

# Elijah, Elisha, John and Jesus in Luke-Acts

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25 ἐπὶ ἀληθείας δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, πολλαις χῆραις ἤσαν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἡλίου ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ, ὅτε ἐκλείσθη ὁ οὐρανὸς ἐπὶ ἔτη τρία καὶ μῆνας ἕξ, ὡς ἐγένετο λιμὸς μέγας ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, 26 καὶ πρὸς οὓδεμίαν αὐτῶν ἐπέμφθη Ἡλίας εἰ μὴ εἰς Σάρεπτα τῆς Σιδωνίας πρὸς γυναικα χήραν. 27 καὶ πολλοὶ λεπροὶ ἤσαν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ Ἐλισαίου τοῦ προφήτου, καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἐκαθαρίσθη εἰ μὴ Ναιμὰν ὁ Σύρος.

25 In truth I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was closed for three years and six months, while a great famine came upon the whole land, 26 and it was not to one of them that Elijah was sent, except to a widow-woman in Zarephath in Sidon. 27 There were many with leprosy in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophets, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.

Luke 4:25-27

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## ‘Solid ground’ passages

- Luke 4:25-27

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## ‘Solid ground’ passages

- Luke 4:25-27
  - needy Israelites vs gentiles whom God blesses through Elijah and Elisha
  - explaining why Jesus does no miracles in his hometown 4:24
  - division in Israel
    - 2:32 (Isa 49:6), 34
    - 3:4-6 (Isa 40:3-5) καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ
  - Acts 13:44-52

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## 'Solid ground' passages

- Luke 4:25-27
- Luke 9

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## 'Solid ground' passages

- Luke 4:25-27
- Luke 9:8, 19, 30-31, 33
- Concerning John: Luke 1:17

7

'Ηλίας ἐφάνη v 8

ἄλλοι δὲ Ἡλίαν v 19

Καὶ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες· ὅτι λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς ὅτι Ἡλίαν δεῖ ἐλθεῖν πρῶτον; **Mark 9:11**  
καὶ ἴδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο συνελάλουν αὐτῷ, οἵτινες ἦσαν Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἡλίας, οἵ δοθέντες ἐν δόξῃ ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, ἣν ἦμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ.  
vv 30-31

*Luke 9*

6

καὶ αὐτὸς προελεύσεται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ δυνάμει Ἡλίου, ἐπιστρέψαι καρδίας πατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀπειθεῖς ἐν φρονήσει δικαίων, ἔτοιμάσαι κυρίῳ λαὸν κατεσκευασμένον.

*Luke 1:17*

8

καὶ αὐτὸς προελεύσεται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ δυνάμει Ἡλίου, ἐπιστρέψαι καρδίας πατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀπειθεῖς ἐν φρονήσει δικαίων, ἔτοιμάσαι κυρίῳ λαὸν κατεσκευασμένον.

καὶ ἴδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμῖν Ἡλιαν τὸν Θεσβίτην πρὶν ἐλθεῖν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ, ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ, μὴ ἔλθω καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἄρδην.

Mal 3:22-23 LXX

Luke 1:17

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## Widely recognised echoes

- Luke 7:11-17 cf. I Kgs 17:17-24
  - Elijah prays; Jesus commands
  - Jesus as ὁ κύριος vv 13, 19
  - ἐσπλαγχνίσθη v 13;  
cf. σπλάγχνα ἐλέους θεοῦ ἡμῶν 1:78
  - ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ v 16  
cf. ἐπεσκέψατο 1:68; ἐπισκέψεται 1:78
  - “Praise be to you, YHWH, the one who makes the dead alive.” Second of 18 Benedictions

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## Widely recognised echoes

- Luke 7:11-17 cf. I Kgs 17:17-24
  - widow
  - only son dies
  - meeting at town gate
  - ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ 7:15/17:23 LXX
  - Elijah as ‘man of God’ and YHWH’s word true; Jesus as great prophet

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## Widely recognised echoes

- Luke 7:11-17 cf. I Kgs 17:17-24
- Luke 7:24-30

12

οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ οὓς γέγραπται· ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν  
ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει  
τὴν ὁδόν σου ἐμπροσθέν σου.

yellow words from Exod 23:20 LXX

underlined words from Mal 3:1 LXX

Luke 7:27

13

## Widely recognised echoes

- Luke 7:11-17 cf. 1 Kgs 17:17-24
- Luke 7:24-30 cf. Mal 3:1; Exod 23:20
- Luke 9:52-55 cf. 2 Kgs 1:9-12
- Acts 1:1-11, esp. 9-11 cf. 2 Kgs 2:1-18

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## Widely recognised echoes

- Luke 7:11-17 cf. 1 Kgs 17:17-24
- Luke 7:24-30 cf. Mal 3:1; Exod 23:20
- Luke 9:52-55 cf. 2 Kgs 1:9-12
  - ἀνάλημψις Luke 9:51  
ἀναλαμβάνω 2 Kgs 2:9, 10, 11
  - river Jordan
  - fire from heaven
  - rejection Luke 9:53

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## Jesus' ascension and Elijah's departure

- linguistic parallels
  - ἀναλαμβάνω in passive voice
  - collocation with ἀπό + person(s) left behind
  - destination is ἀφ' ὑμῶν
  - ὑπέστρεψαν and ἐπέστρεψεν

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## Jesus' ascension and Elijah's departure

- linguistic parallels
- both stories told from earthly perspective
- s/Spirit language important to conversations
- Jesus and Elijah's locations afterwards
- Jesus like and unlike Elijah

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## Elijah texts elsewhere

- Malachi
  - Elijah calling people to avoid YHWH's judgement 3:22-23 LXX  
cf. 3:1 ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς διαθήκης = τὸν ἄγγελόν μου
  - John as τὸν ἄγγελόν μου Luke 7:27/Mal 3:1
  - Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit *and fire* Luke 3:16-17 cf. Mal 3:19 LXX

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## Jesus' ascension and Elijah's departure

- forty days of appearances
- Jesus returning to heaven; Elijah entering for the first time
- Jesus dispenses the Spirit Acts 2:33

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## Elijah texts elsewhere

- Malachi
- Sir 48:10 ἐπιστρέψαι καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καταστῆσαι φυλὰς Ιακωβ  
cf. Acts 15:16-18/Amos 9:11-12

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## Elijah texts elsewhere

- Malachi
- Sir 48:10
- I Macc 2:58
- 4Q558 frag. 51.ii.3-4  
‘therefore I will send Elijah before...’
- 4Q521 frag. 2.ii ‘[For the hea]vens and earth shall listen to His Messiah’

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- Malachi
- Sir 48:10
- I Macc 2:58
- 4Q558 frag. 51.ii.3-4; 4Q521 frag. 2.ii
- 4 Ezra 6:26; 7:109
- I Enoch 89:52; 90:31; 93:8
- Sib. Or. 2:187-89
- *Tg. Ps-J.* Exod 40:10; Deut 30:4
- Mark 9:11; Matt 17:10
- Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8:4; 49:1

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- Sib. Or. 2:187-89
- *Tg. Ps-J.* Exod 40:10 ‘Elijah the high priest...will be sent at the end of exiles’  
Deut 30:4’[the Memra of the Lord] will gather you at the hands of Elijah the high priest, and from there he will bring you near at the hands of King Messiah’ cf. I Kgs 18:30-39?

22

But the Christ, even if he is born and exists somewhere, is unknown and does not yet know himself. He does not have any power at all until Elijah comes and anoints him, and makes him plain to all 8:4 [Spade]

For we all expect that Christ will be a man [born] of men, and that Elijah when he comes will anoint him. But if this man appear to be Christ, he must certainly be known as man [born] of men; but from the circumstance that Elijah has not yet come, I infer that this man is not he [the Christ] 49:1 [Reith,ANCL]

Justin, *Dial.* 8:4; 49:1

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