

## **Naked Bible Podcast Transcript**

**Episode 346**

**The Old Testament in Luke 1**

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### **Episode Summary**

It's common for scholars and critics of New Testament presentations of the birth of Jesus to suggest that the idea of a divine Israelite messiah goes beyond what the Old Testament envisions. The most Jews would expect, so this thinking goes, is a military deliverer who was descended from the line of David, a mere human whom God adopts as his son. This episode provides a glimpse into the data that tell us otherwise. In Luke 1, the gospel writer portrays Jesus as more than a human, Davidic military deliverer.

### **Transcript**

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 346: The Old Testament in Luke 1. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing?

**MH:** Pretty good. We're rapidly moving toward what looks like a conclusion for the next podcast series. What do you think?

**TS:** Yeah. What he's talking about, folks, is you've got to go to [NakedBiblePodcast.com](http://NakedBiblePodcast.com) and cast your vote on the next book study. Of course, your options are Jude, Jonah, and Old Testament in Revelation. And Revelation is holding steady at around 67-68%. There are two more weeks left to vote. Voting ends at midnight on October 31<sup>st</sup>. So you have two more weeks to cast your vote. And Mike, you're correct. I don't know if two weeks is enough time to move the needle when Revelation is at 68% right now.

**MH:** Yeah. I don't know. Maybe one of the other two choices needs some kind of mega-endorsement. Who would we get for that?

**TS:** [laughs] I don't know. You tell me.

**MH:** [laughs] Well, the pugs are voting for Revelation. They had already told me that. So they're out. We take them off the table. [laughter]

**TS:** Well, I don't know if you remember. We pretty much knew this was going to go down. But the last vote, Exodus and Revelation tied, Mike. And I had to extend the voting for one extra week just to try to get some separation. And Exodus *barely* squeaked out by 1%. So I figured Revelation would win this time around.

**MH:** Maybe we should've gone with something like Zephaniah. I don't know.

**TS:** Ooh.

**MH:** [laughs] Probably would've been the same outcome.

**TS:** Yeah. A lot of people were talking about Jude, just because it's short, since we did a long trek through Exodus.

**MH:** Yep.

**TS:** So there we go. Well anyway, it's shaping up to be Revelation, so I'm excited...

**MH:** We should actually get into the episode here, I guess. [laughs] But you know what? We didn't talk about Fantasy sports. We didn't do that.

**TS:** Well, we didn't, till you just did. So...

**MH:** No, no, no. We're cutting it right there. We're cutting it right there. I just want people to know. We got through an episode without...

**TS:** My team's winning. My team's doing good and it's winning. Okay, now we'll cut it there. [laughter] And your team's not doing too good. My team's now above you.

**MH:** The Pugs lost their first two running backs, *but* moving on... [TS laughs]

Old Testament in Luke chapter 1. Gotta fix our minds here on the task at hand here. Now this is going to be very similar to the episodes that we've done to this point, featuring New Testament content and how it repurposes the Old Testament. That's the whole purpose of the series, both to sort of get your heads into methodology—how scholars think the way they think and do what they do and where it leads, just alerting people to the importance of... Look at your Old Testament and in particular, since the New Testament writers most frequently will be using the Septuagint, look at your Septuagint. Get a copy of that thing. You get cross references in your Bible. If you're living in the hard copy world, get a hard copy English translation of the Septuagint, and you can get something out of referencing that. If you're in the digital world, you're a whole lot further down the road, because then you can start to look at Greek lemmas and Greek

vocabulary underneath the English translation if you have something like an Interlinear, especially if it's digital, because it's so fast.

5:00

So today is going to be more of the same. And I'm going to use as my springboard... Because this is a familiar passage—John the Baptist's birth announcement, we've got the episode with Mary, her birth announcement, the visit with Elizabeth, and so on and so forth. This is very familiar stuff. But there's something in particular here that I think is really interesting, at least to me anyway, and will actually bleed into a couple of things that our listeners will encounter when they try to do research or they try to interact with people online. Or when they're reading academic material in biblical studies, they'll run into this or that thought and wonder, "Where in the world are they getting that? And how can I respond to that?" There's actually something here in Luke (well, there's a lot of things in Luke) that deal with the Old Testament. But I want to try to camp on one in particular for this episode that is going to specifically involve the Septuagint. And my springboard here is going to be a book... And honestly, you have to have at least a year of Greek to really handle this book, but this book is awesome. The author is Nina Henrichs-Tarasenkova. She's an adjunct professor at a school in Portland somewhere. I'm not going to give the location or anything. But her book is called *Luke's Christology of Divine Identity*. And it's part of the Library of New Testament Studies series that's put out by Bloomsbury and T&T Clark. So it's one of these highbrow scholarly publications. And the material is not in transliteration. So if you were going to pick up this book either in paperback or in digital form, you're going to have to have at least a year of Greek to just pick up what she's laying down. But it's a terrific book. Here's her introductory paragraph in chapter 5. I mean, she has a whole book on how Luke identifies Jesus with God, and then how Luke takes that identification (that's Jesus' identity) and extrapolates upon it throughout his Gospel. So here's how she begins chapter 5:

Luke does not start his narrative with an account of the annunciation or birth of Jesus, but with the presentation of YHWH's relationship with his chosen people Israel, represented by Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:5–25), implying that what comes prior to Jesus' introduction serves as the proper context for understanding Jesus' story. It is only after Luke embeds Jesus' story within an account of YHWH's mercy and salvation promised to Israel's ancestors and YHWH's supreme authority and power as heavenly Lord God of Israel, creating anticipation for YHWH's coming salvation and restoration of his people Israel, that Luke is ready to introduce his readers to Jesus. In what follows, we will demonstrate that as Luke introduces Jesus against the background of YHWH's position and function in Israel, he encourages his readers to root Jesus' identity in the identity of YHWH and to understand Jesus' relationship to YHWH as a relationship that supersedes any other relationship in Jesus' life. Therefore, he introduces Jesus as the one who shares YHWH's divine identity from the beginning of his narrative.

You can already tell that's a good set-up for some really juicy biblical theology that's going to come later. [laughs] Like I said, this book is just chock-full of really interesting and significant observations. And so when I came across this, I thought, "We're going to have to take a portion of this and weave it into an episode," and so here we are.

Now I'm going to read Luke 1:26-38, just so that we have this in our heads as far as where we're at in Luke 1. So Luke 1:26-38. In the ESV, they mark this as the Birth of Jesus Foretold. But here's the story. And I'm reading from the ESV.

10:00

**<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup>But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."**

**<sup>34</sup>And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"**

**<sup>35</sup>And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.**

Now again, that's a very familiar story, especially around Christmas time. And you think, "Well, we kind of know what's going on here. What new is there to see?" There are a number of things going on here, which is why I wanted to park on this passage for this episode. So our author (whose name is long), Nina Henrichs-Tarasenkova... I'm going to just refer to her as NHT for short. So NHT writes:

As Luke develops Jesus' characterization in the course of Gabriel's dialog with Mary, his readers learn that Jesus will be an ideal Davidic King (i.e., Davidide) whose coming was anticipated by the Scriptures. However, they also learn that

his unique identity cannot be fully explained through his relationship to David because, unlike Davidic descendants who were to become adopted sons of YHWH at their inauguration, Jesus will be YHWH's Son from the moment of his unique conception by YHWH's Spirit. Therefore, he will derive his identity primarily from his unique relationship to YHWH as Son.

And you may think, "What specifically does our author mean by this?" Well, I'm going to read Luke 1:32-33 again.

**<sup>32</sup> [Jesus] will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."**

Now NHT comments:

[T]o understand Jesus' conception and life only in light of YHWH's covenantal promise to David is not enough for Luke, which is why he allows Mary to raise a question that enables him to reinterpret YHWH's promise to David in a new light by means of his reliable character Gabriel. That is, when Mary asks how what was promised to her might happen, emphasizing her status as a virgin (Lk. 1:34), Gabriel explains that fulfillment of the promise does not involve any man because YHWH will father Jesus as his Son on his initiative and through his Spirit (1:35). Until this answer is given, readers could have anticipated that Jesus' conception, like John's conception (1:23–24), would take place naturally, [MH: in other words, they could have imagined that] Mary would soon be married to Joseph from David's household and together they would conceive a child who would become a Davidide and a son of God in accordance with YHWH's promises.

Like Yahweh would later adopt him as king. This is what happened with the Israelite kings. "We're completely human, descendants of David." Yahweh adopts them later. This is what NHT is saying. This is what they could've been thinking until you have this conversation in Luke. Back to NHT, she writes:

However, since Mary's question emphasizes her virginity, mentioned earlier as her defining characteristic (1:27), and since Gabriel explains Jesus' divine sonship as a result of YHWH's initiative and enablement through his Spirit rather than as an adoption at his inauguration as king of the Jews [MH: since all of that is the case], Luke leaves no room for human initiative or action in Jesus' conception...

And this is a little bit later on in her book:

Luke also discourages his readers from understanding Jesus' divine sonship against pagan myths of divine conception. This is because neither the verb 'to come over' (ἐπέρχομαι; *eperchomai*)...

15:00 This is when in the ESV, "the Most High will come upon you," that verb translated to "come upon" or "to come over" in NHT's prose here. Neither that verb nor the following verb, "to overshadow" (ἐπισκιάζω; *episkiazō*)... Neither verb does what the pagan virginal conception myths do. So NHT's going to get into this a little bit. Let me just back up and read those last few sentences again.

Luke leaves no room for human initiative or action in Jesus' conception...

And then skipping a few lines...

Luke also discourages his readers from understanding Jesus' divine sonship against pagan myths of divine conception. This is because neither the verb 'to come over' (ἐπέρχομαι; *eperchomai*) nor 'to overshadow' (ἐπισκιάζω; *episkiazō*), attributed to the activity of Ὑἱῶν's Spirit, have sexual connotations (1:35). In fact, Luke uses ἐπέρχομαι [MH: elsewhere] when speaking of the Holy Spirit's coming over Jesus' disciples and enabling them to become his witnesses (Acts 1:8) and ἐπισκιάζω [MH: Luke uses elsewhere] when speaking of the cloud, denoting Ὑἱῶν's presence, overshadowing Jesus' three disciples (Lk. 9:34) [MH: that's the Transfiguration]. Consequently, Luke speaks of Jesus' conception as resulting from the initiative and activity of Ὑἱῶν's enabling and protecting Spirit and discourages his readers from perceiving Ὑἱῶν as a male counterpart in Jesus' conception...

Let me just stop there. This is what pagan (like Greek) mythology does—where you have the divine person (Zeus or whatever), they have a copulation with a human female and then produce this demi-god or whatever or some other god in the pantheon. Neither of these verbs, she points out, are used with sexual connotations. They're just not. And so Luke is choosing his vocabulary carefully to basically blunt and cut off at the pass this notion, which you'll often see on the internet.

I'm hoping you already see that the two things that I mentioned at the very beginning here... There's something called Adoptionist Christology, and you even get it in some circles of the Church. I think you get it a lot with Christians who don't really understand Christology, and they sort of adopt it (pardon the pun) by mistake. And this is that Jesus was just a normal guy and then the Spirit comes upon him and he *becomes* the son of God when God adopts him as the son of God, and then we go on from there. Luke is cutting that off. No human has anything to do with Jesus' conception (with the incarnation). There's no male counterpart here. And not only does he blunt the whole Adoptionist idea... From the very beginning—from the very get-go, Jesus is *The* Son of God. Not anybody else. So not only do you get that, but the verbs that Luke uses blunt and just

rebut the whole notion that you'll also see on the internet that, "Oh, this is just like... Jesus' birth story is just like these pagan stories of the gods having children with women, and then their children get to be part of the pantheon..." No, it's not. No, it's not. There's a vocabulary distinction here being drawn very carefully by Luke. Now back to NHT. She writes that:

[Later in Luke] Jesus questions people's assumption that the Messiah is David's son...

Remember this scene? Because Luke is going to use this too to cut off the idea that there was any human male that had any role in what's going on here.

[Later] Jesus questions people's assumption that the Messiah is David's son, suggesting that if David calls him 'Lord' in Ps. 110:1, he cannot be merely David's son (20:41–44). In doing so, he echoes what Luke has made known to his readers earlier in the narrative, namely, that YHWH's promise to David is understood properly only when David's descendant, the Messiah, is understood as YHWH's unique Son (1:32–35; cf. 4:41; 22:67–70). Consequently, the father from whom Jesus fully derives his identity is YHWH.

20:00

So we know this theologically, but what we don't sort of catch is the way that Luke crafts this description is very specific. He's very specific. It goes beyond just, "Oh, well Mary was a virgin." It goes beyond that. It specifically tries to connect Jesus to God directly—to the Spirit directly. So the issue isn't just the virginity of Mary. The issue is really the circumvention of any male Davidic (human) involvement.

Now Jesus is going to get his Davidic lineage through the whole Jewish system of... We could use the word adoption in *that* sense. That's not the best word. But the Jewish system of legal recognition—of the tribal recognition—by virtue of being raised in Joseph's house and being taken by Joseph as his own son. So the fact that Joseph does that, that's what gives Jesus his legitimate Davidic ancestry in the eyes of the Jewish community. But it goes beyond that, is NHT's point and Luke's point as well. Luke is very careful. Because he could have gone the Adoptionist route, as she points out. The angel could have come and said, "Hey Mary. Yeah, I know you're a virgin now, but you're going to get married to Joseph and you're going to have a child. And that child is going to be the messiah. And God is going to watch over that child and look at that child and adopt him as king and as messiah." You could've had that conversation, but you don't. That is not the conversation that's had.

So Adoptionist Christology, from the very beginning in Luke, is being ruled out. Yahweh doesn't have to adopt Jesus as his son because Jesus *is* Yahweh's Son. There's no adoption necessary here. You only need anything like that in a legal sense to be recognized by the Jewish community when it comes to the

house of Joseph as far as the tribal relationships and how the Jewish leadership would have looked at this sort of descent. And this is a well-trafficked area of New Testament study. You can get any number of New Testament background resources that talk about the practice of a Jewish male bringing a child that isn't his into his home, and then that child becomes legally recognized as being his for the purpose of genealogy and inheritance and things like that. You can read any number of sources about that. I'm not going to rabbit trail. We'll let somebody else do that because that's well-trafficked territory. But if you're interested in that there's plenty to be had there. NHT has a footnote here that says:

Scholars generally note that 1:32–33 is an interpretation of 2 Sam. 7:8–16 [MH: remember, that's the Davidic covenant passage] and that 1:35 contains a new element, divine sonship by means of the Spirit, which [MH: scholars say] takes one out of the realm of Jewish messianic expectations—e.g., Brown, *Birth*, pp. 310–12; Miura, *David*, p. 200; Strauss, *Messiah*, p. 93; Pietsch, *Spross*, pp. 268–71. However, they [MH: these scholars] generally do not explore how Jesus' unique divine sonship impacts his identity.

That's basically what her book is about. (Her book is an edited version of her dissertation.) So she's saying, it's really common for scholars to say... They recognize what Luke is doing here, divorcing the sonship of Jesus from any human male component here. And then they'll say, "Well, that's like an added detail to the Davidic covenant." Like, "Luke's cheating here," or something like that. And basically what her comeback in footnote form (in one sentence) is, "Well, you might think differently about that if you understood what Luke was doing through the whole course of the book with Jesus' divine identity (his identity with Yahweh), and how that impacts things. Because as we're going to see, there's more that Luke does that links (this is an important thought) divine nature... We'll just use a very general term. You could say "deity," but you know what I'm talking about here. Luke links divine nature, or the phenomenon of incarnation, that the messiah would be God as man... There's more going on, both in what Luke does and how he links to certain other things in the Old Testament, that telegraph that, "You know what? This really was part of the messianic profile." And scholars either don't recognize it or they don't own up to it.

25:00

Now I've mentioned this before in some prior episodes: how do you get a mere human king to fit a description like "everlasting kingship"? How do you do that? How does that work? Because it's more than just the institution. If you describe *The Messiah* (one individual) as having everlasting kingship, that requires a little bit more than being a normal human. And the circumstances of the birth here, as Luke presents it, are going to be part of how you identify that this is more than a man. And again, her argument is going to be that, "That's actually part of the messianic ideal—the messianic profile." Whether scholars want to recognize it or not, it is, because of the way Jesus' identity is constructed and specifically linked



to Yahweh's own identity by Luke and using certain things in the Old Testament (that we're getting to). So *all* of this is set-up to the point that I want to eventually land on with respect to the Septuagint that Luke is doing. So really, that's the first half of the set-up.

So the second part of the set-up goes like this: NHT takes us to Luke 1:39-45. So just continuing on. Now we have Mary's visit to Elizabeth. This is part of her set-up to really get into the weeds as far as how this divine nature is part of the messianic profile. So she takes us to Mary's visit to Elizabeth, which I'll read. It's verses 39 through 45. It goes like this (ESV):

**<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."**

Now the verse that NHT wants us to camp on is verse 43. This is just part of her set-up for what she's angling for. Verse 43 said,

**"Why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"**

Now just as a... If you look at that just... You don't need to know any Greek or any Septuagint stuff. Elizabeth already recognizes the baby as her Lord. There is no Adoptionist Christology here. It's as plain as day. It is as plain as day. The kid's not even born yet and she's referring to him as her Lord! You don't get that in an Adoptionist model prior to the adoption. And the point is, Adoptionist Christology fails miserably here.

Let's go back to NHT. Here's what she writes. She's going to say a whole lot more than that, but that much should be obvious. So she writes:

**Within Luke-Acts, the title κύριος does not have a univocal meaning [MH: in other words, it doesn't always mean or refer to the same thing] and can be applied to figures of authority other than Ἰησοῦς...**

So in the broader scope of Luke's writings (the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts), he does use κύριος to point to various individuals. It's not just Yahweh. "...both earthly and heavenly..." and then she gives the grocery list of Lukan references where κύριος is used, which is a pretty long list. She continues:

30:00

That is why readers can be certain that by calling Jesus 'my Lord', the elderly Jewish woman Elizabeth characterizes him as her superior, but they cannot determine [MH: yet] if she characterizes him as her master, king, or God until they examine how this title is endowed with meaning in its immediate context. In his annunciation Jesus is characterized as the Davidide [MH: son of David] (Lk. 1:32–33), so it is possible that by calling Jesus 'my Lord' Elizabeth recognizes him as her legitimate king/master [MH: in an earthly sense]. However, since Luke roots Jesus' claim to the Davidic throne in his relationship to YHWH as Son (1:35), it is impossible to speak of Jesus as Elizabeth's legitimate king without speaking of his being YHWH's Son and sharing YHWH's divine identity as Lord.

Let me just stop there. This is precisely what scholars do. They only see one side of a coin, typically, when they're talking about what's going on in Luke in relation to Jesus. Let me just read you again what NHT writes. She says:

However, since Luke roots Jesus' claim to the Davidic throne in his relationship to YHWH as Son (1:35), it is impossible to speak of Jesus as Elizabeth's legitimate king without speaking of his being YHWH's Son and sharing YHWH's divine identity as Lord.

So typically, as I just paused to point out, you'll hear and you'll read in commentaries a lot of discussion about, "Oh, well, Elizabeth is saying this because somehow she knows that the child in Mary's womb is going to be the Davidide messiah, the next Davidide king." Well, that's true, but it's not adequate. It doesn't say all that needs to be said and it doesn't say all that Luke is communicating. You only get half the picture there. If you stop with that half, then you can start talking about things like Adoptionist Christology. But if you don't stop there, if you include Luke's fuller picture, as NHT says, it's impossible to talk about one thing without talking about the other (if you're going to be honest with the data, anyway). So she continues and writes this:

Luke provides his readers with further clues that encourage them to treat Jesus as Lord in light of his relationship to YHWH.

Not in light of his relationship to David. He has no Davidic father. That's the whole point. Luke isn't inviting readers to think of Jesus as Lord only as "Oh, he's the next Davidic king." Because Luke has intentionally excluded the Davidic Joseph from the parentage. Intentionally. Out of the gate. Out of the gate, Adoptionist Christology is debunked essentially by Luke. So back to NHT:

Luke provides his readers with further clues that encourage them to treat Jesus as Lord in light of his relationship to YHWH. First, at the beginning of his narrative Luke predicates the title κύριος [MH: in other words he uses the word κύριος (Lord)] of YHWH alone (1:6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 25, 28, 32, 38)...

Throughout chapter 1, Luke, when he uses κύριος, is referring only to Yahweh.

... and after he explicitly predicates it of Jesus (1:43), he predicates it of YHWH until YHWH's angel announces the birth of Jesus (1:45, 46, 58, 66, 68; 2:9)...

So what she's saying is, "Look. When Luke starts off, he uses κύριος only of Yahweh. Then he hits verse 43 and he uses it of Jesus. And then he starts using it of Yahweh again until Yahweh's angel announces the birth of Jesus..." And continuing with her quote:

... who is now characterized as κύριος [MH: the angel characterizes Jesus as κύριος] by ἄγγελος κυρίου [MH: by the Angel of the Lord] (2:9, 11). Then yet again, Luke predicates κύριος of YHWH until the end of the birth narrative [MH: this is the end of chapter 2] (2:15, 22, 23, 24, 26, 39) [MH: all the places he uses κύριος].

Now he's talking about Yahweh again. Now here's her point:

35:00

In doing so, he limits the use of the title [MH: κύριος] within Luke 1–2 to YHWH and Jesus, binding the identities of the Lord YHWH and the Lord Jesus.

κύριος Yahweh, κύριος Jesus. I'm going to stop here. Think about... When you're doing word studies, what we typically do is "Where does the word occur everywhere else?" And then we might ask, "Where does the word occur within this writer (within the book)?" But you see what she's doing here. Earlier in the section I'm reading from her book, she says, "Look, Luke wrote Luke and Acts. So he uses κύριος of a wider variety of individuals. It's not just God; it's others. But there's a pattern here. In Luke 1 and 2 (the birth announcement and the birth narrative of Jesus), when Jesus is going to get introduced, Luke uses κύριος only of Yahweh and Jesus. And that's deliberate. That's deliberate. He binds the

identities of the Lord Yahweh (κύριος Yahweh) and κύριος (Lord) Jesus. She's saying Luke does this to telegraph that these two are to be identified with each other. "That is the context for thinking about Jesus for the rest of my Gospel," Luke essentially says. So to sum up her first point, NHT says Luke's dropping some other clues as to how to think about Jesus as you read his work. That was the first one. Here's the second one. She writes:

Second, before Elizabeth provides this direct characterization of Jesus as Lord, she is allowed to speak only when she recognizes what the Lord YHWH has done for her after John's conception. Thus, the first time she [MH: Elizabeth] speaks, she calls YHWH κύριος; and the second time she speaks, she calls Jesus κύριος, which encourages Luke's readers to hear a connection between Lord [MH: κύριος] YHWH and Lord [MH: κύριος] Jesus.

So even in how Elizabeth's dialogue is framed, she says this is intentional by Luke. She wants one to ring in your head when the other drops so that you connect them.

Now we get to the Old Testament part. That's all set-up. So the first two chapters Jesus is being identified with Yahweh in some very concrete ways that maybe in English Bibles aren't discernable to us, but this is the purpose of the episode. This is how scholars are looking at data and what they consider when they look at the data and the conclusions they draw from data.

So NHT (our author) is going to... This is just a little tiny section of one chapter of a whole book. So she starts talking about later in Luke 1 (Luke 1:69-79). And she draws a number of things out of this section that link back into the Old Testament. And I'm going to focus on one item in particular that, for the sake of time and also just the level of detail here, I think this one for me just really stood out as being very interesting, not something I would've ever picked up on unless I was looking at the primary texts themselves for some reason or had come across her work. So she writes this:

Thus far, we have focused on how Luke defines Jesus' position and argued that Luke claims for Jesus the superior position of YHWH, which he shares with YHWH as his unique Son. We have shown that Luke allows both Elizabeth and unborn child John under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to recognize Jesus' superior position. Now we need to show that (1) Luke assigns Jesus responsibilities and functions of YHWH in accordance with Jesus' superior position, which he shares with YHWH as Son; and (2) Luke indirectly characterizes Jesus as one God of Israel together with YHWH when he shows that Jesus is able to carry out YHWH's responsibilities and functions.

40:00

I mean, this is just a terrific chapter in her book, because that's what she does. How does Luke essentially fuse these two things together? They're the same, but yet they're different. We're used to this kind of thinking and talk (those of you who have read *Unseen Realm*, you're already tracking on this). But here you have this whole book devoted to Luke's Christology, and there it is. So in verse 69, I want to focus on a specific phrase here. So we've got the birth of John the Baptist in Luke 1:57-66, and then in 67 you have Zechariah prophesying. So verse 67:

**67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,**

**68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people  
69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
71 that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant,**

And so on and so forth. So this is Luke 1:67 and onward. So you listen to that, and it sounds... I'll just put it this way. It sounds like what you would be taught definitely like in a university class about New Testament as Literature, but perhaps even in church, that this is the normative Jewish expectation of messiah. Let me read it again what Zechariah (John's father) says:

**67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,**

**68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people  
69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
71 that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant,**

And so on and so forth. It sounds like a military deliverer, okay? So NHT notes that this idea, that the messiah (the Davidide) would save them from their

enemies. This conforms to the normative messianic expectation of Judaism at the time. But Luke isn't satisfied with that. Luke will portray Jesus as more than a human Davidic military deliverer. "That's great. All that 'Davidide, get your enemies, deliver us from empires' stuff is wonderful," Luke would say, "but it's not enough. It doesn't really capture the whole picture." So the language of Zechariah's prophecy is pretty normal, at least as we would be taught to think what Jews were thinking about messiah: military deliverance. It conforms to that real nicely until... [laughs] Until you get to verses 78 and 79. Then you get some strange stuff, okay? This is part of Zechariah's speech here. So we're going to get this awesome Davidic messiah who's going to deliver us from our enemies, and then you read this:

**78 because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace."**

That's actually the end of his sermon or his prophecy. Like, what is that? It certainly doesn't sound like a military deliverer. So what *is* it? What's going on here? So NHT draws attention to one thing in particular. And here's, for the rest of the episode, what I want you to see. She writes this about the wording of Luke 1:78-79:

This reminds Luke's readers that because Luke predicated the title 'Lord' of both YHWH and Jesus and because Jesus' identity is rooted in the identity of YHWH, John's [MH: this is Zechariah's kid, John the Baptist] mission that earlier could be understood as going before Lord YHWH can now be understood also as going before Lord Jesus.

So just store that away.

In 1:78–79, Zechariah speaks of the sunrise that shall visit us from on high (ἀνατολῇ ἐξ ὕψους) [MH: *anatole* is the word we're going to focus on most here]. The key term is the one translated "sunrise" [MH: can also be translated "dawn"]...

45:00 Now if you look this up in a Greek lexicon like BDAG (the standard industry tool) you're going to see that, "Ah, I guess the ESV translators got this one right! Because *anatole* can mean the upward movement of celestial bodies, like the sun, the rising, or the rise of stars over the horizon. That's where you get the dawn idea. It can refer to the position of the rising sun in the east. It can refer to the change from darkness to light in the early morning (in other words, the dawn).

Now this should bring up an obvious question. What in the world does this have to do with the messiah? What is this? To answer that, we turn to the Septuagint, which will, in turn, produce another question. [laughs] So in the Septuagint, *anatole*, this word translated “sunrise” in Luke 1 in the ESV, is used three times to translate the Hebrew word *tsemach* (“branch”). Now you all know that “branch” is absolutely a messianic symbol and term (the branch of David from the stump of Jesse—all this kind of talk). And we’ve had enough on this podcast of talking about tree imagery and how that is associated with kingship, and gardens associated with kingship, and we had a recent episode that dealt with Jesus as the Gardener. *Tsemach* (“branch”) is a clear messianic vocab word. How in the world would you get the Septuagint translator... The three times are Jeremiah 23:5, Zechariah 3:8, and Zechariah 6:12. Why would they use *anatole* (sunrise, rising of the celestial bodies)... Why would they use that for a Hebrew word that means “branch”? It sounds really odd. Why would they do this? Especially when elsewhere in the same books in the Septuagint (Jeremiah 33:15 and then the reference in Isaiah 11:1 and 11:10 where you have *tsemach*—“branch”)... They use a different term, something that is associated with the plant kingdom. What’s up with *anatole*? Before I get to what NHT writes on it, I looked it up in Walser’s Commentary on the Septuagint Jeremiah. This is pages 328-329. I’m just going to share a few of the comments there. He notes:

5. Δανειδ] Gott. has Δανιδ  
 ἀνατολήν] is a rendering of פנצ. The meaning “shoot” is not attested before the Septuagint [MH: for *anatole*—like no other Greek writer uses *anatole* for a word like this until you get to the Septuagint (3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.)], but since the verb ἀνατέλλω [MH: the verbal equivalent] is used of plants springing up as early as Theophrastus (4-3 century BC), the meaning “shoot” is not very far-fetched. Thus the rendering “shoot” in the English translation [MH: or branch for *anatole*, in some translations of the Septuagint, they’ll still translate it with the “branch” language even though *anatole* would normally be this sunrise or something like that].

Which, of course, involves the sun as well, but springing up. That he says it’s not really... I mean, you could see how they could get there. You could see how they would associate one thing with the other. Then he references the work of Lust, which is an article I don’t have yet. I’ve ordered the book it’s in because I found this so interesting.

For a discussion of the term ἀνατολή as a messianic term, see Lust 2004, 45-46, 52-53. Lust argues on p. 52 that “In the Greek-speaking early Christian communities, no special attention was given to Jer. 23,5.” “On the other hand,

one must admit that the early Church frequently used the term ἀνατολή as an image or as a title for Jesus.”

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And they get that from Luke 1. So the connection to plants springing up in response to and reaching out for the sun, that whole idea explains the association (why you would use *anatole*, the noun, to translate something like “branch.”) Even though the Septuagint at other times doesn’t get into this here you have three instances where it does. This is why Luke picks up on it and why later in Christian history it’s considered a messianic term or title. But there are other divine points of contact here, and this is where NHT gets into the weeds here. She writes this:

Although in the LXX ἀνατολή (*anatolē*) may refer to a Davidic Messiah when it translates Hebrew מִזְרָח (Zech. 3:8; 6:12) [MH: and of course the Jeremiah 23:5 instance], it refers predominantly to the rising of the sun (ἀνατολή ἡλίου; *anatolē hēliou*; e.g., Deut. 4:49; Josh. 13:5). Therefore, it can be translated ‘east’ with reference to the geographical location of the rising sun [MH: that happens too in the Septuagint] (e.g., Gen. 2:8; Deut. 3:17; Amos 8:12) or ‘dawn’ with reference to the time of the rising (e.g., Wis. 16:28; 2 Macc. 10:28). Moreover, its cognate ἀνατέλλω (*anatellō*) may denote both the rise of the heavenly bodies, such as sun (e.g., Gen. 32:31 [32:32, LXX]), moon (Isa. 60:19), and stars (Job 3:9; Isa. 14:12), and the rise of a messiah (e.g., Num. 24:17; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Ezek. 29:21).

Of course, the Numbers passage is the “star” reference that some people think is behind the star reference to the birth narrative in Matthew, even though they never quote it and they don’t use *anatole*. So my thoughts on that is that isn’t what they’re thinking. But here, because of the vocabulary, she makes the connection. And I think there’s some legitimacy there. Now just catch this:

However, it [MH: *anatole*] can also be used in promises associated with YHWH’s rising to bring judgment on evildoers and salvation to God-fearers. One can find a reference to the ‘sun of righteousness’ rising (ἀνατελεῖ = *anatelei* with healing in its wings on those who fear YHWH’s name (Mal. 4:1–2 [3:19–20, LXX]). The people on whom this sun rises ‘go out and leap like calves released from bonds’ (Mal. 4:2 [3:20, LXX]), indicating that their oppression has been ended [MH: their exile is over] and that they may now rejoice in their freed state. This sun is not a regular sun that rises daily; it is the ‘sun of righteousness’ that brings healing and salvation at the coming of the day of the Lord ([MH: Malachi] 4:5 [3:22, LXX]). Its salvific function at the coming of the day of the Lord specifies ‘the Lord’ as YHWH. Furthermore, one can find the verb ἀνατέλλω (*anatellō*) used to speak of the Lord’s glory rising, which parallels the coming of the light (Isa. 60:1). Since the



Lord's glory also appears in parallel construction with the Lord  $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$  [MH: in other words, the Lord's *kavod* also appears in parallel with the Lord (divine name) Yahweh] who will shine over people gathered around his light (Isa. 60:2), both the people of Israel and the nations (60:3–14), and since  $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$  is directly called an everlasting light and Israel's glory (60:19–20), one can assume that it is  $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$  who will rise and shine over people and through this rising and shining will lead them to know that he is the one who saves Israel (60:16). Accordingly, ἀνατέλλω (*anatellō*) may be used to denote the rising of both [MH: **both**] messiah and  $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$  [MH: the verb actually fuses them together, is the point], and Luke may be relying on this ambiguity when he characterizes Jesus as ἀνατολή because it allows him to both identify Jesus as a Davidide and reinterpret this identification in light of Jesus' unique relationship to  $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$ .

55:00 Now that is a *lot packed* into a word. Okay? Luke is just really good at what he does. [laughs] I mean, you're using a term like that... Let me just go back through that little section of NHT's book. You have the messiah, you have sun of righteousness (which isn't the normal son—it's sun), associated with the Day of the Lord, which is associated with Yahweh's own rising and his glory that will shine over people gathered around his light, that includes both Israel and the nations, because the rising glory (Yahweh, the rising sun of righteousness) will deliver all of them. He will save Israel and the remnant of the Gentiles. It's all packed into one word. But she's not done. [laughs] She says:

There's another trajectory in Luke 1:78-79 that requires understanding the messiah as more than a human who happens to be in the line of David, or a human adopted by God as messiah. His point of origin is "on high."

"On high" is *hypsos* in Greek. So again, Luke is debunking Adoptionist Christology. That's sort of the takeaway here. And he's also debunking 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century (I guess we'll throw the 19<sup>th</sup> century in there) scholars who would say, "All this divine stuff (messiah as God)—that really isn't part of the Jewish messianic profile." Oh, really? Really? Somebody should've told the Septuagint translators this. Somebody should've alerted them. Back to what she's going to say about *hypsos*.

[I]n the LXX, ὕψος (*hypsos*) is understood as the place of  $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$ 's habitation [MH: the high places], from which  $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$  looks on his people with favor and delivers them (e.g., 2 Sam. 22:17; Ps. 18:16 [17:17, LXX]) rather than a place from which the Davidic messiah comes.

That's such a good line. I'm going to read it over again.

[I]n the LXX, ὕψος (*hypsos*) is understood as the place of  $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$ 's habitation...

This is where Yahweh comes from. It's not a place from which the Davidic messiah comes from (just a normal, average Joe who happens to be from the line of David). That isn't where he comes from. He comes from earth. He doesn't come from *hypsos*.

This understanding of ὕψος (*hypsos*) is familiar to Luke for he speaks of ὙΗΩΗ's Spirit coming from heaven as 'the power from on high' [MH: *hypsos*] (Lk. 24:49; cf. 3:21–22). By claiming that ἀνατολή (*anatolē*) comes from the unique place of ὙΗΩΗ's habitation, i.e., ὕψος (*hypsos*) [MH: the *anatole hypsos*, *anatole* from on high], Luke not only identifies Jesus as the Davidic messiah [MH: okay, we got that part] but also reinterprets this designation in light of Jesus' unique relationship to ὙΗΩΗ—a relationship that was established through the Holy Spirit, i.e., the power from on high, who came down upon Mary (1:35; cf. Acts 1:8) and enabled her to conceive. Luke thus emphasizes that Jesus' identity should be derived from the divine identity of ὙΗΩΗ rather than from the identity of David's descendant Joseph.

Again, this is just packed—it's very dense—with her examination of Luke here. But I've just pulled out a few points that I think we can process in a format like this over a podcast. There's just a lot going on. But again, why bring all this up? And we'll end with this.

1) On the one hand, I'm hoping you'll catch a little bit of a Bible study method point, and that is the importance of Septuagint terminology and how that ties into the New Testament and the theology that extends from it. That's important. Note in this case that the Septuagint terminology and its theological import is not contrived. Luke isn't making stuff up. He's going to the Septuagint, okay? It's based on how Hebrew terms are perceived by the *Jewish* Septuagint translators. Okay? The guys who translated the Septuagint, folks, were not pagans. They weren't Gentiles. They weren't amateurs. They are *Jewish* scholars. And they are looking at their Hebrew Bible and thinking certain thoughts. And their messianic profile includes—displays—a divine nature to the messiah. It just does. And Luke is so familiar with the content of the Old Testament in *his* native language (because Luke is a Gentile), he picks up on it. He utilizes it for his own audience and his own readers. He's getting it from the Old Testament. [laughs] And the Old Testament he uses is the product of the hands of Jews who can read Hebrew. And they can look at a Hebrew term and know... They have a wider cognitive frame of reference, they have a wider worldview context, they have a wider intellectual cognitive pool from which to draw in their head than we do.

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And so when you see people out there promoting, "This divinity stuff just wasn't part of the Jewish thinking," I'm sorry, but it was. Maybe not *every* Jew. But there were a lot of Jews for whom this would not sound at all strange. Maybe you don't want to bring it into your classroom. Maybe it doesn't get you acceptance in

academic discourse, or you'd be perceived as somebody who's taking the data too far. Well, I'm sorry, but there are Jews who lived before and during the time of Jesus who would've given you two thumbs up. They would have. Luke is not contriving anything. This is part of a Jewish understanding of the messianic profile. That's what it is. And for us (believers or otherwise, scholars or otherwise) to exclude this material from people that we are trying to teach isn't honest. It's just not.

2) Why bring this up? Well, I've hit this a couple of times during the episode, but Adoptionist Christology misses this sort of material. I can guarantee you, if you go out there on the wild, wacky world of the internet and you start reading stuff promoting Adoptionist Christology, they're not interacting with this. They're not even *aware* of it. And if they are, they're not telling you. It sees only the human Jesus, presented as a human, and then adopted by God. The content of Luke 1 and plenty of other places in Luke (NHT's whole book works through Luke) shows there's a lot more going on.

3) And third, notions that Old Testament messianic thought didn't include the idea of a divine messiah... You're only getting part of the picture.

So again, I'm just hoping that we can listen to an episode like this and we can realize that if someone said to Luke that the Old Testament Jewish messianic profile anticipated only a human Davidide, Luke would probably look at that person and ask, "Are you not picking up what I'm laying down? Are you not a careful reader of what I'm doing here? Are you not looking up my sources?" He's clearly seeing more than that in his Old Testament. And to boot, he's the Gentile. He knows what he's doing. He knows the material well. And it's part of the Jewish messianic conception in that intertestamental period.

**TS:** Yeah, Mike. I don't know much about Adoptionist Christology. Can you give us a little bit of history on that?

**MH:** It's actually fairly common. You'd see it in antiquity as well, like early Church discussions about the nature of Jesus and whatnot. And it's drawn from when Yahweh makes a covenant with David. The Davidic covenant has to start somewhere and with someone. And God picks David and says, "I'm going to make of your dynasty an everlasting dynasty. And you're the only legitimate line that's going to rule Jerusalem and Zion." And all this sort of stuff. And then you'll take that point of information and then there will be some language in the Psalms about "This day I have begotten you" or "I have brought you forth" or "I have made you king." You get this language in some inauguration scenes as well. So it starts off with God picking a person (David), promising them an everlasting dynasty, and then the people who are members of that dynasty in the inauguration process are reminded of the covenant that God made with David. That's all legit; that's all true. But what typically happens is people will say, "That's *all* that's going on with Jesus." Like at his baptism when the voice from

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heaven says, “This is my son in whom I am well pleased,” well that’s the point when God picks this guy (Jesus) to be the messiah. It’s at this point when he gets baptized that all of a sudden he goes from just being Jesus the apprentice carpenter to *now* God has selected him to be the messiah. So he’s just a selected guy who happens to be from the line of David, so we have to honor that part because that’s Old Testament as well.

But what we’re saying here is... And it’s not just Luke. It’s not just his language here. But there’s lots of other places in the Gospels and, of course, the Epistles that argue that the messiah is pre-existent, that Jesus is God come as man (Philippians 2 and passages like that that we typically think of). John 1:1. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, the Word was with God, the Word became flesh [in verse 14] and dwelt among us.” There are strong pre-existence statements of Jesus. And so what Luke is arguing and what NHT (our author here) is bringing out is that Luke, when he presents Jesus, he actually does things intentionally to undermine the notion that this is a normal guy who just gets picked for the job. [laughs] You know? So it’s another thread that goes into the argument for Jesus being God in the flesh, identified with Yahweh as his son, the son of his right hand, the king, the everlasting king, all this sort of stuff—the coregent stuff that I talk about in *Unseen Realm*. This is another layer to that. But Adoptionist Christology basically denies all that and just has God picking somebody that he feels like picking to be the messiah. And there’s more to it than that.

**TS:** Alright, Mike. Good enough. And you think next week we may actually cover Jonah a little bit?

**MH:** Yeah, I think we’re going to basically do Jonah and chaos imagery (Leviathan chaos underworld imagery).

**TS:** Alright, Mike, sounds good. That’s a good one. With that, we’ll get everybody out and I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.