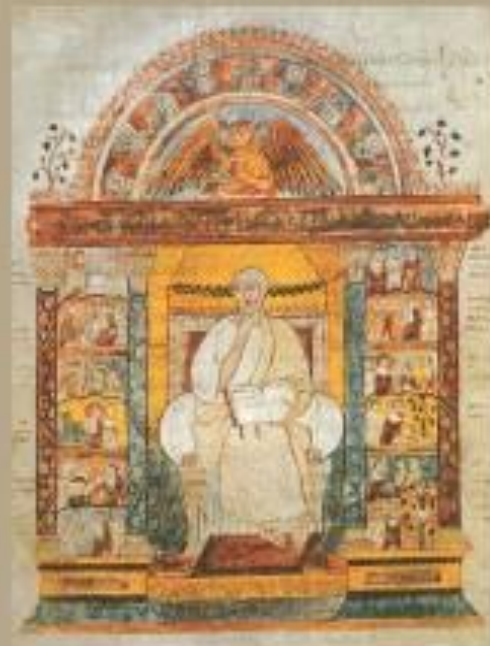


Nico Riemersma

# Jesus as Miracle Worker and Teacher

Studies in the Gospel of Luke



TILBURG  UNIVERSITY

Understanding Society

LIT

## WORD IN ADVANCE

It is with great pleasure that I present this new book to the reader. It is the sequel to ‘The Gospel of Luke as Masterpiece: Structure, Genre and Way of Telling’, which was released by Lit Verlag at the end of 2023. That this book is the sequel to the previous one is evident from the fact that the last pericopes I dealt with ended with my interpretation of Luke 7,11-17, and this book begins with an examination of Luke 8,22-27 and subsequent pericopes from this Gospel.

If you take a closer look at my bibliography, you will see that in various articles and books I have dealt with both Old Testament<sup>1</sup> and New Testament<sup>2</sup> miracle stories. These are stories that intrigue me extraordinarily. They tell of events that are ‘impossible’ by human standards. Yet these stories are told. This raises the question of why they are told in spite of being ‘impossible’. How do they require the reader to respond?

In the previous book I discussed two miracle stories: (1) the healing of the boy of the centurion of Capernaum (7,1-10) and the raising of the only son of a widow (7,11-17). In this book I discuss a number of other miracle stories from the Gospel according to Luke, namely: the story of the stilling of the storm on the lake (8,22-27a); the expulsion of a legion of evil spirits (8,27b-39); the healing of the woman with an issue of blood (8,42c-48); the raising of the daughter of Jairus (8,40-42b+49-56); the miraculous feeding (9,10-17); the cleansing of the ten lepers (17,11-19), and the healing of the blind man (18,35-43). These are found in chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13 and 16. The first five miracle stories are part of a single episode, which begins

---

<sup>1</sup> *Aan de dode een wonder gedaan: Een exegetisch-hermeneutische studie naar de dodenopwekking in Lucas 7,11-17 in relatie tot 1 Koningen 17,17-24 en Vita Apollonii IV,45* (ACEBT.SS, 14), Bergambacht 2016, 134-203, in which I discuss the raising of the only son of a widow by Elijah (1 Kings 17,17-24); ‘Hoe een jong mens weer tot leven komt: Een close reading van 2 Koningen 4,32-35’, in: M. den Braber & W. van Wieringen (red.), *Elia & Elisa* (ACEBT, 35), Amsterdam 2022, 21-34; A brief response to a remark [by Bob Becking], in: M. den Braber & W. van Wieringen (red.), *Elia & Elisa* (ACEBT, 35), Amsterdam 2022, 45-49; An extended response to the remark [by Bob Becking], on: [www.nicoriersma.nl](http://www.nicoriersma.nl) (blog 11 mei 2022); ‘Wie is JHWH? Wie is God? Een bijbels-theologische kijk op 2 Koningen 4:8-37’, in: N. Riemersma *et al.* (ed.), *Van God gesproken: Opstellen over bijbelse theologie aangeboden aan Joep Dubbink* (ACEBT.SS, 19), Amsterdam 2023, 137-149; ‘The First Deeds of Elisha: Two Miracles – 2 Kings 2,19-25’: *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 77/3 (2023), 159-176.

<sup>2</sup> ‘“Spreek met een woord en mijn kind moet genezen”’: Kanttekeningen bij Lucas 7:1-10’, *Kerk en Theologie* 59/3 (2008), 197-213 / ‘“Spreek met een woord en mijn kind moet genezen”’, in: *Het Lucasevangelie onder de loep: Opbouw, stijl en theologie*, Middelburg 2018, 82-10 / ‘A Healing Word That Bridges Distances: The Conclusion of the Sermon on the Plain (7,1-10)’, in: *The Gospel of Luke as a Masterpiece: Structure, Genre and Way of Telling* (TThS 10), Berlin/Münster 2023, 129-151; ‘Gestild en stil: Samenhang en context van Lucas 9:10-17’, *Collationes* 40/1 (2010), 21-38; ‘Een blinde die het heil toch zal zien (Lucas 18:35-43)’, *Interpretatie* 19/7 (2011), 4-6 / ‘Zicht op de weg: Lucas 18,35-43’, *Collationes* 48/1 (2018), 5-21 / ‘Een blinde die zicht krijgt op de weg’: Lucas 18,35-43’, in: *Het Lucasevangelie onder de loep*, 249-267; ‘Een aanraking ten leven: De duiding van het kernwoord van Lucas 8,42-48’, *Collationes* 41/3 (2011), 327-345; ‘Dodenopwekking als teruggave [Lucas 7:11-17]’, *Schrift* 44/1 (2012), 21-25; *Aan de dode een wonder gedaan: Een exegetisch-hermeneutische studie naar de dodenopwekking in Lucas 7,11-17 in relatie tot 1 Koningen 17,17-24 en Vita Apollonii IV,45* (ACEBT.SS, 14), Bergambacht 2016 / ‘De dodenopwekking als daad van compassie: Lucas 7,11-17’, in: *Het Lucasevangelie onder de loep*, 108-115; ‘De dodenopwekking als metafoor: Lucas 7,16’, in: *Het Lucasevangelie onder de loep*, 116-124 / ‘Raising of the Dead as a Metaphor: The Conclusion of the First Part of Jesus’ Public Ministry (7,11-17)’, in: *The Gospel of Luke as a Masterpiece: Structure, Genre and Way of Telling* (TThS 10), Berlin/Münster 2023, 159-179; ‘Hoe er afstand ontstaat tussen Jezus en de leerlingen (Lucas 8,22-27)’, *Collationes* 49/3 (2019), 259-273; ‘De opwekking van Lazarus: Johannes 10:40-11:54 benaderd vanuit de genre- en vormkritiek’, *Kerk en Theologie* 73/2 (2022), 179-196; ‘De tien en meer herstelwonderen van Jezus: Matteüs 8,1-9,34’, in: N. Riemersma & P. van Midden (eds.), *Het Evangelie naar Matteüs* (ACEBT, 36), Amsterdam 2023, 67-78; ‘Eén vreemdeling die terugkeerde: Samenhang en pointe van Lucas 17,11-19’, in: N. Riemersma & B.J. Koet (red.), *Het oog op Lucas-Handelingen: Bijdragen vanuit de Lucaswerkplaats* (ACEBT.SS, 21), Amsterdam 2024, 45-60.

in 8,22 and ends in 9,17. In each case, the nature of the emergency is slightly more severe than in the previous one, which makes the miracles that Jesus performs increasingly remarkable. Before discussing these stories, I consider Luke 8,22-9,17 in its entirety as a story episode (chapter 2). The pericope in-between the last two miracle stories - about the mission of the disciples (9,1-10), is not excluded from the discussion (chapters 7 and 8). The placing of this pericope among the miracle stories is striking. It raises the question of why this sending out by Jesus is positioned between the miracle stories of the raising of Jairus' daughter (8,40-56), and the miraculous feeding (9,10-17).

Many books about miracle stories lack reflection on how a reader can come to terms with such stories. I do not want to ignore the difficulties in understanding these stories, nor the solutions that have been offered to this problem over time. The book therefore starts with the chapter 'How to understand provocative miracle stories?' In my opinion, this requires a reception-aesthetic approach to miracle stories.

In addition to the miracle cycle in 8,22-9,17, I will discuss two more miracle stories. In chapter 13, I offer an explanation of the story known as 'the healing of the ten lepers', which I have called 'The Faithful Samaritan'. This miracle story is at the beginning of the episode 17,11-18,34. It is a characteristic of Luke that he often starts a new episode with a miracle story. He does the same in the following episode 18,35-19,28, with the story of the blind man who gets a view of the way that Jesus is going (18,35-43). I discuss it in the final chapter.

Not only his works (ἔργα) characterize Jesus, but also his words (λόγοι). Where his works characterize him as a miracle worker, his words characterize him as a teacher (διδάσκαλος and ἐπιστάτης). That teaching often takes its shape, either because disciples or others ask the teacher questions, or because the teacher begins his teaching, with a question. On the part of the teacher, a question is regularly answered by means of a parable. This happens, for example, in the didactic conversation between a lawyer and Jesus (10,25-37), where Jesus answers a question by the lawyer 'who is my neighbour?' with the parable of the Good Samaritan (10,30-35). I discuss this parable at the end of chapter 12 in which the semantic field of compassion/mercy is central. Two other parables are discussed: in chapter 14 that of the persistent widow (18,1-8), and that of the Pharisee and the publican (18,9-14) in chapter 15. Both parables are part of the episode 17,11-18,34, which begins with the miracle story of the ten lepers (17,11-19).

The teacher not only teaches his pupils how to live, act and speak, but he also shows them his own way (9,22). He tells them of this way in strict secrecy, after Peter – representing the disciples – has answered the question of who he is, after 4,16-9,17, in which the first part of his way is told. In chapters 10 and 11 I discuss this speech that he addresses to 'all'. The concluding sentence (9,27) cannot, as I try to show in chapter 11, be understood without the immediate sequel, the transfiguration on the mountain (9,28-36).

At the end of the book, I show where previous studies – in Dutch – have been published. Chapters that have not been published before can be found at the beginning, as well as a little further on. These are chapters 1 ('How to understand provocative miracle stories') and 2 ('Luke 8,22-9,17 as an episode'), and chapters 4 ('From legionnaire to disciple, from disciple to preacher') and 5 ('The raising of the daughter of Jairus').

I would like to thank the editors of Tilburg Theological Studies/Tilburger Theologische Studien, Prof. Dr. Jan Loffeld, Prof. Dr. Caroline Vander Stichele and Prof. Dr. Henk Schoot, for their permission to include this book in the series. No less, my thanks go to Alice Deken who once again took on the translation of the book. I think back to working with her with pleasure. And finally, I thank Mirjam for her loving support during the process of creating this book.

*Christmas Eve, December 24, 2024*  
*Nico Riemersma*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

WORD IN ADVANCE	v
1. HOW TO UNDERSTAND PROVOCATIVE MIRACLE STORIES: A RECEPTION-AESTHETIC APPROACH OF MIRACLE STORIES	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The word 'miracle'	3
1.3 Dual use of the word 'miracle'	6
1.4 Definition of the miracle story	6
1.5 How to understand provocative miracle stories	14
2. LUKE 8,22-9,17 AS AN EPISODE	23
2.1 Introduction	23
2.2 The beginning	23
2.3 The ending	25
2.4 Unity of time and place	26
2.5 The structure of 8,22-9,17	27
2.6 Coherence of 8,22-9,17	28
3. THE STILLING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE (LUKE 8,22-27): HOW THE DISTANCE BETWEEN JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES GROWS	31
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Translation of Luke 8,22-27	31
3.3 Unit delimitation	32
3.4 The structure of 8,22-27	33
3.5 The four statements	37
3.6 The relationship between the four statements	41
3.7 The role of the disciples in 8,22-9,17	41
4. FROM LEGIONNAIRE TO DISCIPLE, FROM DISCIPLE TO PREACHER: A CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF Λεγιών IN LUKE 8,26-39	45
4.1 Introduction	45
4.2 Unit delimitation	47
4.3 Translation of Luke 8,26-39+40a	49
4.4 Luke 4,31-37 as the first work of Jesus	51
4.5 Characterisation of the main character (I)	54
4.6 Characterisation of the main character (II)	62
4.7 Centurion and Legion	66
4.8 The place of λεγιών in a world of demons	67
4.9 Interpretation	69
4.10 Conclusion	71
5. THE TOUCH FOR LIFE: THE INTERPRETATION OF THE KEY WORD IN LUKE 8,42C-48	73
5.1 Three issues	73
5.2 Translation of Luke 8,42c-48	73
5.3 The structure of 8,42c-48	74
5.4 An initial exploration	76
5.5 The touching of the hem of the outer garment	78
5.6 The touch and Leviticus 12,25-31	80

5.7	The touch from behind	82
5.8	A magical touch?	84
5.9	Final conclusion	87
6.	THE RAISING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS:	89
	LUKE'S CHOICE FOR SYNCRISIS IN LUKE 8,40-56	
6.1	Introduction	89
6.2	Unit delimitation	90
6.3	Translation of Luke 8,40-56	92
6.4	The place of 8,40-56 in the context	93
6.5	The structure of 8,40-56	94
6.6	Three moments: dying, death, and raising of the daughter of Jairus	97
6.7	Jairus' coming in connection with the emergency (vv. 41-42b)	97
6.8	The coming of someone from Jairus' side in connection with the aggravation of the emergency (vv. 49-50)	102
6.9	Jesus' coming brings a reversal of the aggravated emergency (vv. 51-55)	107
6.10	The reaction to the miracle (v. 56a)	113
6.11	Prohibition on further disclosure	114
6.12	Luke's choice for syncrisis in 8,40-56	117
7.	THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE:	123
	CONTEXT, UNITY AND STRUCTURE OF LUKE 9,1-10a	
7.1	Introduction	123
7.2	Translation of Luke 9,1-10a	123
7.3	The place of 9,1-10a in the context	124
7.4	Unit delimitation	126
7.5	The structure of 9,1-10a	129
7.6	Equipping, missionary commissioning and instructions (vv. 1-5)	129
7.7	Execution (v. 6)	133
7.8	Return and report (v. 10a)	135
7.9	The reason for the interruption and for the mission	136
8.	BETWEEN SEEING AND HEARING:	139
	VIEWS ON JESUS IN LUKE 9,7-9	
8.1	Introduction	139
8.2	Translation of Luke 9,7-9	140
8.3	Two issues in 9,7	140
8.4	The place of 9,7-9 in the context	141
8.5	Structure and coherence	144
8.6	Different views on Jesus	145
8.7	Correspondences	148
8.8	Assessment by the reader	150
8.9	The place of the views in the whole of the Gospel	150
8.10	Herod's reply	152
8.11	Transformation	153
9.	THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING:	157
	CONTEXT AND COHERENCE OF LUKE 9,10b-17	
9.1	Introduction	157
9.2	Translation of Luke 9,10b-17	157
9.3	Unit delimitation	158
9.4	The relationship of 9,10b-11 to 9,12-17	161

9.5	The relationship of 9,10b-17 to 9,1-10a	166
9.6	The relationship of 9,10b-17 to 9,18-27	168
9.7	Conclusion	172
10.	‘IF ANYONE WILL COME AFTER ME ...’: CONCERNING CALLING AND FOLLOWING IN LUKE 9,23-27	175
10.1	Introduction	175
10.2	The call to follow in 5,27	176
10.3	The call to follow in 9,23-27	176
10.4	Translation of Luke 9,18-27	177
10.5	The call to the disciples and to the crowd	178
10.6	Must (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) and will (πάντες)	179
10.7	Two moments of being called	179
10.8	The structure of 4,16–9,50	180
10.9	Abraham’s two moments of being called	181
11.	‘... UNTIL THEY HAVE SEEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD’: CONCERNING LUKE 9,27 AND THE CONTEXT	183
11.1	Introduction	183
11.2	From the transfiguration to the second coming	183
11.3	Coming in his glory	185
11.4	In his glory	187
11.5	The context of 9,27	188
11.6	Interpretation of 9,27	188
12.	COMPASSION AND MERCY IN LUKE-ACTS: A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY	193
12.1	Introduction	193
12.2	Compassion and mercy in the Hebrew Tanakh and the Greek Septuagint	194
12.3	An initial exploration in Luke-Acts	196
12.4	Different terms for ‘mercy’	200
12.5	The term ‘compassion’	210
12.6	The ultimate story of mercy	211
12.7	Drawing up the balance	212
13.	BRIDGING DISTANCES: COHERENCE AND POINT OF LUKE 17,11-19	215
13.1	Introduction	215
13.2	Unit delimitation	216
13.3	Translation of Luke 17,11-19	219
13.4	The place of 17,11-19 in the context	220
13.5	The structure of 17,11-19	222
13.6	The point	229
14.	THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW (LUKE 18,1-8): THE MEANING OF μακροθυμέω IN 18,7	233
14.1	The problem	233
14.2	Translation of Luke 18,1-8	234
14.3	Two parts: the parable and the application	234
14.4	The parable	236
14.5	The application	240
14.6	The coherence of 18,1-8	243
14.7	Translations of καὶ μακροθυμεῖ ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς	245
14.8	Patience to make room for faith	248

14.9	‘... and he is long-suffering toward them’	249
14.10	Final conclusion	253
15.	THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER:	255
	THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN (LUKE 18,9-14)	
15.1	Three issues	255
15.2	Translation of Luke 18,9-14	256
15.3	The place of 18,9-14 in the context	257
15.4	The relationship between 18,1-8 and 18,9-14	257
15.5	The structure of 18,9-14	258
15.6	The rationale for the parable (v. 9)	259
15.7	The parable (vv. 10-13)	260
15.8	Jesus’ final statement (v. 14)	263
15.9	The judgement (v. 14b)	263
15.10	The reason for the judgement (v. 14c-d)	265
15.11	The tenor of the parable	266
15.12	‘Example story’ or ‘agonistic story’	268
16.	GAINING SIGHT ON THE ROAD:	269
	THE HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN (LUKE 18,35-43)	
16.1	Introduction	269
16.2	Unit delimitation	270
16.3	Translation of Luke 18,35-43	271
16.4	The semantic layers of 18,35-43	272
16.5	Luke 18,35-43 as the beginning of 18,35–19,28	272
16.6	The relationship with 17,11–18,34	274
16.7	Two phases	276
16.8	The story unit	277
16.9	Four transformations	284
16.10	Insight and sight	286
	PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED	289
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	293
	INDEX OF SCRIPTURE	319