

Jesus' Crucifixion in Luke: A Prophetic Symbolic Act?

A Case Study of Non-verbal Communication in Literary Form

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Preface

“Does your life depend on it?” was the first question that my supervisor, Dr. Jan Krans, asked me when we discussed the proposal of this thesis. I thought the question was witty and relevant and knew immediately what he meant: Jesus’ crucifixion is still a somewhat controversial topic. Moreover, it can be hard for a theology student to separate personal faith from academic research. Luckily, I was able to calm Jan’s mind when I made it clear that although the topic was close to my heart, I could approach it at a purely academic level, and therefore be entirely open to scholarly debate and ruthless criticism. The preface, however, gives me space to make a few comments of a more personal nature, which I will do now.

The meaning of Jesus’ crucifixion has always been obscure to me. From early childhood on, I questioned its meaning. Now, many years later, at the end of my studies I am still struggling with the same question.

One approach of getting answers is analyzing the answers of others. *What* meaning do others ascribe to Jesus’ crucifixion? And also *how* do they ascribe meaning to Jesus’ crucifixion? This thesis is a modest contribution to that endeavor. Its focus is the gospel of Luke. And the order of questions mentioned above has been reversed. The primary question is about *how*. How is meaning ascribed to Jesus’ crucifixion in Luke? This question will be answered from a very specific angle—that of *the prophetic symbolic act*—which requires an equally specific tool of analysis; the so called *hermeneutical checklist*. The secondary question is about *what*. What meaning is ascribed to Jesus’ crucifixion in Luke? The primary question cannot be answered satisfactorily without addressing the secondary question as well. That means for this thesis that I will not just apply the analytical tool to the text of Luke but I will also delve into *Lukan christology*. This seemed necessary to me and explains the length of this thesis.

I would like to express my gratitude to several people who made writing this thesis possible.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jan Krans, for his critical eye, his gentle way of suggesting improvements and the efficiency of his workflow which was fast and thorough and resulted in just a handful of meetings. I especially appreciated his original insights that made me think and helped me to get a firmer grip on the topic of this thesis.

I would like to thank Professor Dr. Klaas Spronk (OT) who was willing to take on this project when the position of NT assistant professor was still vacant. He went out of his way, more than once, to make sure that I received the proper help for writing this thesis.

I would like to thank my sister, Drs. Tinca van der Bom, who helped me through thick and thin to stay on target and finish this thesis. Her professional experience of guiding students through the whole process of thesis writing at the Faculty of Social Sciences (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) proved to be priceless to me.

Last but not least I would like to thank my wife, Kristin Anderson (MS) whose patience I have tried to unhealthy levels, but who stayed loyal to me anyway. She is a native English speaker and author. She performed several rounds of editing and proofreading and made sure that the text of this thesis would not come across as too “Denglish” (i.e. Dutch-English).

Arie Jan van der Bom

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Introduction

0.1. *The hypothesis*

The hypothesis that will be analyzed in this master thesis is the following: *in Luke the crucifixion of Jesus is framed as a prophetic symbolic act*. The main concern is the question *how* the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion is communicated in Luke. This question is primarily about *the form* in which the meaning is presented and *the Lukan framing* of this *crucial* event.

There are two assumptions underlying this approach. First, Jesus' crucifixion in Luke is *meaningful* in and of itself. Second—and underlying the former assumption—for Jesus' crucifixion to mean something *more* or *different* than any other crucifixion, it needs to have a *distinctive feature* that sets it apart from all the other crucifixions.

This distinctive feature could be something about Jesus—a word, a deed or an event—that took place *before*, *during* or *after* his crucifixion. In Luke all three options apply. And yet, in Luke, Jesus' crucifixion is the focal point. His crucifixion derives *meaning* from what happened *before* and *after*. But more importantly, it is *meaningful by itself* and therefore provides additional meaning to what happened before and after as well.

But how can this be? What is so *different* about Jesus' crucifixion in Luke? And what, then is its *meaning*? And where in Luke is this explained? The solution suggested in the hypothesis is *the prophetic symbolic act*. The prophetic symbolic act has its origin in the OT. It is a *public performance* that communicates a message by *showing* instead of *speaking*. It seems that Jesus' crucifixion in Luke also *shows* its message.

0.2. *Status quaestionis*

To the best of my knowledge there is not a single study that tried to bring together the framework of the prophetic symbolic act and Jesus' crucifixion in Luke. It has been acknowledged though that Jesus occasionally makes use of this particular medium of persuasion. *The entry in Jerusalem* and *the Temple act* are often mentioned as clear examples of prophetic symbolic action by Jesus. He performed other prophetic symbolic acts as well. The exact count is open to debate among NT scholars. The crucifixion, however, is always dismissed beforehand and not even considered.

There are probably two obvious reasons why the crucifixion of Jesus is ruled out as a prophetic symbolic act. First, it is unheard of that a prophet gives up his own life in a public performance to make a point. It is *too real*, so to speak, for it to be a *theatrical* display. Second, it is hard to imagine how someone arranges his own crucifixion. Both objections will be addressed in this thesis. For here the response can only be short. Jesus' *act* of crucifixion might seem very extreme, but is for that reason not impossible.¹ In comparison to the prophetic symbolic acts of the OT it would certainly be a radical innovation of this medium. Furthermore, this thesis is a literary analysis of the text of Luke. Any issues regarding the historical Jesus are of no consequence for the analysis presented here.²

0.3. *Method of procedure*

This thesis contains eight chapters, including the conclusion. A short overview of the content of each chapter is given here below.

In chapter 1 the method of this thesis is developed. The prophetic symbolic act is defined. The result is a *hermeneutical checklist* that has eight criteria which need to be met in order to qualify as a prophetic symbolic act. The eight criteria are divided into three groups: 1. The *extent* of the stage; 2. the *intent* of staging; and 3. the *meaning* of the staged act. These criteria will be applied to Jesus' crucifixion in Luke in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

In chapter 2, similarities between Jesus' *violent death* in Luke and *any* prophetic action in the OT and the intertestamental books, whether symbolic or not, are searched for and discussed. Any positive results could help to make the hypothesis more probable. Three questions will be answered: 1. Are there any similarities within the group of selected *prophetic symbolic acts of the OT*? 2. Is there, like the Lukan Jesus implies, a trend of *prophet killing* in the OT? 3. What is the role of *martyrdom* in the Judaic scriptures?

In chapter 3 the first and most general criterion is checked. This concerns the question if Jesus is a prophet in Luke.

¹ Socrates' death could be viewed as the classical example of a symbolic act that implies dying in order to make a point. "The burning monk", Thích Quảng Đức (Vietnam, 1963), is a contemporary example of this extreme kind of symbolic action.

² The analysis could be extended to the historical Jesus, as will be suggested in the conclusion (see chapter 8). But this would require far more research than can be accomplished within the scope of a master thesis.

In chapter 4 Jesus' familiarity with the medium of prophetic symbolic action is researched. The entry in Jerusalem, the Temple act and the Last Supper are of particular interest to this study. Certain features that seem specific for Jesus' prophetic symbolic acts will surface.

In chapter 5 the *extent* of the stage will be studied. This concerns all the *external*, and therefore *visible*, elements of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke. It seems that Jesus participates in what could be called *a Roman legal symbolic act*.

In chapter 6 the *intent* of staging will be analyzed. In Luke there is abundant textual evidence that Jesus intended to be crucified.

In chapter 7 the *meaning* of the staged act is researched. What is the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke? Is this something that could be derived from the act of crucifixion itself? And is this also explained by Jesus elsewhere in Luke?

In chapter 8 this thesis comes to its conclusion. The results of each chapter will be summarized. The most relevant notions with regard to the hypothesis will be evaluated. The contribution of this thesis to the study of Luke, the broader field of NT studies and even other fields of research will be discussed briefly in this chapter as well.

Chapter 1: Defining the prophetic symbolic act of the OT

1.0. *Introduction*

In this chapter the methodological challenges of this thesis will be addressed. The present hypothesis poses that *in Luke the crucifixion of Jesus is framed as a prophetic symbolic act*. In order to prove this hypothesis, a clear definition of what a prophetic symbolic act is needs to be developed first. The phenomenon of prophetic symbolic action has its origin in the OT.³ It seems therefore only natural to start there and develop a definition for the prophetic symbolic act in the OT. For this undertaking this thesis relies a great deal on Viberg's study *Prophets in Action* (Viberg 2007).

1.1. *Åke Viberg*

Viberg's study has the advantage that it is fairly recent and that its methodic scope is very wide, combining semiotics, linguistics and non-verbal communication theories. He discusses several of these theories and derives analytical tools from them. Something similar will be done to Viberg's study. Viberg's methodology will be discussed briefly and his method will be adjusted to the ends of this thesis.

In his study, Viberg's greatest achievement seems to be twofold. Firstly, he manages to accommodate the particular *hybrid* nature of prophetic symbolic acts, i.e. the fact that these originally *non-verbal* acts are conveyed to us in the *verbal* form of a text, in a conceptual model. Through this model the phenomenon of prophetic symbolic acts becomes accessible to an analysis of a much wider scope than before. Secondly, he is able to make a clear distinction between *prophetic symbolic acts* and other *non-verbal* acts, such as magical acts, legal symbolic acts and cultic symbolic acts. Both points need further explaining.

³ Symbolic acts in the Ancient Near East are discussed by Viberg (Viberg 2007, 36-40) but left out in this thesis. We know of only one prophetic symbolic act from the ancient Near East: *the symbolic act of muhhûm*. The similarities of this act with the prophetic symbolic acts from the OT are remarkable. It proves at least that the phenomenon of prophetic symbolic action was also known outside of Israel.

1.2. 'The prophetic symbolic act in literary form' and 'the three layered model'

Viberg repeatedly stresses that the prophetic symbolic acts in the OT are always *prophetic symbolic acts in literary form*. That means that *non-verbal communication*, i.e. the original prophetic symbolic act, is conveyed to us through *verbal communication*, i.e. the text of the OT. In the analysis we are now faced with a methodological dilemma. Should we approach the prophetic symbolic act at the level of non-verbal communication or at the level of verbal communication? If we choose to approach the prophetic symbolic act at the verbal level, another dilemma arises: Are these acts in literary form factual or fictional? Viberg resolves these issues by developing a three-layered model of *text*, *textual world* and *symbolic world* (Viberg 2007, 40-43).

His reasoning is as follows. First and foremost, any study of the OT is a *textual study*. Fictional or not, the prophetic symbolic act is still part of a text and can, for that reason, be studied as such, i.e. as *a prophetic symbolic act in literary form*. Second, approaching prophetic symbolic acts at the non-verbal level requires that they are seen in and through *the textual world* of the text. The textual world is the imaginary form of reality, which is mirrored to us in and through the text. All that can be said with certainty about the factual or fictional character of the prophetic symbolic act is that the prophet performs this act in a particular textual world. All that can be said with certainty about the overlap between the textual world and the real world, is that the text describes a world that is plausible to us.⁴ Third, based on theory of theatre and drama Viberg adds a third level: *the symbolic world*. This world can be found inside the textual world and appears to us in and through the symbolic act itself. This layer has to do with literary conventions—which are embedded in the culture—that come into play when a symbolic act is described.

Viberg's theoretical approach thus contains three layers: First, there is the text that describes the symbolic act; second, there is the performance of the act within the textual world and third, there is the symbolic reference or representation of the act within the symbolic world of the textual world.

After developing first a whole set of analytical tools, Viberg arrives at the three-layered model by the end of his methodology. In this thesis, however, this model is used as the starting point for any further analysis. This has two advantages: the model is flexible and can

⁴ This notion is relevant for example with regard to so-called miracle-stories in 1-2 Kgs. Should the miracles be considered as "real" events in the textual world, or as "imaginary" events that served the purpose of legitimation of the prophet? (Viberg 2007, 43)

incorporate other analytical tools such as Viberg's linguistic and non-linguistic terminology and the insights from non-verbal communication studies; and more importantly, it very efficiently accommodates the hybridity of the prophetic symbolic act in literary form.

1.3. *Other 'prophetic acts' and other 'symbolic acts'*

Viberg's second remarkable achievement concerns the clear distinction between *prophetic symbolic acts* and other *non-verbal acts*. As he explains, OT scholars struggled for more than half a century to view the prophetic symbolic acts as an *entirely different* category than the prophetic magical acts (Viberg 2007, 14-18). Overholt's conclusion presented by Viberg is insightful here. He believes that *the social function* of prophetic magical acts was *the legitimation* of the prophet *as prophet in that society*. As will be explained later, Viberg points out that the social function of a prophetic symbolic act is *conveying a symbolic meaning as part of the prophetic message*. The difference between the two types of prophetic action is apparent.

Next to *prophetic magical acts* there are also *legal symbolic acts* and *cultic symbolic acts*. Like prophetic symbolic acts, these are also non-verbal and carry symbolic meaning. It can be hard for that reason to discern these symbolic acts from the prophetic symbolic acts. However, Viberg's analytical tools are precisely designed to accomplish this task. The most important distinction between the two types is that legal and cultic symbolic acts are *conventional* whereas prophetic symbolic acts are *unconventional* and *innovative* (Viberg 2007, 18). The problem though with this distinction is that the make-up of prophetic symbolic acts is quite often highly conventional. And yet, the overall meaning is quite often highly unconventional.

As will be argued in this study, Jesus' crucifixion in Luke fits in the latter category due to its particular texture of being conventional and unconventional simultaneously.

1.4. *The analytical toolset*

Viberg develops several analytical tools. Only some of them seem relevant to this study. For that reason, a selection of tools from his analytical toolset will do here.

1.4.1. *The linguistic terminology*

From Viberg's *linguistic terminology* I will point out just one term: *performative* (Viberg 2007, 21-22). This term has been coined in Austin's *speech-act theory*. According to Austin there are conventional utterances which accomplish more than just saying or describing

something. They create *a social fact or a change in social reality*. For example, the words “I do (sc. take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)”, as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony, turn “a fiancée” into “a wife”. Such an utterance is called *performative*. Austin’s speech-act theory limits itself to verbal communication only. However, its application could be extended to *non-verbal communication* as well. Performative acts can be accomplished by using non-verbal means.

In the prophetic symbolic acts of the OT the *performative* aspect clearly plays a role. The prophet carries God’s authority, and so do his words and deeds. The prophetic act thus confronts people with God’s critical view or *judgment* in a way that can hardly be ignored. It becomes a religio-social fact.

In Luke Jesus’ crucifixion could be seen as either *a performative incongruence* or *a performative redefining of Messiahship*. These cryptic descriptions will be clarified in chapter 7.

1.4.2. *The non-linguistic terminology*

Prophetic symbolic acts are non-verbal. For that reason, another toolset is required for the analysis of the non-verbal aspects. From Viberg’s *non-linguistic terminology* only three terms will be used regularly in this thesis: *convention*, *symbol* and *act* (Viberg 2007, 23-27).

A *convention*—which can be verbal as well as non-verbal—is a social agreement and construction, made over time in a particular context, and is presumed true and meaningful more or less unintentionally. This implies that a *conventional act* is an act that has been performed before, and which has become a natural part of a particular society’s construction of their social reality. It can be further qualified as *institutionalized behavior*. Conventions have to be *legitimized* sufficiently in order to be recognized by new members of society as traditions and as parts of a collective memory.

Viberg uses the term *symbol* in the restricted sense of *secondary* or *figurative meaning*. This seems fitting for prophetic symbolic acts since they hint at something beyond the visible surface.

The *symbolism* of a prophetic symbolic act can be further differentiated as either *iconic* by means of analogy, or as *indexical* by means of association, or as *conventional* by means of

institutional behavior, or as a configuration of all of the above. Jesus' crucifixion in Luke is a good example of this last type, as will be explained in chapter 7.

Defining the term *act* might seem redundant. Viberg uses the term in a very broad sense: "when an individual, conscious of his/her doings, intentionally brings about a physical change of some kind, to some end, in a given context." The emphasis is on the *intentional* nature of an act. The restriction of *physical change* is not an absolute here. And not unimportantly, only and exclusively *non-verbal* acts are meant by the term.

1.4.3. *Viberg's definition*

Having defined all the terms for the analysis, Viberg is able to come up with a definition for prophetic symbolic acts (Viberg 2007, 27):

"A prophetic symbolic act is an act whose performance by a prophet has the function of conveying a secondary meaning that transcends the primary meaning related to its physical accomplishments. This meaning forms an inherent part of that prophet's message as a divine messenger, and functions in cooperation with and as an integrated part of his verbal teaching."

Viberg admits that there is a hermeneutical side to the process of defining. By weighing in all possible OT cases of prophetic symbolic action he arrived at his definition. He underscores the fact that a prophetic symbolic act is a *performance* that is *functional*. It serves the purpose of conveying symbolic meaning. He also emphasizes the fact that this act is done by a *prophet*, i.e. a socially recognized intermediate figure who, apart from the symbolic act itself, draws the attention. Furthermore, the non-verbal communication of the act is linked to the verbal communication of the prophet's message. The non-verbal act and the verbal message thus form a complementary whole.

1.4.4. *Non-verbal communication in general*

Yet another source for Viberg as a way to broaden the scope of analysis even further, is the literature on *the empirical study of non-verbal communication* (Viberg 2007, 31-33). He locates two different approaches of structuring non-verbal communication: a semiotic and a functional one.

In *the semiotic approach* the focus is on how acts achieve their meanings. Three ways of *coding* can be distinguished: either an act is *iconic* and the performance of the act depicts

its meaning by analogy, or an act is *indexical* and the performance of the act points to its meaning by association, or an act is *conventional* and its meaning is embedded in the culture, or an act is a configuration of all the above.

Viberg points out that especially *legal symbolic acts* which are primarily conventional, can have a high form of coding when there is nothing but the cultural code to rely on in order to discover the meaning of the act. Prophetic symbolic acts on the other hand are never conventional. As part of a singular message they are performed only once and by one person only. The act itself is often construed by highly conventional means though. But the act as a whole is unconventional and can only be described as either iconic or indexical. Since the Lukan Jesus participates in the Roman legal symbolic act of crucifixion, the distinction made here will be of high relevance later on in this thesis (see 5.2.).

In *the functional approach* the focus is on the function of the act with regard to speech. In the case that there is an act next to speech, the act can be a duplication of what is said or an illustration. In the case that there is no speech at all, the act is itself communicative. It then functions as a substitute for speech. Obviously, conventional acts have this feature.

1.4.5. *Non-verbal communication in literature*

Viberg also consults *studies of non-verbal communication in literature* (Viberg 2007, 33-36). This is relevant because *the literary form* of prophetic symbolic acts adds another layer of interpretation to the process of understanding the meaning of the act. The categories of non-verbal communication in literature turn out to be quite similar to the ones found in the empirical study of non-verbal communication. Viberg lists four modes of non-verbal communication in literature. Only two are relevant for this thesis:

1. An act is described together with an explanation of its meaning. It is the most common mode. This mode applies also to the prophetic symbolic acts in the OT which are by definition unconventional and for that reason in need of a verbal explanation.
2. An act is described without an explanation of its meaning. It is up to the reader to understand the act by picking up the contextual signals. Legal symbolic acts in the OT quite often belong to this category. Due to their conventional nature in ancient society they used to speak for themselves. However, for the modern reader they can be hard to understand.

In Luke-Acts either modes can be found with regard to Jesus' crucifixion (see ch. 7).

1.5. *The texts in the OT*

After applying the analytical tools, Viberg filters out nineteen prophetic symbolic acts in the whole OT (Viberg 2007, 43-48). In a survey he compares his selection with the selections of five other modern OT scholars who published extensive studies on this topic. The general agreement on the selection of texts from the prophetic books is remarkable, as is the almost complete exclusion of the miracle-stories from 1-2 Kgs. Nevertheless, Viberg's selection stands out as the most restrictive of all six. In this thesis Viberg's selection will be taken as *normative* for the prophetic symbolic acts of the OT.

1.6. *A hermeneutical checklist of criteria*

We return to Viberg's definition. For the methodic analysis of prophetic symbolic action by Jesus in Luke this definition is essential. However, for practical reasons Viberg's definition needs to be broken down into multiple criteria by which a prophetic act is measured in order to be qualified as a prophetic *symbolic* act. The advantage of working with criteria is on an operational level. It allows one to go over each and every apparent case of prophetic symbolic action methodically, criterion by criterion, and determine its status transparently. This procedure does not change Viberg's definition; it only transforms it into a *hermeneutical checklist*.

A total of eight criteria have been derived from Viberg's definition. These criteria cover three distinct aspects of prophetic symbolic action and can for that reason be bundled in three groups. The three aspects of prophetic symbolic action are: 1. the *extent* of the stage; 2. the *intent* of staging; and 3. the *meaning* of the staged act.

1.6.1. *The extent of the stage (1)*

When looking at *the extent of the stage* we focus on the question of how the stage is assembled. It is about *if* and *how* the *external* criteria of a prophetic symbolic act are met in the case of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke. These external criteria are: 1. performed by a prophet; 2. a non-verbal performance; 3. unconventional. These criteria are *external* in two respects. They are external in the sense that they address the visible, and the visibly conventional aspects of the symbolic act. They are also external in the sense that they focus on what is *external* to the somewhat hidden (coded) *internal* meaning of the symbolic act. It is all about the outer look of the symbolic act.

1.6.1.1. *The first criterion: performed by a prophet*

The first criterion is the requirement that the act is *performed by a prophet*. The fact that a *prophet* performs a symbolic act, and not just anybody, matters. A prophet is looked upon in society and so is everything he says or does. His political-religious stature adds weight to the symbolic act to the effect of getting the proper attention from an audience. The *notion* that a prophet can be *unconventional*, is *conventional* in that society.

1.6.1.2 *The second criterion: a non-verbal performance*

The second criterion is the requirement that the act is *a non-verbal performance*. There is a clear theatrical aspect to the prophetic symbolic act (Viberg 2007, 15-16). The act is a public display of particular behavior that is aimed at spectators. Like pantomime, the performance is non-verbal. When a prophet proclaims his oracles, people *hear* him speak. But when a prophet stages a symbolic act, people *see* him perform. So the *original* experience is mainly visual.

A very clear example of this feature is Ezek 12:3-7 in which God commands Ezekiel to get ready and go into exile. God tells Ezekiel to do this demonstratively and uses the phrase “in front of their eyes” six times.

There are also counter-examples in which the performance of the symbolic act is not entirely non-verbal. An example is Jer 32:6-15 in which Jeremiah buys a piece of land. In order to buy the land he will have negotiated a price verbally. But since speech here is not proclaiming an oracle or explaining the meaning of the symbolic act, it could be characterized as *verbal non-verbal communication*.⁵

Another concern is the number of spectators. There are examples where the act is performed before a king only, e.g. 1 Kgs 11:29-31, or before a small group of people, e.g. Jer 32:6-15. Apparently the prophetic symbolic act relies on becoming a rumor.⁶ Performing the act in front of one or a few significant others can be sufficient, as they will most likely pass it on to others verbally and make it public.

⁵ Similarly, a chat about the weather could be seen as an example of “verbal non-verbal communication” in which the weather-talk is just a means to communicate *non-verbally* that someone takes interest in someone else.

⁶ This aspect of the prophetic symbolic act seems to be overlooked by Viberg. The act was performed only once. So becoming “the talk of the town” would be an important part of the function of conveying symbolic meaning. This would be just another verbal form, next to the literary form, of the prophetic symbolic act.

In Luke, as we will see, the witnesses of the crucifixion are crucial in allowing the reader to decipher the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion.

1.6.1.3 *The third criterion: unconventional*

The third feature is the requirement that the act is *unconventional* and *innovative*.

Surprisingly this feature is not mentioned explicitly in Viberg's definition in so many words; and yet, he admits repeatedly that this is key to the prophetic symbolic act. It might have been implied by the words "conveying a secondary meaning" (Viberg 2007, 27). But even the terms *unconventional* and *innovative* are not cutting it entirely and seem to be too *objective* or too "polite". The prophetic symbolic acts are quite often puzzling, uncomfortable, provocative, unsettling, embarrassing or straightforwardly scandalous, insulting and enraging. This whole range of emotions on the receiving end of the symbolic act has been neglected by Viberg.

In Jer 13:1-11 God tells the prophet to hide a linen girdle. The act is clearly unconventional. And without the explanation of its meaning the symbolic act would have been at the very least puzzling in this case. Fine examples of embarrassing or straightforwardly scandalous acts are Isa 20 in which the prophet goes around naked for three years, and Hos 1:2-3; 3:1-4, in which God commands the prophet to take a whore as his wife.

Note that what is considered *unconventional* is somewhat open to interpretation. It requires that at least an argument is given that explains how a prophetic act goes against a commonly held convention within that society.

1.6.2. *The intent of staging (2)*

When looking at *the intent of staging*, the focus is primarily on the *intentional* aspect of the symbolic act. Here the concern is whether there is any *textual* proof that the prophet performed the symbolic act: 1. *at God's command* (criterion 4); and 2. *intentionally* (criterion 5). Either of these criteria are essential for it being a prophetic symbolic act. That does not, however, change the fact that these criteria are *external* to the stage itself. There is nothing *visible* about them. Just by watching the prophet's non-verbal performance, a bystander would not be able to tell much about *the intent of staging*. He would simply assume this, based on the fact that it is a prophet who performs this act. He would recognize the puzzling performance as a common trademark of prophets. As a readers though, one is usually explicitly informed by the text itself that the act was *at God's command* and *intentional*.

Furthermore, these two criteria are also *external* to the internal meaning of the symbolic act. The fact that a prophetic symbolic act is performed with *the intent of staging*, does not inform us about the meaning of the act. It only tells us *that* the prophetic act carries meaning. It also tells us that the prophet *owns* the act. The prophet is the author of the act and no one else. This will prove to be of crucial importance in the case of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke.

1.6.2.1. *The fourth criterion: commanded by God*

The fourth criterion is the requirement that the act is *commanded by God*. This seems quite self-evident. Viberg's definition is indirect here and somewhat vague for that reason. If one stays true to the text of the OT, it simply comes down to God who commands the prophet to perform a particular act. God speaks only to the prophet. The prophet is the mouthpiece and the instrument of God. He (or she) only prophesizes what God tells him (or her) to prophesize. The same goes for the prophetic symbolic acts.

1.6.2.2. *The fifth criterion: at the volition of the prophet*

The fifth criterion is the requirement that the act is *intentional* and thus *at the volition of the prophet*. In general, the situation is quite simple: God commands and the prophet obeys. It is a one-way stream. Ideally this is always the case and the fourth and fifth criterion merge into one. Nevertheless, a prophet could decide to ignore what God commands. The prophet Jonah is a comical example thereof. But even a heroic prophet such as Elijah does not always comply to God's will right away and without further reassurances (cf. 1 Kgs 19). This means that the prophet has in fact a will of his own, apart from God's. It is on those occasions that it becomes clear that there are two criteria in play and not just one.

So obedience or complying to God's will is in itself an *intentional* act. It requires determination. This criterion matters a great deal in case of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke.

An interesting borderline case from the OT is 1 Sam 15:27-29. King Saul grabs Samuel's mantle and rips off a piece by accident. Samuel turns this moment into a symbolic act by telling Saul that likewise God will rip him from his kingdom of Israel. The situation is clearly unintentional. And for that reason Viberg does not count it as a prophetic symbolic act.

1.6.3. *The meaning of the staged act (3)*

The meaning of the staged act is the third aspect of the prophetic symbolic act. It is the most interesting part since it is about the purpose of the act. It involves three criteria (6-8). This

aspect is without doubt the main challenge in the case of the crucifixion of Jesus' in Luke and will be dealt with in chapter 7.

1.6.3.1. *The sixth criterion: conveying a secondary meaning*

The sixth criterion is the requirement that the act is *conveying a secondary meaning that transcends the primary meaning related to its physical accomplishments*. This is the function of the act. It conveys *symbolic meaning* by means of a theatrical display of conventional behavior and/or use of conventional objects which serve here merely as props. The challenge for the analysis consists in first understanding the conventional elements of the act (the *extent* of the stage), and then the specific unconventional configuration of it all and the symbolic meaning that is underlying the act.

A very simple and clear example of this feature is Jer 19:1-2, 10-11, in which the prophet Jeremiah smashes a jar on the ground in front of the elders of the people and the senior priests at the Potsherd Gate. It is obvious that the meaning is not the smashing of the jar. In this case the prophet explains the symbolic meaning of the act directly afterwards. The act could be seen as a non-verbal *illocutionary act*.⁷

1.6.3.2. *The seventh criterion: the secondary meaning is part of the verbal teaching*

The seventh criterion is the requirement that the secondary meaning of the act "*forms an inherent part of that prophet's message, and functions in cooperation with and as an integrated part of his verbal teaching*". The main issue here is that the secondary meaning of the symbolic act does not stand in isolation from the verbal message of a prophet. On the contrary, it is connected and forms a complementary whole. However, I would like to simplify and rephrase this criterion as follows: *The symbolic (non-literal) meaning of the act is verbally explained by the prophet elsewhere or can be linked to verbal oracles of the prophet*.

Jer 27:2-3; 28:10-11 is a remarkable example. One prophetic symbolic act is opposed by another prophetic symbolic act. God commands Jeremiah to wear a yoke-collar. Then Hananiah comes by and breaks the yoke-collar. The fight is fought here on a symbolic level. The symbolic meaning of wearing a yoke, the submission to the Babylonian king, ties in with the overall message of Jeremiah which is the submission to the Babylonian king in order to avoid needless losses of lives.

⁷ An illocutionary act is a *performative* act "which attempts to change how people think or act" (Viberg 2007, 22).

1.6.3.3. *The eighth criterion: its meaning for God and His people*

The eighth criterion is the requirement that the symbolic meaning of the act is somehow related to the relationship between God and his people. This requirement seems redundant. It is automatically met by the requirement of the seventh feature, which links the prophetic symbolic act to the verbal teaching of the prophet. And yet, this feature can be helpful in the analysis if the seventh criterion is not met as sufficiently as one would wish. In general, one could say that prophecies are either warnings or reassurances from God to his people. The prophetic symbolic acts tend to refer symbolically to *the current status of* or *the near-future consequences for the relationship between God and his people*.

Chapter 2: In search of prophetic action in the OT and the intertestamental books similar to Jesus' violent death in Luke.

2.0. *Introduction*

Submitting yourself to a humiliating and torturous execution like Jesus does in Luke is highly unconventional without question. The specific criterion of being *innovative* (criterion 3) is certainly met. The problem is rather the opposite: a shortage of convention. An OT prophetic symbolic act as a whole is unconventional and innovative but, as Viberg stresses over and over,⁸ is construed of conventional elements. In this chapter I will search for elements of prophetic action in the OT and the intertestamental books that seem similar to Jesus' crucifixion. This search could provide some context to *if* and *how* Jesus' crucifixion in Luke could be understood as a *prophetic symbolic act*.

This search is done in three subchapters. In the first subchapter (2.1.) the aspect of *submission* as part of prophetic symbolic action will be looked into. This means that the search is limited to Viberg's selection of prophetic symbolic acts only. In the second subchapter (2.2.) the aspect of *killing a prophet as a way of rejection* is researched. In the third subchapter (2.3.) the aspect of *martyrdom* is studied. In a final subchapter (2.4.) the concluding remarks are made.

2.1. *Elements of submission in OT prophetic symbolic action*

Not a single prophetic symbolic act in the OT comes even close to Jesus' crucifixion in Luke. There is just nothing like it. The main reason for this is that *being killed* never appears as a means to convey a message symbolically. The prophetic symbolic acts that we know of are in this respect relatively harmless, and the prophets who performed them clearly intended to survive their acts. It seems therefore accurate to contend that the level of *submission to others to the point of death* as a way of performing a prophetic symbolic act, like Jesus seems to do in Luke, is *unparalleled* in the OT.

However, *submission* in milder forms can be found among the prophetic symbolic acts of the OT. There are just a few, and they will be discussed here briefly. Three kinds of *submission*—which are all aspects of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke as well—can be differentiated: submission to pain, to humiliation and to a conventional script.

⁸ "The conventional is used in order to make the unconventional understood and, more importantly, believed" (Viberg 2007, 156).

In case of the first kind of submission, the prophet is willing to submit himself to a certain level of physical pain in order to make a point. Examples of the first kind are:

1. Ezek 4:4-8. Ezekiel is told to lie down for 390 days on one side and then another 390 days on the other side. Moreover he is strapped by cords to make sure he cannot turn. The whole act is of a penitential nature and must have been physically straining.
2. Jer 27:2-3 and 28:10-11. Jeremiah carries around a yoke-collar. The yoke-collar was the main part of a yoke that was meant to be put on the neck of oxen. It probably was a strong and heavy wooden beam. Carrying it around must have been, at a minimum, uncomfortable.

In case of the second kind of submission, the prophet is willing to submit himself to public mockery and scandal as a way of drawing attention and making a point at the same time.

Examples of the second kind are:

1. Jer 27:2-3 and 28:10-11. By carrying around a yoke-collar Jeremiah exposes himself to public mockery and humiliation.
2. Isa 20. Isaiah walks around naked for three years. This is an extreme case of exposure to ridicule and public embarrassment.
3. Hos 1:2-3 and 3:1-4. Hosea takes a whore as his wife. Once again this act is scandalous and evokes public ridicule and contempt.

In case of the third kind of submission, the prophet is bound by a script of conventions in which others play their conventional roles as well. Examples of the third kind are:

1. Hos 1:2-3 and 3:1-4. By taking a whore as his wife Hosea puts himself into a situation of becoming a victim of adultery.
2. Jer 32:6-15. Jeremiah buys a piece of land from his cousin. He performs a legal transaction. In this symbolic act he relies on others and their performance which is bound by legal conventions.

2.2. *The killing of prophets in the OT?*

In Luke Jesus' execution is framed as a *prophet's death*.⁹ The Lukan Jesus blames Jerusalem for killing God's prophets (Luke 13:34). It would even be "pointless" (or impossible?) for a prophet to be killed outside Jerusalem (Luke 13:33). This fact creates even more reason for Jesus to go to Jerusalem (by avoiding "that fox" Herod). Earlier, in a series of "woes" (Luke 11:42-52) Jesus accuses the Pharisees of cultivating an ancient heritage of killing prophets. This heritage goes back to the murder of "Abel" and continues till the murder of "Zechariah". Therefore "this generation" will be held responsible for spilling "the blood of all the prophets" (Luke 11:47-51).

Based upon this perspective, it appears that the Lukan Jesus believes there is a tradition of killing prophets. The image of this sinister tradition is made stronger in Luke-Acts by including John the Baptist as the second-to-last and Jesus as the last prophet in a seemingly long line of prophets that have been killed (e.g. Stephen's speech, Acts 7:51-53).¹⁰ In Luke Jerusalem's deadly rejection of Jesus is the last straw for God. God will respond in turn with the rejection of Israel. Luke is clearly thinking here of the destruction of Jerusalem (e.g. Luke 13:35; 19:41-44; 23:28-31). Israel will be stripped of its "birthright" and it will be given to the Gentile church. The parable of the vineyard and the bad tenants (Luke 20:9-19) appears to allude to this new reality.

The tradition of prophet killing thus forms the framework in Luke for understanding the rejection of Jesus. To Luke, this tradition points to a stubborn and vicious trend in the history of Israel. He uses it to justify the ultimate rejection of Israel by God.

Given the gravity of the allegation of a history of prophet killing, one would expect that it should not be too hard to substantiate its claim by textual evidence from the OT. But this undertaking turns out to be highly problematic if not outright impossible. Origen was the first asking the critical question: "Where is anything like this written concerning Isaiah, Jeremiah, any of the Twelve, or Daniel?" (Letter to Africanus 14; Stamos 2001, 251). The short answer to this question is: It is "historically false" ("historisch falsch", Klein 2006, 491). The lengthy answer, however, will be summarized in the next two sub-subchapters. I will give an

⁹ "There is a clear intimation of Jesus' end as a prophet's death. This is a picture of the Lukan Jesus, sketched with hindsight by the evangelist" (Fitzmyer 1985, 1030).

¹⁰ The line of prophets and apostles that are killed by "the Jews" does not stop with Jesus in Luke-Acts. Stephen is stoned, James is killed and Paul is almost killed and handed over to the Roman authority. The rejection, though, of Jesus is seen in Luke-Acts as the breaking point with regard to God's promise to His People.

overview of the highlights of two scholarly works about the topic. The first one (2.2.1) is Odil Hannes Steck's epochal study, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten* (Steck 1967). The second one (2.2.2.) is Colleen Stamos' dissertation, *The Killing of the Prophets: Reconfiguring a Tradition* (Stamos 2001).

2.2.1 Steck's deuteronomistic pattern of history

The influence of Steck's study can hardly be overstated: "Over thirty years after its publication, Steck's *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten* remains the most comprehensive and influential study of the fate of the prophets in ancient Jewish and early Christian literature" (Stamos 2001, 30). In his study Steck develops what he calls "the deuteronomistic pattern of history" ("das deuteronomistische Geschichtsbild", Steck 1967, 71). It is this paradigm that according to Steck has shaped Luke 11:49ff and Luke 13f a great deal. Some main points in Steck's line of reasoning will be highlighted.

Luke 11:49ff and Luke 13:34f can be matched to Matt 23:37-39. The overlaps are obvious, and so are the differences. This indicates that we are dealing here with a *logion* that belongs to the unknown text source Q. It is hard to determine the version of Q since both synoptics show multiple signs of editing. As for Luke 11:49ff and Luke 13:13f, they are not Jesus logia. Both texts betray features of the genre of *prophetic warning* within the broader genre of judgment prophecy. The underlying shaping pattern of these texts must therefore be traced back to a particular tradition within Late Judaism (Steck 1967, 58).

Steck finds the oldest textual trace of this particular tradition in Neh 9:29: "But they were disobedient and rebelled against you; they turned their backs on your law. *They killed your prophets*, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies."¹¹ This is the first and only time in the OT in which "the killing of all the pre-exilic prophets in general" (Steck 1967, 64) is stated in a "comprehensive" manner. This statement is "an expression of the persistent disobedience of pre-exilic Israel". The disobedience of Israel is thus formulated "with regard to God (1), His law (2), the message of His prophets (3) and the life of the prophets (4)".¹²

¹¹ For all Bible citations in this thesis, the translation of the New International Version (NIV 2011) is used, unless mentioned otherwise.

¹² "Die pauschale Aussage von der Tötung der vorexilischen Propheten generell ist also Ausdruck des permanenten Ungehorsams des vorexilischen Israel, der hier nicht nur im Blick auf Jahwe, sein Gesetz, die Botschaft seiner Propheten, sondern auch im Blick auf das Leben der Propheten formuliert wird" (Steck 1967, 64).

Other texts in the OT that mention the killing of one or more prophets are dismissed by Steck due to their incidental character. The texts are scarce to begin with. Cases in which the prophet is foreign (Num 31:8) or false (Jer 28:15-17; Jer 29:21-23) can be ruled out beforehand. There is a Zechariah who is killed (2 Chr 24:20-22) but he is the son of a high priest, and not a prophet. Uriah is a prophet who is killed (Jer 26:20-23). But his case does not establish the rule but rather proves to be an exception to the rule.

There are also texts that speak in general terms about *prophets* being killed. But again we need to differentiate. In Lam 2:20 and Ps 105:15 (I Chr 16:22) the threat against the prophets comes from foreign enemies and not from Israel itself. And in I Kgs the same group of prophets is mentioned several times (I Kgs 18:4; 18:13; 19:10; 19:14) as being slain under foreign command of queen Jezebel, who is however married to the Israelite king Ahab. Moreover, this one episode does not show a trend throughout the history of Israel. It concerns just one generation of prophets. Jeremiah 2:30 has a particular event in mind and is probably referring to I Kgs 19:14 (Steck 1967, 60-61).

So Neh 9:26 is the only text in the OT that attests to the deuteronomic pattern of history in which the killing of prophets plays a role. The deuteronomic pattern is a particular way of structuring Israel's history theologically. It evolved over time and consists of six elements (Steck 1967, 184-189):

1. Acknowledgement of *persistent disobedience* by the people of Israel towards God up to "now", i.e. "this generation" admits to be as guilty as any former generation.
2. *God's repeated call to repent* by way of sending his prophets to the people.
3. The stubborn *rejection* of God, his message and his messengers by the people.
4. *God's punishment* of his people by leading them into *exile*.
5. *Repentance* is the only way out.
6. Repentance will lead to *restoration*.

The killing of prophets can now be located within the deuteronomic pattern. It is an extension of the third element and is just another way of emphasizing the disobedience of pre-exilic Israel. The more general form can be found in 2 Kgs 17:13ff. This text is therefore older than Neh 9:26 because it does not yet mention the killing of prophets.

This implies that the killing of prophets is not factual. It is not, and was never meant to be historically accurate. It functions as a self-critical exaggeration of religious remorse about the

past. It is Israel's confession to God. Israel denied God utterly—to the point of killing his prophets—and therefore God denied Israel the promise of the land to the point of exile.

In Luke the confessional aspect of this notion is turned upside down. It does not function any longer as a confession from a remorseful insider, but as offensive ammunition from a critical outsider (Steck 1967, 278-279).

Second, the notion of martyrdom is still absent (Steck 1967, 253-254). The fact that a prophet gave his life as a testimony of his obedience to God does not receive any personal attention. The victim is not glorified in any way. The attention mainly goes out to the killer: the people of Israel. Killing God's prophet is primarily an act of Israel against God. As for the prophet, murdering him is seen as a crime and a transgression of God's law. It is the spilling of innocent blood which invokes a curse (Jer 26:15) or cries out for revenge (2 Chr 24:22).

2.2.2. *Stamos' reconfiguration*

In her dissertation, *The Killing of the Prophets: Reconfiguring a Tradition* (Stamos 2001) Colleen Stamos simply tears down Steck's deuteronomic pattern. She does this quite cleverly. Her main points will be highlighted here.

First, she points out that Steck's deuteronomic pattern with regard to prophet killing is based on only three text passages. For that reason, this can hardly be called "a tradition" but at best "a shared motif" (Stamos 2001, 90). Moreover, of those three text passages there is only one that predates Luke: Neh 9:26. So supposedly the Jesus logia from Luke that mention the prophet killing have been shaped by this one text.

Second, Stamos shows that Neh 9:26—the only textual evidence for a tradition of prophet killing—is also post-Lukan. Origen, who poses the question about the tradition of prophet killing, does not mention Neh 9:26. The first quotation of Neh 9:26 that we know of, can be dated not earlier than mid-third century AD. By referring to the work of Torrey and Howorth—two late nineteenth century scholars—Stamos is able to make a case for 1 Esdras as the true Septuagint text that was used by Josephus and Origen. 1 Esdras ends with Neh 8. The canonical Ezra-Nehemia, including Neh 9 and 10, was translated into Greek by the beginning of the second century A.D. or later (Stamos 2001, 61).

In conclusion, there is not any evidence inside or outside the OT that predates Luke and sustains a tradition of prophet killing (Stamos 2001, 78,124).

2.3. *Martyrdom*

According to Steck, the notion of martyrdom has never been active within Judaism. This is especially true for prophets. They are never seen as martyrs. Their role is very specifically connected to the deuteronomic pattern.

However, Steck sees an alternative tradition rising in the book of Daniel, the book of Enoch, the Psalms of Solomon and especially in 4 Esdras and the Syriac apocalypse of Baruch, in which the notion of *the suffering of the righteous* is developed. This notion can only be understood within an elaborated version of the deuteronomic pattern (Steck 1967, 186-7, 255). The suffering of the righteous comes after stage D, God's punishment of Israel, and is part of stage E, Israel's acknowledgment of God's punishment and their return to God's commandments. This stage will last until *the eschatological turn*, which is the final stage F. Since the suffering of the righteous is not limited to or defined here by a violent death, the term *martyr* adds only confusion and is out of place. Suffering entails a whole life that is lived in obedience to God. This life might result in a violent death, but not necessarily.

At first sight, Steck might seem too restrictive with the term *martyrdom*. Even in case of the intertestamental books 2 Maccabees, probably written as early as 124 BCE, and 4 Maccabees, written around 100 CE, he eschews the term where other scholars openly speak of Jewish martyrs (van Henten & Avemarie 2002, 46-48).

Martyrdom is traditionally viewed as a Christian invention. Jesus is then the first martyr and Stephen the second. For here mentioning *martyrdom* is sufficient. Further exploration of this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.

2.4. *Concluding remarks*

In this chapter, a search for similarities between Jesus' crucifixion in Luke and prophetic action in the OT and the intertestamental books, whether symbolic or not, was undertaken. Any similarity would help to make the hypothesis more probable. Three seemingly reasonable suggestions for possible similarities were researched. The overall result, however, was surprisingly meagre.

First, Jesus' crucifixion in Luke was compared to the prophetic symbolic acts of the OT. In terms of *submitting oneself to others to the point of death* there was nothing of comparable extremity in the OT. The result was just a few examples in which either physical discomfort,

public humiliation or participation in a legal symbolic act was a component in the prophetic symbolic act.

Second, Jesus' comment about the killing of the prophets of old (Luke 11:47-51), which also hints at the lethal rejection of him by Jerusalem, was taken into account. This claim could not be substantiated in the OT. Odil Hannes Steck's *deuteronomistic pattern of history* seemed a promising way out. However, Colleen Stamos countered this position convincingly.

Third, the aspect of martyrdom of Jesus' death in Luke was briefly evaluated. The result was inconclusive. *Rejection* and *martyrdom* are two distinct notions. The rejection of the prophet resulting in death is a *pre-exilic* notion. It expresses the radical disobedience of Israel to God. Martyrdom is a *post-exilic* notion in which "the righteous" takes suffering upon himself. The death of the martyr is told in detail and the martyr is glorified. In Luke, Jesus' crucifixion seems a blend of a rejection story and a martyr narrative.

Chapter 3: Jesus, a prophet in Luke

3.0. Introduction

For an act to be called a prophetic symbolic act it needs to be performed by a prophet. This is the first and most basic criterion. For that reason, it will be shown in this chapter that in Luke Jesus is indeed a prophet.

The notion that Jesus is a prophet is not a Lukan invention. It is older and can be found in the other synoptic gospels and Q as well. Most likely it goes back to the historical Jesus. However, this notion does not speak for itself within post-exilic Judaism. For example, in 1 Maccabees it is mentioned that for the time being God has stopped sending prophets (1 Macc 9:27; 4:46; 9:27). And Josephus explains that the books written after the OT lack the same authority “because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets” (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.8). The Rabbinic tradition also held the view that the era of prophets was pre-exilic, and had come to an end.¹³ This point of view fits well within Steck’s deuteronomic pattern. As for Luke, he is evidently bound by the Early-Christian tradition of Jesus being a prophet.

Another concern is the fact that Jesus is more than *just* a prophet in Luke. He is also the Messiah. This last title is of course the higher office. In this case Johnson is referenced. He combines the two titles and speaks of the Lukan Jesus as *the prophetic Messiah* (Johnson 1991, 81). This combination is in itself remarkable because in 1st century Judaism the majority could only envision *a military Messiah* similar to king David (Fitzmyer 1981, 189; Johnson 1991, 77).

Jesus’ prophetic status in Luke will be explored in four subchapters. In subchapter 3.1. it will be shown that Jesus in his *social encounters* is seen as a prophet. In subchapter 3.2. Jesus’ *prophetic style* is discussed. As it will turn out, on multiple occasions the Lukan Jesus is modelled after Elijah. In subchapter 3.3. the role of John the Baptist with regard to Jesus’ messiahship is highlighted. In subchapter 3.4. a few remarks are made on Jesus’ *prophetic-messianic program* and its Isaianic features. The main results of these explorations will be summarized in the concluding subchapter 3.5.

¹³ In the Talmud (Sanhedrin 11a) Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi are considered the last prophets. They prophesied during the time that the Babylonian exile came to a close.

3.1. *Jesus, a prophet in public*

The simplest way of demonstrating that Jesus is a prophet in Luke is by pointing out the few times he is called “prophet” by others or by himself. Thus, this demonstration takes place on what might be called *the level of the public opinion in Luke*.

According to Luke 9:8 a meaningful rumor is making the rounds among the people: “...one of the prophets of old had come back to life” (trans. AJB¹⁴). This rumor links the title of prophet to Jesus. This is repeated in Luke 9:19 (Mark 6:15). In Luke 7:39 the reader is intimated in the inner dialogue of the Pharisee Simon: “If this man really were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him!” Simon tries to disprove the public opinion that Jesus is a prophet. This suggests that Simon disagrees with the socially accepted view within the textual world of Luke, that Jesus is a prophet. In a similar, but now physically violent manner, Jesus is tested by temple guards in Luke 22:64: “They put a blindfold on him and said, ‘Prophecy to us who struck you!’” Even though this is mockery, the underlying assumption is that Jesus is considered a prophet by others or by himself.

The most striking examples are probably Luke 7:16 and Luke 24:19. These text passages are without synoptic parallels. In Luke 7:16 the people say after a stunning miracle of Jesus: “A great prophet is here with us! God has come to his people.” In Luke 24:19 the two disciples on their way to Emmaus describe Jesus as “a prophet mighty in deed and word in the eyes of God and all the people” (trans. Fitzmeyer 1983, 1553). Both texts have in common that they appear in a resurrection story.

Jesus also refers to himself as “prophet” on multiple occasions. It is however indirect and by implication only. For example, in Luke 4:24 Jesus tells the audience of his hometown: “Believe me, no prophet is accepted in his own country” (trans. Fitzmeyer 1981, 525), thus implying that he is not acknowledged as a prophet by his fellow villagers. In Luke 6:23 Jesus tells his followers that persecution has always been the fate of prophets. Jesus is obviously thinking here of his own fate and that of his disciples. In Luke 11:45ff Jesus is ranting against the hypocrisy of the scribes who honor the prophets of old with tombs, while their ancestors were in fact the killers and persecutors of the very same prophets. This theme of *Israel’s rejection of God’s prophets*, as mentioned before (see 2.2.) runs deep in Luke and the rejection of Jesus fits in this theme. For the Lukan Jesus *rejection* is even *the proving point* for being a true prophet. This cynical outlook is expressed in Luke 13:33-34. Jesus explains

¹⁴ AJB is used as the abbreviation for A.J. van der Bom, the author of this thesis.

that he *must* go to “Jerusalem” since “Jerusalem” is a killer of prophets. The rejection of Jesus by “Jerusalem” thus ultimately defines his prophetic status.

3.2. *Jesus’ prophetic style: Elijah of 1-2 Kings*

In Luke Jesus’ prophetic style is, to some extent, modelled after Elijah’s. In Luke 9:7-9 and Luke 9:19 the *intratextual* connection is made. Jesus is linked to *John redivivus* and to *Elijah redivivus* and to the prophets of old. But this concerns *the eschatological Elijah* from Malachi (Mal 3:23-24). This Elijah represents of course the legendary prophet of 1-2 Kings. In Luke it is only the Elijah of 1-2 Kings that Jesus is modelled after, sometimes combined with Elisha.

In Luke 4 Jesus mentions Elijah and Elisha as examples of prophets who performed miracles outside of Israel. Then in Luke 7:1-17 Jesus performs precisely two miracles that are similar to the ones mentioned in Luke 4:25-27. The first miracle reminds us of a healing performed by Elisha in 2 Kgs 5:1-14. And the second miracle resembles the resuscitation of a widow’s son by Elijah in 1 Kgs 17:20-24. These stories in Luke serve the same purpose as they do in 1-2 Kings. They legitimize Jesus’ role as a prophet (Johnson 1991, 120-121; see also 1.3.).

In Luke 9: 28-36 the story of Jesus’ transfiguration is told. Jesus meets Moses¹⁵ and Elijah on a mount and they discuss Jesus’ upcoming “exodus” in Jerusalem. It is certainly true that Moses and Elijah represent here the Law and the Prophets. But there is more to it. Moses and Elijah both had an experience of God’s presence on a holy mountain (Exod 24:15-18; 1 Kgs 19:8-13). And both anointed a successor prophet with the Spirit (Deut 34:9; 1 Kgs 19:16-19 and 2 Kgs 2:9-15). So in this text section, Jesus is explicitly linked to the two most highly esteemed prophets of the OT. The story communicates that Jesus is of their league, if not higher, the only Son of God (Johnson 1991, 153-156).

Jesus’ ascension should be mentioned here too. This rapture story is a Lukan invention (Zwiep 1997, 193) and quite complicated in its details. For here it suffices to point out that it has certain parallels with the rapture story of Elijah (1 Kgs 19; 2 Kgs 2:1-18). As for the transfer of the Spirit from Jesus to his disciples, Johnson refers again to Moses and Elijah. When Elijah is about to depart, Elisha asks him for a double portion of the Spirit (2 Kgs 2:9). Likewise, the disciples of Jesus will receive a double share of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts

¹⁵ According to Johnson the Lukan Jesus is also modelled after Moses, even more so than after Elijah (Johnson 1991, 17-20). The “exodus” allusion is just one very clear example. There are more.

2:1-4; Johnson 1991, 406). In Acts the reference to Jo 2:28-32 (Acts 2:17-21) might actually be the more obvious choice for framing this narrative.

3.3. *The prophetic presenter of the prophetic Messiah: John the Baptist*

The prophetic role of John the Baptist with regard to Jesus cannot and may not be overlooked. In Luke Jesus is linked to several prophets of old, especially to Elijah. But this was, as we saw (3.2.), more a matter of *style*. Jesus operates *like* Elijah of 1 and 2 Kgs. John the Baptist on the other hand operates in Luke as *the eschatological Elijah* as prophesied in Malachi (Mal 3:23-24). This particular role that John the Baptist takes upon himself reflects back on Jesus' role. While the first one is a role of announcing the Messiah, the second one is about filling up the Messianic void that the announcement creates. But let us take a few steps back and see how the framing of John the Baptist is done in Luke.

Luke's treatment of John the Baptist is complicated and highly ambivalent. John seems to have two faces (cf. Luke 7:28). On the one hand John is portrayed as important and closely related to Jesus, and on the other hand he is depicted as different and unrelated to Jesus and his teaching. A few examples of either side will do.

Jesus' mission takes off after his baptism (Luke 3:21-22; 4:14ff). All four gospels have this in common. It is as if Jesus is launched into the world by John. They thus perform their complementary roles of Messiah-announcer (John) and Messiah (Jesus).

Only in Luke is this bond between John and Jesus presented as rooted in a family tie as well. This happens at the very beginning (Luke 1:36). In Luke John has his own birth stories. These are woven into Jesus' birth stories (Luke 1:5-2:21). These stories underscore the importance of John with regard to Jesus.

But when Jesus is baptized, John is already in prison (Luke 3: 21-22). So Jesus is not baptized by John in person. At that point Jesus seems to be just an anonymous follower of John and nothing more. This narrative clearly deviates from Mark, Matthew and John. In their versions John himself baptizes Jesus and acknowledges him without hesitation (Mark 1:9-11; Matt 3:13-17; John 1:39-34). In Luke, however, it is quite surprising that John learns about Jesus for the first time much later in the story (Luke 7:18-20). Moreover, he expresses doubt about Jesus' messianic status.

The differences between Jesus and John are many. For example, Jesus does not baptize. The content of their teaching is also quite different. John expects a soon and severe judgment from God (Luke 3:7). For that reason John's prophetic style is one of repentance and fasting (Luke 5:33; 7:31-33). Jesus, however, expects the instantaneous arrival of the Kingdom of God. His prophetic style is one of joy and feasting (Luke 7:34). Jesus compares himself even to a bridegroom amidst his wedding guests (Luke 5:34).

And yet, in Luke John the Baptist is also the Messiah-announcer. But the announcement is more abstract than in the other gospels. The connection to the Messiah is constructed through *intertextual association*. The Lukan John is briefly, but very effectively, confronted with the title "Messiah" (Luke 3:15). John denies himself this title by mentioning the coming of "one who is more powerful" (Luke 3:16). Later on John questions Jesus if he is "the one who is to come" (Luke 7:19). These evocative labels are loosely linked together as meaning more or less the same thing (Fitzmyer 1983, 466, 471-473). John thus announces what he himself is not: The Messiah. He does this in very general and somewhat vague terms. And Jesus steps into that role in a most practical and tangible manner (Luke 7:22).

John's role of Messiah-announcer is confirmed by Jesus. He calls John "more than a prophet" (Luke 7:26ff) and quotes Mal 3:1: "I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." The book of Malachi matters here. It provides the intertextual bridge that links the prophet Elijah to the role of Messiah-announcer: "Look, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord arrives. He will encourage fathers and their children to return to me, so that I will not come and strike the earth with judgment." (Mal 3:23-24). The return of the prophet Elijah is charged with eschatological and messianic expectation. When John's birth is announced, the angel paraphrases this particular text of Malachi (Luke 1:17). John is thus associated with *Elijah redivivus* (Luke 9:7-8) and his role of preparing the way for "the one who is to come".

Historically it is not entirely unthinkable that John the Baptist modelled his prophetic role after Mal 3. Just from a textual point of view, which is the only concern in this thesis, it is clear that by framing John's role this way the Lukan Jesus adds scriptural credentials to his messianic claim.

3.4. *The prophetic-messianic program: Isaiah*

The Luke-Acts diptych is held together as one continuing story of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit plays an interventional role from the very start when Mary becomes pregnant with Jesus.

Through the Spirit she gives birth to “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35) in a literal sense. The Spirit theme is carried on throughout the whole gospel and reaches its climax at Pentecost in Acts, and continues after that to be the carrying force of the Early Church.

The theme of the Spirit is mainly derived from the prophet Isaiah. This becomes apparent in Luke 4:18 in which Jesus reads Isa 61:1: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.” Jesus’ reading in the synagogue of Nazareth thus confirms what happened to him shortly before. Through baptism in the river Jordan (Luke 3:22) he was anointed by the Spirit. Now being “full of the Spirit” he was “led by the Spirit” (Luke 4:1) into the desert for a forty days’ time of testing. After passing this test Jesus returned to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14).

What follows in Luke 4:14-30 could be characterized as Jesus’ presentation of his *prophetic-messianic program*. In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus reads the announcement of the year of jubilee from the book of Isaiah (Isa 61:1-2). This text passage depicts a messianic era. It sets the tone for Jesus’ mission in the rest of Luke. The wording in Isaiah is clear and yet vague enough to fill in the blanks as Luke does through all of Jesus’ words and deeds. Jesus will “proclaim the good news to the poor” (e.g. Luke 4:42-44), “redeem” the possessed (e.g. Luke 8:26-38), “heal the blind” (e.g. Luke 18:35-43) and “liberate” the marginalized (e.g. Luke 19:1-10). This prophetic-messianic program also resonates in Jesus’ answer to John the Baptist (Luke 7:22; Isa 29:18; 35:5-6; 42:18; 26:19; 61:1). The message is clear: the program is being executed, its promise is happening for real.

In Luke 4 Jesus’ prophetic-messianic program is based on Isaiah. And so is Luke 7 when Jesus addresses John the Baptist’s doubt. As it turns out, in Luke Isaiah is the OT scripture that is by far quoted the most. In Luke-Acts there is a total of nine explicit Isaiah quotations¹⁶ and more than one hundred allusions (NA²⁷). And in most cases these quotations mark off the beginning of the ministry of the main characters like John the Baptist, Jesus, the disciples and Paul (Mallen 2008, 3-4). In Luke-Acts it seems that Isaiah provides an overall narrative in which the story of Jesus and the Early Church make sense as a part of “God’s plan” (Acts 2:23). Extensive studies have been written on the influence of Isaiah on Luke and the other NT scriptures. This has even led to some calling the book of Isaiah “the fifth gospel” (Mallen 2008, 1).

¹⁶ Luke 3:4-6; Isa 40:3-5; Luke 4:18-19; Isa 61:1-2; Luke 19:46; Isa 56:7; Luke 22:37; Isa 53:12; Acts 7:48; Isa 66:1-2; Acts 8:32-33; Isa 53:7-8; Acts 13:34; Isa 55:3; Acts 13:47; Isa 49:6; Acts 28:25; Isa 6:9

This thesis relies mainly on Peter Mallen's recent study, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts* (Mallen 2008). Mallen demonstrates how strategically Isaiah is used by Luke. The theological concerns thereby are summarized as follows:

"It seems apparent that Luke has selected, arranged and edited his sources through conscious dialogue with the writings of Isaiah. Given that this redaction occurs at significant points in Luke's narrative, it suggests that the changes made reveal his key concerns. These include the universal scope of God's salvation (Luke 3:6; cf. Isa 40:5), the Isaianic nature of Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:18-19; 6:20-26; 7:21-22; cf. Isa 61:1-3) and an active mission to proclaim salvation to Israel and then to all people (Luke 2:30-32; 24:47; Acts 1:8; cf. Isa 49:6). Two major obstacles appear to threaten God's purposes, namely the death of Jesus and the rejection of the message by many in Israel. Luke uses Isaiah—along with other Scriptures—to address both of these significant apologetic issues: God's servant will be rejected and killed before being glorified (Isa 53); and Israel will remain largely blind and deaf to the message of salvation (Isa 6)." (Mallen 2008, 158).

The first obstacle, Jesus' death, does not only lead to the second obstacle, the rejection of the message by many in Israel, it is also the ultimate expression of rejection itself. In this thesis, however, the main focus is limited to Jesus' death by crucifixion in Luke. The question of interest is *how* Jesus' crucifixion communicates meaning in Luke. The Isaianic "Suffering Servant" (Isa 53) plays indeed a key role in Luke's framing of the passion event as will be shown (see chapter 7).

3.5. *Concluding remarks*

It has been made clear in this chapter that in Luke Jesus is portrayed as *a prophet*, resp. *a prophetic Messiah*. This was done on the level of:

- (1) *public appearance*: Jesus is seen by others and by himself as a prophet (3.1.).
- (2) *prophetic style*: Jesus' performance is partly modelled after the legendary Elijah of 1-2 Kings (3.2.).
- (3) *fulfillment of OT eschatological prophecy*: Jesus is announced as the prophetic Messiah by John the Baptist in his role of the eschatological Elijah. The announcement is indirect though, and by means of intertextuality (3.3.).
- (4) *prophetic-messianic mission*: Jesus presents a prophetic-messianic program that is Isaianic. Moreover, through the creative editing of Luke, Isaiah functions as the arching narrative in Luke-Acts that can hold together a wide variety of historical events and

theological concerns. The writings of Isaiah are thus used to add credibility to Luke-Acts (3.4.).

Chapter 4: Jesus' prophetic symbolic acts in Luke

4.0. Introduction

The evidence for the fact that Jesus is a *prophet* in Luke, and in that capacity a *prophetic Messiah*, turned out to be abundant. Given these facts, the focus can now shift to Jesus' prophetic symbolic action in Luke. Does the Lukan Jesus make use of this particular medium that is characteristic for the OT prophets? And if so, which acts of his are *prophetic symbolic acts*? What do they mean? And how does their meaning relate to the overall message of Jesus in Luke?

NT scholars propose different count lists of the symbolic acts of Jesus.¹⁷ A tentative list of acts that might be *prophetic symbolic* in Luke could be the following: Jesus' baptism, the healing of the blind and the sick, the exorcism of demons, the resuscitation of the dead, the proclamation of the good news to the poor, the meal sharing with sinners and tax collectors, the picking of twelve disciples, the sending out of the seventy-two, the feeding of the multitudes, the Entry in Jerusalem, the Cleansing of the Temple and the celebration of the Last Supper.¹⁸

Jesus' crucifixion is not yet mentioned here for obvious reasons. To my knowledge, no one has even considered the execution of Jesus in Luke as a prophetic symbolic act. In this thesis a case is made precisely in favor of this particular view.

Jesus' crucifixion could be seen as the last act in a series of four meaningful acts which together give shape to the "exodus" (Luke 9:31) in Jerusalem. The other three meaningful acts are: the Entry in Jerusalem, the Cleansing of the Temple and the Last Supper. A subchapter is dedicated to each one of these three acts (4.2., 4.3. and 4.4.) in which is determined if the act qualifies as a prophetic symbolic act. The other acts will be discussed first by making a few short observations and some sweeping comments (4.1.).

¹⁷ Theissen lists the following acts: "die Erwählung der Zwölf, die Aussendung der Jünger, die Tischgemeinschaft mit Zöllnern und Sündern, der Einzug in Jerusalem, die Tempelreinigung und das letzte Mahl" (Theissen & Merz 1996, 256).

¹⁸ McKnight (McKnight 2000, 223-224) has an even longer list based on the work of Hooker (Hooker, *Signs of a Prophet*, 3). But his definition of prophetic symbolic action is much less restrictive than Viberg's. He can therefore include the act of *naming* (e.g. Simon becomes Peter) and the act of *ignoring* certain religious conventions (e.g. the disciples not fasting and not handwashing). The inclusion of Luke 5:1-11 is simply obscure. The story has symbolic meaning, but that does not make Peter's fishing trip a prophetic symbolic act.

4.1. *Jesus' acts before the Jerusalem episode*

Jesus' acts prior to the entry into Jerusalem are not clear cut prophetic symbolic acts. In each of them there is symbolic meaning at play, but that does not turn them into *prophetic symbolic acts in the strict sense* of the word as defined in chapter 1.

For example, Jesus' baptism in Luke looks at first sight like a prophetic symbolic act. The act is *non-verbal* and there must have been *bystanders watching the act*. The problem though is that Jesus participates in someone else's prophetic symbolic act, that of John the Baptist (who is not on location). So it is not Jesus' in the first place. But it could have become his symbolic act if he had used the ritual to his own end as a way to convey a prophetic message. But this is clearly not the case.

If we stick to Viberg's definition, then Jesus' baptism in Luke falls short on several criteria. First, Jesus is not yet acknowledged as *a prophet*. Second, Jesus is not in control of the outcome of the baptism. It is God who sends the Spirit from above and speaks. Third, it is not clear in the text whether or not any bystanders can see or hear these phenomena. If they could, then the act would be of a supernatural kind. And if they could not, which seems to be the case, then the act would not be perceived as remarkable in any way. It would look like a fairly conventional baptism without any distinctive features.

Nonetheless, due to narrative orchestration by Luke, the story of Jesus' baptism is highly symbolic. It links Jesus to John the Baptist. And the ritual of baptism means here far more than a cleansing of sins. It is simultaneously a baptism through the Holy Spirit¹⁹ and a divine anointment (Luke 4:18). But that is a whole other matter. The act is in fact only symbolic to the reader of Luke since the reader is the ideal "bystander" here who is intimated with significant details that are hidden to the bystander within the textual world of Luke.

Another example are the miracle stories in which Jesus heals the blind and the sick, exorcizes demons and resuscitates the dead. By themselves these acts qualify as *prophetic magical acts* (see 1.3.) or simply as *acts of healing*.²⁰ But as soon as these acts are bundled

¹⁹ This could explain the absence of John. John does not have the authority of baptizing with the Holy Spirit. But Jesus does. Cf. Luke 3:16.

²⁰ The miracle stories serve multi-faceted purposes, and can not and should not be reduced to a single kind of prophetic action. So for example, some healings raise issues of concern among the scribes with regard to the Mosaic law on purity, the sabbath, the authority to forgive, and sorcery. And some other healings illustrate Jesus' inclusive inclination towards Gentiles.

together with Jesus' act of proclaiming the good news to the poor, they also express symbolic meaning.

These acts fit right into the *prophetic-messianic program* (see also under 3.4.). This program has been laid out by Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 and Luke 7:21-22, and is of Isaianic origin (Isa 61:1-3).

By performing these acts Jesus demonstrates that *the Kingdom of God* is indeed *near* (cf. Luke 21:30-32), and that he is the *One* who is ushering in this kingdom, i.e. that he is *the Messiah*.

However, with the definition of prophetic symbolic acts in mind, it is not without some serious difficulties to view these bundled acts as a whole that qualifies as being prophetic symbolic.

To start with, these acts are not *non-verbal*. They do involve *verbal* proclamation and prophetic healing in which the prophet heals through commanding (e.g. demons) often combined with touching. The healing acts could be seen as *performative speech-acts* (see 1.4.1.), be it of the miraculous kind. Moreover, these acts are not performed *once*, but repeatedly. So they are not unique. Besides, they have a physical impact; people get healed. This experience is quite different from standing by and watching a prophet perform a *theatrical* act. Another problem is the absence of God commanding the prophet explicitly to perform these acts.

And yet, there is something symbolic about these acts as well. They have a primary effect of physical healing (the sick) or psychological encouragement (the poor). But there are also secondary effects to be noticed. These acts are at least *unconventional*. They express *fulfillment* of OT salvation prophecy. But since the fulfillment only partially happens, these acts are also *indexical* (Viberg 2007, 25-26) *signs* or *symbols* for the *complete* arrival of the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, there is an aspect of performance in play as well due to the fact that these acts bring alive the Isaianic prophecies. They could be seen as *enactments of the Scriptures*. And as such they are expressions of God's will and do not lack God's explicit commanding.

4.2. *The entry into Jerusalem*

The entry of the Lukan Jesus into Jerusalem is, as will be made clear in this subchapter, a clear cut case of prophetic symbolic action.

In Luke the whole visit of Jesus to Jerusalem has been anticipated well before. From the moment Jesus discusses his “exodus” with Moses and Elijah (Luke 9) onward, it is mentioned multiple times (Luke 9:31, 51, 53; 13:22, 33-34; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28) that Jerusalem will be the final destination of Jesus’ journey. So there is no lack of intention here. How Jesus will enter Jerusalem is also clear. He is about to stage his entry.

It starts with a peculiar scene of the disciples picking up a colt (Luke 19:29-34). This scene goes mainly back to Mark (Mark 11:2-8). The bystanders in the textual world, the people of Jerusalem, are not yet present. This scene is therefore, strictly speaking, not part of the prophetic symbolic act itself. The reader, on the other hand, is allowed to look behind the curtain. Once again, significant details are passed on to the reader. It is clear that Jesus arranges the colt as a key prop for his upcoming act. The colt “has never been ridden by anybody” (Luke 19:30). This suggests that it has been set aside for this special occasion. It is fit for “the king” (Fitzmyer 1983, 1249). Furthermore, it is said that “the Lord” (ὁ κύριος) has need of the animal (Luke 19:34). The highest title for Jesus is used here. This is not to be confused with “the owners” (οἱ κύριοι) of the colt. The gist of the wordplay seems to be that “the Lord” overrules “the lords”. This scene might also allude to the situation in which the Roman army had a right to confiscate any riding horse in times of war (Bovon 2009, 32). Given the upcoming collision between Jesus and “Jerusalem”, and between Rome and Jerusalem half a century later, this detail is telling. Jesus is on a war path.

The staging of the entry scene involves more than a colt. Disciples drape their robes on the colt as a provisional saddle for Jesus. Other disciples spread out their robes on the road to make sure that Jesus’ ride is untouched by dust. These acts are conventional gestures of festive veneration normally performed in the presence of royalty. A similar case is known from the OT in which fellow-officers spread their garments under Jehu’s feet while calling him “king” (2 Kgs 9:14).

For reasons unclear to me, Luke leaves out the waving of branches here.²¹

By now Luke speaks of “a multitude of disciples” (τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν; Luke 19:37), implying that in the course of Jesus’ journey his following has grown dramatically. And when

²¹ Cf. Mark 11:8; Matt 21:8; John 12:13. Johnson suggests that the waving of branches might be associated with national hopes as can be found in 2 Mcc 10:7 (Johnson 1991, 297). The waving of branches in 2 Mcc follows upon the Cleansing of the Temple. In Luke, Jesus is on his way to the Temple and the symbolic cleansing has not yet taken place. The allusion to 2 Mcc would be most fitting though. It rather seems that Luke is downplaying here the importance of the Temple for Jesus’ mission.

this crowd starts coming down from the Mount of Olives²² they “praise God joyfully” for all the powerful deeds they have seen and they say (λέγοντες) the pilgrim greeting from Ps 118:26 out loud: “Blessed is the King, who comes in the name of the Lord.” Luke follows Mark here, except Luke adds “the King” (ὁ βασιλεύς), putting even more emphasis on the meaning of Jesus’ entry. Luke also adds an *elevated version* of the angelic song at Jesus’ birth: “Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven” (Luke 19:38; trans. Fitzmyer 1983, 1251), instead of: “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth for people whom he favors” (Luke 2:14).

If this particular case is held against the criteria of prophetic symbolic action as developed in chapter 1, then the following can be said; the act is performed *by a prophet*, Jesus, in front of a large group of spectators in the textual world, the people in Jerusalem. Jerusalem must have been packed by locals and pilgrims from outside, like Jesus and his followers, due to the approaching feast of Passover (Luke 22:1). The crowd of Jesus’ followers form an interesting aspect. They play a double role. They are participants in the act, as well as bystanders. They seem to function as a *cheerleading* crowd who shows by example to the crowds of Jerusalem what a proper reception of Jesus looks like.

The act is *non-verbal* on Jesus’ part. However, he is screamed at in praise by the crowds and hailed as king. The crowds in Luke thus comment verbally on the prophetic symbolic act of Jesus and pass on a coded message to the reader of Luke.

The act is certainly *unconventional*. We do not know of any other prophet approaching Jerusalem in this manner. And the act itself is performed only once. The act is also provocative and scandalous in the Pharisees’ opinion. Jesus’ reply to them is only in Luke. It indicates the *necessity* of it all and Jesus’ indirect approval: “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out” (Luke 19:40).

The symbolic meaning seems simple. By entering Jerusalem on a colt and being cheered by a crowd of followers, Jesus is hailed as a king of old. The act itself is *unconventional* due to the fact that Jesus is not the officially recognized king. But the entry on a colt and the particular way of cheering and spreading out garments is more or less *conventional*. It is

²² Like most geography in Luke the Mount of Olives plays a theological role. It is the starting point and the endpoint of the Jerusalem episode (Luke 19: 29, the entry to Jerusalem; 24:50, the ascension), but also the place of Jesus’ prayer and arrest (Luke 22:39).

cultural behavior surrounding the glorious entry of a king who is on the way to his enthronement.

Complications appear when it becomes clear that, unlike the other NT gospels, in Luke a stripped down version of this act is presented. In Luke any reference to king David is left out (cf. Mark 11:10; Matt 21:9). Also an explicit quotation of Zachariah 9:9 is suppressed (cf. Matt 21:4-5; John 12:15). And the waving of branches is missing too (cf. Mark 11:8; Matt 21:8; John 12:13; cf. 2 Mcc 10:7). Why is this? And what sort of king is Luke exactly thinking of? Several suggestions have been made by NT scholars. Johnson believes that Luke wants to steer clear of any nationalistic connotations of Jesus' kingship (Johnson 1991, 301). Fitzmyer thinks that Jesus arrives in Jerusalem neither as the political king, nor as the eschatological king, but simply "as a pilgrim who is hailed as a king" (Fitzmyer 1983, 1245-6; opposed by Bovon, Bovon 2009, 34). He comes to Jerusalem to prepare for his "exodus" (Luke 9:31) and his "rapture" (Luke 9:51)²³, his transit to the Father (Luke 2:49). Or to put it bluntly: Jesus is a "glorified pilgrim" who is not planning to stay in Jerusalem but to "pass by" in heavenly direction.

But there is more to it as Fitzmyer points out (Fitzmyer 1983, 1246). Jesus is greeted by a slightly adapted pilgrim song, Ps 118. The usual "the one who is to come" (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) is immediately followed by the unusual "the king" (ὁ βασιλεύς). This Lukan adjustment in the song marks the only distinction between Jesus and any other pilgrim for whom this song otherwise would be sung. This adaptation thus effectively triggers attention to "the one who is to come". It is an echo of John the Baptist's question in Luke 7:19 and Jesus' prophetic words in Luke 13:35, which brings us straight back to Mal 3:1: "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come (ἔρχεται), says the Lord Almighty." This prophecy will now receive its Lukan fulfillment. It explains Jesus' immediate turn to the Temple right after his entry into Jerusalem.

The Early-Christian theological-historical narrative of the rejection of Jesus by Jerusalem, resulting in his death by Roman execution, and the consequential rejection of Jerusalem by God, resulting in the utter destruction of Jerusalem by the same Roman power forty years later, is clearly present in Luke. The Lukan Jesus hints at both catastrophic events. It also plays a role at Jesus' entry (Luke 19:41-44), and during the rest of his stay in Jerusalem

²³ Luke 9:51, the term 'rapture' has an Elijan connotation (Cf. Zwiép 1997, 85-86). This supports Fitzmyer's interpretation, though he does not seem to be aware of this particular reference.

(Luke 20:9-16; 21:20-28; 23:28-31). This narrative of mutual rejection will be addressed briefly in chapter 7 when going over criterion 8 (see 7.0.).

4.3. *The cleansing of the Temple*

In Luke Jesus enters Jerusalem and goes straight to the Temple to perform another prophetic symbolic act (Luke 19:45-48). The role of the Temple in Luke-Acts is ambiguous and quite complex. It has positive and negative connotations. Jesus is circumcised in the Temple in accordance with Mosaic law (Luke 2:22-24). And he can be found in his “father’s house” at a young age (Luke 2:49). But by the time Stephen gives his speech, sharp Temple criticism can be heard: “However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands.” (Acts 7:48). The last reference, “made by human hands”, implies a serious allegation of idolatry (Dunn 1991, 66-7). It is impossible to go into all the subtleties in Luke-Acts regarding the Temple. The focus here is on the Temple action only.

The entry and the Temple act are tied tightly together in Luke. The transition from the one act into the other is simple and swift. Luke deviates here from Mark. In Mark, Jesus performs the Temple act the day after his arrival in Jerusalem. So Luke skips one day. Furthermore, Luke leaves out the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14). He also shortens and simplifies Jesus’ action, thereby taking out most of its violent details (Mark 11:15-16). And finally he shortens the quotation of Isa 56:7 by leaving out the remark about the Gentiles (Mark 11:17). So once again it looks like Luke presents a stripped down version of Jesus’ prophetic symbolic action in Jerusalem. How can this be explained?

The paired prophetic action of *Entry* and *Temple cleansing* shows determination on Jesus’ end and seems to be motivated by Mal 3:1 as mentioned earlier. The fig tree story has been mitigated in Luke and moved elsewhere (Luke 13:6-9). Given also the fact that the violent details have been taken out, it all seems to suggest that in Luke we have a *pacified version* of the Temple act. This is supported by Jesus’ lament at the entry of Jerusalem: “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.” (Luke 19:42). So in Luke, the purpose of Jesus’ visitation of Jerusalem is offering God’s “terms of peace” (cf. Luke 14:31-32; Johnson 1991, 301). Any violent action or language would not fit well in this image.

Shortening the quotation of Isa 56:7 in Luke seems motivated by two reasons. Once torn down, there will be no need whatsoever of the Temple with regard to the Gentiles (Johnson 1991, 302). Luke thus anticipates here the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple.

Moreover, Jesus' demonstration takes place at a section of the Temple square that is already accessible to the Gentiles. So the addition "for all the nations" (Mark 11:17) does not make any sense here (Sanders 1985, 66).

Many scholars view Jesus' Temple act in Luke as a cleansing in order to create the proper space for his teaching (Johnson 1991, 302, 307; Fitzmyer 1983, 1267; Klein 2006, 620). The result is the occupation of the public area of the Temple for multiple days (Luke 19:47-48; 21:37-38) during which Jesus teaches and the people "hang on his words".

With respect to the criteria of prophetic symbolic action, the Temple act of Jesus seems to qualify. When entering Jerusalem Jesus has been hailed as *the Messiah*. A large crowd is now following his every move. So the stage is set for the next, even more dramatic *performance*.

The act of driving the merchants out of the Temple area is a *one-time* performance. It is a *highly unconventional* act if not a straightforward transgression and demonstration of civil disobedience. However, the provocation is downplayed in the text of Luke.

The act is *intentional*, given Jesus' determination by going straight to the Temple, and given Jesus' quotations of Isaiah and Jeremiah in which God's anger against the Temple's commerce is expressed.

Due to the quotations, the act is not entirely *non-verbal*. The bystanders in the textual world might not hear Jesus quoting OT prophets. But the reader of Luke does and gets its message.

The meaning of the Temple demonstration seems clear enough in Luke; Jesus performs a *cleansing* of money driven commerce. This cleansing is quite literal by removing merchants physically. However, the cleansing seems also a *random and incomplete one-time measure*. The act is therefore symbolic. And the symbolism can be categorized as *indexical*. The act is just a partial cleansing that symbolizes by association a total and thorough cleansing of God's Temple.

The cleansing has a deeper meaning. It prepares the Temple area for Jesus' teaching. Jesus teaching on that particular location could be seen as the prophetic enactment of Isa 2; especially Isa 2:3: "Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of

the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

The scene in which Jesus teaches at the Temple area can be understood as Jesus commenting himself on the Temple act. He addresses exactly those three matters that are at stake in the Temple act: authority, money and the proper dedication towards God.

4.4 *The Last Supper*

Surprisingly the Last Supper (Luke 22:1-38) does not qualify as a prophetic symbolic act. Even though this Passover meal is charged with symbolic meaning, that by itself does not make it a prophetic symbolic act. This becomes clear when the criteria of prophetic symbolic action are taken into account.

The Last Supper seems to meet most criteria. It is performed by Jesus, the prophetic Messiah in Luke. Jesus' instructions before and his speech during the meal indicate *intention*. There is an *audience*, albeit small, in the shape of the twelve disciples. There is the *conventional* element of a Passover meal. And there is the *unconventional* element of Jesus ascribing symbolic meaning to two cups of wine and to the breaking of bread in between. It all takes place in a somewhat theatrical manner. The new symbolic meaning is instilled through what could be called a *illocutionary speech-act*. The meaning is explained by Jesus. It is related to his upcoming suffering and death and its consequences for the kingdom of God as well as the roles of the disciples. So far so good.

However, the problem is the very *verbal* form of it all. Jesus' words are essential to this act. Without these words the non-verbal elements would not make any sense. They require a verbal explanation (or speech-act). With Jesus' entry and Temple act this is not the case. Those acts speak for themselves with or without the verbal utterings.

The question that comes up next, is: If the act of the Last Supper is not a prophetic symbolic act, then what is it? It could be best described as a *cultic symbolic act*. There is a *new ritual that is inscribed into an old one*. The Jewish Passover meal is *re-signified*²⁴ by the Lukan Jesus in the light of the events that are about to take place: Jesus' suffering and death.

²⁴ Viberg dismisses several cases of prophetic action in the OT that have to do with *name giving* (e.g. Isa 7:3; 8:3,18; Hos 1:3-9). He does not see how giving a name is a symbolic act. That does not mean that the names themselves cannot be symbolic in the OT (Viberg 2007, 47). Re-signifying an existing ritual could be understood as being similar to *name giving*. The act of *name giving*, and of *renaming* too (e.g. Gn 35:10; Matt 16:18; Acts 9:1-9), could be qualified as *ritual convention*.

Jesus thus installs a new ritual that functions as a *memorial meal* even before he has died. The ritual will serve as a reminder for Jesus' disciples. Jesus has served them and now they will have to serve others (Luke 22:24-27). It means that the disciples "inherit" the kingdom of God. They have proven to be loyal to Jesus and his cause and for that reason they will face persecution as well (Luke 22:28-30).

So this act could be seen as *the first performance* of what is to become a *cultic symbolic act*, which implies *the repetition of a ritual*. This is precisely another reason why the Last Supper does not qualify as a prophetic symbolic act: It is not intended as a *one-time performance*.

Once installed as a cultic symbolic act, it can also be communicated *non-verbally*. The story of the Emmaus' travelers illustrates this point beautifully. The disciples recognize Jesus by the breaking of the bread.

4.5. *Concluding remarks*

In Luke Jesus makes use of the medium of prophetic symbolic action. The clearest cases of this type of action were Jesus' *Entry in Jerusalem* and the following *Temple act*. Overall, it seems that Jesus' prophetic symbolic acts in Luke have certain features in common which are new and unlike the ones of the OT prophetic symbolic acts:

- (1) *Living out and enacting* a scriptural text.
- (2) Thus presenting *fulfillment*, or partial fulfillment, of the OT prophecies.
- (3) With regard to *the eschatological salvation*.
- (4) Thus presenting in a *self-referential* manner *the Messiah* non-verbally.
- (5) *The reader of Luke is the ideal audience*, not the bystander of the textual world of Luke.

This last notion is especially relevant in this study. It means that the prophetic symbolic act now becomes primarily a reader's experience. This notion will be explored further when looking into Jesus' crucifixion in Luke.

Chapter 5: The extent of the stage

5.0. Introduction

To put it bluntly: In Luke, Jesus *stages* (1) his own crucifixion with *the intent* (2) of conveying *a message* (3). In this chapter, only *the extent of the stage* (1) will be considered. *The extent of the stage* deals with the question of how the stage is assembled (see also 1.6.1.). It is about *if* and *how* the *external* criteria of a prophetic symbolic act are met in the case of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke. These external criteria are: 1. performed by a prophet (5.1.); 2. a non-verbal performance (5.2.); 3. unconventional (5.3.).

5.1. Performed by a prophet

The first criterion, the fact that in Luke Jesus is a prophet, had been met earlier (see chapter 3). And yet it is precisely the notion of Jesus being *the prophetic Messiah* that is contested in Jerusalem resulting in the execution of Jesus. But who exactly in Jerusalem is opposed to Jesus? Does the whole city turn against him, or just a particular group or person?

In Luke it becomes clear that solely the Jewish Council of Jerusalem is to be blamed for Jesus' death (Luke 24:20; Acts 5:30; 7:52). They are portrayed as the schemers and plotters behind the scenes (Luke 19:47-48; 20:19-20; 22:2). They circumvent a potential confrontation with the people of Jerusalem by arresting Jesus *outside the city walls* and *at night* (Luke 22:52-54). And they manipulate the Roman authority into executing Jesus (Luke 23:1-25).

The Roman authority on the other hand is more or less exonerated. Their role in the execution of Jesus is seen as instrumental. The fact that only the Roman authority had the legal power to bring a convict to death and that in Jesus' case they clearly did so, does not change this outlook in Luke.

Lastly "the people" of Jerusalem are depicted as first siding with Jesus (Luke 21:38), then briefly siding with the Jewish Council (Luke 23:4,13,18,23). This brief support happens to be fatal to Jesus' case. They regret their disloyalty and side again with Jesus, but the damage is already done (Luke 23:27,35,48). On the road to Emmaus it is told that Jesus is viewed most favorably as "the prophet, powerful in word and deed in the eyes of God and of all the people" (Luke 24:19). Their short but intense support of the Jewish Council is mitigated by Jesus' words of forgiveness from the cross (Luke 23:34; not in all manuscripts), and later on

by Peter's speech. Peter does not hold the people accountable for their deed since they acted out of "ignorance" (Acts 3:17; cf. Johnson 1991, 376).

In regard to Jesus' execution in Luke, the Jewish Council in Jerusalem is *guilty*, the Roman authority *used*, and "the people" more or less *innocent*. This view is particular for Luke. He deviates here from Mark, his source text, and also differs from Matthew and John.

5.1.1. *The Jewish Council*

Luke names three parties that make up the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem: The high priests, the scribes and the elders (Luke 22: 52, 66; cf. Mark 14:43, 15:1). Together they form the *Sanhedrin*, the Jewish Council in Jerusalem, a group of seventy-two members (Bovon 2009, 365-66; Johnson 1991, 359). High priests and scribes are said to plot Jesus' death (Luke 19:47; 20:1,20; 22:2). The resulting arrest of Jesus is made by temple guards in the presence of all three parties (Luke 22:52). They all mock and harass him at the house of the high priest (Luke 22: 63-65). During the hearing, Jesus is questioned by the whole Council.

Three actions of the Jewish Council in the legal process against Jesus are of special interest in this thesis: The initial charge of *blasphemy* (5.1.1.1.), the *turning over* of Jesus to the Roman authority (5.1.1.2.) and the reframing of the initial charge into *rebellion* (5.1.1.3.).

5.1.1.1. *Blasphemy*

In comparison to Mark, Luke's version of the hearing (Luke 22:66-71) is remarkably simplified. There is no mentioning of "false witnesses" (cf. Mark 14:55-61; Matt 26: 59-60). Any accusation of Temple molestation (cf. Mark 14: 58; Matt 26:61) is taken out. There is no high priest in charge as the leading questioner (cf. Mark 14:61; Matt 26: 57, 62-66). The legal charge of *blasphemy* is only suggested by implication (Luke 22: 71). And there is no word of this transgression deserving the death penalty (cf. Mark 14:64; Matt 26:66).

The image that arises is that of a single, solid consentient council. They operate as one group and not by instigation of one leading figure. Furthermore, they do not base their judgment on the testimonies of witnesses. They themselves produce the false testimony by putting words into Jesus' mouth (Luke 22:71). Due to their massive concord, the whole Council—and not one person in particular—is held responsible for Jesus' death in Luke (Johnson 1991, 362-3).

The men who mock and beat a blindfolded Jesus (Luke 22:63-64), ask him “to prophesize” which one of them is punching him. It indicates that Jesus’ prophetic status is the issue. On top of that these men say “many blasphemous things” (πολλὰ βλασφημοῦντες; Luke 22:65) to Jesus. The word choice is telling in the light of the next scene, the hearing. The Council accuses Jesus of blasphemy. However, the word “blasphemy” itself is not mentioned. It is only implied (Luke 22:71). This suggests that the underlying message of Luke is pointing in the opposite direction: The Jewish Council commits blasphemy, not Jesus.

At the hearing the title “the Messiah” (ὁ χριστός; Luke 22:67) shifts deceptively to “the Son of man” (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; Luke 22:69) and then to “the Son of God” (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ; Luke 22:70). These shifts can be made because these titles have partial overlaps in meaning. Yet, they have also significantly different connotations (Fitzmyer 1983, 1467-8). Jesus’ testimony speaks only of “the Son of man”. When questioned about being “the Messiah” or “the Son of God”, Jesus’ answers are evasive and inconclusive. He neither confirms nor denies these titles. From a legal point of view, Jesus does not incriminate himself. But the Council decides otherwise. According to them, he does incriminate himself based on his answer to the most pretentious title of the three: Son of God. The allegation that is assumed here but not spoken is the one of blasphemy.

5.1.1.2. *Turning over*

The Council decides “to turn over” Jesus to the Roman authority in Jerusalem. This was the plan all along (Luke 20:20). It is precisely this “turn over” in Luke that proves to be fatal for Jesus.

In Luke the term *turn over* (παραδοῦναι) is one of the *keywords* that can capture the whole Passion story. Jesus himself announces his “turn over” twice. He will be *turned over* to “men” (Luke 9:44) or to “the Gentiles” (Luke 18:32). As mentioned, the high priests and scribes are looking for an opportunity “to turn over” Jesus to “the authority of the prefect” (Luke 20:20). Judas offers his services “to turn over” Jesus to the high priests (Luke 21:4,6). During the Last Supper Jesus warns “that man” by whom he will be “turned over”. At the arrest Jesus asks Judas if he is “turning” him “over” with a kiss (Luke 21:48). When the Council and the crowd keep chanting for Jesus’ crucifixion, Pilate concedes by “turning over” Jesus to their will (Luke 23:25). At the empty grave the angels remind the women of Jesus’ words that he would be “turned over” to “sinful men” (Luke 24:7). And on the road to Emmaus two disciples explain to their mysterious co-traveler that “the high priests and the leaders” of Jerusalem

were the ones who “turned over” Jesus in order to get him convicted and crucified (Luke 24:20).

At the center of all these “turn overs” is the one in which the Jewish Council “turns over” Jesus to the Roman authority (which are “Gentiles” (Luke 18:32)). The other “turn overs” might be derived from this one. But there is more to it. There is even a theological version in which God “turns over” his Son to “men” (Luke 9:44) or ultimately to “Satan” (Luke 22:3-4; cf. John 19:11). The repetitive usage of “turn over” and its theological form indicate *intertextuality*. The *verbal allusion* of “turning over” combined with the *conceptual allusion* of God as the acting agent behind all these “turn overs” resonate in *the Song of the Suffering Servant*: “and the Lord *turned him over* for our sins” (Isa 53:6 LXX: καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἡμῶν; trans. AJB), “because his soul was *turned over* to death” (Isa 53:12 LXX: ἀνθ’ ὧν παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ; trans. AJB), “and was *turned over* due to their sins (Isa 53:12 LXX: καὶ διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη; trans. AJB). Note how “the Lord” is the ultimate agent behind the “turning over” (cf. Luke 9:44) and how “our”, resp. “their sins”, are the ultimate reason (cf. Luke 24:7)

5.1.1.3. *Rebellion*

In the act of turning over Jesus to the Roman prefect Pilate (Luke 23:1-25), the Council has made a subtle, yet decisive, change in the allegation against Jesus. The Council accuses Jesus of seducing the people into unlawful behavior (1), trying to prevent them from paying their taxes to the Roman emperor (2) and claiming to be “the Messianic king” (3) (Luke 23: 2). What started out as a religious matter among Jews—the allegation of *blasphemy*—is now framed as a capital crime case of *rebellion* against Caesar and the Roman state. Note that the initial allegation of blasphemy would be inadmissible in Roman court, while the second would not (cf. Acts 18:12-16; 23:26-30; 25:17-27; 26:30-32).

After questioning Jesus, Pilate and Herod shortly after, both dismiss these charges as ungrounded (Luke 23:13-15). Pilate argues three times in favor of Jesus’ release (Luke 23:16, 20, 22). But the protest of the Council members and “the people” (Luke 23:13) is relentless. They keep chanting for Jesus’ crucifixion. After the third time, Pilate rests his case and concedes to the pressure of the protesters (Luke 23:25; Acts 3:13-14; cf. Acts 25:9).

5.2. *A non-verbal performance*

The second criterion requires that the crucifixion in Luke is *a non-verbal performance*. A non-verbal performance is in fact a conglomeration of aspects that can also be analyzed

separately. In the case of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke this analytical approach seems helpful for reasons of transparency. The aspects that will be analyzed separately in sub-subchapters are: the *Roman* aspect of crucifixion (5.2.1.), the *public* aspect of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke (5.2.2.), the *non-verbal* aspect (5.2.3.).

5.2.1. *A Roman performance*

The Roman crucifixion is not something that is done behind closed doors. On the contrary, it is a *public demonstration* and a display of power. The execution of the convict is turned into a *performance* of humiliation, torture and eventually death. It was the most dishonorable, most scandalous punishment imaginable in the Roman empire. Only slaves and insurgents could be condemned to this form of death penalty. Roman citizens were exempted from it (Theissen & Merz 1996, 399-401).

It seems justified to call the crucifixion a *Roman legal symbolic act*. The act does not just consist in the disposal of a human being. It also conveys symbolic meaning. It functions as a deterrence and a warning to civilians. Its message is to not rebel and to not even consider rebellion against Caesar and the Roman state. It thus symbolizes the absolute power of Rome over life and death of its civilians. The act is *conventional* since it is bound by a *legal script* that is embedded in the culture of the Roman empire.

This translates as follows to Jesus' crucifixion in Luke: The aspect of *performance* is an undeniable part of the Roman legal symbolic act of crucifixion. However, the problem remains that Jesus does not seem to be the *author* of the act. He does not *stage* his own crucifixion; the Romans do. They are the ones who are "running the show". Jesus is just a convict who is forced to play his part in this Roman *performance* in which he is killed before an audience.

5.2.2. *In public*

The execution of Jesus takes place in public. It is obviously meant to be seen by the people, present in Jerusalem at the time of the "Passover" festival (Luke 22:1,7,13). These people are not just the local inhabitants of Jerusalem but also the many visiting Jewish pilgrims, in short: The Jewish people (ὁ λαός).

The opening scene of this public *performance* is when Jesus is led away by the soldiers (Luke 23:26). They take him from Pilate's court to Golgotha, a place just outside the city walls that serves as the customary *stage* for public executions (Luke 23:33). A passenger,

Simon of Cyrene, is ordered to carry the cross, the key *prop* of the execution (Luke 23:26). “A large crowd of the people, not only men, but also women” (πολὺ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ γυναικῶν), follow Jesus. The women mourn and make gestures of repentance (Luke 23:27). And there are two other convicts who are also led away (Luke 23:32). This all indicates *a dramatic procession* through Jerusalem to the final destination outside the city walls.

The next scene of the public performance is at the location of the execution itself. Jesus and the two “criminals” are crucified. This means they are attached to the crosses with nails and raised up high in order to be visible from afar. Jesus is in the middle and the criminals are on either side of him (Luke 23:33). He is literally the center of attention. And above his head hangs, for all to see, the inscription that states the cause of his conviction: king of the Jews (Luke 23:38). “The people” simply stand and “watch” passively (ὁ λαὸς θεωρῶν; Luke 23:35). Meanwhile the Roman soldiers and the members of the Jewish Council are engaged in mocking and teasing of the convict (Luke 23:34-37). They thus participate actively in this public performance.

In Luke 23:48, right after Jesus’ death (Luke 23:46), the text passage mentions “the crowds” (οἱ ὄχλοι) who had come together “because of this spectacle” (ἐπὶ τὴν θεωρίαν ταύτην) and who now return to their homes after “having watched” (θεωρήσαντες) Jesus’ execution.

So in Luke the crucifixion is indeed described as *a public spectacle* that is *watched by spectators*. The Greek noun, θεωρία (cf. BDAG, θεωρία, ας, ἡ), and related verb, θεωρέω, are used here consistently. Moreover, the story contains several dramatic characterizations, such as: the procession through Jerusalem, the stage at Golgotha, the staging of the crosses, the *dramatis personae* of convicts, soldiers, leadership, crowds, etc. It is therefore not a stretch to speak here of *a public performance*.

When mentioning the spectators, Luke refers to them as “the people” (ὁ λαός) and only sometimes as “the crowds” (οἱ ὄχλοι). The term “the people” is very specific and has a positive meaning in Luke (e.g. Luke 21:38). It resonates in the OT and denotes “the chosen people” or “the people of God” (Bovon 2009, 53, 452). The Jewish people here are *the intended audience*. The public spectacle of crucifixion is *addressed* primarily to them. And so is its message. It has this feature in common with an OT prophetic symbolic act, which is in principle a performance before “the people of Israel” (cf. Deut 34:12).

5.2.3. *Non-verbal*

The act is non-verbal. It is true that Jesus speaks on his way to Golgotha and later on from the cross. But it does not seem to be part of the performance itself. He does not *explain* the prophetic meaning of the submissive act of crucifixion. Moreover, he does not address his words to the crowds of spectators. He speaks to particular persons: a few mourning women, one of the criminals and God. Jesus' words should be considered here as subtext that might give clues about *the meaning of the crucifixion* (see chapter 7).

5.3. *Unconventional*

The third criterion requires that the crucifixion in Luke is unconventional. At this point in the analysis, Jesus' crucifixion in Luke is still absorbed by the convention of the Roman legal symbolic act. There is not yet a secondary meaning to be noticed. Therefore, it was said that Jesus is not yet *the author of the act* (see 5.2.1.). He is still submerged in primary meaning. Suppose, however, there is a secondary meaning, then the act itself is highly *unconventional*, and thus *innovative* and *unique*, as a way to communicate a prophetic message (see also 2.1.).

In order for the Lukan Jesus to become the *author* of this act and to convey a symbolic meaning, three elements need to be located:

1. Jesus' intent of staging in Luke.
2. A visible, distinctive feature that sets Jesus' crucifixion in Luke apart from any other crucifixion.
3. An alternative meaning of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke that overwrites the Roman meaning.

The first element will be dealt with in chapter 6, and the second and third element in chapter 7.

5.3. *Concluding remarks*

In chapter 5 the *extent* of the stage of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke was determined.

In Luke, the Jewish Council of Jerusalem receives the majority of the blame for Jesus' wrongful death. The Roman authority is exonerated. It has been misled and used by the Jewish Council. And the people of Jerusalem, despite a weak moment at the trial, are more or less innocent as well.

The Jewish Council contests precisely Jesus' *prophetic Messiahship*. However, by rejecting Jesus' status they somehow confirm it too. So even here criterion 1 was met.

Jesus' crucifixion is a *non-verbal performance in public*. It was explained that Jesus participates in a *Roman legal symbolic act* which is *scripted by conventions* and which takes place *in public*. All the components of this act suggested the Roman execution to be a "spectacle" (Luke 23:48) that is watched by the people of Jerusalem.

The Lukan Jesus speaks three times from the cross, but not more than a few words. And these words do not comment on the act of crucifixion itself.

The problem was that Jesus participates in an act that is not his. Even though this act is a *spectacle* that is provocative and stirs up a variety of emotional responses, it still operated within its conventional boundaries. The Lukan Jesus was not yet *the author of the act*. This could only be changed by locating in the text of Luke Jesus' *intent* of staging, *the distinctive feature* of Jesus' crucifixion and *the alternative meaning of this 'act'*.

Chapter 6: The intent of staging

6.0. Introduction

When looking at *the intent of staging* (see also 1.6.2.) the focus is the *intentional* aspect of the prophetic symbolic act. The *intent of staging* concerns two criteria from the overall list of criteria that defines prophetic symbolic action. One requires that the prophetic symbolic act is *commanded by God* (criterion 4), the other requires that the act is performed *at the volition of the prophet* (criterion 5).

The fact that a prophetic symbolic act is performed with *the intent of staging*, does not inform the reader about the meaning of the act. It only tells her *that* the prophetic act carries meaning. And it also tells her that the prophet is *the author* of the act and no one else. However, the wording of the intent in the text can be used as a vehicle to pass on information to the reader of how the prophetic act should be understood. In Luke this often happens. This kind of information is *information on meaning* and will be looked into in chapter 7.

The distinction between criterion 4 and 5 can be difficult (see also 1.6.2.2.). In most cases in Luke, God's will and Jesus' seem inseparably aligned. They come, so to speak, as a pair. This makes it practically impossible to make a clear distinction between the two. In the analysis the two criteria are held closely together as *almost one*.

6.1. The self-prophecies

Jesus' intent to go to Jerusalem in order to face suffering and death by crucifixion is expressed several times throughout Luke.²⁵ In almost all cases Jesus announces in private to his disciples what will happen to him in Jerusalem. In this thesis, these peculiar announcements will be referred to as *self-prophecies*.²⁶ The self-prophecies show great variety. Some are fairly long and detailed, others are short and use just one or two key words which refer to Jesus' final episode in Jerusalem. Some have overlap in vocabulary, others are quite unique.

²⁵ The texts in Luke that will be considered are: Luke 9:22, 31, 44, 51, 53; 12:50; 17:11, 25; 18:31-34; 19:28; 20:17; 22:15, 21-22, 37, 96; 24:6-8, 25-26, 44-46.

²⁶ Not to be confused with *self-fulfilling prophecies*.

Together they all hit on recurring themes and seem to be structured around a set of fixed elements. In most cases *the announcer* (1) is Jesus, and *the addressed* (2) are just the disciples. The repeated and particular use in Luke of *the location* (3) “Jerusalem” lends an ominous ring to this word. “Jerusalem” can even capture the whole passion story (Luke 9:31). For that reason it is called *a key word*. There are other key words as well.

Jesus refers to himself as “the Son of Man” which indicates *prophetic speech* (4). Jesus’ *opponents* (5) who will kill him are mentioned by different names, varying from “men”, “sinful men”, “Gentiles” to “this generation” and “the elders, the High priests and the scribes”. The last group is the Jewish Council.

Three malevolent actions against Jesus could be discriminated. Jesus speaks of being “turned over” (6), undergoing “suffering” (7) and being “killed” (8). Being “rejected” (Luke 9:22; 17:25) is another expression that is used in this context. Jesus’ *vindication* (9) of being “raised on the third day” follows upon the enumeration of the malevolent actions.

God’s will (10) behind all that Jesus prophesies about himself, is expressed by three terms that appear by themselves as well as combined: “must”, “fulfill” and “as is written”. These terms are held together by the Lukan notion that God has a plan for this world. This plan is *written* down in the Scriptures. It *must* be carried out in human history and, when this happens, is *fulfilment* of God’s plan.

In the next sub-subchapters each element will be commented briefly.

6.1.1. *The announcer*

In most cases Jesus is *the announcer of the self-prophecy*. There are a few exceptions. In Luke 9:31 Jesus *discusses* his “exodus” with Moses and Elijah on a mount. And a little further on the narrator in Luke speaks of Jesus’ near future in which he will be “taken up to heaven” (Luke 9:51). Jesus’ crucifixion (and ascension) is thus tagged as a Moses-like exodus and an Elijah-like rapture. By tying in Moses and Elijah, who represent here the Law, resp. the Prophets, the self-prophecy is invested with the authority of the Scriptures (element 10).

There are also non-verbal indications of intent. From time to time it is mentioned in Luke that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51,53; 17:11; 19:28). Jesus does not speak here, but his march says it all. It shows determination (Luke 9:51) and aim of intent.

After Easter the disciples are reminded of Jesus' self-prophecy. First by the angel at the empty grave (Luke 24:6-8), then by Jesus *incognito* on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:25-26), and finally by the risen Jesus himself (Luke 24:44-46). These texts function as post-Easter confirmations of the pre-Easter self-prophecies. It comes close to a "I told you so!" after the fact. And the *otherworldly* appearance of the speaker (the angel, resp. the risen Jesus) reinforces the heavenly origin of the prophecy (element 10).

6.1.2. *The addressed*

Jesus entrusts only his disciples with his self-prophecies (Luke 9:18-22; 43-45; 17:25; 18:34; Luke 22:15). The very first time this kind²⁷ of self-prophecy (Luke 9:18-22) is mentioned, Jesus takes them aside in order to talk to them in private about his messiahship and the secrecy thereof. The self-prophecy follows right after and indicates the political-religious sensitivity of the topic of messiahship.

Before Easter the disciples are puzzled by Jesus' prophecy. They do not understand any of it (Luke 9:43-45; 18:34; 22:23) and they do not even dare to ask what it is all about (Luke 9:45). It is only after Easter that their eyes are opened by the risen Jesus, by his *otherworldly* presence and by his explanation of the Scriptures (Luke 24:6-8, 25-26, 44). It is only then that they understand.

Meanwhile the reader of Luke is informed as well. On the one hand the reader is, like a disciple, made familiar with Jesus' *awareness* of his deadly mission in Jerusalem. On the other hand, it is explained to the reader why the disciples do not talk Jesus out of going to Jerusalem. They simply do not *get* his prophecy and are in denial.

6.1.3. *The ominous location*

In Luke "Jerusalem" has several connotations. It is the city of David and the Temple. But it is also the city of Jesus' opponents, the Jewish Council. And it is the city that is doomed and will be destroyed by the Romans.

However, there is one connotation that is even more dominant than all the others: Jerusalem as the location of Jesus' arrest, trial and execution. For that reason, the name "Jerusalem" often functions in Luke as an *indexical* key word that captures the whole passion story (Luke

²⁷ The self-prophecies about the "second coming" are of a different kind.

9:31). Just mentioning “Jerusalem” can be ominous and foretelling in Luke (Luke 9:51,53; 17:11; 19:28). Elsewhere Jesus refers to “Jerusalem” as *an agent* who kills the prophets that God has sent to her (Luke 13:34), implying his own fate as well.

6.1.4. *The self-reference*

In his *self-prophecies* Jesus consistently, and exclusively²⁸, refers to himself as “the Son of Man”²⁹. The self-prophecies about Jesus’ suffering and death are no exception here (Luke 9:22,44; Luke 17:25; Luke 18:31; Luke 22:22; Luke 24:7).³⁰ Much research has been done by NT scholars on this particular title that seems to go back to Ezekiel but also to Dan 7:13 (Johnson 1991, 94). Having said that, the *self-referential* use of this title is unique to Jesus. There is nothing like it in the OT. It suffices here to say that Jesus’ use of this title sets *the prophetic tone*. It thus indicates the genre of *eschatological prophecy*.

A telling moment is Jesus’ self-prophecy in the presence of the Jewish Council: “But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God” (Luke 22:69; cf. Mark 14:62; Matt 26:64). Luke’s adjustments of Mark here change the meaning drastically. In Mark 14:62 Jesus alludes to “the coming of the Son of Man” at the end-time. In Luke though, the humiliation of Jesus in *present* time on earth is paralleled by his immediate enthronement in heaven.³¹ The self-prophecy is code language for Jesus’ exaltation (see 7.7.) and implies intent as well.

6.1.5. *The opponents*

Some self-prophecies mention Jesus’ opponents. But the descriptions of them vary from general to very specific. In the first self-prophecy on this matter (Luke 9:22), Jesus is very clear. The opponents are, to no surprise (see 5.1.), “the elders”, “the highpriests” and “the scribes”. We recognize here the Jewish Council of Jerusalem.

Other descriptions are: “men” (Luke 9:44), “sinful men” (Luke 24:7), “Gentiles” (Luke 18:32) and “this generation” (Luke 17:25). The last description is a theme in Luke. Jesus blames

²⁸ The title ‘the Son of Man’ appears only once in Acts (Acts 7:55-56). This indicates that the title is particular for Jesus as a way of self-reference in prophetic speech.

²⁹ This title appears in Luke by a total count of twenty-six times.

³⁰ In the first self-prophecy concerning suffering and death (Luke 9:22) the prophetic self-referential title is used by the Lukan Jesus. However, the last time (Luke 24:44) the risen Jesus does not. He simply refers to himself by the pronoun “me” (περὶ ἐμοῦ). The theological implications of this omission are unclear to me.

³¹ Bovon and Johnson believe that Jesus refers here to his resurrection. Cf. Bovon, 369-370; Johnson, 359-360.

“this generation” for its opposition to the prophet’s message (Luke 7:31; 9:41; 11:29, 30, 31, 32, 50, 51; 16:8; 17:25; Acts 2:40). Once again this seems influenced by *the Song of the Suffering Servant* (Isa 53:8 LXX)

6.1.6. *The first act against Jesus*

This point has been discussed sufficiently in chapter 5 (see 5.1.1.2.). Three self-prophecies refer to Jesus being “turned over” (vb. παραδίδωμι) (Luke 9:44; 22:21-22; 24:6-8). Like “Jerusalem” this verb is an indexical key word in Luke that captures the whole passion story. Instead of the location the emphasis is now the intertextual link with *the Song of the Suffering Servant* (Isa 53). It also connotes “betrayal” (e.g. Luke 22:48).

6.1.7. *The second act against Jesus*

Another key word in Luke is “suffering”. Like the other key words it describes a single aspect of the final episode in Jerusalem, and yet it sums up the whole passion story (Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:25-26; 24:46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23). It captures all forms of pain; psychological (humiliation) as well as physical (torture), that Jesus undergoes in Jerusalem. Luke 18:32 illustrates this point; it speaks of “mocking”, “insulting”, “spitting” and “flogging”. “Suffering” is also one of the most relevant verbal allusions to *the Song of the Suffering Servant* (Isa 53; see 7.5.) in Luke.

6.1.8. *The third act against Jesus*

That Jesus will be “killed” is mentioned only twice (Luke 9:22; 18:33).³² At other times, Jesus is more circumspect and merely implies his near future death. In those instances, key words like “turned over”, “suffering” and “rejection” are also covering his execution. Other ways of hinting at his death are by mentioning “the fulfillment” (e.g. Luke 9:31), or calling it “a baptism” (Luke 12: 51), or “entering his glory” (24:26).

6.1.9. *The victory of Jesus*

Like his death, Jesus’ resurrection “on the third day” is mentioned twice by himself (Luke 9:22; 18:33) and once by the angel at the empty grave (Luke 24:7). These text passages seem to be structured by an enumeration of three fixed events. Jesus “must” first be “turned over”, “rejected” or submitted to “suffering”, then “killed”, and finally “raised on the third day”. (Luke 9:22; 18:32-33; 24:7).

³² In Luke 24:7 the angel at the empty grave cites supposedly Jesus’ own words in which Jesus is very specific about his death and uses the word “crucified”.

6.1.10. *According to God's will*

Behind Jesus' crucifixion the will of God is operating. This is expressed in several ways by Jesus in Luke.

First, in the self-prophecies of Jesus the verb "must" (δεῖ, resp. ἔδει) pops up a number of times (Luke 9:22; 17:25; 24:7,26,44) and seems highly meaningful. Much has been said about the specific use of the word δεῖ in Luke by NT scholars³³. It creates a sense of necessity with regard to the events that are about to take place, or that, in retrospect (Luke 24:7,26,44), have taken place. That Jesus "had to suffer all these things" (ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν, Luke 24: 26), seems to suggest far more than God just *commanding* the prophetic messiah. It rather suggests that Jesus' mission was *God's plan* all along (Acts 2:23), as if scripted. And this plan has been revealed to the OT prophets and can therefore be "known" (Luke 24: 25-26; Acts 3:18).

Second, another verb that seems key in Jesus' self-prophecies is "to fulfill" (πληρωθῆναι; Luke 9:31; 18:31; 22:16; 24:44). Its meaning has a similar connotation as the last one. It is usually mentioned in combination with "a prophecy" (BDAG, πληρόω, 4a). The Lukan Jesus views his suffering as fulfillment of the OT prophecies. The fact that the OT prophets are not always mentioned does not change that. In Luke 9:31 Jesus discusses his "exodus" with notably Moses and Elijah, who represent the Law and the Prophets. The "fulfillment" is at stake, meaning "the fulfillment of Jesus' mission as written by the Prophets" (cf. Luke 18:31). And this notion applies to Luke 22:15-16 as well.

Third, the suffering that Jesus must fulfill leads back to "the Scriptures". As is said in Luke 18:31: "...everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled." The emphasis in Luke is on *the fulfillment of prophecy*. For that reason, the whole OT is viewed as *prophecy*. Not just the prophets (Luke 18:31; 24:25), but also the Law of Moses (Luke 9:31; 24:44) and the Psalms (Luke 20:17; 24:44). In Luke 24:44 all three features come together: "Everything *must* be *fulfilled* that is *written* about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

³³ Just the title of Cosgrove's article illustrates this point well: "The Divine Δεῖ in Luke-Acts". Cosgrove sketches the history of previous investigations of this Lukan feature by NT scholars (Cosgrove 1984, 169-170). His general conclusion is as follows: "The term δεῖ is not a terminus technicus in Luke-Acts but carries a wide range of meaning. There is, however, within this circle of broad usage a motif of the divine "must" that is crucially important to Luke" (Cosgrove 1984, 189).

6.2. *Other utterances of intent by Jesus in Luke*

Besides the self-prophecies there are other genres in Luke through which Jesus reveals his true intention of going to Jerusalem. For example, in some of the parables he *hints* at his death (e.g. Luke 19:12-27; 20:9-19). These utterances of intent are, unlike the self-prophecies, *in public*. And probably for that same reason less clear and *coded*.

Yet another genre in Luke in which Jesus' intention shows, is *prayer*. Just before his arrest Jesus prays to the "Father" to be exempted from "this cup" (Luke 22:39-46). Jesus is "in agony" and he is sweating blood (Luke 22:44). It is clear that Jesus is aware of what is about to come. His will is seriously tested. This prayer seems a most private matter between Jesus and God the Father. And yet its content is also confided to the reader of Luke.

6.3. *Concluding remarks*

The *intent of staging* is very well attested in Luke. The textual evidence is abundant. The criteria 4 and 5 are both met more than sufficiently. However, there are also a few peculiar aspects that seem typical for Jesus' intent of staging in Luke. To name the most noteworthy:

- (1) There is *secrecy* around the self-prophecies and the parables. Jesus does not give full disclosure about his mission in Jerusalem until after Easter. And even then, only the disciples receive an explanation from the risen Christ.
- (2) The self-prophecies do not simply announce Jesus' crucifixion in Jerusalem. The wording in Luke reveals *secondary meaning* as well.
- (3) The disciples are entrusted with Jesus' true intentions in private. Meanwhile this information is silently passed on to the reader of Luke as well. So *the reader of Luke* has the privileged perspective of a disciple. And sometimes the reader of Luke is informed even better than the disciples.
- (4) In Luke God's will is expressed in the Scriptures of the OT. The Scriptures can therefore function as *a script* for the Lukan Jesus. By following *the script of the Scriptures* the Lukan Jesus is obedient to God's will. Jesus' crucifixion in Jerusalem is viewed as an important and necessary part of this script.
- (5) However, *the script of the Scriptures* is a Lukan construct. Only a tiny fraction of the Scriptures makes it into Luke. Moreover, it is a selection of bits and pieces. It requires

the *creative hermeneutics of the Lukan Jesus* to read into the OT texts what he reads into it. In Luke this is expressed by the risen Christ when he opens the “hearts” (Luke 24:32) and “minds” (Luke 24:45) of the disciples in order for them to understand the Scriptures. It is thus presented as if the disciples eventually understand Jesus’ intentions, which he based on *the script of the Scriptures* and which he revealed to them on several occasions before his crucifixion. The truth is that *the script of the Scriptures* does not speak for itself but requires a comprehensive interpretation. Therefore, the disciples could never have understood Jesus’ self-prophecies until after Easter, when they were given the interpretation.

Chapter 7: The meaning of the staged act

7.0. Introduction

So far *the extent of the stage* (criteria 1, 2 and 3; chapter 5) and *the intent of staging* (criteria 4 and 5; chapter 6) have been looked into. The focus now shifts to the meaning of it all. This involves three criteria (criteria 6, 7 and 8; see also 1.6.3.).

The first one (criterion 6) requires that the prophetic symbolic act conveys *secondary meaning that transcends the primary meaning*. In the case of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke, it needs to be demonstrated that Jesus "uses" the *convention* of the Roman legal symbolic act as an *unconventional* way to convey a prophetic message. But how can this be demonstrated? Is there in Luke even one single distinctive feature that sets Jesus' crucifixion apart from any other crucifixion? And what is then the secondary meaning in Luke?

In the second criterion on meaning (criterion 7), it is required that *the symbolic (non-literal, secondary) meaning of the act is verbally explained by the prophet elsewhere or can be linked to verbal oracles of the prophet*. In Luke it is clear that Jesus' crucifixion (and resurrection) is the climax of his mission. For that reason, its symbolic meaning should also make sense within the context of Jesus' words and deeds that lead up to his execution. But what is the main message of Jesus' in Luke? And how can the symbolic meaning of Jesus' crucifixion be linked to this main message?

The third criterion (criterion 8) is the requirement that *the symbolic meaning of the act is somehow related to the relationship between God and his people*. This last criterion touches upon a thorny subject. Jesus' crucifixion in Luke-Acts is obviously a story about the rejection of the prophetic Messiah by Jerusalem and about God's *pending countermeasure* by rejecting Jerusalem, or Israel for that matter. To some extent, *the rejection of the Messiah by Israel* is the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke-Acts. But that is too general. The more specific meaning circles around the question: *What about this Messiah* is rejected by Israel in Luke-Acts? And finding the answer to this question leads back to criterion 6.

In this chapter, most of the attention will be given, in a series of subchapters, to meeting *criterion 6*. In subchapter 7.1. it will be argued that, at least, the self-prophecies imply that there must be a *secondary meaning* regardless of what that meaning is. In subchapter 7.2., it will be explained that the *puzzling* nature of Jesus' crucifixion can be interpreted in favor of as well as against a secondary meaning. In subchapter 7.3. and 7.4. *the distinctive feature*

of Jesus' crucifixion within *the textual world* of Luke—resp. *the distinctive features in the literary form of Luke* itself—will be pointed out. In subchapter 7.5. it will be shown how in Luke the notion of *the Suffering Servant* has been *inscribed* into the notion of *the Messiah*. In subchapter 7.6. and 7.7. the reverse will be shown as well; how the notion of *the Messiah* has been inscribed into the notion of *the Suffering Servant*. In subchapter 7.8. concluding remarks on this issue will be made.

Meeting *criterion 7* will turn out to be difficult and open to interpretation. In subchapter 7.9. suggestions will be made for an approach that seems reasonable. This criterion will be met provisionally by way of a general proposal.

Criterion 8 is considered as being met in Luke-Acts. It has been touched upon earlier in several subchapters (2.2., 3.4. and 4.2.). It could be discussed in much more detail, as others have done. However, that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

7.1. *Revisiting the self-prophecies*

Some of the self-prophecies reveal more than just a factual announcement. The crucifixion is described as a “rejection” (Luke 9:22; 17:25; 20:17), as a Mosaic “exodus” (Luke 9:31), as an Elijahic “rapture” (Luke 9:51), as a Johannine “baptism” (Luke 12: 51), as a divine “enthronement” (Luke 22:69) and as “fulfillment” of the Scriptures (Luke 9:31; 18:31-34; 24:25-26, 44-46). None of these *labels* could be said to be neutral descriptions. Neither do they indicate any *primary meaning* of the Roman crucifixion. They are all *theologically charged*, to say the least, and connote *secondary meaning*.

7.2. *A puzzling act*

In Luke the act of crucifixion is *puzzling* to Jesus' disciples. This could also be translated in terms of *primary* and *secondary meaning* of Jesus' crucifixion. Apparently, it is hard for the disciples to look *beyond the primary meaning*. They literally need outside help by means of the risen Christ to get past this point and understand the secondary meaning. The story of the Emmaus travelers (Luke 24:15-24) illustrates this process of understanding. But what does this mean for Jesus' crucifixion itself as a prophetic symbolic act in the textual world of Luke?

From here the reasoning can go opposite directions: (1) either Jesus' crucifixion has only a primary meaning to begin with; the crucifixion is puzzling because there is no secondary meaning to be found, or (2) the crucifixion is puzzling precisely because there is more to it

than just the primary meaning of a Roman death penalty. Besides, it is not unusual for a prophetic symbolic act to be puzzling. On the contrary, due to its unconventional form, it is very common that the prophetic symbolic act takes people by surprise and causes confusion as to what the deeper meaning might be.

7.3. *A puzzling inscription*

In Luke Jesus' crucifixion brings into play an *ambiguity* that can be noticed by any of the bystanders. It is clear and in the face. A conflict of the verbal and the non-verbal can be ridiculed, but it cannot be overlooked. It is puzzling as well, and it needs explaining.

The *ambiguity* appears as soon as Jesus is crucified with an inscription above his head that reads: "This is the king of the Jews" (Luke 23:38). This important detail is well attested in all four gospels (Mark 15:26; Matt 27:37; John 19:19). It was a Roman custom to write down the *causa poenae* on a wooden board. On the way to the place of execution this board would hang around the neck of the convict or it would be carried by a servant preceding the convict (Bovon 2009, 466; Theissen & Merz 1996, 401). In John the high priests are well aware of the ambiguity of Jesus' *titulus crucis*. They urge Pilate to change the inscription into: "This man claimed to be 'the king of the Jews'" (John 19:21). In its current form it could be read as a testimony. And that is precisely what happens in Luke and the other NT gospels.

The result in Luke is a crucified prophet, a Messiah pretender, with a conflicting title above his head. Strictly speaking, this is the whole performance. Within Luke's textual world, this awkward ambiguity would be about all the information the crowds had to work with. Everything about it tells bystanders that this prophet is clearly *not* the king of the Jews. This Messiah is utterly powerless, a target of mockery and torture, and will soon be dead. The humiliation is crushing. The cruelty of it all is still within the boundaries of *the primary meaning* of Jesus' crucifixion. However, there is this other, most unlikely option that this man is actually "the king of the Jews" or that he is in fact expressing what a messianic king looks like. And that would be *the secondary meaning* lying under the surface of the primary meaning.

7.4. *Leading witnesses...*

The ambiguity of Jesus' crucifixion presents a dilemma that calls for a response. In Luke there are several responses to Jesus' crucifixion. These responses are diverse and seem to communicate to the reader, indirectly, how the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion can be

understood. Luke is so to speak “leading the witnesses”, and through them the reader. On top of that, Luke is leading the reader away from primary meaning responses towards secondary meaning responses. In the next sub-subchapters the different responses will be looked at in order of appearance.

7.4.1. *The people of Jerusalem*

The people are just standing and watching (Luke 23:35). They show signs of remorse (Luke 23:48). Somehow they are victims of the situation as well. It is with them in mind that Jesus asks for forgiveness (Luke 23:34).³⁴ They will be victims again when Jerusalem will be destroyed. This is what Jesus tells the lamenting women during the procession to Golgotha (Luke 23:27-31). These women seem to represent the sentiments of the people (Luke 23:27 and 48). They feel compassion for Jesus and show their remorse openly. Their high hopes for this prophet have been trampled (Luke 24:19-21). It means that they acknowledge the ambiguity of Jesus’ crucifixion, but eventually they do not pass the point of its primary meaning. They do not get *it*. By the end of the day they return to their safe homes (Luke 23:48).

7.4.2. *The Jewish Council, the Roman soldiers and the “bad” criminal*

As pointed out before, the Jewish Council members appear as the true enemies of Jesus. Their scheming and plotting has been successful. Jesus has been crucified. As overly confident victors, they now sneer at him and his desolate state by saying that he saved others but he cannot save himself. For that reason, he cannot be “the chosen One”, “the Messiah” (Luke 23:35; cf. Mark 16:31-32). So Jesus’ crucifixion is the proving point of their own conviction. There is no real ambiguity for them, just the certainty that Jesus is *not* the Messiah. The ambiguity, or what is left of it, is ridiculed and laughed away. They have shut themselves off. Any secondary meaning cannot enter their minds.

The Roman soldiers who offer Jesus wine vinegar, similarly mock Jesus: “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” (Luke 23:37). And then, shortly after, Jesus is affronted once again. This time it happens by the “bad” criminal. “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” (Luke 23:39).

The ambiguity of Jesus’ crucifixion is ridiculed by hostile witnesses three times in a row. It leaves the reader of Luke initially with nothing more than a primary meaning interpretation.

³⁴ This verse is not in all manuscripts.

7.4.3. *The “good” criminal*

The turning point is when the “good” criminal reprimands the “bad” one (Luke 23:40-42). Luke clearly deviates here from his Markan source text which has only “bad” criminals (Mark 16:32). In Luke the good criminal admits that the two of them deserve to be crucified. Their punishment is just. Jesus, however, is “not like them”. He has not done any “wrongdoing” (ἄτοπον, cf. BDAG, ἄτοπος, ον, 2). It is not explained how the good criminal can know this. Regardless, this comment sets Jesus apart as *different*. Meanwhile a distinction has been made between “rightfully punished” and “unrightfully punished”, between “guilty” and “not guilty”.

Again the ambiguity is acknowledged. But this time it is not ridiculed, but taken seriously. It is clear that this private conversation between the three crucified is staged in Luke with the reader in mind. The stubborn framing of Jesus’ crucifixion in terms of primary meaning is broken up in order to create space for secondary meaning.

7.4.4. *The Roman centurion*

Right after Jesus dies, the Roman centurion confirms in positive wording what the criminal had expressed in a double negative (οὐδὲν ἄτοπον): “Surely this man was righteous” (Luke 23:47; trans. AJB). Again it is unclear how the centurion knows this or what convinced him.³⁵ This centurion is also present in Mark (Mark 15:39; cf. Matt 27:54). It is obvious that the centurion is more than just a Roman soldier. He stands for the near-future *pagan converts* of the Early Church (cf. Luke 7:1-11; Acts 10; Johnson 1991, 384). For that reason, his role is quite heroic and exemplary. He gives a testimony of faith. In Mark his testimony is quite different though: “Surely this man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:39). In Luke the title “Son of God” is taken out and substituted by “righteous”. The reason for this substitution is multiple and points to a particular theological understanding of the title “Son of God”.

Luke’s use of the title “Son of God” is very restrictive. Moreover he depends in nearly all cases on Mark. When God speaks in Luke it is by the vocative version of this title, “My Son”. This happens at the baptism (Luke 3:22) and at the transfiguration (Luke 9:35). Both times the wording is partly derived from the coronation psalm, Ps 2:7. The angel that announces

³⁵ In Luke, unlike Mark (Mark 15:39), the centurion seems to respond to the ominous circumstances under which Jesus’ dies (Luke 23:44-46). He might have viewed these circumstances as signs of disapproval from heaven. In Matthew this is mentioned explicitly (Matt 27:54). Bovon thinks that the centurion of Luke looks at Jesus’ death from a military point of view and admires Jesus’ courageous manner of dying (Bovon 2009, 492). I do not see any support for this interpretation.

Jesus' birth mentions the full title (Luke 1:35). Satan uses the title as a way of testing Jesus (Luke 4:3,9). Humans possessed by demons are aware of this title of Jesus as well (Luke 4:41; 8:28). The Jewish Council asks Jesus about this title and condemns him for it (Luke 22:77). In Acts the title appears three times, two of which can be dismissed right away: One citing the coronation psalm 2 (Acts 13:33; Ps 2:7) and the other being dubious (Acts 8:37). And in Acts 9:20 the title primarily features Paul's preaching style. The sparse use of the title "Son of God" in Luke might be due to religious sensitivities around God's monotheistic status within Judaism (cf. Luke 22:77). Or it might be due to the view in the Early Church that only after Easter did Jesus *become* "Son of God" (Fitzmyer 1985, 207).

Therefore, it seems *illogical* and *premature* for the Roman centurion in Luke to apply the title "Son of God" to Jesus. The centurion is not possessed by demons and Jesus' resurrection has not taken place yet, therefore he has no way of knowing that this title is appropriate.

But more importantly, Luke takes a special interest in Jesus being *righteous*. This means more than just being *innocent* of the charges made against Jesus. It is true, in Luke it matters that Jesus is *not guilty* in a legal sense, as is declared by Pilate four times (Luke 23:4,14,20,22), confirmed by Herod (Luke 23:15) and by the "good" criminal (Luke 23:41). But when the Roman centurion uses the word *righteous*, Isaian connotations resonate as well. He declares Jesus to be God's "righteous One", which is also the Isaian "righteous One, my Servant, [who will] make many to be accounted righteous" (Isa 53:11). In Acts the "righteous One" functions as a fully accepted title with reference to Jesus (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14).

To quote Johnson here: "...for it is as *the suffering servant* prophesied by Isaiah that Luke wants Jesus' death to be understood" (Johnson 1991, 384). This starts to make sense now.

Jesus speaks in his self-prophecies of being *turned over* (see 5.1.1.2.) and undergoing *suffering* (see 6.2.). He behaves like the obedient servant of God which is fully expressed just before his arrest: "not my will but thine" (Luke 22:42; trans. AJB). He is crucified as "king of the Jews" which refers to the messianic claim. The centurion calls Jesus "righteous" (Luke 23:47). These text elements point to a *hybrid of messiahship* on the one hand and *the Suffering Servant* from Isa 53 on the other. However, more textual evidence is needed. Furthermore, the question of how this *hybrid* is put together needs to be explored.

7.5. *The suffering Messiah*

In Luke the notion of “the Suffering Servant” takes precedence over the title “Son of God”. Or rather, the former defines the latter. Only as *the Suffering Servant* does Jesus become *the Son of God*. At this point, this is based solely on the testimony of the Roman centurion (Luke 23:47). The transition, however, from *Suffering Servant* to *Son of God* is too abrupt. It needs mitigation. In fact, two intermediate steps are missing. First, *the Suffering Servant* needs to be linked to *messiahship* in order to have *a suffering Messiah*. Second, *the Suffering Servant* needs to be linked to *exaltation* in order to be *the exalted Messiah* (see 7.6.).

Linking *the Suffering Servant* to *Messiahship* is a Christian novelty, or more precisely a Lukan novelty (Fitzmyer 1985, 200, 211-213). Neither in the OT, nor within any other first century Judaic tradition do we find traces of this notion.³⁶ In Luke, however, this theme is more prominent than in any of the other NT gospels. Luke might have based it on Mark (Mark 8:29-31), but it is clear that he takes it to a higher level. “Suffering”, and to a lesser degree “turning over”, are *verbal allusions* as well as essential keywords in Luke. These words do not only recapitulate Jesus’ messianic mission, but also evoke Isa 53 (see 6.2., resp 5.1.1.2.).

Furthermore, Luke presents this theme consistently with a general reference to “the Scriptures” as a whole (e.g. Luke 24:46), without quoting the exact text passages of the OT. The notion that the Messiah must suffer, or that the Suffering Servant is the Messiah, can simply not be found in the OT. Only through certain *creative hermeneutics* it could be read into a very small part of the OT texts, Isa 53 in particular (cf. Grube 2012, 87-92). The text of Acts 8:32-39 proves this point. A passage from Isa 53 (Isa 53:7-8) is *quoted* first and then *linked* to Jesus by the apostle Philip.

The linking of *the Suffering Servant* to *Messiahship* takes place on the cross. Precisely in *the act of crucifixion* the Lukan Jesus brings together these two notions. This means that the crucifixion expresses the hybrid form of these two notions. Jesus is the Messiah, “king of the Jews” as is written on the inscription above his head, and he is the Servant from Isa 53, suffering the death of a criminal (Luke 22:37; Isa 53:12). The initial *ambiguity* is getting closer to a resolution.

³⁶ In later Jewish tradition the link has been made (Fitzmyer 1985, 200).

With the *terminology* of chapter 1 in mind, a few technically accurate statements can now be made:

1. On secondary meaning: Jesus' crucifixion in Luke is *the enactment of a very specific prophetic text*, namely Isa 53. Through this enactment he sheds a new light on *messiahship*, one that implies *suffering*. The notion of *the suffering Messiah* is precisely *the secondary meaning* of this particular *prophetic symbolic act*.
2. On symbolism: The kind of symbolism is hard to capture in Viberg's terms. The symbolism is *conventional* (1) due to the fact that the Roman legal symbolic act of crucifixion is used to convey symbolic meaning. The symbolism is also *indexical* (2) since several *parts* of the act *associate* this act to the *totality* of the Song of the Suffering Servant. Lastly, the symbolism is even *iconic* (3) in a counterintuitive manner. The crucifixion is a very *literal* enactment of a text, i.e. Isa 53, that speaks *metaphorically* about Israel as God's Servant. Normally the order of analogy is reversed.
3. On speech-act: To make things even more complex, the act of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke *interacts* non-verbally with the *verbal* legal inscription on the cross. As such, the act is a *non-verbal* performative speech-act in which "the Messiah" is declared to be "the Suffering Servant" (and vice versa, which will be shown in 7.6. and 7.7.).

7.6. *Exaltation* (1): *the exaltation of the servant of God in Isa 53 and in Luke*

So far *the Suffering Servant* has been linked to *the Messiah* in a first step (see 7.5.). Jesus' crucifixion in Luke accomplished this first step. But the reverse, linking *the Messiah* to *the Suffering Servant*, needs to be done as well. This happens through a second step of *intertextuality*. By pointing out the common theme of *exaltation* in both notions it will be shown in this subchapter and the next, how this particular hybridization is done in Luke.

By the end of the song the "righteous" Servant (Isa 53:11 LXX) is rehabilitated after his death. He becomes *the heir* to many (αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλούς; Isa 53:12 LXX; BDAG, κληρονομέω, 1b) and distributes *the spoils* of the strong (τῶν ἰσχυρῶν μεριεῖ σκῶλα; Isa 53:12 LXX; BDAG, μερίζω, 2a). This particular rehabilitation is *the exaltation in its concrete form*. But the exaltation of the Suffering Servant had been mentioned in more general terms earlier at the very beginning of the Song: "See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted" (Isa 52:12, resp. Isa 52:13 LXX). Three different expressions are used in this single verse to underscore the exaltation of the

servant. Two of them are particularly distinctive: the use of the Greek verbs ὑψόω, *to raise high, to exalt*, and δοξάζω, *to glorify*.

In Luke-Acts the verb ὑψόω, *to exalt*, appears seven times. When it appears, it is often paired with its opposite verb, ταπεινώνω, *to lower, to humble* (Luke 1:52; 14:11; 18:14; Acts 8:33 (quoted Isa 53:8)). This touches upon a theological dynamic that is present in the Isaian Song of the Suffering Servant (Isa 52:12 and 53:8) and that has been picked up by Luke. As a matter of fact it is a recurring theme in his gospel (see also 7.10.).

In Acts there are two instances of this verb which point to a kind of exaltation that is different from that of the Suffering Servant. It concerns the exaltation of the Messiah to *the right hand of God* (Acts 2:33; 5:31). The wording goes back to the coronation Psalm, Ps 110:1. This Psalm verse plays a key role in Luke-Acts as the scriptural foundation for the exaltation of Jesus *as Messiah*. For now, it suffices to make a simple point: It seems that in Luke the exaltation of the Isaian Servant has been fused with the one of the king of Psalm 110. More evidence for this insight will be provided in the next subchapter.

The other verb from Isa 52:12, δοξάζω, *to glorify*, has the common connotation of *praising* and *honoring* someone (BDAG, δοξάζω, 1). In most cases it is used in this ordinary way in Luke-Acts. But it can also refer to divinity (BDAG, δοξάζω, 2). This happens for example in Acts 3:13-14. The text passage is a compelling case in which δοξάζω is used next to a few other keywords which together form a verbal allusion to Isa 53. It reads: “(13) The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has *glorified his servant* Jesus. You *turned him over* to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. (14) You disowned the Holy and *Righteous One* and asked that a murderer be released to you.” So God “has glorified” (ἐδόξασεν; Isa 52:13 LXX) “his servant” Jesus (τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ; Isa 52:13 LXX, ὁ παῖς μου).³⁷ Then the usual Lukan accusation follows: The Jewish Council *turned him over* (παρεδώκατε; Isa 53:6 LXX) to be killed. And they did this to the man who is in fact “the holy and *righteous one*” (τὸν ἅγιον καὶ δίκαιον; Isa 53:11 LXX). Note that the glorification of Jesus is to be read here as *being clothed with splendor*

³⁷ The Greek noun παῖς can also mean *slave* or *servant* (Danker, 750 sub 3) as in “servant of God”. In Luke this expression is never used in reference to Jesus. But in Acts there are a few instances in which it is a prominent title of Jesus (Acts 3:13,26; Acts 4:27,30). In Acts 4:27 and 30 Jesus is even referred to by title of “Your holy servant” which seems to indicate the prophetic Messiah. A prophet is often called “My servant”, in particular in Isaiah. But this can also be said of king David (e.g. Luke 1:69; Ps 18:1) or the people of Israel (e.g. Luke 1:54; Isa 41:8).

“in the next life” (BDAG, δοξάζω, 2), i.e. *post mortem* and in heaven. It implies the exaltation of Jesus by God in heaven.

Related to the verb δοξάζω is the noun δόξα, which can be an expression for *divine glory* or *splendor* (e.g. Luke 22:27) next to its more common meaning of *honor, fame* and *recognition*. In Luke 4:6 Satan offers Jesus δόξα. The meaning is clearly double-edged. Satan cannot offer divine glory, but only the human surrogate, which is fame. Jesus rejects Satan’s δόξα in favor of God’s δόξα. This becomes clear in Luke 24:26: “Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” Suffering and entering God’s glory (εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ) are standing right next to each other in this verse. The dynamic of suffering *humiliation* and enjoying *exaltation* is explained here. The latter follows the former. It captures thus the essence of Isa 53. It also links the Isaian notion of suffering to Messiahship. Furthermore, this is said by Jesus from the post-Easter (read: *post mortem*) perspective of exaltation.

7.7. *Exaltation (2): Sitting at the right hand of God*

As mentioned in the last subchapter 7.6., in Luke a fusion of two different OT exaltations takes place: The exaltation of the Suffering Servant from Isa 53 and the one of the Messiah from Ps 110. Or rather, the exaltation of the former is *inscribed* by the exaltation of the latter. For that reason, Ps 110 will be briefly analyzed.

The focus is the text passage in Luke 22:69: “But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” Jesus says this during the hearing by the Jewish Council shortly after his arrest (This scene is echoed in Acts 5:29-31). So at what could be seen as *the starting point of his humiliation* the Lukan Jesus talks about his *exaltation*. This strongly suggests that for Luke the humiliation of Jesus by human hand is simultaneously a movement in the opposite direction: the exaltation of the Messiah by God. Jesus’ defamation and deadly rejection on earth is met by his *enthronement in heaven*. This viewpoint needs to be explored further.

In Luke the Markan phrase “coming on the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:62; cf. Matt 26:64) has been omitted. However, the phrase “from now on” has been added. This adjustment switches the time frame in Jesus’ announcement. The Lukan Jesus does not refer to the end-time. He steers away from the eschatological theme of “the coming of the Son of Man” that he brought up on several other occasions in Luke (Luke 11:30; 12:8, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8; 21:27) and which alludes to Dan 7:13-14. Instead, he tells his accusers what is at

hand right now, “from now on” (cf. Luke 1:48; 5:10; 12:52; 22:18). “The use of this phrase places the next statement in the context of history rather than of eschatology” (Johnson, 359).

In Luke the phrase “you will see” is also left out. It is clear that Jesus’ questioners cannot and will not see him as the Son of Man from the book of Daniel. The first one to really *see* Jesus “standing (sic) at the right hand of God” is Stephen when he is dying a martyr’s death (Acts 7:55-56). It takes a martyr to see an exalted martyr. One could even argue that Stephen undergoes exaltation on the spot. Martyrdom is thus linked to exaltation and messiahship (cf. Luke 22:28-30).

The phrase “sitting at the right hand [of the power] of God” is derived from Ps 110:1 (Ps 109:1 LXX). The original “Sitz im Leben” of this much debated psalm is most likely the enthronement of the Judaic king of Davidic descent in Jerusalem (Kraus 1972, 756). In Luke Jesus discusses the psalm verse earlier (Luke 20:41-44; Mark 12:35-37). The messianic take of the psalm seems to be a Christian novelty. Its meaning has shifted towards the enthronement of the Messiah in Heaven. Traces of this particular interpretation have also been found in the Rabbinic tradition, but only after the second half of the third century A.D. (Fitzmyer 1985, 1311). Jesus’ pun on the phrase “The Lord said to my lord” works in the Greek translation of this verse (LXX), and might work too in Aramaic, but does not work in the original Hebrew. The point Jesus is making could be easily misunderstood. He does not contend that according to the psalm the Messiah is not of Davidic lineage. He rather states that the Messiah, though son of David, is *more* than David: he is “Lord” over David, and not the other way around (Fitzmyer 1985, 1315). Jesus’ Davidic lineage is therefore still of the utmost importance in Luke (Luke 1:32-33; 3:31).

Peter’s speech in Acts 2:14-36 echoes Jesus’ comment on Ps 110. It is longer and quotes Ps 110:1 as well (Acts 2:34-35). Peter’s point is different though. Peter reasons that David has not been exalted into Heaven, so the psalm text of Ps 110 does not speak of him but of someone else, a descendant. This someone else is Jesus who “God made *Lord* and *Messiah*”, and who is immediately hereafter referred to as “the one who you crucified” (Acts 2:36; Fitzmyer 1998, 260). Note how Jesus’ exaltation, messiahship and humiliation are all lined up in this single verse.

7.8. Concluding remarks (1)

The inscription on the cross, the *titulus crucis*, turns out to be the distinctive feature that sets apart Jesus' crucifixion from any other crucifixion (7.3.). Jesus' crucifixion and the inscription above his head together form the *complete* prophetic symbolic act in the textual world of Luke. It is very questionable though whether this act contains sufficient *signage* for bystanders in the textual world to pick up the particular secondary meaning that Luke has in mind.

The reader of Luke, however, is offered more signage through the *edited* responses of witnesses in Luke (7.4.). These responses help the reader to decode the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion. The response of the Roman centurion especially points the reader in the right direction. His testimony links Jesus to the Suffering Servant of Isa 53 (7.4.4.). And there are other verbal allusions to Isa 53 in Luke as well (7.5.)

The linking of *the Suffering Servant* to *Messiahship* is a Lukan novelty and takes place on the cross. Precisely through *the act of crucifixion*, the Lukan Jesus expresses the hybrid form of these two notions. The birth of a new notion, *the suffering Messiah*, is *the secondary meaning* of this particular *prophetic symbolic act* (7.5.).

But the reverse, linking *the Messiah* to *the Suffering Servant*, needs to be done as well (7.6.). This happens through *intertextual overlapping* of the notion of *exaltation*. The Isaian Servant suffers humiliation, but is also exalted by God. In Luke-Acts this scenario is projected on Jesus. Jesus is the Servant who experiences *exaltation* after, and through, *suffering*.

Furthermore, in Luke the exaltation of the Suffering Servant is equated to the exaltation of the Messiah from Ps 110:1 (7.7.). By means of this coronation Psalm *the Messiah* is linked to *the Suffering Servant*. This gets its first and most prominent shape in Luke 22:69 during the hearing before the Jewish Council. Jesus indicates that his exaltation starts "from now on". That means that Jesus' *humiliation* on earth is simultaneously paralleled with his *exaltation* in heaven.

From these concluding remarks three points of interest can be extrapolated.

First, in Luke, unlike Mark and Matthew, any allegations of Temple molestation against Jesus during the hearing before the Jewish Council, are suppressed (Luke 22:66-71; cf. Mark

14:58; Matt 26:61; Acts 7:48). This might indicate embarrassment about the factual truth of these allegations (Sanders 1985, 301-302; Dunn 1991, 49-50). In Luke this omission reinforces the image of an innocent and blameless Jesus that befits the model of *the Suffering Servant* who is “righteous”.

Second, it can be explained now why the Lukan Jesus does not cry out: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34; Matt 27:46; Ps 22:1). The felt absence of God is not fitting here. In Luke Jesus fulfills his mission precisely through his suffering on the cross. It is so to speak “exaltation in progress”. And God is present in this process as the one who exalts.

Support for this viewpoint can be found in the verbal allusion of the specific title that is used by the members of the Jewish Council when they mock Jesus on the cross. They speak of “God’s anointed One, the chosen One” (ὁ χριστὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐκλεκτός; Luke 23:35) which echoes the words spoken from the heavenly cloud at the transfiguration: “My son, the chosen One” (ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος; Luke 9:35). The crucifixion is thus tied in with the transfiguration that foreshadowed Jesus’ exaltation (Johnson 1991, 377).

Third, the resurrection is *not* the starting point of the exaltation. The resurrection is however the proving point *that Jesus is exalted*. The resurrection follows upon the exaltation.³⁸ And so does the ascension of Jesus (Zwiep 1997, 163). These distinctions may seem subtle. And yet, they are crucial with regard to a key issue here: Jesus’ crucifixion in Luke is not an *incomplete* prophetic symbolic act. On the contrary, its meaning can be understood fully by itself. The fact that in Luke the resurrection is mentioned in only three self-prophecies seems to support this interpretation.

That the *exaltation* and *resurrection* are differentiated in Luke can be illustrated by Luke 24:26: “Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” This is said by Jesus *incognito* on the way to Emmaus. The “glory” is Jesus’ *exaltation*. This *exaltation* is simply posited as *truth*, based on “the Scriptures” (Luke 24:25). This is

³⁸ Johnson says that Jesus response at the hearing before the Jewish Council is not “in terms of the parousia, but in terms of his resurrection. The leaders will not see him, but the apostles and the readers will “see Jesus” at the right hand of God” (Johnson 1991, 363). In this comment Johnson conflates exaltation and resurrection. It seems to me that only Stephen “sees” Jesus at the right hand of God. The apostles “see” appearances of the risen Jesus. Therefore they “believe” that Jesus is at the right hand of God. The reader of Luke does not “see” anything. She can only rely on the report of Luke and on faith.

presented by Jesus as sufficient for arriving at this conclusion. However, *experiencing* the living proof of a risen Christ by the two disciples follows shortly after.

7.9. *The second criterion on meaning*

In the second criterion on meaning (criterion 7) it is required that *the symbolic meaning of the act is verbally explained by the prophet elsewhere or can be linked to verbal oracles of the prophet*. In Luke it is clear that Jesus' crucifixion (and resurrection) is the climax of his mission. For that reason, its symbolic meaning should also make sense within the context of Jesus' words and deeds that lead up to his execution. But what is the main message of Jesus' in Luke? And how can the symbolic meaning of Jesus' crucifixion be linked to this main message?

In this thesis the issue can only be touched upon superficially and insufficiently by way of a few suggestions. These suggestions are formed around *a general principle* (7.9.1.) of how in Luke the symbolic meaning of Jesus' crucifixion is integrated in Jesus' main message (7.9.2. and 7.9.3.).

7.9.1. *The dynamic of humiliation and exaltation*

As mentioned before (7.6.) Jesus' crucifixion in Luke is motivated by *a dynamic* that *humiliation on earth* is paralleled by *exaltation in heaven*. What is *humble* here, is *of high esteem* there. This dynamic is a reverse of *the existing social order*. It seems to be a driving force throughout Luke. The *theological dynamic* of humiliation and exaltation is, for that reason, picked here as *the general principle* that might unite the crucifixion with the main message.

This dynamic is put into words by Jesus in Luke 14:11: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (id. Luke 18:14; cf. Ezek 21:31 LXX: "You abased what is lofty and exalted what is lowly").

This theological dynamic can be further differentiated in Luke by the way it gets its *expression*.

7.9.2. *The absolute, the relative and the structural expression*

Jesus' crucifixion could be seen as *the absolute expression* (1) of this dynamic. The humiliation of a human being is most extreme here: the rejection of Jesus through public shaming, torturing and killing. Its aim is *the total submission of 'the other'*. Its aim is also to

stay in “absolute” power. It is a form of human self-preservation and self-exaltation on earth through repression.

By taking up the cross willingly *the suffering Messiah* is not just the victim but somehow also the agent of his humiliation. That means he *humbles* himself to the low point of “transgressor” (Luke 22:37; Isa 53:12). He gives himself up “for many” (Isa 53:12; cf. Luke 22:20). He thus *reveals* the abuse of human power (by “sinful men”, Luke 24:7) and simultaneously the otherworldliness of God’s power (through “suffering”).

The *extreme humiliation on earth* is countered by an equally *extreme exaltation in Heaven*: positioned at the right hand of God, being called “Lord” and “the Messiah”.

Far less extreme are Jesus’ teachings on *table seating ranks* and *table serving*. Here too the humiliation is met by exaltation. But it is relative, a matter of *social esteem* and not of life and death. These teachings could therefore be taken as *the relative expressions* (2) of the humiliation-exaltation dynamic.

In Luke there are also many examples in which Jesus acknowledges people that have been marginalized in society: the sinner, the prostitute, the tax collector, the sick, the possessed, the poor, etc. He sees *the unseen* (the reverse of Isa 53:3). The social exclusion of these people is met by Jesus’ message of inclusion of them in the Kingdom of God. Through Jesus’ words and deeds, the social order changes for the better and bits and pieces of God’s Kingdom become visible. This seems to form the main body of Jesus’ message and ministry in Luke. It could be summarized as *the structural expression* (3) of the theological dynamic. The hierarchy of the social structure is reversed in favor of the oppressed.

7.9.3. *Examples of the three expressions in Luke*

Each of the three expressions of the theological dynamic will now be illustrated by text passages in Luke.

The absolute expression (1) has already been dealt with extensively. Two short remarks have to do here.

First, the Last Supper (Luke 22:7-38) could be read as a verbal comment on Jesus’ crucifixion in Luke (Johnson 1991, 348). Bread and wine are *resignified* as Jesus’ body and blood. His body “is given up for you” (19) and his blood “is poured out for you” (20). This “for

you” is only in Luke. In Mark and Matthew the first “for you” is absent. And the second reads “for many” instead (Mark 14:24; Matt 26:27). This “for you/ for many” combined with “poured out” might allude to the Hebrew version of the Song of the Suffering Servant, Isa 53:12: “He poured out his life in death and was counted among transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many” (Fitzmyer, 1402-3). By the end of the meal, Jesus quotes a phrase from this verse precisely, “he was counted among transgressors” (Luke 22:37). This text passage is unmatched by the other synoptics. So the Lukan Jesus frames his fatal end once again in terms of the Suffering Servant.

Second, during the Last Supper Jesus promises the disciples kingly thrones in Heaven similar to his own (Luke 22:28-30). The text passage is only in Luke. Its implication is somewhat complex and confusing.³⁹ All that matters here is that the disciples are in fact promised to be exalted in heaven due to their loyalty to Jesus. They have been standing by him “in trying times” (ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου). It means that *the absolute expression* of the humiliation-exaltation dynamic can also be extended to them. In Luke the disciples are depicted remarkably more positively than in Mark and Matthew. This might be explained by the fact that after Pentecost the disciples stay loyal to Jesus’ mission under harsh circumstances. In Acts they will, as apostles, face persecution (Luke 6:22-23; Luke 12:4,11-12; Acts 4:3; 5:17-19; 8:1, etc.) and, like Jesus, even death in some cases (Acts 7:54-60; 12:2).

There are several examples of *the relative expression* (2). An important example can be found at the Last Supper as well (Luke 22:24-27). The disciples start a quarrel about which one of them can claim to be “the most important” (μείζων, v. 24). Jesus points out that among the Gentiles the kings “lord over” (κυριεύουσιν, v. 25) their subjects. And they let themselves be called “benefactors” (εὐεργέται, v. 25) by their subjects. Jesus counters this pagan power structure with a reversed principle. “The most important” has to become “like the newest” (ὡς ὁ νεώτερος, v. 26), and “the one who leads” (ὁ ἡγούμενος, v. 26) “like the one who serves” (ὡς ὁ διακονῶν, v. 26).

Luke deviates here significantly from the Markan vocabulary (Mark 10:41-45; Fitzmyer 1985, 1417). The result is an ecclesiastical norm instead of an alternative societal code of conduct. “The newest” most likely indicates the latest member that joined the Early Church community. So in Luke “the most important” in the community should behave as if he was

³⁹ Theissen speaks in this context of “group messianism” (“Gruppenmessianismus”; Theissen 1992).

the most insignificant, a newly arrived member. Jesus points out that he is the one who is serving. The imagery is derived from table-serving (Fitzmyer 1985, 1418). The one reclining is normally “more important” than the one serving. But Jesus reverses the hierarchical order: serving is more important than reclining.

Note how over supper a seat at God’s banquet as well as a heavenly throne is promised by Jesus. This seems to indicate that *the relative expression* of serving and *the absolute expression* of suffering persecution share the same dynamic of humiliation-exaltation.

The quarrel scene during the Last Supper seems to be an echo of Luke 9:46-48. Once again the disciples argue about which one of them is the most important, which occurs once again right after a self-prophecy (Luke 9:44; cf. Luke 22:22). This indicates thematic affinity. The matter is concluded by Jesus: “For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest” (v. 48).

Another examples of *the relative expression* concerns a parable on table seating ranks (Luke 14:7-11). Jesus says here: “But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests” (v. 10).

As for *the structural expression* there are many examples. Just one, well-chosen example will suffice here. The story of *Jesus anointed by a sinful woman* (Luke 7:36-49) seems to have all the ingredients. Jesus is a table guest himself at the house of a Pharisee. He is received with mediocre hospitality (Luke 7:44-46) which reflects the respect of the host for his guest. The “sinful” woman on the other hand washes Jesus’ feet with her tears, dries them with her hair, rubs them in with an expensive oil and kisses them. It is obvious that her act is extreme and embarrassing to some (Luke 7:39). She is perceived by others as “sinful”. Her social esteem is clearly low. But this does not prevent her to show her love and high esteem for Jesus by honoring him humbly and completely. This woman is held as an example by Jesus to the hosting Pharisee.

In terms of the dynamic of humiliation-exaltation it could be said that she humbled herself before others and Jesus, and that he raised her up above the others. The story also shows that this dynamic is connected to the process of being forgiven. Humility is met by forgiveness of sins. This links the general principle, which had been derived from Jesus’ crucifixion in Luke to the core message of Jesus in Luke.

7.10. *Concluding remarks (2)*

The general principle of a theological dynamic in which humiliation, resp. humility, is met by exaltation, has been further differentiated into an absolute, a relative and a structural expression of this principle. As the examples from Luke showed, these expressions could be traced in Luke convincingly. This first and incomplete attempt⁴⁰ of analysis demonstrated that the secondary meaning of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke could be integrated in the main message of the Lukan Jesus. It seems therefore that *criterion 7* from the list of criteria that defines prophetic symbolic action, has been met as well.

⁴⁰ A more complete attempt should also involve the birth stories in Luke in which *the humility* of Mary—socially and mentally—plays an important role for becoming the mother of “the Son of the Highest” (Luke 1:32, 48; Johnson 1991, 42).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.0. *Introduction*

In this final chapter the results of each chapter will be summarized and a short conclusive evaluation of the hypothesis will be given. Furthermore, the contribution of this thesis with regard to the studies of Luke-Acts, the other gospels and the historical Jesus will be touched upon. Suggestions for expanding and deepening the current analysis of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke as a prophetic symbolic act will be made.

8.1. *Results*

The implications of the hypothesis lead to a long and winding road of textual analysis of the OT as well as the NT. Its results will now be summarized and brief commentary will be provided.

8.1.1. *Methodology*

In chapter 1 the prophetic symbolic act is first defined. A study of the prophetic symbolic acts in the OT by Åke Viberg is used to that end. It turns out that the prophetic symbolic act of the OT has a *non-verbal* and a *verbal* segment. It is always *a prophetic symbolic act in literary form*. This is called its *hybrid* nature.

The three-layered model of *text*, *textual world* and *symbolic world* makes it possible to analyze the prophetic symbolic act of the OT at the *verbal* level of the text as well as at the *non-verbal* level within the textual world.

For practical reasons, Viberg's definition of the prophetic symbolic act is broken down into eight criteria that together form *a hermeneutical checklist*. These criteria are divided up into three groups which represent the three main aspects of the prophetic symbolic act: 1. The *extent* of the stage; 2. the *intent* of staging; and 3. the *meaning* of the staged act.

Although its components are *conventional*, the prophetic symbolic act of the OT in its totality is *unconventional* and *innovative* (criterion 3). Moreover, the act is performed only *once*. It is therefore *a unique event*.

The prophetic symbolic act of the OT is *a public performance*. But since the prophetic symbolic act in the OT is always *in literary form* there is a divide between the public audience within the textual world, *the bystander*, and the public audience of the text, *the*

reader. In Luke this divide is exploited in favor of the reader. Through the text, Luke passes on more clues to the reader than to the bystander. A critical question could therefore be: Does the switch from the bystander to the reader contaminate *the purity* of the prophetic symbolic act within the textual world? (see 8.3.).

8.1.2. *The search for similarities*

In chapter 2 a search for similarities between Jesus' crucifixion in Luke and prophetic action in the OT and the intertestamental books, whether symbolic or not, is undertaken. Any similarity would help to make the hypothesis more probable. Three seemingly reasonable suggestions for possible similarities are researched and presented.

First, Jesus' crucifixion in Luke is compared to the prophetic symbolic acts of the OT. Second, Jesus' comment about the killing of the prophets of old (Luke 11:47-51), which also hints at the lethal rejection of him by Jerusalem, is taken into account. Third, the aspect of martyrdom of Jesus' death in Luke is briefly evaluated.

The overall result, however, is surprisingly meagre.

8.1.3. *The Lukan Jesus: a prophetic Messiah*

In chapter 3 the first criterion is met. Jesus' *prophetic status* in Luke is shown on four levels. First, *within the Judaic society* Jesus is recognized as a prophet. Second, Jesus' *prophetic style* resembles Elijah's. Third, Jesus is announced as *the prophetic Messiah* by John the Baptist. And last, Jesus' *program* is based on Isaiah and is prophetic-messianic.

Moreover, by using Isaiah consistently, though selectively, Luke creates in Luke-Acts an over-arching narrative that is not only embedded in "the Scriptures" but can also hold together a wide variety of historical events and theological concerns. This proves to be true especially for Jesus' crucifixion in Luke.

8.1.4. *Jesus' prophetic symbolic acts in Luke*

In chapter 4, Jesus' prophetic symbolic acts in Luke, apart from the crucifixion, are evaluated. It is apparent that Jesus uses the prophetic medium of the symbolic act on several occasions in Luke. The exact count is open to debate. Arguably the clearest examples are Jesus' *Entry in Jerusalem* and the following *Temple act*. The *Last Supper*, however, does not qualify as a prophetic symbolic act. This surprising result demonstrates the strength of the applied method.

Jesus' prophetic symbolic acts in Luke show a few common features that are new and unknown to the OT prophetic symbolic acts. First, it is as if in Luke, Jesus *lives out* a prophetic text. This turns the act into an *enactment of a text from the Scriptures*. Second, by living out a prophetic text Jesus presents the OT prophecy as being *fulfilled*. Third, the fulfilment is always with regard to *the eschatological salvation*, which is for the Lukan Jesus "the arrival of the kingdom of God" here and now. Fourth, by bringing in the messianic time the act also points to the actor as *the Messiah* without mentioning this title explicitly. The act thus presents *the Messiah* in a non-verbal, self-referential manner.

Moreover, the bystander of Jesus' prophetic symbolic act in the textual world is no longer the ideal audience for the performance. This role shifts toward *the reader of Luke*. The reader is allowed to watch behind the scenes. Through the text she is intimated like a disciple of Jesus. She is better informed and therefore more capable than any bystander of the textual world to understand the symbolic meaning of Jesus' prophetic acts.

8.1.5. *The extent of the stage*

In chapter 5 the *extent* of the stage of Jesus' crucifixion in Luke is determined. This means meeting the first three criteria of the definition for the prophetic symbolic act: 1. performed by a prophet; 2. a non-verbal performance; 3. unconventional.

In Luke, the Jewish Council of Jerusalem receives the majority of the blame for Jesus' wrongful death. The Roman authority is exonerated. It has been misled and used by the Jewish Council. And the people of Jerusalem, despite a weak moment at the trial, are more or less innocent as well.

The Jewish Council specifically contests Jesus' *prophetic Messiahship*. However, by rejecting Jesus' status, they somehow confirm it too. So even here criterion 1 is met.

Jesus' crucifixion is a *non-verbal performance in public*. It is explained that Jesus participates in a *Roman legal symbolic act* which is *scripted by conventions* and which takes place *in public*. All the components of this act suggest the Roman execution to be a "spectacle" (Luke 23:48) that is watched by the people of Jerusalem.

The Lukan Jesus speaks three times from the cross, but not more than a few words. And these words do not comment on the act of crucifixion itself.

The problem is that Jesus participates in an act that is not his. Even though this act is a *spectacle* that is provocative and stirs up a variety of emotional responses, it still operates within its conventional boundaries. The Lukan Jesus is not yet *the author of the act*. This could only be changed by locating three key elements in the text of Luke:

1. Jesus' *intent* of staging.
2. A visible, *distinctive feature* that sets apart Jesus' crucifixion from any other crucifixion.
3. An alternative meaning of Jesus' crucifixion that *overwrites* the Roman meaning.

This is done in the following two chapters.

8.1.6. *The intent of staging*

In chapter 6 the *intentional* aspect of Jesus' crucifixion is researched. Two criteria need to be met. The act is *commanded by God* (criterion 4) and performed *at the volition of the prophet* (criterion 5). In most cases in Luke, God's will and Jesus' seem inseparably aligned. This makes it practically impossible to make a clear distinction between the two.

The *intent of staging* proves to be very well attested in Luke. About thirteen *self-prophecies* in which Jesus announces his death, are found. These text passages are compared to each other and structured by a set of recurring elements.

There is *secrecy* around the self-prophecies, and also around the parables that hint at Jesus' death. Jesus does not give full disclosure of his mission in Jerusalem until after Easter. And even then, only the disciples receive an explanation from the risen Christ.

In Luke, God's will (criterion 4) is expressed in the Scriptures of the OT. The Scriptures can therefore function as *a script* for the Lukan Jesus. By following *the script of the Scriptures* Jesus obeys God's will. Jesus' crucifixion in Jerusalem is viewed as an important and necessary part of this script.

The self-prophecies do not just announce Jesus' crucifixion in Jerusalem. The wording in Luke reveals *secondary meaning* as well. This point is further explored in chapter 7.

The disciples are entrusted with Jesus' true intentions in private. This information is silently passed on to the reader of Luke as well. So *the reader of Luke* has the privileged perspective of a disciple.

8.1.7. *The meaning of the staged act*

In chapter 7 an attempt is made to meet criteria 6, 7 and 8, which all concern *the meaning of the staged act*. Criterion 6 requires that the prophetic symbolic act conveys *a secondary symbolic meaning that transcends the primary meaning*. Criterion 7 requires that *the symbolic meaning of the act is verbally explained by the prophet elsewhere*. Criterion 8 requires that the symbolic meaning of the act is somehow related to the relationship between God and his people.

The main emphasis is put on meeting criterion 6.

It becomes clear that *the distinctive feature* that is sought after is the inscription on the cross. It is this inscription that sets apart Jesus' crucifixion from any other crucifixion. Jesus' crucifixion and the inscription above his head together form the *complete* prophetic symbolic act in the textual world of Luke. It remains questionable whether this act contains sufficient *signage* for bystanders in the textual world to pick up the particular secondary meaning that Luke has in mind.

It is shown how *the reader of Luke* was, once again, offered more *signage* through the *edited* responses of witnesses in Luke. These responses help the reader to decode the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion. The response of the Roman centurion especially points the reader in the right direction. His testimony links Jesus to the Suffering Servant of Isa 53. And there are other verbal allusions to Isa 53 in Luke as well.

The linking of *the Suffering Servant* to *Messiahship* which takes place on the cross is understood as a Lukan novelty. Precisely through *the act of crucifixion* the Lukan Jesus expresses the hybrid form of these two notions. The birth of a *new* notion, *the suffering Messiah*, is recognized as *the secondary meaning* of this particular *prophetic symbolic act*.

But the reverse, linking *the Messiah* to *the Suffering Servant*, takes place as well. This connection emerges from the *intertextual overlapping* of the notion of *exaltation* in Luke-Acts, in Isa 53 and in Ps 110. This new notion is expressed in Luke 22:69 during the hearing before the Jewish Council. Jesus indicates that his exaltation starts "from now on". That

means that Jesus' *humiliation* on earth is simultaneously paralleled by his *exaltation* in heaven.

Criterion 7 is met by way of a few suggestions only. Further research is needed to fully meet this criterion. Criterion 8 is already sufficiently met in chapter 5. It says that Jesus' crucifixion in Luke-Acts is obviously a story about the rejection of the prophetic Messiah by Jerusalem, and about God's *pending* countermeasure by rejecting Jerusalem, or Israel for that matter.

8.2. *Conclusive evaluation*

The hypothesis of this thesis does not prove to be entirely true, but also does not prove to be entirely false. It has to be nuanced. The nuance that the prophetic symbolic act is only accessible through its literary form turns out to be most relevant insight. This hybrid of the verbal and the non-verbal results in a split of the audience. On the one hand there is the bystander of the textual world, and on the other hand, the reader of the text.

The conclusion is that the bystander in the textual world of Luke did not receive sufficient *signage* to view Jesus' crucifixion as a prophetic symbolic act. The bystander was left with the irresolvable ambiguity of a man, a prophet perhaps, hanging on the cross with an inscription saying "the king of the Jews". To make the connection with "The Song of the Suffering Servant" as Luke does, would most likely not cross the mind of the man in the street of Jerusalem at all, especially considering the fact that "the Messiah" is expected to be a military leader of the like of king David. In Luke, after Jesus dies, the crowds of bystanders go back to their homes. This response seems to be typical behavior given the circumstances. They are sad and remorseful. But their world is still intact and unchanged.

Moreover, just making the connection with "The Song of the Suffering Servant" would not be enough. The connection to Ps 110 has to be made as well in order to link the Messiah to the Suffering Servant. And even that would not be enough. That Ps 110:1 refers to the Messiah would have to be accepted in the first place.

Nevertheless, the hypothesis is still accurate and holds up under scrutiny. It says: "In Luke, Jesus' crucifixion is framed as a prophetic symbolic act." Luke's editorial influence is acknowledged. He has *framed* Jesus' crucifixion. And he has done this *as if* Jesus' crucifixion is a prophetic symbolic act in the textual world. That makes it a *quasi*-prophetic-symbolic act.

Meanwhile the real audience is *the reader of Luke*. Through the text of Luke, she receives sufficient signage to figure out the symbolic meaning of Jesus' crucifixion. She thus undergoes a textual, i.e. a verbal, experience of *the prophetic symbolic act in literary form*.

The switch from bystander to reader as the actual audience of the act might seem subtle, but is relevant. This switch is *different from* and practically *new to* the prophetic symbolic act of the OT. It could admittedly be viewed as a *contamination* of the *pure* prophetic symbolic act. However, the hybrid form of the prophetic symbolic act itself makes this switch possible. This switch happens when the verbal segment of the act, i.e. the literary form, becomes more prominent than the non-verbal counterpart, the prophetic symbolic act of the textual world.

The option of switching from bystander to reader also means that the prophetic symbolic act becomes *a literary tool* in the hands of the editor. Luke clearly uses this tool to his own ends. He intends to convince his reader that Jesus' crucifixion is very meaningful.

The result is a *duplication* on the level of *staging* in Luke. The prophetic symbolic act is a staged act itself. By *framing* Jesus' crucifixion as a prophetic symbolic act, Luke *stages* a staged act in his gospel.

8.3. *Contribution and suggestions for further research*

In this thesis a new angle on Jesus' crucifixion in Luke is explored. It leads to new insights in how, in this particular case, meaning is communicated. The communication from the cross, as presented by Luke, involves *non-verbal communication* as well as its *verbal description* in literary form. The tracking of these two communicative layers in the analysis shows a discrepancy between the bystander of the textual world and the reader of Luke. This discrepancy leads to the conclusion that Jesus' crucifixion, although presented as a prophetic symbolic act, cannot be a prophetic symbolic act for the bystander of the textual world, but it can for the reader of Luke.

This thesis contributes on several levels. First, it gives new insights in Luke's editorial skills as an author. Second, it shows the relevance of analyzing the layer of non-verbal communication in Luke. Third, it shows the strength of the applied method. The notion of *the prophetic symbolic act in literary form* proves to be valuable. The criteria of the hermeneutical checklist are solid and reliable.

A somewhat accidental contribution of this thesis concerns the study of the historical Jesus. This thesis might present a new argument that from a historical point of view the Lukan framing of Jesus' crucifixion cannot be factual for the following reason: Since Jesus' crucifixion could not be a prophetic symbolic act for the bystander of the textual world, it means that it is virtually impossible, i.e. in *factual history* as well. This argument, however, does not rule out that Jesus' crucifixion was a prophetic symbolic act in some other sense than the Lukan one.

It is not hard to make suggestions for further research. For example, it would be interesting to widen the scope and analyze if and how Jesus' crucifixion communicates meaning non-verbally in Mark, Matthew and John.

The research of this thesis could also be expanded to the historical Jesus. The reason that Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem is most likely Jesus' Temple act (Sanders 1985, 304; Theissen 1979, 157). The grave provocation of this act is downplayed in Luke. But given the fact that it was a serious transgression, what does that tell us about the historical Jesus? Was he ready to give up his life for the purity or the destruction of the Temple? What did the Temple act communicate non-verbally?

The field of research could also be expanded to social and cultural anthropology. Phenomena in modern society or in other cultures, current ones or ones from the past that seem similar to the prophetic symbolic action from the Bible, could be subjected to a closer study with the help of the analytical tools offered in this thesis. For example, one could think of Rosa Parks who refused to stand up for a white man in the bus, and the meaning of this act for the Civil Rights movement in the fifties. Or of the Vietnamese monk, Thích Quảng Đức, who set himself on fire as a protest against the American influence in Vietnam in the sixties. And so on.

It becomes clear that in Luke the question *how* meaning is communicated from the cross, the form, interferes with the question *what* meaning is communicated, the content. For that reason this question also has relevance for systematic theology, be it within the context of systematic reflection.⁴¹

⁴¹ For example: "For as the layers of theological understanding invested in the presence of the cross easily make us forget what it is, a reconstruction of the understanding of the cross needs first of all to state the plain fact that a cross is to be recognized as a mechanism of torture and execution before we can understand it in any other way. As such it is one cross among many" (Henriksen 2009, 299).

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