Acts and the Lukan Christology of Universal Witness

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that, for Luke, universal witness belongs within a broader claim about the identity of Israel's Messiah. Framed by Luke 24:46-48 (and Acts 26:22-23), the book of Acts narratively construes the unfolding universality of the Christian movement as the unfolding of the universality of Jesus' Lordship. The "Lukan Commission," rooted in a prophetic promise, prefigures the role of Acts in narratively unfolding the identity of Jesus as πάντων κύριος (Acts 10:36).

Universal proclamation of salvation in Acts—implicitly by Jesus and explicitly by his witnesses—narratively realizes the universality of Jesus' Lordship. Luke's second volume reconfigures the narrative sense of "presence" and "activity" on the basis of Jesus' exaltation to heaven and Lordship by the Spirit (cf. 2:17-36). Especially as the "word" spreads beyond Jerusalem and the Jewish people, the Lord Jesus' influence on the unfolding of universal witness becomes pronounced.

Though the apostles receive Jesus' commission, their outreach is generally restricted to Jews in Jerusalem. Not until the Cornelius incident (Acts 10:1-11:18) does the universal vision of Jesus' commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) intersect with apostolic witness, which is why Luke gives the episode almost unparalleled emphasis (cf. 11:5-17; 15:7-11). In this respect, the event proves paradigmatic for Luke's coordination of christological identity and universal witness, establishing Jesus' messianic identity as "Lord of all" (10:36). The full scope of Jesus' identity is what participants in witness must *discover* in their encounter with the (ethnically) "other" (ἀλλόφυλος).

This theological breakthrough lies behind Paul's outreach in the Diaspora and finds expression in the makeup of the Syrian Antioch community (11:19-26; 13:1-3), itself the basis

for Paul's outreach to Jews and Gentiles everywhere. In endorsing Antioch's ministry, Peter, James, and the Jerusalem believers "model" for unbelieving Jews the proper interpretation of the salvation of the Gentiles in relation to Israel's hopes (Acts 15). Jesus' identity as universal Lord helps explain Paul's "turn" to the Gentiles (13:46; 18:6; 28:28) less as a result of Jewish rejection than as a fulfillment of the Messiah's work as outlined in scripture (1:8; 13:47; 26:23). The receptivity of Gentiles to Paul's preaching provokes Paul's Jewish audiences even as it models proper receptivity to the universality of Jesus' Lordship. The present study confirms that for Luke mission is in part a means for expanding the witnesses' comprehension of the scope of Jesus' Lordship in light of God's work among the Gentiles. Luke's focus on the response of Jewish believers to this emerging reality in Acts reconfigures notions of χριστός in light of the (narrative) expansion of his identity as πάντων κύριος.

Dedication

To Meredith, Darcy, and Tessa – I can never say it enough: I love you.

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Acknowledgements

While only one name sits atop this dissertation, many deserve credit for its completion. First, I am grateful to my dissertation committee, comprised of first-rate scholars and people. To my advisor, Kavin Rowe, thank you for your unflagging commitment to see me through this process. I have never known a more serious interpreter of the Bible—and I mean that in every positive and no negative sense. My gratitude also goes out to Ross Wagner, who has been a faithful mentor through not one but two degree programs; to Laceye Warner, for both her kind assurances along the way and also her partnership and mentorship in leading the Duke MA(CP) program into the future; to Brittany Wilson, whose generosity with ideas and encouragement is a model for students; and to Stephen Chapman, for always taking the time to think through ideas with me.

Critical to the completion of this dissertation has been my writing group—Julie Newberry and Amy Whisenand. It is no exaggeration to say that I would not be writing these words if it weren't for your kind accountability and rich insights. I am grateful to my parents, Gitta Sadoni and Heinz Kiehnke, Paul Yuckman and MaryAnn Janosik. My parents-in-law, John and Dee Weaver, so often and so graciously made work time possible; our friends Ed Bell and Gloria Camarena made the non-work time so much fun. There is no room here to list the many others who have significantly influenced my scholarship—teachers, classmates, and friends alike—though I am grateful to all.

My thanks also go out to the leadership of the American Society of Missiology, who, in recognizing my work through the Annual Graduate Student Paper Award, confirmed the direction and purpose of my research. I am grateful for the Louisville Institute, from whom I received a doctoral fellowship and an opportunity to learn from a cohort of brilliant scholars whom I am honored to call my peers: Sarah, Leo, Callid, Won Chul, Laura Jean, Hyemin, Jamie, Michael, Dilara, and our fearless leader Susan.

Above all, my sincerest gratitude goes to my family. My spouse, Meredith—words of gratitude (more words!) seem especially inadequate in expressing appreciation for how you have sustained me and us for so long. It is such a gift to be your partner. My children, Darcy and Tessa—you are all light and joy. You remind me every day of the point of it all.

Introduction

> And Jesus said to them, "It is written that the Messiah is to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins is to be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24:46-48 NRSV)

Widely known as the "Lukan Commission," Luke 24:46-48 appears in the narrative context of Jesus' parting words to his apostles just before his departure from the earth. In this respect, it is not unlike his parting words according to Matthew 28:18-20. Indeed, Jesus' final words in Matthew's Gospel provide an illuminating comparison text.

> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20 NRSV)

The Matthean Jesus' words are even more ostensibly words of *commissioning*, oriented by a strong imperative ("make disciples") and concrete auxiliary verbs ("go," "baptizing," "teaching"). What are followers of Jesus to believe and do in the wake of Jesus' departure[1] from the earth? According to Matthew, they are to extend his mission of discipleship, under his authority, and in the knowledge that their Lord is always with them.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Jesus' words of commissioning from Matthew's Gospel have largely dictated the way mission has been "read" in the NT. Arguably, part of the appeal of the "Great Commission" is attributable to its position as

[1] Even if Jesus' departure/ascension cannot be surmised from Mark's Longer Ending (16:19), Luke 24:50-51, or Acts 1:9-11, it remains true that the final words Jesus speaks in each Gospel account represent his parting words to his disciples since (with the sole exception of Luke's Gospel) he will not be heard from again. I follow the scholarly consensus that Mark's "Longer Ending" (16:9-20), which describes Jesus' ascension (ἀνελήμφθη, v. 19), is a later addition.

the last three verses in Matthew's Gospel, lending it a tone of finality. Concluding his Gospel with Jesus' words designates them as a kind of program left behind for those who take up Jesus' ministry—making disciples of the nations through baptism and instruction. But the clear "instructions" of Jesus' final words in Matthew are offset by the fact that they are not followed by any *narrative* portrayal. What, therefore, does fulfillment of the "Great Commission" actually look like? By running out of narrative with which to portray its fulfillment, so to speak, Matthew creates a vacuum which readers can imaginatively fill. No doubt for much of Christian history—in which it was common to harmonize accounts about Jesus—the book of Acts could be appended to *Matthew's* Gospel, which would make the portrait of witness in Acts a kind of proof of the obedience of the apostles and of Paul to Jesus' direct command.[2] Such a harmonization would leave the Lukan Commission (Luke 24:46-48) as a muted echo of the Matthean version.[3]

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[2] Cf. Tertullian, *Proscription Against Heretics,* 20: "Accordingly, after one of these had been struck off, He commanded the eleven others, on His departure to the Father, to 'go and teach all nations, who were to be baptized into the Father, and into the Son, and into the Holy Ghost.' Immediately, therefore, so did the apostles, whom this designation indicates as 'the sent.' Having, on the authority of a prophecy, which occurs in a psalm of David, chosen Matthias by lot as the twelfth, into the place of Judas, they obtained the promised power of the Holy Ghost for the gift of miracles and of utterance; and after first bearing witness to the faith in Jesus Christ throughout Judæa, and founding churches (there), they next went forth into the world and preached the same doctrine of the same faith to the nations."

[3] Indeed, Carey supports his almost expository interpretation of Matt 28:18-20 with an immediate recitation of the story of Acts (*An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* [1792], 14-28). Modern commentaries on early Christian mission display the same tendency in the way they allow the force of Matt 28 to govern the interpretation of other commissions in the Gospels. See Eckhard Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission. Volume 1* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004), 1:348-386, which allows Matt 28:18-20 19 pages of commentary and, in marked contrast, gives Luke 24:26-28 3 pages and Acts 1:8 5 pages. For his part, Carey attempts to put all the commissions under the primary model of obligation best represented in Matthew, and he uses Mark 16:15—with no mention of its textual uncertainty—to support his emphases. *Enquiry,* Section I.

While the position of Luke 24:46-48 relative to the Third Gospel appears comparable to Matt 28:18-20's equivalent position, the existence of a second Lukan volume hermeneutically alters the complexion of the Lukan commission. No longer are Jesus' words a "last will and testament" in Luke's Gospel, in part because Luke essentially repeats them at the start of Acts (1:8) and continues to quote Jesus throughout.[4] Acts' very existence requires the finality of the Lukan commission to be transposed into a programmatic introduction to a second volume,[5] establishing the expectation that the book of Acts will be a narrative representation of the fulfillment of the Lukan commission.[6] Unlike Matthew, Luke shows what the spread of the gospel to the nations looks like. Mission, in this respect, cannot be reduced to the exercise of a set of discrete commands (go, disciple, baptize, teach), but is anchored inexorably in what Acts depicts.

Certainly, the differences between Jesus' commissions across the Gospels[7] should not be overstated since they probably reflect a common source (e.g., Mark 13:10; cf. 16:15) or generally a shared tradition.[8] But differences there are, and these differences are

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[4] Curiously, in Acts Jesus "speaks" four times as many words *after* his Ascension than before. Of these roughly 285 post-Ascension words, about half (135) are recalled by the narrator (half spoken to Paul in 9:4-6; 18:9-10; 23:11; and half spoken to Ananias in 9:10-12, 15-16) and just as many Paul recounts as the Lord's direct speech to him (22:7, 8, 10, 18, 21; 26:14-18). Of a slightly different sort are (presumably) pre-Easter sayings of Jesus recalled by Peter (11:16) and Paul (20:35). See Chapter 2.

[5] Certainly, Christians have been free to interpret the Lukan commission without reference to Acts, but the narrative logic of a two-volume work argues against such an abstraction.

[6] Cf. Christopher J. H. Wright, "Truth with a Mission: Reading Scripture Missiologically," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 15.2 (2011): 6: "Luke shapes his two volume work in such a way that the missionary mandate to the disciples to be Christ's witnesses to the nations comes as the climax to the Gospel of Luke and the introduction to the book of Acts."

[7] Differences between commissions can be illustrated with the observation that while in Matthew's commission Jesus' words begin with "go" (πορευθέντες, 28:19), in Luke's they conclude with "stay" (καθίσατε, 24:49)!

[8] Cf. the conclusions of Benjamin Hubbard in *The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Comissioning: An Exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20* (Missoula: SBL Dissertation Series, 1974), with

most profitably understood in relation to the larger hermeneutical issues that attend a *narrative* reading as opposed to the traditional like-with-like comparison found in many commentaries.[9] Indeed, for all the reasons already mentioned, a comparison between Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:46-48, in spite of their similarities, will always and necessarily be uneven. Read *canonically*, Matthew's and Luke's commissions belong together. In this way, their respective commissions are more complementary, offering different visions in different ways. But even a robustly canonical reading should insist on hearing the Lukan commission on its own terms[10]; otherwise, if it is entirely subsumed under terms set by Matthew's "Great" commission, the very notion of canonicity is undermined. Matthew 28:18-20 cannot be taken as a surrogate for everything the Synoptic Gospels say about mission, nor even for everything Matthew says.[11] Even if mission history has effectively divorced the Great Commission from Matthew's Gospel,

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implications for the study of Luke-Acts in "The Role of Commissioning Accounts in Acts," in *Perspectives in Luke-Acts*, ed. Charles Talbert (Danville: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978), 187-198. Because of the emphasis on form—namely, that a common "commissioning scene" template lies behind each of the Gospel commissions—source-critical conclusions about similarities tend to override observations about narrative difference. Hermeneutically, it is more fruitful to consider the whole hermeneutical context of the reading of Lukan commissions (Luke-Acts) rather than a reconstructed tradition which they may or may not have in common with other Gospel statements.

[9] Darrell Bock, *Luke*, v. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1928, 1941; Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 1:1580-1.

[10] Cf. the approach of Karl Barth, "An Exegetical Study of Matthew 28:16-20," in *The Theology of the Christian Mission,* ed. Gerald Anderson (Nashville: Abingdon, 1961), 57: "All these narratives deal no doubt with a common subject and are in basic agreement. Yet each of them needs to be read independently, as a unique testimony of God's decisive word and intervention at the turning point of the eons."

[11] One possible reason for the historical emphasis on the Matthean Jesus' words, and in isolation from the narrative context in which they appear, is their contrast with the exclusivist statements Jesus makes earlier in the same gospel: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24). Lest we distinguish between Jesus' mission and that of his disciples, Jesus offers the same circumscription to the Twelve: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles … but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:5-6). Because of the strong contrast with the pre-Easter conception of mission, the post-resurrection vision of 28:18-20 stands out for its universal horizon. Moreover, Matthew's sharp eschatological distinction between earth and the kingdom of heaven, between present time and imminent End (24:4-25:46), associates the practice of universal mission with the coming of the *eschaton* (24:14; cf. Mark 13:10). Effectively, what came before (including Matt 10:5-6; 15:24; yet cf. 10:18) now belongs in the past.

it is certainly no more correct to do the same to Luke, especially when Luke offers a whole second volume to explicate his commission.

But the distinctions between other commissions and the "Lukan commission"—in which we include Acts 1:8 as the twin of Luke 24:46-48[12]—cannot all be traced to differences in narrative or hermeneutical context. Luke's commission is strikingly different in *content* as well. Indeed, where a traditional definition of "commission" might hold that one person (e.g. Jesus) designates another (e.g. apostles) for a special task, the Lukan commission seems to de-emphasize the apostles' role for the sake of a christological emphasis. Jesus' parting words in Luke's Gospel have an overriding sense of promise ("you are/will be witnesses") and of prophetic fulfillment ("it is written"). The accent of the Lukan Jesus' commission concerns more what *Jesus* has done or will do than what his followers should do. Even the grammatical agent of universal proclamation is left ambiguous in Luke 24:47 (see Chapter 1). Against the simplisitic view that Luke's Gospel is about who Jesus is and Acts about mission in his name, the pivotal commission at the center of Luke's "hinge" chapter is inescapably christological in its emphasis. Based on Luke 24:46-48, *both* Luke and Acts concern the identity of the Messiah Jesus (cf. Acts 1:1).

More specifically, in Luke 24:46-48 Jesus asserts that suffering/death, resurrection, and the proclamation of salvation to all nations are characteristic marks of

[12] It will be an assumption—clarified in Chapter 2—that Acts 1:8 is essentially a variation of Luke 24:46-48. In the myriad connections between them—linguistically, thematically, contextually—it is clear that Luke does not wish to indicate two separate commissionings but one, refracted according to the particular trajectories of the books in which they appear. See Mikeal Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts: The Ascension Narratives in Context* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987).

the Messiah (χριστός). Two specific aspects of this "commission" help to frame this study. First, by appearing at the conclusion to Luke's first volume, the reference to death and resurrection serves as a kind of retrospective interpretation of the Third Gospel. Specifically, the one who died and was raised from the dead on the third day in accordance with the scriptures is Jesus of Nazareth. In this way, Luke's Gospel is epitomized as an account in which death and resurrection are *narrated into* the term χριστός.[13] The defining traits of Israel's "Messiah," according to Luke, include death and resurrection.

Second, and perhaps more remarkably, not only are the past events of the Messiah's death and resurrection anticipated by the scriptures of Israel, but so is future universal proclamation of salvation in his name. The scriptures ("it is written")—which, we learn, refers to *all* of Israel's scriptures—testify that universal proclamation in his name confirms the Messiah's identity. Because universal proclamation does not occur in Luke's Gospel, Jesus' words anticipate the central motif of the book of Acts. With his second volume, Luke will narrate into Jesus' messianic identity the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness to all nations in his name or, in terms of christological titles, the claim that he is πάντων κύριος (Acts 10:36).

While these features set the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) apart, they also comprise a foundational claim for Luke-Acts: like death and resurrection, universal witness confirms and expresses the messianic identity of Jesus. Jacques

[13] Cf. what Kavin Rowe similarly does with κύριος in Luke's Gospel. *Early Narrative Christology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 17-23. Cf. also Stephen Hultgren, "Narrative Christology in the Gospels: Reflections on Some Recent Developments and their Significance for Theology and Preaching," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 47.1 (May 2013): 10-21.

Dupont[14] is one of the few to identify the christological complexion of the Lukan Commission (Luke 24:46-48) and what it signals for the whole of Luke-Acts. Dupont argues that in 24:46-47 Luke expresses the extension of salvation to the Gentiles as an extension of Luke's christological program.[15] The announcement of salvation to all peoples belongs to the *Messiah's* mission as outlined by Israel's scriptures (cf. Acts 13:47; 26:20-23; Isa 49:6; 42:6). Not only do the scriptures attest what otherwise appears to be a contradiction in terms—a Messiah who was shamefully rejected and killed is the one highly exalted by God[16]—but they also point to a universal mission to be carried out in his name and by his authority. Indeed, by the way in which Luke has framed his narrative (cf. Luke 2:10, 32; 3:6; 4:25-27; Acts 26:22-23) this Messiah Jesus is characterized as the one ("Lord") to whom the task of universal proclamation ultimately belongs. It is the *Messiah's* responsibility to bring the light of salvation to Jews and Gentiles, in accordance with God's plan (Acts 26:23).

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[14] Jacques Dupont, "La portée christologique de l'évangélisation des nations d'après Luc 24.47," in *Neues Testament und Kirche: für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, ed. J. Gnilka (Freiburg [im Breisgau], Basel, Wien: Herder, 1974), 125-143. Dupont's article, because it has not been translated from the French, has unfortunately not enjoyed as wide an audience as it deserves. Cf. also Richard Dillon, *From Eye-witnesses to Ministers of the Word: Tradition and Composition in Luke 24* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 208; Kevin Anderson, *But God Raised Him from the Dead: The Theology of Jesus' Resurrection in Luke-Acts* (Milton Keyes: Paternoster, 2006), 184: "Therefore, in Luke 24:46-47 Jesus sets forth a messianic triad, that is to say, the three essential components delineating his scripturally requisite actions and identity as Messiah: death, resurrection, and universal mission. Jesus will continue to fulfil his messianic destiny through chosen, Spirit-empowered witnesses in Acts who will preach 'to the end of the earth.'"

[15] Dupont, "La portée christologique," 125: "A l'œuvre missionnaire accomplie par les apôtres Luc attribue une signification proprement christologique. Il s'agit là d'une vue originale, à laquelle la réflexion sur la mission chrétienne ne saurait rester indifférente. On n'y a peut-être pas prêté assez d'attention. Cette même signification christologique permet également de mieux saisir l'unité profonde de l'œuvre de Luc: en ajoutant au récit évangélique traditionnel l'histoire des premières missions rapportée dans les Actes des Apôtres, c'est encore de l'œuvre du Christ que l'auteur veut parler. L'extension du message du salut aux nations païennes fait partie de la tâche assignée à Jésus; elle constitue un signe indispensable de sa royauté messianique."

[16] Joel Green, "Learning Theological Interpretation from Luke," in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, and Formation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 69-70.

To be more exact, this third sign of Jesus' messianic identity, signified by proclamation to all nations, is his *universality*, the full scope of his Lordship. According to Dupont, in the way Luke has conjoined the three signs, the first two do not suffice (*ne suffiraient pas*) without the third. As long as universal proclamation is not taken up, the Messiah's mission remains incomplete,[17] his messianic identity effectively unverified. This claim sets Luke-Acts apart from the Synoptic Gospels, which, in lacking second volumes, generally limit their christological visions to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. For Luke, the death, the resurrection, and *the universality* of the Lordship of the χρίστος serve as indicators that Jesus is the one whom the scriptures attest, the one in whom the plan of God for Israel and the world comes to fruition.

Building on Dupont's initial observations, I submit that Luke employs a threefold pattern of christological fulfillment, relevant for all of Acts but first evident in Luke 24:46-48: the scriptures testify that Jesus is the χριστός (1a) by his death and (1b) resurrection, and (2) *by his universal Lordship signified in the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness in his name to all nations*, which his servants both (passively) witness and (actively) bear witness to. Understood this way, universal proclamation belongs *within* the christological unfolding of Jesus' identity, not alongside it as a secondary claim. Even if these events are fulfilled in different tenses—passion and

[17] Dupont, "La portée christologique," 142.

resurrection (past[18]) and proclamation in his name (future)—both are promised in scripture[19] and therefore, for Luke, attest a common messianic framework.

Dupont's conclusions, however, predated the significant contributions of narrative theology (and christology) and therefore warrant further development. The present study extends his observations by exploring how universal proclamation in Acts expands Jesus' narrative identity as Luke portrays the spread of salvation to "all nations" (Luke 24:47) and to "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). By establishing the link between universal witness and messianic identity in Luke 24:46-48, Luke prepares readers of Acts to expect the unfolding of universal witness to perform the function of narratively unfolding Jesus' universal Lordship.

Specifically, the following chapters will argue that the narrative establishment of the universality of the Messiah's Lordship is coterminous with the way Luke portrays proclamation of salvation to both Gentiles and Jews. Thus, the key Lukan motif of the expansion of the early Christian mission from Jews to Jews *and Gentiles* is more than an account of Christian origins; it is an attempt to render the universality of Jesus' messianic identity in narrative terms. To understand who Jesus is, Luke implies, we must read Luke and Acts, for together they narrate the identity of the Messiah in accordance with the scriptures and God's purposes (cf. Acts 1:1).

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[18] Of course for Luke all events he describes, short of the Parousia, stand in the past; his narrative nevertheless is told and shaped in such a way that future events follow clearly from the past and present. Cf. Green, "Learning Theological Interpretation," 61-66.

[19] That is, Jesus' death, resurrection, and proclamation of repentance/forgiveness in his name all fall within the global claims Luke repeats in the "hinge chapter." Witness is part of "the things about himself in all the scriptures" (24:27) and "everything written about [Jesus] in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms" (24:44).

In offering an alternative view to the mission-as-mandate model of Christian mission in the New Testament—specifically focusing on Luke-Acts—this dissertation seeks to temper the outsized influence the "Great Commission" has had on modern constructions of mission and also to offer another model based on the narrative construal of (Luke-)Acts.[20] If the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:46-49/Acts 1:8) has generally been subsumed by mission theologians and practitioners within the more concrete outlook offered by Matt 28:18-20, a study focusing on Luke's vision of mission benefits from evaluating this supposition in more detail. Oriented by the Lukan Commission, this study will explore how Jesus' messianic Lordship is confirmed through universal witness as it narratively unfolds in Acts.

Methodology

The question of discerning the "christology" of Acts has traditionally been addressed in several different ways—by analysis of christological titles,[21] by distilling Acts' kerygmatic speeches down to a coherent core,[22] by thematic studies of scriptural allusions[23] or conceptions of the Spirit,[24] and even by applying modern theological

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[20] Certainly, interpretation of Luke has not been immune to the particular influence of a mission history. For example, Luke's account of Paul's ministry is regularly and unquestioningly characterized as a series of discrete "missionary journeys" on the model of modern European missionary exploits.

[21] See, e.g., C. F. D. Moule, "The Christology of Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 159-185; J. C. O'Neill, "The Use of Kyrios in the Book of Acts," *SJT* 8 (1955): 155-174.

[22] Douglas Buckwalter, *The Character and Purpose of Luke's Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Though he is not guilty of this entirely, Buckwalter's approach over-emphasizes Acts' kerygmatic speeches to the neglect of the narrative context—namely, the whole of Acts—in which they appear.

[23] Darrell Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987).

[24] William Shepherd, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994); cf. the more integrated approach of Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

categories.[25] But not all approaches yield fruit in equal measure. Recent studies in narrative christology,[26] for example, have shown how title-oriented and speech-delimited explorations of Lukan christology tend to abstract from the text christological notions which only make sense in relation to one another *within their interpretive context,* that is, within the whole of Luke-Acts.[27] Moreover, thematic studies tend to isolate and overemphasize one motif to the exclusion of the interrelation of themes that structures the narrative.[28] As an author of διήγησις (Luke 1:1), Luke does not traffic in theological abstractions or propositions. Done well, narrative theological interpretation[29] offers an integrated approach,[30] taking seriously the interwoven christological fabric of Luke's story. Acts is, after all, a narrative which invites an interpretive approach to its christological construal commensurate with the character of that construal.

As a way of taking seriously the interwoven christological fabric of Acts, this dissertation will investigate a focal motif of Acts—the role of universal proclamation—in Luke's narrative christology. Naturally, detailing the "christology" of Acts is much too

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[25] See, e.g., Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005).
[26] See Hultgren, "Narrative Christology," 12. In his own way, Christopher Tuckett reaches similar conclusions in "The Christology of Luke-Acts," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. J. Verheyden (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 133-164.
[27] C. Kavin Rowe, "Acts 2.36 and the Continuity of Lucan Christology," *NTS* 53 (2007): 50-51: "in the act of disengaging any statement (or passage) from the narrative, the possibility of covering that statement's meaning within the Lukan writings is actually forfeited, for the Lukan context itself is rendered inoperative as meaning-determining discourse. Even to begin an analysis … we will have to be methodologically committed to the literary effort to work with the Lukan context, that is, Luke–Acts."
[28] C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology,* 9-17, 202-218; cf. also, Rowe, "Acts 2.36."
[29] Following Joel Green, "Neglecting Widows and Serving the Word? 'History' and Theological Interpretation" in *Practicing Theological Interpretation: Engaging Biblical Texts for Faith and Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011, 50: "[t]he alternative that I champion is a theological interpretation that reads Acts, for example, as a narrative representation of historical events that by definition must focus on the narrative of Acts itself, not on the events to which this narrative is able only partially to bear witness."
[30] See Paul Ricoeur, "Interpretative Narrative," in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, ed. Regina Schwartz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 237-257.

broad a task, well beyond the scope of the present study. Therefore, this study will take up a question that, arguably, gets to the heart of Acts' christological texture, namely how does the narrative construal of universal proclamation in Acts relate to and advance the unfolding of Jesus' identity in Luke-Acts? To answer that question, I will approach Luke's narrative in a way that attempts to treat "christology" and "missiology" together,[31] namely by taking their interdependence as a heuristic assumption. If universal witness, a Lukan *leitmotiv* (beginning, formally, with Luke 24:46-48), can be shown to be a mark of Jesus' messianic identity, then to speak of mission in Acts is also to speak of christology, and vice versa. Rather than undertake a typical christological study,[32] therefore, we will investigate how universal witness is *a defining characteristic of Jesus' narrative identity* and how, therefore, it illuminates the christology of Acts. The goal of this project is to explore the distinctive relationship between Jesus' identity and universal salvation first intimated by Jesus' parting words in Luke's Gospel and narratively construed throughout Luke's second volume.

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[31] Obviously, Luke did not think in the systematic categories which we now take for granted. This is not to say Luke lacked definite notions about things we describe with the terms "christology" and "missiology," only that mapping such terms onto Luke's two-volume work risks introducing a level of propositional conceptuality unsuited to Luke's narrative world. Nevertheless, that should not *de facto* preclude the possibility of a fruitful link between what later interpreters mean by these concepts and what Luke may have meant had he known such terms. In fact, by employing the terms—albeit as placeholders only—in our investigation of Luke we can identify the theological grammar operative in Luke-Acts, and the way in which this grammar furnishes the intelligibility (or non-intelligibility) of the concepts within a modern theological grammar. In this way, we not only illuminate the theological conceptions that fund Luke's narrative construal of "christology" and "missiology," but we also demonstrate the tentative nature—and therefore potentially revisable definition—of the conceptual placeholders we as modern thinkers take for granted. By thinking along with Luke, at least to the degree such a thing is possible, we put our definitional distinctions between "christology" and "missiology" to the test.

[32] Cf. Moule, "Christology of Acts," or in a "traditional" historical-critical sense, Tuckett, "Christology of Luke-Acts."

This approach has the benefit of addressing the integrated (and non-propositional) nature of the narrative on its own terms. The burden of this study, however, is to demonstrate that in its overall narrative construal of Jesus' identity as *Messiah/*χριστός, Acts exhibits, however subtly, the interdependence of christology and universal witness. To make this case I will show how, both in select passages (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:6-8; 2:17-36; 10:1-11:18; 15:7-11; 22:3-21; 26:2-23; 28:25-31) as well as in broader thematic brushstrokes, Luke understands christology and universal witness as mutual coefficients, often defined in relation to one another. The two categories—if we can apply them at all to Luke's narrative—belong together in the way Luke construes Jesus' identity.

Thus, to pay attention to the christology of Luke-Acts will require paying attention to its narrative shape. To that end, this study will generally read Luke-Acts in the order that it appears, mindful of the inter- and intra-textual echoes that structure Lukan writings and prompt multiple readings. Integral to the argument, for example, is that the "incomplete" fulfillment of the Lord's commission by the apostles (Acts 1-9) frames the impact of the apostle Peter's revelation in Caesarea (Acts 10:1-11:18); or that Acts 13:47, by citing Isa 49:6—a "Servant" text associated with Luke's christology—retrospectively evokes and illuminates the phrasing of Acts 1:8. Because the Lukan commission anticipates what only happens for the first time in Acts (i.e. proclamation to the nations), the study will primarily be limited to Acts, with occasional ventures back into the Third Gospel for wider narrative context.

An argument can be made that Acts especially develops Luke's christology in the speeches and uses of titles in Acts. After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, it would seem, Jesus' chosen witnesses became more articulate in their construal of Jesus' identity

or at least received more "air time" to do it. To be sure, the speeches play an important role in advancing Lukan christology. But, instead of offering a compilation of speeches equivalent to a "sayings gospel" on the pattern of Thomas, Luke integrates speeches into narrative context and requires interpreters to do the same (cf. Acts 2:1-16, 17-36). Similarly, though it was once quite popular to determine Lukan christology on the basis of his use of christological titles alone, the use of such titles also relies on narrative context for explication. Indeed, as we will see with respect to Luke's use of κύριος and χριστός, titles are quite revealing insofar as they are understood in light of the narrative ends to which they are put.

To summarize, Luke has shaped his narrative in such a way that to answer the question "who is Jesus?" requires telling the story of universal proclamation in his name. And, conversely, to ask "what is mission?" is likewise to elicit the story of who Jesus is. In this respect, the question of mission is not secondary to the question of Jesus' identity; rather, it is central to it.

One last methodological point deserves mention and it dovetails with the missiological viewpoint of this dissertation. Modern (primarily Protestant) mission has been governed in large part by the notion of mission as a mandate (Matt 28:18-20) to be obeyed. Undeveloped until the late 18th century, the mission mandate model is rooted in the penchant of modern readers and practitioners to identify with the apostles and witnesses in Acts,[33] thereby taking upon themselves the mandate that the

[33] For example, see Robert Maddox, *Witnesses to the End of the Earth* (Enfield, NSW, Australia: UTC Publications, 1980), 22; Howard Clark Kee, *Good News to the Ends of the Earth: The Theology of Acts* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 96. Peter Bolt specifically pushes back against this assumed "bridge" from

apostles/disciples received directly from Jesus (Matt 28:18-20). The same logic holds for Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8. The "you" in "you are/will be my witnesses" passes almost seamlessly from Peter and the apostles to modern-day practitioners of mission. The doctrine of apostolic succession aside, the basic assumption behind most missiological readings of Acts is that the *apostolic* commission applies *mutatis mutandis* to all Christians today.

To be clear, this study is not intended to debate the merits of "using" Acts for mission. It is assumed, rather, that Christians will continue to turn to Acts to justify and definitively shape their mission practices. Throughout history, in fact, Acts has been the de facto model to which church renewal movements have laid claim in their respective quests to reprise the "New Testament church." That is unlikely to change as long as the canonical Acts remains the New Testament's one narrative construal of mission. Rather than offer a normative judgment, therefore, about whether modern Christians *should* read Jesus' commissions as applicable to themselves, it is the assumption of this dissertation that many will continue to do so. And as long as (predominately Gentile!) Christians continue to put themselves in the place of the *Jewish* apostles and witnesses, it behooves them to understand the precise way in which Luke envisions the participation of these Jewish Christians[34] in universal witness. The focus of the following chapters on *Jewish*

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text to world in "Mission and Witness," in *Witness of the Gospel: The Theology of Acts,* ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 210-214.

[34] I am well aware of the must-contested problem of Jewish-Christian identity when studying the New Testament. Rather than spend an inordinate amount of space arguing for one moniker over another, however, throughout this dissertation the terms "Jewish believers" and "unbelieving Jews" will primarily be used to distinguish Christians of Jewish descent from non-Christians of Jewish descent, in part because they are the terms Luke frequently applies. The term "Christian" will also be used, though more sparingly, again in reflection of Luke's pattern of usage. Because the conflicts between Christians and Jews in Acts primarily come down to competing claims about Israel's Messiah, scriptures, and legal

perceptions of and responses to Gentile salvation is thus crucial for aligning modern mission theology with Luke's narrative construal of witness.

From a witness's perspective especially (in this case, Peter's), recognition of Gentile inclusion is simultaneously an acceptance of Jesus' universal Lordship. Rather than focus on what Luke thinks about the challenge of the gospel to the "other" in some abstract way—which is really no way at all—I will pay attention to the portrayal of the challenge of Jesus' universal Lordship *for the apostles and witnesses themselves.* If Acts envisions the practice of universal witness as primarily the fulfillment of messianic identity, what role is there for human participation in the unfolding of Jesus' Lordship, and how does it relate to the common presumption that mission is what Christians do to fulfill a mandate from Jesus (Matt 28:18-20)?

Outline of Dissertation and Chapters

To this end, the argument of the dissertation unfolds in the following way: **Chapter 1** will show that for Luke universal witness is a mark of Jesus' messianic identity in conjunction with his death and resurrection, as attested in Israel's scriptures (Luke 24:46-48). Such a claim is confirmed in the way Luke sets early expectations for the unfolding of a second volume, which is focused by the global statement in Luke 24:46-48 (and repeated in Acts 1:8). The triadic framework of messianic identity (death, resurrection, and universal proclamation of salvation) introduces the possibility of

requirements/temple, it makes the most sense to emphasize the commonality in their identity rather than the sharp distinctions, many of which crystallized *after* the period recorded in Acts. Cf. Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire AD 135–425* (London: Valentine Mitchell & Co., 1996); Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70-170 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); James Carleton Paget, "Jewish Proselytism at the Time of Christian Origins: Chimera or Reality?" JSNT 62 (1996): 65-103.

narrative expansion in the identity of Jesus—namely as πάντων κύριος (Acts 10:36). Indeed, Luke introduces the titles κύριος and χριστός in relation to one another in anticipation of their mutual explication and interdependence throughout Acts. Through universal proclamation of salvation in Acts—by both Jesus and his witnesses—this universal Lordship is narratively manifested.

If universal proclamation of salvation constitutes a critical aspect of Jesus' messianic identity, then it will need to be shown that Jesus continues to participate in the unfolding of universal witness. **Chapter 2** will argue, therefore, that Acts does not present an "absentee christology," but reconfigures the narrative sense of "presence" and "activity" on the basis of Jesus' exaltation to heaven and Lordship over the Spirit. Jesus continues to influence the unfolding of universal proclamation, especially as the "word" spreads beyond Jerusalem and the Jewish people. In this way, Luke connects the unfolding of universal witness with the development in the narrative identity of Jesus as messianic Lord.

But what might participation in the unfolding of Jesus' identity look like? **Chapter 3** argues that, though the apostles are commissioned to bear witness to Jesus to "all nations" (Luke 24:47) and "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8), somewhat surprisingly their testimony is directed almost entirely to Jews in Jerusalem. Until Peter's experience in Caesarea (Acts 10), the apostles at most play the role of confirming new believers outside Jerusalem (e.g., 8:14-17). Indeed, the Peter and Cornelius episode ("P-C episode": Acts 10:1-11:18) represents the first instance in which the *universal* scope of Jesus' commission begins coming to fruition. In this respect, the event is paradigmatic for Luke's coordination of christological identity and universal witness, reflected in the

central role the event and its retellings play (11:5-17; 15:7-11). In Peter's speech (10:34-43) especially, the crucial connection is made between God's favor toward the Gentiles (as Gentiles) and the universal scope of Jesus' messianic identity as "Lord of all" (10:36).

No study of a christology of universal witness is complete without some account of Paul's witness in the Diaspora (13-21) and defense of his mission (22-28). **Chapter 4** argues that Luke construes Paul as the primary fulfiller of the apostolic commission, signaling that christology and universal witness are integrated in the way Paul's life unfolds. Moreover, Luke links Paul with the emergence of the inter-ethnic community in Syrian Antioch, which effectively takes over for the Jerusalem church in spreading witness to the end of the earth. Peter's christological revelation in Caesarea, moreover, becomes part of the foundation for endorsing Paul's Diaspora ministry among Gentiles (Acts 15:7-29). In this way, Luke ties the promises of Israel's restoration to universal witness (1:6-8; 3:21-26; 15:13-21; 26:16-23). Finally, because Paul's story is intimately bound up with the Jewish opposition he faces, it will be shown that Jewish rejection of Paul's message emerges from what are perceived to be existential threats related to the place of Gentile salvation in the fulfillment of Israel's hopes for restoration. In the end, however, Jewish rejection of Paul's message does not "cause" Gentile mission; rather, the salvation of Gentiles as Gentiles reflects the universal scope of the messianic mission, as prefigured by the scriptures. The receptivity of Gentiles to Paul's preaching only commends to Paul's Jewish audiences the proper response to the gospel and Jesus' Lordship over all.

Objections

The present proposal claims that, like Jesus' death and resurrection in the Third Gospel, universal proclamation in Acts expresses and confirms Luke's narrative christology. Several objections to this thesis can be addressed up front, thereby illuminating the basic framework assumed by my thesis.

First, if Acts (rather than Luke's Gospel) narrates Jesus' universal Lordship, it implies an ontological change in Jesus' identity from one volume to the next. As will be shown, Jesus does not take up the role of Lord of *all* peoples in Luke's Gospel (or in Acts 1-9); neither he nor his disciples extend outreach much beyond Jews in Judea. This would seem to suggest that, with his exaltation to heaven (2:33-36), Jesus becomes something ("Lord") that he was not before. By appealing to Acts 2:36, moreover, some would claim that Acts offers an "adoptionist" christology—only *after* his heavenly exaltation does God *make* Jesus universal Lord.[35]

But, as several uniquely Lukan passages indicate (Luke 2:10-11, 30-32; 3:6; cf. 4:25-27; see Chapter 1), Jesus is *declared* "Lord" (of all) from the beginning of Luke's account,[36] even if that declaration is not *narratively* realized until later in Acts. Indeed, even in Acts 2 the universality of Jesus' Lordship remains somewhat symbolic given the apostles' limited outreach. In addition, Luke 24:46-47 signals that universal proclamation will be incorporated into the messianic work of the Lord Jesus in Acts, signifying a new and future aspect of Jesus' narrative identity. Therefore, to say that Jesus' universal Lordship requires fuller "development" in Acts is an *epistemological* rather than an

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[35] Cf., e.g., the views of Ulrich Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte: Form- und traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1963), 170; and Tuckett, "Christology of Luke-Acts," 155.
[36] See especially Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology,* 189-196.

ontological claim. Characters and readers alike will come to recognize the full scope of his Lordship as the narrative unfolds. In Luke-Acts, Jesus only becomes what he had already been declared to be.

Though a detailed definition of "personal identity" falls outside the scope of this project, we can minimally assert that it refers to the persistence of one's character through time, the continuity of a life.[37] Luke 24 dramatically demonstrates continuity in the identity of the pre-Easter Jesus with the risen Lord. Appeals to Jesus' earlier predictions, the scriptures themselves (read properly), Jesus' resurrected body, and the sharing of meals all attest the continuity of Jesus' personal identity. Jesus is Lord, which crucifixion and burial cannot negate; in fact, as Luke tells it, death and resurrection reveal his identity as Israel's Messiah and Lord by fulfilling scriptural prophecy. Acts extends that pattern with Jesus' exaltation and Lordship over all.

A *second* objection might point out that "newness" in Jesus' narrative identity is ruled out by the fact that Jesus the earthly character exits the narrative by Acts 1:10. How can Luke "develop" his identity after he has died, been raised, and departed to heaven? Yet Luke ensures that Jesus remains a vital character in his second volume, even if his presence and activity in the narrative require reconfiguration (see Chapter 2).[38] Though his death and resurrection occurred in the past, they both confirm and enable his ongoing

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[37] See Robert Krieg, *Story-Shaped Christology: The Role of Narrative in Identifying Jesus Christ* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 11; cf. also Stephen Crites' essay which, though not concerned with literary rendering of identity per se, is nonetheless helpful: "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 34 (1971): 291-311.

[38] See, e.g., Robert O'Toole, "Activity of the Risen Jesus in Luke-Acts," *Biblica* 62.4 (1981): 471-498.

participation in the unfolding of events according to God's purposes. Indeed, having been raised, Jesus ascends to heaven to take his place at the right side of God as "Lord."

To this end, Acts 1:1 refers to the Third Gospel's content as "…all that Jesus *began* [ἤρξατο] to do and teach...".[39] Given our preliminary claims about the *ongoing* unfolding of Jesus' identity in Acts, the idea of Jesus' deeds and teachings continuing to unfold in the book of Acts fits well with the thesis that the universal mission is a *continuation* of Luke's (narrative) christology rather than merely a second step taken after Jesus' identity has been established. That he only began to do and teach in Luke's first volume suggests that, in a second volume, he continues to act and speak. Therefore, the common supposition that Luke's Gospel expresses "christology" while Acts is dedicated to "missiology" (or ecclesiology) may be a distortion.

A *third* objection might claim that Luke's christology is better studied by paying attention to the range of christological titles (beyond κύριος and χριστός) and the historical layers of tradition that lie behind them—is it not more accurate to speak of christolog*ies* in Luke-Acts rather than the development of *a* or *the* christology over two volumes? The seeming discontinuity between Luke's first and second book would seem to support such a conclusion. But the study of christological titles tends to presume a static view of identity.[40] My thesis, however, is not concerned with Jesus' personal identity in some static or abstract sense, that takes its direction from a point external to

[39] The NIV and KJV, for example, more literally render the Greek here, while the NRSV—presumably puzzled by the literal meaning of ἤρξατο—converts the aorist verb into an adverbial construction, "from the beginning."

[40] Donald Jones, "The Title *Kyrios* in Luke-Acts," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, vol. 1 (ed. George MacRae): 85-101; or J. C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting* (2nd ed.; London: S.P.C.K., 1970). See the methodological discussion in Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology,* 17-23.

the actual text—for instance, in dogmatic categories or historical reconstruction. Nor is this project intended to answer every question about Lukan christology. Rather, this project is interested in the literary construal of the character of Jesus over the course of Luke-Acts, what we have taken to calling his "narrative identity" *as it pertains to universal witness.* And narrative christology, by its very nature, allows for the development of identity in concert with the development of the narrative.[41]

But given the narrative shape of identity, who Jesus is can be expressed by more than the words and deeds ascribed to him alone. Luke, for example, did not write a biography of Jesus' life, but a "gospel" in which the theological significance of that life is woven into its telling. This means that what constitutes Jesus' identity, for Luke, includes the lines of influence or "effects" which emanate from him during his life and beyond it. In this way, Luke can write about Jesus by describing what others do in his name, by his Spirit, under his past and present guidance; even the resolution of conflicting views about who can follow him (and how) provides narrative contours for the figure of Jesus re-presented in Acts (see Chapter 3). In other words, "who is Jesus?" is answered by telling the story of how a small Palestinian sect reached out to Jews and Gentiles (in spite of internal and external resistance) and formed intercultural communities grounded in the

[41] Alasdair MacIntyre has asserted that who a person is can only be understood in terms of a narrative in which there is a beginning, middle, and end. But for Luke, the narrative about Jesus goes beyond typical beginnings and endings; such literary (anthropological) markers should not be applied too rigidly to Jesus' personal identity. As will be argued, Luke continues to shape the narrative identity of Jesus *after* his departure from the narrative stage (Acts 1:10) and by means of activity which, again intuitively, is often ascribed only to human actors like the apostles and other witnesses. If, on the one hand, ascension is taken as a kind of "end" to the narrative of Jesus' life, his identity will naturally take a different shape, some data excluded by definition. On the other hand, if it can be argued that Luke construes Jesus' narrative identity as extending—and even *developing*—beyond his ascension, then new possibilities and data can be admitted for how we answer the question "who is Jesus, according to Luke?" Cf. *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 190-203.

primary conviction that Jesus is Lord. As exalted Lord, he both stands over this movement and can be identified with it (cf. Luke 10:16; Acts 9:4-5; 22:7; 26:14).[42] Luke 24:46-48 (along with Acts 26:22-23) essentially expresses this claim about Jesus' identity and establishes a framework for reading Acts with a view to the narrative construal of Jesus' identity in the story of universal proclamation.[43]

A *fourth* objection might surmise that, given how this project has been framed, Jesus is *not* the true Lord if his followers do not engage in universal witness in his name. Luke would hardly have understood this way of putting it. Rather, to the question of Jesus' identity, Luke would point to the scriptures and the way prophetic expectations find fulfillment in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection (Luke 24:25-27, 32, 44-46) and in the story of universal witness in his name (Luke 24:47-9; Acts 1:7-8). In other words, to this objection Luke would simply invite a rereading of his Gospel and Acts. The sense of divine superintendence in Luke-Acts indicates that very little is left to chance. Indeed, even Jesus' "commission" is as much a prophetic oracle as a direct command (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). But Luke's characters—and Jewish believers like Peter especially—retain the agency to participate (or not) in the unfolding of universal

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[42] This is to suggest what later chapters will flesh out, namely how it is *Jesus* who gives the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:33; cf. Luke 21:12b-13), how his "name" is associated with his agency throughout, and the repeated sense of Jesus' presence through various modes of narration. Cf. Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 180-184.

[43] Krieg, *Story-Shaped Christology,* 19. There is a sense in which Jesus' universal Lordship emerges in the narrative as something latent but critical for understanding the unfolding of the plot and its significance, not unlike how Paul labors as a Roman citizen but does not reveal his citizenship to readers until later, when circumstances make that prior fact significant for the present. He did not *become* a Roman citizen at the moment of his arrest or unjust treatment; but he announces it because it is precisely this identity that is at stake (on trial even) in the way he is treated. After that, the naming of this identity is what propels the narrative forward, influencing the manner of his captivity and the travels that ensue. Though it is of course of a different nature, Jesus' identity as universal Lord is indicated to readers early on (Luke 2:30-32, etc.) but *learned* by his followers later on, when circumstances evoke it.

salvation. Just as some Jews refuse to believe, rejecting God's purposes in the Messiah Jesus, this refusal only serves to confirm the universality of Jesus' Lordship (Acts 13:46-47; 22:21-22; 28:25-31; see Chapter 4).

We can summarize Luke's construal of the relationship between Jesus' identity and universal proclamation in his name as a "christology of universal witness." Like his death and resurrection, universal witness in Jesus' name confirms the identity of Jesus as Messiah of Israel. Luke, however, prefers showing to telling, and the Cornelius episode (Acts 10:1-11:18) and its aftereffects (15:7-11) vividly demonstrate how Luke portrays this christological development ("Lord of all," 10:36) in its intercultural dimensions. When outreach to Jews and Gentiles—and communities expressing such universal claims (cf. Acts 11:19-21)—occurs, the mark of the universality of Israel's Messiah appears for all to see. Even then, it is not easily accepted. Peter only learns the scope of Jesus' Lordship in the light of the experience of encountering God's grace beyond his Jewish circles (10:1-48). Others follow his lead, like the Jerusalem believers (11:18) and eventually the "whole church" (15:6-29). In this way, in Acts the Lukan Commission (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8) is fulfilled, at least initially, and the sign of the universality of the Messiah Jesus' Lordship is realized. But even this triumph stands out in light of the photonegative depiction of unbelieving Jewish responses to Paul's preaching, a subject that takes up much of the second half of Acts (ch. 16-28). The broader point is that the universality of Jesus' Lordship must be "discovered" and accepted (or rejected) in the course of the expanding mission in Acts.

1. Acts and a Christology of Universal Witness: Luke 24:46-47

The present chapter will lay the foundations upon which the whole argument rests—namely, by showing that rather than an independent missiological claim, the promise that "repentance for the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name is to be proclaimed to all nations" (Luke 24:47) also advances a christological claim. Universal proclamation (24:47) expresses a scriptural pillar of Jesus' messianic identity, according to Luke. Universal witness, therefore, serves as sign and confirmation of Jesus' universal Lordship, explicating the titles χρίστος and κύριος in terms of their universal scope (for Jews *and* Gentiles). Moreover, the universality of his witnesses' testimony confirms Jesus' identity as the "Christ" who, now as heavenly "Lord," is present with and through the increasingly universal proclamation of his apostles/witnesses. First stated formally in Luke 24:46-48 (and echoed by Paul in Acts 26:23), the Lukan "commission" thus serves as a global statement connecting the first volume to the second while shaping readerly expectations for the unfolding of Acts.

If the argument of this chapter is persuasive, it will demonstrate how the nexus of christology and universal witness in Luke 24:46-48 establishes a hermeneutical framework for reading christology and witness in Acts. The chapter aims to show how, narratively, the expansion of witness "to all nations/to the end of the earth" helps explicate the identity of Jesus as "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). Just as Jesus' death and resurrection proved surprising, shocking even, for followers and opponents of Jesus alike (cf. Luke 24:11-12, 37, 41; Acts 4:13; 13:41; 28:24)—and yet reflected the fulfillment of Israel's scriptures properly understood, in Luke's view—so too a universal mission (explicitly including Gentiles) belongs, improbably, within the scriptural plan of God as

work designated for the Messiah. Universal witness unfolds, according to Luke, not by means of mere human obedience to the risen Lord's commission but through the Messiah's own self-declaration in the ministry of his witnesses. In other words, universal witness does not merely attest the faithfulness (or unfaithfulness) of Jesus' followers, as mission history (and interpretations of Matt 28) since the 18th century might imply, but narratively constitutes the Messiah's identity as "Lord *of all*" (Acts 10:36).

1.1 Framing Acts' "Christology of Universal Witness"

> καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὕτως γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλὴμ ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων.
>
> *"Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."* (Luke 24:46-48)

Chapter 24 is often titled the "hinge" chapter of Luke-Acts,[1] bringing to a summary interpretation the events of the first volume while also anticipating events of the second.[2] If chapter 24 is the "hinge" chapter, vv. 46-48 comprise the pin that holds the

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[1] See, Loveday Alexander, "Reading Acts from Back to Front," *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. by J. Verheyden (Leuven: Leuven University Press: Peeters, 1999): 436. This study maintains the consensus that Luke and Acts are a literary unity connected by common authorship, style, outlook, and a host of themes and intertextual references. See the standard statements found in *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts*, ed. by Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) and some essays from *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. by J. Verheyden (Leuven: Leuven University Press: Peeters, 1999). For what this actually means for reading, see Robert Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation,* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 1:1-12. For more recent and nuanced inquiry concerning what "unity" means theologically, canonically, and hermeneutically, see *Rethinking the Unity and Reception of Luke and Acts*, ed. by Andrew F. Gregory and C. Kavin Rowe (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010).

[2] Johnny Awwad, "The Significance of the Death of Jesus in the Plan of God in Luke-Acts: A Door and a Model for the Gentile Mission" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1996), 40-41: "Jesus' synthesis of the Scriptures in 24:46-47 provides the larger framework for the Gospel narrative and the book of Acts. Not only do these verses summarize the Gospel narrative by pointing analeptically to Jesus' death and resurrection, but they also provide the programmatic vision to the events in Acts by pointing

hinge in place. In vv. 46-48 we find several major motifs of Luke-Acts woven tightly together in a series of claims put on the lips of Jesus.[3] For instance, the phrase οὕτως γέγραπται represents well the pattern of promise-fulfillment[4] that characterizes (though not exclusively) Luke's approach to the scriptures of Israel (especially in Luke 24), about which more will be said below (Section B). Moreover, in Luke 24 the focus on Jesus' passion and resurrection as indications of his messianic identity helps readers retrospectively conclude that Luke's story narrates the realization of God's scriptural promises (cf. 24:7, 26-27, 44, 46; cf. Luke 1:1). The repeated appeal to scripture in Luke 24 emphasizes that "the things that have taken place in these days" (Luke 24:14) confirm rather than disprove that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel.

Jesus' words at the end of Luke's Gospel also anticipate central motifs in Acts, namely proclamation "to all nations" (Acts 9:15; 10-11:1818; 13:46-48; 14:27; 15:3-19; 18:6; 21:19; 22:21; 26:17-23; 28:28), the pivotal place of "witnesses" in that proclamation (cf. Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41; 13:31; 22:15, 20; 26:16), and the powerful role of the Spirit (Luke 24:49; cf. Acts 1:4, 8; 2:1, 4, 33; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:3, 5, 10; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9, 52; 15:28; 16:2, 7, 18; 20:22, 23; 21:4, 7; 28:25). Not only does

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proleptically to the Gentile mission." In the same place, Awwad, reflecting Henry Cadbury's language, calls these verses "the connective tissue between these two books."

[3] Cf. Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 855-6: "If one were to think of the stories of Israel, Jesus, and the early church as in some sense distinct, in these verses one would find the seam wherein they are sown together into one cloth. Jesus first inscribes his own story, the story of the Messiah who suffers and is raised, into the scriptural story, and then inscribes the story of the early church into both his own story and that of the Scriptures…In this climax of the risen Lord's revelation to his disciples, then, we find the key point of transition into the book of Acts."

[4] For the now outmoded "proof-from-prophecy" thesis, see Paul Schubert, "The Structure and Significance of Luke 24," in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann,* ed. Walther Eltester (Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1954), 165-186, who is amply critiqued by Charles Talbert in "Promise and Fulfillment in Lucan Theology," *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the SBL Seminar,* ed. Charles Talbert (Crossroad: New York, 1984): 91-103. Darrell Bock, among others, attempts a more wide-ranging account of Luke's use of scripture in *Proclamation from Prophecy*.

"witness" (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8) correspond closely with how Luke describes preaching on Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:30; 10:40-42; 13:30-31), but Luke 24:47 echoes the typical ending of Acts' "missionary" speeches—e.g., "Repent, be baptized … so that your sins may be forgiven" (2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38-39; 17:30; 26:17-18).[5] The inclusion of μετάνοια in these instances may indicate that the invitations issued by Jesus' witnesses later in Acts are worded in such a way to recall the prophetic commission of Jesus in Luke 24:47.

But the "hinge" verses are more than mere recapitulation of what lies behind and program for what is to come. The passage introduces (or, as we will see, reintroduces) the notion of the universality of proclamation. At least to this point in Luke-Acts, a program for universal proclamation has not explicitly appeared in the narrative. The apparent novelty implied in Luke 24:46-48, therefore, draws our attention to the main lines of the present Chapter's argument about how "christology" and universal witness narratively interrelate. It will be argued that, contrary to common opinion, Luke's scriptural claim about universal proclamation of repentance/forgiveness in Jesus' name does not, in itself, indicate a novelty within Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 2:10, 30-32; 3:6; 4:25-27). What is newly emphasized in Luke 24:46-48 is, rather, the attachment of universal witness to the marks of Jesus' messianic identity (death/resurrection), leading to the claim that universal witness itself explicates the identity of Jesus as Lord of all.

What makes the claim possible is that Luke ascribes the task of universal proclamation to *the Messiah himself* (cf. Acts 26:23). In short, Luke construes universal

[5] Dupont, "La portée christologique," 130-131.

proclamation as a task in which both he and his witnesses participate such that the witnesses' activity "in his name" and by means of the Spirit contribute to the idea that as proclamation moves toward Gentiles and Jews, Jesus' identity is narratively developed and his messianic identity confirmed.

1.1.1 Universal Witness as the Messiah's Program

The argument of this chapter will develop in the following way:

(1) *Syntax*. Through a syntactical analysis of Luke 24:46-48, the precise relationship between the scriptural fulfillment of the Messiah's death-and-resurrection and the scriptural fulfillment of universal proclamation in his name will be clarified. Specifically, it will be demonstrated how "it is written" signals a summary scriptural citation, linking all three infinitives in 24:46-47 under the umbrella of biblical prophecy, while leaving the active subject of κηρυχθῆναι un(der)determined. Luke's pattern of using "all nations" will clarify to whom this phrase refers (primarily Gentiles). And finally, parsing "of these (things)" will illuminate the nuances of Jesus' words as a *christological* claim.

(2) *Scriptural Fulfillment and the Plan of God*. The emphasis in Luke 24 (and elsewhere in Luke-Acts) on scriptural "necessity" indicates how both Jesus' death-and-resurrection, however surprisingly, and universal proclamation in his name, equally surprisingly, fulfill the plan of God as attested in the scriptures. The claim can be shown by attending to how Luke 24:46-48 fulfills Jesus' predictions, overcomes the disciples' fear/disbelief, realizes scriptural promises, and indicates the unfolding plan of God.

(3) *The "Framing" Parallel in Acts 26:22-23*. An initial exploration of the parallel between Jesus' concluding words in Luke (24:46-48) and the conclusion of

Paul's last major speech in Acts (26:22-23) reveals a kind of narrative "frame" or bookends, signaling to readers that the whole of Acts is the interpretive context for understanding how Jesus' death-and-resurrection and universal proclamation intertwine; this observation also draws attention to the subtle, yet crucial, notion that universal proclamation is more than once spoken of as part of *Jesus'* prerogative (cf. Luke 1:77; 2:32; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 14:3) and not simply as the responsibility of his witnesses. Readers are clued in that proclamation to all nations in some way construes Jesus' identity (as universal lord). This framing parallel also identifies Paul's witness as fulfillment of this apostolic commission and marks Paul's half of the narrative as crucial to the unfolding of Jesus' identity.

(4) *Gentile Outreach in Jesus' and his Disciples' Mission(s)*. If universal proclamation of salvation is pivotal for the Messiah's identity, why does Luke not fully develop this portrayal in the Third Gospel? A brief study of the scope of Jesus' and his disciples' mission in the Third Gospel will explore this question, ultimately showing that neither Jesus nor his disciples were formally sent to evangelize Gentiles. Yet a redactional study will show—especially in terms of what Luke adds to his Markan and DT/"Q" sources (Luke 2:10, 30-32; 3:6; 4:25-27)—that Luke's Gospel anticipates the narrative realization of Jesus' universal Lordship in his second volume. Analysis of Luke's redactional approach to Mark 13:10 in Luke 24:47 will also indicate how Luke has shifted the eschatological horizon of proclamation to all nations from a mark of the End to a sign that Jesus is the scriptural Messiah. But the absence of a universal mission before the resurrection, along with Lukan additions that foster the expectation of one,

opens up the possibility that Jesus' identity can further develop in Acts since universal proclamation *to Gentiles* signifies a new aspect of Jesus' *narrative* identity.

The preliminary conclusions from this chapter will aim to bring together the exegetical work, primarily on Luke 24:46-48, and other narrative clues in an effort to capture the link between Jesus' messianic identity and universal proclamation. A second section (B) will integrate the exegetical analysis with Luke's deployment of the titles κύριος and χριστός in relation to one another and, through their joint use, in relation to universal witness. This second section will anticipate the broader sweep of the argument in Chapters 2-4, as they unfold a (narrative) "christology of universal witness."

1.1.2 Syntactical Analysis of Luke 24:46-48.

To better grasp the way in which Luke 24:46-48 functions in context, at the "hinge" between volumes, the syntactical complexion of the actual statement(s) needs to be clarified. By doing so, the following section will highlight the different aspects and implications of the way Luke has worded Jesus' final speech in the Third Gospel.

1.1.2.1 Syntax.

The main verb in vv. 46-47 is the passive γέγραπται (v. 46), after which two subordinate clauses of indirect discourse follow, each with an aorist infinitive verb (in bold, below) that takes an accusative subject (underlined):

> [46] οὕτως γέγραπται **παθεῖν** <u>τὸν χριστὸν</u> καὶ **ἀναστῆναι** ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, [47] καὶ **κηρυχθῆναι** ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ <u>μετάνοιαν</u> εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη [.] [6] ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλὴμ [48]ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων (24:46-48)

[6] I have deliberately left the connection between v. 47b and 48 with bracketed punctuation. Though modern translations (and standard versification) argue in favor of ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλὴμ syntactically belonging with the preceding clause, manuscripts are broadly divided over the possibility that the clause

1.1.2.1.1 γέγραπται

The use of γράφω to introduce the statement comes as no surprise, given how diffuse are appeals to scripture in Luke, especially in chapter 24. Luke commonly employs the perfect passive of γράφω—in this case, (οὕτως) γέγραπται—to introduce biblical material.[7] The use of γέγραπται, even lacking the conjunction ὅτι, often prefaces a direct citation in Luke.[8] But a direct citation does not follow. In spite of formally creating expectations of a biblical citation, the use of infinitives with accusative subjects clearly designates clauses of indirect discourse dependent on the main verb (γέγραπται). A citation, by contrast, would have an independent syntax from the verb introducing it (e.g., Luke 4:4, 10). The fact that what follows γέγραπται does not match explicitly any statements from Israel's scriptures (LXX) further confirms that Jesus is paraphrasing or epitomizing rather than quoting (*oratio obliqua*; see 1.1.3.3 below). Therefore, we can conclude that "thus it is written" implies a summative statement about some or all scripture.[9]

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may, instead, belong with the subsequent clause/verse, ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων. If the former, Luke makes the geography of Jerusalem part of the prophecy of scripture; if the latter, the focus shifts to the place from which the apostles will begin to bear witness to him, in parallel to Acts 1:8's geographical emphasis. For a helpful survey of the text-critical issues involved, see Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1584.

[7] Of the 31 appearances of the verb γράφω in Luke-Acts, all but 9 appear in either perfect passive indicative (γέγραπται) or perfect passive participle (γεγραμμένον or γεγραμμένα) form. In all 22 of these cases, the word introduces or refers to Israel's scriptures, and in a majority of cases it is followed by a direct citation.

[8] Of the 12 or so instances in Luke-Acts of the perfect passive γέγραπται/γέγραμμενον introducing a reference to scripture without the conjunctive ὅτι, Luke 24:46 is the only use which does *not* preface a direct citation. The stylistic expectation, therefore, is that what follows is a claim which, if not a citation, is very much scriptural. The lack of the ὅτι in v. 46, however, may also be simply a matter of style, Luke not wanting to repeat the conjunction after having used it earlier in the same sentence. If this were true, then the non-citation would be just as jarring considering every other use of the perfect passive of γράφω followed by ὅτι indicates a citation in Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 2:23; 4:4, 10; Acts 23:5).

[9] Cf. Awwad, "Significance," 83: "The phrase οὕτως γέγραπται seems to suggest that Jesus is about to quote the Scripture and then comment on it. Instead, the Lukan Jesus offers a synthesis of what he thinks the Scripture says about him in a summary fashion."

In addition to establishing Luke 24:46-48's singular importance for (Luke-)Acts, the summative nature of these verses indicates the scope of Luke's global claim both about the Messiah's death and resurrection and also about proclamation in his name to all nations.[10] Because the statement is syntactically structured, by the patterns of Luke's own style, to be a citation of Israel's scripture, and yet is not, the effect is to lend Jesus' pronouncement a scriptural force and prominence. Moreover, given its placement at the end of Luke's Gospel, Jesus' claims assume the strength of a "programmatic" scriptural declaration, particularly as they anticipate events (universal proclamation) still to come. The prophetic aspect of scripture is matched by the prophetic speech of Jesus himself, whose predictions about his fate (Luke 9:22, 44; 17:25; 18:31-33; 24:6-7) have already come true.

1.1.2.1.2 παθεῖν, ἀναστῆναι, κηρυχθῆναι

The first clause contains two aorist active infinitives (παθεῖν, ἀναστῆναι) of which τὸν χριστόν is the subject, while the second contains one aorist *passive* infinitive (κηρυχθῆναι) with μετάνοιαν as its *passive* subject.[11] While it is clear in the first clause that the Messiah (ὁ χρίστος) is the one who is to suffer and rise again, in the second clause the active subject of κηρυχθῆναι—that is, who is to do the proclaiming—is left undetermined. We can only surmise from context that Jesus' audience here, namely the

[10] Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller extend the reach of γέγραπται even further: "all the elements of verses 46-48 fall under the spell of the lead, 'thus it is written': the death and resurrection of Jesus, the worldwide proclamation of conversion and forgiveness, the gift of the Spirit to the witnessing community" (*The Biblical Foundations for Mission* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983], 257).

[11] Cf. Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, rev. Gordon M. Messing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), §1869-70, 1974, 1997-99, which helps clarify the parallel use of the infinitive and the accompanying sense of promise or command which the main verb (γέγραπται) followed by three infinitives conveys.

Eleven and company,[12] is intended, though the syntax is curiously indirect. The narrative suspension of agency may reflect a pattern in Luke 24 (and, arguably, elsewhere in Luke-Acts), where passive verbs render ambiguous the agency of an action which one might intuitively associate with human exploits.[13] The ambiguous language, which we also encounter in a different way in v. 48 (see 1.1.2.1.5 below), serves Luke's larger narrative purpose of construing events as under divine superintendence even when carried out by human actors. Events that unfold on the human plane, Luke assures his readers, follow a pattern laid out by God's plan. Ultimately, the absence of an active subject for κηρυχθῆναι allows for the even greater syntactical prominence of τὸν χριστὸν as the *semantic* subject of the whole sentence.

1.1.2.1.3 τὸν χριστόν

The only (grammatically) *active* subject in vv. 46-47 is τὸν χριστόν, governing the first two infinitives, παθεῖν and ἀναστῆναι. Without an active subject, and by virtue of the strong parallel between clauses, the third infinitive κηρυχθῆναι may at a glance fall

[12] At this point, we know this group included τοὺς ἕνδεκα καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς (Luke 24:33), along with Cleopas and his traveling companion (24:13, 18). In the parallel text in Acts, all we learn of Jesus' audience before his ascension is they are called "apostles" by the narrator and "Men of Galilee" by the angelic figures at Jesus' ascension. The first reference to a gathered group after that gives the Eleven by name (Acts 1:13; cf. Luke 6:14-15) and adds σὺν γυναιξὶν καὶ Μαριὰμ τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ (Acts 1:14). It is unclear if the reference to "120" in the next verse includes those just named or a larger group of believers from which Judas' replacement is presumably to be chosen (cf. 1:15-26). Cf. Kirsopp Lake, "The Twelve and the Apostles," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 5, ed. F. Jackson and K. Lake (London: Macmillan, 1933), 37-59; and *contra* Peter Bolt, "Mission and Witness," 210-212.

[13] For example, in the immediate narrative context, Luke uses the imperfect passive ἐκρατοῦντο (Luke 24:16) to refer to the Emmaus disciples' inability to see—their eyes were literally "kept" from recognizing the risen Jesus. In another instance, at the end of the same scene (v. 31), their eyes "were opened," represented again with a passive verb, διηνοίχθησαν. The syntactical pattern is most noticeable in the so-called "progress reports" in Acts: ἐθεραπεύοντο (5:16); ἐπληθύνετο (6:7; 9:31; 12:24); οἰκοδομουμένη (9:31); προσετέθη … τῷ κυρίῳ (11:24); ἐστερεοῦντο τῇ πίστει (16:5); even ἀπεστάλη in Acts 28:28—"the salvation of God *has been sent* to the Gentiles"—helps to sustain the ambiguity (of a divine passive) introduced in Luke 24:47 and brings it to a fulfillment of sorts.

under the governance of the same subject (τὸν χριστόν). It is *syntactically* impossible, of course, but the *semantic* possibility is further suggested by the immediate appearance of a prepositional phrase conveying the Messiah's indirect agency—ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ[14]—preceding the actual (passive) subject of the sentence, μετάνοιαν. Many translations, at least implicitly, take the phrase adverbially as modifying ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, even though the words are separated syntactically.

Given the way in which Jesus' name will play such an important role in the unfolding of witness in Acts, an argument can be made, and some have made it, that the prepositional phrase is instrumental, even metonymic for Jesus himself.[15] On grammatical grounds alone it is improbable to read τὸν χριστόν as the implied *active* subject of κηρυχθῆναι (i.e. "by the Messiah"). And yet Luke's ambiguous phrasing and syntax invite such an inference. In other words, not only is the claim about scriptural fulfillment extended from Jesus' death/resurrection to universal proclamation, but even *the manner of* fulfillment is implied to be the same. In other words, Jesus not only died and rose again, but he also may be the one to proclaim salvation to all nations.

As we will see, Luke has already associated Jesus himself with "light for the revelation of the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32), as Paul confirms in Acts 26:23, indicating that across Luke-Acts Luke understands *the Messiah's mission* to include proclaiming light to all nations (cf. Luke 2:32; Acts 26:23; Isa 42:6; 49:6) and salvation to the ends of the

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[14] Cf. Stephen Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 48: "The phrase ἐπι τῶ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ expresses for Luke, in a special way, the presence of Christ."

[15] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 184: "What believers do in Jesus' name is in effect being done by Jesus himself. It personifies the exalted Jesus, i.e., making immanent the transcendent Lord."

earth (Acts 1:8; 13:47; cf. Isa 49:6). Given this wider context, Luke has structured these pivotal verses to evoke the possibility that universal proclamation (in Acts) will somehow be carried out by the Messiah himself.

1.1.2.1.4 πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

Typically, for Luke, ἔθνος in the singular refers to Israel or the Jews; the opposite, however, holds for use of the plural, which overwhelmingly denotes Gentiles.[16] Thus the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη throughout Luke's two volumes refers to all nations, inclusive of Jews but especially of Gentiles.

Probing Luke's literary sources, we discover that the use of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη typically refers exclusively to Gentiles in Israel's scriptures (LXX).[17] The Greek text

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[16] Of the 56 uses in Luke-Acts, the singular ἔθνος appears only 15 times. Of those 15 cases, Luke uses the singular predominately to refer to Israel/Jews (cf., however, Acts 7:7). But in every one of those instances, Giuseppe Betori points out ("Luke 24:47: Jerusalem and the Beginning of the Preaching to the Pagans in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Luke and Acts*, ed. G. O'Collins and G. Marconi [New York: Paulist Press, 1993], 111), the term is applied in the context of a pagan audience or interpersonal relations with non-Jews (cf. Luke 7:5; 23:2; Acts 10:22; 24:2, 10, 17; 26:4; 28:19). The case of Acts 8:9 is trickier as it refers to the "ἔθνος of Samaria." However, given how Luke tends to characterize Samaritans as non-Gentiles, the pattern still holds. (The Jerusalem believers do not confront Peter and John about their association with Samaritans, for example.) The two exceptions (Luke 21:10; Acts 7:7) both appear in the context of a biblical allusion and so draw on the source language rather than Luke's own pattern (Luke 21:10 [twice] → LXX 2 Chr 15:6; Acts 7:7 → LXX Gen 15:4 [Egypt]). Finally, I take the sense of the singular when modified by the adjective πᾶν (Acts 10:35; 17:26) as functionally plural, referring in both cases to "every nation" (see below). The lone exception to the pattern of the collective singular is Acts 2:5, which refers to "Jews from every ἔθνος," clarifying national rather than religio-ethnic identity. If the singular ἔθνος predominately applies to Israel/Jews, the opposite holds true for Luke's use of the plural. Again, following Betori, of the 41 instances of the plural, all refer to Gentiles or non-Jewish peoples. In fact, in a majority of cases, especially in Acts, τὰ ἔθνη is actually contrasted with Jews/Israel (cf. Luke 2:32; Acts 4:25, 27; 9:15; 13:46; 14:5; 21:11, 21; 26:17, 20, 23).

[17] While the LXX's patterns of usage vary, on the whole the exact phrase indicates the Gentile nations in distinction from Israel, used primarily to translate כֹּל גּוֹיֵי or כָּל־הָעַמִּים. For instance, the phrase names the nations in their difference from Israel in light of her special covenant with God (cf. Ex 19:5; 20:24, 26; Deut 7:7, 14; 10:15; 14:2; 26:19; 28:1; cf. Est 3:8). In the annals of conquest, the term often connotes the opposition to Israel's inheritance of the land (cf. 2 Ch 32:23; Ex 23:27; Josh 23:3; 24:17; Deut 11:23; Josh 23:4; 24:18; 34:10). This sense of difference vis-à-vis Israel results in the term referring, commonly, to the Gentiles exclusively (cf. Deut 2:25; 4:6, 19; cf. 1 Sam 8:20; 1 Es 1:49; 5:49; Neh 6:16; Jud 3:8; Tob 3:4). Across the span of this use there is yet more variety in the fate associated with the Gentile nations—whether conquest or conversion or both (cf. Am 9:12; Joel 4:2; Isa 2:2; 34:2; 52:10; 66:18, 20; Tob 14:6). A more general use ("all the nations of the world") seems to be characteristic of about half the appearances

with a close affinity to Luke-Acts in this respect is 1 Maccabees, in which the use of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη appears remarkably similar. Broadly consistent with Luke-Acts, 1 Maccabees employs the singular ἔθνος with respect to the Jewish people while reserving the plural for all nations/Gentiles (e.g., 1 Macc 1:42; 2:18-19; 4:11; 5:38; 5:43; 12:53; 13:6; cf. 3 Macc 6:15, 26; 7:4). NT uses of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη comprise a much smaller sample size than OT occurrences.[18] And because most Gospel occurrences appear in double or triple tradition passages, few uses of the phrase are unique to one Evangelist (cf. only Mark 11:17; Matt 25:32; possibly 28:19), except in the case of Luke-Acts. Luke's fondness for the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is readily apparent in the six to eight instances, a majority of which comes from Acts (Luke 12:30; 21:24; Acts 10:35; 14:16; 15:17; 17:26; 21:21; cf. 2:5).[19] In most cases, the phrase carries with it a sense of all the *other* nations of the world (besides Israel), but in a way that highlights the role of these nations in God's plans for Israel (cf. Acts 15:17). When used in the context of a Jewish

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of the phrase in the Psalms (LXX 9:18; 46:2; 48:2; 81:8; 112:4), with the other half denoting Gentiles specifically (LXX 58:6, 9; 71:11, 17; 85:9; 117:10). The broader sense of LXX usage is one which allows for meanings of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ranging from "the whole world" to "the Gentiles in particular," but rarely explicitly *Gentiles and Jews together*.

[18] Of the about 25 instances, 9 appear in the Gospels, 6 in Acts, 3-4 in Paul, and 6 in Revelation. Gospel occurrences of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη are indicated by bold-face type: **Matt 24:9** // Mark 13:13 // Lk 21:17 [only Matthew has (πάντα τὰ) ἔθνη; cf. Mark-Luke match with Matt 10:22]; **Matt 24:14** // **Mk 13:10** // **Luke 24:47**, though most synopses do not recognize a literary relationship (see discussion below); **Matt 25:32** (unique); **Matt 28:19** (mostly unique yet cf. Mark 16:15 ["all creation"] and, of course, **Luke 24:47**); Matt 21:13 // **Mk 11:17** // Luke 19:46 (only Mark has the full verse citation from LXX Isa 56:7, which includes πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, whereas Matthew ends the Isa 56:7 citation after κληθήσεται and Luke before. To these Luke adds about 7 more uses of the phrase, all unique to Luke, giving some impression of Luke's general appreciation of the phrase (Luke 12:30; 21:24; 10:35; 14:16; 15:17; 17:26; 21:21), taking the singulars in 10:35 and 17:26 as functionally plural.

[19] I say "six to eight" because three of the examples above—Acts 2:5; 10:35; 17:26—employ the collective singular (πᾶν ἔθνος) which replicates the function of the plural, at least in the latter two cases.

audience in Acts, e.g., the phrase evokes primarily Gentiles in contrast (or in addition) to Jews (cf. Acts 21:21).[20]

If πάντα τὰ ἔθνη connotes "Gentiles (primarily or exclusively)" then such a claim ("it is written…that repentance and forgiveness would be proclaimed…to *the Gentiles*") introduces a seemingly sharp turn for Luke's two-volume work.[21] This major shift helps explain the way in which Luke aligns his claim about universal witness with scriptural necessity (Luke 24:47; see 1.1.3.3-4). As surprising as the claim is, Luke argues, it was always in God's plan to reach the Gentiles specifically. The narrative expansion of mission to Gentiles signals a kind of narrative expansion in the definition of χρίστος, according to Luke. What Acts intends to show, in other words, is not that Jesus must reach Israel—that has already been established in Luke's Gospel—but that his ultimate mission is also to Gentiles *as a completion of God's promises to Israel*.

1.1.2.1.5 τούτων[22]

Joel Green, in his careful exegesis of these verses, concludes that "the referent of 'these things' should probably be understood broadly to include the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah as well as their significance in relation to the Scriptures and the ongoing proclamation of the early church (i.e. the substance of vv. 44-47)" since, in

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[20] See Chapter 3 on the way Luke employs "ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8; 13:47; Isa 49:6) and "all nations" as virtual synonyms.

[21] Giuseppe Betori ("Luke 24:47," 111) concludes, with a touch of exaggeration: "Above all, it is never possible to blend in the Jewish people with *panta ta ethnē* of the world," adding: "It would be odd indeed if such a blending were to take place in a programmatic text such as Luke 24:47." Though Betori has recognized Luke's accent on Gentiles, no more needs to be said than Luke's use of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη here refers predominately to Gentiles.

[22] The various textual and syntactical issues concerning ἀρξάμενοι and the relationship between v. 47b and v. 48 ultimately have little significance for our study (cf. Green, *Luke,* 857; Betori, "Luke 24:47," 108; Richard Dillon, "Easter Revelation and Mission Program in Luke 24:46-48" in Daniel Durken, ed., *Sin, Salvation and the Spirit: Commemorating the Fiftieth Year of the Liturgical Press* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1979), 267 n. 74.

Acts, "Jesus' followers serve precisely in this capacity."[23] Green's "probably" confirms for us the ambiguity of τούτων and the need for further clarification. For his part, Green is surely correct that "these" refers to the events of Jesus' passion and resurrection—moreover, that they are attested by Israel's scriptures—and their ongoing significance for all people. What Green subtly addresses, and few commentaries take up at any length, is how "proclamation of repentance and forgiveness to all nations"—again, attested in the scriptures (v. 46)—is included among "these things." Strictly speaking, it is syntactically possible to understand "you are witnesses of these things" to mean that the apostles not only will participate in the aforesaid universal proclamation but that they will be witnesses of it, in a more passive sense. In other words, preaching to all nations may *both* be something they do and something they witness, from the outside as it were. This is an important, however subtle, motif recognizable in the way God quite often takes the initiative in the spread of the "word" in Acts and the apostles and witnesses play a confirmatory or interpretative role (cf. 8:14-17; 11:22-24; 15:7-11, 13-21).

If one sought to clarify the referent in 24:48 by appealing to Acts 1:8 ("you will be my [μου] witnesses") on the assumption that the statements are more or less equivalent, the result would be a correspondence between Luke 24:48's τούτων ("these [things]") and Acts 1:8's μου ("my/me"). Naturally, it could be wondered how the plural τούτων in Luke 24:48 aligns cleanly with the singular μου. Yet, given that the subject of the first clause (24:46) is scriptural confirmation of Jesus as τὸν χριστόν, and confirming the messianic identity is part of the overall purpose of Luke 24:44-49, the idea arises that

[23] Green, *Luke*, 858.

"these things" refer to the events which signal Jesus' messianic identity—namely, death, resurrection, and universal proclamation in his name. To be witnesses "of these things" is to be witnesses of Jesus' messianic identity attested by the scriptural fulfillment of God's plan in his death, resurrection, and universal proclamation in his name—that is, of the fulfillment of Jesus' messianic mission.

In addition, the absence of a verb, and therefore tense, in v. 48 is noteworthy: ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων ("You [are] witnesses of these [things]"). Given the multiple tenses in which Jesus' statement traffics at the "hinge" between volumes, the lack of a verb may be purposeful. If "these things" refers to the threefold messianic prophecy concerning the Messiah's recent death, recent resurrection, and future universal proclamation, then an absence of tense assigned to their role as "witnesses" may serve to cover all tenses—past, present, and future—and all voices,[24] active as well as passive.

1.1.2.2 Summary

Several conclusions can be offered on the basis of this syntactical study of Luke 24:46-48. First, γέγραπται, though typically employed by Luke to introduce a scriptural citation, here presents a summative statement about the scriptural necessity standing behind both Jesus' death-and-resurrection *and also* universal proclamation of repentance/forgiveness in his name. Second, the infinitives—παθεῖν, ἀναστῆναι, and κηρυχθῆναι—are all governed by "it is written" even as the first two take "the Messiah" as their active subject while the third only has the passive subject of "repentance." Thirdly, therefore, the syntax leaves open the fulfillment of universal proclamation by not

[24] Cf. Lucien Legrand, "The Spirit, the Mission, and the Church (Acts 1:6-8)," *Bible Bhashyam* 8 (1982): 207, who refers to the two difference voiced forms as "nominal agent form" and "nominal passive form."

specifying its agents; semantically, it creates the possibility that τὸν χριστόν governs the whole statement, an idea reinforced by the use of the phrase ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ as possible circumlocution for Jesus himself. Again, the implication is that the Messiah is somehow also involved in the proclamation to all nations, which elsewhere Luke implies (cf. Luke 2:32; Acts 26:23). Fourth, the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη accentuates mission to Gentiles even as it encompasses all people, Jews and Gentiles. If so, it invites readers to consider whether Luke 24:47 introduces a novel claim about Jesus' mission and identity, based on how Luke construes them. Fifth, the elliptical statement ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων indicates, again in an ambiguous way, that the "these" of which the apostles are designated witnesses are the three events of Jesus' death, his resurrection, and universal proclamation in his name. In other words, not only will the apostles participate in said proclamation, they will also testify that it indeed is happening in accordance with scripture (cf. Acts 13:47). Finally, it should be clear that Luke's ambiguous wording and syntax does not appear to be incidental, but suggestive. With the final words of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, gaps[25] are opened which will require readerly imagination, disciplined by the ensuing narrative of Acts, to fill. Who will actually proclaim repentance and forgiveness to Gentiles and who will bear witness to the marks of Jesus' messianic identity now being realized? We must read on.

1.1.3 A Survey of Scriptural "Necessity" and the Plan of God in Luke 24

[25] For more on narrative "gaps," see Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1985), 186-229; and Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 180-202, who uses complementarily the language of "blanks."

With a brief syntactical orientation to Luke 24:46-48, we can now consider the way in which (1) Jesus' predictions (9:22, 44; 18:31-33; 22:37; cf. 24:6), (2) Luke's characterization of the disciples' surprise/disbelief (24:11, 25, 37-38, 41), and the motifs of (3) scriptural fulfillment (Luke 18:31-33; 22:37; cf. 24:25-27) and (4) divine "necessity" (Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:7; cf. 24:6-7) all function in relation to the claims about Jesus' death, resurrection, and universal proclamation to all nations in vv. 46-48. After taking each aspect in turn, it will be seen how even though events have fulfilled Jesus' own predictions, the disciples' surprise points to the *apparent* discontinuity of events with the story to this point. And yet, by tying recent events to the fulfillment of Israel's scriptures (and Jesus' earlier predictions) and the "necessity" of God's plan lying behind them, Luke highlights an *actual* continuity with what came before. In this way, Luke is able to show that recent events in a sense extend God's purposes revealed in scripture, so that with the unfolding of universal proclamation of repentance/forgiveness (in Acts) God's plan for the world in the Messiah Jesus will come to fruition. The alignment of witness "to all nations" with Israel's scriptures frames the Gentile mission as a fulfillment of God's plans *for Israel.* The tension between apparent discontinuity and actual continuity draws attention to a broader question of why universal proclamation either by Jesus or his disciples is not a strong motif in Luke's Gospel when it is a major focus of Acts (and Luke 24:47). The tension will help frame the following sections by introducing the possibility of an expansion in the identity of the Messiah.

1.1.3.1 Jesus' Predictions

One of the first things to notice about Luke 24:46-48 is so obvious that it verges on the banal—Luke puts these christological claims on the lips of Jesus and not another

character. The full significance of this observation is less immediately obvious and deserves elaboration. First, chapter 24 begins with two angelic figures, in Jesus' absence, reminding the women to remember Jesus' own words from earlier in the Gospel (24:4-7; cf. 9:22, 44; 18:31-33). When the scene shifts to the Emmaus road, Jesus himself relates the fulfillment of his own predictions by guiding the disciples through Israel's scriptures, though his identity remains concealed from them (Luke 24:15-28). When the scene shifts once more, the Emmaus disciples have rejoined the larger group of apostles and related their experience with Jesus, how he was made known in the breaking of bread (vv. 33-35). At that moment, Jesus again presents himself alive, this time to all the apostles (v. 36). However, rather than declare the truth of the resurrection through scripture, as before, Jesus offers physical proof. That he is not a ghost can ultimately only be shown with his hands and feet (vv. 41-43) and a meal together (vv. 41-43; cf. 24:30-31). In a succession of three resurrection "appearances" (24:4-7, 15-32, 36-51), Jesus verbally but especially physically demonstrates the truth of his earlier predictions, an act which only Jesus himself can carry out.

Second, the correspondence between Jesus' earlier predictions and their fulfillment in ch. 24 allows Luke to establish continuity in the character of Jesus (Luke 9:22, 44; 17:25; 18:31-33; cf. 22:7, 37). It is the same Jesus, not two different people. The term earlier applied to Jesus—χρίστος—now includes "death and resurrection" as part of its "definition" (see 1.2).[26] Because of that consistency, readers (as well as apostles) know that Jesus is a trustworthy character, able to make good on his earlier predictions.

[26] See Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology,* 177-189; idem, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 122-123.

Should the risen Lord make another prediction (e.g., Luke 24:46-49), it will surely come true as well.

Thirdly, by verifying for his apostles his promised resurrection he establishes the basic grounds for their qualification as witnesses.[27] As Peter in Acts 1:21-22 will note, to be his witnesses means to be part of the group among whom Jesus went in and out, from the days of John's baptism to the day of Jesus' ascension. Designating them now as witnesses (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8) follows from the fact that they are the ones who can verify that the one who earlier predicted his death and resurrection is the one who has indeed been raised (cf. Acts 10:39, 41; 13:31). Therefore, being chosen as witnesses reflects their selection as disciples (cf. Luke 5:1-11; 9:1-6) and apostles (6:13-16; Acts 1:2 [τοῖς ἀποστόλοις … οὓς ἐξελέξατο], 13) who can attest the continuity of Jesus' pre-Easter life with his post-resurrection Lordship.

1.1.3.2 The Disciples' Surprise/Disbelief

That Jesus' death and resurrection were shocking to Jesus' followers is evident not only in their behavior throughout the passion narrative (Luke 22:47-23:56), but also in how Luke characterizes them[28] in the Lukan resurrection narrative (ch. 24). The

[27] In an obvious sort of way, our thesis explains why the notion and language of "witness" figures so prominently in Acts, starting especially with Luke 24:48. That is, witnesses corroborate that an event happened and also that the event in question has a significance which would make such testimony necessary in the first place. Thus the "commission" which we find at the end of Luke (24:48: "you are witnesses of these [things]") and at the beginning of Acts (1:8: "you will be my witnesses") underscores that Jesus' universal Lordship will require, like the events of his death and resurrection, persons whose role is to bear witness to it. That is, the apostles are both to bear witness actively to the nations while also being witnesses of the selfsame proclamation going forth in Jesus' name. The motif is in keeping with the broader approach of Luke's writing, which explicitly depends on "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (Luke 1:2).

[28] The women are "perplexed" (NRSV) about the empty tomb (ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαι αὐτὰς περὶ τούτου, 24:4). When the apostles learn from the women what allegedly happened (v. 11), the apostles take the news as λῆρος, an "idle tale" and would not believe (ἠπίστουν). After confirming the empty tomb themselves, two among them encounter Jesus in disguise along the road (vv. 13-32). To the summary of events they offer

apostles "would not believe" (ἠπίστουν) the women's eyewitness account at first (v. 11) and, even after Jesus himself physically dispels doubts about his bodily resurrection (vv. 38-40), their immediate joy is tempered with persistent unbelief (ἀπιστούντων αὐτῶν). Their doubts remain, in spite of: previous predictions (Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31-32), multiple personal encounters with the risen Jesus or his messengers (24:4-9; 13-32; 36-43), the accompanying verbal reports at least partially confirmed (24:22-23, 33-35), the sharing of at least one meal with him (24:30-31, 41-43), and the sight[29] (and possibly touch) of his resurrected body (24:38-40). If nothing else, with this characterization Luke demonstrates how *seemingly* discontinuous were the salvation-historical events of the Messiah's death and resurrection, even among those who had been given the prophecy beforehand (Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31; 24:6-7).

But the effect of the disciples' surprise, by means of Jesus' self-confirmation, enables apostolic transformation, a movement from doubt to Spirit-empowered testimony—in literary terms, the movement from Luke to Acts. The fear with which they first receive the news of his resurrection (Luke 24:5, 37) will soon turn to boldness in the

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the unrecognized risen Jesus, ironically, the Lord responds: "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!" (v. 25). Whatever their present grasp of the significance of events, especially in relation to scriptural prophecy, it is insufficient and in need of correction. To this end the scene concludes with Jesus' "opening" the scriptures to them and interpreting "the things about himself in all the scriptures" (v. 26). Eventually, after Jesus initiates the familiar ritual of breaking bread together (vv. 30-31), their eyes which earlier had been "kept from recognizing him" (v. 16) are finally "opened," and he disappears from their midst (v. 32). When Jesus reappears in the midst of the re-gathered apostles and disciples, they are terrified (cf. 24:5) and conclude he is merely a πνεῦμα (cf. Bezae's φαντασμα), indicating unbelief (v. 37). In fact, Jesus points out that their hearts are "troubled" and "questioning" (τεταραγμένοι … διαλογισμοι, v. 38). Even as the recognition dawns, signaled presumably by the joy that overtakes them, unbelief persists (ἀπιστούντων αὐτῶν, v. 41; cf. 24:11).

[29] See Dennis E. Johnson, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption* (Philipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1997), 32-52, who draws close parallels between the "witnesses" in Isaiah 43-44 who require the restoration of their eyes before they can be enlisted as witnesses. Luke appears to depict the apostles' eyes/minds in similar fashion; even Paul must first be healed of blindness (Acts 9:8-18) before becoming a witness and opening the eyes of others (Acts 26:20-23).

face of others' disbelief and maltreatment (Acts 2:29; 4:13, 29, 31; cf. 9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31). Jesus' additional promise of sending the Spirit to aid the apostles "with power from on high" (Luke 24:49) reminds them of his ongoing ability to guide and equip them to fulfill *his* mission (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:3, 5, 10; 7:55; 8:29, 39; 9:31; cf. Chapter 2.). That very transformation allows Luke to show that where human expectation faltered, God's purposes were being worked out (cf. Luke 22:31-32). As will be seen most vividly in the Cornelius incident (Acts 10-11:18), the purposes of God tend to outpace human expectations, which struggle to "catch up." To aid them in this transformation, Jesus (and here, Luke) must show that the whole span of events—from messianic life to death to resurrection—belongs within Israel's scriptural horizons. Luke, therefore, goes to great lengths to pair the disciples' disbelieving posture with repeated appeals to the breadth of the Jewish scriptures. The surprising events of Jesus' passion and resurrection were ultimately anticipated by Israel's scriptures themselves (24:46-48) even if no one except Jesus understood that initially.

1.1.3.3 Scriptural Fulfillment

Though there is a variety of uses to which Luke puts Israel's scriptures,[30] in Luke 24 the primary mode is promise and fulfillment.[31] The fulfillment of Jesus' earlier predictions about his death and resurrection is vouchsafed by the scriptures themselves, confirming the events which are so hard to believe. When Jesus himself joins the

[30] See David Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Craig Evans and James A. Sanders, *Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke-Acts* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001); Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 55-74.
[31] Schubert, "Structure and Significance," 165-186.

Emmaus disciples, he directs their attention to what scripture says (24:25-27, 32), shifting the focus from their own perspective to the scriptural anticipation of events now fulfilled: "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!" (24:25). In this case "believe" means "understand rightly," since Jesus follows this statement by interpreting (διερμήνευσεν) for them in all the scriptures "the things concerning himself" (v. 27). The meaning or reference of scripture, in some cases, is not self-evident and a guide is needed (cf. Acts 8:30-35). The risen Lord himself guides them through what the scriptures say about him; only later, after he breaks bread with them, do they recognize him and the effect his earlier scriptural exposition had on their hearts (Luke 24:32).

When Cleopas and his companion rejoin the larger group of apostles and relate their experiences on the Emmaus road, Jesus appears in their midst (24:33-36). After proving that he is indeed the same Jesus on whom their hopes had hung (vv. 38-43), Jesus again turns to scripture—"everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled" (v. 44; cf. vv. 25-27). The fulfillment of Jesus' earlier predictions is paired with an analogous claim about scripture. What Jesus had said before still holds—the scriptures attest Jesus' messianic identity and all that they proclaim *must* be fulfilled (cf. Luke 9:22, 31; 18:31-33; 22:37). Then, like he did with the Emmaus pair, he "opened their mind to understand the scriptures" (v. 45) and where a reader might expect to hear the substance of that scriptural teaching (v. 46: "Thus it is written …") Jesus instead offers a global, climactic claim about the scriptures in relation to himself (vv. 46-48).

But to which specific events in 24:46-47 does Luke apply the claim "thus it is written" and to which scriptures specifically does fulfillment apply? As noted, syntactically the claim of biblical fulfillment applies to three events: the Messiah's suffering/death, the Messiah's resurrection (24:46), *and* the proclamation of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations (24:47). By pairing them in this way Luke suggests that *in the same way* the scriptures anticipated Jesus' death-and-resurrection they also foresaw universal proclamation. Such a claim is all the more striking when we consider that while death and resurrection lie in the narrative's past, universal proclamation is yet to occur in Luke's story (see 1.1.5 below).

As for which scriptures the prophesied events mentioned in Luke 24:46-47 fulfill, the question is more difficult to answer. Though a number of specific citations interpreting Jesus' death and resurrection[32] appears in Luke-Acts, and some may lie in the background of Luke's broad claim here, none to this point has been explicitly attached to universal proclamation in his name. Indeed, the vague nature of the claim may raise questions which the more specific citations elsewhere answer. But for most in the audience—and maybe especially for any Gentiles—the broad claim of fulfillment accomplishes its purpose: *that* all the scriptures attest these things may be more important than knowing which ones.

Such a conclusion is confirmed by the vagueness with which Jesus scripturally interprets his death and resurrection. For instance, Jesus' earlier predictions (cf. Luke

[32] Cf. Ps 118:22 (Luke 20:17), Isa 53:12 (Luke 22:37), and Ps 31:5 (Luke 23:46; cf. Ps 22:7, 18). In Acts, the death of Jesus is supported by references to specific passages like Ps 118:22 (Acts 4:11), Ps 2:1-2 (Acts 4:25-26), and Isa 53:7-8 (Acts 8:32-33). Elsewhere, the resurrection is attested by both Peter and Paul with reference to Ps 16:8-11 (Acts 2:25-28; 13:35). Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 1:285.

24:6-7) are no more specific than "everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets" (18:31). Luke's purpose is clearly not to be evasive but to be comprehensive. On the Emmaus road Jesus teaches the disciples to re-read scripture; "*beginning with Moses and all the prophets*, he interpreted to them the things about himself in *all the scriptures*" (24:27; cf. v. 32). Later, with all the apostles gathered, the answer is again exhaustive: "*everything* written about [Jesus] in *the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms*" (Luke 24:44).

The generality, it seems, is the point. Indeed, perhaps Jesus' disciples had not expected the events concerning Jesus *because* scripture's testimony about them had not been confined to specific verses, but rather in the impression given by the scriptures in their entirety: "all that the prophets have declared" (Lk 24:25, 27, 44; cf. 18:31; Acts 3:18, 24; 10:43; 21:22). Scripture, in other words, speaks with one voice on the subject. Which scriptures do the events named in Luke 24:46-47 fulfill? Luke's answer appears to be: *all* of them. Anchoring the "hinge" chapter in place, Luke 24:46-48 offers the subsequent story of Acts a broad scriptural framework within which the specific citations and allusions in Luke-Acts find their place.[33]

And yet, it turns out that even scriptural testimony about the Messiah's death, resurrection, and universal proclamation of salvation was not obvious to those who had been told by Jesus himself that such events were happening *as they were happening*

[33] Cf. also Thomas Moore, "The Lucan Great Commission and the Isaianic Servant," *BSac* 154.613 (Jan - Mar 1997): 60; Dupont, "La portée christologique," 136-137; David Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 85; Wright, "Truth with a Mission," 7.

(24:25-27).[34] Therefore, Luke draws on an even broader account of the necessity of events in accordance with God's purposes; not only does scripture attest the Messiah's work, but accepting Luke's claims brings one into the very heart of God's ancient plan for Israel.

1.1.3.4 Divine "Necessity"

The significance of the motif of scriptural fulfillment in Luke-Acts is frequently indicated by the accompanying use of δεῖ, especially prominent toward the end of Luke's Gospel (9:22; cf. 13:33; 17:25; 21:9; 22:7). Verses unique to Luke capture the pattern well: "For I tell you, this scripture *must* be fulfilled in me … and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled" (22:37). In Luke 24 alone, δεῖ appears three times (vv. 7, 26, 44), twice in conjunction with claims of biblical fulfillment (vv. 26, 44), thereby linking Luke 24:46-48's claim of scriptural fulfillment ("thus it is written") to a broader sense of the realization of God's plans.[35] The marks of messianic identity do not revolve merely around proper interpretation of scripture—which can be contested—but ultimately reflect God's ancient plan. The plan of God, as Israel's scriptures attest, was for the Messiah to

[34] Johannes Nissen observes that, in Luke's view, a "re-reading of the Scriptures was to be the source of mission" (emphasis removed). *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives,* 4th ed. (New York; Bern: Peter Lange, 2007), 50.

[35] The connection is even more explicit in some later manuscripts (cf. *Textus Receptus*), which, between γέγραπται and παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν, add the phrase *καὶ οὕτως ἔδει*. As the KJV renders v. 46, "Thus it is written, *and thus it behoved* Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day." The insertion here may be influenced by other Lukan instances of δεῖ linked with Jesus' fate (cf. Luke 17:25; 22:7), especially by attraction to Luke 24:26, which includes the exact phrase ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν. See also the work of Charles Cosgrove ("The Divine ΔΕΙ in Luke-Acts: Investigations into the Lukan Understanding of God's Providence." *Novum Testamentum*, 26.2 [Apr 1984]: 168-190) and John Squires (*The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 1993]) on the motif of God's plan, which is linguistically conspicuous in Luke's proclivity for using words like βούλη/βούλημα, θέλημα, προκαταγγέλλω, προορίζω, πρόγνωσις; cf. Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; 26:22). Cf. also Lampe, "Lucan portrait," 161, who notes how Luke "translates" Mark's and (Matthew's) "he goes just as it is written concerning him" into an emphasis on divine necessity: "the Son of Man goes according to the predetermined plan [ὡρισμένον]" (22:22).

suffer and die, to be raised, and for proclamation of repentance and forgiveness to reach all nations.

Moreover, Luke is able to dispel the perception of discontinuity between pre-Easter expectations and the events described in Luke 24 by driving his narrative forward with an inexorable sense of divine superintendence. Luke-Acts illustrates this dimension of the narrative in different ways, which John Squires[36] has laid out at length. More than a motif among others in Luke-Acts, the "plan of God" permeates the text at multiple levels. Even if Luke 24 does not employ all the explicit language of "the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23), the chapter is suffused with appeals both to scripture and to God's guidance of events (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 32; 44-45). With respect to the latter, the use of δεῖ is particularly pronounced and deserves further comment.[37]

As we noted, chapter 24 begins with the angelic figures at the empty tomb telling the women: "Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man *must* (δεῖ) be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again" (Luke 24:6-7). Later, Jesus proceeds to "open the scriptures" to Cleopas and his

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[36] Squires, *ibid.*, 2, fn 3-10. 1) descriptions of God as being well pleased with Jesus (Luke 3:17; 10:21; 12:32) or of Jesus'/Paul's obedience to the will (θέλημα) of God (Luke 22:42; Acts 21:14; 22:14), or of the "plan" (βούλη) of God which proceeds in spite of resistance (Luke 7:30; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 5:38; 20:27; cf. 13:36); 2) the frequent use of the terms δεῖ/μέλλω (Luke 9:31, 44; 22:23; 24:21; Acts 17:31; 26:22, 23); 3) references to the fulfillment of Scriptures both in the life and ministry of Jesus and that of the early Church (πληρόω in Luke 1:2; 4:21; 9:31; 21:24; 22:16; 24:44; Acts 1:16; 2:28; 3:18; 12:25; 13:25, 27, 52; 14:26; 19:21; and τελέω in Luke 12:50; 18:31; 22:37); 4) a cluster of προ-compounds and related verbs that describe divine intention (προορίζω, Acts 4:28; προκαταγγέλλω, Acts 3:18; 7:52; προγνῶσις; Acts 2:23; προχειρίζομαι, Acts 3:20; 22:14; 26:16; προχειροτονέω, Acts 10:41; ὁρίζω, Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 10:42; 17:26, 31; τάσσω, Acts 14:48; 22:10; and τίθημι, Acts 1:7; 13:47, 48; 19:21; 20:28; and 5) a series of epiphanies which manifest God or divine messengers (Luke 1:11-22, 26-38; 2:9-15; 3:22; 9:30-2; 22:43; 24:4-7, 15-31, 36-49; Acts 1:3, 9-11; 5:19-20; 9:3-6; 10:3-7, 10-16, 30-2; 11:5-10, 13-14; 12:7-11, 23; 16:9-10; 18:9; 22:6-8, 17-21; 23:11; 26:13-18; 27:23-24).

[37] For the following section see Cosgrove, "The Divine ΔEI," 168-190; John Squires, *The Plan of God*, 166-185. Cf. also Squires, "The Plan of God in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts,* ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 19-39.

companion, prefacing his interpretation with the claim: "Was it not necessary (δεῖ) that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" (24:26). Sandwiched between references to scripture (vv. 25, 27) is a straightforward claim: what the scriptures say about ὁ χριστός applies, without remainder, to Jesus of Nazareth. Events surrounding Jesus *had* to occur in this way.

Finally, in v. 44, after the two disciples have rejoined the others, the risen Jesus appears to the group of all the apostles and explicitly connects scripture to divine necessity: "everything written about *me* in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must (δεῖ) be fulfilled." Three times in chapter 24 appeal is made to divine necessity (vv. 7, 26, 44) as a way to underscore that Jesus' death and resurrection did not occur because of human machinations but because God's plan dictated it, an assertion supported elsewhere in Acts (cf. Acts 2:28; 4:25-28).

Luke 24:46, in a sense, builds on the sense of divine necessity two verses earlier. The claim that "everything written about me … *must* be fulfilled" (v. 44) prefaces Jesus' "opening" of his disciples' minds to scripture (v. 45), establishing the conditions for understanding Jesus' summary point: "Thus it is written…" (v. 46). The statement is hardly redundant since, as Dupont points out, Luke 24:44-49 represents the first time the claim about scriptural necessity is being communicated directly *to the apostles as a group*.[38] Indeed, Jesus must give them this message to confirm the promises he made *to them* before his crucifixion (Luke 9:22, 44; 17:25; 18:31-33). In this way, Jesus'

[38] Dupont, "La portée christologique," 131.

summary of the signs of messianic identity (death, resurrection) here forms a natural connection with the commission of universal proclamation that follows.

By rooting the series of events—messianic events past and others still to come—in God's ancient plan, Luke mitigates their discontinuity with events still further back in Israel's history. With this global statement, in other words, Luke lays claim to a particular interpretation of Israel's history that culminates in present-day events (cf. Acts 7:2-53; 13:16-41). Jesus' death and resurrection, and the mission in his name to all nations, were no accident of history which now needs to be explained but part of the plan of God from the beginning. A primary purpose of this passage for Luke is to show that such events introduce no novelty into God's workings with Israel and the nations—a common indictment of new movements (cf. Acts 6:13-14; 18:13; 21:28), but belong to the ancient arc of God's promises adumbrated in scripture.[39]

To conclude, it has been established that in Luke 24 interpretation of the events of Jesus' death and resurrection is suffused with claims to scriptural precedent and anchored in notions of divine necessity. Moreover, Luke 24:46-48 represents the culmination of these trajectories in the Gospel's final chapter. But we can also say more. Not only are the now past events of Jesus' death and resurrection seen as fulfilling God's plan attested in the scriptures, but also events yet to come—namely, universal proclamation of salvation. Readers of Acts, therefore, are prepared to find that the story of universal

[39] The portrait of the disciples in Luke 24 points to a larger claim about Luke-Acts—to paraphrase John Squires: in Luke-Acts things do not happen according to expectations, but they do happen according to plan, God's plan. Cf. John Squires, *The Plan of God*, 186-194; John Carroll "The God of Israel and the Salvation of the Nations," in *The Forgotten God: Perspectives in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Paul J. Achtemeier on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday,* ed. A. Andrew Das and Frank J. Matera (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 104-105.

proclamation will unfold according to God's predetermined plan, as indeed Acts 2:23 (et al) confirms. The linked motifs of scriptural fulfillment and divine necessity tie the events of the past to events in the future.

1.1.4 Lukan Framing (Luke 24:46-47 // Acts 26:22-23)

We have seen how Luke 24:46-47 establishes Jesus' death-and-resurrection and universal proclamation as a global claim of scriptural fulfillment and divine necessity in such a way that it raises expectations for how Acts will unfold. But what evidence is there that the claims made in Luke 24:46-47 actually reverberate throughout Acts—that our interpretive conclusions actually pan out? This question will be answered more fully in subsequent chapters of this study, but we can give a partial answer now by drawing attention to the parallel text found in Acts 26:22-23. Setting the two passages—Luke 24:46-47 and Acts 26:22-23—side by side illumines how Luke has effectively bookended his second volume by the motifs and claims we have already unpacked above. Specifically, we will see how the echo of Jesus' triadic apostolic commission (death/resurrection/universal proclamation) in Paul's final defense speech before Agrippa establishes the global, triadic claim about messianic identity as a frame for understanding Acts. By comparing and contrasting the two pivotal texts, Luke's broader narrative purposes come into view, setting up the central claim of our chapter—that Luke 24:46-48 anticipates the unfolding of universal proclamation in Acts as the unfolding of Jesus' messianic identity as "Lord of all."

In his speech before Agrippa Paul quotes (or paraphrases) Jesus' own previous words to him (Acts 26:14-18), offers an interpretation of his obedience to the Lord's words (26:19-21), and reiterates the scriptural necessity standing behind it all (26:22-23).

By having Paul quote Jesus, Luke elevates the significance of his own words, evoking Jesus' presence as well as the previous speeches and direct commission(s) of Jesus (Acts 1:6-8; cf. 9:4-6; 22:7-10; 22:18-21).[40] A number of parallels emerge (see Table 1 below) between Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 26:16-23, revealing a kind of discursive "frame" whereby Luke bookends nearly all of Acts in the threefold scheme of scriptural fulfillment.

Table 1: Parallel between Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 26:16-23

Luke 24:44-49[41]	**Acts 26:16-18, 22-23**
44 Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι μου οὓς ἐλάλησα πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔτι ὢν σὺν ὑμῖν, ὅτι δεῖ πληρωθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς περὶ ἐμοῦ. 45 τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς· 46 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὕτως γέγραπται **παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν** καὶ **ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν** τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, 47 καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν **εἰς** πάντα **τὰ ἔθνη** [.] ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλὴμ 48 ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων.	16 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὤφθην σοι, προχειρίσασθαί σε ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα ὧν τε εἶδές [με] ὧν τε ὀφθήσομαί σοι, 17 ἐξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε 18 ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κλῆρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ. … 22 ἐπικουρίας οὖν τυχὼν τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄχρι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης ἕστηκα μαρτυρόμενος μικρῷ τε καὶ μεγάλῳ οὐδὲν ἐκτὸς λέγων ὧν τε οἱ προφῆται ἐλάλησαν μελλόντων γίνεσθαι καὶ Μωϋσῆς, 23 εἰ **παθητὸς ὁ χριστός**, εἰ πρῶτος ἐξ **ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν** φῶς μέλλει καταγγέλλειν τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ **τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.**

[40] Of all the words of Jesus cited in Acts, the preponderant portion of the Lord's speech concerns on Paul's commission, setting in parallel Jesus' pre-Ascension commission to his apostles and Paul's reception of a commission directly from the Lord.

[41] In the table, concepts shared between Luke 24 and Acts 26 are underlined while linguistic matches between Luke 24:47 and Acts 26:23 are in bold print.

[49] καὶ [ἰδοὺ] ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρός μου ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς· ὑμεῖς δὲ καθίσατε ἐν τῇ πόλει ἕως οὗ ἐνδύσησθε ἐξ ὕψους δύναμιν.	

A number of broader Lukan motifs are echoed in Paul's speech before Agrippa. For instance, in Acts 26:16 Paul quotes the risen Lord as enlisting him as "servant and witness (ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα) of the things in which (ὧν) you have seen [me] and in which (ὧν) I will appear to you." Elsewhere Luke varies the use of ὧν with τούτων ἅ (cf. Luk 9:36; Act 22:15) and here the language may specifically recall Luke 24:48 ("you are *witnesses* of these *things* [τούτων]"; cf. Acts 1:8). While the referent of "these things" in each Lukan example is not clear, in Acts 26:16 it is specified essentially as that (in) which "you have seen and will see me [Jesus]." Paul of course has seen Jesus on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-20) and in a vision in the Temple (22:17-21; cf. also 23:11). In both cases Jesus' appearance concerned Paul's vocation among Jews and Gentiles (cf. 9:15; 22:18, 21). Like the apostles who are chosen as witnesses "of these things" (Jesus' death and resurrection and universal proclamation in his name), Paul's own vocation as "witness" concerns past and still future events.

Another motif has to do with the emphatic scriptural framework. When Luke 24:44 is compared with Acts 26:22, the similarities are immediately apparent:

> δεῖ πληρωθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς περὶ ἐμοῦ. (Luke 24:44)
>
> οὐδὲν ἐκτὸς λέγων ὧν τε οἱ προφῆται ἐλάλησαν μελλόντων γίνεσθαι καὶ Μωϋσῆς (Acts 26:22)

What Luke 24:44 insists must occur according to divine necessity (δεῖ πληρωθῆναι)—namely the fulfillment of the scriptures in recent events—Acts 26:22 expresses in a similar language of inevitability: "nothing except" (οὐδὲν ἐκτὸς) what the scriptures said

would happen (μελλόντων γίνεσθαι). What Luke's Jesus puts positively—"everything written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44) must be fulfilled—Paul says by negation: "nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen" (Acts 26:22). Both ascriptions of scriptural fulfillment to divine necessity reflect Luke 24:46's global claim that what is written in "Moses and the prophets (and psalms)" prophetically outlines God's plan ("thus it is written").

Both statements are set up by an appeal to scripture and therefore appear as summary statements of scripture's testimony about the Messiah. Moreover—and here we come to the heart of the parallel between passages—both claims of scriptural fulfillment introduce the threefold prophecy of Jesus' death, Jesus' resurrection, and universal proclamation (Luke 24:46-7; Acts 26:23). Below the parallel emerges in sharper relief.

Luke 24:46-47	*Acts 26:23*
παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ **ἀναστῆναι ἐκ** **νεκρῶν** τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν **εἰς** πάντα **τὰ ἔθνη**.	εἰ **παθητὸς ὁ χριστός**, εἰ πρῶτος ἐξ **ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν** φῶς μέλλει καταγγέλλειν τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ **τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.**

Though the syntax is slightly different, the verbal parallels are striking: the Messiah would suffer (παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν // παθητὸς ὁ χριστός), would rise from the dead (ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν // ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν), and proclamation would be made to the nations (κηρυχθῆναι … εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη // καταγγέλλειν τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). The parallel is all the more noteworthy because of the fact that nowhere else in Luke or Acts does the threefold correspondence appear with comparable succinctness. The uncanny parallel, therefore, invites us to draw some conclusions on the basis of the strength of the parallel and also on the basis of the minor divergences between them.

First of all, the parallel is sufficiently clear to show that Luke employs the triadic scheme[42] as an *inclusio*, bookends as it were, between which stands almost the whole of Acts. Thus, the claim that God's scriptural plan lies behind Jesus' death and resurrection and a universal proclamation of repentance/forgiveness in his name canvasses the book of Acts, cluing readers in to its hermeneutical significance for understanding the narrative. In other words, the *inclusio* reinforces the global claim about Jesus' messianic identity and the expectation that Acts as a whole narratively unfolds the interconnected claims of Luke 24:46-47 // Acts 26:22-23.

Secondly, by including the two instances of the fulfillment scheme, one delivered in the context of the apostolic commission, the other in the context of Paul's (summary of his) commission, Luke thereby links Paul's ministry to the original apostolic commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Notably, when Jesus issues his statement, he refers to universal proclamation to come, whereas Paul's words are summative and retrospective. In fact, Paul's broader review (26:16-23) is the most complete summary of Paul's ministry in Acts, appropriately delivered at a time when he no longer has the freedom to add to that résumé. For instance, Paul offers Agrippa an impressive résumé with a striking echo of Acts 1:8 ("…in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end(s) of the earth"): "I declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of

[42] Cf. Dupont, "La Mission de Paul d'après Actes 26.16-23 et la Mission des Apôtres d'après Luc 24.44-9 et Actes 1.8," in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed. Morna D. Hooker and Stephen G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), 290-297. Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus,* 86. Pao notes a threefold parallel by distinguishing Jesus' suffering from his resurrection, but for our purposes, following Luke's own emphasis on Jesus' resurrection (as metonymy for his death-and-resurrection), we can speak of two events: resurrection (or death-and-resurrection) and universal mission.

Judea, and also to the Gentiles,[43] that they should repent …" (Acts 26:20). Furthermore, Paul quotes Jesus' direct commission in v. 17 by using the word ἀποστέλλω (cf. Luke 24:49), the verb form of ἀπόστολος, potentially evoking the role which Luke rarely grants him (cf. only Acts 14:4, 14). Not only is Paul one sent by Jesus himself but he, like other select individuals in Acts, is called a "witness" (μάρτυρα, 26:16) directed "to bear witness" (μαρτυρόμενος, 26:22; cf. 22:15). While nearly every other use of the term "witness" concerns the ministry of the Twelve in Acts (Acts 1:22; 2:32; 5:32; 10:39, 41; 13:31), by having Paul apply the designation to himself, Luke emphasizes the continuity of Paul's ministry with what the Twelve were originally commissioned to do. Indeed, in 22:15 the syntax of Ananias' statement to Paul—"you will be his[44] witness" (ἔσῃ μάρτυς αὐτῷ)—is equivalent *mutatis mutandis* to the original apostolic commission: "you will be my witnesses" (ἔσεσθε μου μάρτυρες).

Some conclusions can also be drawn on the basis of the linguistically minor, but rhetorically significant *differences* between the two passages. First, it would appear that corresponding with Luke 24:47's εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is Paul's phrasing τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. It was already noted above that the plural τὰ ἔθνη (without πάντα modifying it) almost always refers to the Gentiles; in the same vein, the singular λαός almost always

[43] That "to the Gentiles" in Acts 26:20 seemingly corresponds with "to the end(s) of the earth" in Acts 1:8 retrospectively clarifies "to the end(s) of the earth" as a geographically *as well as ethnically* universal statement. Because we have concluded that the threefold confirmation of Jesus' messianic identity frames the book of Acts, the parallels reinforce the *christological* character of the Lukan commission(s), along with its ethnic (Luke 24:46-48) and geographical (Acts 1:8) complexion.

[44] The third person pronoun here is obviously necessary because the commission is being delivered second-hand by Ananias. Admitting this necessity of syntax, including the shift from plural (apostles) to singular (Paul), Paul's commission and the apostles are virtually identical in wording. In other words, had Luke wanted to indicate identity between commission, he could hardly have done it any better.

refers to Israel alone.[45] What Luke 24:47 names collectively ("to all nations") Paul distinguishes as two ethnic groups ("to the people [of Israel]" and "to the Gentiles"). This difference likely reflects what happens in the narrative between Luke 24:47 and Acts 26:23, namely that the Messiah's mission has been explicitly to reach Jews and Gentiles. In that time, moreover, Paul is the only "witness" who regularly preaches to *both* Jews and Gentiles. In this way, Jesus' original apostolic commission becomes clearer in retrospect, just as Paul's statement in Acts 13:47 about "the end of the earth" will clarify Jesus' statement in Acts 1:8 (see Chapter 4).

Second, we note that "repentance/forgiveness of sins is his name" in Luke 24:47 becomes in Acts 26:23 "*light* both to our people and to the Gentiles." The language follows from Paul's expanded description earlier in the same speech: (quoting the risen Lord) "I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles [cf. 26:23]—to whom I

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[45] All except three or four are unambiguous references to Israel or the Jews (see, e.g., the uses in Acts 4:1, 2, 8, 10, 17, 21, 25, 27, and later the pointed use in 28:17, 26, and 27). The only apparent exceptions are, upon closer inspection, not exceptions at all: in 4:25, the believers' prayer cites the words of Psalm 2: "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples (λαοί) imagine vain things?" The parallelism between "Gentiles" and "the peoples" implies synonymous correspondence, yet only two verses later the prayer clarifies: "...both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and *the peoples* of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus..." (4:27), overriding the Psalm's literary parallelism with a *pesher* that distinguishes Pontius Pilate/Gentiles and Herod/the peoples of Israel as two distinct groups in coordinated *opposition* to Jesus. Another example—when, in 13:31, Paul says about the apostles that "they are now his witnesses to the people," he rather strongly implies that the apostolic vocation concerns the Jews, in contrast to his own Gentile mission, but this question be taken up in Chapter 4. In 18:10, the Lord comforts Paul: "for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are *my people*." While this may not refer to the λαόν as Jews, it is not explicitly claiming they are Gentiles either; rather, the focus is on people who are obedient to God, that is, Christians irrespective of ethnicity. The only real exception to the correspondence (1 out of 48) comes in 15:14, where James concludes: "Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them *a people* for his name." But even here the association of Gentiles with "a people" is defined by the subsequent interpretation of Amos 9:9-11, which James recites. A reading based on the LXX Am 9:12, the prophecy speaks of how all the Gentiles will seek after the Lord, a biblical oracle which resonates particularly well since the Jerusalem Council is convened to decide the precise status of Gentiles as members of the people of God. Thus James in a sense maintains the meaning of "people" as Israel (God's people) but, at this critical moment in the movement (and in history), can now include "a people from the nations." This is the pivotal point at which "people" comes to have a wider sense than merely "the Jews" or "Israel." Yet it remains the lone exception to the use of ὁ λαός in Acts—an exception, as it were, that proves the rule.

am sending you to open their eyes so that they may *turn from darkness to light* and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (26:17-18). Here the description and parallel with Luke 24:47 is even more apparent. To "turn from darkness to light" results in their receiving "forgiveness of sins" and inclusion among God's people. Paul's stated mission, therefore, is to reach out to both Jews and Gentiles so as to "open their eyes" (cf. 24:16, 31; Acts 28:26-27; Isa 6:9-10), a fitting task for a witness (Acts 26:16, 22) whose own eyes had once been spiritually and physically blinded (Acts 9:1-18; 22:4-15; 26:9-16).[46] Moreover, the same reservoir of Isaianic imagery Luke draws on for construing *Jesus* as messianic "Servant" (e.g., Luke 2:30-32 [Isa 52:10; 42:6; 49:6]; 3:22 [Isa 42:1; 49:3]; 9:35 [42:1; 49:3]) provides the scriptural backdrop here for conceptions of *Paul's* mission of light to all nations (cf. Isa 42:6; 49:6; 51:4). In other words, that which Luke understands to be part of the Servant-Messiah's mission ("light of nations") is here presented also as the commission of Paul (cf. Acts 13:47; see 4.6.1.1-2).

Third, concerning narrative contexts, on the one hand, the first statement (Luke 24:47) occurs in the context of Jesus' *commissioning* his apostles/Eleven for the task of witness. On the other hand, Paul delivers his account to Roman officials, Herod Agrippa (II) and Porcius Festus (26:22-23). The latter summary appears as part of Paul's longer

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[46] See James A. Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke," in *Luke and Scripture*: *The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke-Acts*, ed. Craig Evans and James A. Sanders (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 20; and Bart Koet, "Isaiah in Luke-Acts," in *Dreams and Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 52. The consonance of imagery between Paul's blindness and the stubbornness of his countrymen likely reflects an Isaianic motif (Isa 43-44). Moreover, description of a "mission of light" in Acts specifically recalls Isaianic language that reverberates throughout Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 2:32; Acts 1:8; 13:47; Isa 49:6; 42:6; 62:11). Cf. Thomas Moore, "The Lucan Great Commission and the Isaianic Servant," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154.613 (Jan - Mar 1997): 47-60; Dennis E. Johnson, "Jesus against the Idols: The Use of Isaianic Servant Songs in the Missiology of Acts," *WTJ* 52 (1990): 343-353.

speech defending his own ministry against charges brought by the Jews (25:15-20, 24-27; 26:1-3, 21-23). In this respect, the summary is overlaid with evaluations tailored to a skeptical Jewish audience (26:4-7, 10-12, 14, 22-23).[47] The effect of this shading in Acts 26 is to cast Paul's fulfillment of the "Lukan Commission" as one in keeping within Jewish tradition and expectation. The fulfillment of the claims about the Messiah (Luke 24:46; Acts 26:23a) is, according to Luke's Paul, a fulfillment of the "hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain" (Acts 26:6-7). Indeed, what Paul claims has happened through him is "nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place" (26:22; cf. Luke 24:44, 46a). A summary of Paul's story, as it were, doubles as a summary of the fulfillment of God's promises *to Israel,* recollecting Jesus' parting commission to his followers (1:7-8). Though this observation will be developed more fully in Chapter 4, it is significant to note in light of the commission the risen Lord Jesus often gives Paul to go to the *Gentiles* (9:15; 22:21; 26:16-23). Thus, even as the broader story moves toward Gentile lands and peoples (cf. 28:25-28), Paul's summary sets that trajectory within the context of a larger claim about God's faithfulness to Israel.[48]

Fourth, another point easily overlooked is that while Jesus delivers his commission to the apostles/Eleven, Paul's summary makes no mention of the apostles at all. Variations in respective contexts, again, can explain this discrepancy in part. Paul's speech (Acts 26:2-23) is, ultimately, a defense against *personal* charges brought against

[47] Such a tone works in context since Agrippa, though a Roman loyalist, was familiar with Jewish views (26:3) and Festus was at least sympathetic to Jews in general (25:9).
[48] In this respect, my reading brings the Lukan Paul close to Paul of the letters (Rom 9-11).

him by Jews. As a result, one would not expect Paul to elaborate on what *others* have done. While this explains one reason for Paul's omitting any mention of apostles or other co-workers, it does not touch on the effect the omission has on readers' sense of the parallel between Luke 24:46-48 and Acts 26:22-23. The exclusive focus on Paul's *vita* leaves readers with several impressions, among which are that Jesus' commission is fulfilled primarily by Paul (26:19-22) and less so by the apostles, that Paul is no mere successor to the apostles/Twelve but one commissioned by Jesus directly (cf. 26:12-20), and that Paul's vocation is in accord with God's purposes of old as attested in Israel's scriptures (26:22).

By ensuring these two statements of Jesus and Paul "face" one another, Luke lets readers know that Paul effectively fulfills what Jesus laid out *for his apostles* (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; cf. 13:47; see Chapters 3-4). The observation is corroborated by the fact that the apostles drop out of Acts after chapter 15 and Paul's summary in Acts 26 makes no reference to them. The limited scope of the apostles' outreach will raise questions both about the purpose of human participation in universal witness (Chapter 3) as well as the relationship between Israel's restoration and the salvation of the Gentiles (Chapter 4).

Fifth, and arguably the most important difference between Luke 24:46-47 and Acts 26:22-23, is the emphasis on Jesus' *agency*. In his defense speech, Paul identifies *himself* as Jesus' agent appointed "to serve and testify to the things" in which Paul has and will see Jesus (Acts 26:16; cf. Luke 24:48) and "to open [Jews'/Gentiles'] eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light … so that they may receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 26:18; cf. Luke 24:47), a commission to which Paul "was not disobedient" (Acts

26:19). But as soon as it might be assumed that this precludes any question of agency, Luke's Paul throws those conclusions into doubt. Paul reminds Agrippa of what the scriptures ("the prophets and Moses") have already spelled out—namely, "that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, *he* [ὁ χρίστος] would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles" (26:23). While the first two parts of the prophetic decree match Luke 24:46 (namely, that the Messiah will die and be raised), in the third part Paul claims it is the Messiah himself who carries out the universal proclamation of light.

> [O]ne finds one important difference [in Acts 26:23] in relation to Luke 24:47: in place of being attributed to the apostles speaking on behalf of Christ, the universal proclamation is attributed directly to Christ. This constitutes his own work…This is also that of Isa 42:6, to which Acts 26:23 refers: "I have placed you as a covenant of people (Jewish) and light of nations (pagans)." Verse 7 served in fact to define the mission of Paul in Acts 26:18: "in order to open the eyes of the blind..." But if the mission of the Servant concerns Paul (v. 18), we do not forget, however, that it belongs properly to Christ: not only is *he* the light of nations, but it is up to him *to announce* the light to all peoples. This announcement remains his task, even if he fulfills it by the ministry of Paul.[49]

Paul's words indicate an important tension found throughout Acts, one that Luke uses to indicate that the testimony of witnesses doubles as Jesus' own self-declaration. Paul can

[49] Dupont, "La portée christologique," 140-141 (author's translation, emphasis original). Cf. P. Boyd Mather, "Paul in Acts as 'Servant' and 'Witness,'" *Biblical Research*, vol. 30, 1985: 23-44. Cf. Dillon, "Easter Revelation," 247-248: "There is one rather startling novelty about the Agrippa peroration, and that is that the risen Christ himself is represented as making the proclamation to humanity following upon his passion and rising…The only other text in which this idea gets aired is Acts 3:26, the conclusion of an exegesis of Deuteronomy 18:15ff. in which Peter in the temple proclaims the risen Christ as fulfillment of Moses' promise of a prophet like himself…His (Jesus') voice, and no other's, is the voice of the Christian mission!" Cf. Anderson, *But God Raised Him,* 184-185: "The previews of universal salvation toward the beginning of the Gospel do not come to full expression or implementation until the close of the Gospel—after Jesus has been raised from the dead!—and throughout Acts. The words of Paul in Acts 26:23 indicate how crucial the resurrection of Jesus is for the universal mission, for it is Jesus himself, who has died and is 'the first from the resurrection of the dead,' who 'proclaims light to the people and to the Gentiles.' The *risen* Jesus, working through his witnesses by the power of the Spirit, is fulfilling Simeon's vision of universal salvation." (emphasis original)

say, on the one hand, that Jesus himself has commissioned him to be a light to the nations (Acts 13:47), and on the other, that Jesus himself is the one who proclaims light to all people (Acts 26:23; see Chapters 2-4). These observations recall the previous discussion about Luke 24:47 in which it was noted that the verb κηρυχθῆναι lacks a specified active subject. The prominent syntactical placement of "in his name" and the somewhat ambiguous "you are witnesses of *these* (things)" (24:48) corroborated the possibility that ὁ χριστός is the implied (or secondary) subject of the main verb.

An implicit claim of Acts 26:23, therefore, is that Jesus carries out a mission to the nations *after* his ascension. Luke 24:46-47 emphasizes the way death, resurrection, and universal proclamation, as discrete events, fulfill scriptural mandates; but Acts 26:22-23 underscores the interconnectedness of the claims by making ὁ χριστός the subject of all three: "by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light…" The implication is that his ability to proclaim to all follows from his death and resurrection, an oblique reference to Jesus' exaltation as "Lord" to God's right hand (Acts 2:33). In this way, "Messiah" is here tied to "Lord" through the act of universal proclamation.

The claim that Jesus himself leads the mission to all nations represents, as we will see, an innovation in Luke's Gospel, where mention of Gentile outreach by Jesus is at best restrained.[50] In spite of the earthly Jesus hardly ever evangelizing Gentiles, Paul's claim seems to mean both that the turn to the Gentiles does not originate with the apostles or himself and also that the mission to the Gentiles is conveyed through the shared

[50] See, e.g, Wilson, *Gentiles*, 29-58.

agency of Jesus and his followers.[51] On the one hand, in the context of Paul's speech, this claim serves as a fitting defense: Paul is merely the "servant" of his master's will, the primary force behind the events for which he is on trial (Acts 26:19-23), to which Paul has been an eyewitness. On the other hand, in light of the parallel between Luke 24 and Acts 26, Paul's speech before Agrippa may confirm what is true of every witness in Luke's narrative world: bearing witness to all peoples is also the means by which the Messiah declares himself Lord of all people (cf. Luke 2:29-32, 34).

1.1.5 Jesus' (and the Disciples') Mission(s) in the Third Gospel

The claim to this point that Luke 24:46-48 ties universal witness to Jesus' messianic identity—even suggesting that Jesus himself is responsible for universal proclamation, in accordance with Israel's scriptures—has one major flaw. If a mark of Jesus' messianic identity is the universality of his Lordship—that is, it includes non-Jews as well as Jews—then what of the fact that Luke appears largely reticent to speak of Jesus' messianic universality in the Third Gospel?[52] What follows attempts to answer this

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[51] Cf. Buckwalter, *Purpose and Character,* 284: "that Jesus' followers resemble him in their own ministries in Acts means that they too are now imaging his servant-like character in their witness of him (cf. Luke 22:26). For this reason Paul can rightly insist that his missionary work to the Jews and Gentiles was in reality a work of the resurrected Christ himself (Acts 26:23). Much of Luke's expressed christology seems to be in the service of this theme. And it is possible that he expected his readers to take such "an overall view" of his christological description of Jesus as well."

[52] To be clear, we are not interested neither in the historical question of the origins of the Gentile mission (see e.g., Martin Hengel, "Origins of the Christian Mission" in *Between Jesus and Paul* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 48-64) nor in the question of the historical Jesus' self-consciousness—i.e., what he *thought* about his own messianic identity and relations with the God of Israel irrespective of what the different accounts explicitly say he thought. Not only are we concerned more with how *Luke* narratively unfolds Jesus' messianic identity, but we also recognize that we cannot access Jesus' internal thoughts apart from Luke's (as well as Matthew's, Mark's, etc.) narrative representation of Jesus' inner life. Luke's account is inarguably historical in the sense that Luke wants readers to think that such events happened. But it is not "historical" in the way people sometimes use the term to mean "historiographical" with its generic implications. Few would now debate the claim that a διήγησις (Luke 1:1) is also necessarily an interpretation of the history it purports to tell. Cf. Joel Green, "Learning Theological Interpretation," 55-78, and Ricoeur, "Interpretative Narrative," 237-257. Therefore, we are attuned to the nature of Luke's

question through a brief redactional survey of Luke's Gospel concerning outreach to Gentiles, both by Jesus and by his disciples.[53]

Two methodological assumptions should be made clear at the start: (1) this study minimally assumes that Luke knew Mark and a tradition shared by ("Q") or identified with Matthew ("Double Tradition" [DT]) and generally adopted the Markan frame for his own work (cf. Luke 1:3).[54] And (2) we can speak about Jesus' mission and that of his disciples, with respect to Gentile inclusion, as effectively one mission.[55]

By investigating Luke's basic redactional patterns concerning the inclusion of non-Jews, it is evident how Luke's construal of Gentile outreach leading up to Luke 24:47 ("all nations") has shifted the framework for a Gentile mission from an apocalyptic setting (Mark) and a possibly more exclusivist position (Matthew) to one in which the inclusion of Gentiles scripturally attests Jesus' universal Lordship. The resulting profile

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narrative, theological construal—that is, primarily, *how* Luke unfolds narratively Jesus' messianic identity and mission.

[53] Methodologically, the question of the "historical" Gentile mission lies beyond our interests, even if others have found it to be the subject of lively and fruitful debate. The question of which historical forces influenced Luke's hypothetical "community" behind the text tends, methodologically, to sacrifice the actual narrative before us for the sake of a reconstructed narrative heuristically taken to be more "real" or "original." See for instance Stephen Wilson's and Christopher Tuckett's approach. But what we have is Luke and Acts; therefore, our focus will be on Luke's narrative representation and characterization of Jesus' and the disciples' approach to universal proclamation.

[54] This is not to claim that Luke necessarily knew Matthew, but the more restrained notion that Luke new Mark and another tradition which stands behind Matthew and Luke. In this case, if Luke had actively omitted statements about restricting mission to Israel, it is possible he did so by rejecting what he found in "Q" and/or in Matthew (functionally the same in this scenario). That I am skeptical of both a hypothetical document called "Q" *and* the alternative view that Luke knew Matthew does not greatly affect the redactional study in this section, even if a strong position on either one of these views may add weight to my thesis in different places.

[55] In obvious ways, of course, their callings differ. The disciples are not killed and raised on the third day. On the subject of the Gentile mission, however, Jesus and his disciples share a similar outlook. The disciples' mission belongs within a broader literary parallel with Jesus by which Luke associates the disciples with the same places, words, descriptions, and ill-treatment that he associates with Jesus (cf. Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-17). Cf. Robert O'Toole, "Parallels between Jesus and His Disciples in Luke-Acts: A Further Study," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 27.2 (1983): 195–212. The connection is so strong that in Acts, with Jesus' narrative absence, we can immediately recognize the possibility that the witnessing presence of Jesus' followers figures forth Jesus' own presence (see Chapter 2).

of Luke's treatment of Gentile inclusion in the mission of Jesus and his disciples is one which not only signals the role of their inclusion for unfolding Jesus' messianic identity but also one that prophetically anticipates the future development of his identity (after the resurrection; Luke 24:47). The survey begins by focusing on (1) Luke's general redactional tendencies with respect to Gentile inclusion; (2) what Luke adds into his source material (Mark and DT/"Q," where applicable); and (3) how Luke 24:47 represents an alteration of Mark 13:10's apocalyptic tone. To anticipate, Luke's special additions in Luke 2:10, 30-32; 3:6; and 4:18 create expectations left unfulfilled until 24:46-48. As an alteration of Mark 13:10, Luke 24:47 exhibits Luke's shift from an apocalyptic view of Gentile mission to one tied to the revelation of Jesus' messianic identity in history. In this way, Luke prepares readers of Acts as both a story of universal witness (to Gentiles and Jews) and also a story in which universal witness develops the narrative identity of the Messiah Jesus as Lord *of all*.

1.1.5.1 Luke's General Redactional Patterns Respecting Gentile Inclusion

There is generally a consensus[56] that Luke unfolds his Gospel in such a way as to suggest that Jesus' and his disciples' mission has consequences beyond the people and land of Israel. Yet in many ways Luke retains the basic outlook found in his Markan source.[57] One example of Gentile inclusion comes from DT material in which Jesus heals a Gentile centurion's highly valued servant (Matt 8:5-13 // Luke 7:2-9). Whereas Matthew attaches to the story an apocalyptic conclusion (8:11-12: "many will come from

[56] For example, Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 128-131; Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations,* 256-269; Nissen, *New Testament,* 49-56.
[57] Wilson, *Gentiles,* 31-33.

east and west…while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness"; cf. Luke 13:28-29), Luke situates the same story by focusing on the centurion's relationship to the Jewish people. Luke's distinctive shaping of the story is evident in 7:3-5 (and absent from Matthew's version): "When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, 'He is worthy of having you do this for him, for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us.'" Luke's version emphasizes the Jewish connections between this centurion and the synagogue, a connection which readers will later recognize in the early stages of the Cornelius incident (Acts 10). Not only does Luke's version confirm his interest in centurions generally (Luke 23:47; Acts 10; 21:32; 22:25-26; 23:17-23; 24:23; 27:1, 6-11, 31, 43), but it also exhibits his penchant for characterizing Gentiles to look like Jews (cf. Acts 10:1-2, 22). On its own, the story is no surrogate for a full-blown Gentile mission, but emphasizing the proximate Jewishness of the centurion may portend the universal mission[58] to Gentiles and the place of the special class of "God-fearers" in that expansion.[59]

One place where Luke might be expected to carry over an episode is the story of the healing of the Syrophoenician/Canaanite woman's daughter (Mark 7:24-30 // Matt 15:21-28). The omission is important since, in Matthew's version at least one of the most ethnocentric of Jesus' statements in any Gospel is voiced: "I was sent only to the lost

[58] Wilson, *ibid.,* 31-32: "Luke saw [the centurion story] as prophetic of the reception of the Gentiles in Acts." Another DT passage, with less correspondence between versions and also less conclusive comparison, is Luke 14:16-24 // Matt 22:1-10. Cf. Wilson, 34; Anderson, *But God Raised Him,* 184.
[59] For study of God-fearers in Luke-Acts, see Kirsopp Lake, "Proselytes and God-Fearers," in *The Beginnings of Christianity. Part I: The Acts of the Apostles. Volume 5: Additional Notes to the Commentary,* ed. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury (London: Macmillan, 1933), 74-96.

sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). In few places does Jesus state so unambiguously the scope of his mission. Moreover, in the dialogue that follows, the woman begs Jesus' help, to which Jesus responds: "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (15:26). Matthew's version seems to emphasize the impropriety of the woman's request, omitting the first part of Mark's version of the same statement—"Let the children be fed first" (Mark 7:27). Regardless, the equation of dog = Gentile/Greek (Ἑλληνίς, Mark 7:26) seems inescapable in both cases. The story makes the exclusiveness of Jesus' mission the axis on which the surprise about the girl's healing is plotted.[60] That Luke lacks this story may be evidence that the strong association of "dogs" with "Gentiles" proved too formidable for Luke to retain it, whether he found it in Mark or "Q"/Matthew.[61] Luke lacks comparable stories in general and, as will be seen, tends to include stronger scriptural allusions to God's plan of Gentile inclusion from the beginning.

The severity of Jesus' statement in Matthew 15:24 reminds us of another exclusivist statement made by Jesus about his disciples' mission without parallel in the other Gospels: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans,

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[60] We also remember, however, that for his part, Mark prefaces this story by one of his own strongest (and most unique) statements about *inclusion*. After teaching the crowds about defilement consisting in what comes out of rather than into a person (7:14-15), he essentially expounds on that teaching for his disciples (vv. 17-23). In the course of that explanation, however, Mark adds a parenthetical statement of supreme salvation-historical consequence: "thus he made all foods clean" (καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα, v.19). To such a wide-ranging pronouncement there are few comparisons in the Gospels (cf. Luke 11:41). The closest parallel occurs in the midst of the Cornelius incident (Acts 10:15; 11:9), which is a pivotal moment for the expansion of universal mission. Curiously, therefore, Mark's story may hint at an underlying universalism in the story, given its narrative frame, whereas Matthew has taken the same story and added an exclusivist tone to Jesus' self-understanding (15:24).

[61] Wilson, *Gentiles,* 51, calls such statements "uncongenial to Luke's own understanding of Jesus' attitude to the Gentiles." At the same time, the story occurs within a larger block of material which Luke famously, and inexplicably, lacks (Mark 6:45-8:26: "Great Omission"). The answer may be as likely to be textual as it is redactional, in other words.

but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:5-6). While such words cannot be taken as Matthew's entire view of the matter (cf. 28:19), they are noteworthy for how they parallel Jesus' later stated self-understanding (15:24). That neither Mark nor Luke contain such a statement may confirm our findings thus far, namely that both remain open to Gentile inclusion before the resurrection in a way that, at least formally, Matthew's Jesus does not. More accurately, the *ad hoc* inclusion of Gentiles before the resurrection in Matthew's Gospel stands as an exception that proves the exclusivist rule (10:5-6; 15:24) while in Mark and especially Luke, such inclusion may point proleptically to the full and formal inclusion to come (cf. Mark 7:19; Acts 10-11).[62]

The previous discussion, as brief as it necessarily was, shows that Luke basically absorbs much of Mark without dramatically reshaping the inherited vision of Gentile inclusion. Differences with Matthew may be most evident, but even here the question of underlying sources may complicate the conclusions. Minimally it can be noted that Luke is careful to include no such story or statement as Matt 15:24 (or 10:5-6). So far we can

[62] Some might point to Luke's omission of certain Markan material as an indication of the opposite tendency—namely, that Luke quiets Markan universalism. For instance, in Mark 10:45 the phrase "as a ransom for many" is, for whatever reason, omitted by Luke. The simplistic notion that Luke resisted a *theologia crucis* and therefore excluded it is hardly likely; it may just as likely be a case of stylistic considerations. Conclusions about Luke's view of the Gentile mission cannot be drawn on the basis of such a change. Similarly, the omission of the phrase "all nations" (Mark 11:17) in Luke 19:46 (// Matt 21:13) appears to support an anti-universalistic redaction given Luke's propensity for the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Luke 12:30; 21:24; 24:47; Acts 14:16; 15:17; cf. Acts 10:35; 17:26) and its salvation-historical ramifications). Even Matthew has several unique uses later in his story (Matt 24:9, 14 [cf. Mk 13:10 // Luke 24:47]; 25:32; 28:19). In fact, arguably, Mark 11:17 represents the lone example from Mark of the phrase that neither Matthew nor Luke picks up, especially surprising in light of the fact that LXX Isa 56:7 has the phrase as well. In other words, the omission appears deliberate. While some might point to the Temple's destruction for Luke's (and Matthew's) omission of Mark's prophetic "all nations" (Wilson, *Gentiles,* 50), the convenient explanation suffers from the fact that Luke's insists on the continued narrative function of the Temple throughout Luke and Acts (cf. especially Luke 24:5; Acts 21:20-29). There may be no good explanation as to why Luke dropped Mark's phrase, but the fact that Matthew lacks it as well points to an overlapping DT source against Mark and thus recourse to a synoptic solution beyond the scope of the present study.

say little more than that Jesus and his disciples are portrayed as focused primarily on reaching the people of Israel even if occasional acceptance of outsiders to Israel's covenant dots the narrative landscape.[63] As we turn to specifically unique Lukan material having to do with Gentiles, the picture becomes clearer in favor of Luke's proleptic universalism.

1.1.5.2 Specific Effect of What Luke Adds (Luke 2:10, 30-32; 3:6; 4:18)

Because Luke's construal of Jesus' identity ("christology") is rooted in a narrative—from the beginning of Luke's Gospel to the end of Acts—our task is to pay attention to the whole arc of the narrative concerning Gentile inclusion. The approach naturally precludes attempts to isolate different statements, especially later ones, as if they can only be explained by recourse to an independent source or sloppy redaction.[64] Thus, Luke's unparalleled material about Gentile inclusion (Luke 2:10; 2:30-32; 3:1, 6, 23; 4:16-27) not only hints at a future universal mission but, because of the narrative location of these hints, creates expectations of fulfillment for later in Luke (and Acts).

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[63] The thesis of Thomas Lane, *Luke and the Gentile Mission: Gospel Anticipates Acts* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1996) that the poor, widows, children—the marginalized in general—are "replaced" in Acts by Gentiles only has support at the level of generalities. In the end, it is much too simplistic an account of the narrative unity of Luke-Acts.

[64] If, for example, the evidence for distinguishing Luke's "adoptionist christology" on the basis of Acts 2:36 ("He made him Lord and Christ") is the fact that Luke gives no comparable statement earlier in Luke's Gospel, then we have already ruled out a narrative reading. A narrative reading, on the contrary, would approach the apparent outlier in Acts 2:36 on the basis of established statements earlier in Luke which provide the basis on which later statements should be understood. That Luke establishes Jesus' Lordship from the beginning, as Elizabeth (Luke 1:43) and the angelic host (Luke 2:11) recognize and the language surrounding John's vocation confirms (Luke 1:16-17, 76; 3:4-6; cf. Isa 40:3-5), configures the textual grammar in such a way that later ambiguous instances of κύριος can be understood without requiring an idiosyncratic explanation. In other words, in this case, a christological title's "meaning" does not exist apart from the larger narrative context and grammar which makes the term mean what it means. See Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, esp. 9-29, 189-196; and idem, "Acts 2.36," 37-56.

When readers arrive at Luke 24:46-48, the old clues are refreshed and the expectations reiterated for readers of the second volume.

The claims above are best illustrated by a brief discussion of Lukan additions. One of the earliest statements of the latent universalism associated with Luke's outlook can be found on the lips of an angel in Luke 2:10-11: "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people (παντὶ τῷ λαῷ): to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." The good news is "for all people" in spite of the fact that the source of that joy is the birth of the χριστὸς (κύριος)—the Jewish Messiah—the location of whose birth further signals the claim's particularity (ἐν πόλει Δαυίδ). The two-toned statement offers an early sense of Luke-Acts' complex negotiation of the particular and the universal.[65] Certainly Stephen Wilson[66] is correct to point out that, Acts 15:14 and possibly 18:10 aside, every use of the singular λαός in Luke-Acts refers to Israel or the Jewish people. In fact, this is clearly the meaning in three instances before Luke 2:10 (1:17, 68, 77). But the *narrative* context of 2:10—an angelic announcement about a child of cosmic significance whose name is σωτὴρ … χριστὸς κύριος (2:11)—

[65] See, e.g., Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission (*Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 27-54, who argues the pattern found in Luke-Acts is reflected across the Jewish and Christian Bible.
[66] *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 34-35. However, it should be noted that this logic is not airtight given divergences in the use of the near-antonym ἔθνος in Luke-Acts. Just as λαός in the singular almost always refers to Israel, ἔθνη in the plural almost always refers to Gentiles. Curiously, ἔθνος in the singular almost always refers to Israel/Jews in Luke-Acts. A slightly different pattern holds for λαός in the plural (or functional plural; cf. παντὶ τῷ λαῷ). For instance, παντὸς ἔθνους in Acts 2:5, though singular, refers not to Israel per se but to the nations from which Jews in Jerusalem had previously come; or in 10:35 Peter concludes that God accepts "from every nation (ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει) anyone who fears him"; or Acts 17:26 in which Paul explains that God made every nation (πᾶν ἔθνος) from one ancestor. In other words, the use of the quantifier πᾶς/πᾶν appears to stretch the meaning by blurring its number, so that it may functionally behave like a plural. In that case 2:10's παντὶ τῷ λαῷ might function more like the plural use in 2:31, πάντων τῶν λαῶν, which appears to be explicated in v. 32 as both Gentiles and the people of Israel (cf. Isa 42:6; 49:6).

suggests a more expansive meaning, which is confirmed by the wider context of the passage (see 1.2 below).

One of the next uses of the same term λαός, this time in the plural, appears on the lips of a pious Jewish seer, Simeon, in Luke 2:30-32: "my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples (πάντων τῶν λαῶν), a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." The use of the plural λαοί is much rarer and does not seem to abide by the same strict patterns we found with the use of the singular λαός (or ἔθνος; Acts 4:25, 27; LXX Ps 2). In the case of Luke 2:31-32, readers benefit from a strong allusion to Isaiah 49:6 (cf. 42:6; Acts 1:8; 13:47).[67] Simeon's prophecy is worded in such a way that "light for the revelation of Gentiles (ἐθνῶν)" and "for the glory of your people (λαοῦ) Israel" combine to define the previous phrase πάντων τῶν λαῶν (v. 31). "All peoples," in other words includes Gentiles and Jews, perhaps filling out the meaning even of 2:10's "all the people" (παντὶ τῷ λαῷ). The word order is intriguing because in all the OT allusions, the order is reversed: "(covenant for) the people, a light for the nations" (Isa 49:6; 42:6), reflecting the basic salvation-historical assumptions of Israel's scriptures—Israel first and the nations, if they are included at all, are a distant second.

However, the emphasis in Simeon's words, if there is one, falls on Gentiles rather than Israel, somewhat surprising given the density of Israel-centric language and motifs in Luke 1-2, not to mention the basic absence of the Gentile theme in most of Luke's

[67] Wilson, *Gentiles,* 38: "Luke has placed in Simeon's mouth a prophecy, the fulfillment of which he describes in his second volume. It is significant that Luke picks up this prophecy only at the end of the Gospel and in Acts; he does not anachronistically place its fulfilment in Jesus' earthly ministry." Cf. Anderson, *But God Raised Him,* 184.

Gospel. One way of explaining the seeming oddity is that Luke uses Simeon's words prophetically with respect to the rest of the story, reinforced by the temple setting in which they are issued (cf. Luke 1:67-79). In other words, "light for the revelation of the Gentiles" establishes expectations to be met at some point in the story, yet which are still awaiting fulfillment when Jesus speaks his final words in the Gospel (24:44-49).[68]

The addition of Gentile-friendly material continues in Luke 3:1-6 and its Isa 40 citation. Neither Matthew nor Luke carries over the first part of Mark's citation of Isaiah (which is really of Malachi 3:1),[69] but both adopt the words of Isa 40:3. At this point, however, Luke extends Isaiah's words: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:5-6). At a glance, there's much in Isaiah's extended quotation that aligns with Lukan motifs.[70] For our purposes, not only does the extended citation shift the focus from the Baptist's work ("prepare the way") to its wider imagery ("every valley shall be filled…"), but the citation ends with a universal claim not found in Mark or Matthew: "πᾶσα σὰρξ will see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6; Isa 40:5). The phrasing recalls Simeon's prophetic words about "all the peoples" (2:31)—i.e. both Gentiles and Jews—who together

[68] Rowe, *One True Life,* 141: "Insofar as characters in a story can speak for their authors, Simeon says with economy what Luke exhibits narratively over nearly a third of the New Testament." Cf. also the intriguing intertextual proposal of Stephen Fowl, "Simeon in Acts 15:14: Simon Peter and Echoes of Simeons Past," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts,* ed. Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Snyder (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 185-198.
[69] Actually, Matthew does but moves it to 11:10 and removes the ascription to Isaiah.
[70] Cf. ὁδός (Luke 1:76, 79; 3:4; 7:27; 10:4; 14:23; 20:21; 24:32, 35; Acts 2:28; 9:2; 13:10; 16:17; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22), and σωτήριον/σωτηρία/σωτήρ (Luke 1:47, 69, 71, 77; 2:30; 19:9; Acts 4:12; 5:31; 7:25; 13:23, 26, 47; 16:17; 27:34; 28:28).

represent Isaiah's "all flesh" (πᾶσα σὰρξ).[71] Even the more ambiguous παντὶ τῷ λαῷ from 2:10, because of the connection between σωτήρ (2:11) and σωτήριον (3:6), appears in hindsight likelier now to include Gentiles in its scope. Moreover, outside of Isa 40:5, only Luke 3:6 and Acts 28:28 contain the exact phrase τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. It is increasingly clear that these early statements (Luke 2:10-11, 30-32; 3:5-6) are prophetic of Jesus' universal mission and significance,[72] setting up expectations for a *narrative* elaboration in Acts.[73]

Though John's preaching might be categorized differently from that of Jesus or the Twelve, it is important to note that John already is reaching out to people beyond ethnic Israel before Jesus arrives on the scene. While some of the Lukan John's statements can be found in Mark and Matthew, much of Luke 3:7-14 is unique. In particular, John's warning to members of Israel is distinctly Lukan: "Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (3:8). According to John, ethnic descent is no guarantee of salvation (3:9). The scene continues with three presumably different

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[71] The phrase πᾶσα σὰρξ, moreover, anticipates Joel's language with which Luke helps readers interpret the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh (ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα)" (Acts 2:17; LXX Joel 3:1). Peter reiterates the universality of the Spirit's arrival throughout his Pentecost speech: "Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21; cf. 2:39). Acts leaves no doubt as to the meaning of the earlier glimpses of universal salvation and "all flesh" in Luke's Gospel.

[72] Wilson, *Gentiles,* 28-29.

[73] The emphasis on "all flesh" is reinforced, in different terms, by the genealogy which Luke, unlike Matthew (cf. Matt 1:1-2, 16-17), traces all the way back to "Adam, son of God" (3:38). Luke's genealogy, moreover, emphasizes the universalist motif by moving from the present (Jesus) to the past (Adam), so that the final impression of the genealogy is comprehensive representation, all humankind. The one named "Son of God" in the narrative's present (cf. Luke 1:35; 3:22; 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 22:70; Acts 9:20; 20:28) can trace his ancestry back to the "son of God" from whom all people are descended. In Jesus the Messiah, "all flesh" is included and addressed. While some may construe the universalism of the genealogy as a secondary motif, the "Son of Adam"/"Son of God" conceptual pair is one Luke later uses to anchor Paul's preaching to Gentiles (Acts 17:26, 31).

groups—"the crowds," "tax collectors," and "soldiers"—posing to John the same question: "what should we do?" (3:10, 12, 14). John's various replies take nothing away from the fact that there were likely non-Jews among them (e.g., soldiers), especially in light of the warning about Abraham's offspring. The broader point is that John requires of even God's people to repent and be baptized, in a sense to *return* to Israel. The striking contrast anticipates the invitation to and rejection by Jews whom Paul encounters later in Acts. More immediately, it anticipates Jesus' first synagogue speech and its hint of universal outreach.

Luke 4:16-30 is perhaps the most suggestive scene concerning universal mission in Luke's Gospel, underscored by its account of Jesus' self-understanding and the unique emphasis Luke gives it. The scene, his first major public appearance, takes place at his hometown synagogue. Luke expands significantly on Mark's account (cf. Mark 6:1-6 // Matt 13:54-58). After reading the Isaiah scroll, Jesus interprets the "Servant" figure of Isaiah 61:1-2 (cf. Isa 58:7) with respect to himself by claiming that this scripture "has been fulfilled in your hearing" (4:21). Jesus' claim that the "[t]he Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed [ἔχρισέν] me" (4:18a), because it is drawn directly from Israel's scriptures, originates from an outlook specific to Israel and Israel's messianic (χρίστος) expectations. Initially, "to bring good news to the poor… to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (4:18b-19) has no explicit ethnic orientation, even if it derives from a more expansive section of "3rd Isaiah" (chs. 56-66). Yet the wider narrative context of his words—belonging to Jesus' first synagogue address, following the reading of the Isaiah scroll—indicates that God's people, Israel, are in view. In fact, it

is precisely this fact that explains the negative reaction elicited by Jesus' later references to Elijah and Elisha (vv. 25-28). We remember that initially the synagogue members "[a]ll spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth" (4:21b), apparently referring to the scripture reading and claim to fulfillment (4:21a). It is not immediately clear what prompts Jesus to shift the message from his own scriptural vocation to the synagogue's (mis)perceptions of that vocation, though it may be implied in the attendees' rhetorical question: "Is this not Joseph's son?" (4:22). On one view, Jesus takes that question as a form of skepticism about Jesus' ability to perform miracles in his hometown. Either way, the shift allows Jesus to illustrate a larger point about reversal by appealing to stories of prophets whose work specifically took them outside Israel and to Gentiles (4:25-27).[74] The combined motif of God's favor toward Gentiles and violent reaction anticipates the characteristic experience of Paul in Acts (ch. 21:28-30; 22:21-22; 26:19-21; see 4.7.2).

While this early glimpse of Jesus' vocation beyond the bounds of Israel may, indirectly, anticipate the Gentile mission in Acts, the salvation-historical significance of Luke 4:25-27 is easy to overstate. Jesus does not offer *the illustrations* about Elijah/Elisha as programmatic for his own (or his disciples') ministry, only as an explanation of the way God has deigned to work among outsiders in Israel's history, especially in light of the rejection which Israel's prophets experienced (1 Kings 17-18; 2 Kings 5) and which Jesus now seemingly faces. Because the tone of Jesus' message—

[74] Some (e.g., Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 535) suspect that because Luke's narrative about Jesus' ministry in Capernaum comes later (4:31-44), Luke must have shifted the mention of signs performed in Capernaum earlier for effect. Only the assumption that 4:31-44 exhausts the account of Jesus' known work in Capernaum requires such a conclusion, however.

confirmed by the people's reaction—emphasizes a critical view of his own people's expectations rather than a programmatic statement, we cannot take his words about Elijah/Elisha as a basis for claiming that Jesus targeted non-Jews with his outreach.

The actual citation of Isaiah 61:1-2 is more obviously programmatic for his vocation,[75] in part because an allusion to it appears three chapters later. John sends disciples to confirm that he is the Messiah (7:18-20), prompted no doubt by the many miracles Jesus was reported to have performed (v. 21). Jesus' answer indirectly points back to his own words from the Nazareth address: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them" (7:22). In other words, the signs are self-interpreting; they confirm that Jesus is indeed the one anointed by God, the Servant of the Lord (Isa 42:6-7; 49:3-11; 61:1-2; cf. Isa 35:5-6).[76]

The so-called "travel narrative" (9:51-18:14), just as aptly termed a teaching narrative, offers little evidence one way or another about the universalism often ascribed

[75] His ministry will be characterized by bringing good news (εὐαγγελίζω: cf. Luke 1:19; 2:10; 4:43; 7:22; 8:1; 16:16; Acts 10:36) to the poor (Luke 6:20; 7:22; 14:13, 21; 16:20, 22; 18:22; 19:8; 21:3), because he has been sent (ἀποστέλλω: Luke 4:43; 9:48; 10:16; 11:49; 13:34; Acts 3:20, 26; 10:36; 28:28) to proclaim (κηρύσσω: Luke 4:19, 44; 8:1; 24:47; Acts 10:37) release (Luke 1:77; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18), to restore sight to the blind (Luke 7:21-22; 14:13, 21; 18:35), to release the oppressed (ἀποστεῖλαι τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφέσει) and announce the Lord's Jubilee (cf. δεκτός: Luke 4:24; Acts 10:35; cf. Lev 25:8-55; Jer 34:8-22).

[76] To further situate Jesus' self-understanding in Luke's Gospel, we notice that not long after the Nazareth synagogue scene Jesus speaks plainly about his itinerancy: "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose" (4:43). That seemingly broad description is immediately followed by a clarification: "So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea" (4:44). In other words, the proclamation for which Jesus is commissioned concerns, at least primarily if not exclusively, the Jews inhabiting Judean synagogues. The rejection at Nazareth does not prefigure an irreparable break with ministry in the synagogues, let alone with Jews elsewhere, as is sometimes ascribed to the early Christian way seen in light of Paul's repeated "turns" to the Gentiles (Acts 13:47; 18:6; 28:28).

to Luke,[77] with the possible exception of a marked emphasis on Samaritans. Because Jesus' commission to the apostles in Acts specifically identifies "Samaria" in the course of its centrifugal trajectory, hints of a Samaritan mission may be apparent (Acts 1:8; 8:1-39; 9:31; 15:3; cf. Acts 26:20). Yet, as Wilson notes, we cannot so quickly overlook the Samaritans' brusque rejection of Jesus in Luke 9:52-53.[78] After all, the disciples' response to that rejection—"Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (9:54)—is based on the apparent belief that such a treatment would be warranted. In that case, Jesus' clemency toward the Samaritans ("he turned and rebuked [his disciples]," v. 55) is intended to show his mercy toward an otherwise despised group.[79]

While the focus is clearly on Jesus throughout Luke's Gospel, the ministry of disciples also plays a narrative role, perhaps even as kind of extension or expression of Jesus' own ministry. The original mission of the Twelve in Luke is to be with Jesus and obey his instructions (5:1-11). Their obedience will entail proclamation and the ministry of healing through miraculous signs (9:1-2, 6; 10:9), reflecting Jesus' own mission in word and deed. At no point, however, do such commissions explicitly refer to those outside of Israel. That the disciples' work occurs in a Jewish context is a given at an almost axiomatic level. To name it would introduce redundancy. As Ernest Best notes, when Jesus called his disciples in Luke 5:10 he did not have to say "I will make you fish

[77] Wilson, *Gentiles*, 41-45.
[78] Wilson, *ibid.*, 44.
[79] Such a perspective is, in fact, reinforced by the several distinctly Lukan episodes in which Samaritans figure prominently (10:30-37 and 17:11-19). That Jesus calls the Samaritan in 17:18 an ἀλλογενής may emphasize the ethnic boundary in a way that Peter later does at the Gentile Cornelius' doorstep (ἀλλόφυλος, Acts 10:28).

for *Israelite* people."[80] In fact, the Cornelius incident (Acts 10-11:18) reinforces this claim by showing Peter's surprise at and subsequent resistance to full and equal inclusion of Gentiles as Gentiles in the people of God. Peter, as representative of the apostles, took the exclusive scope of their mission to Israel (and proselytes included by circumcision) as a given.

That being said, could the commission of the disciples in Luke 9:1-6 (cf. Mark 6:7-13 // Matt 10:1-20) and especially the second and uniquely Lukan sending of the 70/2 in 10:1-11 prefigure the Gentile mission? Answers to this question often appeal to other biblical allusions to the number 70 or 72 like Gen 10 (catalogue of nations) or Num 11:13-17 (dispersing of the spirit of prophecy upon the seventy elders). Even if the allusion in Luke 10 is veiled, the expansive nature of the commission—70/2 rather than twelve—may itself indicate an expansive scope to the mission of Jesus' disciples.[81] In context, however, there is little about the specific instructions given by Jesus in the commission that indicates concern for non-Jews. Perhaps more importantly, and in keeping with much of our findings so far, there is nothing to *preclude* the possibility of extending Jesus' commission beyond Israel eventually.

Toward the end of Luke's Gospel, the Jewish focus of Jesus' work is evident indirectly in the contest for authority between him and the religious rulers on matters of

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[80] "The Revelation to Evangelize the Gentiles," *Journal of Theological Studies* 35.1 (April 1984): 1. In addition to statements early on in the Third Gospel (Luke 1:54-55, 71-74; 2:31-32), Luke's whole Gospel frame, with its geographical starting point in Jerusalem, is oriented by a concern for Israel's restoration (Luke 1:16, 32-33, 68; 2:25, 30-32; 22:30; Acts 1:6; 3:21; 21:20-27; 22:3-5; 23:5; 24:14-21; 25:8-11; 26:4-9). See Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 1996), 109-111.

[81] Wilson, *Gentiles,* 47: "Luke may well have had one eye on the later mission of the Church, but in the immediate context the mission of the Seventy is clearly to Israel."

teaching, healing, Sabbath violation, paying taxes, and so on (cf. Luke 20:1-40). The final destination of Luke's travel section is Jerusalem itself, and specifically the Temple, where we find Jesus "at work" until the point of his arrest (cf. Luke 21:38; cf. Paul in Acts 21:27-33). Even Jesus' trial and interrogation have to do with Jesus' identity as "king of the Jews" (23:3, 37-38; cf. 23:42) and "God's Messiah" (23:35, 39). That these instances account for a majority of references to Ἰουδαῖοι in Luke's Gospel underscores that dramatic irony is one of Luke's favorite literary devices.[82] The mocking placard—"this is the king of the Jews"—expresses the contempt of Jewish leaders even as it ironically confirms his identity in relation to them (cf. 23:42). But the Jewish contempt for Jesus should not be taken as evidence for a countervailing mission to Gentiles; in fact, as Luke tells it, rejection by one's own people is the mark of a true prophet of Israel (cf. Luke 4:24; 6:23; 11:47, 49, 50; 13:28, 34; Acts 3:25; 7:52).

Having already examined Luke 24, we are ready to summarize. Jesus' vocation in the Third Gospel is almost exclusively directed toward Israel, indicated by the fact that such a notion hardly needs stated explicitly. Like the other Gospels, it is a given that Israel remains a central focus of John's ministry as well as that of Jesus. Moreover, the term χρίστος is incontrovertibly a term of Jewish messianism, drawn from the Greek version of Israel's scriptures (cf. Mark 1:1; Matt 1:1, 16, 17, 18; 2:4; Luke 2:11, 26). Luke's Gospel takes it for granted that the scriptures of Israel expect the coming of a Messiah (cf. Luke 3:15; 9:20; 20:41; 24:26, 46), and that the Messiah is to be identified

[82] Cf. Jerry Lynn Ray, *Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts: The Paradoxical Interaction of Prophetic Fulfillment and Jewish Rejection* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1996); and William Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

with Jesus (Luke 2:11, 26; 4:41; etc.). Jesus' vocation exists primarily "for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:32), a glory which will eventually redound to the benefit of non-Jews as well. The disciples' vocation—at least until Luke 24:47—seems to reflect that of Jesus himself. Though variously sent out by Jesus in mission (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-11), their outreach at best symbolizes a universalism to come but little more.

1.1.5.3 Alteration of Mark 13:10 in Luke 24:47

Having established a basic profile of Luke's redaction of Mark (and DT material) with respect to Gentile inclusion, we turn specifically to Luke 24:47. The verse deserves special attention given the apparent novelty of its claim, that proclamation to all nations is the Messiah's scriptural mission now to be reflected in the witness of his apostles. As we will see, Luke's divergence from Mark on the question of a universal mission is most apparent in how he translates Mark 13:10 into his own vision of Jesus' mission and identity.

Though many of the syntactical challenges of Luke 24:46-48 can be credited to Luke's choice of words, the statement itself exhibits the strong influence of Mark's apocalyptic discourse, specifically verse 13:10. It is widely known that Luke in general "updates" the apocalyptic tone of Mark by pushing Jesus' return from the imminent future to a more distant horizon.[83] In this sense, we should expect Luke to alter Mark

[83] On the question of Luke's eschatology, see of course the debate that swirls around Hans Conzelmann's *The Theology of St. Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). We can summarize, more simply, the difference between Luke and Mark (and Paul) by referencing Käsemann's famous quip: "You do not write the history of the Church, if you are expecting the end of the world to come any day." That being said, Luke retains a certain apocalypticism behind his notion of universal witness (cf. Acts 1:11, 3:21, etc.). The emphasis, however, of Luke's narrative falls on the universal Lordship of Christ established by witness to all nations rather than on the completion of witness as a step toward the *eschaton*. On the relation of the different construals of the Gentile mission in Mark and Luke, cf. also Wilson, *Gentiles*, 29-31, who asserts that Mark stands at one remove from the historical Jesus' own view and that Luke, by modifying Mark's

more than Matthew (24:14) does, which turns out to be the case. Even the existence of Acts (and nonexistence of a second volume of Matthew or Mark) points to a striking difference in eschatological outlooks which a synoptic treatment of Mark 13:10 and Luke 24:47 illustrates. Through a brief redactional study of Luke's use of Mark 13:10 (see Table 2 below) it is evident that Luke on the whole translates the apocalyptic associations of Mark's understanding of universal proclamation into a motif of promise and fulfillment.[84]

Table 2: A Synopsis of Mark 13:9-11 with Luke 12:11-12; 24:46-48; 21:12-13

Mark 13:9-11	**Luke 12:11, 24:46-48, 12:12**	**Luke 21:12-13**
13[9] Βλέπετε δὲ ὑμεῖς ἑαυτούς· παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγὰς δαρήσεσθε καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνων καὶ βασιλέων σταθήσεσθε ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς.	12[11] Ὅταν δὲ εἰσφέρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας, μὴ μεριμνήσητε πῶς ἢ τί ἀπολογήσησθε ἢ τί εἴπητε·	21[12] Πρὸ δὲ τούτων πάντων ἐπιβαλοῦσιν ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν καὶ διώξουσιν, παραδιδόντες εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ φυλακάς, ἀπαγομένους ἐπὶ βασιλεῖς καὶ ἡγεμόνας ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου·
[10] καὶ **εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη** πρῶτον δεῖ **κηρυχθῆναι** τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.	24[46] καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὕτως γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, [47] καὶ **κηρυχθῆναι** ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν **εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.** ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλὴμ	*[13] ἀποβήσεται ὑμῖν εἰς μαρτύριον.*
[11] καὶ ὅταν ἄγωσιν ὑμᾶς παραδιδόντες, μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε τί λαλήσητε,	[48] ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων.	

view, ends up opposing the historical Jesus' actual views (58). In my opinion, Wilson pushes the speculative boundaries of redaction criticism which are drawn on the basis of strong conclusions about hypothetical communities behind the text.

[84] See Schubert, "Structure and Significance," 165-186; Tiede, *Prophecy and History*; Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy,* 270-279; Mark Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

ἀλλ᾽ ὃ ἐὰν δοθῇ ὑμῖν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦτο λαλεῖτε· οὐ γάρ ἐστε ὑμεῖς οἱ λαλοῦντες ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.	12[12] τὸ γὰρ ἅγιον πνεῦμα διδάξει ὑμᾶς ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἃ δεῖ εἰπεῖν.	

In Mark, Jesus says, "first it is necessary (δεῖ) for the gospel (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) to be preached (κηρυχθῆναι) to all nations (εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη)" (13:10; cf. 16:15). Following Ferdinand Hahn,[85] Dupont notes that Luke omits this verse from his version of the same discourse (Mark 13:5-32 // Luke 21:8-33), even though Luke seemingly transposes the verses around Mark 13:10 in two different places (Mark 13:9 → Luke 12:11; 21:12; Mark 13:11 → 12:12). In characteristic fashion, Luke has moved a statement from its apocalyptic setting in Mark into a setting where it functions prophetically—in this case, to Luke 24:47.[86]

Evidence of this surfaces in the fact that only in Mark 13:10 and Luke 24:47 does the passive infinitive κηρυχθῆναι appear in each respective gospel. Perhaps more remarkably, the phrase εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη occurs only in these two places in all NT Gospels (cf. Rom 16:26), strongly suggesting literary dependence. On this view, Luke has displaced Jesus' words from their Markan context, with the original tone of divine necessity (δεῖ) in Mark 13:10 fitting Luke's outlook in Luke 24, especially with regard to the fulfillment of scripture (Luke 24:7, 26, 44).

[85] See Hahn, *Mission,* 130-131.
[86] Cf. Dupont, "La portée christologique,"132, who argues Luke has done a similar thing in moving Mark 13:32 to Acts 1:7 and Mark 14:57-58 ("false witnesses" at Jesus' trial) to Steven's trial in Acts 6:13-14 instead of keeping in the corresponding scene. Cf. Wilson, *Gentiles,* 47-48: "Luke 24:47 is Luke's equivalent to Mk 13:10." Conzelmann (*Theology of St. Luke,* 128) says Luke omits Mark 13:10 because he wants to sever the connection between the mission and the End; Hahn, *Mission,* 130-131.

Dupont takes "repentance and forgiveness of sins" as Luke's summary of the Markan εὐαγγέλιον, what Luke is more likely to term the message of "salvation."[87] What the scriptures summarily prophesy about the χρίστος includes universal proclamation of salvation. The Messiah's scriptural mission is not simply to suffer and be raised (Luke 24:46) but to ensure that proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins reaches all nations (Luke 24:47-48). Indeed, when the latter is "fulfilled," Jesus' messianic identity will be confirmed. Dupont's observations crystallize our redactional observations:

> This set of texts invites us to seek in Luke 24:47 the application not merely of the principle according to which what was announced by the Scriptures was necessarily fulfilled, but more precisely of the necessary fulfillment of the messianic prophecies; and this he announced, not solely [by] the death and the resurrection of Christ, but also [by] the proclamation in his name of the message of salvation to all the nations. This proclamation is part of the Scriptures' program *for the Messiah*.[88]

Essentially, Luke has translated Mark's forward-facing claim into a backward-facing claim, even if proclamation to all nations is still to come.[89] Whereas for Mark universal witness is a sign of the end, for Luke it is a guarantee that Jesus is the Christ, to whom the scriptures bear witness. The larger eschatological shift which Luke's reception of Mark 13:10 exhibits is a critical one for recognizing how universal mission has been detached from its moorings in eschatology (Mark, Matthew) and joined more closely to the signification of Jesus' messianic identity in the present age. While Luke retains an

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[87] Dupont, "La portée christologique," 133; Wilson, *Gentiles*, 48.
[88] Dupont, ibid., 134 (emphasis original, translation mine).
[89] Dupont, ibid., 133-134: "The 'necessity' for this [worldwide evangelization in Mark] is that of a sequence of events whose order has been fixed in advance by God" (my translation). Dupont continues: "Ce rapport établi entre l'evangélisation des nations et la fin du a il monde disparaît entièrement chez Luc; fait place à un rapport tout différent, celui qui unit l'évangélisation des nations aux prophéties de l'Ecriture dont elle est l'accomplissement. Hahn le dit très bien: au cadre apocalyptique supposé par le δεῖ de Marc, Luc substitue le schéma prédiction et accomplissement."

eschatological outlook rooted in his Markan source, in this particular case Luke frames universal mission in terms of *christology*. The fulfillment of universal proclamation of salvation, in this sense, is a key aspect of Jesus' messianic identity, since it is ultimately carried out by God at work in Christ and by the power of the Spirit through his followers.

1.1.5.4 Conclusions

It has been shown that the universality of Jesus' and his disciples' ministry in Luke's Gospel is restrained. Whether out of fealty to his sources or not, Luke appears committed to telling the story of Jesus and his followers as one directed almost entirely to the people of Israel. At the same time, this commitment should be qualified in two important ways. First, in at least one of his sources (Mark and DT/"Q") Luke encounters the close association of universal mission with an imminent *eschaton* (cf. Mark 13:10 // Matt 24:14). Because both Mark and Matthew suggest the End will arrive when "all nations" have been reached with the Gospel, Luke likely felt compelled to hold off on a more expansive horizon,[90] at least until a second volume afforded him the narrative space to give it its due. Not only did Luke think Jesus and the disciples did not formally engage Gentiles before his resurrection, but had he claimed otherwise, he would have put himself broadly in conflict with his sources. That being said, Luke generally balks at an (eschatological) subordination of the Gentile mission which allowed Matthew to include exclusive statements like Matt 15:24 or 10:5-6. Luke's narrative lacks such claims and generally resists inclusion of stories that would outwardly preclude a future Gentile

[90] Earl Richard, "The Divine Purpose: Jews and the Gentile Mission (Acts 15)," in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar,* ed. Charles Talbert (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 199-200.

mission, even if in place of them no proactive universalism is directly commended before chapter 24.

Second, what Luke notably adds to his Markan source are several, subtle hints of Jesus' more expansive vocation (Luke 2:10, 30-32; 3:6; 4:25-27)—namely, to be "christ,"[91] "savior," and "lord" to all people, bringing "light to Gentiles and glory to Israel," so that "all flesh" might see salvation, in accordance with God's plan and scripture's testimony. Because these clues to Jesus' identity largely precede his messianic appearance on the narrative stage, so to speak, they function prophetically.[92] They create expectations for the unfolding and reception of the story, expectations which are deferred to Luke's second volume since neither Jesus nor his disciples actively take up a universal mission in the first volume. The contours of a narrative identity that such clues outline require more than one volume to fill. With Luke 24:46-48, the narrative of Acts is assigned the task of explicating Jesus' identity *specifically* in terms of the early Lukan expectations of the universality of Jesus' Lordship and also in light of the universal

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[91] The word χρίστος occurs 12 times in Luke's Gospel, all of which refer to a specific prophetic role, i.e. "the Messiah," and none of which attaches to Jesus as something like a name. In fact, "Messiah" does not even occur in the same sentence as the name Jesus. Much more common is the phrase "Messiah of God" (9:20; 23:35) or "Lord's Messiah" (2:26), defining the name in relation to the God of Israel. However, the word occurs 25 times in 24 verses in Acts. Only 13, about half, refer to "Messiah" (see NRSV translation) as a role or title of Hebrew expectation. The other 12 times are cases in which χρίστος has become something like a last name. Cf. Acts 2:38 in which it is used for the first time—ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ—and 28:31 (last sentence) in which the christological titles from Acts 2:36 ("Lord and Christ") are now combined going forward: διδάσκων τὰ περὶ <u>τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ</u>.

[92] Dillon ("Easter Revelation," 247) speaks of the twofold predictions in the Gospel: passion/death and resurrection, now joined in Luke 24 for the first time with an anticipation of the universal mission, "which has been foreshadowed in earlier passages of the Gospel but never explicitly scheduled." Cf. Wilson, *Gentiles,* 52-53: "His additions at the beginning of the Gospel are always prophetic and forward-looking; they are only picked up in the form of a command in 24:47, a passage which points forward to the unfolding universal mission which Luke relates in Acts … [I]n this manner Luke makes it clear that the inclusion of the Gentiles is not the result of a mere quirk of history or a whim of God; rather, it is grounded in the eternal will of God and is an integral part of his promises to Israel." Cf. also Carroll, "God of Israel," 100-101.

witness that will go forth in his name (Acts 1:8).[93] In this way, readers are prompted early in Luke—and reminded at the very end—to expect the universality of the Messiah's Lordship to materialize narratively in Luke's second volume.

1.2 "Defining" Χριστός and Κύριος

Luke 24:46-48 puts forth a christological claim that Jesus' identity as Messiah of Israel is guaranteed by his death, his resurrection, and universal witness in his name (and by his Spirit). While it was concluded that this claim is largely left to Acts to unfold in a *narrative* manner, part of the christological grammar of Luke's writings includes the use of titles. Even though his "christology" cannot be reduced to the use of such titles, it can be helpful to locate their use within Luke's broader narrative development of Jesus' identity. The present section, therefore, attempts to map the preliminary findings of this chapter onto the pattern of Luke's use of his two most significant (and frequent) christological titles, χριστός and κύριος.

It is helpful to recognize that christological titles are not containers of static meaning, but, in Luke's hands, pliable terms given shape and orientation by the narrative in which they appear. With respect to the title "Messiah," for instance, Luke does not begin with a single inherited stream of messianic expectation before laboring to bring his story into line with this received Jewish expectation. After all, few if any strands of Second Temple Judaism anticipated a dying and rising Messiah of Israel.[94] Whatever the streams of Jewish messianic expectation—which, by all accounts, were varied and

[93] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 189: "Acts presents a messianic unveiling of what was announced of Jesus in Luke's Gospel right from the start."
[94] Jervell, *Theology of Acts*, 27.

conflicting—Luke disrupts them[95] by allowing the events concerning *Jesus* to determine the definition of *Messiah*. The direction of Luke's claims, so to speak, is from Jesus to Messiah—that is, from the narrative account of the person to the definition of the role. To know what Luke means by "Messiah," one must read Luke's account of the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus. Unless one properly grasps the significance of events, even the witness of Israel's scriptures to the χριστός will remain opaque (cf. Luke 24:25-27). Whatever expectations readers bring to Luke's narrative about the Messiah Jesus, Luke reconfigures them in terms of what Jesus did and taught (cf. Acts 1:1). The present section extends and nuances this claim by arguing that, in addition to tying Jesus' death and resurrection into the meaning of "Messiah," Luke narrates Jesus' exaltation and *universal* Lordship into his construal of the title "Messiah."

"Lord of All" (Acts 10:36)

Though it will be left for a later chapter (3.6-7) to unpack the ramifications of Peter's climactic pronouncement that the Messiah Jesus is πάντων κύριος—"Lord of all" (10:36)—some account of the general significance of this declaration for Luke's use of christological titles is needed, offering a basic roadmap for what is to come. As noted earlier, the claim that Jesus is universal Lord is not one realized in Luke's Gospel, only declared in anticipation of a second volume. Yet, even in the first part of Acts (chs. 1-9) the universality of Jesus' Lordship is somewhat muted. Though the early scenes arguably

[95] With the humorous account of the Emmaus encounter (Luke 24:13-27), Luke makes it plain that *no one* fully expected events as they unfolded—in spite of the testimony of Israel's scriptures (18:31; 22:37; 24:25-27, 44, 46-47) and Jesus' several predictions (9:22, 44; 18:31-33; 24:6-7). So unexpected were events (at least, to Luke's human characters) that even a face-to-face conversation with the resurrected Messiah himself about scriptural prophecies concerning him proved insufficient in convincing some of his disciples that the crucified and risen Jesus was the Messiah and Redeemer of Israel (24:19-27).

possess a symbolic universalism (2:5, 8-11, 17, 21, 39; 3:21, 25; 4:12), the apostles do not evangelize anyone but Jews and primarily in Jerusalem. Not until Acts 10 does the prospect of universal salvation appear with the events leading to the conversion of Cornelius' household (10:1-48). And only in light of this experience does Peter make his pivotal christological declaration: "Now I *truly* understand…he is Lord of all" (10:34-36). The Peter-Cornelius episode brings to initial fulfillment the framing prophecy that salvation will be proclaimed in Jesus' name "to all nations" (Luke 24:47; cf. Acts 26:23).

The Jewish apostle Peter makes the connection first (10:34-43), and then relates it persuasively to other Jerusalem believers (11:5-17), and eventually Peter's testimony about his experience becomes the basis for the Jerusalem Council's decision to endorse Paul's work in the Diaspora (15:7-11). The transformation and new openness of Jewish believers to their Gentile brethren is reflected in a corresponding, albeit subtle, shift in the language by which they refer to Jesus. Though πάντων κύριος does not appear again, κύριος appears with increasing frequency as the Gentile mission expands,[96] inversely proportional to the use of χρίστος outside of Jewish lands and audiences.[97] The implication is that, after Peter's revelation in Caesarea, κύριος increasingly carries with it the sense of the scope of πάντων. Prefigured with the emphasis on πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in Luke 24:47, the conversion of τὰ ἔθνη in Acts 10 signals the beginnings of the realization of

[96] See Chapter 2. The distribution of Luke's use of κύριος (around 100 times) in Acts is notable: unambiguous uses for God almost all occur in Acts 2-7 while ambiguous and unambiguous uses of the term for Jesus concentrate in 7:59-28:31.

[97] The title χρίστος occurs only about a fourth (24) as many times as κύριος and, as expected, these uses cluster in the first half of Acts and almost all appear on Peter's lips (13 times in 2:31-9:34; cf. also 10:36, 48; 11:17; 15:26), while the final seven uses (by Paul or the narrator: 16:18, 17:3, 18:5, 28; 24:24; 26:23; 28:31) all occur in Jewish contexts. The lone exception is 16:18 when Paul exorcises the Pythonic girl "in the name of Jesus Christ," but interestingly it may be the use of this name that tips off her owners that Paul and his company are "Jews [who] are disturbing our city" (16:20).

the universality of Jesus' messianic Lordship. As the narrative turns to the story of outreach among Gentiles in the Diaspora (11:19-26; ch. 13-22), the *universality* of Jesus' Lordship is now assumed, embodied in the scope of Paul's outreach to Gentiles and Jews everywhere. It is not going too far to say that "Lord" is how Luke expresses the *universality* of the messianic work of Jesus. This claim will find increasing support with each chapter of this dissertation.

If this line of reasoning is on the mark, we should expect confirmation in the way Luke relates the use of the two titles—κύριος and χριστός—in Luke-Acts. The present section, therefore, is devoted to unpacking this interrelationship and how it fits into the broader narrative christology of universal witness. What we find, arguably, is that the pattern of Luke's use of titles like χριστός and κύριος reflects our preliminary conclusions—namely, that Luke defines "Messiah" in terms of "Lord," both in the anticipatory passages in Luke's Gospel (cf. 2:11) as well as at crucial points of clarification in Acts (cf. 2:36; 10:36; 11:17; 15:26; 28:31). Just as it has been shown that Luke narrates Jesus' death and resurrection into the "definition" of the title χριστός, so arguably, in Acts especially, he narrates Jesus' universal Lordship into χριστός. And because this title is anchored in Jewish presuppositions, the expansion of the christological term to "fit" universal salvation in his name will cause a challenge to Jewish believers like Peter and other Jerusalem believers (10:1-11:18; 15:1-29). If Jewish believers in Jesus come to this recognition only gradually (see Chapter 3), the obstacle of the messianic Lordship of Jesus will be even more severe for unbelieving Jews later in Acts (see Chapter 4). Understanding how Luke encodes his use of χριστός with the

significance of (universal) "Lord" allows the picture of a (narrative) christology of universal witness to emerge more clearly.

Therefore, in what follows I will briefly examine the way Luke uses the titles χριστός and κύριος in proximity and relation to one another. To this end, (1) the "missionary innovation" explanation will be addressed and how it helps or hinders the understanding of what Luke is doing with the titles. The general movement in Acts from ethnic particularity to a wider inclusivism should not be mistaken as expressing a translational equivalency between (Greek/Gentile) κύριος and (Jewish) χριστός, as some readings imply. (2) Starting with Luke 2:11, I will unpack how the terms function—primarily in Acts—as mutually interpreting. As Luke 2:11 attests, the two terms are closely related but not equivalent—in part, because κύριος can refer to God and Jesus (cf. Acts 2:17-21) while χριστός can only refer to Jesus (cf. Acts 3:18; 4:26; 9:22; 17:3; 18:5, 28). Luke closely associates the two titles for Jesus, but also distinguishes them from one another; at the same time, Luke does not reduce their differences to narrative context as though "Christ" were *only* preached to Jews, "Lord" only to Gentiles. Luke's use of the two terms in relation to one another is subtler than that, with the present study concluding that Luke inflects the particularity of "Messiah" in light of the universal scope of "Lord" (cf. 10:36), which itself is reconfigured across Acts (cf. 2:36 and 10:36). (3) This preliminary conclusion will then be evaluated with respect to the five joint occurrences of κύριος and χριστός in Acts (2:36; 10:36; 11:18; 15:26; 28:31), which occur, not coincidentally, at five of the most pivotal moments in the narrative. In this way, the present section will situate the study of christological titles within the broader investigation into Luke's narrative christology of universal witness.

1.2.1 Contextualization and Preaching κύριος

It is generally observable in Acts that as the gospel spreads beyond Jewish territory, the use of the title χριστός declines, whereas the application of the title κύριος to Jesus becomes more frequent. To illustrate, the title χριστός is used 9 times in Acts 2-5 and only 8 times in Acts 15-28. Moreover, from chapter 8 forward the title is predominately applied as a surname (8:5, 12; 9:34; 10:36, 48; 11:17; 15:26; 16:18; 28:31), especially in Gentile or mixed contexts. The few times it appears as a christological title (in the attributive position, ὁ χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς) are in Jewish contexts (17:3; 18:5, 28; 24:24; 26:23). Given the particularity of this pattern of use readers are left with the impression that the title remains important throughout Acts (cf. 28:31), especially for Jews, but its associations change somewhat, particularly with respect to the use of the title κύριος.

Κύριος appears in apostolic preaching, but is used for Jesus in conjunction with its use for God, indicating an overlap of sorts (cf. Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:34-35; 15:15-18).[98] Though the emphasis on the application of κύριος to God predominates early in Luke's Gospel, such an accent fades later in Acts. Perhaps even more striking is the fact that the frequency of unambiguous use of κύριος for Jesus *increases* as Acts progresses.[99]

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[98] Cf. the findings of Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, with respect to Luke's Gospel primarily.

[99] Another pattern of Luke's usage represents the distinctions between christological titles. Because it is somewhat rare for Jesus to be the direct object for the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι (cf. only Acts 5:42; 8:35; 11:20; 17:18) the first three examples can illustratively be set in parallel:

(the apostles to Jews in Jerusalem)	εὐαγγελιζόμενοι	τὸν χριστὸν	Ἰησοῦν (Acts 5:42)
(Philip to Ethiopian eunuch)	εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτῷ	τὸν	Ἰησοῦν (Acts 8:35)
(Jerusalem exiles, speaking to Gentiles)	εὐαγγελιζόμενοι	τὸν κύριον	Ἰησοῦν (Acts 11:20)

The fourth example, in 17:18, is not really an example because it comes in an explanatory aside about the confusion in Paul's audience, evident in the separating of "Jesus" from "the resurrection" which of course are inextricable in the Lukan Paul's actual preaching.

Most references to Jesus as κύριος appear *after* 7:59 (at least 40 of the roughly 50).[100] This shift in emphasis coincides with the spread of the word beyond Jerusalem and exclusively Jewish contexts (cf. 8:1). Indeed, after the Peter-Cornelius episode (10:1-11:18)—in which Messiah Jesus is recognized as "Lord of all"—Luke resumes the storyline of exile from Jerusalem (8:1-4), characterized by the scattered believers "preaching the *Lord* Jesus" (11:20). Peter's christological "discovery" about the universal Lordship of Jesus appears to become the postulate of Christian preaching in the Diaspora. The Messiah preached in Jerusalem (Acts 2-7) is proclaimed as the "Lord Jesus" to the pagan Greeks in Antioch and elsewhere.

A common missiological explanation for why the title κύριος is used with increasing frequency in Acts—and in inverse proportion to the frequency of the use of χριστός—is that Luke's pattern of use reflects a commitment to *contextualization,*[101] either by Luke's characters or by the constraints of Luke's historical verisimilitude, or by both. According to this view, as the preaching of salvation in Jesus' name moves outside of Jerusalem and among non-Jewish populations, the word χριστός loses its intelligibility, requiring a non-Jewish but equivalent Greek term, i.e. κύριος. "Messiah" ("smeared one") did not have traction among (pagan) Gentiles—being itself the Greek equivalent of

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[100] Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, "ΚΥΡΙΟΣ in Acts," in *Jesus Christus als die Mitte der Schrift*, ed. Christof Landmesser et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 363-78.

[101] Representative is Michael Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 146: "Jews who had left Jerusalem during the persecution at the time of Stephen's stoning had traveled up to Antioch, bearing witness of Jesus to both Jews and gentiles (Acts 8:1; 11:19-21). Their message is contextualized: they proclaim Jesus as "Lord" (rather than "Christ" or "Messiah"), a message that more clearly communicates to gentiles the significance of the gospel." Cf. also Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1998), 369 fn 14: "It has often been noted that as the Acts narrative begins to focus more and more on Gentiles, the proclamation becomes progressively more Hellenistic, or at least less Jewish, with less emphasis on Jesus as Messiah, Son of Man, and the like."

the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ—whereas "Lord" already had currency among Greek-speaking Gentiles. To pagans or those unfamiliar with Israel's scriptures (in Greek), κύριος was not used in reference to Israel's God but rather as a word for "master/owner" (cf. Luke 19:33; Acts 16:16, 19) or a general title of esteem ("sir": cf. Luke 13:8, 25; 14:22; 19:16-25; Acts 16:30) which, in its most elevated sense, could be used to refer to the Roman Emperor (Acts 25:26). As a word already in use among Gentiles, therefore, it provided a worthy candidate for communicating the substance of Jesus' identity and importance for Gentiles. That possibility is supported, at least in principle, by the prevalent use of the title κύριος for Jesus in Paul's ministry in the Diaspora.[102] In missiological writings, much is made of the "contextualization" thesis,[103] and it is not my intention here to debate its merits, which, in general terms, are quite valid. On Luke's terms, however, it is doubtful that Luke thought of "Lord" as a kind of Gentile equivalent for "Messiah."[104]

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[102] Acts 11:20, 23, 24; 13:2, 10, 12, 47; 14:3, 23; 15:26, 40; 16:15, 31; 18:8, 9, 25; 19:5, 13, 17; 20:19, 21, 24, 35; 21:13; 22:8, 10, 19; 23:11; 26:15; 28:31.

[103] Most of the missiologists are too careful to declare equivalence, as the following quotation illustrates (David Smith, *Mission After Christendom* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), 69: "The precise nature of the task confronting the early believers was determined by a cultural and historical context in which *Jewish* believers faced the challenge of making the message of Jesus the Messiah intelligible to *Gentile* pagans. The term 'Messiah' actually takes us straight to the heart of the theological and religious issues involved in this first great missionary movement across cultures, since, precious as it was to Jews, *it communicated nothing to their receptors in the Graeco-Roman world.* In this situation translation involved devising a new Christology in which this familiar Jewish title became a proper name, now explained and applied by the addition of a word immediately recognized in the Gentile world, the ambiguous term 'Lord'. The New Testament thus charts a progression in which the confession 'Jesus *is* Messiah' is expanded in the wider world shaped by Roman concepts, to become Jesus Christ (Messiah) *is Lord'"* (emphasis original).

[104] Χριστός is obviously an important title for Luke-Acts, some might say the most important. Eckhard Schnabel, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 1091: "'Messiah' is the most important title for Jesus in Acts." When Schnabel supports this claim, he lists many of the twenty-five occurrences, but overlooks the fact that many of them are used as a surname, especially in Gentile contexts. Schnabel, in other words, treats the occurrences of χριστός as if they are all of one piece, and he also draws his conclusions about christological titles in isolation, as if Luke does not introduce χριστός and κύριος as mutually interpreting.

Contextualization, as it is used here, broadly connotes the "naturalization" of the good news concerning Jesus required for the message to take root effectively in a particular ethnic-linguistic culture. As missiological studies in the last century have confirmed,[105] to gain traction among unevangelized groups of people, the gospel must find expression in the cultural and linguistic idioms of that receptor culture; otherwise, the message will be perceived (and often rejected) as a "foreign"—and, for that reason, suspect—imposition. The name for this process of contextualization is sometimes called "translation," which is contrasted with "diffusion"—the spread of a tradition by converting the receptor culture to the linguistic and cultural forms of the host culture. [106] Christian forms of diffusion might be known better as "proselytism," which, according to Acts 10-15, is precisely what Christians early on chose to reject. Had the Christian message been fossilized in its original form and content, the Christian message's aim would have been to compel all non-Jewish peoples into the idiom of Palestinian Jewish culture (cf. Matt 23:15; Acts 15:1, 5).

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[105] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2009), 13-96; Andrew F. Walls, "The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture," in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 3-15.

[106] Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* 53: "The third is that the Gentile breakthrough has become the paradigm of the church's missionary call. So far as their view of Jesus is concerned, the disciples saw him as the resurrected Lord and Savior, and surrendered the titles "Rabbi" and "Messiah" to the terms of the Easter experience: Jesus died and rose again to begin the reign of God." Sanneh's use of "surrender" may be misleading since the title "Messiah" was not so much abandoned as it was redefined, and not just in light of a new title ("Lord"), but by the newly recognized reality of Jesus' Lordship over all. Elsewhere Sanneh memorably calls "translation" the "church's birthmark and its missionary benchmark" (*Whose Religion is Christianity?* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 97). The very fact that the canonical Gospels, as we have them, were originally written in Greek indicates the essential aspect of the translatability of their message. Cf. idem, "The Gospel, Language and Culture: The Theological Method in Cultural Analysis," *International Review of Mission* 84, 332-333 (Jan - Apr 1995): 47-64 (47-48). Cf. early expressions of the wider translatability of the Christian way—*Ep. Diognetus* 5.

The most simplistic version of this interpretation explains Luke's broad shift from using χριστός to using κύριος as a way to explain the transformation of a predominately Jewish movement to a predominately Gentile one. Effectively, "Messiah of Israel" *becomes* "Lord of all (people)." The ethnocentric associations of a Jewish Messiah are, on this view, the problem that must be overcome as the *missio Dei* moves toward its universal horizon. Such a reading, again in perhaps its most caricatured form, puts (universal) "Lord" at odds with (particular) "Messiah," the former effectively replacing the latter as the Christian way takes on the Gentile world.[107] The shift from χριστός to κύριος is, on this view, essentially a function of missionary innovation.[108]

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[107] Another point against the "translation"/innovation thesis is Paul's Areopagus speech (17:22-31). Paul's speech does not mention Jesus by name, let alone that his name among Gentiles should be "Lord." This would be the perfect place, presumably, if Luke had wanted to publicize his "translation" of titles, but he does not. In fact, the only time he does mention κύριος he does so in the "traditional" sense of saying "God" is "Lord of heaven and earth" (v. 24; cf. 27, 29, 30). The speech, in this respect, is theocentric and the only allusion to Jesus is this: "While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (vv. 31-32). The unnamed man is eschatological judge, whose authority rests on having been raised by God from the dead. Natrually, some scoff at such a claim, while others want to hear more. If we are disappointed to find no christological use of κύριος here to support the translation hypothesis, we should find encouragement in the fact that the universal, eschatological tone remains. Resurrection marks the identity of Jesus, as does the association of this eschatological judge with the promise of repentance for "all people everywhere" (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχου). That last phrase nicely encapsulates the dual testimony of Luke 24:47 (εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) and Acts 1:8 (ἔν τε Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ … ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς). The horizon of Jesus' commission included both an ethnic and geographical universalism—in other words, "all people everywhere." In this respect, Luke identifies Paul's preaching in Athens as reinforcing the scope of Jesus' commission to bring salvation to all people everywhere, which provides the basis for God's "command" to repent (v. 31).

[108] Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Leicester: Apollos, 2005), 43-44: "This "model" community in Luke's story reflects an ethos of innovation, evidenced by several notable characteristics….Second, the Syrian community grows out of a mission that preached Jesus as Lord (Acts 11:20), "a message better suited to a Gentile audience than the proclamation of Jesus as the Christ or Son of Man." Cf. Witherington, *Acts,* 369, referring to Acts 11:20: "It was not a mission originated by the leadership of either the Jerusalem or Antioch church but by God through a variety of means including Peter, Paul, these anonymous men from Cyprus and Cyrene, and perhaps even Philip. The message is here said to involve the proclamation of "the Lord Jesus," a message better suited to a Gentile audience than the proclamation of Jesus as the Christ or Son of Man."

To evaluate this occasional missiological reading, a few characteristics of Luke's usage of christological titles should be pointed out. Whereas the title κύριος, readers learn, can rightly be applied either to Jesus or God, χριστός cannot. Jesus is "Messiah" of Israel, but God is never characterized as such. In fact, Luke clarifies this distinction on occasion when he refers to the χριστός as "the *Lord's* Messiah" (Luke 2:26 [χριστὸς κυρίου]; 20:41-42; Acts 3:20; 4:26). At the same time, on more than one occasion Luke conjoins the two terms with respect to Jesus (see 1.2.2-3 below), as if they say different things about Jesus. On the contextualization view, these cases would be examples of simple redundancy. But contrary to what might be expected of a tendency to contextualize, Luke does not abandon the title χριστός in favor of the increasingly culturally relevant κύριος. Instead, he binds the terms together so that their uses ares to be understood in relation to one another.[109] As will be seen below, Luke introduces them

[109] The migration of "Messiah" from title to surname is important to recognize. That is, though a Gentile framework enables a "new" conception of Jesus as Lord, the messianic identity is retained, if altered slightly by its syntactical placement (no longer substantive titular adjective, "anointed"; now trailing cognomen, "Christ"). This is an important qualifier of the extreme missiological view that with "Lord," the title "Messiah" is all but emptied of its meaning. Luke retains χριστός/Χριστός so that the unity (but not identity) of titles preserves continuity in the identity of Jesus. Cf. Andrew Walls, "The Ephesian Moment," in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 79-80: "The first believers were Jews who saw Jesus in terms of Jewish history, tradition, and belief. But when they came to share that faith with Greek-speaking Gentile peoples, they found it was of little use to talk of Jesus as Messiah. The word meant nothing to Greeks, and needed endless explanation. They had to translate, to find a term that told something about Jesus and yet meant something to a Greek pagan. They chose the word Kyrios, "Lord," the title that Greek pagans used for their cult divinities (Acts 11:19-21). Jewish believers (and the action was taken by Jewish folk) had long seen the title Messiah as key to the identity of Jesus, the truest expression of his significance. It was a rich term, full of biblical allusions and echoes of the history of Israel and pointers to its ultimate destiny. The transposition of a message about the Messiah to a message about the "Lord Jesus" must have seemed an impoverishment, perhaps a downright distortion. Was it not dangerous to use language that was also used in heathen cults, and that might give the idea that Jesus was one more of the "Lords many" of the eastern Mediterranean? And should Gentile converts be deprived of knowledge about Israel's national savior. But it turned out that the transposition was enriching without being distorting. Employing a term used of Hellenistic divinities gave a new dimension to thinking about Christ. It also raised questions, some of them awkward, that a Jewish believer, even one knowing Greek well, would be unlikely to ask... Christian theology moved on to a new plane when Greek questions were asked about Christ and received Greek answers, using the Greek scriptures. It was a risky, often agonizing business, but it led the church to rich discoveries about Christ that could never have been made using only

together (Luke 2:11) and concludes Acts with their conjunction (Acts 28:31). Thus, the terms are not synonymous,[110] nor is their difference reducible to narrative context alone.

1.2.2 χριστὸς κύριος: Luke 2:11 and the Structure of Acts' Christology

> ἰδοὺ γὰρ εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν χαρὰν μεγάλην ἥτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, ὅτι ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν σήμερον σωτὴρ ὅς ἐστιν **χριστὸς κύριος** ἐν πόλει Δαυίδ. (Luke 2:10b-11)

As if to introduce to readers the two most load-bearing titles, as it were, for Luke's narrative christology, Luke begins the account of Jesus' life with the angel's announcement "of great joy for *all* people"—namely, that "today is born … in the city of David a savior who is χριστὸς κύριος" (Luke 2:10-11). Debates about how to translate the dual-title aside,[111] what is clear is that the heavenly pronouncement (2:9) identifies the newborn Jesus as both "Messiah" and "Lord." Simeon's prophecy shortly afterward (2:30-32) will corroborate and nuance these claims, reprising the theme of promise for "all people" and specifying Jesus' mission as "light for the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of [the] people of Israel" (2:32). Immediately connected in Luke's story, in other words, is the notion that Jesus is Messiah and Lord who will bring salvation to both Gentiles and Jews. Luke inscribes universality into these christological titles even before the events he narrates can substantiate that universality. Even though outreach to Gentiles

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Jewish categories such as Messiah. Translation did not negate the tradition, but enhanced it. The use of new materials of language and thought, and the related styles and conventions of debate, led to new discoveries about Christ that could not have been made using only the Jewish categories of Messiahship. They were not incompatible with those categories. Looking back, all the signals could be seen there in the Scriptures; but only the Greek questions and consequent processes of thought made them explicit. Nor was it necessary to abandon the old Jewish categories: Messiahship continues to mean all it ever did. Crossing a cultural frontier led to a creative movement in theology by which we discovered Christ was the eternally begotten Son; but it did not require the old theology to be thrown away, for the eternally begotten Son was also the Messiah of Israel."

[110] *contra* Jervell, *Theology of Acts,* 29: "Often *Christos* and *kyrios* are combined and used interchangeably" (cf. 21).

[111] See Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology,* 50-51, 174.

en masse will not occur in Luke's Gospel, Luke identifies the Christ-Lord as savior of "all people(s)" (Luke 2:10, 31) or "all flesh" (3:6; cf. Acts 2:17; LXX Joel 3:1).

By identifying Jesus with the titles χριστός and κύριος (and σωτήρ), Luke 2:11 shapes readers' expectations about who the newborn Jesus is. The revelation delivered by the angel equips readers with a sense of Jesus' identity that the characters will later come to recognize (or not). In addition, this introductory frame rules out the "adoptionist" view of Jesus—often derived from simplistic readings of Acts 2:36—namely, that Jesus only becomes "Messiah" and "Lord" at some later point (e.g., at his resurrection or ascension).[112] But Luke's application of these titles, long before the narrative offers an account that fills them out, so to speak, should condition readers' reception of later applications of the titles to Jesus. Even if the narrative does not begin to catch up to these christological claims until Luke 24 (or Acts 2:36), the early use of the titles together anticipates the christological shape the narrative will take.

Though the term κύριος is suggestively applied to Jesus very early in Luke's Gospel[113]—almost in passing (cf. 1:17, 43; 76)—Luke 2:11 is the first occurrence in which Luke draws direct christological attention to it. In 2:11, the angel emphasizes the

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[112] See the discussion of Rowe, "Acts 2.36," 42-49.

[113] William G. Witt, "Critical Orthodoxy and the Christology of Luke-Acts," *Trinity Journal for Theology and Ministry,* 3.1 (Spring 2009): 165: "At the level of the order of knowledge (*ordo cognoscendi*), the resurrection of Jesus was the point at which Jesus' divine status was first known. Thus, in the passage Paul cites in Romans 1:4, Jesus was "declared to be Son of God by his resurrection," that is, came to be known as such at that time. However, at the level of ontology (*ordo essendi*), if Jesus was known to be Son of God at his resurrection, then he had to have been ontologically the Son of God all along. And the Synoptics (including Luke) presume that throughout. So even though Luke in Acts 2 and elsewhere has Peter declaring the significance of Jesus' resurrection to his hearers to confirm to them Jesus' identity as the one in whom the promises of Scripture had been fulfilled, Luke had already made it clear that Jesus had been God's Son (and κύριος) all along by virtue of his conception by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Luke's gospel presumes throughout that Jesus was the Son of God (and κύριος) during his entire ministry. He did not become Son of God (or Lord) at his resurrection."

dual-title χριστὸς κύριος, which is confirmed by the sign of a baby in a manger (2:12). The earlier instances of κύριος for Jesus only hinted at its meaning, but those hints remain ambiguous given that they appear in contexts where κύριος is used even more often with reference to ὁ θεὸς (1:6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 25, 28, 32, 38, 45, 46, 58, 66, 68; 2:9).[114] The early, ambiguous use of κύριος invites further clarification.

When the angel's message to the shepherds brings attention to κύριος in 2:11, the title is attached, significantly, to the term χριστός, which marks the first appearance of "Messiah" in Luke's Gospel. Thus, Luke introduces one title χριστός with another, κύριος, as if the application of one term will be integral to comprehending the other. Luke tethers the terms in anticipation of a narrative that will move toward a christological horizon set by χριστός and κύριος. Introduced in this way, the two titles anticipate a relationship configured by mutual explication throughout Luke-Acts. Alerted to the way the terms work together in rendering the identity of Jesus, readers anticipate the significance of Jesus' Lordship for understanding his Messiahship.

1.2.3 Κύριος (Ἰησοῦς) Χριστός: Acts 2:36; 10:36, 11:17, 15:26, and 28:31

That the combination of χριστός and κύριος is so significant in Luke 2:11 may also be evident in the fact that the pairing recurs so infrequently. After Luke 2:11 introduces the titles in relation to one another, they do not appear together again[115] until

[114] Even the applications of κύριος to Jesus in Luke 1:17 and 1:76 are couched in allusions to Malachi (4:6 and 3:1, respectively), suggesting a kind of sharing of the scriptural title between Jesus and God (cf. 2.3.1.3.2).

[115] Arguably, discussion of the use of the two titles in Luke 20:41-44 deserves to be included here. After all, in this passage Jesus quotes LXX Ps 110, the same passage that Peter quotes in his exegetical argument in Acts 2:34-35, right before the conjunction of κύριος and χριστός in 2:36. In this respect, LXX Ps 110 is crucial to Luke's project of clarifying the identity of Jesus for readers. Both citations underwrite the claim that as Messiah Jesus is also "Lord," even though God bears the same title. In Acts 2:36, LXX Joel 3:1-5 supports the case even more since it is the "Lord" who pours out the Spirit of prophecy on "all flesh" and in

Acts 2:36, the concluding statement of Peter's exegetical argument for why these titles apply to Jesus of Nazareth in light of the outpouring of the Spirit. Of course the two titles appear in seeming isolation from one another many times in Acts (especially), but tracing the pattern of conjoined uses helpfully sets the framework within which Luke's readers are to understand the use of the terms in isolation. This section demonstrates that Acts tells the story of the full revealing of Jesus' identity as messianic Lord, highlighting especially the role Acts 10-15 plays in that unfolding. At least in the way that Luke-Acts sets readerly expectations, κύριος establishes the parameters for understanding χρίστος, and therefore helps illuminate the interrelated claims of Luke 24:46-47.

1.2.3.1 Acts 2:36

The first pairing of the two terms in Acts—not as a single title, but nevertheless in relation to one another—appears at the climax of Peter's Pentecost speech (2:14-36):

> ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γινωσκέτω πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι καὶ **κύριον** αὐτὸν καὶ **χριστὸν** ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε (2:36)
>
> "therefore, let the whole house of Israel know with certainty (ἀσφαλῶς; cf. Luke 1:4) that God has declared him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

The speech, of which this statement is the conclusion, is crucial for Acts because it does several things at once. First, Luke/Peter interprets LXX Joel 3:1-5 in such a way that the "Lord" mentioned in Joel—which refers in its prophetic context to God (LXX Joel 2:27: ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν)—comes to refer to the Messiah Jesus. Peter helps his audience make this shift by interpreting the story of Jesus' death and resurrection and

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the name of the "Lord" that salvation is to be found. Thus, Peter concludes his Pentecost sermon, the Lord God has made Jesus "Lord" and "Messiah" (2:36).

ascension/exaltation on the basis of Ps 16:8-11 (LXX 15:8-11) and Ps 110:1 (LXX 109:1; Acts 2:22-35; cf. Luke 20:41-44). David, Peter's argument goes, did not experience what Jesus of Nazareth experienced—namely, freedom from corruption through resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand (Acts 2:27-33). Therefore, Jesus is the "Lord" designated by the "Lord" God in David's prophetic words—the Messiah indeed; and it is this "Lord"—when Joel 3 is read rightly—that pours out the Spirit on all flesh (see 2.3.2.1.1.2.1).

The argument of Peter's Pentecost speech represents a crucial hermeneutical move by which readers understand how Luke employs these christological titles. Luke "defines" the terms κύριος and χριστός in terms of Israel's scriptures, insofar as those scriptures illuminate present events—in this case, both the pouring out of the Spirit and the events concerning Jesus (death, resurrection, and exaltation). Joel's and David's words are brought to bear on these events, and in this way scripture helps to reconfigure terms that may have meant one thing in their prophetic context, but which now refer to Jesus in surprising ways. Peter (re)interprets the κύριος who pours out the Spirit on all flesh in Joel, and upon whose name all must call for salvation, as "Jesus the Messiah of Nazareth." Death, resurrection, and exaltation have been written into the semantic field of "Messiah" and "Lord" so that as the narrative unfolds, the christological titles are tethered both to one another and to the life, death, resurrection, and ascension/exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth. The the events concerning Jesus and Pentecost redefine "Messiah," which in turn invites a rereading of the scriptures which provide the backdrop to notions of "Messiah."

Second, by connecting the outpouring of the Spirit to the identity of Jesus as Messiah and Lord, Luke makes Peter's speech programmatic for Acts. Peter's claims set the basic parameters for how the terms χριστός and κύριος will be used and freighted with meaning as the story unfolds. The end of the Joel citation speaks of calling upon the name of the Lord to be saved; Luke makes it clear that that name is Jesus. Calling upon the name of the Lord throughout Acts, therefore, is to call upon the name of Jesus (cf. Acts 4:12; 9:14; 10:43; 22:16). When the Spirit descends in Acts, it is by the Lord who pours out the Spirit upon new peoples and in new lands (see 2.3.2.1.1.3).

1.2.3.2 Acts 10:36, 11:17; 15:26

As Chapter 3 will show at length, Peter is the one who makes the pivotal pronouncement about Jesus' identity in light of the salvation of the Gentiles—"this one is Lord of all" (10:36). Indeed, the tension and resolution of the P-C episode (10:1-48) is bound up with the way Peter comes to recognize how χριστός and κύριος relate. Given the shift in the views of Jewish believers in Acts, starting in Acts 10 and peaking in Acts 15, it is no surprise that Luke most often joins the titles of κύριος and χρίστος in this portion of Acts (10:36; 11:17; 15:26), a pattern briefly traced below.

> τὸν λόγον [ὃν] ἀπέστειλεν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ εὐαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην διὰ **Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ**, οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων **κύριος**, (Acts 10:36)
>
> You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by **Jesus Christ-- he is Lord of all**.
>
> εἰ οὖν τὴν ἴσην δωρεὰν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ὡς καὶ ἡμῖν πιστεύσασιν ἐπὶ **τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν**, ἐγὼ τίς ἤμην δυνατὸς κωλῦσαι τὸν θεόν; (Acts 11:17)
>
> If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the **Lord Jesus Christ**, who was I that I could hinder God?

> ἔδοξεν ἡμῖν γενομένοις ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκλεξαμένοις ἄνδρας πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς σὺν τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν Βαρναβᾷ καὶ Παύλῳ, ἀνθρώποις παραδεδωκόσιν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ὑπὲρ <u>τοῦ ὀνόματος</u> **τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ**. (Acts 15:25-26)
>
> we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the sake of **our Lord Jesus Christ**.

The first use, as noted briefly above, ties the two titles together in light of the Spirit's descent upon the Gentiles, signifying God's favor apart from Torah-observance (see Chapter 3). As Peter says, God sent a message (τὸν λόγον) to the people of Israel, a message of peace through the person and work of the Messiah Jesus. In a surprised exclamation, Peter concludes: the one sent *to Israel*—the Messiah himself—this one is Lord of *all people* (10:36). Peter's speech goes on, effectively, to explicate the messianic identity of Jesus: his story begins in Galilee with John (10:37); Jesus goes about doing good, anointed (ἔχρισεν; cf. Luke 3:21-22; Acts 4:18, 27) with Spirit and power, (10:38); Jesus is killed, (10:39); Jesus' is resurrected, (10:41); chosen witnesses confirm these things (10:42), concluding with a restatement of the universality of Jesus' identity, now offered in scriptural terms: "All the prophets[116] testify about him that *everyone* who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (10:43). The account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—confirming his messianic identity—culminates in universal witness.

[116] "All the prophets," it should be noted, may for Luke mean more than those canonical books designated as such. It is clear throughout Luke's two volumes that the figures of Moses and David were assumed to be prophetic, implying that the words they spoke (Torah and Psalms) functioned in a prophetic vein. In other words, "all the prophets" may imply all of Israel's scriptures, which are taken to speak prophetically (cf. Luke 24:44: "everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled").

In other words, πάντων κύριος is the definitive christological expression for understanding χρίστος rightly. That Jesus is "Lord of *all*"—as indicated by God's saving of Gentiles—necessarily has implications for how to understand Jesus as Israel's Messiah. Luke links the two christological titles in Acts in order to emphasize how the *universality* of Jesus' Lordship effectively reconfigures the meaning of his Messiahship, and Jewish believers must wrestle with this reconfiguration.

In his retelling of the P-C episode to Jews in Jerusalem (11:5-17), Peter does not repeat his speech (10:34-43). But he does retell the story in a way that reflects the conclusions of his speech. Having established the link between "Messiah" and "Lord" in 10:36, Peter restates the conclusion to the P-C episode (10:47) in 11:17: "Therefore, if God gave them the same gift as (he) also (gave) to us who believed in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who was I to hinder God [in baptizing them]?" The important point at present is the combined title Peter uses for Jesus: κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χρίστος. Had we not been keeping track, it might have been overlooked that this is the first time in Luke-Acts that the two christological titles are expressed in the form of a single name attached to "Jesus."

The significance of this fact is discernible from the context in which the name appears, a context Luke emphasizes in three distinct ways. First, the titles are combined as a way of naming the basis for similarity between Jewish believers and Gentiles believers—God has given to Gentiles the same gift as God gave to Jews (in Jerusalem) at Pentecost. Given Peter's audience of Jerusalem believers ("apostles and Judean believers"), that comparison is an especially relevant one.

Second, the comparison between Pentecost and the P-C episode evokes the basis for the linking of κύριος and χρίστος the first time in Acts (2:36). When Peter evokes

shades of Pentecost in his interpretation of the encounter in Caesarea (10:47; 11:17), he draws attention specifically to the identity of Jesus explicated by both events—namely, that Jesus is the one crucified, risen, and exalted as Lord (of the Spirit) and Messiah (of David's Israel). That Pentecost has, in effect, been repeated among Gentiles confirms the commonality between Gentile and Jewish believers, grounded in a common outpouring of the Spirit and shared faith in the *Lord* Jesus *Christ.*

Third, and perhaps most important of all, is the audience of Peter's speech in 11:5-17: fellow apostles and Judean Jewish believers (including Peter's critics: "those of the circumcision," 11:2-3). Peter uses the combined title for the first time to an audience of *Jewish* believers, suggesting that the revelation Peter experienced in Caesarea is crucial for their own identity as believers in Jesus. Like Peter, they must accept the qualification of "Messiah" by the universality of "Lord" evinced in the salvation of the Gentiles. The new commonality between Gentile and Jewish believers—having both been given the Spirit and salvation through the one κύριος χριστός—is exhibited in Peter's use of the joint title.

The third of three uses of the combined κύριος-χριστός title in the P-C episode cycle (Acts 10-15) occurs in the "Apostolic Decree" letter in 15:26. The "apostles and elders, with the consent of the whole church," send a letter to "believers from the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia" (15:22-23). Notably, both the references in the letter (v. 24[117]) and the destination of the letter itself (15:22, 30-31) identify believers in

[117] "we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds…" (Acts 15:24 NRSV). Though this description may apply to Syria and Cilicia broadly, Luke only narrates the scene in which this is true for the Antioch community, in 15:1-2. In fact, Luke characterizes the Jerusalem Council as initiated, at least in

Antioch as the primary recipients of the letter. This only underscores the importance of Antioch and justifies Luke's focus on the community there (11:19-26; 13:1-3, et passim). Until Paul is arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21), the city provides the base of Paul's ongoing mission.

One recalls that Peter had first established the strong link between "Messiah" and "Lord" in Acts 2:36 and between "Messiah" and "Lord *of all*" in Acts 10:36. Peter goes on to communicate this link—joined formally for the first time in a single name—to his fellow Jewish believers in Jerusalem (11:17). In the Jerusalem meeting, having been convinced by Peter (11:18; 15:7-11), Paul and Barnabas' testimony (15:12), and James' speech (15:13-21), the apostles and elders (and whole church) agree to communicate their approval of the inclusion of Gentiles as Gentiles among God's people. They do so in a decree-letter (15:23-29) addressed to Antioch believers, emphasizing the commonality between Jewish and Gentile believers by identifying Paul and Barnabas' work "on behalf of the name of *our* Lord Jesus Christ" (15:26).

The emphasis on "our" is of obvious significance in a letter pledging the support of Jewish believers to Gentile believers whose soteriological certainty had been under attack (15:1, 5, 24). The use of the pronoun to modify the joint christological title underscores the willingness of Jewish believers—in agreement with Peter, Paul, and James—to recognize Jesus' *Lordship,* the title indicative of Gentile inclusion among God's people. Witnessing the salvation of the Gentiles had given rise to Peter's declaration that Jesus is πάντων κύριος (10:36); to use the title κύριος, now in

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part, by the conflict between Paul/Barnabas and Judean believers, making the letter seem to be a specific response to that conflict.

conjunction with the Jewish term χριστός, signals an acceptance of the expanded sense of "Messiah" in light of Jesus' Lordship over all. The solidarity between Jewish ἀδελφοί (15:23a) and Gentile ἀδελφοί (15:23b), advanced in the letter, hangs on the unity of the "*name* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:26).

Furthermore, the reference to "name" here recalls Acts 2:21 and 2:38, where Peter had earlier established the connection between the name of the κύριος θεός (LXX Joel 3:5; Acts 2:21) and the name of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (Acts 2:38; cf. 3:6; 4:10, 18; 5:40; 9:27-28) in light of the Spirit's descent in Jerusalem. Jesus' identity as "Lord" and "Messiah," first announced by Peter in Jerusalem among Jews (2:17-36) and first proclaimed in a combined title by Peter in Jerusalem among Jews (11:17), here emerges as the "official" christological understanding of the "whole church" (15:22). The unity of the movement—among Jews and Gentiles both—can be found in the proclamation of the *Lord* Jesus (cf. 11:20). Because the unity between Jewish and Gentile believers, as indicated by the letter, hangs on the recognition of God's salvation of and outreach to Gentiles as well as Jews, Jesus' universal Lordship is a primary article of faith, as it were. That Jesus is Messiah remains important for the particularity of witness among Jews (cf. 17:3; 18:5, 28; 24:24), but the unity of the movement, like the unity of the movement's "Lord," is signified by the name *κύριος* Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.

1.2.3.3 Acts 28:31

The combined title—Lord Jesus Christ—only appears one more time after 15:26. Strikingly, it appears in the final verse of Acts in a description of Paul's ongoing activity in Rome:

> κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ **τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ** μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως.
>
> proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. (Acts 28:31)

Luke leaves off his story with a summary of how Paul lived under house arrest for two years, welcoming "all" who came to him (28:30) and he continued "proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching *the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ*" (28:31).

An important aspect of Luke's final use of "Lord Jesus Christ," in contrast to all previous uses of the combined κύριος-χριστός title (Luke 2:11; Acts 2:36; 10:36; 11:17; 15:26), is that it appears in indirect discourse and is issued by the narrator. The final verses of Acts help the reader "exit" the narrative,[118] and in so doing take with her the christological unity of "Lord" and "Messiah" that Luke has developed over the course of Acts. The recognition achieved by Peter, the Jerusalem believers, and Apostolic Council has passed into the grammar of the Lukan narrator. As such, it aids the reader in transitioning from "live action," so to speak, to an epitome of what lies beyond Acts—Paul's undetailed two years in Rome teaching about "the Lord Jesus Christ."

Along with an allusion to the disciples' question that helped frame Acts—"Lord (κύριε), is this the time when you will restore the *kingdom* to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)—the summary in 28:31 emphasizes the name "Lord Jesus Christ" as the subject of Paul's teaching as the curtain draws to a close. In other words, the substance of Christian teaching beyond the horizon of Luke's story concerns the κύριος χριστός. While this does not necessarily mean preaching to Gentiles and Jews continued unabated (cf. debate

[118] cf. Alexander, "Reading from Back to Front," 442-446.

about 28:25-27)—as if the two titles corresponded to two distinct groups within the church—it does imply that the *identity* of Jesus has been established in the unity of "Lord" and "Messiah" and that the combined title best expresses the identity of Jesus in light of universal salvation made available through him.

Indeed, the universality of Jesus' Lordship, announced as early as Luke 2:11 and 2:30-32, has become the crucial qualifier of Jesus' messianic identity. He is Messiah, as indicated by Luke's redefinition of the title in light of Jesus' death and resurrection, and confirmed by reading the scriptures accordingly (Luke 24:46; Acts 26:22-23). But this brief study of christological titles—to be fleshed out in subsequent chapters—has shown that Jesus is Messiah by the universality of salvation and outreach conducted in his name (and in some sense by him), in accordance with the scriptures (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 26:22-23). Just as Luke has narratively (re)configured the title Messiah to include the defining features of death and resurrection, so he has also redefined the title in light of the universal reign of Jesus over all people. The name given to this latter sign and character of Jesus' messianic identity is "Lord." Having established this, Luke concludes the story—inconclusively, in the opinion of many—emphasizing the *continuing* focus on the universality of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is truly "unhindered" for in the Lordship of Jesus, ethnic limitations tied to the particularity of Israel's Messiah have been reinterpreted, indicated by Paul's continuing to welcome "all" who come to him (28:30).

At the same time, though Paul finds himself preaching and teaching in the heart of a Gentile empire, he does not abandon the title χριστός. Reflecting the fact that "Messiah" means something different—in light of universal salvation narrated in Acts—the term χριστός shifts to the position of a surname. That shift reminds readers that Jesus

is Israel's Messiah precisely in the fact that he is Lord of all people, the promises made to Israel fulfilled precisely in the fact that God favors Gentiles as Gentiles, the universality of the gospel rooted precisely in the particularity of the Jewish man from Nazareth.

1.2.4 Conclusions

The present section illustrated the larger argument of this dissertation through an analysis of Luke's conjunctive use of the christological titles, χριστός and κύριος. Though the book of Acts generally shifts in the frequency of use from the former term to the latter, the shift is not merely a function of contextualization. Jesus remains Israel's "Messiah" even as the narrative helps define that title through the salvation of "all nations" and witness to the "end of the earth." The terms, therefore, are not synonymous and yet Luke closely associates them, not only with one another but with the pivotal christological revelations of Luke-Acts (Luke 2:11; Acts 2:36; 10:36; 11:17; 15:26; 28:31). The pattern of their joint uses illustrates the broader development of Jesus' narrative identity as messianic Lord of all people. In this way, Luke aligns his use of christological titles with the narrative that orients that use. But it should be remembered that Luke does not override the particularity built into the title "Messiah" as if "Lord" helps him overcome the Jewish title's presumed limitations. Rather, Luke retains the particularity of "Messiah" even as Paul preaches to wider circles of people (cf. 28:31). Because universal Lordship is a mark of Jesus' *messianic* identity (Luke 24:46-47; 26:22-23), Luke makes sure χριστός is retained but inflected by the revelation that he is "Lord of all" (10:36).[119]

[119] It is also worth considering if qualification in the opposite direction, so to speak, also holds true—that is, whether χριστός significantly alters the sense of κύριος. Arguably, it does and Luke indicates as much by

1.3 Preliminary conclusions: "A Christology of Universal Witness"

Traditionally, the claims concerning the Messiah's death/resurrection and universal proclamation in his name have been linked in broadly literary ways—Luke's Gospel is about Jesus the Messiah, Acts about his followers acting in his name.[120] But such an explanation does not do justice to the way in which Luke has tightly linked the claims about Jesus' death/resurrection and universal proclamation in his name. For not only does Luke put the claims back-to-back, but he links them by means of the same claim—"thus it is written"—implying that the same scriptures stand behind the two seemingly distinct claims of fulfillment. Lest we miss the implication: it is all one text because it is all one claim—syntactically, semantically, christologically. Death, resurrection, universal proclamation of salvation all belong within the scriptural mission assigned to Israel's Messiah.

Jesus the Messiah may be κύριος from the beginning of Luke's Gospel, but the crucial messianic claim that he is universal Lord must be shown, must be narrated, similar to how death and resurrection are narrated into his identity. How does Luke tell the story of Jesus' Lordship over Gentiles as well as Jews? Remarkably, he does not tell it directly in the Third Gospel. As we saw, there are peculiarly Lukan clues given early on concerning the universality of his Lordship (Luke 2:10, 30-32; 3:6; 4:25-27), but the clues are all declaratory (by an angel, Simeon, John, and Jesus). They are told, in other

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retaining Χριστός as a surname when it appears in speech among Gentile or mixed audiences (10:36, 48; 15:26; 16:18; 28:31).

[120] A general survey of commentaries shows that the underlying assumption of most interpreters is that connecting Luke and Acts is a *problem* because it involves connecting two thematically *different* books (and genres).

words, rather than shown. But in Luke's Gospel where we would expect to find a narrative portrayal of what is earlier spoken, we find a fairly restrained characterization of Jesus' and his disciples' outreach to non-Jews. In this way, Luke has configured the early declarations as prophetic statements to be fulfilled later in the story, thereby heightening readers' expectations of the establishment of Jesus' universal Lordship. As the Gospel concludes, those expectations are not dashed but reignited by a global scriptural claim (Luke 24:46-48) which anticipates the narrativization of Jesus' universal Lordship in Acts.

Our study addresses the question of Jesus' expansive identity, rather, in a way that takes seriously both the narrative shape of the "Lord Jesus" and the hermeneutical significance of the two volumes through which that identity is rendered. The universality of Jesus' Lordship is established and attested by witnesses sent explicitly to Gentiles and to the end of the earth because God's will, indicated in Israel's scriptures, has designated such a task as part of the Messiah's mission. Ultimately, universal proclamation itself is constitutive of Jesus' messianic identity rather than merely a response or addendum to the prior christological sign of his death and resurrection. At the risk of oversimplification, for Luke "mission" is Christ-shaped even as "Christ/Lord" is mission-shaped.

The broader argument of this dissertation is that Luke emphasizes the universality of the Messiah's mission—encapsulated in the term (πάντων) κύριος—and that the way in which Luke narratively configures κύριος for Jesus effectively inflects the meaning of χριστός in Acts. More plainly, not only do death and resurrection *define* what Luke means by "Messiah" (cf. Luke 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 18:28; 26:23), but, remarkably, so does universal salvation and witness (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2:17; 3:25-36; 5:31;

10:36; 11:17; 15:7-11, 13-21; 28:31). From this perspective, Luke cannot leave χριστός behind but instead modifies its meaning in light of the emergence of πάντων κύριος, which is what preliminary analysis has shown but which will be explored in greater depth below.

The next chapter will take up the question raised by the present chapter's findings. Namely, if Luke identifies the universality of the Messiah's mission as crucial for grasping his identity in Acts, how can that be squared with Jesus' physical departure from the earth and only fleeting appearances in Luke's second volume?

2. The Exalted Lord and Universal Witness

2.1 Recap of Chapter 1

In the first chapter I analyzed how Luke 24:46-47 conjoins claims about Jesus' death and resurrection and claims about a future proclamation to all nations under the banner of scriptural fulfillment and the plan of God. Since the "missiology" implied in the statement is tied to a broader "christology" of Luke, to speak about the narrative unfolding of mission in Acts is to talk about the fleshing out of who Jesus is, according to Luke. Just as Luke narrates death and resurrection into his definition of "Messiah," so with universal proclamation Luke expresses a crucial aspect of Jesus' messianic identity—the *universality* of his Lordship. Chapter 1 argued that a primary purpose of Luke's narrative depiction of universal proclamation is to indicate the (non-ontological) expansion in Jesus' identity. Jesus does not necessarily become something in Acts that he is not in Luke's Gospel—e.g., Simeon calls him "light for revelation of gentiles" (Luke 2:22) when he is less than two months old (cf. Lev 11:4, 6)—but, narratively, Jesus' Lordship over all people is not depicted in the Third Gospel. The narrative construal of Jesus' universal Lordship is left for Acts.

At the same time, Luke understands proclamation to all nations as belonging to the task of the Messiah. In other words, it is part of the Messiah's program to proclaim the light of repentance and forgiveness to all nations (cf. Luke 2:32; Acts 26:23). Thus, the fulfillment of that task establishing the universality of his Lordship (that is, over Jews and Gentiles) falls ultimately to the Messiah himself. Unlike the Great Commission, for instance, the Lukan commission enfolds the "missiological task" within a broader christological framework, making universal proclamation a sign of Jesus' messianic

identity. This is not to say mission is not an activity undertaken by Christian disciples, only that Luke's *primary* narrative way of construing mission is within a christological frame. Participation in mission, therefore, entails a kind of *discovery* of Jesus' identity (see Chapter 3) rather than simply a means for remedying the ignorance of "others."

Moreover, because of the second volume (Acts), the Lukan commission is explicated narratively and therefore warrants a different hermeneutical approach (than, say, the Matthean commission). Part of that difference reveals itself in the way the Lukan Jesus' words are couched in promise and prophecy rather than in imperatives. Even the notion of "witness" points to the confirmatory role of apostles and servants rather than to the preeminence of their initiative in universal proclamation. They will witness the unfolding of the universal scope of the Messiah's Lordship rather than bring it about simply through their obedience to a mandate. In the end, Luke 24:46-48 frames expectations for Acts as the narrative unfolding of Jesus' messianic identity as universal Lord, confirmed by the testimony of witnesses and reflected in the activity of proclamation, behind which stands the guidance and activity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.2 Reading Mission in Acts

2.2.1 Introduction: Challenges

One of the biggest challenges to the present thesis is the observation that by ascending to heaven in Acts Jesus departs from the narrative, if not entirely then at least in ways that would seem to preclude the notion that he himself remains responsible for universal mission (cf. Acts 26:23). Therefore, to support the conclusions of Chapter 1, it must be shown that Jesus retains responsibility and governance over the universal

mission in his name, even and especially after his physical departure from the earth in Acts 1:10.

The challenge in demonstrating this derives, in part, from a persistent scholarly view that equates Jesus' physical absence from the narrative with the removal of his "presence" or "activity" from the movement in his name.[1] On this view, most of Acts' christological development—especially in the speeches, which represent more than a fourth of the book—is the result of theological or christological reflection *in Jesus' absence.* Indeed, Acts maintains a "high" christology in places (cf. Acts 2:17-36) as a kind of counterbalance, compensating for Jesus' absence as the movement associated with him spreads across the Mediterranean. Jesus is "Savior" (Acts 5:31; 13:23), "Servant" (3:13, 26; 4:27, 30), "exalted to God's right hand" (2:33; 5:31), "Lord (of all)" (2:21, 36; 4:33; 7:59; 10:36; etc.), the one whose name brings power and healing (2:22; 3:6, 16; 4:12; 9:34; 10:38; etc.); but, according to this view, such titles and traits are attributed to Jesus as one who *acted only in the past*. Luke's view of Jesus in Acts is, in effect, an "absentee" or "diastatic" christology.[2] Representative of this view, and often

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[1] As Robert O'Toole noted 35 years ago, however: "Few scholars have shown much interest in [this] aspect of Lucan Christology, the amount of activity which the author of Luke-Acts assigns to the risen Christ." *The Unity of Luke's Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1984), 38. Scholarly exploration of this aspect of Acts has certainly increased since O'Toole's observation but, somewhat surprisingly, most conclusions resulting from this enterprise have largely deferred to those whose work *preceded* O'Toole's observation. C. F. D. Moule, "Christology of Acts," 159-185; George MacRae, "Whom Heaven Must Receive until the Time: Reflections on the Christology of Acts," *Interpretation* 27.2 (April 1973): 151–165; Bo I. Reicke, "The Risen Lord and his Church: The Theology of Acts," *Interpretation* 13.2 (1959): 157–169; G. W. H. Lampe, "The Lucan Portrait of Christ," *New Testament Studies* 2.3 (Feb 1956): 174-175. Cf. Talbert, "Promise and Fulfillment" 91-103; Tuckett, "The Christology of Luke-Acts," 133-64. In this respect, reflections on Jesus' activity in Acts especially have not developed greatly in the last fifty years.

[2] Hans Conzelmann is rightly recognized as the originator of the idea of an "absentee christology," in the sense that his work is most responsible for its popularity. Cf. *Theology of Luke*, 186: Jesus is "a figure from the past by means of the picture of him presented by tradition." His broader thesis holds that the crisis in the delay of the *Parousia* has prompted Luke to "periodize" history and portray the gift of the Holy Spirit as the assurance of salvation which believers require in Jesus' absence. Yet, when the term "absentee" is

identified as its originator, is C. F. D. Moule: "Jesus is…represented in the church's activities and expansion by the Holy Spirit, whose advent is the result of Christ's 'withdrawal.'"[3]

Underlying this viewpoint is the continued influence of Hans Conzelmann's thesis on Luke's periodization of salvation history.[4] Luke's story envisions history as neatly divided (cf. Luke 16:16) into epochs (Israel, Jesus, *ecclesia pressa*). Jesus, who belongs to the "middle of time," cannot regularly participate in the epoch of the church or else the divisions themselves lose their shape. Thus, all the visions or supposed appearances of the Lord Jesus in Acts are classified as exceptions, proving that Jesus really is absent from the earth. While the church may draw on Jesus' power by the Spirit, by invoking his name, by proclaiming the gospel, and by the personal transformation of their lives,[5] these are less "appearances" than the residual influence of an influential leader.

The "absentee" view[6]—as this Chapter will argue in detail—does not offer the best account of Luke's narrative, nor is it as coherent a view as its popularity would

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cited, it is usually C.F.D. Moule whose name is called ("The Christology of Acts," 165)—e.g., MacRae, "Whom Heaven Must Receive," 158. Bo Reicke has alternatively called the same general idea Luke's "diastatic christology." Cf. "The Risen Lord," 161-162: "…Luke has a certain tendency toward diastatic Christology so that Christ is not very often represented as being personally active, but mostly supposed to act through his Spirit or his Angel. For in this context the Spirit or the Angel are nothing but the representatives of the risen Lord himself." Jervell merely echoes these earlier claims (*Theology of Acts*, 33): "In Acts, the exalted Christ is a remarkably passive figure and it sis hard to see that he has any real function."

[3] Moule, "The Christology of Acts," 179: "On the only other occasions when he "appears" at all it is only in a vision (9:10; 22:17-18; 23:11—by implication); otherwise it is by the Spirit (or by his Spirit) or by an angel that action is taken on earth (8:26, 29, 39; 11:28; 12:7; 13:4; 15:28; 16:6, 7; 20:23; 21:11; 27:23). More consistently than in any other New Testament writing, Acts presents Jesus as exalted and, as it were, temporarily "absent," but "represented" on earth in the meantime by the Spirit (except that, undeniably, in the vision of Acts 18:10 Jesus says ἐγώ εἰμι μετὰ σοῦ)."

[4] *Theology of St. Luke*, 170-206.

[5] George MacRae, "Whom Heaven Must Receive," 161-162.

[6] A more recent representative of this view, in his own way, is A. W. Zwiep, *The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

indicate. For example, neither Moule nor George MacRae actually propose such a characterization as the *primary* way to understand Lukan christology. Moule in fact concludes that there are *several* different "christologies" in Acts that should not be reduced to a single conception,[7] making the association of his name with *the* "absentee" view rather ironic. Even MacRae's views, which he acknowledges to be built on Conzelmann's, are far less black-and-white than might be supposed.[8] More importantly, where Moule does take up the claim about Jesus' absence from Acts, it is in specific contrast with Pauline conceptions of an "inclusive," corporate christology.[9] The contrast allows Moule to highlight what is truly distinctive about Luke's christology, namely that it tends to be *individualistic*. In other words, Jesus remains for Luke an individual,

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[7] Moule, "The Christology of Acts," 166-172. Moule is also overly beholden to the identification of Acts' sources—as so many scholars of his generation have been—which inevitably results in "seeing" different christologies whenever possible because distinct sources help identify distinctive "christologies." Obviously, lost in all this—yet increasingly recognized since Moule and MacRae—is the fact that Luke is the theological editor of the received tradition and would have been just as aware of tensions among "christologies" as modern scholars. For an example of an older analysis that recognizes this diversity but still posits a unity is Reicke, "The Risen Lord," 162: "This variety does not mean that there are different Christologies in Acts. It means only that Luke has given illustrations of how the kerygma was partly adapted to the audience to which it was addressed. Peter preaching to Jews, and Paul speaking to Gentiles, would emphasize different points and use different ideas according to the interests and the education of the hearers. Certainly there was also in the Christology of the church a gradual transition from particularism to universalism. This is faithfully reflected by Acts. Luke himself, however, does not think it is a question of different Christologies. He is convinced that Christ is one and the same in all situations, that his Spirit is behind all preaching of the gospel, and that the apostles presented one and the same kerygma to the people, only in different terms according to the environment."

[8] MacRae actually begins his essay ("Whom Heaven Must Receive"), which otherwise emphasizes Jesus' absence at points, by saying (154): "Luke does not conceive of the christological question as properly put in the past tense. For him, Jesus is alive, risen, exalted, active."

[9] Moule, "The Christology of Acts," 179-180: "Even more clearly Acts is marked off from the Pauline writings, at any rate, by its conception of Jesus as now no longer 'on earth' but 'in heaven.' The narrative of the ascension in Acts 1:9-11 is consistently presupposed throughout the story. In Acts 2:33 the exalted Jesus is described as having poured out the Spirit. In Acts 3:21 heaven must receive him until the proper time comes. When he appears to Paul on the Damascus Road, it is a special visitation from heaven (9:3; 22:6; 26:13)… A similar 'absentee Christology' does occur, indeed, in I Thess. 1:10, where the Christians are to await God's Son from heaven. But for the most part the Pauline epistles reverse this impression of temporary absence by the sense of intimate relation between Christians and Christ which pervades them."

notwithstanding the few occasions on which he identifies himself with the movement in his name (Acts 9:4-5; 22:8; 26:15; cf. also 4:2).[10]

In a way, Moule's conclusions about this "individualistic" christology support the overall claims of this dissertation—namely, that Jesus' identity as the one Messiah and Lord remains central to Luke's vision of mission. An individualistic construal of the Lord Jesus, moreover, represents another potential departure from the vision of Matthew (or of interpretations of Matthew) in which Jesus tells his followers "I am with you always" (28:20). Jesus is not always with his followers in Luke, at least not in the ways we tend to think of presence, yet his physical departure enables there to be a kind of epistemological space between who Jesus is and who his followers think he is. Acts, therefore, allows for opportunities in which his closest followers learn[11] or "discover" the identity of Jesus in the practice of universal witness. At the same time, an "individualistic christology" cannot be absolutized since the Servant mission of Jesus can be carried out by servants like Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:47; cf. Chapter 4). Jesus proclaims light to Jews and Gentiles (26:23), but so does Paul (26:18).

For our present purposes, it suffices to point out that a strong "absentee" view of Jesus in Acts tends to lead to the assessment of Acts as basically a "succession narrative."[12] Where the definitive absence of Jesus is assumed and the presence (and

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[10] C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1977), 97-106.
[11] Beverly Gaventa, "Learning and Relearning the Identity of Jesus from Luke-Acts," in *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage,* ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 148-165.
[12] By succession narrative we mean an account of the origin of a movement in its second generation after the departure of the movement's founder. Cf. Francois Bovon, "The Importance of Mediations in Luke's Theological Plan," in *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives,* transl. Jane Haapiseva-Hunter (Pickwick: Allison Park, 1995), 58: "The little the book of Acts tells us of the activties of the ascended Lord has to do with the searching for and formation of succesors." Cf. Lampe, "The Lucan Portrait," 174;

obedience) of apostles/witnesses is emphasized, the conclusion becomes inevitable that mission is what believers do in Jesus' absence. While it is no doubt true that Acts exhibits several characteristics of a classical succession narrative,[13] it is no less true that Luke shows how Jesus—even after his ascension—retains responsibility for universal proclamation in his name. The mission of the Messiah, in other words, *remains* under Jesus' direction and influence—there is only one Messiah of Israel, after all—even as he takes his place next to God in heaven. Moreover, "succession" typically implies continuity of mission, whereas for Jewish believers to continue the mission of Jesus *in reaching out to members of Israel* would represent discontinuity with God's ultimate will. True succession, in this case, would require a transformation in order to participate in and recognize *outreach to Gentiles* as part of the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. How Jesus' followers participate in the fulfillment of that messianic mission is the subject of Chapters 3 and 4.

Recent research on Acts' christology has shown that the "absentee" view is overstated and its coherence much less apparent than the popularity of the phrase "absentee christology" would suggest. In a study of spatial geography in Acts, Matthew

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George MacRae, ("'Whom Heaven Must Receive'") rightly recognizes the differences in commissioning accounts, but unnecessarily concludes that for Luke Jesus' departure is permanent, as far as the narrative is concerned (157-158): "Of course, unlike Matthew, Luke was to supplement his Gospel with a second volume in which the beginnings of the mission would be described. There too the initial focus is on the departure of Jesus ('a cloud took him out of their sight,' 1:9), on the mission of the apostles ('you shall be my witnesses,' 1:8), and on the promise of the Father which is to confer power, the Holy Spirit ('you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,' 1:8). The remainder of the book is characterized by a depiction of the witnessing of the apostles and of Paul *in the absence of Jesus*" (emphasis original). See also W. C. van Unnik, "The Book of Acts: The Confirmation of the Gospel," *Novum Testamentum* 4 (1960): 25-29; O'Toole, "Parallels," 211-212.

[13] See Talbert, Charles H., and Perry L. Stepp. "Succession in Mediterranean Antiquity, Parts I and II," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 37.1 (1998): 148–189.

Sleeman[14] shows that the dualistic categories of "presence" and "absence," "active" and "passive"—upon which the "absentee" view depends—do not map well onto Luke's narrative conceptualization of the ascended Lord Jesus. In fact, systematic theologians[15] have been quicker to recognize this than biblical interpreters. For instance, some have noticed how Pentecost (where Peter recognizes that Jesus' exaltation includes his authority to dispense the Spirit—2:33) *creates* the problem of Jesus' presence rather than resolves it. As Andrew Burgess puts it, "The ascension cannot be seen as simple absence – rather it creates the possibility of *an altogether different form of presence.*"[16] Building on the work of systematicians like Burgess, Sleeman argues that the ascension reconfigures space in Acts, such that "on earth" and "in heaven" no longer cohere as discrete locative descriptors. Rather, with Jesus' exaltation, "Christ-space" transcends simplistic geographical designations. Therefore, the Lordship (or kingdom) of Christ cannot be flatly equated with Jewish or Gentile territories as if pre-ascension conceptions remained unaffected by Jesus' exaltation. Moreover, the subtle dynamic of Christ-space should immediately raise question marks over readings of Acts that think in traditional terms of conquest or "winning" new territory for Christ. Rather, the ascension of Christ reconfigures all space so that both conversions and conflicts arise from the competing conceptions of Christ-space. As Sleeman notes, Jesus' ascension continues to reconfigure

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[14] *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009).
[15] Sleeman draws on Douglas Farrow, Gerritt Scott Dawson, and Andrew Burgess for the way in which their reflections on Jesus' ascension (should) reconfigure conceptions of Jesus' presence-via-absence in Luke. According to Sleeman, what these accounts lack is a thoroughgoing narrative reading of Acts in light of their theological reflections. Sleeman, *Geography,* 18-21.
[16] *The Ascension in Karl Barth* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 96, cited by Sleeman, *Geography,* 20 (who adds the emphasis).

"believer-space" in Acts (esp. chs. 1-11), so that the experience of believers increasingly bears the influence of the ascended Lord.

> [T]his spatial reading…has readily highlighted Jesus' active "presence in absence" within the narrative's economy of space, confirming Jesus' absence from earth without rendering him passive within the present age. This ordering of space justifies seeing Jesus as a rounded character within Acts, and demonstrates the need to spatialise and "Christologise" [*sic*] discussions of "God's superintendence of history."[17]

A number of details in Acts confirm the credibility of Sleeman's thesis. For example, the near-truism in Acts scholarship that the kerygmatic speeches occupy themselves with Jesus' actions *in the past* runs aground on the simple observation that not only are the quotations of Jesus' teachings nearly absent in Acts, but where they do occur, they are teachings not recorded in Luke's Gospel (Acts 11:16; 20:35). While it is true that numerous speeches offer kerygmatic summaries of Jesus' death and resurrection, in the narrative itself so much of the presentation of Jesus' character is oriented by his *present* behavior. Luke's broad characterization of *Jesus'* post-ascension words in Acts is consistently directed toward what he has to say *in the present*—in heavenly appearances, dreams, visions, and character speeches. Thus, Luke is not interested as much in Jesus as the source of inspiration from the remembered past. At no point do the apostles or Paul's associates stop to reflect on the many teachings contained in the Third Gospel; rather, they find themselves constantly *being instructed* by him through christophanies and by the Spirit.

Given this background to the challenges facing this part of our study, it will be argued, on the basis of a close reading of Jesus' "presence" in Acts and the work of

[17] Sleeman, *Geography,* 135.

Sleeman and others, that Jesus remains influential in Acts for the unfolding of universal witness. As long as we do not limit ourselves to construing Jesus' mode of presence in the way the earthly Jesus was present in the Third Gospel, we will find that Luke's characterization of Jesus redefines what "presence" and "activity" mean. Simply put, Jesus is not absent from Acts; in fact, signs of his ongoing activity are woven into the narrative, especially as the "Way" moves beyond an exclusive focus on the land and people of Israel. In this way, Luke connects his characterization of the exalted Lord Jesus to the unfolding of universal witness in his name. Jesus remains an individual distinct from his church, thereby creating space for believers to misunderstand and (re)learn his identity (or reject it), but because universal salvation remains Jesus' prerogative as Messiah, he continues to carry it out by the Spirit and with the help of his followers and sometimes without.

2.2.2 Framing the Questions

To put these preliminary challenges in perspective, we can formulate the reading of mission in Acts as a twofold task: First, if Luke-Acts narratively construes the identity of the Messiah Jesus, how does Jesus' physical departure from the earth fit within this construal?[18] After all, Luke emphasizes Jesus' earthly departure to heaven, concluding his first volume with the ascension (24:51) and introducing his second volume with an even more detailed account (Acts 1:9-10). Inherent in Luke's christology is the notion

[18] See, e.g., the formulation of Mark Reasoner, "The Open Stage of Luke and Acts," in *Delightful Acts: New Essays on Canonical and Non-canonical Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Dennis R. MacDonald, and Clare K. Rothschild (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 169: "The open staging of Jesus' actions and teachings in Luke offers its author a challenge when writing his second volume. How can Jesus be portrayed as teaching and healing as a prophet after he has ascended to heaven?"

that not only is Jesus risen in fulfillment of God's scriptural plan but he has also ascended to heaven, where he is exalted at the right hand of God (Acts 1:11; 2:33; 5:31). As the exalted one "whom heaven must receive" (Acts 3:21) until the *Parousia,* Jesus is responsible for pouring out the Holy Spirit on his witnesses (2:33). If universal proclamation to all nations is going to take place in Acts—in accordance with Israel's scriptures and Jesus' predictions in Luke 24:46-49—it will have to take place without the *earthly* Jesus at the helm. How can Acts narratively develop Jesus' identity as universal Lord when Jesus himself physically exits the stage, at least until the *parousia* (Acts 1:10-11; 3:21; cf. Luke 21:27)?

A second, and related, task for understanding Jesus' narrative identity in Acts is to understand properly the narrative's focus on the activity of Jesus' *witnesses*. Thus, the same question presents itself in equally challenging form from the side of the human characters, as it were: how does the activity of fallible witnesses—including the activity and *in*activity of the apostles (cf. Acts 8:1), to whom the universal commission (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8) is given—somehow develop Jesus' narrative identity (as universal Lord)?[19]

Thus, our argument must address these two challenges—Jesus' apparent absence from Acts and the narrative's focus on his apostles/witnesses—on the way to

[19] On the traditional view of how Luke and Acts relate, of course, these observations are not considered wrinkles at all. The two volumes have different subject matters, different genres even. That is, appended to an account of Jesus' life is an account of his followers in their attempts to live in accordance with his teachings in the wake of his departure. In the shift from Luke to Acts, apostolic exploits, narratively speaking, replace messianic exploits. But Acts is, even on a cursory reading, incompatible with that view. Not only do Jesus' teachings rarely make an appearance (cf., presumably, only 11:16 and 20:35), but he himself appears to give instruction along the way (e.g., 7:55-56; 23:11; for his other "appearances," see below).

demonstrating how Acts unfolds the narrative identity of the Messiah Jesus as "Lord of all." It will need to be shown that Jesus retains responsibility, as ascended and exalted Lord, over the unfolding of proclamation to all nations and the movement of the "word" to the far reaches of the earth. Moreover, Luke's construal of the activity of apostles and witnesses must be shown to depend on the ongoing influence and direction of the ascended Lord so that in the exercise of their increasingly universal proclamation his universal Lordship is increasingly evident. In particular, this includes the crossing of cultural and ethnic boundaries (all nations/Gentiles) as well as geographical boundaries (end of the earth).

In his efforts to show the risen Lord's enduring activity and influence in the story of the apostles and the early church, Luke conceivably could have avoided Jesus' narrative departure altogether. Again, taking Jesus' presence in Luke's Gospel as the standard, Luke could have either simply and suggestively omitted the ascension (cf. Matthew 28:20), depicted Jesus' ascension in vaguer terms (cf. Peter's departure "to another place" in Acts 12:17), or left the risen Jesus' narrative fate more open-ended (cf. Paul's fate in Rome, omitted by Luke). Luke, however, unmistakably insists on Jesus' departure *to heaven*. The angelic figures who appear immediately after Jesus' departure emphasize this very fact: "why do you stand looking up toward *heaven*? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into *heaven*, will come in the same way as you saw him go into *heaven*" (Acts 1:11). In his Pentecost speech, Peter offers more specific detail: "being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, [Jesus] has poured out this that you both see and hear" (Acts 2:33; cf. 5:31). Jesus' exaltation enabled his reception of the Father's promise (Luke

24:49; Acts 1:4) and the requisite authority to distribute the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5), which Acts 2:2 (cf. 2:19) reminds us, was signified by a great rush of wind "from heaven."

Whatever conclusions we reach about Jesus' ongoing activity in Acts, they must be rooted in the fact that, according to Luke, Jesus ascended to heaven and will return to earth at the *parousia*. Though the resurrection scenes (Luke 24) demonstrated Jesus' resurrection from the dead to new life *on earth,* with the ascension Luke makes it clear that his earthly life is over. The next phase of his existence is in exaltation, next to God, *from whence* he is able to govern and influence the unfolding of events. Though he was born "Lord" (cf. Luke 2:11) of "all people" (2:10, 31; 3:6) including Gentiles (2:32; cf. 4:25-27), that dimension of his identity, promised in Luke's Gospel, requires a new configuration. Just as Luke's Gospel narrates into Jesus' messianic identity his death and resurrection, so Acts will narrate universal witness into Luke's definition of "Messiah." The success of a universal mission in Acts will, in effect, verify the scriptural claims that the Messiah Jesus is truly Lord of all.

2.2.3 Framing Responses

Several immediate responses can be offered with respect to these challenges, and they help to frame our analysis in this Chapter: (a) inasmuch as Jesus remains an active character in Acts, his active presence is on the whole different in kind from the characterization of his presence in Luke 1:1-Acts 1:8, given his early physical departure from the narrative (Acts 1:9). Of course, if we take the sense of Jesus' physical presence established by the Third Gospel as the standard of what narrative presence means, then

certainly, by that measure, Jesus is all but absent in Acts.[20] He does not walk around, teach publicly, perform wonders by physical contact, or do many of the things characteristic of the Gospel's account of the earthly Messiah. Therefore, we must be alert to the insufficiency of the concepts related to Jesus' earthly existence based solely in Luke's Gospel—e.g., absence/presence, active/passive, etc. In the course of addressing these concerns, it will become apparent that "absentee" characterizes Jesus' presence in Acts on the assumption that Acts *should* depict the Messiah's activity in the way that Luke's Gospel does.[21]

But, as far as messianic identity is concerned, Luke frames Acts in such a way that the marks of his identity go beyond merely his death and resurrection according to scripture; they also include universal proclamation, a major motif of Acts. Though the presentation of events surrounding the Messiah shapes the content of missionary preaching in Acts—thereby connecting Acts to Luke's Gospel—it is remarkable how little of Jesus' *pre*-ascended life makes it into Acts (cf. 2:22; 10:38-39). Certainly Jesus' death and especially his resurrection figure into Acts' kerygmatic speeches (2:22-36;

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[20] cf. Douglas Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 279: "At the Gospel's end and in the beginning of Acts Luke describes Jesus' return to heaven. He makes it clear that Jesus is no longer on earth guiding his followers as he had done during his earthly career. But Luke is also careful to point out that as Lord, Jesus continues to be immanently involved with his people." MacRae ("Whom Heaven Must Receive, 158) too easily equates an insistence on Jesus' physical absence with an absence in other aspects. The problem arises from the fact that MacRae sees "presence" in much too literal a sense. Because he thinks that Jesus ascension removes him from the earth, he is effectively "gone" and the mission is left entirely to his followers (absentee christology), thereby necessarily ruling out the possibility that ascension and exaltation are part of the *narrative* development of his identity. As Luke tells it, Jesus cannot become Lord and Christ (see Rowe, "Acts 2.36") because he already is. MacRae is guilty of thinking only in terms of biblical-theological perspective, which often mistakes the *narrative-theological* representation of events for a historical reconstruction of events behind the narrative. Because MacRae largely subscribes to Conzelmann's periodization thesis, he is forced to speak of a sharp division between Jesus' presence and absence.

[21] See O'Toole, *Unity,* 60-61; "Acitivity of the Risen Jesus," 478, 497.

3:13-26; 4:8-12; etc.), but very little is reported verbatim from Jesus' earlier teachings[22] or signs/wonders. *That* he did such things proves more useful for missionary preaching than a catalogue of specifics (cf. 10:38). The most compelling reason for this is that in Acts Luke is not interested in merely rehashing kerygmatic data points, as if the central claim of the gospel lies in the past.[23] To the contrary, Luke anchors his claims about repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' *present* activity as risen, ascended, and exalted Lord.

As will be shown, given all the christophanic appearances in Acts—especially the verbal guidance he offers and the pervasive role of the Spirit—Luke seems to be more interested in Jesus' present activity as it pertains to the mission to all nations. But Acts' construal of Jesus' narrative identity requires a different characterization of Jesus' presence in Acts than in Luke's Gospel. Acts' shift in the characterization of Jesus' active presence from the Gospel's depiction reflects the *narrative shift* in the expression of Jesus' universal Lordship, not a shift in the ontological identity of Jesus. Luke 24 insisted, in several ways, that the risen Jesus is the same as the crucified one (see Chapter

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[22] Two clear examples of dominical sayings occur in 11:16 and 20:35, yet in both cases these statements do not appear in Luke's Gospel as spoken by Jesus. This fact only reinforces the sense that Acts is much more concerned with the present guidance and activity of the risen and exalted Lord (cf. Acts 1:1).

[23] Cf. the mischaracterization of Luke's narrative by Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden*, 205-206: "Das Taufbekenntnis zu Jesus als dem κύριος schließt zwar den Erhöhten durchaus ein, aber eben in dem Sinne, den Lukas dem Ereignis der Erhöhung ausdrücklich gegeben hat: als zur Rechten Gottes erhöht, ist Jesus in der Gegenwart zwar durchaus κύριος πάντων (Act 10:36), aber das für die Glaubenden Heilvolle dieses Herrseins Jesu liegt in seinem vergangenen Leben beschlossen, in seinen irdischen Taten und Worten, in denen Gott ihn, den Erwählten, zum Herrn und Christus gemacht hat (Act 2:36). *Der christliche Glaube ist darum prinzipiell rückwärts auf das vergangene Leben Jesu gerichtet.* Der erhöhte Herr ist in der kirchengeschichtlichen Gegenwart zwar nicht unerreichbar fern; man kann zu ihm beten, und er greift in besonders gefahrvollen oder sonst bedeutsamen Situationen in den Gang der Ereignisse ein; aber daß "in seinem Namen" allein das Heil ist (Act 4:12), gründet in der vergangenen Zeit seines Lebens." Overly dependent on Conzelmann, Wilckens' claims find little evidence in a text that cites virtually no teaching of the earthly Jesus (cf. 11:16; 20:35) and emphasizes his Lordship in the present (see 2.3.1.3.1).

1); Acts maintains this continuity by insisting the exalted, heavenly Lord Jesus is the man originally from Nazareth (cf. Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 10:38; 22:8; 26:9). In other words, the development of Jesus' narrative identity—from crucified and risen one to exalted Lord of all—reflects less a change of Jesus' identity than the full emergence of Luke's *christology of presence*. In Acts Jesus does not become what he never was; rather, he takes on the role Luke declared for him from the beginning but which, in the narrative, had remain undeveloped.

(b) The remark by the angelic figures at Jesus' ascension also includes a promise about Jesus' return, which in a sense hangs over the whole narrative of Acts: "This Jesus … will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). At the very moment of his departure we are reminded of his eventual return. There remains an eschatological tone to the construal of Jesus' identity (Acts 1:11; 3:20-21; 10:42; 17:31). The events Acts narrates anticipate Jesus' return, which Luke characterizes as a "season of refreshing" and the culmination of "universal restoration" planned by God from long ago (Acts 3:20-21). But Peter does not relate all this to recommend simply waiting for his return, but to act in anticipation of it: "Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out" (3:19). Indeed, Peter commends this course of action "*so that* (ὅπως ἂν) times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (3:20). Repentance enables those who once rejected the Messiah to receive him as Lord and to receive what he brings, the possibility of refreshment and restoration even now.[24]

[24] Joel Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 140 fn 43: "This would be consistent with the Christology developed thus far in Acts, in which Yahweh's blessings of salvation are available through the agency of the exalted Jesus.

Lest we imagine that history is punctuated by two messianic "visitations" (cf. Luke 19:44) separated by a long absence, Peter clarifies that even now inclusion among God's people is dependent upon receptivity to the "prophet like Moses" (3:22) about whom even later prophets spoke (3:24). "Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out of the people'" (Acts 3:22-23 NRSV; Deut 18:15; cf. Acts 7:37). The force of Peter's appeal hardly makes sense if Jesus has come and gone, spoken and left. The people of Jerusalem whom Peter asks to "listen to whatever [the prophet like Moses] tells you" have, it is true, rejected Jesus' first appearance; but the present time is given for them to change their mind and listen to him (cf. Luke 9:35; Isa 42:1; cf. Acts 28:27-28; Isa 6:9-10). There is little rhetorical effectiveness in Peter's declaring the danger of their displacement ("utterly rooted out," Acts 3:23) without an accompanying invitation to repent and turn to God for the forgiveness of sins (3:19). The command to "listen to him" (cf. Luke 9:35), translated for a post-ascension setting, effectively means "obey the apostles' teaching" (cf. 2:42), but it may also suggest Jesus continues to communicate directly and by means of the Spirit. That there is still time to listen to the eschatological prophet also implies he still has something to say (cf. Acts 1:1).

(c) Finally, and following from the previous points, we can conclude that it is not *in spite of* Jesus' ascension that Luke insists on narrating Jesus' activity and influence throughout Acts but, almost paradoxically, *because* of his exaltation. Jesus' place in

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Here is a reminder that, though he is presently in heaven (1:9-11; 3:21), the Messiah is not for this reason uninvolved in messianic work."

heaven alongside God the Father confirms his role as Lord and co-regent within the heavenly kingdom (Luke 1:33; 4:5; 9:27; 11:20; 22:29-30; 23:42), whence the blessings of the Spirit and divine guidance can be dispensed. The promise of thrones for his Twelve (Luke 22:29-30) and of spiritual aid in times of persecution (12:11-12; cf. 21:12-15) depends on his exalted, authoritative position alongside the God of Israel. As *heavenly* mediator, the Lord Jesus can impart the Holy Spirit upon believers everywhere and thereby retain responsibility for universal mission which, apart from this Spirit, cannot happen (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8). From heaven, Jesus exercises the universality of his Lordship as the human boundaries of ethnicity or geography are crossed by his witnesses, reflected in his commission to proclaim him to "all nations" (Luke 24:47) and to "the end(s) of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Jesus' physical departure from the narrative stage is, therefore, not a *problem* to be overcome in Luke's construal of Jesus' Lordship, but a *prerequisite* in the development of Jesus' narrative identity towards universal Lord.

In other words, terms like "present" and "absent" cannot be equated flatly with whether or not Jesus appears in the narrative, whether or not he is "on earth" or "in heaven," and whether or not it is more precise to say God or the Spirit is acting in his stead. Because witness and universal proclamation are related to Jesus' scriptural identity, at a fundamental level, the christology of Acts continues to "develop" as the narrative about universal witness unfolds. Jesus is, therefore, both "absent" and "present" in significant ways, which cannot be reduced to a simplistic equation that because he is absent physically, all his activity in Acts must either be mediated by others (Spirit or angels, e.g.) or refracted through the activity of his followers. We must pay attention to the terms on which Luke presents the construal of Jesus' presence-by-means-of-his-

absence, which is of a more active than passive character. And it is precisely this sense of Jesus' ongoing activity in the unfolding of universal proclamation (irrespective of unfruitful debates about *where* Jesus is located in Acts after 1:9) that aids readers in recognizing Jesus' participation in the fulfillment of scriptural prophecy about him (Luke 24:46-48).

To summarize, concerning the dilemma of Jesus' physical absence and the focus on human actors in the narrative of Acts, we can insist that Acts redefines what "active presence" means in the construal of Jesus' narrative identity. Moreover, Jesus' ascension and exaltation do not create a complete absence since the invitation to repentance depends—at least in part—on the *present* activity and teaching (cf. Acts 1:1; 3:21; 5:31) of the eschatological "prophet like Moses." Finally, Luke can insist on Jesus' responsibility for universal mission *because* of his exaltation to God's right hand, from whence he is able repeatedly to appear, to dispense and be represented by the Spirit (and "name"), and to influence the unfolding of universal proclamation by direct and indirect means. As a narrative, Acts presents a thicker and more complex portrait than terms like "present" or "active" generally allow. This chapter will attempt to bring out the narrative complexion Luke gives to his christological portrait insofar as he ties the boundary-crossing spread of the "word" to the expansive (narrative) identity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.2.4 Argument Outline

The following argument will unfold through three main lines of argument:

A. Heavenly Ascension and "Appearances." Jesus continues to make appearances to his witnesses (especially Paul),[25] even as signs and wonders are performed in his "name." The cumulative portrait is one in which Jesus remains active in the narrative's *present,* even as that characterization overlaps with Luke's characterization of God. [26] Just as in the Third Gospel, Acts presents the activity of God and of Jesus as coordinated and "overlapping,"[27] especially with respect to actions which the *scriptures* typically assign to Yahweh.[28] While God and Jesus are by no means identical characters in Acts—the question of whether Luke holds to a "divine christology" is beyond the scope of this project—they are less *narratively* distinguishable than some studies suppose. In fact, Luke characterizes the appearances and activity of the Lord Jesus in Acts in ways similar to how he depicts God in the Gospel, further conveying the strong association between the two. There is little doubt that the ascended Jesus acts and speaks in Acts with the full authority of heaven, his will reflecting the very plan of God from the beginning. Such a claim is finally conveyed in the way the ascended Jesus' predictions come to fruition in Acts as if Jesus himself governs the outcome of events.

B. Spirit and "Lord." Because the Messiah is now "at God's right hand" his role with respect to the apostolic mission takes on new dimensions. For instance, after ascending Jesus is able to receive and thereby dispense the Father's promise upon his

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[25] Acts 7:55-56; 9:3, 10, 17; 18:9; 22:6-11, 17-18; 23:11; 26:11, 13-14, 16-21.
[26] *contra* Bovon, "The Importance of Mediations," 57: "What strikes the reader of the Gospel and of the Acts is in fact the difference between the activity of the man Jesus of the Gospel and the inactivity of the risen Christ of the Acts… Resurrected and ascended, Jesus ceases to be this possible mediator and confides his task to the Church. The fact of his being in heaven paradoxically takes away from Christ his commissarial effectiveness."
[27] Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology,* 197-218.
[28] Bock, *Proclamation,* 164-186; Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 115-120; cf. Acts 1:8; 2:33; 5:32; 10:39; 11:15; 13:31, 47; 14:3; 18:5; 20:21; 22:15, 18; 23:11; 26:16, 22; 28:23.

followers (Acts 2:33). Luke can insist on Jesus' physical departure (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:10-11) because he simultaneously emphasizes Jesus' role as heavenly mediator and his ongoing influence in the narrative by other means: the prophetic identification of Jesus as Baptizer-in-the-Spirit (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:6; 11:16; 19:2-4), ubiquitous presence of the Spirit[29] whom Jesus himself dispenses (cf. Luke 3:16; 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:33; 11:16), and the identification of Jesus with the Spirit in the spread of the gospel (Acts 16:7). Though sometimes presented to the reader in subtle ways, the character of Jesus remains far more active in the narrative than is typically recognized despite—or, rather, because of—his ascension and exaltation to God's right hand. Whereas the primary emphasis of Luke's Gospel was that *God was with Jesus* (Acts 10:38), in Acts the focus is on *Jesus being with God* (2:33; 5:31) and with his followers by the Spirit (16:7). As Acts progresses toward the ends of the earth, moreover, the personification of the Spirit increases (ch. 8-20) as a reflection of Jesus' involvement in the spread of universal witness.

C. Progress of the Word. Descriptions of the exalted Jesus' activity tend to cluster around the motif of universal proclamation. Jesus' presence behind universal proclamation can be demonstrated in both broad ways (summaries of the progress of the "word": 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31; cf. also 2:47; 4:4; 5:16; 11:24; 18:11) and in specific ways (episodes in which the Gentile breakthrough is either prefigured or achieved: Chapters 3 and 4). The progress of the "word" dots the narrative landscape, reminding the readers of the fulfillment of God's plans and the expanse of Jesus'

[29] E.g., Acts 2:33; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:10; 8:15, 17, 29, 39; 9:31; 10:19; 10:44; 11:12, 15; 13:2, 4; 13:52; 15:8, 28; 16:6, 8 ("Spirit of Jesus"); 19:6; 20:22, 23, 28.

Lordship. But the expanse of his Lordship is more than a reflection of quantitative growth.[30] Because Jesus' universal Lordship is demonstrated by the breadth of reception of the "word"—that is, as the gospel crosses ethnic as well as geographical boundaries—Acts' narration of the gospel's spread among God-fearers, Samaritans, and Gentiles as far as Rome is crucial for grasping the whole picture Luke offers of Jesus' Lordship. These episodes evoke Jesus' presence and guidance, showing that the risen and exalted Jesus himself carries out the universal mission to all nations, which in turn confirms the universality of Jesus' Lordship in Acts. In point of fact, the apostles' relative neglect of a mission to *all* nations only underscores Jesus' intervention for the universalizing of the mission. Not only are other witnesses enlisted—Stephen, Philip, and Paul—but Peter's (the lead apostle's) pivotal recognition at Cornelius' house turns out, in Luke's telling, to be the revelation that solidifies the nexus between christology and universal mission: "he is Lord of all!" (10:36).

Luke *specifically* portrays Jesus' ongoing presence in universal mission where pivotal events in the movement toward proclamation "to all nations" and "to the end of the earth" convey his universal Lordship. Particular episodes, both in Peter's and Paul's ministries, demonstrate that in the course of Acts' increasingly universal mission Jesus' presence is most pronounced. Because this chapter is limited to an overview of Acts and summaries of the movement, analysis of the Peter-Cornelius incident (Acts 10-11:18; 15:7-11) will be taken up in Chapter 3 and Paul's ministry in Chapter 4.

[30] Readings of Acts that speak of diminishing returns miss the point entirely. Luke's purposes include much more than accounting for how the Christian movement achieved the size it had in Luke's day given its numerically obscure origins.

2.3 Exaltation to Heaven, Universal Witness on Earth

2.3.1 "Departure" to Heaven (Acts 1:9-11)

Fuller attention to Acts 1:1-11 as an introduction to the book (including its parallels with Luke 24:44-49) will be postponed until the next chapter. Certainly, understanding the "programmatic" outline of Acts (1:8) cannot be entirely separated from the question of Jesus' activity in Acts. After all, when the apostles ask about *Jesus'* restoration of the kingdom (1:6), he responds by referring to what *they* will be and do (1:7-8). In other words, early on in Acts the exalted Lord Jesus' activity and the activity of his earthbound apostles cannot in every instance be cleanly distinguished. And, indeed, that is part of the broader point this chapter attempts to make—just as "earthly" and "heavenly" Jesus cannot be entirely distinguished, neither can "exalted Lord" and the spread of proclamation in his name. Therefore, even though Acts' introduction is reserved for the next chapter, we are concerned at present with how Jesus' departure to heaven as exalted Lord primes readers' understanding of his ongoing role in Acts. For now, we take up Luke's emphasis on Jesus' departure from the earth and its implications for how Jesus' presence is narrativized in relation to the spread of salvation in his name.

2.3.1.1 Ascension

The commissioning scenes (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-8) conclude with Jesus' ascension to heaven (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11). Elsewhere, Luke refers to the event (ἀνελήμφθη; Acts 1:2, 22; ἀνεφέρετο, Luke 24:51) as the terminus of Jesus' earthly existence. Luke is the only Evangelist who specifically narrates Jesus' ascension (cf. Mark 16:19). Correspondingly, the Third Gospel anticipates the event (cf. 9:51, ἀνάλημψις; cf. 9:31) as part of the broader sweep of the kerygma. Whereas the other

Gospels have Jesus primarily (if not exclusively) anticipating his death and resurrection, Luke's Jesus speaks of his "ascension" as the culmination of the path ordained for him (Luke 9:51). Acts of course reinforces this notion, not least by applying the same "fulfillment" language for Pentecost in Acts 2:1 (ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς) that is used in Luke 9:51 (ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήμψεως αὐτοῦ). The ascension of the Messiah to God's right hand belongs within the fold of divine necessity alongside death and resurrection. Because Jesus' departure does not signify mere absence, but an ascension to a throne at God's right hand, Luke refers to Jesus' heavenly ascension as "exaltation" (5:31) or "glorification" (3:13) and attaches to it the outpouring of the Spirit (2:33).

In Acts, speeches help readers interpret the ascension of Jesus theologically, in light of the Spirit's advent at Pentecost. First, in a portion of his Pentecost speech comparing and contrasting Jesus with David (2:29-36), Peter focuses not on Jesus' departure, and consequent absence, from the earth, but on his promotion to the right hand of God's authority: "having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear" (2:33). Peter argues that the Messiah's dispensation of the Holy Spirit followed from the scripture's explication of the events surrounding Jesus (Ps 16, 110), thereby illuminating Jesus' exalted position at God's right hand (cf. 3:13; 5:31), from whence he pours out the Spirit of prophecy on "all flesh" (cf. LXX Joel 3:1-2; Act 2:17-18).[31] More detailed analysis on this aspect of Peter's speech will be offered below (2.3.2.1.1.2).

[31] This is one of the ways in which Luke's sequential characterization of Jesus—first in earthly form, then in resurrected form, and finally with ascended/exalted status—differs from the Johannine characterization

Thus, secondly, we can point to Jesus' exaltation as the premise upon which his new narrative role in Acts depends. In another speech (Acts 5:29-32), Peter adds that God exalted Jesus as "leader" (ἀρχηγός; cf. 3:15) and "savior" (σωτήρ; cf. Luke 2:11; Acts 13:23), clarifying Jesus' role as the one to bring σωτηρία/σωτήριον to the end of the earth. This last claim is proven by how Peter connects these titles to Jesus' responsibility for offering "repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (5:29), which Luke epitomizes elsewhere as simply "salvation."[32] Saviors are those who grant salvation—that is, the *opportunity*[33] for repentance and forgiveness of sins. That elsewhere in Luke-Acts it is God who claims the title of "savior" (Luke 1:47) indicates the exalted status signified by Jesus' ascension. The point is that the ascension is no mere departure from the earth but an exaltation with consequences for the fulfillment of Jesus' capacity to bring "light for the revelation of the Gentiles and glory to Israel" (Luke 2:32; Acts 26:18). Exalted to God's right hand, Jesus is granted responsibility for distributing the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 2:33, 38) and for giving repentance and forgiveness to Israel (Acts 5:29; 26:23), both prerogatives which are otherwise reserved for God alone.[34] And yet, they are prerogatives which Jesus can now claim to oversee through his guidance of universal witness. For universal outreach to take place, Acts implies, the exalted Lord

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in which earthly Jesus, risen Jesus, and exalted Lord have all blurred into one. In John, it is simply after his resurrection that Jesus gives the Holy Spirit directly to his disciples (John 20:22; cf. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13).

[32] Dupont, "La portée christologique," 133; Wilson, *Gentiles*, 48.

[33] See the learned discussion of why Acts 5:29 (Jesus' "giving repentance/forgiveness") should be understood in terms of the *opportunity* for conversion (Wesley and Conzelmann) rather than as producing conversion itself (*contra* Calvin and Stenschke) in Joel Green, *Conversion,* 132-142.

[34] On the giving of the Spirit by God, see Acts 2:17; 5:31; 11:17; 15:8; Joel 3:1. On God's responsibility for granting repentance/forgiveness, see Luke 5:21; Acts 13:38; 11:18. See 2.3.1.3 for more on the "overlapping" characterizations of God and Jesus, especially in Acts.

Jesus will oversee the dispensation of the Spirit, which has been crucially linked to the spread of witness (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8).

As Peter's Pentecost speech makes clear, Jesus is exalted to heaven so as to administer the power of the Spirit, which enables proclamation to all nations. In this respect, Jesus' exaltation is a necessary step in the expansion of witness; therefore, his exaltation initiates the narrative realization of his identity as universal Lord. Others[35] have shown that Acts 2:36—"God made him Lord and Christ"—reflects a declaration of a prior reality rather than the designation of an ontological change. After all, Luke insists that from the beginning Jesus is "Lord" (cf. Luke 2:11) and his mission includes outreach to Jew and Gentile (Luke 2:32; 3:6; 4:25-27). *Narratively*, therefore, the mode of Jesus' presence *must* change and his identity as messianic Lord of all awaits fuller construal. Yet, the newness in Jesus' identity in Acts is essentially epistemological (he is coming to be known in a new way) rather than ontological (as if he *becomes* something in Acts that he was not before). As the next two Chapters will show, Luke narrates this "expansion" in Jesus' identity by highlighting the need for characters like Peter (and the apostles) to recognize Jesus' identity as universal Lord. That is, Luke shows how the third pillar of the Messiah's scriptural identity—universal Lordship—must still be *learned* by those who participate in witness to all nations.

Lastly, the finality of the departure is perhaps more emphatic in Acts since two divine figures (cf. Luke 24:4-7) immediately appear in order to interpret Jesus' departure for the disciples. The stress they lay on "heaven" as Jesus' new location, so to speak, is

[35] Rowe, "Acts 2.36," 37-56.

qualified by the claim that Jesus will one day return in the same way he left (1:11). Though no timetable is given, it is understood that until his return Jesus will remain in heaven. Readers of Acts know, however, that Jesus does not return in the narrative—descending on the clouds of glory (cf. Dan 7:13; Mark 14:62; Matt 26:64; Luke 21:27)—which raises the question of how we are to understand his several heavenly appearances in the course of the narrative.[36] Here we come to the first challenge our thesis faces. If Jesus is both responsible for universal mission *and* departs the earth completely (until his return), how can Luke demonstrate the Messiah's ongoing activity in universal proclamation in Acts, and what does Luke's characterization of the exalted Jesus' mode of presence tell us about the influence of the exalted Lord over proclamation to all nations in his name? To this question we now turn.

2.3.1.2 "Appearances" of the Ascended Lord

Though Chapter 4 will take up at length Jesus' appearances to Paul—which are several—it is necessary at this point to survey the various "appearances" of the ascended Jesus in Acts[37] and the characterization of Jesus' ongoing influence on the mission that these appearances collectively yield. A later section of this chapter (2.3.2.1.2.2) will detail the way in which these appearances cluster around the summaries and pivotal moments of the movement toward universal mission and thereby reflect the fulfillment of

[36] See Larry Hurtado, "Christology in Acts: Jesus in Early Christian Belief and Practice," in *Issues in Luke-Acts,* ed. Sean A. Adams and Michael Pahl (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2012), 230: "the author portrays Jesus as taken into heaven from where he exercises executive authority *on earth*" (italics original).
[37] For a helpful review of the data and the debates that accompany them, see "Jesus, Present and/or Absent? The Presence and Presentation of Jesus as a Character in the Book of Acts," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, ed. Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Snyder (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 123-140; and Beverly Gaventa, "The Presence of the Absent Lord: The Characterization of Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Atlanta, GA, November 2003), 1-11.

Jesus' promise-commission by Jesus himself (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).[38] The present sections highlight the various appearances of the ascended Jesus, what they suggest about his exalted status, and how an unreflective "absentee christology" mischaracterizes Luke's construal of such appearances.[39]

2.3.1.2.1 Heavenly Appearances of the Heavenly Lord

Though a detailed study of each "appearance" in Acts is not possible here, we can draw attention to several significant and representative examples. In one of the few accounts of an actual post-ascension "sighting" of Jesus in Acts, the narrator describes what the martyr Stephen sees before his death: "he gazed into heaven and saw the glory[40] of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'" (Acts 7:55-56). Stephen's gaze *into heaven* has the effect of confirming three earlier claims: Jesus' statement before the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:69: "But from now on the Son of Man will be

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[38] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 280: "in directing Paul's mission to the Gentiles in Acts, the exalted Jesus appears, as we have seen, as supreme in knowledge and power and guarantees his presence to Paul despite whatever difficulties Paul would face (e.g., Acts 18:9-10). That Paul arrives safely in Rome and freely preaches the gospel to all who would hear him there (cf. 28:30-31) is itself witness to this divine reality (cf. 23:11)." Buckwalter's conclusions are not wrong but they do rely too heavily on the assumption that Rome necessarily signals "the ends of the earth" for Luke. See Chapter 3.

[39] Cf. Richard J. Dillon, "The Prophecy of Christ and His Witnesses According to the Discourses of Acts," *NTS* 32 (1986): 549: "The Acts kerygma, therefore, being the call to final repentance by the apostles and Paul, is really the personal prophecy of the risen Christ. This, and not some absentee Christology, is authentic Lucan theory of salvation." Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 201, says about the absentee view: "It minimizes, if not altogether misses, what Luke most likely thinks these special visions and theophanies *signify christologically* about the exalted Jesus" (emphasis added).

[40] In addition, Stephen's language—specifically, the reference to the "glory of God" (δόξα θεοῦ, 7:55)—is a common biblical way of expressing *heavenly* appearance without over-personifying that presence (cf., e.g., Ex 24:16; Deut 5:24; 2 Ch 5:14; Ezek 8:4; 9:3; 10:19, 22; 11:22; et passim). For the association of divine δόξα with heaven, cf. 2 Ch 7:1; Ps 19:2; Wis 9:10; Isa 63:15. Such a conclusion is borne out by how Luke himself employs the language of δόξα. In Luke 2:9, for example, the angel of the Lord, accompanied by a heavenly host, appears before the shepherds enveloped in the "glory of God." Similarly, at Jesus' transfiguration, Moses and Elijah "appeared in glory," even as Jesus' disciples saw "his glory," no doubt prefiguring Jesus' glorification at God's right hand (Luke 9:26; 21:27; 24:26). See Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts*, 139.

seated[41] at the right hand of the power of God"; cf. 21:27); the two angelic figures' claim at Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:11; cf. Luke 24:26); and Peter's Pentecost claim that Jesus is indeed "exalted at the right hand of God" (Acts 2:33; cf. 5:31). But Sleeman is right to recognize that it is no coincidence that the appearance of Jesus comes after the longest speech in Acts that maps the "visionary geographies" of Abraham (7:2), Moses (7:30-32), and Solomon and the prophets (7:47, 52). Jesus' appearance afterwards has the effect of gathering the contents and claims of the speech under the penumbra of Jesus' "ascension geography," making Stephen's speech implicitly christological.[42]

Strictly speaking, the narrator tells us only *what Stephen saw* after being filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 55), not what everyone saw, unaided. Not only does Stephen repeat almost word for word what the narrator says, for the benefit of his audience[43] (v. 56), but the murderous crowd who rushes him covers their *ears* not their eyes (v. 57). It is Stephen's supposedly blasphemous christological claims that elicit outrage rather than an otherwise miraculous vision shared by all. Stephen's vision is not perceptible to his attackers because the new configuration of heaven-and-earth effected by Jesus' ascension is tied to "believer-space." Far from believers themselves, the Jerusalem Jews are the

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[41] Various interpretations have been offered for why Jesus is standing rather than sitting at God's right hand. After all, both Ps 110:1 and the allusion to it in Luke 22:69 refer to the Son of Man "seated at the right hand of the power of God." Some would suggest Jesus makes a special gesture to receive Stephen, the church's first martyr, others that the standing pose represents a higher than normal status vis-à-vis God; see the discussion of Barrett, *Acts*, 1:384-385. In terms of the present argument, the fact that arguably Luke's only depiction of the exalted Jesus shows him *standing* rather than sitting may indicate Jesus in the posture of continued activity—i.e., he is not a sedentary savior.

[42] Sleeman, *Geography,* 165-169.

[43] This reading assumes "Look!" (ἰδού), as in many cases in Lukan speech (e.g., in Luke 1 alone, cf. vv. 20, 31, 36, 38, 44, 48), is rhetorical rather than literal. While "look" can be used nearly literally in places (cf. Acts 2:7; 5:9, 25; etc.), that it is generally used non-literally is poignantly evident when Paul tells Elymas "Look…you will be blind for a while" (13:11)!

ones responsible for Jesus' death (7:51-53).[44] Additionally, Stephen's speech anticipates Jesus' heavenly appearance to Stephen[45] in the fact that just as in the speech God is nowhere contained, so in the vision—which elicits his Jewish opponents' rage—Jesus shows himself able to be *anywhere*.[46]

The individual and personal nature of what Stephen sees is echoed in Luke's description of Paul's Damascus road experience, according to Paul's companions. In one account, they can verify the (heavenly) voice but do not see its origin (9:7); in another, they saw only light without sound (22:16; cf. 26:13-14). In Paul's first recollection of the Damascus road encounter, he refers to the δόξα of the light (22:11), later specifying it as a "heavenly light" (οὐρανόθεν … φῶς, 26:13), and summarizing the whole experience as a "heavenly vision" (οὐράνιος ὀπτασία, 26:19) that prevented him from seeing. Even when Luke does not say "heaven" explicitly, terms like "glory" and "light" serve as shorthand. Here the similarity to the appearances of Yahweh in Israel's scriptures is striking (cf. Ex 3:3; Acts 7:30-32, 38; Num 12:6; Deut 4:12; 1 Ki 19:11-18; Ezek 2; Dan 10:7-9). Just as God is understood to reside in heaven in both Israel's scriptures and Luke-Acts, so Jesus upon his exaltation to heaven is characterized in *heavenly* appearances to individuals for the purpose of urging specific action or delivering a message.

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[44] Stephen's "eyewitness" account of Jesus—as well as the juridical context in which he gives it (6:11-15)—may explain why Paul later refers to him as a μάρτυς (22:20; cf. 1:21-22). We can surmise that Paul, as opposed to Saul, retrospectively grants the authenticity of Stephen's claim to see Jesus beside God, which, we recall, originally formed part of the basis for Saul's approval of his murder.

[45] Tthough Jesus remains silent, all three of Stephen's post-speech utterances (Acts 7:56, 59, 60) parallel statements made by Jesus at the hour of his own death (Luke 22:69; 23:46; 23:34; see Table 3 below). Stephen's dying words evoke Jesus' communicative presence, even though the exalted Jesus never utters a word.

[46] Sleeman, *Geography,* 168.

Most "appearances" of Jesus in Acts reinforce our findings thus far, even if they tend to be more dream-like than Stephen's revelation, confined to personal visions (ὅραμα/ὀπτάσια; 9:10; 18:9; 26:19; cf. Luke 24:23; Acts 23:11) or trances (ἔκστασις: 22:17-21; cf. 10:10), and often described in the vaguest of terms (cf. 9:3; 22:6-11; 26:13, 19).[47] As Paul himself characterizes Jesus' appearance in his Agrippa speech, it was "a heavenly light more brilliant than the sun" (26:13).[48] By the Lukan Paul's interpretation, at least, we can conclude that his visions of Jesus are heavenly visions, indirectly confirming Jesus' glorified position alongside God (2:33; 5:31), but also accenting Jesus' omniscience and omnipresence (e.g., 9:10-16). Though the terms from LXX Joel 3:1/Acts 2:17 (ὁράσεις and ἐνυπνίοις) do not recur in Acts, it is likely that the spate of dreams and visions that Peter and Paul have fulfill Joel's prophecy, according to Luke.[49] In other words, that Jesus continues to appear and speak to his servants confirms that the Spirit of prophecy (Acts 2) proves especially influential in the unfolding of the movement.

But it should be noted that these appearances—and the characterization of Jesus' presence/activity that they convey—remain individual manifestations to other

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[47] See J. B. F. Miller's typology in *"Convinced that God Had Called Us": Dreams, Visions, and the Perception of God's Will in Luke-Acts* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 52-63.

[48] οὐρανόθεν ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου περιλάμψαν με φῶς; cf. "glory of the Lord" which περιέλαμψεν αὐτούς in Luke 2:9; cf. Acts 7:2-7.

[49] B. J. Koet, "Divine Communication," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. J. Verheyden (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 750: "The visions of Paul are in line with the programmatic statement in Acts 2. Peter quotes Joel in such a way that this text can be interpreted as the scriptural proof for the Gentile mission. When the visions, prophesied in Acts 2, occur, they are the channel by which God assures and commands the Gentile mission. We can conclude that Luke chose revelation by dreams and visions as a mode by which he justifies the Gentile mission: Peter, Cornelius, Ananias, but especially Paul, are guided through visions. Dreams and visions are a way of divine communication, as it is in the OT and for many of Luke's contemporaries (e.g., in the writings of Josephus)." Yet cf. F. Scott Spencer, "Wise Up, Young Man: The Moral Vision of Saul and Other νεανίσκοι in Acts," in *Acts and Ethics,* ed. Thomas Philipps (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 34-48.

individuals. Luke is not interested, in other words, in declaring Jesus' Lordship over all by having him revealed publicly to all people. And even though Jesus identifies himself with the persecution suffered by his followers ("Why are you persecuting me?": 9:4; 22:7; 26:14), his heavenly appearances maintain this distinct individualism. After all, the exalted Lord appears to Ananias immediately after appearing to Saul (9:10-16), again reminiscent of scriptural theophanies, in order to get one believer to aid another. Additionally, lest it be overlooked, Jesus' appearance—at least in Saul's case—is for the purpose of enlisting and exhorting him to testify to salvation in his name. That pattern, especially with regard to exhortation, recurs throughout Acts.[50]

[50] The emphasis on Jesus' presence-via-speech is confirmed by a simple quantitative analysis of Jesus' spoken words in Acts. Naturally, the most obvious place his words of direct address appear in Acts is in the introductory verses (1:4-8), prior to his ascension. The risen Lord speaks about 62 words to his apostles in anticipation of his departure. Curiously, throughout Acts Jesus "speaks" four times as many words *after* his Ascension, from heaven, than before, on earth. Of these roughly 285 post-Ascension words, about half (135) are relayed by the narrator (half spoken to Paul in 9:4-6; 18:9-10; 23:11; and half spoken to Ananias in 9:10-12, 15-16) and just as many are recounted by Paul as the Lord's direct speech to him (22:7, 8, 10; 22:18, 21; 26:14-18). As much as we are right to emphasize the peculiar weight of Jesus' last earthly words (Acts 1:4-5, 7-8), it should be remembered that these words represent, statistically, less than a quarter of the recorded speech of Jesus in Acts. Moreover, the majority of the speech attributed to the ascended Jesus concerns Paul's commission (about 70%, if we include the thrice-narrated Damascus encounter as separate instances). I take the repeated accounts of Paul's Damascus road encounter as separate, statistically, because each contributes to the overall impression of Jesus' continued presence in Acts. In addition, Luke's attention to Jesus' words sets Jesus' pre-ascension commission to his apostles in parallel with Paul's reception of a commission directly from the Lord. Jesus' speech, in other words, helps establish continuity between the apostles and Paul with respect to the one universal mission. But speech is not the same thing as action or narrative presence, it might be argued. His words may be recalled but they are no substitute for Jesus' active presence itself. And yet, except for two (presumably) pre-ascension sayings of Jesus later recalled by Peter (11:16) and Paul (20:35), all the cited speech of Jesus after Acts 1:11 is purportedly delivered *by the ascended Jesus himself*. Past statements of Jesus are recalled, but most often as statements earlier spoken *in Acts.* Perhaps it is even a testimony to the strength of Luke's conviction that Jesus remains active that he recalls in Acts very few of Jesus' words from the Third Gospel. On this view, Luke need not quote the pre-Easter Jesus because the post-ascension Lord is *still* narratively speaking (cf. Acts 1:1).

2.3.1.2.2 Heavenly Lord on Earth?

At the same time, Luke insists that Paul's visions are authentic encounters with the ascended Lord rather than, say, merely the result of an affected state.[51] Soon after Saul's original encounter, Ananias tells him of the Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ("the Jesus who appeared to you," Acts 9:17). When Barnabas later vouches for Paul before the apostles, he puts it even more strongly, claiming that Paul "saw the Lord" (εἶδεν τὸν κύριον, 9:27), a statement tinged with irony given Paul's subsequent blindness. In his speech on the temple steps, Paul recollects a hitherto unmentioned vision (ἐκστάσις) in the temple (22:17-21; cf. 9:26-28), in which, Paul claims, "I *saw* the Lord saying to me…" (Εγένετο … γενέσθαι με … καὶ ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν λέγοντά μοι, Acts 22:17-18). The setting of the temple probably also signifies a "heavenly" encounter (cf. Luke 1:8-12, 19; 2:49; 19:45-46; 23:45) given its theophanic associations. At the same time, Stephen's speech about the Lord not dwelling in "houses made with human hands" (7:48) had earlier expressed the "ascension geography" reconfiguring the relationship between "heaven" and temple, not least by having Jesus appear to Stephen (alone) outside of it.

According to Luke, Saul/Paul never encounters the *earthly* Jesus, yet the ascended Lord appears to him several times (9:3-6; 18:9-10; 22:6-10, 17-18; 23:11; 26:13-18). Because Saul/Paul did not have the benefit of a physical encounter and commission from

[51] Hurtado, "Christology," 230: "Moreover, Acts certainly presents the ascended Jesus as active and influential in the earthly events recounted. That is, though Jesus is to return in person in God's good time, he is also now the focus of Christian witness and proclamation and is operative in directing and empowering believers in these matters. For example, it is the exalted and ascended Jesus who dispenses God's Spirit to all who turn to him (2:33), and in 16:7 the author even refers to the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of Jesus," indicative of the Spirit's role as the agency of Jesus in directing Paul and his companions. Also, in the accounts of visions/appearances of Jesus previously cited, it is clear that these are to be taken as real and powerful actions of the heavenly Lord Jesus, as in the dramatic reorientation of Saul from opponent to advocate of Jesus on the Damascus Road."

Jesus himself—having "converted" *after* Jesus' ascension—it is necessary for the ascended Lord to reveal himself to Saul directly. Paul's authority to serve as "witness" to Jews and Gentiles, especially given his past antipathy towards believers in Jesus, derives from Jesus himself (cf. Acts 1:21-22; 10:39, 42; 13:31). Naturally, therefore, Luke has Paul receive and recall the bulk of Jesus' appearances in Acts, underscoring Paul's bona fides as witness of the risen Lord (22:15; 26:16).

In the second version of the Damascus encounter, this time related by Paul himself, he ascribes more and different words to Ananias than the narrator gives him in Acts 9:10-17, specifically including the statement to Paul: "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, *to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice*" (ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον καὶ ἀκοῦσαι φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, Acts 22:14).[52] By both revealing himself to Paul and speaking to him directly, Jesus bestows on Paul the direct authority to "be his witness to all the world *of what* [he has] *seen and heard*" (22:15; cf. 23:11; 26:16; 4:20). Beyond all others, Paul benefits from the authority and implied commission Jesus' "appearances" confer (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8, 21-22; 13:47; 26:23). As Chapter 4 will argue, Luke repeats the account of Paul's encounter with Jesus, like Peter's encounter with Cornelius, in order to underscore Paul's considerable role in the unfolding of universal witness (Acts 13-28).

[52] In the context of Ananias' words, which themselves fall in the context of Jesus' appearance to Saul, it seems clearest to understand "hear his voice" (ἀκοῦσαι φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ) as a reference to Jesus' voice. See also 22:15 where Paul's vocation is to "be a witness of all that you have seen and heard," thereby tightly linking sight and sound and recalling the Damascus encounter. See Brittany Wilson, "Sight and Spectacle: 'Seeing' Paul in the Book of Acts," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts,* ed. Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Snyder (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 141-53.

One of the only apparent exceptions to this pattern of "appearances" comes in Acts 23:11, where the "Lord" delivers a message as he "stands by" or "stands over" Paul (ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εἶπεν). Such language (ἐφίστημι) represents one of the most explicit instances of physical action of which the ascended Jesus is the subject in Acts. For those familiar with Israel's scriptures, the manner of the appearance evokes angelophanic associations,[53] further reinforcing the idea that Jesus can be and act anywhere. Jesus' heavenly "location," in other words, does not restrict his appearances on earth. Yet Luke is less interested in specifying the precise nature of Jesus' manifestations. Debates about *where* Jesus resides (until the *Parousia*) emphasize a concern that Luke did not share. By all appearances, Luke is more interested in the fact of Jesus' ongoing appearances to and guidance of Paul in outreach to Jews and Gentiles, highlighting Jesus' ongoing influence from heaven without over-emphasizing the question of his physical availability to his witnesses.

2.3.1.3 Jesus as Narrative Actor in the Present

We have seen briefly how Luke characterizes Jesus' heavenly "appearances" as real interventions in the story that help determine the shape of the mission, especially as orchestrated by Paul. Now we will explore the implications of this combined

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[53] Luke conveys the ascended Lord's presence in similar ways to that of an angelic appearance is evident from the parallel construction between Acts 23:11 and 27:23-24.

> **Τῇ** δὲ ἐπιούσῃ **νυκτὶ** ἐπι**στὰς** αὐτῷ …θάρσει· ὡς γὰρ διεμαρτύρω τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ (23:11)
>
> παρέ**στη** γάρ μοι ταύτῃ **τῇ νυκτὶ** τοῦ θεοῦ … ἄγγελος … μὴ φοβοῦ, Παῦλε, Καίσαρί σε δεῖ παραστῆναι (27:23-24)

Both visions occur at night, with the heavenly figure standing near, issuing words of comfort to Paul about his impending opportunity to bear witness, and both with a tone of command or necessity. Cf. also the luminous angel of the Lord who aids Peter in 12:7 (ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου **ἐπέστη** καὶ φῶς ἔλαμψεν ἐν τῷ οἰκήματι). Possible parallels from Israel's scriptures include LXX Gen 28:13 (ὁ δὲ κύριος ἐπεστήρικτο ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς καὶ εἶπεν) and Numbers 22:23, 31.

characterization for the broader question of the narrative development of Jesus' identity as universal Lord. Specifically, the following analysis will explore how Acts applies with respect to Jesus (a) a strong sense of *present* activity; (b) the ambiguous title κύριος, and (c) the instrumental use of "the name of the Lord."

2.3.1.3.1 Actions Ascribed to Jesus in the Present

Another way Luke handles the challenge of showing Jesus' ongoing activity as universal Lord while also recognizing his heavenly departure is by characterizing his activity as taking place almost entirely *in the present*. That the exalted Lord speaks primarily in the narrative's present is an obvious point, but the observation proves significant in light of Paul's later claim that the Messiah Jesus is the one who would proclaim light to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 26:23). Given Jesus' physical ascension and exaltation to God's right hand, however, Paul's claim surely means that Jesus remains active in Acts by means of the Spirit (Acts 2:33), through the provision of "testimony" (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15), and several appearances (dreams/visions). Therefore, to "proclaim light" refers to the preaching of salvation by Jesus' witnesses through whom the ascended Lord is making his appeal. By guiding his witnesses directly and by the Spirit, occasionally against their will (cf. Acts 9:1-20; 10:1-44), Jesus himself directs the course of the universal spread of salvation to both Jews and Gentiles (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 13:47; 26:23).

Though Luke only rarely identifies Jesus as the subject of transitive verbs—thereby appearing to minimize his "activity" in the narrative—nearer to our concern is

how in Acts Luke assigns to Jesus action *in the narrative's present*.[54] This characterization begins in the very first verse of the book. The first description of Jesus in Acts—albeit in a reference to Luke's Gospel—speaks of "all that Jesus *began* to do and teach" (1:1). While some translations convert the curious use of the verb ἄρχω[55] into an adverb ("in the beginning": cf. NRSV, CEB)—presumably out of confusion over its plain sense—there is no need for a convoluted explanation, given our account thus far of Luke's insistence on Jesus' activity in Acts. In fact, the statement itself prepares readers to recognize Jesus' activity since, according to the plain meaning of the claim, Jesus will continue to act in deed and word.

Because of the ambiguous syntax of Acts 1:1-4, in fact, everything after Acts 1:3 grammatically *fits within* the recollection of Luke's first volume (Acts 1:1-2). In other words, the whole of Acts to come, at least as Luke has syntactically ordered its introductory clauses, belongs *within* the scope of Jesus' words and deeds. In this way Luke confirms the notion—argued in Chapter 1—that Luke and Acts together narrate the *one* story about Jesus.[56] Just as Luke 24:46-48 suggests—namely, that universal proclamation belongs within Luke's construal of christology—Acts 1:1-11 reiterates: Acts will extend Luke's broader purpose of rendering Jesus' identity as "Lord of all"

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[54] cf. Gaventa, "The Presence of the Absent Lord," 4: "I identify the activity of Jesus when either the narrator or a character refers to an action on the part of Jesus that takes place after the ascension itself."

[55] See Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §2098, 2128. In Acts 1:1, ἤρξατο implies καὶ διετέλει before ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας. Cf. ἀρξάμενος in Matt 20:8, Luke 23:5; Acts 27:23.

[56] Martin Hengel's conclusion about Luke-Acts, formulated vis-à-vis the influential views of Hans Conzelmann, remains true (*Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980], 59): "The *auctor ad Theophilum* did not set out to depict the history of Jesus as 'the middle of time', nor to present subsequent events in Acts as the 'period of the church.' In reality, the whole double work covers the one history of Jesus Christ."

(10:36)—that is, what he will *continue* to say and do. The ascension (1:9-11), therefore, does not narrate his new absence from the story, but his redefined presence and the reconfiguration of narrative space that it achieves.[57] In light of this reconfiguration, Luke's introductory claim about Jesus' continued speech and action (Acts 1:1) takes on additional significance.

The conclusion stands out all the more because of the fact that Luke so rarely refers back to what Jesus said *in the past*. The complement of Luke's focus on Jesus' *present* presence, so to speak, is the scarcity of statements referring to Jesus' pre-Easter past. Surprisingly very little is said about Jesus' words and deeds from Luke's Gospel (after Acts 1:1; cf. 10:38; 11:16; 20:35). Instead, Luke focuses on Jesus' present actions like pouring out the Holy Spirit upon believers, his ongoing appearances to Stephen and Ananias and especially Paul, the mediation of his presence by the Spirit (cf. Luke 12:12; 21:15; Acts 16:7), and the intermediary role of his name. The cumulative impression is that while God has historically acted through certain events, the course of present and future action takes the form of the Lord Jesus through whom God's plan is coming to fruition. Just as God's actions have been realized in Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension—in fulfillment of all of Israel's scriptures (Luke 24:44-49)—so Jesus' actions in the present and future will characterize the story of Acts and the church.

Closely following from the claim that Acts will narrate what Jesus *continues* to do and say (Acts 1:1) is the apostles' question: "Is this the time when *you* are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (1:6). Though the question can be quickly dismissed as

[57] For more, see Sleeman, *Geography*.

mere pretext for Luke's construal of a delayed Parousia or a reminder of apostolic obtusenenss (see Chapter 4), at a basic level the question assumes much about the risen Lord's capacities. That is, the apostles do not ask *whether* the risen Messiah can restore the kingdom; *that* he can and will do so is apparently a given (cf. Luke 24:21). Their question concerns timing—"is it now?"—and it reflects Jesus' own teachings prior to Easter (Luke 9:27; 12:32; 19:11; 22:28-30; cf. 23:51), not to mention his forty days of instruction speaking "about the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). The apostles' assumptions contribute to the framework within which readers conceive what it is possible for the risen Lord to do. What he can do, as vindicated messianic Lord, is restore the kingdom to Israel. As Peter's speech by the Temple makes clear, however, *full* restoration must await his *parousia* (3:21; cf. 1:11).[58]

That full restoration must await the *parousia*, however, does not mean that Jesus is effectively absent until then. To the contrary, as has been shown already, he will guide his apostles and witnesses, leading them by the power of the Spirit (Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:8), a claim especially borne out by Paul. Previous generations of Acts scholarship have emphasized the objective syntax of "You will be my witnesses" (1:8), implying that the

[58] O'Toole, *Unity,* 40 says "In other words, if the resurrected and exalted Lord and Christ who now acts in the community, stands in the center of Luke's presentation, the question about the time of the Parousia becomes irrelevant." This statement is unfortunately plagiarized (by translation) from Emmeram Kränkl—as evident by the use of the same (translation of a) Kränkl quotation in an earlier piece by O'Toole ("The Activity of the Risen Jesus in Luke-Acts," 474), which forms the basis for his larger book (*The Unity of Luke's Theology*). See the original quotation in Kränkl, *Jesus Der Knecht Gottes: die heilsgeschichtliche Stellung Jesu in den Reden der Apostelgeschichte* (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1972), 204: "Wenn hier statt des wiederkommenden Jesus der auferweckte und erhöhte, jetzt schon in der Gemeinde wirksame Here und Christus ins Zentrum der Darstellung gerückt ist, dann ist die Frage nach dem Termin der Parusie grundsätzlich irrelevant geworden." The first part of Kränkl's/O'Toole's claim can be accepted while rejecting what it denies. Luke retains elements of an apocalyptic worldview not fully "substituted" by indications of a delayed Parousia (*contra* Conzelmann). Acts 1:11 (cf. also 3:19-26) specifically draws attention to this aspect of Jesus' return, which makes the question of kingdom restoration a live one and no mere pretense on the part of the apostles (Acts 1:6).

apostles do little more than offer fixed testimony *about Jesus* (i.e. primarly the kerygma of his death and resurrection), thereby interpreting Acts' speeches as boiler-plate Lukan formulations. But another way of understanding the genitival phrase is that Jesus' witnesses will become eyewitnesses of what Jesus *will* do.[59]

Because a later section will cover Pentecost and Peter's speech (Acts 2), we can consider Peter's speech by the temple, which includes a slightly obscure section (3:20-26) in which the "raising up" of God's "servant" (παῖς, 3:22; Deut 18:15-18; cf. Acts 7:37) and Messiah is said to redound to the blessing of all nations (Gen 22:18) through Peter's Jewish audience. The speech concludes with this statement: "When God raised up (ἀναστήσας) his servant, he sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:26). Peter's words may construe resurrection and ascension ("raising up") as belonging within the same continuum, so to speak, but the overall impression of the passage is that Jesus' present activity concerns "turning each of you from your wicked ways." In other words, it is not an invitation now past that Peter identifies but a current summons to repentance (cf. 2:38; 26:23). Those who respond positively to the invitation, by listening to God's Moses-like prophet-servant (Deut 18:15-18), essentially fulfill God's ancient covenant and therefore participate in the blessing destined for all nations.

Later, in a brief response to the Jewish council (5:29-31), Peter confirms his earlier words about the ascended Lord's place in salvation history by attributing the gift

[59] Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts*, 30, who notes the objective/subjective split but overlooks the second possible objective meaning. Sleeman, *Geography,* 70, at least recognizes the syntactical possibility of "witnesses of me" without capitalizing on its evocative meaning.

of repentance to Jesus: "God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31; cf. 2:33). Here the capacity to give repentance and forgiveness to Israel follows from his exaltation by God. The pairing of repentance and forgiveness appears elsewhere in Luke-Acts, perhaps most noticeably in the Lukan commission (Luke 24:47) where it characterizes the content of universal proclamation. "Repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name will be preached to all nations," from the hindsight of Acts 5:31, suggests that the ascended Lord himself is assigned to carry it out (cf. Acts 26:23). If indeed he is the one to given repentance and forgiveness to Israel—the first act of restoration (cf. Acts 1:6)—then his witnesses serve as the instruments (cf. 9:15) by which that invitation is to go forth.

Later, when Peter is in Lydda, he heals a man named Aeneas. Peter's words to the man are what concern us at present: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed!" (9:34). This is one of the only times in Acts when the ascended Jesus is syntactically made the clear subject of a present, concrete action on earth, like the healings attributed to the earthly Jesus in Luke's Gospel (Luke 6:19; 9:11, 42; 14:4; 22:51). Some might say that Peter's assertion is merely elliptical—that he uses the name instrumentally to heal the man, not that Jesus performs the healing directly (Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10). But given the position of this "direct" healing by Jesus in the narrative, in anticipation of the spread of the word beyond Judea and Samaria, it provides Luke the opportunity to show how Jesus can reorder the space of believers.[60] In other words, "such

[60] *Geography,* 219 (emphasis original). Cf. Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the "Acts of the Apostles,"* trans. Ken McKinney, Gregory J. Laughery, and Richard Bauckham (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 121: "Luke is uncompromising on this theological point: the 'signs and wonders' that astonish the populations of the Mediterranean basin from the beginnings of

active Christology reinforces Jesus as absent in material terms…[while] realigning material space" [61] on the basis of Jesus' *new post-ascension presence*.

In addition to cases in which Jesus is made the subject of verbs, in several places Luke has Jesus serve as the direct object of actions within the narrative that seem to imply his ongoing agency. The most obvious example is the thrice quoted statement the ascended Jesus makes to Saul/Paul: "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (9:5; 22:8; 26:15). The exalted Lord introduces himself to Saul by identifying with the victims of Saul's persecutions. While it may strain the imagination to think that actions taken on earth against believers in Jesus somehow result in the oppression of the heavenly Jesus himself, Luke's purpose is to show such a close identification between Jesus and Jesus-followers that the impulse behind the spread of their movement—and thus its success—should be identified with the exalted Lord. In 26:9, Paul makes such an identification when he essentially claims he did "many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Though Luke lacks the developed Pauline notion of the "body of Christ,"[62] the several statements listed above indicate a close identification between ascended Lord and his people (cf. Acts 26:23; Chapter 4). That identification provides the foundation for the claim that Jesus' Lordship "of all" (Acts 10:36) is expressed narratively in Acts by the spread of proclamation in his name by his followers (Luke 24:47; Chapter 1), especially

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Christianity do not originate with some religious hero, even one greatly inspired; they are *the work of the Christ,* and the sign of the presence of the Risen One among his own. This Christological intransigence makes for a deficiency in Luke's pneumatology." Interestingly, this "Christological intransigence" is exactly what is required of Luke to show Jesus' Lordship in its brightest colors—by extending himself through the use of his name, introduced at Pentecost: Acts 2:21; LXX Joel 3:5. Not a glitch, one is tempted to retort, but a feature.

[61] Sleeman, *Geography*, 220.

[62] Moule, *Origin of Christology*, 97.

as new and surprising groups of people come to be included in the makeup of the church. As "all" continues to be defined in Acts, so too the portrait of Jesus' Lordship over *all* becomes clearer.

2.3.1.3.2 Overlapping Narrative Identities: κύριος

To this point the analysis has shown how Luke develops the narrative identity of the Messiah Jesus in Acts as universal Lord. While the focus has remained primarily on Luke's characterization of the exalted Lord Jesus in Acts, that portrait cannot be divorced from Luke's broader construal of the character of God in Acts. In fact, as I will argue below, Luke appears to develop the narrative identity of the ascended Jesus by ascribing to him words and actions associated with God in Israel's scriptures (and in Acts). With a brief survey of this "overlap" in Luke's characterizations of God and of Jesus—as well as of the significant ways in which they diverge—a clearer picture emerges of how Luke construes Jesus as exalted κύριος of heaven excersizing the authority and agency otherwise reserved for Yahweh alone.[63]

Other studies have traced Luke's use of the title κύριος throughout Acts.[64] Because the vast majority of unambiguous κύριος references in Acts are to Jesus,[65] the

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[63] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 279: "Luke repeatedly describes the person and activity of the exalted Jesus in language reminiscent of Yahweh in the OT."

[64] Cf. Dunn, "ΚΥΡΙΟΣ," 369-372. Because it lays out the data systematically, Dunn's table is taken as the basis for the following discussion. At the same time, it is rife with errors and speculative decisions. For example, Dunn lists κύριε in Acts 1:24 as unambiguously God (369), but plenty of others would contest that given Jesus' responsibility for electing his apostles (Cf. also O'Toole, "Activity of the Risen Lord," 475-476; Reicke, "The Risen Lord," 157; Sleeman, *Geography,* 89-90.). Also, even more surprisingly, Dunn assumes that in Acts 13:47 Paul quotes God's words from Isa 49:6, which would appear sensible had Luke not elsewhere shown a penchant for transferring the referents of OT citations, as in LXX Joel 3:1-5 (Acts 2:17-21). Therefore, Dunn should generally be supplemented (and corrected) by more analytical works like Jones, "The Title *Kyrios* in Luke-Acts."

[65] One of the most striking features of such studies is that they find, among the more than 100 uses of κύριος in Acts for either God, Jesus, or an ambiguous referent (God or Jesus), the majority are unambiguously applied to Jesus. By contrast, and taking Dunn's table as representative, the majority of

remaining third (of all uses) which have an uncertain referent (e.g., 8:22, 24, 25; 13:2, 10, 11; 15:35, 36, 40) reinforces the suggestive nature of Luke's portrayal. Luke draws heavily on Israel's scriptures, including their traditional and exclusive association of κύριος with Yahweh; yet, in Acts, Luke overwhelmingly associates the term κύριος with Jesus. Given this pattern, Luke's unspecified uses of κύριος allow for the rest of the narrative to accentuate the overlap in his characterizations of God and Jesus, allowing readers effectively to "fill in" ambiguous uses of κύριος with Jesus.[66] Moreover, by limiting most clear references of κύριος to God to OT contexts (citations and allusions), Luke suggestively characterizes the Lord Jesus in Acts on the narrative model of the κύριος θεός in the OT.

Most significant, however, is how the frequency of unambiguous κύριος-uses for Jesus increases as the book of Acts progresses.[67] As the movement in Jesus' name spreads to increasingly far-flung lands and peoples, the title κύριος is increasingly applied to Jesus rather than to God. Thus, the recognition of Jesus' Lordship correlates to

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unambiguous uses of κύριος for God are attributable to an OT citation/allusion (2:20, 21, 25, 34, 39; 3:22; 4:26; 7:31, 33, 49; 15:17 [2x]). Actually, it is much easier to name those unambiguous uses of κύριος for God that do *not* occur in the context of an OT reference (3:20; 4:29; 12:23; 17:24). Of these four, half are explicable in terms of context, leaving only two unambiguous κύριος-uses in Acts for God, outside of an OT reference (3:20; 4:29). The aerial view of Luke's use of κύριος, so to speak, is thus overwhelmingly weighted toward a reference to the ascended and exalted Lord Jesus, lending further credence to the notion that Acts narratively unfolds the identity of Jesus as Lord of all.

[66] Cf. 2:47; 5:14; 8:22, 24, 25, 26, 39; 9:1, 5, 35; 10:33; 11:21; 12:11, 17; 13:11, 12, 47; 14:3; 18:25. For example, regarding uses of κύριος in 8:22, 24, 25, 26, and 39—in the course of Philip's Samaritan ministry—the whole section is bracketed by two cases in which κύριος unambiguously refers to Jesus: 8:16 ("baptized in the name of the *Lord* Jesus") and 9:1 ("Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disicples of the *Lord*"). Framed in this way, the intervening references to κύριος (8:22, 24: "pray to the Lord"; 8:25: "word of the Lord"; 8:26: "angel of the Lord"; 8:29: "Spirit of the Lord") are all rendered ambiguous, and where there is ambiguity the early work Luke does to indicate the sharing of the name (Acts 2:14-36) helps resolve the ambiguity.

[67] Robert Brawley, *Centering on God*: *Method and Message in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 126: "The title "Lord," the most frequent title for Jesus in Luke-Acts, is applied to Jesus from a wide variety of perspectives from an angel (Luke 2:11), suppliants (e.g., 5:12), disciples (e.g., 5:8), the narrator (e.g., 10:1), scripture (Acts 2:34-36), and Jesus himself (Luke 6:5; 19:31)."

the increasing scope of peoples brought into his reign.[68] Chapters 3 and 4 will examine the details of this correlation.

But the title κύριος only tells part of the story since the title receives narrative explication through the actions and prerogatives ascribed to its bearer. Lest we imagine a competitive claim between God and Jesus for the title of κύριος in Acts, it is important to note that Acts is thoroughly theological. Many have noted that regardless of the development of christological and pneumatological claims in Acts, the character of God stands out.[69] Indeed, in spite of the earlier claim that many of God's actions named in Acts are recalled as occurring in the past (before the start of events narrated in Acts' *present*, that is), numerous times God (*without* the modifier κύριος) is credited with present action (4:30; 10:15, 28, 42; 11:18, 19; 14:27; 15:4, 7, 12, 14; 16:10; 17:27, 30; 19:11; 21:19; 22:14; 26:22; 27:23, 24). Most prominently, God "gives" repentance unto life to the Gentiles (11:18; cf. 14:27; 15:4, 7, 12, 14; 21:19) and presently "commands all people everywhere to repent" (17:30; cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Of course the debate about the theological-vs.-christological texture of Acts is unhelpful because Luke shapes

[68] The anticipation of Jesus' Lordship crystallizes with his exaltation to heaven, as interpreted by Peter (Acts 2:33). The rest of Acts is given to developing the character of his reign and activity, evident in the frequency of the use of the title for *the exalted Jesus*. For instance, after Acts 9 there are around 76 uses of the word κύριος, 42 of which clearly refer to the Lord Jesus. The pattern is especially apparent in the latter stages of the book. For example, of the final 22 (theological) uses of the word (Acts 18:8-28:31), 19 refer to Jesus explicitly, and the remaining three are simply ambiguous (19:10, 20; 21:14). Moreover, all three ambiguous uses occur in traditional formula: "the word of the *Lord*" (19:10, 20) and "the *Lord's* will be done" (21:14). Some have suggested, of course, that even in these examples κύριος refers to Jesus since the "word" is strongly associated with him in Acts, that is, even if the phrase is traditional (OT), the content of proclamation is *about* him and it is (also) *his* will reflected in the unfolding of events. E.g., see Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ' (Apostelgeschichte 16:7)," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. B. Lindars and S.S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 233; Witherington, *Acts,* 147-148.

[69] Joel Green, "Salvation to the ends of the earth: God as Saviour in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 83-106.

the narrative toward the fusion of the two, so that to think of κύριος is to think of God in terms of Christ and vice versa. The non-competitive overlapping characterization emerges clearly in statements like the apostles' prayer in 4:29-30: "And now, Lord [God]…grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed *through* the name of your holy servant Jesus." God is very much at work in Acts but the face of that activity is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, because many of the actions ascribed to God in Acts could just as well (and, in some places, are) ascribed to Jesus, readers retain the impression that Luke has "Christologized" the narrative construal of divine superintendence over the unfolding of events.[70]

Jesus' authority to dispense the Spirit (see 2.3.2.1.1 below) is, arguably, part of a larger cluster of actions and prerogatives ordinarily associated with God alone.[71] One such divine prerogative is restoring the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6-7). Another aspect of Jesus' characterization in this respect that has been hinted at but left until now is Jesus' capacity to receive Stephen's dying spirit. In Acts 7:59, Stephen cries out in his final breaths—"Lord Jesus, *receive* my spirit"—implying by such words that indeed the ascended Lord can "receive" his servant's spirit, an act which the appearance of Jesus from heaven is probably included to confirm (7:55-56). The whole scene doubles as Jesus' Sanhedrin trial, which Luke has ostensibly shifted from his Gospel. Nearer to our

[70] Sleeman, *Geography,* 135; cf. also Squires, "The Plan of God," 19-39.
[71] Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy,* 164-186; cf. Sleeman, *Geography,* 90, who also cites Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology* (189, 201-202) on the overlapping identity of God and Jesus.

concern, however, is how the parallel between Stephen's experience and Jesus' experience actually thrusts Jesus into the role of God in Acts (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: A Comparison between Stephen's Final Words and Jesus' Final Words

Stephen with respect to Jesus (Acts 7:56-60)	**Jesus with respect to God** (Luke 22:69; 23:34, 46)
a[1]. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" (7:56) [*lone reference in Acts to "son of Man"*]	a. "But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." (22:69)
b[1]. "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (7:60)	b. "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (23:34)
c[1]. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (7:59)	c. "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (23:46)

Not only does Stephen, in Acts 7:55, essentially see that which Jesus promised in Luke 22:69 ("the Son of Man…at the right hand of the power of God"), but Stephen now speaks the words recognizable from Jesus' own trial and crucifixion scene. By echoing Jesus' pre-Easter words, Stephen plays the role of righteous and innocent sufferer(-prophet).[72] The switch in roles, however, has the additional effect of making the ascended Lord the object of Stephen's prayer and the one two whom the dying martyr entrusts his spirit, both actions that the pre-Easter Jesus directed toward God the Father in Luke 23:34 and 23:46, respectively. That Jesus would be prayed to, asked to offer divine forgiveness, and even designated as the recipient of Stephen's dying spirit, places him in the role

[72] Cf. William Kurz, "Narrative Models for Imitation in Luke-Acts," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. David Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 187.

assigned to God in the Third Gospel. The shift opens up the possibility that Jesus is the object of prayer elsewhere in Acts (cf. Acts 1:24[73]; 22:19-20).

Other designations besides κύριος may function similarly, that is, as titles and roles shared between God and Jesus. For example, studies of christology in Luke-Acts often point to the terms ἀρχηγός (Acts 3:15; 5:31; cf. Heb 2:10; 12:2) and σωτήρ (Acts 5:31; 13:23) as illuminating Luke's views of Jesus.[74] The full effect of using such titles, however, is only felt when Luke's dependence on Israel's scriptures is recognized. For instance, the term σωτήρ ("savior") is strongly associated with God's exclusive soteriological role toward Israel in scripture. In fact, the term often appears in contexts where it is precisely the exclusivity of God's claim to the title that is at stake (cf. LXX 1 Sam 10:19; Ps 61:3, 7; 64:6; 78:9; 94:1; Mic 7:7; Hab 3:18; Isa 12:2; 17:10; 45:15, 21; 62:11). Interestingly, elsewhere in Luke-Acts it is only God to whom Luke applies the title of "savior" (Luke 1:47). In Luke 2:11, as we saw, Luke makes the shift from God as σωτήρ to Jesus as σωτήρ.[75]

Such observations should be paired with the recognition that the characterization of *God* in Acts, by contrast with that of Jesus, tends to focus more on God's actions *in the past.*[76] The characterization of God and the characterization of Jesus are, in Acts,

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[73] See O'Toole, *Unity*, 40: "Probably, Jesus picks Judas' replacement. It could be that Luke speaks of the Father, for the phrase, '"Lord who knowest the heart of all men ..." (Acts 1:24) does parallel the expression, "And God who knows the heart..." (Acts 15:8). On the other hand, it is Jesus who chooses the Twelve (Lk 6:13; Acts 1:2). Jesus also selected the witnesses (Acts 1.21-22; cf. 1.8; 26.16) about whom the narrative concerning Judas replacement speaks. Thus, it is possible to maintain that the risen Jesus selects Matthias as Judas' replacement." Cf. also O'Toole, "Activity of the Risen Lord," 475-476; Reicke, "The Risen Lord," 157; Sleeman, *Geography,* 89-90.
[74] Hurtado, "Christology in Acts," 217-237.
[75] Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 237: "As part of this plan, the Kyrios Jesus performs his 'work,' which is also God's work."
[76] See Robert Mowery, "Direct Statements Concerning God's Activity in Acts," *SBL 1990 Seminar Papers,* ed. David Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 197: "More than half of the direct theological statements in

somewhat inverted. The inversion, however, does not suggest that Jesus' actions somehow "replace" the role of God in Acts; Luke is interested in overlapping his characterizations, not counterweighting them. Luke interprets Jesus' exalted role in such a way as to emphasize his ongoing Lordship even as it evokes the authority of God's actions in the past.[77]

This fundamental shift in characterization, in the narrative, finds initial authorization in Acts 2, with the stated exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand, from whence the κύριος Jesus guides the increasingly universal proclamation of salvation by dispensing the Spirit and intervening in the movement to ensure its universality (see 2.3.2.1.1.2 below). In this way, the Lord Jesus embodies God's will for the world[78] and remains active among increasingly new groups of believers so that history catches up to the title that Peter declares with new recognition at Cornelius' house—he is truly "Lord of all" (10:36).[79] Treatments of the P-C episode (Chapter 3) and Paul's commission

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Acts refer to God's activity in various events which chronologically preceded the first event narrated in Acts. These events include the creation of the world, various events in the story of Israel and various events in the story of Jesus." O'Toole, *Unity*, 42: "In fact, Luke does not ever make the Father the object of preaching. Speaking of the Father, Luke prefers expressions like "word of God," and the "kingdom of God."

[77] Cf. Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 241: "In spite of the numerous analogies and parallels mentioned in the action of God and Christ in the events of mission and the Church, it will nevertheless be possible to establish as the overarching view of Luke: just as in Old Testament history, God is the sole leading power - cf. the big summaries in Acts. 7:2-50 and 13:16-41 - in the history of the New Testament since the time of Easter, Christ is the most prominent subject of the whole event."

[78] See Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 237: "Therefore, it is also absurd to call Jesus a 'tool' in God's plan of salvation; the title of honor of *Kyrios* and the sitting at the right hand of God means rather: the work of Christ and the work of God forms an indissoluble unity. Jesus, as the exalted one, has the same sovereign power as God; in this respect, there is no difference between Luke and Paul. It is difficult to distinguish the 'function' of God and Jesus in the book of Acts in such a way that one consists in carrying out the plan of salvation, the other in carrying out effects in the life of the Church" (my translation).

[79] Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 238: "the *Kyrios* determines - according to Luke – the decisive step toward the pagan mission 10:3ff. but also in the (perhaps) simultaneous action of the 'Hellenists' among the Gentiles 11:20f. the Lord Himself is at work" (my translation).

(Chapter 4) will be left for later, though their construal of Jesus as κύριος are crucial to the fuller, narrative portrait Acts presents.

2.3.1.3.3 Use of the "Name (of the Lord)"

Chapter 1, it will be recalled, noted how universal proclamation of repentance and forgiveness was to take place "in his name" (Luke 24:47)—that is, in the name of the Messiah. Given the way in which Luke construes Jesus as the one responsible for universal proclamation to all nations (especially Gentiles), the question arises whether "in his name" might amount to more than an instrumental use of "Jesus (Christ)" by believers in the wake of his ascension. It is possible that Luke intends "in his name" to function as circumlocution for Jesus' agency (see 1.1.2.1.3),[80] not unlike "the name of the Lord (God)" in Israel's scriptures.[81] By considering a representative sample of the use of "the name" in Acts, I will evaluate how the name of Jesus/Lord functions in Acts' construal of Jesus' activity in Acts. The evidence shows that inasmuch as Luke's use of "the name of the Lord" draws upon a conception of Yahweh's transcendence in Israel's scriptures (e.g. Joel 2:32 [LXX 3:5]), Luke employs the phrase with specific reference to the name of Jesus, thereby ascribing to Jesus what is scripturally ascribed to Yahweh. Moreover, though warning against using the name as a mere incantation (Acts 19:13-16; cf. Luke 9:49-50), Luke also emphasizes the identification of the name with the person and work of Jesus himself. Luke's pattern of usage effectively indicates the ongoing activity and

[80] Max Turner, *Power from on High,* 426: "'the name' appears to be a circumlocution for Jesus himself."
[81] In one respect, this is evident by how the LXX occasionally translates "Lord" (MT) as "the name of the Lord" (cf. LXX Deut 17:12; Ps 12:6; 39:5; 134:1; Isa 12:15; 19:8; 33:21; 66:5). Notably, David's and Solomon's hopes for building the temple for God are described as a wish to build "a house for the *name* of the Lord" (1 Ki 3:2; 5:17, 19; 8:17, 20, 44; cf. 1 Ch 22:7, 19; 2 Ch 1:18; 2:3; 6:7, 10).

influence of the ascended Lord through his name, and through his connection to believers which his name mediates.

The question of whose name is central in Acts crystallizes early on, in part because of its prominent appearance in the Joel text at the center of Peter's Pentecost sermon (2:17-21; LXX Joel 3:1-5; see 2.3.2.1.1.2). This intertextual sermon effectively establishes κύριος as the name of *Jesus*, upon whom all must call to be saved (2:21, 36, 38). After Acts 2, references to "the name" of Jesus abound. In the first healing that takes place in Acts—of the beggar outside the temple (3:1-10)—Peter (with John) says "I do not have silver or gold, but what I have, this I give you—in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk" (3:6). The name of Jesus the Messiah has the power to heal, to save (cf. 2:21). In his speech in Solomon's Portico, Peter explains: "by faith in his name, *his name itself* has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you" (3:16). Peter reinforces the idea that the name of Jesus requires no aid to heal, yet, as if to head off notions of using the "name" as simply a magical incantation (cf. 19:13-16), Peter further explains "his name itself" as "the faith that is through Jesus."[82]

[82] Kränkl, *Jesus der Knecht Gottes*, 178-179: "Als handeln des Subjekt fungiert im ersten Satzteil der Name Jesu, auf ihn ist die Heilung zurückzuführen. Um magischem Mißverständnis vorzubeugen, fügt Lukas bei, erst 'auf Grund des Glaubens an seinen Namen' habe der Name seine Kraft erwiesen. Der Glaube, dessen Ursprung nun wiederum nicht im Glaubenden selbst, sondern in diesem Namen bzw. seinem Träger liegt (ἡ πίστις ἡ δι' αὐτοῦ), erscheint dem Autor als so maßgeblich, daß er ihn im zweiten Satzglied geradezu als die kausale Ursache der Heilung an die Stelle des Namens setzt. Gemeint ist hier nicht der Glaube des Gelähmten – dieser erwartet von den Aposteln ja nu rein Almosen (Apg 3, 3) - , sondern derer, die den Namen Jesu über ihn anrufen."

The narrative repercussions[83] of the initial healing in Acts 3 continue to focus on Jesus' name. For example, at the inquest conducted by the Sanhedrin, the religious leaders ask Peter (and John) "by what authority or *in what name* did you do this [healing]?" (4:7). The suggestive parallel of δύναμις with ὄνομα invites the apostles to give account: are they performing these acts by themselves or is it under the power of another? Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, responds:

> γνωστὸν ἔστω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε, ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐν τούτῳ οὗτος παρέστηκεν ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν ὑγιής. (Acts 4:10)
>
> "let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead." (NRSV)

The syntax of Peter's statement deserves further analysis given the variation in translations, at least with regard to the resumptive[84] phrase ἐν τούτῳ. Minimally, we can say that Peter here affirms what he said already in Acts 3:16—*the name itself* performs the healing. It is possible, however, to understand ἐν τούτῳ as the KJV does and render it as the personal pronominal phrase "by him." Such a translation would imply that the

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[83] Tannehill, Robert C. "The Composition of Acts 3-5: Narrative Development and Echo Effect," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, vol. 23 (1984): 217–240.

[84] Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar,* 326. Syntactically, the phrase ἐν τούτῳ in 4:10 is "resumptive" while οὗτος in v. 11 continues (in the present) as subject of the verb ("continuative"). Though the phrase occurs toward the end of the sentence, the NIV, for example, alters the sense and moves it to the front, eliminating the awkwardness posed by the Greek syntax: "then know *this*, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ…" The more literal KJV captures well the Greek sentence structure: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even by him* (or it) doth this man stand here before you whole." Furthermore, whereas the NIV treats τούτῳ as a free-floating pronoun referring *to the claim* about the name's responsibility for the healing—and the NRSV eliminates the phrase altogether as redundant—the KJV rightly reflects the original syntactical clue that "this" is really "by/in him," recalling the way in which Jesus' name has previously functioned as the power behind the healing (3:16). Moreover, "by him/it" more precisely matches the question the council poses in 4:7: "by [ἐν] what authority or in [ἐν] what name?" Going further, Luke's syntax sets ἐν τούτῳ in parallel with ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου. In that case, the pronoun "this/him" is synonymous with "the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth."

name of Jesus is, where the healing of the man is concerned, synonymous with the healing power of Jesus himself.[85] The conclusion finds even clearer support a few verses later, when Peter makes the emphatic claim: "There is salvation in *no one else*, for there is *no other name* under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (4:12). Here again two prepositional phrases are seemingly put in synonymous parallel:

12a: *ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ* <u>ἡ σωτηρία</u>	"<u>salvation</u> *in/by no one else*"
12b: *οὐδὲ ... ὄνομά* ἐστιν *ἕτερον …* *ἐν ᾧ* <u>δεῖ σωθῆναι ἡμᾶς</u>	"there is *no other name*… *in/by which* <u>we must be saved</u>"

Peter uses person and name almost interchangeably, not unlike in 4:10, but with clearer syntax and with a broader force—that is, with respect to salvation *in general* rather than simply one man's healing (cf. 4:10). Peter prepares readers for the shift by restating the council's question as asking "how this man has been *healed*" (ἐν τίνι οὗτος *σέσωται*, 4:9). The use of the verb σῴζω, which could mean simply "healing," nonetheless anticipates Peter's more comprehensive claim in 4:10 about σωτηρία in no one else and how in no other name it is necessary to be saved (δεῖ σωθῆναι; passive aorist infinitive of σῴζω). That the name Ἰησοῦς means essentially "the Lord saves" or "savior" no doubt accentuates the theological claims accompanying the word play (Sirach 46:1; cf. Matt 1:21; Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23).

If there were lingering doubts about the referent of "the name of the Lord"—that is, whether it was God (Yahweh) or Jesus—Acts 4:10-12 puts those to rest: "there is *no other name* under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (4:12). The

[85] Kränkl, *Jesus Der Knecht Gottes*, 179, refers both to "der gegenwärtigen Heilswirksamkeit" of the name and its "unmittelbare Widerfahrnis aus der Transzendenz."

name is "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" (3:6; 4:10) and, to the degree the figure is identified with the name, it is the exclusive source of healing and salvation. For this reason, one must be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" (2:38) and receive the Holy Spirit which the ascended Messiah and Lord grants from his exalted position at the right hand of God (2:33). There is no other name because there is no other savior (5:31), yet we recall that Israel's scriptures make the same claim with respect to Yahweh (e.g., Isa 43:11, 45:15, 21; 63:8, Hos 13:4; cf. Acts 7:25).[86] Scripturally, God is savior. Confirmed by the overlap implied in the application of "Lord" to both God and Jesus, Luke also ascribes to Jesus the otherwise exclusive role of σώτηρ (Acts 2:21; 4:12; 5:31; 13:23; 15:11). Rather than stand in for the presence of Jesus, however, the uses of Jesus' name in Acts *narratively* mediates the presence of the savior—effecting healing, signs, wonders, boldness, and wisdom (4:30).[87]

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[86] It is quite possible that deep beneath Luke's claims about the designation of Jesus as "savior" (σώτηρ) lies the Hebrew/Aramaic wordplay in Jesus' name: Ἰησοῦς = יְשׁוּעָה ("savior"). Thus, a certain irony presents itself—the exclusive claim to the "name of the Lord" and the designation of "savior," the Lord God of Israel, shares the salvific power of "the name" with the "Savior" Ἰησοῦς. Green, "Salvation," 95-101.

[87] Turner, *Power from on High,* 426-7: "(1) It will be evident that with the possible exception of 3.16 'the name' of Jesus is never the subject of an activity, always an object, benefactor or instrument in an event performed by others. The 'name' of Jesus does not act to effect or present salvation, nor does it take any other form of initiative, nor is anyone 'full of the name', or whatever. (2) Excepting dative/instrumental constructions (which carry the varied senses 'by the authority of', 'on behalf of', etc.), 'the name' appears to be a circumlocution for Jesus himself, used (like 'the name of the Lord') to guard the transcendence of an exalted heavenly figure. That is, the 'name' of the Lord is not strictly a 'means' of God's or Jesus' presence, but simply a reverential way of referring to God or to Jesus himself: *mutatis mutandis,* 'to preach or teach about "the name" of Jesus' is neither to offer a course on the christological titles nor to discourse on the mystical means of the presence of the transcendent, but to preach about *Jesus himself* (essentially about his death, resurrection and present Lordship at God's right hand). (3) It follows from (1) and (2) that it would misrepresent Luke to say Jesus is present *by means* of his name. Rather, the passages using the expression 'the name' variously state Jesus is present (a) in the sense that his authority is exercised by his representatives in miracles and exorcisms performed 'in his name'; (b) where he (= his name) is preached or taught (in the sense that he is the topic of such discourse); and/or (c) where he (= his name) or the word about him is believed in and honoured (in the sense that he is the one to whom such faith and service is directed)." Yet Turner later qualifies these claims slightly: "I am simply arguing that the *theologoumenon* 'the name (of Jesus)' is not some independent means of salvation alongside or prior to the activity and the

Though a fuller treatment of the Cornelius cycle of passages must wait till the next chapter, it should be pointed out here briefly how the "name" functions in James' uses of Amos 9 in the Jerusalem Council speech (Acts 15:13-21). James introduces his interpretation of Am 9:11-12 by making a claim in 15:14 that anticipates ("this agrees with the words of the prophets," 15:15) the language of Am 9:11-12 (15:18). Specifically, James says that Simeon (Peter) has related how "God first sought [ἐπεσκέψατο[88]] to take from the Gentiles a people for his name" (15:14). The emphasis recalls Peter's interpretive move in Acts 2:17-21, on the basis of LXX Joel 3:1-5, which argued that "the name of the κύριος" upon whom everyone must call for salvation is Jesus, the κύριος and χρίστος (2:22-36). Though Am 9:11-12 in its own context certainly refers to κύριος Yahweh (cf. MT), James uses the ambiguity in the title first illuminated by Peter's Pentecost speech to sign off on Gentile inclusion among God's people by the salvation wrought for them by the name of the κύριος Jesus. Moreover, Peter's preceding Jerusalem speech (15:7-11) concludes with the claim that "we will be saved through the grace of the κύριος Jesus, just as they will" (15:11), just as the council's letter (15:23-29) mentions Paul and Barnabas' ministry "for the sake of the κύριος Jesus Christ" (15:26).

The point seems to be that Acts 2:21, drawing on Joel 3, helps define Luke's use of the "name" in Acts, wherein the name of the Lord is explicated as the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The exclusiveness of Jesus' power and grace is associated with Jesus' name—there is salvation in no one else and no other name. But the test of the universal

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gift of the Spirit." In this respect, my argument is similar to Turner's, except to say that, whereas Turner makes a phenomenological and salvation-historical argument regarding the name, my argument is focused on the *narrative construal* of the use of the name.

[88] Cf. Luke 1:68; 7:16.

reach of Jesus' name comes, naturally, with the Jerusalem council's decision to recognize the acceptance of Gentiles as Gentiles among God's people, who are called by the name of the κύριος. Here James, drawing on Amos 9, points to all those over whom the "name of the Lord" is called (the remnant as well as πάντα τὰ ἔθνη), further interpreting the Joel citation (*everyone* who calls upon the name) to include Gentiles as Gentiles (not proselytes). Early emphasis on the exclusiveness of the name (salvation in no one else; 2:21; 4:10, 12) has shifted to emphasize the inclusiveness of who can be saved.

2.3.1.4 Conclusion

Luke insists that Jesus himself is able to and does appear to his servants throughout the narrative. The clearerst examples of course concern Paul's encounters with the risen Lord (Acts 9, 22, 26), which not coincidentally emphasize his commission to Jews and Gentiles everywhere (see Chapter 4). But Jesus also appears, significantly, to Stephen at the hour of his martyrdom (7:55-56). In most cases, Jesus' heavenly appearance transcends the categories of heaven and earth, demonstrating the implicit omnipresence and omniscience of the exalted Lord. Moreover, the appearances often occur for the purpose of commissioning or exhorting servants to bear witness in the face of opposition. Even where the narrative does not explicitly characterize Jesus' appearance, the continual impression is that Jesus stands behind events that extend the movement into new lands and among new peoples.

Another dimension of Luke's characterization includes the way in which he ascribes to Jesus *present* action, making him the subject of verbs in both character's speeches and in the story's plot. By contrast, God is described most often with reference to events in the past. The temporal dimension of Luke's characterization of Jesus-vis-à-

vis God provides readers with a hermeneutical framework for understanding Luke's sometimes ambiguous use of κύριος. Because of the frequency of Luke's application of the title to Jesus in Acts—signalled with the pivotal interpretation of LXX Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:17-39; see 2.3.2.1.1.2 below for more)—readers are conditioned to recognize the exalted Lord Jesus' character and influence even where he is otherwise not explicitly named.[89] The resulting "overlap" between the characterization of God and that of Jesus, strengthened by Luke's assignation of responsibilities to Jesus that are scripturally reserved for God, confirms the sense that Luke narratively develops Jesus' identity in subtle but multifaceted ways. In fact, the way in which the "name of the Lord" figures into Luke's story testifies to Luke's thoroughgoing attempt to depict the ascended Lord as ever-present in a narrative structured by the "ascension geography" that Jesus' exaltation maps.

2.3.2 Lord of and by the Spirit

Conceivably, Luke does not need Jesus to remain active in the narrative to show that he is heavenly lord of all. Indeed, his exaltation to God's right hand (Acts 2:33; 5:31) on its own already implies the universality of his reign. At the same time, Chapter 1 distinctly showed that, for Luke, the future universal mission is partly constitutive of Jesus' messianic identity (Luke 24:47), along with death and resurrection (Luke 24:46). It is partly constitutive because Luke links the unfolding of this mission as the necessary

[89] Gaventa, "The Presence of the Absent Lord," 3: "My contention is that Jesus' departure in no way signals his inactivity in the story that follows. On multiple occasions, Luke communicates that Jesus is actively shaping, directing, and sustaining the witness. His activity overlaps with that of the Holy Spirit and of God. Furthermore, Jesus' various actions in the story provide a framework for understanding the witness of the apostles as Jesus' work rather than their own. That is, the apostles do not so much substitute for an absent Jesus as they exemplify his present, on-going activity."

fulfillment of scriptural prophecy about *the task of the Messiah*.[90] So the question becomes: what will Jesus' Lordship look like in terms of his own participation in this universal mission? We have seen already how Luke reconfigures "presence" and "activity" through "Christ-space," but the manner of this reconfigured presence has not yet been detailed. His several appearances in the text nothwithstanding, it is not yet fully clear *how* the Lord Jesus continues to be involved in the spread of witness to all nations, to the ends of the earth. Thus, the burden of the rest of this chapter is to show how Luke's portrayal of Jesus in Acts is bound to his characterization of the role and presence of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the story of the universal Lordship of the Messiah Jesus cannot be told apart from Luke's account of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit plays a pivotal role in Luke-Acts. Even without a second volume, Luke's emphasis on the role of the Spirit would stand out among the Synoptic Gospels.[91] More important for the present study than Luke's emphasis, however, is his *characterization* of the Spirit's role in Acts, especially as it relates to Luke's portrait of the exalted Lord Jesus. Lest we naively embark on an investigation into the "concept" of the Holy Spirit, it should be recognized at the outset that Luke's concerns are limited, in Daniel Marguerat's words, to conveying a "pragmatic of the Spirit."[92] That is, "[t]he uniqueness of Luke's point of view is precisely that he *recounts* the work of the Spirit in history… He does not discuss the Spirit; he shows him in action."[93] Marguerat's

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[90] Dupont, "La portée christologique," 140-142.
[91] Among the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew has 12 clear-cut references to the Holy Spirit, Mark 6, Luke 17, and John 18. Luke's use of πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit in about 47% of the total uses of the word (17 out of 36).
[92] *Historian,* 110. Emphasis original.
[93] Marguerat, *ibid.,* pp. 109-110. Cf. also 128: "The reader of Acts is not directed to reflect on the Spirit but to live

conclusions prioritize an approach attuned to narrative theology, to which both his and the present study subscribe. Therefore, given the imbricated nature of narrative, attempts to untangle a "pneumatology" from Luke-Acts will inevitably be reductive.[94] As an extension of our narrative approach to christology and witness in Acts, this section seeks to understand how Luke narratively construes the work of the Spirit *in relation to his construal of Jesus' universal Lordship through proclamation and witness.*[95]

With his glorification to God's right side, Jesus receives the Father's promise (i.e. the Holy Spirit) from God directly (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33), administering it to believers

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from him and to discern his path throughout history. For the command of the Risen One to his disciples to be witnesses in all the earth (1.8) is not already accomplished for Luke. Acts ends like an open book: Rome, where the narrative concludes, is not 'the end of the earth'. We notice here that Luke's eschatology is not an affair of the calendar, but of geography. In this sense, the sphere of the Word is the world and the Church is *en route* to a universal horizon."

[94] Max Turner, *Power from on High,* 416: "On this point there can be no doubt, the Spirit is an empowering to serve the church as much as to serve its mission to outsiders, even if Luke's account of the expansion of Christianity inevitably gives more space to the latter…for Luke the Spirit provides the charismatic dimension of the Christian life which brings the believer (individually and corporately) God's directing, transforming and strengthening presence, supporting a wide variety of Christian activity, including witness." One problem inherent in Max Turner's otherwise excellent and exhaustive studies of the Spirit in Luke-Acts is on display here—namely, that if one narrowly (pre)defines "mission" as the conversion of outsiders or assumes an insider-outsider, church-mission distinction in construals of pneumatology, then inevitably the role of the Spirit in Acts can be debated with respect to its relative importance for one or the other. But if "mission" is shaped (by Luke) more by developing the narrative identity of Jesus as universal Lord than by construing an action taken in obedient response to a command, then we ought to interpret Luke's whole view of universal witness (or even "mission") *within* his christological claims about Jesus as Lord of all. The unity of God's plan in Jesus, therefore, cannot be entirely divided by anachronistic categories like "church" and "mission," "insider" and "outsider."

[95] The subsequent analysis and argument will attempt to show, building on the conclusions of Chapter 1, that universal witness *by the power of the Holy Spirit* and the continued activity of the exalted Lord Jesus *through the Holy Spirit* contributes to Luke's narrative construal of Jesus' identity as "Lord of all." In other words, Luke's characterization of the Spirit, especially in Acts, cannot be reduced to a secondary gifting ("spiritual baptism") for the empowerment of mission. Rather, the Spirit is both what Jesus, upon his exaltation to God's right hand, pours out on "all flesh" *and* how Jesus' presence and activity is mediated in the narrative as an expression of his Lordship. The first claim is established with Peter's Pentecost speech (Acts 2:14-36), the second with Luke's personified characterization of the Spirit in the spread of the Word, especially beyond Israel. Together, Luke characterizes the ongoing influence of the exalted Lord *by means of the characterization of the Spirit's activity* in the narrative. To be clear, the following study is not intended to develop a "pneumatology of Acts." Instead, it intends to show how Lukan "pneumatology"—precisely in its entwinement with Luke's characterization of Jesus—undergirds our broader survey of Luke's christology of universal witness.

with the authority of a co-regent.[96] At the same time, as the universality of the mission develops, Luke increasingly portrays the exalted Lord as actively involved in this mission, even going so far as to identify him with the Spirit (Acts 16:8). The ways in which Luke depicts Jesus' relation to the Holy Spirit point to conceptions from Israel's scriptures of Yahweh's relation to the Spirit and divine name. The goal of the argument, however, is not to show Luke's "divine christology" at work so much as to demonstrate how Luke literarily represents the ongoing activity of the exalted Lord in influencing proclamation to all nations, thereby developing his narrative identity as universal lord.[97] For this reason, the mediating guidance of the Spirit, Jesus' appearances to disciples, and the progress of the "word" come into sharpest focus as the gospel encounters new peoples (Luke 24:47) and lands (Acts 1:8).

These preliminary conclusions arise from attention to the emphasis in Luke's characterization on the Holy Spirit as Jesus' prophetic gift to believers and also as an independent witness alongside the witness of apostles and others, a portrayal that at times identifies Jesus with the Spirit (Acts 16:7) and also evokes the relationship between God and the Spirit in Israel's scriptures. While it is true that Luke is consistent in characterizing Jesus as *in heaven* following his ascension from the earthly plane, Luke also characterizes Jesus in Acts as Lord of the Spirit and actively involved in the mission to all nations—that is, not in spite of his heavenly ascension but because of his exaltation to God's right hand. Thus, the characterization of Jesus' universal Lordship is

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[96] cf. Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 123.
[97] Buckwalter, *ibid.,* 204: "In addition, according to Luke, Jesus directly appeared at key junctures within the mission of the early church alongside the Spirit ... It is at this very juncture that we perhaps see Luke's christology most profoundly, for it parallels how Yahweh communicated to people in the OT."

accomplished both by portraying Jesus' enthronement in heaven—from whence he can administer the Holy Spirit and appear to followers—and also his subsequent involvement in and guidance of the testimony of his witnesses on earth.

2.3.2.1 From "Spirit of the Lord" (Luke 4:18) to "Lord of the Spirit" (Acts 2:33) to "the Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7)

Because of the interconnected nature of Luke's two-volume work, his characterization of the Holy Spirit in Acts draws on and develops the portrait begun in the Third Gospel. Interestingly, Luke does not formally introduce the "Holy Spirit" to readers in his Gospel, likely expecting his audience to be able to locate the Spirit theologically vis-à-vis the God of Israel, especially given the dense intertextuality of Luke 1-2.[98] Referring to the coming of John, the narrator simply says, "before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:15). And indeed, in Acts we discover clues about the assumption Luke presupposes of his audience—namely, that the Spirit has been at work throughout history, speaking through David and the prophets (cf. Acts 1:16; 4:25; 7:51; 28:25), and now is associated with the dawn of the messianic era in the ministries of John (Luke 1:15, 17, 41, 80) and Jesus (Luke 1:35; 2:26; 3:22; 4:18; Acts 2:17-18, 33, 38). Those familiar with the scriptures, in a sense, need little introduction to how the Spirit functions. Though the Holy Spirit appears ever-present among the main characters of the infancy narrative—Mary (1:35), Elizabeth (1:41), Zechariah (1:67), Simeon (2:25-

[98] Luke uniquely first speaks of the Holy Spirit in regards to John: "even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit" (1:15). That these words issue from the lips of the angel Gabriel rather than the narrator (cf. Matt 1:18) reflects Luke's typically *dramatic* complexion—putting the inner significance of events and scriptural echoes into the form of character speech. See Joel Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24-31; Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1979), 346-374; cf. also Mark Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative* (JSNTSS 88; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 214-234.

27), and Anna[99] (2:36)—their pronouncements largely function as prophecies about the identity of Jesus now coming to fruition (1:41-45, 46-55, 67-79; 2:29-35). Thus, even in "introducing" the Holy Spirit in the narrative, Luke ties the role of the "spirit of prophecy"[100] to the identity of Jesus as Lord (1:43, 76) and Messiah (2:26).

The Baptist continues the prophetic tone of the infancy narrative by prophesying about one who is coming and who is superior to himself, baptizing not with water but "with the Holy Spirit and fire" (3:16). Luke 3:16 also deserves attention because it marks the point, with respect to the characterization (and promise) of the Holy Spirit, where Luke's Gospel begins tracking with Mark (cf. Matt 3:11). That is, Mark's Gospel introduces the Holy Spirit to his audience by means of John's prophecy (1:8), which Luke not only includes in his Gospel but also brings to fulfillment in Acts—indeed, as we will see (2.3.2.1.1.1 below), to *multiple fulfillments* throughout Acts (1:5; 11:16; 19:2-6; cf. Acts 13:23-25). For now, it is enough to point out that the focus of Luke's references to the Holy Spirit after the infancy narrative primarily concerns the Spirit's relation to Jesus himself.[101] In close succession Luke tells readers that the Holy Spirit "descended …

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[99] Though Luke does not mention the Spirit with respect to Anna, she is characterized as a "prophet" (2:36)—and hence associated with the Spirit—and since she is the last in a series of characters all characterized as full of or led by the Spirit, this "gap" in the text effectively fills itself.

[100] Marguerat, *Historian,* 119: "Luke shares with Judaism this idea that the Spirit is essentially *a spirit of prophecy.* Already in the Infancy narratives, the prophetic dimension of the Old Testament (e.g. Luke 1.46, 67; 2.25-7) and the prophetic inspiration of the Baptist (Luke 1.15, 17) have been stressed. The Lucan description of Jesus does not refute this insistence on the spirit of prophecy. The Spirit's work is a work of the Word, and to speak 'boldly in the name of Jesus' (Acts 9.27) must be considered as the sign *par excellence* of the Spirit." Cf. 4:31-33.

[101] Marguerat, *Historian,* 114*:* "*Before Easter, Jesus is the sole bearer of the Spirit.* In his gospel, Luke accentuates this exclusive bond between Jesus and the Spirit, on the one hand, by the motif of the virgin birth (1.35) and, on the other hand, by quoting Isaiah 61.1 in the programmatic sermon in Nazareth ('The Spirit of the Lord is upon me', 4.18). Jesus comes from the Spirit and is inhabited by the Spirit" (emphasis original). Of course Marguerat recognizes that the Spirit fills the characters of the infancy narrative, but must be assuming that "filling" does not constitute "bearing" or that the infancy narrative is stylized portrayal of inspired speech rather than a claim about who does or does not possess the Holy Spirit.

from heaven" upon Jesus at his baptism while he prayed (Luke 3:21-22); that Jesus was "full of the Spirit" and "led[102] by the Spirit" as he faced his wilderness trials (4:1-13); and that he was "filled with the power of the Holy Spirit" as he made his first public appearance in Nazareth (4:14).

Though the Spirit will be mentioned in Jesus' teachings after this (10:21[103];11:13; 12:10-12)—to which we will return later—the primary statement about Jesus' relationship to the Spirit in Luke's Gospel comes in Jesus' synagogue speech in Luke 4:18: "*The Spirit of the Lord* is upon me and he has anointed me…" His speech (4:17-21) is widely acknowledged to have programmatic import for Jesus' messianic mission Luke-Acts.[104] Arguably it also has similar import for Luke's construal of the Spirit-in-relation-to-Jesus in Acts. Expanding greatly on his Markan source text (cf. Mark 6:1-6), Luke combines Isaianic "Servant" imagery with messianic terminology (ἔχρισέν με; cf. Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1) to outline the future course of Jesus' ministry and reaffirm the close association between Jesus and Spirit. As the Servant-Messiah of Israel (cf. 9:35), Jesus is

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Regardless, even in the infancy narrative, the trajectory of prophetic speech, so to speak, concerns Jesus and his future work. In that sense, even whey they are "filled" with the Holy Spirit, even their inspired words are oriented by Jesus' identity, thereby reinforcing the close associations between the Messiah Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

[102] In contrast to Mark 1:12, where it says the Spirit "drove him" (ἐκβάλλω) into the wilderness, Luke says that Jesus "was led" (ἤγετο) by the Spirit in the wilderness.

[103] Though not strictly part of Jesus' "teachings," Luke 10:21—"At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said…"—further reinforces the unique bond between Jesus and the Holy Spirit which helps form the basis upon which the pivotal claim of Jesus' authority over the Spirit is later made (Acts 2:33).

[104] Cf. Robert Tannehill, "The Mission of Jesus according to Luke 4:16-30," in *Jesus in Nazareth,* ed. Erich Gräßer et al. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 51-75; and *Narrative Unity,* 1:60-73; Franz Neirynck, "Luke 4,16-30 and the Unity of Luke-Acts," *The Unity of Luke-Acts,* ed. J. Verheyden (Leuven: Leuven Univ Press, 1999), 357-395; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 178; David Seccombe, "Luke and Isaiah," *NTS* 27 (Jan 1981): 252-259. Supporting the claim that the passage is programmatic is Luke 7:18-28 in which Jesus responds to John's disciples—*asking specifically about whether he is the Messiah or not*—by pointing to the very things that he used Isa 61:1-2 to interpret as "fulfilled" in 4:17-19 and echoing Isaiah's wording.

anointed (cf. Acts 10:38) to proclaim good news (εὐαγγελίζω) to the poor, release (ἄφεσις) for the captive, sight for the blind, liberty (ἄφεσις) for the oppressed, and the year of the Lord's favor (4:18-19; cf. 7:22). Jesus' fulfillment of the Servant's mission is directly linked to his anointing by the "Spirit of the Lord" (4:18; Isa 61:1)—the only instance of the phrase in the Gospel. Jesus' words and deeds will henceforth be associated with the Holy Spirit. As bearer of the Spirit of prophecy, Jesus is superior even to Moses[105] (cf. Acts 3:22-23).

It is of course in Acts that Luke develops the characterization of the Holy Spirit, for which reason the book has occasionally been given the title "Gospel/Acts of the Holy Spirit."[106] That description of Luke's work, however, may be slightly misleading (like the traditional title) since Luke frames Acts—as Chapter 1 demonstrated—as a narrative construal of *the identity of Jesus Christ* as Lord of all (cf. Acts 1:1). At the same time, given that the christological complexion of Luke's second volume is bound to Luke's construal of the activity of the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit doubles for Luke's construal of *Jesus'* activity as universal Lord (Acts 2:33).

By tying the activity of the Holy Spirit to the promises of the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8), Luke immediately signals the import of his

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[105] B. J. Koet, "Divine Communication," 752-757. In his study of divine dreams and visions, Koet points out that Jesus did not need them in Luke because he was so close to God, but the apostles and Paul do require them so that they can (acc. to Joel 3), under the Spirit's direction, receive God's command of the Gentile mission.

[106] There are, for example, 70 references to πνεῦμα in Acts (58 of which refer to the Holy Spirit explicitly, signifying a rate of about 83%). Luke-Acts represents 28% of the NT references to the Holy Spirit. For some scale of comparison, around 83 of 122 references to πνεῦμα (68%) in the (non-disputed) Paulines denote the Holy Spirit. Cf. Marguerat, *Historian,* 121, who argues against the title "Gospel of the Spirit": "…it is unwise to entitle Acts, the 'gospel of the Holy Spirit'. In that case, one sees only the vehicle and forgets what it transports. The book of Acts narrates the progression of the Word, encouraged by the Spirit and made effective through him."

characterization of the Holy Spirit in Acts. The Holy Spirit represents the "Father's promise" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4) which will be realized in Jerusalem when the apostles are clothed with "power from on high" (Luke 24:49), essentially baptized in Spirit (and fire) as John (and Jesus) prophesied (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5). Thus, where future universal witness is promised, closely bound to that promise is one concerning the Holy Spirit's arrival as the heavenly power enabling that witness. Moreover, the redactional addition to Jesus' (and John's) prophecy about baptism in the Holy Spirit—"not many days from now" (Acts 1:5)—leaves no doubt that Pentecost (Acts 2) represents the occasion of the realization of the Father's promise, the bestowal of power, and the fulfillment of prophecy.

Though a fuller analysis of Pentecost is undertaken below, a few remarks about its central importance in Acts are in order. Firstly, as we have seen, it unmistakably represents the fulfillment of the promises associated with the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8). Spirit, fire, and power descend upon the disciples gathered in Jerusalem. Even the narrative audience for Pentecost includes "Jews from every nation (παντὸς ἔθνους)" (Acts 2:5; cf. Luke 24:47), seemingly from the very ends of the earth (Acts 2:9-11; cf. 1:8).[107] Before this cosmopolitan audience, the apostles (through the voice of Peter) declare themselves witnesses (2:32), as Jesus first designated them (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8). Secondly, the occasion holds symbolic value for Luke, taking place in

[107] While some readers may suppose Pentecost represents the fulfillment of the "Lukan Commission" in entirety, that view is difficult to justify given the audience still is only Jews (even if some are proselytes) who *used to live* outside of Jerusalem but are now residents, and there's no indication Luke gives about them suddenly returning to the nations among whom they once lived. Moreover, having established that Acts 1:4-11 serves to introduce the whole book, it would be an odd introduction indeed if it introduces the next chapter but not the twenty-six following.

the city of salvation (Jerusalem) and occurring during the covenant renewal festival for God's people (Ex 23:16; 34:22; Num 28:26; Deut 16:10-15; cf. also Gen 11:1-9).[108] Thirdly, the event is followed and interpreted by Peter's speech (2:14-36), which helps audiences (within the narrative and without) understand events through the lens of LXX Joel 3:1-5,[109] that is, as the coming of the "Spirit of prophecy" (cf. Num 11:25-29; Jer 32:31-34; Ezek 36:26-27)[110] for the renewal of God's people, akin to a "New Exodus"[111] (cf. Isa 32:15; 49:6; 42:6; 59:21; Luke 9:31).

The cumulative effect of this characterization of Jesus' role in the advent of the Spirit is to show the close connection between the exalted Jesus and the source of the Spirit, both in the past and—more importantly—in the present spread of witness. By interpreting Jesus' exaltation as heavenly Lord according to a heightened messianic and Mosaic typology,[112] Luke ensures that readers understand the Lordship of the exalted Jesus as a co-regency[113] in which Jesus shares with God the authority for dispensing the

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[108] Though the associations with the giving/receiving of the law on Sinai were evidently not formalized until rabbinic Judaism, the associations between the שָׁבֻעוֹת/Pentecost and covenant renewal are found as early as the late 2nd century BCE book of Jubilees. See, especially, how Jubilees links the Festival of Weeks with the covenant made with Noah (6:17-21), the covenant with Abram (15:1-4), and the covenant with Isaac (16:13-15; 22:1-2).

[109] B. J. Koet, "Divine Communication," 746: "The text from Joel is a programmatic statement for Acts." See also Huub van de Sandt, "The Fate of the Gentiles in Joel and Acts: An Intertextual Study," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 66.1 (1990): 57: "Joel 3,1-5 is in fact significant for the whole of Acts. It is the guiding text of the book and outlines the programme that is realized in the next chapters of the narrative." Cf. also Craig Evans, "The Prophetic Setting of the Pentecost Sermon" in *Luke and Scripture*, ed. Craig Evans and James A. Sanders (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 212-220; Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 155.

[110] See Max Turner, *Power from on High,* 402-427.

[111] See Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 217-248.

[112] Yet see B. J. Koet, "Divine Communication," who shows how Luke redacts the Transfiguration tradition with a view to enhancing the Moses-parallels (see also 9:31 ["exodus"] and Luke's travel narrative) in order to set the stage for the Acts 2 pouring out/reception of the "Spirit of prophecy" by which characters in Acts will dream/have visions about God's backing for the universal mission (a la Joel 2:28-31).

[113] Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 1:202-203.

"Spirit of prophecy" as expressed in Peter's interpretation of LXX Joel 3:1-5. Thus, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in universal witness is narratively marked as the exercise of Jesus' Lordship over all—increasingly shown by the Spirit's work among culturally, ethnically, linguistically, and geographically new groups of people in the narrative.

To demonstrate these findings, in what follows I will analyze the relationship in Acts between Luke's characterization of the Spirit and his characterization of Jesus with respect to the spread of the Christian movement. Jesus not only pours out the Holy Spirit from heaven, he will also guide the spread of Christian witness through the activity of the Spirit that mediates his presence. In these interrelated ways, Luke narrates the spread of Jesus' universal Lordship *through the Spirit.* The following two questions will structure the investigation that follows: (a) How does Luke characterize Jesus' role in the advent of the Spirit in Acts among believers, especially as the driving force behind apostolic witness? (b) How does Luke's characterization of the ongoing role of the Spirit in Acts' account of the universal mission further develop the notion of Jesus' universal Lordship?

2.3.2.1.1 Jesus' Role in the Spirit's Advent and Spread of Spirit-Led Witness

The following section will structure the analysis of Pentecost and Peter's subsequent speech by exploring three different aspects of this pivotal chapter in Acts—namely, that (i) Luke extends John's prophecy (Luke 3:16)—or, rather, its fulfillment—throughout Acts (Acts 1:5; 11:16; cf. Acts 13:23-25; 19:2-4) as a way of tying the messianic identity of Jesus to the advent of the Spirit; (ii) Luke links Jesus' ascension-exaltation with the authority to receive and dispense the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2:33) in such a way as to unite the agency of God and the exalted Jesus so that, broadly speaking, activity predicated of the former can be predicated of the latter throughout Acts; and (iii)

Luke ensures that the Pentecost event is not the exclusive or only outpouring of the Spirit, identifying it rather as the first in a pattern of "recurrent pentecosts" (4:31; 8:15-17; 10:45-47; 19:5-7) that continue to manifest the activity of the ascended Lord among new cultures, peoples, and lands.

2.3.2.1.1.1 Extending Prophecy: Luke 3:16

One of the earliest prophecies about Jesus comes from John in the course of his public ministry at the Jordan river (Luke 3:2-18). John tells his audience, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. *He will baptize you* with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16 NRSV).[114] One of several important aspects of this passage concerns John's prophecy of who the Messiah is *on the basis of the Messiah's future work*. Unlike John who baptizes with water, the Messiah *will baptize* with "the Holy Spirit and fire." Spirit and fire here connote purification (cf. Acts 10:15; 15:9) and possibly eschatological judgment (cf. Acts 10:42; 17:31).[115] In Mark 1:8 and Matthew 3:11, the same statement is made by John but

[114] Perhaps an addendum to the survey above is necessary regarding the selection of the Twelve, whom Luke (alone) identifies as "apostles" (Luke 6:13; cf. 1:13). Though Luke does not name the Holy Spirit in Jesus' original selection of the Twelve (Luke 6:12-16; cf. Matt 10:20), in Acts 1:2 Luke appears, retrospectively, to claim that Jesus had made the selection διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου (cf. 4:25; 11:28; 21:4). For instance, Joel Green reads Acts 1:2 this way, as commentary on Jesus' election of his apostles, following a night of prayer (*Conversion*, 149). Syntactically, however, Green's reading is rather unlikely given that διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου modifies "instructing the apostles" (ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις) rather than the subsequent relative clause (οὓς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήμφθη). Naturally, that Jesus gives instructions "through the Holy Spirit" before he is ascended may raise questions of its own about the role of Pentecost as the definitive advent of the Spirit; however, such phrases likely indicate little more than that Jesus—consistent with the characterization in Luke 3-4—acts in full accordance with the Holy Spirit.

[115] cf. David Peterson, "Pneumatology of Luke-Acts: Spirit of Prophecy Unleashed," in *Issues in Luke-Acts: Selected Essays*, ed. S. A. Adams and M. Pahl (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2012), 198-199: "In the prophetic writings, "wind," "breath," or "spirit" can be both a means of cleansing (Isa 4:4; Jer 4:11-12) and a means of judgment (Isa 11:4; 29:6; 30:28; 57:13; Jer 13:24; 23:19; 30:23). Cf. also, Turner, *Power from on High,* 177-180, 183-186.

without a clear sense of fulfillment later in their respective Gospels.[116] Unique to Luke's account is the dialogical context. Thus, Luke underscores baptizing by Spirit and fire as an identifying trait of the Messiah, distinguishing him even from baptizers like John (cf. Acts 19:2-7).

Questions naturally arise: when John says "he will baptize *you*," to whom is the "you" referring? In context, John's baptizing ministry is directed simply toward "the crowds" (Luke 3:7, 10) or "the people" (3:15, 18),[117] but the mention of tax collectors (3:12) and soldiers (3:14) suggests a potentially mixed audience of Jews and Gentiles in need of repentance, auguring the universal scope of salvation (cf. 3:6). Moreover, the implication of John's statement is that the same people being baptized now by John will later be baptized by Jesus. Yet such a thing does not happen. Jesus baptizes neither with the Holy Spirit nor fire in the rest of Luke's Gospel. Not until Acts 2 does Spirit and fire descend upon believers.[118]

Because Mark and Matthew lack a second volume, John's prophecy in the first two Gospels is left hanging, inviting readers to take an eschatological view of John's words about Jesus' cleansing and judgment of Israel. Yet in Acts, Luke ensures that John's prophecy remains on readers' minds by referring back to it several times (Acts

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[116] Interestingly, John 1:33 has "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit," a statement that finds fulfillment throughout John (cf. 3:5, 34; 14:15-17, 26; etc.).
[117] Cf. Mark 1:5 (people "from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem"); Matt 3:5 ("people of Jerusalem and all Judea").
[118] It is possible that the audience of John's prophecy is intended to be primarily, if not exclusively, the audience of Luke's Gospel, implying that Jesus' future baptizing of believers with the Spirit will occur even among his readers. After all, surely we are not to imagine that John's repentant "crowds" (Luke 3:7, 10) reappeared among the 120 (Acts 1:15) upon whom the Spirit falls in Acts 2. Moreover, tax collectors and soldiers (implicitly in need of repentance/purification) represent a different sort of group than the apostolic company later "baptized" in Spirit and pentecostal fire.

1:5; 11:16; 19:2-4; cf. Acts 13:23-25). The renewal of the Spirit of prophecy that is to come upon "all flesh" (Luke 3:6; Acts 2:17-18) begins with Jesus (Luke 4:18), then the apostles (cf. Acts 4:31), Samaritans (Acts 8:15-17), Gentiles (10:44-47; 11:15-16; 15:8), and even John's disciples (19:2-7). The repetition allows Luke to tie repeated appearances of the Holy Spirit in Acts back to John's prophecy and thereby more closely align the two volumes. Moreover, by referring back to and (re)interpreting John's words, Luke is able to expand the sense of John's prophecy about Jesus to include universal witness in Jesus' name (Acts 1:5) and the full acceptance of Gentiles into God's people (11:16). In other words, Luke makes major events like apostolic witness and the inclusion of Gentiles a fulfillment of the original Baptist prophecy *concerning the Messiah's work* (Luke 3:16). Lest readers lose sight of the foundation of John's words, however, Luke demonstrates with the Ephesian *disciples of John* (Acts 19:2-7) that in the scope of the original prophecy most important to recognize is the intimate association between the identity of Jesus and the role of the Spirit. To know the Spirit is to know Jesus and to be baptized in Jesus' name is to invite baptism in the very Spirit he bestows upon believers (2:33, 38). The eschatological Spirit and fire about which John spoke has come; Jesus, the exalted Lord who is also recipient of the Spirit (Luke 4:18; Acts 2:33), now pours it out on "all flesh" (see 2.3.2.1.1.2 below).

2.3.2.1.1.1.2 Acts 1:5

In Acts 1:5, Jesus interprets John's words (recalled as his own[119]) as a prophecy about the imminent coming of the Spirit. Thus, in Luke's hands, Jesus (re)interprets the

[119] The syntax of 1:4-5 is somewhat muddled, as it appears to shift imperceptibly from indirect to direct discourse. Evident from the variety of translations of the verses is the issue of where Jesus' spoken words

messianic claim about himself vis-à-vis John—"John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit *not many days from now*" (Acts 1:5)—as fulfilled in the coming Pentecost event (Acts 2). Thus, Luke's Jesus anticipates the descent of the Spirit in Acts 2 as a messianic sign, indeed that Luke 3:16 has come true, even as the original terms of that statement have shifted. The time for Jesus' baptizing by the Spirit, the sign of his Messiahship, is upon them. But in Acts 1:5 Jesus refashions John's messianic claim (Luke 3:16) as a claim about apostolic witness (Acts 1:4-5, 8; cf. Luke 24:49). And, indeed, Peter's speech in Acts 2 combines an explanation of the Spirit's descent (Acts 2:14-21; Joel 3:1-5) with claims about Jesus' identity as Davidic Messiah (Acts 2:22-32; LXX Ps 15:8-10) and exalted Lord (Acts 2:33-36; LXX Ps 109:1). By echoing Luke 3:16, Acts 1:5 re-asserts, at a pivotal point in the narrative, the intimate association between the Spirit's coming and the mission of the Messiah.

But Jesus' recollection of the quotation contrasting John's water baptism with the Lord's future Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5) draws attention to the differences between Luke 3:16 and Acts 1:5. Whereas John distinguished between his own water baptism and *Jesus' baptizing of people* with Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16), in Acts 1:5 Jesus employs a passive construction: "*you will be baptized* with the Holy Spirit." Instead of emphasizing

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begin. The clearest markers of indirect (3rd person) and direct (2nd person) discourse are, respectively, παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς (1:4a) and ἠκούσατέ μου (Acts 1:4b). Some translations, like the NIV, begin Jesus' words immediately after αὐτοῖς (supplying a marker of indirect discourse before ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι): "Do not depart…" Most gravitate towards the NRSV, which begins the quotation just before ἠκούσατέ (with the relative pronoun ἣν): "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me…" Interestingly, Bezae (D) appears to try to resolve the issue of these words belonging to John but being claimed by Jesus. After ἣν, Bezae adds the awkward phrase ηκουσα δια του στοματος—"which I heard from his mouth"—thereby explaining the origin and path of the prediction. Apparently attempting to bring the sense of Jesus' statement into alignment with Peter's recollections in Acts 11:15-16, Bezae has Jesus claim the saying as his own because he heard it directly from John.

his own agency, Jesus focuses on the apostolic *reception* of the Spirit. Keeping with the broader trajectory of Acts 1:1-11, Jesus' emphasis in Acts 1:5 specifies that John's "you" (Luke 3:16) really applies, at least in part, to the apostles. Moreover, assuming that Acts 1:8 echoes and extends the claims made in 1:5, Jesus implies that apostolic reception of the Spirit has to do with empowerment for witness, a motif which Luke 3:16 lacks. Thus, while the intimate connection between Jesus and Spirit (baptism) is sustained from Luke 3:16 to Acts 1:5, the audience and effect notably diverge. John's prophecy, readers learn, has a certain flexibility in its referents; John's is a prophecy that can be reshaped as God's purposes play out in Acts.

Lest we imagine Acts 1:5 refers to some other event than Pentecost "not many days from now," Luke ensures that a series of parallels[120] between Acts 1:4-8 and 2:1-38 confirm that the Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit is the event about which John's/Jesus' prophecy speaks. The original promise that Jesus would baptize people in Holy Spirit becomes, in Acts 1:5, a promise that Jesus' disciples would be baptized in power for the sake of witness to all nations and lands (Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:8). This renewed promise

[120] First, in the description of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-11, the narrator refers to tongues like fire resting "upon each of them" (2:3: *ἐφ᾽* ἕνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν), recalling Jesus' promise of the Spirit's coming "upon them" (1:8: ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος *ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς*; cf. 2:17, ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα). Secondly, in Peter's speech, he identifies himself and his company—presumably, the apostles—as those who can testify about the risen Lord: οὗ πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν μάρτυρες (2:32). The likely allusion to Jesus' commission in 1:8 (ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες) suggests both that the apostles are trustworthy witnesses to Jesus' resurrection (2:22-36; cf. 1:21-22) and that Peter's proclamation fulfills their vocation of being witnesses to the people of Jerusalem. Thirdly, the reference to "the Father's promise" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4) is echoed in 2:33 and 39. In 2:33, Peter speaks of Jesus' "having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" (τήν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός), linking Father, promise, and reception (λαβὼν) of the Spirit. However, here Peter makes the connection with respect to what *Jesus* has received, not the apostles. On the basis of Jesus' reception, he has the authority to pour the Spirit out (ἐξέχεεν; cf. 2:17, 18), as all now see. In 2:38, however, Peter converts Jesus' promise of baptism in the Spirit (Acts 1:5; Luke 3:16) into an invitation to and consequence of repentance and water baptism. Moreover, Peter draws on similar language (*λήμψεσθε* τὴν δωρεὰν *τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*) as Jesus' original promise (Act 1:8: *λήμψεσθε* δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος *τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος* ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς).

about Jesus' baptizing in Spirit now stands behind the apostles' invitation that all who repent and are baptized in water will receive Spirit baptism by Jesus (who has the authority to do so from the Father, 2:33).

In addition, John's statement in Luke 3:16, delivered in close proximity to Jesus' own baptism (3:21-22), sets in parallel the baptism of Jesus with the disciples' baptism in the Spirit (Acts 2). John's statement that "he will baptize you" (Luke 3:16) matches Jesus' own promise in 1:5: "you will be baptized…not many days from now." Moreover, Jesus' baptism (3:21-22) represented an anointing in the messianic Spirit of prophecy (Luke 4:17-18; Isa 61:1), an anointing which did not need renewal. Luke does not need to reiterate at every turn that Jesus spoke and acted by the Holy Spirit; because of his anointing in the Spirit, it is simply assumed. Similarly, the believers' Pentecost baptism in the Spirit is a one-time event with lasting consequences; Luke does not need to indicate that every time the apostles speak (yet cf. Acts 4:31) or act it is on the basis of the Spirit's prompting.

2.3.2.1.1.1.3 Acts 11:16

The extension of John's words beyond their immediate narrative context continues in Acts 11:16, as part of Peter's explanation to the apostles and Jerusalem elders about Gentile acceptance (11:5-17). Peter interprets the Spirit's appearance at Cornelius' house as a fulfillment of Jesus' statement (Acts 1:5): "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 11:16). The events at Cornelius' house, in other words, have realized John's prophecy (Luke 3:16), which the Lord Jesus himself related to the

apostles earlier (Acts 1:5) and which Peter now terms "the Lord's word" (i.e. the exalted Lord Jesus' statement).

To the expanding horizon of John's "you" (Luke 3:16), already enlarged to include the apostles and the 120 (Acts 1:5), Peter now adds the Gentiles en masse (Acts 11:16). For Peter, the connection between Pentecost and the Cornelius encounter arises in the observation that the Spirit "fell upon [the Gentiles] just as it had upon us at the beginning" (11:16). We recall that whereas Luke 3:16 focused on Jesus' cleansing of new believers by the Spirit and fire, Pentecost (as anticipated by Acts 1:5) emphasizes empowerment for witness (cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8). Here Peter specifically draws a parallel between the *experience* of the apostles at Pentecost and that of the Gentiles at Cornelius' house.

At the same time, the descent of the Spirit at Cornelius' house follows Peter's speech which, in issuing the realization that Jesus is "Lord of all" (10:36), connects the Holy Spirit's descent with God's acceptance of Gentile believers (as Gentiles) within Jesus' Lordship. Again, the dissonance between the three citations (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16) is striking. How can a prophecy about Jesus cleansing believers with Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16) be fulfilled both in the event of Pentecost as means of apostolic empowerment (Acts 1:5, 8) and also in the descent of the Spirit upon Gentile believers as a sign of divine acceptance (11:16)? The three versions of the same citation appear in very different contexts and to different ends.

However, if we understand better how Peter interprets the fulfillment of John's prophecy, then we may recognize the way in which Luke's artistry connects the three scenes. While a fuller treatment of Acts 10-11 and 15 is reserved for Chapters 3 and 4,

respectively, some preliminary comments can be offered here. As the pivotal scene initiating the acceptance of Gentiles, the Cornelius incident (Acts 10:1-11:18; 15:7-11) offers the climactic portrait of the expanding scope of mission, and, therefore, of Jesus' Lordship. The promise of the apostles to be witnesses to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Luke 24:47) finds initial fulfillment at Cornelius' doorstep (11:18). Thus, the pouring out of the Spirit upon the Gentiles—which readers of Acts may attribute to Jesus himself (cf. 2:33; 5:31; 26:23)—ultimately concerns the messianic identity of Jesus as "Lord of all" (10:36). By the chain of echoes (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16), the Spirit's descent upon the Gentiles serves to fulfill messianic claims *about Jesus*. Regardless of the shifting sense of the "you"-audience, it is Jesus' identity that is at stake in the reverberations of John's prophecy throughout Acts. The narrative identity of the Messiah Jesus over two volumes develops precisely with the claim that Gentiles are now included within the scope of his heavenly reign. The coming of the Spirit upon Gentiles does not necessarily enlist them for witness—if it does, Luke gives little indication—yet it does reaffirm that God's purposes are to bring Gentiles (as Gentiles) into God's people, just like the apostles were so designated as the core of God's (renewed) people in Acts 1:4-8. Just as John went about baptizing people in water, so Jesus *by means of the Spirit* continues to baptize new believers from πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. To those who signify their repentance with water baptism (Acts 2:38), Jesus himself will give the Holy Spirit (2:33), not necessarily as a source of empowerment for witness, but as an expression of their induction into the community of his Lordship.[121]

[121] This *may* explain in part why in Acts 13:23-25, when Paul discusses John's prophesying, Luke 3:16 is left out. Paul's speech is to Jews and primarily concerns Jesus' Davidic messianic *bona fides*. Thus, the role

2.3.2.1.1.1.4 Acts 19:2-4

In Acts 19:2-4, the connection between John's ministry and the place of the Holy Spirit is reasserted, when Paul encounters believers in Ephesus who, though baptized, have not even heard of the Holy Spirit (19:2). Their baptism was into John's baptism—that is, in the cleansing water of repentance (19:3-4)—rather than baptism into the Lord Jesus, which entails baptism by the Holy Spirit. When the disciples tell Paul that they had not yet received the Holy Spirit, his response—"into what, then, were you baptized?" (19:3)—implies that the Holy Spirit is integrally related to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (cf. 2:38). That they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit immediately elicits the question from Paul concerning the object, so to speak, of their baptism. If they had been baptized into Jesus' baptism, it would have entailed baptism in the Spirit. When the disciples tell him they have been baptized into John's baptism, Paul uses that very premise to clarify what John himself said about baptism: "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus" (19:4). The original "problem," we note, concerns their not knowing the Holy Spirit, but Paul's response to this situation focuses on the "who" of their baptism. If they are disciples of John, his response avers, then they should know that John himself offered a baptism of repentance *in preparation for baptism in the Messiah Jesus, that is, by the Holy Spirit*. In other words, there is an integral connection between being (properly) baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit. That connection explains why Paul "solves" the problem of their lack of the Spirit by having them

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of the Holy Spirit as the mark of Jesus' expanding Lordship is less relevant in this context, having two chapters earlier noted the Spirit's descent upon Gentiles as the expansion of Jesus' reign.

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. The recognition of the Messiah Jesus as Lord goes hand in hand with the reception of the Spirit (19:5-6). In recalling John's prophecy—"He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16)—Paul clarifies that the "he" in John's prediction is the one in whom these Ephesian disciples must believe, "that is, in Jesus" (τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, 19:4). The absence of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is ultimately treated as a failure of *messianic* recognition, reinforcing our findings that Luke's characterization of the Spirit in relation to Jesus is one of tight association.

To conclude, the renewal of the Spirit of prophecy that is to come upon "all flesh" (Luke 3:6; Acts 2:17-18) begins with Jesus (Luke 4:18), then the apostles (Acts 2:1-4; 4:31), Samaritans (Acts 8:15-17), Gentiles (10:44-47; 11:15-16; 15:8), and even John's disciples (19:2-7). The repetition expands the sense of John's words about Jesus to include universal witness in Jesus' name (Acts 1:5), starting with Pentecost, and eventuating in the full acceptance of Gentiles into God's people (11:16). The final interpretation of John's prophecy is, appropriately enough, given to John's disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19:2-7). As if coming full circle, disciples of the one who issued the original prophecy (John) must learn its fuller sense by being baptized into the Lord Jesus and therefore receive the Holy Spirit about which John spoke. What appears to tie all the references to Luke 3:16 together is Luke's insistence that major events in Acts (apostolic witness/Pentecost, reception of Samaritans, reception of Gentiles, "conversion" of John's disciples) all belong under the umbrella of *the Messiah's work* and identified *by the presence of the Spirit*.

2.3.2.1.1.2 Spirit as Gift of the κύριος

Because of the pivotal role of the Spirit in Acts, particularly with respect to universal witness, some have assumed that the Spirit simply "replaces" or represents the presence of Jesus in the narrative[122]: Jesus ascends (Acts 1:9), the Spirit descends (2:2-4) to play the part vacated by Jesus. But Luke precludes the notion of simple substitution by putting into Peter's mouth a careful interpretation of the Pentecost event that establishes the governing conception of the relationship between the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit—namely, that upon his exaltation to heaven, Jesus receives authority to dispense the Spirit upon "all flesh" as Lord of the Spirit (Acts 2:33), paving the way for the eventual identification of Jesus with the Spirit[123] in the portrayal of proclamation outside Judea (Acts 16:7).

2.3.2.1.1.2.1 Acts 2

Having seen how Luke recalls John's prophecy (Luke 3:16) throughout Acts—a prophecy which has its first ostensible fulfillment in the Pentecost event (Acts 2)—we now take up the interpretation and significance of Pentecost specifically. As we will see, Peter's statement in Acts 2:33 provides the interpretive axis around which Luke's broader construal of the Spirit's work turns. That Jesus is Lord of the Spirit represents the key christological claim to which observations about the relationship between Jesus and the

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[122] See Reicke, 162; Moule, "Christology of Acts," 165-179; cf. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden,* 206-208, who follows Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit*, whose periodization of history seems to require Jesus' absence in Acts in order to work. For catalogue of who broadly holds which view, see Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 199. See also Senior and Stuhlmueller**,** *Biblical Foundations of Mission,* 268: "Because the Spirit becomes in a sense the "replacement" of the person of Jesus in the community, it is not surpring that the Spirit plays a more prominent role in Acts (42 times) than in the Gospel (13 times)."

[123] Though this characterization may resonate with later Trinitarian systematic conceptualization—i.e. *opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*—the present observations are tied to Luke's characterization *in the narrative* irrespective of ontological claims derived from the canonical text.

Spirit throughout Luke-Acts should be linked. Therefore, what follows is a closer examination of Peter's Pentecost speech (2:14-36).

Firstly, Peter flatly equates the events of Pentecost with the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. To the question of onlookers—"what does this mean?" (Acts 2:12)—Peter answers with the words of Joel: "*this is what* was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh…and they will prophesy'" (Acts 2:16-18).[124] Present events, in other words, attest the fulfillment of an ancient promise about God giving the Spirit of prophecy for the restoration of God's people. But the promise about what *God will do* in Joel recalls the Isaiah citation from Luke 4:17-19 about what *God has done* to Jesus. The heavenly voice accompanying the Spirit's descent at Jesus' baptism says, "You are my Son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased" (3:22b; cf. Luke 20;13). These words recall Isa 42:1 (cf. 61:1)—"you are my servant (ὁ παῖς μου; cf. Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30)…I have put my Spirit upon him (ἔδωκα τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν)." In Luke 4:17-18 (Isa 61:1-2), Jesus interprets his baptism as an anointing by the Spirit and identification of himself with Israel's Servant. A parallel forms, therefore, between God's anointing of Jesus with the Spirit at his baptism (Luke 3:21-22; 4:17-18) and Jesus' anointing of the apostles with the Spirit at Pentecost (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5; 2:16-21, 33). Thus, the Joel text in Acts 2 allows Luke/Peter to pivot from Jesus' earthly baptism and reception of the Spirit (Luke 3:21-22; 4:18) to his heavenly exaltation and reception of the authority to baptize others in the Spirit (Acts 2:33). Remarkably, the parallel thrusts the exalted Jesus into the role of God.

[124] Loveday Alexander, "'This is That': The Authority of Scripture in the Acts of the Apostles," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 25.2 (2004): 189-204.

Indeed, as we will see, the use of LXX Joel 3 evokes precisely this "overlap" in the identity of the "Lord" God and "Lord" Jesus in relation to Luke's characterization of the Spirit.

Though it was widely thought that prophecy had ceased in the Second Temple period,[125] texts like Joel offered the promise that the "spirit of prophecy" would be re-activated, so to speak, in the messianic era. In the Pentecost event, the Mosaic wish that "all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them" (Num 11:29) finally comes to fruition. On "all flesh" (cf. Luke 3:6)—including sons, daughters, old, young, male and female slaves (Acts 2:17-18; LXX Joel 3:1-2)—God has poured out God's Spirit. The restoration which the Spirit's arrival initiates also forms the basis of an invitation to "call upon the name of the Lord (κύριος) and be saved" (Acts 2:21, 40; LXX Joel 3:5). Certainly, for Joel, the "Lord" whose name betokens salvation is Yahweh, the God of Israel. Peter's interpretation of Joel will complicate that.

Secondly, following the LXX Joel 3:1-5 quotation (Acts 2:16-21), Peter, with seeming abruptness, turns to a summary of *the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus* (vv. 22-24), coupled with a scriptural citation that serves to interpret these events. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit in the first part of the speech (vv. 22-31), except perhaps indirectly by allusion to Jesus' "deeds of power, portents, and signs" (δυνάμεσιν καὶ τέρασιν καὶ σημείοις, v. 22) paralleling Joel's promise of the Spirit's effects in

[125] 1 Macc 4:44-46; 9:27; 14:41; *Apoc. Bar.* 85:1, 3; *b. Sanh. 11a* and its parallels. Cf. the summary of Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 199-201. Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 251.

"portents…and signs" (τέρατα … καὶ σημεῖα (v. 19).[126] Peter employes LXX Ps 16:8-10 (Acts 2:25-28, 31) to argue that Jesus is the Davidic Messiah (χρίστος) who did not see "corruption" (i.e., he was resurrected). Logically, David's words cannot be spoken from David's perspective since he died and remains buried. Thus, Peter points out, "foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection *of the Messiah*" (2:31)—in other words, David can prophesy his own resurrection because he has adopted the voice and perspective of the Messiah. The apostles are "witnesses" who can vouchsafe the truth that the Messiah Jesus was resurrected (2:32).

Thirdly, another summary (vv. 32-33)—this time *about Jesus between resurrection and Pentecost*—introduces another scriptural citation (vv. 34-35). The summary concludes concerning Jesus: "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear" (2:33). Peter's interpretation here is the crucial hinge by which his whole Pentecost speech swings from Spirit to Jesus and back again. That is, Jesus' ascension is no mere departure from the earth but an exaltation to the heavenly position of power and authority at God's right hand. There the exalted Jesus has received the Father's promise about which Jesus himself earlier spoke (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). Now possessing this promise, Jesus has "poured out" (ἐξεχέεν) the Holy Spirit, an event recognizable by its miraculous sights and sounds.

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[126] We note that Luke/Peter seems to have inserted σεμεῖα into the citation of LXX Joel 3:3 (which only has τέρατα; Acts 2:19), thereby linking the scriptural citation with what he soon after says about Jesus (2:22). See also Max Turner, "Spirit of Christ and Christology," in *Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology Presented to Donald Guthrie,* ed. Harold H. Rowdon (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 174-175. See also the intertextual analysis of Chris Blumhofer, "Luke's Alteration of Joel 3.1-5 in Acts 2.17-21," *New Testament Studies* 62.4 (Oct 2016): 499-516.

The novel claim of Acts 2:33 is that Jesus has "received" the Father's promise and now pours it out on all flesh. The claim may give some readers pause since Luke has demonstrated Jesus *already* possesses the Holy Spirit (e.g., Luke 3:22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; etc.). What is there left to receive? In Acts 2:33 Peter likely means that, as the newly exalted Lord, Jesus has received *the authority/power to distribute the Spirit*. In this sense, "the promise of the Father" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4) means not simply the Spirit itself but *the (scriptural) promise to bestow the Spirit* on all God's people (cf. LXX Joel 3:1-2; Num 11:29). As God's agent filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 4:1), the exalted Jesus, by virtue of his exaltation to God's right hand, now exercises his Lordship by means of the Spirit, distributing it to those whose increasingly universal witness reflects his own universal reign.

As noted, Peter's summary in Acts 2:32-33 prefaces another scriptural citation (Ps 110:1; Acts 2:34-35).[127] Here Peter says these words are spoken by David about another: "The *Lord* said to my *Lord*, 'Sit at my right hand…'" The ambiguity of the two instances of "Lord" in LXX Ps 110:1 (κύριος/κύριος[128]) finds prophetic application in the exaltation of the κύριος Jesus to heaven alongside the κύριος God (cf. Luke 20:41-44). Therefore, Peter explains, two can be given the title κύριος since one has been exalted to a heavenly position beside the other. Concluding the speech, Peter summarizes: "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord [κύριος] and Messiah [χρίστος], this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).[129]

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[127] The words of Ps 110:1 are among the most common to appear in early Christian discourse about Jesus (Luke 20:42-43 and par.; 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:13; 10:12; Eph 1:20).
[128] Also well-known is the fact that ambiguity in Hebrew is not the same: יְהוָה / אֲדֹנָי.
[129] See the conclusions of C. Kavin Rowe, "Acts 2.36," 49-56; idem, *Early Narrative Christology*, 189-196.

Strikingly, a speech begun with the apparent intent to explain the strange sights and sounds of Pentecost ends with a declaration about Jesus as κύριος and χρίστος. A closer analysis of 2:33 in light of Ps 110:1, however, explains why. The scriptural testimony to Jesus' identity as "Lord" indicates that Jesus now serves as heavenly co-regent, with specific respect to the authority to dispense the Spirit at Pentecost. But, we recall, in Joel 2:28-32 (LXX 3:1-5) *God* says "*I* will pour out *my* Spirit…" No extant pre-Christian text anticipates that Israel's Messiah would bestow the Spirit of prophecy on God's people,[130] making the clear shift in referent all the more remarkable. The parallel use of "pour out" (ἐξεχέω) in LXX Joel 3:1-2 (Acts 2:17-18) and Acts 2:33, moreover, identifies the "I" in Joel with the exalted Lord Jesus. In addition, at the end of the Joel citation, it reads that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (LXX Joel 3:5; Acts 2:21). Where undoubtedly "the name of the Lord" in Joel referred to the Lord God of Israel, Luke now suggests that name—and the salvation it confers—rests with the exalted Lord Jesus. Therefore, the events of Pentecost should be understood as the indirect outcome of Jesus' exaltation to heaven and the direct result of Jesus' reception of the authority over the Spirit.[131]

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[130] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 193, says that Isa 59:21 probably comes closest.

[131] The receiving and giving of the Spirit by Jesus may also reflect a conception shaped by Ps 68:19 (LXX 67:19): "You ascended on high; you led captivity captive; you received gifts by a person…" (NETS). Given the associations of this text with first-century Jewish conceptions of Moses' authority, Max Turner argues that a Christian conception of this passage (cf. also Eph 4:8-11) likely stands behind Luke's construal of Jesus' authority over the Spirit. Turner argues this on the basis of several points: first, there are a number of implicit associations between Moses and Jesus in Peter's speech (cf. also Acts 3:22-23). Second, the pre-Christian liturgy of Pentecost included a reading of Psalm 68. Not only is Pentecost itself a holiday commemorating the giving of the law by Moses, but we also recall how Num 11:25-29 (Moses' plea for the Spirit to be upon all the people) likely stands in the background of the Spirit's descent upon "all flesh." Third, in Acts 2:38, the language of Peter's promise that "you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" matches a parallel claim in Josephus ("[God] would favorably receive Moses in his conversing with him, and bestow some such gift upon them by which they might live well," *Antiq.* 3.5.1). Even if Turner's argument is strained at points, his broader point still likely holds—2:33 represents a christological

As Peter later recalls in Acts 10:38, summarizing the Gospel through the lens of Luke 4:17-18, "God anointed [ἔχρισεν] Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power…he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil [cf. Luke 4:1-13], *for God was with him*" (Acts 10:38). Peter's summary in 10:38 is a fitting complement to Peter's summary of Jesus' "location" vis-à-vis God in Acts 2:33. In Luke's Gospel, God had been with Jesus (Acts 10:38), but upon his exaltation in Acts, Jesus is with God (2:33). In Luke, Jesus is anointed Servant and recipient of the "Spirit of the Lord" (Luke 4:18); in Acts, Jesus is now Lord of the Spirit (Acts 2:33) who anoints his servants to fulfill his messianic commission to all nations.[132]

2.3.2.1.1.2.2 The Gift of κύριος God and κύριος Jesus

The discussion above about how Luke associates the Pentecost descent of the Spirit with Jesus' agency (Luke 3:16; 24:49; Acts 2:33) immediately raises questions about other passages in which responsibility for giving the Spirit is ascribed primarily to God. For instance, in Luke 11:13, a passage earlier passed over, Jesus says: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (NRSV) The claim is all the more striking coming from Jesus who, Acts will inform us, is responsible for the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost and beyond (2:33). Perhaps even more striking are later statements

development of Ps 68 in parallel (competition?) with Jewish traditions about Moses. That Jesus *received* and in turn *poured out* the *gift* of the Holy Spirit reflects Luke's notion that he is superior to Moses (cf. also Luke 9:30-31; Acts 3:21f.). Indeed, he is "Lord and Christ," exercising the authority of the Father in bestowing the Holy Spirit upon all. See Turner, "The Spirit of Christ and Christology," 177-179.

[132] See Gustav Stählin's description of the "double floating character" (*schwebenden Doppelcharakter*) of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts ("'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ'", 246). Cf. also Marguerat, *Historian,* 114 n.14: "It is important to affirm the double relation of *pneuma* with the Lucan Christ, as both a product of the Spirit and a master of the Spirit; to accentuate exclusively Jesus' mastery over the Spirit…leads to a one-sided reading of Jesus as an archetype of the charismatic believer, to the detriment of his unity."

made in Acts (5:32; 8:20; 11:17; 15:8)—by Peter!—that point to God's prerogative in dispensing the Spirit.

In Acts 5:32, for example, Peter (and the apostles) tell(s) the Jewish council "we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit *whom God has given* to those who obey him." In Acts 8:20, Peter tells Simon Magus: "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain *God's gift* with money!" The imprecation uses the designation of the Spirit as the δωρεάν of God, a usage echoed elsewhere in Acts (11:17; cf. 2:38; 10:45). Later, in a statement that obscures Jesus' specific role in pouring out the Spirit, Peter tells the Jerusalem Council: "And God, who knows the human heart, testified to [Gentiles] by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us." Peter makes it clear that God directly confirmed the acceptance of Gentiles by granting them the Spirit in analogy with how God granted the same Spirit in the same way to Jewish believers (i.e. Acts 2).

Arguably reflected in these statements ascribing to God the responsibility for supplying the "Spirit of the Lord" is the witness of Israel's scriptures.[133] In these many OT passages, responsibility for and authority over the Spirit belong to the selfsame Lord and are shared with no one else. The passages conveying Yahweh's relationship to the Spirit likely comprised the backdrop of assumptions shared by Luke and his readers familiar with Israel's scriptures. Thus, statements like Luke 11:13, Acts 5:32, 8:20, 11:17, and 15:8 represent the "normative" conception of the Spirit's source from which Acts 2:33 appears, at least at first, to deviate. Outisde of Acts 2:33 (and Luke 3:16 and 24:49),

[133] Cf. Gen 6:3; Num. 11:29; Jdg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 1 Sam 10:6; 11:6; 16:13-14; 2 Sam 23:2; 1 Ki 18:12; Ps 104:30; 139:7; 143:10; Isa 42:1; 44 :3; 59:21; 63:11; Ezek 11:5; 36:27; Hag. 2:5; Zech. 4:6; 7:12. See also Buckwalter, 195.

Luke's writing reflects the assumption that God bears primary responsibility for the dispensation of the Spirit.

It is on the basis of these observations that Peter's pronouncement about the pouring out of the Spirit *by someone other than God* is all the more remarkable, especially as it is delivered to an audience of Jews. For a heavenly figure to receive the gift of the Spirit *in order to dispense the Spirit in turn* would, given the OT backdrop, have evoked a claim to co-regency and possibly divinity on the part of the exalted Jesus.[134] Indeed, the fact that in Acts both God in heaven and the exalted Lord Jesus are, at various points, responsible for pouring out the Spirit on believers indicates that Luke does not treat their respective relationships to the Spirit as exclusive of one another. Luke may very well insist on the *Lord* God's responsibility for the outpouring of the Spirit (cf. LXX Joel 3:1-2 in Acts 2:17-18) in order to underscore the remarkably bold claim that the *Lord* Jesus exercises the same prerogative (2:33), among other forms of shared activity. Though it is not the concern of this study to argue for Luke's "christology of divine identity," Peter's claim in Acts 2:33 unmistakably points in that direction.[135]

The statements in Luke-Acts ascribing responsibility for the Spirit's dispensation to God (Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32; 8:20; 11:17; 15:8), therefore, do not contradict the claim of Acts 2:33. Rather, the emphasis on God as giver of the Spirit establishes the basic theological premise upon which the novel claim in Acts 2:33 is made. An obvious point

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[134] Cf. the insights of Richard Bauckham, "God Crucified," in *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 36.

[135] See Turner, "Spirit of Christ and Christology"; idem, "Spirit of Christ and 'Divine' Christology," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Carlisle, Eng: Eerdmans Paternoster Press, 1994), 413-436; cf. also Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel.*

should be noted: Luke 11:13 ("the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him") narratively *precedes* Acts 2:33. The primacy[136] of Luke 11:13 reflects basic (Jewish) assumptions about God's responsibility for restoring the "Spirit of prophecy" to God's people, *on the basis of which premise* the Lukan Peter can claim that the exalted Lord Jesus now shares God's authority for the Spirit's distribution. The many later references in Acts to *God's* gift of the Spirit (Acts 5:32; 8:20; 11:17; 15:8) confirm that God remains the source of the Spirit while the Lord Jesus pours it out on believers. When Peter says that *God* has given the Gentiles the Spirit "just as he did to us" (Acts 10:45; 11:17; 15:8)—statements that follow on the heels of the declaration that Jesus is "Lord of all" (10:36)—readers are to understand that God's ultimate responsibility for the Spirit is exercised by the exalted Lord Jesus. Acts 2:33, therefore, appears to reinterpret the traditional ascription of the Spirit's (renewal and) distribution to God, implying that readers are to conceive of Jesus in relation to the Holy Spirit analogously to how God relates to God's Spirit in Israel's scriptures.[137]

Ultimately, Jesus' exaltation alongside God represents the first phase of the *narrative* realization of his authority to act as Lord of the universal mission. By serving in the role scripturally reserved for God, Jesus authoritatively dispenses the Spirit upon believers in fulfillment of eschatological promises going all the way back to Moses. The strong connection Luke draws between the Spirit's advent and universal witness (Luke

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[136] The "primacy effect" describes how early details shape a reader's experience of subsequent events. See Michal Beth Dinkler, "'The Thoughts of Many Hearts Shall Be Revealed': Listening in on Lukan Interior Monologues" *JBL* 133.2 (2015): 375; See Coleridge, *Birth of the Lukan Narrative,* 28; Robert Tannehill, "Beginning to Study 'How Gospels Begin,'" *Semeia* 52 (1990): 188.

[137] Max Turner, "Divine Christology," 413: "the exalted Jesus is regarded as standing in that sort of relationship to the Spirit of God that in Judaism and early Christianity normally characterizes *God's own* relationship to the Spirit." Cf. the analysis of Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy*, 183-186.

24:49; Acts 1:8) reinforces the sense of the narrative realization of his universal Lordship.[138] The implications of Peter's Pentecost summary statement (2:33), moreover, echo throughout Acts (4:31; 5:31; 8:15-17; 10:44-46; 11:15-16; 15:8; 19:6-7),[139] as will be shown below.

But Acts 2:33 should also not be expected to convey the full scope of the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit in Acts, even if it does establish a foundational claim for readers' understanding of the Pentecost event(s). Jesus gives the Spirit, but what or who is acting when the Spirit acts? In Israel's scriptures, it was unmistakably Yahweh whose presence the Holy Spirit mediated (cf. also Acts 5:3-4, 9). Words spoken by the Spirit or in accordance with the Spirit—commonly through the medium of the prophetic office—conveyed the will of God. The reason for intermediaries, in the case of Yahweh, was the need to preserve God's transcendence in the narrative.[140] Given proscriptions against depicting God in visual media (cf. Ex 20:4-5), the narratives about God's "appearances" likewise reflected reticence in personifying

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[138] Stahlin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ'" 242: "Just as the work of the exalted one in the book of Acts is enclosed in the plan of God and broadly coincides with God's own activity, so the workings of the Holy Spirit overlap in great detail with the work of Kyrios. It can never be about competition, but only the closest interaction. It is already observed, in nuce, in Act 1:8. This last word of Jesus between resurrection and exaltation has a programmatic meaning for the whole book, which simply cannot be overestimated. This fact has long been recognized; only the sense of this meaning has often been determined unilaterally; for it should never be seen so much in relation to the path of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the end of the earth - that is the usual estimation of the verse - but rather in relation to the work of Kyrios and the Pneuma in this story" (my translation).

[139] A weaker example, but worth noting, is Acts 9:17, which implies the Lord Jesus' ongoing authority over the Spirit in the fact that Jesus sends Ananias to restore Paul's sight and to enable him to receive the Holy Spirit. Cf. O'Toole, *Unity,* 48.

[140] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose*, 279: "The three essential characteristics describing the nature of Yahweh's divine presence in the OT – his invisiblity (i.e., transcendence), uniqueness, and personal presence and activity – closely parallel Luke's depiction of the exalted Jesus in Acts. It seems that Luke consciously describes the exalted Jesus as the Father's co-equal by showing how Jesus' heavenly work uniquely images Yahweh's. Luke apparently does not do this out of a response to some question or attack on Jesus' divine identity, but out of a personal conviction of who Jesus is."

the invisible God.[141] The "Spirit of the Lord" in such cases functions *in the narrative* to mediate God's presence while preserving his exalted status in heaven. Arguably, the Holy Spirit in Acts functions in a similar way vis-à-vis the exalted Jesus as it functions vis-à-vis God in Israel's scriptures.[142] As we will see below, Luke is able to convey the active presence of Jesus through the Spirit in several different ways while also preserving his heavenly "location," as it were. The recurring motif of pentecostal outpourings represents one of those several different ways, to which we now turn.

2.3.2.1.1.3 Recurrent Pentecosts

Luke emphasizes the Pentecost event not as the only outpouring of the Spirit, but as the first in a pattern of "recurrent pentecosts" that continue to manifest the activity and Lordship of the exalted Jesus among new people-groups in new lands.[143] Analysis will show that echoes of the Pentecost event confirm and convey the christological claims Peter associates with the original event (e.g., 2:33, 36). The present study demonstrates how echoes of Pentecost throughout Acts develop Luke's characterization of the Spirit *in relation to the Lord Jesus*. The thread of "recurrent pentecosts"[144] allows Luke to tie the

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[141] Even the ubiquitous warnings—"no one shall see me and live" (Ex 33:20; cf. Gen 32:30; Jdg 13:22; Isa 6:5), which never seems to come true (cf. Deut 5:24)—reflect the common biblical trope that God, to preserve divine glory, is not to be sensed or encountered directly (cf. Ex 3:2-6; Acts 7:30-31).

[142] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 203: "Luke' s perception of Jesus' relation to the Spirit seems closely reminiscent of OT monotheism: as the Spirit of God was largely the point of contact between Israel and Yahweh in the OT, so is the Spirit, according to Luke-Acts, primarily the point of contact between Jesus and the church, and Jesus and the world." As Turner's quotation continues, the Spirit "mediates the person and actions of the exalted Lord, thereby making the risen Christ a saving, empowering, and directing "presence" for the disciples on earth." Turner, "'Divine Christology,'" 413; cf. "Spirit of Christ and Christology," 168-190.

[143] Marguerat, *Historian,* 116: "Luke shows how, in order to enlarge the Pentecostal nucleus to worldwide dimensions, the Spirit pushes the community *in spite of itself to go beyond* the boundaries of Israel, to go beyond the limits of the Law, to exceed the boundaries of Asia to arrive in Rorne, the world's centre [sic]. At the occasion of each of these advances, a reminder of the first Pentecost echoes clearly or vaguely."

[144] Earl Richard, "Pentecost as a Recurrent Theme in Acts," in *New Views on Luke and Acts*, ed. Earl Richard (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 135: "The pentecost theme acquires an iterative character

outpouring of the Spirit to the inclusion of new groups of people, thereby associating the spread of the Word with Jesus' authority to dispense the Spirit on believers. In what follows, I will analyze several echoes of Pentecost in Acts (Acts 4:31; 8:15-17; 10:44-46; 19:6-7) and their function in reiterating Jesus' identity as Lord of the Spirit.

2.3.2.1.1.3.1 Pentecost(s)

As the driving force of apostolic witness (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8), the Spirit is the *sine qua non* of witness to Jesus. Linked to Jesus' agency (Acts 2:33), moreover, wherever the Spirit appears in Acts, it evokes the Lord Jesus who pours out the Spirit on new believers. Though Luke gives Acts 2 unparalleled emphasis, it also serves as the first in a pattern of "recurrent pentecosts" that manifest the active presence of the ascended Lord in the expansion of the movement of the Word toward all peoples and lands. The pattern likely assumes the link between Jesus' heavenly status and his authority to dispense the Spirit upon believers, Jesus' sharing of authority with Israel's God, and an emphasis on Jesus' responsibility for the unfolding of the mission to all nations by means of the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). That Luke assumes this of each "mini-pentecost" can be shown by the way in which these latter scenes reiterate Pentecost's connection between the outpouring of the Spirit and the Lordship of Jesus.

Yet, it should be noticed that when the Spirit alights on a new group of believers—e.g., Samaritans or Gentiles—Luke says nothing about their going forth to engage in witness. This is an important qualification in light of common construals of the

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and function; that is, the Spirit's manifestations participate, by their repetitive features, in the paradigmatic pentecost experience and yet, through their unitive character, transcend this episode and represent the outpouring of the Spirit in the end-days. So the terms 'temporal,' 'repetitive,' 'iterative,' and 'unitive' describe the role time plays in the narrative."

Spirit's work in Acts as restricted to empowerment for mission.[145] The dangers of this assumption are several, not the least of which is the conclusion that the Spirit must be a *donum superadditum*, a secondary gifting—sometimes termed "spiritual baptism"—closely aligned with modern charismatic and Pentecostal pneumatology.[146] It would comfortably fit a modern mission perspective that the Spirit empowers new believers for witness so that with each new group of converts, new believers receive the Spirit for the sake of further witness. But Luke shows little interest in characterizing the Spirit's descent upon new groups of believers as an empowerment for witness. To be clear, apostolic witness cannot happen *without* the Spirit, nor can the spread of the Word to new peoples and lands. However, the descent of the Spirit marks these representative groups of people *as belonging within the expanding reign of the Lord Jesus.* Thus, their inclusion points to the character of Jesus' Lordship rather than the development of an earthly mission per se, which is another reminder that mission to all nations is, at least primarily, the Lord's work.

To recall, the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples with power (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8), manifested both in the speaking (and hearing) of tongues that declare God's deeds (having to do with Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension—Acts 2:14-36) and also in the performing of other signs. Though it is natural to see in the Pentecost event symbolism of a universal mission "to all nations"—the original Pentecost event occurs

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[145] See, e.g., the construal of the Spirit's work in Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).
[146] See Max Turner's treatment in "'Empowerment for Mission'? The Pneumatology of Luke-Acts: An Appreciation and Critique of James B Shelton's *Mighty in Word and Deed,*" *Vox Evangelica* 24 (1994): 103-122.

among "Jews from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5)—the event itself is by no means a substitute for this mission. Certainly the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:8) suggests the apostles will be equipped by the Spirit to bear witness *to* the nations and *as far as* the ends of the earth. But readers (and apostles alike) would be mistaken to imagine that, according to Luke, the Spirit is the exclusive gift of Jewish believers in Jesus. The Pentecost pattern, appearing variously throughout Acts, points to the opposite conclusion—namely, that the Spirit must also come upon other peoples beyond Jerusalem and Israel (sometimes in spite of the hesitation of Jewish believers). The narrative identity of Jesus as universal Lord, in other words, is not served by Spirit-empowered apostles converting all peoples—as is sometimes imagined of the missionary vocation then and now—but by the Spirit's role in *anointing* new groups of believers, especially beyond the ethnic confines of Israel.

Luke ensures that readers recognize the "recurrent pentecosts" in Acts by characterizing other Spirit-events in Acts using the language evocative of Acts 2: baptism in the name of the Messiah Jesus (2:38), speaking in tongues ("speaking God's deeds of power," 2:11; cf. 2:6, 22), other signs and portents (Acts 2:19), and even prophesying (Acts 2:17-18; Joel 3:1-2). Accordingly, Luke narrates several scenes later in Acts that warrant the description of "recurrent pentecost": 4:31, 8:15-17, 10:44-46, and 19:6-7.[147]

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[147] Bertram Melbourne ("Acts 1:8 Re-Examined: Is Acts 8 Its Fulfillment?" *Journal of Religious Thought* 57/58.2 [2005]: 1–18) would add to this list the story of the Ethiopian eunuch constituting a "black Pentecost" but this strains the evidence. Not only is the skin color of Ethiopian never mentioned by Luke, but there is no pouring out of the Spirit. The only mention of the Spirit concerns the setup of Philip's encounter with the man (8:29) and Philip's subsequent departure (8:39). Moreover, five times (vv. 27, 34, 36, 38, 39) Luke underscores the man's identity as a "eunuch" rather than as an Ethiopian (cf. Isa 56:3-5). Following Luke's own clues, therefore, this story is not part of the pattern of recurring Pentecost motifs, even if it evokes Isaianic restoration motifs. Cf. the more accurate summary by Curt Niccum, "One Ethiopian Eunuch is Not the End of the World: The Narrative Function of Acts 8:26-40" in *A Teacher for*

Pentecost (Acts 2) is the pivotal event for the unfolding of universal witness,[148] but as a recurrent motif, it signals the unfolding of Jesus' universal Lordship. The Spirit's outpouring will be repeated in communities beyond the crowd of Jerusalem residents (Acts 2) as a reflection of Jesus' ubiquitous presence as "Lord and Messiah."

2.3.2.1.1.3.2 Acts 4:31

First, following Peter and John's release from custody, the apostles are gathered in prayer: "When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). The tremor accompanying the Spirit's arrival recalls Joel's prophecy of "portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below" (Acts 2:19; Joel 3:3). The Spirit's appearance in the context of prayer harks back to Jesus' own baptism, where the Spirit descends upon him as he prays (Luke 3:21-22), thereby evoking the apostles' "baptism" in the Spirit (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5). The evident purpose of the apostles' being "filled with the Holy Spirit" (cf. Luke 4:1; Acts 2:4; 4:8; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9) is that they might speak God's word "with boldness" (cf. 4:13). After all, the petition at the heart of the apostles' prayer (4:24-30) is, in the face of threats, that the Lord might "grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness" (4:29) as healings, signs, and wonders are performed in Jesus' name (4:30). "Boldness" will be characteristic of the ministry of the word as it moves into the Gentile world, especially under Paul's leadership (9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31). In this sense,

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All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam, vol. 2, ed. E. Mason et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 891: "the eunuch's ethnic heritage is ancillary."

[148] See the premise of Harry Boer's *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 98-254, who correctly emphasizes Pentecost as the impetus for worldwide expansion rather than dominical command.

the pentecostal echo here connotes boldness *in preaching or testimony*, which Luke consistenly connects with the gift of the Holy Spirit.[149] The apostles' reception of the Holy Spirit here is not necessarily redundant, in light of Pentecost (Acts 2); rather, it empowers them with boldness to proclaim the word in spite of new obstructions—of which there apparently were none two chapters earlier—that will multiply as the word of salvation spreads beyond Jerusalem and the Jewish world. Indeed, "boldness" likely characterizes testimony before rulers and authorities (cf. Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15; see 2.3.2.1.2.1 below).

2.3.2.1.1.3.3 Acts 8:15-17

The second Pentecost echo occurs, notably, in Samaria. In light of Jesus' introductory commission ("in Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth," Acts 1:8), 8:1 alert readers to a new phase of apostolic outreach on the path toward worldwide witness. Curiously, however, this next phase is conducted almost entirely by non-apostles scattered in the wake of persecution related to Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 8:1, 4). In fact, Luke explicitly says "all were scattered *except the apostles*." Among those scattered was Philip, one of the Seven, who proves to be the primary agent of proclamation in Samaria (8:5-13, 26-40) in spite of his introduction into the narrative as one whose ministry would allow *the apostles* to concentrate on proclamation (6:3-5).[150] The apparent success of the Samaritan mission reaches the ears of the Jerusalem apostles and they send Peter and John (8:14) for the purpose of "praying

[149] Cf. Marguerat, *Historian,* 118-119.
[150] Cf. Maddox's summary of this section of Acts as "The Twelve Stay-at-home Apostles and the Seven Waiters Who Do Not Wait" (*Witnesses,* 11-34).

for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit" (8:15). Among the several questions the episode raises are why the Samaritans did not receive the Spirit with baptism (as Peter appears to promise his Jewish audience in 2:38) and why apostolic representatives are needed to complete the process, as it were. Luke's explanation, in a sense, only restates the problem: "for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (8:16).

Absent clear cut answers, we note the way prayer again precedes the descent of the Spirit (8:15; cf. Luke 3:21; Acts 4:31), how the Spirit's arrival bears some integral (if not always immediate) connection to baptism, and, given the wider narrative context, how signs of power are broadly associated with the Spirit's work in Samaria (8:9-13, 18-24). The presence of Peter and John does not necessarily indicate the Jerusalem church's "control" over fresh expressions of the Christian movement outside Jerusalem (as proponents of an "early Catholicism" might suggest[151]). Rather, by having the primary witnesses to the Samaritan "pentecost" be John and Peter, the latter of whom was the Jerusalem Pentecost's main interpreter, the apostles can testify that what is happening in Samaria coincides with what happened in Jerusalem. Indeed, the lesson inherent in the experience may be one intended for Peter and John as much as for anyone else.[152] The

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[151] Ernst Käsemann, "Die Johannesjünger in Ephesus." *Zeitschrift Für Theologie Und Kirche*, 49.2 (1952): 154: "Lukas hat Geschichte abermalt und konstruiert, um die *Una sancta apostolica* gegenüber den Zugriff der Gnostiker und Häretiker seiner Tage zu verteidigen." Cf. Marguerat, *Historian,* 124; Dillon, "Prophecy of Christ," 551: "[understanding Jesus' ongoing presence in Acts] further encourages interment of the 'early Catholic' thesis by discrediting the contention that Luke deeds the Christian message to the administration of the Church. After all, even upon the termination of Paul's ministry, the Church will be entrusted to the Word, not the Word to the Church (cf. Acts 20.32), so we need not posit a cessation of Christ's prophetic testimony even at the boundary of Luke's historiography."

[152] Cf. Joel Green, *Conversion,* 154. Marguerat, *Historian:* "The reference 'and they received the Holy Spirit' (8.17) signals that *the lord gives his consent to this missionary expansion."* Cf. Sleeman, *Geography,* 217: "…the 'Christ-event' extends to include Christ's intervention within Acts 9 and the

lesson may be one Peter only learns later, in retrospect, when reporting to Jerusalem Jews about Gentile conversion in Acts 11.[153] The "late" arrival of Peter and John to Samaria previews Peter's almost paradigmatically late arrival at Cornelius' house, where the Spirit descends on Gentiles before he is even finished speaking (10:44; 11:15).

2.3.2.1.1.3.4 Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-16; 15:8

In the Cornelius event, Luke describes the perceptions by Peter's companions of the Spirit's descent upon the Gentiles in language strongly reminiscent of Acts 2 and Peter's interpretation (of Joel 3): "The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded [ἐξίστημι; 2:7, 12] that the gift of the Holy Spirit [ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος; 2:38; 11:17] had been poured out [ἐκχέω; 2:17 (LXX Joel 3:1), 18 (Joel 3:2), 33] even on the Gentiles, for they heard [ἀκούω; 2:6, 8, 11, 33] them speaking in tongues [γλῶσσαι; 2:3, 4, 11] and extolling God" (Acts 10:45-46 NRSV).[154] The descent of the Spirit on Gentiles in Cornelius' household is a pivotal moment for the universal mission and one that will be taken up at length in Chapter 3. At present, however, we can draw attention to how Luke's description of the scene reflects his purpose in extending the effects of the first Pentecost—orchestrated by Jesus himself—by narrating the bestowal of the Spirit on new peoples in new lands. Luke indicates that the Spirit's presence generally was an interruption of sorts by stating that the new believers received the Spirit

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missions of Acts 8. Across these chapters, the heavenly Christ is presented clearly providing for, and defending, the spatial needs of his people."

[153] 11:15: "the Holy Spirit fell upon them *just as it had upon us* at the beginning"; 11:17: "If then God *gave them the same gift that he gave us* when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ…"; and 15:8: "God…gave them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us." See the next section on Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-16; 15:8.

[154] The close linguistic parallel between scenes is perhaps most obvious by direct comparison:

ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ (Acts 2:10)

ἤκουον γὰρ αὐτῶν λαλούντων γλώσσαις καὶ μεγαλυνόντων τὸν θεόν (Acts 10:46)

before they had been baptized. Contrary to Peter's formula of repentance-water baptism-Spirit baptism in 2:38, the Spirit surprisingly and immediately "fell upon all who heard the word" (10:44).

The "Gentile Pentecost"—as it is sometimes styled—is portrayed with specific allusiveness to the first Pentecost (Acts 2) with the purpose of showing that what happened to Jewish believers (including the apostles) is now happening, against expectations, to Gentiles also. When it is remembered that the early Jewish believers received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost *from Jesus*, Peter's conclusion here that Gentiles should be baptized because "these people have received the Holy Spirit *just as we have*" (10:47) takes on additional significance. One dissimilarity, however, is that while Pentecost was ostensibly about empowering the apostles for witness (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8), Luke makes no mention of Cornelius' household turning around and witnessing. The Spirit in this case indicates God's "impartiality" by showing favor to Gentiles as well as Jews (10:34), thereby illustrating that the Messiah of Israel is really "Lord of all" (10:36; see Chapter 3).

In Acts 11:1-18, Peter recounts the episode for the Jerusalem Jewish believers and apostles. In a slight variation of the narrator's version of events, Peter's retelling subtly shifts the agency behind the outpouring of the Spirit in his rhetorical question (cf. 10:47), asking, "If then *God*[155] gave [Gentiles] the same gift that *he* gave us when we believed in

[155] Notably, Bezae lacks ὁ θεός, perhaps in the hopes of leaving the sense of agency in v. 17 undetermined and therefore more amenable to the implied claim of v. 16 that *Jesus* is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 3:16). As we have hopefully shown above, however, to say "God gives the Spirit" is also a way of indicating that Jesus is Lord of the Spirit, which the allusion to Luke 3:16/Acts 1:5 in Acts 11:16 only confirms.

the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder *God*?" (11:17). And yet, Peter prefaces this claim about God's gift of the Spirit with a recollection of Acts 1:5 (and thus indirectly Luke 3:16), which implies *Jesus'* ongoing bestowal of the Spirit. As we have seen, the reiteration of Luke 3:16 throughout Acts functions to root the *ongoing* outpouring of the Spirit in John's prophecy about messianic identity. The Messiah Jesus himself will anoint his followers with the Spirit in baptism, having first experienced that very thing (Luke 3:21-22).

By giving Gentiles the Spirit directly, "God testified to them … and … has made no distinction between them and us" (15:8-9). As noted, such verses comprise part of a larger Lukan conception of the authority to bestow the Spirit as *shared between God and Jesus*. Therefore, the emphasis on God's gifting here likewise evokes the redefined conception of Pentecost as an expression of Jesus' Lordship and agency, even if Peter does not make that explicit. Peter is the one, after all, who issued the pivotal claim in Acts 2:33. The Spirit's role in events forms the basis of the sea change in the church's attitude toward Gentiles. The Holy Spirit is the decisive factor in whether Gentiles as Gentiles can be admitted to full fellowship with Jewish believers in Jesus. Thus, the pivotal turn to the Gentiles as related in the Cornelius incident depends on the Spirit's active intervention, reflective of the exalted Lord's guidance of mission toward a universal horizon (see Chapters 3 and 4) in fulfillment of the divine plan (Luke 24:47).

2.3.2.1.1.3.5 Acts 19:6-7

In the midst of Paul's ministry in Ephesus in Asia Minor (19:1-7), he encounters disciples of John—that is, those baptized with water but not Spirit (cf. Luke 3:16). Upon discovering the insufficiency of their baptism, Paul has them (re)baptized "in the name of

the Lord Jesus" (19:5). Then Paul lays hands on them, at which point the Holy Spirit comes upon them and they speak in tongues and prophesy (19:6). Of course the speaking in *tongues* echoes Pentecost (2:3, 4, 11), as does the reference to *prophesying*, reminiscent of Joel's oracle (Joel 3:1-2; Acts 2:17-18). Baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus and the laying on of hands also recall the Samaritan episode (8:15-17).

This dispensation of the Spirit marks the final formal episode of its kind in Acts, and mention of the Spirit largely drops out after chapter 19 (cf. only 20:22-23, 28; 21:4, 11; 28:25). In that case, this episode (19:1-7) is, at first sight, an odd one to conclude the series of Pentecost reverberations. But more significant for our purposes is the close connection the scene makes between Jesus himself and the descent of the Spirit. These disciples baptized with John's baptism have never even heard of the Holy Spirit. The strong association between proper recognition of Jesus' messianic identity and the coming of the Spirit (cf. Luke 3:16) aids readers in associating the right recognition of Jesus (as Lord) with the presence of the Holy Spirit. By making *John's* disciples the final group among whom a "pentecost" occurs, Luke evokes the christological premise of John's original statement (Luke 3:16: "I baptize with water…he will baptize you with the Spirit and fire"). Moreover, when it was recalled that the "you" of John's statement could *not* have applied to the other groups—apostles, Samaritans, or Gentiles—it is possible, if improbable, that it referred to these Ephesians, whom Luke tells us were specifically *John's disciples*.

Furthermore, we should not overlook the narrator's passing comment that "there were about twelve of them" (Acts 19:7). Only two other references to a group of twelve appear in Acts (6:2, the apostolic Twelve; 7:8, the twelve patriarchs). That Luke

concludes the last of the "pentecostal" episodes in Acts with another "twelve" suggests a major turning point in the story of universal mission. In anticipation of Paul's arrest, captivity, and trials (21:27-28:31),[156] new groups are authorized, symbolically patterned after the apostolic Twelve, to take up the mission to the end of the earth. That impression may be confirmed as Ephesus represents the final stage of Paul's missionary efforts. Though Luke further relates ministry in Greece (19:21-22; 20:1-6), the (re)baptized Ephesian disciples are the last "new" group whom Paul (or anyone) encounters in Acts. After all, the Eutychus incident (20:2-14) takes place among believers whom Paul already knew, as does the meeting with the Ephesian elders in Miletus (20:17-38). To the latter group, in fact, Paul offers his last testament (20:18-35). Adding to the sense of finality to this phase of Luke's narrative are several premonitory remarks about Paul's fate throughout this section of Acts (19:21, 30-31; 20:1, 16, 22-32, 37-38; 21:4-6, 11-14), leading up to his arrest in 21:30-33.[157] Because Acts 21:33-28:31 relates Paul's imprisonments and trials, the pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit in Ephesus (19:1-7) signifies the narrative's final identifiable locus of the Spirit's work among a new group of believers.

Summary. Connected by the Pentecost-like descriptors, these "recurring pentecosts" add a certain pattern to the book's structure. Each instance falls within a

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[156] It is worth noting that Paul's expressed desire to return to Jerusalem in 20:16 is so that we can be back in time for *Pentecost.*

[157] Cf. Niccum, "One Ethiopian," 894: "…Paul's missionary exploits begin, yet at 19:21, in imitation of Jesus (Luke 9:51), paul determinedly heads toward Jerusalem. With a number of parallels between Jesus' journey and Paul's, Luke sets readers' expectations on a final and decisive resolution in Jerusalem. According to the geographical pattern, then, the story should end in Acts 21." Niccum's interesting claim at least has the benefit of underscoring how Acts 22-28 is of a different kind of narrative than what preceded it. In this respect, the Pentecostal reverberations naturally cease by Acts 21 because the perspective of the narrative itself shifts—from the spread of the Word to the defense of Paul and his gospel.

different segment of the story and concerns a different group of people. Acts 4:31 falls within the period of apostolic testimony in Jerusalem (as an extension of the original Pentecost), but especially concerning testimony before the "authorities"; 8:15-17 concerns the reception of the Spirit by Samaritans (cf. Acts 1:8) whose status among God's people was controversial at best; 10:45-47 marks the full inclusion of Gentiles (as Gentiles) among God's people; and 19:6-7 describes disciples of John who were ignorant of the Holy Spirit altogether. These "recurrent pentecosts" point to the ever-widening geographical expansion of the Word by the Spirit (Jerusalem – Samaria – Gentile Judaea – Asia) and its traversing of ethnic boundaries (Jewish apostles – Samaritans – Gentiles – non-messianic [?] disciples of John) previewed with Jesus' words in Luke 24:46-49 and Acts 1:8.[158] The repeated episodes also keep before readers the sense of Jesus' Lordship and authority to bestow the Spirit (Acts 2:33).

2.3.2.1.2 The Spirit, Witness, and Jesus

We have seen one implicit way—through "recurring pentecosts"—that Luke retains the sense of Jesus' active presence, and thus universal Lordship, in the unfolding of the mission in Acts. The focus now turns to the Spirit's more explicit involvement in the mission conveying Jesus' universal Lordship—namely, through: (i) how Lukan redaction emphasizes the connections between the Holy Spirit's role and Jesus' ongoing provision for his followers in material sometimes called the "Spirit-Christ doublet" (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15); (ii) how, therefore, wherever "witness" transpires in Acts, the associations between Jesus' activity and the Spirit's provision of "words and a wisdom"

[158] Moreover, they bring together the major players in the narrative: the apostles as a group, Peter and John (and Philip), Peter and Cornelius (and "those of the circumcision"), and Paul and company.

(Luke 21:15) are strengthened, thereby indicating that character speeches are to double for the Spirit's—more, the exalted Lord's—testimony to himself; and (iii) how Luke characterizes the Spirit as mediating Jesus' involvement in universal proclamation by construing the Spirit in increasingly personified, autonomous ways. The personalized characterization of the Holy Spirit occurs in the part of Acts when the Word begins to spread beyond the ethnic and geographical borders of Israel—namely, in Samaria (ch. 8), among Gentiles (10-15), and throughout Europe (16-20). Luke crystallizes this characterization of the Spirit by referring, at one point in the spread of the Word, to the "the Spirit of Jesus" (16:7), thereby inviting readers to interpret the activity of the Spirit as the activity of Jesus.

2.3.2.1.2.1 Lukan Redaction of the "Spirit-Christ Doublet" (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15).

References to the Holy Spirit in Luke's Gospel appear, more or less, in three main clusters (Luke 1-2; 3-4; and 11-12). Unlike the first two clusters, the third cluster of references (11:13; 12:10, 12) directly concerns Jesus' teachings about the Spirit and possesses a future tenor.[159] The third of the three references to the Spirit (Luke 12:12), because it forms a doublet with another statement in Luke (21:12-15), cannot be

[159] In the first (chronological) reference, Jesus says that if even wicked parents know how to give their children good gifts, "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (11:13). By the *a minore ad maius* logic of the claim, God eagerly desires to give the Spirit, a good gift, to those who request it. As we saw, the statement in 11:13 supplies the foundational claim upon which God's "sharing" of authority with Jesus to dispense the Spirit (cf. Acts 5:32; 10:45; 15:8) is later made (Acts 2:33). In another discourse treating several themes (Luke 12:1-12), Jesus takes up the question of public confession. He includes this warning: words spoken against the Son of Man are forgiven (by God) more easily than words ("blasphemies") against the Holy Spirit (12:10). Mark's Gospel calls such action "an eternal sin" (3:28-29), while Matthew doubly emphasizes the impossibility of receiving forgiveness for blaspheming the Spirit (12:31, 32). Like the first example, the orientation of Luke's statement in 12:10 is future-oriented, even eschatological, though its tone is admonitory. Jesus' statement here may signal the high stakes of lying to or misusing the "Spirit of the Lord" (cf. Acts 5:3, 9; 8:18-24), inevitably a danger wherever the Spirit continues to play a major role in events.

understood properly without relating the two passages to each other ("Spirit-Christ doublet"), as Luke appears to have done. As the last significant mention of the Holy Spirit in Luke's Gospel (before Luke 24:49), Luke 12:12 also looks forward to the role of the Spirit in Acts and previews Jesus' post-ascension role in the witness of believers. A synopsis (see Table 4 below) shows how Luke essentially identifies the presence of the Holy Spirit in the testimony of future believers with the presence of the exalted Lord. The verse, and the doublet of which it is a part, seemingly represents the only statement in any synoptic Gospel indicating the mode of Jesus' ongoing activity *after* his ascension. For that reason, it is worth studying in more detail.

Table 4: The Lukan Spirit-Christ Doublet (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15)

Matthew 10:17-20	**Mark 13:9-11**	**Luke 12:11-12**	**Luke 21:12-15**[160]
17 Προσέχετε δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων· παραδώσουσιν γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰς συνέδρια καὶ ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν μαστιγώσουσιν ὑμᾶς· 18 καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνας δὲ καὶ βασιλεῖς ἀχθήσεσθε ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ	9 Βλέπετε δὲ ὑμεῖς ἑαυτούς· παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγὰς δαρήσεσθε καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνων καὶ βασιλέων σταθήσεσθε ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ	11 Ὅταν δὲ εἰσφέρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας,	12 Πρὸ δὲ τούτων πάντων ἐπιβαλοῦσιν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν καὶ διώξουσιν, παραδιδόντες εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ φυλακάς, ἀπαγομένους ἐπὶ βασιλεῖς καὶ ἡγεμόνας ἕνεκεν

[160] To be clear, based on the synoptic comparisons in Table 4, the core of the Lukan material in 12:11-12 and 21:12-15 is drawn from Jesus' apocalyptic discourse in Mark 13:9-11. As we saw in Chapter 1, however, both Matthew and Luke have altered and displaced Mark 13:10 from the immediate context in which it occurs in Mark (Matt 24:14; Luke 24:47). Luke's alteration is especially noteworthy for how it essentially converts Mark's apocalyptic saying into a backward-facing claim about scriptural promise and fulfillment (see 1.1.5.3). The Lukan redaction in this instance appears especially salient since, as we saw, the adjoining material in Mark's discourse (13:9, 11) shows up in Luke's Gospel in two different places (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15)—that is, Luke emphasizes and links Luke 12:11-12 and 21:12-15 in a way that has no synoptic parallel. Cf. Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 197-198.

εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. *[cf. 24:14]* [19] ὅταν δὲ παραδῶσιν ὑμᾶς, μὴ μεριμνήσητε πῶς ἢ τί λαλήσητε· δοθήσεται γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τί λαλήσητε· [20] οὐ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ἐστε οἱ λαλοῦντες ἀλλὰ **τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν** τὸ λαλοῦν ἐν ὑμῖν. [17] Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; [18] and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. [19] When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; [20] for it is not you who speak, but **the Spirit of your Father** speaking through you.	εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς. [10] καὶ εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πρῶτον δεῖ κηρυχθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. [11] καὶ ὅταν ἄγωσιν ὑμᾶς παραδιδόντες, μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε τί λαλήσητε, ἀλλ᾽ ὃ ἐὰν δοθῇ ὑμῖν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦτο λαλεῖτε· οὐ γάρ ἐστε ὑμεῖς οἱ λαλοῦντες ἀλλὰ **τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον**. [9] "As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. [10] And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. [11] When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but **the Holy Spirit**.	*[cf. 24:47;* Ch 1*]* μὴ μεριμνήσητε πῶς ἢ τί ἀπολογήσησθε ἢ τί εἴπητε· [12] τὸ γὰρ **ἅγιον πνεῦμα** διδάξει ὑμᾶς ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἃ δεῖ εἰπεῖν. [11] When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; [12] for **the Holy Spirit** will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say."	τοῦ ὀνόματός μου· [13] ἀποβήσεται ὑμῖν εἰς μαρτύριον. [14] θέτε οὖν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν μὴ προμελετᾶν ἀπολογηθῆναι· [15] <u>ἐγὼ</u> γὰρ <u>δώσω</u> ὑμῖν **στόμα καὶ σοφίαν** ᾗ οὐ δυνήσονται ἀντιστῆναι ἢ ἀντειπεῖν ἅπαντες οἱ ἀντικείμενοι ὑμῖν. [12] But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. [13] This will give you an opportunity to testify. [14] So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; [15] for I will give you **words and a wisdom** that none of your opponents

			will be able to withstand or contradict.

In the passages above, "they"—presumably unbelieving Jews and generally opponents of the gospel (like Saul, at first)—will hand Jesus' followers over to synagogues and authorities (Luke 12:11a; 21:12). But this act of hostility will only result in "an opportunity to testify" (εἰς μαρτύριον, 21:13). Yet such testimony should not be prepared in advance (12:11b; 21:14) because what to say will be provided to these witnesses at the crucial time (12:12; 21:15). Up to this point the parallels between the two Lukan passages are striking and, in general, both track with Mark's and Matthew's versions. However, whereas Luke 12:12 claims that the "*Holy Spirit* will teach (τὸ…ἅγιον πνεῦμα διδάξει) you…what you ought to say"—thereby following the Markan source language closely—Luke 21:15 makes a surprising switch to the first person: "*I* will give (ἐγὼ…δώσω) you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict." The variation in Luke 21:15 has no parallel in Mark or Matthew. When set in parallel with the claim from Luke 12:12 (// Mark 13:11), it seems to suggest that Jesus' dispensation of "words and wisdom" should be understood as functionally equivalent to the aid supplied by the Holy Spirit: Jesus will grant (literally) "a mouth and a wisdom" (cf. Luke 24:49); that is, by the Spirit he will provide "what to say."[161]

[161] Here Buckwalter (*ibid.,* 201) believes the doublet may even reflect passages like Ex 4:12 ("Now go, I will help you speak and will teach you what to say") or Yahweh's communication with Balaam in Num 22:35, 38; cf. also Isa 50:4; 51:16; Jer 1:9; Mic 6:5.

As for Lukan christology, Luke 21:15 implies that Jesus will somehow be at work in the midst of his followers' future tribulations, to give them aid and wisdom, a claim all the more remarkable for being expressed in the Third Gospel rather than in Acts. Should situations arise in the story of Acts where believers are harassed in synagogues,[162] brought before kings and leaders,[163] or put on trial,[164] readers are primed to interpret the believers' testimony as the fruit of the Spirit's intervention, and to interpret the Spirit's intervention as tantamount to the ongoing guidance of the ascended Jesus himself.

With this understanding of the Spirit-Christ doublet, it would follow that most of the speeches of Acts—which occupy a considerable share of the book[165]—ought to be taken as words and wisdom *given by Jesus himself*, that is, by means of the provision of the Spirit. In a sense, therefore, Acts contains not just the speeches of Jesus' witnesses (Acts 1:8), but the words of Jesus or, as Acts 1:1 implies, what Jesus *continues to say and do.*[166] The Spirit-Christ doublet (12:11-12; 21:12-15) provides Luke with a way of extending the instructive presence of Jesus into the present time of the church. As we will

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[162] cf. 6:9; 9:2, 20; 13:5, 14, 43; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 7, 19, 26; 19:8; 22:19; 26:11

[163] Cf. 4:3-21; 5:17-40; 6:12-8:1a; 9:15; 10:25-48; 11:1-18; 12:1-11; 13:7-12; 16:9-39; 17:19-32; 19:24-41; 21:37-23:11; 24:10-21; 24:8-11; 25:14, 24, 26; 26:2-32; 28:7-8.

[164] Cf. 4:5-21; 5:17-41; 6:12-7:60; 17:9-31; 21:33-23:10; 24:1-21; 25:7-12, 14-21; 26:1-32. The language of "witness" elsewhere recalls a juridical context, indirectly if not explicitly.

[165] Marion Soards notes that 365 verses out of the total 1000 in the book of Acts are in direct discourse (*The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Contexts, and Concerns* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994], 1), which probably amounts to between 25% and 30%, depending on how one calculates. For a helpful list of speeches in Acts, see Henry Cadbury, "The Speeches in Acts," in *The Beginnings of Christianity. Part I: The Acts of the Apostles*. *Volume 5: Additional Notes to the Commentary,* ed. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury (London: Macmillan, 1933), 402-427. Outside of Peter and Paul's combined 17 or so speeches, only James (15:14-21; 21:20-25) and Stephen (7:2-53) offer "Christian" speeches. Purported non-believers are represented in four speeches (Gamaliel: 5:35-39; Ephesian γραμματεύς: 19:35-39; Tertullus: 24:2-8; Festus: 25:14-21, 24-27).

[166] See O'Toole, *Unity*, 61, for the conclusion that continued activity of Lukan Jesus in Acts helps us understand Acts 1:1; and Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 240.

see, the emphasis on the Lord Jesus' activity in the narrative's present culminates in Luke's claim in Acts 16:7 that it is "the Spirit of Jesus" that directs Paul's mission.

The unique promises of the Lukan Jesus to be at work in the post-ascension witness of his followers (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15) find numerous opportunities for fulfillment in Acts. For instance, in one of Acts' most vivid trials, Stephen's testimony proves powerful because, as Luke relates, he was "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5; 7:55) and his opponents "could not withstand (ἀντιστῆναι) the wisdom (σοφία) and the Spirit by which he spoke" (6:10; cf. 6:3). The several verbal connections between Jesus' words in Luke 12:12/21:15 and Acts 6:10 mark the Stephen scene as a case in point.[167] Given those connections, Jesus' promises about μαρτύριον (Luke 21:13) may help to explain why Stephen is later designated a μάρτυς by Paul (Acts 22:20). That the Lord Jesus remains silent during the scene (7:55-56) is apropos, since Stephen's lengthy speech doubles for Jesus' own words, according to Luke 12:12/21:15 (see also Table 2.1 above).

The preceding observations preclude the possibility that Acts imagine Jesus' followers simply taking his place in a succession of roles. Though characters (like Stephen and Paul) look like the Christ of Luke's Gospel at times, they do not narratively stand in his stead. Our study so far actually finds just the opposite of an "absentee christology" to which overstated notions of succession are often tied: Jesus remains active in the narrative through the words he supplies and by the guidance of the Spirit of

[167] Cf. Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose*, 198: "[A]s Luke's unmistakable reference to Luke 21:15 in Acts 6:10 makes clear, Jesus is *directly* responsible for this wisdom, whether in supplying it to Stephen through the Spirit or giving it himself without the Spirit's mediation" (emphasis original). See also Turner, "'Divine Christology,'" 421; O'Toole, *Unity*, 43-44.

prophecy he bestows. Moreover, part of apostolic testimony concerns what the exalted Lord *continues* to say and do in the present. It is his *ongoing* Lordship that is crucial to understanding who Jesus is, not simply his life, death, or teachings in the past.

2.3.2.1.2.2 "Witness" by the Spirit (of Jesus)

One way in which Luke shows the Spirit-Christ doublet playing out in Acts is in the "witness" of Jesus' disciples, especially the apostles and Paul. Others receive the Spirit as the movement spreads beyond Israel, but the apostles have received their anointing which, Jesus reiterates, is for the purpose of witness (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 4:31). The Spirit-Christ doublet (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15) promised that Jesus' post-ascension disciples could rely on Jesus' provision for their testimony. The "Lukan Commission" clarifies that promise by saying it will be by means of baptism in the Spirit that his apostles will be equipped for such "witness."

Having doubly emphasized the connection between Jesus, the Spirit, and apostolic witness, Luke need not explicitly describe the speech and actions of Jesus' apostles as Spirit-led; it can simply be assumed. The term "witness" serves as shorthand for the exalted Lord's provision, by the Spirit, of what to say and do, especially in times of persecution and suffering, which can be further confirmed in Luke's characterization of the "witness"[168] of the apostles and Paul.

[168] To be clear, the Spirit-Christ doublet emphasizes "testimony" as a kind of apology before those in power while the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8) underscores specifically bearing witness to Jesus' death and resurrection (and universal Lordship) as the fulfillment of God's plans. By gathering these expressions of testimony under the single rubric of "witness" Luke broadens the scope of the Spirit's provision, among the nations, to the far reaches of the earth, and in the face of persecution and suffering—in other words, a scope that effectively includes all of Acts.

Luke's use of words for "witness," occurring four times as frequently in Acts as in the Third Gospel,[169] impresses upon readers their conceptual importance for the narrative account of apostolic origins. Every instance of the designation μάρτυς in Acts 1-21, except 5:32b (see below), refers to the apostles (1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32a; 10:39, 41). Jesus first applies the designation to them (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8), and thereafter the apostles refer to themselves as "witnesses" (1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41). Even Paul in Acts 13:31 refers to them by this title. First, Peter (2:40) and, then, Peter and John together (8:25) are said to "testify" (διαμαρτύρεσθαι) to their auditors. Peter later recollects that "[God] commanded us to preach to the people and to *testify* that [Jesus] is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42; cf. 17:26-31). In Acts 4:33, Luke summarizes: "With great power the apostles gave their *testimony* to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." The statement recalls Jesus' promises concerning their witness (1:8) as well as the "power" that would accompany it (Luke 24:49). In addition, the setting of the summary statement—after the apostles' prayer upon release from custody (4:24-30)—may also recall the Spirit-Christ doublet and its specific claims about "testimony" before rulers and authorities (Luke 12:11; cf. 21:12).

Interestingly, "witness" is not a term reserved for human actors alone in Acts. Reminding readers of the divine origin of the Spirit, Peter says in Acts 5:32: "We are

[169] The word μάρτυς and its six derivatives appear 9 times in Luke's Gospel: μαρτύριον (5:14; 9:5; 21:13); μάρτυς (11:48; 24:48); μαρτυρία (22:71); μαρτυρεῖν (4:22); διαμαρτύρεσθαι (16:28); ψευδομαρτυρεῖν (18:20). In Acts the word-family appears 39 times: μάρτυς (1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 6:13; 7:58; 10:39, 41; 13:31; 22:15, 20; 26:16); μαρτυρεῖν (6:3; 10:22, 43; 13:22; 14:3; 15:8; 16:2; 22:5, 12; 23:11; 26:5); διαμαρτύρεσθαι (2:40; 8:25; 10:42; 18:5; 20:21, 23, 24; 23:11; 28:23); μαρτύρεσθαι (20:26; 26:22); μαρτύριον (4:33; 7:44); μαρτυρία (22:18); ἀμάρτυρος (14:17). See Allison A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 128.

witnesses to these things, and *so is the Holy Spirit* whom God has given to those who obey him." Both the apostles and the Holy Spirit are identified as distinct sources of testimony to "these things"—namely, that God exalted the crucified Savior and Leader who now gives Israel repentance and forgiveness (5:31).[170] In addition to the Spirit, Luke also characterizes God (15:8; cf. 14:17), Jesus (14:3), and the prophets (10:43) as ones who testify (μαρτυρεῖν).

The most prominent μάρτυς in Acts (after chapter 13) is Paul (cf. 22:15; 26:16), who repeatedly finds himself "on trial" in synagogues (9:20; 13:5, 14, 43; 14:1; 17:1; 18:4, 7, 19, 26; 19:8; 22:19; 26:11). In many cases, Luke makes it clear that Paul's encounter involves an opportunity to "testify" (18:5; 20:21, 24; 23:11; 26:22; 28:23). Moreover, in Acts Paul is the only one to find himself with an audience of powerful figures anticipated by the Spirit-Christ doublet: βασιλεῖς (Luke 12:11) and ἡγεμόνας (21:12). In fact, the Lord Jesus himself appears to Ananias in Acts to reiterate Paul's vocation of witness: "Go, for [Paul] is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings [βασιλεῖς; cf. Luke 21:12] and before the people of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Felix is several times called a ἡγεμών (Acts 23:24, 26, 33; 24:1, 10). In 26:30, Luke describes Paul's audience with Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice as one involving both βασιλεύς and ἡγεμών (26:30). Like Peter, Paul finds himself incarcerated (16:23-29), a defining characteristic of the latter half of Paul's story (ch. 22-28). Jesus' words in Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15 would seem to apply ever more precisely, in Luke's

[170] See also 20:23, where Paul says that "the Holy Spirit testifies [διαμαρτύρεσθαι] to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me." In this case, however, the word probably carries a strong sense of "warn" rather than "bear witness."

characterization, to the ministry of Paul, even if (like with the apostles) the Holy Spirit is not explicitly mentioned with reference to his "witness."[171]

To conclude, Luke appears to use "witness" as a kind of shorthand for the operative assumptions behind the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)—namely, that the Spirit is what empowers apostolic witness, the character of which includes *apologia* as well.[172] Though the scene involving Stephen—who is described as "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5)—has the most linguistic connections to Luke 12:11-12/21:12-15, Jesus' direct empowerment of the apostles by means of the Spirit should be assumed wherever Luke characterizes their speech and behavior as "witness." Moreover, because the post-ascension Jesus is ultimately credited for the irresistible "words and wisdom" (Luke 21:15) behind apostolic testimony, many of Peter's and Paul's speeches effectively double for the words of the exalted Lord himself.

This observation is a fitting segue to the next section which takes up the seemingly anomalous phrase "the Spirit of Christ" (Acts 16:7). The expression makes explicit what the Spirit-Christ doublet intimated by essentially equating Holy Spirit and

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[171] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 199: "Moreover, in Acts 21:17-26:32 one would expect to find, in view of Luke 12:11-12, the Spirit empowering Paul's testimony as he stands trial before various religious and civil authorities. But Luke *never* directly or indirectly refers to the Spirit in this extended Acts passage. Instead, Jesus again appears as the divine agent directing Paul's witness (23:11) . . . In fact, Paul emphatically states in 26:23 that it is the resurrected Christ who is proclaiming the gospel to the Jews and the Gentiles through him. In this verse, Luke gives the impression that Paul's entire missionary career, in fulfillment of his divine commission (cf. 9:l5-16 pars.), could be understood as a personal work of the Lord Jesus."

[172] O'Toole, *Unity,* 48-49: "In Acts 26: 6-18, no mention of the Holy Spirit occurs; Jesus personally appoints Paul as his witness and gives him his mission. Earlier, it was shown that Acts 20:22-24 parallels 21:11-14. Both passages speak of Paul's trip to Jerusalem. Acts 20:22-23 leaves no doubt that Paul makes this journey under the direction of the Spirit, but Acts 21: 14 calls it the will of the Lord who most reasonably is the Lord Jesus (cf. Acts 20:24)."

Jesus' guiding presence, not unlike how the Spirit conveys the Lord God's presence and activity in Israel's scriptures.[173]

2.3.2.1.2.3 Acts 16:7 and τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ

Luke's characterization of the Spirit shifts in rather pronounced fashion as the Word spreads beyond the traditional ethnic and geographical confines of Israel (e.g., after Acts 8:1). Many have noticed this shift, contrasting the "golden age" of apostolic activity when the "spirit of prophecy" dominated (Acts 1-7) with the later stages of the mission when the Spirit more commonly takes the form of personal interventions (Acts 8-20).[174] Gustav Stählin, for example, describes Luke's construal of the Spirit-in-relation-to-Jesus as possessing a "floating double character" (*schwebenden Doppelcharakter*).[175] That is, Luke characterizes the Spirit both as *the prophetic gift the heavenly, exalted Jesus bestows upon believers* and as *the personified presence that mediates Jesus' active influence on the spread of universal witness in his name*.

Having shown at length the first aspect above (2.3.2.1.1), I now consider this second aspect—namely, how the Spirit serves to communicate or extend Jesus' active presence among God's people. We have already seen how Luke characterizes Jesus as performing actions or responsibilities typically associated with God alone. In Acts 8-20

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[173] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 200: "The Spirit is closely identified with Jesus. This picture conforms to the OT belief that the Spirit of Yahweh *(ruach yhwh)* appears as an extension of Yahweh himself. Luke, however, considers Jesus as *personally active* among his followers. In this case, as do the OT writers with Yahweh, Luke lays special stress at times on the fact that Jesus directly ministers to and inspires the witness of his people [even] apart from the Spirit." Cf. also Turner, "'Divine Christology,'" 413; and idem, "Spirit of Christ and Christology," 168-190.
[174] cf., e.g., Marguerat, *Historian*, 111-113.
[175] "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 246. Cf. Marguerat, *Historian,* 113: "The increase in personal interventions makes him appear, more and more, like a sort of *deus ex machina* abruptly breaking in to modify the course of history. The Spirit's personalization is growing; he is more clearly, towards the end, the grammatical subject of the phrase which names him. In 16.7, he is even called 'the Spirit of Jesus'."

especially, a similar pattern of characterization forms: Luke portrays the intervention of the Spirit in the narrative in a similar way to how the "Spirit of the Lord" mediates God's presence among God's people in Israel's scriptures.[176]

The common characterization of the Spirit's presence and activity throughout Israel's scriptures is as an extension of and identification with the Lord (cf., e.g., Isa 31:3; 34:16; 40:13; 63:10-14). Readers of the LXX would presume τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κυρίου[177] referred to Yahweh, Israel's God, or how Yahweh's presence was mediated to humans. That same conception is even present in Acts itself. For example, in Acts 5:9 Sapphira tests the "Spirit of the Lord," tantamount to lying to God (5:3-4).[178] In 15:10 Peter tells those who insist on circumcising Gentiles not to "put God to the test" by rejecting God's declaration in the Holy Spirit that all are now clean (15:8; cf. 11:17).

Luke's construal of the Spirit as the extension and expression of Jesus' presence finds further definition as the driving force behind universal proclamation. More than merely a prophetic gift to be possessed, the almost "hypostatized" Spirit takes on an

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[176] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 203: "It is not certain that Luke ever thought in subordination terms, esp. if he believed that the Spirit mediated Jesus' presence. Luke' s perception of Jesus' relation to the Spirit seems closely reminiscent of OT monotheism: as the Spirit of God was largely the point of contact between Israel and Yahweh in the OT, so is the Spirit, according to Luke-Acts, primarily the point of contact between Jesus and the church, and Jesus and the world."

[177] Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 233: "The very phrase τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κυρίου, which is also found in the book of Acts (5: 9; 8: 39, as well as 16:7), is of great importance for our question. Originally it referred to the spirit of Yahweh (compare LXX Jd 3:10; 6: 34b; 11:29; 13:25; 1 Sam 10:6; 11:6; 2 Sam 23:2; 1 Ki 18: 12), just like ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ κυρίου the angel of Yahweh (compare LXX Gen. 16: 6ff; 22:11, 15; Ex 3:2; 4:24). But because of the transmission of the Lord's title to Jesus (compare Acts 2:36), τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κυρίου could be understood as the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ and ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ κυρίου as the angel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We probably have this understanding in the majority of pertinent places. On this assumption, it seems probable that Christ is for Luke the κύριος πνεύματος (cf. 2 Cor 3:18), that is, the Lord who dispenses the Holy Spirit as Lord. Then, in contrast to the earthly Jesus, the exalted one also commands the angels. He is the Kyrios, before whom the ἄγγελος τοῦ κυρίου stands, as the πνεῦμα τοῦ κυρίου" (my translation).

[178] Buckwalter, *Character and Purpose,* 203.

independent character in the narrative, acting as the subject of verbs and primary initiator of narrative action. The personification of the Spirit in Acts, moreover, seems to begin or at least escalate noticeably with Philip's ministry in Samaria (Acts 8:5). This characteristic reflects a what has been called "die Vergeistigung Christi und die Christifizierung des Geistes,"[179] culminating in the use of the phrase "the Spirit of Christ" in Acts 16:7. The phrase encapsulates how Luke's characterization of Jesus parallels that of the Spirit so closely that their activity is often indistinguishable, which may be precisely the point—what can be predicated of the Spirit can be predicated of the exalted Lord, effectively widening the horizon of how the Lord Jesus exercises his Lordship over all peoples.

Not only does Luke effectively identitfy "Jesus" with "Spirit" in places like 16:7 (and Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15), but there is a further implied parallel in the way Luke personifies the Spirit. That is, he ascribes to the Spirit direct intervention in the narrative by means of speaking (8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11), sending (13:4; cf. 20:22), prohibiting (16:6-7), consoling (9:31), warning (20:23; cf. 21:4, 11), and "snatching away" (8:39). Many of the actions of which the Spirit is made the subject in Acts are ones which could just as easily be ascribed to God, but given Jesus' authority over the Spirit granted by God, such actions can be ascribed to Jesus himself.[180] That is, given Jesus' exaltation to God's right hand, Luke construes the active intervention of the Holy Spirit

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[179] Moule, *Origin of Christology,* 105. Buckwalter, *ibid.*, 202: "Because Luke at times so closely parallels the work of the Spirit and Jesus in the church's mission, τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ can rightly refer to the combined activity of both."

[180] With the exception of "snatching away" (yet cf. Luke 4:30), Jesus is credited *in Acts* with all the same actions that the Spirit is at some point: speaking (Acts 9:4-6, 10-12, 15-16; 22:7-8, 10, 18, 21; 26:14-18), sending (9:10-12; 22:10, 21; 26:16-18), prohibiting (16:7), consoling (18:9-10; 23:11), and warning (22:18).

in the narrative in ways evocative of Jesus' agency, especially during a part of the narrative where mission advances toward its universal horizon.

The central motif characterizing this section of Acts is the movement of proclamation (the Word) outside of Jerusalem and across the boundaries of Judaism, but before the cycle of Paul's imprisonment and trials begins (Acts 21-28). Naturally, questions remain concerning why the Holy Spirit almost entirely drops out of the narrative in this last section of Acts (cf. only 28:25, a reference to the Spirit's work *in the past*). Consistent with our findings in the previous section, it can be pointed out that Luke employs "witness" as shorthand for the active influence of the exalted Lord by the Spirit, especially in situations requiring (legal) testimony. That the final seven chapters are almost entirely taken up with Paul's defense before "rulers" and "authorities" suggests that Jesus' promises in Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15 have found embodiment in the fate of Paul and need not be reiterated at every turn.

The Spirit as Character

Notably, after Acts 8 there are fourteen or so references to the Spirit as the *subject* of explicit narrative action, clustering between 8:29 and 20:28—that is, at a point in the story where the mission of universal proclamation moves from Jerusalem to Samaria and beyond. For instance, seemingly as part of the expulsion of believers from Jerusalem in the wake of Stephen's death, Philip successfully evangelizes Samaria (8:4-13). After the Samaritans receive the Spirit and the apostles depart, a more vivid characterization of the Spirit commences. The narrator tells us, "the Spirit *said* to Philip, 'Go over to that chariot and join it.'" (8:29). After the ensuing dialogue, which concludes with the eunuch's baptism (8:38), the narrator remarks: "When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of

the Lord *snatched* (ἁρπάζω) Philip away" (Acts 8:39). The miraculous mode of transportation recalls similar episodes from Israel's scriptures (1 Ki 18:12; 2 Ki 2:16; Ezek 3:12-14; cf. Luke 4:30), where God's Spirit "takes" or "lifts" a person to another place. If nothing else, the Spirit's seizure and transport of Philip conveys a strong sense of divine intervention in human affairs, especially where the narrative's concern is to show the expansion of proclamation from Samaria to the far reaches of the earth, like Ethiopia. God—and perhaps Jesus specifically—is responsible for ensuring proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins crosses boundaries of ethnicity and geography.

The Cornelius episode (10:1-11:18) is, of course, suffused with divine initiative. The parallel visions of Cornelius and Peter, containing dialogue with an angel (10:3-6, 30-32) and a divine voice (κύριος; 10:13-16) respectively, affirm that the result of the extended episode reflects God's larger purposes. In the case of Peter's vision, paired with the heavenly depiction of the sheet with mixed animals is a (heavenly) voice to which Peter responds with the vocative (κύριε), implying God. But as events further transpire, and Peter is still contemplating the vision, the narrator says that *the Spirit* tells Peter, "Look, three men are searching for you. Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them." (10:19-20). The first person claim—"I have sent them"—identifies the Spirit with the actor behind the whole scene, which, from the beginning of the Cornelius episode readers have already discovered is God. Yet, in Peter's editorial additions to the narrator's version (10:44-48), he refers twice to *Jesus* as "Lord" (11:16-17) in recalling the pentecostal promise (1:5)—God, Spirit, and Jesus nearly play interchangeable parts in the drama.

The pattern continues in Acts 13 with the start of Paul's ministry. Here the narrator again tells readers that while the Antioch community was in prayer, "the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'" (Acts 13:2). Not only does the Spirit speak directly, as in 8:29, but the Spirit's speech again adopts the first person voice—"I have called them." The implication is that the Spirit serves as mouthpiece of the Lord, rendering God's commands directly. Because Luke tells readers that Jesus himself is earlier responsible for calling Paul directly (Acts 9:1-20), it suggests that Jesus is to be identified with the Spirit here. Even after Paul and Barnabas receive the laying on of hands, Luke reminds us, they go forth, "sent out by the Holy Spirit" (13:4).[181]

In ch. 15, at the Jerusalem meeting of apostles and Jerusalem church leaders, James voices the pivotal decision to include Gentiles as Gentiles among God's people (15:13-21). The letter-decree voices that decision on behalf of the whole church: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials…" (Acts 15:28). Curiously, the letter distinguishes the agreement of the Holy Spirit from the agreement of the council, as if it were possible for Spirit and council to be in conflict, thereby implying the Spirit's independent agency once more. The statement "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit" likely refers to the Spirit's pivotal role in the Cornelius incident, which formed the basis of the argument convincing the council to

[181] Beverly Gaventa, "Initiatives Divine and Human in the Lukan Story World," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D G Dunn*, ed. Graham Stanton et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 83-84: "By placing the Spirit's order in the form of direct address ("Set aside") and locating it between the two summary statements of v. 1 and v. 3, Luke draws attention to the fact that the initiative for this movement comes from the Spirit rather than from the church at Antioch or even from this group of human beings."

accept Gentiles without circumcision. The distinction between Spirit and council, therefore, reaffirms the fact that the Spirit willed Gentile inclusion before human leaders aligned themselves with the Spirit's will.[182]

The Spirit's independent agency, as it were, finds its clearest expression in Acts 16:6-7 where twice Luke tells readers the Holy Spirit obstructed the plans of Paul's company.[183] First the Holy Spirit prevents them from proclaiming the word in Asia, then the "Spirit of Jesus" (16:7) himself blocks their path to Bithynia. As noted, Acts 16:7 is the only occurrence in Luke-Acts, not to mention the NT, of the phrase, "the Spirit of Christ." That Luke does not explain the reason for the Spirit's thwarting only underscores the ongoing divergence—or possibility of divergence—between the will of God and the will of God's human servants like Paul.

In context, it is clear that by the phrase "the Spirit of Jesus" (τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ) Luke means the "Holy Spirit."[184] Luke's statement in 16:6 that Paul and company were "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" forms a natural parallel with

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[182] Cf. Gaventa, ibid., 84, who concludes that Luke's narrative insists that the church does not plan the mission, nor is Paul *de facto* the narrative's hero.

[183] Just like apostolic witness was conducted by the Spirit Jesus poured out, so Paul's ministry to all nations, correspondingly, is conducted by Jesus himself, that is, by Jesus through the Spirit. Cf. Dupont, "La Mission de Paul," 296-97.

[184] Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 232: "Luke certainly means one and the same spirit in vv. 6 and 7." The vast majority of the uses of πνεῦμα in Acts refer to the Holy Spirit, whether explicitly or implicitly (56/70). Moreover, on the whole, Luke's uses of the word πνεῦμα concentrate toward the ends of a spectrum of positive ("holy") and negative ("wicked/unclean") associations, leaving few cases of any ambiguous "spirit(s)." Of the 70 references to πνεῦμα in Acts, the majority are accompanied by the adjective ἅγιον (41). Of the 29 other instances, over half (15) overwhelmingly imply "Holy Spirit" in the absence of the modifier (2:4, 17, 18; 5:9; 6:3, 10; 8:18, 29, 39; 10:19; 11:12, 28; 16:7; 20:22; 21:4). Thus, 56 out of 70 refer to the Holy Spirit, explicitly or implicitly. Of the remaining 14 occurrences, most (8) are paired with πονηρός or ἀκάθαρτος to form "wicked/unclean spirit(s)" (5:16; 8:7; 16:16, 18; 19:12, 13, 15, 16). In those few remaining instances of ambiguous "spirit" (6), most refer vaguely to a person's "spirit" as the seat of discernment or something like a soul (7:59; 17:16; 18:25; 19:21). The final two references are to "spirits" as beings included in a system of belief, that is, distinguishing Pharisees from Sadducees (23:8, 9). Given the background Luke's linguistic pattern provides, we can conclude that Luke expected readers to assume the "Spirit of Jesus" is the "Holy Spirit."

16:7: "they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them." The two statements refer to different paths occluded by the Spirit, but the parallel idea suggests the two are to be taken together. The Spirit—that is, the Spirit of Jesus—is at work in clarifying the path of mission by closing off some avenues and, presumably, opening others (cf. Acts 8).[185]

Many of the unique statements in Luke and Acts examined thus far condition readers to anticipate a strong relation between the Holy Spirit and Jesus' presence. The Pentecostal Spirit belongs to Jesus to administer because, we can conclude, it is *his* Spirit that directs Paul's mission. In terms of our broader thesis, the point bears emphasizing: because Jesus himself is responsible for the unfolding of the universal mission—given that it is his identity as "Lord of all" that is at stake—Luke underscores the ascended Lord's role in directing the mission, even to the point of identifying the Holy Spirit with the "Spirit of Jesus." Acts can proclaim Jesus "Lord of all" (10:36) because it is the Spirit of this κύριος that finally directs the course of mission to all nations.

In his speech to the Ephesian elders (20:18-35), Paul remarks on the uncertain fate that awaits him, yet he also insists the Spirit guides his actions: "And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me" (Acts 20:22-23). Luke here reiterates the earlier

[185] The vision of the Macedonian man (vv. 9-10) is a little different. Whereas the Spirit's actions resulted in immediate impact, namely that Asia and Bithynia were closed to Paul's company, the account of the Macedonian vision refers only to the characters' *conclusions* about their course of action—"*being convinced* that God had called us to proclaim news to them" (v. 10). After relating that the mission to Macedonia followed from an *interpretation* of the vision of a Macedonia man, Luke tells us that their mission succeeded in converting a *woman* from *Thyatira* (that is, from the forbidden Asia, not Macedonia)! Cf. Acts 16:11-15. See Miller, *"Convinced That God Had Called Us",* 91-108.

characterization of the Spirit as having independent agency and will by referring to the Spirit as that which holds Paul captive—in essence, pre-describing the legal and political incarceration he will face as what the Spirit determined in advance. Not only does the Holy Spirit provide the words in times of trial (cf. Luke 12:11-12), but according to Paul the Spirit warns (διαμαρτύρομαι) him of what is to come. The sense of divine superintendence increases in the narrative as Paul's fate is sealed, after his arrest, when he appeals to the emperor (25:11-12). Luke is careful to show that even an audience with the emperor is a divinely orchestrated necessity which events will bear out (cf. 19:21; 23:11). Finally, in that same speech before the Ephesian elders, Paul reminds them to take care of their "flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (20:28). Here again the Spirit is spoken of as working independently and directly among the people—that is, the Spirit rather than merely Paul has made them ἐπισκόπους over the church. Reminiscent of Jesus' election of the Twelve/apostles (Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13, 14-26), the Spirit is responsible for establishing the leadership of the church. The parallel suggests, at the very least, that the work of the Spirit and the work of the Lord Jesus are coterminous.[186]

2.3.2.2 Conclusions

The unmistakable parallelism of "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of Jesus" in 16:6-7 concludes a series of shifts in Luke's construal of the relationship between the Spirit and

[186] Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 247: "in the book of Acts the exalted Christ and the Spirit of God operate in such a close communion of activity that one can speak of the action and the result of the action (*Wirk und Wirken*) as one and the same." Interestingly, Buckwalter uses Stählin's argument to argue for the non-subordination of the Spirit to Christ, yet he mistranslates Stählin's words in favor of his argument: "one could speak of the Work and Workers as one and the same" (203). O'Toole, *Unity,* 43: "Interestingly, the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:21?; 20:22-23; 21:4?, 11) clarifies Jesus' will for Paul."

Jesus—from *Spirit of the Lord God* (Luke 4:18) to *Jesus Lord of the Spirit* (Acts 2:33) to the *Spirit of the Lord Jesus* (Acts 16:7). As the mission moves toward all nations and the end of the earth, the way in which the Holy Spirit mediates Jesus' activity correspondingly shifts. What begins with the Baptist's promise that Jesus would baptize believers with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16) finds fulfillment at Pentecost with the empowerment of the apostles (Acts 1:5; 2:1-11; 4:31). Yet the pentecostal outpourings of the Spirit *by Jesus* (2:33) continue throughout Acts (Acts 4:31; 8:15-17; 10:44-46; 19:6-7), thereby reasserting Jesus' active presence as the movement spreads beyond the contours of Israel. The Lukan Jesus also uniquely promises his post-ascension provision of "words and wisdom" (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15) to his followers in opportunities for "testimony," rendering the many speeches in Acts as the words of Jesus himself (cf. Acts 1:1). "Witness," therefore, is Lukan shorthand for the Spirit's intercession and Jesus' active presence. The close association between Spirit and Jesus culminates in Luke's claim in 16:7 that the "Spirit of Jesus" directed Paul's company toward western Europe. By the ubiquity of the Spirit, Jesus' Lordship comes to expression in the spread of the Word across boundaries of culture, language, ethnicity, and geography.[187] Pneumatology, for Luke, is inescapably bound up with christology.[188]

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[187] Martin H. Franzmann, "The Word of the Lord Grew," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 30.8 (1959): 580: "To proclaim the kingdom of God and the Lordship of Jesus is therefore necessarily to proclaim the Holy Spirit too, for the Spirit is indissolubly connected with both. The presence of the Spirit in the earthly life of Jesus is the evidence of His Lordship even then (Acts 10:38); the gift of the Spirit is the witness to His exaltation (Acts 2:33-36) and the means whereby the exalted Lord exercises His gracious Lordship for the salvation of men [*sic*]. (Acts 2:28, 38; 5:32)."

[188] Kränkl, *Der Knecht Gottes*, 180-181: "Nur wer sich zum erhöhten Herrn bekennt und sich auf seinen Namen taufen läßt, bekommt von jetzt an den Geist verliehen (Apg 2,38; 19,2-6). So eng ist die Vermittlung des Geistes an den Erhöhten gebunden, daß Lukas vom Geist auch als vom "Geist Jesu" (Apg 16,6f.) sprechen kann. Der Geist erweist sich also nicht als Ersatz für den dem geschichtlichen Raum enthobenen Christus, sondern als das hervorragende Medium, mit dem er weiterhin in die Geschichte herein wirkt. *Die Pneumatologie wird so bei Lukas zu einem Teil der Christologie*" (emphasis added). Cf.

2.3.3 Conclusion

The central claim of the chapter to this point has been the insistence that the spatial binaries of present/absent and active/passive constrict the dynamic portrait Luke creates of Jesus' appearances and ongoing influence throughout the book. As we saw, Jesus' ascension is more than a mere indicator of Jesus' departure from the earth. The accompanying explanation that Jesus has gone to heaven and will one day return from heaven (1:9-11) configures the rest of the narrative according to Jesus' exaltation to heaven and Lordship by the Spirit, which entails his departure neither from the narrative nor history (Acts 1:1). In fact, Jesus' ascension is an exaltation by which he (narratively) attains co-regency with God in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit (2:33). As the one who baptizes with Spirit (cf. Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:2-4), the exalted Lord continues to equip new groups of believers (4:31; 8:15-17; 10:44-46; 11:15-16; 15:8; 19:6-7). Early in Acts, Luke explains this role in terms of (LXX) Joel 3:1-5, by which Peter ascribes to Jesus the title κύριος, responsibility for pouring out the Spirit, and the exclusive name by which all must be saved (2:17-21; 4:10, 12). Luke's characterization of Jesus' ongoing influence, however, is incomplete without accounting for the way in which the portrayal of the Holy Spirit is interwoven with that of the exalted Lord. Analysis of the "Spirit-Christ doublet" (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15) demonstrated that even in the Third Gospel Luke anticipated Jesus' post-ascension role in the "testimony" of his followers. Therefore, many of the speeches in Acts—especially those before "rulers and authorities" and in the face of opposition—reflect the provision of the Lord Jesus himself by means of

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also J. Gewiess, *Die urapostolische Heilsverkündigung nach der Apostelgeschichte* (Breslau: Müller & Seiffert, 1939), 90.

the Spirit. In fact, the close association of Jesus and Spirit culminates in Acts 16:7 when the narrator refers to the "Spirit of Jesus" as the guiding force of Paul's mission into new lands around the Mediterranean. Far from an "absentee" Lord, Jesus continues to influence the unfolding of mission, especially as it crosses linguistic, cultural, and ethnic boundaries.

2.4 Universal Mission in His Name: The Progress of the "Word"

Bo Reicke[189] notes that "The fundamental history of the church reported in Acts is constantly considered to be directed by the risen Lord. And everything is concentrated on the expansion of the Christian message, the Logos, the Word of Jesus Christ." Because the progress of the "word" is so integral to a story that develops Jesus' narrative identity as "Lord of all," we can trace how Luke shapes this development by his use of "progress reports" on the Word. Here Luke implicitly demonstrates not only the *present* activity of the exalted Jesus, but Jesus' specific relation to the unfolding of the mission—that is, how proclamation of repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations (Luke 24:47) and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8) reflects Jesus' universal Lordship. That Jesus is "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36) is shown, first, by the spread of the preaching of salvation to Jews *as well as* to Gentiles and to the land of Israel (Jerusalem especially) *as well as* to the Diaspora and, second, by Jesus' explicit or implicit intervention in the advance of that proclamation.

The characterization of the exalted Lord Jesus in Acts—and his responsibility for the mission in his name—becomes especially important as that mission crosses cultural,

[189] "The Risen Lord," 162. Cf. also 166.

ethnic, and geographical boundaries (as Luke 24:46-48 and Acts 1:8 anticipate). In the present section, we turn to another way in which Luke implicitly communicates Jesus' active influence on the unfolding of the universal mission—and thus the narrative explication of his universal Lordship—namely, by narrating the growth of the "word."

2.4.1 Jesus and the Growth of the "Word"

Part of the peculiar Lukan grammar of universal mission, according to Luke, is the spread of the "word of God"[190] or "word of the Lord."[191] Certainly, Luke can periodically describe the numerical increase[192] of believers in Jesus, but just as often he encodes that growth in the language of the spread of the "word."[193] Therefore, a closer examination of this motif is required, especially in light of our broader aim to show the guidance and continued activity of the exalted Lord Jesus.

Rather than analyze every Lukan use of the term λόγος,[194] however, our examination will focus on the way in which Luke uses the term specifically for the expansion of the Christian way. "Word" is sometimes deployed as synecdoche for the Christian movement at the center of Luke's story (cf. Luke 1:3). The pattern emerges most clearly in Luke's characterization of the Christian mission in Acts with the periodic

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[190] Acts 4:31; 6:2; 6:7; 8:14; 11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 46; 17:13; 18:11.
[191] Acts 8:25; 13:44, 48, 49; 15:35, 36; 16:32; 19:10, 20.
[192] Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:35, 42; 11:21, 24; 14:1, 21; 16:5; 17:12; 18:8.
[193] Ernst Haenchen, "Judentum und Christentum in der Apostelgeschichte," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 54.3 (Jan 1, 1963): 162, calls this dimension of Acts "einem atemberaubenden Siegeslauf des 'Wortes Gottes.'" Passages where the language of quantitative growth is paired with mention of the "word": Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:1-7; 11:19-21; 13:49-14:1; 17:11-13.
[194] On other occasions λόγος can refer, in the singular, to a "report" (7:29; 11:22), "reason" (10:29; 18:14; 19:40), "word of exhortation" (13:15; 20:2), "speech/speaking" (14:12; 15:32; 20:7, 38; 22:22), "matter" (15:6; 18:15; 20:24), "by mouth" (15:27), "complaint" (19:38). In the plural λόγοι often refers simply to the words constituting the basis of the message or even equivalent to the message itself: Acts 2:22, 40; 5:5, 24; 7:22; 10:44 (?); 15:15, 24; 16:36; 20:35.

use of brief "progress reports"[195] that chart the advance of the word. The brief summaries (Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31), appearing at pivotal moments in the universal mission, have the effect of updating readers on the progression of the movement but also of confirming God's purposes behind its growth and advance. They occupy our present attention because they represent *Luke's* way of marking the expansion of the movement for readers and, therefore, provide clear case studies for whether or not Luke associates the expansion in the movement with the narrative identity of Jesus.

While these "progress reports" possess several qualities that set them apart from the rest of the narrative, what constitutes a formal "progress report" is sometimes debated.[196] For instance, there are several additional instances in Acts which, though not strictly possessing all the same characteristics as the passages above, are sometimes grouped with them (2:47; 4:4; 5:16; 11:24b; 18:11). Because they fulfill a similar function in the narrative—updating readers on the mission—these additional verses belong within the scope of the present analysis.

For organization clarity, the following analysis groups together the four "reports" that explicitly name the "word of God/the Lord" as representative of the whole movement (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 13:48-49; and 19:20). Together these reports on the growth of the "word" demonstrate how Luke understands the spread of proclamation by divine impetus. Moreover, Luke associates the progress markers with certain stages in the

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[195] Broadly, Luke also employs something similar even in his infancy narrative at 1:80, 2:40, and 2:56. See Henry Cadbury, "The Summaries in Acts," in *The Acts of the Apostles. Volume 5: Additional Notes to the Commentary,* vol. 5 in *The Beginnings of Christianity,* ed. F.J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: Macmillan, 1933), 395.

[196] See Brian Rosner, "The Progress of the Word," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 417-436.

mission, especially where inter-cultural and inter-ethnic contact is concerned. With the growth and spread of the proclamation among new "nations" and lands, Jesus' promissory commission comes to fulfillment and the universal Lordship of Jesus Christ is confirmed. In the second section, a brief analysis of seven other "reports" (Acts 2:47b; 4:4; 5:14-16; 9:31; 11:21; 16:5; and 28:30-31) will confirm and develop previous findings concerning the growth and complexion of the movement as it spreads beyond the ethnic and geographical borders of Israel.

2.4.1.1 Acts 6:7

"The word of God grew (ηὔξανεν) and the number of disciples in Jerusalem multiplied (ἐπληθύνετο) exceedingly, and a great crowd of priests became obedient to the faith."

The first account of the growth of the "word of God" occurs, significantly, in the middle of the introduction of the Seven. Between the apostles laying hands on these Hellenist leaders (6:6) and the start of the ministry of one of the Seven (Stephen, 6:8), Luke offers his first snapshot of the successful movement. In its immediate narrative context, the statement in 6:7 follows up on an initial claim in 6:1 that "during those days…the disciples were increasing (πληθυνόντων τῶν μαθητῶν) in number…" In 6:1, however, the claim is more of an adverbial or explanatory clause, establishing the basis for why the Hellenist-Hebrew controversy developed at this point in the church's life. It was in the days of numerical increase, in other words, that a certain group within that growing body found reason to complain about the treatment of their widows. It should be noted that their complaint does not necessarily contradict the earlier claim that "there was not a needy person among them" (4:34-35; cf. 2:44-45). Rather, these prior claims *establish the grounds* for the Hellenists' complaint. That is, because no one in the early

Palestinian community was in need, the later neglect of some widows among them indicates an injustice is occurring that requires redress.[197]

For the first time in the book, in Acts 6:7 "the word of God" serves as the subject of a verb: "the word of God grew." Though Luke mentions the "word" earlier in Acts (cf. 4:4), it is not until 6:7 that the discreteness of "the word" as representative of the wider movement is established. Moreover, the structure of the verse sets in parallel the growth of the word of God with the multiplication of the disciples. Thus, as the number of believers grows so does the word of God/the Lord, helping readers recognize in the growth of believers in Jerusalem the preliminary fulfillment of Jesus' commission to bear witness "*in Jerusalem*, in all Judea and Samaria…" (Acts 1:8).

Though, technically, the verb "multiplied" (πληθύνω)—a common one in the progress reports (9:31; 12:24; cf. 7:17)—is passive in voice in 6:7, the word typically carries an active and intransitive sense in Koine Greek. Luke generally prefers the passive construction (cf. 9:31; 12:24) to parallel his use of the suggestive passives elsewhere.[198]

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[197] Also important to recognize is the fact that the first update about the young movement occurs in the context of a dispute arising from cultural (and perhaps linguistic) difference within the community. That it is not all widows feeling the sting of neglect, only the Greek-speaking Jewish ones, may presage the later diasporic encounters that result from persecution related to the Hellenists (8:1, 4; 11:19-21). Thus, the crossing of inter-*cultural* boundaries—even within the broader unity of the Jerusalem church of Jewish believers—results in conflict within the community (6:1-2), but also in the election of Hellenist leaders (6:3-6) whose preaching (6:8-10; 7:2-53), in turn, leads to the expulsion of everyone (except the apostles) from Jerusalem, which eventuates in inter-*ethnic* contact between Jewish believers and Gentiles in the Diaspora (11:19-21; cf. 12:24). In Luke's ordering of the narrative, the encounter with boundaries of difference (cultural and ethnic), however painful, opens the door to the wider engagement of and witness to "all nations." For a survey of the many historical issues associated with this passage, and Michael Zugmann, *"Hellenisten" in der Apostelgeschichte: Historische und Exegetische Untersuchungen zu Apg 6:1; 9:29; 11:20* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

[198] Cf. O'Toole, *Unity*, 43: "[C]onsider Luke's use of the terms, "being added to" (Acts 5:14; 11:24), "turning to" (Acts 9:35; 11:21b) and "believing in" (Acts 5:14; 9:42; 11:17; 14:23; 16:15, 31; 18:8; 20:21) the Lord. To dismiss these expressions as communal and confessional hardly does justice to Luke. In a culture which emphasized activity rather than abstractions these expressions also indicated a confidence that the Lord Jesus would act in the lives of those who joined themselves to him. To prove this solely from these expressions themselves would be forcing the texts but the activity of the risen Christ which has [been]

The pairing of αὐξάνω and πληθύνω—most often in that order—to convey the development of the membership of the movement, while characteristically Lukan, appears to be drawn from the LXX. Not only is the refrain (αὐξάνω καὶ πληθύνω) quite common in LXX Genesis (cf. 1:28; 8:17; 9:1, 7; 17:20; 28:3; 35:11; 47:27; 48:4), but the phrase is used to express the universal mandate to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28; 8:17; 9:1, 7), which becomes a specific imperative for the descendants of Abraham (17:20; 28:3; 35:11; Lev 26:9). At the beginning of Exodus, the command is apparently fulfilled, at least in part: οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ Ισραηλ ηὐξήθησαν καὶ ἐπληθύνθησαν (Ex 1:7).

This last use of the phrase is of special note, since it appears to be what Stephen alludes to in Acts 7:17: "But as the time drew near for the fulfillment of the promise that God had made to Abraham, *our people in Egypt increased and multiplied*" (ηὔξησεν ὁ λαὸς καὶ ἐπληθύνθη ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ). The general summary in Exodus 1:7 prefaces the advent of a new king of Egypt and the beginnings of oppression, which, again in parallel with Acts, resulted in God's people growing more numerous (Ex 1:12, 20).[199] Yet where Exodus speaks of the *people's* growth in the face of persecution, Acts uses the same verbs of growth to refer to the "word of the Lord" (6:7; 12:24; 19:20). The word of the Lord, therefore, names the identity of God's covenant people, reflecting the centrality of the proclamation of salvation in Jesus' name. By recalling the phrasing of LXX Exodus (and Genesis) in Stephen's speech, Luke offers a clue about the appearance of similar

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demonstrated shows that these phrases are best understood in a context of interaction between the risen Christ and the Christians."

[199] Cf. LXX Ex 1:12 (πλείους ἐγίνοντο καὶ ἴσχυον σφόδρα) and 1:20 (ἐπλήθυνεν ὁ λαὸς καὶ ἴσχυεν σφόδρα). The influence on Acts 6:7 (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ηὔξανεν καὶ ἐπληθύνετο ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν μαθητῶν ἐν Ἰερουσαλὴμ σφόδρα) and 19:20 (ὁ λόγος ηὔξανεν καὶ ἴσχυεν) is fairly self-evident.

language elsewhere in Acts (6:7; 12:24; 19:20).[200] God's promises to Abraham's descendants (cf. Acts 3:25) find fulfillment in the flourishing of "the word" and the movement of people who join it. Stephen's reference to "our people" (Acts 7:17) may strengthen the identification, since his speech is largely a claim to the authentic or original Israelite identity irrespective of the Temple (7:2-53). Instead of "multiplication" by Abrahamic descent, however, the spread of the "word" advances as it "gains adherents" (12:24, NRSV)—that is, by conversion among Jews as well as Gentiles.

2.4.1.2 Acts 12:24

"But the word of God grew (ηὔξανεν) and multiplied (ἐπληθύνετο)."

Again, Luke tells us "the word of God/the Lord" increased, this time probably as a preface to the first mission from Antioch (cf. 12:25-13:3). Though the summary report appears slightly out of place following the story of Peter's imprisonment and Herod's death (12:1-23), it is probably intended to recall the previous line of narrative in 11:29-30. After all, vv. 29-30 refer to the free-will offering to be delivered by Paul and Barnabas to the Judean believers living through famine (11:28) and 12:25 picks up the thread again: "Then after completing their mission Barnabas and Saul returned from[201] Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark." Why the Peter-Herod story divides the Antioch narratives is not immediately clear, but it at least allows Luke to remark on the ongoing resistance the budding movement faces, as well as the

[200] Moreover, like how multiplication in Egypt (Ex 1:7, 12, 20) preceded oppression, which in turn led to more growth, so too persecution of the young movement will only galvanize its strength and attractiveness (cf. 5:14-16).

[201] The text-critical problems in this verse are legion. Given the clear logistical problems created by εἰς Ἰερουσαλὴμ, the easier and well-attested reading ἐξ/ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλήμ is to be preferred.

divine support (including angels of judgment) it carries. In spite of opposition, the word grows and its adherents multiply.

The quick comment likewise serves as a fitting introduction to the Antioch ministry which is clearly inter-cultural and inter-ethnic from the beginning. Like 6:7, which remarks on the growth of the movement at the start of its inter-cultural spread (and conflict), 12:24 names the spread of the word at the start of the first inter-ethnic community (13:1-3; cf. 11:19-26). The attachment of summaries of growth to introductions of such communities reminds readers of the original commission of Jesus to bear witness to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Luke 24:47).

Here again it is the word itself that grows (6:7; 18:11; 19:20), expressed again with the verbs πληθύνω and αὐξάνω (cf. Acts 6:7; 19:20).[202] Another connection between the summaries lies in the fact that the persecution related to Stephen (8:1, 4)—which 6:7 introduces—results in the inter-ethnic contact between Greek-speaking Jewish believers and Greek-speaking Gentiles in the Diaspora (11:19-26). Antioch is the center of gravity for this new ministry which is theologically authorized by Peter's own revelations in Acts 10:1-11:18. That the disciples were first named "Christians" at Antioch may reflect this fact (11:26).

2.4.1.3 Acts 13:48-49

"Thus the word of the Lord spread (διεφέρετο) throughout the region."

[202] cf. one manuscript reading of ηὐξάνετο (Alexandrinus), which may have been attempting to bring out the sense of divine agency implied in the growth to match that which was perceived in its parallel passive verb, ἐπληθύνετο.

The statement follows Paul's lengthiest speech in Acts (13:16-41), Luke's description of the Jews' positive response (13:42-43), and the subsequent gathering of the whole city in anticipation of more from Paul (13:44). After some Jews contradict Paul (13:45), he speaks of now "turning to the Gentiles" (13:46) and offers a quotation from Isa 49:6 to justify it (Acts 13:47). Gentiles among Paul's audience rejoice at this news and "praise the word of the Lord" (13:48). Luke concludes "thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region" (13:49).

The syntax of the sentence emphasizes that Gentile belief is both a response to the message of Paul and also the result of divine appointment. By placing ἐπίστευσαν at the start of the clause, the narrator suggests the subject τὰ ἔθνη should be carried over from earlier. That is, when the Gentiles heard Paul's words they believed "the word of the Lord" (cf. Luke 24:47). However, the description immediately qualifies the subject of the verb ἐπίστευσαν as ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον ("as many as had been destined for eternal life"). As we have seen elsewhere in Acts, a passive verb without a clear subject often indicates a *passivum divinum*.[203] Even when following an active-voice

[203] Cf. Luke 8:39; Acts 2:22; 14:27; 15:4, 12; 17:24; 19:11; 21:19. See Stählin, "'τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ,'" 236-237: "Dazu darf man auch einige der Geschehnisse zahlen, die Lukas in der Form des Passivs berichtet, insbesondere den Bau (9:31) und das Wachstum (5:14 u. o.) der Gemeinde. Aber man wird damit zu rechnen haben, daß oft, wo ein solches *passivum divinum* steht, als Subjekt des Aktivs im Sinn des Lukas ebenso der erhohte Christus wie Gott selbst gedacht werden kann; das ist ebenso oft eine offene Frage wie an anderen Stellen die, wer mit dem κύριος gemeint ist: so wie Christus z. B. in Apg. 2: 47b (neben ὁ θεός in 2:47a!) der κύριος sein kann, der die Gemeinde der Geretteten vermehrt, so kann er auch das Subjekt des Aktivs zu den Passiva in 2:41; 5:14; 6:7; 11:24 sein. Dieselbe Frage stellt sich z. B. auch einerseits zu 11:21 (vgl. v. 20), 23; 13:47 (vgl. 26:17f.); 15:36; 19:20; 20:32, andererseits zu 10:45 (ἐκκέχυται, vgl. 2:17f. neben 2:33); 2:4; 4:31 (vgl. 5:32; 11:17; 15:8 neben 2:33; 9:17). Gerade bei dem πλησθῆναι τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος wird man mit beiden Möglichkeiten rechnen müssen, gleichzeitig aber festzustellen haben, daß Lukas beides sich vorstellen kann, ohne einen grundsätzlichen Unterschied zu machen, genau wie Paulus in vergleichbaren Fällen (vgl. z. B. 2. Kor. 5:10 mit Röm. 14: 10). So erklärt sich die zweifellos auffällige 'Vermischung von Aussagen über das Walten Gottes und Christi'." Cf. also Bovon, "Mediations," 199 fn 42.

verb which would seem to contradict its claim, the passive verb shifts the "credit" to the "Lord," a title which we have already seen to be freighted with significance for Luke's construal of Jesus.

We have seen elsewhere in Luke-Acts mention of God's foreknowledge and plans (cf. 2:23; 4:28). Indeed, even Paul's ministry is (self-)described in Acts 22:10 as one fulfilling "that which he is assigned (τέτακταί) to do." But few statements are as strong as this one in indicating the theological justification for the "failures" and "successes" of the spread of God's word. Even Jewish opposition—when understood properly in relation to Gentile acceptance—represents the successful spread of the word of the Lord. It is hardly coincidental that Luke's notice of success follows Paul's first statement of "turning to the Gentiles" (cf. 18:6; 28:28). Jewish antipathy and success among Gentiles grows from the same soil, as it were (see Chapter 4).

2.4.1.4 Acts 19:20

"Thus the word of the Lord grew (ηὔξανεν) powerfully and prevailed (ἴσχυεν)."[204]

We recall the analysis above concerning the last of the pentecostal mini-episodes in Acts 19:5-7, after which Paul scarcely encounters an unevangelized person again. The "progress report" naturally serves Luke's narrative, therefore, as a concluding reminder of success, at least until Paul's arrest (21:30). Moreover, Acts 19:20 prefaces Paul's

[204] Interstingly, Bezae replaces the statement about ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου with *ἡ πιστις του θεου ηὐξανε(ν) και επληθυνε(το)*. The verbs in Bezae are explicable on the basis of the pairing of the same verbs in 6:7 and 12:24 and the OT background to Luke's usage. The insertion of ἡ πιστις is less Lukan and may reflect Bezae's intention to explicitly name the divine impetus lurking behind much of Luke's language in the progress reports.

resolve to go to Jerusalem and on to Rome, where readers know the beginning of the end will come (cf. 23:11).

Like 6:7 and 12:24, here the word of the Lord continues to grow, additionally characterized with the adverbial phrase κατὰ κράτος ("mightily"). The introduction of the term ἰσχύω into the progress reports recalls the resistance Jesus' witnesses face from opposition throughout Acts, especially since the first such report (6:10; cf. 25:7). As the word spreads throughout the Mediterranean and the presence of churches becomes more formidable, the opposition to this "progress" grows in kind. Even Jesus anticipated such resistance, promising his personal provision through the Holy Spirit in these trying moments (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15; cf. Acts 16:7). That indeed the word "prevailed" suggests that Jesus made good on his promises. That Jesus both anticipated and made provision for the resistance that this movement would face reminds Acts' audience that where believers face opposition, there Jesus' active influence is close at hand. The overtone of conflict suggested by ἴσχυεν also foreshadows the persecution and suffering that will overtake Paul from chapter 21 to the end of the book. In spite of the obstacles marshalled against the upstart movement, believers in Jesus will prevail. The message coheres with the thrust of many of Jesus' appearances to Paul (cf. 18:9-10; 23:11; 27:24). In Luke's account, growth both signals the power of God at work—often, implicitly through Jesus Christ's provision by the Spirit—as well as the expectation of severe opposition to God's purposes.

2.4.2 The Progress of the "Word"

In this section, a brief analysis of seven other "reports" (Acts 2:47b; 4:4; 5:14-16; 9:31; 11:21; 16:5; and 28:30-31) contributes to the fuller picture of Jesus' role in the effective spread of the gospel beyond the ethnic and geographical borders of Israel.

2.4.2.1 Acts 2:47b

"And day by day the Lord added (προσετίθει) to their number those who were being saved."

Immediately following Peter's warning to the Jerusalem crowd ("save yourselves from this corrupt generation," v. 40), the narrator remarks on the addition of 3,000 people to the movement, the first notice of numerical growth in Acts. The "converts" were likely also Jews since both the narrator's characterization of the audience (2:5) and Peter's speech (2:14, 22, 29, 36) indicate as much, not to mention the believers' continuation of temple worship (2:46). Luke tells us that the new life characterizing the influx of believers consisted of devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (2:42). It additionally included sharing all things in common such that the selling of individual possessions contributed to the meeting of the needs of all (2:44-45). This expansive group met together in both temple and individual homes (2:46). The verse with which we are concerned concludes this succinct cross-section of the earliest community, even as it anticipates the ongoing growth of the movement: "And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (2:47b).

That the earliest of Luke's summary comments follows immediately in the wake of Peter's Pentecost speech (2:14-36, 38-40) is no accident. The arrival of the Spirit heralds the expansion of God's people, just as Jesus intimated (Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:4-5, 8). In addition to exhibiting the growth motif in 2:47b, Luke underscores the role of the

κύριος in the spread of the gospel to new believers. Not only is it the "Lord" who "added to their number" (προστίθημι), but describing the believers as "those being saved" (σῳζομένους; cf. 2:40) similarly emphasizes the Lord's work in the process of salvation. Lest we imagine Peter contradicts this way of construing the syntax of salvation, so to speak, when he warns the people of Jerusalem—"save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (2:40)—we should remember that even Peter's exhortation is made in the passive voice, literally "be saved" (σώθητε; cf. CEB).

Aware of the specific syntax of Peter's earlier statement, we now recognize the strength of the connection with v. 2:47b. "Those being saved" (σῳζομένους) by the "Lord" are indeed those who have *been saved* from their generation, as indicated by their repentance, baptism, and likely reception of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2:38). As the "Lord" adds more and more people to their number—specifically, "everyone whom the *Lord* God calls (προσκαλέσηται, 2:39)—so Peter's invitation remains: "everyone who calls upon (ἐπικαλέσηται) the name of the Lord *will be saved* (σωθήσεται)" (2:21). In pouring out the Spirit, it has become clear that the "name of the Lord" upon whom all are invited to call belongs to the Messiah Jesus. By calling upon his name, believers designate themselves as called by God, and are saved from their present generation. In this way, Luke can state summarily that "day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (2:47b).

2.4.2.2 Acts 4:4

"But many of those who heard the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand."

The statement occurs, as the summary reports commonly do, at slight gaps in the narrative between one story or part of a story and the next.[205] In this case, Acts 4:3 concludes Peter and John's preaching in the temple following the controversial healing of the lame beggar (3:12-26). They are arrested and put in custody for the night (4:3). As if to remind readers that the success of their preaching continues in spite of their imprisonment, the narrator tells us that many of those who heard their preaching—5,000, in fact—believed (4:4). The narrative picks up again after the brief summary interlude: "The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem…" (4:5).

As the second of Luke's reports about a large, countable group of "conversions" (cf. 2:47b), Acts 4:4 speaks of a specific number of those people who, upon hearing the apostolic preaching, believed and, we are probably meant to conclude, were integrated into the larger group of believers to whom the original 3,000 had already been added. One might presume, in purely material terms, that the movement reflects a size with which those in authority must now reckon. After the initial statement of adding 3,000 new members (2:41), the Jewish authorities eventually take an interest in stifling apostolic preaching (4:1-3). Following the next statement about the addition of 5,000 new believers (4:4), the Sanhedrin warns them not to preach or teach in Jesus' name again (4:5-7, 15-18, 21). But the admonitions of the Jewish leadership do nothing to stifle the fervor of the apostles. Indeed, the apostles together pray, upon the release of Peter and John: "And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your

[205] Cadbury, "Summaries," 395-396, calls them Acts' "connective tissue."

word with all boldness" (4:29). The cycle of success, persecution, and further success continues.

2.4.2.3 Acts 5:14

"More than ever believers were added (προσετίθεντο) to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women..."

Following the release of Peter and John from custody (4:21), the apostles' prayer for boldness (4:24-30), and a mini-pentecostal experience (4:31), the narrator offers a snapshot of the Jerusalem community (4:32-35) similar to the earlier one (2:42-47). Again, the summary emphasizes the unity of the growing community, indicated by the common ownership of all possessions (4:32), powerful apostolic testimony to the resurrection (4:33), and the selling of property to meet the needs of all (4:34-35). Barnabas is introduced as the exemplar of this peculiar practice (4:36-37), Ananias and Sapphira the cautionary tale about undermining it (5:1-11). The people who witnessed this latter scene, however, "did not dare join them" (5:13) out of reverence.

But then the narrator inserts a summary statement, a transitional update of the movement, no longer related directly to what came before. Evidence of the standalone character of 5:14-16 is the fact that v. 14 appears to flatly contradict v. 13! That is, "More than ever believers were added (προσετίθεντο) to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women" (v. 14) even though, in the wake of the Ananias-Sapphira incident, "no one dared join them" (v. 13). Certainly what "join them" and "added to the Lord" mean can be parsed in such a way that they refer to different things—the former to the specific fellowship of apostles, the latter to belief in Jesus more broadly—but the apparent dissonance serves primarily to distinguish the kinds of work the different statements are

doing. The fear of onlookers in v. 13 is entirely tied to the admonitory nature of the Acts 5:1-11 story, whereas the addition of new believers concerns a general stock-taking of the larger movement.[206] To understand the respective place of each, we must remember that while Luke is concerned to detail episodes like Acts 5:1-11 and the response it elicited, the larger purpose of the narrative of Acts is to tell the story of a movement to which believers were increasingly added. Acts 5:15-16 develops this latter purpose by emphasizing the wide appeal of the movement, and the power behind it, as people brought their sick and tormented before the apostles and would be cured.

As a transitional summary between 5:13 (Ananias-Sapphira) and 5:17 (renewal of hostilities by Jewish leaders), vv. 14-16 indicate the apparently irresistible spread of the word. The internal challenges faced by the growing community cannot hinder its success, nor can external resistance thwart its spread. In 5:17-18, the high priest takes action by arresting the apostles and putting them in prison. But this time, an angel of the Lord immediately frees them from prison so that they can, in the angel's words, "stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life (πάντα τὰ ῥήματα τῆς ζωῆς)" (5:20). Noting the seriousness of events, the high priest calls together *both* the Sanhedrin *and* "the whole body of the elders of Israel" (πᾶσαν τὴν γερουσίαν, 5:21). As the group of Jesus-followers grows, it is met with a sharper and more wide-ranging response. Luke's way of narrating may even connect growth with resistance as a special way of emphasizing their inherent interrelatedness (cf. 13:46; 18:6; 28:28).

[206] Cadbury, ibid., 402: "[The progress reports] are associated with the adjacent incidents which they generalize. They indicate that the material is typical, that the action was continued, that the effect was general. They fill in the lacunae."

This time, however, the council's inability to grasp the significance of events is indicated by their late realization of the apostles' escape from custody and their continuation of the activity which earlier had been forbidden (4:16-18). When they do catch up to the apostles, the Jewish leaders reiterate their previous orders (4:21) not to preach in Jesus' name, again prompting Peter to insist on his and the other believers' duty to obey God over anyone else (5:29-32). The council's reaction this time is murderous rage (5:33). But the ironic (and irenic) assessment by Gamaliel (5:34-39) convinces them, preserving the apostles, at least for the moment, from further persecution (5:40).[207] The council's wish "to kill them" (5:33), though momentarily stayed, sounds a premonitory note about the growth of the movement. Indeed, Stephen's testimony will prove the limits of the council's forbearance (7:57-60).

2.4.2.4 Acts 9:31

"Meanwhile the church throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was built up (οἰκοδομουμένη) and, going about in the fear of the Lord and in the consolation of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied (ἐπληθύνετο)."

This "progress report" is one of the clearest instances of an update on the movement. The summary report (9:31) clearly marks a transition between characters, settings, and the broader cycle of scenes. As the transition between the introduction of Saul (9:1-30) and the experience of Peter (10-11:18), Acts 9:31 conjoins two scenes,

[207] At the same time, Gamaliel's advice to the Council serves as an "ambiguous prophecy" that finds fulfillment in the narrative of ch. 6-8 (and 11:19-26)—in other words, the persecution of Christians led by Paul only spreads the movement into a widening circle of influence. Thus, Gamaliel's "fighting against God" warning is apropos since the narrative bears out that the spread of the word to "all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (1:8), while anticipated by God's plan and scripture itself, also occurs "because of the persecution that took place over Stephen" (11:19).

characters, and narrative trajectories that will prove vital for the unfolding of universal mission.

Further proof of the significance of the verse lies in the fact that, like 6:7, Acts 9:31 recalls the "Lukan commission" (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), especially the wording about apostolic witness in Judea and Samaria. Luke informs the audience that universal mission, having established the church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, is well on its way "to all nations" and "to the end of the earth." Most importantly, perhaps, this progress report identifies the movement's increase as the setting for the next stage of inter-ethnic contact (i.e. the Cornelius episode; see Chapter 3). Having introduced Paul—who will be the primary agent of mission to Gentiles (and Jews) outside Palestine—Luke now returns to the apostle Peter for the most pivotal episode in Acts concerning universal witness.[208] To see the connections within this cycle of episodes helps readers understand how, once again (cf. Acts 6:7), Luke narrates the "success" of numerical increase as the preface to

[208] To anticipate Chapter 3, it might be objected that Acts 9:32-43 does not relate the story of universal mission and therefore contradicts the conclusions above. Yet, when taken as part of the larger Petrine cycle (Acts 10-11:18), Acts 9:32-43 describes the necessary steps that led to Peter's journey, however indirectly, to Cornelius' door. Moreover, Acts 9:31 introduces the spread of believers to Joppa and Lydda (and Sharon; 9:32-35), where Peter heals a man named Aeneas (9:32-34). That there were already "saints" in these areas should qualify slightly the concluding statement that "all Lydda and Sharon saw [the healed man] and turned to the Lord" (9:35). Seemingly at the risk of contradicting this latter statement, Luke introduces the scene with Peter already among believers in Lydda, perhaps to remind readers that Peter himself did not evangelize these areas. More important is the fact that his temporary stay in Lydda, which becomes known to disciples in Joppa, allows for Peter to be summoned to attend the wake of Dorcas-Tabitha. There he performs another miracle by raising her from the dead. After this encounter, Luke tells us, he stayed in Joppa with a tanner named Simon. That detail will prove significant in the divine vision, the angel's instructions to Cornelius, and Peter's encounter with Cornelius' men. In addition, it is the existence of believers in and around Judea (like, presumably, Simon the tanner and the "circumcised brothers," 10:23, 45-46; 11:12) who indirectly provide for the conditions of Peter's eventual encounter with a Gentile. That is, their existence makes Peter's travel and lodging possible, and their accompanying him verifies his encounter before believers in Jerusalem (11:5-17).

further inter-cultural and inter-ethnic contact (see also 8:1, 4; 11:19-26) on the path to all nations and to the end of the earth.

One further note: in Acts 9:31, the whole sentence/verse[209] has one subject—ἐκκλησία—with multiple verbs, including two passives, οἰκοδομουμένη and ἐπληθύνετο. The range of translations of the first convey its passive character: "built up" (NRSV), "strengthened" (NIV), "edified" (KJV[210]). The CEB even goes so far as to make the divine passive explicit by introducing a subject: "God strengthened the church." As for ἐπληθύνετο, which we have already seen in 6:1 and 6:7, it carries an active and intransitive meaning despite its passive voice: "the church…multiplied." Also like 6:7, it is typically translated intransitively (NRSV/NIV: "increased in number"), though some translations are more ambiguous: "the churches…*were* multiplied" (KJV). Irrespective of passive constructions, because of the way in which Luke has throughout Acts characterized the overlapping activity of God and Jesus as well as Jesus and the Spirit,[211] Acts 9:31 implies that Jesus is ultimately behind the peace (cf. 10:36), the building up, and the numerical increase. The church's dependence on the Lord and the Holy Spirit intimates that it relies on heavenly favor for its growth as well. Such an impression in turn contributes to an audience's inclination to read the full force of the passive constructions (οἰκοδομουμένη and ἐπληθύνετο). The church's deepening "fear of the Lord," reliance on the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, and successful expansion into

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[209] Though most English translations render verse 31 in several sentences for smoothness or clarity, the Greek has one long sentence.
[210] KJV follows a minority reading of αἱ ἐκκλησίαι, thus pluralizing all the verbs accordingly (e.g., οἰκοδουμέναι, ἐπληθύνοντο).
[211] Rowe, *One True Life*, 128: "Acts in particular not only reads Old Testament texts that spoke of God as now speaking of Jesus, it also consistently displays an overlap of God, Jesus, and the Spirit in some of the more basic features of early Christian life."

new territory, augurs Peter's impending declaration that Jesus Christ is indeed "Lord of all" (10:36).

2.4.2.5 Acts 11:21

"The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord."

The statement summarizes the success of the believers, scattered in the wake of Stephen's death (11:19), who spoke to Greeks/Gentiles and not just Jews. The statement shows both that their ministry among Greek-speaking Gentiles proved effective and, more importantly, that they had divine aid. Following the Cornelius episode (10:1-48) and its retelling (11:1-18)—which demonstrated that God stood very much behind full inclusion of Gentiles—the narrator's statement in 11:21 reinforces the sense of divine impetus behind the universalizing of the mission. Whether orchestrated on an individual basis (Peter-Cornelius) or as the apparent effect of forced dispersion among Gentiles (e.g., at Antioch), inter-cultural and inter-ethnic encounter reflects the divine will.

Evidence of this is the use of the phrase "the hand of the Lord was with them," which is a common scriptural refrain indicating either the success or failure of a course of action. In short, plans supported by "the hand of the Lord" succeed with divine favor (Luke 1:66; cf. 1 Ki 18:46; 2 Ki 3:15; 2 Ch 30:12; Ezr 7:6; Isa 41:20; 66:14)[212]; conversely, plans are thwarted when "the hand of the lord was against them" (Ex 9:3; Jdg 2:15; LXX 1 Sam 5:3; cf. Acts 13:11). That the "hand of the Lord was with them" at this

[212] Interestingly, in Ezekiel (1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1), the "hand of the Lord" (χεὶρ κυρίου / יַד־יְהוָה) overlaps with Ezekiel's characterization of the Spirit's activity (cf. 3:14; 37:1; 40:1). Otherwise, the phrase tends to be a personification of Yahweh's power.

crucial point in the universalizing of the mission locates the event within the span of epic biblical narrative from Israel's scriptures (cf. Luke 1:66) and, more, within the scope of the divine plan. It may also reflect the fulfillment, in part, of Jesus' own commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), all the more striking given that none of the actors involved is an apostle.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the "turning" of these Greek believers is described in the same language as the turning of Jewish believers,[213] indicating yet again that the narrator already blurs the distinction which the characters themselves labor to overcome (see Chapter 3). At the same time, it should be noted that "turning" in Luke-Acts is almost exclusively used with the Lord God as the object rather than the Lord Jesus (Acts 3:19; 14:15; 15:19; 26:20; 28:27 [Isa 6:10]; cf. 9:35). As Paul summarizes—quoting Jesus himself—"I am sending you…to open [the Gentiles'] eyes so that they may *turn from darkness to light* and *from the power of Satan to God*…" (26:17-18). Paul's mission is located on the side of light and God, which are opposed by darkness and Satan. At the same time, Luke is interested in the Lord Jesus' place in salvation. We have already seen the title "savior" applied to him (Luke 2:11; 5:31; 13:23), among the other titles and roles shared between him and the Lord God (see 2.3.1.3.1-2). In fact, it would be more accurate to say that in "turning" to God, new believers turn to the God revealed in the death, resurrection, and Lordship of the Messiah Jesus. Certainly, for most Jews to

[213] For Jews "turning" (ἐπιστρέφω), see Luke 1:16; 22:32 (Peter); Acts 3:19; 3:26 (ἀποστρέφω); 9:35 (taking Lydda and Sharon as Jews primarily); 26:20 (μετανοιέω; cf. 2:38; 3:19; 8:22); 28:27 (Isa 6). For Gentiles "turning" (ἐπιστρέφω), see Acts 11:21; 14:15; 15:3 (noun: ἐπίστροφη), 19; 26:18; 26:20 (μετανοιέω; cf. 17:30). See also the use of μετάνοια applied to Jews (Luke 3:8; 5:32; 15:7; Acts 5:31; 13:24; 19:4) and to Gentiles (Luke 3:3 [soldiers?]; 24:47; Acts 11:18; 20:21; 26:20.

"turn" to God would make little rhetorical sense unless a significant definitional shift had occurred within the conception of "God" (and indicated by the ambiguity of the title "Lord") so that it now made sense to speak of "turning" or a "conversion" of Jews[214] to the true God of Israel—e.g. to the God whose impartiality is now exercised in the universal scope of Jesus' Lordship (10:34-36).

Like the Spirit's descent in Samaria, news of conversions among Greeks reaches the ears of the Jerusalem church and they send an emissary, Barnabas, to Antioch as they had earlier done with Peter and John to Samaria (8:14). He confirms them in their faith. That his behavior is indicative of the divine will is signaled by his being "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (cf. Acts 2:4; 4:8; 6:5; 7:55; 9:17; 13:9, 52). The scene concludes with the now common sign of divine approval: "and a great many people were added (προσετέθη) to the Lord" (11:24b). The passive use of προστίθημι again serves to indicate the way in which believers are joined to the movement and its Lord. That many were "added" suggests they belonged elsewhere before; now they belong to him by virtue of turning to the Lord (cf. 11:21).

2.4.2.6 Acts 16:5

"And so the churches were strengthened (ἐστερεοῦντο) in the faith and increased in number (ἐπερίσσευον τῷ ἀριθμῷ) daily."

More generic than earlier ones, this report introduces a few notable variations into the pattern. First, "churches" here occurs in the plural, following closely on the only other

[214] Green, "Doing Repentance: The Formation of Disciples in the Acts of the Apostles." *Ex Auditu* 18 (2002): 18-19.

plural use of ἐκκλησία in Acts, five verses earlier (15:41).[215] Secondly, Acts 16:5 mentions the strengthening of "the faith" (πίστις) of the churches alongside an increase in their membership. Given that this progress report falls at the beginning of the so-called "2nd Missionary Journey" (15:36-18:22), the mention of "the faith" likely indicates efforts associated with return visits—that is, not merely spreading the "word" but strengthening the "faith," as indeed 15:41 says: "He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening (ἐπιστηρίζων) the churches." Though a divine passive may be implied in the use of ἐστερεοῦντο—consistent with the use of αὐξάνω and πληθύνω (6:7; 12:24) previously—Acts 15:41 clarifies that Paul and Silas themselves did the strengthening. Yet, in Luke's narrative world, there is little sense of either-or in the characterization of agency in the universal mission; rather, God works both through servants and, on occasion, in spite of them (Acts 10:1-48).

The progress report at this stage in Paul's mission is noteworthy for another reason related to previous discussion, namely the use of the phrase "the Spirit of Jesus" in Acts 16:7. With the update in 16:5, a new phase of the mission (of Paul, Silas, and Timothy) begins. And the Holy Spirit, the very Spirit of Jesus, plays a crucial role in directing the mission away from Asia and Bithynia (16:6-7) and, presumably, towards Macedonia (16:9-10). Thus, Luke associates the numerical increase of the churches, and their strengthening in the faith, with the ascended Lord's intervention by his spirit, the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:7: "Spirit of Jesus"). Because the universal Lordship of Jesus is at

[215] Though efforts to discern clear intention in the peculiar use of the plural are usually fruitless, it may simply reflect the fact that now there are complementary missions (Paul/Silas, Barnabas/John Mark; cf. 15:39-40) and thus different churches corresponding to those missions.

stake in the spread of the movement, Jesus himself directs the mission to uncharted fields. By going to Macedonia, readers discover, the mission field of Europe opens to Paul and his company, providing a platform for his engagement with the cultural center of the Gentile world in Athens (17:16-34).

2.4.2.7 Acts 28:30-31

"[Paul] lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance."

The last so-called "progress report" in Acts also concludes the book. Though it lacks many of the characteristics of the other reports, its stock-taking tone fits the pattern. In this case, however, the transition is from the narrative world to the world of the audience.[216] Having zeroed in on the story of Paul in the second half of his narrative (ch. 13-28), Luke concludes the book by summarizing Paul's two-year ministry as one of "welcoming all," "proclaiming the kingdom of God," and "teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ" (28:30-31).

The focus on Paul's (continuing) story at the end of Acts sets the two statements about his activity in parallel with each other, making them synonymous rather than merely complementary. To preach about the kingdom of God is, therefore, to teach "the things" concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, even at the very end of Luke's two-volume work the emphasis returns to Jesus' Lordship, itself the expression of God's reign

[216] Cf. Daniel Marguerat, "The End of Acts (28:16-31) and the Rhetoric of Silence," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 74-89; Alexander, "Reading Acts," 442-446.

(1:6) now come to Rome and beyond. No doubt "the things about the Lord Jesus Christ" takes on a particular shading at the center of the Roman empire which already had one who was κύριος over the known world (cf. Acts 25:26) and whose Βασιλέα extended to the far reaches of the earth (cf. Luke 2:1; 3:1).

2.4.3 Conclusion

To conclude, the "progress reports" serve the important narrative function of keeping readers apprised of the bigger picture, so to speak, while enabling Luke to tell the story in smaller episodes that interpret how that long-view took its specific shape. The difference between smaller and bigger picture can occasionally create the appearance of contradiction (cf. 5:13-14). Consciousness of the respective functions of the different levels of narrative helps us to see how the "progress reports" allow readers to take stock of the spread of the message and of believers toward the universal horizon that Jesus promised (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Moreover, Luke uses the spread of the "word" to demonstrate both the numerical growth of the movement (and the resistance it garnered) as well as the inter-cultural and inter-ethnic complexion it took on as it grew. Luke's summaries complement the broader characterization of the exalted κύριος Jesus and his Spirit by showing that growth, perserverance, and proclamation of the word all depend on heavenly grace.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter has shown that Jesus is by no means "absent" in the way that christological studies of Acts have often presumed. Luke draws on multiple modes of characterization to show that as exalted "Lord of the Spirit," Jesus *continues* to guide the spread of salvation to all nations by pouring out the Spirit, appearing to his witnesses,

bearing the name and authority of the κύριος, and working through (and sometimes in spite of) the presence of his chosen apostles and witnesses. In other words, Jesus himself remains central to proclamation of salvation to "all nations" (Luke 24:47) and "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8); after all, the mission he conducts is scripturally ascribed to him as Messiah and Servant of Israel.

The exaltation of Jesus to heaven (1:11; 2:33; 3:21), and Peter's early declamation of him as Lord and Messiah (2:36), reconfigures the narrative sense of his "presence" and "activity." While it is common to judge the christology of Acts as "absentee," Luke ensures throughout the narrative that Jesus' responsibility for universal witness is recognizable. Especially as witness spreads beyond Jerusalem and the Jewish people, the influence of the exalted Lord is close at hand in the narrative. In this way Luke construes the success of universal proclamation as a reflection of the identity of the Messiah Jesus, the "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). Based on how Luke configures Jesus' continued influence (Acts 1:1), Acts' is a christology of universal witness. But even this narrative realization of the scope of Jesus' identity must be learned by participating in that witness. To this pivotal realization the next Chapter is dedicated.

3. Conversion and Christology of Witness

3.1 Recap of Chs. 1-2

In Chapter 1, following a close reading of Luke 24:46-48, it was established that the Lukan "commission"—rather than merely an alternative version of the Matthean Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20)—is a promise aligning the events of Jesus' death, his resurrection, and universal proclamation of salvation in his name with the scriptural plan of God. These three occurrences—two past, one future—attest Jesus' messianic identity as "Lord of all." The third pillar of his narrative identity, the universality of Jesus' Lordship, is only *declared* in Luke's Gospel; it is not *narratively* realized until Acts. Thus, the book of Acts—a second volume (which other Evangelists lack) construing the fulfillment of Jesus' "commission"—is framed (Luke 24:47; Acts 26:23) as the narrative unfolding of Jesus' messianic identity as Lord of all.

Chapter 2 showed how Luke narrates the immanent universality of the Lord Jesus' reign: by characterizing Jesus in the narrative as κύριος *in the present*; by depicting Jesus as exercising prerogatives otherwise reserved (in scripture) for God alone; by characterizing actions carried out "in the name" of Jesus as tantamount to his active presence (cf. Acts 2:21; 3:6, 16; 4:10, 12; 8:12; etc.); by emphasizing narrative fulfillments of the early promise concerning Jesus' messianic identity as baptizer in the Spirit (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:2-4); and by narratively realizing Jesus' promise to provide the words for his disciples' "testimony" (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15). Indeed, Jesus' Lordship is the central concern of Peter's Pentecost speech, in which Peter exegetically confirms that, upon his ascension to heaven, Jesus has received authority as Lord of the Spirit (Acts 2:33), pouring out the Holy Spirit upon new groups of people as

the Word spreads (e.g., Acts 2:1-10; 8:15-17; 10:44-46; 19:6-7). Finally, the connection between universal witness and Jesus' Lordship is affirmed by Luke's "progress reports" charting the movement's heaven-led success (e.g. Acts 2:47b; 4:4; 5:14; 9:31; 11:21; etc.). Rather than an obstacle to our thesis, therefore, Jesus' exaltation proves to a prerequisite to the manifestation of his Lordship over all.

3.2 Challenges

Chapter 3 addresses the challenge set up by the first two Chapters. If Acts narrates the narrative unfolding of Jesus' Lordship (Chapter 1) and Jesus himself is credited throughout with the spread of salvation in his name (Chapter 2), how do (Jewish) apostolic "witnesses" participate in the work God-in-the-Messiah-Jesus is already doing among Gentiles and how does their witness fit (or not) into the framework of mission as obedience to a command/commission? The question of human participation in universal mission is particularly pressing given the unfortunate excesses of modern mission history. Whatever the sense of Jesus' ongoing presence in the unfolding of modern mission (cf. Matt 28:20), it has largely been eclipsed by a human compulsion of those in the "West" to save and civilize people across the globe. Rightly understanding how Luke conceives of human participation in universal witness helps answer the question of whether Luke-Acts itself reflects the way (in this study, Protestant) mission has been practiced in the modern period and, if not, whether Luke's views can provide an alternative vision.

The "high" view of the Lord Jesus' activity derived from the previous chapter contributes to the study in this chapter of how the apostles—to whom Jesus' commission (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8) is given—do not *actively* fulfill "witness" to Gentiles or to the end of the earth. Salvation goes to the Gentiles by agents other than the apostles, and

Peter's experience in Caesarea exemplifies the ambiguous role of the apostles (Acts 1-9). Luke emphasizes the P-C episode (10:1-11:18; 15:7-11) as a way to underscore both the fulfillment of God's plan as well as how Jewish believers *ought* to respond to the (surprising) nature of that plan. In the subtle way Luke tells the story (and has Peter retell it), Peter and the Jewish believers "witness" God's role in reaching out to Gentiles, thereby providing Jewish believers an opportunity to re-conceptualize God as impartial and Jesus as the "Lord of all (peoples)" (10:34, 36). The point of emphasis is not that Gentiles must dramatically change—they do not even need to be circumcised! (15:7-29)—but that Jewish believers in Jesus, by witnessing God's work among Gentiles, come to *learn* or *relearn* the identity of Jesus as Lord of *all*.

By paying attention to Luke's narrative cues, the present Chapter attempts to show that the emphasis of the P-C episode is less on the "conversion of the Gentiles" and more on *the transformation of Jewish/apostolic perceptions* of Gentile salvation. In other words, the transformation (or "conversion"[1]) Luke is interested in depicting is Peter's.[2] The transformation of Peter, Luke shows, becomes the basis for the transformation of the apostles and Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (11:1-18; 15:1-29) to the new reality of Gentile salvation (without circumcision). That new reality is no addendum to the story, according

[1] See the discussion of Stephen Chester, "Paul: Archetypal Convert and Disputed Convert," in *Finding Faith, Losing Faith: Stories of Conversion and Apostasy,* ed. Scot McKnight and Hauna Ondrey (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 123-149. Chester notes that Peter's "conversion" (in which we can include both Luke 9:20 and Acts 10:9-48)—in as inclusive a way as we might use the term—was more paradigmatic (than Paul's) for most readers of the Christian Bible (144).

[2] The concept of "conversion" I follow is more literary and notional than psychological. Joel Green's definition can be taken as provisional ("Doing Repentance," 8): "Conversion is grounded in a fresh comprehension of the purpose of God, as this is plotted in Scripture, and is manifest in the community of God's people who are constituted by this biblical narrative and whose practices embody this spirituality and leverage the ongoing conversion of its membership… [F]or characters within the Lukan narrative, conversion is the consequence of a revisionist rendering of the story of God and his purpose, a reconception of the biblical drama."

to Luke, but part and parcel of the gospel itself. The realization at the heart of Peter's speech in 10:34-43 names a *christology of universal witness* that significantly challenges the dichotomous categories that uphold some modern mission practices and theology.

3.3 Chapter Argument and Outline

Having explored Acts' broad construal of Jesus' Lordship in the spread of the Word, we now turn to the specific event of the Cornelius encounter, which—according to Luke's own emphasis—is the pivotal episode for the universalizing of mission in Jesus' name. As already noted in Chapter 2, the scene is suffused with divine initiative. What specifically interests us at present is the other side of the mission question—that is, how does Luke's narrative characterize human participation in mission, given our previous findings that universal proclamation is the fulfillment of God's ancient plan *for the Messiah* rather than simply an order given to the apostles to be obeyed?

Chapter 3 brings together Chapters 1 and 2, examining the pivotal episode in Acts where the concerns of these preceding Chapters intersect. Chapter 3 analyzes (I) how Acts introduces Jesus' commission in specifically ethnic and Isaianic terms, which create expectations for a breakthrough that does not come until Acts 10; (II) how the *apostolic* character of the apostolic commission configures the narrative by dramatic irony—Pentecost emphasizes Jesus' Lordship but its universal tones are more symbolic ("Jews from every nation") than effectual ("all nations") since the Jewish believers do not evangelize Gentiles directly; (III) how the Cornelius episode (and its retellings) illustrates the pivotal breakthrough in universal proclamation (10:45; 11:1, 18; cf. 15:7-11), which invites both a re-reading of Acts 1-9 and also a reconsideration of the significance of the story for the fulfillment of the Lukan Commission (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8); and (IV)

how Luke establishes the P-C episode as the climactic *christological* "discovery" that reveals the basis for universal salvation and the transformation required of Jewish believers to participate in it.

As a surprising experience for Peter, the story of Acts 10 shows that Peter comes to recognize universal proclamation as part of God's purposes only *after* he finds himself participating in that proclamation. Luke also uses this pivotal moment to have Peter offer the climactic interpretation of Jesus' identity as universal Lord (10:36). In recognizing finally the scope of Jesus' Lordship as reflected in the full scope of proclamation in his name, Peter himself experiences the transformation or "conversion" which we might otherwise associate with his Gentile audience.[3] Contrary to first impressions, the whole scene about "Gentile conversion" is narratively focalized around *Peter's and other Jewish believers' experience* of God's work in accepting Gentiles.

Crucial to the thrust of Luke's narration is the *particularity* of Peter's recognition. As a Jewish apostle in an encounter with a Gentile centurion, Peter announces that Jesus'

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[3] See Green, "Doing Repentance," 7: "…many Gentiles within the narrative of Acts need no conversion to the God of Israel but, like the exemplary Cornelius (Acts 10:1-4), already worship this God. They are recipients of the gift of repentance in the same way that the Jews are (cf. Acts 5:31; 11:18). [Also] in subtle but important ways, Luke underscores the idolatry of even the Jewish people. The Jerusalem temple itself has become a manifestation of Jewish idolatry, according to Stephen's speech (cf. 7:48; 17:24-25). Indeed, membership among the people of God cannot be assumed simply on the basis of Abrahamic ancestry (Luke 3:7-14), with the result that the privilege of God's grace is no presumption of the Jewish people. [Finally],…when Paul recounts before King Agrippa his commission, he proclaims that Jesus sent him 'to open their eyes so that they might turn from darkness to light and
from the power of Satan to God' (26:17-18). In this case, Luke draws on the conversion familiar language of religious but interprets it so as to situate the redemptive purpose of God within the cosmic battle of competing kingdoms. It is an important component of this text that Gentiles and Jews alike need deliverance from darkness (cf. Luke 1:78-79). As Paul goes on to observe, obedience to the heavenly vision entailed declaring 'first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should
repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance' (Acts 26:19-20). Similarly, in 20:21, Paul articulates the needed response of Gentile and Jew in identical terms: '... I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus.'"

universal Lordship is foundational not just for Gentile salvation, but for the construal of Jesus as Israel's Messiah. Far from a missionary "handbook" structured by simple obedience to a dominical command and supported by a strong sense of missioner/missionized (or saved/lost, knowledgeable/ignorant, etc.), Acts narratively construes the fulfillment of apostolic witness as something God carries out for the purpose of transforming the witnesses themselves (Acts 15:11). In fact, Peter and the Jewish believers must "witness" God's work among Gentiles to properly understand the scope of Jesus' universal Lordship, thereby dissolving the kinds of dichotomies that often uphold mission as simply obedience-to-a-command.

3.4 The "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8)

We have seen how the first occurrence of the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:46-49) frames Acts as a story in which the narrative identity of Jesus develops through universal proclamation. But Chapter 1's analysis was mostly limited to the very end of Luke's Gospel, and Chapter 2 focused on Acts' textured characterization of the exalted Lord's ongoing guidance of universal witness in his name. Returning to the beginning of Acts, we immediately encounter in 1:8 a near repeat of the "Lukan Commission" situated in a second version of the ascension scene (Acts 1:4-11; Luke 24:44-51). Oriented by its introductory position, Acts 1:1-8 restates Jesus' promise-commission and also adds distinct emphases in anticipation of the narrative to come. The following section will explore Acts 1:1-8 from several angles: (A) as an introduction to the book, with specific focus on Jesus' parting "commission" (1:8), and (B) as a primarily ethnic, Isaianic, and apostolic vision of universal salvation that nuances Luke 24:46-49, offering a trajectory

of Spirit-led mission in Acts (and beyond) that finds primary (initial) fulfillment in Acts 10-11.

3.4.1 Introducing Acts

> Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιησάμην περὶ πάντων, ὦ Θεόφιλε, ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν, [2] ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου οὓς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήμφθη. [3] Οἷς καὶ παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις, δι᾽ ἡμερῶν τεσσεράκοντα ὀπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς καὶ λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ· (Acts 1:1-3)

A common convention found in second volumes of multi-volume works in ancient Greek literature is a preface which refers back to the first volume and introduces the second.[4] While the author of Acts, in keeping with literary norms, again names his addressee (ὦ Θεόφιλε) and refers back to the subject of the Third Gospel (Acts 1:1-2), no *formal* introduction to the second volume is forthcoming. The clause starting with τὸν μὲν πρῶτον (1:1) is never paired with an expected δέ clause.[5] Instead, the narrator appears to get caught up in relating the memory of earlier events and slides almost seamlessly into a recapitulation of the end of the Third Gospel (Acts 1:2-11), blurring the distinction between the recap and the start of "new" narrative (1:10-13).[6]

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[4] Josephus, *Against Apion,* 2:1-2 is the go-to example, but the convention was well-known before him; e.g., Polybius 3.1.3-3.5.9, esp. 3.1.7; 11.1.4-5; *Rhet. Alex.* 29, 1436a.33-39; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Thuc.* 19; *Lysias* 24; Cicero *Or. Brut.* 40.137; Virgil *Aen.* 1.1-6; Aulus Gellius pref. 25; Soranus *Gynec.* l.intro.2; 1.1.3; 2.5.9 [25.78]; Philostratus *Vit. Apoll.* 7.1; 8.1. Cf. also Thucydides 1.23.6; Pliny *N.H.* 8.1.1; 18.1.1; 33.1.1; 34.1.1; 36.1.1; 37.1.1.

[5] Cf. other instances of an unpaired μέν in Acts 3:13, 21; 27:21; see C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994-1998), 1:65.

[6] Jacques Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles: Essays on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Paulist, 1979), 12-17; W.C. van Unnik, "Der Ausdruck ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς (Apostelgeschichte 1:8) Und Sein Alttestamentlicher Hintergrund," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik,* vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 386-7; cf. also Charles Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 27; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts*, 28; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:9. According to some, like Lucian, such a transition is actually a mark of good writing. Referring to repeated events—and here we extrapolate with Luke's two ascension narratives: "For, though all parts must be independently perfected, when the first is complete the second will be brought into essential connection with it, and attached like one link of a chain to another; there must be no

This feature of Acts' preface, however, aids the reader in moving into the narrative world[7] by restarting, as it were, from a familiar event. Acts 1:1-2 recalls the basic chronology of the Gospel, concluding with ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας … ἀνελήμφθη ("until the day when … he was taken up").[8] Verse 3, however, backtracks to right after Jesus' death ("after his suffering") and to the 40-day period of proofs and instruction by the risen Jesus, that is, between resurrection and ascension (cf. Acts 13:31).[9] As a transitional sentence, verse 3 does double duty, both summarizing the first volume and introducing

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possibility of separating them; no mere bundle of parallel threads; the first is not simply to be next to the second, but part of it, their extremities intermingling" (*How to Write History*, 55). Cf. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:9-10. For a general outline of the possible effects of narrative repetition, see R. Tannehill, "The Composition of Acts 3-5," 237-40. Tannehill offers eight different functions of narrative "redundancy": (1) combats the tendency to forget information over a long narrative; (2) for emphasis; (3) has a persuasive effect; (4) allows for character development; (5) confirms expectations reached through the reading process; (6) allows changes in the pattern to be noted; (7) provides a sense of unity in the narrative; and (8) encourages interaction among characters and events in the reading process. With respect to the overlap of Luke 24 and Acts 1 specifically, see Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus,* 191-199.

[7] Cf. Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus*, 197: "The significance of this silence [of all characters except Jesus at the end of Luke] is that it creates distance between the reader and the characters and effects closure. The reader can 'see' Jesus and the disciples but is unable to hear them. This framing device creates the literary illusion of space between reader and story and effectively assists the reader in leaving the story world." By contrast, of course, the more interactive and dialogical format of Acts 1:4-12 aids readers in "entering" the story world from a familiar narrative location, as it were. See Allen James Walworth, "The Narrator of Acts" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1984), 37-38.

[8] More precisely, it recalls Luke 3:21-24:51, from John to Ascension. If being born is something Jesus "did," however, then we could include part of the infancy narrative as well (2:7f.). As C. H. Dodd (*The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951], 37-56) first noticed, the basic kerygma of the early church was very close to the outline of Mark's narrative. While that may be true, on the basis of Markan priority, Luke is particularly keen on extending the end of that kerygma to resurrection and ascension. Moreover, rather than think of the Lukan kerygma as something lying in the past for his witnesses in Acts, we do well to think of the book of Acts as part of the kerygma itself—that is, the exalted Lord's activity is part of the unfolding of his identity, not something incidental or external to the "core" of apostolic kerygma.

[9] Though there appears to be the possibility of a slight shift in settings between v. 3 and v. 4, in their close narrative proximity the two verses appear narratively integrated. Cf. Craig Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary, Vol. 1: Introduction and Acts 1:1-2:47* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 674: "…in 1:4-11, Luke provides one or two scenes of Jesus's final preascension [sic] communications in more concrete detail. The events in Luke's material here presumably did not all happen at once; 1:4a probably suggests table fellowship but Luke has identified the scene of the ascension as near Bethany (Luke 24:50), on Mount Olivet (Acts 1:12). Despite its potentially disparate chronology, however, all of the material that Luke portrays is thematically connected: The Spirit is the foretaste of the kingdom and the empowerment to prepare a people for it."

verses 4-11.[10] The impression is that verse 3 holds a magnifying glass over the period before Jesus' ascension (v. 2a) in which he offers forty days' worth of instructions to the apostles (v. 2b). In other words, v. 3 prepares readers to find in vv. 4-8 the substance or even culmination of this post-resurrection, pre-ascension period of "instruction" (cf. Luke 24:44-49) described in finer detail. It is worth noting that all of the pre-ascended Jesus' words[11] in the book of Acts fall within these verses, lending them a kind of prophetic orientation toward the rest of the volume. Indeed, just as Luke 1:1 frames his narrative as an account "concerning the things that have been fulfilled among us" (περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων), so Acts begins by extending that sense of fulfillment into an account of Jesus' ascension and of universal proclamation in his name. What Jesus says in Acts 1:4-8, spoken in anticipation of events to come, will double for the book's otherwise missing (formal) introduction.

3.4.1.1 Jesus' Parting Words (Acts 1:4-8 // Luke 24:44-49)

Acts' version of events in 1:1-11[12] is also more than a mere echo of Luke 24:46-51[13]; it introduces characteristic features and emphases recognizable throughout the

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[10] The backtracking of v. 3 can be confirmed by the fact that Acts 1:2 employs the same verb (and tense) for Jesus' ascension (ἀνελήμφθη) as 1:11 (ἀναλημφθεὶς). Thus, vv. 4-11, narrated in "real time," offer a climactic summary of this pre-ascension period by which Luke is able to bring out the details deemed most significant for introducing the book. The fact that these verses represent the first instance of narrative dedicated to telling the story in the present, so to speak, indicates that in a sense the book begins with these words—Jesus' words—thereby underscoring their introductory inflection.

[11] Not counting those rare occasions on which Jesus' (presumably pre-ascended) teachings are recalled by characters—cf. Acts 11:16 and 20:35—but which do not appear in Luke's Gospel.

[12] See also Loveday Alexander, "The Preface to Acts and the Historians," in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. Ben Witherington, III (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 1996), 73-103.

[13] Cf. Senior and Stuhlmueller, *Biblical Foundations*, 256; Sleeman, *Geography,* 66; Tannehill, "Composition of Acts 3-5," 240. In his illuminating study of Lukan ascension scenes, Mikeal Parsons (*The Departure of Jesus,* 193-198) notes seven potentially significant variations between accounts: (1) The Gospel seems to date Jesus' departure on Easter night, whereas Acts allows for a forty-day period of appearances and instruction (1:3); (2) the Gospel lists the ascension's location as near Bethany (24:50; cf. v. 33) and Acts names only the Mount of Olives (1:12); (3) the Gospel says the disciples return to

book. With a better understanding of the distinctive motifs that emerge in Acts' version of the commission-and-ascension scene (Acts 1:4-11), we can grasp the broader narrative trajectories by which Luke construes Jesus' identity as universal Lord. By a brief synoptic comparison, we can see especially how Acts 1:4-8—in anticipation of Jesus' departure (v. 9)—shifts the focus on Jesus' sovereignty in Luke 24:46-49 to an emphasis in Acts 1 on apostolic agency and the abiding role of the Spirit as the power behind apostolic witness.

Table 5: The "Lukan Commission(s)" (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-8)[14]

Luke 24:44-49	**Acts 1:4-8**
44 Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι μου οὓς ἐλάλησα πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔτι ὢν σὺν ὑμῖν, ὅτι δεῖ πληρωθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς περὶ ἐμοῦ. 45 τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς· 46 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὕτως γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, 47 καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ **Ἰερουσαλὴμ** 48 ὑμεῖς **μάρτυρες** τούτων. 49 καὶ [ἰδοὺ] ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω **τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρός** μου **ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς**· ὑμεῖς δὲ καθίσατε ἐν τῇ πόλει ἕως οὗ ἐνδύσησθε ἐξ ὕψους **δύναμιν**.	4 καὶ συναλιζόμενος παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι ἀλλὰ περιμένειν **τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς** ἣν ἠκούσατέ μου, 5 ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἁγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας. 6 Οἱ μὲν οὖν συνελθόντες ἠρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ; 7 εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστιν γνῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ, 8 ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε **δύναμιν** ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος **ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς** καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου **μάρτυρες** ἔν τε **Ἰερουσαλὴμ** καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

Jerusalem where they worship continuously at the temple (24:53), while in Acts they return to the upper room and devote themselves to prayer (1:12-14); (4) in the Gospel account only Jesus speaks and acts, whereas in Acts there is dialogue—questions and answers (cf. 1:6, 11); (5) Jesus' benediction over the disciples with hands raised (24:50-51) is absent in Acts; (6) Luke's Gospel says "he departed from them" (24:51) while Acts specifically claims "he ascended into heaven" (1:11); (7) finally, the Gospel account lacks any mention either of the cloud concealing Jesus (1:9) or the two heavenly messengers who interpret the event for the apostles (1:10-11).

[14] The underlined text indicates generally paralleled content in the two speeches, while bold print indicates exact parallels in word choice, and shaded text highlights the paralleled "commissions."

The first things to note are the substantial similarities between accounts, both in the words comprising Jesus' parting speech and in the general (post-resurrection, pre-ascension) context in which the two accounts are situated. From the comparison above, it is clear that the final words of Jesus' speech in Luke's Gospel (Luke 24:47-49) most closely parallel the final words of Jesus' speech in Acts 1:8 (shaded). Most prominent are the verbal connections between Jesus' direct speech across accounts (in bold above: Ἰερουσαλήμ, μάρτυρες, ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς, δύναμιν). Even to the casual observer, the correspondence between the "commission" part of the speeches is difficult to overlook: "you (are) witnesses of these (things)" (Luke 24:48) and "you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).[15]

There are also some noteworthy differences that indicate the distinct trajectory Acts 1:4-11 sets for the subsequent story. As we have seen, Jesus' final words in Luke's Gospel are framed in the language of scriptural fulfillment (24:44, 46-47) and divine necessity (24:7, 26, 44). They emphasize the events of Jesus' death and resurrection, along with a future universal proclamation, as expressing scriptural expectations of the identity of the χρίστος (vv. 46-47; see Chapter 1). The focus in Acts 1:4-11 is also framed in the language of prophetic fulfillment, but the orientation is different. Even as Jesus' words in Acts 1:5 recall John's (and Jesus') statement from earlier (Luke 3:16), they emphasize future events: the coming of the Father's promise (v. 4), baptism of the

[15] Also helping to create the parallel is the fact that elsewhere in Luke 24 it is not the apostles per se that are involved in the encounter with Jesus (e.g., the women, 24:1-10; Cleopas and companion, 24:13-33). It is not until 24:44 that Jesus turns his attention specifically to the apostles as a group. Thus, the speech directed specifically to them (24:44-49) parallels the Acts' speech for which they are the primary audience (Acts 1:4-11), emphasized by the catalogue of names in 1:13.

apostles in the Spirit "not many days from now" (v. 5), apostolic reception of spiritual power (v. 8a), and their future universal witness (v. 8b). The emphasis falls overwhelmingly on future verbs[16] in Acts 1:1-11, which are, strictly speaking, absent from Luke 24:44-49. In light of Chapter 1's findings, Luke 24 is arguably constructed to show that Jesus' death, resurrection, and universal proclamation in his name are events consonant with scripture—that is, with God's acts in the past—while in Acts 1 a different priority surfaces, namely, the need to prepare the apostles to participate specifically in that future universal witness under the impending guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The mention of "forty days" (Acts 1:3), though its chronology appears to contradict Luke's Gospel (and every Gospel, for that matter), likely serves to draw attention to the period of preparation (40 days after Passover) and the timing of the Spirit's advent at Pentecost (50 days after Passover).[17] With a biblically symbolic span of time,[18] the narrator emphasizes the preparation of the apostles for what is coming next, even at the risk of introducing a slight chronological inconsistency with the Gospel account. The inconsistency confirms that the different accounts are tailored to their respective books and places within those books.[19]

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[16] βαπτισθήσεσθε (v. 4); ἀποκαθιστάνεις (v. 6); λήμψεσθε, ἔσεσθέ (v. 8); and ἐλεύσεται (v. 11).
[17] Wilson, *Gentiles,* 102; Barrett, *Acts,* 1:70.
[18] A parallel may be intended here between Jesus' forty days of trial before the start of his public ministry (Luke 4:1-14) and either baptism in the Spirit (3:21-22) and/or identification with the Isaianic anointed Servant (4:18; Isa 61:1) and the apostles' preparation for their own vocation, which will begin in earnest with the Spirit's anointing (Acts 2:6-11; cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 2:33). See Keener, *Acts,* 670.
[19] Cf. J. Bradley Chance, *Acts* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Pub., 2007), 34; and Parsons, *Departure*, 191-199. I take Parson's conclusions to represent the consensus view on the relationship between Luke 24:44-51 and Acts 1:1-11—namely, the best explanation for the difference between accounts is that they offer two narrative angles on the same event. Parsons, *ibid.*, 194, 198; cf. 94: "[t]he ascension story in Luke functions in its narrative context as an ending which brings closure to the Gospel, while the ascension account in Acts serves in its context as a narrative beginning. The differences in detail between these accounts may be accounted for largely by the role of each in its respective narrative context."

Another point of difference between accounts is the focus on Jesus' sovereignty (in Luke 24:44-51), as it were, which in Acts shifts to a concern to underscore Spirit-empowered *apostolic* activity in the future (Acts 1:4-11). In Luke 24, the ambiguous language in the commission accents the possibility of *Jesus'* ongoing agency (cf. the passive κηρυχθῆναι, the emphatic ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ [v. 47], the undefined τούτων [v. 48]; 1.1.2.1). Luke augments that impression in v. 49 where Jesus himself promises to send (ἀποστέλλω) the Spirit upon the apostles (cf. Acts 2:33).[20] In fact, though Luke 24:46-49—often isolated as the "Lukan Commission"—might naturally be taken as "all about" apostolic witness, the end of Luke's Gospel actually underscores *Jesus'* primacy as narrative actor: the Messiah is the one to suffer/die and rise again, to which the apostles are witnesses (primarily in a passive sense). Even universal proclamation belongs within his appointed mission (cf. Acts 26:22-23). Jesus (with the emphatic ἐγώ) will send the father's promise upon these apostles (Luke 24:49).[21] Even the promise that the apostles will be clothed with power requires of them nothing but to wait in the city. The general impression of Jesus' activity offered in Luke 24:46-49—not to mention in vv. 50-51 (his benediction)—is primarily one of control; he is the main actor, the apostles

[20] As we will see below, in addition to interpreting the Pentecost event as an actualization of promises from Israel's scriptures (Joel and the Psalms), Peter uses language indicating the fulfillment of Jesus' own prophecies from Acts 1:8. Peter's construal of events portrays this double fulfillment in such a way that the Spirit's descent, though anticipated by God in Israel's scriptures (ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ, 2:17; LXX Joel 3:1), is interpreted as having been carried out by Jesus himself (ἐξέχεεν, 2:33). Cf. also LXX Isa 32:15: ἕως ἂν ἐπέλθῃ ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς πνεῦμα ἀφ᾽ ὑψηλοῦ until a spirit is poured out on God's people from on high. See Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus,* 92.

[21] Consider the fact that the prophecies of Spirit baptism are associated with Jesus' activity (Luke 3:16: "I baptized you with water, but one is coming who will baptize you in Spirit and fire"; Mar 1:8 // Matt 3:11), so Jesus' quotation here about "you will receive/be clothed" can also be understood in light of earlier predictions as an activity associated with Jesus' direct action, so to speak. Jesus will do to them with the Spirit what John did to others with water. A remarkable prophecy given that their baptism in the Spirit "not many days from now" will happen *after* Jesus has been "taken up." Cf. Schnabel, *Acts*, 75, who explains the passive formulation βαπτισθήσεσθε by this logic.

a mostly passive audience. That his final speech in Luke's Gospel is a monologue (cf. Acts 1:6) only reinforces this impression. Such observations echo our conclusions from Chapter 1 about how Luke 24:46-49 reflects Jesus' messianic identity and agency *even* with respect to universal proclamation to come.

In an apparent contrast, Acts 1:4-8 privileges the activity of the apostles. First-person verbs (cf. ἀποστέλλω) are lacking entirely in Acts 1:4-8,[22] where the emphasis falls on the *apostles'* future activity. Even in response to the apostles' question "is this the time when *you* will restore the kingdom?" (1:6)—a question specifically about *the Messiah's* agency—Jesus defers to the Father's knowledge and to the apostles' future witness under the power of the Spirit. If we take 1:8b ("but you will receive power…and be my witnesses…to the ends of the earth"), at least in part, as a response to the apostles' question in 1:6, then Jesus appears to tie *his* restoration of the kingdom to Israel to *their* Spirit-led witness. The restoration will indeed still occur—God only knows when (cf. Acts 3:19-21)—but the schedule of the restoration is secondary to, even contingent on, the spread of proclamation to the end of the earth. The reign of the Lord and Messiah Jesus, as we have seen (Acts 1:11; 2:33, 36; 3:21), is not to be established by immediate restoration of Israel's kingdom, but reflected in the universal witness of his servants (cf. 15:13-21). Implicitly, the crossing of linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and geographical boundaries will help realize the reign of Jesus over all people.

[22] See also minor details like the absence of a personal pronoun (cf. Luke 24:49: "the promise of *my* father") in Acts 1:4 ("the promise of *the* father"), though the pronoun's omission in Acts may simply be stylistic.

At the same time, the emphasis on apostolic activity is qualified in Jesus' speech by an emphasis on the Spirit's guidance as a prerequisite to their witness. After all, though Jesus more freely employs second-person verbs in Acts 1:4-8 (than in Luke 24:46-49), they primarily take a passive voice ("you will be baptized…you will receive power…you will be my witnesses"). Acts 1:4, 5, and 8 reiterate that the Holy Spirit will give the apostles power (δύναμις; cf. Luke 24:49) for their participation in worldwide witness. Unlike the end of Luke's Gospel, in Acts 1:4-8 Jesus promises his apostles the Spirit (1:4, 8a) *before* indicating their role as witnesses (cf. Luke 24:48-49). The change in order may explain the slight difference in the commission statements themselves—the passive sense of witness in Luke 24:48 ("you [are] witnesses of these [things]") becomes a more active and anticipatory "you *will be* my witnesses" in Acts 1:8. The Spirit is here designated primarily as the predicate of active testimony, which will require divine aid (cf. Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 7:55; 10:45; 13:9; 16:6; 19:6; 21:11). While the Holy Spirit was not necessarily a prerequisite of *being* an eyewitness to events, it is indispensable for actively testifying about Jesus to "all nations" and to "the end(s) of the earth."[23]

Because the apostles' question (1:6) and Jesus' reply (1:7-8) are logically related—i.e., the former is no mere pretense for the latter[24]—Jesus inscribes the apostles' commission to be witnesses to the end of the earth into his own responsibility for Israel's

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[23] Kee, *Good News*, 100.

[24] Cf. Barrett, *Acts,* 1:77, who says Jesus rejects the premise of the question; or John Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church, and the World* (Leicester, Eng.: Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 41, who simply repeats Calvin's view that there are in the apostles' question as many errors as there are words. Darrell Guder's appropriation of "witness" language is to be commended (*The Continuing Conversion of the Church* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 49-72), yet see his unnecessary critique of the apostles' question in 1:6 as "reductionistic" (110 n. 25).

restoration.[25] Yet this involves more than a simple transfer of responsibility (i.e. a "succession narrative") since none of it is possible without the "power" that comes from the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 2). That is, the apostles' mission is a task delegated and guided by Jesus and the Spirit he bestows (cf. 2:33). Thus, even in a passage that anticipates apostolic activity, the primacy of Jesus remains a central assumption carried over from the end of Luke's Gospel. Arguably, it is precisely because of Jesus' ongoing activity that apostolic witness can effectively take place.

The emphasis on the Spirit creates the expectation that it will be the real driving force behind the progress of the Word (cf. 8:15-17; 10:44-48). The apostles themselves are recipients of the Lord's power; their activity is essentially derivative of his and the Spirit's initiative.[26] Luke characterizes the apostles especially, even in their most "triumphant" moments, as responding to divine initiative. This pattern in Luke's characterization, as later sections will demonstrate, reflects a deeper concern to show how apostolic "witness" provides an opportunity not just for the conversion of others, but for the transformation of the witnesses themselves. In addition, many of the witnesses who help to fulfill the vision laid out in Acts 1:8/Luke 24:47 turn out not to be apostles at all (Stephen, Philip, Paul and Barnabas). In fact, far from turning Acts' characters into "marionettes,"[27] divine initiative throughout the narrative creates the possibility that

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[25] See Chapter 4.

[26] Cf. Marguerat, *Historian*, 115: "What is of interest in this programmatic verse [Acts 1:8] is that it locates the origin of the venture of Christian mission in the founding gift of the Spirit. In this sense, it is incorrect to say that the Spirit makes the witness possible, and better to say that he is the witness. *The gift of the Spirit is the power to witness to Jesus.* The entire unfolding of the mission in Acts confirms this function of the Spirit as the enabling power to witness" (emphasis original).

[27] Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 315.

human characters in Acts may diverge from God's will and themselves require a transformation to understand it.

3.4.1.2 The "Lukan Commission" (Acts 1:8)

Having explored Acts 1:1-11 broadly, and the distinctive features of Acts 1:4-8, we now turn to the specific connotations of Acts 1:8. Here the parallels with Luke 24:47-48 are obvious:

> ["Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day,] [47] and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] **You are witnesses of these things**." (Luke 24:46-48)
>
> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Set in parallel, the two commissioning statements have several aspects in common: the assignment of the task of witness to the apostles (implicit in Luke 24:47), the initial association of their activity with Jerusalem, and the expansive scope of apostolic witness (*all* nations, the *uttermost* part of the earth). While the similarities inform the reader that these are the same commission—reinforced by a common setting, audience, and pre-ascension chronology—the variations evident in Acts 1:8 help to emphasize and develop specific claims from the initial version (Luke 24:46-48).

First, Luke 24:47 defines the *content* of universal witness as proclamation of repentance and forgiveness in the Messiah's name. Acts 1:8 lacks these details but likely assumes them, given how often the speeches in Acts emphasize repentance and forgiveness (2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:24, 38; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20) or simply

"salvation" (Acts 4:12; 7:25; 13:26, 47; 16:17).[28] The citation of Isa 49:6 in Acts 13:47 (cf. 4.6.1-2) clarifies that a vision of salvation lies behind Acts 1:8: "…so that you may bring *salvation*[29] to the ends of the earth" (Isa 49:6; cf. 52:10; 49:8; Luke 3:6; Acts 13:47; 28:28). In other words, Paul's later citation retrospectively clarifies that by being "witnesses…to the end of the earth" (1:8), those commissioned are really bringing salvation. Thus, even though Acts 1:8 says nothing directly about preaching repentance and forgiveness, nor even about salvation, a veiled dependency on Isa 49:6 suggests these motifs are close at hand in Acts 1:8 as the content of apostolic preaching.

In addition to content, the question of the *target* of universal proclamation is a crucial one because it probes the contours of Luke's "missiology"—to whom is the message of salvation supposed to go? Luke 24:47's mention of "all nations," we recall from Chapter 1, refers primarily to Gentiles, whereas Acts 1:8 offers no explicit ethnic categories, only geographical markers (Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, end of the earth). The parallel between Luke 24:46-47 and Acts 26:22-23 (see Chapter 1) appears to equate "all nations" with "our people and the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23), indicating a shift in emphasis in Acts 1:8 from ethnic to geographical terms.[30] The book of Acts will tell not only the

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[28] Especially Lukan terms are σωτήρια (Luke 1:69, 71, 77; 19:9) and σωτήριον (Luke 2:30; 3:6; Acts 28:28). See also Green, "Salvation to the Ends of the Earth," 87-95; and Dupont, "Salvation of the Gentiles," 13-16.

[29] In LXX Isa 49:6, the word is the basic nominal form of σωτηρία; in the MT the text reads "my salvation" (יְשׁוּעָתִי), which not coincidentally is the root-word from which the name יְהוֹשֻׁעַ/Ἰησοῦς originally derives.

[30] Moreover, some might point to the historical-biblical associations of the terms Acts uses to argue they are as much ethnic as geographical categories. In other words, Jerusalem represents the heart of the people of Israel, particularly as it housed the temple of Yahweh. Though a Roman province at the time of Luke's writing, and joined under the ethnarchy of Archelaus, "Judea" may double here—especially in its attachment to "Samaria"—as a reference to the southern kingdom in the 2nd Temple era. In that case, "Samaria" may refer to the northern kingdom. By uniting them ("all Judea and Samaria"; regardless of textual variant ἐν, the adjective πάσῃ is surely distributive, referring to both Judea and Samaria in entirety) Luke implies that the task of universal witness will include the restoration of historical Israel's kingdom.

story of salvation moving from Jew to Gentile but also from Jewish lands to the predominately Gentile Diaspora.

On the one hand, Luke 24:47 is also more broadly prophetic in its trajectory, offering little detail about *when* universal proclamation will take place, only that it shall (and "must"; cf. Luke 24:44; Acts 26:22-23). Acts 1:8, on the other hand, specifies the time ("when the Holy Spirit has come upon you").[31] The fulfillment of the first step in the prophecy ("you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you") in the Pentecost event comes as no surprise in Acts 2, having been predicted in Acts 1:4-5 and 8 (cf. Luke 24:49). But it also creates accompanying expectations that the next step in the prophecy ("you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem…") will similarly come to fruition. The cumulative effect is that events in Acts that have to do with Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and beyond carry the additional significance of fulfilling Jesus' programmatic words about universal witness (cf. 8:1, 4; 9:31; 11:18).

To review, Acts 1:8 re-emphasizes the ethnic contours of Luke 24:46-49 but also highlights several other dimensions: specifically, *how* that commission will be fulfilled (by baptism in the Holy Spirit), *by whom* (the apostles—"you"), *when* ("when the Holy Spirit comes upon you…" earlier defined as "not many days from now," 1:5), and *where* ("in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"). In terms of our broader thesis—that Acts narratively explicates the messianic identity of Jesus as universal Lord—the shift in emphases in Acts appears to develop the first Lukan

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The point is obviously strengthened by the apostles' question which precipitates Jesus' statement: "Lord, is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (1:6).

[31] And this marker of time is further specified earlier by Acts 1:5 ("not many days from now"), both signaling the coming of Pentecost and possibly prompting the apostles' question in the first place.

commission (Luke 24:46-49) in a specific direction, with implications for how we are to read Acts. Jesus' parting words prepare readers to find in Acts a narrative construal of universal mission marked by the preeminence of the Holy Spirit, the activity of the apostles, their imminent baptism in the Spirit, and the geographical trajectory of their witness. The combined portrait is one in which boundary-crossing mission (culturally, ethnically, linguistically, and geographically) will represent the fulfillment of Jesus' commission and the narrative construal of his universal Lordship.

Confirming this broad understanding of Acts 1:8 is the tone of Jesus' parting words, which convey more of a promise than a command.[32] Instead of strict imperatives, Luke offers promissory future indicatives in vv. 5-8 (βαπτισθήσεσθε … λήμψεσθε … ἔσεσθε). While some would take the grammatically indicative ἔσεσθε as functionally imperative,[33] the tenor of promise aligns both with Luke's overall tone of divine necessity as well as with the portrait of christology attested by universal witness. The lack of an imperative in the commission may be why the "Western" text attempts to clarify the promise by inserting a clear dominical command at the end of v. 2: *καὶ ἐκελεῦσε κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*[34] (cf. Mark 16:13). In light of Matthew's clear

[32] Bolt, "Mission and Witness," 197. The verb παρήγγειλεν (v. 4, "*he ordered* them not to depart but to wait") is in fact the only imperative verb in vv. 4-8. The verb is typically associated in Luke-Acts with one person "ordering" others to do something, presupposing an asymmetrical relationship. Cf. the uses in Luke-Acts: Jesus to those healed (Luke 5:14; 8:56); Jesus/Paul in rebuking unclean spirit (Luke 8:29; Acts 16:8); Jesus to disciples (Luke 9:21; Acts 1:4; 10:42); Sanhedrin to disciples (Acts 4:18; 5:28, 40); Jewish believers to Gentile believers (Acts 15:5); Roman leaders to jailors/Paul's nephew/Paul's accusers (Acts 16:23; 23:22, 30); God to all people to repent (Acts 17:30). Bolt says there is no direct command, but a promise and one limited to the first century apostles (211-212).

[33] Haenchen, "Judentum und Christentum," 160-161.

[34] See Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts*, 24-25. The apparent lack of a direct command, that is, elicited a desire to emend the text, perhaps even in light of the tradition underlying Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15. Or, the apparent emendation brings the commission in line with what Peter implies in Acts 10:42 (παρήγγειλεν ἡμῖν κηρύξαι τῷ λαῷ). However, the use of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον in the alternative reading appears somewhat out of sync with Luke's general avoidance of the term (cf. only Acts 15:7; 20:24).

imperatives (πορευθέντες … μαθητεύσατε[35] … βαπτίζοντες … διδάσκοντες [28:19-20]), Luke's commission is less emphatically compulsory. In Luke-Acts (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8) the apostles are told where and to whom testimony about Jesus will go, but the imperatival force of Jesus' "commission" is diminished for the sake of its promissory tone. The prophetic force of Jesus' promise[36] shapes expectations for fulfillment in the course of the narrative, through the apostolic witnesses or, if need be, through alternative witnesses. In this respect, the work of witness forms part of a divine plan manifesting Jesus' identity as universal Lord, rather than an apostolic act upon which God's plans depend entirely. As we will see, the apostles' ultimate role in universal proclamation (represented chiefly by Peter) is primarily as a *witness* to what God does among Gentiles rather than as a fully knowledgeable apostle who leaves Mt. Olivet immediately to evangelize the Gentiles. Thus, even the potential imperatival force of ἔσεσθε (1:8) may reflect a command to become eyewitnesses to events, not simply to *bear witness* in the proactive sense.

3.4.2 Isaianic Sub-text

Identifying the precise trajectory of Acts 1:8 clarifies whether and how Jesus' words are fulfilled later in Acts. Indeed, this single verse in Acts 1:8 is commonly labeled

[35] Though, technically, μαθητεύσατε is the only imperative, the other participles function as auxiliary verbs and reflect the mood of the main verb, a fact reflected in most translations. See David Bosch, "The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20," in *Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, ed. Paul Chilcote and Laceye Warner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 73-92.
[36] Alan Bale, "The Ambiguous Oracle: Narrative Configuration in Acts," *New Testament Studies* 57.4 (Oct 2011): 530–546; and J. Bradley Chance, "Divine Prognostications and the Movement of Story: An Intertextual Exploration of Xenophon's Ephesian Tale and the Acts of the Apostles," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative*, ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance, and Judith Perkins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 219-234.

the "program," "table of contents" (*Inhalt*[37]), or "ground plan" (*Grundplann*[38]) of the book. After all, a quick survey of the narrative sequence reveals that, by book's end, Christian testimony reaches the three (or four) putative geographical regions named in 1:8 (Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria).[39] Indeed, the ministry of designated witnesses broadly proceeds from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and beyond, frequent return trips to Jerusalem notwithstanding (9:26-29; 11:2; 12:25; 15:4-29; 21:15-26; cf. 22:17-18; 24:11). Such an understanding of 1:8's "programmatic" character helps explain why Rome (cf. 28:14) has, broadly speaking, become the default referent of "end of the earth."

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[37] Hans Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Tübingen, Mohr, 1972), 22: "enthält Programm und Dispositionsschema des Buches." Yet see Niccum, "One Ethiopian," 892-3: "The apostles, having conversed forty days with the risen Christ about the 'Kingdom of God' (1:3), ask Jesus, 'Lord, at this time are you restoring the Kingdom to Israel?' (1:6). The rest of the book answers that question, and 1:8 is subordinate to it, establishing a pattern for how restoration will unfold—it does not move toward Jerusalem (as many anticipated) but away from it. The prophesied 'gathering in' is accomplished by sending out…[which is] why 1:8 seems so frustrating as an ordering principle for the second half of the book; its function is something other than a table of contents." Cf. Karl Matthias Schmidt, "Abkehr von der Rückkehr: Aufbau und Theologie der Apostelgeschichte im Kontext des lukanischen Diasporaversändnisses," *NTS* 53 (2007): 406-24.

[38] See Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Bernard Noble et al. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 144 n. 9, which refers to 1:8 as the "ground plan" of Acts: Jerusalem (ch. 1-7), Judaea and Samaria (8-9), and mission to the ends of the earth (10-28). He justifies the expression by identifying the link between Isa 49:6 and Acts 13:47 and Luke 2:32, which attaches the Isaianic image to Jesus; cf. Hans Conzelmann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel; ed. Eldon Jay Epp with Christopher R. Matthews (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 7; Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 26.

[39] Many commentaries, therefore, group chapters of Acts by such geographical designations: Jerusalem (1:1-7:60), Judea and Samaria (8:1-11:18), and ends of the earth (11:19-28:31). See Conzelmann, *Acts,* 7; cf. Earle Ellis, "'The End of the Earth' (Acts 1:8)," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (1991): 124-125; vanThanh Nguyen, "Missionary Churches in Acts: A Model of Intercultural Engagement with the Nations," in *Contemporary Mission Theology,* ed. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2017), 136, offers an alternative: Jerusalem: 1:1-6:7; Judea and Samaria: 6:8-12:25; ends of the earth: 13:1-28:31. Beverly Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 54-56, reviews multiple ways of dividing up the book, whether by geography (1:1-26 / 2:1-9:43 / 10:1-28:28) or by character (Peter: 1-12; Paul: 13:28), but settles on a narrative-oriented structure (Prologue: 1:1-2:47; Part I: 3:1-15:35; Part II: 15:36-28:31).

But attempts to interpret the book of Acts in rigid relation to Jesus' parting words meet with significant challenges along the way.[40] All the geographical explanations, moreover, are unsatisfactory in their own way (e.g., Rome,[41] Ethiopia,[42] Spain,[43] the outer limits of the known world[44]). That the "quest" for the geographical referent of "end

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[40] Chance, "Divine Prognostications," 231-232: "But while this broad outline is helpful, readers who attempt to squeeze the outline of Acts into rigid conformity with the outline of Acts 1:8 inevitably experience frustration… For example, is the prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit really to be understood as referring quite narrowly to Pentecost? Or are we not to see the consistent reports of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in such texts as 8:15-17 (Samaritans), 9:17 (Paul in Damascus), 10:44 (gentiles of Caesarea), 13:52 (disciples of Antioch of Pisidia), and 19:6 (disciples of Ephesus) as linked to this prophecy? Are we required to conclude that the Ethiopian is not a gentile, that he is in some sense Jewish or Samaritan, since the witness to him takes place during the Judean/Samaritan mission and before the "real" gentile phase begins with the preaching to Cornelius? And where in Jesus' prophetic outline of 1:8 do we fit Paul's preaching to the Jews of Damascus in Acts 9? And what do we make of the fact that when we are now in the "ends of the earth" phase of the outline in the last part of Acts, Paul regularly preaches to Jews and even returns to Jerusalem where, we are told by a revelation of the risen Jesus, Paul has offered testimony for Jesus (Acts 23:11), supposedly long after "the Jerusalem phase" of the story should have ended?" Chance concludes (227): "the oracle serves as a 'very broad outline' of the story but not a precise chronological prediction of events to come."

[41] A general survey of secondary literature on Acts would probably lead to the impression that a majority of scholars hold to the view that "to the end(s) of the earth" refers to Rome. On the one hand, the Roman hypothesis (Senior, *Biblical Foundations,* 274; Floyd Filson, "The Journey Motif in Luke-Acts" in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 75-76, has several narrative pieces of evidence in its favor. On the other hand, each piece of evidence can be controverted. Cf. Unnik, "ΕΩΣ ἐΣΧΑΤΟΥ," 398; Ellis, "To the Ends of the Earth", 125; Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus,* 90; Dupont, "La portée christologique," 136.

[42] A slightly less common hypothesis is Ethiopia. Cf. Niccum, "One Ethiopian," 886. Niccum somewhat surprisingly calls it the scholarly consensus by appealing to several different scholars who cite one another: Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 109; Witherington, *Acts,* 290 fn 45. Yet this is a rather (recent) small cross-section of scholars upon which to lay claim to a consensus. Henry Cadbury was actually one of the first to suggest such an identification (*The Book of Acts in History* [New York: Harper, 1955], 15; yet in his earlier *The Making of Luke-Acts* [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927], 323-324, he seems to oppose this idea.). Expanding Cadbury's initial thought was C. G. Thornton ("To the End of the Earth: Acts 1:8," *Expository Times* 89 [1977–78]: 374-5). But the problems with the Ethiopian hypothesis are many. See Niccum, "One Ethiopian," 887-891; Ellis, "To the Ends of the Earth", 128; Niccum's conclusion says enough (887): "[i]f viewing the Ethiopian episode as a direct fulfillment of 1:8 makes most of the Book of Acts irrelevant, regarding it as a proleptic experience of the Gentile mission makes it impotent."

[43] Among the referents not named in Acts, but which could lie behind the phrase "end of the earth" is Spain (Ellis, "To the End of the Earth," 123-132). Cf. Strabo's *Geography* (3, 1, 8; 1, 2, 31; cf. 1, 1, 5) and Diodorus Siculus's *History* (25, 10, 1); Romans 15:24, 28; *Muratorian Canon* (lines 34-39); and 1 *Clement* 5:7. But Ellis's theory is undone by numerous considerations, not the least of which is Spain never appears in Acts and relies too heavily on sources outside of and chronologically later than Acts (cf. Niccum, "One Ethiopian," 889-90 and 190 fn 25).

[44] Another theory, first substantively posed by W. C. van Unnik, asserts that ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς refers to "the extreme limits of the earth" (*die ausserste Grenze der Erde*), a defined notion in antiquity (van Unnik, "ΕΩΣ ἐΣΧΑΤΟΥ," 386-391, 398-400). Van Unnik's is probably the strongest of the geographical

of the earth" has not been satisfactorily resolved—by appeal to Acts or contemporary literature—suggests that a purely geographical solution misses the point of the phrase.[45] As will be shown in the next section, the source of Luke's phrase is more than likely Israel's scriptures (LXX), and "the end of the earth" an implicitly *ethnic* category.

In light of these observations, Robert Tannehill qualifies the claims about 1:8's "programmatic" character by arguing that Jesus' words outline *the mission* that will take place in his name rather than simply the book's plot.[46] On this view, what the narrative contains is something short of what Jesus' commission envisions. Supporting this assertion is the way in which Jesus ties universal witness to Israel's restoration (Acts 1:6-8), putting mission on an eschatological trajectory tied to Jesus' physical return (Acts 1:9-11; 3:19-21; 10:42; 17:30-31). Like the *parousia*, therefore, universal mission is not completed in the narrative (cf. 28:30-31). In contrast to the apocalyptic certainty of Mark 13:10 and Matt 24:14,[47] Acts 1:8 has an open trajectory, matched by the book's inconclusive ending (28:28). Confirming this conclusion, in a way, is the evidence

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hypotheses, but the notion of the four points of the compass does not really offer geographical specificity beyond the notion of "everywhere." While he is right to pay attention to the LXX-parallels (see section below), he too easily conflates such parallels with non-biblical notions of the "uttermost parts of the earth." As will be shown below, Luke's perspective is almost certainly drawn from biblical and, more specifically, Isaianic imagery and language, which can only be properly understood within the wider narrative context in which Luke uses the "end(s) of the earth."

[45] Sleeman, *Geography,* 71; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:272-347; cf. also Thomas Moore, "'To the End of the Earth': The Geographical and Ethnic Universalism of Acts 1:8 in Light of Isaianic Influence on Luke," *JETS* 40/3 (September 1997): 389-99.

[46] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:17: "Although the final words are often viewed as an outline of Acts, this is true only in a limited way. It is more accurate to say that Jesus outlines the mission, and Acts ends with that mission still incomplete" and (2:18) "Thus Acts 1:8 does not outline the actual course of Acts beyond Samaria, and it envisions a goal that reaches beyond the end of Acts. It is an outline of the mission, but only in part an outline of Acts."

[47] Mark 13:10 – "and first the gospel must be preached to all the nations"; Matt 24:14 – "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come" (author's translations).

throughout Acts that participation in the fulfillment of the *apostolic* promise-commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) involves *non*-apostles like Philip and Paul and Barnabas (cf. 13:47; 26:16-23). If Tannehill's conclusions are to be followed—and I am convinced they should be—then "to the end of the earth" means witness is to go and be *everywhere*. This universal sense, therefore, is undercut by any attempt to tie "end of the earth" to any single location in Acts or outside of it. Jesus' promise effectively eliminates any stopping point short of the whole inhabited world (cf. 17:30; 21:28; 28:22, 30-31).[48]

If indeed Acts narratively develops the identity of the Messiah Jesus as Lord of all peoples—as Chapter 1 argued—then the realization of that universal Lordship will be signaled in the narrative by the crossing of boundaries that potentially inhibit witness *everywhere* (cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and geographical). Moreover, to limit "end of the earth" to, or identify it entirely with, a specific geographical marker effectively restricts the full scope of the narrative identity of the Messiah Jesus developed in Acts.

3.4.2.1 The Limits of "the End(s) of the Earth"

Another clue that a straightforward geographical referent may not be implied by Luke's use of "the end(s) of the earth" is the phrase's slightly odd syntax (ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς).[49] First, there is the misfit of the phrase within the series of seemingly geographical terms: "*in* Jerusalem," "*in* all Judea and [*in* all] Samaria," and "*to* the end(s)

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[48] This is not to offer any opinion on the interpretation, built upon later legends about the apostles, which read back into Jesus' words a kind of division of labor among them—Thomas and Bartholomew evangelized India (*Acts of Thomas*, Rufinus, *Hist. Eccl.* 1.9-10), Andrew went to Scythia (Origen, *ap.*; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl*. 3.1), and Matthew to Ethiopia (Rufinus, *Hist. Eccl.* 1.9-10), and so on. Such legends may have found interpretive foundation in readings like that of *1 Clement* 42:3f; Justin, *Apol.* 1.93.3 and 1.50.12, which indicates that the apostles "went to every race of human" (εἰς πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων ἐλθόντες); cf. also Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit*, 1.7.81-82, and Hermas, *Sim.* 9.25.2.

[49] Cf. van Unnik, "ΕΩΣ 'ΕΣΧΑΤΟΥ," 394-99; and the broader survey of Darrell Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 64-67.

of the earth" (1:8). Where we might expect "in/among (ἐν) the ends of the earth"—especially if it were referring to a fixed geographical point—we instead find "to/as far as" (ἕως), perhaps signaling a different kind of marker or source behind the phrase. Secondly, the Greek phrase translates literally as "to the end (sing.) of the earth," even if most English translations render it in the plural—"ends" (e.g., NRSV, NIV). Given the common English rendering, it might be assumed that the singular ἐσχάτου is simply idiomatic Greek for a geographical designation. But in Greek literature contemporary with Luke, the singular is not used in this manner. Overwhelmingly, it is the plural τὰ ἔσχατα that denotes the standard way of expressing geographical reference in non-biblical Greek literature.[50] What is more, by and large biblical authors do not follow secular usage of the geographical plural.[51] Whatever cultural codes Luke assumes of his audience, the common extra-biblical way of using τὰ ἔσχατα is not among them, making contemporary parallels less fruitful in clarifying Luke's use of the singular ἔσχατος. Rather, Luke's usage—at least in the case of the phrase ἕως τοῦ ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς (Acts 1:8; 13:47)—appears to reflect the influence of a different source, namely the Greek Bible.

[50] See fn 422.

[51] In the 17 biblical occurrences of the plural τὰ ἔσχατα, none appears in relation to τῆς γῆς directly, and only LXX Isa 37:24 possess specific geographical shading ("the utmost heights [τὰ ἔσχατα] of Lebanon"); cf. LXX 2 Sam 2:26; Ps 72:17; 138:5, 9; Job 8:7, 13; 11:7; 42:12; Isa 37:24; 41:22; 46:10; 47:7; Lam 1:9; Matt 12:45; Luke 11:26; 2 Pe 2:20; Rev 2:19; cf. Wisdom 2:16; Sirach 7:36; 28:6; 38:20; 48:24; Dan (Th) 11:4; 12:8. More often the sense of the substantive plural is one of "last state" or "end (of time)" (cf., e.g., Luke 11:26). Thus, in biblical (LXX) terms and syntactical patterns, τὰ ἔσχατα is not the preferred construction for indicating geographical reference, as is commonly the case in contemporary Greek literature.

In the LXX, genitival phrases of apposition[52] most often link ἡ γῆ with the singular modifier ἔσχατος. Moreover, the exact phrase—ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς—preceded by a preposition occurs frequently in Isaiah (8:9; 45:22; 38:20; 49:6; 62:11) and Jeremiah (6:22; 10:13; 16:19; 27:41; 28:16; 32:32; 38:8).[53] Preceded by the specific preposition ἕως (cf. Acts 1:8; 13:47), however, the phrase only occurs in four verses, all in LXX Isaiah: 8:9; 48:20; 49:6; and 62:11 (cf. Ps Sol 1:4).[54] Three out of four of those occur in Isaiah 40-55, corroborating the general sense of "2nd Isaiah's" influence on Luke.[55]

In two cases—Isa 48:20 and 62:11—the horizon of the phrase's use concerns the fortunes of Israel. Although in these instances "to the end of the earth" bears an unspecified geographical connotation (i.e. "the whole earth"), the emphasis remains on proclaiming the restoration and return of exilic Israel. What appears to be a geographical connotation, in fact, has more to do with the reality of Israel's far-flung dispersion—i.e. everywhere where God's people are scattered. Another passage (49:6; cf. 8:9),[56] in

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[52] Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 95-100.

[53] The only other OT references include LXX Deut 28:49 and Ps 134:7 (cf. Ps Sol 1:4; 8:15). The only NT references are Acts 1:8 and 13:47, about which more will be said below.

[54] Cf. Niccum, "One Ethiopian," 889: "The use of ἔσχατου in the singular is also telling, for ancient authors typically employed the plural, but *especially* did so when referring to Ethiopia due to Homer's influence [Homer, *Od.* 1.23; cf. also Strabo in *Geog.* 1.2.24-28]…Only the Greek Old Testament provides the symbolic world presupposed by ἔσχατου τῆς γῆς." Cf. also van Unnik, "ΕΩΣ 'ΕΣΧΑΤΟΥ," 393-4, 396-8. From this brief study a basic tendency is evident in Jeremiah to employ the phrase with ἀπό and in Isaiah (esp. "2nd Isaiah") to use it with ἕως. Cf. Jer 12:12, where ἕως ἄκρου τῆς γῆς refers to "the end of the land," establishing at least minimally the possibility that ἡ γῆ is used ambiguously in 1:8.

[55] Cf. Koet, "Isaiah in Luke," 51-79; Evans and Sanders, *Luke and Scripture*; Mallen, *Reading and Transformation,* 60-133; and Johnson, "Jesus against the Idols," 343-53.

[56] Cf. also LXX Jer 32:31 (MT 25:31), which has several parallels with Isaianic servant language. As one of the four instances in the MT to use the primary Hebrew phrase (עד־קצה הארץ) underlying ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς (Ps 46:10; Isa 48:20; 49:6; Jer 25:31 [אל־קצה הארץ lies behind Isa 62:11 and מרחקי־ארץ behind Isa 8:9]), Jer 32:31, interestingly, puts several phrases with Lukan resonance into parallel: ἐπὶ μέρος τῆς γῆς, πᾶσαν σάρκα, and ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. In other words, "ends of the earth," "all flesh," and "the nations" are construed essentially as synonyms in Jeremiah 32:31. It should be noted, however, that Jeremiah's use is directed toward a portrait of *judgment* upon the nations. Cf. Morna D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1959), 32-34.

contrast to the first two examples, employs synonymous parallelism between ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς and ἔθνη, emphasizing the ethnic connotations of the phrase.[57] The "end of the earth" refers to everywhere God's people are scattered *among the nations*. Evoking Isaianic (LXX) imagery—rather than a contemporaneous Greek grammar—Luke's use of "end of the earth" signals an *ethnic* trajectory tied to a scriptural vision.[58]

Because these prophecies about the nations are tied to promises of Israel's restoration (Isa 40-55), Luke's use of the term evokes theo-political connotations.[59] Given that the Jewish Diaspora was already extensive[60] by the first century, the "ends of the earth" could have sounded to the Jewish(-Christian) reader, at least, as a reference to the far-flung Diaspora community.[61] That possibility is strengthened in view of the

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[57] Cf. Chance, "Divine Prognostications," 231; Joel Green, "Neglecting Widows and Serving the Word? Acts 6:1-7 as a Test Case for a Missional Hermeneutic" in *New Testament Theology in Light of the Church's Mission,* ed. J. C. Laansma et al. (Eugene: Cascade, 2011), 159 fn 23. Even those who insist on a geographical connotation admit that some ethnic implications are present. Cf. Ellis, "To the Ends of the Earth," 124-125.

[58] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:17: "Although Jesus' references to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria correspond roughly to developments in Acts 2-9, important steps in the progress of the mission beyond that point are ignored. There is no reference to the spread of the gospel to Antioch, Asia Minor, or Greece, although each of these steps is significant in Acts. Nor is there any reference to Rome, for there is no firm basis for identifying "the end of the earth" with Rome….Isaiah is the source of the phrase in Acts…also shows that, for the narrator of Acts, "to the end of the earth" is a key expression from Isaiah's testimony that God intends salvation for all peoples." Cf. Witherington, *Acts,* 110 fn 25, who recognizes that "Rome is not meant but rather that that the text should be read in light of Luke 24:47 – the gospel must go to all *peoples*" (emphasis added). Cf. Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles*, 19: "the reasoning implicit in this expression [in Acts 1:8] is more religious than geographic."

[59] Based on the Acts 26:17-18 Isaianic language resurfacing, Niccum argues ("One Ethiopian," 890) that "'The end of the earth,' then, is the incorporation of devout Gentiles into Israel's restoration, a primarily theological rather than geographical concept."

[60] Cf. Philo *Vit. Mos.* 2.19-20; *Leg.* 10; cf. Jonah 1:3; Jub 8:23, 26, 9:12; Jos. *Ant.* 1.122; cf. Judith 14:10; 15:1.

[61] Indeed, this is how Jervell interprets "end of the earth" (*Die Apostelgeschichte* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998], 116): "Endlich ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς Man sollte nicht vorschnell an Heiden denken. Erstens zeigen Apg 9-28, class die paulinische Mission vor allem den Heiden gilt, so klar in den Synagogenszenen. Das 'bis ans Ende der Welt' ist denn in erster Linie als die jüdische Diaspora zu verstehen. Zweitens versteht Lukas die nicht-jüdischen Mitglieder der Kirche als aus den Gottesfürchtigen herkommend - Leute, die schon im Verhältnis zur Synagoge standen. Die Apg zeigt, dass 'das Ende der Erde' nicht einen Endpunkt kennzeichnet, sondern den Weg des Evangeliums durch die ganze Welt. Rom ist als Ziel für die Heidenmission verstanden, aber die Mission geht 28,30 über Rom hinaus." Cf. also

apostles' question to Jesus in 1:6 that prompts his promise-commission: "Lord, is now the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Asking about the restoration of *Israel*, the apostles are told about witness reaching the holy city ("Jerusalem"/temple), the two historic kingdoms reconstituted (Judah/"all Judea," Israel/"[all] Samaria"), and Israel's Diaspora ("the end of the earth").[62] But how is Israel's restoration related to apostolic witness reaching far-flung peoples? A partial answer is that Jesus envisions the in-gathering of Diaspora Jews, meaning apostolic witness is to go everywhere *where Jews are scattered* and include the Gentiles there in the vision of salvation.[63] Another partial answer to this question will come in Chapter 4, in discussions of Acts 15 (especially James' speech).

Haenchen, "Judentum und Christentum," 160-161; Hilary Le Cornu, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts* (Jerusalem: Academon, 2003), 22-23; K. H. Rengstorf, "The Election of Matthias: Acts 1:15ff," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation,* ed. William Klassen and Graydon Synder (New York: Harper, 1962), 186; and Eckhard Schnabel, "Mission, Early Non-Pauline" in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 754. Supporting this possibility are observations like that of Loveday Alexander ("'This is That,'" 197), who notes: "it is important to realize that on a first reading of Acts there are no clear predictions of Gentile mission before ch.10, only hints which, can now be reinterpreted with hindsight. The famous charge to witness "to the ends of the earth" in 1.8 echoes prophetic language about the Diaspora: a first reading could quite naturally take the whole thing to refer to a messianic witness to the world-wide Jewish community." Cf. Isa 2:2-3, 11:11-12, 43:5-6, 60:3-16, 66:18-20; Jer 31:10f, 33:6ff, 50:19; Zch 8:20-23.

[62] Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus,* 94-95.

[63] Noting the parallel of Acts 1:8 with Luke 24:47, on the one hand, and with Acts 13:47, on the other, Jacques Dupont points out that Isa 49:6. Jesus' response to the disciples' question is specifically worded to oppose the idea of a restoration which would only benefit Israel. Proclamation "to all nations" (εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) in Jesus' name will encompass the restoration of Israel *and* the salvation of the Gentiles. Thus, "witness" can and will go *everywhere*, specifically to *both Jews and Gentiles*. Having identified the scriptural intertext from Paul's citation of Isaiah 49:6 we can now use it to show that apostolic witness, like Paul's own testimony, is intended for Gentiles and universal salvation. In this way Paul's own ministry is connected back to the apostolic commission issued by Jesus at the beginning of Acts. Narratively, Paul's vocation can even be thought of as receiving a kind of transference of the original commission (Unnik, "ἕΩΣ ἐΣΧΑΤΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΓΥΣ...", 393). Perhaps it is no accident that Paul and Barnabas, only a few verses after Paul cites Isa 49:6 in Pisidian Antioch, are given the title "apostle" (14:4, 14), the only instances of this designation for them in Acts. See chapter 4 for more.

3.4.2.2 Acts 10 and the (Initial) Fulfillment of the "Lukan Commission"

The ethnic universalism of Acts 1:8 invites readers to expect the story of Acts to unfold in such a way that the key boundary to cross will be the one that separates Jews and Gentiles and that it will be carried out by the apostles themselves. But in the first nine chapters of Acts, no obvious episode points to the fulfillment of Jesus' promise-commission, unless we take the symbolic universalism of Pentecost as fulfilling Jesus' words (see below), yet even this would make the remaining twenty-six chapters somewhat redundant.

One view of the geographical dimension of Jesus' promise-commission that was passed over in the survey above is the provocative thesis of Daniel Schwartz,[64] who posits that τῆς γῆς ought to be taken rather as "of the *land*," referring to the geographical borders of Israel.[65] Schwartz's thesis (and its variations) is important to consider, not

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[64] Though Etienne Trocmé has been credited with its inception, the theory originated with Daniel Schwartz ("The End of the γη [Acts 1:8]: Beginning or End of the Christian Vision?" *JBL* 105.4 [1986]: 669-676). The origin of the false ascription of this theory to Trocmé (*Le livre des Actes et l'histoire* [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957]) appears to be W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 279, according to Schwartz, 670 fn 6. Cf. also the misattribution repeated in Pao, *New Exodus,* 92.

[65] Schwartz (ibid., 672-3) proposes an underlying Semitic syntax to the beginning of Acts. The singular form ἐσχάτου in 1:8, claims Schwartz, is really of Hebrew or Aramaic origin rather than Greek and finds parallel in both the Hebrew Bible and the LXX. On occasion γῆ is used for "the land of Israel" rather than the whole earth (cf. Jer 12:12; 1 Macc 3:9). Though Luke clearly could have used οἰκουμένη as a less ambiguous expression, as he does elsewhere (Luke 2:1; 4:5; 21:26; Acts 11:28; 17:6, 31; 19:27; 24:5), significantly he chooses not to. Additionally, we have several instances in which Luke uses γῆ in the limited sense of "land" (Luke 4:25; 23:44; cf. 21:23). Schwartz argues that in the threefold movement of Jesus' words, "in Jerusalem" and "in all Judea and Samaria" are quite specific and bounded designations whereas "ends of the earth" is not. If Acts 1:8 is indeed an outline of Christian mission in Acts, the progression is strange since most of Acts is occupied with mission in regions beyond Palestine. Secondly, to the apostles' question in 1:6 ("is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?") Jesus only seems to address half their concerns: "It is not for you to know the times or periods...But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses..." (1:7-8). While he rejects the question of timing he does not seem to deny the overall inquiry about the kingdom. In this way Jesus may be confirming, or at least not disconfirming, that the apostolic task ahead will indeed be limited in scope to the people of Israel and to the land. Though Schwartz's reliance on the mostly-discredited theory of an Aramaic *Vorlage* weakens his case, his use of the narrative logic is compelling.

because it is ultimately persuasive, but because it points out several key data points[66] that will prove significant for the development of my argument. And because Schwartz's argument takes seriously the narrative coherence of Acts, it contributes to the present discussion in a way that other conjectures about the meaning of "end of the earth" generally do not.

Schwartz places the proper emphasis on understanding the tension[67] created between Jesus' words and the P-C episode: if Jesus commanded his *apostles* to go to the Gentiles, then why do they generally restrict their witness to Jews in Jerusalem? If, with the rest of the apostles, Peter had been given this charge to go to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη why is the Cornelius incident such a surprise to him (10:9-47) and to the Jewish believers in

[66] Firstly, Schwartz points out that the struggle to understand how the phrase "end(s) of the land" coherently concludes the pattern of first "Jerusalem" (holy city), then "all Judea and Samaria" (double-region) can be resolved when viewed theo-politically. The first two geographical designations refer to historical Israel, which would make "end of the *land*" a kind of summary statement. Witness is to go to the farthest extent of Israel's borders. Secondly, Schwartz notes that if Peter and the apostles had heard and understood the emphatic directive to be witnesses to "the ends of the earth" in Acts 1:8—which, as we saw, primarily concerns ethnic boundaries—then why would another divine revelation have been needed to say essentially the same thing in Acts 10? If Jesus had anticipated a Gentile mission in Acts 1:8, in other words, the divine care taken to arrange Peter's meeting with Cornelius would appear essentially redundant. Of course, Schwartz's reply is that Jesus did *not* command a Gentile mission. Rather, Jesus limited the scope of his outreach (and that of his apostles) to the Jews alone, making sense of Peter's surprise in Acts 10. Nevertheless, besides Schwartz, few scholars have asked how the relationship between 1:8 and the *narrative* unfolding of the Gentile mission might illuminate the meaning of Jesus' final words. Among the few who do, though with different conclusions, see Best, "The Revelation to Evangelize the Gentiles," 1030. Even Best, however, returns to the common stock of geographical references, concluding that "ends of the earth" must either be Rome or Spain. Thirdly, Schwartz's thesis would explain why the apostles, to whom the commission was given, do not make contact with Gentiles directly in Acts 1-9.

[67] What few of the geographical interpretations of "the end(s) of the earth" take seriously is the full scope of narrative context—not just locations named as part of the book's plot, but also the fact that the promise of "witness" is directed specifically toward the apostles. After all, the apostles themselves, at least according to Luke are not directly responsible for the spread of the Word to any of these locations (Rome, Ethiopia, Spain, or the uttermost regions of the earth). Their reticence to evangelize the Gentiles can be understood as obedience to Jesus' limited commission. On this view, Peter's experience at Caesarea (Acts 10) opens up an entirely new mission field not anticipated by Acts 1:8. The "programmatic outline" of Acts 1:8, therefore, is fulfilled by the end of Acts 9.

Jerusalem (11:1-3)?[68] But if consensus holds both that Jesus' commission (1:8) is "programmatic" and the P-C episode is "pivotal," how do the two parts of Acts relate? Ultimately, Schwartz's answers to these questions—that Jesus really meant "land (of Israel)" rather than "earth," thereby severing Acts 10 from 1:8—do not satisfy since he overlooks the many clues Luke[69] gives in connecting the P-C episode back to Jesus' commission. What dooms Schwartz's hypothesis is the assumption underlying many other geographical conjectures—namely, that Jesus' words can only be taken in *one* way—that is, the phrase ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς can only mean "ends of the earth" or "end of the land."

Drawing on parallels in Greek literature, with respect to "ambiguous oracles," Alan Bale and Bradley Chance have suggested that the broad ambiguity of Jesus' commission in 1:8 actually opens up the possibility of two different interpretations.[70] On this view, the primary meaning (Jesus/Luke) would be that apostolic witness is to go to the Gentiles (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη); the limited meaning would be closer to what Schwartz suggested was the only meaning, namely that the apostles were to restrict their outreach to geographical Israel or ethnic Israel—i.e., to Jews in the Diaspora (cf. Acts 10:42; 13:31). The question immediately arises: whose interpretations are we talking about when

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[68] Alan Bale ("Ambiguous Oracle," 535-7) and J. Bradley Chance ("Divine Prognostications," 227-34) both recognize that this tension is more real than apparent (cf. also Schwartz, "End of the γη," 674-5), as so many interpreters assume. Of course the once-traditional view that such *aporia* can be explained on source or redactional grounds made such a question ultimately irrelevant.

[69] Curiously, Schwartz's proposal finds oblique confirmation in traditions underlying Matthew's Gospel evident in Matt 10:23: "you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes" (cf. Matt 16:28).

[70] Cf. Chance, "Divine Prognostications." This is one of the reasons Eckhard Schnabel's conclusion (*Acts,* 1100) that Acts 1:8 and 2:38 ("Repent, and be baptized…and you will receive the Holy Spirit") should be classified as "rules" is mystifying. In both cases, what Jesus and Peter spell out, respectively, is all but contradicted by how events play out. The apostles do not go to the "ends of the earth" and quite often the Spirit and baptism do not follow in Peter's supposedly prescriptive order.

we identify "differing" interpretations? On the one hand, that God intended for salvation to go to all nations everywhere is obvious after reading all of Acts. This first (maximal) "interpretation" therefore represents Luke's and Jesus' "meaning." On the other hand, while it cannot be determined with any certainty how the apostles *heard* Jesus' commission, a basic profile of their understanding can be culled from Luke's account of what they actually *did* (see 3.5 below). This second (minimal) "interpretation" apparently involved limiting outreach to Jews in Jerusalem, thereby explaining Peter and the apostles' sense of surprise at events in Caesarea (10:1-11:18). In this way, Acts 1:8 functions like an "ambiguous oracle"[71] that hermeneutically alters how Acts 1-9 is to be read, at least in retrospect.

Before we turn to Acts 1-9, however, more evidence in favor of understanding Acts 10 as the (initial) fulfillment of Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8 should be considered. In anticipation of section 3.5 of this chapter, several key links can be identified. First, as we have noted, the P-C episode marks the first inter-ethnic encounter with lasting significance in Acts (in contrast to 8:26-39). Second, Luke gives the episode almost unparalleled emphasis.[72] Third, Cornelius' specific identity (as Roman and Caesarean

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[71] Bale, "Ambiguous Oracle," 530-46.

[72] The number of verses Luke uses in total for the story (and its retellings) far exceeds the relative amount of narrative time Luke gives it (about five days) in relation to all the events recounted in Acts; see vanThanh Nguyen, "Luke's Point of View of the Gentile Mission: The Test Case of Acts 11:1-18," *Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research* 3 (Fall 2011): 89-90. That is, by most reckonings Acts covers roughly 28 years in 28 chapters (Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism* [London: SCM, 1999], 87), meaning we could expect each chapter to cover about a year. Obviously, by virtue of the episodic nature of all narrative—life-altering moments are recalled and the breakfast routines are not—there will be many gaps where nothing is narrated for a time and other places where narrative time slows down considerably. For instance, Peter's Pentecost sermon takes up a disproportionate amount of Acts' surface area given the speech's confinement to a small window of time on a single day. By the standard of Pentecost even, Luke's emphasis on the Cornelius incident far exceeds the relative importance of all other events. The percentage of Acts' 28-year account by this roughly five-day long story is around two chapters (roughly 71 verses; a 1,000 verses over 28 chapters equals about

centurion) quickly drops from the narrative in favor of his representative role as τὰ ἔθνη (10:45, 47; 11:1, 17-18; 15:7-11). Fourth, Peter's speech (10:34-43) is oriented by allusions to Jesus' apostolic commission (10:39, 41, 42), even as Peter links his own interpretation of events (11:15-17) back to Jesus' pre-ascension promises in Acts 1:5. Fifth, as the "breakthrough" in Gentile mission, the P-C episode provides the theological confirmation for Paul's wide-ranging ministry after Acts 11, confirmed by the inter-/intra-textual reference to Isa 49:6 in Acts 13:47 and the crucial role of the P-C episode in the Jerusalem council meeting (15:7-11, 13; see Chapter 4). Thus, the pivotal turn in Acts toward universal mission primarily concerns the crossing of an ethnic boundary, and only secondarily a geographical one (though the latter follows from the former), thereby indicating the initial fulfillment of Jesus' commission in Luke 24:46-48 and Acts 1:8. Given the dependence of Luke on ("2nd") Isaiah's ethnic emphasis (Isa 49:6; 42:6; cf. 13:47), it becomes clear in Acts that 1:8 anticipates the Cornelius episode (Acts 10) as the pivotal episode, not only for the book as a whole but also for understanding Jesus' promise-commission (1:8; cf. Luke 24:47). It is, therefore, somewhat surprising that the *apostle* Peter—to whom the very commission was given—experiences the fulfillment of that commission unexpectedly and not as the result of his own initiative. In this way, Luke emphasizes that the *apostolic witnesses* included in the commission must

35 verses a chapter), which would represent around two years of Acts' chronological span. Five days of time in proportion to two years means the five-day narrative is given narrative allotment almost 150 times its temporal size. The only other event with nearly comparable proportionality is Paul's conversion-commission (9:1-20; 22:3-16; 26:9-20), which also takes place over a short period of time (3-5 days). Yet even with the repeated summaries combined, the account falls a little short of the Cornelius event (45 verses), making it more than 90 times bigger than its relative chronological size warrants; plus, it largely concerns Paul's own vocation and does not have salvation-historical significance like the Cornelius incident does, according to Luke. Given its size and emphasis, however, Paul's story will be central to Chapter 4.

themselves change in order to grasp its fulfillment. By interpreting the significance of God's work among the Gentiles, Jewish believers "witness" the fulfillment of God's scriptural promises for Israel. Participation in universal witness will mean discovering anew the universal Lordship of the Messiah.[73]

3.4.3 Conclusions

Upon review, it is clear that Luke's use of the phrase "end(s) of the earth" reflects a Septuagintal rather than a contemporary Greek influence. Moreover, given the strongly Isaianic framework implied by the phrase (Isa 49:6; cf. Acts 13:47), Luke appears to associate the term with *ethnic* identity as much as with geographical specificity, confirming the parallel with Luke 24:47. Therefore, studies that identify a specific geographical referent for "end of the earth" undercut Luke's purpose in using the phrase, which is to prophesy the *limitless* spread of Christian witness and, by extension, of Jesus' Lordship. Acts 1:8 outlines the path of *Christian mission to all peoples,* both in Acts and beyond. To the question of *how* Jesus' witnesses will reach the "end of the earth," therefore, we are now prepared to give an answer: by the crossing of ethnic boundaries, namely in the evangelization of the Gentiles. That Jesus' "programmatic" words, however, can be taken in more than one sense suggests that Jesus and the apostles interpreted the phrase differently, a possibility borne out by the apostles' behavior in Acts 1-9.

3.5 An *Apostolic* Commission

[73] Green, "Doing Repentance," 18: "Although the terms of this mandate may seem clearly enough to draw on Isaiah and so speak of a mission to the Gentiles, it is self-evident in the narrative of Acts that this interpretation of Jesus' words was not immediately obvious to his followers. The formation of disciples, as Luke develops it, is a process of conversion."

It has been shown how Acts 1:8 lays out the basic program of mission in Acts and beyond, rather than a mere outline of the book's plot. The ethnic and theological/christological complexion of the Lukan commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) anticipates the path of witness toward Gentiles all over the earth. However, lest the commission be understood in isolation from the rest of Acts—as is sometimes the case in missiological readings[74]—Jesus' parting words are specifically directed to the *apostles*. This is not to say Jesus' words are, according to Luke, limited to the apostles; only that Luke emphasizes that the apostles comprised the original audience of the commission-promise. Strikingly, however, the apostles do not carry out proclamation of salvation to Gentiles and hardly ever to people outside Jerusalem. In chapters 1-9, though the apostles reach many Jews with their message, their ministry is eventually eclipsed, in the narrative, by others like Stephen, Philip, and Paul, servants who *do* participate in the spread of the Word beyond Jerusalem and law-observant Jews. Thus, the narrative of Acts distinguishes between the essentially limitless horizon of Jesus' commission and the limited participation of the specially commissioned apostles in that vision, while also highlighting the participation of non-apostles in the fulfillment of the *apostolic* commission.[75]

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[74] See the critique of Beverly Gaventa, "'You Will Be My Witnesses': Aspects of Mission in the Acts of the Apostles," *Missiology* 10.4 (Oct 1982): 414-416.

[75] Cf. Dupont, "La Mission de Paul," 294-95; Holly Beers, *The Followers of Jesus as the 'Servant': Luke's Model from Isaiah for the Disciples in Luke-Acts* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 179: "the point about who takes up the servant mission in Acts is significant, as it is mainly non-apostles (in the sense of the twelve). Thus my project suggests the need for future research in Acts scholarship regarding the decentralization motif. A common scholarly argument is that Luke reserves a distinctive role for the twelve apostles; however, my research, with its focus on those outside the twelve embodying the servant task, suggests exactly the opposite. The lack of activity on the part of the apostles (with the possible exception of Peter and perhaps John) thus implicitly critiques them, though the positive side to their apparent sedentary life is the extension of the Isaianic mission to the larger group of Jesus' followers. It is this latter group in

In the few places the apostles appear to participate more broadly in universal witness, it is primarily in the role of confirmation (i.e. witnessing what God is doing outside of apostolic initiative; cf. Acts 8:4-17). On the whole, as Luke characterizes their activity in Acts 1-8 especially, they remain focused on Jerusalem. Yet not only do the apostles (led by Peter) *speak* about the universal scope of salvation (2:14-36, 3:19-26), standing behind the whole of Acts is the commission of Jesus to bear witness to "all nations" (Luke 24:47) at the very "end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The contrast created between what the apostles *do* and what Jesus (and even Peter) *says* sustains a dramatic irony through the first half of Acts. That irony indicates that God-in-Jesus drives the universality of the mission forward (see Chapter 2); moreover, it provides the basis for highlighting the apostle Peter's transformation in recognizing God's initiative and also interpreting its significance, both for the audiences in Jerusalem (11:5-17; 15:7-11) and for the audience of Acts.

3.5.1 Acts 1-5: "Witness" in Jerusalem

The expectation created by the commission in its narrative context, therefore, is that these Eleven (Twelve after 1:13-26) will be the ones to cross the thresholds putatively named in 1:8. The "you" to whom Jesus makes his promise is quite clearly the apostles who can bear "witness" because they have been (eye)witnesses to Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection (1:21-22). Moreover, the election of Matthias (1:13-26), as the first major apostolic act following Jesus' commission-and-ascension, emphasizes the reconstitution of the Twelve (and, by extension, a restored Israel) as the basis for

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Acts who is truly faithful to Jesus' commission and continues to preach the good news 'with all boldness and without hindrance' (Acts 28.31)."

what comes next. That is, if they are indeed to await the Spirit's power in Jerusalem, then electing Judas' replacement allows them to meet these expectations in full force, echoing presentiments from Luke's Gospel (e.g., Luke 22:29-30; 24:21). But Luke alerts readers to something slightly askew in the fact that Matthias, for all the care taken in selecting him to replace Judas, disappears entirely from the rest of the book. The ambiguous introduction signals to readers that the role of the apostles in fulfilling Jesus' promise-commission may not unfold in the simplistic manner of obedience to a command. That ambiguity is confirmed early on when Peter preaches (exclusively) to "Jews from every nation" (2:5) about the *universal* scope of salvation in Jesus. In other words, Acts begins the story of the universal Lordship of Jesus with a possible double meaning of the word "all"—raising the question whether Jesus meant "Jews from all nations" or "Jews *and* all nations/Gentiles." As we will see, the scope of actual apostolic outreach in Acts 1-9 points to the former, while apostolic speech (in accordance with Jesus' commission) indicates the latter, setting up the P-C episode as the decisive moment in recognizing that "all" means "*all* people."

3.5.1.1 The Election of Matthias (Acts 1:13-26)

As the only event recorded by Luke as occurring between Jesus' ascension (1:9) and Pentecost (2:1), the election of Matthias to replace Judas among the Twelve deserves comment. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf believed that the scene has an "almost too pompous air," given the complete disappearance of Matthias (not to mention Joseph "Justus" Barsabbas), from the rest of the narrative. Strange that among the other events Luke likely knew of between ascension and Pentecost this would be the episode recalled, and with such emphasis. According to Rengstorf, the care shown in electing a Twelfth

Apostle indicates the apostles' conception of their mission as restricted to the people of Israel (cf. Luke 22:29, etc.).[76] Their conception, however, flies in the face of Jesus' parting words to reach πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). The dissonance between the apparent meaning of Jesus' commission (to bear witness to Gentiles) and the actual behavior of the apostles in restricting their vision to Jews (and primarily Jerusalem) can be explained by the existence of two different understandings of Jesus' parting words. Whereas the apostles, in keeping largely with Jesus' teachings in the Gospel, limited their horizon to the Jewish Diaspora (Acts 1-9), Jesus' empowerment by the Holy Spirit is intended to break through that ethnocentric conception and prompt a truly universal mission.[77] Luke includes the Matthias scene as a way to show the two trajectories side by side and without negative associations. That is, a mission to Jews remains crucial (and therefore the apostles are not wrong), but it should not be conducted at the expense of a more expansive vision which ties Israel's restoration to salvation of all nations.

Rengstorf's interpretation of the Matthias scene coheres well with previous findings about the multilayered significance of Jesus' words of promise and commission (Acts 1:8). It is once more a reminder that individual statements (and especially Acts 1:8) cannot be understood without attention to the sweep of the whole narrative. On the basis of the election of Matthias, therefore, Luke prepares readers to recognize an ongoing tension between the self-conception of the apostles as called to minister exclusively to Israel and the wider purposes of God in Jesus and by the limitless power of the Spirit.

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[76] Rengstorf, "The Election of Matthias," 178-192.
[77] Cf. Mark A. Plunkett, "Ethnocentricity and Salvation History in the Cornelius Episode (Acts 10:1-11:18)," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 24 (1985): 465–79.

Though Rengstorf himself does not spend much time parsing "end of the earth," his reflections remind us of the tension—running through the first 10 chapters of Acts—that our previous analysis uncovered. The universal scope of Jesus' words (and Lordship) and the seemingly ethnocentric focus of the apostles appear to coexist for much of Acts, and it is possible that the restoration of the Twelve is the first variation on the theme. If so, the tension and suspense lining the first half of Acts derives from the mismatch between dominical commission and apostolic understanding, at least until Acts 10, when the apostle Peter's experience with Cornelius (10:1-48) will bring the latter into alignment with the former. Indeed, such tension only underscores the point that the P-C episode is a study in the apostles'—especially Peter's—capacity and need to *learn* the full scope of Jesus' commission. In other words, only with an actual encounter with Gentiles can Peter discover the universality of Jesus' Lordship. As Peter himself will acknowledge in Caesarea, "this one is Lord of all!" (10:36).

3.5.1.2 Pentecost and Peter's Speech (Acts 2)

3.5.1.2.1 Pentecost Event (Acts 2:1-13)

Luke ties the witness of the apostles in the immediate aftermath of Jesus' ascension to the arrival of the Spirit in Jerusalem at Pentecost. Thus, the first instance of apostolic witness occurs when, gathered in a house in Jerusalem, "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Acts 2:4). The Pentecost miracle, in which Jews native to Jerusalem and to the Diaspora saw and heard the descent of the Spirit, resulted, according to the Jews present, in "hearing [the apostles] speaking about God's deeds of power in our own languages" (Acts 2:11; 2:6). But the sights and sounds associated with these mere Galileans (2:7; cf.

1:11; 4:13) draws both interest and contempt (2:12-13). Peter stands up as mouthpiece of the apostolic group to answer their question, "what does this mean?" (2:12).

At a glance, the narrative seems to introduce the Pentecost scene in universal tones: "Jews, devout men *from every nation under heaven* (ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν, 2:5). The description is *potentially* synonymous with "all nations" (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη)/"end of the earth." With Pentecost, part of the conditions of Jesus' promise is met—the Spirit has come upon the apostles and they have borne witness, in a way, to people from "all nations." The scene may reflect certain strands of prophetic literature that envisioned the Gentiles streaming to Jerusalem.[78] And the catalogue of nations in 2:9-11 recalls scriptural parallels like Genesis 10, an allusion that is all the more likely given several echoes in the Pentecost narrative of the tower of Babel story (Gen 11:1-9).[79] Some have taken similar lists of nations in literature roughly contemporary with Luke to argue for hints of Luke's universalistic tone here as well.[80]

But if it was Luke's goal to give the impression that these Diaspora Jews returned to their faraway lands (Acts 2:39) to bear witness to what they have seen and heard, he failed. The presence of foreigners is not explained in terms of Pentecost (as a pilgrimage

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[78] Cf. Isa 19:23; 2:3; Zech 8:21, 23; Isa 60:11; Ps 47.10; Jer 3.17; Mic 7:12; Isa 18:7; Hag 2:7; Ps 68.30, 32; Isa 60:5-9, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20; Zech 14:16; Mic 7:17. See Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (London: SCM Press, 1958), 55-73.

[79] Cf., e.g., πυρί (Acts 2:3; LXX Gen 11:3); γλῶσσα (Acts 2:3, 4, 11; Gen 11:7); ἕκαστος (Acts 2:3, 6, 8; Gen 11:7); συγχέω (Acts 2:6; Gen 11:7, 9); ἀκούω (Acts 2:6, 8, 11; Gen 11:7); φωνή (Acts 2:6; Gen 11:1, 7); and κατοικέω (Acts 2:9; Gen 11:2).

[80] See James M. Scott, "Acts 2:9-11 as an Anticipation of the Mission to the Nations," in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles,* ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 87-123.

from Diaspora lands) nor is their eventual return mentioned, let alone interpreted as (potential) fulfillment of worldwide witness.[81]

Some interpret the events of Pentecost more symbolically. Pentecost does not denote for Luke the breakthrough in mission "to all nations," but it symbolizes its proleptic fulfillment in Acts. On one level, this makes sense, but on another level, Luke himself seems to emphasize the difference between imagining universal inclusion and actually experiencing it, an emphasis that emerges clearly in the detailed attention he gives to the Cornelius episode (10:1-48; 11:1-18; 15:7-11). In fact, Luke sustains the dramatic character of the P-C episode by the traditional assertion that Jews do not associate with Gentiles (10:28) and Gentiles cannot be received into God's people without being circumcised first (11:2; 15:1, 5). In Luke's narrative world, the difference between actual Jews and actual Gentiles is precisely the difference that matters. Despite the impression of universality the catalogue of nationalities (2:5, 9-11) conveys, the phrase Ἰουδαῖοί τε καὶ προσήλυτοι (2:10) appears to modify the whole list[82]—these are Jews or Jewish converts only.

Furthermore, Luke will eventually make it clear that expulsion from Jerusalem through persecution (Acts 8:1, 4; 11:18-26) that prompts contact with Gentiles,

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[81] Jacques Dupont points out that the Ἰουδαῖοι comprising the apostles' audience are said to be εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες, i.e. residing in Jerusalem (cf. 2:14). In other words, they may be multinational Jews who, though born elsewhere, are living in Jerusalem more or less permanently. If this were true, then the thesis that Pentecost was the beginning of a fulfillment of Jesus' commission becomes less likely. These were not Jews planning to return to "the ends of the earth" but merely Diaspora Jews residing in Palestine more or less permanently. Cf. Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles,* 35-60. The more conventional view is that these are Jews from the Diaspora, not Jerusalem residents: Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:27-28; and Dean Philip Bechard, *Paul Outside the Walls: A Study of Luke's Socio-Geographical Universalism in Acts 14:8-20* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 209-224.

[82] Note that UBS4/NA27, Westcott-Hort, Vaticanus, and Tregelles all lack the phrase.

seemingly for the first time. For these apostles the universal scope of Pentecost is, for lack of a better word, nationalistic rather than ethnic—Jews from every ἔθνος rather than πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Luke 24:47) among whom Jews are scattered. While the apparent repentance and salvation of the foreign Jews (2:41) likely signals the initial stages of the *apostolic* fulfillment of the Lord's commission ("...in Jerusalem")—thereby initiating Israel's restoration—Pentecost does not encompass its whole scope ("…in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"). We must read on.

All that being said, the Pentecost narrative remains crucial for Luke's construal of universal witness. When Peter arrives at his pivotal revelation that God has intervened to save Gentiles just like Jews, it will be his experience at Pentecost that he cites in support of his change in views and behavior (10:44-45; 11:15-17; 15:8). For the apostles, Pentecost is the paradigm by which they are able to recognize and interpret the authentic experience of the Spirit among Samaritans (8:14-17) and Gentiles (10:44-45; 11:15-17).

3.5.1.2.2 Peter's Speech (2:17-36, 38-39)

As Chapter 2 showed, Peter's speech interprets the Pentecost event in christological terms,[83] tying Jesus' reception and outpouring of the Spirit to his Lordship. With his linked interpretations of (LXX) Joel 3:1-5, Ps 15, and 109 (2.3.2.1.1.2), Peter makes the scriptural case for understanding the Pentecost advent of the Spirit as the work of Christ himself upon his exaltation to God's right hand (2:33). As "Lord and Messiah"

[83] Cf. Darrell Bock, "Scripture and the Realization of God's Promises," in *Witness to the Gospel: Theology of Acts,* ed. I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: 1998), 53-55; Richard B. Hays, "The Paulinism of Acts, Intertextually Reconsidered" in *Paul and the Heritage of Israel,* vol. 2, ed. David P. Moessner et al. (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 39: "Thus, both of our authors [Paul and Luke] are reading Joel's reference to 'the Lord' christologically."

(2:36), the exalted Jesus bears the name upon which anyone wishing to be saved must call (2:21, 38). The specific focus of the present analysis, however, is the universal tone of Peter's words and how that scope tracks (or does not) with apostolic outreach in Acts 1-9. Peter's speech contains suggestions of both particularity and universalism.

On the one hand, he repeatedly addresses his audience as members of Israel. On the other hand, his interpretation of the Pentecost event contains several universalizing claims. How are these two tendencies in Peter's speech related? And what does their existence side by side imply about Peter's own understanding of the unfolding of events as the fulfillment of Jesus' promises? The following analysis will argue that Peter's words imply the universality of Jesus' Lordship over Gentiles as well as Jews—after all, Jesus is indirectly responsible for his "testimony" (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15)—but Peter and the apostles' behavior indicate that they understand universality through an ethnocentric lens. That is, for Peter/apostles, universal mission means bearing witness to Israel or to Jews in the Diaspora, on the model of Pentecost. If Gentiles come into apostolic view—and little in Acts 1-8 suggests they do—it is only as proselytes to Judaism, on the (unstated) assumption that they must in essence become Jews to be saved.[84]

"Witness" to Jews.

Multiple times Peter refers to his audience as members of Israel: ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἰερουσαλὴμ πάντες (v. 14), Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται (v. 22), Ἄνδρες

[84] Though the conviction about Gentiles adopting circumcision and legal observance is not mentioned before Acts 10-11, its emphatic role in the debates in 10-15 suggest that it circumcision was the de facto practice for admission into Israel for Gentiles (i.e., as proselytes to Judaism; cf. 15:1, 5).

ἀδελφοί (v. 29), and πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ (v. 36). The seemingly interchangeable use of Ἰσραηλῖται and ἀδελφοί points to shared kinship between speaker and audience, indicating the contextual shape of Peter's speech. Moreover, the note of hope with which the speech concludes makes the Father's promise (1:4-5; Luke 24:49; cf. Acts 2:33) explicitly directed toward members of Israel and their descendants: ὑμῖν γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν (v. 39a). The implication is that the Father's promise, now poured out by Jesus from heaven (2:33), is for Jews everywhere, to the very ends of the Diaspora, as represented by 2:9-11.

Also worth noting are the specific ways in which Peter describes his audience with respect to Jesus: ἀποδεδειγμένον … εἰς ὑμᾶς … ὁ θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν καθὼς αὐτοὶ οἴδατε (2:22); τοῦτον … ἀνείλατε (2:23); ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε (2:36). Even as he affirms common ethnic Jewish identity with his audience Peter emphasizes their witness to the events surrounding Jesus and, what is more, their complicity in his death.[85] While it is true that at various points later Luke reminds readers of the responsibility of Gentile Roman leadership for Jesus' death (2:23b; cf. Acts 4:25-28), here there is little possibility that Peter is addressing *Gentiles* complicit in such events. This part of the speech only makes sense as addressed to Jews, many of whom have rejected Jesus as Messiah (yet cf. 2:41).

The particularity of Peter's address exists alongside a basic universalism in his speech. That universalism (and its ambiguities) appears to be rooted in his appropriation

[85] The targeted criticism may also confirm that the audience is not comprised, at least not significantly, of Jews from the Diaspora; otherwise, Peter's accusations of their responsibility for the death of the Messiah would be less intelligible (and, when indiscriminately generalized, potentially anti-Semitic; cf. Matt 27:25).

of LXX Joel 3.[86] Though Joel speaks of the renewal of the Spirit for the reconstitution of God's people, the text also applies the language of "all flesh" (LXX 3:1; Acts 2:17; cf. Luke 3:6; LXX Isa 40:5) to the promise of the Spirit of prophecy. Peter's citation of LXX Joel 3:1-5a (Acts 2:17-21) begins and ends with a universalist tone: "I will pour out my Spirit upon *all* flesh" (Joel 3:1; Acts 2:17) and "*everyone* who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Joel 3:5a; Acts 2:21). But Peter also delays the very end of the citation (LXX Joel 3:5b) until after his speech (2:39), that is, when he responds to the audience's question, "then what shall we do?" (2:37). After telling them to repent, to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and to receive the Holy Spirit (2:38), he remarks about the intended target of God's promises in Jesus Christ: "For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, *everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him*" (2:39). The last part of the verse is a clear allusion to LXX Joel 3:5b, indicating the extended presence and influence of Joel in Peter's speech. Most notable in this verse is what Peter seems to have left out of the Joel 3:5 citation. The first half of the Joel verse Peter cites in Acts 2:21, the second half in Acts

[86] Peter/Luke contextualizes Joel's words by assigning them an eschatological context (ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, LXX 3:1, μετὰ ταῦτα; cf. MT Joel 3:1, אַחֲרֵי־כֵן) and connecting the gift of the Spirit to the fulfillment of God's ancient plan in the (narrative's) present. [The phrase ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις may be taken from LXX Isaiah 2:2 which, not coincidentally, also includes the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, which appears both in Luke 24:47 and James' interpretation of Amos 9 in Acts 15:17. See G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 209. The fulfillment of the plan, moreover, is signaled both by Joel's prophecy and Jesus' own words from the previous chapter (1:8) and his final words from the previous book (Luke 24:49). In fact, Jesus' parting words in Acts make at least three allusions to the Spirit's descent in these condensed words: Jesus ordered the apostles "to wait there for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4); Jesus seemingly quotes himself (quoting John, cf. Luke 3:16)—"this is what you have heard from me: for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5); and "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses…" (1:8). The consistent emphasis signals to the reader that Pentecost is to be taken as the direct (if only initial) fulfillment of Jesus' final promises. Joel's words (Acts 2:1-5), John's words (1:5; Luke 3:16), and Jesus' words (1:4-5, 7-8) all anticipate what is now happening.

2:39. But one part of LXX Joel 3:5 is left out by Peter or, arguably, replaced by a different claim. The words in question are shaded below (LXX Joel 3:5b; Acts 2:39a).

Table 6: LXX Joel 3:5 and Acts 2:21 and 2:39

LXX Joel 3:5	**Acts 2:21 and 2:39**
[5a] καὶ ἔσται πᾶς ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσηται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται	[21] καὶ ἔσται πᾶς ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσηται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται.
[5b] ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σιων καὶ ἐν Ιερουσαλημ ἔσται ἀνασῳζόμενος καθότι εἶπεν κύριος καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι [5c] οὓς κύριος προσκέκληται	[39a] ὑμῖν γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακράν, [39b] ὅσους ἂν προσκαλέσηται κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν.
3:5b: because in Mount Sion and in Ierousalem there shall be one who escapes, as the Lord has said, and people who have good news announced to them, (NETS)[87]	2:39a: or the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, (NRSV)

The shaded text, on the on the left side, represents the part of LXX Joel 3:5 that Luke/Peter leaves out of his citation in Acts 2:21. On the right side, the shaded text represents what Luke/Peter effectively has in place of the missing text. Luke/Peter appears to exchange the particularity of Joel's context (Mt. Zion, Jerusalem) for a more generic universalism (you, your children, all who are far away; cf. Isa 57:19). As important as geography is for Luke, here we glimpse how Luke's language feeds into a larger ambiguity about who is included in the vision of salvation. Whereas "in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem" likely denotes members of Israel, "you, your children, and all who are far away" could include *both* Jews (Palestinian as well as Diaspora) *and*

[87] *A New English translation of the Septuagint: and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title,* ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), hereafter cited parenthetically as NETS.

Gentiles.[88] The "all who are far away" (Acts 2:39a) echoes the earlier language about "all flesh" (LXX Joel 3:1; Acts 2:17) and "everyone who calls on the name" (LXX Joel 3:5a; Acts 2:21).

Given the tension between Peter's clear identification of his audience with members of Israel and the all-encompassing language of his speech, as it draws on Joel 3, it is unclear whether "those who are far off" refer to the Jews "from every nation under heaven" living in Jerusalem (2:5), Diaspora Jews still to be gathered into the restored Israel, or Gentiles whose own fate is bound up with the restoration of Israel. Luke may intend all of the above, but Peter and the apostles' actions later point only to the first one and maybe the second, but not the third, at least not on the simple terms of repentance and baptism. After all, until Acts 10 no direct contact is made between the apostles and Gentiles.

3.5.1.3 "Witness" in Jerusalem (Acts 3-5)

Following the Pentecost narrative (Acts 2:1-40), Luke states that "about 3,000" were added to the young movement (2:41). Though Luke gives little indication of the makeup of the community, he does offer a brief snapshot of the Jerusalem group and their characteristic practices (2:42-47), which included "spending much time together in the temple" (2:46).[89] The next chapter and episode involving the apostles takes place in the

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[88] Cf. Hays, "The Paulinism of Acts," 38: "it is indisputable that Joel's prophecy of salvation for those who call upon the name of the Lord stands as the keynote for Luke's account of the first Christian preaching, and that this prophecy, read within the wider narrative of Acts, already prefigures the message of salvation that will go forth to the gentile world." It may indeed stand as a keynote, but a necessarily ambiguous one, given the narrative context, which both *may* anticipate the Gentile mission and *may also* obscure it if the presupposition had already been one oriented to an exclusively Jewish mission.

[89] Cf. also the ending of Luke's Gospel (24:53). The early community's common life is measured by the Lukan narrator with phrases/terms like ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό (Acts 2:44, 47) and ὁμοθυμαδόν (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; cf. 15:25).

vicinity of the temple (3:1-11), again a reminder of the ethnically Jewish character of the group and its outreach. Peter's (and John's) healing of the lame man at the temple gate (3:2-8) initiates a pattern of events that brings the rest of the chapter as well as the following two chapters into its orbit.[90]

The healing leads to a pointed speech by Peter to Jerusalem Jews gathered in Solomon's Portico (3:12-26). Like the Pentecost speech, Peter's words here are directed to ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται (3:12; cf. 2:22, 29, 36; 4:10; 5:35). "The God of *our* ancestors," says Peter, "has glorified his servant Jesus whom you handed over and rejected" (3:13). Again, Peter's words target the people of Jerusalem complicit in Jesus' death (3:14-15, 17; cf. 2:36; 4:26-27). But the tone of judgment is for the sake of an invitation to repentance—"so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (3:20). Yet the emphasis on the guilt of the Jerusalem audience is matched by an accent on God's foreknowledge (vv. 18, 21, 26) and biblical prophecy (vv. 18, 21-22, 24-25). The power on display in the man's healing, in other words, is merely an expression of greater deeds set in motion by God and prophetically fulfilled in recent events in which the people of Jerusalem unknowingly participated (3:17). The broader impression is one of divine superintendence, the fulfillment of God's purposes both through and in spite of human resistance.

The apostles or their representatives in Peter and John (the presumed referents of ἡμῖν in 3:12, ἡμῶν in 3:13) are able to offer this account of events—both the man's healing and Jesus' death and resurrection—because, in their own words, ἡμεῖς μάρτυρές

[90] There is of course precedent in "causal" links between episodes, as Tannehill shows in Acts 3-5 ("The Composition of Acts 3-5").

ἐσμεν (3:15). The word choice recalls Luke 24:48 (ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων) and Acts 1:8 (ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες).[91] Peter's claim to be one of the witnesses reflects the apostolic point of view rather than that of Jesus, whom we know to have ascended from earth (1:9-11). Peter's self-reference offers a reminder of the way in which the miraculous deed and his interpretation of it signal the "witness" for which Jesus commissioned the apostles. Their testimony to the Jews of Jerusalem is itself a fulfillment of the scriptures.

Peter's speech is ultimately christological, clarifying the identity of Jesus as Messiah whose eventual return will mark the "time of universal restoration God announced long ago through his holy prophets" (3:21). Jesus is a "prophet like Moses" (3:22; cf. Deut 18:15-18) to whom the people must listen or be cut off (3:23; cf. Luke 9:35); he is God's servant (παῖς; cf. Isa 42:1; 43:10; 44:1; 49:6; 52:13) sent to bless the people by turning the people from their wicked ways (3:26). But the language steeped in Israel's scripture and conceptual world is, ultimately, linked to a more universal notion. Peter draws on the Abrahamic covenant, which, on its original terms, concerned more than just the family of Abraham: "You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Acts 3:25; Gen 12:3). Even in a speech directed toward those Jerusalem Jews complicit in the Messiah's death, Luke/Peter situates the Jewish identity of his audience within the larger covenantal perspective to be

[91] Interestingly, the relative pronoun in Acts 3:15 introducing Peter's claim is οὗ, which could be either neuter (referring to the fact of the events themselves) or masculine (referring to the risen Lord or the God who raised him). Most translations (NRSV, NIV, KJV, etc.) resolve the confusing syntax by starting a new sentence and by translating the pronoun generically as "to/of this," perhaps echoing the genitive in Luke 24:48 ("of these things"). Were it to be taken as masculine, however, the phrase could be rendered "of whom we are witnesses," referring to the one on whose behalf and about whom their testimony is given. Such an interpretation may move the phrasing closer to that of Acts 1:8 (μου μάρτυρες).

a blessing to *all nations*. Thus, the stated purpose of the Servant's coming *to bless* the people is to fulfill the original Abrahamic calling to *be a blessing* to all the families of the earth (αἱ πατριαὶ τῆς γῆς). Like Acts more broadly, Peter's speech suggests the universal scope of God's purposes in Jesus Christ is evident from Israel's scriptures.

Peter's speech is overheard by Jewish leaders who arrest Peter and John and interrogate them (4:1-7), giving them another opportunity to testify (4:8-12). To the question of in whose name or under whose authority the apostles preach, Peter, "filled with the Holy Spirit," speaks to the "rulers of the people" (ἄρχοντες τοῦ λαοῦ, 4:8). The speech fulfills precisely the promise made by Jesus in Luke 12:11 that the Spirit would provide what to say when his disciples are brought before "rulers and authorities." In his brief speech, Peter points to the source of the healing, the "good deed" (εὐεργεσία, Acts 4:9) done "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" (4:10). Peter concludes with an expansive vision of salvation: "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven…by which we must be saved" (4:12). Certainly, the "we" could be parsed, whether it refers to all people or Jews alone. Given the intramural setting (before Jewish leaders), it is perhaps a moot point. Nevertheless, even in this speech there is a hint of the broader scope of Jesus' work. "No other name under heaven" (4:12) recalls "every nation under heaven" from the Pentecost gathering (2:5), tying the exclusivity of salvation in Jesus' name with the universal scope of people included in his reign.

In addition, the apostles appear in a central position of authority[92] (vv. 35, 37; 5:1-11). They are the ones at whose feet Christian property owners lay the proceeds of

[92] See Kavin Rowe, "Authority and Community: Lukan Dominium in Acts," in *Acts and Ethics,* ed. Thomas E. Phillips (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 96-108.

their sales (cf. Acts 4:35-5:2). Moreover, it is not the whole community but explicitly the apostles who are responsible for bearing witness to Jesus' resurrection. "Witness" in this sense retains the association with having been an eyewitness to Jesus' death and resurrection (cf. Acts 1:21-22; 2:32). And the "great grace" that was upon all of them (presumably the whole community) is paired with the "great power" with which they (the apostles) bear witness. "Power" here refers specifically to the Spirit's power to enable testimony, by word and deed, a motif from Jesus' words of commission (1:4-8) that recurs throughout Acts (e.g., 4:7-8, 13, 33; 5:32; 8:25; 10:42-43; 14:3; 15:8; 20:23-24; 26:22).

To the interrogations of the Jewish council (5:27-28), Peter offers a reply on behalf of the apostolic vocation: "We must obey God rather than any human authority. . . God exalted [Jesus] at [God's] right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him" (5:29-32). The "we" here can again be taken as a reference to the apostles (Twelve) with Peter as their spokesperson (with John standing by). Here, however, Peter not only repeats the kerygma in miniature (v. 31) but also emphasizes the apostolic commission—"we are witnesses of these things" (ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν μάρτυρες τῶν ῥημάτων τούτων, v. 32). The phrasing again echoes Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8 (cf. 3:15). The choice of τῶν ῥημάτων, moreover, may refer back to the specifically verbal aspect of proclamation first introduced in Acts 2:14 ("listen to what I have *to say*") and reinforced by an angel of the Lord who tells the apostles in 5:20 to stand in the temple and tell the people πάντα τὰ ῥήματα τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης (cf. Acts 10:22, 37, 44; 11:14).

The first several chapters of Acts underscore apostolic witness among Jews, almost entirely in Jerusalem. Pentecost sets the tone with the outpouring of the Spirit, a phenomenon to be repeated as the Word spreads to new peoples and lands. Yet, based on apostolic behavior, it appears that the apostles understand Jesus' commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) to have been represented primarily in the "universality" of Pentecost. There Peter's crucial speech interprets Jesus identity as "Lord and Messiah" (2:39). But the precise scope of Jesus' Lordship remains somewhat ambiguous—have "all nations" been reached? Are the "ends of the earth" fully represented in Diaspora Jews gathered in Jerusalem? The next section will further unsettle the notion that the apostles have fulfilled Jesus' commission, since it will underscore the eclipse of their ministry by Stephen and Philip, "witnesses" whom the apostles commission to do other things than proclaim the word.

3.5.2 Acts 6-8: "Witness" beyond Jerusalem

3.5.2.1 Election of the Seven, Stephen's Testimony and Death (Acts 6:1-7:60)

The terrifying story of Ananias and Sapphira provides a cautionary tale for the early community of goods (cf. 5:11-16), but it also tips readers off to the imperfect picture to come. In fact, Acts 5 is immediately followed by the story of widow neglect in the early community (6:1-4). With the growth of conversions (5:14-16; 6:1), naturally the composition of the community begins to vary. Greek-speaking Jews begin to have significant enough numbers in the early community, alongside Palestinian Jews, that the neglect of their widows in the daily distribution of bread comes to the attention of the apostles. They must address the situation because it represents an injustice that contradicts the narrator's earlier claims that "they would sell their possessions…and give

to *all* who had need" (2:45; cf. 4:35) and that "there was not a needy person among them" (4:34). Rather than contradicting these earlier claims, the earlier claims establish the premise upon which the outcry over injustice becomes intelligible and the basis for acting. The apostles have seven elected from among the Greek-speaking Jews ("Hellenists"). They are identified by their possession of faith and the Holy Spirit. Among them are two disciples who will prove consequential for the unfolding of "witness" beyond Jerusalem, as narrated in the rest of Acts 6-8, thereby tying the three chapters together in a cycle detailing the spread of the Word.

But the sudden spread of the Word outside Jerusalem and Judea coincides with the narrative priority given to *non*-apostles. Readers attuned to Jesus' introductory words about witness "in Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria" should now expect to hear in Acts 6-8 some account of the spread of the Word in Judea and Samaria *by the apostles*, perhaps followed by further movement toward the "end of the earth." It is not the *apostles* readers hear about, however, but those elected to do what the apostles do not do. The Seven are elected with the expressed purpose of addressing the inequities in food distribution among the Greek widows. According to the apostles (6:2-4), the election of the seven allows the apostles to get back to their own vocation—"the ministry of the Word" (ἡ διακονία τοῦ λόγου; 6:4). The apostles appear to pit neglect of widows (παρεθεωροῦντο… αἱ χῆραι αὐτῶν) in food distribution (6:1) against what they see as their primary vocation as apostles, lest they too become guilty of abandoning (καταλείψαντας) the word of God (6:2). The opposition the apostles set up between "waiting on tables" and "serving the word" is, however, not one shared by the Lukan narrator. Not only do the apostles not get back to proclamation later in Acts 6, but

members of the Seven—duly elected to "serve tables"—take the lead in the narrative by proclaiming the Word before Jews (Acts 7:2-53), Samaritans (8:4-13), and an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-39).[93]

The reconfiguration of expectations continues when Stephen, suddenly on trial, delivers the longest speech in Acts before the Sanhedrin and authorities the apostles earlier faced. The speech allows Luke to demonstrate how the direction of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15; cf. 2.3.2.1.2.2) are manifest in the "testimony" of a Christian witness. Second, and related, it allows Luke to lay out an interpretation of Israel's history (cf. 13:16-41), with a view to how current events reflect that history. Stephen's speech suggests the behavior of his opponents reflects a misreading of the identity of Israel's God, a mistreatment of his prophets, and ultimately an indication that they, not Stephen, are the real law-breakers.

Stephen concludes his "trial" speech (7:2-53), ironically, with a judgment upon his audience, which only incites them to murderous rage (7:54, 57). A man named Saul, Luke announces portentously, stood by in approval as the crowds murdered Stephen (7:58). A few verses later, Luke (re)introduces Saul while updating the reader with an aerial view of the church (8:1a). The persecution that resulted in Stephen's death has now spread to the church in Jerusalem, leading to the expulsion of all believers, except the apostles, from the city (8:1b). Luke focuses less on their expulsion, however, than on the

[93] The phrasing echoes the way in which the apostles characterized their own distinct ministry in ch. 6 when the need for leaders to oversee food distribution arose. Luke's characterization of Philip's ministry, for example, recalls the original apostolic commission. Philip "proclaimed the Messiah to them…preaching the good news…of the name of Jesus Christ" (ἐκήρυσσεν αὐτοῖς τὸν Χριστόν, 8:5). The apostles are commissioned to "proclaim in [the Messiah's] name" salvation to all nations (κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ, Luke 24:47).

scattering that results from it—namely, by saying that believers were dispersed "throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria" (8:1b). The phrasing recalls the middle part of Jesus' commission: "you will be my witnesses … *in all Judea and Samaria*" (1:8; cf. 9:31).[94] It is implied that persecution results in a new mission field (8:4), yet the new mission field is described in largely the same terms as Jesus' original commission. Thus, with the apostles as a group having already begun to recede from the narrative forefront, the divinely enabled spread of the Word in Judea and Samaria employs other servants, specifically Philip. Like Stephen, Philip is introduced (6:5) in a way incommensurate with his actual narrative behavior.[95] In the narrative neither Stephen nor Philip "wait on tables," but both end up carrying out a form of witness which seemed reserved, at least originally, for the apostles alone. Stephen is later called "the witness" (22:20) and Philip "the evangelist" (21:8).

After Luke concludes the ministries of Stephen and Philip (6-8), it might be assumed that the narrative would turn to how the apostles "get back" to proclaiming the Word, as they claim in Acts 6:3-4. Yet, the apostles never return to proclamation of the Word, if by "proclamation" is meant apostolic initiative. Certainly, their διακονία (6:1-4) narratively passes into others' hands. Even Peter's forays into Samaria (8:15-17) and Caesarea (10:1-48), it will be shown, underscore the way the apostles *must witness* what God is doing beyond their ken in order to keep pace with the spread of Jesus' Lordship. Luke's parenthetical comment in 8:1 that the apostles were the *only* ones to remain

[94] Green, "Missional Hermeneutic," 159: "The new missionary leadership, drawn from among the Hellenists, receives its authorization from this: they are witnesses, as Jesus had directed, 'in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth' (1:8)."
[95] See Green, "Missional Hermeneutic," 154-159.

behind after the persecution linked to Stephen's death summarizes the narrative turn of this part of Acts—the involvement of *apostles* in the *apostolic* commission effectively ceases as the movement spreads beyond Jerusalem. Not only does Luke rarely depict them ministering in the Diaspora (and then only under exceptional conditions), Luke tells readers that they *stayed behind* when persecution pushed believers into those areas where Jesus' commission had originally promised *the apostles* would go. The next section will examine this narrative dynamic in more detail, with respect to Acts 8.

3.5.2.2 Dispersion, Philip, Samaritans, and Eunuchs (Acts 8)

The vision of *apostolic* witness to "all nations" and "to the end of the earth" becomes obscured by a shift in focus to the Seven, and also by the fact that Luke ties the ministry of the apostles to Jerusalem (8:1). In fact, Saul will be introduced into the storyline before they return.[96] Not only do the apostles disappear, as it were, but the story that fills the apostolic void emphasizes that the scattering of everyone else (i.e., non-apostles) will redound to the church's growth through proclamation.[97] Even though the

[96] It is tempting to see proof in this interlude, as some commentators do, of a discrete source (i.e. a "Hellenist" or "Diaconal" source). Cf. Adolf Harnack, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1909), 201; and Haenchen, *Acts,* 361. Yet the scenes are not as episodic as they appear. Luke has connected passages so that a certain narrative progression results, not necessarily chronologically but in terms of significance (cf. Luke 1:3, καθεξῆς). The reader is encouraged to see in disparate scenes at least an implied relationship. For instance, the negative illustration of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11 introduces the possibility of disruption among the early believers, which continues in the oversight of food distribution in chapter 6. Apostolic priority, emphasized in Acts 1-5, becomes in chapter 6 the basis for authorizing the Seven, who thereafter take center stage until 8:14. See Jacques Dupont on the uncertainty of identifying Acts' sources in *The Sources of Acts* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964).

[97] Moreover, Luke may extend his implicit non-flattery of the apostles with the story of Peter's divine jailbreak in Acts 12:3-17. Peter is, again, slow to grasp the nature of events transpiring around him (12:9), given that he realizes it was an angel helping him only after the angel is gone (12:12). Luke also reminds us that the church (12:5), and particularly the apostles (12:12), were praying fervently for Peter during his imprisonment. Yet upon the report that Peter was at the door of the house where they were gathered in prayer—i.e. that God has presumably answered their very prayer—they do not believe it. The irony is particularly biting when we recall that the apostles define their vocation as "devoting ourselves to *prayer* and to serving the word" (6:4). It is possible that one can be devoted to prayer yet without fervent belief in its efficacy!

apostles identify their own activity with the "Word" (6:2-4), it will be the expulsion of everyone else into the Diaspora that makes the fulfillment of Jesus' commission possible (11:19-26), and in the form of a movement led by Saul no less! After the expulsion of Jerusalem (Jewish) believers, the ministry of Philip (the "evangelist," 21:8) in Samaria is introduced.

Philip, among those "scattered" (οἱ διασπαρέντες) after Stephen's death, demonstrates how these non-apostles went about "proclaiming the word" (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν λόγον; 8:4). Philip's testimony and acts of power are so mighty that they even eclipse the powerful magician Simon's practices, signaled by the fact that whereas the Samaritans originally only "listened eagerly" (8:11) to Simon, when they believe Philip's proclamation "they were baptized, both men and women" (8:12). The narrator concludes with the summary: "Samaria had accepted the word of God" (8:14). Word of Philip's success in Samaria[98] reaches the ears of the apostles in Jerusalem and they send Peter and John, to pray with and for the Samaritans "that they [too] might receive the Holy Spirit" (8:15). The narrator offers a quick aside to explain that these Samaritans, though recently baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, had not yet received the Spirit (8:16), an act understood as somehow necessary for the completion of their conversion or salvation.

[98] See the several uniquely Lukan stories of Samaritan inclusion (and rejection) in the third Gospel: e.g., Luke 9:52-53 (Jesus intends to go through Samaria but his emissaries are rejected; ctr. Matt 10:5); 10:30-37; 17:11-18.

Irrespective of the debate whether the Jerusalem apostles' act is an indication of a subtle *Frühkatholizimus*,[99] the role of the apostles here is confirmatory rather than executive. That is, Philip has done the preaching and teaching; Peter and John are there to pray and lay hands on the new believers, an act which, if nothing else, reminds readers of the apostolic delegation of responsibility to others (cf. 6:2-6). With the previous impression of their authority still in our minds, readers again encounter the apostles laying on hands, but this time on already-baptized Samaritans. The baptism of new believers, it should be noted, happened outside of their purview, qualifying their role as confirmers of God's work through others. Looking back to Acts 6, even though the apostles' laying of hands on the Seven would appear to indicate their authority over them, *in terms of the narrative* the apostles' self-identified authority to preach is actually displaced by the Seven (upon whom they had laid hands). The Lukan narrator reinforces this conclusion by quickly presenting Simon's response to the apostles' laying on of hands as a cautionary tale about misinterpreting the relationship of Spirit to apostles (8:18-24). It is *God's* gift or it is not the Spirit (8:20; cf. 2:38; 10:45; 11:17).

Peter's last verbal act is to warn Simon: "pray to the Lord that . . . the intent of your heart may be forgiven you" (8:22). The scene concludes with a retrospective summary, namely that "Peter and John had testified (διαμαρτυράμενοι) and spoken the word of God" (8:25), offering an interpretation of what occurred up to this point in chapter 8. Yet the verb διαμαρτύρομαι—translated most often "testified" (NRSV, NIV, KJV, etc.)—is used elsewhere in Acts to indicate primarily a warning (2:40; 20:23; cf.

[99] Cf. Ernst Käsemann, "Die Johannesjünger in Ephesus," *Zeitschrift Für Theologie Und Kirche* 49.2 (1952): 144–154.

10:42; 20:21). Given that the use here follows the warning Peter issues Simon (8:18-24), it is possible to understand Peter and John's "witness" in Samaria in a different sense than the one primarily outlined in Acts 1:8 (Luke 24:47). Moreover, the wider narrative context of their "witness" in Samaria seems to suggest that they serve as (eye)witnesses to the events taking place—confirming their authenticity, as it were—than as bearing witness in a more proactive sense. In the narrative cycle of Acts 6-8, readers receive the first preview of the subsequent role of the apostles (represented by Peter) in Acts 10-11 as "catching up" to what God is doing beyond their ethnocentric horizon.[100]

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged, on their way back to Jerusalem Peter and John proclaim "the good news to many villages of the Samaritans" (8:25). Peter and John's preaching in Samaritan towns on the way back to Jerusalem may be covering territory Philip's work has already reached since, as Luke notes categorically, "Samaria had (already) accepted the word of God" (8:14). Nor is their itinerant proclamation seemingly related to the purpose for which they were originally sent (8:15). Luke's aim in this singular verse (8:25), therefore, is not to declaim the apostles as fulfillers of their commission; if anything, Peter and John find themselves in Samaria to "witness" for themselves that Samaria has indeed received the Word and receives the same Pentecostal Spirit. That Peter and John do not use Samaria as the stepping stone to the "end of the earth" as Jesus' original promise might imply is confirmed by Peter and John's swift return to Jerusalem. Their commitment to "prayer and proclaiming the word" (6:2-4)

[100] Cf. Bonz, *Past as Legacy,* 159: "…in his careful placement of the story of Stephen, followed by Philip's conversion of the Samaritans and the Ethiopian official, Luke has successfully structured a narrative unit in which Jesus' words (Acts 1:8) are fulfilled *in nuce* (in a nutshell)."

apparently is to be exercised primarily in Jerusalem. To be clear, there is nothing negative in Luke's characterization of the apostles, only a subtle reminder that the apostolic commission is finding fulfillment in the work of others. To maintain a sense of apostolic fulfillment of the Lord's commission we must include the work of *confirmation* as an expression of obedience to Jesus' words in Acts 1:8, even as it indicates that the fulfillment of Jesus' words in "witness" is not restricted to what the apostles exclusively do themselves. As confirmers of God's work in and through Christ, moreover, the apostles must be increasingly open to the movement of the Spirit beyond Israel and Jewish lands, a posture that prefigures Peter's experience in Caesarea.

The Jerusalem apostles represent the personal link to Pentecost, the only ones who can evaluate whether the Spirit that has come upon the Samaritans matches that which fell upon the believers in Jerusalem at Pentecost. The Cornelius encounter will follow a similar pattern: God is at work beyond the purview of the apostles who, first by the representative presence of Peter (Acts 10), and then by the hearing the story themselves (11:1-18), are "converted" to a new understanding of God's work in Christ among a new group of believers.[101]

In case there is any doubt about the primacy of divine initiative, in the next scene Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch in an encounter suffused with divine initiative (8:26-

[101] Green, *Conversion,* 154: "Another, more helpful way to make sense of this puzzle is to focus on the apostles who for the first time journey from Jerusalem to Samaria—in spite of the clear mandate in 1:8 to witness to Jesus "in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" as well as Luke's testimony that Stephen's execution resulted in the scattering of the church throughout Judea and Samaria (8:1). From this vantage point, the apparent delay in the outpouring of the Spirit in Samaria serves to assist in the ongoing conversion of Peter and John, so that they finally engage in a ministry among the Samaritans (8:25), and to prepare for the Jerusalem Council, where those gathered come to recognize that the chasm between Jews and gentiles (and thus also between Jews and Samaritans) is bridged ultimately by God (15:8-9)." Cf. also Haenchen, "Judentum und Christentum," 166.

40). And chapter 9 begins with the conversion of Saul. The vocation of witness to Jesus Christ, at least in the way Luke's narrative presents it, is eclipsing its apostolic origins.[102] By Acts 13:47, when the apostles have all but disappeared from the narrative, the very wording of the *apostolic* commission "to the end of the earth" (1:8) is applied to Paul and Barnabas (see 4.6.1.1-2).

3.5.3 Conclusion

The scholarly tendency to impose structure on Luke's work should not override careful attention to the narrative setting in which Acts 1:8 appears. For instance, insofar as Acts 1:8 presents the "program" of mission in Acts it is one specifically given *to the apostles*.[103] However, *narratively* the question of the phrase's communicated meaning is more complicated. There is no doubt that Luke's theological world was given decisive structure by the Isaianic framework. And certainly Jesus' commission to his apostles reflects Luke's own grasp of God's purposes that good news be preached to Jews and Gentiles unto the very ends of the earth. But at another level, within the narrative,[104] the *apostles'* behavior indicates a more limited interpretation revealed, in a sense, by the removal of those limitations in Acts 10-11. The fact that the apostles' last question to Jesus concerns the restoration of the kingdom *to Israel* (1:5) and their first post-ascension

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[102] See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:143: "After Stephen and Philip enter the narrative, the apostles are seldom presented as initiators of new stages of the mission. Rather the apostles and the Jerusalem church respond to what others are doing and affirm it … the initiative in extending the mission to new areas or groups generally does not come from the apostles."

[103] Referring to previous analyses of 1:8 as the "program" of Acts, van Unnik notes, "Denn damit hat man schon von vornherein *angenommen*, dass Lukas hier ein Programm für sein Buch gibt, aber das sagt er nicht und es wird auch durch den Kontext nicht direkt nahegelegt. Apg. i.8 enthält zwar ein Programm, aber *von Jesus für die Apostel*" ("ΈΩΣ ΈΣΧΑΤΟΥ," 392, emphasis original).

[104] Cf. the "turn" to narrative criticism documented by Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).With a focus on Acts, and Acts 10-11 especially, see the helpful, but overly driven by narratological terminology, van Thanh Nguyen, *Peter and Cornelius: A Story of Conversion and Mission* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012).

act is to complete the number of *twelve* apostles, symbolic of Israel's restoration (1:15-26),[105] makes sense of the surprise, at least, that comes with the P-C episode.

At stake in the meaning of Acts 1:8 is whether or not the apostolic mission will go to the ends of the land of Israel (or wherever Jews are scattered), and thus remain limited to God's covenant people,[106] or whether it will go to the end of the earth and to Gentiles. While full clarity for the reader only comes after hearing Paul preach in Pisidian Antioch (13:47; see Chapter 4), the events in Acts 10-11 clarify how apostolic understanding of Jesus' Isaianic mission and commission was incomplete. In this way, Luke's construal of apostolic mission in Acts is one in which those commissioned are often having to "catch up" to God's purposes.[107]

Based on our brief study, it seems clear that the reference to "ends of the earth" in 1:8 must include in its semantic range both an expansive sense of *to whom* (Jews and Gentiles) witness will be conveyed and *by whom* (Jesus, the apostles, Paul, and others) it will be delivered. Enough ambiguity remains around the valence of 1:8 that the apostles must yet learn the full(er) meaning of Jesus' words (Acts 13:47; cf. Luke 1:4; 24:32, 44-45). It will require the rest of the narrative to fill out Jesus' words. Peter, while given this very commission, does not begin to fulfill its most expansive terms until ch. 10 (and only after more divine prompting) while Paul, who is not given the *apostolic* commission, is the one who fulfills it extensively. In this way, readers and apostles are brought together

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[105] Jervell, *Theology of Acts*, 75-82.
[106] Schwartz, "The End of the γη," 672 fn 17, acknowledges the weakness of the connection between 13:47 and 1:8; cf. also Loveday Alexander, "This is That," 197, fn 23; Richard Bauckham, "Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 435-87 (475); and Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 17.
[107] See Green, "Doing Repentance," 18.

in a quest to grasp the full meaning of Jesus' initially ambiguous commission. By the time a Gentile centurion entertains an angel in ch. 10, Peter the representative apostle[108] will be prepared for a new encounter in the light of which Jesus' final words will finally be understood, as if for the first time.

Luke will highlight Peter's sluggish theological pace in the encounter with the Gentile centurion as a way to highlight the ambiguity of the apostles' previous activity. More importantly, the apostles' *incomplete* participation[109] in evangelizing the nations in Acts 1-9 anticipates Peter's initial resistance to the acceptance of unclean Gentiles among God's people as well as the dramatic theological and christological shift it portends for Jewish believers.

The P-C episode is, narratively, the great "breakthrough" in universal mission, to which later debates about the Gentile mission point when discussing God's endorsement. Moreover, the experience appears to be what Jesus' commission "to all nations" anticipated. The Cornelius episode both underscores the ambiguity of the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) and resolves it at the same time in light of realization that God is truly impartial, that Jesus is "Lord of all" (10:36). In this respect, Acts 10-11 represents the flowering in the narrative of God's will to reach Gentiles with the good news of salvation.

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[108] Peter's silent partner John joins him in his travels to Samaria (8:14-17) and back (8:25). But Luke never attributes to John action that is not also attributed to Peter or other apostles, and we never hear John speak. His characterization, in other words, is completely "flat" and should be understood, at best, as the authenticating witness of Peter's speech and action. Luke, after all, likes pairs and his understanding of μάρτυς/μαρτύριον bears a juridical connotation in which the presence of *multiple* witnesses helps authenticate an event or claim. See Trites, *New Testament Concept*, 1-47.
[109] cf. Jervell, *Theology of Acts*, 75.

The effect of Luke's shaping of the story is to show, narratively, how God's purposes outpace human (apostolic) participation in and understanding of those purposes. In spite of the fact that Luke is keen to show that the turn to the Gentiles reflects the fulfillment of scriptural promises (13:46-47), characters in the narrative do not automatically grasp the full extent of God's purposes. The apostles, like Peter, must discover and bear witness to this seemingly new thing themselves. In fact, in Luke's characterization of Peter, the apostolic "missionary" par excellence finds himself in need of a kind of "conversion" in order to accept the implications of Gentile salvation.

3.6 Peter's Participation in the Narrative Realization of Jesus' Universal Lordship

Chapter 2 showed how Jesus retains responsibility for the universal spread of witness even though he early on disappears from the narrative as a human character (1:10). Luke ensures that readers recognize Jesus' active presence and guidance throughout the narrative of the spread of the Word, especially beyond Jerusalem and ethnic Israel. This aligns well with the basic thrust of the P-C episode, which is suffused with divine initiative and the recognition of Jesus' universal Lordship. The episode represents the moment in which inter-ethnic contact in Acts begins in earnest and therefore marks the crowning recognition of Jesus' identity as Lord of all (10:36). In these ways, Luke designates the P-C encounter as the key episode in the trajectory that Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8 anticipate.[110] Thus, Peter participates, as far as Acts is

[110] Ronald D. Witherup, "Cornelius Over and Over and Over Again: 'Functional Redundancy' in the Acts of the Apostles," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 15.49 (January 1993): 64: "The first function of this redundancy is to help move the plot of Acts along in a forceful manner. Not only does the repetition and size of the narrative draw attention to it, but it sets forth unambiguously the fulfillment of the goal of Acts expressed in 1.8b. The gospel message is meant for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews!" Wilson, *Gentiles*, 177: "at last we have at least a partial fulfillment of Acts 1:8."

concerned, in the initial fulfillment of Jesus' commission, by preaching to Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη). The wider significance of the act is indicated by the way in which Luke has Peter retell the story to the apostles and other Jewish believers (11:5-17), even making it the foundation for the Jerusalem council's decisions (15:7-11).

The previous analysis of Acts 1:8 showed that Jesus' promise-commission bears a primarily *ethnic* rather than geographical emphasis. Jesus' commission implies that proclamation of salvation will reach "all nations" if not by the end of Acts then by the return of the ascended Jesus (Acts 1:6-8, 11; 3:20-21). Moreover, given the fact that Jesus' words are explicitly directed toward *the apostles*, the narrative fulfillment of his dominical commission—so readers are conditioned to expect—would involve the apostles. Yet the previous section showed that the apostles do not go to the Gentiles, hardly venturing beyond Jerusalem, in Acts 1-9. Long-awaited "fulfillment" of the Lukan commission, therefore, comes in an episode after Acts 9 that involves an apostle in an evangelistic, inter-ethnic encounter. Naturally, the P-C episode (10:1-48) presents itself as the obvious candidate for fulfilling these criteria.

Several clues confirm this conclusion. First, the chief contextual marker in the P-C episode is ethnicity rather than geography. Certainly Luke does not diminish the fact that Cornelius is a centurion (10:1, 7, 22) residing in Caesarea, the Roman capital of Judea (10:1, 24; 11:11). But the emphasis throughout the story (and its retellings) falls on Cornelius' Gentile identity (10:28, 35, 45; 11:1, 17-18; 15:7-11). To be clear, Cornelius looks nearly as Jewish as Peter in the story, which, as we will see, points to Cornelius' ethnic identity as more symbolic than actual, since he is primarily characterized as the *representative* of "the Gentiles," especially in retrospect. Several times over the three

versions of the story, characters equate the conversion of the Gentile *Cornelius'* household as the conversion of *the* Gentiles (10:45; 11:1, 18; 15:7-10).

Second, Luke counterweights the emphasis on the ethnicity of Cornelius with a focus on Peter's ethnic identity as *Jewish* believer in Jesus (10:14-16, 22, 28, 47; 11:2-3, 8-9, 17-18; 15:7-11). In the narrator's version (10:1-48) and Peter's retelling (11:5-17; cf. 15:7-11), Luke underscores the apostle Peter's *experience* as central to the significance of the episode. The central tension that drives the story comes from Peter's objections to associating with Gentiles (10:11-16, 28, 34-36, 43; 11:2-10, 15:9-11). Thus, in spite of the P-C episode often being called the "conversion of Cornelius," the central thrust of the story concerns *Peter's* transformation as a Jewish apostle vis-à-vis the Gentiles. In the P-C episode the *ethnic* trajectory of Luke 24:47/Acts 1:8 finally aligns with its *apostolic* focus.

Third, the unparalleled emphasis Luke gives this episode within the scope of Acts commends it as the pivotal moment for the fulfillment of Jesus' commission. In addition to being repeated several times (11:1-18; 15:7-11), the statistical weight given to the P-C episode is difficult to gainsay.[111] No other candidate for the wider scope of Acts 1:8's (initial) "fulfillment" even comes close. For example, though it is sometimes argued that the Ethiopian eunuch is really the first Gentile received into the church (8:26-40),[112] several aspects of the story tell against it. Not only is it unclear the Ethiopian is a Gentile,[113] but the story is never repeated or recalled (like the P-C episode). Furthermore,

[111] See fn 451.
[112] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:108-112.
[113] Niccum, "One Ethiopian," 883-893.

the Ethiopian eunuch is not referred to as representative of a people (as Cornelius is) and the "witness" who evangelizes the eunuch is Philip, a non-apostle. On the other hand, instances of proclamation to Gentiles that follow Acts 10-11:18—and which are largely conducted by Paul—assume the theological foundation laid by the P-C episode, namely that God wills the salvation of Gentiles as Gentiles.[114] In other words, the definitive nature of the P-C episode—culminating in the Jerusalem council (15:1-29)—ensures that Paul need not interrupt his mission work at every turn to justify what he is doing.

3.6.1 The Perspective of Peter

While the importance of the P-C episode for Acts is often noted,[115] interpretations of the episode in relation to Luke-Acts tend to vary. Against the common assumption that the story is primarily concerned with a Gentile's conversion, it will be shown that the P-C episode *assumes* the conversion of Cornelius; more attention is given to God's ratification of the event by the Spirit and to Jewish responses to it. Accordingly, Cornelius is largely portrayed in a flat and symbolic manner, while Peter's character develops throughout the story and its repetitions. The salvation of the Gentiles, which none of the Jewish characters in the story questions, is largely accomplished through divine intervention. The perspectival focus of the story emerges in Peter's *reaction* (10:1-48) and the Jewish believers' *response* (11:1-18) to the implications of Gentile

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[114] Statistically supporting the pivotal nature of the P-C episode, for what it is worth, is the fact that almost exactly half the book of Acts occurs before the Jerusalem council decree (15:23-29) and half afterwards.
[115] Martin Dibelius, "The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography" in *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Heinrich Greeven; trans. Mary Ling (New York: Scribner's, 1956), 161-162: "…from the literary point of view Peter's action was the decisive one for the book of Acts, and Luke has made that clear in many ways. First of all, he has made a great composition out of the story of Cornelius, which, as an elaborated narrative, has no equal in the whole book." Cf. Wilson, *Gentiles*, 177: "No other narrative in Acts is given quite such epic treatment as the Cornelius episode...Sheer length and repetition are Luke's way of impressing upon his readers the immense significance which this event had for him."

salvation.[116] So often missed in studies of Acts 10-11:18 is the subtle, but singular emphasis on the transformation (or, more traditionally, "conversion") of Peter and other Jewish believers to the new christological reality ("Lord of all," 10:36) signaled by the inclusion of Gentiles within God's people.[117]

With the whole narrative of Acts in view, therefore, the *apostle* Peter's perspective on this *ethnic* encounter provides the hermeneutical lens for understanding its significance. That is, the overriding concern of the narrative in Acts 10-11:18 (and 15:7-11) is to show the consequential implications of Gentile salvation *for Jewish believers,* represented first by the apostle Peter (Acts 10) and second by the Jerusalem leaders (Acts 11). Readers, moreover, have been primed by Acts 1:8 to expect apostolic participation in the fulfillment of Jesus' commission. For nearly nine chapters the apostles make no direct contact with Gentiles and with few people beyond Jerusalem. Readerly expectations have been deferred until Caesarea. Some readers may even have given into the view that Jesus' commission was not intended to reach Gentiles. In that case, readers find themselves awakening to the ambiguity of Acts 1:8 and in relative kinship with the apostle Peter,

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[116] Cf. Witherington, *Acts,* 354: "Perhaps more to the point, since Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8 had already suggested a mission to the ends of the earth to all nations, and blessing for all the families of the earth in Christ (3:25-26), the issue here seems to be *how* such a mission could be carried out in view of the Jewish laws about clean and unclean. How could ethnocentric purity laws be overcome? The answer seems to be, by decree from God, in view of the new situation created by the Christ-event." Certainly, the "how" question gets expressed in different ways in Acts 10 (are Gentiles clean?), 11 (can Gentiles be associated with, eaten with?), and 15 (can Gentiles be saved apart from circumcision?). But because the scene is foundationally christological—is Jesus Lord of *all*?—the logistical "how" questions merely address the second-order issues derived from the first-order theological problem.

[117] Green, "Doing Repentance," 18: "Conversion requires resocialization within the community being formed... Luke's complex narration in Acts 10:1-11:18 of the encounter between Peter and Cornelius and its aftermath in the Jerusalem church illustrates this process. Cornelius is introduced first, with the result that we may gain the mistaken impression that this text centers on his conversion and that of his household. Luke's focus is more fundamentally on Peter and the Jerusalem church and especially on the issue of ethnocentric practices."

whose transformation will reflect their own change of mind by the end of the series of episodes (10:47; 11:18; 15:11).

And, because the story centers on Peter especially, the P-C episode is narrated as a way for Peter to *learn* or *relearn* what God is doing to bring Cornelius, and with him all Gentiles, into God's people. Not only is the premier apostle the one who experiences the encounter and consequent change of outlook, but through Peter's testimony the Judean believers—"those of the circumcision" (11:1)—come to accept that God has given salvation even to the Gentiles (11:18).[118] Later, on the basis of Peter's testimony in Jerusalem, the "apostles and elders" (15:4, 6)—and, presumably, those of the sect of the Pharisees who insist on circumcising Gentiles (15:5)—are persuaded to recognize the membership of Gentiles among God's people as Gentiles, that is, free from the full encumbrance of the law. But Acts 10-11 is specifically narrated, not as a theological principle in the abstract[119] but as a specific encounter of an *apostle* with Gentiles, in a narrative prefaced by Jesus' promise of just such an encounter (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). As a "witness" to what God is already doing among Gentiles, Peter, not unlike a "convert,"

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[118] Martin Dibelius, "Conversion of Cornelius," in *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Heinrich Greeven; trans. Mary Ling (New York: Scribner's, 1956), 118: "Luke does not regard Cornelius as the main character, and Cornelius' adoption of the Christian faith is not the essential content of the story; it is Peter whom we find in the centre of the narrative from Acts 10.1 to 11.18…"

[119] Dibelius, ibid., 117: "This, then, is what the reference to the conversion of Cornelius means. It is not a conversion-story of the usual type, nor is it meant to show that Peter is glorified by the consequences of the knowledge which he gained through a vision. It shows the revelation of God's will that the Gentiles should be received into the Church without obligation to the law. This is what the story of Cornelius means, at least for Luke." Cf. 122: "Luke has elevated the story of Cornelius in order to make it represent a principle…Here, as elsewhere, Luke has abandoned an exact reproduction of history for the sake of a higher historical truth. We have seen how this truth consists of the idea that the incorporating of the Gentiles into the Church without subjecting them to the law originated neither with Paul, nor with Peter, but with God."

discovers the universal Lordship of the Messiah Jesus: "he is Lord of *all*" (10:36). Indeed, as Jesus promised, he will "be/come a witness" (1:8).

In the present section, therefore, the focus of the study turns to the question of *Peter's* role and perspective in the Cornelius encounter. As the third in a series of three "conversion" stories (eunuch: 8:26-39; Saul: 9:1-20; Cornelius: 10:1-48), the P-C episode offers remarkably little commentary on Cornelius' actual conversion. Naturally, the question follows of who is most transformed in this episode or, rather, whose transformation Luke is interested in conveying with the detailed story. As we will see, the episode is told primarily from the perspective of Peter, emphasizing *his* realization rather than Cornelius' (the representative Gentile's). Thus, the story on the whole points to the transformation of *the Jewish-Christian believers' experience of Gentile salvation and its consequences* rather than the experience of Cornelius or of the Gentiles per se.

Moreover, given our broader concern to show how Luke's "missiology" does not promote mission-as-mandate, the focus of the episode on *Peter's* experience offers hermeneutical clues for how this pivotal scene should be understood in terms of participation in universal witness. Specifically, Peter's transformation attests the reality that "witness" remains a potentially passive category, opening the possibility that witnesses themselves learn or relearn the identity of the Lord to whom they bear witness as they encounter God's work among the (ethnically) "other." Moreover, even a witness's christological convictions—ordinarily the conventional motivation of mission activity—is subject to change as a result of inter-ethnic encounter. Luke's emphasis on the transformation of the witness, rather than on that of the "other" (ἀλλόφυλος, 10:28), may

be paradigmatic for a view of mission as bearing epistemological weight rather than one oriented simply by dominical command.

Focalization

One aspect of Luke's subtle shaping of the P-C episode, and too easily overlooked, is its *focalizing perspective*[120]—that is, where the story's *interpretive point of view* lies. While a sense of divine guidance is no doubt a signature aspect of the P-C episode,[121] it is easy to forget that the way in which this aspect of the story emerges is through the contradistinctive characterization of its human actors.[122] That is, *Peter's* characterization—in tandem with the portrait of Cornelius' obedience—brings out the sense of divine guidance in the P-C episode. Rather than a story of the "twitching of marionettes,"[123] the character of Peter must change, learn from his encounter with an "unclean" Gentile, and draw level with God's will. Indeed, the tension of the story emerges in the uncertainty whether Peter will "catch up" to what God and the Spirit already have planned and, after finally comprehending, whether he can convince the rest of the Jerusalem apostles and church to do the same.[124]

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[120] Marguerat, *How to Read,* 72-74; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* Nguyen, "Luke's Point of View," 95.

[121] cf. Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles*, 33: "Luke is not content merely to relate the circumstances that led to the spread of the Church among the pagans. He wishes to show that this new orientation was willed by God and guided by the Holy Spirit, and thus that it fulfilled the messianic prophecies."

[122] Octavian Baban, "Conflicts in Acts: Luke's Style and Missionary Paradigms," *Journal of European Baptist Studies*, 1.3 (May 2001): 32: "On the one hand, Luke is focusing on individual characterisation, as Hellenist historians would to do, in order to present a historical period, movement, or people, and, on the other hand, he makes use of conflicts, as an indirect means of characterisation."

[123] Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, 315: "die Menschen drohen zu Marionetten zu werden."

[124] This is one reason why the motif of the transmission of the message (God's will) among characters suffuses the narrative. Cf. Roland Barthes, "Structural Analysis of a Narrative from Acts 10-11," in *Structuralism and Biblical Hermeneutics,* ed. and transl. Alfred Johnson (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1979), 109-143.

Though analysis will center on Acts 10:1-11:18, the characterization of Peter in the P-C episode begins well before Acts 10. As we saw, the apostles (of which Peter is narratively foremost) do not venture beyond Jerusalem much or engage Gentiles at all. The strongest example of apostolic witness outside Jerusalem (yet still in Judea) occurs in the run up to the P-C episode (9:32-43). After Paul's conversion and early ministry, Luke turns the spotlight back to Peter, with his ministry in Lydda and Joppa. The brief survey of Peter's travels, however, does more than reintroduce Luke's primary apostle; in subtle ways, it helps frame the way in which Luke will develop Peter's character in the pivotal Acts 10-11. Thus, the following survey of Peter's characterization in Acts 10-11 begins in 9:32-43[125] and concludes with his final words in Acts, at the Jerusalem council meeting (15:7-11).[126]

Therefore, the following analysis will be limited to the passages that fall within the orbit of the P-C episode. First, I will show how 9:32-43 primes readers for perceiving Peter's *Jewish* identity in a specific way, thereby underscoring his pious protestations in Acts 10. Second, because Luke frontloads the characterization of the Gentile centurion, an analysis of Cornelius' narrative portrait and its significance *for Peter's characterization* follows. Cornelius' Jewish-looking obedience opens new opportunities for him, even as Peter's apparent purity obstructs his faithfulness to God. Third, I turn to

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[125] While most commentaries are content to limit analysis of the P-C episode to Acts 10-11:18, some interpreters—especially those of the narrative or rhetorical variety—recognize that Luke begins the full episode in 9:32. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 327-339; Scott Spencer, *Acts* (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 102-119, who entitles this section "Peter the Apostle in Sharon and Caesarea: 9.32-11.18"; Harold E. Dollar, "A Biblical-Missiological Exploration," 132-137; and Charles Talbert, *Acts* (Atlanta: J. Knox Press, 1984), 43-52, except Talbert non-ironically labels the whole section "In Step with God"!

[126] Witherup, "Cornelius," 48 fn 9. While a full exposition of Peter's character could go all the way back to Luke 5, narratively Luke's characterization of Peter climaxes in Acts 10-11.

the main chronological survey of the development of Peter's character in the episode (10:9-48) and its retelling (11:5-17)—demonstrating how Luke highlights *Jewish* responses to Gentile salvation and the need for Peter and Jewish believers to change. Luke's way of narrating this study in Peter's character emphasizing the acceptance of Gentile salvation as a christological foundation for renewed *Jewish* belief, a conclusion which crystallizes in the analysis of Peter's pivotal speech in Caesarea (10:34-43). This last part of my study will be mostly reserved for the chapter's concluding section.

3.6.1.1 Peter in Acts 9:32-43

Following a transitional "progress report" (9:31) on the peace and increase of "the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria," Luke takes up the thread of Peter's story once more. It is important to note that to this point in Acts much of Judea and Samaria has already been evangelized, implying that the middle phase of the "outline" in Acts 1:8 is nearing completion, and notably because of Philip's ministry rather than that of the apostles. When Luke says that Philip "proclaimed the good news" from Azotus to all the towns to Caesarea, he maps out the journey which Peter essentially takes in 9:32-43. Peter's travels from Jerusalem to Lydda to Joppa to Caesarea (9:32-43) closely resemble Philip's own journey from Jerusalem to Gaza to Azotus to Caesarea (8:1, 40).[127] Therefore, when in Acts 9:32 Luke relates Peter's travels (διερχόμενον) in and around Judea, it is probably meant in the manner of a "tour of inspection."[128] While some[129]

[127] For Joppa (and perhaps Lydda) lies on the direct path from Azotus (and Gaza) all the way to Caesarea, where both figures end up. See Spencer, *Acts,* 102.
[128] Haenchen, *Acts*, 338; Barrett, *Acts,* 1:479; Witherington, *Acts,* 328. Cf. CEB.
[129] Witherup, "Cornelius," 50; and Nguyen, "Dismantling Cultural Boundaries: Missiological Implications of Acts 10:1-11:18," *Missiology* 40.4 (October 2012): 457.

would characterize Peter's activity in Lydda and Joppa as "missionary," few details in Luke's description support such a conclusion.[130]

When the narrative zooms in on Aeneas, it says nothing more than that Peter "found" a man in Lydda named Aeneas, whose eight-year-long paralysis Peter heals with the declaration: "Jesus Christ heals you!" (9:34) One of the few healings in Acts (compared to the Gospel), it recalls the healing of the lame man, which Peter and John mediate in Acts 3:2-8 (cf. 14:8-11). The narrator seems to summarize the point of the brief episode in the concluding verse: "And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him [Aeneas] and turned to the Lord" (9:35). The hyperbole is typical of Luke's portrayal of public reactions in Acts (3:9-10; 8:8; 15:3). Consistent with the portrait of apostolic ministry to this point, the "turning" of onlookers is attributable as much to what everyone

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[130] For instance, in addition to his trail being blazed by another (Philip), Peter does not embark on his travels in order to fulfill a wider circle of mission, at least according to Acts. An alternative view is that of Martin Hengel ("Luke the Historian and the Geography of Palestine in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Between Jesus and Paul* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983]: 112-117), who says Philip probably pursued a ministry among the Hellenists while Peter pursued those who were culturally Jewish (cf. Sleeman, *Geography,* 218-219). In that case, Peter's discriminating would be even plainer. His sense of Jesus' commission would appear even narrower, given that he goes over the same territory but does not think of it as redundant since Hellenistic Jews are different from Palestinian Jews. Even if Peter's deeds of power in 9:32-42 parallel quite closely Jesus' own wondrous work (Luke 5:17-26; 7:11-16), which included aiding a centurion like Cornelius (Luke 7:2-10), there is little evidence that Peter acts in 9:32-43 out of compulsion to convert new groups of people. To be clear, conversions do follow from his movements around Judea, but Luke narrates them as secondary effects of Peter's wondrous healing of Aeneas and resurrection of Tabitha-Dorcas. In this respect, Peter may be serving as "witness" in a broader sense. But, in terms of Peter's apostolic commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), there is still no indication here that Peter is here consciously reaching out to "all nations"/"the end of the earth." Even if readers were expected to assume that Peter's activity fulfilled his apostolic commission, it would follow that Peter seems to understand his commission as limited to Jews, thus bringing to a close nine chapters of outreach made exclusively to Jews. This way of looking at it explains Peter's surprise in Acts 10 at the revelation, essentially, of being told to bear witness to a Gentile. Perhaps supporting this conclusion is the fact that the relatively unusual title within Luke-Acts of "saints" (ἅγιοι) to describe those to whom Peter ministers tends to imply, in Luke's usage, Jewish believers (9:13; 9:41; 26:10), perhaps with ties to Jerusalem, and thus likely not uncircumcised Gentiles. Nothing in Luke's portrait of Peter's activity in Acts 9:32-43 suggests his contacts are anything but Jewish believers. Cf. Barrett (*Acts,* 1:480), who notes that Aeneas' Greek name was also known to have been held by Aramaic-speaking Jews. Haenchen (*Acts,* 338 and fn 4) likewise claims that Luke characterizes Aeneas as a "Jewish Christian." Tabitha-Dorcas' Jewish bona fides are even more apparent (see below).

witnesses themselves as to Peter's proclamation (if he "proclaims" anything, Luke omits it). In fact, even without Peter's active evangelization of Lydda and Sharon, their residents "turned to the Lord," Luke's characteristic way of naming conversion (cf. 3:19; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19; 26:18, 20; 28:27). A similar summary follows the next scene: "This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord" (9:42). In Peter's Judean ministry, rumor plays the part of apostolic "witness" in evangelizing the people, who are notably all *Jewish* believers.

After the Aeneas incident, the narrator switches to the new setting of Joppa (9:36) and to the miraculous aid Peter gives to a woman there. The story forms a pair with the Aeneas incident, reflecting the common Lukan pattern of male-female doublets. The purpose of his journey to Joppa, however, is not clear until 9:38: "Since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples heard that Peter was there…" Again, the narrator implies the prior presence of a believing community (founded by Philip?), not primarily an evangelistic context. One of the disciples there whose (Aramaic) name was "Tabitha" had been a (Jewish) believer in Jesus long enough to have earned a reputation for good works and acts of charity (9:36) and to be sorely missed by those among whom she ministered (9:39). Later it becomes clear that her circle of influence included other saints, but especially widows (9:41). A curious note about the Greek version of her name, Dorcas, accompanies her introduction (9:36). The translated name is apparently introduced to explain the narrator's use of the name in the story (9:39).[131] The bearing of two names suggests that her ministry was conducted at the intersection of cultures. Some may even

[131] Luke similarly prefers "Peter" to Simon, though often mentions their association (cf. Luke 6:14; 10:5, 18, 32; 11:13). In the P-C episode both names are emphasized to distinguish him from Simon the tanner.

speculate that Dorcas belonged to the "Hellenist" group identified in 6:1-4, who, as in Joppa in Acts 9, required widow care. Both Luke's inclusion of two names as well as the characterization of the woman as "full of good works and almsgiving" (9:36) may anticipate the threshold-crossing encounter in the next chapter.[132] As we will see, Luke's description of Cornelius as someone "who gave many alms to the people" (ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνας πολλὰς τῷ λαῷ, 10:2; cf. 10:4) likewise signals the crossing of ethnic boundaries into which Peter will be drawn through divine guidance.

While Peter is in nearby Lydda, he receives a summons to Joppa (9:38), giving the impression that his eventual trip there (more so than his trip to Lydda) does not flow from his own initiative. There are (Jewish) disciples already there who, having no doubt heard of the power associated with Peter (5:13-16), decide to call upon him to come "without delay" (9:38).[133] Though the Lukan narrator offers more detail in this story than the previous one, the single-verse conclusion parallels the Aeneas summary (9:35): "This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord" (9:42). The scene concludes with the additional and seemingly innocuous detail that Peter lodged in Joppa with a tanner named Simon (9:43).

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[132] Spencer, *Acts,* 107: "This double name fits the mixed Jewish-Gentile demographics of Joppa and acts as a bridge between Aeneas (Jew) in Lydda and Cornelius (Gentile) in Caesarea."

[133] It is unclear why Peter's summons would have such urgency attached to it, given the care taken to wash the body and to lay it out in the upper room. It is possible the widows prepared the body for burial while the disciples decided to call Peter for help, presumably to resurrect her. It is equally possible that Luke wishes to emphasize that there was no doubt it was a dead body—rather than merely a case of a premature death pronouncement, for example—as a way to underscore the power at work in Peter (cf. John 11). The narrator leaves most things unsaid. Readers only hear the initial summons (9:38) and Peter's direct statement to the body—"Tabitha, get up" (9:40). Everything else slides into indirect discourse—the greetings, the showing of Dorcas' textile work, the clearing of the room, the prayer, the calling of everyone back into the room, and the re-introduction of the woman to a surprised but elated group.

One noteworthy aspect of these mini-episodes that bears on Luke's characterization of Peter is the crossing of boundaries, a transgressive movement that anticipates Acts 10-11. In Acts 10 Peter's supposedly unflagging law-observance will be a central issue (10:14-16, 28), but here Peter appears to be somewhat ambivalent toward such issues. Broadly speaking, with the Aeneas encounter (9:32-35) Peter moves about among those afflicted with illness; with the Tabitha encounter (9:36-42), he potentially acquires corpse impurity[134]; by lodging with a tanner (9:43), among the most unclean of professions in Jewish eyes,[135] he courts further impurity. When connecting 9:32-43 to Acts 10-11, a contrast can be drawn between Peter's eagerness to help (Jewish) believers and lodge in a tanner's house, *in spite of* the contaminant-risk, and his hesitation in attending to a Gentile with a Roman name *because* of the risk of impurity.

Joel Green captures well the significance of these seemingly obscure narrative details when he notes that, from Acts 9:32 to 10:48, the movement across geographical boundaries (Jerusalem → Lydda → Joppa → Caesarea) mirrors the crossing of interpersonal and legal-ritual boundaries.[136] The subtle details of 9:32-43, which might otherwise be interpreted as a summary of Peter's "missionary" triumphs, actually allow Luke to show Peter's sanctimoniousness toward *ethnic* boundaries, since the crossing of

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[134] Though the narrator does not say Peter touches her until after she is alive again (9:41), the suggestion is that his desire to aid her eclipses his fear of impurity.

[135] *m. Ketub.* 7:10; *b. Pesaḥ* 65a; *Qidd.* 82b; cf. Witherup, "Cornelius," p. 48 fn 10; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 214; Witherington, *Acts,* 333: "...tanners, because of their contact with the hides of dead animals, were considered unclean by more scrupulous Jews. In fact, the Mishnah and Talmud suggest they were despised because of their ongoing uncleanness caused by their trade, not to mention the bad smell associated with the tanning process … This is worth pointing out in view of the story that follows in Acts 10 about unclean human beings. Peter, not known for his consistency (cf. Galatians 2), had no problems of conscience (apparently) about staying with an unclean Jew, but balked at unclean Gentiles!"

[136] *Conversion,* 96-97.

several other boundaries lines the path to Cornelius' door. Even as the narrative conspires to put Peter in the midst of inter-cultural contact (see "Tabitha-Dorcas"), it will be his objections to inter-ethnic contact that must be overcome. As Green[137] summarizes, in Acts 9-11 "Peter is on a collision course with the ideology he has espoused." The strong feelings Peter voices about ritual purity in Acts 10 (vv. 14-16; 28a) are part of a broader characterization of the apostle in 9:32-43 that will make his objections to Gentile acceptance seem disingenuous or at least contribute to the suspense. Luke accomplishes this portrayal subtly enough to avoid a directly negative characterization of Peter, while also underscoring the possibility of the apostles' mutability. This preliminary portrait of Peter's characterization in Acts 9:32-11:18 anticipates the focus of the P-C episode as a study in *Peter's* transformation. Logistically, 9:32-43 tells readers how Peter got to Joppa where Cornelius' messengers reach him (10:5-6); narratively, however, these verses prepare readers to recognize how much Peter and the Jewish believers must overcome in accepting the Spirit's designation of Gentiles as members of God's people.

3.6.1.2 The Characterization of Cornelius

Luke's portrait of Peter, however, does not stand on its own. Related to the portrait of divine guidance and the portrayal of the apostle Peter in Acts 10-11 is the characterization of Cornelius. A brief survey of Luke's characterization of Cornelius will demonstrate that the Gentile centurion is a steady and "flat" character, whose Jewish-

[137] *ibid.,* 97. As Green notes, given this background, "it is unsurprising that when he retells the story he leaves out whom he is staying with!"

looking piety accentuates the Jewish apostle Peter's own ambiguous identity as observant Jewish believer in 9:32-43 and 10:9-28.[138]

In the way that Luke has organized the P-C episode, the piety of a Gentile centurion (10:1-8) is given primary position, before readers encounter the Jewish apostle Peter's pious prayers (10:9-29). If we take Acts 9:32-43 as part of the broader portrait of Peter, then we are immediately surprised by the introduction of a Gentile soldier in the language of observant Judaism: "a devout man who feared God with all his household[139]; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God" (10:2). "Devout/godly" (εὐσεβής) describes both Cornelius (10:2) and the soldier he sends as emissary to Simon Peter (10:7). The phrase φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν (10:2, 22) may be Luke's way of identifying Cornelius as a "God-fearer," representative of a kind of uncircumcised Gentile with close ties to the synagogue.[140] Later, when describing Cornelius to Peter, Cornelius' servants characterize him as "an upright and God-fearing man" (ἀνὴρ δίκαιος καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, 10:22). The parallel phrasing (10:2 and 10:22) suggests that εὐσεβής and δίκαιος serve as synonyms in this context. Given Luke's wider application of the latter term (cf. Luke 1:17), its use here places Cornelius

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[138] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:133: "Thus Cornelius is addressed like a Jew by the angel and portrayed like a Jew by the narrator. The narrator is not presenting a character as distant as possible from the Jews in order to display the potential of the gospel to reach all. Rather the narrative uses a persuasive rhetoric that would be appropriate for Jewish Christians like Peter and those with him. They meet a character who has the central qualities that they recognize as true piety. When Peter notes in 10:47 that Cornelius and his company "have received the Holy Spirit just as we have," this is the capstone of a series of similarities between Cornelius and devout Jewish Christians." In other words, it is difficult for Jewish Christians to reject a man in whom they recognize so much of themselves. "Everything in the narrative conspires against maintaining the barrier between Jews and this Gentile."

[139] The introduction of Cornelius "with all his household" likely previews the conversion of his whole household (10:24, 33, 44; 11:14). Cornelius, in this respect, stands in for a larger group of people who are given no existence independent of their *pater familias*, anticipating the way in which Cornelius-cum-household will stand in for all Gentiles (10:45; 11:1, 18).

[140] See fn 102.

in the company of other pious *Jewish* characters like Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6), Simeon (2:25), and Joseph of Arimathea (23:50). Moreover, the centurion on Golgotha calls Jesus δίκαιος (23:47). The application of the term "righteous" to Jesus predominates in Acts (3:14; 7:52; 22:14), which makes Luke's use with respect to the Gentile Cornelius all the more striking.

The narrator does not merely assert Cornelius' devotion, however, but draws attention to practices characteristic of his piety. The giving of alms (ἐλεημοσύνη; 10:2, 4, 31), for example, recalls the piety of Tabitha-Dorcas (9:36). Cornelius' commitment to prayer ("he prayed to God constantly": δεόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ παντός, 10:2) anticipates Peter's own prayer practice (10:9). But the piety readers are to associate with Cornelius goes beyond individual practices. As his servants inform Peter, Cornelius is "esteemed by the whole Jewish nation" (10:22). From such a statement it can be inferred that "the people" (ὁ λάος) to whom Cornelius generously gave alms also included Jews, perhaps lending credence to the notion that Cornelius was already associated in some capacity with a synagogue.[141]

Another aspect of Luke's characterization of Cornelius—with bearing upon the related portrayal of Peter—is Cornelius' steady obedience to divine call and command.

[141] While it is true that Luke seems to connect the angel's visit and the general favor Cornelius receives to his piety ("Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God," 10:4), it is not true that only Jewish-looking Gentiles are to be received into God's people. Otherwise, the logic of the P-C episode and its implications is undercut entirely. What makes Cornelius able to represent "the Gentiles" is not that he is Jewish in all but foreskin, but that irrespective of his personal piety, he remains a Gentile with whom observant Jews are not to associate (10:28). So why does Luke emphasize his piety, especially in a pericope in which the demonstration of Jewish piety by an observant Jewish believer creates tension with God's will? Studies of Peter's character that overlook the portrait of Cornelius' character too quickly make of Peter a model believer and apostle. When Cornelius' characterization forms the backdrop to Peter's subtle character portrait, a more complex picture emerges, which is crucial to understand in order to grasp the broader trajectory of the P-C episode.

When the angel appears to Cornelius and tells him to "send men to Joppa for a certain Simon[142] who is called Peter" (10:4-5), he does not wonder at the angel's message (cf. Peter in 10:17, 19), but does exactly what he is told. He sends the men according to the angel's instructions. When these servants arrive at Simon's house, the Spirit says to an inquisitive Peter: "go with them without hesitation for I have sent them" (10:20). Lest it be too quickly passed over, the Spirit claims responsibility for the sending of Cornelius' servants *by Cornelius*, further underscoring Cornelius' alignment with God's purposes. Cornelius' obedient response to all the commands given him confirms his deep devotion to God (10:7-8, 22, 24-25, 30-33).

As many details as the Lukan narrator offers about Cornelius' character, it might be concluded that he is a "round" character, dynamic, developing throughout the narrative. In an effort to turn Cornelius into a "model convert," in fact, some missiological readings have attempted to see "conversion" or transformation in his character where there is none.[143] Lest readers forget, Luke foregrounds Cornelius' piety (10:2), so that transformation over the course of the episode is all but precluded. In fact, some have pointed out that the only potential instance of impiety on Cornelius' part occurs toward the end of the scene, when he "falls at [Peter's] feet and *worships* (προσεκύνησεν) him" (10:25). Given Peter's reaction—"Stand up; I am only a mortal"

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[142] Sleeman notices that the P-C episode provides the only instances of Peter being called Simon in Acts (cf. Simeon in 15:14), thereby recalling from the Third Gospel Peter's relationship with Jesus (5:10; 6:14; 22:31-32) and its potential christological implications for this story (*Geography,* 225).

[143] E.g., Nguyen, *Peter and Cornelius,* 109-115, 151-153. Because the focus of the episode is on Peter's experience, Cornelius' character is necessarily "flatter" than Peter's. Dibelius had it right all along ("Conversion," 118-119): "It is not the centurion's belief which is being proved, but the apostle's right to enter the houses of uncircumcised men—and then not in order to convert the uncircumcised to Christ, but in order to eat with them."

(10:26)— Cornelius' behavior here probably amounts to more than mere genuflection[144]; it may represent the characteristic Gentile sin of idolatry (cf. Acts 12:21-23; 14:11-15; cf. 28:6),[145] as if Luke reminds readers of his narrative role as *the* representative Gentile. That is, Cornelius' bowing[146] may indicate the persistent gap in holiness between Gentiles and Jews which the Holy Spirit will soon overcome.

In his speech, however, Cornelius transparently repeats nearly verbatim the angel's visit and command (10:30-32; cf. 10:4-6). Cornelius goes on to express appreciation for Peter's coming and indicates his receptivity to whatever Peter has to say (10:33). For example, when Peter arrives in Caesarea, Cornelius expresses his trust in divine providence by waiting expectantly for Peter and his own servants, manifest in his having called together relatives and friends (10:24) to hear "all that the Lord has commanded [Peter] to say" (10:33).[147] As if to underscore the limited shape and role of Cornelius' character, Cornelius' name drops out of Peter's retelling in 11:1-18 (cf. "the man") and then his character disappears entirely from 15:7-11. The significance of this

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[144] Gaventa, *Acts*, 167, views Cornelius' bowing minimally; cf. Bruce, *Acts*, 221. Similarly, the NIV ("in reverence") and CEB ("honor") minimize his transgression. At the same time, as Christoph Stenschke notes (*Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999], 151-152), Cornelius' bowing may remind readers of precisely how this Gentile represents all Gentiles, that is, by his proclivity for idolatry. cf. also Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 104, who views the bowing as a Gentile transgression requiring reproof.

[145] C. Kavin Rowe, "Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult: A Way through the Conundrum?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27.3 (March 2005): 279–300.

[146] Interestingly, we find almost identical wording in 2 Ki 4:37 (καὶ εἰσῆλθεν ἡ γυνὴ καὶ *ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ καὶ προσεκύνησεν* ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν). The story of Elisha and the Shunamite's son, which echoes Acts 20, Eutychus, and Lk 7:15, the widow's son at Nain; many have seen in the Elijah and Elisha cycles a kind of pattern influential in Luke's writings (cf. Craig Evans, "The Function of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives in Luke's Ethic of Election" in *Luke and Scripture*, ed. Craig Evans and James A. Sanders; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001], 70-83.

[147] Witherup, "Cornelius," 49.

episode—which Luke highlights by repeating it (11:1-8; 15:7-11)—ultimately does not require the particularity of Cornelius' identity, only that he is a Gentile.

One conclusion to be drawn on this profile of Cornelius' character is that Luke builds the story not around the uncertainty of Cornelius' acceptance or transformation, but around Peter's overcoming of his own sensibilities and certainties, for which he is well known (cf. Luke 9:33; 22:31-34). Therefore, despite this being a story about Gentile "conversion"—*the* conversion story *par excellence* in Acts, some would say[148]—the focal perspective of the episode concerns *Peter's experience* of the event, not Cornelius'.[149] Another conclusion is that the rhetorical effect of Cornelius' characterization is to persuade readers to judge Cornelius worthy of receiving the Holy Spirit (especially as it precedes baptism) and of being the first (undisputed) Gentile convert in Acts.[150] Others have taken Cornelius' piety as an instance of a broader pattern of Lukan characterization of Gentiles. When the narrator labels Cornelius "devout and god-fearing" (εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν, Acts 10:2, 22), he identifies him with a particular group of Gentiles that had special attachments to the Jewish synagogues (but were not circumcised). These "God-fearers" are found in Acts alongside Jews in the

[148] Nguyen, "Dismantling Cultural Boundaries," 461: "The P-C episode, therefore, was the test case *par excellence* for genuine mission to the Gentiles." Wilson, *Gentiles*, 177: "It is for Luke the test-case *par excellence* for the admission of the Gentiles into the Church."
[149] Witherup, "Cornelius," 54, notes the progressive shift in the story: "The vision of Cornelius is narrated four times in the context of the story (10.1-8, 22, 30-33; 11.11-14). It is [my] contention … that the role of Cornelius declines as the story unfolds just as the role of Peter rises."
[150] That Luke could such a thing is apparent from the other significant centurion story in Luke-Acts. In Luke 7:2-10, Jesus is approached by Jewish elders on behalf of a centurion, whose valued slave was fatally ill. They explicitly tell Jesus, "[The centurion] is worthy of having you do this for him, for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us" (7:4-5). Certainly, Jesus may have decided to help this Gentile regardless of the man's loyalty to the local Jewish population. But the Jews' advocacy makes Jesus' aid seem all the more deserving, just as the narrator's description in Acts 10:2-4 and 10:22 (cf. 11:13-14) makes Cornelius' household's salvation all the more appropriate.

synagogue (cf. 13:16, 26). And because the historical data on such a group are ambiguous at best, some have concluded that Luke has essentially made the official designation up.[151] That is, "God-fearer" is a literary fiction intended to minimize the distance between Jewish self-definition (holy, elect) and the perception of Gentiles as idolatrous and unclean. In this way, the argument goes, Luke overcomes possible tension between the Israel-focused ministry of Jesus and the more expansive outreach of the apostolic and post-apostolic church (of Luke's day). But the larger point of the story is to underscore the fact that whatever Cornelius is, he is a Gentile. While his piety is mentioned at various points, it is never interpreted as the *basis* for salvation. Even the claim that "your prayers have been heard" (10:4) is tied to the promise that he still lacks something which Peter will help remedy ("message by which you … will be saved," 11:14; cf. 10:22).

As much as we emphasize the continuity between the Jewish-looking Cornelius and the Jewish apostolic church,[152] the episode is clearly built atop the opposite assumption—namely, that a chasm exists between the two characters (e.g., 10:28; 11:5). In fact, the dichotomy between "we" (Jewish believers) and "they" (Gentiles) becomes a common refrain throughout the P-C cycle that gives the episode its salvation-historical

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[151] Cf. Lake, "Proselytes and God-Fearers," 74-96; and Eyal Regev, "The Gradual Conversion of Gentiles in Acts and Luke's Paradox of the Gentile Mission," in *Law and Narrative in the Bible and in Neighbouring Ancient Cultures,* ed. Klaus-Peter Adam et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012): 349–371.

[152] Taken further, the surface similarity between a pious Gentile centurion and a Jewish apostle may also contribute to the extreme view that Gentiles are not saved *except* by association with Jews. Despite the appearance in the P-C episode of God's favor apart from legal observance, it could be argued that God does not "address" the Gentiles directly, only making an appeal to them by means of Jewish believers. On this view, pious Gentiles express their inclusion in salvation through Christ by incorporating Jewish practices. This is part of a larger argument about how to interpret Acts and, in particular, the relationship between Jewish rejection of the gospel and Gentile inclusion in God's people. Specifically, it is an offshoot of the notion that Gentiles are saved *because* of Jewish acceptance of the Gospel (i.e. the restoration of Israel), to which Gentiles are then secondarily added. This view counters the persistent theory that Gentile salvation follows from Jewish *rejection* of the gospel.

force: “the gift of the Spirit has been poured out *even* on the Gentiles” (10:45; cf. 11:1, 17-18; 15:7-9). Rather than simply smooth over that dichotomy for the sake of establishing the continuity of the Gentile with the Jew, Luke emphasizes the distinction in order to bring out the significance of surmounting it.

Finally, from a reader’s standpoint, it might be asked why some are so quick to identify Cornelius as the “other.” Certainly, if Christian mission history is a guide, he is the default target of missionary efforts. But to focus on Cornelius as the identified “other” only obscures the main emphasis of the P-C episode, which is *Peter’s* mutability. The characterization of Cornelius, therefore, is crucial to understanding Acts 10-11, but not as a model “convert” so much as the stable character in the story against which Luke can contrast the evolving character of Peter. Whereas Cornelius’ Jewish-looking devotion brings him into alignment with God’s purposes, it is Peter’s adherence to legal observance that puts him *out* of alignment with God’s will. The “Jewishness” of Cornelius, in a way, thrusts the Jewishness of Peter into potential crisis (cf. 9:32-43). In other words, the “conversion” of Cornelius is part of the narrative backdrop in a story that emphasizes the transformation of the apostle Peter. As it stands, the obsolescence of Cornelius’ character in 11:5-17 and 15:7-11 only underscores the prominence and character development of Peter, from whose perspective the second (and third) telling of the story is delivered.

Gentile conversion is a part of the *setting* of the episode, but not its primary focus. Not only does the episode indicate that God is the originator of the Gentile mission (as Chapter 2 showed to be true throughout Acts) but the transformation of the insider is the

more difficult and effectual task accomplished by God than bringing the willing Gentile into God's people.

3.6.1.3 Peter in Acts 10:9-29, (34-43) 44-48

The Cornelius incident begins, remarkably, with a description of the Gentile centurion and an angelic visitation.[153] In fact, the disorienting nature of the event is evident from the very beginning in that God's plans are revealed to Cornelius before they are communicated to Peter, though neither character is given full(er) knowledge until they have met one another. Just as Peter was summoned to Joppa from Lydda, so he will be brought to Caesarea from Joppa without full awareness of what awaits him. The introduction to the P-C episode frames Peter's behavior, not as an explicit act of obedience to Jesus' commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), but as a *reaction to present events*, in the light of which that commission becomes clearer. The irony that results from Peter's eventual turnaround in the story (10:28) is that Peter may not have fully understood Jesus' commission-promise (1:8) or at least what such a commission implied about contact with and acceptance of Gentiles among God's people. Therefore, in initially resisting the divine revelation to make no distinctions (10:14-16, 28), Peter appears to resist the fuller sense and scope of Jesus' commission "to all nations" (Luke 24:47) and "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

[153] Jacob Jervell's conclusion that the God of Israel has nothing to do directly with Gentiles in Acts—only with Gentiles already associated with Israel—is thus overstated ("The Future of the Past: Luke's Vision of Salvation History and Its Bearing on His Writing of History," in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. Ben Witherington [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 1996], 105-110). It is overstated because the angelic appearance to Cornelius ("in his house": 11:13) is not prepared by the Jewish apostle's presence there or by his explicit connections to a synagogue. Those connections—while important for the characterization of Cornelius—are tangential to the *reasons* for the angel's visit (10:2, 4).

3.6.1.3.1 Acts 10:9-29

In Acts 10, the narrator re-introduces Peter, whom we know to be lodging in Joppa. He is in prayer while Cornelius' emissaries approach Joppa (10:9). In other words, Luke begins the characterization of Peter's activity only after other events having to do with him have been set in motion. This aspect of Luke's storytelling reminds readers that the initiative behind events belongs to God rather than to Peter. But Peter is no puppet on a string; the episode is crafted to bring out Peter's ignorance of God's plans and therefore the possibility and accompanying significance of his response to divine prompts. The broader canvas of Luke's characterization of Peter concerns Peter's experience as one in which a fuller grasp of "meaning" comes at the end rather than at the beginning. Yet, unlike Peter, the reader already knows what has happened with Cornelius, and so is in a position to see whether Peter will accept or resist what is coming. Peter will have to act on the basis of partial knowledge and reach fuller understanding through the witness of Cornelius (and the Holy Spirit) *to Peter*. The dramatic irony by which Luke structures the episode enables readers to both recognize God's hand in events as well as pay attention to Peter's *reactions* to them.

Interestingly, both Peter and Cornelius are introduced with respect to their practices of prayer and a subsequent heavenly vision (10:2-6, 9-16). While Luke narrates Cornelius' vision[154] and charge as a kind of divine response to the centurion's piety,

[154] Nguyen, "Luke's Point of View," 92-93, notes how Cornelius' vision is first related by the narrator (10:3-6), then by Cornelius' men (10:22), then by Cornelius himself (10:31-32), and finally by Peter (11:13-14). The path of these retellings can be understood as moving from external to internal focalization—that is, from a point of view outside of the characters to one internal to the main character, Peter.

Peter's prayer (and hunger) provides the conditions for a "trance" (ἔκστασις; 11:15; cf. 22:17) in which his desires and sense of obedience will be challenged (10:10-16). In the midst of his practice of Jewish piety, Peter will receive a cryptic message about how to re-imagine the boundary-markers of Jewish observance.[155]

3.6.1.3.2 The Vision of Clean and Unclean Animals (10:11-16)

Much, of course, can be said about Peter's strange vision. The present concern, however, is to show how Luke's *characterization* of Peter develops with respect to the divine communiqué. Until v. 17, Cornelius' divine visitation (10:1-8) and Peter's vision (10:11-16) are parallel rather than intersecting experiences, adding suspense and revealing the knowledge deficit Peter must overcome. Peter's bewildered reception of his vision and eventual clarity about it structures the episode, thrusting the Lukan characterization of Peter front and center.

Several observations about his vision (10:9-16) can be offered. First, the vision is clearly intended to express divine revelation. The language recalls other "heavenly" disclosures in Luke and Acts, especially those concerning Jesus.[156] As Peter's speech will

[155] Another level of irony may be indicated in the fact that the roof on which he prays belongs to a tradesman who traffics in animal impurity.

[156] The detail that Peter "saw the heaven opened" (θεωρεῖ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεῳγμένον, 10:11) recalls similar instances in Luke-Acts. For instance, when Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, Luke says, "heaven was opened" (ἀνεῳχθῆναι τὸν οὐρανὸν, Luke 3:21) as Jesus prayed. Luke's description in Acts 10:11 finds an even closer parallel, both thematically and narratively, in Stephen who, at the hour of his death, tells his persecutors of his vision: "I see the heavens opened (θεωρῶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς διηνοιγμένους) and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). The opening of the heavens reflects a certain measure of access to God and now Jesus (Acts 1:11; 2:33; 3:21). After all, where earlier God had poured out the Spirit from heaven onto Jesus (Luke 3:21), we learn in Acts that Jesus pours out the Spirit from heaven onto believers (Acts 2:33). Stephen, therefore, sees Jesus in heaven when "the heavens are opened." Even Luke's description in Peter's vision of the return of the "something like a large sheet" to heaven (ἀνελήμφθη τὸ σκεῦος εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, 10:16) echoes earlier language of Jesus' ascension (ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀναλημφθεὶς ἀφ᾽ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, 1:11; cf. 1:2, 22).

clarify, the experience concerns the clarification of God's character (10:34) and the scope of Jesus' Lordship (10:36).

Second, the vision of a sheet-like (ὡς ὀθόνην) object containing "all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds" (10:11-12), from which Peter is commanded to slaughter and eat, prompts Peter to object (10:13-14): "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." Peter's objection should be familiar to readers of Luke-Acts who recall his penchant for correcting Jesus (Luke 5:5a, 8; 8:45; 9:33; 22:34, 58, 60-61).[157] Though the disciples on the whole receive better treatment in Luke-Acts than, say, in Mark's Gospel, attentive readers recognize in Peter's misguided certainty a familiar trope (cf. Mark 8:32-33; 14:29-31; 14:37).[158] At the same time, given the series of mini-episodes preceding the P-C account (Acts 9:32-43), Peter's dalliance with ritual impurity primes readers for the irony of his protestations. The one who spent time among the "sick," exposed himself to corpse impurity, and lodged in a house of ritual uncleanness (9:32-43), objects to God's command on the basis of his covenantal identity: members of Israel maintain purity by upholding *kashrut*, thereby reflecting the holiness of God (cf. Lev 11; Deut 14).

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[157] While most assume the referent of κύριε is God, it should be pointed out that God is rarely the object of the vocative (among several ambiguous references, cf. the only clear examples in Luke 10:21 [but by Jesus]; Acts 4:29 [apostolic prayer]), and never addressed directly by Peter in that way (Luke 5:8; 12:41; 22:61; cf. Acts 12:11). In fact, only once God addresses Peter directly, in 9:35, where Jesus himself is also present.

[158] This is not to suggest that Luke expected his readers to be familiar with Mark's specific ways of characterizing the Twelve, and Peter especially, but that Luke himself was likely influenced by Mark's pattern of characterization so that similarities with Mark can be explained without requiring the burden of synoptic proof in each case. That is, Luke's characterization of Peter may build on the characterization that Luke notices in Mark even if Luke does not bring all of the Markan characterization of Peter into his own two-volume work.

Third, concerning the vision, it appears that there were *both* clean and unclean animals in the heavenly sheet. Indeed, the point of the vision—as we will later learn—is that distinctions should not be made between clean and profane (because the clean can no longer be defiled by the common[159]). On this view, it would be possible for Peter to simply select out the clean animals for eating.[160] That Peter does not—and, presumably, cannot—suggests that the association of clean and unclean comprises the challenge inherent in the vision. Peter must not make distinctions among the creatures God has made. Difficult to overlook is the fact that so-called (by Peter) "unclean" animals are already associated with the divine realm.[161] Proof that these creatures are finally to be judged "clean" is implicit in the fact that, according to the vision, they descend from heaven itself (10:11-12).

Fourth, Peter's objections ("by no means, Lord") seem immediate and unreflective, tightly bound up with his own ethnic identity. To distinguish between clean and unclean is to obey the Word, fulfill the covenant, declare the terms on which the God of Israel is to be known and worshipped. But Peter's objections are as misguided as they are instinctive. The divine voice must insist three times that God has made all the creatures clean (10:15-16). The repeated vision, though not narrated, implies Peter's slowness to comprehend. The vision ends with understanding deferred till later in the story (10:17, 19, 28).

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[159] See Colin House, "Defilement by Association: Some Insights from the Usage of ΚΟΙΝΌΣ/ΚΟΙΝΌΩ IN Acts 10-11," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21.2 (Summer 1983): 143-154.
[160] Haenchen, *Acts,* 361-362.
[161] Nguyen, "Dismantling Cultural Boundaries," 456.

3.6.1.3.2.1 The Aftermath of the Vision (10:17-29)

Luke introduces the next stage of the story by highlighting Peter's incomprehension—he was "greatly puzzled (ἐν ἑαυτῷ διηπόρει) about what to make of the vision that he had seen" (10:17). Other Lukan uses of διαπορέω (the only four in the NT) similarly reflect perplexity in response to a miracle or seeming impossibility (Luke 9:7; Acts 2:12; 5:24). Peter simply lacks the conceptual categories to make sense of what God is asking of him. Indeed, as we will see, a broader encounter in which God is also at work (among Gentiles) is needed for everything to fall into place for Peter.

Because of Peter's hesitations and, perhaps, since it is a vision, the trance ends without Peter eating anything, unclean or otherwise. The meaning of the vision is left open at this point. As Peter wrestles with the vision's meaning, the narrator unites the first scene about Cornelius (vv. 1-8) to the present scene involving Peter (vv. 9-17a). The sudden appearance of Cornelius' men while Peter is still "greatly puzzled" suggests that their appearance is somehow related to the vision's purpose for Peter (v. 17b). Again, a few verses later, "while Peter was still thinking about the vision" (v. 19a), Luke tells readers, "the Spirit said to him, 'Look, three men are searching for you. Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them'" (vv. 19b-20). The men's arrival at Simon's house coincides with the Spirit's prompting of Peter to recognize their arrival (not that they are Gentiles!). From Peter's perspective, the men's arrival and the Spirit's directive do little to clear up his perplexity.

Because this is a turning point in the story—indicated by the words being put in the Spirit's mouth, as it were—the following statement deserves special consideration:

> *"Get up, go down, and go* (ἀναστὰς κατάβηθι καὶ πορεύου) *with them without hesitation* (μηδὲν διακρινόμενος); *for I have sent* (ἀπέσταλκα) *them"* (10:20).

First, on the one hand, the angel's compact command (ἀναστὰς κατάβηθι καὶ πορεύου) is just that, an order to go with the visitors. On the other hand, though it is unlikely that resurrection imagery is intended here, there may be symbolism in the angel's command to "go down" (κατάβηθι; cf. also Acts 10:21).[162] Peter must descend from the heights of the position he has taken up in prayer and condescend to those whom God has sent to him, mirroring the broader movement of Peter's characterization over the course of the story. The story moves from a holy vision in which he defends his seemingly pious actions before God (10:9-16) to an earthly encounter in which he must defend his seemingly impious actions before other believers (11:5-17). To "go with" these Gentiles implies the beginnings of a deepening association evocative of the ultimate significance of the story. Peter cannot remain where he is or as he is, if he is to grasp what God is doing among the Gentiles and, therefore, among all God's people.

The transformation of Peter, moreover, is reflected in the geographical movement of the story. Symbolically, *Peter* must journey from Joppa to Caesarea, rather than Cornelius from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Ultimately, the story has to do with the lengths to which Peter and the apostolic church must go to be able to recognize that indeed God has willed the Gentiles to be members of God's people, without recourse to law-observance. Moreover, this will mean that Jewish believers like Peter are the ones whose transformation Luke's narrative foregrounds. That transformation, moreover, may be

[162] Examples where καταβαίνω likely means more than simply "go down" include Luke 18:14; Acts 8:38; 14:11.

subtly suggested by the linguistic and geographic parallels between the P-C episode and the Jonah story.[163]

Second, the word διακρίνομαι/διακρίνω functions as a kind of hook word throughout the ensuing narrative (11:2, 12; 15:9), its use in Luke-Acts limited entirely to the P-C episode cycle. Here (μηδὲν διακρινόμενος) used in the middle voice, it tends to mean (in broader biblical usage) "doubt" or "hesitate" (lit., be at variance with oneself).[164] The phrase introduces a causal clause ("doubting nothing *because* I have sent them…"),[165] which makes a broader claim than the immediate context suggests. That is,

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[163] These associations are most fully traced by Robert Wall, "Peter Son of 'Jonah': Conversion of Cornelius in the Context of Canon," in *The New Testament as Canon: A Reader in Canonical Criticism*, ed. Robert Wall and Eugene Lemcio (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 129-140. Wall develops his observations on and in contradistinction from the previous work on the subject by C.S.C. Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (BNTC; London: A & C Black, 1957), 152-153. Wall draws out a number of parallels between the two stories: the continuity of location (Joppa: Jonah 1:3; Acts 9:43); motif of the reluctance of God's messengers to go to the Gentiles (which is overcome by divine intervention) [Wall notes the parallel between the "three days and nights" of Jonah 2:1 and the "three times" the sheet comes down and the voice tells Peter to eat (131), yet three is a common enough number that the allusion is weak.]; parallel wording of the divine command (ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύθητι εἰς Νινευη (LXX Jonah 3:2]; ἀναστὰς κατάβηθι καὶ πορεύου σὺν αὐτοῖς [Acts 10:20]); theme of Gentiles believing the Word and being forgiven (Jonah 3:5; Acts 10:43); motif of conversion of the Gentiles eliciting a negative Jewish response (Jonah 4:1; Acts 11:2; cf. 10:14); and God's rebuttal of that hostile response (Jonah 4:2-11; Acts 11:17-18; cf. 15:13-21). (Wall, 131-132). Wall concludes, "*Luke's point is that Jonah's God is Peter's God.* As such, he [sic] is free to save the repentant non-Jew even though his messengers might want to restrict the true Israel only to Jews." (Wall, 132, emphasis original). Whether or not Luke "intends" a reference to Jonah here, the parallels at least help to draw out how Luke characterizes Peter's reluctance to follow divine command with respect to Gentiles. In hesitating to associate with the "unclean" *Gentile* (cf. Peter's willing association with potentially unclean *Jews* in Acts 9:32-43), Peter locates himself in the tradition of the reluctant prophet who must learn by experience that God is "a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love" (Jonah 4:2). While it is true that Luke elsewhere draws on the Jonah narrative (Luke 11:29-32 // Matt 12:39-41; cf. Matt 16:4), less congenial to Wall's argument is the fact that only Matthew calls Peter "Simon *bar-Jonah*" (16:17), unless of course Luke knew Matthew or at least the same underlying source ("Q"). That Luke does not include this title in the place where Matthew does is not, however, evidence against Luke's association between Jonah and Peter.

[164] The common translation "without hesitating" (NRSV, NIV) is slightly idiomatic. Because μηδὲν is accusative, the more literal reading is "doubting nothing" (KJV).

[165] Given that μηδὲν functions like a direct object, the subsequent ὅτι likely cannot introduce a relative clause (since ὅτι ordinarily occupies the place of a direct object in relative clauses). Therefore, the subsequent clause—ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀπέσταλκα αὐτούς—is causal. In other words, the Spirit says "doubt nothing *because* I have sent them" (rather than "do not doubt *that* I have sent them"), as most translations recognize.

the scene focuses on Peter's doubts *in general*, not simply his doubts about who sent these men to him. In this way, Luke characterizes the Spirit's command as a way to preempt the doubts or hesitations likely facing Peter on the way to a Gentile's house in Caesarea. Because Peter's retelling of this part of the episode in Acts 11 develops the significance of the use of διακρίνομαι/διακρίνω, more will be said about the ambiguity of μηδὲν διακρινόμενος in a subsequent section.

Third, as we have seen, the claim that the Spirit has sent (ἀπέσταλκα) the men to Peter is implicitly a claim that Cornelius' obedient actions (of sending the men) serve as the medium of the Spirit's work. Though the angel gave the command (πέμψον ἄνδρας εἰς Ἰόππην, 10:5, 32; cf. 11:13: ἀπόστειλον εἰς Ἰόππην), when the men arrive at Simon's house they are described as οἱ ἄνδρες *οἱ ἀπεσταλμένοι ὑπὸ τοῦ Κορνηλίου* (Acts 10:17; cf. 10:33: ἔπεμψα πρὸς σέ; cf. 11:11), and when Peter learns of their arrival it is *the Spirit* who claims ultimate responsibility (ἀπέσταλκα, 10:20). Rather than settle the question of who sends the messengers—as if Luke intended there to be only one answer—it can be inferred that the Spirit is behind both the communications of the angel as well as the obedience of Cornelius himself.[166] Once again, Cornelius' obedience appears as part of God's purposes, to which Peter is invited to respond in kind.

[166] In claiming "I have sent them," the Spirit identifies both with the angel of God who gives Cornelius the original message to send men to Peter (10:5-6, 22, 30-32) *and also* with Cornelius' obedient response to the command (10:7-8, 22, 33). Such a conclusion implies that the Holy Spirit—mediating God's/Jesus' presence on earth—is working through Cornelius though he has yet to hear the message of salvation! This may account, in a way, for how Peter can later say that "*God testified* to [the Gentiles] by giving them the Spirit, just as he did to us" (15:8).

Whether or not Peter's question—"what is the reason for your coming?"—reflects doubt or hesitation,[167] it does indicate his limited understanding in this narrative. Cornelius was asked to send men for Peter without knowing precisely the reason; Peter is told to go with these men knowing little more than that the Spirit had sent them. To the question of why they have come, Cornelius' men introduce a bit more information: "Cornelius … was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say" (10:22). That Peter was to be summoned *in order to deliver a message* was spelled out neither in the angel's original message to Cornelius (10:4-6) nor in the Spirit's explanation to Peter (10:19-20). Only from the men themselves does Peter learn that he will deliver a message to Cornelius' household. Later, when Peter arrives at Cornelius' house, Cornelius further specifies *why* he sent for Peter: "So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to *all that the Lord has commanded you to say*" (10:33). In other words, Cornelius believes not just that Peter has something to tell Cornelius, but that Peter's very words have been given him by the κύριος; indeed, the Lord *commanded* him (πάντα τὰ προστεταγμένα).

In 10:21, Peter is not any closer to grasping the specific message of the food vision; his obedience to the Spirit's command, however, does signal an openness to what

[167] Whether Peter actually hesitates is another question. What it would look like if Peter "hesitated" or "doubted," according to the logic of the narrative? Would waiting until the next day before "going with them," as Peter does, count? Would simply questioning the visitors, as Peter does, suffice? Cf. the CEB, which translates μηδὲν διακρινόμενος as "Don't ask questions." The translators here presumably attempt to draw out Peter's hesitations more vividly since the very thing Peter does when the men arrive is to ask them, "Why have you come?" Then again, it should not be overlooked that Peter welcomes the Gentile visitors into the house (of Simon the tanner)—does that indicate compliance instead? Certainly, an observant Jewish man's presence in a Gentile centurion's home is a bigger leap than Gentiles' presence in a less than fully observant Jewish household. And yet, both presumably entail an "association" of sorts. Curiously, in his retelling of the story in Acts 11, Peter leaves out both the overnight stay and the query (11:12).

will happen next. In fact, Peter's cooperation creates a parallel with Cornelius' obedience to divine command earlier. That he welcomes Cornelius' messengers by offering them the hospitality (ξενίζω: 10:23) that he himself received from Simon the tanner (ξενίζω: 10:6, 18) linguistically alerts readers to an initial shift in Peter's attitude.[168] Just as the prefatory narrative of 9:32-43 previewed themes to come (impurity, e.g.), so Peter's playing host to Cornelius' men anticipates the crucial motifs of Jew-Gentile association (10:28) and Cornelius' hospitality toward Peter (10:27, 48)—the very points of controversy requiring Peter's defense in Acts 11:1-18.

The note about the accompaniment of some believers from Joppa (τινες τῶν ἀδελφῶν τῶν ἀπὸ Ἰόππης, Acts 10:23) establishes the authenticating presence of other witnesses. At the end of the chapter, when the Spirit falls on Cornelius' household, Luke specifically notes the response of these "circumcised believers": "[they] were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God" (Acts 10:45-46). This remark anticipates Peter's testimony before the Jerusalem believers (also including "circumcised believers," 11:2) in the next chapter: "These six brothers accompanied me and we entered [Cornelius'] house" (11:12). It also corroborates Peter's repeated claim that what happened in Caesarea among Gentiles parallels what happened to Jewish believers in Jerusalem (11:15, 17; 15:8).

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[168] John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 87: Peter's hospitality represents "the germ of his repentance from the conviction that the gospel should be preached only to the Jews."

3.6.1.3.2.2 The Meeting of Peter and the Gentiles (10:23-29)

Another aspect of characterization is evident after Cornelius falls at Peter's feet and "worships" him (10:25). While commentaries debate the significance of Cornelius' act here—whether it is merely a sign of respect or something more[169]—a few points can be offered on the brief interchange, from the angle of Peter's characterization. First, Peter's response ("Stand up[170]; I am only mortal," 10:26) implies that Cornelius' action is mistaken in bestowing such honor, whether it had been intended to esteem Peter as divine or not.[171] On the one hand, Luke may be underscoring Cornelius' Gentile identity, of which idolatry is the defining trait (cf. 14:11-13; 12:22; 28:6) in Jewish eyes. God (along with Jesus; Luke 24:52) is to be worshiped; Jesus' servants are not. On the other hand, it is also true that Cornelius' action gives Luke the opportunity to remind readers that Peter is not to be identified with divine presence[172]—not simply because Peter is mortal, but because the whole episode is about Peter's need to *learn* God's will and character in due

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[169] For the debate see Barrett, *Acts*, 1:513-14; Witherington, *Acts*, 352.

[170] The statement "Peter made him get up, saying, 'Stand up…'" (ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν λέγων· ἀνάστηθι, Acts 10:26) recalls Peter's experience on the rooftop, when the Spirit tells him: ἀναστὰς κατάβηθι καὶ πορεύου. In other words, as Peter had to arise and descend to meet Cornelius' men, so now Peter raises up Cornelius and tells him, literally, to ascend from his obsequious stance. The topography of body language, so to speak, is unmistakable: Peter is told by the Spirit to "go down" (κατάβηθι) and Cornelius is told by Peter to "get up" (ἀνάστηθι). Even as the Gentile Cornelius rises to new religious status, so Peter's ethnic self-understanding is transformed vis-à-vis Cornelius. As representatives of their respective people, Peter's descent will mean Cornelius' ascent, preparing us for the new theological/christological awareness to come in 10:34-43.

[171] Bezae, presumably discontent with the ambiguity, replaces "get up" with "what are you doing?", thereby drawing attention to the impropriety of the Gentile's behavior. But the (uncorrected) Bezae also tacks on at the end "(I am a mortal) *just like you*," which anticipates the "just like us" motif running throughout Acts 10, 11, and 15.

[172] Brawley, *Centering on God,* 141: "The narrator first uses Cornelius' obeisance to heighten Peter's heroic status. But Peter's self-designation anticipates the equality of human beings from the divine perspective (10:34)." Interestingly, as Sleeman notes (*Geography*, 223-235), in Luke's Gospel Jesus heals the centurion's servant in absentia (7:1-10)—i.e. without going into his house—but here the precise thing needed, as well as the controversy that attends it, has to do with Peter's *entry* into Gentile space. Space itself is restructured—from the Gentile geography (formerly unclean for angels and Jews) to Peter's Jewish geography (traveling among Jews, eschewing idolatry)—in light of Christ's heavenly ascension.

course. Cornelius had been given a divine message from an angel (10:3-6); here he may identify Peter as a messenger of similar origin. But to equate Peter with the presence of the divine ends up contradicting the logic of the whole story, which is to show how far Peter must travel *theologically*.[173]

Second, Cornelius' obeisance allows Peter to offer the correct[174] response to the gesture, according to the narrative of Acts (cf. 14:14-15), by insisting on his non-divine status. Rather than merely an instance of Peter's "exemplary humility,"[175] however, Peter's self-effacing response makes explicit the point of the whole P-C episode: Peter is unlike the angel (10:3-6) who executed God's will, because Peter is only now learning about God more fully too—namely, that God is *truly* impartial (10:34), that Jesus is "Lord of *all*" (10:36). That Cornelius could confuse Peter with God's presence sounds an ironic note since Luke thrice emphasizes the distinction between God's will and Peter's understanding (10:13-16). Moreover, it is Cornelius' work with which the Spirit identifies in 10:20 ("*I* have sent [Cornelius' servants]").

After raising Cornelius up (10:26), Peter converses with him as they enter the Gentile's house, where many of Cornelius' friends and family are gathered (10:27). Peter's initial address to Cornelius in 10:28-29 indicates a shift in Peter's understanding:

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[173] It is also possible that Cornelius does the right thing in respectfully genuflecting, but that Peter misreads it, ascribing to this Gentile behavior that, readers already know, would be atypical for him. Though Luke does not give us many decisive clues, this reading would further underscore Peter's penchant for misinterpreting the situation.

[174] That it is "correct" is probably indicated in the narrator's explanation of Herod's death in Acts 12:22-23: when the people shouted to Herod "The voice of a God, and not of a mortal," the text says, "immediately, because he had not given the glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:22-23). Though Peter does not obviously "give glory to God," he at least does not accept any of the possible implications of Cornelius' genuflection. Cf. the sensitive discussion in Bock, *Acts*, 392.

[175] Haenchen (*Acts,* 350) does not sufficiently account for the humility Peter experiences throughout the story because of his hesitation and tardy response to God's initiative.

"You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; *but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean*. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?" (NRSV, emphasis added). When Peter asserts what "you yourselves know," he refers to the common scriptural claim of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, especially emphasized during certain points in Israel's history. Where the identity of Israel was under particular threat by outside influence or culture (cf. 2 Macc 6), the associations between Jews and Gentiles were fraught with more than the dangers of ritual impurity; they posed a threat to the whole Jewish way of life.

In addition, Peter's choice of words—ἀθέμιτόν ἐστιν ἀνδρὶ Ἰουδαίῳ κολλᾶσθαι ἢ προσέρχεσθαι ἀλλοφύλῳ—recalls the LXX, which ubiquitously uses ἀλλόφυλος for "Philistine."[176] Even past the time of the historical Philistines, the Old Greek employs the term to refer to any foreign peoples with whom Jews are not to associate. In 2 Macc 6, for example, the author details how the faithful Jewish man Eleazar refused to "go over to an alien religion" (6:24), literally resisting "allophylism" (ἀλλοφυλισμός; NETS). When Peter says that it is well known that Jews are not to visit or associate with a Gentile ἀλλόφυλος, he names the partition that guarantees the distinctiveness of Jewish identity, his own included.

Cornelius and company surely know, Peter asserts, what is integral to Jewish identity, namely the limits of having impure contacts (Lev 10:10; 11:46-47; Deut 20:25; cf. *Jubilees* 22:15-19). Cornelius' familiarity with Jewish practices (prayer, almsgiving,

[176] Judges: 30 times; 1 Samuel: 133 times; 2 Samuel: 23 times.

general piety) makes it likely that he (and his household) indeed knew the boundaries of Jewish identity and community. The uncircumcised Cornelius (11:2-3) still knows that he is not someone with whom an observant Jewish apostle should associate, let alone share table fellowship.

Peter's reminder of unlawful association, however, is followed by an adversative clause: κἀμοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἔδειξεν μηδένα κοινὸν ἢ ἀκάθαρτον λέγειν ἄνθρωπον (Acts 10:28). Though κἀγω is rarely used adversatively in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:3; 2:48; 11:9; 19:23; 20:3; 22:29; Acts 8:19; 22:13, 19), because the clause beginning with κἀμοί (God says not to call people profane or unclean) essentially states the opposite of the first clause (it is unlawful for Jews to associate with profane or unclean people), κἀμοί must mean "but/yet/however" (cf. virtually all translations). The statement gives the clearest indication of Peter's dawning recognition that his divine vision has overturned his pious objections. That is, the command to eat the animals shown him in his vision really refers to God's directive not to distinguish between clean and unclean *people*. The adversative character of the statement clues readers in to the transformation that Peter is undergoing—from his early objections ("by no means, Lord!", 10:14-16) to his period of perplexity (10:17-19) to his dawning comprehension (10:22-28). Peter's explanation here, furthermore, helps frame his speech in vv. 34-43 as a kerygmatic recognition of his epiphany, thereby aiding readers in understanding what the speech is intended to convey.

Although readers never witness the "Lord" assigning Peter specific words to say to Cornelius' household, by the way Luke has ordered the episode, it is natural to take Peter's speech (10:34-43) as the substance of "everything the Lord commanded" Peter to

say (10:22, 33; 11:14).[177] On the one hand, it might seem natural to interpret Peter's words as the provision of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 12:11-12; Acts 2:1-11; 4:31). On the other hand, the fact that the personified Spirit intervenes to direct Peter's response (10:19-20) suggests that readers not equate all that Peter says and does with the Spirit's provision. Peter, as Luke characterizes him, must obey the Spirit in the absence of understanding (10:21-22). Moreover, that other Spirit-anointed Jewish believers and apostles require convincing by Peter (11:1-18; 15:7-11)[178] *about the Spirit's work* further suggests that the P-C episode represents a formidable breakthrough which one's anointing by the Spirit is no guarantee of understanding rightly.[179] The P-C episode epitomizes the frontiers across which the "word of the gospel" (15:7) must go, in fulfillment of the scriptures and Jesus' promise. The point is perhaps best encapsulated in a statement from the apostolic letter to Gentile believers at Antioch: "For it has seemed

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[177] A clarifying parallel can be found in Paul's own commission. In Acts 22:10, Paul recalls: ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν πρός με· ἀναστὰς πορεύου εἰς Δαμασκὸν κἀκεῖ σοι λαληθήσεται περὶ πάντων ὧν τέτακταί σοι ποιῆσαι / "The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus and there it will be told you concerning everything of which it has been assigned you to do." Here Paul recalls his Damascus encounter, including words spoken to him by the Lord Jesus and translating them into a slightly different idiom: λαληθήσεταί σοι ὅ τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν (Acts 9:6). Here "concerning everything of which it has been *assigned* you to do" parallels "whatever you *must* do." Thus, Luke understands "commanded/assigned" (προτάσσω/τάσσω by the Lord, explicitly or implicitly) to be a matter of divine necessity. Moreover, in Acts 9, Paul is not quite told what he must do. Rather, *Ananias* is told by the Lord Jesus that Paul "is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (Acts 9:15-16 NRSV). But when Ananias meets up with Saul, he simply declares his own assignment—"so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17). That is, Saul is not told "what you must do" (9:6); presumably, the Holy Spirit and Jesus' repeated appearances to him will serve that function. Readers might also assume that what Ananias is told summarizes Paul's to-do list—namely, to be an instrument to bring Jesus' name before Gentiles and kings and Israel and to suffer for the sake of that name (9:15-16). The parallel may suggest that "Lord" here (10:33) should be understood as Jesus. For these reasons and others, I follow Sleeman (*Geography,* 238) in suggesting it must be.

[178] This was helpfully pointed out to me by Julie Newberry.

[179] Luke's characterization of the Spirit in Acts 10 reflects the broader pattern of the Spirit's personification in Acts 8:26-21:20. In Jerusalem, the apostles receive the Holy Spirit for tongues of witness (2:2-11) and boldness (4:31), but as the "word" spreads beyond Jerusalem and Israel, the new frontiers call for further discernment of the Spirit's leading.

good to the Holy Spirit *and* to us" (Acts 15:28). The recognition of Gentile salvation and its momentous implications for table fellowship requires the working together (rather than the identification) of the will of the Spirit and the understanding of Christian leaders.[180]

Even if Peter's speech seems equally directed toward the audience of Acts (see below), and the delivery gets interrupted by the Spirit's descent (10:44; 11:15), Luke ties Gentile "salvation" to Peter's message. When the Spirit does come upon the Gentiles, it falls on "all who *heard the word*" (πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντας τὸν λόγον, 10:44). That is, Peter's speech is identified with the "word," elsewhere used in an absolute sense by Luke to designate the proclamation (of repentance and forgiveness) that Jesus and scripture promised would go to all nations (Luke 24:46-47). In Peter's later account, he even claims his message is the means "by which [Cornelius and his household] will be saved" (11:14). Even without strong declarations of belief and repentance by Cornelius in the episode, Peter's speech ensures that these Gentiles hear the gospel before the Spirit comes upon them. Notably, when Peter defends his actions before Jerusalem believers (11:5-17), he does not tell them what he *said* but what happened—i.e. what God/Spirit did.[181]

From this angle, the P-C episode is shaped in such a way to prompt readers to understand Peter's speech to Cornelius' household (10:34-43) as a reflection of Peter's perspective. Thus, it reflects his dawning discovery of the meaning of events; in his

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[180] See Stephen Fowl, "How the Spirit Reads and How to Read the Spirit," *Engaging Scripture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998): 97-127; and Luke Timothy Johnson, *Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983): 61-106.
[181] Cf. House, "Defilement by Association," 145.

speech Peter conveys the conclusions he is slowly compelled to draw as a result of the experience. Thus the speech declares both the gospel summary as well as the crucial realization Peter must make about what God has shown him. Peter himself is discovering the fullness of the gospel (along with the reader)—namely, that God is partial to all (10:34) and that the Messiah Jesus is Lord of all (10:36)—even as he declares that discovery to Gentiles.

3.6.1.3.3 Acts 10:34-43 and Speech as Characterization

Many speeches in Acts are treated by scholars as *ex post facto* compositions (*prosopopoeia*), allowing the author's views to find formal expression in the narrative[182] and helping readers understand the significance of the events narrated. Peter's speech (10:34-43) seems to fall into this category.[183] At the same time, there are indications that the speech does not quite "fit" its narrative context, suggesting Luke has an alternative purpose in placing it here.[184] Dibelius, for instance, claims the speech is a generic

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[182] Cf. Cadbury, "Speeches in Acts," 402-427; Dibelius, "The Speeches in Acts, " 138-145; Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*; and the oft-cited Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War,* 1.21.1: "my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said. And with reference to the narrative of events, far from permitting myself to derive it from the first source that came to hand, I did not even trust my own impressions, but it rests partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me, the accuracy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible."

[183] Cf. Dibelius, "Conversion," 111: "this speech in Cornelius' house…is composed on a pattern similar to that of Peter's other speeches and of Paul's speech in Antioch (13.16-41). …continue along the lines of a scheme which consists of kerygma (in this case 10.37-41), proof from the scriptures (10.43a) and exhortation to repentance (10.42, 43b). By developing the same scheme several times Luke wants to show his readers what Christian preaching is and ought to be…'You know of the story'—a literary phrase which could scarely be appropriate to use to Cornelius who, although he knows something of the Old Testament, evidently, as 10:1-4 indicates, knows nothing about Jesus Christ. See p. 111, fn 5: "Nothing justifies our assuming that Cornelius 'knows' anything." Cf. Ulrich Wilckens, "Kerygma und Evangelium bei Lukas: Beobachtungen zu Acta 10 34-43," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Alteren Kirche* 49.3-4 (1958): 226-227; Barrett, *Acts,* 1:522-523. An unspecified "John" who announces baptism (10:37) or perhaps even a reference to "all the prophets" (10:43) would have little traction with a Gentile centurion, however closely aligned to Judaism in his pious practices (10:2, 22).

[184] Wilckens, "Kerygma," 227. Since Dibelius ("The Conversion of Cornelius," 109-122), many have argued that Luke inserted Peter's speech into a conversion story that originally lacked such a speech.

"missionary" speech patterned after other examples of preaching to *Jews* in Acts.[185] But minor details make that explanation unlikely. The speech is not exhortative (2nd person) but declarative (3rd person) and expressed in the detached language of scriptural fulfillment (Acts 10:43).[186] If Luke inserted a speech into this story, it is hardly a model example of a *missionary* speech.[187] Ulrich Wilckens, therefore, concludes that the speech is rather a model "church sermon."[188] Though Wilckens' reading is more precise than Dibelius', form-critical assumptions lead them both to overlook the possibility that

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Dibelius attempted to prove this by pointing out how Peter's later account (11:5-17) recalls no such speech: "*As I began to speak*, the Holy Spirit fell upon them…" (11:15). In other words, Peter himself admits he did not deliver a speech on the occasion, thereby showing that 10:34-43 was a secondary addition. Yet see below for the qualification offered by John Kilgallen, "Did Peter Actually Fail to Get a Word in? (Acts 11,15)," *Biblica* 71 (1990): 405-410.

[185] Cf. Acts 2:38; 3:19; 13:24; 14:15; 17:30; 20:21; cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 5:31; 8:22; 19:4; 26:18-20. These reflect Luke's preferred use of μετάνοια/μετανοέω and ἐπιστρέφω. In his testimony before Agrippa, Paul summarizes his own ministry: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, *that they should repent* and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance" (26:19-20). Thus, ministry among sinful Gentiles (especially) is associated with the call to repentance. Dibelius concludes Peter's speech is simply a model of missionary preaching to be emulated ("Conversion of Cornelius," 98: "Lukas will den Lesern zeigen, was christliche Predigt ist und sein soll.") but there is no call to repentance (μετάνοια), only the mention of forgiveness (10:43).

[186] See Dibelius, "Conversion," 110-111, 119; Wilckens, "Kerygma," 225-226. Wilckens also notes that the typical scriptural citations that would frame the kerygma in continuity with God's ancient plan are missing or, at least, greatly condensed into a more general claim: "all the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (10:43).

[187] Jervell, *Apg.,* 309 fn 168. But Bock (*Acts,* 395) is also right to recognize that the speech may be unfinished, the Holy Spirit having interrupted Peter. In this respect, what place repentance *might* have had in the speech is now replaced by the presence of the Spirit.

[188] Peter's speech seems directed toward those who are already Christian. Given the speech's location at a crucial juncture in Acts, Wilckens concludes, Luke offers a picture not of missionary preaching (*Kerygma*), but of Christian *catechesis* (*Katechese*)—that is, a summary of the *gospel*. "Kerygma," 237: "Lukas hat das Schema des Missionskerygmas in das der Gemeindepredigt umgeprägt…" In support of his thesis Wilckens points out the many parallels between Peter's speech (Acts 10:34-43) and Luke's prologue (Luke 1:1-4). Like Luke's prologue, Peter's speech appeals to the authority of "witnesses" (Acts 10:39, 41; Luke 1:2), the motif of fulfillment (Acts 10:43; Acts 1:1), and ostensibly addresses a Roman audience (Cornelius; cf. Theophilus in Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) despite the likely intent to reach a wider readership. Cf. 229: "Überraschenderweise stimmt also diese von Lukas selbst in dieser praefatio formulierte Charakterisierung seines Evangeliums mit der Struktur der Petrusrede in Act 10 genau überein. Diese Beobachtung legt den Schluß nahe: Lukas hat hier das Schema der Missionspredigt in das Schema des Evangeliums, wie er es versteht, umgestaltet."

Peter's speech is subtly integrated into its specific narrative context.[189] To consider the question of the narrative integrity of Peter's speech, we must bring the analysis of Peter's speech back to the question with which the present inquiry is concerned: how does a declarative summary of the gospel, where an evangelistic sermon is expected, reflect and develop the broader pattern of Peter's characterization in the P-C episode?

To recall, the "conversion" of Cornelius' household is part of the setting of the episode, but not the main "point." Salvation of the Gentiles is largely planned and executed by God and the Spirit, a fact which Peter only gradually grasps. Peter's position in relation to events is subtly suggested by the fact that his speech most often refers to *Peter* and the apostles—"I" (v. 34), "we" (v. 39), or "us" (vv. 41, 42). As noted, the only instance in which Peter addresses his immediate audience concerns not what Gentiles must do or accept, but *what they already know* (ὑμεῖς οἴδατε; 10:36-38). In this respect, the speech fits well a narrative context in which the focus throughout remains on the characterization of Peter (as representative apostle) and his perspective on Gentile salvation and fellowship. Peter's speech, reconciling this new experience with his past understanding, situates the P-C episode within the scope of the gospel itself, thereby

[189] My approach here eschews the conventional assumption that Lukan speeches tell us more about Luke's theology than the narrative in which they are set (cf., e.g., the views of Lampe, "The Lucan Portrait of Christ," 161; and Reicke, "The Risen Lord," 158). The traditional approach (typical of form criticism) has elevated speeches to theology-bearing (representing Luke's "creativity"), thereby demoting narrative to the container holding the speeches, even if from a historical perspective, narrative was seen as less pliable to revisionist interests. Seen from a narrative perspective, of course, speeches and narrative belong together for the simple reason that this is how Luke has conjoined them. Readers (or, rather, auditors) do not receive speech and narrative as two unrelated elements, but as a whole impression of events and their significance (just as an actual audience does not distinguish between "story" and "discourse"). At the very least, the narrative context should be interpreted with a view to how it supports and helps interpret the speech it frames (cf., e.g., the reading of Kavin Rowe in "The Grammar of Life: The Areopagus Speech and Pagan Tradition," *NTS* 57 [Jan 2011]: 31-50). But if narration and speech work together, then a natural question arises, from the other side of the issue, as it were: how can Peter's *speech* contribute to the characterization of Peter in the *narrative*? Indeed, this is precisely the question with which the present section is concerned.

articulating Peter's "discovery" of how this event rounds out the story of the good news of Jesus Christ.[190]

A fuller treatment of the content of Peter's speech is reserved for the concluding section of this chapter. For now, it suffices to recognize that Luke has integrated the speech into its narrative context, even if there are several clues that Peter's words also speak beyond that context. Rather than a kerygmatic speech intended to bring the audience of Gentiles to repentance, Peter's words evoke the significance of the P-C episode for Jewish believers as a fundamental restatement of the gospel. There is a sense in which the proper understanding of the Cornelius event is, according to Luke, crucial for *Jewish* identity.

3.6.1.3.4 Acts 10:44-48

Despite the importance of Peter's word for the episode and for Acts, the Lukan narrator notes that the Spirit *interrupts* his speech. While the phrasing—Ἔτι λαλοῦντος τοῦ Πέτρου ("while Peter was still speaking…", Acts 10:44)—may imply that the coming of the Spirit is a kind of effect of Peter's proclamation, Peter's later recollection (11:15: "As I *began to speak*…) will underscore that the Spirit arrived almost without regard for Peter's speaking. On the one hand, Luke has linked the Spirit's coming with Peter's speech by pointing out the Spirit's falling upon "all who heard the word" (10:44). On the other hand, the Spirit arrives in the midst of Peter's speech, seemingly before it is over, thereby qualifying the causal relationship between speech and Spirit. Luke has

[190] Sleeman, *Geography,* 238-239, notes that Peter is learning the non-nationalistic implications of Jesus' heavenly exaltation. Indeed, if he is truly Lord of all—evident in the events unfolding before him—then the very notion of restricting God's partiality to ethnic Israel is impossible to maintain. With Jesus' "departure" from the earth, his heavenly rule over the earth necessarily reconfigures the boundaries of place and people.

rather subtly structured this sequence to show that Peter plays the part of *recognizing* the Gentiles' salvation (and its implications for fellowship) rather than of actively persuading Gentiles to believe. His speech (10:34-43), therefore, reflects his dawning recognition of the theological implications of God's non-discrimination (10:34, 36, 43). Yet, full realization only comes *after* the Spirit has fallen on the Gentiles, for it is the Spirit's arrival which, according to Peter (and Luke), is of primary importance for understanding the P-C episode (10:45-47; 11:15-18; 15:8-9). That Peter feels the Spirit preempted his declaration (11:15) only reinforces the idea that the whole episode is about Peter (as well as the apostles and Jerusalem leaders) "catching up" to God.[191]

Such a reading makes sense of the fact that the Gentiles neither explicitly repent, offer a confession of faith, nor even receive baptism before the Spirit's descent. God's approbation in the form the Spirit comes first, designating them as members of God's people. The circumcised believers who accompanied Peter to Caesarea make the critical recognition, namely that "that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out *also* on the Gentiles" (Acts 10:45) as expressed by their speaking in tongues and extolling God (cf. Acts 2:4). Peter has the same (late) recognition and responds by ordering them to be baptized. The curious phrasing of Peter's statement further underscores its tardiness. Rather than say "I authorize their baptism," Peter says: "Can anyone *withhold* the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (10:47; 11:17; cf. 8:36). This way of phrasing the question makes it a *de facto* declaration, adding to God's initiative the rubber stamp of apostolic approval. God's will moves forward with

[191] Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden*, 66: "ein Nachholen ... auf seiten der Menschen."

or without Peter's blessing (cf. 5:35-39). So Peter orders their baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (cf. 8:38). But chapter 10 ends not with Peter's triumph, so to speak, but with the *Gentiles'* invitation to Peter: "Then they invited him to stay for several days" (Acts 10:48).

This last detail deserves a closer look than it usually receives. It would have been quite possible for Luke to say Peter went back to Jerusalem immediately. Or Luke could have left out such a seemingly trivial detail altogether, thereby giving Peter the last word. Instead Luke insists on having Peter stay with these new believers, all the more remarkable given that the whole scene is oriented by Peter's attention to Jewish boundaries—eating only clean foods (10:11-16) and associating with only Jewish believers (10:28a). The seed of Peter's new understanding, signaled by the hospitality he shows to the Gentile emissaries in Joppa (10:23), has sprouted into full recognition, now allowing him to receive the hospitality of the Gentile Cornelius (10:48). Having sanctioned their baptism, he is ready to act upon the convictions that the divine vision helped him form.

3.6.1.4 Peter in Acts 11:1-18

Having left Peter in Caesarea with Cornelius in 10:48, chapter 11 begins with the notice that the apostles and Judean believers (οἱ ἀδελφοί) have heard about Gentile "conversion" (11:1). By following the P-C episode with this update, Luke indicates that the events of Acts 10 symbolically represent the reception of God's word by τὰ ἔθνη. The statement follows the pattern of previous announcements in which the "word of God" spread among Jerusalem priests (6:7) and then later among Samaritans (8:14). Notably, it is not the Gentiles' *hearing* of Peter's "word" that is emphasized but their *reception* of

the "word." Cornelius' response to Peter's speech—whether he was repentant, for example—goes unmentioned, echoing the findings of Chapter 2, namely that the Spirit (of Jesus) has led to the conversion of the Gentiles. Peter's role is to recognize this, after the fact, with an order of water baptism (10:47).

In 11:2, Luke again picks up the story of Peter specifically: "So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him." No reason is given for Peter's (apparent) return to Jerusalem. But earlier we saw how Luke strongly associates Peter, and all the apostles, with ministry in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 2-6; 8:1). What little Peter does outside Jerusalem, according to Acts, is either in a confirmatory role (8:14-25) or by an implicit summons (9:32-10:48). By the way Luke characterizes Peter's attitude toward ministry among non-Jews—implicitly in Acts 1-6 and explicitly in 10:28 ("it is unlawful for Jews to associate with Gentiles…")—it is safe to assume that Peter returns to Jerusalem because he understands the holy city as his ministry field (cf. 8:1; 10:42; 13:31). As in the case with 8:14-25, Peter does not use the experience at Cornelius' house as the springboard for proclamation to the "end of the earth." Rather, he returns to his home based to face questions over his associations with "unclean" Gentiles.

In the formulation of Acts 11:1-3, Luke links the rumor of Gentile salvation that reaches the apostles and Judean believers (11:1) with the objections leveled against Peter by circumcised believers (11:2). That is, the apostles themselves are associated with the criticism brought against Peter for "going to uncircumcised men and eating with them" (11:3), reinforcing the notion that the Jerusalem apostles on the whole do not understand mission to Gentiles as belonging within the scope of their commission. Or, if Jesus had intended it (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), it must be conducted in such a way that would avoid

associating with and, especially, eating with *uncircumcised* Gentiles. The unstated implication is that Gentile mission—if such a thing reflects the risen Lord's wishes—can only be conducted with the prerequisite that Gentiles be circumcised (become proselytes) before being "saved" (15:1). Acts 10, interpretively retold in 11:5-17, is narrated to challenge this idea, which seemed to have been the default mindset of the Jerusalem leadership.

The narrative setting for Peter's account in Acts 11:5-17 is akin to a trial, but one in which Peter serves as both defendant and witness before a jury of fellow "circumcised believers." Yet, remarkably, Peter does not offer an extended theological rationale or a sophisticated rhetorical defense; he simply tells the story of Acts 10 in slightly condensed and modified form. The event itself, Luke implies, is key. As important as scriptural warrants are to Luke's broader concern to justify the Gentile mission (cf. Luke 2:32; 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; 3:25; 13:47; etc.), the event of God's actions in Jesus and by the Spirit are primary. Even Peter's allusion to Mosaic legal protocol (10:28a; cf. Lev 11:4f; Deut 20:25) turns out to be an obstacle to recognizing what God is doing. Only with a retrospective glance, it would seem, can Peter square the scriptures with recent events (Acts 10:43). It will largely be left to James to offer a fuller interpretation of the scriptures concerning the sea change taking place among Jews and Gentiles (15:13-21). At this point, all Peter can do is relate what God has done among the Gentiles in Caesarea. It is evident that, just as Luke's Gospel effectively narrated into the identity of the χριστός the death and resurrection of Jesus, so with Acts 10-11 Luke narrates into the Messiah's identity the universality of witness, which later scriptural reflections will confirm (cf. 15:13-21).

But Peter does not simply tell what happened. His account is also the story of his *experience* of events. The characterization of Peter's perspective in 11:5-17, moreover, is shaped by Luke's broader characterization of Peter himself throughout Acts. As a result, there are at least three ways in which the characterization of events and of Peter himself shifts slightly in Acts 11:1-18.

First, Peter only relates what he himself witnessed, and in the order that he witnessed it. For example, because he did not witness the angel's communication with Cornelius (10:1-8), Peter does not begin his account with it, as the narrator does in Acts 10. Peter learned of Cornelius' angelic visit only after his own vision (10:30-32; cf. 10:22). Therefore, in retelling it to Jerusalem Jews (11:13-14) he reorders slightly Acts 10's chronology of events. When the narrator says "Peter explained it to them, step by step (καθεξῆς)" (11:4), it means that, like Luke's two-volume work in general (Luke 1:3, καθεξῆς), the account is structured by an *interpreted* order of events rather than a flat chronology. Peter's version brings to the fore the significance of the events, which in turn pre-determines which events receive mention.

Second, because the perspective of the account belongs to Peter, rather than to an omniscient narrator, the account reflects Peter's own experience at the center of the events in question. His account is from *inside* the story, a perspective internal to the account he gives. This reinforces the idea that the significance of the P-C episode for Luke has to do primarily with Peter's experience. Peter wishes to convey what he experienced to be true—the divine guidance and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Gentiles. Instead of minimizing his own role, the story presents his experience as the

answer to the objections eliciting his narration (11:2-3), even if Peter ultimately attributes his behavior to the prompting of the Spirit.

Third, rather than a simple recapitulation of the events of Acts 10, Peter's account is tailored to his audience of Jerusalem Jewish believers, emphasizing certain details of the event while minimizing others. In the broader scope of Acts, if Peter's defense proves successful, his version of the P-C episode will show that events accord with Jesus' commission (Acts 1:4-8), which in turn reflects God's ancient plan (Luke 24:46-48). Moreover, because Peter's speech in 11:5-17 is tailored to context, Luke is able to combine a defense of Gentile salvation and mission with the significance of that mission for Peter and, by extension, the apostles. That is, Luke's narrativization of the warrant for Gentile mission does more than simply justify this new policy for Jewish believers; it allows Luke to demonstrate the corresponding shift required *of Jewish believers* for the acceptance of Gentile salvation and outreach. Peter models what a transformed Jewish believer looks like.[192]

Peter's Perspective

In the following analysis, therefore, attention will be paid to what Peter, in the retelling, emphasizes, omits, or alters relative to Acts 10. The peculiar details of his version of the story—shaped by the above three aspects of Acts 11:1-18—help readers understand the development of Peter's character within the broader picture of the salvation of the Gentiles in Acts.

[192] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:143: "Peter is a reluctant initiator, for he begins with the presuppositions of the objectors in 11:3. Nevertheless, he is the one who takes the new step that requires the Jerusalem church to reexamine its relation to Gentiles."

As noted, Acts 11 shifts the setting to Jerusalem, where "circumcised believers"—presumably including apostles and "believers who were in Judea" (11:1)—are gathered. When Peter and his traveling companions arrive, he is immediately forced to answer questions about rumors of his conduct there. Interestingly, though the Jewish believers knew "the Gentiles had accepted the word of God," their immediate concern is with *Peter's* behavior, not the Gentiles'. This confirms that the inclusion of Gentiles among the saved is not inherently a problem for Jewish believers; the bigger concern is what Gentile salvation means *for observant Jewish believers* who still conceive of their practices within the legal boundaries of covenantal Israel. Thus, Peter becomes the focal point of questions about what happened in Caesarea—that is, *what he did or did not do in response to Gentiles' acceptance of the Word.*

The charges brought against Peter are introduced (11:2) with a verb already shown to be significant for the P-C episode—διακρίνω/διακρίνομαι (10:20; 11:12; 15:9). Of the four uses of the verb in Acts, this is the only instance of its use without negation. Moreover, here the verb is not used to describe the attitude of Peter's detractors: literally, "those of the circumcision *criticized him* (διεκρίνοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν)." Most translations of the middle-voice verb—which can otherwise carry the sense of "doubting" or "hesitating" (cf. 10:20)—render it in 11:2 as "criticized" (NRSV, NIV) or "contended with" (KJV).[193] Though Luke apparently does not need to use the word here,[194] he likely

[193] Unlike the other uses of this verb in Acts (though cf. Jude 9), the use here conveys a sense of disputation, thus implying the sense of "distinction" conveyed by the active sense. The imperfect may also suggest an ingressive sense—"they *began* to dispute…"

[194] We can infer that Luke did not have to use the word since he occasionally excludes its use in Markan material he borrows (Mark 11:23 // Matt 21:21; cf. Luke 17:6). Moreover, in Double Tradition material Luke presumably knows other words to substitute. For example, in Matt 16:3 Matthew employs διακρίνω whereas Luke's parallel passage prefers the verb δοκιμάζειν (12:56).

does so for its evocative power throughout the P-C cycle of narrative (Acts 10, 11, 15). The word connects Peter's challenges (doubting and discriminating) to the Jewish believers' own challenges (accepting Peter's conduct). In this way Luke links the struggles of the two groups of Jewish believers, thereby confirming that the trajectory of the Cornelius incident primarily concerns the response of Jewish believers to Gentile acceptance, not the fact of Gentile acceptance alone. Moreover, the wordplay suggests that Peter's overcoming of his doubts and hesitations both incites the criticism of his co-religionists and also provides the model of how they too must overcome their objections.

Curiously, however, the narrator specifies that those "criticizing" Peter were οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς (11:2). An identical description (οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς) is applied in 10:45 to the six believers who accompanied Peter from Joppa to Caesarea. Linguistically, it might seem natural to equate the two groups, but it is hardly likely that Peter's companions who were "astounded" at the Spirit's coming upon the Gentiles in 10:45 turned around, once in Jerusalem, and became Peter's harshest critics. But Luke surely does not intend to say that those who accompanied Peter now needed Peter to defend his actions publicly, especially since the persuasive account Peter ends up offering in defense (11:5-17) is essentially a retelling of the events to which these six circumcised believers had themselves been witnesses.[195] Moreover, the initial response of οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς in Acts 10 (v. 45: "they were amazed…the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles [καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη]") is very similar to the favorable reaction of Peter's audience in 11:18 ("they praised God, saying, 'Then God has given even to the Gentiles [καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν]

[195] There is precedent for *not* equating two groups designated by the same title in Luke's use of Ἑλληνιστής (cf. 6:1; 9:29; 11:20); on this score see Michael Zugmann, *"Hellenisten" in der Apostelgeschichte*.

the repentance that leads to life'"). The initial reaction of one group of circumcised believers likely serves as the template for the *other* circumcised believers whom Peter seeks to persuade in chapter 11. In other words, Luke probably uses the same designation to underscore their similarity—but not their identity—in order to underline the parallel between the effect of the story in Acts 10 and its intended effect in Acts 11. If Peter can convey the essence of events from Acts 10—which proved persuasive for οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς the first time (10:45)—then surely his retelling can have a similar outcome for the unconvinced among οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς in Jerusalem who did not witness the events in question (11:2).

Peter begins to tell the story of his experience where it started for him, in the city of Joppa, during a trance when he saw a vision as he prayed (11:5). Leaving out the hour of his prayer (10:9) and the fact that he was hungry (10:10), Peter recalls rather precisely what he saw: καταβαῖνον σκεῦός τι ὡς ὀθόνην μεγάλην τέσσαρσιν ἀρχαῖς καθιεμένην (11:5; cf. 10:11). Peter summarizes the fact that the sheet was lowered "to the ground" after "the heavens were opened" by recalling, in a more personal manner, that it was let down "from heaven and *came to me*" (11:5).[196] The most noticeable shift in Peter's retelling at this point, however, is probably the addition of verbs of perception: ἀτενίσας κατενόουν καὶ εἶδον ("as I looked closely, I observed and saw…"). In this way Peter

[196] In Acts 11:6 (// 10:12), there is a very subtle shift in the language characterizing the "object like a great sheet." Whereas the narrator refers to the other-worldly "vessel" (σκεῦος) as containing (ἐν ᾧ) the mixed animals (10:12), Peter actually describes the more concrete "something like a great sheet" (τι ὡς ὀθόνην μεγάλην) as the object (εἰς ἣν) possessing the animals, perhaps underscoring the broader shift of point of view from which the account is narrated. It may also emphasize remind auditors of the foreign or other-worldly aspect of the vision. Cf. the 70+ uses of ὡς in Revelation to signify the constant metaphorical mediation involved in divine visions. Supplementing this aspect of Peter's account in Acts 11 is the language of perception that Peter adds to the narrator's account in Acts 10.

personalizes the account for his audience, emphasizing his unique access to heaven through this vision (cf. ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ in 11:9). It also accents the object of his perception, namely the list of various categories of animals (to which list from 10:12 he adds καὶ τὰ θηρία, 11:6).[197]

Peter's objection to the divine request to kill and eat exhibits more small variations with potential significance (10:14; 11:8). Whereas the word order of Peter's response in Acts 10:14 emphasizes the adverb οὐδέποτε ("never"), reinforcing the previous adverb μηδαμῶς ("by no means"), his statement in 11:8 accents the categories "profane or unclean." Moreover, Peter speaks of these things never having "gone into my mouth," perhaps a more formal way of indicating the preservation of one's purity ("I never even touched it"). But the wording of Peter's response, in his own words this time, also unmistakably[198] evokes the language of LXX Ezekiel 4:14 (see Table 7).

Table 7: Ezekiel 4:13-14 and Acts 11:7-8[199]

LXX Ezek 4:13-14	***Acts 11:7-8***
13 καὶ ἐρεῖς τάδε <u>λέγει</u> κύριος ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ισραηλ οὕτως <u>φάγονται</u> οἱ υἱοὶ Ισραηλ <u>ἀκάθαρτα</u> ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν 14 καὶ <u>εἶπα</u> **μηδαμῶς κύριε** θεὲ τοῦ Ισραηλ ἰδοὺ ἡ ψυχή μου οὐ μεμίανται ἐν *ἀκαθαρσίᾳ* καὶ θνησιμαῖον καὶ θηριάλωτον οὐ βέβρωκα ἀπὸ γενέσεώς μου ἕως τοῦ νῦν <u>οὐδὲ</u> <u>εἰσελήλυθεν</u> **εἰς τὸ στόμα μου** πᾶν κρέας ἕωλον	7 ἤκουσα δὲ καὶ φωνῆς <u>λεγούσης</u> μοι· ἀναστάς, Πέτρε, θῦσον καὶ <u>φάγε</u>. 8 <u>εἶπον</u> δέ· **μηδαμῶς, κύριε**, ὅτι κοινὸν ἢ <u>ἀκάθαρτον</u> <u>οὐδέποτε</u> <u>εἰσῆλθεν</u> **εἰς τὸ στόμα μου**.

[197] This addition only strengthens and reminds readers of the allusion to Genesis, specifically 1:24-30; 6:19-20; 7:14-21; 8:1-19.

[198] According to David Allan Handy, "The Gentile Pentecost: A Literary Study of the Story of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-11:18)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1998), 45, "The second most commonly noticed echo is the way Peter's protest against the divine command to eat the non-kosher food he saw in his vision (10:14; 11:8) echoes, or rather amplifies, Ezekiel's vehement (and successful) protest against a similar command (Ezekiel 4:14)."

[199] Word in bold font are exact matches, showing likely dependence; underlined words are variations on the same word, likely showing influence.

[13] "And you shall say: This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says, "Thus shall the sons of Israel eat unclean things among the nations." [14] And I said, "**In no way, O Lord**, God of Israel, if my soul has not been defiled in uncleanness and from my birth until now I have not eaten a carcass or that which was killed by animals, and no day-old meat has come **into my mouth**." (NETS)	[7] I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' [8] But I replied, **'By no means, Lord**; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered **my mouth**.' (NRSV)

The verbatim wording in places, supported by parallels in language and theme, indicates that the overall scene and especially Peter's wording (more so than in Acts 10:14) evokes Ezekiel 4:13-14. Ezekiel 4 concerns a series of sign-acts (σημεῖον, 4:3) which God requires of Ezekiel as a prophetic representation of the siege of Jerusalem. God tells Ezekiel to interpret the sign-acts in this way: "You shall say: This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says, 'Thus shall the sons of Israel eat unclean things among the nations'" (4:13). In Ezekiel, the prophecy anticipates Israel's punishment. But the prophet, understanding the violation of identity that the command entails, objects: "In no way, O Lord, God of Israel, if my soul has not been defiled in uncleanness … and no day-old meat has come into my mouth" (NETS). The similarities to both God's command to Peter and Peter's response are clear: God's servant is commanded by God to perform an act in seeming violation of covenantal identity, to which the servant objects by insisting on preserving *kashrut* and thus his fundamental identity as a member of God's people.

Notably, in Ezek 4:15 God relents in response to Ezekiel's protestations. In Acts 10-11, however, it is Peter who must relent and accept the dissolution of such purity categories as they pertain to contact with a foreigner (ἀλλόφυλος). Though there are

limits to comparing the contexts in which the two scenes are set, the Ezekiel allusion adds a prophetic dimension to Peter's role in Acts 10-11. He represents all Jewish believers (and, proleptically, the restored Israel) in first rejecting and then accepting God's command to perform what is otherwise Torah-defying behavior. Like Ezekiel's sign-act as well, Peter is not to permanently exchange kosher food for unclean food as if all food laws are abrogated for everyone[200]; rather, as a symbolic act, his eating of unclean animals is meant to represent the free association of Jewish believers with Gentile believers as a corollary to God's acceptance of Gentiles into God's people. Certainly, even within Acts, there is ample evidence that Jewish believers remain law-observant (cf. Acts 16:1-4; 21:20-26). But Peter's vision is meant not only to condone the acceptance of Gentiles into God's people without full law-observance (like circumcision), but even more specifically *to formalize the approval by Jewish believers of that acceptance*. The implication, to be developed further below, is that Peter's overcoming of his own objection to God's directive is the key *to Jewish identity* as much as it signals the acceptance of Gentiles.

That 11:5-17 is *Peter's* account, rather than an external narrator's, is evident from the absence of an equivalent to 10:17 ("Now while Peter was greatly puzzled…"; cf. 10:19). Peter's post-event clarity has been inserted into his recital of the past. Replacing Peter's perplexity is an interpretation of the meaning of the whole experience: "And then I remembered the word of the Lord how he would say, 'John baptized with water, but you

[200] See the mistake of Nguyen, "Dismantling Cultural Boundaries," 460-2.

will be baptized in the Holy Spirit'" (11:16). To this Petrine "insertion" we will return shortly.

Peter also omits description of his lodging with Simon the tanner, admitting only that "three men arrived *at the house where we were*" (11:11). At this point Peter introduces the Spirit's voice, but this time in indirect discourse: "the Spirit said to me to go with them without making a distinction (μηδὲν[201] διακρίναντα)" (11:12). The translation is difficult because the phrasing obviously echoes 10:20 (μηδὲν διακρινόμενος) and yet puts the verb in active (rather than middle) voice.

11:12 **συν**ελθεῖν **αὐτοῖς μηδὲν διακρίναντα**.

10:20 ἀλλὰ ἀναστὰς κατάβηθι καὶ πορεύου **σὺν αὐτοῖς μηδὲν διακρινόμενος**

Translations of 11:12 vary. The NIV ("without hesitation") and KJV[202] ("doubting nothing") have elected to emphasize the parallel with 10:20, thereby making 11:12 a more or less flat recollection of the angel's words from 10:20. But the NRSV ("without making a distinction") rightly reflects the subtle difference in verb voice (from middle to active), bringing out a potential shift in meaning in Peter's retelling, but losing the word parallel in English. Luke appears to underscore both the fact that Peter is recalling the

[201] Interestingly, as Peter awakens to the meaning of events, he tells Cornelius: ὁ θεὸς ἔδειξεν μηδένα κοινὸν ἢ ἀκάθαρτον λέγειν ἄνθρωπον—"God has shown (me) not to call *anyone* profane or a person unclean" (10:28). It is possible the use of μηδένα here signals a parallel with the use of the same word with διακρίνω above (cf. also οὐθὲν in 15:9). In that case, "doubting nothing" and "not distinguishing (between) anyone" are once more connected. The comprehensiveness implied in the use of μηδένα, therefore, reflects the comprehensive scope of the claims in 10:34 ("God is impartial") and 10:36 ("[Jesus] is Lord of all"). To doubt or hesitate at all is akin to making distinctions between people (Jews and Gentiles) in such a way that undermines the very identity of God as impartial (or, partial to all) and of Jesus as truly Lord of all. To accept God's impartiality and Jesus' universal Lordship is simultaneously not to doubt that God has engineered events with Cornelius nor to distinguish between Gentile centurions and Jewish believers.

[202] The KJV follows the Majority text in assuming a middle form, whereas most modern translations follow the strong and early attestation of the best manuscripts in positing the active form. cf. Handy, "Gentile Pentecost," 58, fn 18. Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts*, 198, who chooses not to decide between forms.

Spirit's statement from 10:20 but also that his recollection is colored by what he has learned from the whole experience.[203] Concealed beneath most English translations is the subtle notion that Peter's first obstacle was overcoming doubt/hesitation in going along with events, whereas the real challenge in hindsight facing Peter (and the whole church)—indeed, the deeper meaning of the Spirit's directive—is *not making a distinction* between uncircumcised Gentiles and circumcised Jews/proselytes in the economy of salvation. The variation in meaning reflected in the different shadings of διακρίνω is attributable to Peter's actual encounter with Cornelius (10:25-48).

The shift is especially remarkable given that the opposite logic prevails in passages like Leviticus 20:24b-26[204] and Deut 14:2-4a.[205] The link between what can be eaten and with whom one can associate is integral to Israel's covenant with God. But the point of the P-C episode is to read this covenantal logic in reverse. If God *joins* Gentiles and Jews in fellowship, then the question of food cleanliness must follow suit. That is, while categories of "clean" and "unclean" still exist (for Jewish believers), the "profane" foods cannot contaminate the "clean" by association,[206] just as fellowship with uncircumcised believers cannot defile circumcised believers (cf. 15:9).

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[203] Therefore, Peter's phrasing in 11:12 parallels the narrator's in 10:20 but also shifts it slightly in favor of the broader meaning of the event. In support of this reading, perhaps, is the fact that Peter puts his construal of the Spirit's words into indirect discourse, therefore not risking the possibility of misquoting the Holy Spirit.

[204] "I am the LORD your God; I have separated you from the peoples. You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean (καθαρῶν) animal and the unclean (ἀκαθάρτων), and between the unclean bird and the clean; you shall not bring abomination on yourselves by animal or by bird or by anything with which the ground teems, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy, and I have separated (ἀφορίζω) you from the other peoples (πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν) to be mine."

[205] "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God; it is you the LORD has chosen (ἐκλέγω) out of all the peoples (πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν) on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. You shall not eat any abhorrent thing. These are the animals you may eat…"

[206] House, "Defilement," 143-154.

Peter's recollection excludes mention of his role as host, his question about their coming, their response and indirect introduction of Cornelius, and his invitation to stay with Simon the tanner (10:21-23). Both accounts, however, mention that the "brothers" (ἀδελφοὶ) from Joppa also went with Peter to Caesarea (10:23b; 11:12b). Peter himself says "*these* six brothers" since they have accompanied him yet again, this time (presumably) from Caesarea to Jerusalem, and can corroborate his account. Given the context of his speech as a personal defense, Peter judiciously says "*we* went into the man's house" (εἰσήλθομεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἀνδρός, 11:12), whereas the narrator had referred to Peter's entry into both Caesarea and Cornelius' house in the singular (εἰσῆλθεν: 10: 24, 27). Peter's emphasis on there being others with him suggests that if he is guilty of violating table fellowship protocol, he was not alone! By sharing the alleged offense with his travel companions, as it were, Peter may hope to elicit their corroborating testimony.

Peter says nothing of who had assembled to greet them upon arrival (10:24). Cornelius' obeisance (10:25), Peter's response (10:26), and their dialogue (10:28-30a) are all but omitted. The parallel picks up again when Peter gives the man's (Cornelius') account of his angelic visit and commission (10:30b, 32a; 11:13), leaving out only the angel's characterization of Cornelius' piety (10:31). Of note is the specific claim that the man "told us how he had seen an angel *standing in his house* …" (11:13a). Peter's defense, one recalls, is prompted by accusations that he "went into (the house of) and ate with uncircumcised men" (11:3). That an angel had preceded Peter into that Gentile's house is surely evidence of the propriety of his own presence there.

Peter's account abbreviates the angel's speech and varies the wording slightly (11:23b). Peter recalls Cornelius' speech (10:33), but develops the detail: "he will speak words to you *by which you and your whole household will be saved*" (11:14). Because Peter's version does not repeat the speech he gives in 10:34-43, it is possible that "words by which you will be saved" epitomizes that speech. After all, the speech refers to God's impartiality, Jesus' universal Lordship, and that anyone who believes in him can receive "forgiveness of sins"—a concept elsewhere summarized as "salvation" (cf. Luke 1:77; 3:4-6; Acts 2:38-40; 5:31; 13:47; 28:28; Isa 49:6).

Remarkably, however, if Peter's Jerusalem audience had been hoping to hear the words by which uncircumcised Gentiles might be saved, they never come. Instead, Peter says "while I *began to speak*, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had also (fallen) upon us in the beginning" (11:15). Compare this with 10:44, when the narrator says that the Holy Spirit descended upon Peter's audience "*while* he was still speaking…" The two different expressions could probably be parsed in such a way to draw out their similarity.[207] Moreover, the point of the larger scene (in Acts 10) is to show that the unfolding of events does not flow from Peter's initiative but from God's. Peter retells the story (11:5-17) in order to show how the behavior of God and the Spirit justifies his own controversial actions. It is plausible, therefore, to understand Peter's claim in 11:15 to be an *interpretation* of his experience in 10:44. That is, though Peter had indeed begun to

[207] Also, the narrator introduces Peter's speaking in 10:34 that may hint at the *beginnings* of a speech: "Peter *opened his mouth* and said…" The phrase recalls other instances in which "opening the mouth and speaking" implies the initial stages of a speech (Luke 1:64; Acts 8:35; 18:14), which some translations reflect in 10:34: "The Peter *began to speak*…" (NRSV, NIV). See Kilgallen, "Did Peter Fail to Get a Word in?", 406-410, who shows how the syntax of ἀρξάμενος indicates the *beginning* of a speech, not the moment before he began speaking.

speak—10:34-43 records his dawning recognition—he is interrupted by the Spirit. Looking back, therefore, Peter recognizes his own initial speech as ultimately insignificant for the *salvation* of the Gentiles, given that it was merely the prompt for the Spirit to do the real work. Yet the narrator's remark that the Spirit fell "on all who heard the word" (10:44) reminds readers of the place of this episode in the trajectory of Acts. That is, here is the defining moment in which *apostolic* "witness" reaches τὰ ἔθνη (Luke 24:47) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The apostolic commission has finally been fulfilled, at least in a way that removes ethnic and (therefore) geographical limits to the scope of the mission.

Luke, therefore, is in the position of both emphasizing Acts 10:1-48 as the Spirit-led Gentile breakthrough and, at the same time, diminishing the apostles' role in this breakthrough for the sake of their emerging recognition of its significance. Acts 10-11 becomes the basis for apostolic *learning* and *transformation*—(re)learning the scope of Jesus' commission even as the scope of Jesus' Lordship comes fully into view. In this respect, Peter is not a paradigm of mission,[208] but *a paradigm of Jewish responses to God's prevenient mission.* Peter's "witness" is as much about passively witnessing God's impartiality toward Gentiles (10:34) as much as it is delivering a saving message to them (cf. 11:14). After all, the groups persuaded by the P-C episode and its retellings—namely, the "uncircumcised believers" in Caesarea (10:45), the Jewish believers in Jerusalem (11:18), and James/Jerusalem council (15:12-21)—all attribute the acceptance of Gentile

[208] *Contra* Nguyen, *Peter and Cornelius*, 149-151, and "Missiological Implications," 462.

salvation as well as free association with them *to the Spirit's descent upon Gentiles*, not Peter's "words of salvation."

Peter's recollection in 11:16 represents one of the major differences in accounts: "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" It will be recalled that Peter's circumcised traveling companions were amazed that "the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out also on the Gentiles (καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη)," subtly implying a parallel between the "original" Pentecost and the "Gentile" Pentecost.[209] In Acts 11:16, Peter explicitly develops his companions' notion from 10:45. Peter may recall Pentecost precisely at this moment because he seems to have previously imagined that Acts 2 represented the primary fulfillment of Jesus' commission (see 3.5.1.2).

But Acts 11:16 goes further than merely tying the events in Caesarea to Pentecost. Peter's retrospective interpretation recalls Jesus' own words (Acts 1:5), thereby connecting the events in Caesarea with Jesus' initial speech commissioning the apostles (Acts 1:4-8). The "word of the Lord" (τοῦ ῥήματος τοῦ κυρίου) that Peter cites here is qualified as something Jesus said (ἔλεγεν) on at least one occasion (cf. Luke 22:61). It suffices to point out, on general grammatical[210] grounds, that Jesus' word occurred prior to the Cornelius incident and possibly on more than one occasion. That Luke/Peter chooses this moment to connect the Gentile breakthrough with Jesus' parting words

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[209] Though most translations render καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη as "even on the Gentiles" (NRSV, NIV, CEB, etc.), the more literal KJV probably draws out the intended parallel better with "on the Gentiles *also*."

[210] The debate over whether ἔλεγεν ought to be taken as a customary imperfect ("he would say") or iterative ("he repeatedly said") should not concern us. Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 546-48. Cf. Smyth, *Greek Grammar,* §1892, 1894. Notice however that most translations render ἔλεγεν as a pluperfective imperfect—"the Lord/he *had* said" (NRSV, NIV)—based on the fact that the statement in question was spoken at a time in the past (Acts 1:5) preceding the past event to which Peter was connecting it (10:1-48).

effectively grounds the pivotal event in Jesus' promise (1:8). Readers may correspondingly remember both Jesus' Pentecost promise (Acts 1:5) as well as the original messianic prophecy of the Baptist (Luke 3:16: "I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"). Luke thereby links the turning point of Acts with the introduction of Jesus' identity and, notably, the moment he is baptized and anointed by the Spirit (3:21-22; cf. 2.3.2.1).

Naturally, Peter's version of Jesus' words in Acts 11:16 lacks reference to timing since the implicit claim that Gentile reception of the Spirit fulfills Acts 1:5 extends the original prophecy beyond its original context (Pentecost). A temporal contrast does appear, however, in 11:15b—"…the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ; cf. 10:45)"—suggesting a significant gap between then and the narrative's present. The Cornelius event—specifically the Spirit's descent upon Gentiles—fulfills Jesus' earlier predictions from Acts 1:5 in a new way. The surprising revelation in Peter's reference to Acts 1:5 is that a prediction which readers had thought fulfilled at Pentecost finds *additional* fulfillment in the Cornelius incident (Acts 10), according to Peter's retrospective interpretation (Acts 11:16). Moreover, Jesus' promise that "*you* will be baptized (βαπτισθήσεσθε) with the Spirit" (Acts 1:5) was directed principally toward the apostles. Peter's retrospective citation (11:16) suggests that "you" (pl.) in a new context (Cornelius' house in Caesarea) refers to the Gentile recipients of Spirit baptism (10:44-46). The rather anonymous Gentiles of Caesarea become, in Peter's interpretation, the addressees of Jesus' apostolic commission, implicitly serving as witnesses of Jesus *to Peter and the Jewish believers.* The narrative description of the

incident confirms the suggestion by describing the scene in ways reminiscent of Acts 2: ἤκουον γὰρ αὐτῶν λαλούντων γλώσσαις καὶ μεγαλυνόντων τὸν θεόν (10:46).[211]

Yet, Peter's interpretation in 11:16 in turn thrusts Peter and his circumcised brethren into the role of bewildered audience, akin to the foreign Jews at Pentecost (2:5-12). Peter and company are the ones who hear the Gentiles speaking in tongues and magnifying God's name (10:46). One irony of this expansion in meaning (of Acts 1:5) is that it comprises part of a speech by the chief apostle himself directed toward an audience of Jerusalem Jews (11:16) once more! The apostles now serve, at least indirectly, as curious bystanders to the baptism of Gentiles by the Spirit and to the accompanying gift of tongues. Such a surprising turn of events indeed calls for Peter's explanation, especially since it was his first speech that interpreted the events of Pentecost (2:14-36). Like Peter and his companions in chapter 10, who first witnessed the significance of events (10:47), the Jerusalem Jews are now witnessing by proxy the fulfillment of John's/Jesus' "prophecy" (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16; cf. 2.3.2.1.1.1).

The experience of "missionary" contact with a Gentile household turns out to offer the requisite framework for Peter to recognize how events belong within the larger movement of God's purposes for the world. That is, even in a spoken account intended to defend himself against criticism by Jewish believers, Peter makes larger salvation-historical claims. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon Gentiles in Caesarea signals not just God's initiative, but also the fulfillment of Jesus' promise about Pentecost (itself a

[211] There are several linguistic parallels with the narrator's summary in Acts 10:46: ἤρξαντο **λαλεῖν** ἑτέραις **γλώσσαις** (Act 2:4; cf. 2:8) and, especially, **ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς** ἡμετέραις **γλώσσαις τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ** (2:11).

christological event) as well as, at least implicitly, of John's prophecy about Jesus as the Spirit-baptizer.[212] Peter's hindsight reverses the roles of apostle and eyewitnesses, in light of the Pentecost paradigm. Peter and the Jewish believers become *witnesses to the Spirit's work* among Gentiles, just like the international audience at Pentecost had been witnesses to the Spirit's descent upon Jewish believers like Peter. The pivotal P-C episode thrusts Peter and the apostles into the role of eyewitnesses to what God is doing with and without their help.

3.6.2 Conclusion

At few points in the episode before his speech (10:34-43; cf. 10:28b-29) does Peter seem consciously to initiate or even desire the encounter that eventuates between him and Cornelius. The meeting is organized entirely at God's direction. Even at the triumphal moment of Peter's speech, he appears to get interrupted by the Spirit (10:44; 11:13). In Caesarea, seemingly everything happens before, and sometimes in spite of, apostolic approval. Lest the characterization of Peter be understood as the "twitching of a puppet," however, Luke shows how Peter must be transformed by the experience and become the model Jewish respondent to the consequential events in Caesarea, commending his change of mind to fellow believers in Jerusalem (11:5-17; cf. 15:7-11).

Though the P-C episode is ostensibly about Gentile conversion, Luke diminishes that aspect of the story in favor of showcasing Jewish *responses* to Gentile salvation (by God). At stake in the Cornelius incident is a theological contest—how can the God of

[212] Chance, "Divine Prognostications," 229: "Here we can say that Peter's interpretations of an event (the coming of the Spirit) and a prophecy (Acts 1:5) combine to create action which moves the plot along—the baptism of the gentiles is a key turning point in the story."

Israel's covenant seemingly remove the boundaries integral to the covenant people's identity? By contrasting the "flat" characterization of Cornelius with the hesitating obedience of Peter, Luke underscores the apostle's mutability. The focus of Luke's narration falls on Peter's response and, by extension, that of the apostles and Jewish believers whom Peter later attempts to persuade. In the end, it is the behavior of the Spirit toward Gentiles that inspires the sea change in Jewish views of Gentile salvation/fellowship. Peter's grasp of the significance of the episode comes later, when defending his role in events (11:5-17). Peter's retrospective interpretation, linking God's act in Caesarea to God's act in Jerusalem, becomes the foundation (15:7-11) for the Jerusalem council's decision and subsequent decree (15:19-29).

Ultimately, the "conversion" of the Gentiles is, at least according to Acts, primarily a story about Jewish transformation.[213] Luke carefully narrates the Cornelius

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[213] Green, "Doing Repentance," 18-19: "The formation of disciples, as Luke develops it, is a process of conversion. It entails a reconstruction of one's self within a new web of relationships, a transfer of allegiances, and the embodiment of transformed dispositions and attitudes. Conversion requires resocialization within the community being formed—around Jesus in the Gospel, in the name of Jesus in Acts. Luke's complex narration in Acts 10:1-11:18 of the encounter between Peter and Cornelius and its aftermath in the Jerusalem church illustrates this process. Cornelius is introduced first, with the result that we may gain the mistaken impression that this text centers on his conversion and that of his household. Luke's focus is more fundamentally on Peter and the Jerusalem church and especially on the issue of ethnocentric practices. The significance of what transpires is accentuated by multiple evidences of the divine hand at work—e.g., the presence of an angel and the complementary visions (10:3-16), the prayer motif (and consequent anticipation of divine revelation [10:3, 4, 9]), and the spontaneous outpouring of the Spirit (10:44-47). Why is this divine intervention necessary? It is not the legitimation of a Gentile mission that is at stake, for this has already been mandated by the risen Lord (Luke 24:47-48; Acts 1:8) and, at least arguably, performed by Philip (Acts 8:26-40). Rather, the emphasis falls on the question of full fellowship between Jew and Gentile; indeed, hospitality, not preaching or baptism, was at stake in the protestations first of Peter (Acts 10:28a) and then of the circumcised in the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:2-3). Cornelius is converted, to be sure, but so are Peter and those of the Jerusalem community—Cornelius, in the sense that he moves from his position as a God-fearer on the margins of the Jewish religion to full membership within the community of God's people for whom Jesus is Lord; Peter and the Jerusalem community to a fuller understanding of their newly embraced life-world, expressed in the confession that Jesus is, indeed, "Lord of all" (Acts 10:34-36). The practice of the church in Acts was, finally, to welcome Gentiles into their communities with a status equal to that of existing members. Jesus' ministry had paved the way for such a practice, as had his missionary directive. However, this became so only as Jesus' followers involved themselves in witness, engaging with persons outside their own number, and came to embrace more fully

episode as a representative depiction of universal witness wherein God's purposes outpace the Jewish apostles' participation in them. The Jewish objection Peter declares at the outset of the Cornelius episode (10:28) prefigures the objections his testimony helps overturn in Jerusalem among his brethren (11:2-3, 18; 15:7-11).

3.7 Peter's Speech (Acts 10:34-43)

3.7.1 Personal Revelation and New Good News

Though narrative and discourse, as noted, are interrelated in Luke's story, I have left Peter's speech till now in order to give its christological emphasis proper due. Peter's speech in 10:34-43 provides Luke the opportunity to express Peter's own transformation in terms of the story of the gospel. Peter's words, therefore, have a double function: to express his new understanding ("Truly, I [now] realize…", 10:34) as well as to situate theologically the salvation of the Gentiles within the good news of the Messiah Jesus. The following analysis will proceed verse-by-verse[214] through Peter's speech with special attention to these motifs.

> **(10:34-35)** *Then Peter opened his mouth and said to them: "Truly, I understand that God shows no favoritism, 35 but in every nation the one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him."*
>
> Ἀνοίξας δὲ Πέτρος τὸ στόμα εἶπεν· ἐπ᾽ ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνομαι ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολήμπτης ὁ θεός, 35 ἀλλ᾽ ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστιν.

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the terms of their own faith. By engagement with persons at the "end of the earth," they were pressed in the direction of end-of-the-earth thinking. Having embraced God's perspective on things, having relocated themselves in the story-line of God's ancient purpose, they found themselves in a process of transformation, being shaped so as more faithfully to incarnate this life-world." Cf. Bock, "Scripture and the Realization of God's Promises," 57: "Gentile inclusion was so innovative from a Jewish point of view, not to mention for the disciples, that God had to force its implementation using vision and radical conversion."

[214] Unless otherwise indicated, the version appearing in the text and footnotes is my own translation.

Peter's introductory words express an intensification indicative of deeper understanding, reflected in the emphatic phrasing: ἐπ᾽ ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνομαι. Peter now understands something about which he lacked full understanding previously.[215] The beginning of Peter's speech reflects the larger pattern of change and recognition structuring the whole P-C episode.

Remarkably, however, what Peter now grasps, as if for the first time, is something that appears across the pages of Israel's scriptures: God's impartiality (Deut 10:17; 2 Ch 19:7; Job 34:19). The rare[216] adjective προσωπολήμπτης (Acts 10:34) derives from an idiomatic Greek expression—originating before Luke's writing—meaning, literally, "to not receive face."[217] The theological claim, and the word employed by Peter to express it, had purchase outside of Luke's writings, illustrated by the use of the noun-form elsewhere in the NT (προσωπολημψία: Rom 2:11; Gal 2:6; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; cf. 1 Pe 1:17). In a sense, therefore, Peter's new understanding is hardly new, or at least should

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[215] Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains,* vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 32.18 (καταλαμβάνω), with reference to Acts 10:34: "to come to understand something which was n ot understood or perceived previously" (cf. also 37:19). Appearing broadly in the NT (15 times), καταλαμβάνω is only used in (Luke-)Acts in the middle voice (καταλαμβάνομαι), figuratively extending the root sense (to "overcome" or to "seize") to mean "understand" or "comprehend" (Acts 4:13; 25:25). This sense is reflected in both the NIV ("I *now* realize…") and CEB ("I really am learning…"). Cf. Martin Culy and Mikeal Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2003), 202: "I have come to understand…" Cf. Joel Green's analysis (*Conversion,* 90-91), which draws on Berger and Luckmann (*The Social Construction of Reality* [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971], 160) about how in "conversion narratives" everything that comes before one's transformation is retrospectively interpreted as leaning toward it, a summary reinterpretation of the past: "Then I thought...now I know."

[216] The word does not occur anywhere else in the NT or LXX, but the noun προσωπολημψία does occur four times in the NT (Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; Jam 2:1).

[217] The best examples can be found in Sirach (4:22, 27; 42:1: μὴ λάβῃς πρόσωπον) and are variously translated "Do not show partiality" (4:22, 27; NRSV, CEB), "Do not save face" (42:1; NRSV), and "Don't show favoritism" (42:1; CEB). The hopelessly literal NETS has in Sirach 4:22, 27, and 42:1, respectively, "Do not receive a person," "Do not accept a person," and the even more wooden "do not receive a face." The idiom may reflect a condensed version of the OT claim about God found in both Deut 10:17 and 2 Ch 19:7: οὐ θαυμάζει πρόσωπον οὐδ᾽ οὐ μὴ λάβῃ δῶρον ("he does not wonder at a face nor take bribes").

not be new for a believer steeped in the scriptures of Israel. The question naturally arises: why does Peter experience God's partiality as something new *now*? Part of Peter's realization to this point in the story concerns the favor God has shown to this Gentile centurion, even prior to Peter's entry into the man's life. Peter recognizes, in both Cornelius' report(s) about the angel's visit to the centurion's home (10:22, 29-32) as well as Peter's own divine promptings (10:11-16, 19-20), that God has broken through the line that has long partitioned Gentiles from Jews. Notions of "clean" and "unclean" cannot be applied to people where God—the truly impartial one—has intervened (cf. 10:28). Even the kosher laws themselves (given by God!) cannot stand in the way of Gentile salvation and the Jew-Gentile fellowship that necessarily follows.

What Peter recognizes seemingly for the first time is the *universality* of God's favor: "but (ἀλλ᾽) in *every* nation (ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει) anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable (δεκτὸς) to him." Verse 35 begins with the adversative ἀλλά, thereby introducing God's impartiality in a more positive manner—i.e. God is not merely impartial, but partial to all nations. The phrase ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει likely recalls the pivotal claim made in Luke 24:47 about salvation going εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.[218] Peter's indirect allusion back to Jesus' promise invites a re-reading of Acts 1-9, where it has been shown (3.5.1) that the apostles limit their outreach almost entirely to Jews in Jerusalem.[219]

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[218] cf. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:134. It should be acknowledged that some fulfillment of Jesus' commission begins almost immediately with Pentecost (cf. 2:33), but in Acts 10 the full scope of the commission—after which there is no more widening, so to speak—comes into focus. Similarly, before Acts 10, the "end of the earth" could always be qualified ("the extent of the Jewish Diaspora" or "the end of the land of Israel"), but afterwards, with the unconditional acceptance of Gentiles, the end of the earth is logically possible and therefore representationally in view.

[219] In other words, on the basis of Peter's confession ("I [now] truly realize…"; ἐπ᾽ ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνομαι, 10:34) it is possible to interpret Peter's *prior* understanding of Jesus' promise-commission—up to this point in the narrative—as a call to bear witness to the Jewish Diaspora (cf. 2:5:

Indeed, Peter's dawning recognition,[220] and the climactic lesson of the P-C episode overall, is that the scope of the Messiah Jesus' Lordship is *truly* universal (10:36)—"Lord of all" means of all *nations,* not just of all of a specific "people."

A reminder of the suitability of Peter's speech for its narrative context is the phrase ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν ("the one who fears [God]"), since Cornelius is twice called ὁ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν (Acts 10:2, 22). Thus, Peter implicitly identifies Cornelius' household with those now deemed "acceptable" to God. Peter adds to the notion of "fearing God" the phrase [ὁ] ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην ("the one who…does what is right"), which also matches the description of Cornelius offered by his servants (10:22: ἀνὴρ *δίκαιος* καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν). It is natural to conclude that Peter's encounter with Cornelius and assessment of his character has informed his own realization about God's grace. Cornelius is a paradigm of those who (ὁ) are acceptable to God, establishing the centurion's representative character in the P-C episode—i.e. Cornelius = "the Gentiles" (10:45; 11:1, 18; 15:7-9).[221]

"Jews from every nation under heaven") or even only "to the ends of the *land* [τῆς γῆς]" (1:8) of Israel. See Schwartz, "The End of the γη." The reference to "every nation/ἔθνει" (10:35) links Peter's realization at this pivotal moment in Acts to Jesus' promise-commission, thereby indicating—by the unanticipated nature of the realization itself—that up to this point in the story, Peter (and the apostles) may have had only a limited grasp of the scope of Jesus' words.

[220] It is good to clarify that Luke avoids an outright negative characterization of the apostles' fulfillment of the dominical commission. Contrary to some views (Don Richardson, "The Hidden Message of Acts," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne [Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1992], 110-120), Luke allows Peter himself to make the crucial realization that his ministry has to this point reflected a limited fulfillment of Jesus' promise. In this sense, Peter and the apostles were not wrong. After all, thousands (Acts 2:41; 4:4) were converted from the apostles' early witness. Rather, where apostolic witness remained limited to Jews (largely in Jerusalem), it reflected an incomplete grasp of the implications of Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation. The retrospective recognition of that incomplete understanding further allows Luke to underscore Peter's *learning* and transformation, symbolic of Jewish believers more broadly, on the way to embracing an ethnically and geographically universal mission.

[221] To be clear, one of the ways Luke demonstrates Cornelius' representative character (see section above) is by saying so in several places—i.e. referring to the Cornelius incident in terms of its broader significance, which requires a collective judgment: "God has poured out the Spirit on *the Gentiles*!" (cf.

Finally, the unusual term δεκτός[222] ties Peter's recognition of Cornelius' salvation to Jesus' inaugural statement from Luke 4:18-19 (cf. 4:24), reflecting a broad set of connections between Peter's speech and Isa 61:1-2.[223] By claiming that τὰ ἔθνη are now δεκτός, Peter effectively names the continuity between Jesus' outreach in Luke 4:18-19 as Israel's Servant and Peter's own experience of divine favor toward Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10-11).[224] The Jubilee-like "year of the Lord's favor (δεκτός)" (4:19; Isa 61:2) inaugurated by Jesus and characterized by ἄφεσις (Luke 4:18; Lev 25:10 et passim; cf. Acts 10:43; Luke 24:47) includes Gentiles as well. Indirectly, the whole episode confirms the claim stretching from Luke's infancy narrative (Luke 2:30-32) to Paul's Agrippa speech (Acts 26:23) that Jesus himself carries out the mission. Moreover, Peter's inference that the mission of the messianic Servant to reach Gentiles with forgiveness finds fulfillment in Caesarea anticipates Paul's missionary self-conception in Acts 13:47, where Paul quotes Isa 49:6 (a "servant" text) with reference to his own outreach to

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10:45; 11:1, 18). As pious as Luke characterizes Cornelius, he remains the *de facto* type of the Gentiles. The Ethiopian eunuch was certainly as pious and as close to Judaism as Cornelius' household (equally uncircumcised, at the least), yet Luke never takes his "conversion" as representative of anyone but himself. Cornelius is demonstrably different in this respect. At the same time, this does not mean that the type becomes prescriptive—i.e., all Gentiles must be pious and Jewish-adjacent first—even if it does make Cornelius' acceptance easier for reluctant Jews to endorse.

[222] Cf. David Balch, "Accepting Others: God's Boundary Crossing According to Isaiah and Luke-Acts," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 36.6 (Dec. 2009): 414–423.

[223] See Gerhard Schneider, *Lukas, Theologe der Heilsgeschichte: Aufsätze zum lukanischen Doppelwerk* (Königsstein: P. Hanstein, 1985), 267-268, who combines the findings of Stanton, Nestle[25], and Nestle/Aland[26]. The connections between Peter's speech (10:34-43) and Jesus' inaugural address (4:17-19) can be charted by the influence of Isa 61:1 on Peter's wording:

Acts 10:36a	Isa 61:1 (εὐαγγελίσασθαι...ἀπέσταλκεν; cf. Isa 52:7 [εὐαγγελιζομένου...εἰρήνης])
Acts 10:38b	Isa 61:1 (πνεῦμα...ἔχρισέν)
Acts 10:38c	Isa 61:1 (ἀπέσταλκέν...ἰάσασθαι)
Acts 10:42a	Isa 61:1 (κηρύξαι)
Acts 10:43	Isa 61:1 (ἄφεσιν)

[224] Moreover, now Jesus' remarks about his hometown rejection, in light of ancient precedents of Gentile receptivity (Luke 4:25-27), can be seen as prefiguring universal salvation.

Gentiles (13:47; cf. 26:23). The P-C episode expresses the gospel itself since both Jesus' own mission as well as the commission he gives to his apostles anticipate it.

> (**Acts 10:36-38**) (This is) the word he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all!—[37] you know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: [38] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.
>
> τὸν λόγον [ὃν] ἀπέστειλεν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ εὐαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος, [37] ὑμεῖς οἴδατε τὸ γενόμενον ῥῆμα καθ᾽ ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας, ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐκήρυξεν Ἰωάννης, [38] Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέθ, ὡς ἔχρισεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ δυνάμει, ὃς διῆλθεν εὐεργετῶν καὶ ἰώμενος πάντας τοὺς καταδυναστευομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἦν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ.

Though Peter's speech begins with a personal revelation ("I truly realize…"), English translations (e.g., NRSV, NIV) often introduce second-person address in v. 36: "You know the message…" But the phrase ὑμεῖς οἴδατε does not actually occur until v. 37 (cf. KJV, CEB), which, along with a few other anomalies,[225] has bewildered translators.[226] Despite the difficult syntax, the statement is clear enough.[227] Harald

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[225] For instance, the textually uncertain relative pronoun in τὸν λόγον [ὃν] ἀπέστειλεν, which, depending on the reader, makes the sentence easier or more difficult to understand, thereby rendering *lex difficilior* inoperable. A summary of the issues can be found in Harald Riesenfeld, "The Text of Acts 10:36," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, ed. Ernest Best and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1979), 192; cf. Alexander, "This is That," 201: referring to Peter's being at a loss at Cornelius' house, probably unsure "what the Word of God will be in this impossible situation. You can almost hear him fumbling for words: the Greek syntax of 10:36ff. is laced with *asyndeta*. 'The Word,' he begins (ton logon): 'is *that* what you want? Well, there's only one Word that I know God has given me, and that's the Word that he sent to the children of Israel when he sent Jesus to preach the Gospel of peace. Is that it? But that was a Word for the Jewish people: what relevance has it to you?'"

[226] Barrett's comment on these verses is broadly representative: "so difficult as to be almost untranslatable" (*Acts,* 1:521). Cf. Culy and Parsons, *Handbook,* 210. Perhaps most indicative of the oddness of the construction is the translation of grammarians Friedrich Blaß and Albert Debrunner (*Grammatih des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 14th ed., ed. F. Rehkopf [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976], § 295, note 2), who take the accusative τὸν λόγον as the *predicate* of οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος.

[227] Barrett, *Acts,* 1:521; Sleeman, *Geography,* 239.

Riesenfeld's translation[228] (reflected, with modifications, above) illuminates the speech as Peter's epiphany about the significance of events in relation to the gospel.

In Riesenfeld's rendering "the word" (v. 36) refers (back) to the claim that God is impartial, a claim explicated by the insertion "he is Lord of all." In other words, Peter has learned that the character of God's impartiality—already widely known by Jews—is revealed in a new way in Jesus' universal Lordship of all peoples, Jews as well as Gentiles. Though Riesenfeld misreads the referent of "peace through Christ" as exclusively concerning the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles, the connections between "preaching peace through Jesus Christ" here and the associations of "peace" with Jesus' birth (Luke 1:79; 2:14) are worth considering.[229] The peace prophesied at Jesus' birth, in Peter's hindsight, has to do with divine acceptance of all people, which expresses both a theological and christological reality. Also, given the Isaianic allusions to Peter's phrasing (Isa 52:7: εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνης), his claims have a wider salvation-historical resonance.[230] Therefore, Peter implies, the P-C encounter realizes the work of

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[228] "Truly I realize that God does not show partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him; *(this is) the word which he sent to the children of Israel, proclaiming good news of peace through Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. You know what took place throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached*…" Remarkably enough, Riesenfeld's translation echoes that of J.A. Bengel. Riesenfeld, "Acts 10.36," 192.

[229] Burchard, Christoph. "A Note on ῥῆμα in Josas 17:1f.; Luke 2:15, 17; Acts 10:37," *Novum Testamentum* 27.4 (1985): 281-295. Though his arguments against the Riesenfeld translation of 10:36-37 are not convincing, Burchard compellingly draws links between Peter's speech and Luke 2:1-20. As was shown in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, the angelic declaration of Jesus as σώτηρ χρίστος κύριος (Luke 2:11) hints at the broad scope of Jesus' messianic identity, which soon after Simeon expresses in Isaianic terms: "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:32). Burchard confirms in part the notion that Peter's speech recapitulates crucial early claims about the identity of Jesus, newly fulfilled with the bringing together of Peter and the Gentile Cornelius. See also the Luke 2 connections recognized by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:138-139; and Witherington, *Acts,* 357.

[230] Cf. the connections with Isa 61:1 (Luke 4:17-18).

peace and salvation identified with Jesus' own life and ministry.[231] The claim asserts continuity between Jesus' seemingly limited mission to Israel and the events in Caesarea. Like Paul in Acts 26:23, Peter suggests that Jesus is ultimately the one who initiates mission to both Jews *and Gentiles*, so that a mission to Gentiles can be deemed the accomplishment of the Messiah himself.

Another slight anomaly, yet of inestimable importance for the speech and episode, is the syntax of the phrase οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος. Syntactically disruptive (*asyndeton*), the phrase can be attached to the preceding statement in different ways—either as a parenthetical aside[232] or an exclamatory interjection.[233] From a hermeneutical standpoint, and as an expression of Peter's recognition, the phrase makes the most sense as an exclamation. Its syntax draws attention to the phrase[234] and, given the speech's wider narrative context, the claim that "[the Messiah Jesus] is Lord of all!" is central to

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[231] Riesenfeld, "Acts 10.36," 193: "What is made clear in Peter's speech, which in the economy of Acts marks the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles is that the Gospel which has been addressed to the Jews (by the message and the ministry of Jesus) from its beginning implies the fact that peace (between Jews and Gentiles) has been established by the mission and achievement of Jesus Christ. Therefore he is Lord of all (of Jews and Gentiles equally)." Cf. Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles,* 33: "Thus if it is true that the evangelization of the Gentiles fulfills messianic prophecies, it is equally true to say that the messianic prophecies guarantee the legitimacy of such evangelization. They present it as part of the program set down by God for the Messiah. He wishes to teach us that the Scriptures have in fact been fulfilled. He also wants us to understand that the Scriptures themselves justify the Christian mission among the pagans, for they require this mission as the continuation of the salvific work of Jesus, the Christ." Cf. Dupont, "La portée christologique," 134-136, 138, 141.

[232] Among those taking "he is Lord of all" as a parenthetical or aside: Haenchen, *Acts*, 352; Barrett, *Acts,* 1:522; Culy and Parsons, *Acts,* 210.

[233] Among those who believe it functions like a climactic announcement: Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts,* 192; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:139-140; Rowe, "Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult," 297; cf. also idem, *World Upside Down,* 111-114. Cf. the broader use of the term in Second Temple literature: 3 Macc 5:28; 6:39; Wis 6:7; 8:3; Sir 36:1; *Test. Moses* 4:2; *Aristeas* 16, 18; cf. also Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 12.

[234] Some like F. F. Bruce claim both options at once (*Acts,* 225)—"Parenthetic but none the less emphatic"; Bock, *Acts,* 397: "Even though the remark is parenthetical grammatically, it is the theme of the speech conceptually." One way to understand *why* the syntax is so convoluted here is to recognize that the broader subject of the sentence, in vv. 34-36, is clearly ὁ θεός. A statement that "he is Lord of all," set in the normal syntax of the sentence, as it were, would doubtlessly have led to the impression that *God* is Lord of all (cf. 17:24). Wanting to make it clear that Jesus is Lord of all, however, Luke/Peter disrupts the syntax which, otherwise left alone, would have inevitably given the impression of God's Lordship rather than Jesus.

what Peter's words announce. Simply put, it is the point.[235] The emphatic position of the modifier (πάντων) reminds readers that what is new to Peter is not Jesus' Lordship but its *scope* ("of *all*").[236] After all, Peter had already declared Jesus "Lord and Messiah" in Acts 2:36 (cf. Luke 9:20). But that prior pronouncement had occurred in a speech delivered to Diaspora Jews and proselytes (2:14-39). Until the P-C episode, Peter had not yet discovered, let alone expressed, the full *scope* of Jesus' messianic Lordship. With God's favor shown to the Gentile Cornelius, the third pillar (along with death and resurrection) of Jesus' messianic identity is identified and affirmed by Peter (and subsequently by Jewish believers in Jerusalem): *the Messiah is also universal Lord*.

Understood in this way, "he is Lord of all" (v. 36) plays multiple roles in the speech. It serves to clarify what is "new" about God's impartiality (v. 34), namely that all nations find acceptance before God through the Lord Jesus (v. 35). But it also explains the existence of the following verses (vv. 37-42), which tell the story of the gospel. The gospel culminates in Jesus' universal Lordship (10:36), now illuminated by Peter's Gentile encounter. The scriptural claims concerning the Messiah (Luke 24:46) are incomplete without it (24:47).[237] He is Lord of all or not Lord at all.

> **(10:39-42)** We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; [40] but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, [41] not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. [42] He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.

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[235] Burchard, "A Note on ῥῆμα," 294. If, as Burchard argues, "the core of Peter's speech to Cornelius is v. 34-36 [and] the rest is proof," then his other claim—that "the οὗτος-clause is not an aside, rather it is the point of v. 36" (292)—makes Peter's claim about Jesus' Lordship the axel on which the whole speech turns. Cf. also Rom 10:12, with its similar constellation of motifs.
[236] Burchard, "A Note on ῥῆμα," 290-293.
[237] Cf. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:140-141; Witherington, *Acts,* 357-358.

> [39] καὶ ἡμεῖς μάρτυρες πάντων ὧν ἐποίησεν ἔν τε τῇ χώρᾳ τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ [ἐν] Ἰερουσαλήμ. ὃν καὶ ἀνεῖλαν κρεμάσαντες ἐπὶ ξύλου, [40] τοῦτον ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν [ἐν] τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν ἐμφανῆ γενέσθαι, [41] οὐ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, ἀλλὰ μάρτυσιν τοῖς προκεχειροτονημένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡμῖν, οἵτινες συνεφάγομεν καὶ συνεπίομεν αὐτῷ μετὰ τὸ ἀναστῆναι αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν· [42] καὶ παρήγγειλεν ἡμῖν κηρύξαι τῷ λαῷ καὶ διαμαρτύρασθαι ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ὡρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν.[238]

The proof that the Jesus now recognized as "Lord of all" is the same one who ministered in Judea rests on the authoritative claims of those who were witnesses to his activity (v. 39). This Jesus died and was raised (v. 40), to which chosen witnesses can testify (v. 41). But the role of the witnesses (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8), says Peter, is not simply to be bystanders: "He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead" (v. 42). This last statement deserves further scrutiny because, on the one hand, it strengthens the ties between the P-C event (Acts 10:1-48) and the apostolic commission (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8) and, on the other hand, appears to contradict one part of the present study's thesis—namely, that the "Lukan Commission" is more a promise to be fulfilled than a command to be obeyed.[239] Analysis will be given to this part of Peter's speech (and especially 10:42) in order to better understand how Peter conceives of the relationship between the P-C episode and his own commission.

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[238] The "Western" text adds ἡμέρας τεσσερακόντα, by which the editor apparently seeks to bring the statement in line with Acts 1:4-8 ("forty days"). That addition draws out the connections between the P-C episode and Jesus' parting words of commission even more strongly than the majority text.

[239] In Chapter 1, I drew a hermeneutical contrast between Luke's and Matthew's construal of the (apostolic) commission, noting that the "Great Commission" (28:18-20) contains the lone imperative (μαθητεύσατε, 28;19), whereas the "Lukan Commission" (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) is more promissory than imperatival. Cf. the "Western" variant at the end of Acts 1:2, which may have arisen on account of the perceived weakness of the future verb in 1:8: *καὶ ἐκελεῦσε κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.*

Firstly, it must be noted that since Acts 10:37-41 outlines the basic message of Luke's Gospel, following the chronology from John's baptism (v. 37) to the post-resurrection breaking of bread (v. 41), v. 42 falls in the sequence where we would expect to find events corresponding to those described in Luke 24:47-49/Acts 1:4-8. No other appearance of Jesus and no other commission is given to Peter or the apostles between the ascension and the Cornelius encounter, according to Acts.[240] Moreover, the language of μάρτυρες (vv. 39, 41) specifically recalls the designation the risen Jesus first uses for his followers in Luke 24:48 and Acts 1:8. "Witness" is a category strongly associated with the apostles, especially with regards to what they will do *after* Jesus' ascension.[241]

Secondly, Peter's self-identification with the "witnesses" (v. 39, 41) whom the Lord commanded to preach to the people recalls Peter's own definition of "witness" in Acts 1:21-22: "So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, *beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us*—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22). How Cornelius and his household would know who comprises Peter's "we/us" is unclear; the reader, however, is probably meant to assume the apostles,[242] with Peter as their representative. The emphasis on "us who were chosen" (10:41)—arguably by the risen Lord himself (cf. 1:24; Chapter 2)—sounds an ironic note since as much as Peter (likely) emphasizes the apostles' role in witness, the most

[240] The appearance of the ascended Jesus to Paul in Acts 9:3-9 is of course of a different order and will be taken up more fully in Chapter 4.
[241] By all accounts, Peter's statement is worded in such a way to draw attention back to Jesus' words for his apostles in 1:8. For the reader, familiarity with Acts 1:8 makes Acts 10:42 sound like an echo even if Peter himself neither quotes Jesus nor refers to that specific moment on Mt. Olivet. This is evident simply on the basis of the use of μάρτυς-related terms, which, across Luke-Acts, show up disproportionately in Acts.
[242] Jervell, *Apg.,* 311-312.

significant "witnesses" in Acts, besides Peter and especially after Acts 11:18, are *non*-apostles (Stephen, Philip, and Paul and Barnabas).[243]

Thirdly, the question of who chose the "witnesses" (v. 41) presents itself again a verse later, since it is not immediately clear who stands behind the "he" implied in παρήγγειλεν. Some assume it must be God.[244] At the same time, in the context of the speech, the nearest pronouns to the verb παρήγγειλεν—αὐτόν in v. 41, οὗτος in v. 42b—both refer to Jesus. Moreover, the obvious candidate given the commission found at the end of Luke (24:46-48) and at the beginning of Acts (1:8) is the risen Lord. As chapter 2 showed, however, Luke has textured the narrative of Acts in such a way that God and Jesus are "overlapping" characters, especially in relation to the use of the title κύριος (see 2.3.1.3.2 and 2.3.2.1.1.2.2). Peter's ambiguous language here may extend that ambiguity by crediting God even as the apostolic commission specifically recalls Jesus' charge.[245]

Fourthly, that Peter describes this commission as a command (παραγγέλλειν) may initially give readers pause. Outside of Acts 10:42, the only instances in which Jesus orders the disciples to do something (cf. Luke 9:21) appear to be isolated, *ad hoc*

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[243] Of the four characters, Stephen (22:20) and Paul (22:15; 26:16) are both given the title μάρτυς, whereas Philip and Barnabas clearly participate in the spread of the "Word" in a manner befitting the original apostles (cf. 6:4).6:4).6:4), not to mention that the same allusion to Isa 49:6 in 13:47 (applied to Paul/Barnabas) stands behind Acts 1:8, the commission given to the apostles. Yet cf. 14:4 and 14, where Luke calls Paul and Barnabas apostles.

[244] Though not usually representative of the consensus view, Jervell (*ibid.,* 312) probably best sums up the view that God is the one giving the command. After all, the subject of the verbs in Peter's gospel summary, at least starting in v. 40, is ὁ θεός, who "raised [Jesus] from the dead and made him to appear." Verse 41 adds a long subordinate clause specifying to whom God made the risen Lord appear. Thus, if v. 42 resumes the description started in v. 40 with the conjunctive clause καὶ παρήγγειλεν ("and he commanded"), the stated subject of the first clause would carry over as the unstated subject of the second clause.

[245] Cf. Barrett, *Acts,* 527, for example, who mentions both possibilities without deciding on one or the other.

commands (e.g., Luke 5:14; 8:29, 56; 9:21; Acts 1:4).[246] Notably, the verb παραγγέλλειν is not found either in Luke 24:47-48 or Acts 1:8; however, its occurrence in Acts 1:4, among all other appearances in Acts, resembles most closely the use in Acts 10:42. When Jesus "ordered" (παρήγγειλεν) his apostles not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the Spirit, the directive may implicitly include bearing witness.[247] Moreover, the specific charge given Peter and the apostles—namely "to preach" (κηρύξαι)—further recalls Luke 24:47 (κηρυχθῆναι[248]). The parallels between Luke 24:47 and Acts 10:42-43 go even further:

> κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ … ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (Luke 24:47)
>
> κηρύξαι … ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν … διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ (Acts 10:42-43)

Both passages contain the somewhat common phrase ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν,[249] and linked—in a manner nearly without parallel[250]—by the instrumental use of Jesus' name. Peter's

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[246] Interestingly, one of the few exceptions to the *ad hoc* use of commands (παραγγέλλω at least) appears in Acts 17:30, when Paul says to the Athenians, "God commands all people everywhere to repent." The reference to "all people" (οἱ ἄνθρωποι πάντες) and "everywhere" (πανταχοῦ), moreover, may implicitly echo Jesus' own apostolic commission in Luke 24:47 (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) and Acts 1:8 (ὁ ἔσχατος τῆς γῆς).

[247] That is, Jesus' final speech in Acts 1:4-8 could be interpreted as belonging to a single line of thought, with the force of παρήγγειλεν (v. 4) sustained throughout the series of future indicative verbs that follow (v. 5: βαπτισθήσεσθε; v. 8: λήμψεσθε … ἔσεσθε). Moreover, the actions which will be fulfilled in the future—being baptized in the Spirit, receiving power by the Spirit, and being witnesses—are all introduced and made logically possible by Jesus' command to remain in Jerusalem (v. 4). In one sense, therefore, the command to remain in Jerusalem comprises part of their commission to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. See Haenchen ("Judentum und Christentum," 161), who notes that ἔσεσθε could be future or imperative.

[248] Interestingly, while this verb is applied to the vocation of the Twelve in Luke 9:2 (and Luke 24:47), it is not used in Acts to describe apostolic witness until 10:42. Before then it is applied to the work of Philip (8:5), Saul (9:20; cf. 19:13; 20:25; 28:31), and, even within this same speech of Peter, to John the Baptist (10:37). Cf. also Mark 16:15.

[249] Cf. Luke 1:77; 3:3; 11:4; 17:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18.

[250] The phrase ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν is linked with the name of Jesus in only three places explicitly: Luke 24:47 (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ), Acts 2:38 (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), and 10:43 (διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτου. Cf. also Acts 13:38 (διὰ τούτου).

recollection draws attention back to Luke 24:47/Acts 1:8, emphasizing that to be "witnesses" entails preaching the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name.

Fifthly, and finally, Peter recalls that the command given him and the others concerns preaching τῷ λαῷ. Overwhelmingly, the use of ὁ λαός in Acts refers to the people of Israel. Given the Gentile context of the speech, however, some have questioned that consensus.[251] After all, Peter's speech emphasizes the universal scope and significance of Jesus' Lordship (10:34, 35, 36, 43), a claim bracketed by the assertions that "in *every* nation *anyone* who fears God…is acceptable to him" (10:35) and "*everyone* who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (10:43). Peter's speech, in this respect, might be understood as anticipating James' redefinition of λαός as including Jews *and* Gentiles (Acts 15:15-18).

To summarize, Peter reviews the gospel and locates his own apostolic commission within the story of Jesus, rounding off that story with the Lord's command that Peter preach to the people of Israel. As we saw, Peter's claim in 10:42 falls within the timeline of the gospel summary (vv. 37-42) right around where Jesus' departing words would have appeared (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), had Peter cited them. But, when Jesus' commission and Peter's recollection are compared, a distinct difference emerges. Whereas Jesus spoke of apostolic preaching εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, Peter characterizes that commission as a charge to preach τῷ λαῷ. If Peter is referring, even implicitly, to Jesus'

[251] For the traditional view—that λαός here refers to Israel exclusively—see Haenchen, *Acts,* 353, 359; Conzelmann, *Acts,* 84; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:527; Jervell, *Apg.,* 312. In his own way, the Lukan Paul supports this view, at least in contradistinction to his own ministry—Acts 13:31: οἵτινες [νῦν] εἰσιν μάρτυρες αὐτοῦ *πρὸς τὸν λαόν*. A different view is represented by Fitzmyer (*The Acts of the Apostles* [New York: Doubleday, 1998], 399), who think the reference to "people" here likely means "all nations (i.e. Gentiles)" (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 15:14). It is possible that Luke leans on a double-meaning here, in anticipation of the arc of the whole story. Cf. fn 88.

original commission, his recollection interprets the Lord's parting words in narrower terms than were explicitly stated, terms which the apostles' limited outreach in Acts 1-9 exhibits. That is, though Jesus spoke of *all* nations, Peter had a practicable understanding of "all" that more precisely meant "all Israel," at least in its primary accent.[252] Such a reading makes the most sense of the limited role the apostles play in fulfilling 1:8 in Acts' first nine chapters as well as of Peter's own surprise at the turn of events in Acts 10.

With one verse left to review, it suffices at this point to claim that Peter's speech shows how the difference between Peter's original apostolic self-conception (in preaching to Jews) and the new conception (that Jesus is Lord of all) finally dissolves in Acts 10. The P-C episode proves to be the decisive chapter in which the apostolic pattern of mission is brought into alignment with Jesus' original commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), a shift that will be ratified by the key apostle (10:1-48), the apostles and brothers (11:1-18), and ultimately the whole Jerusalem council (15:1-29).[253]

> (**10:43**) *To this all the prophets testify, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.*
>
> [43] τούτῳ πάντες οἱ προφῆται μαρτυροῦσιν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν λαβεῖν διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ πάντα τὸν πιστεύοντα εἰς αὐτόν.

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[252] Cf. Sleeman, *Geography,* 241: "Although Acts 10:42 expresses the scope of this proclamation within a more narrowly nationalistic reading of 1:8 [,] 10:43 at least allows for a wider mental map ('everyone who believes in him'), on ethat will certainly arrive with the…imposition of the Spirit which is about to interrupt Peter's address."

[253] Cf. Alexander, "'This is That,'" 201: "In fact it is very clear from 10.36ff. that the only word Peter has to say—to Cornelius or anyone else—is his testimony, the unadorned narrative of Jesus, who forms the subject of the whole sermon. But this pre-programmed testimony, the Jesus story that Peter thought was only for Israel, proves to be the key, first to the anointing of the Spirit (10.44), and subsequently to the church's theological reflection on the whole event (11.15-17; 15.9, 11)."

In the very next verse (v. 43) Peter's recap shifts to the new realization, exchanging first person reference ("us") for a more impersonal, even global claim.[254] The new tone also brings the speech back to the universalism of the speech's beginning ("every nation … anyone," v. 35; "Lord of all," v. 36). The Cornelius incident allows Peter to understand Jesus' commission as if for the first time, its fuller meaning now revealed by current events. It is not merely "all the people (of Israel)" with which God's work in Jesus Christ is concerned, but "all the nations"—both Jews and Gentiles. Moreover, by locating the apostolic commission within the trajectory of the gospel (vv. 37-42), Peter declares the salvation of the Gentiles the necessary fulfillment of the one story of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:1). The completion of the story of Jesus, as it were, is not Jesus' resurrection, but his exalted Lordship over *all* people, narratively realized in proclamation of salvation to Gentiles as well as Jews.

Zooming out, it is evident that Peter's speech is bracketed[255] with two universalizing claims: πάντι ἔθνει (10:35) and πάντα τὸν πιστεύοντα (10:42). What is said between these bookends primarily concerns a recapitulation of the gospel (10:37-42),

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[254] Haenchen, *Acts,* 353, says concerning verse 43: "Up to this point the sermon has reckoned almost solely with the mission to the Jews, which of course according to Acts is the only one so far existing. But Luke did not see this as conflicting with 1.8…The πάντα τὸν πιστεύοντα crashes through the barrier which is still intact in the preceding verse."

[255] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:141-142: Peter "ends his speech by noting a twofold responsibility given by Jesus to his witnesses: They must preach to the Jewish people and they must bear witness that Jesus has been appointed as universal judge, who already exercises his authority by offering to release the sins of everyone, Jew or Gentile, who believes in him. This pairing of a witness to the people with a witness of universal scope probably corresponds to the descriptions of Paul's commission, for Paul must testify to both Jews and Gentils. However, 10:42-3 does not clearly claim a mission to the Gentiles for the apostles. They are to proclaim to the people, and they are to bear witness that Jesus' authority applies to all and his benefits are open to all (as Peter does in defending gentile Christians in 15:7-11). This does not necessarily imply that they will conduct the gentile mission themselves. The ending of Peter's speech may represent a modification of Luke 24:47-48 in light of the fact that the apostles will largely play the role of verifiers, not initiators, in the gentile mission."

which is more particularistic in its language. That is, the intervening verses refer specifically to: the gospel's geographical origins in Galilee and temporal beginning after John's baptism (v. 37), the associations of Jesus with Nazareth (v. 38), the location of Jesus' ministry in Judea and Jerusalem and the specific manner of his death (v. 39), and the selection of certain witnesses ("we") by God to bear limited witness to Israel (vv. 41-42). The contrast exhibits the dual-purpose nature of Peter's speech. On the one hand, the bookend verses (vv. 34-36 and 43) mark and express Peter's new revelation, as it were, of the universality of God's plans by including *all* people in salvation, specifically formulated in light of the P-C experience. On the other hand, the intervening verses (vv. 37-42) express Peter's (re)formulation of the gospel, now interpreted afresh from the standpoint of the lesson Peter is learning about God's universal purposes.

Therefore, Peter's speech affirms the particularities of the gospel message—past events about which Peter claims his audience knows (v. 36)—while also integrating into that message the key element that until the Cornelius episode had been missing: actual proclamation of forgiveness to *all nations* (Gentiles) in Jesus' name (Luke 24:47). The story of Jesus, properly understood, necessarily entails the proclamation of salvation to Gentiles. Verse 43 also returns Peter's speech to its christological focus.[256] The gospel summary (vv. 37-42) had been about who Jesus is—life, death, resurrection, but now it can be seen to culminate in the question of *who* is to be included in the preaching of

[256] Interestingly, the two bookending claims are not identical. The first speaks of God's impartiality (v. 34), that anyone is potentially acceptable to "him" who fears "him" (v. 35). That is, "him" clearly refers to God. By v. 43, however, the "him" in the claim that "everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" has shifted to Jesus. Not unlike Peter's speech in Acts 2:14-36—in which the reference to the κύριος (God) in LXX Joel 3:1-5 shifts in meaning to the κύριος Jesus (Acts 2:17-21)—the speech in 10:34-43 moves from a focus on God to a focus on Jesus and salvation in his name. Cf. Bock, *Proclamation,* 230-240; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:140-143.

salvation. The scope of Jesus' Lordship is reflected in the range of peoples for whom salvation is intended (*πάντων* κύριος); hence, Peter's conclusion that "everyone who believes in [Jesus] receives forgiveness of sins in his name" (v. 43), reinforcing the importance of the P-C episode for the fulfillment of Jesus' messianic identity.

Peter's speech helps readers see from the outside what Peter, as it were, has experienced from the inside (cf. 11:5-17). The narrative's definition of "gospel"—in accordance with God's scriptural plans—now includes not only Jesus' death and resurrection, but also Jesus' Lordship over Jews *and Gentiles*. The limited outreach to Jews (10:42) is recognized for what it is, a partial expression of the messianic Lordship of Jesus. The "gospel" itself is truncated without the inclusion of Gentiles within the scope of Jesus' Lordship. This stunning realization is Peter's to make because the focalizing perspective of the P-C episode concerns the *response* of Jewish believers to Gentile salvation. Peter's speech is not a "church sermon," still less a model of "missionary" preaching, but an exemplary articulation of *how Jewish believers ought to respond to the fact that Gentile salvation fulfills scriptural promises about the messianic Lordship of Jesus.* With the recognition of Jesus' universal Lordship in the conversion of Gentiles, the Jewish apostle himself is transformed into the witness of Jesus and can now more fully grasp the messianic identity of Jesus, even as he seeks to communicate the gospel about Jesus to Gentiles. Having finally "witnessed" universal proclamation to all nations, Peter *becomes* Jesus' witness (Acts 1:8).

Certainly, the recognition that Gentiles can find acceptance by God through the Lord Jesus has many implications for Gentiles themselves, but it would be misleading to suggest the P-C episode is primarily concerned with Gentile perspectives. By ending the

scene with Peter's *associating* and *staying with* (thus sharing table fellowship with) Gentiles, Luke ensures that one of the primary points of the story is demonstrated in narrative action: *Jewish believers in Jesus* must reinterpret Torah and covenant obedience, given this new experience of God's prevenient favor toward Gentiles. How will Jewish believers respond? To accept that God saves Gentiles apart from circumcision is to accept a bold claim about God and Jesus (cf. 10:34-43), namely that the gift of the Spirit makes Gentile believers, along with Jewish believers in Jesus, co-members of the people of God (cf. 15:9-11). And Peter's commitment to stay with these Gentile believers means he accepts the social implications of those theological claims.

Just as Gentiles are now included in the "all" over which Jesus is Lord, so now apostles and Jewish believers must in turn recognize what "all" means for them: Jesus is not merely the Messiah whose reign now includes a people whom it did not before; rather, the fullness of Jesus' identity *as Messiah* comes from being Lord of *both Jews and Gentiles*. At the risk of overstatement, Jesus cannot be Lord of Jews if he is not also recognized as Lord of Gentiles—the truth of which claim is attested by the existence of communities whose life together expresses that claim (11:19-26).

3.7.2 Conclusion: Discovering Jesus' Identity

On the one hand, the controversies that prompt each retelling of the P-C episode appear different from one another. Acts 10 concerns the perception that Gentiles are "unclean," Acts 11 that Jewish believers should not freely associate with uncircumcised Gentiles, and Acts 15 that Gentile believers cannot be saved apart from circumcision and the demands of Torah. On the other hand, the preceding exegesis has demonstrated that the axle around which the episode turns is the christological claim that Jesus is universal

Lord. In view of these findings, the three accounts are unified in the way they present obstacles to the recognition of Jesus' Lordship. In other words, full recognition that "this one is Lord of all" requires the removal of all forms of social distinction that inherently oppose that Lordship. In their own way, each account of the P-C episode—in Luke's handling—narrates improper Jewish responses (Torah-objections, social distinctions, proselytism) to the revelation of Jesus' Lordship over *all.* When Jewish believers challenge and overcome these obstacles, they socially express the deeper christological claim—that Jesus is truly Lord of all peoples.

It should be remembered that Peter's retelling of the P-C narrative is elicited by charges brought against him by "those of the circumcision": "Why did you go to *uncircumcised men*[257] and eat with *them*?" (Acts 11:3). In contrast to Peter's dissolving of distinctions (11:12), Peter's accusers maintain conventional out-group titles (cf. 10:28a) for the Gentiles. Focusing on the covenantal mark of initiation, they emphasize how *dissimilar* Jews and Gentiles are. Though these Jewish believers do not say it explicitly, their language of "going to and eating with" implies a level of association that risks defilement. They have yet to learn the lesson of Peter's vision, and so he must retell the story in order that they can arrive at the same conclusions: "God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean" (10:28b). Given the context of Peter's "defense" speech (11:5-17), Peter justifies his controversial associations with Gentiles by characterizing events as in keeping with Pentecost. To the degree that Jews and Gentiles are similar—they have both received the Spirit—they should not be distinguished

[257] It should be noted that the controversies in the text concern the circumcision of males only. The question of the initiation of Gentile women into God's people is not addressed by Luke.

(11:12). Without the operative Jew-Gentile distinction, the charge leveled against Peter becomes unwarranted.

At no point in Acts 10-11 is the question of the "conversion" of Gentiles considered inadmissible. At stake, rather, is the proper understanding of the implications of their admission into God's people. Underlying the criticism of Peter's behavior (in both Acts 11 and 15) is the idea that even though Gentiles can be saved, a distinction between them and Jewish believers should remain. A qualification persists, namely that full association between circumcised and uncircumcised believers—which presumes equality in the eyes of Israel's God, in other words—cannot be sustained because of the demands of the law (Lev 10:10; 11:46-47; Deut 20:25). Peter's slow recognition—encapsulated finally in 10:34-43 and his lodging with Gentiles—becomes the basis for the transformed understanding of his Jerusalem brethren. As Chapter 4 will show, that understanding will give way to a fuller statement on the acceptance of Gentiles *and specifically what it means for Jewish believers* (15:1-29).

3.8 Conclusion

What this chapter has discovered is that, when careful attention is paid to Luke's construal of Jewish participation in universal mission, such participation provides an opportunity for (Jewish) witnesses to discover more fully the scope of the Lordship of the Messiah Jesus. Again and again, the focus of Luke's pivotal P-C episode falls on the capacity of Jewish believers to *learn* more fully who Jesus is as a result of *witnessing* God at work among Gentiles. The transformation of the apostle Peter symbolizes this change in Jewish perceptions, reflected in the fact that Luke has Peter discover, as it were, the full scope of Jesus' identity. Peter goes on to retell and interpret theologically

the story of his encounter with Cornelius. By doing so, Luke unearths the christological core of the episode[258]—and, arguably, of all of Luke-Acts[259] —namely, that Jesus is truly "Lord of all" (10:36). As the linchpin of Peter's speech, the title indicates two key points: first, Peter's speech marks the moment when it becomes clear that the P-C episode initially fulfills the trajectory of Jesus' universal commission; and, second, it highlights the moment of the Jewish apostle's transformed understanding, which will eventuate in the further transformation of Jerusalem believers (11:18) and the "whole church" (15:1-29).

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[258] It can tentatively be pointed out here that even though Jesus does not "appear" explicitly in Acts 10-11:18, besides on the lips of speakers, the way in which Luke has overlapped the freight of the term κύριος to this point in the narrative may imply his presence everywhere (and nowhere at the same time). For instance, in the run-up to the Cornelius episode (9:1-31), κύριος is used repeatedly to refer to Jesus (9:1, 5, 10 [2x], 11, 13, 15, 17, 27, 28), which is perhaps to be expected given the scene primarily concerns Saul's encounter with the ascended Lord. The strong association of Jesus with κύριος likely shapes the way in which the ambiguous use of κύριος is to be read in Acts 10-11. Furthermore, in Acts 10-11, the term θεός is used exclusively in the third-person (10:4, 15, 28, 31, 34; 11:17, 19; only the Spirit explicitly speaks (as God) in the first-person (10:20). Other clues like the suggestive ambiguity of Peter's use of the vocative κύριε (10:14; 11:18) may enhance the implied connection. After all, it remains unclear who Peter's addressee is, except that the voice comes from heaven (10:13), refers to "God" in third-person (10:15), and seems to be closely associated with the "Spirit" who sent Cornelius' men (10:19-20). All of these details cumulatively point to Jesus himself, based on the earlier part of this chapter. Additionally, twice in his recollections of the Cornelius encounter Peter uses κύριος in clear reference to Jesus. In Acts 11:16, Peter says he "remembered the word of the *Lord*, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" The recollected statement clearly refers to Acts 1:5, a statement delivered by the risen Lord Jesus. Peter follows up in 11:17 with the conclusion: "If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the *Lord* Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" Furthermore, given the pattern of κύριος-usage in Acts elsewhere—aligned by the exclamation "he is Lord of all!" (10:36)—the Lord Jesus is suggestively present and/or active even where he is not explicitly named or where the language used tends to be associated with only God or the Spirit. In light of the tendency throughout Acts to apply the title κύριος to Jesus as salvation in his name crosses geographical and ethnic boundaries in Acts, it makes sense that in the pivotal episode of the *Gentile* breakthrough readers could reasonably fill in uses of "Lord" with "exalted Jesus." Such an assumption, perhaps, is confirmed in Acts 11:20, when the narrator this time refers to those scattered (8:1, 4; 11:18) who end up speaking to Jews and non-Jews, "proclaiming the *Lord* Jesus." Cf. Sleeman, *Geography,* 226-229.

[259] Rowe, "Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult," 297: "Acts 10.36 provides a remarkable and dramatic abbreviation of Luke's christological use of κύριος. In this way it is a material link to the κύριος Christology of the entire Luke-Acts narrative, and its intrinsic narrative importance is therefore confirmed." Cf. Sleeman, *Geography,* 240-241: "Peter's insight, its revelation for Cornelius, and its implications within the narrative are intensely Christological."

It might be supposed that Peter "discovers" the Gentile mission in a roundabout way—as if he had not conceived of Gentiles being saved before—but the narrative avoids that impression. Rather, Peter's objections (and those of his detractors) deal with making "distinctions" between different kinds of believers (10:28; 11:2; 15:1, 5). Therefore, Peter learns more specifically that Gentiles can be saved without circumcision and remain in full fellowship with Jewish believers because of the Pentecost-like gift of the Spirit (10:44-45; 11:15-17; 15:7-9). Moreover, in linking the full inclusion of Gentiles to the universal Lordship of Christ, Luke makes the denial of one a denial of the other. In other words, accepting Gentiles as Gentiles signals the transformation required of the apostles and other Jewish believers with respect to God and Jesus. Luke demonstrates this broadly by showing the gradual evolution of Peter's character—from impure contacts in Judea (9:32-43) to Torah-objections before God (10:11-16, 28a) to recognizing the salvation of the Gentiles (10:44-48) to advocating for their acceptance *qua* Gentiles (11:5-17) and, finally, to tying Gentile salvation to the christological shift required of all Jewish believers (15:11).

To put our findings in the context of the whole of Acts, we can conclude that Peter's christological "discovery" depends on his venturing into a new intercultural context (he must go to Caesarea, not Cornelius to Joppa or Jerusalem). To refuse the trajectory toward "all nations" (Luke 24:47) and "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)—which Peter (and the apostles) had seemingly done until Acts 10—is to limit one's own capacity to recognize Jesus as Lord of all. Universal witness itself expresses a crucial aspect of who the Lord Jesus is, a point unintelligible to Peter except from *within* the unfolding of that witness, from within the kinds of practices emblematic of that recognition

(fellowship, hospitality, fictive kinship). Certainly, Peter could have recognized Cornelius as a different category of believer or placed conditions on his membership among God's people, as some Jewish believers do in Acts 15:1 and 15:5 (cf. 11:2). Peter instead acquiesces to God's leading because the mutuality of intercultural acceptance names who Jesus fundamentally is—Lord of *all*. Jesus' Lordship can only be expressed in irreducibly intercultural terms (Acts 2); difference is essential but not essentialized.[260] Thus the absolutizing of one's own culture (taking it as the measure of other enculturated responses to the gospel)[261]—no matter how logical internally—is a contradiction of the gospel of Jesus. At stake in Peter's acceptance or rejection of Cornelius' testimony is the very identity of Jesus as Lord of all (10:36), which itself expresses the consistent character of the God of Israel as "impartial" (10:34).

The next chapter will conclude this study by tracing the narrative development of Jesus' identity as universal Lord in the commission and ministry of Paul.

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[260] Jennings, *Acts*, 102-121.

[261] See, e.g., Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), 116-127, 184-197; Andrew Walls, "The Ephesian Moment," in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 72-83; and Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* 13-55.

4. Jesus' Universal Lordship and Outreach to Jews and Gentiles

4.1 Rationale

The previous three chapters about Jesus' narrative identity were largely devoted to the end of Luke's Gospel (Luke 24:44-49, Chapter 1), and to the beginning of Acts and Acts' account of apostolic witness (Acts 1:1-11:18, Chapter 3). Chapter 2 was more wide-ranging, tracing the theme of Jesus' "activity" and the growth of the "word" throughout Luke's second volume. It also touched on Jesus' appearances to Paul, though a fuller treatment was postponed till the present chapter.

In Chapter 3, it should be recalled, Peter's encounter with Cornelius (10:1-11:18) highlights Luke's narrative christology in Acts. That is, with Peter's declaration that the Messiah Jesus is "Lord of all" (10:36), issued in light of God's work among Gentiles like Cornelius, the prophetic statements in Luke 2:11, 2:32, and 3:6 appear to have been fulfilled, at least initially. With the Holy Spirit's descent upon Gentiles as well as Jews (10:44-47; 11:18), God's ancient purposes for Israel and the nations have come to pass, God's impartiality fully revealed in the boundless scope of Jesus' Lordship (10:34-36).

It might be wondered, therefore, what a survey of Paul's ministry has to contribute to this picture of universal witness. *Peter* testifies that the Gentile "breakthrough" narratively signifies Jesus' universal Lordship. What is there left for *Paul* to do? The answer, at least according to Acts, is plenty. Luke emphasizes Paul's role, not only by devoting more than half of his second volume to him (Acts 9:1-30; 13:1-28:31),[1]

[1] Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles*, 27: "Paul is undoubtedly the principal figure in the Acts of the Apostles. In this book of slightly more than 1,000 verses, he occupies the foreground in about 600, Peter in only 250."

but also by having the exalted Lord Jesus appear to Paul by vision and speech more often than to any other character, and principally for the purpose of exhorting him to take up and/or continue his worldwide witness (18:9-10; 22:14-15, 21; 23:11; 26:16-18; cf. 9:15; 13:47; see Chapter 2). At the risk of overstatement, "if we can grasp the significance Luke sees in Paul's mission, we will have understood by the same token the meaning Luke intends to convey by his entire narrative."[2] Though it is less immediately clear how the lengthy account of Paul's captivity and trials (Acts 21:27-28:31) figures into the exposition of Jesus' Lordship, even this concluding block of narrative enables Luke to underscore the universality of Jesus' saving reach (22:14-21; 26:16-23; 28:28-31), albeit with a retrospective tenor. In this way, the universal Lordship remains in view even when Paul is in custody and the narrative no longer focuses on the expansion of the movement throughout the Diaspora (cf. Acts 11, 13-21).

Supporting these preliminary conclusions about Paul's role is the observation that the P-C episode (Acts 10:1-11:18)—through its retelling (15:7-11), that is—represents Peter's (and the apostles') last act in the narrative. Peter's final words in the book, at the Jerusalem Council, offer a theological discourse on his experience with Cornelius (15:7-11). Peter exits the narrative, telling and retelling of God's work among the Gentiles and, especially, of the significance of this work for Jewish believers (cf. 15:11; see 4.5.2 below).[3] Peter's speech at the Jerusalem Council serves to confirm what Paul and Barnabas are already doing (15:2-4, 6, 12, 25), in part, by addressing the objections raised against their work (15:1, 5). The point of Acts 15, as far as the apostles in the

[2] Dupont, ibid., 28.
[3] Dupont, ibid., 24.

narrative are concerned, is to recognize and ratify the significance of the P-C episode for witness in the Diaspora. This transformation of the apostles and other Jewish believers, led by Peter, effectively brings apostolic work into alignment with what God is doing among the Gentiles, led primarily by Paul. After narratively (re)aligning the apostles' understanding with God's will, Luke hands the spotlight over to Paul and takes up an account of his increasingly wide-ranging witness. Luke previews this shift in focus after the P-C episode (10:1-11:18) by immediately turning to the narrative arc associated with Paul and the Jerusalem exiles (cf. 8:1-4; 11:19-26; 12:18f.), among whom the apostles are notably not included (8:1). Chapter 4, therefore, explores the way in which the unfolding of witness in the Diaspora (esp. from Antioch) by Paul and others attests Luke's way of tying the universality of Christian witness to the universality of Jesus' Lordship.

4.2 Outline of Chapter

It will be recalled, from Chapter 1, that Luke ties Paul's understanding of his commission and ministry in Acts to Jesus' apostolic commission (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8) in at least three ways: first, the conclusion of Paul's final major speech (Acts 26:22-23) closely parallels Jesus' final speech in Luke's Gospel (24:46-47), effectively bookending all of Acts. The anticipatory tone of the "Lukan Commission" matches the summative, retrospective tenor of Acts 26:22-23, aiding readers in seeing the fulfillment of the apostolic commission in the résumé of Paul. Second, Luke draws out the inter- and intra-textual connections between Acts 1:8 and 13:47 to tie the apostolic commission to Paul's commission in light of *Jesus' messianic mission* as construed by Isaiah (49:6). As will be shown in depth below, the quotation of Isa 49:6 in Acts 13:47 not only recalls and clarifies Acts 1:8's allusive phrasing, but it also inscribes the scope of Jesus' apostolic

commission into Paul's commission in Acts (see 4.6.1.1 below). Finally, it was noted that by "all nations" (Luke 24:47) and "end(s) of the earth" (Acts 1:8) Luke has in mind an *ethnically* inclusive mission (Jews and non-Jews alike) as well as a *geographically* expansive outreach (everywhere). By the end of Acts, it becomes apparent that Jesus' parting words to his *apostles* in the beginning more accurately characterize *Paul's* work in far-flung lands and among Jews and Gentiles (cf. Acts 13-21). The implication is that an account of Paul's mission in the Diaspora doubles for the narrative unfolding of Jesus' universal Lordship.

Given this basic framework established in Chapter 1, it remains to be seen *how* Luke's account of Paul contributes in detail to the narrative christology of universal witness under consideration in this dissertation. The present chapter will take up this question by attending to three peculiar characteristics of Luke's account of Paul: (1) the association of Paul with the emergence of the Syrian Antioch community as the new, intercultural (Jew-Gentile) center of the Christian movement (11:19-26; 13:1-3; 14:26-28; 15:22-35; 18:22-23), which attests Peter's christological revelation in the form of a new community; (2) the way the Jerusalem Council meeting (15:1-29) agrees on Gentile salvation as part of Israel's restoration, thereby modeling the proper response to Gentile inclusion in God's purposes; and (3) how Jewish opposition to Paul reflects not only a rejection of Jesus as crucified and risen Messiah but specifically of the notion that the Messiah's mission involves reaching Gentiles through Paul.

As will become clear, in Acts Paul operates on the assumption that Jesus is truly "Lord of all" and that to reject Paul's mission is to reject the universal scope of the Messiah's work. It is fitting, therefore, that Luke identifies Paul's expanding outreach

efforts with the (Syrian) Antioch community, the first community comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. As the social explication of Jesus' universal Lordship, the Antioch community presents the apostles and Jerusalem church with the concrete implications of Peter's christological revelation. The Jerusalem meeting (Acts 15) recognizes what is at stake, affirming that Jews are saved just like Gentiles, that Israel's restoration and outreach to Gentiles are correlated in God's plans, and that Paul's ministry in Antioch and beyond is consistent with these conclusions. Having modeled the proper response to Paul's ministry, so to speak, the apostles and Jerusalem church all but disappear from the narrative. In place of believing Jewish-Christian affirmation we encounter repeated instances of unbelieving Jewish opposition to Paul's mission. Jewish rejection of Paul's message, however, does not "cause" his outreach to Gentiles. Luke is clear that Gentile receptivity *confirms* the universality of the messianic mission, and Paul's participation in it. Jewish antagonism towards Paul, therefore, only underscores—albeit negatively—the link between universal outreach and the identity of Jesus.

4.3 Introduction: Paul's Commission in Light of the "Lukan Commission"

When Luke's focus in Acts shifts to Paul, almost exclusively from chapter 13 on, Luke continues to emphasize the programmatic vision of Jesus' parting words (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8), but with a new primary agent of fulfillment. The emergence of Paul is accompanied, narratively, by a decline in appearances by the apostles. Lest readers think of the commissions of the apostles/Peter and that of Paul as unrelated, however,

Luke offers several clues throughout Acts interpreting Paul's witness in light of the commission given to the apostles.[4]

In its immediate narrative context, Jesus' commission is delivered to the apostles, but the widest scope of its fulfillment is accomplished by Paul, according to Acts. Peter's revelation in Caesarea, in fact, demonstrates that while the apostles limited their outreach to Jews and Jerusalem, Jesus' commission had a wider horizon. With the inter- and intra-textual connections revealed in Acts 13:47, it becomes clear that the apostles helped to fulfill part of the Isaianic vision (cf. 49:6*a*). Reading Acts through Luke's account of Paul effectively indicates that the Jerusalem apostles understood their "universal" commission to "restore the tribes of Jacob and to return the exiled remnant" (Acts 1:8; Isa 49:6a) while the Antioch "apostles" (Paul and Barnabas; cf. 14:4, 14) are explicitly commissioned to "be a light for the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47; Isa 49:6b). As the tissue connecting two halves of Acts, Acts 10:1-11:18 helped Peter and the apostles and Jerusalem believers recognize the wider vista of "*all* nations" (Luke 24:47)—namely, that which is pursued by Paul and others in the Diaspora. The repeated dominical commissions of Paul (9:15; 22:21; 26:17-18) and the narrative account of his activity confirm this basic distinction. Because Paul says nothing about the work of the apostles or Jerusalem church in the summary speech in Acts 26, the impression is that Paul's ministry should be understood as a primary means for the

[4] The question of "apostolic succession" is not considered here as it represents an extra-textual and historical concern, since, aside from passing remarks in 14:4 and 14:14, the term "apostles" is not used for successive groups in Acts after the original Twelve. As many have pointed out, James the son of Zebedee is not replaced after his death (12:2; cf. Judas in 1:13-26) and the anointing of a new "twelve" in Acts 19:7 is not tied to apostolic succession nor are these believers heard from again. For a terse summary, see Maddox, *Witnesses,* 26-27; or, for an alternative view, see Bolt, "Mission and Witness," 191-214; and, different still, Raymond Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984).

extension of the gospel to the ends of the earth. In this respect, the commissions of the apostles and Paul/Barnabas are neither identical nor entirely distinct; rather, they are complementary and interdependent.[5]

4.4 Paul and Witness in the Diaspora

Luke connects Paul with the Antioch community and the storyline of outreach in the Diaspora by exiles from Jerusalem (8:1, 4; 11:19-26; 13:1-3; etc.). By introducing "Saul" into the narrative in the midst of Stephen's trial and execution (7:58; 8:1, 3), Luke highlights Paul's indirect responsibility for exile (cf. 11:19) and his change of course on the Damascus road (9:1-22:6-16; 26:12-18). Paul's journey shifts from responsibility for destroying communities of believers (22:4-5, 19-20; 26:9-12) to being responsible for

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[5] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:281: "Thus the twelve apostles and Paul share a witness to the risen Messiah, but there is also something distinctive about the witness of each: in the one case a witness to the ministry of Jesus, which remains important; in the other a witness with a breadth that corresponds to the breadth of God's saving purpose. Theus the twelve and Paul have complementary and interdependent roles in the unfolding purpose of God." By contrast with the apostles, the extent of Paul's ministry is characterized as virtually unlimited from the beginning. Luke has the exalted Lord Jesus introduce the "new" Saul to readers as "an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel" (Acts 9:15). In Acts 22, when Paul recalls the same vision (i.e., 9:15) of the risen Lord, this time Paul epitomizes Ananias' message to Paul: "you will be his witness to *all* people (ἔσῃ μάρτυς αὐτῷ πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους)" (Acts 22:15). In this recollection, Paul's role as μάρτυς echoes the original *apostolic* commission (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8a: ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες), while emphasizing that Paul's outreach was explicitly universal in scope (πάντες ἄνθρωποι; cf. Luke 24:47's πάντα τὰ ἔθνη). Later in the same speech, Paul refers to a heretofore unmentioned vision of Jesus in the temple, in which Jesus says to Paul—directly, this time—"Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles (εἰς ἔθνη μακρὰν ἐξαποστελῶ σε)" (Acts 22:21; cf. 26:17-18). Indeed, in his own summary of his work in Acts 26, Paul epitomizes his obedience to the Lord's calling: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance" (Acts 26:19-20). Paul's ministry is ethnically inclusive ("and also to the Gentiles") and geographically expansive ("in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea" and implicitly wherever there are Gentiles; cf. 21:21). With the exception of a reference to Damascus, where he first encountered the risen Lord (9:1-25), Paul's account of his ministry in Acts 26 is patterned on the path laid out by Jesus himself in Acts 1:8 (cf. 9:27-30). Earlier in the same speech Paul quotes the exalted Lord Jesus' personal promise to Paul (ἐξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε, v. 17), suggesting that Paul's commission was to go to Jews (λαός) and Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) everywhere. Thus, Paul's mission covers both the ethnic trajectory of Jesus' apostolic commission as well as its basic geographical scope, reinforcing the impression that Paul's activity has effectively fulfilled the widest horizon of Jesus' promise about apostolic witness.

equipping new communities in the Diaspora (e.g., 13:1-3; 14:26; 15:40-41; 20:28). The spread of outreach to Greeks/Gentiles in places like Antioch (11:20, 22), according to Luke, provides an opportunity for the new "Paul" (13:9) to take on a leadership role. As Acts unfolds, it is no minor point that each of Paul's so-called "missionary journeys" begins from Antioch (13:1-3; 15:35; 18:23). With the exception of the third journey—when his arrest in Jerusalem interrupts a possible return (21:27-28)—each of his trips ends in Antioch as well (14:26-28; 18:22). From Acts 11:19 on, Antioch is the new center of outreach to the Jewish Diaspora and pagan world. In this respect, Antioch (the first-century Roman Empire's third largest city after Rome and Alexandria) narratively eclipses Jerusalem even if Luke notes several ties between the two cities. In fact, the connections form the basis for the way Luke construes Antioch as taking up the mantle of witness "to the end of the earth." Antioch, in Luke's story, is key to identifying the significance of Paul's story and its way of further developing the narrative identity of Jesus as universal Lord. In Antioch we find Luke's paradigm of communities whose inter-ethnic life together explicates the Lordship of Jesus.

4.4.1 The Antioch Community in the trajectory of Acts 6-8

Even though the episodes appear side-by-side in Acts, Luke does not correlate Peter's experience (10:1-11:18) with the beginnings of the Antioch community and mission; instead, in 11:19, he resumes the storyline introduced earlier in Acts (6:7-8:4):

> Now those who were scattered [οἱ … διασπαρέντες] because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. (Acts 11:19-21 NRSV)

First noted in 8:1-4, the scattering (διασπαρέντες) of believers from Jerusalem sets events in motion to which the Lukan narrator now returns in 11:19. In the way Luke has connected episodes in Acts 6-8, the scattering of believers can be traced back to the election of the "Seven" (6:5-6) since two among them—Stephen and Philip—occupy central roles in chapters 6-8. Moreover, Luke emphasizes Stephen's "trial" in part because of its role in indicating the persecution believers began to experience en masse. Acts 11:19 even refers to Stephen specifically to ensure readers make the connection. In a sense, therefore, the role Antioch will play can be indirectly traced as far back as Acts 6.[6] The attempt to alleviate disparities in food distribution gives rise to the "Seven" (6:1-6) whose διακονία indirectly results in the spread of believers into the Diaspora (8:1-4), the conversion of the Samaritans (8:5-25), and the conversion of an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40). Readers may surmise that among the Jerusalem exiles were the rest of the "Seven." The last named member, and the brief accompanying description, may point forward to 11:19-26: "Nicolaus, an *Antiochene* proselyte (Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχέα)" (6:5).

Luke offers more clues in 11:19-26 indicating the resumption of the story from 8:1-4. In addition to the identification of those "scattered" (οἱ διασπαρέντες; 8:1, 4; 11:19) in the wake of Stephen's martyrdom (8:1-2; 11:19), the wording of Acts' account of the exiles' activity in 11:19-20 (λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον… εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν) echoes that of 8:4 (διῆλθον εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν λόγον). The resumption of the

[6] It is likely not coincidental that in the genealogy of the Antioch community lies Acts' first example of inter-cultural community (Aramaic-speaking Jewish believers and Greek-speaking Jewish believers). In addition, in 11:24, the Jerusalem church chooses Barnabas as their emissary to Antioch. Barnabas, first introduced in 4:36 among the Jerusalem community, is characterized as "full of the Holy Spirit and faith," a description that closely parallels that of the "Seven" and especially Stephen, who was "full of faith and the Holy Spirit" (6:5).

Acts 6-8 storyline also becomes more focused in 11:19-26, concentrating on a specific group of exiles from Jerusalem (a subset from Cyprus and Cyrene who went to Greeks/Gentiles[7] as well) and their destinations in the Diaspora ("as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch"). Luke uses the many parallels between Acts 6-8 and 11:19-26 to indicate both the resumption of the "exiles" storyline as well as an emphasis on that storyline for showing how Jews and Gentiles were reached with the Gospel in the Diaspora (especially Antioch).[8]

Moreover, Luke characterizes the success of the exiles' efforts in Antioch in a way that recalls a similar rumor of success in 8:14 concerning Samaritan outreach:

> "News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch." (Acts 11:22)
>
> "Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them." (Acts 8:14)

The pattern repeated in Antioch reflects the shifting role of the Jerusalem church and apostles in the spread of the word outside of Jerusalem. God's activity in Samaria and Antioch elicits the confirmation of Jerusalem believers, who send emissaries to confirm events and offer their blessing. Luke emphasizes these connections between new frontiers of mission (Samaria and Antioch) and the Jerusalem church as a way to highlight unity in the expansion of the movement beyond its Palestinian and apostolic origins.[9] Plotted on

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[7] David Seccombe, "The New People of God," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 361; and Zugmann, *"Hellenisten"*, 4-10.

[8] That Antioch is quickly elevated above the others may be indicated by the fact that Antioch occupies the final position in the prepositional phrase of direction: ἕως Φοινίκης καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Ἀντιοχείας (11:20). Cf. Acts 1:8: ἕως τοῦ ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς, also in final position.

[9] As Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, 2:149) notes, Luke's insistence upon keeping Jerusalem apprised of such frontier work results in renewing the Jerusalem church's understanding of God's activity beyond the horizon of their own work.

the trajectory of 1:8 (Jerusalem → Judea/Samaria → ends of the earth), the focus on Antioch may signal for readers the initiation of a movement toward the end of the earth.

As shown in Chapter 3, the storyline of expulsion from Jerusalem and its consequences is broken up by an interlude about Peter (9:32-11:18). His story represents an interruption in the narrative progression since, outside of the discrete storyline in 9:32-11:18 (which focuses almost entirely on him), Peter does not appear as the lead character in 6:7-11:30. In fact, his role in Acts 8:14-25 is more that of a role-player, verifying Samaria's "conversion" predominately led by Philip (8:1-13). Arguably, confirmation comes in the fact that Peter makes his way back to Jerusalem thereafter, rather than using Samaria as the basis for reaching the end of the earth (8:25). As Chapter 3 (3.5.2.2) argued, this trip is in some sense a means of conforming Peter and John—and, by extension, the apostles and Jerusalem church—to the reality initially taking place beyond their control or grasp, a transformation culminating in the agreement reached in Acts 15.

At the same time, as Peter's story nears its climax, Luke introduces readers to the story of Saul/Paul. If Peter's P-C encounter appears to float in narrative time—underscoring its timeless significance—Paul's conversion (9:1-21) fits squarely within the story of the scattering, which he helped to bring about through persecution (7:58; 8:1-4). But narrative of Paul's activity, especially as it relates to the central role played by Antioch in that activity (11:19-26; 13:1-3), comes *after* Peter's transformative experience in Caesarea (10:1-11:18). In effect, Acts 11:19-26 continues the *narrative* trajectory begun in Acts 6-8, helping frame Paul's story, but continues the *theological* trajectory established in Acts 10:1-11:18, essentially concluding Peter's story but establishing its continuity with Paul's work to come.

The transition from Peter's recognition that Jesus is πάντων κύριος (10:36) to the next phase of narrative (11:19-26) confirms that the apparent insertion of the Cornelius episode (10:1-11:18) is no interruption after which things go back to normal, as it were. Luke indicates this by remarking on how immediately after Peter's successful defense of his behavior (11:18) Jewish-Christian exiles from Jerusalem preach "the *Lord* Jesus" as far as Antioch (11:19). A theological and christological paradigm shift has occurred in the narrative, which Paul's outreach embodies (13:1-14:28) and the Jerusalem Council will eventually codify (15:1-29).

4.4.2 The Antioch Community and Paul

Among the many narrative aspects common to both Acts 6-8 and 11:19-26 is the figure of Saul-Paul. It is clear that Luke adds clues early in his story in anticipation of Paul's prominence both in Acts 9 and 13-28. For instance, Luke inserts the odd detail in 7:58 that "the witnesses [against Stephen] laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul." A few verses later, Luke expands: "And Saul approved of their killing him … [and] Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison" (8:1-4). By accenting the hostility Saul shows to the new movement, Luke heightens the reversal in Saul's behavior after his transformation (9:1-21) and what it signifies for the expansion of the gospel. In this respect, Acts 9:1-30 is not an "interlude" in the storyline of Acts 6:1-11:26; rather, Luke ties the introduction of Saul back to the events surrounding Stephen's death as well as forward to the success of the Antioch community, whose progress Barnabas and Paul will oversee as teachers and ambassadors (11:25-26; 13:1-3).

Luke includes Paul in this initial portrait of the Antioch story (11:18-26), like he did with the Stephen passage(s) (7:58; 8:1; cf. 22:19-20). Paul's re-introduction anticipates his future role in the narrative. At this point, however, Saul has been changed from persecutor to champion of the Christian way. Luke's return to Saul's character, therefore, now anticipates both the positive role he will play in the expansion of the movement and specifically the place of Antioch in facilitating Paul's efforts (cf. 13:1-3). The first and second so-called "missionary journeys" begin (13:1-3; 15:35) and end (14:26-28; 18:22) in Antioch. The third distinct trip of Paul also begins in Antioch (18:22), but appears to get interrupted when Paul is seized by Jews at the Jerusalem temple (21:27-28). In all likelihood, Paul would have returned to his "base" in Antioch had he not been accosted while in Jerusalem. At the same time, according to Acts, Paul's fate is tied to Jerusalem (e.g., 20:16, 22; 21:4, 13) and ordained by God (23:11).

4.4.3 Antioch and Jerusalem

One effect of drawing out the connections between the founding of the Antioch community (11:19-26) and the narrative sequence of Acts 6-9 is to highlight the distinctions-in-continuity between the predominately Jewish (Christian) Jerusalem community (Acts 2-6) and the emerging inter-ethnic church of Antioch (13:1ff.). One note of distinction is that the Antioch community forms as the result of exiles scattered from Jerusalem spreading the Word (8:1, 4; 11:19), not by the concerted outreach efforts of the Jerusalem church.[10] Readers have already seen a similar pattern in 8:5-17, when the Jerusalem church sends Peter and John to confirm the Samaritan believers and lay

[10] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:146: "Neither the plan nor the permission of the Jerusalem church plays a role."

hands on them (8:13-17). In the present case, Jerusalem sends Barnabas to survey the results of the exiles' evangelistic success. The language Luke employs for Barnabas' work there is specifically non-evangelistic: "he exhorted them all *to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion*" (τῇ προθέσει τῆς καρδίας προσμένειν τῷ κυρίῳ, 11:23). In other words, Barnabas neither introduces the gospel nor "authorizes" Antioch's ministry; instead, he encourages them simply to keep going. Ultimately, it appears that *Barnabas'* role in the narrative shifts as a result of the encounter with this community of new converts. He and Paul become the Antioch community's teachers (11:26; 13:1), its emissaries to the Jerusalem church (11:29-30; 15:1-5, 12), and its evangelists abroad (13:2-14:26 [both]; 15:36-39 [Barnabas]; 15:40-21:17 [Paul]). Antioch has been founded through a scattering of exiles—circumstances beyond the control of the Jerusalem church or of the apostles associated with it—but the new community bears the marks of the Jerusalem church, both in figures like Barnabas and in the confirmation Jerusalem believers give to movements beyond their horizon.

Even though Luke distinguishes the *causes* behind the emergence of the Antioch community from the efforts of the Jerusalem church, his *characterization* of the two communities is markedly similar.[11] Briefly, these parallels consist of the following: both communities are explicitly favored by divine "grace" (4:33[12]; 11:23), a characteristic sign of which is numerical growth (προστίθημι: 2:41, 47; 5:14; 6:7; 11:24; ἀριθμός: 4:4;

[11] Tannehill, *Ibid.,* 2:147-149; Goheen, *Light to the Nations,* 148; cf. Richard Thompson, *Keeping the Church in Its Place: The Church as Narrative Character in the Book of Acts* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 153.
[12] Goheen, *Light to the Nations,* 148, cites only 2:43-47 here, but that use of χάριν has to do with "favor/esteem with the people," not explicitly with God, though that may be implied.

11:21).[13] Second, both communities are devoted to apostolic[14] teaching (2:42; 11:26); in the case of Antioch, Saul and Barnabas teach there for a whole year (11:26), showing a level of commitment by the Antioch church that matches what readers learned earlier about the Jerusalem community (2:42-47; 4:32-33).[15] Third, Luke depicts both communities as generous in their handling of money (2:44-45; 4:32-34; 11:27-30).[16] In fact, Antioch shows in its offering for the famine-stricken Judean churches that it is following the program laid out by the Jerusalem church itself: "they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (2:45). Barnabas, one recalls, was introduced as an exemplar of the generosity characterizing the early Jerusalem community (4:36-37). As representatives of the Antioch community, he and Paul deliver the generous offering of Antioch for the relief of the Judean communities (11:29-30). The use of the term διακονία in 11:29 ("relief" or "assistance") may also recall earlier how the word was used for the "ministry" of apostolic preaching (6:4) as well as the "distribution" of food (6:1) to neglected Greek-speaking widows. The

[13] Of course Luke describes the growth of other new communities in similar terms (cf. 16:5), but the grammar of growth in the parallel between Jerusalem and Antioch is but one way in which Luke mirrors the two churches.

[14] Whether or not one takes Acts 14:4 and 14 as grouping Paul and Barnabas among the apostles, the broader parallels between Jerusalem and Antioch suggest that the content of the teaching in Antioch cohered with apostolic teaching in a general sense, especially given Barnabas' close connections to the apostles and Jerusalem (4:36-37; 9:26-30; 11:22-24).

[15] While it is true that Paul spends a year and a half in Corinth (18:11), the narrator gives readers very little detail about the community there, certainly nothing on the level of Jerusalem or Antioch.

[16] There is no small irony in the fact that in spite of their expulsion from Jerusalem, the likely Hellenist Jewish exiles ended up becoming part of churches that could gather money to aid the Judean church from which they had been forcibly separated. Though the apostles were not expelled, thereby remaining in the Judean church (8:4), they presumably experienced some of the hardship related to the famine (11:28). Luke shows here how the Diaspora believers freely collected an offering to send to Jerusalem to alleviate the need of those Judean churches (11:23). This binds the two stories, of Jerusalem and those scattered, back together, indicating a basic unity under the divergent storylines. This feeds into the notion of Antioch as a (or "the," as far as Paul's experience focalizes the story) new center of the one church, whereas Jerusalem now depends on another to be sustained.

baseline of parallels between the two bodies of believers may even imply that the vivid characterization of the Jerusalem community in 2:42-47 and 4:32-35 should be assumed in the description of the new Antioch community.[17]

This similarity-in-difference identifies Jerusalem and Antioch as the two major centers of the Christian movement. In addition, their predominant presence in the two halves of Acts' narrative (Jerusalem: ch. 1-7; Antioch: ch. 13-21) designates them as strategically crucial for the fulfillment of Jesus' commission. On the one hand, both Christian centers will play a part in reaching Gentiles with the gospel (10:1-11:18; 11:19-26f.). On the other hand, Luke has shown that the Jerusalem community's outreach primarily targeted Jews in Jerusalem, thereby signifying Jesus' promise about initiating the restoration of Israel (Luke 22:32; Acts 1:6-8; 3:20-21; 15:16-18; 26:6-7; 28:31; cf. Luke 2:38). The full scope of restoration—entailing the conversion of Jews and Gentiles in the Diaspora as far as "the end of the earth" (1:8; 13:47)—will take place primarily with ministry proceeding from Antioch.

The first description of a community (and its leaders) other than that of the church of Jerusalem should catch readers' attention for another reason. Continuity between Antioch and Jerusalem accentuates the ways in which the Antioch community represents something of a departure from its Jerusalem counterpart. First, the Antioch church arises in the wake of the exiles' outreach among non-Jews (11:19-21), representing the first clear instance in Acts of a community comprised of *both* Jewish and Gentile believers

[17] Goheen, *Light to the Nations,* 148.

(cf. 13:1). Unlike the Jerusalem community,[18] Antioch embodies the theological breakthrough realized with Peter's encounter in Caesarea (10:1-48). While Jerusalem believers are convinced that Gentiles have a part in God's plans (11:18), only in Antioch do we see that convinction manifest in a new community. Jerusalem and Antioch stand on opposites sides of Acts 10:1-11:18, as it were.

This observation may explain why Luke leaves off the storyline of exile from 8:1-4 until *after* Peter's encounter in Caesarea and why, when Peter comes to Jerusalem in Acts 11, the Jerusalem believers (11:1-3) need convincing about the propriety of Peter's actions. That is, the Jerusalem community—like Peter himself initially (10:1-48)—must come to a new point of view concerning Gentiles among God's people (11:1-18). Luke's initial portrait of Jerusalem believers (Acts 2-6) gives little indication that they understood Jesus' Lordship as inclusive of (uncircumcised) Gentiles. We recall that the criticism leveled at Peter after the Cornelius incident concerns his scandalous *fellowship* with Gentiles: "why did you go in and eat with uncircumcised men?" (11:2-3). However the apostles—and by extension, the Jerusalem community—had understood their role in the unfolding of witness "to the ends of the earth," it apparently did *not* include forming a community of Jews *and Gentiles.* They may not have objected to Gentile salvation in principle, but their criticism of Peter's behavior gives the impression that the Jerusalem believers had not—at least, not until Acts 11:18—believed in the possibility of (equitable) fellowship with converted Gentiles. Yet this new (for Jerusalem) point of

[18] While it is true that the Jerusalem believers, including the apostles, eventually endorse the idea of Gentile admission into God's people (without circumcision), their sanction (11:18) does not necessarily result in an inter-ethnic *Jerusalem* community. That step, according to Luke, is left for Antioch.

view seems to be a *sine qua non* of Antioch's origins, at least as the narrative depicts it (11:19-26).

A second variation between the two descriptions of churches appears in 11:26. It is surely no accident that the Lukan narrator takes this opportunity to point out the first application of the title "Christians" to believers in Antioch (11:26). It bears emphasizing that a community of believers founded after exiled (Hellenistic Jewish) believers from North Africa (Cyrenaica) and a Mediterranean island (Cyprus) shared the word among Jews and Gentiles in Syrian Antioch became the first group, according to Luke, explicitly labeled "Christian" (cf. 26:28). Rather than be identified by a geographical or ethnic affiliation, these believers are called by the one with whom their ultimate allegiance lies—literally, they are "Christ-lackeys."[19] The thick conception of the equality between "us" and "them"—articulated in the P-C episode (10:45, 47; 11:15, 17; 15:9, 10, 11)—comes to expression in the form of a new community (Antioch), and with such a community Luke associates the term "Christian."[20]

On a related note, Antioch is clearly a community with sights set beyond itself and its geographical boundaries. To the extent that the Jerusalem church looked beyond a predominantly Jewish-focused mission, the church's wider horizon involved, in most cases, the *confirmation* rather than *initiation* of God's work outside Jerusalem (cf. 8:14; 10:17-48; yet cf. 9:32-43). Luke reinforces this pattern with the introduction of the Antioch community (11:22). Curiously, when the Jerusalem believers, whom readers had

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[19] John Elliott, *1 Peter*: *A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 28a; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 790-793.
[20] See Rowe, "Authority and Community," 103 fn 22.

left yielding to Peter's point of view (11:18), hear of the successful spread of the word on another front, they send Barnabas to traverse the same route to Antioch that the "scattered" had taken, evident from the linguistic parallel:

> Οἱ … διασπαρέντες … διῆλθον ἕως … Ἀντιοχείας (11:19)
>
> ἐξαπέστειλαν Βαρναβᾶν [διελθεῖν] ἕως Ἀντιοχείας (11:22)

Those scattered from Jerusalem take the lead in witness beyond Jerusalem, with Barnabas—Jerusalem's representative in this case—coming in later to verify the report the church has received. In this subtle way, Luke shifts the narrative focus from Jerusalem, at least with respect to evangelism among Gentiles as well as Jews in the Diaspora, to other communities—Antioch foremost among them—who take the lead in the spread of the word. Barnabas' path to Antioch, tracing the steps of the exiles as it were, symbolizes the broader way in which the Jerusalem church now *follows*[21] the lead of others into more expansive witness. Like Peter in response to God's work among the Gentiles, the Jerusalem church witnesses (via Barnabas) what God is doing among Jews and Gentiles in the Diaspora.

Jerusalem's new role may be evident from the fact that after confirming what happens in Antioch, they do not attempt to take over Gentile outreach for themselves. Even the more formal Council in Acts 15 merely interprets, endorses, and offers guidelines for the fledgling community (cf. 15:22-29). With this, the Antioch church becomes the new center from which mission to all nations and to the end of the earth

[21] Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:147: "Barnabas sets to work to support this community, and through him the Jerusalem church is being led into the gentile mission, not because it planned this course of action but because it recognizes that what it values most highly is present also in the lives of others."

proceeds. In this respect at least, Antioch takes Jerusalem's place—and with it Jerusalem's approval (and one of its leaders, Barnabas)—for the next steps toward the realization of universal salvation. The founding of the Antioch community—and the authorizing of its representatives (cf. 13:1-3)—becomes the mechanism, in narrative terms, for fulfilling Jesus' commission to all nations and every part of the earth (cf. 13:47). Just as the apostles are largely associated with Jerusalem (though empowered by the Spirit to be witnesses to the ends of the earth; cf. Acts 1:8), Paul is associated with the believers in Antioch, who obey the Spirit in sending him and Barnabas toward the end of the earth (cf. 13:1-3, 46-47).

4.4.4 Conclusions

We are now ready to situate these observations, at least preliminarily, in terms of the broader argument of this chapter. Luke narrates the way first Peter (10:1-48) and then the Jerusalem believers (11:1-18) come to recognize God's work among the Gentiles. Grounded in that new recognition, the spread of the gospel among Gentiles as well as Jews in the Diaspora coalesces into a representative community in Antioch. With a *theological* underpinning established by the P-C episode (10:1-11:18) and a *narrative* framework supplied by the storyline of exile from Jerusalem and Paul's introduction (8:1-4; 11:19), Luke presents the Antioch community as the social explication of Jesus' universal Lordship (a community of *all* people), which forms the basis for Paul's ministry in the Diaspora. The story of Antioch adds a new dimension to the narrative expansion of Jesus' identity in Acts, namely by exhibiting a form of inter-ethnic community that will earn the blessing of (and take over the spotlight from) the Jerusalem (and apostolic) church. Modeled in many ways on the Jerusalem community, the Antioch church—

comprised of Jews as well as Gentiles—expresses by its common life together the universality of Jesus' Lordship.[22] While Jerusalem represented universality in symbolic terms (2:5-11; cf. 3.5.1.2), Antioch embodies the reality of a univeral fellowship and, thus, provides Paul (and Barnabas) with a platform for reaching "both our people and the Gentiles" (26:23) at "the end of the earth" (13:47).[23]

Later Luke appears to make Paul and Barnabas's work in Antioch among Gentiles what elicits a need for further clarification at the Apostolic Council (15:1-6). In this way, Acts 15 provides Luke with an opportunity to unite, as it were, the two mission centers of Acts—Jerusalem and Antioch—along with their representatives in a common conception of how Gentiles are saved (without circumcision; 15:7-21). In a sense, "apostles" of both groups—the Jerusalem "Twelve" and the Antioch two (Paul and Barnabas; cf. 13:47)—converge at the Jerusalem Council in a show of commitment to the unity and universality of their witness. After Acts 15, readers never hear from the Jerusalem apostles again (cf. 21:25) while the remainder of Acts focuses on the continued work of Paul, which now bears the official sanction of the Jerusalem church and apostles.

That Peter (10:28b-48; 11:5-17; 15:7-11), the other apostles and elders (11:18), and the whole Jerusalem community (15:13-29), come to consensus on admitting Gentiles into God's people apart from the law is crucial step for Luke in narratively

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[22] Cf. Rowe, *One True Life,* 134: "Of all the New Testament writers, Luke is the one who most explicitly conceived ecclesiology as internal to the way we should understand the life of Jesus." Or, put differently, "Ecclesiology cannot be disentangled from Christology or anthropology…Church, for Luke, is what it is to be publicly caught up with one's being in the life of Jesus of Nazareth….the visible human witness to the Lord Jesus Christ in a world that did not know him."

[23] Justo Gonzalez, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001), 136-143; and Lucien Legrand, "Acts 13:1-3 and the Mission Theology of Luke," in *Service and Salvation: Nagpur Theological Conference on Evangelization,* ed. Joseph Pathrapankal (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1973), 125-131.

developing Jesus' Lordship of "all" peoples who are also *one* people.[24] The response of the Jewish believers faced with Gentile admission into God's people effectively "models" how Jews ought to react to what God is doing among the nations. To place conditions on Gentile entry into God's people, or to reject God's favor toward Gentiles out of exclusive concern for Israel's restoration, is to deny Jesus' universal Lordship (see 4.6).

4.5 Acts 15: The People of God and Universal Witness

Chapter 1 asserted, and subsequent Chapters endeavored to verify, that Luke stretches (rather than shrinks) the terms χριστός and κύριος to fit Jesus and the events of his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation. Luke inflects the particularity of "Messiah" in Acts by pairing it suggestively with "Lord" (cf. Acts 2:36; 10:36; 11:17; 15:26; 28:31). As Luke tells it, those with most at stake in this christological reconfiguration are Jewish believers (and Jews more broadly). Chapter 3 confirmed this, in a way, by showing how difficult and dramatic the christological (and, thus, theological) shift was for Peter and the Jerusalem believers (10:1-11:18). The yoking of κύριος and χριστός occurs, not coincidentally, most often in Acts 10-15, where the emphasis shifts from Messiah Jesus to Lord of all. Luke identifies the Cornelius incident as the pivotal event by which this shift occurs, drawing attention to it both by volume of verses as well as by repeated narration (10:1-11:18; 15:7-11). Dramatic visions, angelic messages, interventions by the Spirit, and divinely orchestrated meetings are all required to bring the Jewish apostle Peter to recognize God's salvation of the Gentiles on par with the salvation of Jewish believers. After witnessing God's purposes play out, Peter delivers the key theological

[24] Seccombe, "New People of God," 349-372.

and christological declaration—that God's welcome of Gentiles into God's people indicates both God's partiality toward all and Jesus' Lordship over all (10:34-36). To speak of God ("Lord") is to speak of God's Servant and Israel's Messiah ("Lord"), but, after Acts 10, Jesus the Messiah is, in a sense, unrecognizable without also acknowledging the salvation of the Gentiles within the scope of his messianic Lordship. Luke's configuration of κύριος as universal Lord results in the *re*configuration of χριστός for Jewish believers.

But Luke does not think merely in terms of christological titles. One of the ways Luke underscores the narrative expansion of Jesus' identity is by showing how Jewish believers come to recognize the universality of Jesus' Lordship and its implications for worldwide witness. To this end, Luke ties the significance of the Cornelius incident to the narrative of Paul's outreach—with which most of Acts is concerned (ch. 13-28)— by bringing the apostles, the Jerusalem church, and Paul and Barnabas together in Jerusalem for a formal meeting. Luke frames the pretext of the Jerusalem meeting (Acts 15) as a response to controversy in *Antioch* when "certain (Jewish) individuals" challenge Paul's work among Gentiles there (15:1, 5; cf. 15:24). In fact, it is indirect proof that Paul's ministry starts where Peter's ministry leaves off, so to speak, since the objections (or assumptions lying behind the objections) Peter faces in Jerusalem (11:1-2) resemble those brought against Paul's ministry in Antioch. Luke furthers this impression, at the Jerusalem Council (15:1-29), by having *Peter's* speech address the objections raised against *Paul's* ministry in Antioch and beyond (15:7-12).

At the same time, the decision reached by Peter, James, and the "whole church" (15:22) has an *ex post facto* character, since Paul's ministry, begun *before* the meeting

(cf. 11:25-30; 13-14), is not noticeably different *after* the meeting concludes (15:30).[25] Consequently, the purpose of the Jerusalem Council, while obviously important for Luke's narrative, is not immediately clear. After all, even though the meeting is sparked by Paul's debate with Jewish believers in Antioch (15:1), Luke does not give readers Paul's testimony (15:12). It is, apparently, more important for Luke to have Peter and James mount Paul's defense (15:7-11, 13-21). The structure of Acts 15, therefore, contributes to the impression that the point of the Jerusalem proceedings is to showcase the alignment of *Jewish* (Jerusalem) believers with the new reality of the salvation of the Gentiles and their consequent inclusion in God's people, embodied in Paul's outreach. The significance of the approval by the apostles and elders and Jerusalem believers cannot be overstated, because it expresses a recognition of the implications of Jesus' universal Lordship. That is, if Jesus is truly "Lord of all" (10:36), then Gentiles and Jews stand on equal footing before God (15:7-11). The salvation of Gentiles, moreover, goes hand in hand with the restoration of Israel (15:13-21). In recognizing communities like Antioch—comprised of both Jews and Gentiles—Jewish-Christian leaders acknowledge the implications of Gentile salvation apart from the law.

But why showcase the responses of Peter, James, and the church to the new reality of Gentile salvation if the salvation of the Gentiles was a *fait accompli*, already

[25] Of course, Paul's transformation occurs earlier in Acts (9:1-21) and is of a more personal nature than Peter's transformation which draws in many other interested parties. Also important to note is that, from the beginning, there is no ambiguity in the scope of Paul's mission. What Peter experiences as a new direction in his commission, Paul seems to be clear on from the start. Indeed, that Jews and Gentiles alike have a place among God's people, under the rule of Christ, seems to be a *sine qua non* of Paul's outreach. The commission Paul receives directly from the Lord entails witnessing to Gentiles as well as Jews (9:15; 22:15, 21; 26:17-20). While Peter must be brought, by divine initiative, to the controversial position of having fellowship with Gentile believers qua Gentiles, Paul begins from that position.

recognized by Peter and the Jerusalem leadership (10:47; 11:2, 18)? Moreover, if the Jerusalem meeting is so important, as its central placement in Acts would imply, why does the meeting precipitate the apostles' *departure* from the narrative altogether?

One way of answering these questions is to reflect on how Peter's positive response (along with that of Jerusalem believers) to the Cornelius encounter (10:28b-11:18) relates to the negative response of "certain individuals from Judea" (15:1; cf. 15:5) to Paul's ministry among Gentiles. Because the objections voiced against Peter's behavior in Caesarea are not unlike those brought against Paul and Barnabas' ministry in Antioch, the Jerusalem Council (and decree) does double duty by addressing both voices of dissent. That is, in each case a *christological* crisis precipitates markedly different reactions.

On the one hand, for Peter, the favor God shows to Gentiles apart from the requirements of the law (or even baptism, initially) convinces him to declare that the Messiah Jesus is truly "Lord of all" (10:36; cf. 11:17). The experience of God's favor shown to Gentiles persuades Peter to re-interpret his own Torah obedience as out of line with God's will. The care Luke takes to show how Peter's perceptions change underscores the difficulty in reaching the new position.

For circumcised believers from Judea, on the other hand, they confront the christological crisis implied by the redefinition of God's people by bringing its terms into line with received tradition: "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1; cf. v. 5). In their case, the particularities of ethnic identity (marked by circumcision/law) trump the universal claims of the gospel in

an effort that would be characterized as "proselytism" today.[26] On this view, that Jesus is the Messiah of *Israel* should continue to delineate the claim about the universality of his Lordship. That is, "all" people, including Gentiles, can join the people of God, but only by being or becoming Jewish first. Here the connection between christology and ecclesiology emerges more clearly. To place conditions on who belongs to the people of God is to deny the favor God has shown Gentiles, thereby extending those qualifications to the nature of Jesus' Lordship. On this view, his Lordship is universal as long as that universality is enclosed within the conditions set by Jewish observance (circumcision, *kashrut*, ritual purity, etc.). The insistence by the "circumcised" party on making legal requirements a basis for Gentile salvation indicates that the difficulty that Peter first overcome may have been too great for some to change their minds (15:1, 5).

With a sense of the christological crisis that faced Jews and Jewish believers for whom "Messiah" necessarily connoted ethnic particularity, we can now recognize the linkage between the change in *who* can be admitted to the people of God (and how) and *who* the Messiah Jesus is. A shift in (re)defining the people of God is bound to a shift in (re)defining Jesus's messianic identity as Lord of all people. So monumental is this shift—as Acts 10:1-11:18 labors to point out—that it does not occur without resistance, both *within* the apostolic church and *without*. The present section will trace the internal challenges, which are eventually overcome on the model of Peter, the Jerusalem believers, and James (and the "whole church"), while the subsequent section will trace external challenges, namely resistance by unbelieving Jews, whose skepticism relates

[26] Andrew Walls, "Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church," *International Bulleting of Missionary Research* 28.1 (Jan 2004): 2-6.

specifically to the notion that Israel's restoration is bound in some way to the salvation of the Gentiles (cf. 15:13-21), a notion embodied in Paul's continued outreach to and success among Gentiles.

4.5.1 The Jerusalem Meeting and Universal Witness

An important narrative clue Luke gives readers ahead of the Jerusalem meeting (Acts 15:1-29) is that it is called to order to resolve controversy stemming from *Paul's* work in Antioch. The formation of new communities like Antioch raises questions of Gentile salvation anew, as the fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers explicates and proclaims socially universal Lordship, the implications of which were the most difficult to accept regarding Jesus. If Gentiles do not need to be circumcised, and are therefore not Torah-observant, then how can circumcised and Torah-observant Jewish believers have unmediated fellowship with them (11:2)? The question of cleanliness and holiness (11:2-3), which Peter answered (cf. 10:28), is raised again, when Jewish believers confront Paul and Barnabas in the mission field (15:1-2). But the objection is formulated as a question of soteriology and put in starker terms (than in 11:3, e.g.): "*unless* you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (15:1). The restatement of this position in 15:5, attributed to believing Pharisees, is even more severely worded: "They *must* (δεῖ) be circumcised and *ordered* to keep the law of Moses." Luke underscores the unrelenting nature of the objection by showing how a recitation of what God is doing among the Gentiles (cf. 10:44-47; 11:5-17) does not assuage them this time (15:4). As successful as Peter had previously been in dissolving "us" and "them" because of the new light shed on the universality of Jesus' Lordship (10:45, 47; 11:15, 17), opponents of Peter's conclusions assert their views on Gentile

difference in the strongest possible terms. In fact, Paul and Barnabas' report seems to prompt these latter objections (15:5).

Deference to what God has done should not negate Torah-regulations—is it not the same God at work among Gentiles who also made circumcision a sign of the covenant? The question may not be expressed in such terms in Acts, but these are the implications. Mixed fellowship is impossible without addressing the key distinction between Jews and Gentiles—covenantal law (including but not limited to circumcision, *kashrut*, and ritual purity). That is, on what terms can it be claimed that Gentiles are saved, if not by their becoming Jews on par with the ethnic descendants of Abraham? From this perspective, unity and equity of fellowship is achievable by having the same requirement for all believers—circumcision and keeping the law of Moses (15:5). But this would contradict what Peter discovered in Caesarea, namely that the Spirit was poured out on believers regardless of circumcision or legal observance (10:44-47; 11:18). And it no doubt contradicts the basis for a community in places like Antioch, where unity and fellowship obtained without any question of Mosaic strictures. A Council meeting in Jerusalem is called to settle the matter, this time with James, Peter, Paul and Barnabas all present. Each represents a different branch of the now widespread movement: James, the Jerusalem community; Peter, the lead apostle and "discoverer" of Gentile salvation apart from the Law; and Paul/Barnabas, Antioch emissaries and Diaspora "missionaries."

Though the Council is originally framed as a response to questions raised by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas, it is Peter (15:7-11) and James (15:13-21) who take center stage and give speeches on the subject. The scene concludes with consensus and the words of an "Apostolic Decree" letter ratifying their decision (15:23-29), sent from

Jerusalem to Antioch with Paul, Barnabas, Judas Barsabbas, and Silas (15:22, 32). By allowing Peter to set the terms of the debate, Luke orients the discussion around Peter's conclusions determined by the P-C episode. This time, however, Peter's speech reflects a developed theological consideration of his experience rather than a mere retelling. Even the conclusion that Peter refers to the P-C episode in 15:7-11 is less obvious than it it first appears. The reason is because 15:7-11 represents the fruit of theological reflection and thus an evolution in interpretation of the episode rather than a recollection of events as if they were self-interpreting.

4.5.2 Peter's Speech (Acts 15:7-11)

It might be wondered why Peter would be required to give yet *another* account of events since his previous one appeared to receive widespread approval (11:18), and by believers in Jerusalem no less. But it should be remembered that witness among Gentiles in 11:19-14:28 is the first of its kind *without* apostolic leadership. Lacking this stamp of authority perhaps, Paul's ministry in Antioch was vulnerable to rogue pronouncements by Jewish believers uncertain about how easily Gentiles were being admitted into the church (cf. 15:24). While it is common to presume the formation of the Antioch mission historically preceded the Cornelius encounter,[27] Luke's narrative gives the reverse order—first Jewish acceptance of Gentile salvation, second the formation of Jewish-Gentile communities. This order has several implications. First, it suggests that there was

[27] Niccum, "One Ethiopian," 891, points out various "aporia" that suggest Luke knew of Gentile conversions taking place before Cornelius—e.g., after his conversion (9:3-19), Paul preaches among Gentiles, but Luke does not divulge that fact until 26:17-19 (cf. 22:21). Cf. Haenchen (*Acts,* 356) who repeats B. Weiss's view that Peter's phrasing is evidence that the whole P-C episode preceded even the Stephen incident (Acts 6), thereby contradicting Luke's general chronology in Acts.

one church rather than separate churches (and missions). Luke shows the unity of the church by having Jewish believers take up the issue as a "whole church" (15:22). Second, confirming Chapter 3's findings, Luke's ordering suggests Jewish believers were required to change in some way before the conversion of Gentiles could be entirely accepted. But that change was no simple alteration of common opinion (i.e., Gentiles are okay now); Jewish believers needed to see that the salvation of Gentiles augured the full restoration of Israel (15:13-21).

Luke implies that the acceptance of Gentiles by the Spirit is continuous with God's ancient purposes, which Jewish apostles and leaders must witness and endorse. It is their acceptance of both Gentile admission into God's people and also the equality of fellowship between circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles that marks the fulfillment of their covenantal identity as the descendants of Abraham—through whom "all the peoples of the earth would be blessed" (Acts 3:21; Gen 12:2-3) and "light for the revelation of the Gentiles and glory to Israel" would shine forth (Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; Isa 49:6; 42:6). The point is not simply that Gentiles are now included in the reign of Christ where they were not before, but that recognition of Gentile inclusion is key to *Jewish identity*. Confirming the findings of the previous section, we can restate our conclusions in different terms: for Jewish believers (present and potential), the universal Lordship of Jesus, evident in the salvation of *all* nations, necessarily inscribes into the meaning of "Messiah" the active inclusion of Gentiles among God's people.

The Speech

Our primary aim at present is to understand the function of the Jerusalem Council in developing Luke's christology of universal witness. Addressing that aim requires

paying attention to the three primary statements delivered in Acts 15—Peter's speech (vv. 7-11), James' speech (vv. 13-21), and the so-called "Apostolic Decree" letter (vv. 23-29; cf. 15:20; 21:25).

First, Peter's speech:

> After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." (Acts 15:7-11 NRSV)

Peter's speech, it should be noted, is not a "defense" of his behavioral habits in the house of a Gentile (cf. 11:2-4), nor even an explicit apology for Paul's work. Even though 15:7-11 is commonly grouped with Peter's other P-C episode retelling (11:5-17), it is no mere recitation of the Cornelius episode. Rather, it is a theological assessement of its importance in light of present events. The change in tone from Acts 11 is recognizable, for instance, merely on the basis of how often God is the subject of verbs in Acts 15:7-11.[28] In effect, Peter's words offer readers a theological justification for the admission of Gentiles that had been missing in Acts 11:5-17. While Peter's retelling of the Cornelius incident in 11:5-17 had persuaded Jerusalem believers to praise God and conclude "God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life" (11:18), the conclusion to which the Jerusalem Council drives goes further: *because* God has given salvation to the Gentiles, nothing can stand in their way of being part of the people

[28] In 15:7-9, for example, five times θεός is the subject of a verb.

of God (cf. 10:47; 11:17). Circumcision (for men) and obedience to the law especially are not necessary for Gentiles to be saved. In the course of announcing the theological justification for these conclusions, Peter recognizes the limits of the law in a broader sense. If the law cannot save Gentiles, it is a reminder that it does not save Jews either. All are one by the grace of the Lord Jesus (15:11). The consequence of this recognition is that Peter announces the functional dissolution of the distinction between "us and them" (15:8-11). In this respect, Peter's Acts 15 speech develops the point of the Acts 11 speech. Not only does God will that Jewish believers no longer make a distinction between Jews and Gentiles ("clean"/"unclean"), but even the conception of "us" and "them" must be reconsidered in light of "the grace of the Lord Jesus" (15:11).

4.5.2.1 "Just Like Us": Acts 15:7-10

Peter's speech shifts the focus from his personal experience (cf. 10:9-11:17) to God's role in relativizing the distinctions between Jewish believers ("us") and Gentile believers ("them"). The recurring motif of "just like us"—naming a new commonality between Jews and Gentiles on the basis of God's gift of the Spirit—has its roots in the original account of the P-C episode (10:45, 47) and its recapitulation by Peter in Jerusalem (11:15, 17). Peter's speech combines theological reflection and ruminations on the significance of the newly revealed *similarity* between Jew and Gentile within God's purposes. By tracing this aspect of Peter's speech, a comparison rooted in Pentecost, the thrust of Peter's speech in relation to the broader purpose of Acts 15 becomes clearer.

Confirming assumptions about the event's paradigmatic significance, Peter refers to "the Gentiles" rather than "those Gentiles in Caesarea." That is, not only does the name Cornelius not appear in 15:7-11 (it had already disappeared by Acts 11:5-17), but

the man himself has been replaced by the collective group he represented in 11:18 ("God has given even to *the Gentiles* the repentance that leads to life!"). Peter, in other words, is no longer discussing specific Gentiles in a specific location, but *the* Gentiles within the scope of God's purposes. In this sense, Acts 15:7-11 represents a later development of the P-C account. Reflective distance, it would seem, has enabled Peter to offer extended theological conclusions about its meaning.

4.5.2.1.1 Acts 15:8

> "And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, *just as he did to us*…" (15:8)

First, God attests the salvation of Gentiles as Gentiles by giving them the same Spirit God gave to Jewish believers at Pentecost (Acts 2). Several implications follow from this claim. First, as one of the few occasions on which someone other than the apostles is characterized as a "witness" (cf. 2.3.2.1.2.2; Acts 15:28), 15:8 suggests that God's act of testifying took place irrespective of Peter's preaching that accompanied it. Though Luke's narrator (10:44) and Peter (11:14-15) imply some connection between Peter's message and salvation, in 15:8 the emphasis falls almost entirely on what God does directly by the Spirit. The task of "witness" is not so bound to the identity of the apostles that it cannot be accomplished by other witnesses or even God directly.[29] Moreover, in both the previous episodes, it is unmistakably the pouring out of the Spirit upon Gentiles that is deemed the crucial factor in determining the event's meaning (10:47; 11:18). Very little is recalled about what Peter said or accomplished; in fact, when his own role in events comes under scrutiny, it is the account of the *Spirit's* actions

[29] *Contra* Bolt, "Mission and Witness," 191-214.

that exonerates him. Peter's words here clarify that the proper basis for understanding the significance of the P-C episode is in the recognition of the Spirit's work. The authenticity of Gentile salvation marked by the Spirit is, therefore, tied to the authenticity of Pentecost itself. Only by doubting the latter can the former come under suspicion.

Second, the claim that God gives the Spirit recalls Jesus' own role (see 2.3.2.1.1) in the outpouring of the Spirit (2:33; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8). Peter's citation of LXX Joel 3 at Pentecost made it clear that the "Lord" who "pours out the Spirit" is the Lord Jesus Christ (2:17-21, 33), and it is the Pentecost event to which Peter, upon reflection, refers in 11:16 and 15:8. Each time the movement of the "word" expands to new territories and ethnic groups, the Spirit is poured out as a sign of divine approbation. Therefore, to say that God gives the Holy Spirit to Gentiles (15:8) is necessarily to claim that God through the Lord Jesus pours the Spirit out upon believers, just like at Pentecost. Because of the climactic notion of Jesus' universal Lordship spelled out in 10:36 ("he is Lord of all"), the meaning of the term κύριος used in the P-C episode takes its cue from the special use exegetically ratified in Acts 2:17-36 (see 2.3.2.1.1.2).

Third, his statement recalls 11:15, when Peter says "as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them *just as it had upon us at the beginning*." Peter here equates "at the beginning" (ἐν ἀρχῇ) with Pentecost. He adds to this observation, and to the justification of his baptizing these Gentiles, the recollection of John's/Jesus' statement about the work of the Messiah (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5), concluding "If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" (11:17). Rather than indicate that the apostles/Jewish believers only first believed

at Pentecost—as if they only first became "Christians" then[30]—Peter's recollection recognizes the beginning of Jesus' *Lordship* of the Spirit (2:33) upon his exaltation. Peter identifies the turn to the recognition of Jesus' universal Lordship with Acts 2, in a sense filling out the universalistic tone of Peter's speech (2:17-36) in light of current events. The apostle Peter is especially equipped to recognize this parallel between "pentecosts" since he now sees unfolding among these Gentiles what had happened to him and the other apostles in Jerusalem.

4.5.2.1.2 Acts 15:9

> "in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made *no distinction between them and us*" (15:9)

Peter takes the parallel between the original Pentecost and the Gentile Pentecost even further. The observation about the pentecostal nature of the Spirit's descent on Cornelius' household recognizes that the *experience* of the Spirit on both occasions is similar. One might suppose that the Spirit cleanses or purifies new believers, reminiscent of the "fire" John promised when the Messiah comes to baptize (Luke 3:16). Judgment and acceptance go together in Spirit baptism. But that observation also creates a problem. The vision God gives to Peter (10:9-16) suggests that the foremost apostle is not to distinguish between "clean" (καθαρός; cf. Luke 11:41) and "unclean" (ἀκάθαρτος, 10:14, 28; 11:8) because God has already made Gentiles clean (10:15; 11:19; καθαρίζω). Yet the Spirit had not come upon any Gentiles to this point, nor had any been baptized. There had not even been any mention of repentance/forgiveness. So how can there be *no* distinction

[30] *Contra* J.D.G. Dunn's dubious claim that Peter is saying the apostles *became* "Christians" at Pentecost. *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1970), 52.

between Jewish believers and Gentiles in general *before* the Spirit does its cleansing work? Peter appears to have this problem in mind when he says in 15:8 that "in cleansing their hearts *by faith* he has made no distinction between them and us." This introduces a new thought into the P-C story—or at least one that was undeveloped in Acts 10-11—that the faith of the Gentiles is the basis for their being the same as Jews before God. God cleanses them by the faith found among Gentiles (cf. Luke 7:9).[31] This observation will prove important later when discussing the receptivity of Gentiles, especially in light of the hostility of Jews to Paul's message.

When he speaks to the Jerusalem council, Peter argues that "in cleansing (καθαρίσας) their hearts by faith God has made no distinction (οὐθὲν διέκρινεν) between them and us" (15:9). This may be the most important single verse in the series of P-C accounts, since it encapsulates the point of the story and also clarifies *how* Peter's vision, the encounter with Cornelius, and the event's significance for the church go together. The only uses of the verb καθαρίζω in Acts occur in 10:15, 11:9, and 15:9. The first two uses of καθαρίζω appear in the exact same statement (ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἐκαθάρισεν, σὺ μὴ κοίνου)—made by the heavenly voice in the vision (10:15; 11:9)—and refer to food purity. But in 15:9 Peter applies the meaning of that very statement, made originally in reference to

[31] For the close connection between the strength of one's faith and salvation (or, in some cases, "healing"), see Luke 5:20; 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42; Acts 14:9. Though the P-C episode does not explicitly mention the cleansing-by-faith motif, it is tacitly present in the characterization of Cornelius. Luke portrays Cornelius and his company (both his emissaries and his household) as obedient to God's guidance throughout. Moreover, their piety has a particularly Jewish flavor to it. Faith, in other words, is present before the Spirit comes and the Spirit's baptismal cleansing expresses this prior fact. Perhaps this very thought finds expression in 11:17, when Peter compares Gentiles to Jewish (apostles and) believers: "If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ …" That is, the similarity of gift (Holy Spirit) may imply a corresponding similarity in belief; thus, it is possible to infer that Gentile belief preceded Spirit baptism. Luke's characterization of Cornelius enhances this probability.

mixed food, to the context of (table) fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. Jewish believers can and must not make a distinction between clean and unclean people (Jews and Gentiles, respectively) because God has *cleansed* Gentile hearts by faith, thus making "no distinction between them and us."[32] The coming of the Spirit upon the Gentiles at Cornelius' house has proven that God has baptized Gentiles in the Spirit, just as God had done to Jewish believers (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 2:33).

And yet, because the primary emphasis of the P-C episode, at least in Acts 10 and 11:1-18, concerns (believing) *Jewish perceptions* of Gentile salvation, the motif of cleansing-by-faith is left until Acts 15:9. Instead, in Acts 10-11, Luke highlights the way in which the Holy Spirit comes upon the Gentiles as an indication of their salvation and of their status as members of God's people. Pointing out the fact that Cornelius was pious and faithful to God's call might minimize God's initiative; it also would do little to exonerate Peter's scandalous behavior. Thus, Luke is in the position of showing that God, by the Spirit, was in charge of extending salvation to Gentiles, but also that their salvation entailed a "cleansing"—and thus the possibility of unmediated fellowship between Jewish believers and Gentiles—by virtue of their faith toward God. That Luke treats the issue of the Gentiles' faith in the last iteration of the P-C episode rightly allows divine initiative—and Peter's learning curve—to take center stage in Acts 10-11. It also

[32] Moreover, οὐθὲν διέκρινεν represents the last of the uses of διακρίνω/διακρίνομαι in the P-C series. In using this word, Peter implicitly recalls the divine command not to "doubt/hesitate" (10:20;) or to "make a distinction" (11:12) and his accusers' disputation (11:2). Here he interpretively captures the essence of the hook-word by saying "[God] has made no distinction between them and us," effectively a summary of Acts 10-11:18.

anticipates the receptivity of Gentiles in the Diaspora (cf. 28:28) to Paul's preaching as an indication of God's (scriptural) plan for universal salvation.

To summarize our findings thus far, in 15:7-11 Peter retrospectively thrusts himself front and center in God's work among the Gentiles ("God chose me…in the early days," 15:7). What had taken divine prompts before now Peter recalls as part of a larger plan with which he was fully aligned "from the beginning." The new tone of clarity—all but absent in Acts 10—reflects the transformation of his character, which Luke has taken great care to communicate. Like most "converts," Peter retrospectively declares with certainty what he had earlier experienced as a surprise. In short, Peter has learned something and that something is now made the basis for a larger theological claim.

Also noteworthy is that Peter's "turn" here from more passive witness to God's work among the Gentiles to more active proclaimer marks the last of Peter in Acts. His final act is to crystallize the theological significance of his pivotal experience. By using the P-C event as the basis for the defense in ch. 11 and decision-making in ch. 15 Luke underscores how the Church must "catch up"—bear "witness" both passively and actively—to what the Spirit is doing to fulfill the exalted Lord's commission. In this respect, Peter is Luke's model of the Jewish believer come to terms with the salvation of Gentiles apart from circumcision and on equal footing with Jewish followers of Jesus. Peter in Acts 15 is what "catching up" to God and the Spirit looks like.

4.5.2.1.3 Acts 15:10

> "Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that *neither our ancestors nor we* have been able to bear?" (Acts 15:10)

But Luke has been clear that Jesus' Lordship over all cannot brook exceptions; otherwise, they disprove his rule. To assert difference at the level of interpersonal and communal relations is to posit a corresponding distinction within the character of God. Insisting upon ethnic boundaries, to put it baldly, denies God's impartiality and diminishes Jesus' Lordship. "All" again becomes relative, tiered even. Peter required a divine vision and interpersonal encounter to believe otherwise. In the case of the Pharisees among them, a simple retelling of the P-C episode (cf. 11:5-17) may not be enough; a more formal, even legal, response is required to meet the objection where it starts—in the scriptures of Israel. James' speech (15:13-21) and ensuing Diaspora letter (15:23-29) play this role. In the meantime, the apostles must debate the point. Though readers are not given all sides to the argument, we are given the "winning" testimony, which includes Peter's theological reflections on the P-C episode (15:7-11).

The parallel giving of the Holy Spirit and faith—both God's gifts—signify that believing Jews and believing Gentiles are the same before God. To deny this in any way would be to undercut even the basis for the salvation of *Jewish* believers: "Therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear?" (15:10). Implicitly, Peter makes the objections of Jewish believers (15:5) an attack not only on what was learned from the P-C episode (the shape of God's impartiality), but also an assault on the premise *by which Jewish believers are saved*—namely, salvation as God's gift in Christ. Rather than say simply the opposite—that no, Gentiles are not under the law—Peter goes further by insisting that even *Jews* cannot and never have been able to bear the full burden of the law. And if Jews cannot bear this burden, why foist its yoke upon Gentiles? Therefore,

Jews and Gentiles are alike with respect to the basis of salvation, namely that it is entirely "through the grace of the Lord Jesus" (15:11). Opponents of Paul's mission are not only wrong about Gentiles, but they are mistaken about Jewish believers as well.

4.5.2.2 "Just like Them": Acts 15:11

The final statement in Peter's Jerusalem Council speech is noteworthy for several reasons.

> "…we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, *just as they will*." (Acts 15:11)

Peter concludes the string of "just like us" phrases by reversing the direction of comparison, so to speak. To this point, the concept had essentially been "(they are) just like us" (10:45, 47; 11:15, 17; 15:9, 10), but here it shifts to "(we are) just like them" (15:11). Not to be overlooked, Peter's final words in Acts emphasize how the (new) theological center of gravity is how God has saved Gentiles through the grace of the Lord Jesus. This subtle shift means the salvation of Jewish believers is now oriented by what God has done among Gentiles. In confirmation of the preceding analysis, therefore, Peter's parting words declare that the primary significance of Gentile salvation is the christological renewal it signals for Jewish believers.[33]

This is remarkable because the pattern of direction throughout Acts 10-11 and 15 has been from the paradigm of Pentecost to the new reality of Gentile salvation, from

[33] Brawley, *Centering on God,* 141: "As a law abiding kosher Jew and customary worshiper in the temple, Peter initiates the Gentile mission, in relation to which he undergoes a transformation. He considers himself to be on the same level as Gentile believers. Twice he compares Gentile believers with Jewish believers (Acts 10:47; 11:15). But, true to his conviction, he also inverts the comparison. He regards Jews, not as the paradigm of salvation for Gentiles, but quite the reverse—Gentiles are the paradigm of salvation for Jews (15:11). Therefore, Peter develops from considering himself to be distinguished from Gentiles to viewing himself as on a par with them."

Jerusalem to Caesarea, in a sense. But all that reverses with Peter's final words: Jewish believers are like Gentiles. The way in which Gentiles are saved—namely, through the grace of the Lord Jesus—becomes the template for how Jews are saved. How dramatic this shift is can be gauged by recalling the origins of the Jerusalem meeting—and, by extension, the need for Peter's speech—in the claim that *Gentiles* are saved by submitting to Mosaic requirements. Not only does Peter reject this claim, but extends that rejection to a claim that was not even under debate—whether *Jews* are saved on account of legal observance.[34] Peter thereby concludes his contributions to the Acts narrative with a surprising shift in perspective. A speech responding to pointed claims about the salvation of *Gentiles* concludes with a pointed claim of his own about the salvation of *Jews*. And Luke/Peter provocatively formulates this latter claim as one that follows *from the pattern set by God's dealings with the Gentiles*. That is, how God saves the Gentiles is the paradigm by which God saves the Jews.

The significance of this abrupt shift cannot be overstated. Not only does it remind readers that while the prompt for proceedings in Acts 15 concerns Gentiles, the resolutions that emerge from that meeting may be most significant for Jewish believers. In this respect, Acts 15 extends the pattern laid out by the P-C episode (10:1-48) and its

[34] Peter's words, it should be noted, do not negate the law *for Jews*, even if that perception appears among Paul's detractors later in the narrative (21:20-26). Paul still has Timothy, the son of Jewish woman, circumcised in deference to the Jews (16:1-3). Peter's appeal to grace, therefore, has to do with salvation in Christ, which holds for Jew and Gentile alike. The Law remains operative for Jewish believers, which is *why* guidelines should be given to Gentiles to ensure that their behavior does not make it harder to sustain Jew-Gentile fellowship and community. Two temptations must be overcome in order for there to be sustainable Jew-Gentile relations, in light of God's work among Gentiles: first, Gentiles must not be made to become Jews (circumcision, obedience to the Law) in order to be saved; second, Jewish believers must not first become Gentiles, as it were, in order to be saved. In other words, the Law still has a place, even if both Jews and Gentiles are united in finding salvation by the grace of the Lord Jesus.

first recapitulation (11:5-17), both of which end with a recognition *by Jewish believers* of God's favor toward the Gentiles. Reinforcing this conclusion in a way is the fact that Paul's ministry is not noticeably different before the decisions of the Jerusalem Council than afterwards. In other words, the meeting is about Jewish perceptions of Gentile salvation and the transformation of those perceptions in accordance with what God is doing among Gentiles. Consequently, the behavior of these Jewish believers serves to model the appropriate response to Gentile salvation and admission into God's people.

This effectively signals the flowering of Peter's theological reflections and their missiological implications, as it were. It also points out the underlying crisis behind Jewish opposition (see 4.6.2)—Jews are resistant to Paul's message when they should be, like the Gentiles, receptive to the message fo the gospel, as Peter and the other Jerusalem believers demonstrate.

4.5.3 James' Speech (15:13-21)

> After they finished speaking, James replied, "My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name.
> This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,
> 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;
> from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up,
> so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—
> even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called.
> Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago.'
> Therefore, I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues." (Acts 15:13-21 NRSV)

James' speech immediately follows Peter's and brings Scripture to bear on Peter's conclusions (15:13-21). More than that, his speech recognizes that the authenticity of Peter's experience—validated by the Pentecost parallel—logically leads to a reinterpretation of Torah and God's promises to Israel. James' speech continues the modeling of proper Jewish responses to the good news of salvation in Jesus for *Gentiles* as well as Jews.

James both confirms Peter's eyewitness testimony about how "God first looked favorably on the Gentiles" (15:14a) and goes on to characterize God's actions as "taking from among [the Gentiles] a people for his name" (15:14b). The statement in 15:14 is striking for several reasons. First, the verb for "look favorably" is ἐπισκέπτομαι, alternatively translated "look upon with care" or "visit." Zechariah's prophecy (1:68-79), we recall, is bracketed by the use of the same rare verb (1:68, 78), and in both cases God is the subject of the action. God's mercy toward his people is evident in the sending of a savior. Curiously, both uses of the word in Luke 1:68 and 78 are paired with a use of λαός for God's "people." In Zechariah's speech, the focus is on God's care for and intention to save the "people" of God, that is, Israel. In Acts 15:14, however, James subtly shifts the usage of words so that God's "favorable look" remains upon "the people," but this group now includes Gentiles.

Second, the overarching significance of this subtle shift can be seen more clearly when it is remembered how λαός is predominately used in Luke-Acts (and the Gospels). As the first, and possibly only (cf. Acts 18:10), time an Evangelist explicitly employs the

singular λαός to describe Gentiles,[35] significantly it is issued by the putative head of the Jerusalem community. That the phrasing evokes other prominent statements from the Torah and prophetic books about God's people—both "over whom the name of YHWH has been invoked" (Deut 28:10; 2 Ch 7:14; Jer 14:9; Dan 9:19) and the notion of the people as God's "special possession" (Ex 19:5; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17)—underscores the sense of James' speech as structured by *Jewish* categories.[36] James is letting the new reality attested by Peter's experience help illuminate how Israel's scriptures had envisioned just such a notion. Perhaps most striking of all, James does not say the promises have *changed* in light of the favor God has shown the Gentiles, but that the favor shown the Gentiles proves the truthfulness of God's promises *to Israel concerning restoration.* The restoration of the eschatological people of God is marked by the conversion of the Gentiles as members on equal footing, rather than by their submission to Jewish rule. Of course this means a great deal for hopeful Gentiles, but as Luke tells it, it may mean even more for those Jewish believers who had not expected such a twist in the story.

Thus, at stake in the debate in Jerusalem is the definition of God's people.[37] Jews as well as Gentiles can be part of the λαός of God. Peter laid the groundwork for this declaration by noting the grace of the Lord Jesus as the soteriological foundation for both Jews and Gentiles (15:11). Now James casts that conclusion in salvation-historical terms,

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[35] See fn 88.
[36] Richard Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church," in *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 457.
[37] cf. Jacob Jervell, "The Future of the Past," 104.

which he confirms by appealing to Amos 9:11-12. In the Table (8) below,[38] the Lukan James' use of LXX Amos 9:11-12 demonstrates the specific theological points at stake in James' speech.

Table 8: LXX Amos 9:11-12 and Acts 15:14-18

LXX Amos 9:11-12	NETS	Acts 15:14-18	NRSV
		14 Συμεὼν ἐξηγήσατο καθὼς πρῶτον ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. 15 καὶ τούτῳ συμφωνοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν καθὼς γέγραπται·	*14 Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name.* *15 This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,*
11 <u>ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ</u> ἀναστήσω **τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυιδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω** τὰ πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς καὶ **τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς** ἀναστήσω **καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτὴν** <u>καθὼς</u> αἱ ἡμέραι <u>τοῦ αἰῶνος</u>	11 <u>On that day</u> **I will** *raise up* **the tent of Dauid that is fallen**, **and rebuild its ruins** *and raise up its destruction*, **and rebuild it** *as* <u>the days of old</u>;	16 <u>μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω</u> καὶ **ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀνοικοδομήσω καὶ** ἀνορθώσω **αὐτήν**,	16 <u>'After this</u> <u>I will return</u>, and **I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and** I *will set* **it** *up*,
12 **ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ᾽ οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ᾽ αὐτούς λέγει**	12 **in order that those remaining of humans and all the nations upon whom my name has been called might seek out (me),**	17 **ὅπως** ἂν **ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων** <u>τὸν κύριον</u> **καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ᾽ οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ᾽**	17 **so that all other peoples may seek** <u>the Lord</u>-- **even all the Gentiles over whom** **my name has been called.** **Thus says the**

[38] In the table, **bold-face type** indicates shared verbiage, <u>underlined text</u> similar and/or possibly displaced verbiage, and *italicized text* unique to its respective passage.

κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ **ποιῶν ταῦτα**	**says the LORD** [*God*] **who does these things.**[39]	**αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα**	**Lord, who has been making these things**
		[18] γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος.	[18] *known* from long ago.'

Of special note in the comparison above is the way James' speech emphasizes certain aspects of Amos' words. First, James links Amos' prophecy directly to the claim made by Peter that God has "taken from among the nations/Gentiles a people for his name" (15:14-15). If by "Simeon" James is referring to Peter and his preceding speech,[40] the summary aims to epitomize Peter's words rather than quote them. Peter's speech (15:7-11), as we saw, offered a theological interpretation of the Cornelius episode and, more generally, of Gentile salvation of which the Cornelius episode was the first and representative instance. James essentially begins his speech by saying that Peter's interpretation accords with Israel's scriptures and, therefore, is in keeping with God's ancient promises. Amos in this case, though not identified by name, is taken as representative of "the prophets" (cf. Acts 10:43) or even the prophetic aspect of the scriptures more generally (cf. Luke 24:44-49). The purpose of James' speech includes adding scriptural sanction to the significance of the P-C episode and Peter's theological

[39] Cf. the NRSV of the MT: "in order that *they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations* who are called by my name, says the LORD who does this" (Amos 9:12), which notably makes the nations the object of conquest rather than the subject of "may seek the Lord" (cf. LXX Am 9:12; Acts 15:17-18).
[40] See Fowl, "Simeon in Acts 15:14," 185-198. Cf. the traditional view of Dibelius, "The Speeches in Acts," 164: "One small observation will be sufficient to show that it is literary intention which has consciously fashioned this whole composition. Normally, in Acts, Peter is called Πέτρος, even in this story about Cornelius, so long as only he is the subject of the narrative; but where the name is used from Cornelius' side, that is, where the angel first speaks of him to the Gentile (10:5), where the messengers enquire after Peter (10.18), where Cornelius tells Peter of his visit by the angel (10.32) and even where Peter, in Jerusalem, gives his account of the story about Cornelius (11.13), there he is called Σίμων ὁ ἐπικαλούμενος Πέτρος or ὅς ἐπικαλεῖται Πέτρος. And when James, who speaks Aramaic, uses the name in Jerusalem, the Greek transcription of the Aramaic name, Συμεών, is found (15.14). This gives some small indication of how conscious intention has governed the whole narrative."

and christological understanding of it. It will be recalled that Peter does not draw heavily on scripture, either in his immediate reactions to the conversion of Cornelius' household or in his retelling of the story to Jerusalem Jews. Even Peter's application of the phrase "word of the Lord" is to a statement made *by Jesus* (11:16; cf. 1:5) rather than by Israel's scriptures.

Second, in v. 16 James cites Am 9:11 with reference to God's restoration of the σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ, the "dwelling of David." The Lukan James' treatment of Amos' prophetic words here seem to indicate that the eschatological temple is in view (e.g., this is why "as in the days of old" has not been retained)—built by God but having to do with the work of the Messiah. In this way, argues Richard Bauckham[41] for instance, James identifies the Christian community with God's eschatological temple "where" Gentiles can come and seek God's presence. Without referring explicitly to the Messiah, James implies that the Davidic Messiah's work includes the restoration of Israel and extension of salvation to Gentiles. But, given the Jerusalem temple's role in separating ("making distinction between") people by degrees of affiliation with Israel (cf. Acts 21:26-30), James speaks of a non-architectural temple to which Gentiles *could* gain admittance—a temple comprised of people (cf. Acts 9:31; 20:32), an idea reflected elsewhere in the NT.[42]

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[41] "James and the Gentiles (Acts 15:13-21)," in *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul: Tensions in Early Christianity*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig Evans (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 159-168. Cf. 167: "It is therefore entirely plausible that Amos 9:11-12, interpreted as a prophecy that God would build the eschatological Temple (the Christian community) so that Gentiles might seek his presence there, should have played a decisive role in the Jerusalem church's debate and decision about the status of Gentile Christians."

[42] cf. Matt 16:18; Rom 14:19; 15:2, 20; 1 Cor 8:1; 10:23; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26; 2 Cor 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Gal 2:18; Eph 4:12, 16; Col 2:7; 1 Thess 5:11; Jude 20.

Third, James introduces the scriptural citation with the phrase μετὰ ταῦτα (15:16), in contrast to ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ (LXX Am 9:11).[43] For James, the eschatological restoration of Israel has begun in earnest, now signaled and accompanied by the entry of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, specifically the Gentiles over whom the "name of the Lord" has been called. If the the Messiah's work in restoring Israel through the Twelve has run its course, retrospectively making Acts 1-9 the Israel-centric aspect of the messianic mission (Isa 49:6a; cf. Acts 13:31), the receptivity of the Gentiles indicates that God's building of the eschatological temple (again, the Christian community) is sufficiently complete to invite Gentiles in. Peter's surprise in the P-C episode, again in hindsight, may have been related to confusion over how Gentile salvation would be related to Israel's restoration. Gentiles could be incorporated into God's people previously by adopting Jewish observance; that Gentiles were shown favor by God as Gentiles threw into question the larger conception of Israel as *the* people to whom (and to whose law and temple) receptive Gentiles were to conform (cf. Acts 25:8; 28:17). James' speech identifies this problem and addresses it by (re)reading Israel's scriptures about Israel's restoration as correlated now to the salvation of the Gentiles.[44]

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[43] Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles," 157, concludes that the change to "after these things" reflects Hos 3:5 and a larger thematic background involving promises of an eschatological temple "built" out of people—i.e. the Christian community. Moreover, Bauckham treats the citation of Am 9 as "selected and adapted to suit the interpretation," namely by "framing" composite-allusions to Hos 3:5, Jer 12:15, and Isa 45:21.

[44] Bauckham, "Restoration of Israel," 466-467: "Is the apostles' role as witnesses to the end of the earth (1:8) itself the restoration of Israel's royal rule, or is it the role that they exercise in the meantime, on the way to that restoration? The logic of vv. 6-8 seems to require the latter (otherwise why is v. 7 required?). However, in both these cases (Luke 22:29-30 and Acts 1:6-8), it is important to notice that the way to the future restoration of Israel's kingdom is through the service and witness of the apostles. This unexpected route to the kingdom, parallel to Jesus' own unexpected route to his own enthronement, must make a difference to the nature of the kingdom itself, even though Luke does not spell this out, content as he usually is with the traditional eschatological imagery when speaking of the still future aspects of salvation. This is not a kingdom that comes through violent overthrow of enemies but through service and witness."

Fourth, the parallel with Acts 2 remains significant because James reiterates Peter's claim that the "name" upon which all—especially Gentiles—must call is the κύριος Jesus (Acts 2:21; LXX Joel 3:5; Acts 15:14, 17; LXX Am 9:12). For both Peter and for James, Israel's scriptures attest that the "name of the Lord" is the basis for soteriological hope. And in both their speeches, the "Lord" to whom their scriptural citations refer—in their originating context—is Israel's God, known ubiquitously as simply κύριος. However, in their *appropriation* of the words of the prophets, the speeches clarify that the κύριος to whom this name and its power belong is really Jesus (Acts 2:21, 36, 39; 15:14, 17; cf. 15:11). Further supporting this observation is the fact that in James's citation of Amos 9, he inserts τὸν κύριον ("that all other peoples may seek *the Lord*," 15:17) into the LXX, as if to clarify the point of restoration—that *all* peoples may seek the Lord. Even the additional name in LXX Am 9:12 ("thus says the Lord *God*") is left out in James' recitation, as if to ensure the unadulterated emphasis on the ambiguous κύριος throughout.

James need not state the conclusion to which readers are now led: because Jesus is πάντων κύριος, Jews and Gentiles are united by salvation in his name, the very name shared with the God of Israel. Just as Jesus had responded to his inquiring apostles (1:6), universal witness and the restoration of Israel are bound together (1:7-8). Peter's experience has highlighted their interconnectedness by realizing how the salvation of Gentiles is part of the renewal and transformation of Israel.[45] Therefore, witness to all

[45] Bock, "Scripture and Realization," 52: "[By citing] Amos 9:11-15 in Acts 15:14-18…[James] is arguing that Gentiles belong in the community of God's people—to take out a people for his name from the Gentiles (v. 14). In terms of function, this text justifies Gentile involvement in the community, which is why it could be considered a text about ecclesiology. However, …Luke's use also has christological

nations (Acts 10-11) provides the basis for James' scriptural-exegetical claim that indeed Israel is on the way to full restoration. But witness to the nations is not a sign that the Jewish mission is finished (cf. e.g., 21:20-24); rather, the receptivity and influx of Gentiles into the *new* temple signifies that the temple has indeed been "(re)built" (Am 9:11) and Israel's restoration is at hand. Overseeing this rebuilding, moreover, is the Lord and Messiah. Therefore, with the salvation of the Gentiles (apart from Jewish temple and law), God's promises to Israel are being fulfilled in the universal Lordship of the Messiah.

4.5.4 The Apostolic Letter-Decree (15:23-29)

> Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, with the following letter:
>
> "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings.
>
> Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds, we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials:
>
> that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.
>
> If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.
>
> Farewell." (Acts 15:22-29 NRSV)

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overtones. The Amos citation in its cited form promises that the fallen Davidic house will be rebuilt and that the nations will be included in its restoration. So the Christ event represents the rebuilding of that fallen house and now Gentiles are included in the promise…The interesting feature is that, like Acts 3, this text addresses the issue of blessing for the world through the presence of the one who fulfils this text. Here, even more explicitly than in Acts 3, the claim of heritage in terms of the unusual make-up of the newly reformed people of God is made-that Gentile inclusion is a part of Davidic hope. The roots of the promised multi-ethnic make-up of the new community are ancient in origin."

Though the letter follows directly on the heels of James' speech, and reflects his recommendation (v. 19: "I have reached the decision…") to send a letter to Diaspora Gentiles, the framing and text of the letter commends it as a universal consensus. Not only is it introduced as having "the consent of the whole church" (v. 22), but it explicitly expresses the greetings and wishes of "the apostles and elders" (v. 23) or ἀδελφοί more broadly. James' "I have decided" (v. 19) expands to "we have decided unanimously" (v. 25). Luke compresses the distance between recommending the letter and its formulation and sending by including the text of that letter two verses after the completion of James' speech. James and the whole church speak with one voice in adding their approval to events in Antioch and the future of a Gentile mission.

Several aspects of the letter deserve attention, as they reflect the wider significance of Acts 15 for universal witness, particularly as it is expressed in Acts by Paul's outreach. First, the "apostolic decree" letter is sent via Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch, reminding us of the premise of the Jerusalem meeting (15:1, 5-6). Even though the letter is addressed to "believers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia," that the letter is taken to Antioch suggests that city stands as representative of other emerging mixed and Gentile communities.

Second, and undetectable in most English translations (except the KJV), is the parallel use of ἀδελφοί for both the senders and recipients of the letter. The Jerusalem ἀδελφοί are specified as οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι. The addressees are called, specifically, τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν *ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἐθνῶν* (15:23): literally, "*the brothers* throughout Antioch and Syria and Cilicia *who are from the Gentiles*." The syntax of ἐξ ἐθνῶν, moreover, echoes James' earlier statement that

God has taken "from the Gentiles a people" (ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαόν) for his name (15:14). Thus, the letter reflects James' own usage of the phrase, thereby identifying the believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia as ones both confirmed by Peter's theological conclusions (15:7-11) and James' scriptural argument (15:13-21).

The use of ἀδελφοί is noteworthy in another sense. In this letter, for the first time in Luke-Acts (or contemporary literature), Jewish-Christian believers call Gentile believers "brothers."[46] That the letter, as an official decree of sorts, makes the linguistic identification of Jewish believers in Jerusalem with Gentile believers in Antioch—by means of the term ἀδελφοί—is remarkable by its singularity. It underscores precisely what the P-C episode—and positive responses to it—have implied, namely, that Jews and Gentiles are alike. There are few better ways for Jerusalem believers to indicate as much than by applying the same term to themselves that they use for Gentile believers in Antioch and the Diaspora.

Third, the letter builds on this shared identity by naming their common christological belief, referring to Paul and Barnabas' work as done "for the sake of *our Lord Jesus Christ*" (15:26). Chapter 1, we recall, showed how the joint use of κύριος and χριστός appears at pivotal points in Acts (cf. 2:36; 10:36; 11:17; 15:26; 28:31). Here the significance of the combined title derives from the tone of the letter, which reconciles the opinion of the "whole (Jerusalem) church" with what God is doing among Gentiles in Antioch and beyond. By referring to "*our* Lord Jesus Christ," the letter invokes the commonality of Jewish and Gentile believers under the one Lordship of the Messiah

[46] Aaron Kuecker, *Spirit and the "Other": Social Identity, Ethnicity and Intergroup Reconciliation in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark International, 2011): 178, 213.

Jesus. The social and ethnic reconciliation that Acts 15 effects cannot occur without accepting the christological foundation upon which it rests. The Messiah of Israel is the Lord of all, therefore Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus are one people. This conclusion aligns well with James' earlier scriptural redefinition of the term λαός as referring simultaneously to Jewish and Gentile believers (15:14).

Fourth, though a thorough study of the terms of the decree (abstaining from idol food, blood, strangled meat, and fornication) cannot be undertaken here, it should be pointed out that this list of regulations is often misinterpreted with respect to the question of Gentile admission. A common view of the terms of the apostolic decree (and James' list, 15:20) is that they represent minimum requirements for accepting Gentiles into God's people, or that they are primarily intended to allow for greater possibility of fellowship between observant Jews and converted Gentiles.[47] Richard Bauckham has convincingly shown,[48] however, that the terms of the decree are drawn from Lev 17-18. Each of the prohibitions named—εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας (Acts 15:29; cf. 15:20)—corresponds to what can be found in MT[49] Lev 17:8-9 (idol meat), 17:10-12 (blood), 17:13 (things strangled), and 18:26 (fornication). Most significantly, however, in Leviticus these prohibitions are given as regulations for

[47] For this view, among others see Stephen Wilson, *Gentiles,* 74-75. Cf. Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles," 174-175.
[48] Bauckham, ibid., 172-177.
[49] Bauckham, ibid., 177: "it could not be the LXX text that provided the basis for the Apostolic Decree. The LXX calls the resident alien in those chapters, as elsewhere in the Torah, 'the proselyte (προσηλύτος) who sojourns
among you.' But the point of the Apostolic Decree is precisely that Gentile Christians are not required to become proselytes, who would be obliged to keep the whole Law. Only by disregarding the LXX's interpretation could the laws of Leviticus 17-18 be understood to apply to Gentile Christians not otherwise obliged to keep the Law… Our conclusion [is] that the prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree are based not simply on Leviticus 17-18, but on the exegetical link between [MT] Jer. 12.16; Zech. 2.11/15 and Leviticus 17-18."

"anyone of the house of Israel *or of the aliens who reside among them*" (Lev 17:8, 10, 13; 18:26; cf. 17:15). In other words, the Apostolic decree specifically identifies regulations for Israel that additionally apply to *aliens* (not "converts/proselytes") living among the people of Israel.[50] Therefore, the purpose of the decree is not to bring Gentile believers closer to Jews in terms of legal requirements (which would be akin to proselytism) but to acknowledge that the law itself provides for Gentiles who remain Gentiles. In this way, the Torah—rather than rendered impotent, as many assume[51]—is affirmed and brought to bear on the new situation of Gentile admission into God's people as Gentiles.[52] This interpretation additionally explains why James' speech concludes with a reference to the claim that "in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues" (15:21). In other words, to prove his point James merely has to point to a text that all Jews should have known anyway by virtue of being in synagogue worship. The salvation of Gentiles *as Gentiles* finds confirmation and legal guidance in the Torah.

Lest this reading suggest that James and the Apostolic Decree support the coexistence of two different churches, however, it should be recalled how James and the letter posit unity in the unprecedented use of λαός (15:14), ἀδελφοί (15:22), and κυρίου

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[50] Bauckham, ibid., 175: "Amos 9.12 establishes that Gentiles may belong to the eschatological people of God precisely as Gentiles, without becoming Jews. While this exempts them from the Law of Moses as a whole it does not necessarily mean that none of the specifically Mosaic laws applies to them." And 179: "Prophecies of the
conversion of the Gentiles to God in the messianic age show that, while these Gentiles are not obliged to become Jews and to observe the Law as a whole, the Law itself envisages them and legislates for them."

[51] While it is common in popular Christian literature to assume the law's dissolution *for all,* it is only a little less common to find the claim made in academic texts—e.g., Nguyen, "Dismantling Cultural Boundaries," 460-2.

[52] Quoting Earl Richard ("The Divine Purpose," 197; though Bauckham cites "273," presumably from a differently paginated version), Bauckham says ("James and the Gentiles," 179): "The law of Moses continues to be valid for Jews as Jews and for Gentiles as Gentiles."

ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (15:26). Moreover, the letter is being sent to and is affirming of Antioch, a community comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. The objections to Paul's ministry had attempted to find unity in Torah prescriptions for proselytes—circumcision and full observance of the law (15:1, 5). James and the Apostolic Decree show that the Torah makes provision for unity among Jews and Gentiles without turning Gentiles into Jews first. The one way in which Jews are to become more like Gentiles, however, is in their receptivity to Jesus' *universal* Lordship.

4.5.5 Acts 21:17-26

One indication of the Decree's abiding significance is the repeated reference to it in 16:4 and, with detail, in 21:25. The latter reference deserves special comment because it occurs right before Paul's arrest in the Jerusalem temple (21:27-33).

> [17] When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us warmly. [18] The next day Paul went with us to visit James; and all the elders were present. [19] After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. [20] When they heard it, they praised God. Then they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the law. [21] They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs. [22] What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. [23] So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. [24] Join these men, go through the rite of purification with them, and pay for the shaving of their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself observe and guard the law. [25] But as for the Gentiles who have become believers, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." [26] Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having purified himself, he entered the temple with them, making public the completion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them.

Paul meets with the Jerusalem elders soon after arriving in Jerusalem and relates what God has been doing among the Gentiles. The elders praise God upon hearing it. But,

seemingly without transition, these elders change the subject to "how many thousands of believers are among the Jews, and…all zealous for the law" (21:20). Why does Paul's report about God's work among the Gentile believers prompt the (Jewish-Christian) Jerusalem believers' report about the number of believing *Jews*? As the previous section showed, the Jerusalem Council resolved the question of Gentile admission into God's people by recognizing that the Torah makes provision for Gentiles as Gentiles. A misreading of the Council's decision might assume that the Law itself had been rendered void, for Gentiles *as well as Jews*. That misconception had indeed become a rumor even among Jewish believers that Paul had been teaching Jews to, in effect, become Gentiles (21:21). Part of this rumor, it seems, is that Paul himself has apostasized (21:24). To prove that the rumor is false on both accounts (cf. 16:1-3; 21:24; 24:16-18; 26:6-7), the elders recommend that Paul should both "go through the rite of purification" and pay for others to do likewise (21:24, 26).

It is important to recognize what is fully at stake in this interchange between Paul and the Jerusalem elders. The Council's decision to admit Gentiles as Gentiles makes the grounds for commonality between believing Jews and Gentiles God's gift of the Spirit (15:7-11), the scriptural prophecies tying Israel's restoration to Gentile salvation (15:13-21), and Torah regulations ensuring Jews remains Jews and Gentiles remain Gentiles. From the outside, this unity could be misconstrued from both directions—on the assumption that unity is only possible either by making Gentiles into Jews (15:1, 5) or Jews into Gentiles (21:21). But Paul's outreach among Diaspora Jews is rooted in a commitment to navigate between these two poles. Hence, Paul submits to the elders' recommendation and begins the purification process for himself and the young men. As if

to indicate that such a gesture would not have proven sufficient anyways—so bent on rejecting Paul's ministry were the Jews in Jerusalem—Paul is seized before he can complete the purification rites (21:27).

By keeping before readers an awareness of the salvation of Gentiles as Gentiles as coherent with the ongoing relevance of the Torah for Jewish believers, Luke anticipates the charges and objections Jews bring against Paul in Jerusalem. To bring charges against Paul is to misunderstand Torah, whereas those who accept Gentiles as Gentiles into God's people comprehend the law and (eschatological) temple on a deeper level. Like the Stephen speech (7:3-52), the narrative context and speech of Acts 21-22 (see below) suggests that the accusing Jews are really the ones on trial.

4.5.6 Conclusions: Modeling Jewish Responses to the Universality of Jesus' Lordship

The Jerusalem Council meeting (Acts 15) stands at the center of Acts, in terms of both chapter arrangement and significance. Not only does the meeting bring together the ministry of the apostles and Paul, but it also weaves together the Jerusalem church narrative (Acts 2-5, 9:32-11:18) with the account of exile as far as Antioch (6-8:1, 9:1-29, 11:19-26, 13:1-15:4). To that narrative link is added a theological/christological reflection by Peter (15:7-11), scriptural argument by James (15:13-21), and formal support of Paul's ministry by the Apostolic Decree (15:23-29).

Because readers have already encountered Peter's Cornelius experience in Acts (10:1-48; 11:1-18) as well as Paul's ministry among Gentiles in the Diaspora (13:1-14:28), the Jerusalem meeting has the feel of an *ex post facto* event. Especially the speech of James, and the related Apsotolic Decree, appear to bring the "normative"

understanding of Israel's scriptures into line with events that have already occurred. In this respect, God's initiative is again highlighted and the apostles and Jerusalem leaders serve as models of how to catch up to what God is already doing among the Gentiles (cf. 11:19-26; 13:1-14:28). Luke narratively models—in the change in attitude of Peter and the Jerusalem believers and especially the Jerusalem Council decisions—what the (believing) Jewish response to Gentile salvation ought to look like. Most Jewish believers, readers learn, rejoice at what is happening among Gentiles (11:18; 15:3-4, 12, 31). Unbelieving Jews, on the other hand, will most often reject Paul's message largely—see 4.6.2 below—because the consensus of the Jerusalem meeting about the place of Gentiles among the people of Israel threatens the self-conception of these Jews, particularly with respect to the law and the temple (21:28; 25:8).

In a sense, therefore, the decisions reached in Acts 15 issue an implicit invitation to other Jews. The emphasis Luke gives to Peter's change from skeptic to proclaimer of Gentile salvation, along with the change in attitude by the Jerusalem believers from 11:2-3 to 11:18 and 15:6-29 outlines the gap that needed to be and has been crossed by Jewish believers in Acts. Implicit in that recognition—for it to align with God's purposes—is the conviction that Gentiles are not saved *separately*, as it were, from Jews, as if the people of God were divided into distinct groups with little in common. To the contrary, Acts 15 underscores their equality before God on the basis of God's gift of the Spirit (15:9-10), "the grace of the Lord Jesus" (15:11), the role of Gentiles in the restoration of Israel (15:15-18), and the provisions of Torah for both Jews and Gentiles (15:19-21). Given this unity identified and enacted in Acts 15, to deny the admission of unobservant/uncircumcised Gentiles into God's people is to deny the validity of the

Torah, scriptural promises more broadly, and Jesus' identity as Messiah and Lord. To limit "people of God" to Jews of ethnic descent or proselytes is to undermine the very scriptures upon which the objections to Gentile admission are predicated (15:1, 5).

This anticipates how Jewish rejection of Paul will revolve around a contest over Israel's scriptures, specifically with respect to the claim that Jesus is the Messiah and that his mission involves saving Gentiles as well as Jews—i.e. what constitutes the *universality* of his messianic Lordship. The Lordship of Jesus over all people thus symbolizes the heart of the common identity shared by Jews and Gentiles. An implication of the "success" of the Jerusalem meeting is that Jesus is not Jewish Messiah unless he is universal Lord. The notion of "Messiah" is not simply expanded to include Gentiles, as if Gentile admission into the people of God must still pass under the bar of Jewish identity (adherence to the law, circumcision for men, food and ritual purity, etc.); on the contrary, "Messiah" itself is reconfigured in light of the claim that Jesus is "Lord of all." As universal Lord, he fulfills the scriptural promises concerning *Israel*, which is to say that salvation of the Gentiles completes the messianic hopes, preventing the ethnocentrism evident both in Peter's initial hesitations as well as the Jerusalem believers' objections to Peter's behavior (11:2-3) and to Paul's mission (15:1, 5).

4.6 Jews and Jewish Opposition to a Christology of Universal Witness

This dissertation has revolved around the thesis that Luke construes mission in Acts as the narrative unfolding of Jesus' identity as universal Lord. Because Jesus' identity is at stake in the conversion of Gentiles (see Chapter 2-3), Peter's revelation in Caesarea (retold in Jerusalem, 11:5-17; interpreted in 15:7-11) is primarily *christological*. More than simply an acknowledgment that Gentiles fall within God's saving purposes,

Peter's revelation identifies God's favor toward Gentiles as an indication of the universal scope of Jesus' Lordship. Just as "glory for your people Israel" *is* "light for the revelation of the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32), so the Messiah of Israel is "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). In this way, Luke closely connects the identity of Jesus to the Jew-Gentile composition of the people of God. To make Gentiles responsible for the whole law, or even to invite Jews to apostasize from the law, contradicts the universal Lordship of the Messiah Jesus.

In a previous section (4.5.6), it was argued that Peter and the Jerusalem leaders model the "correct" response to the revelation of universal salvation in Jesus' name. Though it is a gradual and at times challenging process for them (Acts 10-15), they eventually recognize that the favor God shows toward Gentiles, apart from the law, validates Peter's christological conclusions. Accepting Gentile salvation as the fulfillment of God's ancient promises *to Israel*, Luke implies, is how Jews ought to respond to God's work in Jesus Christ and by the Spirit. Having, in a sense, "solved" the *internal* (i.e. believing Jews') struggle (cf. also 21:18-26), Luke now turns to the version of this opposition from outside the early Christian community (i.e. *externally*, in the form of unbelieving Jews).[53] How these leaders handle internal challenges helps frame the way readers are to interpret, by and large, the *external* (Jewish) opposition universal outreach faces. That is, readers are primed to expect that, after Acts 15 especially, the same controversy that challenged believing Jews will prove to be a major stumbling block for unbelieving Jews. If these followers of Jesus, who were slow to recognize the crucified

[53] The opposition of Jewish groups—already prefigured in 15:1—sounds similar to the initial internal criticism (which is why 15:1 and 15:5 sound so similar), but it will add outright rejection and violence to it.

and risen Lord (Luke 24), have gradually come to the revelation of the universality of the Messiah's Lordship, how will *unbelieving* Jews respond?

Specifically, the present section will argue that Jewish opposition to Paul (variously expressed as "jealousy" or outright violence) is rooted in a rejection of the universality of Jesus' (Messianic) Lordship as signified by the inclusion of Gentiles *qua* Gentiles among God's people. That Gentiles are somehow part of the mission of the Messiah and thus part of God's ancient plans *for Israel* arguably proves scandalous to many Jews. Three primary lines of evidence will be traced as the argument unfolds, namely how Luke simultaneously emphasizes: (1) the fulfillment of Jewish hopes for restoration[54] in the messianic work of Jesus and his witnesses, (2) Jewish opposition to Paul's message about the Messiah (both by de-emphasizing Gentile opposition or linking that opposition to Jewish instigation), and (3) the universal scope of Paul's commission—specifically in outreach to (receptive) Gentiles—as an expression of the universality of Jesus' messianic work, rather than simply as a reaction to Jewish rejection of his message.

To anticipate, Luke is committed to showing that Israel's hopes are fulfilled in the Messiah, whose identity is revealed by crucifixion and resurrection and, as this study has labored to point out, by universal Lordship (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 26:22-23). Not only are unbelieving Jews scandalized by the idea of a crucified and risen Messiah, but also and especially by the inclusion of Gentiles *as Gentiles* in the universal scope of his reign,

[54] "Jewish hopes for restoration," whatever they would have included historically, are reconfigured by virtue of being represented in Luke's narrative. In appropriating them as it were Luke necessarily changes them, wanting to show all along that the expectations to be held are those that are met and fulfilled in Jesus' work of restoration and universal outreach.

especially since their inclusion allegedly expresses fulfillment of scriptural expectations of *Israel's* restoration. When Paul's message and outreach find a receptive audience among Gentiles and God-fearers, the crisis for unbelieving Jews emerges most clearly—how can ethnic Israel remain God's people when Gentiles are being added without respect to circumcision and the law? Thus, the success of Paul's ministry in itself reminds unbelieving Jews of the threat this new movement poses to the traditions of Israel. Even though Luke, by focusing on Jesus' Lordship over "all" (especially Gentiles), does not mean Jews are thereby rejected (cf. 13:46-47; 18:6; 28:25-28), unbelieving Jews cannot recognize Jesus as Messiah without also welcoming Gentiles as Gentiles into the messianic community of Israel, now in the process of being restored. The universal Lordship of Jesus requires nothing less than a transformation in the self-conception of Jews in Acts. A christology of universal witness, therefore, comes to light in Acts when the impetus behind Jewish opposition to Paul is illuminated.

4.6.1 Universal Witness and the Restoration of Israel

> Οἱ μὲν οὖν συνελθόντες ἠρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ; εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστιν γνῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ, ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἔν τε Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.
>
> So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8 NRSV)

The book of Acts begins with the risen Jesus speaking about the "kingdom of God" with his disciples for forty days (1:3), a detail important enough for Luke to include

at the risk of conflicting with the end of his Gospel account. As part of Acts' introduction, the detail of this forty-day period of kingdom teaching conditions readers to understand the apostles' question in 1:6: "Lord, is this the time when you will restore (ἀποκαθιστάνεις) the kingdom to Israel?" (1:6). Their question appears to be the culmination of this period of kingdom-related instruction, not a misunderstanding that undoes that teaching, as is sometimes assumed.[55]

Several factors help draw out this conclusion. The naturalness of the question finds confirmation in Jesus' earlier promises to his followers about the coming kingdom (cf. Luke 21:31; 24:21; cf. 23:51) and the role of the Twelve in it (22:28-30; cf. Acts 1:13). And, even though Jesus' response is sometimes interpreted as rebuking the disciples for their question, the nature of Jesus' reply (1:7-8) subtly affirms the question even as he reframes it. Not only is the negation in Jesus' reply ("It is not for you to know the times or periods") limited to the temporal aspect of the disciples' question ("now?"), but he shifts the framework of their question *about Israel* by giving an answer about *worldwide witness.* The adversative ἀλλά (1:8b), which follows from the negative claim about the apostles' knowledge, somewhat unexpectedly does not introduce a clause addressing *when* restoration will occur nor even when the apostles will learn the correct timing. Rather, the negation of the first clause ("it is *not* for you to *know*…") leads to a positive claim about their impending responsibility.

[55] Numerous scholars assume the question misconstrues Jesus and the nature of the kingdom that he brings, in spite of Luke's insistence that Jesus instructed the apostles for forty days about the kingdom. Cf., everyone from Alfred Wikenhauser (*Die Apostelgeschichte* [Regensburg: verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1961], 27) to John Stott (*Acts,* 40-42).

The apostles' question, we recall, concerned what *the risen Jesus* would do. Jesus' reply, however, offers a statement about what *his chosen witnesses* will do. In this way, Jesus affirms the premise of the question—will Israel be restored?—while reframing the answer presupposed by the question's wording. That is, though it will not happen *now*, Israel's restoration will still occur[56]; and though it is still Jesus' responsibility, the focus falls on the responsibility of apostolic witnesses through whom he will work; and, perhaps most significantly, the restoration of Israel is now tied to a message intended for the whole world. As Acts unfolds, Israel's restoration will remain a live question. But the manner of its restoration is now bound up with the activity of universal witness taken up by Jesus' followers.[57]

Further connections between Israel's fate and the fate of the nations, in fact, appear right away in Acts after Jesus' commission. Many have noticed the emphasis given the reconstitution of the Twelve in Acts 1:13-26; it is, after all, the only event between ascension and Pentecost narrated. The election of Matthias recalls and seemingly brings to fruition Jesus' pre-Easter promises (Luke 22:29-30; 24:21), thereby implying that the restoration of Israel about which Jesus' disciples had asked is indeed "on the way." That the Twelve are restored prefigures the restoration of the Twelve tribes.[58] In

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[56] Craig Evans, "Prophecy and Polemic: Jews in Luke's Scriptural Apologetic" in *Luke and Scripture*, ed. Craig Evans and James A. Sanders (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 209.
[57] Jervell, *Theology of Acts,* 44-45. Based on a previous section of this Chapter (I), which compared the apostolic commission (Acts 1:8) to Paul's commission (Acts 13:47) through the intertextual reference to Isa 49:6, it is possible to understand the commission to be witnesses "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria" (1:8a) as aligning with Isa 49:6a: to "set up the tribes of Iakob and turn back the dispersion of Israel" (NETS). The latter half of the same verse—Isa 49:6b—is of course what Paul recalls the Lord Jesus commissioning him and Barnabas to fulfill.
[58] Jeremias, *Promise to the Nations,* 19-25; and E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 95-105.

this way, Luke frames the post-Pentecost narrative as simultaneously the story of universal witness and Israel's restoration. The widely recognized fact that James the son of Zebedee is not replaced among the Twelve later (Acts 12:2) may indicate that restoration, and universal witness with it, is both a *present* and future process. As will be shown below, this reading of Acts 1:13-26 may support the view that apostolic participation in the Messiah's mission is primarily oriented by restoration and re-gathering the tribes of Jacob (Isa 49:6*a*; cf. Acts 13:31, 47; see 4.6.1.1 below).

Understood in this way, Acts 1 adds significance to Acts 2 as an expression of Israel's restoration, symbolic or otherwise. After all, the "spirit of prophecy" Peter refers to in his citation of Joel 3 and subsequent commentary is associated with the dawning of the eschatological era (cf. μετὰ ταῦτα), ushered in—according to Luke's Peter—by the Messiah himself (2:33). The Lord Jesus pours out this Spirit on "all flesh" (cf. Luke 3:6) as a renewal of the spirit of prophecy in Israel. Paired with Acts 1 (symbolic reconstitution of the Twelve), Acts 2 symbolizes the in-gathering of the Diaspora. Notably, restoring Israel and gathering in the remnant are the tasks assigned to Israel's Servant in Isa 49:1-6 (cf. 42:1-6; see 4.6.1.2).

One way readers know Luke sustains a focus on the question of Israel's restoration is that it appears immediately after the Pentecost story. In Peter's speech in Solomon's Portico (3:12-26), which begins with a focus on Jesus' resurrection (3:13-18),[59] Luke draws readers' attention back to the disciples' question with a linguistic echo

[59] Green, "Doing Repentance," 11: "[I]n those texts of Israel's Scriptures and Second Temple Judaism where resurrection is found, "resurrection" is intimately associated with a larger complex of motifs: the restoration of Israel, including Israel's triumph over its enemies (and thus Israel's experience of conclusive and end-time salvation), God's vindication of the righteous who have suffered unjustly, and the decisive

of Acts 1:6 (ἀποκαθιστάνεις). Peter asserts that the appointed Messiah Jesus "must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration (ἀποκαταστάσεως) that God announced long ago through his holy prophets" (3:21). Moreover, mention of "universal" (πάντων) restoration intimates a scope wider than ethnic Israel.[60] Accordingly, Peter anchors his expansive claims about Messiah and restoration by reminding his Jewish audience of the Abrahamic covenant: "in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (3:25; Gen 12:3). Thus, the appearance of the "Servant" Jesus signals the "first" stage of blessing—turning the Jews of Jerusalem from their wicked ways—from which will follow blessing for all nations (Acts 3:26; cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 13:46). The themes Peter identifies in this speech reappear in his brief words to the Sanhedrin in 5:29-32. In spite of Jewish opposition to Israel's "Leader and Savior," God has raised and exalted this Messiah Jesus—as part of God's plan—to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel (5:30-32). In this respect, Jesus' purpose is to extend the work of John the Baptist, who invited all who came to him to repent, especially those claiming to be Abraham's descendants (3:3-14). The witness of the apostles to Israel is part of the resurrected Messiah's invitation to repentance and intention to restore all things (cf. 13:31-39). The connection here between Jesus' resurrection, a general

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establishment of divine justice, where rewards and punishments are distributed in relation to the character of one's life before death … Luke's phrase, "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead," is an astute summary of Peter's speech, therefore, with "resurrection of the dead" functioning as a synecdoche for the eschatological restoration of Israel and, not incidentally, providing a felicitous explanation for the hostility his sermon would have attracted from the Jerusalem rulers." Cf. Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:1-14; Hos 6:1-3; cf. Dan 12:1-3; *1 Enoch* 22; 2 Macc 7.

[60] Indeed, "all" may also imply here all creation, but the subsequent emphasis on all nations blessed through Abraham focuses the universality on human families.

resurrection, and Israel's hopes for restoration anticipates Paul's preaching and defense before Jews in the Diaspora (cf. 17:3; 23:6; 24:5, 21).

Another way Luke ensures readers understand that the Christian movement represents a completion of God's promises to Israel is by offering extended salvation-historical speeches suggesting just that. Both Stephen's Sanhedrin testimony (7:3-53) as well as Paul's first major speech (13:16-41, 46-47) place the messianic mission of Jesus within the framework of the story of God's people (cf. 7:51-53; 13:23-39), such that the promises delivered to the Jews' ancestors are fulfilled in the mission of Jesus and of his followers. Notably, each major speech culminates in a statement about Jewish recalcitrance (7:51-53; 13:40-41) and is followed, at length, by Jewish rejection of the speaker (7:54-58; 13:45, 50-51). On the one hand, while the Stephen speech is more polemical, and delivered before the Gentile mission begins, it nevertheless anticipates the rejection the gospel will meet in Paul's preaching to Gentiles. The overall thrust of Paul's speech(es) in Pisidian Antioch, on the other hand, concerns the claim that the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel are to be found in the life, death, and resurrection of the Isaianic Servant and Messiah of Israel, and *also* in the extension of salvation to the Gentiles at the ends of the earth. While Stephen's trial speech made a kind of ethnic expansion implicit in his portrayal of Israel's history, Paul's Pisidian Antioch speech (especially its epilogue in vv. 46-47) explicitly links Paul's outreach to Gentiles and Jesus' messianic mission. Effectively, Luke implies that outreach to Gentiles is fundamental to Israel's identity, according to God's ancient plan and the scriptures that bear witness to it. To reject this outreach in the present is to reject God's purposes of old.

Returning to Acts' chronology, following Stephen's death the early Christian movement is characterized by a Diaspora existence (8:1-4), especially in Antioch (11:19-26). But according to that chronology, the scattering of believers (11:19-21) is preceded by a series of conversion accounts. The Christian movement expands through the conversion of Samaria (8:5-14), the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-39), and Cornelius' household in Caesarea (10:1-48). Unlike Paul's transformation in 9:1-21, these three "conversions" function representatively, bearing salvation-historical significance in the unfolding of Luke's story. That is, they function in a largely symbolic manner.[61] Supporting this claim is the fact that these conversion narratives generally fit into the pattern laid out by Jesus' parting words in Acts—that witness would begin in Jerusalem, reach Judea and Samaria, and make its way to the end of the earth (1:8). These geographical and ethnic designations (Judea-Samaria, Ethiopia/eunuchs, Gentiles/end of the earth), in other words, may imply a kind of "map of restoration." Jesus' programmatic words in 1:8, by both their reframing of the disciples' question (cf. 1:6 above) and also the symbolic designations employed, suggest that the path toward Israel's restoration will follow the path of apostolic witness "in Jerusalem [ch. 2-7], in all Judea and Samaria [ch. 8-9], and to the end(s) of the earth [ch. 10-28]."

[61] We know this, in part, because: (1) Samaria is never really heard from again (cf. 15:3), the payoff of its conversion being the surprising realization by the apostles (Peter and John) that the word of God has taken root there without the expressed influence of the Jerusalem church/apostles (cf. Ezek 16:53-55); (2) the Ethiopian eunuch is never mentioned again, not even to tell readers that he evangelized his homeland—plus the emphasis on his being a "eunuch" (mentioned five times) seems to imply the fulfillment of Isa 56:3 as part of Israel's wider restoration; and (3) even though Cornelius' household is specifically identified in Acts 10-11, its conversion is quickly talked about in representative terms—i.e. as the salvation of *the Gentiles*.

Three pieces of evidence favor this reading. First, according to scripture, Jerusalem is often identified as the site of the future restoration of God's people,[62] as the statements early in Luke's Gospel confirm (Luke 2:4, 38). Heard in a register of Jewish expectation, Jesus' promise of witness in *Jerusalem* (Luke 24:48b; Acts 1:8) would have signaled the possibility of the beginning of Israel's restoration, which was widely thought to *begin* in Jerusalem.[63] Second, Jesus' geographical linking of Judea and Samaria—apparently anachronistic given what we know of 1st century geography[64]—may be intended to evoke the restoration of the two historical kingdoms of *Judah* and *Israel*.[65] Repeated claims about Jesus' Davidic inheritance and kingship in Luke-Acts contributes to this impression (Luke 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4, 11; 3:31; 18:38-39; 20:41-44; Acts 2:25, 29, 31, 34; 13:22-23, 34-37; 15:16-17).[66] Third, as noted, the reference to "the end of the earth" is an allusion—especially recognizable in light of Acts 13:47—to Isa 49:6 and the mission of the Isaianic Servant of Israel (cf. 42:1-6; 49:1-6; 50:4-7; 52:13-53:12; cf. 4.6.1.1). Jesus' programmatic words (Acts 1:8) are strongly allusive of the language and imagery of scriptural promises of restoration, while the narrative fulfillment of this program in Acts 1-10 evokes Israel's initial restoration (cf. 15:13-21), to be completed at the *eschaton* (Acts 1:11; 3:21).

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[62] E.g., Deut 30-33; Isa 40-66; see specifically Dan 9:25; Joel 3:1; Mic 4:6-7; Zeph 3:19-20; Isa 49:22-23; 52:9-12; 58:12; 60:1-9; 66:20.
[63] Cf. Bar 4:36-37: 5:5-9; Tob 13:13-14; 14:5b, 7b; 2 Macc 2: 18; *Psalms of Solomon* 11; *1 Enoch* 90:29-33. Cf. also Bauckham, "Restoration of Israel."
[64] Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 115-116.
[65] Pao, *New Exodus*, 91, 125-129. For Luke to have written "Judah and Israel" would, of course, created too many problems since these designations were not applied by most (and therefore contested) in the first century. By using then present-day designations in a symbolic way, Luke can both freight them with significance that exceeds their geographical limitations while also indicating to auditors, by the sheer strangeness of the link, that something more than geography is implied.
[66] See Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah*.

Returning to Acts 10-11, though it ostensibly concerns the salvation of Gentiles, this section of Acts also presents the pivotal episode in Luke's construal of the story of *Israel*. For with this story (told, in essence, three times), Luke breaks through the seemingly impregnable conception that God's promises to Israel were, by definition, limited to Jews by ethnic descent or proselytism (cf. Acts 10:28; 15:1, 5). After heavenly visions, the instruction of the Spirit, and divinely orchestrated encounters (Acts 10), Peter realizes the coherence of Gentile salvation with God's plan, concluding that "all the prophets testify about him that *everyone* who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43; cf. Isa 32:15). Though the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Gentiles in Caesarea comes as a surprise to Peter and the apostles and Jerusalem church, eventually they all recognize how it reflects God's purposes for Israel, as attested in scripture (11:1, 18; 14:27; 15:2-3). In fact, the primary purpose of James' speech at the Jerusalem Council (15:13-21) is to note how Israel's scriptures anticipated the ingathering of Gentiles as congruent with Israel's restoration ("the words of the prophets": Amos 9:11-12; Isa 45:21). The salvation of the Gentiles is no mere extension of the reach of the gospel, as if Israel is restored and now affiliate groups are allowed in[67]; rather, the conversion of the Gentiles is a correlate of Israel's restoration (cf. Acts 1:6-8).[68] As we will see, the challenge confronting Jews throughout Acts is whether or not they will accept this premise (see 4.6.2).

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[67] This is close to the view of Jacob Jervell, *Theology of Acts*.

[68] Cf. David L. Tiede, "'Glory to Thy People Israel: Luke-Acts and the Jews," in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*, ed. Joseph Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 31: "But now the salvation of the Gentiles is fundamental to Israel's own fulfillment." Cf. *T. Simeon* 7:1-2 and *T. Levi* 4:3-4.

Paul's later speeches especially focus on the way the story of Jesus completes the story of Israel. In two prominent (defense) speeches to Jewish audiences (22:1-21, spoken in Hebrew; 26:2-23, addressed to the Roman-Jewish ruler, Agrippa), Paul emphasizes how his own calling reflects the will of "the God of our ancestors" (22:14; cf. 26:6); his testimony consists of "nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place" (26:22). His final speech, before Agrippa (26:2-23), links his outreach among Gentiles to Israel's restoration: "And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise [of resurrection] made by God to our ancestors, a promise that *our twelve tribes hope to attain*, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope…that I am accused by Jews!" (26:6-7). Israel's hope for restoration (cf. 1:6) is met in the resurrection of Jesus, which signals the availability of new life for all (26:8).[69] As the "first to rise from the dead," the Messiah is responsible for the light of salvation reaching all, "both our people and the Gentiles" (26:23; cf. Luke 2:32). Indeed, Paul's encounter with the risen Lord—here mentioned for the third time in Acts (cf. 9:1-21; 22:3-16)—introduces his commission to proclaim salvation in the Messiah Jesus' name to all people (26:20-23; cf. 9:15; 22:14-15). Through Paul's outreach to *both* Jews and Gentiles the messianic work of Jesus is coming to fruition.

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[69] Robert Tannehill, "Rejection by Jews and Turning to Gentiles: The Pattern of Paul's Mission in Acts," in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*, ed. Joseph Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 95: "It is the resurrection of Messiah Jesus that fulfills the Jewish hope for the resurrection of the dead. His resurrection initiates a resurrection that others will share…These connections make sense because resurrection life is one of the benefits of sharing in the Messiah's eternal kingdom. This insight explains how Paul can describe resurrection as 'the promise to our fathers' for which 'our twelve tribes' hope (26:6-8). This is not an individualistic hope for life after death but a hope for the messianic kingdom, which is established through resurrection and characterized by resurrection life."

Even at the very end of Acts, the link between the fate of Israel and the inclusion of Gentiles is evident. Though imprisoned in Rome, Paul meets with Jews, constantly "testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets" (28:23). It is often assumed that the poignant citation of Isa 6 at this point rules out the ongoing link between Israel's restoration and Gentile salvation (28:25-27), since the "dullness" of the Jews' response to Paul's message is followed by the claim that "God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles—they will listen" (28:28; cf. 13:46; 18:6). But when considering the whole narrative, the link established and strengthened throughout Acts between Israel's restoration and outreach to Gentiles conditions readers to see in Paul's final words a confirmation rather than rejection of this link. The scriptures (Isa 6, e.g.) anticipate the Jewish response; like Stephen's speech, Isaiah's words apply to unreceptive Israel of all ages, but they do not render final judgment on Jewish hopes for restoration (see 4.6.3.3 below). Moreover, the narrator's concluding summary of Paul's preaching—that he "welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the *kingdom* of God and teaching about the *Lord Jesus Christ* with all boldness and without hindrance" (28:30-31)—forms a kind of bookends with the beginning of Acts. The disciples' question about the *kingdom* (1:6) and Jesus' response about apostolic witness to him as *Lord* and *Messiah* (1:7-8; 2:36) anticipate Paul's own work. By continuing to welcome "all," Paul embodies Jesus' promise that universal witness and Israel's restoration remain intertwined.

To summarize briefly, far from a story in which the chaff of Judaism is brushed aside in the interest of revealing a kernel of universality,[70] Acts presents something like the converse: a picture of emerging universality (in the particular form of Gentile receptivity) *and its implications for the particularity of Jewish belief in the Messiah*.[71] The Jewish Messiah is, contrary to expectation, the crucified and risen one and Lord of Gentiles as well as Jews. Jewish hopes for restoration through Israel's Messiah and Servant are, according to Acts, fulfilled in Jesus (cf. 15:13-21) and yet also awaiting full consummation at his return (cf. 1:7-8, 11; 3:21-26).[72] The complex picture of Israel's restoration initiated and anticipating completion, of Israel's scriptures finding fulfillment in the events concerning Jesus, of Gentiles finding themselves within Jesus' reign and among God's restored people—this constellation of motifs comprises the backdrop against which Jewish opposition to Paul's preaching should be viewed.

4.6.1.1 Two Commissions to Go "to the End(s) of the Earth"?

Though it has been shown elsewhere that Luke in general ties Paul's commission to Jesus' apostolic commission (4.3), it has not been resolved entirely how the work of the apostles and Paul's outreach fit together. Arguably, in Acts 13:47 Luke answers this question by connecting Jesus' commission to the apostles and Jesus' commission to Paul

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[70] Cf., e.g., Adolf von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries,* trans. and ed. James Moffatt; 2nd, enl. and rev. ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1908).

[71] It is important to note at this point that the universality Luke narrates into Jesus' Messiahship, so to speak, does not erase Jewish particularity, but it does reconfigure it. The "universality" of mission, in this sense, is always being expressed through new particularities rather than the absence of particularity (cf. Bauckham, *Bible and Mission,* esp. chs. 1-2). The people of God is not simply Gentile and universal where before it was Jewish and particular; on the contrary, Israel is comprised of repentant Jews and Gentiles and is particular in a new way. Cf. the sober warnings of Denise Kimber Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge, whose remarks on Paul apply *mutatis mutandis* to Luke. "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul," *JBL* 123/2 (2004): 235–251.

[72] Cf. Larry R. Helyer, "Luke and the Restoration of Israel," *JETS* 36.3 (September 1993): 317-329.

through an intertextual background (Isa 49:6). An intertextual (and intratextual) comparison illuminates how Luke construes the relationship between commissions. Underlying both the witness of the apostles and the witness of Paul (and Barnabas) is the messianic task of Israel's Isaianic Servant.

The synopsis below[73] illuminates the nature of the inter- and intra-textual connections between Acts 1:8 and 13:47, the implicaitons of which the following section will elaborate.

Table 9: Acts 1:8, LXX Isa 49:6, and Acts 13:47

Acts 1:8	**LXX Isa 49:6**	**Acts 13:47**
[1:7: εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς] ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἔν τε Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ **ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς**.	καὶ εἶπέν μοι *μέγα σοί ἐστιν τοῦ κληθῆναί σε παῖδά μου τοῦ στῆσαι τὰς φυλὰς Ιακωβ καὶ τὴν διασπορὰν τοῦ Ισραηλ ἐπιστρέψαι ἰδοὺ* τέθεικά σε [*εἰς διαθήκην γένους*][74] εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν **ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς**	οὕτως γὰρ ἐντέταλται ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος· τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν **ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς**.

[73] **Bold** text indicates text cited by both Acts 1:8 and 13:47. Underlined text indicates words from Isa 49:6 cited by Paul in Acts 13:47. *Italicized* text indicates words not cited by Paul in Acts 13:47.

[74] Very few English translations (including NETS) translate this phrase, which I think has to do with the fact that the phrase is textually uncertain and probably appears in manuscripts because of assimilation to LXX Isa 42:6, where it does appear and in a nearly exact parallel statement about the work of the "servant": ἔδωκά σε **εἰς διαθήκην γένους** εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν (Isa. 42:6).

As a reminder, both statements (Acts 1:8 and 13:47) are purportedly delivered by the risen Lord Jesus to his servants. In the first instance (Acts 1:8), the risen Jesus commissions his apostles to go "to the end of the earth" (ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς), implicitly echoing the ethnic scope of the commission in Luke 24:47 ("to all nations") and explicitly attaching a geographical outline to it. In the second instance (Acts 13:47), the exalted Jesus-as-quoted-by-Paul enlists Paul and Barnabas to participate in a similar commission as was given to the apostles. The parallel—enhanced by the shared, allusive phrase—suggests that indeed the commission given to the apostles and to Paul/Barnabas ought to be read in light of one another. The question arises: to what end has Luke linked their commissions intertextually?

To answer this question, a deeper analysis of the connections between Acts 1:8, 13:47, and Isa 49:6 is needed, specifically by understanding how both commissions function in their respective narrative contexts and in relation to one another. Starting with Acts 13:47, we note that Luke concludes Paul's speech(es) in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41, 46-47) by having Paul recall Jesus' commission to him (and Barnabas: ἡμῖν). Somewhat characteristically in Acts, Paul recalls words spoken to him by the exalted Lord Jesus that were not recorded previously; that is, they are remembered from the past rather than narrated as occurring in the present (e.g., 1:5; 20:35; 22:18-21; 26:14b, 16-18). In the case of Acts 13:47, Paul's recollections take the form of an abbreviated (and unidentified) citation of Isa 49:6: "I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may be for salvation (εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν) to the end of the earth (ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς)." The citation—credited to the "Lord" and expressed as a command (ἐντέταλται) to

Paul and Barnabas—is noteworthy for a number of reasons relating to the broader purpose of the present study.

The common use of ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς by Acts 1:8 and 13:47 ties the two dominical "commissions" together and evokes the source of the phrase (LXX Isa 49:6). Lest such an instance of verbatim agreement be thought a coincidence of common usage, it should be remembered that ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς occurs nowhere else in the NT besides these two examples. Outside of the NT the phrase only appears in Israel's scriptures in LXX Isaiah (8:9; 48:20; 49:6; 62:11; cf. 1 Macc 3:9; Ps Sol 1:4), from whence Luke's Paul clearly draws its usage in Acts 13:47.

That Luke's/Paul's use of Isa 49:6 here evokes *both* forms of the Lukan Commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) may be evident in the structure of the quotation: "I have set you to be a light *to the nations* (ἐθνῶν), to be for salvation *to the end(s) of the earth* (ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς)" (Acts 13:47). The parallelism of Isaiah 49:6b is effectively synonymous, emphasizing correspondence between "nations" and "end of the earth"—arguably the same parallel found in the two versions of the Lukan Commission: "to all nations" (εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) and "to the end of the earth" (ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς).[75] Both versions of the Lukan Commission, in other words, are in a sense united and restated in the commission of Paul (and Barnabas), with new emphases added (see below).

[75] Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles*, 19. Cf. Beers, *The Followers of Jesus*, 132: "The immediate co-text in Isa. 49.6 includes the servant as 'a light to the nations'. In this way the Isaianic story points to the 'end of the earth' as equaling Gentile inclusion (cf. the allusions to 'light to the nations' in Lk 2.32; 24.47; Acts 26.17-18, 23; 28.28). This is true also at the end of Acts, where Paul describes his mission in geographical terms, (133) highlighting Jerusalem, Judea, 'and also to the Gentiles' (26.20). The arrangement recalls the command to be 'witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' of Acts 1.8."

Given that Acts 1:8 includes a more latent allusion to Isa 49:6 than Acts 13:47 does, and yet occurs first narratively, readers may or may not grasp the allusion to Isaiah in Jesus' parting words. Not until Paul's statement in Pisidian Antioch (13:47) does Jesus' commission come into focus and its Isaianic scope become more distinct. Indeed, if one only had the vague allusion in Acts 1:8 to go on, it would be possible to get the impression (especially for Jewish readers) that the apostolic commission was limited to Israel and to Jews in the Diaspora.[76] Acts 1-9, as shown previously, appears to bear out such a limited view. In this respect, one way to read the latent allusion in Acts 1:8 is something along the lines of Isa 49:6*a*, that is, what Paul's quotation in Acts 13:47 *omits*: "so that you may restore the tribes of Jacob and return the scattered of Israel."

One possible implication is that, though sharing an Isaianic reference, Acts 1:8 and 13:47 are less parallel in their commissional claims than they are complementary. In other words, "ends of the earth" in Acts 1:8 may function—by its very vagueness—as an invitation to bear witness and thereby restore Israel, gathering in the scattered remnant (Isa 49:6a; cf. Acts 1:6-7). Several details support this reading: the disciples' question about "restoring the kingdom to Israel" (1:6) which Jesus indirectly confirms, the emphasis of Jesus' commission on starting in/from Jerusalem (Luke 24:47b; Acts 1:8), the linking of Judea and Samaria reminiscent of the historical union of Southern and Northern kingdoms under David, and the ambiguity of "end of the earth" without the accompanying citation. Moreover, Acts 1:13-26 is narrated as a restoration of the

[76] Chance, "Divine Prognostications," 229. Cf. also Alexander, "This is That," 197, fn 23: "As will become clear when we reach the second half of Acts, the precise inter-textual reference of 1.8 is Isaiah 49.6 … but on a first reading the phrase could just as well evoke "Restoration" promises such as Isaiah 48.22, 62.11, Jer. 38.8 (LXX)."

Twelve, while Acts 2 evokes the in-gathering of Diaspora Jews from "every nation under heaven" (2:9-11).

Another observation in support of this line of reasoning comes from an earlier statement in the Pisidian Antioch speech, when Paul tells his Jewish audience that the apostles[77] "are *now* his witnesses (μάρτυρες) to the people (λαόν)" (13:31). The reference to μάρτυρες directs readers' attention back to Acts 1:8 (cf. 1:21-22), but also seems to qualify the apostolic commission as one limited in scope, given that λαός is virtually a Lukan synonym for Jews/Israel (except in 15:17). The narrative context of Acts 13:31—in a speech to Jews—makes this all but certain. In other words, according to Luke's Paul, the work of reconstituting Israel and gathering in the tribes has largely fallen to the apostles, while Paul's (and Barnabas') work is directed primarily to Gentiles. Again, lest readers imagine two distinct and separate commissions—which, admittedly, the Paul of the letters implies (cf. Gal 2:11)—the inter- and intra-textual connections indicate *complementary* commissions within a more broadly unified charge issued by Jesus.

On this view, the more explicit emphasis on Gentile outreach in Paul's quotation of Isa 49:6*b* in Acts 13:47 fills out the scope of the commission shaped by Luke's dependence on Isaiah. Paul and Barnabas are commissioned by Jesus himself to "complete" the work that the apostles have done, especially after Peter and the apostles recognized and ratified the "fuller" sense of their commission in the wake of the

[77] Though the Lukan Paul does not call them apostles, he identifies these witnesses as "those who came up with [Jesus] from Galilee to Jerusalem" (13:31), which echoes Peter's own, seemingly apostolic, claim that he and the other early disciples "are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem" (10:39; cf. 1:21-22). Though not too much can be decided on an omission, Paul's non-use of the term "apostles"—along with the narrator's application of the title to Paul and Barnabas in 14:4 and 14:14—may imply their common, but complementary, commission.

Cornelius incident (10:1-11:18). Peter's and the apostles' transformation laid the theological groundwork, so to speak, for Paul and Barnabas to make an explicit commitment to Gentiles as far as the end of the earth. By putting Paul and Barnabas' commission into Jesus' mouth in Acts 13:47, Luke ties it to Jesus' parting words in Acts 1:8 and frames their work as the fulfillment of his words in a maximal sense. They will help to complete the vision laid out in Isa 49:6, predominately by reaching Gentiles. The apostolic commission and Paul/Barnabas' commission are neither two different commissions nor identical with each other; they are complementary and help the two halves of Acts fit together. Moreover, the identification of scripture (Isa 49:6) with what "the Lord commanded us" (13:47) sets Jesus' words in Acts 1:8 as a commission expressing scriptural prophecy. As we will see, to participate in the work of fulfilling this prophetic task is to participate in work assigned to the Servant and Messiah of Israel.

4.6.1.2 The "Servant" Jesus and Jesus' "Servants"

> "See, I have made you (σε) a light of nations, that you (σε) may be for salvation to the end of the earth." (LXX Isa 49:1-6, my translation)
>
> For so the Lord has commanded us (ἡμῖν), saying, 'I have made you (σε) a light of nations, that you (σε) may be salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (Acts 13:47, my translation)

As part of a string of "servant songs" (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12), Isa 49:6 in its original context identifies the Servant *as* Israel (cf. Luke 1:54), entrusted with the responsibility to restore Jacob's tribes, gather in the exiled remnant, and extend the light of salvation to Gentiles. In the context of Paul's statement, however, the quotation of Isa 49:6b is identified simply as something commanded *of Paul and Barnabas* by the "Lord." Paul's claim is immediately complicated by several details. For example, there is a subtle

mismatch in syntax between the intertext and narrative context of Acts 13:47, but obscured by English translations. Paul says "the Lord commanded *us* (ἡμῖν)," but the quotation from LXX Isaiah uses singular pronouns: "I have set *you* (σε) …so that *you* (σε) …" That is, the command given to Paul and Barnabas (ἡμῖν), as worded in Isa 49:6, appears to be the responsibility of an *individual*, who is to be a light of nations and salvation to the ends of the earth. Rather than adjust the syntax to fit the narrative context[78]—thereby making the identification of Paul/Barnabas with Isaiah's "Servant" complete—Luke allows the ungrammaticality to stand, likely as a reminder that Paul and Barnabas are ultimately *not* the scriptural Servant.

One of the distinctive features of Luke-Acts, in this respect, is the identification of the Isaianic Servant with the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Though few Jewish texts contemporary with Luke interpreted the Isaianic "servant" texts messianically (cf. *2 Bar* 70:9), Luke adopts Isaiah's Servant as one of many christological titles for Jesus. The child Jesus is introduced in Luke-Acts with Simeon's prophetic claim that he will be "a light for revelation of the Gentiles (φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν) and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:32), a description strongly allusive of the Isaianic Servant (LXX Isa 42:6; 49:6; 51:4). Several other references to ("2nd") Isaiah reinforce the association

[78] See Acts 4:25, where apostles cite Ps 2 (LXX) and its use of λαοί, but in applying this text to present circumstances, they allow the unusual plural to stand in their interpretation, speaking of λαοῖς Ἰσραήλ (Acts 4:27), when almost every other reference to the "people of Israel" involves the singular use of λαός in Act. In Ps 2, moreover, "peoples" refers to the Gentiles rather than Israel; the implication of course is that in the scheme of events, Israel is playing the part of Gentiles, along with the Gentiles, in fulfilling the prophetic words of Ps 2. Cf. Evans, "Prophecy and Polemic," 194; and idem, "Prophetic Setting of the Pentecost Sermon," 221 and fn 16.

of Jesus with Isaiah's Servant,[79] but in Acts 3-4 Luke goes even further, having the apostles refer to Jesus by the title of παῖς (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30).[80]

Returning to Acts 13:47, we are in a better position to interpret the mismatch in syntax between Isa 49:6 ("you" singular) and Paul's claim about the plural recipients of the command ("us") in 13:47. The singular σε—given the wider constellation of Servant motifs in Luke-Acts—refers to the Messiah Jesus. He is the one commissioned to *be* light and salvation to the ends of the earth. If the role of Isaianic Servant is so strongly associated in Luke-Acts with the Messiah Jesus, then readers are led to conclude that Jesus' apostles and Paul and Barnabas are invited to *participate* in the work of the exalted Lord (see Chapter 2).[81] Moreover, because Jesus himself is the Servant of Israel, his work includes outreach to Gentiles (26:23), which forms the basis for Paul's "turn" to the Gentiles (13:46; 18:6; 22:21; 28:28). Paul is to go where the Lord Jesus is at work.

That this reading is not far off the mark may be evident in the ambiguous way in which the citation is introduced in 13:47, namely as something the *κύριος* commanded. Though there is some debate about the title's referent in this verse, a majority assume it is

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[79] cf. Isa 42 in Luke 3:22, 9:35, and 23:35; Isa 53:12 in Luke 22:37; Isa 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33. To this list could be added the reference to Isa 61:1-2a (and 58:6b) in Luke 4:18-19 since Isa 61:1-2 is commonly throught to be commentary on and interpretation of the servant song of Isa 42. Cf. Joseph Blenkisopp, "The Servant and the Servants in Isaiah and the Formation of the Book," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, vol. 1, ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans (Leiden, Brill, 1997): 155-175.

[80] While David is given the title παῖς once in Acts (4:25), this instance is almost immediately followed by two uses of the title for Jesus and intensified with the adjective ἅγιος—"your *holy* servant Jesus" (4:27, 30).

[81] Cf. Mallen, *Reading and Transformation,* 92-93: "Here we meet an unresolved tension in Luke's presentation, which may be expressed as follows: Jesus *continues* to actively fulfil the servant mission of proclaiming light to both Israel and the Gentiles *through* the words of his chosen witnesses; the witnesses in turn proclaim salvation that is available in the *name* of Jesus. In [Paul's] final trial then, Paul outlines both these aspects: his own servant commission from Jesus; and the servant role of the Messiah as stated in the Scriptures."

Jesus.[82] Suggestive clues include the fact that every command/commission Paul receives in Acts comes from κύριος Jesus (9:15; 18:9-10; 22:14-16, 18, 21; 23:11; 26:16-18) and not κύριος θεός. Also, as noted above, Jesus issues the complementary and corresponding commission to the ends of the earth in Acts 1:8. That κύριος θεός issues the declaration in the original context of Isa 49:6 is beyond doubt (cf. 49:5), but Chapter 2 helped establish that Luke often ascribes to Jesus responsibilities that are otherwise scripturally reserved for God (cf. Acts 2:17-21; LXX Joel 3:1-5).

One conclusion to draw from this is that in appropriating Isa 49:6b for his own purposes, Luke has simply transferred God's role to Jesus, and the Servant's role to Paul and Barnabas. That conclusion is ruled out by several points, however, including the observation above about Luke's strong association between the Isaianic Servant and the Messiah Jesus, and the corresponding limits of Paul's participation in the Servant's task. Moreover, Luke offers little evidence that Paul and Barnabas "take over" the role of the Servant from Jesus, as if the hopes of Israel and the nations now rest with Paul personally. To the contrary, the sense that the "Lord" Jesus issues the command fits with

[82] See O'Toole, *Unity,* 42: "Three other passages very probably relate postresurrectional activity of Jesus. The Lord commands Paul and Barnabas to be a light to the Gentiles (Acts 13:47). The parallels (Acts 26: 17-18,23; cf. 22:21) indicate that the Lord here is Jesus. Acts 26: 17-18,23 constitute the closest parallel in Luke-Acts and based, at least in part, on the same OT text (Isa 49:6) relate how the risen Christ assigned this mission to Paul." Dupont, "La portée christologique," 136: "At first glance, Acts 1:8 omits an essential trait of Luke 24:47: the mission entrusted to the apostles is not presented as included in the messianic prophecies. Looking closer, we can see that the scriptural reference is not absent. It is found implicitly marked in the evocative expression "to the ends of the earth." From the point of view of the economy of Acts, this expression can appear strange, since in fact it must apply to the city of Rome, where the narrative ends. How can Luke, a citizen of the Empire, thus designate the "capital and center of the οἰκουμένη? This expression is not simply geographical. It only reappears in one other NT passage, in Acts 13:47. In the course of his first great missionary discourse, Paul cites Isa 49:6: "I have set you to be a light of the nations, so that you might bring salvation to the ends of the earth." By reaching the center of the pagan world, the evangelical message also reaches the "ends of the earth," and he [Jesus himself] becomes "light of nations." (my translation)

the previous analysis, which concluded that Jesus remains, in Luke's eyes, the Isaianic Servant who accomplishes his messianic task, among other ways, through Paul and Barnabas' participation. In this respect, it makes sense to talk about the one Servant and the many servants with whom he shares his work.[83]

With the quotation of Isa 49:6 in Acts 13:47, Luke encourages readers to think of both the apostles' work and Paul/Barnabas' as work that should simultaneously be understood as work carried out by the Lord Jesus himself. In fact, Paul's speech in Acts 26 concludes with just such a notion. The scriptures prophesied that Jesus would die, be raised, and that "*he* would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23). By tying his own vocational identity to this aspect of the Isaianic Servant's identity and mission, Luke's Paul aids readers in understanding the unfolding of Paul's ministry as the unfolding of Jesus' identity as messianic Servant and Lord of *all*.

The ambiguity between what Paul accomplishes and what the Lord Jesus accomplishes runs right through Paul's final major speech (26:17-23). On the one hand, it is clear that Paul is sent to the Gentiles (v. 17) for the expressed purpose of turning them from darkness and Satan to light and God, that they might be saved (v. 18). Paul was obedient to this vision-commission (v. 19) declaring repentance to Jews and Gentiles both (v. 20; cf. 9:20-29; 26:14-16). Jews attempted to kill him for this behavior (v. 21), but Paul testifies to the fact that his actions and his message are nothing other than what

[83] The language of "servants" throughout Luke-Acts is limited to δοῦλοι (Acts 2:18; 4:29; 16:17; cf. Luke 12:35-48), ὑπηρέται (Acts 26:16; Luke 1:3), and participants in διακονία-διακονέω (Acts 6:4; 19:22; 20:24; 21:19). That Paul and Barnabas (or any other living characters) are not called the παῖς suggests that role is reserved for the exalted Lord Jesus alone. The two times the term is applied to David (Luke 1:69; Acts 4:25), it of course identifies David in the fulfillment of a previous, anticipatory role (cf. e.g., 1 Ch 17; 2 Ch 6; Ps 18:1/LXX 17:1; Isa 37:35).

scripture prophesied (v. 22)—namely, that the Messiah would suffer/die, rise from the dead, and proclaim light to Jews and Gentiles (v. 23; cf. Luke 24:46-47). In the concluding summary Paul appears to credit the Messiah with the proclamation of light to Jews and Gentiles, even though a few verses earlier Paul explicitly characterizes his own commission—assigned him by the messianic Lord himself!—as turning Gentiles to the light of God (Acts 26:18), that is, declaring repentance to Jew and Gentile alike (26:20). Hearers of Paul's final speech to Agrippa cannot help but think of Jesus' work (after the ascension even) to convert Jews and Gentiles and Paul's summary of his own career as somehow an account of the same activity.

4.6.2 Jewish Opposition to Paul's Message of Resurrection and Universal Salvation

No account of Paul in Acts is complete without attention to the role Jewish opposition plays in his ministry. To be sure, Paul's outreach meets resistance among Gentiles in Acts as well (13:6-11; 16:17-24; 19:23-34; cf. 17:32). But not only are instances of Gentile opposition fewer and farther between than examples of Jewish opposition (see below), in most cases where Gentiles react violently to Paul's outreach,[84] the narrator traces that resistance to the instigation of certain Jews (13:50; 14:2, 5, 19; 17:5-7, 13; 18:12-16; 21:27-30).[85] Indeed, Simeon's warning to Mary, when Jesus was

[84] One occasion on which Gentiles require no prompting in their vehemence against Paul is the silversmith uprising in Ephesus (19:23-34), but such a case is nearly exceptional as far as Acts is concerned.

[85] This is in keeping with the interpretation of Ps 2 that Luke offers in the apostles' prayer in Acts 4:25-28, where the synonymous parallelism of LXX Ps 2:1 pairs ἔθνη and λαοί: "Why did the Gentiles (ἔθνη) rage, and the peoples (λαοί) imagine vain things?" Subsequent verses in Ps 2 clarify that it is almost entirely concerned with the behavior of Gentiles, when it speaks of "the kings of the earth…and the rulers gathered against the Lord and his Messiah" (Ps 2:1). This is reinforced by the fact that in the LXX λαοί in the plural almost always refers to Gentiles, while the singular almost always refers to Jews/Israel. Here in Acts 4, however, the apostolic prayer shifts those expected referents slightly: "For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles (ἔθνη) and the peoples (λαοί) of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:27-28). Almost never do biblical writers refer to the "people*s* of Israel," but Luke has gone

still a child, rings true for Paul's ministry: "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed" (Luke 2:34).

Direct conflict with Jews marks Paul's relationship with (unbelieving) members of Israel from the beginning of his call (Acts 9:22-25). Throughout Acts Paul disputes with ethnic Jews (9:29; 14:4; 17:2; 18:4-6, 19, 27-28; 19:8-9; 24:1-9; 25:7; 28:22, 24-25; cf. 19:13-16), arguments that often reflect a severity incomparable to those Paul has with Gentiles. For example, the Lukan narrator emphasizes how certain Jews repeatedly plot to kill Paul (9:23-24, 29-30; 14:5, 19; 20:3, 19; 21:31, 35-36; 22:22), even after he is taken into Roman custody (23:12-21; 25:3), notwithstanding the fact that Roman officials conclude he has done nothing warranting death (23:29; 25:25; 26:31-32; cf. Luke 23:4). In fact, Luke seems intent on emphasizing Jewish responsibility for Paul's fate, even within a larger recognition of Roman authority.[86] Agabus prophesies, one recalls, that

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out of his way to connect Jewish responsibility for the death of the Messiah to biblical prophecy. Though the original "prophecy" of Ps 2 was exclusively about Gentile opposition, Luke finds a way to insert Jewish responsibility into its interpretation, with the result that the tandem opposition of the Gentile leaders and Jewish "peoples" bringbringsbring about the death of the anointed one. But even then, the prayer reminds readers, even such tragic events should be understood as "whatever [God's] hand and plan had predestined to take place." The point of all this is that Luke softens Gentile responsibility for Jesus' death somewhat, [but?] he does not deny it. But he also pairs with this portrait the conviction that Jewish leaders played their part, even if both Gentiles and Jews acted in accordance with what God predestined to take place.

[86] Gentile *rulers*, who occupy more of Luke's attention than Gentiles in general, receive a notably ambiguous portrayal in Acts. While Luke recognizes that Gentile leaders are responsible for Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (21:33; cf. 24:25-27)—they are the ultimate arbiters of Paul's fate in Rome (cf. 21:11; 26:32), just as they were of Jesus' fate in Jerusalem (Luke 23:23-26) —their participation in the opposition to the Christian gospel in Acts is not easily categorized. Roman authorities generally do not capitulate to the demands placed on them by their Jewish subjects. Their response to Paul's alleged crimes tends to be dismissive (cf. Acts 18:17; 19:36-40; 21:32-34; 23:29; 24:23; 25:18-20, 25-27; 26:31-32), partially on account of Paul's claim of Roman citizenship (16:37; 22:25-28) and partially because of their perplexity about what he is doing wrong (23:28-29; 25:18-20, 26; 28:18). In spite of this general disinterest in the Christian way ("see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be judge of these matters"; 18:15), Roman officials do not abandon Paul to the angry mobs (23:10, 19-33; cf. the aid of "Asiarchs" in 19:31), even apologizing on occasion for their treatment of Paul (16:38-39; 22:29-30). Acts ends with Paul in custody in Rome but, Luke emphasizes, continuing to welcome all, preaching and teaching "unhindered" by circumstance (28:30-31).

"the Jews in Jerusalem … *will hand him over to the Gentiles*" (21:11; cf. Matt 20:19). Because the plots against Paul emerge almost immediately after his Damascus road experience (Acts 9:1-20; cf. 9:23), the impression throughout the latter half of Acts is that Jewish opposition to Paul and his ministry is nearly irreconcilable.

Certainly, instances of initially positive or even mixed Jewish response in Acts 13-28 are easier to number (cf. 13:42-43; 14:1; 17:10-12; 28:17-24). But even in the cases of a positive reception among Jews in Pisidian Antioch (13:42-43) and Bereoa (17:11), for example, division quickly follows (13:45, 50; 17:13-14), with a certain group of Jews instigating resistance to Paul's presence.[87] Another example of, at best, mixed response appears in Acts 28, the book's final scene. Whatever conclusions can be drawn about Acts' ending (see 4.6.3.3 below), clearly the response of Jews to Paul's preaching is an important motif from start to finish in Acts. In other words, Luke deploys the motif of Jewish opposition to underscore an aspect of Paul's preaching and outreach that is so controversial for Jewish identity that it provokes outrage and death threats at nearly every turn.

On the whole,[88] Luke presents the Jews—most often, certain groups of Jews (from Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Asia, and Jerusalem)—as vehemently opposed to Paul

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[87] For a treatment of the complex way in which Luke employs (οἱ) Ἰουδαῖοι throughout Acts, see Augusto Barbi, "The Use and Meaning of (Hoi) Ioudaioi in Acts," in *Luke and Acts*, ed. Gerald O'Collins and Gilberto Marconi; trans. by Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 123-142.

[88] In the apostles' case, numerous Jews in their audience (including many priests; Acts 6:7) received the apostolic message positively and joined their movement (2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14). The resistance, especially in Acts 2-5, came predominately from Jewish *leaders* and its form was limited to brief imprisonments and warnings (4:3, 17-18, 21; 5:17-18, 26-28). The only other instance of Jewish opposition occurs later, this time at the hands of King Herod (Agrippa I), who, after killing the apostle James, imprisons Peter with the likely intent of executing him after Passover (12:2-4). But an angel of the Lord liberates Peter, and the account of the apostles and the Seven—not to mention of apostolic persecution—essentially concludes (12:7-17). Naturally, the persecution of the apostles and Seven mirrors the resistance Jesus himself faced on earth and fulfills Jesus' predictions about his followers (12:11-12; 21:12-15). In this respect, Paul's

and his message. But because Jews are neither the majority population (outside Jerusalem) nor have the authority to execute Roman citizens, they incite groups of Gentiles and God-fearers to resist Paul's message, even going so far as to pursue Paul from city to city. Part of that strategy is to translate Jewish objections against Paul's activity into an idiom intelligible to and judicable by Gentile rulers (17:6-8; cf. Luke 23:2; Acts 18:13-15; 23:29; 25:18-19).[89] But of more significance for the present study is

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experience is consistent with that of the apostles, especially Peter, and with Jesus himself. In the case of Paul (and his coworkers), however, Jewish opposition was more widespread—including both leaders and civilians—and also more virulent. Since most of the setting for Paul's preaching was the largely Gentile Diaspora, the Jewish groups antagonizing Paul moved around and, given their limited number, often stirred up (the more populous) Gentile residents against Paul. Thus, a basic parallel emerges between the apostles and Paul (see Table below):

Acts	**Passages**	**Proclaimers**	**Who is Receptive?**	**Who Resists?**
ch. 2-12	2:13, 37, 41; 4:1-4, 7, 16-18, 21; 5:14-18, 25-28, 33, 38-40; 6:9-14; 7:54-8:3; [9:22-25, 28-30]; 12:1-5	Apostles, Seven	Jews and proselytes	Sanhedrin; Herod (Agrippa I)
ch. 13-28	13:44-45, 48-51; 14:1-6, 19; [15:1] 17:1-9, 10-14; 18:5-6; 19:8-10; 21:27-32; 22:22-23; 22:30-23:15; 28:21-28	Paul and co-workers	God-fearing Greeks and Gentiles (occasionally Jews)	Jews from Asia, Antioch, Iconium, and Jerusalem; Sanhedrin

While the apostles were persecuted by Jewish leaders (including Saul!), who were "jealous" (5:17) of their popularity among the Jewish masses, Paul and company are persecuted by many Jews (leaders and locals), who are "jealous" (13:45; 17:5) of *their popularity among Gentiles and God-fearing Greeks*. In sum, with the shift from Acts 1-12 to 13-28, the role played by the Sanhedrin is generally taken over and expanded by Jews in the Diaspora; the role played by the apostles in Jerusalem is taken over and expanded by Paul all around the Mediterranean; and the role played by receptive Jerusalem Jews (and proselytes; cf. 2:9-11) is taken over and expanded by receptive *Gentiles* and God-fearers in the Diaspora. Noteworthy is the fact that the persecution Paul faces right after his "conversion" occurs, chronologically, in this first half of the book. The immediate threats he faces anticipate the motif in the latter half of the book, thereby hooking the two halves of Acts together.

[89] Note also that the "owners" of the pythoness in Philippi cannot distinguish Paul from other Jews, complaining to the city magistrates that "these men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe" (16:19-21). Interestingly, that criticism is, on form, similar to how Jews characterize the Christians to Roman magistrates: "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also…They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor" (17:6-7).

understanding *why* Jews are so united (ὁμοθυμαδὸν, 18:12; cf. 7:57) in their violent opposition to Paul—no less than six attempts are made on his life (14:5, 19; 20:3, 19; 21:27-30; 22:22-23; 23:10; 23:12-15). Answering this question takes us to the heart of this chapter's focus—namely, how Luke's portrayal of Paul's ministry, thrust into high relief by Jewish opposition, confirms Luke's narrative construal of the link between christology and witness.

4.6.2.1 Jewish Opposition

Widely noted is Paul's pattern of beginning his preaching in a local synagogue (9:20; 13:5, 14, 43; 14:1; 17:1-3, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8). In Thessalonica, for example, when Paul enters the synagogue and argues with Jews there over the course of three Sabbaths, the narrator remarks that this "was his custom" (17:2). That pattern is confirmed in city after city—Salamis, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus (twice). Acts 18:4 offers a simple summary of Paul's ministry: "Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks." Even right after the well-known passages where Paul declares his intention to "turn" his focus to the Gentiles (13:46; 18:6), Paul can be found in discussions with synagogue Jews (cf. 14:1; 18:19).[90] Paul's experience in synagogues, in addition to recalling Jesus' own inaugural sermon in Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19, 21, 23-27), which also ended in rejection (4:28-29), evokes Jesus' predictions to his disciples about

[90] Often overlooked in comparisons of the "turning" passages (13:46; 18:6; 28:31)—in part, because it is easy to de-contextualize them when categorizing them by the same pattern—is the fact that the last such passage does *not* occur in proximity to a synagogue setting, thus breaking the pattern. Because of his imprisonment, it is uncertain whether Paul could have entered a synagogue again, though the meeting with the Jews of Rome (28:17-25) functions like an equivalent encounter. And even after this meeting as the story concludes, the narrator tells us, Paul continued to welcome "all" (including synagogal Jews, presumably) who came to him.

persecution: "When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities…" (Lk 12:11; cf. 21:12). Such moments, Jesus promised, provide an opportunity to confirm Jesus' ongoing guidance (21:15) and the provision of the Holy Spirit (12:12; cf. 2.3.2.1.2.2.). From a practical perspective, synagogues also provided Paul with a ready-made network of connections by which to spread his message (Acts 9:2; 22:19; 26:11).[91] Whatever the basis for Jewish opposition, the way Luke repeatedly signals its origin in the synagogue implies that Paul's message was both rooted in Jewish life and simultaneously posed a threat to it. The contest over God's promises to Israel went right to the heart of Jewish communities around the Diaspora.[92]

Of course Paul's mere presence in synagogues is not sufficient to explain the extreme reaction he meets there. He had, after all, been trained at Gamaliel's feet (22:3) and lived as a strict Pharisee (23:6; 26:5), and so his presence would not, on its own, have provoked violence. At first the picture is not clear *why* Jewish opposition was so vehement, even though rejection and plots against Paul's life appear almost as soon as his ministry begins (9:22-23, 29). When we scrutinize the several later instances in which Paul is threatened or plots are made against his life (13:44-50; 14:18-19; 17:2-5, 11-13; 18:12-13; 20:2-3; 21:27-31; 22:21-23; 23:12-15; 25:1-3; 26:21) the impression comes into greater focus. Later examples—especially revolving around his arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and two defense speeches (Acts 22:3-21; 26:2-23)—retrospectively illuminate the more ambiguous instances elsewhere. Luke, sometimes subtly, deploys the motif of

[91] cf. Harnack, *Mission and Expansion,* 1.
[92] Such a conclusion is echoed in Second Temple texts like *Jubilees*, which warns of Israel's abandonment of the law in following after Gentiles (cf. 1:9-15) and the sending of "witnesses" to turn them back. Cf. *2 Baruch* 1:4; 68:5; 83:5.

Jewish rejection as a way to illuminate, albeit by a negative contrast, the relationship between christology and universal witness.

4.6.2.2 "Jealousy" (13:45; 17:5)

Clearly Paul had some preaching success, even among Jews in the Diaspora—for example, in a Thessalonican synagogue, "some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks (σεβόμενοι Ἕλληνες) and not a few of the leading women" (17:4; cf. 13:43; 14:1, 4; 17:12; 28:24). Because Paul's preaching takes place in the synagogue, his success effectively divides synagogue members (cf. 13:43; 18:4; 19:8, 26; 28:23-24),[93] with Gentile "God-fearers" generally finding his preaching persuasive while many Jews find it objectionable.

Why the success of Paul's preaching would stir jealousy tinged with violence is not immediately clear.[94] All readers learn from the two instances of jealousy in Paul's half of Acts is that it characterizes the response of Jews upon seeing the crowds Paul's preaching attracts (13:45), especially new believers drawn from God-fearing Greeks (17:4-5). Little further detail is offered, and the deeper causes of the jealousy—or, rather, the animosity created by the appeal of Paul's preaching to non-Jews—must be inferred from details in the wider context and elsewhere in Acts.

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[93] Cf. Jacob Jervell, "The Divided People of God," in *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), 41-74.

[94] Some have noted that the term "jealousy," in connection with violence, reflects a common Hellenistic *topos* that by Luke's time had made its way into Jewish literature. See Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts,* 96, 117, 240. Examples in Hellenistic literature include Plato, *Laws,* 896E-870A; Plutarch, *On Brotherly Love* 17. In Jewish literature, see Wis 2:24; Philo, *On Joseph* 12; *T. Simeon* 2:7, 11. Such a conclusion has limited value, however, since it does not identify the precise source of such jealousy in Luke's narrative. Cases of ζηλός prompted by threats to Jewish tradition, however, should be understood each on its own terms (1 Macc 2:24-58; 1QH 14:13–15; *m. Sanhedrin* 9:5).

First, after Paul's lengthy synagogue speech (13:16-41), which puts claims about Jesus' messianic identity at the heart of Israel's story, word apparently gets out. The following Sabbath (13:44), the whole city gathers, including presumably both Jews and non-Jews: "when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy (ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου); and blaspheming [Jesus], they contradicted what was spoken by Paul" (13:45). The Jews' sight of the success of Paul's preaching fills them with jealousy, which in turn prompts them to contradict Paul's message (cf. also 14:1-2). The two verses that follow (13:46-47) are naturally significant for understanding the implications of this success-then-rejection motif, but both verses are covered in another section (4.6.3.1) and so will be left aside for now. It suffices to say that Jewish opposition, in this instance as well as elsewhere, is somehow connected to the *receptivity* of Gentiles, especially those without full attachment to the synagogue. The implied popularity of the gospel among Gentiles commends Gentiles as a model for Jews (cf. 15:11).

Second, in Thessalonica, the motif of jealousy emerges again after Paul is found in the synagogue making a scriptural argument that the χριστός must die and be resurrected (17:2-3a) and identifying that Messiah as Jesus (17:3b). The way Luke characterizes Paul's activity at one point (17:3: τὸν χριστὸν ἔδει παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν) echoes the scriptural framework bookending Luke's second volume (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 26:22-23). What Paul preaches to Jews in synagogues, in other words, aligns with what Jesus commissioned his apostles to do among all nations. The transformation that Jesus' disciples experienced—when Jesus "proved" to them (Luke 24) that he was the crucified and resurrected Messiah—is, in a way, put in the form of an

invitation by Paul to Jews in the Diaspora. Will they accept that "Messiah" now means the crucified, risen, and reigning Lord Jesus?

It suffices to point out that "jealousy" in this context is more than a petty emotional response to others' success. Even in Stephen's speech, when summarizing the "jealousy" of the patriarchs toward Joseph (7:9), this is not merely envy but the special favor shown Joseph by God and his father, evoking issues of covenantal identity. This possibility may be reflected in the pattern of LXX uses, where the term is often characterizes God's "zeal" for the covenant with Israel.[95] The association is fitting since jealousy among Jews in Acts appears to focus on the wide appeal of the Christian way, and its implications for Jews. That is, at stake in Paul's outreach to Gentiles (as well as Jews) is the conception of Israel's Messiah and Servant. For Paul, messianic identity as universal Lord is attested in outreach to Gentiles ("all nations"), whereas for Jews, such a notion would contravene the integrity of God's covenant *with Israel*.

Though it might be assumed that the Christians' claim about Jesus being the Messiah is the clearest explanation for the violent opposition of Jews to Paul's activity, the details of Luke's narrative suggest there is more to it. Arguably, it is the nature of the messianic claim concerning Jesus that provokes such outrage. Specifically, if Gentiles are included in the Messiah's mission, and that mission is to restore Israel, then the salvation of Gentiles is necessary for Israel's restoration (as James argued in 15:13-21). In this

[95] Cf. Ex 20:5; 24:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 29:19; 32:19, 21; Josh 24:19; 1 Ki 14:22; 2 Ki 19:31; Ps 77:58; 78:5; Joel 2:18; Nah 1:2; Zeph 1:18; 3:8; Zech 1:14; 8:2; Isa 9:6; 11:11; 26:11; 37:32; 42:13; 63:15; Ezek 5:13; 16:38, 42; 23:25; 36:6, 19, 25. Though it is not used this way in Acts, we do find positive examples of the human side of this zeal, as it were, in Jewish believers who are pious in their legal obedience. For example, the Jewish believers whom the Jerusalem leaders bring to Paul's attention in Jerusalem are described as "zealots" for the law (21:20). Interestingly, in his defense speech before Jews, Paul describes himself as "educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being a zealot for God" (22:3).

way, Paul's activity in preaching salvation to Gentiles (as Gentiles) embodies the claim that accepting Jesus as Lord of all is a precondition for acknowledging him as Messiah of Israel.[96]

In one of his defense speeches, Paul explains that none of the charges brought by the Jews holds up to examination (24:11-13), in part because his message and activity reflect the fulfillment of Israel's hopes. Paul, too, worships "the God of our ancestors" (13:17, 32; 22:14; 26:6; 28:17). In his preaching he has simply put forth "everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets" (24:14; cf. Luke 16:16; 24:27, 44; Acts 13:15; 23:6; 24:21; 28:23), testifying to "nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place" (26:22). Even his arrest in Jerusalem for supposed crimes had occurred while he was fulfilling his intention "to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifices" (24:17). Moreover, Paul characterizes the hopes of the Jews as identical with his own—namely, "that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and unrighteous" (24:15; cf. 17:32; 23:6). In fact, after rehearsing the events leading to his initial arrest in Jerusalem, Paul suggests one possibility for controversy: "it was this one sentence that I called out while standing before them, 'It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today'" (Acts 24:21). Because Israel's ultimate hopes are in the resurrection, those hopes are fulfilled in the Messiah Jesus—the one crucified and risen in anticipation of the general resurrection (26:23) and appointed eschatological

[96] The motif of "jealousy" does not appear in Acts again after Thessalonica, but it can likely be assumed in most accounts where Jewish rejection follows the positive reception of Paul's message by Gentiles (cf. 18:12-13; 20:2-3; 21:27-31). But readers also get a sense of the source of the jealous opposition in Paul's defense of his vocation. After Paul is in custody, and the plots against Paul continue unabated (22:21-23; 23:12-15; 25:1-3; 26:21), Paul frames his defense in a way that tries to mitigate the source of Jewish jealousy.

judge (17:32). Like Paul, one recalls, the apostles' ministry was concerned with declaring that "in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead" (4:2).

A basic link has emerged in Luke's portrait of Jewish opposition—by opposing Paul's message about *Jesus'* resurrection, Jews undermine their own scriptures' promises of resurrection and, by extension, national restoration. The conflict between Paul and his opponents concerns the question of the "completion" of the promises *to Israel*; the answer, according to Luke, lies in the person and mission of the Messiah Jesus to *all nations*.

4.6.2.3 Acts 21-22, 26

With the exception of Acts 13:45-47, which places the motif of "jealousy" in the context of Paul's outreach to Gentiles specifically, few of the cases surveyed above offer an unequivocal explanation of *why* Jews oppose Paul and his message so vehemently. The string of opposition by Jews throughout the Diaspora awaits further clarification, which readers receive with Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (21:27-34) and his subsequent defense speech before a Jewish audience (21:40-22:21; 26:2-23), to which we now turn. To anticipate, the analysis below will give credence to the conclusion that the Jews in Acts react with vitriol generally to Paul's emphasis on outreach to Gentiles and specifically to the implication that this outreach fulfills the Messiah's work in bringing restoration to Israel and salvation to the ends of the earth (cf. Luke 2:32; Acts 26:18; see 4.6.4 below).

When Paul arrives in Jerusalem around Pentecost (20:16; 24:17), Jewish believers including James meet with Paul and warn him of the skepticism hovering around him and his teaching. After receiving their advice, Paul submits to a ritual procedure

demonstrating his Jewish bona fides and, perhaps more importantly, indicating that he supports traditional Jewish rites for others (cf. 21:20-21). Before completing the rites, "Jews from Asia" accost Paul in the temple (21:27). They call upon their "fellow Israelites" to join the cause by claiming: "This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place" (21:27-28). The narrator explains this charge: "For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple" (21:29). One recalls that Peter's experience had convinced the church of unmediated fellowship between believing Jews and Gentiles, God having made Gentiles clean (10:28; 11:2-18; 15:9). Paul had, in fact, risen to prominence in a church characterized by such fellowship (11:19-26; 13:1-3). And the Jerusalem Council had given its endorsement both to Peter's Gentile experience as well as Paul's ministry in Antioch (15:13-21, 23-29).

Therefore, Paul's open association with the Gentile Trophimus is hardly suprising, yet it carries the risk of misinterpretation from the outside by those who do not subscribe to the propriety of such fellowship. The narrator's comment about the Jews' supposition (21:29) implies that it is incorrect, but the temple's role must be diminished (or eschatologized) as it stands in the way of the unity of believers in Jesus. Whether or not the charge is correct, Jews at least grasp this logic when they charge Paul with "teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place" (21:28). At the same time, as will be seen below, Paul frames his speech (22:1-21) as one consonant with Israel's hopes and Jewish piety, suggesting that outreach to Gentiles is the logical fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. To reject Paul's message about universal outreach

is to reject Israel's Messiah, and to reject Israel's Messiah is, at least implicitly, to reject the God who sent him.

But the sight of and suspicions concerning Paul incite the whole city. A mob rushes Paul in hopes of killing him (21:30-31). The Roman tribune, however, catches wind of events and intervenes, saving Paul's life by arresting him (21:31-34). In Roman custody, Paul will have the chance to offer a defense speech before his Jewish accusers (22:3-21).[97] Paul's ἀπολογία (22:1; cf. 24:10; 25:8, 16; 26:1, 2, 24) deserves special attention because both its content and the Jews' reaction to it (22:22) reveal more clearly than anywhere in Acts the link between Jewish opposition and the messianic mission to Gentiles. In this way, this section of Acts helps to answer our guiding question of how Jewish opposition reinforces the christology of Acts—namely, that the universal reign of the messianic Lord Jesus is bound to the inclusion of Gentiles (as Gentiles) among God's people. In answering this question, this episode clarifies the more ambiguous episodes that precede it.

> "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment. While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' Then he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to

[97] That the verb ἀπολογέομαι occurs so frequently in this section of Acts (24:10; 25:8; 26:1, 2, 24) also recalls Jesus' promise to his disciples about testifying "before synagogues, rulers and authorities" (Luke 12:11) and "before kings and governors" (21:12), in which contexts the same verb is found (12:11; 21:14). These latter two citations are the only places in Luke's Gospel where the verb is found.

> me. I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.' Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus. A certain Ananias, who was a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there, came to me; and standing beside me, he said, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight!' In that very hour I regained my sight and saw him. Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.' "After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw Jesus saying to me, 'Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him.' Then he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 22:3-21 NRSV)

Several observations can be made. First, Paul's speech is infused with ingratiating language toward his Jewish audience. Not only is the speech delivered in Hebrew (though reported by Luke in Greek, 22:2), but Paul addresses his audience as Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατέρες ("brothers and fathers," 22:1; cf. 7:2). This latter address is most common in Acts where ties of kinship are assumed (1:16; 2:29, 37; 3:12; 7:2; 13:15, 16, 26, 38; 15:7, 13; 21:28; 23:1, 6; 28:17), showing up especially in the speeches to Jews by Peter (1:16; 2:29, 37; 3:12; cf. 15:7) and Paul (13:15, 16, 26; 23:1, 6; 28:17). In addition, Paul begins by underscoring his identity as a member of Israel—"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today" (22:3). Here Paul's adherence to the law and "zealotry" bear positive connotations, likely earning him further license to speak before his Jewish audience. The details of his former behavior (22:4-5)—enhanced in the retelling (cf. 9:1-2; 26:9-12)—help to frame the trustworthiness of his

account of transformation on the Damascus road (22:6-11). Furthermore, in relaying Ananias' message[98] from the Lord Jesus to him, Paul quotes Ananias as saying "the God of our ancestors has chosen you…" (22:14), again emphasizing the lines of continuity between speaker (Paul) and audience (Jews). In case these Jews are not ready to take the purported Messiah's own word for it, they should not deny the account of a respected Jewish man like Ananias.

Second, the message delivered by Jesus (via Ananias) places special emphasis on Paul's commission as appointed by God (προχειρίζομαι; 22:14; cf. 3:20; 26:16). Fulfillment of that commission, moreover, involves knowing God's will and seeing and hearing τὸν δίκαιον (22:14), the "Righteous One," a title Luke elsewhere applies to Israel's Messiah (Luke 23:47; Acts 3:14; 7:52). Earlier Paul implied that Jesus was also to be recognized as "Lord" (22:10). In this way, Paul reinforces the idea not only that Jesus is the Messiah but also that Jesus is still active, the Lord who can be seen and heard after his ascension (see Chapter 2); Paul is elected by God to be the worldwide "witness" (22:15) of what he has been chosen to see and hear.[99] Now baptized, indicating the repentance and purification of sins in Jesus' name, Paul can carry out his God-given

[98] Even the emphasis on Ananias' reputation as "a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there" (22:12) seems intended to emphasize—before a Jewish audience—the authenticity of his experience and therefore his subsequent behavior. It is worth noting that, by contrast, Cornelius' name drops out of Peter's subsequent retellings of the P-C episode (11:5-17; 15:7-11), thereby indicating the relative unimportance of the character's particularity for what Peter is trying to communicate with the story. Ananias' particular role, however, is emphasized here because he is a *Jewish* witness confirming the authenticity of the story. That Ananias drops out of Paul's final account in Acts 26:9-23 is likely due, again, to narrative context—a speech before the ruler Agrippa (not a group of Jews).

[99] Though it lies beyond the horizon of the present study, there is certainly an implicit contrast in this language between Paul's ability to see and hear—especially in light of his original blindness—and the dulled senses of unreceptive Jews (28:25-28). The origin for Luke's imagery likely resides in the influence of Isaiah (cf. chs. 43-44), from which Luke ostensibly draws the language of "witness" *as well as* the need for healing blindness in order to bear proper testimony; cf. Dennis Johnson, *Message of Acts*, 32-52.

mission (22:16). The divine promise that Paul will "see and hear" the Righteous One of Israel immediately comes to fruition when Paul returns to Jerusalem to pray in the temple, where he experiences a heretofore unmentioned vision of Jesus (22:17-21).

Third, this vision explicitly claims a connection between the identity of Jesus and the universality of Paul's commission. Framed in Jewish terms, the vision takes place in the *temple* while Paul is *praying.* Couched in terms continuous with ancestral tradition and Paul's own piety[100] (cf. 21:20-27), the vision seems intended to validate Paul's practice of associating with Gentiles (cf. 11:2-3). Indeed, the vision is noteworthy for its not being mentioned earlier in Acts (cf. 9:18-30)[101]; Luke may have left it for the context of Paul's defense before Jews to underscore how the messianic mission emerges from the heart of Israel's traditions and *after* Peter's experience in Caesarea (10:1-48).

Another noteworthy aspect of Paul's vision account is that it begins not with the commission, but rather an urgent exhortation: "Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony (μαρτυρία) about me" (22:18). The ascended Jesus had given Paul the role to be a "witness to [Jesus] before all people" (μάρτυς αὐτῷ πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, 22:15), but here he qualifies that role on the basis of Jewish rejection. Jesus' statement had anticipated Jewish opposition, especially in Jerusalem, which can be confirmed by Acts 13-22 (cf. 9:22-23, 29). Witness to "all people" may still

[100] In a later recollection, Paul additionally claims that he had originally come to Jerusalem "to bring alms to my nation and offer sacrifices" (24:17).
[101] Aligning the chronology of Acts 9 with Paul's own account in ch. 22, we would expect to have found an account of Paul's vision between his baptism (9:18) and his departure from Jerusalem (9:30), but there is none.

include Jews, but in Jerusalem, it seems, the fruitlessness of the Jewish mission field should not prevent fruitful possibilities in outreach to Gentiles.

Fourth, and easily overlooked in Paul's speech is the fact that Paul does not seem to accept Jewish recalcitrance as finally as Jesus does. Instead of hurrying out of Jerusalem as Jesus urges, Paul had defended the (potential) receptivity of the Jerusalem Jews to his preaching, replying to Jesus, "Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him" (22:19-20). Paul seems to suggest that he had earned a hearing with these Jews because of his past commitment to eradicate the movement he now leads.[102] He had led Jewish opposition to the Christian Way in the past. Even though the vision purportedly occurred on his first Jerusalem visit (Acts 9:26-28), it is doubly relevant for his present situation—he hopes his former associates will hear him out.

More to the point, Paul's reply dispels any notion that a move to the Gentiles was *his* idea; it is rather all the Lord's doing.[103] Not coincidentally, Paul's claim here reiterates the theological conclusions of the Cornelius episode (11:17-18; 15:8-9)—*God* has given repentance to the Gentiles (cf. 5:31). Recalling that Paul's temple vision had

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[102] Cf. Bruce, *Acts,* 404; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts,* 390: Paul's objection "invites his listerners to bear witness to his former sincereity as a persecutor of the Christians. If they do so, they should also be willing to grant the sincerity of his new experience and perspective."

[103] Barrett, *Acts,* 1044, says Paul means he thought the Jews would listen to him (thus making Gentile mission merely something he is commission [not necessarily chosen] to do. Haenchen (cf. 13:47) on 22:21 (627-628) says "there can…be no question of Christianity having separated itself from Judaism." Such a conclusion misconstrues Paul's own reply here, not to mention the whole speech, which frames Paul's mission as *within* the bounds of Jewish tradition. The threat posed by the Christian way is not in its alternative religious outlook, but precisely in its claim to continuity with Israel's traditions, scriptures, and monotheism.

occurred in the past, presumably right after his "conversion," the reader knows that Paul *had* indeed gone to the Gentiles. But, for whatever reason (cf. 20:16; 24:17), Paul has come back to Jerusalem, and his recollection now of this previous temple vision suggests he identifies with his people and holds out optimism about his people's receptivity to the gospel. On the one hand, so much of his vision—not to mention his whole defense speech—is concerned with demonstrating the integrity of his actions with his ancestral religion. The turn to the Gentiles, on the other hand, is credited almost completely to God's appointment (22:15) and Jesus' command (22:21). In this way, Luke places the continuity of Paul's behavior with the traditions of Israel within the larger arc of God's purposes for the Messiah to save Gentiles (Luke 24:47; Acts 26:23). Not sharing Paul's optimism about the receptivity of his audience, the Lord instead tells Paul, "Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles" (22:21).

The "prophecy" of Jewish rejection—"they will not accept your testimony about me" (22:18)—is ironically fulfilled a few verses later by the Jews' reaction (22:22): "Up to this point they listened to him, but then they shouted, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!'" (22:22). The whole vision, in this respect, serves as a prophecy intended to show that Jewish opposition to Paul's message—in a strange way—reflects God's foresight (cf. 28:25-28). By rejecting Paul, the Jews of Jerusalem simply confirm their blindness toward and ignorance of God's will. Because the context of this account is *Paul's* defense, however, the emphasis falls on his commissioning to the Gentiles as a vocation linked to the Messiah himself.[104] According

[104] As Tannehill, *Narrative Unity,* 2:283, notes, "It is noteworthy that Paul in this speech attributes his call as a messenger ot the nations to a vision in the temple, for on several previous occasions the temple has

to the logic of the passage, the bone Jews have to pick is, finally, not with Paul, but with the "God of our ancestors" and the Messiah whom God has sent to Israel *and to the Gentiles*.

But now the original question of Jewish opposition emerges with even greater force: why do Jews react with such vehemence to Paul's message? The outburst by Paul's audience occurs immediately following the Messiah's directive to go to the Gentiles. It should be remembered that the Jews' shouts for Paul's death conclude—or, probably, interrupt—Paul's defense of his piety and vocation. That is, lest we forget, the whole speech is littered with details framing the behavior of Paul as consistent with the practices and piety of the people of Israel. With that in mind, Paul presents Jesus' charge to "go far away to the Gentiles" as fitting within this broader concern to put Paul's (and by extension Jesus') work on a Jewish continuum. Having constructed the scene this way, Luke frames the response of Jews to Paul's speech as ultimately a rejection of Paul's claims about the "completion" of Jewish identity in outreach to Gentiles.[105]

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been the site of announcement that God's saving purpose will encompass the world. In the temple Simeon first announced that in Jesus God's salvation has been prepared for "all the peoples" (Luke 2:30-32), and in Solomon's portico Peter reminded his audience of the promise that "in your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Acts 3:25). The temple setting gives geographical expression to the belief that this promise for the world does not conflict with Israel's calling but, in fact, is rooted in israel's history and experience of God." Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts,* 391, on v. 21: "This prophetic commissioning resembles most of all that of Isaiah in the Temple (Isa 6:10). The reader now knows the source of Paul's self-referential citation of Isa 49:6 concerning "light to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:47), and is also better able to grasp the full import of the prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:35). Cf. Witherington, *Acts,* 675.

[105] Dibelius, "The Speeches in Acts," 161: "Thus, at the end of his labours, paul once more gives a fundamental defence of his work, which has been the mission to the Gentiles. This was not a task of his own undertaking. It was the will of God, of that same God whom Paul served as a Jew, that God who revealed himself in the temple. That is the particular meaning of the vision in the temple: it is intended to show that no contradiction exists between the God of the temple and the God of the Gentiles. From within the Jews' holy place itself God has commanded that there should be a mission to the Gentiles! It is understandable that this assertion by the great renegade was felt by the Jews to be highly provocative."

Along with 13:45-47, Acts 22:21-22 provides the clearest example of the explicit claims about universal outreach to which Jews react negatively in Acts. As we have seen, Jewish rejection of Paul in Acts happens rather consistently throughout the narrative, sometimes in response simply to Paul's presence, other times in reply to claims about Jesus—crucified and risen—as the Messiah of Israel. But here the link is expressed in unmistakable terms: Jews in Jerusalem believe that the Messiah Jesus' command to Paul to go directly to the Gentiles is unforgivable, punishable even by death. While presumably Luke could have ended Paul's speech at the point where Jesus tells Paul to leave Jerusalem because the Jews refused to listen (cf. 19:9), instead he allows Paul to offer his hopes for a positive response from his countrymen, only for Jesus to state more emphatically: "Go, I will send you far away to the Gentiles." That this final statement is what provokes the Jews' anger underscores the connection Luke makes between the universality of Paul's outreach and the universality of the Messiah's work.

Acts 26

Lest readers think this is the only time Luke draws attention to this connection, however, we find in Acts 26 a confirmation of such a link. In another defense speech, this time before the Roman Jewish ruler Agrippa (II), Paul clarifies *why* the Jews have opposed him so diametrically. Referring to his Damascus encounter yet again (26:12-18), Paul relates Jesus' commission in extended terms:

> "But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint (προχειρίζομαι) you as servant (ὑπηρέτης) and witness (μάρτυς) to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn (ἐπιστρέφω) from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26:16-18)

Following the analysis of Acts 21-22, it is noteworthy that Paul in retrospect condenses Jesus' commission into a single and detailed speech. Whereas, previously, bits of these directives were attributed to Ananias (9:15-16; 22:10-16) or to a separate vision (22:17-21), in Paul's final recollection, he eliminates the role of Ananias altogether and puts all the commands directly into a monologue by Jesus. Important themes mentioned earlier are reiterated—Paul is "appointed" (cf. 3:20; 22:14) as "servant" (cf. Luke 1:2) and "witness" (cf. Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 22:15). Just as Jesus had emphasized in the temple vision (22:21), he will rescue Paul from his people and send him to the Gentiles (26:17) to "open their eyes" to the light of salvation (cf. Luke 1:78-79; 2:30-32), so that they may "turn" (cf. Acts 14:15; 15:19; 28:27) and join the people of God who are sanctified through faith in Jesus (cf. 15:11). In this mini-speech—the longest consecutive quotation of the "Lord" in Acts—the main themes connected to Paul's vocation coalesce into the most direct statement so far.

Paul's speech continues, recounting his response to Jesus' commission:

> "After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but first to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I proclaimed (ἀπήγγελλον) that they should repent and turn to God, doing deeds worthy of repentance. *For this reason* (ἕνεκα τούτων) the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me." (26:19-21)

In the most explicit statement yet in Acts, Paul explains to Agrippa that the cause for the Jews' seizure of Paul (ch. 21) and attempt to kill him (ch. 22) was his fulfillment of Jesus' commission—namely, to announce repentance and salvation to Jews *and*

Gentiles. Some readings[106] want to limit Paul's preaching of "conversion" to the Gentiles, with repentance reserved for Jews. But such a reading misses the arc of Paul's argument, which in Acts 26 concerns a universal horizon specifically predicated upon outreach to Jews and Gentiles in a similar way. That is, both ("they") need to turn ("convert") and to repent in order to find salvation (cf. Luke 1:77-79; 2:30-32; Acts 20:21). After all, Luke has shown throughout Acts that the transformation required of Jews is akin to what is expected of Gentiles (cf. Luke 3:3-18) even though Jewish believers already belong to ethnic Israel. That sense has already been reaffirmed in Jerusalem by the apostolic council meeting, where Peter concluded that "on the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, *just as they will*" (Acts 15:11). As has been shown throughout this chapter, it is not the possibility of Gentile salvation—or their inclusion among God's people—that angers ethnic Jews (proselytism was widely accepted); rather, it is the suggestion that the Messiah's mission (carried out through Paul) is to bring (unclean, uncircumcised) Gentiles into God's people (without full legal observance) and that the receptivity of Gentiles toward Paul's preaching, in a sense, commends their response to ethnic (unbelieving) Jews (cf. 15:9).[107] Ultimately, Jewish hopes for resurrection and restoration are tied to the fulfillment of this universal mission, which means Jews stand on equal footing with Gentiles. As Paul's speech will conclude, it is God's purpose that the Messiah himself would proclaim light

[106] Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts*, 436-437, who takes εἰς οὕς as a reference to the Gentiles alone. As Green notes ("Doing Repentance," 22 fn 15), however, "Pauline mission inclusive of Gentiles and Jews is supported by the Isaianic echoes, by Luke 1:78-79, and by Acts 26:20, 23."
[107] Cf. 5:31-32, where Peter's Jewish audience tries to kill the apostles seemingly because of the claim that the Messiah came to give "repentance" to Israel, which is tantamount to treating them like Gentiles (cf. John in Luke 3).

both to Jews and Gentiles (26:23). Both peoples are in need of "conversion" and repentance, and in this respect they are one people before God.[108]

Clarifying all this is Paul's concluding statement, which has been shown throughout to be of critical importance for understanding Luke's christology of universal witness:

> "To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26:22-23 NRSV)

The specific claim about Paul's commission to reach Gentiles is, finally, consonant with what the scriptures proclaim. Paul effectively removes all associations of novelty from his argument, depriving Jewish reactions of the claim that he is introducing corruption into ancestral tradition (18:13; 21:28). In a sense, Paul is simply repeating what the scriptures themselves prophesied. Another way of saying this is that the provocative claim about outreach to Gentiles actually expresses the fulfillment of Israel's scriptural

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[108] Green, "Doing Repentance," 8: "Conversion is grounded in a fresh comprehension of the purpose of God, as this is plotted in Scripture, and is manifest in the community of God's people who are constituted by this biblical narrative and whose practices embody this spirituality and leverage the ongoing conversion of its membership. On the one hand, for characters within the Lukan narrative, conversion is the consequence of a revisionist rendering of the story of God and his purpose, a reconception of the biblical drama. The Jewish people are challenged to change their minds with reference to Jesus, so that his life, death, and resurrection are regarded as necessarily continuous with, and the actualization of, God's ancient agenda. For persons within Luke's narrative who are unfamiliar with the biblical story, Gentiles relatively untouched by the synagogue or Jewish Scriptures, a revisionist reading of history is likewise on offer." Cf. also, Green, *Conversion*, 71-72: "Even when obeying God, people within the Lukan narrative obey him as they have come to perceive him, and the extent of their misperception is so grand that attempts at obedience actually run counter to the divine will. That is, so long as they were committed to their former way of construing the nature of God and life before God, they were blinded to what God was doing. What is needed is a theological transformation: a deep-seated conversion in their conception of God and, thus, in their commitments, attitudes, and everyday practices...the resolution of 'ignorance' is not simply 'the amassing of facts,' but a *realignment* with God's ancient purpose now coming to fruition (that is, *conversion*) and divine forgiveness."

promises and God's ancient purposes. In fact, so integral is the incorporation of Gentiles to God's plans *for Israel* that "the restoration of the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6) is, according to Luke, inconceivable without it. As Paul says earlier, he stands on trial before Agrippa not because he has departed from Israel but precisely "because of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain" (26:6-7; cf. 28:20).

But Paul takes this argument further. That which the scriptures—essentially in their entirety (cf. Luke 24:44-47)—said would take place is this: "the χριστός would (μέλλει) suffer/die and that—as the first of those resurrected from the dead—he would proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23). The title χριστός has itself been redefined in terms of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and exaltation. In his exaltation to heaven, Jesus has been declared κύριος, pouring out the Spirit upon all flesh (Acts 2:33, 36) and bringing all peoples into his reign (10:36). As "Lord of all," Jesus offers salvation to Jews and Gentiles alike, an assertion that has repeatedly found expression in Paul's own outreach, despite Jewish opposition. Not only is Jesus the crucified and resurrected Messiah of Israel, but as scriptural Messiah (and embodiment of Israel's hopes) he is the proclaimer of light to all nations, Jewish as well as Gentile.

Several points deserve elaboration. First, what makes the Lucan Commission (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8) so remarkable is its introduction of a formal announcement of universal mission that had only been hinted at early in Luke's Gospel (2:10, 30-32; 3:6; 4:25-27; see Chapter 1). Chapter 2 attempted to explain how Jesus' "presence" and "activity" remain significant for Luke's account of the spread of universal witness, especially beyond the land and people of Israel. Paul's concluding words in Acts 26:23

help readers reconcile these two emphases in Acts—namely, that universal witness construes Jesus' Lordship while the ongoing responsibility for that witness still belongs to Jesus.

Second, and clearly related, the evidence Paul's speech offers for this concluding claim about Jesus' messianic mission to all peoples is a summary of Paul's own outreach:

> "[sent by the Lord Jesus to Jews and Gentiles] to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in [Jesus]…declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance … testifying to both small and great" (Acts 26:17-18, 20, 22)

In other words, the claim about Jesus' death, resurrection, and mission can be validated by the course Paul's own life and outreach have taken. Indeed, that Jesus "would proclaim light to the people and to the Gentiles" (26:23) corresponds with Paul's account of turning both Jews and Gentiles (26:17, 20) "from darkness to light" (26:18). All that Paul has done and especially that for which he had been seized and threatened and arrested—notably, his outreach to Gentiles—is really the work of Jesus himself. The mission of Israel's "Servant" (cf. Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30; Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6) shines forth in the commission of his servant (Acts 26:16).

Third, this claim helps readers make the connection between Jewish opposition to Paul's ministry and Lukan christology. Because Luke has established that the risen Messiah Jesus is the Lord of all, Christian messianic claims are simultaneously claims about the universal scope of salvation. If the universal scope of Jesus' mission finds expression in Paul's outreach to Gentiles—which is the very thing Jews find objectionable—then Jewish rejection clarifies, albeit negatively, the christology of

universal witness. In several instances in Acts of Jewish opposition to Paul, the messianic identity of Jesus appears central. Moreover, given the way Luke has to this point (Acts 26) reconfigured "Messiah" as a title in Acts—on the basis of Jesus' death, resurrection, and the salvation of the Gentiles (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 26:22-23)—Paul's proclamation of "Messiah" is underwritten by the claim that Jesus is Lord of all. Jews who "refuse to believe" (19:9; 28:24) do not simply deny that a crucified and risen Jesus can be Messiah of Israel—though that is also true—but that it is the Messiah's mission to bring Gentiles (as Gentiles) into God's people as part of the fulfillment of the promises concerning the restoration of Israel (Luke 1:32-33, 69-79; 2:30-32; Acts 1:6-8; 3:21-26; 15:13-21). By emphasizing Jewish rejection of Paul's outreach to Gentile, therefore, Luke underscores the narrative unfolding of Jesus' identity as messianic "Lord of all." These implications of Paul's climactic statement are all the more remarkable because they essentially follow from Paul's final statement in defense of his mission (26:22-23).

Not to be quickly overlooked is Festus's (apparently) interrupting exclamation: "You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane (μανία)!" (26:24).[109] The apparent outburst helps draw attention to the climactic nature of Paul's conclusion. Moreover, Festus' claim of μανία—on the basis of learning—both indicates Paul's assertions are rooted in scriptural knowledge and tradition and also implies that he, a Roman ruler, cannot ultimately make heads or tails of them. Agrippa's coy response—"are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?" (26:28)—may ironically (and tragically) identify the hope of Paul's proclamation, that in accepting Israel's scriptures,

[109] See Rowe, *World Upside Down,* 84 and 229 fn 218.

Jews would accept the claims made on their basis (26:22) with respect to Jesus and universal salvation (26:23).

4.6.3 Rejection *confirms* Messianic Mission (Acts 13:47; 18:6; 28:28) of universal salvation

Having investigated the strength of the connection, in Acts, between Jewish opposition to Paul and the unfolding of Jesus' universal Lordship, we are prepared to bring those findings to an exploration of the motif of Paul's "turn" to the Gentiles (Acts 13:47; 18:6; 28:28), which has been postponed until now. Because it is closely related to the broader theme of Jewish rejection, discussing this recurring motif is necessary to round out our study of Jewish opposition to Paul in Acts. Moreover, when understood in light of the preceding study, these examples of Paul's commitment to the Gentiles underscore the universal scope of the Messiah's mission at the very end of Acts. In this way, they form a natural conclusion both to the chapter and the larger study.

Three times in Acts—once each in Pisidian Antioch, Corinth, and Rome—Paul famously tells his (primarily) Jewish audience, who reject his message, that he is "turning" to the Gentiles (13:46; 18:6; 28:28). Much ink has been spilled over these statements—usually centering on whether Paul's "turn" is temporary and particular, as the first two instances suggest, or permanent and universal, as the third implies. Rather than add commentary to the long-running debate between camps well-represented by Jacob Jervell and Jack T. Sanders,[110] however, I will unpack the three statements in their

[110] See Jervell, *Theology of Acts,* 18-115; "The Divided People of God," 41-74; "The Future of the Past," 104-126; cf. also O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 76. On the other "side" of the debate, see Jack T. Sanders, "The Prophetic Use of the Scriptures in Luke-Acts," in *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee,* ed. Craig A. Evans and William F. Stinespring (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 191-197; "Salvation of the Jews in Luke-Acts" in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, ed. Charles Talbert (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 104-128; idem, *The Jews in Luke-*

respective narrative contexts and with reference to the overall themes of this chapter. Evaluated in light of Luke's broader concern to narrate a christology of universal witness, Paul's repeated statements about turning to the Gentiles confirm—at least, indirectly—the link between Paul's mission to Gentiles and the messianic mission to "all nations." Jewish rejection of Paul's message does not, according to Luke, *cause* Gentile mission; rather, Paul's experience of rejection by Jews *confirms* the universality of the Messiah's work which he is commissioned to carry out. In this way, Luke narrates the necessity of reaching Gentiles with salvation as part of the fulfillment *of God's promises to Israel.*

4.6.3.1 Pisidian Antioch (13:45-47)

We have briefly studied Paul's first great discourse in Pisidian Antioch (13:16-41) but will do so in more depth here and in relation to its wider context. Central to our concern, of course, is the reaction of Jews to Paul's preaching and the way in which Paul interprets that reaction in declamatory fashion (13:46-47).

As the first recorded sermon by Paul to Jews in Acts, the Pisidian Antioch speech places the story of Jesus within the story of Israel or, rather, tells Israel's story in such a way that it is completed in Jesus and his ongoing work. The center of the sermon concerns Jesus (13:23-39), as Davidic Messiah recognized first by John (13:23-25) but rejected by Jerusalem Jews and killed, in accordance with scriptural prophecy (13:26-29). But God raised him from the dead (13:30), to which his apostles bear witness to the

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Acts (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), esp. 25-26; cf., generally, also Stephen Wilson, *Gentiles,* 219-233; Hahn, *Mission in the NT,* 134; Haenchen, *Acts,* 100-101; Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses,* 214-215; and idem, "Easter Revelation," 251. For a helpful summary of views, see Charles Talbert, "Once Again the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts," in *Der treue Gottes Trauen: Beiträge zum Werk des Lukas,* ed. Claus Bussmann and Walter Radl (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 99.

people (13:31). Paul encapsulates the interrelationship between God's plans for Israel and Jesus' resurrection in vv. 32-33a: "And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled *for us*, *their children*, by raising Jesus…" Paul justifies this claim in part by offering a string of scriptural quotations—Ps 2:7, Isa 55:3, Ps 16:10—the importance of which is evident from their appearance elsewhere in pivotal passages (Ps 2:7 = Luke 3:2, 9:35; Ps 16:10 = Acts 2:27). In fact, Acts 13:35-37 closely parallels the argument of Peter's Pentecost speech (2:27-31). And like Peter's speech, Paul relates Jesus' death and resurrection—in fulfilling God's will—to an invitation to salvation: "Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (13:38-39). In a way, this statement by Paul stands in the equivalent place, in Peter's speech, of claims about Jesus' exaltation to God's right hand and his pouring out of the Spirit (2:33-36). In another way, however, to say "through this man forgiveness is proclaimed to you" (13:38) indirectly acknowledges the ongoing role of the Lord Jesus in bringing the light of salvation to all peoples (cf. 26:23).

But the focus of our study is with the motif of rejection and acceptance, which Paul hints at in the final two verses of the sermon: "Beware, therefore, that what the prophets said does not happen to you: 'Look, you scoffers! Be amazed and perish, for in your days I am doing a work, a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you'" (13:40-41). The warning of Hab 1:5 anticipates the rejection motif that will be highlighted a few verses later (13:45-47). If we took Sanders' suggestion that 13:40-41

simply reprises Stephen's charge in 7:51,[111] Paul's warning of "beware" would have the sub-text of "it is already too late." But the narrative complicates that simple explanation, especially when we zoom in on 13:42-50. Though it is popular to divorce narrative from discourse, Luke has written them together and so their integrity rather than their artificial distinction should form the basis for interpretation.

> As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people urged them to speak about these things again the next sabbath. When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; and blaspheming, they contradicted what was spoken by Paul. Then both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, **"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you reject (ἀπωθεῖσθε) it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"** When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers. Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. (Acts 13:42-50 NRSV)

Because of Paul's warnings ("beware")—or in spite of them—the people in the synagogue "urge them to speak about these things again" (v. 42). Indeed "many Jews and devout proselytes" follow Paul and Barnabas, who urge the new believers to "continue in the grace of God."[112] The Jews' response in this instance is gilded, for when the next Sabbath arrives and the "whole city" gathers to hear Paul, "the Jews" became jealous and blasphemed (Christ?), contradicting what Paul said (v. 45). By the way the Lukan

[111] "Salvation of the Jews," 113.
[112] Sanders would prefer to see all such instances of positive reception as "persuasion" short of "conversion" (since there's no baptism or other conversion-language); cf. idem, 108.

narrator relates this chain of events, it is apparent that the initially positive reception of "many Jews and proselytes" who followed Paul (v. 43) did not provoke "(the rest of) the Jews"; only after seeing the *wider appeal* of his message—presumably to Gentiles (cf. 47-48)—do the Jews reject Paul. It is unclear whether the first receptive group of Jews is included in this collective group of "the Jews," but the impression created by Paul's mini-speech in vv. 46-47 is that the rejection is broader than a few agitators.

Paul and Barnabas reply to this turn in events by speaking of the necessity of proclaiming God's word first to the Jews before turning to Gentiles (v. 46). This claim appears to align with other statements about the priority of Israel in the message of the gospel (3:26). If readers never encounter another Jewish audience in Acts, we might be inclined to posit a strong separation here, as Haenchen does when he labels 13:46 "the moment of divorce between the gospel and Judaism."[113] But there will be several more opportunities for Jews to accept or reject Paul's message—in fact, in the very next town of Iconium, Paul's preaching leads to "a great number of Jews and Greeks becoming believers" (14:1). This wider narrative context informs us that whatever Paul means here it does not indicate a definite cleavage, nor does it present a salvation-historical progression in which "phase 1: Jews" is ending and "phase 2: Gentiles" is beginning. Attention to the detail of the story reveals that Gentiles were *already* receptive to gospel proclamation in Pisidian Antioch (13:44-45)—to say nothing of Caesarea (10:34-48) and Syrian Antioch (11:19-26) before that. It is precisely this receptivity which triggers Jewish jealousy and rejection (see 4.6.2.2). In a way, it is more accurate to describe the

[113] Haenchen, *Acts,* 471.

scene as one in which Gentile receptivity provokes Jewish rejection of the message. Such a pattern, it turns out, matches in essence what occurs in the P-C episode: Gentile receptivity initially meets with Jewish-Christian rejection. In the case of Peter and Jerusalem believers, that initial hesitation is eventually overcome by revelation (10:1-48), debate (11:2-18; 15:1-6, 12), and theological (15:7-11) and scriptural reflection (15:13-29). In the case of Jews in Pisidian Antioch, their rejection confirms the rightness of Paul's "turning" to Gentiles. In both cases, it is evident that God stands behind the salvation of the Gentiles.

In fact, Paul quickly qualifies any sense of Jewish rejection *causing* outreach among Gentiles by identifying his divine commission to go to Gentiles. He quotes Isa 49:6b, part of God's commission to the Isaianic Servant (cf. 42:1-6), as if spoken by the Lord Jesus himself to Paul and Barnabas. The work of Israel's Servant and Messiah is, according to (LXX) Isa 49:6, "to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the dispersion of Israel…[to be] a light of nations, that you may be for salvation to the end of the earth." Earlier in this chapter (4.6.1.1) it was argued that Acts 1:7-8 reflects the first half of this Isaianic commission (Isa 49:6a), especially in light of its role in answering the apostles' question about *restoring the kingdom to Israel* (Acts 1:6). Here, in Acts 13:47, the second half of that commission, concerning salvation of the Gentiles—in turn, clarifying Acts 1:8—rounds out the portrait of the messianic mission.

Readers of Luke-Acts will recall that part of the Messiah's mission, virtually from his birth, was to be "salvation (σωτήριον)…of all peoples, *a light for revelation to the Gentiles* and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32; cf. 2:10-11; 3:6; Acts 26:23). Far from an arbitrary "turn" on the basis of Jewish recalcitrance, Paul's focus on the

Gentiles reflects the mission of the Messiah himself. In going to the Gentiles, therefore, Paul (and Barnabas) participates in the scriptural program assigned to Israel's Messiah and Servant.[114] In this way, Luke ties Jewish rejection of Paul to the confirmation and announcement of Paul's commission to go to all nations everywhere, which in turn reflects a broader concern to link christology to universal witness.

The picture gets more complicated, however, when we recall a curious detail in Paul's speech to the Jews of Pisidian Antioch, how the apostles are "[now] witnesses to the people" (13:31). The seemingly insignificant detail raises a significant question: if the apostles, the original "witnesses," are commissioned to evangelize "the people" (Israel), then why is Paul, whom we know is commissioned specially to reach Gentiles (9:15; 13:47; 22:21; 26:19-23), preaching at length to Jews at all? Several qualifying questions could be offered in reply—Were the apostles commissioned only to reach "the people" in Jerusalem? Are Diaspora Jews not part of Israel? Is Paul's preaching to Jews really only preaching to the Gentile God-fearers among them? To each question the answer is surely "no." The conclusion readers are, therefore, left with is that Luke deems it important for this message of universal salvation to be preached to Jews and *precisely* to Jews. The mission of the Lord Jesus to "all nations" (Luke 24:47) is integral to the identity of Israel's Messiah and is offered on those terms to be accepted by Jews.

But, as we have seen already, this "reconfiguration" of the notion of "Messiah"—firstly in light of Jesus' death and resurrection and secondly in terms of universal salvation—is not well-received by Jews, especially after Acts 6. It is no accident that

[114] Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles*, 19.

while the universal scope of outreach lies dormant in apostolic preaching, their message is favorably received among Jews; when it becomes explicit (after Acts 10), Jewish rejection of the message becomes the norm. The content of Paul's preaching, as we have seen, concerns the messianic identity of Jesus as crucified, risen, and reigning Lord of all people, oriented both by a scriptural framework bound to Israel's hopes for restoration. As Acts 15 will show, the hope of Israel is tied to the fate of Gentiles (15:13-21), so the "turn" to the Gentiles is—counterintuitively—a fulfillment of Jewish hopes.[115] That Paul's invitation to Jews to accept a gospel that necessarily includes Gentiles in its horizon occurs *before* the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) suggests ethnic Jews have first right of refusal, in a sense. The Jewish-Christian church will, instead, accept this realization, modeling the proper response, but unbelieving Jews will primarily react with "jealous" rejection (13:45; 17:5) or "stubbornly refuse to believe" (19:9). As if to underscore the impropriety of Jewish response, the Pisidian Antioch scene concludes when Gentiles "rejoice and praise the word of the Lord" (13:48) while "the Jews" stir up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, driving them out of the area (13:50-51).

4.6.3.2 Corinth (18:4-7)

The first instance of the "turning to the Gentiles" motif occurs in Paul's first and paradigmatic Pisidian Antioch speech, and its implications can likely be assumed as the

[115] Sanders, "Prophetic Use," 198, fn 25: "I cannot agree with Jervell…and with R. C. Tannehill ("Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story," *JBL* 104 [1985]: 69-85) that Luke views this inevitable rejection as a tragedy. Jervell ("The Center of Scripture in Luke" in *The Unknown Paul* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984], 122-137) has noted and accurately evaluated much of the evidence presented here. But Jervell takes the prophecies about the gospel's going from the Jews to the Gentiles to mean that 'it is prophesied in Scripture that the salvation of the Gentiles will be linked to the destiny of Israel' (ibid., 134) and thus misunderstands Luke's intent."

pattern unfolds elsewhere. Indeed, in the second example, in Corinth, the pattern recurs with slightly different details and additional implications.

> Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the dust from his clothes and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. **From now on I will go to the Gentiles**." Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. (Acts 18:4-7 NRSV)

Paul continues his "custom" of preaching in synagogues upon arrival in a new area (18:4; cf. 17:2). In the case of Corinth, Paul is engaged in proclaiming the word, namely asserting "that the Messiah was Jesus" (18:5). This way of phrasing it—rather than that Jesus was the Messiah—draws attention to how the title "Messiah" fits, as it were, into the narrative identity of Jesus. The events at the center of Paul's preaching are Jesus' death and resurrection (cf. 13:16-41) and his messianic mission to bring salvation to all (cf. 13:46-47). To reject *this* "Messiah" is to reject a restored people of God comprised of Jews and Gentiles, which is therefore to subvert Israel's scriptural hope. But Paul's preaching is met with opposition and abuse, so he shakes the dust from his clothes and promises, "from now on (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν) I will go to the Gentiles" (18:6).

In addition to recalling the earthly Jesus' instructions to those whom he sent—namely, to shake the dust off when rejected (cf. Luke 9:5; 10:11)—Paul's message possesses a stronger tone of finality than 13:46. And yet, when we pay attention to narrative context, it becomes immediately clear that Jewish rejection *necessitates* a Gentile mission. In fact, after leaving the synagogue in protest, Paul only makes it several feet before entering a God-fearer's house next door (18:7). What is more, the Lukan

narrator tells us, the first new converts following this "swearing off" of the synagogue is none other than "Crispus, the president of the synagogue, together with all his household" (18:8)! If Paul's strong language was intended to draw a line in the sand, he immediately stepped over it upon departing the synagogue. In this way, Luke's narrative framing helps qualify the severity of Paul's words, preventing readers from over-reading the relationship between Jewish opposition and Gentile mission.

Additionally, it is possible to read in this slight tension between Paul's language of going to the Gentiles and his actual behavior of reaching out to Jews an encapsulation of the messianic mission of which he is a part. That is, because the in-gathering of the Gentiles marks the coming-to-fulfillment of Israel's hopes for restoration (15:13-21), Paul's insistence on going to the Gentiles indirectly issues an invitation to Jews to accept that the Messiah is Jesus. The scope of Jesus' messianic identity is to be known in the gathering in of Gentiles alongside the restoration of Israel's tribes (Isa 49:6), thus it is not unreasonable to conclude that the realization of the former evokes the latter. Luke's account of Jewish opposition suggests that some God-fearers and Jews like Crispus and his household saw this connection; most others, however, did not.

4.6.3.3 Rome (28:25-28)

Paul's arrival in Rome, according to Luke, is a long time in coming. The legal conditions that would bring Paul to Rome are first identified when Paul, a Roman citizen pressed by Jewish opposition, appeals to Caesar (25:11-12, 21; 26:32; 28:19). But Luke ensures readers know that Paul's travels are not determined by Roman jurisprudence. Jesus himself appears to Paul, while he is in custody and after his examination by the Sanhedrin, to remind him: "Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me

in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome" (23:11; cf. 27:24). Paul hints at this earlier when he says, to no one in particular, "after I have gone [to Jerusalem], I must (δεῖ) also see Rome" (Acts 19:21). Suspense is added by: Paul's escape from plots to murder him (23:12-22; 25:2-12), nighttime changes in his custody arrangements (23:23-35), legal limbo in a Caesarean jail (24:25-27), a dramatic shipwreck (27:1-44), his death-defying viper bite (28:1-6), and being stranded on the island of Malta (28:7-10). Luke goes to great lengths, narratively speaking, to get Paul to Rome. Lest readers imagine the goal of Jesus' commission "to the end of the earth" (1:8; 13:47) has been reached, however, Luke notes that there were already believers awaiting Paul in Rome (28:14-16). But the bulk of Luke's account of Paul's time in Rome is occupied with his interaction with *Jews* (28:17-28).

> Three days later he called together the local leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. When they had examined me, the Romans wanted to release me, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to the emperor-- even though I had no charge to bring against my nation. For this reason therefore I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." They replied, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken anything evil about you. But we would like to hear from you what you think, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. Some were convinced by what he had said, while others refused to believe. So they disagreed with each other; and as they were leaving, Paul made one further statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah, 'Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn-- and I would heal them.' Let

> it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. (Acts 28:23-31 NRSV)

It is striking how Paul immediately summons the Jewish leaders in Rome (28:17) rather than avoid them, as might be expected on the theory that he had nothing more to do with Jews in Acts (13:46; 18:6). This part of the narrative context is often overlooked in theories that assume by this time Luke had all but written the Jews off.[116] In fact, Paul launches into an account of events bringing him to Rome, emphasizing his innocence with respect to the charges brought against him by the Jews. He is adamant, claiming "I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors" (28:17) and had "no charge to bring against my nation" (28:19). "For this reason (διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν)," Paul says, "I have asked to see and speak with you" (28:20), adding "it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." In other words, not only is Paul innocent of crimes against his people, he has no complaint against them; what is more, his imprisonment is for the sake of Israel's hope (of restoration)! All of this, it seems, needed clarification in case word about him had reached Rome before him. Confirming this is the Jews' reply that they had received no unfavorable report about him (28:21), though the Christian "sect" associated with him was "everywhere spoken against" (28:22).

To explain the matter further, Paul arranges to meet with them again, and the Roman Jews arrive at that meeting in "great numbers" (28:23). At this meeting Paul

[116] e.g., Sanders, "Salvation of the Jews," 115-117.

explains (ἐξετίθετο) to them "morning until evening." Though he is in Roman custody, the summary of Paul's message is consistent with his preaching in previous synagogue encounters (cf. 9:20, 22; 17:3; 18:5; 19:8). Especially noteworthy is the dual motif of "the kingdom of God" (διαμαρτυρόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ) and preaching "about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets" (28:23). The combination of language associated with Israel's hopes (cf. 1:6) and teaching about the Messiah Jesus from Israel's scriptures—as we have seen—reflects a recurring emphasis in Paul's preaching and Luke's narrative.

Naturally, the response of these Roman Jews to his message is similar to what we find throughout the second half of Acts: "Some were convinced by what he had said, while others refused to believe. They disagreed with each other…" (28:24-25; cf. 13:46; 14:4; 17:4; 18:6). In this respect, at least, it does not seem like anything has changed in the pattern of Jewish response to signal a final severance between Paul and outreach to Jews. In fact, given that Paul faced murderous opposition from Jews almost as soon as his ministry began (cf. 9:23-24, 29), not to mention death threats by Jews in both Damascus (9:23-24) and Jerusalem (9:29; 21:31, 36; 22:22; 23:10, 21; 25:3, 24; 26:21), the lukewarm response Paul's preaching receives in Rome is anticlimactic. If Isa 6:9-10 is cited to convey permanent rejection, the narrative context does not align with that impression. This is crucial to observe because the narrative sets the tone for how the ensuing prophetic citation should be read. Even though 28:25b-28 is routinely extracted from its narrative context and made the foundation for a claim about Israel's rejection of

God and God's rejection of Israel, little in the narrative context before 28:25 would suggest that, and, as we will see, little after v. 28.[117]

Paul appears to interpret the division in his Jewish audience with a citation of Isaiah: "and as they were leaving, Paul made one further statement: 'The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah…'" (28:24-25). Several things deserve comment here. First, the mention of "ancestors" strikes a discordant note. Throughout Paul's defense speeches he has made a habit of tying his own behavior to the traditions and hopes of his ancestors, whom he shares in common with his Jewish interlocutors (22:14; 24:14; 26:6; 28:17). But here the tone is polemical. The Roman Jews' apparent refusal to believe his message reminds Paul of what Isaiah said with reference to the disobedient ancestors of present day Israel, echoing earlier claims made by Stephen (7:3-52) and Paul himself (13:16-41, 46-47). The negative tone is perhaps reinforced by the fact that Paul refers to "*your* ancestors." Within a larger discourse in Acts attempting to establish continuity between Paul's message and the fate of Israel, Paul is still capable of disassociating himself from those whom he understands to deny God's purposes.

Second, most commentators who take the Isa 6:9-10 citation as a direct assault upon all Jews, or even all Roman Jews, overlook the fact that Paul does not say the Holy Spirit was speaking to "you" but to "your ancestors." In this way, Paul's citation affirms the division within Israel as signified by the response of these Roman Jews (28:24-25).

[117] Whether or not we take v. 29 as spurious ("and after he said this, the Jews departed having much dispute among them."), it serves to explain where the Jews go after he offers his words of judgment and before the Lukan narrator summarily brings the narrative to a close. In other words, it has less bearing on the questions before us than its content would suggest.

But division is different than permanent dismissal.[118] Had the Lukan Paul ended with Isa 6:9—"you will indeed look but *never* perceive"—the evidence for a permanent break would be more compelling. As it stands, however, the citation implies prophetic judgment *and* invitation: "For this people's heart has grown dull…and/but I *would* heal them" (28:27). As any Jewish audience familiar with scripture would know, Isaiah's reprimand was not permanent, and neither is Paul's.

Third, even if the prophetic force of the Isa 6:9-10 citation can be neutralized somewhat by narrative context, it is Paul's subsequent statement that clinches the permanent judgment on Jewish unbelief for some: "Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen" (28:28). Two sub-points should be made here.

(a) The Lukan Paul's word choice here—specifically τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ—is unusual. In fact, the neuter noun (typically not preferred to the feminine form) only occurs in Luke 2:30 (cf. Isa 40:5; 52:10) and Luke 3:6 (Isa 40:5), two verses our study has returned to repeatedly. As a reminder, these early uses anticipate the narrative unfolding of Jesus' identity as universal Lord and Messiah. That Paul uses the same word—following another Isaianic reference, no less—seems hardly accidental. By recalling the uniquely Lukan (extended) prophetic use of Isa 40:3-5 in Luke 3:4-6, Luke effectively brackets most of Luke-Acts (from John's ministry in the wilderness of Judea to Paul's ministry in Rome) with the notion of "the salvation of God" reaching "all

[118] Sanders, "Prophetic Use," 198 fn 24: "the climactic character of the quotation as well as the way in which this final scene in Acts and the opening scene of Jesus' ministry in Luke (Luke 4:16-30) bracket everything in between and place the bulk of Luke-Acts thus behind a minus sign."

flesh." This latter phrase surely means, for Luke, "to the Gentiles as well as the Jews."[119] Receptive Gentiles help fill out the "all" in "all flesh" (Luke 3:6; Isa 40:5; Acts 2:17; Joel 3:1) and "all nations" (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:5, 9-11; 10:35; 15:17) and "all people" (Acts 17:30; 22:15; 24:16; 28:30). Therefore, the use of Isa 6 in Acts 28:28 is the culmination of Luke's universal vision, not its dimunition by removing Jews from the "all nations" envisioned. A zero-sum model of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles among God's people is only present in Luke-Acts where readers introduce it. For Luke, τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ is all-inclusive.

(b) A careful reading should recognize that Paul does not draw a direct line of causation between Jewish "dullness" and Gentile receptivity. Paul contrasts them of course ("let it be known to *you* that…*they* will listen"),[120] but in such a way that the openness of Gentiles serves as a model *for Jews* (cf. 15:11). In a way, Paul's prophetic use of Isaiah here aids readers in understanding, retrospectively, the relationship between Jewish opposition and Gentile outreach throughout Acts. Jewish rejection of Paul's message does not cause the turn to Gentiles, but Gentile receptivity models the proper response to the gospel that Paul wishes *for Jews.* Given the authentic experience of the Spirit at Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit upon Gentiles elsewhere (cf. 10:44-45) should be seen for what it is—a sign of God's favor and the fulfillment of ancient promises of Israel's restoration.

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[119] Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles*, 16.
[120] The phrase could just as easily be translated "they *also* will listen." See Seccombe, "New People of God," 369.

The last two verses of Acts confirm that Paul continues to hold the fate of Israel and Gentile outreach together. The narrator's summary immediately follows Paul's words: "He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed *all* who came to him, proclaiming *the kingdom of God* and teaching about *the Lord Jesus Christ* with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:30-31). That is, not only does Paul continue to welcome *all* people (thereby precluding the notion of the Jews' final[121] rejection), but the description of his message concerning "the kingdom of God…and the Lord Jesus Christ" matches up with what the narrator said he was doing *prior* to the Isa 6 quotation, namely, he was "testifying to *the kingdom of God* and trying to convince them about *Jesus* both from the law of Moses and from the prophets" (28:23). In other words, because his approach to Jews is the same before (v. 23) as after (v. 31) his so-called prophetic judgment (vv. 25-27), the portrait of Paul's ministry with which Luke concludes his second volume is one of *continuity* rather than discontinuity. No major break occurs in 28:28.

Part of this continuity follows from the fact that 28:31 ("preaching about the kingdom and teaching about Jesus") forms a bookend with the beginning of Acts—namely, in the disciples' question about the kingdom (1:6; cf. Luke 2:25; 23:50-51;

[121] Jack Sanders, who is associated with the final rejection thesis, employs a terribly unfortunate choice of words to express his view on Luke's treatment of the Jews ("Salvation of the Jews," 115): "The Gentile mission therefore served to attest the truth displayed in the martyrdom of Stephen, which Paul finally and for the last time announces at the end of Acts. A *final solution* of the Jewish problem has been indicated" (emphasis added). If Sanders' intention was to lay the blame for the systematic eradication of Jews by Nazi Germany at Luke's feet, then he ought to argue for it on the basis of reception history rather than make insinuations about Luke's responsibility. However Luke and Acts are read, they say nothing at all about depriving Jews of the right to continue living. Cf. 116, where Sanders claims Luke's Gospel is as "anti-Semitic" as his Acts.

24:51) and Jesus' response about their witness to him (1:7-8). Jesus' commission[122] *continues* to find expression beyond Acts, specifically the two years Luke knows about but which he chooses not to narrate in detail. One recalls that throughout Acts Luke has aligned Paul's outreach with "the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise the twelve tribes hope to attain" (26:6-7; cf. 24:14-15), thereby claiming a broader coherence between Paul's message and the (scriptural) promises of Israel's restoration.[123] Jesus' mission to restore Israel continues unabated in the ongoing outreach to Jews but especially Gentiles, whose receptivity is commended to all.[124] And by continuing to welcome "all," Paul embodies Jesus' promise that universal witness and Israel's restoration *remain* intertwined. Acts concludes with the universality of Jesus' identity affirmed by the receptivity of Gentiles, itself the basis for an implicit invitation to Jews to be healed.

4.6.4 Conclusions

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[122] Sanders, "Salvation of the Jews," 117, diminishes the importance of the Lukan Commission since it lacks any treatment of Jewish opposition or rejection. First, he says "the Lucan version of the Great Commission (24:44-49) simply takes as given the theme of Jewish rejection and of the consequent sending of salvation to the Gentiles. The 'forgiveness of sins' is to go to 'πάντα τὰ ἔθνη,' and it is to begin 'from Jerusalem.' The apostles, however, are to remain in Jerusalem (only) until they receive the heavenly power." He does not even mention Acts 1:8 in this respect, except to call it, remarkably, "inconsequential in view of the overall soteriological plan of Luke-Acts." Uncongenial to Sanders' thesis is the fact that Luke lays out Acts in such a way that Acts 1:8 comes first and Acts 28:25-28 last, not the other way around.

[123] Tiede, "'Glory to thy People Israel," 28: "The last word is always about Israel, not only in Acts 28…Far from concluding that God or the Messiah or the apostles are done with Israel, the whole of the narrative rather demonstrates that even the Gentile mission is fundamental to God's determination to deal with a willful Israel." *Contra* Sanders, "Salvation of the Jews," 109: "…Paul's final speech, the meaning of which is that *it is inherent in being Jewish to be incapable of understanding* (especially the gospel) and that God therefore sends his missionaries to the Gentiles, who *are* capable of understanding" (emphasis added).

[124] In the way that Acts suggests that Gentile receptivity may *provoke* the jealousy of some Jews, Luke is not far from what we find in the Paul of the letters (cf. Rom 9-11).

Among some Jews in Acts, what arguably drives "jealousy" and violent opposition to Paul's ministry is their allergy to the potential role of Gentile salvation in the restoration of Israel and fulfillment of God's scriptural promises. Though such a justification for Jewish resistance is hinted at throughout Acts,[125] it emerges most clearly with Paul's arrest and subsequent defense speech in Jerusalem (Acts 21-22). What seems to incite the "Jews from Asia" (with help from their Jerusalem brethren) is Paul's claim that the Lord Jesus sent Paul to the Gentiles in partial fulfillment of the Messiah's work (22:21). Paul himself verifies this later in his speech before Agrippa, when he clarifies the reason for the Jews' violent opposition—namely, that Paul had preached repentance and "conversion" (turning) to Gentiles as well as Jews. The problem, it would seem, is not that Jews do not on principle accept Gentiles among the saved—the constant presence of "proselytes" and "God-fearing Greeks" in the synagogues in Acts[126] proves otherwise—but that Gentiles must in essence become Jews in order to share in salvation, an objection they likely shared with some believing Jews (cf. 10:28; 11:2-3; 15:1, 5). If Gentiles were somehow given equal access to God's promises (15:11), without having to take on the legal conditions that went with it, much of the framework of Jewish identity would be compromised: God's covenant with ethnic Israel, the gatekeeping role of the Mosaic law

[125] Though the present chapter has focused primarily on Paul's half of Acts (chs. 13-28), and what is unique about Luke's account of Paul, it is important to recognize that our preliminary findings find support in a pivotal passage about Jesus from Luke's Gospel (4:25-27). In fact, the degree of opposition by synagogue members to Jesus in Nazareth (4:28-29)—which has long puzzled scholars—is similar to what we find throughout Acts with respect to Paul. This is no accident, arguably. Furthermore, the reasons behind Jewish opposition to Paul that have been traced so far may retrospectively illuminate the reasons for the opposition Jesus faces. It is only after Jesus highlights the opposition by local Jews ("no prophet is welcome in his hometown")—and then goes on to emphasize the outreach of Elijah and Elisha to *Gentiles*—that the crowd becomes enraged and attempts to kill him. Just like Acts 21-22, Luke 4:25-29 suggests that the violent opposition of some Jews stems from the favor God shows to Gentiles (as Gentiles) and what this means for the Messiah's mission.

[126] cf. Acts 10:2, 22; 13:16; 26, 43; 17:4, 14; cf. 13:50; 16:14; 18:7.

(circumcision, etc.), and the hierarchy of access mapped by the Jerusalem temple (21:28; cf. 6:13). Resistance among Jews to the favor Paul seems to show to Gentiles, therefore, is understandable within the world sketched by Luke.

As ethnically Jewish himself, Paul embodies everything wrong with the Christian "sect," according to Jews in Luke's narrative world. Not only does he indicate that the Messiah of Israel is a crucified and resurrected Jesus who is still alive, but he insists that the Messiah's mission is to bring Gentiles into God's people without full legal requirements. In addition, by repeatedly highlighting Jewish opposition to his message—and contrasting it with Gentile receptivity ("*they* will listen")—Luke's Paul seems to commend to unbelieving Jews the faith of the Gentiles (cf. 15:9). For Paul, the receptivity of the Gentiles points to the fulfillment of the Messiah's mission to restore the kingdom *to Israel*. The dissonance created by this claim, along with the rumors about his bringing Gentiles into the temple and teaching Jews to apostasize, leads to unfettered outrage among some Jews. They are not "jealous" out of petty envy over crowd sizes, but "zealous" for the covenant which they understand to be mediated by ethnic descent and Mosaic regulation.

Given these findings, neither Sanders view of Israel's rejection nor Jervell's view of Israel's restoration is entirely sustainable.[127] Luke is by no means finished with the

[127] See Richard, "The Divine Purpose," 197-199: "The schema that sees the rejection of the gospel by the Jews as providing the impetus for the Gentile mission is not supported by a reading of Luke-Acts as a whole. Such a view attempts to impose upon Acts a very doubtful pattern of "rejection/Gentile-mission" by relying on surprisingly few data: the rejections at Antioch, Corinth, and Rome. To do this one must of necessity isolate the three verses (13:46; 18:6; 28:28) from their contexts. Methodologically this is suspect, since none of these occurs at the conclusion of its respective episode…Jervell's contrasting proposal, that the reception of the gospel by repentant Israel precedes and forms the basis of the Gentile mission, encounters similar objections. While he is correct in emphasizing the significance of mass Jewish conversions throughout Acts, his insistence upon the prior nature of the mission to the Jews and upon the

Jews, and Paul continues to welcome "all" who come to him (28:30). Yet Israel's restoration (1:11; 3:21) is clearly incomplete, according to Acts, even though it has begun and the salvation of the Gentiles plays a crucial part in its fulfillment (15:13-21). Ultimately, Luke frames Paul's "turning" to the Gentiles as a reflection of the Isaianic Servant-Messiah's mission (13:46-47), in which Paul and Barnabas participate. The work of "restoring the tribes of Jacob and gathering the dispersion of Israel" (Isa 49:6a; Acts 1:8) remains connected to "bearing light to the Gentiles and bringing salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isa 49:6b; Acts 13:47; 26:23), in accordance with Israel's scriptures (Luke 24:46; Acts 26:22). Rejection of Paul's ministry by Jews only *reveals* the integrity of universal salvation and the Messiah's restorative work; it does not cause it. Indeed, Luke ensures that readers know that God's scriptural promises (concerning Isaiah's "Servant") stand behind the "turn" to the Gentiles. Moreover, that these Gentiles "will listen" when many Jews will not only confirms the validity of the turn itself and presents to the Jews

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incorporation of Gentiles as an associate people within repentant Israel is questionable at best. The theme "Israel first" is only partly temporal. The gospel is announced first to the jews and of course early Christians were principally Jewish; however, this theme must be related to that of *how* salvation comes to the nations. It is the jewish character and medium of salvation that is of fundamental importance here (also Acts 3:25-26). Further, his concept of the church as a "new" Israel consisting of repentant Jews and believing Gentiles rests upon very debatable and selective evidence and on too great a desire for continuity in salvation history….even in the rejection of the gospel, Israel continues to be called *laos* ("people," Acts 28:26-27), while converted Gentiles also constitute a *laos* (15:14). The relationship of Judaism to Christianity is considerably more complex and less (199) defined than Jervell would have it. Neither rejection nor acceptance of the gospel is a negligible factor in Luke's scheme of things, but instead of viewing these as major agents of salvation, one should see them as facets of the gradual unfolding of the divine plan, unmistakably revealed in the sacred scriptures…." Cf. Awwad, "The Death of Jesus," 145-146: "I wish to propose that the origin of the Gentile mission in Luke-Acts is to be found neither in the Jewish acceptance nor rejection of the gospel, but in Jesus' commissioning of a mission to the Gentiles in his 'name' that is proclaimed in Jerusalem in accordance with the plan of God as it is attested to in the Scriptures (cf. Lk. 24:46-47) …When Jesus commissions and validates the Gentile mission and its proclamation in Jerusalem, he is announcing that the messianic promises are now being realized."

of Luke's world a model for imitation (cf. Luke 4:25-27). The conversion of the Gentiles, to the believing member of Israel, signals the fulfillment of *Israel's* prophetic promises.

4.7 Conclusions

This chapter has argued that the ministry of Paul has a special place in the development of Luke's narrative christology of universal witness. First, in the way that Luke frames his account of Paul (Luke 24:47; Acts 26:23) as a participation in the fulfillment of the Lord Jesus' (apostolic) commission, Luke positions Paul as the primary fulfiller of the messianic mission "to the end of the earth" (1:8:13:47; Isa 49:6). Readers are primed to recognize in the mission of Paul to "all nations" the unfolding of the Lordship of Jesus over all. Second, Luke situates Paul's ministry in the context of Jerusalem exiles and inter-ethnic church of Syrian Antioch (11:19-26; 13:1-3), a community that effectively takes the place of Jerusalem in the spread of the word and serves as a kind of social explication of Jesus' universal Lordship. Third, Luke brings together the apostolic and Pauline storylines in Acts 15, the pivotal chapter in Acts' construal of a christology of universal witness. Peter's speech (15:7-11), James' exegesis (15:13-21), and the Apostolic Decree (15:23-29) all attest the coherence of Gentile salvation with Israel's scriptures and God's ancient purposes (without the requirement of proselytism). A condition for the restoration of Israel, Acts 15 shows, is the ingathering of the Gentiles *as Gentiles*. The way in which the apostles, Jerusalem leaders, and "whole church" reach these conclusions, in addition to adding blessing and authority to Paul's ministry in the Diaspora, provides a model for how Luke thinks *unbelieving* Jews ought to respond to Jesus' messianic Lordship. Fourth and finally, most Jews do not react positively to Paul's preaching; in fact, their "jealousy" and violent opposition is nearly

ubiquitous in Acts. Though the reason is not always self-evident, Paul's arrest (21:27-33), defense speeches (22:1-21, 26:1-23; cf. 13:45-47), and Jewish reactions to them (22:22; 26:21) make it clear (retrospectively) that Jewish opposition is driven by the rejection of the salvation of Gentiles as Gentiles as part of the messianic mission *to Israel*. Thus, the familiar passages in which Luke seems to link Jewish rejection of Paul with Paul's turn to the Gentiles (13:47; 18:6; 28:28) are not causal—Paul is not forced to go to the Gentiles because of recalcitrant Jews—but rather these passages confirm and clarify (especially for readers) how the Messiah's mission to Israel is advanced by the receptivity and salvation of Gentiles and serves to fulfill Israel's scriptures (13:47).

In short, at stake in the opposition of Jews in Acts is Luke's christology and its rootedness in universal witness. Like Peter in the P-C episode, Jews must come to terms with what God is doing among Gentiles: does it reflect God's surprising will (Peter/elders/apostles/Paul) or is it a threat to the boundaries by which Jewish identity has traditionally been marked (circumcision/law/temple)? The answer to that question centers around different "reasoning" with respect to Israel's scriptures, and it is clear on which side Luke stands. The apostles and Paul eventually affirm the favor God shows to Gentiles, while most Jews in Acts reject such a possibility on the basis of its threatening implications for Jewish self-conception. In this way, Luke characterizes Jewish rejection in Acts as the negative side of Peter's positive declaration. If recognizing God's work among the Gentiles is inescapably a recognition of Jesus' universal Lordship, then the failure of recognition by Jews proves the converse true—namely, to deny that God wills the salvation of Gentiles along with the Jews is to deny the identity of Jesus as "Lord and

Messiah" (2:36). To accept Jesus as Messiah requires the conviction that he is Lord of all people, Jews as well as Gentiles.

To put our conclusions into the terminology of Luke's christological titles, from Chapter 1, Jewish opposition to the Christian way in Acts—and primarily in Paul's half of the book (chs. 13-28)—reinforces the link between "Messiah" and universal "Lord." In the way Luke narrates the consistent rejection by Jews of Paul's preaching of resurrection and outreach to Gentiles, he depicts how rejecting the universal scope of Paul's outreach effectively reveals—in a negative light—how the identity of the Messiah Jesus is revealed and discovered through boundless mission (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 26:22-23).

Another way to understand this: Luke uses the first half of Acts (1-10) to freight the term κύριος with universal significance (cf. 10:36). With that framework in place, the second half of Acts—concerned primarily with Paul's outreach—presents a narrative construal of the way πάντων κύριος in turn (re)configures the particularity of χριστός. By the end of Acts, to accept Jesus as "Messiah" of Israel is to accept that his mission necessarily includes the Gentiles as Gentiles as well. Consistent Jewish opposition to the messianic claims about Jesus, therefore, indicates that Jews by and large reject the notion that Gentile salvation is a crucial piece in their own hopes of restoration.

5. Conclusion: Christology of Universal Witness

The "problem" this dissertation has sought to address lies, in a sense, *between* the Bible and mission. At least since William Carey's 1792 treatise,[1] Protestant missions have emphasized the mandate in Jesus' words from Matthew 28:19 to "go and make disciples of all nations." The rediscovery[2] of Jesus' commission in the midst of a colonial era contributed to the notion that the primary biblical model for Christian mission was obedience to a dominical command. As a result, Matthew 28:18-20 has had a singular influence in shaping the imagination of Christians over the last several centuries, serving as Western Christianity's preeminent biblical impetus for the practice and theology of mission.[3] That the three last verses of Matthew's Gospel are regularly termed the "Great Commission" is probably proof enough of their outsized impact.[4] Potentially fitting hand-

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[1] *An Enquiry*. Though Carey proved the most influential for taking dominical commands as applicable in the present day, he had antecedents like John Donne (1622), who preached on Acts 1:8 to members of the Virginia Company: "The acts of the apostles was to convey that name of Christ Jesus, and to propagate his Gospel throughout the whole world. Beloved, you too are actors on this same stage. The end of the earth is your scene. Act out the acts of the apostles. Be a light to the Gentiles who sit in darkness. Be content to carry him over these seas, who dried up one Red Sea for his first people and who has poured out another red sea-his own blood-for them and for us." Cited in Timothy George, "Reading Acts with the Reformers," *First Things* (May 5, 2014) https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/05/reading-acts-with-the-reformers. Accessed Dec. 20, 2018.

[2] Cf. Bosch, "The Structure of Mission," 74-78. For early views (and at least until William Carey) that limited the application of Matt 28:18-20 to the original generation of apostles, see, e.g., Tertullian, *De Fug*. 6, and John Calvin, *Harmony*, I.291, 295-6.

[3] Boer, *Pentecost and Missions,* 27. Citing mission luminaries no less than John Mott and Gustav Warneck, Boer argues, "it is clear that the Great Commission has been the dominant motivation to missionary witness during the most flourishing and productive period in the century and a half that have elapsed since Carey published his *Enquiry* in 1792…Does our knowledge of the missionary mind and activity of the early Church bear out the thesis that the Great Commission was for her the foundation of the gospel witness in the sense in which this has been the case during the past one hundred and fifty years?" Boer's study answers this question in the negative.

[4] Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, 18-27. Indeed, many surveys of mission in Acts take it for granted that the "core" of Jesus' evangelistic charge was what we find in Matt 28 and the others are but variations on that single theme. In some cases, this approach justifies itself by tying Matt 28:18-20 to Mark 16:15, even though most scholars now agree that the latter is a much later addition, itself influenced by the original commissions found in Matt, Luke, and John. Note that Senior and Stuhlmueller assign Matt 28:18-20—at least going by the air time they give this passage—almost twice the level of importance as other "commissions," including Luke 24:46-48 and Acts 1:8 combined, as does Schnabel (*Early Christian*

in-glove with colonial expansion, the Matthean Jesus' commission implicitly encouraged Christians to export Western Christianity and culture to "the nations" of the world.[5] So firm has this passage's grasp on the Christian imagination been that it is hardly possible any longer to imagine Jesus' words as *not* applicable to modern Christians. In fact, it would be unsurprising if most Christians answered the question "why mission?" with a simple reply that distilled the "Great Commission" down to its core: "because Jesus said so."

The purpose of this dissertation has not been to offer an alternative reading of Matthew 28:18-20, nor to assail its suitability as a biblical warrant for mission.[6] The last three verses of Matthew's Gospel are inescapably part of the canon of Christian scripture, even if too great an emphasis on the Matthean commission can actually undermine the Christian canon by muting the complementary "commissions" in Luke or John. This dissertation, rather, has attempted to draw special attention to the Lukan vision, which is not only oriented by an equivalent "commission" (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8) but also offers a book-length narrative construal of the fulfillment of that commission. Certainly, Matthew's "mandate" model and Luke's model are not mutually exclusive but complementary, especially within a canonical context.[7] By discerning the unique aspects

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Mission, 1:348-386); cf. more popularly, John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 22-25; or the "Lausanne Covenant" which privileges the notion of mission as obedience, especially in light of competing ecumenical statements that seek to soften the missionary mandate.

[5] See the survey of Bosch, "The Structure of Mission" and idem, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991): 57-84, 357-371. Cf. also Boer, *Pentecost and Missions,* 15-27.

[6] cf. George Hunsberger, "Is There Biblical Warrant for Evangelism?" in *The Study of Evangelism,* ed. Paul Chilcote and Laceye Warner (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008) 59-72.

[7] Nor should the contrast in agency between a "mandate" model and Luke's vision be overemphasized, since Luke too emphasizes the collusion of human actors in the fulfillment of messianic promises (cf. Acts 13:47; 26:16-23).

of Luke's vision, however, this study has brought attention to the way Luke undercuts some of the modern binaries associated with a mission history overly influenced by a certain reading of Matthew's commission.

5.1 Summary

The thesis of this dissertation asserted that Luke sets universal witness within a broader claim about the identity of Israel's Messiah. Framed by Luke 24:46-48 (and Acts 26:22-23), the book of Acts narratively construes the unfolding universality of the Christian movement as the unfolding of the universality of Jesus' Lordship (Chapter 1). The "Lukan Commission," moreover, rooted in a prophetic promise, prefigures the role of Acts in narratively unfolding the identity of Jesus as πάντων κύριος (Acts 10:36). Universal proclamation of salvation in Acts—implicitly by Jesus and explicitly by his witnesses—narratively realizes the universality of Jesus' Lordship. Luke's second volume reconfigures the narrative sense of "presence" and "activity" on the basis of Jesus' exaltation to heaven and Lordship over the Spirit (cf. 2:17-36). Especially as the "word" spreads beyond Jerusalem and the Jewish people, the Lord Jesus' influence on the unfolding of universal witness becomes pronounced (Chapter 2). Though the apostles receive Jesus' commission, their outreach is generally restricted to Jews in Jerusalem. Not until the Cornelius incident (Acts 10:1-11:18) does the universal vision of Jesus' commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) intersect with apostolic witness, which is why Luke gives the episode almost unparalleled emphasis (cf. 11:5-17; 15:7-11). In this respect, the event proves paradigmatic for Luke's coordination of christological identity and universal witness (Chapter 3), establishing Jesus' messianic identity as "Lord of all" (10:36). The full scope of Jesus' identity is what participants in witness must *discover* in their

encounter with the (ethnically) "other" (ἀλλόφυλος). This theological breakthrough lies behind Paul's outreach in the Diaspora and finds expression in the makeup of the Syrian Antioch community, itself the basis for Paul's outreach to Jews and Gentiles everywhere (Chapter 4). In endorsing Antioch's ministry, Peter, James, and the Jerusalem believers "model" for unbelieving Jews the proper interpretation of the salvation of the Gentiles in relation to Israel's hopes (Acts 15). Jesus' identity as universal Lord helps explain Paul's "turn" to the Gentiles (13:46; 18:6; 28:28) less as a result of Jewish rejection than as a fulfillment of the Messiah's work as outlined in scripture (1:8; 13:47). The receptivity of Gentiles to Paul's preaching provokes Paul's Jewish audiences even as it models proper receptivity to the universality of Jesus' Lordship. The present study confirms that for Luke mission is *how Jesus himself realizes the universal scope of his messianic Lordship both through, and occasionally in spite of, his witnesses*. Universal witness, the responsibility of the scriptural Messiah, becomes a means for expanding the witnesses' comprehension of the scope of Jesus' Lordship in light of God's work among the Gentiles. For Jewish believers, this meant accepting the reconfiguration of χριστός in light of the (narrative) expansion of his identity as πάντων κύριος.

5.2 Implications

In the course of this dissertation, several implications have emerged for how Luke thinks about participation in witness with a view to modern mission theology and practice.

1. *Universal proclamation of salvation is the responsibility of the Messiah rather than merely an obligation which his followers carry out in his absence.* Colonial-era missions found in Matt 28:18-20 a "pedagogical imperative" to enter nations without

invitation and, with divine sanction, remedy their pagan ignorance. Luke's vision of universal witness represents one way the NT canon "talks back" against the anthropological portrait of mission as what Western Christians *do* to the rest of the world.[8] The presumption of "one-way traffic" in Christian mission has thankfully dissipated, though many of the attendant notions of cultural superiority persist. Admittedly, Luke also envisions an expansive ethnic and geographical horizon for Christian mission, but because his vision is anchored in the unfolding identity of Jesus as "Lord of all," the anthropological mandate to civilize the nations is nowhere in view. In this way, recovering a distinctly Lukan voice in the Christian canon restores the christological core of biblical mission even as it balances[9] excessive reliance on the mandate model represented by the "Great Commission."

In many ways, the shift from Matthew to Luke corresponds with a shift in mission theology over the last century which has resulted in the recognition of the priority of the *missio Dei* and the origin of mission within the triune life of God.[10] Luke's construal of mission reflects this trend, adding to it the language of *missio Christi* (Acts 26:23), and puts the emphasis on the relationship between universal witness and the identity of Jesus as universal Lord. Thus, in Acts, because the obedience of Jesus' witnesses is

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[8] Mousa Dube, "'Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations' (Matt 28:19a). A Postcolonial Perspective
on Biblical Criticism and Pedagogy," in *Teaching the Bible*: *The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, ed. by Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 224-246.
[9] Moreover, to give some perspective on the imbalance, Luke's narrative construal of mission arguably covers around 28% of the New Testament, far in excess of the three last verses of Matthew's Gospel.
[10] Stephen R. Holmes, "Trinitarian Missiology: Towards a Theology of God as Missionary," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8.1 (Jan 2006): 72-90. Cf. also the helpful summary of John Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity,* Missio Dei, *Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 1-77.

downplayed, the primary emphasis falls on *the signification of the act of witness itself*, how it indicates the scriptural identity of Jesus as "light for the revelation of the Gentiles and glory for Israel" (Luke 2:32). Participation in witness fulfills God's plans even as it provides the opportunity to be newly formed by those plans.

2. *"Witness" refers not only to the apostles as eyewitness to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, but to the testimony of Jesus' followers and—most surprisingly—to the role of Jesus' servants in experiencing what the exalted Lord Jesus continues to do*. That Luke works with a dual-voice definition of μάρτυς is hardly controversial. "Witness" is both (passive) eyewitness to events (like Jesus' death and resurrection; cf. 1:21-22) and (active) testimony delivered to Jews and Gentiles (cf. 13:31). The former is associated with the end of Luke's Gospel and the kerygma concerning Jesus' death and resurrection, while the latter is associated with the apostles' preaching in Jerusalem and Paul's ministry in the Diaspora. What this study has revealed, however, is that "witness" in the passive sense (of "eyewitness") *also* regularly characterizes the apostles' participation in universal salvation (cf. 8:14-17; 11:22-24; 15:7-11, 13-21). That is, as the "Word" spreads beyond Jerusalem, opportunities arise for the apostles especially to recognize God at work in Samaria and Caesarea and Syrian Antioch. The prevenience of the Spirit's advent in these places and among new peoples creates a tension which only the "eyewitness" experience of apostles and Jerusalem believers can resolve. Even Paul, one recalls, is commissioned as a witness to "the things in which you have seen me and to those in which *I will appear to you*" (26:16). Because Jesus continues to be active, witness requires receptivity to the new things the exalted Lord is doing and will do beyond the witness's immediate horizons.

In this respect, the Lukan commission has more than a dual-meaning (i.e., you have been witnesses, now go bear witness). The apostles are told by Jesus "you *will be* my witnesses" (1:8), a promise ordinarily taken in the active sense—"you will bear witness to me." Having explored Acts at length, this narrative study has shown that the verb ἔσεσθε (1:8) may retrospectively be a promise about *becoming* witnesses to what Jesus will do in the future rather than only events in the past. The periodization of Luke-Acts according to discrete epochs, which puts Jesus in the middle but not the end, naturally overlooks this possible shading of the Lukan Commission. As was shown, however, the pivotal scenes of Acts for construing Jesus' universal Lordship (10, 11, 15) revolve around the capacity of believers to "witness" the new thing that God is doing through Jesus and by the Spirit. In fact, as Luke tells it, the crucial "testimony" Peter offers in Acts is the one that convinces Jerusalem believers (11:5-17) and the "whole church" (15:7-11) of what God did *after* Jesus' commission. By the end of Acts it is the receptivity of Gentiles to Jesus that stands as testimony to Jews of God's purposes come to fruition. Again and again the focus of Luke's account is how Jews—believing and unbelieving—respond to the fact of Gentile salvation and receptivity. In effect, Peter and Paul especially *become* (eye)witnesses to what God is doing among Gentiles in fulfillment of God's purposes for Israel and the world. Indeed, unless they witness among Gentiles the same Spirit that was at work among Jewish believers (Acts 2), their grasp of Jesus' identity as Messiah of Israel remains incomplete.

3. *Luke's vision of universal witness undercuts persistent dichotomies that characterize Christian mission work even today.* Where an anthropological emphasis in mission continues—as in the "mandate" to make disciples of all nations—it rather easily

invites binary thinking. Mission defined primarily by what one does in response to a command, in essence, *requires* the identification of who is saved and who is not. On this view, "conversion" is only something that *non-Christians* "others"[11] experience upon turning to right belief. Therefore, the obedience model of mission presupposes and encodes in mission practice a number of static dichotomies (missionary/missionized, saved/lost, true/false, us/them, etc.).[12] Such binaries continue to influence Christian practice in countless ways—paternalistic beneficence, Euro-tribal attitudes toward "foreigners," neo-colonial ethnic and racial assumptions, and so on.

To be clear, like all NT authors, Luke has a strong sense of the rightness of the tradition out of which he writes, decrying paganism and its "ignorance" (cf. 17:23, 30). There is no doubt that Gentile religion is false, according to Luke. But the terms the Lukan Paul applies to the Gentiles Luke also applies to the behavior of Jews (cf. Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17; 13:27). More to the point, in the P-C episode (Acts 10:1-11:18), it is the misunderstanding of the *Jewish apostle* Peter that is in need of correcting rather than

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[11] Green, "Doing Repentance," 18-19: "Cornelius is converted, to be sure, but so are Peter and those of the Jerusalem community—Cornelius, in the sense that he moves from his position as a God-fearer on the margins of the Jewish religion to full membership within the community of God's people for whom Jesus is Lord; Peter and the Jerusalem community to a fuller understanding of their newly embraced life-world, expressed in the confession that Jesus is, indeed, 'Lord of all' (Acts 10:34-36)."

[12] Paul Kollman, "At the Origins of Mission and Missiology: A Study in the Dynamics of Religious Language," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 79.2 (June 2011): 425–458. To take an obscure example, cf. the language of Harold Dollar, writing on the Cornelius incident (*St. Luke's Missiology: A Cross-Cultural Challenge* [Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1996], a condensed version of his 1990 doctoral dissertation: "A Biblical-Missiological Exploration of the Cross-cultural Dimensions in Luke-Acts"), 147: "the conversion of evangelizer precedes conversion of the lost." According to Luke, however, lostness cuts both ways.

[12] Green, "Doing Repentance," 18-19: "Cornelius is converted, to be sure, but so are Peter and those of the Jerusalem community—Cornelius, in the sense that he moves from his position as a God-fearer on the margins of the Jewish religion to full membership within the community of God's people for whom Jesus is Lord; Peter and the Jerusalem community to a fuller understanding of their newly embraced life-world, expressed in the confession that Jesus is, indeed, 'Lord of all' (Acts 10:34-36)."

simply the pagan ignorance of Cornelius (who is by most accounts quite pious). In fact, one of the many takeaways from this pivotal episode and its retellings is the *similarity* between Jewish believers and Gentile believers. As Peter and other Jewish believers remark (10:45, 47; 11:15-17; 15:9-10), by receiving the Holy Spirit these (uncircumcised) Gentiles are "just like us." Peter's final words go even further by claiming that *Jewish* believers are saved by "the grace of the Lord Jesus, *just like they* [Gentiles] *are*" (15:11). Central to Luke's vision, at least where the P-C episode is concerned, is the dissolution of such us-them distinctions. The key crisis for believing Jews (and, in a way, for unbelieving Jews) in Acts is the acceptance of uncircumcised (law-exempt) Gentiles as equal members of God's people alongside Jews.

This dissertation has found that Luke's narrative construal of mission works to qualify static binaries, even if they are never entirely dissolved in Acts. In fact, the force of the P-C episode is predicated upon the enduring *difference* between Jews and Gentiles. What makes the Cornelius incident so important is the foundation it lays for Luke's new definition of "people" (15:14), rooted in the commonality of identity (15:23) under one Lord Jesus Christ (15:26).[13] Difference—and specifically *Christian* difference—remains essential, but never essentialized.

4. Luke's vision focuses on the transformation of Jewish witnesses in the process of mission, so that mutual discovery rather than simply the conversion of the "other"

[13] See the important theological reading of Acts by Willie James Jennings, *Acts* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017), which resonate with some of the findings of this dissertation. Other resources like Marion Grau's *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society and Subversion* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2011) is also illuminating, though it tends to get swallowed up in postcolonial jargon and largely leaves questions about the Bible to the side.

characterizes universal witness. The implicit normative assumption that Jesus' commission to his *Jewish* witnesses passes, unchanged, to predominately *Gentile* believers of every age[14] should not be overlooked. In transposing a *Jewish* commission to reach Jews and Gentiles, the radicalness of the commission is at risk of being mitigated and, worse, the particularity of Jewish identity associated with it effaced.[15] Therefore, the appropriation of Luke's vision of mission must be conducted with a close eye on its ethnically particular[16] context, namely how Luke binds witness to all nations with the fulfillment of scriptural promises concerning Israel's restoration. It has been argued that Luke's vision of mission does not exchange particularity for universality but inflects Jewish particularity in a way that brings Gentile particularity into itself. If modern Gentile Christians hear "you will be my witnesses" as a direct commission to themselves, then special attention needs to be paid to the particularity of that commission in a Jewish-Christian context where Torah-observance is *not* nullified even as Jesus' messianic identity includes, almost paradoxically, Jews as believing Jews and Gentiles as believing Gentiles in *one people of God*. What unites Jews and Gentiles into one people is the grace of the *one* Lord Jesus Christ.

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[14] Cf. Tertullian, *Proscription Against Heretics*, 9: "All the Lord's sayings, indeed, are set forth for all men; through the ears of the Jews have they passed on to us. *Still most of them were addressed to Jewish persons*; they therefore did not constitute instruction properly designed for ourselves, but rather an example."

[15] See the critique of Christian pretensions to "universalism" at the expense of Jewish "particularism" in Daniel Boyarin (*A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 233. See also John Barclay, "Universalism and Particularism: Twin Components of Both Judaism and Early Christianity" in *A Vision for the Church: Studies in Early Christian Ecclesiology in Honour of J.P.M. Sweet,* ed. Markus Bockmuehl and Michael B. Thompson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 207-224; and Buell and Hodge, "The Politics of Interpretation," 235–251.

[16] See the important observations of Jennings, *Acts*, 81-89; and A. G. Honig, *What is Mission?: The Meaning of the Rootedness of the Church in Israel for a Correct Concept of Mission* (Kampen; Kok: In opdracht van de Theologische Hogeschool van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, 1982), esp. 28-29.

Another striking feature of Acts on this score is how the Cornelius episode—routinely labeled in commentaries as the "conversion of Cornelius"—is actually narrated in a way that chiefly emphasizes the event's consequence for Jewish believers. This finding was confirmed beyond this episode as well. The question for Luke is not "can the Gentiles be saved?" but "how must *Jewish believers* respond to God's saving of Gentiles?" Faced with the new reality of Gentile salvation, Peter (and later all the Jerusalem believers) must decide whether they will absolutize the Jewish framework of the gospel, or whether they will receive the testimony of the Gentile "others" and its theological implications. Peter's speech (10:34-43) communicates the theological implications of this apparent turn in salvation history—God is truly impartial, Jesus is Lord of all, and everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus receives forgiveness of sins in his name.

Though the "conversion" of the Gentiles is a significant motif in Acts, Luke's focus again and again falls on the *implications* of that conversion for Jewish believers. In fact, the narrative's depiction of Peter's obedience to his commission is inverted, since it is precisely in Peter's allegiances to his own understanding of Torah that make him resistant to the revelation of Gentile salvation (and "cleansing") by the Spirit. While the "conversion of the Gentiles" is indeed celebrated by Jewish believers (11:1, 18; 15:4, 12), the narrative does not underscore this phenomenon as Peter's achievement; it happens as much in spite of his witness as because of his witness. To be precise, Luke is not interested in portraying the apostles (like Peter) in an unfavorable light. But the very fact that the narrative does not emphasize their *disobedience*—even Peter's obstacle is Torah-*obedience*—indicates that faithfulness to Jesus' commission falls outside Luke's

interests. At the same time, because human participation in universal witness remains important (God is no divine "puppeteer"), Peter and other believers must *learn* or "catch up" to the Spirit's work among the Gentiles.

Peter's pivotal experience, in the end, focuses on recognizing the expansive identity of the Lord Jesus through the collective witness of the Holy Spirit and the Gentile "other." Acts 10-11 becomes the basis for apostolic *learning* and *transformation*—(re)learning the scope of Jesus' commission even as the scope of Jesus' Lordship comes fully into view. In this respect, Peter is not a paradigm of mission, but *a paradigm of Jewish responses to God's prevenient mission* (*missio Dei*). Consequently, Acts is less a "succession" narrative than has previously been thought, given that Jesus' "witnesses" are successors to a mission that even Jesus himself did not conduct in his lifetime. Peter's "witness" is as much about passively witnessing God's impartiality toward Gentiles and Jews (10:34) as much as it is delivering a saving message to Gentiles (cf. 11:14). After all, the groups persuaded by the P-C episode and its retellings—namely, the "uncircumcised believers" in Caesarea (10:45), the Jewish believers in Jerusalem (11:18), and James/Jerusalem council (15:12-21)—all attribute the acceptance of Gentile salvation as well as free association with them *to the Spirit's descent upon Gentiles*, not Peter's "words of salvation."

In this way, Luke complicates traditional perspectives on "conversion." Conversion is not only something Gentiles must do, but also characterizes the transformation required of Jewish believers to rightly understand Israel's scriptures in continuity with God's plan in the Messiah Jesus. For Peter, as for many a "missionary" perhaps, by witnessing and bearing witness in intercultural contexts, Jesus' identity as

"Lord of all" may be discovered, as if for the first time. Mission remains an activity undertaken by Christian disciples, but because Luke's *primary* narrative way of construing mission is within a christological frame, participation in mission entails a kind of *discovery* of Jesus' identity rather than simply delivering "others" from the emptiness of their false religion. Further, the mission encounter may itself be crucial for revealing the ethnic and cultural captivity of one's own conception of the gospel,[17] even to the point of pressing the "insider" toward a transformed christological understanding because of the *witness* of the "outsider."

A Lukan vision of mission emphasizes *the transformation of Jesus' witnesses* through their witnessing of God's acts and the Spirit's work. The language of "repentance" and "conversion," therefore, applies almost equally well to Jesus' disciples in Acts as it does to the Gentiles they encounter (cf. Acts 26:16-23). While Luke's vision does not wholly undercut mission-as-mandate, it certainly complicates it by showing how Jesus' witnesses themselves require transformation in order to recognize what *God* is doing among the nations. As Joel Green has concluded,

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[17] Amos Yong, "The Spirit of Hospitality: Pentecostal Perspectives toward a Performative Theology of Interreligious Encounter," *Missiology: An International Review* 35.1 (Jan 2007): 60: "The lesson to be learned [from Acts 10-11] is that it is precisely in and through his encounter with Cornelius that Peter's self-understanding is transformed. The dialogical relationship between those "inside" and "outside" the faith resulted in the changed lives of both the missionized and the missionary. I suggest that this intersubjective process characterizes the relationships of those operating under the indigenous principle." Cf. Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 180: "In our contact with people who do not acknowledge Jesus as Lord, our first business, our first privilege, is to seek out and to welcome all the reflections of that one true light in the lives of those we meet"; and Pascal D. Bazzell ("Who is Our Cornelius Today?" in *The State of Missiology Today: Global Innovations in Christian Witness,* ed. Charles E. Van Engen [Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016], 124: "In conclusion, Christian mission *with* the people is about being co-pilgrims in faith with the other, together seeking and proclaiming who God is. Consequently, mission is not only about *giving* but also *receiving*, not only about *evangelizing* but also *being evangelized*. Mission becomes sharing *to* and hearing *from* the mystery work of the triune God in the other in order to participate *with* God's mission."

> [t]he practice of the church in Acts was, finally, to welcome Gentiles into their communities with a status equal to that of existing members. Jesus' ministry had paved the way for such a practice, as had his missionary directive [Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8]. However, this became so only as Jesus' followers involved themselves in witness, engaging with persons outside their own number, and came to embrace more fully the terms of their own faith. By engagement with persons at the 'end of the earth,' they were pressed in the direction of end-of-the-earth thinking. Having embraced God's perspective on things, having relocated themselves in the story-line of God's ancient purpose, they found themselves in a process of transformation, being shaped so as more faithfully to incarnate this life-world.[18]

Acts 10-15, the christological and missiological heart of the book of Acts, demonstrates how the machinery of an emerging institution can be brought around to the new thing that God is doing. Indeed, it can be a liberating admission for the church to recognize that God's purposes outpace the church's understanding of its role in mission.

5. Luke's vision of universal witness counters the basic presupposition that missiology (and ecclesiology) is simply derivative of, or secondary to, christology. Because of the anthropological focus implied by Matthew's commission—mission is what *people* do—christology becomes something that always and necessarily precedes missiology. In other words, to be able to make disciples through baptism and instruction implies already a certain epistemological division between insiders and outsiders to a tradition. Christology, in this scenario, is something those sent on missions already *know* so mission is what Christians do with that knowledge—share it with others, forming outsiders into insiders ("making disciples of all nations"). But a two-step model—first christology, then missiology (or ecclesiology)—is not the only model of mission; indeed,

[18] Green, "Doing Repentance," 19.

as I have argued, Luke construes christology and missiology as closer to coefficients, often defined in relation to one another.[19]

While it is true that the apostolic commission comes *after* Jesus' resurrection and depends on it, upon closer review, the "Lukan Commission" is more than a summons to proclaim him abroad. The simplistic distinction between Luke's Gospel being about Jesus and Acts about his followers proves unhelpful.[20] Indeed, the standard account of the relation between Luke's two volumes, as moving from Jesus to his witnesses or, in traditional terms, from "christology" to "missiology," can even be hermeneutically problematic.[21] Nowhere is that more obvious than in the Lukan commission (Luke 24:46-48), where the christological identity of Jesus forms the broader claim within which universal witness is nested. Jesus' witnesses do not simply go forth to publish his name abroad—though they do that as well—but in the process of encountering the nations they also discover more deeply the scope of Jesus' Lordship. The linking of christology and missiology provides a crucial and corrective framework that has historically limited

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[19] Among many possible examples of scholars who may see in Lukan christology-missiology progressive steps, see Darrell Bock, *Proclamation*, 278; Bo Reicke, "Risen Lord," 158; or Dollar, *St. Luke's Missiology*.

[20] The traditional title (Irenaeus, 2nd century)—"Acts of the Apostles"—contributes to this impression though, it should be remembered, this is not the title which "Luke" included with the book itself.

[21] See Wright, "Truth with a Mission," 4-15. Wright understands the yoked claims of Jesus passion/resurrection (Luke 24:46), on the one hand, and universal witness through the preaching of repentance/forgiveness in his name (24:47), on the other, as distinct categories of biblical fulfillment. Thus Luke 24:46-47 offers a twofold scheme of fulfillment in which Jesus' passion-resurrection is joined to universal witness in his name. In spite of recognizing their conjunction, Wright sharply distinguishes between the christological and the missiological, in part because of his overriding commitment to read the OT missiologically, but also in order to safeguard the OT from unchecked christological interpretations. Wright is hardly alone. Many readers of Acts—and especially those concerned with understanding its relevance for mission theology—read the Lukan commission in a similar way. Wherever modern readers are shaped by an assumptive framework that instinctively reads the separation between christology and mission, such a view is in fact inevitable. By seeking to open the Old Testament up to missiological readings, the christological core of *Luke's* missiology, at least, is circumvented. To take Luke's christology of universal witness seriously is to read mission christologically and christology missiologically.

mission to that which is ancillary, subordinate, and secondary to christology. The ubiquity of this conception, moreover, helps explain why mission has often supported the dichotomies named above and also why mission practice and mission theology have struggled to find their place in the theological encyclopedia.[22]

But this especially Lukan configuration of christology and mission places the act of witness in a context defined by risk. Peter's certainty that his understanding was sufficient was tested in his encounter with Cornelius when he discovered, through the risk of contact and table fellowship, that his previous certainty about social distinctions were actually hampering his ability for deeper theological discovery. He too had to risk what he "knew" in the commerce of mutual witness, thereby discovering that not only do Gentiles stand in different relation to his God than he had imagined but that this relation served to reconfigure his own notions of fellowship and unity with them. As Rowan Williams has noted, "it is *the experience of mission itself* that energizes all Christological reflection" because it "pushes the Church into Christology: it is the attempt to wrestle with the implications of the extraordinary fact that Jesus is apparently 'recognizable' in places where we should expect him to be foreign, inaccessible."[23] Indeed, as Martin

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[22] David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 501-9.

[23] Rowan Williams, "Mission and Christology: J.C. Jones Memorial Lecture," 1994, 13 and 19, respectively. Cf. also 20-21: "There must, in the missionary encounter, be sufficient space for the partner to assimilate what Jesus promises in terms that are not dictated by the Christian speaker. If we too hastily seek to specify such terms, we risk saying that Jesus cannot in fact address the other within the context of their own history and identity. Naturally the *hope* of mission remains visible community, the tangible reality of the sacramental fellowship that is entrusted with the communication of the good news; without this clear focus, linking us to the concrete history of Jesus, making us contemporary with his divine hospitality, the Church is always likely to forget that Jesus is different from the Church, not the Church's possession … Discovering Christology through mission in this way is, of course, discovering *Christ* through mission …" (23) "We pursue mission, because it is in the practice of mission that we find the full truth of Christ for ourselves as, we hope, for others; and we go on doing Christology because it makes sense of mission."

Kähler observed more than a century ago, "mission is the mother of theology."[24] Where these insights into Luke's vision of mission are remembered, mission theology and practice stand on solid, if less plowed, biblical ground.

[24] Colin Yuckman, "Mission and the Book of Acts in a Pluralist Society," *Missiology: An International Review* 47.2 (April 2019): 104-120. Cf. 112: "What results is a kind of christology of universal witness, which cuts across traditional binary modes of mission and puts all on equal footing as those in need of repentance and forgiveness, including and maybe especially the 'witnesses' themselves. Luke construes christology in the unfolding of universal witness itself so that Jesus' identity as Lord of all is *learned* by intercultural encounter as much as it is *delivered* by missionary proclamation. In an age when world Christianity—rather than 'global Christendom'—reflects the intercultural origins of the Christian 'way' (Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22), we are reminded that at stake in Christian witness among cultures is the very question of who Jesus is. If indeed he is 'Lord of all' (Acts 10:36), it is more than a propositional claim to be passed on to others in the name of missionary obligation. Rather, Jesus' universal Lordship is a reality to be endlessly discovered through intercultural witness, so that witness becomes the epistemological premise of faith itself. 'You will be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8) is an invitation above all to find out, with Peter and the Hellenistic Jewish believers, that 'the God whose presence calls forth a distinctive form of doxology in one culture is the same God whose mercy calls forth grateful praise as well from other cultures, in other forms' [Jim Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love: New Testament Resources for a Missional Hermeneutic* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998), 24]."

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Biography

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