

‘This is My Covenant with Them’: Isaiah 59.19-21 as the Programmatic Prophecy of the New Covenant in the Acts of the Apostles (Part II)

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Abstract

Isaiah 59.19-21 provides not only a prediction of the Pentecost events, but imposes a sequential and thematic coherence on Acts 2, describing: (1) the powerful rushing sound (2) of the wind/Spirit and the ‘words in the mouth’/speaking (Joel 2) (3) which cause (4) the universal (5) fear of (6) the Lord’s name and his glory. (7) In this way, the redeemer (Ps. 16) (8) comes to Zion/Jerusalem (9) to Jacob/Jews, who, upon their repentance, (10) will receive the covenant/promise of the Spirit (11) that shall not depart from him (Jesus) nor from his children nor from their children forever. Thus Isa. 59.19-21 serves as the programmatic statement for the book of Acts, building upon its mirrored programmatic passage (Isa. 61.1-2) of Luke’s first volume. In Luke, Jesus is the prototypical bearer of the Spirit; in Acts, the bestower of the Spirit. The Spirit, expressed in the growing and multiplying ‘word’, is the unifying and structuring theme in Acts. This thesis solves a number of problems in Acts studies.

Keywords

Isaiah 59, Acts 2, new covenant, programmatic statement, acts, prophecy, pentecost, Spirit

This article is the second of a two-part series showing that the structure and themes of at least the early sections of Acts seem to mirror the programmatic prophecy of Isa. 59.19-21. More significantly, the Lukan lens of this Isaiah template shifts the traditional focal point that defines the nature and purpose of the normative Christian life as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

Part one treated the first five themes of Isa. 59.19-21 as they are developed mostly in Acts Chapter Two: (1) The powerful rushing sound (2) of the wind/

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Spirit and the ‘words in the mouth’/‘speaking’ (Joel 2) (3) which cause (4) the universal (5) fear of (6) the Lord’s name and his glory. This section continues to map out the intertextual correlation of the two passages, beginning with a theme that dominates the third and fourth chapters of Acts, that is, the fear of the Lord’s *name* (section 6). This is followed by the concatenated themes of: (7) the redeemer (Ps. 16), who (8) comes to Zion/Jerusalem (9) to Jacob/Jews, who, upon their repentance, (10) will receive the covenant/promise of the Spirit (11) that shall not depart from him nor from his children nor from their children forever. Examination of this series of themes is followed by a discussion of the two programmatic prophecies of Luke-Acts: Isa. 61.1-2 and 59.19-21, respectively. A summary of implications follows this study.

6. Fear of the Lord’s *Name*...

According to Isa. 59.19, because of Yahweh’s mighty display of power, inhabitants of the earth will fear the ‘*name* of the Lord’ and his glory. Predictably, then, indicating that the thesis holds, Acts develops this theme of ‘name’ to a far greater extent than any other New Testament document, some 59 times.¹ Of those, 26 refer to the names of individuals, for example, ‘a man named Ananias’. What is striking, however, is that while Acts uses the phrase, ‘the name of the’ ‘Lord’, ‘Jesus’ or ‘Lord Jesus’, a total of 19 times,² it uses the term, ‘name’ in *reference* to the Lord or Jesus 33 times.³

This ambiguous application of ‘name’ to ‘Lord’ or ‘Jesus’ seems to reflect the relationship of the Lord (Yahweh) of Isa. 59.19 and 21 to the redeemer of Isa. 59.20, perhaps clarifying the rationale for Luke’s selection of this passage as the narrative plot for Acts 2 and the introduction of Jesus as ‘Lord and Christ’. Jesus has already been introduced as ‘redeemer’ in Lk. 24.21, cf. Lk.

¹ Noted by Silva New, ‘The Name, Baptism, and the Laying on of Hands’, in F. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, [1933] 1979), V, Pt. 1: pp. 121-34. C.K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), I, p. 139.

² Four times Acts uses the term ‘name of the Lord’ (2.21; 9.15, 28; and 15.17); ten times, ‘name of Jesus’ (3.6; 4.10; 4.18; 5.40; 8.12; 9.27; 10.48; 16.18; 26.9), and five times the terms are blended, ‘name of the Lord Jesus’ (8.16; 19.5, 13, 17 and 21.13). By contrast, this term ‘name of the Lord’ or ‘name of Jesus’ occurs in Mt. and Jn only twice, Mk and Lk. three times, the most anywhere else in the NT is 1 Cor. at four.

³ Mt. refers to the name of Jesus in any connection 14 times and Lord, 5 times. Mk: 7 and 1, respectively; Lk.: 6 and 4; Jn: 11 and 7. All Scripture references are taken from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

2.38, so just as in Isa. 59.21, it would also be his role to send the new covenant Spirit. It is entirely logical, then, that Peter ties repentance and the gift of the Holy Spirit to the initiation via baptism into the ‘name’ of Jesus Christ. Acts 2, then, lays out the sequence of the coming of the Spirit in theophanous power, inducing fear (wonder, amazement and repentance) as the multitude comes to fear the name of Jesus, who, as Peter explains, is behind it all (2.33-39, 43).⁴

In chapters 3 and 4, the theme of the ‘name of the Lord’/‘name of Jesus’ is developed more thoroughly as the central theme in the narrative (3.5, 16; 4.7—the focus of the inquiry and its response is ‘by what power or what name?’ 4.10, 12, 17, 18) and, significantly, is associated with other familiar themes of Isa. 59.19-21: 1) divine power (3.6, 16; 4.7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 30), that caused 2) fear (‘filled with wonder and amazement’, ‘utterly astonished’ 3.10, 11; 4.13), 3) ‘words in mouth’, witness, speaking boldly or prophetically (3.4; 4.8, 13, 19-20, 29-31), 4) repentance (3.15, 19, 26), 5) covenant (3.25), and, 6) the bestowal of the Spirit (‘times of refreshing ... from the presence of the Lord’, 3.19; 4.31).

Pentecost in Acts 2 began with a display of mighty power and the outpouring of the covenant Spirit in much speech. One task of chapter 2 was to link this display to the person of Jesus. The next two chapters develop this link by focusing on the power of the ‘name’ of Jesus in the case of a ‘notable sign’ (4.16) of the lame man. This two-chapter exposition on the name of Jesus is bracketed in a chiasm by theophanic events:

- a all gathered in one place which was filled with a violent, rushing wind the disciples were filled with the Spirit and speech (2.1-4)
- b fear (φόβος) from the onlookers at the signs and wonders of the apostles (2.41)
- b’ healing of the lame man by apostles which causes fear (ἐπλήσθησαν θάμβους καὶ ἐκστάσεως, ἔκθαμβοι 3.10-11)
- a’ the theophanic shaking of the place where the disciples were gathered and their filling with the Spirit with prophetic speech (4.33).

⁴ This sequence, based on the pattern of Isa. 59.19-21, is repeated in the next chapter of Acts. This time the programmatic statement of Luke (Isa. 61.1-2 with 35.6a >Lk. 7.22) is blended in: 1) because the redeemer comes to Zion 2) the power of the Lord appears 3) causing the name of the Lord to be feared, 4) which causes repentance 5) and the reception of the covenant Spirit (‘times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord’). Peter and John, the representatives of Jesus’ power (3.12 and 16) approach the temple (Zion). A lame man, not allowed into the temple, ‘saw’ (ἰδῶν) Peter and John; Peter, with John, ‘stared intently’ (ἀτενίσας) at the lame man, and say, ‘Look (βλέψον) at us!’ The lame man ‘fixed his attention’ (ἐπέϊχευ) on them, fulfilling, ‘The eyes of the blind shall be opened’. On the lame man’s exclusion and Acts’ corrective, see Mikeal Parsons, ‘The Character of the Lame Man in Acts 3-4’, *JBL* 124.2 (2005), pp. 295-312.

Luke, however, takes pains to emphasize the connection in chapters 3 and 4 of the *name* of Jesus with the display of God's power, the reaction of fear and repentance. It is the command to rise up and walk in 'the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth' that is central to the healing miracle. This point is repetitively pounded home: that against human power and piety (3.12), it is 'faith in his *name*, his *name* itself has made this man strong' and 'faith that is through *Jesus*' has given 'perfect health'. Again, in the next chapter (4.7-12, 17-18) *the central focus* of the trial in Jerusalem was, 'by what *power* and by what *name* did you do this?'⁵ Again, Peter affirms that 'by the *name* of Jesus Christ of Nazareth' the miracle occurred. This leads to a generalization about the centrality of what appears to be the *universal fear of the Lord's name* from Isa. 59.19, 'there is no other *name under heaven* ... by which we must be saved' (4.12). The reaction of the council again mirrors the connection of the power of God ('a notable sign') and the doubly-emphasized warning against speaking 'in this name' (4.17) or 'in the name of Jesus' (4.18).⁶ Finally, the same point is made in the prayer of the disciples, 'stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed *through the name of your holy servant Jesus*' (4.30).

Moreover, the conclusion of Peter's sermon (3.12-26), just as the conclusion to his Pentecost sermon (2.25-26), summarizes and focuses on themes of Isa. 59.19-21, including those of: the prophetic children ('sons of the prophets and of the covenant') (3.25), the blessing (the Holy Spirit), and the redeemer being sent to 'bless' (cf. Lk. 24.50-51) after the preparation of repentance (note the 'so that' 3.19) by 'first' 'turning each of you (of Jacob) from your wicked ways', then 'all the families of the earth will be blessed' (3.25) in the 'universal restoration' (3.21, cf. Isa. 59.19). Importantly, all the foregoing material, according to Peter's speech, is thoroughly derived from biblical precedent and prophecy, much of which appears to be based on Isa. 59.19-21.⁷ This passage also provides the template for the introduction

⁵ 'Power' and 'name' appear to be used here almost as synonyms.

⁶ Paul also counted himself among those who opposed 'the name' of Jesus in 26.9 despite the 'promise' (ἐπαγγελία) made to 'our ancestors', the 'twelve tribes', now ironically being resisted in court by 'the Jews', from Jerusalem, who were promised this covenant (26.4-11). P. Elbert, 'Possible Literary Links Between Luke-Acts and Pauline Letters Regarding Spirit-Language', in T. L. Brodie, D. R. MacDonald, and S. E. Porter (eds.), *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, New Testament Monographs 16 (Sheffield: Sheffield-Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 226-54.

⁷ 'You are the descendants of the prophets (lit.: 'sons of the prophets' cf. 2 Kgs 2.3, 5, 15; 4.38; 6.1) and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed'. When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways'.

of the most important new element in the Pentecost events: the role of the redeemer Jesus.

7. The Redeemer Comes (*And he will come to Zion as Redeemer* or, *A Redeemer will come to Zion*)

While Deutero-Isaiah supplies a robust ‘redeemer’ theme in its literature,⁸ the redeemer of 59.19-21 specifically ties his coming to Zion and the repentance of Jacob with the covenant/promise of the Spirit. Acts 2.22-39 develops these themes more fully, but not before Lk. 24 and Acts 1 at least similarly outline these connections.⁹ These passages supply the plot for Acts, so it is significant that the Isaiah 59 themes appear here as well as in Acts 2.¹⁰

Lk. 24.44-53, after alluding to Jesus as redeemer in 24.21, drives home the crucial importance of seeing the OT scriptures fulfilled *in Jesus*. This emphasis should signal the reader to be alert to echoes, key words and phrases, which were the characteristic, rabbinic way in the NT writings of citing the larger message of the OT passages.

⁴⁴Then he said to them, ‘These are my *words* which I *spoke to you*, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses *and the prophets* and the psalms must be fulfilled.’⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,⁴⁷ and that *repentance and forgiveness of sins* should be preached in *his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem*.⁴⁸ You are *witnesses* of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, *I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city*, until you are clothed with power *from on high*.⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he *blessed* them.⁵¹ While he *blessed* them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.⁵² And they returned to *Jerusalem* with great joy,⁵³ and were continually in the *temple* blessing God’.

Jesus is at pains to identify the Spirit source of his climactic summary as ‘my words which I spoke to you’ before the crucifixion. The message has not

⁸ ‘For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel’, Isa.44.23c; ‘I, the Lord, am your Savior and your redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob’, 48.20c, 49.26b, 60.16.

⁹ These passages tend to be repetitive and supplementary as a device to weave the two volumes together. K. D. Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God’s People Intertextually* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), pp. 159-60. The theme of Jesus as Redeemer being the occasion of repentance is also found in Acts 5.31; 11.17-18; 13.23-39; 17.30-31; 19.2-6; 20.21-27. Note here also connections with the themes of Zion, Jews and the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰ William Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), pp. 21-23.

changed: ‘everything written about me’ is to be fulfilled—‘according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God’ (Acts 2.23). From his summary of the essentials of his mission, what clues point to the specific scripture that is being fulfilled? Here at the end of Lk. 24, echoes of Isa. 59.19-21 abound.

The redeemer comes to Zion (‘Jerusalem’, ‘the city’), to those in Jacob who *turn* from *transgression* (‘repentance and forgiveness of sins’—the work of a redeemer). Thus the ‘name of the Lord’ will be feared by ‘all nations’ (Isa. 59.19), ‘beginning from Jerusalem’, the place where the redeemer makes his appearance (Lk. 18.31).¹¹ Jesus establishes himself as the source of the father’s (a late Isaianic name of God) promise (a synonym for ‘covenant’), which, Jesus says, ‘I send... from on high’.¹² Twice Luke records a ‘blessing’, suggesting a proleptic bestowal of the covenant/promise, as at that point Jesus ascends into heaven (‘on high’) whence the Spirit will come. The disciples return to ‘Jerusalem with great joy’ and are last seen ‘continually in the temple (Zion) blessing God’ (Acts 1.11). The disciples are to be ‘witnesses’, which suggests an anticipation of the covenantal Spirit who puts ‘words in your mouth’, vv. 51-53, cf. Lk. 12.13).¹³ In this passage, then, adopting the themes of Isa. 59.19-21, Jesus is established with (or as) the Lord as the authority who delivers the covenantal Spirit.

Acts 1.1-11 replicates these themes from our Isaiah passage, specifically in 1.4.¹⁴ In the first verses of Acts 1, Luke makes clear that the importance and

¹¹ ‘Beginning from Jerusalem’ implies that Luke’s universalism is always tethered to its prophetic source: ‘the city’. Luke-Acts mentions Jerusalem 90 times against 51 times for all the rest of the NT. Barrett lists the reasons for remaining in Jerusalem: it is a holy place, the locus of the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and the gift of the Spirit, ‘the continuity between Israel and the church’ (Conzelmann) and the *parousia*; Acts 1.72-73. Emmanuel Asante is closer when he suggests that Luke’s focus on Jerusalem shows that ‘the redeemer of Jerusalem is the universal Messiah’; Emmanuel Asante, ‘The Theological Jerusalem of Luke-Acts’, *Africa Theological Journal* 15.3 (1986), p. 181. Asante, however, does not connect this insight with the same themes in Isa. 59.19-20; nor does J. K. Elliot, ‘Jerusalem in Acts and the Gospels’, *NTS* 23.1 (1977), pp. 462-69.

¹² ‘It is important to note that even at this early stage [events of Pentecost] Jesus was understood not merely as a sort of archetypal Christian charismatic, but religious experiences of the earliest community, including experiences like those enjoyed by Jesus himself, were seen as dependent on him and derivative from him’. James Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), p. 195.

¹³ Compare Lk. 12.13 where words are given by the Spirit. This is likely an allusion to another ‘new covenant’ prophecy of the Spirit from Jer. 31.31-34, developed in Jn 14.26, 1 Jn 2.27 and Heb. 8.8-12.

¹⁴ Kurz notes that ‘this prologue to Acts introduces the rest of the book by functioning as a summary of some key aspects of the upcoming plot line’. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, p. 22.

focus of his two volumes is what *Jesus* did and taught (v. 1). He did so ‘until the day he was taken up’, making the point of his divine authority (v. 2). The verse continues noting that Jesus had given orders ‘through the Holy Spirit’, showing his authority as a prophet, perhaps like Elijah,¹⁵ who was empowered to pass on the Spirit to the apostles (the Twelve representatives of the New Israel),¹⁶ ‘whom he had chosen’, also an act of authority. In v. 3, Jesus ‘presents himself alive’, the reflexive here emphasizes that he alone took the initiative. ‘After his passion’ marks the contrast of his death with his resurrected state ‘by many proofs’.¹⁷ He also ‘appeared to them during forty days’, a number usually involved in probation or testing.¹⁸ Jesus’ ‘speaking of the kingdom of God’ implies divine authority. He contrasts John’s water baptism with his own promise of their being ‘baptized with the Holy Spirit’ (v. 5). A similar contrast is made from the disciples’ question about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. The ‘times and seasons’ of the restoration the ‘Father has fixed by *his own* authority’ (1.7). Jesus then seems to be inserting himself as the mediator of the new covenant of the Spirit. ‘*But* (by contrast) you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come *upon you*; and you shall be *my witnesses*¹⁹ in *Jerusalem... to the end of the earth*’.²⁰ Could this sentence be the fulfillment and paraphrase of “The redeemer will come to Zion ... and I—this

¹⁵ The Elijah/Elisha parallels for the bestowal of the Spirit have received substantial attention. M. Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament: Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des alttestamentlichen Propheten im frühen Christentum* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997). J. Severino Croatto, ‘Jesus, Prophet Like Elijah and Prophet-Teacher Like Moses’, *JBL* 124.3 (2005), pp. 455–58.

¹⁶ Lk. 6.13; 9.1, esp. 22.30 where the twelve seem to have equivalent functions of the 70 elders of Israel.

¹⁷ The odd expression, ‘many proofs’ is attested in Hellenistic literature. D. L. Mealand, ‘The Phrase, “Many Proofs” in Acts 1.3 and in Hellenistic Writers’, *ZNW* 80.1–2 (1989), pp. 134–35.

¹⁸ Where Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days, possibly paralleling the 40 years of the Israelites’ wilderness experience, but more likely replicating the intercession for Israel by Moses on Mt. Sinai 40 days (Deut. 9.12) without food or water (9.18, 25). Stephen (Acts 7) notes that in the life of Moses, 40 years elapsed before decisive events (Acts 7.23, 30, 36, 42) while other contexts indicate a time of testing (Acts 13.18, 21). See ‘The Gospel of the Forty Days’ in Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 38–41.

¹⁹ Isa. 43.10–12, “*You are my witnesses*”, says the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me”. Is Jesus citing this passage as an indication of his deity? “I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and *you are my witnesses*”, says the LORD’. The odd repetition of ‘I, I am the Lord’ (אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה) is reminiscent of Isa. 59.21 (וְאֲנִי יְהוָה).

²⁰ ‘To the ends of the earth’ (ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς) is a phrase which appears four times in Isa. LXX (8.7; 48.20; 49.6; 62.11). In each case it is a message of the Lord that reaches out to this extent; similarly, 45.22–23.

is *my* covenant with them—I will put *my* Spirit upon you and *my* words in your mouth ... forever? Once again, Luke seems to show fulfillment not by strict literal correspondence, but by the correlation of concepts:

- 1) Jesus sends Spirit // Yahweh sends ‘my Spirit’;
- 2) upon you // upon you;
- 3) in Jerusalem // in Zion
- 4) my witnesses (speakers?) // my words in your mouth;
- 5) to the end of the earth // for endless generations, forever.

It is verse 4, however, that adumbrates the argument Luke makes in Acts 2 about the role of Jesus in introducing the Spirit in Jerusalem. Luke is making no less than a claim for Jesus’ deity, or at least identification with Yahweh as redeemer (Lk. 24.21) from Isa. 59.20-21.²¹ This ambiguity between the Spirit as being the ‘promise of the Father’ on one hand, and the bestowal of it by Jesus on the other, seems to be quite reasonably derived from the Isaianic text itself.

As we shall see in Acts 2, Luke linked the redeemer (Lk. 24.21) with his promise (covenant) to send the Spirit ‘in the city’ (Zion) until the Twelve (the new Israel/Jacob) are ‘clothed with power from on high’ (24.49)—the climactic summary of the instruction. Importantly, the Lk. 24 passage is obsessively concerned with Jesus fulfilling scripture, a major one of which appears to be Isa. 59.19-21. The end of Luke’s Gospel, then, sets the stage for the fulfillment of the Isaiah 59 redeemer theme in Acts 2.²² Immediately afterward, in the second volume, the first eleven verses of Acts also summarize the important climax, the goal of Jesus’ mission continued from Luke: Jesus’ established authority as identified with the Lord to send the Spirit.²³

Luke, early in Acts, makes a crucial move forward on his agenda of showing Jesus to be the fulfillment of scripture: to follow the template of Isa. 59.20-21 showing *Jesus is Isaiah’s redeemer who bestows the Spirit*. In the poem of Acts, Luke offers a retrospective as ‘all that Jesus *began* to do and teach’, implying that the second volume would *continue* the description of what Jesus would

²¹ The definitive study on the question of the attribution of deity to Jesus is L. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). For Christ devotion in Acts, see pp. 177-206.

²² The Lord as redeemer is a strong theme in Deutero-Isaiah, being so described 13 of the 18 times in the OT.

²³ Traditional Christianity would focus on the crucifixion with perhaps the resurrection as the most important elements of the faith. Important as they are, for Luke-Acts, at least, it appears that the real ‘punch line’ of these documents is the establishment of Jesus’ cosmic authority and his bestowal of the Spirit of power—again, along the lines of Isa. 59.19-21.

‘do and teach’.²⁴ It is important to note that Luke’s summary of this ‘doing and teaching’, that immediately follows in 1.2-11, concentrates on a theme that Luke develops more fully in Acts 2.22-36, the authority of Jesus as the sender of the Spirit.

Luke, however, faces a problem: just as his audience was aware that Jesus had been ‘attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs’, they also knew he had been killed and buried (Lk. 24.18-20; Acts 1.19; 2.23). How, then, could Jesus be relevant to the Pentecost events? Explicitly, Luke uses Ps. 16 to introduce the central role of Jesus into the events of Pentecost, but this passage only overlays a deeper structure of four arguments from Isa. 59.19-21. First, Jesus the redeemer continues his past expression of God’s attesting ‘mighty works, wonders and signs’ by coming in the audience’s *present experience* in theophanous wonders (Acts 2.22, 33, cf. 2.2 from Isa. 59.19 ‘for *he will come* like a rushing stream, which the wind/Spirit of the LORD drives’). Second, the living redeemer further fulfills his Isaianic role by *being the occasion* of ‘repentance to Jacob’ (2.34-39). Third, the redeemer seems both distinct from Yahweh, but ambiguously the same—a picture one can derive from the Isaiah template.²⁵ Peter describes Jesus as both ‘Lord and Christ’. Fourth, accordingly, Jesus assumes the role of Yahweh himself by introducing the new covenant of the Spirit accompanied by the words in the mouth (2.33-38).²⁶ Moreover, just *where* this occurs is of importance to both Isaiah and Luke.

²⁴ C.K. Barrett, *Acts*, I, pp. 66-67. J. Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 109-10.

²⁵ The RSV identifies the redeemer with Yahweh himself: “And *he* will come to Zion *as* redeemer . . .”, says the Lord. “And as for me [or, and I,] this is my covenant with them [Jacob/Israel], says the Lord: my Spirit. . .”. The NIV translates the verse more isolated from its context but more true to the grammar: ‘A redeemer will come to Zion’, as does the LXX: ‘καὶ ἦξει ἕνεκεν Σιῶν ὁ ῥυθόμενος...’. > לַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה. The Lord speaks of the redeemer in the third person, suggesting distance. This is a fairly rare phenomenon in the OT, the closest being Isa. 41.14 and Ps. 110.1! This translation, of course, does not *demand* that the redeemer is a person distinct from Yahweh, but it does suggest at least ambiguity which is translated into a kind of binitarianism in Acts 2. Luke similarly deals with the relation of the Messiah to David as well as to Yahweh in 20.41-44.

In Acts 1.4 Jesus commands, “wait for the promise of the Father”, which, he said, “you heard from me”. Codex D adds to this latter phrase: ‘from my mouth’. Is D clarifying an echo of Isa. 59.21 about the bestowal of the Spirit ‘on you’ (second person singular, the redeemer/prophet of Isa. 61.1-2, 8?) and ‘my words in your mouth’, which then are also placed in the mouth of subsequent generations, forever?

²⁶ In Isa. 59.21. Elsewhere in Deutero-Isaiah, Yahweh is identified as the redeemer (e.g., ‘I, the LORD, am your Savior and your redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob’, Isa. 47.4; 49.7, 26; 54.5, 8; 60.16; ‘Thou, O LORD, art our Father, our redeemer from of old is thy name’, 63.16).

8. 'And a Redeemer will come to Zion'

Luke's fascination with Jerusalem likely expresses his corresponding fascination with the fulfillment of the Isa. 59.20 prophecy about Jesus.²⁷ It is doubtlessly for this reason that Luke insists that the promised Spirit would come upon the disciples if they stayed/sat 'in the city' (Lk. 24.49). They were to do so *only until* they were to be 'clothed with power from on high', so the connection with the bestowal of the covenant Spirit upon them and its fulfillment in Jerusalem becomes clearer. Acts 1.4 emphatically repeats this command: 'he charged them *not to depart from Jerusalem*, but to wait for the promise of the Father'. The 'power from on high' came in the mighty, rushing wind/Spirit at Pentecost, as predicted, both by Jesus and Isaiah, in *Zion/Jerusalem*. Luke has already established the centrality of Jerusalem in the arrival of the redeemer and the Spirit in Lk. 18.31. 'And taking the twelve, he said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written of the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished"'. In the absence of any other explanation, is it not likely that Isa. 59.20 was behind this logion? Similarly, Anna's prophecy of Jesus (Lk. 2.38) is revealing with respect to this Isaianic passage: She 'spoke of him to all who were looking for the *redemption* (λύτρωσις) of *Jerusalem*'.²⁸ It would be Jesus, in other words, who would come as a redeemer to Zion. In explicit terms in Acts 3, the emblematic lame man is redeemed from exclusion 'in the name (and power) of Jesus' and enters the temple whole (3.1-11).

In Acts 2, the setting of the Pentecost festival is further described as 'Jerusalem' (v. 5) where Peter's audience was addressed as 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem' (v. 14). More often, the Zion theme repeatedly appears in the form of expressions about the temple.²⁹ The feast of Pentecost

²⁷ On the significance of Jerusalem in Luke-Acts, see note 12, above. It is possible that Lk. 2.42-50 and chs. 19-21 should be read with Isa. 59.20 as its background: the initial attempts of the Redeemer coming to Zion (Jerusalem) and the failure of 'Jacob' to repent, all in anticipation of the events of Pentecost when the Redeemer comes in the power of the Spirit.

²⁸ The term, 'redemption' (λύτρωσις), here and in Lk. 24.21 ('the one who would redeem (λυτροῦσθαι) Israel') is derived from a different root than the LXX of Isa. 59.20 (ῥυόμενος), though conceptually they are the same. 'In the NT it is the redemption which is awaited for Israel or Jerusalem, Lk. 1.68; 2.38, i.e., from the yoke of enemies, Lk. 1.71. The reference is not to a ransom but to a redeemer, cf. Lk. 24.21. At root we have here the same ideas of the redemption of Israel by God's pardoning grace as in Ps. 110.9; 129.7, so that λύτρωσις is virtually the same as σωτηρία, cf. Lk. 1.69, 77'. H. Büchsel, 'λύτρον', *TDNT* 4.351.

²⁹ Luke elsewhere associates Jesus and the temple ('a redeemer comes to Zion') frequently: Lk. 2.27, 37, 46; 4.9; particularly in his climactic manifestation to Israel: 19.45, 47; 20.1, 5, 37, 38; 22.52, and 53.

has good Jews, appropriately, in the temple, ‘all together in one place’ (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ), a phrase that occurs three times in Acts 2.1, 44 and 47 and often associated elsewhere with gathering together in unity for worship.³⁰ The end of the Pentecost narrative summarizes a part of the early life of the church as ‘attending the temple together’ (2.46). The mighty wind ‘fills all the *house* where they were sitting’, likely the temple or its precincts, but certainly within the sense of ‘Zion’.³¹ Luke’s emphasis on this location must have a reason: could it be that the wondrous appearance of the redeemer in Zion once again finds its fulfillment in Isa. 59.19–21? The redeemer comes to Zion for a dual purpose: to redeem those who repent (sec. 9) and to bestow the covenant of the Spirit (sec. 10).

9. ‘... To those *in Jacob* who *turn from transgression*’

Peter introduces Jesus into his sermon for at least two reasons: not only to show the central role of Jesus as redeemer who pours out the Spirit, but also as the redeemer who is the occasion for the preparatory repentance of *Jacob*. Hence, Peter brackets both ends of the ‘Jesus section’ of the Pentecost sermon (2.22–38) by an address to ‘Men of Israel’/‘house of Israel’, which are synonyms for ‘Jacob’ (Isa. 59.20).³² Accordingly, a major theme in Peter’s introduction of Jesus represents an appeal for repentance (2.23 and 38): ‘This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men’. He concludes with the parallel: ‘Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified’. The audience, the men of Israel (Isaiah’s ‘Jacob’), ‘when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins”’. Isa. 59.20–21 reiterates the broader Old Testament teaching that the Messianic era would be characterized by the remission of sins (Isa. 43.25; Jer. 31.34b; 33.8; 50.20;

³⁰ For example, Jer. 50.4–5 (LXX 27.4–5); Ps. 33.4; 55.14; 102.22; 133.1.

³¹ Contra Haenchen, *Acts*, 168, n.1.

³² The difficulty with the inclusion of Judah in the list of nations, Acts 2.9, may be resolved if Luke is deliberately emphasizing the fulfillment of Isa. 59.20. Certainly, Peter specifically addresses, ‘Men of *Judea* and all who live/have settled in Jerusalem’ (2.14) as those to whom the covenant is originally intended.

Mic. 7.18-20), hence it is understandable that repentance here is expressed in baptism as the link between the redeemer and the new covenant of the Spirit.³³

Moreover, the term, ‘brethren’, used both to (v. 29) and from the audience (v. 37) further suggests the ethnic identification with the house of Israel and carries with it the redemptive overtone of family obligation for rescue and reconciliation.³⁴ The climactic and concluding functions of the presentation of the redeemer, then, is to elicit repentance to Jacob/Israel in Jerusalem as preparation for the giving of the promised Spirit, the very sequence of Isa. 59.20-21.

To summarize these last sections: The first action of the redeemer was to come in a theophanic wonder (Isa. 59.19 // Acts 2.2, 23), secondly, to come in this way specifically to Zion/Jerusalem (Isa. 59.20 // Lk. 24.45-49; Acts 1.4), and thereby to cause repentance to Jacob/ Israel (Isa. 59.20b // Acts 2.36-38). All this is to produce the climactic purpose of the Pentecost narrative: the ongoing bestowal of the covenantal Spirit.

10. ‘... This is My *covenant* with them, says the Lord: My Spirit . . .’

The Pentecost narrative is further bent on demonstrating the contemporary fulfillment of Isaiah’s *covenant* of the Spirit (59.21). Instead of using the word, ‘covenant’ (LXX, διαθήκη), however, Luke substitutes the term, ‘promise’ (ἐπαγγελία), of the Spirit (Lk. 24.49; Acts 1.4; 2.33; 3.39). Elsewhere in Acts, this substitution is retained: Acts 7.17; 13.21, 32; 26.6-7. In this Luke seems to follow biblical usage generally, where ἐπαγγελία refers to ‘covenant’: Rom. 4.13-14, 20; 9.4, 8; 15.8; 2 Cor. 6.16-7.1; Gal. 3.14-17, 29; 4.23-28; Eph. 1.13; 2.12; 3.6; Heb. 4.1; 6.12, 13, 15, 17; 7.6; 11.9, 13, 17; 8.6; 9.15; 10.36; 11.39; 2 Pet. 3.9. Indeed, the terms, ‘covenant’ and ‘promise’ are placed in synonymous parallel in: Gal. 2.12; Eph. 3.17; Heb. 8.6;

³³ Also, Lk. 24.47; Acts 5.31; 10.43; 13.23-39; 26.18; Eph. 1.7; Col. 1.14; 1 Jn 1.9; 2.12. A. Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1958), p. 349. C. H. Dodd’s classic, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper & Row, 1936), pp. 21-24 notes that the sermons of Acts always conclude with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit. This pattern is not accidental if one sees Isa. 59.20-21 lying beneath it, since it reinforces Luke’s emphasis on fulfillment of scripture to demonstrate divine foreknowledge and authority for Christian belief and activity.

³⁴ Lev. 25.47-48, among numerous other OT passages, suggests that the term, ‘brother’, involves cultural requirements for assuring the welfare of the extended family, or even nation, e.g., Mt. 18.15; Phlm. 16.

9.15, cf. LXX: 1 Chron. 16.16; Neh. 9.8. So in Peter's direct quotation of the Isaiah prophecy, the substitution for 'covenant' is clear: 'This *promise* (ἐπαγγελία)—covenant—is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off' (2.39). If, then, we substitute 'covenant' for Luke's 'promise' with respect to the outpouring of the Spirit, then his theme of the Isaiah 59 fulfillment stands out more sharply (Lk. 24.49; Acts 1.4; 2.33).³⁵

One might also argue that baptism is a rite for entering the new covenant of the Spirit.³⁶ Certainly Jesus' own baptism, which precipitates the Spirit coming upon him (Lk. 3.21–22), appears as archetypal for his 'children' to follow him. Peter's urging the Jews to repent, be baptized and be filled with the Holy Spirit is essentially an invitation to follow the template of Isa. 59.20–21. This offer ultimately, however, is not limited to 'Jacob', but to all those described in 59.19 as well: 'for this promise is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him'.³⁷

Isa. 59.21, then, drives the sequence of the covenant's bestowal in Luke-Acts:³⁸ The Father's promise is bestowed on the redeemer (Isa. 61.1–2, 8, cf. Lk. 4.18), who then bestows it upon subsequent generations forever.

³⁵ Certainly, St. Paul follows Luke's pattern with respect to the covenant mediators, *i.e.*, 'our competence is from God who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life' (1 Cor. 3.6); similarly, Heb. 8.15. These NT passages appear to repeat the message of the new covenant prophecy of Jer. 31.31.

³⁶ Baptism is 'the eschatological sacrament of the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days'. Alan Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1958), p. 349. In this connection, see also, Lk. 3.16; Acts 1.5; 2.38; 10.47; 11.16; 1 Cor. 12.13, cf. Matt 28.19 with a number of Isa. 59.19–21 themes: 'Go therefore and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them in the *name* [and promise of] of the *Father* and of the *Son* [redeemer] and of the *Holy Spirit* ... I am with you always, even to the *end of the age*'. 'With the baptism of Christ the age of the Spirit begins in the full sense (Mt. 3.13 ff. and par.). As the dove of Noah after the flood indicates the dawn of a new epoch (Gen. 8.8 ff.), so the dove-like form of the Spirit indicates the dawn of a new creation rising with Christ from the baptismal waters (cf. 1 Pt. 3.19 ff.) ... being then imparted to the disciples as the Spirit of Pentecost'. O. Proksch, 'ἅγιος in the NT', *TDNT* 1, p. 104.

³⁷ 'God is the προκαλούμενος at Acts 2.39 and 16.10, and the Holy Spirit at Ac. 13.2. Jesus is often called the προκαλούμενος τούς μαθητάς αὐτοῦς, or τὸν ὄχλον, Mt. 10.1; 15.10, 32; 18.2; 20.25; Mk 3.13, 23; 6.7; 7.14; 8.1, 34; 10.42; 12.43; Lk. 18.16'. K. L. Schmidt, 'καλέω', *TDNT* 3.500. Luke appears comfortably to attribute the designation, 'Lord' to Jesus as does Paul. L. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 108–18.

³⁸ The sequence of symbolic events is similar in Lk. 4 and Acts 1. At both the beginning and resumption of his ministry, Jesus appears in the power of the Spirit for 40 days; he is speaking and tempted about kingdom issues; he deflects the temptation; he speaks of the Spirit and his mission from a passage in Isaiah!

11. ‘... shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children’s children, says the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore’

The final element in the plot line of our Isaiah passage (v. 21), which is traced by the Pentecost narrative, describes the *permanence* of the Holy Spirit covenant. This description and offer of the covenant represent the climax of Peter’s Pentecost sermon, ‘For this promise is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off (πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακρὰν)’. The expression ‘afar off’, (εἰς μακρὰν) seems to carry the primary idea of extended time in the future, just as Isa. 59.21. The only occurrence of εἰς μακρὰν in the LXX appears in 2 Sam. 7.19 describing successive generations of the house of David.³⁹

It may be, then, that Luke plays on the ambivalence of the term: to be ‘afar off’ in *both* time (later generations) and accessibility (religious and ethnic distance). The bestowal of the covenant Spirit—the core theme of the Christian message in Acts—to successive generations of ‘children’⁴⁰ forever, is a pattern with support in the biblical tradition.⁴¹ Indeed, St. Paul cites this very passage⁴² as the universal principle to which one could appeal for the ongoing possibility of salvation for Jews: ‘The gifts (*charismata*) and the call of God are irrevocable’ (Rom. 11.29). The citation, of course, is not direct. Nevertheless, the simple ‘for’ (γὰρ) formula for introducing scriptural proof follows that of Luke, citing Peter, for the same passage (Acts 2.39).⁴³ Paul’s point is that the

³⁹ Interestingly, the fairly rare μακρὰν appears twice in Isa. 59, where, e.g., salvation, righteousness and even God himself are remote or at a distance, cf. Ps. 9.21; Jer. 2.5. O. Preisker, ‘μακρὰν’, *TDNT* 4.372.

⁴⁰ The Lukan idea of ‘children’, aside from being a direct citation of Isa. 59.21, cf. Lk. 11.13, involves the idea of ‘someone with the same characteristics’, as in Lk. 3.8; 7.35, or as members of a group: Lk. 13.34; 18.16; or even covenant community: Acts 13.33. In Luke, ‘children’ are often the recipients of the Spirit or revelation, perhaps echoing Isa. 59.21 (Lk. 1.17; 35, 41, 44, 76, 80; 2.32, 35, 40; 7.35; 11.13; 13.34; 16.8 (where ‘light’ = revelation; 18.16-17); Acts 13.33.

⁴¹ For example, in descriptions of the extent of the Christian experience: Mt. 24.14; 25.32; 28.19-20; Mk 13.10, 17; Lk. 1.32-33, 47-50; 2.29-32; 24.47; Acts 1.8; Rom. 1.5; 4.16-18; 16.25-26; Gal. 3.8; Col. 1.23; 1 Tim. 3.16; Rev. 12.5; 15.4; 19.5; 21.24-26. These may have their grounding in such passages as, Gen. 18.18; 26.4; 1 Chron. 16.6-36; 20.6; Ps. 2.8; 22.27; 65.5; 67.2; 72.11; 82.8; 86.9; 96.3; 102.15; 117.1; Isa. 2.2-4; 45.22; 49.6; 52.10; 61.8-11; 66.18, 20; Jer. 3.17; 16.19-21; Dan. 7.14; Hab. 2.5; Zeph. 2.11; Zech. 14.9.

⁴² ‘...as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”... “and this will be my covenant with them” when I take away their sins. As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable’ (Rom. 11.26-29).

⁴³ Marion Soards lists a valuable series of clear ‘signals’ that scripture is being quoted in Acts such that can elicit unanimity ‘among all parties’. Less clear is that the Isa. 59.21 passage is

'*charismata*', a rare term, but one which for Paul refers to the specific, broadly prophetic working of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12.6; 1 Cor. 12), are permanent, and, by implication, are offered to all.⁴⁴

On the other hand, offering the promised covenant Spirit to those who are 'afar off' has support for describing religious or spiritual distance, as relating to Gentiles.⁴⁵ Indeed, can we detect in Lk. 24.36 the pattern of the 'peace to those who are near and to those who are afar off' of Isa. 57.19? 'Jesus himself stood *among them* [those who are near] and said to them, 'Peace be with you', concluding with the promise that '*repentance and forgiveness of sins* [peace?] is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations [those who are afar off]'. Certainly, this is the stance in Eph. 2.12, which describes the readers as 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise (ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας—an allusion to Isa. 59.21?), having no hope and without God in the world' are also 'ὑμεῖς οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν' ('you who were once afar off').⁴⁶ Hence, the covenant of the Spirit, then, 'is thus extended in time and space ... addressed not only to Jews but to distant races'.⁴⁷

For all of the controversies over the bestowal of the covenant Spirit, *viz.*, the recipients, the timing, extent, preconditions or characteristics (who, when, where and how), the major concern for Acts seems to be simply *that* people receive the Spirit. For Luke, this composite experience of repentance, the

introduced as proof with only a simple 'for' (γὰρ). Marion Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), p. 60, n. 139.

⁴⁴ See Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-Biblical Miracles* (New York: Continuum, 1993), 204. Support for the permanence of spiritual gifts, at least in this present age, appears in: Rom. 11.29; 1 Cor. 4.4-8; 13.8-13; Eph. 1.13-23; 3.14-21; 4.11-13, 30; 5.15-19; 6.10-20; Phil. 1.5-10; Col. 1.9-12; 1 Thess. 1.5-8; 5.11-23; 2 Thess. 1.11-12; 1 Pet. 1.5; 4.7-12; 1 Jn 2.26-28; Jude 18-21, cf. Jer. 32.20.

⁴⁵ Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 184, however, suggests that 'Acts 22.21 and especially Ecclesiasticus 24.32, corroborates the spatial [*sic*] interpretation of this expression. The listeners cannot take it as a reference to the Gentile mission'. Actually, the passages Haenchen cites probably show the duality of meaning here: temporal *and* spiritual (Gentile-like) distance. Acts 22.21 may well represent echo Isa. 57.19 'far away to the Gentiles'. Ecclesiasticus 24.32-34 clearly describes both: 'I [wisdom] ... will send forth her light afar off. I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy, and leave it to all ages for ever. Behold that I have not labored for myself only, but for all them that seek wisdom'.

⁴⁶ Preisker ('μακρὰν', *TDNT* 4.372) notes the clear citation of Isa. 57.19 in Eph. 2.12-17. The following verse combines themes of Isa. 59.19-21. 'for through him [redeemer] both of us [universal fear of Lord] have access [via repentance] in one [promised covenant] Spirit to the Father'.

⁴⁷ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 155.

bestowal of the Spirit, and the words in one's mouth is the supreme ratification of the new covenant and the fulfillment of the programmatic prophecy (Isa. 59.19-21) that undergirds his second volume, the book of Acts. The next section examines the relationship between the programmatic prophecies which shape the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

Isaiah 61.1-2 and 59.19-21—The Programmatic Statements of Luke and Acts

Bernard Gosse is the only scholar this author has discovered who suggested that the eternal covenant of the Spirit promised in Isa. 61.8 is bestowed on the individual described in 61.1 and on this individual's children in a late interpolation, for example, Isa. 59.21.⁴⁸ Gosse's intriguing connection may well be shared by the author of Luke-Acts, though with, of course, very different recipients of the covenant in mind. Where Gosse has suggested that the recipient was a figure⁴⁹ contemporary with the post-exilic interpolator, it would appear that Luke clearly saw Jesus as embodying the covenant which is then shared with the new Israel and their descendants forever.

Moving from the recipients of the covenant, Alexander Rofé offers a suggestion as to the content of the Isa. 59.21 covenant that would fit the period. While he recognizes that the terms, “spirit” and “word” belong to prophetic stock, yet there is little doubt that they have been reinterpreted here to designate the Torah.⁵⁰ As support, Rofé argues that:

- 1) Josh 1.8 applies the same expression (*lo' yāmūsū mippikā* Heb: לֹא יִמּוּטוּ מִפִּי... שׁוֹר) 'shall not depart out of your mouth' to the book of the Torah. He notes that this string occurs elsewhere only in Isa. 59.21 as an argument for this redefinition. The string, however, is not as it actually appears in Josh 1.8, where the term, 'book of this Torah' (סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת) is inserted between 'will not depart' and 'from your mouth'. The two passages, on their faces, are actually making different points.

⁴⁸ 'L'Alliance d'Isaïe 59.21', ZAW 101.1 (1989), pp. 116-18. Craig Keener actually discusses the relationship of the 'programmatic' prophecy of Luke (Isa. 61:1-2) and Acts 1:8 with '2:16-21 (interpreting Joel) [as] programmatic for Acts'. Keener's observation is so very close, but his Joel quotation fails to account thoroughly for the explicit themes in Acts 2 and elsewhere to the extent that Isa. 59:19-21 does. Craig Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), p. 190.

⁴⁹ Gosse suggests that this figure was a post-exilic High Priest. 'L'universalisme de la Sagesse face au Sacerdoce de Jérusalem au retour de l'exil (Le don de 'mon Esprit' et de 'mes Paroles' en Is 59,21 et Prov 1,23)', *Transeuphratène*, 13 (1997), pp. 39-45, also in 'Isa 59,21 et 2 Sam 23,1-7, l'opposition entre les lignées sacerdotales et royales à l'époque post-exilique', *BN* 68 (1993), p. 11.

⁵⁰ Alexander Rofé, 'The Piety of the Torah Disciples at the Winding-Up of the Hebrew Bible', in *Bibel in Jüdischer und christlicher Tradition* (Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1993), p. 83.

- 2) Rofé further argues that since the ‘covenant is with a whole community’, indicated by the term, *’otām*, ‘with them’ (‘those in Jacob who turned back from sin’)⁵¹ it is unlikely that the Spirit of prophecy could be so widespread. Only a covenant of Torah study could be so envisioned. But the point of the context is exactly the opposite, where the fear of the Lord would be universal, from the setting to the rising of the sun (59.19) *because*, as Luke would point out (‘at this sound’), the Lord comes ‘like a rushing torrent driven by the *ruach* of the Lord (רוּחַ יְהוָה)’ to Jacob (Israel), to those who repent. Similarly in v. 21, the covenant of the *ruach* and its prophetic speech is clearly given universally ‘from this time forth and for evermore’ (מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם). Indeed, in the Joshua tradition (Num 11.29), no less an authority than Moses actually *corrects* Rofé’s rabbinic reinterpretation that the covenant could not be the bestowal of the Spirit of prophecy. Moses holds out the ideal: ‘Would that *all* the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon *them*!’ In both contexts (Isa. 59 and Num 11) Israel/Zion/Jacob are intended as the recipients of the Spirit—their numbers being only limited by their repentance in Isa. 59.20 and unlimited in Num 11.29, to *all the Lord’s people*—which may extend even *beyond* Israel.
- 3) Rofé continues: the covenant of Isa. 59.21 does not describe a ‘future redemption’ extended to Jacob, but merely continues Joshua’s Torah covenant (Josh 1.8). This is true, he argues, since Isa. 59.21 ‘does not organically belong’ to the immediate context describing Israel’s sin and subsequent redemption in the future (59.1–20). Even though the 59.21 ‘interpolation’ refers, via *’otām*, to ‘those in Jacob’, the covenant ‘speaks of the present—‘from now’—describing the covenant which has never been denounced’. In Christian terms, this passage is no promise of a redeemer who bears the new covenant of the Spirit, but rather represents a late interpolation which reinterprets terms usually describing prophecy (*ruach* and *davar*) into excitement over studying scripture. The covenant is the old one: ‘its definite substance is in Israel’s knowledge of the Torah’!⁵²

⁵¹ Rofé, ‘The Piety of the Torah Disciples’, p. 82.

⁵² Alexander Rofé, ‘The Piety of the Torah Disciples’, p. 84. This expression would resonate deeply with Christian scholastics of every age, including many conservative Evangelicals today. This ‘reinterpretation of both “spirit” and “words” expressed, consciously or unconsciously, the belief of a late generation that since prophecy had passed away, its function—the Lord’s address to Israel—was devolved to the Torah and its students’. Rofé cites a sage of the early Hellenistic period: ‘Up to now prophets have prophesied by the holy spirit [*sic*], from now on, incline your ear and listen to the words of the sages’ (*S’Olam Rab.*, 30). For a literature review on the cessation of prophecy in Judaism see Benjamin D. Sommer, ‘Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation’, *JBL* 115.1 (1996), pp. 31–47.

Two observations are in order here. First, to preserve his argument, Rofé must appeal to higher critics: the passage is an interpolation from a different hand, era and interests. Hence, the context, which would deny the theory, need not be considered. Moreover, the canonical Isaiah constantly juxtaposes, as it does here, the present evils against future redemption (e.g., Isa. 29.22; 49.7; 50.1-2; 54.8), so one need not posit a later interpolation for 59.21. In any case, for our purposes, the author of Acts seems oblivious to the sophisticated, scholarly sensitivity to the ‘multitude of sources’ behind his text. He treats these three verses in Isaiah 59 as a unit that applies to the new covenant of the Holy Spirit, sent by the redeemer, Jesus, exalted as Lord and Christ.

Conclusion

The understanding of Luke’s use of Isa. 59.19-21 as the fulfillment template of Acts 2 and elsewhere solves a number of puzzles:

- 1) Against the tradition in scholarship that Acts is a confused jumble of sources, the narrative of the Isaiah passage corresponds compellingly with the narrative sequence of Acts, providing a coherent, detailed structure of the Pentecost story. No other Old Testament passage provides a similar sequence. The theme of ‘the word’, a synonym for ‘the Spirit’, from the cited passage (Isa. 59.21) repeatedly extends the fulfillment of the new covenant, where the spread and growth of ‘the word’ becomes the very unifying and structuring theme of Luke’s second volume (Acts 4.4; 6.7; 8.4; 9.27-31; 10.44; 11.1; 12.24; 13.49; 14.3; 16.5-6, 35; 18.11; 19.10, 20).⁵³
- 2) The Isaianic passage outlines the very essence of the new covenant Gospel: its universality and the centrality of the Spirit identified with the redeemer. This correlation of Isaiah and Acts 2 also explains:
- 3) The choice of supporting prophecies in their sequence, Joel 2 and Psalm 16, respectively;
- 4) Peter’s address to those in Zion/Jerusalem contrasted against the actual audience who represented the nations of the world as well as Jesus’ earlier insistence on the disciples’ waiting in Jerusalem/‘the city’ for the promised/ covenant Spirit;

⁵³ After the Pentecost events, other passages describe the ‘word’ going forth: Acts 4.29, 31; 5.5; 6.2, 4; 6.11; 7.22; 8.14, 25; 10.44; 11.1; 13.5, 7, 15, 44, 46, 48; 13.49; 14.3, 25, 27; 15.35, 36; 16.6, 36; 17.13; 18.5, 11; 19.10. Sixty-five more times the words, ‘speak’ and its variants describe a prophetic or inspired ‘word’.

- 5) Luke's puzzling fascination with speech/'words' at the various comings of the Spirit (Acts chapters 2, 8, 9, 10-11, 19). It would seem that, beyond the fascination of Pentecostals with Luke's association of speech with the coming of the Spirit as 'evidence' of the baptism of the Spirit has merit beyond mere rationalistic apologetics. Luke is making a larger point: that the essential fulfillment of the promised new covenant in *Spirit and speech* is pounded home at each stage the promised covenant advances.
- 6) The emphasis of the new covenant promise of the Spirit of inspired speech is on its *permanence* from generation to generation. Isaiah almost obsessively repeats the consequence of the covenant as being permanent to all earthly generations, as does Paul, using the same citation in Rom. 11.29.
- 7) The emphasis upon the *power* and *speech* of Spirit throughout the narrative and in its template, Isa. 59.19-21, shows that the conclusion of the Pentecost narrative is not simply a call for repentance. Traditional theology does not comprehend the full nature of this new covenant: it is not a matter of becoming regenerated by the Spirit as a way of dealing with the cost of sin and attaining heaven. Rather, the reverse: the new covenant sees repentance *only as preparation for the gift of prophethood* on all generations, indeed, 'all flesh'. The 'wonders, signs and mighty works' of Jesus and of his apostles, are normative for every recipient of the promised covenant and are part of the 'commission' of the new Israel (Lk. 9 and 10; Acts 1.8). Finally,
- 8) it would seem that, just as Isaiah 61.1-2 is the 'programmatic' and defining passage for Luke's first volume, Isaiah 59.19-21 serves the same role for Luke's second volume, the book of Acts. The second programmatic prophecy builds upon the first: the prophetic Spirit of the Lord bestowed on Jesus in Luke now in Acts is extended to his 'children and [his] children's children' forever. Understanding the sequence of these programmatic passages is important because, just as traditional theology has largely neglected the central agenda of Jesus' mission in the Gospel of Luke—not only for repentance, but the power of the Spirit to prophesy, heal, raise from the dead and deliver from demons⁵⁴—the church, correspondingly, has failed to apply the central message of the book of Acts: that the essence of the new covenant is the action of the exalted redeemer who, 'mighty in deed and word', having received the Spirit of the Lord, would in turn, bestow this promise upon his repentant 'children and his children's children', forever.

⁵⁴ See Graham Twelftree, 'The Miracles of Jesus: Marginal or Mainstream?', *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 1.1 (2003), pp. 104-124.