

# **THE LORD HAS REMEMBERED: DIALOGIC USE OF THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH IN THE DISCOURSE OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Using Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism as an investigative tool, this article begins with a brief account of the latter's understanding of the utterance. It goes on to show how the Lucan narrative appropriates and engages with (amongst others) the HB Book of Zechariah to advance its own discourse. Another orientation imprinted on it, Luke's primary discourse contains (at least) two semantic positions: its own and that of Zechariah. The article selects five instances of this intertextual relationship to see how the Zecharian discourse is used to reinforce the validity of the Lucan narrative, rooting it in the older discourse concerning the restoration of God's people to himself. Appropriated into the Menippean idiom, the Zecharian text serves to authenticate the key character Jesus as the representative and embodiment of the coming Kingdom of God. The article also seeks to show how Luke, in using Zechariah's depiction of the oracles and of God's imminent intervention in theophanic and apocalyptic terms, invokes a new concept of the community of God's people. Morally grounded in the laws of traditional Judaism, this community is challenged to think beyond the constricting reality of earth-bound kingdoms in order to fix its eyes firmly on the coming Kingdom of God, a universal plane that is open to all people.

## **1. The Utterance**

Bakhtin views every utterance as essentially dialogical. Inevitably, it responds to a past utterance, or utterances, and fashions itself according to

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1 This article is an extension of a paper of the same name that I delivered at the SBL international Meeting in Cambridge in July 2003

an expected future response to itself. His primary concern is how the polyphony of human relations, that is, the presence of various unmerged voices in dialogue with each other, is represented in a narrative text. Thus, a text like the Gospel of Luke, as an utterance, would contain various voices within itself, appropriated or responded to from other, earlier texts. These texts interact with and enrich the discourse of the host text to a greater or lesser degree, as it fashions itself in preparation for a future responding voice, that of the reader.

The text or voice of another may be present in the host text in various ways. Bakhtin puts forward three considerations when approaching the phenomenon of intertextuality.<sup>2</sup> The first is a question of *locus*. Where in the text is the other's voice encountered? Is it at the object under discussion itself, as in the case of direct or indirect polemic? Or, is it an encounter with various voices that surround the object, past utterances, that is, a conflict between various substitutable denominations of the same object. Or is it encountered in the potential (future) voice of the expected respondent? An example of this would be rhetorical discourse.<sup>3</sup>

A second consideration is the question of *form*. For example, is the voice of the other represented in the form of a particular character's speech? In this case one would look to see whether the author treats it as a passive object, part of his own discourse, or whether the voice of the character maintains a certain autonomy concerning the subject-matter, thus standing in a relationship that resembles a dialogue with the discourse of the author. Or, does the voice of the other appear in the form of a direct quotation from another text? Is it in the form of imitation (where the other's voice is absorbed into the voice of the author), or, in the form of stylisation (where the other's voice is presented as that of another, the voice of the author identifying itself with it, using it as a reinforcement of his own discourse), or, in the form of parody (where the voice of the other is also presented as that of another, but, in this case, the author's voice clashing with it by means of ridicule)?

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2 For the sake of clarity, I shall use the term *intertextuality* when referring specifically to the dialogic relation between actual texts, while using the word *dialogism* for the phenomenon as a whole.

3 M. Bakhtin, *Slovo v romane* (Discourse in the Novel), cited by Todorov (1984:72).

The third consideration concerns the varying *degree* of the presence of the other in the text. There can be full presence as in the case of direct dialogue. On the other end of the scale the voice of the other does not materially appear in the text. Nevertheless, it can, and has been summoned into the text because it exists in the collective memory of a given verbal community. This is the case when parody or stylisation is made use of. The voice that is actualised in the text is presented in the light of another voice, even though this second voice is not realized, remaining outside the text itself (Bakhtin in Todorov 1984, 73).

Between these two extremes there is an intermediary degree of the presence of the other's voice, which Bakhtin refers to as hybridisation. Todorov calls it a generalization of free indirect style (73). In this case the text belongs to a single speaker in terms of its syntax and composition, while, nevertheless, containing a second voice in terms of style and worldview within it (73).

## 2. The Gospel of Luke and the Hebrew Bible

It is hardly necessary to point out the overwhelming presence of the voices of the Hebrew Bible in the Gospel of Luke, voices that are themselves in intertextual relationship with each other.<sup>4</sup> Simply by glancing at the gospel text one is struck by overt references to the older texts. Actual books of the older canon are mentioned by name, like, the Law of Moses (Luke 2:22) and the book of the prophet Isaiah (Luke 3:4). Sections of HB texts appear in the Gospel in the form of quotation without specifically naming the source (Luke 4:4=Deut 8:3; Luke 4:10-11=Ps 91:11-12; Luke 4:12=Deut 6:16), while others are named and quoted (Luke 3:4-6=Is 40:3-4). Furthermore, both the narrator and characters in the Gospel, evidencing the author's assumption of a general pre-knowledge of the older texts, mention characters from the Hebrew canon. Examples are Aaron (Luke 1:5 27), Jonah (Luke 11:29-32). Characters from the HB, namely, Moses and Elijah, as well as Satan, actually appear in the Gospel (Luke 9:30, 4:1-12).

Further evidence of the connection can be seen in the Palestinian setting of the Gospel, Jerusalem and the Temple playing a major part at the beginning and at the end, reference to festivals, such as the Passover, and

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4 For practical purposes I shall refer to the Hebrew Bible as HB and to the New Testament as NT.

character names, such as Zechariah, John, Mary, Jesus, and others, who have counterparts in the older canon. Lest there be any further doubt as to the author's intention of ensuring an overt, direct, continuous link between the narrative that appears in the Hebrew canon and the narrative of the Gospel of Luke, one need only look at Luke 3:23-38, where the genealogy of the protagonist, Jesus, confirms the Angel Gabriel's statement (Luke 1:32) as to Jesus being a descendent of David, thus establishing this character as the embodiment of the link between the old canon and the new gospel text.

Apart from these, easily observable features that are evidence of an intertextual relationship between Luke and the older texts, there are other connections on a covert level, which, nevertheless have a profound impact on the discourse of the Gospel. One of these is that the Gospel follows the example of the books of the HB in terms of quoting or paraphrasing passages from the various books of the canon that have gone before.<sup>5</sup> These quotations, evidencing an intertextuality between texts of the older canon, open the potential for a larger or lesser engagement between them. They can serve either to reinforce or to challenge a particular point, or they may simply reinforce the sense of continuity and legitimacy of a particular text. The Gospel in following this example takes over this whole potential for intertextuality between itself and the texts of the Hebrew canon.

A parallel use of form is another way that the Gospel interacts with these older texts, an example being, amidst others, the use of genealogy (Luke 3:23-38=Gen 5 and 1 Chr 1-9). Further examples are the use of specific formulations and the way the narrative is placed into history, both of which can be seen in the following example: "In the fifteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius ...the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness" (Luke 3:1-2), which can be compared to Zech 1:1, "In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah son of Iddo." Another example is the repetitive use of the phrase "on that day", referring to Yahweh's Day of salvation in Zechariah (e.g. Zech 14:20), and the day that the Son of Man will be revealed in the Gospel (e.g. Luke 17:31). Furthermore, one can find many instances where the Gospel makes use of words, names, imagery,

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5 Examples in the HB are Neh 9: 17 (cf. Num 14:18) and Judg 13:4-5 (cf. Num 6:3, 5). Examples in Luke are Luke 3:4-6 (cf. Isa 40:3-5) and Luke 4:18 (cf. Isa 61:1-2).

motifs and situational parallels in order to interact with the older texts by way of association. One can contemplate how, one way or another, and on various levels, these factors affect the themes that make up the discourse of the Gospel as a whole.

What is striking at the beginning of the Gospel, as the narrative gets onto its feet to reach the point of Jesus' ministry, are the multiple strands that root it into the Hebrew canon. Presumably for the purpose of legitimisation, the later text is placed in close proximity to the older, already canonized narrative. By means of what could be called a grafting technique, the implication is created that the gospel narrative is a continuous development of the narrative of the older texts.

### **3. The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Zechariah**

This article will focus on what is perceived to be one strand of this multiple intertextuality between the Gospel of Luke and the Hebrew Bible, namely the book of Zechariah. At first glance there is not all that much *prima facie* evidence that the author of the Gospel was familiar with Zechariah. Also, parallels found between the texts could, theoretically, be coincidental, or, one could argue that shared features occur as a result of intermediary sources. On the other hand, it would be difficult to prove that the author of Luke did *not* have knowledge of the Book of Zechariah. Common features, such as theme, names, images, and formulaic usage, certainly merit an intertextual investigation.

For the sake of this investigation let us, for the moment, assume that the writer of Luke was familiar with the Book of Zechariah, and consciously appropriated aspects of it to craft his narrative and to develop his own discourse. Viewed broadly, at least two factors would support this assumption. Zechariah predates Luke as a canonized text, and, secondly, there is the parallel of the overall theme: namely, that of Yahweh/God returning to dwell amongst and save his people, for which preparation must be made by a divinely chosen human agent – all this taking place within the context of a cosmic battle between God and the forces of Satan.

The constraints of this article allow for the discussion of only a limited selection of corresponding features in the two texts. I have chosen five. To begin with I shall consider the implications of the name, *Zechariah*, at the beginning of the gospel narrative. Secondly, I shall discuss the scene between Satan and Jesus in the desert in the Gospel in the light of the scene

in Zechariah in which Satan challenges Joshua.<sup>6</sup> From there I shall show how this same scene in Zechariah also interacts with the scenes that depict the trial of Jesus in the Gospel, thus binding the desert scene to the trial. Fourthly, I shall consider the Branch (Zech 3:8-10) as a possible source for the character, Jesus, in the Gospel. The last parallel I shall present is the image of a gentle saviour-king riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

### 3.1 *The name Zechariah*

The character *Zechariah* at the beginning of the Lucan narrative immediately points towards the Book of Zechariah by association. Although this could be coincidental, Zechariah being a common name in Judaic tradition, the parallels between this character and the HB prophet suggest otherwise.<sup>7</sup> Both figures are introduced in genealogical terms, are of priestly families, and are familiar with ritual matters. They both converse with an angel in a vision, and both prophesy salvation for the Children of Israel. The HB scholar, David L. Petersen, argues for the significance of that very name in the Book of Zechariah (the name, meaning – Yahweh Remembers), “... the name is conservative, evoking a sense of continuity with earlier Israelite tradition. Such a name suggests that Yahweh remembers what he did for and with Israel at an earlier period. And it presumes that he will act again in a similar manner (Petersen 1984, 110).” Arguing along the same lines, one could say that the name *Zechariah*, far from being coincidental in the Gospel, is used deliberately to proclaim the resumption of God’s benevolent intervention in the fate of the Children of Israel. Continuity with the HB tradition in terms of God remembering the promises of old is thus announced. This notion is supported in the Gospel in Luke 1:54-55, in The Song of Mary, “He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors”, and in Luke 1:72-73 in the Song of Zechariah “thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant.”

Using the name *Zechariah* as a literary device, the writer of the Gospel directs the reader’s memory to the HB book and circumstances. In terms of its dialogic action, one could say that by rooting the Gospel into an already canonized text, the validity of the story of Zechariah in the Gospel is

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6 Ἰησοῦς in the *Septuagint* translation, the same as in the Greek text of the Gospel for *Jesus*.

7 This particular character does not appear in the other three canonical Gospels.

authenticated, as is, by extension, the annunciation of John, and, most importantly, the closely connected annunciation of Jesus. The reader is encouraged to believe in God's earlier promise coming into its own in first century times. The time and setting of the Gospel (as well as that of its appearance), although centuries had passed in between, is equated with the reconstructive circumstances in the Jerusalem of the early post-exilic period. A sense of continuity with the earlier era created by this would encourage faith in God's saving intervention about to be announced in the Gospel.

In Bakhtinian terms one could thus say that the *locus* of this intertextual encounter is situated at the point of the future response of the receiver of the gospel text. The *form* in which it appears is the actual name of the Book of Zechariah as well as the name of the prophet, the main character having the visions. It is conveyed by the voice of the narrator of Luke, an ostensibly reliable neutral voice. The reader would have to have at least some pre-knowledge of the Book of Zechariah for this intertextual effect to operate.

### 3.2 *Test of identity*

I shall now turn to the second section that I wish to discuss, focussing on Luke 4:1-12, read in the light of Zech 3:1-7. In both these texts a character, Satan, challenges a central character called Jesus. While Satan also appears in other HB texts, as for example the Book of Job, he only appears in combination with a character called Joshua (Jesus) in the Book of Zechariah.

The legitimacy of the chosen agent for the divine plan for restoration is at the heart of both of these scenes. What is immediately striking is that the function of the HB figures of Satan and Joshua is vastly expanded and elaborated upon in the Gospel. From passive characters, entirely organized by divine beings in Zechariah, they feature as active contenders in the battle between good and evil in the Gospel. The Satan in Zech 1:1-2, although challenging Yahweh's choice of Joshua as agent for the divine plan, appears only briefly, having been silenced before the reader can hear what he has to say. In contrast, the Satan in the Gospel, depicted as the active tempter, dominates that scene. His role has been elevated to opponent-in-chief in the battle between the coming Kingdom of God and the forces that oppose it. No longer a part of the divine council, as in the older text, he rules a kingdom of his own. In this particular scene in Luke 4:1-12, crucial in terms of creating the awareness of the cosmic battle underlying the relatively peaceful storyline of the Gospel thus far, he is brought into the

consciousness of the reader, embodying, together with Jesus, a visible, face-to-face encounter between the two opposing kingdoms.

An ambiguous, multifaceted dialogic use of Zech 3:1-7 by Luke 4:1-12 can be noted here. To begin with the HB scene serves as a source scene for the encounter between Jesus and the devil in the desert, giving that scene a sense of stature as well as clarifying that a cosmic battle underlies the narrative as a whole. The vision in the book of Zechariah is in the context of Yahweh saving his people from forces that oppose his plan (in this case, earthly, military enemies) so that restoration can take place. In the Gospel, as Satan and Jesus are presented as two opposing forces in terms of the divine plan, the vision in the Book of Zechariah is brought to mind, and with it the existence and actions of the divine council. On the other hand, the divergence from the older text by the gospel scene in depicting the two characters on their own, without the context of the divine council, emphasizes that Satan has stepped out of this legal context. He does not submit to any council. The battle scene has been relocated from within the legal proceedings of Yahweh's council, as seen in a vision by the prophet, to a recognizable geographical place in this world. While the two HB figures are passive, fully under the control of the divine messengers, the gospel figures are exposed to each other without mediation. This is significant in terms of the Lucan discourse, as it carries the implication that Jesus, engaging directly with Satan (who now claims the status of an opposing god), can be seen to be part of God himself, rather than a separate human being, as in the case of his counterpart in the HB scene. This confirms the words of the angel, Gabriel, at the annunciation in terms of his divine nature. The scene in the desert constitutes an attack on Jesus' integrity as the Son of God, a testing of his identity.

Looking at the manner in which these two scenes are presented one can find a significant difference in terms of genre. The HB scene makes use of the vision or dream. The prophet, Zechariah, is presented as a historical figure experiencing this vision. A vision as such can accommodate supernatural figures, like Satan and the angel meeting with the historical human, Joshua, without compromising its historical credibility. In the Gospel, on the other hand, no effort is made to stay within the boundaries of realistic, historical description in this scene. Two figures, one supernatural, the other semi-divine, meet without the covering frame of a vision. This can

be seen to be consistent with the *Menippea* of the Hellenistic era.<sup>8</sup> One of the features of the latter is the use of supernatural description, invented in order to test the main idea running through the narrative. Viewed from this angle one could see the main idea that is being tested in the Gospel being whether Jesus is the Son of God and the embodiment of the Kingdom of God.

In terms of Bakhtin's categories, one could say that the *locus* of this intertextual connection lies in the expected response of the reader, a reader that has some knowledge of the Book of Zechariah. The *form* is that of a narrative (not in the form of a vision) that does not stay within the constraints of verisimilitude, pointing to the supernatural dimension of the overall battle. This carries the frightening implication that the evil forces are no longer contained, no longer controlled by Yahweh via the angel in the divine council. Instead, the devil roams freely, acting according to his own laws, necessitating the coming of the Son of God himself into this world to counteract this force. In terms of *degree* one could say the Zecharian voice is strongly presented, the vivid visual parallel between the two scenes being easily recognisable, while the divergence in Luke creates the awareness of the presence and absence of divine legal control.

### 3.3 *The trial*

This brings me to my third consideration, namely the trial of Jesus. In terms of testing the central idea in the Gospel, discussed above, the trial of Jesus can be seen as an extension of the desert scene. The latter's association with the scene in Zechariah, depicted as a legal proceeding, connects it to what is the major legal proceeding in the Gospel, namely, the trial. Zechariah's fourth vision thus links the desert scene with the trial scenes in the Gospel by means of its intertextual relations with both.

Like Joshua in Zech 3:1-2, Jesus stands before a council to be tried on a charge concerning his identity in terms of the divine plan. The presiding angel of the HB scene is absent. Instead, we see successive human judges in the form of the High Priest, Herod and Pontius Pilate. At first glance it seems that the Satan is also absent, but this is not so. In the earlier desert

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8 This term takes its name from the satires of Menippus of Gedara. Bakhtin uses it as a collective name to refer to the large body of serio-comic writings of the Hellenistic era. He sees it as having exercised a carnivalistic influence on European literature (Bakhtin 1984, 13).

scene Satan had claimed that he has authority over the kingdoms of this world (Luke 4:5). Having failed to corrupt Jesus, he ostensibly disappears from the scene, his representatives acting for him from this point on. As Jesus stands accused by people that, according to the Gospel, are opposing the divine plan of the coming kingdom of God embodied by him, Satan, like Yahweh in Zechariah, can be seen to be present by representation.

What we see here is an inversion of the trial situation in Zech 3:1-7. In that scene, Joshua is surrounded by benevolent divine beings that represent God, the angel in charge acquitting him of a ritual impurity that would prevent him from inaugurating worship in the reconstructed temple. In contrast to this, hostile people that represent Satan surround Jesus in the trial scenes in the Gospel. The cosmic battle between good and evil is presented in human form. In terms of power, the *status quo* has ostensibly tipped in favour of Satan, turning matters upside down in terms of the HB scene. Along with the inversion of the trial itself, there is the inversion of the symbolic process of attire. In Zechariah, Joshua has his filthy clothes that symbolize his and his community's ritual impurity,<sup>9</sup> replaced with pure robes, and a ritually pure crown is put on his head to legitimise his role as the high priest. He is thus validated as the agent of the divine plan to restore worship in the Jerusalem temple, so that Yahweh can come and dwell in it amongst his people. In contrast, the Jesus in the Gospel is stripped and scourged and is then robed with a regal gown in mockery. What is a *bona fide* crowning within the system of Yahweh's council in Zechariah, is a carnivalistic mock crowning in the Gospel.

The test of Jesus' integrity and thus his identity as the embodiment of the coming Kingdom of God, and, by extension, the reality of the advent of this kingdom, has been drastically intensified, the trial constituting a testing according to two different criteria. In Bakhtinian terms one could call it a dialogue between two discourses or voices. The one is the voice of worldly standards that tries and condemns Jesus to death on an earthly, physical level, discrediting him as a messiah in terms of historical, worldly power.

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9 Petersen suggests that the impurity and guilt lies in the fact that because of the Babylonian exile, Joshua and the members of the community were born in an 'unclean' land, and thus had to be purified before worship could be re-instated in the newly built Jerusalem temple. The question that Satan and the community may reasonably ask is whether this 'unclean' priest can remove the people's guilt when he, himself, is contaminated by the exilic experience (Petersen 1984, 195). See also Driver (1912, 150-151)

The other voice uses the maltreatment and condemnation to test his identity in terms of the divine plan for salvation. Discredited according to earthly standards, his identity in terms of his divine being remains intact.

Regarding the Lucan discourse, the following conclusions can be drawn from this intertextual relationship. The battle between good and evil shows itself on familiar, human ground, a more equal distribution of power becoming apparent. The unseen Yahweh of the older text does not feature as the sole, controlling being via his messengers in the Gospel. Instead, Jesus, who, as part of God himself visibly engages with a lethal adversary, embodies a new concept of the theophanic divine warrior that features in the HB book: a god who is visible in human form, who is immersed in basic human activity, who, instead of using cosmic power and the sword of earthly enemies to effect his plan, uses Scripture, the embodiment of human vulnerability and gentleness as his weapons. This kind of inversion of the traditional concept of power can be seen in the light of another key feature of the Menippea, that of carnivalistic inversion. The particular inversion in the trial, having been thus exposed as a travesty by its interaction with the scene in Zechariah, interacts simultaneously with the norm of first century worldly standards, exposing them to be foreign to the coming Kingdom of God that will inevitably take over.

Added to this is the implication that the restoration of the Children of Israel will come about in a new dimension altogether. The assumption that the establishment of both the priesthood and the secular, Roman power is under Satan's authority, makes the radical suggestion that the physical temple and its establishment, as well as the city, will be replaced by another kind of temple and city for God to dwell in amongst his people, a symbolic or other-worldly one, beyond the geographical and temporal constraints of this world. While the first part of the Book of Zechariah (1-8) is deeply concerned about the reconstruction of a new, physical temple in Jerusalem, the opposite movement can be detected in the Gospel. Jesus tries to cleanse the temple of existing corruption by evicting the traders<sup>10</sup> and by personally proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God in it. Nevertheless, he prophesies that the temple and the city will be destroyed (Luke 19:43-44, 21:6). Furthermore, the assumption of the priesthood being under the dominion of Satan, means that it can no longer be entrusted with

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10 Cf. Zech 14:21

representing the holiness and purity of the community as a whole, as had been the case with Joshua in Zech 3:1-7.

In terms of Bakhtinian theory, one can say that the *locus* of this intertextual engagement lies, firstly, in the expected response of the reader, depending on the latter's knowledge of the scene in Zechariah. Secondly, it lies in the concept of what constitutes power, who is in possession of it, and to whom it should be delegated. The *form* is partly visual, in terms the parallel scenes, the Gospel diverging by presenting a carnivalistic inversion. However, it also presents itself by implication that is the result of the inversion. In terms of *degree*, one can say that the Zecharian voice is present in a large section of the Lucan narrative, following the latter's various trial scenes. Although it is not actually quoted, it is there under the surface, drawing the different scenes together by its own discourse as the Gospel implicitly engages with it.

### 3.4 *The Branch (Zechariah 3:8-10)*

While the scene featuring Satan and Joshua in Zechariah's vision ostensibly deals with matters of reinstating the worship of Yahweh in a near-future rebuilt temple in Jerusalem in the post-exilic period, featuring what can be seen as an historical Joshua,<sup>11</sup> another figure is mentioned in this vision that defies any definitive interpretation in terms of identity or chronology. Joshua, having been purified and ritually instated as the High Priest, is told, together with those with him, that a servant of Yahweh, called the Branch, will be brought to them. Nothing more is said about this character at that stage, but he is mentioned again in a later vision (Zech 6:12-13), in which the prophet is told that a man called Branch "shall flourish from his place ... will build the temple of Yahweh... will acquire majesty ... as a ruler (he) will sit upon his throne... beside his throne will be a priest (and) peaceable council will exist between the two of them." Scholars have debated the identity of this character and the length of the interim period between the promise and the future fulfilment. Petersen, voicing the mainstream view, suggests that in the postexilic period the coming of the Branch would have been seen as the fulfilment of a hope for the return of a Davidic ruler in the

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11 Son of Jehozadak (Hag 1:1; Zech 6:11). See Petersen, who identifies him as the first 'historical' character (grandson of Seraiah, the High Priest, during the defeat of Jerusalem in BCE 587), apart from Zechariah, himself, that appears in the night visions (Petersen 1985, 188).

person of Zerubbabel, the descendent of David who returned with the exiles from Babylon as governor of Yehud (Petersen 1984, 212). He points out how the word *Branch* (צמח) and other plant imagery is used in the HB, often metaphorically, referring to a Davidic ruler, and at times in a physical sense, signifying growth, and thus material wealth.<sup>12</sup> In view of the fact that the Branch appears in the first half of Zechariah, Hanson<sup>13</sup> also identifies him as Zerubbabel, who would be crucial in rebuilding the temple (Hanson 1975, 253-4). In contrast, Meyers and Meyers, although interpreting the Branch as a (possibly messianic) Davidic king, place the fulfilment of this promise into a distant future, contending that it was unlikely that the prophet would promote a monarchy in the contemporary period, which would constitute a political rebellion against Persian rule (Meyers & Meyers 1987, 202-3). Rose goes further than this, maintaining that on the evidence of the text the Branch cannot be Zerubbabel, and that the temple he must rebuild cannot be the physical one of the post-exilic period.<sup>14</sup> Instead, referring to Jer 23:5-6 as the direct background to Zech 6:12-13, he sees the Branch as a messianic figure raising “expectations focusing on a future royal figure sent by God who will bring salvation to God’s people and the world and establish a kingdom characterized by features like peace and justice” (Rose 2000:248-49).

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12 Petersen shows how plant imagery as such to designate some place or person appears a number of times in the Hebrew Bible. For example, in Ezek 16:7 the term צמח is used to designate Jerusalem. In Isa.11:1, plant imagery, although the term ונצר (branch), and not צמח, is used for the notion of a future Davidic ruler, while Jer. 23:5 uses צמח in association with David to refer to a future king who “will rule wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.” (Petersen 1984, 211-12).

13 Hanson separates Zech 1-8, which he sees as presenting the legitimisation of the programme of reconstruction of the ruling, Zadokite priesthood, from Zechariah 9-14, which he interprets as presenting the apocalyptic view of the visionary, disenfranchised group.

14 Rose’s argument against the view that the Branch refers to Zerubbabel hinges on four points: (1) the fact that it is Joshua who is ritually crowned, not the Branch, (2) The use of the name, the Branch (צמח), when Zerubbabel could have been used (as it is in Zech 6:10), (3) the discontinuity in terms of historical means conveyed by the imagery of the word צמח, implying that ‘growth’, unlike ‘branch’ emerges from the soil rather than from an existing plant (cf. Jer 23:5-6), thus necessitating divine intervention, and (4) that the coming of the Branch is consistently referred to in the future.

The Branch as such does not ostensibly feature in the English translations of the Gospel of Luke. However, if one is to follow Rose's interpretation of that character in Zechariah as a messianic figure, and consider this in the light of what the angel, Gabriel, says to Mary in Luke 1:32-33, namely, that her son will be given the throne of his ancestor, David, and that his kingdom will have no end, one could tentatively consider whether this passage is announcing a fulfilment of the prophecy Zech 3:8 and 6:12-13. In both instances an angel announces the divinely mediated coming of a future ruler of a kingdom of utopian proportions.

Rose opposes 'branch' (part of an existing plant) as the translation of the Hebrew צמח (Rose 200, 120). He argues for 'vegetation', 'greenery', and 'growth' (plants as a whole, possibly in a collective sense, growing directly out of the soil). He distinguishes the use of צמח in Zechariah from other plant imagery that refers to a future Davidic king, as for example the 'shoot/sprout (ונוצר)' imagery from Isa 11:1 as a metaphor for offspring, pointing out that there is no mention of the name, *David*, in connection with the Branch in Zechariah. If one is to analyze Rose's translation of 'vegetation, greenery, growth' for, one could say that one element of this meaning is that it is a process that has an unlimited future. Another element is that of plenty. A third element is that of new life. All these meanings could be consistent with a utopian kingdom.

In the Septuagint the word צמח is translated with the Greek ἀνατολή. This word does, in fact, appear in the Greek text of the Gospel of Luke. First, it is uttered by Zechariah in his song (Luke 1:78), while the second time it is spoken by Jesus ( Luke 13:29). NRSV translates ἀνατολή in the Song of Zechariah as 'dawn',<sup>15</sup> while the NIV translates it as the 'rising sun'. On the face of it, this meaning has little to do with 'vegetation', 'greenery', and 'growth' that Rose uses to translate צמח, or for that matter with the word, 'branch' or 'shoot', the standard translations. However, if one takes these concepts in a metaphorical sense (the name, Branch, in itself being metaphorical), thinking of a future utopian kingdom ruled by a messiah, then the element of new life inherent in Rose' translation of צמח,

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15 So does the Amplified Bible. Similarly the New American Bible translates it as 'daybreak', while the King James Version translates it as 'dayspring'. The New American Standard Bible translates it as 'sunrise'. The Rheims New Testament translates it as 'the Orient'. The latter is close to the sense in which Jesus uses it later, namely 'the east'.

and the realization that the sun is vital for vegetation, greenery, growth and new life, then ‘dawn’, ‘dayspring’, ‘sunrise’, and ‘rising sun’ could be seen as signifiers related to ‘vegetation’, ‘greenery’ and ‘growth’.<sup>16</sup>

It is of significance that the word ἀνατολή, that is, the LXX translation of קִמְצַח in the Book of Zechariah, is used at the climax of Zechariah’s song in the Gospel (Luke 1:78). We see a Zechariah uttering this particular word in both the HB and the Gospel texts in terms of a promise of salvation. The content of Zechariah’s song in the Gospel consists of praising God for fulfilling his promise in sending a mighty messiah (Luke 1:69), while the vision in the HB promises a figure that will become a majestic ruler in a peaceable relationship with the priesthood (Zech 6:12-13). As in the vision in the HB text, there are two co-operating figures mentioned in the Gospel, of which one has a higher status than the other. In other words, the messiah and his forerunner (the descendent of a priestly family, John) in the Gospel can be seen to correspond with the Branch and the priest in the Book of Zechariah. Furthermore one could see a parallel in the future temple that the Branch will build with the coming Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaims and propagates. The word ἀνατολή in Luke 1:78 is clearly not meant in its physical sense but is a metaphor for the messiah, for the son that is about to be born to Mary.<sup>17</sup> This ‘dawn’ is not about to occur in the natural way, that is, a rising of the sun from the horizon. Instead it will *come down* from “on high”, that is, from heaven. Apart from the coming utopia that this vivid image suggests, there is the implication that the messiah, the son of God comes down in person to fight the coming battle here on earth, which can be seen to correspond to another image presented in the Book of Zechariah, namely, that of the divine warrior, Yahweh, who is to come and stand on the Mount of Olives to fight for Jerusalem “on that day”, the final day of restoration (Zech 14:1-21).

Contemplating the possibility that the Gospel appropriates the figure of the coming Branch in Zechariah to coincide with the figure of Jesus as the fulfilment of the prophecy, one can note a parallel quality in the being of

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16 Marshall, in fact, points to a double meaning of the word ἀνατολή in Luke 1:78. Firstly, while not specifically linking it to the Branch in Zechariah, he does interpret it as the Davidic Messiah, the Shoot from Jesse, and, secondly, as a heavenly body, linking it to the star of Jacob in Num 24:17 (Marshall 1978, 95).

17 If one is to follow Marshall’s interpretation, Zechariah, like Elizabeth, would be aware that Mary’s unborn child is the messiah (Marshall 1978, 91, 93).

these two figures, a being that is characterized by a duality that makes it difficult to definitively identify them. The Branch is introduced as a coming servant of Yahweh, ostensibly human, who will rule an ideal kingdom. The fact that he is specifically introduced as the servant,<sup>18</sup> suggests that he is closer to the deity than other humans, as for example, Joshua and his colleagues. This could be interpreted to mean that he is someone between the human and the divine, possibly already in existence but to be brought at a later stage to perform a specific task in the divine plan. He is inseparable from the ideal kingdom he will inaugurate and rule (Zech 6:12-13).<sup>19</sup> The vegetation imagery associated with his name could suggest that he rules the kingdom while also being its embodiment. While this kingdom could optimistically refer to a future, physical one in a reconstructed Jerusalem, there is also a possibility that an apocalyptic one is envisaged. This ambiguity opens the possibility of the figure being used as a source for the figure of Jesus in the Gospel.

Jesus is announced in the Gospel as someone who will be given the throne of his ancestor, David, to rule a kingdom that shall have no end (Luke 1:13). He appears in the Gospel as the messiah in human form, although his conception takes place under the shadow of the Holy Spirit, resulting in his being called the son of the most high. At the same time he represents the Kingdom of God, which is a state in the process of coming. In the Gospel, when Zechariah predicts that the dawn will come down from Heaven, he refers to both aspects, that is, the messiah himself, as well as the coming kingdom of God (Luke 1:79).

One can conclude at this stage that the Gospel of Luke has made use of Zech 3:1-8, as well as Zech 6:9-13. Apart from using it as a source for the function of the characters Jesus and Satan in terms of the battle between the divine plan and the forces that oppose this, there is the use of the figure of the Branch to support and legitimise the messiahship of Jesus. The fact that the identity of the Branch in Zechariah is impossible to pinpoint with certainty, that even the meaning of the word itself is not absolutely clear, makes it possible to appropriate the character into the new text, moulding it to suit its own purpose.

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18 The appellation, 'Yahweh's servant', can simply apply to a king. Rose points out that this only applied to David and Hezekiah (Rose 2000, 122).

19 The 'servant'/messiah/kingdom component of the old prophecy also appears in the Gospel (Luke 22:26-30)

How, then, does this intertextual reinforcement work in the Gospel? For one thing the old text features in the new text as a prophecy that is in the process of being fulfilled, thus strengthening the validity of Jesus as the messiah. Process, as opposed to stasis is at the core of the Gospel as such. In Zech 6:13 the Branch is visualized statically, sitting on a throne while the priest stands beside it. In the Gospel, the messiah (Jesus) is in movement, like life itself, as he comes, represents and propagates the Kingdom of God, dies, is resurrected, and leaves, promising a future coming. The descendent of the priestly family (John) is also in movement as the forerunner who preaches and baptizes to purify the people to receive the Lord. Both feature as moving beyond the confines of temple and palace. A new era has arrived; the old prophecies are being fulfilled, but an active, desperate struggle to overcome the evil forces that threaten to obstruct final fulfilment still has to be fought. The followers of Jesus, outside the establishment of priestly and secular power, are the ones given the promise, are purified, and are encouraged to fight this battle in a manner that disengages from conventional warfare. The fact that both Joshua and the Branch in the Book of Zechariah are source figures for the Jesus in the Gospel carries two implications concerning his being: like Joshua he is placed in history as a historical figure, while his divine quality, that is beyond historical time, is implied by his identification with the Branch. Secondly there is the implication that both priestly and kingly properties are combined in him.

Contemplating this intertextual engagement in terms of Bakhtin's categories of *locus*, *form* and *degree*, one could conclude the following. Once again, the *locus* of the involvement is in the expected response of the reader, providing that he or she has some knowledge of the Book of Zechariah. At the same time it can be seen to lie in the traditional concept of the messiah. While the possibility of the latter being a semi-divine being is hinted at in Zechariah, the divine element is emphasized in the Song of Zechariah in the Gospel. The unmilitary nature of the actions of the messiah (as opposed to the concept of a military victor), shown to an increasing degree in the course of the Gospel, is introduced here. The *form* of the presence of the Book of Zechariah in Luke appears in the word ἀνατολή in Luke 1:78. At the same time it also appears below the surface of the text in the parallels between the two books, as for example the functions of the Branch and Jesus, the parallels in number between the vision of the Branch and a priest in Zechariah, and Jesus and John the Baptist at the beginning of

the Gospel. Another parallel is the fact that in both texts the word ἀνατολή (אֲנָטוּלָה) appears in a prophecy uttered by a Zechariah. In terms of *degree* one can say that the actual appearance of the word ἀνατολή (אֲנָטוּלָה) in the Gospel brings to mind the Branch in Zechariah. Having once drawn attention to this, the other elements of the Zecharian scene in the Gospel become apparent. The latter diverges from the older text in terms of mobility, signifying the movement, as opposed to stasis, that underlies the coming Kingdom of God in the gospel message.

### *3.5 The King on a donkey (Zech 9:9, Luke 19:35-40)*

My last example concerns the image that is perhaps the most obvious indication of the presence of the Book of Zechariah in the Gospel of Luke, that of a king riding on a donkey into Jerusalem.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
 Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!  
 Lo, your king comes to you;  
 triumphant and victorious is he,  
 humble and riding on a donkey,  
 on a colt, the foal of a donkey.  
 He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
 and the war-horse from Jerusalem;  
 and the battle bow shall be cut off,  
 and he shall command peace to the nations;  
 his dominion shall be from sea to sea,  
 and from the River to the ends of the earth (Zech 9:9-10 (NRSV))

Critics have debated the identity of this king. S R Driver, a HB commentator, sees him as a combination of the Servant of Yahweh in the Book of Isaiah, and the royal conqueror, meaning Yahweh himself. Peterson suggests that he is a corporate character rather than an expected real or ideal Davidic king. Be that as it may, one could say that the king on the donkey inaugurating peace in Zechariah could be seen as human while also having the attributes of the divine king. According to the LXX translation, he is just, victorious and – a saviour.

The ambiguity of the image makes it suitable for appropriation into the Gospel in terms of the duality of Jesus' human and divine being. In Luke this image is presented as a fulfilment of the ancient prophecy in contemporary, historical time. Deceptively gentle, it has radical implications

in terms of having the potential to cause a popular uprising against the worldly establishment within which it functions.<sup>20</sup> Its cosmic dimension is implied in Jesus' saying that the very stones would shout out, should the people be prevented from doing so (Luke 19:40). The fact that this image in Luke stays in line with the prophecy in Zechariah in terms of not mentioning the name *David* (unlike the other three canonical Gospels), further reinforces the notion, as is hinted at in the older book, that an altogether different kind of king is referred to. Were he to be a Davidic king, he would fight with worldly weapons of power within a worldly power structure, which is depicted in Luke to be Satan's domain. Instead, intent on the coming Kingdom of God, the hailed king on the donkey bypasses this type of engagement.

Considering the dialogic implication of this HB image in the Gospel, one could say that the presentation of a visual, physical fulfilment of the visionary prophecy puts forward a powerful confirmation of Jesus as the predicted messiah. It is a statement in visual terms, acting as an offensive against opposing forces. Without the HB text behind it, however, the scene in the Gospel would simply feature as an incident without the resonance of the underlying battle that rages so vividly in the second part of the Book of Zechariah. The fact that the passage in that text, although, in itself peaceful, is set amongst scenes of violence, warfare and rigorous purging of the community, serves to emphasize the magnitude of the battle in the Gospel.

In terms of Bakhtin's notion of the *locus* of the intertextual action, this can be found both in the expected response of the reader and in generally held views of what a king is. In terms of *form* one can see this engagement in a near quotation and a vivid image. The battle between good and evil underlying the Gospel, which is about to intensify with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, is undergirded by the violent scenes surrounding the quoted scene in question in Zechariah. Furthermore the Zecharian scene appears as a powerful image in the Gospel. The degree of this intertextuality is high because of the quotation. It appears fully on the surface of the text, fully

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20 The donkey is not an inferior animal in the HB image. It could be the appropriate mount of a king, the Hebrews traditionally deprecating the horse as a symbol of foreign power (Driver 1912, 355). One could say that it acts as an ambiguous symbol in the Gospel. On the one hand it is reminiscent of the image in Zechariah as an appropriate animal for a king, recognisable to the people, while (menippean-like) it acts as a carnivalistic inversion in the Gospel, making fun of Roman triumphal processions.

recognizable as it unequivocally emphasizes the regal, victorious, but unmilitary nature of the messiah.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that this paper is only a sample of the many implications that emerge as a result of a Bakhtinian reading of the Gospel in the light of Zechariah. Furthermore, the other strands or voices from books of the Hebrew canon contained in this Gospel must be kept in mind, each of which can be pursued with equal validity. Together with the one discussed here, they constitute multiple dialogical interaction within the Gospel amongst themselves, the older canon and the discourse of the Gospel itself. This particular study has shown how use is made of the Book of Zechariah in various forms and at various levels as a source, a validation and as reinforcement. At the same time, however, the older text serves as the norm from which the Gospel diverges, proclaiming an unprecedented *modus operandi* by the divine warrior in the battle for the coming Kingdom of God.

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