

## SHARING THE SERVANT'S MISSION: ISAIAH 49:6 IN LUKE-ACTS

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**Abstract:** *Luke's Gospel and Acts progressively apply the servant prophecy in Isaiah 49:6 to Jesus (Luke 2:32), then to the apostles (Acts 1:8), and finally to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:47). While Jewish opposition prompts the missionaries' "turning to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46), their citation of Isaiah 49:6 provides the underlying biblical-theological warrant for this outreach through the principle of corporate solidarity, which is evident already in the book of Isaiah. The risen Lord himself is "a light for the Gentiles," and he continues to shine through his servants who share in and extend the servant's global mission by proclaiming salvation in his name.*

**Key words:** *Isaiah—theology; Luke-Acts—theology; missions—biblical teaching; Apostle Paul; Servant of the Lord; use of the OT in the NT.*

In Acts 13:46–47, Paul and Barnabas cite the Lord's command in Isaiah 49:6 as support for their decision to turn to the Gentiles in their missionary outreach.<sup>1</sup> This development recalls Paul's calling to bear Christ's name "before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15)<sup>2</sup> as well as the Lord's programmatic promise that the disciples will be his witnesses "to the end of the earth" (1:8). But this quotation of Scripture in Acts 13 also raises several exegetical and biblical-theological questions.<sup>3</sup> First, in what sense were the missionaries "commanded" to turn to the Gentiles? Second, how exactly does Isaiah's servant prophecy apply to the missionaries in Acts 13:47?

Interpreters deal with these questions in very different ways. For example, Carl Holladay reasons that Paul and Barnabas replace "'Israel, the servant of the Lord,' who ... would serve as the 'light to the gentiles.'"<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, Bede explains, "What was said with specific reference to Christ the Lord is here taken by

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<sup>1</sup> This article adapts and expands material from Brian J. Tabb, *After Emmaus: How the Church Fulfills the Mission of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 149–55.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 13:9 notes that "Saul ... was also called Paul." The former is his Hebrew name (used beginning in Acts 7:58), the latter is his Roman name, employed in Paul's letters and in the accounts of his missionary activity throughout in the Greco-Roman world in Acts. See, for example, Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 559. This article primarily uses the more familiar name "Paul."

<sup>3</sup> "That the gentile mission is based on this reference to the OT [Isa 49:6] is clear, but the actual way it happens leaves much to be discussed," according to Bart J. Koet, "Isaiah in Luke–Acts," in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, ed. M. J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, NTSI (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 94.

<sup>4</sup> Carl R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016), 281–82.

the apostles as referring to themselves, as they call to mind that they are his members ... because of the oneness of his body.”<sup>5</sup>

This article traces the application of Isaiah’s servant prophecy to Jesus (Luke 2:32), then to the apostles (Acts 1:8), and finally to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:47), which reflects the movement from the Lord’s servant to the servants in the book of Isaiah. This multifaceted use of Isaiah 49 is crucial to the narrative of Luke-Acts and informs our understanding of the church’s mission as Christ’s witnesses.

## I. ISAIAH 49:6: THE SERVANT’S MISSION TO THE NATION AND THE NATIONS

Isaiah 49:3 identifies the Lord’s servant as “Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” However, as verses 5–6 make clear, this servant is not the nation but an individual who carries out God’s plan to bring back, gather, and raise up Jacob’s tribes. Moreover, this servant has a global mission, which is anticipated by the opening call to the coastlands and peoples (v. 1) and made explicit by the servant’s designation “as a light for the nations” (v. 6; cf. 42:6).

Within the book of Isaiah,<sup>6</sup> the Lord designates the prophet himself (20:3), Eliakim (22:20), David (37:35), and “Israel” (41:8) as “my servant” (עַבְדִּי), and this servant theme is especially prominent in chapters 41–66. Scholars have devoted particular attention to the book’s four “Servant Songs” (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12), which positively portray a righteous, Spirit-anointed servant who contrasts with the description of Israel as a deaf and blind servant (42:19).<sup>7</sup>

Isaiah 49 reiterates and elaborates on the earlier portrait of the servant in chapter 42.<sup>8</sup> There the Lord introduces “my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights” (42:1).<sup>9</sup> This verse recalls the earlier description of Israel as “my servant ... whom I have chosen,” whom the Lord will strengthen, help, and uphold with his right hand (41:8–10). The Lord promises to give his servant “as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to

<sup>5</sup> Bede, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* 13.47, cited in *Acts*, ed. Francis Martin and Evan Smith, ACCS 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 171.

<sup>6</sup> OT scholarship typically distinguishes between First Isaiah (chaps. 1–39), Second Isaiah (chaps. 40–55), and Third Isaiah (chaps. 56–66). For discussion of scholarly views and a defense of Isaiah’s literary and compositional unity, see Richard L. Schultz, “Isaiah, Isaiahs, and Current Scholarship,” in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture*, ed. James Karl Hoffmeier and Dennis Robert Magary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 243–61.

<sup>7</sup> These Servant Songs were independent compositions later inserted into the book, according to Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 3rd ed., HKAT 3/1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914), 284. However, this theory neglected the relationship of these poems to their literary context in Isaiah and raised questions about the identity of the individual servant, which dominated twentieth-century study of the book, as noted by John Goldingay, “Servant of Yahweh,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 704.

<sup>8</sup> For a table summarizing the parallels between Isaiah 42:1–9 and 49:1–13, see Matthew S. Harmon, *The Servant of the Lord and His Servant People: Tracing a Biblical Theme through the Canon*, NSBT 54 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2021), 123.

<sup>9</sup> Translations of Scripture are from the ESV unless otherwise noted. For a discussion of the use of Isaiah 42:1–4 in Matthew 12:17–21, see Tabb, *After Emmaus*, 172–77.

bring out the prisoners from the dungeon" (42:6–7). This closely parallels 49:6–9, which describes the Lord's chosen servant as "a light for the nations" (לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם) and "a covenant for the people" (לְבְרִית עַם) who calls out prisoners and those in darkness. Yet God also calls his servant "blind" and "deaf" (42:19). Though Israel received the glorious divine law, the people did not obey it and were plundered by their enemies as an expression of God's anger over their sin (42:21–25).

Interpreters debate whether Isaiah 42:1–9 refers to the nation of Israel, to an ideal figure, or to an individual servant who acts on behalf of the nation. A collective interpretation of the servant in Isaiah 42:1 is supported by the Septuagint rendering, "Jacob is my servant ... Israel is my chosen."<sup>10</sup> Further, "my servant" and "my chosen" in 42:1 closely parallel the description of Israel in 41:8–9: "But you, Israel, *my servant*, Jacob, *whom I have chosen*, the offspring of Abraham, my friend."

Andrew Abernethy argues that the servant consistently refers to the nation of Israel throughout Isaiah 40–48.<sup>11</sup> He writes, "Strategically positioned in exile, scattered among the nations, God's servant, Israel, is to carry forth God's mission of bringing justice and spiritual transformation throughout the world."<sup>12</sup> Harmon adds that Israel as the Lord's servant in 42:1–4 resembles the Spirit-anointed Davidic ruler in Isaiah 11:1–5, since "Israel's king was to be the personal embodiment of what Israel was supposed to be as a nation."<sup>13</sup> Abernethy explains that because Israel fails to carry out this task due to its spiritual blindness, the Lord promises in Isaiah 49–53 to "use an individual servant to achieve atonement for and effect spiritual change in Israel and all nations."<sup>14</sup>

John Goldingay argues that "the servant is an ideal figure rather than a historical person."<sup>15</sup> He stresses that the Hebrew text does not explicitly name the servant, whose identity is only implicit rather than explicit.<sup>16</sup> A close reading of the literary context suggests that Israel is this servant. However, the nation cannot fulfill the servant role of establishing justice without crying out, breaking, or becoming faint (Isa 42:1–4), since Israel is filled with violence and injustice (5:7). The serv-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 2 vols., ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 1:212; Holly Beers, "The Servant(s) in Luke-Acts," in *Isaiah's Servants in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Isaian Servant and the Exegetical Formation of Community Identity*, ed. Michael A. Lyons and Jacob Stromberg, WUNT 2/554 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 191–92.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew T. Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic-Theological Approach*, NSBT 40 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 138. Similarly, Jaap Dekker, "The Servant and the Servants in the Book of Isaiah," *Sárospataki Füzetek* 16.3–4 (2012): 37; Harmon, *The Servant of the Lord and His Servant People*, 112–20.

<sup>12</sup> Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom*, 141.

<sup>13</sup> Harmon, *The Servant of the Lord and His Servant People*, 116. Similarly, Goldingay states, "The servant's designation is thus analogous to that of a king" in Isaiah 42:1 and 52:13. Goldingay, "Servant of Yahweh," 702.

<sup>14</sup> Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom*, 138.

<sup>15</sup> John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 153.

<sup>16</sup> Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 153.

ant's anonymity serves as an invitation for readers to consider whether they have a role to fulfill or whether another servant will fulfill this role for them.<sup>17</sup>

Alternatively, there are several compelling reasons for viewing the Lord's servant as an individual in Isaiah 42:1–9 as in the later Servant Songs. First, the Lord declares that he has put his Spirit upon this servant (42:1). This recalls the description of the Spirit resting upon the Davidic Messiah (11:2), who will administer justice and rule nations (11:4, 10 LXX). It also anticipates the Lord's agent who is anointed to proclaim good news (61:1).<sup>18</sup> Second, the Lord appoints his servant "as a covenant for the people" and "a light for the nations" in both 42:6 and 49:6–8.<sup>19</sup> Abernethy suggests that "covenant for the people" in 42:6 denotes "how Israel is to enable the nations to experience God's salvation."<sup>20</sup> However, the singular "people" more naturally refers to Israel, in contrast with the plural "nations."<sup>21</sup> This suggests that in both Isaiah 42:1–9 and 49:1–6, the Lord's servant is an individual who acts on behalf of Israel and the nations.<sup>22</sup>

In 49:1, the servant says, "Listen to me, O coastlands." This rare first-person speech recalls 48:16: "And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and his Spirit." The phrase "and now" further links 48:16 and 49:5,<sup>23</sup> suggesting that both texts refer to the Lord's servant.<sup>24</sup> The servant recounts his divine call from the womb and the Lord's decree, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (49:1, 3). He then confesses that he has "labored in vain" (v. 4), before announcing his commission to gather Israel and bring light to the nations (vv. 5–6).

Scholars interpret Isaiah 49:1–6 in various ways.<sup>25</sup> Some read verses 1–4 as designating the nation of Israel, while verses 5–6 refer to an individual servant (the speaker from 48:16–22).<sup>26</sup> However, the use of the first person in verses 1–4 continues in verse 5, which strongly suggests the same referent. For example, "The LORD called *me* from the womb" (v. 1) closely parallels "he who formed *me* from the womb to be his servant" (v. 5). Further, the servant's confession, "My God has become my strength" (v. 5), naturally follows from verse 4: "I have spent my strength." Others identify the servant throughout verses 1–6 as the prophet, who

<sup>17</sup> Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 154.

<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere Isaiah recalls how Israel grieved the Holy Spirit and how the Spirit was in their midst in "the days of old" (63:10–11), and the prophet speaks of a future time of salvation when the Lord will pour out the Spirit upon his people (32:15; 44:3; 59:21). The focus in Isaiah 42 on the servant's anointing by the Spirit to bring about justice suggests an individual agent, as in 11:2 and 61:1.

<sup>19</sup> The Hebrew phrase לְבִרְתָּ עַם ("as a covenant for the people") occurs in Isaiah 42:6 and 49:8. Some Greek manuscripts (e.g., Sinaiticus) read εἰς διαθήκην γένους in 49:6 as in 42:6.

<sup>20</sup> Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom*, 195n47.

<sup>21</sup> Paul R. House, *Isaiah*, 2 vols., Mentor (Ross-Shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2019), 323; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 2 vols., NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986–1998), 2:117–18.

<sup>22</sup> See also Jason S. DeRouchie, "Redemptive-Historical, Christocentric Approach," in *Five Views on Christ in the Old Testament: Genre, Authorial Intent, and the Nature of Scripture*, ed. Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 207–9.

<sup>23</sup> This textual link is present in both the Hebrew (וְעַתָּה) and Greek texts (καὶ νῦν).

<sup>24</sup> House, *Isaiah*, 419–20. The individual servant of Isaiah 49:1–6 "step[s] forward" in 48:16, according to Christopher R. Seitz, "The Book of Isaiah 40–66," *NIB* 6:429.

<sup>25</sup> For additional views beyond those surveyed here, see House, *Isaiah*, 429–31.

<sup>26</sup> House, *Isaiah*, 428, 431.

embodies Israel and shares the Lord's light with the Gentiles.<sup>27</sup> Alternatively, Holly Beers identifies the servant in Isaiah 49 as a remnant group of faithful Israel, based on the Septuagint's rendering of v. 5 ("I will be gathered," συναχθήσομαι).<sup>28</sup> A fourth view seems most likely: the servant in verses 1–6 is an individual agent who bears Israel's name, takes up Israel's mission, and also acts on Israel's behalf.<sup>29</sup> In this reading, the servant's lament concerning his spent strength and futility (v. 4) points forward to the servant's humility and suffering in the final two Servant Songs.<sup>30</sup> The servant's total commitment to speak God's word (50:4–5) brings about resistance and suffering (50:6; cf. 49:7; 53:3).<sup>31</sup>

Thus, I understand the servant in Isaiah 49:1–6 to be an individual agent who is chosen and prepared by God for a mission to restore Israel and bring light to the nations, extending God's salvation "to the end of the earth." Verses 7–12 further explain the servant's mission to Israel and the nations: he will be despised yet vindicated (v. 7) and will be "a covenant to the people" in the day of salvation (v. 8), bringing light to those in darkness and freedom for prisoners (v. 9), shepherding God's people (v. 10), and gathering them from distant lands (vv. 11–12).<sup>32</sup>

The Lord identifies this agent as "my servant, Israel" (v. 3), which recalls repeated references to corporate Israel as his servant in chapters 41–48. Yet Jacob is a blind and deaf servant (42:19),<sup>33</sup> prone to fear (44:2) and in need of redemption (48:20). The faithful individual servant who is introduced in 42:1 and speaks in 48:16 and 49:1–6 is identified as "Israel" (49:3) by the principle of corporate solidarity or identification—the one who represents the many.<sup>34</sup> This servant could aptly be called *Mr. Israel*. John Oswalt comments, "He will be for Israel, and the world, what Israel could not be."<sup>35</sup>

Strikingly, after Isaiah 53:10–11 describes the righteous individual *servant* who will "see his *offspring*," "make *many* to be accounted righteous," and bear their sins,

<sup>27</sup> Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 368–74. Goldingay refers to this prophet as "Second Isaiah," distinct from Isaiah the son of Amoz (p. 370).

<sup>28</sup> Beers, "The Servant(s) in Luke-Acts," 192.

<sup>29</sup> Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom*, 147.

<sup>30</sup> "My pain" (ὁ πόνος μου) in Isaiah 49:4 LXX anticipates the servant's "pain" (πόνος) in 53:4, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom*, 148.

<sup>32</sup> Similarly, House, *Isaiah*, 431; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, NAC 15b (Nashville: B&H, 2009), 339–40.

<sup>33</sup> While the Hebrew text of Isaiah 42:19 refers to Yahweh's blind and deaf "servant" (עֶבֶד), the LXX uses the plural: "my servants" (οἱ παῖδες μου) and "the servants of God" (οἱ δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ).

<sup>34</sup> For discussion of corporate solidarity or representation as a key presupposition of biblical authors, see Klyne Snodgrass, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 37; G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 651–52.

<sup>35</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 2:291. Similarly, J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 20 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 351; Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 656–57. Commenting on Isaiah 49:1–6, Harmon states, "The servant, then, must be an individual, a person who as the servant embodies everything Israel was supposed to be but failed. No wonder Yahweh will display his glory in this servant!" Harmon, *The Servant of the Lord and His Servant People*, 23.

chapters 54–66 refer ten times to the Lord’s *servants* (plural).<sup>36</sup> The servant’s saving work creates a community of “servants” who share in the vocation of the servant—Mr. Israel—to bring saving light and justice to the world.<sup>37</sup> These servants include not only “offspring from Judah” (65:9) but also “foreigners who join themselves to the LORD” (56:6). As the Lord’s servant is “a light to the nations,” Isaiah prophesies that the nations will come to the people’s “light” (60:3) and God’s servants will declare his “glory among the nations” (66:19). So “the Servant’s role as ‘light to the nations’ ... is passed on to the community he creates.”<sup>38</sup>

Before returning to Acts 13, how does this understanding illuminate the allusions to Isaiah 49:6 by Simeon in Luke 2:32 and by the risen Lord in Acts 1:8?

## II. LUKE 2:32: SALVATION IN THE FLESH

Only Luke records the meeting between Simeon and the child Jesus in the temple. Simeon is “righteous and devout”; the Spirit rests on him and reveals that his old eyes will see the Messiah (Luke 2:25–26). Simeon has long waited for Israel’s “consolation,” and now he sees salvation in-the-flesh and holds the hoped-for Christ in his wrinkled hands. Similarly, aged Anna is among those “waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem,” and she tells everyone about the Christ child (2:36–38). Together Simeon and Anna represent all who expectantly hope for the dawning of God’s ancient prophecies and are among the first to see the sunrise of salvation.<sup>39</sup>

Simeon’s prophetic words in 2:29–35 explain the biblical-theological significance of Jesus’s arrival, drawing deeply from the well of Isaiah to express how God has begun to fulfill his promises to bring consolation, salvation, and revelation for Israel and the nations.<sup>40</sup> Verses 29–32 offer a preview of salvation for all peoples as Simeon declares, “My eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples” (2:30–31). His words have a number of lexical similarities with Isaiah 40:3–5, the great prophecy of the new exodus in the wilderness. “Your *salvation*” parallels “the *salvation* of God” in Isaiah 40:5 LXX,<sup>41</sup> and “you have *prepared*” recalls the command “*prepare* the way of the LORD” in Isaiah 40:3.

<sup>36</sup> “Servants” (עֲבָדִים) occurs in Isaiah 54:17; 56:6; 63:17; 65:9, 13–15; 66:14. The reference to offspring (וְרֵעַ) in Isaiah 53:10 signals “the turning of ‘the Servant’ to ‘the servants,’” according to W. A. M. Beuken, “The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah, ‘the Servants of YHWH,’” *JSOT* 15 (1990): 68. Decker calls these servants “the spiritual offspring of the Servant.” Decker, “The Servant and the Servants in the Book of Isaiah,” 41. For a survey of research on the servant and servants in Isaiah, see Michael A. Lyons and Jacob Stromberg, “Introduction: ‘This is the Heritage of the Servants,’” in Lyons and Stromberg, *Isaiah’s Servants in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 3–9.

<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Mark S. Gignilliat, *Paul and Isaiah’s Servants: Paul’s Theological Reading of Isaiah 40–66 in 2 Corinthians 5:14–6:10*, LNTS 330 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 130–31; Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God’s Kingdom*, 156; Harmon, *The Servant of the Lord and His Servant People*, 137.

<sup>38</sup> Michael A. Lyons, “Paul and the Servant(s): Isaiah 49,6 in Acts 13,47,” *ETL* 89 (2013): 352.

<sup>39</sup> This “sunrise” image comes from Malachi 4:2 and Luke 1:78.

<sup>40</sup> For a summary discussion of OT allusions in Luke 2, see Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 367 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 65–66.

<sup>41</sup> The phrase “the salvation of God” (τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ) occurs only in the LXX version of Isaiah 40:5, which serves as an answer to 38:11 LXX: “I said, No longer shall I see the salvation of God on the earth” (NETS).

Further, Israel's "consolation" (παράκλησις) in Luke 2:25 likely refers to the "comfort" (παρακαλέω) announced three times in Isaiah 40:1–2 LXX.<sup>42</sup> While Simeon waits for God to comfort *Israel*, he explains that God has prepared his glorious salvation "in the presence of *all peoples*." Simeon's term "all peoples" parallels "all flesh" in Isaiah 40:5 and includes Jews and Gentiles together as beneficiaries of God's work of salvation. Luke 3:4–6 explicitly cites Isaiah 40:3–5 LXX to offer a biblical rationale for John's prophetic ministry in the wilderness. Simeon's words in Luke 2 anticipate this fuller quotation in Luke 3 of Isaiah's famous prophecy, but there is more. Simeon *sees* God's salvation as he looks upon Christ—the very salvation that "all flesh" *will see*, according to Isaiah 40:5.<sup>43</sup> This Christ child is embodied salvation, swaddled in Simeon's arms.

Simeon further identifies Jesus as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:32). This stands in apposition to God's "salvation" (v. 30), thus explaining salvation in terms of "light." Simeon here alludes to Isaiah 49:6 or perhaps 42:6—both texts call the Lord's servant "a light for the nations."<sup>44</sup> In Luke 2:32, this "light" has two expressed purposes: "for revelation to the Gentiles" and "for glory to your people Israel."<sup>45</sup> The first aim, "for revelation to the Gentiles," may recall another promise of future salvation: "And the Lord shall *reveal* his holy arm before *all the nations*, and all the ends of the earth shall see the *salvation* that comes from God" (Isa 52:10). The second purpose, "glory" for Israel, may also reflect OT prophecies of restoration—particularly Isaiah 60:1–2, which closely links light and glory through poetic parallelism.<sup>46</sup>

Simeon speaks of light, revelation, and glory, and these images of salvation are developed further in Luke-Acts.<sup>47</sup> Zechariah depicts salvation as a rising sun that illuminates those sitting in darkness (Luke 1:78–79), as Isaiah prophesied that

<sup>42</sup> Holly Beers, *The Followers of Jesus as the "Servant": Luke's Model from Isaiah for the Disciples in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 535 (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 95–96.

<sup>43</sup> "Luke has Simeon interpret his encounter with the promised messianic king as an encounter with the salvation of God itself," according to Michael Wolter, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 2 vols., BMSSEC (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016–2017), 1:140.

<sup>44</sup> Most commentators recognize this allusion to Isaiah 42:6 or 49:6, including Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (London: Chapman, 1977), 458; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986–1990), 1:43; John Nolland, *Luke*, 3 vols., WBC 35A–C (Dallas: Word, 1989–1993), 1:120; David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Luke," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 272. However, Morna D. Hooker disputes it in *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1959), 84.

<sup>45</sup> The Greek syntax of Luke 2:32 is challenging. For explanation of the interpretive options, see Alan J. Thompson, *Luke*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017), 51–52; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, 2 vols., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994–1996), 1:244.

<sup>46</sup> Pao and Schnabel, "Luke," 273.

<sup>47</sup> Early church tradition consistently identifies Luke, the physician and traveling companion of Paul, as the author of the third Gospel and Acts (e.g., Muratorian Canon 2–8; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.1). I affirm the common authorship and narrative unity of Luke-Acts while acknowledging that these books were distinguished in early canon lists and have their own structure, genre, and emphases. Cf. C. Kavin Rowe, "Literary Unity and Reception History: Reading Luke-Acts as Luke and Acts," *JNST* 29 (2007): 449–57.

light would come to people in darkness (Isa 9:2; 42:6–7; 49:9).<sup>48</sup> Later, Paul encounters the risen Lord as “a light from heaven” (Acts 26:13) and describes conversion as turning from darkness to light, from Satan’s power to God (26:18). Moreover, Paul depicts Christ proclaiming light to Israel and the nations (26:23). “Revelation” (ἀποκάλυψις) always refers to divine disclosure in the NT.<sup>49</sup> Jesus explains, “Nothing is covered up that will not be *revealed* [ἀποκαλυφθήσεται], or hidden that will not be known” (Luke 12:2). Yet Jesus himself uniquely and truly reveals his Father to whomever he chooses (10:22). “Glory” is closely associated with God’s radiant presence (Luke 2:9; Acts 7:2, 55) and also with Christ’s resurrection, exaltation, and coming with power (Luke 9:26; 21:27; 24:26). So Israel’s hope of “glory” is bound up with the radiance of the resurrected, reigning Lord Jesus.

Thus, Simeon recognizes that the Christ child fulfills God’s promises to save and comfort his people and extend revelation even to the nations. The allusion to Isaiah 49:6 identifies Jesus as the promised servant who will bring about the new exodus salvation for Israel and all the nations.<sup>50</sup> In keeping with Luke 2:32, a further allusion to Isaiah 49:6 appears in Acts 1:8.

### III. ACTS 1:8: TO THE END OF THE EARTH

The opening verse of Acts characterizes Luke’s first volume as a summary of “all that Jesus began to do and teach.” This implies that Luke’s second volume addresses all that Jesus continues to do and teach after his ascension through his Spirit-empowered witnesses, whom he commissions to the end of the earth.<sup>51</sup>

Acts 1:8 records Jesus’s final words before his ascension: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The risen Lord here responds to the disciples’ query: “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (1:6).<sup>52</sup> Christ does not rebuke his followers for expecting restoration, but he redirects their focus from *when* this restoration would take place (v. 7) to *how* God’s purposes will be fulfilled: by the Spirit-empowered mission of Christ’s witnesses (v. 8). Jesus’s programmatic promise prepares readers for the

<sup>48</sup> Pao and Schnabel, “Luke,” 265.

<sup>49</sup> *NIDNTTE* 2:615. See, for example, Romans 16:25; 2 Corinthians 12:1; Ephesians 1:17; 1 Peter 1:7; Revelation 1:1.

<sup>50</sup> “The Isaianic servant is the human agent” of the new exodus, according to Beers, *The Followers of Jesus*, 88–89.

<sup>51</sup> For similar assessments of “began” (ἤρξατο) in Acts 1:1, see Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke’s Account of God’s Unfolding Plan*, NSBT 27 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 48; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 30; Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 195.

<sup>52</sup> On the relationship of the disciples’ question (v. 6) and Jesus’s response (vv. 7–8), see David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, BSL (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 95; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 108–9; Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 105.



unfolding gospel advance after Pentecost in Jerusalem (chaps. 2–7), Samaria and Judea (chaps. 8–12), and to all nations (chaps. 13–28).

Acts 1:8 outlines Jesus's plan for the church's mission after his ascension. Significantly, the Lord's summary charge includes three allusions to Isaiah that explicate the biblical-theological significance of his witnesses' mission.

First, Jesus's promise that the Holy Spirit will come upon his disciples recalls Isaiah 32:15 LXX: "until the Spirit from on high comes upon you" (my translation). Notably, while Acts 1:8 does not include Isaiah's phrase "from on high," Luke 24:49 speaks of the Spirit's coming in precisely these terms: "And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power *from on high*." This parallel with Isaiah 32:15 in Jesus's last words in Luke's Gospel strongly suggests that Acts 1:8 draws upon Isaiah's prophecy.<sup>53</sup> In Isaiah 32, the Spirit's arrival marks the dawn of the new age of salvation, turning the forsaken land into a place of fruitfulness and faithfulness (vv. 14–18). The transformation of the wilderness anticipates further prophecies of end-time salvation in Isaiah. For example, "the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad" when God's glory is revealed (35:1–2). The Lord describes this coming salvation as a new creation: he declares, "Behold, I am doing a new thing.... I will make a way in the wilderness" (43:19). Further, he promises to comfort Zion, making "her wilderness like Eden" (51:3). Thus, the Spirit's coming marks the beginning fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies of a new exodus, when the Lord would make a way in the wilderness and reveal his glorious salvation (40:3–5).

Second, Jesus calls his apostles "my witnesses," which reiterates Luke 24:48 and closely parallels the refrain, "You are my witnesses," in Isaiah 43:10, 12 and 44:8. These verses feature an extended courtroom motif, in which the Lord summons Israel and the nations to supply evidence confirming or challenging his claim to be the only true God.<sup>54</sup> Unlike the impotent idols of the nations, the Lord alone creates, saves, and reveals the future. Ironically, he calls to the witness stand "the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears" (43:8). This is God's "chosen" servant Israel; they have trusted in false gods and resemble those blind and deaf idols (42:17–20).<sup>55</sup> The Lord's "witnesses" have received God's word and perceived his power; yet they need the Lord to save them and overcome their blindness and deafness (29:18; 35:5). Thus, Isaiah anticipates that "the people of God will become witnesses to the salvation of God when the new age arrives."<sup>56</sup>

The third OT allusion in Acts 1:8 comes in the closing line: "to the end of the earth." This phrase occurs four times in Isaiah LXX, and here it alludes to Isaiah

<sup>53</sup> Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 92. See also Max Turner, "The 'Spirit of Prophecy' as the Power of Israel's Restoration and Witness," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David G. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 345.

<sup>54</sup> House, *Isaiah*, 2:343.

<sup>55</sup> See G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 41–51 (and throughout the book); Dennis E. Johnson, "Jesus against the Idols: The Use of Isaianic Servant Songs in the Missiology of Acts," *WTJ* 52.2 (1990): 347.

<sup>56</sup> Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 93.

49:6: “I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach *to the end of the earth*.”<sup>57</sup>

Scholars have explained “the end of the earth” in Acts 1:8 in various ways. Some have identified this “end” with distant places such as Rome, Spain, and Ethiopia,<sup>58</sup> while others interpret the phrase as an ethnic or theopolitical reference to Gentiles.<sup>59</sup> This latter interpretation fits well with the narrative of Acts, which emphasizes the Gentiles receiving the message of salvation and the promised Holy Spirit and being included within God’s people. Likewise, Isaiah 49:6 closely links salvation reaching “the end of the earth” with the “nations” or “Gentiles” receiving light. Syntactically, however, when the Greek preposition ἕως (“to”) is followed by a location in the genitive case, this construction expresses a geographical limit: believers “traveled *as far as* Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch” (Acts 11:19), the church “sent Barnabas *to* Antioch” (11:22), soldiers go “*as far as* Caesarea” (23:23), and Paul persecuted believers “even *to* foreign cities” (26:11).<sup>60</sup> This usage suggests that “*to* [ἕως] the end of the earth” conveys movement as far as a geographical limit, which makes sense of the specific locations mentioned earlier in Acts 1:8: Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Eckhard Schnabel argues plausibly that the phrase “designates the farthest regions of the earth” and thus “describes the geographical scope of the missionary assignment of the disciples.”<sup>61</sup>

The use of Isaiah 49:6 in Acts 1:8 also signals that the witnesses’ global mission is an outworking of the promised new exodus that involves restoring Israel and also extending God’s salvation to the Gentiles. Israel’s eschatological restoration begins as the risen Lord chooses a twelfth apostle to replace Judas (1:24–26), pours out the Spirit in Jerusalem (2:33), and is proclaimed to “all the house of Israel” (2:36). Jesus’s reference to “all Judea and Samaria” (1:8) recalls the prophetic hopes that the divided northern and southern kingdoms would one day be reunited under a Davidic king.<sup>62</sup> As the Lord promised to gather scattered Israel, so also the message of salvation will spread to “all flesh” (Isa 40:5) in remote and distant places. Acts narrates how Paul and his companions travel as far as Rome, in accord with the Lord’s directives (19:21; 23:11; 28:14). Paul’s preaching in Rome does not exhaust the disciples’ mission to “the end of the earth”—he longed to reach Spain after visiting Rome (Rom 15:24, 28)—yet the journey to Rome is representative of the global mission of Jesus’s witnesses.<sup>63</sup> Their mission starts in Jerusalem, expands

<sup>57</sup> “To the end of the earth” (ἕως ἑσχατοῦ τῆς γῆς) also occurs in Isaiah 8:9; 48:20; 62:11 LXX, as well as in Psalms of Solomon 1:4.

<sup>58</sup> For summaries of these and other views, see Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 93; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 1:372–73; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012–2015), 1:704–8.

<sup>59</sup> Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 94–95.

<sup>60</sup> BDAG lists five definitions for ἕως and includes the usage in Acts 1:8 under category 3: “marker of limit reached, *as far as, to*” (p. 423).

<sup>61</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:373, 375.

<sup>62</sup> Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 106.

<sup>63</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:703, 707; C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols., ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1994–1998), 80. The word’s advance to Rome in Acts 28 guarantees its spread to the whole world,

into the nearby regions of Judea and Samaria, and ultimately extends beyond geographic and ethnic barriers, such that it is truly a "world mission."<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the allusions to Isaiah in Acts 1:8 signal that the mission of Christ's followers fulfills OT prophecy. Jesus is the Lord's promised servant who is himself true "Israel" (Isa 49:3) and who acts to restore Israel (49:5) and bring God's salvation to the nations (49:6).<sup>65</sup> Acts 1:8 clarifies that the risen Lord exercises this servant vocation through his Spirit-empowered followers, who act as his witnesses and carry out his mission unto the end of the earth.

#### IV. ACTS 13: LIGHT FOR THE NATIONS

Acts 1:8 establishes that the mission of Christ's witnesses will extend "to the end of the earth," in keeping with the servant prophecy of Isaiah 49:6. The rest of the book narrates how Jesus's followers carry out this mission in Jerusalem (chaps. 2–7), Samaria and Judea (chaps. 8–12), and beyond (chaps. 13–28). The Lord Jesus charges the most unlikely witness to bring the gospel "to the end of the earth"—Saul of Tarsus, the church's most zealous opponent.<sup>66</sup> While on a mission to detain and destroy disciples, Saul encounters the risen Lord (9:1–5), who chooses this persecutor "to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" (9:15) and explains that he "must suffer for the sake of my name" (9:16). Saul immediately begins to proclaim Christ and experience persecution in Damascus and Jerusalem after his dramatic conversion (9:19–30). He later ministers with Barnabas in Syrian Antioch before bringing aid to Jerusalem (11:25–30). The Holy Spirit directs the church in Antioch to "set apart" Barnabas and Saul for a new work to which God has called them (13:2). They travel to Cyprus (13:4–12) and then to Pisidian Antioch, where Paul preaches in the synagogue (13:14–41). On the following Sabbath a large crowd assembles to hear the word of the Lord, but the Jewish leaders contradict and oppose Paul out of jealousy (13:44–45).<sup>67</sup>

This opposition prompts a bold response: "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles" (13:46). The missionaries cite Isaiah 49:6 as biblical rationale for their outreach to Gentiles: "For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth'" (13:47). Luke recounts the joyful response of the Gentiles and advance of the gospel throughout the region (13:48–49).

according to Daniel Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres*, 2 vols., CNT 5A–B (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007–2015), 1:42.

<sup>64</sup> Schnabel, *Acts*, 80.

<sup>65</sup> Similarly, Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 118.

<sup>66</sup> For extended discussion of Saul's conversion and call in Acts, see Brian J. Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview: Luke, Seneca, and 4 Maccabees in Dialogue*, LNTS 569 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 143–53.

<sup>67</sup> Since "many Jews" followed Paul and Barnabas according to Acts 13:43, "the Jews" who revile them in verse 45 cannot refer to all the Jews in Antioch. Their "jealousy" recalls the description of the high priest and Sadducees who arrest the apostles (5:17–18), suggesting that the opposition in 13:45 comes from the unbelieving Jewish leaders and those whom they incite against the missionaries (v. 50).

Having considered the context of Isaiah 49:6 and allusions to this prophecy in Luke 2 and Acts 1, I now focus on its quotation in Acts 13:47.<sup>68</sup> Paul and Barnabas introduce this citation of Isaiah's prophecy by saying, "For so the Lord has commanded us." The conjunction "for" indicates that their appeal to Isaiah provides a rationale for turning to the Gentiles in response to Jewish opposition (v. 46).

Interpreters debate whether "the Lord" (κύριος) who commands Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:47 refers to God or Jesus.<sup>69</sup> Acts repeatedly calls Jesus κύριος,<sup>70</sup> and 13:44–49 includes three references to "the word of the Lord"—that is, the missionaries' message about Jesus. The title "Lord" often refers to the sovereign God in prayers, Scripture citations, and elsewhere,<sup>71</sup> and many occurrences of κύριος in Acts do not specify whether the Lord God or the Lord Jesus is in view (such ambiguity may be theologically deliberate). In 13:47, "so the Lord has commanded us" could refer to God who has spoken by the prophet: Isaiah 49:6 records the Lord's commission to his servant. Alternatively, it is noteworthy that the only other occurrence of ἐντέλλω ("command") in Acts comes in 1:2: the risen Lord "*had given commands* through the Holy Spirit to the apostles." The Lord Jesus then commissions his witnesses "unto the end of the earth" (1:8), using the language of Isaiah 49, and "the Lord" appears to the persecutor Saul on the Damascus Road and commissions him as his chosen emissary to the Gentiles (9:5, 15; 26:16–18). While Isaiah's prophecy is *God's* scriptural word, the narrative context of Acts suggests that the missionaries appropriate Isaiah 49 by way of *the Lord Jesus's* instruction to the apostles (Acts 1) and then to Paul (Acts 9).

Therefore, Isaiah 49:6 offers biblical grounding for the mission of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles through the principle of corporate solidarity. This principle is at work within the book of Isaiah itself. The Lord identifies both the nation of Israel and his righteous agent as "my servant." This righteous servant is Mr. Israel: he bears Israel's name, will bring back scattered Israel, and will accomplish the global mission that Israel fails to fulfill due to its spiritual blindness. Further, this righteous servant will make many righteous (53:11) and will create a community of "servants" who love the Lord and enjoy his favor (56:6). The Lord also reassures his faithful servants who tremble at his word and experience hatred for his name's

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<sup>68</sup> For careful comparison of Acts 13:47 and the extant text forms of Isaiah 49:6 LXX, see Martin Karrer, Ulrich Schmid, and Martin Sigismund, "Das lukanische Doppelwerk als Zeuge für den LXX-Text des Jesaja-Buches," in *Florilegium Lovaniense: Studies in Septuagint and Textual Criticism in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Hans Ausloos et al., BETL 224 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 261–62.

<sup>69</sup> Κύριος in Acts 13:47 refers to God, according to Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, KEK 17 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 364. Κύριος refers to Jesus, according to Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 101.

<sup>70</sup> Representative examples include Acts 1:21 ("the Lord Jesus went in and out among us"); 2:36 ("God has made him both Lord and Christ"); 4:33 ("the resurrection of the Lord Jesus"); 7:59 ("Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"); and 9:5 ("Who are you, Lord? ... I am Jesus").

<sup>71</sup> For example, Acts 3:22 ("The Lord God will raise up"); 4:26 ("against the Lord and against his Anointed"); 7:31 ("there came the voice of the Lord").

sake that they will be vindicated (66:5–6), following the pattern of the servant's suffering and exaltation (52:13–53:12).<sup>72</sup>

Moving to Luke's Gospel, it is noteworthy that Simeon identifies Jesus as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" (2:32). This signals that "foundationally, he is the one in whom Isaiah's prediction is fulfilled."<sup>73</sup> Jesus himself makes clear at the beginning and end of his ministry that he fulfills the servant prophecies of Isaiah 61:1–2 (Luke 4:17–21) and Isaiah 53:12 (Luke 22:37).<sup>74</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Holladay asserts that "Luke presents Paul and Barnabas as the replacement of 'Israel, the servant of the Lord'" in Isaiah 49.<sup>75</sup> However, by moving directly from Israel to the missionaries, Holladay skips two crucial biblical-theological steps. First, in Isaiah the righteous individual servant fulfills corporate Israel's mission, accomplishes the nation's restoration, and creates a community of servants. Second, in Luke-Acts Jesus fulfills Isaiah's servant prophecy and then commissions his servants to share in his servant mission. Thus, Isaiah's prophecies concerning the work of the Lord's servants and his servant people are progressively fulfilled in the narrative of Luke-Acts.<sup>76</sup>

Acts 26 provides further support for this biblical-theological argument. On the Damascus Road, Paul himself encountered "a light from heaven, brighter than the sun" and heard the Lord's voice (vv. 13–14). Paul repeatedly presents his saving encounter with the risen Lord as a "heavenly vision" of "light," in which he experienced temporary blindness and then true spiritual sight (cf. 9:3–6; 22:6–11). In 26:18, Paul recounts his own commission to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light." He then summarizes the Scriptures' teaching "that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles" (v. 23). The use of "light" in verses 18 and 23 reflects the servant's mission to be "a light for the nations" and to "open the eyes that are blind" (Isa 42:6–7). By stating that the risen Christ himself "proclaim[s] light" to Israel and the Gentiles, Paul stresses the Lord's personal agency in his missionary work, even as Paul was sent "to open their eyes" that people might turn to the light (vv. 17–18).

Similarly, Paul applies Isaiah 49:8 to his ministry of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 6:1–2: "Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a

<sup>72</sup> Lyons notes that the servants in Isaiah 66:5 and Christ's followers in Luke 21:12, 17 and Acts 9:16 suffer "on account of his name." Lyons, "Paul and the Servant(s)," 354.

<sup>73</sup> Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 398.

<sup>74</sup> The agent in Isaiah 61 "speaks in the voice and takes on the role of the servant," according to Beers, *The Followers of Jesus*, 44. In Luke 4:18–19, Jesus announces that he is the Lord's Spirit-anointed agent sent to proclaim good news to the poor and liberty to captives; see Tabb, *After Emmaus*, 94–101.

<sup>75</sup> Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary*, 281–82. A similar argument is advanced by James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 184: "Israel itself had been given the task of being and bringing light and salvation to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6). So all Paul and Barnabas were doing was fulfilling Israel's mission—to the end of the earth."

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Rouven Genz, *Jesaja 53 als theologische Mitte der Apostelgeschichte: Studien zu ihrer Christologie und Ekklesiologie im Anschluss an Apg 8,26–40*, WUNT 2/398 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 413–14; Beers, "The Servant(s) in Luke-Acts," 189–208.

day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The era of salvation has come through Christ, and Paul applies Isaiah's prophecy to his own ministry through the principle of "corporate representation" because he "was continuing the mission of Jesus, the Servant."<sup>77</sup>

In Acts 13:46, Paul and Barnabas declare that they "are turning to the Gentiles" in response to Jewish opposition to their message. The Lord Jesus sets forth his witnesses' mission to the nations in Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8 and calls Paul as his chosen emissary to the Gentiles in Acts 9:15, but it is the Jews' antagonism in Antioch that spurs the missionaries' outreach to Gentiles. This is one of several situations where suffering or opposition serves as a catalyst for gospel advance in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and unto the end of the earth.<sup>78</sup> Luke contrasts the Jews' jealousy and rejection of their message with the Gentiles' joy and reception of the word of the Lord (13:45, 48, 50, 52) and with its spread "throughout the whole region" (13:49). However, the missionaries' "turn" to the Gentiles in 13:46 does not end their ministry among Jews. Paul reasons with the Jews in the synagogues at Iconium, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus.<sup>79</sup> He addresses his fellow Jews in Jerusalem (21:40–22:21) and seeks an audience with Jews in Rome (28:17). Following the missionaries' turn to the Gentiles in Antioch, Paul makes similar declarations in Corinth (18:6) and Rome (28:28). Even at the close of the book, Paul welcomes "all" who come to him to hear about the Lord Jesus (28:30).<sup>80</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION: SHARING THE LORD'S GLOBAL MISSION

While Jewish opposition to the word of God is a catalyst for the mission of Jesus's witnesses beyond Jerusalem in Acts, citation of Isaiah 49:6 signals that the missionaries' turn to the Gentiles is not a ministry audible or afterthought.<sup>81</sup> Isaiah's prophecy provides the underlying biblical-theological warrant for the outreach to the Gentiles.<sup>82</sup> In the book of Isaiah, a righteous servant makes many righteous and creates a community of servants who share in his mission to bring saving light and justice to the world. Then, in Luke–Acts, the risen Lord himself is "a light for the Gentiles," and he continues to shine through his servants, who share in and extend the servant's global mission by proclaiming salvation in Jesus's name.

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<sup>77</sup> G. K. Beale, "The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5–7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1," *NTS* 35 (1989): 564. In Romans 15:20–21, Paul presents his own pioneering ministry among the nations as an extension of Christ's servant mission. See Tabb, *After Emmaus*, 191–93.

<sup>78</sup> See Brian J. Tabb, "Salvation, Spreading, and Suffering: God's Unfolding Plan in Luke–Acts," *JETS* 58.1 (2015): 52.

<sup>79</sup> Acts 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8.

<sup>80</sup> "To the very end Paul remains faithful to the Lord's calling to bear witness to both Jews and Gentiles," according to Robert C. Tannehill, "Rejection by Jews and Turning to Gentiles: The Pattern of Paul's Mission in Acts," in *Luke–Acts and the Jewish People*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 101.

<sup>81</sup> Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 398.

<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Lyons, "Paul and the Servant(s)," 349–50; James A. Meek, *The Gentile Mission in Old Testament Citations in Acts: Text, Hermeneutic, and Purpose*, LNTS 385 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 45.