



VOLUME 2

ACTS

AN EXEGETICAL
COMMENTARY

3:1–14:28

CRAIG S. KEENER

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CRAIG S. KEENER



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The working bibliography for the entire commentary and indexes for the first two volumes may be found on the enclosed CD-ROM.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ancient Sources

Note: Works are listed under their traditional authors for the sake of locating them, not to stake a position regarding authorship claims.

General

abs.	<i>absoluti</i> , acquitted
amb.	<i>ambusti</i> , undecided
ap.	<i>apud</i> , in (quoted in)
Bk.	Book
damn.	<i>damnati</i> , condemned
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
<i>ed. princ.</i>	<i>editio princeps</i>
epil.	epilogue
ext.	external
frg(s).	fragment(s)
intro.	introduction
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
MS(s)	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
Murat. Canon	Muratorian Canon
NT	New Testament
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orations</i> (except in <i>Sib. Or.</i>)
OT	Old Testament
par.	parallel
pr.	<i>principium</i>
praef.	<i>praefatio</i>
pref.	preface
prol.	prologue
Q	Quelle (hypothetical common source for Matthew and Luke)
rec.	recension
Sp.	Spell
Sup.	Supplement(s)
v./vv.	verse/verses

Old Testament

Gen	Genesis
Exod	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Num	Numbers
Deut	Deuteronomy
Josh	Joshua
Judg	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1–2 Sam	1–2 Samuel
1–2 Kgs	1–2 Kings
1–2 Chr	1–2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh	Nehemiah
Esth	Esther
Job	Job
Ps(s)	Psalms(s)
Prov	Proverbs
Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Song	Song of Songs/Song of Solomon
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Lam	Lamentations
Ezek	Ezekiel
Dan	Daniel
Hos	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obad	Obadiah
Jonah	Jonah
Mic	Micah
Nah	Nahum
Hab	Habakkuk
Zeph	Zephaniah
Hag	Haggai
Zech	Zechariah
Mal	Malachi

New Testament

Matt	Matthew
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	Acts
Rom	Romans
1–2 Cor	1–2 Corinthians
Gal	Galatians
Eph	Ephesians
Phil	Philippians
Col	Colossians
1–2 Thess	1–2 Thessalonians
1–2 Tim	1–2 Timothy
Titus	Titus
Phlm	Philemon
Heb	Hebrews
Jas	James
1–2 Pet	1–2 Peter
1–3 John	1–3 John
Jude	Jude
Rev	Revelation

Septuagint (LXX)

1–4 Kgdms	1–4 Kingdoms
Ode(s)	Ode(s)

Old Testament Apocrypha

Add Esth	Additions to Esther
Bar	Baruch
Bel	Bel and the Dragon
Ep Jer	Epistle of Jeremiah
1–2 Esd	1–2 Esdras
Jdt	Judith
1–4 Macc	1–4 Maccabees
Pr Man	Prayer of Manasseh
Sg Three	Song of the Three Young Men
Sir	Sirach/Ecclesiasticus
Sus	Susanna
Tob	Tobit
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

OTP	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–85.
Ahiq.	<i>Ahiqar</i>
Apoc. Ab.	<i>Apocalypse of Abraham</i>
Apoc. Adam	<i>Apocalypse of Adam</i>
Apoc. Elij.	<i>Apocalypse of Elijah</i>
Apoc. Ezek.	<i>Apocalypse of Ezekiel</i>
Apoc. Mos.	<i>Apocalypse of Moses</i>
Apoc. Sed.	<i>Apocalypse of Sedrach</i>
Apoc. Zeph.	<i>Apocalypse of Zephaniah</i>
As. Mos.	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>
Asc. Is.	<i>Ascension of Isaiah</i>
2–4 Bar.	<i>2–4 Baruch</i>
1–3 En.	<i>1–3 Enoch</i> (2 En. has recensions A and J)
Gr. Ezra	<i>Greek Apocalypse of Ezra</i>
Hist. Rech.	<i>History of the Rechabites</i>
Jan. Jam.	<i>Jannes and Jambres</i>

Jos. Asen.	<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i> ¹
Jub.	<i>Jubilees</i>
L.A.B.	<i>Pseudo-Philo Biblical Antiquities</i>
L.A.E.	<i>Life of Adam and Eve</i>
Lad. Jac.	<i>Ladder of Jacob</i>
Let. Aris.	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
Liv. Pr.	<i>Lives of the Prophets</i> ²
Mart. Is.	<i>Martyrdom of Isaiah</i>
Odes Sol.	<i>Odes of Solomon</i>
Pr. Jac.	<i>Prayer of Jacob</i>
Pr. Jos.	<i>Prayer of Joseph</i>
Ps.-Eup.	<i>Pseudo-Eupolemus</i>
Ps.-Phoc.	<i>Pseudo-Phocylides</i>
Pss. Sol.	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
Sent. Syr. Men.	<i>Sentences of the Syriac Menander</i>
Sib. Or.	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
Sim.	<i>Similitudes of Enoch</i>
Syr. Men. Epit.	<i>Epitome of the Syriac Menander</i>
Test.	Testament of
Ab.	<i>Abraham</i> (recensions A and B)
Adam	<i>Adam</i>
Ash.	<i>Asher</i>
Benj.	<i>Benjamin</i>
Dan	<i>Dan</i>
Gad	<i>Gad</i>
Iss.	<i>Issachar</i>
Jac.	<i>Jacob</i>
Job	<i>Job</i> ³
Jos.	<i>Joseph</i>
Jud.	<i>Judah</i>
Levi	<i>Levi</i>
Mos.	<i>Moses</i>
Naph.	<i>Naphtali</i>
Reub.	<i>Reuben</i>
Sim.	<i>Simeon</i>
Sol.	<i>Solomon</i>
Zeb.	<i>Zebulun</i>
Tr. Shem	<i>Treatise of Shem</i>

Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Texts

DJD	<i>Les grottes de Murabba'at</i> . Edited by P. Benoit, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux. 2 vols. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 2. Oxford: Clarendon, 1961.
DSSNT	<i>The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation</i> . By Wise, Abegg Jr., and Cook. San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1999.
1Qap Gen ^{ar}	<i>Genesis Apocryphon</i>
1QH ^a	<i>Hodayot</i> or <i>Thanksgiving Hymns</i>
1QpHab	<i>Pesher Habakkuk</i>
1QM	<i>Milhamah</i> or <i>War Scroll</i>
1QS	<i>Serek Hayahad</i> or <i>Rule of the Community</i> or <i>Manual of Discipline</i>
1QSa	<i>Rule of the Congregation</i> (App. A to 1QS)
4Q285	<i>Sefer ha-Milhamah</i>
11QT	<i>Temple Scroll</i>
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the <i>Damascus Document</i>

1. The citations give double enumerations where the OTP translation (listed first) and the standard Greek text differ.
2. The citations first give the OTP reference, then the enumeration in Schermann's Greek text.
3. Where editions diverge, I cite the enumeration in both Spittler (in OTP) and Kraft.

Josephus and Philo

Jos.	Josephus
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	<i>Against Apion</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>
<i>Life</i>	<i>Life</i>
<i>War</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>
Philo	
<i>Abr.</i>	<i>On Abraham</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>On Husbandry/Agriculture</i>
<i>Alleg. Interp.</i>	<i>Allegorical Interpretation (1–3)</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>On the Cherubim</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>On the Confusion of Languages</i>
<i>Contempl.</i>	<i>On the Contemplative Life</i>
<i>Creation</i>	<i>On the Creation</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>The Decalogue</i>
<i>Dreams</i>	<i>On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent (1–2)</i>
<i>Drunkenness</i>	<i>On Drunkenness</i>
<i>Embassy</i>	<i>Embassy to Gaius</i>
<i>Eternity</i>	<i>On the Eternity of the World</i>
<i>Flacc.</i>	<i>Flaccus</i>
<i>Flight</i>	<i>On Flight and Finding</i>
<i>Giants</i>	<i>On the Giants</i>
<i>Good Person</i>	<i>Every Good Person Is Free</i>
<i>Heir</i>	<i>Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?</i>
<i>Hypoth.</i>	<i>Hypothetica</i>
<i>Jos.</i>	<i>Joseph</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>The Migration of Abraham</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>Life of Moses (1–2)</i>
<i>Names</i>	<i>On the Change of Names</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>Concerning Noah's Work as a Planter</i>
<i>Posterity</i>	<i>On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile</i>
<i>Prelim. St.</i>	<i>Preliminary Studies</i>
<i>Prov.</i>	<i>On Providence (1–2)</i>
<i>QE</i>	<i>Questions and Answers on Exodus (1–2)</i>
<i>QG</i>	<i>Questions and Answers on Genesis (1–4)</i>
<i>Rewards</i>	<i>On Rewards and Punishments</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>On the Birth of Abel and the Sacrifices Offered by Him and His Brother Cain</i>
<i>Sobr.</i>	<i>De sobrietate/On the Prayers and Curses Uttered by Noah When He Became Sober</i>
<i>Spec. Laws</i>	<i>Special Laws (1–4)</i>
<i>Studies</i>	<i>On Mating with the Preliminary Studies</i>
<i>Unchangeable</i>	<i>Unchangeableness of God</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	<i>On Virtues</i>
<i>Worse</i>	<i>That the Worse Is Wont to Attack the Better</i>

Targumic Texts

<i>Tg.</i>	<i>Targum (+ biblical book)</i>
<i>Tg. Jon.</i>	<i>Targum Jonathan</i>
<i>Tg. Neof.</i>	<i>Targum Neofiti</i>
<i>Tg. Onq.</i>	<i>Targum Onqelos</i>
<i>Tg. Ps.-J.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
<i>Tg. Rishon</i>	<i>Targum Rishon</i>
<i>Tg. Šeni</i>	<i>Targum Šeni</i>

Mishnah, Talmud, and Related Literature

Soncino	<i>The Babylonian Talmud</i> . Edited by Isidore Epstein. 35 vols. London: Soncino, 1935–52.
b.	Babylonian Talmud

bar.	baraita (with rabbinic text)
<i>m.</i>	Mishnah
<i>t.</i>	Tosefta
<i>y.</i>	Jerusalem (Yerushalmi, Palestinian) Talmud
<i>'Ab.</i>	<i>'Abot</i>
<i>'Abod. Zar.</i>	<i>'Abodah Zarah</i>
<i>'Arak.</i>	<i>'Arakin</i>
<i>B. Bat.</i>	<i>Baba Batra</i>
<i>B. Meši'a</i>	<i>Baba Meši'a</i>
<i>B. Qam.</i>	<i>Baba Qamma</i>
<i>Bek.</i>	<i>Bekorot</i>
<i>Ber.</i>	<i>Berakot</i>
<i>Beṣah</i>	<i>Beṣah (= Yom Ṭob [in the Tosefta])</i>
<i>Bik.</i>	<i>Bikkurim</i>
<i>Demai</i>	<i>Demai</i>
<i>'Ed.</i>	<i>'Eduyoth</i>
<i>'Erub.</i>	<i>'Erubin</i>
<i>Git.</i>	<i>Giṭṭin</i>
<i>Ḥag.</i>	<i>Ḥagigah</i>
<i>Ḥal.</i>	<i>Ḥallah</i>
<i>Hor.</i>	<i>Horayot</i>
<i>Ḥul.</i>	<i>Ḥullin</i>
<i>Kelim</i>	<i>Kelim</i>
<i>Ker.</i>	<i>Kerithot</i>
<i>Ketub.</i>	<i>Ketubbot</i>
<i>Kil.</i>	<i>Kil'ayim</i>
<i>Kip.</i>	<i>Kippurim</i>
<i>Ma'as.</i>	<i>Ma'aserot</i>
<i>Ma'as. Š.</i>	<i>Ma'aser Šeni</i>
<i>Mak.</i>	<i>Makkot</i>
<i>Makš.</i>	<i>Makširin</i>
<i>Meg.</i>	<i>Megillah</i>
<i>Me'il.</i>	<i>Me'ilah</i>
<i>Menah.</i>	<i>Menahot</i>
<i>Mid.</i>	<i>Middot</i>
<i>Miqw.</i>	<i>Miqwa'ot</i>
<i>Mo'ed Qaṭ.</i>	<i>Mo'ed Qaṭan</i>
<i>Naz.</i>	<i>Nazir</i>
<i>Ned.</i>	<i>Nedarim</i>
<i>Neg.</i>	<i>Nega'im</i>
<i>Nid.</i>	<i>Niddah</i>
<i>'Ohal.</i>	<i>'Ohalot (Ahiot in the Tosefta)</i>
<i>'Or.</i>	<i>'Orlah</i>
<i>Parah</i>	<i>Parah</i>
<i>Pe'ah</i>	<i>Pe'ah</i>
<i>Pesaḥ.</i>	<i>Pesaḥim</i>
<i>Qidd.</i>	<i>Qiddušin</i>
<i>Roš Haš.</i>	<i>Roš Hašsanah</i>
<i>Šabb.</i>	<i>Šabbat</i>
<i>Sanh.</i>	<i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>Šeb.</i>	<i>Šebi'it</i>
<i>Šebu.</i>	<i>Šebu'ot</i>
<i>Šeqal.</i>	<i>Šeqalim</i>
<i>Soṭah</i>	<i>Soṭah</i>
<i>Sukkah</i>	<i>Sukkah</i>
<i>Ta'an.</i>	<i>Ta'anit</i>
<i>Tamid</i>	<i>Tamid</i>
<i>Ṭehar.</i>	<i>Ṭeharot</i>
<i>Tem.</i>	<i>Temurah</i>
<i>Ter.</i>	<i>Terumot</i>
<i>Yad.</i>	<i>Yadayim</i>
<i>Yebam.</i>	<i>Yebamot</i>
<i>Yoma</i>	<i>Yoma</i>
<i>Zabim</i>	<i>Zabim</i>
<i>Zebaḥ.</i>	<i>Zebaḥim</i>

Other Rabbinic Works

'Abot R. Nat.	'Abot de Rabbi Nathan (recensions A and B)
Der. Er. Rab.	Derek Eres Rabbah
Der. Er. Zuṭ.	Derek Eres Zuṭa
Deut. Rab.	Deuteronomy Rabbah
Ecd. Rab.	Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth) Rabbah
Esth. Rab.	Esther Rabbah
Exod. Rab.	Exodus Rabbah
Gen. Rab.	Genesis Rabbah
Jer. Tg.	Jerusalem Targum
Lam. Rab.	Lamentations Rabbah
Lev. Rab.	Leviticus Rabbah
Mek.	Mekilta (ed. Lauterbach)
Am.	Amalek
Bah.	Bahodesh
Besh.	Beshallah
Kaspa	Kaspa
Nez.	Nezikin
Pisha	Pisha
Shab.	Shabbata
Shir.	Shirata
Vay.	Vayassa
Midr. Pss.	Midrash on Psalms (Tehillim)
Num. Rab.	Numbers Rabbah
Pesiq. Rab.	Pesiqta Rabbati
Pesiq. Rab Kah.	Pesiqta de Rab Kahana
Pirqe R. El.	Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer
Ruth Rab.	Ruth Rabbah
S. Eli. Rab.	Seder Eliyahu Rabbah
S. Eli. Zut.	Seder Eliyahu Zuta
Sem.	Semahot
Sipra	
A.M.	'Aharê Mot
Behuq.	Behuqotai
Emor	Emor
Mes.	Mesora
Neg.	Neg'aim
par.	parashah
pq.	pereq
Qed.	Qedošim
Sav	Sav
Sav M.d.	Sav Mekhilta deMiluim
Sh.	Shemini
Sh. M.d.	Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim
Taz.	Tazria
VDDeho.	Vayyiqra Dibura Dehobah
VDDen.	Vayyiqra Dibura Denedabah
Sipre Deut.	Sipre on Deuteronomy
Sipre Num.	Sipre on Numbers
Song Rab.	Song of Solomon Rabbah
Sop.	Soperim
Tanḥ.	Midrash Tanḥuma
Yalqut Isa.	Yalqut on Isaiah
Yalqut Pss.	Yalqut Psalms

Apostolic Fathers

AF	<i>The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings.</i> Translated by J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer. Edited and revised by Michael W. Holmes. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
Barn.	Epistle of Barnabas

1–2 Clem.	1–2 Clement
Did.	Didache
Diogn.	Epistle to Diognetus
Herm.	Shepherd of Hermas
Mand.	Mandates
Sim.	Similitudes
Vis.	Visions
Ign.	Ignatius of Antioch
Eph.	Epistle to the Ephesians
Magn.	Epistle to the Magnesians
Phld.	Epistle to the Philadelphians
Pol.	Epistle to Polycarp
Rom.	Epistle to the Romans
Smyrn.	Epistle to the Smyrnaeans
Trall.	Epistle to the Trallians
Mart. Pol.	Martyrdom of Polycarp
Poly. Phil.	Polycarp Letter to the Philippians

Patristic and Other Early Christian Sources

ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325.</i> Edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.
FC	Fathers of the Church
NPNF	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.</i> Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886–89. Repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
Ambrosiaster	Ambrosiaster Commentary on Paul's Epistles
Aphrahat Dem.	Aphrahat Demonstrations
Arator Acts	Arator on the Acts of the Apostles
Aristides Apol.	Aristides the Philosopher Apology to Hadrian
Athanas.	Athanasius
Fest. Let.	Festal Letters
Inc.	On the Incarnation
Vit. Ant.	Vita Antonii/On the Life of Anthony
Athenag. Plea	Athenagoras A Plea for Christians
Aug.	Augustine
Bapt.	De baptismo contra Donatistas
C. du. ep. Pelag.	Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum/Against Two Letters of the Pelagians
City	City of God
Conf.	Confessions
Ep.	Epistles
Harm. G.	Harmony of the Gospels
Retract.	Retractions
Serm.	Sermons
Tract. Jn.	Tractates on John
Basil	Basil of Caesarea (the Great)
Holy Sp.	On the Holy Spirit
Hom. Hex.	Homilies on the Hexaemeron
Chrys.	John Chrysostom
Hom. Acts	Homilies on Acts
Hom. 1 Cor.	Homilies on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians
Hom. 2 Cor.	Homilies on the Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians
Hom. Gen.	Homilies on Genesis
Hom. Jn.	Homilies on John

Abbreviations

<i>Hom. Matt.</i>	<i>Homilies on Matthew</i>
<i>Hom. Rom.</i>	<i>Homilies on Romans</i>
<i>Pan. Ign.</i>	<i>Panegyrics of Saint Ignatius</i>
Clem. Alex.	Clement of Alexandria
<i>Instr.</i>	<i>Instructor</i>
<i>Misc.</i>	<i>Miscellanies</i>
<i>Protr.</i>	<i>Protrepticus</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromata</i>
Cyprian Ep.	Cyprian Epistles
Cyril Jer. Cat. Lect.	Cyril of Jerusalem Catechetical Lectures
Ephrem Syr. Hom.	Ephrem the Syrian Homily on Our Lord
Epiph.	Epiphanius
<i>De mens.</i>	<i>De mensuris et ponderibus</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Refutation of All Heresies/Panarion</i>
Euseb.	Eusebius
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicle/Chronicon</i>
<i>Comm. Is.</i>	<i>Commentary on Isaiah</i>
<i>H.E.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica/Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>P.E.</i>	<i>Praeparatio evangelica/Preparation for the Gospel</i>
Firm. Matern.	Firmicus Maternus Matheseos libri VIII
Math.	Firmicus Maternus Matheseos libri VIII
Greg. Naz. Or.	Gregory of Nazianzus Orations
Greg. Nyssa Greg. Thaum.	Gregory of Nyssa Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi
Hippol. Ref.	Hippolytus Refutation of Heresies
Iren. Her.	Irenaeus Against Heresies
Jerome	
<i>Comm. Gal.</i>	<i>Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians</i>
<i>Dial. Pelag.</i>	<i>Dialogues against the Pelagians</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i>
<i>Ruf.</i>	<i>Adversus Rufinum</i>
<i>Vigil.</i>	<i>Adversus Vigilantium</i>
<i>Vir. ill.</i>	<i>De viris illustribus/On Famous Men</i>
<i>Vit. Hil.</i>	<i>Vita S. Hilarionis eremitaе/Life of St. Hilarion</i>
Justin Martyr	
<i>1–2 Apol.</i>	<i>1–2 Apology</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
<i>Exhort.</i>	<i>Exhortation to the Greeks</i>
Lact. Div. Inst.	Lactantius Divine Institutes
Mac. Magn.	Macarius Magnes Apocriticus
Apocrit.	Macarius Magnes Apocriticus
Malalas Chronogr.	John Malalas Chronographia
Mart. Just.	Martyrdom of Justin
Mart. Pion.	Martyrdom of Pionius
Origen	
<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Against Celsus</i>
<i>Comm. 1 Cor.</i>	<i>Commentary on 1 Corinthians</i>
<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	<i>Commentary on Matthew</i>
<i>Comm. Rom.</i>	<i>Commentary on Romans</i>
<i>Hom. Exod.</i>	<i>Homilies on Exodus</i>
<i>Hom. Luke</i>	<i>Homilies on Luke</i>
Orosius Hist.	Paulus Orosius Historiarum adversus paganos
Pass. Perp.	Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas
Pelagius	
<i>Comm. 2 Cor.</i>	<i>Commentary on 2 Corinthians</i>
<i>Comm. Rom.</i>	<i>Commentary on Romans</i>
Photius Bibl.	Photius Bibliotheca
Ps.-Clem.	Pseudo-Clementines
<i>Hom.</i>	<i>Homilies</i>
<i>Rec.</i>	<i>Recognitions</i>

Ps.-Const. Rom.	Pseudo-Constantius The Holy Letter of St. Paul to the Romans
Sulp. Sev. Chron.	Sulpicius Severus Chronica
Tatian Or. Gks.	Tatian Oration to the Greeks
Tert.	Tertullian
<i>Adv. Jud.</i>	<i>Adversus Judaeos</i>
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apology</i>
<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>On Baptism</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>De corona militis</i>
<i>Fasting</i>	<i>On Fasting, against the Psychics</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga in persecutione/On Flight in Persecution</i>
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i>
<i>Mart.</i>	<i>Ad martyras/To the Martyrs</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Ad nationes/To the Heathen</i>
<i>Pall.</i>	<i>De pallio</i>
<i>Pat.</i>	<i>De patientia</i>
<i>Praescr.</i>	<i>De praescriptione haereticorum/Prescription against Heretics</i>
<i>Scap.</i>	<i>Ad Scapulam</i>
<i>Scorp.</i>	<i>Scorpiace</i>
<i>Spec.</i>	<i>De spectaculis/The Shows</i>
<i>Test. an.</i>	<i>De testimonio animae/The Soul's Testimony</i>
<i>Wife</i>	<i>To His Wife</i>
Theodoret	Theodoret of Cyrrhus
<i>Comm. 1 Cor.</i>	<i>Commentary on 1 Corinthians</i>
<i>Comm. 2 Cor.</i>	<i>Commentary on 2 Corinthians</i>
<i>Hist. Rel.</i>	<i>Historia religiosa</i>
<i>Interp. Rom.</i>	<i>Interpretation of Romans</i>
Theoph.	Theophilus of Antioch To Autolytus

Nag Hammadi Texts

<i>NHL</i>	<i>The Nag Hammadi Library in English.</i> Edited by J. M. Robinson. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977.
<i>Hyp. Arch.</i>	<i>Hypostasis of the Archons</i>
<i>Orig. World</i>	<i>Origin of the World</i>
<i>Sent. Sext.</i>	<i>Sentences of Sextus</i>
<i>Zost.</i>	<i>Zostrianos</i>

New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

<i>Acts John</i>	<i>Acts of John</i>
<i>Acts Paul</i>	<i>Acts of Paul</i>
<i>Acts Pet.</i>	<i>Acts of Peter</i>
<i>Acts Phil.</i>	<i>Acts of Philip</i>
<i>Acts Thom.</i>	<i>Acts of Thomas</i>
<i>Ap. John</i>	<i>Apocryphon of John</i>
<i>Apoc. Paul</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Paul</i>
<i>Apoc. Pet.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>
<i>Apost. Const.</i>	<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>
<i>G. Eb.</i>	<i>Gospel of the Ebionites</i>
<i>G. Nic.</i>	<i>Gospel of Nicodemus</i>
<i>G. Pet.</i>	<i>Gospel of Peter</i>
<i>G. Thom.</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>
<i>G. Jms.</i>	<i>Gospel of James</i>
<i>Paul Thec.</i>	<i>Acts of Paul and Thecla</i>
<i>Prot. Jas.</i>	<i>Protevangelium of James</i>

Other Greek and Latin Works and Authors

Ach. Tat.	Achilles Tati <i>Leucippe and Clitophon</i>	Pol.	<i>Politics</i>
Ael. Arist.	Aelius Aristides	Rhet.	<i>Art of Rhetoric</i>
<i>Def. Or.</i>	<i>Defense of Oratory</i>	Soul	<i>On the Soul</i>
<i>Leuct. Or.</i>	<i>Leuctrian Orations</i>	V.V.	<i>Virtues and Vices</i>
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orations</i>	Aristob.	Aristobulus <i>Fragments</i> (in Eusebius H.E.)
<i>Panath.</i>	<i>Panathenaic Oration</i>	Aristoph.	Aristophanes
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>Sacred Tales</i>	<i>Acharn.</i>	<i>Acharnians</i>
Aelian (Claudius Aelianus)		<i>Birds</i>	<i>Birds</i>
<i>Farmers</i>	<i>Letters of Farmers</i>	<i>Ec.</i>	<i>Ecclesiazusae</i>
<i>Nat. An.</i>	<i>Nature of Animals</i>	<i>Frogs</i>	<i>Frogs</i>
<i>Var. hist.</i>	<i>Varia historia</i>	<i>Lys.</i>	<i>Lysistrata</i>
Aeschines		<i>Plut.</i>	<i>Plutus/Rich Man</i>
<i>Ctes.</i>	<i>Ctesiphon</i>	<i>Thesm.</i>	<i>Thesmophoriazusae</i>
<i>Embassy</i>	<i>False Embassy</i>	<i>Wasps</i>	<i>Wasps</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timarchus</i>	Arius Did. Epit.	Arius Didymus <i>Epitome of Stoic Ethics</i>
Aeschylus		Arrian	
<i>Ag.</i>	<i>Agamemnon</i>	<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Anabasis of Alexander</i>
<i>Eum.</i>	<i>Eumenides</i>	<i>Ind.</i>	<i>Indica</i>
<i>Lib.</i>	<i>Libation-Bearers (Choephoroi)</i>	<i>Peripl.</i>	<i>Periplus maris Euxini</i>
<i>Pers.</i>	<i>Persians</i>	Artem. Oneir.	Artemidorus Daldianus <i>Oneirocritica</i>
<i>Prom.</i>	<i>Prometheus Bound</i>	Athen. Deipn.	Athenaeus <i>Deipnosophists</i>
<i>Seven</i>	<i>Seven against Thebes</i>	Aul. Gel.	Aulus Gellius <i>Attic Nights</i>
<i>Suppl.</i>	<i>Suppliant Women</i>	Aur. Vict. Epit.	
Alciph.	Alciphron	<i>Caes.</i>	Aurelius Victor <i>Epitome de Caesaribus</i>
<i>Court.</i>	<i>Courtesans</i>	Babr.	Babrius <i>Fables</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae/Letters</i>	Caesar	Julius Caesar
<i>Farm.</i>	<i>Farmers</i>	<i>Afr. W.</i>	<i>African War</i>
<i>Fish.</i>	<i>Fishermen</i>	<i>Alex. W.</i>	<i>Alexandrian War</i>
<i>Paras.</i>	<i>Parasites</i>	<i>C.W.</i>	<i>Civil War</i>
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus <i>Res gestae</i>	<i>Gall. W.</i>	<i>Gallic War</i>
Anacharsis Ep.	[Ps.]- Anacharsis <i>Epistles</i>	<i>Sp. W.</i>	<i>Spanish War</i>
Andocides Myst.	Andocides <i>De mysteriis</i>	Callim. Epig.	Callimachus <i>Epigrammata</i>
Ant. Diog. Thule	Antonius Diogenes <i>Wonders beyond Thule</i>	Callistr.	Callistratus
Antiph. Her.	Antiphon <i>Murder of Herodes</i>	<i>Descr.</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>
Ap. Rhod.	Apollonius of Rhodes <i>Argonautica</i>	<i>Dig.</i>	<i>In Digest of Justinian</i>
Apth. Progygn.	Aphthonius <i>Progygnasmata</i>	Cato	Dionysius Cato
Apoll. K. Tyre	Apollonius <i>King of Tyre</i>	<i>Coll. Dist.</i>	<i>Collection of Distichs</i>
Apollod.	Apollodorus	<i>Distichs</i>	<i>Distichs</i>
<i>Bib.</i>	<i>Bibliotheca/Library</i>	Cato E.	Cato the Elder
<i>Epit.</i>	<i>Epitome</i>	<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De agricultura (De re rustica)</i>
Appian		Catull. Carm.	Catullus <i>Carmina</i>
<i>Bell. civ.</i>	<i>Bella civilia/Civil Wars</i>	Char. Chaer.	Chariton <i>Chaereas and Callirhoe</i>
<i>Hist. rom.</i>	<i>Historia romana/Roman History</i>	Cic.	Cicero
Apul.	Apuleius	<i>Acad.</i>	<i>Academica</i>
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apology</i>	<i>Ag. Caec.</i>	<i>Against Caecilius</i>
<i>De deo Socr.</i>	<i>De deo Socratis</i>	<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De lege agraria</i>
<i>Metam.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>	<i>Amic.</i>	<i>De amicitia</i>
Aratus Phaen.	Aratus <i>Phaenomena</i>	<i>Arch.</i>	<i>Pro Archia</i>
Arist.	Aristotle	<i>Att.</i>	<i>Letters to Atticus</i>
<i>Breath</i>	<i>On Breath</i>	<i>Balb.</i>	<i>Pro Balbo</i>
<i>Const. Ath.</i>	<i>Constitution of Athens/Athēnaion politeia</i>	<i>Brut.</i>	<i>Brutus, or De claris oratoribus</i>
<i>E.E.</i>	<i>Eudemian Ethics</i>	<i>Caecin.</i>	<i>Pro Caecina</i>
<i>Gen. Anim.</i>	<i>Generation of Animals</i>	<i>Cael.</i>	<i>Pro Caelio</i>
<i>Heav.</i>	<i>On the Heavens</i>	<i>Cat.</i>	<i>In Catilinam</i>
<i>Hist. An.</i>	<i>History of Animals</i>	<i>Clu.</i>	<i>Pro Cluentio</i>
<i>Mem.</i>	<i>Concerning Memory and Recollection</i>	<i>De or.</i>	<i>De oratore</i>
<i>Met.</i>	<i>Meteorology</i>	<i>Deiot.</i>	<i>Pro rege Deiotaro</i>
<i>Mir. ausc.</i>	<i>De mirabilibus auscultationibus</i>	<i>Div.</i>	<i>De divinatione</i>
<i>N.E.</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	<i>Fam.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad familiares/Letters to Friends</i>
<i>Parv.</i>	<i>Parva naturalia</i>	<i>Fat.</i>	<i>De fato</i>
<i>Poet.</i>	<i>Poetics</i>	<i>Fin.</i>	<i>De finibus</i>
		<i>Flacc.</i>	<i>Pro Flacco</i>
		<i>Font.</i>	<i>Pro Fonteio</i>
		<i>Handb. Elec.</i>	<i>Handbook of Electioneering</i>
		<i>Inv.</i>	<i>De inventione</i>
		<i>Invect. Sall.</i>	<i>Invective against Sallust</i>

Abbreviations

<i>Leg.</i>	<i>De legibus</i>	<i>Timocr.</i>	<i>Against Timocrates</i>
<i>Leg. man.</i>	<i>Pro lege manilia</i>	<i>Zenoth.</i>	<i>Against Zenothemis</i>
<i>Lig.</i>	<i>Pro Ligario</i>	Dio Cass.	Dio Cassius Roman History
<i>Marcell.</i>	<i>Pro Marcello</i>	Dio Chrys. Or.	Dio Chrysostom Orations
<i>Mil.</i>	<i>Pro Milone</i>	Diod. Sic.	Diodorus Siculus Library of History
<i>Mur.</i>	<i>Pro Murena</i>	Diogenes Ep.	[Ps.-]Diogenes Epistle
<i>Nat. d.</i>	<i>De natura deorum</i>	Diog. Laert.	Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers
<i>Off.</i>	<i>De officiis</i>	Dion. Hal.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus
<i>Opt. gen.</i>	<i>De optimo genere oratorum</i>	1–2 <i>Amm.</i>	1–2 <i>Epistle to Ammaeus</i>
<i>Or. Brut.</i>	<i>Orator ad M. Brutum</i>	<i>Anc. Or.</i>	<i>On Ancient Orators</i>
<i>Parad.</i>	<i>Paradoxa Stoicorum</i>	<i>Ant. rom.</i>	<i>Antiquitates romanae/Roman Antiquities</i>
<i>Part. or.</i>	<i>De partitione oratoria</i>	<i>Demosth.</i>	<i>Demosthenes</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	<i>Orationes philippicae</i>	<i>Din.</i>	<i>Dinarchus</i>
<i>Pis.</i>	<i>In Pisonem</i>	<i>Epid.</i>	<i>On Epideictic Speeches</i>
<i>Prov. cons.</i>	<i>De provinciis consularibus</i>	<i>Isaeus</i>	<i>Isaeus</i>
<i>Quinct.</i>	<i>Pro Quinctio</i>	<i>Isoc.</i>	<i>Isocrates</i>
<i>Quint. frat.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Quintum fratrum</i>	<i>Lit. Comp.</i>	<i>Literary Composition</i>
<i>Rab. Perd.</i>	<i>Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo</i>	<i>Lysias</i>	<i>Lysias</i>
<i>Rab. Post.</i>	<i>Pro Rabirio Postumo</i>	<i>Pomp.</i>	<i>Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius</i>
<i>Resp.</i>	<i>De re publica</i>	<i>Thuc.</i>	<i>Thucydides</i>
<i>Rosc. Amer.</i>	<i>Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino</i>	Epict.	Epictetus
<i>Rosc. com.</i>	<i>Pro Roscio comoedo</i>	<i>Diatr.</i>	<i>Diatribai</i>
<i>Scaur.</i>	<i>Pro Scauro</i>	<i>Encheir.</i>	<i>Encheiridion</i>
<i>Senect.</i>	<i>De senectute</i>	Epicurus Let. Men.	Epicurus Letter to Menoeceus
<i>Sest.</i>	<i>Pro Sestio</i>	Euhemerus Sacr.	Euhemerus Sacred History
<i>Sull.</i>	<i>Pro Sulla</i>	<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Euhemerus Sacred History</i>
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topica</i>	Eunapius Lives	Eunapius Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists
<i>Tull.</i>	<i>Pro Tullio</i>	Eurip.	Euripides
<i>Tusc.</i>	<i>Tusculan Disputations</i>	<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcestis</i>
<i>Vat.</i>	<i>In Vatinius</i>	<i>Andr.</i>	<i>Andromache</i>
<i>Verr.</i>	<i>In Verrem</i>	<i>Bacch.</i>	<i>Bacchanals</i>
Colum.	Columella	<i>Cycl.</i>	<i>Cyclops</i>
<i>Arb.</i>	<i>De arboribus/On Trees</i>	<i>Dict.</i>	<i>Dictys</i>
<i>Rust.</i>	<i>De re rustica/On Agriculture</i>	<i>El.</i>	<i>Electra</i>
Corn. Nep.	Cornelius Nepos Generals	<i>Hec.</i>	<i>Hecuba</i>
Cornutus Summ.	Cornutus Summary of Greek Theology	<i>Hel.</i>	<i>Helen</i>
Crates Ep.	Pseudo-Crates Epistles	<i>Heracl.</i>	<i>Children of Heracles</i>
Demet. Style	Demetrius Phalereus On Style/De elocutione	<i>Herc. fur.</i>	<i>Hercules furens/Madness of Heracles</i>
Demosth.	Demosthenes	<i>Hipp.</i>	<i>Hippolytus</i>
<i>Andr.</i>	<i>Against Androtion</i>	<i>Hyps.</i>	<i>Hypsipyle</i>
<i>Aphob. 1–3</i>	<i>Against Aphobus</i>	<i>Iph. Aul.</i>	<i>Iphigeneia at Aulis</i>
<i>Aristocr.</i>	<i>Against Aristocrates</i>	<i>Iph. Taur.</i>	<i>Iphigeneia at Tauris</i>
<i>Aristog. 1–2</i>	<i>Against Aristogeiton</i>	<i>Med.</i>	<i>Medea</i>
<i>Boeot. 1–2</i>	<i>Mantitheus against Boeotus</i>	<i>Oed.</i>	<i>Oedipus</i>
<i>Chers.</i>	<i>On the Chersonese</i>	<i>Orest.</i>	<i>Orestes</i>
<i>Con.</i>	<i>Against Conon</i>	<i>Phoen.</i>	<i>Phoenician Maidens</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>De corona/On the Crown</i>	<i>Rhes.</i>	<i>Rhesus</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae/Letters</i>	<i>Suppl.</i>	<i>Suppliants</i>
<i>Ep. Philip</i>	<i>Epistula Philippi/Letter of Philip</i>	<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Troades/Daughters of Troy</i>
<i>Epitaph.</i>	<i>Epitaphius/Funeral Speech</i>	Ezek. Trag. Exag.	Ezekiel the Tragedian Exagōgē
<i>Eub.</i>	<i>Euxitheus against Eubulides</i>	Florus Carm.	Florus Carmena
<i>Exord.</i>	<i>Exordia (Prooemia)</i>	Frontin. Str.	Frontinus Strategemata
<i>Fals. leg.</i>	<i>De falsa legatione/False Embassy</i>	Fronto	Marcus Cornelius Fronto
<i>Lacr.</i>	<i>Against Lacritus</i>	<i>Ad am.</i>	<i>Ad amicos</i>
<i>Leoch.</i>	<i>Against Leochares</i>	<i>Ad Ant. imp.</i>	<i>Ad Antoninum imperatorem</i>
<i>Lept.</i>	<i>Against Leptines</i>	<i>Ad Ant. Pium</i>	<i>Ad Antoninum Pium</i>
<i>Mid.</i>	<i>In Midiam/Against Meidias</i>	<i>Ad M. Caes.</i>	<i>Ad Marcum Caesarem</i>
<i>Navy</i>	<i>On the Navy-Boards</i>	<i>Ad verum imp.</i>	<i>Ad verum imperatorem</i>
<i>Neaer.</i>	<i>Against Neaera</i>	<i>Bell. parth.</i>	<i>De bello parthico</i>
<i>Olymp.</i>	<i>Against Olympiodorus</i>	<i>Eloq.</i>	<i>Eloquence</i>
<i>Olyynth. 1–3</i>	<i>Olynthiaca 1–3</i>	<i>Ep. graec.</i>	<i>Epistulae graecae</i>
<i>Pant.</i>	<i>Against Pantaenetus</i>	<i>Fer. als.</i>	<i>De feriis alsiensibus</i>
<i>Philip. 1–3, [4]</i>	<i>Philippic Orations 1–3, 4</i>	<i>Nep. am.</i>	<i>De nepote amisso</i>
<i>Steph. 1[–2]</i>	<i>Against Stephanus 1–2</i>	<i>Pr. Hist.</i>	<i>Preamble to History</i>
<i>Theocr.</i>	<i>Against Theocritus</i>		
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Against Timotheus</i>		

Gaius		Aristarch.	Aristarchus
<i>Dig.</i>	In Digest of Justinian	Astyph.	Astyphilus
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutes</i>	Ciron	Ciron
Galen N.F.	Galen On the Natural Faculties	Cleon.	Cleonymus
Gorg. Hel.	Gorgias Encomium of Helen	Demes.	Against the Demesmen
Gr. Anth.	Greek Anthology	Dicaeog.	Estate of Dicaeogenes
Grattius Cyneg.	Grattius Cynegeticon	Eumath.	On Behalf of Eumathes
Hdn.	Herodian History	Euphil.	On Behalf of Euphiletus
Hdt.	Herodotus Histories	Hagnias	Hagnias
Heliod. Eth.	Heliodorus Ethiopian Story	Hagnoth.	Against Hagnotheus
Heracl. Ep.	Heraclitus Epistles	Menec.	Meneceles
Heracl. Hom. Prob.	Heraclitus Homeric Problems	Nicost.	Nicostratus
Hermog.	Hermogenes	Philoct.	Philoctemon
<i>Inv.</i>	<i>Invention</i>	Pyrr.	Pyrrhus
<i>Issues</i>	<i>Issues</i>	Isoc.	Isocrates
<i>Method</i>	<i>Method in Forceful Speaking</i>	<i>Ad Nic.</i>	<i>Ad Nicoclem/To Nicocles (Or. 2)</i>
<i>Progymn.</i>	<i>Progymnasmata</i>	<i>Antid.</i>	<i>Antidosis (Or. 15)</i>
Hesiod		<i>Areop.</i>	<i>Areopagiticus (Or. 7)</i>
<i>Astron.</i>	<i>Astronomy</i>	<i>Demon.</i>	<i>To Demonicus (Or. 1)</i>
<i>Cat. W. E.</i>	<i>Catalogues of Women and Eoiae</i>	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i>
<i>Sh. Her.</i>	<i>Shield of Heracles</i>	<i>Nic.</i>	<i>Nicocles/Cyprians (Or. 3)</i>
<i>Theog.</i>	<i>Theogony</i>	<i>Panath.</i>	<i>Panathenaicus (Or. 12)</i>
<i>W.D.</i>	<i>Works and Days</i>	<i>Paneg.</i>	<i>Panegyricus (Or. 4)</i>
Hierocles	Hierocles (the Stoic)	<i>Peace</i>	<i>On the Peace (Or. 8)</i>
<i>Fatherland</i>	<i>On Duties: How to Conduct Oneself toward One's Fatherland</i>	<i>Soph.</i>	<i>Against Sophists (Or. 17)</i>
<i>Gods</i>	<i>On Duties: How to Conduct Oneself toward the Gods</i>	Julian Ap.	Julian the Apostate
<i>Love</i>	<i>On Duties: On Fraternal Love</i>	<i>Let.</i>	<i>Letters</i>
<i>Marr.</i>	<i>On Duties: On Marriage</i>	<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orations</i>
<i>Parents</i>	<i>On Duties: How to Conduct Oneself toward One's Parents</i>	Justin.	Justinian
Hippocr.	Hippocrates	<i>Cod.</i>	<i>Codex</i>
<i>Aff.</i>	<i>Affections</i>	<i>Dig.</i>	<i>Digest</i>
<i>Airs</i>	<i>Airs, Waters, Places</i>	<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutes</i>
<i>Aph.</i>	<i>Aphorisms</i>	Juv. Sat.	Juvenal Satires
<i>Barr. Wom.</i>	<i>On Barren Women</i>	Libanius	
<i>Dis.</i>	<i>Diseases</i>	<i>Anecdote</i>	<i>Anecdote</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i>	<i>Comp.</i>	<i>Comparison</i>
<i>Epid.</i>	<i>Epidemics</i>	<i>Declam.</i>	<i>Declamations</i>
<i>Fleashes</i>	<i>Fleashes</i>	<i>Descr.</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Glands</i>	<i>Glands</i>	<i>Encomium</i>	<i>Encomium</i>
<i>Nat. Man</i>	<i>Nature of Man</i>	<i>Invect.</i>	<i>Invective</i>
<i>Pl. Man</i>	<i>Places in Man</i>	<i>Maxim</i>	<i>Maxim</i>
<i>Progn.</i>	<i>Prognostic</i>	<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orations</i>
<i>Prorr.</i>	<i>Prorrhetic</i>	<i>Refutation</i>	<i>Refutation</i>
<i>Reg. Ac. Dis.</i>	<i>Regimen in Acute Diseases</i>	<i>Speech in Character</i>	<i>Speech in Character</i>
<i>Superf.</i>	<i>On Superfetation</i>	<i>Thesis</i>	<i>Thesis</i>
Hom.	Homer	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Common Topics</i>
<i>Il.</i>	<i>Iliad</i>	Livy	Livy <i>Ab urbe condita</i>
<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssey</i>	Longin. Subl.	Longinus On the Sublime
Hom. Hymns	Homeric Hymns	Longus	Longus <i>Daphnis and Chloe</i>
Hor.	Horace	Lucan C.W.	Lucan Civil War
<i>Ars</i>	<i>Ars poetica</i>	Lucian	
<i>Carm. saec.</i>	<i>Carmen saeculare</i>	<i>Affairs</i>	<i>Affairs of the Heart/Amores</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i>	<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Alexander the False Prophet</i>
<i>Epodes</i>	<i>Epodes</i>	<i>Amber</i>	<i>Amber, or The Swans</i>
<i>Odes</i>	<i>Odes</i>	<i>Anach.</i>	<i>Anacharsis, or Athletics</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satires</i>	<i>Astr.</i>	<i>Astrology</i>
Iambl.	Iamblichus Chalcidensis	<i>Book-Coll.</i>	<i>The Ignorant Book-Collector</i>
<i>Myst.</i>	<i>Mysteries</i>	<i>Career</i>	<i>The Dream, or Lucian's Career</i>
<i>V.P.</i>	<i>De vita pythagorica/On the Pythagorean Life/Life of Pythagoras</i>	<i>Carousal</i>	<i>The Carousal (Symposium), or The Lapiths</i>
Iambl. (nov.)		<i>Charid.</i>	<i>Charidemus</i>
Bab. St.	Iamblichus (novelist) Babylonian Story	<i>Charon</i>	<i>Charon, or The Inspectors</i>
Isaeus		<i>Cock</i>	<i>The Dream, or The Cock</i>
<i>Apollod.</i>	<i>Estate of Apollodoros</i>	<i>Critic</i>	<i>The Mistaken Critic</i>
		<i>Cynic</i>	<i>The Cynic</i>
		<i>Dance</i>	<i>The Dance</i>
		<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Demonax</i>
		<i>Demosth.</i>	<i>In Praise of Demosthenes</i>

Abbreviations

<i>Dial. C.</i>	<i>Dialogues of Courtesans</i>	Modestinus Dig.	Herennius Modestinus in Digest of Justinian
<i>Dial. D.</i>	<i>Dialogues of the Dead</i>	Mus. Ruf.	Musonius Rufus
<i>Dial. G.</i>	<i>Dialogues of the Gods</i>	Musaeus Hero	Musaeus Hero and Leander
<i>Dial. S-G.</i>	<i>Dialogues of Sea-Gods</i>	Nicolaus Progymn.	Nicolaus the Sophist Progymnasmata
<i>Dipsads</i>	<i>The Dipsads</i>	Nin. Rom.	Ninus Romance
<i>Dion.</i>	<i>Dionysus</i>	Orph. H.	Orphic Hymns
<i>Disowned</i>	<i>Disowned</i>	Ovid	
<i>Downward Journey</i>	<i>Downward Journey</i>	<i>Am.</i>	<i>Amores</i>
<i>Eunuch</i>	<i>The Eunuch</i>	<i>Ars</i>	<i>Ars amatoria</i>
<i>Fisherman</i>	<i>The Dead Come to Life, or The Fisherman</i>	<i>Con. Liv.</i>	<i>Consolatio ad Liviam</i>
<i>Fly</i>	<i>The Fly</i>	<i>Her.</i>	<i>Heroides</i>
<i>Fun.</i>	<i>Funerals</i>	<i>Metam.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>Hall</i>	<i>The Hall</i>	<i>Pont.</i>	<i>Epistulae ex Ponto</i>
<i>Harm.</i>	<i>Harmonides</i>	Parth. L.R.	Parthenius Love Romance
<i>Hermot.</i>	<i>Hermotimus, or Sects</i>	Paulus	Julius Paulus
<i>Hipp.</i>	<i>Hippias, or The Bath</i>	<i>Dig.</i>	<i>In Digest of Justinian</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>How to Write History</i>	<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Sententiae/Opinions</i>
<i>Icar.</i>	<i>Icaromenippus, or The Sky-Man</i>	Paus.	Pausanias Description of Greece
<i>Indictment</i>	<i>Double Indictment</i>	Pers. Sat.	Persius Satires
<i>Judg. G.</i>	<i>Judgment of the Goddesses</i>	Petron. Sat.	Petronius Satyricon
<i>Lex.</i>	<i>Lexiphanes</i>	Perv. Ven.	Pervigilium Veneris
<i>Lover of Lies</i>	<i>The Lover of Lies</i>	Phaedrus	Phaedrus Fables
<i>Lucius</i>	<i>Lucius, or The Ass</i>	Philod.	Philodemus
<i>Men.</i>	<i>Menippus, or Descent into Hades</i>	<i>Crit.</i>	<i>On Frank Criticism</i>
<i>Nero</i>	<i>Nero</i>	<i>Household</i>	<i>On Household Management</i>
<i>Nigr.</i>	<i>Nigrinus</i>	<i>Piety</i>	<i>On Piety</i>
<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Octogenarians</i>	Philost.	Flavius Philostratus (the Athenian)
<i>Par.</i>	<i>The Parasite: Parasitic an Art</i>	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae/Love Letters</i>
<i>Parl. G.</i>	<i>Parliament of the Gods</i>	<i>Ep. Apoll.</i>	<i>Epistles of Apollonius</i>
<i>Patriot</i>	<i>The Patriot (Philopatris)</i>	<i>Hrk.</i>	<i>Heroikos</i>
<i>Peregr.</i>	<i>The Passing of Peregrinus</i>	<i>Vit. Apoll.</i>	<i>Vita Apollonii/Life of Apollonius</i>
<i>Phal.</i>	<i>Phalaris</i>	<i>Vit. soph.</i>	<i>Vitae sophistarum/Lives of the Sophists</i>
<i>Phil. Sale</i>	<i>Philosophies for Sale</i>	Philost. Elder	
<i>Portr.</i>	<i>Essays in Portraiture</i>	<i>Imag.</i>	Philostratus the Elder Imagines
<i>Portr. D.</i>	<i>Essays in Portraiture Defended</i>	Philost. Younger	
<i>Posts</i>	<i>Salaried Posts in Great Houses</i>	<i>Imag.</i>	Philostratus the Younger Imagines
<i>Prof. P.S.</i>	<i>A Professor of Public Speaking</i>	Pindar	
<i>Prom.</i>	<i>Prometheus</i>	<i>Dith.</i>	<i>Dithyrambs</i>
<i>Prom. in Words</i>	<i>To One Who Said "You're a Prometheus in Words"</i>	<i>Isthm.</i>	<i>Isthmian Odes</i>
<i>Runaways</i>	<i>The Runaways</i>	<i>Nem.</i>	<i>Nemean Odes</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>Sacrifices</i>	<i>Ol.</i>	<i>Olympian Odes</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Saturnalia/Conversation with Cronus</i>	<i>Pyth.</i>	<i>Pythian Odes</i>
<i>Ship</i>	<i>The Ship, or The Wishes</i>	Plato	
<i>Slander</i>	<i>Slander</i>	<i>Alcib.</i>	<i>Alcibiades (1–2)</i>
<i>Slip</i>	<i>A Slip of the Tongue in Greeting</i>	<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apology</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	<i>The Sham Sophist, or The Solecist</i>	<i>Charm.</i>	<i>Charmides</i>
<i>Syr. G.</i>	<i>Syrian Goddess</i>	<i>Clitophon</i>	<i>Clitophon</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timon, or The Misanthrope</i>	<i>Cratyl.</i>	<i>Cratylus</i>
<i>Tox.</i>	<i>Toxaris, or Friendship</i>	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i>
<i>True Story</i>	<i>A True Story</i>	<i>Epin.</i>	<i>Epinomis</i>
<i>Tyr.</i>	<i>The Tyrannicide</i>	<i>Gorg.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i>
<i>Z. Cat.</i>	<i>Zeus Catechized</i>	<i>Hipp. maj.</i>	<i>Hippias major</i>
<i>Z. Rants</i>	<i>Zeus Rants</i>	<i>Hipp. min.</i>	<i>Hippias minor</i>
Lucret. Nat.	Lucretius De rerum natura	<i>Hipparch.</i>	<i>Hipparchus</i>
Lycophron Alex.	Lycophron of Chalcis Alexandra	<i>Lach.</i>	<i>Laches</i>
Lysias Or.	Lysias Orations	<i>Laws</i>	<i>Laws</i>
Macro.	Macrobius	<i>Menex.</i>	<i>Menexenus</i>
<i>Comm.</i>	<i>Commentary on the Dream of Scipio</i>	<i>Parm.</i>	<i>Parmenides</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Saturnalia</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>
Manetho Aeg.	Manetho Aegyptiaca	<i>Phaedr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
Marc. Aur.	Marcus Aurelius Meditations	<i>Phileb.</i>	<i>Philebus</i>
Mart. Epig.	Martial Epigrams	<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politicus/Statesman</i>
Max. Tyre	Maximus of Tyre Orations	<i>Prot.</i>	<i>Protagoras</i>
Men. Rhet.	Menander Rhetor (of Laodicea)	<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Treatises</i>	<i>Treatises</i>	<i>Soph.</i>	<i>Sophist</i>
Min. Fel. Oct.	Minucius Felix Octavius	<i>Symp.</i>	<i>Symposium</i>

<i>Theaet.</i>	<i>Theaetetus</i>	<i>Fort. Rom.</i>	<i>Fortune of Romans</i>
<i>Theag.</i>	<i>Theages</i>	<i>Galba</i>	<i>Galba</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>	<i>Gen. of Soul</i>	<i>Generation of the Soul in the "Timaeus"</i>
Plaut.	Plautus	<i>Gk. Q.</i>	<i>Greek Questions</i>
<i>Bacch.</i>	<i>Bacchides</i>	<i>Isis</i>	<i>Isis and Osiris</i>
<i>Cas.</i>	<i>Casina</i>	<i>L. Wealth</i>	<i>Love of Wealth</i>
<i>Men.</i>	<i>Menaechmi</i>	<i>Lect.</i>	<i>On Lectures</i>
<i>Miles glor.</i>	<i>Miles gloriosus</i>	<i>Love St.</i>	<i>Love Stories</i>
<i>Most.</i>	<i>Mostellaria</i>	<i>Luc.</i>	<i>Lucullus</i>
<i>Rud.</i>	<i>Rudens</i>	<i>Lyc.</i>	<i>Lycurgus</i>
<i>Truc.</i>	<i>Truculentus</i>	<i>Lys.</i>	<i>Lysander</i>
Pliny	Pliny the Younger	<i>M. Ant.</i>	<i>Marc Antony</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i>	<i>M. Cato</i>	<i>Marcus Cato</i>
<i>Panegyry.</i>	<i>Panegyricus</i>	<i>Mal. Hdt.</i>	<i>Malice of Herodotus</i>
Pliny E. N.H.	Pliny the Elder <i>Natural History</i>	<i>Many Friends</i>	<i>On Having Many Friends</i>
Plot. Enn.	Plotinus <i>Ennead</i>	<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Marcellus</i>
Plut.	Plutarch	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Moralia</i>
<i>Adv. K. Well</i>	<i>Advice about Keeping Well</i>	<i>Nat. Phen.</i>	<i>Causes of Natural Phenomena</i>
<i>Aem. Paul.</i>	<i>Aemilius Paulus</i>	<i>Nic.</i>	<i>Nicias</i>
<i>Ag. Pleasure</i>	<i>Against Pleasure (frgs.)</i>	<i>Numa</i>	<i>Numa</i>
<i>Ages.</i>	<i>Agesilaus</i>	<i>Obsol.</i>	<i>Obsolescence of Oracles</i>
<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcibiades</i>	<i>Old Men</i>	<i>Old Men in Public Affairs</i>
<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Alexander</i>	<i>Or. Delphi</i>	<i>Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse</i>
<i>Apoll.</i>	<i>Letter of Consolation to Apollonius</i>	<i>Otho</i>	<i>Otho</i>
<i>Arist.</i>	<i>Aristides</i>	<i>Par. St.</i>	<i>Greek and Roman Parallel Stories</i>
<i>Borr.</i>	<i>On Borrowing (That We Ought Not to Borrow)</i>	<i>PeI.</i>	<i>Pelopidas</i>
		<i>Per.</i>	<i>Pericles</i>
<i>Br. Love</i>	<i>On Brotherly Love</i>	<i>Phil. Power</i>	<i>That a Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power</i>
<i>Br. Wom.</i>	<i>Bravery of Women</i>		
<i>Bride</i>	<i>Advice to Bride and Groom</i>	<i>Phoc.</i>	<i>Phocion</i>
<i>Brut.</i>	<i>Brutus</i>	<i>Plat. Q.</i>	<i>Platonic Questions</i>
<i>Busybody</i>	<i>On Being a Busybody</i>	<i>Pleas. L.</i>	<i>Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible</i>
<i>C. Mar.</i>	<i>Caius Marius</i>		
<i>Caes.</i>	<i>Caesar</i>	<i>Poetry</i>	<i>How the Young Man Should Study Poetry</i>
<i>Cam.</i>	<i>Camillus</i>	<i>Pomp.</i>	<i>Pompey</i>
<i>Cat. Min.</i>	<i>Cato Minor</i>	<i>Praising</i>	<i>Praising Oneself Inoffensively</i>
<i>Chance</i>	<i>Chance</i>	<i>Profit by Enemies</i>	<i>How to Profit by One's Enemies</i>
<i>Cic.</i>	<i>Cicero</i>	<i>Progr. Virt.</i>	<i>How One May Become Aware of One's Progress in Virtue</i>
<i>Cim.</i>	<i>Cimon</i>		
<i>Cleverness</i>	<i>Cleverness of Animals</i>	<i>Publ.</i>	<i>Publicola</i>
<i>Cleom.</i>	<i>Cleomenes</i>	<i>Pyrr.</i>	<i>Pyrrhus</i>
<i>Comm. Conc.</i>	<i>Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions</i>	<i>R. Col.</i>	<i>Reply to Colotes</i>
<i>Comp. Alc. Cor.</i>	<i>Comparison of Alcibiades and Coriolanus</i>	<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Romulus</i>
<i>Comp. Arist. Cato</i>	<i>Comparison of Aristides and Marcus Cato</i>	<i>Rom. Q.</i>	<i>Roman Questions</i>
<i>Comp. Lys. Sull.</i>	<i>Comparison of Lysander and Sulla</i>	<i>S. Kings</i>	<i>Sayings of Kings and Commanders</i>
<i>Comp. Thes. Rom.</i>	<i>Comparison of Theseus and Romulus</i>	<i>S. Rom.</i>	<i>Sayings of Romans</i>
<i>Compliancy</i>	<i>On Compliancy</i>	<i>S. Sp.</i>	<i>Sayings of Spartans</i>
<i>Consol.</i>	<i>Consolation to Wife</i>	<i>S. Sp. Wom.</i>	<i>Sayings of Spartan Women</i>
<i>Contr. A.</i>	<i>On the Control of Anger</i>	<i>Sert.</i>	<i>Sertorius</i>
<i>Coriol.</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>	<i>Sign Soc.</i>	<i>Sign of Socrates</i>
<i>Crass.</i>	<i>Crassus</i>	<i>Solon</i>	<i>Solon</i>
<i>Demetr.</i>	<i>Demetrius</i>	<i>St. Poets</i>	<i>Stories and Poets</i>
<i>Demosth.</i>	<i>Demosthenes</i>	<i>Statecraft</i>	<i>Precepts of Statecraft</i>
<i>Dial. L.</i>	<i>Dialogue on Love</i>	<i>Stoic Cont.</i>	<i>Stoic Self-Contradictions</i>
<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner of Seven Wise Men</i>	<i>Sulla</i>	<i>Sulla</i>
<i>Div. V.</i>	<i>Delays of Divine Vengeance</i>	<i>Superst.</i>	<i>Superstition</i>
<i>E Delph.</i>	<i>E at Delphi</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Table Talk</i>
<i>Eating Fl.</i>	<i>Eating of Flesh</i>	<i>Ten Or.</i>	<i>Ten Orators</i>
<i>Educ.</i>	<i>On the Education of Children</i>	<i>Themist.</i>	<i>Themistocles</i>
<i>Envy</i>	<i>On Envy and Hate</i>	<i>Thes.</i>	<i>Theseus</i>
<i>Eum.</i>	<i>Eumenes</i>	<i>Tib. Gracc.</i>	<i>Tiberius Gracchus</i>
<i>Exile</i>	<i>On Exile</i>	<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timoleon</i>
<i>Face M.</i>	<i>Face on the Moon</i>	<i>Uned. R.</i>	<i>To an Uneducated Ruler</i>
<i>Fame Ath.</i>	<i>Fame of the Athenians</i>	<i>Virt.</i>	<i>Virtue and Vice</i>
<i>Fate</i>	<i>On Fate</i>	<i>WV.S.C.U.</i>	<i>Whether Vice Is Sufficient to Cause Unhappiness</i>
<i>Flatt.</i>	<i>How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend</i>		
<i>Fort. Alex.</i>	<i>On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander</i>		

Polyb.	Polybius <i>History of the Roman Republic</i>	Servius <i>Comm. in Verg. Aen.</i>	Maurius Servius Honoratus <i>Commentarius in Vergilii Aeneida</i>
Porph.	Porphyry	Sext. Emp.	Sextus Empiricus
<i>Abst.</i>	<i>De abstinentia</i>	<i>Eth.</i>	<i>Against the Ethicists</i>
<i>Antr. nymph.</i>	<i>De antro nympharum</i>	<i>Math.</i>	<i>Adversus mathematicos/Against the Professors</i>
<i>Ar. Cat.</i>	<i>On Aristotle's Categories</i>	<i>Pyr.</i>	<i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i>
<i>Isag.</i>	<i>Isagoge sive quinque voces</i>	Sil. It.	Silius Italicus <i>Punica</i>
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>To Marcella</i>	Soph.	Sophocles
<i>Porphyry's</i>	<i>Porphyry's Against the Christians: The Literary Remains.</i> Edited and translated by R. Joseph Hoffmann. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1994.	<i>Ajax</i>	<i>Ajax</i>
<i>V.P.</i>	<i>Vita Pythagorae/Life of Pythagoras</i>	<i>Antig.</i>	<i>Antigone</i>
Prop. Eleg.	Propertius <i>Elegies</i>	<i>El.</i>	<i>Electra</i>
Ps.-Callisth. Alex.	Pseudo-Callisthenes <i>Alexander Romance</i>	<i>Oed. Col.</i>	<i>Oedipus at Colonus</i>
Ps.-Chion Ep.	Pseudo-Chion of Heraclea <i>Epistulae</i>	<i>Oed. tyr.</i>	<i>Oedipus the King</i>
Ptolemy		<i>Philoc.</i>	<i>Philoctetes</i>
<i>Geog.</i>	<i>Geography</i>	<i>Wom. Tr.</i>	<i>Women of Trachis</i>
<i>Tettab.</i>	<i>Tetrabiblos</i>	Soranus <i>Gynec.</i>	Soranus <i>Gynecology</i>
Publ. Syr.	Publilius Syrus <i>Sentences</i>	Stad.	Stadiasmus <i>maris magni</i>
Pyth. Sent.	Pythagorean <i>Sentences</i>	Statius	
Quint.	Quintilian	<i>Ach.</i>	<i>Achilleid</i>
<i>Decl.</i>	<i>Declamations</i>	<i>Silv.</i>	<i>Silvae</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutes of Oratory</i>	<i>Theb.</i>	<i>Thebaid</i>
Quint. Curt.	Quintus Curtius Rufus <i>History of Alexander</i>	Stob.	Stobaeus
Res gest.	<i>Res gestae divi Augusti</i>	<i>Anth.</i>	<i>Anthology</i>
Rhet. Alex.	<i>Rhetorica ad Alexandrum</i>	<i>Ecl.</i>	<i>Ecolgae</i>
Rhet. Her.	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>	<i>Flor.</i>	<i>Florilegium</i>
Sall.	Sallust	Strabo	Strabo <i>Geography</i>
<i>Catil.</i>	<i>War with Catiline</i>	Suet.	Suetonius
<i>Ep. Caes.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Caesarem/Letters to Caesar</i>	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Augustus</i>
<i>Invect. M. Tull.</i>	<i>Invective against Marcus Tullius</i>	<i>Calig.</i>	<i>Caligula</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae</i>	<i>Claud.</i>	<i>Claudius</i>
<i>Jug.</i>	<i>War with Jugurtha</i>	<i>Dom.</i>	<i>Domitian</i>
<i>Mith.</i>	<i>Mithridates</i>	<i>Galba</i>	<i>Galba</i>
<i>Philip.</i>	<i>Speech of Philippus</i>	<i>Gramm.</i>	<i>Grammarians</i>
<i>Pomp.</i>	<i>Letter of Gnaeus Pompeius</i>	<i>Jul.</i>	<i>Julius</i>
<i>Sp. Caes.</i>	<i>Speech to Caesar</i>	<i>Nero</i>	<i>Nero</i>
<i>Sp. G. Cotta</i>	<i>Speech of Gaius Cotta</i>	<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetoricians</i>
Sallustius <i>Gods</i>	Sallustius <i>On the Gods and the Universe</i>	<i>Tib.</i>	<i>Tiberius</i>
Sen. E.	Seneca the Elder	<i>Tit.</i>	<i>Titus</i>
<i>Controv.</i>	<i>Controversiae</i>	<i>Vergil</i>	<i>Vergil</i>
<i>Suas.</i>	<i>Suasoriae</i>	<i>Vesp.</i>	<i>Vespasian</i>
Sen. Y.	Seneca the Younger	<i>Vit.</i>	<i>Vitellius</i>
<i>Ag.</i>	<i>Agamemnon</i>	Tac.	Tacitus
<i>Apocol.</i>	<i>Apocolocyntosis</i>	<i>Agr.</i>	<i>Agricola</i>
<i>Ben.</i>	<i>On Benefits</i>	<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annals</i>
<i>Clem.</i>	<i>De clementia</i>	<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogus de oratoribus</i>
<i>Consol.</i>	<i>Consolation to Marcia</i>	<i>Germ.</i>	<i>Germania</i>
<i>Const.</i>	<i>De constantia</i>	<i>Hist.</i>	<i>History</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogues</i>	Terence	
<i>Ep. Lucil.</i>	<i>Epistles to Lucilius</i>	<i>Andr.</i>	<i>Lady of Andros</i>
<i>Herc. fur.</i>	<i>Hercules furens</i>	<i>Brothers</i>	<i>The Brothers</i>
<i>Herc. Ot.</i>	<i>Hercules Otaeus</i>	<i>Eun.</i>	<i>Eunuch</i>
<i>Ira</i>	<i>De ira</i>	<i>Moth.</i>	<i>The Mother-in-Law</i>
<i>Med.</i>	<i>Medea</i>	<i>Phorm.</i>	<i>Phormio</i>
<i>Nat. Q.</i>	<i>Natural Questions</i>	<i>Self-T.</i>	<i>Self-Tormentor</i>
<i>Phaed.</i>	<i>Phaedra</i>	Themistius <i>Or.</i>	Themistius <i>Orationes</i>
<i>Phoen.</i>	<i>Phoenician Women</i>	Theod.	Theodotion
<i>Prov.</i>	<i>De providentia</i>	Theon <i>Progymn.</i>	Aelius Theon <i>Progymnasmata</i> (citing the Butts edition except where otherwise noted)
<i>Tranq.</i>	<i>De tranquillitate animi</i>	Theon of Smyrna	<i>Expositio rerum mathematicarum</i>
<i>Troj.</i>	<i>Trojan Women</i>	Theophr.	Theophrastus
<i>Vit. beat.</i>	<i>De vita beata</i>	<i>Caus. plant.</i>	<i>De causis plantarum</i>
		<i>Char.</i>	<i>On Characters</i>

- Thucyd.** Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War*
- Ulp. Dig.** Ulpian in *Digest* of Justinian
- Val. Flacc.** Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica*
- Val. Max.** Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*
- Varro**
L.L. *On the Latin Language*
Rust. *De re rustica*
- Veg. Mil.** Vegetius *De re militari*
- Vell. Paterc.** Velleius Paterculus *Compendium of Roman History*
- Vett. Val.** Vettius Valens *Anthology*
- Virg.** Virgil
Aen. *Aeneid*
Catal. *Catalepton*
Ecl. *Eclogues*
Georg. *Georgics*
Priap. *Priapea*
- Vit. Aes.** *Vita Aesopi/Life of Aesop/Aesop Romance*
- Vitruv. Arch.** Vitruvius *On Architecture*
- Xen.** Xenophon
Ages. *Agesilaus*
Anab. *Anabasis*
Apol. *Apologia Socratis*
Cav. Com. *Cavalry Commander*
Cyr. *Cyropaedia*
Hell. *Hellenica*
Lac. *Constitution of Lacedaemonians*
Mem. *Memorabilia*
Oec. *Oeconomicus*
Symp. *Symposium*
- Xen. Eph. Anthia** Xenophon of Ephesus *Anthia and Habrocomes*
- Cat. Act.** *Catena in Acta ss. apostolorum*. Edited by J. A. Cramer. Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1838 (Martin, *Acts: Catena on the Acts of the Apostles*).
- Cat. Cor.** *Catena in sancti Pauli epistolas ad Corinthios*. Edited by J. A. Cramer. Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1841 (Bray, *Corinthians: Catena on Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians*).
- CER** Origen. *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos*. Edited by T. Heither. 5 vols. New York: Herder, 1990–95.
- CMG** Corpus medicorum graecorum
- CSEL** Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
- Cod. theod.* *Codex theodosianus*
- Confuc. Anal.* *Confucius Analects*⁴
- Corp. herm.* *Corpus hermeticum*
- CTH** *Catalogue des textes hittites*. By Emmanuel Laroche. Paris: Klincksieck, 1971.
- Cyn. Ep.** *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition*. Edited by Abraham J. Malherbe. SBLSPS 12. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977.
- Diehl** *Anthologia lyrica graeca*. Edited by E. Diehl. 2 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1925.
- Düring** *Chion of Heraclea: A Novel in Letters*. Edited by Ingemar Düring. Göteborg, Sweden: Wettergren & Kerber, 1951.
- ENPK** *Ein neuer Paulustext und Kommentar*. Edited by H. J. Frede. 2 vols. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1973–74.
- Epicurea** *Epicurea*. Edited by H. Usener. Leipzig: Teubner, 1887.
- Eshn.** Laws of Eshnunna
- Eustath. Com. Il.** Eustathius of Thessalonica *Commentary on Iliad*
- FIRA** *Fontes iuris romani antejustiniani*. Edited by S. Riccobono et al. 3 vols. 2nd ed. Florence: Barbèra, 1940–43.
- Gilg.** Epic of Gilgamesh
- GBP** *The Greek Bucolic Poets*. Translated by J. M. Edmonds. LCL. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1912.
- GGM** *Geographi graeci minores*. Edited by C. Müller. 3 vols. Paris: Didot, 1855–61.
- Gnom. Vat.** *Gnomologium Vaticanum*
- GVSGM** *Geographiae veteris scriptores graeci minores*. Edited by John Hudson. 4 vols. Oxford: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1698–1712.
- Hamm.** Code of Hammurabi
- Incant. Text** Incantation text from *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls*. By Charles D. Isbell. SBLDS 17. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975.
- Just, Luke** *Luke*. Edited by Arthur A. Just Jr. ACCS: New Testament 3. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003.
- KUB** *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*
- LSAM** *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*. By Franciszek Sokolowski. Paris: E. de Boccard, 1955.

Other Ancient and Medieval Sources

- ANET** *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by James B. Pritchard. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955.
- ARMT** *Archives royales de Mari: Transcriptions et traductions*
- ARS** *Ancient Roman Statutes*. Translated by Allan Chester Johnson, Paul Robinson Coleman-Norton, and Frank Card Bourne. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961.
- BCH** *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*
- Bede Comm. Acts** Venerable Bede *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*
- BGU** *Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden*. 15 vols. Berlin, 1895–1983.
- Book of Dead** *Book of the Dead (Egyptian)*
- Bray, Corinthians** 1–2 *Corinthians*. Edited by Gerald Bray. ACCS: New Testament 7. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1999.
- Bray, Romans** *Romans*. Edited by Gerald Bray. ACCS: New Testament 6. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998.
- CAGN** *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*. Edited by B. P. Reardon. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
4. Chai's enumeration followed parenthetically by the original enumeration.

Abbreviations

LSCG	<i>Lois sacrées des cités grecques</i> . By Franciszek Sokolowski. Paris: E. de Boccard, 1969.
MAMA	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris antiqua</i> . Edited by William M. Calder et al. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press; London: Longmans, Green, 1928–.
Martin, <i>Acts</i>	<i>Acts</i> . Edited by Francis Martin, with Evan Smith. ACCS: New Testament 5. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006.
MOT	<i>The Montanist Oracles and Testimonia</i> . Edited by Ronald E. Heine. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1989.
Oden and Hall, <i>Mark</i>	<i>Mark</i> . Edited by Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall. ACCS: New Testament 2. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998.
<i>Pauluskommentare</i>	<i>Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche</i> . Edited by K. Staab. Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 15. Münster: Aschendorff, 1933 (Bray, <i>Corinthians</i> , and Bray, <i>Romans: Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church</i>).
Petav.	Synesius. <i>Opera quae extant omnia</i> . Edited by Dionysius Petavius (Denis Pétau). 2nd ed. Paris: D. Bechet, 1640.
PG	<i>Patrologia graeca</i> . [= <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca</i>]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 166 vols. Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857–86.
PL	<i>Patrologia latina</i> [= <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina</i>]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844–46.
Pleket	H. W. Pleket, ed. <i>Texts on the Social History of the Greek World</i> . Vol. 2 of <i>Epigraphica</i> . Leiden: Brill, 1969.
<i>Rev. Laws</i>	<i>Revenue Laws of Ptolemy Philadelphus</i> . Edited by B. P. Grenfell. Oxford: Clarendon, 1896 (cited in <i>SPap</i>).
RG	<i>Rhetores graeci</i> . Edited by Leonhard von Spengel. 3 vols. Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1853–56.
<i>Rhet. Gr.</i>	<i>Rhetores graeci</i> . Edited by Christian Walz. 9 vols. in 10. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1832–36.
SB	<i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten</i> . Edited by F. Preisigke et al. Strassburg, 1915–.
SHA	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
SSGF	<i>The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers</i> . Translated and edited by M. F. Toal. 4 vols. Swedesboro, N.J.: Preservation, 1996.
Syncellus “Temple Program”	George Syncellus <i>Ecloga chronographica</i> “Temple Program for the New Year’s Festivals at Babylon”
UPZ	<i>Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (ältere Funde)</i> . Edited by U. Wilcken. 2 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927–57.
UT	Cyrus H. Gordon, <i>Ugaritic Textbook I–III</i> (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965)
Zonaras	John Zonaras <i>Epitome historiarum</i>

Papyri, Inscriptions, and Fragment Collections

AE	<i>L'année épigraphique</i>
CIG	<i>Corpus inscriptionum graecarum</i> . Edited by A. Boeckh et al. 4 vols. Berlin: Riemer, 1828–77.
CIJ	<i>Corpus inscriptionum judaicarum</i> . Edited by Jean-Baptiste Frey. 2 vols. Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Christiana, 1936–52.
CIL	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i> . Berlin: Riemer, 1862–.
CIS	<i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum</i> . Paris, 1881–.
CMRDM	<i>Corpus monumentorum religionis dei Menis</i> . Edited by Eugene Lane. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1971–78.
CPJ	<i>Corpus papyrorum judaicarum</i> . Edited by Victor A. Tcherikover, Alexander Fuks, and Menahem Stern. 3 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press for Magnes Press, 1957–64.
Diels-Kranz	Hermann Diels. <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, griechisch und deutsch</i> . Edited by Walther Kranz. 3 vols. 9th ed. Berlin: Weidmann, 1959–60.
<i>Eph. Ep.</i>	<i>Ephemeris epigraphica: Corporis inscriptionum latinarum supplementum</i> . Edited by Wilhelm Henzen et al. 9 vols. Rome: Institutum Archaeologicum Romanum; Berlin: Riemer, 1872–1913.
Epid. inscr.	<i>Epidaurus inscription</i>
FGH	<i>Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Edited by F. Jacoby. 3 vols. in 15. Leiden: Brill, 1954–64.
GEF	<i>Greek Epic Fragments from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC</i> . Translated by Martin L. West. LCL. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.
<i>I. Eph.</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos</i> . Edited by Hermann Wankel. 8 vols. in 10. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 11–17. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1979–84.
<i>I. Ital.</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Italiae</i> . Edited by V. Bracco et al. Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1931–.
IC	<i>Inscriptiones creticae</i> . Edited by M. Guarducci. 4 vols. Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1935–50.
IG	<i>Inscriptiones graecae</i> . Berlin, 1873–.
IGBulg	<i>Inscriptiones graecae in Bulgaria repertae</i> . Edited by G. Mikhailov. Sofia: Academia Litterarum Bulgarica, 1956–.
IGLS	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i> . Edited by L. Jalabert et al. Paris: Geuthner, 1929–.
IGRR	<i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes</i> . Edited by R. Cagnat et al. Paris: Leroux, I, 1911; III, 1906; IV, 1927.
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones latinae selectae</i> . Edited by H. Dessau. 3 vols. in 5. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916.
KSB	<i>Koptisches Sammelbuch</i> . Edited by M. R. M. Hasitzka. Vienna: Brüder Holleink, 1993–.

- Nauck *Tragicorum graecorum fragmenta*. Edited by A. Nauck. 2nd ed. Leipzig: Teubner, 1889.
- OGIS *Oriens graeci inscriptiones selectae*. Edited by W. Dittenberger. 2 vols. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1903–5.
- P.Amh. *The Amherst Papyri*. Edited by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt. London, 1900–1901.
- P.Beatty *Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri*. Edited by F. G. Kenyon. London, 1933–41.
- P.Bour. *Les Papyrus Bouriant*. Edited by P. Collart. Paris, 1926.
- P.Cair. *Die demotischen Denkmäler*. Edited by W. Spiegelberg. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. Leipzig, etc., 1904–32.
- P.Cair.Masp. *Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine*. Edited by J. Maspero. 3 vols. in 6. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1911–16.
- P.Cair.Zen. *Zenon Papyri*. Edited by C. C. Edgar, O. Guéraud, and P. Jouguet. 5 vols. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1925–40.
- P.Col. *Columbia Papyri*. New York: Columbia University Press; Missoula, Mont.; and Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1929–.
- P.Coll.Youtie *Collectanea papyrologica*. Edited by A. E. Hanson et al. Bonn, 1976.
- P.Duk. Duke University papyrus collection
- P.Egerton *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri*. Edited by H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat. London, 1935.
- P.Eleph. *Elephantine-Papyri*. Edited by O. Rubensohn. Berlin: Weidmann, 1907.
- P.Enteux. ENTEΥΞΕΙΣ: *Requêtes et plaintes adressées au roi d'Égypte au IIIe siècle avant J.-C.* Edited by O. Guéraud. Cairo, 1931–32.
- P.Fam.Theb. *A Family Archive from Thebes*. Edited by M. El-Amir. Cairo, 1959.
- P.Fay. *Fayum Towns and Their Papyri*. Edited by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, and D. G. Hogarth. London, 1900.
- P.Flor. *Papyri greco-egizii, Papiri Fiorentini*. Edited by G. Vitelli and D. Comparetti. Milan, 1906–15.
- P.Fouad *Les Papyrus Fouad I*. Edited by A. Bataille et al. Cairo, 1939.
- P.Giss. *Griechische Papyri im Museum des Oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Giessen*. Edited by E. Kornemann, O. Eger, and P. M. Meyer. Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1910–.
- P.Giss.Univ. *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Giessener Universitätsbibliothek*. Edited by H. King et al. 6 vols. Giessen: Töpelmann, 1924–39.
- P.Grad. *Griechische Papyri der Sammlung Gradenwitz*. Edited by G. Plaumann. Heidelberg, 1914.
- P.Graux Nos. 1–8: *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*. Vol. 4, nos. 7461–68. Edited by H. Henne. Heidelberg, 1931. Nos. 9–31: *Papyrus Graux*. Edited by S. Kambitis. Geneva: Droz, 1995–2004.
- P.Grenf. *Greek Papyri*. Edited by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903.
- P.Gur. *Greek Papyri from Gurob*. Edited by J. G. Smyly. Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1921.
- P.Hal. *Dikaionata: Auszüge aus alexandrischen Gesetzen und Verordnungen in einem Papyrus des Philologischen Seminars der Universität Halle (Pap.Hal. 1) mit einem Anhang weiterer Papyri derselben Sammlung*. Edited by the Graeca Halensis. Berlin: Weidman, 1913.
- P.Hamb. *Griechische Papyruskunden der Hamburger Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek*. Leipzig, etc., 1911–98.
- P.Heid. *Veröffentlichungen aus der Heidelberger Papyrussammlung*. Edited by E. Siegmann et al. Heidelberg, 1956–.
- P.Hib. *The Hibeh Papyri*. Edited by B. P. Grenfell et al. London, 1906–55.
- P.Köln *Kölnener Papyri*. Edited by B. Kramer et al. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1976–.
- P.Lips. *Griechische Urkunden der Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig*. Vol. 1: Edited by L. Mitteis. Leipzig: Teubner, 1906. Vol. 2: Edited by R. Duttonhöfer. Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete, Beiheft 10. Munich: Saur, 2002.
- P.Lond. *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*. Edited by F. G. Kenyon et al. London: Printed by Order of the Trustees, 1893–.
- P.Meyer *Griechische Texte aus Aegypten*. Edited by P. M. Meyer. Berlin, 1916.
- P.Mich. Michigan Papyri. 19 vols. in 20. Ann Arbor, etc., 1931–99.
- P.Mil.Vogl. *Papiri della R. Università di Milano; Papiri della Università degli Studi di Milano*. Edited by A. Vogliano et al. 8 vols. in 9. Milan, 1937–2001.
- P.Murabba'at *Les grottes de Murabba'at*. Edited by P. Benoit, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 2. Oxford, 1961.
- P.Oslo *Papyri Osloenses*. Edited by S. Eitrem and L. Amundsen. Oslo, 1925–36.
- P.Oxy. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. London: British Exploration Fund; Egypt Exploration Society, 1898–.
- P.Panop.Beatty *Papyri from Panopolis in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*. Edited by T. C. Skeat. Dublin, 1964.
- P.Paris *Notices et textes des papyrus grecs (p. par.) du Musée du Louvre et de la Bibliothèque impériale*. Edited by M. (A.-J.) Letronne, W. Brunet de Presle, and E. Egger. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1865.
- P.Petr. *The Flinders Petrie Papyri*. Edited by J. P. Mahaffy and J. G. Smyly. Dublin, 1891–1905.
- P.Rein. *Les Papyrus Théodore Reinach*. Edited by P. Collart. Cairo, 1940.
- P.Ryl. *Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester*. Edited by A. S. Hunt, J. de M. Johnson, and V. Martin. 4 vols. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1911–52.

Abbreviations

P.Sakaon	<i>The Archive of Aurelius Sakaon</i> . Edited by G. M. Parássoglou. Bonn, 1978.		
P.Stras.	<i>Griechische Papyrus der Kaiserlichen Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek zu Strassburg</i> . Edited by F. Priesigke. Leipzig, 1912–.	PSI	<i>Papiri della Società Italiana</i> . Edited by G. Vitelli et al. Florence, Felice le Monnier, etc., 1912–.
P.Tebt.	<i>The Tebtunis Papyri</i> . Edited by B. P. Grenfell et al. London: H. Frowde, etc., 1902–.	RECAM	<i>Regional Epigraphic Catalogues of Asia Minor</i>
P.Thead.	<i>Papyrus de Thèadelphie</i> . Edited by P. Jouguet. Paris: Fontemoing, 1911.	SEG	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i> . Amsterdam, etc., 1923–.
P.Turner	<i>Papyri Greek and Egyptian</i> . Edited by P. J. Parsons et al. London, 1981.	SPap	<i>Select Papyri</i> . Edited by A. S. Hunt, C. C. Edgar, and D. L. Page. 5 vols. LCL. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932–41.
P.Yale	<i>Yale Papyri in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library</i> . Edited by J. F. Oates. New Haven, etc., 1967–.	SIG ²	<i>Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum</i> . Edited by W. Dittenberger. 3 vols. 2nd ed. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1898–1901.
P.Wash.Univ.	<i>Washington University Papyri</i> . Edited by V. B. Schuman, K. Maresch, and Z. M. Packman. Missoula, Mont.; Oplanden, Ger., 1980–90.	SIG ³	<i>Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum</i> . Edited by W. Dittenberger. 4 vols. 3rd ed. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1915–24.
P.Wisc.	<i>The Wisconsin Papyri</i> . Edited by P. J. Sijpesteijn. Leiden; Zutphen, Neth., 1967–77.	SVF	<i>Stoicorum veterum fragmenta</i> . Edited by H. von Arnim. 4 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–24.
PDM	<i>Papyri demoticae magicae</i> . Demotic texts in the PGM corpus as collated in <i>The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells</i> . Edited by Hans Dieter Betz. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992–.	TrGF	<i>Tragicorum graecorum fragmenta</i> . Edited by Bruno Snell et al. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971–.
Pearson	<i>The Fragments of Sophocles</i> . Edited by A. C. Pearson. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917.	von Arnim	<i>Hierokles: Ethische Elementarlehre (Papyrus 9780)</i> . Edited by H. von Arnim with W. Schubart. Berlin: Weidman, 1906.
PGM	<i>Papyri graecae magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri</i> . Edited by K. Preisendanz	W.Chrest.	<i>Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde</i> . Edited by U. Wilcken and L. Mitteis. 2 vols. in 4. Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1912.

Modern Sources

General

ad loc.	<i>ad locum</i> , at the place discussed
B.C.E.	before the Common Era
C.E.	Common Era
ca.	circa
ch(s).	chapter(s)
col.	column
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example
ed(s).	edition, editor(s), edited by
enl.	enlarged
esp.	especially
ET	English translation
fig.	figure
ft.	foot/feet
Gk.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew
i.e.	<i>id est</i> , that is
impv.	imperative
in.	inch(es)
inv.	inventory number
kg.	kilogram(s)
km.	kilometer(s)
lit.	literally
m.	meter(s)
mi.	mile(s)
n(n).	note(s)
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place/no publisher/no pages
n.s.	new series
no(s).	number(s)
p(p).	page(s)
par.	parallel
pl.	plural
R.	Rabbi
rev.	revised
s.v.	<i>sub verbo</i> , under the word
sect.	section
ser.	series
sing.	singular
sq.	square
trans.	translator(s), translated by
vs.	versus

Bible Translations

GNB	Good News Bible
GOODSPEED	E. J. Goodspeed, <i>The Complete Bible: An American Translation</i>
JB	Jerusalem Bible
MOFFATT	James Moffatt, <i>The New Testament: A New Translation</i>
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RV	Revised Version
TWENTIETH CENTURY	Twentieth Century New Testament

Journals, Series, and Other Reference Works

AAAH	Acta Academiae Aboensis, Humaniora
AAAM	American Anthropological Association Monographs
AAAPSS	<i>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>
AARAS	American Academy of Religion Academy Series
AARTRSS	American Academy of Religion Teaching Religious Studies Series
AASF	Annales Academiae scientiarum fennicae
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David N. Freeman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABIG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
ABPRSSS	Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Special Studies Series
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AbrN	<i>Abr-Nahrain</i>
ABW	<i>Archaeology in the Biblical World</i>

Abbreviations

ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture		
ACI	<i>Acta Classica</i>		
ACQ	<i>American Church Quarterly</i>	AnSt	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>
ACR	<i>Australasian Catholic Record</i>	ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins	AnthConsc	<i>Anthropology of Consciousness</i>
<i>Advance</i>	<i>Advance</i>	AnthHum	<i>Anthropology and Humanism</i>
Aeg	<i>Aegyptus</i>	Anthrop	<i>Anthropos</i>
AfCrit	<i>Affirmation & Critique</i>	AnthrQ	<i>Anthropological Quarterly</i>
AfCS	<i>African Christian Studies</i>	Antiquity	<i>Antiquity</i>
AfET	<i>Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology (=EAfrJET)</i>	Antonianum	<i>Antonianum</i>
<i>Africa</i>	<i>Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, London</i>	ANZJPsc	<i>Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry</i>
AfSR	<i>African Studies Review</i>	ANZSTR	<i>Australian and New Zealand Studies in Theology and Religion</i>
AfSt	<i>African Studies</i>	AOAT	<i>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</i>
AfThJ	<i>Africa Theological Journal</i>	APAP	<i>Analytic Psychotherapy and Psychopathology</i>
AGP	<i>Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie</i>	APB	<i>Acta Patristica et Byzantina</i>
AGSU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und Urchristentums	Apeiron	<i>Apeiron</i>
AHB	<i>Ancient History Bulletin</i>	APOT	<i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English.</i> Edited by R. H. Charles. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1913.
AIPHOS	<i>Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves</i>	APsPSAL	<i>Acta Psiquiatrica y Psicologica de America Latina</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>	Apuntes	<i>Apuntes</i>
AJAH	<i>American Journal of Ancient History</i>	AramSt	<i>Aramaic Studies</i>
AJBA	<i>Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology</i>	ARAnth	<i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i>
AJBI	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>	ArbInt	Arbeiten zur Interkulturalität
AJEC	<i>Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity</i>	Archaeology	<i>Archaeology</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>	ArchOd	<i>Archaeology Odyssey</i>
AJPS	<i>Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies</i>	ArchRep	<i>Archaeological Reports</i>
AJPSS	<i>Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies Series</i>	Arethusa	<i>Arethusa</i>
AJSR	<i>Association for Jewish Studies Review</i>	ArIntHI	<i>Archives Internationales d'histoire des idées</i>
AJT	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>	ARJ	<i>Annual of Rabbinic Judaism</i>
Alfinge	<i>Alfinge</i>	ASAMS	<i>Association of Social Anthropologists Monograph Series</i>
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des Hellenistischen Judentums	ASDE	<i>Annali di storia dell' esegesi</i>
<i>Altertum</i>	<i>Das Altertum</i>	AsEthn	<i>Asian Ethnology</i>
ALUOS	<i>Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society</i>	AshTJ	<i>Ashland Theological Journal</i>
ALW	<i>Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft</i>	ASNU	<i>Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis</i>
AmAnth	<i>American Anthropologist</i>	ASocR	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
AmAntiq	<i>American Antiquity</i>	ASP	<i>American Studies in Papyrology</i>
AmBenRev	<i>American Benedictine Review</i>	AsSeign	<i>Assemblées du Seigneur</i>
AMECR	<i>AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church Review</i>	ASSR	<i>Archives de sciences sociales des religions</i>
AmEthn	<i>American Ethnologist</i>	ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
AMEZQR	<i>A.M.E. Zion (African Methodist Episcopal Zion) Quarterly Review</i>	AsTJ	<i>Asbury Theological Journal</i>
AmJPsc	<i>American Journal of Psychiatry</i>	ATDan	<i>Acta Theologica Danica</i>
AmJSocPsc	<i>American Journal of Social Psychiatry</i>	AThR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
AmPsc	<i>American Psychologist</i>	'Atiqot	<i>'Atiqot</i>
AmSocMissMonS	<i>American Society of Missiology Monograph Series</i>	ATLABS	<i>American Theological Library Association Bibliography Series</i>
AmSocMissS	<i>American Society of Missiology Series</i>	ATSSWCRMPCS	<i>Asbury Theological Seminary Series in World Christian Revitalization Movements in Pentecostal/Charismatic Studies</i>
AmSocRev	<i>American Sociological Review</i>	AugCNT	<i>Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament</i>
Anám	<i>Anámnesis</i>	AuOr	<i>Aula Orientalis</i>
AnBib	<i>Analecta Biblica</i>	AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
AnBrux	<i>Analecta Bruxellensia</i>	AUSt	<i>American University Studies</i>
AnCrac	<i>Analecta cracoviensia</i>	AYBRL	<i>Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library</i>
AncSoc	<i>Ancient Society</i>	BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
ANES	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>	BAGB	<i>Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé</i>
Angelicum	<i>Angelicum</i>	BAIAS	<i>Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society</i>
Annala	<i>Annala</i>		
Annales	<i>Annales</i>		
ANQ	<i>Andover Newton Quarterly</i>		
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der</i>		
			<i>neueren Forschung.</i> Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1972-.

BangTF	<i>Bangalore Theological Forum</i>	BMik	<i>Beth Mikra</i>
BapRT	<i>Baptist Review of Theology/Revue baptiste de théologie</i>	BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>	BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>	BO	<i>Bibliotheca orientalis</i>
BASP	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>	Bolls	Bollingen Series
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge	BPN	Bibliotheca Psychiatrica et Neurologica
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>	BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BCCompAW	Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World	BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BCCompRel	Blackwell Companions to Religion	BrillPauly	<i>Brill's New Pauly, Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World: Antiquity</i> . Edited by Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Christine F. Salazar. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002–.
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd rev. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999.	BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BDV	<i>Bulletin Dei Verbum</i>	BSClinPsyc	<i>British School of Clinical Psychology</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament	BSGA	Blackwell Studies in Global Archaeology
BEFAR	Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome	BSL	Biblical Studies Library
BegChr	<i>The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles</i> . Edited by F. J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. 5 vols. London: Macmillan, 1920–33; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.	BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BehBrSc	<i>Behavioural and Brain Sciences</i>	BTCLB	Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible
BeO	<i>Bibbia e Oriente</i>	BTr	<i>Bible Translator</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium	BTZ	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
BETS	<i>Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society</i> (later = <i>JETS</i>)	BullCorrHell	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance hellénique</i>
BEURU	Bibliotheca Ekmaniana Universitatis Regiae Upsaliensis	BurH	<i>Buried History</i>
BHMTSNABR	The Bishop Henry McNeal Turner Studies in North American Black Religion	BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie	ByF	<i>Biblia y Fe</i>
BI	<i>Biblical Illustrator</i>	BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>	BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
Bibh	<i>Bible Bhashyam (Biblebhashyam)</i>	BZNWK	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>	CaÉ	Cahiers Évangile
BibLeb	<i>Bibel und Leben</i>	CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
BIBMS	BIBAL Monograph Series	CahJos	<i>Cahiers de Joséphologie</i>
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia	CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
BibRev	<i>Biblia Revuo</i>	CanJBehSc	<i>Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science</i>
BibSham	Bibliotheca Shamanistica	Cathedra	Cathedra
BibSp	<i>Bible and Spade</i>	CathW	<i>Catholic World</i>
BibT	<i>The Bible Today</i>	CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
BibTh	<i>Biblical Theology</i>	CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
BibUnt	Biblische Untersuchungen	CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
Bijdr	<i>Bijdragen</i>	CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
BIOSCS	<i>Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>	CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series	CBull	<i>Classical Bulletin</i>
BJGS	<i>Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies</i>	C&C	<i>Cross & Crown</i>
BJPhilSc	<i>British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i>	CC	Continental Commentaries
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library</i>	CCER	<i>Cahiers du Cercle Ernest-Renan</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies	CCI	<i>Civiltà Cattolica</i>
BJSoc	<i>British Journal of Sociology</i>	CCRMS	Cross-Cultural Research and Methodology Series
BK	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>	CCSS	Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture
BL	<i>Bibel und Liturgie</i>	CCWJCW	Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to AD 200
BLE	<i>Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique</i>	CE	<i>Coptic Encyclopedia</i> . Edited by Aziz S. Atiya. 8 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1991.
BK	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>	CEC	The Context of Early Christianity
BMedJ	<i>British Medical Journal</i>	CGB	<i>Church Growth Bulletin</i>
		CH	<i>Church History</i>
		CHB	<i>Christian History & Biography</i> (formerly <i>Christian History</i>)

Abbreviations

ChH	<i>Christian History</i> (continued as <i>Christian History & Biography</i>)	DeuUn	<i>Deutsche Universitätszeitung</i>
ChicSt	<i>Chicago Studies</i>	DiabMed	<i>Diabetic Medicine</i>
Chm	<i>Churchman</i>	Diakonia	<i>Diakonia</i>
ChongTJ	<i>Chongshin Theological Journal</i>	Dial	<i>Dialog</i>
ChrÉg	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>	Didaskalia	<i>Didaskalia</i>
Christus	<i>Christus</i>	Diogenes	<i>Diogenes</i>
CHSC	Center for Hellenic Studies Colloquia	Discovery	<i>Discovery</i>
CHSP	<i>Center for Hermeneutical Studies Protocol</i>	Divinitas	<i>Divinitas</i>
ChuenKLS	Chuen King Lecture Series	DivThom	<i>Divus Thomas</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>	Diwa	<i>Diwa: Studies in Philosophy and Theology</i>
CJP	<i>Canadian Journal of Philosophy</i>	DLNTD	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments</i> . Edited by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997.
CJT	<i>Canadian Journal of Theology</i>		
ClAnt	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>	DNTB	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> . Edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000.
ClassO	<i>Classical Outlook</i>		
CMPsy	<i>Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry</i>	Dor le Dor	<i>Dor le Dor</i>
CNS	<i>Cristianesimo nella Storia</i>	DOTHB	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books</i> . Edited by Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005.
CNT	<i>Commentaire du Nouveau Testament</i>		
Coll	<i>Collationes</i>	DOTP	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch</i> . Edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003.
CollLat	Collection Latomus		
Colloq	<i>Colloquium</i>	DPCM	<i>Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements</i> . Edited by Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.
ColT	<i>Collectanea Theologica</i>		
CommCog	<i>Communication and Cognition</i>	DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> . Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993.
Commentary	<i>Commentary</i>		
Communio	<i>Communio</i>	DRev	<i>The Downside Review</i>
ComPsy	<i>Comprehensive Psychiatry</i>	DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
ConBNT	<i>Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series</i>	DSt	<i>Dutch Studies</i>
		DTT	<i>Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift</i>
ConBOT	<i>Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series</i>	DVerb	<i>Dei Verbum</i>
		EAFrJET	<i>East African Journal of Evangelical Theology</i>
Concilium	<i>Concilium</i>	EAFSt	<i>Eastern African Studies</i>
ConeJ	<i>Concordia Journal</i>	East Asian PastRev	<i>East Asian Pastoral Review</i>
ConnCMon	Connecticut College Monographs	ÉcBib	<i>École biblique</i>
ConsJud	<i>Conservative Judaism</i>	EcRev	<i>Ecumenical Review</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>	EdF	<i>Erträge der Forschung</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>	EfMex	<i>Efemerides Mexicana</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>	ÉgT	<i>Église et Théologie</i>
CRBR	<i>Critical Review of Books in Religion</i>	EHPR	<i>Études d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses</i>
CrisTR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>		
Criterion	<i>Criterion</i>	EHRel	<i>Études d'Histoire des Religions</i>
CSHJ	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism	EKKNT	<i>Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</i>
CSHSMC	Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care		
		EkkPhar	<i>Ekklesiastikos Pharos</i>
CSSH	<i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>	ELKZ	<i>Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung</i>
CT	<i>Christianity Today</i>	EMC	<i>Echos du Monde Classique/Classical Views</i>
CTAFS	Christian Theology in African Scholarship	Emmanuel	<i>Emmanuel</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>	Enc	<i>Encounter</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>	EnclJud	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> . 16 vols. Jerusalem: Keter, 1972.
CTQ	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>		
CTSR	<i>Chicago Theological Seminary Register</i>	Enr	<i>Enrichment</i>
CuadTeol	<i>Cuadernos de Teología</i>	EphLit	<i>Ephemerides Liturgicae</i>
CulRel	<i>Culture and Religion</i>	EphMar	<i>Ephemerides Mariologicae</i>
CurBS	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>	ÉPROER	<i>Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain</i>
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>		
CV	<i>Communio Viatorum</i>	EpwRev	<i>Epworth Review</i>
CW	<i>Classical World</i>	Eranos	<i>Eranos</i>
DACB	<i>Dictionary of African Christian Biography</i> . New Haven: Overseas Ministries Study Center. Online: http://www.dacb.org .		
Dados	<i>Dados</i>		
DaughSar	<i>Daughters of Sarah</i>		
DavLog	<i>Davar Logos</i>		
DBM	<i>Deltion Biblikon Meleton</i>		
DCDBCN	The Development of Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicea		
DécHell	<i>Décrets hellénistiques</i>		
DeutsArclns	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut		

<i>ErAuf</i>	<i>Erbe und Auftrag</i>	HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel (Erets-Yisrael)</i>	<i>HekRev</i>	<i>Hekima Review</i>
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity	<i>Helios</i>	<i>Helios</i>
<i>EspV</i>	<i>Esprit et Vie</i>	<i>Hen</i>	<i>Henoch</i>
<i>EstAg</i>	<i>Estudio Agustiniiano</i>	<i>Herm</i>	<i>Hermathena</i>
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios Bíblicos</i>	Hermeneia	Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
<i>EstEcl</i>	<i>Estudios Eclesiásticos</i>	<i>Hermenêutica</i>	<i>Hermenêutica</i>
EtBib	Études Bibliques	<i>Hesperia</i>	<i>Hesperia: Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens</i>
<i>Ethnology</i>	<i>Ethnology</i>	Hesperia Sup	Hesperia Supplements
<i>Ethos</i>	<i>Ethos</i>	<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>EthRacSt</i>	<i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i>	<i>HibJ</i>	<i>Hibbert Journal</i>
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>	<i>HibBehSc</i>	<i>Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences</i>
ETR	<i>Études Théologiques et Religieuses</i>	<i>Historia</i>	<i>Historia</i>
<i>ÉtudClass</i>	<i>Les Études Classiques</i>	<i>HistTh</i>	<i>History and Theory</i>
<i>Études</i>	<i>Études</i>	<i>HistW</i>	<i>History Workshop</i>
<i>EunDoc</i>	<i>Euntes Docete</i>	HMFT	Health/Medicine and the Faith Traditions
EurH	Europäische Hochschulschriften	HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
EurSCO	European Studies on Christian Origins	HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
EUSTS	European University Studies, Theology Series	<i>Hok</i>	<i>Hokhma</i>
<i>EvJ</i>	<i>Evangelical Journal</i>	HolNTC	Holman New Testament Commentary
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>	HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>	HS	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>	HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
ExpBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary	HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>Explor</i>	<i>Explorations</i>	HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>	HT	<i>History Today</i>
<i>FaithFreed</i>	<i>Faith and Freedom</i>	HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
FCNTECW	Feminist Companion to the New Testa- ment and Early Christian World	HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>FemTheol</i>	<i>Feminist Theology</i>	HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
FF	Foundations and Facets	HTS/TS	<i>HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies</i>
FIAEC	Fédération Internationale des Associa- tions d'Études Classiques	HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>FidHist</i>	<i>Fides et Historia</i>	<i>HumDev</i>	<i>Human Development</i>
<i>FilNeot</i>	<i>Filología Neotestamentaria</i>	HvTS	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies</i>
<i>F&M</i>	<i>Faith & Mission</i>	IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
FO	<i>Folia Orientalia</i>	IBMR	<i>International Bulletin of Missionary Research</i>
<i>FoiVie</i>	<i>Foi et Vie</i>	IBRB	Institute for Biblical Research Bibliographies
<i>ForKathTheol</i>	<i>Forum Katholische Theologie</i>	IBS	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>Forum</i>	<i>Forum</i>	IBT	Interpreting Biblical Texts
<i>FourR</i>	<i>The Fourth R</i>	IC	<i>Inscriptiones creticae 1-4</i> , ed. M. Guarducci (Rome, 1939-50)
<i>FPhil</i>	<i>Faith and Philosophy</i>	ICC	International Critical Commentaries
<i>FreiRund</i>	<i>Freiburger Rundbrief</i>	ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments	IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
FSCS	Faith and Scholarship Colloquies Series	IGSK	Inschriften Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien
<i>FZPhTh</i>	<i>Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie</i>	<i>IgViv</i>	<i>Iglesia viva</i>
GBWW	Great Books of the Western World	IJAC	<i>International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling</i>
GCAJS	Gratz College Annual of Jewish Studies	IJAHS	<i>International Journal of African Historical Studies</i>
GDT	<i>Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church</i> . Edited by Wil- liam A. Dyrness et al. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2008.	IJComSoc	<i>International Journal of Comparative Sociology</i>
GNC	Good News Commentaries	IJSocLang	<i>International Journal of the Sociology of Language</i>
GNS	Good News Studies	IJSocPsc	<i>International Journal of Social Psychiatry</i>
GOTR	<i>Greek Orthodox Theological Review</i>	IKaZ	<i>Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift</i>
GR	<i>Greece & Rome</i>	ImBst	Immersion Bible Studies
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>	<i>Imm</i>	<i>Immanuel</i>
Greg	<i>Gregorianum</i>	<i>IndCHR</i>	<i>Indian Church History Review</i>
GTJ	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>	InnTStud	Innsbrucker theologische Studien
HABES	Heidelberger althistorische Beiträge und epigraphische Studien	<i>Interchange</i>	<i>Interchange: Papers on Biblical and Current Questions</i>
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>		
HCPsy	<i>Hospital and Community Psychiatry</i>		
HDBull	<i>Harvard Divinity Bulletin</i>		

Abbreviations

<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	Jian Dao DS	Jian Dao Dissertation Series
<i>IntRevMiss</i>	<i>International Review of Mission</i>	JIHist	<i>Journal of Interdisciplinary History</i>
ISBE	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> . Rev. ed. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–88.	JITC	<i>Journal of the Interdenominational Theo- logical Center</i>
ISLN	<i>Israel—Land and Nature</i>	JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
ISNumJ	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>	JJTP	<i>Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy</i>
ISNumR	<i>Israel Numismatic Research</i>	JLH	<i>Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie</i>
ITQ	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>	JLR	<i>Journal of Law and Religion</i>
ITS	<i>Indian Theological Studies</i>	JMBeh	<i>Journal of Mind and Behavior</i>
IVPNTC	InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary	JMenSc	<i>Journal of Mental Science</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>	JMFam	<i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i>
JAAS	<i>Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary</i>	JMS	<i>Journal of Mithraic Studies</i>
JAbnPsy	<i>Journal of Abnormal Psychology</i>	JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>	JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JAfrHist	<i>Journal of African History</i>	JÖAI	<i>Jahreshefte des Österreichischen archäolo- gischen Instituts</i>
JAM	<i>Journal of Asian Mission</i>	JPastCare	<i>Journal of Pastoral Care</i>
JAMA	<i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i>	JRFC	<i>The Jewish People in the First Century: His- torical Geography; Political History; Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions</i> . Edited by S. Safrai and M. Stern with D. Flusser and W. C. van Unnik. 2 vols. Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 1. Vol. 1: Assen: Van Gor- cum, 1974; vol. 2: Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.
JAmFolk	<i>Journal of American Folklore</i>	JPJ	<i>Journal of Progressive Judaism</i>
JANER	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>	JPOS	<i>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
JANESCU	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>	JPsychHist	<i>Journal of Psychohistory</i>
JAnthRes	<i>Journal of Anthropological Research</i>	JPsyChr	<i>Journal of Psychology and Christianity</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>	JPsyTE	<i>Journal of Psychiatric Treatment and Evaluation</i>
JapRel	<i>Japanese Religions</i>	JPsyTh	<i>Journal of Psychology and Theology</i>
JAramB	<i>Journal for the Aramaic Bible (now = Ara- maic Studies)</i>	JPT	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</i>
JAS	<i>Journal of Asian Studies</i>	JPTSUp	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement</i>
JASA	<i>Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation</i>	JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JATS	<i>Journal of the Adventist Theological Society</i>	JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>	JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
JBLMS	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series</i>	JRASS	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology Supple- mentary Series</i>
JBPREs	<i>Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research</i>	JRefJud	<i>Journal of Reform Judaism</i>
JBPsi	<i>Jornal Brasileiro de Psiquiatria</i>	JRelAf	<i>Journal of Religion in Africa</i>
JBQ	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>	JRelHealth	<i>Journal of Religion and Health</i>
JCounsDev	<i>Journal of Counseling and Development</i>	JRelS	<i>Journal of Religious Studies</i>
JDharm	<i>Journal of Dharmā</i>	JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>	JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
Jeev	<i>Jeevadhara</i>	JRT	<i>Journal of Religious Thought</i>
JerPersp	<i>Jerusalem Perspective</i>	JSAlc	<i>Journal of Studies on Alcohol</i>
JerSJT	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought</i>	JSCE	<i>Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics</i>
J ECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>	JSHJ	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
JES	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>	JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Per- sian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>	JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JEthS	<i>Journal of Ethiopian Studies</i>	JSNTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testa- ment: Supplement Series</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>	JSocI	<i>Journal of Social Issues</i>
JEurPentTA	<i>Journal of the European Pentecostal Theo- logical Association</i>	JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JExpPsc	<i>Journal of Experimental Psychology</i>	JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testa- ment: Supplement Series</i>
JFSR	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>	JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JGES	<i>Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society</i>	JSPSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series</i>
JGPsc	<i>Journal of General Psychology</i>	JSQ	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
JGRCJ	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>	JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JHC	<i>Journal of Higher Criticism</i>	JSSR	<i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i>
JHI	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>	JStRel	<i>Journal for the Study of Religion</i>
JHistPhil	<i>Journal of the History of Philosophy</i>		
JHistS	<i>Journal of Historical Studies</i>		
JHistSex	<i>Journal of the History of Sexuality</i>		
JHLT	<i>Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology</i>		
JHom	<i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>		
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>		
Jian Dao	<i>Jian Dao</i>		

<i>JS/TS</i>	<i>Journal for Semitics/Tydskrif vir Semitiesiek</i>	<i>Mayéutica</i>	<i>Mayéutica</i>
<i>JTC</i>	<i>Journal for Theology and Church</i>	<i>MBPS</i>	Mellen Biblical Press Series
<i>JTheol</i>	<i>Journal of Theology</i>	<i>McMJT</i>	<i>McMaster Journal of Theology</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>	<i>MCom</i>	<i>Miscelánea Comillas</i>
<i>JTSA</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>	<i>MdB</i>	<i>Le monde de la Bible</i>
<i>Judaism</i>	<i>Judaism</i>	<i>MedQ</i>	<i>Mediterranean Quarterly</i>
<i>JVallnq</i>	<i>Journal of Value Inquiry</i>	<i>MeT</i>	<i>Melita Theologica</i>
<i>Kairos</i>	<i>Kairos</i>	<i>Meroitica</i>	<i>Meroitica</i>
<i>Kairós</i>	<i>Kairós</i>	<i>MFC</i>	Message of the Fathers of the Church
<i>KathKomNT</i>	Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament	<i>MHR</i>	<i>Mediterranean Historical Review</i>
<i>KBANT</i>	Kommentare und Beiträge zum Alten und Neuen Testament	<i>MHRC</i>	<i>Mental Health, Religion and Culture</i>
<i>KEKNT</i>	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, begründet von H. A. W. Meyer	<i>Midstream</i>	<i>Midstream</i>
<i>Kerux</i>	<i>Kerux</i>	<i>MilS</i>	<i>Milltown Studies</i>
<i>Klio</i>	<i>Klio</i>	<i>Mishkan</i>	<i>Mishkan</i>
<i>KuI</i>	<i>Kirche und Israel</i>	<i>Missiology</i>	<i>Missiology: An International Review</i>
<i>LangSc</i>	<i>Language Sciences</i>	<i>Missionalia</i>	<i>Missionalia</i>
<i>LangSoc</i>	<i>Language in Society</i>	<i>MissSt</i>	<i>Mission Studies</i>
<i>Laós</i>	<i>Laós</i>	<i>MissT</i>	<i>Mission Today</i>
<i>Latomus</i>	<i>Latomus</i>	<i>MJCSL</i>	<i>Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning</i>
<i>Laur</i>	<i>Laurentianum</i>	<i>MM</i>	Moulton and Milligan
<i>LCBI</i>	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation	<i>Mnemosyne</i>	<i>Mnemosyne</i>
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library	<i>MNTC</i>	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
<i>LCQ</i>	<i>Lutheran Church Quarterly</i>	<i>Moment</i>	<i>Moment</i>
<i>LCR</i>	<i>Lutheran Church Review</i>	<i>Monist</i>	<i>Monist</i>
<i>LD</i>	Lectio Divina	<i>Moralia</i>	<i>Moralia</i>
<i>LebSeel</i>	<i>Lebendige Seelsorge</i>	<i>MounM</i>	<i>Mountain Movers</i>
<i>LEC</i>	Library of Early Christianity	<i>MScRel</i>	<i>Mélanges de Science Religieuse</i>
<i>Leš</i>	<i>Lešonénu</i>	<i>MSJ</i>	<i>The Master's Seminary Journal</i>
<i>Levant</i>	<i>Levant</i>	<i>MTZ</i>	<i>Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>Ling</i>	<i>Linguistics</i>	<i>Mus</i>	<i>Muséon: Revue d'études orientales</i>
<i>List</i>	<i>Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture</i>	<i>NABPRSS</i>	National Association of the Baptist Professors of Religion Special Studies Series
<i>Listener</i>	<i>The Listener</i>	<i>NAC</i>	New American Commentary
<i>LivL</i>	<i>Living Light</i>	<i>NBf</i>	<i>New Blackfriars</i>
<i>LNTS</i>	Library of New Testament Studies	<i>NCamBC</i>	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>LOS</i>	London Oriental Series	<i>NCBC</i>	New Century Bible Commentary
<i>LowS</i>	<i>Louvain Studies</i>	<i>NCCS</i>	New Covenant Commentary Series
<i>LPSt</i>	Library of Pauline Studies	<i>NCS</i>	Noyes Classical Studies
<i>LQ</i>	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>	<i>NDST</i>	Notre Dame Studies in Theology
<i>LRB</i>	Library of Religious Biography	<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
<i>LSEMSA</i>	London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology	<i>NEAEHL</i>	<i>New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . Edited by M. Stern. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Revised by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.	<i>NEASB</i>	<i>Near East Archaeological Society Bulletin</i>
<i>LTJ</i>	<i>Lutheran Theological Journal</i>	<i>NedTT</i>	<i>Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift</i>
<i>LTP</i>	<i>Laval Théologique et Philosophique</i>	<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>LTPM</i>	Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs	<i>NESTTR</i>	<i>Near East School of Theology Theological Review</i>
<i>LTQ</i>	<i>Lexington Theological Quarterly</i>	<i>NFTL</i>	New Foundations Theological Library
<i>LumVie</i>	<i>Lumière et Vie</i>	<i>NHL</i>	<i>The Nag Hammadi Library in English</i> . Edited by James M. Robinson. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977.
<i>LUOSM</i>	Leeds University Oriental Society Monograph	<i>NIB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i> . Edited by Leander E. Keck. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004.
<i>LVit</i>	<i>Lumen Vitae</i>	<i>NIBCNT</i>	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>MAAR</i>	Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome	<i>NICNT</i>	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>Maarav</i>	<i>Maarav</i>	<i>NICOT</i>	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>MaisD</i>	<i>Maison Dieu</i>	<i>NIDB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–9.
<i>Man</i>	<i>Man</i>		
<i>Manresa</i>	<i>Manresa</i>		
<i>MAP</i>	Monographs on Ancient Philosophy		
<i>Marianum</i>	<i>Marianum</i>		

Abbreviations

NIDNT	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . Edited by Colin Brown. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.	PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary	PerMS	<i>Perceptual and Motor Skills</i>
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary	Personalist	<i>The Personalist</i>
NortCE	Norton Critical Edition	PerTeol	<i>Perspectiva Teológica</i>
NotesT	<i>Notes on Translation</i>	PFES	Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>	Phil	<i>Philologus</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to <i>Novum Testamentum</i>	PhilAnt	<i>Philosophia Antiqua</i>
NRTh	<i>La Nouvelle Revue Théologique</i>	Philosophy	<i>Philosophy</i>
NTA	<i>New Testament Abstracts</i>	PhilPA	<i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i>
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen	Phoenix	<i>Phoenix</i>
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch	PHR	<i>Problèmes d'Histoire des Religions</i>
NTG	New Testament Guides	Phronesis	<i>Phronesis</i>
NTIC	New Testament in Context	PIBA	<i>Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association</i>
NTL	New Testament Library	PillNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
NTM	New Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary	PJBR	<i>Polish Journal of Biblical Research</i>
NTMon	New Testament Monographs	PNAS	<i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i>
NTOA	<i>Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus</i>	Pneuma	<i>Pneuma</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>	PolSt	<i>Political Studies</i>
NTT	<i>Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift</i>	Pom	<i>Pomegranate</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies	PopSt	<i>Population Studies</i>
NumC	<i>Numismatic Chronicle</i>	POTTS	Pittsburgh Original Texts and Translations Series
Numen	<i>Numen: International Review for the History of Religions</i>	P&P	<i>Priests & People</i>
NV	<i>Nova et Vetera</i>	P&Pres	<i>Past & Present</i>
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology	Prism	<i>Prism</i>
OCD ³	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . Edited by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth. 3rd rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.	ProcArisSoc	<i>Proceedings of the Aristotle Society</i>
Oceania	<i>Oceania</i>	ProcC	Proclamation Commentaries
OEANE	<i>Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East</i> . Edited by Eric M. Meyers. 5 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.	ProEccl	<i>Pro Ecclesia</i>
OiC	<i>One in Christ</i>	ProtMon	<i>Protestantische Monatshefte</i>
OJRS	<i>Ohio Journal of Religious Studies</i>	PrRR	Princeton Readings in Religions
ÖKNTN	Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament	PRSt	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta	PrTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
OLD	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Edited by P. G. W. Glare. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.	Prudentia	<i>Prudentia</i>
Or	<i>Orientalia</i>	PSB	<i>Princeton Seminary Bulletin</i>
OrChr	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>	PSCC	Protocol Series of the Colloquies of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies
OrChrAn	Orientalia Christiana Analecta	Psychosomatics	<i>Psychosomatics</i>
Orientierung	<i>Orientierung</i>	PsycRep	<i>Psychological Reports</i>
Orpheus	<i>Orpheus</i>	PsycRes	<i>Psychiatry Research</i>
OTP	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983–85.	PsycTRPT	<i>Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training</i>
PAAJR	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i>	PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
Pacifica	<i>Pacifica</i>	PWS	Pietist and Wesleyan Studies
Parab	<i>Parabola</i>	PWSup	Supplement to <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Edited by Georg Wissowa, Kurt Witte, and Wilhelm Kroll. 15 vols. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1903–80.
PAST	Pauline Studies (Brill)	PzB	<i>Protokolle zur Bibel</i>
PastPsy	<i>Pastoral Psychology</i>	Qad	<i>Qadmoniot</i>
PastRev	<i>Pastoral Review</i>	QC	<i>Qumran Chronicle</i>
PBMon	Paternoster Biblical Monographs	QDisp	<i>Quaestiones Disputatae</i>
PBSR	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>	QF	<i>Quatres Fleuves</i>
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament	Ramus	<i>Ramus</i>
PEFQS	<i>Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement</i>	RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
PentEv	<i>Pentecostal Evangel</i>	RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
		RBPH	<i>Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire</i>
		RCB	<i>Revista de Cultura Biblica</i>
		RCT	<i>Revista Catalana de Teologia</i>
		RdT	<i>Rassegna di teologia</i>
		REA	<i>Revue des Études Anciennes</i>
		Readings	Readings: A New Biblical Commentary
		REAug	<i>Revue des Études Augustiniennes</i>
		REB	<i>Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira</i>
		RechBib	<i>Recherches bibliques</i>

<i>Reconstructionist</i>	<i>Reconstructionist</i>	SBLBMI	Society of Biblical Literature The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters
<i>RefR</i>	<i>Reformed Review</i>	SBLBSNA	Society of Biblical Literature Biblical Scholarship in North America
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des Études Grecques</i>	SBLCP	Society of Biblical Literature Centennial Publications
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des Études Juives</i>	SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>RelBiog</i>	<i>Religion und Biographie</i>	SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
<i>RelHHeal</i>	<i>Religion, Health and Healing</i>	SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Religion</i>	SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
<i>RelIntL</i>	<i>Religion and Intellectual Life</i>	SBLSDL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
<i>RelS</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>	SBLSSB	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>	SBLSSC	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
<i>RelT</i>	<i>Religious Traditions</i>	SBLSemS	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies
<i>RésCon</i>	<i>Résister et Construire</i>	SBLSemSup	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Supplements
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>	SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
<i>RevAg</i>	<i>Revista Agustiniana</i>	SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
<i>RevAgEsp</i>	<i>Revista Agustiniana de Espiritualidad (= RevAg)</i>	SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>	SBLWGRW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Greco-Roman World
<i>ReVision</i>	<i>ReVision: A Journal of Consciousness and Transformation</i>	SBLWGRWSup	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
<i>RevistB</i>	<i>Revista Biblica</i>	SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
<i>RevMet</i>	<i>Review of Metaphysics</i>	SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>RevPhil</i>	<i>Revue de Philologie</i>	ScC	<i>La Scuola Cattolica</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>	ScEs	<i>Science et Esprit</i>
<i>RevRel</i>	<i>Review for Religious</i>	SCEthn	Series in Contemporary Ethnography
<i>RevScRel</i>	<i>Revue des Sciences Religieuses</i>	SCHNT	Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti
<i>RevThéol</i>	<i>Revue de Théologie</i>	SChrJud	Studies in Christianity and Judaism
<i>RGRW</i>	<i>Religions in the Graeco-Roman World</i>	SCI	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
<i>Rhetorica</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>	SCJ	<i>Stone-Campbell Journal</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses</i>	SCR	Studies in Comparative Religion
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>	ScrB	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Rivista Biblica</i>	<i>Scriptura</i>	<i>Scriptura</i>
<i>RivSant</i>	<i>Rivista storica dell'Antichità</i>	<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
<i>RMPPhil</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>	<i>ScrJudCr</i>	<i>Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia</i>
<i>RNT</i>	<i>Regensburger Neues Testament</i>	<i>ScrTh</i>	<i>Scripta Theologica</i>
<i>RocT</i>	<i>Roczniki Teologiczne</i>	ScSoc	<i>Science and Society</i>
<i>RocTK</i>	<i>Roczniki Teologiczne-Kanoniczne (= RocT)</i>	SE	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>RomPhil</i>	<i>Romance Philology</i>	SEÁ	<i>Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Römische Quartalschrift</i>	SEAJT	<i>South East Asia Journal of Theology</i>
<i>RR</i>	<i>Review of Religion</i>	SecCent	<i>Second Century</i>
<i>RRéf</i>	<i>Revue Réformée</i>	<i>Sefarad</i>	<i>Sefarad</i>
<i>RRJ</i>	<i>Review of Rabbinic Judaism</i>	SEHT	Studies in Evangelical History and Thought
<i>RSLR</i>	<i>Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa</i>	<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
<i>RSPT</i>	<i>Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques</i>	<i>SémBib</i>	<i>Sémiotique et Bible</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de Science Religieuse</i>	<i>Semeia</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
<i>RSSSR</i>	<i>Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion</i>	SGRR	Studies in Greek and Roman Religion
<i>RStMiss</i>	<i>Regnum Studies in Mission</i>	<i>Shamanism</i>	<i>Shamanism</i>
<i>R&T</i>	<i>Religion and Theology</i>	SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
<i>RThom</i>	<i>Revue Thomiste</i>	SHCM	Studies in the History of Christian Mission
<i>RTL</i>	<i>Revue Théologique de Louvain</i>		
<i>RTP</i>	<i>Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie</i>		
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>		
<i>RuBL</i>	<i>Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny</i>		
<i>SacEr</i>	<i>Sacris Erudiri</i>		
<i>SAJPsyc</i>	<i>South African Journal of Psychology</i>		
<i>Salm</i>	<i>Salmanticensis</i>		
<i>SANT</i>	<i>Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments</i>		
<i>SAnthM</i>	<i>Studies in Anthropological Method</i>		
<i>SAOC</i>	<i>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations</i>		
<i>SBB</i>	<i>Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge</i>		
<i>SBEC</i>	<i>Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity</i>		
<i>SBET</i>	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>		
<i>SBFLA</i>	<i>Studii Bibliici Franciscani Liber Annuus</i>		
<i>SBL</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i>		
<i>SBLABib</i>	<i>SBL Academia Biblica</i>		

Abbreviations

SHR	Studies in the History of Religions (Supplements to Numen)	SWJA	<i>Southwestern Journal of Anthropology</i>
SICHCH	Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity	SWJT	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
SIFC	<i>Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica</i>	SyllClass	<i>Sylllecta Classica</i>
Signs	<i>Signs</i>	TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
SJFWJ	Studia Judaica: Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums	TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity	TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>	Tarbiz	<i>Tarbiz</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>	TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
SJTOP	Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers	TBei	<i>Theologische Beiträge</i>
SK	<i>Skriften Kerik</i>	TD	<i>Theology Digest</i>
SkI	<i>Skeptical Inquirer</i>	TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76.
SLJT	<i>Saint Luke's Journal of Theology</i>	Telema	<i>Telema</i>
SMedJ	<i>Southern Medical Journal</i>	Teresianum	<i>Teresianum</i>
SNTA	Studiorum Novi Testamenti auxilia	Teubner	Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum teubneriana
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series	Textus	<i>Textus</i>
SNTSU	<i>Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt</i>	TGI	<i>Theologie und Glaube</i>
SO	<i>Symbolae Osloenses</i>	Them	<i>Themelios</i>
SocAnal	<i>Sociological Analysis</i>	Theo	<i>Theologika</i>
SocG	<i>Sociologische Gids</i>	Theof	<i>Theoforum</i>
SocRes	<i>Social Research</i>	TheoEv	<i>Theologia Evangelica</i>
Sophia	<i>Sophia</i>	Théologiques	<i>Théologiques</i>
SP	Sacra Pagina	Theology	<i>Theology</i>
SpCh	<i>The Spirit & Church</i>	THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
SPCI	Studies in Pentecostal and Charismatic Issues	Thought	<i>Thought</i>
SPhilA	<i>Studia Philonica Annual (Studia Philonica)</i>	ThQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
SPhilMon	Studia Philonica Monographs	ThTo	<i>Theology Today</i>
Spiritus	<i>Spiritus</i>	TijSW	<i>Tijdschrift voor Sociale Wetenschappen</i>
SPNT	Studies on Personalities of the New Testament	TJ	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
SR/SR	<i>Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses</i>	TJT	<i>Toronto Journal of Theology</i>
SSAMD	Sage Series on African Modernization and Development	T&K	<i>Texte & Kontexte</i>
SSCS	SUNY Series in Classical Studies	TLG	<i>Thesaurus linguae graecae</i> . Online: http://www.tlg.uci.edu .
SSMed	<i>Social Science & Medicine</i>	TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
ST	<i>Studia Theologica</i>	TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
StanHR	<i>Stanford Humanities Review</i>	TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)	TP	<i>Theologie und Philosophie</i>
StBibSlov	<i>Studia Biblica Slovaca</i>	TPAPA	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association (later = TAPA)</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah	TPQ	<i>Theologisch-Praktische Quartalschrift</i>
StHistMiss	Studies in the History of Missions	Tradition	<i>Tradition</i>
STJ	<i>Stulos Theological Journal</i>	TranscPsc	<i>Transcultural Psychiatry</i>
STK	<i>Svensk Teologisk Kvarntalskrift</i>	TranscPscRR	<i>Transcultural Psychiatric Research Review</i>
StMkRev	<i>St Mark's Review</i>	Transversalités	<i>Transversalités</i>
StOv	<i>Studium Ovetense</i>	TRu	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
StPat	<i>Studia patavina</i>	TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
StPB	Studia Post-Biblica	TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
STRev	<i>Sewanee Theological Review</i>	TSHP	Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy
StSpir	<i>Studies in Spirituality</i>	TSJTSA	Texts and Studies of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America
StTheolInt	Studies in Theological Interpretation	TTCABS	T&T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies
StThSt	Stellenbosch Theological Studies	TTEd	<i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i>
Studies	<i>Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review</i>	TTKi	<i>Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke</i>
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica	TIZ	<i>Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments	TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
Supplément	<i>Supplément</i>	TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
SUSIA	Skrifter Utgivna av Svenska Institutet I Athen	UCPLA	Unidade Científico-Pedagógica de Letras e Artes
SvMT	<i>Svensk Missionstidskrift</i>		
SVTQ	<i>Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>		

UCPP	University of California Publications in Philosophy	WPR	<i>World Press Review</i>
UJT	Understanding Jesus Today	WSCM	World Studies of Churches in Mission (World Council of Churches)
UltRM	<i>Ultimate Reality and Meaning</i>	WSPL	Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Language
UNDCSJCA	University of Notre Dame Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity	WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
UnS	<i>Una Sancta</i>	WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
USFISFCJ	University of South Florida International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism	WW	<i>Word and World</i>
USQR	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>	YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>	YJS	Yale Judaica Series
VD	<i>Verbum Domini</i>	YonsJT	<i>Yonsei Journal of Theology</i>
VE	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>	YonsRTC	<i>Yonsei Review of Theology & Culture</i>
VerbEc	<i>Verbum et Ecclesia</i>	YPR	Yale Publications in Religion
VFRUL	Veröffentlichungen des Forschungsinstituts für vergleichende Religionsgeschichte an der Universität Leipzig	YSMT	York Studies in Medieval Theology
Vid	<i>Vidyajyoti</i>	ZAC/JAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal of Ancient Christianity</i>
VidJTR	<i>Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection</i>	ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
VitIndRel	Vitality of Indigenous Religions	ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
VR	<i>Vox Reformata</i>	ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
VS	<i>Vox Scripturae</i>	ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
VSpir	<i>Vie Spirituelle</i>	Zion	Zion
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>	ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements	ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie</i>
WAffJES	<i>West African Journal of Ecclesial Studies</i>	ZKWKL	<i>Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben</i>
WArch	<i>World Archaeology</i>	ZNT	<i>Zeitschrift für Neues Testament</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary	ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
WD	<i>Wort und Dienst</i>	ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
WestBC	Westminster Bible Companion	ZRGG	<i>Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte</i>
WJBSt	<i>Western Journal of Black Studies</i>	ZSNT	Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament
WLQ	<i>Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly</i>	ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament	Zyg	<i>Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science</i>
WMQ	<i>William & Mary Quarterly</i>	ZZ	<i>Der Zeichen der Zeit</i>
WomSt	<i>Women's Studies</i>		
Worship	<i>Worship</i>		
WPJ	<i>World Policy Journal</i>		

APOSTOLIC LEADERSHIP IN JERUSALEM (3:1–5:42)

In this section the apostolic church grows and even challenges the municipal aristocracy (the local political elite) by an alternative vision of leadership for Israel. This section reports a major public sign and a consequent speech appealing to Israel to turn and submit to its rightful king. It then turns to two escalating confrontations with Jerusalem's leaders. Sandwiched between the two confrontations are an account of a second community experience of the Spirit (analogous to the Pentecost experience), including positive (Barnabas) and negative (Ananias and Sapphira) examples of sharing possessions, and a summary of continuing apostolic signs.

Luke's contrast between two kinds of leadership—one institutional and supported by Rome and hereditary wealth, the other charismatic and following Jesus's example—is graphic. The contrast would be especially striking if, as suggested in the commentary introduction (ch. 10), Luke wrote in a period when Jerusalem and its priestly aristocracy lay in shambles whereas the movement founded by Jesus's apostles had continued to spread.

Scholars have often noted some parallels between the persecution of the apostles in Acts 4 (Peter and John) and Acts 5 (all the apostles). A century and even half a century ago most scholars viewed the repetition as due to Luke's including divergent oral accounts of the same event as different events. Today most scholars find instead a deliberate literary pattern, an "echo effect" to reinforce the point.¹

1. Spencer, *Acts*, 42–45; cf. the pattern noted in 4–5 in Donegani, "Procès." Cf. a similar trend even in contemporary approaches to Genesis's doublets (see discussions in Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*; Loewenstamm, *Evolution*, 16; Houtman, "Pentateuch," 192–94; Cassuto, *Hypothesis*, 69–83; Whybray, *Making*, 74–78; Alexander, "Variants"; idem, "Oral Variants"). Repetition characterizes both the author's style (Whybray, *Making*, 78) and ancient Near Eastern practice (80–84; Wiseman, *Records*, 117–18; Heidel, *Genesis*, 7n1; Gordon, *Near East*, 134, 139). Sometimes doublets may in fact stem from divergent versions developed through oral tradition, both regarded by the editor as too valuable to discard; but this cannot be simply assumed in a given case.

Because some of the patterns (those unrelated to the arrest and trial) also appear in a previous section, I have listed some of the parallel points in three columns. Expanding the parallels through the rest of Luke-Acts would put the parallels between the two trial accounts in an even larger context, underlining the fact that they reflect the same patterning of summary material that appears throughout the work.

Acts 2–3	Acts 3–4	Acts 5
Revival summary (2:41–47)	(Revival summary; 2:41–47)	Revival summaries (4:32–35; 5:11–16)
Preaching in temple (2:14–40)	Preaching in temple (3:12–26)	(Preaching in temple; 5:20, 25)
Activity in temple (summary; 2:46)	(Preaching in temple; 3:12–26)	Activity in temple (summary; 5:12)
Many converts (2:41)	Many converts (4:4)	Many converts (5:14)
Continuing apostolic miracles (2:43; 3:8) — (no recorded opposition from leaders)	Continuing apostolic miracles (3:8; probably 4:33) Priests and Sadducees against apostles (4:1–2, 5–6)	Continuing apostolic miracles (5:15–16) High priest and Sadducees against apostles (5:17)
Favor with the people (2:47) —	Favor with the people (4:21; cf. 4:4) Apostles jailed overnight (4:3)	Favor with the people (5:26) Apostles jailed overnight (5:18)
—	Apostles tried (4:5–7), including demand (4:7)	Apostles tried (5:21–41), including demand (5:28, 40)
—	Peter and colleague preach (4:8–12), including, Obey God, not people (4:19–20)	Peter and colleagues preach: Obey God, not people (5:29–32)
—	Response of authorities and private dialogue among themselves (4:13–17)	Response of authorities and private dialogue among themselves (5:33–39)
—	Apostles released (4:21)	Apostles released (5:40–41)
—	Prayer for events (4:23–30)	Praise for events (5:41)
(Revival summary; 2:41–47)	Continuing apostolic activity and revival (4:32–35)	Continuing apostolic activity (and presumably revival; 5:42)

Listing only parallels can, however, obscure the distinctions among the accounts, such as the increasing intensity of persecution and the addition of other apostles. Apart from the fact that the apostles are arrested twice—which makes sense if they continued preaching after their first arrest—most of the parallels are due to Luke’s method of summarizing *continuing* activity rather than to parallel events. Nor do the patterns fall neatly into identically sequenced, set columns (as the very attempt to list them clarifies; note the varied sequencing of parallel components); the repetition is of various individual events, not of entire narrative sections. As narrative criticism has clarified, then, the parallels reflect not doublets of the same historical material but deliberate *literary* patterning for theological reasons. The clearest differences among the accounts particularly emphasize increasing intensity:

Acts 2	Acts 3–4	Acts 5
No persecution recorded (2:47)	Arrest (4:3) and warning (4:21)	Arrest (5:18), near execution (5:33), and beating (5:40)
—	—	Angel frees them (5:19)
—	Peter’s “you be the judge” (4:19)	Greater confrontation (5:29, 32)

Luke highlights the parallels not to equate them but to exhibit the increasing intensity of the conflict; in this way he offers a pattern resembling the role of conflict in

the plot development in the Gospels. The pattern here may thus fit the repetition of intensifying cycles (as in John's last discourses or 1 John) more than Luke's standard parallelism among Jesus, the Jerusalem Christians, and Paul (on which see the discussion in the commentary introduction, ch. 16). (For chronological reasons, Luke cannot climax the greatest of the three objects of his parallels—namely, Jesus—last.)

THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC AND ITS AFTERMATH (3:1–4:30)

In Acts 3:1–10, Luke emphasizes the power of Jesus’s name; signs (by definition) draw attention for the gospel (3:11–26).¹ In the sermon of 3:11–26, the power of Jesus’s name demonstrates that God raised Jesus, Isaiah’s “servant” (3:13, 26; the inclusio suggests that this is the “controlling” title), the righteous sufferer (3:14), the promised ruler (3:15), the epitome of Israel’s prophetic leadership (3:22–23). The time of promise has come (3:24–25); as soon as Israel will accept Jesus as its rightful ruler (3:19, 26), the kingdom will be restored (3:19–26).

1. The Power of Jesus’s Name (3:1–11)

Luke’s writing does not always yield easily to modern (or ancient) outlines, since he provides continuity even when he shifts “sections.” Thus 3:1–10 follows naturally from the preceding section, concretely illustrating apostolic signs (2:43) and prayer in the temple (2:47). This account thus becomes a dramatic example of the summary that precedes it.² Believers are praying daily in the temple (2:42, 46–47), and hence Peter and John are going to the temple to pray (3:1); Peter’s lack of silver (3:6) illustrates the sacrificial lives of those serving the Lord in 2:44–45.

Most clearly, this event illustrates the continuing apostolic signs (2:43) and is a particularly dramatic case of continuing conversions (2:47; 4:4).³ The heart of the account, as demonstrated by the dialogues that follow (3:16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17–18, 30), is that healing occurs through Jesus’s “name” (3:6), which offers salvation and wholeness (2:21, 38).⁴ That is, Jesus remains active and works through the agents he has chosen and commissioned.

a. Introductory Issues

There are clear parallels with Jesus’s healing of the lame man in Luke 5:17–26, including the literary function (linking the healing with Jesus’s power to forgive and save and a universal scope, 5:24; Acts 4:9, 12).⁵ The early placement of these two healings

1. This pattern of miracle followed by audience response followed by Peter’s speech is comparable to Acts 2 (Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 8; cf. also Panier, “Récit”).

2. As is often noted, e.g., Bruce, *Acts*¹, 103.

3. With Tannehill, *Acts*, 48.

4. Both senses of the term appear in the following discussion, as they do throughout Luke-Acts (e.g., Luke 7:50; 8:48).

5. Tannehill, *Acts*, 50–51.

in the corresponding works may also be significant.⁶ The parallels with the healing of a lame man in Acts 14 early in Luke’s narration of Paul’s ministry are also significant:⁷

Acts 3:1–6	Acts 14:8–10
Man disabled “from birth” (3:2)	Man disabled “from birth” (14:8)
Peter and John “gaze intently” (3:5)	Paul “gazes intently” (14:9)*
Leaping and walking (3:2)	Leaping and walking (14:10)
Near temple gates (3:2)	Near temple gates (14:9)
Human “adulation” rejected (3:11–16, esp. 3:12)	Human “adulation” rejected (14:11–18, esp. 14:15)

* This is significant, but less than the preceding point, as this term is common for Luke. Acts uses the verb ἀτενίζω ten times (it appears twice in the Gospel and in only one other NT passage, 2 Cor 3:7, 13; in the Apostolic Fathers, it is found only in 1 Clem. 7.4; 9.2; 17.2; 19.2; 36.2; it also appears in 1 Esd 6:27; 3 Macc 2:26).

Some of the parallels are more significant than they might first appear; for example, in both cases the healed man demonstrates his healing by leaping (3:8; 14:10). This is hardly coincidence; the rare term appears only three times in the NT, including these two (the other is John 4:14, with a different sense). Rather, the repeated use of this specific language is probably meant to reinforce and illustrate the fulfillment of the messianic-era promise in Isa 35:6 (by far the closest parallel among the seven LXX uses of the term), the text alluded to in Luke 7:22. This allusion reinforces, in turn, the point that the prophets announced these days (Acts 3:24).⁸ The parallels among Jesus, Peter, and Paul here are characteristic of Luke-Acts, suggesting the continuity of divine activity in salvation history. Even among such parallels, however, Luke retains Jesus’s preeminence; Peter and Paul both point to Jesus as the source of miracles (3:16; 14:14–15; cf. 10:25–26).⁹

Some scholars find historical tradition in 3:1–11 on the basis of pre-Lukan Palestinian features.¹⁰ Even Goulder, noting clearly nonallegorical details (such as the Beautiful Gate, Solomon’s Portico, and John and Alexander among the Sadducees), argues for tradition here. Some memory of the occasion may have been preserved, in view of its dramatic public character and its effects; Luke knew of many healings (2:43; 5:15–16) and could have easily chosen this one as the most famous.¹¹ Others doubt tradition here, though sometimes because of antisupernaturalist presuppositions. “There is no historical nucleus to the tradition of the miracle story in vv. 1–10,” Lüdemann opines, because “those who are lame from their childhood are (unfortunately) not made whole again.”¹² The commentary introduction (ch. 9) has addressed antisupernaturalistic presuppositions; these are premises that interpreters are not obligated to grant. But even one who prefers a psychosomatic explanation (in which Peter and John might have held him as he walked, 3:11) might allow a nucleus of genuine tradition.

6. Witherington, *Acts*, 173, compares how closely Luke 5:17–26 follows the call of the first disciples (Luke 5:1–11).

7. Many scholars note parallels here, but I follow here especially the particularly full list in Spencer, *Acts*, 149. For a comparison of Acts 14:8–10 with the healing in Luke 5:18–25, see Lindemann, “Einheit,” 238–42. The healing fits a pattern found in the Gospels (a sick person is healed, sometimes demonstrating healing, and observers marvel; e.g., Gaventa, *Acts*, 83), but it is difficult to conjecture how else one would depict such accounts.

8. Tannehill, *Acts*, 52–53.

9. *Ibid.*, 53.

10. Sabugal, “Curación.”

11. Goulder, *Type and History*, 188. Pervo, *Acts*, 98–99, suggests development of a core, with an added speech, a compositional method that scholars often suggest for Johannine miracle accounts in John 5, 9, and 11 (cf. Martyn, *Theology*).

12. Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 54.

Whatever their explanation, accounts of some disabled persons suddenly being cured and walking do abound, and I witnessed such a case myself.¹³ Certainly, the parallel account in the Gospel (Luke 5:17–26) stems from tradition (Mark 2:3–12), though Luke may adjust the telling of it;¹⁴ Luke could then have created analogous accounts for Peter and Paul. But Luke’s account in Acts can appear suspect historically more than the account in his Gospel only because we do not possess Luke’s source for Acts 3 as we do for Luke 5. Most competent ancient historians (at least those as conservative as Luke is with his sources where we can check him) selected and emphasized parallel events but did not create them wholesale.¹⁵ This dependence on tradition did not, of course, preclude adjustments in some details for the purpose of underlining the narrative unity already expected there, and Luke uses fairly consistent style throughout his writings (except when he reverts to a semitizing style).

b. Hour of Prayer (3:1)

Luke often emphasizes dramatic divine interventions during prayer times. The ninth hour (3:00 p.m.) recurs as the time when an angel reveals God’s message to Cornelius (10:3). In this case, the apostles were probably on their way to a corporate prayer meeting in the temple (2:46). Peter and John often appear together, sometimes with James the son of Zebedee (Luke 8:51; 9:28; cf. Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3) but later more often by themselves (Luke 22:8; Acts 3:1–4, 11; 4:13, 19; 8:14; cf. Gal 2:9; James is martyred in Acts 12:2).

For the “hour of prayer,” Luke’s audience may recall the “hour of the incense offering” in Luke 1:10.¹⁶ The Bible mandated sacrifice in the temple both in the morning and toward dusk (Exod 29:39–41; Num 28:4; cf. 2 Kgs 3:20; 16:15; Ezra 9:5; Ps 141:2; Dan 9:21; Jdt 9:1).¹⁷ Such a practice was not unusual in the ancient world; Egyptian temple cults and public ceremonies “included daily morning and evening services,” during which people offered incense and hymns.¹⁸ At some point during the Hellenistic period, the time of the near-dusk offering shifted toward the middle of the afternoon (as in Acts 3:1),¹⁹ perhaps to avoid the risk of running

13. Around 1980, I personally witnessed a nursing home Bible study leader in the United States, whom I knew fairly well, take by the hands a woman who, all the time I had known her, had been complaining of her absolute inability to walk. To her amazement as well as that of everyone else in the room, he walked her around the room; after that event, she began to walk on her own (and not surprisingly became quite zealous for the Bible study). For other claims of some disabled persons being instantly able to walk, see discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 523–36 (including accounts from interviews in various parts of the world); more briefly, e.g., Duffin, *Miracles*, 18, 62; Opp, *Lord for Body*, 46–47; Curtis, *Faith*, 1–5, 81–82; Kidd, “Healing”; Ising, *Blumhardt*, 212–13; Ma, “Encounter,” 137; idem, “Vanderbout,” 129, 132; Green, *Thirty Years*, 104; De Wet, “Signs,” 94–95, 114; Bush and Pegues, *Move*, 51–52; Menberu, “Mekonnen Negera”; comments at Acts 9:34. Most persons unable to walk long-term are of course not dramatically cured in this way, but it is impossible to deny that many cases have occurred.

14. Some scholars draw parallels with the Matthean version (Matt 9:1–8; Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 3:67), but most of these elements are not surprising in any account of something extraordinary and fit particularly the pattern of early Christian miracle stories (for the patterns for such stories, cf. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*; Kee, *Miracle*).

15. See discussion in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:568–74.

16. Luke reveals significant interest in temple worship (e.g., Luke 18:9–14; Hamm, “Service”; cf. Acts 10:3, 30), fitting his portrayal of the Jerusalem believers’ interests (Acts 2:42–47) and perhaps his own visit to Jerusalem in the 50s.

17. The LXX of Exod 29:39 probably accounts for the addition in D relating to the afternoon offering (Haenchen, *Acts*, 198n3); cf. Lev 6:20; Jos. *Ant.* 3.237, 257. On morning and evening sacrifices, see Reid, “Sacrifice,” 1040–41. Some scholars connect some of the psalms to morning or evening offerings (cf., e.g., Pss 5:3; 55:17; 59:16; 92:2; 130:6; 141:2; 143:8; Weiser, *Psalms*, 125); but cf. Wilson, *Psalms*, 1:166.

18. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 135.

19. Falk, “Prayer Literature,” 297.

late. Josephus mentions sacrifices in the morning and at the ninth hour—that is, about 3:00 p.m. (Jos. *Ant.* 14.65);²⁰ a century later the Mishnah reports that the lamb was normally slaughtered around 2:30 p.m. and burned as an offering by 3:30 p.m. (*m. Pesah.* 5:1).²¹

Various writers compared prayer to incense (Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8; 8:5).²² From an early period, people offered prayer during the incense offering and other offerings (Sir 50:9, 13, 17, 19; Luke 1:10; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.196–97; *Ant.* 4.203); priests made the incense offering before the morning sacrifice and after the evening one (cf. 2 Chr 2:4; 13:11).²³ It is clear that many people in the temple (Luke 1:10) and elsewhere (Dan 9:21; Jdt 9:1) prayed at these times.²⁴ At least some of the pious may have prayed during the entire hour (cf. *b. Ber.* 32b, bar., for nine hours of prayer daily).

Scholars debate whether synagogues practiced a unified liturgy in this period; it is not clear that a unified liturgy existed in the Diaspora (or even Judea) by the end of the first century.²⁵ First-century local leaders in Galilee could call a special public fast day (Jos. *Life* 290), and people would engage in their prayers (*Life* 295) in the house of prayer (*Life* 293); it is likely that they prayed aloud,²⁶ but it is not clear whether those present recited their prayers in unison.²⁷ In the temple itself, people would be coming and going, and many outside Jerusalem would not know the liturgy; although the priests may have followed some sort of liturgy, it is unlikely that the crowds would have done so. Instead worshipers prayed according to their interests and needs (cf. many who pray at the Wailing Wall today).

This is not to deny that some standard prayers were already in circulation. The Shemoneh Esre prayer (the Eighteen Benedictions, also known as the Amidah) eventually came to be used in synagogues throughout the ancient world,²⁸ and at least its basic substance is early.²⁹ The Amidah is probably pre-Christian, or at least some forms of it.³⁰ By the second century at the latest, the Amidah was widely recited three times a day,³¹ and it is possible that this practice recalls an earlier custom in the temple.

20. The hours were reckoned from sunrise, which on average was about 6:00 a.m. but by our reckoning would vary by time of year. Rabbis debated exactly how much light constituted sunrise and hence exactly when to say morning prayers (*m. Ber.* 1:2). Later rabbis allowed the afternoon prayer between the ninth hour and sunset (cf. *m. Ber.* 4:1; *b. Ber.* 26b; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 165).

21. Following Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 42.

22. Cf. *Mart. Pol.* 15.2; *Jub.* 2:22; Philo *Heir* 199, 226–27; Marshall, *Luke*, 54.

23. Falk, "Prayer Literature," 297; Sanders, *Judaism*, 255.

24. Dunn, *Acts*, 40.

25. For evidence that does not suggest a common liturgy, cf. Levine, "Synagogue," 19–20; Cohen, "Evidence on Synagogue," 175; thus Talmon, "Institutionalized Prayer," 273–74, thinks Qumran's early institutional prayer (1QS IX, 26–X, 3; 4QS504; 4QS507–509; see Abegg, "Liturgy: Qumran," 648–49) unusual. For evidence that could favor some common Jewish liturgy, cf. Schiffman, "Scrolls"; Maier, "Kult"; Goodman, *State*, 86. The example in Harding, "Prayer," predates the fifth century C.E., but we cannot be certain of its date.

26. On the analogy with traditional Greek and Roman prayers, on which see van der Horst, "Prayer."

27. If they did it privately, it was nevertheless in the place of public assembly, large enough to hold Tiberias's citizens (Jos. *Life* 277).

28. Martyn, "Glimpses," 173; for the importance of the prayer, see, e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 69:4; *Lev. Rab.* 1:8.

29. E.g., *m. Tamid* 5:1; the themes appear in many pre-Christian documents (Oesterley, *Liturgy*, 54–67; Levine, "Synagogue," 19; cf. Arbel, "Liturgy: Rabbinic," 650–51). Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 72, cites *m. Ber.* 4:3 as implying that "something close to a set text" existed at Yavneh; cf. *idem*, *Judaism*, 203, where he contends instead for basic themes.

30. Van der Horst ("Greek Evidence"; *idem*, "Egerton 5") suggests an early form, without the temple or Jerusalem, in P.Egerton 5.

31. Schiffman, "Crossroads," 151, observes that the Amidah was "the only thrice-daily recitation in the synagogue services" (fitting Jerome's later testimony and *t. Ber.* 2:9; 6:24; cf. *y. Ber.* 4:1, 3; *Ta'an.* 2:2, §6). That second-century Christians knew this prayer is made likely by their apparent view that its added malediction against the *minim* was anti-Christian (see Horbury, "Benediction," 19; Barnard, "Old Testament," 400; *idem*,

In any case, at some period the synagogue settled on three prayer times during the day (a practice followed by Christians, *Did.* 8.3); some scholars connect these with the different hours of prayer in Acts 2:15 (9:00 a.m.), 3:1 (3:00 p.m.), and 10:9 (noon),³² though it is not really clear that all of these are necessarily regular prayer times.³³ Many believe that the standard prayer times were established by Jesus's day.³⁴ Analyzing the Qumran scrolls and earliest rabbinic sources, others suggest that this period knew only two regular times of daily prayer, corresponding with the morning and afternoon (about 3:00 p.m.) offerings in the temple, with a third (evening) offering still optional.³⁵ Since it is unlikely that second-century Christians would have borrowed a Jewish practice used exclusively by Palestinian rabbis, however, the thrice-daily prayer times probably do reflect a pre-Christian practice (though not universal and with the third time probably optional).

The Qumran sectarians prayed at least twice a day (1QS X, 1);³⁶ they apparently had different prayers for evening and morning prayers for each day of the month (4Q503).³⁷ Morning prayers appear in the first-century B.C.E. work *Psalms of Solomon* (*Pss. Sol.* 6:4–5/6:6–7).³⁸ Evening prayers also appear in early texts (*Jdt* 9:1; 12:7–9).³⁹ At least in second-century C.E. tradition, one must say afternoon prayers toward but before night (*m. Šabb.* 1:2); later traditions on the later evening prayers varied considerably as to the required time (*m. Ber.* 1:1), possibly suggesting a requirement of more recent vintage. Although the Amoraic tradition that thrice-daily prayer goes back to the three patriarchs (*Num. Rab.* 2:1) naturally lacks merit,⁴⁰ rabbis did have biblical precedent subsequent to the patriarchs: Daniel's biblical prayer three times a day (*Dan* 6:10, 13) was counted among his righteous acts (allegedly first-century tradition in *'Abot R. Nat.* 4 A). Likewise, Tannaim cited Ps 55:17 (55:18 MT; 54:18 LXX) for prayer during the evening and morning prayers, with "noon" applied to the afternoon prayer (*t. Ber.* 3:6). Some scholars argue that the Qumran sectarians matched the three periods of daytime prayer with these three biblical periods, dividing day as well as night into three watches.⁴¹

Daniel Falk notes that the various sources on prayer times fall into two basic patterns: twice-daily personal prayers by morning and evening (including the Shema)

Justin Martyr, 44–45; Shotwell, *Exegesis*, 83–84; Pancaro, *Law*, 253; Williams, *Justin Martyr*, xxxii; by contrast, Kimelman, "Evidence," 235–38, disputes this interpretation of the second-century evidence; see discussion in Keener, *John*, 207–14, esp. here 210).

32. Oesterley, *Liturgy*, 125.

33. Noon (Acts 10:9) was probably not a regular prayer time (*Jeremias, Prayers*, 79).

34. E.g., *Jeremias, Prayers*, 73; idem, *Theology*, 188.

35. Schiffman, "Scrolls," 39–40. Though uncertain of corporate liturgical prayers outside Qumran before 70 C.E., Sarason, "Intersections," notes similarities between rabbinic and Qumran evidence.

36. 1QS X, 1 appears to refer to prayer three times a day, in the morning, in the evening, and, between them, possibly (depending on the sense) at what can be the "solstice" (or high point, in rabbinic Hebrew), hence perhaps at midday; but X, 3 seems to rehearse this and mentions only two times, during day and night (unless it means three times in the day and three at night).

37. At Qumran, proper times of prayer aligned the community with the angelic liturgy in heaven; cf. 1QS X, 6; XI, 8; 4Q400–407; 11Q17 in *DSSNT* 365–77; cf. *Sipre Deut.* 306.31.1; Lincoln, *Paradise*, 112, 149; Newsom, "Songs." Qumranites viewed prayer at set times as an act of righteousness (Arnold, "Prayer"). Later Judaism continued to associate heavenly worship with the times of offerings in the temple (cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 14:24).

38. Also in *Let. Aris.* 304–5; *Sib. Or.* 3.591–93; cf. perhaps *Pss* 5:3; 59:16; 88:13; 92:2 (perhaps connected with the morning offering).

39. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 74–75 (*Let. Aris.* 184–85, though before the banquet, is less likely). Cf. *Ps* 141:2.

40. The same tradition attributes the Eighteen Benedictions to Moses and Aaron (who were addressed equally eighteen times).

41. S. Talmon's interpretation of 1QS IX, 26–X, 3, as cited in Abegg, "Liturgy: Qumran," 649.

or a thrice-daily (possibly originally twice-daily) pattern based on the temple service.⁴² In all, Luke's picture of prayer practices fits that of other Jewish sources before 70: daily prayer in the temple (but not clear in Palestinian synagogues), prayers at sunrise and sunset, "and morning and afternoon, based on the Temple sacrifices."⁴³

The early Christians prayed together in the temple (Acts 2:42, 46). Although this practice may have included corporate singing of psalms or other worship (2:47; cf. 4:25–26), much of the prayer may have been from persons leading or of everyone praying differently simultaneously. Corporate prayer did exist in this period, as the language of the Eighteen Benedictions, the Kaddish, and some earlier communal prayers (e.g., 4Q503) indicate;⁴⁴ at least Essenes repeated some inherited prayers (Jos. *War* 2.128).⁴⁵ At the same time, many prayers were individual (as often in 1QH^a), and it is not clear that people prayed even shared prayers in "unison" (see comments on Acts 4:24).⁴⁶

If Peter and John were coming to the temple for prayer about 3:00 p.m., the preaching probably continued for about three hours (since it was toward evening when they were arrested, Acts 4:3); the message in 3:12–26 is thus intended as a mere summary of the most relevant samples of apostolic christological exegesis. Jewish wonder-workers were often said to have prayed before performing healings, though the Gospels usually report Jesus doing miracles simply by command, as Peter and John will do here.⁴⁷ In this passage, it may be of interest that Peter and John are on their way to prayer (perhaps for their second hour that day) and hence ready to act *before* their afternoon prayers. Nevertheless, the entire context of Luke-Acts supports the frequent connection between prayer and divine activity (see comments on Acts 1:14).

c. *The Disabled Beggar at the "Beautiful" Gate (3:2–3)*

Jesus had advocated for (Luke 14:13, 21) and healed (7:22) those unable to walk (the term *χωλός* here); this pattern of healing continues with Philip (Acts 8:7) and Paul (14:8, where the disability also stemmed from birth, *ἐκ κοιλίας*). We should not think, however, that the disciples prayed for all with such disabilities to be healed.⁴⁸ The believers were continuing "daily" (2:47) in the temple, and this man was laid at the gate of the temple "daily" (3:2), yet the man does not appear to even recognize them, much less know them from previous prayers for healing. What makes this occasion the significant one for healing is not the disciples merely passing by but that the man initiates contact on the basis of his need. Although he asks only for alms

42. Falk, "Prayer Literature," 296. Most references to hours of prayer in Tannaitic texts are connected with times of sacrifices (see Hruby, "Horas de oración"). The importance of regular prayers by the Amoraic period may be illustrated by the dictum that even God says prayers (*b. Ber.* 7a).

43. Falk, "Prayer Literature," 267 (summarizing his chapter).

44. The Kaddish is almost certainly pre-Christian, unless we think (against all probability) that it and other early Jewish prayer language is based on the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13//Luke 11:2–4; see Keener, *Matthew*, 215–16). Most scholars recognize that the Lord's Prayer draws on the Kaddish (e.g., Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 133; Jeremias, *Prayers*, 98; idem, *Theology*, 21; Moore, *Judaism*, 2:213; Smith, *Parallels*, 136; Hill, *Matthew*, 136–37; Perrin, *Language*, 28–29; Vermes, *Jesus and Judaism*, 43; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:595; Luz, *Matthew*, 371); others suggest other early Jewish parallels (e.g., Bivin, "Prayers").

45. Talmon, "Institutionalized Prayer," 273–74, thinks that the Qumran covenanters (like common Judaism after the temple's destruction) developed such prayers because of their isolation from the temple and its hours of sacrifice. Luke 11:1 could imply fixed prayers (cf. Jeremias, *Theology*, 170; Leaney, "Text," 110; Smith, *Parallels*, 129, comparing *t. Ber.* 4:16–18), but it probably concerns simply the manner of prayer.

46. Sanders, *Judaism*, 205–7.

47. Aune, "Magic," 1533–34.

48. Presumably they prayed for those brought to them, but as their fame multiplied, there were apparently too many supplicants even to pray for all of them individually—without this limitation thereby diminishing the divine generosity at work (Acts 5:15–16).

(3:3) and expects only alms (3:5), he has provided an opportunity for the apostles to provide him a benefit.⁴⁹

In some gospel tradition, Jesus had earlier healed the lame in the temple (though they were coming from elsewhere; Matt 21:14), though without implying that he must have healed everyone. That Luke's depiction of Jesus's ministry in the temple specifies only teaching (Luke 19:47; 20:1; 21:37–38) allows for his audience to understand more easily why such an obvious case of illness noted in Acts 3:2 was not already healed.

Although ancient sources mention the names of many gates in the temple,⁵⁰ they do not specify which gate was popularly called “Beautiful” (though they may provide hints). (The title could be merely a nickname,⁵¹ though the available evidence does not specify whether the nickname was widespread locally or peculiar to Luke's Jerusalem “tour guide”⁵² or some similar source.⁵³ Nor can we be fully certain whether 3:2 refers to an outer gate of the temple complex or a gate to the sanctuary.) The traditional site for this gate (starting in the fifth century C.E.) is the Shushan Gate on the east side of the Temple Mount; this was, appropriately, near Solomon's Colonnade (also often translated as Solomon's Portico).⁵⁴ Against this suggestion, only those entering the temple from outside the city would use this gate, and so a beggar wishing charity from larger masses usually entering from Jerusalem itself might prefer a different gate⁵⁵—assuming, at least, that there was enough space to go around for all the beggars likely at such gates. Some scholars have preferred the southern gate, which the Talmud makes the primary entrance to the temple,⁵⁶ but people entered through many gates, and the Talmud's depictions of the temple are often fanciful in any case.

Much more often, modern scholars prefer as more probable (though not certain) the famous Nicanor Gate.⁵⁷ Josephus speaks of the Corinthian bronze⁵⁸ of a gate

49. The parallel language to Acts 14:9 (ἀτενίζω) might suggest that Peter perceived that the man would have faith when commanded in Jesus's name to rise (3:4, 6). (The absence of mentioned faith might also be used to argue for a deliberate contrast here; but someone—whether the man or the apostles—clearly did express faith, in 3:16. See comments there.)

50. See Netzer, “Kysd.” Cf. the traditional expression “gates of prayer,” sometimes along with “gates of repentance” (e.g., *Deut. Rab.* 2:12; *Lam. Rab.* 3:43–44, §9; cf. 3 *En.* 1:11; 8:1).

51. That Luke notes that it is “called” this does not necessarily specify a nickname (Luke 2:4; 22:1, 47; cf. Acts 6:9). The parallel verb καλέω can apply to a given name (e.g., Luke 2:21; 7:11; 9:10; 10:39; 19:2, 29; 21:37; Acts 1:12; 7:58; 10:1; 27:16) or to a nickname (e.g., Luke 6:15; 8:2; 22:3; Acts 1:23; 8:10; 13:1; 15:22; cf. Luke 1:36; 23:33). Parsons, *Acts*, 59, suggests a rhetorically appealing play on words between the Greek term for “beautiful” here and the ninth “hour” in Acts 3:1.

52. Given Paul's reception in the Jerusalem temple, we may think it more likely that most of Luke's Judean sojourn was spent in Caesarea.

53. Luke's specificity nevertheless points to his knowledge of Jerusalem topography (Hemer, *Acts in History*, 108). The connection of Ὠραΐαν with ὥραν (in Acts 3:1) or the Hebrew term for “light” (Taylor, “Beautiful”) is not probable, although a local Hebrew name for “light” (emphasizing the gate's shininess) might have sounded to Luke like the Greek term “beautiful.”

54. E.g., D. Williams, *Acts*, 66. For various views, see Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 278. Medieval times named the Shushan Gate the “Golden Gate.”

55. Barrett, *Acts*, 179–80. But for beggars at all the gates, cf. Cowton, “Alms Trade”; Cynics at gates in Alexandria in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.9. Bahat, “Temple Mount,” 302 (who prefers a gate of the temple proper), even argues that the gate was used only for “priests going to the Mount of Olives for the sacrifice of the red heifer.”

56. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 32–33.

57. E.g., Lake, “Localities,” 479–85; Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 14; Carter and Earle, *Acts*, 49; Haenchen, *Acts*, 198; Bruce, *Commentary*, 83; Witherington, *Acts*, 174; Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 357n204a; Parrot, *Temple*, 85, fig. 20; Talbert, *Acts*, 36 (tentatively); cf. Marguerat, *Actes*, 118. Schwartz, “Nicanor Gate,” attributes the name to the Greek general defeated by Judas Maccabee; but Hemer, *Acts in History*, 223, attributes the name to its maker, who claims credit for it on his ossuary (*CIJ* 2:262, §1256 = *OGIS* 599). In any case, concluding three lines with “temple” in Acts 3:2–3 indicates an emphasis on the larger site (Parsons, *Acts*, 305, noting antistrophe).

58. Also *t. Kip.* 2:4; *b. Yoma* 38a; whereas other gates had gold, the Nicanor Gate allegedly experienced a miracle to make it shine like gold (*m. Mid.* 2:3; cf. *m. Yoma* 3:10). On the special value of Corinthian bronze, see Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.1.1; 2.4.44.97–98; *Fin.* 2.8.23; Strabo 8.6.23; Petron. *Sat.* 31, 50; Sen. *Y. Dial.* 9.9.6; Pliny E.

more beautiful than those covered with silver or gold (Jos. *War* 5.201), and it was the largest of the gates (5.204).⁵⁹ Tannaim likewise praised the bronze of Nicanor's Gate, which appeared like gold, and some Tannaim associated this appearance (or the gate's preservation) with a miracle.⁶⁰ All of these details would fit the description "Beautiful" gate; also important is that Solomon's Portico was also accessible without much trouble from where rabbinic tradition locates the Nicanor Gate (Acts 3:11).⁶¹ Though Luke mentions this epithet for the gate only in passing, some Roman writers were happy to describe in detail the splendid doors of some temples.⁶²

That Luke intended the Nicanor Gate cannot be certain.⁶³ The gate could date from anywhere between 6 and 60 C.E., and the Mishnah does not name all the gates in the outer court.⁶⁴ But the gate probably does precede 60 C.E.; it seems doubtful that a gate that lasted for less than a decade would have earned such fame in later rabbinic literature or even in Josephus. If we must guess, the Nicanor Gate seems the most likely suggestion among the known choices available, and in the unlikely event that the Nicanor Gate was not yet built at the time assumed in Acts 3, a gate in the vicinity where rabbinic tradition locates it would make sense (3:11). Certainly, the gate would have been built by the time of Luke's visit, and given the specificity of the title ("the Beautiful Gate"), any former pilgrims to the temple among his ideal audience might most naturally think of some particularly impressive gate. Some evidence suggests that this gate separated the outer court from the elevated Court of Women, but Josephus, who knew the temple firsthand, seems to link a notable bronze gate with the sanctuary and differs from later rabbis as to whether it was located at the eastern or the western entrance.⁶⁵ The events in Acts 3 may fit well the eastern gate and entrance to the Court of Women, near Solomon's Portico.⁶⁶ Perhaps subsequent discoveries and analysis will produce greater clarity regarding the site involved.

Most scholars doubt that a man unable to walk, and hence one that some considered ritually defective, could enter beyond this point.⁶⁷ There is some ground for uncertainty

N.H. 34.1.1; 34.3.6; 34.3.8; Jos. *Life* 68; Mart. *Epig.* 9.59.11; 14.172, 177; Pliny *Ep.* 3.1.9; 3.6.1–5; Paus. 2.3.3; Murphy-O'Connor, "Bronze." Although it was supposedly invented by accident (Plut. *Or. Delphi* 2, *Mor.* 395BC), some suggest that it may instead stem from fraud: the alloy probably contained tin rather than, as was supposed, gold (Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 36–37). Its source is hard to document (cf. Mattusch, "Corinthian Bronze"), and it may not have all come from Corinth (Jacobson and Weitzman, "Bronze"); on its color, cf. Jacobson and Weitzman, "Alloy"; other discussion in Emanuele, "Aes corinthium."

59. Although many identify this gate with the Nicanor Gate, Josephus's identification is not certain (Mare, *Archaeology*, 143–44); certainly his location differs from that in later rabbinic sources.

60. *M. Yoma* 3:10; *Mid.* 2:3; *t. Kip.* 2:4. See further *m. Šeqal.* 6:3; *Soṭah* 1:5; *Mid.* 1:4; 2:3, 6; *Neg.* 14:8; later, *b. Yoma* 38a. Because of its public character, Amoraim viewed it as a suitable location for public disgrace (*b. Soṭah* 8b).

61. See Dunn, *Acts*, 40.

62. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.56.124 (to denounce the impiety of Verres in stealing them).

63. Or, despite his visit to Jerusalem (and Polybius's emphasis on historians checking sites), even that he understood the exact location where the event occurred.

64. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 39 (see more fully 38–42); but his suspicion that the disabled could not beg at a primary eastern gate (39, following Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 128–29n50) is less likely. Rabbis reckoned Nicanor as the eastern gate (*m. Mid.* 1:4; 2:6).

65. Cf. Jos. *War* 2.411; 6.293; Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 38; Schwartz, "Nicanor Gate." The later comment in a Jerusalem talmudic tractate claims that "before the Lord" refers to the Nicanor Gate (*y. Soṭah* 1:5, §1), i.e., making it the main entrance to the temple proper (cf. *b. Naz.* 45a: at entrance to the camp of Levites). Earlier tradition distinguishes it from the Women's Gate (*m. Šeqal.* 6:3), though rabbinic tradition identified it as the place for purifying women after childbirth (*m. Soṭah* 1:5) and publicly humiliating adulteresses (*m. Soṭah* 1:5; *b. Soṭah* 8b) as well as for cleansed lepers (*m. Neg.* 14:8). Rabbis mentioned fifteen steps between the two courts (*b. Yoma* 16a).

66. Bahat, "Temple Mount," 301–2. Note the Jerusalem Map B in Brill's *New Pauly*, 6:1171.

67. E.g., Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 117; Reicke, *Era*, 99; Dunn, *Acts*, 39–40. Marguerat, *Actes*, 121, finds here Luke's interest in the religiously marginal (e.g., Luke 7:1–10; 19:1–10; Acts 8:26–40). More cautiously,

about this position, although some strands of evidence may support it. Biblical law excluded the disabled only from the priesthood (Lev 21:18),⁶⁸ but Qumran applied this law to restrict their presence in the community (1QSa II, 5–6).⁶⁹ (It should be noted that although the rabbis and Qumran excluded them from holy places, they did not exclude them from participation in the covenant,⁷⁰ nor did Jews, in contrast to many Gentiles, sanction destroying infants who were considered deformed.)⁷¹ The same purity practices that kept women and Gentiles from the Court of Israel perhaps did exclude those unable to walk as well, although they were not ritually “unclean.” Later rabbis, at least, believed that the unclean could not go beyond the Nicanor Gate (though not specifying this application to those unable to walk, who were not unclean).⁷² Some later Targumim apparently associated the blind and those unable to walk with sinners excluded from God’s house.⁷³

Temple gates were useful locations for begging, since they were frequented by large numbers of people (at least some of whom might also have been in a mood more disposed than usual toward charity).⁷⁴ That the man had to be brought here daily makes sense, but that the man would be brought here at this time of day could appear more problematic.⁷⁵ But this arrival need not constitute the beginning of his begging day; it is doubtful that the man would be out in the sun in midday heat, when most people sought shade.⁷⁶ If he had people to carry him at all (and such help would be viewed as pious, like charity itself), they would also be able to move him under the colonnades. The traffic flow at the gate would increase with the approaching hour of prayer, inviting him to take up his place again.

Excursus: The Disabled, Poverty, and Begging

1. The Disabled (3:2)

Although too dismal a picture can be painted, the lot of the disabled was not an easy one. Classical Athens provided a very small pension for the disabled (Lysias *Or.* 24

Parsons, *Body*, 115, doubts whether we can be certain, though he notes (115–16) that pagan temples excluded priests for blemishes.

68. Cf. Deut 15:21; Mal 1:8, 13. Others also note this limitation (e.g., Gaventa, *Acts*, 84). In pagan priest-hoods, Parsons, *Body*, 115–16.

69. Commentaries frequently cite this passage (e.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 40; Johnson, *Acts*, 65). For similar exclusions, see 4QMMT B 49–51 (the blind) and B 52–54 (the deaf); 4Q174 1 I, 2–4 (anyone with a defect); cf. 1QM VII, 4–6; XII, 7–9; Plut. *Rom. Q.* 73, *Mor.* 281C; *BCH* 7 (1883): 477.1 in Grant, *Religions*, 7; Soph. *Philoc.* 1032–33. Only disabilities potentially marring a sacrifice (e.g., deaf-mutes, who presumably did not hear the instructions, as also minors, who might not understand them) are excluded from this activity in *m. Hul.* 1:1.

70. See Shemesh, “Angels.” Olyan, “Dimensions,” thinks that 11QT^a XLV, 12–14 reads 2 Sam 5:8 as indicating that these disabilities were polluting, but that 1QSa II, 3–10 and 1QM VII, 4–5 view them as merely profaning (though also going beyond Scripture).

71. See comments on Acts 7:19.

72. E.g., *b. Nid.* 70a. This may be why a leper, after immersing himself, stands in the Nicanor Gate (*b. Yoma* 30b); in this line of tradition, the unclean were often sprinkled there (*Num. Rab.* 9:13; a parallel with adulteresses exposed there, *b. Soṭah* 8b, is far less likely). Lepers were also known to shelter in Jerusalem’s city gates (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 177, cites *b. Pesah.* 85b).

73. See the evidence in Evans, “Targum 2 Samuel 5.8.”

74. Barrett, *Acts*, 180; Cowton, “Alms Trade.”

75. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 277, notices the problem, though he warns that the question spoils the story.

76. E.g., Sus 7 (= Dan 13:7 LXX); Ovid *Metam.* 3.143–54; Livy 44.35.20; 44.36.1–2; Colum. *Arb.* 12.1; Longus 2.4; Aul. Gel. 17.2.10. See fuller comments at Acts 26:13.

[*Refusal of a Pension to the Invalid*]),⁷⁷ but we have little evidence for such provision elsewhere.⁷⁸ The disabled and others forced to beg appeared at temples and other public places in Mediterranean cities.⁷⁹ Although Sophocles expects his description of Philoctetes's lameness to elicit pity, he recognizes that many would view the lame as potentially troublesome and dependent (Soph. *Philoc.* 481–86); a lame man might smell bad and hence his presence prove offensive to the gods (*Philoc.* 1032–33). A lame person would endeavor to minimize discomfort however possible (Lysias *Or.* 24.10, §169).⁸⁰

Greeks and Romans often used terms of weakness (such as ἀδύνατοι, ἀσθένεια; *debiles, debilitas*) to designate the disabled; sometimes they also associated it with divine judgment or with the disabled person's bad character.⁸¹ Even some aristocrats faced discrimination based on their disability; some concealed their disabilities whereas others mocked themselves or grew depressed and even suicidal.⁸² Mostly they had to depend on their families⁸³ (though, among Gentiles, disabled infants, if considered deformed, were sometimes discarded);⁸⁴ but begging was necessary for those without family support and for the many with such support who needed to supplement it (cf. John 9:8, 18). Some were even forced to perform as clowns for the public, "displaying their physical anomalies."⁸⁵

Still, we read of blind poets, lame craftsmen (one thinks immediately of the Greek deity Hephaistos),⁸⁶ and so forth; not all disabilities were equally incapacitating, and some disabled persons were able to live more normal lives.⁸⁷ There were disabled

77. On Athens's provision for those unable to work, see further Aeschines *Tim.* 104; Arist. *Const. Ath.* 49.4; for a theoretical law perhaps based on Athens, Sen. E. *Controv.* 3.1.excerpts.

78. Libero, "Disability," 535.

79. See Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 109; for begging at temples, see also Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.305. Beggars would have been around the various temple gates, so that one cannot decide the site of the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:2) by isolating a common location for beggars (see Cowton, "Alms Trade").

80. In this text, by riding a horse; by contrast, Hippocr. *Airs* 22.1–36 warns that Scythians experience lameness from riding too much.

81. Libero, "Disability," 534; cf. Parsons, *Body*, 113; idem, *Acts*, 56–57. Hierocles *How Should One Behave toward the Gods?* (Stobaeus *Anth.* 2.9.7) attributes many disabilities to excess. Some drew connections (at least in individual cases) between one's physical deformity and one's base character (Vell. *Paterc.* 2.69.3–4; Libanius *Invect.* 3.12), but people knew enough to argue the contrary when they wished (Libanius *Encomium* 4.19). For the connection between status and appearance more generally, see (for Roman elite culture) Toner, *Culture*, 137. Parsons (*Body*, 109–16; idem, "Character") argues that Luke subverts physiognomic conventions here.

82. Libero, "Disability," 535.

83. A wife might need to bring in money if a husband was incapacitated (Tob 2:11; *Test. Job* 21:2–3; 22:23; 23:10; 24:4).

84. The advice of Arist. *Pol.* 7.14.10, 1335b; in Roman practice (where the decision whether to discard the infant was ultimately the father's, but the father sometimes chose the infant's death), see Boer, *Morality*, 98–99, 113, 116 (often); Allély, "Enfants malformés"; Libero, "Disability," 535 (sometimes); in more recent cultures, e.g., Dawson, "Urbanization," 324. Edwards, "Deformity," argues against overemphasizing Greek disdain for deformed infants. But malformed or unusual babies were often viewed as omens; e.g., Livy 21.62.2–3; 24.10.10; Val. Max. 1.6.5; Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.1.4; 4 *Ezra* 6:21; cf. Hesiod *W.D.* 180–81; Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 3.8.122–23; Boer, *Morality*, 100.

85. Libero, "Disability," 535. This was probably less frequent in this period, but Parsons, *Body*, 114, notes that both Plutarch and artwork indicate that making the lame try to dance was used as dinner entertainment; mocking the lame had to be warned against in 4 *Ezra* 2:21.

86. Satirized in Lucian *Z. Cat.* 8; *Sacr.* 6; *Dial. G.* 241–43 (17/15, Hermes and Apollo 1–3); 243–44 (18/16, Hera and Leto 1); 245–46 (21/17, Apollo and Hermes 1–2) (esp. Lucian's mockery in 241 [Hermes and Apollo 1]; and Leto's in 243 [18/16, Hera and Leto 1]). In one account, his embarrassed mother Hera cast him from heaven (Hom. *Il.* 18.395–98; Libanius *Narration* 7.1). An Argonaut hero was disabled in his feet because he was a son of Hephaistos (Ap. *Rhod.* 1.202–4), presupposing a genetic mechanism that most would dismiss today as Lamarckian. Among other deities, Lucian figuratively portrays Wealth (Ploutos) as blind and lame (*Tim.* 25–27).

87. Libero, "Disability," 535.

philosophers,⁸⁸ although ancient mockery of intellectual opponents did not spare their physical weaknesses (hence one mocked a “lame Peripatetic,” lit. “lame walker”).⁸⁹

The OT strongly emphasized just treatment of the disabled (Lev 19:14; Deut 27:18), including the lame (Job 29:15).⁹⁰ This emphasis on showing special kindness to the disabled (Luke 14:13, 21), as well as on their healing (7:22; 8:7; 14:8), appears elsewhere in Luke-Acts. Their healing is an eschatological gift announcing the arrival of the messianic era (7:22, recalling Isa 35:5–6, to which Luke also alludes in the “leaping” of Acts 3:8). In the end time God would “save the lame” of Israel (Zeph 3:19), gather the lame and marginalized (Mic 4:6), and make the lame into “a remnant” (4:7).

Disability of the legs could be attributed to various physical causes, including walking through cold snow (leading to frostbite and amputation).⁹¹ Yet some ancients associated maladies with punishment for misbehavior.⁹² Some later teachers opined that, at least as a rule, one who encounters the lame, the blind, or others who are visibly afflicted should say, “Blessed be the righteous judge” (*t. Ber.* 6:3).⁹³ Thus, in Greek sources, the gods and Fate often sent punishment like the crime;⁹⁴ Jewish sources, including both early sages and sectarian sources⁹⁵ as well as later rabbis,⁹⁶ recited the same principle. In many Greco-Roman sources, God or the gods punished with physical afflictions;⁹⁷ in Jewish sources, sickness often stemmed from sin.⁹⁸ Thus a woman would die childless only because of her sin (*1 En.* 98:5). The *Testament of Job* even supplies a possible sin (pride) committed by Job’s sons that made them susceptible to death (*Test. Job* 15:6–9/10).⁹⁹ One later Amora opined that a person would be born lame because the parents cohabited unnaturally (though the majority of sages

88. Notably Epictetus, as in Fronto *Ad verum imp.* 1.1.5.

89. Lucian *Dem.* 54.

90. Cf. 2 Sam 9:3. Ancient cultures did use “lameness” as an insult to ridicule the able-bodied as weak (2 Sam 5:6–8; cf. Isa 33:23); but God would protect the weak of his people, including the lame (Jer 31:8; Mic 4:6–7; Zeph 3:19), and some other ancient Near Eastern ethics defended the lame (e.g., “The Instruction of Amen-em-ope” 2, in *ANET* 422). For the lame as a character type in the LXX, see Roth, *Blind, Lame, Poor*, 107–8 (for the poor, 112–32).

91. Lucian *Book-Coll.* 6; Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.12; Hdn. 6.6.3; cf. Alciph. *Farm.* 27 (Ampelion to Euergus), 3.30, ¶1.

92. E.g., blindness (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 16.3.1; Ovid *Metam.* 3.335; *b. Ta’an.* 21a; see more fully Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:135); at Qumran, cf. Naveh, “Fragments.” Much earlier, cf. *KRT C* (vi) (*ANET* 149). Borgen, “Miracles,” 101, emphasizes that this is only one option in NT narratives.

93. The response was to be the same, however, for bad news to oneself (*m. Ber.* 9:2). Cf. also *b. Ber.* 58b, though here some Amoraim harmonize opinions by differentiating one born with a condition and one who acquired it after birth. Some of what follows I have adapted from Keener, *John*, 777–78.

94. Diod. Sic. 20.62.2; see also Demosth. *Zenoth.* 6; cf. Plot. *Enn.* 3.2 [47], 13.1–17, cited in Judge, *Athens*, 185. The principle also applied to executions by rulers (e.g., Diod. Sic. 20.101.3; Aul. Gel. 7.4.4) or heroes (Apollod. *Bib.* 3.16.1; *Epit.* 1.2–3; Eurip. *Archelaus* test. iiiia.3–4 [from Hyginus *Fab.* 219]). Cf. sorcerers’ death by sorcery in Kenyan Luo tradition (Whisson, “Disorders,” 289).

95. Ps 9:15; Prov 26:27; Obad 15; Sir 27:25–27; 2 Macc 4:38; 9:5–6; 13:7–8; *L.A.B.* 44:9–10; 1QpHab XI, 5, 7, 15; XII, 5–6; 4Q181 1 1–2; *Jub.* 4:32; 35:10–11; 37:5, 11.

96. See *m. ’Ab.* 2:6/7; *Sipre Deut.* 238.3.1; *’Abot R. Nat.* 27, §56 B; *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 17b, bar.; *Ber. Sa;* *Sanh.* 108b; *y. Hag.* 2:1, §3; *Gen. Rab.* 53:5; *Tg. Rishon* on Esth 1:11; other sources in Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 110; esp. Phillips, “Balance”; cf. Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 125. Some did not even believe that a rabbi would face execution without having merited it somewhat through at least a minor transgression (*Mek. Nez.* 18.55ff.).

97. Hom. *Il.* 6.139; Hierocles p. 48.22–49.9 from Stob. *Ecl.* 1.3.54 (in van der Horst, “Hierocles,” 157–58); Parth. *L.R.* 29.2. Some ancients, however, attributed such afflictions directly to human vice apart from the gods (Iambl. *V.P.* 32.218).

98. E.g., *Pesiq. Rab.* 22:5; Lachs, *Commentary*, 166 (citing *b. Meg.* 17b; *Ned.* 41a; *Šabb.* 55a); Brown, *John*, 1:371; see more extensively Abrahams, *Studies* (1), 108. One should not, however, overstate the case (as in Dibelius, *Jesus*, 112–13); cf. the sickness of pious rabbis (Dvorjetski, “Medical History”). Sicknesses could be useful for meritorious suffering (e.g., *b. Ber.* 17a; *Sanh.* 107b, bar.; *Gen. Rab.* 62:2).

99. In a late source, Job himself suffered because he did not speak against wrongdoing (*Exod. Rab.* 1:9). Likewise, the death of the concubine in Judg 19 is attributed to her earlier sin with an Amorite (*L.A.B.* 45:3);

disagreed).¹⁰⁰ Prayer for forgiveness might be coupled with prayer for healing.¹⁰¹ Some Jewish teachers did, however, express skepticism that we could know the reasons the righteous suffered,¹⁰² and argued that not all kinds of suffering derived from sin.¹⁰³ Like many other narrators, Luke makes no connection with individual sin here; his theology allows for other causes (cf., e.g., Luke 13:11).

That the malady was experienced from birth might, but would not necessarily, alleviate a verdict of sin.¹⁰⁴ Some people in antiquity believed in significant prenatal activity;¹⁰⁵ it would thus not prove surprising that some could also suspect prenatal sin,¹⁰⁶ though the view was probably less dominant than is sometimes supposed.¹⁰⁷ Luke mentions that the man was disabled from birth, however, to emphasize the greatness of the cure (Acts 4:22); this was the usual function, in ancient texts, of specifying the duration of an ailment divinely cured.¹⁰⁸

2. Poverty in General (3:2)

Although only a minority of people were so destitute as to be forced to beg, poverty was pervasive. We will survey some information regarding wealth and poverty in the Roman Empire, including in Judea and Galilee, before turning to the more specific questions of charity and begging.

There was little overlap between rich and poor in classical society.¹⁰⁹ It has been estimated that in the late republic a wealthy person had 714 times the income of the poor, with the extremely wealthy holding 10,476 times the wealth of the poor. The gap between rich and poor remained in the early empire, but that between the wealthiest and the poor widened to 17,142 times.¹¹⁰ By some estimates, the rich constituted about 3 percent of the empire, with the majority of the remaining people being poor;¹¹¹ others estimate that 2 percent of the empire controlled half to two-thirds of the empire's

Dinah was raped because her father Jacob boasted (*Gen. Rab.* 79:8; 80:4). Even Elisha's sickness (cf. 2 Kgs 13:14) was attributed to sins (*b. Sanh.* 107b).

100. So *b. Ned.* 20ab.

101. Sir 38:9–10; Jas 5:14–15. For forgiveness and healing, see, e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 97 NV (perhaps spiritual here only). For other prayers for healing, e.g., the eighth benediction of the Amidah; *m. Ber.* 5:5; *b. Ber.* 60a; *Gen. Rab.* 53:14 (for God as the source of healing, also Sir 34:20 [31:17]; *b. Ber.* 60b; *Pesah.* 68a).

102. *M. 'Ab.* 4:15. In general, later Babylonian sources were more nuanced than Tannaitic and later Palestinian ones (Elman, "Suffering").

103. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:443, 446 (esp. *t. B. Bat.* 3:25 concerning Job's comforters). Pagans might also protest that their suffering was due to Fate rather than to any evil they had done (Horsley, *Documents*, 4:30–31, §7, citing *CIG* 4.9668).

104. "From the mother's womb" was a more traditional Semitic manner of expressing the situation (ἐκ κοιλίας appears about fifteen times in the LXX) than "from birth" (as in John 9:1; see Brown, *John*, 1:371).

105. E.g., Isis and Osiris copulated in the womb (Plut. *Isis* 12, *Mor.* 356A).

106. E.g., the question in John 9:2; often argued by commentators on that verse (e.g., Barrett, *John*, 356; Lightfoot, *Gospel*, 202).

107. Cf. also *b. Sanh.* 91b (sins from birth, not conception); perhaps *Exod. Rab.* 4:3 refers to a decree at birth. Some later rabbis regarded the evil impulse as inborn (*'Abot R. Nat.* 16 A; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 3:2), as some Gentiles viewed wrongdoing as humanity's natural bent (e.g., Crates *Ep.* 12).

108. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 51–52 (citing Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.43; *Epid. inscr.* 1). Cf. *Test. Job* 26:1; 27:6/9; 28:1. The cause, as Wilkinson, *Health*, 88, notes, is presumably a prenatal "developmental abnormality," perhaps a severe form of clubfoot.

109. In the perspective of Arist. *Pol.* 4.3.15, 1291b. On ancient Mediterranean poverty, see also Watson, "Collection," 15–31.

110. Bastomsky, "Rich" (noting that this gap far surpassed that in Victorian England). The figures are, of course, estimates.

111. Friesen, "Demography," 369; highlighting the intermediate range, see Longenecker, "Middle." Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 86, suggests that the actual "upper class" was perhaps 0.02 percent.

quantifiable, transferrable wealth.¹¹² A range did exist, with mobile artisans in notably better circumstances than tenant farmers,¹¹³ but the truly wealthy were few.¹¹⁴ It has been argued that the drive to acquire wealth did not transcend individual activities to generate capital or act the way a more productive market economy would.¹¹⁵ Others argue that the early empire's economy did connect many interdependent markets, though they acknowledge that it did not achieve modern sophistication.¹¹⁶

Most of the empire's labor force consisted of subsistence-level agricultural labor.¹¹⁷ Agriculture was also central to the Palestinian Jewish economy (Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.60).¹¹⁸ Most scholars hold that the cities exploited the production of neighboring countrysides,¹¹⁹ yet most surrounding countrysides were inadequate to support cities without cities' provisions being well supplemented by trade.¹²⁰ The economy was inadequate to support many large cities in most of the empire.¹²¹

Most of the rural empire was poor.¹²² Although some smallholders remained, the majority of the poor in both Italy and Asia Minor now lacked their own land.¹²³ Landowning defined wealth, and landowners profited enormously by exploiting farmers working their land.¹²⁴ Landowners insulated themselves against crisis¹²⁵ with large holdings.¹²⁶ By contrast, the homes of poor Egyptian farmers were terribly overcrowded (e.g., twenty-four in one adobe house; twenty-six in another).¹²⁷ Subsistence for the poor was minimal, so that most died young; most peasants probably made barely enough to stay alive.¹²⁸ Moses Finley argues that "Cato gave his chained slaves more bread than the average peasant in Graeco-Roman Egypt could count on as a regular staple."¹²⁹ The soil in most of the empire (in contrast to the land around the Nile) was not highly productive, yielding its

112. Blomberg, *Poverty*, 89–90. Malina, *Anthropology*, 72–73, also estimates 2 percent for the elite. More modestly, 1.5 percent might control 20 percent of the empire's income (Scheidel and Friesen, "Size").

113. For important observations concerning stratification below the elite, see Holmberg, "Methods," 263, 265–66, and sources he cites.

114. For matters of comparison, the average middle-class person in the United States at the time of this book's writing has a much higher standard of living than any but the most wealthy in Roman antiquity.

115. Finley, *Economy*, 144.

116. Temin, "Market Economy."

117. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 43–46; Andraeu, "Wages," 542 (noting subsistence level also for manual laborers). On Greek farmers, see Osborne, "Farmers"; on Roman farmers, Rathbone, "Farmers."

118. For details regarding agriculture in Jewish Palestine, see Applebaum, "Economic Life," 646–56.

119. E.g., Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 119.

120. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 121. Engels argues (131–42) that cities such as Corinth survived by trade, not exploitation.

121. Erdkamp, "Agriculture." Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 27–33, argues that Corinth's outlying areas did not produce enough agriculturally to support it.

122. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 1–27. Of course, economics, like education (e.g., Aelian *Farmers* 20 [Phaedrias to Sthenon], end), varied geographically among rural populations. Many scholars estimate about 90 percent of the empire as agrarian peasants (Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits*, xii); for arguments for gradual and eventual agrarian decline in Roman Palestine, see Gil, "Decline."

123. Grant, *Social History*, 72. For independent subsistence farmers, despite their relative invisibility, see also Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 75–77. Independent workers earned small wages (e.g., White, "Finances," 232) and could find extra work only during harvest (Finley, *Economy*, 107); landowners kept their workforce no larger than necessary to maximize profits (MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 42). On day laborers' lack of security, see also Arlandson, *Women*, 92–98.

124. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 48–56. For land as the basis for wealth, see also Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 64–82. Some argue that tenant farmers often hated cities because they housed their exploiters (Lee, "Unrest," 128; see Keener, *Acts*, 1:589–96).

125. On famine, see comments on Acts 11:28.

126. Finley, *Economy*, 108.

127. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 13.

128. *Ibid.*, 13–14.

129. Finley, *Economy*, 107.

fruits only with arduous toil.¹³⁰ A hailstorm could destroy one's crops and leave one at the mercy of potential creditors for survival.¹³¹

That rich landlords oppressed the poor was widely enough known (Apul. *Metam.* 9.35–37).¹³² Some wealthy landowners tried to seize the land of those unable to protect their own interests.¹³³ A landholder might send his own slaves or tenants to seize the land of another person if the latter was weak.¹³⁴ The rich landlords tended to live in cities or sometimes villas, ruling their large estates from afar.¹³⁵ These landlords often effectively controlled the labor force of entire villages on or near their estates.¹³⁶ They were the towns' benefactors¹³⁷ and also could render decisive judgments more economically than would courts.¹³⁸ Their generally absentee status, however, often laid these communities open to exploitation by the landlords' delegated managers.¹³⁹

Those who lived on and worked these estates were poor tenant farmers,¹⁴⁰ who were often subject to exploitation.¹⁴¹ Tenants were generally more profitable economically to landholders than slaves were, since the landholder owed them no maintenance and could lay them off in difficult times.¹⁴² A worker could well fear an estate's owner if something went awry.¹⁴³ At least in some areas, the poor resented the oppression they experienced from the empire and its local collaborators.¹⁴⁴ Analysis of skeletal remains reveals the chronic undernourishment and physical stress on people who did not belong to the elite.¹⁴⁵

Pliny considers himself a benevolent absentee landowner but finds wearisome dealing with the tenants' complaints when he visits;¹⁴⁶ he reports that his tenants have fallen so far into debt, despite his reducing the rent, that they no longer even try to catch up on it.¹⁴⁷ His urban servants supervise the peasants to make sure they are

130. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 32–33.

131. So in Alciph. *Farm.* 3 (Amnion to Philomoschus), 1.24. Alciph. *Farm.* passim reveals that others in the empire were aware that farmers faced hardships; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 70.1 assumes knowledge that they were hard workers.

132. On class prejudice, see, e.g., MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 138–41.

133. E.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 4.1–2.

134. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 7–12. The drive was toward consolidating rural resources into increasingly "fewer hands" (6, citing sources including Cic. *Agr.* 3.4.14; Petron. *Sat.* 48.3; 77.3; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 90.39; *Ben.* 7.10; Ambrose *De Nabuthae historia* 1; Jerome *Commentary on Micah* 2.1; Cyprian *Ad Donatum* 12).

135. Fiensy, "Composition," 215.

136. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 39–40, noting (39) that towns could even be sold. Hock, "Ethnography," 108, cites Char. *Chaer.* 1.3.1; 1.11.2 for peasants living on or near many estates.

137. See Pliny *Ep.* 4.1.4–5; 9.15.1; *CIL* 6.1492 (101 or 102 c.e., in Sherk, *Empire*, §193, p. 248); MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 47 (and passim). Many of our sources for specific aspects attest them particularly for the West, but they at least illustrate the picture of social stratification more generally.

138. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 39.

139. *Ibid.*, 5–6.

140. Lee, "Unrest," 127, compares them with a sort of rural client (employing the image more loosely than its narrower political sense).

141. Foxhall, "Tenant" (also noting various kinds of tenancy). For tenant farmers' difficult situation, see also Krause, "Colonatus," 538–39.

142. Shelton, *Romans*, 155.

143. E.g., Alciph. *Farm.* 19 (Polyalsus to Eustaphylus), 3.22, esp. ¶¶3–4, where they accidentally snared the master's pet dog.

144. Toner, *Culture*, 167 (though citing esp. evidence from fourth-century Egypt).

145. *Ibid.*, 63.

146. Pliny *Ep.* 9.36.6. For landholders' visits to estates, see also Hock, "Ethnography," 111, citing examples in novels that imitate social reality (Char. *Chaer.* 2.3.1–5; 3.8.2–9; Ach. *Tat.* 5.17.2–10; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 2.1.2; 11.1; cf. in greater detail Hock, "Experience," 314–19). In Char. *Chaer.* 2.3.10, the landowner's country estate had plenty of housing space to host his entourage (Hock, "Ethnography," 108).

147. Pliny *Ep.* 9.37.2. (Aristocrats often accumulated land through peasants' debts; Horsley, *Galilee*, 215–21.) One solution Pliny considers is to lease the land for a proportion of produce rather than for monetary

working while he enjoys a bit of leisure.¹⁴⁸ He complains about a former landowner who sold peasants' possessions to compensate for their debt, thereby diminishing their future resources. This, he reasons, foolishly diminished their future ability to pay.¹⁴⁹

Taxes in the Roman Empire must have seemed daunting to the poor.¹⁵⁰ Most peasants in the empire paid 10 percent for rent, 10 percent for tax on the land, and an additional poll tax, but this was better than the 50 percent that eighteenth-century French peasants paid (on top of a 10 percent church tithe and other taxes).¹⁵¹ Tax breaks were usually based more on status than on need; thus, for example, the Hellenist metropolites¹⁵² in Egypt's nomes received tax breaks and hence were taxed less than the other, poorer Egyptians.¹⁵³ Taxes in Judea were also high.¹⁵⁴ Much of the grain in Upper Galilee was designated for Caesar (Jos. *Life* 71).¹⁵⁵ With the Jewish taxes—all three biblical tithes (Jos. *Ant.* 4.240)—on top of government taxes, agrarian peasants who actually did pay all the tithes that strict interpreters expected carried a heavy tax burden.

3. Urban and Judean Poverty (3:2)

More directly relevant to our passage are the urban poor, whose plight could be extreme.¹⁵⁶ Philip Esler describes the ancient urban poor as “ill-fed, housed in slums or not at all, ravaged by sickness,” and with little hope of social betterment.¹⁵⁷ The divide between wealth and poverty was particularly obvious in cities.¹⁵⁸ The poor constituted the majority of cities' residents; at Pompeii they even constituted a sufficiently significant voting bloc that “the beggars” could “demand” someone's election.¹⁵⁹ In Rome they often lacked enough food,¹⁶⁰ and they had to pay high rent for wretched lodgings.¹⁶¹ Since they often lacked sufficient income to cover basic necessities, their situation was desperate;¹⁶² Rome could not have supported itself without depending on its empire.¹⁶³

rent (9.37.3). Pliny would reduce rents also after a bad harvest (10.8.5); what is noteworthy to us is how easily he could *afford* to do so.

148. Pliny *Ep.* 9.20.2. Some, however, may have opined that poverty trained people better for hard work than luxury did (Eurip. *Alexander* frg. 54, from Stobaeus 4.33.3).

149. Pliny *Ep.* 3.19.6. Replacing such tenants, he wants to employ good slaves there who need no chains, since he does not use chained labor (3.19.7).

150. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 34–37. One also needed to reckon with customs duties, taxes on transported goods (2.5 percent), sales tax (1 percent), and inheritance tax (5 percent) (O'Rourke, “Law,” 183).

151. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 133. (He earlier places the rents at 20–40 percent but notes that even with taxes at 60 percent in the fourth century, peasants survived, 39–40.)

152. On these gentry, see Lewis, *Life*, 45–64.

153. *Ibid.*, 41. For Roman repression of Egypt, see 207. For full freedom from taxes as a special honor, see, e.g., 1 Sam 17:25; Jos. *Life* 429.

154. Others have estimated higher in Judea than Engels's general figures above, such as 40 percent or more (Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits*, 55–59, esp. 58–59) or 50 percent (Oakman, “Countryside,” 165), but Sanders, *Judaism*, 146–68, esp. 158–68, suggests that the total of taxes and tithes for Jewish peasants was probably below 35 percent, though difficult for the poor. Crossan, *Jesus*, 221, argues that the tax burden was no worse than elsewhere in the empire; yet this was bad enough for the poor.

155. Some Galilean grain belonged to Berenice (Jos. *Life* 118–19), but perhaps because of her ownership of the fields.

156. On the plight of the urban poor, see Esler, *Community*, 171–79.

157. *Ibid.*, 179.

158. In Rome, see Dupont, *Life*, 30–55 (with little middle ground between rich and poor).

159. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 87.

160. Juv. *Sat.* 3.203–11.

161. Juv. *Sat.* 3.164–67 (also complaining, however, about the cost of food for one's slaves; Juvenal is a better source for the cost of living than for the suffering of the poorest).

162. See, e.g., Gager, “Class,” 106.

163. Cf. the portrait in Rev 17:3 (and comments in Bruce, *Message*, 86).

To provide for (and pacify) the poor of Rome, emperors in the early empire had to provide a form of food welfare, the grain dole.¹⁶⁴ Providing grain for the people had always earned favor with the people for those who could afford to sponsor this benefaction;¹⁶⁵ the emperor protected his political power in part by absorbing this activity into responsibilities of the government.¹⁶⁶ Augustus provided the dole monthly for the city's poor (Suet. *Aug.* 40.2), though he found ways to limit it when less grain was available (42.1–3). Whereas the ruler effective in ensuring the grain supply earned praise,¹⁶⁷ Dio Cassius lists among Nero's atrocities that he deprived the Romans "of the free dole of grain."¹⁶⁸ This benefaction required much attention; supporting perhaps two to four hundred thousand people¹⁶⁹ was no small undertaking.¹⁷⁰ Rome was always vulnerable if the supplies of Egypt were cut off,¹⁷¹ making control of Egypt and the efficiency of the grain fleet crucial.¹⁷²

The dole was important to maintain political stability in the capital. During food shortages, riots were to be expected,¹⁷³ including when grain supplies were cut off externally.¹⁷⁴ Ancients were aware of the possibility of class strife more generally,¹⁷⁵ but unrest was generated especially in times of hunger.¹⁷⁶ The high price of grain nearly caused riots in 32 C.E. (*Tac. Ann.* 6.13), and in 51 C.E. hostile crowds again gathered in Rome (12.43).

Exploitation of the poor was not a distinctively Roman problem, appearing, for example, in Gaul before Roman subjugation.¹⁷⁷ Jewish Palestine, too, had its elite classes.¹⁷⁸ For three centuries, most of the elite in Jewish Palestine had been priests,¹⁷⁹ and Josephus reports that aristocratic priests boldly seized the support designated for the poorer priests.¹⁸⁰ In Jewish piety, the designation "poor" sometimes applied to the pious;¹⁸¹ the rich were sometimes thought to oppress

164. E.g., Gager, "Class," 106; Hardy, *World*, 96. Later, meat was also provided (e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 1.5), but it was currently a private responsibility (Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 277).

165. E.g., Sir 31:23–24 [34:23–24]; Livy 4.13.3; Lucan *C.W.* 3.52–58; Suet. *Jul.* 26.3.

166. Stambaugh, *City*, 134. Cf. the *curator annonae* (Clarke, "Italy," 474; Stambaugh, *City*, 145; O'Rourke, "Law," 169); controller of the grain supply was one of the early empire's highest offices (*Tac. Ann.* 1.7; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.10.2). Managing the city's grain without personal profit could make an administrator popular (*Tac. Ann.* 14.51).

167. Pliny *Panegy.* 29.1–5.

168. Dio Cass. 62.18.5 (LCL, 8:117).

169. For differing estimates within this range, see, e.g., Carcopino, *Life*, 65; Casson, *Mariners*, 207. See further discussion regarding Rome's population at Acts 28:16.

170. On the economic demand, see, e.g., Koester, *Introduction*, 1:327.

171. *Tac. Ann.* 2.59; *Hist.* 3.48. Concerns about cutting off the grain supply were also important in ancient Athens (*Lysias Or.* 22).

172. On this fleet, see comments on Acts 27:6. Rome earlier had to deal with pirates who could obstruct the trade (Jones, "Army," 200, citing *Jos. War* 3.414–31), but Pompey had mostly eliminated these roughly a century before the narrative world of Acts begins.

173. E.g., Stambaugh, *City*, 143; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 66. People might even riot when they did not manage to see an actor in the theater, which forced the government to fund actors better (Dio Cass. 56.47.2); another actor who offended Romans was lynched on the spot (Diod. Sic. 37.12.1).

174. Appian *Bell. civ.* 5.8.67.

175. Arist. *Pol.* 5.1.6, 1301b. During the republic, poor multitudes in Rome were easily stirred to anger against the rich by misfortunes (e.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 9.25.2).

176. Famine could lead even to cannibalism (e.g., Deut 28:55, 57; 2 Kgs 6:28–29; Polyb. 1.85.1; Plut. *Luc.* 11.1; *Tac. Hist. frg.* 1; cf. Diod. Sic. 1.84.1; Appian *Bell. civ.* 12.6.38).

177. Caesar *Gall. W.* 6.13.

178. Stern, "Aspects," 580–621.

179. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 79; Stern, "Aspects," 580–612.

180. *Jos. Ant.* 20.181, 206–7; cf. *Life* 80. The tithes may have barely supported the poorer priests to begin with (Fiensy, "Composition," 220). Contrast the friendlier picture in *t. Pe'ah* 4:3.

181. Davids, *James*, 43, 111 (citing, e.g., Sir 10:22–24; *Pss. Sol.* 5; 1 *En.* 108:7–15; 1 QpHab XII, 3, 6, 10; 4 QpPs 37; 1 QM XI, 9; 1 QH^a XI, 25; also rabbinic sources). It was said that Hillel had been poor (*b. Yoma*

the poor (Sir 13:20);¹⁸² and one could speak of a poor person “before his ruler” (1QS IX, 22–23).¹⁸³

Like other locations in the empire, rural Galilee presumably had a number of tenant farmers working absentee landowners’ estates.¹⁸⁴ Rabbinic evidence can support the picture of rich landowners and poor peasants in Galilee,¹⁸⁵ but while archaeological evidence suggests this situation in Galilee, it also suggests less disparity between rich and poor there than in much of the empire.¹⁸⁶ Perhaps this lack of disparity simply suggests that most of the wealthy did not live in rural Galilee, which was very poor;¹⁸⁷ in this period, many wealthy Palestinian Jews undoubtedly lived in Jerusalem¹⁸⁸ as well as in the two Galilean cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias.¹⁸⁹ Although most Jerusalemites were not wealthy, many of them held steady employment; the city produced as well as consumed.¹⁹⁰

Just as diminished food supplies could stir unrest in Rome, economic problems contributed toward the social unrest in Judea that helped precipitate the Judean revolt.¹⁹¹ Power struggles within the Jewish ruling class probably constituted a factor in the Judean revolt.¹⁹² (That priestly aristocrats soon challenge Peter and John for providing to the needy man a popular “benefaction” that they have not provided is noteworthy [Acts 4:5–9].)

Wealthy Romans typically viewed poverty as shameful, driving people to morally undesirable behaviors;¹⁹³ some ancient thinkers, though, argued that one should distinguish the honorable from the dishonorable reasons for particular cases of poverty.¹⁹⁴ Some later Jewish sages believed that God would protect students of Torah from such poverty and certainly from the need to beg (*b. Šabb.* 151b); poverty was one of the worst possible problems (*Exod. Rab.* 31:14), even atoning for sin (*b. Erub.* 41b).¹⁹⁵ In other sources, however, poverty was considered helpful for Jewish people¹⁹⁶ because

35b). Josephus’s claim that the Pharisees lived simply (*Ant.* 18.12) may assimilate them to Stoics (Feldman in LCL, 9:10–11 n. b). For the poor in the OT, the Apocrypha, and the Pseudepigrapha, see Hoyt, “Poor in Luke-Acts,” 13–61.

182. Cf. Johanan ben Zakkai’s criticism of property owners in *‘Abot R. Nat.* 31, §67 B.

183. Cf. Phaedrus 1.15 on the difference between enslavement and life as a peasant: it makes little difference if one changes masters. Cf. also the propriety of using slaves or foreign serfs to till the soil in *Arist. Pol.* 7.8.5–6, 1329a.

184. See Luke 20:9–10; Mark 12:1–2; Matt 21:33–34; Applebaum, “Economic Life,” 657–60. On the problem of landlessness in Jewish Palestine after Pompey, see Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 91–92.

185. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:632.

186. Goodman, *State*, 33. Hirschfeld, “Ramat Hanadiv,” reinforces this picture of wealthy landowners versus the poor, although there remains great debate on his view of Qumran.

187. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 155, 160. Possibly, Roman liberation of Hellenistic cities from Hasmonean rule had produced more landless Jewish peasants (Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits*, 57–58), but the poverty of Galilean peasants should not be overestimated (Reed, *Archaeology*, 97).

188. Neusner, *Beginning*, 24. The rural Galilean poor resented urban aristocrats (Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 148).

189. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 149.

190. See Finger, *Meals*, 108–24.

191. See Applebaum, “Economic Causes”; Goodman, *Ruling Class*, 51–75; Reicke, *Era*, 210; cf. Lang, “Oppression.” In earlier eras, too, famine had moved people toward revolt (1 Macc 9:24). In Galilee as in Rome, free distribution of food created interest but had to be managed in such a way as to avoid rioting (Goodman, *State*, 39).

192. Goodman, *Ruling Class*, 19. Goodman argues that Romans per se were less a particular object of resentment than “Gentile” oppressors in general (76–108). The Roman sympathies of some of the Judean aristocrats probably presented them as traitors to those suffering the worst oppression (Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits*, 227–28).

193. Saller, “Poverty.” Cf. the marginal status of the propertyless in Ungern-Sternberg, “Proletarii,” 1.

194. Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 97 (from Stob. *Flor.* 95.9).

195. Cf. *Exod. Rab.* 52:3.

196. E.g., *b. Hag.* 9b; *Lev. Rab.* 13:4.

its very hardship led toward repentance.¹⁹⁷ See the fuller discussion concerning ancient views of wealth at Acts 2:44–45.

4. Alms (3:2)

Beggars requested charity precisely because they could expect that some people would accommodate their request. Luke often emphasizes the piety involved in almsgiving (Luke 11:41;¹⁹⁸ 12:33; Acts 9:36; 10:2, 4, 31; 24:17), providing ten of the thirteen NT uses of ἐλεημοσύνη.¹⁹⁹ Despite Judaism's heavy emphasis on charity, being a recipient of charity, or otherwise having to depend on others, was considered shameful;²⁰⁰ despite the injustice of such a stigma, it undoubtedly did reduce abuse of the system. Judaism stressed both charity and a high work ethic; most beggars genuinely had no alternative means of income.²⁰¹ Jewish sources recognized as a moral, though not legal, obligation the practice of giving to beggars who requested alms.²⁰²

Charity was one of the most basic and often-emphasized obligations in early Judaism;²⁰³ sometimes it appeared even among the three most prominent moral demands.²⁰⁴ It was central to the early Jewish conception of “righteousness.”²⁰⁵ Altruistic²⁰⁶ ethical (and not simply “legalistic”) concerns motivated Jewish emphasis on charity.²⁰⁷ Even Gentiles recognized the Jewish emphasis on charity (Jos. Ag. Ap. 2.283). A Jewish sage emphasized giving charitable help to the poor (Ps.-Phoc. 23) and even taking in the homeless (Ps.-Phoc. 24). Josephus emphasized that God

197. *Song Rab.* 1:4, §4.

198. A Lukan redaction of Q; cf. discussion of the underlying Aramaic in Black, *Aramaic Approach*, 2; Burney, *Aramaic Origin*, 9; Argyle, *Matthew*, 176; Keener, *Matthew*, 553.

199. The Apostolic Fathers add a few more early Christian uses (2 *Clem.* 16.4; *Did.* 1.6; 15.4); it appears about fifty times in the LXX, most commonly in Tobit (Tob 1:3, 16; 2:14; 3:2; 4:7–11, 16; 12:8–9; 13:8; 14:2, 10–11) and Sirach (Sir 3:14, 30; 7:10; 12:3; 16:14; 17:22, 29; 29:8, 12; 31:11; 35:2; 40:17, 24).

200. See also *b. Ber.* 6b; *Beza* 32b, bar.; *Erub.* 18b; *Pesah.* 112a; *Yebam.* 63a; *Song Rab.* 2:5, §3; cf. Derrett, *Audience*, 43.

201. In a society dominated by honor and shame, some considered it better to die than to beg (Sir 40:28–30; cf. Diogenes *Ep.* 34); few would resort to that lifestyle unnecessarily. Work generally generated more income than begging anyway; especially among Gentiles, begging usually met refusal (Diogenes *Ep.* 11; Diog. Laert. 6.2.49).

202. Guelich, *Sermon on Mount*, 223.

203. E.g., Prov 29:7; Ezek 16:49; Tob 1:3; 2:14; 4:7; Sir 4:1–8; 17:22; *Test. Job* 9–12; 15:1; *Test. Iss.* 3:8; Ps.-Phoc. 29; Jos. *Asen.* 10:11/12; *m. Demai*; *t. B. Qam.* 11:3; *Demai* 3:16; *Abot R. Nat.* 3, 7 A; 14, §33 B; *b. Ta'an.* 21a; in the Diaspora, *CJJ* 1:142, §203. On charity in Judaism, see further Johnson, *Sharing Possessions*, 135ff.; Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving*, 277–83; Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 412–39; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 180–82; Watson, “Collection,” 56–119 (in the OT, 56–80; after the OT, 80–96, 106–19). On Christian charity in the patristic period, see Grant, *Christianity and Society*, 124–45; idem, *Paul*, 57; cf. *Did.* 1.5–6; most of Jesus's initial followers were probably much poorer than most of the audience of the Tannaim (Cohen, *Maccabees*, 122).

204. One early teacher lists the three basic deeds as Torah, the temple service, and charity (*m. 'Ab.* 1:2; cf. *Abot R. Nat.* 31, §67 B); another, judgment, truth, and peace (*m. 'Ab.* 1:18); other, later teachers would list prayer, charity, and repentance (*y. Ta'an.* 2:1, §9; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 28:2; *Ecl. Rab.* 7:14, §1). One Jewish-Christian writer claimed that charity was more meritorious than fasting or prayer (2 *Clem.* 16.4), fitting a Jewish teaching that it outweighed all other commandments (*t. Pe'ah* 4:19; *b. B. Bat.* 9a).

205. See esp. Przybylski, *Righteousness*, 67, 74–75, for Tannaitic sources.

206. Magnetic resonance technology shows that altruistic decisions involve the most developed and distinctively human parts of the brain (Moll et al., “Networks”); they are also associated with better psychological health (Schwartz et al., “Behaviors”).

207. With, e.g., Liébaert and Bernard, “Dieu et prochain.” One must give charity from the right kind of heart (*m. 'Ab.* 5:13; Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 67; cf. Ethiopic *Apoc. Peter* 11). Indeed, some Jewish teachers also praised secret charity and objected to ostentation in charity (*Test. Job* 9:7–8; *m. Šeqal.* 5:6; *t. Pe'ah* 4:19–21; *Šeqal.* 2:16; *b. B. Bat.* 9b; *Pesah.* 113a; see further Abrahams, *Studies* [2], 125; Odeberg, *Pharisaism*, 84–85; Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 153; Lachs, *Commentary*, 113; Vermes, *Religion*, 196).

blessed humanity with many material blessings so that one could give to others (*Ant.* 4.237).

Later rabbis developed such thought further. Later rabbinic sources suggest a wide range of charitable programs to meet the needs of the poor.²⁰⁸ Sages declared that one should treat the poor as members of one's family (*m. 'Ab.* 1:5). Texts speak of specifically assigned persons who locally collect and distribute charity,²⁰⁹ although late texts sometimes also warn against their oppressing the poor by demanding funds from them for the collections (*Lev. Rab.* 30:1). In an act of piety, a second-century Tanna began to support his ex-wife and her blind husband, for whom she was begging alms (e.g., *y. Ketub.* 11:3, §2). Some sages recounted acts of sacrificial charity being rewarded by providence.²¹⁰ Still, some teachers wanted to impose limits on charity (roughly 20 percent beyond tithes) lest one impoverish oneself out of well-intentioned devotion.²¹¹

Greek culture also practiced charity but did not emphasize it to the same extent (cf. *Artem. Oneir.* 3.53), except in the sense that rich benefactors contributed to public works and were requited by honor from the populace.²¹² But while scholars rightly note that Greco-Roman society emphasized charity less than Judaism, this comparison can be overplayed.²¹³ Greeks and Romans did have some means of caring for the poor and of benefaction,²¹⁴ though these never effectively challenged either the exploitation of urban peasants or the personal deprivation of the urban masses. Thus a moralist could praise a man who provided food for the hungry and dowries for girls who could not afford them (*Val. Max.* 4.8.ext. 2).²¹⁵ In a later period, a writer praises Damianus of Ephesus for not only helping repair public buildings but using his wealth to help the poor (*Philost. Vit. soph.* 2.23.605). No less an accepted Greek authority than Homer claimed that strangers and beggars are sent by Zeus and hence one must treat them kindly (*Od.* 6.207–8; 14.57–58). The first-century Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus urged providing charity to support the common good, though a classicist opines that he was “one of the first” to do so.²¹⁶ Later Herodes the Athenian counseled using wealth to help those in need instead of hoarding it.²¹⁷ Wealthy Pliny the Younger emphasized that true generosity involves helping friends without means to repay, not just those who will reciprocate with equivalent gifts (*Ep.* 9.30.1–2)—though, of course, his offhand remarks are less demanding than Luke's Jesus in this regard (Luke 14:12–14).

208. See Dalin, “*Tzedakah*” (emphasizing dignity for the needy).

209. CD XIV, 13–16; *t. B. Qam.* 11:3; *B. Meši'a* 3:9; *Demai* 3:16; cf. Acts 4:35; 6:2–3; the date of the rabbinic practice is unclear (cf. Seccombe, “Organized Charity”).

210. E.g., *Lev. Rab.* 5:4; *Deut. Rab.* 4:8.

211. Hengel, *Property*, 20; cf. *Jeremias, Jerusalem*, 127.

212. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 64; cf. *Ps.-Phoc.* 80; Boer, *Morality*, 34–36; Zuiderhoek, “Sociology.” Boer (*Morality*, 151–78) argues that nothing was done to help the very poor, in contrast to generosity to those in need in the givers' social class.

213. I was guilty of the same overgeneralization in Keener, *Background Commentary*, 61. See, e.g., *Publ. Syr.* 274; *Corn. Nep.* 5 (Cimon), 4.1–2; *Libanius Descr.* 29.3; cf. *Hesiod W.D.* 354 (give to the generous; cf. perhaps *Prov* 11:25; 22:16); Romans also praised those who used their resources to serve the needy instead of profiting from their office (*Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 12.1.7).

214. On which see, e.g., Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving*, 253–77; Hoyt, “Poor in Luke-Acts,” 84–96. Addressing Gentile responses to hunger, Watson, “Collection,” notes patronage (31–33), benefactors (33–40), the corn dole (41–46), and liturgies (46–47); for a comparison with Jewish aid to the poor, see 123–39.

215. Cf. *Sen. E. Controv.* 1.19, 14 for helping needy relatives and 1.1.19 for nonrelatives (here a needy elderly man). An advocate compares his client's generosity to individuals with the benefaction of public works in *Quint. Decl.* 260.13.

216. Lutz, “Musonius,” 30; cf. *Mus. Ruf.* 19, p. 122.24–27. In a contemporary philosopher, see *Sen. Y. Ep. Lucil.* 95.51 (for honorable works of kindness, including sharing bread with the hungry).

217. *Philost. Vit. soph.* 2.1.547 (he functioned as a municipal patron, giving to cities; see 2.1.548–49).

5. Begging (3:2–3)

Although a practiced beggar can sometimes discern who will not give, the disabled man in this passage could not know who might give something. If second-century rabbis preserve reliable historical tradition here, people entering the temple could not expose their wallets to view (*t. Ber.* 7:19).²¹⁸ Temple gates were, however, a common place for begging,²¹⁹ as here (see the discussion above on the Beautiful Gate).

Despite some examples of charity toward the poor, the dominant ethos among the rich was disdain for the poor, whose need seemed endless.²²⁰ Certainly, Luke understood this to be the general view and challenged it accordingly (Luke 14:21–23).²²¹ What in modern times has been labeled “compassion fatigue” may have numbed even the most compassionate, given the boundless need. One scholar comments that 15 percent of urban populations were considered “expendables,” those for whom the rest of society had no use, including beggars, unfamilied widows and orphans, and so forth.²²² In major cities such as Rome, one encountered beggars regularly,²²³ as in many parts of the world today; some places even had colonies of beggars.²²⁴

Ancient Greek ethics demanded kindness toward strangers and beggars, treating them as sent by Zeus (*Hom. Od.* 6.207–8; 14.57–58). Views about them, however, varied widely. Although beggars could be viewed as homeless through the tragedies of war or exile (Tyrtæus 10.3 [*GEF*]), they could be associated with laziness (Hesiod *W.D.* 299ff., 395ff., 496–97) or idleness (Thucyd. 2.40.1).²²⁵ Later Roman law, understandably, forbids begging for employable men (Justin. *Cod.* 11.26.1).²²⁶

Those unaccustomed to a lifestyle of begging considered it shameful or embarrassing.²²⁷ Nevertheless, beggars could not afford to be shy about their need; casting aside any semblance of honor, they had to beg boldly or stay poor (*Hom. Od.* 17.347, 578).²²⁸ The disabled typically had no choice,²²⁹ as is often the case today for recently urbanized disabled people with minimal extended kin support in many Majority World cities. The disabled were susceptible to severe abuse. Thus declaimers presented an outrageous hypothetical situation in which a man rescued discarded children only to cripple them so that he could have them beg and take a percentage of their profits

218. So Barrett, *Acts*, 180, rightly preferring this view to the stricter (and less enforceable) prohibition of wallets there in *m. Ber.* 9:5.

219. E.g., for Cynic philosophers, in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.9 (along with Alexandria’s streets). Their broad colonnades made temples useful places for begging (*Jos. Ag. Ap.* 1.305; perhaps Acts 14:8–9, 13).

220. Jeffers, *World*, 193. Citing Plato *Laws* 936C, Judge, *Athens*, 185, points out that Plato’s ideal state resolved the issue of begging by expelling beggars beyond its territory.

221. Despite the church fathers’ charity ethic, contempt remained (Hahn, “Beggars,” 580, cites Chrys. *Hom. Matt.* 48.6–7).

222. Arlandson, *Women*, 108–9 (more on the “expendables,” 109–12).

223. Hahn, “Beggars,” 580, cites *Hor. Ep.* 1.17.48ff.; *Sen. Y. Vit. beat.* 25.1; *Mart. Epig.* 4.53; 10.5; 12.32; *Juv. Sat.* 3.13ff.; 4.117; 5.6ff.; 14.299ff.

224. Hahn, “Beggars,” 580, citing *Sen. Y. Vit. beat.* 25.1; *Juv. Sat.* 4.117–18. Although beggars often appear alone, as here, they may have sometimes experienced group support (cf. lepers, though not explicitly beggars, in Luke 17:12–13); one source even suggests that they had their own sort of code language (Toner, *Culture*, 141, citing Lucian *Hist.* 22).

225. Hahn, “Beggars,” 579; Reden, “Unemployment,” 112.

226. Hahn, “Beggars,” 580. Unfortunately, probably a quarter of urban populations lacked sufficient employment to sustain themselves, and perhaps 30–40 percent more could not reach subsistence levels (Reden, “Unemployment,” 111).

227. E.g., *Mus. Ruf.* 11, p. 80.19, 21–23; *Hermog. Issues* 50.14–16; Luke 16:3; *Sir* 40:28–30.

228. Alexander expected even his friends to ask boldly (*Plut. Alex.* 39.3–4).

229. E.g., *y. Ketub.* 11:3, §2 (the story concerns a Tanna but is probably Amoraic).

(Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.4.intro).²³⁰ Although people gave them alms, they prayed for them to die and hence receive mercy (10.4.4); but some argued that a maimed beggar's life was preferable to death from exposure (10.4.17).

Cynics were known to be particularly insistent beggars,²³¹ often to others' disdain,²³² although the mendicant lifestyle was hardly limited to their group.²³³ Diogenes the Cynic, known for his wit, reportedly once begged from a stingy person "who was slow to respond; so he said, 'My friend, it's for food that I'm asking, not for funeral expenses'" (Diog. Laert. 6.2.56 [LCL]). To another, who dared Diogenes to persuade him, the Cynic replied that had he the power of persuasion, he would have persuaded the man to hang himself (6.2.59).²³⁴ One Cynic source advocated practicing begging from statues to accustom oneself to being turned down.²³⁵

Begging for alms was viewed as a wretched existence (Artem. *Oneir.* 3.53).²³⁶ Sores and lice helped identify the poorest, and beggars were typically unwashed and their hair uncut.²³⁷ At least in parody, a beggar could even be assaulted by someone from whom he begged alms (Lucian *Tim.* 47). In one story, a sage forces the reluctant people of Ephesus to stone to death a pleading beggar, but fortunately they discover incontrovertible evidence that the beggar was merely a demon in disguise (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.10). (See also comments above on the abuse of the disabled.)

Despite Judaism's heavy emphasis on charity, begging was viewed as unpleasant;²³⁸ some considered it better to die than to beg (Sir 40:28). Although begging probably did not provide a large means of income, rabbis did warn that whoever falsely claimed to be in need would suffer genuine need afterward (late first-century tradition in 'Abot R. Nat. 3 A).²³⁹ In Luke-Acts, Jesus and his agents do not simply treat beggars as continuing recipients of charity but change their condition.²⁴⁰

230. He was envisioned as blinding some, cutting off arms, or breaking feet or legs (Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.4.2–3). Although I knew no cases of deliberate maiming, some of the beggars I met in northern Nigeria reportedly had to share their profits with those who sent them out. Although some beggars may have employed "faking strategies" (Toner, *Culture*, 30, citing the satirist Martial *Epig.* 12.57), in most cities other means of income would be simpler than begging.

231. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22.10; Diogenes *Ep.* 10; Crates *Ep.* 17; Diog. Laert. 6.2.46, 56, 59; 10.119; Lucian *Cynic* 2; cf. Aristippus in Diog. Laert. 2.70, 82. Cf. Liefeld, "Preacher," 246–49; Hock, *Social Context*, 55–56; Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 46–47. For discussion of Cynics, see the excursus at Acts 14:8–10 ("Paul as a Cynic Preacher?").

232. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.9; Diog. Laert. 10.119; Lucian *Fisherman* 42; Diogenes *Ep.* 34; Socrates *Ep.* 1. For one debate about the propriety of Cynic simplicity, see Lucian *Cynic* 1, 2, 4, 11, 17, 19, 20.

233. Cf. also priests of foreign cults, including those of Isis and Cybele (e.g., Babr. 141.1–6; Phaedrus 4.1.4–5; Val. Max. 7.3.8), also often to others' disdain (*Sent. Syr. Men.* 262–77; Lucian *Lucius* 35; Apul. *Metam.* 8.24; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.41). Some early Christian missionaries apparently sought to avoid this model (cf. 3 John 7; Liefeld, "Preacher," 251, 265; Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 9:156).

234. Some ancients argued that it was honorable to beg so long as one chose from whom to do it and one did not do it indiscriminately (Crates *Ep.* 19, 22, 36), but this appears to be a later, domesticated, literary form of Cynicism. Speakers could expect money (*Vit. Aes.* 124) and insult those who refused to give it (*Vit. Aes.* 125–26).

235. Diogenes *Ep.* 11; Diog. Laert. 6.2.49.

236. This text also associates such existence with those who must enter a house of prayer (προσευχή, on which see comments on Acts 1:14).

237. Toner, *Culture*, 132, citing Firm. Mat. 5.3.49.

238. See esp. Sir 40:28–30. It is better to sell everything than to be disgraced by begging (*b. Yebam.* 63b). Dependence on others for food was viewed as terribly difficult (*b. Beṣah* 32b, bar.); better to work on the Sabbath, one insisted hyperbolically (*b. Pesah.* 112a).

239. See also Le Cornu, *Acts*, 177 (adding *m. Pe'ah* 8:9; *t. Pe'ah* 4:14). One could also withhold alms from the wicked (late second- or early third-century tradition in *y. Hag.* 2:1, §11).

240. See Speckman, "Beggars"; cf. idem, "Healing" (applying Acts 3:16 paradigmatically for economic development).

d. Faith in Jesus's Name (3:4–7)

The man is healed because of faith in Jesus's name (Acts 3:16; see also comments there). Peter expresses faith by commanding the healing and lifting the man up; apparently, the healed man also expresses faith by recognizing what has happened and acting accordingly (3:8). Jesus's name is a key issue that recurs throughout this section (3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17–18; cf. 4:30; 5:28, 40–41). This emphasis expressly points beyond Jesus's agents (as in 3:12) to the one who sent them (see Luke 10:16).

I. INVITING ATTENTION (3:4–5)

The disabled man expected to receive something from them²⁴¹ but, ironically, would be receiving something of far greater value than he anticipated.²⁴² Misunderstanding is a motif in some miracle stories (cf., e.g., 2 Kgs 5:5–7; John 5:7; 11:24; Mark 5:39); thus, “when Apollonius stops a funeral procession” before a miracle “the mourners think, ‘He is going to make a speech like the funeral speeches which provoke lamentation’” (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.45).²⁴³

The speaking part here, as most often in Luke's early chapters, belongs especially to Peter. John the apostle has few speaking parts in Acts. In literary terms, he is a flat, secondary character, though his presence pays homage to the knowledge that he played an important role in the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9). His fewer speaking parts could, however, also reflect historical tradition about his personality vis-à-vis Peter's.²⁴⁴

Some scholars emphasize Peter's “fixing his gaze” (ἀτενίσας) on the man (Acts 3:4). Supernatural stares were thought to wield enormous power;²⁴⁵ for example, rabbinic literature is replete with miracles of destruction wrought by sages with supernaturally powerful eyes.²⁴⁶ But Luke often uses the verb (ten times in Acts; twice in the Gospel and in only one other NT passage)²⁴⁷ and might simply refer to the apostles' discernment that the man had faith to be healed (cf. Acts 14:9). Their command to the man, “Look at us!”²⁴⁸ might imply no more than a summons to attention.²⁴⁹

II. WITHOUT SILVER OR GOLD (3:6)

Their lack of silver and gold (3:6a) is significant; it fits Luke's distinctive theology so well (cf. 2:44–45) that Conzelmann thinks that it represents Luke's only addition

241. Although it is not exclusively Lukan, Luke supplies ten of the NT's fifteen uses of προσδοκάω (with 2 Pet 3:12–14 providing three of the others); in the Apostolic Fathers (cf. 1 *Clem.* 23.5; *Ign. Magn.* 9.2; *Pol.* 3.2; *Herm.* 19.3), it is most common in the *Epistle to Diognetus* (4.6; 8.11; 9.2; 12.6). It appears about thirteen times in the LXX, most commonly in 2 Maccabees (7:14; 9:25; 12:44; 15:8, 20). Thus a few authors supply most of the uses, with Luke dominating.

242. For comic irony in Luke-Acts, see Goldingay, “Comic Acts?” On this passage, see Grassi, *Laugh*, 45 (noting that the man is initially disqualified to enter the temple).

243. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 55. For the misunderstanding motif and its literary functions, see at greater length Keener, *John*, 545–46.

244. Even in the Fourth Gospel, the beloved disciple (who may be connected with John; see the argument in Keener, *John*, 84–91) has few speaking parts despite observing and even participating in much of the action (John 13:25; 21:7; cf. 21:20).

245. Cf. Strelan, “Stares”; idem, *Strange Acts*, 38–39. For some ancients using such stares to kill (cf. our modern expression “If looks could kill”), see, e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.2.16–18 (esp. the Illyrians in 7.2.16).

246. E.g., *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:16; 18:5; *b. B. Bat.* 75a; *B. Qam.* 117a; *Šabb.* 33b–34a; *Gen. Rab.* 79:6; less fatally, *b. B. Meši'a* 85a. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 183, cites, in addition to some of these, *b. Sanh.* 100a; *B. Meši'a* 59b; *Ta'an.* 9a; and for one case of healing with the eyes, *b. Šabb.* 33b; for the evil eye, *Gen. Rab.* 45:5; 53:13; *Lev. Rab.* 16:8; *Deut. Rab.* 1:25; *y. Šabb.* 14.3.14c.

247. 2 Cor 3:7, 13; in the Apostolic Fathers, it is found only in 1 *Clement* (7.4; 9.2; 17.2; 19.2; 36.2); it also appears in 1 *Esd* 6:27; 3 *Macc* 2:26.

248. Cf. perhaps gazing on the serpent in Num 21:8–9; but cf. Keener, *John*, 565.

249. Cf. possibly comparable uses of the impv. of βλέπω in Luke 8:18; 21:8; Acts 13:40.

to the tradition in 3:1–10.²⁵⁰ By contrast, what Peter does “give” (3:6, 16)²⁵¹ is greater than what could be bought with money (8:20), a pure “benefaction” from God’s mercy (cf. 4:9).

The phrase “silver and gold” simply means money, “minted coins.”²⁵² Certainly, such a claim exonerates Luke’s apostles here from any comparisons with the widely known danger of greedy charlatans (see comments on Acts 20:33–35). Some pagans, at least by the early second century, thought Christians unlearned and particularly vulnerable to financial exploitation from unscrupulous leaders (Lucian *Peregr.* 13). Particularly relevant in this context, the apostles’ lack of money helps distinguish them from magicians, who accepted pay for their services (cf. Acts 8:20).²⁵³ (For a discussion of signs, see the commentary introduction, ch. 9; for the antimagical apologetic of Acts, see 8:11, 20–24; 13:6, 8.)²⁵⁴

In contrast to begging, admitting a lack of money was not necessarily shameful (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.14). Many ancients respected those who lived ruggedly or simply (see comments on Acts 2:44–45). Some Romans praised the more virtuous days of old, when their leaders eschewed opulence and viewed luxury as scandalous (Val. Max. 2.9.4–5); although such views did little to limit current luxury, they did provide a template for viewing such praiseworthy simplicity as depicted here. Some criticized even the common prayer for money (Lucian *Z. Cat.* 1, noting that the putative gods rarely granted such requests anyway).

Simple living was, however, especially noteworthy in austere leaders or teachers whose lives of simplicity contrasted starkly with others who abused their offices for personal gain. Thus Xenophon favorably compares Socrates’s poverty with Critobulus’s wealth because only the former could be satisfied with what he had (Xen. *Oec.* 2.2–4). The Cynic Epistles cite Socrates as claiming that because he has little money, he will leave something better than money for his children, “namely good friends” (Socrates *Ep.* 6 [*Cyn. Ep.* 237]). Likewise, Plutarch praises Aristides for choosing to remain poor, despite his office, as much as for his military victory (*Arist.* 25.3, 5). Philostratus praises a sophist who, though he could have profited, maintained his shabby cloak and poverty.²⁵⁵ The apostles’ lack of money would contrast them with some greedy Cynics and other itinerants against whom nobler philosophers would contrast themselves (see further comments on Acts 20:33–35).

The combination of traveling simply and performing healings fits particularly the missionary discourses of Luke 9:2–6 and 10:4, 9.²⁵⁶ Leaders, especially, were required to live simply (Luke 12:41–42; Acts 20:33–35); they might oversee funds

250. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 26. Johnson, *Acts*, 65, suggests a possible contrast between the apostles’ simplicity and the temple’s wealth (implied in the “Beautiful” Gate). One cannot make much connection between ὑπάρχει in Acts 3:6 and the noun cognate in 2:45, since the verb appears forty times in Luke-Acts.

251. Cf. Luke 9:1; 10:19; Acts 8:18; with charity, Luke 12:33. But again, the verb appears in Luke-Acts eighty-eight times (thirty-four times in Acts). What one was given, one might also be expected to share (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3.3; Matt 10:8; analogous to Matt 10:8, cf. Torah teachers in *b. Bek.* 29a; *Der. Er. Rab.* 2.4; Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 226; Lachs, *Commentary*, 180; cf. *m. ’Ab.* 1:3; *Sipre Deut.* 48.2.7; *y. Ned.* 4:4).

252. With Barrett, *Acts*, 182 (citing Philo *Unchangeable* 169; *Good Person* 76; *Jos. Ant.* 15.5). On coinage, see, e.g., Betlyon, “Coinage.” On Greek and Roman minting, see, e.g., Kaenel, “Minting”; for Middle Eastern examples, e.g., Klose, “Minting,” esp. (for Jewish examples) 32. On money, see, e.g., Reden, “Money”; Crawford, “Money”; on silver, see Riederer, “Silver”; idem, “Extraction.”

253. Klauck, *Magic*, 21; Reimer, *Miracle*, 139, 246, 252; cf. also Thomas accepting no fees in *Acts Thom.* 20 (Klauck, *Magic*, 22).

254. On “divine men,” see Keener, *John*, 268–72.

255. Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.29.621.

256. Bede *Comm. Acts* 3.6 (Martin, *Acts*, 40) viewed Peter’s lack of silver and gold as reflecting Christ’s command (Matt 10:9); cf. Euseb. *Proof of the Gospel* 3.5 (Martin, *Acts*, 41).

(Acts 4:34–37; 5:2; cf. Luke 12:42), but even this role they quickly relinquished in favor of others who could attend to the needs more fully (Acts 6:2–4). Historically, although Paul acknowledged the right of apostles to support (1 Cor 9:4–14; cf. 1 Tim 5:17–18),²⁵⁷ he sacrificed the right for himself (1 Cor 4:11–12; 9:12, 15).

In the context of the church's giving (Acts 2:44–45; 4:32–35), this account emphasizes that a greater gift than charity is removal of the need for charity; a dependent (carried there daily, 3:2)²⁵⁸ would now have means that would also improve his social status.²⁵⁹ What the apostles here offered was a gift that money could not procure (as in 8:20). Others also contrasted mere money with treasures that money could not procure.²⁶⁰ Thus, when one matron boasted of her jewelry, Cornelia claimed that her sons (the Gracchi) were *her* jewels (Val. Max. 4.4.pref.). Ancients, especially ancient Jewish sages, often compared wisdom to a treasure.²⁶¹

The idea here is one that fits the zeal of many new religious movements but is often quickly lost. Some commentators illustrate this point by referring to a supposed exchange between Thomas Aquinas and Pope Innocent II (applicable to most current Western Protestants and other established religious groups today no less than to medieval Catholics): “You see, Thomas,” said the Pope, “the Church can no longer say, “Silver and gold have I none.” “True, holy father,” said Thomas, “and neither can she now say, “Arise and walk.””²⁶²

III. JESUS'S NAME (3:6)

Jesus's “name” is a key element for this section; it appears repeatedly (Acts 3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17–18, 30; 5:28, 40, 41), as it did in the preceding context, which links its invocation with baptism (2:21, 38; see esp. comments there).²⁶³ But Acts uses “the name of Jesus” in various ways, the connection with the gospel and Jesus being the primary unifying thread.²⁶⁴

By designating the powerful name of Jesus as “Jesus the Nazarene,” Peter not only specifies which Jesus (the name was common enough; cf. Col 4:11) but defies popular expectations of greatness. Being from a great city was to one's honor (see comments on Acts 21:39), but Jesus's followers in Acts are not ashamed of his association with inconspicuous Nazareth (Acts 4:10; 10:38; 26:9; cf. Luke 24:19; see esp. comments on Acts 2:22), nor is Jesus himself (Acts 22:8), despite the animosity of outsiders on this basis (cf. 6:14; also “Nazarenes,” 24:5).

257. It is possible that 1QS VI, 19–20 advocates other members providing support so that one can study all the time (cf. 1QS VI, 6–7; shared with me by Prof. Orval Wintermute, then at Duke University, fall 1987).

258. Beggars often went door-to-door, so that one who was laid at the temple steps was genuinely lame (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 177, citing, for door-to-door begging, *b. Ketub.* 67a; 108b; *Git.* 68b; *Meg.* 15b; *B. Bat.* 9a).

259. Some scholars apply the principle here to issues of socioeconomic development (e.g., Speckman, “Healing”). Luke clearly cares about the economically marginal (e.g., Luke 4:18; 6:20; 7:22; 14:13, 21).

260. Johnson, *Acts*, 65, supplies many examples of various virtues' superiority to wealth in moralists' teachings (Plut. *L. Wealth 1, Mor.* 523D; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.3.5–13; 3.7.19–28; 3.9.15–22; 3.26.34–36).

261. E.g., Ps 19:10; Prov 2:1, 4; 3:14; 7:1; 8:10, 19; 16:16; 20:15; Sir 1:24; 40:25 (cf. 41:14); Wis 7:13–14; 8:5; Col 2:2; the Torah in Ps 119:72, 127; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12:11; *b. Šabb.* 88b. Among Gentiles, cf. Vitruv. *Arch.* 6.pref. 1–2; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.21.

262. Bruce, *Commentary*, 84. Contrary to modern “prosperity teaching” in some Christian circles (a recent innovation not historically connected to healing claims, which more often surrounded ascetics in Christian history, nor even part of Pentecostalism, Curtis, *Faith*, 206; cf. Hedges, “Prosperity Theology”; in Africa, Stabell, “Modernity,” 469), in much of history as recent as the twentieth century, healing powers were more apt to be associated with the sacrificially poor. (Even some prominent modern “faith healers” acknowledged being poor for a period of time; see, e.g., Lindsay, *Lake*, 31–32.)

263. On the importance of the “name” here, see, e.g., Ridderbos, “Speeches of Peter,” 29; Tannehill, *Acts*, 49; Karris, *Invitation*, 49.

264. Ridderbos, “Speeches of Peter,” 29; Ziesler, “Name in Acts.”

Some scholars associate use of the name with magic (see full discussion at Acts 19:13). Practitioners of magic often employed name invocation,²⁶⁵ and magical papyri attest the special proficiency of Jewish magicians who claimed access to the hidden name of God.²⁶⁶ Once a person acquired an “angel’s” name, the person could offer sacrifice and become the angel’s friend,²⁶⁷ and then the angel would do all sorts of magic for him.²⁶⁸

But Luke clearly repudiates this sort of use of Jesus’s name (19:13–20).²⁶⁹ He is not remotely subtle in his antimagical polemic (8:9–11, 19; 13:8–11; 16:16–18), including against magical abuse of Jesus’s name (19:18–19);²⁷⁰ he would hardly risk undermining his apologetic case with this formula if its most obvious interpretation for his audience would be magical. Indeed, Luke’s very emphasis on Christology may provide a deliberate contrast with magic,²⁷¹ and the preceding context links invocation of Jesus’s name with baptism (2:21, 38).²⁷² Whereas magicians invoked many names, the earliest Christians regarded Jesus’s name as “uniquely efficacious”;²⁷³ further, in contrast to secret use in magic, Jesus’s name was publicly and corporately affirmed.²⁷⁴

Some ancient texts report healings produced by invoking a miracle-working name.²⁷⁵ Invoking a deity’s name would bring to bear his power.²⁷⁶ For monotheists such as Christians, this would mean the name of the one God. Jewish sources emphasize the power of the sacred name;²⁷⁷ some people apparently invoked it for healing.²⁷⁸ Those who knew the secret of the divine name could perform miracles, such as using the name to strike someone dead (e.g., *Exod. Rab.* 1:30).²⁷⁹ By calling on God’s name, Moses had his prayers answered (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Deut 9:19). Rabbis may have understood Christian invocation of Jesus’s name along such lines; they spoke of wonder-workers who healed in the name of Jesus or prophesied in the name of a false deity (*m. Sanh.* 11:1, 6).²⁸⁰ Rabbis noted especially one “Jacob” in Galilee for healing in Jesus’s name.²⁸¹

265. PGM 1.160–61, 167, 216–17; 12.316; Lucan *C.W.* 6.732–34; Apul. *Metam.* 2.28. Pulleyn, “Power of Names,” however, doubts that Greek religion attached magical efficacy to name invocation of the gods.

266. For the sacred name of Israel’s God, Incant. Text 20.11–12; 69.6–7; *CIJ* 1:485, §673; 1:486, §674; 1:490, §679; 1:517, §717; 1:523, §724; 2:62–65, §819; 2:90–91, §849; 2:92, §851; 2:217, §1168; *Test. Sol.* 18:15–16; *Pr. Jos.* 9; *b. Git.* 68ab; *Num. Rab.* 16:24; also revelatory texts in Scholem, *Gnosticism*, 32–33. For Jewish support of and opposition to magic, see also sources in Keener, *Spirit*, 29–30n21.

267. PGM 1.168–72. This is probably the patronal rather than the egalitarian sense of “friend” (see discussion at Acts 19:31).

268. PGM 1.172–90.

269. In a later period, by contrast, Christian magical syncretism analogous to Jewish magical usage appeared (see, e.g., Gitler, “Amulets”; cf. Smith, *Magician*, 62–64, despite his anachronistic approach). Of course, many uses of Jewish and Christian divine names were by pagans (Klauck, *Context*, 213).

270. For Luke’s antimagical polemic in general, see, e.g., Garrett, *Demise* (a very useful work); comments on Acts 8; 19.

271. See Marguerat, “Magie, guérison, et parole.”

272. Barrett, *Acts*, 176–77.

273. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 204.

274. *Ibid.*, 205.

275. Bultmann, *Tradition*, 223, cites Mark 9:38; *t. Hul.* 2:21–23; *Jos. Ant.* 8.47 (invoking Solomon’s name); Lucian *Lover of Lies* 10, 12.

276. Hurtado, “Signs,” 50; cf. the appeal to Caesar in Apul. *Metam.* 3.29.

277. See Urbach, *Sages*, 1:124–34, including the divine name (engraved on clubs) used to calm the sea (p. 126, citing *b. B. Bat.* 73a). Later kabbalistic speculation developed thought on the divine name further (Simon, *Sects*, 120).

278. *M. Sanh.* 10:1 notes (and condemns) this use (so Urbach, *Sages*, 1:130; the text mentions both invoking the name and reciting Exod 15:26).

279. Moore, *Judaism*, 1:426. God also performed miracles with his own name (*Pr Man* 4).

280. Bietenhard, “ὄνομα,” 267–68 (citing, e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 177; *Eccl. Rab.* 1:8; Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 1:468); Moore, *Judaism*, 1:378; Bagatti, *Church*, 106–7. For Jesus’s followers allegedly healing in the name of Yeshu ben Pandira, see *t. Hul.* 2:22–23; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:116; Herford, *Christianity*, 103–11; Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 40; Pritz, *Nazarene Christianity*, 96–97.

281. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 188, cites *t. Hul.* 2:22–23; *y. Sabb.* 14.4.14d; *’Abod. Zar.* 2.2.40d–41a; *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 27b.

Use of Jesus's name may evoke calling on the Lord's name, a theme elaborated in the preceding context (Acts 2:21).²⁸² In biblical tradition, God's people had confessed God's name, praying toward the temple (1 Kgs 8:29, 33, 35; 2 Chr 6:20, 24, 26).²⁸³ Those who prayed called on the Lord's name (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:24; Ps 116:4, 13, 17)—that is, called on the Lord himself. In the context of prayer, calling on the deity's name meant addressing him (1 Kgs 18:24–26, 32; 2 Kgs 5:11; Pss 9:2; 18:49); similarly, in 1 Chr 16:2, when David blessed the people in the Lord's name, he apparently was calling on the Lord to bless them. Thus the point may simply be an implicit invocation of the Lord, although the form is directed to a human hearer.

Late first-century Christian sources in the Johannine tradition provide an example of prayer “in Jesus's name” (John 14:13; 15:16; 16:23–24).²⁸⁴ But in what sense did the Fourth Gospel mean such prayer in Jesus's name?²⁸⁵ Praying “in one's name” might evoke praying “on the merits of,” or because of, another's status before the one entreated. Thus the patriarchs had earned Israel favor before God, and they could seek God's favor on account of their ancestors' favor (Exod 32:13; Deut 9:27; 2 Chr 6:16–17).²⁸⁶ Biblical tradition was clear that God answered the prayers of the righteous (e.g., Ps 34:15–18; Prov 15:8, 29; 21:27; 28:9)²⁸⁷ and the repentant (2 Chr 7:14; Neh 1:6) and that God often showed favor to the descendants of the righteous (Deut 9:5). Prayer “in Jesus's name” could mean prayer predicated on his merit alone.

Another proposed background draws on the ancient Mediterranean role of a broker;²⁸⁸ patrons could write letters of recommendation to procure for their clients favors from other members of the elite, and others could use their favor as agents to secure favor as well. For example, a prince in the king's special favor might secure whatever he asked for his friends.²⁸⁹ Thus, in John's Gospel, prayer in Jesus's name (presumably related in some way to Luke's use of Jesus's name) could mean asking “as his representative, while about his business,” just as Jesus came in his Father's name (John 5:43; 10:25).²⁹⁰ This would involve prayer “in keeping with his character and concerns and, indeed, in union with him.”²⁹¹ This usage (“in the name of” meaning “as one's representative”) was common (e.g., as a messenger)²⁹² and fits the Johannine context (14:26; 15:21; cf. 15:26–27). (Later rabbis also spoke of passing on traditions in another's name—that is, on another's authority [e.g., *m. 'Ab. 2:8*].)²⁹³ Such

282. Cf. O'Toole, *Unity of Theology*, 50, on the divine, LXX background for Luke's use of Jesus's name.

283. Some find background for prayer “in Jesus's name” in the biblical tabernacle traditions; one praying in or toward God's house would secure an answer to prayer (cf. Lacomara, “Deuteronomy,” 80; Dowd, “Theology,” 333); but this is probably simply one example of the broader category of calling on God's name.

284. Cf. also Jas 5:14; perhaps Gabriel praying in God's name (1 En. 40:6).

285. I adapt much of this material from Keener, *John*, 947–50.

286. For the efficacy of Abraham's intercessory prayer, see *Test. Ab.* 14:8; 18:10–11 A; 1 Qap Genst XX, 16, 28–29, though many religious figures shared this power (Harrington, “Abraham Traditions,” 171). On ancestral merit, see the excursus on Pauline soteriology in context, at Acts 13:39.

287. Also in early Judaism, e.g., *Let. Aris.* 192; *Pesiq. Rab.* 23:9.

288. See Malina and Rohrbaugh, *John*, 235; deSilva, *Honor*, 97–98, 137.

289. Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.1; cf. *Apoll. K. Tyre* 17. Alexander reportedly encouraged people to ask boldly, depending on his generosity (Plut. *Alex.* 39.3–4; cf. Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 2.21; 3.6). Objects of such favor were always selective; e.g., people might grant any special requests to heroes (Hermog. *Issues* 81.5–23; Libanius *Declam.* 36.13); a ruler invited his teacher to request whatever he wished (*Mus. Ruf.* 8, p. 66.28–29).

290. Sanders, *John*, 324, comparing also Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10; 16:18; also Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:73; Malina and Rohrbaugh, *John*, 247–48.

291. Whitacre, *John*, 355, citing Aug. *Tract. Jn.* 73.3. Augustine also notes that one receives what one asks only if one does not ask wrongly (73.1.1, citing Jas 4:3).

292. As a messenger of God (Deut 18:19–20; 1 En. 10:2) or another (1 Sam 25:9).

293. To speak “in God's name” could, however, mean simply to speak as one loyal to God (*Jos. Asen.* 9:1 in light of *Jos. Asen.* ch. 8; cf. Acts 4:17).

prayer naturally implied desiring the sort of thing that Jesus would desire and hence praying, as best as one knows, according to God's will (cf. 1 John 5:14).

Whatever else may be involved, the idea of a representative is likely prominent. Messengers delivered their messages in the name of the one who sent them (1 Sam 25:5, 9). One could receive someone sent in the sender's name—that is, as their representative (Luke 9:48; Mark 9:37; Matt 18:5). Messengers were “authorized”—that is, they carried the authority of their sender, to the extent that they accurately represented their commission;²⁹⁴ thus, acting in Jesus's name might entail acting in accord with Jesus's revealed purpose, as his agent (cf. Acts 9:34)—that is, by the direction of the Spirit (cf. 16:7).²⁹⁵ The same point may be underlined by the agents in Luke's second volume (Acts) repeating many sample miracles performed by Jesus in the first volume (the Gospel); he continues to work through his agents.²⁹⁶

One could pass on traditions in another's name—that is, citing that person as one's authority.²⁹⁷ One could also speak in this way as another's representative, equivalent to announcing, “Thus says . . .” (1 En. 10:2). Thus the prophets spoke “in the name of the Lord” (Jas 5:10),²⁹⁸ something James mentions in a context where he advocates prayer for the sick “in the name of the Lord” (5:14). Jesus spoke of followers working miracles in his name (Mark 9:39), including exorcisms (9:38–39; cf. 16:17). In Acts also, Jesus's agents teach and preach in his name (Acts 4:18; 5:40; 9:27) and command out demons in his name (16:18; cf. 19:13).²⁹⁹

“In God's name” could signify a representative's acting on God's behalf (Exod 5:23; Deut 18:19–22; Jer 14:14–15), according to his command (Deut 18:5, 7), or by his help (Ps 118:10–11; Prov 18:10) or using his name for a miraculous act (2 Kgs 2:24). That various early Jewish circles could employ “name” as a polite surrogate for pronouncing the divine name also fits this usage.³⁰⁰ In earlier biblical usage, “name” often connoted reputation, so that when God acted “on account of his name,” God defended his honor, a matter readily understood in the ancient Mediterranean world, given its emphasis on honor and shame.³⁰¹ Thus “in the name of Jesus” might mean “on Jesus's behalf” or, most likely, “by the authority and power of Jesus, who

294. E.g., *m. Ber.* 5:5; *t. Ta'an.* 3:2; *b. Naz.* 12b; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.88.2; Diod. Sic. 40.1.1; *Jos. Life* 65, 72–73, 196–98; 2 Macc 1:20; on agents and agency, see (much more fully than here) Keener, *John*, 310–15; Rengstorf, *Apostolate*, passim; idem, “Ἀπόστολος”; Dix, *Ministry*, 228–30; Kirk, “Apostleship.” For envoys of rank, see, e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 18.265; *Pliny Ep.* 10.18.2. Ἀπόστολος was one of the Greek terms for “envoy” (Eder, “Envoys”).

295. Cf. the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:10–16; Phil 2:5).

296. Warrington, “Healing Narratives,” emphasizes Jesus's activity in his agents, doubting that they replicate Jesus's messianic activity; Shelton, “Used to Be?,” counters that the repetition reveals the paradigmatic character of Jesus's healing ministry. Undoubtedly both elements are present: Jesus's charismatic ministry is paradigmatic for the church (through some of its agents); his signs resemble those of Elijah and Elisha instead of being unique. At the same time, their ministry is efficacious because Jesus works through his agents (who are not messianic); see Acts 9:34.

297. See, e.g., *m. Ab.* 2:8; *b. Ber.* 5a.

298. Both true (Deut 18:19) and false (18:20; Jer 14:14–15; 23:25; 27:15; 29:9, 21, 23; Matt 24:5; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8) prophets, since both claimed to speak as God's messengers.

299. The exact phrase “in the name of Jesus” appears only in Acts in the NT (seven times); “the name of Jesus” altogether appears there eleven times (it also appears in Phil 2:10); “the name of the Lord Jesus” appears five times in Acts and two times in Pauline texts. But Jesus uses “in my name” in Markan (Mark 9:37, 39; 13:6), Johannine (John 14:13–14, 26; 15:16; 16:23–26), and other (Mark 16:17) traditions.

300. 1 En. 6:3 (if “Semyaza” means “he sees the Name”); perhaps 1 Chr 13:6 LXX; Jeremias, *Theology*, 10; Longenecker, *Christology*, 43; Bietenhard, “ὄνομα,” 268–69. Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 7, cites *m. Ber.* 4:4; *Yoma* 3:8.

301. Cf., e.g., *Pss* 23:3; 25:11; 31:3; 79:9; 109:21; 143:11; *Isa* 48:9; *Jer* 14:7, 21; *Ezek* 20:9, 14, 22, 44; 36:23; *Mal* 1:11.

authorized us.”³⁰² One more general nuance of Jesus’s name is certain: as baptism in Jesus’s name specified identification with Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5), healing in Jesus’s name (as in 3:6; 4:30) meant healing credited specifically to him (3:16; 4:10; 9:34; cf. 3:12–16; 9:27; 19:13, 17; 21:13). Jesus’s agents acted only for his honor, not for their own.

IV. COMMANDING HEALING (3:6)

The verbal element of miracle working was not uncommon, though often as words of assurance.³⁰³ The gospel tradition already spoke of commanding mountains (Mark 11:23) or, in Luke, a tree (Luke 17:6).³⁰⁴ As God’s representatives, prophets sometimes commanded, speaking by the word of the Lord, and their words were fulfilled (e.g., 2 Kgs 1:10; 2:14, 21–22, 24; 4:43; 5:10). Such commands, though addressed to the object in question, could also function as implicit prayers by reflecting dependence on God (Josh 10:12); when David blessed the people in YHWH’s name (1 Chr 16:2), he was implicitly calling on YHWH to bless them. Such biblical blessings and curses also allowed for “wish-prayers,” words directed grammatically to the subject the speaker desired to help but directed implicitly to God as the one who could make the words efficacious.³⁰⁵ In this case, acting in Jesus’s name means speaking as his agent, authorized on Jesus’s behalf to do what he would do (see comments above on use of Jesus’s “name”).

Occasionally, Jewish tradition could envision efficacious commands. In Jos. *Ant.* 2.287, Moses commanded his rod to become a serpent (contrast Exod 7:9–10);³⁰⁶ some later rabbis claimed that very pious sages could decree events and they would occur.³⁰⁷ Conversely, a sage too audacious in demanding a miracle could be viewed as having profaned the divine name.³⁰⁸ Peter boldly acts on the name, trusting its efficacy and not his own (Acts 3:12). Curing disease with a mere word was unusual, contrasting with most of the popular magicians of the day.³⁰⁹

V. CONTRAST WITH GENTILE ATTEMPTS TO SECURE DIVINE FAVOR

Gentiles often reminded a deity of favors owed, seeking an answer on contractual grounds, as many classical texts attest.³¹⁰ In some cases, Gentiles piled up multiple

302. Witherington, *Acts*, 175. For “name” as equivalent to “power” here, see Marguerat, *Actes*, 119. Busch, “Presence,” connects the use of name with his full presence being deferred till the eschatological time (cf. Acts 3:19–21).

303. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 58–59 (citing Mark 2:5; 5:36; 6:50; 7:29; 9:23; 10:49; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.38; 4.10, 45; 7.38; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 11; *Hymn of Isyllus* in IG 4.128).

304. For speaking to objects in nature as if animate, see, e.g., Iamb. *V.P.* 28.134 (Pythagoras conversing with a river); cf. the prophetic act of symbolism in Ezek 37:4, 7, 9–10. Exorcistic texts also could, in the name of some deity, command wombs to stop “wandering” (Faraone, “New Light”).

305. E.g., *Abot R. Nat.* 8 A; Wiles, *Prayers*, 25–29, 71. Earlier Egyptians also expected their priests—and increasingly in this period, magicians—to bless and curse efficaciously (Frankfurter, “Curses,” noting continuity of practice even to later Coptic monks).

306. Less successfully, the Egyptian false prophet also promised his followers to make the walls of Jerusalem collapse “at his command” (Jos. *Ant.* 20.170), and Theudas promised to command the Jordan to part (20.97).

307. E.g., instant death on a Cuthean (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:16; *Ecl. Rab.* 10:8 §1); cursing people with poverty (*b. Ta’an.* 23b); cursing one with death (outside the rabbis, e.g., *Test. Jud.* 11:3–5), even accidentally (*Gen. Rab.* 74:4 and *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:4, citing Gen 31:32); or, more positively, filling a field with cucumbers (*Abot R. Nat.* 25 A); commanding a field to produce gold dinars (*Exod. Rab.* 52:3). Traditional African culture also attributes supernatural power to words, especially those spoken by a greater to a lesser (Mbiti, *Religions*, 257–58).

308. E.g., *y. Ta’an.* 3:10, §1.

309. Anderson, *Mark*, 97.

310. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.39–41; 10.291–94; *Od.* 1.61–62, 66–67; 4.762–64; 17.240–42; Ap. Rhod. 1.417–19; Virg. *Aen.* 12.778; cf. also Maximus of Tyre, who reports the first *Iliad* example (Max. Tyre 5.2) but rejects

names of the deity they were entreating,³¹¹ apparently hoping that at least one would prove effective.³¹²

Romans were concerned with getting a formula precisely right;³¹³ thus, for example, after praying, a Roman would turn to the right (Plut. *Cam.* 5.7).³¹⁴ Roman magistrates read prayers exactly as they had been handed down through tradition; “if one syllable or one ritual gesture was performed incorrectly, the prayer might well be invalid.”³¹⁵ Even a single mistake could ruin the prayer, functioning like a bad omen (Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.3.11). Any minor lapse in proper protocol required the sacrifice’s or procession’s repetition; in some cases, it could be repeated as many as thirty times (Plut. *Coriol.* 25.3). Thus, for example, when games were marred by something that displeased the gods, a deity might demand in a dream that the games be repeated (Val. Max. 1.7.4).³¹⁶ Too much was at stake to trifle with errors; when a priest’s hat fell off at a sacrifice, he was removed from the priesthood (1.1.5). Although the intelligentsia were typically less impressed with such formulas than the people were (Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.3.10), traditions of past confirmations of such formulas (28.3.12–13; 28.5.29) and punishments on those who failed in them (one struck by lightning in 28.4.14) rendered them more plausible to some.³¹⁷

Jewish ritual was less particular, but correctly implementing the ritual remained important, leading to conflicts between, for example, Pharisees and Sadducees (or the people and high priests) over correct ritual³¹⁸ or various opinions on the dating of the new moon.³¹⁹ (The Sadducees had to accommodate Pharisaic opinion on the matter because of its popular support [Jos. *Ant.* 18.15, 17].) For example, if one errs while reciting the *Tefillah*, it is a bad omen for the reciter and for whoever may have appointed the reciter (*m. Ber.* 5:5). Likewise, anyone apt to mispronounce words was not allowed to lead in prayers (*y. Ber.* 2:3, §3, bar.).³²⁰

its literal plausibility (5.3). Requests were a prominent form of prayer (see Averna, “Suasoria”). Sacrifices elicit divine favor (Libanius *Maxim* 3.4), though pure motives also could count (Libanius *Encomium* 7.4). When sacrifices did not achieve their effect, people might complain that they were in vain (Alciph. *Farm.* 33 [Thallicus to Petraeus], 3.35, ¶1); Zeus was too busy elsewhere (¶2).

311. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.37–38, 451–52; 2.412; PGM 4.2916–27; Cleanthes’s *Hymn to Zeus*; more restrained, *ILS* 190; cf. *Apoc. Zeph.* 6:7; *Apoc. Ab.* 17:8, 13.

312. Burkert, *Religion*, 74.

313. Aune, “Religion,” 919, 923, cites formulas of address such as “whether god or goddess” (Livy 7.26.4; Cic. *Rab. Perd.* 5; Aul. Gel. 2.28.3) or “by whatever name” (Virg. *Aen.* 2.351; 4.576; Catullus [Carm.] 34.21f). Cf. also Versnel, “Prayer,” 1243; Klauck, *Context*, 30; on the efficacy of Roman ritual words, especially Hahn, “Prayers,” 235–39.

314. Romans placed their right hand on their lips and turned around, although the Gauls thought turning to the left was most effective (Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.5.25).

315. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 129; cf. also Hahn, “Prayers,” 235–39; Jeffers, *World*, 90; Aune, “Religion,” 919–20, 923; in the rabbis, cf. *y. Ber.* 1:5, §5.

316. Citing a different case, Toner, *Culture*, 151, notes that spectators, appealing to such breaches, sometimes insisted on restarting the games to prolong their pleasure.

317. Pliny thought that their omens’ effects depended on how people responded to them (*N.H.* 28.4.17).

318. E.g., *m. Sukkah* 4:9; *t. Sukkah* 3:16; *b. Sukkah* 48b; *Yoma* 19b; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 264–65. 4Q276–277 concurs with a Sadducean (dominant priestly) ritual versus that of the Pharisees (*m. Parah* 3:7; so Abegg, “Introduction to 4Q276–277,” 284).

319. On the importance attached to correct sighting of the new moon for dating festivals properly, see, e.g., *m. Roš Haš.* 1:3–5; *Mek. Pisha* 2.1ff., 35ff. (Lauterbach, 1:15, 18); *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 5:1, 13; *b. Roš Haš.* 22b; *Sanh.* 42a; *y. Roš Haš.* 1:4–3:1; *Exod. Rab.* 15:11, 22; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15, preamble; 15:17; note its importance even in texts using a solar calendar (*Jub.* 1:10; 16:1; 1QS X, 3; 1QM II, 4; 11Q5 XXVII, 7). It was celebrated from an early period (Num 29:6; 1 Sam 20:5, 18; 2 Kgs 4:23; 1 Chr 23:31; Neh 10:33) and long past Luke’s period (*Gen. Rab.* 44:14; *Pesiq. Rab.* 1:1–3). Gentiles also celebrated it as a holiday (Theophr. *Char.* 4.12; Pindar *Nem.* 4.35; Porph. *Abst.* 2.16) and used it to define months (Ovid *Fasti* 3.883).

320. A *shaliach* mispronouncing words could bring punishment on the entire congregation (Richardson, *Theology*, 324).

If pagans performed the appropriate rituals or offered even unsolicited gifts, however, they believed that they could remind the deities, expecting reciprocal obligations as in the patronage system and ancient society more generally.³²¹ A central element of many Greek (and some biblical) prayers was “the argument,” appealing either to the petitioner’s deeds or to the deity’s character.³²² If pleas to multiple deities eventually produced no results, however, the supplicants might simply give up (Thucyd. 2.47.4); the goal of most popular religion then (as, in practice, in most cultures) was not assimilation of one’s will to the deity’s (cf. Luke 22:42) but obtaining what one needed from the deity. Sacrifices unheeded were “in vain” (Alciph. *Farm.* 33 [Thalliscus to Petraeus], 3.35, ¶1); the god must be too busy elsewhere (3.35, ¶2; cf. 1 Kgs 18:27).

Lucian parodies prayer;³²³ for example, one might get the gods’ attention if one shouted sufficiently loudly for them to hear.³²⁴ He also notes the contradictory and unjust nature of many human prayers.³²⁵ Lucian ridicules the idea that sacrifices can purchase blessings from the gods, as if the gods sell them.³²⁶ He lampoons Homer’s depiction of Chryses’s complaining to Apollo about his fellow Achaians. Chryses there reminded Apollo that he was Apollo’s benefactor (having offered many sacrifices), and so Apollo began slaying Achaians.³²⁷

Some ancients believed that one should simply ask the gods to send “good things,” leaving the definition of “good things” to them (e.g., Socrates in Xen. *Mem.* 1.3.2).³²⁸ This idea was, however, never dominant; most people prayed to their deities for what they needed.³²⁹ Myths portrayed deities ready to work with such a system; in myths, though, deities also often promised or granted gifts that they regretted, or otherwise granted benefactions that harmed their recipients.³³⁰ Jews and Christians would be more apt to pray for what they thought best, yet trust their God’s discretion in answering.³³¹ A ruler who invited one to ask whatever one wished would be considered particularly benevolent (Suet. *Tit.* 8.2), and the same would be true of deities (cf. John 14:13–14; 1 John 5:14).

VI. STRENGTHENED FEET (3:7)

Clasping by the right hand was typically a sign of agreement or covenant in the ancient world (see comments on Acts 23:19); one also accepted a suppliant by giving him one’s right hand (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.2.1).³³² The idea here is more general,

321. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.39–41; Virg. *Aen.* 12.778; cf. also Aune, “Religion,” 923, for this principle. Some ancients considered unworthy the portrait of deities implied in such prayer (Max. Tyre 5.2–3).

322. Versnel, “Prayer,” 1242.

323. E.g., deities could not help mortals in the face of fate, though “Zeus” claimed that sacrifices were nevertheless appropriate for those greater than mortals (Lucian *Z. Cat.* 7).

324. Lucian *Tim.* 7, 11; cf. 1 Kgs 18:27.

325. Lucian *Icar.* 25–26.

326. Lucian *Sacr.* 2.

327. Lucian *Sacr.* 3, citing from Hom. *Il.* 1.33ff.

328. Also Val. Max. 7.2.ext. 1a; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.11, 33; 4.40; cf. Diogenes in Diog. Laert. 6.2.42. Some opposed petitionary prayer (Max. Tyre 5 passim, e.g., 5.3; cf. 5.8, which misinterprets Plato; see more fully van der Horst, “Maximus van Tyrus”); Seneca the Younger regards as superstitious and primitive the notion that incantations can affect rains (*Nat. Q.* 4.7.3); some regarded all divine decrees as immutable (Hierocles *How Should One Behave toward the Gods?* in Stobaeus *Anth.* 1.3.53, beginning). Other thinkers defended prayer (e.g., Iamblichus *V.P.* 28.137), while limiting its propriety to requests of eternal value (Porph. *Marc.* 12.212–18).

329. See Burkert, *Religion*, 75. Sometimes this was wealth (so Lucian *Z. Cat.* 1).

330. E.g., Eurip. *Bacch.* 90ff., 596–99; Ovid *Metam.* 2.44–102; 3.287–98, 308–9; 11.100–105; 14.129–53; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.4.3; Mart. *Epig.* 12.

331. Thus one should thank God when one’s petition fails as well as when it succeeds (Chrys. *Hom. Gen.* 30.16; Bray, *Corinthians*, 306).

332. In addition to the comments on Acts 23:19, see Keener, “Pillars.” Derrett, *Audience*, 130, suggests that “the left hand, used for lavatory purposes, was inauspicious even after it had been washed.” Positively

though it may imply the connotation of personal kindness (cf. Acts 23:19); the man's hand was stretched out to receive the alms he had requested,³³³ and it may have been the right hand simply because he was, presumably, right-handed. But if the man was not expecting healing, he may have needed Peter's act of faith to motivate him to walk. The element of touch was frequent in healing accounts, especially in the NT.³³⁴ In a later tale, the Amora R. Johanan took an ailing rabbi by the hand and raised him up (*b. Ber. 5b*).³³⁵

The particular terms by which Luke designates feet, ankles, and restoring bones appear in medical literature;³³⁶ but medical language had passed into the vernacular, and its use here probably simply reveals Luke's command of sophisticated Greek.³³⁷ Some scholars argue that the terms Hobart identified as medical here, though found elsewhere, are particularly frequent in medical writers as the more technical terms available for describing these matters;³³⁸ this observation would be consistent with the tradition of a physician's authorship, though any educated Greek could have written it. But the terms used here were quite common in Greek.³³⁹ That the man was healed "immediately" (παρᾶχρημα) reflects Luke's usual vocabulary (sixteen times in Luke-Acts, the only other two NT uses being in Matt 21:19–20).³⁴⁰

Palestinian Jewish Christians expected healing whenever prayers were offered in faith; James writes as if he expects this experience to happen regularly (Jas 5:14–16).³⁴¹ Some other Jewish teachers expected healing in answer to prayer (Sir 38:9) and urged confidence in prayer (*Lev. Rab.* 16:9),³⁴² but this confidence appears considerably more pervasive, on the whole, in what religion scholars might call the revivalistic experience of earliest Christianity.³⁴³

e. Public Attention to the Healing (3:8–10)

As in Acts 2:6–8 and often in Acts, signs draw attention to the message to be proclaimed (see, e.g., 4:29–30; 14:3). Miracle accounts typically delighted in emphasizing physical demonstrations of deliverance (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 8.48). As Theissen puts

contagious touch could be envisioned (as in a common version of the Midas story, though Max. Tyre 5.1 has just prayer).

333. With Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 279.

334. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 62 (giving examples with respect to resuscitation, Mark 5:41; Luke 7:14; Acts 9:40; cf. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.45; Ovid *Fasti* 6.753–54). Occasionally touch from a foot (Plut. *Pyrr.* 3.7–9) could be said to accomplish healings (Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 62).

335. With characteristically Amoraic theology, he did so only after the other rabbi preferred to be rid of his suffering despite its promised reward in the world to come.

336. Hobart, *Medical Language*, 34–35.

337. Cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 33; Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 36; Haenchen, *Acts*, 200; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 105; see further comments on authorship in the commentary introduction, ch. 11. Parsons, *Body*, 112–13, notes that physiognomic literature links strong feet and ankles with strong character.

338. Carter and Earle, *Acts*, 51.

339. Parsons, *Body*, 111, remarks that the *TLG* includes more than 1,600 uses of βάσις; he notes (112) more than 100 for σφυρόν (cf. here σφυδρόν).

340. Other early Christian uses appear in *Barn.* 12.7; *Mart. Pol.* 13.1; of the roughly sixteen LXX uses, more than one-third appear in a single work (2 Macc 4:34, 38; 5:18; 7:4; 10:22; 11:36). Luke also uses εὐθύς and εὐθέως (twenty-two times, including thirteen times in Acts), but this is not distinctive (as is well known, Mark uses these terms more than forty times).

341. See discussion in Thomas, *Deliverance*, 36–37; Davids, *James*, 192–97; McKnight, *James*, 434–48. They recognized, however, that it did not occur on every occasion (e.g., Phil 2:26–27; 2 Tim 4:20).

342. Prayer assurances also appear outside Israel, e.g., "The Instruction of Ani" (*ANET* 420). Some rabbis taught that the matriarchs were barren so that God could answer prayer (*b. Yebam.* 64a; *Gen. Rab.* 45:4; cf. 60:13).

343. Di Lella, "Health," connects healing in Tobit (of Sarah and Tobit) with doing good, hence with Deuteronomic expectation. Luke's focus is on the evangelistic sign function of healing.

it: “In healings the newly acquired physical power is demonstrated by activity: the man who had been sick serves (Mk 1.31), carries his bed (Mk 2.12; Jn 5.9; Lucian, *Philops.* 11), or a stone (Epidauros, 15), can walk and follow (Mk 5.42; 10.52; Plut. *Cor.* 13 . . .). The girl who has come back to life eats (Mk 5.42) and utters sounds (*vita Apoll.* iv, 45).”³⁴⁴

Like other miracle accounts emphasizing demonstrations, Luke mentions “walking” four times in Acts 3:6–8 and mentions it again in 3:12, suggesting that this demonstration is emphatic.³⁴⁵ Luke is further emphatic by describing the healing with the term *παρὰρῆμα*, which he often attaches to miracles (Luke 1:64; 4:39; 5:25; 8:44, 47, 55; 13:13; 18:43).³⁴⁶ Luke also notes that the man was “leaping,” just as the formerly lame man leaped up in 14:10; outside these two references, the NT nowhere uses the term (except in a very different sense at John 4:14). Luke probably employs this term to allude to the messianic-era promise in Isa 35:6 (easily the closest parallel among the seven LXX uses of the term), as nearly all commentators recognize.³⁴⁷ Because Luke earlier alludes to this text in Luke 7:22, he emphasizes that the blessings of the promised messianic era have begun, foreshadowing Peter’s impending speech (Acts 3:24).³⁴⁸ If the lame were forbidden to enter the temple (see discussion on Acts 3:2–3, above), Luke’s indication that the man entered the temple courts proper is significant.

We may also learn from Luke’s depiction of the people’s response in 3:9–10. That “the people” recognized him (cf. John 9:8–9) suggests that this is not a festival but the usual temple constituency in Jerusalem, the local population.³⁴⁹ The audience is, however, symbolically larger: “all the people” may symbolically represent Israel,³⁵⁰ suiting the invitation to Israel in Acts 3:25–26.

A disabled person might use a walking stick (Lysias *Or.* 24.12, §169), or his affliction might be otherwise visibly evident (24.14, §169). The disability noted in Acts 3 is even more serious; the lame man had to be “carried” to the temple (Acts 3:2); lame from his mother’s womb, his legs were probably visibly useless (3:7; cf. Prov 26:7). But ultimately people recognized him by sight, perhaps aided by his shabby begging clothes and even more by his current jubilation at being able to walk.

That they were “filled” (*ἐπλήσθησαν*) with wonder may be a typically Lukan way of wording their amazement (Luke uses *πίμπλημι* twenty-two times out of a total twenty-four times in the NT). Amazement is, however, a characteristic response to

344. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 66.

345. Dunn, *Acts*, 41. With the events of Acts 3:7–8, van der Horst (“Macrobius,” 225) compares Macrobius *Sat.* 1.2.4. Parsons, *Body*, 119–21, notes that slow walking connotes dignity but that this man displays enthusiasm instead; given the circumstances, of course, we can hardly expect otherwise, whether for him or for the crowd that runs together in Acts 3:11. In most cultures, a person dramatically and suddenly healed expresses excitement (e.g., an Indian report in “Power of Prayer,” 21).

346. Apart from the two occurrences in Matt 21:19–20, all NT uses appear in Luke-Acts (sixteen times); Acts applies it especially to judgment miracles, Acts 5:10; 12:23; 13:11; 16:26. Healings as signs of the messianic era might be “immediate,” but the consummation of the kingdom would not be (Luke 19:11).

347. E.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 200; Bruce, *Commentary*, 85; Tannehill, *Acts*, 52–53; Crowe, *Acts*, 20; Dunn, *Acts*, 41; Witherington, *Acts*, 176; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 189; Gaventa, *Acts*, 85; Marguerat, *Actes*, 120; Parsons, *Acts*, 58; Pervo, *Acts*, 101; Peterson, *Acts*, 166–67. “Leaping” for joy appears in Luke 1:41, 44; 6:23; and elsewhere (e.g., LXX Ps 113[114]:4, 6; Jer 27[50]:11; Mal 3:20; Wis 19:9; 1 En. 51:4; Jos. *Ant.* 5.193; Libanius *Narration* 8; *Speech in Character* 17.1).

348. Tannehill, *Acts*, 52–53; cf. Parsons, “Character”; Marshall, “Acts,” 544.

349. Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 4.81, where the blind Alexandrian healed through Vespasian was “well known” for his blindness; cf. also John 9:8. Naturally, such recognition amplifies the public effect of a miracle; cf., e.g., the miracle reports in the *Natal Mercury* in 1922 in Hickson, *Heal*, 122; from Guatemala, February 20, 1953, in Osborn and Osborn, *Evangelism*, 1:944.

350. Gaventa, *Acts*, 85.

miracles in the NT (Theissen lists more than twenty references).³⁵¹ Parallels outside the NT are much less common than one would expect; examples are far more common in Christian miracle stories or other miracle stories late enough to depend on them. The isolated pre-Christian examples are not frequent enough in the many miracle stories to constitute a motif.³⁵² Human nature being what it is, however, we would expect such amazement whether or not it was a motif to report it.³⁵³

Some scholars suggest a lapse of time between the healing before the hour of prayer and the preaching (which they place afterward),³⁵⁴ but such a delay would probably lose the momentum of the event. In this narrative, Peter did not deliberately draw the initial crowd but began preaching only when he saw their reaction.³⁵⁵

f. Running Together at Solomon's Portico (3:11)

Temples following Greek architectural models had porches (e.g., Polyb. 4.67.3), where people could gather protected from sun and inclement weather. Colonnades displayed a city's wealth or a benefactor's gifts, starting at least as early as Herod the Great in Antioch.³⁵⁶ After the NT period, wealthy donors even built a long porch (στοά) from Ephesus to the temple of Artemis, a stadion in length, to prevent worshipers from avoiding the temple during rains (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.23.605). Public speakers often lectured in temples, which were major public buildings.³⁵⁷

The use of Solomon's Portico (Acts 3:11; 5:12) undoubtedly was part of primitive Christian tradition, independently attested (as a location of Jesus's activity and early Christian interest) in John 10:23.³⁵⁸ Greek public buildings regularly included such porches, which philosophers and others employed for activities such as public lectures; covered on top and shielded on one side by the building to which they might be attached and somewhat on the other by pillars, they provided shade and shelter, as noted above. On the southern end of the massive outer court of the temple lay the Royal Portico (or Porch); the eastern colonnade was called Solomon's Portico. Whereas the Royal Portico had four rows of pillars, Solomon's Portico along the eastern wall of the Court of the Gentiles had, like the other sides, two rows of pillars.

A long outdoor hallway supported by pillars, Solomon's Portico was on the east of a pre-Herodian structure considered Solomon's, which overlooked the steep Kidron Valley (Jos. *Ant.* 20.221; *War* 5.185).³⁵⁹ Because the eastern colonnade's masonry was pre-Herodian, people assumed that it derived from the time of Solomon (*War*

351. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 69. The particular term *θάμβος* is exclusively Lukan in the NT (Luke 4:36; 5:9; though six times in LXX); Luke usually uses *ἐκστάσις* for a visionary state (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17) but can also use it for astonishment (Luke 5:26; as in Mark 5:42; 16:8, the other two NT uses; but about twenty-six times in the LXX).

352. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 70 (citing Lucian *Lover of Lies* 12; *Disowned* 5; Apul. *Metam.* 10.13; P.Oxy. 10.1242; PGM 4.2454–55).

353. In popular accounts of miracles in various nations today, cf., e.g., celebration at the healings of the lame that is reported in Green, *Thirty Years*, 104; Chavda, *Miracle*, 12–13, 146; Dunkerley, *Healing Evangelism*, 18 (explicitly compared with Acts 3); various examples cited in Keener, *Miracles*, ch. 12. In research for that book, I found statements of amazement commonly accompanying miracles (not recording all of them in the book); in many cases, however, one might safely assume its occurrence even without its specific mention.

354. Dunn, *Acts*, 44.

355. Witherington, *Acts*, 179.

356. See McRay, *Archaeology*, 39.

357. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.17; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.2; see comments on Acts 2:46.

358. The LXX employs the term *στοά* for the temple (1 Kgs 6:33; Ezek 40:18; 42:3, 5), but the LXX would not by itself provide information on "Solomon's" portico. Some other scholars have also noticed the connection between John and Acts here (e.g., Anderson, "Worship").

359. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 37; cf. Thompson, *Archaeology*, 337; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 279.

5.184–85; *Ant.* 15.397–400; 20.221).³⁶⁰ The putative connection with Solomon, builder of the original temple (Acts 7:47), may have helped play into an eschatology emphasizing the temple’s restoration even if the believers chose the site for its utility.

These “temple precincts across the Court of the Gentiles” were “some way from the sanctuary entrance.”³⁶¹ Whether Luke studied the temple sufficiently during his time in Jerusalem to visualize such aspects of its topography, and whether he could expect some older Jewish members of his ideal audience to be able to visualize it, we cannot say.³⁶² What is clear at least is that Luke wants to indicate that he has authentic historical tradition and wants his audience to share at least some of the setting of these events, rooted in Israel’s history. Teaching in temples was common; see comments on Acts 2:46.

The gathering of “the people” in the temple may also remind the ideal reader of the work’s first such gathering, during Zechariah’s prayer (Luke 1:10, 21), when God also acted dramatically for his plan of redeeming Israel, or Jesus’s teaching there (19:47–48; 20:1, 6, 9, 19, 26; 21:38).

The “running together” of “the people” here in a good way (cf. Mark 6:33) contrasts with the temple crowd during Paul’s later visit to the temple—when “the people” “run together” to lynch him (Acts 21:30).³⁶³ Running was counted as undignified for particularly honorable people,³⁶⁴ though allowed for extraordinary circumstances (Luke 15:20) such as these.³⁶⁵ People might even “run together” to hear a famous teacher.³⁶⁶

2. Call for Israel’s Repentance and Salvation (3:12–26)

Throughout Acts, signs are the most abundant means of drawing attention to the gospel (see the commentary introduction, ch. 9, and esp. ch. 15, sect. 6.b.i)³⁶⁷ and hence are inseparable from proclamation.³⁶⁸ The audience’s attention so secured in Acts 3:1–11, Peter preaches his message. This passage offers a restoration of Israel’s kingdom if Israel, which has rejected its king, will now turn and receive him.

a. Introduction

Before examining the speech’s details, it will be helpful to summarize its message, arguments concerning its “authenticity,” and the nature of its rhetoric.

I. MESSAGE

Peter emphasizes that the blessings to Israel (3:26) promised to patriarchs and prophets are now available through the Messiah, whom his people have rejected.

360. E.g., Brown, *John*, 1:402; see further Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 37.

361. Witherington, *Acts*, 178–79. It was, however, accessible from there (see Dunn, *Acts*, 40). Luke’s language is probably general; otherwise (as Pervo, *Acts*, 101, emphasizes), his topography is precise only in the probably later (and corrected) Western text.

362. See Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 37.

363. The verb συντρέχω can appear in joyful (Jdt 6:16; 13:13; 15:12), sorrowful (Jdt 14:3; 2 Macc 3:19; 6:11), virtuous (Ign. *Eph.* 3.2; 4.1; *Magn.* 7.2; *Pol.* 6.1), and sinful (Ps 50:18 [49:18 LXX]; 1 Pet 4:4; 1 *Clem.* 35.8; *Barn.* 4.2) settings.

364. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.52 (noting [32.54] that one’s gait in walking reveals one’s character); cf. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, xv; Jeremias, *Parables*, 130; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 150; esp. Parsons, *Body*, 119–20.

365. E.g., tragedy to a loved one (*Apoll. K. Tyre* 25); meeting a king (*b. Ber.* 58a); reuniting with a loved one (Gen 33:4; Tob 11:9–10; Luke 15:20; *Appian Hist. rom.* 2.5.3; see further Hock, “Novel,” 140).

366. E.g., y. *B. Meši’a* 2:11, §1; *Hor.* 3:4, §4.

367. Keener, *Acts*, 1:320–82, 542–44.

368. For one application of this observation, see Campbell, “Ministry,” 43–44 (noting that twentieth-century evangelicals, liberals, and Pentecostals often separated word, deed, and power).

Although their rejection of their rightful ruler comes close to the beginning of Peter's message (3:13–14), as in his Pentecost message (2:23), in both instances the message is introduced and occasioned by divine activity revealing God's presence with Israel (2:16–21; 3:12), and the bulk of the message argues for Jesus's identity and Israel's proper response. Luke includes many points (especially about the promises to Israel) here that do not appear in the Pentecost speech, and vice versa, providing through different speeches samples of early Christian preaching to Israel and scriptural apologetic summarized in Luke 24:44.³⁶⁹ When speaking about Israel's rejection, we should keep in mind that Luke's own narrative in the Gospel is actually more nuanced; in fact, Jesus was quite popular especially in Galilee. But given biblical promises about Israel as a whole turning to God, a mere remnant, no matter how large, was insufficient to fulfill God's restoration promises. Rejection by Israel thus means not that all Jesus's people rejected him but that many did so, in Luke's passion narrative indeed repudiating him in a particularly forceful way (Luke 23:13–24).

Because Israel has rejected its king, it must now repent and embrace this king to receive the promised kingdom blessings (Acts 3:25–26). Peter's—and apparently Luke's—view is that ultimately Israel will accept its king, ushering in the eschatological era. The delay in obedience, meanwhile, leads to a delay of the promised end and so provides the time in which the Gentile mission will be carried out (a view similar to that of Paul in Rom 11).

Nevertheless, though Jesus is an authority figure here (Acts 3:15) and has already never introduced as king (2:36), this speech's christological focus lies elsewhere. Jesus is the promised and expected one who would inaugurate the promised eschatological blessings. The controlling christological title is “servant,” as indicated by the inclusio of 3:13 and 26; in light of other clues, this is almost certainly the servant of Isaiah. In light of this title, “righteous one” (3:14) probably recalls Isaiah's “servant” as well (Isa 53:11).³⁷⁰ (Clearly, Luke does associate Jesus with Isaiah's servant [Acts 8:32–33].)³⁷¹ (On the nature of “servants” more generally, see the excursus at Acts 12:13; but the sense here is much more specific.)

Among the distinctive features introduced to the theology of Luke's speeches by this passage, scholars often emphasize the prophet-like-Moses Christology evident here (3:22).³⁷² Zehnle points out parallels between Peter's preaching about Jesus here and Stephen's portrayal of Moses in Acts 7:³⁷³

1. In “orthodox” Christian literature before the end of the second century C.E., only Acts 3:22 and 7:37 cite Deut 18:15.³⁷⁴

369. For how this speech fits Luke's larger strategies, including in Luke 4:16–30, see, e.g., Neiryneck, “Luke 4,16–30,” 378–79. Buttica, “Actes 3,” proposes connections with the narrative (Acts 3:1–11) and Luke-Acts more widely.

370. With many, e.g., Watson, “Faith,” 156–57. Doble, *Paradox* (e.g., 158), argues that Jesus, as the “righteous one,” at his death (Luke 23:47) evokes Wis 2, hence implying that Jesus's death was “a faithful response to God's call.” I do find this language in the passion narrative, though I have seen language from Wisdom of Solomon more clearly in Matthew (Keener, *Matthew*, 682).

371. Presumably Luke would read Isa 53:12 as implying Jesus's resurrection, although he nowhere cites it clearly.

372. E.g., Hamm, “Acts 3:12–26.”

373. Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 76–77.

374. This means explicit citations; clearly, allusions appear elsewhere, including in John 1:21, 25; 6:14; 7:40 (though the Johannine references represent outsiders' inadequate Christology). Cf. also possibly “hear him” at Luke 9:35; Mark 9:7; Matt 17:5 (see, e.g., Mauser, *Christ in Wilderness*, 114; Davies, *Sermon*, 24; Longenecker, *Christology*, 36; Young, *Jewish Theologian*, 211), which appears in the context of a larger Moses allusion in the transfiguration.

2. Exodus 3:6, quoted in Acts 7:32, is alluded to in Acts 3:13 (cf. Mark 12:26; Matt 22:32; Luke 20:37).³⁷⁵
3. Whereas ἀρνέομαι appears for Jesus in Acts 3:14 and Moses in 7:35, it appears nowhere else in Luke-Acts.³⁷⁶
4. Similar titles apply to both: Jesus is δίκαιος and ἀρχηγός (3:14–15), and Moses is ἄρχων καὶ δικαστής (7:27, 35).
5. Moses’s return in 7:34–37 parallels Jesus’s return in 3:20–21.
6. Moses-Jesus parallels are absent from the rest of Acts.³⁷⁷
7. The language of the covenant appears in 3:25 and 7:2–8, 17.³⁷⁸

In support of this pattern, he notes also the clear Moses-Jesus parallel in Acts 7 (a strong argument) and adds the possibility that 3:20’s προκεχειρισμένον (cf. also 22:14; 26:16) reflects a Mosaic parallel³⁷⁹ (unfortunately a very weak argument).³⁸⁰ Deuteronomy 18 suggests a prophet patterned after Moses, and the primary connection in Acts is that both were rejected.³⁸¹

Borgman suggests parallels in Peter’s preaching to Israel (Acts 2:14–39; 3:12–26; 4:8–12);³⁸² I asterisk in the following table the parallels that are most significant, where I believe they can be defended in at least two columns:

	2:14–39	3:12–26	4:8–12
*Resurrection	You killed God raised	You killed God raised	You killed God raised
Authority#	Let Israel know certainly	Heed him	Salvation only in him
*Repentance	Repent, be baptized	Repent, turn to God	(Failure to repent rejects Israel’s cornerstone)
*Forgiveness	So your sins may be forgiven	So your sins may be wiped out	(No repentance, hence no forgiveness)
Holy Spirit†	Spirit poured out explains disciples’ behavior (2:15–17)	Why do you attribute the healing to our own power? (3:12)	By what power . . . ? Peter, filled with the Spirit (4:7–8)
“Punch line”	Know with certainty; repent	Listen to him! Repent	(Not listening rejects the cornerstone)

#This could better be viewed, in two cases, as an appeal to Christology.

† In this section, the Spirit is mentioned in a speech (as opposed to a surrounding narrative) only in Acts 2, not in Acts 3–4.

Although some of the “parallels” require too much inference or association, the explicit connections are clearest regarding Jesus’s resurrection, the call to repentance, and the promise of forgiveness. Borgman rightly points out that this pattern reflects Jesus’s own last-words speech (Luke 24:46–47);³⁸³ as in these speeches, this is evident regarding resurrection, repentance, and forgiveness. It is especially conspicuous regarding repentance and forgiveness, which Jesus specified to preach in 24:47, starting in Jerusalem, a commission that Peter is here carrying out. We should also add the “witnesses” of 24:48 (see Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32).

375. The OT source can be only Exod 3:6, 15; 4:5, all of which are part of Moses’s call narrative.

376. But cf. the emphasis on repudiation in Luke 19:14, 27 (noted by Tannehill, *Luke*, 161).

377. This is part of his argument for the pre-Lukan character of the motif in Acts 3. Acts does not focus on Jesus as much as Luke’s Gospel does, but the parallel is not entirely absent; still, it is predominant especially here and in Acts 7.

378. This is really an Abrahamic parallel, a point on which the text itself is clear (Acts 3:25; 7:8).

379. Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 77–78.

380. The LXX employs the exact term only at 2 Macc 3:7; 8:9; 14:12; Dan 3:22.

381. Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 78.

382. Borgman, *Way*, 279.

383. *Ibid.*, 277.

II. AUTHENTICITY

Many scholars have argued for early tradition in this speech, sometimes in contrast with Acts 2. Not all the proposed arguments are of equal weight, but they merit mention. Zehnle, who finds far more marks of Lukan composition in Acts 2, offers the following non-Lukan (hence pre-Lukan) characteristics of Acts 3:12–26:

1. Elements of forgiveness terminology
 - a. especially ἐξαλειφθῆναι³⁸⁴ (3:19)
 - b. and ἐν τῷ ἀποστρέφειν³⁸⁵ (3:26)
2. End-time terminology
 - a. Καίροὶ ἀναψύξεως³⁸⁶ (3:20)
 - b. Χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως³⁸⁷ (3:21)
3. In contrast with Acts 2, it is not highly polished³⁸⁸
4. Jewish motifs without traces of later Christian theological developments³⁸⁹

He also suggests that Luke sometimes adopts the style of the source at times instead of restating it.³⁹⁰ But verbal cognates (e.g., for “restoration”) and other points of contact between this speech and other passages in Luke-Acts (mentioned below and at those other passages) warn us against reading too much into early Christian hapax legomena. Modern reconstructions of what Christologies are most “primitive” (as opposed to the more objective category of “distinctive”) also often depend on a modern view of the evolution of Christology in the early church that contradicts some of our explicit early evidence.³⁹¹ Many elements of Christology here do, indeed, seem early and based on tradition, of course; I also believe that the distinctive elements do suggest early tradition. The necessity of Israel’s repentance prior to the end appears often enough in the prophets and occasionally in the NT; but it is rare for Luke, and this may suggest tradition about emphases of the primitive church.³⁹² But even this fits into Luke’s overall schema (see comments on Acts 1:6–8). Although I believe that this passage betrays signs of Luke’s knowledge about distinctive emphases of the (probably primitive) Jerusalem church, I do not believe that all distinctive elements should weigh as heavily for the argument as they are sometimes counted. Whatever his sources, Luke avails himself of the opportunity to expand, in Peter’s second sermon, elements of the salvation-historical theology and Christology introduced in the first.³⁹³

John A. T. Robinson argues that “prophet” and “servant” in Acts 3 are more primitive than “Lord” and “Christ” in Acts 2, as is also its futurist (as opposed to Acts 2’s

384. In extant early Christian texts, elsewhere only in *1 Clem.* 18.2 (quoting Ps 51); *2 Clem.* 13.1 (Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 56). By contrast, “forgiveness of sins” here is common Lukan terminology, but it is hardly limited to him.

385. Zehnle claims that this is unique in early Christian literature (*Pentecost Discourse*, 57).

386. It appears nowhere else in the NT, and in the LXX only at Exod 8:11 (Symmachus adds Isa 32:15 but is too late; Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 57).

387. Only the verb form is found elsewhere in the NT (the relevant examples are Matt 17:11; Mark 9:12; Acts 1:6; Luke omits the Markan example; Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 58).

388. Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 60.

389. *Ibid.*, 134–35. Luke at least wishes his material to seem primitive, and his attempt at least reflects his knowledge of the community’s primitive traditions (137).

390. *Ibid.*, 59.

391. See, e.g., Keener, *John*, 298–310; cf. Witherington, *Story*.

392. See, e.g., Parker, “Apokatastasis,” 31. The eschatology of Acts 3:19–21 does not seem to be Lukan in emphasis (though compatible; cf. Acts 1:6–7; Luke 21:28) (cf. discussion in Hahn, “Überlieferungen,” esp. 148–51).

393. Cf. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:158. Pervo, *Dating*, 335–36; *idem*, *Acts*, 103, argues against primitive christological titles in Acts 3.

mainly realized) eschatology.³⁹⁴ He goes too far, however, in seeing Jesus as only Christ-designate until his return from heaven.³⁹⁵ (He answers the objection from Jesus's Christ title in the context, 3:18, by arguing that it is an interpolation;³⁹⁶ it is circular reasoning, however, to select what is early in the sermon only on the basis of what fits one's thesis about what should be early.) Dunn likewise argues for early tradition in this sermon, especially on the basis of its "primitive" Christology³⁹⁷ and its role for Israel:

1. Jesus is *παῖς* only here (3:13, 26) in the NT (Dunn claims).
2. Jesus is the Holy and Righteous One (3:14), which is *rare* in the NT.
3. Jesus is *ἀρχηγός* (3:15; 5:31), a title that elsewhere appears only in Heb 2:10; 12:2.
4. There are ancient motifs of God restoring Israel (Acts 3:19–21).
5. The new Moses of Deut 18:18 is not widespread in the NT, which generally considers a mere prophet Christology inadequate.³⁹⁸
6. The covenant blessing for the nations starts with Israel (Acts 3:24–26; Gen 22:18).³⁹⁹

Although I concur (for reasons given in the commentary introduction, chs. 3–7) that Luke has access to—and hence, like a good historian, uses—early tradition, not all of the above arguments prove effective in support of that claim. First, Jesus does appear as *παῖς* at least occasionally elsewhere, even if we count only the clear examples of the title and not Isaiah allusions (Matt 12:18), and this appearance includes in Luke's writings (Acts 4:25–30; cf. Israel and David in Luke 1:54, 69).⁴⁰⁰ Second, titles of "holy" and "righteous" are not rare in Luke's style (Luke 4:34; Acts 7:52; 22:14). Third, one wonders whether a title attested in Hebrews, a Hellenistic Jewish document, is necessarily primitive; in contrast to the expectation that rare terms are early, terms can be rare because they are late and had not had the opportunity to spread throughout early Christianity, whereas early terms could be widespread because of their antiquity.

On the fourth and sixth points, expecting Israel's restoration is part of how Luke consistently characterizes the first apostles in these chapters (Acts 1:6). Although this depiction no doubt reflects genuine knowledge of primitive Christian expectations, by itself it does not demonstrate knowledge of a particular speech's content; it could be explained by Luke writing speeches in character (see the commentary

394. Robinson, "Primitive Christology"; idem, *Studies*, 150; cf. Cullmann, *Peter*, 66; Witherington, *Acts*, 153; Marguerat, *Actes*, 125. Somewhat persuasively, "his" Christ appears more primitive than "the" Christ (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 37; Semitic usage in 1 Sam 2:10; 12:3–5; 22:51; Pss 2:2; 18:50; 20:6; 28:8; Isa 45:1; Sir 46:19; 1 En. 48:10; 52:4; 4Q377 1 II, 5; Pss. Sol. 18:5; Rev 11:15; 12:10; but cf. Acts 4:26; Luke 2:26).

395. Robinson, *Studies*, 144; idem, *Coming*, 144.

396. Robinson, *Coming*, 145. Granted, Christ's suffering is Lukan language, but it is also the language of other early Christian teachers (e.g., Mark 8:31; 9:12; Heb 2:18; 5:8; 9:26; 13:12), including the Petrine tradition (1 Pet 2:19–23; 3:18; 4:1). Excising parts of the speech that do not fit one's thesis does not disprove one's thesis, but it suggests that one may also not grant its falsifiability.

397. Cf. Robinson, *Studies*, 46: "In Acts 3.12–16, we have a speech which . . . preserves extremely primitive material, and indeed reflects a Christological outlook as primitive as any other in the New Testament."

398. Aune, *Prophecy*, 155, particularly notes that this is not a notable Lukan emphasis.

399. Dunn, *Acts*, 42–43.

400. O'Toole, "Servant," sees "servant" as an important Lukan motif. Marshall, "Acts," 545, notes that although the title appears in the Apostolic Fathers (cf. 1 Clem. 59.2–4; Did. 9.2–3; 10.2–3; Mart. Pol. 14.1, 3; 20.2; Diogn. 8.9, 11; 9.1), it appears there without apparent connection with Isaiah (though cf. Barn. 5.14–6.1; perhaps 9.2 with Isa 50:2).

introduction, ch. 8, sect. 2.b)⁴⁰¹ without knowledge of this specific speech's content. Finally, the prophet-like-Moses (or prophet-greater-than-Moses) Christology appears also in John and Matthew,⁴⁰² which are hardly the earliest NT works (though they are thoroughly Jewish).⁴⁰³

These qualifications weaken the argument but do not necessarily attenuate it beyond helpfulness. That Luke does report various christological titles in Acts, some more in earlier sections, suggests that he did not try to conform all the speeches to a single standard despite the various ways he connects them together. He wished to portray distinctively the earliest Jerusalem church and apparently had some early tradition that allowed him to highlight such distinctions while nevertheless weaving a literary unity throughout the speeches. Likewise, although some of the proposed translations back into Aramaic seem convincing, for the most part Luke is probably "archaizing," using the LXX.⁴⁰⁴

III. RHETORIC

This speech is mostly deliberative rhetoric, calling for a change in behavior (3:19, 26).⁴⁰⁵ Peter's speech has tangled syntax and ideas without clear connections, but the syntactic disjunctions may result from compressing too much.⁴⁰⁶ Apparently, Luke knew some early Christian preaching, but in compressing the material so much, he may depend on his audience's awareness of the same material if he expects them to follow. Satterthwaite suggests the following structure and notes how unusual it is:

1. Proem (3:12)
2. Proposition (God glorified his Son, 3:13a)
3. Demonstration (3:13b–16)
4. Peroration (3:17–21)
5. Conclusion, which functions as a new proposition (3:20b–21: Jesus fulfills prophecy)
6. Further demonstration (3:22–24)
7. Peroration (3:25–26)

He suggests that it may be unusual because Luke wanted "to give an impression of something exuberant, spontaneous, and impassioned, which would naturally tend towards a loose structure."⁴⁰⁷ Luke would certainly not expect Peter to follow standards of Greco-Roman rhetoric, nor expect Acts' audience to anticipate this competence of Peter. Possibly the repetition of the basic structure is meant to suggest that Peter's speech, going on for some time (cf. 2:40), repeated various elements, especially with a likely growing crowd. The elaborate chiasmus in the equally spontaneous speech in 2:22–36 indicates that Luke himself was careful with structure, however, and none

401. Keener, *Acts*, 1:284–86.

402. See esp. Allison, *Moses*; Glasson, *Moses*.

403. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 26–27, while allowing the (untestable) possibility that Luke could have used prior tradition identifying Jesus as the new Moses, contends that Luke has constructed this Christology in its present form in Acts. We cannot be certain; although the parallels may fit Luke's interests elsewhere, those could derive from tradition as well.

404. Johnson, *Acts*, 72–73.

405. On the deliberative rhetoric, see Haraguchi, "Call for Repentance." See further the commentary introduction, ch. 8.

406. Johnson, *Acts*, 72–73. Contrast the suggestion of literary chiasmus in Acts 3:12–16 (Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:36), which would be editorial.

407. Satterthwaite, "Acts," 359.

of the above explanations for the unusual structure here fully explain why Peter's earlier sermon is structured so differently. This difference apparently stems either from sources of a different nature or from Luke's simply allowing varied models to make different points.

b. Not by Our Power or Devoutness (3:12)

That Peter here teaches in the temple (more explicitly than in 2:14–40; cf. also 2:42, 46) indicates that he continues Jesus's ministry there (Luke 20:2).⁴⁰⁸ It is not impossible that Peter's address, "men," here could signify his preaching further in the interior of the temple (Acts 3:8) and hence deriving converts only from the Court of Israel, not including women (cf. ἀριθμὸς τῶν ἀνδρῶν in 4:4). This is, however, a familiar Lukan (and ancient) form of address (see comments on Acts 2:14), and so it is unlikely that we should limit the converts to the males explicitly mentioned (4:4). "Israelites" fits the theological message to Israel (3:19–21, 26) but also the setting in Jerusalem, whether the speaker is Peter (2:22), Gamaliel (5:35), or Paul's accusers (21:28); Paul also applied the term to Diaspora Jews (13:16).

Peter begins his sermon by correcting a misunderstanding of a miracle, as he did in 2:14–15.⁴⁰⁹ Here Peter disclaims being the cause of the healing.⁴¹⁰ Some scholars suggest that by Luke's discounting their own power or piety as the cause of healing, Luke contrasts them with "divine men" like Simon (8:10) or later Apollonius (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.18; 8.5, 7).⁴¹¹ The "divine man," in its best-known form (as in stories of Apollonius), is a later construct, but particular elements of this portrayal already existed in wonder-workers in the first century.⁴¹² Since many of these wonder-workers (when not viewed benevolently) were understood as sorcerers,⁴¹³ this passage may function as antimagical apologetic; Luke elsewhere (Acts 8:7–13, 18–24; 19:11–20) applies such contrasts to distinguish early Christian miracles from sorcery, which was often feared (see comments on Acts 8:9–11). Paul and Barnabas offer the same disclaimer (14:15).

One may contrast also some circles of Jewish tradition. Honi would draw a circle and refuse to step outside it till God sent rain, so that God, honoring Honi's confidence and piety, would grant the request.⁴¹⁴ It was later said of Levi ben Sisi that God drove off marauders in response to his piety (but responded less enthusiastically to a less pious disciple).⁴¹⁵ A holy man had power to make things happen, because he was holy.⁴¹⁶ Some Jewish people, however, had concerns about misplaced faith. According to Josephus, Moses even rewrote his own disappearance from the earth to avoid people's attributing his ascension to his great virtue (*Jos. Ant.* 4.326).

Pagans, too, linked piety with spiritual power. Romans believed that their sacrifices could expiate the gods (*Val. Max.* 1.1.16) and that their continued worship could

408. With Crowe, *Acts*, 26. On teaching in temples, see comments on Acts 2:46.

409. Barrett, *Acts*, 188.

410. John Cassian *On the Incarnation of the Lord against Nestorius* 7.19 (Martin, *Acts*, 40) suggests that the apostles never treated the power as if it came from themselves but always gave credit to Christ, who gave the power. Some modern healing evangelists have also offered such disclaimers (Kuhlman, *Miracles*, 15–16), although the utility of such claims as analogies is mitigated by likely dependence on the biblical tradition.

411. Witherington, *Acts*, 179.

412. See, e.g., the discussion in Keener, *John*, 268–72, following, e.g., Tiede, *Figure*; Holladay, *Theios aner*, passim.

413. Barrett, *Acts*, 200, specifies antimagical apologetic in contrast to divine men as background.

414. See discussion in the commentary introduction, ch. 9, sect. 3.d (Keener, *Acts*, 1:338–41). *'Abot R. Nat.* 9 A applies the circle-drawing to Moses's intercession for Miriam.

415. *Y. Ta'an.* 3:8, §2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:18.

416. *Y. Ta'an.* 3:11, §4; cf. *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 18a (on R. Meir); *Me'il.* 17b (R. Simeon ben Yohai); *Sukkah* 28a (Jonathan ben Uzziel). Cf. *b. B. Meši'a* 86a in Neusner, *Sat.* 77–78, where signs are recorded to glorify Rabbah bar Nahmani.

even make the gods embarrassed to continue in anger against Rome (1.1.15). They could speak of those who merited answers to prayer (Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.10). Even the few who opposed petitionary prayer (see comments on Acts 3:6) believed that deities favored those who merited their favor (Max. Tyre 5.3).

Luke is not opposing either piety or power; he elsewhere employs εὐσεβ- terminology only for non-Christian religious devotion but portrays it as positive and potentially a prelude for Christian faith (Acts 10:2, 7; 17:23). In addition to more general connections between piety and power noted above, Luke's audience would be familiar with εὐσεβ- language; piety toward the divine was one of the highest values of pagan society (Men. Rhet. 2.1–2, 368.17–20).⁴¹⁷ Greek-speaking Jews also portray it as a central virtue.⁴¹⁸ "Power" appears in Luke-Acts in connection with healings and miracles (Luke 4:36; 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 9:1; Acts 4:7; 6:8; 10:38),⁴¹⁹ but the power comes from God, not from God's agents (cf. Luke 9:1; 24:49; Acts 1:8; 10:38).

Peter asks why his hearers marvel. It should not surprise us that ancient texts sometimes report people's amazement as a typical response to miracles, other supernatural activity (*Sib. Or.* 1.32), unusual behavior (Mus. Ruf. frg. 39, p. 136.10, 14), or greatness (P.Lond. 1912.8–9). Astonishing and unnatural events were called "wonders" (θαύματα).⁴²⁰ Hearers could marvel (θαυμάζω) when hearing about them.⁴²¹ Just as Luke probably borrows "signs and wonders" from the exodus story (cf. Acts 7:36; Exod 7:3; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:3; 34:11), he might interpret the language of "marveling" in light of the same source (Acts 7:31, reflecting the idea of Exod 3:3; cf. Exod 3:20); his most immediate source, however, is likely gospel tradition (compare, e.g., Luke 8:25 with Matt 8:27).⁴²² Yet Peter here treats their amazement as inappropriate, considering the truth that God had raised up the Prince of life (Acts 3:12–15).

c. God Glorified His Rejected Servant Jesus (3:13)

Scholars generally recognize as the speech's proposition the premise that the God of Israel had acted in history again to resurrect Jesus.⁴²³ A full πρόθεσις, or statement of the case, should also preview arguments that will be used in the proof,⁴²⁴ but this is too much to expect of Luke's mere speech summary here.⁴²⁵

I. THE ANCESTRAL DEITY

Pagans could describe a local deity as "god[dess] of our fathers"⁴²⁶ or speak of the "gods of our ancestors,"⁴²⁷ but the Jewish expression was much more familiar in Jewish

417. For the importance of εὐσεβεία in Greek religion, see Burkert, *Religion*, 272–74.

418. E.g., *Test. Iss.* 7:6 (*OTP* 1:804)/7:5 (Charles, 115). In various forms, it became a common Jewish name (e.g., *CIJ* 1:79, §113; 1:80, §114; 1:260, §§330–31; 1:261, §332).

419. The term employed for "miracles," δυνάμεις, presupposes the connection, as "acts of power" (Grundmann, "δύναμαι/δύναμις," 301).

420. E.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 8.12–13, 15; 14.4.

421. Philost. *Hrk.* 9.4.

422. Luke employs the verb θαυμάζω eighteen times, more than any other individual NT writer (even proportionate to size; though Matthew has more than Acts, Luke's Gospel more than compensates), though only about 40 percent of the total. It is also frequent in the Apostolic Fathers (thirteen times) and the LXX (fifty-seven times if we include 4 Maccabees [1:11; 6:11; 8:5; 9:26; 17:16–17; 18:3]). The verb for "gazing" recalls 3:4 (see Gaiser, *Healing*, 216).

423. E.g., Satterthwaite, "Acts," 359.

424. Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 17.

425. For further discussion of speech propositions, see comments on Acts 1:8.

426. Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 1.11.

427. Virg. *Aen.* 9.247; Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 96.26, 30; Quint. Curt. 4.10.34. See in more detail Parker, "Patrooi theoi"; in the ancient Near East, cf. Gordon, *Near East*, 130; Carpenter, "Deuteronomy," 442. Malina and

circles than the pagan expression in pagan ones. “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” was a familiar Jewish expression, derived from the biblical revelation to Moses (Exod 3:6, 15–16; 4:5; 6:3).⁴²⁸ It continues to appear in early Jewish sources.⁴²⁹ This title appears in the regularly prayed Eighteen Benedictions and hence would have been one of the most familiar titles of God in early Judaism.⁴³⁰

A specific passage is, however, likely Luke’s source here. Apart from their mention in Luke 13:28, these patriarchs appear in Luke-Acts only in connection with “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” in explicit allusions to the burning-bush passage (Luke 20:37; Acts 7:32).⁴³¹ The informed reader of Luke-Acts would recall that Jesus uses this very phrase from Exod 3:6 to affirm the doctrine of resurrection (Luke 20:37).⁴³² Luke probably therefore expects the informed reader to presuppose that argument here: the God who demonstrated his faithfulness to the patriarchs in the exodus would also raise them from the dead and had now demonstrated his power by raising Jesus as a foretaste of the resurrection of God’s people.⁴³³ But the Spirit acts as Jesus’s executive power,⁴³⁴ in this case through Jesus’s “name” (see extended comments on Acts 3:6).

II. THE GLORIFIED SERVANT

The term *παῖς* itself can mean either “child”⁴³⁵ or “servant.”⁴³⁶ Because the context is pregnant with biblical allusions, however, the usual OT, especially Isaianic, sense should be given preference; Jesus is God’s “servant.”⁴³⁷ At least some in the Qumran community called the Teacher of Righteousness God’s “servant” (4Q171 1–2 III, 15–16).⁴³⁸ Most scholars, however, rightly find the direct background here in Isaiah’s servant, who both suffers (as here) and is also “glorified” (Isa 52:13 LXX).⁴³⁹ Some have disputed this

Pilch, *Acts*, 187–88, compare ancestor veneration in many societies (a frequent subject in anthropological literature), but the connection appears rather tenuous.

428. Cf. also Gen 28:13; 31:42; 1 Kgs 18:36; 1 Chr 29:18; 2 Chr 30:6. If the repetition of “God” with the name of each patriarch is original (textual evidence is divided), it would, though traditional, produce rhetorical effect; the repetition might suggest *synonymia* (cf. Rowe, “Style,” 133; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 580), and rhetoricians might also see epitheton (cf. Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 580) here. Regardless of the variant, care must be taken in translating the expression here into some languages to retain its monotheistic sense (Wade, “Gods”). Mention of “Abraham” may also prepare for Acts 3:25.

429. E.g., *Jub.* 27:22; 29:4; 44:5; 45:3; 4Q393 4 5 (probably); *Philo Dreams* 1.3, 159; *Abr.* 51; *Mos.* 1.76; *Mek. Pisha* 1.23–27; *b. Ber.* 16b; *Gen. Rab.* 82:3; *Test. Mos.* 3:9. The title also appears with individual patriarchs, e.g., “the god of our father Jacob” (*Test. Dan* 1:9, most MSS). Other nations also addressed the gods of their ancestors (e.g., *Virg. Aen.* 9.247).

430. Cf. also Bruce, *Acts*¹, 107. For discussion of the dating of this prayer, see comments above on Acts 3:1.

431. “Glorified” might relate to the glory of the angel of the Lord in the burning-bush passage; but Luke omits that feature of the passage (cf. Acts 7:2, 35, 38), and some other sources for “glorified” are likelier.

432. See similar ancient Jewish arguments in *y. Ber.* 2:2, §9; Lachs, *Commentary*, 361; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:233; Keener, *Matthew*, 528–29; for various arguments for the resurrection from the Pentateuch, see *Sipre Deut.* 306.28.3; 329.2.1; *b. Sanh.* 90b; *Gen. Rab.* 20:10; for the patriarchs’ continuing life, *Philo Abr.* 50–55 in Downing, “Resurrection”; 4 *Macc* 7:18–19; 16:25.

433. Reference to the God who acted in a strikingly new way in the exodus may also help explain the title “pioneer of life” in Acts 3:15.

434. Turner, *Power*, 303.

435. E.g., *CIJ* 1:369–70, §505; Char. *Chaer.* 3.5.4; Acts 20:12.

436. E.g., *Test. Ab.* 17:18 A; 18:3 A. Theon *Progymn.* 5.104–6 understandably warns against the term’s potential ambiguity.

437. With, e.g., Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 28.

438. The Qumran scrolls apply the language and perhaps the image to the Teacher of Righteousness (see Brownlee, “Messianic Motifs,” 18–20; Dupont-Sommer, *Writings*, 361–63). This title is not based on the text being explained (Ps 37:23–26), but it is possible that the Qumran use for the Teacher and for the priestly messiah reflect Isaiah’s “servant” (Betz, “Servant”). Brownlee, “Servant,” applies it to the community as the “saints” of Daniel (though cf. Reider, “MSHTY”); others also apply it to the community (Tängberg, “Justification”).

439. Cullmann, *Peter*, 66; Ridderbos, “Speeches of Peter,” 23; Haenchen, *Acts*, 205; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 107; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 28; Bock, *Proclamation*, 188–89; Dunn, *Acts*, 44–45; cf. Abbott, *Acts*, 53; Morris, *Cross in*

connection,⁴⁴⁰ but the “glorifying” of the servant here undoubtedly alludes to Isaiah (53:12; cf. 49:3), as does the servant’s “anointing” in Acts 4:27 (cf. 10:38; Luke 4:18; Isa 61:1). Given the Isaianic background, Cullmann even has some reason for his claim, overstated as it is, that the title lies at “the heart of New Testament Christology.”⁴⁴¹

Luke is aware that the title “servant” applies to Israel (Luke 1:54)⁴⁴² as well as that the title applies to Jesus’s agents (implicitly, Acts 13:47). But the text of Isaiah itself would offer clues pointing in various directions. Isaiah’s “servant” is clearly Israel (Isa 41:8; 44:1, 21; 49:3); but Israel fails to fulfill the servant calling (42:18–19), and one within Israel brings the rest of Israel back to God (49:5–7; 53:5–6). Although Israel suffers justly for its sins (40:2), this remnant “servant” suffers in Israel’s place, though innocent (53:4–12, esp. 53:9).⁴⁴³ This portrayal of God’s perfect agent, who would both save Israel and bring light to the Gentiles (42:6; 49:6; 52:15), lent itself most naturally to the retroactive, early Christian interpretation of Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

“Servant” was normally not a title of high honor (see comments on slavery at Acts 12:13), but “servant of God” was different. The Hebrew Bible and later Jewish tradition regularly call the Israelite prophets “slaves of God,”⁴⁴⁴ also applying the title to David,⁴⁴⁵ Moses,⁴⁴⁶ the patriarchs,⁴⁴⁷ and Israel as a whole;⁴⁴⁸ other ancient

New Testament, 141; Ladd, *Theology*, 330–31. Because the title applies to Jesus mostly in early strata of the NT (Jeremias in Zimmerli and Jeremias, *Servant*, 93), there is good reason to trace the usage to Jesus himself (with, e.g., Schweizer, “Son of Man Again,” 257).

440. Jones, “‘Servant’ in Luke-Acts,” 158–59, who doubts that Luke borrows the title from Isaiah in part because he also applies it to David (Luke 1:69; Acts 4:25; for Israel in Luke 1:54; for Jesus in Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30).

441. Cullmann, *Christology*, 51.

442. Some scholars would so apply it exclusively (e.g., Berger and Wyschogrod, *Jewish Christianity*, 48); others recognize corporate personality in these chapters (Bright, *History*, 358–59; Robinson, *Personality*, 40ff.; Cullmann, *Christology*, 55; cf. Hooker, *Servant*, 44; Kaiser, *Theology*, 215); one suggestion limits it in “Second Isaiah” to Jerusalem (Wilshire, “Servant-City,” 367). For Israel, cf. also, e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 12:6; 17:23. Some argue that Qumran sectarians identified more with the justified than with the servant in Isa 53 (Tångberg, “Justification”), viewing the servant as their righteous Teacher (Betz, “Servant”); some argue that the individual use attested at Qumran paved the way for messianic use (Elgvin, “Interpretation”). Further, the title’s background need not be limited to Isaiah; e.g., David is God’s “servant” (Luke 1:69; Acts 4:25), as often in biblical sources (2 Sam 3:18; 7:5, 8, 26; 1 Kgs 3:6; 8:25, 66; 11:13, 32, 34, 36, 38; 14:8; 2 Kgs 8:19; 1 Chr 17:4, 7, 24; 2 Chr 6:15–17, 42; *Pss* 78:70; 89:3, 20; 132:10; 144:10; Isa 37:35; Jer 33:21–22, 26; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; 1 Macc 4:30). If Isaiah’s usage dominates in Acts 3:13, the Davidic “servant” might predominate in 4:25, 27, 30.

443. Cf., e.g., discussion in LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Survey*, 310–12 (citing also Clines, *Approach*); differently, yet recognizing both individual (the prophet) and corporate (Israel) elements, see Robinson, *Personality*, 39–42. Other views include “what Israel must become” (McKenzie, *Isaiah*, lv); the prophet himself (Whybray, *Isaiah*, 171; perhaps written by a disciple of the prophet, Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 355–56); both God’s people and a special servant (Oswalt, *Isaiah* 1–39, 51–52; cf. Jesus in idem, *Isaiah* 40–66, 408); for a survey of interpretations, see, e.g., McKenzie, *Isaiah*, xlii–lv; for bibliography, Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 408–10.

444. E.g., 2 Kgs 9:7, 36; 10:10; 14:25; 17:13, 23; 21:10; 24:2; Ezra 9:11; Isa 20:3; Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Dan 3:28; 6:20; 9:6, 10; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6; cf. *’Abot R. Nat.* 37, §95 B; later also, e.g., Qur’an 43:59; 66:10.

445. E.g., 2 Sam 3:18; 7:5, 8, 19–21, 25–29; 1 Kgs 3:6; 8:24–26, 66; 11:13, 32, 34, 36, 38; 14:8; 2 Kgs 8:19; 19:34; 20:6; 1 Chr 17:4, 7, 17–19, 23–27; 2 Chr 6:15–21, 42; *Pss* 78:70; 89:3, 20; 132:10; 144:10; Isa 37:35; Jer 33:21–22, 26; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; cf. *’Abot R. Nat.* 43, §121 B.

446. E.g., Exod 14:31; Num 12:7–8; Deut 34:5; Josh 1:1–2, 7, 13, 15; 8:31, 33; 9:24; 11:12, 15; 12:6; 13:8; 14:7; 18:7; 22:2, 4–5; 1 Kgs 8:53, 56; 2 Kgs 18:12; 21:8; 1 Chr 6:49; 2 Chr 1:3; 24:6, 9; Neh 1:7–8; 9:14; 10:29; *Ps* 105:26; Dan 9:11; Mal 4:4; cf. 4Q378 22 2; *L.A.B.* 30:2, *famulum*; *’Abot R. Nat.* 43, §121 B. Teeple, *Prophet*, 63, cites *b. Soṭah* 14a.

447. *Cf.* Gen 26:24; Exod 32:13; Deut 9:27; *Pss* 105:6; 2 Macc 1:2; *Jub.* 31:25; 45:3; *Test. Ab.* 9:4 A; 2 *Bar.* 4:4; *’Abot R. Nat.* 43, §121 B.

448. Lev 25:42, 55; Deut 32:43; Isa 41:8–9; 42:1, 19; 43:10; 44:1–2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3; Jer 30:10; 46:27–28; Ezek 28:25; 37:25; 2 *Bar.* 44:4; *t. B. Qam.* 7:5; *’Abot R. Nat.* 43, §121 B; *Gen. Rab.* 96 NV; *y. Qidd.* 1:2, §24; *cf.* Tob 4:14 mss.

hearers would have also received the image of being God’s slave as one of great honor.⁴⁴⁹

Various early Jewish sources naturally called the “Messiah,” among others, God’s servant. Thus the warrior Messiah in *2 Bar.* 70:9 is God’s “servant,” though the title is hardly exclusive to him.⁴⁵⁰ What is more surprising is that some early Jewish sources, and especially later rabbinic sources, applied Isaiah’s servant image to the Messiah, although not, so far as we know, to a suffering one.⁴⁵¹ Among eighteen persons called “servant” in the Hebrew Bible, some rabbis identified the Messiah as one, citing *Isa* 42:1;⁴⁵² others identified the Messiah as the servant in 49:8–13;⁴⁵³ and a targumic tradition even identifies the Messiah as the servant in 52:13–53:12, while reserving the descriptions of suffering for Israel.⁴⁵⁴ Because the Targum strongly rewords this section, many scholars suspect anti-Christian polemic at work.⁴⁵⁵ Some others suggest that the targumic identification of the servant in 52:13–53:12 as a triumphant Messiah was a logical inference from Jewish hermeneutics.⁴⁵⁶ Whatever one’s conclusions, there is but one possible pre-Christian source for the language of Luke (and other early Christians) that was indisputably in wide circulation among his audience before he wrote: Isaiah itself.⁴⁵⁷

David Moessner has noted a number of echoes of Isaiah’s servant in Peter’s sermon in Acts 3 (especially in the explicit mentions of the servant in 3:13, 26). Some are stronger than others, but the overall case seems firm:⁴⁵⁸

Acts 3	Isaiah’s Servant
δοξάζω, 3:13	<i>Isa</i> 49:3, 5; 52:13
παραδίδωμι, 3:13	<i>Isa</i> 53:6, 12
δίκαιος, 3:14	<i>Isa</i> 53:11
μάρτυς, 3:15 (apostles)	<i>Isa</i> 43:9–12
διαθήκη, 3:25	<i>Isa</i> 42:6; 49:6, 8
διατίθημι, 3:25	<i>Isa</i> 61:8*

*Although it appears only twice in Luke-Acts (several more times in Hebrews), it appears eighty-five times in the LXX, making this a weaker argument. The other parallel Moessner cites (the use of *πρωτοῦς* in *Isa* 53:9, without verbal parallel in Acts 3) is weaker still.

449. Inscription in Grant, *Religion*, 122; Martin, *Slavery*, xiv–xvi (citing Soph. *Oed. tyr.* 410; Plato *Phaedo* 85B; Apul. *Metam.* 11.15; inscriptions), 46, 49 (against, e.g., Beare, *Philippians*, 50); cf. Rom 1:1 (cf. Minear, *Images*, 156). Slaves of rulers exercised high status (e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.19.19; 4.7.23; inscriptions in Sherk, *Empire*, 89–90; Deissmann, *Light*, 325ff. passim; P.Oxy. 3312.99–100 in Horsley, *Documents*, 3:7–9; Suet. *Gramm.* 21 [in Dixon, *Mother*, 19]; cf. Char. *Chaer.* 5.2.2).

450. The title applies to Baruch (*2 Bar.* 48:11; 54:6) and to Abraham (4:4). Other texts also apply servant language to others, e.g., Job (*Test. Job* 37:8).

451. Schoeps, *Paul*, 134–35, 139; Jeremias in Zimmerli and Jeremias, *Servant*, 57ff.; Kelly, *Peter*, 126. Houtman, “Lijdende,” suggests that the relation of the Aramaic to the Hebrew led to a triumphant Messiah here. Santala, “Messiah,” does find ancient Jewish application to a suffering Messiah. It is possible that Sir 1:6 applies the imagery of *Isa* 53:1–2 LXX to Wisdom, but Prov 8:1 is more probable as the background.

452. *Abot R. Nat.* 43, §121 B. Rabbi Simlai saw Isaiah’s servant as Moses (*b. Soṭah* 14a, in Davies, *Gospel and Land*, 60).

453. *Pesiq. Rab.* 31:10.

454. Koch, “Messias,” thinks that the Targum is simply silent about the Messiah’s death but that it might be inferred at *Isa* 53:12. We may dismiss the relevance of the medieval Kabbalah tradition (in, e.g., Ginsburg, *Kabbalah*, 141–42), which drew also on Christian Gnosticism.

455. Jeremias in Zimmerli and Jeremias, *Servant*, 70–71. The section was probably omitted from the haftarah for polemical reasons (Bruce, *Acts*, 193, following Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 544).

456. *Ādna*, “Herrens.” Some believe that these methods would also naturally coalesce the servant and the Son of Man (Doeve, *Hermeneutics*, 147–48).

457. Later church fathers regularly construed *Isa* 52–53 messianically (e.g., *1 Clem.* 16.3–14; Justin *Dial.* 13, 43).

458. Moessner, “Script,” 228.

For Luke (in contrast to John; cf. John 12:23–24; 13:31–32; 14:1–5), the “glorification” specifically indicates exaltation rather than atonement.⁴⁵⁹ It may apply directly to praising God for the miracle (Acts 4:21; cf. Luke 2:20; 5:26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15, 18; 18:43)⁴⁶⁰ but also alludes naturally to Jesus’s resurrection (Luke 24:21) and return (9:26; 21:27), both addressed later in the sermon (esp. Acts 3:15, also God’s response to Jesus’s execution; 3:19–21).⁴⁶¹

“Glory” involves especially honor here (for revelatory or eschatological glory, see comments on Acts 9:3).⁴⁶² Δόξα often meant honor; “glorifying” God meant honoring him. When applied to humans, it could refer to reputation;⁴⁶³ some thinkers warned that such reputation depended on human whims and was not worth much effort.⁴⁶⁴ Although many thought that the pursuit of honor would lead to noble exploits,⁴⁶⁵ some others regarded love of glory, or its excess, as something to be avoided.⁴⁶⁶

Jewish texts speak of “honor” or “glory” for those who did exploits⁴⁶⁷ or of bringing honor to their nation.⁴⁶⁸ Other Jewish texts praised those who would not concern themselves with human glory⁴⁶⁹ and noted that God would shame those presently honored.⁴⁷⁰ God “glorified” or honored his people, vindicating them.⁴⁷¹ Thus Jewish thinkers, like some Greek and Roman thinkers, emphasized the importance of transcending concern for honor. Early Christian writers also adopted this virtue of seeking only divine commendation (Rom 2:29; 1 Cor 4:3; 2 Cor 3:1; 1 Thess 2:6). Whatever might be said of human honor, ultimately all true honor belonged to God.

Many associated God’s “glory” also with God’s revelation (see comments on Acts 9:3). In this passage, “glorification” involves honor and may also imply God’s revelation. In the context of Isa 52:13 LXX, early Christians could interpret it in light of the servant’s suffering and hence in light of Jesus’s passion, which inverted the world’s values of honor and shame (cf. Luke 14:11).

459. With, e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 28; cf. Jones, “‘Servant’ in Luke-Acts,” 158–59.

460. So Haenchen, *Acts*, 205 (the miracle, not the resurrection).

461. Cf. the association of “glory” with resurrection in Paul (Rom 6:4; 8:18, 21, 30; 9:23; 1 Cor 15:40–41, 43; Phil 3:21; Col 3:4; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:10; cf. 1 Tim 3:16).

462. I draw here from Keener, *John*, 410, 885–86.

463. Reputation was considered important enough to form a basis for praise in an encomium; Theon *Progymn.* 9.18; cf. Plut. *Themist.* 1.1; *Demosth.* 12.1; Eunapius *Lives* 465. Alexander reportedly craved praise (Arrian *Alex.* 7.28.1). Some appreciated reputation but warned that it invited trouble (Babr. 4.7).

464. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 66; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 123.16; cf. also Porph. *Marc.* 15.253 (where, however, the term bears the common nuance of “opinion,” as in, e.g., 17.284; Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 76.30). Human mortality also relativized the value of glory (Diog. Laert. 5.40, citing Theophrastus), and reputation invited trouble (Babr. 4.6–8). Cic. *Fam.* 10.12.5 insists on true honor, that which benefits the state (also *Fam.* 15.4.13).

465. E.g., Xen. *Hiero* 7.3; Cic. *Sest.* 48.102; Val. Max. 2.8.5; 5.7.ext. 4; 7.2.ext. 1b; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.20; Dion. Hal. *Epid.* 7.291; Philost. *Hrk.* 23.23; 45.8; cf. Pliny *Ep.* 3.16.6; 5.8.1–2; 5.11.2; 9.3.1–2; Lucian *Dial. D.* 449 (23/29, Ajax and Agamemnon 2); 1QSa I, 18.

466. E.g., Diog. Laert. 6.1.8 (Socrates); Diogenes *Ep.* 4; Socrates *Ep.* 6; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 94.63–66; cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.17; 4.4, 60, 84, 118–19, 126–28; 13.13; 24.3; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.9; Lucian *Peregr.* 33; Marc. Aur. 7.34; Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.281. Diogenes the Cynic reportedly attacked all those who were bound by reputation (ἐνδοξολογοῦντας, Diog. Laert. 6.2.47). Cynics, of course, went so far as to refuse human commendations altogether (Diogenes *Ep.* 9); Stoics could ridicule those concerned with what others thought (Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 76.30; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.21.12–14; cf. the diminutive δοξάριον in Marc. Aur. 4.2; 8.8).

467. E.g., 1 Macc 11:51 (ἐδοξάσθησαν); Wis 8:10.

468. E.g., 1 Macc 14:35.

469. E.g., *Test. Benj.* 6:4 (δόξης ἀνθρώπων). Competing social groups in the ancient Mediterranean world demanded that one seeking honor determine in which group(s) one should seek it (see deSilva, “Honor and Shame,” 520).

470. 1QM XIV, 11–12 (ולנבדויהם); 4QpNah II, 9 (also mentioning “rulers,” ומושלים); cf. 4QpNah 3–4 III, 9; 3–4 IV, 4; *Gen. Rab.* 1:5.

471. E.g., Wis 18:8; 19:22; cf. also 1Qsb III, 4; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 2:7; *Tg. Isa.* 1:2; 5:2. Cf. eschatological glory for his people in 4 Ezra 7:98; 2 Bar. 51:3; 2 En. 43:3 A; perhaps *Test. Job* 40:3.

**Examples in Peter's Temple Sermon of Some Lukan Imagery
and Its Broader Context in Early Christianity**

Image in Sermon	Language Elsewhere in Luke-Acts	Image Elsewhere in Early Christianity
God of patriarchs (3:13)	Acts 7:32; Luke 20:37; cf. 13:28	Mark 12:26 (source for Luke 20:37)*
Jesus as the Servant (3:13, 26), probably from Isaiah	Acts 4:27, 30; from Isaiah, cf. 8:32–33	1 Pet 2:22, 24–25; Matt 12:18; John 12:38; perhaps Phil 2:7–8; Mark 10:45; 14:24
Witnesses of resurrection (3:15)	Acts 1:8; 2:32; 10:41; 13:31; Luke 24:48	Cf. John 15:27; 1 John 1:2; especially (in different words) 1 Cor 15:5–11; cf. also 1 Pet 1:12; 2 Pet 1:16
Ignorance as a somewhat mitigating factor (3:17)	Acts 17:30	1 Tim 1:13; cf. Rom 3:25; 5:13; Heb 9:7; perhaps 1 Pet 1:14
Israel's repentance precedes Jesus's return (3:19)	—	Rom 11:24–32; probably Matt 23:39; perhaps Rev 11:2, 13
Jesus's return to restore the kingdom (3:19–21)	Cf. Acts 1:7–8; 26:7; Luke 21:27–28; 22:30; perhaps 1:74; 21:24	Rom 11:26–27
Message of all the prophets (3:18, 21, 24)	Acts 10:43; Luke 1:70; 24:44; cf. Luke 16:16, 29; 24:25; Acts 13:27; 24:14; 26:22; 28:23	Rom 3:21; 1 Pet 1:10; Matt 11:13 (Q); cf. Rom 1:2; 16:26; Heb 1:1; 2 Pet 3:2
Prophet like Moses (3:22–23)	Acts 7:37; cf. possibly Luke 9:35	Cf. John 1:21; 6:14; probable echoes in Matt 2:19–20; 4:2; possibly 5:1; Mark 9:7
Abraham's blessing (3:25–26)	Cf. perhaps Luke 13:28	Gal 3:8; cf. possibly 1 Pet 3:9

*This title is not very distinctive here, being pervasive in early Judaism.

As noted above, some scholars argue that “servant” Christology is the earliest⁴⁷² in the NT or at least very primitive and hence stemming from the beginning.⁴⁷³ Others deny that the title is primitive;⁴⁷⁴ still others concede it as early without it being primitive.⁴⁷⁵ Probably the title is an early one, but insufficient extant evidence remains to ascertain historically whether it derives from tradition regarding a speech on this occasion or simply represents Luke archaizing to approximate as best as possible what might well have been said in such an early speech. Further, even if it is early tradition, Luke makes it serve his purposes.

Luke undoubtedly is aware of the potential atonement language of the Isaian context (see comments on Acts 8:32–33) and elsewhere may exploit it (cf. Luke 22:19–20, 27; Mark 10:45).⁴⁷⁶ Here, however, he merely outlines a much longer speech (cf. Acts 3:1; 4:3), allowing his informed readers to reconstruct such ideas from elsewhere in his work.

III. THE SERVANT REJECTED

Jesus is denied and handed over to death, just as the servant of Isa 53:1–3 was rejected (although, in that context, it was the Lord who “handed him over” for Israel's sins, Isa

472. Cullmann, *Peter*, 66–67 (emphasizing especially its location in Acts). Much early Christian Christology likely flows from Jesus's own self-understanding as reflected in his teachings; see, e.g., Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*; Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 256–82.

473. Robinson, *Studies*, 150 (along with the prophet Christology in the same sermon).

474. E.g., Jones, “‘Servant’ in Luke-Acts” (viewing Luke's Christology as late).

475. Ménard, “Messianic Title.”

476. For the presence of atonement language in this passion tradition, see comments in Keener, *Matthew*, 487–88; Morris, *Preaching*, 34; Gundry, *Matthew*, 404; Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:579–80; for Isaianic servant language in the saying, see, e.g., Taylor, *Atonement*, 14; Cullmann, *Christology*, 64–65; Jeremias, *Theology*, 292–93; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:95–97. For early Jewish atonement imagery, see, e.g., Kim, “Atonement.” Peterson, “Atonement Theology,” esp. 70, rightly points to Luke's dependence on Isa 53 and the connection between Jesus's cross/resurrection and forgiveness.

53:6 LXX). The term for “handed over” (παράδιδωμι) carries a wide range of meaning, but Luke employs it for Jesus’s being “handed over” to people (Luke 9:44; 24:7), specifically Israel’s leaders (24:20) “handing” him over to Gentiles (18:32); disciples could also expect to be “handed over” (21:12, 16; cf. Acts 8:3; 12:4; 22:4), including Paul to the Gentiles (Acts 21:11; 28:17). It applied more specifically to Judas’s betraying Jesus (Luke 22:4, 6, 21–22, 48) and to Pilate’s handing Jesus over to the wishes of his aristocratic Jewish opponents (23:25), completing the chain of shared guilt. The speeches to Israel naturally emphasize Israel’s responsibility for rejecting God’s agent, although Luke’s full usage reveals that he regarded the Jewish (Acts 4:26; 13:27–28) and Roman (4:27) leaders as more directly responsible than the people themselves.

Peter also notes that the people “denied” Jesus (twice in 3:13–14)—that is, as their rightful ruler.⁴⁷⁷ The term (ἄρνέομαι) is the same for Israel’s disowning Moses in 7:35 (not the wording of the LXX).⁴⁷⁸ Ironically, the Gospel employs this verb not for those who betrayed Jesus to the Sanhedrin (Judas) or to Pilate (the priestly leaders) but for Peter himself, who denied Jesus (Luke 22:57; cf. 9:23; 12:9). For Luke’s audience, the connection of verbs might link Peter’s betrayal with that of Judas but also suggests that the guilt can be resolved through repentance. Peter, the denier, is now the proclaimer par excellence.

IV. PILATE’S DESIRE TO RELEASE JESUS⁴⁷⁹

That Pilate wanted to release Jesus (Luke 23:16, 20, 22) does not absolve Pilate from the guilt of giving in to popular sentiment instead (Luke 23:25; Acts 4:27); even a Roman audience would regard Pilate’s behavior as unjust and unbecoming of a governor⁴⁸⁰ (see comments on Acts 24:27). But because Peter is preaching to “Israelites” (Acts 3:12), this emphasis allows him to focus on the responsibility of his audience (cf. 13:28).

That Jesus appeared before Pilate⁴⁸¹ is an inescapably historical datum; only the governor could order him crucified, and if he wished to follow some semblance of order, he would provide at least a brief hearing. Likewise, Jesus’s own countrymen would normally perform the function of *delatores*, or accusers, to charge him with sedition.⁴⁸² Yet what is striking is Pilate’s reticence to pronounce sentence; if no Roman citizens were involved, one would expect most governors to act quickly at the local aristocracy’s request.⁴⁸³ The Gospels show that Pilate did indeed act quickly, but they also report his reluctance to do so.

477. Although not identical in sense to “delivered up,” this verb broadens rather than specifically supplements its sense and (in the speech itself, ignoring Lukan literary connections) would function like other rhetorical repetition for emphasis.

478. Jewish tradition uses the term for those who deny God (Wis 12:27; 16:16) or renounce their Judaism (4 Macc 8:7; 10:15); early Christians employed it for denying the true God (2 Clem. 3.1; Diogn. 10.7) or Jesus (2 Tim 2:12; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 2:13; 3:8; 2 Clem. 17.7; Mart. Pol. 9.2; Herm. 6.7–8; 74.4; 103.3–6; 105.4–8; Diogn. 7.7) or the truth about Jesus (1 John 2:22–23; Ign. Magn. 9.1; Smyrn. 5.1); sometimes this applied primarily to behavior (1 Tim 5:8; Titus 1:16; Jude 4).

479. I have drawn here from Keener, *Matthew*, 665–67.

480. Tac. *Ann.* 15.44 calls Pilate “procurator”; an inscription discovered in 1961 calls him [*prae*]fectus, which may be used to correct Tacitus but might be intended nontechnically (Dubuisson, “Procurateur,” argues for Tiberius’s “prefect”).

481. See Sherk, *Empire*, 40, §39A; Smallwood, *Jews*, 145; Brown, *Death*, 336–37. Although scholars once thought that the officials brought Jesus to Pilate in the Fortress Antonia, most now concur that Pilate was residing in Herod’s palace (Schürer, *Time of Jesus*, 181; Lane, *Mark*, 548; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem*, 140; Brown, *Death*, 705–10), as ancient sources suggest (Pilate in Philo *Embassy* 299; Florus in Jos. *War* 2.301, 328). Herod’s palace is farther from the temple but not a difficult trek.

482. Harvey, *History*, 16; see Sherwin-White, *Society*, 47.

483. Cf. Harvey, *History*, 17; Sanders, *Figure*, 274; for an impoverished provincial condemned to death without trial, cf., e.g., Apul. *Metam.* 9.42.

Thus some scholars question whether Pilate’s “wanting to release” Jesus, as here and in the Gospels, is “in character” with the Pilate known to us from other sources.⁴⁸⁴ Pilate’s brutal disposition, however, colors all the other brief Jewish reports of his activity that remain extant.⁴⁸⁵ Pilate executed people without trial, and excessive use of capital punishment ultimately cost him his office.⁴⁸⁶ From what Philo and especially Josephus show us of Pilate’s character, any reticence to accept the local leaders’ recommendation would be more out of spite for them than concern for justice.⁴⁸⁷ Yet this reticence need not be unhistorical. As corrupt as the later governor Albinus was, he dismissed Joshua ben Hananiah (Jesus son of Ananias) from further punishment (after a scourging reportedly bared his bones) once he took him to be insane and hence harmless (Jos. *War* 6.305).⁴⁸⁸ Even before Sejanus’s fall and while Pilate remained governor, Pilate seems to have been quite unpopular (cf. rumors circulating in Luke 13:1).⁴⁸⁹

Still, the narratives go to great lengths to emphasize that Pilate cooperated with Jesus’s execution against his own preference, and this literary emphasis is understandable for apologetic reasons. Minority sects often validate themselves through reports of praises by those respected among their oppressors; those writing in socially delicate situations also must show proper deference to officials. Thus, for example, Josephus repeatedly excuses Roman rulers’ motives; for instance, Titus wished to spare the temple but some soldiers failed to cooperate (*War* 6.254, 258, 260–66), and Titus allowed his soldiers to torture Jews only for good reason (5.449–51). The *Letter of Aristee* likewise defends the Ptolemaic ruler’s motives against the Jews (*Let. Aris.* 14), and Josephus claims that Ptolemy Philadelphus praised the Jewish law (*Ag. Ap.* 2.45–47). In the same manner, early Christians commending themselves to an audience in the broader Roman world might wish to exonerate the Roman governor⁴⁹⁰ or even cite, in their own defense, Roman officials’ reticence to condemn them (e.g., Acts 13:12; 18:14–15). This emphasis fits Luke’s larger apologetic agenda.

Historically, Pilate may have had good reason for political concern if he erred in judgment. Philo notes the anti-Jewishness of Sejanus, Pilate’s patron (Philo *Flacc.* 1). Although Sejanus was not executed until October 19, 31 C.E.⁴⁹¹ (probably after Pilate questioned Jesus),⁴⁹² Pilate, like most provincial officials,⁴⁹³ was probably politically

484. Winter, *Trial*, 54–55, 60; Borg, *Vision*, 179.

485. On the rhetorical bias of such accounts, see, e.g., Krieger, “Judenfeind”; Thatcher, “Pilate.”

486. Philo *Embassy* 302; Jos. *Ant.* 18.88–89; Sanders, *Figure*, 274. On governors being tried for abusing power, especially for executing innocent people (particularly Roman citizens), see Pliny *Ep.* 2.11 in Jones, *Empire*, 192–95; and esp. comments on Acts 24:27.

487. Cf. Benoit, *Jesus*, 1:141–42.

488. Philo and especially Josephus are also ill disposed to report good of Pilate (cf. Brown, *Death*, 697; Krieger, “Judenfeind”; Thatcher, “Pilate”); they seem to have felt that the unrest in Judea is better blamed on deceased prefects such as Pilate (once supported by the corrupt Sejanus, still despised, e.g., in Juv. *Sat.* 10.66, 76, 89–90, 104; Phaedrus 3. prol. 41–44; cf. also Brown, *Death*, 694, on Philo *Flacc.* 1; *Embassy* 160–61) than left with the Judeans themselves.

489. On which see Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 75. For Pilate’s attempts to promote the imperial cult, see Taylor, “Pilate.” Brown, *Death*, 695–705, ultimately concludes, as I do, that most of the Gospel portrait fits what we know of Pilate from the other sources once all has been taken into account.

490. Cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 298; Cohn, *Trial*, 326–27.

491. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 132; Lane, *Mark*, 556–57n34; cf. Sherk, *Empire*, 75–77, §40. The contemporary report about Sejanus in Velleius is positive (Vell. *Paterc.* 2.127.3–4; 2.128.1–4; contrast Tac. *Ann.* 4.1), but had it been otherwise (during Sejanus’s dominance), Velleius’s work certainly would have been suppressed.

492. The proposed date of 33 C.E. for Jesus’s crucifixion (e.g., Jewett, *Chronology*, 29; Duriez, *AD 33*) appears less probable, in my opinion excessively compressing Pauline chronology.

493. See Reicke, *Era*, 138, 175.

ambitious and hence could ill afford bad reports about himself.⁴⁹⁴ In contrast with many of his peers in office, being only an equestrian left him especially vulnerable apart from Sejanus's patronage. More to the point, Pilate had incurred the hatred of the Jewish people⁴⁹⁵ and on some other occasions had backed down to pacify them.⁴⁹⁶ Thus Pilate was not only cruel but, like many bullies, fearful of exposure to those in authority over him.⁴⁹⁷

If anything, this situation might well require Pilate in time to become more, rather than less, cooperative with the more powerful of his subjects (cf. John 19:12–13); to fail to prosecute a potential revolutionary, accused by the leaders of his own people, could lay Pilate himself open to the charge of *crimen majestatis* (or *majestas*).⁴⁹⁸ Even the suspicion of treason could be fatal under Tiberius, and despite Sejanus's patronage, Pilate likely would not risk it.⁴⁹⁹ Further, although Jesus may have proved politically innocuous,⁵⁰⁰ cooperation with the local aristocracy would be more politically advantageous than risking more conflict for an individual of no value to Pilate.⁵⁰¹ That Pilate survived as governor until 36 C.E., long after his patron's demise, suggests that he had belatedly acquired some political savvy.⁵⁰² In any case, in the Gospels, the hearing before Pilate is brief, and the execution swift (a few hours later).

d. Disowning the Bringer of Life (3:14–15)

Jesus's titles here highlight both his innocence and the irony of killing the lifegiver. Commentators regularly note the contrast between a murderer and the author or giver of life in Acts 3:14–15.

I. THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS ONE (3:14)

The titles “holy one” and “righteous one” function as antonomasia.⁵⁰³ Jesus is called “holy” elsewhere in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:35; Acts 4:27), and both demons (Luke 4:34) and Scripture (Acts 2:27; 13:35) recognize him as God's “holy one.” The quoted psalm in 2:27 and 13:35 employs a different Greek term, but Luke employs here his common term for “holy” (ἅγιος, seventy-one times in Luke-Acts, often for the Holy Spirit). “The Holy One” was especially a title for God himself in the OT⁵⁰⁴ and in early Judaism.⁵⁰⁵ In a context that draws heavily on Isaiah (see esp. Acts 3:13), the “holy

494. Cf. Malina, *Windows*, 115–16.

495. E.g., Jos. *War* 2.169–77; *Ant.* 18.55–62.

496. Philo *Embassy* 301–2; Jos. *War* 2.171–74; *Ant.* 18.59.

497. Winter, *Trial*, 53–54.

498. Blinzler, *Trial*, 236; Smallwood, *Jews*, 169.

499. Tiberius reportedly viewed even negative remarks as *majestas* (e.g., Dio Cass. *R.H.* 57.9.2; 57.19.1; 57.23.1–2; cf. Caligula, 59.11.6), leading to many false accusations (57.4.5–6); some later emperors also suffered paranoia (Hdn. 1.13.7). Among Romans, treason was the greatest crime (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.80.1).

500. So Cullmann, *State*, 46–47. The matter (and sense of “innocuous”) is debated.

501. On Pilate's possible perspective on Jesus as a harmless sage, see Keener, “Truth.”

502. Reasons for his dismissal in 36 C.E. are sometimes debated; Krieger, “Problematik,” rejects Josephus's explanation.

503. On antonomasia, cf. Anderson, *Glossary*, 23 (citing *Rhet. Her.* 4.42; Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.29–30; Plut. *De vita et poesi Homeri* 24); Rowe, “Style,” 128 (citing Matt 26:48; Cic. *Consil.* 4.9); Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 579 (citing Rom 5:14). The adjectives are coupled in Mark 6:20 but not in a titular sense; the combination was a natural one (cf. Rom 7:12; Rev 22:11), though Luke more often conjoins “righteous” with other descriptions of piety (Luke 1:6; 2:25; Acts 10:22).

504. E.g., 2 Kgs 19:22; Job 6:10; Pss 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Prov 9:10; 30:3; Jer 50:29; 51:5; Ezek 39:7; Hos 11:9, 12; Hab 1:12; 3:3; and esp. in Isaiah (Isa 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17, 20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19, 23; 30:11–12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14, 15; 45:11; 60:9, 14).

505. E.g., Sir 4:14; 23:9; 43:10; 47:8; 48:20; Bar 4:22, 37; 5:5; 2 Macc 14:36; Tob 12:15; 1Q20 1 I, 7; II, 14; VI, 13, 15; VII, 7; XII, 17; 4Q162 II, 7–8; 4Q163 23 II, 3; 4Q176 8–11 7; 4Q405 20–22 12; 4Q448 II, 1; 1 *En.* 1:3; 10:1; 14:1; 25:3; 84:1; 92:2; 97:6; 98:6; 104:9; 3 *En.* 1:2 and passim; *L.A.E.* 33:5; *m. Ab.*

one” title could imply deity (“Holy One” appears thirty times in Isaiah, including for God as Israel’s savior and “redeemer” in the servant contexts, Isa 41:14; 43:3, 14; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5). (It nevertheless could also function as an acceptable title for one of God’s servants when conjoined with “of God.”)⁵⁰⁶

“Righteous one” is not a common expression of later Christology (though cf. 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:1)⁵⁰⁷ and may well be primitive;⁵⁰⁸ Luke employs it exclusively in speeches to Jerusalem audiences, perhaps suggesting that he knew it especially appropriate there.⁵⁰⁹ Nevertheless, it certainly also fits Luke’s emphasis. Calling Jesus the “righteous one” (also Acts 7:52; 22:14) heightens both the contrast with Barabbas the “murderer” and the guilt of those who denied Jesus in 3:13. It also fits a theme in Luke’s passion narrative that is central to his apologetic and acceptable for Roman consumption: Jesus is innocent, as Pilate (Luke 23:4, 13–15, 22), a centurion (23:47), and even a thief (23:40) recognize.⁵¹⁰

Such a title would be familiar in the larger milieu, although Luke’s allusion is primarily biblical. A pagan ruler could call himself “Righteous One” as a divine title;⁵¹¹ certainly, the ideal ruler was to be “righteous.”⁵¹² Speeches in Acts, however, specify Jesus as the “righteous one” especially for Jewish audiences (Acts 7:52; 22:14), suggesting the significance that the title bore in early Jewish circles. Some Jewish people called God “the most righteous” (δικαιότατος, *Sib. Or.* 3.720, probably second century B.C.E.). Later teachers opined that “righteous” was among God’s titles,⁵¹³ though it was not holy like the divine name.⁵¹⁴ Because “Holy One” was also a divine title,⁵¹⁵ the two conjoined may imply Jesus’s deity. But “righteous one” also functioned as an epithet⁵¹⁶ for some of God’s special servants,⁵¹⁷ such as Enoch⁵¹⁸ and Noah.⁵¹⁹ The

3:1, 4. Cf. also 1 Pet 1:15–16; John 17:11; 1 John 2:20; Rev 4:8; 6:10; 16:5; *1 Clem.* 30.1. Some fifty-four of some seventy-two references to any of the terms we translate “holy” in Luke-Acts apply to the Spirit; that is 75 percent. Similarly, three of the five uses of ἅγιος in John apply to the Spirit (John 1:33; 14:26; 20:22); this pattern of usage coheres with usage in early Judaism.

506. Ezra in the late work *Gr. Ezra* 5:10. Domeris, “Confession,” argues that the title connotes agency. It applies to Jesus in Luke 4:34 (following Mark 1:24 for the demon’s confession); in works explicitly affirming Jesus’s deity, John 6:69; Rev 3:7; cf. *1 Clem.* 23.5; *Diogn.* 9.2.

507. Because the righteous person’s response to the aorists in Jas 5:6 is present, it is probably not messianic (cf. 5:16), though cf. Longenecker, *Christology*, 47. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 83 (on Acts 7:52), suggest that the title was passed on from Jesus to James “the Just.”

508. Robinson, *Studies*, 151; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 83; cf. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 65 (though he also recognizes Luke 23:47 as emending Mark 15:39). It appears later in Justin *Dial.* 16.4 as a title for Jesus, but this depends on Acts 7:52. Sources naturally conjoined “holy” and “righteous” in some descriptions (e.g., for people in *Jub.* 25:3; *1 En.* 25:5; 38:4–5; 39:4; 48:1, 7, 9; 51:2; 65:12; 100:5; *2 Bar.* 85:1; Mark 6:20; angels in *1 En.* 39:5; for the law in Rom 7:12; for God in *Jub.* 21:4; *Ass. Mos.* 3:5; *L.A.E.* C 27:1; Rev 15:4; 16:5; 22:11).

509. Hays, *Conversion*, 126–27.

510. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 118–19, noting likely dependence on Wis 2:12–20 (or, less likely, Isa 53:11 LXX).

511. See the inscription from Antiochus I of Commagene (50–35 B.C.E.) in Grant, *Religions*, 21 (“God, Righteous One, Manifest”).

512. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.24 (“most righteous,” δικαιότατος).

513. E.g., *b. Sanh.* 26b; *y. Hag.* 2:1, §12; *Pesiq. Rab.* 14:6.

514. *Y. Meg.* 1:9, §17.

515. *1 En.* 1:3 (Knibb, 58, cites also 10:1; 12:3; 14:1; 25:3; 84:1; 92:2; 97:6; 98:6; 104:9; 1Qap Gen^m II, 14; XII, 17); and texts noted above.

516. On rhetorical epitheton (substituting an epithet for a proper name), see *Rhet. Her.* 4.31.42; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 580.

517. A pre-Christian sage named Simeon “the righteous” (קִיָּוִן, *m. Ab.* 1:2); Esdram in the late *Gr. Ezra* 1:9. Brownlee, “Messianic Motifs,” 13, compares Qumran’s “Teacher of Righteousness.” Contextually, *1 En.* 92:3–4 probably refers to the righteous in general (with Knibb, 222) instead of being used as a title (Isaac, 74).

518. *Test. Levi* 10:5; *Test. Jud.* 18:1; *Test. Dan* 5:6; *Test. Benj.* 9:1 (most mss); *2 En.* 1a:1, rec. A; probably *1 En.* 1:2 (with Isaac; less clear in Knibb).

519. *4 Bar.* 7:8–9; cf. also Ebedmelech (called Abimelech) as δίκαιος ἄνθρωπος in *4 Bar.* 5:28.

Similitudes of Enoch appear to use “righteous one” as a title (*1 En.* 38:2), apparently for the “Chosen One,” the son of man (53:6).⁵²⁰ Presumably, Peter’s Jewish hearers, and any of Luke’s audience who knew the titles but did not identify Jesus with deity, would assume the exalted human rather than the divine usage.⁵²¹

Luke’s primary literary background shared with his audience, however, is biblical, and this is the primary source of his allusion. Thus the most likely usage to come to their mind, given the allusion to the servant in Acts 3:13, would be Isaiah’s title of “righteous one” for the servant in Isa 53:11.⁵²²

II. REJECTING JESUS (3:14)

In Jewish tradition, “denying” the Lord was a terrible sin.⁵²³ Although the motif of repudiation also appears in Luke 19:14, 27,⁵²⁴ the people’s rejection appears explicitly in Luke’s version of the passion only alongside that of the leaders who moved them (23:13, 18). Luke is aware of the complexity of differing loyalties (and degrees of loyalty) among the people; elsewhere the crowds also protect Jesus (e.g., 22:6) and mourn him (23:27, 48). Yet while Luke tones down the guilt of the crowds by laying responsibility on the leaders, texts such as this one reveal that he did not repudiate Mark’s perspective about the crowd’s responsibility (Mark 15:8–15). There, too, the crowd was stirred by its leaders (15:11), and so the difference is one of emphasis. Mark focuses on the guilt of the crowds; ancients were well aware of the injustices created by mob violence. Luke focuses on the aristocratic leaders; had it not been for them, Luke may imply, Israel might have received its Messiah and his apostles.

Perhaps because the high priests reported to Pilate Jesus’s popular appeal along with the charge (Luke 23:5), Pilate gambled that the people would prefer Jesus to Barab- bas, releasing him from obligation to the Jerusalem aristocrats;⁵²⁵ if so, his hope was disappointed. Although Jesus’s Galilean following may have been large, the high priests represented the temple system respected by most local and foreign Jews, and they could more easily inflame the vast majority of the crowd in their favor. Ancient literature is replete with examples of masses being easily swayed by leaders,⁵²⁶ including by these elite priests,⁵²⁷ and being fickle in the populist favor they bestowed on various figures.⁵²⁸

520. It is not always clear whether it applies to God, to the Messiah, or to Enoch, but *1 En.* 53:6 identifies the title with the chosen one, presumably the Messiah (cf. also 46:3; see also Longenecker, *Christology*, 46–47; citing also possibly 1QIsa^a LI, 5; the repeated descriptions in *Pss. Sol.* 17:23–51; 18:7–8). Some scholars claim that it was a messianic title in rabbinic literature (Abbott, *Acts*, 91); the righteous are associated with the Messiah in *b. B. Bat.* 75b; but I do not recall finding the title “Righteous One” for the Messiah in the Talmud, and I suspect that it is at best rare.

521. More recently, some scholars have offered significant arguments that “son of man” in Enoch’s Similitudes may also be a divine title (see esp. Quarles, “Lord”).

522. With Morris, *Cross in New Testament*, 141; Witherington, *Acts*, 181; Moessner, “Script,” 228.

523. E.g., *1 En.* 38:2; 41:2; 45:1–2; 46:7; 48:10; 67:8, 10; *4 Ezra* 7:37; cf. denying God’s covenant and words, *4 Ezra* 5:29; 7:24; *2 Bar.* 59:2; 82:9; *Philo Spec. Laws* 2.255. Gentile philosophers also warned against denying God (e.g., *Porph. Marc.* 21.338; 23.361–62).

524. Tannehill, *Luke*, 161.

525. As noted above, Pilate was not eager to please them and did not have a good relationship with them; at the same time, he could not ignore political realities (see comments on Acts 24:27).

526. E.g., many who voted for Aristides’s banishment allegedly did not know the charge; *Corn. Nep.* 3 (Aristides), 1.4.

527. *Jos. War* 2.237–38, 316–17, 321–25; cf. 2.406.

528. *Tac. Ann.* 2.41; *Hist.* 1.32, 45; 3.85; *Ps-Phoc.* 95–96; *Philo Embassy* 120; *Jos. Life* 87, 97, 143–44, 313–17, 333; *Livy* 31.34.3; *Lucan C.W.* 3.52–58; *Corn. Nep.* 10 (Dion), 10.2; 13 (Timotheus), 4.1; *1 Sam* 18:16; 25:10; *2 Sam* 5:2; 15:6. The ruling class usually could sway the masses (Saldarini, *Community*, 38), although deep-rooted popular convictions were no more easily removed than today (*Paus.* 2.23.6; *Jos. Ant.* 13.298; 18.17). Contrast the motif of being well liked by the people, who advocate one’s case, as a sign of one’s nobility (e.g., *Char. Chaer.* 1.1.10; *1 Sam* 14:45; *Jos. Ant.* 6.128; *Life* 303).

Further, the outdoor hearing at Pilate's *bēma*⁵²⁹ undoubtedly took place at Herod the Great's old palace;⁵³⁰ although still in the Upper City, dominated by the priestly aristocracy, it was some distance from the temple, where Jesus's popular following had been growing and where most Galileans would be found. Early in the morning, the hearing may have also been before most of Jesus's supporters would have returned to the temple area after a late-night Passover celebration. That Mark does not emphasize this distinction between Galilean supporters and Judeans who heeded the local aristocrats fits an ancient literary device: ancient writers, especially those influenced by the chorus tradition of Greek drama, often allowed a corporate body to speak as if in unison.⁵³¹

Although Israel's leaders bear primary responsibility for Jesus's being handed over and executed by the Romans, Peter addresses the responsibility of all his hearers. This is not to reduce the guilt of the leaders (Acts 3:17) but to call for repentance from the only people who may embrace it in response to his preaching—his hearers. Although this shift is useful for deliberative rhetoric, it is also grounded in Luke's tradition about the passion. The crowds, presumably more native Jerusalemites than Galilean pilgrims (cf. Luke 23:49, 55), did prefer a murderer to Jesus (23:18–19). Luke assumes, as his tradition did (Q material in 11:47–50; 13:34), Israel's corporate responsibility along with individual responsibility. This feature is common among the biblical prophets and hence should not surprise us.

Some scholars have charged that Luke's passion narrative is particularly anti-Judaic; they sometimes attribute this anti-Judaism to a source whose tendency on this matter contrasts with pro-Jewish statements in other parts of Luke-Acts.⁵³² Luke's version is less harsh toward Israel than Matthew's (cf. Matt 27:25), but Matthew's better fits the rules of intra-Jewish polemic.⁵³³ The commentary introduction (ch. 14, sect. 1)⁵³⁴ has addressed the question of Luke's alleged anti-Judaism, but we should note that here Peter's sermon qualifies the guilt by the concession of ignorance (Acts 3:17) and the affirmation of God's plan (3:18).

Against the tendency to see much early tradition in this passage, some regard attribution of responsibility to the Jewish people more than to Romans as a late feature.⁵³⁵ Emphasis on Jewish responsibility (while playing down that of the Romans) did,

529. John 19:13; Jos. *War* 2.175–76, 301, 308; cf. Acts 18:12; 2 Cor 5:10. John 19:13 necessarily occurs at the *bēma*; capital sentences, unlike others, had to be pronounced from there (Blinzler, *Trial*, 240, following Mommson). It was natural to go outside if one was to speak with the multitude (Jos. *War* 2.172).

530. Brown, *Death*, 705–10; Strachan, *Gospel*, 212; Blinzler, *Trial*, 173–76; Reicke, *Era*, 140; Benoit, *Jesus*, 1:167–88; idem, "Reconstitution"; Gundry, *Matthew*, 552; Carson, "Matthew," 567; Schürer, *Time of Jesus*, 181; Lane, *Mark*, 548; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem*, 140; Jos. *War* 2.301.

531. E.g., Virg. *Aen.* 11.122–31; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.10.1; 6.87.1; Acts 4:24; cf. 1 Sam 11:4; 2 Sam 5:1–2. One may think of their corporate unity also in the way that historians portray civic assemblies acting, without supposing that every individual in a city supported the assembly's actions (e.g., Athens exiling generals), though the Gospels depict the crowds' activities as more like a mob scene than the democratic process of a Greek *polis* (for the negative narrative function of mob scenes, see comments on Acts 19). Manson, *Servant-Messiah*, 79, also ventures a chronological explanation for the transformation of the crowds—namely, the passage of six months between Jesus's act in the temple (at Sukkoth) and his arrest (at Pesach). Yet it seems inconceivable that the authorities would have allowed Jesus to survive in public six months after the act in the temple, unless one also postulates a miracle or that Jesus went into hiding. Granted, they had no direct authority in Galilee, but they might have prevailed on Antipas to arrest him; as we know from the case of John, the latter had no scruples about arresting prophet figures.

532. Gaston, "Anti-Judaism and Passion Narrative."

533. See Keener, *Matthew*, 45–51, 536–37, 546–47, 561, 671; Johnson, "Slander"; on Matthew's Jewish context, see esp. Overman, "Judaism: A Study"; Saldarini, *Community*.

534. Keener, *Acts*, 1:459–77.

535. E.g., C. Williams, *Acts*, 77 (though curiously he cites in support of this 1 Thess 2:15, which is probably the earliest NT document).

indeed, grow over time (cf., e.g., Justin *Dial.* 17); this approach undoubtedly allowed Christians a more favorable hearing in the Roman world when explaining how their Lord was crucified as a rebel.⁵³⁶ Nevertheless, shared responsibility appears in the sources from the beginning.⁵³⁷ Indeed, what is probably our earliest relevant source, 1 Thess 2:15, hyperbolically attributes Jesus's death *directly* to Judeans (assimilating it to the deaths of the prophets, as also apparently in some gospel tradition; see comment on Acts 7:52), even though Paul's audience would recognize crucifixion as a Roman punishment.⁵³⁸ Further, Peter preaches to a Jewish crowd here; emphasis on Jewish responsibility appears in Acts especially in sermons to Jewish people (Acts 2:23; 13:27), not to Gentiles (cf. 28:19); the messages focus on the aspect relevant to their respective audiences. Pilate is sometimes mentioned as sharing responsibility even among strictly Jewish hearers (4:27; 13:28), though the other side of Pilate's behavior is emphasized in 3:13; Luke's passion narrative includes both aspects of Pilate's behavior.

III. PREFERRING A MURDERER (3:14)⁵³⁹

In requesting a murderer's release (Luke 23:19) rather than that of Jesus, the people embodied on a narrative level in Peter's audience had (in the less sympathetic words of Stephen) become murderers themselves (Acts 7:52). Many earlier manuscripts omit Luke 23:17, which explains Pilate's "obligation" (ἀνάγκην) to release a prisoner; it may well have originated as a scribal marginal explanation based on other Gospels. Yet Luke's account presupposes the Markan (and perhaps independently Johannine) custom, since the people barter for one prisoner's release over another's (23:18). The threat of mob violence might well compel Pilate's choice of which prisoner to release once the matter was on the table, but was the governor, in fact, obligated to offer a prisoner release?

Although all four Gospels attest the paschal amnesty custom,⁵⁴⁰ most scholars remain skeptical of the custom because the proposed analogies from other locations appear inadequate.⁵⁴¹ A Gospel writer might, then, follow a literary practice of his day in creating customs to suit his narrative.⁵⁴² Conversely, this objection to the narrative's claim is a not particularly compelling argument from silence.⁵⁴³ Like most customs

536. See Keener, *Matthew*, 666.

537. See 1 Thess 2:14–15 (sometimes rejected for the circular reason that it claims Jewish responsibility); Keener, *Matthew*, 612–16; later, see Jos. *Ant.* 18.64, the earliest non-Christian Jewish source unless (as is quite possible) this particular line was interpolated. That the high-priestly leaders would have wanted Jesus dead for public order and, as local leaders, would be responsible for delivering him to the Romans is simply the way things were done (Sanders, *Figure*, 265–69; cf. Vermes, *Religion*, ix–x).

538. Paul does not specify crucifixion in the Thessalonian correspondence, perhaps for political reasons (cf. comment on Acts 17:7), but it is clear that he recognized it and had preached it to his audiences (1 Cor 1:17–18, 23; 2:2; Gal 3:1; 5:11; cf. Rom 6:6; 1 Cor 1:13; 2:8; 2 Cor 13:4; Gal 2:20; 5:24; 6:12, 14; Phil 2:8; 3:18). For a brief summary of the debate about an interpolation in the passage, see my *Acts*, 1:463n32, but no textual evidence supports the interpolation hypothesis.

539. Here I have drawn on Keener, *John*, 1115–18; idem, *Matthew*, 668–69. The close resemblance of the Greek expressions for "denied" and "asked" here is rhetorical repetition.

540. See Brown, *Death*, 793–95.

541. E.g., Cohn, *Trial*, 166; Winter, *Trial*, 91; Brown, *Death*, 814–19. Theissen, *Gospels*, 196, links this story with the Caligula crisis, when he thinks more of the populace would have sided with the "bandits" than with Christians (citing Tac. *Ann.* 12.54.1; Jos. *Ant.* 20.5, 97, 102); but this is hardly the *only* period in the first century in which that would be the case, and Jesus would be less popular than Barabbas to those prone to revolution and, probably more to the point here, less popular with most of the Jerusalem masses than the priestly authorities were.

542. Bauer, "Namen."

543. One could at least regard the custom's historical existence as "plausible" (as in Culpepper, *John*, 225) and certainly "possible" (Talbert, *Matthew*, 302). The Fourth Gospel might provide independent attestation

of the Roman administration in Palestine, this one is currently unattested (a not surprising situation given the freedom of governors to ignore and supersede earlier customs),⁵⁴⁴ but if the Gospels usually correctly report events, especially when they multiply attest them (as possibly here, if John's witness is counted as independent), it seems sounder to judge in favor of, rather than against, their claims if no hard evidence to the contrary is available.⁵⁴⁵ Analogies do suggest the general consistency of the reported paschal amnesty custom with Roman policy, and the Gospel writers appear to assume that their audiences were familiar with this practice in prior gospel tradition.

Although Roman law dictated that judges should not ignore laws, decrees, or custom (Justin. *Inst.* 4.17), Roman provincial officials often followed, but were not bound by, "precedents of their predecessors or local customs."⁵⁴⁶ Prefects were in any case free to issue amnesties.⁵⁴⁷ Pilate's offer of amnesty thus could be a custom Pilate himself initiated, though it is more likely an earlier custom that he merely decided to continue (cf. John 18:39). Pilate had authority to ignore a preexisting custom, but given previous conflicts with the people (e.g., Jos. *War* 2.174, 177) and the dangers of popular unrest at festivals (e.g., 2.224), he may have been more inclined to grant such symbolic concessions.⁵⁴⁸ Politically prudent rulers in the East presumably often continued festival traditions begun by their predecessors.⁵⁴⁹ Doing away with pardons and other civic customs was considered despicable (Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 1.3), and governors who wished to make a positive impression typically continued as many precedents that the people liked as possible (Cic. *Att.* 6.1).

Romans sometimes deferred to local custom in forgiving an offense (e.g., Plut. *Rom. Q.* 83, *Mor.* 283F); they also sometimes freed prisoners en masse on local feasts (Livy 5.13.8),⁵⁵⁰ a custom known in various other ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultures.⁵⁵¹ Although the later practice of pardoning criminals at Easter (*Cod. theod.* 9.38.3–4, 8) is probably dependent on the Gospels,⁵⁵² sometimes Roman authorities also released captives because of the people's demands.⁵⁵³ Romans usually

of the tradition, but I believe that John's passion narrative reveals awareness of the Markan (or pre-Markan) passion tradition.

544. On which point, see Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 50.

545. A minimalist methodology demanding external evidence before accepting a source serves a legitimate function if one's goal is historical certainty, but this approach is too stringent for normal purposes of ascertaining probability; little of ancient history could survive such a criterion.

546. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 50. This freedom may call into question the supposed official report cited by Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.2) and Tertullian (*Apol.* 21:24; cf. 5:2), which may depend on an earlier Christian forgery that the Christians assumed to be accurate (probably as in Just. *1 Apol.* 35, 48; *pace* Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 145–46).

547. E.g., P.Oxy. 1668.17–19 (third century C.E., perhaps referring to a political disturbance); cf. Sen. E. *Controv.* 5.8 (hypothetical); Plut. *Caes.* 67.4 (the senate).

548. Its lack of attestation in Josephus might suggest that it was discontinued by his own day; but whether for supposing the custom discontinued or denying its existence, appeal to Josephus on this point remains an argument from silence. Arguments from silence may have merit to the degree that the silence runs contrary to legitimate expectations, but such an argument is not particularly compelling in this case, given Josephus's focus on other matters.

549. E.g., Alexander in Diod. Sic. 17.16.3; contrast the imprudent Verres in Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.21.51–52.

550. Blinzler, *Trial*, 206. During local festivals, Romans sought to show particular benevolence to local populations even with respect to executions (Philo *Flacc.* 83). They offered mass amnesties when it proved politically advantageous (Cic. *Phil.* 8.9.32).

551. Merritt, "Barabbas"; cf. P.Tebt. 5.1–13 (118 B.C.E.); Corn. Nep. 8 (Thrasylbulus), 3.2; a fictitious example in Iambl. (nov.) *Bab. St.* 16 (Photius *Bibl.* 94.77a).

552. With Cohn, *Trial*, 167. Blinzler, *Trial*, 207, 218–21, argues for the custom of a paschal release of prisoners in *m. Pesah.* 8:6 (cf. also Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:252); Le Cornu, *Acts*, 198; but see Bammel, "Trial," 427, who argues that the text merely indicates the special Jewish desire to free prisoners at this time.

553. P.Flor. 61.59ff., cited in Deissmann, *Light*, 269; Blinzler, *Trial*, 207; Lane, *Mark*, 553. Roman rulers sometimes handed over convicted persons at the people's request as an act of benevolence (Livy 8.35.1–9); governors might also release prisoners in acceding to terrorist demands (Jos. *Ant.* 20.208–10).

delayed punishments during their own festivals in Rome.⁵⁵⁴ Roman law permitted two kinds of amnesty: *abolitio* (acquitting a prisoner before trial, Justin. *Cod.* 9.42 [*De abolitionibus*]; *Dig.* 48.16) and *indulgentia* (pardoning a convicted criminal, Justin. *Cod.* 9.43.3).⁵⁵⁵ Since Pilate had not yet pronounced sentence against Jesus, an *abolitio* allowed him to easily circumvent the whole matter placed before him.

Scholars typically accept (at least until evidence is offered otherwise) many ancient claims about customs that are attested in only one source; yet the passion tradition here may be attested independently by Mark and John. Further, the custom was potentially subject to verification in the earliest period, and so fabricating the custom in the passion tradition that probably circulated first in pre-70 Jewish Palestine would hardly have been helpful for apologetic purposes. Finally, the tradition is likely pre-Markan; Mark presumes his audience's prior knowledge of Pilate and (more significantly) Barabbas and other insurrectionists. They presumably know about Barabbas through gospel tradition and not simply a copious knowledge of recent Judean history, for Pilate in fact confronted many such revolutionaries.⁵⁵⁶

Why would Pilate consider releasing Jesus rather than Barabbas? If Pilate wished to grant any prisoner's release for the festival, it was far safer to release Jesus, whom he likely supposed akin to a harmless philosopher,⁵⁵⁷ than alternatives such as Barabbas, who had committed murder during an act of revolt (Mark 15:7).⁵⁵⁸ Yet Pilate's approach in the Gospel passion narratives portrays him as one who attempts to be politically shrewd but proves politically inept. He tries to achieve two goals simultaneously: he is willing to honor an earlier custom—which Roman law did not require him to follow—to curry more favor with the people, and at the same time to release a prisoner whom he wishes to release in any case. Yet he proves politically inept: the crowds prefer Barabbas to Jesus, revealing how poorly Pilate read the situation.⁵⁵⁹

IV. THE ESTABLISHER OF LIFE (3:15)

"Prince of life" is *antonomasia* and is synonymously parallel with another title, "the one whom God raised." That Peter's "people" (3:12) "killed" the Prince of "life" is a classic case of rhetorical antithesis, which juxtaposes opposing meanings;⁵⁶⁰ it is also part of the obvious rhetorical contrast between their asking for a murderer

554. Sen. E. *Controv.* 5.4; Cic. *Cael.* 1.1; New Year's Day in Suet. *Tib.* 61.

555. Blinzler, *Trial*, 207–8.

556. Theissen, *Gospels*, 171, 182–83. Livy occasionally cites a name as if familiar despite lack of previous mention (e.g., 40.55.2), perhaps incompletely following a source. Dodd, *Tradition*, 120, thinks the question of treason relevant in Palestine only before 70 C.E., but this argument is questionable: to be sure, the issue fits Tiberius's time very well, but it would remain relevant after 70.

557. See Keener, *John*, 1112–14; idem, "Truth"; even if the details are purely Johannine, the logical assumptions that John highlights in John 18:35–38 fit cultural expectations about what was probably already implicit in Mark 15:2–5.

558. John 18:40 employs a term for Barabbas used for insurrectionists in Josephus (Barrett, *John*, 539). In the gospel tradition, those who arrested Jesus treated him as if he were a guerrilla as well—a natural category in which to place many messianic pretenders, albeit not Jesus (Mark 14:48). Some argue plausibly that Jesus shared the social bandits' "basic goals" though rejecting their violent means (see, e.g., Oakman, "Peasant," 121).

559. Perhaps Pilate expects the municipal aristocracy to side with Roman values over against a low-class peasant revolutionary; it was such lower-class revolutionaries who, perhaps more than two decades before this Gospel was written, ultimately had slaughtered much of the priestly aristocracy in the temple area (Jos. *War* 4.302–34). Ironically, the chief priests hand Jesus over as a messianic pretender yet favor a genuine revolutionary (who must have seemed to them far less dangerous, having fewer followers).

560. See *Rhet. Alex.* 26, 1435b.25–39; Anderson, *Glossary*, 21–22 (citing, e.g., *Rhet. Her.* 4.15.21; 4.58; Demet. *Style* 22–24, 247, 250; for cautions, Theophr. frg. 692 FHS&G); Rowe, "Style," 142 (citing as examples Greg. Naz. *Or.* 3; Aug. *Ep.* 196.6); Black, "Oration at Olivet," 87; in the LXX, see Lee, "Translations: Greek," 780 (e.g., Prov 6:1). Commentators generally notice the irony (e.g., Kilgallen, *Speech*, 99). Cf. antimetabole in Anderson, *Glossary*, 22; Rowe, "Style," 143; Porter, "Paul and Letters," 582.

(Acts 3:14) and their repudiating the Prince of life. (For the accusation that his audience participated in “killing” Jesus, cf. 4:10; 7:52; but esp. comments on Acts 2:23.) Barrett observes the following contrasts that demonstrate Luke’s skillful composition:

- A You denied the holy and righteous one
- A’ You asked for a murderer
- B You asked for a murderer
- B’ You killed the author of life
- C You killed
- C’ The author of life
- D You killed the author of life
- D’ God raised him from death⁵⁶¹

The contrast between life and death recurs as many as three times here. Jewish hearers schooled in Scripture might recall Moses’s challenge to choose life rather than death (Deut 30:15, 19) and might note that the Jerusalemites had chosen death. Now Peter will offer them the alternative of life again, eschatological salvation for Israel (Acts 3:19–21), the blessing of the covenant (3:25–26) prefigured in the wholeness of the disabled man (3:16). The blessing of the covenant appears often in the Law (see esp. Gen 12:2–3; 22:17; Deut 28:2; 30:1, 19) but, for our present point, most notably in the above-mentioned passage about choosing life and death (Deut 30:16, 19).

The greatest lexical challenge for commentators in this passage is the meaning of ἀρχηγός (here and in Acts 5:31). The term also appears in Hebrews (Heb 2:10; 12:2), also a document from a highly educated Diaspora Christian.⁵⁶² The term could apply to deities⁵⁶³ but only in the sense that these deities were viewed in the larger category of leaders or saviors. It applied to eponymous heroes and was often applied specifically to Heracles.⁵⁶⁴ Greek texts often use the term to depict a founder,⁵⁶⁵ such as the founder of a city,⁵⁶⁶ a meaning that may be relevant in Hebrews (cf. Heb 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14).⁵⁶⁷ The term closely overlaps with ἀρχηγέτης, “leader,” “founder,”⁵⁶⁸ which also applied to Apollo, Heracles, Attic demes’ heroes, and so forth.⁵⁶⁹ A writer could describe Noah’s family as ἀρχηγέται of a new and second world after the flood’s destruction (Philo *Mos.* 2.65) and hence as “inaugurators” (with LCL, 6:481).⁵⁷⁰

561. Barrett, *Acts*, 197.

562. From the early second century, it applies to Jesus also in 2 *Clem.* 20.5 (in a more general sense in 1 *Clem.* 14.1; 51.1; 63.1).

563. Van der Horst, “Cornutus,” 169, cites Cornutus *Summ.* 6 (Lang, 6, lines 5–6; Rhea); 28 (Lang, 56, line 18; Demeter).

564. Often noted, sometimes in connection with the term’s use in Hebrews (e.g., Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 61). For the thesis that Heracles imagery affects more thoroughly Hebrews’ portrayal of Jesus, see Aune, “Heracles” (perhaps plausible in the background, although, certainly, explicit biblical citations dominate the foreground).

565. E.g., of a philosophic school, e.g., Zeno of the Stoics (Lucian *Oct.* 19). For “founder,” see, e.g., BDAG; for hero-founders, see Delling, “ἀρχηγός,” 487.

566. E.g., Heracles as founder of Tarsus (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.47). Like many terms applied to Jesus, this one might compete with the emperor, whom imperial propaganda could portray as “creator” (founder) of cities to whom he showed benefaction (Pont, “Fondateur”). Cf. Alexander as founder (using a different term, Libanius *Descr.* 27, esp. 27.1).

567. Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 60–61, rightly objects that God, rather than Jesus, founds the city (Heb 11:10), but the writer of Hebrews elsewhere coalesces the image of Jesus with God as builder (3:2–4; cf. 1:3).

568. For the overlap, see LSJ.

569. See Graf, “Archegetes,” 980.

570. Josephus also uses this term to designate Noah as the “originator” of humanity (*Ag. Ap.* 1.130).

The term ἀρχηγός is frequent in the LXX, where it applies to heads of clans;⁵⁷¹ the basic sense is not their hereditary position but that they are respected leaders.⁵⁷² It also could apply to authors or originators of something (1 Macc 9:61; of something negative there, but the sense of leader also fits in this passage) or the “initiator” of something (1 Macc 10:47, with NEB; see also Jos. *Ant.* 7.207). For readers steeped more in biblical Greek than in Greek tradition, the image of leadership would be a dominant nuance.⁵⁷³ Luke’s ideal audience probably knew something of both but would expect Peter’s preaching to echo more the language of the LXX.

To the extent that ἀρχηγός means (as it typically does in the Greek Bible) “leader” as well as “forerunner,” it overlaps with the semantic range of ἄρχων. The latter term appears elsewhere in Acts and applies to worldly rulers of various sorts (Acts 3:17; 4:5, 8, 26; 13:27; 14:5; 16:19; 23:5; cf. Luke 8:41; 11:15; 12:58; 14:1; 18:18; 23:13, 35; 24:20) but in an unambiguously positive sense only twice—of Moses, whom God explicitly appointed (Acts 7:27, 35; cf. Exod 2:14 LXX).⁵⁷⁴ One of these texts couples the title with “redeemer” (Acts 7:35), just as 5:31 couples “Savior” with ἀρχηγός. As Moses was the prince who led his people to salvation, so is Jesus. Such an allusion (or, perhaps more accurately, at most an implicit comparison) would pave the way for the explicit prophet-like-Moses Christology later in the sermon (3:22–23). Although a first-time hearer would not immediately catch the comparison, Moses would naturally provide the sort of biblical figure with whom Jewish people could associate the Greek term.⁵⁷⁵

Jesus is thus the heroic leader leading the way to the historic goal of achieving eternal life (Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; Acts 5:20; 11:18; 13:46, 48), the life of the resurrection (cf. Luke 14:14; 20:36; Acts 23:6; 24:15, 21), and as such fulfills the promises and inaugurates the opportunity for the eschatological era of blessing (Acts 3:24–26). Thus Christ, by his resurrection, is the “first” to preach (26:23; followed by others, cf. 13:47), and this sermon’s message is summarized as preaching “in Jesus the resurrection from among the dead ones” (4:2). In the words of other early Christian writers, he is the “firstborn” from the dead, who thereby guarantees life to the rest of his people (Col 1:18; Rev 1:5).⁵⁷⁶ Or (using the same term) Jesus authors salvation for his people (Heb 2:10; 12:2).

Many commentators render the term “pioneer.” This can be appropriate provided we understand it as the one who has led the way rather than with the nuances of rugged individualism often associated with the concept among U.S. readers. Jesus’s triumph over death was not a matter of rugged self-determination but of submission to the Father’s will and of exaltation by the Father’s act (Acts 3:15).

That the “ruler” here (3:15) is also the “servant” (3:13) functions like an oxymoron,

571. Exod 6:14; Num 10:4; 1 Chr 5:24; 26:26; Neh 7:70–71; 1 Esd 5:1; leaders of ranks in 1 Chr 12:20; 2 Chr 23:14; Neh 2:9; Jdt 14:2. In their function as the people’s representatives, see, e.g., Num 25:4.

572. E.g., Num 13:2–3; Deut 33:21; Judg 5:2; Isa 3:6–7; Lam 2:10. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 143, cites it especially for judges in Judg 11:6, 11 (cf. also “raising” a “savior,” as in Acts 5:31, at Judg 3:9), though this is in only some MSS. It applies to those chosen by the assembly (Num 14:4; 16:2) and is used for other nations’ leaders in Num 24:17 (only LXX); Isa 30:4.

573. Johnston, “Archegos,” 385, though he may go too far in viewing it as a royal title equivalent to ἄρχων, “prince,” a messianic title also used by Michael and various guardian angels in the DSS.

574. Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 47, who draws this parallel (cf. also Cribbs, “Agreements,” 55), suggests that Luke changes Moses’s ἄρχων to ἀρχηγός for Jesus to differentiate the two.

575. Another might be Joshua, as founder of a “colony” (C. Williams, *Acts*, 78). But Joshua, not mentioned much in Acts (Acts 7:45; cf. Heb 4:8), is probably merely an example of the category in which Moses is a clearer example.

576. Cf., e.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 206. For the excellent fit of this conception with “originator” (emphasizing that nuance here, where it is appropriate), see also Anderson, *Raised*, 225.

inviting attention;⁵⁷⁷ it may reflect “the servant of rulers” despised by the nations (Isa 49:7) until his exaltation (52:13–15).⁵⁷⁸

e. Faith and Witness (3:15–16)

The apostles were witnesses of the miracle that Jesus had risen from the dead. The name of the risen Jesus had now generated another miracle, but this time the crowds hearing Peter were themselves the witnesses, since many among them recognized that this healed man was the one who was previously unable to walk. Dependence on Jesus’s name by his agents could produce miracles, as did faith in the Gospels when Jesus was present.

I. WITNESS (3:15–16)

The witnesses (3:15), in the first case, are the apostles whom Jesus appointed to testify of what they had seen (see extended comments at Acts 1:8; for the phrase “we are witnesses,” cf. 2:32; 5:32; 10:39). This role is important for Luke as an author, since witnesses were essential in Hellenistic historiography.⁵⁷⁹ “Witness” may also retain some of its judicial nuance, given the context, which appears to apply the charges made against Jesus now to the city that had called for his execution (3:13–15; see also 5:31–32).⁵⁸⁰ “We” is emphatic, and the statement about witnesses may come last in the sentence because it begins the proofs section of this speech summary.⁵⁸¹

Now that his audience has witnessed a miracle, Peter appeals to their own firsthand knowledge (3:16); appeal to an audience’s eyewitness knowledge was a useful rhetorical technique.⁵⁸² Peter’s hearers see the man well, and presumably from their experience in the temple, they “know” the man as having been disabled. (Cf. “see and hear” in 2:33; 4:20.)

II. FAITH IN JESUS’S NAME (3:16)

The man was healed on the basis of faith; this faith might refer to that of the healed man (which would better fit the parallel in 14:9)⁵⁸³ but might be that of the apostles who used the name (3:6).⁵⁸⁴ That this faith also comes through (δὲ) Jesus⁵⁸⁵ probably alludes to events described in Luke’s Gospel, either to Jesus’s teaching the disciples faith through their experience with him or to the miraculous events of Jesus’s ministry and/or exaltation as the basis for their faith.⁵⁸⁶

577. On this figure, see Rowe, “Style,” 143; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 582; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 227; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 327; Krentz, “Oxymora.”

578. If one looks to Isaiah for the “ruler” (on the basis of the servant allusion in Acts 3:13), one might think of the messianic ruler of Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–5 (ancients read Isaiah as a unity), but the term does not appear here in the LXX.

579. Witherington, *Acts*, 182.

580. Returning charges was standard rhetorical practice (see comments on Acts 24:19), although, in this case, the apostles themselves have not yet been charged.

581. Some scholars begin the demonstration earlier, as in the outline from Satterthwaite, “Acts,” 359, cited above; but the proofs themselves, after returning of the charges, seem to begin here.

582. See comments on Acts 26:4–5, 26.

583. The pattern fits Luke’s work well, e.g., Luke 5:20; 7:9; 8:25, 48, 50; 17:19; 18:42; cf. Mark 5:34; 9:19; 10:52. In Acts (after the resurrection despite unbelief, Luke 24:11, 25, 41), we have only Acts 14:9, but it provides the closest parallel to this passage.

584. For that of the apostles, see Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 37; Gaventa, *Acts*, 87; cf. Jas 5:14–15. Ammonius in *Cat. Act.* 3.16 (Martin, *Acts*, 43) suggests that the faith of both is necessary; cf. Gaiser, *Healing*, 218–19 (distributing faith still more widely). In either case, πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος contains an objective genitive (Schreiner, *Romans*, 183).

585. That it is the “faith” that comes through Jesus, rather than the gift of health, seems clear; the relative pronoun “which” (ἣ) corresponds to ἣ πίστις, which immediately precedes it.

586. Cf. Acts 9:34; esp. 4:13. If we read it in light of Paul, it could also refer to faith imparted as a gift through Jesus (cf. Rom 12:3; but though scholars sometimes take Eph 2:8 accordingly, the neuter demonstrative

Acts uses πιστεύω and its cognates far less often than does the NT epistolary literature but more often than other NT narratives except the Fourth Gospel.⁵⁸⁷ A broader Mediterranean audience might understand faith in the context of dependence on a divine provider; inscriptions and other texts demonstrate the use of faith language in patronal and sometimes benefactor relationships.⁵⁸⁸ Thus one could praise a patron for his πίστις (trustworthiness).⁵⁸⁹ Roman Christians translated πίστις into Latin as *fides*, hence imbuing it with legal and moral associations⁵⁹⁰ that include veracity and the maintaining of commitments.⁵⁹¹ Even in Greek, πιστεύω and its cognates can imply loyalty or fidelity,⁵⁹² and this nuance is undoubtedly included in Paul's emphasis on covenant faith (cf. Rom 1:5; 16:25).

In a more cultic sphere, faith also entailed acceptance of particular claims; Lucian mocked Christians for having faith without evidence.⁵⁹³ Faith language contrasted with skepticism elsewhere as well.⁵⁹⁴ Ancients would also understand the dangers of active unbelief that could provoke the anger of deities.⁵⁹⁵ Philostratus recognizes that failing to believe a semidivine hero after sufficient evidence has been presented would be unjust (*Hrk.* 17.1). (Philostratus even traces in his narrative the development of a person's faith,⁵⁹⁶ although it is difficult to know to what degree the Gospels, by then widespread, might have influenced him.)⁵⁹⁷ Judgments for unbelief in a divine agent also appear in the OT (2 Kgs 9:7; Dan 9:6–7; Amos 7:12–17), Amoraic texts,⁵⁹⁸ and Luke-Acts (Luke 1:20; Acts 13:11).

One might suggest that Jesus was the object of faith only in the way that Moses or the prophets were, but the language is stronger than this. Moses is frequently the object of faith in the LXX of the Pentateuch (Exod 4:1, 8, 9, 31; 14:31; 19:9);⁵⁹⁹ most often, however, Moses leads the people to "believe" in God (4:5; 14:31; Num 14:11; 20:12; Deut 9:23; 32:20). Luke's Christology is clearly higher than this (Acts 2:34–38), and faith in others besides God did not yield miracles on behalf of their agents.⁶⁰⁰

Sometimes signs could be performed with minimal or no faith,⁶⁰¹ but in Luke's

pronoun [τοῦτο] there would not refer strictly to the feminine πίστεις [faith] as its antecedent). Gaiser, *Healing*, 220, views this faith as a gift.

587. Jeremias, *Theology*, 160, notes that cognates appear on the average page of the Greek text of the NT according to the following distribution: 0.09 in Revelation; 0.24 in the Synoptics; 0.55 in Acts; 1.10 in the Catholic Epistles; 1.25 in Paul; 1.31 in Hebrews; and 1.48 in John.

588. E.g., Sen. Y. *Ben.* 3.14.2; Tac. *Dial.* 10; Marshall, *Enmity*, 21–24; deSilva, *Honor*, 115–16, 145; idem, "Patronage," 768 (following Danker, *Benefactor*). Peter would not think in terms of Roman patronage here, but it might illustrate one element of the context for Luke's audience.

589. Kent, *Inscriptions*, no. 265, lines 4–7.

590. Büchli, "Fides," 417.

591. Schieman, "Fides," 415; Horsley, "Assembly," 386. On the personification of this virtue, see Prescendi, "Fides" (but some demurred, Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.5.14).

592. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.88.

593. Lucian *Peregr.* 13. Luke, who cites evidence, would define believers' faith differently.

594. E.g., Lucian *Tox.* 56. Also the contrast between mere "faith" and true "knowledge" (Philostr. *Ep. Apoll.* 52; *Hrk.* 8.1; contrast the perspective in 1QM XIII, 3; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 94–95.20–22).

595. E.g., Ovid *Metam.* 3.513–18; cf. Porph. *Marc.* 22.348–60.

596. The guest in Philostratus's *Heroikos* initially does not believe in heroes but is willing to be persuaded (3.1; 7.10–11; 8.2). Before long, however, he begins to believe in response to accounts of the signs (7.12; 8.18; 16.6; 17.1; 18.1; 44.5).

597. Moving an interlocutor along during a dialogue appears as early as Plato; but Christianity certainly popularized an analogous language of faith.

598. E.g., *b. B. Bat.* 75a; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 18:5; cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 25:29, 32.

599. For other prophets, see 2 Chr 20:20; cf. 1 Sam 12:18.

600. On agency, especially divine agency, see Keener, *John*, 310–15, esp. 314–15.

601. Suet. *Vesp.* 7.3 (but Suetonius honors Vespasian by reducing his credulity, for skeptics).

Gospel (as in the gospel tradition in general),⁶⁰² faith is often associated with miracles (Luke 5:20; 7:9; 8:25, 48, 50; 17:6, 19; 18:42). Those who received revelation were morally responsible to respond in faith (1:20, 45; 24:25; cf. 8:12–13).⁶⁰³ Still, it should be recognized that not all accounts mention faith (e.g., 7:12–15; 13:11–13; Matt 8:14–15; 14:14; Mark 1:30–31; John 5:6–9; 9:4–7); one dare not argue from silence, especially since Jesus himself supplied faith in many cases, but it is also clear that miracles can occur at times despite some participants' lack of faith (Matt 8:26; 14:17, 26; 16:8–10; Mark 4:40; 6:49; 8:4, 17–21; 9:24, 26; Luke 2:9; 5:4–9; 8:25; 11:14–15; especially Luke 1:20; cf. Luke 10:18). The disciples themselves are often the ones chided for their little faith (Mark 4:40; Luke 8:25; 12:28; cf. Luke 17:5), albeit especially in Matthew (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20).⁶⁰⁴

For the sake of emphasis, Peter repeats “name,” though the repetition is not grammatically necessary for understanding.⁶⁰⁵ The term “name” functions as a sort of metonymy for his authority⁶⁰⁶ (though this use of the term was so common that authority may simply function as part of its semantic range) or as synecdoche (a part functions for the whole).⁶⁰⁷ Jesus’s name healed the man in Acts 3:6; the man was healed through faith in the efficacy of Jesus’s name, in which Peter declared he was acting.

Here the primary issue in the use of “name” involves not magic but Jesus’s *honor*. (For discussion of the meaning of “Jesus’s name” in this context, see comments on Acts 3:6.) From a human perspective, Jesus was shamed by the cross (one of the ultimate humiliations in the Roman world),⁶⁰⁸ but by exalting him, God had vindicated him and restored his honor (cf. 3:15).⁶⁰⁹ The name also, however, involves agency: Peter acted in Jesus’s name, as Jesus’s agent, carrying out Jesus’s own ministry (9:34). This agency thus entailed doing what Jesus had earlier been doing (see comments on “what Jesus *began* to do and teach” in 1:1) and what Jesus now would continue to do through his agents.

602. Cf. Mark 2:5; 5:34, 36; 9:23; 10:52; 11:23–24; Matt 8:10//Luke 7:9; Matt 8:13; 9:2, 6–7, 22, 28–29; Matt 14:28–31; 15:28; 21:21–22; John 4:50; 11:40; later, Mark 16:17. Disbelief likewise inhibited healings (Luke 9:41; cf. Mark 6:5–6; Matt 13:58; perhaps violent disbelief, in view of Luke 4:28–29), including the disbelief of Jesus’s agents (Matt 17:20; cf. Mark 9:29; Luke 9:41). (John more typically emphasizes basic faith *following* signs; John 1:50; 2:11, 23; 4:39, 48, 53; 7:31; 11:15, 42, 45, 48; 12:11; 14:29; 16:30; 20:30–31; cf. John 9:35–38; 10:25; Acts 13:12.) That Jesus granted miracles to those who trusted God’s power in him is part of the modern consensus regarding Jesus’s miracles (Blackburn, “Miracles,” 375).

603. Some modern Christian healing evangelists also emphasize the operation of faith in healings, but some warn that it is only God’s gift (cf. Kuhlman, *Miracles*, 152–53, 211–12, 214, 217–18, disagreeing with many “faith” healers).

604. Cotter’s recent and excellent *Miracle Stories*, thoroughly informed in ancient culture, helpfully highlights the petitioners and Jesus’s response to them in some key Markan narratives and Q, often including the petitioners’ boldness. For faith and its often bold expression in this work, see *Miracle Stories*, 6–7, 9, 12, 74–75, 100–102, 158, 254–55, 257.

605. This is something like metaclisis (using different inflections), though a strong example would list more than two occurrences (cf. Rowe, “Style,” 133, citing as examples 1 Cor 9:20; Aug. *Ep.* 267), or epanalepsis (Rowe, “Style,” 129, citing as examples Demosth. *Cor.* 208; Cic. *Phil.* 2.17.43; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 579, citing Phil 2:8; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 86, citing Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.51; Mark 13:8, 12; see also Hermog. *Method* 9.423–25). Peter also repeats “faith” twice in Acts 3:16.

606. On metonymy, see *Rhet. Her.* 4.32.43; Anderson, *Glossary*, 73; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 85; Rowe, “Style,” 126; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 578.

607. For synecdoche, see *Rhet. Her.* 4.33.44–45; Anderson, *Glossary*, 112 (citing also Cic. *De or.* 3.168; Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.19–22); Rowe, “Style,” 127 (citing Demosth. *Fals. leg.* 313; Cic. *Phil.* 11.14.37); Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 578; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 85.

608. See the excursus on Acts 2:23; more fully, Hengel, *Crucifixion*.

609. Spencer, *Acts*, 43.

f. Their Ignorance and God's Plan (3:17–18)

After confronting his audience with the full measure of their corporate guilt, Peter more gently points out their ignorance and God's plan in allowing Jesus's crucifixion.

I. IGNORANCE AS A MITIGATING FACTOR (3:17)

Ignorance mitigated Israel's guilt, though it did not erase it completely. Ignorance mitigated the guilt of Gentiles (14:17; cf. 17:23, 30), though the ignorance of the Judean leaders, who knew Scripture, was more culpable (cf. Luke 11:52; Acts 13:27). The leaders were ignorant because they understood neither Jesus nor the Scriptures (Acts 13:27; cf. Mark 12:24); these leaders contrast with the true leader (Acts 3:15). Ignorance mitigated guilt for the crucifixion (the likeliest reading of Luke 23:34).

Other writers also believed that ignorance was culpable but forgivable (1 Tim 1:13); indeed, biblical law specifically provided atonement only for sins done in ignorance (Lev 4:2–3, 22–23, 27–28; 5:15–19; 22:14; Num 15:22–31; 35:11, 15).⁶¹⁰ Early Judaism widely recognized this principle (e.g., *L.A.B.* 22:6, *ignorantia*).⁶¹¹ The author(s) of the pre-Christian *Psalms of Solomon* believed that God disciplined the righteous in the present (as opposed to destroying sinners utterly) for deeds done in ignorance (*Pss. Sol.* 13:7, ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ; cf. 18:4), but the work allowed that by fasting the righteous could atone for ignorance (3:8). Philo also acknowledges pardon for those who acted in ignorance, unaware that their acts were sins.⁶¹²

Later Jewish sources concurred. In one novel, Judah notes that God had mercy because Judah acted in ignorance.⁶¹³ In a novel⁶¹⁴ of uncertain date, Aseneth beseeches God's forgiveness on the basis of her ignorance (*Jos. Asen.* 6:7/4)⁶¹⁵ soon after pleading with God to pardon her idolatrous sins against God performed "in ignorance" (13:11 [many MSS] and 13:12–13, several times). Rabbis believed that sins of ignorance were not culpable⁶¹⁷ or that they should be punished, but less so than deliberate sins.⁶¹⁸ Ignorance could even invite the nullifying of vows (based on mistaken information).⁶¹⁹

610. If one repented, one's sins would be counted as if "sins of ignorance" (*Tg. Hab.* 3:1). Cf. lack of intention as a mitigating factor in some ancient Near Eastern law (Wells, "Exodus," 238; Eshn. 37; Hammurabi 266; for homicide, *Xen. Anab.* 4.8.26; Apollod. *Bib.* 2.3.1; Sen. E. *Controv.* 4.3, excerpts, introduction; 6.2).

611. E.g., Tobit asked God not to punish his sins, his ignorances (ἀγνοίμασίν μου), and those of his ancestors (*Tob* 3:3).

612. Philo *Unchangeable* 134.

613. *Test. Jud.* 19:3–4 (also noting the devil's blinding him through his sins). The pre-Christian nature of this testament is not certain.

614. For *Joseph and Aseneth* among romances, see, e.g., West, "Joseph and Aseneth"; Doran, "Narrative Literature," 290–91.

615. For the range of possible dates, see Burchard, "Introduction," 187; pre-Christian, see West, "Joseph and Aseneth," 79–80; Koester, *Introduction*, 1:265. It appears mostly Jewish (appealing for Gentile women's conversion; cf. the emphasis on Levi in *Jos. Asen.* 22–26, though this could be Jewish-Christian, as in *Testament of Levi* [which is at least heavily interpolated]) and does not teach permanent celibacy, but it sometimes appears to recall Christian ideas (*Jos. Asen.* 13:13 sounds like virgin birth typology; *Jos. Asen.* 14:7–8 might recall Acts 9; *Jos. Asen.* 14:9–11 might recall Rev 1:13–16; *Jos. Asen.* 14:12–13 might recall the putting off and the putting on of tunics in conversion, as perhaps in Col 3:9–10; in *Jos. Asen.* 16:15–16/16:9, the bread of life might recall the Eucharist, and anointing, later Christian baptisms; in 19:11, the imparting of spirit by breath could evoke John 20:22; and other features may suggest a Christ typology).

616. E.g., *Jos. Asen.* 6:7 (*OTP* 2:210)/6:4 (Philonenko, 150), ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ (for other references, see Burchard, *OTP* 2:210 n.s.). Some Tannaim felt that God had a more tolerant standard for Diaspora proselytes (*t. Šabb.* 8:5).

617. E.g., *Sipre Deut.* 155.1.1 (the text in Deuteronomy concerns a capital offense). One who, knowing no better, followed the wrong decision of a court is not culpable (*m. Hor.* 1:1); a proselyte among Gentiles might inadvertently commit a sin, which was therefore covered by the sin offering (*t. Šabb.* 8:5).

618. E.g., *Sipra VDDeho. par.* 12.65.2.1.

619. *M. Ned.* 9:8.

Gentiles also viewed ignorance as mitigating guilt.⁶²⁰ A soldier who unwittingly killed his own brother could have viewed himself as innocent by virtue of his ignorance (*ignorantiae beneficio innocenti*), though the narrator reports that this soldier proved so exceptionally pious that he killed himself instead (Val. Max. 5.5.4). Far more than biblical tradition, Greek religion could regard unbelief as less culpable if stemming only from ignorance (Philost. *Hrk.* 8.18). Greek philosophy tended to identify ignorance as the cause of wrong behavior.⁶²¹ A Stoic claimed that those who did wrong were unlearned like beasts, but if one could cure their ignorance (ἄγνοίας) and lack of instruction (ἀμαθίας, line 30), they would stop such behavior (Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 78.27–31, esp. 78.30–31).⁶²² Epictetus, another Stoic, exempted the ignorant masses from fault, explaining that they were simply blind (*Diatr.* 1.18.4); even brigandage and adultery were not culpable, stemming only from blindness (1.18.6). But philosophers could recognize that love for pleasure provided a basis for deliberate ignorance.⁶²³

Ignorance reduced legal liability.⁶²⁴ In contrast to ignorance of facts (such as that one's animals were grazing in the plaintiff's field), ignorance of the law remained culpable.⁶²⁵ Nevertheless, groups presumed to have less knowledge or mental competence (whether foreigners, women, children, or rural people) were treated more leniently.⁶²⁶ Some concrete examples illustrate the same concession. For example, when masters exported slaves without proper knowledge of tax rules, the slaves were sold by the state (*BGU* 5.65.164, from the second century C.E.), but penalties were harsher if they acted knowingly (5.66.165–5.67.170). Many analogously viewed youth as an extenuating circumstance.⁶²⁷ Youth could overlap with ignorance; thus some Jewish moralists attributed sexual immorality to the "ignorance of youth" (*Test. Reub.* 1:6; 2:9; 3:8).

In a context of forensic rhetoric, granting that the accused acted in ignorance was a significant concession.⁶²⁸ A defendant may claim that his or her action was unintentional and remind the hearers "that unjust conduct is particular to wicked people, but the error [ἐξἁμαρτεῖν] and misfortune in one's actions is not peculiar to yourself alone but is common to all mankind, including the members of the jury."⁶²⁹ A prosecutor may respond that laws must hold people liable for their actions even if they claim them accidental, or else everyone will begin committing such "mistakes."⁶³⁰ Similarly, a defendant may claim that no law prohibits his or her specific act, which

620. For attention to intention in legal reasoning, see, e.g., Hermog. *Issues* 61.16–18; 72.14–73.3.

621. See, e.g., Max. Tyre 12.9; see further Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 42 (citing the moralist Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.13).

622. Thus one wicked through ignorance could reform through philosophic knowledge (Lucian *Downward Journey* 24; cf. the rabbis on R. Akiba or 1 Tim 1:13 on Paul).

623. See, e.g., Max. Tyre 25.5. Ignorance, pleasure, and vices ruled the masses (Lucian *Charon* 15).

624. Even without ignorance (but not relevant here), Roman law sometimes regarded killing as justifiable, e.g., in self-defense, defending a family member's sexuality, killing a deserter to the enemy, and sometimes avenging adultery (Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 45).

625. *Ibid.*, 16. To make crimes of ignorance intelligible, Bryan, *Preface*, 102, compares corporate racist attitudes (citing Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa).

626. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 17.

627. *Rhet. Alex.* 7, 1428b.37–40; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 5.9.2 (the plea did not prove effective); Plut. *Alc.* 16.3; *Themist.* 2.5; Suet. *Aug.* 5; *Nero* 26.1; Quint. *Decl.* 260.2; 267.1, 4; 290.2; 300.2; *Test. Jud.* 11:1; cf. perhaps Aeschines *Tim.* 39; Cic. *Cael.* 20.48.

628. Though few prosecutors granted this concession, it was strategic to appear gentle rather than bitter when pressing home charges, hence winning more favor from the hearers (*Rhet. Alex.* 37.1445b.17–19). Intention was important in arguing for or against guilt (Hermog. *Issues* 61.16–18).

629. *Rhet. Alex.* 4, 1427a.37–40 (LCL, 314). The ultimate form of such a line of argument was the insanity defense (Hermog. *Issues* 58.19–59.3; cf. Eurip. *Herc. fur.*; 2 Cor 11:1).

630. *Rhet. Alex.* 4, 1427a.1–21, esp. 13–14 (ἐξἁμαρτάνοντα).

produced unforeseen consequences (Hermog. *Issues* 65.17–22). The prosecutor could respond that harming the public interest violates the law even if the specific act did not (66.5–7); the defendant might answer by affirming that his or her *intentions* were correct (67.6–8).

The concession of ignorance may resemble the ancient rhetorical technique (cf. discussion at Acts 4:13) of calming an audience *after* a shocking statement (3:14–15).⁶³¹ Its status as a concession would not, however, mean that it would not be taken seriously. Some later Christian writers believed that God even forgave the rulers (Pilate, Herod, and the chief priests) though they continued in unbelief until they merited judgment.⁶³²

II. GOD'S PLAN (3:18)

Having mitigated their guilt based on ignorance (3:17), Peter now further softens the charge of murdering the Messiah by showing that it happened according to God's plan (cf. 2:23; Gen 45:5).⁶³³ Such a claim softened the rhetoric without completely absolving the hearers of their personal and corporate responsibility (cf. Rom 3:7–8; Gen 50:20–21). God's plan had long included rejected deliverers (Acts 7:9, 27–28, 35). Whereas Stephen (in his harsh counteraccusation in 7:52) applies the same verb *προκαταγγέλλω* to Jesus's coming (though he acknowledges that Scripture foretold Jesus's rejection, 7:35–37), Peter applies it (in the only other NT use) to Jesus's suffering. (The phrase "through the mouth of" implies divine inspiration; see comments on Acts 1:16.)

Some Jewish teachers spoke of a suffering Messiah, though it seems likely that, except among Jesus's followers, this tradition stems from the second rather than the first century (see the excursus on the Messiah at Acts 2:36). But the rest of Luke-Acts suggests that Luke draws on patterns of God's suffering servants, especially those rejected by their people, which provides a norm to expect for any of God's servants, with Jesus being God's servant par excellence.

The speech summary notes the support of Scripture proofs, though in its summary form it will develop only a few (esp. 3:22–23). For Luke as well as for the primitive church, the gospel of the kingdom may move beyond the Law and the Prophets (Luke 16:16), but those sources remain valid and sufficient testimony (16:29). The *global* reference to Scripture is frequent Lukan hyperbole (Acts 3:18, 24; 10:43; 17:3; 18:28; 24:14; 26:22; Luke 1:70; 24:44–47), "almost exclusively Lukan in the NT."⁶³⁴ But if it includes patterns and principles as well as explicit prophecies (see comments on Acts 7), Luke may genuinely envision a broad sweep of the biblical message. That the Scriptures foretold Jesus's execution implies not only explicit texts on which Luke draws (such as Isa 53:7–8 in Acts 8:32–33; Isa 53:12 in Luke 22:37) but also patterns of rejected deliverers (Acts 7:9, 27–28, 35), as the following context makes

631. Thus as something like what some Greeks called *epanorthosis* (cf. Rowe, "Style," 141 [citing Basil *Hom. Hex.* 9.7.63C; Aug. *Serm.* 339 c. 1]; Porter, "Paul and Letters," 581 [citing Rom 3:5]; cf. *μεταβολή* in Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 162, 170–71; cf. correction in *Rhet. Her.* 4.26.36), but without retracting or explicitly contrasting what he has said.

632. Theodoret *Comm. 1 Cor.* 176 (Bray, *Corinthians*, 23). Others believed that the chief priests and scribes knew that Jesus was the Christ and hence that they, unlike Pilate and Herod, merited judgment (Oecumenius in *Pauluskommentare* 432 [Bray, *Corinthians*, 23] comparing Luke 20:13–15).

633. One might think that Peter portrayed the ignorance (Acts 3:17) as less excusable in view of prophetic Scripture available to his audience (3:18), but the emphasis is on God's plan.

634. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 91; cf. similarly Meek, *Mission*, 137–38. Other writers did, of course, cite simply "the prophets" if they had numerous sources in view (e.g., *Tg. Isa.* 30:27; Matt 2:23; 5:17; 7:12; 22:40). Dahl, "Abraham," 141, treats "all the prophets" in Luke 13:28 as "a Lukan addition" (comparing analogous language in 4 Macc 13:17; 16:25).

clear (3:22–23). Whereas Greeks used Fate and oracles as plot-moving devices, fulfillment of biblical prophecies performs an analogous narrative function in Luke-Acts.⁶³⁵

The informed reader of Luke-Acts will hardly be surprised that Peter possesses a repertoire of Scripture relevant to Jesus's death and resurrection; Jesus himself instructed his followers on these matters only a few chapters earlier (Luke 24:46; cf. 24:26). Presumably, such texts include the obvious and more explicit examples cited in Acts (e.g., the servant in Acts 8:32–33), plus texts fitting the model of the righteous sufferer (e.g., 1:20) and the pattern of the rejected deliverer (e.g., 7:37–39). Paul and presumably many other early Christians believed that Jesus fulfilled the most critical biblical promises (e.g., Rom 15:8; 16:25–26; 2 Cor 1:20; Gal 3:14–16), that the Law and the Prophets testify to the gospel message (Rom 3:21), and that the Law supports justification by faith (3:31; 4:3). The Petrine tradition itself indicates that the prophets predicted beforehand the sufferings of Christ, that he would experience glories afterward, and that this message belonged to a future generation (1 Pet 1:10–12).

Many Jewish sages offered an eschatological, hence a messianic, reading of biblical prophecies.⁶³⁶ If, as later rabbis hyperbolically claimed, the prophets spoke only of the “days of the Messiah,” Jesus's coming was the climax of history (see fuller comments on Acts 3:24).⁶³⁷

g. Repentance Would Bring Israel's Restoration (3:19–21)

The call to repentance (Acts 3:19) signals the deliberative purpose of the speech. Luke may display some rhetorical sensitivity in the repetition of various sounds, though the examples here are quite minor by the standards of ancient rhetoric (as might be expected with a mere summary of a first-century Galilean's speech).⁶³⁸ Acts 3:19 opens with verbs coordinated and with -ατε endings,⁶³⁹ 3:20 repeats the ἀπό and προ- sounds (ἀπὸ προσώπου . . . ἀποστείλη τὸν προκεχειρισμένον).⁶⁴⁰

Luke's eschatology is, as noted before, less emphatically futuristic than that of Matthew, Mark, or Paul's Thessalonian correspondence. Whether this difference stems from a delay of the parousia is an open question (see comments on Acts 1:6–7), but many of the passages that speak of the end (10:42; 17:31; 24:25) lack an emphasis on eschatological urgency.⁶⁴¹ The present text, by contrast, reflects an expectation of at least a *potentially* imminent end, an ideology that Luke apparently connects with the earliest Jerusalem church.⁶⁴² The prerequisite for the end, however, appears to be

635. See, e.g., Aune, *Environment*, 131; fuller discussion on Acts 2:23.

636. E.g., all the prophets prophesied about the future era (1 *En.* 108:6) or about Jerusalem's restoration (*Gen. Rab.* 78:3, emended version). Rabbis also reread texts about prophets with an eschatological application (e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 357.5.11).

637. Dodd, *Preaching*, 21. Cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 211; Edersheim, *Life*, 309 (citing *b. Sanh.* 99a; *Ber.* 34b; *Šabb.* 63a).

638. As noted in the commentary introduction, ch. 8, Hellenistic historians sought to provide not only rhetoric that was acceptable (on appropriate occasions) but rhetoric that was appropriate to the speakers.

639. For this rhetorical pattern, see Anderson, *Glossary*, 78–79 (cf. 91–92); Rowe, “Style,” 138; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 581; Lee, “Translations,” 779; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 221. For a fuller example of end-rhyme, cf. *Mus. Ruf.* 6, p. 54.12–13.

640. Cf. also Acts 3:26, with two words beginning with ἀπέστ- and ἀποστ- respectively. This may not be close enough to constitute paronomasia (on which see *Rhet. Her.* 4.21.29–4.22.31; Rowe, “Style,” 132; Poglouff, *Logos*, 106; contrast the definition in Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, §488), but it is akin in its method. Many restricted this device to epideictic rhetoric (Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 283–85, citing *Rhet. Her.* 4.32; *Cic. Or. Brut.* 37–38, 164–67) and excluded it from passages with pathos (Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 283–85, citing *Dion. Hal. Thucyd.* 48; *Demet. Style* 27–29, 154, 247, 250).

641. See, e.g., Dunn, *Acts*, xxii.

642. Luke may also connect this early idea with the eschatological tradition of tribulation preceding the end (Acts 14:21–23), which would suggest that he preserved traditional eschatology even if he did not emphasize it (Nielsen, “Purpose,” esp. 88).

Israel's repentance (3:19; cf. Rom 11:15, 25–26; Matt 23:39; Hos 14:1–7),⁶⁴³ as often in early Jewish texts. Luke's explanation for the parousia's delay would thus undoubtedly be the delay of Israel's repentance (cf. Rom 11:25),⁶⁴⁴ an idea closely related to the Jewish expectation that the Messiah's coming was being delayed until Israel's repentance. Luke, however, would probably attribute this delay in repentance to the divine purpose of allowing the Gentile mission to be fulfilled first (Acts 1:6–8; cf. Rom 11:11–12, 25, 30–31; Matt 24:14).⁶⁴⁵ In context, the healing, an act of "salvation" through Jesus's name (cf. Acts 4:9, 12), may well prefigure eschatological deliverance.⁶⁴⁶

I. LUKE'S REPENTANCE ESCHATOLOGY (3:19)

If Jesus's coming was the fulfillment of the prophetic promises (3:18), then the era had come when God's eschatological blessing was available to Israel.⁶⁴⁷ Peter's summons to repentance here recalls the same summons in 2:38 (see fuller comments there). This is a call to Israel corporately, like the calls to turn to God in the biblical prophets (e.g., Isa 6:10; 10:21; Jer 3:7; 4:1; Hos 14:1–2; Joel 2:12–13; Zech 1:3–4; Mal 3:7).

The particular term ἐπιστρέφω also could apply to philosophic conversion (Porph. *Marc.* 24.378–79) but appears regularly in the LXX for Israel's repentance (Deut 30:2; Isa 6:10; 31:6; 44:22; 55:7; Jer 3:10, 12, 14, 22; 5:3; 8:5; 24:7; 34:15; Lam 3:40; Ezek 14:6; 18:30; Hos 2:7; 5:4; 6:1; 11:5; 12:6; 14:1–2; Amos 4:6–11; Joel 2:12–13; Hag 2:17; Zech 1:3; Mal 3:7), including in what first-century interpreters would understand as the end time (Deut 4:30; Hos 3:5).⁶⁴⁸ If Luke (or his source) derives the term from a specific biblical source, it is most likely Isa 6:10, which he quotes in his concluding summary justifying the Gentile mission in Acts 28:27. Although Luke uses the term also for regular repentance (Luke 17:4; 22:32), he employs it in a more dramatic sense for conversion (Acts 9:35; 11:21; 15:19; 26:18, 20), at least sometimes as an eschatological work, part of Elijah's mission (Luke 1:16–17).

This turning to the Lord in the prophets invites the Lord's restoration of Israel (e.g., Ezek 36:24–28; Hos 14:1–7; Joel 2:12–32); when applied in an ultimate, eschatological sense, this suggests the end of the age.⁶⁴⁹ It is not surprising that, for Peter, this repentance ushers in the eschatological promises (Acts 3:19–21), including Jesus's return (3:20), as apparently elsewhere in early Christian expectation (Rom 11:25–27, esp. 11:26; Matt 23:39). Luke apparently believes that in the meantime, if Israel refuses to repent and drags out the interim period,⁶⁵⁰ then the very hardness of Israel justifies the Gentile mission, against Jewish objections.

II. REPENTANCE ESCHATOLOGY IN EARLY JUDAISM (3:19)

For much of early Jewish expectation, Israel's repentance was the goal of history (see *Jub.* 1:15–18), and many Jewish sources expected that Israel would return to

643. With, e.g., Tannehill, *Luke*, 260; Glasson, *Advent*, 155. Cf. perhaps Rev 11:13, depending on its interpretation (for support, see, e.g., Keener, *Revelation*, 297; but the passage is not easy).

644. With, e.g., Bruce, *Commentary*, 90.

645. With Munck, *Acts*, 29.

646. Hamm, "Sign of Healing," 163–74 (as cited in Tiede, *Prophecy*, 90); Hamm, *Acts*, 25 (noting Acts 3:24); Gaiser, *Healing*, 217, 224.

647. Parker, "Apokatastasis," 36–37.

648. Cf. also for Egypt (Isa 19:22) and the nations (45:22). Cf. Sir 18:21.

649. The Lord would "return" to Israel's people when they "returned" to him (Joel 2:12–14; Zech 1:3; Mal 3:7; Tob 13:6; cf. Jer 18:8; *Test. Zeb.* 9:7).

650. Particularly if Luke understands Isaiah as saying that the period of welcoming Gentiles lasts until Israel's repentance and restoration ("to make them jealous" [Deut 32:21], Paul would have added [Rom 10:19; 11:11, 14]).

God's law in the last days.⁶⁵¹ Often Jewish teachers, most abundantly exemplified in later rabbinic texts, predicated the end's arrival and Israel's restoration as chronologically contingent on Israel's repentance.⁶⁵² As early as *Jubilees* (second century B.C.E.) we may find the idea (if the text means this) that a generation turning completely to God would usher in the (or an) age of peace (23:26–27). Rabbi Judah praised charity as bringing the final redemption closer;⁶⁵³ some later teachers claimed that caring for the poor would bring the resurrection before the appointed time.⁶⁵⁴ Other rabbis noted that obedience to various other precepts also hastened the Messiah's coming.⁶⁵⁵ Various sins were thought to delay the Messiah's coming, such as insincere converts or marrying girls too young to produce children.⁶⁵⁶ A third-century teacher reportedly claimed that only Hezekiah's failure to praise God for Sennacherib's overthrow delayed the end and prevented Hezekiah from being the Messiah.⁶⁵⁷ Delaying repentance would delay the time of redemption.⁶⁵⁸ An early version of such views certainly affected some Jewish-Christian eschatology; one Jewish Christian opined that if Christians did particular things, the kingdom would come (2 *Clem.* 12.1–6, esp. 12.6).

Not all Jewish teachers agreed on the timing of this end-time scenario. Some Jewish teachers held that the end would come at a fixed time, whereas others believed that Israel's repentance would usher it in.⁶⁵⁹ Thus 4 *Ezra* 7:74 declares that God is patient with the world, not for the sake of its people, but for the sake of God's pre-established times. A very late tradition claims that the Messiah will not come until all the souls predestined to be created have been formed.⁶⁶⁰

There thus existed no unified view: later rabbis collected various views about dates, prerequisites, and signs of the Messiah's coming, alongside warnings against speculating when he would come (*b. Sanh.* 97a–98b).⁶⁶¹ Teachers could combine the options, of course, since God would bring about Israel's repentance whether or not they wished to cooperate.⁶⁶² In a late tradition attributed to a third-century rabbi, God had set an appointed time for the end but would advance it if Israel proved worthy⁶⁶³—for

651. E.g., 4QMMT C 21–22 (after surveying Israel's behavior in history, C 17–21); *Test. Jud.* 23:5; *Test. Zeb.* 9:7; *Test. Dan* 5:9–10; 6:4. The renewal (or "regeneration," Vermes) would come when the spirit of falsehood was purged from the earth at the determined end (1QS IV, 25). For eschatological repentance for many sinners, see 1 *En.* 50:2–5. Differing from an emphasis in some rabbinic eschatology, in *Jub.* 1 repentance may be seen as divinely, rather than humanly, initiated (Lambert, "Redemption").

652. E.g., *Sipre Deut.* 43.16.3 (citing *Jer* 31:21); *y. Ta'an.* 1:1, §7; also *Test. Dan* 6:4; possibly *Test. Mos.* 1:18. Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 117, cites also *Sipre* on *Num* 11:3; see more fully Bonsirven, *Sages*, 180 (noting the prerequisite of repentance in *b. Sanh.* 97b–98a as well as other prerequisites, such as prayer and good deeds); Moore, *Judaism*, 2:350–51 (citing, e.g., *b. Yoma* 86b; *Yalqut Isa.* 59:20); Urbach, *Sages*, 1:669; Klausner, *Messianic Idea*, 427–29. New Testament scholars generally note this pattern as well (e.g., Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 1:599ff.; Manson, *Paul and John*, 23–24; Munck, *Acts*, 29; De Ridder, *Discipling*, 118; Talbert, *Acts*, 40).

653. *B. B. Bat.* 10a (ca. 200 C.E.).

654. *Song Rab.* 2:5, §3 (citing third-century R. Johanan in the name of second-century R. Simeon ben Yohai if the attribution is dependable).

655. *Deut. Rab.* 6:7. All Israel's keeping the Sabbath on one day would bring the end (*Exod. Rab.* 25:12, third-century R. Levi if the attribution is dependable, a caveat that must apply to all the later parts of Midrash Rabbah cited in this section).

656. *B. Nid.* 13b (interpreting a baraita).

657. *Song Rab.* 4:8, §3 (attributed to R. Joshua ben Levi).

658. *Pesiq. Rab.* 33:6.

659. Noted also by others, e.g., Le Cornu, *Acts*, 135. See fuller discussion at *Acts* 1:6–7.

660. *Lev. Rab.* 15:1 (attributed to R. Tanhum b. R. Hiyya, possibly third century C.E.).

661. For attempts to calculate the time of the end (on the basis of such matters as sabbatical and Jubilee cycles or end-time invasions), see *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 9b–10a; *Lam. Rab.* proem 21; *Lam. Rab.* 1:13, §41.

662. E.g., *Sipra Behuq. pq.* 8.269.2.3 (using *Ezek* 20:33).

663. *Song Rab.* 8:14, §1 (R. Aha in the name of third-century R. Joshua ben Levi).

example, if Israel repented even for a single day.⁶⁶⁴ Another late story even claimed that Elijah once woke the patriarchs separately for prayers lest, praying together, they “bring the Messiah before his time.”⁶⁶⁵ Whether at an appointed time or before, Israel’s repentance signaled the end.⁶⁶⁶

Luke, like many Jewish contemporaries, seems to have accommodated both approaches; the times were fixed (Acts 1:7), but Israel’s repentance would usher in the end (3:19–20). The earliest Christians apparently expected, or at least hoped, that this repentance of Israel and consequently Christ’s return from heaven would occur almost immediately.⁶⁶⁷ Although many modern arguments for the church’s later disappointment over the delay of the parousia are overstated, it does appear that the earliest Christians connected Jesus’s return with Israel’s repentance and viewed the delay of the latter (for some, providentially allowing the Gentile mission) as the primary factor delaying Christ’s return (cf. Rom 11:15, 25–26).

Where Luke parts company most starkly with other Jewish eschatological views, however, is his Christology.⁶⁶⁸ For Luke, repentance was inseparable from receiving God’s agent (Acts 3:22–23, 26; cf. 2:38; 5:31; 17:30–31; 19:4; 20:21). There was no question of what to do to hasten the Messiah’s first coming; he had come, his people had rejected him, and now they could not expect his return until they repented (cf. Matt 23:39 [with 21:9]; though contrast Luke 13:35; 19:38).

The “wiping away” of sins or guilt appears elsewhere in early Christian texts (Col 2:14), but the term also applies to wiping away tears (Rev 7:17; 21:4) or one’s name from the new Jerusalem’s citizen register (3:5). In the LXX, the verb appears in pleas to blot out the petitioners’ sins (Ps 50:11 [51:9 ET]; 2 Macc 12:42)⁶⁶⁹ and, most significantly, in Moses’s prayer for God to blot out Israel’s sin (Exod 32:32).⁶⁷⁰ Here the forgiveness extends even to the ultimate guilt of participation in their king’s murder (Acts 7:52; Luke 11:47–51).⁶⁷¹

III. REFRESHING AND JESUS’S RETURN (3:20)

The term ἀνάψυξις and its cognates nowhere bear a specifically eschatological meaning in biblical literature (though that literature’s usage signifies, as here, something like “refreshing,” rest or respite from trouble).⁶⁷² Some scholars connect it with the aftermath of the exodus in Ps 66:12, which could be relevant to those seeking a new exodus (Luke 21:24).⁶⁷³ Others note Symmachus’s use for it to replace πνεῦμα in the

664. *Exod. Rab.* 25:12 (R. Johanan); cf. *Song Rab.* 5:2, §2 (R. Levi). The principle of an interim period being necessary because of Israel’s sin was applied even to the Passover (*Mek. Pisha* 5.38ff.).

665. *B. B. Meši’a* 85b (Soncino 492).

666. Cf. also *Deut. Rab.* 3:2.

667. With Dodd, *Preaching*, 33; cf. Goppelt, *Times*, 37.

668. Cf. Bayer, “Eschatology in Acts 3:17–26,” esp. 250.

669. Cf. the prayer in 3 Macc 2:19, employing a cognate verb (BDAG). God wipes away transgressions in Isa 43:25; Sir 46:20; God would spare his holy ones and wipe away their transgressions by discipline, in *Pss. Sol.* 13:10.

670. Also in prayers that the sins of one’s persecutor *not* be blotted out (Ps 108:14 [109:14 ET]; Jer 18:23; cf. a plea to wipe away the memory of the wicked in *Pss. Sol.* 2:17).

671. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 29 (Martin, *Acts*, 168–69, on Acts 13:38) contends that forgiveness is offered even to the very people who killed Jesus.

672. Exod 8:15 (respite); 23:12 (rest); Judg 15:19; 1 Sam 16:23; 2 Sam 16:14; Pss 39:13; 66:12; Hos 12:8; Jer 49:31; 2 Macc 4:46; 13:11. The proposed alternative to an eschatological reading here (periods of relief from the final suffering; cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 37: “a temporary relief attainable through faith”) has not commended itself to many interpreters (see the critique in Conzelmann, *Acts*, 29). *Apoc. Sed.* 16:5 applies it to a place of refreshing for the righteous after death, but this source is late enough to possibly reflect the influence of some NT language.

673. Rackham, *Acts*, 53 (also connecting this with a new creation in Ps 39:13, but this is difficult to find there).

LXX of Isa 32:15, and they suggest that the repentant here are promised “refreshing” in this age as they are promised the Spirit in this age in Acts 2:38.⁶⁷⁴

That God would “send” Jesus (3:20)⁶⁷⁵ connects his second mission with his first,⁶⁷⁶ for God had already “sent” him to bless Israel first (3:26; cf. Luke 4:18, 26, 43; 9:48; 10:16; 20:13; Acts 10:36).⁶⁷⁷ Like Moses (Acts 3:22–23), Jesus was “sent” by God yet rejected by his people (7:34–35). The term employed here for “appoint” (προχειρίζομαι) indicates God’s sovereign choice (like that of a king [cf. 2 Macc 3:7; 8:9; 14:12]; Dan 3:22; applied to the Lord’s choice of Paul in Acts 22:14; 26:16, the only other NT uses), underlining the claim that rejecting Jesus as Messiah is rebellion against God’s choice for Israel and embracing him is obedience to Israel’s God.

The “face of the Lord” represents his presence (e.g., Gen 3:8; 2 Cor 3:18),⁶⁷⁸ essentially (like his name) his person (Jdt 4:11; 1 Pet 3:12). Judgment comes from there (Num 16:46 [17:11 LXX]; 2 Thess 1:9); God’s face is so awesome as to have dramatic effects (Judg 5:5). Thus one may contrast the negative repercussions of the Lord’s showing his face in some passages (Isa 2:10, 19, 21; 2 Thess 1:9).⁶⁷⁹ The righteous might see God’s face at death or in the coming age,⁶⁸⁰ but at the death of the wicked, God might turn his face from them (Sir 18:24). For God to “hide” or “turn away” his face was a fearful matter.⁶⁸¹

IV. RESTORATION ESCHATOLOGY (3:21)

Luke has already spoken of God’s prophets predicting Jesus “from antiquity” (ἀπ’ αἰῶνος, Luke 1:70) and will use the phrase again (Acts 15:18); although it appears nowhere else in the NT, Luke has probably borrowed it from the LXX.⁶⁸² That heaven would receive Jesus until the period of restoration echoes Ps 110:1, as quoted in Acts 2:34–35: Jesus ascended (1:9–11; 2:33) and would complete his heavenly reign and return only at the time that his enemies would be put under his feet (2:34–35).⁶⁸³

674. Marshall, “Acts,” 546–47 (following W. L. Lane). Although this argument is plausible, one cannot (pace Marshall) treat the restoration as present; in view of Luke’s ἄχρι, Jesus’s return and restoration period are future, not only from Peter’s but from Luke’s standpoint.

675. Cf. God’s sending a king (perhaps Cyrus) in *Sib. Or.* 3.286–87; sending Wisdom (Wis 9:10) or Torah (*Song Rab.* 1:2, §2); the heavenly agent, in Borgen, “Agent,” 144–47. Agents in ancient Jewish sources include Moses (*Sipra Behuq.* pq. 13.277.1.13–14; *’Abot R. Nat.* 1 A, most mss; *Exod. Rab.* 6:3; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 14:5; cf. *Jos. Ant.* 4.329; note also *Memar Marqah* 6.3, in Bowman, *Documents*, 241, 243), Aaron (*Sipra Sav M.d.* 98.9.6), the prophets (*Mek. Pisha* 1.87 [Lauterbach, 1:8]; *’Abot R. Nat.* 37, §95 B), or anyone who carries out God’s will (*Sipra Sav M.d.* 98.9.5). See further discussion of the sending motif in Keener, *John*, 310–17, esp. 310–15.

676. The idiosyncratic view that the sending in Acts 3:20 refers to Jesus’s sending to the individual soul (Abbott, *Acts*, 55; cf. John 14:23) cannot fit the context here.

677. The commission started with the prophets (Luke 11:49; 13:34; 20:10–12) and is extended to the Spirit (24:49) and the apostolic witnesses (9:2, 52; 10:1, 3, 16; 11:49; 14:17; 22:35; Acts 26:17) and for the Gentiles (Acts 26:17; 28:28).

678. Sometimes connected with the tabernacle because God’s presence was there (Num 17:9 [17:24 LXX]; Josh 4:5 [as an LXX circumlocution for the ark]; 1 Sam 1:14, 22; 2:11; 21:6; Sir 35:6 [35:4]; cf. Jdt 4:13); it probably represents the Holy Land in 1 Sam 26:20.

679. 3 Macc 6:18; *Sib. Or.* 3.556–57; Rev 6:16; cf. *Jub.* 1:20.

680. E.g., 1 En. 90:35; 4 Ezra 7:98; *CIJ* 1:452, §634 (cf. 1:509, §696); *Sipra Behuq.* pq. 3.263.1.5; *Sipre Deut.* 47.2.2; 310.6.1; *’Abot R. Nat.* 1 A; *Pesiq. Rab.* 12:9; 37:2; in probably Christian material, *Asc. Is.* 9:38. Some Hellenistic sources also place a vision of God at death (Max. Tyre 9.6; 10.3; 11.11).

681. Often, e.g., Pss 13:1; 27:9; 69:17; 88:14; 102:2; 104:29; 143:7; Ezek 39:29; Mic 3:4; Tob 3:6; 4:7; *Jub.* 1:13, 20; 21:22; 1 En. 84:6; CD I, 3–4; II, 8; 4Q216 II, 14; 4Q388a 6 2; 4Q390 1 9; 11QT LIX, 7.

682. See, e.g., Gen 6:4; Ps 118:52 (119:52 ET) (the law); Jer 2:20; 25:5; Sir 44:2 (Israel’s early history); 51:8; later, 3 Macc 5:11. The expression does not imply “eternity,” though it can reach as far back as Adam (Sir 14:17; 1 Clem. 32.4).

683. The δεῖ here suggests divine necessity (see Cosgrove, “Divine ΔΕΙ”), i.e., a fixed eschatological plan. The period referred to in both 3:19 and 21 is presumably the eschatological era ushered in at Jesus’s return (3:20); see Anderson, *Raised*, 226–28 (responding also to alternative positions). The pattern outlined here

The “restoration” spoken of in the prophets is specifically connected with the hope of Israel, whose “restoration” was already mentioned by the disciples in 1:6 (there a form of the verb ἀποκαθίστημι).

Throughout history, some have interpreted the “restoration of all things” cosmically. Some modern interpreters likewise apply it to the restoration of the cosmos.⁶⁸⁴ In the most extreme form of this position, Origen understood this promise as declaring not merely the subordination but the reconciliation of all things (cf. Col 1:20), so that even Satan would be saved (a view deemed heterodox by most later Christians).⁶⁸⁵ Context prevents us, however, from reading Luke’s “restoration of all things” in a universalist manner,⁶⁸⁶ even many within Israel would be destroyed (Acts 3:23; see comments there). Further, the time of restoration, which ends Jesus’s period in heaven, parallels the subjugation of Jesus’s enemies (2:35). But could a cosmic “restoration” remain in view?

Certainly, cosmic eschatology was common, attested most obviously in Zoroastrianism⁶⁸⁷ but also (though less commonly, apart from Stoics) in Greek and Roman views.⁶⁸⁸ Greeks and Romans sometimes believed at least in the restoration of an ancient “golden age” (cf., e.g., Calpurnius Siculus *Eclogae* 1.42–45).⁶⁸⁹ Pliny the Elder and Seneca expected a golden age to follow the world’s destruction.⁶⁹⁰

Scholars have often drawn attention specifically to Stoic language as background for Acts 3:21, noting that Stoics used the term “restoration” for the reoccurrence in each new age of the events of previous ages.⁶⁹¹ Stoics taught that the universe was periodically dissolved in primeval fire,⁶⁹² followed by a “regeneration” (παλιγγενεσία;

also renders impossible the traditional dispensational schema of a pretribulation gathering of saints (see Katterjohn and Fackler, *People*, 68).

684. E.g., Ladd, *Theology*, 333; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 283.

685. Hall, *Reading Scripture*, 52–53; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 289 (citing Origen *De principiis* 1.6.1–4; 2.3.1–5; 3.5–6; *Cels.* 8.72; also Greg. Nyssa *Oratio catechetica* 26); Pelikan, *Acts*, 66; see qualifications and discussion in Reasoner, *Full Circle*, 56–57. Cf. the gnostic idea of restoration into the pleroma (*Tripartite Tractate* 122–24, in *NHL* 91); or the later Kabbalah idea of universal salvation at a final Jubilee (Ginsburg, *Kabbalah*, 126–27; the source is thirteenth century).

686. Still more dubious is the allowance that the Bible as a whole could support universal salvation (Pelikan, *Acts*, 66–68), appealing as such a notion is to most of us; apart from soteriological universalism’s serious problem with more explicit passages about eternal destruction, the “restoration” here must refer to the restoration of Israel in Acts 1:6–7 (see discussion below).

687. Collins, “Eschatologies,” 332–33; Finegan, *Religions*, 90. It is possible that this perspective indirectly influenced the Stoic view (Knox, *Gentiles*, 207, is skeptical because of lack of evidence for contact, but contacts with Parthia were many).

688. See Collins, “Eschatologies,” 333.

689. Probably about the first century C.E. See fuller discussion of a primeval golden age in our comments on Acts 2:17. Janus brought newness each year (Statius *Silv.* 4.1.17–20).

690. Downing, “Strands,” doubting that they regarded it as cyclical.

691. E.g., Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 29. For Stoics and the end of the cosmos, see Adams, *Stars*, 114–24, including discussion of the cosmic conflagration (116–18) and cycle (118–20); for concise comparison and contrast with Jewish notions, see 128–29. This view contrasts with the eternity of the world in some other systems (Arist. *Heav.* 1.9–10; Lucret. *Nat.* 1.215–64, 958–1115; Cic. *Tusc.* 1.23.54; *Nat. d.* 1.9.21–22; Ovid. *Metam.* 15.252–58; Plot. *Enn.* 2.1.1; Sallustius *Gods* 7, 13, 17; others in Sen. *Y. Nat. Q.* 3.22.10; Aug. *Serm.* 241.7; cf. Pliny *E. N.H.* 2.1.1; 2.6.30; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 58; Bodnár, “Eleatic School,” 892), argued against in, e.g., Philo *Creation* 7, 170 (affirming a beginning, esp. against Aristotle; see Chroust, “Fragment”; Chroust also finds fragments of Aristotle in Philo’s *Eternity* [Chroust, “Comments”]); perhaps *Gen. Rab.* 1:5; cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:180, 301–5.

692. E.g., Sen. *Y. Ben.* 4.8.1; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.13.4; Plut. *Comm. Conc.* 31, *Mor.* 1075B; Lucian *Phil. Sale* 14; Marc. Aur. 4.46; Diog. Laert. 9.1.7; cf. Klauck, *Context*, 354; Sevenster, *Seneca*, 33; Knox, *Gentiles*, 1–2; Hippol. *Ref.* 6.4; for different approaches among early Stoics to the conflagration, see Salles, “Ἐκπύρωσις”; cf. Murray, *Philosophy*, 56–57. Some others also utilized the image of the conflagration (Lucan *C.W.* 7.812–15). For periodic destructions of the world order, see Bauckham, *Jude*, 301 (citing esp. Plato *Tim.* 22C–E; Berossus in Sen. *Y. Nat. Q.* 3.29.1; Lucret. *Nat.* 5); Justin *1 Apol.* 20. Even later rabbis allowed earlier worlds, though not a cyclic repetition of history (*Gen. Rab.* 3:7; 9:2; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:11, §1).

cf. Matt 19:28) or restoration (ἀποκατάστασις).⁶⁹³ Because the Stoic view of history was cyclical,⁶⁹⁴ they believed that the gods could predict the future—because it had already happened before (Chrysippus frg. 1192).⁶⁹⁵ Seneca expects the earth to be covered again by the fated deluge (*Nat. Q.* 3.27.1; contrast 2 Pet 3:6–7);⁶⁹⁶ he combines this fate with the cosmic conflagration (*Nat. Q.* 3.29.1; cf. 2 Pet 3:7).⁶⁹⁷ He expects the cosmic deluge to be followed by a re-creation of animals and a humanity free from sin, though it will decline again (*Nat. Q.* 3.30.7).

In a Jewish context, a cosmic transformation must refer to the time of the new creation,⁶⁹⁸ applicable especially to the time of Israel's restoration (cf. *Jos. Ant.* 11.66; Acts 1:6–7; 3:21, 25) and the resurrection (cf. *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.218, though cf. also *War* 6.250). Many Jews also expected an ultimate conflagration of divine judgment.⁶⁹⁹ From Isaiah (Isa 65:17; 66:22) on,⁷⁰⁰ cosmic renewal was a familiar Jewish hope.⁷⁰¹ Isaiah had promised a cosmic renovation (65:17; 66:22), a new (or renewed) creation along with (Isa 66:18–19) a new (or renewed) Jerusalem, which came to be echoed frequently in ancient Jewish literature. The eschatological new creation appears frequently in early Jewish hopes.⁷⁰²

Adopting Hellenistic language, Josephus claims that the righteous will receive new life (in traditional Palestinian Jewish terms, the resurrection of the dead) at the time of the “revolution” of things (*Ag. Ap.* 2.218).⁷⁰³ Apocalyptic texts often depicted the *Endzeit* in terms of the *Urzeit*,⁷⁰⁴ a motif not entirely foreign to Roman readers, who had hoped for a restoration of the primeval golden age in the Augustan Pax Romana or other events.⁷⁰⁵ Thus what was ruined in Adam could be restored in the eschatological time.⁷⁰⁶

693. Bruce, *History*, 44; for the world's renewal after destruction, see, e.g., Sen. *Y. Dial.* 6.26.7; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.1.18. This Stoic claim of periodic παλιγγενεσία after conflagration is challenged in Philo *Eternity* 85, 88; Tatian *Or. Gks.* 6. Pliny *E. N.H.* 2.4.13 refers to the annual rebirth of the year.

694. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 2.1.18. History repeated itself even down to the details of the same individuals having the same friends in each cycle (Chrysippus *Frg.* 625, in Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 311). Cf. the less dramatic “cycles” of different races of humanity in some other sources (e.g., *Sib. Or.* 1.65–124).

695. Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 312. For cyclical destructions, see also Plato *Tim.* 22B.

696. His present-tense verbs probably reflect his Stoic expectation that the catastrophe recurs. On the expectation in 2 Peter, see, e.g., Thiede, “Conflagration.”

697. Bruce, *History*, 44. Cf. also the possibly noncyclical renewal in Pliny and Seneca (Downing, “Strands”). Many cite such Stoic imagery in 2 Pet 3 (see Harrill, “Physics,” 131).

698. See the discussion of Jewish texts addressing transformation of the present world in Arrington, *Aeon Theology*, 98–100. Among the rabbis, see, e.g., citations in Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 201; cf. also later Jewish mysticism (e.g., in Scholem, “Luria,” 578). Cf. Matt 19:28 and comments in Manson, *Sayings*, 216; France, *Matthew*, 287; Sim, “Παλιγγενεσία”; Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:565; for the “resurrection,” see Derrett, “Palingenesia.”

699. E.g., 1QH^a IV, 13; *Sib. Or.* 3.73–74, 83–92, 760–61; 4.43, 161, 176–78; 5.29–31, 211–13; 7.118–31 (cf. Collins in *OTP* 1:388 n. f2); *Jos. Ant.* 1.70; *Gen. Rab.* 39:6; cf. 1 *En.* 1:6.

700. Isaiah's vision included socioeconomic restoration (Kraybill, *Cult and Commerce*, 209–10, citing Isa 65:20–22; 66:12) and certainly Jerusalem's restoration (Isa 65:18).

701. See, e.g., Black, *Scrolls*, 135–36; Gaster, *Scriptures*, 23; McNamara, *Judaism*, 112–13.

702. E.g., *Jub.* 1:29; 4:26; 1 *En.* 45:4–5; 72:1; 91:16; *Sib. Or.* 5.211–12; *L.A.B.* 3:10; 2 *Bar.* 32:6; 44:12; 57:2; *Deut. Rab.* 11:10; cf. 4 *Ezra* 6:16; 8:52; perhaps *Gen. Rab.* 1:13. On strands of renewed creation teaching relevant to Rev 21, see Stephens, “Destroyers”; idem, *Annihilation* (note esp. Second Temple materials in 46–116).

703. Naturally, Philo and his imitators could exploit this Hellenistic language (Philo *Eternity* 85; *Mos.* 2.65).

704. Cf., e.g., Rev 22:1–3; 1QH^a XIV, 16–17; 4 *Ezra* 8:52–54; 9:5–6; *Test. Levi* 18:10–12; *Test. Dan* 5:12; 2 *En.* 8:3; *m. Ab.* 5:20; *b. Tamid* 32b; *Tem.* 16a; *Yoma* 87a; *Song Rab.* 4:12, §3; see further Rissi, *Time*, 4; Arrington, *Aeon Theology*, 77–81.

705. Cf., e.g., Calpurnius Siculus 1.42–45; cf. Winslow, “Religion,” 239.

706. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 208 (citing *Gen. Rab.* 12:6); Scroggs, *Adam*, 27–31 (citing, e.g., *Apoc. Mos.* 13:2–4; 39:2); see also *Num. Rab.* 13:12; perhaps 1QS IV, 23; CD III, 20; 1QH^a IV, 27.

This conceptualization may appear most strikingly in Essene thought. The Qumran scrolls speak of creation's renewal⁷⁰⁷ and (in 1QH^a XI) appear to confirm the later report of Hippolytus that the Essenes envisioned a future cosmic conflagration at the end of the age.⁷⁰⁸ Some scholars have also compared the restoration of Adam's former glory in the Qumran scrolls.⁷⁰⁹ Early Christians also spoke of creation's liberation (Rom 8:21–22) and a new creation (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1; cf. Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Cor 5:17), a "regeneration" (Matt 19:28). But such factors establish only the *possibility* that Acts 3:21 envisions cosmic renewal; they do not demonstrate that this is the nearest frame of reference for interpreting the phrase. Other factors in fact suggest a quite different meaning.

The terminology does not require us to narrow the meaning to its occasional Stoic usage; in fact, Stoics themselves could employ such language in different ways.⁷¹⁰ Nor need the term refer to a once-for-all (as opposed to cyclical) return to the beginning of creation, following the common apocalyptic principle of the end time's reflecting the beginning time.⁷¹¹ The term appears in papyri for various kinds of repairs of temples and may even function as "the establishment of what was predicted rather than the restoration of an earlier condition."⁷¹² Significantly, when used for restoration, it can apply to Jerusalem's restoration (Jos. *Ant.* 11.63), which fits the only other usage of even a cognate term in Luke's own writings (Acts 1:6).

In view of the cognate usage in 1:6 and the text's claim that the object of restoration is what all the prophets spoke about, the restoration of Israel is the likeliest interpretation.⁷¹³ Israel's restoration appears repeatedly in the biblical prophets (Amos 9:14; Ezek 39:25; see comments on Acts 1:6), a significant point here given that the restoration is of what "the prophets" predicted (Acts 3:21).⁷¹⁴ Granted, they also prophesied in terms of cosmic renewal (e.g., Amos 9:13; Isa 65:17; 66:22); but this renewal was always connected in context with Israel's restoration, and it included the nations' destruction or subjugation as often as their conversion. Jewish literature frequently commented on cosmic renewal, but Israel's restoration was always a part of this hope (even, in some sense, in Rev 21:1–2, which features a new Jerusalem alongside the new creation, following Isa 65:17–18; 66:22–23).⁷¹⁵ Because Peter nowhere qualifies the Jewish expectation that this restoration would occur at the end of the age, it seems likely that this is what he has in mind.

h. The One Predicted by Moses and the Prophets (3:22–24)

Presumably expounding the sort of texts learned from Jesus in Luke 24:44–47, Peter has portrayed Jesus as "servant" (Acts 3:13), "holy and righteous one" (3:14),

707. 1QH^a XIX, 13; perhaps 4Q225 1 7.

708. Cross, *Library*, 94 (citing Hippol. *Ref.* 9.27; 1QH^a XI, 19–36, esp. 29–31); Black, "Essenes," 175; idem, *Scrolls*, 142. It is interpreted figuratively by Pryke, "Eschatology," 4:54–55, because it appears nowhere else in the Scrolls, but cf. 1QS II, 7–8; CD II, 5–6; 1QpHab X, 3–5. 1QH^a XI has been compared with Stoicism and the *Sibylline Oracles* (Gaster, *Scriptures*, 22, 25) and with 2 Pet 3:7 (Barnard, "Judgment").

709. Black, *Scrolls*, 135.

710. E.g., the material part of a human reverts (ἀποκαταστήναι) to its original elements at death (Epict. *Diatr.* 4.7.15).

711. A view defended by Mattill, *Last Things*, 5–6. On the connection of *Endzeit* and *Urzeit* in apocalyptic literature, see comments above.

712. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 38; for various uses, cf. Carter and Earle, *Acts*, 54.

713. Also, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 187; Wright, *Ethics*, 206 (adding the more controversial Jubilee principle). Luke's language in 3:19–21 evokes particularly Israel's restoration and the messianic age; see in detail Lennartsson, *Refreshing*; for the restoration theme in Luke-Acts against the background of early Jewish expectations, see also Fuller, *Restoration*.

714. On Israel's restoration, especially through the lens of Isaiah, see Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 111–46.

715. Cf., e.g., Buchanan, *Consequences*, 138–39; Tiede, *Prophecy*, 90.

“founder” of new life (3:15), and “Christ” (3:18, 20). Now he turns to an explicit biblical citation (3:22–23) and a final global summary (3:24) to proclaim Christ: Jesus fulfills what both Moses and the prophets spoke and hence is the epitome of Israel’s hopes for the promised new era of blessing (cf. 3:19–21, 25–26).

I. THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES (3:22)

Orators regularly used citations in their proofs; the speech, which surrounds its eschatological summons with global allusions (3:18, 21) and will soon offer another global allusion (3:24), now develops one text in particular, this one a reading from the “law” proper. The quotation’s emphatic repetitions of “you” or “your” help underline God’s concern for Israel (3:25–26).

Peter presented Jesus not only as the Messiah but also as the prophet like Moses.⁷¹⁶ This idea is developed more fully in 7:37 (see fullest comment there).⁷¹⁷ Moses was not only a prophet but a divinely appointed leader of the nation (once even “king,” Deut 33:5).⁷¹⁸ Prophetic endowment was the ideal for any ruler of Israel (cf. 1 Sam 10:6, 11; 16:13; Acts 2:30) but modeled only by a few (Acts 2:30; Judg 4:4; 1 Sam 7:15–17). A prophet “like Moses” was thus a prophet of great rank (Deut 18:19; cf. 33:4–5) with special intimacy with God as well as wonders and signs (34:10–12; Acts 7:36; cf. 2:22). The most important connection offered in Acts, however, is that he was a prophet rejected by his people (Acts 7:35–37); Deuteronomy itself promised a prophet from among the people (Deut 18:15, 18) and warned against disobeying him (18:19).

Moses was central in Jewish tradition. Even many Gentiles knew of Moses’s centrality to Judaism,⁷¹⁹ so that he was “by far the best-known figure of Jewish history in the pagan world.”⁷²⁰ Although Moses’s behavior was accepted as the standard for all subsequent prophets,⁷²¹ this “prophet like Moses” was usually understood not as one among many but as a special successor to the greatest prophet (see discussion below).⁷²² Moses was widely associated with prophecy, as the most preeminent of prophets (*L.A.B.* 35:6).⁷²³ He also functioned as a sort of ruler,⁷²⁴ a role sometimes emphasized alongside his prophetism.⁷²⁵ Some later rabbis said that Moses would lead Israel⁷²⁶ and teach Torah⁷²⁷ in the coming world.⁷²⁸ He functioned as mediator of God’s supreme revelation;⁷²⁹ various early Jewish texts presented Moses as a

716. With, e.g., Hamm, “Acts 3:12–26.”

717. Moessner, “Luke 9:1–50,” argues also for a new-Moses and new-exodus comparison in Luke 9.

718. Philo emphasized the combination of prophet and king in Moses (see Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 115); probably Hasmonean rule had popularized this combination.

719. For law giving, see Gager, *Moses*, 25–112; for the exodus, 113–33. Moses appears as a prophet even in magical texts (e.g., *PGM* 5.107–9).

720. Gager, *Moses*, 18.

721. Cf. *Sipre Deut.* 83.1.1. In *Sipre Deut.* 306.24.2, Moses is “father” of the prophets.

722. Moses and Isaiah were the greatest prophets (*Deut. Rab.* 2:4; but cf. 7:8, which grants the title to Ezekiel).

723. Moses is the chief prophet in the Qumran scrolls (Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 173); in the rabbis, see Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 198–200; in Philo, 125–29; in Josephus, 137–38; in Samaritan literature, 220–26.

724. Deut 33:5; cf. the name in *L.A.B.* 9:16; Joshua as ruler in 20:5. For Moses’s kingship, see esp. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 181–96; in Philo, 107–17 (despite lack of Hellenistic precedent for combining king and prophet); in Samaritan literature, 238, 236 (rarely); Ezekiel the Tragedian in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.29 (Lane, *Hebrews*, liv; Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 147–50). He is never king in Josephus (Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 134–36; not surprising given his apologetic) but is a commander (133–34).

725. E.g., Philo *Rewards* 53.

726. *Deut. Rab.* 9:9.

727. *Exod. Rab.* 2:6.

728. For Moses’s eschatological role, see Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 246–50.

729. E.g., *Exod. Rab.* 28:1; Jeremias, “Μωυσης,” 852–53; cf. Van Henten, “Moses as Messenger.”

continuing advocate or intercessor for Israel,⁷³⁰ as he had been in the Bible (Exod 32:32; Jer 15:1). He was the most righteous of all people⁷³¹ and, contrary to 1 Kgs 3:12, he was also the wisest of all people in history.⁷³² Commenting on Exod 7:1, some traditions used virtually divine language for him the way many Greeks had divinized Plato and other philosophers.⁷³³ For further discussion of Moses haggadah, see comments on Acts 7:20–22.

More to the point here are traditions about the new Moses.⁷³⁴ Scholars often compare especially the Samaritans, as best as we can reconstruct their views from later sources.⁷³⁵ Samaritans apparently (if our sources reflect this early period) rejected prophets (or at least the Jewish tradition of prophets) between Moses and the final prophet, a prophet like Moses—the Taheb or “restorer” (cf. comments on the restoration in Acts 3:21).⁷³⁶ Despite Luke’s interest in the Samaritans, it remains doubtful that his audience possessed detailed knowledge of their beliefs; their writings, however, may preserve a more widespread tradition of exegesis on the question of the prophet like Moses.⁷³⁷

There was a widespread expectation of an end-time prophet (a new Elijah, Mal 4:5; Sir 48:10), perhaps at least sometimes conjoined with Deut 18 (cf. Mark 9:4, 7;⁷³⁸ John 1:21).⁷³⁹ “The Prophet” like Moses highlighted in some ancient Jewish literature could point to Elijah,⁷⁴⁰ though, for Luke-Acts, Jesus is one greater than Elijah (see comments on Acts 1:8–11). Early Christians regularly compared Christ to Moses, while asserting the former’s superiority (e.g., John 1:14–18; 5:45–47; Heb 3:3–6).⁷⁴¹

Scholars, however, point out especially the expected prophet of the Qumran scrolls, who is at least sometimes linked with the prophet-like-Moses text of Deuteronomy.⁷⁴²

730. E.g., *Jub.* 1:19; *Philo Mos.* 2.166; *4 Ezra* 7:107; *L.A.B.* 12:8–9; *Test. Mos.* 11:17; *Sipre Deut.* 343.1.2; as an intermediary in other respects, e.g., *Test. Mos.* 1:14; 3:12; *Pesiq. Rab.* 6:2; 15:3. Pardon comes through Moses in 4QDibHam^a 1–2 II, 7–12 (in Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 30). In greater detail, for nonrabbinic Jewish literature, see Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 118, 137, 160–61; in rabbinic literature, 200–204; in Samaritan tradition, 254. Joshua intercedes for Israel in *L.A.B.* 21:2–6.

731. E.g., *Mek. Shir.* 9.34ff. (Lauterbach, 2:69); *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 1:20.

732. *Jos. Ant.* 4.328; *Sipre Deut.* 306.24.2. Later the Qur’an portrays him not only as a prophet (Qur’an 19.51) but also as the greatest human of his era (7.144).

733. For Philo, see esp. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 103–6. In one Amoraic tradition, perhaps with tongue-in-cheek hyperbole, God even allowed Moses to be stronger than God (*y. Ta’an.* 4:5, §1)!

734. Some think that *Psalms of Solomon* also assimilates the Messiah to Moses (Patte, *Hermeneutics*, 173).

735. E.g., Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 73; Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 61; Bruce, *Time*, 39.

736. Bruce, *History*, 37–38; idem, *Time*, 39; on this reading, the prophetic figure of *Jos. Ant.* 18.85–87 might be viewed as the Taheb. On the Taheb (a Mosaic, not Davidic, figure), see *Memar Marqah* 2.40.28; 4:12 (in Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 264–65); Teeple, *Prophet*, 63–64; MacDonald, *Samaritans*, 362–63; Bruce, *History*, 37–38; Longenecker, *Christology*, 34; Brown, *John*, 1:172; Dexinger, “Taheb-Vorstellung”; see further Keener, *John*, 610, 619–20.

737. Gaster, *Scriptures*, 393, notes that the Samaritans used the same *testimonia* for the Taheb as appear in Qumran *testimonia* (cf. 444–46, citing Deut 5:25–26; 18:18–19; Num 24:15–17; Deut 33:8–11; Josh 6:26).

738. Many commentators think that “hear him” in the heavenly voice may evoke Deut 18:15 (see Mauser, *Christ in Wilderness*, 114; Davies, *Sermon*, 24; Lane, *Mark*, 321; Bruce, *Time*, 40; Longenecker, *Christology*, 36; Gundry, *Matthew*, 343; Young, *Jewish Theologian*, 211; Keener, *Matthew*, 439).

739. See *Sipre Deut.* 175.1.3; discussion in Aune, *Prophecy*, 124–25; Keener, *John*, 434–37.

740. Cf. Robinson, *Studies*, 32.

741. Cribbs, “Agreements,” 55, emphasizes the parallel between John’s and Luke’s use of the prophet like Moses. In John, see, e.g., Keener, *John*, 436–37; Glasson, *Moses*, passim; on Moses Christology in early Christianity more generally, see, e.g., Longenecker, *Christology*, 32–38 (cf. 72–73).

742. See, e.g., Appold, *Motif*, 72; Marshall, *Acts*, 95; Witherington, *Acts*, 188; Dunn, *Acts*, 47; Barrett, *Acts*, 208; citing 1QS IX, 10–11; 4QTest [= 4Q175] 5–7; Marshall, “Acts,” 548; cf. also Xeravits, “Moses Redivivus” (suggesting also 11QMelch II, 15–21). Some also mention 1 Macc 14:41, and Mosaic-type attempted prophets in Josephus (e.g., *Ant.* 20.97). Poirier, “Return,” thinks that Qumran texts envisioned an eschatological prophet and an eschatological priest, corresponding to Moses and Elijah.

The Qumran scrolls do reveal expectation of an eschatological prophet (1QS IX, 10–11; 11QMelch II, 15–21),⁷⁴³ though they may also apply it (and Deut 18:15–18) to the Teacher of Righteousness, who may have originally filled this role for them.⁷⁴⁴ That a Qumran scroll links the Mosaic prophet (4Q175 I, 5–8) with the star from Jacob (Num 24:15–17; 4Q175 I, 9–13) indicates that some Jewish people associated this mission with the future anointed ruler.⁷⁴⁵

At least from the vantage point of Deuteronomy, the prophet of Deut 18 points toward the future, unfulfilled at the time of Deuteronomy's writing (34:10).⁷⁴⁶ Although the rabbis apparently rarely interpreted Deut 18:15–18 eschatologically,⁷⁴⁷ many compared the future redeemer to the former one—that is, to Moses.⁷⁴⁸ The hidden Messiah tradition often connects the Messiah with Moses, who was also hidden before he was revealed.⁷⁴⁹ In some texts, the Messiah would lead home the exiles of Israel⁷⁵⁰—that is, in a new exodus. The new exodus expectation persisted as late as the rabbis⁷⁵¹ and was already present in so-called Deutero-Isaiah.⁷⁵²

The command to “heed” the prophet in “everything” provided him great authority comparable to that of the first Moses. Heeding this Mosaic prophet would bring deliverance from enemies and from God's anger (4Q375 I, 1–4; presumably this implies the converse as stated in Acts 3:23). Later rabbis allowed that in an emergency situation he could even contravene some laws in Torah, as Elijah did (*Sipre Deut.* 175.1.3). The command to “heed” Jesus, probably an allusion to Deut 18:15, already appears in Luke 9:35 (following Mark 9:7).⁷⁵³

The “raising up” of this prophet invited a wordplay with the resurrection (cf. Acts

743. See, e.g., Xeravits, “Moses Redivivus.” In 4Q377 1 II, 5, Moses is “anointed” (but at Qumran this need not mean the anointed king).

744. Cf. Aune, *Prophecy*, 126 (citing 1QS IX, 10–11; 4QTest 1–20 [see esp. 4QTest 1–8] and numerous scholars). Among others, Teeple, *Prophet*, 51–52, thinks that Qumran viewed its Teacher of Righteousness as the prophet like Moses.

745. This does not suggest “literary dependence so much as that Qumran and NT authors breathed the same air of eschatological expectation” and used the same Bible (Brooke, “4Q175,” 1207). Although the text is “messianic” (see, e.g., Villalón, “Deux messies,” 62–63), its messianic figure might not be *the* Messiah in the usual early Jewish sense; the *testimonia* probably address the multiple messianic figures held by the sect (cf. Vermes, *Scrolls*, 247–48).

746. Certainly Deuteronomy does not regard Joshua (cf. Deut 34:9) as the “prophet like Moses” (see 34:10), and those who argue for a Deuteronomistic history would not see the promise as fulfilled even by their own era (again, see 34:10). Holladay, “Background,” and idem, “Jeremiah,” suggests that Jeremiah viewed himself in these terms; others compare Elijah (e.g., Konkel, *Kings*, 303). Many prophets may have followed aspects of Moses's model or calling, but Moses remained special (Num 12:6–8; Deut 34:10–12).

747. Aune, *Prophecy*, 125–26.

748. E.g., *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5:8; *Num. Rab.* 11:2; *Ruth Rab* 5:6; *Eccl. Rab.* 1:9, §1; cf. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 27:5; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:15, §1; *Tg. Neof.* on Exod 12:42 (but *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 12:42 is simpler); Jeremias, “Μωυσης,” 857–62; Mauser, *Christ in Wilderness*, 55–56. Rabbis also compared others to Moses (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 100:10).

749. Commentators cite *1 En.* 48:6; *4 Ezra* 13:52; *Justin Dial.* 8.4; 110.1; for rabbinic documentation, see Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 137–39. See further *1 En.* 62:7; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5:8; *Num. Rab.* 11:2; *Ruth Rab.* 5:6; *Song Rab.* 2:9, §3; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:10; Glasson, *Moses*, 103. Much of the rabbinic attestation is late (Smalley, *John*, 65, declares that the “hidden Messiah” appears only in rabbinic sources, but this is true only of its developed form), but the basic tradition in earlier sources surely does not derive from inferences from John or from Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*.

750. E.g., *Pesiq. Rab.* 31:10.

751. See, e.g., *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 27:5; *b. Ber.* 12b; *y. Ber.* 1:5, §8; *Exod. Rab.* 1:5; 3:4; 15:11; 19:6; 32:9; *Lev. Rab.* 27:4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 52:8; cf. *t. Ber.* 1:10; *Eccl. Rab.* 2:15, §2; probably in CD V, 19 (but cf. VII, 21); 4Q389 frg. 2. See more fully Longenecker, *Christology*, 39–41; cf. Qumran imagery in Hatina, “Exile,” 349.

752. See, e.g., Glasson, *Moses*, 15–19; cf., e.g., Isa 12:2 (with Exod 15:2); 40:3; 52:4, 12; 63:11–14; Hos 2:14–15; 11:1, 11. On exodus typology in the OT, see most extensively Daube, *Exodus Pattern*, passim.

753. Luke emphasizes “heeding” Jesus (cf., e.g., Luke 5:1, 15; 6:18, 47, 49; 8:8, 10, 18, 21; 10:16, 24, 39), though this is neither unique to Luke nor necessarily based on an allusion to Deut 18.

2:24, 32; see esp. 3:26; 13:33–34).⁷⁵⁴ This need not connect the resurrection with traditions of Moses’s survival, but they may bear mention. Because of the special circumstances of Moses’s burial (Deut 34:6),⁷⁵⁵ later traditions claiming even that he did not die⁷⁵⁶ arose at least as early as the first century (Jos. *Ant.* 4.326;⁷⁵⁷ see comments on Acts 1:9–11).

II. PUNISHMENT FOR REJECTING HIM (3:23)

Peter did not need to quote this further line from Deuteronomy (Deut 18:19, adapted in light of other texts) for a solely christological point, which was already established in the “prophet like Moses.” His point is instead soteriological, a warning concerning the consequences of nonrepentance. God threatens punishment of those who do not heed the prophet in Deut 18:19; Peter implies the meaning of that punishment by adding words from other texts about being “cut off” or “destroyed” (esp. Lev 23:29). That the unrepentant will be “destroyed” from among the people shows that the promise to Israel as a whole does not guarantee the salvation of individual Israelites who fail to repent. The “restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21) refers to Israel’s restoration (1:6–7), not to the sort of universalist soteriology accepted by Origen and others. Other Jewish people recognized that whereas Israel as a whole would be saved, many individual Jews would be lost.⁷⁵⁸ The vision of the Qumran scrolls may be closest to Acts here, yet furthest from Origen’s universalism: not only the Gentiles but unrepentant Jews (those who did not join the elect community represented at Qumran) would be destroyed.

Blending texts was common, and this passage certainly follows the practice: “every soul” being “cut off” clearly echoes a familiar phrase from the Pentateuch. The verb is common in the LXX and is frequently conjoined with “soul” or “person,” for example, in punishing those who break the Abrahamic covenant by rejecting circumcision (Gen 17:14; cf. Acts 3:25; 7:8), breaking the Sabbath (Exod 31:14), performing ritual sacrifice outside the tabernacle (Lev 17:4), eating food with blood in it (17:14; cf. Acts 15:20), engaging in sexual abominations (Lev 18:29), rejecting Passover and unleavened bread (Exod 12:15, 19; Num 9:13), and other offenses (Lev 19:8; 22:3; Num 19:20)—in short, any deliberate rebellion against the Lord (Num 15:30). Seven of these texts specify that one is cut off from the “people” (λαός, not including synonyms; Exod 31:14; Lev 17:4; 18:29; 19:8; 23:29; Num 9:13; 15:30). Peter’s speech may thus allude to the language of just punishment for any act of rebellion against the Lord.

It is, however, noteworthy that the exact phrases (πᾶσα ψυχή ἥτις and ἐξολεθρευθήσεται ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ) appear in Lev 23:29 and only there.⁷⁵⁹ This could

754. See Dupont, *Salvation*, 155; Ellis, “New Testament Uses Old,” 202; Dunn, *Acts*, 47; esp. O’Toole, “Observations on *anistēmi*.” Ancient rabbis and orators used wordplays to advance arguments (see, e.g., Demosth. *Ep.* 3.28; Diog. Laert. 6.2.55; 6.2.68; Keener, *Paul*, 54n101; idem, *John*, 537, 782; for discussion in the rhetorical handbooks, see Anderson, *Glossary*, 59–60 [cf. also 81–82]; Rowe, “Style,” 132).

755. Followed by the more conservative line of tradition, e.g., *1 En.* 89:38; *Test. Mos.* 11:8; *Sipre Deut.* 338.2.1; *b. Sofah* 13b; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Deut 33:21. On Moses’s unusual death, cf. also *Deut. Rab.* 11:10.

756. A view in *Sipre Deut.* 357.10.5; perhaps in *Abot R. Nat.* 12 A. Scholars also cite Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6.15.

757. Cf. Philo *Sacr.* 8–10. Elsewhere Josephus implies the deathlessness of Elijah and Enoch, while omitting Elijah’s ascension per se (*Ant.* 9.28). Rev 11 is often construed to play, literally or symbolically, on a return of Moses along with Elijah (e.g., Glasson, *Moses*, 69; Frost, *Revelation*, 212; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 183; Ford, *Revelation*, 178; Talbert, *Apocalypse*, 45).

758. E.g., *m. Sanh.* 10:1; *b. Hag.* 15b; *Sanh.* 90a; *Num. Rab.* 14:1; *Song Rab.* 1:1, §5; cf. Rom 11:26 (in the context of cutting off, 11:17, 19–20); for longer lists, *t. Sanh.* 12:9; *b. Roš Haš.* 17a. In particular, most teachers consistently excluded Manasseh (2 *Bar.* 64:7–9; *Num. Rab.* 14:1), though a minority demurred (*b. Sanh.* 103a); some salvaged even Jeroboam son of Nebat (*Pesiq. Rab.* 1:5) and others (*b. Hag.* 27a; *Erub.* 19a). Akiba reportedly even denied the ten tribes, but his colleagues refuted him (*b. Sanh.* 110b).

759. That Luke employs a composite citation of Deut 18:19 and Lev 23:29 has been noted by others (e.g., Teeple, *Prophet*, 86; Gaventa, *Acts*, 89; Marshall, “Acts,” 547). Despite targumic parallels (cited by Waard, “Acts

indicate a random adaptation of one passage's wording to allude to the entire series of phrases, retaining its general condemnation of rebels. It may, however, suggest a deliberate allusion. Bock thus proposes that the language alludes not only to the rejection of Moses (Deut 18:15, 19 LXX) but also to those who reject the Day of Atonement (Lev 23:29), which would suggest that the idea of Jesus's death as expiatory is hinted at.⁷⁶⁰

III. ALL THE PROPHETS ANNOUNCED THESE DAYS (3:24)

By citing "all" the prophets, Peter's speech develops the claim of Acts 3:21 hyperbolically, a technique familiar in the rhetoric of both the Greco-Roman world and traditional Jewish sages.⁷⁶¹ We are also familiar with Luke's narrative "all" meaning "many," as in Josephus (e.g., *War* 2.515–16, where "all" the men had gone, but fifty were discovered in hiding).

Although prophecy appears earlier (including Peter's citation of Moses in Acts 3:22–23), Peter starts with the prophetic movement initiated by Samuel, who was followed by a succession of prophets.⁷⁶² Scripture records no explicitly messianic prophecy of Samuel, but his prophecies about the establishment of David's kingdom would be relevant.⁷⁶³ Pertinent prophecies by Samuel or within the work associated with him may include such passages as 1 Sam 2:10 (the anointed king); 12:3, 5 (referring to Saul); 12:22 (God's faithfulness to Israel); 16:1–13 (David's anointing); and 2 Sam 3:18 (David's call against the Philistines). Positive prophecies about Israel's anointed king could be fulfilled par excellence in the messianic Son of David (cf. Acts 1:16; 2:25–36; 4:25; 13:33–37; 15:16).

Because Luke is interested in patterns in Scripture, some other images from the section of Scripture associated with Samuel are relevant: just as Luke implicitly compares Zechariah and Elizabeth to Abraham and Sarah (Luke 1:7), he compares Jesus's mother to Hannah (2:46–55; cf. 1 Sam 2:1–10). But mention of Samuel is especially important because he is the greatest prophet-judge after Moses and fathered the prophetic movement in a special way (cf. 1 Sam 3:1; 10:5; 19:20). Samuel was also the prophet where Samaritan tradition parted company with Israel: the Samaritans apparently believed that Eli, Samuel's predecessor as Israel's leader, inaugurated the era of divine displeasure with Israel, which had remained till the present era.⁷⁶⁴

Later teachers often claimed that the prophets prophesied for the end of the age and the messianic era.⁷⁶⁵ Using hyperbole that exceeds Luke's here, a later rabbi (R. Hiyya bar Abba, in the name of third-century R. Johanan) could even claim that all

3, 22.23 and Text"), the basis is clearly the LXX; the Targumim postdate the LXX and may reflect it at points. Nevertheless, the LXX of Deut 18:19 does resemble the early Palestinian text found in 4QTest 7 (Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 289, following Waard, "Acts 3, 22.23 and Text").

760. Bock, *Proclamation*, 191–93. He finds here the Jewish concept of atonement through suffering, present in the Akedah (which in turn fits Acts 3:25, which he sees as alluding to Gen 22:18; 12:3 [194]).

761. See, e.g., Arist. *Rhet.* 3.11.15; *Rhet. Alex.* 11, 1430b.16–19; *Rhet. Her.* 4.33.44; Cic. *Or. Brut.* 40.139; Demet. *Style* 2.124–27; 3.161; Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.73–76; examples in, e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 5.16.1; Marcus Caesar to Fronto in Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 2.3.3; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.7; *Hrk.* 48.11; *m. 'Ab.* 2:8; *'Abot R. Nat.* 36A; see further Anderson, *Glossary*, 122–24; Rowe, "Style," 128. Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 98, finds here a pesher view of the OT similar to Qumran. Celsus attacked Christian arguments from OT prophecy (Cook, *Interpretation*, 72–76).

762. For prophetic succession, see, e.g., Heschel, *Prophets*, 472; Scott, *Relevance*, 57. Rabbi Judah the Prince reportedly called Samuel the greatest of prophets (*y. Hag.* 2:1, §2; cf. Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 13); but few texts repeat this view, and it probably constituted merely one opinion among many (cf., e.g., *Deut. Rab.* 2:4; 7:8).

763. Bruce, *Commentary*, 93 (citing 1 Sam 13:14; 15:28; 16:13; 28:17; cf. 2:10).

764. Bowman, *Documents*, ii.

765. E.g., *b. Šabb.* 63a; *Tg. Jon.* on 2 Sam 23:1, 3; on 1 Kgs 5:13.

the prophets prophesied only of the messianic era.⁷⁶⁶ But sages could also claim that God spoke to all the prophets only because of Israel⁷⁶⁷ or that they all prophesied concerning Jerusalem.⁷⁶⁸ Tradition attributes especially to R. Hiyya bar Abba the claim that prophets prophesied only concerning the messianic era; yet this same rabbi, again in the name of R. Johanan, also claimed that “all the prophets prophesied only on behalf of one who gives his daughter in marriage to a scholar” and otherwise serves scholars.⁷⁶⁹ The same rabbi reportedly further claimed that they “prophesied only for repentant sinners.”⁷⁷⁰ Elsewhere it was said that all the prophets predicted that Jerusalem will be rebuilt.⁷⁷¹ In other words, some sages used hyperbole to describe any subject they believed the prophets must have addressed at length.⁷⁷² Although later rabbis referred to a future rather than a past Messiah, Urbach thinks that their messianic midrashim apply a christocentric hermeneutic similar to the one that he finds in the Gospels: they sought “to find the fulfilment of all the Scriptures and visions containing Messianic descriptions.”⁷⁷³ Later rabbis did not likely borrow these ideas from early Christians,⁷⁷⁴ so the points shared in common probably reflect the wider environment of early Jewish thought.

“These days” of which they prophesied refer to the messianic era or the era of the kingdom’s restoration to Israel, a subject indeed of concern to most of the biblical prophets. Luke’s “days of the Son of Man” elsewhere (Luke 17:22) may be relevant, though it is probably not exactly the same.⁷⁷⁵

i. Israel’s Blessing through Jesus (3:25–26)

God planned to bless all nations through Abraham’s seed (Acts 3:25), but the blessing was offered to Israel first of all (3:26). Israel had a special place of privilege (3:25), but it could be realized only by each hearer’s turning from sin (3:26).

I. HEIRS OF COVENANT BLESSING (3:25)

This passage reflects Luke’s respect for the heritage not only of the Jerusalem church (a respect that Paul advocated except perhaps when engaged in polemic; cf. Rom 15:27, 31) but also of the Jewish people generally, whose cultural heritage had also become his own spiritual heritage. The phrase “descendants of the prophets”⁷⁷⁶ (Acts 3:25) in context surely indicates those for whom the prophets prophesied (3:18, 21,

766. *B. Ber.* 34b; *Sanh.* 99a; *Šabb.* 63a.

767. *Mek. Pisha* 1.135ff., 166 (admittedly this need not mean “concerning Israel”).

768. *Gen. Rab.* 82:2 (a fifth-century rabbi in a third-century rabbi’s name, but apparently using an earlier commonplace).

769. *B. Ber.* 34b (Soncino); *Sanh.* 99a.

770. *B. Sanh.* 99a (Soncino 671); *Ber.* 34b.

771. Later in *Pesiq. Rab.* 17:2.

772. Thus, “in every text,” the fathers and prophets offered their lives for Israel (in *Mek. Pisha* 1.111–13, summarizing 105–11).

773. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:686.

774. A polemical reaction is possible, but similar eschatological applications in Qumran pesharim suggest that the model predates both early Christian and rabbinic usage.

775. It refers to Jesus’s return (Luke 17:24, the “day” of the Son of Man) or to the peaceful period just preceding his return (17:26–29); probably it refers to the period just before (17:30, climaxed by the day when he would be revealed). Cf. the “days of the Messiah” in rabbinic sources (*Sipre Deut.* 343.7.1; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 27:5; *b. Ber.* 34b; *Pesah.* 68a; *Šabb.* 63a; *Num. Rab.* 13:14; *Ecl. Rab.* 12:1, §1; *Song Rab.* 2:13, §4). Cf. “the last days” in Acts 2:17–18.

776. Unusual in extant Christian texts for the Jewish people (Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 53) and hence perhaps reflecting earlier tradition (perhaps rooted in Tob 4:12; cf. “disciples of the prophets” for Israel in *t. Pisha* 4:14, attributed [rightly or wrongly] to Hillel). Rhetoric demanded building rapport with one’s audience (e.g., Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 36), though especially in the *captatio benevolentiae* (see comments on Acts 17:22).

24). But it may well also remind the informed reader of Luke 11:47–48, a passage that suggests an implicit choice here (a choice implied elsewhere, e.g., 13:28; 16:31; 24:25): they will act as descendants either of the prophets (6:23, 26; 10:24; Acts 2:17–18) or of their killers (Luke 11:47–50; 13:34; Acts 7:52).⁷⁷⁷ To be effective, the children of Israel would need to return to the Lord (cf. Luke 1:16).

“Descendants of the covenant” could reflect the language of Ezek 30:5 LXX, but the sense is quite different (especially if readers understood the Hebrew behind the translation). More relevant to the first-century sense, the phrase refers to the Jewish people (albeit tempted to apostasy among the Gentiles) in *Pss. Sol.* 17:15 and became a self-designation of the Qumranites (1QM XVII, 8; 4Q501 1 I, 2; 4Q503 7–9 IV, 3).⁷⁷⁸ But in the context of Luke-Acts, the “covenant” focuses the reader on remarks about Abraham (cf. Acts 7:8, 17; Luke 1:55, 72–73; 13:16; 19:9).⁷⁷⁹ They are “children of the covenant” as children of (explicitly) their “ancestors,” of whom Luke specifies Abraham (Acts 3:25; cf. the “ancestors” in 3:13; 7:32; 13:17, 32; 24:14; 26:6; Luke 1:55, 72).

This mention of the covenant with Abraham underlines the promise-fulfillment continuity with the OT story in which Jesus’s story is rooted (Luke 1:55, 72–73).⁷⁸⁰ The prominence of the Abraham story lies in the background of Luke’s story, not only in his historical retrospective in Acts 7:2–8 but also in various allusions throughout his work. The story is echoed as early as Luke 1:7, 13, where Zechariah and Elizabeth experience a miracle like that of Abraham and Sarah (except that Zechariah’s initial skepticism is greeted less gently, 1:18–20; cf. Gen 17:17–19; 18:12–15; also Luke 1:34–35). The “blessings” now available to them (Acts 3:25–26) were among the blessings of Abraham also continued in subsequent covenants with his descendants (Deut 28:2–14). These covenant blessings included healing and deliverance (Luke 13:16) as well as participation in the messianic banquet (13:28; 16:22–23). Salvation was also for ethnic children of Abraham, including those who had been alienated but would repent (19:9–10). But while ethnic descent from Abraham may involve the first “right of refusal” (Acts 3:26), participation in the covenant was not guaranteed without repentance (Luke 3:8; 16:23).⁷⁸¹ In one line of Jewish tradition that became prominent in rabbinic literature, God offered the law first to the seventy nations, who rejected it, after which Israel accepted the offer.⁷⁸² In Acts 3 and Rom 11, this sequence may be reversed, although there remains the expectation that, in the end, Israel will accept it (cf. Acts 3:19–21; Rom 11:15, 25–26).

777. Cf. Jervell, *Unknown Paul*, 96–121, for whom the prophetic Spirit reveals the continuity between believers and OT prophets and who applies Acts 3:25 this way (though it addresses all the people). People ought not disbelieve their ancestors (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.77). Parsons, *Acts*, 71, notes the inflection of “you” in various cases in Acts 3:25–26, which rhetorically underlines this address.

778. On the Qumran usage, see Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 291.

779. Van den Eynde, “Children,” 482, relates the covenant promise here to Luke 1:72 (applying it only to Jewish followers of Jesus). The Last Supper tradition also contains an allusion to Moses’s covenant (Luke 22:20; cf. Mark 14:24; 1 Cor 11:25), but this is less explicit. Evocative allusions to the story of Abraham help shape Luke’s characterization of God’s covenant faithfulness (see Brawley, “Abrahamic Traditions,” 130–31; on the centrality of this covenant in Luke-Acts, cf. also idem, “Blessing”).

780. Bock, “Scripture and Realisation,” 50–51, points out that Acts 3 emphasizes Abraham (and alludes to Moses) the way Acts 2 and 13 emphasize David.

781. Cf. Paul’s point in excluding Ishmael and Esau from the primary Abrahamic promise (Rom 9:6–13; though Ishmael was blessed in other respects, Gen 17:20); this idea of limiting Abraham’s covenant descendants must have also been raised between Jews and Samaritans (cf. John 4:12).

782. E.g., *Mek. Bah.* 5 (in Urbach, *Sages*, 1:532); *Sipre Deut.* 343.4.1; *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 2b; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 2:1; 12:10; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 1:15; *Exod. Rab.* 17:2; 30:9; *Num. Rab.* 14:10; *Lam. Rab.* 3:1, §1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:2; 21:2/3; 30:4; comments in Keener, *John*, 397–98.

In at least some early Christian theology, Abraham was the model of faith even for Gentile converts to messianic faith (Gen 15:6 in Rom 4:9–10; Gal 3:7), making him the spiritual ancestor of those who exercised faith as he did (Gal 3:7; Rom 4:11–13). His blessing (Gen 12:2–3; 17:16; 18:18; 22:17–18; cf. 26:4; 28:14) comes even on Gentiles who received the promised Spirit by faith (Gal 3:14). In the heat of polemic (possibly inverting opponents' claims), Paul could even imply that unbelieving Jews were like spiritual Ishmaelites rather than Israelites (Gal 4:22–31), but normally he could also still use the literal sense of physical Abrahamites (Rom 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22).

Luke combines the language of various texts addressing the Abrahamic promise. That the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's *seed* appears in Gen 22:18 (cf. 18:18); the promise is repeated to Isaac in 26:4 and to Jacob (in whom and whose seed the "families" of the earth will be blessed) in 28:14. God's blessing to the "families" of the earth (synonymous with "nations" of the earth in the other passages) appears in 12:3 (and, for Jacob, 28:14).⁷⁸³ This conflation of texts suggests that Luke envisions the entirety of the promise to Abraham rather than merely the one or two texts to which his language is closest.

Luke uses the promise concerning "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3; 28:14)⁷⁸⁴ again to foreshadow the Gentile mission, demonstrating that it belongs to God's purposes even in the very inauguration of the covenant.⁷⁸⁵ "All families" applies to Gentiles; thus Israel was only "first." Luke may find the conversion of the Gentiles through Israel's remnant also in his allusion to the "servant" passages (probably in Acts 3:13, 26), since the servant would touch all the nations (Isa 49:6–7; see comments on Acts 1:8; 13:47). By offering the blessing first to Israel (Acts 3:26), Luke apparently provides us one biblical rationale for the arrangement of his own story, starting from the Jerusalem temple (Luke 1:9; and now in Acts 3:12–26) and proceeding to the ends of the earth.

Although Luke is aware that the Abrahamic covenant included circumcision (Acts 7:8; cf. 16:3), like Paul he probably does not emphasize this aspect of the covenant blessing (Gen 17:10–14; see Acts 11:3; 15:1, 5) unless in a spiritual sense (Acts 7:51; cf. Rom 2:26–29; Col 2:11).⁷⁸⁶ Though his language blends allusions to several aspects of the promise, it seems to emphasize "seed" (Gen 22:18, responding to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac) and its universal future ("families of the earth" appears in 12:3; 28:14; Amos 3:2; Zech 14:17).

II. THE CONDITION FOR BLESSING (3:26)

The speech concludes on a deliberative note, although it is not worded as the sort of direct appeal one would expect in a deliberative *peroratio*. This conclusion, which presumably summarizes and drives home the point of the speech's message, is that Jesus as the servant fulfills and makes possible Israel's hopes, and through him Israel is welcomed to turn to God and receive the promised blessings of the covenant.

Although the emphasis on turning is personal here (ἐκαστον), it recalls the demand for Israel's repentance (Acts 3:19; cf. 2:38). Apparently, when a significant proportion

783. For the interchangeability, see, e.g., Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 233. Cf. "families of nations" in LXX Ps 21:28 (22:27) and 1 Chr 16:28 (D. Williams, *Acts*, 73). Though noting that Acts 3:25 uses Gen 22:18, Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 296–97, thinks that Eph 3:14–15 is closer; it is not, however, closer by any significant margin.

784. Modeled in the patriarchs' lives (e.g., in Gen 14:22–24; 26:12–33, esp. 26:29); especially others blessed for their sake (e.g., 30:27, 30; 39:5).

785. Léonas, "Note," contends (in view of Genesis, Philo, and Peter's audience) that the promise is for Abraham's offspring in the land, not for the Gentiles. But even if this was what Peter's audience would have understood and expected, more is in view in Luke's larger context in Acts.

786. The spiritual sense reflects an OT emphasis as well (Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:26).

(perhaps an overwhelming majority?) of individual Israelites repented, God would count it as Israel's repentance and provide the Abrahamic blessing. Part of Jesus's mission, as expressed here, was to turn Israel from its ways⁷⁸⁷ so that its people might qualify for God's promised blessings, which he desired to give them.

That God "raised up" (ἀναστήσας) the servant may suggest a play on words. The noun cognate applies regularly to Jesus's resurrection (e.g., 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 33), as also often does the verb (e.g., 2:24, 32). But in this immediate context, it also plays on the promise that God would "raise up" a prophet like Moses (3:22); because Luke does not seem fond of midrashic wordplay (though he presumably recognizes it), he may reflect earlier tradition here.

The narrowing of the source of blessing from Abraham's seed (3:25) to David's ultimate scion (3:26; cf. Gal 3:16) represents an intriguing reading of biblical history. Genesis does portray a narrowing of the chosen seed from Adam to Noah to Abraham (cf. Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7; 12:2–3; 17:6), then through Isaac to Jacob (35:11). Carrying forward the Abrahamic promise through the promise to David of a seed (2 Sam 7:12–14) represents a canonical approach suggested also by Luke's blending of various biblical hopes elsewhere (Luke 24:44).⁷⁸⁸ As one moves through Scripture, the promise to Abraham of land and chosen descendants finally becomes a promise ultimately fulfilled in God's kingdom, established through the ideal Davidic ruler.

The idea of narrowing the source of blessing from Israel to Jesus appears in other early Christian writers, whether Paul's application of a singular "seed" to Christ (Gal 3:16;⁷⁸⁹ though he knows very well the term is collective, 3:29) or Matthew showing how Jesus recapitulates Israel's history.⁷⁹⁰ That Isaiah's servant (see comments on Acts 3:13) is the agent of blessing after his resurrection would likely be news to Peter's audience, although Isaiah does appear to indicate the servant's exaltation after his death (cf. Isa 53:12).

The promise to Abraham of land was conditioned, however, on his descendants' obedience. The people of Israel's disobedience to Moses (cf. Acts 7:39–41) prolonged their stay in the wilderness for another generation (Num 32:13; Deut 1:35); likewise, they first subdued the promised boundaries fully in the time of David (Gen 15:18; Josh 1:4; 2 Sam 8:9–12). The promised blessing could come incrementally (as during the conquest under Joshua) but would ultimately be fulfilled when they followed the promised deliverer—or be delayed if they did not. Early Christians shared Jewish expectations of a new exodus (Isa 11:16; 40:3; 43:19; Hos 2:14–15; 11:11) and hence adopted the wilderness experience as a metaphor for their experience between their first taste of redemption and its completion (cf. the exodus language in Rom 8:14–17, 23; Rev 12:5–6).

To offer blessing to Israel *first* (of the families of the earth)⁷⁹¹ probably implies the Gentile mission, which follows it, fleshed out in the rest of Acts.⁷⁹² Paul, Luke's hero

787. Ironically, Luke's only other use of ἀποστρέφω is the charge that Jesus sought to "turn" the people to sedition—again a political misinterpretation of his kingship (cf. Acts 17:7). John was to prepare Jesus's way by "turning" people back to the Lord (Luke 1:16–17; cf. 3:4).

788. See Kaiser, *Theology*, passim. Not all Kaiser's exegetical arguments on specific OT passages are compelling, but he provides a reading that in many respects may resemble the canonical reading presupposed by Luke.

789. Also noted by Marshall, *Acts*, 96 (for Jesus as the seed, cf. also idem, "Acts," 549); Bock, "Scripture and Realisation," 51. For the promise to all nations through an individual, see here Meek, *Mission*, 114–29.

790. On this practice in Matthew, see, e.g., Keener, *Matthew*, 109, 136–37; Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 144–45; Meier, *Vision*, 55, 59–61; Patte, *Matthew*, 37; Gundry, *Matthew*, 34, 53.

791. Cf. also the prior responsibility of Israel in Amos 3:2 (its "families of the earth," undoubtedly deliberately echoing the Abrahamic promise); Rom 2:9–10.

792. See Witherington, *Acts*, 187; Bayer, "Preaching," 268.

of the Gentile mission, himself maintains this sequence of offering the message of the kingdom to Jewish people in each location before the Gentiles (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 28:17). The salvation-historical understanding reflected here also appears in the writings of the historical apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 1:16; 2:9–10).⁷⁹³

Heikki Räisänen doubts any future for Israel in Acts, thinking (against Mussner and Tannehill) that Luke has reinterpreted OT promises through Christ in such a way as to empty them of their content.⁷⁹⁴ The issue for Luke, as for Paul, however, seems one of delay, with him still expecting the fulfillment of God's promise to the Jewish people as a whole. Some aspects of their argument, however, would have shocked most first-century Jews. Paul's and Luke's ethnic universalism (despite Paul's expectation of an ultimate inclusion of "all Israel," Rom 11:11–12, 26) would have appealed only to those Jews who expected the conversion of (many of) the nations; allowing this conversion without circumcision did not change the content of the promise, but many even within the church felt that it changed the content of covenant conditions for the promise (Acts 15:5).

3. Confronting Jerusalem's Elite (4:1–30)

Acts 4:1–22 shows that worldly status is spiritually ineffective compared with Christ's authority through his apostles. Conflict dominates the section, in which the apostles (4:8–12, 19–20) twice respond to the rulers (4:1–7, 13–18). The immediate passage (4:1–12) displays the effectiveness of the apostles' service to Christ even when they were experiencing persecution from the very elite rulers who (3:17) participated in killing these elite's rival, God's appointed ruler (3:15). Jesus's name saves not only physically but spiritually (4:9–12; cf. 2:21, 38; 3:6, 16). Acts 4:13–22 then contrasts the politically cautious elite with the courageous boldness of apostles carrying on Jesus's ministry (i.e., in his name) by signs (cf. 4:29–30).

a. Introduction

Just as Jesus's words in Nazareth were first well received (Luke 4:20, 22), so were Peter's (Acts 2:37, 41, 47; 4:4); but in both cases proclamation ultimately led to persecution (Luke 4:28–29; Acts 4:1–2).⁷⁹⁵ In both cases, too, God's servants remained safe (Luke 4:30; Acts 4:21; 5:19). That the apostles repeat Jesus's experience of suffering validates their calling (cf. Acts 5:41).⁷⁹⁶

Persecution is a major theme in Acts,⁷⁹⁷ inseparable from the spreading of the gospel and sometimes connected with joy (5:41; 16:25).⁷⁹⁸ Such persecution is by no means Luke's literary fiction; he reports it only sporadically,⁷⁹⁹ and other early Christian writers in authentic occasional documents confirm it (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13, 23; Phil 3:6; 1 Thess 2:14–16).⁸⁰⁰ But Luke certainly makes theological use of

793. Cf. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 114; Marshall, "Acts," 550.

794. Räisänen, "Redemption," 101.

795. Goulder, *Type and History*, 55. The account of Acts 4–5 is retold in summary fashion in Iren. *Her.* 3.12.5.

796. Cf. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 24–25; Kilgallen, "Persecution." For echoes of Luke's passion narrative (Luke 20:2, 27; 22:52, 66; 23:13), see Marguerat, *Actes*, 141.

797. See, e.g., House, "Suffering and Purpose"; Rapske, "Opposition," 235–56; Cunningham, *Many Tribulations*; Mittelstadt, *Spirit*.

798. See further Pereira, "Persecution."

799. Kilgallen, "Persecution," 160.

800. Cunningham, *Many Tribulations*, esp. 340, rightly views Jewish persecution in Luke not as anti-Jewish but as an apologetic response to questions about the majority of Israel rejecting Jesus (see further on Luke's portrayal of Judaism in the commentary introduction, ch. 14, sect. 1 [Keener, *Acts*, 1:459–77]).

it, presenting it (as do some other writers, e.g., 2 Tim 3:12) as characteristic of the Christian life (Luke 6:23; Acts 14:22).⁸⁰¹

I. POWER CONFLICT

It is noteworthy that the authorities had not moved against Jesus's followers the way they had moved against those of Theudas, the Samaritan prophet, or the Egyptian prophet (cf. Acts 5:36–37; 21:38; Jos. *Ant.* 20.98; *War* 2.260, 263). Some scholars attribute the difference to different regional administrations,⁸⁰² but the primary difference probably lies in the level of perceived threat (cf. Luke 22:52; 23:2, 5). The disciples had not taken up arms or spoken about overthrowing anyone; neither had Jesus, but his action in the temple (and his usual location in Galilee, less available for observation) would have rendered him more suspect from the start.

Like Jesus, however (Luke 19:45–48), the disciples would have to confront the municipal aristocracy. The chief priests and scribes were particular targets of Jesus's criticisms (e.g., 20:19) and were among his most critical enemies (19:47; 20:1, 19; 22:2, 4, 52, 66; 23:4, 10; 24:20). Jesus's preaching of the kingdom could have announced, as some other pietist contemporaries did, God's intervention without planning political force; indeed, his virtually suicidal, unarmed collision with Jerusalem's elite suggests nothing else. But in an honor-and-shame culture, Jesus's challenge to the temple hierarchy had political consequences and would probably be understood politically. The parable in 20:9–16 treats the religious elite essentially as illegitimate usurpers of Jesus the king's rightful position.

The leaders could not but have suspected thinly veiled criticisms of their legitimacy (cf. Luke 20:19), especially since such criticisms were not uncommon. Most minority Jewish sects viewed the Sadducean elite (the dominant, though not the only, voice in the Sanhedrin)⁸⁰³ as Rome's political lackeys (cf. the connection in Acts 4:25–29);⁸⁰⁴ with Rome's support, Herod the Great had installed his own backers in the Sanhedrin, and Rome determined who filled the high-priestly office. The minority sects differed only in their view as to who ought ideally to fill the place wrongly held by the Sadducees: Pharisees, Essenes (in a future new order), or leaders of the emergent Jesus movement. The approach of the apostles, however, is more confrontational than that of the Pharisees (who by this period worked within the system insofar as possible) or the Essenes (many of whom withdrew to the wilderness to await God's intervention): they openly imply, in the presence of the elite, the municipal aristocracy's corruption and abuse of power (4:10–11, 19; cf. 2:23; 3:13–15), like biblical prophets challenging their people's rulers (e.g., 1 Kgs 13:2; 14:7–11; 17:1; 21:21–24; 2 Kgs 21:10–15). The true king is ready to return and rule Israel if the people are ready to receive him (Acts 3:19–23). True, the apostles' confrontation plainly relied on theological claims and not verbal or visual threats of armed resistance (indeed, Luke presents them as almost polite in 3:17; 4:8); Jesus's opposition to their attempt to resist violently in Luke 22:49–51 should have put that approach to rest for them.⁸⁰⁵ Nevertheless, their

801. See more fully Cunningham, *Many Tribulations*, esp. 337–38.

802. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 195–96. Pilate, Fadus, and Felix were, however, all governors of Judea and only a matter of decades apart.

803. Although not all aristocrats were Sadducees, most Sadducees belonged to the priestly aristocracy (Sanders, *Judaism*, 318, 322).

804. Many scholars emphasize the ruling elite's connection to Rome (e.g., Kee, "Central Authority"; Sampathkumar, "Bandits"). Luke does distinguish the aristocracy from the rulers—the latter being more powerful (Acts 4:26–27)—but both remain potent political forces.

805. Cf. Jesus's dependence on God to raise him in the face of injustice (Luke 22:50–53, 67–69; Matt 26:52–54; cf. Luke 6:27–29//Matt 5:39, 44; John 10:18), and the early Christian theme of true power revealed

teaching was public and publicly challenged the elite's honor (Acts 5:28). Such honor could be recouped only by avenging it. Only the apostles' growing popular support in Jerusalem (not, as with Jesus, mainly from Galilean pilgrims) likely protected them from hastier discipline.

We should not, as do some uninformed approaches, read the conflict anachronistically, as if it were between Jews and Gentiles or between the representatives of distinct religions. Both the apostles and the Sanhedrin claimed to lead their people, albeit the former through their teaching rather than by political means. The conflict is not one of ethnicity but one of power; political elites repress their competition.⁸⁰⁶ (The contrast between receptive peoples and resistant, repressive leaders also sounds true to form in many societies.)⁸⁰⁷ The issue is one of political power versus truth,⁸⁰⁸ a common theme in ancient philosophy suggested also by *παρρησίαν* in 4:13.

That the narrative retains clues of such confrontation, which could be construed politically, suggests that confrontation of some sort occurred (cf. 1 Thess 2:14–15); Luke would hardly dare invent something so counterproductive to his political apologetic. Luke does agree that it was the corrupt rulers who prevented Jesus's mission from being accepted by his people (cf. Luke 22:66; 23:4, 10, 13; Acts 13:27–28).⁸⁰⁹ He does, however, tread carefully in his presentation. Many in Rome disliked Jews for their foreign ways and their conversion of Romans; a Jewish sect making converts for what seemed a subversive rebel movement could only appear worse. Both Corinth and Philippi (probably within Luke's geographic range) had enough Roman influence to be sensitive to such issues in a post-Nero era. Further, Rome would favor the municipal aristocracy of Jerusalem over potential rivals; the failure of this aristocracy to keep peace, however, might render them more suspect by Luke's day (at any date after 66). Luke is careful to emphasize repeated Roman decrees of the leader's and movement's innocence (e.g., Luke 23:14–15, 22; Acts 26:30–32); that the "other king" charge (Acts 17:7) represents a complete misunderstanding; and that even in the confrontation between the apostles and the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, this was no movement based on political force like those of Theudas or Judas (5:36–37).⁸¹⁰

II. SOURCES AND NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION

Historically, if Jesus's followers preached in the temple, the temple guardians would have surely intervened; this is especially likely if these officials helped facilitate Jesus's execution, which they very likely did (as argued elsewhere).⁸¹¹ Rome depended on

in weakness, hence God's power for those embracing their social weakness (1 Cor 1:17–2:5; 2 Cor 12:9–10; 13:4; Jas 4:6, 10; 1 Pet 5:5–6; Rev 5:5–6; 1 Clem. 6.2; 13.1; 16.1–3; 30.2–3; 59.3–4).

806. González, *Acts*, 86–87, on Acts 5:17–40, emphasizes this reading from a Latino perspective. Just as the Sanhedrin sought to pacify Rome, many Majority World elites retain power through the realities of global injustice (87). Local elites exercised considerable authority (cf. Sloopjes, "Potentes," though focused on the second and third centuries).

807. González, *Acts*, 63–69, illustrates from his Latin American perspective how contemporary is the cultural conflict between the masses and the elites and how movements among the former can challenge the sense of power among the latter.

808. An issue also applicable within Christendom today, as Chance, *Acts*, 84, observes.

809. Indeed, initially Jesus had been so popular that even his Pharisaic detractors, more popular than the Sadducees, could be portrayed as isolated from a celebration shared by everyone else (in Luke 15:23, a fattened calf would feed a village, but in 15:25–26, only the elder brother seems unaware of the celebration!).

810. Luke also fails to use Peter's Aramaic name "Cephas" (1 Cor 1:12) and mentions "Caiaphas" by name only twice (Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6), eliminating any possibility of a contrasting play on the similar-sounding names.

811. This would be particularly clear in Jos. *Ant.* 18.64, if the most relevant line is original, but this is uncertain; see discussion of Josephus's *testimonium* at Acts 21:20. As Sanders observes (*Jesus and Judaism*, 286), conflict with the Romans, crowds, or Pharisees would not explain events subsequent to the passion

the chief priests to maintain order.⁸¹² The leading priests likewise intervened when any supposed prophet threatened the stability of the temple (Jos. *War* 6.300–305).⁸¹³

They would likely continue to intervene until the movement was suppressed or became too popular to suppress. Luke Timothy Johnson is very likely correct that Luke had much more detailed sources for Acts 13–28 than for the early chapters and hence “filled out” these earlier chapters “with summaries, speeches, and vivid descriptions.” He suggests that Luke may have created the scenes of the apostles’ hearings in Acts 4 and 5 on the basis of knowledge that the Sanhedrin did persecute the apostles (cf. 1 Thess 2:14–15).⁸¹⁴

On the basis of what we know of Luke’s technique elsewhere and where this locates him along the spectrum of ancient historians (see the commentary introduction, chs. 6–7), it seems likely that Luke knew more details than just that the Sanhedrin persecuted the apostles. Presumably, for example, he would have had informants in Jerusalem who could recount at least what they had heard or opined about some reasons for these events. Johnson is surely right, however, that the sources are less complete in this section of Acts; concrete narrative details are fewer and of the sort that might stick in informants’ memories years later, supplemented with much speech material. At this temporal remove, we lack sufficient evidence to investigate more fully the sources of Luke’s details.

Earlier scholars argued that parallels between the arrest scenes in Acts 4 and 5 reflected two variant forms of the same original tradition. Granted, if Luke heard different forms of the story from two informants and could not harmonize them, he may have chosen to include both conflicts (since both make engaging stories). But the two, escalating accounts (constituting essentially a warning followed by more severe discipline when the offense was repeated) fit the way discipline could be undertaken for offenses that were minor or (as in this case) politically difficult to crack down on.

There are also literary reasons for including the two accounts (see the introduction to Acts 3:1–5:42). The presence of apparent “doublets” might fit Luke’s pattern of variation in retelling stories.⁸¹⁵ If Luke’s sources here are oral, one would expect repetition for narrative reasons, entirely aside from the question of tradition.⁸¹⁶ Contemporary narrative criticism, bolstered by ancient Near Eastern parallels, has likewise challenged an earlier generation’s confidence that “doublets” indicate separate accounts of single events in ancient Israelite stories.⁸¹⁷ Certainly, Luke’s contemporaries did not view these earlier biblical stories as merely doublets from recycled tradition.

tradition, but the continuing enmity of the chief priests against Jesus’s followers (e.g., Acts 4:1–7; 5:17–18; 9:1–2) points to the priestly aristocracy as the main source of opposition. Cf. also Vermes, “Jesus the Jew,” 120. On members of the priestly aristocracy rather than others being the opposition, cf. further discussion and sources in Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 290–94, 310–13, 316–17.

812. Jos. *War* 2.232–44; Sanders, *Figure*, 266–67. The high priest probably wanted Jesus removed for the sake of public order (Sanders, *Figure*, 265) and would have handed him over to the governor; “that is the way things really happened, as the numerous stories in Josephus prove” (269).

813. Regev, “Concerns,” considers the pattern of priestly opposition in the early Christian sources consistent with the Sadducees’ special commitment to the temple’s ritual purity (see esp. 86).

814. Johnson, *Acts*, 4. It is historically likely that leaders of the aristocratic priesthood, if involved or somehow implicated in Jesus’s condemnation (see Keener, *Matthew*, 612–13), would have repressed his followers if they became a mass movement and if they implicated the leaders in the execution (cf. also Richardson, *Israel*, 46).

815. Cf. Mussies, “Variation.”

816. See Dewey, “Oral-Aural Event,” 149 (following Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 37–49).

817. See Klingbeil, “Historical Criticism,” 410, and sources surveyed there; Whybray, *Making*, 74–80; Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*; for ancient Near Eastern parallels, see esp. Whybray, *Making*, 80–84; Klingbeil, *Ordination*, 104–7; Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*, 22–25.

Typically, reduplication of scenes elaborates and develops a pattern, later scenes recalling earlier ones but advancing the plot further.⁸¹⁸ Certainly, this is the case in Acts 4–5, where Acts 5 advances the plot much further toward crisis, requiring Gamaliel’s intervention to save the apostles’ lives.⁸¹⁹ The parallels highlight the differences instead of obscuring them. Some scholars also point out that later rabbis required a warning for a first offense and punishment only for subsequent offenses. If this practice reflects a wider custom, it helps explain the need for two trial scenes in Acts 4 and 5 (4:21; 5:40).⁸²⁰

Listed below are some of the common elements between the narratives; though not all are of equal weight, the stronger elements suggest that Luke invites us to notice the parallels and consequently to focus especially (in the second arrest narrative) on the new developments in the situation.

Sadducees and chief priests arrest the apostles (4:1)	Sadducees and chief priests arrest the apostles (5:17–18)
Because they are disturbed (4:2)	Because they are jealous (5:17)
They jail them overnight (4:3)	They jail them overnight (5:18–19)
—	An angel releases the apostles (5:19)
Yet the apostles are successful among the people (4:4) (the apostles’ popularity protects them, 4:21)	The apostles are successful among the people (5:20, 25–26) (the apostles’ popularity protects them, 5:26)
Their hearing before the municipal aristocracy occurs the next morning (4:5–7)	The Sanhedrin summons them in the morning (5:21)
The authorities demand an answer (4:7)	The authorities demand an answer (5:28)
Peter’s answer (4:8–12, 19–20)	Peter’s answer (5:30–32)
God raised Jesus, whom you crucified (4:10)	God raised Jesus, whom you crucified (5:30)
(Jesus is the exalted cornerstone, 4:11)	(Jesus is the exalted ruler, 5:31)
Jesus is the means of salvation (4:12)	Jesus is the Savior (5:31)
(Obeying God rather than mortals, 4:19–20)	(Obeying God rather than mortals, 5:29)
(The apostles cannot stop speaking what they know firsthand, 4:20; Peter speaks, filled with the Spirit, 4:8)	(The apostles are witnesses, 5:32; the Spirit testifies, 5:32)
Gag order (4:18)	Reminder of gag order (5:28); new gag order (5:40)
Threat of punishment (4:21)	Carrying out of punishment (5:40)
They release the apostles (4:21)	They release the apostles (5:40)
Praise (4:24)	Rejoicing (5:41)
Continuing activity (4:31–35)	Continuing activity (5:42)

As already noted, the parallels are not all of one kind. Some elements, such as being jailed overnight or being confronted by the Jerusalem authorities, are plausible by themselves; that Peter and the municipal authorities would continue their essential demands is also to be expected in the narrative. One also expects continuing activity that disobeys the injunctions to stop preaching; that Luke describes it would fit his emphasis in each case whether or not he is drawing a deliberate parallel. Parallels in some other elements, such as the apostles’ evangelistic success reported in 4:4 and suggested in 5:25–26, are less clear yet attributable to Luke’s narrative artistry (the report of 4:4 could easily have preceded the arrest). Other elements (such as

818. Real or apparent doublets could be used to heighten suspense, as here; cf. Jonathan’s peaceful resolution of David’s situation with Saul in 1 Sam 19:1–7, with the more open breach in 20:1–42.

819. Tannehill, *Acts*, 64; Gaventa, *Acts*, 106. Cf. Wall, “Acts,” 103: the two accounts were “written to be read together as mutually interpreting narratives of apostolic vocation and authority.”

820. Marshall, *Acts*, 97; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 332; following Jeremias. Offering a public warning first would be honorable; admittedly, the Sadducean elite would not be much concerned with the niceties of what later became rabbinic procedure.

the addition of the other ten apostles; the angelic release; Gamaliel's intervention; and carrying out a flogging) show a development in the overarching narrative (and consequent natural differences between the two accounts).

b. Jerusalem's Elite Confront the Apostles (4:1–7)

Peter's summons to Israel to repent (3:12–26) is met instead with hostility from the current leadership of Israel (4:1–3), who object to their theology (4:2) even if they cannot contravene their miracle (4:14). Many of the people had responded (4:4), a pattern that would continue with the Jerusalem church (21:20). Nevertheless, the die has also been cast for the future: Luke seems to imply that Jerusalem as a whole would have responded to the apostolic message but for the leaders' hostility—hostility because of jealousy (5:17) and because Israel's God-ordained leadership threatened their power base (cf. Luke 20:14).⁸²¹

I. THE ELITE ARREST THE APOSTLES (4:1–3)

In Acts 4:1, Peter is calling Israel to turn from evils (3:26, end of the verse); those who fail to do so will be destroyed from among Israel (3:23). That the speech is "interrupted" (see comments on Acts 2:37; 10:44) at this point⁸²² not very subtly indicts the leaders of Israel (who proceed to arrest the apostles) with being among those who do not heed the Messiah (3:22–23). The end result is the impression that much of Israel might have turned to Christ were it not for the leaders' unwillingness to relinquish power or admit wrongdoing (cf. 5:28).

This commentary will treat some groups of the elite where they arise later in the narrative (such as the Sanhedrin in 4:5). The focus at present will be the commander of the temple guard and the Sadducees, who appear in 4:1. "Priests" here may refer to various priests in the temple (some of whom may have later joined the Jesus movement, 6:7), but they would be under the leadership of the aristocratic priests (a large percentage of whom belonged to the favored Sadducean party). Here the Sadducees, who reject the resurrection (Luke 20:27), are threatened by the proclamation that resurrection has in fact happened—in the person of an enemy whose death they helped to facilitate. (Their behavior here also prefigures their role against Paul in Acts 23:6–10, though less emphatically; in that passage Paul also emphasizes the resurrection.)⁸²³

(1) Commander of the Temple Guard (4:1)

The "commander of the temple guard" was a high officer who, according to some ancient reports, occasionally even rose to the office of high priest.⁸²⁴ Rabbinic texts call him the *sagan ha-kohanim*, to whom commentators frequently attribute rank after the high priest as well as chief responsibility for preserving order in the temple.⁸²⁵ Josephus, like Luke (also Acts 5:24, 26),⁸²⁶ calls him a στρατηγός (*Ant.* 20.131; *War*

821. Other Jewish groups, such as the one represented in the Qumran sectarian texts, also claimed to represent the true, God-ordained leadership for Israel (though this group lost the battle and mostly withdrew from Jerusalem instead of continuing to attract the people). The Pharisees' vision of rule by their traditional interpretations of the Torah was less dramatic and took much longer to achieve, but it survived 70 C.E. in a way that Sadducean power could not.

822. From a literary perspective, such interruptions may help Luke "veil the unreal brevity of space which he could afford to allocate to the speeches" (Horsley, "Speeches," 610).

823. Similarly, Paul in 23:6–10 experiences Pharisaic intervention like the Jerusalem apostles in 5:34–40. For a semiotic reading of 4:1–12, see Donegani, "Procès."

824. See Reicke, *Era*, 148.

825. E.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 40; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 115; Bruce, *Commentary*, 95n4.

826. Only Luke employs this title in the NT (but elsewhere always in the plural, Luke 22:4, 52; Acts 16:20, 22, 35–36, 38), but it is quite common in the LXX (usually in the plural but consistently singular in some

6.294);⁸²⁷ this term frequently translates *sagan* in the LXX. Certainly, this officer was among those whom Luke envisions as involved in Jesus's arrest (Luke 22:4, 52). Later rabbis, whose perspective is naturally generally rabbinic-centered, portrayed some who filled this priestly office as wise scribes as well.⁸²⁸ They also reported that this officer, or likely one of those who filled this office in Jerusalem's final generation, was quite harsh even with his own temple guards, occasionally even setting aflame the clothes of a guard found asleep.⁸²⁹

One individual who filled this office close to our period is Ananus (Jos. *Ant.* 20.131), who a parallel reference in Josephus suggests was the son of the high priest Ananias (*War* 2.243).⁸³⁰ If Ananus is the same temple officer as here (which is by no means certain, since this narrative is somewhat earlier), he later became high priest himself (*Ant.* 20.197) and executed James the Lord's brother (20.199–200). But if this connection is accurate, Luke might not know of it; at the least, we may observe that he makes no attempt to communicate it to his audience.⁸³¹ Regardless of the official's specific identity, we may expect that this high office was filled by a relative of the high priest (cf., e.g., 20.208; *War* 2.409). The appearance of Levitical officers foreshadows the confrontation with aristocratic priests in Acts 4:5–6.

The Sanhedrin maintained some police power, which the Romans tolerated as in other municipal aristocracies.⁸³² Because most ancient temples had wealth (among Gentiles, often including idols) and often treasuries that functioned as banks,⁸³³ they typically also had watchmen and guards.⁸³⁴ The temple guards were Levites who functioned as an honor guard in addition to protecting entrances (on the latter function, cf. Acts 21:30).⁸³⁵ The Levite gatekeepers were apparently linked with the twenty-four courses of priests (2 Chr 8:14),⁸³⁶ and some early Jewish traditions assign them to

Maccabean works: 1 Macc 8:10; 10:65; 11:59; 13:42; 14:42, 47; 16:11; 2 Macc 3:5; 4:4; 8:8–9; 9:19; 10:11, 14; 12:2, 32; 13:24; 14:12; 4 Macc 4:2).

827. He might also be the same as "the king's captain" (Jos. *War* 1.652, with LCL, 2:311 n. a), though the term is familiar enough that this need not follow (cf., e.g., Acts 16:20, 22, 35–36, 38; more than fifty times in the LXX [cf. esp. Neh 13:11; 1 Macc 14:47], though it is restricted to Luke in the NT). Josephus can employ Greek terms generally when describing Roman officers, rather than employing the terms technically for particular offices (see στρατάρχης in *War* 2.531, 544; Tully, "στρατάρχης").

828. E.g., Hanina the *sagan* of the priests, *m. Pesah.* 1:6; *Šeqal.* 4:4; 6:1; *Ed.* 2:1–3; *Ab.* 3:2; *Zebah.* 9:3; 12:4; *Menah.* 10:1; *Neg.* 1:4; *Parah* 3:1; *b. Pesah.* 14b; cf. the rabbinic son of a *sagan* in *b. Pesah.* 47a. If Hanina is the Ananias of Jos. *Ant.* 20.131, it is curious that rabbis a generation or two later would cite him as an authority (especially if he became high priest).

829. *M. Mid.* 1:2; *b. Tamid* 27b–28a. Penalties for sleeping guards could be harsher in armies (see comments on Acts 20:28), but rabbis reported this behavior as if unduly harsh.

830. Cf. the prefect Haniah in the Mishnah (*m. Šeqal.* 8:5; *Ketub.* 2:8), perhaps father of the later prefect Eleazar ben Hananiah, who served 62–64 C.E. (cf. Jos. *War* 2.409; so Le Cornu, *Acts*, 216).

831. Given Luke's use of identical names for literary connections (most obviously, among "Herods," Luke 3:19; 9:7–9; 13:31–32; 23:11; Acts 12:1–23), mention of an Ananias here would have served his point later (Acts 23:2; 24:1); hence he probably does not know a connection (especially since he names other leaders, 4:6).

832. Cadbury, "Law and Trial," 300; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 34. On municipal aristocracies, see also Welwei, "Gerousia"; in Jerusalem, Ego, "Gerousia."

833. See Pindar *Pyth.* 4.53–54; Caesar *C.W.* 3.33, 105; *Juv. Sat.* 14.260–62; *Cic. Fam.* 5.20.5; 2 Macc 3:6–7; 4 Macc 4:3–7; Keener, *John*, 523; comments on Acts 19:25.

834. E.g., *Cic. Verr.* 2.4.43.94; 2.4.44.96.

835. See Safrai, "Temple," 872; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 210. Priests probably outnumbered Levites in Jerusalem (cf. Neh 11:18); the latter appear rarely in Second Temple sources (Fiensy, "Composition," 220). Other ancient Near Eastern temples also had keepers to bar intruders (Moyer, "Practices," 36, noting also Milgrom, "Custody"; idem, *Studies*, 50–59).

836. Luke knew of the courses (Luke 1:8), which appeared in his Bible (1 Chr 24:7–18; 28:13, 21; 2 Chr 5:11; 31:2, 15, 17; 35:10; Ezra 6:18; 1 Esd 1:2). They were widely known (Jos. *Ant.* 7.365, 367; *Life* 2; *t. Sukkah* 4:26–27; *Ta'an.* 2:1; 3:1; *y. Ta'an.* 4:5, §13; cf. 4Q494 1 3; see further Stern, "Aspects," 587–95; more anachronistically, Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 72, 199).

twenty-four stations: five for the outer gates of the temple, five for the gates of the court, four for the outer corners, four for the corners of the court, one behind the holy of holies, and one each in five chambers.⁸³⁷ A large number were assigned to closing of the temple gates.⁸³⁸ Not all Jewish people in antiquity felt that the priesthood guarded the temple adequately; some accused the priests of being poor stewards unworthy of the sanctuary's keys (2 Bar. 10:18).⁸³⁹

(2) Sadducees (4:1)

Luke has previously mentioned the Sadducees only with regard to their skepticism about the resurrection (Luke 20:27). But it will soon become clear that the Sadducees are the circle around the high priests (Acts 5:17) and hence form a significant part of the ruling assembly (4:5, 15; cf. 23:6). They thus belong to the circle that had opposed the apostles' Lord (Luke 9:22; 19:47; 20:1, 19; 22:2, 66; 23:10; 24:20).

Though some aristocrats were not Sadducees (some, such as Gamaliel, were Pharisees), it is believed that in this period nearly all the Sadducees belonged to the aristocracy.⁸⁴⁰ Most likely a priestly sect, they were probably the well-to-do priests who had remained loyal to the Zadokite line during the Maccabean era (while other Zadokites fled to Qumran and elsewhere; cf. 1QS V, 2; VI, 3–4; CD V, 5), returning to a position of power under the Romans.⁸⁴¹ Most scholars contend that in this period they dominated the Sanhedrin (on which see comments at Acts 4:5).⁸⁴²

The Jesus movement was not alone in its resentment of the Sadducees. Among other critics, later rabbinic tradition complains that the rich Sadducees (who did not affirm the resurrection) had all their reward in this life ('*Abot R. Nat. 5 A*). The rabbis linked them with "Boethusians" under the special charge that they denied the resurrection from the dead.⁸⁴³ Their denial of resurrection was widely known,⁸⁴⁴ and many Jews besides the Pharisees felt that a denial of substantive future hope led to wickedness (Wis 2:1–24).⁸⁴⁵ (On the Sadducees' views regarding the resurrection, see fuller comments at Acts 23:7–8.)

Other grounds also separated these aristocrats from the dominant views that became rabbinic practice.⁸⁴⁶ Probably claiming to take Scripture as their only authority,

837. Safrai, "Temple," 872–73 (citing *m. Mid.* 1; *Tamid* 1:1); cf. also Le Cornu, *Acts*, 217 (citing also *Jos. War* 6.294).

838. Two hundred in *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.119; but twenty could shut it with considerable effort (*War* 6.293). The two hundred could represent a textual corruption.

839. See further references in *OTP* 1:624 n. h (esp. 4 Bar. 4:4–5; also *b. Ta'an.* 29a; *Lev. Rab.* 19:6).

840. See Sanders, *Judaism*, 318, 332. I have adapted material on the Sadducees and high priests from Keener, *Matthew*, 613–14; on Sadducees, see also Porton, "Sadducees."

841. See Baumbach, "Sadduzäerverständnis." Manson, *Servant-Messiah*, 16, derives "Sadducees" from a cognate of "Sanhedrin," but the Zadokite explanation is more probable (with Lohse, *Environment*, 74, and others).

842. E.g., Gager, "Class," 105.

843. '*Abot R. Nat. 5 A*; 10 B; cf. *m. Ber.* 9:5; a reading of *b. Šabb.* 152b; the Palestinian Targum in Isenberg, "Polemic"; Bowker, *Pharisees*, 53–76. Medieval tradition sometimes links them with Karaites (Jacobs, *Exegesis*, 10), perhaps for polemical purposes against the Karaites; others (aside from the scholars who once dated the Scrolls to the medieval period) have found, for the Karaites, predecessors in the Essenes (early after the discovery of the Scrolls, cf., e.g., Ginsberg, "Cave Scrolls," 81; Kahle, "Karaites"; Wieder, "Sectaries and Karaites"; Fritsch, *Community*, 86–89).

844. Cf. *Jos. Ant.* 18.16; *War* 2.164–65. Cf. comments in Flusser, *Sage*, 43, on the Jerusalem tomb of "Jason," with illustrations of the present life but no expressions of future hope.

845. Also '*Abot R. Nat. 5 A*; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 4:8; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 4:8. So also some Gentiles, against Epicureans (Aul. Gel. 9.5.8; cf. *Plut. Pleas. L.* 23, *Mor.* 1103D; Neyrey, "Polemic," 410–12, 420–22); cf. even the utility of a fictitious fear of judgment for social control (Polyb. 6.56.12–15).

846. E.g., *m. Nid.* 4:2; *Yad.* 4:7; *t. Nid.* 5:2; *Sukkah* 3:1; later rabbis treated Sadducean women who followed Sadducean practice as like Samaritans, i.e., unclean (*t. Nid.* 5:2), but believed that many of them learned instead from the sages (5:3).

Sadducees felt no obligation to embrace Pharisaic traditions.⁸⁴⁷ Later rabbis claimed that despite Sadducean disagreements, Sadducees had to follow Pharisaic rules in the temple;⁸⁴⁸ because Pharisees tended to represent the popular perspectives, Sadducees had to accommodate populist sentiments in some public rituals.⁸⁴⁹ To whatever degree there may have been truth in such claims, powerful Pharisees and others had to work alongside them before 70.⁸⁵⁰

Qumran and others opposed the priestly aristocracy that controlled the temple; the Dead Sea Scrolls offer numerous criticisms of such priests.⁸⁵¹ For example, the Habakkuk peshar provides a quite unpleasant view of “the last priests of Jerusalem” (1QpHab IX, 4–5). Qumran sectarians complained about the Jerusalem priesthood’s corrupt wealth (e.g., IX, 4–7; 4QpNah 3 + 4 I, 11).⁸⁵² The Qumran sectarians viewed the temple as morally desecrated, in part because of the hierarchy’s wickedness.⁸⁵³ A “wicked priest” had driven their own teacher and community into exile,⁸⁵⁴ and the image may have been applied subsequently to others belonging to the improper priestly lineage.⁸⁵⁵ Certainly, the Jewish revolutionaries who seized control of Jerusalem hated the high-priestly family (Jos. *War* 2.256). Many marginalized groups viewed the Judean elite as the primary source of problems.⁸⁵⁶

Josephus, himself a priestly aristocrat, has a far more positive view of Jerusalem’s aristocracy than does Luke.⁸⁵⁷ Yet even Josephus testifies to the corruption and abuse of power in the high-priestly family and some other leading families, having experienced it himself (e.g., *Life* 216). He especially regards the chief priests as corrupt during the period of Agrippa II (particularly 59–65 C.E.),⁸⁵⁸ but he may highlight their behavior in this period because of his own uncomfortable experiences then.

847. Jos. *Ant.* 18.16; cf. *Abot R. Nat.* 10 B; Neusner, *Beginning*, 27–28; Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 107.

848. Some texts warn that Sadducees who did not cooperate were sometimes struck dead (*t. Kip.* 1:8; cf. *y. Yoma* 1:5).

849. Though later rabbinic perspectives about this accommodation may be exaggerated, Josephus also tells us this (*Ant.* 18.15, 17).

850. Pace Eppstein, “Excommunicated,” even had Pharisaism exercised adequate control to effect excommunication, the Sadducees could not have been excommunicated almost a decade before the temple’s destruction. Worse still, Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 264–65, takes later rabbinic sources at such face value that he supposes that Pharisaic (protorabbinic) authority had stripped the Sadducees of power (cf. Finkelstein, *Pharisees*, 2:659).

851. E.g., 4Q387, frg. 2–3, apparently condemns aristocratic priests (cf. three reigning ones in frg. 3.6) who disobey God (2.4), serving other gods (3.6); CD VI, 15–16 condemns exploitation of consecrated funds. Cf. criticisms of the end-time priesthood also in *Test. Levi* 17:11. Nor were criticisms of the priesthood new (1 Sam 2:12–17; Jer 5:31; 26:8, 11; Ezek 22:26; Hos 4:9; 5:1; 6:9; Mic 3:11; Zeph 3:4; Mal 1:6).

852. Many attacked the aristocratic priests’ corruption (1QpHab IX, 4–5; XI, 6–7; CD V, 6–7; cf. *Pss. Sol.* 8:11–13; *Test. Levi* 14:1, 6 if not an interpolation); later rabbis most often attacked their doctrine.

853. Cf. 4QMMT C (Regev, “Abominated Temple”). Some argue that some sectarians from the Maccabean period may have remained pro-temple while opposing the priestly establishment (Finkelstein, “Documents,” 22–24).

854. 1QpHab I, 13; VIII, 8–12; IX, 9; XI, 4–6; XII, 2–3, 5–6, 8; 4Q163 30 3; 4Q171 IV, 8 (= “the man of deceit” in 1QpHab II, 1–2; V, 10–11; X, 9; cf. CD I, 14–15; 4QpPs 37:7; so also, e.g., Thiering, “Wicked Priest”). The first priest’s identity is debated (e.g., Fritsch, *Community*, 83–84; Rost, *Judaism*, 163; Brownlee, “Messianic Motifs,” 13–15). Some think that the “lion” in 4QpNah is Alexander Jannaeus (Allegro, “Light,” 92; Eisenman, *Maccabees*, 23, 35 [but positively]); but cf. Rowley, “4QpNahum”). The wicked ruler of 4Q175 lines 21–29 may not be the Wicked Priest.

855. See van der Woude, “Wicked Priests”; cf. Thiering, “Wicked Priest” (not viewing him historically at all).

856. Overman, *Crisis*, 329; see the argument of Goodman, *Ruling Class*.

857. See, e.g., Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.185; Sanders, *Judaism*, 187; Mason, “Chief Priests,” 175 (though emphasizing agreement with Luke that the high priest led an aristocratic council; that the Pharisees were more populist; and that the Sadducees were more skeptical, 175–76). On the priests, cf. also, e.g., Basser, “Priests.”

858. Sanders, *Figure*, 324; see, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 20.206–7. For Josephus’s negative view of the Sadducees, see Baumbach, “Sadducees”; of some high priests (but not their office), Thoma, “Priesthood” (attributing it to Josephus’s pro-Hasmonean tendencies). For earlier abuses dominant in the time of the Annas family, see Puigdollers I. Noblom, “Grans sacerdots.”

The examples in his work may thus suggest (in keeping with our other contemporary sources) a broader corruption within the aristocratic ranks from which such priests were drawn.⁸⁵⁹ By the time of Felix, the high priests were so corrupt that they seized the tithes belonging to the poorer priests, allegedly leading many to starve (Jos. *Ant.* 20.181); when another aristocratic priest was seizing their tithes (20.206), his bold servants were beating those who refused to comply.

Of course, wealth and power often breed resentment. Archaeological sources confirm the literary portrayal of a priestly aristocracy.⁸⁶⁰ But even if some resentment of the Sadducees was due more to jealousy than to corruption, wealth and power would breed conflict with other groups, conflict that would naturally be settled the way such conflicts were normally settled in antiquity: by the dominant party's exercise of power. Such an exercise would always be viewed as abuse of power by those against whom it was wielded.

Repressed groups in Judea generally hated the group in power, and the group in power repressed its competition sufficiently to maintain power, until that power base disintegrated en route to and in the wake of the Judean-Roman war. Human nature leads us to expect nothing different. Luke's locating opposition to the Jesus movement primarily in the Sadducean aristocracy is historically plausible and not likely simply a Lukan construct.⁸⁶¹ Pagan literature also cites examples of corrupt priests (e.g., Plut. *Lys.* 26.1–3), and many in antiquity complained about corrupt priesthods.⁸⁶²

Even Pharisaic tradition respected the office of high priest,⁸⁶³ though Sadducees dominated it. The priesthood as a whole reportedly included both those committed to extrabiblically stringent purity rules (probably including Pharisees or their sympathizers) and those who were not (*y. Ter.* 6:1). Jewish high priests held considerable political authority,⁸⁶⁴ recognized even among Gentiles (Diod. Sic. 40.3.5–6). Contrary to traditional Israelite law, however, Roman officials freely gave and revoked the office of high priest; thus Quirinius installed Annas (Jos. *Ant.* 18.26), and Vitellius retired Caiaphas after Pilate's recall to Rome (18.95).⁸⁶⁵

(3) *Announcing the Resurrection in Jesus (4:2)*

Luke's audience knows that Sadducees reject the doctrine of the resurrection (Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8). Like Jesus's followers, Pharisees also preached an eschatological

859. Perhaps in part because I find myself more skeptical that religion often changes human nature, I am less sympathetic to their piety than is Sanders, *Figure*, 336. They probably acted in their own self-interest, as well as for the peace, in relations with the Romans (Horsley, "High Priests"). The charges may be stylized, sectarian polemic, as Sanders suggests (and against the priesthood in general he may be right, *Judaism*, 182–89), but one should not dismiss too readily the reasons for the polemic, which appear widely (cf. 1QpHab IX, 4–5; *Test. Levi* 14:1; 2 *Bar.* 10:18; *t. Menah.* 13:21 in Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 130; idem, "Burnt House," 71; Hengel, *Property*, 23); corrupt priesthods were common targets of polemic in the ancient Near East through the first century (Crocker, "Corrupt Priests"; cf. Plut. *Lys.* 26.1–3; Libanius *Declam.* 44.43). Cf., e.g., the later Ananias's servants, who beat poorer priests to seize their tithes (Jos. *Ant.* 20.181, 206).

860. See Fiensy, "Composition," 216–19. Osteoarchaeological evidence raises questions about the incidence of disease and injuries among the upper class (see Zias, "Mount Scopus Tomb"). For the pattern of a healthier upper class in antiquity generally, see, e.g., Toner, *Culture*, 134.

861. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 214–15. There were apologetic reasons to attack the Pharisees (though this is much more dominant in Matthew and John, engaged in late first-century intra-Jewish polemic), although, after 70 C.E., there was no reason to appeal to any positive sympathies for the Sadducees.

862. See, e.g., Crocker, "Corrupt Priests." Apparently Egyptians resented local priesthods for their collaboration with Roman oppression (Toner, *Culture*, 167). Sanders, *Judaism*, 188, objects that stereotypical charges common against other priesthods do not apply to Jerusalem's.

863. See, e.g., *m. Hor.* 3:1; *y. Sanh.* 2:1, §2; Acts 23:5–6. Still, Pharisees could criticize the high priest (Jos. *Ant.* 13.288).

864. Smallwood, "High Priests."

865. Herod the Great was the first to set this precedent (Jos. *Ant.* 15.40; cf. Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 133).

resurrection of dead people, a theological difference that generated considerable conflict between themselves and the Sadducees.⁸⁶⁶ It is unlikely that the Sadducees employed police force to suppress the Pharisaic proclamation; the operative difference here, however, is that the apostles preached this doctrine “in Jesus.” That is, they preached not a theoretical hope for the future but that this hope was grounded in an event that had already occurred.⁸⁶⁷ Jesus’s resurrection was theologically inseparable from the corporate resurrection (hence the plural νεκρῶν),⁸⁶⁸ but as an accomplished event, it could not be contested in the same way. The portrayal that this view was central to apostolic preaching yet threatened the Sadducees recurs frequently later in Acts (see Acts 24:21; 25:19; 26:6–8; esp. 23:6–9).⁸⁶⁹

The Sadducees also had political reasons to be concerned about movements preaching resurrection; movements with partially realized or participatory imminent eschatologies—those who believed that they were inaugurating the kingdom—could pose a threat to Judea’s political stability and hence could ultimately invite potential Roman intervention.⁸⁷⁰ Indeed, that the Sadducees gradually vanished after 70 C.E. confirms that such instability threatened their own survival.⁸⁷¹

Further, the one in whom they proclaimed resurrection was an alternative authority to the priestly aristocracy,⁸⁷² and early Christian tradition implicates this aristocracy in his execution (Luke 20:19; 22:2, 4, 52, 66; 23:4, 10; 24:20; cf. Acts 13:27). (Paul also has his conflicts with them later [Acts 23:14; 25:2, 15].) One would not expect the priestly aristocracy to take well to public criticisms, which they usually did not need to tolerate (3:13–14, 17; 5:28). Leaders in various Mediterranean societies often viewed their own situations as tenuous and unstable;⁸⁷³ apart from the frequent change of high priests under Rome, certainly the priestly aristocracy made many enemies, as most sources from the rest of early Palestinian Judaism suggest.⁸⁷⁴

(4) Jailed Overnight (4:3)

Luke claims that the temple police jailed the apostles because it was already evening. Within the story world, many people had gathered in the temple courts for the

866. E.g., *Jos. Ant.* 18.14, 16; *Abot R. Nat.* 5 A; cf. *b. Sanh.* 90a. Finkelstein, *Pharisees*, 1:145, finds class conflict behind this theological difference; certainly the resurrection was a more popular view than that of the Sadducees.

867. Ladd, *Theology*, 324; idem, *Last Things*, 79; cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 219–20. The claim’s centrality was also a likely factor in its offensiveness (Hare, *Persecution*, 5).

868. Though it technically specifies only the plurality of the dead (cf. Luke 9:7; 16:30–31; 20:38; 24:5), the phrase typically implied a corporate resurrection. It appears frequently in Luke-Acts (20:35; 24:46; Acts 10:41–42; 13:30, 34; 17:3, 31–32; 23:6; 24:21; 26:23; most relevant here, Acts 3:15; 4:10) and other early Christian texts (e.g., Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:12–13, 21, 42; Heb 6:2; 1 Pet 1:3; Rev 20:5; 1 *Clem.* 24.1; *Did.* 16.6; *Barn.* 5.6). This future, corporate resurrection was the only one that early Judaism knew (see Jeremias, *Theology*, 309).

869. See Tannehill, *Acts*, 59.

870. Caird, *Apostolic Age*, 83.

871. Goppelt, *Times*, 57.

872. The best textual reading in Acts 4:1 says “priests” (ἱερεῖς) rather than “high priests” (ἀρχιερεῖς), but the context (4:5–6) suggests this sense, which probably also commended itself to the copyist who introduced the variant reading based on Luke’s usual style. On the high priesthood, see Stern, “Aspects,” 600–612.

873. They believed that those who were prominent provided the most prominent targets, as in, e.g., Corn. Nep. 1 (Miltiades), 7.5–6; 2 (Themistocles), 8.1–7; 3 (Aristides), 1.1–5; 7 (Alcibiades), 4.1–2; Babr. 4.6–8; 31.23–24; 64.10–11; Phaedrus 1.21.1–2; 2.7.14–15; 3.5.1; 4.6.11–13. Prominence was held to arouse envy, hence hostility, as in Corn. Nep. 5 (Cimon), 3.1; 8 (Thrasylbulus), 4.1–2; 12 (Chabrias), 3.3; 14 (Datames), 5.2; 15 (Epaminondas), 7.1; 18 (Eumenes), 7.2; 10.2; 19 (Phocion), 4.3; 23 (Hannibal), 1.2; Hdn. 3.2.3; Plut. *Demosth.* 26.5.

874. E.g., 1 QpHab IX, 4–5; *Test. Mos.* 5:4; *Test. Levi* 15:1; 2 *Bar.* 10:18; repeatedly in rabbinic sources. Granted, such charges come only from their opponents (Sanders, *Judaism*, 182–89, who argues that the charges are stylized polemic; cf. Botha, “Point of View”); it is likewise true that most groups had only opponents, rather than permanent allies, outside themselves. It is sufficient for my point, however, to observe how many opponents the Sadducees made and the concreteness of the accusations.

hour of evening prayer (Luke assumes knowledge of these hours; see comments on Acts 3:1), and so Peter had fresh ranks of hearers to whom to preach. Because the disciples went to the temple about 3:00 p.m., the coming of evening suggests that a few hours have passed; Luke again provides merely a summary rather than a transcript of Peter's preaching (cf. 2:40).

Still more widely known was the fact that most work stopped at night and would be suspended till the next morning. A prisoner's being confined overnight till a morning hearing appears in Greek novels⁸⁷⁵ but also emulates reality for urgent cases. That the authorities jailed the apostles overnight rather than try them in the evening fits what we know of nearly all public activities in antiquity (cf. Luke 24:29),⁸⁷⁶ including battles⁸⁷⁷ and court sessions.⁸⁷⁸ Thus, for example, the Roman senate convened even most emergency meetings (when confronting the Catiline conspiracy) at daybreak (Plut. *Cic.* 15.3; 19.1).

Luke's portrait contrasts with the Markan tradition of Jesus's (presumably illegal) night trial (Mark 14:53), which Luke omits, including only the more official morning hearing (Luke 22:66; though cf. 22:54; Mark 15:1).⁸⁷⁹ Jesus's night interrogation (Mark 14:53; cf. Luke 22:54) was a special emergency situation, and even in Jesus's case, Luke reserves the official hearing for daybreak (Luke 22:66).⁸⁸⁰ This is the first of many detentions in Acts (Acts 5:18–19; 8:3; 12:4–6; 16:23–27; 22:4; 24:27; 26:10), fulfilling Jesus's promise in Luke 21:12 and fulfilling part of Peter's earlier commitment (22:33), which Peter had failed to fulfill during the passion narrative.

II. CHURCH GROWTH DESPITE PERSECUTION (4:4)

Luke shows that the intervention of the temple elite, apparently after two or three hours of the apostles' public preaching, does not prevent the church's growth among the people. Part of Luke's emphasis is that nothing can stop the gospel (cf. Acts 28:31). A higher level of hostility would eventually force the movement to expand elsewhere (8:3–4; 12:17) temporarily (cf. 21:20), and the disaster of war and the city's destruction would scatter them from Jerusalem in the long term (Luke 21:20–22). But even then, God arranges that the movement as a whole continues to grow.

Three thousand people were already believers (Acts 2:41); the number had been growing (2:47) and would eventually, after a period of steep decline (8:1, 4; 11:19), reach much higher figures (21:20). Because Luke reports that the number "came to" five thousand, there is some debate whether he means the total number of believers in the Jerusalem church or the total number of those believing newly on that occasion. Even if he means the former,⁸⁸¹ he specifies here only the number of men, suggesting

875. It appears in three of thirteen court scenes there (Schwartz, "Trial Scenes," 112–13), as it also appears in only select court scenes in Acts.

876. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 2.387; 7.275–82; 8.529–30; 11.209; 14.259–61; Ap. Rhod. 4.1059; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 9.48.3; Arrian *Alex.* 1.19.2; Polyb. 5.86.1–2; Caesar *Alex. W.* 1.11; *Gall. W.* 2.11; Apollod. *Epit.* 4.2; Sil. It. 5.678; 13.254–55; Pliny *Ep.* 7.2.2; Philost. *Hrk.* 58.4.

877. E.g., Hdt. 1.74, 76; Polyb. 5.86.1–2; Vell. Pat. 2.27.3; Pliny *Ep.* 4.9.9. Their rarity made night attacks all the more devastating (Hom. *Il.* 10.100–101; Arrian *Alex.* 1.4.1).

878. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 2.11.16, 18; 4.9.9; cf. forced dismissal of the senate (Cic. *Fam.* 1.2.3). Pliny views as indiscreet one speaker who continued after nightfall (*Ep.* 4.9.14).

879. Night trials were technically illegal according to our available sources (*m. Sanh.* 4:1; cf. also Pompey's interpretation of Roman law in Aul. Gel. 14.7.8).

880. Although Mark reports this morning meeting (Mark 15:1), he focuses on proceedings during the night (14:53–65, 72). The same sources that warn of night meetings' illegality portray the priestly authorities as disinclined to limit themselves by such rules (discussion in Keener, *John*, 1086).

881. With, e.g., Calvin. This estimate would, however, include only those of the three thousand thought to have remained in Jerusalem, i.e., not pilgrims.

a much larger total figure. The temple courts would have been the ideal place to make the most converts, since it would have been here, in Jerusalem's largest "public space," that people would have congregated in the largest numbers.⁸⁸² But this number is huge.⁸⁸³

Although some commentators allow that the number may be historical,⁸⁸⁴ more remain skeptical. Those who follow Jeremias's old estimate of Jerusalem's population (25,000–30,000) regard such numbers as incredible.⁸⁸⁵ But more recent estimates of ancient Jerusalem's population are consistently and considerably higher, undercutting the primary basis for this argument against authenticity (see comments on Acts 2:41).⁸⁸⁶ One need not suppose that the early Christians counted the crowd, but they did have an idea about how many new believers ended up in their meetings (cf. Judean churches in Gal 1:22) and probably how many baptisms would have been performed in following days (cf. Acts 2:41).

Fanciful estimates are common in ancient writings, especially haggadic and midrashic texts.⁸⁸⁷ At the same time, more sober military reports and censuses were more characteristic sources for most Greco-Roman historians. Thus Thucydides at one point admits that he cannot recount the number of either the Spartans or their enemies because the former keep their numbers secret and most people exaggerate the numbers of their enemies to make their own victories greater (or defeats smaller; Thucyd. 5.68.2). Granted, in such cases, casualty estimates⁸⁸⁸ and some other figures in the sources might be inflated estimates, but they were rarely utterly fanciful. Thus, when quoted numbers do not fit, Polybius finds the scribe a more believable source of the error than a historian (Polyb. 12.4.4–6). Some also point out that Luke's figure may include large numbers from the Judean countryside⁸⁸⁹ who visited the temple regularly (though their attendance would have been more expected on a Sabbath or feast day).

This is not to deny that the numbers are quite high relative to Jerusalem's size. Because only men (explicit in ἀνδρῶν) are counted,⁸⁹⁰ the total figure by this point (if this is a new number added to those in Acts 2:41, 47) is probably more than 10 percent of current estimates of Jerusalem's population.⁸⁹¹ Ancient estimates of Jerusalem's population (like Luke's estimate of the crowd) may have been higher than most modern ones, but even from our modern interpretation of the data, the figures nevertheless would appear massive (see comments on Acts 2:41). Josephus finds in all Judea more than four thousand Essenes (*Ant.* 18.20) and, at one point, more than six thousand Pharisees (17.42), although their proximity to education and influence may have limited the latter group's numbers. Luke's number is thus

882. On massive numbers of people congregating in public space, including temples, see Stambaugh, *City*, 111, 113.

883. Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 42, note that classical Athenian thinkers such as Plato (*Rep.* 5) could attribute 5,040 citizens to an ideal city.

884. E.g., C. Williams, *Acts*, 81.

885. E.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 215n2.

886. See Reinhardt, "Population Size," 237–50 (followed by some more recent commentators). The highest estimates (at 250,000) are doubtless too high; estimates from 70,000 to 85,000 seem more likely. On Luke's growth figures generally, cf. also discussion in Keener, "Plausibility."

887. E.g., *L.A.B.* 14:4 (more than nine million, not including women); 43:8 (adding 37,000 to Judg 16:27); *L.A.B.* 63:3 (though the LXX comes close and Josephus agrees); those slaughtered at Bethar in, e.g., *y. Ta'an.* 4:5, §10. For fuller discussion, see comments on Acts 2:41.

888. On ancient recognition that many exaggerated counts of enemy casualties, see, e.g., Xen. *Hiero* 2.16; Thucyd. 5.68.2.

889. D. Williams, *Acts*, 85–86.

890. Counting only men was a common practice (*L.A.B.* 5:7; 14:4; compare Matt 14:21 with Mark 6:44).

891. This would be even more if one quadruples the figure for men, as Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 172, suggests (attributing the rapid growth to the less urban influence of John's ministry); more conservatively, one might simply double it.

not small. Also possibly significant for Luke, Jesus fed a crowd estimated at exactly this size (Luke 9:14).⁸⁹²

If ὥς is original, it would certainly fit Luke's characteristic style. Following the custom of good ancient historians,⁸⁹³ he is generally explicit when a figure is merely an approximation (Luke 3:23; 9:14, 28; 22:41, 59; 23:44; Acts 1:15; 2:41; 10:3; 19:7). This usage is rarer among other NT writers except John (John 4:6; 6:10, 19; 11:18; 19:14, 39; though also Matt 14:21; Rev 16:21).⁸⁹⁴

III. THE POLITICAL ELITE CONFRONT THE APOSTLES (4:5–7)

Preaching and even drawing crowds in the temple was not illegal; intervening against such preachers was a delicate matter unless it was possible to first discredit them publicly (cf. Acts 5:26; Luke 20:19–22, 27–33). Publicly denouncing the leadership and their decisions, however, appeared to be political subversion; even if Peter attributed Jesus's execution to Israel as a whole as well as to the leaders and mitigated it with ignorance (Acts 3:17), it was clear to everyone that Jesus's execution involved primarily the activity of the government. Even if the details of the night arrest were unknown, the chief priests' participation thereafter was public knowledge (Luke 23:10, 13; 24:20), and Jesus's disciples, being eyewitnesses, could also make known these officials' participation in that secret arrest (cf. 22:52–54). (The disciples did not seem inclined to keep such matters secret but were ready to make public what they saw as injustices against God's purposes [cf. Acts 4:23, 26; 13:27; 26:10–12].)

This concern of the officials becomes explicit in 5:28: they accuse the apostles of bringing Jesus's blood on them. The issue is not only the perception that the apostles want them to hand over their political power; the issue is also that the apostles are publicly dishonoring them. Honor was a paramount value in this society. Thus for the elite to admit error on a capital case, and still more to admit it in executing Israel's promised Messiah, would shame them for incompetence. Likewise, to admit error in their Sadducean denial of messiahs and resurrections was to abandon all that they stood for, hence their public honor. By contrast, Jesus's apostles counted it honorable to suffer public shame for his name or reputation—that is, to honor him (5:41). As always, the exalted would be humbled, and the humble exalted (Luke 1:52; 10:15; 14:11; 18:14; so also with Jesus, Acts 2:33; 5:31).

(1) Rulers, Elders, and Scribes (4:5)

On the only earlier occasion where Luke describes rulers (taken as the high-priestly leaders), elders, and scribes gathering, they meet to condemn Jesus (Luke 22:66; cf. Acts 4:26–27). Although this prior incident might build suspense concerning the outcome here, it also prepares for the denunciation of such leaders (Acts 4:10). Their gathering may also contrast with the divinely empowered gathering (also using συνάγω) of believers in 4:31.

“Rulers” could refer to temple administrators (the term sometimes translates *sagan* in the LXX) but more likely refers to the ruling priests, who appear alongside “scribes” and “elders” in the Gospel (Luke 9:22; 20:1; cf. 22:6), though not in Acts

892. Cf. C. Williams, *Acts*, 81; also Bede *Comm. Acts* 4.4 (Martin, *Acts*, 47; L. Martin, 49). Perhaps the number portrays the disciples in Jerusalem as carrying on Jesus's ministry; but even Johnson, *Acts*, 76, suspects that this is coincidence (possible in view of other numbers in the narratives, e.g., Acts 2:41; 21:20); Luke neglects the opportunity to draw parallels (though a communal meal hardly fits this narrative; in contrast to 2:41–42, he could not have included one here).

893. Ramsay, *Bethlehem*, 197–98.

894. For ὥς and ὡσεὶ meaning “like,” compare Luke 3:22 with Mark 1:10 (Matt 3:16 agrees with Luke); Luke 22:44; Acts 2:3; 6:15.

6:12.⁸⁹⁵ The term “elders” can apply to local synagogue leadership (Luke 7:3) but can also be connected with chief priests and scribes as Jesus’s adversaries (9:22; 20:1; 22:52) or as adversaries of the Jerusalem apostles (Acts 4:5, 8, 23), Stephen (6:12), or Paul (23:14; 25:15; cf. 24:1). Likewise, the Jesus movement used the term for local congregational leaders (14:23; probably 20:17) but also the leaders of the Jerusalem church (11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4; 21:18).

Josephus also portrays elders ruling (e.g., *War* 2.267, 571), for example, alongside rulers in David’s time (*Ant.* 7.26, 28, 41, 78) and later (8.99); they also led alongside the priests (12.406; 13.124). These could be leaders in Jerusalem (11.306) or of the tribes (12.39, 56–57, 86–87, 91, 101). Josephus speaks of a *γερουσία*, a ruling council of elders, some twenty-nine times; the term appears thirty-five times in the LXX. This Jewish usage reflects wider Mediterranean usage, where a *γερουσία* could also be linked with a “sanhedrin.”⁸⁹⁶ On the governing role of “elders,” see further comments on Acts 11:30; 14:23. If Luke’s audience envisions the apostles the way they would have envisioned typical disciples, the apostles here are young men, like Saul (Acts 7:58).⁸⁹⁷ Not only were the apostles of lower social status, but they would also be much younger than these “elders” in a culture that valued age.

The Christian tradition that essentially equates “scribes and Pharisees” with the whole of the Jewish people (e.g., Justin *Dial.* 17) is a wholesale misrepresentation of the evidence (if Josephus’s estimate of six thousand Pharisees is proportionate to his population estimates, the Pharisees formed far less than 1 percent of the Judean population). Granted, some scribes may well have been Pharisees,⁸⁹⁸ given the Pharisees’ popular reputation for skill in the law and their availability for training. Many of the scribes may have been priests,⁸⁹⁹ who may have been better equipped financially to pursue such training.⁹⁰⁰ Elsewhere in the Mediterranean world, priesthoods often preserved laws (cf. Val. Max. 2.5.2).

Luke expects some of the scribes to be Pharisees (Acts 23:9, referring to the Sanhedrin; Luke 5:30) and sometimes portrays them as acting in concert (Luke 5:21; 6:7; 11:53; 15:2), but he also recognizes a distinction (11:45). On other occasions they are linked with rulers in Jerusalem, in the Sanhedrin, as here (Luke 9:22; 19:47; 20:1, 19; 22:2, 66; 23:10; Acts 6:12).

In the villages of the Roman Empire, “scribes” were literate (not always well-educated) professionals who executed legal documents.⁹⁰¹ Such persons also existed

895. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 41 (noting that “Josephus also uses ἄρχοντες as a synonym for ἀρχιερεῖς”). The title is also valuable to Luke from a literary standpoint, as noted in Marshall, “Acts,” 550; it fulfills the citation in Acts 4:26 (Ps 2:2) and possibly also two texts against trusting in “princes,” Ps 118:9 (Peter will cite from this psalm in Acts 4:11) and Ps 146:3 (which Acts will use in Acts 4:24).

896. E.g., *IGRR* 4.836.8 (BDAG); cf. other Gentile examples in, e.g., Diod. Sic. 14.113.7–8; *SIG* 1112.1–2 (BDAG).

897. Although Peter is married (Luke 4:38; cf. Mark 1:30), John, in widely known gospel tradition, still worked for his father at the time of his calling (Mark 1:20; cf. Luke 5:10). Many of the disciples may have been young. On disciples in their teens, see, e.g., Jos. *Life* 10; *m. Ab.* 5:21; Eunapius *Lives* 493; Stamps, “Children,” 198; comments on Acts 22:3.

898. Cf. Sanders, *Figure*, 177–78; cf. Rivkin, *Revolution*, 138, 178–79 (seeking to identify Pharisees with rabbis).

899. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 80; idem, *Figure*, 170–71; for priests as teachers, cf. Ezek 44:23; Mal 2:7; Jos. *Ant.* 8.395. Relevant here are scribes of the temple (Jos. *Ant.* 11.128; 12.142).

900. The wealthier priests (cf. Jos. *Life* 63; *Ant.* 20.213), not the poorer ones (as in *Ant.* 20.207). Some Qumran sectarians also viewed priests as teachers, but they specified that they should be from the Zadokite line (4Q163 frg. 22, albeit reconstructed). More fully on scribes, see Twelftree, “Scribes”; Keener, *Matthew*, 537–38; on the high priests, e.g., Reid, “Sacrifice,” 1048–49; on the elite classes, see Stern, “Aspects,” 580–621 (on the priests, 580–612; for aristocratic priests, 600–612).

901. *CPJ* 1:157, §21; 1:188–89, §43; Lewis, *Life*, 82.

in Palestine and surrounding territories.⁹⁰² Yet the Gospels and Acts (employing the title about sixty times) can hardly apply the term in so broad a sense, and ancient views of special education in Judea⁹⁰³ suggest that many “literate” professionals did more than execute documents (cf. Ezra 7:10–11; 1 Macc 5:42).⁹⁰⁴ Presumably, many also instructed children in reciting the law, and the more advanced among them would have had adult disciples (i.e., disciples older than thirteen). Occasionally later rabbis could look ill upon their scribal predecessors, perhaps recognizing their great responsibility to guide Israel rightly (*’Abot R. Nat.* 36 A).⁹⁰⁵

Some scholars also suggest that Luke or his source borrows the phrase from the LXX, where γραμματεὺς translates not only “scribe” but also “officer” regularly among the Levites.⁹⁰⁶ The term γραμματεὺς also applied to secretaries of associations⁹⁰⁷ and of councils, the latter case sometimes representing a high office (see comments on Acts 19:35).⁹⁰⁸ Some highly literate scribes knowledgeable in Israel’s laws might become leading teachers of the people, and some, but perhaps a minority, belonged fully to the Pharisaic sect.

(2) *The Sanhedrin (4:5)*⁹⁰⁹

The assembly described in Acts 4:5 consists of the same groups as Jerusalem’s “council,” or Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66); Luke clearly intends this identification here (explicit in Acts 4:15).⁹¹⁰ The identification is already clear to Luke’s audience here if they can associate the “rulers” with the high-priestly aristocracy (cf. Luke 9:22; 20:1; esp. 22:66).⁹¹¹

A συνέδριον was a ruling council, equivalent to a βουλή, or “senate.”⁹¹² Cities such as Tiberias had their own ruling senates composed of the leading citizens (Jos. *Life* 64, 69, 169, 313, 381); such elite assemblies were distinguishable from the larger citizen assembly (*Life* 300).⁹¹³ Josephus applies the term both to Jerusalem’s council

902. Cf. Goodman, *State*, 59; Sanders, *Figure*, 179.

903. Cf. Stern, *Authors*, 8–11, 46, 50.

904. The function of Diaspora synagogue “scribes” (*CIJ* 1:12, §7; 1:18, §18; 1:21, §24; 1:70, §99; 1:84, §121; 1:85, §122; 1:88, §125; 1:100, §142; 1:103, §145; 1:104, §146; 1:106, §148; 1:107, §149; 1:130, §180; 1:158, §221; 1:161, §225; 1:250, §318; 1:275, §351; 1:326, §433; 1:337, §456; perhaps 1:27, §36; cf. 1:545, §22, but probably pagan) is unclear; they could be scholars (cf. “law-t[eacher],” 1:140, §201; “the wise,” 1:519, §719), secretaries (as in usual Greek usage; see esp. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 184–85), or something else (Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 454–55; cf. *CIJ* 1:xcii–xciv)—e.g., one could be nineteen years old (*CIJ* 1:196, §279) or, more incredibly (probably honorary), twelve (1:200, §284, but possibly non-Jewish).

905. For distinctions between legal scribes and more authoritative rabbis, Overman, *Crisis*, 205, cites *m. Kelim* 13:7; *Or.* 3:5; *Sanh.* 11:3; *Tehar.* 4:7; *Yad.* 3:2. For further documentation on scribalism, see also Scott, *Customs*, 165–68; Keener, *Marries Another*, 23, 145–46; on “scribes” as scholars, see Pogoloff, *Logos*, 160–72. In the Tanak, Philo, Josephus, and rabbis, see Orton, *Scribe*, 39–61; in ben Sira, 65–75; in apocalyptic literature, 77–120; in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 121–33.

906. See Le Cornu, *Acts*, 223, citing 1 Chr 23:4; 26:29; 2 Chr 19:11; 34:13.

907. Klauck, *Context*, 46; probably *CIJ* 1:545, §22. Traditionally, Greeks honored ordinary scribes or secretaries more than Romans did (Corn. Nep. 18 [Eumenes], 1.5).

908. Even in villages, petitions could address the village scribe as an official of some sort (*BGU* 1256.1–2; P.Tebt. 39.1).

909. Developed from Keener, *Matthew*, 614–16; idem, *John*, 1074–76.

910. Likewise, the Sanhedrin appears in the later arrest (Acts 5:21, 27, 34, 41), identifying itself with the earlier group that arrested representatives of the apostles (5:28).

911. Luke distinguishes yet links them in Luke 23:13. But the role of the high priest and his family both in Luke-Acts and in other literature indicates that the high-priestly elite formed the heart of the ruling elite.

912. See, e.g., Rhodes, “Synhedrion.” Συνέδριον is a broad rather than restrictive term, applicable also in Greek texts to an informal assembly of advisers (Diod. Sic. 13.111.1) or, frequently, to Rome’s “senate” (e.g., 40.1.1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 5.70.5; 6.30.2; 6.81.1; 6.85.2; 8.69.2; 9.32.5; 10.2.6; 12.1.14; 12.6.2 [4]); in these texts, it appears interchangeably with βουλή, a more common term, e.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 5.71.1; 6.1.1; 6.21.1; 6.81.4). Usage was broad; a βουλή traditionally could constitute a local council (Aristoph. *Knights* 475, 653) but also a leader’s war council (Hom. *Il.* 2.84).

913. Officials could also assemble their own administrative “councils” from among their friends (e.g., Jos. *Life* 368).

(*Ant.* 14.167–68, 170–72, 175, 177–80; *Life* 62) and to district councils (*Ant.* 14.91).⁹¹⁴ This usage is not surprising. The term “Sanhedrin” was widely used, for example, in Achaia,⁹¹⁵ though βουλή (which is employed throughout this excursus as a synonym) appears more often there.⁹¹⁶

The similarity in terminology to other ruling councils is no coincidence. Rome ruled through local aristocracies, in Judea as elsewhere.⁹¹⁷ Municipal senates consisted of aristocrats the Romans called “decurions,”⁹¹⁸ and in the eastern Mediterranean “varied in size from thirty to five hundred members.”⁹¹⁹ (See discussion of decurions at Acts 13:50.) Local senates often had property qualifications, and sometimes those who wished admittance to such senates, especially if beyond the requisite number of members, had to pay significant fees.⁹²⁰

Jerusalem’s Sanhedrin was the ruling council for Jerusalem, the major urban center that watched over Judea; just as the Roman senate wielded power far beyond Rome because of Rome’s power, Jerusalem’s Sanhedrin wielded some influence in national affairs to the degree that Roman prefects and Herodian princes allowed.⁹²¹

The wealthiest elite dominated municipal aristocracies of the Mediterranean world, and the dominance of a priestly aristocracy in Judean affairs was a lasting legacy of the Maccabean era.⁹²² Priestly Sadducees dominated the Sanhedrin and were mainly loyal to Rome. “In Judea, as elsewhere, the local aristocracy was the municipal equivalent of the Roman Senate—conservative, wealthy, hereditary, and, above all, loyal to the purposes of the Empire.”⁹²³ Some of the “scribes” may have been Pharisees, but Pharisees were not dominant in the Sanhedrin,⁹²⁴ despite Josephus’s possible favoritism toward Pharisees.⁹²⁵

At some point the Sanhedrin may have held seventy-one members, as tradition indicates;⁹²⁶ it is, however, doubtful that all members were expected to be present on all occasions (especially an emergency meeting on the night when people had eaten the Passover). The number could reflect an average or an ideal number of members

914. See Twelftree, “Sanhedrin,” 1061. Cf. also spontaneously assembled councils (*Life* 368), noted above; the title also could apply to the management board of the Ephesian Artemis cult (*I. Eph.* 1a.28; 3.945, 951, 966; Horsley, “Inscriptions of Ephesos,” 143n158).

915. See Meritt, *Inscriptions*, 57, no. 76.7 (albeit reconstructed).

916. E.g., *ibid.*, 57, no. 86.1; 107.2.

917. Étienne et al., “Romanisation,” 106. On local ruling classes in the empire, see Brunt, “Romanization.” Local aristocrats often adopted elements of Roman (or, in the East, a blend of Hellenistic and Roman) culture whereas others sometimes emphasized their local traditions more heavily (Bénabou, “Résistance,” 375).

918. Municipal senators who governed a city and its countryside were of the *ordo decurionum*, the order of decurions.

919. Jeffers, *World*, 186.

920. In *Pliny Ep.* 10.112.1, one thousand to two thousand denarii (the debate was whether those elected should also pay the entrance fee, 10.112.2). Former civic officials became members of senates (*Pliny Ep.* 10.79.1; 10.80).

921. Overman, *Crisis*, 372–73, 385, regards the Sanhedrin as a Roman political institution, although conceding that “some of the local Jewish elite may have been involved.” Yet in cities such as Jerusalem, Rome ruled through municipal aristocracies—here pro-Roman Jewish aristocrats.

922. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 79 (noting the high priests’ leadership in the Sanhedrin; also priests as generals in *Jos. War* 2.566–68).

923. Gager, “Class,” 105. Toward the beginning of the war, some younger members of the priestly aristocracy also became disaffected, but their resistance could not long unite with the less aristocratic nationalists.

924. Brown, *Death*, 350–52.

925. *Jos. Ant.* 18.15, 17; cf. *Life* 1, 12; *Ant.* passim; Brown, *Death*, 353–56.

926. *M. Sanh.* 1:6; cf. later *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Exod 15:27. Cf. also Josephus’s Galilean council of seventy members in *War* 2.570; *Life* 79 and that of the Zealots in *War* 4.336, both undoubtedly following a standard contemporary model; the models probably ultimately derive from Mosaic tradition (Exod 24:9; Num 11:16, 24; cf. Ezek 8:11). Josephus also assumed a council of seven judges as a lower court in every city (*War* 2.571; *Ant.* 4.214).

in the elite body.⁹²⁷ If tradition regarding its size is even approximately correct, Jerusalem's senate, or Sanhedrin, was not particularly large; such bodies in the eastern Mediterranean ranged from thirty to five hundred.⁹²⁸ The Sanhedrin included the high priest, who according to tradition could break ties in voting.⁹²⁹ Again according to tradition, its members met in the Chamber of Hewn Stone on the Temple Mount;⁹³⁰ otherwise they met close to the Temple Mount (cf. Jos. *War* 5.144).⁹³¹ Our first-century sources, the NT and Josephus, include Sadducees and other groups in the Sanhedrin, under high-priestly control; later rabbis portray the Sanhedrin as an assembly of rabbis.⁹³² The later portrayals should not surprise us; rabbinic portraits of the Sanhedrin include more striking anachronisms than this, by depicting leaders of the Sanhedrin in biblical times.⁹³³

According to rabbinic (and probably Pharisaic) ideals, judges who proved themselves locally could be promoted to the Sanhedrin (*t. Šeqal.* 3:27), but in actuality the Sanhedrin in the apostles' day probably consisted mainly of members of the Jerusalem aristocracy and wealthy landowners in the vicinity. Rulers could use sanhedrins, or assemblies, the way some politicians today use committees: to secure the end they wanted without taking full responsibility for the decision. Although Rome held authority over the Sanhedrin, it seems to have supervised them closely, primarily in the wake of publicly scandalous abuses (as in Jos. *Ant.* 20.201–3).

Before Herod came to power, the Jerusalem Sanhedrin exercised significant authority (Jos. *Ant.* 14.177). In Josephus, rulers such as Herod appointed the Sanhedrin members they wished and obtained the results they wished.⁹³⁴ After appointment by Herod the Great, the group's membership was probably self-selecting⁹³⁵ and hence undoubtedly represented the most powerful political interests, most commonly associated with traditional aristocratic priestly families. In Pilate's time, without Herod the Great's interference and with the Romans expecting local aristocracies to

927. Brown, *Death*, 348–49, doubts that an exact list of seventy-one members existed in the first century, suggesting that it merely included elders from distinguished families alongside chief priests, representatives of whom were expected to appear. He may be correct.

928. Jeffers, *World*, 186. In the late republic, the Roman senate numbered more than a thousand, but Augustus reduced it (Suet. *Aug.* 35.1).

929. Cf. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 453. An odd number to break a tie made sense; as in Roman law (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.64.6; Quint. *Decl.* 254 intro; 254.6, 18–19; 314 intro; 314.12), a tie vote would yield acquittal.

930. *T. Šeqal.* 3:27; *Sipre Deut.* 152.1.2; *b. Yoma* 25a; *Gen. Rab.* 70:8; *Num. Rab.* 19:26; *Ecl. Rab.* 1:1, §1; some traditions made this the world's center (*Num. Rab.* 1:4). A location near the temple is not surprising; at times, other peoples' leaders could use temples (the senate in Cic. *Fam.* 8.4.4).

931. For bibliography on the Sanhedrin, see Safrai, "Self-Government," 418 (the section on the Sanhedrin is 379–400). Josephus generally prefers the term "sanhedrin," "assembly," in *Antiquities of the Jews* and βουλῆ, "council," in the *War*. The rabbis believed that God supported the decrees of the rabbinic *Beth din hagadol*, great assembly (*Exod. Rab.* 15:20), on which Israel rightly depended (*Song Rab.* 7:3, §1; *Lam. Rab.* 2:4, §8).

932. Cohen, *Maccabees*, 156. The Sanhedrin appears often, albeit in idealized form, in later rabbinic literature (e.g., *m. Sanh.* passim; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 27:9); rabbis elaborated Israel's dependence on the Sanhedrin (e.g., *Song Rab.* 4:1, §2; 7:5, §2). See now also Grabbe, "Sanhedrin," against most of the later rabbinic image of the Sanhedrin.

933. E.g., *b. Ber.* 3b; *Gen. Rab.* 74:15; *Exod. Rab.* 1:13; *Pesiq. Rab.* 11:3; *y. Sanh.* 7:5, §5; 10:2, §8; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Lev 24:12; *Tg. Ruth* 4:1, 4; *Tg. 1 Chr.* 18:17; *Tg. Qoh.* 2:10; *Tg. Rishon* on Esth 2:21. Cf. also the eschatological and heavenly Sanhedrin, composed of angels or scholars (*'Abot R. Nat.* 32 A; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 36a; *B. Meši'a* 75a; 85b; 86a; *Giṭ.* 68a; *Mak.* 13b; *Pesaḥ.* 53b; *Šabb.* 129b; *y. Sanh.* 1:1, §4; 11:5, §1; *Gen. Rab.* 49:2; 64:4; *Exod. Rab.* 12:4; 30:18; *Lev. Rab.* 11:8; 24:2; 29:1, 4; *Num. Rab.* 3:4; 18:4; 19:3; *Ruth Rab.* 4:3, 5; *Ecl. Rab.* 1:11, §1; 2:12, §1; 5:11, §5; *Song Rab.* 3:11, §2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 23:4; 24:11; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:19; Keener, "Heavenly Court").

934. See Sanders, *Figure*, 482–83; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 15.173; 20.216–18. If we may take Josephus literally, Herod executed the former sanhedrin that had resisted him (*Ant.* 14.175); he could then assemble his own councils as needed (*Ant.* 16.357, 360; 17.46).

935. Cf. Rapske, *Custody*, 105.

administer the business they could (cf. Jos. *War* 2.331, 405; *Ant.* 20.11), we should not be surprised that chief priests would convene a sanhedrin (*Ant.* 20.200), especially since the priestly aristocracy constituted a large portion of it.⁹³⁶ We should also not be surprised if the Sanhedrin found the support of Rome in their interests, since its members maintained their status by virtue of Roman benevolence.⁹³⁷ Fewer than four decades after the events the Gospels describe, Jerusalem's aristocracy continued to act as a body. When the high priest and the leading Pharisee allegedly acted without the approval of the rest of the assembly, they provoked that assembly's anger (Jos. *Life* 309).

A small minority of scholars, wishing to harmonize the later rabbinic portrait of the Sanhedrin with the one found in Josephus and early Christian sources, have opted for two Sanhedrins—the religious Sanhedrin of the rabbis and the political Sanhedrin attested in first-century sources. Some of these scholars argue that the political Sanhedrin tried Jesus, thereby exonerating the religious Sanhedrin of the rabbis. One scholar favoring the rabbinic picture has even argued that the Gospels and Acts are late sources on this matter, with changes into the fourth century.⁹³⁸ Nevertheless, even apart from textual evidence to the contrary, evidence within the early Christian texts refutes this theory: later writers fail to clear up conflicts and to impose later theology.⁹³⁹ In the final analysis, it is simply anachronistic to reject all our first-century portraits on the basis of later, idealized rabbinic accounts, although reliable tradition may remain in them at points. Few scholars have therefore accepted the double-Sanhedrin thesis.⁹⁴⁰

After examining Josephus's three mentions of "Sanhedrin" and five of βουλή,⁹⁴¹ Brown concludes that Josephus's portrait of the Sanhedrin is quite close to that of the Gospels and Acts.⁹⁴² It judges, consists of "chief priests, scribes, and rulers or influential citizens (= elders)," sentences those found guilty of crimes, and constitutes the leading Jewish body with which Roman rulers would deal. Clearly, it "played a major administrative and judicial role in Jewish self-governance in Judea."⁹⁴³

It is not clear from first-century sources how frequently and formally this senate met; presumably, they would assemble as often as other municipal aristocracies, though this frequency need not imply that every member would be present (see discussion at Acts 22:30). On this occasion, however, especially with a meeting postponed till morning (Acts 4:3, 5) and given how rapidly important information would spread (see comments on Acts 19:10), here likely through messengers or servants, the percentage of attendance could be substantial.⁹⁴⁴ A meeting place on or near the Temple Mount itself is very likely. Rabbis called the meeting place the

936. Cf. Sanders, *Figure*, 484–87; Jos. *War* 2.331, 336; *Ant.* 17.160, 164; 20.216–17; probably the municipal aristocracy in *Ant.* 14.91, 163, 167, 180; *Life* 62.

937. Spencer Kennard, "Provincial Assembly" (though, in view of Josephus's portrait, he may overstate their loyalty to Rome).

938. Mantel, *History of Sanhedrin*.

939. Sutcliffe, "Review."

940. See Blinzler, *Trial*, 15, 140; Brown, *Death*, 343–48; Grabbe, "Synagogue," 1730–44, esp. 1743.

941. Jos. *War* 2.331, 336; 5.142–44, 532; *Ant.* 20.11, 200–201, 216–17; *Life* 62.

942. Brown, *Death*, 342–43.

943. *Ibid.*, 342–43.

944. Dunn, *Acts*, 52, suggests only the high priest's advisers and some others, doubting that the highest court would be convened for this. Although the term can apply to ad hoc groups (see Levine, *Hellenism*, 88–90) and this narrative would fit an assembly limited to ranking Sadducees, there is no reason to doubt that the court met often (and members counted participation honorable, as with elders in ancient Israelite towns, Deut 22:15; 25:7; Josh 20:4; Ruth 4:1–2; 2 Kgs 6:32; Prov 31:23; Lam 5:14; Ezek 8:1; Zech 8:16). Well-to-do Roman aristocrats such as Pliny certainly invested considerable time in court and Rome's senate.

Chamber of Hewn Stone;⁹⁴⁵ first-century evidence suggests a site on the east end of a bridge over the Tyropoeon Valley, near the western end of the temple (Jos. *War* 5.144).⁹⁴⁶ Other municipal senates could meet in temples.⁹⁴⁷ (See fuller discussion of the meeting place at Acts 23:5.)

(3) *Named High Priests (4:6)*

Luke writes as if his audience may be familiar with the names he lists, or at least gives the impression that he possesses (and this could also be the point he is making) secure historical information. He may at least safely assume his audience's knowledge of Annas and Caiaphas, whom he earlier introduced as high priests (Luke 3:2). The high priest presided over the ruling council and hence was Jerusalem's most powerful permanent resident, to whom the Roman prefect would likely defer many decisions.

Annas the high priest is Ananus I, son of Seth, who held the highest office from 6 to 15 C.E. (One should not be surprised how frequently variant names such as Annas and Ananias appear for different individuals in Acts [e.g., Acts 5:1; 9:10; 23:2]; the names were quite common in Palestine and need not imply any deliberate narrative connections.)⁹⁴⁸ The Roman governor Quirinius put this chief priest in office (Jos. *Ant.* 18.26), and five of his sons (20.198) as well as his son-in-law Joseph Caiaphas became high priests after him. Rome might change the highest official but often preferred to retain the hereditary dynasty in power.⁹⁴⁹

That Caiaphas held power as long as he did (nineteen years) reinforces the suspicion that one acquires from other nonpriestly sources concerning the character of the high priesthood: he was a skilled but probably often ruthless politician. He kept the public peace in a manner that satisfied both Rome and the populace, and thereby preserved his own position.⁹⁵⁰ He was well-to-do⁹⁵¹ and part of the most hellenized elite⁹⁵² and hence had much at stake personally in keeping the peace.

Some scholars suggest that Luke was incorrect about Annas being the "high priest,"⁹⁵³ since Caiaphas was officially high priest in this period (cf. John 18:13; Jos. *Ant.* 18.35, 95).⁹⁵⁴ But elsewhere Luke reveals his awareness that Annas and Caiaphas shared high-priestly authority in this period (Luke 3:2; cf. here "high priestly family"). This observation fits the likelihood, given the continuing dynasty over whom Annas

945. *M. Pe'ah* 2:6; *'Ed* 7:4; *Mid.* 5:4; *Sipre Deut.* 152.1.2; *b. Yoma* 19a; cf. *Sanh.* 11:2; *Tamid* 2:5; 4:3.

946. A nearby site (the same one?) in Jos. *War* 2.344 appears spacious enough to hold large crowds and so perhaps was used especially for public deliberations, with private hearings in nearby chambers. Cf. the hall's destruction in 6.354. Cf., e.g., Jerusalem Map B in *Brill's New Pauly*, 6:1171.

947. Though Rome had its own senate house, cf. the meeting in the temple of Apollo in Cic. *Fam.* 8.4.4.

948. E.g. (including feminine forms), Luke 2:36; *CIJ* 1:62, §88; 1:228, §290; 1:244, §310; 1:314–15, §411; 2:127, §907; 2:155, §967; 2:186, §§1013–14; 2:195, §1066; *CPJ* 1:165–66, §24; and nearly fifty times in the LXX. It was not common in the Diaspora, however, where Luke was from (Williams, "Names," 85).

949. Two high-priestly families dominated the first-century high priesthood. Later rabbis preserved tales of the wickedness of some of the final aristocratic priests (*b. Pesah.* 57a).

950. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 102. (Stauffer [54] thinks that Caiaphas "held his peace" when Pilate introduced standards into Jerusalem; but Jos. *Ant.* 18.57–59 is unclear.)

951. See the so-called Caiaphas family tomb, although the precise name of the owner remains debated (Riesner, "Familiengrab"; Reich, "Inscriptions"; idem, "Name"; Evans, "Caiaphas Ossuary"; idem, "Excavating," 327–28). Even if it did not belong to Caiaphas himself, it probably belonged to aristocratic priests (see Horbury, "Ossuaries") and so illustrates the point; for health advantages of Jerusalem's upper class, cf. Zias, "Mount Scopus Tomb." At the time of this book's writing, the current verdict is that the tomb did belong to Caiaphas (see Zissu and Goren, "Ossuary," brought to my attention by Craig Evans, May 5, 2012), but the debate is continuing.

952. On pagan features of the tomb, see Greenhut, "Tomb"; idem, "Cave"; Evans, "Excavating," 329 (noting the coin in a skull's mouth in the same tomb, though Evans does not insist that the tomb is Caiaphas's).

953. E.g., Winter, *Trial*, 33; Pervo, *Acts*, 115.

954. On Caiaphas, see further comments in Keener, *John*, 853–54, 1089–90; Bielecki, "Problems"; for a proposed site for his palace, McRay, *Archaeology*, 199–202.

reigned as *paterfamilias*, that he continued to exercise considerable influence after Caiaphas, his son-in-law, assumed office.⁹⁵⁵ After Vitellius, legate of Syria, deposed Caiaphas in 36 C.E., he replaced him with Jonathan son of Annas (Jos. *Ant.* 18.95); in time all five sons of Annas followed in office (20.198), suggesting that Annas had in fact exercised considerable influence before his death in 35 C.E. None of these factors would justify regarding Annas as the highest priest, but he may have retained the title as one of respect, something like retired U.S. presidents.⁹⁵⁶ Josephus does, indeed, suggest that even former high priests could retain the title “high priest” (e.g., 20.204). Annas certainly also retained respect in a situation where many Jews must have been frustrated by Rome’s authority to depose and appoint high priests.

More important, Luke clearly employs the term “high priests” in the plural for all the leading priests (Luke 9:22; 19:47; 20:1, 19; 22:2, 4, 52, 66; 23:4, 10, 13; 24:20; Acts 4:23; 5:24; 9:14, 21; 22:30; 23:14; 25:2, 15; 26:10, 12); this usage appears in the adjective “high-priestly” in Acts 4:6 itself. Josephus uses the plural “high priests” more often than does Luke; it was simply the standard terminology of the era.⁹⁵⁷ Perhaps under foreign influence, Jewish writers came to speak of the priestly aristocracy or high-priestly family as high priests, rather than merely the ruling chief priest, the *kohen hagadol* of the OT.⁹⁵⁸ Luke’s frequent use of the plural (twenty-two times, or one-third of NT uses in the plural) thus reflects the standard usage of his day (in Acts, this usage first appears in 4:23; then 5:24).

Hebrew names such as “John” and “Jonathan” were not unusual⁹⁵⁹ and appear among members of the high-priestly dynasty (Jos. *Ant.* 18.95). “Alexander” is a good Greek name, rare among Palestinian Jewish peasants but common among Jerusalem aristocrats and in the Diaspora.⁹⁶⁰ Greek names in general were especially popular with the Jerusalem aristocracy, in contrast to “the heavily Aramaised peasantry of Galilee.”⁹⁶¹ Indeed, the elite absorbed various Greek customs as well as names.⁹⁶²

Those who knew Jerusalem’s leadership and history best would not be surprised by Luke’s mention of a high-priestly family. The high-priestly line held a hereditary power base,⁹⁶³ a heritage considered critical to those who maintained it.⁹⁶⁴

955. This continuing influence is widely acknowledged (e.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 216; Reicke, *Era*, 142–43).

956. For retaining the title, see Witherington, *Acts*, 190–91. Certainly this could be Luke’s practice as a Diaspora writer; Roman officials retained titles of past offices they had filled (Taylor, “Asiarchs,” 258). Some may have felt that he remained high priest in God’s sight because the office was supposed to be lifelong (a view mentioned by some commentators, e.g., Talbert, *Acts*, 41); cf. the biblical specification of transition with the “death of the high priest” (Num 35:25, 28; Josh 20:6).

957. E.g., Jos. *War* 2.243, 316, 320, 342, 410–11; 4.151, 315; *Life* 197; cf. also 1QM II, 1; 4Q494 1 4; Stern, “Aspects,” 601, 603; Sanders, *Figure*, 327–32; Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 51. Josephus, indeed, employs the plural of ἀρχιερεὺς about seventy-seven times.

958. Elsewhere in the Roman Empire, the title “high priests” did not always bear the prestige it held in Judea (cf. Lewis, *Life*, 47; Reicke, *Era*, 147).

959. See Ilan, “Lhbdlly ktyb.” Still, “Jonathan” (e.g., in *CPJ* 1:165–66, §24) was one of “the least popular of the early Hasmonaean names” (Williams, “Names,” 88).

960. Williams, “Names,” 96–97. See, e.g. (in either gender), *CIJ* 1:lxvii; 1:13, §8; 1:59, §85; 1:102, §144; 1:149, §210; 1:157, §219; 1:288, §370; 1:436, §606; 2:27, §764; 2:249, §1217; 2:274, §1284; *CPJ* 1:xix; 3:168–69.

961. Williams, “Names,” 109. Some upper classes in the empire still knew the local vernacular, the degree of the use of which varied from one place to another (see Brunt, “Romanization,” 170–72).

962. E.g., the Greek afterlife practice of a coin in the mouth (Evans, *World*, 98); cf. also decorative designs in the elite’s homes (96).

963. The priesthood as a whole shares a common ancestry, one apparently supported also by genetic analysis (Basser, “Priests,” 825).

964. E.g., the Zadokite line, established in the time of David, was a matter of no small importance to protest movements originating in the period of Hasmonaean ascendancy, as evident in the emphasis on Zadok at Qumran (CD IV, 1, 3; V, 5; 1QS V, 2, 9; 1QSa I, 2, 24; II, 3; 1QSB III, 22; 4Q174 1 I, 17; 4Q266 5 I, 16).

(4) The Authorities' Challenge (4:7)

That the apostles stood in the “midst” would fit the tradition that the Sanhedrin sat in a semicircle⁹⁶⁵ and at the least indicates that they were situated so that all the gathered leaders could see them. That early Christians appeared before various courts is difficult to dispute (cf. 2 Cor 11:24–25), and the reported suffering of the Jerusalem church (Gal 1:13, 23; 1 Thess 2:14–16) probably implies that at least some of the municipal authorities were involved. But this trial scene, like others in Acts, also makes for a good story. As much as pirates and shipwrecks, trial scenes provided suspense in ancient narratives (cf., e.g., those in Chariton *Chaereas and Callirhoe*).

The authorities ask the apostles a leading question (cf. Acts 8:34),⁹⁶⁶ which allows the apostles to address Jesus’s “power” (cf. 1:8; 3:12; 4:33; 10:38) and “name” (3:6, 16; 4:10, 12, 17–18, 30). This resembles the questioning of Jesus’s authority in Luke 20:2, except that in this case the disciples’ answer is not evasive (contrast Luke 20:3–4). “Name” signified authority or authorization (see comments on Acts 3:6). Because Acts speaks of priestly authority (Acts 9:14; 26:10, 12), God’s authority in Christ (cf. 1:7; 26:18; delegated to the apostles in 8:19) may here appear as a direct challenge to that of the priestly authorities. As in ancient Israel, God’s summons through his agents the prophets was a higher authority than that of earthly rulers.⁹⁶⁷

c. Salvation in Jesus’s Name (4:8–12)

Unintimidated by the political power arrayed before him, Peter plays on the semantic range of $\sigma\acute{\omega}\zeta\omega$: the name of Jesus, which alone “saved” this man from sickness (4:9), was the only means for anyone’s “salvation” (4:12); only Jesus’s authority and power brought either kind of God-given salvation. The authorities had unjustly brought about Jesus’s death, but God had reversed their unjust verdict by raising him (4:10); now Peter interprets this reversal as fulfilling a principle of Scripture (4:11). Peter holds back nothing; apart from his courteous use of a title for his hearers (4:8), he confronts the officials with the same message he preached publicly.

Like some other speeches in Acts, this one has a judicial setting, one of the most common settings for ancient oratory.⁹⁶⁸ It introduces some themes developed further in the parallel speech in 5:29–32 (on the relation to which, see comments on doublets above);⁹⁶⁹ it also summarizes some themes from Peter’s earlier Lukan speeches, including challenging the hearers with Jesus’s crucifixion and especially proclaiming salvation through Jesus’s name.⁹⁷⁰ The brief speech plays especially on the broad sense of $\sigma\acute{\omega}\zeta\omega$, which includes both physical (4:9) and spiritual (4:12) salvation, deliverance,

965. *M. Sanh.* 4:3; *Exod. Rab.* 5:12; see comments on Acts 23:1. This view is commonly suggested by commentators (e.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 216; Larkin, *Acts*, 72; Polhill, *Acts*, 142; Peterson, *Acts*, 189). But Luke commonly uses $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omicron\varsigma$ (twenty-three times; compared with four in John; two in an interpolation in John; five in Mark [comparable for its length]; seven in Matthew; seven in Pauline literature), often for the center of action in a narrative.

966. Ancient narrators frequently used interlocutors as foils (e.g., Plato’s dialogues; cf. also Maclean and Aitken, *Heroikos*, xli).

967. Cf. Walaskay, *Came to Rome*, 66, contrasting Caesar’s political authority (Luke 20:25), as delegated through centurions (7:8), with the church’s authority in the soteriological sphere. Robinson and Wall, *Called*, 258–59, argue that Luke portrays God’s agents as prophetically challenging authorities to employ their power justly, not as seeking to establish a theocracy; the apostles relativize earthly rulers’ authority in light of God’s final authority. For the church’s authority (and authorities), cf. O’Toole, “ Αὐθηνία .”

968. See Soards, *Speeches*, 44 (noting that Acts 4:19–20 function as a judicial epilogue for the speech, though also noting the deliberative implications of 4:12).

969. Sabugal, “Kerygmas de Pedro,” finds an original Petrine core in the tradition behind these speeches.

970. See Susaimanickam, “Name.”

or wholeness.⁹⁷¹ By continuing his preaching of Jesus’s “name” (3:6, 16) in response to their question (4:7), Peter effectively carries forward the same theology articulated in his central text in 2:21: whoever calls on the Lord’s “name” will be “saved.”⁹⁷²

I. FILLED FOR CONFRONTATION (4:8)

The apostles here are filled with the Holy Spirit, probably again,⁹⁷³ indicating that Luke employs the language freely for empowerments for proclamation, not simply for an initial entrance into faith or empowerment (cf. 2:4; 4:31, 33).⁹⁷⁴ This is Peter’s first occasion for confronting an enemy of the gospel; Paul’s first recorded filling with the Spirit subsequent to his initial one (9:17) occurs under similar circumstances (13:9).⁹⁷⁵ The Spirit had also led Jesus immediately into conflict with spiritually hostile forces (Luke 3:22; 4:1–2, 13–14).⁹⁷⁶ Although Luke speaks often of “receiving” the Spirit, he conceives of the Spirit not as simply a past possession to be commemorated but as God’s powerful presence dynamically active within the community of believers.

Spirit-empowered speech (which appears frequently in Acts: e.g., Acts 2:4; 4:31) fulfills the promises of 1:8 (applying “witness” even in the narrowly forensic sense) and Luke 12:11–12 (which is specifically forensic).⁹⁷⁷ The Holy Spirit, who inspires witness for Christ (Acts 1:8), and the obvious miracle (4:14) both instigate Peter’s unflinching response; certainty of the resurrection (4:2) may also make the apostles fearless (on this boldness, see further comments on Acts 4:13). In view of their resurrection certainty, death itself loses its power to coerce fear.⁹⁷⁸ Such courage is not the province only of fiction; ancient historical writers often focused on those who gave their lives in loyalty to the state (common in Roman military and political history) or their convictions (as in accounts of prophets and philosophers). Such experiences are not uncommon in today’s world.⁹⁷⁹

Jesus directly confronted Jerusalem’s leaders only toward the end of his public ministry; his followers confront them toward the beginning. Hearers steeped in the LXX, as Luke’s ideal audience is, would recognize in the audacity of Peter and John toward Israel’s rulers the character of ancient Israelite prophets confronting kings and other leaders of Israel’s institutions (as well as an echo of Jesus, 4:13). This impression is reinforced by the explicit claim that they were “filled with the Holy Spirit,” a claim frequently associated with prophecy.⁹⁸⁰

971. Cf. Bailey, *Poet*, 65, though his proposed double chiasmic structure is not persuasive.

972. On Joel 2:32 as the subtext here, see Dupont, *Salvation*, 152; cf. Marshall, “Acts,” 550.

973. Though “having been filled” is an aorist passive participle, it need not refer to an event as antecedent, as Pentecost was; if it refers to chronology at all, it simply demands action antecedent to that of the main verb (cf. the discussion in Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, 174–75, §339); so also Acts 13:9. See Parsons and Culy, *Acts*, 66: the participle could function “as attendant circumstance” (an additional action) “or temporal” (Peter spoke after being filled). For multiple fillings in the OT, cf. 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6.

974. Cf. Carson, *Showing Spirit*, 160; Keener, *Gift*, 166–68; Miller, *Empowered for Mission*, 121. One should nevertheless distinguish between the spontaneous inspiration implied by the aorist passive (here) and the continuous character implied in the adjective πλήρης (as in Acts 6:5; Bruce, *Commentary*, 99n16; Hamilton, “Theology of Spirit”).

975. Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 109, also notes the parallel.

976. Cf. Keener, *Spirit*, 70–71, on Mark 1:9–11.

977. See Soards, *Speeches*, 44.

978. An educated ancient audience would respect the lack of fear of death; see philosophers and others cited in my introduction to Acts 27:21–26.

979. My own experience makes it impossible for me to treat all such accounts as intrinsically implausible. In the first few years after my conversion from a non-Christian background, I experienced some beatings and threats on my life for my witness. On one occasion, I continued preaching as my head was being slammed repeatedly against the floor and my hair was being torn out; on one of the occasions, I felt no pain. Whether one attributes this behavior to adrenaline or, as I would have interpreted it at the time, pneumatic inspiration, I am a witness that bold preaching may continue in the face of potentially life-threatening hostility.

980. See Keener, *Spirit*, 10–13, among many others; see the commentary introduction, ch. 15, sect. 5.a.iii (Keener, *Acts*, 1:523–24), and esp. part 3 of the excursus in that chapter (534–37).

Although Peter will speak “boldly” (see comments on Acts 4:13), he opens with a courteous address, the customary *captatio benevolentiae*.⁹⁸¹ If he treads softly in 4:8–9,⁹⁸² by 4:10 he speaks with boldness; speakers sometimes softened the blow of courageous speech (παρρησία) with flattery or an explanation⁹⁸³ or, as here, at least an acknowledgment of due respect.

II. ARRAIGNED FOR BENEFACTION (4:9)

Peter’s response is laden with irony.⁹⁸⁴ By ironically pointing out that the apostles are being legally examined⁹⁸⁵ for offering a benefaction, Peter both begins a defense and goes on the offensive.⁹⁸⁶ Defensively, it was a common rhetorical practice to admit a charge that was not a crime (cf. 24:14);⁹⁸⁷ claiming one’s benefaction, in fact, should weight the burden of proof in favor of the speaker’s positive character, and hence one’s innocence (see comments on Acts 24:17). Benefaction was, indeed, universally viewed as a virtue.⁹⁸⁸ Offensively, in the ancient Mediterranean ideology of reciprocity, the proper response to benefaction was gratitude;⁹⁸⁹ the ungrateful person was viewed quite negatively.⁹⁹⁰ After listing murder and other vices, for example, Seneca rhetorically claims that ingratitude is worse than all of them and the source of all of them.⁹⁹¹ Indeed, it was virtuous to repay benefactions and scandalous to neglect such returns.⁹⁹² Though a benefactor might continue to give anyway,⁹⁹³ gratitude provided further motivation for the relationship,⁹⁹⁴ and Eastern cities evolved patterns of honoring benefactors that were meant to invite future benefaction.⁹⁹⁵ Benefactions

981. Observed by rhetorical commentators, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 193.

982. One could use figured speech to soften one’s message to those in authority (see Anderson, *Glossary*, 58, on Demet. *Style* 287–98).

983. See Anderson, *Glossary*, 94 (on παρρησία); cf. *prodiorthōsis* in the comments on Acts 4:10a.

984. Most recognize this (e.g., Pervo, *Story*, 23). On irony as a rhetorical technique, see *Rhet. Alex.* 21, 1434a.17–32; Cic. *Brut.* 292; Anderson, *Glossary*, 39–40; Rowe, “Style,” 128–29; Duke, *Irony*, 8–12; O’Day, *Revelation*, 12–19; Keener, *John*, 223; in satire and debate, e.g., 1 Kgs 18:27; Plato *Soph.* passim; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.9–10; Plut. *St. Poets* 4, *Mor.* 1058c; Apul. *Metam.* 3.4–6; Jos. *Life* 340; Ag. *Ap.* 1.295; Tert. *Apol.* 40.2; forensic speech in Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.10.25. On sarcasm (probably too strong a depiction for here), see, e.g., Anderson, *Glossary*, 108.

985. Luke usually uses the term for hearings (Luke 23:14; Acts 24:8; 28:18) or legal examination (Acts 12:19), though it can also apply to spiritual evaluation (1 Cor 2:14–15; 4:3–4; 9:3; 14:24; cf. Acts 17:11).

986. Cf. Paul’s claim in Acts 26:6–7 that he was on trial for his Jewish faith, i.e., for sharing the common Jewish hope of resurrection, to which his Sadducean accusers objected.

987. See comments on Acts 24:14.

988. E.g., Demosth. *Aristocr.* 6; Mus. *Ruf.* 14, p. 92.32; Quint. *Curt.* 7.3.1; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11e, pp. 68–69.14; Marc. *Aur.* 1.15.3; Philo *Spec. Laws* 4.58.

989. E.g., Xen. *Mem.* 2.2.13; Cic. *Fam.* 13.22.2; Sen. *E. Controv.* 9.1.intro.; 9.1.9; Val. *Max.* 5.2; Pliny *Ep.* 3.2.6; 4.13.10; 7.15.3; 7.31.7; Fronto *Ad Ant. Pium* 9.1; Harrison, *Grace*, 40–43; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 148; deSilva, “Patronage,” 768; idem, *Honor*, 109–10, 116, 142; in Epicureanism, Dorandi, “Epicurean School,” 1074. The normal response was also “friendship” (e.g., Mus. *Ruf.* 19, p. 122.29–30 [cf. 122.26–27]), as Luke well knew (Luke 16:9). Naturally, gratitude was expected toward deities (e.g., Ael. *Arist. Panath.* 21, 161–162D; Men. *Rhet.* 2.17, 437.7–9, 13–15; Diog. *Laert.* 8.1.24; cf. Porph. *Marc.* 35.534–35).

990. Xen. *Mem.* 2.2.2–3; Polyb. 6.6.6; Val. *Max.* 5.3; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 81 passim, esp. 81.1; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11k, pp. 80–81.21–22; Lucian *Fisherman* 5; *Tim.* 35; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 36; Jos. *Ant.* 19.361; for potential legal penalties, e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 1.2.6 (Persia); Val. *Max.* 2.6.6 and 5.3.ext. 3–4 (Athens); Suet. *Claud.* 25.1; Winter, *Left Corinthin*, 130; Buckland, *Roman Law*, 130. Ingratitude toward deity was especially wrong (e.g., Porph. *Marc.* 23.372; Ps 78:11 [77:11 LXX]; Wis 16:11; Philo *Creation* 169; Rom 1:21; ‘Abot R. Nat. 46, §128 B).

991. Sen. *Y. Ben.* 1.10.4 (cf. Rom 1:21). Cf. Cic. *Att.* 8.4: ingratitude “encompasses all offenses.”

992. E.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 1, 1421b.38; 1, 1422a.32–34, 36–38; 2 Macc 9:26.

993. Fronto *Nep. am.* 2.9; deSilva, *Honor*, 117, cites here Sen. *Y. Ben.* 1.10.5; 7.31.2, 4; 7.32; cf. deity in Epict. *Diatr.* 1.6.42.

994. Pliny *Ep.* 6.18.2; cf. deSilva, *Honor*, 117, citing Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.38, 65. This was also understood with reference to gratitude to deities (Harrison, *Grace*, 349–50).

995. Bowersock, “Cult,” 171.

normally elicited praise from observers,⁹⁹⁶ honor being their desired end. Ironically, civic benefactors were typically members of the urban elite⁹⁹⁷—that is, the class that jailed the apostles overnight and is now interrogating them.

But here the response is worse than ingratitude; it is in fact scandalously inappropriate. To betray or harm benefactors was grossly wicked;⁹⁹⁸ indeed, criticizing a civic benefactor could mobilize the citizenry against oneself,⁹⁹⁹ a potential danger of which the rulers would not be unaware (Luke 20:19; Acts 5:26). Instead of being thanked for performing a civic benefaction akin to giving alms,¹⁰⁰⁰ Peter and John are being prosecuted as if the benefaction were a crime! This in turn casts the moral discernment of the priestly leaders in a bad light, possibly following the rhetorical technique of returning the charges against one's accusers (on which see comments on Acts 7:51–53; 24:19). Had Peter wished to be more conciliatory, he could have used softer language for the interrogation (while retaining his claim to act as a benefactor), but Acts 4:10 indicates that he has no intention of being conciliatory here.

Benefaction ideology was prominent in antiquity and appears elsewhere in Luke-Acts for Jesus's ministry (Luke 22:25; Acts 10:38; elsewhere in the NT only at 1 Tim 6:2).¹⁰⁰¹ Although people sometimes employed the language ironically (e.g., 1 Tim 6:2)¹⁰⁰² or more loosely,¹⁰⁰³ "benefactors" were most commonly those who possessed adequate social power to benefit others; ideally, such persons would feel obligated to benefit the larger society.¹⁰⁰⁴ The culturally respected way for the wealthy to distribute their wealth was through public benevolence.¹⁰⁰⁵ (They also expressed such benevolence toward socially powerful persons with somewhat lesser status than themselves.)¹⁰⁰⁶

This social power was most obvious in the case of "benefactors" who were deities¹⁰⁰⁷ and kings.¹⁰⁰⁸ (In many cases a king was even titled Euergetes, "Benefactor.")¹⁰⁰⁹ Philosophers spoke of God as beneficent or benefactor¹⁰¹⁰ and claimed that God expected

996. E.g., Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11i, pp. 78–79.27–28; Plut. *Cim.* 10.1–5; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 17; a dominant theme in civic inscriptions (e.g., *CIL* 5.875 in Sherck, *Empire*, §116, pp. 158–59).

997. See, e.g., Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 89; Clarke, "Italy," 472; Kearsley, "Benefactor."

998. E.g., 2 Macc 4:2; 3 Macc 3:19; 6:24; Wis 19:14; Jos. *Ant.* 10.166; 11.278. Cf. the ancient horror of those who betrayed benefactors with whom they had shared table fellowship (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 21.76; *Od.* 4.534–35; Eurip. *Cycl.* 126–28; *Hec.* 25–26; Livy 25.16.6; more fully Keener, *John*, 912–13).

999. See Lucian *Peregr.* 19, where the critic barely escapes lynching. Four years later, the critic praises the benefactor instead (*Peregr.* 20).

1000. Not silver and gold in this case but empowering the man to earn his own living.

1001. For benefaction imagery in general, see, e.g., Walker, "Benefactor"; Saller, *Patronage*; and esp. Danker, *Benefactor* (for a concise survey of the theme's applicability to Luke-Acts, see idem, *Luke*, 6–8).

1002. Figuratively, philosophers also provided the greatest "beneficence" by their teaching (Epict. *Diatr.* 1.4.29). A wicked governor appeared a "benefactor" in contrast to one more wicked still (Jos. *Ant.* 20.253).

1003. Rahab's benefaction to the spies (Jos. *Ant.* 5.30).

1004. For examples of such benefactions, Pliny *Ep.* 2.4; 6.18.1; 7.18.5 (by publishing these letters, Pliny invites greater honor).

1005. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 19, p. 122.24–27. Although many saw the sponsoring of activities such as public games as diminishing public morals to gain reputation, sponsoring civic projects was honorable (Zuiderhoek, "Munificence").

1006. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 15.190; 17.109 (to his son); 20.66 (a deposed king); Char. *Chaer.* 4.5.8. Nevertheless, although Hellenistic benefaction overlaps with Roman patronage, it is not identical (Joubert, "Exchange"; Gehrke, "Euergetism," 155; Harrison, *Grace*, 15–16; MacGillivray, "Patronage," 46–54, 80).

1007. For Osiris, Plut. *Isis* 12, *Mor.* 355E; for Isis, Kee, *Miracle*, 125–28. This theme became prominent in the Hellenistic era (see Du Sablon, "Religiosité").

1008. E.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.34; Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 60.9–14, esp. 60.9 (king). Cf. Herod's beneficence to other peoples (Jos. *Ant.* 16.159).

1009. E.g., Sir prol.; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.48. Ptolemy is the "divine benefactor" in *PSI* 1016.16 (129 B.C.E.).

1010. Mus. Ruf. 17, p. 108.14; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.6.42. Jewish philosophers (e.g., Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.209; 4.187; *Rewards* 122; *Decal.* 41) and nonphilosophers (Pss 13:6 [12:6 LXX]; 57:2 [56:3]; 116:7 [114:7]; Wis 3:5; 11:5, 13; 16:2; 2 Macc 6:13; 10:38) also portrayed God as benefactor; so also wisdom in Wis 7:23. As

mortals to exhibit the same ethic.¹⁰¹¹ Rulers ideally should be benefactors;¹⁰¹² the ideal ruler should delight in giving even more than receivers desire receiving.¹⁰¹³ Naturally, benefactor ideology applied in the empire to the emperor par excellence.¹⁰¹⁴ To receive benefactions from the emperor increased the receiver's honor as an obvious beneficiary of the emperor's attention.¹⁰¹⁵ Just as rulers could be benefactors, they could be "saviors," a term also applied specifically to the emperor.¹⁰¹⁶ Kings were often called both "benefactor" and "savior" (or said to "do benefaction" and "save").¹⁰¹⁷ Peter's hearers understood well the benefaction obligations expected of leaders; many earlier priestly leaders in Jerusalem had functioned as civic benefactors.¹⁰¹⁸

Peter's speech will, accordingly, move quickly from benefaction to salvation in the parallel clause (σέσωται, at the end of Acts 4:9), a concept he will develop further in 4:12. Luke's use of not only "benefactor" but "savior" terminology for God and Christ may suggest his use of the imagery of the benefactor cults;¹⁰¹⁹ but it is of interest that he uses "savior" only in exclusively Jewish settings (Luke 1:47; 2:11; 5:31; 13:23). Moreover, Josephus mentions being called by Galilean villagers "savior and benefactor,"¹⁰²⁰ and the terms are paired in other noncultic contexts;¹⁰²¹ where they refer to a deity in a Jewish setting, they naturally apply to Israel's one God as both savior and benefactor.¹⁰²² Jewish sources in Greek often made use of benefaction language; thus, for example, Job's generosity with his wealth made him a benefactor.¹⁰²³

Human benefaction was typically financial, which was the sort of gift the man had initially requested (Acts 3:2–3); but Peter had promised the man a different kind of benefaction (3:6). Peter's speech ultimately pointed beyond mortal benefactors to the divine one. In contrast to models of paternalistic social power exemplified above, Luke also provided models of servant-benefactors (following Luke 22:25).¹⁰²⁴

The verb σώζω applied to divine healing for the sick (e.g., Luke 8:36, 48, 50; 17:19; 18:42)¹⁰²⁵ as well as other kinds of deliverance (cf. Acts 27:20, 31, 34; Luke 9:24; 13:23; 18:26); Peter's speech plays on different senses of the term (see comments on Acts 4:12).¹⁰²⁶ "Today" might underline the realization of eschatology (cf. Luke

a benefactor, God should be praised and honored (Philo *Prelim. St.* 97; *Dreams* 1.163); on God as benefactor, cf. further Neyrey, "Benefactor"; on miracles as benefactions, see idem, "Miracles," 22–27, esp. 26–27.

1011. Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 104.33; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.14.13; applicable also to rulers in *Let. Aris.* 190, 205, 210, 281. Benefactors were often compared to deity or encouraged to imitate deity (Mus. Ruf. 17, p. 108.11–22, esp. 14; Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.5.19; Iambl. *V.P.* 21.100; cf. Harvey, *History*, 9–10).

1012. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 66.11.

1013. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.23; Iambl. *Letter* 6, frg. 2.3–5.

1014. Witherington, "Salvation," 166; see, e.g., *Res gest.* 15.1–24.2 (Sherk, *Empire*, §26, pp. 45–47); SB 3924 (Sherk, *Empire*, §35 B, p. 61); Philo *Embassy* 148; cf. *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.57 (Latin). His benefactions could include sending a good prefect (*OGIS* 666; *IGRR* 1.1110 in Sherk, *Empire*, §63, p. 104).

1015. So explicitly Pliny *Ep.* 10.13; hence his many and tedious requests of the emperor in published letters (e.g., 10.12.2).

1016. See, e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.6; Green, "Salvation," 87–88; Gilbert, "Propaganda," 238–39; cf. Sall. *Ep. Caes.* 13.6.

1017. E.g., as divine titles of Ptolemy V in *OGIS* 90 (Grant, *Religions*, 68); for the emperor, P.Fouad 8 in Sherk, *Empire*, §81, p. 123; Philo *Flacc.* 74; *Embassy* 22; *Jos. War* 7.71.

1018. See Gardner, "Leadership and Benefaction."

1019. Klauck, *Context*, 328. For the pairing of benefactor and savior in such cults, see, e.g., Koester, *Introduction*, 1:176 (Asclepius); Otto, *Dionysus*, 113 (Dionysus).

1020. *Jos. Life* 244, 259.

1021. E.g., Philo *Flacc.* 126; *Jos. War* 1.530; 3.459; 4.146; *Ant.* 12.261.

1022. E.g., Philo *Creation* 169; *Alleg. Interp.* 2.56; *Sobr.* 55; *Prelim. St.* 171; *Spec. Laws* 1.272.

1023. *Test. Job* 16:6; 44:3. Jewish usage often applied to the poor (Harvey, *History*, 9).

1024. See esp. Lull, "Servant-Benefactor."

1025. *Men. Rhet.* 2.1–2, 375.14 (on the Asclepiads).

1026. Widely noted (e.g., Ridderbos, "Speeches of Peter," 28; Haenchen, *Acts*, 217).

2:11; 4:21; 19:5, 9; 23:43) but may simply evoke LXX rhetoric (cf. Acts 20:26; 22:3; 24:21; 26:29; Luke 5:26), whether as a biblicism, to underline events' importance, or to underscore their reliability.¹⁰²⁷

III. CHARGING THE REAL CRIMINALS (4:10)

“Let it be known to you” may prepare for a shocking statement (cf. Acts 2:14, 36; 13:38; 28:28) and hence may function in a manner akin to the more elaborate techniques rhetoricians called *prodiorthōsis* (preparing hearers for a shocking statement) or perhaps *proparaskeuē* (which prepares the audience to heed something).¹⁰²⁸ The invitation to “know” appears elsewhere in exhortations (e.g., *Test. Jud.* 20:1; *Test. Iss.* 6:1). The language of Acts 4:10–11 includes some features found in some rhetoric, though just as likely the product of the intensity of emotion as due to deliberate mimicking of rhetorical force.¹⁰²⁹

It was standard rhetorical practice to charge one's accusers with something (see comments on Acts 7:51–53; 24:19).¹⁰³⁰ To charge one's *judges*, however, was unusual; one normally appealed positively to judges, and so to charge them was an extraordinary act of *παρρησία* (“boldness,” 4:13) that normally characterized only the boldest of philosophers or prophets. Those who narrated the trials of philosophers such as Socrates sometimes portrayed the trial as revealing that the accusers in reality were accusing themselves, whereas Socrates was being vindicated (Max. Tyre 3.8).¹⁰³¹ Crucifixion was almost the most shameful and painful form of execution known (see comments on Acts 2:36); on the charge of guilt for Jesus's execution, see comments on Acts 2:23.¹⁰³²

Though the text does not explicitly play on the different nuances of *ὄψις* the way it does *σῶζω*, writers had also come to apply this term and its cognates to moral and spiritual health.¹⁰³³ Physical health often functioned as a metaphor for moral or intellectual health, which allows a parabolic application (in addition to the literal sense) in many Gospel narratives, including Luke's (Luke 6:9; 8:36, 48, 50; 17:19; 18:42; Acts 14:19).¹⁰³⁴

IV. THE REJECTED CORNERSTONE (4:11)

The disciples, who learned their messianic prophecies from Jesus (Luke 24:44–46), had learned from Jesus to apply this text to the leaders (the “builders”), even in public confrontation (20:17).¹⁰³⁵ Supporting this saying's authenticity in

1027. For the last option, see Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 294.

1028. On *prodiorthōsis*, see Rowe, “Style,” 142 (citing Demosth. *Cor.* 199; Livy 39.37.17); on *proparaskeuē*, see Rowe, “Style,” 146 (citing Hyperides *Contra Euxenippum* 23; Cic. *Clu.* 4.11); cf. Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 581. Similar expressions appear in the LXX, sometimes preceding dramatic statements (cf. 1 Esd 2:14; Ezra 4:12–13; 5:8; with different wording, 1 Kgs 18:36; Ezek 36:32; Dan 3:18). Raising one's voice also appears in LXX idiom (see comments on Acts 2:14).

1029. Note the two successive *ὅν* clauses referring to Jesus in Acts 4:10, the use of *τούτω* and *οὗτος* for Jesus in 4:10–11, and (modifying Ps 117:22 LXX [118:22 ET]) the two *ὁ* clauses referring to Jesus in Acts 4:11. This resembles a brief anaphora (see Demet. *Style* 5.268; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 86 [citing *Rhet. Her.* 4.13.19]; for examples, e.g., Mus. Ruf. 14, p. 92.35–36; Rowe, “Style,” 131 [citing Aug. *Serm.* 219]; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 579; in the LXX, Lee, “Translations: Greek,” 779) or something like polyptoton (cf. Rowe, “Style,” 132–33). But had Luke constructed the pairs more carefully, perhaps one might not expect *οὗτος* for the healed man in 4:10 before its application to Jesus in 4:11.

1030. See also Keener, *John*, 753.

1031. Trapp, *Maximus*, 30n22, compares Plato *Apol.* 39CD.

1032. The phrase “all the people of Israel” suits Lukan hyperbole and recurs only in Acts 13:24 in the NT.

1033. E.g., Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.Sb.4, pp. 16–17.34; Philost. *Hrk.* 53.3–4; 1 Tim 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1–2, 8; 3 John 2; Malherbe, *Philosophers*, 121; cf. more generally Mus. Ruf. 1, p. 32.15; Philost. *Hrk.* 33.4; analogously (albeit in Latin) Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 10.4.

1034. See Keener, *Matthew*, 298; this commentary's introduction, ch. 11, sect. 3.c (Keener, *Acts*, 1:414–16).

1035. The quotation diverges from the LXX (unlike Luke 20:17), possibly suggesting *testimonia* tradition; but changes in wording also highlight the persecution theme (Larkin, *Acts*, 74). Most important is Peter's

the gospel tradition is its context in the Hallel used at Passover season.¹⁰³⁶ Some scholars have also found there other potential support, including possible Semitic wordplays.¹⁰³⁷ Some have even suggested that Peter and the fledgling Jerusalem church here knew that the site of Jesus's crucifixion was a rejected stone quarry area, as archaeologists have discovered, a realization that would have offered another wordplay.¹⁰³⁸

The cornerstone or topstone¹⁰³⁹ to which Jesus referred is part of the architecture of the temple; hearers may have recognized that he was comparing the elect community to a temple, as in the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹⁰⁴⁰ Most clearly, they would recognize that he was challenging the “builders,” here the temple authorities. (On the historical level, this represented especially, though probably not exclusively, the Sadducees.)¹⁰⁴¹

Whereas Jesus implied the identity of the builders, however, Peter states it directly.¹⁰⁴² Their focus on building (cf. the temple in Acts 7:47, 49) might contrast with God building the church (9:31; 20:32). The building in view in Ps 118:22 (if not a general metaphor, 127:1) may be the temple (118:19–20, 27); it was readily understood that the temple's cornerstone was massive.¹⁰⁴³

Many scholars interpret the “cornerstone” as a “capstone,” the final stone fitted in place to hold the others in place.¹⁰⁴⁴ The image of a strategically placed stone was also intelligible to others in the first-century Mediterranean world, not requiring advanced knowledge of architecture. Seneca expects Lucilius to understand when he compares their mutual relations to “a stone arch, which would collapse if the stones did not mutually support each other.”¹⁰⁴⁵

explanatory “you,” identifying the builders. Early Christians (Eph 2:20), including the Petrine author in 1 Pet 2:6–7, applied the cornerstone to Jesus (apparently differently, Naassene gnostics; cf. Hippol. *Ref.* 5.2).

1036. See Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 284–85; *m. Pesah.* 5:7; 9:3; 10:5–7; *t. Pisha* 8:22; cf. *t. Sukkah* 3:2.

1037. Although Vermes, *Religion*, 104, characteristically rejects the citation as anti-Jewish church polemic (the saying itself is hardly anti-Jewish), various factors argue strongly for authenticity: Jewish parables typically included a Scripture citation (so Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 197, on this parable, though many of Jesus's parables lack such allusions); the citation appears in all three Synoptics and also in the *Gospel of Thomas* (Young, *Parables*, 293–94; Snodgrass, *Stories*, 280); Jesus draws his citation from the festal liturgy; “stone” may provide a Hebrew play on words here with the “son” earlier in the parable (Gundry, *Matthew*, 429, following Black); “Have you not read?” is unique to Jesus in the NT (Gundry, *Use*, 200); and the collection of stone sayings in a variety of disparate early Christian texts supports a common authoritative source for diverse early Christian groups (Acts 4:11; Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:6–8; cf. Luke 19:38, 40, 44). For the fit with the parable, see esp. Snodgrass, *Stories*, 289–90. Early Christians naturally accommodated the quotation to the LXX (Perrin, *Kingdom*, 132), although Jesus undoubtedly addressed the Jerusalem aristocracy in Greek. Jesus may read *habonim* (“builders”) as if from *bun*, “understand,” rather than from *bnh*, “build,” and hence apply it to the scribes (Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 196); Young, *Jewish Theologian*, 219, suggests a play between “sons” (*banim*), “builders” (*bonim*), and “stones” (*avanim*).

1038. Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism*, 124. But even if this information is accurate, would Jerusalemites have known the area's use seven or eight centuries earlier?

1039. Cf. McKelvey, “Cornerstone,” for the former; for the latter, cf. Gundry, *Matthew*, 429; Jeremias, “Γωνία,” 792–93.

1040. 1QS VIII, 5, 8–9; IX, 6; CD II, 10, 13; Gärtner, *Temple*, 16–46; Flusser, *Judaism*, 37–39; Wilcox, “Dualism,” 93–94. This image probably does not appear, however, in 4QFlor (McNicol, “Temple”; Schwartz, “Temples”).

1041. A later rabbinic tradition plausibly explains the rejected cornerstone as David, repudiated by Saul (Hilton and Marshall, *Gospels and Judaism*, 60; Young, *Jewish Theologian*, 219).

1042. The cornerstone tradition appears in (1 Pet 2:7), but is not limited to (Mark 12:10; Eph 2:20; cf. Rom 9:33), Petrine material. On the implications of this passage in early Christian teaching, see, e.g., Moule, *Birth*, 41; Longenecker, *Christology*, 50–53.

1043. *Test. Sol.* 22 (*Test. Sol.* 23 connects this to Ps 118, but it may reflect Christian interpretation).

1044. E.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 33, citing *Test. Sol.* 22:7–23:4 (third century C.E.); Tert. *Marc.* 3.7; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 301; Longenecker, *Acts*, 100.

1045. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 95.53 (LCL, 3:91).

V. SALVATION IN JESUS'S NAME (4:12)

Although we might see “save” here as a wordplay with “save” in Acts 4:9,¹⁰⁴⁶ our sense that this is a wordplay (rather than simply the developing of another nuance of the same word complex) may stem largely from the fact that our English terms for these concepts are usually different; in Greek, both senses simply belonged to the broad semantic range of “salvation.”¹⁰⁴⁷ Thus “not only lame people but all can find salvation through” Jesus’s name.¹⁰⁴⁸ Still, the repetition of salvific vocabulary and “name” provide rhetorical emphasis,¹⁰⁴⁹ an emphasis that is climactic in this speech.¹⁰⁵⁰ That no other name provides salvation “under heaven” means that no other name provides it “anywhere”¹⁰⁵¹ (at the very least, Luke must intend the phrase to mean “among all nations”; cf. 2:5). The idiom “under heaven” is biblical; all peoples under heaven would experience God’s rule (Dan 7:27).¹⁰⁵² Not surprisingly, the ethnic universality of Jesus’s saving significance fits Luke’s central theme (Acts 1:8).

Luke teaches God’s continuing concern for Israel, but this is exemplified in continuing mission rather than the common two-covenant view today; Luke regards salvation as effective only through calling on Christ.¹⁰⁵³ Despite attempts to circumvent the claims of soteriological exclusivism here, it is clear that Luke affirms¹⁰⁵⁴ salvation only through Christ.¹⁰⁵⁵ Early Jewish groups held a range of views, from universalism (some Alexandrian documents) to the salvation only of the (sectarian) Jewish remnant (the Qumran *War Scroll*). But whereas early Christians were ethnically universalistic, they proved “much less willing to recognize the possibility

1046. Wordplay was a common argumentative device; see Keener, *John*, 537, 782; idem, *Paul*, 54n101. Thus *tradio*, which allows for plays on different senses of a word (Rowe, “Style,” 132, citing Isoc. *Peace* 101; Cic. *Verr.* 2.64.155; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 580, citing Rom 8:2–3; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 86, citing *Rhet. Her.* 4.14.20–21; Quint. *Inst.* 9.3.41–42; Mark 13:34–35), is more relevant than paronomasia here. A wordplay with Jesus’s name is less likely (cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 302), as it would presuppose Aramaic competence.

1047. On which see, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 821–43; idem, “Salvation”; comments on Acts 27:20. Other early Christian writers could also play on the term’s varied connotations (Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 329). For the conceptual relationship between physical and spiritual health in earlier Israelite thought, see, e.g., Brown, *Healer*, 185–207.

1048. Tannehill, *Acts*, 61.

1049. For “close verbal” parallels, Barrett, *Acts*, 230, cites Jos. *Ant.* 3.23; Aristoph. *Lys.* 29–30; Hdt. 8.118.3; cf. the “antiparallel” that van der Horst, “Macrobius,” 226, finds in Macrobius. 1.8.3. Luke, however, echoes especially “saved” and “name” from the Joel quotation in Acts 2:21 (see introduction to this section, “Salvation in Jesus’s Name,” 4:8–12). Marshall, “Acts,” 551, also allows a possible allusion to the inability of princes to “save” in Ps 146:3 (145:3 LXX, οὐκ ἔστιν σωτηρία), in view of the echo of this psalm in Acts 4:24.

1050. The accompanying gesture for emphasis often was the pointing of one’s index finger at the ground (Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 74–75); the use here of “under heaven,” however, may have invited a lateral (or combination of upward and lateral) gesture.

1051. Barrett, *Acts*, 232 (comparing Plato *Tim.* 23C; *Ep.* 7.326C).

1052. Cf. Dan 9:12, where “under the whole heaven” nothing is comparable to what Jerusalem suffered; Deut 2:25 (all peoples afraid of Israel); 4:19 (the nations are peoples “under the whole of heaven”); Gen 7:19; Eccl 1:13; 2:3; 3:1; Job 28:24; 41:11; comments at Acts 2:5; for destruction from under heaven, Gen 6:17; Exod 17:14; Deut 7:24; 9:14; 25:19; 29:20; 2 Kgs 14:27. Cf. also “from one end of heaven to the other” (Deut 4:32; Matt 24:31; similarly, Jer 49:36).

1053. With Tannehill, *Acts*, 3 (who disagrees with Luke on this point); Talbert, *Acts*, 43. Views through church history and modern theology vary widely, but only by reading around the plain sense of much of earliest Christianity (as exemplified in the extant first-century Christian documents) can scholars evade the reality that this claim was central to the apostolic kerygma preserved in Acts or other first-century Christian documents. One can deny such a claim’s respectability in a more theologically relativist framework, but this is a theological, not historical, verdict. We ought not try to make its authors more respectable to our contemporaries by denying their claim (a respectability that Luke’s characters might well reject, in any case; cf. Acts 5:41).

1054. At least on the level of apostolic proclamation; but he presumably agrees with this.

1055. See Sandnes, “Stendahl’s Exegesis of 4:12.” For a survey of views, see Fernando, *Acts*, 163–66.

of salvation for nonbelievers, be they Jews or Gentiles,” than did some other early Jewish groups.¹⁰⁵⁶

Luke believes that people from afar will enter the kingdom but that the way of salvation is narrow and many of the children of the kingdom will be lost (Luke 13:23–30).¹⁰⁵⁷ Despite Luke’s ethnic universalism, it is unlikely that he would regard unconverted polytheists as saved if he believed Israel to be lost. Jewish people held different views concerning the salvific status or eschatological potential of Gentiles (see comments on Acts 15:1), but they generally agreed that unconverted polytheists (who constituted the vast majority of Gentiles) were not saved. The ethnic universalism in Isaiah’s later chapters, on which Luke draws, speaks of Gentiles’ conversion or submission (see comments on Acts 1:8)—not an allowance for other saviors (see Isa 43:3, 11; 45:20–21; 47:13–15; cf. Jer 2:28; 11:12; Hos 13:4; 14:3).¹⁰⁵⁸

Luke, like most first-century Christians,¹⁰⁵⁹ followed the most exclusivistic line of Judaism, though maintaining dialogue with the outside world (in contrast to the radically exclusivistic Qumran community). This exclusive truth claim was now further narrowed through Christ: the apostolic proclamation of Jesus as Christ meant that he was king of Israel and rightful king of humanity.¹⁰⁶⁰ (To most of Luke’s contemporaries, such a notion would sound absurd: Christians remained a small albeit rapidly growing sect.) Still, Luke’s perspective is more nuanced than that of Johannine moral and social dualism;¹⁰⁶¹ he allows for some who are “close” to the kingdom (Acts 10:4, 31; 15:9; cf. Mark 12:34; Luke 10:28, 37).

Luke’s claim would have been intelligible, though not welcome, to most of his non-Christian contemporaries. Although polytheists could accommodate additional deities,¹⁰⁶² they recognized Judaism’s theological exclusivism and understood the nature of exclusivistic truth claims.¹⁰⁶³ Thus, for example, a Stoic complained that

1056. Boccaccini, *Judaism*, 265; in Paul, see Gundry-Volf, “Universalism.” Peterson, *Acts*, 192, suggests that the Sanhedrin itself would have insisted that exclusively Israel’s God provided salvation (citing, e.g., Isa 43:11–12; 45:22), and that the apostles simply narrowed this; certainly, Jewish monotheists affirmed only one divine Savior whatever their view of Gentiles’ salvation. Green, “Salvation,” argues that “salvation” is Acts’ unifying theme (perhaps an overstatement, though cognates appear some twenty times, and roughly an equal number of times in the Gospel) and is articulated so as to address yet challenge both Gentile and Jewish understandings of the concept.

1057. For the salvation of only a few or a remnant in contemporary Judaism, see, e.g., 4 *Ezra* 7:3–16, 45–61; 8:1–3; *Test. Ab.* 11 A; 8 B; *b. Sukkah* 45b; Keener, *Matthew*, 250–51.

1058. Larkin, *Acts*, 74, notes that “Peter claims this role for Jesus” (citing also 4QFlor 1 I, 13; 1QH^a VII, 18–19; *Jub.* 31:19).

1059. See Talbert, *Acts*, 43–44; idem, *Romans*, 270 (cf. the fuller discussion, 269–74); idem, *Matthew*, 159–61; Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 114–22. On this passage specifically, see further Edwards, *Savior*, 105–7.

1060. The frequent modern Western individualist notion that one can adopt Jesus as personal Lord and Savior but not recognize him as the only rightful Lord and Savior of humanity is more in line with the ancient Jerusalem authorities’ tolerance of personal beliefs (so long as they did not make public, political demands on Israel) than with the extant apostolic witness. (The former approach addressed the political sphere, not truth claims, because theology held at most secondary significance for political stability or control.) The apostles were prepared to suffer publicly for “his name”; Christ was a personal Lord and Savior only because he was first of all God’s appointed Lord and Savior for the world.

1061. See Keener, *John*, 941–43. The Johannine community’s more radical separatism may have been shaped by its situation of persecution and of marginalization from its own ethnic community (cf. 149–52, 198–227; from a social standpoint, cf. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *John*, 237–39). Among more fully sectarian groups, the Qumran covenanters appear to have withdrawn from the rest of Israel; see, e.g., 1QSI, 18; II, 19; III, 22; IV, 20; 1QM I, 6; XIV, 9; CD I, 5; VI, 10; 1QpHab V, 7–8.

1062. Thus, e.g., one normally could be initiated into various mystery cults (Winslow, “Religion,” 241), although some were exclusive (Horsley, *Documents*, 1:21–23, §3; this is in terms of initiation, not in terms of belief in multiple deities).

1063. Polytheists often looked down on this exclusivism; tolerating all professed deities (e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.4.18), they found monotheism more difficult to tolerate (Mac. Magn. *Apocrit.* 4.20–23 [*Porphyry’s* 83–88]).

the various opinions on foods held by Jews, Syrians, Egyptians, and Romans each excluded the others and hence could not all be right.¹⁰⁶⁴ There were many divergent approaches to philosophy; different schools each believed that they themselves were right and others were wrong.¹⁰⁶⁵ The plurality of claims to exclusive truth about a matter may have confused outsiders, but to insiders of these movements such claims often constituted matters of life and death.

d. Confounding the Authorities (4:13–22)

Acts 4:13–22 contrasts the politically cautious elite with the courageous boldness of apostles carrying on Jesus’s ministry (i.e., in his name) by signs (cf. 4:29–30). This paragraph opens and closes with the elite’s being confounded by a public miracle they cannot deny (4:14, 21–22), and its heart is the insistence on speaking the truth of what the apostles know firsthand (4:19–20).

Although some ancients denigrated extemporaneous speech by comparison with prepared speech,¹⁰⁶⁶ others preferred it; it was in any case a prized skill usually held to be acquired only by much effort.¹⁰⁶⁷ (See further discussion at Acts 14:9.)

I. THE APOSTLES’ BOLDNESS (4:13)

The leaders’ amazement at the apostles’ bold challenge performs the same literary function as authorities’ amazement in Jewish martyr stories (e.g., 4 Macc 17:16; Matt 27:14): it reinforces attention to the protagonists’ courage (for martyrs’ boldness, see 4 Macc 10:5). Perhaps the authorities expected these commoners to cringe before their authority and accede to it apologetically, as was presumably often the case,¹⁰⁶⁸ but Peter and John answer to a higher authority.

Peter has already spoken with boldness (Acts 2:29) after the outpouring of the Spirit (2:4). The Spirit (4:8) provides the same boldness here, and the Spirit will do the same for believers at the next outpouring (4:31; cf. 4:29). As in other respects, Paul’s ministry will parallel Peter’s in this one (28:31; for the verb, 9:27–28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; and before authorities, 26:26). Philosophers, moralists, and other writers regularly praised *παρρησία*—open, frank speech.¹⁰⁶⁹ They sometimes attributed this frank speech to particularly respected sages (among Gentiles, these were especially philosophers) who were committed to truth rather than to others’ opinions.¹⁰⁷⁰ For example, one first-century Stoic philosopher asks who was freer than Diogenes the Cynic, who displayed *παρρησία* even as a slave.¹⁰⁷¹ Eschewing hierarchy, Epicurean

1064. Epict. *Diatr.* 1.11.12–13. By contrast, on such secondary issues, Paul, a strict monotheist, was willing to bend (Rom 14:2–3).

1065. E.g., Lucian *Hermot.* 14; cf. 29. Lucian, who presents the approaches as “doors” (*Hermot.* 15) and “ways” (*Hermot.* 25–26, 30; cf. John 14:6), seems readier to question them all than to accept Stoicism.

1066. Cf., e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 36.1444a.16–34. Some rhetoricians refused to speak extemporaneously (Plut. *Demosth.* 8.3–4; 9.3).

1067. On extemporaneous speaking in antiquity, see, e.g., Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 103. See further comments at Acts 14:9.

1068. People of lower status were expected to cringe and show deference to social superiors (Toner, *Culture*, 140), in striking contrast to the apostles’ behavior.

1069. E.g., Mus. Ruf. frg. 9 (in Meeks, *Moral World*, 49); Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 9.32.2; Diog. Laert. 6.2.69; Publ. Syr. 10; Plut. *Praising* 6, *Mor.* 541D; Pliny *Ep.* 3.3.5; Lucian *Fisherman* passim, esp. 3, 17; *Posts* 4; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.12; *Ad verum imp.* 2.2; Philod. *Crit.* passim (possibly an influence in Horace; cf. Kemp, “Flattery”); Men. *Rhet.* 2.3, 386.9; 2.10, 416.24–25; Libanius *Encomium* 4.15; among Cynics, see Vaage, “Barking”; more generally, Sampley, “Frank Speech,” 293–99 (in Paul, 299–309). Some might stress practicing philosophy secretly before proclaiming it (Epict. *Diatr.* 4.8.35–36), but this idea is rarer and not contradictory.

1070. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1, pref. Cf. esp. accounts of Socrates; see comments on Acts 4:19; 17:19.

1071. Mus. Ruf. 9, p. 74.10–11 (cf. also 74.12–13). Cf. Paul’s “frankness” despite his detention (Eph 6:19–20; Phil 1:20; 1 Thess 2:2; Rapske, *Custody*, 311–12).

disciples exercised this freedom of speech.¹⁰⁷² Some writers even requested frankness in feedback (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 3.4.9; 6.12.3–5). Moral freedom was inseparable from this virtue of unrestrained speech;¹⁰⁷³ philosophy thus could be associated with frankness, truth, and freedom in contrast to flattery and servility.¹⁰⁷⁴ Writers also associated this fearless speech with the traditional virtue of courage.¹⁰⁷⁵

Moralists also recognized, however, that such frankness could sometimes prove insulting, as here,¹⁰⁷⁶ hence generating needless hostility.¹⁰⁷⁷ It was best to avoid harshness and bitter self-defense¹⁰⁷⁸ (thus perhaps cf. Acts 4:8–9). Witty repartee was a highly prized skill,¹⁰⁷⁹ but by boldly shaming one's accusers, one risked making enemies of them (e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 33.8–9).¹⁰⁸⁰ Flattery was a safer way to win one's judges (see comments on Acts 7:51–53), and the powerful were thought to favor flatterers.¹⁰⁸¹ But writers regularly contrasted *παρρησία* with flattery, preferring those who spoke the truth.¹⁰⁸² (This was especially true in friendships,¹⁰⁸³ perhaps particularly because such boldness proved safer there than in politics.)¹⁰⁸⁴ Most denounced flattery,¹⁰⁸⁵ though many may have rationalized contrary practice. Orators could feign *παρρησία* by pretending to say something offensively bold that would not in fact offend their audience;¹⁰⁸⁶ obviously, Peter's words would be genuinely offensive, but Luke's report of them for his own audience would sound rhetorically courageous without being controversial for them.

Ancient literature about frankness often addressed its propriety with regard to rulers. Dio Chrysostom spoke truth instead of flattery even when it was dangerous to do so (*Or.* 3.13); one later writer praised Pythagoras for confronting a tyrant frankly,¹⁰⁸⁷

1072. Dorandi, "Epicurean School," 1074.

1073. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 9, pp. 72.23–74.3.

1074. Lucian *Nigr.* 15; *Dem.* 3.

1075. Mus. Ruf. 9, p. 74.5–7. On courage as one of the four traditional virtues, see, e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 35, 1441b.7–8; Mus. Ruf. 4, p. 48.8; 9, p. 74.24; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5b, p. 10.18; 2.7.5b.1, p. 12.21–22; 2.7.5b.2, p. 14.4, 7, 16; Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 373.7; 2.5, 397.23; 2.10, 415.26; Iambl. *V.P.* 32.214–28 (in 30.167–33.240); comments on Acts 26:25.

1076. Plut. *S. Kings, Lys.* 5, *Mor.* 190F; cf. *Prov.* 27:6.

1077. E.g., Appian *Hist. rom.* 9.11.3; cf. Arrian *Alex.* 5.28.1. Lucian mocks Cynics for such behavior (*Phil. Sale* 8, 10).

1078. Philod. *Crit. passim*, e.g., col. 2a.

1079. E.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 33.8; Maclean and Aitken, *Heroikos*, xlvi; Aul. Gel. 1.2.13; 18.13.7–8; *b. B. Bat.* 115b.

1080. Toner, *Culture*, 97, notes that some deployed magic to seek harm against those who mocked them.

1081. Plut. *Educ.* 17, *Mor.* 13B; Arrian *Alex.* 4.8.4–5; 4.9.9; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.9.26; 3.24.45; Hdn. 5.5.6. Toner, *Culture*, 33, contends that flattery and deception became pervasive elements of relationships in Roman society. On 158, he notes that Dio Cass. 59.27.2 characterizes the masses as flatterers, but Toner adds that this was "the safest way to speak to the powerful" (see also 33); on 170–71 he specifically cites Acts 4 as an example of what would have violated elite expectations.

1082. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 11.9.1; Tac. *Hist.* 1.15; Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 11.3; *Flatt.* 1–37, *Mor.* 48E–74E; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.15.

1083. Plut. *Profit by Enemies* 6, *Mor.* 89B; *Flatt.* 17–37, *Mor.* 59A–74E; cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4.36.48; Alciph. *Farm.* 37 (Philometor to Epiphanius), 3.39, ¶3.

1084. Konstan et al., "Introduction," 3, attribute the shift to the rise of kingdoms after the Athenian democracy. Fredrickson, "Free Speech," notes the shift from political to moral discourse (arguing, more controversially, that Paul reiterated its public value).

1085. Historians (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.6.5), philosophers (Epict. *Diatr.* 1.9.20; 1.12; 4.6.33; 4.7.24; Diog. Laert. 6.1.4; 6.2.51; 6.5.92; Marc. Aur. 1.16.4), orators (Symm. *Ep.* 1.37.2; 1.90.2), and moralists (Isoc. *Demon.* 30; Cic. *Amic.* 25.94–26.99; *Off.* 1.26.91; Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.25–39; Juv. *Sat.* 3.86–87; 4.65–72; Babr. 77; Phaedrus 1.13.1–2; 3.16.16–18; 4.13; Athen. *Deipn.* 6.236e), including Jewish writers (Wis 14:17; Jos. *Life* 367; Ps.-Phoc. 91; 1 Thess 2:5), regularly warned against flattery. In a distant culture, see Confuc. *Anal.* 63 (13.23); 100 (5.24).

1086. Anderson, *Glossary*, 94 (citing Rutilius Lupus *De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis* 2.18).

1087. Iambl. *V.P.* 32.215, 220. Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 118–19, on the ancient motif of confronting tyrants as background for reading the image in Acts 4:15–17.

another praised the Pythagorean Apollonius for refusing to flatter Domitian.¹⁰⁸⁸ Not everyone appreciated this impudence of philosophers against rulers, but benevolent rulers endured it patiently (Suet. *Vesp.* 13).¹⁰⁸⁹ (One might even praise an emperor for preferring truth to flattery—without, of course, seeming to flatter him for it!)¹⁰⁹⁰ The strong, secure in their self-image, might in fact need harsher criticism than others to secure their attention.¹⁰⁹¹ But ancients also understood that people of reputation did not usually appreciate reproofs, attributing them to jealousy.¹⁰⁹² People in authority could view such frank speech as insolent and dishonoring them; kings, with total power, could become angry,¹⁰⁹³ viewing reproof “as insubordination.”¹⁰⁹⁴ That most people praised rulers highlighted all the more the unexpected reproof of others.¹⁰⁹⁵

Philosophers could get away with much, and even when a sage was banished for foolishly criticizing a good ruler, he might earn praise with the unlearned populace for his “frankness.”¹⁰⁹⁶ Frankness did not, however, always pay favorable dividends. Refusing to accept shameful treatment as a subordinate, Agrippa’s former general spoke to him as an equal on the basis of their friendship and hence remained in prison (Jos. *Ant.* 19.317–18, 321–22, 325). The apostles here risk jail rather than such shameful subordination; the issue in their case, however, is not personal honor but the publicly manifest truth of their claim.

II. “UNEDUCATED” (4:13)

ἄγραμματος literally means “illiterate.” But while the level of education widely available in small villages such as Nazareth remains disputed,¹⁰⁹⁷ many or most Palestinian Jewish boys would have had training at least in reciting Torah,¹⁰⁹⁸ and fishermen probably had more access to income and education than most Galileans.¹⁰⁹⁹ The term more broadly indicated simply lack of formal education.¹¹⁰⁰ Here it might function as a contrast with γραμματεὺς, “scribe” (a common enough title in Luke as elsewhere in the Gospels), and hence mean one without scribal training in reading and interpreting Scripture.¹¹⁰¹ Later sages could regard as unlearned even those who could read the

1088. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.4.

1089. Frankness was likewise appreciated only in the minority of democracies that were benevolent (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.27–28).

1090. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.2–3 (by contrast with what is reported of the reign of terror in Domitian’s later years, Trajan certainly earned the praise).

1091. Philod. *Crit.* frg. 7 (contrast the weak in frg. 59.9); cf. Luke 11:39–52.

1092. Philod. *Crit.* col. 23a.

1093. Philod. *Crit.* col. 23b.

1094. Philod. *Crit.* col. 24a.

1095. Philod. *Crit.* col. 24b.

1096. Lucian *Peregr.* 18 (complaining about Peregrinus).

1097. Lack of primary education was, however, common in the ancient Mediterranean (e.g., Meeks, *Moral World*, 62), and despite apologetic claims of education for Hellenistic readers (e.g., Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.178; *Life* 9–10) and among the aristocracy (*m. Ab.* 5:21; *t. Hag.* 1:2.), Tannaitic mistrust of the *amme haaretz* (cf. Keener, *John*, 732–33) may suggest that even in Jewish Palestine, elementary education was more available to those with means. Horsley, *Galilee*, 246–47, thinks that the nonelite learned primarily orally.

1098. See, e.g., *t. Hag.* 1:2; Watson, “Education,” 311. Outsiders sometimes praised them as a “nation of philosophers”; see comments on Acts 17:22–31. But claims of advanced literacy (e.g., *m. Ab.* 5:21) may apply only to the minority (Horsley, *Galilee*, 246; cf. the various categories in Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 31–32). Still, note some significant evidence for literacy in Evans, *World*, 63–75, 80–88 (for Jesus, see, e.g., Mark 2:25; 12:10, 26; Luke 10:26, on 86), and Foster, “Educating” (as cited by Evans). See further discussion at Acts 22:3.

1099. See Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, 186; Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 241; Keener, *Matthew*, 152; cf. Mark 1:20.

1100. Johnson, *Acts*, 78, citing Plato *Tim.* 23A; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.9.10.

1101. Barrett, *Acts*, 233–34; cf. Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 3:463; Evans, *World*, 81; on John 7:15, Keith, “Claim” (esp. 63–64). For γραμματιστα related to the law, cf. Rom 2:27, 29; 7:6; 2 Cor 3:6, although, in much of the urban Greek East, a γραμματικὸς would instruct boys from well-to-do homes in grammar at the

Scriptures in Hebrew but did not follow the traditions (or perhaps were unaware of the traditional interpretive pointings) of the schools of sages.¹¹⁰²

Ἰδιώτης could designate an ignorant person or one who lacked training, in contrast to a philosopher.¹¹⁰³ One schooled in a particular philosophy might be a layperson (ιδιώτης) with regard to another philosophy.¹¹⁰⁴ Both Paul (2 Cor 11:6) and Josephus (*Ant.* 2.271) employ the term for someone without rhetorical skill.¹¹⁰⁵ Because the designation came into early Jewish literature as a loanword meaning “commoner,” some commentators associate it with the less educated common people whom later rabbis called the *amme haaretz*.¹¹⁰⁶ Just as some trained philosophers despised the philosophically uninformed masses,¹¹⁰⁷ later rabbis lamented that it was better never to have been born than to be unable to recite the Torah.¹¹⁰⁸ Perhaps because of deficient educational opportunities, poverty could lead to the neglect of the Torah.¹¹⁰⁹ Hillel reportedly doubted that such unlearned people could be pious.¹¹¹⁰ Various Tannaim doubted that those who neglected learning Torah if they had the opportunity would share in the coming world (*ʿAbot R. Nat.* 36 A); some apparently felt that undue fellowship with an *am haaretz* would deprive one of the coming world.¹¹¹¹ Rabbinic reports express the social distance that existed between Pharisees and the *amme haaretz*,¹¹¹² the common people who often ignored their legal interpretations.¹¹¹³

Even the disciples’ appearance (at the least, not adorned like the rich; cf. Acts 3:6) could have counted against them. Despite traditions of poorly clothed¹¹¹⁴ or

secondary level, perhaps around ages seven to twelve, in preparation for rhetoric (Heath, *Hermogenes*, 11–12; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 534–35; Burrige, “Gospels and Acts,” 510; Kennedy, “Survey of Rhetoric,” 18).

1102. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 31–32, at length.

1103. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 3, p. 40.35; cf. Matheson, *Epictetus*, 25; Johnson, *Acts*, 78 (citing Lucian *Alex.* 30, for ignorance; Arist. *Pol.* 1266a for someone untrained). A philosophy student regarded the rabble as ἰδιῶται (Lucian *Hermot.* 1); when the unschooled (ιδιώται) see how the Cynics behave, it makes them reject true philosophy (*Runaways* 21).

1104. Lucian *Hermot.* 17. The “layman” in Lucian’s story proves much wiser than his Stoic-schooled colleague, regularly contrasting the ἰδιώτης with philosophers (*Hermot.* 15, 21, 67, 81, 83).

1105. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 302. It also applies to outsiders to the church in 1 Cor 14:23–24 (perhaps 14:16).

1106. Bruce, *Commentary*, 102n25; Johnson, *Acts*, 78 (citing *m. Demai* 2:2–3; 3:3).

1107. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.18.10; 1.2.18; 1.3.4; 1.18.4; 2.1.22; 4.8.27; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 66.31; 108.7; Marc. Aur. 11.23; Mus. Ruf. frg. 41, p. 136.22–26; Max. Tyre 1.7–8; 33.1; Iambl. *V.P.* 31.200, 213; Porph. *Marc.* 17.291–92; 30.475; Diogenes the Cynic in Diog. Laert. 6 passim.

1108. *T. Hag.* 1:2. The rabbis did require higher moral standards for the learned (Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 190), but any who neglected Torah study or even listening to sages would be damned (*ʿAbot R. Nat.* 36 A). Priests were also trained in the law (Sanders, *Judaism*, 178).

1109. Cf. *m. ʿAb.* 3:17 (though contrast 4:8).

1110. *M. ʿAb.* 2:6, probably a hyperbolic way to underline the importance of learning Torah but a not unnatural view, considering the price Hillel himself reportedly had to pay (if these stories glorifying him, probably to secure imitation, are true) to acquire learning (see Moore, *Judaism*, 1:313, citing later Amoraic traditions in *b. Yoma* 35b; *Pesah.* 70b).

1111. *M. ʿAb.* 3:10/11, unless it means death in the present world.

1112. For the contrast, see, e.g., *m. Git.* 5:9; *Hag.* 2:7; *t. Demai* 2:5, 14–15, 19; 3:6–7; 6:8; *Ma ʿas.* 2:5; on the *am haaretz*, see the fuller excursus in Keener, *Matthew*, 294–96 (esp. for questions of their cleanness, salvation, and so forth).

1113. Though the severest rabbinic accounts (including Akiba’s comments on his former antipathy toward scholars) may be intended hyperbolically (*b. Ber.* 61a; *Pesah.* 49b); cf. kinder sentiments in *m. Git.* 5:9; *ʿAbot R. Nat.* 16, 40 A.

1114. See, e.g., Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 106.13; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22.10; cf. 4.8.12, 15; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.2; 49.11; 64.18; 70.8; *Juv. Sat.* 13.121–22; Lucian *Runaways* 14, 20; *Phil. Sale* 9; *Icar.* 31; *Dem.* 48; Lucian *Cynic* 4, 20; *Crates Ep.* 16, 23, 33; *Diogenes Ep.* 6, 7, 13, 19, 26, 30, 46; *Diog. Laert.* 6.1.13; 6.2.22–23, 76; cf. *Anacharsis Ep.* 5. Cynics carried only a bag and a staff; see, e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22.10; Lucian *Runaways* 32; *Peregr.* 24; *Dial. D.* 364–65 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 2); *Book-Coll.* 14; Max. Tyre 1.9. I omit here most references that include long hair (for use below).

unkempt¹¹¹⁵ philosophers and probably prophets (likely 2 Kgs 1:8; certainly John in the wilderness), someone with unkempt beard and hair could be assumed unlearned until his speech proved otherwise (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.24.529). Urban elites sometimes denigrated the masses, depicting them as the “dregs” or the sort of dirty water that collects at the bottom of a boat.¹¹¹⁶ Although fishermen (Luke 5:8–10) were not peasants, neither did they belong to the elite.

The disciples lacked formal scribal credentials,¹¹¹⁷ though it is uncertain how many pre-70 sages possessed credentials recognized outside their own movements, in any case. The disciples had studied under Jesus; formal rabbinic ordination was almost certainly not mandatory in this period, and they apparently knew how to recite Scripture. But Jesus does not seem to have studied with any particular school (cf. John 7:15) except perhaps John the Baptist,¹¹¹⁸ whose authority was widely rejected by the urban elite (Luke 7:30). The scribes who were not Sadducees (Acts 4:5; cf. 23:6) may have been concerned about such matters. Sirach contrasts the professional sage with groups that cannot achieve wisdom—that is, common workers (Sir 38:25–39:3).¹¹¹⁹

Most members of the municipal aristocracy, however, whether scribes or not, would have Hellenistic education and, if Josephus is any indication, probably had at least some knowledge of rhetoric, a subject relevant to evaluating speakers. (Evaluation of rhetoric was in fact more widespread in the cities than formal rhetorical training was.)¹¹²⁰ This was also the form of education likeliest to come to the mind of Luke’s ideal audience; probably even their knowledge of the most Jewish training available—training in the law (cf. Acts 22:3)—would have been filtered through this lens (cf. 7:22).

The term ἰδιώτης applied, in rhetorical contexts, to a layperson in rhetoric, even if the person was a philosopher.¹¹²¹ Plainly, the apostles lacked formal advanced schooling, especially in rhetoric, which was the most common form of advanced Hellenistic education.¹¹²² More broadly, they lacked “the formal education of an upper-class gentleman in the Graeco-Roman world; they were ignorant of philosophy and literature and rhetoric.”¹¹²³ This would have been available to the wealthy priests of rank.¹¹²⁴ (For rhetorical and other education, including in Jerusalem, see comments on Acts 22:3.) Boys from wealthy homes in much of the urban Greek East would

1115. For philosophers with long hair and beard, see, e.g., Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 106.14; Dio Chrys. *Encomium on Hair*; Or. 12.15; 35.2; 36.17; 47.25; 72; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.23.21; 4.8.12, 15; Plut. *Isis* 3, *Mor.* 352C; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.30; Lucian *Posts* 33; *Dial. D.* 371–72 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 9); *Peregr.* 15; *Hermot.* 18, 86 (cf. also *Eunuch* 9); *Runaways* 27; *Lover of Lies* 5; *Indictment* 6, 11; *Phil. Sale* 2; *Icar.* 29; *Fisherman* 42; *Dem.* 13; Lucian *Cynic* 1–4, 11, 17, 19–20; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 3, 70; *Vit. Apoll.* 7.34, 36; 8.7; Diog. Laert. 1.109; Iambl. *V.P.* 2.11.

1116. Toner, *Culture*, 129, citing Cic. *Quint. fratr.* 2.4; *Flacc.* 18; *Att.* 1.19.4.

1117. E.g., Judge, “Scholastic Community,” 12.

1118. Many scholars portray Jesus as John’s “disciple”; see, e.g., Dodd, *Tradition*, 274; Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 65; Lane, *Mark*, 52; Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 55 (summarizing the position of Lohmeyer [1932] and K. Grobel [1941]); Freyne, “‘Servant’ Community,” 111. This title may exceed our evidence, but Jesus followed John in at least some respects, a relationship unlikely to have been invented by the gospel tradition.

1119. Probably scribes and priests belonged to a literate elite, in contrast to most of ancient Israelite society (Young, “Israelite Literacy”).

1120. E.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 29, 1436b.33–34; Lucian *Prof. P.S.* 20; Witherington, *Corinthians*, 124; for more sophisticated evaluation of speeches, see, e.g., Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* passim; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 18.11; Pliny *Ep.* 3.13.5; 5.3.8; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 1.8.

1121. See Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 213–15.

1122. See Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 85; cf. Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 143; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 9.

1123. Hanson, *Acts*, 78.

1124. After 70 C.E., rabbis forbade teaching Greek (literature?) but made an exception for R. Gamaliel’s household (*t. Soṭah* 15:8); this would hardly have affected pre-70 aristocratic priests. Moreover, the prohibition probably concerned only children until much later (Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 101–2).

study grammar at the secondary level, often around ages seven to twelve, and focus on rhetoric at the next level.¹¹²⁵ Although Jerusalem undoubtedly offered some such training, the wealthiest probably sent their children “to study rhetoric in Alexandria or other centers of Hellenistic education.”¹¹²⁶ Obviously, such training would not be available to most Galileans from the towns or villages outside Sepphoris and Tiberias.

Such training might be thought to equip one to speak more boldly (it was, at times, a rhetorical technique if employed in proper balance,¹¹²⁷ though rhetoricians would hardly commend it to those facing judges). Yet these disciples speak authoritatively despite their lack of formal training. The claim of being a layperson (ιδιωτης) could also function to lower expectations, thus reinforcing appreciation for the degree of rhetorical skill nevertheless displayed (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.16); hence Luke may employ the leaders’ verdict to good rhetorical effect for his own audience.¹¹²⁸

From the standpoint of the documentary papyri, “illiterate laymen” was not an insult¹¹²⁹ and may not have offended Luke’s audience. But the audience would also know that members of the elite (such as the Sanhedrin) often looked down on those of nonelite status and that members of the elite would be offended by the impudence of commoners (see discussion of “frankness,” above). Any members of Luke’s audience who might have considered the protagonists’ lesser sophistication embarrassing, however, would find compensation in the hero of the second half of the volume, Paul. Yet the Jerusalem elite want to *kill* the educated Paul: the inconsistency resembles the treatment of John and Jesus (both rejected, for opposite reasons, Luke 7:33–34; not unlike the cornerstone, Acts 4:11).

Other hostile observers had recognized before that Peter had been “with” Jesus (Luke 22:56, 58), but on this occasion Peter will not be ashamed of it (cf. Luke 9:26; 22:57–62). Peter’s claim in Acts 4:10 left no doubt that the apostles were supporters of Jesus of some sort (cf. Luke 9:49), but now the Jerusalem authorities recognize that these were among Jesus’s close disciples or adherents who learned from him.¹¹³⁰ Teachers were often judged by how their students turned out and were sometimes even held liable for it.¹¹³¹ Thus, for example, when Crates donated all his property to the citizen body, the public marveled at the one who had trained him in this way (Diogenes *Ep.* 9, to Crates). In a negative vein, Socrates, who was accused of corrupting youths, protested that none of his disciples had gone from moral to immoral behavior.¹¹³² The observation of this verse applies to the whole of the parallels between the Gospel’s Jesus and Acts’ apostles: Peter performs signs (Acts 5:14–15), achieves popularity (5:26), and so forth because the apostles have been with Jesus and his

1125. Heath, *Hermogenes*, 11–12; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 534–35; Burridge, “Gospels and Acts,” 510; Kennedy, “Survey of Rhetoric,” 18. Rhetorical training in Rome was normally around ages fifteen to seventeen (Watson, “Education,” 310); apart from the aristocracy, Judeans rarely attended school of any sort beyond age thirteen unless training under a rabbi (Watson, “Education,” 312).

1126. Watson, “Education,” 312.

1127. For the favor attaching to its appropriate use in rhetoric, see Anderson, *Glossary*, 94; Rowe, “Style,” 139.

1128. For lowering audience expectations, see, e.g., Isaeus *Aristarch.* 1; Cic. *Quinct.* 1.1–4; 24.77; 26.80–27.85; Isoc. *Panath.* 3; Quint. *Inst.* 4.1.8–9, 11.

1129. See esp. Kraus, “Illiterate.” Papyri offer a view of the broadest cross section of society, including the very poor.

1130. On this sense of “disciple” as adherent of a school, see Wilkins, *Discipleship*, esp. 41–42.

1131. E.g., Aeschines *Tim.* 171–73; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.8.579; 2.10.588 (an example of liability); *t. Ed.* 3:4; *Abot R. Nat.* 27 A; 34, §76 B; Mark 2:18, 24; perhaps Alciph. *Court.* 7 (Thais to Euthydemus), 1.34, ¶¶6–7.

1132. Xen. *Apol.* 19 (the notorious Alcibiades had always been dissolute). Xenophon defends Socrates against these charges elsewhere as well (*Mem.* 1.2.2, 12); Critias and Alcibiades (1.2.12) followed him only to learn proficiency in speech (1.2.14–16) and remained virtuous during their period of study with him (1.2.18, 26).

Spirit continues to empower them.¹¹³³ Because they lacked boldness before Pentecost (Luke 22:57–62), their newfound *παρρησία* reflects the impact of the Spirit's empowerment on their speech.¹¹³⁴ This humanly inexplicable boldness fulfills Jesus's promise (21:15; cf. 12:11–12).¹¹³⁵ It thus brings honor to Jesus, the one they have been "with" and who should be credited for their newfound abilities.¹¹³⁶

III. PRIVATE DISCUSSION (4:14–17)

Even if the apostles are less educated, their spiritual power to heal and speak boldly both confounds and silences the educated elite (Acts 4:14). In ancient literature, speakers sometimes silenced their opponents, shaming the latter.¹¹³⁷ That the man is "standing" (4:14) presumably reemphasizes the point that his feet and ankles are now strong (3:7).¹¹³⁸ (His presence may indicate that the man was jailed overnight with them,¹¹³⁹ but he may have simply been summoned for the hearing. He was the occasion but not the cause of the putative disorder.)

Who could be Luke's ultimate source for the closed discussion in 4:16–17? Leaks sometimes occurred from closed meetings of Roman senators (Val. Max. 2.2.1a) or the Jerusalem Council (Jos. *Life* 204); but Luke could also be simply engaging in a reasonable historical surmise about the general nature of the discussion (an acceptable technique in ancient historiography), a surmise that would appear very probable in view of the leaders' behavior after their closed session.¹¹⁴⁰ Such a surmise fits standard rhetorical practice for expanding a *chreia* (anecdote),¹¹⁴¹ as well as Luke's historical method (rephrasing Luke 24:47–49 in Acts 1:4–8). The practice of warning before punishment (cf. Acts 5:40) is documented in some ancient Jewish sources.¹¹⁴² Aristocrats in high courts regularly argued on the basis of the credibility of witnesses (e.g., Cic. *Scaur.* 17.38–40); in this case, however, the witnesses are not limited to the apostles before them.

The apostles had confronted the municipal leadership boldly, and to leave the impression that the apostles had the final word would cause the municipal officials to lose face. At the same time, the multitudes who celebrated the apparently inexplicable,

1133. Juel, *Promise*, 66. Often in the Gospel, the disciples (or the special nucleus of disciples, including Peter and John) are "with" Jesus (Luke 8:1, 38, 51; 22:14; 24:29; cf. Mark 2:26).

1134. See esp. Hull, *Spirit in Acts*, 143–45. Many ancient thinkers considered learning from a teacher good, but from innate virtue better (cf. Philo *Abr.* 6); Musonius Rufus opined that even the least educated could have virtue because valuing it is innate (2, p. 38.17–20).

1135. Pervo, *Story*, 24; idem, *Acts*, 117.

1136. Cf. Bede *Comm. Acts* 4.13 (Martin, *Acts*, 51; also L. Martin, 50), comparing 1 Cor 1:17: God sent "unlettered" people to preach so that faith "would not be thought to have come about by eloquence and teaching instead of by God's power."

1137. E.g., Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.10; Cyr. 5.5.21; Demosth. *Cor.* 112; Plut. *Cic.* 12.5; Aul. Gel. 1.2.13; 18.13.7–8; Eunapius *Lives* 497–98; Neh 5:8; Luke 14:4; 20:26; Matt 22:34; Jos. *Life* 298–99; Tg. *Ps.-J.* on Deut 28:15.

1138. Pointed out by Kistemaker, *Acts*, 158.

1139. Cf. the observations of Mundhenk, "Invisible Man."

1140. Marshall, *Acts*, 101–2, also presents both possibilities. Some believe that Luke elsewhere takes the liberty to rewrite Mark's account of Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66–71) without additional sources (Matera, "Luke 22, 66–71"). But Bruce does point to a possible Semitism in the Byzantine text of Acts 4:17 (Bruce, *Acts*³, 154; see discussion below).

1141. Theon *Progymn.* 4.37–42, 80–82, advised expanding or contracting fables by elaborating speeches or descriptive details; but his example for expanding a *chreia* does not change its basic meaning much (3.224–40; cf. 2.115–23; cf. Longin. *Subl.* 11.1).

1142. E.g., Marshall, *Acts*, 97; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 332; following Jeremias, "Untersuchungen." Though this probably reflects Pharisaic sensitivities and Conzelmann (*Acts*, 41) is right that the sources are more than a century later, it comports with the narrative (much more than does Conzelmann's approach); we also lack clear evidence for *contrary* procedures in Jewish noncapital cases, and preliminary warnings were not unheard of elsewhere.

yet undeniable, healing would certainly view the authorities, who publicly arrested the apostles, as punishing them for a “benefaction” (Acts 4:9) if they flogged them. So the authorities released them with a mere warning; if the apostles failed to heed the warning, however, the authorities would be forced to act at that time or lose face and the people’s respect by backing down (5:28–41). (For the apostles, the corrupt leadership had already lost its moral authority to silence them because it had handed Jesus over for execution and because God had reversed its verdict.)

Because the witnesses are too numerous and diverse, the Sanhedrin cannot deny that the miracle occurred (4:16); their use of γνώστων probably echoes Peter’s own declaration in 4:10.¹¹⁴³ If “What shall we do . . . ?” (τί ποιήσωμεν) alludes to the only other NT uses of the phrase—namely, Luke 3:12, 14 and Acts 2:37¹¹⁴⁴—it ironically underlines the contrast between humble and blinded responses to divine activity. That they are *unable* to deny it might mean that they would if they could (cf. the same term for “deny” in Acts 3:13–14).

Despite the miracle, the leaders never seem to pause to question their own position. The dissonance of this feature of the narrative invites the ideal readers’ notice.¹¹⁴⁵ In part, Luke may imply political corruption and hardness of heart among the elite, a condition with which most people in ancient cities would have been familiar; even on Luke’s reading, however, corruption does not affect all the Sanhedrin’s members (Acts 5:34–39). Other factors can also help explain why the miracle itself was not intellectually coercive. Later sages valued tradition over signs (e.g., *t. Yebam.* 14:6).¹¹⁴⁶ More to the point with Hellenistically trained Sadducees (and expectations for Luke’s ideal urban audience), some thinkers were skeptical about many paranormal claims,¹¹⁴⁷ especially unsubstantiated miracle claims¹¹⁴⁸ (which this is not; cf. Acts 4:14, 16). (For the plausibility of such a scenario, one need only think of how many claims of miracles today are simply dismissed or ignored without investigation, especially when they come from social strata not respected by the intellectual elite.)

One could acknowledge a miracle yet question its source, as Celsus and later rabbis did regarding Christian miracles.¹¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the informed reader cannot miss the irony of authorities more interested in political “damage control” than in explaining a miracle that they themselves cannot deny.¹¹⁵⁰ “The ignorance that may have excused them for Jesus’s death [cf. 3:17] hardens into blindness.”¹¹⁵¹

For the informed reader, it is clear that the interrogators lack the moral authority that the disciples possess; their power is purely political and hence can be maintained only through political means and sensitivities (cf. similarly in Luke 20:5–7). By contrast, Jesus chose the Twelve as leaders of a nucleus for the renewed remnant

1143. They also employ Luke’s designation σημεῖον (Acts 4:22; cf. 2:43). Perhaps what they cannot “deny” contrasts with “denying” Jesus (3:14); it might also imply that they would deny it if they could (i.e., were the act not public; cf. Matt 28:12–13; on the importance of activity being public, see comments on Acts 26:26).

1144. The phrase was not uncommon (e.g., Judg 21:7, 16; 1 Sam 5:8; 6:2; 2 Sam 16:20; 2 Chr 20:12; Song 8:8; 1 Macc 3:50; 1 Clem. 16.17), especially given the addition “to these people,” but coming so soon after Acts 2:37 (and given Luke’s usage), it seems plausible here.

1145. It invites commentators’ notice as well (e.g., New, “Name,” 132). That each side in the confrontation claimed refutation of the other (cf. Acts 4:27–29) may be interpreted in light of the concern for losing face and the observations of labeling theory (Webber, “Heathen So Arrogant”).

1146. More fully, see Dibelius, *Tradition*, 149–50 and references.

1147. See the commentary introduction, ch. 15, sect. 6 (Keener, *Acts*, 1:537–49); Keener, *Miracles*, 87–96; cf., e.g., Thucyd. 1.22.4; Polyb. 7.7.1; Pliny E. *N.H.* pref. 12–13.

1148. Cf., e.g., Lucian’s pillorying of the gullibility of Peregrinus’s followers, especially at his death.

1149. See, e.g., Yamauchi, “Magic?,” 90–91; also in the gospel tradition itself, cf., e.g., Keener, *Spirit*, 104–9.

1150. Johnson, *Acts*, 81.

1151. Pervo, *Story*, 21–22, on the responses of the leaders in Acts 3:1–8:3; Haenchen, *Acts*, 218–19.

of Israel (see comments on Acts 1:22, 26), and they would ultimately rule over it (Luke 22:30).¹¹⁵² The corrupt leaders' days of power were numbered. In Acts 3–5, "the present leaders of the people lack credibility and authority in the people's eyes, while the apostles have become their effective leaders. The Jewish authorities refuse to accept the obvious significance of the facts they cannot deny."¹¹⁵³ In view of such matters, Luke, like Paul in Rom 11, grapples with theodicy and apologetic to explain how in God's purposes the apostolic leadership of Israel has been delayed. Tragically, Israel's political leaders prevail (though the Jerusalem church remains effective, Acts 21:20) and lead Jerusalem down the road Jesus warned would lead to destruction (Luke 19:42–44; 21:21–24). Like Paul, however, Luke nevertheless believes that the apostolic movement will one day prevail and peacefully bring Israel under the lordship of its rightful king, Jesus (Acts 3:20; Luke 22:30).

The authorities decide on issuing a warning (Acts 4:17). Municipal authorities normally suppressed only groups that posed a threat to stability; executing a ringleader was often sufficient.¹¹⁵⁴ Romans suppressed cults that they considered subversive, but otherwise proved officially tolerant even in Rome itself.¹¹⁵⁵ More severe repression was necessary only in cases of more dangerous threats; thus, after one Cleander was executed (like Jesus) for treason (Hdn. 1.13.4), his sons and known friends were also executed (1.13.6). The leaders here are not certain that the disciples pose a political threat on the same order as Jesus; nevertheless, if an executed would-be messiah's supporters continued supporting him, it could stir unrest against the leaders who had felt the need to suppress him (cf. Acts 5:28).¹¹⁵⁶

Late as the text form behind the Byzantine text is, on this verse (4:17) it may offer an earlier variant than the Alexandrian family: Byzantine manuscripts have ἀπειλή ("with a threat") in front of the verb, a familiar Semitism that made little sense in Greek. This variant, if original, could suggest that Luke followed an eyewitness source¹¹⁵⁷ or at least a bilingual informant whose language reflected Semitic interference.¹¹⁵⁸

IV. REFUSING TO BE SILENT (4:18–22)

Ordering them not to speak "in Jesus's name" (4:18) means not to speak as his representatives, acting on his authority and thus drawing attention to a rival voice for popular attention who was executed by the authorities. But for the informed reader, compliance with such an order is clearly impossible: this same "name" is doing miracles (3:6, 16; 4:7, 10) and is the only means available for Jerusalem's salvation (2:21, 38; 4:12).¹¹⁵⁹

Peter and John openly refuse to abide by the order (4:19–20). Their "inability" to stop speaking according to their firsthand knowledge (4:20) contrasts with the Sanhedrin's "inability" to deny the sign (4:16). Unethical "gag orders" often proved

1152. Indeed, Talbert, *Acts*, xxi, makes a case that in their role in the Jerusalem church, they judge the restored remnant already under Christ's reign established in Acts 2:34–36.

1153. Clark, "Role," 174–75 (and more fully, 173–77).

1154. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.40.3; 5.43.2; Jos. *War* 2.75, 77–78.

1155. Cf. O'Rourke, "Law," 178; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 170–71; Bammel, "Romans 13," 367–68. E.g., the repression of the Isis cult (Jos. *Ant.* 18.79) was a special (and temporary) circumstance.

1156. For the view that the Sanhedrin had begun to perceive in the apostles a potential political threat, see Judge, *Pattern*, 64; idem, "Scholastic Community," 12.

1157. Bruce, *Acts*³, 154 (comparing, e.g., Exod 3:7).

1158. Luke might then have unconsciously retained the expression because he recognized it from the LXX, even if he was not composing this section in that style. But as with most source-critical questions, this one is not easy to resolve.

1159. One may also think of speaking "in the name" of God (Jos. *Asen.* 9:1, where it refers to rejecting close companionship with an idolater, Jos. *Asen.* 8), but it is not clear that this was a widespread idiom.

ineffective with proclaimers who exhibited integrity. Many first-century Jews with apocalyptic perspectives, while avoiding violence, may have disdained the elite who led their nation in paths they considered less holy.¹¹⁶⁰ They had biblical models for respectful civil disobedience (as here) when necessary (e.g., Dan 3:16–18; 6:10, 13) and, for more extreme cases, the defiant responses of the Maccabean martyrs in 2 and 4 Maccabees. (Politically, Sadducees and Maccabees were also incompatible.)

Among Greeks, philosophers in particular offered models of resistance against orders for silence; among these the martyred Socrates became the model par excellence. Thus, for example, Socrates virtually refused to obey the illegal commands of the thirty tyrants (Xen. *Mem.* 4.4.3). Socrates's alleged claim that he would obey the god rather than his judges (Plato *Apol.* 29D; see comments on Acts 5:29) was a commonplace that might inform Luke's particular choice of wording (esp. in Acts 5:29).¹¹⁶¹ Luke later appeals to the model of Socrates more explicitly in the case of Paul, whom he often parallels with Peter (see comments on Acts 17:19). Threatened with death but perhaps allowed release if he remained silent, Plato's Socrates was respectful (cf. 4:8's *captatio*) but insistent: "If you should let me go on this condition which I have mentioned, I should say to you, 'Men of Athens, I respect and love you, but I shall obey the god rather than you, and while I live and am able to continue, I shall never give up the philosophy or stop exhorting you and pointing out the truth to any one of you whom I may meet.'"¹¹⁶² The parallel might be "analogical" rather than "genealogical,"¹¹⁶³ but Luke elsewhere was ready to use common quotations (with or without allusion to their source; cf. Acts 26:14); he could have paraphrased his sources to bring out such analogies if he wished (see the commentary introduction, ch. 8).

Many philosophers justified disobedience to authorities when obedience to them would contravene obedience to the justice they ought to espouse. (Sometimes they even portrayed this as obedience to the authorities in *spirit*.)¹¹⁶⁴ Thus Musonius advocates obedience to philosophy over obedience to one's father if the latter forbids the former;¹¹⁶⁵ by acting in such ways, one chooses God's will over a mortal's.¹¹⁶⁶ Dio Chrysostom complains about those who neglect Zeus's divine law for human laws (*Or.* 80.6–7). Jewish martyr accounts portray acts of defiance against rulers to honor God.¹¹⁶⁷ Luke's ideal audience, familiar with the LXX, will naturally think also (or especially) of prophets who defied authorities, including Jerusalem's authorities, to bring them the one true God's message (cf., e.g., 1 Sam 13:13–14; 2 Sam 12:1–15; 1 Kgs 13:1–3; 2 Chr 24:20; Jer 20:3–6; 26:20).

Peter's "Judge for yourselves" (cf. "if we are being examined" in Acts 4:9) invited the authorities' own evaluation of the obvious; such remarks appear elsewhere (cf.

1160. See Segal, "Revolutionary," 211–12, arguing for Jesus's own setting.

1161. Noted by most commentators (Wikenhauser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 66; Marshall, *Acts*, 102; Barrett, *Acts*, 237; Johnson, *Acts*, 79; Witherington, *Acts*, 197; Dunn, *Acts*, 55; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 314; cf. also Socrates *Ep.* 1). Athenag. *Plea* 7 may recall Acts.

1162. Plato *Apol.* 29D (LCL, 1:109); cf. also 37E (LCL, 1:133).

1163. Longenecker, *Acts*, 103; cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 104. Cf. Luther at Worms (April 14, 1521; Marguerat, *Actes*, 149).

1164. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 102.12–31, for whom *true* obedience to fathers is obeying what they *should* command rather than what they do command. Musonius was apparently sympathetic to the conspiracy against Nero (Meeks, *Moral World*, 51), as was, of course, Seneca (Tac. *Ann.* 15.45, 60–64).

1165. See Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 100.23–31.

1166. Mus. Ruf. 16, pp. 104.37–105.1. Antigone likewise preferred the laws of Zeus to those of Creon (Soph. *Antig.* 450–55, cited by Meeks, *Moral World*, 21; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 314).

1167. See, e.g., 2 Macc 7:2; 4 Macc 5:16–29; Jos. *Ant.* 17.158–59 (cited by Conzelmann, *Acts*, 33; Johnson, *Acts*, 79). For a Jewish prophetic reading of Luke's use of "boldness," see Shelton, "Boldness," 319–20 (Jewish usage on 302–3; Acts' usage on 308–15).

1 Cor 10:15; 11:13).¹¹⁶⁸ Orators sometimes asked questions of their audience as a rhetorical device;¹¹⁶⁹ the most relevant form was the device that rhetoricians called *anacoenosis*, rhetorically inviting the audience's own opinion (cf. Luke 10:26).¹¹⁷⁰ "Judge for yourself" could be construed as a rhetorical device similar to submission to a jury's or judge's decree¹¹⁷¹ (as if one had any choice; cf. comments on Acts 7:51–53; 24:8, 10).

Even a writer who wished to show off his oratory would not waste it on a dialogue,¹¹⁷² however, and this brief rejoinder to the authorities is more like part of a dialogue than a lengthy speech. The following context reveals that Peter has no intention of currying favor. In contrast to most rhetorical questions, this one functions ironically; Peter invites his hearers to pronounce negative judgment on their own behavior (cf. 2 Sam 12:5–7). In fact, there can be no question concerning what is "right" (δικαιος) in such a choice, a point perhaps underlined by Luke's (and Peter's) most recent use of the term: the unjust execution of "the righteous one" (Acts 3:14).

Appeal to what Peter and John have "seen and heard" implies that the court's real interest is not maintaining public security but suppressing legitimate testimony.¹¹⁷³ If the disciples are "witnesses" (4:20), they hold the moral high ground both within and outside the story world; as common as the intimidation of eyewitnesses against testifying must have been, no one defended it as honorable behavior. Hearings regularly included rhetorical misrepresentation of opponents' claims and attempts to discredit witnesses (see comments on Acts 6:11; 24:5–9), but only tyrannies openly prevented testimonies from being heard in court.

The question of whether Luke intends the apostles' boldness toward authorities as a model for Christian proclamation in his own day requires some nuancing.¹¹⁷⁴ Certainly, the disciples follow the example of Jesus, who accepts human authority as valid but subordinate to God's (Luke 20:25); obeying God rather than people (Acts 5:29) when the two are in conflict does not require disrespect under normal circumstances (cf. 4:8; 23:5).¹¹⁷⁵ Luke does not seem to treat all authorities in the same manner. Throughout his narrative, Luke usually appeals favorably and respectfully to Rome, in contrast to Jerusalem's (by his day, probably defunct) Sanhedrin. Nevertheless, he would presumably authorize civil disobedience there as well if it became necessary (cf. Luke 21:12–15).¹¹⁷⁶

1168. E.g., Alciph. *Court.* 7 (Thais to Euthydemus), 1.34, ¶7.

1169. E.g., Max. Tyre 1.1 even uses it to open his work. Cf. *hypophora*, asking what the adversaries can say on their behalf or what can be said against the speaker (*Rhet. Her.* 4.23.33).

1170. See Porter, "Paul and Letters," 581 (citing Phil 1:22–24). In view of Acts 4:20, it is certainly not aporia (pretending not to know where to start).

1171. E.g., Aeschines *Tim.* 196.

1172. See Schenkeveld, "Philosophical Prose," 230.

1173. For Acts 4:19–20 as judicial rhetoric, see Soards, *Speeches*, 44. For "seen and heard," see extended comments on Acts 2:33. Although I regard this as a good Lukan expression, Johannine scholar Paul Anderson has pointed out to me its exact correspondence (in its present form) to Johannine usage; because this is one of John's only speaking parts in this work and because of at least Johannine tradition in the Fourth Gospel, the question that Anderson raises may merit further exploration (see Anderson, *Quest*, 10, 116; idem, *Christology*, 274–77; cf. Wright, *Mission of People*, 154).

1174. Boldness in general, of course, is a positive model (see Acts 4:29–31, which likely does attribute boldness by the Spirit's empowerment more broadly than to the apostles alone; cf. 4:33).

1175. Cf. Cassidy, *Society*, 44–45.

1176. For the passage as a model for Christians when the state seeks to muzzle the apostolic message, see Draper, "Church-State Conflict." Pelikan, *Acts*, 89, questions the Reformation's application of this text to resisting ecclesiastical authority (e.g., Augsburg Confession 28.75). Luke probably never envisioned the need for such resistance (Acts 15:2 is gentler than Gal 2:6, 11), but it is difficult to see how the application is illegitimate: Peter is here confronting religious as well as civil authority, preferring truth to authority.

In the end, it is the municipal authorities who are (from Luke's perspective) compelled to back down, although without explicitly indicating that they are doing so (Acts 4:21–22). This would be a matter of shame; for the leaders to lose face before these populist healers (who might seem arrogant to them) undoubtedly aroused their long-term hostility. Nevertheless, they were left little choice but to back down. Politicians sometimes had to accommodate the populace to prevent unrest (cf. Luke 20:1–7);¹¹⁷⁷ for this reason, the Sadducees sometimes even worked with the more populist Pharisees despite the differences between the two parties.¹¹⁷⁸ They had not “found” (cf. Luke 23:22) a legal basis for punishing them, and certainly they could not protest the people’s “glorifying” God (Acts 4:21).¹¹⁷⁹

Nevertheless, upper classes regularly despised demagogues and their appeals to the unlearned, hence easily swayed, masses. In elite ideology, it is individuals least persuasive to the wise who tend to be most persuasive to the masses,¹¹⁸⁰ and in one of the more common themes of ancient political thought, the masses are easily misled by demagogues, those who appeal to their ignorance instead of courting the wise elite.¹¹⁸¹ The Greek term *δημαγωγός* (from which we derive the term “demagogue”) was not originally negative in classical Athens,¹¹⁸² but aristocratic critics saw dangers in purely populist appeal. Popular support of the masses for (or against) a hero was common in good stories,¹¹⁸³ but these reflected (albeit sometimes also amplified) social reality (see comments on Acts 2:47). Some ancients charged that public speakers used oratory to sway the masses,¹¹⁸⁴ though the authorities are not likely to attribute any formal rhetorical training to the disciples (4:13).

Ancient *encomia* praised those who had education; conversely, lack of education was not praiseworthy.¹¹⁸⁵ Popular philosophers such as the Cynics preferred the simple life and hence were more apt to appreciate those formally unlearned.¹¹⁸⁶ Some philosophers felt that virtue was more widespread than education because it was innate.¹¹⁸⁷ Most would have been skeptical, however, of those who sought to be public speakers and leaders purely by instinct and without training.¹¹⁸⁸

That the man disabled from birth (3:2) was more than forty (4:22) heightens the

1177. Cf. the Roman senate after the creation of tribunes. With Acts 4:21, Marguerat, *Actes*, 141, compares Luke 19:48.

1178. E.g., Jos. *War* 2.411; *Life* 21–22.

1179. Normally this means “praising” him (e.g., *Test. Sol.* 5:13; cf. *1 En.* 90:40; *Jub.* 25:11; 4 *Macc* 1:12; *Test. Ab.* 6:8; 18:11 A). This is a regular response to divine interventions in Luke-Acts (Luke 2:20; 5:25–26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43, where also “the people” do so; 23:47; cf. 2 *Cor* 9:13; *Gal* 1:24), though in Acts focusing on the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 11:18; 13:48; 21:20), and also applies to honoring Jesus (Luke 4:15; Acts 3:13).

1180. Eurip. *Hipp.* 988–89. For elite Roman disdain for populist rhetoric, which was often portrayed as unnecessarily passionate or frenzied, see Hall, “Delivery,” 231.

1181. E.g., Aristoph. *Frogs* 419, 1085–86; Isoc. *Ad Nic.* 48; Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.27, 47; Arist. *Pol.* 3.6.4–13, 1281a–1282b; 4.4.4–7, 1292a; 5.4.1–5, 1304b–1305b; 6.2.10–12, 1319b; *Rhet.* 2.20.5, 1393b; Diog. Laert. 6.42; Polyb. 6.3–4; Diod. Sic. 10.7.3; 15.58.3; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.8.1; 7.31.1; 7.56.2; 8.31.4; 9.32.4; 10.18.3; Livy 3.71.5; 6.11.7; 22.34.2; Appian *Hist. rom.* 2.9; 3.7.1; 7.3.18; 11.7.40; C.W. 1.5.34; Phaedrus 1.14.10–13; Plut. *Cic.* 33.1, 3–4; *Cam.* 31.2; *Praising* 16, *Mor.* 545C; *Statecraft* 5, *Mor.* 802 DE; Max. Tyre 6.5; 27.6; Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 189, §57D; 201–2, §§61D–62D; Philo *Creation* 171; Jos. *Ant.* 4.223; 6.36. On Dio Chrysostom’s mistrust of the mob, see Barry, “Aristocrats.”

1182. Hornblower, “Demagogues.”

1183. Pervo, *Profit*, 35.

1184. See, e.g., Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 189, §57D; 201–2, §§61D–62D, for an orator’s response.

1185. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *John*, 152–53.

1186. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 90, commenting on this passage.

1187. Mus. Ruf. 2, p. 38.17–20.

1188. See, e.g., Socrates’s view in Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.6.

magnitude of the miracle,¹¹⁸⁹ eliciting the crowd's praise.¹¹⁹⁰ His disability had been neither temporary nor partial and was widely known (3:10), and thus the healing was impossible to deny. Miracle stories often include the duration of prior disability to heighten the intensity of the miracle (cf. Mark 5:25; John 9:1).¹¹⁹¹

e. Prayer for More Boldness (4:23–30)

Acts 4:23–5:16 displays God's power in the face of the world's opposition. In 4:23–31, Luke emphasizes God's agents glorifying God in the face of opposition, because opposition fulfills God's plan (4:25–28), and their asking therefore for continued boldness backed by continuing signs (4:29–30). Their prayer may illustrate graphically the custom of corporate prayer mentioned in 2:42 (cf. 2:47).

As elsewhere in Luke-Acts, prayer invites the coming of the Spirit (Luke 3:21–22; 11:13; Acts 1:14; 8:15). But the presence of prayer in this crisis contrasts starkly with the disciples' prayerlessness in another crisis in Luke 22:39–46;¹¹⁹² the disciples now follow the prayerful model of their Lord. Jesus had warned his followers to respond to persecution with prayer (6:28).¹¹⁹³ The prayer may offer one concrete model for prayer in the face of suffering:¹¹⁹⁴ acknowledging (in language echoing Scripture) God's supreme authority (Acts 4:24); reading persecution in light of earlier biblical prayers and hence putting it in its place in God's plan (4:25–28); and praying for renewed confidence and power to go on speaking regardless of opposition (4:29–30).

As in the Fourth Gospel and many ancient historians, where speeches provide perspectives on narrative events, the prayer in this passage provides a theological interpretation of the opposition the apostles have experienced.¹¹⁹⁵ The prayer confirms the pattern for how the gospel will spread in the rest of Acts (especially through the Spirit's empowerment for signs and boldness, which follow the prayer, 4:29–31).¹¹⁹⁶ The prayer also provides encouragement in the face of persecution by emphasizing God's sovereignty, historical perspective on facing opposition (David's and Jesus's suffering), and power for signs by the Spirit and Jesus's name.¹¹⁹⁷

We lack external corroboration to evaluate Luke's sources here,¹¹⁹⁸ but scholars have offered various observations. Structurally the passage follows the same pattern as other reports of people narrating what God had done (e.g., Luke 24:33–35).¹¹⁹⁹

1189. Cf. the healing of a lame man of thirty in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.39. Here Bede *Comm. Acts* 4.22 (Martin, *Acts*, 52) opines that his age made his healing all the more difficult to challenge (though Bede then goes on to allegorize the number).

1190. The proposed allusion to Israel's forty years in the wilderness (Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:157–58; Parsons, *Acts*, 58 [citing Isa 35 in Acts 3:8]; cf. Bede *Comm. Acts* 4.22 [Martin, *Acts*, 52]) is possible (cf. Acts 7:36, 42; 13:18; John 5:5), but it lacks explicit supporting clues in the text and may simply be a round number (cf. Acts 23:13, 21) to emphasize the extended duration of his need.

1191. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 51–52; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 45 (citing Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.38).

1192. Tannehill, *Acts*, 71–72.

1193. Gradl, "Gebet," emphasizes prayer as response to persecution here; cf. Green, "Acts," 742, citing Luke 22:40, 46. Cf. Dan 6:10.

1194. Hamm, "Paradigm," even views it as a model for liturgical prayer. In view of Ps 2, just referred to, one might expect prayer for judgment against the apostles' enemies; instead, the prayer is for boldness for proclamation (Hamm, *Acts*, 29).

1195. See, e.g., Rosner, "Biblical History," 76 (comparing the prayer in 1 Kgs 8:22–53); Keener, *John*, 69–71.

1196. See Wahlde, "Assessment of Persecution" (part omitted); more fully, idem, "Acts 4, 24–31."

1197. Wahlde, "Acts 4, 24–31," esp. 244. On the Spirit providing boldness to face opposition here, see Mittelstadt, *Spirit*, 99. The prayer moves from God's sovereignty over creation (Acts 4:24) to sovereignty over their present difficult situation (Gallagher, "Acts 4:22–31," 50).

1198. Prayers could be inserted into historical narrative like speeches, though the narrator may not have had access to a speech (cf. 1 Macc 7:36–38; perhaps 1 Sam 2:1–10).

1199. Maloney, *Narration of Works*, 43–66.

Although this pattern appears in the LXX as well,¹²⁰⁰ it may indicate Lukan composition or reworking.¹²⁰¹ Such an observation does not deny the possibility that Luke may have drawn on earlier sources. In favor of Luke's dependence on sources here, Witherington notes that Acts 4:27 preserves the etymological significance of "Christ" as "anointed," an idea quickly obscured among Gentile churches where "Christ" became more a name than a title.¹²⁰² Dunn offers the following observations:¹²⁰³

1. Early Christians may have employed similar prayers in similar situations (esp. Isa 37:16–20).¹²⁰⁴
2. "Lord" means "God" here, rather than Jesus.
3. Jesus appears as the servant; as in the early Christology of Acts 3:13, 26, this may suggest pre-Lukan Christology.
4. The prayer's mention of "the peoples of Israel" in contrast to Luke's positive use of "the people" in 4:1–2 may suggest pre-Lukan material.
5. Dunn argues for the possibility of early tradition even behind 4:31.

Some of these suggestions are weaker than others (for discussion of the antiquity of servant Christology, see comments on Acts 3:13). It is always easier to spot Lukan elements that fit the work's unity than to substantiate non-Lukan material (since anything that Luke includes is, by definition, "Lukan" regardless of the prior sources). But given what we know of Luke's custom elsewhere, it is reasonable to affirm that Luke has a tradition of the prayer meeting here and some information about the early community's perspectives that he has written in a manner that both takes account of the tradition and fits his work as a whole.

I. THE GATHERING AND ADDRESS (4:23–24)

After being released, the apostles returned to "their own";¹²⁰⁵ scholars differ as to the exact sense of the reference. Most think that the entire community of disciples is in view, which would fit what appears to be a general pattern (2:42, 46; 13:52; 14:27; 15:4).¹²⁰⁶ Others doubt that this is possible, since it now may have included more than eight thousand members (2:41; 4:4);¹²⁰⁷ this might pose a strain even on a meeting in the temple courts, and whatever place they met was shaken (4:31).

A meeting of the church as a whole is possible. In Luke's narrative, the church of three thousand (plus those being added daily) has been holding corporate meetings in the temple in addition to private house meetings (2:42, 46–47), and the newer converts of the previous day may not yet be incorporated. Even later, the church continues to meet, and in Solomon's Portico (5:12), not in mere rooms (though a

1200. See *ibid.*, 190; 1 Esd 4:61–62.

1201. Maloney, *Narration of Works*, 53; for Lukan characteristics in Acts 4:23–31, see also Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 131.

1202. Witherington, *Acts*, 202. On the use of "Christ" as a name in Gentile churches (and a title in Jewish ones), see Longenecker, *Christology*, 73–79. Nevertheless, highly educated Gentile Christians might recognize the connection (cf. later Bede *Comm. Acts* 4.27).

1203. Dunn, *Acts*, 56.

1204. Also in 2 Kgs 19:15–19. Other scholars also point out dependence on Hezekiah's prayer (e.g., Boisnard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:66; Haenchen, *Acts*, 228; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 306; Witherington, *Acts*, 203; Chance, *Acts*, 78; Pervo, *Acts*, 121), which cannot decide the historical question either way.

1205. A much happier prospect, in any event, than Judas going to his own (Acts 1:25). The only other occurrence in the context is 4:32; if the occurrences of the wording are meant to be taken together, Luke may be saying that the ideal community counted their spiritual siblings, rather than their possessions, as "their own."

1206. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 201; Barrett, *Acts*, 242.

1207. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 307.

more enclosed place may be suggested by 4:31). Further, the parallel results on the congregation in the two narratives (2:44–45; 4:32) suggest that all may have been present for the outpouring of the Spirit (though in the story world, even the converts at Pentecost would have received the Spirit subsequently to the first group; 2:4, 38, 41). The outpouring of 4:31 certainly affects the entire *πλήθος* of 4:32.¹²⁰⁸ A smaller assembly is also plausible, though it need not be limited to the apostles (cf. 1:15).¹²⁰⁹ If the meeting was spontaneous on the apostles' return, it would not be the full body, but this impression could be left simply by Luke's abbreviating a source or composing without concern for this question.

This passage reflects “free, spontaneous” prayer,¹²¹⁰ as apparently often in early Christianity (cf. 1 Cor 14:26). Crying out with a single voice could refer to prayer in unison, in which case it would be inspired. This could resemble the common voice of the chorus in Greek drama;¹²¹¹ such a chorus had to speak in unison to be intelligible.¹²¹² It was said that the Therapeutae sang antiphonally and then united as one chorus (Philo *Contempl.* 84). One may think also of later synagogue liturgy, but it is unclear to what extent a liturgy existed in this period, and even less clear whether it was widely prayed in unison. More problematic still, the prayer is too relevant to the events to be an earlier liturgical form simply recited together. Far more likely, it simply reflects the idiom for speaking in unanimity¹²¹³—that is, united in agreement (as implied by *ὁμοθυμαδόν* elsewhere in Acts; see comments on Acts 1:14; 2:46)—rather than speech with identical words.¹²¹⁴ (The assembly could have recited the psalm quotation together, however.)

The prayer addresses God as *Δέσποτα*;¹²¹⁵ *δεσπότης* is a title that appears for gods in Greek literature¹²¹⁶ but also for the one God in Jewish texts,¹²¹⁷ including specifically in prayers (as in its only other use in Luke, Luke 2:29).¹²¹⁸ God as maker of

1208. The *πλήθος* (the public assembly of the congregation; also Acts 6:2; 15:12, 30) might evoke the congregation in the wilderness or town assemblies (see comments on *ἐκκλησία* in Acts 7:38; 19:32, 39–40) but has a parallel at Qumran (see Brown, “Scrolls,” 7).

1209. The apostles surely would have welcomed others to join them for prayer (cf. Acts 12:12; 16:25; though 5:13 could be understood otherwise).

1210. Martin, *Worship*, 34, on Acts in general (cf. Acts 1:24–25). On Spirit-inspired prayer, see comments on Acts 2:4.

1211. On the chorus, see Zaminer, “Chorus,” 248–49. Ign. *Eph.* 4.2 idealizes singing with a common voice (Zaminer, “Chorus,” 249). For scripting purposes, a normal chorus would be treated as a single character (Arist. *Poet.* 18.19, 1456a), though they normally circled around a main character (4 Macc 8:4; Callim. *Hymns* 4 [to Delos], line 301; Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 98.9–13; Men. *Rhet.* 2.17, 439.19–20; 445.32–446.2).

1212. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.2; 39.4; 48.7.

1213. See Polyb. 3.62.7; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.10.1; 6.87.1; Cic. *Phil.* 6.1.2; Virg. *Aen.* 11.122–31; Vell. Patern. 2.32.1; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 84.9; Apul. *Metam.* 11.13; Exod 19:8; 2 Chr 18:12; 4 Macc 8:29; 1 En. 61:11–13; Jos. *Life* 259.

1214. Possibly one person led while others either agreed or repeated after him (Marshall, *Acts*, 103); whoever led would need to pray loudly so that all could hear (Jos. *Ant.* 4.40).

1215. Haenchen, *Acts*, 226, suggests that Luke changed Isa 37's *κύριε* here to avoid confusion with Christ. Falk, “Prayer Literature,” 275, suggests that the closest OT analogies are an expanded “You are the Lord” (e.g., Ps 86:5, 15, 17) and a *berakah* (“Blessed are you, Lord”; e.g., 1 Chr 29:10), later expanded by rabbis with participial clauses (the DSS resemble Acts 4:24 here).

1216. *I. Eph.* 1240.1 (Zeus); Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 308 (citing Eurip. *Hipp.* 88; Xen. *Anab.* 3.2.13); many others in BDAG. It was not necessarily praiseworthy for a mortal ruler (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.22).

1217. E.g., Wis 8:3; 13:3, 9; 2 Macc 5:17, 20; 6:14; 9:13; 3 Macc 5:12; Jos. *Ant.* 1.20, 72; 5.93; Philo *Alleg. Interp.* 1.96; *Cher.* 83; *Test. Ab.* 1:1.12, 25; 8:3; 16:2–3; 20:12 A; *Test. Jos.* 1:5; *Test. Job* 38:1 (with Job 5:8 LXX); *CJ* 1:279, §358; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 308 (citing LXX Job 5:8; Wis 6:7; 8:3; Sir 36:1; Philo *Heir* 22–23; Jos. *War* 7.323; *Ant.* 8.107; 18.23; 1 *Clem.* 59.4; 61.1–20); Christ in 2 Pet 2:1; Jude 4. Philo distinguishes its sense from *κύριος* (*Her.* 22–23). Some Jewish prayers may reflect significant Greek influence (cf. van der Horst, “Elements,” on *Apost. Const.* 7.34–35), but use of Greek language is sufficient to explain the overlap here.

1218. E.g., 1 Esd 4:60; Tob 8:17; Jdt 9:12 (master of heaven and earth); Wis 11:26; Sir 23:1; Bar 6:5; 2 Macc 15:22; 3 Macc 2:2 (master of creation); 6:5, 10; Jos. *Ant.* 1.272; 2.270; 4.40; 5.41; 11.162, 230; 20.90; Rev 6:10; Gr. *Ezra* 2:23.

heaven and earth (cf. Acts 14:15; 17:24) was a long-standing title for God in Jewish prayers;¹²¹⁹ the linking of heaven and earth and sea was a common summary of the world.¹²²⁰ Luke echoes the title later in the book (14:15), perhaps one of his many connections between his narrations of the Jerusalem church and the Diaspora mission. In both 4:24 and 14:15, Luke thinks especially of Ps 146:6 (145:6 LXX). Probably this belongs to Christian liturgical memory (alluded to in Rev 5:13; 10:6; 14:7; 21:1), but Luke may remain cognizant of the context. Here he may recall the warning not to trust in princes (Ps 146:3 [145:3 LXX]); Acts 4:26 speaks of princes, using the same term as the LXX.¹²²¹ If God rules all creation (4:24), then the earth's human rulers are foolish to think they can stop his purposes for his king, the Messiah (4:25–28)—or the Messiah's agents (4:29).

II. THE ENEMIES IN PSALM 2 (4:25–26)

Given biblical precedent, believers had no reason to be discouraged by persecution; rulers' opposition fulfilled Scripture. Indeed, it fulfilled God's plan (4:28). In 4:25–29, the believers identify their sufferings for Christ's name with Christ's own (cf. 5:41; 7:59–60; 9:4). That David was "our father" refers to his role as leader and benefactor (Mark 11:10; cf. 2 Kgs 2:12; 13:14; Isa 9:6)¹²²² rather than to genetic descent (in contrast to Acts 2:30; 13:23; 15:16; Luke 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4; 3:31; 18:38–39). That the Spirit spoke through him—that is, inspired the psalms—was customarily recognized (cf. Acts 1:16 and comments there; cf. Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34).¹²²³

Luke here cites the LXX of Ps 2:1. The editors of the books of Psalms prefixed this psalm to the "Davidic psalms" collection (the first two books contain numerous Davidic superscriptions, the meaning and origin of which are unclear). Some considered Ps 1 as an introduction to the entire Psalter, thus leaving Ps 2 as the opening of the Davidic psalms in particular.¹²²⁴

Given the mention of the "Anointed" one in Ps 2:2, it comes as no surprise that early Judaism often applied the psalm to the ultimate Davidic seed popularly called by that title—that is, the "Messiah" (Χριστός) (Acts 4:26).¹²²⁵ That early Christians would immediately apply the title to Jesus "whom you anointed" (ἔχρισας, 4:27) is even less surprising. Most Jews who recited the psalms would be familiar with this divine approbation of the Davidic line at the beginning of their hymnbook. They

1219. E.g., Pss 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; cf. 2 Chr 2:12; Jdt 6:19 (God invoked as Lord God of heaven); much later, Qur'an 39:46 (cf. 42:11); and the oft-cited 2 Kgs 19:15; Isa 37:16.

1220. E.g., Lucian *Phil. Sale* 18; Gen 1:26, 28; 9:2; Amos 9:6; Zeph 1:3; Hag 2:6; *1 En.* 101:8; *2 En.* 23:1; 47:5; *4 Ezra* 4:21; Jos. *Ant.* 1.31, 156; 3.123, 181; Philo *Creation* 114; *Giants* 7; *Conf.* 154; Rev 5:13; 12:12; 14:7; 21:1; *1 Clem.* 33.3; *Diogn.* 7.2. Including all three in prayer in Jos. *Ant.* 4.40 (added); 8.107; Neh 9:6; Pss 96:11; 146:6 (derived from Exod 20:11, though not in a prayer; cf. further Falk, "Prayer Literature," 275; Soards, *Speeches*, 48); in oaths, Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.121; Rev 10:6. Helios appears as "Lord of heaven and earth" (and "God of gods") in PGM 4.641.

1221. Which appears twenty-two times in only seventeen psalms (about 11 percent of the psalms).

1222. "Father" applied to societal benefactors (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 12.1.8; Paus. 8.48.5–6; 8.51.7; Plut. *Cic.* 23.3); generals (Sil. It. 7.734–35; 8.2; 17.651); rulers (Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 64.14; Heliod. *Eth.* 10.17), including Rome's emperor (Ovid *Tristia* 4.4.13; *Fasti* 2.130–32, 637; *Pont.* 4.9.134; Hdn. 2.2.9; 2.6.2); and so forth. On "father" as an honorary title in general, see (for scores of ancient references) Keener, *John*, 921–23.

1223. For the hyperbaton here (as well as some other rhetorical features), see Roux, "Style and Text"; on hyperbaton in general, see Rowe, "Style," 136; Black, "Oration at Olivet," 87; Anderson, *Glossary*, 121–22; Porter, "Paul and Letters," 580. Miura, *David*, 167 (with Wahlde, "Acts 4, 24–31," 242), notes a chiasm: Gentiles and peoples (of Israel; 4:25, 27); kings and rulers (4:26, 27); gathered together against Lord and anointed (4:26–27).

1224. See Wilson, *Psalms*, 1:92; idem, *Editing of Psalter*, 204–6.

1225. See Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 101; following Lövestam, *Son and Saviour*, 17–19; most important, 4QFlor. For Ps 2:8, see *b. Sukkah* 52a; *Gen. Rab.* 44:8; for Ps 2:9, see *Pss. Sol.* 17:26; more fully on Ps 2, see comments on Acts 13:33. On the meaning of "Messiah," see the excursus at Acts 2:36.

would therefore recognize that the same psalm announced this king as God’s “son” (Ps 2:7), a claim useful for Luke’s (and early Christian) proclamation (Acts 13:33; cf. Heb 1:5; 5:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). (The hostile “rulers of the earth” might also evoke the king’s coming international rule in Ps 2:8 and hence, for Luke, the Gentile mission.)¹²²⁶

What is more surprising is that the opposition in the psalm¹²²⁷ is the nations (Ps 2:1), not Israel itself.¹²²⁸ (The verses include roughly synonymous ideas—Gentiles are peoples, and kings are rulers—reflecting a common form of parallelism in Hebrew poetry.)¹²²⁹ By applying the psalm to their persecutors in the Jewish aristocracy (alongside the Gentile Pilate), the believers are viewing the Jerusalem leaders as allies of the Gentiles. While such a perspective is striking, it is hardly unprecedented. Jerusalem had originally fallen under Roman “protection” partly because some factions in its leadership had invited Roman assistance to ensconce themselves in power.¹²³⁰ Members of the priestly aristocracy owed their continuing power, in large measure, to their Roman patrons, hence incurring the resentment of Jewish revolutionaries,¹²³¹ and this aristocracy gradually disappeared after the destruction of the temple in 70. The Qumran scrolls, written by a movement born from protest against Jerusalem’s priestly aristocracy in an earlier generation, classed all of apostate Israel (those not aligned with their sect) along with the Gentiles in the final battle (e.g., 1QS V, 19–20; 4QpNah IV, 3).¹²³² If Jesus was Israel’s rightful king, then Jews who opposed him were apostates from the covenant. Now, as one scholar puts it, “the enemy is anyone who stands opposed to the Lord’s anointed.”¹²³³

Thus Pilate (Acts 4:27) becomes a representative of the “Gentiles” (Acts 4:25; Ps 2:1) and perhaps (along with Herod the tetrarch, Acts 4:27) of the “kings of the earth” as Caesar’s agent (Acts 4:26; Ps 2:2).¹²³⁴ But just as many other Jewish interpreters would read different significance into synonymous parallelism where it suited their exegetical purpose, this prayer reapplies the psalm’s other enemies to Jerusalem’s municipal aristocracy. They were “rulers” (ἄρχοντες, Acts 4:26; Ps 2:2), mentioned elsewhere in Luke-Acts as those who engineered Jesus’s execution (Acts 3:17; 13:27; Luke 23:13, 35; 24:20)¹²³⁵ and had now arraigned two of the apostles (Acts 4:5, 8; cf. 23:5). The “peoples” (4:25; originally parallel with the “Gentiles,” Ps 2:1) are now

1226. Perhaps not coincidentally in view of Acts 1:8 (as noted by Richard Hays in a seminar on Acts and intertextuality at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, November 17, 2007), Ps 2:8 also mentions the king’s rule “to the ends of the earth” (though the LXX here uses πέρατα τῆς γῆς and the wording and context in Acts 1:8 point more closely to Isa 49:6; see comments there).

1227. The “enemy” is a standard “character” throughout the psalms; here the enemy is corporate.

1228. Some later rabbis naturally applied the text eschatologically to the war against Gog and Magog (Edgar, “Messianic Interpretation,” 49, citing *b. Ber.* 7b).

1229. Still intelligible to a Greek audience (cf. Greek use of synonyms in rhetoric; Anderson, *Glossary*, 114), especially one familiar with the use of LXX Psalms in worship. The community applies “peoples” to Israel; if the plural suggests Israel’s tribes, the usage is highly unusual (reflecting neither OT nor Lukan practice; cf. Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 141).

1230. E.g., *Jos. Ant.* 14.29–30.

1231. E.g., *Jos. War* 4.147–48, 154, 157, 160, 315–17.

1232. Qumran scrolls, indeed, applied Ps 2:1 to the “nations” opposing “the chosen of Israel in the eschatological time” (4Q174 1 I, 18–19)—i.e., against the sectarians. For similar pesher applications to the community, see also 1QH^a XIV, 26; XVI, 7–8 (Dupont, *Salvation*, 119–20).

1233. Bock, “Scripture and Realisation,” 56n20; cf. also idem, *Acts*, 206.

1234. Luke’s tradition of Pilate’s and Herod’s cooperation persisted in later sources; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 141–42, cites *Ign. Smyrn.* 1.2; *G. Pet.* 1ff.; *Justin 1 Apol.* 40.

1235. This usage is unique to Luke and (later) John among the Gospels and becomes Luke’s prevailing use only in the passion narrative (contrast Luke 8:41; 11:15; 12:58; 14:1; 18:18); does he already have this citation in view when writing Luke 23?

the “peoples” of Israel (Acts 4:27), a highly unusual expression formed solely by the early believing community’s pesher-style application of the psalm.¹²³⁶

III. THE PSALM’S PRESENT APPLICATION (4:27–28)

Now the prayer turns to the pesher application of the psalm to the present (eschatological) time.¹²³⁷ (Peter underlines the certainty of what has happened with the solemn phrase ἐπ’ ἀληθείας, “truly.”)¹²³⁸ Jesus’s followers could be assured that all had happened according to God’s plan (4:28), for they found opposition to God’s anointed in Scripture (4:25–26).

The rulers were “gathered” (συνήχθησαν), just as the psalm predicted (Acts 4:26); Luke’s informed audience may think of how the rulers “gathered” both against Jesus (Luke 22:66) and the apostles (Acts 4:5).¹²³⁹ (On the identity of the “rulers,” see comments above.) Because, from the standpoint of Peter and his colleagues, Jesus is God’s ultimate “anointed” (i.e., “Christ,” 4:26) and the psalm’s ultimate “son” (Ps 2:7; see comments above), the application appears straightforward. The disciples experienced the mistreatment of the anointed one.

The rejection of Jesus as God’s “servant” undoubtedly echoes Isaiah’s Servant Songs,¹²⁴⁰ where God’s servant is rejected by the people (Isa 53:3, 7–9).¹²⁴¹ That the “servant” is “anointed” here confirms a likely connection with Isaiah’s servant (61:1),¹²⁴² as implied in one of Luke’s paradigmatic texts (Luke 4:18) and another of his summaries (Acts 10:38). Early Christian understanding of this passage is not difficult to reconstruct (see also comments on Acts 3:13; 8:32–33); though Israel is God’s servant (Isa 41:8–9; 43:10; 44:1–2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3), Israel proves blind and disobedient (42:19). Thus God raises up a remnant within Israel to restore Israel (49:5–7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11); in contrast to Israel (40:2), this one suffers without personal guilt (53:4–6, 8–11, esp. 53:9). Like Israel (42:1, 6; 43:10–12; 44:8), he brings light to the Gentiles as well (49:6; 52:15; cf. Luke 2:32).

Nevertheless, Jesus’s “servanthood” here is connected not with that of Israel but with that of David (Acts 4:25; cf. Luke 1:69).¹²⁴³ This points to an additional line of early Christian christological exegesis—namely, the application of selected Davidic promises to Jesus (Acts 2:25–31; 13:23, 33–37; relevant to Ps 2 in Acts 4:25–26).

1236. Cf. Rom 3:19: after citing texts applicable primarily to Gentiles and heinous sinners (3:10–18), Paul applies the text universally by recalling the principle that everything in the law must be relevant for those for whom it is intended (Dunn, *Romans*, 1:145, 149; cf. also Hays, *Conversion*, 90–91; Schreiner, *Romans*, 167). For application of this context in Psalms to both Jewish and Gentile enemies in pre-Christian Jewish sources, see Miura, *David*, 163–64 (citing *Pss. Sol.* 17:22–29; 4QFlor frg. 1).

1237. It is in a sense also functionally a *narratio* (narrative introductions appear not only in speeches but in genres as distant as ancient Near Eastern treaties), but its function as an application of the text determines its placement here. The line-by-line explanation fits Qumran’s pesher-style approach.

1238. Used by Peter also in Acts 10:34 but by Luke also in Luke 4:25; 20:21 (following Mark 12:14); 22:59 (the other earliest extant Christian uses being Mark 12:32; *1 Clem.* 23.5; 47.3). The phrase appears in the LXX (Deut 22:20; Isa 37:18; Jer 23:28; Tob 8:7), esp. in Job (9:2; 19:4; 36:4) and Daniel (2:5, 8, 9, 47; 8:26).

1239. With Johnson, *Acts*, 84. The term does not appear in Mark’s passion narrative (though cf. John 11:47).

1240. The voice of Luke 3:22 might combine Ps 2:7 with Isa 42:1, but I am inclined to think that it echoes instead, if anything, Ps 2:7 with Gen 22:1, in contrast to Matthew (see Keener, *Spirit*, 56–59; idem, *Matthew*, 135; cf. Matt 12:18).

1241. Moessner, “Script,” 229. Some suggest that this interpretation goes back to Jesus himself (Cullmann, *Peter*, 66; Ladd, *Theology*, 331); others date it later (Ménard, “Messianic Title”), some much later (Jones, “Servant” in Luke-Acts”). See comments on Acts 3:13; fuller discussion in Keener, *Matthew*, 487–88.

1242. Cf. Kilgallen, “Servant You Anointed”; Ridderbos, “Speeches of Peter,” 23.

1243. Often in the OT, e.g., 2 Sam 7:5, 8, 20, 26; Pss 89:3, 20; 132:10; Jer 33:21; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25. The dual comparison (to Isaiah’s servant and to David the servant) is noted also in Kilgallen, “Servant You Anointed.”

The informed reader would presuppose information from Luke’s passion narrative about the individual enemies named, Pilate and Herod. Although Pilate’s governorship is attested on an inscription,¹²⁴⁴ among Gentiles he was especially remembered by Luke’s generation (cf. *Tac. Ann.* 15.44), and particularly among Christians (1 Tim 6:13), for his involvement with Jesus’s crucifixion. Early Jewish sources confirm that Pilate executed people without trial; excessive use of capital punishment ultimately cost him his office (Philo *Embassy* 302; *Jos. Ant.* 18.88–89).¹²⁴⁵ His earlier plundering of the temple treasury to support an aqueduct¹²⁴⁶ and particularly his recent issuing of coins bearing an insignia of the divine emperor¹²⁴⁷ blatantly demonstrated his insensitivity to local Jewish concerns. (Pilate was an ethnocentric colonialist governor, though both the republic and the empire reveal even harsher cases of provincial exploitation and maladministration.)¹²⁴⁸ From what Philo and especially Josephus show us of Pilate’s character, any reticence to accept the local leaders’ recommendation would be more out of spite for them than out of concern for justice.¹²⁴⁹ For discussion of Pilate’s reluctant condemnation of Jesus, see comments on Acts 3:13;¹²⁵⁰ for discussion of corrupt governors, see comments on Acts 24:26–27.

“Herod” here was a legitimate name for Herod Antipas, as evidenced in Josephus,¹²⁵¹ as well as the standard name for him in early Christian tradition; Luke’s retaining the name “Herod” also allows for a connection with “Herod” Agrippa I, also an enemy of the Jesus movement (12:1–19). Herod was known among early Christians for his affair with Herodias and execution of John (Mark 6:14–29; Luke 3:19–20; 9:7–9)¹²⁵² but in Luke also for his involvement with Jesus’s execution (Luke 23:6–12). This text provides a theological verdict on the more nuanced description of the behavior of Pilate and Herod earlier narrated by Luke: though Pilate tried to avoid condemning Jesus (23:4, 14–16, 20, 22), he ultimately yielded to political expediency (23:7, 12, 24–25). Though Herod found no guilt in him (23:15), he abused Jesus (23:11; cf. 13:31–32). Rarely did they work together,

1244. Evans, “Pilate Inscription”; Smallwood, *Jews*, 145; Sherck, *Empire*, §39A, p. 40.

1245. Sanders, *Figure*, 274. On governors being tried for abusing power, especially for executing innocent people (particularly Roman citizens), see Pliny *Ep.* 2.11, in Jones, *Empire*, 192–95.

1246. Others viewed this act as misappropriation of funds (*Jos. War* 2.175–76; cf. *Ant.* 18.60; *Suda*, s.v. “*Korbanas*,” in Sherck, *Empire*, §39 B, 75); Pilate, however, probably assumed that he followed safe Roman precedent: Augustus and others paid for workmen on aqueducts by public and imperial treasuries (Frontinus *De aquis* 2.89–101, 116–18, in Jones, *Empire*, 207; cf. *Res gest.* 4.20), and the use of public money would have been expected (*Jos. Life* 199; but cf. *Life* 298–99) had it not been from the temple treasury. Romans and other Gentiles, however, also complained when designated funds in a public treasury were redirected (Appian *Bell. civ.* 2.6.41; *Lysias Or.* 25.19, §173; 27.7, §178; 27.16, §179; Plut. *Cic.* 17.2; *Caes.* 35.2–4; worse, despoiling temple treasuries, e.g., Val. Max. 1.1.21; *Tac. Ann.* 14.18; see further Keener, *Matthew*, 557n72; Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 31; cf. 4 Macc 4); they would have been angrier had he profited himself, which sometimes happened (Catull. *Carm.* 10.7–13; cf. Jeffers, *World*, 111–12).

1247. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 72; Thompson, *Archaeology*, 308–9.

1248. E.g., *Cic. Verr.* 1.1.2; 1.4.12; 2.3.22.55; 2.3.28.69; *Sest.* 25.55; many Judean governors as presented by Josephus, e.g., *Ant.* 20.106–17, 162–63, 215, 253–57; *War* 2.223–45, 272–79. Pagan motifs on Pilate’s coins, however, are not attempts to provoke his subjects; they appear elsewhere in the empire (Hoffeditz, “*Divus*”).

1249. Cf. Benoit, *Jesus*, 1:141–42.

1250. See the discussions of Pilate in Keener, *Matthew*, 665–67; idem, *John*, 1103–4; cf. the negative verdict on Pilate in Flusser, *Sage*, 145–55 (showing that despite the Gospels’ apologetic slant, their portrayal of his actions fits that found in other sources).

1251. E.g., *Jos. Ant.* 18.104–6, 243–55. But Josephus, unlike Luke, always calls Antipas’s brother-in-law Agrippa. Because Herod is here one of the “kings” of Acts 4:26 and Luke knows better (13:1; Luke 3:1, 19; 9:7), Pervo, *Acts*, 123, finds pre-Lukan tradition here; this is a plausible inference, but ancient exegesis could also apply the terms loosely.

1252. On which see Hoehner, *Antipas*, passim; idem, “Herodian Dynasty,” 490–93; for a differing perspective, Theissen, *Gospels*, 81–97; I have noted other sources in Keener, *Matthew*, 397–402 (which is closer to Hoehner’s approach).

but they used Jesus as a means of reconciliation between them (only¹²⁵³ in 23:12);¹²⁵⁴ thus, despite their differences, they acted in concert against God's Messiah. They are rounder, more nuanced characters in Luke's narrative, but his ultimate verdict on them is negative.

In Acts 4:28, Luke emphasizes again that Jesus's death was no accident but a fulfillment of God's purposes and explicit promises (see 3:17–18; 13:27; esp. comments on Acts 2:23, which similarly speaks of τῆ ὀρισμένη βουλή).¹²⁵⁵ That God acts by his "hand" may be a particularly Lukan way of putting the matter (cf. 4:30; 7:50; 11:21; 13:11; Luke 1:66; 11:20), though it is hardly unique to him and recalls especially OT language.¹²⁵⁶ It might also reflect the image of healing often occurring through laying on of hands (e.g., Acts 28:8; Luke 4:40; 13:13).

IV. PRAYER FOR BOLDNESS AND SIGNS (4:29–30)

Having recited God's promise and narrated part of its fulfillment in their time, the disciples now pray for the triumph (or perhaps here the prelude to that triumph) also declared in the psalm.¹²⁵⁷ (They expect the final triumph once the work of proclamation is complete; cf. Acts 1:7–11; implied also in other psalms cited, 2:34–35; Luke 20:43). They draw attention to the "threats" (ἀπειλάς) facing them, undoubtedly especially the warning against further proclamation in Acts 4:17 in addition to the "further threatening" of 4:21 (προσαπειλησάμενοι). Luke will employ the same term for "threats" from another persecutor in 9:1, immediately before narrating his conversion.¹²⁵⁸

Following the psalms (and human need in general),¹²⁵⁹ Jewish people offered many prayers for God's justice and vindication in the present age¹²⁶⁰ as well as prayers for deliverance from adversaries.¹²⁶¹ What is striking is that the primary protection requested here against the oppressors is more boldness for further proclamation.¹²⁶² On "boldness" here, see comments on Acts 4:13, where it stems, as here (4:30), from

1253. The language is characteristically Lukan; various forms of "friendship" terminology appear explicitly seventeen times in Luke-Acts (see discussion in Mitchell, "Friends by Name," 236–57; Keener, "Friendship," 386), six times in John (see discussion in Keener, *John*, 579–80, 1004–15, 1128–29), once in Matthew (11:19 = Luke 7:34), and in only three other NT passages (in the Apostolic Fathers, see *1 Clem.* 10.1; 17.2; *2 Clem.* 6.5; *Herm.* 34.2; 40.4; 55.6, 11; 57.1; 58.3).

1254. Political enemies might find reconciliation and renewed friendship (politically speaking, an alliance) expedient; see Val. Max. 4.2.passim; Keener, "Friendship," 381; Marshall, *Enmity*, 42–43. On rulers sacrificing lives for expediency, see, e.g., Baynham, "Quintus Curtius," 433.

1255. This fits the providential approach to history shared with many other Hellenistic historians; see comments on Acts 2:23. The conjunction of God's plan with the rulers' ignorance is probably implied also in 1 Cor 2:8.

1256. For opposition (cf. Acts 13:11), see, e.g., Exod 9:3; Deut 2:15; Josh 4:24; 22:31; Judg 2:15; Ruth 1:13; 1 Sam 5:6, 9; 7:13; 12:15; Job 12:9. For empowerment (as in Acts 4:30; 11:21), see 1 Kgs 18:46; 2 Kgs 3:15; 2 Chr 30:12; Ezra 7:6, 28; Ezek 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1. In Greek literature, Barrett, *Acts*, 247–48, cites Pindar *Nem.* 8.12, 13. Haya-Prats, *Believers*, 36, emphasizes the association with healings and wonders.

1257. Ancient narrators also used prayers in response to oracles to advance the narrative (because both would be fulfilled), e.g., Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 5.1.

1258. For Jewish hearers, the term might evoke Jewish persecution literature (see esp. 3 Macc 2:24; 5:18, 30, 33, 37; 4 Macc 4:24; 7:2; 8:19; 9:32; 13:6; 14:9).

1259. Others also prayed for divine intervention against their enemies, e.g., Sil. It. 12.643–45; Iamb. *VP* 32.222; 2 Chr 24:22; Ps 137:8–9; 1QM XII, 11–12; *1 En.* 22:6–7; 84:6; 97:5; 99:3; *CJF* 1:524, §725; Rev 6:10; 8:4–6; Burkert, *Religion*, 75; Deissmann, *Light*, 413ff., 424; for imprecations, see, e.g., *MAMA* 1.25, 126, 294, 425, and 437; 7:xxxv–xxxvi.

1260. See Johnson, *Prayer*, 29–31. See also my comments on Acts 7:60.

1261. Johnson, *Prayer*, 7–12.

1262. Sometimes deities were believed to impart strength or courage to continue fighting (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 5.513; 13.59–61; 21.304, 545–47).

completed signs and wonders (4:9–10).¹²⁶³ As the Lord’s “servants” (δούλοις), they are the promised recipients of his prophetically inspiring Spirit (2:18, one of only two other uses in Acts). Given this allusion, the prayer may extend beyond the apostles to their entire community of believers despite Luke’s primary narrative focus on apostles.¹²⁶⁴

Luke’s use of “word” (4:29), or “word of the Lord” (4:31), fits that of our early Christian sources, but for this very reason it is easy for modern readers to miss how striking this usage was in its original Jewish setting. Israel’s Scripture calls the Law and the prophetic message God’s “word” or “message” more than two hundred times, a usage with which early Christians were quite familiar. Isaianic prophecies also associate this “word” (e.g., Isa 40:8) with the “good news” of God’s kingdom intervention for his people (40:9; 52:7; cf. 60:6; 61:1).¹²⁶⁵ Throughout Acts, however, the phrase consistently refers to the proclamation of the gospel, implying that Luke regards this proclamation as inspired (as implied in Acts 1:8; 2:17–18; cf. likewise 1 Thess 2:13; Rev 19:10).

Signs and wonders are the primary means of drawing attention to the gospel message in Acts (e.g., Acts 2:43; 5:12–16; 14:3; on the function of signs and wonders in Luke’s missiology, see further the commentary introduction, ch. 15, sect. 6).¹²⁶⁶ The healing of the disabled man in 3:6–10 functions as the model for the sorts of healings for which they now pray: the term ἴασιν here probably refers back to it (see also 4:22; the only other NT use is in Luke 13:32). That healing occurred through Jesus’s “name” (Acts 3:6, 16), brought many to faith in Jesus, and provoked opposition that required boldness (4:13; requested in 4:29 and granted in 4:31).

The Lord will grant his servants boldness (4:29) especially through healing and performing signs and wonders through the name of Jesus (4:30).¹²⁶⁷ (For one example, see 16:18.) The context is significant for informing this prayer: the name of Jesus had performed healing already (3:6, 16; 4:10), and their prayer now defied the command to stop speaking in this name (4:17–18; 5:28). (They would respond similarly to a further such command; see 5:40–41.) The term for Jesus as “servant” here (cf. comments on Acts 3:13; 4:27)¹²⁶⁸ differs from that used for his followers in 4:29, but even were they the same, it would remain clear that Jesus’s name, rather than the disciples, did the miracles (cf. 19:13 for a failed attempt to depend on the name secondhand). Enemies raged against Jesus and simply fulfilled God’s purposes (4:25–28); now Jesus will continue to work, despite enemies’ threats, through those who bear Jesus’s name (4:29–30).

1263. Other first-century Christians also prayed for boldness for proclamation; see Eph 6:19. Boldness also applies to confidence before God in prayer (1 John 2:28; Philo *Heir* 4–5; see Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 44; cf. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 10.4), but here boldness is the object, not the means.

1264. This prayer is answered in Acts 4:33 for the powerful witness of the apostles; but it is also answered (and with closer verbal echoes) in 4:31 for “all” who, filled with the Spirit, “spoke boldly” (4:31 repeats *ἀλέω, λόγος*, and, most significant because least common, *παρησία*). The grace on “all” in 4:33 likelier refers to the community generally than to the apostles specifically, because of the presumably explanatory *γάρ* in 4:34.

1265. Isa 40:8 (used also in 1 Pet 1:25) belongs to a passage important to Luke (Luke 3:4–6) and hence may underlie Luke 3:2.

1266. Keener, *Acts*, 1:537–49.

1267. For this likely relationship (made explicit in some translations), see, e.g., Parsons and Culy, *Acts*, 79 (“probably”); Keener, *Gift*, 95.

1268. For early Christian prayers including Jesus as God’s “servant,” cf. also *Did.* 9.2–3; 10.2–3.

RESULTS OF THE SECOND OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT (4:31–5:16)

Acts 4:23–5:16 displays God’s power in the face of the world’s opposition (experienced both externally and internally); in 4:31–5:16, God pours out the Holy Spirit again as at Pentecost.¹ God answers the prayer for increased boldness, backed with signs and wonders (4:23–30), by granting boldness (4:31) and a fresh outpouring with a focus again on sharing (4:32; 4:34–5:10). This second outpouring in the same city demonstrates that Luke believes Pentecost to be not only a past event but also a model for the praying church. The parallel to 2:44–45 takes central stage here, with its contrast between generous sacrifice (4:36–37) and the mere pretense of such religion (5:1–10). Both outpourings also lead to apostolic signs (2:43; 3:4–8; 5:12–16) and consequent confrontations with Jerusalem’s ruling elders (4:1–22; 5:17–40).

1. Immediate Impact of Prayer (4:31)

As evangelism (2:41, 47) framed church life (2:42–46; sharing possessions in 2:44–45) in Luke’s first summary section (2:41–47, employing a chiasmic A-B-B’-A’ pattern), Luke may here follow an A-B-A’-B’ pattern of narrating the consequences of the prayer:

- A The community’s² proclamation (4:31)
- B Sharing possessions (4:32)
- A’ The apostles’ proclamation (4:33a)
- B’ Sharing possessions (4:34–35)³

The disciples prayed for boldness in the face of opposition, backed by signs (4:25–30). In this passage they do receive boldness (4:31) and perhaps signs (implied in “power” in 4:33). Although Luke nowhere calls it a sign or relates it to healing (4:30), the church’s sharing (4:32–5:10) has a heavy impact on the surrounding city, and a sign associated with the sharing (5:5, 10) leads to much attention (5:11). More signs appear in 5:12–16, further fortifying the church members before they must face further opposition (5:17–41).

1. Against those who find contradictions and redactional tensions in Acts 4:32–5:16, Noorda, “Scene,” argues that it is a coherent section, compositionally cohesive (as a summary, not a scene).

2. One need not insist that the proclamation here is solely apostolic for the parallel with A’ to hold; Acts 2:41 refers to a response to apostolic proclamation, and 2:47, probably at least partly, flows from the community’s lifestyle. For the community in 4:31, see comment below.

3. This differs slightly from the A-B-A’ pattern in Talbert, *Acts*, 47, but only because he excludes Acts 4:31 from consideration in the unit.

This verse narrates the dramatic answer to their prayer: God the Creator may be understood as acting in the earthquake (cf. Acts 4:24; cf. Isa 6:3–4; Amos 5:8–9); more explicitly, the filling of the Spirit provides for continuing signs, and the boldness directly answers the request in Acts 4:29.⁴ (This verse plainly echoes the prayer’s λαλέω, λόγος, and—most significant because least common—παρηρησία.) In principle, the “all” may apply here to all believers (in view of 2:38–39; the more probable referent of “their own” in 4:23; and the “all” of 4:33), though Luke’s own narrative focus is on the apostles.

Here, as often in Luke-Acts, the Spirit comes in response to prayer (Luke 3:21–22; Acts 1:14; 8:15; 9:11, 17; 10:30, 44–46; cf. 19:6), as Luke’s redaction of Q material in Luke 11:13 leads us to expect.⁵ And here, as elsewhere in Luke-Acts, prayer often precedes mission (Luke 6:12–13; 10:2; Acts 10:9, 19–20; 13:2–3).⁶ The Spirit provides the utterance when there is need of boldness in the face of adversaries (Luke 12:11–12), the situation envisioned here (Acts 4:29).

One immediate confirmation that the prayer is answered is the shaking of the place where the believers are gathered,⁷ just as thunder or other phenomena were sometimes thought to confirm divine answers to prayer.⁸ Like a good rationalist, Harnack suggested that the ecstatic trembling of believers was “transferred also to the place where they were assembled.”⁹ There are some modern reports of buildings shaking during periods of spiritual revival.¹⁰ Ancient sources shed light on how Luke’s audience may have heard the passage. Ancient literature sometimes mentioned the shaking of a building to confirm that a deity had heard a prayer (e.g., Ovid *Metam.* 9.782–85).¹¹ The closest and (for Luke’s informed audience) most obvious specific sources, however, are biblical theophanies, especially Isa 6. Sinai trembled when God revealed himself there (Exod 19:18). More notably, in Isaiah God’s house was filled with glory and smoke (Isa 6:1–4 LXX; cf. the first outpouring, with which Luke parallels this outpouring, Acts 2:2–3). God’s house was also shaken (Isa 6:4), and Isaiah was divinely empowered for his calling (6:5–8). When this shaking is combined with the cloud of Acts 1:9 and especially the sound, wind, and thunder of 2:2–3, it is clear that Luke recalls OT theophanies here.¹² Instead of a mere vision of God, however (cf. 7:55–56; 9:3–4), the community is again filled with God’s own Spirit (2:4; 4:31).

4. Bold speaking could follow signs (as in Acts 4:8–13) or precede them (14:3); as with baptism and the Spirit (2:38; 8:15–17; 10:44–48), Luke does not demand adherence to a unified pattern in every instance.

5. Observed by others, e.g., Richard, “Pentecost,” 135.

6. See comments of Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 51–52.

7. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 11 (Martin, *Acts*, 54) also understands this as a confirmation that their prayer is heard. Although Luke’s use of “place” is by no means restricted to the temple, that usage dominates in the rest of the first quarter of Acts (6:13–14; 7:49; cf. 7:7, 33).

8. E.g., Hom. *Od.* 20.101, 103; 21.413; Virg. *Aen.* 7.141–42; 8.523–26; 9.630–31; Pindar *Pyth.* 4.197–200; Sil. It. 15.143–45; Ovid *Fasti* 3.369; Cic. *Cat.* 3.8.18; cf. Parth. *L.R.* 6.6; Catull. *Carm.* 64.202–6; in Jewish tradition, see Exod 19:19; 1 Sam 12:17–18; Sir 46:16–17; cf. 1 Kgs 18:36–38, 44; see further comment in Keener, *John*, 877.

9. Harnack, *Acts*, 154.

10. The history of revivalism does report the experience of a house being shaken by divine power like a dramatic storm, and claiming that even those outside witnessed it (Woodworth-Etter, *Diary*, 107); or even people falling down as people present experienced houses shaking (Peckham, *Sounds*, 106, 113, on the Presbyterian Hebrides revivals in 1939 and 1949; also in Gulick, *Captured*, 134–35); cf. Keener, *Miracles*, 590.

11. Scholars regularly cite shaking as a portent in Virg. *Aen.* 3.84–92 (Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 315; Karris, *Invitation*, 61; Chance, *Acts*, 80; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 142) and sometimes other passages (e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 47, cite 4 Ezra 6:15, 29; Witherington, *Acts*, 204, cites Ps 18:7–8; *Test. Levi* 3:9; Jos. *Ant.* 7.76–77; Plut. *Publ.* 9.6; Lucian *Men.* 9–10; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 142, cites also Ovid *Metam.* 15.669ff.). Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 83, cites the shaking after Moses’s prayer in Jos. *Ant.* 4.40–51.

12. With, e.g., Pervo, *Story*, 18; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 311; cf. Spencer, *Acts*, 32; more generally, Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 82–83. Cf. also the figurative uses in Pss 46:6–7; 114:7 cited by Arnold, “Acts,” 250.

God confirms the coming of his Spirit in both initial instances with striking physical phenomena (2:2–3; 4:31), though narrations of subsequent outpourings suggest that these would not normally be repeated (8:17; 10:44–46; 19:6).¹³ The shaking of a location also follows prayer in 16:25–26 (there as a delivering earthquake). The primary effect of being filled with the Spirit, though, is speaking God’s message boldly, fitting the primary activity of the Spirit in Acts (see esp. 1:8; 2:17–18). More believers have been added since the last recorded dramatically ecstatic community experience (2:4); nevertheless, the new experience also reminds the church that the Spirit is not simply a past possession but God’s continuing, dynamically active power among God’s people (see comment on 4:8).¹⁴

2. Sacrificial Sharing of Believers (4:32–35)

This summary section, like other ones in Acts, reinforces the thrust of Luke’s narrative (see comment on Acts 2:41–47).¹⁵ Sharing goods frames this unit (4:32–35).¹⁶ Luke also uses this summary to promote the Christian sect as the ideal community, appealing to popular perceptions of virtue in antiquity.¹⁷ As on the day of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit here (4:31) produces a community of sharing (cf. 2:42, 44–45) and continued apostolic power (presumably for signs; cf. 2:43). Some suggest that the passages are so close in content that they may resemble a single original tradition, which Luke for theological reasons has doubled and inserted from this point (where it is illustrated in 4:36–5:11) into the Pentecost narrative.¹⁸ If such events happened once, however, it would not be surprising if they happened more than once; earlier revivals often generate expectations for subsequent revival movements in the same tradition.¹⁹ Rather than Luke doubling a single source in his tradition, it is likelier that he deliberately parallels the two events. Although Luke’s language is idealistic, we know that early Christians valued such ideals (Rom 12:16; 15:5; 1 Cor 1:10; 10:24, 33; 13:5; 2 Cor 8:13–15; Phil 1:27; 2:2–4), and Luke does not impose his ideals onto his reports of later stages of the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:3; 15:5). What is certain is that Luke intends to parallel the two narratives to illustrate a point he believes he has learned from this tradition: outpourings of the Spirit in response to prayer produce such results as these.

13. Luke’s reports are admittedly incomplete (Acts 8:18 could suggest phenomena of some sort, and 10:46 is necessary only to explain the response of the observers in the narrative, not to justify the omniscient narrator’s perspective). But such dramatic external phenomena would presumably bear mention.

14. Luke probably echoes Ezek 37 in Acts 2:2; in Luke’s theology as in Ezekiel’s, God’s people without God’s activity and blessing are like a heap of dry bones.

15. So, e.g., Joubert, “Gesigpunt”; see fuller discussion at Acts 2:41–47.

16. Cf. Wall, “Acts,” 96.

17. For discussion of other ethnographic histories focused on philosophic sects, see Sterling, “Athletes of Virtue.”

18. Lake, “Communism,” 145. Midrashic exposition also allowed material later in a source to be glossed onto an earlier analogous account, creating parallel accounts (Goulder, *Midrash*, 36). But on doublets, see discussion in the introduction to part 2 above.

19. Cf., e.g., analogies between the two Asbury revivals at Asbury University. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 59: “Charismatic movements, particularly in the first flush of enthusiasm, are capable of building a communal life on such altruistic principles.” Apart from renewed experience, the radical expectations at a movement’s beginning may often adapt over time to external social constraints. Cf., e.g., the earliest Franciscans and subsequent limitations on poverty (cf. Galli, *Francis of Assisi*, 92–96, 108–11, 130–33), though they would still appear radical to most modern Western observers; or nineteenth- and early twentieth-century faith missions, many or most of which eventually developed support infrastructures (for one example of similar changes, cf. McGee, *Preached*, 109–14).

The suggestion of some scholars that this liquidation of its capital led to the Jerusalem church's later poverty is a counterreading of Acts. Luke not only is explicit that the direct cause of that poverty was a famine (11:27–30),²⁰ but he depicts the community of goods in glowing terms (which all educated Greek readers would have understood as such; see comment on Acts 2:44–45) as an ideal for wherever the Spirit is outpoured.

a. Common Property (4:32)

Luke's Greek rhetorical skill enables him to depict the community in terms intelligible and appealing to his audience.²¹ The immediate described result of much of the community's Spirit filling (4:31) is that members of the "community" serve one another.²² Urban Mediterranean society sometimes romanticized older rural notions of sharing and communal values.²³ The ideal of sharing all things "in common," however, was especially attributed to "friends,"²⁴ an ideal celebrated at least as early as Aristotle. For further discussion, see comment on Acts 2:44.

Various ancient writers also claimed that friends were of "one soul" or "mind," as here (sometimes worded the same way, sometimes differently).²⁵ This depiction was not limited to friends,²⁶ but it was most common there. It also applied, like having "all things in common" (see comment on Acts 2:44), to "ideal philosophical communities."²⁷ A few centuries after Luke, one philosopher reports on the earlier teachings of Pythagoreans as follows:

The first principle of justice, then, is the concept of the common and the equal, and the idea that all should approximate as nearly as possible in their attitudes to having one body and soul in which all have the same experience, and should call that which is mine and that which belongs to another by the same name.²⁸

The idea was developed among Stoics, among others.²⁹ Jewish writers in Greek took over the phrase "one soul" (or "same soul"; 4 Macc 8:29); LXX translators used it to translate what we might render as "one heart" in 1 Chr 12:38.³⁰ The pleonastic "heart and soul" reflects Luke's biblical idiom, presumably from LXX passages about wholehearted devotion to the Lord,³¹ perhaps most familiarly from the passage that

20. González, *Acts*, 71 (noting also [73] that Paul's collection reveals that the practice continued).

21. Hengel, *Property*, 8 (though regarding the Qumran parallels as closer in substance, 9); cf. Capper, "Context," 324–25.

22. Πλήθος can mean simply "crowd," but it twice translates *qahal* in the LXX (Exod 12:6; 2 Chr 31:18; usually translated by ἐκκλησία; Bruce, *Commentary*, 108n41); it can elsewhere apply to the church (Acts 15:12, 30; cf. Taylor, "Community of Disciples"), though this is not its most common sense.

23. Alciph. *Farm.* 27 (Ampelion to Euergus), 3.30, ¶3; 29 (Comarchides to Euchaetes), 3.73.

24. E.g., Alciph. *Fish.* 7 (Thalassus to Pontius), 1.7 (emphasizing reciprocity).

25. Commentators (see esp. Dupont, *Salvation*, 96–97; Spencer, "Approaches," 403) cite Phil 1:27; 2:2; Eurip. *Orest.* 1046; Arist. *N.E.* 1168b; Cic. *Amic.* 21.81; 25.92; *Off.* 1.17.56 (citing Pythagoras); Plut. *Dial. L.* 21.9, *Mor.* 967E; Diog. Laert. 5.20 (citing Aristotle). See also comment on Acts 15:25.

26. In marriage, see Char. *Chaer.* 1.3.7; *Gr. Anth.* 6.209; for an army, Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.10.1 (ἐκ μιᾶς ψυχῆς); for the state, 6.87.1; for cities, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 39.5.

27. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 90.

28. Iambl. *V.P.* 30.167 (Dillon and Hershbell, 183).

29. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 75; Grant, *Paul*, 127. Stoics particularly developed the relationship between friendship and the ideal political community (see Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 74, 77), though they were not known to practice the (limited) sort of communalism depicted here.

30. The eschatological "one heart" of Ezek 11:19 is translated "another heart" in the LXX.

31. E.g., Exod 35:21; Deut 4:29; 10:12; 11:13, 18; 13:3; 26:16; 30:2, 6, 10; 1 Chr 22:19; 28:9; 2 Chr 6:38; 15:12; 34:31; Jer 32:41; Tobit 13:6; 2 Macc 1:3; it is rarer in works composed in Greek unless they echo biblical idiom.

would be recited with the Shema (Deut 6:5–6). Even rules of hospitality invited people to claim that their possessions belonged also to the person they addressed (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 1.4.3).

This sharing continues a theme in Luke-Acts (see fuller discussion at Acts 2:44–45). Scholars debate the sense of the third-person plural verb reciprocating generosity in Luke 6:38; in the immediate context, God repays, but in 6:38, it appears that other people participate. The third-person plural, however, fits what we find in Acts (or in Luke 18:30): believers share their resources with other believers, and in turn receive from them, whenever any are in need.

b. Power and Grace (4:33)

“Power” here probably suggests continuing signs and wonders (matching the first outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2:43; on “power” and signs, see discussion at Acts 1:8); the coupling of “grace” and “power” elsewhere also suggests signs (6:8). Jewish prayer tradition already emphasized that raising the dead displayed God’s power (i.e., the second blessing of the Eighteen Benedictions: “You are eternally powerful. . . Blessed are you, Lord, who restores life to the dead”);³² it was natural that demonstrations of power could best attest the message that God had raised Jesus.

Luke elsewhere speaks of God’s “grace” being “on” Jesus (Luke 2:40). Other writers could speak of divine χάρις for necessary tasks;³³ they also could describe the Spirit (see comment on Acts 10:44) or other divine gifts (e.g., 1 Esd 6:1) as being “upon” (ἐπί) God’s servants. The grace on “all” in Acts 4:33 may imply the community generally and not simply the apostles specifically, because of the presumably explanatory γάρ in 4:34 (see also the discussion of “their own” at 4:23). Acts 5:12 picks up the thought of apostolic power in 4:33; the section 4:36–5:11 is a digression illustrating 4:34–35.

c. How the Property Was Distributed (4:34–35)

The imperfect verbs suggest not a sale of all property upon conversion but believers selling their property when needs arose and contributing to a common fund supervised (at this point) by the apostles.³⁴ As the community grows and new situations arise, the apostles will ultimately need to delegate supervision to those with more leisure for it (6:2–4). Still, the divestiture of property might challenge “the Greco-Roman cultural attitude that rationalizes the retention of wealth under the guise of being able to bestow future benefits, primarily among one’s friends.”³⁵ “Selling” their possessions may well evoke Jesus’s call to the rich ruler (Luke 18:22), which constitutes a sort of model for all disciples (12:33). On sharing of property, see the extended discussion at Acts 2:44–45 (the use of πικράσκω in Acts 4:34 and 5:4 is among the features recalling the earlier passage); cf. also Jesus’s principle in 20:35.

The claim that none were needy among them (4:34) reflects the language of the biblical ideal community in Deut 15:4.³⁶ God promised that if its members were obedient, there would be no poverty among them (15:4–6), even though the poor

32. Sandmel, *Judaism*, 148 (noting also that *m. Roš Haš.* 4:5 calls this benediction “Powers”); in Paul, cf. Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:43; Eph 1:19–20; Phil 3:10.

33. *Test. Jud.* 2:1; *Jos. Asen.* 4:7; Rom 12:6; Eph 4:7; cf. χάρισμα in 1 Cor 1:7; 12:4, 9, 28–30; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10.

34. With others, e.g., Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:180; Dunn, *Acts*, 59; Tannehill, “Ethics,” 118.

35. Mitchell, “Friendship in Acts 2:44–47,” 272.

36. As is often recognized; e.g., Grassi, *Laugh*, 121; Johnson, *Acts*, 86; Capper, “Reciprocity,” 502; Chance, *Acts*, 80; Green, “Acts,” 742.

would never depart from the land (15:11), because God would supply enough resources for those who were endowed with resources to share with those who were not (15:7–10). Thus Luke depicts the primitive church not only in Greek terms as the ideal community but in traditional biblical terms as well (appropriate for Israel's righteous remnant; see comment esp. on Acts 1:26).

That the goods were deposited at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:35, 37; 5:2) means that they were the managers who would supervise distribution among the needy (6:1–2); the income was not for themselves (3:6). The location at their feet indicates submission (cf. Luke 5:8; 8:35, 41; 10:39; 17:16; Acts 7:58; 10:25; 13:25; 22:3).³⁷ Supervising the distribution of goods could be an important role; residents of Rome might think of distribution of the grain dole, but Judean models are closer at hand. Among the Essenes, money was given into the hands of the *mebaqqer* (supervisor) and judges to give to the needy (CD XIV, 13–16).³⁸ Later rabbis also spoke of specific charity officials but warned that if they found no poor people to whom to distribute others' gifts, they could not use it for themselves (*t. B. Meši'a* 3:9). Being above reproach in distributing funds was critical,³⁹ and Luke appears concerned to distinguish his protagonists from greedy charlatans (see comment on Acts 3:6; 20:33–35; cf. Luke 9:58). That the apostles used all the funds for the needy contrasts them with members of the religious elite who exploited others economically (e.g., Luke 16:14; 20:47; cf. Acts 8:18; 16:16; 19:25).⁴⁰

The goods were distributed according to need (Acts 4:35, the language recalling 2:45). Luke does not tell us whether the later complaint of 6:1 was just or not, but if so, it arose at a later stage, when the dimensions of the charitable project became too large for the apostles themselves (6:1a).

3. Positive and Negative Examples of Sharing (4:36–5:11)

This passage contrasts positive and negative models to explain, illustrate, and reinforce the summary statement of 4:32–35,⁴¹ as early interpreters also recognized.⁴² (With the contrasting approaches to possessions in 4:36–5:11, cf. Luke 18:18–30; 19:2–10.) It includes apostolic signs of power (5:3–5, 9–10; cf. 4:32; 5:12) but especially illustrates the character of the church's sharing.

37. Also Johnson, *Acts*, 87 (noting that this gesture is common in the LXX); cf., e.g., Exod 11:8 (MT); 1 Sam 25:24; 2 Sam 15:17–18 (MT); 2 Kgs 4:37; Esth 8:3; Jos. *Ant.* 17.248; *War* 2.625. The exact phrase is especially Lukan (eight of nine NT uses, with no precise matches in the LXX, Josephus, Philo, or Apostolic Fathers, though cf. the expression for surrender in Jos. *War* 2.625). Barrett, *Acts*, 255, thinks that the strongest parallels are Cic. *Flacc.* 68; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 20; *Dial. C.* 14 and allows that Fitzmyer's parallels (CD XIV, 13; 1QS VI, 19–20) contain "the sense but not the wording."

38. The priests and multitude make all decisions on property (1QS V, 2–3). The *mebaqqer* supervises initiates' funds in 1QS VI, 19–20, a practice fitting Josephus's description in *War* 2.123. Like the entire community (cf., e.g., 1QS III, 6–7), such officials presumably needed the Spirit (cf. Acts 6:3). For the *mebaqqer* in general, see CD IX, 18–19, 22; XIII, 6–7, 13, 16; XIV, 8, 11, 13; XV, 8, 11, 14; 1QS VI, 12, 20; 4Q265 4 II, 6, 8; 4Q266 5 I, 14; 7 III, 2 (reconstructed); 3; 8 I, 2, 5; 9 II, 17; 9 III, 2; 10 I, 1, 5, 6; 11 16; 4Q267 8 4 (reconstructed); 9 IV, 2, 3, 11; 9 V, 13; 4Q269 9 8; 16 14; 4Q270 6 II, 7; 6 IV, 12; 4Q271 3 14; 4 I, 11; 4Q275 3 3; 5Q13 4 1.

39. Cf. 2 Cor 8:21; *t. Šeqal.* 2:2, 24; *y. Šeqal.* 3:2; *Exod. Rab.* 51:2. For being above reproach more generally, see, e.g., Hesiod *W.D.* 760–64; Isoc. *Demon.* 17; *Nic.* 54 (*Or.* 3.38); Polyb. 22.10.8; 27.8.4; Corn. Nep. 25 (*Atticus*), 6.4; Quint. *Inst.* 2.2.14; Plut. *Cic.* 29.7; *Sipre Deut.* 79.1.1; comment on Acts 6:3.

40. Cf. Spencer, *Acts*, 55–56.

41. Barnabas's sale of land to help the needy may also contrast with Judas's purchase of land with blood money (Acts 1:18–19; Witherington, *Acts*, 210).

42. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 12 (trans. p. 76). So also most commentators today (e.g., Parsons, *Acts*, 73; Pervo, *Acts*, 126; Peterson, *Acts*, 208; Chance, *Acts*, 87).

Comparison was a standard narrative technique, sometimes employed even to create parallel biographies.⁴³ Orators could use comparisons to exalt one person (often themselves) at another's expense.⁴⁴ Critics used it as a heuristic device to enable them to discern strengths and weaknesses in various authors.⁴⁵ But it was also used to discern appropriate examples.⁴⁶ Thus one might illustrate the virtue of gratitude and the vice of ingratitude by providing examples of each (Val. Max. 5.2.pref.).⁴⁷ See more complete discussion of parallels among characters in the commentary introduction.⁴⁸

a. Positive Example: Joseph Barnabas (4:36–37)

Luke may have had other positive examples to contrast with Ananias and Sapphira; even if he knew only a small proportion of the donors' names, the positive examples were surely more numerous than the negative ones. Further, given the emphasis on gratitude toward benefactors in the ancient Mediterranean world, many of the positive examples would likely have been remembered for some time.⁴⁹ Some scholars think that Barnabas is singled out because his donation as a landowner was the greatest "single contribution,"⁵⁰ but would Luke have considered this sufficient reason to specify him (cf. Luke 21:2–4)?⁵¹ Although Barnabas was generous, we cannot necessarily infer from Luke's mention of him that he contributed the largest gift.⁵² Rather, Luke has a specific literary reason to focus on Barnabas; he often mentions his characters in preliminary ways before introducing them in their primary roles (e.g., Philip and Stephen in Acts 6:5; Saul in 7:58 and 8:1).⁵³

External sources support Luke's basic portrayal of Barnabas in Acts. Paul later mentions Barnabas as a traveling companion (1 Cor 9:6; Gal 2:1, 9), who once sided with conservative elements from Jerusalem in Antioch though he should have known better (Gal 2:13). From Paul's portrayal, it appears that Barnabas wanted merely to keep peace within the church, whereas Paul insisted on a matter of principle for the sake of new Gentile believers and the church's future; Acts likewise portrays Barnabas as a broad-hearted peacemaker eager to welcome everyone (Acts 9:27; 15:37–39; cf. 11:22–24).⁵⁴ External tradition also indicates that Barnabas and Mark belonged to the same extended family (Col 4:10), which makes good sense of both the former's defense of Mark (Acts 15:37–39)⁵⁵ and the fact that both Barnabas (here, 4:36–37)

43. See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:568–74.

44. Cic. *Brut.* 93.321–22.

45. Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1–2.

46. Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 6.

47. One could also extend such comparisons to different characters' contentment with wealth (e.g., Xen. *Oec.* 2.2–4). Readers would probably identify with Barnabas; on reader identification, see Dewey, "Oral-Aural Event," 151–57.

48. Keener, *Acts*, 1:568–74.

49. Cf., e.g., Lysias *Or.* 19.9, §152 (one who spent more on Athens than on himself should be praised).

50. Dunn, *Jesus and Spirit*, 161. More simply and accurately, many ancient hearers would regard Barnabas as a benefactor (see Witherington, *Acts*, 205; on benefaction, see comment on Acts 4:9).

51. Luke may use the Barnabas story to challenge widespread cultural values, including the reciprocity ethic (see Mitchell, "Friendship in Acts 2:44–47," 272).

52. Wealth itself was one ground for praise in typical aristocratic Greek thought (e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 35, 1440b.17–19), but this hardly fits Luke's perspective elsewhere (or that of even wealthier philosophers; cf. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 94.72, on true grounds for status; 98.6, on relinquishing concern to retain property).

53. Capper, "Context," 341. Though otherwise a secondary character, his appearance in many scenes in Acts reinforces his importance; cf. Murphy, "Role of Barnabas," emphasizing his role in spreading the gospel.

54. On Barnabas as a reconciling or mediating personality in the various sources, see esp. Öhler, *Barnabas*. For a survey of his story, see Burge, "Barnabas."

55. Luke's audience, most of whom probably lacked this information (whether Col 4:10 provides new information or simply identifies which "Mark," a common name), would have seen this more in light of Barnabas's peacemaking character, already noted in Acts 9:27.

and Mark's mother (12:12–13) had ample resources. Certainly, Barnabas would not easily be charged with greed; he appears to have shared the practice of Paul, unlike that of some other missionaries, of paying his own way (1 Cor 9:6).⁵⁶

I. NAMING BARNABAS (4:36)

In the OT, naming a person signified authority over them (Gen 2:19; 17:5; 19:39; 25:26, 36; also *Jos. Asen.* 15:7; cf. Luke 6:13–14).⁵⁷ Thus Barnabas, who also lays possessions at their feet, proves doubly submissive.⁵⁸ His character throughout Acts is associated with encouraging those otherwise marginalized (Acts 9:27; 11:22–26; 15:37–39), though this personality trait could also lead to more tolerance than Paul thought appropriate at times (both in Acts [Acts 15:36–39] and in Paul's letters [Gal 2:13]). The later conflict with Paul in Acts 15:39 may not reflect the submissive element but simply allows for Barnabas to be a rounder character than mere literary creation would prefer.⁵⁹

"Son of Encouragement"⁶⁰—that is, *encourager*—could accurately depict elements of Barnabas's ministry in Acts,⁶¹ but it is probably not what the passage means.⁶² It is not what the Aramaic title cited means, nor is it the only way to interpret Luke's or his tradition's Greek translation of that title.⁶³ Some suggest that the Aramaic title might have been originally a pagan theophoric, such as "son of Nebo";⁶⁴ it appears only one other time as a Jewish name (in first-century Egypt), but it was common among other Semites.⁶⁵ In this case, later Christian tradition may have found a more pious etymology for Barnabas's title, one that Luke unwittingly follows here.⁶⁶

Given the unlikelihood, however, that many pagan names would arise in Jerusalem (or that Semitic pagan names would flourish among Greek-speaking Cypriot Jews), another explanation seems equally plausible. The apostles may have given a barely familiar pagan name a new meaning, as described here.⁶⁷ (It is, after all, a *nickname*; on nicknames, see comment on Acts 1:13 and esp. 1:23.) The title may mean "son" (*bar*) of "prophet" (*nabi*), prophecy referring to exhortation;⁶⁸ this would fit his

56. See here Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 679. For a survey of information on Barnabas in Acts and Paul's letters, see Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 129; for a reconstruction of the historical Barnabas, see Öhler, *Barnabas*.

57. Johnson, *Acts*, 87.

58. *Ibid.*

59. An informed reader could also compare one's best and worst reported moments (cf. Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 35, end, as a rhetorical critical technique on a writer's style).

60. It functions as an epithet (cf. Anderson, *Glossary*, 52–53) rather than as *antonomasia* (cf. 23; Rowe, "Style," 128; Porter, "Paul and Letters," 579).

61. See, e.g., France, "Barnabas." Insofar as the Greek term can suggest "comfort" or "consolation," it might apply to gifts for widows (Acts 6:1); but the title here may precede the gift, and Luke applies "consolation" more broadly (Luke 2:25; 6:24; Acts 9:31; 15:31).

62. See, e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 36.

63. Unless we accept the tradition that Luke was from Antioch, he need not have known Aramaic (and even then, Luke need not have known Aramaic well or perhaps even directly, since Greek was so common there); the LXX probably can account for his adaptation of Semitic style in places.

64. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 87, who suggests that Luke's translation is faulty but fits Barnabas's character in Acts (Acts 9:27; 11:22, 30; 12:25). Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 213, doubt that it would be understood as a pagan theophoric but reject in any case the objection that a Levite could not have born one; pagan deity names were common (see, e.g., "Apollon," Acts 18:24; cf., e.g., Lung-Kwong, *Purpose*, 104).

65. Williams, "Name," 101. It appears in numerous Semitic inscriptions, including at Dura-Europos (Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 24).

66. Deissmann, *Studies*, 307–10, esp. 310.

67. This should be preferred to a proposal that they simply gave him a name "son [*bar*] of encouragement" in addition to "Barnabas" (cf. R. Williams, *Acts*, 60).

68. See Barrett, *Acts*, 1:258–59; Hill, *Prophecy*, 101; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 130–31; Witherington, *Acts*, 209; Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:163–64; Bock, *Acts*, 217. Cf. the Hebrew designation "sons of the prophets" (1 Kgs 18:20; 20:35; 2 Kgs 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1; used very differently in Acts 3:25).

role both as a prophet at Antioch (13:1) and a bearer of the Lord's message (14:14; see comment on Acts 4:31; cf. "exhortation" in 13:15), though in the latter role he appears subordinate to Paul in speaking (14:12).⁶⁹

His original name, "Joseph," was so common as to require a surname or nickname to distinguish him from others by that name (cf. 1:23). It is frequently attested in both the Diaspora and Palestine, and the latter includes it "at all social levels."⁷⁰ It is the one non-Hasmonean name that was as common as Hasmonian names in first-century Palestine.⁷¹

II. A CYPRIOT LEVITE (4:36)

Identifying Barnabas's place of origin as Cyprus helps explain ministry connections later in the story (11:20; 13:4; 15:39; see further comment on Cyprus at 11:20). Place of origin was also a frequent basis for identifying a person. One of the first questions a person would ask of another is, "Where are you from?"⁷²

Some members of Luke's ideal audience, or at least the urban Jewish Christians among them, may have known that many Jews lived in Cyprus (13:4–5).⁷³ Barnabas's Cypriot Jewish origins presumably make him one of the Hellenists (6:1), which, along with his background in wealth, may help explain his initial compatibility with Paul, also part of an immigrant family and probably of the same class (cf. 6:9; 7:58; 9:1; 26:4).⁷⁴

Perhaps Barnabas's associations with Cyprus help explain his wealth (and that of his relatives, 12:12–13).⁷⁵ Cyprus was a prosperous land both rich in minerals (especially copper⁷⁶ but also gems⁷⁷) and agriculturally fertile (Strabo 14.6.5); Cyprus's fertility made it a natural source of food for Judea, especially in time of need there.⁷⁸ Given the mention of his "field" (cf. Luke 14:18; 15:25; 17:7, 31; though contrast the use in 8:34; 15:15), Barnabas may have acquired income from agricultural work (presumably someone else's).⁷⁹ (Another Cypriot disciple in 21:16, probably from the same early period of the church, hosts a large entourage and hence also appears to be a person of means, or at least someone very generous.)

Although Levites did not hold tribal territories and might live in towns (Num 18:20; Deut 10:9; 12:12, 18; 14:27, 29; 16:11, 14; 26:12; 2 Chr 23:2), they traditionally held

69. Prophets may have been, ideally, poor (*Did.* 11.5–6, 9; cf. Matt 10:41; Boring, *Sayings*, 92).

70. Williams, "Names," 89.

71. *Ibid.*, 108–9.

72. E.g., Gen 16:8; 29:4; 42:7; Josh 9:8; Judg 13:6; 17:9; 19:17; 1 Sam 25:11; 30:13; 2 Sam 1:3, 13; Jonah 1:8; Luke 13:25, 27; John 7:27–28, 42; 8:14; 9:29–30; 19:9; Rev 7:13; Hom. *Od.* 19.104–5; Soph. *Oed. Col.* 206; Eurip. *Cycl.* 102, 275–76; *Hel.* 86; *Iph. Taur.* 495, 505; *Rhes.* 682; Prop. *Eleg.* 1.22.1–2; Pindar *Pyth.* 4.97–98; Philost. *Letters* 5 (41) (even using it to explain the person's character); *Hrk.* 1.1. Another was about one's parentage or ancestry (e.g., Pindar *Pyth.* 4.98–100).

73. See, e.g., Philo *Embassy* 282; Jos. *Ant.* 13.284–87 (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 99; most fully, Stern, "Diaspora," 154–55). Cyprus is among the places judged in *Sib. Or.* 3.457.

74. On the basis of the tradition that Mark and Barnabas were relatives (Col 4:10) and Luke's claim that Mark's mother owned a sizable home in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12–13), either a large part of Barnabas's family had emigrated from the Diaspora (perhaps with some resources acquired there) or, less likely, he had traveled abroad on business ventures (perhaps through other family connections).

75. People of means are known from there (e.g., Lucian *Dem.* 3), including Jews (Jos. *Ant.* 18.131).

76. On Cyprus's notable copper, see Strabo 3.4.15; Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.46.131; 34.2.2, 4; cf. 34.23.106; for copper factories there, 34.24.107; for ash from cadmea and copper ore, 34.34.130. On Cyprus, see further comment at Acts 13:4.

77. Pliny E. *N.H.* 37.15.58; 37.17.66–37.18.67; 37.38.119.

78. Jos. *Ant.* 20.51; Feldman in LCL, 10:29 n. d, cites further y. *Demai* 2:1. Cf. Reifenberg, "Beziehungen"; on coins indicating trade links, Le Cornu, *Acts*, 683.

79. Romans of high status considered this "the only socially acceptable business" (Jeffers, *World*, 184; cf. Gager, "Class," 101; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 116–17), although, of course, most people did not have the luxury of making such choices.

some Israelite cities with surrounding land (Num 35:2–7; Josh 14:4; 21:3, 13; 1 Chr 6:64; 9:2; 2 Chr 31:19; Ezra 2:70; Neh 7:73; 11:3, 20; 12:44; 1 Esd 5:46). They could not, however, sell such land, in contrast to Barnabas's action here. More relevant is that Levites often did hold land by this period (Jos. *Life* 68–83; cf. Jer 32:6–15; Jos. *Ant.* 11.312; Luke 1:23, 39, 65).⁸⁰ The Levitical connection makes some historical sense of the ample house of Barnabas's relative in the Upper City, probably near the temple and the Fortress Antonia (see comment on Acts 12:13).⁸¹ Luke may appeal to Barnabas's "Levite" status the way he appeals to priests' joining the church (Acts 6:7) or to Paul's Roman citizenship (16:37):⁸² within Judaism, "Levite" was a status claim, just like hereditary aristocratic lineages elsewhere.⁸³ As we observe elsewhere, Luke is interested in reporting status claims among early Christians.⁸⁴

Some scholars deny Barnabas's Jerusalem connection, making him a leading Hellenist (from Antioch or elsewhere).⁸⁵ But had Luke wished to invent connections for Barnabas, he could have brought him closer to the Jerusalem apostles by renaming Joseph Barsabbas (1:23) "Barnabas," as the Western text does with minimal emendation.⁸⁶ That he was in fact connected to Jerusalem, as well as to the Diaspora, is suggested by his alliance with the Judean faction in Gal 2:13.⁸⁷

III. SALVATION FOR THE WEALTHY (4:37)

Against biblical injunctions about Levites and priests not holding land, the aristocratic priests (see comment on Acts 4:5) show that some did in fact grow rich (unlike the apostles, Acts 3:6). Although probably nowhere on the scale of such wealthy priests, in comparison with most persons in the empire, Barnabas, like Lydia later in Acts (16:14), illustrates the Gospel's teaching about salvation for the rich.⁸⁸ (By the definitions of Jesus and John, someone living in Jerusalem with an extra plot of land somewhere else readily qualified for the discussion [Luke 3:11].) In principle, it was impossible for the rich to be saved (Luke 18:24–25) apart from God's intervention (18:26–27). Joseph of Arimathea had risked his reputation and probably his life to follow Jesus (23:50–52), and Zacchaeus had surrendered much of his wealth (19:8–9).⁸⁹ Barnabas provides another illustration of a rich person who forsook all

80. With Witherington, *Acts*, 209; Talbert, *Acts*, 49. Fiensy, "Composition," 228, suggests that his background in Cyprus probably indicates that he did not belong to one of the twenty-four temple courses (cf. Luke 1:8). On Levites, see Stern, "Aspects," 596–606.

81. Cf. Acts 12:12–13 with Col 4:10. The interlocking of such data, not emphasized by the authors themselves, supports the probability of historical tradition behind both sources.

82. This is not to say that Luke *invented* Barnabas's Levite status; as Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 213, ask, why not make him a priest? (Or Paul as well if Luke did not know he was a Benjaminite?)

83. This remains true even if priests such as Josephus treated Levites as rivals (Feldman, "Levites," thinks that Josephus played them down).

84. Perhaps Barnabas even had Sadducean connections (since many of the Sadducees were wealthy priests), but since they were a local aristocracy, this is less likely. (Luke's silence on the matter would not, however, count against it: his portrayal of the Sadducees, unlike that of the Pharisees and the priesthood, is purely negative, a portrayal that Barnabas cannot fit.) That Barnabas's Levite status invited him to sell the land (as a return to biblical norms) is possible but not what Luke emphasizes.

85. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 212–13, summarize their position.

86. *Ibid.*, 214.

87. *Ibid.*, 215.

88. Not only his Levite ancestry (as noted above) but his wealth would be a mark of status. Πλοῦτος is one of the subjects for praise in an encomium (Theon *Progymn.* 9.18).

89. Cf. D'Sa, "Salvation of Rich." Fiensy, "Composition," 226, suggests that Simon of Cyrene was also wealthy, since he had a farm near Jerusalem (Mark 15:21), but would this be the meaning of "coming from the field" on a festival day? On Zacchaeus's conversion in the context of Luke's conversion stories, see Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm*, 153–80 (for the nonconversion of the ruler in Luke 18:18–30, see 198–214).

and hence could enter the kingdom. (Jewish teachers could use examples of both rich and poor who served God, to eliminate the excuses of all alike.)⁹⁰

b. Negative Example: Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–11)

In the context of Acts 4:32–37, part of the narrative's point concerns the value of sharing one's goods with the needy (through the leaders in the church, in a time when those are godly). Ancient moralists, both Gentile⁹¹ and Jewish,⁹² preached hard against covetousness. But the standard here is not just against covetousness; it invites sacrificial sharing (see discussion on Acts 2:44–45). The passage also emphasizes the community's sanctity and warns against lying to the agents of the God who knows all hearts (cf. 1:24). In a sense, it also praises the Jerusalem apostles (as histories and biographies often praised honorable characters; cf. 5:13) as the second half of Acts praises Paul, but since they only act as God's agents, the ultimate focus of praise is God himself (5:11).

In terms of the narrative's larger epideictic treatment of the "pristine" Jerusalem church, however, the focus is on God's guarding the community's sanctity.⁹³ Ananias and Sapphira wanted to join God's community while also retaining their personal autonomy from God's authority. They thereby risked infiltrating God's church with Satan's agenda (5:3). God's decisive action against them guarantees that, for the time being at least, only true believers (5:14; "men and women," balancing the report of Ananias and Sapphira), and not compromising ones (5:13), will join the movement. God's active justice in the ideal community, the church, also contrasts with the corruption of the municipal elite in the surrounding context.⁹⁴ What this passage suggests about the sanctity of the church experiencing God's power contrasts starkly with the conception of the institutional church and its merely routine church meetings typically perpetuated in Western Christendom today.⁹⁵ Even in Luke's setting, however, he does not seem to expect God's enforcement of community holiness so directly normally (cf. 20:29–31).

I. INTRODUCTION

Scholars differ in their estimates of the historical content of the account. Some doubt whether the narrative even has a historical core.⁹⁶ Others accept an original core in which a couple attempted to deceive the church, were found out, and were excommunicated⁹⁷ or died shortly after the deception.⁹⁸ At least one piece of historical

90. E.g., 'Abot R. Nat. 6 A; 12, §30 B; *b. Yoma* 35b; 3 *En.* 4:3; cf. the principle in Plut. *Coriol.* 1.2; Max. Tyre 1.9.

91. E.g., Demosth. *Olymp.* 46; Mus. Ruf. 3, p. 40.27–28; 4, p. 48.9; 8, p. 62.17; 14, p. 92.22; 17, p. 108.13; 20, p. 126.18; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.32; 17 (esp. 17.6, 21); 34.19; Men. *Rhet.* 2.9, 414.9–10; Iambl. *V.P.* 17.78; van der Horst, "Macrobius," 223.

92. E.g., Sir 14:9; *Let. Aris.* 277; 1QS IV, 9; 11QT II, 8; 4 *Macc* 2:7; Rom 1:29; Col 3:5; *Jos. Ant.* 15.89; *Sib. Or.* 3.189, 235; *Test. Naph.* 3:1; *Test. Gad* 5:1; *Test. Ash.* 5:1; *Test. Benj.* 5:1; 3 *Bar.* 13:3. Philo employs $\pi\lambda\epsilon\omicron\nu\epsilon\acute{\xi}\iota\alpha$ and relevant cognates some sixty times, and Josephus about fifty.

93. For Luke's emphasis on the church and its proper unity here, see Thompson, *Church*, 81–82. For one semiotic reading of the passage, sensitive to its larger context, see Duplantier, "Mort." For an approach in light of Aristotle's rhetoric and ethics, see Spencer, "Scared to Death." For expectations for a holy community's special sanctity due to God's presence, see, e.g., Lev 10:2–3; Deut 23:10, 13.

94. See Repschinski, "Hananiah," contrasting the preceding and following Sanhedrin trials.

95. Others offer additional Lukan points with subsequent potential applicability, such as the Spirit's activity in the church; church authority; and so forth (e.g., Ntumba, "Ananie"; idem, "Mort").

96. Hills, "Equal Justice."

97. In which case, it was believed that they should have died (Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 66, citing 1 Cor 5:5; but contrast Haenchen, *Acts*, 239).

98. Goulder, *Type and History*, 188; cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 239–41; Pervo, *Acts*, 131. Williams, *Miracle Stories*, 143, allows excommunication followed by death, yet without a demonstrable causal relationship.

evidence supports a historical core. “Sapphira” is a rare name without likely symbolic value,⁹⁹ though occasionally a scholar has drawn symbolic value from “Ananias” (against whom Jeremiah pronounced mortal judgment, Jer 28:15–17).¹⁰⁰ Her name fits almost exclusively the right location and social class and hence suggests reliable tradition.¹⁰¹

Some other proposals for or against the passage’s historical reliability could be argued either way. From the biblical parallel (the Achan story in Josh 7), one could argue that Luke entirely composed the narrative, but the connections could also simply mean that he or his tradition edited the narrative so as to emphasize the parallel. If Luke composed the story simply to parallel that of Achan (a passage he nowhere explicitly quotes here), the many differences between the narratives would obscure his point.¹⁰² On the other side of the argument, one could argue from the likely reaction against such a story¹⁰³ (the telling of which could weaken Luke’s apologetic concerning the church’s innocence) that Luke would not have invented it, though for the same reason one could wonder why he tells it at all. Thus most historical arguments in this case, though perhaps of some value, are not conclusive. Nevertheless, given our observations concerning Luke’s overall methodology, it seems most plausible that Luke has reworked a tradition available to him.

Luke-Acts itself and its grounding in the biblical story provide more explicit information for exploring the points Luke wished to make from the narrative.¹⁰⁴ Certainly the story demonstrates, like the Achan narrative in the book of Joshua, which it echoes,¹⁰⁵ that sin can disrupt *κοινωνία* even in the primitive, idyllic community.¹⁰⁶ Achan kept some of Jericho’s wealth devoted to God; Ananias and Sapphira hold back some of their wealth already dedicated to God.¹⁰⁷ The sudden deaths may also recall the priests who died in God’s presence in Lev 10:1–5.¹⁰⁸ Luke’s audience might also recall that Gehazi, understudy of a prophet to Israel, secretly took wealth, but God saw and punished him (albeit not mortally) through the prophet (2 Kgs 5:27).

Within the structure of Luke-Acts, Johnson may be right that each new geographic frontier includes a symbolic confrontation with “evil powers,” echoing Jesus’s kingdom

Such a relationship is hard to doubt in Luke’s narrative, however, where both parties die independently and instantly on being confronted! Both antisupernaturalism and a modern distaste for “judgment” miracles probably figure into skepticism about this passage.

99. Goulder, *Type and History*, 188. It is among the names that first-century ossuaries attest (Thompson, *Archaeology*, 319).

100. Goulder, *Type and History*, 174, 188. But cf. a positive “Ananias” in Acts 9:10–17.

101. Williams, “Names,” 95.

102. Gaventa, *Acts*, 103, emphasizes the differences: “Achan’s secret action brings defeat on Israel, he immediately confesses when confronted, and all Israel takes part in the stoning of Achan and the destruction of his entire family and all his property.” Cf. Marshall, “Acts,” 554 (suggesting the verb *νοσφίζω* as the only explicit connection); Marguerat, *Actes*, 173.

103. See likely Porphyry in Mac. Magn. *Apocrit.* 3.19–22 (*Porphyry’s*).

104. For a survey of views here, see Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 318–20.

105. As commonly recognized; e.g., Johnson, *Possessions*, 205–6; Allen, *Death of Herod*, 124; Witherington, *Acts*, 213; O’Day, “Acts,” 309 (also comparing Saul’s disobedience in 1 Sam 15); Talbert, *Acts*, 51 (also comparing the coconspirators Ahab and Jezebel in 1 Kgs 21); Chance, *Acts*, 88. Particularly reminiscent is the devotion of the transgressor of mandatory *herem* to *herem* himself, in Acts having voluntarily devoted possessions to *herem*; see Park, *Herem*, 132–43.

106. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 320.

107. Achan’s function in the Joshua narrative also contrasts him with Rahab: he hid loot under his tent, but she hid the spies on her roof (Josh 2:6; 7:21–22); they each betrayed their own people; Achan brought about his (complicit) family’s death, and Rahab her (complicit) family’s deliverance (6:17, 23, 25; 7:24–25). If Luke thinks of the context, this betrayal in Israel might also remind him of the Gentile mission. (But we lack clear Rahab allusions; the closest plausible one, Lydia in Acts 16:15, is not close at all.)

108. Barrett, *Acts*, 262; Witherington, *Acts*, 214. Wright, *Acts*, 80 (also comparing the violation of the sacred in 2 Chr 26:19–21). Cf. similarly 2 Sam 6:6–7, another transgression of holiness.

confrontations in the Gospel (Luke 11:20). Here the church confronts members with Satan in their hearts (Acts 5:3; cf. Luke 22:3); later God's agents will confront sorcerers and magicians (Acts 8:9–11; 13:8–11; 19:13–16) and demons (16:16; cf. 5:16).¹⁰⁹

Certainly the passage fits into Luke's larger theme on possessions. It also fits Luke's opposition to hypocrisy. God discerns the insincerity of even the outwardly devoted (Luke 16:15) who really loved money (16:14), illustrating the point that one cannot serve both God and mammon (16:13). Jesus cleansed the temple (19:45) perhaps partly in response to its hypocrisy and handling of money (19:46). God judged impostors within the community (Acts 1:18; 5:5) more severely than false prophets outside it (13:11).¹¹⁰ Thus there was no room for spiritual compromise, especially in the revivalistic intensity of the Pentecost community: in the presence of God's Spirit (5:3, 9; cf. 4:31), there was no toleration for nominalism or mere pretense of commitment (cf. 5:13).¹¹¹

Ananias's behavior of seeking to deceive the community recalls the betrayal of Judas: both had Satan in their hearts (Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3), conspired for money (Luke 22:4–6; Acts 5:9), and were involved in real estate in a negative way (Acts 1:18).¹¹² They contrast starkly with the role of disciples in forsaking all to follow Jesus (Luke 5:11; 12:33; 14:33; 18:28–30).

II. DECEPTIVELY WITHHOLDING INCOME (5:1–2)

Luke elsewhere pairs husbands and wives, often positively (Acts 18:2–3, 26; also Luke 1:7, with its emphatic ἀμφότεροι); here Luke mentions Sapphira's complicity in the plot at both stages. The name "Sapphira," in its various spellings, means "beautiful" and appears "almost exclusively" among wealthy Jerusalem families in this century.¹¹³ This name thus suggests that she came from a propertied family and likewise married into one,¹¹⁴ which indicates that the church has (as in Acts 4:36–37) now extended beyond those who have little wealth (3:6). The term κτήμα (also 2:45), along with the amount of money the narrative seems to presuppose (also in 4:36–37), might suggest "medium-sized estates."¹¹⁵

109. Johnson, *Acts*, 11 (though viewing the viper of Acts 28:3–5 as such a power encounter, in view of Luke 10:19, might go too far); O'Toole, "Not to Us but to God." Combet-Galland, "Expulsion," even compares exorcism (and the fall narrative of Genesis).

110. Those who knew the right way but turned out badly merited even greater punishment (Thucyd. 1.86.1; Heb 6:6; 2 Pet 2:20–21; cf. Ezek 18:24; Amos 3:2).

111. Marguerat, "Mort d'Ananias," thinks the narrative's focus is the activity of the Spirit rather than community rules or behavior. Marguerat's Adam-and-Eve connection for the couple (*ibid.*; *idem*, "Terreur dans l'Église"; cf. *idem*, *Histoire*, 268; *idem*, *Historian*, 178) appears more questionable (although this is the initial sin of a new community).

112. Johnson, *Acts*, 40; Allen, *Death of Herod*, 125. Allen also compares (*ibid.*) Herod, who also sinned against God (Acts 5:4; 12:22–23) and "expired" (5:5, 10; 12:23), inviting the church's growth (5:12–16; 12:24).

113. Williams, "Names," 95 (with at least nine other toms from "the Jerusalem area"; "The only other case known (also a rich lady) comes from 2nd-century Murabba'at"). See, e.g., *CIJ* 2:316, §1378 (Greek and Semitic); 2:318, §1384 (Semitic). Barrett, *Acts*, 264, cites a masculine cognate in *b. Mo'ed Qat.* 11a. Cf. the positive figures Σεπφώρα in LXX Exod 1:15 (Shiphrah); 2:21; 4:25; 18:2 (Zipporah); Σαπφώρα in *Jos. Ant.* 2.277 (Zipporah); the closest common term in the LXX is that for "sapphire."

114. Although some men gladly married wealthy women (*Cercidea* 38–41; *Jos. Life* 427; *Plut. Cic.* 41.3–4), conventional wisdom advised men not to marry women from families wealthier than the husband's (*Aeschylus Prom.* 887–93; *Eurip. frg.* 214 [in *P.Oxy.* 3214.5–6; *Stob.* 4.22.93]; *Melanippe frg.* 502 [Stob. 4.22.94]; *Callim. Epig.* 1; *Xen. Cyr.* 8.4.25; *Sen. E. Controv.* 1.6.5, 7; *Plut. Educ.* 19, *Mor.* 13F–14A; *Diog. Laert.* 1.92; *Libanius Thesis* 1.22; *Ps.-Phoc.* 199–200; *Tg. Šeni* on *Esth* 1:16; cf. *Eurip. El.* 931–33; *Plut. M. Cato* 20.1; *Quint. Decl.* 257.7; *Philost. Vit. soph.* 2.25.610–11; somewhat differently in comedy, *Menander Dyskolos* 795–96, 825–34), though hers could be poorer (*Pliny Ep.* 6.32.1–2; *Athen. Deipn.* 8.359F). Some ancients did opine it wiser to marry their daughters to an honorable poor man rather than to a dishonorable rich one (*Val. Max.* 7.2.ext. 9). Later rabbis warned that a man must be able to maintain his wife at the standard with which she had grown up (*Safrai*, "Home," 763).

115. So Fiensy, "Composition," 227.

The text appears to lay primary responsibility for active deception on Ananias (5:2), with his wife participating in the subterfuge (5:1, *σὺν Σαπφίρῃ*).¹¹⁶ Given the usual authority structure in ancient households,¹¹⁷ it is not surprising that Ananias would have taken the lead. The narrative attributes to both, however, the sale of the property (5:1). Contracts reveal some Jewish women as cosellers, signing alongside their husbands. This was no mere formality: separate witnesses attest the signatures of each. The husband's property was liable if the wife's *ketuba* (marriage settlement) needed to be refunded in the case of a normal divorce, and so she had to sign to show that the property was genuinely available for sale.¹¹⁸ More explicit joint ownership might also be in view here, in the case of a more independent woman from a wealthy household (but see comment on Acts 16:14).¹¹⁹ Whatever the case, Sapphira participated fully and was judged fully (5:8–10);¹²⁰ even subordinate rank in a patriarchal society did not excuse complicity in disobeying God, the ultimate authority (cf. 1 Sam 25:14–38).¹²¹

Like Barnabas, this couple may have held property some distance from Jerusalem. In support of this possibility, Ramsay points out that Mediterranean life was public and everyone would know the price of any field that was sold (cf. Jer 32:9–12); he doubts that the couple would have risked exposure by selling a field close to Jerusalem.¹²² Given the size of both Jerusalem and the church, however, Ananias and Sapphira may well have gambled that no one would check, especially if other contributors were not being questioned.¹²³

Some scholars think that a special group existed in the church “for whom communal ownership . . . was obligatory.”¹²⁴ It is likelier that it was voluntary for everyone, motivated not by membership requirements but by the internal leading of the Spirit suggested in Acts 4:31–32. Nevertheless, even when sharing is voluntary, the practice itself, when it becomes a dominant practice of the group, exerts considerable influence on other members to conform to the new standard it sets. More malevolent motives are also possible: benefactors in the ancient Mediterranean world expected public honor, and the couple may have wished to achieve status within the Christian community without genuine sacrifice.

Excursus: Parallels for This Narrative

Various ancient analogies help us to reconstruct some of the sense that Luke may have assumed his audience would intuit. Normal cultic and other associations required

116. Reimer, *Women*, 14–16, 262, portrays her complicity as silent enablement of her husband's patriarchy in relinquishing her *ketuba* (hence rights to the property as a widow). This assumes, however (though perhaps rightly) that the *ketuba* was tied up in the property. On widows' inheritance rights in the Greco-Roman world more generally, see comment on Acts 16:15; in Israel historically, see Num 36.

117. See, e.g., Philo *Creation* 167; Keener, “Marriage,” 687–91; idem, *Acts*, 1:619–26.

118. Reimer, *Women*, 5 (on women's property rights in marriage more generally, see 2–6).

119. Classical Athens rejected even the validity of changes of will that were influenced by women (Isaeus *Philoct.* 29–30, though this is an allegedly immoral one), but classical Athens represents an extreme position.

120. As often noted, e.g., Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 36 (even viewing them as “equally culpable”).

121. Obedience to the law took precedence over family allegiance (Deut 13:6–9; 4 Macc 2:11; cf. Sir 30:19).

122. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 34–35.

123. Certainly no one was expected to produce receipts of their transactions, or they would not have risked this ruse, in any event.

124. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 322, summarizing and rejecting this position.

only dues and fees, not total sacrifice (see comment on Acts 2:42).¹²⁵ A small minority of groups, however, went further. Followers of Pythagoras sold property and entrusted their resources to him. If they ultimately proceeded to full discipleship, they relinquished their property permanently to the community; if not, it was restored to them (with more added for their trouble).¹²⁶

Qumran's communalism was not voluntary (1QS I, 11–12), except in the sense that membership in the community was voluntary.¹²⁷ But when members first joined, their resources were initially surrendered only provisionally (VI, 17); after a waiting period,¹²⁸ the novices would either be initiated fully (and the property go to the community, VI, 19–20) or receive their property back (VI, 21–22).¹²⁹ Particular leaders of the community (VI, 12) had to evaluate the case, as well as bringing it before the entire community.¹³⁰

In such models, the funds, in a legal sense, remained the adherents' "own" even after they had donated them; this allowed them opportunity to reevaluate their commitment for a limited period if they proved dissatisfied. Such a two-phase process could explain how the funds remained at the couple's disposal (Acts 5:4) even while they "kept back" part of the price (5:3).¹³¹ This suggestion offers a plausible account of the dynamics behind this narrative.

The text, however, refers to the funds being their own after the sale, not after their donation (5:4). It is not clear that the Jerusalem community offered to refund dissatisfied customers the way Pythagoreans or Essenes might, since initiates were not required to hand over all property at baptism. At the same time, it also appears that no one was required to contribute everything to the community, in contrast to fully committed Essenes and Pythagoreans. One clear difference between Pythagoreans and Essenes, on the one hand, and the Jerusalem Christians, on the other, is that the latter did not abolish property altogether; we read of Christians continuing to meet in homes (2:46; 5:42; 8:3), some apparently well endowed (12:12–13). It is unlikely that these homes are Luke's fabrication (to match the house churches of the Diaspora?); he would not deliberately tone down the utopian imagery by which he presents the primitive church (cf. also his ideal, admittedly possibly hyperbolic, in Luke 12:33; 14:33), nor would the churches have persevered easily (especially after persecution, Acts 8:1; 12:1) without private meeting places.

The threat to the integrity of the community, however, is no less real simply because the community's rules are voluntary. The Greek term νοσφιζω means "to put aside for oneself, *keep back*, of engagement in a type of skimming operation,"¹³² or

125. Sometimes those who neglected "business meetings" (as in the case of a cult association of Dionysus) would also be fined (Smith, *Symposium*, 121).

126. Iambl. *V.P.* 30.168; Grant, *Christianity and Society*, 100 (citing Iambl. *V.P.* 80–81; Hippol. *Ref.* 1.2.16–17).

127. For volunteering, see 1QS I, 11; VI, 13; cf. 1QS I, 7; V, 1, 6, 8, 10, 21–22; VI, 13; 1Q31 1 1 (for the final battle, 1QM VII, 5; 4Q261 1 2); see comment on Acts 2:44–45. Knowledge of the Essene practice persisted; see, e.g., Hippol. *Ref.* 9.14.

128. The first year (1QS VI, 17–18; and even the second year, to a lesser extent, 6.21) was provisional. Some cult associations required membership for at least a year (P.Lond. 2710, from 69–57 B.C.E., in Klauck, *Context*, 50).

129. See Capper, "Context," 329; idem, "Acts 5.4." Evidence suggests that those who signed over their property did so with a legal document (Flusser, "Light on First Church"; cf. Cross and Eshel, "Ostraca").

130. Harrison, "Rites," 27.

131. Comparing both Pythagoreans and Essenes, cf. Capper, "Interpretation of Acts 5, 4"; idem, "Context," 337–39. Hamidovic, "Remarque," suggests that the couple retained rights over the usufruct after the donation; this would be problematic for the narrative as we have it, however, since it could hardly be kept secret.

132. BDAG (citing Xen. *Cyr.* 4.2.42; Polyb. 10.16.6; Plut. *Luc.* 517 [37.2]; *Arist.* 320 [4.3]; Jos. *Ant.* 4.274; *SIG* 993.21; P.Ryl. 116.10; 2 Macc 4:32).

withholding some of the proceeds.¹³³ Luke uses the term *νοσφίζομαι* nowhere but here (5:2–3; elsewhere in the NT only at Titus 2:10), but it does appear twice in the LXX, both times as sins against the community (2 Macc 4:32; Josh 7:1).¹³⁴ The former case concerned the theft of sacred vessels from the temple by one who also conspired to murder the high priest.¹³⁵ In the latter case, Achan's rebellion against God removed God's blessing, thereby bringing death to many others in the community (Josh 7:1, 5–13). The danger of the removal of God's blessing was serious enough to warrant Achan's own death (7:25–26); the evildoer in 2 Maccabees also ultimately died a disgraceful death (2 Macc 13:1–8).

The term itself probably implies more than theft; it seems to apply especially to “insiders” acting secretly when property does not belong to them.¹³⁶ Josephus employs the same term for retaining another's property in Deut 22:1–3 (Jos. *Ant.* 4.274); Polybius uses it for making sure the soldiers divide booty equally and no one holds some back (Polyb. 10.16.6; cf. also 6.21).¹³⁷ Reimer takes this to mean that the price of the field was no longer Ananias and Sapphira's in Acts 5:2, on the basis of their prior commitment.¹³⁸ In this case, members of the community had agreed that whatever they sold belonged to the community; their “free decision” (5:4) was made when they were entering the community.¹³⁹

This interpretation is possible, but 5:4 indicates that they retained authority over the wealth until they laid it at the apostles' feet. Perhaps this means simply that the wealth should have belonged to the community once sold, according to the official purpose for its sale (4:34), but that it still remained in their right legally (if not morally) to change their minds (openly, not deceitfully). If the community allowed tentative commitments like the Essenes and the Pythagoreans (which is uncertain), this would be possible. But it seems likelier, as argued above, that giving possessions was an ideal for those within the community rather than a requirement for entering it. Luke's wording may allow several reconstructions that vary on some details because he is more interested in the application than in satisfying our curiosity on all the economic arrangements. The economic particulars did not obtain in his Diaspora churches (though they provided a useful voluntary model; cf. 20:33–35); nevertheless, the summons for disciples to forsake possessions for God's purposes remained (Luke 14:33).

III. SPIRITUAL CONFRONTATION AND JUDGMENT (5:3–6)

Whereas some onlookers may have viewed Ananias's action as at worst merely selfish from a personal perspective, it was in fact Satan's activity to infiltrate the community with hypocrisy. Love of money might look outwardly righteous, but this behavior was detestable in God's sight (Luke 16:14–15).¹⁴⁰ God saw the sinful

133. BDAG (citing esp. Josh 7:1, 19–26; Diod. Sic. 5.34.3).

134. Commentators regularly note the Achan allusion here (e.g., Rackham, *Acts*, 65; Munck, *Acts*, 40; Bruce, *Commentary*, 110; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 322; Bock, *Acts*, 221; Pervo, *Acts*, 130–31). Some (like Reimer, *Women*, 6–7) note both Achan and the 2 Maccabees allusion.

135. Alexander, “Comment(ary)ing,” suggests a parallel with the striking-down of Heliodorus for violating community sanctity in 2 Macc 3:27–28, close to the same context.

136. See Reimer, *Women*, 8; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 322.

137. Reimer, *Women*, 7 (also noting the use for common property in the army camp in Xen. *Cyr.* 4.2.42; cf. Plut. *Luc.* 37; Athen. *Deipn.* 6.234; other texts, p. 8). Only in exceptional cases was keeping back some wealth accepted (Plut. *S. Kings*, Dionysius the Elder 13, *Mor.* 176C).

138. So Reimer, *Women*, 9.

139. *Ibid.*, 12–13.

140. Luke associates it with the Pharisees (Luke 16:14), just as he associates hypocrisy with them (Luke 12:1).

hearts; Peter thus confronts the problem spiritually, and Ananias, Satan's agent, pays the price.

(1) *Satan's Activity* (5:3)

Whereas others are filled with the Spirit (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52), Ananias is filled by Satan to lie to the Spirit (Acts 5:3)—though obviously ineffectively. Whereas Satan fills hearts to lie, God's Spirit fills believers to speak his genuine message (4:31).¹⁴¹ The conflict in the narrative thus goes beyond the level of Ananias and Peter to Satan and God's Spirit (cf. 2 Kgs 6:16–17; Eph 6:12).¹⁴² Although Judaism accepted God's sovereignty over Satan's limited sphere of activity,¹⁴³ it understood Satan's activity and motivation as hostile.¹⁴⁴

Early Judaism commented often on Satan (usually synonymous with the devil, Belial, Beliar, Mastema, and often Sammael)¹⁴⁵ and conceptualized his activity in several primary spheres.¹⁴⁶ First, Satan functioned as accuser, a role derived from Scripture (cf. Job 1:6–2:7; Zech 3:1–2).¹⁴⁷ Thus Satan might tempt (the second role) and then accuse the person who succumbed to temptation. Second, he functioned as tempter (cf. Luke 4:2; Matt 4:3; 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Chr 21:1).¹⁴⁸ Later rabbis underlined this role by telling of famous rabbis nearly deceived to destruction when Satan disguised himself as a beautiful woman.¹⁴⁹ Finally, he acted as deceiver (John 8:44), a category admittedly overlapping with tempter (temptation being the object of the deception).¹⁵⁰ The latter two roles are most relevant here, since Satan's agents attempt deceit (Acts 5:3–4) and try to “test” the Spirit (5:9).¹⁵¹ Despite God's sovereignty

141. Spencer, *Acts*, 56.

142. Dunn, *Acts*, 64. God's Spirit was incompatible with deception (*Sib. Or.* 3.701; cf. Titus 1:2), and some portrayed it as the spirit of truth in contrast to the spirit of error (1QS IV, 21–23; 4Q177 12–13 I, 5; *Test. Jud.* 20:1; cf. *Jub.* 25:14; *Test. Jud.* 14:8; 20:5; *Test. Sim.* 3:1; *Test. Reub.* 2:1 [in the context of 2:3–4]; *Test. Iss.* 4:4; further discussion in Keener, *John*, 969–71; on 1QS IV, 21–23, see Duhaime, “Voies”).

143. E.g., *Jub.* 10:8–9; 49:2; *Test. Job* 20:3. Sometimes a later text attributes to Satan something that an earlier text attributed to God's judgment, as if Satan is an agent of such judgment (2 Sam 24:1 with 1 Chr 21:1; Exod 4:24 with *Jub.* 48:2–3; cf. a Masada text vs. Exod 4:24; Eshel, “Mastema's Attempt”; to some extent, Gen 22:1 with *Jub.* 17:15–18).

144. Satan's absence yields peace and corresponds to the absence of evil (*Jub.* 23:29; 40:9; 46:2; 50:5).

145. See Elgvin, “Belial”; e.g., CD V, 18; VIII, 2; XIX, 14; 1QS II, 4–5; *b. Ber.* 60a; for “satans” (plural), see 1 En. 40:7; 65:6. In Luke-Acts, see Fitzmyer, *Theologian*, 146–74; particularly extensively, Garrett, *Demise*. In the form of Azazel, cf. Shea, “Azazel.” For a summary of some early Christian perspectives, see Arnold, “Satan.” Satan, God's subordinate, differs starkly from dualistic Zoroastrianism's Ahriman (Yamauchi, *Persia*, 460), but Jewish thoughts about Satan seem to have developed especially during the exile (1 Chr 21:1; Job 1:6–2:7; Zech 3:1–2).

146. On the diverse range of views, see Best, *Temptation*, 55.

147. Satan's acts of killing already make him more than a mere prosecutor in Job (Riley, “Devil,” 247), though the Hebrew employs “the satan” as a title. For Satan as accuser in subsequent sources, see, e.g., *Jub.* 1:20; 48:15, 18; 3 En. 14:2; 26:12; *Gen. Rab.* 38:7; 57:4; 84:2; *Exod. Rab.* 18:5; 21:7; 31:2; 43:1; *Lev. Rab.* 21:10; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:2, §2; Rev 12:10; in the plural, 1 En. 40:7. Cf. 4Q225 2 I, 9–10; the name “Satan” means “adversary” or (in legal settings) “accuser” (e.g., Breytenbach and Day, “Satan,” 726; Ladd, *Theology*, 49n15; pace Gershenson, “Satan,” who offers the alternative proposal “Titan”). Later rabbis said that he could not accuse on Yom Kippur (*b. Yoma* 20a; *Lev. Rab.* 21:4; *Num. Rab.* 18:21; *Pesiq. Rab.* 45:2; 47:4; though cf. *Tg. Job* 2:1).

148. E.g., CD XII, 2; 1QS X, 21; 4Q174 1 I, 9; 4Q225 2 I, 9–10; 11QS XIX, 15; *Jub.* 10:8, 11; 17:16; *Test. Reub.* 4:11; *Test. Jos.* 7:4; *Test. Iss.* 7:7; *Test. Ash.* 3:2; 3 Bar. 9:7; *b. B. Bat.* 16a; *Gen. Rab.* 70:8; *Exod. Rab.* 19:2; 41:7; cf. 1QS III, 24; *Gen. Rab.* 22:6; Eph 4:26–27; persecution in 2 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 12:3–4, 13, 17; much later, cf., e.g., Qur'an 7.20.

149. *B. Qidd.* 81a (the apocryphal accounts involve R. Akiba and R. Meir; cf. the temptation in *b. Qidd.* 81b, although his wife takes the role of tester there); *y. Sabb.* 1:3, §5.

150. E.g., CD IV, 15–16; *Test. Benj.* 6:1; *Test. Dan* 3:6; *Test. Levi* 3:3; *Test. Jud.* 25:3; *Test. Job* 3:3/4; 3:6/5; 26:6/7; 27:1; Eph 6:11; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 12:9; 20:8; much later, cf. Qur'an 43.62; 47.25; see discussion in Keener, *John*, 760–61.

151. At least in secular Greek, πειράζω normally refers to proving or testing, not specifically enticement to sin (Gibson, “Testing”). “Testing” a deity was an act of unbelief that warranted divine punishment (Xen. *Cyr.* 7.2.17).

over Satan, he was thought to be in deliberate rebellion against God¹⁵² and, in some sense, to rule the sinful world.¹⁵³

Satan was thought to move some people against others¹⁵⁴ or, by “filling” them (as here), inspire them to speak evil.¹⁵⁵ In some Jewish sources Satan targeted the righteous.¹⁵⁶ Thus Beelzebul sought to stir sinful desires in holy people and chosen priests (*Test. Sol.* 6:4); Dan sought to kill Joseph because one of Belial’s spirits was working in him (*Test. Dan* 1:7). (For Luke, Satan’s temptation does not, however, force anyone to act; it does not absolve Ananias or Sapphira of moral responsibility.)¹⁵⁷

The narrative thus highlights the danger of Satan’s direct testing and its effects on God’s community. After God anointed Jesus with the Spirit (Luke 3:22; 4:1), Satan tempted Jesus (4:2), but Jesus triumphed and emerged from testing still full of the Spirit (4:14, 18). Now that God has empowered the church with his Spirit afresh (Acts 4:31), Satan seeks to disrupt this community. Jesus triumphed in testing (Luke 4:1–14), but Satan entered Judas successfully (22:3)¹⁵⁸ as he now filled Ananias’s heart (Acts 5:3). Peter himself has been tested through Satan (Luke 22:31) but persevered (or was restored) through Jesus’s intercession (22:32), and now he is God’s agent of victory in this conflict. Apparently the standards of holiness were particularly demanding for a community experiencing dramatic spiritual life such as Acts depicts for the church after Pentecost.¹⁵⁹ Like Jesus in the wilderness, however, its members persevere.

(2) Lying to God (5:3–4)

The phrase in 5:4, “lied not to us,” does not literally mean that Ananias has not lied to Peter, but rather that the far more important issue, which Ananias has not realized, is that he has lied to God. This semantic construction may echo biblical prophets.¹⁶⁰ Lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3) is identified with lying to God (5:4). In an early Jewish context, the Spirit could be understood as God’s activity or agency; Christians at an early stage seem to have portrayed the Spirit at times as an entity within the one Deity.¹⁶¹ Peter’s knowledge of Ananias’s deceit is clearly portrayed as supernatural.

152. E.g., *L.A.E.* 12:1; *2 En.* 29:4–5 (expanded and late material); cf. Anderson, “Exaltation.” Views defending him (e.g., *b. B. Bat.* 16a) are rare.

153. E.g., *1QS I*, 18, 23–24; *II*, 19; *1QM I*, 1, 5, 13, 15; *IV*, 2; *XI*, 8; *XIII*, 2, 4, 11; *XIV*, 9; *XV*, 3, 17; *XVI*, 11; *XVII*, 15; *XVIII*, 1, 3; *4Q174* 1 I, 8; *4Q176* 13 I, 16; *4Q177* 12–13 I, 11; *1 John* 5:19; cf. perhaps *Col* 1:13. He was especially powerful (e.g., *3 En.* 14:2; *Asc. Is.* 2:4).

154. E.g., *1 Chr* 21:1; *Test. Sim.* 2:7; *John* 13:21, 27.

155. *Test. Job* 41:5/7; cf. the late *Apoc. Sed.* 5:4–5.

156. Besides examples below, note also the rabbis noted above in *b. Qidd.* 81a.

157. A point emphasized among patristic writers (Pelikan, *Acts*, 134, citing Theophylact *Exposition of Acts* 5:6; today, Marguerat, *Actes*, 175). Some had apparently used Satan’s activity to reduce the guilt of the patriarchs (*Test. Dan* 1:7).

158. On spirits entering mortals, in addition to Synoptic portrayals of demonization (Satan’s entrance being the ultimate example, *Luke* 22:3; *John* 13:27), see *Hom. Il.* 17.210–11; *Philost. Hrk.* 27.2.

159. Some popular literature today describes analogous “judgment” events in some communities experiencing intense religious revival (see Tari, *Wind*, 32–33, in Indonesia; Thollander, *Mathews*, 125, in India).

160. Cf. *Exod* 16:8; *1 Sam* 8:7; *Jer* 7:22–23; *Mark* 9:37, all cited (along with *Acts* 5:4) in Allison, *Jesus*, 105 (regarding a different point).

161. Most fully, in John’s Paraclete passages (see Keener, *John*, 962–71; idem, “Pneumatology,” 218–65, esp. 233–65); more generally, widespread trinitarian formulas (see esp. Fee, *Presence*, 839–42; Watson, “Identity”; in Paul, esp. *1 Cor* 12:4–6; *2 Cor* 13:14; *Eph* 4:4–6). The Spirit may function as a divine character or actor in Luke’s narrative (see *Acts* 8:39; 16:6–7; 20:23; Shepherd, *Narrative Function*, 255–56); but even if we may assume that Luke accepted the distinct identity of the Spirit as Paul seems to (and John certainly does), he nowhere makes this explicit (see Turner, *Power*, 41–44). Patristic writers often used the connection in *Acts* 5:3–4 in supporting the Spirit’s deity (Pelikan, *Acts*, 82–83, cites Basil *Holy Sp.* 12.28; 16.37; *Greg. Naz. Or.* 31.30; *Bede Comm. Acts* 5). See the brief discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:528.

Ancients usually associated such knowledge with deities,¹⁶² heroes,¹⁶³ and their agents.¹⁶⁴ Jewish readers and those who shared their Scriptures would naturally think of the prophetic tradition,¹⁶⁵ and the informed reader would think of Jesus's own prophetic ministry (e.g., Luke 6:8; 9:47; 10:13; 11:17; 21:6–36). Halfhearted commitment could be prophetically exposed (1 Cor 14:24–25).¹⁶⁶

Moralists sometimes noted that wrongdoing cannot remain concealed indefinitely.¹⁶⁷ This must be especially the case when God is involved (Num 32:23; 1 Cor 4:5; 1 Tim 5:24–25),¹⁶⁸ a point likely not lost on Luke's audience, including more well-to-do members such as Theophilus. Ancients called deities to witness the truth of their claims when they swore oaths by them; the assumption was that deities saw the truth, could not be deceived, and would avenge the honor of their name.¹⁶⁹

Under normal circumstances, both Gentiles¹⁷⁰ and Jews¹⁷¹ viewed lying negatively. Greeks opined that liars would be punished by the gods;¹⁷² Jewish tradition emphasized that the end for thieves and, worse yet, liars was destruction (Sir 20:25),¹⁷³ and elsewhere also emphasized punishment¹⁷⁴ and damnation for liars.¹⁷⁵ Ancient writers also sometimes assumed that some people could become habitual liars by nature (e.g., Babr. 57), so that even when they told the truth, they would not be believed (e.g., Phaedrus 1.10.1–3). Philosophers, naturally, opposed falsehood, emphasizing the importance of seeking truth;¹⁷⁶ they thus usually emphasized telling

162. Particular high deities were thought to know (e.g., Hom. *Od.* 4.468; 13.417; 20.75; Pindar *Pyth.* 3.28; Xen. *Cav. Com.* 9.9; Plut. *Isis* 1, *Mor.* 351E; Athen. *Deipn.* 5.218F; Mus. Ruf. 1, p. 32.17–18; Max. Tyre 3.1; Philost. *Hrk.* 16.4) and see (Hom. *Il.* 3.277; Hesiod *Theog.* 514; Aeschylus *Eum.* 1045; *Suppl.* 139, 210, 303–5; Ap. Rhod. 2.1123, 1133, 1179; cf. Aristoph. *Birds* 1058; Ovid *Metam.* 13.852–53) all things. Israel's God in Sir 39:19; Bar 3:32; Sus 42; *Let. Aris.* 210; *Sib. Or.* 1.151; 3.12; *1 En.* 9:5; 39:11; 84:3; CD II, 9–10; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.181; *2 Bar.* 21:8; cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 3:9; 16:13; *Neof.* 1 on Gen 1:9; "God of knowledge" in 4Q504 4 4; 4Q510 1 2; 4Q511 1 7. See fuller discussion in Keener, *John*, 531–32.

163. Who knew more than mortals but less than deities (Philost. *Hrk.* 16.4); cf. the exorbitant claim for Caesar in Ovid *Pont.* 4.9.125–28; a hero in Philost. *Hrk.* 43.3. For philosophers, see Diog. Laert. 9.7.42; Eunapius *Lives* 468–70 (cf. also 495); for sorcerers, see PGM 1.175–77; Aune, *Magic*, 45; in some later traditions, some demons had foreknowledge (e.g., *Test. Sol.* 5:12).

164. E.g., Eunapius *Lives* 468 (though the agent appears as divine in *Lives* 470).

165. E.g., 1 Kgs 14:5; 2 Kgs 4:27; 5:25–27; 6:12, 32; *Jos. Asen.* 6:6; 23:8 (despite textual variants in 23:8, the context clarifies the sense); 26:6; *Liv. Pr.* Nathan 2 (Schermann, §28); *y. Hag.* 2:2, §5; *Sanh.* 6:6, §2; Joseph in *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 41:45; Enoch in *2 En.* 40:1–2. Since lying to the apostles is automatically testing the Spirit, identification with the Spirit may exceed that of the prophets here (2 Kgs 4:27; Brown, *Apostasy*, 107).

166. Some miracle reports even today include the supernatural confrontation of hidden sins (Wimber, *Power Evangelism*, 33–34, 51–52) or other secrets of the heart (59; Keener, *Gift*, 51).

167. E.g., Isoc. *Demon.* 17; Diod. Sic. 14.1.1–2; Livy 3.36.1; Aul. Gel. 12.11.

168. Cf. Sir 11:27–28; *Sib. Or.* 3.258–60; *2 Bar.* 83:3; *b. Soṭah* 22b; *y. Soṭah* 7:5, §5; *Exod. Rab.* 8:2; *Num. Rab.* 9:12; 19:6; *2 Clem.* 16.3; though cf. *Pss. Sol.* 13:8. Cf., e.g., cases of adultery (Sir 23:21; *Lev. Rab.* 23:12; *Num. Rab.* 9:1).

169. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.273; 14.158; Exod 20:7; see comment on Acts 23:12. Lucian *Phal.* 1.1 subverts this convention (tongue in cheek but a theological skeptic, in any case).

170. E.g., *SIG* 3/985 (= LSAM 20), lines 12–15 (Klauck, *Context*, 66); Corn. Nep. 25 (Atticus), 15.1; Phaedrus 4.13; Plut. *Educ.* 14, *Mor.* 11C; Ps.-Plut. frg. 87; Diog. Laert. 1.60. This is common morality in many cultures (e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 277).

171. E.g., 1 Macc 7:18; Tob 7:10–11; Sir 7:12–13; *Let. Aris.* 206, 252; *1 En.* 104:9; 1QS X, 22; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.79–80; *War* 2.141; *Sib. Or.* 3.38, 498–500; Ps.-Phoc. 7; *Test. Iss.* 7:4; *Test. Dan* 5:1–2; *b. Hul.* 94a (even to Gentiles).

172. Phaedrus 1.17.1.

173. Falsehood and theft also appear together in *t. B. Qam.* 7:8. Some Greeks opined that liars stole the understanding (*Rhet. Alex.* 1, 1422b.5–8).

174. E.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.500–503; for breaking one's word, *m. B. Meṣi'a* 4:2; *b. B. Meṣi'a* 49a.

175. E.g., *1 En.* 99:1; *Abot R. Nat.* 45, §§125–26 B; probably *b. Sanh.* 103a. For the eschatological destruction of deceit, see, e.g., *1 En.* 91:8.

176. E.g., Diog. Laert. 7.1.110.

the truth.¹⁷⁷ The better people prefer hearing truth to lying flattery.¹⁷⁸ Polemic often accused opponents of lying.¹⁷⁹

Philosophers¹⁸⁰ and other Gentiles¹⁸¹ did allow deception under some circumstances, as did pious Jews.¹⁸² For example, one might deceive an enemy at war (Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.14–15) or deceive someone into taking medicine necessary for health (4.2.17). Deception captured Troy, and it is also appropriate in catching traitors to protect the state (Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.6.2). Even philosophers could lie, an orator noted, to persuade a judge to do justice.¹⁸³ No moralists, however, approved deception merely to conceal and support one's wrongdoing. Also, whereas pagan deities might lie,¹⁸⁴ the same was never said of Israel's God.¹⁸⁵

Those who lied about their property (ןן) when entering the Qumran community would be excluded from full participation in the community for a year and deprived of a quarter of their food allowance (1QS VI, 24–25).¹⁸⁶ Lying to God, by contrast, was much more severe.¹⁸⁷

(3) Ananias's Death (5:5)

Jesus "breathed his last" when he died (Luke 23:46); this similar description here could imply a contrast between honorable and dishonorable death, but may simply represent a familiar way of depicting death.¹⁸⁸ The precise expression, however, appears in Acts 12:23, where another enemy of the church dies.

That Acts reports a miracle of judgment would have concerned Luke's audience less

177. E.g., Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 92–93.27–31; Marc. Aur. 9.1.2; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 83. Sometimes, however, they were accused of falsehood (e.g., Lucian *Runaways* 19, against Cynics).

178. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.15.

179. E.g., Lysias *Or.* 4.13, §101; Cic. *Rosc. com.* 16.46; cf. further, on the liar charge in polemic, Keener, *John*, 761–62.

180. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 4.6.33; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 92–93.31–35.

181. E.g., *Orph. H.* 14.8. In the epic period, deception for useful purposes could indicate cleverness (Hom. *Od.* 19.164–203, esp. 203; Gen 27:19, 24; 30:31–43), though Odysseus's cleverness (e.g., Soph. *Philoc.* 54–55, 107–9, called "wisdom" in 119, 431) appears unscrupulous to some ancients (Soph. *Philoc.* 1228). See Keener, *John*, 708.

182. Jdt 9:10, 13; *Test. Jos.* 11:2; 15:3; 17:1; (perhaps) 13:7–9; *t. Ta'an.* 3:7–8; Exod 1:19; 1 Sam 16:2–3; 21:2, 5, 8, 13; 2 Sam 12:1–7; 17:14; 1 Kgs 20:39–41; 22:22; 2 Kgs 8:10; 2 Chr 18:22; Jer 38:27; probably 2 Kgs 10:19. Especially on Judith, see deSilva, "Lies."

183. Quint. *Inst.* 2.17.27. Quintilian further notes (12.1.38–39) that deception to prevent assassination or to save one's nation is ethical, but he does also note that not all circumstances allow this (12.1.40).

184. E.g., Hera's false oath in Hom. *Il.* 15.36–44; Rhea's good lie in *Orph. H.* 14.8. Zeus keeps his promise to Hera yet circumvents truth in Diod. Sic. 4.9.5.

185. E.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.701; *Jos. Ant.* 3.308; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18; 1 *Clem.* 27.2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 14:4. More philosophic Gentiles refrained from attributing sin to deity (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.77.3; Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 95.49–50); for limitations on deity, see, e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.5.27; likely Porphyry in Mac. Magn. *Apocrit.* 4.24.

186. Often pointed out in connection with this passage; e.g., Capper, "Context," 340; Reimer, *Women*, 18–19. Sages generally simply expected God to punish those who lied about needs (*'Abot R. Nat.* 3 A).

187. With, e.g., Yamauchi, *Stones*, 138; on lying to a deity, see, e.g., Epid. inscr. 7 (noted below). Such a lie violated biblical rules concerning vows (Num 30:1–2; Deut 23:21–23; cf. Mark 7:11–12; 1QS VI, 24–25; Dunn, *Acts*, 63). Some scholars believe that exclusion from the community could also lead to death in view of the oath not to accept food from outsiders (*Jos. War* 2.143; Reimer, *Women*, 19), but such vows would most likely be annulled outside (see comment on Acts 23:12). Pervo, *Acts*, 133, compares lying to God here with "battling God" in Acts 5:39.

188. One breathed out (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 13.654, ἀποπνεύων; Eurip. *Phoen.* 1454, ἐξέπνευσαν; *Herac.* 566, ἐκπνεύσαι) one's life, or "breathed" (*exanimatus est*) one's last (Corn. Nep. 15 [Epaminondas], 9.3); for breathing out one's spirit or its departure in other ways as a means of depicting death, see Ovid *Metam.* 10.43 (*exhalata anima*); Vell. Patern. 2.14.2 (giving up *spiritus*); Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.14; *Test. Ab.* 17 A; *L.A.E.* 45:3; 2 *En.* 70:16; cf. Jas 2:26. In Luke-Acts (and earliest Christian literature, though cf. LXX Judg 4:21; Ezek 21:12), the specific term appears only here and in Acts 12:23; pace Hobart, *Medical Language*, 37, it is not a distinctively medical term (see LXX Judg 4:21; Ezek 21:7).

than it does many modern readers.¹⁸⁹ Those familiar with biblical stories recognized that God had struck others dead for similar offenses, usually for profaning what was sacred to the Lord. Thus Uzzah was struck dead for touching the ark (2 Sam 6:6–7; 1 Chr 13:9–10; cf. those who looked inside in 1 Sam 6:19); the Korahites were swallowed by the earth for challenging Moses and breaking the peace of the community (Num 16:30–33); those who threatened Elijah (2 Kgs 1:10, 12) or mocked Elisha (2:23–24) faced sudden deaths; Aaron’s sons died for offering alien fire on the holy altar (Lev 10:1–2); others in Moses’s time also died “miraculously” for rebellion (Exod 32:35; Num 14:37; 16:35; 21:6; 25:9), leaving a holier remnant. A number of judgment miracles also appear in both pagan¹⁹⁰ and postbiblical Jewish tradition.¹⁹¹ Sometimes they involved judgment for lying to a deity¹⁹² or his agent (2 Kgs 5:27). Later Jewish haggadah often reported rabbis efficaciously pronouncing judgment,¹⁹³ sometimes disintegrating evildoers with their eyes.¹⁹⁴

Achan was executed for hoarding wealth devoted to destruction. Similarly, Greeks knew of one people who reportedly executed farmers who kept back any of their harvest instead of bringing all of it to the community storehouse (Diod. Sic. 5.34.3).¹⁹⁵ Such accounts reflect an even broader and more widespread ancient understanding that the community takes priority over individuals when the interests of the two conflict.¹⁹⁶

Anthropological literature documents suffering and deaths caused by curses,¹⁹⁷ possibly due to extreme terror.¹⁹⁸ Some scholars suggest death by terror here,¹⁹⁹ though on the historical level it strains reasonable probability to suppose that both Ananias and Sapphira independently and immediately expired simply from the natural trauma of Peter’s words. In the narrative, Peter’s words are not actually a curse but a prophecy

189. In ancient texts, “even punitive miracles” were accepted as long as one did not seek “personal advantage” (Reimer, *Miracle*, 247); such reports expressed “the longing for justice” (Pervo, *Acts*, 52, though he disapproves [131–35] of the theology). Ancients expected judgments for impiety (e.g., Hermog. *Inv.* 3.5.146) and desecration of holy space (see comment on Acts 19:37). For judgment in Acts, see Morris, *Cross in New Testament*, 112–13.

190. Epid. inscr. 11 (Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 109–10); Lucian *Lover of Lies* 20; Aelian *Nat. An.* 11.17 (Havelaar, “Acts 5.1–11 and Interpretations”); Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.4.4 (though cf. 3.5.1–2); Val. Max. 1.1.16–21; 1.1.ext. 1–9.

191. *M. Soṭah* 3:4; see further Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 110; Eve, *Miracles*, 268–69.

192. E.g., Epid. inscr. 7 (in Grant, *Religions*, 57–58), where one received another’s brand marks.

193. E.g., *Sipra Sh. M.d.* 99.5.6; *y. Šeb.* 9:1, §13 (38d).

194. E.g., *b. B. Bat.* 75a; *B. Qam.* 117a; *Yebam.* 45a; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 18:5; cf. *b. B. Meši’a* 85a.

195. Spencer, “Approaches,” 399; idem, *Acts*, 57.

196. Spencer, “Approaches,” 399.

197. See, e.g., Prince, “Yoruba Psychiatry,” 91; Dawson, “Urbanization,” 328–29; Mbiti, *Religions*, 258; cf. Remus, *Healer*, 110; Welbourn, “Healing,” 364; voodoo and taboo deaths in Benson, *Healing*, 40–41; Frank, *Persuasion*, 39–42; esp. Knapstad, “Power,” 84, 89. Most people in the ancient Mediterranean world also accepted the efficacy of curses (e.g., Aeschylus *Lib.* 912; *Seven* 70, 656, 695–97, 709 [it was irresistible; see 692–711, 725–26, 833–34]). Widespread beliefs in curses’ efficacy appear in rural Africa (e.g., Azevedo, Prater, and Lantum, “Biomedicine”; Lienhardt, “Death”) but also in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlands (see Waardt, “Witchcraft”) and in some parts of the West more recently (e.g., Sebald, “Witchcraft”).

198. Cf. the “nocebo effect,” the negative opposite of the placebo effect (in Beauregard and O’Leary, *Brain*, 145–47; Benson, *Healing*, 39, 53, 59, 63); sudden deaths from emotive trauma in Engel, “Death” (as cited in Benson, *Healing*, 42; cf. Weisman and Hackett, “Predilection,” in Benson, *Healing*, 53; Phillips, Van Vorhees, and Ruth, “Birthday,” in Benson, *Healing*, 62; Adler, “Pathogenesis,” in Benson, *Healing*, 85). Other elements, such as dehydration, may also play a role (Eastwell, “Voodoo Death,” 5).

199. Dunn, *Acts*, 64; Witherington, *Acts*, 218. Luke does not emphasize overtly miraculous elements here, but Hellenistic historians often played these down, in any case, at least on the surface of their narration. That events occur today that witnesses construe as judgment warns against hasty dismissal of a tradition of judgment in ancient Jerusalem.

or pronouncement of a divine verdict.²⁰⁰ That fear fell on others afterward (Acts 5:5, 11) is not surprising (cf. 2:43; 9:31; 19:17); on this phenomenon, see comment on Acts 5:11.

(4) Ananias's Immediate Burial (5:6)

Covering²⁰¹ the corpse after death was an act of respect; even before one had official shrouds for an expensive burial (which is not envisioned here despite Ananias's social status),²⁰² one would cover a corpse to preserve the deceased's dignity.²⁰³ That "young men" handled the body (5:6, 10) might allude to the biblical mention of those who had to remove the corpses of the priests struck dead for profaning the sanctuary (Lev 10:4–5), though the passage lacks the particular terms found here.²⁰⁴ It might, however, simply reflect their supportive role (cf. Acts 7:58; Luke 22:26; 1 Pet 5:5) and strength (cf. Prov 20:29; 1 John 2:14).²⁰⁵ That they "carried him out" (5:6; cf. also 5:10) ironically recalls how he "brought" (a cognate verb) some of the money (5:2).

Why was the burial so sudden that even Sapphira (three hours later) proved unaware of it (Acts 5:7)?²⁰⁶ Jewish custom required the rapid burial of corpses, and tradition claims that Jerusalem custom demanded it on the day one died.²⁰⁷ As Safrai notes, "Leaving a corpse unburied through the night, for any reason, was considered to be sinfully disrespectful, and was permitted only if more time was needed for the preparation of shrouds or a coffin."²⁰⁸ Tradition, however, also demanded the involvement (and certainly the notification!) of family. That the narrative suggests the events happened otherwise may imply the degree to which the church became a new household (and hence a center for distributing resources; Luke 18:29–30);

200. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 38 (contrasting even pronouncement of judgment in Acts 13:11); Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 324; both citing Jerome *Ep.* 130.14.5–6 (who responded to Porphyry; cf. perhaps Mac. Magn. *Apocrit.* 3); Witherington, *Acts*, 218.

201. Συοτέλλω bears various meanings, but by far the likeliest with a corpse is "wrap" or "shroud" (LSJ; Barrett, *Acts*, 269, citing Eurip. *Tro.* 378; cf. Hobart, *Medical Language*, 37–38).

202. For expectations of costly burials, see, e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 4.12.3; Statius *Silv.* 2.1.157–62; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 26; but those advocating simplicity opposed these (e.g., Iambl. *V.P.* 27.122–23).

203. E.g., Livy 3.18.9. It was honorable to cover the face of a person about to die (Esth 7:8; Eurip. *Hipp.* 1458; Livy 1.26.11; 4.12.11; Sil. It. 11.257–58; Dio Cass. 42.4.5; cf. Livy 3.49.5; 23.10.9; Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.28.72; 2.5.60.157), as with, e.g., Caesar (*Appian Bell. civ.* 2.16.117; Plut. *Caes.* 66.6–7; Suet. *Jul.* 82) and Polyxena (Eurip. *Hec.* 432–33; Ovid *Metam.* 13.479–80). For similar reasons of honor, ancients would close a person's eyes once dead (Hom. *Od.* 11.426; Val. Max. 2.6.8).

204. So Dunn, *Acts*, 64; Sapphira's name might (though need not) link her with the priestly aristocracy (but if Luke knew of this connection, it might have suited his overall *Tendenz* to mention it). Less relevant, Johnson, *Acts*, 89, cites the young men who took Rahab from the city (Josh 6:23).

205. For Luke's usage of these and cognate terms, cf. further Acts 2:17 (young men empowered by God); 23:17–18, 22 (used to rescue Paul); 20:9 and Luke 7:14 (one himself dead but raised; cf. Acts 20:9–12). Their supportive role appears frequently (e.g., Exod 24:5; Num 11:27; Josh 2:1, 23; 6:21–23; 1 Sam 20:22, 37; Dan 1:10). One may compare prophets' younger attendants (e.g., Exod 24:13; 33:11; 2 Kgs 3:11; 4:38), and a prestige given to Peter normally accorded only to traditional teachers (cf. Acts 22:3). Spencer links them with the ancient stereotype of young men's proclivity toward violence ("Young Man," esp. 39; citing esp. the OT, 4 Maccabees, and Josephus; see comment on Acts 7:58), since they are not said to mourn the violence (pp. 40–41). This is, however, a weak argument from silence; neither does Peter explicitly lament here, and whereas David protested Uzzah's death (2 Sam 6:8), Moses did not lament that of Korah's company in Num 16:31–40 (though others do, 16:41).

206. A reasonable objection to the narrative's realism (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 38); but cf. below on ancient associations often attending to members' burials. If Ananias had been missing three hours and (as the narrative indicates) Sapphira knew where he was going, it is not surprising that she would come looking for him.

207. Safrai, "Home," 774, cites *t. Neg.* 6:2; *'Abot R. Nat.* 35 A; 39 B; *b. B. Qam.* 82a. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 268, notes that the bier should be simple (*t. Nid.* 9:16).

208. Safrai, "Home," 774 (citing *m. Sanh.* 6:5; *Sem.* 11:1); cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 270. Cf. also how far mourning procedures have advanced in Luke 8:52, immediately after death (8:41–42, 49; the small size of Capernaum [cf. 8:40] or towns like it prohibit a burial's lengthy delay due to travel if the same town is envisioned, as in 8:41).

it also could suggest one reason that the apostles became an alternative leadership within Jerusalem, inviting the “envy” of Jerusalem’s political elite (Acts 5:17).

Where family members were not available (and the couple’s contribution might suggest that they had no children), a community to which one had entrusted oneself would be involved (Mark 6:29). Those who had given everything to the church presumably lacked property and hence would need to be buried by the church (compare the practice of the Qumran community). Ananias may not have given everything, but his covenant with the community presumably left the community with responsibility for his body; here we may compare ancient burial associations.²⁰⁹ The burial place was presumably the land of someone else in the church, since believers shared their property (Acts 2:44–45) but most contributions to the church were in money (4:34, 37; 5:1).²¹⁰

That Luke mentions no lamentation after burial may be significant in view of the contrast with 8:2 (where such mourning may even have been dangerous). The primary delay in a burial was to allow for brief mourning first (though most of the mourning period followed burial);²¹¹ this burial’s immediacy might stress, more clearly than Luke’s silence, that no public mourning occurred.²¹² Mourning was normally withheld or forbidden only in the case of enemies or criminals (see discussion under Acts 8:2), indicating the moral status of Ananias. Those who joined such a holy community must also be willing to be judged by its strict standards. Nevertheless, the Christians did not withhold burial; whereas ancient rulers sometimes forbade burial for heinous offenses, ancient literature generally considered more honorable those who granted burial (see comment on Acts 8:2). Biblical law expected burials for everyone (e.g., Num 11:34; Deut 21:23; Josh 7:26; 8:29; 10:26–27).

IV. SAPPHIRA’S LIE AND JUDGMENT (5:7–10)

Sapphira was privy to the plot and shared its promised gain, like Achan’s family (clear from his burial of the loot under their tent, Josh 7:21–22). Like Achan’s accomplices (7:24–25), therefore, Sapphira would share her husband’s penalty if she persisted in denying the truth she knew about (Acts 5:2).²¹³ Women were executed in antiquity, though far less often than men (perhaps because they were generally held to pose less of a threat; see discussion at Acts 8:3; 9:2). Sapphira is given opportunity to tell Peter the truth (with his question perhaps suggesting to her his suspicion),²¹⁴ thus taking the side of God’s agents rather than her deceitful husband. Nevertheless, she refuses the opportunity (cf. Gen 4:9; 2 Kgs 5:25–26).

Peter warns that they conspired to “test” God’s Spirit and now must witness the terrible result, since God could not be deceived (Luke 16:15).²¹⁵ In Luke-Acts, Satan

209. On which see, e.g., Smith, *Symposium*, 104. Although burial may have been a secondary function of associations in this period (Harrill, “Asia Minor,” 136), it remained a function.

210. Burying another in one’s own tomb displayed special affection or commitment (cf. 1 Kgs 13:30–31; Matt 27:60).

211. Cf., e.g., Eurip. *Alc.* 336; Plut. *Coriol.* 39.5; Sir 22:12; Jdt 16:24; further discussion in Keener, *John*, 842–43, 848.

212. Cf. Larkin, *Acts*, 86. This may fit the special situation of those struck by divine decree (Lev 10:1–5; Josh 7:25; so Witherington, *Acts*, 217, and Bock, *Acts*, 224, following Derrett, “Ananias, Sapphira,” 198).

213. Attempts to cover one’s behavior could be seen as an admission of guilt (Mus. Ruf. 12, p. 86.19–20).

214. Though Haenchen, *Acts*, 238–39, sees the question only as a strategy “to make her complicity plain to the reader,” her complicity is already suggested by Acts 5:2. Pervo, *Acts*, 131, compares Peter’s questions in 5:3–4, 9, to Joshua’s in Josh 7:25 (though the wording is not close).

215. Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 199, parallels Hdt. 6.86, where one who has wrongly kept money is accused, at Delphi, of “testing the deity” (τὸ περιηθῆναι τοῦ θεοῦ) and lacked descendants. This example illustrates the intelligibility of such an account to an ancient audience.

“tempts” Jesus (4:2), as do his human opponents (11:16), but the church also later risks “testing” God by holding to its traditions (Acts 15:10).²¹⁶

Distress tested one’s character to see if one would sin;²¹⁷ suffering was thus often testing.²¹⁸ Enemies could test martyrs’ faith by torture.²¹⁹ God would try his people;²²⁰ he would also test particular individuals²²¹ through their sufferings, such as martyrs²²² or whoever wished to serve the Lord.²²³ God would also rescue his servants in their testing;²²⁴ his purpose in testing was not the hope that one so tested would fall, because he did not want people to sin.²²⁵ The same person could experience testing as being from God²²⁶ or Satan²²⁷ in the same context, because Satan was subject to God’s rule. Major examples of testing were Abraham²²⁸ and Israel in the wilderness.²²⁹ Testing God, by contrast, was a serious offense (cf. 15:10),²³⁰ and one could do this, for example, by breaking God’s commandments²³¹ or acting in a way that displayed unbelief.²³² A prototypical instance of this in Scripture was Israel’s testing God in the wilderness (Exod 17:2, 7; Deut 6:16; Pss 78:18; 95:9).

Sapphira’s falling to her death at Peter’s “feet” (Acts 5:10) contrasts starkly with the couple’s pretended submission of part of their property at the apostles’ feet (5:2).²³³ The couple pretended submission earlier; now they offer it involuntarily in death.²³⁴ Just as God here judges both a man and a woman (both share moral responsibility; cf. Acts 13:50; 2 Chr 15:13), both men and women believe in the continuing revival (Acts 5:14; a Lukan emphasis, cf. 2:18; 8:12; 16:13–14; 17:4, 12).

V. OTHERS OBSERVED AND FEARED (5:11)

Luke elsewhere speaks of fear falling on all in response to God’s works (e.g., Luke 1:12, 65; 2:9; 5:26; 7:16; 8:37; Acts 19:17), a familiar phrase.²³⁵ More broadly,

216. The use of the verb in Acts 9:26; 16:7; and 24:6 means simply “attempt.”

217. 1QS XI, 13 (in the context of XI, 9–22).

218. *Pss. Sol.* 16:14.

219. So 4 Macc 9:7.

220. E.g., Deut 13:1; Judg 2:22; 3:1, 4; 7:4; Isa 48:10; Jer 20:12; Zech 13:9; Jdt 8:25; 1 Pet 1:7; 4:12; Rev 2:10; for Israel in the wilderness, see, e.g., discussion in Sheriffs, “Testing,” 832–33. Some rabbis observed that God tested only the righteous, not the wicked (*Gen. Rab.* 55:2). But in 3 Macc 2:6, God tested Pharaoh.

221. Cf. Joseph in Ps 105:19; Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32:31; the righteous in Wis 3:5; Sir 2:5; also *Sen. Y. Dial.* 1.4.8: God counts worthy those whom he tests, to see how much human nature can endure (cf. 1.1.6).

222. So Wis 3:5–6 (using ἐπίρασεν in 3:5 and ἐδοκίμασεν in 3:6, the latter for refining like gold in the furnace); cf. 4 Macc 17:12.

223. So Sir 2:1.

224. So Sir 36:1. He would deliver them after first allowing their brief testing (*Test. Jos.* 2:6).

225. E.g., Sir 15:11–12, 20; cf. Mark 10:21. He could test mortals as a teacher tests students (*Philo Creation* 149) or test the righteous as a parent warns a child (*Wis* 11:10).

226. E.g., *Jub.* 17:17; 4Q225 2 I, 10–13.

227. E.g., *Jub.* 17:15–18 (who suggested the idea, although God chose to implement it); 4Q225 2 I, 9–10. Cf. angels in *Jub.* 19:3.

228. Esp. in Gen 22:1, where it is explicit in Scripture; e.g., Jdt 8:26; *Jub.* 17:16–18; Heb 11:17; *Num. Rab.* 17:2; cf. further Sir 44:20; 1 Macc 2:52. On other occasions, e.g., *Jub.* 19:8 (Abraham’s ten testings; cf. *Num* 14:22); *Num. Rab.* 14:11 (also Abraham’s ten testings).

229. E.g., Exod 16:4; 20:20; Deut 8:2, 16; Heb 3:9; Wis 10:10; 11:9; cf. Katzin, “Testing,” on 4Q171.

230. E.g., Mal 3:15; Jdt 8:12–13; Wis 1:2.

231. E.g., *Test. Mos.* 9:4.

232. E.g., Jdt 8:12–13.

233. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 52, see “the feet” in Acts 5:9 as a Semitism; if their evidence (1 Kgs 18:41 LXX) is not convincing, falling dead at someone’s feet was certainly a biblical expression of triumph (Judg 5:27; 2 Sam 22:39; Ps 18:38). Falling at someone’s feet also signified submission (1 Sam 25:24; 2 Kgs 4:37; Esth 8:3).

234. Cf. also Johnson, *Acts*, 89; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 325; Rev 3:9.

235. The language of fear falling on people may echo biblical language (e.g., Exod 15:16; Deut 2:25; Josh 2:9; 1 Sam 11:7; Jdt 2:28; 1 Macc 7:18; cf. Gen 9:2; Rev 11:11), though having “the fear of Heaven upon” one

Luke speaks of everyone feeling awe (Acts 2:43), the church²³⁶ continuing in fear (9:31), individuals fearing (Luke 1:12), amazement coming on all (4:36), and, most broadly of all, in simple summaries, God's message growing everywhere (4:37).

Traditional Romans opined that one reason for punishing a crime was to set an example and prevent others from committing the same crime (Aul. Gel. 7.14.4); Jews agreed (3 Macc 7:14–15, where they executed apostates).²³⁷ Deuteronomy likewise decreed punishments for their deterrent value (Deut 13:11; 17:13; 19:20; 21:21), and later Jewish sources echoed this tradition (11QT LXI, 10–11; cf. 1 Tim 5:20). When pagan deities executed judgment, word spread and people revered the deities more (Ovid *Metam.* 6.146–47 [cf. 6.139–45], 313–15). In the Bible, when judgment miracles occurred, people also feared (Num 16:34).²³⁸

4. Apostles' Honor and Signs (5:12–16)

Such summary sections (see comment on Acts 2:42–47; cf. also, e.g., Acts 4:32–35) are useful for reinforcing Luke's themes, as in other literature (including depictions of sectarian movements).²³⁹ This section also picks up the thought of 4:33 (after the digression of 4:36–5:11, which illustrated the thought of 4:34–35).²⁴⁰

a. The People Revere the New Movement (5:12–14)

Because of continuing signs (5:12), the people of Jerusalem respect the apostles and their movement (5:12–13). This makes the apostles even less easy for the aristocrats to target (4:21; 5:26) but even more of a perceived threat to their power (5:28). The apostles' honor is increased by the growing healing ministry in 5:14–16. Their mounting popularity will ultimately provoke the leaders to intervene before the apostles can become still more powerful (5:17).

I. SIGNS THROUGH THE APOSTLES' HANDS (5:12)

For Solomon's Portico, see comment on Acts 3:11. The continuing use of this site probably suggests that the apostles viewed the temple as the appropriate place for an end-time renewal of Israel (for their likely pro-temple views, see comment on Acts 2:46).²⁴¹ As in an earlier summary (2:46), they continued to meet in the temple (the conflict over the temple arising only in 6:13–14).²⁴² For being in one accord or of one mind, see comment on Acts 2:46. The unity (*ἁποθυμαδόν*) reported in 5:12b is

(*m. 'Ab* 1:3) was positive. As God put the fear of Israel on others (Gen 35:5; Exod 23:27), so Greek deities could cause combatants on one side to panic (Hom. *Il.* 16.656–58; *Od.* 14.268–70); in the ancient Near East, see, e.g., Carpenter, "Deuteronomy," 436.

236. In Acts, the "church" first appears by this designation in 5:11 and then especially in Acts 8, suggesting a development in this contextualization (see Trebilco, "Self-Designations," 42–45, 49). The designation did arise in Judea early (Gal 1:22), but just not at the very beginning (42). Trebilco suggests (42–43) that it probably originated with the Hellenists in Jerusalem, and (44) Luke is avoiding anachronism. This is not to deny the possibility that Jesus had used this language (Matt 16:18; 18:15–21; see discussion in Keener, *Matthew*, 427–28), but to suggest that it took time for his followers to welcome it as a chief title.

237. Cf. also shaming people by assigning appropriate texts for public reading (*t. Kip.* 4:12).

238. This is also the reported effect in modern accounts (e.g., Thollander, *Mathews*, 125).

239. See comment on Acts 2:42–47; cf. Joubert, "Gesigpunt"; Sterling, "Athletes of Virtue."

240. Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:48, see Acts 5:12b–13 as a transitional summary concluding the long episode that began in 3:1.

241. See Dunn, *Acts*, 65.

242. Though cf. Kisirinya, "Re-interpreting" (who argues that the early summaries progressively move away from the temple).

presumably that not only of the apostles but of the entire movement they were leading, as in 1:14 (though the movement was smaller there), 2:46, and 4:24.

For signs and wonders, see the commentary introduction.²⁴³ Here the thought matches the signs after the first outpouring of the Spirit (2:43); already suggested for the second outpouring (cf. 4:33), signs become explicit here.²⁴⁴ Just as the signs after the first outpouring were accompanied by a specific example (3:1–10), which included a moral about the greater value of God’s power than that of human wealth (3:6), so the sharing of possessions at the second (4:32–35) was accompanied by concrete examples (4:36–5:10), one of which included signs that brought fear (5:5, 10–11; cf. 2:43). Now, however, Luke has returned to summarizing the many miracles.

The mediating (διὰ) use of the apostles’ “hands” (cf. 2:23; 11:30; 15:23; often in the LXX, e.g., Ezek 38:17) may be idiomatic, but it also follows the biblical tradition where God used the “hands” of his agent (Exod 14:16, 21, 26–27), though it remains clear that God did the work (Exod 14:21, 27; Acts 7:25). (Gentile traditions may also be relevant for some parts of Luke’s audience, although they are not as close.)²⁴⁵ More specifically, it presumably envisions the apostles touching people to communicate God’s power (Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 8:17–18; 9:17; 19:6; 28:8; in contrast with a negative kind of laying on of hands, Acts 4:3; 5:18).²⁴⁶

II. RESPECT FOR THE APOSTOLIC MOVEMENT (5:13–14)

Ananias and Sapphira, wanting to both belong to God’s holy community and retain their own interests, had risked infiltrating the community with Satan’s agendas (5:3). God’s decisive action against them guarded the community’s sanctity, preventing others from joining the community (5:13) except those who were true believers (5:14, like Ananias and Sapphira, both men and women).

Clearly, outsiders’ fear of association comports with respect (5:13b). What does “associate” (κολλᾶσθαι) mean? The verb applies to any sort of cleaving (Luke 10:11; cf. Rom 12:9; 2 Kgs 3:3; 5:27; Bar 1:20; 3:4), whether a higher (such as becoming a dependent worker in someone’s household, Luke 15:15; cf. Ruth 2:8)²⁴⁷ or a lower level of attachment (such as simply joining with another’s chariot, Acts 8:29). Closer to the particular sense here would be the association with Gentiles that would be avoided by Jews (for different reasons, Acts 10:28; cf. 1 Kgs 11:2) and especially the act of becoming a believer and adherent to the Christian faith (Acts 17:34).²⁴⁸

Does the crowds’ fear of association refer to associating with the apostles (5:12a) or to associating with the entire assembly of believers (5:12b)? In favor of fearing to associate with the apostles, their works inspired awe (5:12a), including the fear based on the fate of Ananias and Sapphira (5:11).²⁴⁹ Thus the crowds would not dare

243. Keener, *Acts*, 1:537–49 (on Luke’s theology of signs); cf. also 320–82.

244. For a comparison among Luke’s miracle summaries (as in Acts 2:43), see Lindemann, “Einheit,” 248–50.

245. Gentile traditions sometimes associated healing with particular parts of persons’ bodies (Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.20; 28.6.34). Some cured by touch (28.6.30, for snakebites) or presence (28.6.31), although “hands” in general stood for crafts or writing (or speeches; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.42).

246. Yamauchi, “Magic?,” 135–36, compares modern emphasis on the therapeutic value of touch; if this principle is too far afield, so perhaps are associations with Hellenistic magic (cf. the use of physical contact in prior biblical tradition, e.g., 1 Kgs 17:21; 2 Kgs 4:34). For Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 14, the laying on of human hands (in ordination) mediates God’s touch (Pelikan, *Acts*, 95).

247. Also marriage (1 Esd 4:20; Matt 19:5; cf. Tob 6:19) or immoral sexual unions (Sir 19:2; 1 Cor 6:16–17).

248. It also applies to “cleaving” to the Lord (Deut 6:13; 10:20; 2 Kgs 18:6; Ps 63:8 [62:9 LXX]); Jer 13:11; Sir 2:3) and political allegiance (2 Sam 20:2; 1 Macc 3:2; 6:21).

249. Johnson, *Acts*, 95.

seek to emulate their authority or originate rival factions.²⁵⁰ Those who challenged Moses's authority suffered terrible deaths (Num 16:10, 27, 32, 40) or other judgments (12:8–10), and other passages in Acts demonstrate that power seekers marginally acquainted with the faith tried, and failed, to imitate apostolic power (Acts 8:18–24; 19:13–16). One may compare the tradition about people's awe of Moses's glory (Exod 34:30), though Paul contrasts this external glory with the greater internal glory of apostolic ministry (2 Cor 3:7–18). Pagans also recognized some holy persons who were closer to deities than were others (e.g., Statius *Silv.* 3.3.64–66).²⁵¹

According to this view, even other Christians might fear associating with the apostles.²⁵² Pythagoras divided his students into “probationers” and “advanced students” because not all were of equal merit (Iambl. *V.P.* 18.80–81), and reportedly only the highest order of disciples had access to him.²⁵³ Zoroaster chose to associate only with the magi, those best able to understand him (Dio Chrys. 36.41); even in terms of patrons and clients, friends and some clients had fuller access to patrons than others did.²⁵⁴

More likely Luke refers to fear of association with the assembly of believers who were of one mind on Solomon's Portico (Acts 5:13b).²⁵⁵ “Joining” this assembly meant becoming a follower of Christ;²⁵⁶ this fits with Luke's occasional use of *κολλάομαι* to indicate joining the Christian movement (17:34). Possibly the crowds feared to join, despite their respect for the church, because they feared persecution;²⁵⁷ but given the surprising leniency of the previous sentence (4:21) and the lack of overt persecution of even the apostles until after these events (5:18), another view is more likely. The context probably shows the reason for fear of association: inadequate commitment could bring death (5:1–10), and this judgment generated widespread fear (5:11).²⁵⁸ Possibly members of this larger group respected the early Christians the way Gentile God-fearers respected Judaism (see comment on Acts 10:2) but were both unwilling to surrender all their property and afraid to offer it only in pretense like the deceased couple (5:1–11).²⁵⁹ The closer the community lives to the holy ideal, the more self-selective their core group.²⁶⁰ Ironically, the disciples (meaning Christians, 6:1–2, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 38; 11:26, 29; 13:52) later are reticent to let Paul associate (*κολλᾶσθαι*) with them because they (for a very different reason) fear him (9:26).

250. E.g., Rackham, *Acts*, 68.

251. In some societies, kings are ritually holy, leading to veneration and avoidance (Mbiti, *Religions*, 240).

252. Disciples and other hearers might “be with” (*συνόντας*) their teachers (Mus. Ruf. 6, p. 52.7), but *κολλᾶσθαι* may imply a greater degree of adherence.

253. This reportedly provoked murderous jealousy from those “not accounted worthy of admittance to his presence” (Diog. Laert. 8.1.39 [LCL, 2:355]). Culpepper, *School*, 51, acknowledges this tradition but finds another one more likely.

254. See Chow, *Patronage*, 75 (citing Sen. Y. *Const.* 10.2; Juv. *Sat.* 1.100–101; or, Chow notes, they could bribe patrons or catch them on the street, Hor. *Sat.* 1.9.56–58; Juv. *Sat.* 3.189). In the gospel tradition, Jesus spent time with his apostles but spent long days among the masses as well.

255. Cf. the Egyptians who wanted the Israelites to leave quickly, lest the Egyptians all die as the firstborn had (Exod 12:33)—perhaps analogous to fear after Ananias's and Sapphira's deaths here.

256. See Barrett, *Acts*, 274.

257. Witherington, *Acts*, 225 (recognizing that this would constitute a negative part of Luke's otherwise positive summary, 226).

258. Revival fervor can generate fear of insincere commitments; cf. the spiritual experience at Azusa Street (Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 54–55); cf. some judgment miracles reported in popular sources noted above (Tari, *Wind*, 32–33; Thollander, *Mathews*, 125).

259. Cf., insightfully, Schwartz, “Sympathizers” (though his view that the believers of Acts 5:14 probably had not joined is less persuasive; see 2:44; 4:4, 32; 8:12–13).

260. Cf., e.g., Wesley's preference for a more committed core and his follower Asbury's less rigid public enforcement of positions (e.g., on slaveholding). (For Wesley against slavery, see, e.g., Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 143; Childs, *Political Black Minister*, 27–28; early Methodists in Wilmore, *Religion*, 34; Adams, *Period*, 97.)

Although outsiders feared to join the movement hypocritically, the insistence on sincere converts led to greater long-range growth (5:14). The mention of both genders in 5:14 fits Luke's typical pattern (see comment on Acts 5:9). It also balances the negative example of Ananias and Sapphira with a positive one. Because God struck down hypocritical Christians, the uncommitted feared to join (5:13), but the number of genuine believers continued to grow all the more (5:14). Continued growth also fits the pattern of revival in 2:47 (see comment there).

b. Seeking Healing (5:15–16)

Luke here reports even more dramatic signs, with consequently greater church growth. Even limited persecution (5:17–41) would not slow the movement down (5:42).

I. DRAMATIC SIGNS (5:15)

The popular enthusiasm and miracle summaries Luke reports in 5:15 can easily reflect earlier tradition; such reports are characteristic of renewal movements, “particularly in their initial enthusiasm.”²⁶¹ Such phenomena are commonly reported in many regions of the world today, and during some revival movements historically by large numbers of sincere and trustworthy people claiming to be eyewitnesses.²⁶²

Although there is therefore no reason to question whether a genuine report or reports could stand behind Luke's abstract, Luke summarizes them in his own words, using language characteristic of his other descriptions of miracles.²⁶³ The term *κράβαττος* refers to a mattress or pallet, what the poor might use for a bed (BDAG); coupled with it, *κλινάριον* probably retains its diminutive force (despite the dilution of the diminutive in Koine); together the terms might suggest an appeal to the less wealthy masses (though even the wealthy would hardly arrive on the street in a full bed).²⁶⁴ The general mention of such healings may be exemplified in specific stories elsewhere in Luke-Acts, such as Aeneas (who was confined to his *κράβαττος*, 9:33) and the bedridden paralytic whom Jesus healed in Luke 5:24–25 (cf. *κλίνης*, 5:18).²⁶⁵

The gathering in the streets may merit further comment. Small and crooked streets often joined neighborhoods;²⁶⁶ the larger streets would help define the neighborhood units. (Thus in Rome “the urban unit was the *vicus*—a street and the neighborhood spreading around it into alleys and little squares.”)²⁶⁷ Luke probably envisions larger Jerusalem streets²⁶⁸ rather than side alleys; still, he may not think of the main

261. Dunn, *Acts*, 66.

262. See extensively Keener, *Miracles*, 209–599. The interpretation of such reports is more debatable, but see 601–759. For ancient sources, see 19–82.

263. This context might also imply a contrast between those carrying away the bodies of Ananias and Sapphira after judgment miracles (5:6, 9–10) and people carrying others to Peter to be healed (5:15); these constitute the only uses of this precise verb in Acts (elsewhere, Luke 15:22), though Luke frequently employs a cognate (fourteen times, one of them in 5:16).

264. For beds more generally, see, e.g., Mare, “Bed.”

265. For beds of various kinds (from the minimum possessions of the poor to elaborate forms for the rich), see Safrai, “Home,” 735–36 (citing, e.g., *t. Ned.* 2:7; *b. Sanh.* 20a).

266. Cf. Stambaugh, *City*, 188 (on Rome). Straight streets, the urban planning ideal (Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 104), were harder to achieve in old cities.

267. Stambaugh, *City*, 184. The narrow side streets were better protection from the sun (p. 189, citing Tac. *Ann.* 15.43; Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 104). Whereas Greek streets could run parallel, Romans liked intersecting north-south and east-west streets (Watson, “Cities,” 214; Owens, *City*, 113, 131).

268. Jerusalem's main north-south street, “Tyropoeon Valley Street,” was 10 m. wide, running alongside the Temple Mount's west; the east-west “Hulda Gates Street” (6.4 m. wide, ca. 280 m. long) intersected it; one street in the Upper City was 13 m. wide at its widest point (Aune, *Revelation*, 618).

thoroughfares, and rarely in ancient cities were even most large paved streets wider than twenty to thirty feet²⁶⁹ (often they were only eight).²⁷⁰ We should thus imagine considerable congestion (not a new situation for ministry of the word; cf. Luke 5:1; 8:42, 45). Many people could be found congregating in streets (Luke 14:21; undoubtedly especially on warm days), and these were useful places to preach or teach,²⁷¹ as Jesus's example (13:26) and instructions for his disciples (10:10, as here) show.

II. SHADOWS (5:15)

Scholars have compared the involuntary flow of power from healers (Mark 5:30; Luke 8:46; Acts 5:15; 19:12; cf. Luke 5:17; 6:19) to magical Greek conceptions of divine power as a sort of fluid substance.²⁷² Thus scent, voice, and other emanations from a person might transmit beneficent or malevolent effects;²⁷³ the suppliant's presence at Epidaurus was sometimes sufficient for healing.²⁷⁴ Occasionally this concept of spiritual effects of proximity applied to great teachers such as Socrates.²⁷⁵ The magical idea of a "zone" around a holy person is attested in a variety of traditions, from Buddhism to the experience of Francis of Assisi.²⁷⁶

This principle may apply to shadows as well, as in some modern healing claims.²⁷⁷ Van der Horst notes that some ancients believed that a criminal's shadow (Ennius) or those of animals (Aelian *Nat. An.* 6.14) could cause harmful effects;²⁷⁸ some believed that injury to one's shadow or its diminution by midday sun could be harmful.²⁷⁹ Shadows also play an important role in many traditional cultures, sometimes even identified with one's soul—though the effects of such shadows are generally held to be negative.²⁸⁰ Greek traditions also associated shadows with the realm of the dead, allowing some to speculate about active shadows (specifically, about one's shadow exposing one's deeds at the judgment).²⁸¹

269. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 104. Not all streets were paved (Carcopino, *Life*, 46–47), but by this period, paving was common for larger streets (Owens, *City*, 157).

270. Stambaugh, *City*, 188 (citing Varro *L.L.* 7.15).

271. Teachers could hold school in the streets (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 20.9). Perhaps particularly relevant, streets were public sites as opposed to private ones (e.g., Prov 1:20; 5:16; 7:12; Song 3:2; Isa 42:2; Jer 5:1; 9:21; Lam 1:20; Nah 2:4; 3 Macc 1:20; Matt 6:2, 5); in business documents, "in the street" can even mean "before the public notary" (e.g., P.Oxy. 261.8–9 [AD 55]; 266.7 [AD 96]; 270.7 [AD 94]).

272. Kee, *Miracle*, 215; Aune, "Magic," 1537; on the story of the woman with the flow of blood, Lane, "Theios anēr," 160–61. "Power" (Luke 8:46) certainly is frequent in the magical papyri (Arnold, *Power*, 73, though also citing the LXX).

273. Caused by particles in Plut. *Table* 5.7.1–2 (Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 78–79).

274. Ael. Arist. *Sacr.* 2.71; 3.22 (Johnson, *Acts*, 96). Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 63, argues that various material substances were thought to radiate healing power, but his examples (Lucian *Lover of Lies* 11; Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.7; Tac. *Hist.* 4.81) may simply represent medical quackery.

275. Implied in Plato *Theag.* 129E; 130C; 130E (Tiede, *Figure*, 35) but rare in other sources (36).

276. See Borg, *Vision*, 129 (including 144n16). Cf. Nock, *Essays*, 603–5, on use of the notion of "mana" (borrowed from Polynesia). By way of anecdote, although I have not generally experienced the divine Spirit this way (except in extraordinary cases such as at the home of some remarkably prayerful Ethiopian refugees), I have sensed something like such "zones" in some power encounters.

277. E.g., Numere, *Vision*, 213; Crandall, *Raising*, 28 (secondhand); cf. Liardon, *Generals*, 219 (following Frodsham, *Apostle*, 79), on Smith Wigglesworth in Sri Lanka in 1921.

278. Van der Horst, "Shadow," 207–8; Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 195. Shadows of various kinds of trees could promote harm or good (*Strange Acts*, 209, citing Pliny E. *N.H.* 17.18; Lucret. *Nat.* 6.783–85).

279. Van der Horst, "Shadow," 208 (citing Arist. *Mir. ausc.* 145 [157]; Lucan *C.W.* 3.423ff.; Philost. *Hrk* 1.3; Porph. *Antr. nymph.* 26; more rationally, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 67.4–5). Profaning a sacred place could cause one to lose one's shadow and hence die (van der Horst, "Shadow," 209, citing Polyb. 16.12.7; Paus. 8.38.6; cf. also much later Jewish texts, p. 210). Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 193, connects "shadows" here with "images" (cf. Lucret. *Nat.* 4.379–86).

280. Van der Horst, "Shadow," 205–7 (including ancient Egyptian texts, 207).

281. Lucian *Men.* 11 (Menippus is not, however, a reliable narrator). For the deceased as shadows, see, e.g., Lucian *Fun.* 9.

Such comparisons are helpful for reconstructing likely ways early Gentile Christians would have understood Luke's language, and there is no reason to doubt that he would have readily contextualized his message in terms they understood.²⁸² These comparisons, however, need to be nuanced by also weighing earlier Jewish sources (cf. esp. 1 Sam 19:20–24; 2 Kgs 13:20–21)²⁸³ and a more careful consideration of the *antimagical* nature of Luke's accounts.²⁸⁴ The language of "overshadowing" might recall passages about God's presence such as Exod 40:35; Ps 91:1, 4.²⁸⁵

Most significantly, for Luke's audience Peter's shadow would recall God's power overshadowing Mary (Luke 1:35) and the cloud of heavenly glory from which the Father claimed Jesus at the transfiguration (9:34). Given these earlier comparisons in the Gospel, the shadow may thus recall what some sources call the Shekinah.²⁸⁶ If a shadow was considered part of one's body,²⁸⁷ we should not be surprised that people sought to touch at least this, like the woman who sought access to Jesus's power through his garment (8:44, 46). (For power mediated through touch, see comment on Acts 3:6–7; 5:12.) Peter thus carries on the ministry of Jesus exemplified in Luke 8 and also parallels Paul's ministry in Acts 19:11–12. Their empowerment by the Spirit, who actually performed the miracles, allowed for secondary effects on others not intended by themselves (1 Sam 19:20–24; 2 Kgs 13:21).

III. THE WORD SPREADS FURTHER (5:16)

The gathering of crowds to be healed is familiar from Luke's other summaries (Luke 4:40; 5:15, 17; 6:18–19; 9:11; Acts 8:7; 28:9); crowds also gathered to hear Jesus (e.g., Luke 8:4; 15:1). Being thronged by crowds (the other side of Acts 5:13) was a common feature of popularity.²⁸⁸ Given the high rate of early mortality attested by youthful skeletal remains, we can be confident that a healer would draw large crowds.²⁸⁹ The mention of people "bringing" the sick may recall for attentive readers how a paralytic's friends brought him to Jesus (Luke 5:18–19).²⁹⁰

That word spread widely in the vicinity²⁹¹ of Jerusalem (as many of the Gospel's summaries reported it had in that of Galilee, e.g., Luke 4:14) is not surprising (for the rapid spread of word in the ancient Mediterranean world, see comment on Acts 19:10). The appropriate response to benefaction (even attempted confidential benefaction, e.g., Luke 5:14–15; cf. 8:56) was as much publicity for the act as possible.²⁹² Epideictic

282. Cf. how Christian holy men (e.g., St. Anthony) directly replaced expectations for pagan counterparts in late Roman Egypt (Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 267); Polhill, *Acts*, 402, sees such activity (in Acts 19:11–12) as divine accommodation. There were, of course, limits; unlike Greek magicians, no one in Acts seeks invisibility, works love spells, etc.

283. Cf. Derrett, *Audience*, 128 (a holy sage's blessing); cf. Arnold, *Power*, 36–37.

284. See comment on Acts 8:9–11; 19:11–20.

285. Larkin, *Acts*, 90–91. Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 50, also cite Deut 33:12 LXX.

286. For discussion of sources concerning the Shekinah, see Keener, *John*, 409–11.

287. Hence it could communicate even corpse uncleanness; cf. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 34, 232; Borg, *Conflict*, 104; *m. 'Ohal.* in Maccoby, "Corpse." Pharisees were not alone in their strict concern regarding corpse impurity (4QMMT B 72–74; Jos. *Ant.* 18.38). For later exceptions, probably following the purported cleansing of Tiberias (on which see, e.g., Levine, "Purification"), cf., e.g., *b. Bek.* 29b; *Ber.* 19b; *B. Meši'a* 114b.

288. See, e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.38–44.

289. Evans, *World*, 111. Cf. also large numbers drawn to therapeutic springs (see my *Acts*, 1:327n50).

290. Cf. also apostles entreated to perform healings in later apocryphal literature (e.g., *Acts John* 19).

291. Luke here, as often, uses πόλις "indiscriminately"; see Oakman, "Countryside," 170; Reed, *Archaeology*, 166–68 (suggesting [168] Luke's theological motives in Acts 26:26). The less technical use in the evangelists (esp. Luke, who in his two volumes accounts for just more than half the NT uses) has an abundance of LXX precedents and was hardly unique to them (see BDAG), though unusual for elite authors such as Pausanias.

292. DeSilva, *Honor*, 134–35 (noting that this would prove all the more the case with the most virtuous benefactors, namely, those who attempted confidential benefactions); for deSilva's ancient sources, see 114 (citing Arist. *N.E.* 8.14.2, 1163b 1–5; Sen. *Y. Ben.* 2.22.1, 4; 2.23.1).

texts often recounted how their protagonists' reputation spread (e.g., *Iambl. V.P.* 2.11; cf. comment on Acts 2:47).²⁹³ This was and is naturally the case for signs reports.²⁹⁴

IV. DELIVERING PEOPLE FROM UNCLEAN SPIRITS (5:16)

The expression "harassed by unclean spirits" here is close to that in Luke 6:18, again reflecting the disciples' emulation of Jesus's ministry.²⁹⁵ Demons were often associated with sicknesses²⁹⁶ (though not every sickness would have been thought caused by a demon). Luke elsewhere associates sicknesses with demonic activity (cf. Acts 10:38) but does distinguish those sick from natural causes from those sick by possession (e.g., Luke 8:2; 13:11).²⁹⁷

See the extensive excursus on demons, possession, and exorcism at Acts 16:16.²⁹⁸ Some cultures associate spirit possession or a trance state with power for exorcism;²⁹⁹ in Luke-Acts, God's agents do not act in trance states, but they are filled and empowered by God's Spirit (e.g., Luke 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:4). Philip demonstrates the message of God's sovereignty (Acts 8:12) by expelling demons (8:7), as elsewhere (Luke 4:41, 43; 6:18–20; 9:1–2; 10:9, 17; esp. 11:15–20; cf. 4:32–36; 8:1–2).³⁰⁰ The exorcisms performed by both Jesus and his disciples in the Gospel foreshadow those in Acts.³⁰¹

The association of "spirits" with "uncleanness" or "impurity" (as here) appears in earlier gospel tradition, and also in some Jewish tradition,³⁰² though surprisingly less frequently than we might expect from the Gospels.³⁰³ Sometimes links between sin

293. Ancient narratives about popular teachers also could praise them by emphasizing their popularity (e.g., *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 1.40; Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher*, 122n74; cf. *Ovid Metam.* 3.339–40, 511–12).

294. For signs and consequent movement growth, see esp. De Wet, "Signs"; also, e.g., Yung, "Integrity," 173–75; Maggay, "Issues," 34; Ma, "Encounter," 136; Khai, "Pentecostalism," 268–70; Read, Monterroso, and Johnson, *Growth*, 323; Marostica, "Learning," 207; Norwood, "Colloquium," 24–26; Castleberry, "Impact," 108; Dunkerley, *Healing Evangelism*, 21–22; on a popular level, Lindsay, *Lake*, 26, 29; Thollander, *Mathews*, 84, 87–90.

295. These are the only NT uses of ὀχλέω and ἐνοχλέω, except for an occurrence of the latter in Heb 12:15 (ἐνοχλέω also occurs a few times in the LXX, and ὀχλέω in Tob 6:8; 3 Macc 5:41).

296. See Kotansky, "Demonology," 271–72; e.g., *Test. Sol.* 18; *y. Šabb.* 6:3, §7. The NT hapax legomenon ὀχλέω appears in medical texts (Hobart, *Medical Language*, 7–8) but also in other descriptions of sickness (Gen 48:1; 1 Sam 19:14; 30:13; Mal 1:13); most relevant here is its association with demons (Tob 6:7–8), as in the only other Lukan use (the cognate in Luke 6:18).

297. Thomas, *Deliverance*, 249; for the Gospel, see 198–228; for Acts, see 229–95.

298. For discussion of OT evidence for demons, see also Kotansky, "Demonology," 269–70; for a survey of Satan and demons in Luke-Acts (esp. the Gospel), see Fitzmyer, *Theologian*, 146–74. On approaches to spirits in antiquity, see discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 769–87; in various cultures today, 788–856.

299. Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 196–97.

300. More often than not, these texts mention the exorcisms before proclaiming the kingdom, as if God's authority is first demonstrated and then explained. Proclaiming God's rule is used to terrify spirits in 4Q510 1 4 (Vermes, *Religion*, 130).

301. For Jesus, see Twelftree, *Name*, 130–37; for the Twelve, 137–42; for echoes specifically in Acts 5:12–16, see 142.

302. See Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 134–38, citing esp. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 4:7 (which uses Zech 13:2; he argues for a popular view refuted here); a likely implication of 4Q*Exorcism ar* (4Q560) (Gaster, *Scriptures*, 262n17, claims that it appears in rabbinic literature, but offers no sources; regarding spirits in graveyards, presumably associated with corpse uncleanness, cf. *b. Sanh.* 65b; *Hag.* 3b). See also the "polluted demons" in *Jub.* 10:1; "unclean spirits" in 4Q230 1 1 (but this is reconstructed); and, differently, "unclean spirit" in 1QS IV, 22 (vs. the "spirit of truth" in IV, 21); 4Q444 1 3–4 + 2 I, 4 (possibly the human spirit); clearly 11Q5 XIX, 15 (and the reconstructed text in 11Q6 4–5 16; here an unclean spirit acts like Satan). Those dominated by Belial's spirits also are more apt to defile the temple (CD XII, 1–2; 4Q271 5 I, 17–18). "Unclean" could sometimes represent "sinful" (1QpHab VIII, 13). Later, see *Test. Sol.* 3:7 (τὰ ἀκάθαρτα πνεύματα).

303. Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 137, while emphasizing that it is attested as one perspective, concedes that it is not widespread.

and impurity also appear.³⁰⁴ Levitical purity laws lack prophylactic associations, but their Hittite analogies serve as prophylaxis against demons.³⁰⁵ Following Leviticus and Jewish tradition, some forms of sickness (such as leprosy; cf. Lev 13) are linked with impurity in Luke-Acts.³⁰⁶

Power encounters were a primary means of driving out competition.³⁰⁷ Many later Christian authors claimed that exorcism happened regularly and as a matter of public knowledge. Thus Justin boasts about it in his city; Irenaeus is emphatic about its occurrence; Tertullian says, “Let a man be produced *right here before your court* who, it is clear, is possessed by a demon, and that spirit, commanded by any Christian at all, will as much confess himself a demon in truth as, by lying, he will elsewhere profess himself a ‘god’”; Cyprian says that his audience may *see* the demons cast out of burning idols.³⁰⁸ These exorcists were not averse to “roughing” demons up—“manhandling,” “humiliating them, making them howl, beg for mercy, tell their secrets, and depart in a hurry,” thus exposing the superiority of the true God over all others.³⁰⁹

304. Klawans (“Impurity”; idem, “Idolatry”) emphasizes the links between sin and impurity in the Scrolls; Himmelfarb, “Impurity and Sin,” warns against overgeneralizing this link (while conceding that 1QS and 4QS12 exceed OT perspectives).

305. See esp. Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 256–57, 259–60, 318, 766; note also, e.g., Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *Background Commentary*, 25, 125, 129–32; cf. Gane, *Leviticus*, 407.

306. See, e.g., Pilch, *Healing*, 111–12.

307. MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 27. On power encounters, see further discussion at Acts 8:9–11 and 13:6.

308. MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 27.

309. *Ibid.*, 28.

MORE PERSECUTION (5:17–42)

In contrast to the people's favorable reception of Jesus's appointed agents in Acts 5:12–16 is the authorities' response in 5:17–18. In 5:17–42, the power of God invites more persecution. Moreover, the narrative illustrates that God's power can deliver from captivity, but that power also enables God's servants to continue to grow the church despite persecution. The apostles, backed with continuing miracles, are no less bold than before. The central speech is by a respected non-Christian voice (5:35–39), climaxing in 5:39: if Jesus's movement is not a human revolutionary movement but from God, nothing will stop it. And in Acts, nothing does (5:42; 28:30–31).

The introduction to Acts 4–5, above, briefly addressed conventional historical questions, but we may also pause to note that aspects of the narrative sound more plausible to many peoples in the world than seems natural to many middle-class Western readers. The portrait of a power struggle between a political elite and a populist movement depicted here comports well with reality as experienced and interpreted by many repressed groups in much of the world.¹

I. Arrest, Release, Rearrest (5:17–28)

Acts reports a variety of divine escapes, including a permanent escape (12:8–11), an escape that was not an escape (16:26–28), and here a temporary escape leading to a rearrest. The second time, however, the officers must arrest the apostles publicly in front of a crowd, and so, if anything happens to the apostles, all Jerusalem will know of it.

a. Sadducees Arrest the Apostles (5:17–18)

That the high priest and his colleagues “arose” could suggest that they planned to speak or take public action (cf. 2:14; 5:34; 11:28; 13:16; 15:7; and comment on Acts 5:20), but it may simply reflect Semitic syntax due to Luke's immersion in the LXX or perhaps semitized Koine.² This “high priest” was introduced in 4:6 as Annas (though historically Caiaphas was high priest at this time, his father-in-law was de facto head of the high-priestly family)³ and leads the session in 5:27 (cf. 7:1).

I. THE SADDUCEAN “SECT” (5:17)

Luke here calls the Sadducees a “sect” (αἵρεσις); elsewhere he applies the title to the Pharisees (15:5, in this case also Christians, and so the two are not mutually exclusive categories; 26:5) and Christians (Nazarenes, 24:5), though he accepts the title for Christians only as an external designation (28:22), since they believed

1. See esp. González, *Acts*, 86–87.

2. Cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 56; Luke 4:38; 24:12; Acts 1:15; 8:27; 9:39; 10:20.

3. See comment on Acts 4:6.

themselves the true way (24:14). Greeks used the term to describe different sects of philosophers, such as Epicureans, Peripatetics, and Stoics (Epict. *Diatr.* 2.19.20), and also Platonists.⁴ Stoics so described their own school.⁵

Josephus applied this language to the different movements or schools within early Judaism,⁶ and Luke provides independent attestation that this was an accepted way to explain Palestinian Jewish groups to Gentile readers.⁷ The language itself (cf. 1 Cor 11:19; Gal 5:20; 2 Pet 2:1) rightly points to the divisions in early Judaism,⁸ which may help explain the reference to “jealousy” here.

II. JEALOUSY AS A MOTIVATION (5:17)

Luke explains part of the temple hierarchy’s motivation as “jealousy,” which may sound to modern ears like an unverifiable cheap shot but is entirely plausible in the logic of the narrative (cf. 1 Sam 18:8–9). The same motivation (and exact wording, “filled with jealousy”) appears in the first reported synagogue hostility toward Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:45); Thessalonian Jews (17:5) likewise oppose Paul from jealousy. All of these opponents seem to follow the model of Joseph’s brothers in the biblical narrative (7:9; see comment there). The expression “filled” is common in Luke-Acts, but it might possibly recall the recent mention of Satan’s filling Ananias’s heart (5:3).⁹

Envy was common enough in the agonistic, honor-shame society of ancient Mediterranean cities.¹⁰ As Spencer points out, “Within a competitive limited honor culture the popularity of the apostles’ ministry . . . diminishes their own support.”¹¹ This is particularly the case given apostolic charges attributing to Jerusalem’s leaders unjust decisions that led to Roman soldiers crucifying a good Jew—indeed, God’s Messiah (3:17; 5:28). In a similar (though less sensational) manner, Josephus felt that his good fortune produced jealousy and frequent accusations against him (*Life* 423, 425) and that fellow aristocrats opposed him because of “envy” (*Life* 204).¹² Because successes breed envy (especially against outsiders),¹³ some ancients even considered it wise to leave the arena of their successes (Polyb. 1.36.2–3). Just as success bred jealousy, jealousy might generate slander;¹⁴ indeed, an orator might deliberately stir envy to create enmity,¹⁵ which was its neighbor.¹⁶

4. For Platonists, see Macrob. *Comm.* 2.14.6 (van der Horst, “Macrobius,” 226).

5. Hierocles p. 37, col. 8, 10 (van der Horst, “Hierocles,” 157); Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.6a, pp. 38–39.4; 2.7.6b, pp. 38–39.19; 7, pp. 42–43.26; 11m, pp. 86–87.22; 11m, pp. 90–91.16.

6. Josephus schematizes Jewish schools in terms of three or four sects; but later rabbis mention Boethusians as very close to Sadducees, and Josephus mentions two varieties of Essenes (cf. *War* 2.160). Josephus cannot list all sects; he does not list as a sect the Judean followers of Jesus (“Nazarenes,” Acts 24:5), who cannot but have existed (e.g., Gal 1:22). But all our sources list Pharisees and Sadducees as the dominant groups in Judean society.

7. See, e.g., Acts 15:5; 26:5; Reicke, *Era*, 152.

8. On the diversity of early Judaism, see (differing in how far they take it), e.g., Porton, “Diversity”; Luke, “Society Divided”; Boccaccini, “Multiple Judaisms”; Neusner, *New Testament*, 106–24; Keener, *John*, 181–85.

9. Cf. also Jesus’s opponents filled with anger in Luke 4:28, or Peter being filled with the Spirit in confronting the leaders (Acts 4:8).

10. Plut. *Profit by Enemies* 10, *Mor.* 91E, counts it both endemic in humanity and characteristic of the base (citing Pindar frg. 212).

11. Spencer, *Acts*, 43.

12. I am treating ζήλος, φθόνος, and similar terms as sufficiently synonymous for the points being made here.

13. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 1.7.2; Corn. Nep. 8 (Thrasylbulus), 4.1–2; 12 (Chabrias), 3.3; 23 (Hannibal), 1.2; Diog. Laert. 5.76–77; Philost. *Hrk.* 15.10.

14. Lucian *Slander* 12.

15. *Rhet. Alex.* 36, 1445a.12.

16. *Rhet. Alex.* 36, 1445a.19–20.

Moralists often addressed the issue of envy,¹⁷ even in entire essays.¹⁸ Philosophers were known to critique envy.¹⁹ Both Gentile²⁰ and Jewish²¹ authors condemned envy in general; Gentile²² and Jewish²³ authors also did so in narratives. Instead of harming a person whom one envies, it is better to stop envying (Mus. Ruf. 7, p. 58.1–2).²⁴ In one Jewish text, true humility kills jealousy (*Test. Gad* 5:3).

Envy was a natural motivation to attribute to enemies²⁵ and also proved useful to answer charges that one was exaggerating the praises of one's protagonists (Thucyd. 2.35.2).²⁶ Some scholars today suppose that Luke's attribution of this motivation fits best in novelistic genres,²⁷ but it was in fact common in historical genres. It appears frequently as a motivation for enmity in the works of political historians and biographers,²⁸ sometimes even as a statement of general political life.²⁹ It provided a motive that a person could cite for his opponent's charges (e.g., Lysias *Or.* 24.1, §168).³⁰ Marcius's colleagues plotted against him διὰ φθόνου (Plut. *Coriol.* 39.1); those who most should have supported Spinther caused him troubles because of jealousy (Cic. *Fam.* 1.7.2); some who criticize others do so because they envy those superior to themselves (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.21.515). Some orators even studied how to provoke envy against opponents (presenting them as harming the audience's interests; *Rhet. Alex.* 36, 1445a.12); this was helpful in generating hatred (36, 1445a.19–20). The charge was apparently common enough to warrant the disclaimer that a political action was not caused by envy (Val. Max. 2.8.4, presenting the republican senate as above such motives).³¹ It appears as a motivation for op-

17. E.g., Hor. *Sat.* 1.1 (e.g., status in 1.1.61–62; wealth in 1.1.70–79); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.19; Plut. *Flatt.* 24, *Mor.* 65B; *Lect.* 5, *Mor.* 39DE; *Profit by Enemies* 8, *Mor.* 91AB.

18. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 77–78; Plut. *Envy, Mor.* 536E–538E (hate was worse, since it desired the other's destruction).

19. E.g., Sen. *Y. Dial.* 5.31.1; Mus. Ruf. 17, p. 108.13; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.9.20; 2.19.26; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5f, pp. 30–31.28; 2.7.10e, pp. 62–63.15; Anacharsis *Ep.* 4.13, to Medocus; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.11; *Ep. Apoll.* 43; van der Horst, "Musionius," 310; Diog. Laert. 6.1.5; 10.117 (Epicurus).

20. E.g., Hesiod *W.D.* 195; Xen. *Mem.* 3.9.8; Ovid *Metam.* 2.760–64, 768–69; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 4.1. Some ancients associated it particularly with women (Musaeus *Hero* 36–37; *ILLRP* 977 in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 135, §138; Jos. *Ant.* 18.255), but most references in ancient literature are to men. Younger men often euphemized it with designations such as "ambition" (Plut. *Old Men* 25, *Mor.* 796A). Some eventually even personified Jealousy; see Men. *Rhet.* 1.1, 342.6–9 (claiming it a recent innovation).

21. E.g., Wis 6:23; *Let. Aris.* 224; *Sib. Or.* 3.660–64; *Test. Iss.* 4:5; *Test. Gad* 7:2; Philo *Good Person* 13; *Sacr.* 20–21, 32; *Posterity* 138, 140, 150; *Test. Sol.* 6:4 MSS; 2 *En.* 70:23; *Gen. Rab.* 49:8. It would cease in the coming age of peace in *Sib. Or.* 3.377.

22. E.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.15; Val. Max. 2.8.4; Plut. *Isis* 27, *Mor.* 361C; Iambl. *V.P.* 2.10; Char. *Chaer.* 1.2.5–6.

23. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 18.255; *War* 1.77; *Acts Paul* 3.15 (*Paul Thec.* 15); Joseph's brothers constituted a common case (e.g., Philo *Jos.* 5, 17, 114, 144, 234; Jos. *Ant.* 2.13; *Test. Sim.* 3).

24. Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.10c, pp. 60–61.32; pp. 62–63.2.

25. E.g., 3 Macc 6:7 (Daniel's accusers); *Test. Dan* 1:6; *b. Yoma* 71b. Josephus accuses some Gentile historians of ignoring Jews for this reason (*Ag. Ap.* 1.213; cf. 1.222, 225). Political biography regularly lists envy as a motive for hostility; e.g., Hdn. 3.2.3; Corn. Nep. 5 (Cimon), 3.1; 8 (Thrasylbulus), 4.1–2; 12 (Chabrias), 3.3; 14 (Datames), 5.2; 15 (Epaminondas), 7.1; 18 (Eumenes), 7.2; 10.2; 23 (Hannibal), 1.2.

26. Disbelief of accounts might stem from envy (Lucian *Tox.* 56).

27. Pervo, *Acts*, 141n9, associates inference of motives especially with popular and fictitious works, citing appropriately several texts (esp. Jos. *Asen.* 24; roughly ten references to lovers' jealousy in Gentile romances); less apt is his citation of material in Josephus that the latter may have believed historical (*Ant.* 12.174; esp. 20.21, which mentions envy). Although *Acts* is fairly popular literature (as Pervo emphasizes on 141), this motivation is not limited to popular literature.

28. E.g., Corn. Nep. 14 (Datames), 5.2; 23 (Hannibal), 1.2 (Sil. It. 11.554 also mentions that Hannibal's rival opposed him because of jealousy, *invidia*); Vell. Paterc. 2.47.2; Tac. *Ann.* 16.18; cf. Plut. *Themist.* 29.4.

29. Corn. Nep. 8 (Thrasylbulus), 4.1–2; 12 (Chabrias), 3.3; Vell. Paterc. 2.40.4.

30. Others presented charges as motivated by personal enmity of other sorts (Lysias *Or.* 9.10, §115 [the issue was friendship with the accuser's enemy, 9.13, §115]).

31. Plaintiffs had to guard against being suspected of this motive (Hermog. *Inv.* 1.1.95–96). Some commentators also cite the association of envy with the desire to murder (e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 34.1; Johnson,

position in early Christian texts (Mark 15:10; Phil 1:15; *Acts Paul* 3.15), including later in Acts (Acts 7:9; 17:5).

For the Sadducees, populist Pharisees may have been bad enough; the relatively uneducated Galilean apostles, however, claimed charismatic power and divine authorization to challenge their hegemony. In addition to Luke's mention of the leaders' envy of the apostles' popularity (5:13), we might imagine that the leaders would be troubled by rumors that some people, specifically a well-to-do couple, had mysteriously died when confronted by Peter, a report that seems to have spread widely (5:11). The story's biblically literate ideal audience would be aware that God's agents might be blamed when God struck someone dead (Num 16:41).

III. ARREST AND DETENTION (5:18)

The apostles' popularity³² and lack of an adequate public charge had protected them from the authorities so far (cf. Acts 4:21); but they had continued to openly defy the authorities' decree, and the authorities either would be viewed as tacitly accepting the new sect or would continue to lose face if they failed to discipline them publicly. The authorities probably believed that they had been lenient so far; indeed, they had sought only to restrict public preaching, not to suppress the church.³³ Now, however, matters had escalated to the point of threatening their own public honor and control, and inaction appeared more dangerous than intervention (though some still thought otherwise, 5:38–39). Their hostile laying on of hands (5:18; cf. 4:3) apparently contrasts with miracles through the apostles' hands in 5:12.

Peter's jailing is significant for one who approaches the early chapters of Acts in light of the end of the Gospel. In the Gospel's passion narrative, Peter claimed that he was willing to face "both prison and death" for Jesus (Luke 22:33)—but he failed (22:34, 57–61). His character proves quite different in Acts, with the resurrection and Pentecost as the transforming events (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4–5). His imprisonments (Acts 4:3; 5:18; 12:4–6) also connect him backward with John's ministry (Luke 3:20) and forward with Paul (Acts 16:23–40; 24:27) and other disciples (Luke 21:12; Acts 8:3; 22:4; 26:10).

Luke may not be referring to the "public prison" (e.g., NRSV) but may well instead employ the adjective δημοσίᾳ adverbially: they jailed them "publicly,"³⁴ as in Acts 16:37 (cf. 18:28; 20:20); this action contrasts with the angel's releasing them by night (5:19). This claim further highlights the elite's public competition with the apostles for honor (5:17), publicly shaming the apostles—who will count this indignity as a badge of honor (5:41). Although this jail had gates (5:19), it is not likely in the Fortress Antonia (in contrast, perhaps, to the place of detention in 12:4–5). Romans garrisoned the Fortress Antonia in this period (again in possible contrast to the brief period of Herod Agrippa I's reign in Acts 12), but the narrative presents this site as under the jurisdiction of the temple police and the municipal aristocracy. Nevertheless, like the fortress, this site is likely near the temple (5:21).

Acts, 96, and Witherington, *Acts*, 229, cite Plato *Laws* 9.869E–870A; Plut. *Br. Love* 17, *Mor.* 487F; Wis 2:24; Philo *Jos.* 12).

32. Whereas Jesus's power base was Galilean (cf. Luke 22:59) and hence of little threat to the leaders, the apostles now had a Jerusalem base.

33. Cf. Goppelt, *Times*, 57.

34. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 106. See BDAG for more detailed argument and examples (esp. *SIG*² 680.3; also, e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 3.4.1; 3.22.2; Vett. Val. 71.22; *SIG* 1173.9, 13, 18; *BGU* 1086.2.3; 2 Macc 6:10; 3 Macc 2:27; 4:7; *Jos. War* 2.455; Justin 2 *Apol.* 3.2; 12.5; Tat. 18.3; 25.1; 26.3).

b. Released and Commissioned (5:19–20)

Whereas Peter leaves the range of the deadlier nemesis, King Agrippa I (12:17), here the apostles are sent not into hiding but into public to teach. That they heed this angelic commission underlines both their courage and their obedience—both in turn based on faith. The release is a means to an end: continuing to proclaim God’s message (cf. 4:20, 29, 31; 5:28–32).

I. MIRACULOUS ESCAPES (5:19)

Jesus’s mission includes release to the captives (Luke 4:18;³⁵ cf. perhaps [but probably not] 23:25), and Luke knew quite well how difficult it sometimes was to get people out of detention by legal means (Luke 12:58–59; Acts 24:27). The angel of the Lord will free Peter from a more serious detention again in Acts 12:7–11 (a context that in some respects evokes the deliverance at Passover). And as in 12:6–10, doors open without guards realizing it.

As scholars often observe,³⁶ miraculous escapes are a frequent motif in ancient literature, especially surrounding classical tales of the “new” god Dionysus spreading his cult.³⁷ Even if biblical allusions are more natural to Luke’s explicit narrative world (as noted above), in this case Greek stories provide some more-detailed parallels. In Euripides, Dionysus freed his followers from prison (Eurip. *Bacch.* 443–45), and the fetters fell “of themselves” (αὐτόματα; cf. Acts 12:10) from their feet (*Bacch.* 447); doors likewise “unbolted themselves” without human hand (*Bacch.* 448).³⁸

One need not assume that Luke directly drew on Euripides here, although Euripides was the most popular model and could influence Luke’s telling, directly or indirectly.³⁹ Others after Euripides likewise repeated this supernatural release of prisoners, often narrating others as well (Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.1).⁴⁰ In the second century B.C.E., Apollonius of Rhodes sang that door bolts sprang back by themselves (αὐτόματοι) through the witch Medea’s magical song (Ap. Rhod. 4.41–42). In the second century C.E., Philostratus claimed that Apollonius loosed his bonds and that gates opened wide for him before his final disappearance (*Vit. Apoll.* 8.30).

Hellenistic Judaism had already adopted the motif probably by the third or second century B.C.E., if later Christian sources transcribed Artapanus accurately;⁴¹ this author

35. The passage in its Isaian context refers to Israel’s restoration, but just as Luke would read literally (Isa 35:5 in Luke 7:22) as well as spiritually (cf. Isa 6:9–10 in Acts 28:26–27) Isaiah’s promises of the blind’s sight restored, the God who would deliver his people at the eschatological restoration could also do so literally at times for his servants who were agents of the end-time restoration.

36. E.g., Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 101; Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 58; Marguerat, *Actes*, 189–90. Weaver, *Epiphany*, 45, counts “Dionysus’ liberating power . . . among his best-known attributes” and (11–22) surveys previous studies of Greek myth in prison escapes in Acts (Otto Weinreich; Richard Pervo; Reinhard Kratz). Ziegler, *Dionysos*, finds Dionysian motifs in Acts perhaps too pervasively but is correct to highlight *theomachos* (e.g., 115–18, on Euripides; 177–82, on Paul; and 183–87, on Agrippa vs. Peter); cf. also Schäfer, “Funktion.” On Dionysus, see concisely, e.g., Graf, “Dionysus.”

37. Pervo, *Profit*, 21–22, reckons more than thirty such tales. Rapske, *Custody*, 418, sees the accounts of Dionysus as variants of a single story; he also surveys the motif in apocryphal Christian literature that is at least sometimes dependent on Acts (414–17).

38. Dionysus himself escapes likewise in Eurip. *Bacch.* 642–43; in *Bacch.* 655, he flies over walls to escape. On door bolts in this period, see, e.g., Hurschmann, “Lock,” 766, 768.

39. For the importance of recognizing the motif’s pervasiveness, see Weaver, *Epiphany*, 281–82.

40. Rapske, *Custody*, 412–14, cites other examples, including Ovid *Metam.* 3.572–701 and the escape of Caius Marius in the historical period (87 B.C.E.; Lucan *C.W.* 2.76–83; Plut. *C. Mar.* 39; Velleius Paterculus *Roman History* 2.19.3; but cf. Livy *Epit.* 77). See also later reports of the divine man Apollonius (Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.38; Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 58).

41. Clement has “according to God’s will” rather than Eusebius’s αὐτομάτως, the latter corresponding more explicitly to Acts 12 (*OTP* 2:901 n. j-2)—yet also common elsewhere (Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.1). On Artapanus’s prison escape, see Weaver, *Epiphany*, 69–72; Weaver associates this with the exodus, in apologetic against

often evokes Greek myths,⁴² with which he skillfully interweaves the biblical story.⁴³ In Artapanus, Pharaoh imprisoned Moses when he came to tell him to release the Jews.⁴⁴ “But when night came, all the doors of the prison opened of themselves, and some of the guards died, while others were relaxed by sleep and their weapons were broken.”⁴⁵ Even Acts 12 and 16 are less dramatic than this report, but both share the same worldview in which God sometimes miraculously delivered his agents.

The LXX lacks a tradition of angels aiding prison escapes, though angels were involved in a prophet’s escape from harm (1 Kgs 19:7), including while in prison (Dan 6:22); another righteous person’s escape (Gen 19:15–16); and the deliverance of Israel from slavery (Exod 3:2; 14:19; 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:3).⁴⁶ An angel could also (contrast Acts 5:19–20) instruct a prophet to go *with* those who had come to arrest him (2 Kgs 1:15). Although God brought individuals out of prison in ancient Israel (Gen 41:14–45; Ps 105:20; cf. 142:7; Jer 40:1), it was not by the means here. An angel enabled Peter’s escape in Acts 12:7–11, but there the situation was much more serious, requiring Peter’s flight (12:17). Here the apostles preach in the temple.

This fits a pattern of miraculous escapes in Acts, though variety in the pattern undercuts attempts to predict how God must act (cf. 2:38; 10:44–48). Sometimes apostles died (12:2); other times they were miraculously released (12:7–11), were released but were wise to stay (16:28), or had to endure a lengthy judicial process (24:27; 26:30–32). Those offended by the shame of Paul’s imprisonment (cf. Phil 1:7, 20; 2 Tim 1:8, 16) could therefore note that it stemmed not from God’s lack of power to release him but from Paul’s being on trial for the defense of the gospel (Acts 24:20–21; 26:6–8; 28:20; Phil 1:7, 13) and having to testify before officials as Jesus had promised (Luke 12:11–12; 21:12; Acts 9:15).⁴⁷

John Weaver rightly notes a story line common both to the three supernatural release accounts in Acts and to the Dionysus tradition, a plot that may be diagrammed as follows: “Arrival of New God/Cult → Conflict with Impious Ruler(s) → Epiphanic Deliverance from Prison → Death or Repentance of Oppressor → Establishment of Cult.”⁴⁸ His approach does allow for necessary flexibility in sequence and variation in detail,⁴⁹ and he allows for such a plot in historical as well as other genres.⁵⁰ He also

Egyptian anti-exodus polemic (72–78). He also (79–82) compares 3 Maccabees, which recalls (82–84) *Bacchanals*. (Hacham, “Polemic,” views 3 Maccabees as anti-Dionysiac polemic, less plausibly suggesting [182] that some Jews may have been attracted to the cult.) For Jewish prison-escape stories, Koskenniemi, *Miracle-Workers*, 291, cites also *Hist. Rech.* 10:5.

42. Weaver, *Epiphany*, 64–78 (esp. 66: “above all a myth-mimicker”).

43. *Ibid.*, 66–69.

44. Of itself, this would constitute a not implausible surmise for a fairly liberal Greek historian; the following sensationalism, however, reflects haggadic expansion, perhaps from earlier storytellers but not dependent on the exodus story itself.

45. Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.23 (*OTP* 2:901). Others also cite Artapanus here (Karris, *Invitation*, 72–73). Angels delivered righteous people from prison in *Hist. Rech.* 10:5, but this appears to be a Christian monastic work.

46. For Artapanus’s linking his story of Moses’s miraculous prison escape with the larger narrative of the exodus, see Weaver, *Epiphany*, 72–78. Weaver, 102–3, notes angelic involvement in deliverances in 2 Macc 11:6; 3 Macc 6:5, 7 (though the stories alluded to in 3 Maccabees already include angels; i.e., 2 Kgs 19:35; Dan 6:22).

47. For apologetic for Paul (and his custody) being one element of Luke’s apologetic, see discussion in Keener, “Apologetic”; *idem*, *Acts*, 1:445–47.

48. Weaver, *Epiphany*, 22. He traces this plot in Acts 5 (93–148) (though overdoing the connections with Acts 1–7), in Acts 12 (149–217), and in Acts 16 (219–79). For liberating appearances in mythic settings, see 32–44; for prison epiphany as miraculous salvation, see 44–49; for avenging the god and the cult, 49–51; for reestablishing the cult, 51–53; for political functions of prison epiphany (e.g., the overthrow of Pentheus), 57–59.

49. *Ibid.*, 23.

50. *Ibid.*, 1–6, refers to historians’ use of mythic patterns (though most of Weaver’s examples belong to the distant past) and (282) associates with historical practice Luke’s selection and presentation of such

notes what is distinctive about Acts; it is not fair to say that the apostles themselves are “unhindered” — certainly they *are* hindered by such detentions — but nothing stops the gospel’s “irrepressible advance.”⁵¹ Most important is what follows the releases in Acts, indicating Luke’s theology: these incidents include “not just a release *from* prison, but also a release *for* proclamation.”⁵²

Scholars rightly note narrative connections among various jailings and escapes in Acts, though we should not use Luke’s literary connections to deny that such jailings may have occurred.⁵³ Paul’s letters testify abundantly to the reality of not only various forms of persecution (Rom 15:31; 1 Thess 2:14–15) but also repression from various kinds of authorities (2 Cor 11:23–25; 1 Thess 2:2), a repression in which, he confesses, he himself has participated (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6). If Luke, providing a narrative, supplies details about persecutions (including jailings; e.g., Acts 8:3; 22:4)⁵⁴ that Paul’s summaries omit, Luke should not for this reason be held extraordinarily suspect. Only Acts provides *narratives* that include detentions in this period, though Paul’s detention by Roman authorities somewhere is unquestioned (Phil 1:7, 13; 4:22), as are a significant number of earlier imprisonments (2 Cor 6:5; 11:23). Only Acts details miraculous escapes with regard to some of these detentions, however (though cf. 2 Cor 11:32–33 with Acts 9:23–25; perhaps 1 Cor 15:32). The most we can say from Pauline evidence is that Paul would have regarded God as responsible for any release (2 Cor 1:10; Phil 1:19).⁵⁵

The variety in the escapes also shows that, despite his narrative connections, Luke is not bound to an inflexible compositional pattern. Whereas Acts 5 and 12 are similar, Acts 16 is a miraculous *nonescape*, and Acts 22–28 represents a lengthy detention also attested in Paul’s correspondence (especially Philippians and Philemon; also likely Ephesians and/or Colossians if they are accepted as genuine). Granted, the varied outcomes could also be interpreted as a novelistic technique that supports variety.⁵⁶ But the variations do not by themselves demand a novelistic interpretation. Rather, they demand only that Luke, writing about a movement that found itself in conflict with authorities from the earliest period (cf., e.g., Luke 23:1–5), focused on detentions as one of the more interesting features of his sources and believed that the Christian God, no less than Artapanus’s God of Moses or the former gods of some members

material. The best “historical” example may be the biblical adaptation in Artapanus, but it is not unlikely that if Luke had escapes in his sources (and firsthand stories from some of my own in-laws, regarding a war situation, illustrate that escapes do occur; note an example below), he would have been happy to retell them in a manner evoking such narratives.

51. *Ibid.*, 285.

52. *Ibid.*, 286.

53. Pace Goulder, *Type and History*, 188. Those who accept as pre-Lukan tradition only what can be corroborated from extant external sources employ a minimalist approach that, if applied to other historical works (on Acts as a work of ancient historiography, see discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:51–319), would leave us little knowledge of premodern history. If our goal is ascertaining what is historically probable rather than merely articulating the bare minimum that seems certain (cf. my brief discussion in *Historical Jesus*, 163–64), we have reason to believe that Luke has information here, just as he does in his Gospel and in the Pauline portions of Acts.

54. Prison was usually employed for temporary detention until trial or execution (Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.3.26; Plut. *Cic.* 20.3), however, not usually as a punishment (cf. Caird, *Revelation*, 35; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 35; Hemer, *Letters*, 68; esp. Rapske, *Custody*, 12–14). Sometimes it also coerced payment (Aeschines *Tim.* 16; Plut. *Caes.* 2.4; Matt 18:34); occasionally it could be envisioned as punishment (Cic. *Cat.* 4.4.7).

55. Cf. historical narrative in Eunapius *Lives* 479, which recounts as a (pagan) miracle Maximus’s release by order of the officials. Others occasionally escaped from prisons nonmiraculously, usually through guards’ carelessness or complicity (Plut. *Demosth.* 26.2).

56. Pervo, *Profit*, 18. Narratives of incarcerations “introduce great danger while evoking sympathy from the readers” (19).

of his ideal audience, sometimes intervened miraculously and at other times did not. Christians of more recent eras also have miraculous escape stories along with the more common martyr stories.⁵⁷

That the motif of divine escapes was by now widespread could be used to challenge any specific allusion to Euripides, but an allusion to Euripides probably is present (on the level of Luke's audience, regardless of whether it is present in his sources). This is suggested by the use of θεομάχοι in Acts 5:39 (see comments there); although even quotes from the widely known author Euripides can derive from handbooks or school exercises (and hence ignore their contextual source; cf. comment on the Euripides allusion in 26:14), the accumulation of allusions in this context is suggestive. If Luke hopes his audience will infer such a suggestion, however, it would be for Christ as a rival, rather than an imitator, of Dionysus.⁵⁸ For himself, his fellow God-fearers, and other believers traditionally associated with the synagogue, Luke's use of such a model would carry all the more "orthodox" associations they had already gathered in Jewish tradition.

II. THE MESSAGE OF LIFE (5:20)

The command to go speak in the temple fits the situation (it was here that the apostles could address large crowds) but also might evoke similar earlier commands to Jeremiah (again, to address all the people; e.g., Jer 7:2; 26:2; in other public places, 17:19; 18:2; 22:1). "Standing" to speak (also 5:25) may be contrasted with the usual mode of Jewish instruction (cf. Luke 4:20; Matt 5:1),⁵⁹ but it may provide better acoustics for a large crowd. It matches the apostles' posture for speaking in Acts 2:14 and would be the most familiar (though not exclusive) posture for speakers in the world known to Luke's audience (cf. 17:22; 21:40; 22:30; 24:20–21; 25:10, 18; 26:22; 27:21; 1 Cor 14:30).⁶⁰

Though the message of "this life" possibly could refer to the "way" of behavior (cf. Luke 12:15) as in wisdom tradition (see comment on the "way" in Acts 9:2), it probably refers to eternal life (Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; Acts 11:18; 13:46, 48) through Jesus (cf. Acts 2:28; 3:15). This would make it parallel to "message of this salvation" mentioned later (13:26).⁶¹ It also suggests the sort of message Peter had already preached in the temple the preceding day (3:12–26), which included "the prince of life" (3:15).

That the site of the apostles' ministry is specifically the temple suggests that they

57. E.g., the escape of Sundar Singh, an Indian Christian mystic (Gallagher, "Hope," 163; Lynch-Watson, *Robe*, 63, 79–80, though noting questions); a story of a Yoruba evangelist (Fape, *Powers*, 98); a Chinese prisoner (Yun, *Heavenly Man*, 64, 251–62, both resembling Acts 12; less supernaturally, 44). In Congo-Brazzaville, during the 1993–94 war, one of my brothers-in-law, Aimé Moussounga (interview, Yaoundé, Jan. 13, 2013), a civilian, also providentially (and barely) escaped captors who had bound him and planned to kill him, although this story has no explicit supernatural trappings except perhaps the timing of his sister's prayers (like other "providential" escapes, e.g., in Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 142; Olson, *Bruchko*, 86–89; Trousdale, *Movements*, 152); cf. also the "miraculous" escape in Hunt, *History and Legacy*, 103 (the nature of which is not elaborated).

58. Whatever their historical origins, these stories theologically "may be setting out to rival similar liberation miracles in Dionysus traditions" (Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 277).

59. See comment on Acts 22:3 (though noting a range of early Jewish teaching postures).

60. See, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.68–69; Xen. *Anab.* 5.1.2; 6.4.12; 6.6.11; Cyr. 7.5.55; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.47.1; Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.64.142; *Pro Amer.* 1.1; 22.60; Virg. *Aen.* 11.342; Plut. *Cic.* 16.3; *Coriol.* 16.2; Pliny *Ep.* 4.9.18; 9.13.18; Lucian *Peregr.* 31 (Albucius's approach in Suet. *Rhet.* 6 is unusual); also comment on Acts 2:14. It might contrast with the "standing" of guards (Acts 5:23) or being "stood" before the Sanhedrin (5:27), though supporting clues are too few to render this more than speculation.

61. With, e.g., Marshall, *Acts*, 118 (noting that Syriac translates "life" and "salvation" with the same term); Johnson, *Acts*, 97.

continue Jesus's ministry (Luke 20:2)⁶² and hence Jesus's confrontation with the temple authorities. In a sense, they seek to "reclaim" the site; God's message ought to be proclaimed there of all places.⁶³ This contrasts with the passive approach of most who worshiped in the temple, however they felt toward the authorities, and the monastic Essenes' apparent surrender of the temple to its defilement. It also contrasts with the approach of the apostles later in Acts, when at least Peter (who had been slated for execution) went into hiding during the fiercer persecution under Agrippa I (Acts 12:17), and perhaps with the uneasy, temporary peace that prevailed afterwards, before James's execution (21:18).

c. *The Council's Reaction* (5:21–28)

Going to the city's most public place in direct defiance of the authorities' orders was calculated not to maintain the apostles' safety but to obey the angels' command (5:20). That the apostles followed divine instructions by speaking (5:21, 29) contrasts starkly with the rulers' expectation of obedience to their own command to be silent (5:28). This portrayal fits the narrative's larger characterization of the apostles as obeying God rather than people (5:29–32).

I. MORNING DISCOVERY (5:21–25)

The apostles began teaching immediately at daybreak (5:21), about when the Sanhedrin began to gather to deal with them. Public life in the ancient Mediterranean world began at daybreak, and not only in Judea. Thus, for example, Roman clients approached their patrons early in the morning, those in front of the line receiving attention beginning around dawn, usually about 6:00 a.m.⁶⁴ Jewish people were well aware of this practice; "friends" or clients of officials could visit them even before the sunlight was widely viewed (3 Macc 5:26). Senators also could assemble at daybreak,⁶⁵ even schools started then.⁶⁶

Jewish people offered morning prayers before work at sunrise (*m. Ber.* 1:2). At night guards kept closed the gates of a temple,⁶⁷ like the gates of cities.⁶⁸ The Levite guards must have opened the temple, however, "in time for the sacrifice at daybreak."⁶⁹

62. With, e.g., Crowe, *Acts*, 26. Temples were common sites for teaching (e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.17; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.2; see comment on Acts 2:46); but they were not the only sites, and hence Luke's story as a whole offers the dominant interpretive grid.

63. Barrett, *Acts*, 284, finds doubtful the views that "the Temple now belongs to the Gospel" (Stählin, *Apostelgeschichte*, 89) or that "this proclamation is the purpose for which God intended the Temple" (Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, 102). Admittedly, a temple was simply a natural public site for assembling and speaking (cf. Watson, "Education," 310), but the apostles do seem to be (spiritually, not politically) "reclaiming" it to some degree (Acts 3:11; 5:12).

64. E.g., Hor. *Sat.* 1.1.9–10; *Ep.* 2.1.103–5; Mart. *Epig.* 3.36.1–3; see further Friedländer, *Life*, 1:86–93; Clarke, "Italy," 475; receiving guest-clients was important to civic-minded nobles (e.g., Plut. *Cic.* 8.3–4). Roman governors followed the same pattern of early-morning meetings; e.g., *Cic. Verr.* 2.4.66.147 (despite the exceptional circumstances; allowing one to come only at daybreak may reflect arrogance, as it does in Theophr. *Char.* 24.7); Plut. *Cic.* 36.3; cf. Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66; 23:1.

65. *Cic. Fam.* 1.2.4; Plut. *Cic.* 15.3; 19.1.

66. Watson, "Education," 311–12; for Jewish schools, see also Safrai, "Education," 954.

67. *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.119; *m. Šeqal.* 5:1 (Ben Geber); Barrett, *Acts*, 284. Haenchen, *Acts*, 249, cites *Jos. Ant.* 18.29 to argue that the gates opened at midnight (it may well be relevant, but it might apply only to Passover, as Bock, *Acts*, 239, also notes).

68. Polyb. 4.18.2; cf. Rev 21:25. This was certainly the practice during war (Sen. *E. Controv.* 5.7), when it might be enforced during the day (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.16).

69. Barrett, *Acts*, 285 (citing Exod 29:39; Num 28:4; Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.169; *m. Yoma* 3:1–2; though noting *m. Ed.* 6:1); for the morning sacrifice, see also 11QT XIII, 15; *Jos. Ant.* 3.257; 14.65; *Ag. Ap.* 2.105; Philo *Heir* 174, 199; *Spec. Laws* 1.171, 256. For some questions concerning the official "hour of prayer," see comment on Acts 3:1.

Some Jerusalemites and visitors would begin gathering this early⁷⁰ for the morning prayer, and so the apostles would find a ready-made crowd to teach at that time. Perhaps most significantly, they continued Jesus's practice of beginning his temple teaching early in the mornings (Luke 21:38).

Although the leaders quickly discovered that the apostles were already teaching in the temple (Acts 5:25), it may be noteworthy that it was not part of their own group that informed them (note "you" in 5:25). In contrast to the apostles (3:1), the mostly priestly city leaders are depicted as further removed from the liturgical life of the temple and the Jerusalemites who worshiped there. For comments on the meaning of "teaching" the gospel, see comment on Acts 5:42.

"All the senate of the house of Israel" (5:21) is probably emphatic: the apostles will witness to the leaders of Israel as Jesus had declared (Luke 12:11–12; 21:12–15). Granted, this need not indicate that every member was available. Yet because the matter was so important and word would have circulated (formally or informally) since the close of the previous day's session,⁷¹ we should expect a large complement of the Sanhedrin present (probably larger than usual). That it gathered before the apostles were summoned indicates for Luke's audience that the entire assembly would be confronted with the report of the miracle (or, from their view, the escape) that had taken place.⁷² Luke's careful summary of the groups gathered here may contrast their self-importance (cf. Acts 25:23) with the public embarrassment the leaders are about to receive (Acts 5:24).

Officers were regularly sent to carry out not only arrests but also transfers of detention and other such matters (e.g., P.Oxy. 65). Most cities in the empire had their own "locally recruited watchmen," rarely effective except in Roman colonies.⁷³ Jerusalem used Levites to guard the temple grounds.⁷⁴ The temple guards' most important duty was to guard the temple at night (*m. Mid.* 1:2).⁷⁵ The term ὑπηρέτης has a wide range of usage, including for attendants in the synagogues (Luke 4:20)⁷⁶ or other kinds of assistants (Acts 13:5).

That the guards were at the custody site (5:23) implies that the guards had not abandoned their post and presumably also had not participated in a conspiracy. (Perhaps not everyone would have found this argument persuasive; cf. Agrippa I's view of his guards' failures in 12:18–19, but he is presented as more bloodthirsty than the Sanhedrin.) In a drama, the report here would have been adequate without narrating the action itself,⁷⁷ but Luke has already recounted the action in 5:19–20, albeit briefly.

70. For Jewish prayer at sunrise, see esp. Manns, "Ante lucem"; cf. Philo *Contempl.* 27; *Flacc.* 122; *Jos. War* 2.128; *Ag. Ap.* 2.10; but esp. fuller comment on hours of prayer at Acts 3:1. Knowing, "Acts," 150, relates ὄρθρον to the Judean heat after early morning.

71. Particularly likely for the majority of members who would have lived in the Upper City.

72. For another example of an unpleasant surprise for a gathered senate, see *Plut. Cic.* 15.3 (cf. 1 *Kgs* 1:42–49).

73. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 34.

74. See 1 *Chr* 9:17–27; 15:18–24; 16:38–39; 23:3–5, 19; 2 *Chr* 34:13; 35:15; *Ezra* 2:42, 70; 7:7; 10:24; *Neh* 7:1, 45, 73; 10:28, 39; 11:19; 12:25, 45–47; 13:5, 22; comment on Acts 4:1; 21:30.

75. Barrett, *Acts*, 286; cf. *Jos. War* 4.298; 6.131; *b. Hor.* 13a; *Tamid* 25b; 27a; for priests ministering at night, cf. *Jos. Ant.* 7.367; *War* 6.299; *Ag. Ap.* 1.199; *b. Ta'an.* 17a; *Zebah.* 87a.

76. Also in one Roman synagogue (*CIJ* 1:xcix); on the *chazzan*, see further *t. Meg.* 3:21; *CIJ* 2:94–95, §855 (but reconstructed); Moore, *Judaism*, 1:289; Safrai, "Synagogue," 935; Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 190. That these Greek and Hebrew terms are equivalent is likely (*Jos. Ant.* 4.214; 12.152; *CIJ* 1:124, §172; 2:57, §805; *Epiph. Her.* 30.11; cited in Applebaum, "Organization," 496; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 695).

77. See Zimmerman, "Messenger Scenes," 765; staging or convention limitations led some actions to be merely narrated in messengers' speeches (cf. *Job* 1:14–19).

Because Sadducees did not (at least according to Josephus)⁷⁸ accept direct divine intervention, they could not but be astonished (5:24; cf. *Jos. Ant.* 13.173).⁷⁹ They do, however, seem more concerned about the potential results of the escape (τί ἄν γένοιτο τοῦτο) than its cause (miracles being ruled out a priori); for Luke's implied audience, this is a morally and probably intellectually negative trait, certainly incompatible with their own Christian beliefs (Acts 4:2; 23:8; Luke 20:27).⁸⁰ By contrast, some non-Sadducean members of the Sanhedrin may have been more open to entertaining the possibility that God had acted (cf. Acts 5:39; 23:9). In contrast to the leading Sadducees (5:17), these other members had not arranged the arrest but only come to discuss it and may have felt the political threat (and personal shame; see below) less fully than the Sadducees did.

In addition to being perplexed,⁸¹ the highest priests and captain of the guard (see comment on Acts 4:1, 5–6) undoubtedly lost face (were shamed) in front of the other Jerusalem leaders they had gathered (5:21). (The captain of the guard would bear primary official responsibility for the proper detention of the prisoners, but his relatives the high priests had also failed to anticipate this situation [5:17–18].) They do not know what is happening and are not in control of the situation, inverting expectations for honor and shame vis-à-vis the apostles.

Whether enemies explained the apostles' escape as due to sorcery or (more likely for the Sadducees) unanticipated human allies (cf. Acts 12:19; perhaps John 7:46–47), the escape presented the apostles as all the more dangerous a threat. If the escape were believed by the crowds to be miraculous, it would heighten the apostles' credibility all the more.⁸² That the apostles were preaching in the temple instead of escaping⁸³ indicated that they were not even afraid of the Sanhedrin—which could appear to the leaders as at once a mark of their confidence in their dangerous popularity and an act of defiance that further shamed the leaders. It constituted a public challenge to their authority, demanding a strong show of force. Yet the increasing popularity of the apostles made such a show of force dangerous (Acts 5:26).

II. REARREST AND CHARGE (5:26–28)

In addition to the shaming of the elite, Luke has to explain how the apostles survived such daring behavior relatively unscathed. Under the corrupt dynasty of Annas and Caiaphas, the Levite temple guards were known for their use of violence.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, soldiers occasionally were too persuaded by speakers they were sent to arrest or execute to carry out their commission.⁸⁵ Here the matter is not personal conviction but concern not to stir the unrest of the crowds,

78. He did present the “sects” so as to correspond with some Jewish philosophic sects, and his sympathies for the Sadducees were limited (though the level of his self-claimed Pharisaic commitment is also questionable).

79. Larkin, *Acts*, 92.

80. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 41, too quickly dismisses the coherency of a rearrest after a miraculous release; granted, it works for Luke's purposes, but it also coheres with the logic of the story world.

81. The verb also applies to hearers at Pentecost (Acts 2:12), to Peter grappling with his vision (10:17), and to Herod Antipas wondering about Jesus (Luke 9:7).

82. Leaders with a Greek education would be familiar with the stories of miraculous escapes surrounding Dionysus's deadly confrontation with King Pentheus. They would also be familiar with the unsubmitiveness of unorthodox Jewish holy men (on “charismatics” and their conflicts with later sages, see Vermes, *Jesus and Judaism*, passim).

83. Cf. the boldness of Moses, who, when miraculously released, went to awaken the king who had imprisoned him (Artapanus in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.24).

84. Barrett, *Acts*, 286 (citing *b. Pesah.* 57a; *t. Menah.* 13:21). One would normally understand rulers' “violence” negatively (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 2.75).

85. E.g., Val. Max. 8.9.2 (cf. also 2.10.6); App. *C.W.* 1.8.72; John 7:45–46; cf. 1 Sam 19:20–24; 22:17.

which could prove dangerous in Jerusalem.⁸⁶ Popular support for a hero appears in novels,⁸⁷ but at this point novels reflected social reality about celebrities; sometimes popular support did protect a person (e.g., Jos. *Life* 250; see further comment at Acts 2:47). If the apostles had proved agents of healing for the masses, they would be quite popular.⁸⁸ Leaders in most societies feared “demagogues” who could play on the “irrational” fears of the masses and stir unrest (see comment on Acts 4:21).⁸⁹ Politics sometimes demanded compromise; in one notorious instance, most jurors voted illegibly so as to “neither risk their lives with the populace by condemning” Clodius nor anger other aristocrats “by acquitting him” (Plut. *Caes.* 10.7 [*Lives*, LCL, 7:467]).

The fear of the people “stoning” them recalls Lukan redaction in Luke 20:6. Luke reports such a pattern of concern about the views of the populace among Jerusalem’s leaders (Luke 19:47–48; 20:6, 19, 26; 22:2, 6, 53; Acts 4:21), and their charge that Jesus was misleading the people (Luke 23:5, 14), that his narrative as a whole suggests that Jerusalem might have embraced the message about Jesus had the corrupt authorities not thwarted this (leaving a spirit of bitterness between the groups). This theme suggests that, for the moment at least, “effective power over the populace has passed to the apostles.”⁹⁰ Perhaps like Elijah, the apostles voluntarily accompany guards to speak God’s message to those who summoned them;⁹¹ Jesus had told them that they would speak to rulers (Luke 12:11; cf. 21:12). That they go willingly seems to be assumed, since the temple guard cannot use violence.⁹²

This is not likely a mere doublet of the tradition also reflected in the previous hearing (Acts 4:3–22); most ancients knew enough to distinguish a preliminary hearing concluded with a warning and a punishment for disregarding the warning (see also comment on Acts 4:21).⁹³ Paul also endures multiple hearings later in Acts, though for quite different reasons.

Although it is striking to us (as Luke probably intended) that the interrogators skip over the problem of how the disciples escaped, this matter was less pressing to the authorities than the apostles’ disobedience to their previous warning, disobedience that provided them formal grounds for action (5:28). “Filling” Jerusalem with their teaching (5:28) reflects the apostles’ success (5:12–16), which Luke has already claimed provoked the Sadducean priests’ jealousy (5:17).⁹⁴ Claiming that evildoers had “filled” a vast area with something negative seems to have become a conventional hyperbole.⁹⁵

86. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 20.108; *War* 2.325–27.

87. Pervo, *Profit*, 35; cf. Char. *Chaer.* 4.7.5; Conzelmann’s citation (*Acts*, 42) of Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.16 as an analogous example of popular unrest.

88. See my *Acts*, 1:366–67, 370. Many think that Jesus’s activity as a healer was a primary draw for crowds (Sanders, *Figure*, 154; cf. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 72), just as people in antiquity traveled from far away to reach healing sanctuaries (Casson, *Travel*, 130–35, 193–94) and flocked to hot springs (Keener, *Matthew*, 158).

89. Even Socrates (see comment on Acts 5:29) was accused of socially subversive behavior (e.g., Xen. *Apol.* 20).

90. Johnson, *Acts*, 97. As in the case of the Pharisees, this should be nuanced as a matter of popular religious support, not political power.

91. 2 Kgs 1:15–16, though there the angel commanded Elijah to go whereas here he has commanded the apostles to teach (Acts 5:20).

92. Chance, *Acts*, 94, suggests the humor in this scene as well as in the officer’s being earlier unaware of their activity in the temple, his own jurisdiction.

93. With, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 228–29.

94. Also a “filling,” as with Ananias in Acts 5:3; but given Luke’s usage of “filling” language elsewhere (e.g., 13:45; 19:28), the cluster of negative fillings here might be coincidence.

95. Whether a city with confusion (Acts 19:29), “all cities” with Cynics (Lucian *Runaways* 16), the world with false accusations (by Gaius Caligula, Jos. *Ant.* 19.14), or the empire with false teaching (Lucian *Alex.* 2).

Speaking of bringing “blood on them” (5:28) refers to the concept of bloodguilt: one who carried guilt for shedding innocent blood would need to be punished.⁹⁶ In the larger context of Luke-Acts, ironically, the apostles would carry bloodguilt for their hearers if they *failed* to speak (20:26, echoing Ezek 33:6; cf. Acts 5:29; 18:6). Hearers who heard but rejected bore their own guilt (Acts 18:6). Further, as Peter boldly points out, the leaders *were* guilty of Jesus’s blood (5:30), thus climaxing a series of martyred prophets that stretched through all salvation history (Luke 11:50–51). Thus the apostles do not seek to bring Jesus’s bloodguilt on these leaders; the leaders have brought it on themselves.⁹⁷

2. Obeying God rather than the Elite (5:29–33)

Peter and the apostles confront the elite again, again emphasizing that obedience to God takes precedence over obedience to other authorities. The apostles must obey God (Acts 5:29), and this is why they can act by the Holy Spirit, whereas the authorities, who do not obey God, cannot (5:32). The apostles are simply witnesses to what they have seen (5:32); meanwhile, the authorities killed the true king and Savior whom God appointed for Israel (5:31)—just as they now are tempted to kill the king’s agents (5:33).

a. Obeying God (5:29)

Although this speech states its points concisely, Luke has offered a fuller context for these points in earlier speeches addressed to the Sanhedrin or to Jerusalemites in general. Unlike most speeches, it lacks a *captatio*. Although Acts includes only summaries of speeches rather than transcripts, the lack of even an address (in contrast to 4:8) seems deliberate (and would sound abrasive; cf. Luke 15:29). The content of this brief speech is good forensic rhetoric against accusers (though it was not, of course, considered good against judges): it reverses the charge of disobedience (seeking to convict, not, as in the deliberative rhetoric of passages such as Acts 2:14–39 or 3:12–26, to persuade). As members of the elite, the Sanhedrin would not anticipate such boldness (or effrontery) from commoners, but they certainly would understand that they were being accused.

Peter’s claim⁹⁸ to obey God rather than people⁹⁹ (echoed in the closing words of this brief speech in 5:32) likely recalls a line commonly quoted in the Greek world,

96. See Gen 4:10–11; Deut 19:10, 13; 21:8–9; 22:8; 2 Sam 1:16; 3:8; 21:1–6; 1 Kgs 2:32–33, 37; 21:19–24; 2 Kgs 21:16; 24:4; Ps 106:38; Prov 6:17; Jer 7:6; 19:4; 22:3, 17; 26:15; Ezek 18:13; Hos 12:14; Matt 23:35; 27:4, 24–25; cf. Lev 20:9–16, 27; *Test. Zeb.* 2:2; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 4.2; for the Canaanite concept of bloodguilt, cf., e.g., Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra*, 43.

97. In an ironic sense, they do seek to bring Jesus’s blood on others salvifically; but Luke does not apply the image of Jesus’s blood this way (even in Luke 22:20; Acts 20:28), and such exploitation of verbal irony is more often Johannine, or possibly Pauline, than Lukan.

98. It seems safe to presume that Peter is the primary spokesperson, as generally when he is named along with others (Luke 9:20; Acts 1:15; 2:14, 37–38; 3:4, 6, 12; 4:8, 13, 19; 8:14, 20; cf. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:216); Luke can speak of a team yet acknowledge a primary spokesperson (Acts 14:12).

99. The pairing of “gods and people” was familiar rhetorically (e.g., Polyb. 18.54.9, 11; 22.10.8; 27.8.4; Sen. *Y. Ben.* 7.1.3; Mus. *Ruf.* 9, p. 76.10; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.40; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.12; for the one God, *Test. Reub.* 4:8; *Test. Levi* 14:7; *Test. Jud.* 16:4; Luke 2:52; Rom 14:18; Poly. *Phil.* 6.1), including in speaking of impiety or hostility toward both (e.g., Polyb. 15.20.4; 32.15.13). The contrast between God and humans is frequent in early Christian texts (Mark 7:8; 10:27; John 12:43; Rom 2:29; 1 Cor 1:25; 2:5, 11; 14:2; 2 Cor 5:11; Gal 1:1, 10; 1 Thess 2:4, 13; 1 Pet 2:4; 4:2, 6; 1 John 5:9; Ign. *Rom.* 2.1; Poly. *Phil.* 5.2), including in Luke (Luke 2:14; 12:8; 16:15; 18:27); the contrast in Acts 5:29 may also echo that emphasis in 5:4. Antithesis was

a line lost neither on Sadducees nor on Luke's audience.¹⁰⁰ People throughout the Mediterranean world knew the story of Socrates's trial, and his obeying God rather than his judges (Plato *Apol.* 29D) was a line easily remembered. Though it had become enough of a commonplace to be used without reference to its source, Luke may count on his ideal audience's recalling the source of the echo (as in his more explicit Scripture citations; cf. Acts 17:19). Although 5:29 echoes this line more clearly than does 4:19, this commentary has treated the allusion more fully under 4:19 (because it surfaces there first); whereas 4:19 is framed in a more conciliatory way as a rhetorical question, however, 5:29 responds more directly. In either situation, this was not an allusion the Sanhedrin would expect to hear from Galileans,¹⁰¹ but still less was it a sentiment the authorities would wish to be expressed. It would frame them in the same role as those who martyred Socrates—an allusion that fits Luke's point perfectly (5:30).

What was the divine commission they were called to obey? God had given them commands through Jesus (1:2), specifically that they should be “witnesses” (1:8; hence 5:32). They could not obey the leaders' command to silence and still obey Christ's command to speak. Paul later echoes obedience to this same commission in 26:16–19.¹⁰²

b. The Message (5:30–32)

In connection with obeying God rather than people (5:29), the apostles in 5:30–31 contrast God's power with the political power of Jerusalem's elite who are essentially “fighting against God” (5:39). The same God who delivered them from unjust imprisonment had delivered Jesus from unjust death (5:30). “The God of our ancestors” is a familiar Lukan and LXX phrase (3:13; 22:14; 24:14; cf. 7:32; 22:3; 26:6; 28:17; elsewhere in the NT only at Matt 23:30; see fuller comment on Acts 3:13); its primary function here is to ground the apostolic message in Israel's history, against the Sanhedrin. For the shame and suffering attached to crucifixion, see comment on Acts 2:23.

The municipal aristocracy does not want to have Jesus's blood attributed to them (Acts 5:28), but Peter minces no words. (Luke's ideal audience, valuing portraits of philosophers' frank insistence on truth or prophets' courageous declaration of God's justice, will no doubt appreciate Peter's stance more than did his audience within the narrative.) One might expect Peter to speak of the leaders having “crucified” Jesus by Roman hands (2:23), but instead he speaks in a manner appropriate not to Romans but to Israel's leaders: they “hanged him on a tree” (also Acts 10:39; Gal 3:13; Paul also calls the cross “wood” or a “tree” in Acts 13:29). Luke's contemporaries knew about crosses and would know that they are not normally called “trees.”¹⁰³ The lan-

a familiar rhetorical device (e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 26, 1435b.25–39; Rowe, “Style,” 142; exploited most notably by Gorgias, most being more restrained; MacDowell, “Introduction,” 18).

100. With most commentators (e.g., Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:216; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 42; Barrett, *Acts*, 237; Witherington, *Acts*, 197; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 314). In turn, Luke's formulation influences 2 *Clem.* 4.4.

101. The words were a commonplace whose source would not always be recalled (indeed, Plato was hardly the first to speak of “obeying” deities; Hom. *Il.* 1.218; Exod 19:5; Deut 27:10). It is admittedly difficult to think how else the apostles could have responded to the Sanhedrin, given their conviction, but Luke would have freedom to phrase these words so as to recall other ideas (like a Socratic allusion) to his hearers. If pressed, perhaps Luke would attribute the allusion to the Spirit (Luke 12:11–12) rather than to Peter or even the collective knowledge of the Twelve; but cf. Paul's comparable classical allusion in Acts 26:14.

102. For reception history of Acts 5:29 from the Latin fathers through the twelfth century, see Tasca, “Pia disobbedienza.”

103. For an exception, Brown, *Death*, 947, cites Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 101.14. Ancients also impaled people on stakes or trees (Diod. Sic. 33.15.1), but without thinking of this as the usual means of crucifixion.

guage alludes to a shameful mode of execution in Deut 21:22–23 (cf. Gen 40:19),¹⁰⁴ which other Jews by this period applied to crucifixion, including for charges of treason (11QT LXIV, 7–8) or evading the law (LXIV, 10–12).¹⁰⁵

Much of the apostles' expectation for Israel echoes popular sentiments based on biblical hopes.¹⁰⁶ Because Jesus's mission included salvation for Israel (Acts 5:31), the apostles needed to keep preaching to the people in the temple (5:20)—and hence could not submit to the Sanhedrin's demands for silence. Jesus was Israel's rightful prince (whom the authorities, as caretakers who essentially became usurpers, had participated in killing, 5:30; cf. Luke 20:14). The hearers understand the apostles' claim politically (Acts 5:36–37), and whether the claim is good or bad politics depends on whether God is genuinely with them (5:39). That the authorities killed the rightful prince of Israel portrays them as corrupt. As already noted, this was partly true for leaders of the Sanhedrin. Herod the Great had appointed members to the Sanhedrin after killing their predecessors, and many of the current members would be descended from his appointees.¹⁰⁷ (Herod did not like Pharisees, though more were apparently gaining entrance into the council by the time portrayed in 23:6.)

Although ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα is not technically a hendiadys, the thoughts are closely connected; Jesus is the ἀρχηγός of life and hence also naturally the one who authors or pioneers salvation by being the first to rise from the dead (on the meaning of ἀρχηγός, see extended comment at Acts 3:15). Angels (Luke 2:11) and Paul (Acts 13:23), speaking to Jewish audiences, also identify Jesus as the Savior; Peter has already declared him the only way of salvation (4:12).¹⁰⁸ The first term probably connotes also authority or rank (some even translate “prince”);¹⁰⁹ kings were often called “benefactors” (see comment on Acts 4:9) and “saviors,”¹¹⁰ and in any event, Jesus's exaltation to the Father's right hand (echoing 2:33) assures his authority.¹¹¹ Jesus had a higher claim to authority than did the priestly authorities (cf. 3:15–17, also stressing the leaders' responsibility).

It would appear bad enough to the authorities that the apostles maintained that the authorities had miscarried justice in the execution of Jesus (5:28), and worse, that the execution itself, meant to suppress the movement, had become foundational to it; but the disciples now “improved upon” this “intolerable impertinence” by claiming that God had used it to exalt Christ as the supreme Lord (Ps 110:1).¹¹² The apostles also

104. Often noted, e.g., Morris, *Cross in New Testament*, 142; cf. Davies, *Paul*, 227–28n3; Marguerat, *Actes*, 195; Arnold, “Acts,” 256. The language of the biblical text continued to be used and understood (e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 4.202); Philo allegorizes it (Knox, *Jerusalem*, 132).

105. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 337 (citing also 4QpNah 3–4 I, 6–8, which refers to the situation in Jos. *Ant.* 13.379–80; 11QT LXIV, 7–8). Execution by such “hanging” was common (e.g., Philo *Flacc.* 85).

106. Most of this made sense within various existing expectations; e.g., opportunity for repentance appears elsewhere (cf. Acts 17:30; Philo *Alleg. Interp.* 3.106; Plut. *Alex.* 11.4), and “cleansing from sins belongs to this eschatological picture (*Pss. Sol.* 17.22–23; *Jub.* 4.26; 50.5; *1 En.* 10.22; *Test. Levi* 18.9; *Test. Jud.* 24.1)” (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 42; cf. also biblical writers, e.g., Mic 7:19).

107. For his killing the Sanhedrin, see Jos. *Ant.* 14.175.

108. Moses may provide an OT model for a bringer of salvation (see Acts 7:25).

109. Cf. Johnston, “Archegos,” 385. Jesus also appears here with a dual title analogous to that of Moses in Acts 7:35 (e.g., Cribbs, “Agreements,” 55), again indicating rank.

110. Cf. comment on Acts 4:9; 27:20. Gilbert, “Propaganda,” 237–42, surveys “savior,” especially its political ideological application to emperor (238–39); but we should note that Luke employs the noun only in distinctly Jewish contexts (Acts 5:31; 13:23; Luke 1:47; 2:11), though Luke 2:11 probably does imply a contrast with the emperor (2:1).

111. “Right hand” alludes to Ps 110:1 (as in Acts 2:33); “exalted” may echo the language of the servant (Isa 52:13) and/or divine language (6:1; 57:15; see Bauckham, *Crucified*, 49–51, esp. 51).

112. Judge, “Scholastic Community,” 12–13.

insist on Israel's repentance for the misdeed, still proclaiming the offer of repentance and the forgiveness of sins (as in Acts 2:38).

Peter's speech begins (5:29) and ends (5:32) with the note of "obedience" to God; this is clearest in the Greek text, where his speech begins with a word translated "We must obey" and ends with "obey him" (5:29, 32).¹¹³ Peter and his colleagues claim to have obeyed God rather than the Sanhedrin (5:29); thus they have already implied that they, rather than the Sanhedrin, obey God. Now they make this claim more explicit. By appealing to the Spirit as evidence of obedience, the apostles (who have demonstrated their possession of the Spirit to the Sanhedrin in 4:8 and for the readers in 5:3, 9) imply that the Sanhedrin, which lacks the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:9; Jude 19), does not obey God. (On the Spirit as "gift," see comment on Acts 2:38.) As was frequent in forensic rhetoric, Peter and his colleagues have gone on the offensive (see comment on Acts 7:51–53).

Some Jewish tradition linked the Spirit with obedience or exceptional holiness.¹¹⁴ In Luke's summary of an element of the apostolic message, the obedience that brings the gift of the Spirit begins with repentance (Acts 2:38). Stephen soon carries Peter's challenge further by explicitly accusing his audience (which Luke presents as roughly the same, 6:12, 15; 7:1) of resisting the Holy Spirit (7:51).

The pairing of the witness of the Spirit and Jesus's followers appears also in the Johannine Jesus tradition (John 15:26–27).¹¹⁵ Historically, this commonality probably suggests pre-Lukan and pre-Johannine tradition behind both sources, perhaps reflecting teaching in the Jesus tradition; rhetorically, it places the testimony of the apostles here (and Jesus's followers in John) on the higher level of divine inspiration.¹¹⁶ To disobey their message is thus to disobey God; even Israelite kings had often thought twice before disobeying Israelite prophets.¹¹⁷

In challenging the officials' behavior, Peter and the other apostles appear unafraid even of provoking their martyrdom. This fearlessness indicates their absolute conviction (not surprising in the narrative world, in view of their experience of witnessing Jesus's resurrection and ascension, and the continuing miracles). It may also reflect their conviction that Jesus would soon establish the kingdom, prevailing against the abusive authorities, whatever actions the authorities might undertake beforehand (cf. 3:20–21, although the timing seems contingent on Israel's repentance, 3:19).

c. The Authorities' Response (5:33)

The apostles' refusal to be intimidated threatens the elite's socially accepted status of honor. Whereas Peter's first audience was struck to the heart in a manner leading to repentance (Acts 2:37), Luke warns that the response to the Spirit's conviction is not always positive, especially when it encounters hardened hearts (cf. 7:51). Διαπρίω, the term used here, indicates mortal rage; in its other NT use, following Stephen's speech (which pushes further the point of this one in 7:51–53), the object of rage

113. The *inclusio* is noted by Dunn, *Acts*, 69 (also noting the fourfold mention of God); it is clearer than the proposed chiasmus (Zehlnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 39) that also includes it. That *πειθαρχεῖν* in Acts 5:29 is connected with *πειθαρχοῦσιν* in 5:32 is inescapable; the verb appears nowhere else in Luke-Acts except 27:21 (and elsewhere in the NT only at Titus 3:1; in the LXX, Dan 7:27; 1 Esd 8:90; Sir 33:29).

114. E.g., *Mek. Besh.* 7.135ff; *Sipre Deut.* 173.1.3; *'Abot R. Nat.* 11, §28 B; *b. Sukkah* 28a, bar.; *y. 'Abod. Zar.* 3:1, §2; *Soṭah* 9:16, §2; *Exod. Rab.* 5:20; *Lev. Rab.* 35:7; *Song Rab.* 1:1, §9; see further Keener, *Acts*, 1:522n197.

115. Cf. Bruce, *Time*, 97; Keener, *John*, 1021–24.

116. Cf. Menzies, *Development*, 53–112; Turner, *Power*, 86–104; Keener, *Spirit*, 10–13; see *idem*, *Acts*, 1:523–24, 531–32, 537.

117. On "prophetic immunity," see, e.g., Gordon, *Near East*, 222.

was martyred (7:54).¹¹⁸ Without employment of the same term, Nazareth's hostile response to Jesus's challenges conveys the same idea of mortal rage (Luke 4:28), indicating that the same pattern of response to God's agents continues.¹¹⁹ God's servants may anticipate rejection, just as in Israel's story (Luke 11:47–50; Acts 7:52) and Jesus's story. Generating emotive response characterized pathos in ancient rhetoric (normally to stir sympathy), but the stirring of anger in judicial rhetoric was normally designed against one's enemies, not oneself. The philosophic (in contrast to the rhetorical) tradition preferred repentance to applause as the proper response to speech (Mus. Ruf. frg. 49, p. 142.12–19), but a response of pure hostility suggests the tradition of martyred prophets (Luke 11:47–50; 13:34; Acts 7:52).¹²⁰ Although their intention is averted this time, it is carried out at the end of the narrative's next trial scene (Acts 7:54–60).

That the authorities “wanted” (ἐβούλοντο) to kill the apostles makes ironic light of the high priest's charge that the apostles unjustly “wanted” (βούλεσθε) to charge the leaders with Jesus's blood (5:28). Wanting to kill may reflect typical sentiments for offended aristocrats avenging breach of social order, but it violated Roman restrictions on capital authority.¹²¹ Such restrictions could be finessed politically (Luke 23:1–2), especially for followers of one executed for sedition, but the text may suggest that many members were angry enough to act extrajudicially on the spot (cf. Acts 7:57–58; 23:10). Had they sought grounds in the law for executing the apostles, they might have appealed to the prohibition against speaking evil of rulers (cf. 23:5; though this was hardly a curse as in Exod 22:28; the false charge in 1 Kgs 21:10, 13). By performing this act, the leaders would simply confirm the line of behavior with which the apostles had charged them—abusing authority to kill God's agents (Acts 5:30).

Although ancient reports suggest that the Sadducees, like many other powerful elites, sometimes abused their power violently, the Pharisees by this period, like their rabbinic successors, were probably much more stringent in evidential requirements for capital cases.¹²² That the Sanhedrin did not, so far as we know, engage in lynchings¹²³ suggests that historically its members probably would not have carried through their anger on this occasion, but neither were they often confronted with insubordination from leaders of a rapidly growing movement in their capital. (We do know of violent interactions in an earlier period, reflected in both Josephus and the Qumran scrolls.¹²⁴ We also know of violence even among competing aristocratic parties a generation later.)¹²⁵ Given the contrast with 7:54–58, however, Luke may suggest that the lynching would have occurred but for the intervention of Gamaliel (5:34–39).¹²⁶

118. It originally conveyed a cutting image; Barrett, *Acts*, 291, notes classical usage for grinding teeth (e.g., Aristoph. *Frogs* 926–27; for sawing through, BDAG cites also *SIG*² 587.160; 304; sawing in 1 Chr 20:3).

119. Luke 4:28–29 is part of Luke's programmatic section and prefigures Jesus's crucifixion; it also roots Jesus in the history of earlier prophets (4:24–27), as does Stephen's situation (Acts 7:52–54). Jesus's teaching generated positive emotional response among his followers (Luke 24:32).

120. Of course, philosophers also endured martyrdom. When one protested Socrates's being executed unjustly, he reportedly replied, “Would you prefer that I be executed justly?” (Xen. *Apol.* 28).

121. See John 18:31; Keener, *John*, 1107–9; Sherwin-White, *Society*, 32–43, esp. 36.

122. Cf., e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 13.294; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Lev 24:12; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Lev 24:12.

123. Later tradition suggests that they rarely approved executions even when they held capital authority (*m. Mak.* 1:10; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 288), but this may be a later, rabbinic idealization.

124. In the Scrolls, see 1QpHab VIII, 8–12; IX, 4–7; XII, 5; 4QpNah I, 11; between Pharisees and Sadducees, Jos. *Ant.* 18.17; *m. Yad.* 4:7; *t. Hag.* 3:35; *Nid.* 5:3; see further documentation in Keener, *Matthew*, 352–53. Later rabbis even accused some Shammaites of such violence against Hillelites (*y. Sabb.* 1:4).

125. See comment on Acts 23:10.

126. Historically, moderates like Gamaliel could be one reason we do *not* have more reports of violence.

3. Gamaliel's Defense (5:34–39)

Luke's portrayal of even Jerusalem's aristocracy is not monolithic (see discussion of Luke and Judaism in the commentary introduction).¹²⁷ Just as a "good" member of the Sanhedrin stood for Jesus in the Gospel (Luke 23:50–51)—albeit quietly and after the execution, unlike Gamaliel—so now a good member stands for justice for God's servants.¹²⁸ Gamaliel, a minority Pharisee on the council, does not so much defend the apostles' views as the Pharisaic position of tolerance. But his warning that fighting against them could constitute fighting against God (Acts 5:39) becomes an important idea as the book progresses, especially for Gamaliel's own (wayward?) disciple Saul (9:4; 26:14; cf. 22:3).

a. Gamaliel, Pharisees, and the Speech (5:34–35)

Luke's portrait of Gamaliel and the Pharisees fits what we know of them and also fits his portrayal of the Pharisees, which is more nuanced than Mark's (and much more so than the later and more polemical presentations in Matthew and John).

I. GAMALIEL

Gamaliel is described as a "teacher of the law," a term Luke employed in Luke 5:17, where it is coupled with Pharisees like the more common γραμματεὺς, usually rendered "scribe" (e.g., 5:21, 30; 6:7);¹²⁹ in such connections, Luke may indicate law teachers of the Pharisaic party (Acts 23:9).¹³⁰ Gamaliel ordered the apostles to be put outside, undoubtedly partly for privacy but perhaps also to prevent the apostles from making the court still angrier.¹³¹

That Gamaliel was respected by all the people (as Paul also presupposes when mentioning him in 22:3) is also attested in rabbinic comments on both him and his grandson and namesake. This is especially the case in the oft-cited *m. Soṭah* 9:15, which eulogizes various prominent sages by declaring what virtues fled Israel at their deaths, associating with Gamaliel the Elder "the glory of the law."¹³² Later rabbinic tradition also sometimes portrayed Gamaliel as lenient (*b. Pesah.* 88b),¹³³ though his son Simon appears in Josephus as a major political player in the Jerusalem aristocracy, not always to his credit (*Jos. Life* 193). Later rabbis made Gamaliel a descendant of Hillel,¹³⁴ who

127. Keener, *Acts*, 1:459–77.

128. Luke gives no indication as to what has become of Joseph of Arimathea or any other sympathizers. Perhaps we are left to infer that they worked quietly to maintain peace as long as possible (perhaps influencing Gamaliel). It is far less likely to assume that they would be excluded from the Sanhedrin for supporting the Nazarenes; that Joseph died so soon after the passion narrative would be, at most, a speculative guess. In any case, a small number of supporters would be insufficient to protect the movement indefinitely if it had aroused significant opposition.

129. See comment on "scribes" at Acts 4:5. The compound νομοδιδάσκαλος resembles the analogous [v]ομομαθης in funerary inscriptions from the Via Appia (*CIJ* 1:79, §113; 1:136, §193).

130. Luke could, however, distinguish them; cf. τις τῶν νομικῶν in Luke 11:45.

131. Sometimes closed sessions prevented partisan appeals to outsiders (cf. *Sall. Ep. Caes.* 11.2); given Gamaliel's popularity with the people, however, this would not be the case here.

132. Regularly cited (e.g., Kennedy, *Epistles*, 15; Bruce, *Commentary*, 124; Longenecker, *Paul*, 22–23; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 339; Barrett, *Acts*, 292; see esp. Oesterley, *Liturgy*, 25–26). For Gamaliel's prominence, see also *m. Pe'ah* 2:6; 'Or. 2:12; *Roš Haš.* 2:5; *Šeqal.* 6:1; *Yebam.* 16:7; *Git.* 4:2; 'Ab. 1:16 (Strack, *Introduction*, 109).

133. The rabbinic portrayal of his moderation accords with Luke's (Youngblood, "Gamaliel," 394; with better documentation, Chilton, "Gamaliel," though he regards the correspondence as superficial because he rejects the episode in view of Acts 5:36–37).

134. Cf. 'Abot R. Nat. 15 A. This tradition was followed by many earlier scholars (e.g., Strack, *Introduction*, 109; LaSor, *Knew*, 90; Longenecker, *Paul*, 22n3; Rivkin, *Revolution*, 238; Sanders, *Judaism*, 422–23).

was praised for his tolerance;¹³⁵ earlier sources may portray him as simply Hillel's successor,¹³⁶ though his genetic connection with Hillel is less certainly rejected than the claim that he (and hence the later rabbinic "princes") descended from David.¹³⁷ In any case, Hillel's school tended to be more lenient than Shammai's on most issues,¹³⁸ although Shammites probably predominated before 70 C.E.,¹³⁹ as is often noted.¹⁴⁰

The nature of Gamaliel's wealth, status, and influence in the Sanhedrin, despite his minority Pharisaic position, may be illustrated by Josephus's comments about his son Simon. Josephus tells us that he was Gamaliel's son and held much authority in the Jerusalem assembly (*Life* 190); that he was a Pharisee from a prominent Jerusalem family (*Life* 191); that he was very intelligent (*Life* 192); and that he had influence with Ananus and Jesus son of Gamalas, high priests (*Life* 193). Simon and Ananus the high priest sent legates to carry out their will in Galilee (*Life* 216). Josephus reports such influence despite the fact that Simon was his personal enemy (*Life* 193); he probably was happier to report that Simon and Ananus were both later censured for having acted without the Sanhedrin's consent on a matter (*Life* 309).

II. PHARISEES

Gamaliel's Pharisaic associations probably affect his portrayal here. More than the other Gospels, Luke presents the Pharisees in a nuanced way, sometimes as ambiguously favorable toward Jesus (Luke 7:36; 11:37; 13:31; 14:1), and he does so especially in Acts. Their beliefs were not necessarily incompatible with faith in Jesus (Acts 15:5; 23:6).¹⁴¹ Even in the Gospel, Pharisaic opposition focused on disagreements about the law, but it was the Sadducees whose hostility to Jesus led to his execution.¹⁴² In the larger world of skeptical Sadducees and Greeks, the Pharisees at least affirmed the foundational doctrine of resurrection of the dead (23:8).¹⁴³ Although 5:17 suggests that the Sadducees dominate the council, Luke elsewhere plays on the council's divisions to the advantage of Christians (23:6–9). Luke notes that Gamaliel was respected by the people; Josephus indicates that the Pharisees normally were (*Ant.* 13.297–98). Although Gamaliel was part of the elite, he speaks for the Pharisees¹⁴⁴ and hence (from the elite's perspective) for the people.

135. On Hillel's mildness, see, e.g., *b. Šabb.* 31a; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:589. Neusner doubts many of the traditions about Hillel (*Beginning*, 63–88; on his sayings, *idem*, *Traditions*, 1:212–302). Hillelites, in any case, tended to be more lenient (e.g., *m. Git.* 9:10; *t. Šabb.* 16:22; *Sipre Deut.* 269.1.1; *b. Ber.* 23b), though there were a few exceptions (e.g., *b. Hul.* 104b, bar.).

136. E.g., Neusner, *Traditions*, 1:294–95; Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 73.

137. Stern, "Aspects," 617 (noting that the tradition does not predate Judah ha-Nasi). For the view, see, e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 98:8.

138. See, e.g., *t. Šabb.* 1:16; *b. Ber.* 23b; *Hul.* 104; on traditions concerning Shammai and Hillel themselves, see Urbach, *Sages*, 1:589.

139. See, e.g., *m. Šabb.* 1:4; *t. Šabb.* 1:16; *b. Bešah* 20a. Pace Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 321.

140. E.g., Neusner, *Traditions*, 1:339; Davies, *Paul*, 9; cf. Finkelstein, *Akiba*, 127. Hillelite tradition ultimately won out (*m. Demai* 3:1; *t. Ed.* 2:3).

141. See Gowler, *Host, Guest*, 177–296 and esp. 301–5; Mason, "Chief Priests," 134–42; Tannehill, *Acts*, 67. Contrast, e.g., Sanders, "Parable and Anti-Semitism." See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:459–77 (esp. 468–69). Mason, "Chief Priests," 150, thinks that Luke earlier suppresses Pharisaic involvement in the Sanhedrin to prevent association with Jesus's execution; this is possible (cf. Acts 23:6; Carroll, "Portrayal of Pharisees"), but the Sanhedrin explicitly appears negatively before this only in Luke 22:66 (contrast Luke 23:51); Acts 4:15 and appears negatively afterward (Acts 6:12, 15; 23:15).

142. Tyson, "Opposition in Luke" (also recognizing the more positive role of the Pharisees in Acts, as does Hakola, "Pharisees"). Luke sometimes redacted his written sources to provide a more nuanced picture of the Pharisees (see Ziesler, "Luke and Pharisees").

143. See also Conzelmann, *History*, 60.

144. Pharisees deferred to their elders' decisions (*Jos. Ant.* 18.12), and so other Pharisaic representatives on the council would presumably line up behind the policy Gamaliel proposes.

Gamaliel's tolerance makes sense from a Pharisaic perspective, as scholars often note.¹⁴⁵ Whereas the Sadducees, who held most of the political power, were sensitive to political threats, the Pharisees would likely object to executing those who kept the law.¹⁴⁶ The Pharisees are reported to have favored more leniency than the Sadducees (Jos. *Ant.* 13.294; cf. *War* 2.166), who punished most strictly (*Ant.* 20.199). Likewise, their rabbinic successors severely restricted capital punishment (even if partly to accommodate Roman and Babylonian legal jurisdiction); serious disagreement on interpretation did not constitute grounds for executing those who supported keeping the law.¹⁴⁷ That Gamaliel's speech would have affected the Sanhedrin is not surprising. Steve Mason argues that Josephus and Luke concur in portraying the Pharisees as representing the views of the people, a status that often (in Josephus, regularly) enabled them "to sway the council's decisions, though both authors suggest that they constituted a minority in the council."¹⁴⁸ Because it is the people's support that provides the apostles political safety (Acts 5:26), the voice of one "respected by the people" (5:34) would be influential in the assembly of the municipal elite.¹⁴⁹

The Pharisaic movement's support for public toleration of the Nazarene sect also is historically plausible and, both before and after their period of likely increase in influence under Agrippa I, even probable. That the church was established in Jerusalem (21:20) and later those "strict in the law" (presumably Pharisees)¹⁵⁰ protested the execution of Jesus's brother James (Jos. *Ant.* 20.200–201) suggests that the church developed some support among Pharisees, who may have seen them as allies in restoring Israel to the law.¹⁵¹

Why would Luke report this tolerance? Part of his aim in reporting information may be simply historical, but this does not explain his process of selection; modern historians are often frustrated by the many details that Luke omits. Certainly he had little to gain by praising Pharisees for his Diaspora audience, whose knowledge of Pharisees might often be limited to little beyond the Jesus tradition and reports about Paul (cf. Phil 3:5). After 70, when he was writing, some of the new leaders of the Pharisaic movement seem to have grown increasingly hostile toward the Nazarenes, as suggested by the polemic in Matthew and John and, in traditions beginning a few decades later, early rabbinic literature.¹⁵² Luke might still wish to appeal to them or their allies, recognizing that they stand poised to become a dominant voice in Palestinian Judaism (and hence an influence in the Diaspora as well). Such an appeal to their (continuing, it would be hoped) tradition of tolerance could also be an appeal to their possible Roman benefactors,¹⁵³ tolerance all the more necessary in the wake of

145. From a largely rabbinic perspective, see Finkelstein, *Akiba*, 9–10; cf. Marmorstein, "Attitudes," 383–84; Klausner, *Jesus to Paul*, 284–85. Older detractors from seeing Gamaliel's tolerance as realistic typically had caricatured Pharisaism negatively (Weiss, *History*, 1:185, critiqued in Longenecker, *Paul*, 33n44).

146. Goppelt, *Judaism*, 105–6; Caird, *Apostolic Age*, 83. Many scholars today recognize the Sadducean rulers, rather than the Pharisees, as the primary culprits in Jesus's execution (e.g., Vermes, "Jesus the Jew," 120).

147. See comment in Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 18–19; idem, *Figure*, 268; discussion in Keener, *Matthew*, 352–59.

148. Mason, "Chief Priests," 176–77, noting that (given aristocratic complaints of Pharisaic influence) the Pharisees exercised more influence than some scholars suggest.

149. With Mason, "Chief Priests," 151.

150. Cf. Jos. *War* 2.162; *Life* 191; cf. *War* 1.648; *Ant.* 19.332; 20.43 (Theissen, *Gospels*, 230).

151. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 71; Marguerat, *Actes*, 190. By partial contrast, Theissen, *Gospels*, 230–31, believes that the Pharisees and the Nazarenes were at odds in the 30s c.e. but reconciled in the 50s.

152. See Keener, *John*, 194–214.

153. Some scholars argue that Luke uses his relatively favorable portrait of Pharisees to help legitimate Christianity (Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 105–6; Gowler, *Host, Guest*, 301–5; Carroll, "Portrayal of Pharisees"); others argue against this thesis (Kingsbury, "Pharisees in Luke-Acts").

Roman suppression of Judea's genuine revolutionary movements.¹⁵⁴ If Luke portrays the tolerance of Roman officials, the tolerance of Gamaliel could point in the same direction, inviting Pharisaism's heirs to emulate his example.

*Excursus: Pharisaism*¹⁵⁵

“Pharisee” may derive from a term meaning “specifiers,” those exact in the law,¹⁵⁶ or, considerably less likely, “Persianizers.” Most scholars, however, associate the term with a root implying “separatists.”¹⁵⁷ Some argue that the sense of *perushim* may, indeed, vary among different rabbinic sources.¹⁵⁸ At any rate, the Pharisees' emphasis on tithed food and purity prohibited them from eating with Jews nonobservant in these regards.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, they constituted primarily a lay rather than priestly movement¹⁶⁰ and probably did not eat ordinary food as if they were priests, as some have contended.¹⁶¹ They merely agreed to follow a limited number of purity laws¹⁶² and were known as “exact” interpreters of the laws who drew on Pharisaic tradition.¹⁶³

Although Pharisees held political power under Salome Alexandra (Jos. *War* 1.110–13; *Ant.* 13.399–405), the families of Herod and the Sadducean priestly aristocracy formed the regional and municipal governments under the Romans in the Herodian period.¹⁶⁴ In the Roman phase of the Second Temple period,¹⁶⁵ the Pharisees lacked overt political power.¹⁶⁶ Apart from the reign of Agrippa I, the descendants of Herod (Antipas and Agrippa II) controlled Galilee, whereas Jerusalem's municipal aristoc-

154. Tomson, “Counsel,” 603, compares Luke to Josephus, who sought Pharisaic favor and addressed an upper-class Roman audience after 70 C.E. (Luke's audience is less elite than Josephus's, however.) Tomson suggests (603) that Josephus sought to rehabilitate his own reputation (having been a priestly aristocrat) whereas Luke portrays Christianity “as a legitimate outgrowth” of Pharisaic ideals, appealing to appreciation for Hillelite moderation and pluralism. This approach follows Paul's willingness to allow both circumcised and uncircumcised to remain as they were (603–4).

155. I have adapted material here from Keener, *Matthew*, 538–40; idem, *John*, 182–84.

156. Baumgarten, “Pharisees.”

157. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 13; Moore, *Judaism*, 2:60; Finkelstein, *Pharisees*, 1:76; Davies, *Introduction*, 6; Cohen, *Maccabees*, 162; Borg, *Conflict*, 58. Bowker takes the term as generally pejorative and applied by the rabbis descended from the *hakamim* to their opponents rather than to themselves (*Pharisees*, 15), but this is highly questionable (see Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 50). To confuse matters further, the rabbis did not limit their term *perushim* to pre-70 Pharisees (Rivkin, “Pharisees”; idem, *Revolution*, 165; Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 154). They were not always *haberim* despite significant overlap (Rivkin, *Revolution*, 175; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 187) and often appear as *hakamim* (scholars; Rivkin, *Revolution*, 138, 141), but though many Pharisees, attentive to the law's details, must have been scribes, Rivkin goes too far in identifying them always with the scholar class (177–79). We have sometimes accepted the identification of Pharisees with *haberim*, but even a Sadducee may appear as a *haber* in some sources (*b. Nid.* 33b).

158. Ames, “Fellowship.”

159. E.g., *t. Šabb.* 1:15; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 70b, *haberim*.

160. See Sanders, *Figure*, 404.

161. See Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 131–54, 235–36.

162. E.g., *'Abot R. Nat.* 41 A.

163. Jos. *War* 1.110; 2.162; *Ant.* 13.297–98; *Life* 191. Scholars differ as to the antiquity of the “oral Torah” conception (cf. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 97–130; Ehrlich, “Tora”; discussion in Keener, *John*, 64, 356–57); e.g., Zetterholm, “Kontinuitet,” thinks that the Pharisees attributed their traditions to Sinai whereas the priesthood allowed for innovations based on Scripture.

164. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 128–29; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 101.

165. Neusner, “Pharisees,” rightly argues that their political involvement effectively ended (with individual exceptions such as Simeon ben Gamaliel) in the first century B.C.E.

166. Sanders, *Judaism*, 388–402, 458–90. Josephus's few statements that could be interpreted otherwise probably reflect his own social situation (see Sanders, *Judaism*, 410–11; cf. 11, 488–89).

racy functioned as Rome's local agents in Jerusalem.¹⁶⁷ Although the Pharisees may have been represented in that municipal aristocracy, the predominantly Sadducean aristocratic priesthood seems to have dominated.¹⁶⁸

This is not to say that the Pharisees were unimportant in this period;¹⁶⁹ from various perspectives, the rabbis, Josephus (esp. in *Antiquities of the Jews*), and the NT (the Gospels; Acts 15:5; 23:6; Phil 3:5) coincide in stressing their prominence.¹⁷⁰ They were probably more influential than Josephus allows in the *Jewish War* (where he may wish to exculpate them from influence in the revolt) but less powerful than many modern scholars have supposed on the basis of his *Antiquities*. By the time he wrote his later *Antiquities*, Pharisaism had become a predominant party within Palestinian Judaism, and Josephus apparently chose to lend greater support.¹⁷¹ As Neusner puts it, "Though Josephus exaggerated the extent of their power, the Pharisees certainly exerted some influence [before 70 C.E.]."¹⁷²

In this period, the Pharisees' popular influence may have stemmed mostly from their popularity with the people rather than from official, political power (Jos. *Ant.* 13.298; 18.15, 17).¹⁷³ With a total of only six thousand Pharisees in an earlier period of influence (17.42),¹⁷⁴ their influence derived more from popular respect than from numbers. Later texts typically contrast their views with those of the Sadducees,¹⁷⁵ with whom they undoubtedly vied for influence (cf. Acts 23:6–9; Jos. *Ant.* 13.297).¹⁷⁶

Most of the educated Pharisees probably belonged to a sort of elite¹⁷⁷ and wielded considerable influence with the masses.¹⁷⁸ Although not all were scribes, they seem to have acquired a reputation for more precision in understanding the law (Jos. *Life* 191). Josephus's autobiography suggests that some prominent first-century Pharisees participated in Jerusalem's municipal aristocracy alongside the leading priests (*Life* 21). Simeon ben Gamaliel, who was wise and powerful (*Life* 190–92), joined with Ananus the high priest to authorize legates to execute their will in Galilee (*Life* 216). When the priestly aristocracy sent aristocratic representatives to Galilee, some of those sent were Pharisees (*Life* 196). Thus some scholars have even portrayed them as a political "retainer" class.¹⁷⁹ With the demise of the leading priests in Jerusalem

167. Except during Agrippa I's reign, the aristocracy answered to the Roman governor, but because he lived in Caesarea most of the year, the municipal aristocracy would have exercised considerable power, provided they expressed it in deference to Rome.

168. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 128–29; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 101. For fuller evidence that the Pharisees did not control Palestine in the time of Jesus, see Sanders, *Figure*, 388–402, 458–90. Later texts frequently contrast their views with those of the Sadducees (e.g., *t. Hag.* 3:35; *Yoma* 1:8; *b. B. Bat.* 115b; *Nid.* 33b; *Sukkah* 48b), with whom they undoubtedly vied for influence (cf. Acts 23:6–9; Jos. *Ant.* 13.297).

169. Smith, *Magician*, 29, 50, is too skeptical. Even Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 312–13, probably explains away too much evidence (the Gospels and some rabbinic and Josephus texts) about Pharisaic presence in the Sanhedrin, although he is surely right to question their dominance vis-à-vis that of the priestly aristocracy.

170. Cohen, *Maccabees*, 163; cf. Neusner, *Beginning*, 45–61; Mason, "Dominance."

171. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 195–96; idem, *Figure*, 410–11, 488–89; though cf. differently Mason, *Josephus and New Testament*, 140–43; idem, *Pharisees*; Williams, "Smith on Pharisees." Wright, *People of God*, 212, suggests that the Pharisees wielded considerable populist support but that Josephus may exaggerate their political power to exonerate his own aristocratic class.

172. Neusner, *Beginning*, 27.

173. Sanders, *Judaism*, 402–4; cf. Rivkin, *Revolution*, 38–42. Certainly they sought political influence; Horsley, *Galilee*, 149–50, also contends that they functioned as a "retainer" class.

174. In a population of as much as five hundred thousand by the older estimate in Simon, *Sects*, 15.

175. E.g., *t. Hag.* 3:35; *b. B. Bat.* 115b; *Nid.* 33b; *Sukkah* 48b.

176. Cf. Mantel, "Dichotomy."

177. For their prominence, cf. Cohen, *Maccabees*, 163; cf. Neusner, *Beginning*, 45–61; Mason, "Dominance."

178. Jos. *Ant.* 13.298; 18.15, 17; Sanders, *Judaism*, 402–4.

179. Horsley, *Galilee*, 149–50; Overman, *Crisis*, 128.

during the Jewish revolt, the Pharisees were well positioned to have their interests represented in a new coalition of power.

Pharisaism formed not a ruling or “normative” Judaism but, rather, one part of the larger Jewish piety in popular Judaism;¹⁸⁰ thus the Pharisees had no choice but to participate with other elements in Judaism for the common society.¹⁸¹ Later rabbis, who probably included heirs, in some sense, of earlier Pharisaic scribes,¹⁸² found themselves in a much better position to try to establish a “normative” Judaism in the land, and even they were not wholly successful.¹⁸³

It is clear that Pharisees gained influence after 70 with the loss of the Sadducees’ power base: one of the leaders of the rabbis at Yavneh, Gamaliel II, was a son of the aristocratic Pharisee Simeon ben Gamaliel, who figures prominently in pre-70 Jerusalem Judaism.¹⁸⁴ Yavneh was one of the Judean cities controlled by the Herodian family with Rome’s approval,¹⁸⁵ and Vespasian settled there Judeans willing to submit to Rome; they would have included many aristocrats with vested interests.¹⁸⁶ Some scholars argue that the leading citizens among those settled there were mostly Pharisees;¹⁸⁷ others suggest that the leaders were scribes in general, including but not limited to Pharisees.¹⁸⁸ In any case, many of the leaders (such as Gamaliel and Eliezer ben Hyrcanus) were Pharisees—which fits the otherwise inexplicable portrait of hostile Judean leadership in the Fourth Gospel (and to a lesser extent in Matthew’s Gospel) as dominated by “Pharisees.”

The Pharisees and Jewish Christians probably had a more amicable relationship in the 60s,¹⁸⁹ but some factors surrounding the Judean revolt—perhaps the need to consolidate influence afterwards, perhaps the social class or just idiosyncrasies of Yavneh’s surviving elite—seem to have changed the relationship to what appears presupposed in Matthew and John.¹⁹⁰

180. Sanders, *Judaism*, 449; Smith, “Sect,” 355–56. For fuller evidence that the Pharisees did not control Palestine in the time of Jesus, see Sanders, *Judaism*, 388–402, 458–90.

181. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, passim, e.g., 12. Thus some can portray Jesus himself as ideologically a prerabbinic Pharisee (Winter, *Trial*, 133).

182. Cf., e.g., Sanders, *Judaism*, 422–23; Kugel and Greer, *Interpretation*, 66; Cohen, *Maccabees*, 154–59, 227. The earliest Pharisaic layers of rabbinic texts consist of debates rather than rules, suggesting a society in which Pharisees participated but did not rule (Sanders, *Judaism*, 470–71). Not all agree that the Pharisees were precursors of the rabbinic movement (e.g., Sigal, *Halakah*, 4); although Pharisaic idiosyncrasies may have most often prevailed, Horsley, *Galilee*, 95–97, may well be right that later rabbis inherited the mantle of the previous scribal movement as a whole. The rabbis at least inherited the mantle of the scribes’ most prominent representatives, but in their eyes this apparently included some significant Pharisees, especially through the influence of Gamaliel II, son of Simeon ben Gamaliel.

183. Cf., e.g., Goodman, *State*, 127; Cohen, *Maccabees*, 223–24. One should note that even in Jesus’s day, many people disobeyed laws widely recognized by the pious (Jos. *Life* 65); but synagogues were community centers, and later zodiacs there support the view that populist piety (probably including local elders) differed from the expectations of the intelligentsia most educated in Torah.

184. See Jos. *War* 4.159; and esp. *Life* 190–92, 309. Perhaps the family even produced a short-lived high priesthood (*Ant.* 20.213, 223). Gamaliel II was a landlord reputed for generosity toward the tenant farmers on his estates (*m. B. Meši’ā* 5:8). Neusner, “Gamaliel,” doubts that we can know much biographically about even Gamaliel II.

185. Jos. *War* 2.98; *Ant.* 17.321; 18.31.

186. Jos. *War* 4.444; cf. 4.130; Horsley, *Galilee*, 95–96.

187. Cf., e.g., Sanders, *Judaism*, 422–23; Kugel and Greer, *Interpretation*, 66; Cohen, *Maccabees*, 154–59, 227. Sanders, *Judaism*, 422–23, rightly points especially to the heritage in the schools of Hillel and Shammai, although the purported physical descent of Gamaliel from Hillel may reflect a later development.

188. Horsley, *Galilee*, 96; cf. Sigal, *Halakah*, 4.

189. See Theissen, *Gospels*, 230–32.

190. Suspicion of Jewish Christians’ disloyalty, on grounds of their flight from Jerusalem, is a possible factor, but suspicion based on their linkage with Gentile Christians is less likely given the Yavneh elite’s own partial client relationship with Rome.

III. THE SPEECH'S DESIGN

There is some reason to suspect that Luke designed a speech, perhaps inferred from the apostles' surprising (cf. Acts 5:33) survival of the incident (5:40). One proposed reason for this (in addition to the problem in 5:36–37; see comment there) is the question of sources: was he or one of his sources privy to information from behind closed doors (5:34)?¹⁹¹ As Barrett puts it, "The Christians can hardly have had inside information of what was said in the Sanhedrin after v. 34—unless Gamaliel's pupil, Saul of Tarsus, was present!"¹⁹² It is possible but hardly likely that Luke or his sources had access to a court summary in the civic archives during his visit to Jerusalem (21:17–18);¹⁹³ though such sources existed at least for Roman courts, the Sanhedrin's archives presumably would not be matters of public access (especially for a deliberately private speech), nor would they be arranged topically.

Yet the question of sources is not, by itself, absolutely decisive. It is not impossible, and it is even plausible, that some members of the early apostolic movement eventually would have learned from supporters the substance of what was said about them. Leaks from the Sanhedrin, as from other "closed" elite bodies, were relatively common, especially if one had any secret sympathizers there.¹⁹⁴ Although Luke omits such details from the Sanhedrin later in his work,¹⁹⁵ his revelations in this period could make sense if Christians had any tacit minority allies in the Sanhedrin, the sort who could have also preserved some of the details of Jesus's hearing.¹⁹⁶ Following earlier tradition, Luke in fact reported such a source (Joseph of Arimathea) for several years earlier (Luke 23:50–51), against the tradition's tendency to paint the Sanhedrin wholly negatively.¹⁹⁷ It is impossible at this remove to evaluate the probability of a leak in this particular case; one can offer it only as a possibility. Thus a number of scholars allow that Luke may have had access to the incident (i.e., that Gamaliel's faction withdrew their support from the Sadducees' plans), even if Luke filled in the details (and in the case of Theudas, most argue, not entirely precisely).¹⁹⁸

More to the point on the presuppositions of Luke's story world, if Saul was still a "young man" in Acts 7:58, it is possible that at this point he was still a pupil or at least an associate of Gamaliel (22:3).¹⁹⁹ Had Luke considered such details, he would undoubtedly have considered it likely that the Gamaliel of this assembly would have spoken with his students about his opinions regarding the Nazarenes and, presumably, shared with the students that he once intervened on behalf of tolerance for

191. E.g., Smith, *Magician*, 20 (who calls it "Christian propaganda").

192. Barrett, *Acts*, 296. Sometimes writers of fiction even designed circumstances to explain their "inside knowledge" of some events (e.g., Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.27). On Saul's possible presence, see comment below.

193. On archives at Jerusalem (destroyed in the Judean-Roman war), see Jos. *War* 2.427 (for debts); 6.354. That archives were important is clear from Josephus's report about those in Antioch (*War* 7.55). In this period even the Roman senate's minutes were no longer published, though their resolutions were (Kolb, "Newspaper," 698, citing Suet. *Aug.* 36); Luke may know the outcome but infer some details for the scene.

194. For the Sanhedrin, Jos. *Life* 204; for Rome's senate, see Val. Max. 2.2.1a; elsewhere, e.g., Corn. Nep. 4 (Pausanias), 5.1; 14 (Datames), 5.3; the emperor's inner circle, in Tac. *Ann.* 14.53; in Acts 5, cf. Marshall, *Acts*, 121.

195. Acts 23:16 could be an exception, but the nephew's source (aristocratic priests and municipal elders, or those who formed the plot) is not specified.

196. Keener, *John*, 1088; idem, *Matthew*, 645. See plausibly, e.g., Joseph of Arimathea in Mark 15:43 (Luke 23:51; Matt 27:57; John 19:38); cf. also Nicodemus (John 3:1; 7:50; 19:39), and probably others in the aristocracy who would have friends or relatives sympathetic to the movement.

197. Because Joseph looked for God's kingdom (Luke 23:51), his sympathies were, like Gamaliel's, not Sadducean. In support of the historical Joseph of Arimathea, see O'Collins and Kendall, "Joseph of Arimathea."

198. Cf. Knox, *Acts*, 23; Caird, *Apostolic Age*, 83; C. Williams, *Acts*, 94.

199. Because Gamaliel was a prominent leader ca. 30–50 C.E. (Sandmel, *Judaism*, 241), it is not certain that he would be teaching many students in this period, even those who paid well (he was wealthy already).

them. If Paul was a pupil of Gamaliel as 22:3 claims, it is intrinsically likely, even on the historical level, that he would know Gamaliel's opinion of the Christians, even if he disagreed.²⁰⁰

If, as I think, Luke's sources (probably oral, perhaps from Paul) indicated that Gamaliel advocated tolerance for the allegedly revolutionary apostles in (or outside) the assembly, Luke would nevertheless retain the freedom (and probably the necessity) to write up the speech in his own words, as other ancient historians did with speeches.

The rhetorical formulations, the sometimes profound and sometimes elegant analyses, belong to the historians; so does the organization of material in accordance with rhetorical principle. Everything was heightened, made precise, given point and relevance from foreknowledge of events. Always there was the admixture of the imagination and intellect of the historian, and it obviously increased in the degree that the recollection of speeches actually delivered grew dimmer.²⁰¹

See further discussion below.

IV. GAMALIEL BEGINS SPEAKING (5:34–35)

In the midst of a council, one would “rise” to speak to the assembly (Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.55; Virg. *Aen.* 11.342; see comment on Acts 5:20), as here (Acts 5:34). Even though one leader might remain in supreme command of an assembly, various leaders could normally step forward to offer their opinions (e.g., 15:7; Philost. *Hrk.* 30.2–3). Ancient narratives elsewhere can present a single voice of reason seeking to move opposition, even if not always successfully (e.g., Virg. *Aen.* 2.40–56; 11.243–95).²⁰² In one fictitious later tradition, when the Sanhedrin's members feared to act justly, a pious sage called for divine judgment and Gabriel slew them (*b. Sanh.* 19b).

For the title “men of Israel” (Acts 5:35), see comment on Acts 2:14. The speech opens and closes with its main theme—namely, a warning against prejudging and mistreating the apostles.²⁰³ “Take heed to yourself/yourselfes” (πρόσεχε/προσέχετε with a reflexive pronoun) is a familiar enough idiom in the context of exhortations (e.g., Exod 19:12; 23:21; 34:12; Deut 4:9; 6:12; 8:11; 11:16; 12:13, 19, 30; 15:9; 24:8; Tob 4:12, 14; Sir 29:20), including in Luke's style (Luke 12:1; 17:3; 21:34; Acts 20:28; nowhere else in the NT).²⁰⁴

b. Jesus versus Revolutionary Movements (5:36–37)

Gamaliel compares the Jesus movement to armed resistance movements (perhaps reflecting a widespread assumption by the narrative's Sanhedrin that Jesus's movement is politically subversive), noting that the latter came to nothing, and the same would happen to the Jesus movement if it lacked God's blessing. It is unfair to Luke's Gamaliel to portray him negatively in light of his disciple, Paul the persecutor (Acts

200. For Paul as a possible source, see also Witherington, *Acts*, 234. For discussion of the possible disagreement, see comment on Acts 22:3.

201. Fornara, *Nature of History*, 167–68 (nevertheless arguing, in contrast to many, that the “core” of most speeches remained based on sources).

202. In more sophisticated literature, this authorial skill fits the ancient rhetorical practice of being able to argue either side of an issue (Cic. *Or. Brut.* 14.46).

203. Gamaliel's warning frames two examples of revolutionaries (5:36–37), as Talbert, *Acts*, 55 (emphasizing an A-B-B'-A' pattern), notes.

204. Without the reflexive pronoun, προσέχω in this sense is far more widespread (6 times in Matthew; several times in the Pastorals; *Test. Dan* 1:2; *Test. Job* 33:4). But even if we simply counted its uses in the imperative, Luke has half the NT uses (including Luke 20:46).

22:3);²⁰⁵ Luke’s point is likely the opposite—namely, Paul’s lack of preconversion sense to heed even his own master. By advocating noninterference, Gamaliel reflects the ideal position (or at least the best-hoped-for possibility) for authorities from a Lukan perspective (cf. 18:15; 25:19).²⁰⁶

Gamaliel’s perspective here is not that of a believer in Jesus,²⁰⁷ despite some optimistic early Christian readings.²⁰⁸ Luke grounds the apostolic ministry in the OT ministry of the prophets (3:18, 21, 24–25; 7:52–53); Gamaliel sees it against the backdrop of failed revolutionary movements. But a persecuted minority sect might well appreciate even advocacy of tolerance, and Luke makes theological use of Gamaliel’s openness. (Given that a Pharisee named Saddok aided Judas the Galilean,²⁰⁹ the historical Pharisees, in general, probably viewed some of these movements more favorably, and perhaps Gamaliel viewed them less harshly, than did the Sadducees.)²¹⁰

This comparison to messianic revolutionary movements²¹¹ suits Luke’s purpose. He seems aware that others had offered the comparison (Luke 22:37; cf. Acts 17:7; 24:5), and he must address the issue as part of his political apologia for the Christian movement.²¹² Historically, the comparison to such movements is also plausible; surely this perception of the Nazarenes as a populist movement that could become out of control constituted part of the historical Sanhedrin’s concern with them. (After all, the movement’s founder had been crucified for sedition [Luke 23:2, 5].) The comparison to a mere four hundred followers (numerically right or wrong, Acts 5:36) shows that Gamaliel severely underestimates the size of the new movement (2:41, 47; 4:4).

I. LUKE VERSUS JOSEPHUS ON THEUDAS’S CHRONOLOGY

Luke’s summary of revolutionary movements here (cf. also 21:38) comports well with Josephus at some points. Theudas and Judas the Galilean²¹³ were revolutionaries,

205. *Pace* Johnson, *Acts*, 99. He rightly notes Gamaliel’s comparison of the Jesus movement to failed revolutionary movements, but the comparison’s outcome is left unclear.

206. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 233. After using an angel to rescue the apostles from prison, God uses Gamaliel to rescue them from execution, whatever Gamaliel’s persuasion (Tannehill, *Acts*, 66).

207. He would probably allow for historical claims to be evaluated in retrospect by probability (as in Polyb. 3.20.1–5) and might be more pessimistic than optimistic about the movement’s survival with or without the Sanhedrin’s intervention (e.g., Allen, *Death of Herod*, 114). But he is not closed to the possibility (Luke’s version of his wording is even optimistic), and so his warning about opposing God is probably not mere irony (*pace* Allen, *Death of Herod*, 115)—though, admittedly, “damning with faint praise” was already a malicious rhetorical device (Plut. *Mal. Hdt.* 8–9, *Mor.* 856CD).

208. E.g., Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 14 (Martin, *Acts*, 68): Gamaliel “all but preached the gospel”; in *Hom. Acts* 14.1, Chrysostom suggests that Gamaliel must have eventually become a believer (*NPNF* trans. p. 87n1 cites *Ps.-Clem. Rec.* 1.65 for Gamaliel’s being a secret believer; Photius codex 171, p. 199, cites an earlier source as claiming that Peter and John baptized Gamaliel). These inferences may depend on analogies of secret believers such as Nicodemus (John 19:39; cf. 7:50) or Joseph of Arimathea (Matt 27:57; John 19:38), but Luke is not explicit even in Joseph’s case (Luke 23:50–51, with Mark 15:43).

209. *Jos. Ant.* 18.4, 9.

210. Pharisees, unlike Sadducees, apparently did expect a Messiah (cf. probably *Pss. Sol.* 17; Segal, “Pre-suppositions,” 169; see discussion at Acts 2:23) and might prefer to leave true revolutionaries for the Romans to suppress—until the real Messiah, whom the Romans could not suppress, came. Handing over those who might be God’s servants (cf., e.g., *Judg* 15:11–13) would be reprehensible.

211. Many (e.g., Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 194–95) believe, and with significant reason, that these groups awaited apocalyptic intervention instead of being military movements. Some have doubted that these leaders viewed themselves as messiahs (cf., e.g., Bloomfield, *Recensio*, 3:386). Regardless of their genuine character, however, they would have appeared to the authorities as subversive and destabilizing (many such movements among the masses claimed to follow a king of some sort; Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits*, 114, 129–30). Interestingly, Luke omits Mark’s warning about false Christs (Mark 13:22; cf. Matt 24:24).

212. By contrast, Trumbower, “Jesus and Speech,” thinks that Luke could introduce this comparison only because Jesus was by now depoliticized and (as somewhat in the Gospel) de-eschatologized.

213. Though *Jos. War* calls him a Galilean, in *Ant.* 18.4 he is more specifically from Gamala, east of the Jordan.

and Judas led a revolt in the days of the census (5:37), in 6 C.E.²¹⁴ (Luke probably thinks of the same census to which he already referred in Luke 2:2,²¹⁵ the one place in the Gospel where, as here, secular historiography raises the most questions about his account.)²¹⁶ Judas founded a revolutionary sect that Josephus wishes to distinguish from other Jewish sects (*War* 2.118). Judas's sons were later crucified for rebellion (*Ant.* 20.102).²¹⁷ Theudas apparently tried to be an eschatological-signs prophet, something like Jesus; he tried (unsuccessfully) to part the Jordan (*Ant.* 20.97). These revolts were short lived; Cuspius Fadus captured Theudas and had his head cut off (20.98).

Theudas's revolt (ca. 44 C.E.), however, occurred later than this speech of Gamaliel should have taken place and long after Judas the Galilean's revolt in 6 C.E. (rather than before him as in Acts 5:36–37). In one summary, Josephus also places Theudas before mention of Judas because Judas's sons were also revolutionaries (*Ant.* 20.98, 102), but even here the governors named make it clear that he speaks of matters that occurred after the events depicted in Acts.²¹⁸ (Further, one could argue that Judas's movement was not technically scattered when he died,²¹⁹ though the dissipation of its initial thrust could have been sufficient for Gamaliel's point in the speech.)²²⁰

Various solutions to Luke's contradiction of Josephus are possible.²²¹ One is that Josephus got some details wrong.²²² This solution is certainly conceivable, and no less a careful scholar than Luke Timothy Johnson opines that "it is impossible either to harmonize or to utterly dismiss either version."²²³ Josephus sometimes contradicts himself, apparently even on matters such as when to date the rise of the Sicarii.²²⁴ In his major works he contradicts himself "in names, numbers, and in the order in which events are reported." His *Life* contradicts his *Jewish War* "in the order of six important episodes," and he sometimes does the same with biblical material in *Antiquities of the Jews*.²²⁵ In *Ant.* 20.16, he appears to claim that the authority to remove high priests continued among the descendants of Agrippa I's brother Herod (cf. 20.103), but later we know that instead Agrippa I's son Agrippa II held this authority (20.179, 196, 203).²²⁶ Moreover, in the midst of many genuine details confirmed as correct

214. Some later Christian writers recognized the connection between Judas and Quirinius's census, probably on the basis of Josephus; see Apollinaris, on Rom 13:1–7, in *Pauluskommentare* 78; Bray, *Romans*, 324).

215. The only other place in the NT where the term appears, although it also appears in the LXX and other early Jewish sources (Dan 10:21; 2 Macc 2:1; 3 Macc 2:32; 4:15, 17; 7:22).

216. Luke appears to date it wrongly, but alternative explanations have been offered (see below).

217. Cf. perhaps a different rebel son in *War* 2.433–34, whose activity echoes the deeds of Judas himself.

218. Some claim that Luke followed Josephus's sequence in this passage, but this is chronologically implausible (with, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 340), as noted below. Luke's sequence could conflate the later activity of Judas's sons or followers—who kept alive Judas's vision—with Judas himself, but in any case one should keep in mind that their activity was later than Gamaliel's speech in the narrative world.

219. Munck, *Acts*, 48; Wright, *Acts*, 95.

220. Certainly the Romans suppressed it brutally (*Jos. War* 2.68–75); cf. Farmer, "Judas."

221. Contrary to modern critical scholarship's assumption that it was first to notice the problem, it has been addressed at least since Origen; indeed, Lardner (1684–1768) devoted extensive attention to it (*Works*, 1:425–33; cf. 6:420nb; brought to my attention by Timothy McGrew).

222. E.g., Abbott, *Acts*, 73; Arrington, *Acts*, 60; Witherington, *Acts*, 235–39, all as a second choice. The possibility is entertained, but not specifically endorsed, by Hemer, *Acts in History*, 162–63.

223. Johnson, *Acts*, 99.

224. Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 83 (to the time of Felix in *Jos. War* 2.253–54; to that of Judas, apparently, in *War* 7.253–54). Sometimes Josephus forgets to return to a subject he promises to treat (*Ant.* 20.53; cf. 20.101).

225. Witherington, *Acts*, 236, following Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 6–7. Other sources, such as OT chronology, also present problems (cf. Gordon, *Near East*, 214).

226. In this case, Josephus may have omitted a later decision that would have explained the change.

by archaeology,²²⁷ archaeology also suggests that Josephus confused the locations of Caesarea's theater and amphitheater.²²⁸ Sometimes Josephus gets wrong even his most public information.²²⁹

Yet given Josephus's more detailed treatment of Theudas and Judas, explicit mention of the governors in authority during their revolts, and his apparent access to written sources, on the grounds normally used to ascertain historical probability Josephus seems likelier than Luke to have access to the correct chronology.²³⁰ Revolutionaries are germane to Josephus's primary interest but almost wholly peripheral to Luke's; by normal historical canons, we would expect Josephus likelier than Luke to offer the correct information in this instance.²³¹

Another (less likely) solution sometimes offered is that there was an earlier Theudas before Jesus's birth (Origen *Cels.* 1.57).²³² Undoubtedly, prophetic figures abounded, and there must have been more "kingdom"-oriented movements than Josephus reports (even if he reports the most prominent).²³³ For such a coincidence of names, a commentator notes that one William O'Brien led an Irish uprising in 1848 and another man of the same name led another in 1891.²³⁴ One could also cite two men of the church named John Eck in Luther's day.²³⁵

Theudas, however, was a rare name, although it does appear.²³⁶ Supporters of the two-Theudas view contrast Luke's minor leader of "four hundred" with Josephus's "masses" who followed Theudas,²³⁷ but by the same token, one might contrast diverse groupings or circles of Jesus's twelve disciples, the 120 (Acts 1:15), and the "crowds" who followed him. Gamaliel must number Theudas's followers here (and Luke may

227. See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:191–92, and sources cited there.

228. McRay, *Archaeology*, 144.

229. Such as Germanicus's relationship to Tiberius (*Jos. Ant.* 18.206).

230. Some later Christians looked to Josephus for such details, e.g., Bede *Comm. Acts* 5.37 (Martin, *Acts*, 67; L. Martin, 60) on Judas; 5.36 (Martin, *Acts*, 67–68; L. Martin, 60) on Theudas (though apparently adding details, perhaps from Euseb. *H.E.* 2.11). As Lardner noted in the eighteenth century (*Works*, 1:427), Josephus could make mistakes, but one is improbable here; Josephus is explicit about the timing, which was during his own boyhood. Likewise, Bloomfield noted in 1828 (*Recensio*, 4:176; brought to my attention by Tim McGrew), Josephus lived in Judea in that era, "and therefore must have known what happened in his own time."

231. With, e.g., Gaventa, *Acts*, 109.

232. Lardner, *Works*, 1:432–33 (citing Beza, Whitby, and Usher); Bloomfield, *Recensio*, 4:177 (citing Beza, Grotius, Whitby, and many others); Abbott, *Acts*, 73; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 147; Neil, *Acts*, 99–100; Arrington, *Acts*, 60; Polhill, *Acts*, 172; Kistemaker, *Acts*, 211; Witherington, *Acts*, 239; Larkin, *Acts*, 97; Bock, *Acts*, 250; Peterson, *Acts*, 225. Some (e.g., Cassidy, *Politics*, 17; Packer, *Acts*, 13, 47) cite this solution as possible but not necessarily probable. We cannot assume that any pre-Judas Theudas would be the same one who led the later revolt in Josephus (in his old age), though this seems likelier than "another" Theudas (unless we should think of a son of Theudas bearing his name). Lardner, *Works*, 1:427–28, does rightly note that one should not read too much into Luke's "some time ago"; he cites Jer 31:31; Acts 9:23; more convincingly Porphyry and Cicero; cf. the same expression in Acts 21:38.

233. On the abundance of movements, cf., e.g., Grappe, "Jésus."

234. Kistemaker, *Acts*, 211n52. But "William" and "O'Brien" were probably more common, even conjoined, in their era than "Theudas" was in first-century Palestine.

235. John Eck of Ingolstadt (Bainton, *Stand*, 107–20 and passim) and John Eck of Trier (182–83, 185; distinguished on 182).

236. *CIJ* 2:261, §1255, from Jerusalem, has in Hebrew "Judah son of Todos," i.e., Judas son of Theudas; commentators cite also *CIG* 2684; 3563; 3920; 5698. (By contrast, "Judas" was an extremely common name; Williams, "Names," 89–90.) Bloomfield, *Recensio*, 4:178, following Wetstein, considered the name a common one. Lardner, *Works*, 1:430, 433, compares the confusion of different figures with the name Simeon; but, though Lardner would not have had means to know this as we do today, Simeon was a quite common name (see, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Essays*, 105–12). Lardner's observation of *three* men named Judas involved in disturbances at roughly the same time (*Works*, 1:430) is much more compelling; but again, Judas was a very common name (Williams, "Names," 89–90).

237. Polhill, *Acts*, 172–73, also protesting that Luke omits Josephus's spectacular descriptions (this seems somewhat an argument from silence in a summary of fewer than thirty words!).

depend on a genuine historical estimate for this point) to show that the apostles need pose no ultimate threat. “Theudas gathered a following, just as . . . the apostles have.”²³⁸ More plausibly, supporters point out that “Theudas” might be a nickname, short for such popular names as “Theodorus,” “Theodosius,” and “Theodotus” (which were equivalent to such Semitic names as “Jonathan,” “Nathanael,” and “Matthias”). Such names were possible among the many uprisings that occurred when Herod died (Jos. *Ant.* 17.269).²³⁹ (One could even argue that Luke conflated two figures with similar names, deliberately or inadvertently, as he is sometimes thought to conflate two censuses in Luke 2:2.)

For all this solution’s ingenuity, however, “Theudas” (whether as name or nickname) does not (contrary to some commentators’ suggestion) appear very often in our sources, and one wonders why people bearing this name or nickname would turn up primarily as revolutionaries, one in Luke and a different one in Josephus.²⁴⁰ Further, Josephus mentions only one rebel of this name (and indeed, extremely few other rebels of *any* name) prominent enough to be classed with Judas the Galilean, just as Luke here mentions only one Theudas alongside one Judas. Although it is true that Josephus mentions “thousands” of disorders in Judea (*Ant.* 17.269), he specifies by name only the most prominent, and we would expect the same from Gamaliel. Arguments for another Theudas, no matter how valiantly argued, prove unpersuasive to most scholars, and (in my opinion) for good reason.²⁴¹

II. LUKE’S RHETORICAL USE OF THEUDAS

Most scholars believe that the simplest solution is that Luke “made a mistake, either unaware of the true date of Theudas or confusing him with some other rebel.”²⁴² Although one cannot rule out the proposal that Josephus introduced the confusion, most scholars feel that conventional historiographic method, limited as it is in terms of the certainty of its results, in this case deems historically likelier Luke’s imprecision than Josephus’s. Usually, comparing with Acts our limited historical external evidence favors Luke’s accuracy. Where evidence is most limited, Luke’s excellent historical record at most other points should weight the burden of proof in his favor in cases where no strong contrary evidence exists. In this case, however, most historians consider the contrary evidence strong enough.²⁴³ More conservative scholars help sometimes unduly critical scholars keep perspective on Luke’s reliability as a Hellenistic historian; historians of the Greco-Roman world often need to depend

238. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 340.

239. Especially *μυρία* *θουσίβων*, “thousands of [i.e., innumerable; see BDAG] disturbances.” See Bruce, *Acts*¹, 147; idem, *Documents*, 104; Polhill, *Acts*, 173; Larkin, *Acts*, 97.

240. I have a similar problem with the idea, found in Eusebius’s interpretation of Papias and often today, that there were two “Johns” associated with the production of the Fourth Gospel (see Keener, *John*, 95–98)—though “John” at least was a far more common name, requiring far less extraordinary coincidence, than Theudas.

241. See Munck, *Acts*, 48; Kee, *Every Nation*, 85–86. Although it is always remotely possible that archaeologists will uncover evidence of another Theudas involved in a revolt, the evidence from Josephus is sufficient to question the *likelihood* of this happening. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 156, by tongue-in-cheek analogy suggests two early Christian missionaries named Paul, working in roughly the same region, to explain differences between Acts and Paul’s letters.

242. Barrett, *Acts*, 296; see, e.g., Gray, *Figures*, 116 (though noting that Luke’s information coheres with Josephus’s apart from chronology).

243. Historical methodology is limited to probabilities based on the rules that it employs. Those with other epistemological considerations may challenge the limitations of our historical evidence here but, unless they articulate those considerations intelligently in public discourse, must allow scholars working with normal historical methods to follow where the evidence leads them. The same rules cited to support, to various degrees of probability, Luke’s accuracy on some points (e.g., Paul’s travels), and to which some gladly appeal at those points, raise more questions in this case.

on works far less careful and contemporary than Luke's.²⁴⁴ Yet critical arguments also challenge the most optimistic scholars to handle the evidence evenhandedly. As one fairly conservative scholar points out, "The concurrence of names between Luke and Josephus is so striking that even conservative exegetes assume here that either Luke himself or the tradition preceding him made an error."²⁴⁵ Along this line, Bo Reicke allows that Luke may have wished "to embellish Gamaliel's speech with some familiar examples of frustrated messianic movements, and had also heard of Theudas."²⁴⁶ Although Ben Witherington does not adopt this approach, he insists that its possibility "must be frankly admitted," and that it "is not impossible if Luke was following Thucydides' advice about making the speaker" approximate what he would have been known to say.²⁴⁷

According to this approach, it is reasonable that Luke fills in the summary of a comparison of Christians with revolutionary leaders (surely part of the historical Sanhedrin's concern with them),²⁴⁸ providing the names of such leaders as are most likely familiar (if any names are) to some of his audience.²⁴⁹ In the process, he appears not to be concerned with their precise chronology. If confronted with the chronological problem, perhaps his response would have been that he simply needed to use the well-known members of the category he was illustrating so that some of his audience would catch his point.²⁵⁰ Probably few in Luke's audience would have found this practice objectionable for even the best of ancient historians (and it ought to be able to go without saying that *ancient*, rather than modern, history was the genre in which he was writing).²⁵¹ Perhaps if he had thought anyone would have found this objectionable and had his critics provided more detailed information, he might have accommodated their concern.²⁵²

As historical oversights go, this would be a rather minor one, excusable especially in a summary speech (which historians wrote in their own words)—still more in a speech behind closed doors (which probably normally required historians' greatest compositional skill). It would also be one of only two particularly obvious deviations that most scholars cite in Luke-Acts in relation to Greco-Roman history (cf. Luke

244. It is not the case that only one group of scholars has assumptions; see, e.g., Keener, "Assumptions."

245. Riesner, *Early Period*, 332. There are exceptions to this consensus (some noted above).

246. Reicke, *Era*, 204n51.

247. Witherington, *Acts*, 238, 239 respectively, on the dating of Theudas (brought to my attention by Philip Richardson).

248. Appealingly but less persuasively, Knox, *Jerusalem*, 2, sees Gamaliel's support stemming from them as *nonrevolutionaries*, "a counter-attraction to the dangerous lures of nationalist agitators."

249. Perhaps only a few would have known even these names, but he picks the best known, those he knows, to bring the case as close as possible to what he believes Gamaliel would have said. Diaspora Christians may have heard of some messianic claimants in Judea from Judean believers, just as the Judean actions of Caligula may have left their mark on early Christian tradition (cf. 2 Thess 2:3–4). Rome had to contend with various religiously inspired revolts like that of Theudas elsewhere in its empire; see Rives, *Religion*, 188, citing Dio Cass. 54.34.5–7; Tac. *Hist.* 4.61, 65; cf. comments on slave revolts in the excursus at Acts 12:13.

250. It is relevant that Luke normally follows even Mark's chronology of events in his Gospel, though biographies did not require such chronology, but Luke feels free to shift the location of his programmatic scene in the Nazareth synagogue for strategic literary purposes (Mark 6:2–4; Luke 4:16–30). Dissociating the messianic Jesus movement from revolutionaries was important to his purpose (cf. Acts 21:38).

251. On differences between ancient and modern historiographic approaches, see discussion in Keener, *Acts*, e.g., 1:100–102, 166–67 (cf. 91, 107, 201, 309). Historically based approaches work to avoid anachronism. Although Witherington prefers a different solution in this case, he critiques some unfounded conservative approaches to incongruities in biblical narratives, insisting that a narrative "be judged on the basis of what the author was attempting to do" in his setting, not by modern standards (*Doctor*, 62).

252. That Luke places Theudas's date before Judas (whose approximate period he seems to know; cf. Luke 2:2) probably indicates that he lacked the detail himself; but he might have considered the question pedantic on the basis of the limited access to such information available to him and his audience.

2:2),²⁵³ quite a small number for an ancient (or modern) historian. (Compare again Josephus above, who made quite a few more obvious deviations, though at least partly because he writes more extensively and covers a larger span of history.)²⁵⁴ Apart from annals and the works of predecessors, ancient historians did not have access to compilations of records as extensive as are available to their modern counterparts, and so accuracy in a range of details often entailed extensive work. As Colin Hemer, who elsewhere argues for Luke's accuracy even in many matters of detail, rightly concedes, "Yet even if Luke has committed an anachronism by placing these words on Gamaliel's lips and has reversed the order of the two uprisings, one such slip on his part would not entitle us to argue for his general unreliability."²⁵⁵

Given Luke's freedom to rewrite details in passages such as Luke 24:47–49 and Acts 1:4–8 (or the slight differences among Paul's conversion accounts), it is unlikely that Luke or his ancient audience would feel as scandalized by this approach as some of his more recent readers have been. In fact, the matter is minor enough that it might generate little attention beyond a footnote in comment on another ancient historian, and may generate greater attention in Acts primarily in response to the strictest theological protests against its possibility. As some scholars note, apart from this passage and Quirinius's census, Luke's other significant historical assertions that can be tested most securely (Gallio, Felix and Festus, Drusilla, Agrippa and Berenice, the Egyptian prophet, local titles for officials, etc.) can all be corroborated.²⁵⁶ To judge Luke's integrity by modern assumptions of how precisely he should have written speeches, rather than by his objectives and standards as a Christian Hellenistic historian, disrespects the canons of Hellenistic historians in general, violating our own historical canons against anachronism.

Some scholars contend that Luke depends on (and hence is later than) Josephus here,²⁵⁷ but most recognize that this is quite unlikely.²⁵⁸ Should we assume that Josephus was the only source to preserve these names?²⁵⁹ What then would have been Josephus's source? (If Josephus lacked a source, we might suppose that Josephus invented these figures, and if such important figures as these, why not many others as well? But given Josephus's apologetic interests, this solution is quite improbable even apart from other historical considerations.) Further, if Luke depends on Josephus, it would certainly prove remarkable that the clearest trace of his work would be here, in an instance where Luke contradicts him. Josephus completed *Antiquities of the Jews* no earlier than 93 C.E., in a period probably too late to date Luke on other grounds.²⁶⁰ This is especially true if we must allow time for Luke to secure eventual access to the elite circles in which Josephus's work would have initially circulated.

253. For some credible, though not all necessarily equally compelling, alternative explanations even on Luke 2:2, see the summary of views in Keener, *Acts*, 1:74–75n210, 201n300.

254. I refer here to errors of detail; if we factor in Josephus's penchant for elite, rhetorical embellishment, the "errors" multiply (but ancients probably would not consider such deliberate adaptations errors). One finds mistakes also in other usually careful writers, such as Pliny *Ep.* 10.58.5; 10.81.6.

255. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 162–63.

256. As emphasized rightly by Riesner, *Early Period*, 333.

257. Torrey, *Composition*, 70 (who thinks that Luke depends on Josephus only here and at Luke 3:1; cf. *Jos. Ant.* 20.137, 140); Pervo, "Dating Acts."

258. Barrett, *Acts*, xliii; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52; Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 2–4; Witherington, *Acts*, 237–38; Padilla, *Speeches*, 124.

259. Luke could have used any source (Barrett, *Acts*, 296).

260. Quite apart from the question of the "we" narratives' authorship, Luke's perspective on Pharisaism is friendlier and earlier than John and likely Matthew, and his openness to Roman administrators would hardly make sense in the later years of Domitian's reign; his apologetic for Paul also appears early (for the suggested date of Acts, see discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:383–401).

From the standpoint of usual historical method, it is more likely that Luke, from his conversations in Judea, has a general knowledge of revolts that occurred (cf. Acts 21:8–27:1), even if he does not have easy access to (or have reason to be concerned with) their exact dates.²⁶¹ If he believed that Gamaliel compared (or would have compared) the earliest apostolic movement to revolutionary movements, the proper procedure in ancient historiography was to flesh out the speech with the most plausible details.²⁶² He thus would preserve the thrust of the speech by providing what seem the most appropriate details. Ancient historians would be less concerned about such a detail than are modern commentators.²⁶³ Although rhetoricians warned against this common danger of mixing chronology (Hermog. *Issues* 34.3–9, on flawed invention), it happened even in widely read and accepted works (e.g., the probable anachronism in Plato *Alcib.* 2.141D).²⁶⁴ Whether this above approach to Luke's inclusion of the names is ultimately correct in this instance or not, it is certainly well within the range of ancient historiographic practice.

Luke's particular wording is useful for his argument. Like Simon (Acts 8:9) but in contrast to Peter and Paul (who refuse divine honors, 10:25–26; 14:14–15), Theudas claimed to be “someone”; Jesus had already taught that only the humble would be exalted (Luke 14:11; 18:14).²⁶⁵ Gamaliel's wording also fits the comparison of Jesus to revolutionary leaders. Theudas also “rose up,” the same term used for Jesus's resurrection (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:22, 26),²⁶⁶ further, people “obeyed” (ἐπείθοντο) both Theudas and Judas (5:36–37), as the apostles claimed to “obey” God (5:29, 32).²⁶⁷

Luke's wording also points to the future. Judas's movement fell apart when it was “dispersed” or “scattered” (διεσκορπίσθησαν),²⁶⁸ as Luke leads us to expect for the wicked (Luke 1:51; cognate in 11:23). As Theudas's followers were also scattered (a different term in Acts 5:36), Gamaliel might expect (and most of his hearers likely expect) the same ultimate fate for Jesus's followers.²⁶⁹ Yet soon Luke will narrate (using the different term διασπείρω) the dispersal of Jesus's Jerusalem followers (8:1), while showing that this very dispersal strengthened this godly movement (8:4; 11:19–20).

261. Judean outsiders would have naturally compared a prophetic leader such as Theudas with Jesus, to the extent that Judean believers in the 40s would have remembered Theudas and had to respond to him. It is possible that some of Jesus's movement outside Judea had heard of him from Judean believers.

262. See discussion of speeches, and different views about them, in Keener, *Acts*, 1:258–319. Histories' speeches often introduce historical examples (Tac. *Ann.* 11.24; Sall. *Catil.* 51.5–6; Jos. *War* 5.376–98; Jer 26:17–23; cited in Plümacher, *Lukas*, 38–72, esp. 41–50; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 42); the practice may be more common in Acts than Plümacher recognizes (Soards, *Speeches*, 138–42, esp. 142). Vell. Pat. 1.3.2 does complain about anachronistic speech in the mouth of poets' characters, but such updating was not uncommon (see the commentary introduction, ch. 8). The observation that historians updated language has been widely accepted by even fairly conservative biblical scholars, for example, at Gen 12:16 (e.g., Albright, *Biblical Period*, 6–7; Bright, *History*, 81; Wright, *Archaeology*, 40)—though this particular example is now uncertain (for occasional use of some camels, note data in Becker, “Camels”; Forbes, *Technology*, 2:187–208, esp. 202–3; Gordon, *Near East*, 124; Millard, “Methods,” 49)—and more often at Gen 21:32, 34 (Wright, *Archaeology*, 40; Yamauchi, *Stones*, 46; Walton, “Genesis,” 96).

263. With Dunn, *Acts*, 73. The exception would be ancient polemical critics (on the order of Celsus or Porphyry) looking for grounds to criticize the early Christians; historians could have such critics, but perhaps not commonly enough for Luke to have envisaged the potential problem.

264. Here the pseudepigrapher of *Alcibiades* attributes to Socrates the reference to a “recent” event in 399 B.C.E., the year he died (see LCL, 4:240–41n2).

265. Tannehill, *Acts*, 53. Gamaliel's use of ἐαυτόν with respect to Theudas may also rhetorically echo his use of ἐαυτοῖς for the Sanhedrin in 5:35; the nearest uses of ἐαυτοῦ outside Gamaliel's speech are in 1:3 and 7:21.

266. Then again, the term is also applied to Gamaliel (Acts 5:34) and the high priest (5:17); Luke employs the term seventy-one times (about two-thirds of the NT uses).

267. Johnson, *Acts*, 99–100.

268. Many contend that it, in fact, resurfaced later through Judas's sons, but it was apparently squelched at least in the short term.

269. Cf. Talbert, *Acts*, 55–56.

Perhaps most important for Luke's purposes is the difference between Jesus's movement and that of a failed revolutionary. If, as I suggest in chapter 10 of our introduction, Luke writes in the wake of the Judean-Roman war, differentiating the Jesus movement from other Judean messianic movements that led to revolt and Jerusalem's destruction will be an important part of his apologetic.²⁷⁰ That Jesus's movement continues shows Luke's audience that it differs from movements dependent on the strength of followers or dispersed after the execution of leaders.²⁷¹

c. *Gamaliel's Wise Counsel* (5:38–39)

Gamaliel's "I say to you" (5:38) was a common formula for the sages.²⁷² The sentiment of 5:38–39 is appropriate to the Pharisaic movement, both for reasons of leniency mentioned above (Jos. *Ant.* 13.294) and (if correctly understood) for views such as expressed by a second-century disciple of R. Akiba in *m. 'Ab.* 4:11 (Danby, 454): "Any assembling together that is for the sake of Heaven shall in the end be established, but any that is not for the sake of Heaven shall not in the end be established."²⁷³

Good historians sought either to provide what speakers said or to plausibly reconstruct what they might have said; whichever Luke did here, he appears to have done it admirably. Granted, the analogy is inexact: Judas and Theudas failed because of intervention, whereas it is intervention that Gamaliel argues against for the apostles. But the apostles' supporters are in Jerusalem itself, are so far nonviolent, and seem less dangerous if not provoked with their leaders' martyrdom; and as far as Gamaliel was concerned, Roman intervention might prove the divine will, but Pharisees might know the divine purpose in such cases only in retrospect.²⁷⁴

Such sentiments were not, however, limited to Pharisaism. Thus Diogenes Laertius cites as a proof of Epicurus's goodness that his school, unlike most others, has continued with a succession of scholars supervising it (Diog. Laert. 10.1.9). At the same time, many ancients recognized the limits of such logic; one cannot always judge what is praiseworthy on the basis of successes or failures, Polybius said, because successes can yield calamity if used unwisely, and failures can be turned to advantage through courage.²⁷⁵

270. Josephus, who portrays Jesus (*Ant.* 18.63–64), like John the Baptist (18.116–19), in a manner quite different from leaders of politically dangerous prophetic movements, remains silent (according to the likeliest original version) about the movement that grew up around Jesus and had attracted negative press in Rome (*Tac. Ann.* 15.44).

271. The movement's continuance would not yet have been evident to Gamaliel within the narrative but is evident to Luke's audience (even by the end of Acts itself); for the function of this difference as dramatic irony, see Padilla, *Speeches*, 128–30.

272. See (with reference to Jesus's usage) Schechter, "Parallels," 427; Abrahams, *Studies* (1), 16; Smith, *Parallels*, 28–30; Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 55–58; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:294; Keener, *Matthew*, 182; cf., e.g., *Mek. Pisha* 1.58, 62; *b. Ber.* 63a.; significantly paralleled also in 4QMMT (though Wise, "General Introduction," 264, regards it as previously unparalleled).

273. Regularly cited at least since Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:640; see Haenchen, *Acts*, 253n2; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 43; Longenecker, *Paul*, 33n44 (see also other suggestions there); idem, *Acts*, 119; Dunn, *Acts*, 72; Chance, *Acts*, 97. On the survival of bad teaching, see, e.g., *m. 'Ab.* 1:11; *Sipre Deut.* 48.2.5.

274. On some Pharisaic sympathy for revolutionaries despite the claim of Jos. *War* 2.118–19 and the possibly pacifist attitude of Johanan ben Zakkai, see Jos. *Ant.* 18.4, 9 (a Pharisee who aided Judas's revolt); 18.23 (the revolutionaries agree with Pharisaism on most points except violence, though this is a significant exception here); *War* 1.648–50 (Pharisaic resistance against the imperial eagle in the temple); see also Simon, *Sects*, 44; Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 83–84; Sanders, *Judaism*, 408–11; Neusner, *Beginning*, 26–27; Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits*, 198 (contrast Davies, *Introduction*, 18–19). Revolutionaries themselves probably saw themselves in the mold of the Maccabees (e.g., 1 Macc 2:24–28); what made the difference in others' evaluation of them was that the Maccabees were successful against Syria whereas first-century revolutionaries failed against Rome. Failures were then retroactively recognized as cursed by God (e.g., *Pesiq. Rab.* 30:3).

275. Polyb. 3.4.1–5; cf. *Judg* 8:27; 2 Kgs 14:7–14.

Whereas Pharisees and other Jews would allow that some bad teachings survived, one would not expect the same for revolutionary movements under Roman rule.²⁷⁶ Pharisees would also believe, and Luke would emphasize, that a movement raised up by God's "purpose" would not be destroyed²⁷⁷ (on God's "plan," see comment on Acts 2:23). In the broader context of Luke-Acts, the divine purpose in the gospel contrasts starkly with the human plan to oppose it, both of which coincided in the cross (Luke 23:51). The opposition itself was part of God's plan (Acts 2:23; 4:28); thus nothing would stop the gospel (28:31; cf. 8:36; 10:47; 11:17).²⁷⁸

Gamaliel's warning against fighting against God (5:39), more plausible by conventional expectations than Peter's apparent paraphrase of Socrates, seems to echo Greek tradition. Many scholars have argued that the rare term *θεομάχοι* suggests an allusion to a term most notably found in Euripides's *Bacchanals*.²⁷⁹ Verses from Euripides were collected in anthologies long before this period, and many naturally suppose these the source;²⁸⁰ by Luke's day the term had become more widespread.²⁸¹ But even some of the later uses alluded back to Euripides's story; thus, when Apollonius escapes a king's custody (just as Dionysus had in Euripides's story), the king concedes that he cannot "fight against a god" (*θεομαχεῖν*, Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.44).

Even a Jewish text that circulated widely used the term (2 Macc 7:19), and this would be the closest likely source for Jewish readers.²⁸² In this passage, "fighting against God" is what the pagan persecutors of the Maccabean martyrs did, and God would punish these persecutors (7:19) and resurrect these martyrs (7:23).²⁸³ Gamaliel's hearers (many of them Sadducees denying the resurrection) would hardly wish to be ranged with pagan persecutors. But even though Luke's audience might think of 2 Maccabees, that passage itself likely alludes to Euripides and treats the wicked king, persecuting God's servants, like Euripides's god-resistant king Pentheus, warning of the same fate.²⁸⁴ If Luke and his ideal audience might have thought of Euripides, an allusion to the story there would be striking: the god freed his agents supernaturally from confinement and destroyed the leader who persecuted his followers.²⁸⁵

276. Even under normal circumstances, millenarian movements by their nature either die out quickly or mutate from being millenarian (Gager, *Kingdom*, 21).

277. Cf. the basic Pharisaic tenet that God determines destiny (Jos. *War* 2.162; Reicke, *Era*, 189).

278. Literally, Gamaliel speaks not of the gospel itself, nor of God's just-mentioned plan (feminine singular), but of "these men" (masculine plural), also just mentioned. This expression is not meant to confer immortality on God's agents but does imply that God's plan for his agents will not be thwarted (see Acts 13:36; cf. Luke 4:30; 22:53). Thus one servant may die (Acts 7:60), but another is preserved for a time to fulfill God's promised purpose (23:11; 27:24). Outside Luke-Acts, compare the tension between individual martyrdom and the preservation of God's community probably implied in Matt 16:18, 24.

279. Renehan, "Quotations," 22–23 (Eurip. *Bacch.* 45, 32S, 125S; cf. *Iph. Aul.* 1408 if genuine; the noun in *Bacch.* 795); esp. Weaver, *Epiphany*, 132–36. I say "most notably" because this would be the single most recognizable literary source for Greeks.

280. See Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 42; idem, *Moral Exhortation*, 115. Euripides may depend on an earlier Greek proverb (Munck, *Acts*, 48–49).

281. Heracl. *Hom. Prob.* 1.2 (cf. 2.1; contending that Homer would so qualify were he not read allegorically); Lucian *Z. Rants* 45 (a Stoic against an Epicurean who denies the gods); cf. the idea in Quint. *Decl.* 323.5. It also applied to deities battling each other (Heracl. *Hom. Prob.* 52.1–53.1, esp. 52.1).

282. See Conzelmann, *Acts*, 43. In different words, cf. the concept in *Test. Ab.* 8:8 A.

283. The Maccabean context might be fresh in the minds of Luke's audience if *νοσφισσάθαι* evoked 2 Macc 4:32 at Acts 5:3.

284. Cf. the issue of Dionysus in 2 Macc 6:7; 14:33. Similarly, in view of anti-Dionysiac apologetic in 3 Maccabees (cf. 3 Macc 2:29), Cousland, "Dionysus *theomachos*?" is probably correct that 3 Maccabees also recalls Euripides's *Bacchanals* (also Weaver, *Epiphany*, 82–84); God defeats the "new Dionysus," Ptolemy IV Philopator.

285. See above, on Eurip. *Bacch.* 443–48. For the connection with the apostles' earlier prison escape, see similarly Weaver, *Epiphany*, 144, 147; that I noticed the connection before reading Weaver encourages me that we have noticed a genuine feature of the text.

Moreover, not only might Luke's ideal audience recognize an allusion to the setting in Euripides; they might expect much of Jerusalem's ruling elite to catch it.²⁸⁶ Given the supernatural escape in Acts 5:19 (known from Greek traditions surrounding Dionysus), Gamaliel himself could use θεομάχοι in view of the tradition of authorities opposing a god in the narrative tradition of the *Bacchantes*. The Sanhedrin should not act like Pentheus in the myth, blind to a supernatural escape. Gamaliel instructed some Hellenists (22:3), and we have reason to believe that his household trained scholars in Greek as well as Hebrew texts (see comment on Acts 22:3). Whether or not Luke expects his audience to think that Gamaliel made the allusion deliberately, however, Luke might expect much of his audience to catch it.

We should not underestimate the possibility that Gamaliel, as an actor within this narrative, would be willing to entertain at least the possibility that God was working through this movement.²⁸⁷ To entertain the possibility committed him to nothing, but it also allowed for the apparent miracle the Sanhedrin itself had just experienced (5:24), a miracle that Pharisees, unlike Sadducees, were not theologically compelled to dismiss.²⁸⁸ Further, only the leading Sadducees had ordered the arrest to begin with (5:17); Gamaliel's Pharisaic minority had not, in fact, lost face through the unexpected release.

Certainly, the way Luke puts Gamaliel's words serves his narrative well. The informed reader of Luke's day was well aware that the movement would *not* simply vanish like the short-lived revolutionary movements with which it is compared in 5:36–37.²⁸⁹ The reader would know that the apostles' "plan" (βουλή) was in fact from God (Luke 7:30; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 13:36; 20:27).²⁹⁰ Thus Gamaliel's shift from the subjunctive ("if it be of human origin") to the indicative ("if it is from God") may function as God's own wisdom for Luke.²⁹¹ Further, "fighting against God" is precisely what Saul later found himself doing (Acts 26:14), against the counsel of his own teacher (22:3).²⁹²

4. Continued Obedience (5:40–42)

After the council has the apostles flogged (5:40), the apostles celebrate their shame in human eyes (5:41) and continue obeying their commission to be witnesses (5:42).

286. This would be all the more true if some of them happened to be well informed: historically, the household of Gamaliel was known for Greek as well as Jewish learning (see comment on Acts 22:3), and the Sadducean aristocracy knew Greek well. Most aristocratic burial inscriptions are in Greek (at least one-third of all Jerusalem inscriptions, mainly those of the smaller middle and upper classes; Levine, *Hellenism*, 78, 94–95, 182), though aristocrats may have been bilingual (cf. Jos. *Ant.* 20.263–64). (Even the Semiticist Dalman long ago recognized the use of Greek in Jerusalem [*Jesus-Jeshua*, 3].) See further discussion at Acts 21:40; 22:2.

287. Strelan, "Gamaliel's Hunch," argues that Luke's Gamaliel has a "hunch" that the apostles serve God's purposes.

288. Pharisees were certainly more open to fresh revelation than were Sadducees (see Dunn, *Acts*, 72–73; Jos. *Ant.* 13.297, 408).

289. With, e.g., Pervo, *Story*, 28 (Luke's informed audience has just heard of the angelic intervention, Acts 5:19). For the speech's apologetic value for Luke, see Padilla, *Speeches*, 120–34.

290. Cf. Moessner, "Script," 230. Sometimes "work" was linked with "plan" (Isa 29:15; Mic 6:16; Wis 6:3; cf. Sir 37:16), including when both are God's (Ps 106:13; Jer 32:19); cf. Luke's "words and works" (Luke 24:19; Acts 7:22). Lohfink, "Taten Gottes," thinks that the "work" here (from Luke's perspective) is the church (cf. Acts 13:41); cf. "work" as ministry (13:2; 14:26; 15:38).

291. With, e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 43; Soards, *Speeches*, 54; Tannehill, *Acts*, 67; Witherington, *Acts*, 235; Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, §372.1; contrast Darr, "Irenic or Ironic?" Many ancients believed that speakers could utter unintended prophecies (Jdt 6:2; 'Abot R. Nat. 43, §118 B; b. *Soṭah* 12b; through children, Plut. *Isis* 14, *Mor.* 356E; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 5.4; Aug. *Conf.* 8.12; in more detail, Keener, *John*, 856–57, on John 11:51–52).

292. Cf. the allusion to Greek literary tradition in Acts 26:14, which reinforces the possibility of such an allusion here.

a. The Council's Reluctance to Execute (5:40)

Having been calmed down, council members would not likely desire a lynching (though contrast violence in Jerusalem settings in 7:57–58; 21:30–32; 22:20, 22–23; 23:12–14);²⁹³ handing the disciples over to the Roman governor on the charge of sedition would, however, remain a legal option, an option later employed against Paul (24:5). Nevertheless, the turn of events in the narrative here is a more logical one at this stage in the story. The apostles are too popular in Jerusalem to risk disposing of them the way Jesus was dealt with earlier or the way some would attempt to deal with Paul later. Paul will lack significant popular support at his arrest (21:21, 28–30; 22:22; 23:14–15), but the same cannot be said even at that time for the Jerusalem Christians, who are known to be law abiding (21:20).

Luke emphasizes Gamaliel's Pharisaic affiliation (5:34) in part because, as information both extrinsic and intrinsic to his account implies, Pharisees were closer to the people than were the Sadducees. The Sadducees and their temple police fear the masses (Acts 5:26; Luke 20:6; 22:2), but Luke tells us that Gamaliel is respected by the people (Acts 5:34). Gamaliel has special influence in the council, and particularly in a situation such as this, because the Sadducees hear him as a voice for the people.²⁹⁴

Moreover, the disciples were a charismatic, messianic sect within Judaism, not a distinct "religion." They were a sect like the Essenes or Gamaliel's own Pharisees, and so Pharisees could believe them wrong about some matters yet still grant that God might use them. Administrators of a diverse nation, especially if they needed Roman ratification for executions, had to practice a measure of political tolerance for such sects whatever their individual beliefs. (Minorities might also appreciate another movement that more vocally challenged the rulers' hegemony.) Perhaps this political reality lent urgency to Gamaliel's case; the politically less powerful Pharisees stood to suffer from restrictions on religious freedom, whereas the Sadducees stood to suffer from Pharisaic discontent.²⁹⁵ Most of all, both groups stood to suffer if they made martyrs out of the now-popular apostles, whose followers already considered the Jerusalem leaders responsible for martyring the Galilean prophet Jesus. Martyring more leaders, even if it did not provoke a violent response (5:26), would further alienate the aristocratic elite from the people they governed. Gamaliel's solution made political sense for a municipal aristocracy, even if a later, popular king felt no need for such scruples (12:2; perhaps conveniently for the movement's critics, the climate of opinion may have shifted after Stephen's more radical approach to the land, cf. 12:3).

An ancient senate most of whose members advocated conspirators' execution could be dissuaded, at least temporarily, from its plan (e.g., Plut. *Cic.* 21.1–2).²⁹⁶ Whereas Gamaliel is presented as a person of principle, the Sanhedrin had some political considerations (cf. Luke 20:6, 19; 22:2) that would have made his counsel more convenient to embrace: the same popularity that made the apostles a threat to them also made it dangerous to dispose of them too harshly (Acts 5:26), even by a sedition charge to the governor (as in Luke 23:2).

293. Apart from Acts 23:12–14, these mostly appear spontaneous and hence not reflective of official activities.

294. See Mason, "Chief Priests," 151. In the Roman Republic, one might compare the influence of the tribunes of the plebs.

295. Luke does seem aware of the distinction between the politically more powerful Sadducees and the populist Pharisees (see Mason, "Chief Priests," 115).

296. In the case in Plut. *Cic.* 20–22, however, the death sentence finally did prevail (21.3) and was carried out (22.2).

Luke's account of Pharisaic persuasiveness for some tolerance is not only historically plausible, it is theologically pregnant. The council "heeded" (ἐπέισθησαν, 5:39–40) Gamaliel—the same term Gamaliel employed for the crowds who "followed" Theudas and who "followed" Judas. This is functionally a synonym for the term used to depict the apostles' determination to "obey" (πειθαρχεῖν) God rather than humans (5:29) and their claim that God gives the Spirit to those who "obey" him (5:32).²⁹⁷ This proves ironic: the Sanhedrin's members end up heeding people rather than God. (Ultimately, through Gamaliel, popular with the people [5:34], they heed the people, whom they fear [5:26; cf. Luke 20:6, 19; 22:2].) By contrast, the apostles refuse to heed the Sanhedrin's decree (Acts 5:40) and keep preaching and teaching (5:42), thus obeying God rather than people.²⁹⁸

A flogging was hardly the same as merely another warning (4:17, 21),²⁹⁹ though it was not execution (cf. Pilate's willingness to settle merely for Jesus's scourging in Luke 23:16, 22). That it is passed over so quickly, with emphasis on the triumph of Gamaliel's "tolerant" counsel, probably suggests that it is genuine historical tradition; narrators were to pass over quickly matters likely to trouble the audience.³⁰⁰ Ancient courts could order beatings for violating court orders.³⁰¹ Beatings were also common for a variety of other causes; in addition to the disciplining of children,³⁰² masters could flog apprentices for habitual tardiness,³⁰³ and slaves also would be beaten.³⁰⁴ For fully free men, however, official beatings were an act of public humiliation,³⁰⁵ even seen as making the one beaten comparable to a slave (Jos. *Ant.* 4.238).

Many scholars suspect that the flogging was the traditional Jewish thirty-nine³⁰⁶ lashes (2 Cor 11:24); at least the Pharisees in the council would not have approved

297. As noted above, Luke draws attention to this verb because it frames Peter's brief speech (and uses it only one other time in Luke-Acts, in Acts 27:21).

298. Johnson, *Acts*, 101.

299. Preliminary warnings were standard for many offenses (Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 332; see comment on Acts 4:16–17, 21). Granted, Luke nowhere makes this rule explicit (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 41); but he makes two hearings explicit, and preliminary warnings were not unheard of elsewhere.

300. So Theon *Progymn.* 5.52–56. The scene may, however, also fit Luke's apologetic: the same sort of leaders who later charge Paul here flog innocent people (Mauck, *Trial*, 83–84).

301. In Egyptian papyri, see Lewis, *Life*, 194.

302. By fathers (Aristoph. *Clouds* 1409–10; Xen. *Lac.* 6.1–2; *Ahiq.* 81 [saying 3]; Prov 13:24; Sir 30:1, 12; *t. B. Qam.* 9:11; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 15:4; Pilch, "Beat"; Safrai, "Home," 770–71), teachers (Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.13; *t. B. Qam.* 9:11; Goodman, *State*, 78; Safrai, "Education," 954–55; Carcopino, *Life*, 105; Townsend, "Education," 145), and pedagogues (Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 380, §127). Some opposed this (Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.13–14; cf. Plut. *M. Cato* 20.2; Ps.-Phoc. 150).

303. For habitual tardiness (Jos. *Ant.* 18.314) or mistakes, even as a child (Lucian *Career* 4).

304. E.g., "King Cheops and the Magicians" 12.8–28 (in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 23–24); Aristoph. *Clouds* 1451; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.13; Theophr. *Char.* 12.12; Apollod. *Bib.* 2.8.2; Cic. *Fin.* 4.27.76; Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.14; Plut. *M. Cato* 21.3; Martial *Epig.* 2.66, 82 (crucifixion); 8.23; Juv. *Sat.* 6.219 (crucifixion), 474–85, 490–91; Ach. Tat. 5.17.8–9; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 2.6; Moore, *Judaism*, 2:138. Sometimes they would receive fifty (Aeschines *Tim.* 139) or even a hundred (Plato *Laws* 9.881C; P.Hal. 1.188–89, 196–99; Petron. *Sat.* 28) lashes. But Germans were said to beat slaves less often (Tac. *Germ.* 25), and Greeks were not to beat other slaveholders' slaves (Demosth. *Con.* 4).

305. Even a personal blow to the face constituted a grievous insult (e.g., P.Hal. 1.203–5; Plut. *Alc.* 8.1; Plat. *Q.* 9.4, *Mor.* 1010F; *m. B. Qam.* 8:6; *b. Sanh.* 58b; Lachs, *Commentary*, 106), and severer public beatings even more so (Hom. *Il.* 2.265–70; 1 Thess 2:2). But Luke's ideal audience will know that biblical prophets faced such insults (1 Kgs 22:24; 2 Chr 18:23; Isa 50:6; Jeremiah, *Sermon*, 29).

306. See Jos. *Ant.* 4.238, 248; many rabbis in *m. Mak.* 3:10 (though R. Judah insists on forty; but 3:11 requires a number divisible by three, such as thirty-nine); this was apparently to avoid accidentally going beyond Deuteronomy's forty (so also Chrys. *Hom.* 2 Cor. 25.1). In cases of a person with a weak physical constitution, the blows might be reduced further (*m. Mak.* 3:11; *y. Naz.* 4:3, §1; people being scourged often pleaded for the number of blows to be reduced, Polyb. 30.31.3). The prescription of eighty blows for an offense (*b. Ker.* 15a) was presumably administered, if at all, in installments (*b. Pesah.* 24a prescribes four flagellations). It might differ with heavenly beings: Metatron received sixty blows (*b. Hag.* 15a), as did Elijah (*b. B. Meš'i'a*

of more,³⁰⁷ and in view of Deut 25:2–3, even the Sadducees would have presumably observed this limit, especially given the punishment’s public character. Later rabbis inflicted the punishment for various offenses,³⁰⁸ such as breach of ritual law;³⁰⁹ breaking the bone of a paschal offering;³¹⁰ breaking a Nazirite vow with wine;³¹¹ cursing another with the divine name;³¹² *orlah*;³¹³ trimming hair to emulate pagans;³¹⁴ and, more commonly, work on a festival day.³¹⁵ Since options for discipline were limited, however, Jewish courts may have employed flogging even for cases beyond those later specified.³¹⁶ Some did allow monetary payment in substitution for some beatings.³¹⁷ Relevant here, this punishment was more apt to occur after the offender had defied a prior warning.³¹⁸

In the custom preserved in later rabbinic sources, the person would be tied to a post³¹⁹ or lie on the ground,³²⁰ receiving one-third of the blows on the front of the body and two-thirds on the back.³²¹ Thus the one inflicting the punishment would strike a strap of calf leather with interwoven thongs against the offender’s back twenty-six times and the breast thirteen times.³²² It is doubtful that a Sanhedrin dominated by the Sadducean high priest would have trifled with such details, but the rabbinic picture may give us a “low” estimate of the kind of discipline the apostles received. In the Mishnah, the synagogue *chazzan* would supervise; here we might presume the involvement of the captain of the temple guard (Acts 4:1).

b. Celebrating Persecution (5:41)

The narrative concludes in 5:41–42 by reinforcing the characterization that the apostles, in contrast to Jerusalem’s political elite, obey God rather than people (5:29). They rejoice when suffering for Jesus’s name (5:41), as he commanded (Luke 6:22–23), while disobeying the Sanhedrin’s injunction not to teach in Jesus’s name (Acts 5:40, 42). The apostles return with joy, as they did after Jesus’s ascension (Luke

85b), but in *b. Yoma* 77a, Gabriel received only forty. Some Amoraim claimed that the forty represented the forty days it took to give the Torah (*Num. Rab.* 5:4). Forty was also a round number that Gentiles could use for beatings (Petron. *Sat.* 105), but not regularly as in Judaism.

307. With, e.g., Le Cornu, *Acts*, 297. In contrast to Gentile courts, Jewish courts limited the beatings (*b. Ketub.* 33b), texts suggesting that the usual number was about forty (probably generally thirty-nine). We cannot be certain that they would have followed the strictures laid out in the Mishnah, but this procedure is closer chronologically than the nineteenth-century suggestion of the Egyptian bastinado, in which the person was beaten on the ground (Abbott, *Acts*, 74).

308. E.g., *m. Hul.* 5:2; *Kil.* 8:3; *Tem.* 1:1; *Mak.* 1:1–3; 3:3–5; *b. B. Meši’a* 115b. Even against fellow rabbis, who might receive it humbly (e.g., one R. Jacob in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 4:3; *Gen. Rab.* 7:2; *Num. Rab.* 19:3; *Eccl. Rab.* 7:23, §4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 14:9; allegedly, Akiba received this five times, *Sipra Qed. pq.* 4.200.3.3; *Sipre Deut.* 1.3.2).

309. E.g., *t. Tem.* 1:1.

310. So *m. Pesah.* 7:11.

311. So *m. Naz.* 4:3 (unless her husband has annulled her vow).

312. *Pesiq. Rab.* 22:6.

313. *Y. Pesah.* 24b limits the punishment to olives and grapes.

314. *Deut. Rab.* 2:18.

315. As opposed to the Sabbath, which merited stoning; e.g., *y. Šabb.* 7:2, §15; *y. Bešah* 5:2, §11; *y. Meg.* 1:6, §2. Some of the offenses for which they prescribed the flogging must have applied only in theory, e.g., the high priest leaving the Temple Mount in priestly garments (*Num. Rab.* 19:19); the high priest held more power than Pharisees so long as the temple stood.

316. See Thrall, *2 Corinthians*, 737.

317. So R. ‘Ulla, a Babylonian Amora, in *b. Ketub.* 32ab.

318. So Simeon ben Lakish, *y. Ter.* 7:1.

319. E.g., *m. Mak.* 3:12.

320. E.g., *Sipre Deut.* 286.4.1.

321. E.g., *m. Mak.* 3:13; *Sipre Deut.* 286.5.1. According to the rabbis, someone was to read from Deut 28:58–59 at the time (*m. Mak.* 3:14).

322. *M. Mak.* 3:10–12.

24:52). Luke often emphasizes joy over embracing the gospel (e.g., Acts 8:8, 39; cf. Luke 10:20),³²³ but the connection with suffering is no coincidence (also Acts 16:25). The apostles here follow Jesus's teaching to rejoice when persecuted, because this suffering made them successors of the biblical prophets (Luke 6:22–23). Early Christians often spoke of rejoicing in suffering (Rom 5:3; Jas 1:2; 1 Pet 1:6)³²⁴ and even giving thanks for all things (Eph 5:20; cf. 1 Thess 5:16–18), an ethic that would appeal to many of those familiar with Greek philosophy (especially Stoics)³²⁵ as well as with the Jewish wisdom and apocalyptic traditions.³²⁶

That they suffered “for the name” is significant. Jewish people emphasized sanctifying “the name” and suffering on behalf of it; the Name was a divine circumlocution in Judaism (see comment on Acts 2:21). Acts transfers many concepts associated with the divine name to the name of Jesus (see comment on Acts 3:6).³²⁷ They suffer ὑπέρ Jesus's name, just as he suffered ὑπέρ (for) others.³²⁸ Similarly, Jewish sources praised martyrs who died διὰ (on account of) God (4 Macc 16:25), God's law (6:27, 30), or piety (9:7), or ὑπέρ (on behalf of) their ancestral covenant (1 Macc 2:50) or God's laws (2 Macc 7:9).

Beneficiaries should display gratitude toward their patron, in part, by showing loyalty, ideally even when this commitment entails suffering (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 81.27).³²⁹ Sharing in what was another's could mean sharing the other's suffering or death (Philost. *Hrk.* 28.11–12). Suffering (δείραντες, “having flogged [them],” Acts 5:40) for Jesus's “name” meant that the disciples shared his sufferings, standing in continuity with the prophets (Luke 6:22–23, 26; δείραντες, 20:10–11) and their Lord (δέροντες, 22:63; later believers in Acts 16:37; 22:19). They have already been sharing Christ's sufferings, interpreting their sufferings in solidarity with Christ's in Acts 4:25–29, just as Stephen emulates Jesus's death in 7:59–60.

They had been “dishonored” (ἀτιμασθῆναι, 5:41), the beating meant to serve as public humiliation and a challenge to their status (Luke 20:11, the other Lukan use, applying to God's servant-messengers [from Mark 12:4]).³³⁰ Paul and Silas face analogous public humiliation later in the book (Acts 16:22; cf. 1 Thess 2:2),³³¹ ironically because they are Jewish (Acts 16:20–21). In an honor-shame society, such punishments were experienced as degrading; yet none of these was considered as degrading

323. On joy in Acts, see, e.g., Harnack, *Acts*, 277–81; Martín-Moreno, “Alegria”; comment on Acts 13:52.

324. Repeated later, e.g., in Chrys. *Hom. 1 Cor.* 23.4 (Bray, *Corinthians*, 95).

325. See esp. Epict. *Diatr.* 1.6.1; 4.7.9; Marc. Aur. 6.16. Since one cannot change one's lot, one should accept it (Sen. *Y. Dial.* 1.5.6; 7.8.3; 11.4.1; *Ep. Lucil.* 66.18, 37–39; 98.3; Mus. Ruf. 17, p. 108.37–38; frg. 38, p. 136.4–8; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.12.23; 2.16.42; 3.18.1–9; Marc. Aur. 3.12; Lucian *Phil. Sale* 21; *Dem.* 19–20; cf. Cic. *Fam.* 6.20.3; Val. Max. 7.2.ext. 1a) and appreciate whatever is good in it (Sen. *Y. Dial.* 7.15.4–7.16.3; 9.10.4), remaining cheerful (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 123.3; *Nat. Q.* 3.pref. 12–13, 15; *Dial.* 1.5.8; 7.15.4; 7.16.1–3), without complaining (*Ep. Lucil.* 96.1–2; 107.6; *Dial.* 7.15.6; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.14.16; Marc. Aur. 2.16; cf. Publ. Syr. 180). Cf. the formula “Perhaps it is for the best” (Cic. *Fam.* 13.47.1; *b. Ta'an.* 21a).

326. See 1QS X, 15–17; Sir 2:4; 2 Bar. 52:6; for praise despite suffering, 1 En. 108:10; *b. Ta'an.* 21a. For joy in suffering for God's commandments (because of future reward), see *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.5; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:2/3; for joy in martyrdom in hope of future reward, see the Essenes in Jos. *War.* 2.152. See further the comment on Acts 16:25.

327. “The Name,” employed “without qualification (cf. 3 John 7),” may be “Christian Greek” (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 62–63), reflecting divine Christology (see Longenecker, *Christology*, 43–45). But Gentiles would also understand “name” in terms of honor (e.g., the emperor's, in Pliny *Ep.* 10.82.1).

328. Acts uses ὑπέρ often with reference to suffering on behalf of Christ (Acts 9:16; 15:26; 21:13); elsewhere for sacrifices “on behalf of” persons (21:26) (elsewhere only 26:13, in a different sense; and praying on one's behalf in 8:24). This sense of ὑπέρ (vs. in Luke 6:40; 9:50; 16:8) appears in the Gospel only for Jesus dying on behalf of others (22:19–20, perhaps employing the language of ransom for God's people as in Isa 43:3–4).

329. DeSilva, *Honor*, 144.

330. For shame and imprisonment, see, e.g., Rapske, *Custody*, 298.

331. Cf., e.g., Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 78.23–24; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 76.4; see comment on Acts 16:22.

as the cross, which God had, for Christians, inverted to make it a symbol of honor (Luke 9:23; 14:27; 1 Cor 1:17–18; Gal 5:11; 6:12–14; Phil 2:8; Col 1:20; Heb 12:2).

Although Gamaliel is a positive figure as far as worldly figures go, it is possible that Luke’s audience may see an implicit contrast between the comfortable elite teacher and the suffering apostles: Gamaliel is “honored” (τίμιος) by all the people (Acts 5:34), but the apostles are “dishonored” by standing for Jesus’s name (5:41).³³² To be “counted worthy”³³³ for this human dishonor means interpreting such dishonor as a badge of honor by their Lord’s standards (cf. again Luke 6:22–23).

This picture of the disciples rejoicing over unjust public “dishonor” would appeal to Luke’s audience. Popular Stoic philosophers identified joy with a correct perspective on sufferings.³³⁴ One mid-first-century C.E. Stoic philosopher opined that experiencing supposedly insulting and shameful punishments (Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 76.18–19), and even enduring blows (πληγαί, 76.20; cf. Acts 16:23, 33; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:23), was not truly shameful (αἰσχρόν, Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 76.20) or insulting (ὕβριστικόν, 76.21). It was a matter of perception, he explained; when scourged (μαστιγουμένους; cf. Luke 18:33), Spartan boys “celebrate” (ἀγαλλομένους) it (Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 76.21). True philosophers ought to despise blows and insults (76.23–24); those who regard popular honor do not discern what is really shameful (76.29–30), for real shame comes not from enduring insults (p. 78.1–2) but only from one’s own behavior (78.4, 7).³³⁵

Philosophically minded orators developed the same themes. Thus the second-century orator Maximus of Tyre urged hearers “to rejoice in noble deeds. . . . Thus it was that Heracles rejoiced on his way to the pyre,³³⁶ and Socrates rejoiced as he waited in prison, in obedience to the law” (Max. Tyre 25.7 [Trapp, 213]).³³⁷ Greeks praised both philosophers and heroes with lists of their sufferings through which they demonstrated noble character.³³⁸

c. Continued Teaching about Jesus (5:42)

This verse caps the narrative with a summary statement (as in Acts 2:46; 4:33; 5:12–14; the next is 6:7); it evokes particularly 2:46. As in 2:46, the apostles continue their activity daily in both the temple (i.e., publicly) and homes; they continue teaching as in 2:42. The public nature of their activity also undercuts the possibility of charges of subversion (see comment on Acts 26:26). By returning to the summary of the church’s growth in 5:12–16, Luke makes the persecution, discussed at length in 5:17–41, almost a digression (albeit an intriguing one from a narrative standpoint) in the continuing spread of the gospel. Luke’s literary perspective here probably also provides his theological perspective; opposition did not hinder the spread of the good

332. Of course, the apostles were still being honored among the people, too (Acts 5:13), but the close proximity of the two cognates here may invite a contrast.

333. Luke uses καταξιώω also for meriting the resurrection in Luke 20:35 (the other NT use concerns suffering to be worthy of the kingdom, 2 Thess 1:5). Less relevant, Luke employs ἀξιώω in Luke 7:7; Acts 15:38; 28:22—three of the seven NT uses.

334. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 96–98, esp. 96. Barrett, *Acts*, 300, compares here Epict. *Diatr.* 1.29.49; 2.1.38–39.

335. Wicked behavior was universally deemed shameful, even if individuals sometimes debated which behaviors fell in this category (e.g., Eurip. *El.* 44–45; Mus. Ruf. 3, p. 38.29–30; 4, p. 48.3; 8, p. 62.8–9; 16, p. 106.10–12; 18B, p. 116.4, 17–20; frg. 51, p. 144.8; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.43, 115; 18.9; 33.50, 60; Iambl. *V.P.* 31.203; Philost. *Hrk.* 34.7).

336. This is Maximus’s philosophized version, certainly differing from such tragic accounts as Sophocles’s *Women of Trachis* and Ovid *Metam.* 9.

337. To praise unexpected matters (such as Death or Poverty) functioned as rhetorical paradox and hence captured attention (see Men. *Rhet.* 1.2, 346.10–23).

338. Danker, “Debt,” 265; see further Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 36.

news.³³⁹ By refusing to “stop” (a favorite Lukan expression) speaking, they obeyed God rather than the authorities (5:29). This unhindered increase in turn reveals that God is genuinely with the movement (5:39; cf. 28:31).

The semantic ranges of “teaching” and “preaching” overlap, but when combined they surely include the entire range of activity suggested by either. Some scholars distinguish teaching from proclamation,³⁴⁰ which in Acts tends to be especially deliberative (seeking converts),³⁴¹ but it is possible that the apostles also “proclaimed” to believers (20:25). In a synagogue context, even evangelistic preaching would include Scripture exposition (13:17–41; cf. 7:2–53). “Teaching” (διδασκίη) could sometimes be evangelistic (5:28; 13:12; 17:19); the verb is evangelistic in 4:2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28, but it refers to instruction in 18:25, probably refers to instruction in 11:26; 15:1, 35; 18:11; 20:20; 21:21, includes instruction in 1:1, and is unclear in 5:42; 21:28; 28:31.³⁴² Luke’s audience might visualize teaching in terms of synagogue homilies (13:16–41), public lectures in philosophers’ schools (see comment on Acts 19:9), or lectures at banquets in homes.³⁴³

By contrast, “proclamation” (κηρύσσω,³⁴⁴ conjoined with teaching in 28:31) was usually evangelistic (8:5; 9:20; 10:37, 42; 19:13; probably 28:31), but it represents instruction in 15:21 and possibly in 20:25 (where either meaning is possible but teaching is easier). Their semantic ranges overlap, but like familiar OT merisms (coupling of opposites) to indicate a whole (though these are closer to synonyms than opposites), their appearance together (Luke 20:1; Acts 5:42; 28:31) probably implies a full range of activities.

The Greek term εὐαγγέλιον, “gospel,” normally included the idea of news to the hearer, and hence the NT usage refers especially to proclamation to those outside the believing community.³⁴⁵ The term for “proclaim” here, εὐαγγελίζομαι, is thus by definition “evangelistic” (conjoined with teaching also in Acts 15:35), though even here a partial function of encouraging the church with the “good news” cannot be ruled out.³⁴⁶ Luke’s ideal audience, familiar with the Septuagint and the earlier Christian use of the term, might think of the good news of Israel’s restoration (Isa 52:7; 56:1; 61:1–2),³⁴⁷ unless the history of Christian usage had already obscured the term’s origins.³⁴⁸ Naturally, the enthronement of Israel’s Messiah (Acts 2:34–36)

339. Luke’s optimism could be tempered by the fulfillment of prophecies against the temple (Luke 21) and by Paul’s execution, but he records neither, keeping his narrative upbeat and fast moving. Even in those cases, his theological perspective would be positive (Acts 5:41); God was sovereign and was achieving his purposes even in apparent tragedy (2:23).

340. E.g., Dodd, *Preaching*, 7–8; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 270.

341. That it can also occur in houses (Acts 5:42) may suggest that nonbelievers were welcomed (cf. 1 Cor 14:22–25); perhaps inquirers sometimes even offered their homes (Acts 10:24–25, 48).

342. That Luke sometimes describes the apostles’ evangelistic ministry as “teaching” (Acts 5:21, 25, 28) probably does underline the emphasis on the *content* of their message (Fernando, *Acts*, 211). Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 225, thinks that the “word of the Lord” in Acts includes not only the *kerygma* but also the *didachē*. This is probably not the phrase’s focus, but that teaching is central in the apostolic mission is difficult to miss.

343. For lectures at banquets in homes, see, e.g., Max. Tyre 22; Pогоloff, *Logos*, 264–71; Slater, “Introduction,” 2–3; cf. Plut. *Lect.* 14, *Mor.* 45D; see esp. comment on Acts 2:42, 46.

344. Technically, this entailed repeating the message of a sovereign without embellishment or interpretation (Siegert, “Homily,” 426–27); the connection of its root with “power” (Athen. *Deipn.* 14.660B), however, is fallacious. Associating it with, e.g., the Eleusinian Mysteries (which used a κήρυξ, “herald”; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.21.13) is too narrow.

345. Dickson, “Gospel as News.” For one history of usage, see Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 141–44.

346. Καί functions here not purely exegetically, but it does connect the terms.

347. Betz, “Kingdom,” suggesting allusion also to the context of Isa 52:13–53:12; cf. Hengel, “Problems,” 244–48. Moses is a herald of good tidings in 4Q377 2 II, 11 (possibly alluding to Isa 61:1–5), but early Judaism also continued to apply the term to Israel’s restoration (*Pss. Sol.* 11:1).

348. For Paul’s usage, see Stuhlmacher, “Pauline Gospel.”

meant the beginning of Israel's restoration in some sense (3:19–21; 5:31). In some early Christian contexts, the reapplication of the Jewish use in a pagan context may challenge pagan uses (e.g., hailing the emperor's works).³⁴⁹

In rhetorical terms, teaching and preaching were probably both mainly deliberative, calling for moral change; teaching might also include epideictic elements (especially narrating accounts praising Jesus),³⁵⁰ and some apostolic proclamation in Acts includes forensic elements (as in 5:29–32). But Luke, like most ancients, was in any case probably less concerned to divide these categories of rhetoric in practice than one would guess from the handbooks, which overemphasized such classifications.³⁵¹

That the apostles continue their public ministry in the temple (5:42; cf. 5:20), in defiance of the temple authorities' decree (5:40), underlines continuity with their previous practice (Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:12, 20–21, 25). The temple was God's house (Luke 19:46), and so God's servants were right to use it regardless of what its political and financial custodians demanded. But this activity also provides the backdrop for the coming debate about the temple's role (Acts 6:13–14; 7:48–50), a debate that will indirectly transform the church's active mission (8:1–4).³⁵² Transitions functioned rhetorically to restate what had already been stated and to set forth what would follow (*Rhet. Her.* 4.26.35); in this case, Acts 5:42 caps off the preceding story but sets the stage for the growth—and conflict—of 6:2.

349. Wright, *Founder*, 42–44, 60; cf. Horsley, "Assembly," 386; Montefiore, *Gospels*, 4. On imperial usage, cf., e.g., Fears, "Ideology of Power." But the secular usage applied to any good news (e.g., Diogenes *Ep.* 23), including wedding invitations (Horsley, *Documents*, 3:10–15, §2, esp. pp. 10, 12, citing P.Oxy. 3313; Longus 3.33). Further, the Hellenistic usage is less directly relevant than the history of the Hellenistic Jewish usage noted above (so also Nock, "Vocabulary," 132).

350. On the epideictic function of much biography, see, e.g., Burrige, *Gospels*, 88; Keener, *Matthew*, 17, esp. n. 46; cf. Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 145.

351. See Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 419; Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 51 (noting admissions in *Rhet. Her.* 3.4.7; Quint. *Inst.* 3.4.15–16). For the conventional categories in the handbooks, see, e.g., Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 20; Theon *Progymn.* 1.74–76; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.16.1; Diog. Laert. 7.1.42; Men. *Rhet.* 1.1, 331.4–9; Hermog. *Issues* 34.21–35.2; Nicolaus *Progymn.* 1.pref. 3; Kennedy, *Art of Rhetoric*, 7–23; idem, "Genres"; Calboli, "Genera." They were not always defined the same way (Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 97).

352. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 74.

THE HELLENIST EXPANSION (6:1–9:31)

Luke reports the ministry of the Hellenist leaders, replacing one of the ministries of the apostles (6:1–7), and focuses on Stephen (6:8–7:60) and Philip (8:5–40) in particular. He also focuses on a particular Hellenist nemesis of these Christians—namely, Saul (7:58; 8:1–3), who is soon converted and called to become an agent of the message he once persecuted (9:1–30).

These chapters (Acts 6–8 or 6–9) provide, in a sense, a transition between the Jerusalem church and the beginning of the Gentile mission.¹ They introduce the bicultural Hellenist faction in the church and narrate accounts of two of their leaders who broke cultural boundaries. In Acts 9, a bicultural Hellenist is called to the Gentile mission; in Acts 10, we encounter the first “official” Gentile convert (though Luke informs us of an earlier Gentile convert not “ratified” by the church in 8:27–39). Other ancient writers also used transitional sections at times.²

This larger section also allows for the transition from Peter (a bridge between Jesus and Paul) to Paul as central characters. Saul is a Hellenist, and the attentive reader of Acts (though probably not the first-time hearer) will catch an allusion to Saul of Tarsus in the Cilicians’ synagogue of 6:9. Luke introduces Saul the persecutor explicitly in 7:58–8:3 (followed by Philip’s ministry), details his conversion and early faith in 9:1–30 (ended by a summary statement in 9:31 and Peter’s ministry in 9:31–10:18; repeated in 22:5–21 and 26:9–18), shows his recruitment by a Hellenist emissary of the Jerusalem church in 11:19–30 (esp. 11:25–26, 30; followed by Peter’s escape from “Herod” and from Jerusalem in 12:1–24), and finally returns

1. It was the Antioch community, not the Hellenists as a whole, that spearheaded the Gentile mission (Skarsaune, *Shadow*, 167), but some Hellenists certainly provided the transition (esp. Acts 8:4–40).

2. See, e.g., Val. Max. 1.6.ext. 2–3, which ends the section on prodigies (1.6.113; 1.6.ext. 1–3) with events that happened to Midas and Plato while asleep, then turns to dreams (1.7.1–8; 1.7.ext. 1–10; see esp. 1.7.1; see Wardle, *Valerius*, 195, on such links in Val. Max. 1.6.7, 9; 1.6.ext. 3).

to Paul permanently in 12:25–28:31 (though Peter reappears in 15:7–14). Saul’s persecution (7:58–8:3; 9:1–2) frames Philip’s ministry (8:4–40); Paul’s apostolic call (9:15; 13:2–4) might in some way implicitly frame all of the final Peter section (9:32–12:24), but his ministry to the Jerusalem church clearly frames the narrative of Peter’s departure from Jerusalem (11:30–12:25).

Goulder sees 6:1–9:31 as a major section and notes various signals of continuity with the previous section.³ We may picture these as follows:

Acts 1:1–5:42	Acts 6:1–9:31
Election of Matthias (1:23–26)	Election of the Seven (6:3–6)
Peter teaches about Abraham and Moses (3:22, 25)	Stephen develops Abraham and Moses themes further (7:2–7, 20–49)
Apostles are arrested, tried, and beaten (4:3–22; 5:17–41; but cf. esp. 5:33)	Stephen is arraigned, tried, and killed (6:11–7:60; cf. esp. 7:54)
The Spirit comes at Pentecost and in 4:31	The Spirit comes in Samaria (8:14–17)
Greedy Ananias filled with Satan (5:3)	Greedy Simon the sorcerer (8:20)

Somewhat less persuasively at points, he offers a further set of parallel themes in the first, second, and third (9:32–12:20) sections of Acts as follows:⁴

First Section	Second Section	Third Section
1:1; 3:1: raising of Jesus, disabled man	—*	9:34, 40: raising of Aeneas, Dorcas
1:14: choosing of Matthias	6:1: choosing of the Seven	—†
2:1; 4:31: descent of the Spirit	8:14: descent of the Spirit	10:44: descent of the Spirit
2:14; 3:11: apostolic preaching	8:26: preaching‡	10:28: preaching
2:37; 4:4: crowd converted and baptized	8:36; 9:1: eunuch, Saul converted and baptized	10:48: Cornelius converted and baptized
4:23: gathering of church	—	11:1: gathering of church
2:42; 4:34: charity	6:1: charity	11:22: famine relief
4:1; 5:17: arrest of apostles	6:11: arrest of Stephen	12:1: arrest of James and Peter
4:5; 5:27: trial of apostles	7:1: trial of Stephen	—
5:40: punishment of apostles	7:54: martyrdom of Stephen	12:1: martyrdom of James
5:19: apostles released by an angel	—	12:7: Peter released by an angel
5:1: Ananias struck dead through Peter	8:18: Simon Magus confounded through Peter	12:20: Herod struck dead (after Peter’s release) by angel

* One might add signs summaries here (Acts 6:8; 8:6–7).

† If exact sequence is not crucial (and I believe that it is not), one might cite Saul’s calling here (Acts 9:15).

‡ One might cite Stephen’s speech in Acts 7 to parallel those of Peter in Acts 2, 3, and 10 (though, admittedly, it parallels the forensic speeches of Acts 4–5 better).

Although some of these parallels are noteworthy, others are weak; some items recur so frequently in Acts (and sometimes more than mentioned in these “sections”) as to render the table questionable. Clearly the “parallels” are not all sequential. What they do, however, illustrate abundantly is the narrative continuity of Acts.⁵

3. Goulder, *Type and History*, 23.

4. *Ibid.*, 26.

5. Wiest, “Stephen,” probably makes too much of the narrative connections in doubting historical content (although Luke would have been free to make the sort of adjustments of detail appropriate to his genre); one need not choose between literary patterns and historical content (see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:562–74, esp. 568–74). Again, Luke’s use of biblical texts as narrative models (Kea, “Septuagint,” though accepting the likelihood of Stephen’s martyrdom) need not rule out historical tradition.

HELLENIST LEADERS (6:1–7)

In this passage Luke introduces some characters who will prove important to his narrative, both individually and as a cultural and missiological transition to the Gentile mission.

The crucial ministry of resource sharing, emphasized in 2:44–45 and highlighted further in 4:32–5:10, now outgrows apostolic supervision with an intra-Jewish cultural clash. This leads to Luke’s treatment of the Hellenist leaders, including Stephen, Philip, and eventually Saul of Tarsus. The apostolic church has survived the threat of sin’s infiltration (5:1–11) and persecution from the outside (5:17–42), nevertheless continuing to grow (5:42–6:1a); now it must address the danger of internal cultural conflicts.¹ The passage, then, concerns age-old and always-repeating issues of intercultural encounters and association² as well as of how to define leadership in the most workable forms.³

Instead of defending their challenged honor, as would have been customary in the wider culture, the apostles sought to share the challenged responsibilities. The following narrative reveals that they shared them with members of the offended minority. Luke does not indicate whether the charges were true (which might suggest that they were), but since the minority members chosen were genuinely “full of the Spirit and wisdom,” everyone could be assured that equity, rather than the interests of any faction, would be pursued.

Despite the sometimes controversial issues dividing early Christians, Luke portrays their assemblies to discuss such matters (6:2–6; 11:1–18; 15:5–29; cf. 21:18–26) as orderly, in contrast to public assemblies, which sometimes rioted and proved hostile to Christians (19:25–34; cf. 18:17; 21:27–29).⁴ Of course, Christians, as members of a minority faith, surely would have experienced the larger culture as more hostile

1. In another possible connection with the preceding context, Willimon, *Acts*, 58, suggests that in contrast to the council, which (like most institutions) preserved the vested interests of tradition (Acts 5:28), the believing community in Acts 6 proves flexible and ready to adapt to new situations. Pervo, “Meet Right,” treats such contrasts as a mark of fiction; but a partisan vantage point for interpretation is not the same as recounting fictitious information. For a different reading, from a semiotic perspective, see Dagron and Calloud, “Récit.”

2. Those concerned with applying the text might offer the following sorts of application of the principles: Leaders in Jesus’s movement can give more “ownership” of the movement (i.e., more participation in its leadership) to leaders of its culturally marginalized minorities when they too are led by God’s Spirit. Freeing such minorities with indigenous leadership often leads to greater growth there than is experienced among the original “sending” population. (Many parts of Christendom still fail to heed less powerful voices in their midst: often women in very conservative churches; ethnic or cultural minorities; the youngest or elderly members; the suffering; etc.) Hertig, “Cross-cultural Mediation,” applies Acts 6:1–7 to multicultural situations, diversity, immigration, and cross-cultural partnership. See also González, *Acts*, 92–93, for contemporary analogies addressing pluralism and minority communities in larger church and political bodies, including (p. 93) the importance of sound indigenous leadership in so-called mission churches. It may have been a sort of “affirmative action.” For various principles in the Stephen narrative, see Schönberger, “Stephanus.”

3. From Luke’s perspective, qualifications for leadership include moral and spiritual readiness; increasing growth invites increasing specialization, including for supervising resource sharing. (Others also draw leadership principles from this passage, e.g., Annen, “Heilige Geist.”)

4. Pervo, *Profit*, 39–42.

than their internal gatherings; one need only compare rules for order in Qumran's *Manual of Discipline* (admittedly more structured than early Christian assemblies) with Qumran's depictions of its external oppressors (e.g., 1QpHab IX, 9; XII, 8; 4Q171 IV, 8) to recognize the intrinsic likelihood of this portrayal of their experience. Still, although Luke focuses on the resolution of issues, he leaves indications that original, genuine conflicts stood behind these assemblies' need for resolution (Acts 6:1; 11:2–3; 15:1, 5, 7; 21:21–22).

Luke also portrays the origins of the Christian movement, and here the Hellenist movement that provided a transition to the Diaspora mission, as praiseworthy. Penner shows that Jewish apologetic historiography often offers epideictic portrayals of God's people in the past.⁵ This approach to the past includes favorable portrayal of a community's founding,⁶ including its progressive attitude of openness to foreigners⁷ and the way it faced opposition.⁸ Such a favorable history serves to rank the pristine movement with the highest Jewish, Greek, and Roman ideals, confirming it as the divinely ordained continuation of Israel's ancient heritage.⁹

1. Historical Basis?

A major purpose of 6:1–7 is to introduce the Hellenist leaders Stephen and Philip.¹⁰ Whereas Luke's ideal audience would have heard of Peter (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal 1:18; 2:7–14) and probably John (Gal 2:9) from the Jesus tradition, it may have known nothing of these Hellenist leaders. Because Luke moves from the assignment of waiting on tables to the ministry of the Seven without narrating their work with community goods, and because Luke earlier attributes this role to the apostles, some scholars suspect that Luke created the community goods role for them merely to symbolize the transfer of authority.¹¹

This skepticism, however, reads far too much into Luke's compressed account (like the apostles, he will not focus on waiting on tables, though caring for economic need is a frequent theme in the early chapters of Acts). Would Luke have invented the murmuring against the apostolic administration of goods, then worked so hard to soften the charge? A minority movement could prove quite sensitive to charges that its leaders mishandled funds.¹² Luke, no less than Paul (cf. 1 Cor 4:11–12; 2 Cor 2:17; 8:20–21; 12:17–18; 1 Thess 2:5), includes a running apologetic against any suspicion of the apostles' greed or profit from their ministries (cf. Acts 3:6; 18:3; Luke 9:3, 58; 10:4; esp. comment on Acts 20:33–35). He would hardly invent a story suggesting that anyone had raised contrary questions (handing the financial administration over to the others would support this picture). Granted, there are Lukan themes here, but this is true of Luke's writing even where we know from other Gospels or Paul that he depends on historical tradition.

Penner believes that scholars have expended too much attention on questions of

5. Penner, *Praise*, 235–61.

6. *Ibid.*, 262–87.

7. *Ibid.*, 276–87, noting both Acts and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Such an attitude must appear particularly "progressive" when the members of one's audience (or their ancestors) would have counted as foreigners within the narrative.

8. *Ibid.*, 287–303.

9. *Ibid.*, 330.

10. Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, 130.

11. Johnson, *Acts*, 110–11.

12. For embarrassment over a treasurer's abuse of office, see, e.g., Aeschines *Tim.* 56; cf. John 6:70–71; 12:6; 13:26–30.

“historical reliability”; he believes the narrative’s sole purpose is “to demonstrate the praiseworthy response of the community to a crisis situation.”¹³ Penner is probably right about this epideictic function in such narratives, but there is a likely reason that Luke recounts this rather than another crisis situation and that Luke writes historical rather than another kind of narrative. Whatever ancient historians’ epideictic purposes, they did include claims about the past as a basis for that praise (see the commentary introduction).¹⁴ Even for rhetorically attentive Josephus, focusing on praiseworthy details and composing with this emphasis in view did not entail wholesale replacement of all events in one’s history.

If Luke did not simply make up the stories, what might his sources be?¹⁵ Many scholars find a “Hellenist source” in Acts 6–8 and 11:19–30. Some language seems to characterize this section more than other parts of Luke-Acts: “the disciples” (6:1, 2, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 25–26; 11:26);¹⁶ the Twelve (only at 6:2); and “full of the Spirit” (6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24) and “of wisdom” (6:3, 10; 7:10, 22) in contrast to Luke’s usual “filled with the Spirit.”¹⁷ Luke then would have inserted his favorite stories of Paul’s conversion (9:1–31, repeated twice further in Acts) and Cornelius’s conversion (twice in Acts 10–11 and later in 15:7–9).¹⁸

The link between 8:1–3 and 11:19–20 may suggest that the material on the Seven (Acts 6–8) derives from the tradition of the Antioch church.¹⁹ The objection that one would “expect more concrete material” here if this were the case is rather subjective.²⁰ Luke does provide concrete material here but has probably more concrete sources (such as the “we” narrative) that take priority for space devoted to details. More important, how much concrete material one should “expect” is difficult to quantify. This Antioch source could represent oral traditions rather than specific written or even oral sources.²¹ In this case, Paul would certainly have known these traditions (13:1) and could have recounted them occasionally in his preaching (even as he summarized his own role as persecutor occasionally in his writings or recounted a conflict in Antioch in one of his extant letters [Gal 2:11–14]).

I regard another source as more probable than an Antioch source, however, despite Luke’s skillful literary connections with Antioch. On my view of the “we” narratives’ authorship,²² Luke was directly acquainted with two actors in the present narrative. One, implied throughout the “we” narratives, is Paul himself, who would have had direct access to some of this information, particularly Stephen’s trial (Acts 7:58).²³

Another, with whom Luke stayed for several days during his time with Paul in

13. Penner, *Praise*, 275–76.

14. Keener, *Acts*, 1:116–65.

15. Richard, *Composition*, 306, concludes that despite Luke’s significant literary activity, he depends strongly on his source (more fully, see 243–352; Scott, “Stephen’s Speech”).

16. Probably Luke’s own terminology to establish continuity with Jesus’s ministry. It does not occur elsewhere among earliest believers outside the narrator’s wording, apart from Acts 15:10, where Luke probably gives Peter this wording (Trebilco, “Self-Designations,” 37).

17. Dunn, *Acts*, 79–80. For verbal connections between Acts 6:1–7 and the following sections (6:8–7:2a; 7:2b–53), see Richard, *Composition*, 232–38. Being “full” of the Spirit may characterize continuous experience rather than empowerment for a specific occasion.

18. Dunn, *Acts*, 76.

19. Barrett, *Acts*, 52. The view of an Antioch-Jerusalem source in Acts 6:1–8:4; 11:19–30; and 12:25–15:35 goes back to W. L. Knox. Watson, *Gentiles*, 68, doubts a special source here, correctly observing that Diaspora Jews were converted in Acts 2:5, 9–11, 41; but Luke could have generated the portrayal of these Diaspora Jews in Acts 2 on the basis of information in Acts 6 or information consonant with it.

20. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 87.

21. Barrett, *Acts*, 53.

22. See discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:402–22; comment on Acts 16:10.

23. Some of what Luke knew indirectly, of course, he may well have learned from disciples in Antioch.

Caesarea (21:8–10), was Philip, whose story is told in Acts 8 up to the location where Luke later meets him.²⁴ Had Paul and Philip conversed during Paul’s stay there (and the rules of hospitality demanded no less), they likely would have compared memories of the events that they knew from different perspectives—Philip from that of Stephen as a colleague, Paul from that of Stephen’s trial and martyrdom, in which he had a hand. Even though it is debated whether Luke mentions Philip primarily to specify him as an informant, Luke is not shy about implying that he met some of the prominent early actors in his story he recounts (21:8, 18). Because Paul remained in Caesarean detention for up to two years (24:27), during which the “we” narrative’s author apparently remained nearby (27:1–2), it is possible that Philip continued to be the narrator’s host, and it is likely that the narrator at least remained in Caesarea and had continued access to Philip and those close to him. The tradition of Cornelius’s conversion would also likely be recounted in Caesarea (cf. 10:1, 24; 11:11).

2. Literary Connections

While depending on the information in his source or sources, Luke also shows his literary skill in constructing the narrative. The narrative echoes, for example, an analogous situation in the OT. Goulder finds a double parallel in Luke’s work; as the seventy followed the apostles in Luke’s Gospel (Luke 10:1), so the Seven follow them here; both echo Moses’s appointing seventy elders to help him with his work.²⁵

Leaders in Numbers 11	Leaders in Luke 9–10	Leaders in Acts 6
Mixed multitude hungry (Num 11:4)*	Feeding in mixed territory (Luke 9:10)	Mixed multitude hungry (Acts 6:1)
Pressure of work forces delegating it to seventy (11:24)	Appointment of seventy (or seventy-two)† (10:1)	Appointment of Seven (6:3)‡
Seventy after Moses	Seventy (seventy-two) after the Twelve (9:1–6)	Ministry of Twelve (Acts 1–5), then of Seven (Acts 6–8)
Requirement that leaders be full of the Spirit (11:25)	(implied, 10:9)	Requirement that leaders be full of the Spirit (6:3, 5)
Wish to restrain (11:28)	Something like a wish to restrain (9:49–50)	—
Multitude fed (11:31)	—	Multitude fed (6:1–3)
—§	Addresses Samaritans (10:25–37)	Ministry to Samaritans (8:5–25)

* On the complaining here (and some other parallels), see further C. Williams, *Acts*, 95–96, following A. Farrer.

† If one adds Eldad and Medad to the seventy (Num 11:26–27), the seventy-two may echo the same passage.

‡ Pearce, “Council of Seven,” suggests tentatively that Josephus’s local councils of seven might evoke the seventy of Num 11 (though I am skeptical).

§ One could suggest here a comparison with God’s defense of Moses’s marriage to a Nubian outsider.

|| This connection appears in Goulder, *Type and History*, 57; it is one of the weaker ones.

Again, some of these connections are not statistically significant, given their occurrence elsewhere or the tenuousness of the comparisons. Some elements, however (especially the numbers of those to whom work is delegated), do suggest an allusion in both the Gospel and Acts. (The Seven could evoke the seventy [or seventy-two] the way the 120 in Acts 1:15 may evoke the Twelve.)

24. Spencer, *Philip*, 249. If someone else authored the “we” narrative, Luke could still have had access to Philip’s testimony from the same source, at one remove.

25. Goulder, *Type and History*, 56. They may in fact be seventy-two, depending on the textual variant. Robertson, “Limits,” also plausibly connects the role of Luke’s seventy with the Seven here. For Luke grounding the mission of the seventy (Luke 10) in Num 11:24–30 rather than Gen 10 (where the number must be inferred), see the argument in Menzies, “Sending,” 95–99.

The theme of wealth and poverty, common in Luke-Acts (see comment on Acts 2:44–45; 3:6), also surfaces here.²⁶

3. The Problem (6:1)

The (probably unintentional) neglect of the Hellenist widows in the community's charity distribution provoked charges of discrimination. This provided one of the church's first reported internal schisms, one that had to be handled quite differently from the case of Ananias and Sapphira or instances of external persecution. In this case a wrong had to be righted, but a cultural issue was involved that the Galilean apostles were not yet well equipped to handle.

"In those days" (6:1) sometimes functions as a chronological transition device in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:5, 39; 2:1; 6:12; Acts 1:15; 9:37; 11:27)²⁷ as well as evoking earlier biblical narratives (repeatedly throughout the LXX; e.g., Exod 2:11; Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:21; 1 Sam 3:1; 2 Kgs 15:37; 2 Chr 32:24; cf. Luke 4:25; 17:26, 28; cf. comment on Acts 1:15). That the numbers were growing fits Luke's fuller summary statements elsewhere (see, e.g., Acts 2:47; esp. 6:7, which shows that this growth continued after the resolution of the conflict reported here).²⁸

That the disciples were increasing (6:1) fits the pattern of other summaries (2:47; 6:7; 5:14); by implication, they continue to increase in Judea until Jerusalem's fall (21:20).²⁹ With growth came problems, however, especially as the growth crossed cultural boundaries. The apostles may have been unaware of the level of growth among the Hellenist Christians. Nevertheless, the imperfect verb probably suggests that the problem persisted over time.³⁰ The apostles were among the "Hebrews" (6:1) and supervised the distribution (4:35), and so the complaint ultimately includes the sphere of their responsibility. It is not difficult to imagine that, given the rapid spread of their fame in the city, they could offer detailed attention to the organized ministry of charity no more than they could pray individually over all the supplicants who sought their help (5:15–16). Their very success pressed the needs beyond the limits of their human ability to accommodate (cf. Luke 5:16, 19; 8:19; 19:3), requiring them to delegate through the Spirit, as Jesus had done (Luke 9:1–2; 10:1–2).

a. Hellenists and Hebrews

Scholars have long debated the nature of the "Hebrews" and "Hellenists" specified in Acts 6:1. Although many earlier scholars focused on a theological divide, the trend today is to view the groups as linguistically (and to some extent culturally) distinct. The Hebrews presumably spoke Aramaic and (in varying measures) Greek; the Hellenists were primarily Greek speakers, probably especially Diaspora immigrants or their descendants in Jerusalem. Such Hellenists, in many cases, probably never learned much Aramaic; in others, such as among youth growing up in Jerusalem, they may have learned some Aramaic (cf. 21:40) yet retained significant identification with their Diaspora Jewish heritage.

26. See Hoyt, "Poor in Luke-Acts," 222–25.

27. So Bruce, *Acts*¹, 15.

28. Some also point out the cognate $\pi\lambda\eta\theta$ - terms in Acts 6:2, 5, 7 (Gaventa, *Acts*, 114); others note the growth summaries of 6:1, 7 as an *inclusio* (Parsons, *Acts*, 82).

29. Though often disputed, it is historically inevitable that the disciples did increase at some point, given the eventually large number of Christians throughout the empire. Revival movements tend to multiply more rapidly during the period of revival (though often consolidating the growth later).

30. Dunn, *Acts*, 82. Many suspect that the system did prove inadequate (e.g., Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 344).

I. THE TÜBINGEN APPROACH

Some earlier scholars, such as F. C. Baur and his nineteenth-century Tübingen school, speculated too much behind the text, inferring that the Hellenists in the Jerusalem church held a theology distinct from, and independent of, that of the rest of the church.³¹ In their view, Luke smoothed over differences in the movement (if 6:1 can be rightly called “smoothing over” instead of presenting the best face). The apostles and “Hebrews” supported the temple, whereas the Hellenists opposed the temple and hence were driven from Jerusalem (8:1).³² In this view, the Hellenists ultimately found themselves in conflict with law observance, following Jesus’s trajectory better than the apostles did.³³ This hypothesis has also generated numerous secondary and tertiary hypotheses dependent on it.³⁴

Strangely, however, our only explicit source for the discussion claims that this charge of opposing the temple was false (6:13),³⁵ and Acts presents no theological conflicts with these Hellenists the way it later reports debates about the Gentile mission in 11:3–18.³⁶ (That Hellenists participated in the circumcision debate of 15:5–22 is possible, although Luke does not note it, but this suggestion assumes that they returned to Jerusalem after being dispersed or that a new community of Hellenist believers began there.)

The supposed theological divide between Hebrews and Hellenists may reflect especially Baur’s use of Hegelian dialectic rather than Luke’s narrative itself.³⁷ Stephen clearly does not reject the law (on which 7:2–53 depends liberally); for that matter, neither does Luke’s apostle to the Gentiles (16:3; 18:18; 21:26). Nor should we assume that Stephen speaks for the theology of all the Hellenists; given the range of places and backgrounds from which Hellenists came, it is likely that, on the historical level at least, he would not. Given Luke’s varied usage (6:1; 9:29; 11:20), he does not use the term very technically and hence is not likely to signal a continuing “party” in the church.³⁸

II. HEBREWS

The title “Hebrews” appears often in inscriptions throughout the empire, though it should be noted that these inscriptions are mostly in Greek and the term there probably simply means “Israelite.”³⁹ Paul writes fluent Greek yet calls himself a “Hebrew

31. See the summary of the approach in Hill, *Hellenists*, 5–17 (which he goes on to refute in the rest of the book; cf. also Jervell, *Unknown Paul*, 13–22).

32. Esler, *Community*, 140. Cf. Barnett, *Birth*, 71 (thinking that the infusion of pro-temple priests in Acts 6:7 would have created conflict).

33. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 45; cf. Knox, *Jerusalem*, 39–40. Tyson, “Legacy,” notes recent supporters of Baur’s basic thesis (cf. Tyson, “Themes”).

34. E.g., Cullmann, “Qumran Texts,” 220–24, views the Hellenists as a bridge between Essenes and early Christians (also Black, *Scrolls*, 88; tentatively, Klijn, “Stephen’s Speech,” 31), a form of Christianity later represented in the Fourth Gospel (though scholars more often use the Scrolls to emphasize the Palestinian nature of this Gospel; cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 348). Goulder, *Midrash*, 139–41, theorizes that nine apostles returned to Galilee (thus Mark 16:7; Matt 28:10), that the three and James remained in Jerusalem, and that Stephen and Philip led the Hellenists who emerged from the Jerusalem community. But Mark 16:7 mentions Peter, one of “the three.”

35. Jervell, *Unknown Paul*, 13–14; Watson, *Gentiles*, 67; Skarsaune, *Shadow*, 153.

36. Jervell, *Unknown Paul*, 22. Most thoroughly, Hill, “Division,” strongly challenges the view of a theological divide; although I think he plays down too much Stephen’s challenge to the temple, I believe he is correct to doubt opposition to the law in the Jerusalem church.

37. See Gerdmar, “Hebreer och hellenister.”

38. Barrett, *Acts*, 309; Reinbold, “Hellenisten.”

39. See *CIJ* 1:230, §291; 1:249, §317; 1:276, §354; 1:287–88, §370; 1:294, §379; 1:366, §502; 1:369, §505; 1:373, §510; 1:397, §535; 2:16, §750; 2:46, §793. On this title for an early immigrant synagogue in Rome, see also Lung-Kwong, *Purpose*, 97 (citing *CIJ* 1:230, §291; 1:288, §371; 1:373, §510; 1:397, §535).

of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5; cf. 2 Cor 11:22), underlining his credentials as thoroughly Jewish; but Luke, who links Paul with the Hellenist faction (Acts 6:9; 9:29), probably uses his terms in a different way.⁴⁰ In Acts, related terminology elsewhere indicates language (21:40; 22:2; 26:14), but this cannot settle the question until we have examined the term “Hellenists” and its cognates, which in the NT appear only in Acts. This term, too, is ambiguous; it refers to people, Jewish in 9:29 but perhaps not in 11:20 (depending on the variant).⁴¹

III. HELLENISTS

Scholars differ over the meaning of “Hellenists.” The argument that the term means “Gentiles”⁴² is impossible to defend without dismissing more of the evidence than is left to build the theory. They cannot be converted Greeks, which would make 6:7 “superfluous”⁴³ and would also require an incredible number of Jerusalem proselytes to make the rest of the story work (6:9; 9:29; cf. 11:20).

Most scholars today see the distinction as primarily linguistic, between Greek and Aramaic speakers.⁴⁴ Luke reflects interest in groups’ languages (14:11; 21:37; 22:2; 26:14; 28:2). Some suggest that “Hebrews” means those who “speak exclusively or mainly Aramaic,”⁴⁵ but in view of the linguistic evidence, this limitation cannot have included the majority of the Jerusalemite church and probably would not have included the apostles. Because Greek was the lingua franca of the urban eastern Mediterranean, probably most Jerusalemites and even Galileans knew some Greek.⁴⁶ More likely, therefore, is the now-dominant view that “Hebrews” may have known some Greek in addition to Aramaic whereas “Hellenists” spoke only or mainly Greek.⁴⁷

Excursus: Greek and Aramaic Use in Judea and Galilee

Bilingualism was apparently fairly standard in antiquity, although fluency in the second language was not expected. Because Greek and Latin represented the languages of education and the empire, however, they were widely adopted voluntarily by the upwardly mobile in the empire.⁴⁸ In the East, Greek was much more common, origi-

40. Hill, *Hellenists*, 47–48. Granted, Paul cannot be a Hellenist in the sense of speaking only Greek (scriptural arguments in his letters demonstrate this), even for Luke (Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14).

41. It could refer to culturally and linguistically hellenized Syrians, as one would expect much of Antioch to be (cf. Ferguson, “Hellenists”; Stanton, “Hellenism,” 470). The common language allowed for spreading the message.

42. Cadbury, “Hellenists,” 59–74.

43. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 348.

44. E.g., Sevenster, *Greek*, 33; Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism*, 1; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 151; Gaventa, *Acts*, 112; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 216; Campbell, “*We*” *Passages*, 94. Earlier, John Chrysostom viewed the Hellenists as Greek-speaking Jews (*Hom. Acts* 14).

45. Johnson, *Acts*, 105; cf. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 4–5.

46. Marshall, *Acts*, 125–26; Capper, “Context,” 353. Aramaic was the dominant language of rural Syria, but Greek prevailed in cities and among “upper classes” (Rives, *Religion*, 63).

47. Moule, “Once More, Hellenists”; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 347; Dunn, *Acts*, 81; Fiensy, “Composition,” 234–35; cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 105. This indicates, incidentally, that the Jesus tradition would have first entered Greek in a bilingual setting when the tradition’s original transmitters remained dominant voices (on this tradition’s reliability, see discussion in Keener, *Matthew*, 8–36, esp. 24–32).

48. Thomas, “Bilingualism.”

nally spread by Alexander's conquests and spread further, in urban areas, through his Hellenistic successors.

Although Aramaic was probably the first language of most Galileans outside the urban centers, even in Lower Galilee,⁴⁹ Greek was widespread in the land;⁵⁰ even in Jewish Palestine, some scholars estimate that as many as two-thirds of known funerary inscriptions are in Greek (a high estimate).⁵¹ But Greek was not evenly distributed:⁵² Semitic remains prevail primarily in part of heavily traditional Upper Galilee;⁵³ Aramaic inscriptions are common around villages of Jesus's Lower Galilee as well.⁵⁴ But urban Jerusalem is different. Even the Semiticist Dalman long ago recognized the use of Greek in Jerusalem.⁵⁵

Some estimate that about two-thirds of the Palestinian papyri discovered (roughly four hundred) are in Greek, even some in the Bar Kokhba archive;⁵⁶ thus, although the "indigenous Semitic language continued to be used, these documents illustrate that the language of commerce, trade, and governmental administration, including the courts, was Greek."⁵⁷ This is exactly the situation one finds in most postcolonial bilingual settings today, though the national trade language is typically used less, and at a less sophisticated level, in more remote rural areas where it is less needed. Many Palestinian Jews learned Greek as an educated culture language or for urban trade.⁵⁸ Gymnasia, Greek names, and elements such as architecture "and pottery show Greek influences."⁵⁹ Even rabbinic literature includes some fifteen hundred Greek loanwords.⁶⁰

Up to 39 percent of ossuary inscriptions from Jerusalem are in Greek, not including those that are bilingual.⁶¹ Thus many scholars estimate that at least 10–20 percent of Jerusalemites would have spoken Greek as their first language;⁶² a very rough guess of at least ten thousand speakers is reasonable. These native Greek-speakers were hardly the only Jewish Greek speakers by this period. In fact, the percentage of Greek inscriptions in Jerusalem may be as high as 40 percent.⁶³ (This is a much lower

49. See Horsley, *Galilee*, 247–49; cf. Millard, *Reading and Writing*, 85–102, esp. 91–102.

50. E.g., Mussies, "Vehicle"; Millard, *Reading and Writing*, 102–17; cf. *y. Soṭah* 7:1, §4.

51. Van der Horst, "Funerary Inscriptions"; cf. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 75.

52. Claims about Greek use that are based on the hellenized cities should not be extrapolated to all Palestine, as is done by Schwank, "Grabungen."

53. Cf. Meyers, "Judaism and Christianity," 74.

54. Horsley, *Galilee*, 249.

55. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 3; on Greek-speakers in Jerusalem, see Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 54–62. Because most of Jesus's teachings in the Synoptics appear to have been delivered to Galilean villagers, they probably reflect Aramaic (Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 1:267–68; Deissmann, *Light*, 64; Black, "Language," 305; Jeremias, *Theology*, 4; Segert, "Languages"), rather than Greek, originals. Yet because he also taught in urban Jerusalem, the scholars who suggest that he sometimes taught in Greek (Porter, "Teach"; idem, "Greek in Galilee," 154; cf. Argyle, "Semitism"; *pace* Draper, "Greek") are also likely correct. For discussion of Jesus's language through Dalman, see Schweitzer, *Quest*, 270–78.

56. Porter, "Papyri, Palestinian"; van der Horst, "Funerary Inscriptions."

57. Porter, "Papyri, Palestinian," 766. Rabbinic literature might call into question the language of the courts, but Pharisees (probably the dominant influence on the later rabbinic movement) did not control first-century courts.

58. Fiensy, "Composition," 230; cf. Porter, "Greek of New Testament."

59. Fiensy, "Composition," 231; followed by, e.g., Le Cornu, *Acts*, 316.

60. Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 209.

61. Fiensy, "Composition," 231, following Hengel. Levine, *Hellenism*, 78, 94–95, 182, estimates that at least one-third of all Jerusalem inscriptions are in Greek, mainly those of the smaller middle and upper classes.

62. Fiensy, "Composition," 231, again following Hengel. This lower estimate takes into account that surviving ossuaries are more apt to be the expensive stone ones more available to the well-to-do, who were also more exposed to Greek. (Many of the very poor in antiquity left no burial records; Macmullen, *Social Relations*, 34.)

63. Levine, *Hellenism*, 182, estimates that 35 percent of Jerusalem's Jewish inscriptions overall are in Greek; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 209–10, estimates more than 60 percent in Palestine and roughly 40 percent in Jerusalem.

proportion of Greek inscriptions than we find in coastal Joppa or distant Rome,⁶⁴ though Jerusalem was quite hellenized culturally.)⁶⁵ Admittedly, the statistics for Greek use in Judea outside Jerusalem might be unnaturally high, given the difficulty of dating inscriptions; use of the Greek language probably made greater inroads in succeeding centuries, whereas our record for Jewish Jerusalem ends, for the most part, in 70 C.E.⁶⁶ In any case, there is no disputing that Greek was widely used in Jewish Palestine, including in Jerusalem.

IV. MORE THAN LANGUAGE

Many scholars hence argue that the Hellenists are those whose “mother tongue is Greek.”⁶⁷ Thus they spoke primarily Greek and usually little Aramaic,⁶⁸ and their Greek may have been more fluent than that of the average bilingual Galilean or Judean. Martin Hengel notes, “The word ἑλληνίζειν primarily meant ‘speak Greek correctly,’ and only secondarily ‘adopt a Greek style of life.’ Impeccable command of the Greek language was the most important qualification for taking over Greek culture.”⁶⁹ The verb “hellenize” was used in contrast to “barbarize” and hence meant speaking correct Greek, sometimes (though clearly not to be expected in first-century Jerusalem) Attic Greek.⁷⁰ The Sadducean aristocracy seems to have felt at home in Greek, and some members of the Hellenist community may have had relations with them (Acts 6:12); some Levites were perhaps Hellenists (4:36), and the conversion of priests in 6:7 could be viewed against this background (though perhaps only the upper-class Jerusalem priests were, in fact, more Hellenistic). Although the “Hebrews” might know Greek, their “liturgical language” would be Hebrew or Aramaic,⁷¹ as attested by the use of Hebrew psalms and the abundance of preserved early prayers.⁷²

One problem with making the Hellenists’ language the hard-and-fast distinction between “Hebrews” and “Hellenists” for Luke is that Luke’s Paul is connected with the Hellenists (6:9; 7:58; 9:29) yet spoke and understood Aramaic relatively fluently (26:14), even years after his full-time residence in Jerusalem (21:40–22:2). Those who argue that *most* of the Hellenists spoke Greek almost exclusively (in contrast to the Hebrews) are very probably correct; but to stop here begs the question of why there were many Jews in Jerusalem who knew only Greek.⁷³ Were they descended

64. Levine, *Hellenism*, 182, estimates 90 percent for Jaffa and 78 percent in Rome (99 percent if Latin is added).

65. *Ibid.*, 94–95.

66. But the dated papyri still indicate widespread Greek use.

67. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 45; cf. Reinbold, “Hellenisten.”

68. Some scholars suggest that the Hellenists may have known a little Hebrew or Aramaic, mainly regarding the Torah (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 308). Probably this was sometimes the case (as with Saul of Tarsus), but given the dominance of Greek translation in the Diaspora by this period, it can by no means be taken for granted. Knowledge of basic Semitic greetings (e.g., *shalom*) and phrases, of course, would be likely in Judea even if many Hellenists remained largely in their own enclaves; this would be more the case for immigrants’ children than for first-generation immigrants.

69. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:58.

70. Barrett, *Acts*, 308 (citing the texts). In *Jos. Ant.* 14.191, cf. an adverb cognate to Luke’s term for the Greek language.

71. E.g., Moule, “Once More, Hellenists”; Capper, “Context,” 353.

72. Some think that Jesus supported prayer in vernacular Aramaic instead of Hebrew (Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 18–21; Jeremias, *Theology*, 188–89; *idem*, *Prayer*, 92–94); on the assumption that Matthew may have adapted Mark for a stricter Jewish-Christian community, cf. Mark 15:34 with Matt 27:46.

73. Cf. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:105, who suggests that some “groups grew up bilingual and thus stood right on the boundary of two cultures” (though most scholars today would view the “Hebrews” as the more bilingual group).

from the Hellenist reformers who rejected Jewish customs? Or were they foreign Jews who had simply not learned the “Judean” language?

Although language must have been an important factor, it is not the entire story.⁷⁴ Greeks spread their language and culture together; early in the Hellenistic period, some began to define even “Greek” as no longer a purely ethnic term but as a term identifying disposition and education.⁷⁵ Many scholars doubt that the term concerns only language, arguing that it also implies “support for Greek culture”⁷⁶ or at least considerable influence from Greek lifestyle.⁷⁷

Some factors favor the emphasis on a cultural as well as linguistic divide here. Although the noun Ἑλληνιστής first appears in currently extant literature in Acts, related terms apply in 2 Maccabees to those who follow Greek customs (2 Macc 4:10, 13, 15; 6:9; 11:24; cf. 4 Macc 8:8).⁷⁸ One may compare “Medizing” (μηδίζοντες) Greeks—that is, those who had gone over to the Persians (Plut. *Arist.* 18.4).⁷⁹ But the term cannot be a question of cultural *loyalties* here, for the fiercest defenders of traditional Judean institutions in the narrative are also Hellenists (Acts 6:9–11; 9:29).⁸⁰ Still, although some sectors of Judaism were considerably more hellenized than others (e.g., elite Alexandrian Jews, such as Philo, in contrast with authors of Qumran’s sectarian documents),⁸¹ Hellenistic culture had influenced all of Jewish society in the Roman Empire (though much less in Parthia), including in Judea and Galilee.

Jewish Palestine was not as hellenized in this period as the Diaspora or as Palestine was a few centuries later,⁸² but evidence of hellenization is abundant.⁸³ Rabbinic texts—traditionally (albeit inaccurately) considered the epitome of Judaism in Palestine and less hellenized areas further east⁸⁴—often betray Greek language⁸⁵ and culture;⁸⁶ Judaism in Alexandria and elsewhere naturally absorbed and accommodated even more Greek cultural influences.⁸⁷ Many Jewish documents, including at times purely Palestinian Jewish documents, employ Greek interpretive methods.⁸⁸ Jewish

74. Cf. those who doubt that they were a discrete linguistic group (e.g., Bodinger, “‘Hébreux’ et ‘hellénistes’”).

75. Isoc. *Paneg.* 50 in Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:65.

76. Stanton, “Hellenism,” 470.

77. Barrett, *Acts*, 208–9. We should, of course, think much more of Greek athletics and education than of Greek religion.

78. Stanton, “Hellenism,” 464. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 18, connects the term with Jews “who followed or were suspected of following the ways of the Greeks, i.e., of the heathen.”

79. The language may be more cultural and less a matter of loyalty (given the element of compulsion) in Plut. *Mal. Hdt.* 29, *Mor.* 864A; 31, *Mor.* 864D.

80. The term could reflect the Hebrews’ perceptions about the Hellenists’ cultural loyalties, but then continued use in Acts 9:29 would not fit. Sociological study of immigrant subcultures could suggest a generational divide, but for Luke the biggest divide in the Hellenist community is between the Nazarenes and those who are not. The Hellenist immigrants here were probably conservative regarding the Torah and the temple cult (Schneider, “Stephanus,” 237).

81. For varieties and degrees of hellenization, see, e.g., Wilson, “Hellenistic Judaism”; for Aramaic-speaking Jews, including early rabbis, being much less hellenized than some other circles, see Wasserstein, “Non-hellenized Jews.” Indeed, not all Aramaic-speaking cultures were hellenized to the same degree (Gzella, “Sprachsituationen”), and speaking Aramaic did not unify them (Wallace and Williams, *World*, 39, following Millar, *Near East*).

82. See, e.g., Meyers, “Challenge.”

83. For one nuanced approach to Judaism and Hellenism, see Levine, *Hellenism*, *passim*.

84. Greek learning did apparently arouse some opposition (*t. Abod. Zar.* 1:20; *b. Menah.* 99b), especially in instructing children (*m. Soṭah* 9:14; *t. Soṭah* 15:8; *b. Menah.* 64b, bar.; *Soṭah* 49b, bar.; *B. Qam.* 83a); but cf. Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 100–114; Urbach, “Self-Isolation,” 284–87.

85. E.g., *b. B. Bat.* 140b; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:6; *Gen. Rab.* 81:5; *Lam. Rab.* proem 31; 4:15, §18; cf. Sevenster, *Greek*, 38–61; Alarcón Sainz, “Vocables.”

86. See, e.g., Sperber, “Note”; Roshwald, “Ben Zoma.”

87. This is hardly disputed, but see, e.g., *Let. Aris.* 121–22.

88. Sambursky, “Gematria”; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 103, citing Cic. *Inv.* 2.40.116; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:80ff.; Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 47–82. Some may also reflect Babylonian sources (Cavigneaux, “Herméneutique”).

texts frequently include elements from Greek mythology,⁸⁹ although these naturally prevail in more hellenized Jewish communities and are sometimes euhemeristic.⁹⁰ Scholars have often suggested that Judaism was more assimilated to local pagan culture in some regions than in others,⁹¹ although Diaspora Judaism was on the whole no more “lax” than Palestinian.⁹²

Jerusalem’s Hellenists are defined by their “acculturation”⁹³ to Hellenism (its language and various degrees of cultural literacy), but they were not highly assimilated (i.e., did not abandon minority Jewish customs in the Diaspora) and, if Saul of Tarsus is an example, proved not very “accommodated”—that is, they rejected rather than embraced essential Hellenistic ideals. What degree of hellenization distinguished Hebrews from Hellenists as groups?

V. DIASPORA IMMIGRANTS

In view of the narrative that precedes, the Hellenists to whom Luke refers are probably the Diaspora immigrants who appear strategic already in 2:7–12 and 4:36. (In 2:7–12, Luke uses them to prefigure the Gentile mission, and so it is not surprising that he would revisit them more fully here; they have presumably grown in number since then, like other Jerusalem believers [2:47].) That hellenized immigrants are in view is confirmed by 6:9, where their unconverted counterparts identify themselves with a synagogue or synagogues on the basis of their immigrant status.⁹⁴ Probably the synagogue in 6:9, like various immigrant congregations today, included second-generation members who had grown up in Jerusalem (cf. 22:3; 23:6). (On synagogues, see comment on Acts 6:9.)

Archaeological evidence suggests that many Diaspora Jews did settle in Jerusalem, perhaps to spend their final days there.⁹⁵ Josephus also explicitly testifies that there were many Diaspora immigrants.⁹⁶ Diaspora Jews were certainly hellenized; though faithful to Jerusalem, they were also faithful to the cities where they settled and into whose cultures they integrated.⁹⁷

89. Jdt 16:7; Jos. *War* 1.353; 2.155–58; *Ag. Ap.* 1.255; 2.263; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:4 (cf. Greek Phlegethon; cf. the Elysian Plain and the Acherusian Lake in *Sib. Or.* 2.337–38, probably Christian redaction; *Apoc. Mos.* 37:3).

90. E.g., Artapanus in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.3; *Sib. Or.* 2.15 (Poseidon); 2.19 (Hephaestus); 3.22 (Tethys); 3.110–16, 121–55, 551–54, 588 (euhemeristic; cf. similarly *Let. Aris.* 136; *Sib. Or.* 3.723; 8.43–47); 5.334 (personification; cf. also 7.46; 11.104, 147, 187, 205, 219, 278; 12.53, 278; 14.56, 115); *Test. Job* 1:3 (cornucopia); 51:1/2 (perhaps an allusion to Nereus, also in *Sib. Or.* 1.232); cf. eastern Ishtar as an evil spirit in *Incant. Text* 43.6–7, perhaps 53.12 (Isbell, *Bowls*, 103); cf. art (some of it in Palestinian synagogues) in Goodenough, *Symbols*, vols. 7–8 (and Dura-Europos synagogue, vols. 9–11 and 12:158–83).

91. E.g., Martin, *Colossians*, 18–19; Knox, *Gentiles*, 149; Wilson, *Gnostic Problem*, 259. Although an Egyptian provenance for the *Testament of Solomon* is possible, I would favor an Asian provenance, given its date (cf. also Artemis in *Test. Sol.* 8:11, etc.), and stress the magical-mystical nature of much of Judaism in Asia.

92. So Kennedy, *Epistles*, 14, 22; Robinson, *Redating*, 294. Palestine had its Pharisees and Essenes (by Josephus’s estimates, only six thousand of the former and four thousand of the latter) but had even more *amme ha’aretz*.

93. Using the “acculturation,” “assimilation,” and “accommodation” categories and definitions in Barclay, “Paul among Jews,” 93–98.

94. For Hellenists as wholly or partly Diaspora immigrants here, see, e.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 81–82; Lenski, *Acts*, 240; Kurzinger, *Apostelgeschichte*, 26; Kilgallen, *Commentary*, 47; Johnson, *Acts*, 105; Kisau, “Acts,” 1309.

95. Safrai, “Relations,” 193–94; Witherington, *Acts*, 135. Ossuary inscriptions sometimes declare the place of origin, suggesting the sort of continuing identification found in Acts 6:9 (cf. in Fiensy, “Composition,” 231, though he extrapolates from this to too many of the Greek inscriptions; contrast the correct caution in Sevenster, *Greek*, 147).

96. Fiensy, “Composition,” 232; these include a Babylonian-appointed high priest (for obscurity’s sake; *Jos. Ant.* 15.22, 34, 39).

97. See esp. Gruen, *Diaspora*, passim. For sample inscriptions, see Reinhold, *Diaspora*, 93–96; most fully, *CIJ* passim.

VI. CONFLICT OVER THE LAW?

Would these Jews' hellenization have brought them into conflict with native-born Jerusalemites over the law? Some scholars suggest that the "Hebrews" continued nationalist resentment against Hellenistic influences.⁹⁸ But while the Jewish people had staved off Greek religion in the Maccabean period (1 Macc 1–2), other elements of Hellenistic culture were as much a part of Jerusalem now as of any eastern Mediterranean city. Granted, the Hellenists' subculture may have alienated Hellenists from native Jerusalemites, but the Hellenists, at least, would not view it as a conflict over the law.⁹⁹ Diaspora Jews who paid the annual half-shekel tax to the temple¹⁰⁰ hardly dismissed its importance. Even more to the point, Jewish immigrants who came to Jerusalem would have settled there out of respect for the Holy City and its temple and hence would not be any less committed to the temple than were others.

Further, it is not "Hebrews" but other members of the immigrant community who react most fiercely to the Hellenist Christian message (Acts 6:9; 7:58; 9:29). Their bicultural competence made the Hellenist Jewish Christians a natural bridge to reaching non-Jewish Hellenists (11:20)¹⁰¹ and perhaps to new ideas that eventually shifted their theology. But it did not in itself make them disloyal to the law or the temple. It is thus probably too much to consider them a distinct theological group within the Jerusalem church as well as a distinct sociological one.¹⁰²

Perhaps Luke's audience also lacked the information to clearly identify the differences between the two groups; perhaps they and Luke were less interested in such historical questions than we are. Because they were themselves mostly Greek or hellenized Jews, they would naturally identify with the emerging Hellenist movement. The narrative supplies the information necessary to understand the story and its primary thrust, especially its function in the larger work. For Luke's theological purposes, certainly the Hellenists, as bicultural Jews, form a natural bridge to the Gentile mission.¹⁰³

b. The Complaint (6:1)

The widows' complaint addressed not the community of goods per se (2:44–45; 4:32–5:11) but the distribution mechanism.¹⁰⁴ Luke softens the charge of the complaint in several ways:

1. The church was growing faster (6:1) than the apostles could supervise adequately, and so they needed help.¹⁰⁵

98. E.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 82.

99. Nor were Hellenists allied only with the more hellenized Sadducees (Acts 6:12) if we may accept that Paul was a Hellenist Jerusalem Pharisee (23:6; 26:5; Phil 3:5).

100. Cf. Jos. *Ant.* 18.312; Liver, "Offering"; Sanders, *Judaism*, 156; Trebilco, *Communities*, 13–16; earlier, Exod 30:13–16; Jos. *Ant.* 3.194; 9.161; cf. 7.318. Those known to disagree were in fact Judean (4Q159 I II, 6–12, esp. 7).

101. With Larsson, "Hellenisten und Urgemeinde," this was more linguistic than due to a less law-faithful theology (Koch, "Border," emphasizes the influence of their Christology already held in Jerusalem).

102. I concur here with, e.g., Marshall, "Hellenistic Christianity," esp. 286; Larsson, "Hellenisten und Urgemeinde"; Gerdmar, "Hebreer och hellenister"; Schneider, "Stephanus," 237; Watson, *Gentiles*, 67; Gaventa, *Acts*, 112; most thoroughly, Hill, *Hellenists*, passim; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 207–10; *pace*, e.g., Scobie, "Source Material," 421. I do go further than some of these scholars in arguing that the Hellenists probably functioned historically as a bridge group, which is how Luke, our only direct reporter of their existence, portrays them.

103. See, e.g., Bodinger, "Hébreux' et 'hellénistes"; cf. Watson, *Gentiles*, 68–69: "to underline the universal significance of the Pentecost event."

104. Capper, "Context," 350. Certainly there is no criticism implied of the event in Acts 5:1–11; for that matter, judging from their names, Ananias and Sapphira did not belong to the Hellenists.

105. With Johnson, *Acts*, 105 ("needs outstripping administration").

2. Luke fails to specify that the apostles were the object of the complaint—even though they had been in charge (4:35) and they had to respond to the complaint.
3. The apostles recognized their limitations and their explicit calling and welcomed members of the offended minority to replace them.
4. A later passage shows Peter's compassion and (miraculous) provision for widows (9:39–41).¹⁰⁶

Just treatment of foreigners was one basis for praise in encomia of cities (Men. Rhet. 1.3, 363.4–10) and was heavily emphasized in Judaism even when the foreigners were not Jewish.¹⁰⁷ Some Judeans felt that Diaspora Jews lived too far from the temple and the land and that they compromised God's law too much.¹⁰⁸

Luke probably doubts that the apostles would have deliberately shown prejudice against the Hellenist widows, though he recognizes Peter's prejudice against full-fledged Gentiles (Acts 10:28). Even if it was not deliberate, however, Jerusalem's charities could have neglected foreign widows. In the unlikely event that food for the poor was distributed through a public dole as in Rome, immigrants might have had less knowledge and access to the dole. If, as is more likely, charity was distributed through private means and synagogues, those ministering to Hellenists might have faced a disproportionate number of widows compared with the native Judean counterparts (see discussion below).

Some of the Hellenists had been able to settle in Jerusalem precisely because they were families of means (cf. 4:36); certainly only a family of means would be able to provide for study with Gamaliel (22:3) or access to the high priest (9:1). Others, however, were apparently poor; in any event, many widows became destitute. At this point, we must survey several issues: the general nature of social welfare and charity in Jerusalem, the specific question of the treatment of widows, and the question as to whether there might be a disproportionate number of Hellenist widows requiring support.

The language by which Luke describes the complainers does not appear complimentary to them (cf. Jesus's religious critics in Luke 5:30; 15:2; 19:7):¹⁰⁹ γογγυσμός represents Israel's sin against Moses and the Lord in Exod 16:7–9, 12; Num 17:5, 10; Sir 46:7 (also γόγγυσιν, Num 14:27).¹¹⁰ The verb cognate also applies to Israel's offenses in the wilderness in Exod 17:3; Num 14:27, 29; 16:41; 17:5; Ps 106:25;¹¹¹ and most significant for our purposes, Num 11:1.¹¹² The complaints of Num 11:1, 4 led to the appointment and Spirit-filling of seventy elders (11:16–17), but God was

106. On this fourth point, see Spencer, "Neglected Widows."

107. Exod 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:34; 23:22; Num 9:14; 15:14–16, 26, 29; 35:15; Deut 10:18–19; 24:14, 17, 19–21; 26:11, 13; 27:19; Jos. *Ant.* 4.234; Ag. *Ap.* 2.209–10.

108. E.g., *Exod. Rab.* 42:9, though this example is late.

109. Without using the terminology, Luke 12:13 provides another example of one seeking a more favorable distribution of resources (Jesus's response is unfavorable in Luke 12:14–21; but he may have responded differently to someone genuinely destitute, Luke 20:47).

110. Its other LXX uses are also very negative (Isa 58:9; Wis 1:10–11). Second-century Christians carried on the tradition against grumbling (*Did.* 3.6; 4.7; *Barn.* 3.5). On "murmuring" in OT tradition, see Hunt, "Murmuring."

111. Its other LXX uses are also usually negative (Ps 58:15 [59:15 MT]; Isa 29:24; 30:12; Jdt 5:22; cf. perhaps Judg 1:14, added to the MT; Lam 3:39; Sir 10:25). The cognate διαγογγύζω, used in Luke 15:1; 19:7, fits Israel's grumbling against Moses, Aaron, and the Lord (Exod 15:24; 16:2, 7–8; Num 14:2, 36; 16:11; Deut 1:27), as against Joshua's generation of leaders (Josh 9:18); for complaining about stingy food distribution, see Sir 31:24.

112. On Num 11's relevance here, see C. Williams, *Acts*, 95–97.

not pleased with the complaints (11:33–34). Although not in the case of Num 11, most of Israel's complaints concerned food or drink, as here. The portrayal of such complaints would appear flattering neither to Jewish people familiar with the wilderness tradition¹¹³ nor to those thinking about complaints more generally.¹¹⁴

From the standpoint of Greco-Roman benefaction, the appropriate response to any gift was gratitude; complaining was utterly inappropriate. Jewish charity was not based on reciprocity of honor,¹¹⁵ but Luke's ideal urban audience might still wince at the complaints of the widows.¹¹⁶ The response of the apostles to this complaint would be considered extraordinarily charitable; benefactors who gave without thought for their own honor were thought worthy of the greatest honors.¹¹⁷

The widows themselves, however, presumably viewed their plight as too urgent to wait, and some members of Luke's first real audiences probably sympathized with them.¹¹⁸ Despite the terminology, these widows' complaints were probably more justifiable than that of Israel in Num 11¹¹⁹ (especially if we read the $\sigma\tau\iota$ in Acts 6:1 as "because"), and even in Moses's day, the just complaint of aggrieved women had to be heard (Num 27:1–11; a context possibly relevant again in Acts 6:6). The narrative suggests no judgment against them (in contrast to most complainers in Numbers, e.g., 11:1); the allusions to the Pentateuch here are varied, since the apostles, like Moses, delegate, but Moses delegated on the basis of wise counsel, not complaints (Exod 18:17–24). When flattering the elite did not obtain necessary provision, nonelites escalated conflict with complaints.¹²⁰ The apostles are not elite, but they do supervise the resources.

Moreover, ancient readers would know that women, especially widows, could safely get away with complaining and even harassing authorities (Luke 18:3–5) in ways that men could not;¹²¹ such demands were often their only means for securing redress against injustices.¹²² The widows here may continue in the path of earlier

113. See CD III, 8; 4Q365 6 II, 10; Jos. *Ant.* 3.23; b. *Arak.* 11b; 15a; *Lam. Rab.* 3:39, §9; 1 Cor 10:10; cf. 1QH^a XIII, 25, 27; XVII, 22; John 6:41, 43, 61; Phil 2:14. Cf. also Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 58.

114. Philosophers and moralists often critiqued complaints against the divine will (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 96.1; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.6.42; 1.14.16; Marc. *Aur.* 2.16; 8.10; 10.1; 12.12; Max. Tyre 15.1); hearing excess complaining also bothered ordinary people (cf. Theophr. *Char.* 15.7; 17.1–3). "Human grumbling," opined one writer, "deified Fortune" (Publ. Syr. 180).

115. Winter, *Welfare*, 50; Witherington, *Acts*, 249.

116. Cf. murmuring on the part of some who were serving widows in *Test. Job* 14:3–5 (in context, 13:4–14:5). Land, *Diffusion*, 225, is probably right to think that Acts 6:1 would be understood by the accused group as an honor challenge (which the Twelve defused with sibling terminology in 6:3).

117. DeSilva, *Honor*, 106–9; cf. Pliny *Ep.* 7.18.5; 9.30.2; Fronto *Nep. am.* 2.9.

118. Luke does not clarify whether the widows were in desperate need or simply receiving less than their share, but $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\omicron\upsilon\nu\tau\omicron$ (a biblical hapax legomenon, but cf. BDAG) does suggest that their complaint was accurate and just.

119. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 113.

120. Toner, *Culture*, 35.

121. In Jewish settings, Luke 18:2–5; 2 Sam 14:1–21; 20:16–22; 1 Kgs 1:11–16; 2:17; Matt 20:20; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 134; in Gentile settings, see Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 179; Simon, "Causes" (on Val. Max. 8.3); cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.44.1–8.54.1; Tac. *Ann.* 16.10; Plut. *Coriol.* 34.1–2; *Alex.* 12.3; 21.1–3. Cf. also appeals to prefects with special concern for women's powerlessness (e.g., P.Sakaon 36 in Horsley, *Documents*, 4:132–33; *Lysias Or.* 32.11–18, §§506–11).

122. Later an office of widows existed (perhaps already in 1 Tim 5:3–16; see Keener, *Marries Another*, 90–91; esp. Thurston, *Widows*, 36–55, esp. 44–46; in the Apostolic Fathers, 56–75; Tertullian, 76–91; cf. Scott, *Pastoral Epistles*, 57; Pelser, "Women," 105; Verner, *Household*, 164–65). But it seems to me that to suggest that widows were growing in power and that Luke attempts "to mask" this by accumulating more power in males' hands (Reid, "Power," 87) attributes crime without motive; I have argued that Luke's agenda is pro-women and not the reverse, even if his setting does not invite him to develop modern sensitivities (see the commentary introduction, ch. 18). (Price, "Rhoda," also argues that Luke suppresses widows, but this work is utterly speculative and not grounded in evidence.) Ng, "Guardians," suggests that even Ign. *Pol.* 4.1–2 has nobler motives.

biblical widows who heroically and unconventionally sought their rights.¹²³ Wise leaders often addressed complaints quickly, stopping dissension within their ranks.¹²⁴

c. *Charity and Widows (6:1)*

Not only in the primitive church but also in their surrounding environment, widows were, for the most part, dependent on the resources of relatives and charity. The heavy emphasis on charity in ancient Judaism would have helped widows, provided the distribution mechanisms proved adequate.

I. CHARITY AND DISTRIBUTION MECHANISMS

It is difficult to overestimate the moral emphasis placed on charity in early Palestinian Judaism (see comment on Acts 3:2).¹²⁵ The thought of structurally abolishing poverty probably did not occur to many first-century thinkers, but Jewish charitable institutions were unique in the Roman world.¹²⁶ Later scholars opined that the classes of sinners bound for Gehinnom include those who fail to provide charity.¹²⁷ For details on charity in early Judaism, see comment on Acts 3:2.

Rabbinic sources reveal a great deal about how local Jewish communities organized charity and distributed goods to meet people's needs, at least in a later period.¹²⁸ Most teachers held that unspecified grants of charity were to be used locally for one's own synagogue or town (*t. B. Qam.* 11:3).¹²⁹ After collecting for communal charity funds, the collectors would distribute the funds in each neighborhood (*t. Demai* 3:16). The officials supervising charity had to be above reproach; thus, if they found no one who needed the food, they could sell it, but not to themselves (*t. B. Meši'a* 3:9). When rabbis or others were appointed to these positions, they might also need to be persuaded to accept them (*y. Pe'ah* 8:7, §3). Later rabbis did condemn charity collectors who themselves oppressed the poor by demanding that they contribute.¹³⁰ The offices of local officials in Palestinian villages, including charity collectors, reflect the characteristic role of village officials throughout the Roman province of Syria: supervision of "village finances and building projects."¹³¹

Some scholars have argued that this system of charity distribution did not exist before 70 C.E.;¹³² certainly this is true of the sources attesting this system.¹³³ Arguments against its existence at that time include Josephus's silence concerning the involvement of local agencies in Herod's and Helena's grain distributions (*Ant.* 15.305–16; 20.51–53) and the frequency of beggars in the NT. The first argument is from silence;

123. See Merz, "Importunate Widow," 86, focusing on Luke 18:2–5 (on the biblical narrative tradition, see 65–70).

124. E.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.12–13 (for Cyrus's speech, 6.2.14–20). For the dangers of such complaining, while not helping, see, e.g., Polyb. 29.1.1–3.

125. See, e.g., Sanders, *Judaism*, 230–31. Some other societies also have a heavy emphasis on giving alms to the poor and its relation to divine reward (Mbiti, *Religions*, 330).

126. Goodman, *State*, 39 (noting [n. 195] that the aims of Italian *alimenta* were very different).

127. *Tg. Qoh.* 6:6.

128. Johnson, *Acts*, 106, citing, e.g., *m. Demai* 3:1; *'Ab.* 5:9; *b. Meg.* 27a; *B. Bat.* 8a–9a; *Roš Haš.* 4a–5b. A traveler could be given food from the common fund (*m. Pe'ah* 8:7), and one could take offerings for the poor when one deemed oneself truly in sufficient need (*m. Pe'ah* 5:4); presumably a sense of honor prevented most people from exploiting this freedom inappropriately.

129. See also Goodman, *State*, 39.

130. *B. B. Bat.* 8b; *Lev. Rab.* 30:1; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 27:1.

131. Goodman, *State*, 121.

132. Seccombe, "Organized Charity"; followed by, e.g., Capper, "Context," 351–52; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 348; Finger, *Meals*, 235.

133. Though it should be noted that discussion of it is attributed to the pre-70 school of Shammai (*y. Demai* 3:1, 23b).

Herod and Helena would not need to work through such agencies, and Josephus would not need to mention it if they did. The second argument is more convincing, though beggars could coexist with charity distribution then as they do today. Ultimately, however, the later rabbinic practices probably say more about villages and small towns than about how charity could be organized and supervised in a massive population such as Jerusalem's.

Some suggest that the "daily" nature of the service in Jerusalem resembles synagogue practice,¹³⁴ but others stress the differences more. Thus, whereas the later rabbinic system speaks of daily offerings for immediate needs, synagogues normally distributed funds for fourteen meals once each week.¹³⁵ This difference points to another—namely, that the apostles had been distributing not funds but food (thus the apostles' relinquishing of "serving at tables" in Acts 6:2); this practice may have been related to eating together (2:46).¹³⁶ This does not suggest that the apostles had developed the system without Jewish precedents; the Essenes, for example, reportedly ate together daily and also distributed to those in need.¹³⁷ The synagogue undoubtedly exerted its influence as well, but the apostles adapted the system, as they were preparing to adapt it again in response to a new circumstance (6:1–4).

We cannot therefore be sure how organized charity distribution was in Jerusalem; probably its effects were as beneficial but as sporadic as those of many private charities today. Local synagogue communities surely were involved; benefactors ran "a community soup kitchen" in Aphrodisias,¹³⁸ and the Theodotus inscription suggests that Jerusalem synagogues helped Diaspora pilgrims (see comment on Acts 6:9). Whatever their models, Christians also were engaged in charity distribution among their own people.¹³⁹

II. WIDOWS

Widows play a prominent and invariably positive role in Luke-Acts, and so it is unlikely that Luke expects us to view them negatively here. Some widows receive notable blessings: the earlier widow of Zarephath, as a model of God's favor through a prophet (Luke 4:25–26); the widow of Nain (7:12); also those widows blessed through Dorcas and whose entreaties to Peter are answered with Dorcas's resurrection (Acts 9:39–41). A widow becomes a parabolic model for insistent prayer (Luke 18:3–5). Nor are widows only on the receiving end of blessing: Anna the prophetess bears witness to Jesus as an infant (2:37); a poor widow in the temple becomes a model for sacrificial giving (21:2–3).

Some scholars argue that the widows here were neglected not in terms of care for them but in terms of their participation in "the honorable female role of *servicing* food."¹⁴⁰ This argument is plausible; the sharing of possessions and meals (Acts 2:44–45) leads to a situation in which none are needy (4:34), and so "serving at tables" could involve the shared meals of believers.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, on the whole,

134. Blue, "Influence," 487–88.

135. Capper, "Context," 350–51; Blomberg, *Poverty*, 168–69.

136. Capper, "Context," 350–51. Luke can give τράπεζα a broader economic sense (Luke 19:23), but normally the term refers to eating (Luke 16:21; 22:21, 30; Acts 16:34); for description of the usual furniture, see Carcopino, *Life*, 34.

137. Capper, "Context," 352, citing Philo *Hypoth.* 11.4–11.

138. Blue, "Influence," 487.

139. Walter, "Apostelgeschichte 6.1," believes that the problem here involved not the church but Jerusalem's authorities, but this is unlikely in view of (1) the distribution program that Christians had (Acts 2:44–45; 4:32–35) and (2) the "disciples'" participation in choosing the leaders to solve it (6:2–3).

140. Finger, *Meals*, 167. For discussions of a possible "order of widows" (cf. *ibid.*, 261–62), see comment on Acts 9:39–41.

141. *Ibid.*, 257, 279.

the traditional interpretation of caring for widows has more in its favor. Ancient texts more typically portray widows as destitute¹⁴² (the way Luke’s audience may have understood the text apart from clarification to the contrary); those replacing the apostles in serving tables are seven men (6:2–3);¹⁴³ and in Luke-Acts, Jesus’s model suggests that roles in addition to serving tables were open to women (Luke 10:38–42).

Ancient texts viewed widows not, first of all, in terms of their bereaved marital status (as we generally do)¹⁴⁴ but in terms of the destitution that typically resulted from it.¹⁴⁵ One major study argues that widowhood was more common in this period than often assumed and that most widows were terribly impoverished.¹⁴⁶ Some even argue that widows constituted nearly a third of women in the Roman world and 40 percent of those between forty and fifty years of age.¹⁴⁷ If impoverished widows constituted only half of such numbers (despite the large percentage of poor people in general in Mediterranean antiquity), they could easily overwhelm a community’s resources to care for them.

Compared with Jewish customs of charity, those of Greek society did not help widows much.¹⁴⁸ Generally, widows were expected to be supported by male relatives or to remarry.¹⁴⁹ A Roman ideal was the *univira*, the person who married only once;¹⁵⁰ but from the era of Augustus forward, remarriage was standard practice.¹⁵¹ Judaism tended to encourage widows’ remarriage and certainly did not discourage it.¹⁵²

Scripture commanded concern for widows.¹⁵³ Most ancient Near Eastern legal systems cared for widows, but the OT, unlike Babylonian, Hittite, and Assyrian laws, made no provision for them to inherit.¹⁵⁴ This made supporting them all the more

142. This was not always actually the case, as *ibid.*, 258–60, emphasizes (see also comment on Acts 16:15), but it fits both Luke’s frequent language about widows (Luke 4:25–26; 7:12; 18:3, 5; 20:47; 21:2–3; Acts 9:39; with only Luke 2:37 being ambiguous) and that of the biblical tradition from which he draws it.

143. In Finger’s view, these men would be working with the women (*Meals*, 279), but I think it less likely that Luke’s audience would have inferred this conclusion without Luke’s mentioning the women’s activity. (By contrast, Finger would infer it from the nature of the activity.)

144. This is not to deny that grief was recognized; for widowers, see *b. Sanh.* 22a; for widows, e.g., *Sen. Y. Dial.* 6.7.3.

145. Thurston, *Widows*, 9–10, noting even the terms used in Greek and Hebrew; this is the definition in ancient laws (Duncker, “Viduae”). Not all widows, of course, were left poor (cf., e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 281.1.2).

146. Krause, *Witwen und Waisen*; reviewed favorably in McGinn, “Widows.”

147. Winter, *Wives*, 124 (admitting that such figures can be only estimates but pointing to [125] statistics from inscriptions).

148. Boer, *Morality*, 34–36. Cf. *Mart. Epig.* 4.56.1–2 (and 4.56.7–8, where Martial jests that the funds would have been better donated to himself).

149. Clark, “Widows,” 1621. On widows’ remarriage, see also Finger, *Meals*, 212–13, 258.

150. Clark, “Widows,” 1621; Walcot, “Widows”; Lightman and Zeisel, “Univira” (in the principate, e.g., 19–20; noting [26] that the term may apply to widows no earlier than Tert. *Wife* 2.1); Gardner, *Women*, 50–51; Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 6, 22; Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 232. For the ideal, cf. *Hom. Od.* 18.269–70 (temporarily limited); *Diod. Sic.* 1.22.1; 12.14.2–3; *Val. Max.* 2.1.3; *Sen. E. Controv.* 2.2.intro.; 6.4; 8.1 excerpts, intro.; *Petron. Sat.* 111; *Paus.* 2.21.7; *Char. Chaer.* 3.6.6. For a widower (more rarely), *Eurip. Alc.* 305–68; *Ovid Fasti* 5.527–29.

151. Often noted, e.g., Gardner, *Women*, 82; Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 22; Rawson, “Family,” 31; Winter, *Wives*, 125; O’Rourke, “Law,” 180; Last, “Social Policy,” 448–52; Grant, *Paul*, 107; for some resistance, see *Suet. Aug.* 34.1. Earlier, see *Plut. S. Sp. Wom.*, Gorgo 6, *Mor.* 240E. This principle was less applicable to older widows (*Plut. S. Kings*, Dionysius the Elder 6, *Mor.* 175F).

152. Ilan, *Women*, 148–49; Harrell, *Divorce*, 58; Safrai, “Home,” 788; see, e.g., *t. ‘Abod. Zar.* 2:7; *‘Abot R. Nat.* 3 A; *y. Ketub.* 9:8, §4; 1 Tim 5:14; though cf. the ideal in Luke 2:36–37; *Jdt* 8:4–5; 16:22.

153. E.g., *Exod* 22:22; *Deut* 10:18; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:17, 19–21; 26:12–13; 27:19; *Pss* 68:5; 146:9; *Prov* 15:25; *Isa* 1:17, 23; *Jer* 7:6; 22:3; *Ezek* 22:7; *Zech* 7:10; *Mal* 3:5. Cf. Gordon, *Near East*, 224.

154. Thurston, *Widows*, 13–14. For warnings against oppressing widows, see, e.g., AQHT A (v) (*ANET* 151; cf. C (i) [*ANET* 153]); KRT C (vi) (*ANET* 149); “The Instruction of Amen-em-ope” 6 (*ANET* 422); cf. sources in Wells, “Exodus,” 244.

important. This support continued in early Judaism as well.¹⁵⁵ Widows were, in addition to their poverty, particularly vulnerable without male defenders in the male arena of law and hence warranted special protection.¹⁵⁶ It is not unlikely that the early Christian ministry to widows was modeled after “a Jewish community institution such as the one found at Aphrodisias.”¹⁵⁷

The *Testament of Job*, a probably second-century C.E. work, praises Job’s beneficence toward widows (developing Job 29:13; 31:16); he had twelve tables (τραπέζας) set for them (*Test. Job* 10:2). Rabbis praised a righteous supervisor of a community’s “charity chest” who, finding no money in the chest to give to a poor widow who came with seven sons, gave her his own money (*’Abot R. Nat.* 3 A).¹⁵⁸ Even if Christians continued Jewish practices without adding new elements, it should not surprise us that Christians would attract widows and that pagan writers by the second century associate large numbers of widows and orphans with the Christian movement.¹⁵⁹

Some scholars suggest that these widows were cut off from public support because they became Christians.¹⁶⁰ It is possible that commitment to Christ had cut them off from local synagogue support, but the new movement was probably not generally in competition with local synagogues (cf. 2:47).¹⁶¹ It may simply be that there was more poverty in Lower City Jerusalem than all the charitable resources of the day could meet. It has also been suggested that the Jerusalem church’s resources were drained from caring for all widows indiscriminately, in contrast to the later, more nuanced approach of 1 Tim 5:3–16;¹⁶² but such details can be argued only from silence. What is clear is that the Christian system continued, perhaps with qualifications (1 Tim 5:9–10) that codified the earlier, more charismatic wisdom used for evaluation by overseers such as those in Acts 6:3.¹⁶³

III. DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBERS POOR?

One factor in the need of Hellenist widows might be discrimination, as suggested briefly above; they were a minority subculture within Jerusalem and may have had to fend more for themselves. This suspicion is difficult to quantify, however, since some of the Hellenists probably had ties with some of the elite (as noted above).

Another reason that a disproportionate number of Hellenist widows would be poor is simply that they lacked the same level of local extended kin network¹⁶⁴ (and

155. E.g., Jdt 9:4; Tob 1:8; Wis 2:10; Sir 35:17; 2 Macc 3:10; 8:28, 30; 2 En. 50:5–6; Jos. *Ant.* 4.227, 240; Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.308; *Sib. Or.* 3.242; *Apoc. Zeph.* 7:4; *Sipre Deut.* 281.1.2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 10:10; 15:9; *Gen. Rab.* 100:2; cf. Jas 1:27. On widows in Second Temple Palestinian Judaism, see, e.g., Chapman, “Marriage,” 215–17.

156. Cf., e.g., P.Ryl. 114.5; for vulnerability in ancient Israel and Egypt, see Galpaz-Feller, “Widow.” Care for widows remains an important application emphasis for African readers (see Reggy-Mamo, “Widows”), given widespread abuse of widows in Africa (Kapolyo, *Condition*, 127).

157. Blue, “House Church,” 179.

158. The model of a widow with seven sons could recall 2 Maccabees (2 Macc 7:20; cf. 4 Macc 15:2, 24, 27; 16:1, 3, 6; 17:2, 5, 7, 9, 13; 18:6, 20).

159. Lucian *Peregr.* 12 (probably viewing widows and orphans as particularly gullible and easily exploited).

160. E.g., Larkin, *Acts*, 99 (citing *m. Pe’ah* 8:7, about Jewish charitable distribution to the poor).

161. Granted, at some point members of the Hellenist synagogue of Acts 6:9 came to view Stephen’s movement as a threat; that may suggest continued participation (cf. what 2 Cor 11:24 suggests for Paul). The level of participation in the community of believers (2:42, 46) may have been so high as to diminish other social commitments.

162. Winter, *Welfare*, 66–67.

163. See later P.Oxy. 1954–56 and Horsley, *Documents*, 2:192–93 (cited in Witherington, *Acts*, 248n217). For Christian alms in the patristic period, see Grant, *Christianity and Society*, 124–45.

164. Cf. Safrai, “Home,” 732–33. Still, contrary to common expectation, the nuclear family was dominant both in Rome (Saller and Shaw, “Tombstones”; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 129; Rawson, “Roman Family,” 7; Stambaugh, *City*, 158) and in Galilee (Goodman, *State*, 36, citing *m. B. Meši’a* 5:10).

perhaps sometimes local offspring) on whom they could depend (cf. 1 Tim 5:4, 8).¹⁶⁵ This is the most certain factor.

One possible factor is the age disparity between husbands and wives in Judea and the Greek world¹⁶⁶ (if the latter affected Hellenist Jews).¹⁶⁷ This factor is less certain because it is less clear that Hellenist Jewish immigrants would reflect the same age disparity as Greeks. Some Greeks regarded fourteen as an ideal age for beauty and procreation.¹⁶⁸ Although it was understood that male puberty followed soon after female puberty,¹⁶⁹ Greek men¹⁷⁰ typically married wives roughly a decade their junior;¹⁷¹ Roman men tended to be closer to five years older than their wives.¹⁷² Some scholars argue that girls from the elite class typically married “in their late teens,” with grooms “in their twenties”; lower classes may have married younger.¹⁷³ Others suggest that most Roman women married in their late teens, with men a decade older and an even wider disparity among upper classes.¹⁷⁴ Ancient sources suggest that a large number of women married quite young, but also may suggest geographic variation.¹⁷⁵

Average Judean men, by contrast, probably married wives only a few years younger than themselves. If later rabbinic texts reflect wider Judean practice in the Second Temple period, typical Jewish men probably generally married around the age of eighteen or twenty.¹⁷⁶ This gave them some time to prepare for marriage; young men were expected to begin adult responsibilities around age thirteen.¹⁷⁷ Jewish women

165. Cf. (including esp. children's support), e.g., Hesiod *W.D.* 188–89; Isaeus *Menec.* 10; Lysias *Or.* 24.6, §168; Xen. *Oec.* 7.19; P. Enteux. 26; Quint. *Inst.* 7.6.5; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.45; Diog. Laert. 1.37; *Gen. Rab.* 100:2; *Sib. Or.* 2.273–75; Moore, *Judaism*, 2:170.

166. On the common age disparity between husbands and wives in Roman antiquity, see, e.g., Krause, *Witwen und Waisen*.

167. Jeffers, “Families,” 135, suggests Jewish men marrying around thirty, on the basis of Philo *Creation* 103, but this probably reflects Hellenistic influence on the Alexandrian Jewish elite.

168. For beauty, Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 1.2; for conception, fourteen and the years immediately following were most useful (Soranus *Gynec.* 1.8.33–1.9.34).

169. Egyptian males entered adulthood at fourteen (Lewis, *Life*, 156), as did Roman males (Gaius *Inst.* 1.196; 2.113; 3.208; Gardner, *Women*, 14); cf. also Jos. *Life* 9. The basic matter was the achievement of puberty (e.g., Gaius *Inst.* 1.196; *Gen. Rab.* 91:3; *y. Ter.* 1:3), as in many traditional societies (Mbiti, *Religions*, 158–73; Eliade, *Rites*, 41; Dawson, “Urbanization,” 309). Men could marry as young as puberty or fourteen (Gardner, *Women*, 38).

170. Who often married about thirty (Hesiod *W.D.* 695–97, which also recommends marrying a bride in her teens, 698; Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 118). But a man marries at eighteen in Demosth. *Boeot.* 2.12.

171. For young brides, cf., e.g., Epict. *Encheir.* 40; Plut. *Bride* 2, *Mor.* 138D; Quint. *Inst.* pref. 4; *Nin. Rom.* frg. 1, A.3; thirteen in Ovid *Metam.* 9.714. The age was often thirteen to sixteen among Greeks and Romans (Friedländer, *Life*, 4:123–31; Lewis, *Life*, 55; cf. Pleket 10 in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 136; Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 41, 118, 164; Boer, *Morality*, 39, 269; Verner, *Household*, 41), though about eighteen may have been common (cf. Hesiod *W.D.* 698). The claim of typical Indian marriages at seven (Arrian *Ind.* 9.1) is fanciful (cf. two-hundred-year-old elephants in 14.8).

172. Jeffers, “Families,” 134; idem, *World*, 238.

173. Stamps, “Children,” 199.

174. Shaw, “Age.” Most men in the Latin-speaking West outside Rome married around twenty-five or older (Saller, “Age”), often in the late twenties or early thirties (Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 131).

175. In inscriptions in Gardner, *Women*, 39, about 40 percent of the women studied married before age fifteen, and almost three-quarters before age nineteen (cf. Hopkins, “Age at Marriage”); in Egyptian census declarations, however, only 10 percent were married before age fifteen, which suggests some geographic variation; see more fully Rawson, “Family,” 21–22; *CIL* 6.

176. E.g., *m. 'Ab.* 5:21, 32; *b. Qidd.* 29b–30a; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:2, §3; cf. Davis, “Age”; Jeremias, *Parables*, 129; also elsewhere, e.g., Lewis, *Life*, 55, though the Diaspora Jew in *CIJ* 1:409, §553, marries around twenty-two. For early betrothals, see Cohen, *Law*, 297–98.

177. Cf. *m. 'Ab.* 5:21; *'Abot R. Nat.* 16 A; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 3:2; *Gen. Rab.* 63:10; probably Luke 2:42 and Jos. *Ant.* 10.50 (not yet adult); cf. adulthood at twelve in 1 *Esd* 5:41.

often married as young as twelve or fourteen, upon reaching puberty,¹⁷⁸ though some were even older than twenty.¹⁷⁹

Another factor was the obvious situation that presumably a large percentage of immigrants arrived in adulthood, whereas native Jerusalemites lived there from childhood; demographically, this would create a larger elderly population among the Hellenists than among the natives (and elderly widows, in contrast to widowers, were apt to lack means of self-support).¹⁸⁰

In conjunction with this fourth factor may be the belief held by some that it was pious to be buried in the Holy Land.¹⁸¹ Assuming that this belief was communicated in the Diaspora through travelers or through festal pilgrims, it might increase the percentage of senior immigrants. It is not as clear how widespread the belief, documented especially in the Amoraic period, was in the first century, but it probably reflects some earlier tendencies.¹⁸² Even in the first century, one king sent the bones of his brother and mother, both proselytes, to Jerusalem (*Jos. Ant.* 20.95). Certainly, Diaspora Jews looked to Jerusalem as their “mother city” (*Philo Flacc.* 46), and hence some who had visited it on pilgrimages might have wished to finish their days there.¹⁸³ Later Palestinian rabbis proved particularly emphatic on the matter; those who died outside Eretz Israel would have to roll underground to the land in order to be resurrected there.¹⁸⁴ The necropolis at Beth She‘arim and other Palestinian burial sites demonstrate that from about the turn of the third century C.E., many Jews from throughout the Diaspora were brought to the Holy Land for burial.¹⁸⁵

4. The Solution (6:2–7)

The Twelve summoned the congregation (cf. Luke 18:16)¹⁸⁶ in Acts 6:2 and delivered a brief speech. The structure of the apostles’ “speech” may be approached as an *inclusio* (6:2, 4 providing the apostles’ primary mission) but is probably too brief for

178. *Gen. Rab.* 95 MSV; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:6; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 365. The usual range seems to have been twelve to eighteen (Chapman, “Marriage,” 186).

179. Ilan, *Women*, 67–69, notes that women usually married in their teens (at ages such as thirteen or sixteen), but some married even older than twenty. Either Miriam or her husband was thirty at marriage in 4Q545 1 I, 5–6.

180. Finger, *Meals*, 213 (following Stark, “Antioch,” 195), notes that wives typically predeceased their husbands, but this was probably most common during child-bearing years and hence would have less demographic impact on older immigrants.

181. See, e.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 260–61; for the view, cf. Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 63; Davies, *Gospel and Land*, 62–65.

182. *Abot R. Nat.* 26 A (R. Akiba, early second century). God provided special eschatological protection only in the land (2 *Bar.* 29:2, early second century; cf. *L.A.B.* 7:4). Preference for burial in one’s homeland was not limited to Jews (cf. Philodemus *Death* 26.9–10, disdaining the usual inclination).

183. The masses generally pitied those who died “in a foreign land” (Epict. *Diatr.* 1.27.5).

184. *Y. Ketub.* 12:4, §8; *Gen. Rab.* 96 MV; 96:5, some MSS; *Deut. Rab.* 2:9 (most passages citing Ezek 37:10, 12). Even later Babylonian rabbis concurred (*b. Ketub.* 111a), and the patriarchs were said to have endured much to be buried there (*Pesiq. Rab.* 1:4). Such images of subterranean travel were more conceivable in ancient Mediterranean cosmology (e.g., Ovid *Metam.* 5.501–4; Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.106.225).

185. Safrai, “Relations,” 213. See, e.g., *CIJ* 2:132, §920; 2:136, §930; 2:137, §931; 2:262, §1256. For Diaspora Jews being brought to Jerusalem for burial, see also, e.g., the suggested case in Lemaire, “Engraved.”

186. The term for “summon” (προσκαλέω) is rarely used in this way in Luke and is neither specifically Lukan nor evocative of the exodus account (for the cognate καλέω, cf. Exod 12:21; 19:7; Deut 5:1, but among more than four hundred uses in the LXX, this is not significant). “Congregation” (πλήθος) might evoke the wilderness assembly (Exod 36:5), though ἐκκλησία (also relevant for town assemblies, a possible background here; cf. comment on Acts 19:32, 39–40) makes as much sense here (Deut 23:1–8; 31:30) unless Luke wishes to stress the large numbers (e.g., Exod 1:9; Deut 1:10; 10:22; 26:5; cf. Acts 6:1). It may be paralleled in Qumran usage (see Brown, “Scrolls,” 7; this might evoke the wilderness assembly).

one to argue for a structure any more complex.¹⁸⁷ Lest anyone assume that the appeal to what is “desirable” or “pleasing” (ἀρεστόν) could be considered base (cf. 12:3, its only other Lukan use), it appears frequently as an ethical criterion in ancient sources, including philosophers;¹⁸⁸ it was crucial to please the deity.¹⁸⁹

a. God’s Message or Serving Tables? (6:2, 4)

Although this passage, especially when viewed in light of the rest of Luke-Acts, values economic ministry to the needy, it indicates that the apostles of God’s message have a higher obligation to the message and prayer. Both are described as “ministries” here, both must be done, and both require Spirit-filled leaders.

I. THE APOSTLES’ PRIORITIES (6:2, 4)

The apostles’ central “ministry” (διακονία) in proclamation and prayer (6:4) now requires them to delegate their earlier additional “ministry” of food (6:1).¹⁹⁰ Some scholars suggest that the apostles play down Jesus’s more “holistic model of ministry” in the Gospel of Luke,¹⁹¹ but this charge does not seem fair.¹⁹² The more accurate parallel is Jesus’s delegating some of his ministry because the need was too large for him to address by himself (Luke 9:1, 13–14; 10:1).

Luke has already emphasized that the word of the Lord takes priority over serving tables with his story emphasizing Mary’s role as superior to that of Martha (Luke 10:38–42, using διακονίαν in 10:40). This may be one reason why serving the poor, so central to Jesus’s teaching in Luke (see comment on Acts 2:44–45), nevertheless takes a narrative role in Acts that is secondary compared with cross-cultural evangelism (contrast also the programmatic statements of Luke 4:18–19 and Acts 1:8; 2:17–18).¹⁹³ (To say that the role is secondary is not to deny its continuing importance; see, e.g., Acts 4:35; 11:29–30;¹⁹⁴ 24:17.) The issue is partly a matter of delegating (see comment below) forms of ministry that can be done by others, so that leaders can focus on growing tasks that require their special attention.¹⁹⁵ Jesus

187. Soards, *Speeches*, 55, classifies this as deliberative rhetoric, consisting of a proem (Acts 6:2b), a proposition (6:3), and an epilogue (6:4).

188. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 106.10–11; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5i, pp. 32–33.25–26; 2.7.11b, pp. 74–75.17.

189. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 2.14.12; 4.12.11; for Israel’s God, see Tob 4:21; Wis 4:10; 9:10; *Test. Ab.* 15:14 A.

190. This διακονία to widows is described as διακονεῖν, to “serve,” or “wait on,” tables in Acts 6:2. Luke continues to respect both the apostolic διακονία of the message (1:25) and διακονία for the poor (11:29), which remains, after all, the focus of economic stewardship throughout Luke-Acts. Jesus’s own mission can be portrayed as “serving at table” (Luke 22:27; Parsons, *Acts*, 84).

191. Spencer, *Acts*, 66–67. Though cf. the court in Yavneh, which, in contrast to Acts 6:2, 4, when “preoccupied with communal needs, . . . did not interrupt” this even for the Shema or prayer (*i. Ber.* 2:6).

192. Finger, *Meals*, 266, notes that the apostles, who prefer preaching, are soon moved off stage in Luke’s narrative. To this we should note that Luke, having already reported their ministry (and established his emphasis on caring for the poor), is not obligated to continue to reiterate it in order to expect his audience to assume its continuance when the focus of his narrative shifts (a principle that Finger also recognizes elsewhere; see *Meals*, 217–18). Pervo complains that Luke narrates from the perspective of the comfortable versus that of the poor (*Acts*, 161–62); but while the poor certainly do have an appropriate predilection for economic justice, surveys (e.g., Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, “Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals” [October 5, 2006], n.p.; online: <http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal>) show that in Spirit movements such as Majority World Pentecostalism, “witness” remains a central priority, even among the poor.

193. Cf. Bergquist, “Good News to the Poor.”

194. That Barnabas and Saul undertake such a mission before being sent to evangelize (Acts 13:2–4) might suggest that social ministry was sometimes a step preliminary to “apostolic” style of ministry (perhaps helping to develop the compassion valuable for healing signs, as in Luke 7:13–15; cf. Mark 1:41; 6:34–42; 8:2–8).

195. Cf. the distinctive tasks assigned to Plato’s ruling guardians, pointed out by Dupertuis, “Summaries,” 293. Robertson, “Limits,” even argues that the seventy of Luke 10:1–20 and the Seven here fulfill Jesus’s commission more readily than the Twelve (although the failure of the Twelve is not obvious here, Philip certainly reaches Samaria before them).

also set the example of recognizing realistic limits on possible ministry (cf. Luke 4:43–44; 5:1, 3; perhaps 8:9–10; 9:18), though these limits are emphasized more frequently in Mark (e.g., Mark 1:37–38, 45; 3:7, 9; 4:1, 34–36; 6:31–32, 45–46; 7:24; 8:27).

II. SERVING BY PROCLAMATION AND PRAYER (6:2, 4)

The ministry of the “word” includes proclamation and probably sometimes teaching (e.g., Acts 2:41; 4:29, 31; 6:2, 4, 7; 8:4, 14, 25; 10:36; 11:1); the ministry of prayer was likewise integral to the apostles’ (and the early Christian community’s) activity, both corporately (2:42, 46–47), whether during regular hours of prayer (3:1) or perhaps on other spontaneous occasions (4:24–30), presumably sometimes privately (10:9; cf. 10:2), and also during ministry directly to others (6:6; 8:15).

The expression in 6:4, τῆ προσευχῆ . . . προσκαρτερήσομεν (cf. also 1:14; 2:42), need not mean prayer without interruption but a continuing practice of prayer, such as “observance of the regular hours of prayer”¹⁹⁶ and, as we have seen, additional prayer times as well. Some rabbis spoke of earlier pious people who prayed nine hours a day (often by praying every other hour); this left less time for study than rabbis desired, but God miraculously preserved their memory of Torah (*b. Ber.* 32b, bar.).¹⁹⁷ It is unlikely, however, that unceasing prayer entails continuous, cognitive attention to prayer (cf. Eph 6:18; Col 1:3, 9; 1 Thess 2:13; 3:10; 5:17; 2 Thess 1:11; 2 Tim 1:3).¹⁹⁸

Ancients understood well the importance of the consecration of certain individuals (such as priests or vestal virgins) or periods (such as festivals) to a deity or a special work for a deity. Thus, for example, Isis’s priests had special times of devotion free of alcohol, when they would only learn and teach cultic knowledge (Plut. *Isis* 6, *Mor.* 353B). Nazirites were similarly consecrated for periods of time (Num 6:5, 8, 13), and Israelite priests in various ways for life (Exod 28:41; 30:30). Most directly relevant to the apostolic example here, the word and prayer are the focus of Moses’s ministry after he delegates administrative responsibilities to others (Exod 18:19–20).

III. “SERVING” ECONOMICALLY

Serving was not a demeaning role; the earliest church’s Jewish context, in fact, respected people of status humbling themselves before others. A brief survey of leaders’ humility in early Jewish sources provides a helpful context.¹⁹⁹

Judaism emphasized the value of humility for leaders, as for all hearers.²⁰⁰ Thus writers might amplify the biblical report of Moses’s meekness (Num 12:3); under normal circumstances, he acted like one of the multitude and sought not to be exalted above them.²⁰¹ He also declined any honor the people tried to confer on him,²⁰² perhaps like

196. Jeremias, *Prayers*, 79; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 152. The verb’s linkage with prayer may have been common among early Christians (Rom 12:12; Col 4:2); otherwise it appears in the NT only at Mark 3:9; Acts 8:13; 10:7; Rom 13:6 (and in the LXX only at Num 13:20).

197. In Judean society, to be able to take on and fulfill duties could be viewed as a privilege (cf. Derrett, *Audience*, 34, probably correctly despite the scarce evidence he offers).

198. Much as, in a setting of intense revival, all of life is so suffused with the divine presence that one’s heart is turned toward God in everything.

199. Adapted from Keener, *John*, 904–7.

200. E.g., *Let. Aris.* 257, 263; *Pss. Sol.* 5:14; 1QS II, 24; III, 8; IV, 3, 5; V, 3, 25; VIII, 2; 1 *En.* 5:8; 2 *En.* 52:13; *Test. Gad* 5:3; *m. ‘Ab.* 4:4; 5:22; *b. ‘Abod. Zar.* 20b; *Soṭah* 4b–5a. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 236, also cites Qumran texts extolling gentleness or meekness (including 1QS XI, 1).

201. *Jos. Ant.* 3.212. Cf. imperial propaganda, originally intended to preserve a veneer of Rome’s republic, in which the emperor was merely the *princeps*, the first among many.

202. *Jos. Ant.* 3.212. On his humility, cf., e.g., Sirat and Woog, “Maitre.”

some statesmen of the Roman Republic who claimed to think only in terms of their duty to the state. (Ancient sources often praised generals' or rulers' benevolence and mercy,²⁰³ if not usually their humility in our modern sense of this term.)²⁰⁴ Likewise, through various stories rabbis extolled Hillel's humility and patience.²⁰⁵ The literature regularly employs both God and rabbis as examples of humility.²⁰⁶ Rabbis told of one teacher who, when his ass-driver answered more wisely than he, switched places with him;²⁰⁷ they claimed that R. Meir endured spit in his eye to reconcile a wife and a husband, following God's example of humility.²⁰⁸

Some accounts of humble rabbis illustrated that it was meritorious to seek another's advancement above one's own,²⁰⁹ even in matters of seating.²¹⁰ Rabbinic literature highly praises rabbis who served their guests with humility.²¹¹ Another teacher faced death because he had been proud when he lectured the host of Israel.²¹² One second-century teacher exhorted that one "should recount what is to his credit in a low voice and what is to his discredit in a loud voice."²¹³ Some said that Samuel "the small" was so known because he belittled himself.²¹⁴ A later rabbi claimed that when a sage boasted, his wisdom departed.²¹⁵

In contrast to our present text (but not incompatible with early Christian ethics, cf. 1 Pet 5:5), such humility was often expressed toward those in positions of greater power. A person should be quick to serve a "head," one in authority over himself.²¹⁶ Two third-century teachers attributed their longevity partly to never having walked in front of someone greater than themselves.²¹⁷ But those in power should never dare become too arrogant themselves. The aristocrat R. Gamaliel II insulted the dignity of R. Joshua and was deposed from his position as head of the rabbinic academy until he went around and apologized.²¹⁸ As one Tanna put it, "Power buries those who possess it."²¹⁹ In a parallel particularly relevant for serving, Rabban Gamaliel mixed wine for R. Eliezer, who was unwilling to accept it. But R. Joshua and R. Zadok responded that Abraham and God himself serve others' needs; and therefore it was appropriate for Gamaliel, as the most honored, to serve his colleagues.²²⁰

203. E.g., of Alexander (Arrian *Alex.* 1.17.12; Val. Max. 5.1.ext. 1a) and others (Appian *Hist. rom.* 10.4.24; Corn. Nep. 1 [Miltiades], 8.4; 8 [Thrasylbulus], 2.6; Hdn. 1.2.4; Val. Max. 5.1 passim). Though Achilles slays many suppliants, the gods require his mercy toward Priam near the book's end (Hom. *Il.* 24.507–8, 665–70; though even here cf. his limits in 24.559–70).

204. One could praise a "meek" ruler, i.e., a "gentle" one (Babr. 102.3; Val. Max. 5.1.ext. 1a; Men. Rhet. 2.4, 389.8); see further Good, *King*, 47–49.

205. 'Abot R. Nat. 15 A; 29, §§60–62 B. Rabbis also praised the humility of Simeon ben Shetah (*y. Sanh.* 6:6, §2) and others.

206. See Maher, "Humble." On God's service, see also Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 13. God promised to exalt the humble (cf. Isa 2:11–12; 5:15–16; Ezek 21:26; Sir 11:5–6; *b. 'Ab.* 6:4, bar.; 'Abot R. Nat. 11 A; 22 B; Matt 23:12; Xen. *Anab.* 6.3.18).

207. E.g., *Deut. Rab.* 3:6.

208. *Num. Rab.* 9:20.

209. *Y. Ta'an.* 4:2, §8.

210. *Y. Ta'an.* 4:2, §9.

211. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 117.

212. 'Abot R. Nat. 38 A; 41, §111 B. Whoever exalted himself at the expense of another's humiliation would not inherit the coming world (an early Amora in *Gen. Rab.* 1:5).

213. *B. Soṭah* 32b, bar. (R. Simeon ben Yohai; Soncino).

214. *Y. Soṭah* 9:13, §2.

215. *B. Pesah.* 66b.

216. *M. 'Ab.* 3:12 (R. Ishmael).

217. *B. Meg.* 28a; *Ta'an.* 20b.

218. E.g., *y. Ta'an.* 4:1, §14.

219. 'Abot R. Nat. 39 A.

220. *Sipre Deut.* 38.1.4.

Humility did have its limits. Scholars often thought that others should serve scholars.²²¹ For one probably hyperbolic example, those who did not serve scholars, including serving them food, could warrant death!²²² Likewise, any student who was so presumptuous as to offer a legal decision in front of his teacher might be struck dead.²²³ Many also acknowledged limits to their humility; thus R. Judah ha-Nasi, head of the rabbinic academy at the beginning of the third century, was so modest that he would do whatever anyone asked of him—*except* relinquish his position to place another above him.²²⁴ Rabbi Judah also felt that one should observe honor distinctions, starting with the greatest when bestowing greatness and with the least when bestowing humiliation.²²⁵

Because this passage employs the term διακονέω for “serve,” many have linked it with the later office of deacons.²²⁶ Irenaeus, Pseudo-Tertullian, Cyprian, and others applied this passage to the diaconate,²²⁷ and these applications may be useful for models for the later church office. Yet even assuming that the verb points to its noun cognate (which is far from always the case), διάκονος even in Pauline literature usually refers to Christ as minister (Rom 15:8; cf. Gal 2:17), Paul as minister (2 Cor 11:23; Eph 3:7; Col 1:23, 25), Paul and colleagues (1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 3:6; 6:4), or specifically Paul’s fellow ministers of the gospel (Rom 16:1; Eph 6:21; Col 1:7; 4:7; 1 Tim 4:6) and only rarely a specific category of local church official (the nature of which remains unclear, Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8, 12).²²⁸

It should also be noted that even in this passage, the verb applies not only to the administrators of the common fund but also to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:1, 4).²²⁹ Both are ministries,²³⁰ but to read the later title “deacon” into the passage may confuse more than illumine.²³¹ (Certainly the later restriction of “diaconal ministry” at times to social ministry should not be read back into biblical usage.)²³² These seven were apparently recognized leaders among the Hellenists²³³ (though probably not leaders specifically of the Hellenists),²³⁴ and their own ministry quickly expanded beyond tables as well (6:8, 10).

221. E.g., 'Abot R. Nat. 25 A; see considerably more documentation in Keener, *Matthew*, 542–45, on Matt 23:7–11.

222. 'Abot R. Nat. 27, §56 B.

223. E.g., *Sipra Sh. M.d.* 99.5.6; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 26:6/7.

224. *Y. Ketub.* 12:3, §6; *Gen. Rab.* 33:3.

225. *Sipra Sh. M.d.* 99.6.1.

226. See, e.g., Nagel, “Twelve”; esp. Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 188–89. In Justin 1 *Apol.* 67, deacons carry the Lord’s Supper to those who are absent, but the congregation’s “president” is in charge of distributing funds collected for widows and orphans during the meeting.

227. See Cabié, “Les ‘sept’”; for Irenaeus, Faivre and Faivre, “Terre.” A more nuanced position recognizes that these are not deacons but reflect the sort of ministry that later developed in that direction (e.g., Hamm, *Acts*, 35).

228. If one added the cognate verb διακονέω, used in Acts 6:2, the results would prove similarly ambiguous.

229. With, e.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 83.

230. Ancients would probably view both “as forms of public religious service, or as they would be called in the Greek world, λειτουργιοι (liturgies)” (Witherington, *Acts*, 250). Officially liturgies, including more general civic benefactions enlisted by the community, were a privilege, but many benefactors “drafted” for these duties sought to be released from these obligations (Lewis, *Life*, 177–84, esp. 182; further on the liturgies in Egypt, see Bell, “Egypt,” 301–2, 315).

231. With, e.g., Panning, “Acts 6.”

232. See Collins, *Diakonia*, 64, 254, 260; emphasizing a God-given task, e.g., 251; Dr. Ben Hartley brought this carefully researched book to my attention; cf. Gooley, “Deacons”; in the Fathers, Bray, *Romans*, 305, 312–13, citing Chrys. *Hom. Rom.* 21; Pelagius *Comm. Rom.* on 12:7 (de Bruyn, 133); Theodoret *Interp. Rom.* on 12:7 (*IER*, PG 82:188). The best translation would be “ministry” (with Finger, *Meals*, 256, summarizing Collins’s work).

233. Cf. Capper, “Context,” 354. Reimer, *Women*, 236–37, thinks they were leaders in the cultic life of the Christians besides caring for funds and community meals.

234. See Schnabel, *Mission*, 428, correctly warning against going beyond the text.

The term Luke uses for “serving” was an apt one for the activity of serving widows, among other activities. The *Testament of Job* stresses this critical ministry (*Test. Job* 10:2, noted above) and describes it as “the ministry of service” (τὴν ὑπηρεσίαν τῆς διακονίας, 15:1).²³⁵ For the Seven, this ministry entailed not just handing out food but overseeing the finances of the community, a major part of the community’s life together (Acts 2:44–45; 4:32; 4:34–5:11).²³⁶ Although the language here is that of serving at tables rather than specifically financial,²³⁷ we know that caring for needs, including food, required funding (4:34–5:2). What other Jewish offices (besides the uncertainly dated charity officers mentioned above) might provide analogies or models for this early Christian use?

The *mebaqqer* (overseer) of Qumran may have overseen management of the members’ goods (1QS VI, 20), a role Josephus also attributes to an officer among the Essenes (*War* 2.123, 134; *Ant.* 18.22).²³⁸ The typical Judean community reportedly had seven leaders (archons or magistrates, who acted as judges), assisted by two Levite ὑπηρέται, or helpers (*Ant.* 4.214).²³⁹ (There may be some other parallels with judges [cf. Exod 18:21], but although judges did decide financial matters in dispute, they were distinct from distributors of charity.) Local synagogues had *hazzanim*, who kept order in the services, administered prescribed corporal discipline, and were prominent members of their local communities. The equivalent Greek title for them was ὑπηρέτης.²⁴⁰ In the first century, however, titles seem to have varied from one location to another, and their meaning often varied when the titles did not.²⁴¹ For that matter, the churches no less pragmatically adopted different models of church government in different locations.²⁴² At the least, we can suggest that the office was an honorable one and “service” was meant very positively.²⁴³

b. Securing the Right Ministers (6:3)

The church’s burgeoning economic ministry is necessary, but the apostles are no longer able to supervise it adequately. They must delegate this part of their ministry to others. The apostles define the basic qualifications (good reputation; full of the Spirit and wisdom) and invite the church as a whole to choose appropriate representatives who meet these qualifications.

I. DELEGATION

The principle of delegation may stem from the story of Moses (Exod 18:21–26), to whom apostles were naturally compared (2 Cor 3:7–18; John 1:14).²⁴⁴ Josephus

235. Both of these terms appear for the ministry to the poor also in *Test. Job* 12:1–2 (διακονῆσαι, 12:1; ὑπηρετεῖ, 12:2/3–4). Collins, *Diakonia*, 165–66, treats *Test. Job* 11–15 more extensively here.

236. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 64, argue that τράπεζα could include nuances of banking as well as referring to dining tables (see also BDAG; but it is more often a dining table, as in, e.g., *Did.* 11.9).

237. Collins, *Diakonia*, 231, argues that διακονία does not involve handling finances, but it could apply to serving persons at a table; see also Finger, *Meals*, 257.

238. Cf. Driver, *Scrolls*, 521–22. The *mebaqqer* may thus be a “bursar” (Vermes, *Scrolls*, 20). 1QS VI, 19–20 may suggest that nine of ten members would support one who could thus engage in full-time study (cf. VI, 6–7; suggested to me by Orval Wintermute in 1987).

239. Applebaum, “Organization,” 491, noting also communal leadership of elders and archons (e.g., Jdt 6:16), and first-century Alexandrian Jews’ gerousiarch and archons (Philo *Flacc.* 74, 117). In synagogues, archons were in charge mainly of “secular” aspects of synagogue business (Applebaum, “Organization,” 494–95).

240. Applebaum, “Organization,” 496 (citing, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 4.214; Luke 4:20; Epiph. *Her.* 30.11).

241. See Trebilco and Evans, “Diaspora Judaism,” 287.

242. For the varied models of organization in Acts, see, e.g., Dumais, “Ministères et Esprit.”

243. Overseeing community funds was a respectable position in eastern Mediterranean society; so also here (cf. Arlandson, *Women*, 197, countering Witherington’s view that men serving women here inverts the social structure).

244. Rosner, “Judges,” finds in Moses’s appointment of judges a precedent even for 1 Cor 6:5 (though, despite the use of διακρίνω in Exod 18:16 LXX, not many substantive verbal parallels undergird the

suggests that Moses set rulers over the people because of Raguel's advice so that Moses could attend to the more essential business of the nation's safety (*Ant.* 3.68–73). In one account, the seventy to whom the work is delegated are filled with the Spirit and prophesy temporarily (Num 11:16–17, 24–25); here, by contrast, those to whom the work is delegated must be continuously full of the Spirit already (Acts 6:3).²⁴⁵ This may be why some of these new leaders for the Hellenist Christians soon appear preaching the word of the Lord (8:14), as the apostles themselves were determined to do (6:2, 4).

Moses delegated directly to honorable men whose character he knew (Exod 18:21; cf. Num 11:16, 24), but here the entire congregation chooses those with good reputation.²⁴⁶ This is not to suggest that this represents the only form of choosing leaders elsewhere in Acts. Among relatively recent converts, Paul and Barnabas appoint leaders (Acts 14:23); after defining the qualifications and narrowing down candidates to a widely acceptable pool, the Jerusalem church also uses lots to select an apostle (1:21–26). It appears less likely that Acts presents a single model of selecting leaders than that it endorses variety: although the gospel, the Spirit, and the church remain priorities, many other issues can be adapted pragmatically according to available models and current needs.²⁴⁷ Luke elsewhere employs ἐπισκέπτομαι to mean “visit” (Luke 1:68, 78; 7:16; Acts 7:23; 15:14, 36), but other senses (such as “examine carefully”) are well attested in antiquity (BDAG cites, e.g., Num 1:3; Hdt. 2.109.2; Diod. Sic. 12.11.4; *1 Clem.* 25.5; for this context, cf. esp. Num 27:16).

II. QUALIFICATIONS, INCLUDING REPUTATION

Sometimes standards were higher for leaders than for others.²⁴⁸ Lists of qualifications constituted a conventional literary form (cf. 1 Tim 3:2–7),²⁴⁹ applicable, for example, to various civic offices²⁵⁰ and even for the best midwives.²⁵¹ In classical Athens, candidates chosen by vote or lot were afterward questioned to see if they fit the qualifications (e.g., being at least thirty years old).²⁵²

Such qualifications for leadership appear in Hellenistic Jewish literature. In Pseudo-Aristeas, the high priest informed Ptolemy that “in the presence of all we selected [ἐπελέξαμεν] elders good and true, six from each tribe” (*Let. Aris.* 46 [Hadas, 119]). Josephus argues (apologetically but also self-servingly) that the priests were qualified for leadership in Israel because they were the most persuasive and behaved the most wisely, not on the basis of their wealth or possessions (*Ag. Ap.* 2.186).²⁵³ Lists

allusion; cf. “wise” in Deut 1:13, 15; 16:19). For Mosaic text models here, Pervo, *Acts*, 152, cites Daube, “Reform.”

245. On the importance of delegation in Num 11 as background here, see, e.g., Kisau, “Acts,” 1310. I am not here assuming that ancient Israelite texts employed “spirit” in the same manner as early Christianity (cf. discussion in Keener, “Spirit,” 484–87; from a different approach, Levison, *Filled*), but considering how early Christians read them in light of early Christian vocabulary more generally.

246. This more democratic orientation probably reflects the cultural change; Greek culture had experimented much more with the electoral process than had cultures surrounding ancient Israel.

247. Cf. a similar observation regarding church order in the Pastorals, which may be corrective rather than normative, in Fee, “Church Order.”

248. E.g., Tac. *Hist.* 2.29; perhaps Oxford Genizah Text B.10–11.

249. E.g., Macrobius, *Comm.* 1.8.4 (van der Horst, “Macrobius,” 230); comparing 1 Tim 3:2–7 and Titus 1:6–9 with “ancient descriptions of professional leaders, particularly of household managers,” see Malherbe, “Overseers” (quote from 73). For philosophers in India, supposedly, see Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 2.30; for vestals, see Gardner, *Women*, 22–23.

250. E.g., Arist. *Pol.* 7.8.5–6, 1329a. Cf. negative qualifications in Aeschines *Tim.* 27–30.

251. Soranus *Gynec.* 1.1 (esp. 1.1.3); 1.2.4.

252. Gomme and Hornblower, “*Dokimasia*.”

253. This resembles the epideictic fiction in Dion. Hal. *Anc. Or.* 1.3, praising Rome because “her leaders are chosen on merit” (S. Usher, LCL, 1:11).

of qualifications for judges appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls (CD X, 6–7)²⁵⁴ and in rabbinic literature.²⁵⁵

The necessity of qualifications is also relevant in view of the narratives about Israel's wilderness experience, on which the primitive church and/or Luke were drawing for their model of delegated leadership. In Exodus, leaders chosen had to fear the Lord, be individuals of integrity, and abhor dishonest gain (Exod 18:21); such requirements would be implied in leaders of good reputation who were full of the Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3). Moreover, Moses's elders were newly filled with the Spirit, at least temporarily (Num 11:17, 25–26); here the leaders are already continuously full of the Spirit.

One crucial qualification was that of being of good reputation (in early Christianity, 1 Tim 3:2, 7, 10; Titus 1:6),²⁵⁶ essential for leaders in Greco-Roman politics.²⁵⁷ (This is the sense of μαρτυρουμένου, “favorably attested” by others, as in Acts 10:22; 22:12; cf. 22:5; 26:5; Luke 4:22. Divine attestation, of course, proved the most critical element [cf. Acts 13:22; 14:3; 15:8].) Greek custom required electoral candidates to be of good standing;²⁵⁸ Jewish people likewise expected their leaders to be irreproachable.²⁵⁹ Such good reputation could stand one in good stead if one was later accused of any crime,²⁶⁰ giving the accused the benefit of the doubt (cf. 1 Tim 5:19). By contrast, one whose private life was counted immoral was open to criticism as a public leader.²⁶¹ A leader could hardly get away with enforcing standards that he himself was believed to have violated;²⁶² a speaker of known integrity was also more persuasive.²⁶³ Philosophers opined that it was important that those seeking good reputations should be genuinely what they wished to appear to others (Iambl. *V.P.* 9.49). If bad reputation was harmful to the individual, it also reflected on one's family and associates;²⁶⁴ it was thus a great liability to a minority community. Thus Jewish people often worked hard to establish themselves as honorable in their Diaspora communities.²⁶⁵

254. Cf. likewise age qualifications for a ruling priest (CD XIV, 7) and a *mebaqqer* (XIV, 9).

255. E.g., *t. Hag.* 2:9; *Sanh.* 7:1. Earlier, cf. Exod 18:21.

256. On the value of reputation, see, e.g., Pindar *Nemean* 8.37–39; Publ. Syr. 75, 96; Vitruv. *Arch.* 6.pref. 5; Marc. Aur. 10.1; Prov 3:4; 22:1; Eccl 7:1; Sir 41:13; 42:8; Jdt 8:8; Ign. *Philad.* 11.1. For being above reproach, see, e.g., Hesiod *W.D.* 760–64; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.Sb.2, pp. 14.35–16.1; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.5.570; Philo *Abr.* 6; *CIJ* 1:57, §82; 1:81, §117; 1:91, §130; 1:102, §144. For condemnations of those neglecting reputation, see, e.g., Theophr. *Char.* 9 *passim*.

257. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Demosth.* 18; *Let. Aris.* 280; also for other kinds of leaders, e.g., Val. Max. 8.15.3.

258. Cf. Betz, *Corinthians*, 74. A truly virtuous man ought to be above even suspicion (Aeschines *Tim.* 49; Plut. *Caes.* 10.6; cf. Plut. *Table* 2.1.4–5, *Mor.* 631F–632A) and certainly above consistently bad reputation (Aeschines *Tim.* 126–29).

259. Gerousiarchs in *CIJ* 1:13, §9; 1:83, §119; 1:276, §353; fathers of synagogues in 1:66, §93; 1:372, §509; 1:398, §537; blameless priests in 1 Macc 4:42. Cf. those of “good report” (2 Macc 14:37; cf. Tob 10:13; Sir 34:23–24).

260. E.g., Lysias *Or.* 5.2–3, §§102–3; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.58.2; Cic. *Mur.* 6.14 (who creates and refutes a vice list to underline his point); Val. Max. 2.10.1; Char. *Chaer.* 5.7.2; Sus 27; see further discussion at Acts 24:5. Accusing one of known virtuous character might reflect badly on the accuser (Cic. *Vat.* 10.25–26). Conversely, public sentences against one can ruin one's reputation (Cic. *Quinct.* 15.50).

261. E.g., Cic. *Sest.* 9.20.

262. Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.1.2 (claiming that as prosecutor he has therefore lived by the more difficult standard); 2.3.2.4.

263. *Rhet. Alex.* 38, 1445b.30–34.

264. For wives, e.g., Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 78.16–19; Mart. *Epig.* 2.56; Pliny *Ep.* 6.31.4; Sir 22:5; some marriage contracts even prohibit the wife from shaming her husband (P.Eleph. 1.6; P.Tebt. 104.30). For children, Eurip. *Hel.* 136, 200–202; Xen. *Apol.* 31; Cic. *Invect. Sall.* 5.13; Corn. Nep. 15 (Epaminondas), 10.1; Plut. *Themist.* 2.6; Parth. *L.R.* 35.1, 3–4; Gaius *Inst.* 3.221; Diog. Laert. 2.114; 4Q213 2 18–20; Sir 3:10; 22:5; 42:11. Cicero implies that those too intimate with Catiline could be suspected of having behaved immorally with him (*Cael.* 4.10). The text 4Q541 24 5 might involve a priest honoring the priesthood by his deeds.

265. E.g., 3 Macc 3:5.

Being of good reputation might seem particularly important for someone handling money, as these new leaders would be. Qualifications for office might include avoidance of greed (e.g., 1 Tim 3:3);²⁶⁶ this was important even for a midwife, to ensure that she could not be bribed to give an abortive agent (Soranus *Gynec.* 1.2.4). Such love of money could be coupled with other forms of susceptibility to desire, such as for sex and wine.²⁶⁷ Greed could corrupt people and make them traitors (Polyb. 13.2.3–5). A stingy person ought not be put in charge of community finances,²⁶⁸ and one should be ready to give an accounting and remain above suspicion.²⁶⁹ Early Rome expelled from the senate those given to luxury;²⁷⁰ in classical Athens, indeed, officials who coveted the city's possessions were (at least in principle) subject to execution (Lysias *Or.* 28.3, §179). A good leader lived simply, for those given to extravagance found access to public money an irresistible temptation.²⁷¹

Ancients recognized that some treasurers grew rich by abusing their office, embarrassing the official for whom they worked (Aeschines *Tim.* 56); ancients respected statesmen who did not touch public revenues (Iambl. *V.P.* 27.129). Officials²⁷² or ministers²⁷³ who acted out of greed for gain were denounced as corrupt, and officials and others who resisted opportunity to indulge greed were praised.²⁷⁴ Letters of recommendation might insist on the subject's invulnerability to greed²⁷⁵ or contend that one seeking office was not doing so for its salary.²⁷⁶ Hating unjust gain was one of the few qualifications for judges in Exod 18:21, and the early church also contended against greed in ministry.²⁷⁷ Luke, like other NT writers, does not have a high tolerance for corruption (cf. Acts 24:26), and he has a higher standard for leaders (Luke 12:41–42). See further discussion at Acts 20:33–35.

III. FULL OF THE SPIRIT AND WISDOM

Being “full of the Spirit” (Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24) probably indicates a continuous state more than does a mere occasion of being “filled with the Spirit,” although, because the latter assertion signified special empowerments, both assertions could be simultaneously true of the same person (cf. 4:8; 13:9).²⁷⁸ In keeping with Luke's emphasis on the

266. For philosophers in India, Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 2.30. Against love of money more generally, see, e.g., Plato *Laws* 1.649D; Val. Max. 9.4; Sen. *Y. Nat. Q.* 1.16.1; Plut. *Sulla* 1.3; Max. Tyre 5.1; Diog. Laert. 6.2.50; Sir 34:5; *Test. Jud.* 17:1; 18:2; 19:1; Ps.-Phoc. 42.

267. All three in Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.10e, pp. 62–63.23; wine and money in 2.7.5f, pp. 30–31.30–31; cf. money, reputation, and pleasure in 2.7.10b, pp. 58–59.36; Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.281; money and pleasure in Longin. *Subl.* 44.6.

268. 4Q424 1 10.

269. E.g., Cic. *Off.* 2.21.75 (in Danker, *Corinthians*, 132–33); *t. Šegal.* 2:2, 24; *Sipre Deut.* 79.1.1; *y. Šegal.* 3:2; *Exod. Rab.* 51:2, 6; 2 Cor 8:21.

270. Val. Max. 2.9.4–5.

271. Polyb. 10.22.5.

272. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.58.3; Suet. *Tit.* 7.1.

273. E.g., *Test. Levi* 14:6 (priests; perhaps a late addition).

274. E.g., Tac. *Agr.* 6; cf. Pindar *Isthm.* 2.6; Pliny *Ep.* 7.31.2; Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 375.18–21; Socrates in Plato *Phaedo* 82BC; Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.5; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 54.3.

275. Pliny *Ep.* 7.31.3.

276. Fronto *Ad Ant. Pium* 9.2. Heracles supposedly desired kingship for noble reasons, not for gain (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.65).

277. Freedom from greed is a qualification for overseers in 1 Tim 3:3; *Did.* 15.1; elders in Poly. *Phil.* 11.1–2; one also discerned prophets by greed in *Did.* 11.12.

278. See Turner, *Power*, 167–69 (also arguing that the expression “full of the Spirit” distinguishes the specially empowered from ordinary Christians; one might concur yet respond that Paul's perspective might be that the “ordinary” Christians simply live short of their privileges in Christ); similarly, Calderón, “Lenura”; Hamilton, “Theology of Spirit.” Luke's construction may reflect LXX idiom (Turner, *Power*, 166). Haya-Prats, *Believers*, 159, sees the Spirit as the cause of wisdom here. Although there is a clear connection between the Spirit and wisdom in some early Jewish sources (see, e.g., Keener, “Pneumatology,” 232–33; idem, *John*,

Spirit's empowerment for mission (1:8), he prefaces his depiction of the ministries of Stephen and Philip (Acts 6–8) with mention of their empowerment by the Spirit here.²⁷⁹ Linking the Spirit with wisdom for a task would make sense for readers of the LXX (Exod 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Deut 34:9); the righteous would also be filled with “the Spirit of understanding” when God wills and hence pour forth wise (σοφίας) sayings (Sir 39:6).

Some biblical texts provide special models. For example, in a text about delegation on which this scene draws, Moses's elders were filled with the Spirit at least temporarily (Num 11:17, 25–26), whereas here the leaders are already continuously full of the Spirit. Perhaps the most relevant text (supplying an important model for laying on of hands, cf. Acts 6:6) would be Joshua's being filled with the Spirit of wisdom to lead Israel because Moses laid hands on him (Deut 34:9).

The term σοφία appears only four times in Acts: twice in descriptions of the Seven together or Stephen in particular (Acts 6:3, 10), and two in cases of heroes of the past (Joseph and Moses, 7:10, 22) with whom Stephen stands in continuity (7:51–52).²⁸⁰ In the Gospel, wisdom characterizes Jesus (Luke 2:40, 52), John (7:33–35), and all God's agents (11:49), particularly in debate settings and under duress (21:15). Ancients generally regarded wisdom (described by a variety of terminology) as an important gift for proper governing, judging, and lawgiving (Men. Rhet. 2.3, 385.28–386.6). Thus a leader might choose as a unit commander someone “full of good sense” (φρονήματος . . . πλήρη).²⁸¹ Philosophers believed that as wise persons they were the true rulers and could best equip kings for their tasks.²⁸² As noted above, Josephus believed that the priests' wisdom qualified them to oversee and judge (Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.186–87; cf. Mal 2:6–7); some leaders in Tiberias favored Josephus's opponents, noting their noble birth and reputation for wisdom (Jos. *Life* 278).

Part of the requisite wisdom would undoubtedly be knowledge of how to manage funds. Lists of qualifications often specified financial integrity and sense for those who would manage funds. Thus 1 Timothy's overseers must not love money (1 Tim 3:3); the Qumran scrolls warn against giving “a stingy man responsibility for money” (4Q424 1 10).²⁸³ Among later rabbis, decisions made by a judge found to be financially corrupted were annulled (*t. Bek.* 3:8). Of course, the Seven's wisdom was not limited to financial matters (Acts 6:10).

IV. SEVEN MEN

It is not surprising that the early church, which already had a group of “the Twelve,” would choose another number widely invested with significance.²⁸⁴ Jewish people and

961–64; Bennema, *Power*, 58–60), some have overplayed it over against the prophetic connection of the Spirit (see the correct critique in Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 14–51).

279. With Miller, *Empowered for Mission*, 144.

280. Its limitation to this section (Acts 6–7) could indicate a source (cf. Richard, *Composition*, 348–49, citing parallels in L material, Luke 2:40, 52; 21:15; but cf. also Luke 11:31, 49) or simply that the term was fresh on Luke's mind. Most likely, however, it deliberately connects these characters.

281. Diod. Sic. 18.7.3; although the selected person did not turn out to be nice, he was competent.

282. Especially Stoics, Cic. *Fin.* 3.22.75; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 108.13; Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 66.1–6 (cf. Klassen, “King”); Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22.49; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 88–89.26–27; pp. 92–93.18–20; Plut. *Flatt.* 16, *Mor.* 58E; Diog. Laert. 7.1.122; ridiculed in Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.125; Lucian *Hermot.* 16, 81. But also others; cf. Plato *Rep.* 5.472; Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.6–7; Val. Max. 7.2.ext. 4; Philo *Abr.* 261; Max. Tyre 36.5; Iamb. *VP.* 35.250; cf. Plut. *S. Kings*, Cyrus 2, *Mor.* 172E; Quint. *Inst.* 2.17.28. Only occasionally did philosophers achieve political power (Eunapius *Lives* 462; also Marcus Aurelius). Cf. the principle for those who sought God in CD VI, 5–6 (perhaps related to eschatological dominion, 1QM I, 5; XII, 16). For Stephen's positive portrayal from ancient philosophic perspectives, cf. Smith, “Portrait of Stephen,” noted in Pervo, *Acts*, 165.

283. *DSSNT* 393.

284. For twelve leaders in Qumran ideology, see 1QM II, 1; 11Q19 LVII, 11–13; cf. 1QS VIII, 1; for seven, cf. much less significantly 1QM VII, 14; seven (apparently angelic) princes in 4Q403 1 I, 6–29; 4Q405 3 II, 1–15.

others widely used the number seven symbolically (see comment below), but its use for groups of leaders is most significant. Given the seventy(-two)'s analogous role of receivers of delegated responsibility in Luke 10, the number might evoke the seventy elders of Num 11.²⁸⁵ (Some scholars argue that Jewish people associated “seven” with the Hellenistic world,²⁸⁶ a comparison that would be apt if correct, though hard to prove given the wide range of associations for “seven.”) Greeks had their famous “seven sages” (though the number is more constant than the individuals named).²⁸⁷ It is possible that Palestinian Jewish charity distributors sometimes functioned in groups of seven.²⁸⁸

More clearly, Josephus claims that councils of seven governed towns (*Ant.* 4.214, 287; *War* 2.571).²⁸⁹ Each of these judges had two officers from the tribe of Levi (*Ant.* 4.214), and all should be honored (4.215). Even if Josephus's portrait here is schematized (and contains only an average), it may represent a frequent ideal.²⁹⁰

The seven planets²⁹¹ made seven an important number for Greeks,²⁹² including in the Mithras cult.²⁹³ Some ancients opined that seven had special power, appearing in many natural phenomena.²⁹⁴ Pythagoras had regarded the number as holy,²⁹⁵ and Pythagorean numerology had important influence in antiquity.²⁹⁶ The days of the week, climaxing in the Sabbath, had already made seven an important number for Jewish people;²⁹⁷ confluence with Hellenistic and continuing Babylonian contexts would have only increased this emphasis. Jewish literature often played on sevens—for example, in Qumran's *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*²⁹⁸ and in *Joseph and Aseneth*.²⁹⁹ Philo explains why seven was the natural number for the day of the Sabbath:³⁰⁰ it was the most honored number³⁰¹ and a suitable symbol for God.³⁰² He uses seven's astro-

285. The talmudic evidence for their ordination by laying on hands (Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 30) need not suggest an early tradition on which the apostles or Luke might draw, but it does reveal that it was natural to read current practice back into that narrative (cf. Num 27:23).

286. Livingston, “Seven” (arguing that the Seven represent a pre-Pauline Gentile mission that did not originally belong to the Jerusalem church).

287. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 72.12; Lucian *Dial. D.* 416 (6/20, Menippus and Aeacus 4); Paus. 1.23.1; see further Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 438. Pervo, *Acts*, 156, also mentions these and “the Roman priestly college called the *Septemviri*,” though conceding that their actual number varied.

288. Goodman, *State*, 121 (noncommittally).

289. Pace Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 349, this may be relevant; with Conzelmann, *Acts*, 45 (citing also Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:641; Greek councils in *SIG* 1.495.2); Witherington, *Acts*, 249 (citing *b. Meg.* 26a; Roman *septemviri* in Tac. *Ann.* 3.64); Pervo, *Acts*, 156. Pearce, “Council of Seven,” suggests that Josephus might evoke the Greek tradition of the seven sages or echo the seventy of Num 11 (neither of which suggestions I find fully persuasive). Cf. Quint. *Decl.* 365 intro, where Roman court cases involving violence have seven jurors.

290. Greeks may have often used seven jurors in a trial (Lucian *Indictment* 13), though numbers varied from three to eleven (Lucian *Indictment* 13–14).

291. E.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.4.12; 2.6.32–41. Cf. also the seven Pleiades, in *Iliupersis* (*Sack of Ilion*) frg. 5, scholiast D on Hom. *Il.* 18.486a (*GEF* 151).

292. On symbolic values of numbers, and ancient theories on significant numbers, see Menken, *Techniques*, 27–29.

293. Klauck, *Context*, 142. It was also sacred to Apollo (Aune, *Prophecy*, 30).

294. Aul. Gel. 3.10.

295. Apul. *Metam.* 11.1 (influencing the Isis cult).

296. See, e.g., Plut. *E Delph.* 8, *Mor.* 388C; Allen, *Philosophy*, 7; esp. Laroche, “Numbers.” But even six became a “perfect” number (Plut. *Gen. of Soul* 13, *Mor.* 1018C).

297. It appears in ancient Near Eastern sources before Pythagoras (Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra*, 48–49).

298. 4Q400–407; 11Q17 (the sevenfold schema climaxes in the Sabbath).

299. *Jos. Asen.* 2:6 (cf. also the use of twelve in 3:2/3).

300. Philo *Abr.* 28.

301. Philo *Creation* 99; cf. 89–128. Philo praises seven further in *Spec. Laws* 2.56ff. Carlston, “Vocabulary,” 134, mentions its perfecting power in *Creation* 102, 103, 106, 107 and that it was more perfect than ten (Philo *Posterity* 173) or than anything (*QE* [Armenian] on Exod 26:2; though he once lists ten thousand as the most perfect, Philo *Plant.* 76). It remains the most loved number in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 23:10; *Lev. Rab.* 29:11.

302. Philo *Creation* 100.

logical significance to confirm this claim.³⁰³ “Seven” thus had widespread appeal and significance;³⁰⁴ nevertheless, these associations are less directly relevant than those applied to governors of towns.

That the leaders are male (ἄνδρες) undoubtedly reflects the expectation for most leaders in ancient society (e.g., *Lysias Or.* 12.43, §124). In a patriarchal society (which, by all extant accounts, even urban Jerusalem was),³⁰⁵ women leaders in such an office might struggle to be respected even by other women and would generate further criticism from hostile voices outside the movement. This is not to say that the apostles suggest male leaders as an apologetic device; given their Judean and Galilean culture, the possibility of female leaders for this position probably had not yet even occurred to them (despite Acts 2:17–18). We may also point out that this language would be used if the normal expectation was a man even if some individuals would be women. (Thus, for example, Porphyry regularly speaks of the wise ἀνὴρ, even when writing to exhort his *wife*.)³⁰⁶ Some scholars find more significant the fact that Luke allows men here to take on traditional feminine and domestic roles.³⁰⁷

c. Choosing the Seven (6:5)

The multitude, presumably including those who have complained (6:1), welcome the apostles’ proposal (cf. 15:22) and choose seven representatives who meet the qualifications. This time, instead of twelve Hebrews, the food distribution program is assigned to seven Hellenists. Because they belong to the offended minority, they have special sensitivity to both the minority’s needs and perceptions, and they are less vulnerable to criticism than Hebrews would have been. Because they are genuinely people of the Spirit, they can be trusted not to treat Hebrews or others unjustly.³⁰⁸

I. HARMONIOUS RESOLUTION

The church’s public assembly (the language may parallel the gathered assembly at Qumran)³⁰⁹ is pleased with this decision, as crowds sometimes received favorably the answers of other leaders (*Jos. Ant.* 6.22).³¹⁰ That the conflict is quickly resolved fits a pattern of Luke’s summaries of church meetings ending in consensus (Acts 1:15–26; 11:2–18; 15:22–29; 21:22–26). For Luke, it is the ultimate resolution, rather than the conflicts along the way, that merits most attention; but this presentation does allow for a narrative contrast with the riotous meetings of some who oppose the Christians (19:25–34, 40; 21:27–32; 23:7–10).³¹¹

Greek and Roman political theory emphasized the establishment of concord and the removal of discord (see also comment on Acts 15:25).³¹² Sometimes this

303. Philo *Creation* 116.

304. Cf. Arator *Acts* 1 (Martin, *Acts*, 70), treating seven here as a heavenly number.

305. Not all Jewish groups in all cities shared the same perspectives on gender (see Brooten, *Women Leaders*; cf. comment in Keener, *Acts*, 1:614–16, 636–37), but at least a majority of Jerusalemites would have found women leaders unusual and requiring explanation.

306. E.g., Porphy. *Marc.* 32.497. And Porphyry tells her that gender as a bodily matter is irrelevant (*Marc.* 33.511–12).

307. See Finger, *Meals*, 268 (citing also Luke 22:24–27), 275 (concluding a longer argument).

308. For what it is worth, we hear of no further complaints, but given Luke’s brevity for this period and his emphasis lying elsewhere, such an argument from silence is not particularly strong.

309. Brown, “Scrolls,” 7.

310. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 45, compares 2 Sam 3:36 LXX, though the parallel rests mainly on the verb (the noun is λάος).

311. See Pervo, *Profit*, 39–42. Still, as a minority, Christians undoubtedly did experience the larger culture as more hostile than any internal gatherings that did not end in schism; cf. John 15:18–25; rules for assemblies in the *Manual of Discipline*.

312. See, e.g., Grant, *Paul*, 26; Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 60–64, 68–99, 151–57.

concord had to be achieved through the forcible removal of a person causing discord.³¹³ Although elites often suppressed complaints of politically powerless minorities and rarely recruited members of the offended minority for leadership,³¹⁴ the concept would have been intelligible.³¹⁵ Polybius reports that a Spartan complained about the way the Carthaginian generals were conducting their war against Rome. The generals summoned him, and after being convinced, put him in charge of their troops, who found him more competent than the generals had been (Polyb. 1.32.1–9; cf. 1 Sam 17:31–58).³¹⁶ (The Greco-Roman theme of rulers establishing concord in diverse societies³¹⁷ also appears in Hellenistic Jewish texts³¹⁸ and would be familiar to Luke’s audience.)³¹⁹ Still, the report is exceptional³²⁰ and presents the apostles as benevolent and wise rulers, the sort whom philosophers idealized.³²¹ Hellenists (or Gentile members of Luke’s audience, to whom Hellenists would be the closest cultural equivalent so far) would identify with the Hellenists now chosen.³²²

II. ELECTING THE SEVEN

The term for choosing (ἐκλέγομαι) does not by itself specify a vote (Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2), but it refers to some corporate selection mechanism (Acts 6:3; cf. 15:25) other than drawing lots (1:24, which also uses the term).³²³ In view of Luke’s Greek audience, a vote would be the most likely inference; Greek individualism and emphasis on equality made voting common among them.³²⁴ Many Greek offices were elective,³²⁵ although some decisions used ballots (cf. comment on Acts 26:10), many probably required simply raising hands, no exact count being necessary if a majority was obvious.³²⁶ Greeks often appointed officials through lots, but the prevalence of elective offices in the Roman Republic led to a higher level of *ambitus*, or electoral corruption, there.³²⁷ Early second-century Rome apparently introduced use of a secret ballot to check abuses of popularity (Pliny *Ep.* 3.20.7), but some feared that it would breed its own abuses, since people were more dishonest in secret than in public (3.20.8;

313. See Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 112 (citing, e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.21 and the principle of exile). For even subjugation as pacification in some imperial ideology, see comment on Acts 10:36.

314. One may contrast the tribunes of the plebs but should recall that this situation was forced on the patricians rather than welcomed. The apostles here appear exceptionally benevolent.

315. One solution to strife was to let the other party decide how to divide the disputed matter (Gen 13:7–13; cf. 36:6–8, though both passages emphasize especially God’s sovereign grant of the land to his people).

316. They won this battle (Polyb. 1.34.1–12).

317. See, e.g., Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 114–15, 126–27.

318. *Let. Aris.* 267.

319. Cf., e.g., agents of reconciliation making peace between quarrelers in Phil 4:3 (cf. 2 Cor 5:20); *Did.* 4.3; *Cic. Att.* 1.3, 5, 10; Pliny *Ep.* 1.5.8; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.38.

320. Cf. observations by Sider, *Christians*, 99–100. Land, *Diffusion*, 152–67, 225, shows that instead of responding harshly to an honor challenge, the Twelve defuse it by sharing honor, using fictive sibling language (Acts 6:3) to reframe (225) “the conflict as an internal family affair”; against ancient expectations, they show that “honor is an unlimited good.”

321. On philosophers’ views that they were themselves ideal rulers, see, e.g., *Cic. Fin.* 3.22.75; much more fully, information noted above.

322. The principle of people identifying with others belonging to the same category was widespread (e.g., Max. Tyre 1.9; *Abot R. Nat.* 6 A; 12, §30 B; *b. Yoma* 35b; *Lev. Rab.* 2:9; *Pesiq. Rab.* 35:3; 3 *En.* 4:3).

323. When no one sought an office, the people might need to choose (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.49.1). The people could also choose some leaders in the OT (Deut 1:13).

324. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 85–87 (noting even Arist. *Pol.* 1282a); cf. Rhodes, “Elections” (cf. Roman voting in Paterson, “Elections”). Some other cultures also practice election (e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 247), whereas others practice appointment (Mbiti, *Religions*, 241).

325. E.g., *Men. Rhet.* 1.3, 364.1–2. Cf. election to office in cult associations (Jeffers, *World*, 77).

326. Rhodes, “Ekklesia,” 869. Cf. voting at trials, which could also entail either ballots or raised hands (Rhodes, “Katacheirotonia”).

327. Eder, “Elections,” 897.

4.25.1–3). Pliny viewed as unfair that every voter in an assembly have an equal say, since not all shared equal ability to discern (2.12.5–6).

Among both Greeks and Romans, only adult male citizens (and in some states, those with property qualifications), a minimum of residents, could vote.³²⁸ The generals of Athens were elected by the people (ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου χειροτονηθέντας, *Lysias Or.* 15.6, §144). Soldiers also sometimes voted on matters important to their assemblies (e.g., *Xen. Anab.* 7.3.6; awards in *Philost. Hrk.* 23.25).³²⁹ A Dionysiac association could vote on the admittance of new members.³³⁰

Writing for readers familiar with Greek politics, Josephus claims that the Essenes “elect by show of hands [χειροτονοῦντες] good men to receive their revenues and the produce of the earth and priests to prepare bread and other food” (*Ant.* 18.22 [LCL, 19]).³³¹ When his two companions ruled against his decision, Josephus claimed, he had to submit to the majority (*Life* 73). Some synagogue offices may have been elective,³³² but as with Greek assemblies, prominent and wealthy members would presumably be regarded as favored candidates. Majority opinion dominated in various early Jewish circles.³³³

Spencer compares decisions made by the elders and the “whole church” later in Acts (Acts 15:4, 12, 22) and concludes:

In short, throughout the book of Acts a non-hierarchical, democratic process characterizes church government in general and the appointment of ministers in particular. Peter and the apostles play a leading role but do not lord their authority over fellow-believers in Jerusalem or elsewhere.³³⁴

This statement might need to be qualified: Paul appointed elders for young congregations (14:23), and the mother church in Jerusalem exercised a leading role in decisions that would affect the Diaspora churches if they submitted to that church and its decisions (15:22–23, 30, 41; 16:4). Nevertheless, the observation of sometimes democratic polity (certainly in a passage depicting the apostles’ accommodation to Hellenists) would probably not escape Luke’s audience, which may have found such government most suitable in their cities in the Aegean region (cf. 1 Cor 12:4–30; 16:16).

III. STEPHEN

Some of these names are rare, and there was no need to introduce all seven of them unless Luke had a list or oral information. “Stephen” was a very common Greek name, but it was rare in Palestine and is never clearly attested for Palestinian

328. Among Greeks, see Rhodes, “Ekklesia,” 868; in the Roman Republic, Gizewski, “Comitia,” 621–22.

329. Greeks often cast ballots by hand, but they could also vote by raising hands (e.g., *Heliod. Eth.* 4.21; the soldiers in *Xen. Anab.* 3.2.33, 38; 7.3.6); Spartans, by contrast, usually voted by shout (*Thucyd.* 1.87.2). See further Rhodes, “Elections.”

330. Smith, *Symposium*, 119 (also on business, 113).

331. The verb cognate does not, however, mean “elect by show of hands” in Acts 14:23; there imposition of hands in ordination might be meant, but the verb had taken on the figurative extension “select.”

332. Cf. Applebaum, “Organization,” 494–95.

333. E.g., *IQS V*, 2, 9; VI, 19; *Jos. War* 2.145 (on the Essenes); *t. Ber.* 4:15; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:17; *b. Ber.* 11a; 37a; *B. Meṣi’a* 59b; *Yebam.* 46b; *Hor.* 5b; *Yoma* 36b; *Beza* 11a; *y. Mo’ed Qat.* 3:1, §6; *Gen. Rab.* 79:6; *Ecll. Rab.* 10:8, §1; *Song Rab.* 1:1, §5. Finger, *Meals*, 270–71, uses the Essene model to argue against assumptions that Luke must read a later form of church order into his tradition.

334. Spencer, *Acts*, 198. For the seven as an example of a team formed to meet ministry needs, see Sell, “Seven” (denying they are deacons). For a survey of team leadership in Acts, see also Shenk and Stutzman, *Communities*, 48–49.

Jews.³³⁵ Clearly then, Stephen belongs to the immigrant Hellenists. As a common Greek name, it is also likely literal, not symbolic or fabricated,³³⁶ against some scholars who think that the narrative could be fabricated.³³⁷ Some writers in the ancient church did in fact connect Stephen's name with his martyrdom; Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.1.1) opined that "Stephen" was a fitting name for one who received the "crown" of martyrdom.³³⁸ The term and its cognates apply to garlands, including those used for mystery rites.³³⁹ Early Jewish sources speak of such garlands and crowns for future rewards,³⁴⁰ playing especially on the victor's wreath in athletic settings³⁴¹ (also used in military settings³⁴² and for other honors³⁴³ or celebrations).³⁴⁴ But the Christian connection of the crown with martyrdom in particular, rather than with righteousness more generally, depends most explicitly on the later Rev 2:10,³⁴⁵ something to which Luke's original audience could not have appealed for their understanding.³⁴⁶ Other names would have sufficed better, and had Luke wished to play on the title, he could have used the common cognate for "garlands" on sacrificial animals in Acts 14:13; that he does not probably militates against a wordplay on or creativity with Stephen's name.

That he was "full of faith and of the Spirit" links him with the requirement that he should be "full of the Spirit" (6:3) and also with the trouble this would cause him (7:55; cf. 6:10). That he was "full of faith" is also a Lukan expression, perhaps

335. Williams, "Names," 111–12. In the Diaspora, see, e.g., *CIJ* 1:311, §404; 1:312, §405; 1:457, §642.

336. Although secondary to Peter and Paul, Stephen is a major figure in Acts (with, e.g., Jeska, "Stephanus"), and if Luke has not fabricated major figures where we can check him, we should doubt that he has fabricated Stephen. A novel could employ realistic names in symbolic ways (for etymological or other associations; see Jones, "Names," on Heliodorus's *Ethiopian Story*); but this approach does not work well for historical works such as Acts, full of actual personages—Peter, Paul, Agrippa, etc.

337. Matthews, "Stoning," 125; idem, "Hellenists." She also notes (rightly) that the earliest patristic martyr lists start with the apostles ("Stoning," 129, citing *1 Clem.* 5.1–6.2; *Poly. Phil.* 9.1–2; and noting that *Iren. Her.* 3.12.10 is the first to portray Stephen as the first martyr). She could be correct that Clement and Polycarp did not know Luke's account of Stephen or about Stephen independently; but even if they did, it made sense to start with the apostles (who were not likely the sole objects of persecution; cf. *1 Thess* 2:14–16 and comments in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:462–63). Matthews, "Stoning," 127–29, does observe that most NT scholars have accepted Stephen's historicity.

338. Noted also by Matthews, "Stoning," 130.

339. *Men. Rhet.* 2.6, 409.10, 13 (also wedding celebrations); Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 238; Otto, *Dionysus*, 153.

340. *1QS* IV, 7; *4Q257* V, 5; *Wis* 5:16; cf. *2 Bar.* 15:8; *Test. Job* 40:3; *Sib. Or.* 2.153–54; *b. Ber.* 17a; *Meg.* 15b; *Deut. Rab.* 3:7; *Phil* 4:1; *1 Cor* 9:25; *1 Thess* 2:19.

341. E.g., *Aeschines Ctes.* 179; *Diod. Sic.* 16.79.3; *Dio Chrys. Or.* 9.11; 28.4; 31.21–22, 82, 95; [Favorinus] 37.15; 66.5; *Pliny Ep.* 10.118.1; *Suet. Nero* 24.2; 25.1; *Lucian Anach.* 9, 16; *Book-Coll.* 10; *Paus.* 6.8.4; 6.14.11; *Ps.-Callisth. Alex.* 1.19; *Diogenes Ep.* 31. Sometimes this was applied figuratively; e.g., *Dio Chrys. Or.* 8.15; 9.11–13; *Max. Tyre* 1.4–6; 34.8–9; *Iambl. V.P.* 9.49; *Wis* 4:2; *Philo Dreams* 2.62; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.217–18; *Test. Job* 4:10/8; *Exod. Rab.* 21:11.

342. E.g., *Thucyd.* 2.46.1 (figuratively); *Polyb.* 6.39.5–6; *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 6.94.1; *Corn. Nep.* 8 (Thra-sybulus), 4.1; 16 (Pelopidas), 5.5; *Arrian Alex.* 7.5.4; 7.10.3; *Suet. Jul.* 2; *Aul. Gel.* 5.6; *Jos. War* 7.105; but these may have followed the athletic analogy, as in *Corn. Nep.* 7 (Alcibiades), 6.3; *Pliny E.N.H.* 15.5.19; *Plut. Comparison of Lucullus and Cimon* 2.1; *Lucian Posts* 13.

343. E.g., *Val. Max.* 2.6.5; *Diog. Laert.* 6.2.41; *Philost. Vit. soph.* 1.25.530; *Hrk.* 23.23; 33.19; cf. *Polyb.* 32.1.1; 32.2.1; also data in Horsley, *Documents*, 2:50, §14.3.

344. E.g., for Athenian citizenship, *Aeschines Tim.* 21; for prosperity, *Sib. Or.* 5.100; for celebration, *Apoll. K. Tyre* 46; *Jub.* 16:30; *Jos. War* 7.72; for weddings, *m. Soṭah* 9:14; *Eccl. Rab.* 10:5, §1; *Lam. Rab.* 5:16, §1; *Men. Rhet.* 2.6, 409.10, 13; other rewards, *Sir* 15:6; 32:2; at Sinai, *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 16:3; *b. Šabb.* 88a; *Song Rab.* 4:4, §1; *Lam. Rab.* 2:13, §17; *Pesiq. Rab.* 10:6; 21:7. For various other figurative uses, see, e.g., *Lam* 5:16; *Ps* 89:39; *Let. Aris.* 280; *m. 'Ab.* 4:13; 6:5; *'Abot R. Nat.* 41 A; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 2:7; *b. Ber.* 7a; *Gen. Rab.* 63:2; *Exod. Rab.* 34:2; *Num. Rab.* 14:10; *Eccl. Rab.* 7:1, §2.

345. Though it also appears in *4 Macc* 17:15 (possibly as a particular display of righteousness); later *Gr. Ezra* 6:17. Later *Iren. Her.* 5.29.1, for achieving victory through suffering the final tribulation.

346. One could appeal to *Mark* 15:17; *2 Tim* 4:8 but only after *Rev* 2:10 explicitly articulated the connection, and not to *Phil* 4:1; *1 Thess* 2:19; or *1 Pet* 5:4.

comparing him to the Hellenist Barnabas (11:24), unless these are simply sample designations (which appears fairly likely if 6:3 and 6:8 reflect synonyms). It may also suggest why he could perform signs in 6:8 (3:16; 14:9; cf. Luke 5:20; 7:9, 50; 8:25, 48; 17:5–6, 19; 18:42). Some scholars suggest that Stephen was leader of the group, given his listing first and his description.³⁴⁷ If any of the Seven was leader, this appears a reasonable inference; Peter’s name appears first in apostolic lists (Mark 3:16; 13:3; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13; Matt 10:2), and Peter was at least the most prominent and outspoken among the Twelve. But we cannot be certain that hierarchy is involved; although Stephen appears to have been a particularly competent theologian, he may appear first simply as the subject on whom Luke will first focus, with Philip mentioned next because Luke will treat him next.

IV. PHILIP AND OTHER NAMES

“Philip” does appear as a name among Palestinian Jews (cf., e.g., Acts 1:13) but was not as common³⁴⁸ as it was in the Diaspora. The theory that he was “a hellenized Jew from Palestine itself” simply because he settled in Caesarea (21:8)³⁴⁹ rests on faulty logic; were all the Seven “from Palestine itself” because they settled in Jerusalem? His ability to preach across Palestine (albeit apparently most comfortably in hellenized areas) may suggest his familiarity with Palestine but without identifying his place of origin.³⁵⁰ In any case, that he is a Hellenistic Jew of some sort, probably from a predominantly Greek area (whether in Palestine or beyond it), is not generally in dispute. The name “Prochorus” was rare everywhere and means something like “leader of the dance”; it would be more likely to arise in the Diaspora.³⁵¹ Although we know of Nic- compounded names in Jewish Palestine, the specific name “Nicanor” is so far attested for first-century Jews only in the Diaspora.³⁵² Because of the limited sample size of extant sources, the name “Timon,” common among Greeks, is nowhere else attested for Jews.³⁵³ We likewise lack any other examples of Jews named Parmenas; the -as ending indicates that his name was “from a Doric-speaking Diaspora community”³⁵⁴ or, perhaps more likely, borrowed from some popular figure of the past.

V. NICOLAS FROM ANTIOCH

“Nikolaos” or “Nicolas” was a common Greek name,³⁵⁵ not surprising for a convert from Antioch.³⁵⁶ (Josephus in fact depends heavily for his knowledge of Herod the

347. Schnabel, *Mission*, 428.

348. Williams, “Names,” 98–99. On Philip, see further Spencer, *Philip*; Dobbeler, *Philippus*.

349. Williams, “Names,” 112.

350. His ministry in Aramaic-speaking villages is reported, if at all, only alongside Galilean apostles (Acts 8:25).

351. Williams, “Names,” 111 (arguing that the name suggests pagan cultic associations, usually avoided in Palestinian Jewish names).

352. *Ibid.*, 110 (citing, e.g., *CIJ* 2. §§1256, 1491).

353. Williams, “Names,” 112.

354. *Ibid.*, 111.

355. E.g., Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.18–19; Jews also could use Greek ΝΙΚ- names (e.g., *Test. Job* 1:3). The name means in Greek roughly the same as “Nicodemus” (on which cf. Keener, *John*, 535). The patristic connection of “Nicolaitans” (Rev 2:6, 15) to him (Iren. *Her.* 1.26.3; 3.11.1; Walter, “Proselyt aus Antiochien”) was undoubtedly speculation based on the common name (Ford, *Revelation*, 387, noting further extrapolation later, in Hippol. *Her.* 7.24; Epiph. *Her.* 1.2.25).

356. On Hellenistic influence from Antioch’s founding, see comment on Acts 11:19. Proselytes occasionally took Hebrew names on conversion (e.g., Judah in *m. Yad.* 4:4; *b. Ber.* 28a [unlike Judah the son of proselytes in *b. Šabb.* 33b]; Benjamin in *Sipre Deut.* 253.2.2; “Sara” added to “Veturia Paulla” in *CIJ* 1:384, §523; cf. Salome in Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 68); this was obviously not the case here (or generally). Although the term “proselyte” eventually extended to some Christian converts (Justin *Dial.* 28.2; Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 40–46), this cannot be the sense this early.

Great's reign on the well-known Nicolaus of Damascus.)³⁵⁷ That the place of origin of Nicolas alone is noted (though cf. 13:1), and that he is from Antioch, points the reader's attention toward the city to which the narrative's action will soon shift (11:19–30; see comment there). Most significant, he is a proselyte, a former Gentile now in leadership in the church. Proselytes had apparently entered the church before (2:11, perhaps from Rome) and would continue to do so (perhaps 13:43), but this is the first occasion in which any are identified as in leadership. This foretaste of diversity points the way forward to the later diverse leadership team in Nicolas's home city of Antioch (13:1).

Josephus indicates that many Greeks in Antioch converted to Judaism in some periods.³⁵⁸ Inscriptions testify of some Diaspora proselytes who settled in or had connections with Jerusalem,³⁵⁹ including another emigrant from Syria.³⁶⁰ Although most later sages welcomed proselytes and, in many respects, their status was theoretically equal to that of those who were born Jews, they also faced discrimination from many other Jewish people.³⁶¹ This, too, shows the direction the narrative of Acts is moving, and it is no coincidence that the proselyte from Antioch takes the climactic final place on the list begun by Stephen and Philip. As Goulder puts it, "That is the way the wind is blowing—not merely Israelites but ex-Gentiles may be the officers of the Church, and Antioch is a place they may come from."³⁶²

Excursus: Proselytes

See also the discussion on proselyte baptism at Acts 2:38; on God-fearers at 10:2; on women proselytes at 16:13; and on Jewish interest in making proselytes at 1:8. Biblical texts about the "stranger" in the land gradually came to be applied to proselytes³⁶³ (see also discussion on Acts 15:20). In later rabbinic sources, Abraham came to be viewed as the model proselyte,³⁶⁴ whose late circumcision encouraged all proselytes to feel welcome.³⁶⁵ Some Jews seemed very eager to make converts to

357. See Jos. *Ant.* 1.94, 108, 159; 7.101; 12.126–27; 13.250, 347; 14.9, 68, 104; 16.29, 30, 58, 183, 299, 333, 335, 337, 338, 339, 342, 370; 17.54, 99, 106, 127, 219, 225, 240, 248, 315–16; *War* 1.574, 629, 637; 2.14, 21, 34, 37, 92.

358. Jos. *War* 7.45 (cf. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 147; D. Williams, *Acts*, 119).

359. Fiensy, "Composition," 232, noting the son of a proselyte (*CIJ* 2.§1385) and the presence of tombs and other real estate owned by the royal house of Adiabene (Jos. *War* 4.567; 5.55, 119, 252–53; 6.355; *Ant.* 20.17–37, 75–80). On proselytes in Jerusalem, see also Le Cornu, *Acts*, 316.

360. Ariston/Judah (Riesner, *Early Period*, 110n8).

361. See the excursus below.

362. Goulder, *Type and History*, 71; cf. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 153.

363. Although *ger* may remain a "stranger" in CD VI, 21; 4Q174 1 I, 4 (but cf. CD XIV, 4, 6) and probably even in *Targum Neofiti* (vs. later Targumim; Ohana, "Proselytisme"), the biblical *ger* also became a model for proselytes. Thus the LXX already often translated it as προσήλυτος (Lake, "Proselytes," 8:84), and the rabbinic *ger* (proselyte) applied biblical prescriptions concerning the *ger* (stranger in the land); see, e.g., *Sipra A.M. par.* 7.190.1.1; *pq.* 11.191.1.1; *Sipra Qed. par.* 4.206.1.2; *pq.* 8.205.1.4; *Sipra Emor. par.* 7.223.1.1; *pq.* 17.239.2.4; *pq.* 19.243.1.12; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 3:16; *Pesiq. Rab.* 12:9; cf. also Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 566.

364. E.g., *b. Sukkah* 49b; *Num. Rab.* 8:9; *Pesiq. Rab.* 11:4; on his forgiveness, see *Gen. Rab.* 39:8; cf. Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 175–76; Torrance, "Origins," 170. He was also known to recruit proselytes (e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 32.2.1; *Abot R. Nat.* 12 A; 26, §54 B; *Num. Rab.* 14:11; *Song Rab.* 1:3, §3; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 21:33; cf. Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 176–79; Safrai, "Abraham und Sara"; Hayward, "Abraham as Proselytizer"). Job holds a similar role in some sources (Jacobs, "Motifs"), as does Ruth (Butting, "Bedeutung").

365. *Mek. Nez.* 18.36f. (Lauterbach, 3:140); *Gen. Rab.* 46:1. The rabbis also portrayed the early sages She-mayah and Abtalion as descendants of proselytes (*b. Git.* 57b; *Yoma* 71b; cf. Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 222–23).

their true faith;³⁶⁶ other Diaspora Jews, such as Philo, often expressed positive views concerning proselytes.³⁶⁷ Conversion to Judaism often carried a large cost for those rejected by their own people.³⁶⁸

Against the sectarian scrolls from Qumran, the temple authorities probably never excluded proselytes from the temple.³⁶⁹ In some Qumran texts, proselytes are lower in status than Israelites but are on the correct side in the eschatological time.³⁷⁰ Rabbinic literature also ranks proselytes' social status toward the bottom of the Jewish community (below illegitimates but above freed slaves),³⁷¹ although some other statements may have mitigated this in practice.³⁷²

The rabbis were in the vast majority of cases positive toward proselytes,³⁷³ though a number of texts are negative.³⁷⁴ The emphasis on embracing proselytes fully³⁷⁵ may not have always translated into practice,³⁷⁶ just as immigrants often face prejudice from some individuals regardless of legal status.³⁷⁷ Although there was never consensus, many Tannaim forbade proselytes to call Abraham their father.³⁷⁸ Most important, however, is that proselytes, like Israelites, accepted God's covenant³⁷⁹ and would be saved.³⁸⁰

366. See, e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.34–46. For proselytes in Diaspora inscriptions (though some are fragmentary), see, e.g., *CIJ* 1:20, §21; 1:141, §202; 1:159, §222; 1:182, §256; 1:340–41, §462; 1:384, §523; 1:424, §576.

367. E.g., *Philo Virt.* 219; so also Josephus, a Judean with a Diaspora audience (*Ag. Ap.* 2.210).

368. E.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.77, 81; *t. Pe'ah* 4:18. Tacitus also despises proselytes (*Hist.* 5.5).

369. Baumgarten, "Exclusions." Rabbinic literature never went so far, but Baumgarten, "Netinim," 96, does compare their exclusion from being part of Qumran's eschatological sanctuary to some rabbinic exclusions; Blidstein, "4QFlorilegium," 435, also notes its overlap with some rabbinic conceptions.

370. *CD* XIV, 4; 4Q279 1 6.

371. E.g., *m. Hor.* 3:8 (lower than bastards but higher than freedpersons); *m. Qidd.* 4:1, 7; *Num. Rab.* 6:1. Cf. further Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 272, 323; Das, *Debate*, 180; noted for Acts 6 also in Marguerat, *Actes*, 211 (comparing the marginal in Acts 8:5–40).

372. One should love proselytes as oneself (*Sipra Qed. pq.* 8.205.1.6) and not remind them of their past (*m. B. Meši'a* 4:10; *Pesiq. Rab.* 42:1).

373. E.g., *Sipre Num.* 78.3.1; 78.5.1; *b. B. Meši'a* 59b, bar.; *Gen. Rab.* 88:7; *Num. Rab.* 8:9; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 9:27; on Exod 2:12; on Deut 23:7–9; cf. Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 145, 149–61; Moore, *Judaism*, 1:330–35; Hoenig, "Conversion," 41–42; McKnight, "Proselytism," 840–41. Among disciples of Akiba, cf. the esteemed translator Aquila (e.g., *y. Meg.* 1:9, §4; *Qid.* 1:1, §13; *Gen. Rab.* 70:5; *Eccl. Rab.* 7:8, §1) and the Egyptian proselyte Benjamin (*Sipre Deut.* 253.2.2); another (Johanan ben Torta) also taught Torah (*Pesiq. Rab.* 14:2). The Tannaim were probably more positive than the Amoraim (Hoenig, "Conversion," 43). Converts in various kinds of sources (*Joseph and Aseneth*; the Isis cult in Apuleius) became members of the communities (Galagher, "Conversion and Community"). Chestnut, "Setting," even suggests that the purpose of *Joseph and Aseneth* was to improve proselytes' status.

374. Kunin, "Proselytes"; McKnight, "Proselytism," 841–42; Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 161–65 (with mixed opinions, 165–69). They had no place in the land, but neither did priests (Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 66–67). At least in theory, proselytes might be limited initially in marriage prospects (e.g., Egyptians in *Sipre Deut.* 253.2.2; more generally, *b. Pesah.* 112b; cf. Stern, "Aspects," 623), perhaps especially males (cf. Moabites in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 16:1; positively for females, *t. Hor.* 2:11; *Sipre Num.* 115.5.7); but in practice cf. *m. Qidd.* 4:7.

375. Kern-Ulmer, "Bewertung"; Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 145–61; McKnight, "Proselytism," 840–41.

376. Cf., e.g., *m. Hor.* 3:8; *Sipre Deut.* 253.2.2; Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 161–69; McKnight, "Proselytism," 841–42; Keener, *Spirit*, 146–47; 4Q279 1 6.

377. The rabbis' favorable opinions did not eliminate other people's prejudices (Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 277–78).

378. See *m. Bik.* 1:4–5 in Cohen, "Fathers" (noting the more positive view in *y. Bik.* 1:4).

379. *Sipra VDDen. par.* 2.3.3.1; *Sipra Qed. pq.* 8.205.1.5. Proselytes shared in all obligations of the Torah (*Sipre Num.* 71.2.1).

380. E.g., 2 *Bar.* 42:4–6; the thirteenth benediction of the Amidah (Oesterley, *Liturgy*, 65); *Lev. Rab.* 3:2; cf. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12:20. Converts rendered unconverted Gentiles without excuse (*Lev. Rab.* 2:9; *Pesiq. Rab.* 35:3). They lacked ancestral merits but earned their own (*Num. Rab.* 8:9), and could excel in Torah (13:15–16); they also had deliverance at Sinai (*b. Šabb.* 146a). For God's love for them, see, e.g., *Lev. Rab.* 1:2; *Num. Rab.* 8:2; *Ruth Rab.* 3:5; *Eccl. Rab.* 7:8, §1.

Judaism despised false or uncommitted proselytes,³⁸¹ later texts explicitly demanding fear of God as the proper motive for authentic conversion,³⁸² though some allowed that proselytes from impure motives might still have some status before God.³⁸³ Some second-century rabbis rejected proselytes who balked at so much as a single obligation of Torah.³⁸⁴ Some proselytes, however, may have become too strict through lack of knowledge of Torah.³⁸⁵

Later Jewish teachers opined that when a Gentile converted to Judaism, the proselyte became “like a new-born child”;³⁸⁶ in the earliest rabbinic sources, the phrase applies to a new legal status rather than to an ontological transformation.³⁸⁷ Perhaps engaging in hyperbole to underline the newness of status, later rabbis took the new legal status of proselytes so seriously that in theory³⁸⁸ they permitted marriage to one’s “former” mother,³⁸⁹ but this was a matter of legal status akin to what occurred in Roman adoption. Roman law recognized adoptive ties so strongly that it prohibited incest even if ties were based only on adoption;³⁹⁰ children were freed from their father’s authority if the father lost his citizenship, just as if he had died.³⁹¹ By adoption, the new son lost all status connections with his natural family and his former debts.³⁹² Likewise, for one who became a Roman, it might no longer be considered appropriate for that person to inherit from a mother of another nationality.³⁹³ Cotta, recalled from exile, claimed to be “born twice” into Roman citizenship.³⁹⁴

By their nature, other sources unfortunately provide less detail about the legal status or ontological dynamics of conversion than the more voluminous body of rabbinic tradition. Yet sources from Philo and Josephus to *Joseph and Aseneth* indicate that people anticipated transformation of some sort as well as a change in legal status; proselytes turned completely from their former Gentile condition.³⁹⁵ Various traditions of moral transformation suggest the possibility of that image: echoing the language of

381. E.g., Jdt 11:23; *Test. Jos.* 4:4–6; *Sipre Deut.* 356.S.7; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 3b; *Nid.* 13b; *Šabb.* 33b; *Pesiq. Rab.* 22:5; 23:4; for caution, e.g., *Sipre Num.* 115.S.7. The worshipers of the calf in the wilderness were proselytes (*Lev. Rab.* 27:8). Proselytes among Gentiles, less familiar with Torah, proved less culpable (*b. Šabb.* 68ab); a defective proselyte might also be like a righteous Gentile (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 64b).

382. *B. Qidd.* 62a; *Yebam.* 24b; 47a; *y. Giṭ.* 1:4, §2; *Qidd.* 4:1, §§2–3; *Num. Rab.* 8:4, 9; cf. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:387–88, on *b. B. Meš'i'a* 72a. Neusner, “Conversion,” 66, argues that political factors may have partially motivated the conversions of Helena and Izates, though their conversions were sincere.

383. Cf. *y. Sanh.* 6:7, §2; *Num. Rab.* 8:4. New entrants to a culture often found some difficulties in adjustment (e.g., *Plut. Lect. 2, Mor.* 37EF).

384. *T. Demai* 2:50; *b. Bek.* 30b, bar.; cf. *Num. Rab.* 5:3.

385. E.g., *b. Pesah.* 91b.

386. Often noted, e.g., Mary, *Mysticism*, 64; White, *Initiation*, 70; Malina and Rohrbaugh, *John*, 82 (citing *b. Yebam.* 22a; 48b; 62a; 97b; *Bek.* 47a). Lightfoot, *Talmud*, 3:265, noted this in regard to John 3:3 in the seventeenth century.

387. Kelly, *Peter*, 49; Lampe, *Seal*, 25.

388. In practice, freed slaves who had converted to Judaism were forbidden lest they view Judaism as less than holy (Cohen, *Law*, 148–49).

389. Cf., e.g., Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 324. Further on legal status, see Hoenig, “Conversion,” 54–55; for other legal relationships, cf. *y. Yebam.* 2:10, §2. The proselyte’s status changed at the point of conversion (*m. Ketub.* 4:3; *Sipre Deut.* 165.2.3).

390. Gaius *Inst.* 1.59; this remained true even after the adoptive tie was broken. Cf. also blood siblings in Mbiti, *Religions*, 276.

391. Gaius *Inst.* 1.127–28. Cf. the loss of agnatic ties by change of status in 1.161; the invalidation of a will through status change in 2.147.

392. Wansink, “Law,” 990; Lane, *Hebrews*, 371.

393. Cf. *BGU* 5.54.140–41.

394. *Sall. Sp. G. Cotta* 3; cf. *Cic. Att.* 6.6.4. Accepting citizenship in one place terminated it elsewhere (*Corn. Nep.* 25 [Atticus], 3.1).

395. Boccaccini, *Judaism*, 252–56.

Saul's transformation (1 Sam 10:6), Joshua and Kenaz each became "another person."³⁹⁶ More relevant, if the document does not bear Christian influence, is that Joseph prays for the repentant Aseneth as she converts to Judaism: "Renew [ἀνακαίνισον] her by your spirit . . . revive [ἀναζωοποίησον] her by your life."³⁹⁷ The Qumran covenanters held that a hostile angel left the convert who truly obeyed the law (CD XVI, 4–6).

VI. SEVEN HELLENISTS

What are we to make of the seven Greek names? Fitzmyer concedes that most were probably Hellenists (and originally Diaspora Jews) but doubts that we can say this for all of them; "many Jews of that period bore Greek names."³⁹⁸ But a sizable number of the Palestinian Jews with Greek names were Hellenists. It was more likely for Diaspora Jews to bear biblical names than for even rich Judeans to bear Greek ones.³⁹⁹ In Rome, where three-quarters of all Jewish inscriptions are in Greek and only 1 percent are Semitic, roughly half the Jewish names examined were Latin (because many were freedpersons) and nearly one-third were Greek, but 15.2 percent included some Semitic elements.⁴⁰⁰ The linguistic mixture of names of the putative LXX translators in Pseudo-Aristeas is also informative (*Let. Aris.* 47–50).⁴⁰¹ Even centuries later, Palestinian rabbis recognized that Gentile names were particularly common in the Diaspora but much rarer in the Holy Land (*y. Git.* 1:1, §3).

That all seven have Greek names was hardly a coincidence, was surely deliberate,⁴⁰² and would be recognized by readers in regions where Greek names were common; Luke's informed readers are suddenly on ground familiar from their own environment. Most scholars concur that the Seven are members of the Hellenist faction.⁴⁰³ Given the apostles' use of Moses's model for delegation here (Exod 18:21), it might be relevant that Moses selected judges (probably representatively) from "all Israel" (Exod 18:25); this pattern also fits the trajectory that Acts will follow.

As the "Twelve" (Acts 6:2; Luke 8:1; 9:1, 12; 18:31; 22:3, 47; cf. Mark 3:16; 1 Cor 15:5) led most of the church, the "Seven" (Acts 21:8) would provide recognized and universally accepted leadership for the minority subculture in the Jerusalem church.⁴⁰⁴ (Some scholars even believe that they were chosen specifically to oversee distribution to the neglected Hellenists and not the entire distribution program,⁴⁰⁵ but this view may go too far.) This necessary expansion of leadership to meet the growing needs of

396. *L.A.B.* 20:2; 27:10. For Philo, ascending to the pure realm of spirit, as Moses did, could produce a "second birth" (*QE* 2.46).

397. *Jos. Asen.* 8:9/8:10–11. Some scholars also think the prayer for the regeneration of catechumens in *Apost. Const.* 8.6.6 reflects an earlier Jewish prayer, but this is unclear.

398. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 350; cf. Gaventa, *Acts*, 115. For Jews bearing Greek names, see, e.g., Mussies, "Greek," 1051–52, and the sources cited there.

399. They also appear among "the rich and well-educated" (Williams, "Names," 109; though even here cf. only one in Acts 4:6). One could think here of wealthy Jews drafted for "liturgies" (Lewis, *Life*, 177–84, esp. 182; cf. Danker, *Corinthians*, 144), but even then class would not provide all seven with Greek names unless they really were Hellenists, which fits the point of the story (Acts 6:9).

400. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 107–8; also Lung-Kwong, *Purpose*, 102–3.

401. Cohen, "Names of Translators," views Persian names as a mark of the transition from a Persian to a Hellenistic framework, but the document's Alexandrian provenance suggests Alexandrian expectation (at least in an early period) that Palestinian Jews had varied names.

402. With Hill, *Hellenists*, 47.

403. E.g., Klausner, *Jesus to Paul*, 289; Bruce, *Commentary*, 129; Dunn, *Acts*, 83.

404. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 84; Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 7.

405. E.g., Capper, "Context," 353–54 (speculatively suggesting even a movement away from community of goods to the more common Diaspora model in Acts, which was generous [Acts 11:19–21] but less radical); tentatively, Hill, *Hellenists*, 48.

the Christian community shows that the leadership is growing beyond the Twelve, and hence pointing toward the leaders who would arise in the Diaspora (13:1) and for the Gentile mission.⁴⁰⁶ The bilingual milieu of the Jerusalem church already in this period provided a groundwork for the transition that would come.⁴⁰⁷

d. *The Commissioning (6:6)*

The people chose the leaders, but the apostles commissioned them, perhaps adding their blessing as they later did to Philip's ministry in Samaria (8:14–17; commissioning with prayer also appears in 13:3). Laying on of hands may evoke patriarchal blessings (Gen 48:14)⁴⁰⁸ and Moses's commissioning of Joshua (Num 27:23; Deut 34:9)⁴⁰⁹ as well as Jesus's imparting blessings to children (Luke 18:15–16; Mark 10:16; on the efficacious touch, see comment on Acts 3:6; 5:15).

Hands could be laid on for healings in Luke-Acts (Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 5:12; 9:17; 14:3; 19:11; 28:8), as in some Jewish expectations (1Qap Gen^{ar} XX, 22, 29;⁴¹⁰ 2 Kgs 5:11 LXX) and in gospel tradition (e.g., Mark 5:23; 8:23).⁴¹¹ Hands might also be laid on to pray for blessings (Luke 18:15–16) in some early Jewish sources,⁴¹² following the patriarchal model. Probably more relevant here, rabbis ordained their pupils through laying on of hands;⁴¹³ some emphasize that this was a special form of hand-laying characterized by heavy pressure, to be distinguished from mere contact necessary in blessing or healing.⁴¹⁴ The technical distinction between "laying" and a heavier "leaning" of hands cannot work in the NT, which employs only one Greek verb,⁴¹⁵ but probably at least the earliest Jewish Christians would have been familiar with laying on of hands for ordination before it was practiced among themselves (1 Tim 4:14).⁴¹⁶ Because of their date,⁴¹⁷ sources could derive from imitation of the Christian practice, but this is inherently less likely than the reverse.

406. Cf. Nock, *Conversion*, 189; with Greek names and the Spirit of prophecy, they could take the gospel further.

407. Hengel, *Jesus and Paul*, 26, believes this allowed the apocalyptic sect to begin to universalize (he may date this transition too early; but one doubts that all thinkers made the "transition" simultaneously, cf. Acts 10:28).

408. Talbert, *Acts*, 117, also helpfully cites Jacob's mother, placing both her hands on his head to bless him, in *Jub.* 25:14; and Pharaoh blessing Joseph and Aseneth in *Jos. Asen.* 21:5–6/4.

409. Cf. also the commissioning of Levites as Israel's representatives in Num 8:10–11 (as a wave offering [Num 8:11, 13, 15, 21], perhaps analogous to laying hands on sacrifices, Exod 29:10, 15, 19; Lev 4:15; 8:14, 18, 22; 16:21; Num 8:12; 2 Chr 29:23). Witnesses also laid hands on the head of the one they accused of blasphemy (Lev 24:14) and apparently other offenses (Sus 34). Some suggest possible analogies before the Pentateuch, such as a pharaoh delegating authority "by extending his hands over" officials' heads (Cole, "Numbers," 388, regarding a scene from the Amarna period).

410. See Fitzmyer, *Apocryphon*, 65, 67; Flusser, "Laying-On of Hands"; Driver, *Scrolls*, 461.

411. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 240n35 (to p. 66), contrasting the MT. For Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 14, the laying on of human hands (in ordination) mediates God's touch (Pelikan, *Acts*, 95).

412. *Jos. Asen.* 8:9; 21:6, some MSS; cf. perhaps Xen. *Cyr.* 6.4.9 (though the touch may be for other reasons). Laying on hands for sacrifice was a different reason (cf., e.g., *m. Hag.* 2:2, probably early as a reported debate between the early Pharisaic schools; *y. Hag.* 2:3, §2), also in Greek practice (Isaeus *Ciron* 16).

413. E.g., Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 235–36; more fully, Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 207ff.; idem, "Johanan ben Zaccai," 56–59; Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:647–61; Hruby, "Ordination." Le Cornu, *Acts*, 320, notes that סמניכה could be conferred by words without actual touch (*b. Sanh.* 13b).

414. E.g., Jeremias, *Theology*, 143; more fully, Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 224ff. (arguing for this heavier *samakh* in Acts 6, 237ff.); idem, "Gospel and Rabbis," 343.

415. Barrett, *Acts*, 316.

416. Laying on hands seems one tradition already known from early Judaism in Heb 6:2 (though it is not clear there that it is for ordination). Many societies have rites of passage to validate religious workers (e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 232, 246), but these need not include hand-laying. For earlier studies of laying on of hands relevant to Acts, see Mattill and Mattill, *Bibliography*, 293, §§4088–99.

417. Some scholars argue for the lateness of various rabbinic ordination customs, including hand-laying (cf. Hoffman, "Ordination juive").

Scholars often, however, recognize as part of the direct background here the unquestionably pre-Christian story of Moses's laying hands on Joshua (Num 27:18, 23; Deut 34:9),⁴¹⁸ also part of the background of the wider practice of laying on of hands for ordination. Joshua was filled with the Spirit of wisdom because Moses laid hands on him (Deut 34:9);⁴¹⁹ although this fullness was a prerequisite in Acts 6:3 (and mentioned explicitly for Stephen in 6:5), it clearly continues in 6:10. Laying on of hands in Acts is sometimes associated with empowerment by the Spirit (8:17; 19:6).⁴²⁰ The congregation of Israel obeyed Joshua because Moses imparted some of his authority to him (Num 27:20), and the same image may be present here.⁴²¹

Our fullest picture of what happened at the sort of laying-on-of-hands ordination⁴²² with which Luke's ideal audience would have been familiar appears in two early Christian letters also in Paul's sphere of influence (or possibly even paraphrasing his teaching)—namely, 1 and 2 Timothy. Elders (1 Tim 4:14) and Paul (2 Tim 1:6) had laid hands on Timothy, presumably at his ordination (cf. 1 Tim 5:22). That event involved the Spirit, as this one seems to (Acts 6:3, 5, 10):⁴²³ prophecies were given (1 Tim 4:14; cf. 1:18), and a spiritual gift was given (4:14), through Paul's laying on of hands (2 Tim 1:6), from the Spirit (1:7).⁴²⁴

e. Summary of the Church's Growth (6:7)

Nothing, even internal conflicts (Acts 6:1), hindered the church's growth; the conflict was quickly resolved, and the church continued to grow. The "word of the Lord"—that is, the prophetic message of the apostolic witnesses (cf. 1:8)—was spreading.⁴²⁵

I. SUMMARY STATEMENTS

As is presumably the case here, Luke elsewhere uses summary statements to chart the gospel's expansion (9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:31;⁴²⁶ in the Gospel, cf., e.g.,

418. E.g., Abbott, *Acts*, 77; Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:50; Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 238–39; Marshall, "Acts," 555 (comparing also ἐπισκέπτομαι in Num 27:16 with Acts 6:3); cf. also Talbert, *Acts*, 58 (also noting Moses's role in Exod 18:14–18, which I have cited in other connections here); on the LXX of Num 27:15–23, cf. Kislev, "Vocabulary." Num 11 may also be relevant, though hand-laying here appears only in later tradition about the passage (for the tradition see, e.g., Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 30), probably inferred midrashically from the analogy of Joshua.

419. A point that continued to be emphasized in a later period (*Sipre Deut.* 357.17.1).

420. Scholars hold various views about this practice; for one study, see Coppens, "Imposition," 423–32. For the suggestion that the Spirit is transferred by laying on hands in 2 Tim 1:6, see Poirier, "Callings," 95–98.

421. As in Acts 14:23, the succession here is not precisely one of office but of function (διακονία) (Talbert, *Mediterranean Milieu*, 53). For Moses corresponding to the apostles, cf. 2 Cor 3:7–18; John 1:14 (on the latter, cf. comments in Keener, "Beheld," esp. 22).

422. By using the term "ordination," I do not mean to imply all the connotations for such an event that the practice eventually developed. Acts and the Pastorals probably suggest laying on hands to authorize for ministries but may not indicate a formal ordination ritual in the later sense (see Dowd, "Ordination"); laying on hands confers blessing or appoints to a task rather than creates an office (Villiers, "Church Rule," 79). Luke displays greater interest in service than in offices (see Bartchy, "Power," 96–97, 101–3, esp. 103).

423. For themes connecting Acts 6:8, 10, 15, cf. Combrink, *Analysis*, 7. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 14 associates this laying on of hands with ordination but claims that if one is truly ordained, it is especially God's hand that touches one's head.

424. Grammar does not specify the antecedent naming the persons who prayed for them, who could be the crowds (cf. Num 8:10), but the background suggests the apostles (Num 27:23; Deut 34:9; 1 Tim 4:14; Dunn, *Acts*, 84; cf. also hand-laying by one person in the late first century according to *y. Sanh.* 1:2, §13). Banks, *Community*, 83, sees the laying on of hands as itself an act of prayer (citing patriarchal blessings such as Gen 48:14–20).

425. On the meaning of this phrase, see comment on Acts 4:31. The NT most often employs it for the gospel, but the OT for the law and the prophetic message. Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 147–79, esp. 158, grounds this claim in restoration texts such as Isa 2:3; 40:9, but the allusion may be more general.

426. My list of summary statements concurs with that of most commentators (e.g., Bruce, *Commentary*, 131; Brehm, "Significance of Summaries"); Liefeld's list (*Acts*, 41–42) includes other conversion summaries, but these are not all section summaries per se.

Luke 4:14, 37; 7:17).⁴²⁷ These summaries advance the work's central purpose and theme (Acts 1:8)⁴²⁸ and function somewhat like a narrative "refrain"; refrains are most common in poetic works⁴²⁹ but appear elsewhere.⁴³⁰ These statements are more focused and less extensive than broader summary passages (such as 2:42–47), which seem to depict the church's lifestyle.⁴³¹

Ancient readers would not be surprised by Luke's use of summary statements (for summary sections, see comment on Acts 2:41–47). It was common to recapitulate one's preceding argument at the end of a section;⁴³² summary statements are common in many historical works.⁴³³ The Israelite historiographic work 1–2 Kings uses "a set formula or pattern as a connective . . . to move from one king to another."⁴³⁴

Such summaries serve an apologetic purpose. Although people of status despised demagogues, they could also appreciate leaders whose character was recognized and approved by the people (e.g., *Jos. Life* 250),⁴³⁵ and Luke includes here "priests." Because Luke describes the history of a "people,"⁴³⁶ it is noteworthy that this verse also echoes the multiplication of the Israelites in Egypt (Exod 1:7, quoted soon after in Acts 7:17).⁴³⁷ This biblical formula pairing ἀύξάνω and πληθύνω (as also in Acts 12:24) may allude beyond that exodus quotation to a wider pattern: what God does for all creatures in creation and restoration (Gen 1:22, 28; 8:17; 9:1, 7), God does specifically for his people (Gen 17:20; 28:3; 35:11; 47:27; 48:4; Exod 1:7; Lev 26:9)⁴³⁸ and would do again at the time of their restoration (Jer 3:16; 23:3). Those familiar with LXX language could not have missed these sorts of associations.

This growth summary also confirms the direction in which God's answer to Gamaliel's test points: God is with the Jesus movement (Acts 5:38–39). Direct opposition, however, may be a more severe test than internal problems (6:1); this is the test that follows (6:9–14), and although it ultimately will temporarily decimate the movement locally, it simply serves to disseminate the movement's roots more widely (8:1–4). If (as this commentary supposes) Luke writes after Jerusalem's fall, his audience will recognize that God used such dissemination to preserve and expand the movement

427. Witherington, *Acts*, 156–59; Rosner, "Progress," 221–23; Brehm, "Significance of Summaries."

428. With Rosner, "Progress," 232–33.

429. E.g., Pss 42:5, 11; 43:2, 5; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31; 118:1–4, 29; 136:1–26; the wedding invocation to Hymen in Ovid *Her.* 12.143; esp. Catull. *Carm.* 61.4–5, 39–40, 49–50, 59–60; 62.4–5, 10, 19, 25, 31, 38, 48, 66 (with *io* added, 61.117–18, 137–38, 142–43, 147–48, 152–53, 157–58, 162–63, 167–68, 172–73, 177–78, 182–83); the bridal summons (Catull. *Carm.* 61.96, 106, 113); invocation to the Fates (64.327, in briefer form thereafter in 333, 337, 342, 347, 352, 356, 361, 365, 371, 375, 381); or a summons to love (*Peru. Ven.* 1, 8, 27, 36, 48, 57–58, 68, 75, 80, 93).

430. E.g., Sen. *Y. Nat. Q.* 3.pref. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25; Rom 5:2–3, 11.

431. Witherington, *Acts*, 159. Analysis of Luke's redactional patterns suggests his greatest creativity in summary statements (Witherington, "Editing," 346).

432. E.g., Cic. *Fin.* 3.9.31; 1 Cor 14:39–40; 4Q270 11 I, 15.

433. E.g., Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.25; 4.8.19.

434. Rosner, "Biblical History," 76 (citing as examples 1 Kgs 14:19–20, 31; 15:8, 24).

435. For fame spreading, cf., e.g., Char. *Chaer.* 4.7.5; see more fully comment on Acts 2:47.

436. For discussion of ethnographic histories, see Keener, *Acts*, 1:108–9, 113–14, 161–64, and sources cited there, especially Sterling.

437. Tannehill, *Acts*, 82. Acts 6:7 shares with the LXX ἀύξάνω, πληθύνω, and (though missing in Acts 7:17) σφόδρα. Cf. Col 1:6, 10 (noted in, e.g., Talbert, *Ephesians*, 185). Relevant but not nearly as relevant as LXX usage, Balch, "ΜΕΤΑΒΟΛΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΩΝ," 165, notes the use for the growth of new colonies in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (see comment at Acts 2:47).

438. Authors many centuries before Luke already drew explicit literary connections between the creation mandate and Israel's mandate. The *fear* of humanity on all creatures (Gen 9:2) prefigures the fear of God's chosen on others (Gen 35:5; Exod 23:27; Deut 2:25; 11:25; Josh 2:9); the command to subdue the earth (Gen 1:29) also applied to subduing the promised land (Num 32:22, 29; Deut 20:20; Josh 18:1).

for the future. The summary in 6:7 is simply another sign pointing to God's securing the spread of the gospel through and sometimes despite the church. By God's intervention, obstacles produce growth; growth leads to more persecution, but even this does not stop the spreading of God's message.⁴³⁹

II. CONVERSION OF PRIESTS

Many priests "were obeying the faith." Other early Christian writers could speak of accepting the Christian message as "obeying" it (Rom 6:16–17; 10:16; 15:18; 2 Thess 1:8) and expected obedience as a sign of faith (connected most explicitly in Rom 1:5; 16:26).⁴⁴⁰ Luke is no less concerned with obeying God (Acts 5:29, 32; 7:39, 53).

Like the ancient Israelite Chronicler, Luke has interest in the priesthood as well as in temple worship (Acts 2:46; 3:1–3; 5:20, 42). The faith of many of the priesthood's members may help validate the Christian message's heritage in the Diaspora as well (cf. 19:14; 22:5). Luke opens his entire narrative, in fact, with an account of a pious priestly family (Luke 1:5).⁴⁴¹ Because of priests' association with the temple, Luke can also show the falsehood of the charge against Stephen at Acts 6:13–14. Despite his mistrust of the priestly aristocracy (a sentiment shared by many Judean religious groups and probably many poorer priests), Luke has a positive view of the priesthood in general and knows how to differentiate the two (see Luke 1:5; 5:14; 17:14).⁴⁴²

By noting the conversion of many priests, Luke also emphasizes that the Sadducean aristocracy (cf. Acts 5:17, 21, 27) was now virtually alone in opposing the movement, with even Pharisees and priests open to it (5:34; cf. 15:5).⁴⁴³ Some priests here, like Zechariah in Luke 1:5, serve the Lord. Since there were nearly two thousand in an earlier period (Neh 11:10–14; cf. 1 Chr 9:13), there were probably no fewer in first-century Jerusalem.⁴⁴⁴ Josephus claims (in a context that might invite characteristic exaggeration on the high side) twenty thousand priests (*Ag. Ap.* 2.108). Jeremias estimates as many as eighteen thousand priests and Levites in all Judea, but is surely correct that the temple could not employ so many during the ten or eleven months

439. See Sole, "Rapporto." Luke would surely approve of those who use as a model his portrait of the church growing even through struggles and conflicts (e.g., Thekkekara and Punnapadam, "Growth").

440. Bruce, *Commentary*, 131n17, suggests "obedient by faith," noting that "the faith" as the gospel's content is rare in Acts (in contrast to Pauline literature, 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 1:23; and abundantly in the Pastorals); but cf. Acts 13:8; 14:22; 16:5. Cf. obeying God's message in Rom 6:17; 10:16; 2 Thess 1:8. The language does not echo the LXX; Gen 49:10 (cited by Le Cornu, *Acts*, 323) does not mention the "faith."

441. For the piety of many priests, see, e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 14.65–68. Luke might even know the tradition of Jesus as high priest (Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14–15; 5:1–10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11, 35; cf. Ps 110:4), given Jesus's lifted hands for blessing (Luke 24:50; Danker, *New Age*, 254; Stempvoort, "Interpretation of Ascension," 34; cf. Lev 9:22; *b. Ta'an.* 26ab; *Soṭah* 38a) and Luke's use of Ps 110:1 (Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34–35). (The mention of priests was relevant in the context of Joshua's ordination just cited, Num 27:19, 21–22; but the thought in Acts 6:7 is a new one, not dependent on the ordination in 6:6.)

442. Though cf. Luke 10:31; Acts 4:1; but the priests in Acts 4:1 are those serving in the temple, led, presumably, by the elite priesthood. Phillips, "Prophets," 234, rightly notes evidence for the hostility of the priesthood in Luke-Acts, but this hostility reflects the priestly establishment (as often in the OT tradition) rather than all priests per se (the limitations of Zechariah correctly noted on 225, 228, are not outright hostility like that of the chief priestly aristocrats).

443. Dunn, *Acts*, 85. Stephen's message and murder scattered the church (Acts 8:1), apparently leaving a more hostile population behind (12:3a).

444. Fiensy, "Composition," 219–20; Sanders, *Judaism*, 170; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 322. The numbers in Jerusalem were particularly large (Stern, "Aspects," 584). Although various conflicts forced some priests (such as those associated with the Qumran community) out, Jerusalem's population had multiplied since Nehemiah's era; the proportion of priests, however, had declined, since they could be sustained only by birth rate (Stern, "Aspects," 595–96).

outside their temple service.⁴⁴⁵ In any event, “a great crowd” of priests becoming disciples is not at all implausible.⁴⁴⁶

Luke gives no clear indication whether they were of high status like the Sadducees (see comment on Acts 4:6) or poorer common priests like those Josephus says were exploited and starved by the more powerful aristocratic priests (*Ant.* 20.181, 206–7).⁴⁴⁷ Poorer priests might work as stone cutters, in agriculture, or selling oil; more influential priests likely served as scribes and judges,⁴⁴⁸ and Josephus even attributes to them divine authority in Judea.⁴⁴⁹ Many peasants did not pay the tithes on which poorer priests depended (Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.153–54; *m. Demai* passim), and richer priests allegedly robbed the poorer ones, an activity reported as beginning perhaps a decade after the events reported here (*Jos. Ant.* 20.181; cf. *b. Pesah.* 57a).⁴⁵⁰

That Luke does not specify their status may suggest that more of them were poorer, since he typically mentions persons of status when possible⁴⁵¹ (to appeal to the parts of his audience with much status to lose by following the gospel). Priests of any status could have strengthened the community’s ties with the temple,⁴⁵² but higher-status priests would have wielded more influence. That nonaristocratic priests were not all Sadducees is clear; tradition even suggests, undoubtedly rightly, that some priests followed Pharisaic interpretation of the law.⁴⁵³

For Luke’s Diaspora audience, however, any priests might have status; even Gentile converts would respect them for their role in the Scriptures. Priests may have maintained high status in Diaspora Jewish communities (Philo *Hypoth.* 7.13; cf. *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 1.32).⁴⁵⁴ Priests held the highest status in Qumran texts (in contrast to later rabbis, who ranked sages most highly).⁴⁵⁵ (For that matter, even later rabbis praised the priesthood as winning God’s favor for Israel.)⁴⁵⁶ We should pause to note that just as Luke does not reveal the priests’ economic status, he does not reveal their prior sectarian orientation. Given the similarities between Christian and Essene beliefs, it is not surprising that some scholars, especially in the early flush of enthusiasm over the Dead Sea Scrolls, would suggest that these priests were Essenes.⁴⁵⁷ There were

445. *Jerusalem*, 204; followed, e.g., by Haenchen, *Acts*, 264.

446. With Carter and Earle, *Acts*, 89. Luke’s summaries may serve a literary purpose, while also depending on historical information (with, e.g., Varickasseril, “Portrait”). Certainly, in the second century, others also believed that some priests and scribes were Christians, if Lucian is not confused (*Peregr.* 11).

447. Cf. Stern, “Aspects,” 580–621, for a discussion of the elite classes, including priests (580–612, esp. 580–96); cf. also Basser, “Priests.”

448. Cf. *Deut* 17:9; 21:5; 2 *Chr* 15:3; *Ezek* 44:24; *Mal* 2:7; *Jub.* 31:15; *Sir* 45:16–17; *Jos. Life* 197; *Ag. Ap.* 2.187; *Diod. Sic.* 40.3.5. See Fiensy, “Composition,” 220 (for the poorer priests; citing Stern, “Aspects,” 586–87; *t. Kip.* 1:6; *Beṣah* 3:8); for some priests as *haberim* (probably Pharisees), see *t. Ter.* 7:5–6. Other nations also had priests as a literate class in religious matters or laws (e.g., *Val. Max.* 2.5.2).

449. Sanders, *Judaism*, 171 (citing *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.165, 184–87, 194; *Ant.* 14.4); as a priest himself, Josephus may have imbibed this ideology more than others.

450. Fiensy, “Composition,” 220, along with various commentators.

451. Luke’s reports of people of status are often noted, though the status increases considerably in the more novelistic second-century apocryphal acts (Grant, “Social Setting,” 22).

452. As suggested by Bruce, *Commentary*, 131 (noting also the status differences, 131–32).

453. E.g., *y. Ter.* 6:1.

454. Sanders, *Judaism*, 52–53 (mentioning also archaeological evidence). Priests may have been community leaders even in Alexandria if one follows the reading of *Let. Aris.* 310 proposed by Schwartz, “Priests in *Ep. Arist.*,” but this is uncertain.

455. Cf. Sharvit, “Hkhn” (though this point may characterize later rabbis more than pre-70 C.E. Pharisees).

456. *Sipre Deut.* 352.1.2.

457. Others have conjectured plausibly (but still speculatively) on interaction between Christians and Jerusalem Essenes (Capper, “Monks”).

in fact Essenes living in Jerusalem, as the Essene Gate (Jos. *War* 5.145) suggests.⁴⁵⁸ But there is no indication in the text, and certainly no external evidence, supporting the view that these are specifically Essene priests; not all Essenes were priests, and certainly not all priests were Essenes.⁴⁵⁹

458. Fiensy, “Composition,” 228 (noting also 1QM VII, 6–7; 11QT XLVI). Archaeology confirms the Essene Gate on the southern part of Jerusalem’s Western Wall, on Mount Zion (Riesner, “Gate”; Pixner, “Essene Gate”; idem, “Gateway”; idem, “Zion,” 321; Pixner, Chen, and Margalit, “Mount Zion”). Some scholars also point to “Essene-type” graves in Jerusalem (Zissu, “Graves”; idem, “Tomb”), but such graves were not unique to Essene sites (Shanks, “Who Lies?”; Zangenberg, “Farewell”). Some also argue that Essenes used the temple (e.g., Kugler, “Reconstruction”), although consensus eludes us.

459. See also the critiques in Brown, “Scrolls,” 6; Fiensy, “Composition,” 228 (though acknowledging priests at Qumran, 1QS I, 18).

STEPHEN (6:8–8:1A)

After introducing the seven Hellenists in Acts 6:1–6 (esp. 6:5), Luke focuses on two of them: Stephen (6:8–8:1a) and Philip (8:1b–40). Commissioned by the apostles (6:6), these Hellenists now expand the apostles' sphere of ministry theologically (Acts 7) and geographically and culturally (Acts 8). In so doing, they are led by the Spirit to push forward toward the work's goal specified by Jesus in 1:8.

As noted above, Luke (or his source) could know something about Stephen's ministry from Philip and about his final speech and death from Paul, although Luke would select from and develop this information in ways suitable to his cohesive narrative.

1. Introduction to Stephen

Stephen is mentioned by name nowhere else in the NT. If Luke's creation, his name could be symbolic for a victor's wreath, used for martyrs in Rev 2:10. Yet as noted above, this was not the primary symbolic association of wreaths at this time. The other names in the list (and in Luke-Acts generally) are not easily symbolic, and other potential names could better symbolize martyrdom (or even triumph, with *νικ-* roots elsewhere in the list) than this one. Paul never mentions Stephen, but he never mentions any of his victims, details the specifics of his persecutions, or mentions individuals from his past who were not also his contemporaries. Paul does, however, indicate that all Judean Christians knew of his persecutions (Gal 1:22–23), which would make learning details relatively easy for one who had contact with Judean churches or with traveling former members before or after 70 (e.g., Acts 21:16–18). For a traveling companion of Paul on long voyages, knowledge of details not mentioned in Paul's letters would be easy to come by (certainly more than it is for us, dependent on his letters). It would be especially difficult to believe that, if Luke's account is correct, Paul could spend several days with Philip (21:8, 10) without some conversation about Stephen, at least from Paul's side.

It is unclear how long Stephen preached before his martyrdom, but it is certain that he was martyred before Paul's conversion in Acts 9. Some scholars suggest that Stephen was martyred under the interregnum after Pilate's departure (36–37 C.E.), when no Roman governor was present to prevent it (as later in Jos. *Ant.* 20.200). It is difficult to date Paul's conversion so late, however (Gal 1:18; 2:1), and less difficult to simply believe that a mob lynching could occur during the majority of the year when the governor resided in Caesarea. See comment on Acts 7:54–60.

Luke parallels Jesus and Stephen, since the latter, as the church's first martyr, provides a paradigm of the church following its Lord. Some of the parallels work with pre-Lukan passion tradition but not Luke's own record of the passion. Witherington summarizes the parallels thus:¹

1. Witherington, *Acts*, 253; others also note many of the parallels, e.g., Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:26; Marguerat, *Actes*, 221; Pervo, *Acts*, 168; esp. Green, "Acts," 745, with sixteen parallels (adding, e.g., burial and mourning by the righteous).

1. Trial before the high priest/Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53 par.)
2. False witnesses (Mark 14:56–57; not in Luke)²
3. Testimony about the temple's destruction (Mark 14:58; not in Luke)
4. Temple “made with hands” (Mark 14:58; not in Luke; Acts 7:48)
5. Heavenly Son of Man (Mark 14:62; Acts 7:56)
6. Blasphemy charge (Mark 14:64; not in Luke; Acts 6:11)
7. High priest's question (Mark 14:61; not in Luke, though cf. Luke 22:67; Acts 7:1)
8. Committal of spirit (only Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59)
9. Cry with a loud voice (Mark 15:34, 37; Acts 7:60)
10. Prayer for forgiveness of persecutors (only in Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60)

Two of the ten parallels appear only in Luke and Acts (8 and 10); five appear in Acts and other Synoptics but not in Luke's Gospel. Thus Luke “had Acts in mind while writing his Gospel”;³ Luke omitted some material from Mark in his Gospel but recalled it in Acts. (We should note, however, that Jesus is unofficially accused of blasphemy in Luke 5:21.)

The obvious question is, why did he omit some of his parallels (especially when making others so explicit)? Had it happened only one or two times, one might simply accuse Luke of being so familiar with the common passion narrative that he forgot that he had made the omissions. Perhaps the omissions suggest that others had already shaped the Stephen story for such parallels before Luke heard it, and he then developed some others; but since Luke clearly notices some parallels (cf. Acts 7:56–60) and knew Mark, why would he omit some of them? It is also possible that Luke omits the parallel in his Gospel when he will need to transfer it to the Stephen story in Acts (as Matthew omits Markan accounts of a healing and an exorcism, then may midrashically compensate by doubling blind men and demoniacs in Matt 8:28; 9:27–28).⁴ But this proposal is unlikely here, especially since Luke's passion narrative sometimes supplies the only parallel for something in the Stephen story. Perhaps most likely is that Luke presupposes widespread knowledge of the passion tradition (as John does)⁵ even where he does not record it.

Some scholars argue that the Stephen narrative is likely fictitious, since (it is argued) it portrays Jewish murderous behavior and hence is an example of Luke's rhetorical violence against Jewish people.⁶ Several points could be raised against this position, but since I address Luke's perspectives on Judaism more specifically elsewhere,⁷ I raise just two points here: first, an anti-Jewish reading of the Stephen narrative runs counter to Luke's narrative as a whole (see esp. comment on the law in the introduction to Acts 7); second, Luke's report that some Jews were hostile to some other Jews

2. Luke's knowledge of the false witnesses is probably implied, however, in Luke 22:71.

3. Witherington, *Acts*, 253; cf. similarly Pervo, *Acts*, 168–69.

4. On the possible midrashic technique, cf. Holtzmann in Bruce, “Matthew,” 145; Goulder, *Midrash*, 44–45; Gundry, *Matthew*, 158.

5. See Keener, *John*, 918–19, 1067–68, 1100–1103, 1133–34.

6. Matthews, “Stoning,” 133–34; idem, “Hellenists.” She contends that if there was a Stephen and he died, he was like anyone else who died—that we must reject Luke's ideology. Romans and lions cared little, she notes, whether the lions devoured criminals or Christians, though friends of Christians and criminals told different stories. This much is true, but remaining academically neutral about claims of metanarratives is not the same as (dogmatically) denying all such claims on the basis that no such metanarratives are possible. Since Matthews rejects Luke's alleged assault on Judaism, however, she is not simply absolutizing moral relativism, and much of the argument will revolve around whether Luke is genuinely anti-Jewish (see discussion in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:459–77).

7. Again, see discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:459–77, and sources cited there.

who believed in Jesus is almost impossible to dispute, since we have Paul's personal testimony to this effect.⁸ Luke does not claim more than this. The same argument contends that "Jews" become negative characters after Stephen's stoning,⁹ but this is not always the case. Sometimes they constitute a hostile group, but often do not,¹⁰ and some major positive characters hold this title (Acts 18:2, 24; 21:39; 22:3).

Modern Westerners are often skeptical of martyrdom accounts because secular societies tend to experience fewer cases of violent persecution against religious or ideological minorities; but such persecution is widespread in many other societies. Not only are there thousands (some claim tens of thousands) of Christian martyrs annually,¹¹ but other religious minorities also suffer in other nonsecular societies (whether the state ideology is a particular religion or antireligion).¹² To readers in many places, Luke's account of a single martyr is far more restrained than their normal experience.¹³

2. Ministry and Opposition (6:8–7:1)

Among the Hellenists of 6:1–7, Luke focuses on the example of the ministry of Stephen and especially on opposition (6:8–15). Luke offers various features in this narrative that fit larger patterns in his work, suggesting some of his emphases (persecution, social and evangelistic ministry, signs, and so forth).¹⁴

a. Grace and Signs (6:8)

Luke rhetorically couples nouns here, both the abstract nouns "grace" and "power" (cf. Acts 4:33; 2 Cor 12:9; Eph 3:7) and the traditional biblical pairing of "wonders" with "signs." Connected with "power," "grace" probably involves divine empowerment.

8. Paul's letters confirm especially his own activity. One might argue (as an extreme example; I do not know anyone who argues this) that Paul fabricated claims of his former persecutions, but Paul offered these claims at the risk of discrediting himself, not in his favor. One could propose almost anything counter to the text, but the most radical skepticism leaves nothing but the skeptic's hypothetical reconstructions.

9. Matthews, "Stoning," 131–32; idem, "Hellenists." Cf. similarly Pervo, "Gates," although he begins the primarily negative usage after Acts 9:22.

10. See Acts 10:22, 28, 39; 11:19; 13:5, 43; 16:1, 20; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4–5, 19; 19:10, 17; 20:21; 21:20; 22:12; 24:24. The term does not appear anywhere in Acts 6–8. For a more nuanced picture of the varied senses of the title in Acts, fitting the ambiguous boundaries of ethnicity, see Barreto, *Negotiations*, 81, including his challenge of A. Barbi's argument (though it, too, includes a range of uses; "Use and Meaning"), which he believes determined by the criterion but misunderstanding ethnicity (82–83). Luke employs the term more in the Diaspora (85). In Barreto's survey of uses (88–90), only the sixth of seven appears adversarial. For the diverse usage of the term in the Fourth Gospel, see Keener, *John*, 214–28; for other discussions, see, e.g., Bratcher, "Jews"; Cuming, "Jews"; De Boer, "Depiction" (the approach closest to mine); Fuller, "Jews"; Lowe, "ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ"; Nothomb, "Juifs"; Von Wahlde, "Jews"; White, "Jews."

11. For one very high estimate (perhaps based on a broad definition of "martyr"), see Barrett, "Table," estimating more than 160,000 Christians martyred in 1996. On persecution in modern times, see, e.g., Marshall, *Blood*; from a somewhat different approach, Hefley and Hefley, *Blood*; see esp. recently Marshall and Shea, *Silenced*.

12. See, e.g., Mandryk, *Operation World*, regarding Muslims in parts of India (421), tens of thousands of Muslims in parts of Indonesia (450), Sufis and followers of Baha'i in Iran (466). Regarding the intelligibility of Paul's own later captivity, Zerbe, "Constructions," 255, offers a helpful modern analogy in a Filipino context.

13. As someone who has been personally beaten and had his life threatened more than once for Christian witness even in the United States (mostly in the years soon after my conversion), and has spent time in places where Christians have been killed for their faith (for one account, see Keener, "Mayhem," 61–64), I find nothing implausible in the suggestion of far more martyrdoms than Acts records (whether or not such martyrdoms took place, they are not implausible).

14. Applications of the passage might include the following: persecution and false accusations should not surprise Jesus's followers; ministries can grow (as Stephen's changes from social ministry to public proclamation); signs (6:8) can draw attention and provoke greater hostility from rivals for popular support (6:9–10), especially among those for whom ends (which they believe noble) justify inappropriate means.

I. GRACE

“Grace” could apply to special rhetorical skill or other eloquent or charming speech (in classical texts often translated “charm”).¹⁵ (This was also closer to the idea of the Greeks’ three divine graces.)¹⁶ Thus delivery style could add χάρις to one’s oratory (Plut. *Demosth.* 7.2), and rhetoricians supported the “charms” of entertaining narratives (Men. Rhet. 2.5, 395.4); simplicity (2.7, 411.23–24) or verbal ornamentation (411.29–31); grace and appropriateness in epideictic wedding speeches (411.22); and charm in even formal proems (2.6, 400.1). Dionysius claims that Demosthenes possessed all rhetorical skills except “charm” (χάριν, Dion. Hal. *Demosth.* 54). Cicero’s speech was so full of pathos and grace (χάριτι) that Caesar acquitted his own enemy whom Cicero was defending (Plut. *Cic.* 39.6). This is one of the few NT passages where this sense of “grace” is possible (cf. Eph 4:29; Col 4:6). This sense surely appears in Luke 4:22 (possibly 2:40 but, in view of 2:52, probably not), but it is unlikely here as elsewhere, unless perhaps in the sense related to divinely imparted favor in the sight of others.

In the widely read *Odyssey*, Athena shed (κατέχευε) charm (χάριν) on Odysseus’s head (Hom. *Od.* 8.19) to make him look taller and impress the Phaeacians (8.20–22), and poured (κατέχευεν) charm (χάριν) on Telemachus (2.12), so that all the people were impressed when he came to speak (2.13; again, 17.63–64).¹⁷ This usage may be relevant again to Luke 4:22 and Acts 2:47 and to some other early Jewish texts (*Test. Jud.* 2:1). It is certainly relevant to the image of divine “favor” in Acts 7:9, which alludes back to this passage and hence is undoubtedly relevant here. Stephen, like Jesus (Luke 2:40, 52) and Joseph (Acts 7:10) before him, would have “favor.”

The nearest background for Luke’s ideal audience, however, would be their early Christian context. Early Christian writers often spoke of “grace” as God’s gift of empowerment for necessary tasks (see esp. Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 1:7; 12:4, 9, 28–29; Eph 4:7; 1 Tim 4:14; 1 Pet 4:10);¹⁸ this would fit the mention of signs and wonders here and is probably the point in Acts 4:33.¹⁹ Since both “favor” and “empowerment” are divine gifts, it is possible that both nuances are present here. This would fit the connection with “power” here.

II. SIGNS AND WONDERS

The pairing of “signs and wonders” throughout Luke-Acts evokes the miracles God performed in the exodus through Moses (7:36).²⁰ Though signs characterize apostolic ministry in Acts (cf. also 2 Cor 12:12), the ministry of the Seven demonstrates that signs were not limited to the Twelve (Acts 6:8; also 8:6–7; 9:17–18). They might, rather, characterize the church in general (cf. Mark 16:17–18), especially particular

15. See, e.g., Sir 20:19; 21:16 (other “charm” in 7:19); Prov 10:32 LXX; Pliny E. *N.H.* 35.36.79 (for artistic charm); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 53.6; Max. Tyre 25.7; Men. Rhet. 2.7, 405.28; 2.17, 446.11–13, esp. 446.12; cf. likewise analogous Latin terms (Fronto *Ad Ant. imp.* 1.2.4; Symm. *Ep.* 1.2.6). For particular rhetorical figures providing “charm,” see Demet. *Style* 29, 154, cf. 247 (Anderson, *Glossary*, 127).

16. E.g., *SIG*³ 985 (= *LSAM* 20), lines 1–11 (in Klauck, *Context*, 65); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.37; Men. Rhet. 2.7, 407.5–6; 2.17, 439.19–20; Schachter, “Charites”; in Roman art, Francis, “Three Graces”; givers of beauty in Hom. *Od.* 6.18; cf. Hephaestus’s wife in Hom. *Il.* 18.382–83. Luke and Paul might even avoid the plural of χάρις precisely to avoid any semblance of alluding to these daughters of Zeus (cf. Harrison, *Grace*, 9).

17. Flavius Philostratus in *Hrk.* 34.6 accuses Odysseus of “gracelessness” in his anti-Odyssean polemic (contrast the “charm” of Agamemnon’s regal appearance, *Hrk.* 29.2).

18. Even rhetoricians employed χάρις for signs of favor from deities (e.g., Men. Rhet. 2.17, 440.8–9; the same context also uses its frequent sense for thanks, 444.19).

19. See Keener, “Gifts,” 156; cf., e.g., Wis 3:14. Nolland (“Words”) sees “grace” as divine power in Luke 4:22.

20. E.g., Combrink, *Analysis*, 7; see esp. and more fully comment on Acts 2:22.

members “full of the Spirit,” though, as in Paul’s theology (1 Cor 12:7–10, 28–30), Luke expects particular gifts to regularly accompany particular callings, and Stephen’s and Philip’s recorded signs (though not clearly those of Ananias) come after the apostles have ratified their leadership.

Stephen was doing the great²¹ signs among “the people” (λαῶν), the contemporary Jerusalemite expression of historic Israel (already Acts 2:47; 3:9, 11–12, 23; 4:1–2, 8, 10, 17, 21; 5:12–13, 20, 25–26, 34), which has biblical significance for Luke (e.g., 3:23; 7:17, 34).²² The church’s favor among the people (e.g., 2:47; 5:26) was, however, vulnerable to negative influences (6:12).²³ It should be noted that Jesus’s favor with the “crowd” also diminished later in the Gospel.²⁴ Stephen may have been a Torah teacher, but this is not certain; what is clear is that he had signs and wonders—a phenomenon his academically “qualified” opponents could not answer on its own terms. In a social power conflict, this likely threatened their hegemony.²⁵

b. Debating Some from the “Freedpersons” Synagogue (6:9–10)

Just as the success of the Jerusalem apostles provoked envy and a backlash (5:12–17), so Stephen’s success provoked the same (6:8–9). That Stephen was indicted by fellow Hellenists may mean that they felt responsibility for disciplining members of their own community in Jerusalem.²⁶ Even more than this, however, it suggests that they felt the threat because many of their own members were being converted (cf. 6:8, 10).

Although the term συζητέω (6:9) can apply even to discussions among disciples (Luke 22:23; 24:15), it also applies to the sort of passionate debate that can provoke mortal enemies, as later with Paul (Acts 9:29). Educated proponents of the faith, such as Paul, could “dialogue” or “argue” with others who disagreed with them, seeking to persuade (17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8–9; 24:25), and Stephen apparently engaged in the same. What synagogue or synagogues were involved in 6:9?

Excursus: Synagogues

Synagogues were likely a Diaspora institution imported into Judea; in Egypt they appear as early as the third century B.C.E. and are well attested in the first century C.E.²⁷ By “synagogues” is meant local gatherings, formal or informal, usually in regular meeting places.²⁸ In the Diaspora the places of gathering were called προσευχαί—that

21. Cf. Philip’s miracles in Acts 8:13 and, negatively, “great signs” for false prophets (Luke 21:11; Matt 24:24; Rev 13:13); the phrase applies to apocalyptic symbols in Rev 12:1, 3; 15:1.

22. For Luke, λαός is basically synonymous with ἄλλος, but he prefers the former (eighty-three times; the latter sixty-three; as against two uses of λαός in Mark, two in John [in addition to one time in an interpolation], and fourteen in Matthew); see Tannehill, *Luke*, 143.

23. On the masses being easily swayed or changing their minds, see, e.g., Corn. Nep. 3 [Aristides], 1.4; Jos. War 2.237–38, 316–17, 321–25; Keener, *Matthew*, 670. Modern democratic politics in most countries provides a more contemporary and verifiable example of periodic opinion shifts.

24. See Tannehill, *Luke*, 157–58.

25. See Philip, *Pneumatology*, 156–57.

26. R. Simeon ben Gamaliel and other Tannaim emphasized the responsibility of each locality to judge members of their own locality (*t. Sanh.* 3:10).

27. Fine and Meyers, “Synagogues,” 122 (citing, e.g., Philo *Embassy* 156; *Dreams* 2.156; *Mos.* 2.216).

28. The title in this period more often designates the community, not the edifice, as Frey notes in *CIJ* 1:1xx.

is, “places of prayer” —well before the first century B.C.E.²⁹ Gentile literature also takes note of them (*Juv. Sat.* 3.296). Many were small and simple, like the first-century B.C.E. structure on Delos;³⁰ the characteristic activity, rather than a particular structure, defined the site (cf. Acts 1:14; 16:13–16).

Although we know of many synagogues (with that title) from the ancient Mediterranean world,³¹ most are of later or uncertain date.³² With a different title, some are attested much earlier, “well established” in Egypt “as early as the mid-third century BCE.”³³ These Diaspora synagogues were often called “prayerhouses” in this period (see comment on Acts 1:14).³⁴ Thus some scholars (most notably H. C. Kee, who in other scholarly matters is generally more careful) have argued that the term “synagogue” is Luke’s anachronism, from the post-70 C.E. period when the term became more popular.³⁵ Certainly, later rabbis were never hesitant to read synagogues anachronistically back into earlier periods.³⁶

Other scholars, however, have offered sound arguments against this position, which has been rejected by most commentators.³⁷ Thus Josephus calls them “prayerhouses” (προσευχαί) five times (for the Diaspora and hellenized Tiberias)—but “assemblies” (συναγωγαί, synagogues) six times.³⁸ Kee dismisses the relevance of Josephus as from the second century, but Josephus was born in 37 C.E. (*Life* 5) and his works date from about the mid-70s through about 95.³⁹ It also appears as a title for Diaspora synagogues in 56 C.E. (Berenice in North Africa, *SEG* 17.16) and about 40 C.E. (Philo *Good Person* 81).⁴⁰ It is likely that some of the Diaspora houses of prayer that Luke calls “synagogues” would have called themselves “prayerhouses,” but we can also be certain that his audience was familiar with his term and that it had been used at times even in the Diaspora in the period he describes. (On “prayerhouses,” see comment on Acts 1:14.) It may have been popularized further in his region by the forced Palestinian Diaspora after 70 C.E.

Certainly, it is impossible to maintain with Kee that we lack firm evidence for Palestinian synagogues before the late fourth century,⁴¹ though the vast majority of

29. E.g., *CPJ* 1:239–40, §129; 1:247–49, §134; 2:368, §1441; 2:370–71, §1443–44; 2:375–76, §1449. For later examples, see, e.g., *CIJ* 1:476, §662; 1:495, §683; 1:497, §684; 2:367, §1440; 2:369, §1442; perhaps 1:525, §726; 2:360, §1432; 2:361, §1433. *Jos. Life* 277 also freely applies the Hellenistic title to a Galilean structure; the favored title seems to have varied geographically (Applebaum, “Organization,” 490), perhaps until rabbinic influence became more widespread (Schubert, “Sacra Sinagoga”).

30. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 48. Some now, however, question the site’s identification as a synagogue (Matassa, “Myth”; among earlier scholars supporting the identification, see Kraabel, “Evidence”).

31. E.g., *CIJ* 1:238, §301; 1:251, §319; 1:286, §368; 1:298, §383; 1:298–99, §384; 1:303, §390; 1:318, §416; 1:319, §417; 1:323, §425; 1:360, §494; 1:368, §503; 1:372, §509; 1:373, §510; 1:384, §523; 1:398, §537; 1:457, §639; 1:504–7, §694; cf. 1:295, §380; 1:313, §408; 1:369, §504.

32. Discoveries in recent decades have thrown into disarray older “typologies” of synagogue architecture (McRay, *Archaeology*, 70).

33. Lightstone, “Diaspora Judaism,” 356.

34. See further, e.g., Schubert, “Sacra Sinagoga.” For a survey of Diaspora synagogues, see Foerster, “Survey of Synagogues”; cf. discussion in Nanos, *Mystery*, 42–50.

35. E.g., Kee, “Response to Oster”; idem, “Reassessing Evidence from Gospels.” Hachlili, “Origin,” argues that the institution spread after 70 C.E., being considerably more limited beforehand; but even this approach risks reading our extant evidence as if fairly complete rather than representative.

36. E.g., *Tg. Amos* 6:3; probably also *Tg. Zech.* 9:17.

37. See, e.g., Oster, “Rejoinder to Kee”; Atkinson, “Defining”; Dunn, “Synagogue,” 216–21. See esp. the careful and thorough Kloppenborg, “Theodotus Synagogue Inscription”; idem, “Dating Theodotus.”

38. Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 183.

39. *Ibid.*, 182–83; Smallwood and Rajak, “Josephus,” 798.

40. Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 181–82. The Corinthian synagogue lintel identifying it as a “synagogue” also may be second century or earlier (Witherington, *Acts*, 255; see comment on Acts 18:4).

41. Kee, “Transformation,” 10.

buildings devoted strictly to this usage do postdate 70. Three fairly clear pre-70 synagogues have now been excavated in Palestine (Gamla, Masada, and the Herodium), including not only stone benches around the walls, ritual baths, and an apparent orientation toward Jerusalem but also Torah fragments and possibly evidence of a niche for the Torah scroll.⁴² Many scholars today find a larger number certain.⁴³ Other sites have been or are being discussed as well,⁴⁴ not including suggestions of pre-70 liturgical use of other buildings beneath the ruins of second-century and later synagogues. Some specialists have argued that most synagogues developed from houses or *insulae* (following a pattern for religious-association meetings in antiquity),⁴⁵ and only after 70 did specific synagogue forms develop.⁴⁶ This origin makes them more problematic to identify; it does not refute literary evidence for their existence. *Pace* Kee, pre-70 synagogues existed even in Jerusalem (see section 2.b.iii, “Diaspora Synagogues in Jerusalem,” below on the Theodotus inscription, pp. 1306–8).⁴⁷

Most early synagogues probably began as parts of other buildings, which minimizes early archaeological evidence, but we cannot simply dismiss the literary evidence of Josephus, the Gospels, and other contemporary sources as if they all conspired together merely to deceive later readers about their fictitious institution.⁴⁸ In the Diaspora they functioned as *collegia* (corporations) on the model of other Hellenistic social and religious associations (Jos. *Ant.* 14.258, 260; Philo *Embassy* 311–15).⁴⁹ (On associations, see comment at Acts 12:12.)

Some scholars have argued that the assembly halls common in the Diaspora and attested in Jerusalem may have been less common in Galilee.⁵⁰ Others contend that the reason few pre-70 Palestinian synagogues have been uncovered is simply that those building later synagogues completely demolished earlier ones on the same site; all three probable pre-70 synagogues that have been discovered are from sites not resettled after their destruction.⁵¹ They may have also not been architecturally

42. Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 184–86, following Meyers, “Synagogue,” 255; and a number of excavation reports (including Ma’oz, “Synagogue from Second Temple,” 142; Gutman, “Gamala,” 460–62; Netzer, “Masada,” 981–83); see also Chilton and Yamauchi, “Synagogues,” 1146–47; Hachlili, “Architecture,” 127–28. But some dispute even these three (Grabbe, “Synagogue,” 1727, cites Chiat, *Handbook*, 116–18, 204–7, 248–51, 282–84, though this work is from 1982).

43. Evans, *World*, notes Magdala (53), the earlier Hasmonean synagogue at Modi’in (56–57), Qiryat Sefer (57–58), in addition to Herodium (51), Gamla (49–51, noting on 50 that it was destroyed in November 67), and Masada (55). Grabbe, “Synagogue,” 1729, thinks that the Diaspora institution of the synagogue probably reached Palestine in the first century B.C.E. (but possibly the first century C.E.).

44. Cf. also a probable first-century B.C.E. synagogue or prayer room from Shuafat (Shu’fat), north of Jerusalem (Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 192). There are various other recent or disputed sites (e.g., in Jericho, in Netzer, “Jericho”; Shanks, “Is It a Synagogue?”; in the Second Temple village of Kiryat Sefer, in Magen, Zionit, and Sirkis, “Qryt-spr”; Chorazim’s synagogue in May and Stark, “Reconstruction”).

45. White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:62, 101 (more generally, 60–101).

46. *Ibid.*, 1:85. For the wide variety of synagogue structures, see Meyers, “Synagogue,” with a full survey of archaeological evidence then available.

47. See, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 357; Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem”; Evans, *World*, 38–58 (noting that hardly anyone has been persuaded by Kee).

48. E.g., though no synagogue has been excavated from Sepphoris from any period, it is impossible to doubt that some existed; a contemporary source, indeed, attests eighteen there (Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 186, citing *y. Kil.* 32b; Weiss, “Sepphoris”); cf. also Witherington, *Acts*, 255–57 (citing Jos. *War* 2.285–91; 7.43–44; *b. Ber.* 6a; *y. Ber.* 5:1, §9). Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 185–86, argues for Pharisaic influence in the synagogues.

49. Mantel, “Nature of Synagogue,” 75–91; cf. White, “Revisited”; Harland, *Associations*, 30–55, esp. 33–36.

50. See Horsley, *Galilee*, 222–33.

51. Sanders, *Judaism*, 200; *idem*, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 77; cf. May, “Synagogues,” 3.

distinctive, preventing us from recognizing them.⁵² With the loss of the temple, synagogues grew more ornate after 70.⁵³

But even if one were to assume the lack of formal structures functioning through the week as religious and community centers,⁵⁴ one should not suppose that Galileans failed to assemble (cf. Sir 1:30). Although smaller towns may have lacked the resources for such formal structures,⁵⁵ Josephus reflects the interpretation that the law required Jews to assemble each Sabbath to study Torah (*Ag. Ap.* 2.175) and pray (1.209).⁵⁶ A public place of prayer in Tiberias (one of Galilee's two large cities) functioned as the meeting place for the entire citizen assembly (*Life* 277–78).

Regardless of the kind of building, the assembly places were not restricted to what Western society would call religious functions as many modern Western churches are. Certainly they remained houses of study (e.g., *CIJ* 2:333, §1404), but as Levine summarizes,⁵⁷ before 70 they also functioned as community courts,⁵⁸ gathering sites for charity,⁵⁹ collection points for funds for the temple,⁶⁰ hostels (as in the Theodotus inscription),⁶¹ and banquet halls.⁶² Further, both synagogue designs⁶³ and comments of later rabbis⁶⁴ show us that the local communities, not representatives of the rabbinic academy, controlled synagogues in the second century and later.⁶⁵ Seats face one another in the pre-70 synagogue at Gamla, suggesting interaction in Galilean assemblies.⁶⁶ Members of the community may have gathered to such assembly halls for special events during the week, such as the visit of a traveling teacher like Jesus

52. Miller, "Number in Cities." Atkinson, "Defining," finds features consistent with later synagogues in the four he identifies as certain; but this would not be obvious in houses or other building types.

53. From the earliest period (well before 70 C.E.), writers associated the synagogues with the Jerusalem temple (Cohen, "Evidence on Synagogue," 163). The associations grew after 70, however, and probably still further under later Byzantine influence (Levine, "Nature and Origin," 446–47).

54. Most do see them as multipurpose (e.g., Levine, "Synagogue," 14, offering first-century evidence; Evans, *World*, 58). No form was mandatory; various architectural types existed even through the medieval period (Meyers, "State," 128–32); on pre-70 Judean types, see Chen, "Design." Friedman, "Features," argues that many features of synagogues emulated the temple (so also Spero, "Tabernacle").

55. Well-to-do persons sometimes donated synagogues (Luke 7:5; *CIJ* 2:8, §738; Theodotus inscription). Some synagogues probably met in well-to-do patrons' homes, like the house churches (Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 141; cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 1218); some have suggested that a private home lies beneath the later Capernaum synagogue (Strange and Shanks, "House in Capernaum," 29–30; cf. idem, "Synagogue"), though the reuse instead of demolition of the earlier, impractical foundation may suggest that it was actually the earlier synagogue (Evans, *World*, 46–47).

56. Cf. also Jos. *War* 2.289; *Ant.* 16.43. As Sanders, *Judaism*, 199, points out, Philo recognizes a "house of prayer" (*Embassy* 132) in which Jews learned Torah in an assembly on the Sabbath (*Hypoth.* 7.12–13; cf. *Spec. Laws* 2.62–63; *Good Person* 81). First-century Jews believed that Moses required this (*Hypoth.* 7.12–13; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.175; *L.A.B.* 11:8; Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 78).

57. Levine, "Synagogue," 14. See also idem, "First-Century Synagogue"; idem, "Nature and Origin"; for Diaspora synagogues as community economic centers, see Rosenfeld and Menirav, "Synagogue"; Lightstone, "Diaspora Judaism," 372.

58. Like the "gates" of biblical tradition; Acts 22:19; Matt 10:17; 23:34; *m. Mak.* 3:12; though Urman, "House of Assembly," argues for a distinction between synagogues and community centers in this period.

59. Matt 6:2; *t. B. Bat.* 8:14; *Šabb.* 16:22; *Ter.* 1:10.

60. Philo *Embassy* 156; Jos. *Ant.* 14.215; 16.167–68.

61. Cf. synagogues as guest houses also in later times, e.g., *y. Meg.* 3:3, §5.

62. Jos. *Ant.* 14.214–16; 16.164.

63. E.g., May, "Synagogues," 9; Hachlili, "Zodiac in Art"; Narkiss, "Elements," 185–86; Levine, "Nature and Origin," 444.

64. E.g., *t. B. Meš'it* 11:23; *Ṭehar.* 8:11.

65. Synagogues nevertheless regularly appear as positive places of worship in rabbinic texts, e.g., *t. Sukkah* 4:6; *b. Meg.* 28ab; *y. Ta'an.* 3:11, §4. Later rabbis both project the institution anachronistically into the distant past (e.g., *Lam. Rab.* proem 2) and exaggerate their numbers in the more recent past (e.g., 3:51, §9).

66. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 152–53.

or Paul (see further discussion at Acts 13:5). In many places the respected elders probably allowed any guest with a reputation as a teacher to speak.⁶⁷

I. MULTIPLE SYNAGOGUES?

What is the synagogue or synagogues mentioned here? Some argue that grammatically, this verse might refer to five synagogues, or to at least two,⁶⁸ but most scholars now read the grammar in support of a single “Synagogue of the *Libertini* [former Roman slaves],” who immigrated to the Holy Land from the various regions mentioned in Acts 6:9.⁶⁹ Certainly there is no reason to limit the number of synagogues to one on the supposition that only one would be possible in the city (cf. 24:12). Later rabbinic traditions claimed that pre-70 Jerusalem contained 480 synagogues, but this is probably no more than nostalgic glorifying of their past heritage; the tradition also claims elementary schools and Mishnaic institutes attached to each.⁷⁰ Despite such exaggerations, if a tiny village such as Nazareth could have its own synagogue, one might expect many in Jerusalem even though public activities in the temple might be more popular. In favor of multiple synagogues in this passage is the difficulty in supposing that large numbers of Jewish slaves of Roman citizens would have settled in other, non-Jewish Eastern cities before moving here; one could thus argue that freed slaves could thus meet as a social group separate from the groups from other locations. Nevertheless, just as Paul was a Roman citizen from Tarsus, it is conceivable that a number of freed Roman Jews had settled elsewhere before returning to Judea. Given Luke’s multicultural focus, noting representatively diverse locations helps his case; not all members were necessarily from these areas (nor even necessarily all descended from the freedpersons who founded the synagogue). Diaspora Jews might, however, appreciate the status of a synagogue founded by Roman citizens.

The use of the Latin *libertini*, borrowed into the Greek, probably suggests not just any freedpersons but citizens’ freedpersons, who would therefore have normally been made citizens themselves (see comment on citizenship acquisition at Acts 22:28).⁷¹ Some scholars doubt that they would wish to retain the self-designation “freedpersons” after many generations;⁷² but the synagogue may have taken this name in a prior generation and retained its name, hosting especially citizens of slave descent. Because the Latin name connoted citizenship, Jerusalemites who attended it would probably associate the title with high rather than low status (though there were higher-status methods of acquiring citizenship).

67. Cf. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 80–81.

68. E.g., D. Williams, *Acts*, 127, thinks two, since the grammar distinguishes Cilicia and Asia (especially τῶν ἀπὸ). But the distinction probably simply takes note of the geographic shift rather than distinct synagogues.

69. Riesner, *Early Period*, 153; idem, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 204–5; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 156; Munck, *Acts*, 58; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 358; Barrett, *Acts*, 325; Dunn, *Acts*, 86; tentatively, Johnson, *Acts*, 108.

70. E.g., *y. Meg.* 3:1, §3; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 15:7; *Lam. Rab.* proem 12; cf. the variant “80” in *Num. Rab.* 18:21. Of course, a city of some eighty thousand could easily contain so many synagogues, and with six thousand mostly Jerusalemite Pharisees and possibly more scribes, the number of schools is also plausible.

71. Many have noted the connection with “freedmen of Rome” here (in the nineteenth century, Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, 50). The term was already a loanword in Greek, but it does not appear in any other NT or LXX passage referring to freed slaves. Some Gentile *libertini* also apparently became God-fearers or proselytes (*Tac. Ann.* 2.85, noted by Arnold, “Acts,” 265).

72. D. Williams, *Acts*, 127 (following Sherwin-White, *Society*, 152). The title retained some stigma, but even after equestrian status was limited to free birth in 23 C.E., this limitation no longer applied to the third freeborn generation (Lintott, *Romans*, 93).

II. SYNAGOGUE OF FREEDPERSONS (6:9)

Some arguments for multiple synagogues are noted above. The grammar, however, is more easily read as referring to one synagogue rather than to several. But only one “synagogue” is actually mentioned here, and one would not expect the synagogue to be “called” by the names of each of the separate groups, so the first is likely its title. It suggests a gathering of *libertini*, freed slaves of Roman citizens (or descendants of such freed slaves)⁷³ who were thus citizens themselves. The apparent improbability of slaves freed from Rome settling elsewhere before returning to the land of their ancestors (mentioned above) is mitigated by the large number of Jews in Rome descended from freed slaves. Philo reports as common knowledge (even in Alexandria and certainly in Rome) that most of the Jewish community on the other side of the Tiber was descended from captives who had been freed and who maintained their observances (*Embassy* 155) and had synagogues there (*Embassy* 156).⁷⁴ People regularly moved to and from Rome (cf. Rom 16:3–15),⁷⁵ and it is likely that some would wish to return to the mother city of their ancestors, as Jewish people throughout the Roman world considered Jerusalem.⁷⁶

Other Hellenist synagogues may have affiliated on the basis of where their ancestors came from or what (presumably Hellenist) neighborhoods they lived in; this group, while also united by its use of Greek language, was united on the basis of social status. Freed slaves could hold ambivalent status in Roman or Jewish society;⁷⁷ as Roman citizens, however, they held a coveted status not shared by even much of the municipal aristocracy in Jerusalem or other Eastern cities (see comment on Acts 22:28). (Freed status was lower than free status within citizenship, a common status in Rome;⁷⁸ but in the East few yet held Roman citizenship.)

Synagogues sometimes bore names, some indicating their patrons;⁷⁹ possibly the patrons, and more likely the founders, rather than every person who attended, were *libertini*. Nevertheless, the synagogue seems to have been of high status, and hence likely influential, and might have been the preferred synagogue for other Roman citizens of Diaspora and slave descent. If the founders and their descendants were Roman citizens, they would therefore have a readier hearing with the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:12) and presumably with Rome.⁸⁰

73. Although the title might apply strictly to first-generation children of freedpersons (Suet. *Claud.* 24.1; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 156), those for whom it was a high-status term might preserve it longer; and it would need apply only to the synagogue’s founders, in any case, not to all those who attended it.

74. Large numbers of these “captive” Jews had been taken by Pompey in 63 B.C.E. (noted in, e.g., Kurzinger, *Apostelgeschichte*, 27). Jews may have often sought to buy the freedom of fellow Jews (Lohse, *Environment*, 150).

75. Cf. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 16–17; Hunter, *Romans*, 131. For immigration to Rome from Palestine, see, e.g., Jos. *Life* 13; *CIJ* 1:282, §362; 1:287–88, §370; and (involuntarily) 1:411, §556; from the East and other provinces more generally, 1:365, §500; Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 238–40; Clarke, “Italy,” 466; Carcopino, *Life*, 55; Friedländer, *Life*, 4:11; Nock, *Conversion*, 66–70. In a sense, all roads led to Rome (Ramsay, “Roads and Travel,” 376).

76. Tob 13:9; Philo *Flacc.* 46; *Embassy* 281 (cf. 203, 294, 305); 4 *Ezra* 9:38–10:28, esp. 9:43–45; 10:7; 2 *Bar.* 3:1–3; cf. Isa 66:8–9; Gal 4:25–26; Luke 13:34; Rev 12:1–2; 21:2. A city that founded colonies was a “mother city” (e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.17.76).

77. See Gaius *Inst.* 1.11; Jos. *Ant.* 18.47; Dupont, *Life*, 65–66; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 21. Later rabbis ranked freed slaves (of Jews) one step below proselytes (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 272, citing *m. Hor.* 3:8; less relevant, *m. Qidd.* 4:1; *t. Meg.* 2:7).

78. In Rome, the thousands of Jewish freedmen seem not to have been well accepted, especially a generation earlier (19 C.E.; Tac. *Ann.* 2.85, though these may be understood as Gentiles with Jewish leanings, as in Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 356), a factor that may have motivated some toward migration eastward.

79. See *CIJ* 1:1xxi–lxxxii; e.g., 1:318, §416; 1:323, §503; or other names, e.g., 1:372, §509.

80. If “Junia” was a Roman citizen, her conversion before Paul (probably in Jerusalem; see Rom 16:7; unless she was Joanna, as some have proposed) suggests that she may have belonged to this synagogue and hence that some of its members had joined the Jesus movement.

*Excursus: Freedpersons*⁸¹

Because less than .05 percent of U.S. slaves were manumitted before the U.S. Civil War,⁸² most modern readers are not familiar with a very common aspect of ancient slavery, namely, manumission. Apart from high-status slave positions such as slavery to Caesar, people recognized that as a rule freedom was preferable to slavery.⁸³ By the hope of manumission, slaveholders motivated slaves' compliance besides presenting themselves as benevolent and virtuous in their society.⁸⁴ Slaves often bought their freedom, and masters could use the funds to buy younger and healthier replacements.⁸⁵ Sometimes it was also less expensive to release the slave than to continue to maintain him or her in the household.⁸⁶

Slaves had to be more than thirty years old (and slaves of Roman citizens) to be manumitted in such a way as to obtain citizenship.⁸⁷ Augustus had restricted manumission (e.g., Suet. *Aug.* 40.3), but even during his reign many achieved it (42.2–3); it became common during the empire.⁸⁸ Probably a large proportion of household slaves were eventually manumitted.⁸⁹ Earlier many slaves achieved freedom even during the republic;⁹⁰ it was said that earlier slaves achieved it by good behavior but later ones by purchasing it (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.24.4).

Roman law recognized freedpersons as a category of free people (of lower status than freeborn),⁹¹ not as a class intermediate between slave and free.⁹² Nevertheless, freedpersons retained obligations to their former masters, now as clients belonging

81. For sample source texts on freedpersons, see, e.g., Shelton, *Romans*, 186–202; Gaius *Inst.* 3.39–76; Justin. *Inst.* 1.5. For sample emancipation contracts, see, e.g., P.Oxy. 722 (91 or 107 C.E.). See further Heinrichs, “Freedmen”; Friedländer, *Life*, 1:202–6; for Greek analogies, see Cartledge, “Freedmen”; in Corinth's history, Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 16–18, 67–69.

82. Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 150.

83. E.g., Xen. *Symp.* 4.29 (much earlier); *Test. Jos.* 1:5.

84. Bradley, *Slaves*, 83, 111–12. Manumitting slaves appeared virtuous partly through creating more citizens (Pliny *Ep.* 7.32.1). Perhaps to appear benevolent, Pliny favored a more liberal approach to slaves than did some of his contemporaries (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 4.10.1–2; 7.6.8; 8.14.12; 10.66.2; 10.72). For manumission as a reward for service, see, e.g., Cic. *Mil.* 22.58. Sacral manumission (e.g., Deissmann, *Light*, 319–23; among Hellenistic Jews, 321–22), by contrast, was not a widespread practice (see Bartchy, *Slavery*, 121–25); on Jewish manumission, see Hezser, *Slavery*, 304–17.

85. Winter, *Welfare*, 153, following Bradley, *Slaves*, 109–12. Some even abandoned sick slaves to evade the expense of treating them, although at that point Claudius intervened and freed them (Suet. *Claud.* 25.2). When an estate might be confiscated, freeing slaves to become freedpersons might be the more profitable course (Cic. *Fam.* 14.4.4); freedmen had legal obligations to their patrons, but not to the patrons' heirs (Quint. *Decl.* 318.1–2). On the sometimes high monetary price at which slaves might have to secure manumission, see, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 388.24.

86. Stambaugh, *City*, 96–97. For slave accommodations in Roman homes, often tight, see Jeffers, “Families,” 132; naturally, wealthy homes afforded better accommodations (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 2.17.9, with rooms for freedpersons also; but for two in one bed, see 7.27.12).

87. Gaius *Inst.* 1.17, 20; Buckland, *Roman Law*, 79 (though manumission by the manumitter's will was less restrictive, 80). A girl of fourteen was manumitted in *ILS* 5213 (Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 133, §135). On conditions for freedpersons becoming citizens, see also Schieman, “Manumission,” 265.

88. Cf. Jeffers, *World*, 230; Harrill, “Paul and Slavery,” 589; Grant, *Social History*, 112–22; cf. Lintott, *Romans*, 92. The slaveholder had complete freedom to manumit (e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 340 intro; 340.1; 342 intro; 342.1).

89. E.g., Winter, *Welfare*, 153 (following Hopkins, *Conquerors*, 116); Rawson, “Roman Family,” 12–13; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 124f.; Jeffers, *World*, 231 (suggesting “the average slave”); though “virtually all slaves . . . in their 30s” (Murphy-O'Connor, *Corinthians*, 79) may be an overstatement. Scheidel, “Quantifying,” thinks the numbers low; but see the critique of Harris, “Demography.” A runaway slave might also, when recognized, pretend to have been freed (Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.2.4.14).

90. Dupont, *Life*, 62–65.

91. For perceptions of their lower status, see, e.g., Gaius *Inst.* 1.11; Jos. *Ant.* 18.47; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.72; 16.10.

92. Gaius *Inst.* 1.9–11. Nevertheless, practical ambiguities remained; see Lintott, “Freedmen and Slaves.”

to their household.⁹³ Even after the slaveholder died, a freedperson might dedicate a monument to him or to her.⁹⁴ The former masters now owed their new clients help, such as letters of recommendation⁹⁵ and other business assistance.⁹⁶ Freedpersons' patrons often employed them and at least sometimes, as in the case of Cicero with his educated scribe Tiro, grew close to them.⁹⁷ Freedpersons were of lower status, so that some were surprised that Pliny ate with his freedmen; but he did so by sharing their quality of food, rather than expending more resources by treating them to his.⁹⁸

Freedpersons remained a distinct group. They received lower seating in banquets, could not marry higher-class women, and could not serve in Roman legions.⁹⁹ In the first and second centuries C.E., freed slaves on special occasions wore a special conical hat with no brim to celebrate their emancipation.¹⁰⁰ Some associations were only for freedpersons.¹⁰¹ A number of freedmen were teachers.¹⁰²

After Augustus, freeborn Roman men not belonging to the senatorial class could marry freedwomen.¹⁰³ Perhaps two-thirds of imperial slaves and freedmen, a group with high status and influence, married freeborn women.¹⁰⁴ A free man often used his freedwoman as a concubine.¹⁰⁵ Slaveholders often freed favorite female slaves in order to marry them;¹⁰⁶ on occasion, even a wife might free her deceased husband's favorite slave woman.¹⁰⁷ Although a freedwoman married to her patron could divorce him, this did not grant her the freedom divorces normally conferred on wives.¹⁰⁸

93. See, e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 3.1.2; Val. Max. 5.1.11; Sen. E. *Controv.* 4.8, excerpts; Pliny *Panegy.* 42.2; *Ep.* 9.21.1–3; 9.24; Tac. *Ann.* 4.7; Suet. *Calig.* 16.4; *Rhet.* 3; discussion in Bradley, *Slaves*, 81; Winter, *Welfare*, 152–54 (citing *Dig.* 38.1.16.1); Buckland, *Roman Law*, 88–89; Shelton, *Romans*, 198–200; Lampe, “Patrons,” 489; Chow, *Patronage*, 69–72; Dupont, *Life*, 65–66. For contracts specifying continuing duties as conditions of freedom, see Horsley, *Documents*, 4:102–3, §24. A former holder, as a *paterfamilias*, also could execute freedmen (Val. Max. 6.1.4; Suet. *Jul.* 48); for revoking freedom under some conditions, see Val. Max. 2.6.6; 2.6.7a; Suet. *Claud.* 25.1; for limits on such revocation, see Tac. *Ann.* 13.26–27.

94. E.g., *ILS* 7558, 7580 (Sherk, *Empire*, §173I, p. 229). A patron might also dedicate a monument to himself and to his freedmen and freedwomen (*ILS* 7486, in Sherk, *Empire*, §173F, p. 228).

95. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 13.23.1–2. On remaining part of the household business, see, e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 1.3.2.

96. E.g., Suet. *Jul.* 2. Freedpersons might also be designated as heirs (e.g., *CIL* 2.4332, in Sherk, *Empire*, §180, p. 239), though this might also entail debts (suggested by the editor on *CPJ* 2:20–22, §148).

97. Cic. *Fam.* 16.1.1–2; 16.3.1–2 (freed soon after); cf. similarly Pliny *Ep.* 5.19.2. They might well seek work in a former holder's employment even without the holder's interest, as in Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 5.37 (52). Freedpersons acquired honor through positive association with their former holders (cf. Polyb. 12.6a.4).

98. Pliny *Ep.* 2.6.3–5. That Claudius is presented as easily influenced by his freedmen is viewed as shameful (Suet. *Claud.* 25.5).

99. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 105. Perhaps exceptions were made for those with sufficient power (see comment on Acts 23:24), but these restrictions would have applied generally.

100. Croom, *Clothing*, 69; Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 78.

101. Klauck, *Context*, 47.

102. Suet. *Gramm.* 15–20; 23 (when one was “freeborn,” as in *Gramm.* 21, it is noted; but he became a slave).

103. McGinn, “Missing Females?”

104. Jeffers, *World*, 228. Under normal circumstances, however, freeborn women of means marrying freedmen was less acceptable than free men marrying freedwomen (Sen. E. *Controv.* 7.6.1–12), perhaps not least because of the shortage of aristocratic women. But imperial freedwomen might attract suitors for political reasons (Suet. *Otho* 2.2).

105. Treggiari, “Marriage and Family,” 169.

106. E.g., Jeffers, *World*, 239; Osiek, “Female Slaves,” 261.

107. E.g., Val. Max. 6.7.1 (although one might also consider that this removed the woman from the house). Apparently wives also had affairs with male slaves (cf. Lucian *Downward Journey* 11), though this activity required far more discretion.

108. Buckland, *Roman Law*, 117.

Freedpersons of Caesar could wield considerable power,¹⁰⁹ and slaves of Caesar might prefer to remain in that privileged position.¹¹⁰ After the abuses of imperial freedpersons in Claudius's and Nero's reigns, however, many condemned the worst extremes.¹¹¹ More generally, freedpersons experienced significant social mobility.¹¹² In Pompeii, large numbers of freedpeople and their descendants entered the aristocracy;¹¹³ freedpeople were well represented in many of the empire's municipal aristocracies.¹¹⁴ It would not be surprising if some Jewish ex-slave Roman citizens were prominent in Jerusalem. Traditional aristocrats, however, lampooned nouveau riche freedpersons.¹¹⁵

Many Jews brought to Rome as slaves under Pompey were soon freed, possibly through the financial help of other Jews.¹¹⁶ Under the usual conditions, freed slaves of Roman citizens became Roman citizens.¹¹⁷ If Paul belonged to a Cilician family in the synagogue of freedpersons (cf. Acts 6:9 with 21:39), it is reasonable to assume that his ancestors received citizenship the way many Jews had—through being enslaved and then freed.¹¹⁸ They normally took the patron's nomen and praenomen;¹¹⁹ for a discussion of the origin of Paul's name, see comment on Acts 13:9.

III. DIASPORA SYNAGOGUES IN JERUSALEM

Most striking is archaeological evidence for a Diaspora-related synagogue in Jerusalem, the Theodotus inscription.¹²⁰ Most scholars naturally date this synagogue complex before Jerusalem's destruction.¹²¹ The paleography suggests a pre-70 date,¹²² and archaeological evidence (such as items found near it) also fit this date.¹²³ Kee dates it to the fourth century, but Jews remained banned from Jerusalem at that date.¹²⁴ Since Theodotus was expanding a complex founded earlier by his grandfather, and

109. E.g., P.Oxy. 3312.10–13 (on which see Weaver, "P. Oxy. 3312"); *CIL* 6.8583; *ILS* 1578 (Sherk, *Empire*, §181, p. 240); *Pliny Ep.* 10.27–28, 84–85; *Jos. Ant.* 18.167; 19.64; 20.135; cf. also Balch, "Families," 273. Naturally not all held exalted positions (cf. the water bearer in *Jos. Ant.* 18.192).

110. E.g., Suet. *Gramm.* 21 (in Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 19).

111. E.g., *Tac. Ann.* 14.39; 16.23; *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 5.36; see comments on Pallas at Acts 23:24. For a governor avoiding transacting business through freedmen and hence eliminating a cause of corruption, see *Tac. Agr.* 19. For examples of the abuses, e.g., *Epict. Diatr.* 1.1.20; *Tac. Hist.* 1.76.

112. Jeffers, *World*, 233; López Barja de Quiroga, "Mobility."

113. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 103.

114. Finley, *Economy*, 72 (up to 33 percent in Ostia and as low as 12 percent in rural Cisalpine Gaul), based on M. L. Gordon's study of more than a thousand epitaphs.

115. See Trimalchio in *Petron. Sat.*, e.g., 38.

116. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 237.

117. E.g., *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 4.23.3; *Gaius Inst.* 1.12, 17 (for those not qualified for citizenship, 1.13, 16–17); cf. Lyall, "Slave and Freedman," 78; Finley and Treggiari, "Freedmen." One satire notes free persons who sold themselves into slavery and then had themselves manumitted to achieve citizenship (*Petron. Sat.* 57). Those freed by aliens (*Pliny Ep.* 10.5.2) or under the wrong conditions were not Roman citizens, but the ideal was full Roman, rather than mere Latin, citizenship (7.16.4; 10.104–5).

118. Schnabel, *Missionary*, 42, notes also patristic support for this thesis. See further discussion at Acts 22:28.

119. Chow, *Patronage*, 70.

120. Available, e.g., in *CIJ* 2:332–35, §1404; Carmon, *Inscriptions*, §182, pp. 83, 182–83.

121. See, e.g., Porter, "Inscriptions," 534; Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 192–200.

122. Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 194–95.

123. *Ibid.*, 195–98.

124. *Ibid.*, 198–99; for lack of evidence for habitation on the Ophel in the second through fourth centuries, see also Evans, *World*, 43. Theodotus does appear as a feminine name in a fourth- or fifth-century C.E. Palestinian inscription (Schwartz, "Inscription in Library," esp. 87), but the Greek theophoric element was quite common in Jewish names (see comments on "Theophilus" in Acts 1:1). Grabbe, "Synagogue," 1727, notes that "Kee is almost alone in arguing that it is post-70"; Evans, *World*, 42–43, notes that most paleographers date it to the Herodian period, against Kee.

this would not have been possible after 70 in this part of Jerusalem, it must have been standing in Jesus's day.¹²⁵

Given the name of Theodotus's father, Vettenu, the synagogue was probably originally founded by a Jew from Rome.¹²⁶ The name "Vettenu" may refer to the *gens Vettina*, suggesting freed status; freed slaves often adopted the family names of the patron who freed them, and we know that many slaves in Rome became free and achieved citizenship through this act of manumission (Philo *Embassy* 155). Many scholars have thus offered the reasonable suggestion that this is the "synagogue of the libertines" mentioned here,¹²⁷ but others are more skeptical of this connection.¹²⁸ It seems plausible but not provable.¹²⁹ Without any suggestion to that effect in the inscription, however, one wonders how likely the coincidence would be that the synagogue in this inscription uncovered by archaeologists would be the very one mentioned in Acts, at least if many Diaspora (or other) synagogues existed in Jerusalem. (If few did, the likelihood increases correspondingly.) We cannot be certain that Theodotus's synagogue is the one mentioned in Acts; at the least, however, it illustrates that synagogues with Diaspora associations, perhaps built by Diaspora Jews, existed in Jerusalem.¹³⁰

Scholars often cite the Tannaitic tradition mentioning a synagogue of Alexandrians (*t. Meg.* 3[2]:6); this tradition stems from the early third century, but the earlier events it depicts may fit other data.¹³¹ Although we cannot be sure that it represents the pre-70 situation, it is a likely inference; Alexandria was the closest major city to Jerusalem¹³² (unless we count smaller cities such as Damascus) and boasted one of the world's largest Jewish populations.¹³³ The Tarsian synagogue in Jerusalem (if this is the meaning in *b. Meg.* 26a; it might refer to a sort of metalworker) might be a different synagogue,¹³⁴ but some have suggested that it is the same one, which would fit the probable way to take the grammar of Acts 6:9.¹³⁵ What such traditions indicate at the least is that later Palestinian Jews found it likely that Diaspora Jews settled in Jerusalem and maintained their identity through synagogues there.

Alexandria was one of the largest cities of the Roman world and was also a major intellectual center (see further comment on Acts 18:24–25).¹³⁶ While Philo belonged to

125. Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 200. See also Kloppenborg, "Dating Theodotus"; idem, "Theodotus Synagogue Inscription"; Charlesworth, "Archaeology," 50–51.

126. With Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 3.

127. Yamauchi, *Stones*, 112–13; Thompson, *Archaeology*, 315; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:324; Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 206.

128. E.g., Safrai, "Relations," 193. Evans, *World*, 43, regards the identification as possible but "speculative." Deissmann, *Light*, 441, argues that the "synagogue of libertini" was probably made up of former imperial slaves, but this represents an even greater overspecification than identification with Theodotus's synagogue.

129. With Witherington, *Acts*, 254; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 326.

130. Martin, "Theodotus Inscription," notes that Theodotus's synagogue may have differed from many Jerusalem synagogues, as it was for Greek-speaking Diaspora Jews.

131. E.g., Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 188–89; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 68; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 47; most following earlier writers such as Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 3; Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:663–64; scholars often add *y. Meg.* 3, 73d. The context of *t. Sukkah* 4:6 also indicates an Alexandrian synagogue. Alexandrian Judaism was decimated in the early second century C.E.

132. Commonalities in some views, despite different cultures, also suggest interaction (see, e.g., Bamberger, "Philo and Aggadāh").

133. On Alexandria's Jewish population, see Clarke, "Alexandria," 24–25; further comment on Acts 18:24–25.

134. E.g., Knowling, "Acts," 175.

135. Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 189, 204–5; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 47. A synagogue of Tarsians (perhaps in Tarsus?) appears negatively in *y. Šeqal.* 2:5 (it was later reused by idolaters); Cilicia also had a bad reputation for violence (Plut. *Caes.* 2.1).

136. See Clarke, "Alexandrian Library"; and esp. idem, "Alexandrian Scholarship" (focusing esp. on philosophy and mathematics).

the educated Jewish elite there (Egyptian Jewish papyri in *Corpus papyrorum judaicarum* reveal a different disposition), some Alexandrian Jews later apparently agitated for Hellenistic citizenship in the city, suggesting that as a community they were probably better educated Hellenistically than many Jews, especially those elsewhere in Egypt.¹³⁷ Philo,¹³⁸ the *Letter of Aristeas*,¹³⁹ and other sources¹⁴⁰ also indicate that most of the Alexandrian Jewish educational establishment supported the Jerusalem temple. Some Alexandrian immigrants, presumably in the sphere of acquaintance of those mentioned here, probably became believers earlier (cf. Acts 2:10; Alexandrians would have constituted the majority of Egyptian Jews, especially those likely to settle in Jerusalem).

Cyrene in North Africa also had a large Jewish community (cf. 2 Macc 2:23; Mark 15:21; perhaps 1 Macc 15:23), as Luke himself knew (Luke 23:26; Acts 2:10; 11:20; 13:1).¹⁴¹ Although estimates of a hundred thousand Jews there are surely too high (especially given lower estimates for most cities' populations than was once common), that some scholars provide such estimates (higher than most estimates for Jerusalem's population) points to the size and prominence of the community there. (See further comment on Acts 11:20.)

The Roman province of Asia, mentioned here, also had a significant Jewish population (e.g., Acts 18:19),¹⁴² and its hostility here may prefigure some of Paul's struggles with Asian Jews later (19:9; 21:27–28). Diaspora Jews from Tarsus or elsewhere in Cilicia were also known abroad (Philo *Embassy* 281)¹⁴³ and sometimes settled among Diaspora Jews in Palestine (cf. one Isaak from Tarsus, elder of [apparently the synagogue] of the Cappadocians, *CIJ* 2:137, §931).¹⁴⁴

North African Jews—namely, Cyrenians and Alexandrians (especially given Alexandria's proximity)—may have dominated; but given the trajectory of Luke's narrative, his emphasis probably rests on the Cilicians and Asians. Saul, soon to be the lead character, is a Cilician (Acts 7:58; 9:11; 21:39) and will have a ministry in the larger region of Asia, including the province of Asia proper (19:10). Luke does not play down the importance of these sites: others minister to Cyrene and Alexandria,¹⁴⁵ and we know that Apollos from Alexandria also became a believer at some point (18:24). But Luke's focus will be on Paul.

IV. A "HELLENIST" SYNAGOGUE

Perhaps this synagogue or "assembling" functions like communities of Jews in the Diaspora that acted as semiautonomous communities of resident aliens.¹⁴⁶ Though

137. See discussion in Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 63–71; briefly, see comment on Acts 18:24.

138. E.g., Philo *Embassy* 278, 312.

139. E.g., *Let. Aris.* 33, 40, 42, 84–104.

140. See Schniedewind, "Tendenz in Greek Text." Some allegorists wished to abandon literal kashrut and sacrifices, but Philo's retention of the (symbolic) customs seems more likely to have been mainstream (cf. discussion in Barclay, "Paul among Jews," 100–101).

141. See most fully Applebaum, *Jews and Greeks in Cyrene*, esp. 130–200. A synagogue in nearby Berenike of Cyrenaica was repaired in 55 C.E. (*SEG* 17.283, cited in Evans, *World*, 41).

142. See Stern, "Diaspora," 143–55, for all of Asia Minor.

143. On Cilician Jewry, see *CIJ* 2:39–48, §§782–95; Stern, "Diaspora," 147–48 (including Epiph. *Her.* 30.11.2 and inscriptions, in addition to Philo and Josephus); on Cilicia more generally, see, e.g., Bing, "Cilicia." Cf. *Jos. Ant.* 20.145, which is rendered more plausible by the supposition of some Cilician Jews. The location of Cilicia would be familiar to most readers in eastern Mediterranean cities (*Jdt* 1:7, 12; 2:21, 25; 1 Macc 11:14; 2 Macc 4:36; 4 Macc 4:2).

144. Cilicians had long had relations with Cappadocia; thus, when Cicero was governor of Cilicia in 51 B.C.E. (*Cic. Fam.* 13.67.1), he was assigned to keep Cappadocia on good terms with Rome (*Plut. Cic.* 36.1–2).

145. Both outside Luke's narrative; but many Cyrenian settlers in Jerusalem had become believers (Acts 2:10; 11:20; 13:1; cf. Luke 23:26) and presumably had taken the gospel back to their region. Cf. also Egypt in Acts 2:10.

146. On such communities, see, e.g., Harland, *Associations*, 102–3.

not viewed as resident aliens, these Diaspora Jews might form their own respected Hellenist minority community in Jerusalem, overseeing some of their own affairs. They probably lived primarily in their own area of the city, just as some other groups (such as Essenes and Sadducees) did.¹⁴⁷ They would seek intervention from civic authorities (6:12) only when they wished to carry matters further (cf. 18:12–13).

Possibly both Stephen and Paul grew up in this synagogue;¹⁴⁸ the text is relatively clear that Paul did (6:9; 7:58; 22:3), though it does not clarify until later from which of the geographic regions that are represented his family derives (Cilicia; 9:11).¹⁴⁹ Descent from freed slaves (implied by “the synagogue of freedpersons”) would explain Paul’s citizenship (16:37),¹⁵⁰ although it is not surprising that Luke, stressing Paul’s high status (22:28; see comment there), does not emphasize this point. If Luke were simply inventing Paul’s citizenship, would he not portray him not only as a freeborn person but also as not (contrary to what one might infer from this text) a descendant of freedpersons? (Jewish readers would also prefer Roman citizenship without slavery; if a female ancestor was a slave during her child’s conception, the paternity of the child¹⁵¹ and the purity of Jewish ancestry could well be regarded as uncertain.)¹⁵²

Although Stephen faced opponents from various parts of the Diaspora, Luke does not wish to impugn these areas. He reports Hellenist Christians from some of the same areas: Cyrenian converts included Lucius (Acts 13:1), perhaps Simon (Luke 23:26; cf. Mark 15:21),¹⁵³ and others (Acts 11:20); Paul came from Cilicia (9:11), and churches arise there (15:23, 41; cf. Gal 1:21); later, Apollos came from Alexandria (Acts 18:24). Paul’s ministry would lead to many converts from Asia, though there was much opposition there as well (cf. 21:27–29). We should also note that it was not the entire synagogue community that opposed Stephen but some (τινες) within this synagogue.¹⁵⁴ Unfortunately for Stephen, they seem to have been highly influential members.

Against the assumptions of some NT scholars, we should expect that foreign Jews who immigrated to Jerusalem would support the temple (as 6:13 indicates), despite common disparaging views about foreign Jews’ orthodoxy.¹⁵⁵ If anything, the Hellenists were more zealous for the traditions than were many other Jews¹⁵⁶ (as suggested by the former’s being the ones to persecute Stephen and Saul). Granted, many Diaspora Jews may have been less temple-centered than those who had greater access to the

147. On living in different parts of the city, see Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 34.

148. Stephen’s name is Greek, but noncitizens could also attend a synagogue founded by citizens.

149. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 68 (linking Paul with “both” Cilician and *libertini* synagogues, as if distinct).

150. It serves as a likely historical confirmation of Paul’s citizenship (Minnen, “Roman Citizen”).

151. For sexual use of slaves, see, e.g., Alciph. *Farm.* 24 (Gemellus to Salaconis), 3.27; Sen. E. *Controv.* 4.pref. 10; 6.3; Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 2.4; Bradley, *Slaves*, 116–18; Osiek, “Female Slaves,” 262–64; Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 103–5; Arlandson, *Women*, 99–102; Glancy, “Obstacles”; see further comment under “Sexual Abuse” in the excursus “Slaves and Slavery” at Acts 12:13.

152. For the importance of the purity of one’s Israelite lineage, see, e.g., Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.30; cf. *b. Pesah.* 62b; *y. Ter.* 7:1; Johnson, *Genealogies*, 88–95; for priestly lineage, 1 *Esd* 5:39–40; cf. *t. Hag.* 2:9; 7:1; *y. Ketub.* 1:9, §1.

153. On the likelihood of his conversion (explaining the preservation of his name), see France, *Matthew*, 395; Brown, *Death*, 913. A first-century burial cave in Jerusalem suggests an Alexander, son of Simon, with apparently Cyrenian origins (Powers, “Treasures”); but (*pace* some scholars) these were common names, and so identification is not certain.

154. Hertig, “Dynamics,” 76, compares the frequent conflict in immigrant communities often between an older generation and a more assimilated, less strict younger generation.

155. E.g., *t. Abod. Zar.* 4:6 (R. Simeon ben Eleazar associating them with idolatry for eating with Gentiles). By 300 B.C.E., some Gentiles spoke of Jews with “Greek souls” (Stern, *Authors*, 1:47–52); on the hellenization of Alexandrian Judaism, see *CPJ* 1:25–47.

156. See, e.g., the prologue to Sirach.

temple.¹⁵⁷ But that these Diaspora Jews had left their homelands to settle in Jerusalem shows, as Skarsaune points out, “that they were not average Jews.”¹⁵⁸

Given his role in 7:58 (and claim in 26:10), Saul may well have been among those debating with Stephen. Paul’s letters identify him as a Pharisee (Phil 3:5) and reveal his thorough training in Torah, which Luke also knows (Acts 22:3; 23:6; 26:5); it is thus not unlikely that he was a Torah teacher in Greek-speaking Jerusalem synagogues.¹⁵⁹ One might wonder how much teaching he was doing as “a young man” (7:58), but by 8:3 and 9:1–2 it is clear that Saul is prominent in the persecution of Nazarenes, even if still a young man (cf. Gal 1:14). Perhaps we would expect Luke to be more explicit if Saul was involved before Acts 7:58, but his role in 7:58 seems hard to explain if it was his first introduction. Thus it is at least plausible that Saul debated with Stephen and, perhaps in one of his few early setbacks, met his match there. Luke does not address this, however; he avoids most unedifying details about Saul’s role beyond 7:58 and general summaries.

V. STEPHEN’S INSPIRED SUCCESS IN DEBATE (6:10)

Although it appears that members of the synagogue initiated the dispute with Stephen (6:9), he obtained the upper hand not only by signs but also intellectually (6:10). The key to his success was wisdom and the Spirit.

That Stephen speaks with “wisdom and the Spirit”¹⁶⁰ confirms these traits that characterized him before his commissioning (6:3; see comment there). “Wisdom” could include not only administrative ability (6:3) but speaking and rhetorical ability (cf. 1 Cor 1:20; 2:1, 4–5, 13; 12:8).¹⁶¹ Luke provides a sample of such wisdom in Stephen’s speech in chapter 7. Judaism recognized God as the source of wisdom.¹⁶² Luke does not use a hendiadys (the distinct articles prevent us reading “wisdom of the Spirit”), but clearly he does associate wisdom and the Spirit (see esp. Acts 6:3; cf. 1 Cor 2:4, 13; 12:8; Eph 1:17).¹⁶³ Scripture already associated wisdom and knowledge with God’s Spirit;¹⁶⁴ this association with wisdom and knowledge is also emphasized in Qumran texts.¹⁶⁵

157. So Shutt, “Aristeas,” 10.

158. Skarsaune, *Shadow*, 153–54 (quotation, 154); he compares “English-speaking Brooklyn Jews, settling in Jerusalem’s ultra-orthodox quarters” in modern times (154n13).

159. So Philip, *Pneumatology*, 151.

160. The concepts are related (see comment on Acts 6:3), though this is not technically a hendiadys here (the second noun also being articular).

161. Cf. Lucian *Hipp.* 1; Men. *Rhet.* 1.3, 364.14–16 (φρονήσεως); Pogoloff, *Logos*, 110–11; but cf. Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 273. The term also applies to other forms of skill (Lucian *Phal.* 1.12; Philost. *Hrk.* 1.3; 4.10; 25.13). In 1 Cor 1–2, philosophy may also be in view, but in the context speech is at least partly in view (1 Cor 1:17, 20; 2:1–5).

162. E.g., 4Q286 1 II, 6–7; *L.A.B.* 20:3. Bible teachers understood it as mediated through the Torah (Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 84); for some, wisdom had to come by divine revelation (1QS II, 3; 1QpHab XI, 1; Cook, introduction to “Book of Secrets,” in *DSSNT* 175, although, of course, this could also apply to understanding of the Torah). For Gentiles, divine wisdom also could include recognizing patterns in nature (Xen. *Mem.* 4.3.12; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.36–37; Philost. *Hrk.* 9.4), which would presumably apply also to patterns in history (as in Rom 11:33), relevant to Stephen’s understanding in Acts 7.

163. Cf., e.g., 1 *En.* 49:3 (modeled on Isa 11:2); 61:7, 11; Sir 39:6; *Pss. Sol.* 18:8; Wis 1:6; 7:7, 22, 25; 9:17 (on the usage in Wisdom, cf. also Levison, “Rhetoric,” 31–34); 4 *Ezra* 5:22; 14:40; *Jos. Asen.* 19:11 MSS; Philo *Giants* 23, 27, 47; *Spec. Laws* 1.8.

164. Exod 28:3; 31:3; 35:31 (changed in *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Exod 35:31); Deut 34:9; Isa 11:2; cf. Dan 5:11–12, 14 (cf. *Jos. Ant.* 10.239); perhaps Job 32:8.

165. See 1QS IV, 3, 26; 1QSb V, 25 (cf. Isa 11:2); VI, 36; 1QH^a VI, 24–27; 4Q161 8–10 12 (cf. Isa 11:2); 4Q213a 1 I, 14 (reconstructed); 4Q257 V, 1–3; 4Q365 10 4 (cf. Exod 31:3); 4Q427 2 + 3 II, 13; 4Q444 1 1, 3; perhaps 4Q510 1 6; 4Q511 18 II, 6. See also Menzies, *Development*, 84–87; Flusser, *Judaism*, 54–55; Barth, *Ephesians*, 1:148.

No one had been able to answer Jesus either (e.g., Luke 20:8, 26; esp. 20:39–40). Jesus had promised the help of the Spirit (12:12) and that adversaries would not be able to answer divinely given wisdom (21:15, using ἀνθίστημι, as here),¹⁶⁶ both in defense settings (12:11–12; 21:12–15). It is noteworthy that at Stephen's trial his accusers oppose him but never answer him (Acts 7:54–58); he has the narrative's last words (7:59–60). But although the apostles survived (5:40), Jesus warned that some of those accused would be put to death, despite the gift of divine wisdom (Luke 21:15–16); Stephen will become the first example of this warning. Jesus also refuted his opponents in public (Luke 20:7–8, 19, 26, 39–40) and was condemned without refutation at his hearing (Luke 22:67–71).

Rhetoricians knew how to turn opponents' arguments against them, implying sinister motives that violated the audience's values.¹⁶⁷ That his opponents could not refute Stephen may have therefore surprised them; in a synagogue serving members from the background discussed above (Acts 6:9), many must have had some skill in rhetoric. Invective and denunciation characterized much of ancient rhetoric.¹⁶⁸ Some scholars have argued that the rise of *delatores* as accusers¹⁶⁹ ushered in a new era of harshness in Roman oratory, but Roman oratory had long been that violent.¹⁷⁰ In the second century, Lucian satirizes the base level of some popular rhetoric: "Effrontery and shamelessness, a prompt lie, with an oath to confirm it always on the edge of your lips, jealousy and hatred of everyone, abuse and plausible slanders—all this will make you famous and distinguished in an instant."¹⁷¹

Jewish tradition (based on Deut 13:1–5) obligated all Jews to denounce any Jewish prophet leading others away from God;¹⁷² to love God more than others made this an obligation, even for those for whom it felt most distasteful. If this group of opponents within the synagogue believed that Stephen filled the role of a prophet leading astray, his persuasiveness made him all the more dangerous. Against the best in Jewish ethics (but according well with common human nature), some may have judged that the end justified the means (witnesses biased enough for Luke to present them as false in Acts 6:11–13).¹⁷³

c. False Witnesses (6:11, 13)

The appearance of false witnesses (6:11, 13) parallels Jesus's trial in the passion tradition (Mark 14:55–59); does Luke forget that he did not record this?¹⁷⁴ Stephen's trial will parallel that of Jesus in other respects as well (see esp. comment on Acts 7:55–56, 59–60). (Although Luke's passion narrative omits Mark's blasphemy charge, he does report that some hearers accused Jesus of blasphemy earlier [Luke 5:21].)

166. The term applies to Elymas's resistance (Acts 13:8); it could also apply to others resisting God (e.g., Wis 11:21; 12:12; Rom 9:19; 2 Tim 3:8; 4:15; 1 Clem. 27.5) and his servants (e.g., Wis 2:18).

167. E.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 36, 1444a.16–34.

168. E.g., Lucian *Critic* passim; see Marshall, *Enmity*, 46–69.

169. On which cf., e.g., Tac. *Agr.* 2; *Hist.* 1.2; Suet. *Tit.* 8.5; Hdn. 7.3.2; 7.6.4; O'Neal, "Delation."

170. Rutledge, "Delatores."

171. Lucian *Prof. P.S.* 22 (Harmon in LCL). In *Phal.* 1, ¶14, Lucian derides the use of false testimony in his mock apology for a tyrant.

172. Cf. also the traditions cited in Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 206, though these are all from later rabbis (e.g., *m. Sanh.* 7:10).

173. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 206, argues that Jewish tradition allowed secret witnesses to wait for "mislead-ers" (and them only) to betray themselves (citing, e.g., *m. Sanh.* 7:10; *b. Sanh.* 67a), but such secret witnesses are more like "undercover agents" than false witnesses.

174. Many argue that he omitted them deliberately because he will use them here (e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 69; Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 26; Dunn, *Acts*, 88), but Luke's more common practice is to include a feature in both volumes.

The false witnesses of Acts 6:13 contrast with the men of “good reputation” (μαρτυρουμένους) in 6:3, a group that included Stephen; they also contrast with God’s true witnesses (1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41; 13:31). The term ὑποβάλλω appears only here in the NT;¹⁷⁵ the term can mean “instigate,” indicating that some of Stephen’s opponents prompted false witnesses.¹⁷⁶ The exact language for “seizing” him together (6:12) is exclusively Lukan in the NT or Apostolic Fathers (Luke 8:29; Acts 27:15), used for a mob action in 19:29.¹⁷⁷

I. FALSE CHARGES

The masses supported the apostles (Acts 5:13, 26); why do they not defend Stephen? Peter’s sermons challenged the authorities but not Israel or its heritage; the charge that Stephen opposed the temple, however, could be enough to turn “the people” as well as the authorities against him.¹⁷⁸

Frivolous lawsuits were common in Greco-Roman culture; sometimes people were prosecuted because they had incurred the plaintiff’s personal enmity on an unrelated matter¹⁷⁹ or simply because the plaintiff needed a scapegoat to divert attention from his own guilt.¹⁸⁰ Sometimes, without actually proving the person guilty,¹⁸¹ a prosecutor would stir the audience’s anger concerning the terrible charges against a person, forcing the defense speaker to remind the hearers that a person was on trial, not the vice (Cic. *Cael.* 12.29). But false witnesses could advance the prosecution’s case by “proving” the defendant guilty of the terrible offenses.¹⁸²

II. INVESTIGATING AND PUNISHING FALSE WITNESSES

Cross-examination often exposed false witnesses, whom everyone viewed with disdain.¹⁸³ Jewish tradition included separate examination of witnesses to test them for falsehood.¹⁸⁴ If they contradicted each other even in matters of detail, their testimony was thrown out (e.g., *Sus* 51–52; *Sipre Deut.* 93.2.1).¹⁸⁵ Cross-examiners had to be very discriminating with witnesses (pre-Christian tradition in *m. ’Ab.* 1:9) and careful not to lead the witnesses into error (if this is the correct understanding of the Mishnah passage).

Self-contradiction raised suspicions concerning witnesses not only in Jewish courts (e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 189.1.3) but also in Greek and Roman courts. If a witness

175. Its only use in the LXX, 1 Esd 2:14 (2:18 ET), is not relevant (nor are its four uses in Josephus [but the adjective cognate in *Ant.* 7.186; *War* 5.439 is relevant] or most of its forty-eight uses in Philo); but cf. Dan 3:9 Theod.

176. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 68–69 (citing Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.74; hostile Smyranean Jewish deceit in *Mart. Pol.* 17.2; BDAG adds other sources, including Dan 3:9 Theod.; *Test. Sim.* 3:3).

177. Cf. the cognate form in 23:10 (without the prefix), for a mob action by the Sanhedrin. Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 176, notes the prevalence of the term in martyr literature, citing 2 Macc 3:27; 4:41; 4 Macc 5:4; but of these instances, only the last use is parallel in sense to the idea here. As language of human violence (resembling Acts 19:29) it appears also in *Jos. War* 7.415; Philo *Flacc.* 65, 95.

178. Dunn, *Acts*, 85–87.

179. E.g., *Ps.-Lysias Or.* 9.10, §115; *Vit. Aes.* 127.

180. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.45.101; cf. Nero’s charge against the Christians in *Tac. Ann.* 15.44.

181. See also Hall, “Delivery,” 232, citing for the prosecution Cic. *De or.* 2.185–90, and giving as examples *Verr.* 2.1.40–54, 64–70; 2.4.26–54; 2.5.160–63; and more rarely for the defense, *Rosc. am.* 145–46; *Clu.* 199; cf. *Quint. Inst.* 6.1.9–10. Cf. the stirring of the people in Acts 6:12.

182. Witnesses could persuade a court to convict (e.g., *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 8.78.3).

183. For hostility toward accused false witnesses and perjurers, see, e.g., *Isaeus Dicaeog.* 19; *Philoct.* 10; *Cic. Mur.* 6.13; *Sall. Catil.* 16.2; *Prop. Eleg.* 3.6.20; 1 *Tim* 1:10. Perjury would offend the deity whose “name was taken in vain” (Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 117).

184. *Sus* 48–62; *m. ’Ab.* 1:9; *Sanh.* 3:6; 5:1–4; *t. Sanh.* 6:3, 6; *Sipre Deut.* 149.1.1–2; 189.1.3.

185. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 208 (citing also *m. Sanh.* 5:2; *Mak.* 1:3–8; *t. Sanh.* 5:5; 6:3); Trites, *Witness*, 186 (citing *Sus* 54, 58, 61; *t. Sanh.* 5:5; *b. Pesah.* 12b). Gentiles also cross-examined people (the accused in *Tac. Ann.* 15.55).

changed his story, this implied his falsehood (Cic. *Att.* 2.24). Thus, when one witness who had claimed never to have spoken with a person afterward mentioned a lengthy conversation with him, he was declared a liar and an undependable witness (Cic. *Vat.* 1.3). If a story did not fit the facts (e.g., the informer claimed to see the defendant by moonlight, yet there was no moon that night), the witness was false (Plut. *Alc.* 20.5).¹⁸⁶

No one officially tolerated false witnesses. Among earlier Athenians, a case influenced by a false witness might be thrown out of court and required to start over (Isaeus *Hagnias* 46). Under Jewish law, false witnesses were to be punished with the judgment they had sought for their neighbor;¹⁸⁷ Roman law included the same provision, meant to reduce the abuse of *delatio* (the system by which prosecution depended on accusers).¹⁸⁸ Thus, in this capital case, Stephen's accusers would assume the death sentence themselves if shown to be false. (The Pharisees, who severely restricted genuine capital offenses in general, apparently also restricted the capital nature of this crime.)¹⁸⁹ Egyptian law also punished perjury with death.¹⁹⁰ Some other places punished false accusers with so much shame that they fled their city (Diod. Sic. 12.12.2).¹⁹¹

III. DELIBERATE JUDICIAL DECEPTION

We should not assume, however, that such constraints, favored by many and practiced when feasible, must have shaped Stephen's trial. If the council behind Luke's story is what we usually call the Sanhedrin (συνέδριον simply means "council"),¹⁹² the young movement already had some enemies there (Acts 4:15; 5:21; Luke 22:66). Later rabbis idealized the Sanhedrin,¹⁹³ including the judicial experience for judges (*t. Šeqal.* 3:27), but first-century sources are less sanguine, at least about the aristocratic priests who usually dominated the assembly (see comment on Acts 4:1).¹⁹⁴

186. The principle of investigating claims extended beyond legal settings (e.g., Phaedrus 3.10.5–6).

187. E.g., Deut 18:18–19; 11QT LXI, 7–11; Jos. *Ant.* 4.219; *m. Mak.* 1:7; *t. Sanh.* 6:6; *Sipre Deut.* 190.5.1. This is also true in ancient Mesopotamian law (Hamm. 1–4, 11, esp. 1, 3, 11).

188. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 51; cf. Quint. *Decl.* 313 intro; 324 intro; 331 intro; 331.2, 5. On other penalties associated with false witness, see Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 37. Cf. also the distaste for perjury in Sall. *Catil.* 16.2; *Philip.* 15; *Invect. M. Tull.* 2; Cic. *Invect. Sall.* 5.14; Prop. *Eleg.* 3.6.20.

189. For some limitations, see, e.g., *m. Mak.* 1:4. But Sadducees were apparently more lenient in this situation, requiring that the false witness not merely intended, but even succeeded, in having the defendant executed, whereas the Pharisees required only that the sentence was passed (1:6; *Sipre Deut.* 190.5.1; cf. *t. Sanh.* 6:6).

190. At least in Hellenistic idealizations of it; Diod. Sic. 1.77.2.

191. A false witness becoming prisoner of the person he slandered (Sen. E. *Controv.* 5.4) is probably fictitious, but it recalls the principle of just retribution. The Qur'an harshly punishes false witnesses (Qur'an 24.4).

192. Even according to later rabbis, twenty-three judges were sufficient for even a capital hearing (*m. Sanh.* 1:6; *t. Sanh.* 3:1 [though this instance is for an ox]; cf. *b. Sanh.* 9a; 36b). Later tradition required the Sanhedrin's participation in capital cases concerning apostasy or false prophets (Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 207–8, relevantly citing *m. Sanh.* 1:5; 11:4–5), but since earlier sources reveal that it lacked capital jurisdiction (see above), it is doubtful that the hearing here began as an official "capital" case.

193. This is commonly acknowledged today as one area where the Mishnah contradicts earlier sources. Although I prefer to take Tannaitic traditions as reliable where feasible (see Keener, *John*, 185–94), conflict with earlier sources renders that procedure more problematic here.

194. I have argued elsewhere that much of the Sanhedrin, loaded with the descendants of Herod's political appointees, could have been as corrupt as the NT and early Jewish sources present (and certainly as biased toward the elite), without, for that reason, casting Jewish piety as a whole in a bad light (Keener, *Matthew*, 613–16; esp. 644–46). Politically powerful members of the Sanhedrin differed from most of the Jewish people in many respects. I have observed politically motivated legal injustice in some cultures today, and in ecclesiastical courts and denominational hierarchies as well, and doubt that human nature has changed much, regardless of its ethnic or creedal label. Today there are both noble and ignoble lawyers, both noble and ignoble clients, and both noble and ignoble causes; justice is not always served, including in many Western courtrooms with all their safeguards.

Pharisees and their rabbinic successors seem to have been strict in their requirements for testimony,¹⁹⁵ but such legal conservatism is not relevant here; we have no indication that the Pharisees or others of like convictions are in view. Luke’s “elders,” “scribes,” and “Sanhedrin” (and possibly “people”; 6:12) echo Jesus’s passion in Luke 22:66.

If Stephen’s Hellenist accusers were at all like the forensic rhetoricians who show up throughout our ancient sources, the criterion that would determine which witnesses to bring and which witnesses to challenge was simply what would help them win their case (see comment on Acts 24:5–8a). For example, those who wanted to bring down a popular leader in classical Athens formed a coalition to charge him (Plut. *Cim.* 14.2). In another trial, informers were proved false, but the case proceeded toward its predetermined outcome (Plut. *Alc.* 20.5).

More to the point, rhetoric taught people not only how to turn arguments but how to deceive legally.¹⁹⁶ One Hellenistic rhetorical handbook, indeed, provides training for what we would recognize as false witnesses. It explains how to give false evidence without being liable to charges as a false witness if exposed. For example, one can refuse to take the oath because one does not wish to expose the crime (thereby implying the person’s guilt without perjuring oneself by stating it; *Rhet. Alex.* 15, 1432a.4–9). By contrast, if one’s opponents tried the same technique, an able rhetorician would demand “written depositions” (1432a.9–11 [LCL, 347]).¹⁹⁷ One could swear truly about a point, then attach a false statement to it that will seem like an oath yet remain immune to prosecution (1432a.4–5). It is hardly surprising that a notorious “false accuser” (*calumnia notatus*) became a teacher of oratory (Suet. *Rhet.* 4). By succumbing to bribery or personal vendettas, even prosecutors could be corrupted (Pliny *Ep.* 3.9.29–30).¹⁹⁸

Rhetoricians knew how to discredit opposing witnesses when this would be helpful to their case (*Rhet. Alex.* 15, 1431b.37–1432a.3). Likewise, if a witness’s oath favors one’s case, one argues that the swearer would fear to perjure himself before the gods; if it opposes one’s case, one argues that the swearer is so notoriously wicked that he is not moved by fear of the gods (17, 1432a.33–1432b.10).¹⁹⁹ When attacking the credibility of witnesses, one could “either attack them on the grounds that they give evidence out of partiality or enmity, or because of personal relationships, or for private gain, or because they are untrustworthy because of their age.”²⁰⁰ Apparently, false witnesses sometimes conspired together, because an old Jewish legal tradition prohibited executing one false witness unless the other was also found false (*t. Sanh.*

195. E.g., *t. Sanh.* 8:3; *b. Sanh.* 37b. On the need for at least two witnesses, see Deut 17:6; 19:15; CD IX, 17–23; Jos. *Ant.* 4.219; *Sipre Deut.* 148.1.1; 188.2.1–2; 188.3.1–2; Daube, “Witnesses”; Vliet, *No Single Testimony*; for potential abuses even here, see *y. Sanh.* 6:3, §3, but the rabbis were stricter in demanding evidence in some respects than, e.g., the *Damascus Document* had (CD IX, 17–20; see Neusner, “Testimony”; despite Rabinovitch, “Parallels”). Rothstein, “Testimony,” argues that the *Damascus Document* required testimony (and punishment!) on the very day of the crime. If the court lacked adequate evidence to execute a sentence, God would do so (e.g., *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 9:6).

196. Thus Lysias appears as if he always speaks the truth, but this appearance simply reveals the excellence of his imitation of truth (Dion. Hal. *Isaeus* 16). For turning any claims to one’s advantage, see, e.g., *Rhet. Her.* 3.3.6; for arguing either side of a case, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 331.14; Hermog. *Inv.* 2.2.110–12; 3.5.145, 149 (skeptics, denying accessible truth, also followed this practice; cf. Hippol. *Ref.* 1.20).

197. Ethics were violated, not simply unknown; the opponents sought to “steal” (κλέπτειν) their way by lies (*Rhet. Alex.* 15, 1432a.3–4, 8–9). Orators themselves would not swear about objective acts they had not witnessed but added casual oaths reinforcing subjective *ēthos* (Hermog. *Method* 20.435).

198. For further on bribing judges or jurors, see Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 37; on political bribery, see comment on Acts 24:26. Some legal traditions made convicting some categories of criminals financially profitable, though the consequences of failure could prove lethal (Quint. *Decl.* 324 intro, perhaps hypothetical).

199. An oath is defined as “an unproved statement supported by an appeal to the gods” (*Rhet. Alex.* 17, 1432a.1–2).

200. Hermog. *Issues* 45.10–20 (Heath, 36–37).

6:6).²⁰¹ It was not always possible to distinguish true witnesses from false, and ancient judges, like modern ones, sometimes came to varied conclusions (*m. Roš Haš. 2:8*).

IV. LUKE'S PORTRAYAL

How would this case of false witnesses be viewed by Luke's audience? Would this fate cause readers to think that God had forsaken Stephen? The descriptions of both Stephen (Acts 6:3, 8, 10, 15) and the witnesses (6:11, 13) would prevent that. Although the system probably worked better in Roman Corinth and Philippi than in some other locations, everyone was well aware that courts sometimes corrupted justice; Christians in some locations where Luke expected an audience had probably experienced this (16:20–23; 17:5–9), and others knew that Paul warned against dependence on the courts to achieve justice (1 Cor 6:1–11).²⁰² Everyone would view as honorable Socrates, who, though falsely charged, felt no guilt, in contrast to the false witnesses against him (*Xen. Apol. 24*). Historians portrayed as vicious those who hired false witnesses.²⁰³ Luke's ideal audience would certainly sympathize with Stephen, a true witness (cf. Acts 22:20) who contrasts with the false ones here (cf. 7:58).²⁰⁴

Most relevant is that hiring false witnesses to get someone stoned (6:13; 7:58–59) recalls the behavior of wicked rebels against God such as Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs 21:8–15),²⁰⁵ except that Stephen is not merely an innocent victim figure like Naboth but a righteous, signs-working, divinely attested prophet figure like Elijah (1 Kgs 21:17–24); for stoning, cf. Moses in Exod 17:4.²⁰⁶ The parallel also leads the informed reader to expect judgment on the false witnesses (1 Kgs 21:20–24); the conversion of one of their allies (Acts 7:58; 9:5–8) partially subverts this expectation, at least for first-time readers still unaware of "Saul's" identity.

Witnesses were to be the first to cast stones at the person convicted of a capital charge (Deut 17:7). Conversely, false witnesses were subject to the sentence they sought for the accused (19:16–19); such measures were intended as deterrents (19:20). In this case, however, the false witnesses explicitly joined in the stoning (Acts 7:58). By various narrative elements, however (the witnesses stripping themselves; Stephen confessing their sin rather than his own; and possibly Jesus standing at God's right hand), Luke implies that God would execute their sentence (see comment on Acts 7:59–60).

d. The Charges (6:11–14)

Just as rhetoricians who wanted to be clear stated their theses early in their speeches, historians who wanted to make their forensic narratives lucid would include the

201. Given Pharisaic reticence to approve of executions, this may, of course, simply provide a further limitation. But the conspiracy concern appears elsewhere (e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 189.1.3).

202. See briefly Keener, *Corinthians*, 52–53; for bias against the poor, cf. Cic. *Quinct.* 1.1–2; *Mil.* 7.17; Mitchell, "Rich"; Winter, "Litigation"; for corruption, e.g., Cic. *Quint. frat.* 3.1.5.15; 3.4.1 (though Roman courts were interested in truth and not simply oratory; Riggsby, "Verdicts"; Men. *Rhet.* 2.3, 379.20–24). Paul's approach in some respects resembles the legal nonresistance of some philosophers; see Mus. *Ruf.* 10, p. 76.16–17; p. 78.7–9, 22–26; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.2.5; 3.3.12; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.22; Iambli. *V.P.* 27.124, 126; cf. Max. Tyre 12; mocked in Lucian *Eunuch* 1–3; *Icar.* 16.

203. E.g., Quint. *Curt.* 10.1.27, 36.

204. On Stephen as "witness" (in view of Lukan usage), see Malipurathu, "Mission."

205. Boisnard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:26, 54; Brodie, "Stoning of Naboth"; Hill, *Hellenists*, 65–66. The only clear parallels need not, however, suggest Lukan fabrication (as Brodie would argue); if one was stoned on false charges (as early Christians would insist that Stephen was), this was one of the most relevant OT accounts through which to view it. Despite echoes, the stories are quite different, with Naboth also being a minor character in the Elijah story rather than a major character like Stephen (Marshall, "Acts," 556).

206. On Stephen's prophetic characterization, see Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 86–90.

charges early in their presentation of the trial. To understand Stephen's speech in Acts 7, we must first understand the charges to which his speech responds.²⁰⁷

The charges also resonate, by parallel or contrast, with other elements of Luke's narrative. Stephen's enemies stirred up the people (6:12), but ironically Christ's agents are accused of this offense (24:5; cf. 17:6; Jesus in Luke 23:2). The charge of undermining Moses's traditions and customs (6:14) is later a slander against Paul in the Jerusalem church itself (21:21).

I. LISTING THE CHARGES

By providing three versions of the charges against Stephen (which, concretely, come down to rejecting the law and the temple; 6:11, 13–14), Luke signals his audience what issues to listen for in Stephen's speech. (Answering charges was standard practice, though the answer is often more explicit than in Acts 7 [e.g., Isoc. *Antid.* 31].)²⁰⁸ The charges appear thus:

6:11	Against God	Against Moses
6:13	Against this holy place (the temple)	Against the law
6:14	Destroy this place	Destroy the customs

Three times Stephen is charged with opposing Moses, the law, or the "customs"; twice he is charged with opposing the temple; once he is charged with opposing God, perhaps a general catchall charge covering the other charges.²⁰⁹ E. P. Sanders accepts Luke's portrait on this point as plausible: "We can accept without argument the reason given for Stephen's death: he spoke against the temple, and consequently against the law, which establishes it."²¹⁰

The Greek term βλάσφημος (Acts 6:11) applies to any kind of defaming and was not limited to narrower, later Mishnaic definitions of religious blasphemy.²¹¹ Ironically, bearing false witness (hence violating divine oaths) did in fact constitute desecration of the divine name according to most ancient thought. "Blasphemy" against Moses sounds particularly strange under narrower definitions, but the use here fits first-century Greek usage,²¹² even specifically against Moses.²¹³

Both the temple and the law were central to first-century Judaism. It is difficult to overstate the centrality of Torah for early Judaism.²¹⁴ Each nation was defined in

207. With, e.g., Kilgallen, *Speech*, 35.

208. The issues do surface throughout the speech, *pace* Richard, *Composition*, 315–16 (who compares Jesus answering questions but not accusations, n. 174).

209. Because of the parallels with the other charges, Combrink, *Analysis*, 7, suggests that the accusers use "God" for the temple.

210. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 284 (one of the rare cases of persecution that he grants without argument).

211. See *m. Sanh.* 7:5; Keener, *Matthew*, 365–66, 651. Profaning the name in any way, however, was offensive (e.g., *y. Ta'an.* 3:10, §1); offensive acts could be popularly viewed as blasphemous even without a statute (Bock, *Blasphemy*, 111; *idem*, *Acts*, 271). For blasphemy in Judaism, see, particularly thoroughly, Bock, *Blasphemy*, 30–112; on blasphemy in the Pentateuch, see Rooker, "Blasphemy" (and sources he cites).

212. The Greek verb covers any "abusive language" whether or not the charge is religious (with BDAG; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 69; see Luke 22:65; 23:39). One could also blaspheme (though the term is different) by threatening the temple (1 Macc 7:35, 38).

213. *Jos. War* 2.145 (Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 208; Dunn, *Acts*, 87; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 333); *Ag. Ap.* 1.279 (the Egyptians against Moses); and esp. *Ant.* 4.307 (where the Israelites revile and seek to stone Moses, as Stephen's accusers will do to him in Acts 7:58). Among later rabbis, even dishonoring sages could merit exclusion from the future world (*m. Sanh.* 10:1; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 333); some sages, indeed, averred that teaching law even in the presence of one's teacher merited death by God (*Sipra Sh. M.d.* 99.5.6; *b. Erub.* 63a; *Tem.* 16a; *Lev. Rab.* 20:6–7).

214. Cf., e.g., Moore, *Judaism*, 1:235–50; Schechter, *Aspects*, 116–69; Grossfeld, "Torah." For the law in the prophets, see discussion in Halton, "Law" (esp. 493–94).

part by its own laws, and Diaspora Jews were often granted the legal right to organize themselves according to their ancestral laws (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 14.216, 223, 227, 263; 16.172; 19.310–11). One Diaspora Jew, for example, could argue that Jews had not changed a single word since Moses and would die ten thousand deaths rather than violate the law (*Philo Hypoth.* 6.9).²¹⁵

Jewish people studied Torah not only to learn how to live but also as an act of devotion toward God;²¹⁶ its prescriptions were no more viewed as a burden than our modern traffic codes are for us.²¹⁷ Although Torah could be said to consist of commandments,²¹⁸ its sense is broader than code or custom, denoting instruction and revelation.²¹⁹

Jewish people scrupulously taught Torah to their children²²⁰ and were thus regarded among Gentiles as a particularly educated people.²²¹ The relatively popular Pharisees and their successors were particularly known for their study of the law.²²² Tannaim emphasized lifelong study of Torah;²²³ a Torah scroll could be said to be “beyond price.”²²⁴ Some declared that study of Torah was the Bible’s point in saying “serve the Lord with all one’s heart and soul”;²²⁵ other Tannaitic texts attribute the exile to neglect of Torah²²⁶ or declare that it is better never to have been born than to be unable to recite words of Torah,²²⁷ or that one who does not study is worthy of death;²²⁸ or that Torah study is a greater role than priesthood or kingship.²²⁹ Amoraim tend to be even more graphic: God himself keeps Torah;²³⁰ the entire world represents less than a thousandth of Torah.²³¹ Amoraim elaborated the Tannaitic tradition that the world is sustained by Torah: the world would not continue without it.²³² And whereas the Holy One may be lenient in judging idolatry, sexual immorality, murder, or even apostasy, he would not be lenient in neglect of Torah.²³³

215. Cf. later rabbis on the sacredness of a single *yod* (*b. Sanh.* 107ab; *y. Sanh.* 2:6, §2; *Gen. Rab.* 47:1; *Lev. Rab.* 19:2; *Num. Rab.* 18:21; *Song Rab.* 5:11, §§3–4; cf. *Luke* 16:17; *Matt* 5:18; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 1:8; *Exod. Rab.* 6:1).

216. See, e.g., Safrai, “Education,” 945. I am borrowing here from Keener, *John*, 355, 357–59 passim.

217. *T. Ber.* 6:24–25; see Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 191; cf. Koester, *Introduction*, 1:242. The law’s purpose had been gracious from the start (e.g., *Deut* 6:20–25).

218. E.g., *Exod. Rab.* 33:7 (Amoraic).

219. Sandmel, *Genius of Paul*, 47. Translations regularly speak of the “revelation” at Sinai (e.g., in *Sipra Sav pq.* 18.97.1.4; *Sipra Taz. par.* 1.121.1.6; *b. Hag.* 6a, in purported discussion of the schools of Shammai and Hillel; *Gen. Rab.* 34:9; *Exod. Rab.* 28:5; *Num. Rab.* 7:1; *Deut. Rab.* 2:31; 7:8); see Ross, “Revelation,” 119.

220. Cf. Lichtenberger, “Lebenskraft.”

221. See, e.g., Stern, *Authors*, 8–11.

222. See Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 236.

223. *’Abot R. Nat.* 3 A (R. Ishmael and R. Akiba).

224. *T. B. Meṣi’a* 3:24 (Neusner, 4:92), R. Judah. On its worth, see also, e.g., *m. Qidd.* 4:14; *Gen. Rab.* 16:4 (using *Ps* 19:1); such comparisons with wealth derive especially from the wisdom tradition in Proverbs.

225. *Sipre Deut.* 41.6.1.

226. *’Abot R. Nat.* 5, §18 B.

227. *T. Hag.* 1:2.

228. Hillel in *m. ’Ab.* 1:13.

229. *B. ’Ab.* 6:5, bar.

230. *Y. Roš Haš.* 1:3, §24 (R. Eleazar; 57b); *b. Ber.* 7a; *Pesiq. Rab.* 14:6. Harvey, “Torah,” 1239, cites *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 3b to show that God studies it daily, to which we may add *Tg. Neof.* 1 on *Deut.* 32:4; cf. Marmorstein, *Anthropomorphism*, 66–68.

231. *B. ’Erub.* 21a and *y. Pe’ah* 1:1, 15d, cited in Harvey, “Torah,” 1239.

232. See *m. ’Ab.* 1:2; *b. Pesah.* 68b; *Ned.* 32a, cited in Harvey, “Torah,” 1239.

233. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 15:5; *Lam. Rab.* proem 2; cf. *y. Hag.* 1:7, §3. To those familiar with rabbinic literature, the language is obviously hyperbolic here, meant to underline the point; further, one must obey as well as study Torah (e.g., *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 17b). Many may have agreed literally, however, with the Tannaitic tradition that a person would first give account in the judgment for Torah study (*b. Sanh.* 7a). The importance of Torah study appears in many other Amoraic texts (e.g., *b. Menah.* 110a; *Roš Haš.* 4a; *Šabb.* 83b; *Exod. Rab.* 41:7; see further references in Patte, *Hermeneutic*, 25–26).

But Torah's importance was hardly limited to the Pharisees and later rabbis, although most people did not have the time for the academic pursuits in which rabbis reveled. The Qumran sectarians, apparently practicing virtual monasticism so as to devote themselves fully to Torah study, emphasized devotion to Torah more heavily, it seems, than did their other contemporaries.²³⁴ The law's centrality appears in Greek-speaking Jewish texts as well as documents in Hebrew or Aramaic: for instance, the law was eternal (Bar 4:1) and constituted God's holy words (*Let. Aris.* 177).²³⁵

Josephus claims that the law was central to the life of all Palestinian Jews (*Ag. Ap.* 1.60), and this undoubtedly reflects accurately the norm (even if he glosses over exceptions). He further claims that Jewish observance of the law everywhere (2.282) causes the law to be in all the world just as God himself is everywhere (2.284). Further, because the limited legal autonomy that was granted Jewish communities in the Diaspora permitted them to judge members of their communities on the basis of Jewish law, study and exegesis of biblical laws was a civil as well as a religious issue.²³⁶ In short, "to be a Jew may . . . be reduced to the single, pervasive symbol of Judaism: Torah. To be a Jew meant to live the life of Torah, in one of the many ways in which the masters of Torah taught."²³⁷ Often in later (especially Amoraic) Jewish texts, the Torah is betrothed to Israel, God's daughter to his son,²³⁸ and sometimes the law giving at Sinai is portrayed as a wedding.²³⁹ In another kind of parable, Torah is God's bride and queen, interceding for Israel.²⁴⁰ Thus Torah laughs at men,²⁴¹ exclaims,²⁴² talks with the Shekinah,²⁴³ and so forth. When God says, "Let us make humanity," the plural refers to God and his Torah.²⁴⁴ The Sabbath is sometimes personified in a similar way.²⁴⁵

The law contained what was most fundamental to Jewish heritage and practice and hence to the Jews' identity as a people. A challenge to the law was thus a challenge to their very understanding of their existence as a people, as well as a challenge to God the lawgiver and to what God required.²⁴⁶

II. ANCIENT CUSTOMS AND LAWS

"Customs" (Acts 6:14) here must be roughly equivalent to "law" (6:13), since they were passed down by Moses (cf. 2 Macc 12:38).²⁴⁷ Whereas Dio Chrysostom in one

234. For the emphasis in the Scrolls, cf. Braun, "Beobachtungen"; LaSor, *Scrolls*, 116–20. For mystical Judaism, see Urbach, *Sages*, 1:177.

235. Jewish people, unlike Romans, did not distinguish divinely inspired ritual prescriptions from merely humanly ordained civil laws (Cohen, *Law*, 28–29). Eventually, Jewish tombs as distant from the Holy Land as Rome were decorated with Torah shrines (Goodenough, *Symbols*, 2:6, 22; for an extensive treatment of these shrines, see 4:99–144; cf. 12:83–86).

236. See Meeks, *Moral World*, 64.

237. Neusner, *Beginning*, 13.

238. *Sipre Deut.* 345.2.2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 26:9; *Exod. Rab.* 29:4; *Song Rab.* 8:11, §2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:2. For Torah as God's daughter, cf. also *b. Sanh.* 101a; *Exod. Rab.* 33:1; *Num. Rab.* 12:4; *Song Rab.* 3:10, §2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:1. Although this is the usual image in rabbinic sources, Jewish people used imagery flexibly; in a much rarer variant, Torah is the bride and the ark is the bridegroom (*y. Ta'an.* 2:1, §6), or (more often) Israel is God's daughter rather than God's son (e.g., *b. Pesah.* 56a; *Song Rab.* 8:9, §2).

239. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12:11; 26:9.

240. *Song Rab.* 8:14, §1, attributing the parable to R. Levi, early third-century Palestine. For Torah as intercessor, cf. also *Exod. Rab.* 29:4.

241. *Gen. Rab.* 85:9, third-century Palestine.

242. *Exod. Rab.* 30:3; on the Holy Spirit's analogous exclamations, cf., e.g., *Exod. Rab.* 27:9.

243. *B. Šabb.* 87a.

244. *Tanḥ. Pekudei* 3, as cited in Harvey, "Torah," 1239.

245. *B. Šabb.* 119a (bride); *Pesiq. Rab.* 23:6 (married to Israel at Sinai); 46:2.

246. With, e.g., Moore, *Judaism*, 1:466. Greek orators might practice supporting or challenging laws (Gibson, "Notes," 527, and sources there), but Israel's laws were too sacred for direct challenge.

247. With Kilgallen, *Speech*, 115; O'Toole, *Acts* 26, 38–39.

oration (*Or.* 75) argues (in an encomium on law) that laws are the best guide, “customs” (ἔθνη) usurp this pride of place in *Or.* 76, “On Custom” (Περὶ ἔθους; an encomium on custom). As an “unwritten law” obeyed by people voluntarily, it is superior to written codes (76.1);²⁴⁸ laws are like tyrants, but customs are like benevolent kings (76.2; cf. 76.4).

For Greeks, all peoples’ laws (νόμοι) included various traditions passed down, including beliefs and rites.²⁴⁹ A “custom” (ἔθος) also included traditions, sometimes religious in nature (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:28 LXX; Wis 14:16; Iambl. *V.P.* 1.1),²⁵⁰ even from the moment of its first transmission (Iambl. *V.P.* 28.149). Custom provided one critical foundation for ancient law²⁵¹ and also a criterion for argument (alongside advantage and feasibility).²⁵² “Above all,” Roman law declared, the judge “must be sure not to depart from the statutes, imperial pronouncements, and custom.”²⁵³ Most thinkers in the period valued ancient customs and viewed innovation as suspicious.²⁵⁴ Thus Augustus emphasized how he heroically upheld ancestral customs (*Res gest.* 6.1; 8.5),²⁵⁵ and Romans expected fathers to educate their sons in national traditions to make them good citizens (Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.69.161). Because cities came to follow Roman laws rather than local laws, local customs remained a matter for individual cities’ encomia (Men. *Rhet.* 1.3, 363.11–14).²⁵⁶

Respect for the “ancients” was of paramount importance, and people regularly appealed to their authority.²⁵⁷ One dare not disbelieve one’s ancestors (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.77). One who dared to differ from the precedent of the ancients must reckon with their prestige (e.g., *Rhet. Her.* 4.2.2–4.3.4, esp. 4.2.2). When one polytheistic ruler converted to Judaism, his people wanted him dethroned for having abandoned their ancestral customs (Jos. *Ant.* 20.77, 81). Even “savage” Scythians, noted Josephus, obey their own customs (*Ag. Ap.* 2.269).

Gentiles’ arguments for new customs often turned on how they fit ancient laws;²⁵⁸ this would have been a still greater concern for Jewish people. Those debating about changing religious rites could either advocate the change or protest it (*Rhet. Alex.* 2, 1423a.30–33; 1423b.12–33); if the latter, they could argue on the basis of ancestral custom (1423a.32–1423b.12). But Stephen’s response focuses on the temple, meanwhile presupposing rather than arguing for his fidelity to the law.²⁵⁹

248. Cf. also Hierocles *How Should One Behave toward One’s Country?* in Stobaeus *Anth.* 3.39.36.

249. See Rudhardt, “Attitude des Grecs”; cf. Jervis, “Law,” 632; Thucyd. 2.34.1; 2.35.3; on the value of ancient law, see, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 320.3.

250. See also Macrobi. *Sat.* 3.8.9 (van der Horst, “Macrobius,” 226).

251. Jervis, “Law,” 632 (citing, e.g., Cic. *Resp.* 5.1). This was the basis for written law and was as important as written law (Plato in Diog. Laert. 3.86).

252. Ael. Arist. *Leuct. Or.* 5.6–11.

253. Justin. *Inst.* 4.17.intro. (Birks and McLeod, 143; *legibus aut constitutionibus aut moribus proditum est*); for an earlier appeal to “laws . . . tribunals and customs,” see, e.g., Cic. *Cael.* 1.1. For classical Athenians, rule by “laws” was what uniquely characterized democracies (νόμοις, Aeschines *Ctes.* 6).

254. Cic. *Resp.* 5.1.2; Hierocles *How Should One Behave toward One’s Country?* (Stobaeus *Anth.* 3.39.36, also noted in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 88); valuing of ancestral custom in *Res Gestae* 2.8; Quint. *Decl.* 339.10.

255. Conveniently, in Sherck, *Empire*, §26, p. 43.

256. This work dates to the late third to early fourth century C.E. and probably reflects a higher degree of unity under Roman law than existed in the first century, certainly in the province of Syria. Otherwise customs parallel laws (Men. *Rhet.* 1.3, 363.6–7); the term also applies to local customs in 2 Macc 13:4. Honoring one’s homeland was a high value (Cic. *Resp.* 6.16.16; 6.24.26; *Inv.* 2.22.65; see comment on Acts 21:39).

257. E.g., Cornutus *Summ.* 1 (Lang, 2, lines 17–18), in van der Horst, “Cornutus,” 168; *Rhet. Her.* 4.2.2; Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 64.12; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.18.17; Tac. *Dial.* 16; Babr. 47.1; Crates *Ep.* 35; Athen. *Deipn.* 8.363D; Matt 5:21, 33; cf. “ancient things” in Philost. *Hrk.* 7.12.

258. Hermog. *Progymn.* 12, “On Introduction of a Law,” 27; Aphth. *Progymn.* 14, “On Introduction of a Law,” 53S, 47R. Stoics argued that they alone observed the full spirit of laws (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11d, pp. 68–69.1–3, 6–8; 2.7.11i, pp. 76–77.30–37).

259. Cf. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 115.

As with other peoples, for Israel to forsake its customs was a terrible offense (1 Macc 1:41–43; 2 Macc 4:12; 11:25; 4 Macc 18:5).²⁶⁰ Even most Diaspora Jews maintained some distinctively Jewish customs.²⁶¹ It is possible that Luke includes here oral traditions, such as those respected by the Pharisees (Jos. *Ant.* 13.297, 408; *m. 'Ab.* 1:1),²⁶² although others would not have shared all the Pharisees' traditions. The idea that Moses “handed down” the customs might allude to a supposed unbroken chain of tradition, perhaps what came to be called oral Torah;²⁶³ still, it could as easily refer to his having handed them down in the written law (cf. 1 Esd 9:39).

Although rabbinic traditions eventually came to be identified with the law itself as a sort of “oral law”²⁶⁴ and viewed oral tradition as greater than written Torah²⁶⁵ (because oral law encompassed and explained written law),²⁶⁶ it is debated how widely spread this development was even in Pharisaism by Luke's day.²⁶⁷ (Proposed early attestation in Philo may simply attest a popular Greek idea not yet widely applied to Torah in Judea.²⁶⁸ It might be of relevance, however, for the perspective of the Hellenists.) Like the Samaritans,²⁶⁹ many non-Pharisaic Jews regarded the written Torah as sufficient, while filling in its gaps, which they did not admit existed. The early image of the fence around Torah,²⁷⁰ however, reflects the importance of Torah observance; the “fence” of traditional interpretations that grew up around the law, assumed to be correct,²⁷¹ was undoubtedly in practice identified with the sense of the law.²⁷² The Essenes certainly regarded their laws as equivalent to Scripture.²⁷³

260. They must also resist the “customs of the Gentiles” (1 Macc 1:14).

261. Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 1–2, citing Philo *Mos.* 1.278; for some characteristic traits of Judaism in the Diaspora, despite diversity, see Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 399–444.

262. So also Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 359.

263. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 334.

264. *'Abot R. Nat.* 15 A (reportedly of Shammai and Hillel); 29, §§61–62 B; *Sipra Behuq.* pq. 8.269.2.14 (citing also Akiba); *Sipre Deut.* 306.25.1; 351.1.2, 3 (the latter citing R. Gamaliel II); *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 4:7; 10:5; 15:5; *Num. Rab.* 13:15–16; *Song Rab.* 1:2, §5; 1:3, §2; cf. *'Abot R. Nat.* 3 A; *Sipra Behuq. par.* 2.264.1.1; *Sipre Deut.* 115.1.1–2; 161.1.3; *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:1; probably also *Sipre Deut.* 335.1.1. Thus not only later Scripture (e.g., Esther in *y. Meg.* 1:5, §3) was revealed on Sinai but also the correct rabbinic interpretations implicit in Torah (*b. Ber.* 5a; *Meg.* 19b; cf. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:304). On oral Torah, cf., e.g., Ehrlich, “Tora.”

265. *Y. Ber.* 1:3; *Pe'ah* 2:6, §3; *Sanh.* 11:4, §1; *'Abod. Zar.* 2:7, §3; *Hor.* 3:5, §3; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 35a; *'Erub.* 21b; *Num. Rab.* 14:4; *Song Rab.* 1:2, §2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:2; cf. *b. Menah.* 29b. Transgression of sages' teachings was deathworthy (*'Abot R. Nat.* 2 A; cf. *b. 'Erub.* 21b), and a person could be fined for transgressing the words of a Tanna, e.g., R. Akiba (*'Abot R. Nat.* 3 A). The words of the scribes were nearly always on a lower level, however, than the words of Torah in the earliest rabbinic sources (Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 115–25; *Sipre Deut.* 154.2.1).

266. Later amplification was understood to have been implicit in the Sinai Torah from the very beginning (*Sipre Deut.* 313.2.4); cf. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:305, 376.

267. See Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 97–130; on the varying value of tradition among early Tannaim, cf. Landman, “Traditions,” 111–28. Chernick, “Responses,” 393–406, suggests that this emphasis reflects a polemical response to Jewish Christians and Gnosticism (cf. similarly Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 159). This observation contrasts with the assumptions of much earlier scholarship, e.g., Sandmel, *Judaism*, 183; Kohler, *Theology*, 355; Simon, *Sects*, 34; Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 85 (although Bonsirven notes that the term is rare in the early period, “traditions” being preferred).

268. Cf. Martens, “Unwritten Law.”

269. See Bowman, *Documents*, v–vi.

270. E.g., *m. 'Ab.* 1:1; 3:14; *Sipre Deut.* 48.1.5; echoed in the Amoraim (e.g., *Ruth Rab.* 2:2; for the principle, cf., e.g., *m. Ber.* 1:1; *Sanh.* 11:4; Tannaitic tradition in *b. Šabb.* 12b and *b. 'Erub.* 7a); cf. CD V, 20–21; XX, 25. The use of the image in *Let. Aris.* 139, 142 may be somewhat different, but the principle of not even approaching genuine transgression was not solely Jewish (Plut. *Compliancy* 6, *Mor.* 531D).

271. Pharisees were known for their unwritten ancestral traditions of interpretation (Jos. *Ant.* 13.297; 13.408); cf. the collection in *m. 'Ab.* 1–2, whose “primary purpose . . . is to demonstrate the continuity and hence the weight of tradition” (Strack, *Introduction*, 53).

272. Cf. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 127. One may compare the unconscious assumption of the biblical reliability of information gleaned from Scofield's reference notes, held by many early to mid-twentieth-century fundamentalist Christians.

273. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 126–27, esp. on the *Temple Scroll* (though the Scrolls can warn against adding or subtracting measures regarding sacrifices, Oxford Genizah Text D.17–19). But Essenes frequently wrote their halakah, in contrast to that of the Pharisees (cf. Baumgarten, “Unwritten Law,” 7–29).

That Hellenists might already think in these terms is certainly plausible. Plato valued unwritten law as highly as written law, the former being the basis for the latter (Diog. Laert. 3.86).²⁷⁴ Zeno reportedly urged people to live according to nature, following “the common law”—that is, the law common to all—which he identifies as the pervasive Logos and Zeus.²⁷⁵ This “natural law” also existed beyond purely philosophic circles.²⁷⁶ Plutarch could appeal to classical poets to prove that law was written in human hearts, which he identifies with ensouled Logos, or reason.²⁷⁷ The idea of natural, universal law became so widespread that some Roman legal codes began by distinguishing laws particular to given states from the law of nature (*ius naturale*),²⁷⁸ the law due to natural reason (*naturalis ratio*).²⁷⁹ Philo²⁸⁰ and Josephus²⁸¹ draw on the notion of natural law (or humanity’s common law), and Paul probably draws on it in Rom 2:14–15.

Stephen undoubtedly challenged many customs, but because first-century Judaism divided over such traditions (Sadducees, who held the high priesthood, rejected them; Jos. *Ant.* 13.297), probably only the claim that he rejected the law of Moses or violated widely agreed-on tenets of the law could be grounds for conviction by a Jewish legal body.²⁸²

Luke (who alone uses the term in the NT, apart from John 19:40; Heb 10:25) employs ἔθος or its cognates for personal customs (Luke 22:39),²⁸³ Roman customs (Acts 25:16), and Jewish ancestral customs (16:21; 26:3), particularly those established by the law (positively in Luke 1:9; 2:27, 42; Acts 21:21; 28:17; negatively in quotations in Acts 15:1; 16:21). Later Paul will be alternately accused of promoting (Acts 16:21) or attacking (21:21) Jewish customs, but he practices them himself (16:3; 18:18; 21:26) and objects only to their imposition on Gentiles (15:1–2).

Those who sought to introduce new customs could accomplish this with least offense by grounding their new ideas in the teaching of the founders.²⁸⁴ Luke, who emphasizes early believers’ coming to welcome foreigners into the sacred community, must demonstrate continuity with the old ways.²⁸⁵ Luke grounds the Gentile mission in Israel’s heritage without inventing new pro-Gentile sayings for Jesus (though

274. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 359–60, cites also Plato *Laws* 7.793A.

275. Diog. Laert. 7.1.88. On divine law meaning living according to nature, see also Epict. *Diatr.* 2.16.28; on one law and Logos in the universe, see Marc. Aur. 7.9. For a full discussion of natural law in Stoicism, see Watson, “Natural Law.” For the connotative difference between *logos* and *physis* (Nature), see Long, *Philosophy*, 120, 148–49.

276. Cf. Cicero in Frank, *Aspects*, 109; Max. Tyre 6.5; 11.12 (comparing mind and law; in 27.8 he regards God as pure Mind); even Lucan *C.W.* 7.1; *Sib. Or.* 3.757. Cf., in Palestinian Judaism, 1 *En.* 72:2; 73:1; 74:1; 76:14; 78:10; 79:1–2; 1QM X, 12–13.

277. Plut. *Uned. R.* 3, *Mor.* 780C; cf. *Stoic Cont.* 1, *Mor.* 1033B, where “Philosophy’s Logos,” or doctrine, is a law by which people will choose to live.

278. Justin. *Inst.* 1.2.1–2 (Birks and McLeod, 36–37), a later compilation of earlier laws.

279. Gaius *Inst.* 1.1 (Gordon and Robinson, 19–20). In the Hellenistic period, *Rhet. Alex.* pref. 1420a.26–28 defined law as reason (λόγος) specified by common agreement, a sort of social contract.

280. Cf. Philo *Posterity* 185; *Agr.* 31, 66; *Plant.* 132; *Sobr.* 25; *Migr.* 105; *Abr.* 249; *Spec. Laws* 3.46, 189; *Rewards* 42, 108; *Good Person* 30; *Contempl.* 59; *Eternity* 105; *Prov.* 2.23; *Embassy* 68. Cf. *Sib. Or.* 3.757.

281. Jos. *Ant.* 4.322; *War* 1.378; 3.374.

282. In Tannaitic sources, violating oral teachings of the scribes was not deathworthy like violating Torah (*Sipre Deut.* 154.2.1).

283. Use for personal or family habits or customs was common; e.g., 1 Macc 10:89; Sir 23:9, 14. Cf. the Greek cliché that ἔθος (habit) led to ἦθος (character; Meeks, *Moral World*, 15). For customs as ethnic markers, cf. Barreto, *Negotiations*, 93.

284. Balch, “ΜΕΤΑΒΟΛΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΩΝ,” 140.

285. Ibid. Balch (174–80) notes that in Plutarch, founders change constitutions; Dionysius, with a more apologetic end, emphasizes continuity instead. Distinct from both Romans and kosher-keeping Jews, Luke’s believers must emphasize continuity (180–83).

including Q's centurion, he even omits Mark's Syrophenician woman). But he does build toward this grounding with Jesus's acceptance of outsiders—already in the tradition—and Jesus's and soon Stephen's use of Scripture.

III. THE TEMPLE

Profaning or even denouncing the temple might be viewed as worthy of death,²⁸⁶ especially to the Sadducees who controlled the temple (cf. Acts 21:28; Luke 19:45–47; Jer 20:1–2).²⁸⁷ Even merely predicting the temple's destruction (as Stephen presumably does; cf. Acts 6:14) invited arrest by the temple authorities themselves. Thus, a generation later, one Jesus ben Ananias prophesied the temple's demise, and this led to his arrest by the authorities and being handed over to the governor for a brutal flogging (Jos. *War* 6.300–309).²⁸⁸ Threatening a temple that was central to a city's identity and livelihood could also be dangerous, as Luke knows (Acts 19:27; 21:28–29). Given the earlier, historically likely challenge of Jesus to the temple authorities and the known antipathy of the Sadducean authorities to any actions thought to undermine the temple's sanctity, the temple charges in Acts (against both Stephen and Paul) appear plausible.²⁸⁹ Of particular interest to Luke, however, is how the charges against Stephen presage those that Paul will face later in the book.

Excursus: Views about the Temple

Much of Jerusalem's economy depended on the temple, in ways that sometimes would have applied to immigrant as well as native citizens. The temple establishment "required bakers, weavers, goldsmiths, washers, merchants of ointments and money changers." Because it was still under construction, it required also stonemasons and carpenters; its completion (in 62–64 C.E.) would create an estimated eighteen thousand unemployed workers (Jos. *Ant.* 20.219).²⁹⁰

The temple was renowned for its beauty²⁹¹ and known throughout the Roman world.²⁹² Perhaps because Judaism had just one God and its cult was centralized,²⁹³ its temple was larger and more magnificent than virtually any other temple of antiquity.²⁹⁴ Pharisees, who generally disliked Herod, were sometimes displeased with his

286. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 206, cites later rabbinic sources (*t. Sanh.* 13:5; *b. Roš Haš.* 17a; *y. Ber.* 9, 13b; also doubting the tabernacle's holiness in *L.A.B.* 25:9).

287. See esp. Regev, "Concerns," 86; for profaning the temple as a capital offense, see comment on Acts 21:28. Taylor, "Stephen," intriguingly explains sensitivity to the temple charge in view of the tensions surrounding Caligula's plan to desecrate it in 40 C.E. But we should retain Stephen's link with Paul's conversion, which cannot be dated so late. The resistance to Caligula's decree does, however, at least illustrate the fervent loyalty to the temple that could produce volatile conflict such as depicted here in the 30s.

288. Also noted by Le Cornu, *Acts*, 337.

289. On their historical likelihood, see Regev, "Concerns," adding later accounts of James's martyrdom. Regev views the sources as consistent among themselves and with Sadducean concerns for the temple's sanctity.

290. Fiensy, "Composition," 221 (noting also other markets famous for wares in Jos. *War* 2.305, 315; weavers' and wool dealers' markets in *m. Erub.* 10:9; *Ed.* 1:3; and (221–22) other markets in Jos. *War* 2.530; 5.147, 331). Enormous labor and ingenuity went into the temple's construction; for archaeological material corroborating and explaining Josephus's account of the temple and its building (*War* 5.184–227), see esp. Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 346–61.

291. Jos. *War* 6.267; *Abot R. Nat.* 28 A; 48, §132 B.

292. 2 Macc 2:22; *Let. Aris.* 84–91; *CIJ* 1:378, §515; Lohse, *Environment*, 151.

293. Sanders, *Judaism*, 50.

294. *Ibid.*, 55–69; cf. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem*, 76; Patrich, "Temple." On its massive architecture and how it was built, see Jos. *War* 5.184–227; and, for archaeological corroboration, Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 346–61. Some

approach to the temple, especially regarding his golden eagle there;²⁹⁵ nevertheless, even their movement ultimately regarded the temple as the holiest site in the world's holiest city.²⁹⁶ (In succeeding centuries, however, popular synagogue Judaism seems to have liked eagle decorations).²⁹⁷

Some hellenized Jews may have spiritualized the temple;²⁹⁸ such spiritualized imagery naturally appears in Philo.²⁹⁹ Yet the claim that the temple would not have been honored so much in the Diaspora (where the Jews of Acts 6:9 are from) as in Judea³⁰⁰ is questionable, at least for Jews serious enough about their heritage to move back to Jerusalem. First of all, the spiritual imagery of the temple appears in the far less hellenized Qumran scrolls, where the true temple often stands for the community.³⁰¹ Second, Philo himself emphasized Jewry's unanimous love for the temple and expected it to remain forever.³⁰² Third, Diaspora Jews were intensely committed to the temple, as attested both by their payment of the annual tax for its upkeep³⁰³ and remarks in Egyptian Jewish literature (e.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.575–79; cf. also *Letter of Aristeas*). For the related discussion of the centrality of the land (also a matter of ethnic sacred space), see section 6 in the introduction to Acts 7, below.³⁰⁴

A minority of Jews did view the temple as defiled, and a smaller minority did predict its consequent destruction.³⁰⁵ For example, the *Testament of Moses*, which accuses priests of polluting the altar (*Test. Mos.* 5:4), prophesies judgment against the temple (6:8–9).³⁰⁶ In some other texts, enemy rulers may want to destroy the temple (*Sib. Or.* 3.665), but God will establish it eschatologically (*Sib. Or.* 3.657–60). Scholars

recent scholars have questioned whether the temple proper is under the Dome of the Rock (see Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 364, 426; Vogt, "Temple"; Kaufman, "Temple"; this different location would be easier politically). In many ancient cities, "temple mounts" included palaces and other supremely important buildings as part of the most defensible acropolis (see Rohrbaugh, "Pre-industrial City," 134).

295. *Jos. Ant.* 17.151–52; *War* 1.651; Schürer, *Time of Jesus*, 144, 157.

296. E.g., *m. Kelim* 1:6–9; *Mek. Pisha* 1.48ff. (Lauterbach, 1:4). Long after the temple's destruction, it remained central in Jewish hopes (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 14:8; 56:2; 95 MSV); speaking hyperbolically, a later teacher lamented that whereas pagans pray for the earth, all Israel's prayers are for the temple's rebuilding (*Gen. Rab.* 13:2).

297. Goodenough, *Symbols*, 8:121–22.

298. Romans could do so (e.g., *Tac. Ann.* 4.38.2; Sinclair, "Temples").

299. E.g., *Philo Rewards* 123, where the wise man's mind is God's οἶκος.

300. E.g., Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 33; Shutt, "Aristeas," 10.

301. E.g., 1Q5 VIII, 5, 8–9; IX, 6; CD III, 19A; II, 10, 13B; 4Q511 35 2–3; more fully, Gärtner, *Temple*, 20–46; Flusser, *Judaism*, 37–39; Bruce, "Jesus," 76; Wilcox, "Dualism," 93–94; McNamara, *Judaism*, 142; already applied by NT commentators, e.g., in Kelly, *Peter*, 90; Goppelt, *Theology*, 2:11; and by Sanders, e.g., in *Judaism*, 376–77; but cf. suggested qualifications in Caquot, "Secte et temple." The claims for 4QFlor (e.g., Gärtner, *Temple*, 30–42) have proved less persuasive (McNicol, "Temple"; Schwartz, "Temples"). The eschatological temple in the *Temple Scroll* follows the design of Israel's camp in the wilderness (inlay article in Yadin, "Temple Scroll," 42).

302. Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.76; Sanders, *Judaism*, 52. Not all Jews embraced the temple's sanctity, but most did.

303. See *Jos. Ant.* 18.312 and discussion above.

304. See also the summary in Keener, *John*, 613–15.

305. E.g., *Test. Levi* 15:1 (cf. 14:6) if pre-Christian. Whatever the date of *Testament of Levi* specifically, predictions of the temple's destruction in general need not be post-70. That a Qumran document accurately warns that the Kittim (by whom it means the Romans) would carry off the Jerusalem priesthood's wealth (1QpHab IX, 6–7) hardly makes the prediction post-70 when it is in a clearly pre-70 document. Fritsch thinks that the probable Damascus Essenes were less antitemple than the Qumran community (*Community*, 84; cf. CD VI, 16, 19–20; XI, 18–XII, 2); cf. also Davies, "Temple in Damascus Document." Even later rabbis, while praising the temple, acknowledged its inadequacy to withhold judgment if Jerusalem was engaging in sin (e.g., *y. Ta'an.* 4:5, §13). Josephus both finds portents warning of the temple's destruction and reports prophetic figures who denied it; see Bedenbender, "Kampf."

306. Because the Roman ruler destroys only part of the temple in the oracle, the prophecy presumably predates 70 C.E.

note the repeated expectation in some strands of early Jewish literature, including some texts before 70 C.E., that God would bring a new temple down.³⁰⁷ Often this expectation reflected the view that the priesthood was impure.³⁰⁸ See fuller discussion at Acts 2:46, on the temple's eschatological renewal.

Most ordinary Jews, however, honored and used the temple, whether or not they approved of everything the temple establishment did.³⁰⁹ Even in the Ptolemaic period, before Herod's grand temple, an Egyptian Jew might view the temple as invincible (*Let. Aris.* 100–101).³¹⁰ Indeed, if Greeks believed that gods might fight to defend their temples (e.g., *Hdt.* 8.37), why should not Israel believe the same about its temple (4 Macc 4:9–12)?

Certainly, Stephen could express dissatisfaction with the temple yet remain part of a movement that worshiped there; even the Essenes reportedly sent sacrifices to the temple (*Jos. Ant.* 18.19). Other groups that criticized the temple were marginalized, but not (in this period) hunted down and persecuted;³¹¹ yet an individual deemed too much of a public threat or a nuisance could be severely punished (*War* 6.300–309, esp. 301, 303–4), depending on how his words were interpreted or (more likely in this case) twisted.

Two of the three summaries of the charges here that mention the temple (Acts 6:11, 13–14) refer to the temple as “this place” (6:13–14), in one of these instances specifically “this holy place” (6:13). This wording is hardly unique,³¹² but it has special significance in Acts. It matches the wording of the LXX quote (Exod 3:5) in Acts 7:33 as well as the later charge against Paul in 21:28. Stephen will answer this charge by demonstrating that *any* place where God's presence is is holy, whether the promised land (7:7) or a mountain near Egypt (7:33). Stephen afterward employs another quotation (Isa 66:1), which contains the same term τόπος (probably connecting a prophets reading with a law reading by *gezerah shevah*), to show that God's “place” is not only the temple (Acts 7:49).³¹³

The final version of the charge specifies Jesus's role as the temple's destroyer; this reveals more of how Stephen's words may have been distorted than the other charges do. Probably this suggests³¹⁴ that Stephen developed some of Jesus's teaching regarding the temple's destruction (Luke 21:6, also using καταλύω,³¹⁵

307. See esp. Sanders, *Figure*, 262, noting 1 *En.* 90:28–29; 11QT XXIX, 8–10. After 70, cf., e.g., the Amidah and 2 *Bar.* 32:1–4.

308. Thus in the Scrolls (Flusser, *Judaism*, 43; probably, e.g., also in 4Q176 1–2 L, 2–3). Bryan, “Hallel,” rightly argues that the renewal of the temple suggests its purification rather than its rejection.

309. Loyalty to the temple functioned as a covenant marker in early Judaism (Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, 53).

310. For the general sentiment of its invulnerability, cf. Borg, *Conflict*, 165–70. After 70, some opinions revised the claim of invincibility to argue that the surviving western wall would never be destroyed (*Num. Rab.* 11:2; *Song Rab.* 2:9, §4; *Lam. Rab.* 1:5, §31; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:10).

311. In contrast to the earlier conflict regarding the Wicked Priest, reflected in the Qumran scrolls.

312. A temple might be called a “place” (e.g., *Test. Job* 3:7), but given the frequency of the noun (nearly ninety times in the NT and more than five hundred in the LXX), this observation is not very helpful; more significant is “holy place” (e.g., Ps 24:3; Eccl 8:10; Isa 60:13; Ezek 42:13; Matt 24:15; 2 Macc 8:17; 3 Macc 2:14; probably the land in 2 Macc 1:29; 2:18).

313. Τόπος appears sixteen times in Acts, five of them in this section (about 38.5 percent of the uses, even though Acts 6:13–7:60 comprises only about 6.3 percent of the verses in Acts).

314. For our historical interests, not necessarily Luke's readers. But his ideal audience undoubtedly knew the passion tradition, and so it might have also ideally gathered this point.

315. Interestingly, this verb for the temple's and the city's destruction also applies to human actions (Acts 5:38–39); but this correspondence may be coincidence. Athenian law applied the cognate noun to treason

cf. 19:44–45),³¹⁶ a feature that the passion tradition indicates false witnesses had already distorted (and which perhaps Luke does not care to emphasize by mentioning more than once?). That the later church felt comfortable attributing the charge about Jesus's destroying the temple only to false witnesses (here and Mark 14:58) suggests its authenticity in some form³¹⁷ (as does likely Jesus tradition in 2 Thess 2:4).³¹⁸ Jesus's threat of the temple's destruction may not have articulated his own agency, but it is not surprising that his critics would so report his words.

This version of the charge shows that the basis for Stephen's critique is christological and eschatological (probably partly realized eschatology, in view of his salvation-historical approach climaxing in Jesus in Acts 7). For Stephen and Luke, the temple's destruction does have to do with Jesus as his accusers have charged; but "it was rejection of him that brought this destruction about."³¹⁹

After 70 C.E., rabbis reported divine portents forty years before the temple's destruction;³²⁰ such tragedy required explanations that only hindsight could provide (or invent). In light of the whole context of Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 21:5–6, 20–24; 23:45; Acts 22:21–22) in its likely post-70 setting, some scholars argue that "Stephen's speech in Acts 7 became an explanation for the destruction of the temple; the temple worship was no longer acceptable because Jesus had not been accepted."³²¹ That Stephen's speech partly provides an explanation for the temple's destruction is likely; still, although temple worship was not adequate by itself, that it was not "acceptable" is an overstatement. Against some scholars, Luke seems to portray the temple itself and the primitive church's view of it favorably (e.g., Acts 2:46; 5:20; 21:26; Luke 2:27, 37, 46), but the temple was provisional,³²² not eternal, as the events of 70 C.E. confirmed. Stephen protests not the temple's divine ordination (explicit in Acts 7:44) but its abuse.³²³ If Luke is against localizing God's presence in temples, this is antilocalization in general, not specifically against a Jewish temple (17:24);³²⁴ the issue is not hostility toward the temple but a wider concern for God's broader purpose.³²⁵ In this narrative, Stephen is not antitemple *per se*; it is unlikely that we

against the state (lit. "dissolution" of the state's constitution; Thür, "Katalysis"). For the concept of abolishing by undermining Israel's law, cf. *m. Ber.* 10:5; sources in Keener, *Matthew*, 177; other laws, cf. Val. Max. 7.2.ext. 15.

316. Dunn, *Acts*, 87.

317. Cf., e.g., Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 73–74; Theissen, *Gospels*, 113, 194; Wright, *Victory*, 335. Given other pre-70 prophets of the temple's destruction, many scholars accept the authenticity of Jesus's prediction of the temple's destruction (e.g., Hill, *Prophecy*, 62–63; Aune, *Prophecy*, 174–75).

318. On Thessalonian parallels with Jesus's eschatological teaching, see my comments in Keener, *Matthew*, 565–66; in greater detail, idem, *Historical Jesus*, 361–71; Wenham, *Rediscovery*, 176–80; Waterman, "Sources." That the later church would have grown more eschatologically oriented than Jesus is inherently unlikely, and that it would have invented 2 Thess 2:3–4 after 70, when the temple was destroyed, is even less likely.

319. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 119; cf. O'Neill, *Theology*, 79; on Jesus's centrality here, see Kilgallen, *Speech*, 32–33. Because these witnesses do not mention the temple's rebuilding (contrast Mark 14:58; John 2:19), Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 23, thinks that for "Stephen the coming destruction of the sanctuary will be final," but this probably reads too much into the testimony of "false witnesses" (Acts 6:13).

320. Some scholars cite Jos. *War* 6.293–96; *b. Yoma* 39b; *y. Yoma* 6:3 (43c); cf. Tac. *Hist.* 5.13 (see Dibelius, *Tradition*, 195 [though he thinks the tradition circulated only after 70]; Carson, "Matthew," 580; France, *Matthew*, 400n2).

321. Harrington, *God's People*, 38–39 (following Kilgallen, "Turning Points"; though the additional claim that Acts 8–14 challenges the necessity of the law for salvation is not clear). God's message in 1 Kgs 9:6–9 likewise functions as a warning within the narrative world, yet as theological commentary for the edited work's postexilic audience.

322. For the temple as provisional but positive, see, e.g., Weinert, "Meaning of Temple"; idem, "Luke, Stephen, and Temple"; Peterson, "Worship," 378; comment on Acts 2:46. Larsson, "Temple-Criticism," sees the temple as good but superseded by the fulfillment of God's promise.

323. See also Bachmann, "Stephanusepisode," 561.

324. Walton, "Perspectives," 143.

325. *Ibid.*, 148.

are to interpret this speech of Luke's reliable character as significantly harsher than Luke's own view.

The charges are mostly false, especially and most obviously the charge that Jesus threatened the temple's destruction.³²⁶ Stephen is no true apostate; he has not, unlike some,³²⁷ abandoned the ancestral faith. But because the charges come before Stephen's response, they create suspense for a first-time reader. The reader trusts that no one full of the Spirit will speak against God or Moses (as Israel did in the wilderness, Num 21:5), but what of the temple or (less likely) the law?³²⁸ (On "blasphemy" in Acts 6:11, see comment above.) That he refuses to "stop" speaking may echo the recent refusal of the apostles to stop speaking for Christ (5:42, though Luke has a predilection for this term).

It is unlikely, given Stephen's Scripture-laden response and counteraccusation (7:2–53, esp. 7:51–53), that Luke believes that Stephen opposed the law;³²⁹ certainly, Luke does not (and he is our only source for Stephen's views).³³⁰ But Stephen's words about the temple appear more ambiguous.³³¹ Stephen will thus confirm some suspicions about him while answering the charges. As noted above, the "Hellenist faction" did not espouse a radical Hellenistic theology that diverged from the apostles, as some have argued. This should not be taken to mean, however, that Stephen's speech failed to challenge some widely held Jewish ideals.³³²

e. Stephen's Transfiguration (6:15)

Just as Jesus (Luke 9:29) and Moses were transfigured, so is Stephen here, even if not as literally.³³³ In view of connections with the following context, which situates Stephen (Acts 7:51) in the tradition of the prophets (7:52), an allusion to Moses makes sense here. Moses saw God's glory in the bush (via an angel, 7:30–31, 35) and reflected God's glory (Exod 34:29–30, 35); Stephen (later) witnesses Jesus's glory in heaven (Acts 7:55–56), and so perhaps he (albeit beforehand) reflects his glory as

326. With Hill, *Hellenists*, 57–58; cf. Borg, *Conflict*, 180. But apparently Jesus spoke about the temple in such a way as to lend plausibility to the charge (see Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 73–74).

327. Tiberius Alexander indeed abandoned Judaism (Jos. *Ant.* 20.100).

328. Johnson, *Acts*, 113.

329. Cf. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 47 (against only the debased practice of it); pace, e.g., Hengel, *Jesus and Paul*, 56–57. Watson, *Gentiles*, 67, complains that Hengel accepts Luke's report about the charge against Stephen yet not its "attribution to 'false witnesses.'"

330. Even when ancient Jews contradicted statements in the law, they typically thought, apparently, that they supported the law. Thus we have conflicts with written statements in the Torah in *Jubilees* (wrongly taken as against the Pentateuch by Zeitlin, "'Jubilees' and Pentateuch," 234; idem, "Jubilees, Character"); the rabbis (see, e.g., comment on Acts 2:1 regarding their date for the law giving); and Josephus's haggadic expansions of biblical texts (see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:144–47, 302); yet all these sources must have affirmed the authority of the law.

331. Goppelt, *Judaism*, 106, thinks that Stephen denies that his words against the localization of God's presence in the temple are blasphemy, but Goppelt admits that he says them. In Stephen's speech, God is transcendent above the temple, which Israel's larger history relativizes, but Stephen does not portray the temple as bad (see Rhodes, "Tabernacle," esp. 136). Rather, Stephen views himself and Jesus's movement as heirs of the dynamic relationship with God behind the tabernacle's and temple's founding, a relationship from which the entrenched elite who run the temple have moved away.

332. Cf., e.g., Latourette, *To A.D. 1500*, 70–71.

333. So also others, e.g., Le Cornu, *Acts*, 337; Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 15 (Martin, *Acts*, 73: "This was the glory of Moses"). Although Greek and Jewish literature reported many transfigurations (see Walde, "Metamorphosis"), that of Moses was the standard one behind the Gospel accounts (Exod 34:29–35; cf. *L.A.B.* 12:1; 19:16; *'Abot R. Nat.* 13, §32 B; *b. B. Bat.* 75a; cf. more fully Moses, *Transfiguration Story*, 84–85; Keener, *Matthew*, 437; the citation of Philo *Mos.* 1.57 in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:695). For Moses-Sinai and transfiguration themes in Philo, see Moses, *Transfiguration Story*, 50–57; in Josephus, 57–61; in Qumran, 61–66; in other sources, 66–83. In addition to Exod 34:29, Packer, *Acts*, 51, cites Eccl 8:1 and Judg 13:6; but the latter reference concerns an actual angel.

Moses reflected God's glory to the people. Luke thus ironically reverses the accusation that Stephen opposes Moses (in 6:11); instead, Stephen follows the pattern of Moses,³³⁴ whereas (as he will shortly demonstrate) his accusers identify with their ancestors who repudiated Moses (7:27, 35–37). Stephen stands in prophetic continuity with the earlier agents of God whom his speech invokes (7:51–52).

Luke saves the climactic ἀγγέλου (of an angel) for the final word of the sentence. In this case, Stephen's face appearing like that of an angel in 6:15 and his vision of Christ's glory in 7:55–56 frame his martyr speech, connecting his martyrdom closely with that of Jesus (see comment on Acts 7:55–60). The most important contextual connection may be 7:53;³³⁵ God's people failed to keep God's law given to them through angels (cf. also 7:30, 35, 38) and likewise reject Stephen, who is God's agent of revelation to them. Far from undermining the law (per their accusation), Stephen is linked with the angelic giving of the law and himself offers prophetic revelation in chapter 7. (Possibly it is relevant that he is facing death and that Luke elsewhere shows his awareness that some believe in an angelic existence after death [cf. 12:15].)³³⁶ The Sadducean part of the Sanhedrin, who reject angels (23:8–9), will also reject Stephen, God's agent.

Luke may expect his audience to visualize this event as literal yet ambiguous. Some scholars suggest that Luke intends a literal transfiguration here, with Stephen being transformed by beholding Jesus's glory.³³⁷ Later apocryphal literature echoes the expression here, applying it literally to Paul (whose appearance alternated between human and angelic, *Acts Paul* 3.3).³³⁸ But a transfiguration as dramatic as that of Jesus in Luke 9:29–32 would render the hostile audience reaction difficult to understand, though it is possible that it falls into the range of irresistible miracles that enraged them (Acts 6:8, 10) and they might attribute it to magic (which often specialized in transformation of various kinds).³³⁹ Luke uses ὡσεὶ, which he normally applies to approximations (as in 2:41) or resemblances that are not exact identifications (see comment on Acts 2:3).³⁴⁰

In a figurative sense, it was hard for the wicked even to look at the righteous, whose lifestyle was so different, according to a widely circulating Hellenistic Jewish work (Wis 2:15).³⁴¹ Jacob had praised Esau as God's agent as if one had seen in him God's

334. Moses's experience of God's glory provided other early Christian writers a pattern for new-covenant ministry, especially Paul (2 Cor 3:7–18; cf. Belleville, *Glory*; Hays, *Echoes*, 123–53; Osten-Sacken, "Geist"; Keener, *Corinthians*, 168–69) and John (John 1:14–18; cf., e.g., Keener, *John*, 405–26; idem, "Beheld"; idem, "Transformation," 17; Boisnard, *Prologue*, 135–45, esp. 136–39; Hanson, "Exodus"; Harrison, "John 1:14," 29; Mowley, "Exodus").

335. Also noted by others, e.g., Pate et al., *Story*, 197; Fletcher-Louis, *Angels*, 98 (following Glombitza, "Charakterisierung," 244).

336. Cf. also the ancient expectation that those near death could predict the future (e.g., Aune, *Prophecy*, 178; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 105, 155).

337. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 69, contending plausibly that the ὡσεὶ restricts the miracle's reality no more than in Acts 2:3. For background, some scholars appeal to Jewish traditions where pious men appeared like angels (Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:665–66; followed by Haenchen, *Acts*, 272n3). Some revival settings also report shining faces (e.g., Peckham, *Sounds*, 171, recalling Moses); also some power encounter reports (Tandi Randa, interview, May 23, 2012; follow-up correspondence, May 25, 2012).

338. Figuratively, grace shone from Polycarp's face in *Mart. Pol.* 12.1.

339. Metamorphosing one substance into another (Hom. *Od.* 10.239–40; Ovid *Metam.* 14.414–15; *y. Hag.* 2:2, §5; *Sanh.* 6:6, §2), or themselves or others (Apul. *Metam.* 1.9; 2.1, 5, 30; 3.21–25; 6.22; Blackburn, "ΑΝΑΡΕΣ," 190, 193; in modern times, cf. Mbiti, *Religions*, 256–58; Nanan, "Sorcerer"). Magicians were also known for attempting invisibility (e.g., *PGM* 1.222–31, 247–62, 256–57; cf. Smith, *Magician*, 120). The idea that the Sanhedrin's "glare" points to "something 'magical' . . . a kind of 'giving the eye' to Stephen" (Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 127) reads too much into ἀτενίσαντες, which is capable of various senses.

340. Cf. discussions of the use of simile in Greek thought (though more common in poetry than in prose; see Anderson, *Glossary*, 38).

341. Philo *Virt.* 67 appears to speak figuratively also (of radiant joy), despite the subject being Moses.

face (Gen 33:10, probably in view of 32:20, 30); others could employ the same sort of complimentary hyperbole in addressing one as appearing like an angel of God (1 Sam 29:9; Esth 15:13 LXX).³⁴² But if a full-fledged transfiguration is too dramatic, a figurative reading is, at least on the level of the story, not dramatic enough. What the figurative readings offer is some of the moral significance that Luke and his ideal audience may have found in the narrative.

f. The High Priest's Question (7:1)

The high priest's question, the immediate occasion of Stephen's speech, does not repeat but alludes to the charges in Acts 6:11–14. It thus reminds the reader that Stephen's speech (7:2–53) both responds to these specific charges and addresses not only the false witnesses of 6:13–14 but also the authorities introduced to this narrative in 6:12.

The high priest appears as an essentially "flat," uniformly hostile character in Luke's narrative (5:17, 21), sometimes passive (9:1; cf. 23:14–15) but sometimes (as here) leading the questioning of the Christians (5:27; cf. Mark 14:60–66). This picture applies to different high priests as well (Acts 23:2; 24:1); since "the high priests" (the high-priestly family; or, often more generally, the aristocratic priests) function as a group, a sort of composite character (4:6; cf. 4:23; 5:24; 9:14; Luke 19:47; 20:1, 19; 22:2, 52; 23:4, 10, 13), the individual high priest is less important to the narrative here than is the character of the group. (See comment on Acts 4:1.)

The high priest's "... these things so" is Lukan language (Acts 17:11; 24:9).³⁴³ The high priest's question functions in the story world to give Stephen a chance to defend himself, but it also allows Luke to give Stephen the chance to speak. Those who knew the Jewish martyr tradition might think of the opportunities interrogators sometimes gave prospective martyrs to save themselves by denying their faith, opportunities that the martyrs used instead to reaffirm their commitments.³⁴⁴

Stephen was probably lynched, and so some scholars doubt the involvement of the Sanhedrin (6:12, 15) and the high priest (7:1).³⁴⁵ They are not necessary for the basic story line and are given less a distinct voice here than in the apparently different material (possibly indicating a different source?) in Acts 4–5. They may then appear more for consistency with the persecuting establishment in Acts (4:15; 5:21, 41; 23:1). It should be noted, however, that Luke does not believe the high-priestly establishment morally incapable of approving lynchings (23:14–15; 25:3).³⁴⁶

3. Stephen's Countercharge (7:2–53)

Luke offers a climactic example of Stephen's preaching by the Spirit (6:10), hence like a prophet (7:51). The two charges are that Stephen opposes the temple and the

342. Scholars often cite Esth 15:13 here (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 69; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 158; Marshall, *Acts*, 131; Johnson, *Acts*, 110 [citing also Dan 3:92 LXX, with similar language for the "fourth"]). Some add 2 Sam 14:17 (Peterson, *Acts*, 243).

343. The speech introduction resembles the procedure in Acts 4:7 and 5:27 (cf. 13:15; Richard, *Composition*, 314).

344. E.g., 2 Macc 7:7–9, 24–38; 4 Macc 5:6–13; 6:16; 8:10; 9:4; cf. *Mart. Pol.* 9.2.

345. Barrett, *Acts*, 340, thinks it "probably but not certainly correct . . . that the unannounced appearance of the High Priest indicates that Luke is rewriting the story of a lynching." Luke is capable of blending accounts; his passion narrative (Luke 22:66) collapses Jesus's hearings into Mark's official morning hearing (Mark 15:1) instead of the longer night session (Mark 14:53–65; cf. Luke 22:54, 67–71).

346. These explicit references portray the events of a generation later, but cf. here Acts 5:33; 9:1–2.

law (6:11–14). He responds to both charges, the latter by the conventional rhetorical technique of returning their charges against them.³⁴⁷ Stephen responds to the temple charge apparently by explaining what he has been saying about the temple (which may sound to his accusers, but not to Luke, like confirming the charge of speaking “against” the temple). Stephen responds to the charge that he opposes the law, however, not by defending himself directly (although his authoritative and pervasive use of Scripture, especially the Pentateuch, offers an implicit defense)³⁴⁸ but by tracing Israel’s rebellion against the law through history and finally laying that charge at the feet of his accusers and judges. It is not he but they who have defied God’s law, “uncircumcised in heart” (7:51).

a. Introduction

This speech assumes the authority of the law (implicitly refuting one charge against Stephen), explains the sorts of ideas that generated the (distorted) temple charge (7:43–50), and countercharges Stephen’s opponents with violating the law themselves (7:38–42; esp. 7:51–53). With regard to the temple, it emphasizes that God is not localized (Abraham, Joseph, and Moses; 7:2, 5–6, 10, 14–15, 22, 29–30, 33–34, 36, 48–50); with regard to the countercharge, it emphasizes that Israel has often rejected servants God raised up (Joseph, 7:9; Moses, 7:27–28, 35, 39–40, 53; and all the prophets, 7:52). Although Luke treats many characters in the narrative of Israel’s history, the one enduring and continuous character on whom his telling of the narrative focuses is God.³⁴⁹

Luke’s application of this material includes the idea that God is not confined only to Jerusalem (supporting his emphasis on the Gentile mission) and that it is not surprising (in view of history) that God’s own people rejected the king God appointed for them. God is not attached to any one place (cf. Jer 7:4–15; Amos 9:7), a point that would strike home especially after Jerusalem’s fall in 70. Further, God’s servants should expect persecution in the world, even from others who claim to be his servants (Luke 21:12).

How might Luke have applied such principles in a setting relevant to the subsequent generations where Jerusalem no longer remained the theological center? He suggests that the Spirit pushes God’s people to what we could describe as an international, multicultural vision and that tradition that holds people back from such a vision is not serving God’s purpose. This vision would also warn against limiting God’s activity to anyone’s ethnic or cultural group or to one’s Christian in-group.³⁵⁰

This passage climaxes “a series of three trials before the Sanhedrin chronicled in Acts 4–7, with escalating results (warning, flogging, and in this case death).”³⁵¹ Stephen’s

347. Most commentators recognize that he charges them (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 161; idem, *Commentary*, 142) or even returns the charge (e.g., O’Neill, *Theology*, 79; Kilgallen, “Speech of Stephen”); on the frequency of this pattern in ancient forensic rhetoric, see discussion below. The argument that the speech does not respond to the original charges and hence was originally independent (Haenchen, *Acts*, 286–89) displays little sensitivity to the rhetorical situation; Stephen builds rapport in his *narratio*, but its points prepare for his countercharge in his climax. For a fuller bibliography on Acts 7, see, e.g., Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 231–32.

348. His quotations of the law provide an indirect or implicit defense; cf. Aeschines, who, charged with treason against the democracy, simply persistently condemns those who suppress democracy (*Tim. passim*, e.g., 191). For the pervasiveness of Stephen’s use of Scripture, see discussion on each passage below.

349. Rhetorical observations may support this theocentric approach. Parsons, “*Progymnasmata*,” 58n45; idem, *Acts*, 91, notes that orators would repeat a term in different inflections to identify the subject of a speech and that the speech includes θεός inflected in four cases (though most often [twelve times] in the nominative). Θεός is also the final word of Acts 7:56, a climactic pronouncement (which Parsons, “*Progymnasmata*,” 58n45, counts as the end of the speech).

350. In modern terms, perhaps akin to denominations, movements, cliques, or other sorts of identifying principles, as opposed to Christ (cf. perhaps Luke 9:49–50).

351. Witherington, *Acts*, 252.

death is “a turning point” in the narrative,³⁵² through which the church passes from a phase of popularity in Jerusalem (2:47) to one of persecution and scattering (8:4). Other Jewish sects or visionaries challenged the temple,³⁵³ but most of them did so privately or from a distance, like the wilderness sectarians of Qumran. The early Christian leaders, however, were vying with the temple authorities for the leadership of Jerusalem’s Jewish faith, a conflict that would ultimately lead to Stephen’s martyrdom as it had led to that of Jesus. Unlike the apostles, who acted as a group, Stephen here (like Paul later) had to stand trial alone.³⁵⁴

If one wonders why Luke provides a lengthy speech (in fact, the book’s longest) at this critical juncture in the narrative, we should remember that speeches were part of the action in Hellenistic histories, whether generals’ speeches before battle or forensic speeches in a courtroom (though these reports often treated both sides at length). Like Stephen’s speech, these speeches in moments of crisis sometimes recalled earlier history, placing the events of the literary context in a broader chronological context of analogous events.³⁵⁵ This is the longest survey of salvation history in Luke-Acts and offers insight into Luke’s agenda: Jesus and the experience of the church (7:51–52) continue and climax earlier biblical experience, a living experience of God’s activity in the present (cf. 2:17–18).

Because speeches often provided the author’s perspective on their narrative context,³⁵⁶ scholars find strategic theological commentary here. Stephen develops both the theme of God’s fulfillment of his promises (e.g., 7:17) and the theme of the opposition to agents of promise that appear in each generation (e.g., 7:9, 27–28, 35–37).³⁵⁷ This conflict is often portrayed in somewhat supersessionist terms³⁵⁸—for example (though some are more supersessionist than others): Jerusalem’s stubbornness would justify the Gentile mission;³⁵⁹ Stephen was the first to recognize the movement’s need to expand beyond Jewish categories;³⁶⁰ Stephen’s answer to the charges (6:11, 13–14) shows why the church moved beyond the temple and the law;³⁶¹ the conflict caused by the truth identifies Stephen as a paradigm for true biblical interpretation and true descent from Abraham;³⁶² Luke uses this speech as “a farewell speech to Judaism”;³⁶³ Stephen pushes the Hellenist agenda to reject the temple and purify the canon.³⁶⁴

But to the extent that Stephen’s speech represents Luke’s theology (as well as any historical tradition behind the speech), it does not represent a break with the law (7:38, 52–53).³⁶⁵ Because Stephen argues from the law, the reverse would in fact appear more

352. *Ibid.*

353. See comment on Acts 6:13–14.

354. His stand could be viewed as strategic historically; cf. Jewish tradition regarding the importance of solitary figures (e.g., Ezra or Akiba) rising in their various generations to preserve the law (*Sipre Deut.* 48.4.1).

355. Johnson, *Acts*, 120, cites Hdt. 9.26–27; Thucyd. 1.3.68–70; 2.6.35–47; Jos. *War* 5.376–419.

356. See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:265–66, and sources cited there.

357. Dahl, “Abraham,” 147–48 (though the language of “disinheritance” [148] is strong it is applied corporately); Stephen viewed the fulfillment and the rejection as both climaxed in his day.

358. Positive supersession was certainly understandable; thus Plutarch does not criticize Cicero’s poetry, noting that it is not celebrated because greater poets followed him (*Cic.* 2.4).

359. O’Neill, *Theology*, 87.

360. Stanley, *Resurrection*, 36. The claim of expanding traditional categories is true, but the demand for this already existed in segments of Judaism.

361. Kilgallen, “Function of Speech.”

362. Richard, *Composition*, 358.

363. Richard, “Joseph Episode,” 265.

364. Simon, *Sects*, 101, 105.

365. Dunn, *Acts*, 90–91, agrees, though he thinks that Stephen saw Solomon’s temple as a misunderstanding (Acts 7:48–50), and he allows for a break with the law in Acts 15.

likely!³⁶⁶ That conflict over geographic centralization scattered the church (and led to conflict over ethnic centralization) is, however, inescapable here (8:4). The speech's theology of decentralization regarding the land provides theological groundwork for the church's mission, in line with Luke's thesis (1:8).³⁶⁷

It is also important to note that, contrary to anachronistic perspectives (argued from the vantage point of later Christian anti-Semitism), Luke does not present Stephen's speech as anti-Jewish. Stephen accepts the temple as God-ordained but abhors its abuse; this is hardly anti-Judaism.³⁶⁸ Stephen's polemic is intra-Jewish and delivered "in the style of *Israel's* classical prophets."³⁶⁹ Intra-Jewish polemic appears throughout Second Temple sources and comes in harsher shades than this (such as Qumran's denunciation of apostate Israel as a "congregation of Satan").³⁷⁰ The speech fits the ideology of other Jewish sects like Qumran who saw themselves as the righteous remnant and viewed most of their people as apostate.³⁷¹ Stephen appeals to biblical common ground; the only explicit "Christian" elements added to the OT are the present applications to continuing resistance in 7:51 and the recent killing of Jesus, implied in 7:52.³⁷²

Theologically, the issue in Acts 7 is not Jewish people versus Gentiles. Although Luke emphasizes the Diaspora mission, he affirms heritage as well as mission and respects the Jewish people (see our introduction, ch. 14), of whom Stephen was himself one. The speech may instead contrast intransigent human power and institutions, such as those before whom Stephen is tried, with the activity of God through those who dynamically follow him, such as Stephen. From an early Christian perspective, Stephen's historical emphases appear uncomfortably relevant to Stephen's audience in the narrative. These emphases would also be respectable to Luke's milieu, which normally valued prophetic revelation so long as it was not subversive toward the Roman government.

Stephen points away from Israel's possessions and institutions to God himself. God did give the land that Stephen's hearers held sacred, but not every generation experienced that promise (7:5–6), and the purpose of giving the land was not as an end in itself but for divine worship (7:7). Possession of the land came through Abraham's faithful obedience to God's new revelation (7:2–3), not dependent on the sort of institutions, places, or power that Stephen's audience took for granted. God fulfilled his purposes for Joseph, though the latter was outnumbered and overpowered by his brothers (7:9), just as God's movement in Stephen's day lacked the prestige and power of its opponents (cf. 6:12).³⁷³ Through God's signs, God showed that he

366. Cf. Longenecker, *Paul*, 133n33; Njoroge wa Ngugi, "Catechetical Discourse" (who sees Luke's purpose in the speech as catechetical, showing the church grounded in the OT).

367. See Scott, "World Mission."

368. Bachmann, "Stephanusepisode," 561 (contrasting real anti-Judaism in *Barn.* 16.1–10); Rhodes, "Tabernacle" (relativizing rather than denouncing the temple). For discussion of genuinely anti-Jewish sources in antiquity, see Keener, *Acts*, 1:464–65. Parsons, *Acts*, 107–8, shows that the speech follows conventions for contrasting positive and negative characters and is not anti-Jewish.

369. Spencer, *Acts*, 81. For Luke's prophetic characterization of Stephen, see Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 86–90.

370. See 1QH^a X, 22; esp. Johnson, "Slander"; cf. (on Matt 23) also Overman, *Gospel and Judaism*, 16–23. Sometimes intra-Jewish disputes indeed became violent; in the Scrolls, see 1QpHab VIII, 8–12; IX, 4–7; XII, 5; 4QpNah I, 11; between Pharisees and Sadducees, *Jos. Ant.* 18.17; *m. Yad.* 4:7; *t. Hag.* 3:35; *Nid.* 5:3; see further documentation in Keener, *Matthew*, 352–53. Later rabbis even accused some Shammites of such violence against Hillelites (*y. Sabb.* 1:4). In the first century, however, such violence was more often spontaneous and rarely official (see comment on Acts 23:2, 10).

371. See Donaldson, "Sectarian Nature."

372. With Spencer, *Acts*, 81.

373. The narrative connections between Stephen and the biblical predecessors he cites are manifold, e.g., the "wisdom" of Stephen and his companions (6:3, 10) and that of Joseph (7:10) and Moses (7:22), the only

was with Moses rather than the powerful Pharaoh (7:36), just as signs confirmed that God was with the minority movement to which Stephen belonged rather than with its powerful opponents (6:8).³⁷⁴ The tabernacle and even temple originated in a dynamic relationship with God, which continued in Stephen and his allies, not in entrenched positions of hereditary power, such as Jesus's early movement saw in the temple establishment of their day.³⁷⁵ Stephen thus sees continuity with an earlier biblical pattern in which God often worked through a suffering or marginalized people, while those with power were often blind to God's activity.³⁷⁶ The temple's destruction would appear a vindication of Stephen's approach; mission would necessarily take precedence over previous centers of power.

I. RHETORIC OF ACTS 7

Because Luke has made clear that Stephen is a Hellenist (6:1, 5) and that his speech is irresistible (6:10), Luke's ideal audience will likely read this speech in light of standard audience expectations for Greco-Roman speeches. The language is not ornate, but this would not be expected in a speech summary or necessary in a speech that thoroughly embodies and echoes the LXX.³⁷⁷ Although the three major forms of rhetoric overlapped in practice, Stephen's speech is plainly forensic, though it is unexpectedly offensive rather than defensive.³⁷⁸ Some scholars have compared its structure to that of ancient Israelite speeches (which it may echo), especially historical retrospectives, such as Josh 24.³⁷⁹ The heavy Jewish elements might help explain why it does not fit Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions as well as do Paul's defense speeches in the final quarter of Acts.

Scholars debate the value of rhetorical analysis for letters, but for speeches ancient critics themselves would have read Acts in rhetorical terms. If we take Cicero's *Pro Quintio* as a typical defense speech, the proem is followed by a lengthy *narratio* (*Quinct.* 3.11–9.33), a statement of the case (10.36), the proving of his case (11.37–27.85), and a summary of what he has proved (28.85–29.90). The proofs repeat events as the *narratio* does, but they are not arranged chronologically as in the *narratio*.³⁸⁰ Stephen is less explicit about his agenda at the beginning (becoming most explicit only in Acts 7:51–53), but this stealth approach is necessary to gain him time to complete the speech.

Dupont's basic rhetorical outline of Stephen's speech follows the passage helpfully, though some might dispute where to divide the *narratio* from the argument.³⁸¹

1. *Exordium* (7:2a)
2. *Narratio* (7:2b–34)

uses of this noun in Acts (sometimes in paired form; cf. also Luke 2:40, 52); cf. also Moses being powerful (in speech) with the power of Stephen (for miracles; 6:8; 7:22).

374. Possibly Luke draws on earlier Christian precedent for paralleling some powerful Jewish interests with those of Pharaoh; cf. Matt 2:16 and, more generally, Rom 9:15–17.

375. As noted in the discussion of Acts 4, above, Herod allegedly executed the former sanhedrin that had resisted him (*Jos. Ant.* 14.175); he could then assemble his own councils as needed (*Ant.* 16.357, 360; 17.46). Since Herod's day the body had probably been self-selecting but undoubtedly drew most of its members from the local hereditary aristocracy.

376. For the idea in Pauline Christianity, see, e.g., 1 Cor 1:18–31; 2 Cor 12:9–10; 13:4.

377. For the large narrative, too, "simplicity" might be preferred (*Men. Rhet.* 2.7, 411.23–24).

378. Soards, *Speeches*, 58; Witherington, *Acts*, 260. For the emphasis on counteraccusation here, see also Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 121–22.

379. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 129; on historical retrospectives, see below.

380. Perhaps relevant for Acts 7:36–47 if we follow Dupont's outline below.

381. Dupont, "Structure oratoire"; mostly followed by Witherington, *Acts*, 260–61; similarly, Bock, *Acts*, 277. Marguerat, *Actes*, 231, suggests a double *narratio* (Acts 7:2–34, 44–47) and *argumentatio* (7:35–43, 48–50). Pervo, *Acts*, 179, surveys multiple options but plausibly warns that Acts 7 is defective as a normal Greek speech.

3. Transition (7:35)
4. *Argumentatio* (7:36–50)
5. *Peroratio* (7:51–53)

Narrative introductions suited not only forensic speeches³⁸² but also dialogues (Tac. *Dial.* 1–3) and other genres, including even ancient Near Eastern treaties³⁸³ and, perhaps, argumentative (as opposed to typical) letters.³⁸⁴ Yet Stephen's *narratio* is unusually long, compared with most speeches in Acts. This may be partly because a speaker addressing a hostile audience "must follow the indirect route of *insinuatio*"; such speeches require a longer *narratio* to establish some common ground.³⁸⁵ The *narratio* is also long, however, because Luke writes a narrative work for hearers drawn to narrative and hence will include narratives within his narratives (a technique common in ancient literature, including the many digressions in Homer). By placing the narrative of Israel within his narrative, while connecting his narrative with Israel's narrative, Luke stresses again that his narrative is part of the larger metanarrative of Israel's salvific history (see the commentary introduction, ch. 14, sect. 2).³⁸⁶

Within the story world, Stephen's own audience would expect his *narratio* to rehearse the history of events leading up to the case;³⁸⁷ for Stephen, however, the events that set the stage for his case are Israel's history of contentions against the Lord,³⁸⁸ climaxing in the murder of the Messiah and yielding a countercharge against the accusers. This resembles some biblical prophetic speeches with narratives for a similar purpose (e.g., Deut 1–3 as an introduction for Deut 4; 1 Sam 12:8–11; cf. Isa 5:1–2; Ezek 16); compare also historical psalms to set the stage for prayer (Pss 105; 106). Rhetoricians sometimes reserved the most controversial part of the speech for the end.³⁸⁹

The thrust of Stephen's forensic rhetoric is his counterattack, which he saves for the end; had he stated it up front in a *propositio*, Luke's ideal audience would be left wondering how Stephen survived long enough to finish the speech.³⁹⁰ But Acts 7:6–7, though not constituting a *propositio*, probably does help provide a chronological framework for the narrative that follows: the people of Israel would be foreigners in Egypt (7:6a, 9–16); they would be enslaved four hundred years (7:6b, 17–19, though this covers only the period's final generation); God would judge Egypt (7:7a, 20–32, 20–38 or 20–44). Meanwhile, bringing them again to "this place," the Holy Land, sets the stage for discussion of the real holy place (7:33, 43–50).³⁹¹

It is of interest for the structure of the speech's narrative portion that the rhetorical historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus arranges history the way some scholars have

382. E.g., 2 Sam 14:5–7; Cic. *Quinct.* 3.11–9.33.

383. The historical prologue; see, e.g., Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms," 58–60; Bright, *History*, 151; Thompson, "Covenant," 790; Weinfeld, "Covenant Making."

384. Thus, e.g., Melanchthon analyzed Romans as judicial rhetoric, with *exordium*, *narratio*, and *confirmatio* (Peterson, *Eloquence*, 8). Against finding this in normal letters, see, e.g., Reed, "Epistle," 179–82.

385. Witherington, *Acts*, 260.

386. Wiens, *Sermon*, naturally parallels the structure of Luke-Acts with that of Stephen's speech. The parallel is, however, more explicit and therefore even likelier with Israel's history.

387. E.g., Cic. *Quinct.* 3.11–9.33; Tac. *Dial.* 19.

388. No one doubted these, though most would have objected that the history of the Gentiles was far worse.

389. E.g., Demosthenes's *De corona*; in a letter, Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 88 (citing P.Oxy. 1837); likewise, philosophers start with simple matters and then proceed to the more difficult (Epict. *Diatr.* 1.26.3). Cf. also the use of figured speech to cloak one's full intention (Anderson, *Glossary*, 58).

390. Dupont, "Structure oratoire," thinks that the charges (Acts 6:11, 13–14) function something like a *propositio*; Witherington, *Acts*, 260n267, attributes this role to 7:35 because it moves from *insinuatio* closer to a direct statement of the speech's agenda.

391. Here I have adapted insights from Dupont, "Structure oratoire."

argued Luke does, in three eras: “ancestors, Founder(s), and successors.”³⁹² (Of course, a chronological approach to history, highlighting the most noted figures, makes sense in any case.) Luke treats the early ancestors most fully in this speech (dwelling on David more in 13:22–23, 34–37). He explicitly treats the ultimate founder and successors together and only briefly at the speech’s conclusion because his countercharge must be concise to be heard at all.

II. USE OF SCRIPTURE

Readers curious about what Luke has in mind regarding the content of Jesus’s christological interpretation of Scripture in Luke 24:27, 44–45 can reconstruct the sort of passages and interpretations implied by the use of Scripture in Acts. Acts 7 provides the longest example of this interpretive approach and suggests a heavy emphasis on noting patterns of deliverers.³⁹³

(1) *Historical Retrospectives*

If orators were happy to draw on ancient quotations as “proofs,”³⁹⁴ Stephen’s speech (including not only his “proofs” but his *narratio*) consists primarily of retelling sacred stories. Historical retrospectives and lists of heroes of the faith were a common literary device, as scholars often point out.³⁹⁵ Moses recites God’s past deliverances (Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Joseph) to encourage Israel (Jos. *Ant.* 3.87); Josephus recounts history to address his own day in a speech as well as in his writings (*War* 5.379–411). Even an Ammonite commander rehearses Israel’s history from Abraham on to warn how dangerous Israel will be (Jdt 5:6–21), thereby implicitly praising Israel’s God. Other such retrospectives noted by scholars include 4 *Ezra* 3:4–36; 14:29–31; CD II, 18–V, 6. Later Christians adopted the model (Heb 11:4–32; 1 *Clem.* 4.1–5.7).³⁹⁶

Minority groups within Judaism could recount these historical retrospectives in different ways. Most such voices, whether the Qumran sectarians, or Hellenistic Jewish philosophers such as Philo, or authors of apocalypses recounting history with a view to the future, reread the biblical narratives from their own perspectives and with their own agendas. “It would have been astonishing,” Johnson suggests, “for a splinter group of Judaism such as the first Christians not to have engaged in a similar exercise.”³⁹⁷ The sharing of a (mostly) common canon usually limited the divergence of views and dictated some overlap, but the diversity of questions necessarily led to different emphases. That Luke’s retelling differs from many other perspectives³⁹⁸ is to be expected.

Historical retrospectives could call on Israel to depend on God, as in Deuteronomy’s briefer confessions (Deut 6:20–24; 26:5–9) and in Joshua (Josh 24:2–14).³⁹⁹ Other retellings emphasized repentance for continued rebellion against God (Neh 9:6–31; cf. Ps 78:1–64; perhaps Ezek 20:5–29); judgment on the wicked (3 *Macc* 2:4–7); worship (Pss 105; 106; 135:8–12; 136:10–22); continued faithfulness and

392. Balch, “Genre,” 16, also arguing that Luke denounces the unjust patriarchs. But while Luke offers a “revisionist” historical perspective (at least from the perspective of the traditional, more hagiographic reading of these narratives), he cites a legitimate pattern in these narratives.

393. Cf., e.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 13.

394. With, e.g., Black, *Rhetoric of Gospel*, 128.

395. E.g., Bruce, *Commentary*, 144; Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 40–41; Richard, *Composition*, 141; Neudorfer, “Speech,” 281–83; Soards, *Speeches*, 61.

396. Cf. the brief sample in *Apost. Const.* 7.37.2–4.

397. Johnson, *Romans*, 152 (on Rom 9, another example of this pattern).

398. Notably, regarding the land; see, e.g., Pate et al., *Story*, 199–201; and discussion below. For a contemporary model, for all Scripture (OT and NT) read as a unity of Israel’s story, see Pate et al., *Story*, *passim*, who read the entire Christian canon as a unity of Israel’s story.

399. They could also be used, as they often are in the Middle East and elsewhere today, in land disputes (Judg 11:12–13, 15–27).

sacrifice (1 Macc 2:52–60; Heb 11:3–38); stricter interpretation of the law (*Jubilees*); or God’s sovereign purpose (1 *En.* 83–90).⁴⁰⁰ The very diversity of applications available in history allowed Luke considerable freedom in his own application. Given Stephen’s execution immediately after his speech, it might also be relevant that such historical retrospectives could provide exhortation in testaments, a dying father’s final instructions to his successors (e.g., 1 Macc 2:51–60 in 2:49–69).⁴⁰¹

Sometimes these retrospective views may portray the present time as a continuation of biblical history. Sirach lists many heroes of biblical history chronologically (Sir 44:16–49:13), then jumps back to earlier characters (perhaps for a climax)—Enoch (49:14; where he started in 44:16), Joseph (49:15), and figures before Enoch (49:16)—before covering the postbiblical period (Sir 50), featuring Simon son of Onias. Likewise, after tracing history from Adam (Wis 10:1–2) to Israel’s wilderness wanderings (11:2–16), Wisdom of Solomon moves to application.⁴⁰² Psalm 78 may end with David (Ps 78:70–72; cf. 78:65–69) in hopes that the Davidic dynasty can lead Israel toward a better future.⁴⁰³ One could recount past characters of history in a way that reframed the way more recent characters, or the present era, would be viewed (or vice versa).⁴⁰⁴ Among later Christian writers, Clement adds NT heroes (1 *Clem.* 5.1–6.1) to his OT list (4.1–13).

(2) Luke’s Selection Criteria

Stephen’s speech sometimes follows postbiblical traditions (e.g., Acts 7:16, 22), but as the commentary will demonstrate, he chooses them fairly conservatively and omits most of those available. He stays closer to the basic content of the biblical narratives more often than do most of his contemporaries, including those who, like Josephus, claimed to repeat them carefully.⁴⁰⁵ The speech does employ numerous first-century Jewish interpretive techniques (such as midrashic allusiveness and blending of texts) that are foreign to us today, but it also explores intertextual patterns among biblical characters more familiar to us from contemporary narrative criticism.

Ancient writers, like modern ones, were often faced with the problem of too many sources; to forestall criticism, they sometimes had to explain why they chose to focus on some matters to the exclusion of others (Dion. Hal. *Isaeus* 19–20). Luke ranges across his canon, but the combination of examples he selects is significant for the point he wishes to emphasize. That Stephen emphasizes characters first from the law before moving briefly to the prophets fits what was probably a frequent pattern for synagogue exposition (see comment on Acts 13:16–47); that so much of the speech concerns the law fits both his audience in the narrative world (which may include Sadducees, Acts 6:12; 7:1) and Stephen’s strategy of reserving the most controversial points for the speech’s final moments.

400. I have supplemented here Dunn, *Acts*, 89. Some of these texts overlap categories.

401. Some ancients thought that those close to death could foretell the future (e.g., Xen. *Apol.* 30; Gen 49; Aune, *Prophecy*, 178; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 105, 155); Stephen’s focus is past, but his insight is prophetic (Acts 7:51–52). His speech also helps explain the temple’s destruction (future from Stephen’s perspective) for Luke’s audience (Kilgallen, “Speech of Stephen”).

402. Doble, *Paradox*, 145, thinks that Wisdom of Solomon provides Luke’s model here.

403. Some, however, regard it as preexilic (e.g., Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 2:361–62; Anderson, *Psalms*, 562), but this seems unlikely (Ps 78:61–64 could refer to events at Shiloh as in 78:60, if the psalm follows chronological sequence here).

404. See, e.g., Bergren, “Nehemiah”; Borgen, “Reviewing and Rewriting.”

405. With Richard, *Composition*, 308, on this point. Surprisingly, Ps.-Philo *Biblical Antiquities* and often even *Jubilees* feel free to remain closer to the narrative than the Hellenistic historian Josephus (on whom rhetoric and apologetic make higher demands); Luke’s relative brevity and less elite audience may spare him some of Josephus’s “excesses” (from our modern historical perspective).

Ancient interpreters could narrate history (e.g., 4Q370 I) and then apply the message they found there to principles relevant for their own time (e.g., 4Q370 II).⁴⁰⁶ Early Jewish interpreters often approached biblical texts in the context of the canon, connecting them freely with other texts that helped them fill out the passages they were examining.⁴⁰⁷ Interpreters could excerpt and collect texts on related topics from different parts of the same book (e.g., 4Q365 28 + 36); they could recount God’s miracles epideictically to invite praise (4Q185 1–2 I, 14–15). Stephen finds particular patterns persisting in the narratives of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, which introduce the book of the covenant. Although Stephen’s (Luke’s) application is specifically Christian, these recurring patterns are mostly evident within the Genesis-Exodus narratives themselves (for a much fuller treatment, see comment on Acts 7:9–16). Like some of his contemporaries, Luke understood these patterns as evidence of God’s “plan” (see comment on Acts 2:23).

J. Bradley Chance offers a helpful table comparing some of the key differences between Scripture itself and Stephen’s retelling of it (often explainable as due to use of the LXX or postbiblical early Jewish readings):⁴⁰⁸

Speech in Acts 7	Pentateuch Passage	Possible Explanations
7:2–3: God called Abram in Gen 12:1 “before he lived in Haran”	The context of Gen 12:1 shows that God called Abram <i>when</i> he was in Haran (11:31–32; 12:4–5)	Gen 12:1 says, “from your own country”; Gen 15:7 says that God brought Abram from Ur
7:4: Abram left Haran for Canaan after Terah’s death*	Abram was born when Terah was seventy (Gen 11:26) and left seventy-five years later (12:4)—long before Terah’s death at 205 (11:32)	Abram’s departure (Gen 12:5) is mentioned after Terah’s death (11:32); Philo read the passage the way Stephen did (<i>Migr.</i> 177)
7:14: Seventy-five went to Egypt	Seventy went to Egypt (Gen 46:27; Exod 1:5; Deut 10:22)	The LXX does report seventy-five (at Gen 46:27; Exod 1:5) because, instead of adding Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph’s <i>two</i> sons to Gen 46:26, the LXX claims that he has <i>nine</i> sons. Philo also notes the discrepancy (<i>Migr.</i> 200–202)
7:16: Jacob and Joseph were buried in Shechem	Though Joseph was buried in Shechem (Josh 24:32), Jacob was buried at Hebron (Gen 49:29–32)	Luke is deemphasizing the Holy Land, and the ruins of Shechem were now in Samaritan territory†
7:22: Moses’s training in Egyptian wisdom	Not noted‡	Often emphasized in postbiblical Jewish sources (e.g., Philo <i>Mos.</i> 1.20–24)
7:23: Moses visited his people at age forty	In Exodus, it is clear only that he was now grown (Exod 2:11)	Later rabbis, undoubtedly reflecting earlier tradition, divided Moses’s 120-year life into three forty-year periods
7:53: Angels mediated the law	Missing in the Hebrew Bible	This was apparently a common Jewish tradition (cf. Deut 33:2 LXX; Jos. <i>Ant.</i> 15.136; Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2)

* It is possible that Luke’s Stephen, like many modern interpreters, does not take the ages in Genesis very literally.

† The imprecision of condensation is also possible, but Luke’s theology could explain why Luke uses Shechem rather than Hebron for the condensed version.

‡ Although some Egyptian education could be assumed for a son of one of Pharaoh’s daughters.

406. See Wise, “Introduction to 4Q370.”

407. Fisk, “Genesis Apocryphon,” 401; on intertextuality, see Hays, *Echoes*; Fishbane, *Interpretation*; on a canonical approach to correspondences in history, see Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 94; cf. further Neusner, *Connection* (maintaining the importance of appropriate historical perspective).

408. Chance, *Acts*, 110 (though the wording has been adapted here). For a recent discussion of Luke’s adaptations of Genesis, see Kim, “Quotations.”

(3) *Applying the Scriptures*

Stephen's (and Luke's) application of the motifs to their own day also fits expectations.⁴⁰⁹ Those who read Israel's Scripture as Scripture naturally sought to emulate its models and interpret their lives in light of it. Thus, for example, Josephus sometimes described himself in light of various biblical characters and may have portrayed them in ways that foreshadowed (or helped justify) his own activities.⁴¹⁰ As noted in the commentary introduction (see comment there), historians found patterns in history that they believed to be divine;⁴¹¹ Luke does likewise with his narratives, but he certainly also does so with the larger story of Israel, into which the story of Jesus and the apostolic mission are embedded.⁴¹² Some Jewish teachers and Hellenistic historians, to be sure, distinguished the current time from the supernatural or heroic past;⁴¹³ but many Jewish movements, especially eschatological-restoration movements such as the Qumran community and the early Christians, saw themselves as continuing to live in "biblical" times.⁴¹⁴

God's activity in previous eras, reported in Scripture, suggested the way believers should expect God to work in their own. Thus, for example, testing and suffering were always a pattern for God's servants in Scripture, including the heroes of Acts 7 (7:3–5, 9, 27–28). This scriptural pattern fits the suffering-exaltation central to recitals of the gospel story, and Luke believed it foundational to understanding that story (Luke 24:46; Acts 3:18; 17:2–3; 26:22–23; 1 Cor 15:3; 1 Pet 1:11).⁴¹⁵ (For several biblical patterns relevant for this speech, see comment on Acts 7:9–16, 29.)

Scripture also provided another useful pattern: God nearly always surprised his people in how he fulfilled his promises to them. When God informed Abraham that the son he had obtained by natural means was not the final fulfillment of his promise but that God would provide the promised son by "impossible" means, Abraham was astonished (Gen 17:17–18; cf. 16:2; 18:12). God fulfilled his promise that Abraham would have a multitude of descendants, though to his dying day he had only one son of promise, and Isaac to his dying day had only two sons. Joseph's exaltation fulfilled divine promises (27:29; 37:7, 9), but it came through Joseph's suffering first; as noted below, significant aspects of Moses's exaltation invert the pattern of Joseph, although Moses also suffered before his exaltation. The God of Scripture was always full of surprises, revealing that even when he was keeping his promises, he would usually sovereignly surprise his people in how he did so (a pattern Paul also noticed in Scripture, Rom 11:33–34; 1 Cor 1:18–19; 3:19). Should Israel be surprised that God had fulfilled his promise of the Messiah in a way it was not expecting, obvious only in retrospect?

Early Christians understood the OT differently than their Jewish contemporaries

409. See discussion of *peshet* at Acts 2:16, though making the text applicable to one's own time was the role of all midrash (Wright, "Midrash," 133–34). Although not expository in the modern sense, preaching of Scripture in Acts is biblically grounded (Scharf, "Expository Preachers").

410. See Daube, "Typology in Josephus."

411. For historians and patterns, see esp. Keener, *Acts*, 1:571–74; for historians and theology, see 1:73, 156–58. More generally, they would also value arguments by analogy (Arist. *Rhet.* 2.23.4–5, 1397b).

412. Cf. Paul's reading of Scripture "primarily as a *narrative* of divine election and promise" (Hays, *Echoes*, 157; more fully, 155–58).

413. On historians, see the commentary introduction; on differences in supernatural activity in some Jewish sources, see, e.g., Keener, *Spirit*, 13–16.

414. Cf. Hays, *Echoes*, 170–72 (though drawing a starker distinction between early Christians and Qumran on this point). Qumran sectarians, probably more firmly than many others, also believed that they held the correct interpretive grid (Trever, "Covenanters," 129). This perspective also characterizes many Christian apocalyptic movements today; see, e.g., Robeck, *Mission*, 121–22.

415. Czachesz, "Logic," draws attention to the humiliation-exaltation pattern in Luke-Acts.

even though both shared similar interpretive techniques.⁴¹⁶ Ancient readers of texts sometimes argued over the original intention of texts; their perspectives on intention, however, could differ.⁴¹⁷ A major difference between the Jesus movement and much of mainstream Judaism stemmed from a different approach or “interpretive grid”; for most of our sources from the Jesus movement, the biblical narrative was promise, finally understood in light of its fulfillment.⁴¹⁸ As Darrell Bock puts it:

The very premise behind reading history as involving promise and pattern is divine design and the constancy of God’s character as he saves in similar ways at different times. Jewish imagery reusing Exodus motifs or new creation language shows how Judaism accepted this view of history.⁴¹⁹

Stephen’s speech reads the biblical narrative intertextually to expound God’s coherent plan in history in a way that provides the reader an interpretive grid for the charges in Acts 6:11–13.⁴²⁰ Luke will provide another example in Acts 13, which suggests that historical retrospective is important to his perspective.⁴²¹ Clearly Luke sees historical narrative as critical to proclamation; with this indicator, he suggests the purpose of his own two-volume work (as a “gospel,” so to speak, or at least a gospel and a model for further preaching it).

III. HISTORY AND REDACTION

Many scholars have argued for sources for even specific wording in Stephen’s speech, often on dubious grounds. Many others have argued against such sources, also often on dubious grounds.

(1) *Arguments for Sources*

A number of scholars have argued that Luke drew on an earlier source for Stephen’s speech.⁴²² Marcel Simon summarized the mid-twentieth-century consensus: the elements and at least some of the wording derive from a pre-Lukan source.⁴²³ Some scholars point to contrasts with other speeches to argue that even if Luke composed the other speeches, this one depends on preexisting material (whether or not that material goes back to Stephen).⁴²⁴ Martin Scharlemann regards the speech’s “vocabulary and style” as “so unusual in places as to be inexplicable if the author of Acts was interested only in creating variety by literary *fiat*.”⁴²⁵ Why, he asks, would Luke leave “awkward connections” and elements foreign to his own style?⁴²⁶

416. Pace Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 80, christological interpretation did not require abandoning traditional exegetical techniques (see Longenecker, *Exegesis*, passim).

417. Greek legal interpreters in the same way sometimes sought to ascertain a lawgiver’s intention and/or courts’ interpretations of the law that reinforced it (*Rhet. Alex.* 1, 1422b.20–25; Hermog. *Inv.* 2.2.110–12).

418. Bock, “Scripture and Realisation of Promises,” 43–44. Qumran’s pesher approach to Scripture may have been similar, but Luke’s large-scale appropriation of biblical patterns here is distinctive enough to be significant.

419. *Ibid.*, 47.

420. See, e.g., Njoroge wa Ngugi, “Stephen’s Speech.” One may compare Luke’s mentor Paul, who, as Hays puts it (*Echoes*, 157), “finds the continuity between Torah and gospel through a hermeneutic that reads scripture primarily as a *narrative* of divine election and promise.”

421. Acts 13 provides the closest parallel to Acts 7 (Neudorfer, “Speech,” 281–82).

422. E.g., Scharlemann, “Speech: Lukan Creation?”; Lenski, *Acts*, 15, 259–60; Marshall, *Acts*, 133; D. Williams, *Acts*, 128 (following Dunn, *Unity*, 270–71); views noted in Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 180–82. Pervo, *Acts*, 176, notes that this is a very widespread position and surveys the options (175–78; concluding, however, that no source is certain here).

423. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 39–40.

424. Klijn, “Stephen’s Speech,” 25–28.

425. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 24.

426. *Ibid.*, 29–30.

Others note that Stephen's thorough use of the language of LXX passages usually without explicit quotation "suggests an extemporaneous speech rather than a conscious literary composition."⁴²⁷ Aside from the fact that this approach would make much of Luke-Acts merely "extemporaneous," it assumes that Luke had traces of Stephen's actual wording rather than the report of the gist.⁴²⁸ This is unlikely in Stephen's speech (in contrast to traditions passed down in school settings, such as those of Jesus's disciples). It could reflect Luke's use of a written source (if not verbatim from Stephen), but this question invites further exploration.

John A. T. Robinson sees the sermon, which does not emphasize Christology, as "pre-messianic from beginning to end."⁴²⁹ Dunn offers the following arguments for a pre-Lukan source that Luke has adapted to fit his own presentation:

1. It is overtly Christian only at the end and (unique in Acts) lacks a call for repentance.⁴³⁰
2. It is unorthodox (the burial in Shechem, 7:16).
3. Circumcision (7:8) is not yet problematic, and so this is pre-Pauline.
4. The temple is denounced (7:48), in contrast to Luke's usual view (Luke 1:8–23; 2:22–38, 41–50; 24:53; Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42).

Dunn therefore suggests that this speech derives from the Hellenist source followed throughout Acts 6–8.⁴³¹

At least one of these arguments is without merit: the lack of polemic against *Jewish* circumcision (point 3) does not conflict with Luke's (Acts 16:3; 21:21) or Paul's (1 Cor 7:18; Gal 5:6; 6:15) theology. Other arguments are of limited merit: the practice of writing speeches "in character"⁴³² could allow for a measure of diversity in a historian's speeches.

Moreover, it is not as clear as some scholars have asserted that this speech differs from Luke's usual theology on the points claimed. Thus some question whether one can identify pre-Lukan tradition here. The emphasis on salvation history is also Lukan, and the lack of christological emphasis until the end is explicable on rhetorical terms appropriate to the situation depicted here. This is not to deny that such features may point to earlier tradition (at some points, they at least may increase this likelihood); it is merely to note that they could also be individually explained on other grounds.

(2) Arguments against Sources

Some arguments against the speech's authenticity are at least equally strained. Some claim, for example, that Luke's account of the speech depends fully on the LXX (Acts 7:38, 43, 45) and regard it as doubtful "that the whole hearing was conducted

427. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 167. Haenchen, *Acts*, 286–89, thinks that this speech was originally independent because it does not answer the charges in Acts 6:11–13, but this approach misunderstands the speech's rhetoric.

428. Luke, who is consciously producing a literary work, would also have the ancient historian's freedom to reshape the speech for his audience's standards.

429. Robinson, *Studies*, 151.

430. O'Neill, *Theology*, 89, even doubts that Stephen was a Christian (attributing to Stephen's disciples [94] the identification of his Son of God vision with Jesus). This is an extreme position that ignores the narrative context, which has better claim to historicity than the content of a speech.

431. Dunn, *Acts*, 92. With many other scholars, Dunn notes (*Partings*, 65) that Acts 6–8 coheres so well as to suggest a source. These chapters might, however, simply reflect Hellenist perspectives reported through Paul and Philip. Many contrast Stephen's radical approach with Luke-Acts elsewhere (e.g., Hays-Pratts, *Believers*, 215); while these observations are not without merit, characterization often varied among figures in the same writer.

432. See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:284–86.

in Greek.”⁴³³ But since the hearing involved especially Hellenists (6:9, 12), who may have spoken only Greek, and since the Sadducees were the most likely members of the Sanhedrin to have participated in the hearing, Greek is, in fact, the likely language of the proceedings. (Romans also accommodated Greek language in eastern Mediterranean courts, since it was the lingua franca of the urban East.)⁴³⁴ Because Stephen was a Hellenist, it is also likely the language in which Stephen studied Scripture and preached.

Some also date Stephen’s speech shortly after the temple’s destruction.⁴³⁵ But many before 70 C.E., employing OT language, denounced the temple and/or predicted its demise far more explicitly than we can argue Stephen’s speech does;⁴³⁶ such predictions do not reveal their date. This is especially the case if we grant that the early Christian source Q, which also announced Jerusalem’s demise, is pre-70 (Matt 23:35, 38; Luke 11:50–51; 13:35; cf. Mark 13:14)⁴³⁷ or that Jesus overturned tables in the temple as a sign of imminent judgment (Mark 11:15–17).⁴³⁸ (Naturally, those of us who date Acts after 70 will see the influence of such an event on the shaping of Luke’s narrative, as in Luke 21,⁴³⁹ but this perspective does not settle the question of whether Luke drew on historical tradition or, if he did, of how much he drew.)

Others point to clear signs of thorough Lukan composition.⁴⁴⁰ Even the emphasis on prophecy fulfillment in the speech, some argue, is characteristic enough of Luke to point to his authorship.⁴⁴¹ It is clear that Luke writes the speech in his own words, and it can be integrated without serious conflict into his theology. Some therefore doubt that Luke had access to much tradition about Stephen.⁴⁴² Yet Luke incorporates plenty of tradition into his Gospel while selecting and arranging it according to his own literary purposes. Indeed, advocates of a source themselves do not deny Luke’s freedom to put the account into his own words.⁴⁴³ This observation does make sources difficult to demonstrate (despite the suggestion of *some* dissonance between the speech and Luke’s theology, offered below), though, of course, neither does it refute sources; historians customarily rewrote material—above all, speech material—in their own words.⁴⁴⁴ This argument is stronger than the other arguments against authenticity, but if pressed elsewhere in Luke or Acts, it might yield *no* pre-Lukan material (despite our clear external evidence to the contrary).

Although Stephen’s perspective on the temple serves Luke’s purpose, it does appear to go beyond the voice of other reliable characters in Acts. Thus Luke “almost bends over backwards to show Paul in a conciliatory mood towards the Temple ([Acts]

433. Dunn, *Acts*, 91–92, though he (like Witherington, *Acts*, 261) notes that this means simply that Luke reported the summary in his own words.

434. E.g., Winter, “*Captatio benevolentiae*,” 526; see comment on Acts 18:12–13.

435. Conzelmann, “Luke’s Place,” 309.

436. See discussion at Acts 6:13; also Keener, *Matthew*, 560–62, and sources there (see esp. *Test. Mos.* 6:8–9; cf. *1 En.* 90:28–29; 11QT XXIX, 8–10; 1QpHab IX, 6–7; Josephus *War* 6.306–9; *Test. Levi* 15:1).

437. Theissen, *Gospels*, 203–34, esp. 220–21, 230–32, dates Q to the 40s. Caligula’s attempt to install his statue in the temple may have fueled further interest in the subject at that time.

438. With, e.g., Harvey, *History*, 131–32; Aune, *Prophecy*, 136; Catchpole, “‘Triumphal’ Entry,” 334; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 70, 364n4; Keener, *Matthew*, 500–501.

439. For Luke’s using Stephen’s speech to help explain the temple’s demise in 70, see, e.g., Kilgallen, “Speech of Stephen”; Taylor, “Temple,” 720–21.

440. Hill, *Hellenists*, 82–90; Kilgallen, *Speech*, 121–63; also Koester, *Introduction*, 2:90. Hill summarizes and counters various specific source theories: Aramaic, Alexandrian, and Essene sources (*Hellenists*, 92–93); the Antiochene source (93–95); the Samaritan source (95–99; see below); the “neutral” source (99–101).

441. Dahl, “Abraham,” 147 (contrasting other recapitulations of history).

442. Hill, *Hellenists*, 101.

443. E.g., Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 39; Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 23; Richard, *Composition*, 239–41.

444. See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:178–79, 201, 230, 258n7, 268, 277, 281, 302.

21.26; 22.17; 24.12, 18; 25.8).⁴⁴⁵ Though Stephen is not really against the temple in the larger context of Luke's report⁴⁴⁶ (and Luke uses Stephen's words to serve the broader context of his own theme, Luke 21:5–6), he may sound, on the whole, more antitemple than Luke is (esp. in Acts 7:43, 47–50). Certainly, Stephen's accusers thought him opposing the temple (6:11–14; 7:58–60). One could therefore suggest that Luke tones down and tames an antitemple speech, but this conclusion is still not necessary. An institution's guardians often perceive attacks against its abuse as attacks against the institution itself (cf. Mark 14:58). Before his conversion, Paul, who is the likeliest candidate for Luke's primary source here,⁴⁴⁷ would have understood the basic outline of the speech as antitemple, but afterward he may have appreciated that Stephen merely opposed misplaced veneration of the temple.

(3) *Mediating Approaches*

Barrett doubts that the material in the speech stems from a trial but accepts much of it as historically valuable for insights into the views articulated by Stephen and some fellow Diaspora Jews.⁴⁴⁸ Although Lüdemann rejects the historicity of most of the story, he does accept as historical "Stephen's criticism of law and cult," judging that "the expulsion of those of like mind from Jerusalem is the best reason for such an assumption."⁴⁴⁹ One can question, however, whether even Luke limits the expulsion only to those of like mind (Acts 8:4), and we have already questioned whether Stephen, in fact, criticizes the law itself.

Still, it is likely that the basic substance (or for many not in leadership, at least the rumored basic substance) of both the charge and the response would have been remembered by Jerusalem Christians and certainly by the scattered Hellenists such as Philip and (in a different way) Saul. As Kennedy points out, "The first martyrdom was a turning point for the Church, and the substance of what Stephen said may thus have been remembered."⁴⁵⁰ This was not Stephen's only speech (6:10), and in an oral culture Stephen's friends (such as Philip) and enemies (such as Saul) would likely have remembered key themes of his preaching, especially if they were taken up by others afterward. Probably most exegetes still favor Simon's view that essential elements are pre-Lukan, though most are also more skeptical of our ability to discern a pre-Lukan source on the basis of peculiar wording.⁴⁵¹ Although specific evidence of sources continues to be debated (and source criticism in general is no longer in vogue), Luke's historical work where we can test him suggests that here, too, he works from sources. Given his association with Paul and (for several days) with Philip, Luke should have had plenty of material for all of Acts 6–8, however he may have thought best to package it. He may have known the basic charges against Stephen and the kinds of arguments with which Stephen countered them; Luke could then flesh out that argument concretely. Given his usual willingness to settle for much briefer speeches, he may for this speech have a fuller or even fairly substantial idea of what Stephen

445. Dunn, *Partings*, 64–65.

446. Sweeney, "Stephen's Speech," contending that Luke is not antitemple, even argues that Luke's focus here is not the temple but salvation history.

447. Suggested also by others, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 261.

448. Barrett, *Acts*, 339; for the theology of Stephen and his movement here, cf. also Taylor, "History and Tradition."

449. Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 93; cf. Koester, *Introduction*, 2:90 (citing Acts 6:11, though doubting 6:13–7:53).

450. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 122.

451. Cf. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 39–40. Cf., e.g., Marguerat, *Actes*, 235: Luke reshaped a source from the Hellenists, but one that we cannot reconstruct.

and/or those aligned with him often taught. But we should avoid overestimating our ability to reconstruct the sources.

IV. ACTS 7 AND THE SAMARITANS

Scholars have often looked for a Samaritan source or Samaritan connections here. Some have used such “Samaritanisms” to demonstrate the authenticity of the speech, opining that Luke (despite his Samaritan interests, Luke 9:52; 10:33; 17:11, 16; Acts 1:8; 8:1–25; 9:31; 15:3) could not be responsible for these.⁴⁵² Those who find numerous Samaritanisms here sometimes suggest that Stephen was influenced by the Samaritans, particularly regarding the temple.⁴⁵³

On the historical level, Stephen’s colleagues apparently began a Samaritan mission soon after his death (Acts 8:5), but does this likelihood suggest deliberate Samaritan connections on Stephen’s part before the mission began?⁴⁵⁴ Would a Hellenist *be* a Samaritan (though cf. comment on Acts 8:5 regarding Sebaste)? And if 8:5–25 reveals a Samaritan source, would this source also cover Stephen’s earlier preaching, before the Samaritans’ conversion (7:2–53; yet summarize Philip only in 8:5–25)?⁴⁵⁵

Most of Stephen’s retrospective derives from the Pentateuch, which would fit Samaritan expectations. For Samaritans, only the Pentateuch was “canonical”; their version of Joshua was not biblical but part of their “chronicles.”⁴⁵⁶ But Jewish expositors often started with and focused on a Pentateuch text; Sadducees (relevant for the reported Sanhedrin setting, cf. 6:12; 7:1) may have also (according to some views) emphasized the Pentateuch;⁴⁵⁷ and once Stephen becomes more explicit in the prophets, he cannot confidently count on much more time to speak uninterrupted. Further, his retrospective includes Joshua, David, and Solomon (even if Solomon might not be fully positive in 7:47) and quotes prophets the Samaritans rejected (7:45–50).

Fitzmyer’s critique of the various Samaritan theses is accurate: since Samaritans valued Mount Gerizim, Stephen’s geographic universalism would undermine their theology as well as that of Jerusalemites.⁴⁵⁸ Neither Samaritan sources nor variant textual traditions are necessary to explain details; these apparent anomalies may simply reveal “the conflation and inexactitude of popular Judaism.”⁴⁵⁹ Most Samaritan

452. Scobie, “Origins and Development,” 396. Scobie believes that the source was Samaritan (“Source Material,” 405–12) but revised in a Christian tract before reaching Luke (412–15).

453. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 19. Cf. Spiro, “Samaritan Background”; perhaps Le Cornu, *Acts*, 330 (but questioned [340]).

454. Cf. Scharlemann, “Speech: Lucan Creation?”

455. That Acts 8:26–40 is outside the range of Samaritan knowledge makes it far more likely that Philip was the source for both accounts; Luke stayed with Philip (Acts 21:8, 10), but he gives us no indication of having gone out of his way to visit Samaria.

456. Bowman, *Documents*, 61. Bóid, “Transmission,” thinks that elements of the Samaritan version of Joshua-Judges may reflect an earlier source than the MT or the LXX; whether or not this is correct, the observation underlines the observable differences between the recensions.

457. See Jos. *Ant.* 13.297; 18.16 (but Josephus explicitly refers here only to Sadducean denial of the oral Torah, not post-Mosaic Scripture); Pharisees, in debating with Sadducees, used especially the Pentateuch. Again, this need not mean that Sadducees denied the rest of Scripture (like Samaritans), but the Torah held pride of place (witness Philo’s focus almost exclusively on the Pentateuch).

458. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 368. Jewish texts report not simply Samaritan repudiation of Jerusalem but Samaritans’ competition between Jewish and their own holy sites (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 32:10). Samaritans also valued the past (and eschatological) tabernacle (see Pummer, “Tabernacle”).

459. Longenecker, *Acts*, 136. Richard, *Composition*, 41, thinks that Luke’s use of the LXX here makes variations from the LXX all the more significant; these may stem, however, from different text types, the interpreter’s freedom to paraphrase relevantly, and the quoter’s freedom to paraphrase by memory. Parsons, *Acts*, 105, helpfully emphasizes the use of paraphrasing citations in rhetoric more generally (citing Theon *Progymn.* 108P).

“distinctives” echoed in the speech appear elsewhere in early Judaism.⁴⁶⁰ Samaritans themselves may have been influenced by, more than influenced, the sort of Hellenistic Judaism reflected in Acts 7 (perhaps especially given the proximity of Sebaste). The only distinctive Samaritan element is the burial of the twelve patriarchs; everything else appears in Jewish sources.⁴⁶¹ This element may derive from ethnic cross-fertilization of traditions, perhaps among early Christians themselves (see 9:31; 15:3 for continuing interaction). In the end, most scholars have been unpersuaded by Samaritan sources or distinctives.⁴⁶²

Luke’s primary biblical version in the speech is unquestionably the LXX (see the following commentary on the speech, *passim*),⁴⁶³ and elements resembling the “Samaritan Pentateuch” are not usually distinctively Samaritan.⁴⁶⁴ (Discussion below focuses primarily on the most common Septuagintal readings rather than digressing at greater length to note divergent LXX texts.) Readings known to us primarily or only from the Samaritan Pentateuch⁴⁶⁵ may have been available to ancient readers from other sources. The Samaritan Pentateuch’s readings sometimes agree with the text type found in pre-Masoretic sources, such as Qumran or the most common extant version of the LXX.⁴⁶⁶ Thus the expanded form of Exod 20:19–21 in the Samaritan version is also attested in 4Q158 frg. 6.⁴⁶⁷ Another fragment (4QNum^b) is closer to the Samaritan than to LXX or MT readings.⁴⁶⁸

Some parallels, however, are questionable; for example, some supposed proto-Samaritan elements (e.g., in 4QDeutⁿ) may simply handle the text in a manner similar to the Samaritan Pentateuch.⁴⁶⁹ More important, despite agreements with other early sources at points, the Samaritan Pentateuch’s readings diverge from other sources more often than do most of our other text traditions;⁴⁷⁰ for example, Terah’s age in the Samaritan Pentateuch for Gen 11:32 was 145 years, but 205 years in the MT, the LXX, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.152), and apparently 4Q252 1 II, 8–10. Obviously, other manuscripts would not agree with the Samaritan conflation of

460. Cf. likewise Bowman, “Samaritan and Pauline Theology” (on comparisons of Paul with Samaritan thought). Cf. even Coggins, “Samaritans and Acts” (who emphasizes “Samaritanisms” in Acts 7), 433: Samaritan elements there “may emanate from a milieu analogous to, if not precisely identifiable with, Samaritanism.”

461. Neudorfer, “Speech,” 293–94.

462. With Richard, “Samaritan Evidence”; Witherington, *Acts*, 265.

463. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 20, argues that Samaritans early adopted the Greek language and perhaps a pre-LXX Greek translation of the OT.

464. With, e.g., Mare, “Acts 7.”

465. Some scholars argue for Samaritan originals of some works (Kugler, “Evidence,” but, in my opinion, questionably); Schorch, “Bedeutung,” argues that Samaritan oral tradition for vocalizing the Hebrew Bible may sometimes preserve a more original reading than the MT and the LXX. (Throughout the commentary, when I speak of the “LXX,” it should be understood that I refer to a family of texts, not as if there were a single LXX text.)

466. See, e.g., Koester, *Introduction*, 1:248; Wevers, “Scrolls”; for one early collection of studies on the Scrolls and text criticism, see Cross and Talmon, *Qumran and History*. Qumran texts often read closer to the LXX than to the MT (e.g., Cross, “Fragment”; idem, “Manuscripts”; Orlinsky, “Text Studies”; Vermes, *Scrolls in Perspective*, 204; Martone, “Septuagint”; Wevers, “Scrolls”). Greek fragments there (Orlinsky, “Text Studies,” 32) also reflect diverse textual traditions (Miller, “Fragments”).

467. Skehan, “Exodus,” argues that Qumran’s Exodus is often closer to the Samaritan Pentateuch than to the MT.

468. Vermes, *Scrolls in Perspective*, 204.

469. Owen, “4QDeutⁿ.” For arguments for some proto-Samaritan readings in the Qumran scrolls, see, e.g., Jastram, “Comparison”; Tov, “Compositions.”

470. On its secondary character, see, e.g., Bowman, *Documents*, 18 (though the Qumran scrolls have improved our picture of the Samaritan Pentateuch’s value since Bowman’s writing). Some rabbinic objections to Samaritan use of the law concerned merely liturgical arrangement (see Bowman, *Documents*, 2, 4, 27, 31–35).

the ninth and tenth commandments to make room for their own tenth commandment, to build an altar on Gerizim (Deut 27:3–5).⁴⁷¹ Further, many of the earlier readings in the Samaritan Targum resemble the Masoretic Text, perhaps pointing to an earlier *Vorlage*.⁴⁷²

Even the LXX we know was not yet standardized. Josephus used a Greek text closer to 4QSam^a than to the MT, and the OT Chronicler apparently did the same.⁴⁷³ The Samaritan Pentateuch probably diverged from the tradition that led to the standardized MT early enough to point to an early text type; this text type may stand behind Acts 7 without any direct dependence on the Samaritan Pentateuch.⁴⁷⁴

V. HELLENISTIC JUDAISM

Whatever else Stephen was, he was a “Hellenist” (6:1–9). To classify him as a Hellenistic Jew is therefore not very controversial. Unfortunately, it is also not very helpful; since all but the most rural Jews in the empire were somewhat hellenized, the label is not very restrictive if one does not specify the extent and nature of hellenization. Two scholars may use the label to signify very different levels of Hellenism. What the discussion should lay to rest are any protests emphasizing “primitive” Semitic traits “beneath” a hellenized exterior.

Some scholars use Stephen’s “Hellenism” to explain too much. For example, Simon contends that Stephen held his antitemple views as a “Reform” Jew before his conversion.⁴⁷⁵ Opposition to the temple (or, more properly, to the temple hierarchy who had defiled it) was not, however, a distinctively or even commonly “Hellenist” trait (more characteristic of the Essenes, some apocalyptic visionaries, or a Judean prophet such as Jesus son of Ananias)⁴⁷⁶ and could stem from early Christian conviction about a new temple (probably analogous to Qumran’s).⁴⁷⁷ Stephen differed from most critics of the temple (except, in a sense, Jesus son of Ananias) in that he publicly challenged its guardians in Jerusalem. This is a difference not of theology about the temple but of temperament or character, fitting a prophet “full of the Spirit” (6:3, 5, 10).

Others have sought to identify Stephen’s Hellenistic background with more precision, connecting him, for example, with a background in Alexandria. Although this is possible, it “cannot be proved.”⁴⁷⁸ Hellenized Alexandrian Judaism did exhibit some distinctive features, but these would have been carried to various locations by those who studied there (cf. 18:24). Stephen is not interested in allegory like Philo, nor do his prophetic denunciations come in Greek meter as one finds in the Alexandrian *Sibylline Oracles* (which are not formally distinguishable from Asian *Sibylline Oracles*).

471. See *ibid.*, 14.

472. See Tal, “Traditions.”

473. Ulrich, “Text for Samuel,” 93 (arguing that Theodotion and Aquila sought to bring the old LXX into line with the rabbinic Bible that would become the MT); Vermes, *Jesus and Judaism*, 105. Josephus follows a text closer to 4QSam^a at *Ant.* 6.68–85 (Begg, “Saul’s Start”), among other places.

474. See Pummer, “Samaritan Pentateuch.”

475. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 75, risking anachronism perhaps for the sake of finding a modern analogy. He later contrasts Paul’s christological “criticism of the Law” with Stephen’s preconversion conviction (115).

476. See Keener, *Matthew*, 560–62. Behind Josephus’s Greek rendering is Joshua ben Hananiah.

477. Bruce, *Commentary*, 143–44. For Qumran’s “new temple,” see Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 82–85; on the more general apocalyptic new-temple expectation, see 77–90.

478. Barnard, “Stephen and Alexandrian Christianity,” 44. Neudorfer, “Speech,” 292, also contends that the name “Stephen” is attested only in Italy (a contention weakened, however, at least by the Jerusalemite location of the Stephen of our text).

Some connect Stephen's speech to Qumran and thence to the Hellenists,⁴⁷⁹ though Qumran constitutes only one example among potential Jewish connections—and is one of the least “hellenized” among them.

Where did this Hellenism lie on the continuum of early Christian sources? Some have compared Matthew,⁴⁸⁰ but this Gospel may not be “Hellenistic” enough.⁴⁸¹ Many have compared Hebrews (the traditional label for which means “Jews,” not specifically non-Hellenistic Jews as in Acts 6:1). Some find behind both Acts 7 and Hebrews an antitemple midrash based on Isa 66 and 2 Sam 7.⁴⁸² One commentator on Hebrews compiles voluminous parallels and treats Acts 7 as the key to Hebrews.⁴⁸³ F. F. Bruce more tamely suggests that Stephen is “the spiritual father” of Hebrews' author.⁴⁸⁴ But such connections should not be pushed too far. The distinctive features of Acts 7 show affinities with Hebrews, but such affinities are simply “in character with the Hellenistic Judaism which is associated with Stephen.”⁴⁸⁵ Parallels with Hebrews, then, illustrate the milieu of early Christian Hellenistic Jewish exegetical thought, rather than dependence of any direct sort of either on the other.⁴⁸⁶

VI. THE LAND

The land represents a crucial element of the speech's theology; although this was also a feature of the theology of much of the Pentateuch, the emphasis here differs: instead of assuring the people that the land would be theirs,⁴⁸⁷ Stephen warns that God is not limited to this land. Against those who think that Stephen challenged the centrality of law and holy land, Barrett is surely right that only the latter is in view.⁴⁸⁸ Stephen's approach to biblical history challenges the permanent centrality of the land, at least in the present era.⁴⁸⁹ (This fits Luke's shift in this volume from heritage to mission until the eschatological restoration.)

Most Diaspora Jews, especially those who settled in the Holy Land, continued to respect the temple and the land,⁴⁹⁰ but this is not to deny that Stephen's (or Luke's) Diaspora background may help his critique of the centrality of the land. The speech might draw on Samaritan and Egyptian Jewish models of defending Diaspora Judaism, based on earlier biblical stories where people lived outside the land.⁴⁹¹

479. Klijn, “Stephen's Speech,” 31.

480. Baum, *Gospel*, 145.

481. Matthew seems, to me, closer to what emerged as rabbinic Judaism than do other early Christian sources included in the NT, even John and probably even Paul in Romans (Keener, *Matthew*, 45–51, esp. 50; cf. also Goulder, *Matthew*; Bonnard, *Matthieu*; Ellis, *Matthew*, 3; Gundry, *Matthew*, 606). John and Revelation are thoroughly Jewish, but Matthew shares far more language also attested in the later rabbis.

482. Thurston, “Midrash”

483. Manson, *Hebrews*, 25–46.

484. Bruce, *Commentary*, 143.

485. Moule, “Christology of Acts,” 171 (doubting the speech's christological distinctiveness). Elsewhere Moule does compare their hermeneutical premises (*Messengers*, 59), but the differences are too great, and the commonalities too common elsewhere, to make that comparison significant.

486. Cf. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 165–75, esp. 175.

487. E.g., Gen 12:1, 7; Deut 4:1, 21; 7:13; 8:7. But the Pentateuch also warned that the land could spew them out if they broke God's covenant (Lev 18:28; 20:22; cf. Gen 3:23–24; Deut 9:4–7), a warning we might have expected Stephen to emphasize more explicitly if the source were post-70 C.E. But Luke may well use this speech to help explain the devastation of 70 (cf. Luke 21:24).

488. Barrett, *Acts*, 339.

489. See Davies, *Gospel and Land*, 269–70; Bruce, *Commentary*, 141; Pate et al., *Story*, 199–201; Kistemaker, *Acts*, 244.

490. Pace the disdain of some teachers (e.g., *t. 'Abod. Zar.* 4:6). See discussion at Acts 6:9–14.

491. See Sterling, “Legitimation,” 217 (suggesting that Luke is “probably a Diaspora Jew”); in one source, see perhaps Hacham, “Aristeas”; for a positive view of the Diaspora here, see also Neudorfer, “Speech,” 284–86. Arai, “Stephanusrede,” thinks that this speech fits an audience of God-fearers.

(1) *Early Jewish Land Theology*⁴⁹²

The centrality of the land appears in the OT,⁴⁹³ the Qumran scrolls,⁴⁹⁴ and rabbinic literature;⁴⁹⁵ in different (often eschatological) forms, the emphasis on land also appears in early Christianity.⁴⁹⁶ By the Jewish nationalist revival of the mid-second century B.C.E., the book of *Jubilees* was heightening the land polemic already present in Genesis: because Shem owned the land (*Jub.* 9:1–13) and those who violated established boundaries were cursed (9:14–15), Canaan seized Shem's possession there and hence was cursed (9:27–34). An angel warns Jacob not to build at Bethel (32:23).

Although Josephus, writing in the wake of the Judean revolt, does not highlight the land as much as one might expect,⁴⁹⁷ the emphasis on it appears in other early Jewish texts. Thus God loved the land when Israel was righteous (2 *Bar.* 61:7), and only those living there would experience God's protection in the end time (29:2). Aune even suggests that, despite Israel's experiences of exile beginning in 722 B.C.E., the land was so central that no major Jewish historical works focus on Jewish life outside the land.⁴⁹⁸ Naturally, following biblical prophecy, early Judaism envisioned a unique eschatological significance for its homeland.⁴⁹⁹

Later rabbis (especially Palestinian rabbis) developed this theology more fully.⁵⁰⁰ Rabbinic texts portray Israel as the holiest among lands⁵⁰¹ and as the highest, hence most praiseworthy, of lands.⁵⁰² Along with Torah and eternal life, Eretz Israel was one of God's most precious gifts to Israel, all given through sufferings.⁵⁰³ One could limit the Torah to the land of Israel;⁵⁰⁴ a rabbi might merit the Shekinah but forfeit it through living in Babylon;⁵⁰⁵ those who lived in Syria might need to work twice as hard for each commandment to merit the same reward as one who lived in the land.⁵⁰⁶ Many second-century teachers felt that, apart from some notable exceptions, the Spirit of prophecy was limited to the Holy Land.⁵⁰⁷ Thus the *Mekilta*, reporting the second-century views of the school of R. Ishmael, goes to great lengths to explain away all texts that do not agree with the premise that God reveals himself only inside

492. Here I adapt and expand my material in Keener, *John*, 613–15.

493. See, e.g., Schiffman, "Israel," 554–56; McKeown, "Land"; Rad, *Theology*, 96–305; Williamson, "Land"; Wright, *Ethics*, 182–211; Janzen, "Land"; Brueggemann, *Land*; Marlow, "Land," 492. The specification of Jerusalem comes after the law (2 Sam 5:6–10), but "land" itself is prominent in the promises to the patriarchs (e.g., Gen 12:1, 7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 26:2–3; 28:13; 35:12).

494. Schiffman, "Israel," 556–57.

495. *Ibid.*, 557–58; Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 660–64; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:42–43, 489, 587; Goodman, *State*, 43.

496. Allison, "Land." Davies, *Gospel and Land*, 220, thinks that Paul's "in Christ" replaces the land, but they are probably different kinds of categories.

497. Probably to avoid revolutionary-type implications in the minds of his Gentile readers (cf. Amaru, "Theology"; Harrison, *Grace*, 136).

498. Aune, *Environment*, 97, though overstating the case (cf., e.g., fictional works such as 3 Maccabees or Tobit; sections of the *Letter of Aristeas*; historical sections in Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Jonah; Daniel; Esther).

499. E.g., Tob 13:7–16; *Pss. Sol.* 11:2–7; 4 *Ezra* 7:26.

500. E.g., *Sipre Deut.* 37.1.4–6; 37.2–3.7. For the emphasis on the land in early Judaism, see, e.g., Allison, "Land," 643; esp. Davies, *Gospel and Land*; for its exclusive holiness, Ben Eliyahu, "Polemic."

501. E.g., *m. Kelim* 1:6; cf. *Esth. Rab.* 1:17, although it also notes excessive hypocrisy in Jerusalem; Hester, *Inheritance*, 76. In some traditions, it is more precious to God than is anything else (*Num. Rab.* 23:7).

502. *Sipre Deut.* 37.3.5–6. Praising cities was a standard part of ancient rhetoric (Ps 48; Ael. Arist. *Panath.*; Isocrates *Panegyricus*; *Panathenaicus*; SQ15; Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.26; Rev 21:10–23; cf. Balch, "Encomia").

503. Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai in *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.10; *b. Ber.* 5a; *Exod. Rab.* 1:1.

504. *Sipre Deut.* 37.1.4; cf. *Mek. Pisha* 1.43–44.

505. *B. Mo'ed Qat.* 25a. Some Babylonian Amoraim, however, did view immigration to Eretz Israel unfavorably (*b. Ber.* 24b).

506. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 14:4.

507. *Mek. Pisha* 1.59–105.

the land (*Pisha* 1.35–88, esp. 1.58–72); only Israel was now suitable for the divine word (1.43–44).⁵⁰⁸

Later Palestinian rabbis and those who transmitted their sentiments sought to further translate into practice this emphasis on the Holy Land.⁵⁰⁹ Some regarded living in the land as meritorious,⁵¹⁰ equal (in standard rabbinic hyperbole) to all other commandments,⁵¹¹ and guaranteeing the life to come;⁵¹² still more hyperbolically, a single day in Jerusalem removed one's sins.⁵¹³

Inferior students within Israel were better than the best outside (R. Gamaliel in *'Abot R. Nat.* 32, §70 B); if a sage who lived in the land left it, his skills weakened, but he remained superior to those who never lived there (Simeon ben Eleazar in *'Abot R. Nat.* 28 A). Some teachers warned against the temptation of idolatry for those dwelling among Gentiles elsewhere,⁵¹⁴ and Palestinian teachers sometimes cast aspersions on those who resided in Babylon.⁵¹⁵

Some Jewish teachers prohibited renting land to Samaritans or Gentiles in the Holy Land.⁵¹⁶ A fully Jewish town is normally preferable for habitation to a partly Gentile one, but better a majority Gentile town within Eretz Israel than a fully Jewish one in the Diaspora.⁵¹⁷ It thus comes as no surprise that a later rabbi would conclude that in the time to come, all synagogues would be in Eretz Israel.⁵¹⁸ Guardian angels would not escort people outside the land (*Gen. Rab.* 68:12).

Many seem to have thought that burial in the Holy Land was meritorious (see discussion under Acts 6:1, and note even Stephen's own observation in Acts 7:16). Citing Ezek 37:12–14, Amoraim taught that the dead in Israel would be raised first, or that the righteous dead outside Eretz Israel would have to roll underground to return to the land before being resurrected.⁵¹⁹ (This eschatological scenario likely provided a not-so-subtle hint to whatever Diaspora Jews might ever encounter rabbinic teaching that they ought to emigrate while still alive.)⁵²⁰ That preference for burial in Eretz Israel was more widespread than the rabbis' own views may be attested by Palestinian burial sites with an abundance of Diaspora Jews throughout the Amoraic period.⁵²¹ Although this practice becomes abundant more than a century after the

508. See also Davies, "Spirit in Mekilta"; idem, *Gospel and Land*, 62 (cf. also idem, *Paul*, 206). More generally, a range of early Jewish sources reduce or remove biblical dialogues between God and people (Koskenniemi, *Miracle-Workers*, 294, citing *Jubilees*, Artapanus, Philo, and Josephus).

509. Rabbi Johanan initially forbade R. Assi to leave "the Land" (*b. Qidd.* 31b).

510. E.g., *b. Roš Haš.* 16b.

511. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:349, on *Sipre Deut.* 80.

512. *T. Šabb.* 1:3; R. Meir in *Sipre Deut.* 333.6.1; *b. Pesah.* 113a; *Ketub.* 111a; *y. Šeqal.* 3:3.

513. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 6:4; 15:7, referring to Jerusalem's offerings. More strongly, 6:3 claims that the land itself expiates sins.

514. *'Abot R. Nat.* 32, §71 B (attributed to Akiba).

515. The Jerusalem Talmud often calls Babylonian rabbis "rabbis of that other place" (e.g., *y. Yebam.* 10:1, §11) or "the rabbis from over there" (e.g., 10:3, §1); for tension between them, often over the authority of their respective rulings, see, e.g., *y. Ketub.* 12:4, §8; *Ned.* 6:8, §3; *Sanh.* 1:2, §10; *'Abod. Zar.* 2:1, §1; 2:8, §5. Babylonian rabbis relegated the land's importance especially to the past and the future (see Stemberger, "Bedeutung des 'Landes'").

516. E.g., R. Meir in *t. 'Abod. Zar.* 2:8 (R. Jose disagrees).

517. Goodman, *State*, 43, citing esp. *t. 'Abod. Zar.* 4/5:3. Israel's deserts are better than palaces elsewhere (*Gen. Rab.* 39:8). The baraita in *b. Ketub.* 110b is far more emphatic, (hyperbolically?) denying the faith of all Diaspora Jews.

518. *B. Meg.* 29a.

519. *B. Ketub.* 111a; *y. Ketub.* 12:4, §8; *Gen. Rab.* 74:1; 96:5, some texts; 96 (MV); *Pesiq. Rab.* 1:4; cf. *'Abot R. Nat.* 26 A; *Deut. Rab.* 2:9. Ancients apparently anticipated underground conduits for travel (Ovid *Metam.* 5.501–4). For the emphasis on burial in the land, see also Davies, *Gospel and Land*, 62–65.

520. Burial in Eretz Israel was a privilege and reward (*Gen. Rab.* 36:6; *Pesiq. Rab.* 1:4).

521. Safrai, "Relations," 213; cf. *CIJ* 2:132, §920; 2:136, §930; 2:262, §1256.

composition of Acts, some Diaspora Jews and proselytes of the first century also preferred to be buried in the land (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.95; cf. comment on Acts 6:1).

(2) *Holy Sites within the Land*

Sacred space meant not only the land but holier space within the land.⁵²² Whatever the date of other traditions surrounding Jerusalem, Jerusalem's great holiness was certainly highly regarded before and during the first century.⁵²³ Later rabbis regarded Jerusalem as the holiest place in the Holy Land,⁵²⁴ the only place worthy of the temple or altars.⁵²⁵ According to some later traditions, in the world to come, Jerusalem would be the size of Eretz Israel, and Israel the size of the current world.⁵²⁶

The principle of holy land applied especially to the holiest site of all, the Jerusalem temple. Thus when Jewish teachers spoke of a progression of holiness, the holiest site in the Holy Land's Holy City was the temple.⁵²⁷ Various Jewish groups argued that God had long before chosen this site for the temple.⁵²⁸ Thus an angel warned Jacob at Bethel not to build a sanctuary there "because this is not the place."⁵²⁹ Just as Israel was the highest of all lands,⁵³⁰ the temple was higher than the rest of the world.⁵³¹ That Jews, unlike other peoples, had a single God with a single (massive) centralized temple may help explain their united response to Roman challenges to the temple.⁵³²

Thus Jews sought honor not only for their people but for their temple (1 Esd 8:67). Later sources claimed that the temple was the center of the world (see comment on Acts 1:8). Against what Luke's audience presumably already knows (on my admittedly tentative dating of the book), many believed that Jerusalem and its temple were indestructible (see excursus on views of the temple at Acts 6:11–14). Indeed, the Romans recognized that Jerusalem was well fortified, which prolonged their siege. In some areas, the wall towers were 60 feet high, and in valleys 120 feet (*Tac. Hist.* 5.11). The temple itself was fully walled like a citadel in its own right (5.12), as one would expect for an ancient city's acropolis (cf. *Judg* 9:46–47, 51).⁵³³

Naturally, Palestinian Jews stood to profit from Diaspora interest in their land. Probably partly because the Romans found revolutionary potential in such ethnic ties of geographical loyalty, they eventually diverted the didrachma tax once used for the temple's upkeep.⁵³⁴

522. Some space was also unholy and hence not fit for religious activity (e.g., *b. Ber.* 25a) except under extraordinary circumstances (*Exod. Rab.* 15:5).

523. *Sir* 36:13; 2 *Macc* 3:1; *Tob* 13:9; 11QT XLVII, 14–15; *Philo Flacc.* 46.

524. E.g., *m. Kelim* 1:8; *Seqal.* 8:1. In *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 6:4; 15:7, it also sanctified its inhabitants.

525. E.g., *Mek. Pisha* 1.44–46; *Lev. Rab.* 13:2 (attributed to Simeon ben Yohai, second century C.E.). Later tradition united the altars of Adam, Noah, and Abraham on the site (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on *Gen* 22:9; for Abraham, *Tg. Onq.* on *Gen* 22:14)—even if Jewish interpreters did not, like Samaritans, modify the text of Torah.

526. *Pesiq. Rab.* 1:3 (attributed to a third-century C.E. Palestinian Amora).

527. E.g., *m. Kelim* 1:6–9; *Mek. Pisha* 1.42–50. For the progression of holiness in the biblical tabernacle and temple, see Davies, "Tabernacle," 498–506; Haran, "Image," 200–206; Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 144. Early Jewish architecture further amplified biblical divisions of holiness in the temple (*Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.102).

528. Perhaps in polemic against groups such as the Samaritans, some insisted that God had chosen the temple before the creation (*Abot R. Nat.* 37, §95 B; but cf. already *Wis* 9:8; *Jub.* 3:10).

529. *Jub.* 32:23 (*OTP* 2:118).

530. *Sipre Deut.* 37.3.5–6.

531. *Sipre Deut.* 317.2.1; *b. Qidd.* 69a; *Song Rab.* 7:5, §3. For the temple's geographic centrality, see comment on Acts 1:8; Keener, *John*, 729–30. Some, however, preferred prayer in low spots (*b. Ber.* 10b).

532. See Bohak, "Theopolis," also noting the protest movements against this temple, such as those on Gerizim or in Heliopolis. *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.193 argued that there should be just one temple to correspond to the one true God. For the tabernacle's and the temple's earlier function in engendering unity, cf. Andrews, "Worship," 61; much less persuasively, Wainwright, "Pyramid."

533. On inner citadels, see also Rohrbach, "Pre-industrial City," 134.

534. See *CPJ* 1:80–81; 2:119–36, §§160–229; *Dio Cass. R.H.* 65.7.2; Hemer, "Ostraka"; Carlebach, "References."

(3) *Devotion to Holy Sites*

Ancient Near Eastern religion emphasized holy sites; thus, when invaders destroyed an existing city, they often reused the site of its cult for their own shrine.⁵³⁵ Early Judaism⁵³⁶ and Christianity⁵³⁷ continued this tradition. Like many cultures,⁵³⁸ ancient Near Eastern cultures often spoke of holy mountains, whether the Greeks' Olympus, Jerusalem's Zion (the Temple Mount), or the Babylonians' artificial ziggurat.⁵³⁹ A pre-Christian Jewish tradition accepted four holy mountains—two in the east, Sinai, and, with eschatological associations, Zion (*Jub.* 4:26).

Gentiles usually believed that deities most naturally heard prayers at their favored spots (e.g., Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.9.1). Thus gods were figuratively addressed according to their sanctuaries or favored locations.⁵⁴⁰ Ground remained consecrated to a deity even after a shrine had collapsed (Pliny *Ep.* 10.71).⁵⁴¹ Synagogue architecture reveals more about popular Jewish views of sacred space outside rabbinic circles.⁵⁴² Thus builders sometimes elevated synagogues.⁵⁴³ The location of prayer was often important in early Judaism;⁵⁴⁴ some locations made prayers more likely to be heard than others.⁵⁴⁵ One should not recite the Shema in an unclean location;⁵⁴⁶ a Jewish teacher who had never meditated on Torah in any unclean place would invite emulation.⁵⁴⁷

Orientation for prayer was a widely known concept; earlier Greeks faced east for prayers to celestial gods but west for curses (e.g., Lysias *Or.* 6.51, §107).⁵⁴⁸ Following biblical precedents,⁵⁴⁹ many Jewish communities also oriented synagogues toward the Jerusalem temple,⁵⁵⁰ although not all synagogues fit this description.⁵⁵¹ The limited archaeological evidence from Qumran can be read as suggesting that Qumran's as-

535. Albright, *Yahweh*, 194–95, contrasting this practice with evidence from the Israelite conquest.

536. See Davies, *Land*, passim.

537. See Meyers, "Judaism and Christianity," 75, against Davies, *Land*.

538. Cf., e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 71–72.

539. See ANET 326; Clifford, "Tent," 223; Gordon, *Civilizations*, 48, 232–33; Kaiser, "Pantheon," 29–30, 181; de Vaux, *Israel*, 279–80; Dahood, *Psalms*, 11; Max. Tyre 2.1. Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai reportedly claimed that no mountain proved suitable for Torah but Sinai (*Lev. Rab.* 13:2).

540. Kearns, "Religion, Greek," 1301.

541. Although Pliny and Trajan recognized that some cultures saw the shrines, rather than the ground, as consecrated (Pliny *Ep.* 10.49.2; 10.50). Thus polytheistic conquerors often reused shrines from vanquished cities (cf. Albright, *Yahweh*, 194–95).

542. Rabbis as well as others, however, considered synagogues sacred (*m. Meg.* 3:1–3). Some even thought that God heard prayers there only, but most disagreed (*b. Ber.* 6a).

543. *T. Meg.* 3:23; Strange and Shanks, "House in Capernaum," 29 (citing *t. Meg.* 4:23).

544. E.g., in the *Mekilta* (Davies, "Spirit in Mekilta," 96).

545. Johnson, *Prayer*, 44–46. Many religions prefer particular postures and sometimes geographical directions in prayer (Mbiti, *Religions*, 84), including traditional Greek religion (Lysias *Or.* 6.51, §107).

546. *B. Ber.* 25a, near excrement; cf. *y. Hal.* 2:1, §10. Similarly, one should ask guardian angels to wait outside when one uses the restroom (*b. Ber.* 60b), and follow careful purity rules, including not facing the east-west axis (*Abot R. Nat.* 40 A; *b. Ber.* 62a, reportedly Tannaitic tradition).

547. *B. Ta'an.* 20b (R. Adda bar Ahaba); told of R. Zera in *b. Meg.* 28a.

548. The design of Greek temples, however, was very much influenced by regional variations (Tomlinson, "Temple"). A foreigner could pray toward God's temple in 1 Kgs 8:42 (but apparently after coming to the location, 8:41).

549. 1 Kgs 8:30, 44, 48; 2 Chr 6:32, 34, 38; Dan 6:10. Orientation of buildings toward Jerusalem may begin in the second century B.C.E. (Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 191–92).

550. Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 143–44; Meyers, "State," 128–29; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 399; attested also in *t. Ber.* 3:15–16; *Sipre Deut.* 29.3.2; for prayers, cf. *m. Ber.* 4:5–6; *t. Meg.* 3:21. Cf. Muslim orientation of graves toward Mecca (Mbiti, *Religions*, 329); Greek toilet manners regarding the sun and streams (Hesiod *W.D.* 727–32, 757–59).

551. See Ma'oz, "Synagogues," 119; Wilkinson, "Orientation"; cf. Stewart, "Synagogue." Greek temples were normally oriented eastward, though exceptions existed (Herbert, "Orientation"); cf. eastward orientation in *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.10 (Apion's claim); *t. Meg.* 3:22; a synagogue in Delos facing eastward toward Jerusalem (Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 48).

sembly hall was oriented toward Jerusalem, a perception that, if true, would date the custom of facing Jerusalem quite early.⁵⁵² Whatever the community's leaders thought of the reigning priesthood, their very use of the Psalter, which emphasized Zion,⁵⁵³ disposed them to regard Jerusalem as the eternally chosen city (also 4Q380 I, 2–6). The site of Jerusalem had been holy since the times of Adam and especially Abraham.⁵⁵⁴

(4) Samaritans and the Temple⁵⁵⁵

Both prophets and philosophers critiqued worship based merely on sacred space, such as a temple cult.⁵⁵⁶ Thus philosophers “reconceptualized” sacred space, making philosophy the genuine cultic activity.⁵⁵⁷

Samaritans offered the most persistent and hostile critique of the Jerusalem temple. Samaritans regarded Gerizim as “the holiest of mountains” (*Jos. Ant.* 18.85).⁵⁵⁸ Even in the mid-30s C.E. a prophetic figure could rally Samaritan masses around an eschatological hope for the recovery of the hidden vessels of the tabernacle,⁵⁵⁹ and probably for a rebuilt temple,⁵⁶⁰ on Gerizim (18.85–87). A generation later Samaritans gathered on Mount Gerizim to oppose the Romans (*War* 3.307–8), and those who did not surrender (3.313–14) were slaughtered there (3.315). Samaritan Decalogue inscriptions show that the Samaritans combined the traditional ninth and tenth commandments to make room for their own commandment based on their reading of Deut 27:3–5: they must build an altar to God at Gerizim.⁵⁶¹

Disagreement over respective holy sites had led to severe conflicts in the Ptolemaic period (*Jos. Ant.* 13.74–79). Before the governorship of Pontius Pilate, some Samaritans, in an act of revenge for earlier acts against their temple and nation, secretly defiled the Jerusalem temple with bones (18.30). Luke earlier claims that the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus because he was going to Jerusalem for a Passover feast (Luke 9:51–53). See a much fuller discussion in the excursus on Samaritans at Acts 8:5.

Some scholars compare Stephen's critique to the Samaritan critique, but Stephen is hostile to the temple's abuse, not to the temple per se. Thus, for example, he affirms that God promises that they will eventually worship “in this place” (7:7); the problem is missing the true God to which the temple is meant to point (7:39–44). Stephen stands closer to the prophetic tradition that he (unlike Samaritans) cites

552. Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 191–92 (on Locus 77, the large dining hall).

553. E.g., Pss 2:6; 9:11; 46:4–5; 48:1, 11; 51:18; 68:29; 99:2; 116:19; 122:2–6; 125:2; 128:5; 129:5; 135:21; 137:6–7; 147:2, 12.

554. Cf., e.g., Mount Moriah in *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 22:9; *Tg. Onq.* on Gen 22:14; *Tg. 2 Chr.* 3:1.

555. Here I adapt some of my material from Keener, *John*, 611–12; see further comment in the excursus on Samaritans at Acts 8:5.

556. So Talbert, “Worship,” 337–40, citing, e.g., *Xen. Mem.* 1.3.1–3; *Plato Alcib.* 2.149E; *Pers. Sat.* 2.69–75; *Amos* 5:21–24; *Hos* 6:6. To this may be added *Strabo* 16.2.36 on Mosaic worship.

557. Talbert, “Worship,” 340–46, citing, e.g., *Sen. Y. Ep.* 41; Apollonius of Tyana *On Sacrifices*, frg. in *Euseb. PE.* 4.12–13; Apollonius of Tyana *Ep.* 26; *Porph. Abst.*, frg. in *Euseb. PE.* 4.11; *Philo Good Person* 75. One could cite many examples of spiritual or ethical sacrifices (e.g., *Isoc. Ad Nic.* 20; *Plut. Educ.* 14, *Mor.* 11C; *Pyth. Sent.* 15, 20; *Diog. Laert.* 7.1.119; 8.1.22; *Philost. Ep. Apoll.* 27; *Prov* 15:8; *Ps* 154:10–11; *Jdt* 16:16; *Sir* 32:1–3; *Wis* 3:6; 1QS IX, 4–5; X, 6; *Sipre Deut.* 306.20.3; *Abot R. Nat.* 4 A; 8, §22 B; *Rom* 12:1; *Sent. Sext.* 47).

558. Rabbis viewed Mount Gerizim as the Samaritan counterpart to the Jewish temple (*b. Yoma* 69a); just as Jewish synagogues often pointed toward Jerusalem (see above), so it is reported that an excavated Samaritan synagogue points toward Mount Gerizim (*Goodenough, Symbols*, 1:262–63).

559. Cf. Kalimi and Purvis, “Hiding”; Collins, “Vessels”; MacDonald, *Samaritans*, 365. For a parallel Jewish hope, cf. *2 Macc* 2:4–7; *2 Bar.* 6:7–9; *4 Bar.* 3:10–11, 19; 4:4; *m. Šeqal.* 6:1–2; contrast *Jer* 3:16.

560. I extrapolate here on the basis of Jewish hopes. Later Samaritan texts also attest the hope that the tabernacle of Moses's day had been hidden on that mountain and would be restored in the eschatological time (Olsson, *Structure*, 190).

561. Bowman, *Documents*, 14; Hepner, “Tenth Commandment.”

(here, Isa 66:1). Early Jews often critiqued the temple or the corruption of those who ran it (see comment on Acts 2:46; 6:13–14; where I have also argued that Luke was not hostile to the temple itself). Without critiquing the temple or the land, Paul points to eschatological fulfillment of covenant land theology.⁵⁶² Neither Paul nor the harsher Jewish critics may be associated significantly with Samaritan theology; neither is it necessary to associate Stephen with Samaritanism on the basis of his approach to the temple.

b. Abraham the Alien (7:2–8)

Luke might portray his own time as a continuation of biblical history by selecting points about Abraham (Acts 7:2–8) and Joseph (7:9–16) that suggest relevant models, prefiguring events in his own narrative. Thus Joseph helped with the famine (7:11–14, though this is not the emphasis here) as did Agabus later (11:27–28). God sent Abram out (7:3), as he continued sending people out (13:3–4); more to the point, if God’s servants Abraham and Joseph often encountered God outside the promised land, God’s servants in Luke’s day could also work to bring salvation to the nations instead of focusing on the recent tragic events in the Holy Land.⁵⁶³

God’s promise to Abraham begins a history of promises, with partial fulfillments, climaxing in Jesus’s coming (7:52).⁵⁶⁴ Luke introduced the motif of this promise already in Luke 1:55, 73. The paragraph’s goal is “*worship in this place*” (7:7); that is, Stephen refers not only to the Holy Land but ultimately to the temple, which is not uniquely holy (see 7:33). Readers attentive to the charge against Stephen (6:11–14) will hear here a beginning of his response, climaxed in 7:44–50.

Luke’s portrayal of Abraham follows the biblical text fairly closely. Dahl argues that whereas Paul, John, Hebrews, and James make Abraham a protagonist for the Christian faith, the rabbis make him a protorabbi, and Philo makes him a philosopher, Luke reinterprets Abraham less for his own time.⁵⁶⁵ Dahl’s survey may exaggerate dominant elements of other portrayals and diminish Luke’s agenda, but it is generally accurate that Luke, writing concisely, adjusts Abraham less than many of the other writers.

Jewish texts often call Abraham “our father”⁵⁶⁶ and Jewish people his children.⁵⁶⁷ Various Jewish groups apparently employed the model of Abraham as a prototype for their own form of Judaism, from the group behind *Jubilees* to Paul.⁵⁶⁸ Thus, for example, for later rabbis he was the model Pharisee.⁵⁶⁹ They also made Abraham and Sarah model proselytes.⁵⁷⁰

562. Harrison, *Grace*, 138. Cf. Rom 4:13; note the omission of the land in Rom 9:4.

563. Cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 143.

564. Dahl, “Abraham,” 144. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 44, rejects promise as the story’s key, in view of the prominence of Acts 7:7 (see comment below). Luke uses Abraham traditions for his characterization of God (Brawley, “Abrahamic Traditions,” 130–31); for the centrality of the Abrahamic covenant in Luke-Acts, see further idem, “Blessing.”

565. Dahl, “Abraham,” 140.

566. E.g., 4 Macc 16:20; *m. ’Ab.* 3:16; 5:3–4, 9, 22; *Sipre Deut.* 311.1.1; 313.1.3; *’Abot R. Nat.* 23, §46 B; *b. Ber.* 6b; *Ned.* 32a; Rom 4:1. Those not his descendants also could greet him with the honorary title “father” (*Test. Ab.* 2:3 A; 9:4 B); in some sense, he was father of the whole world (*t. Ber.* 1:12 on Gen 17:5). On Abraham traditions, see further Moore, *Judaism*, 1:538–39; Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 3:186–202.

567. E.g., Gal 3:7; 4 Macc 6:17, 22; 18:1.

568. Müller, “Abraham-Gestalt.” Initially he was the only person following God (*Pesiq. Rab.* 11:4).

569. E.g., *y. Soṭah* 5:5, §2.

570. E.g., *Mek. Nez.* 18.36ff. (Lauterbach, 3:140); cf. *b. Sukkah* 49b; *Num. Rab.* 8:9; Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 175–76. Abraham and Sarah were also active in making proselytes (e.g., *Song Rab.* 1:3, §3; cf. Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 176–79).

Abraham was righteous⁵⁷¹ and hence became a model for righteous behavior.⁵⁷² Despite contrary information in Genesis, Abraham was supposed to have kept the entire law before it was given.⁵⁷³ Jews in the Roman Empire also used the figure of Abraham to defend Jewish identity.⁵⁷⁴ In later texts, Abraham could intercede for sinners' salvation, especially for circumcised Israelites.⁵⁷⁵

Often legends exalted Abraham far beyond the faithful-but-sometimes-struggling figure of Genesis.⁵⁷⁶ Abraham invented various plows for protection from crows (*Jub.* 11:23). The flood shortened most lifespans, but not Abraham's (23:9–10). Eventually rabbis developed extensive Abraham haggadah; for example, he was larger than Adam before his fall,⁵⁷⁷ so that each of Abraham's steps was three miles long.⁵⁷⁸ He merited being created before Adam, but God sent him after Adam to repair the world that Adam had ruined.⁵⁷⁹ He was of enviably high status.⁵⁸⁰

More important, Abraham rejected and contended with idolatry.⁵⁸¹ Sometimes he reasoned against idols;⁵⁸² sometimes he destroyed them.⁵⁸³ In Jewish tradition, Abraham became a fierce opponent of idolatry;⁵⁸⁴ he destroyed the idols in his household⁵⁸⁵ and faced conflict with his family.⁵⁸⁶ Later rabbis said that Abraham was the first person to leave idolatry.⁵⁸⁷ He shamed a prospective idol buyer by asking him why he, at age fifty, would worship something made just a day ago.⁵⁸⁸ Likewise, he shattered idols and put a stick in the hand of the largest; when his father disbelieved

571. E.g., 1 Macc 2:52; *Test. Ab.* 1:3, 18; 2:1, 3, 6, 12; 4:6; 7:8; 9:1, 2, 8; 13:14 (cf. 13:2); 15:6, 9; 16:7, 11; 17:10, 19 (cf. 17:7); 18:6, 8, 11 (cf. 18:1); 19:7, 14 A; 4:10 B (although Nickelsburg, "Structure and Message," 87, suggests that *Testament of Abraham* parodies Abraham's traditional righteousness); 'Abot R. Nat. 36, §94 B; *Gen. Rab.* 56:8, later MSS; *b. Ned.* 32a, bar.; cf. later Qur'an 16.120. Still, many recognized that even Abraham was not completely righteous (cf. *Test. Ab.* 9:3; 14:12; 15:9–10 A; *b. 'Arak.* 17a, bar.; Sandmel, *Judaism*, 187), though some demurred (*Pr Man* 8; *Test. Ab.* 10:14 A).

572. E.g., 4 Macc 15:28; *m. 'Ab.* 5:19/22. Martyrs are "offspring of Abraham" in 4 Macc 9:21; 18:23. For Abraham as an example in Judaism, see also Dibelius, *James*, 168–74. Naturally this included the model of his faith (Urbach, *Sages*, 1:31, citing the *Mekilta*; Rom 4:12, 16; Gal 3:6–7; cf. 4Q225 2 I; for various interpretations of Gen 15:6, see Oeming, "Glaube"), though Josephus and the Targumim emphasize his works instead (Cairus, "Works-Righteousness"); for both, see Gregory, "Abraham," on Sir 44:19–21.

573. E.g., *Jub.* passim; 2 *Bar.* 57:2; *m. Qidd.* 4:14. Contrast, e.g., Gen 21:33 (with Deut 16:21).

574. See Fornberg, "Abraham" (also in Fornberg, "Times").

575. E.g., *b. Erub.* 19a; *Gen. Rab.* 35:2; 48:8; *Gr. Ezra* 2:5. For Abraham's praying sinners to salvation in narratives, see, e.g., *Test. Ab.* 14:5–8 A. Abraham would lead all the world to repentance (*Gen. Rab.* 30:8); for his success at making converts, see, e.g., 'Abot R. Nat. 12 A; 26, §54 B; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 21:33; comment on "proselyte" at Acts 6:5.

576. Noted, e.g., by Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 59. For his visions, see, e.g., 2 *Bar.* 4:4.

577. *Pesiq. Rab.* 7:2; cf. *Jos. Asen.* 1:5/8. On Adam's size before his fall, see, e.g., *Sipra Behuq.* pq. 3.263.1.9; 'Abot R. Nat. 8, §22 B; 42, §116; *b. Hag.* 12a; *Sanh.* 38b; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1:1; 5:3; *Gen. Rab.* 2:3; 8:1; 12:6; 21:3; 24:2; 58:8; *Lev. Rab.* 14:1; 18:2; *Num. Rab.* 13:12; *Song Rab.* 3:7, §5; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:3.

578. *Gen. Rab.* 43:3; *Pesiq. Rab.* 49:5.

579. E.g., *Gen. Rab.* 14:6; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:11, §2. The picture of Abraham's seed as restorer of what Adam ruined, at least, is already implied in Genesis (see discussion below).

580. So *Gen. Rab.* 82:14.

581. E.g., *Jub.* 11:16; 21:3; *Apoc. Ab.* 1–8; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 3a; *Gen. Rab.* 39:1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 33:3. Cf. the comparable stories about Job, *Test. Job* 2–5.

582. E.g., *Jub.* 12:1–8; *Gen. Rab.* 38:13; cf. later Qur'an 26.70–73.

583. E.g., *Jub.* 11:12; *Gen. Rab.* 38:13.

584. E.g., *Jub.* 21:3 (summarizing his righteousness); *Apoc. Ab.* 1–8. Flusser, "Upanishads," highlights Abraham's resistance to idolatry (e.g., *Jub.* 11:16–18; 12:1–6, 12–14; *Jos. Ant.* 1.155–56), but his comparison to the Upanishads is unnecessary (in the Qur'an, see 16.120, 123; 19.46; 43.26 and esp. 21.58–69 and 26.69–76, which echo the earlier Jewish legend).

585. *Jub.* 11:12–14.

586. *Jub.* 11:16–17; 12:1–8.

587. *Pesiq. Rab.* 33:3. In *Gen. Rab.* 39:1 (attributed to a Tanna), he questioned and God revealed himself to him.

588. *Gen. Rab.* 38:13.

that an idol could have carried out the violence, Abraham asked why he worshiped an object unable to act.⁵⁸⁹ Nimrod was unable to persuade Abraham to worship idols made by fire, or fire extinguished by water, or water carried by breath, or breath carried by people; Abraham thus reasoned back to a first cause.⁵⁹⁰

Stories about Abraham often exemplified an emphasis on Israel's election, as some scholars have seen here.⁵⁹¹ Stephen's contemporaries may have envisioned Abraham as a source of blessing and favor for their people, although this approach reaches dramatic lengths in later rabbinic sources.⁵⁹² Later rabbis emphasized that patriarchs' merits permitted Israel's first redemption from Egypt and deliverance through the sea;⁵⁹³ this tradition may even reflect pre-Christian tradition concerning Abraham's merit.⁵⁹⁴ Later rabbis sometimes attributed God's blessings on Israel to merits of the patriarchs,⁵⁹⁵ or occasionally the matriarchs,⁵⁹⁶ though some also emphasized the greater importance of one's own merits.⁵⁹⁷ But opinion was not unanimous even by the end of the second century,⁵⁹⁸ and there appears little explicit connection between merits and personal benefits unrelated to corporate blessing on Israel.

Nevertheless, the notion of dependence on Abrahamic descent for salvation is explicit in early Christian polemical texts (such as Matt 3:9//Luke 3:8).⁵⁹⁹ That Jewish people could seek God's blessings for his people on the basis of his covenant with the patriarchs (2 Macc 1:2; Sg Three 11) suggests the antiquity of potential dependence on Abraham in some sense.⁶⁰⁰ Scripture already emphasized that God had blessed Israel for Abraham's sake (Exod 2:24; Lev 26:42; Deut 4:37; 7:8; 9:5; 10:15; 2 Kgs 13:23; Ps 105:8–9, 42–45; Mic 7:18–20) and that God could be entreated on this basis (Exod 32:13; Deut 9:27).⁶⁰¹ But God had also warned against depending on this

589. *Gen. Rab.* 38:13.

590. E.g., *Gen. Rab.* 38:13 (including Abraham's survival in a fiery furnace, a story persisting even in Qur'an 21.68–69); cf. b. 'Abod. Zar. 3a.

591. Reinmuth, "Beobachtungen" (citing *L.A.B.* 1–8; 18:5; 32:1–4; 40:2).

592. I draw here from Keener, *John*, 754–56.

593. E.g., *Mek. Pisha* 16.165–68 (other opinions in 169–72); *y. Ta'an.* 1:1, §8; *Gen. Rab.* 55:8; 74:12; 76:5 (Jacob's merit); 84:5 and 87:8 (Joseph's merit); *Exod. Rab.* 2:4; 15:10; 23:5; *Lev. Rab.* 34:8, bar.; *Num. Rab.* 13:20; *Song Rab.* 4:4, §4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 10:9 (in prayer); see further Moore, *Judaism*, 1:537. Some Tannaim suggested they could have used more merit (*Sipre Deut.* 2.1.1–4); some Amoraim attributed the exodus to the merit of, or faith in, Moses (*Exod. Rab.* 15:3; 16:1), to righteous acts (*Exod. Rab.* 1:28; *Lev. Rab.* 28:4; *Num. Rab.* 20:22), to the merits of Israelite women (*Exod. Rab.* 1:12; *Num. Rab.* 3:6, bar.), or to various factors, including patriarchal merits (*Deut. Rab.* 2:23).

594. E.g., in *Mek. Besh.* 4.52–57 (attributed to Shemaya and Abtalion). The idea of God showing favor to descendants for an ancestor's sake does appear in Scripture (e.g., Deut 7:8; 10:15; 1 Kgs 11:36; 2 Kgs 8:19; 2 Chr 21:7).

595. E.g., *m. 'Ab.* 2:2; *Sipra Behuq.* pp. 8.269.2.5; *Sipre Deut.* 8.1.1; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1:1; 2:5; 5:8; 22:4; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 5:2; *Gen. Rab.* 39:3; 44:16; 48:12; 49:11; 70:8; *Exod. Rab.* 1:4; 15:4; 44:5; *Lev. Rab.* 31:4; 36:5; *Song Rab.* 7:6, §1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:9; 27/28:1; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 48:20; cf. *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 30:27; 39:5; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 18:18; 19:29; 21:17. This included expiation of Israel's sins (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 23:8; *Lev. Rab.* 29:7; *Deut. Rab.* 3:15).

596. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:6; *Lev. Rab.* 21:11; 36:5; *Num. Rab.* 11:2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 12:5; 15:9.

597. E.g., *'Abot R. Nat.* 12, §30; 22, §46 B; *Gen. Rab.* 74:12; *Num. Rab.* 8:9; cf. individuals' benefits from ancestral merit, *y. Ta'an.* 4:1, §14; *Lev. Rab.* 9:2. Amoraim differed as to whether patriarchal merit could eventually run out (*y. Sanh.* 10:1, §6; *Lev. Rab.* 36:5).

598. See *Sipre Deut.* 329.3.1, following biblical precedent (Ezek 18:20); cf. 2 *En.* 53:1. Even in *Song Rab.* 1:2, §3, biblical sacrifices appear preferable to ancestral merits.

599. Noted also by Marmorstein, *Merits*, 38.

600. Cf. protection from judgment on account of the patriarchs in *Test. Levi* 15:4 (possibly a later interpolation); perhaps Moses's virtue and the law (*Jos. Ant.* 3.322).

601. Cf. invoking an ancestor in 3 *En.* 1:3; supplication on the basis of the honor of the patriarchs in *CIJ* 1:519, §719 (if it means the biblical patriarchs); invoking their merits in prayer in *Gen. Rab.* 60:2.

heritage (Deut 7:7; 10:22; 26:5; cf. Dan 9:18). The first of the Eighteen Benedictions, likely pre-Christian, reminded God of the ancestors' righteous deeds and, on this basis, prayed for God to send a redeemer; Tannaim summarized this benediction under the title "Fathers" (*m. Roš Haš. 4:5*). In the early period, the issue may have been simply Israel's deliverance as a people and the expectation that Abraham's Israelite descendants would all be saved, except for those who broke covenant (cf. *m. Sanh. 10:1*).⁶⁰²

Luke knows that some vainly depend on Abrahamic descent—that is, on being God's chosen people—for salvation (Luke 3:8; 16:24, 30). But whereas some Christian sources polemicize against dependence (perhaps on a popular level) on Abrahamic descent, there is no indication of polemic here, and Luke does affirm God's covenant with Israel's ancestor Abraham in a nonpolemical context (1:73; cf. 13:16; 19:9). Stephen appeals to Abraham's life as an example of how (and where) God acts.

Throughout Luke-Acts, biblical narratives of God's faithfulness to characters such as Abraham echo as a subtext. The Abraham story, a foundational biblical narrative, is echoed even at the opening of Luke's Gospel, where Zechariah and Elizabeth resemble Abraham and Sarah (1:7, 13); see further comment on Acts 3:25.

I. GOD SPEAKS IN MESOPOTAMIA (7:2)

The *captatio* summary is brief. On "men," see comment on Acts 2:14; on "brothers," see comment on Acts 9:17. In addressing "fathers," Stephen addresses respectfully the elders of the people, perhaps especially the Sanhedrin, Jerusalem's municipal senate (Acts 6:12, 15).⁶⁰³ Thus Romans spoke of their own senators, the "elders" of their people.⁶⁰⁴ More generally, ancients employed such fictive kinship terminology in an honorary manner, sometimes in direct address (e.g., 2 Kgs 5:13; 13:14; Diod. Sic. 21.12.5). For example, various texts apply "father/son" language to teachers and their disciples;⁶⁰⁵ disciples were called "children" of their teachers,⁶⁰⁶ and their teachers were their "fathers."⁶⁰⁷ Ancients employed titles such as "father of the Jews" (2 Macc 14:37); "fathers of the world" for the first-century schools of Hillel and Shammai (*Gen. Rab. 12:14*);⁶⁰⁸ "father of his country" or of the state for the emperor;⁶⁰⁹ and "fathers" for

602. For the salvation of all Israel, cf. also *b. Hag. 27a*; *Sanh. 110b*; Rom 11:26. For Abraham's involvement, see also Just. *Dial.* 44.1; Williams, *Justin*, xxxii.

603. I adapt my father/son comments from Keener, *John*, 921–22, which provides further detail.

604. Pliny *Paneg.* 1.1; 66.1; Tacitus *Hist.* 2.52; Suetonius *Claudius* 25.1; *Dom.* 11.3; Sall. *Catil.* 6.6; 31.7; 51.1, 4, 7, 12, 15, 37, 41; 52.2.7, 35; *Jug.* 14.1, 3, 12, 13, 18, 25; 24.2; *Philip.* 1, 17; *Pomp.* 1, 6; *Ep. Caes.* 11.1; *Invect. M. Tull.* 1; *Cic. Cat.* 1.2.4; 1.4.9; 1.11.27; 1.12.29; 1.13.31–32; 2.6.12; 4.1.1, 2; 4.2.3, 4; 4.3.6; 4.5.9; 4.6.11; 4.8.16, 18; *Prov. cons.* 1.1; 2.3; 4.8; 5.11; 8.18; 9.23; 10.25; 12.30; 13.32; 16.38, 39; *Pis.* 20.46; 22.52; 24.56; 33.81; *Marcell.* 1.1, 2; 5.13; *Phil.* 1.1.1; 1.3.7; 1.4.11; *Fam.* 10.35.1, 2; *Invect. Sall.* 1.1, 2, 3; 2.5; 4.12; 5.14; 6.16; 8.22; Livy 1.8.7; 1.26.5; 2.1.10–11; 2.23.14; 2.24.2; 2.27.3; 2.32.12; 2.34.12; 2.35.3; 2.41.4; 2.48.8; 2.60.3; 3.13.7; 3.16.1; 3.21.1, 3, 4; 3.51.11; 3.52.6; 3.63.8; 4.1.4; 4.2.13; 4.60.1, 3; Val. Max. 1.5.1; 2.2.1a; 2.7.ext. 1; 2.8.4; 3.8.1; 4.1.4; 4.1.6b; 4.4.10; 4.5.1; 5.2.1; 5.8.3; 5.9.3; 6.1.10; 6.2.1; 6.6.3; 8.13.4; 8.15.1; Plut. *Rom. Q.* 58, *Mor.* 278D; Lucan *C.W.* 3.109; Corn. Nep. 23 (Hannibal), 12.2; Sil. It. 1.610, 675; Quint. *Decl.* 265.15.

605. Among philosophers, cf. Epicurus (Culpepper, *School*, 107, cites *Lucr. Nat.* 3.9); Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22.82; Nock, *Christianity*, 30.

606. E.g., Porph. *Marc.* 1.6–8; Eunapius *Lives* 486, 493; 1 Cor 4:14–15; 1 Tim 1:2; Phlm 10; 3 John 4; 4 Bar. 7:24; *Sipre Deut.* 34.3.1–3, 5; 305.3.4; *b. Pesah.* 112a; *Šabb.* 25b; 31a (Hillel); *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:6 (Moses to Israel); 51:1. Other texts make analogies between fathers and teachers (e.g., *t. B. Qam.* 9:11). Some scholars have suggested the same analogy for mystagogues and mystery initiates (Lohse, *Colossians*, 200).

607. E.g., Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.490; 1.25.536, 537; Iambl. *V.P.* 35.250; 2 Kgs 2:12; 4 Bar. 2:4, 6, 8; 5:5; *t. Sanh.* 7:9; Matt 23:9; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 12:14 (Simeon ben Yohai of the sages of Beth Hillel and Shammai); for Christian usage from the second to fifth centuries, see Hall, *Reading Scripture*, 50.

608. "Father of the world" also came to be a title for the patriarchs (*Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 40:12; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 40:12; Deut 28:15).

609. *Res Gestae* 6.35; Ovid *Tristia* 4.4.13; *Fasti* 2.130–32, 637; Tac. *Ann.* 2.87 (refused); 11.25; Suetonius *Julius* 76.1; *Aug.* 58.2; *Vespasian* 12; Pliny *Paneg.* 42.3; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.22 (the ideal ruler); Hdn. 2.2.9; 2.6.2; or simply "parent" or "father" (Ovid *Pont.* 4.9.134; cf. the deceased Julius Caesar in Cicero *Fam.* 12.3.1;

triumphant generals,⁶¹⁰ for other societal leaders or benefactors,⁶¹¹ for rescuers in battle (Polyb. 6.39.6–7), and for older mentors.⁶¹² Nevertheless, the respectful⁶¹³ but negative picture of “our fathers” at Acts 7:39, 44–45 may color the respectful address “fathers” in 7:2. Calling one’s audience to “hear” or “heed” one was common in rhetoric⁶¹⁴ and biblical tradition (e.g., Job 5:27; 13:6; 34:2; Prov 1:8; 4:1, 10)⁶¹⁵ and is common elsewhere in Acts (Acts 2:14, 22; 13:16, 40; 15:13; 22:1; 26:3; see comment on Acts 2:14).

The phrase “God of glory” appears in Ps 29:3 (28:3 LXX),⁶¹⁶ from the early Christians’ prayerbook (Psalms; e.g., Acts 4:24–26): the God who deserves that all glory be ascribed to him (Ps 29:2) because he reigns in majesty (29:4). That the God of glory appeared⁶¹⁷ might allude to God’s glory appearing in Isa 40:5 LXX (though this is omitted from Luke 3:6). Genesis does not record a vision of glory at Abram’s call, but this report undoubtedly anticipates Stephen’s vision of glory in Acts 7:55, forming an *inclusio* around Stephen’s speech;⁶¹⁸ the patriarchal history continued in Stephen’s experience. That the verb is no accident might be confirmed from its introduction to a quotation from Exodus in 7:26 (see comment there). “Our father Abraham” fits standard Jewish thought about Abraham (cf. John 8:53; Rom 4:12),⁶¹⁹ as Luke seems to recognize (Luke 1:73; 3:8; 16:24, 30).

“Mesopotamia” and “Haran” appear together in Gen 27:43 LXX (although the MT does not mention Mesopotamia there), but this is probably not an allusion to a specific text; “Harran” appears eight times in the LXX of Genesis, and “Mesopotamia” thirteen times in the LXX of Genesis.⁶²⁰ Although in practice Luke focuses his cross-cultural theology on the mission to Rome and its empire, he recognizes that the mission is beyond Rome as well (Acts 1:8; 8:26–40); in this case, he knows of Jews in Mesopotamia and Christian proclamation there (2:9). Many scholars would not define “Ur of the Chaldeans” (Gen 11:28, 31; 15:7; Neh 9:7) as technically in Mesopotamia, but it was for Josephus (explicitly, *Ant.* 1.157).⁶²¹

In a straightforward reading of Genesis (Gen 11:31–12:4), God appears to have called Abram in Haran, but ancient writers sometimes read behind narratives and

Suetonius *Julius* 85); so also for other kings (the fictitious Ethiopian king in Heliod. *Eth.* 10.17) and for the Roman state itself (Tac. *Ann.* 3.28); comparing a ruler to a father, Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.1. For the significance and publicizing of Augustus’s title, cf. Starr, “*Pater patriae*.”

610. Sil. It. 7.734–35; 8.2; 17.651; Tac. *Ann.* 2.80.

611. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 12.1.8; Paus. 8.48.5–6; 8.51.7; Cicero in Plut. *Cic.* 23.3; for Rome’s founding elders (Ovid *Fasti* 5.71); honorary title “father of the Greeks” (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.27.617); a kind master (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.44); an ideal ruler (Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 64.14, claiming that this imitates Zeus’s role). Cf. for leaders in the Mithraic cult (Burkert, *Cults*, p. 42).

612. Hom. *Il.* 9.607, employing a different term; *Od.* 1.308.

613. See Acts 7:11–12, 15, 19.

614. E.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 19, 1433b.19–23; Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.5.10; *Mil.* 2.4; in ethical exhortation, cf. Epict. *Diatr.* 2.19.12.

615. Including for divine speech (e.g., Deut 5:1; 6:4; 9:1; 2 Chr 18:18; Isa 66:5; Jer 2:4; Amos 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; Mic 1:2; 3:1) and prayer (e.g., Pss 27:7; 143:1; Dan 9:18).

616. Others (Richard, *Composition*, 39; Soards, *Speeches*, 61; Dunn, *Acts*, 92) also note this connection. The psalm may depict a storm in theophanic terms (cf. Weiser, *Psalms*, 261–63).

617. Luke is fond of the aorist passive of ὀράω for revelations, whether of angels (Luke 1:11; 22:43; Acts 7:30, 35), Elijah and Moses (Luke 9:31), the risen Jesus (Luke 24:34; Acts 9:17; 13:31; 26:16), the fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:3), or a night vision (16:9); otherwise only 7:26.

618. E.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 114; Richard, *Composition*, 39; Soards, *Speeches*, 61; Dunn, *Acts*, 92.

619. E.g., 4 Macc 16:20; *m. ’Ab.* 3:16; see the introduction to Acts 7:2–8 above.

620. Apart from the LXX, Luke’s audience might have little interest in Mesopotamia. Important as it was for understanding Israel’s origins (and Parthian Jewry), the Roman world’s understanding of Mesopotamian history was, in general, limited (see Pliny *N.H.* 6.30.117–20, esp. 117).

621. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 343. Stephen apparently defines “Mesopotamia” as narrowly around Ur (Acts 7:2, 4), though Haran is in Mesopotamia in Gen 24:10 LXX (Marshall, “Acts,” 557).

rearranged chronology according to what they thought a more accurate scheme. In contrast to the surface narrative sequence in the Genesis passage, the figures in Genesis (11:26, 32; 12:4; cf. 17:1) suggest that Abram was called and left before Terah died⁶²² (although the speech also rejects this option, Acts 7:4). Some have found a connection here with the Samaritan Pentateuch, which varies from the MT here (to allow Terah's death before Abram's departure),⁶²³ but this may simply reflect a broader Jewish tradition. For a calling before Terah's death, perhaps Luke depended on Gen 15:7 or Neh 9:7 or on exegetical tradition suggesting an earlier calling (attested also in Philo *Abr.* 71–72);⁶²⁴ see further in comment on Acts 7:4.

II. FORSAKING ALL FOR GOD'S PROMISE (7:3)

The call to leave kin and land for a greater promise (Gen 12:1, 4) fits Luke's larger understanding of Christ's call to believers (Luke 18:29–30; employing συγγενής, 14:12; 21:16). The calling of Saul that Luke will soon narrate also involves a degree of leaving his own people and going where God will show (9:15–16; cf. 22:21; 26:17).⁶²⁵ Even sooner, the principle here will require believers to be scattered from Jerusalem—ironically, especially due (on the narrative level) to the hostile response to Stephen's message (8:1; 11:19).

God's promise to Abram in Genesis concerned land and seed, but Luke's and Stephen's canonical reading would view this promise (especially regarding the ultimate seed, 13:23; see comment on Acts 3:26) as partly already fulfilled in God's kingdom through the Davidic ruler. This promise of the land was delayed through the people's rejection of Moses (cf. Acts 7:42, 45); hence the kingdom and Israel's rule over its own land could be likewise delayed through their rejection of the prophet like Moses (cf. 7:37, 52). The quote here is almost exactly the same as in Gen 12:1 LXX except for the omission of a statement about Abram leaving his father's house. This omission would not seem significant except for Acts 7:4's emphasis that he waited until his father's death, having received the call earlier (see comment on Acts 7:4). This might emphasize that God allowed Abraham to wait, which would make even longer the time of God's faithfulness *outside* the land. The omission might also respond to apologetic concerns, emphasizing submission to the *paterfamilias*,⁶²⁶ but it could have been omitted simply to conserve space.

III. ABRAHAM'S DEPARTURE (7:4)

Stephen spends much more time narrating Abraham's wanderings in Mesopotamia than his hearers might expect; Abraham heard from God before in Haran (7:2), then

622. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 70; Haenchen, *Acts*, 278. Of course, Gen 11:26 is not intended as a detailed chronological statement unless the three sons were triplets, but if he began fathering at that age, Abram may have been his firstborn.

623. E.g., Bruce, *Acts*¹, 162n1; Bruce, *Books*, 130n2; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 52.

624. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 70; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 60; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 161 (citing also Jos. *Ant.* 1.154, which could work if the Chaldean land includes Ur but not Haran). Soards, *Speeches*, 148, emphasizes Neh 9:7, noting other allusions to that passage's retrospective in Acts 7. Such solutions are better, Litke argues ("Samaritan Chronology"), than dependence on Samaritan ideas.

625. Acts 9:16 employs a cognate (ὑποδείκνυμι) of the verb for "show" (δείκνυμι) in 7:3 (the cognate ὑποδείκνυμι appears also in 20:35; Luke 3:7 Q; 6:47; 12:5). Cf. also God "showing" Peter (the only other use of the exact verb δείκνυμι, from Acts 7:3, in Acts) that God welcomes Gentiles. (Admittedly, the verb appears in other senses in the Gospel: Luke 4:5; 5:14; 20:24; 22:12; most early manuscripts of 24:40.) The command "come" in Acts 7:3 appears only in summons or calls in Luke-Acts (7:34, for Moses; Luke 18:22) and is probably introduced into Stephen's quotation in Acts 7:3 from the LXX of Exod 3:10 (quoted in Acts 7:34).

626. Cf. Jesus's submission to parents in Luke 2:51 (though Luke does not tone down the radical character of the Jesus tradition about "hating" parents in 14:26 in the way that Matthew apparently does); Luke also includes Joseph's kindness to his father Jacob in Acts 7:14. Is this apologetic for those who thought Christians subversive (on which see, e.g., Keener, *Paul*, 129–56, and sources cited there; Balch, *Wives*, 65–80, 118)?

lived in Haran before coming to the promised land (7:4); likewise, his descendants would live in God’s providence in a foreign land for centuries before settling in the land (7:6). The term used for their current living in the land (κατοικεῖτε) recalls Abraham’s dwelling in Haran (7:4; also earlier in 7:2).

Here begins a series of tragic reversals (“a central device in tragedy” since the time of Aristotle).⁶²⁷ The positive events demonstrating God’s faithfulness to Abraham in this paragraph are echoed and reversed for Israel later in the speech:

Abraham Story	Condemnation of Israel
God “resettled” Abraham (7:4)	God “resettled” Israel by exile (7:43)
Abraham’s descendants should worship God (7:7)	Israel worships idolatrously (7:42)
God grants the covenant of circumcision (7:8)	Stephen’s covenant-breaking accusers have uncircumcised hearts (7:51)

“Thus three key words or root words associated with God’s saving work and promise in the Abraham section of the speech,” Tannehill notes, are recalled later in the speech to remind Stephen’s hearers how far Israel has often strayed, and how far his own hearers have strayed, from God’s call and promise.⁶²⁸

Terah died in Gen 11:32, in Haran (also in *Jos. Ant.* 1.152); then Abram’s call to the promised land came explicitly in Gen 12:1–3 (also *Jos. Ant.* 1.154), but Luke approaches the chronology differently. Because the family had already started en route to Canaan when they settled in Haran (Gen 11:31), Luke reports the calling (Acts 7:2–3) not only before the migration to Canaan but also before the migration to Haran.⁶²⁹ (See comment on Acts 7:2–3.) The ages at which events occurred in Genesis suggest that Abraham left before his father’s death (Gen 11:26, 32; 12:4), but simply following the Genesis narrative would not inform the reader of this. Terah’s age at death (11:32) in the Samaritan Pentateuch was 145 years, which allows for the harmonizing of both tendencies in Genesis, but the number is 205 years in the MT, the LXX, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.152), and apparently in 4Q252 1 II, 8–10, in all of which Terah was presumably alive when Abraham left. If Luke had specific reasons for the change, they may be social-apologetic, related to his omission of Genesis’s “leave your father’s house” (see comment on Acts 7:3).⁶³⁰ But others besides Luke and the Samaritans also opined that Abraham left after Terah’s death (*Philo Migr.* 177).⁶³¹

Abraham went and “dwelt” in Haran; the description resembles the LXX of Gen 12:4–5 except in his use of κατοικέω, which nowhere appears in the LXX with Haran or Mesopotamia (altogether only three times in the LXX, never in Genesis) but appears in Acts 7:2 as in 7:4. Was Luke using language that would appeal to resident Diaspora Jews (2:5, 9)? Or perhaps it is just Lukan style in Acts (19 occurrences; only twice in the Gospel). In a legend that Josephus claims to find in Nicolaus of Damascus *History* 4, Abraham remained a powerful leader in Damascus (Josephus perhaps identifying Damascus with Haran) before leaving for Canaan (*Jos. Ant.* 1.159–60).

627. Tannehill, *Acts*, 90.

628. *Ibid.*

629. Whether Terah was following God’s call (cf. Gen 31:53) or not (cf. Josh 24:2) the narrative does not settle.

630. This might help mitigate Jesus’s alleged dishonoring of families; but if reducing that charge were a major concern of Luke’s, one would have expected him to retain Mark’s *qorban* passage (Mark 7:11) and to qualify his harsh statements, such as Luke 14:26 (cf. Matt 10:37).

631. E.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 70; Haenchen, *Acts*, 278; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 180; Chance, *Acts*, 110.

IV. THE PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE, NOT THE PRESENT (7:5)

Stephen here employs the rhetorical device that some more technical rhetoricians called *epimone*, following “no inheritance” with the specification “not even a foot of ground.”⁶³² In view of Gen 23:16–18, this may be partly hyperbole;⁶³³ but the point may be that nothing was yet permanent (in view of Acts 7:6). In any case, “not even a foot of ground” exemplifies the way midrashists borrowed from one story to fill in another because they affirmed patterns of divine activity in history. “Not even a foot” quotes words from Deut 2:5, where God prohibits Esau’s land to Israel because he has given that land to Esau for an inheritance.⁶³⁴ If the allusion is deliberate, it evokes awareness of the God who cares for all peoples and is sovereign over geography.⁶³⁵ Stephen is free to describe one part of Scripture with the language of another. Thus this “giving an inheritance” was more common in Numbers and Deuteronomy (about twenty times each) than in Genesis (only once, Gen 31:14, undoubtedly irrelevant). But Stephen has not forgotten Genesis. The promise in this verse clearly echoes Gen 17:8, to which it corresponds in several key words, and the mention of the child he did not yet have uses the term for “child” applied to Isaac in 17:16; 22:7. (“Inheritance” invited various theological, including eschatological, associations for Israel; see comment on Acts 20:32; on the “promise,” see comment on Acts 7:17.)

Despite the conciseness of the summary, Stephen emphasizes that Abraham did not yet have a child; this may highlight that the promise demanded faith. Abraham (and his descendants, Acts 7:6) needed to persevere by faith through testing. Testing was always a pattern for God’s servants in Scripture, including the heroes of this chapter (7:3–5, 9, 27–28); this fit the pattern of suffering-exaltation continued in recitals of the gospel story, and Luke believed it foundational to understanding that story (Luke 24:46; Acts 3:18; 17:2–3; 26:22–23; cf. 1 Cor 15:3; 1 Pet 1:11).

That Abraham did not yet receive the promise shows that God worked through someone not yet in possession of the land; it is not so much present possession of the land but the guarantee of eschatological promise that matters. This connection might suggest the importance of faith for Luke’s early Christian audience (Heb 4:1–2; 11:9–10, 13–16; cf. Rom 4:17–21). It also placed the land in perspective: although God’s people could be confident of eschatological possession of the land (cf. Acts 1:6–7; 3:19–21), there was no guarantee that they would hold it in the present, particularly if they faced judgment (cf. Luke 21:24).

V. THE PROMISE OF EXODUS AND THE LAND (7:6–7)

Following proper rhetorical protocol, this part of the speech anticipates some of what will come. It prepares the way for the Moses story by predicting slavery and oppression (cf. *κακόω* in Acts 7:19, 34), just as the Moses story alludes back to the fulfillment of the “promise” in the exodus (7:17) and refers to God as the God “of Abraham” (7:32).⁶³⁶ It also implies that the exodus will echo Abraham’s own experience of “coming out” of the place where he had lived (7:3).⁶³⁷

632. On *epimone*, see Rowe, “Style,” 144–45 (citing as examples Greg. Naz. *Or.* 16.1; Cic. *Mil.* 26.69); cf. also Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 582 (citing Rom 7:18–20).

633. The language may reflect Hittite deeds (see comment below on Acts 7:15–16). Most important, however, from a literary perspective, it establishes a foothold for Israel’s future presence in the land. Genesis itself can use “foot” hyperbolically (Gen 41:44).

634. Others also note the allusion (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 52, also noting similar language in Gen 12:7; 13:15; 48:4; tentatively, Dunn, *Acts*, 93).

635. Possession by “feet” refers to one way of measuring ground off, but see also Josh 1:3, which echoes the Abraham story at Gen 13:14–15.

636. Tannehill, *Acts*, 91.

637. Cf. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 38.

The key wording reflects Gen 15:13 (“the seed will be πάροικον in a land . . . , they will enslave and abuse [them] for 400 [years]”).⁶³⁸ The existence of Israel’s people as resident aliens in Egypt provides a model for God’s people as aliens in the world (cf. Heb 11:8–10, 13–16; 1 Pet 1:1, 17; 2:11; perhaps Ps 119:19 [118:19 LXX]; *Diogn.* 5.5). “The only land that Abraham possessed,” Bruce points out, was the land “he bought for a burying-place” (cf. Acts 7:16, 29, 44, 47; cf. Gen 23:4 LXX; Ps 105:12 [104:12 LXX]).⁶³⁹ The many connections throughout the speech show how deep this emphasis runs. The immigrant theme appears also in the Joseph story (Acts 7:17–21),⁶⁴⁰ and the term πάροικος applies to Moses (the reversal of Joseph in some respects; cf. comment on Acts 7:9–18), who became an alien in Midian (7:29); Luke employs a cognate in 13:17 again for Israel’s sojourn in Egypt.⁶⁴¹ The LXX sometimes uses πάροικος with ἀλλότριος for living in a foreign land (Deut 14:21), including in Moses’s story (Exod 2:22; 18:3).⁶⁴² (It is possible that some of Luke’s audience after 70 would connect this with Israel’s period of oppression.)⁶⁴³

Gentile readers would understand Luke’s language of “slavery” (Acts 7:7) here even without knowledge of the story in the LXX (Exod 14:5, 12); many condemned political tyranny or domination, whether by tyrants⁶⁴⁴ or empires,⁶⁴⁵ as “slavery.” “Freedom,” conversely, often meant freedom from political domination, including by a foreign empire.⁶⁴⁶

The Abraham story heads to this climax of worship in “this place” (Acts 7:7). The land is tied to the place of worship, answering Stephen’s accusers’ claims that he opposed the temple (6:11–14). This is clear in part from the speech’s blending of quotations. (Luke’s speakers elsewhere add phrases such as “says God” for clarity [2:17; 15:17–18].) Although most of the quotation closely follows Gen 15:14 LXX (appropriate after Gen 15:13 in the preceding verse),⁶⁴⁷ the language of worship (λατρεύουσιν) jumps ahead to its possibly implied goal in Exodus, where God commands Pharaoh to let Israel come “worship” God in the wilderness (Exod 3:12;

638. The figure is obviously a round one; cf. 430 years in Exod 12:40 and Gal 3:17, as well as 450 years in Acts 13:19.

639. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 163.

640. See Kilgallen, *Speech*, 41.

641. Cognates easily applied to Israel’s exile as well (Ezra 8:35; 1 Esd 5:7). Μέτοικος applies to “immigrant foreigners who lived in a Greek city without possessing rights of citizenship” (Cartledge, “Metokoikos,” 810), even if (as in Hellenistic Athens) this may have been half the city (812). Though best attested in prominent Athens, such resident aliens are attested in about seventy cities under various synonyms, including πάροικος (813).

642. Ideally, hospitality prohibits treating anyone as an “alien” (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.74, ἀλλότριον; Exod 12:48–49, though here and elsewhere the LXX applies this principle specifically to “proselytes”). But aliens normally remained susceptible to harsher treatment (Aeschylus *Suppl.* 202–3; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.84; for the tax on resident aliens, see Lucian *Parl. G.* 3). Those who grew up in a place as resident aliens tended to accept the culture more readily than newcomers (Plut. *Lect. 2, Mor.* 37EF) and might hold a status superior to pure foreigners (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.3).

643. According to some views of early Judaism, even Judean Jews before 70 remained in exile (Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 143–45, following Wright, *People of God*, 269–70 and others; citing, e.g., Tob 14:5; Sir 36). Others argue that although Judaism recognized the need for future restoration, Judean Jews before 70 did not see *themselves* as still in exile (see Kim, *New Perspective*, 136–41, esp. 137–38); contrast the twelve tribes, on which see comment on Acts 26:7.

644. E.g., Corn. Nep. 8 (Thrasylbulus), 1.5; Cic. *Att.* 14.14; *Phil.* 3.5.12; 3.11.29; 3.13.33; 6.7.19; 14.14.37; Sen. E. *Historical Frg.* 1; Lucan *C.W.* 7.445; Tac. *Agr.* 2–3; Iamb. *V.P.* 32.220; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.15.498; 1.486.

645. E.g., Lysias *Or.* 2.21, §192; Demosth. *Philip.* 3.36; 4.25; Isoc. *Peace* 105 (*Or.* 8.180); Sall. *Jug.* 102.6; *Mith.* 10; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.23.20; Appian *Hist. rom.* 8.9.56; Hdn. 3.2.8; Corn. Nep. 15 (Epaminondas), 5.3; 1 Macc 2:11.

646. E.g., from Rome in Tac. *Hist.* 4.64; cf. Diod. Sic. 10.34.8; Strabo 10.4.16. For a survey of political and moral applications of “freedom” language in ancient literature, see Keener, *John*, 749–52.

647. The omission of ἀποσκευή, “possessions” (cf. Gen 14:12; 31:18; 34:29; 30 times in the LXX but never in the NT) may be due to the need to quote only part of the verse, but if deliberate, it would match Luke’s emphasis on the worthlessness of possessions (Acts 2:44–45; Luke 14:33).

4:23; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 7–8, 11, 24, 26; 12:31).⁶⁴⁸ Stephen substitutes “this place” (Acts 6:13–14; cf. 21:28) for “wilderness.” But it may especially allude to the first reference (Exod 3:12 LXX),⁶⁴⁹ where Israel would come worship God at Mount Sinai. Thus Stephen’s use of “this place” would anticipate his later usage in Acts 7:33;⁶⁵⁰ in Acts 6–7, τόπος is elsewhere a place of worship (6:13–14; 7:49). Offering the following evidences, Kilgallen argues that Luke emphasizes 7:7:⁶⁵¹

1. The fact that the verse provides the last direct quotation from God in the Abraham story (and until 7:32)
2. Luke concluding with it emphatically in a position of fulfillment
3. The deliberate coordination of two texts in 7:6–7, introducing a verse from Exodus into the Abraham narrative
4. Arguments from the composition of 7:7b
5. Auxiliary arguments

Not all of these arguments are compelling in themselves, but in view of Luke’s context (6:11–14; 7:44–50), it is impossible to doubt the connection with the temple and hence the importance of these words for their context. But if the land’s (and the temple’s) purpose was as a place for worship, then defiled worship (cf. 7:39–50) at least temporarily voided the land of its sacred value and Israel of its promised right. The new “place” of worship was where God was (7:33), and God was dwelling in the midst of Jesus’s community through the Holy Spirit (2:4; 4:31).⁶⁵²

VI. THE COVENANT AND THE PATRIARCHS (7:8)

The terms “covenant” and “circumcision” appear together in Gen 17:13 LXX; “giving” a covenant appears idiomatically in 9:12; 21:27 and (with Abram) in 15:18.⁶⁵³ (On the covenant, see also comment on Acts 3:25.) Again the speech alludes to particular texts but echoes entire sections, demonstrating familiarity with the ethos of the text.

After noting the gift of circumcision, Acts 7:8 provides a chronological transition from Abraham to Joseph.⁶⁵⁴ The structure of Genesis itself lays special emphasis on these two figures. Of course, the literary connections are not limited to them. The first cycle of stories links Adam, Noah, and Abraham with promises of blessings, curses, offspring, and land as well as with genealogies (Gen 1:28; 9:1; 12:2–3).⁶⁵⁵

648. The verb λατρεύω means “serve” (Luke 1:74; Acts 24:14; 26:7; 27:23), but sometimes specifically by worship (Luke 2:37; 4:8; Acts 7:42; cf. Rom 9:4; 12:1; Heb 9:1, 6, 9; 10:2; 12:28; 13:10; Rev 7:15).

649. This is the reference most frequently cited (Dahl, “Abraham,” 145). Because τόπος appears in Acts 6:13; 7:33, 49, others note the significance of Luke’s change of “mountain” here (Combrink, *Analysis*, 9; Kilgallen, *Speech*, 38).

650. As Penner, *Praise*, 308, notes, thus “the place of Moses becomes the place of Abraham.” It is possible that this place alludes to the Akedah (Gen 22:3–4, 9, 14 LXX), perhaps identifying Moriah with Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chr 3:1), but this is probably pressing too much.

651. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 35–39, esp. 37–39. Kilgallen thus regards “promise” to be inadequate as a key for interpreting the story (44).

652. Smith, “Refutation.” Because of this new emphasis, the temple’s demise need not traumatize (Taylor, “Temple,” 720–21). Later rabbis often called God himself “the place” to underline his omnipresence (e.g., 3 *En.* 18:24; *m. Ab.* 2:9, 13; 3:14; *t. Sanh.* 1:2; 13:1, 6; 14:3, 10; *Sipre Num.* 11.2.3; see fuller comment at Acts 7:46), an emphasis Stephen would have appreciated.

653. Soards, *Speeches*, 149, compares Neh 9:8, presumably because of that passage’s other echoes in the context.

654. On the transition, see esp. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 45. A rhetorically trained reader might have viewed the way names are linked as akin to anadiplosis (on which see Rowe, “Style,” 130; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 579), though LXX readers might think more of genealogies such as Gen 5:1–32 and 10:1–32, which provide chronological transitions between narratives.

655. Each of the genealogies separating these figures runs approximately ten generations and ends in three sons (Gen 5:1–32; 11:10–27). The curses appear in Gen 3:14; 9:25; 12:3, paralleling the serpent’s seed and Abraham’s opponents with Canaan.

Adam Narratives	Noah Narrative	Abraham Narrative
Blessed (1:28a; 5:2)	Blessed (9:1)	Blessed (12:2–3)
After creation	Recreation after the flood	After Babel*
“Be fruitful and multiply” (1:28)	“Be fruitful and multiply” (9:1, 7)	Promise of seed (12:2; 15:4–5)
Fill the earth (1:28)	Fill the earth (9:1)	Promise of the land (12:1)
Curse: serpent (and its seed, 3:14–15)	Curse: Canaan (9:25)	Curse: those who curse you (12:3)
Followed by a genealogy with about ten generations ending in three sons (5:3–32)	Preceded and followed by a genealogy with about ten generations ending in three sons (5:3–32)	Preceded by a genealogy with about ten generations ending in three sons (11:12–27)

* Making Abraham’s name great (12:2) contrasts with the people at Babel seeking to make their own name great (11:4); they were scattered after seeking not to be scattered (11:4, 8–9), whereas Abraham went in obedience to God (Gen 12:1, 4).

In Genesis, a remnant is called to begin to undo the damage done in Adam;⁶⁵⁶ God establishes a new people in Abraham, who must teach his descendants God’s way (Gen 18:19).⁶⁵⁷ The remnant contrasts with surrounding wickedness, contrasting also obedience to God’s promise with destruction: thus Noah versus his violent contemporaries (Gen 6–9), and hospitable Abraham versus dangerously inhospitable Sodom (Gen 18–19).⁶⁵⁸

But the largest narratives in Genesis concern Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. Even in this transition in Acts, however, the covenant of circumcision remains critical, providing the speech’s only comment about Isaac besides that he fathered Jacob. Isaac’s circumcision on the eighth day appears in Gen 21:4 (in obedience to 17:12), but Acts does not quote it exactly. Isaac played a major role in Jewish thought of this period;⁶⁵⁹ in later texts,⁶⁶⁰ Isaac’s willingness to be sacrificed proved meritorious,⁶⁶¹ and other details were also added.⁶⁶² Later Christians applied the Akedah to Jesus’s death,⁶⁶³ but Stephen offers little more role to Isaac in his narrative than that of a genealogical connector.⁶⁶⁴

656. Noah is destined to reverse the curse in Gen 5:29; Moses nearly assumes this remnant role in Exod 32:10.

657. In Luke’s theology, Jesus’s movement propagates God’s way not primarily through rearing children (although that pattern is not discontinued) but through reaching existing peoples, thereby blessing all the earth’s families (Acts 3:25).

658. Similarly, the flood and fate of Sodom, like the plagues against Egypt, represent on a smaller scale the undoing of the blessing of creation. Sodomites threaten Lot, the nephew of the man who rescued them from slavery in Gen 14; Adam’s rebellion followed God’s supreme benevolence. Lot chose wicked Sodom’s area because it looked like the “garden of the LORD” (13:10); its comparison also to Egypt might warn hearers tempted to return to Egypt (Num 11:5).

659. The Akedah was among the Genesis texts apt to be emphasized in the Second Temple period (*Jub.* 17:15–18:16; 4Q225 2 I–II; 4Q252 1 III, 6–9; Huizenga, “Battle”; Fitzmyer, “Sacrifice”; Fisk, “Offering Isaac”; cf. Feldman, “*Aqedah*”; idem, “Version of *Aqedah*”; Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac*, 23–55; Longenecker, *Christology*, 115). Samaritans also were interested (note the fourth-century lamp in Sussman, “Binding”). For surveys of the entire ancient Akedah tradition, see Heijne, “*Aqedat Isak*”; Kundert, “*Bindung Isaaks*.” Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 28–29, regards the tradition as minor in this period.

660. Hayward, “*State of Research*,” argues that elements such as Isaac’s willing sacrifice were established by the first century, but it does not seem clear enough in certainly earlier sources.

661. E.g., *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 1:20; *Gen. Rab.* 55:4; 56:8; *Pesiq. Rab.* 40:6; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 22:8, 10, 14; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 22:1, 10; *ibid.* on Lev 22:27; contrast the Greek child sacrifice tradition in Aeschylus *Ag.* 205–47. For connections with Israel’s redemption, see, e.g., *Exod. Rab.* 15:11.

662. E.g., Bernstein, “*Angels*”; Chilton, “*Second Night*.” For varied approaches, see Elbaum, “*Sermon*.”

663. Early Christian art (for differences from the rabbinic approach, see, e.g., Bardski, “*Intuitions parallèles*”; Bourguine, “*Opfer*”) applies the Akedah to Jesus’s death (Jensen, “*Binding*”); this tradition continues in later history (e.g., a seventeenth-century Pietist hymn that mixes Hebrew, Yiddish, and German; Lapide, *Hebrew*, 75). (For Jewish artistic depiction of the Akedah, see Goodenough, *Symbols*, 9:71–77.) Hayward, “*Sacrifice*,” argues that the later Akedah haggadah is without Christian influence; by contrast, Davies, “*Passover*,” argues that the paschal link is a reaction against Christian teaching; Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac*, 78, argues that the connection with expiation grew in reaction to Christian teaching.

664. Allusions in the NT are debated (for a survey of views, see Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac*, 5–22); some find allusions to the rabbinic form (Wood, “*Typology*,” citing [583] also Israël Lévi in 1912) whereas others (I think more plausibly) find allusions only to the biblical account (e.g., Brown, *Death*, 1435–44, on the passion

Whereas Isaac's role is largely transitional in Genesis (apart from a small cycle of stories), Jacob's is not;⁶⁶⁵ here, however, he appears only in connection with the Joseph story (Acts 7:12, 14–15). This may not be surprising; Luke nowhere shows detailed interest in Jacob, mentioning him only as ancestor (Luke 1:33; 3:34; Acts 7:8) and in a title for God (Acts 7:46), usually alongside other patriarchs (Luke 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32), with whom he also appears in the kingdom (Luke 13:38).⁶⁶⁶ "Patriarchs" nowhere appears for the earliest ancestors in the early LXX (just for heads of families in 1–2 Chronicles) but appears in 4 Macc 7:19; 16:25.⁶⁶⁷

Luke elsewhere specifies circumcision on the eighth day (for John, Luke 1:59; for Jesus, 2:21),⁶⁶⁸ as does Paul in a perhaps oft-recounted summary of his orthodox past (Phil 3:5). Circumcision on the "eighth day" (cf. Lev 12:3) originally meant after the first week (12:2).⁶⁶⁹ It probably originally involved mercy toward the child for its first week (cf. Exod 22:30; Lev 22:27) before entering the covenant that devoted him to the Lord (Gen 17:10–14, presumably the immediate source of Stephen's "covenant" of "circumcision").⁶⁷⁰ Despite opposition to imposing circumcision on Gentile converts (Acts 15; see discussion of circumcision there), clearly Luke is not against circumcision for ethnic Israel (21:21).

c. Joseph the Rejected Deliverer and Alien (7:9–16)

By various literary connections, Luke links Joseph⁶⁷¹ with Jesus⁶⁷² and Stephen himself, whereas Joseph's brothers are spiritual ancestors of those who killed the prophets, Jesus, and ultimately Stephen himself (7:51–60).⁶⁷³ By the time the speech reaches its explicit climax, Luke's audience will credit Stephen for clear *παρρησία* (on which see comment on Acts 4:13): only the boldest of prophets or philosophers accused their hearers' ancestors of evildoing and added that the hearers now compounded their offenses (Luke 11:47–51; Diogenes *Ep.* 28).⁶⁷⁴ As in the Abraham story (Acts

narratives). Many doubt that the Akedah influenced Paul (e.g., Messner, "Soteriologie"), though many others disagree (e.g., Schoeps, *Paul*, 141; Rubenstein, *Paul*, 109; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 224; Penna, "Motivo"). Some find it in John (e.g., Braun, "Sacrifice d'Isaac") or in Jesus's binding to the "tree" (Wilcox, "Tree").

665. He is also further elaborated in haggadah (see, e.g., *Jub.* 19–45; see further Endres, *Interpretation*, 85–119).

666. Jewish traditions tend to either exalt Jacob or ignore him (Sicre Díaz, "Tradiciones").

667. Also *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*; without the Greek term, cf. *Sipra Behuq.* pp. 8.269.2.5; later rabbis identified Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as "the fathers" eighteen times in the Torah (*y. Ta'an.* 2:2, §2). In the NT, it is used only in Acts 7:8–9; for David in Acts 2:29; for Abraham in Heb 7:4. Luke's usage of this Greek term is among its early samples (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 72, suggested the earliest extant).

668. The accompanying naming ceremony (Luke 1:59; confirmed in later sources, Safrai, "Hebrew Sources," 5; idem, "Home," 767) resembles and might stem from a more widespread ancient custom (Danker, *New Age*, 17, suggests Hellenistic influence here). Romans named daughters on the eighth day and sons on the ninth (Plut. *Rom. Q.* 102, *Mor.* 288BC; Stamps, "Children," 198). For celebration until the circumcision, see Safrai, "Home," 767. The *sandak* as a godparent who holds the boy during circumcision is probably a later custom (see Newman, "Sandak").

669. Cf. this use of "eighth day" as "after the week" in, e.g., Lev 23:39; 2 Chr 7:8–9; Neh 8:18; Ezek 43:27.

670. Cf. 1 Macc 1:15; *Jub.* 15:11, 13, 14, 26; 16:14; 20:3; *t. Ber.* 6:12; *b. Šabb.* 132a; *Ned.* 32a; *Sanh.* 59b; *Menaḥ.* 53b; *Ker.* 9a; polemically, *Barn.* 9.6.

671. The setting of our earliest extant version of the Joseph story fits an Egyptian context (e.g., Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 77–106; Sarna, *Genesis*, 211–31; Kitchen, "Egypt," 209; idem, *Reliability*, 343–52; Currid, *Egypt*, 74–82), and most Egyptologists (except Redford) date its essential form to the Ramesside (New Kingdom) period (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 98).

672. Subsequent Christian writers elaborated Joseph-Jesus parallels further, e.g., in Aphrahat *Dem.* 21.9 (brought to my attention by Ilya Lizorkin; Aphrahat lived ca. 285–345 C.E.). More relevant for modern critical sensibilities, Lunn, "Allusions," 31–35, usefully highlights concrete verbal allusions to the Joseph narrative in Luke-Acts. Although some might simply recall biblical language more generally, the pattern seems striking, suggesting that Luke may draw on Joseph typology himself more widely than in this passage.

673. See Richard, "Joseph Episode," esp. 265; Kilgallen, *Speech*, 49–51; Lampe, "Wolves," 264; in a more general way, noted often (e.g., R. Williams, *Acts*, 72).

674. Rhetoricians advised making hearers well disposed by praising their ancestors (Socratics *Ep.* 28).

7:4–5), the theme of God’s servant suffering before exaltation also recurs (7:9; cf. Gen 37:18–41:14; Ps 105:17–19).

I. LITERARY CONNECTIONS

This *narratio* focuses on common features of three major characters in the Torah (Abraham, Joseph, and Moses) from the narratives that introduced the law (cf. Acts 7:53).⁶⁷⁵ The principle of linking characters “typologically”⁶⁷⁶ in biblical history is not one that Luke originated; Joshua’s picture of a second exodus (Josh 4:22–24) and the prophets’ picture of a future exodus (e.g., Isa 12:2; 40:3; 43:20; Jer 16:14–15; Hos 2:14–15; 11:1, 11; Mic 7:14) evoked their prototype; Jewish eschatological literature uses the *Urzeit* as a prototype for the *Endzeit* (Isa 51:3; 63:11–14; 65:17; especially Eden).⁶⁷⁷ As noted in the commentary introduction, Greek historians themselves, citing providence, retrospectively discerned correspondences and patterns in history.⁶⁷⁸

For that matter, various characters are linked in the Genesis-Exodus narratives themselves, as discerning readers recognized and continue to recognize. These connections are most obvious between Joseph and Moses, sometimes as parallels and other times as contrasts. The contrasts reveal that God acts in history by a variety of means, not all as dramatic and obvious as the parting of the sea, yet all necessary and strategic for God’s plan (on the plan, see comment on Acts 2:23).

Joseph*	Moses
Brothers sold him into slavery	Family, who were slaves, rescued him from slavery
Midianites sold Joseph into Egypt	Midianites received Moses when he fled Egypt
Joseph became “father” to Pharaoh (Gen 45:8)	Moses became son to Pharaoh’s daughter
In one day, Joseph was exalted from slavery, over Egypt	In one day, Moses lost his royalty in Egypt by identifying with slaves
Joseph made all Egypt Pharaoh’s slaves (Gen 47:19)	Moses freed slaves; through him God judged Pharaoh’s might
Joseph from Jacob’s house to Egypt as a deliverer	Moses from Pharaoh’s house from Egypt as a deliverer
Joseph’s God delivered Egypt in famine	Moses’s God struck Egypt with plagues
Joseph, exiled in Egypt, married an Egyptian	Moses, exiled from Egypt, married a Midianite (and a Cushite)†
Aseneth’s father was priest of On	Zipporah’s father was priest of Midian
Aseneth‡ bore two initial sons, the name of the first reflecting his father’s sojourn in a foreign land	Zipporah bore two initial sons, the name of the first reflecting his father’s sojourn in a foreign land
God raised him up to bring Israel to Egypt	God raised him up to bring Israel out of Egypt
Future deliverer’s leadership initially rejected by his brothers	Future deliverer’s leadership initially rejected by his people

* Of course, narrative connections within the Joseph story itself abound. Thus, for example, Joseph’s prison is also a “pit” (Gen 40:16; 41:14), recalling where his brothers threw him (37:24; cf. Ps 40:2); each case is preceded with Joseph being stripped of his cloak (Gen 37:23; 39:12), which is replaced with a more exalted one at his exaltation (41:42). Judah, who sold Joseph into slavery (37:26–27), betrays his signet ring to an apparent prostitute (38:18, 25); Joseph, who resists temptation, gets Pharaoh’s signet ring (41:42), and Judah prefers slavery for himself rather than for Joseph’s brother Benjamin (44:33).

† The account shows other narrative connections as well: e.g., Isaac (via an intermediary, Gen 24:10–24), Jacob (Gen 29:1–12), and Moses (Exod 2:16–21) all found wives at wells.

‡ Her name in Gen 41:45, 50; 46:20; *Jub.* 34:20; *Jos. Asen.* passim; some MSS (perhaps corrections) of *Test. Jos.* 20:3 but, surprisingly, not in that document’s B and S texts (which have “Zelphan”).

675. Some Qumran texts parallel Joseph with Abraham (perhaps even as teachers if one reads “had taught” in 4Q213 1 I, 11–12; Rothstein, “Pedagogue”).

676. Cf. Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 94. I am employing the term more generally—less technically—than in Bock, *Proclamation*, 50, who distinguishes it from analogy.

677. Kugel and Greer, *Interpretation*, 46–47; on the *Endzeit* and the *Urzeit*, see discussion at Acts 3:21; Eden as the eschatological paradise for the righteous (e.g., Isa 51:3; Rev 22:1–3; the rabbis [e.g., *m. Ab.* 5:22, 24]; *Test. Dan* 5:12). Hays, *Echoes*, 101, gives the example of the Jordan crossing deliberately evoking the crossing of the *Yam Suph* (Josh 3:7–13).

678. Keener, *Acts*, 1:571–74.

Other parallels are possible, too, though not all are equally compelling.⁶⁷⁹ Luke, who compares and contrasts Jesus, Peter, Paul, and others in his story (following Greco-Roman conventions), can barely have missed such rich allusions in Israel's ancient Scriptures.

Various sources exploited the Joseph story for various purposes.⁶⁸⁰ Jewish traditions, especially the stream preserved in later rabbinic literature, often saw Joseph as a paradigm for the exiled and oppressed who would be vindicated by God.⁶⁸¹ They also extol his righteousness and observance of the law.⁶⁸² Philo in some respects treats Joseph as a model "of a bad politician."⁶⁸³ Stephen picks up on a function of Joseph that is highlighted by the above contrasts with Moses that appear early in the story collection: he was a deliverer whom God raised up. By contrasting two very different sorts of deliverers that God used to rescue his people, this speech provides some common characteristics of deliverers God used, which one would expect to find in most deliverers God raised up, especially the deliverer par excellence. One would expect the ultimate deliverer to be rejected by his own people, at least initially (cf. Luke 4:24–29).

II. GOD'S PRESENCE VERSUS JEALOUS PATRIARCHS (7:9)

As in Gen 37:11, Joseph's brothers "envied" him (and hated him in 37:4).⁶⁸⁴ This fits the passion tradition (Mark 15:10, but omitted by Luke; on jealousy and attacks, see Acts 17:5) and how apostles were treated by fellow Israelites in Acts 5:17 (see comment there).⁶⁸⁵ Ancient Jewish sources often commented on the jealousy of Joseph's brothers (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 2.13; *Test. Dan* 1:6).⁶⁸⁶ These traditions sometimes amplified Joseph's danger,⁶⁸⁷ allowing for even closer assimilation to the pattern of the martyred prophet that grew in prominence in early Judaism (Acts 7:52). The brothers' jealousy stemmed from failing to understand that Joseph was not their rival but their deliverer (7:11–14). In Luke's theology, God exalts a person not for the person himself or herself but for his or her people's good (cf. Acts 13:36; 15:7; Luke 6:13–16); jealousy is therefore foolish.⁶⁸⁸

679. E.g., Joseph avoided adultery (Gen 39:8–12), but Moses committed murder (Exod 2:11–12; but the act may be understood more nobly, as in, e.g., Acts 7:24); Joseph continued interpreting dreams during suffering (Gen 40:12–19), but Moses apparently abandoned hope of deliverance (Exod 4:10, 13); Joseph was a young deliverer (Gen 41:46), but Moses an old one (Acts 7:40). For contrasts between positive and negative characters in Acts 7, see Parsons, *Acts*, 107–8.

680. For the early interpretation of Joseph in *Jubilees*, see Endres, *Interpretation*, 171–90.

681. Kern-Ulmer, "Vorlage und Rezeption."

682. See Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 66. Samaritan texts linked Joseph as the greatest king and Moses as the greatest prophet (Bowman, *Documents*, 257). Cf. Joseph's celebrated resistance to sexual temptation (*Jub.* 39:5–6; *Test. Jos.* 8:3; *y. Hor.* 2:6, §4; *Gen. Rab.* 87:6, 8; *Lev. Rab.* 23:10; *Song Rab.* 4:12, §1; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 39:10; Teugels, "Kuisse").

683. Neudorfer, "Speech," 292; cf. Philo *Jos.* passim.

684. Josephus's depiction of Izates (*Ant.* 20.20–21) might recall Joseph's brothers' envy due to his favor with his father (Gen 37:4).

685. Cf. also the possible allusion to Gen 37:20 in Luke 20:14, though it is less obvious than in Mark 12:7 and Matt 21:38 (it is not certain whether Luke caught the allusion).

686. Johnson, *Acts*, 117, cites also Philo's emphasis on their envy (*Jos.* 5, 17), hatred (5), grief and anger (10–11), anger and murder (12); and *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (*Test. Gad* 3:3; 4:5–6; 5:1; *Test. Jos.* 1:3–4; esp. *Test. Sim.* 2:6–7, 11, 14; 3:2–3; 4:4–9). Envy often appears as a motivation in historical (Thucyd. 2.35.2; Polyb. 1.36.2–3), biographic (Plut. *Coriol.* 39.1; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.21.515), and ethical (Plut. *Profit by Enemies* 10, *Mor.* 91E) texts; see fuller comment on Acts 5:17, including discussion of envy in ancient ethics.

687. E.g., Joseph's warning that his siblings not "shed innocent blood" (*Test. Zeb.* 2:2). The story of their opposition continued to circulate in subsequent centuries (e.g., Qur'an 12.9–20).

688. For Luke, jealousy against Jesus belongs to a different category, in which jealousy is foolish because it is hubris against the Creator.

That they “handed him over” or “traded” (ἀπέδοντο) him “to Egypt” echoes Genesis: Joseph’s brothers “handed him over” to slave traders who “handed him over” to people in Egypt⁶⁸⁹ (Gen 37:27–28, 36; 45:4–5). This betrayal likely also echoes the image of Jesus’s being “handed over” by fellow Jews to Gentiles in the passion tradition, though the Greek term there is παραδίδωμι and not ἀποδίδωμι (Luke 9:44; 18:32; 20:20; 24:7, 20; Acts 3:13; for disciples, see Luke 21:12, 16; Acts 8:3; 12:4; 21:11; 22:4; 27:1; 28:17).⁶⁹⁰ Kidnapping for slave trading was a heinous offense both in ancient Near Eastern legal collections (Exod 21:16; Deut 24:7; Hamm. 15) and in Greco-Roman thought.⁶⁹¹ Some other historians and rhetoricians portrayed ancients who introduced slavery and slave abuse as wicked.⁶⁹² Stephen’s and Luke’s audiences would recoil at the behavior depicted here.

Some Jewish traditions tried to reduce the ancestors’ guilt for what they did to Joseph. *Jubilees* 39:1–2, Artapanus (*On Jews* frg. 2), and Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 8:9) omit the element of envy.⁶⁹³ One very late tradition, against a plain reading of Genesis, even claims that all twelve patriarchs were “equally righteous” (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 49:28).⁶⁹⁴ Other perspectives were less lenient: God ordained the Day of Atonement because of what Joseph’s brothers did to him (*Jub.* 34:18–19).

Jewish sources often recognized the pattern in Scripture that Acts 7:51–52 climaxes. Philo wrote of the worse hating the better (*Worse* passim). A late rabbinic tradition (*Song Rab.* 8:1, §1) points out the pattern that Cain killed Abel,⁶⁹⁵ Ishmael hated Isaac (this part is postbiblical), Esau hated Jacob,⁶⁹⁶ and Joseph’s brothers hated him (Gen 37:8; cf. also probably 1 Sam 17:28). Of course, sibling rivalry was not limited to Jewish tradition: Romans had their primeval Romulus and Remus,⁶⁹⁷ sibling quarrels continued to characterize much of the culture;⁶⁹⁸ and squabbles about inheritance,

689. In the larger context of this narrative, Egypt’s role here stands for the Diaspora, but Luke is aware of believers from Egypt (Acts 2:10; 18:24) and elsewhere in North Africa (2:10; 11:20; 13:1; cf. Luke 23:26), though his own narrative’s focus will be on Paul’s missions to the north and west.

690. In addition, Judas “handed Jesus over” to the priests (Luke 22:4, 6, 21–22, 48), and Pilate also “handed Jesus over” to them (23:25).

691. E.g., 1 Tim 1:10; Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.62; Terence *Eun.* 108–9 (kidnapping children for the slave trade); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 69.9; cf. seizing stragglers in Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.1. It grew from an offense that incurred a very heavy fine to a capital offense under Huplian (Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 34). Kidnapping remained a major source for the slave trade (Scroggs, *Homosexuality*, 120; Gagnon, *Homosexual Practice*, 333–34; Goodman, *State*, 38).

692. Balch, “Genre,” 14, offering a comparison with Acts 7:9. For further summary discussion of ancient slavery, see comment on Acts 12:13.

693. Johnson, *Acts*, 116–17.

694. Like Josephus, Philo, and Pseudo-Philo, Luke skips Joseph’s “bad report,” but later rabbinic midrashim view Joseph’s behavior negatively (Kalimi, “Josef,” who suggests that Jewish-Christian tension underlies these midrashim). The rabbis could react against Christian polemic against “the fathers” acting unjustifiably or simply sought haggadic reduction of their guilt (as in *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*).

695. On Cain killing Abel, see further 1 *En.* 22:6–7; *Jub.* 4:2–3; Wis 10:3; 4 Macc 18:11; *L.A.B.* 16:2; *Jos. Ant.* 1.52–59; *L.A.E.* 23; *Apoc. Mos.* 2–3; 40:4; *Test. Benj.* 7:3–5; *Test. Ab.* 13:2 A (perhaps also 11:2 B, depending on the date); Heb 11:4; Jude 11; 1 John 3:12; 1 *Clem.* 4.1–6; *Abot R. Nat.* 41 A; *Gen. Rab.* 22:9; 97 NV; *Num. Rab.* 20:6; *Song Rab.* 7:11, §1; 8:1, §1; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 4:8; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 4:8; *Tg. Onq.* on Gen 4:10; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 4:10; further, discussions in Chempakassery, “Cain”; Millard, “Kain”; later, García Martínez, “Samma’el”; Kim, “Cain”; Keener, *John*, 761; Bassler, “Cain”; Isenberg, “Polemic”; Reim, “Joh. 8.44.”

696. See, e.g., *Jub.* 35:14; *Philo Alleg. Interp.* 3.88; *Sipre Deut.* 312.1.1; 329.3.1; 343.5.2; *Song Rab.* 8:1, §1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 12:3.

697. E.g., Hor. *Epodes* 7.17–20; Ovid *Tristia* 4.3.8–9; Livy 1.7.2; cf. Fronto *Ad verum imp.* 2.1.11.

698. E.g., Hdn. 4.5.2–3. Sibling murder was viewed as terrible (Apollod. *Bib.* 3.12.6; Cic. *Off.* 3.10.41; Plut. *Cic.* 10.2; Lucian *Icar.* 25; Z. *Rants* 52; Hdn. 4.5.2; cf. Pindar *Pyth.* 2.32; Val. Max. 9.2.ext. 2), with terrible punishment (Diod. Sic. 16.65.5–6; Apul. *Metam.* 10.8). Sibling rivalry, of course, appears in a variety of cultures (e.g., Freeman, “Observations,” 565).

often among relatives, became a prominent form of legal discourse (cf. Luke 12:13).⁶⁹⁹ But this was more to be expected among ungodly Gentiles than among the patriarchs of God's own people!

God was "with" Joseph; the language echoes Gen 39:21 (cf. 48:21), during his imprisonment, and appears elsewhere in the patriarchal narratives with various patriarchs (Ishmael, 21:20; Abraham, 21:22; Isaac, 26:24; Jacob, 28:20; 31:5; 35:3); in Acts, God was with Jesus (Acts 10:38) and Paul (18:10).⁷⁰⁰

III. GOD EXALTED JOSEPH (7:10)

The statement that God "delivered" Joseph employs the same term (ἐξείλατο) as in Gen 37:21 (where Reuben delivers him from being killed), but Stephen's speech applies it more broadly: God might be "with" one (cf. Acts 7:9) in "affliction," and "deliver" one (Ps 91:15 [90:15 LXX], same words).⁷⁰¹ Just as God "delivered" Joseph, he delivers Israel from Egypt's oppression (Acts 7:34) and in Acts delivers Peter (12:11, in a paschal context) and Paul (26:17), which shows a common pattern of divine activity. Affliction, meanwhile, was also a common circumstance of God's servants (7:11; 11:19; 20:23; esp. 14:22).

That God gave Joseph grace and wisdom before Pharaoh (cf. Gen 50:4) certainly accurately summarizes Joseph's appearance before Pharaoh, if not its wording; he suddenly surmounted the "wise men" (41:8, 39) and had favor before (ἐναντίον) Potiphar (39:4). The primary focus of the language, however, is 39:21, where God gave Joseph favor and also (see Acts 7:9) God was with Joseph.⁷⁰² Possibly (the expression is too common to be sure) the Moses story also echoes the Joseph story with God's giving all Israel, freed slaves, favor before the Egyptians (Exod 3:21; 11:3); Luke may suggest a parallel with God's activity toward David (Acts 7:46), the church (2:47), and Stephen (6:8).

But Luke has a special reason for the wording: that Joseph had "favor" (grace) and "wisdom" connects him with Stephen himself (6:3, 8). ("Favor and wisdom" also connects him with Jesus in Luke 2:40, 52.) Also relevant for Luke's central theme, Joseph, like Stephen and some other Hellenistic Jewish proclaimers in Acts, was persecuted by his brothers yet secured a hearing among *Gentiles* such as Pharaoh (Acts 7:10).

Cognates of σοφός appear in Genesis only for Pharaoh's failing wise men (Gen 41:8), but Luke pairs it with "speech" (Luke 21:15), the Holy Spirit (with Stephen and his colleagues, Acts 6:3, 10), and perhaps "power" (7:22).⁷⁰³ Although the Lord's gift of "wisdom" appears with popular favor in Sir 37:21, the terms "favor" and "wisdom" elsewhere canonically are paired in this way only in Luke 2:40, 52, about Jesus, whom Joseph typifies here.

The title "Pharaoh" appears often in Genesis (perhaps seventy times) but the LXX has "king of Egypt" seven times in the Joseph story; the titles are combined occasionally, as here (Gen 40:17; 41:46; 45:21; 47:5; cf. Exod 3:10–11, 18–19). "King" may evoke for the informed reader Luke 21:12, making Joseph paradigmatic

699. E.g., Isaeus *Cleon.* 4.35; 6.35; *Menec.* 28–29; Pliny *Ep.* 6.33.2; for a more positive approach, Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.13.

700. Cf. *Jos. Asen.* 4:7/9, where the Lord's grace was with (μετ') Joseph.

701. Cf. Ps 50:15 (49:15 LXX); 1 Sam 26:24; with different language, Pss 34:4; 54:7; 107:6; such language came naturally to those steeped in the Psalms, e.g., Ps 18 superscription.

702. Other Jewish commentators also noticed this prominent element of "favor" (e.g., *Test. Jos.* 11:6; *Jub.* 40:5 [in the older Charles ed., 40:4]), though it also appears elsewhere (e.g., Tob 1:13; *Test. Jud.* 2:1).

703. If one omits the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians, Luke-Acts displays one of the particularly high concentrations of "wisdom" in the NT corpus (the highest numerically but not by percentage).

for the Christian mission (cf. Acts 21:24, though this “king” is Jewish). That Joseph was appointed (κατέστησεν) presumably echoes Gen 41:43 LXX but also fits Luke’s purpose: Stephen himself was just “appointed” (6:3), and Israel questioned Moses’s being “appointed” (7:27, 35); together these four instances in this section account for all but one use of the term in Acts (17:15; cf. Luke 12:14, 42, 44). The description of Joseph’s exaltation echoes especially Gen 45:8 LXX (though, at points, the ideas more than the wording). The term ἡγέομαι is not applied to Joseph in Genesis but can summarize Genesis’s more extensive list of titles.⁷⁰⁴

IV. MEETING JOSEPH THROUGH FAMINE (7:11–13)

Gentile hearers would also understand “our fathers” as an expression for ancestors, for example, in one’s native city (Plut. *Cim.* 1.6); it appears especially pervasively, however, in Jewish sources (see comment on Acts 3:13). “Our fathers” respectfully connects Stephen with his audience; common ground was important in defense speeches,⁷⁰⁵ though Stephen will drop this bridging pronoun (for polemic, not ethnic-theological, reasons) during his explicit counterattack (“your fathers,” twice in Acts 7:51–52). Although Luke employs the title elsewhere (Luke 1:55, 72; Acts 3:13; 5:30; 13:17; 15:10; 22:3; 24:14; 26:6; 28:17), an overwhelmingly disproportionate concentration of his usage appears in this speech (Acts 7:11, 12, 15, 19, 38, 39, 44, 45), where it builds rapport but also foreshadows conflict when he speaks of “our fathers” disobedience to Moses (7:39; cf. 28:25; Luke 6:23, 26; 11:47–48). Biblical prophets and prayer leaders often drew attention to the “fathers” sins, especially when their descendants continued in their ways.⁷⁰⁶ One could emphasize either side of the ancestral tradition,⁷⁰⁷ depending on one’s objective. Stephen’s emphasis fits the pattern he will articulate, a pattern of rejecting God’s agents⁷⁰⁸ and of consequent judgment.⁷⁰⁹

Famine on “all the world” (Gen 41:54, 57) becomes “on the land of Egypt and Canaan” in Acts 7:11 (though this is also true in Genesis, cf. Gen 41:36; 42:5); in Acts, Agabus, like Joseph, can predict famine on a much larger world than Joseph’s and prepare people to help those in the promised land by a method similar to that of Joseph (Acts 11:28).⁷¹⁰ Famines elsewhere became occasions for divine intervention (Luke 4:25, on Elijah’s day).⁷¹¹

The description “great tribulation” may summarize what happened, though the wording appears elsewhere in the LXX (Neh 9:37; Jer 11:16; 1 Macc 9:27). Just as Joseph was delivered from his affliction in Acts 7:10, he becomes the agent for his siblings’ deliverance from affliction here; Lukan theology expects tribulations (11:19; 14:2; 20:23). The expression need not include an eschatological allusion (Rev 2:22; Neh 9:37; Jer 11:16), but one is possible (Matt 24:21; Rev 7:14), especially if an allusion to Dan

704. For the meanings of some of these, see Sarna, *Genesis*, 219–22.

705. See Witherington, *Acts*, 268 (on establishing common ground in the *narratio*).

706. E.g., Neh 9:2, 16, 34; Pss 78:8, 57; 106:6–7; Isa 65:7; Jer 2:5; 3:25; 7:25–26; 9:14; 14:20; 23:27; 44:9; Lam 5:7; Ezek 2:3; 20:36; Dan 9:16; Amos 2:4; Zech 1:2, 4; 8:14; Mal 3:7.

707. Deuteronomy is overwhelmingly positive toward the “ancestors” but refers (as is appropriate to its Mosaic setting) especially to the patriarchs.

708. Bock, *Proclamation*, 217–18, acknowledges the pattern but would not call it typology; the classification question here hinges on the definition of “typology.”

709. Balch, “Genre,” 11–13, argues that whereas Dionysius of Halicarnassus employs ancestors for eulogy, Luke employs some of them for invective. Balch compares Josephus’s analogous invective about the ancestors to explain their sufferings (14).

710. On famine in antiquity, see Garnsey, “Malnutrition”; and further comment at Acts 11:28.

711. Also for repentance (Luke 15:14).

12:1 is in view.⁷¹² If there are eschatological associations, then this “tribulation” famine perhaps foreshadows the one that Agabus, like Joseph of old, predicts in Acts 11:28 (the only other use of “famine” in Acts, though it appears four times in Luke’s Gospel).

They “could find no food” (7:11 NRSV, NASB) literally refers to no “fodder” for animals (so the term appears in Gen 42:27; 43:24 LXX and normally in the LXX). It is possible that Luke might mean it more broadly, since he uses the cognate verb for Jesus’s feeding people (Luke 9:17),⁷¹³ but the verb often bears this broader sense (most NT and LXX uses), and it is unclear whether we ought to read that sense into its cognate noun here. The plural noun can bear a broader sense,⁷¹⁴ but if Septuagintal usage is determinative here the term likelier connotes primarily “fodder.”

Stephen’s “our fathers” (Acts 7:12) brings home the point that this behavior stemmed from those his audience often idolized (cf. Luke 11:48). Legends and haggadah had whitewashed the behavior of many of the patriarchs, or at least explained their behavior and provided sufficient repentance. Storytellers could tone down negative incidents,⁷¹⁵ omit them,⁷¹⁶ or justify the protagonists’ behavior.⁷¹⁷

That the patriarchs heard of grain in Egypt repeats Gen 42:2.⁷¹⁸ The speech’s “the first time” (Acts 7:12) provides a deliberate contrast to “second time” in 7:13, making the contrast emphatic—Joseph revealed himself openly and saved his people *fully* only the second time (allowing for the “hidden Messiah” of the first coming; see comment on Acts 3:22); cf. Heb. 9:28. This two-stage revelation is sometimes compared with Christian proclamation through both Peter and Stephen,⁷¹⁹ but in this case we would be surprised that it is rejected both times. It could fit Jesus’s rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4:28–29) and reappearance for Israel after his forty-day exile in the wilderness (4:14),⁷²⁰ though the chronology is reversed. Or the Gospel of Luke is Jesus’s first visitation, whereas he offers his second in Acts.⁷²¹ But perhaps a comparison with Jesus’s expected return is more likely (Acts 1:6, 11).⁷²²

Joseph revealed himself to his brothers on their “second” journey to him (7:13), which is emphatically contrasted with their first (7:12, noted above; cf. Gen 42–45). Likewise, God’s people accepted Moses only when he came to them after their initial rejection of him (Acts 7:27–35; and in that case they still were not obedient, 7:38–44, esp. 7:39–40).⁷²³ The term for Joseph’s “revealing” himself to his brothers (a form of ἀναγνωρίζω) clearly echoes Gen 45:1, the only other place in either the LXX or

712. Cf. the duration of Elijah’s famine in Luke 4:25; Jas 5:17 as perhaps an eschatological prefiguring (contrast more simply 1 Kgs 18:1). Some cite this figure in later rabbinic sources as well (e.g., *Yalqut Simeoni*, fol. 32, col. 2, on 1 Kings).

713. Barrett, *Acts*, 348. Cf. perhaps in Ps 36:19 LXX [37:19], where the cognate verb stands for God’s provision during famine (cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 52).

714. Cf. Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, 690; Liddell and Scott.

715. E.g., *L.A.B.* 12:2–3; *Test. Job* 39:12–13/9–10; 40:3/4.

716. E.g., *Jub.* 13:17–18; 14:21–16:22; 29:13; *Test. Zeb.* 1:5–7.

717. E.g., CD IV, 20–V, 3; *Jub.* 19:15–16; 27:6–7; 28:6–7; 30:2–17, 41; 1 Qap Gen^{tr} XX, 10–11; *Jos. Asen.* 23; *Test. Jud.* 8–12; *Test. Iss.* 3:1; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 38:25; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 38:25–26; 49:28.

718. Ἐξαποστέλλω is not used here in the Joseph narrative (though it appears for Joseph’s sending brothers back to Jacob, Gen 45:24), but the cognate ἀποστέλλω is frequent in the narrative.

719. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 268.

720. Johnson, *Acts*, 13, on the Moses parallel (Acts 7:24–39).

721. Again *ibid.* on the Moses parallel (Acts 7:24–39).

722. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 73; mentioned noncommittally by Bruce, *Acts*¹, 165 (citing Zech 12:10); opposed by Gaventa, *Acts*, 123. Chance, *Acts*, 113, observes that one can accept this reading, at most, for the level of Luke’s audience, not for that of Stephen in the story world; but were Stephen’s accusers unaware of Christian teaching that Jesus would return (cf. Acts 6:14; the allusion to Jesus’s own eschatological teaching in 7:56)?

723. Others also note the parallel with Moses here (e.g., Bruce, *Acts*¹, 165).

the NT⁷²⁴ where the term appears.⁷²⁵ Pharaoh then learns of them in Gen 45:16.⁷²⁶ In contrast to the king who did not know Joseph (Acts 7:18), this pharaoh was hospitable (Gen 45:16–20), supporting Stephen’s speech and Luke’s theology of a Gentile welcome outside the land.

V. MIGRATION TO EGYPT (7:14–15A)

The number seventy-five derives from the LXX (Gen 46:27; Exod 1:5);⁷²⁷ one can calculate the numbers in a variety of ways, but Genesis listed them artificially so as to yield seventy, possibly to parallel the genealogy of Gen 10.⁷²⁸ The tradition was probably wider than the LXX; 4QGen-Ex^a 17–18 2 and 4QEx^a I, 5 have seventy-five.⁷²⁹ The LXX gives Joseph nine sons instead of two (Gen 46:27 LXX); though he had more than two sons altogether (Gen 48:6), we can be relatively sure that the MT is the original reading here (cf. *Jub.* 44:24); even the LXX retains seventy in Deut 10:22.⁷³⁰ Educated Diaspora Jewish scholars recognized the discrepancy, at least between the LXX of Exod 1:5 and Deut 10:22; Philo says that the difference of five allegorically represented the senses, which Jacob managed to eradicate before going to Egypt (*Migr.* 199–201). Other Greek-speaking Jews sometimes preserved seventy despite the LXX, revealing their awareness of the earlier textual tradition.⁷³¹ Stephen simply follows the LXX of the more familiar passages, which Luke may have expected his audience to know, and perhaps this is all Luke was aware of here. If Luke knew another version, perhaps he considered it better to cite the version better known to his audience.⁷³²

Joseph’s sending to his father alludes to Gen 45:23–25; on Luke’s level, Joseph “sent” word to Jacob to bring him to Egypt (Acts 7:14),⁷³³ and God “sent” Moses to Egypt to bring his people out (7:34–35). Whereas leaving behind “relatives” (7:3) fits Jesus’s summons to commitment (Luke 14:12; 21:16), caring for relatives can also be virtuous (cf. Luke 1:58; Acts 10:24; although Luke, unlike Matthew, omits Mark 7:9–13).

VI. THE PATRIARCHS’ DEATH AND BURIAL (7:15B–16)

The same term for death (Acts 7:15) appears for Jacob’s death in a false retrospective in Gen 50:16 LXX (his death is in 49:33, and Joseph’s death is in 50:26).⁷³⁴ The

724. Though cf. *Herm.* 1.1; *Jos. Ant.* 3.173. The cognate noun appears in Philo *only* with reference to this revelation (*Jos.* 237; fairly rare, it appears in Josephus at *Ant.* 13.168).

725. Here Joseph also “sent out” (ἐξαποστείλατε) the Egyptians present, a term appearing in Acts 7:12, but the term is frequent enough to be coincidence. Joseph’s revelation fits the ancient appreciation for hidden heroes’ revelation (see Porras, “Return,” esp. 50–58).

726. The speech’s term φανερός is appropriate but appears in the Joseph story (and Genesis) only at Gen 42:16, which is not relevant.

727. Bede *Comm. Acts* 7.14 also points out that Stephen follows the LXX here rather than the Hebrew’s “seventy.”

728. See, e.g., Walton, *Genesis*, 684–85. Seventy was a standard round number (see, e.g., Fensham, “Seventy”).

729. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 374; Vermes, *Scrolls in Perspective*, 205; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 347; cf. also Conzelmann, *Acts*, 52; Barrett, *Acts*, 350. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 41, believes that this figure came to Stephen through Samaritan tradition. *Jubilees* may know both readings, noting seventy people belonging to Jacob, but explaining that five died before Joseph (*Jub.* 44:33; though these may be from the seventy).

730. Often noted; cf. Kurzinger, *Apostelgeschichte*, 29. Strangely, the LXX wording of Deut 10:22 may have influenced this text (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 73; Richard, *Composition*, 71).

731. *Jos. Ant.* 2.176; 6.89; Ezek. *Trag. Exag.* 2 (*OTP* 2:808).

732. Ancient Jewish teachers typically used a pragmatic approach to text criticism—namely, the most effective version (e.g., Brownlee, “Interpretation,” 61).

733. For Jacob’s going down (καταβαίνω) to Egypt, see LXX Gen 45:9; 46:3–4.

734. Tacitus finds parallels in Jewish and Egyptian modes of burial, since neither normally cremated (*Hist.* 5.5).

patriarchs died in Egypt but, trusting in God's promise of the land, planned burial there (cf. Gen 50:24; Heb 11:22).⁷³⁵ The patriarchs' burial may evoke the burials of Jesus (Luke 23:50–56) and Stephen (Acts 8:2), but this may be pressing connections too far, since Jewish people buried almost everyone (cf. 5:6, 9–10).⁷³⁶ More clearly, their burial may remind the reader that their story points not to themselves but to God's redemptive purposes, into the pattern of which they fit (cf. Acts 2:29; Luke 11:47; though cf. also Luke 20:37–38). Heroes such as David died and were buried after serving God's purposes for their generation (Acts 2:29; 13:36), reminding hearers that the only overarching, consistent, and ultimate "hero" of biblical narrative is God himself.

Jacob, not Abraham, purchased the site from "the sons of Shechem's father Hamor"⁷³⁷ (Gen 33:19; a hundred pieces of money), and it would be hard to think otherwise:⁷³⁸ the name "Hamor" first appears in 33:19 and then appears about ten more times—all in Gen 34. Joshua says that Joseph's bones were buried here, repeating that Jacob bought it from the sons of Shechem's father, Hamor (Josh 24:32). Luke's summary probably conflates the biblical sources,⁷³⁹ whether deliberately (to evoke more Scripture or simply to condense the account) or not: Abraham bought with "silver" (Gen 23:9, 13, 15–16; four hundred shekels) a field from Ephron the Hittite to bury his wife.⁷⁴⁰ Both texts do illustrate that at some strategic moments in their history, God's people lacked more than a foothold in the promised land.

Joseph's bones were buried at Shechem a generation after the exodus from Egypt (Josh 24:25, 32). It is realistic to think, contrary to later tradition, that if Joseph's brothers' bones were transferred at all, it would have been at the same time as Joseph's rather than earlier.⁷⁴¹ But Jacob was buried at the cave of Mamre (Gen 50:13), earlier bought from Ephron the Hittite near Hebron (23:16, 19; 49:30),⁷⁴² just as Jacob instructed (47:29–31; 49:29; 50:5).⁷⁴³

It is grammatically possible that Acts 7:15–16 refers to the burial only of Joseph's brothers ("our fathers" in 7:15, referring to the brothers as in 7:12) instead of including

735. The journey for the burial made embalming convenient (Gen 50:2; though also done for Joseph, 50:6). The LXX nevertheless appears shy about this, though embalming was an Egyptian custom (e.g., Youngblood, "Embalming Process"), as Luke's audience would also recognize (Diod. Sic. 1.91.1–7; 19.99.3; the duration in Hdt. 2.88 is seventy days [cf. Gen 50:3]). Mummification continued in the Greco-Roman period (Gessler-Löhr, "Mummies," 278).

736. They also seem to have valued burial in the land (e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 20.95; see comment on Acts 6:1).

737. As for Acts 7:16, the reading "in Shechem" is probably better attested than "of Shechem" (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 345), which might imply an otherwise unattested father of Hamor, not just his known son, named Shechem. Bede *Comm. Acts* 7.16 (Martin, *Acts*, 77) also preferred "in Shechem," although allowing that Hamor could have had a father with this name.

738. Packer, *Acts*, 57, suggests that Jacob here is buried in a tomb purchased by another, which fits the depiction of Jesus in Luke 23:53 (cf. Matt 27:60).

739. Marshall, "Acts," 560, cites F. F. Bruce's 1988 opinion to this effect: as Stephen conflated two different calls of Abraham, he also conflates two land purchases in Canaan.

740. On the Hittite negotiations there, see Gordon, *Civilizations*, 94, 288; idem, *Near East*, 124; Wright, *Archaeology*, 51; Kitchen, *Orient*, 155; Bright, *History*, 117; cf. Katzoff, "Purchase." Tucker, "Legal Background," prefers first-millennium parallels; but Rabin, "Imperative," argues for a Hurrian component, and Reviv, "Elements," argues from early features that Israel simply updated the language of older material. In any case, the chapter is meant to further confirm Israel's rightful possession of the land.

741. Bede *Comm. Acts* 7.15 (Martin, *Acts*, 77; L. Martin, 71), quoting from Jerome *Ep.* 57.10; 108.13, remarks that Jerome, who lived in Palestine, attests that Joseph's brothers were buried with him at Shechem, though Genesis mentioned only the more prominent Joseph. Against this tradition, local Christians who had heard Acts even once would happily look for clues of such burial sites; so would others before them, given the Samaritan tradition. Yet the command of Joseph and the tribal location correctly noted by Bede might be significant.

742. Abraham's tomb was still venerated there in the first century, decorated with marble (Jos. *War* 4.531–32); on tombs, see comment on Acts 2:29.

743. Testaments often included burial instructions (e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 8.7.25).

that of Jacob. This is not, however, what most Jewish people held.⁷⁴⁴ Later Jewish tradition claimed that Jacob's other sons were buried at Hebron as well (*Jub.* 46:9–10; *Jos. Ant.* 2.199);⁷⁴⁵ this is repeatedly emphasized in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁷⁴⁶ Certainly, the tradition would want them buried in the Holy Land (especially given increasing emphasis on the importance of such burial; see comment on Acts 6:1; cf. *Jos. Ant.* 20.95). Thus, for example, some Jews held that Kohath and Amram went to Canaan to build tombs for their ancestors (4Q545 1 II, 12–13, 17–18; 4Q544 1 3); a later tradition even explains that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sought burial there because the dead would rise first there (third-century tradition in *Gen. Rab.* 96 MV).⁷⁴⁷ But once the patriarchs were in the land, Jewish interpreters would prefer them to be in the right *part* of the land. Anti-Samaritan polemic in Jewish texts also “hardly commends Shechem as a suitable final resting place for Israel’s fathers.”⁷⁴⁸ This would be especially the case if Samaritans claimed Shechem as the burial site for all Jacob’s children⁷⁴⁹ (a tradition that is, however, unattested and would probably have been unknown to Luke’s audience, in any case).

Clearly, “Luke has . . . either confused these traditions, or telescoped them into one.”⁷⁵⁰ Scholars who speak of a telescoping of events here cite a similar possibility in Acts 7:2 (and a composite quotation in 7:7), which they attribute (plausibly) to Luke’s compressing the narrative.⁷⁵¹ Luke or Stephen might well assume that the patriarchs were buried with Joseph rather than Jacob, and Luke might well abbreviate this to mention only Joseph’s burial site (but allude to Jacob’s by mentioning Abraham’s purchase), clearly the more offensive and “Diaspora” (albeit in the Holy Land) of the two. Perhaps Luke and most of his audience would not have quibbled over such details; yet the polemical nature of the passage made these details important because they could lay him open to a charge of error on Scripture from his detractors.

Why telescope events in this manner? Is Luke portraying Stephen realistically by allowing a few accidental conflation? (Had Luke intended us to think that Stephen made mistakes,⁷⁵² however, we might expect that someone in Stephen’s biblically literate audience would have responded.) Or did Luke simply conflate details accidentally

744. Many scholars acknowledge the grammatical possibility even if not the conclusion (Kilgallen, *Speech*, 57).

745. *Jubilees* offers the oldest version of this tradition (Charles, *Jubilees*, lxxxiii).

746. *Test. Reub.* 7:2; *Test. Jud.* 26:3–4; *Test. Levi* 19:5; *Test. Sim.* 8:2; *Test. Iss.* 7:8; *Test. Zeb.* 10:6/7; *Test. Dan* 7:2; *Test. Naph.* 9:1; *Test. Gad* 8:4/5; *Test. Ash.* 8:1–2; *Test. Jos.* 20:6; *Test. Benj.* 12:1, 3.

747. Judean hearers in Stephen’s generation (though not Luke’s Diaspora audience) might even assume secondary burial from their own practice; for that custom in the mid-first century, see Hachlili, “Architecture,” 127; idem, “Necropolis,” 239; Hachlili and Killebrew, “Customs”; Silberman, “Ossuary”; for some slightly later uses, see Rahmani, “Customs”; idem, “Remarks.” Jews may have borrowed the custom as early as the Hasmonean period, from Romans (Levine, *Hellenism*, 67; McCane, “Burial Practices,” 174). Despite some relevant pagan models, ossuaries are not yet attested among Jews outside Palestine (McCane, “Burial Practices,” 174). But on other occasions as well, heroes were reburied at better sites (Plut. *Thes.* 36.1; *Cim.* 8.5–6; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 47.16–17; see comment on Acts 2:29).

748. Spencer, *Acts*, 79. The earlier centrality of Shechem during Israel’s era of the judges, postulated by Alt and Noth, may be historically improbable (see Cross, “Tabernacle”).

749. See Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 41.

750. Johnson, *Acts*, 119. Bede displays almost modern historical sense at this point: although one cannot be certain, it may be that Stephen conflated material, concentrating “less on the arrangement of the historical details than on the point with which he was concerned” (*Comm. Acts* 7.16 [Martin, *Acts*, 77; see also L. Martin, 72]). But Bede also thinks that Stephen may have accommodated “popular opinion” (L. Martin, 72).

751. Bruce, *Acts*, 165–66.

752. Le Cornu and Shulam, *Acts*, xxxvi, suggest that Luke simply accurately reports Stephen’s mistake. But Luke lacked a verbatim transcript, and had he had one and expected readers to catch the mistake, he probably would have corrected it (cf. how Luke 3:4–6 and Matt 3:3 avoid the problem in Mark 1:2–3).

in his own memory? Certainly, it does not appear that Luke had a Genesis scroll in front of him while writing the chapter; he was working from memory and may have made other such slips (such as Theudas in Acts 5:36–37; many also think Quirinius in Luke 2:2).⁷⁵³

Nevertheless, writers normally took such large narrative works through several stages of revision, and if the book were orally performed, Luke or other biblically literate hearers should have caught the mistake, just as subsequent readers have. Luke's audience may not have known much about Theudas or Quirinius, but they apparently knew biblical narrative. The generally accepted text of Acts may not be in the final form Luke would have desired, but neither is it the roughest first draft, as its symmetry in length with the Gospel of Luke indicates.

Possibly, then, Luke is making a deliberate conflation to tie the accounts together. (Ancients could employ such deliberate conflation as a midrashic technique.)⁷⁵⁴ Why might he do this? He could allude to Abraham's purchase of a burial site as a prototype of the care later to be expended, since all of Gen 23 is devoted to the negotiations. This explanation, however, lacks much explanatory power by itself. More likely, he is alluding to the multiple burials of the patriarchs; Jacob is among those buried in Acts 7:16, and Jacob was buried in the field Abraham bought from Ephron (Gen 50:13).⁷⁵⁵ But the conflation allows Luke to stress the Samaritan connection (below). If the conflation is not deliberate on Luke's part, it could represent the obscurity obtained from abbreviating a source, but this suggestion encounters the same objection from revisions as above. The burials of Jacob and Joseph are plainly conflated here; whether the conflation is deliberate (as seems to me somewhat more likely) or inadvertent (as is probably more commonly held) is not certain.

Scholars often point out a Samaritan connection here.⁷⁵⁶ Shechem was a Samaritan city, prominent in the early Hellenistic and later Roman periods⁷⁵⁷ and central in Samaritan thought;⁷⁵⁸ Luke may be indicating that Stephen's universal thinking included the Samaritans (cf. Acts 1:8), which helps prepare the way for the Samaritan ministry in 8:5–25 (and fits a larger pattern of embracing Samaritans that is also revealed in Luke 9:51–56; 10:25–37; 17:11–17). Shechem was now called by a different name (Jos. *War* 4.449)⁷⁵⁹ but in Jewish tradition was known by its biblical title. Shechem was known to be close to Gerizim (Judg 9:7), so that Judeans were strongly anti-Shechemite.⁷⁶⁰ Because the proper site for the temple was the primary divisive issue

753. Qumran Decalogue texts (4QPhyl G, 8QPhyl Group III, and 4Qmez A—i.e., 4Q134, 8Q3, and 4Q149) could conflate Exod 20 (the dominant source) with Deut 5, possibly mixing sources in their memory (Himbaza, "Décalogue").

754. Cf. blending of texts in 4Q266, 270 (note Baumgarten, "Citation"); see further Keener, *Matthew*, 657; Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 138, 150. It could be used as a means of haggadic exegesis, though it might also reflect the confusion of distant tradition (cf. perhaps the depiction of Moses like Jacob in Qur'an 28.27).

755. Deliberate conflation is one way to surface the message of more material in limited space. It still characterizes summaries and ordinary speech and popular (as opposed to academic) accounts (writers who try to precisely qualify all matters end up with multivolume works). Ancient rhetoric valued topical arrangement and recombinations of material, a practice that affected ancient biographies; that was less the case with elite historiography dependent on annals for chronology.

756. E.g., Spencer, *Acts*, 75–78, 81; C. Williams, *Acts*, 105; Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 41; Witherington, *Acts*, 268.

757. See Seger, "Shechem," 23 (though it was apparently rebuilt only in Vespasian's day); comment on Acts 8:5.

758. In later tradition (the Samaritan Chronicle *Tolidah*), part of the original Torah scroll remained in Shechem (Bowman, *Documents*, 48).

759. Vespasian refounded it as Flavia Neapolis (ca. 72 C.E.), today called Nablus (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 166).

760. Spencer, *Acts*, 73, citing Sir 50:25–26; *Test. Levi* 7:2; Jos. *Ant.* 11.340–41; also citing (78–79) Jewish interpretations of Shechem material in Gen 34, in *Jub.* 30; Jos. *Ant.* 1.337–40.

between Jews and Samaritans in this period⁷⁶¹ and the centrality of the temple is at issue in Acts 7, the Samaritan connection makes good sense here.

Could Luke’s ideal audience have known enough about Samaria to have picked up on this connection? It is uncertain; nevertheless, it is possible that Luke hoped that they were biblically informed enough to recognize that Shechem was a city in the region controlled by Samaria (1 Kgs 12:25; 16:24; Jer 41:5). If so, he probably would have expected this ideal core audience to recognize that Stephen’s audience would have reacted negatively. Indeed, the tradition of burial near Hebron may have been formulated partly against the alternative Samaritan location.

d. Moses the Rejected Deliverer (7:17–28)

The connections this speech draws between various characters are highly selective, considering the breadth of narrative connections in the original cycles of stories. The Joseph and Moses stories introducing the book of the covenant were probably connected orally from an early period and show numerous parallels and contrasts (see more extended comment on Acts 7:9–16). The original writers or storytellers provided a variety of other narrative connections as well (see, e.g., comment on Acts 7:19, 21), few of which this speech takes space to exploit.

I. INTRODUCTION

Scholars have drawn connections between the description of Moses here and Luke’s depiction of Jesus elsewhere. Such a comparison should be expected, since Stephen views Jesus as the “prophet like Moses” predicted in Acts 7:37 (and 3:22), one who is rejected like Moses and the entire prophetic tradition (7:52). One useful list of comparisons is provided by Zehnle:⁷⁶²

Moses in Acts 7	Jesus in Luke-Acts
“Powerful in words and works” (7:22)	“Powerful in words and works” (Luke 24:19)
Instructed in wisdom (7:22)	Instructed in wisdom (Luke 2:40, 52)
They did not understand his mission (7:25); they denied him (7:35); words were rejected (7:39–43)	Jesus was denied (cf. Acts 3:14, 17, 26)
Sees theophany; leader and liberator (7:35)	Cf. the theophany in Luke 3:21; * Jesus as leader (Acts 3:15)
Ascends on Mount Sinai (7:38)†	Jesus ascends (Acts 2:33)

* The language is not exclusively visionary, however, as in Mark 1:10 (cf. Matt 3:16).

† The ascent element is not explicit here, though it may be assumed (see comment on Acts 2:33).

Because Stephen was accused of speaking against “Moses” and his law, the speech gives special and extended attention to Moses—as a witness for Stephen’s defense (cf. John 5:39, 45–47).⁷⁶³

Advocates of the Samaritan thesis here could be encouraged that Moses’s role was particularly prominent in Samaritan thought: he was next to God, sometimes even viewed as preexistent, though this appears only in late materials.⁷⁶⁴ But Moses was also prominent in Jewish thought (see comment on Acts 3:22), more than enough

761. Spencer, *Acts*, 73–75; Keener, *John*, 612–13. See, e.g., 4Q371 1 + 8 + 11; 4Q372 1 10–14, esp. 11–12; *Jos. Ant.* 13.74–79; 18.30; *y. ’Abod. Zar.* 5:4, §3; *Gen. Rab.* 32:10; 81:3; *Deut. Rab.* 3:6; *Song Rab.* 4:4, §5.

762. Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 77 (slightly adapted). For others, see, e.g., Lampe, “Lucan Portrait of Christ,” 169; Marguerat, *Actes*, 235, 237, 247, 252; most fully (on Matthew) Allison, *Moses*, 98–100. Pauline typology focuses on the creation narratives and the exodus story (Ellis, “New Testament Uses Old,” 211).

763. Cf. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 44.

764. See MacDonald, *Samaritans*, 147–222, esp. 162ff.; the *Memar Marqah* in Bowman, *Documents*, 253; Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 59. A liturgical prayer that God turn from wrath “for Moses’ sake” (Bowman, *Documents*, 335) expresses a sentiment that is not uniquely Samaritan.

to warrant the attention here.⁷⁶⁵ For the rabbis, Moses was by far the greatest of ancient heroes.⁷⁶⁶ Some sources may treat him as almost divine.⁷⁶⁷ The angel of death could not take Moses, requiring God to do it himself.⁷⁶⁸ Later rabbis viewed Moses as a mediator between God and his royal children (*Pesiq. Rab.* 6:2, purportedly Tannaitic tradition).⁷⁶⁹

Despite his emphasis on Moses and occasional use of postbiblical tradition, Stephen's mission (and perhaps Luke's space constraints) help keep him closer to the biblical text than the novelistic expansions of Moses tradition common in his day (see esp. comment on Acts 7:20, 22). Philo conformed Moses to fit philosophical ideals for sages, at points running roughshod over the biblical portrait to do so.⁷⁷⁰ The pictures of Moses in Josephus and Artapanus also include novelistic features to conform to Hellenistic conventions.⁷⁷¹ Moses was so celebrated in Judaism that Greek and Roman sources often mention him in connection with Israel, whether as a wise lawgiver, a subversive lawgiver, or a magician.⁷⁷² Some of the latter negative portrayals of Moses may indeed have invited the heavy apologetic retelling of his life in early Jewish sources.

II. GROWING IN EGYPT (7:17–18)

The term “promise” does not appear in Genesis LXX, though the idea it represents is a dominant theme there (focusing on land and seed).⁷⁷³ But aside from Luke's use for the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39), in Luke it can refer to the entire prophetic thread of promise, including David (Acts 13:23, 32–33), and especially concerning the resurrection (26:6). These other references are Pauline, and Paul historically made considerable use of the “promise” motif (twenty-five examples in the Pauline corpus), particularly the promise to Abraham in Romans and Galatians.

In 7:17 the “promise” refers to Gen 15:13–16, in which Abraham's seed would possess the land at a specified time; but connected with other singular uses in Acts, it may connote also the entire promise motif of God to Abraham and his descendants, including the later Davidic promise and consequent hope for Israel's restoration.⁷⁷⁴

The time (χρόνος) drawing near may be suggestive of a pattern for God's appointed time for the fulfillment of the promises in Jesus (cf. Acts 1:7; 3:21; Gal 4:4), but

765. Derda, “Moses,” argues that Christians but not Greco-Roman Egyptian Jews named their children Moses; Williams, “Moses,” provides some evidence; Derda, “Reply,” counters that this evidence is insufficient. Williams, “Case,” attests the name widely in the Diaspora outside Egypt.

766. Explicit in *m. Soṭah* 1:9; *Mek. Shir.* 9.34–37 (Lauterbach, 2:69).

767. Fletcher-Louis, “4Q374,” argues that 4Q374 presents Moses's glorification as deification, and uses this as background for Jesus. But early Judaism offers much more diverse potential “deity” parallels.”

768. *Sipre Deut.* 305.3.3; *Abot R. Nat.* 12 A; 25, §51 B. This reflects the same sort of idea of a hero resisting death found in *Test. Ab.* 15–20 A.

769. For Moses as both king and priest, cf. Deut 33:5; Philo *Mos.* 1.334; 2.2–7, 187, 292; *Rewards* 53; Tiede, *Figure*, 127.

770. Petit, “Traversée exemplaire” (on Philo's *Hypothetica*, and comparing similar practices in Artapanus, Josephus, and Ezekiel the Tragedian); Van Veldhuizen, “Model of Philanthropia” (emphasizing Stoic *apatheia*). Cf. also Philo's portrait of Moses as commander-in-chief (Canevet, “Remarques sur l'utilisation”).

771. Silver, “Moses and Birds” (on *Jos. Ant.* 2.243–53; Artapanus in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27).

772. See the sources collected in Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 55–63.

773. One might find the idea in Gen 18:19; 21:1; and 28:15, but Luke's terminology surfaces only in later parts of the LXX, especially the Apocrypha (e.g., 1 Esd 1:7; 1 Macc 10:15; 11:28; 2 Macc 2:18; 4:8, 27, 45; 3 Macc 1:4; 4 Macc 12:9; Wis 2:13; Sir 20:23; *Pss. Sol.* 7:10; 12:6; 17:5). The language was appropriate for first-century sources (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 1.236).

774. Kaiser, *Theology*, passim; idem, “Centre”; Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*, 115–17, and sources cited there (esp. Westermann, “Promise”; Zimmerli, “Promise”; Rad, “Verheissung”; Murphy, “Relationship”; idem, “Understanding”; though Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*, 98–99, responds that no single theme can unify OT theology). Some see Acts 7:17 as allowing a future fulfillment (Kilgallen, *Speech*, 64), but future fulfillment need not rule out partial fulfillment in that era.

one should note that Luke omits the quote in Mark 1:15 (καίρός; cf. Matt 21:34), using such language only for the eschaton (cf. Luke 21:8). Still, just as a salvific time approached (using ἡγγιζεν) in Moses's era, so the "kingdom" (Luke 10:9, 11) and divine redemption (21:28; cf. 21:20) were now approaching.

"Grew and multiplied" refers to Exod 1:7 LXX.⁷⁷⁵ Exactly the same phrase (nowhere else alluded to in the NT corpus, except perhaps 2 Cor 9:10; Col 1:10) appears in two of the summaries in Acts (Acts 6:7; 12:24), suggesting that Luke saw the pentateuchal expansion of God's people as a pattern for the expansion of God's message among people in Luke's own time. Historically, strong evidence indicates many Semites in Egypt, including Semitic slaves who are especially well documented in the Rameside era.⁷⁷⁶ Semites like the Israelites probably flourished under the Asian Hyksos,⁷⁷⁷ although individual Semites (such as Moses) are also attested in high positions under later dynasties.⁷⁷⁸ Phenomenal growth of Israel in Egypt is plausible, though scholars usually question the more exact biblical estimates, on the basis of projected birth rate, spatial calculations, or—much more important here—economic and other data.⁷⁷⁹ (That the term translated "thousands" may also mean military "units" may alleviate the problem slightly.)⁷⁸⁰ Luke's audience, of course, simply assumed the reliability of the biblical claims.⁷⁸¹

In 7:18, the speech quotes Exod 1:8 LXX (appropriate, after Exod 1:7) almost exactly. The pharaoh originally described may have been Seti I (1308–1290)⁷⁸² or perhaps Ramses II,⁷⁸³ though scholarly consensus on the date of the exodus is elusive (probably more so today than half a century ago); neither Stephen nor his hearers would have had access to the pharaoh's name. The Exodus narrative does name the

775. It appears also as a motif of Adamic creation (Gen 1:22, 28), Noahic renewal after the flood (8:17; 9:1, 7), and with reference to Ishmael (17:20) and Jacob (28:3; 35:11; 48:4) and is fulfilled in Israel (47:27; Lev 26:9).

776. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 52–76, 112–16; cf. Colless, "Inscriptions"; Albright, *Biblical Period*, 12–13; Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 146; sources in Smith, *Education*, 233; cf. "Earliest Alphabet." For evidence of "Israel" in Egypt, see Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 107–34, noting that New Kingdom texts deliberately omit names of Pharaoh's enemies (111) and that the list of sites, while perhaps containing editorial additions, including early elements (e.g., Ramses), thus would be unintelligible after 1100 B.C.E. (117–22). Canaanites had ties with Egyptian mines (Amiran, "Centre"), perhaps related to Semitic slaves there.

777. For relevant information regarding the Hyksos here, see, e.g., ANET 230–34; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.75–91; Bright, *History*, 59–61, 108–9; Albright, *Biblical Period*, 10–11; idem, *Yahweh*, 57; idem, *Stone Age*, 152; Wright, *Archaeology*, 58; Kenyon, *Archaeology*, 182; Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 99; cf. Bietak, "Problems."

778. E.g., Kitchen, *World*, 74; Pfeiffer, *Tell el Amarna*, 70.

779. Bright, *History*, 134 (including n. 69). Some of Bright's spatial calculations seem to assume that the Israelites traveled in single file, when in fact the more probable arrangement reduces spatial problems. Crossing the sea in one night is more difficult (if they were about a hundred abreast, one would need eleven hours if each new row entered at two-second intervals). The generational multiplication is not impossible (cf. the Druse for an equivalent doubling rate; Faiman, "Hebrews"); moreover, in sixteen generations (at twenty-five years each) with seven or eight surviving children to the average family (starting with not only Jacob's "seventy" immediate family members but servants and the tribe), one could reach the biblical numbers easily, especially if the "mixed multitude" is reckoned in tribal numbers. Nevertheless, these are not the primary problems with the numbers. Impact on the Egyptian economy and other factors appear more difficult.

780. See Wenham, "Numbers."

781. Though some Egyptians (e.g., Manetho and Apion) had, naturally, challenged the Israelite version. On Manetho's early Hellenistic, anti-Jewish version of lepers driven from Egypt, see Raspe, "Manetho on Exodus"; cf. the Egyptian version in Diod. Sic. 1.28.2; Tac. *Hist.* 5.3. On the conflict between pagan polemic and Jewish apologetic regarding Moses, see Moro, "Mosè"

782. E.g., Strawn, "Pharaoh," 634. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 375, notes that Seti began construction projects in the Nile Delta region and Ramses continued them (see also John A. Wilson, ANET 252). For Egyptian elements in Exod 2:1–10, see, e.g., Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 138–40; Sarna, *Exodus*, 27–37. For possible Egyptian roots of Moses's name, see Thissen, "Namen."

783. E.g., Sarna, *Exodus*, 10.

midwives, presumably implying that they are more significant to God's plan than is Pharaoh.⁷⁸⁴

III. EXPOSING INFANTS (7:19)

The term ἔκθετος, as here, and the term ἐκτίθημι, as in Acts 7:21, often were used for “exposing” infants.⁷⁸⁵ This image would have been very familiar to Luke's audience. Against the teaching of its prophets,⁷⁸⁶ ancient Israelites were sometimes tempted by surrounding cultures' customs of child sacrifice.⁷⁸⁷ This was not a Greco-Roman custom,⁷⁸⁸ although Phoenician cities apparently retained vestiges of the practice during the Greco-Roman period.⁷⁸⁹ Discarding children was, however, a common practice among cultural Greeks.

Population decline in Hellenistic Greece may have stemmed from child exposure.⁷⁹⁰ The practice is well attested,⁷⁹¹ though it was most common for children with defects⁷⁹² (which Roman law viewed as evil omens);⁷⁹³ probably, those deemed illegitimate were also often exposed.⁷⁹⁴ Public interest in malformed and disabled infants rested in their value for omens, but in private law, the father officially decided their fate.⁷⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the oft-repeated claim that the father had to lift a child from the ground

784. With Sarna, *Exodus*, 25.

785. See, e.g., Wis 18:5; Richard, *Composition*, 335n200, cites Hdt. 1.112; Diod. Sic. 3.56; Lucian *Sacr. 5*; Philo *Mos.* 1.10–12 (most of these and others also appear in BDAG); also see Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.110, 115–17; *Virt.* 131. The semantic range of the verb is broader, but in context of infant exposure, the term carries especially this sense. For the adjective BDAG cites Manetho *Apot.* 6.52.

786. E.g., Lev 18:21; 20:2–5; 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 32:35; Ezek 16:21; cf. Wis 12:5–6; 14:23; L.A.B. 4:16; Bodoff, “Tragedy.”

787. E.g., 2 Kgs 17:31; 2 Chr 28:3.

788. Greeks and Romans abhorred human sacrifice (Ovid *Tristia* 4.4.81–82; *Fasti* 3.339–42; 5.621–32; Sil. It. 4.791; Plut. *Cic.* 10.3; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.7), recognizing it as a custom of other peoples (e.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 2.5.11; Lycophron *Alex.* 229; Cic. *Resp.* 3.9.15; Arrian *Alex.* 1.5.7 [children]; Lucian *Sacr.* 13; *Dial. G.* 274 [3/23, Apollo and Dionysus 1]) or the wicked (Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.14.117; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 2.13); Rome suppressed it elsewhere (Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 169; cf. Tert. *Apol.* 9.2). Exceptions appear mainly (but cf. Plut. *Themist.* 13.2–3; Suet. *Aug.* 15) in stories about earlier times (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 23.175–76; Sen. *Y. Troj.* 360–70; Plut. *Par. St.* 35; *Mor.* 314CD); for Iphigeneia (besides sources above), see, e.g., Aeschylus *Ag.* 205–26; *Soph. El.* 530–45; Eurip. *Iph. Aul.* 1592–95; *Cypria* 8; some scholars compare Iphigeneia with Isaac (Gordon, *Civilizations*, 290; Tucker, “Sins”; Prestel, “Erprobung”; if anything, it should be a contrast). Earlier, e.g., Rundin, “Poza Moro”; Ritner, *Mechanics*, 162–63; Mitchell, “Archaeology,” 185; Glueck, *Rivers*, 61; Albright, *Biblical Period*, 17; Albright, *Yahweh*, 152; in some other traditional cultures, e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 235 (children), 241; Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 13.

789. Cf. the nearly one hundred infant skeletons found in Roman-Byzantine sewers (Stager, “Eroticism at Ashkelon”). Lucian *Syr. G.* 58 accuses Syrians of killing their children like oxen. Judean rabbis also thought that pagans practiced infanticide (Sipre *Deut.* 81.4.1–2).

790. Sallares, “Infanticide” (citing Polyb. 36.17). Wiesehöfer, “Exposure,” 224–25, doubts that this was deliberate population control.

791. E.g., Polyb. 36.17; Paus. 2.26.4; Harris, “Infanticide” (against D. Engel); Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 19, 23 (noting, e.g., Pliny *Panegy.* 26.5); Rawson, “Children,” 172.

792. Wiesehöfer, “Exposure,” 224 (citing Plut. *Lyc.* 16; Plato *Rep.* 5.460C; Arist. *Pol.* 1335b; Soranus *Gynec.* 2.6). Aristotle in *Pol.* 7.14.10, 1335b may be expressing his own view only, but it is that all deformed infants should be exposed if possible. Some other traditional societies withhold ceremonies at a “deformed” person's death (Mbiti, *Religions*, 202).

793. Wiesehöfer, “Exposure,” 224 (citing Lex 12 tab. 4.1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 2.15.2; Cic. *Leg.* 3.19; Sen. *Y. Ira* 1.15.2; Livy 27.37.5–6); see also Sen. *E. Controv.* 10.4.16. This is not to argue that all ancients abhorred all malformed infants (see Edwards, “Deformity”); only some were discarded (Libero, “Disability,” 535). During the republic, seriously deformed babies were killed (Boer, *Morality*, 98–99, 113, 116, noting that they were typically burned; in some other societies, see Dawson, “Urbanization,” 324), but this practice is not so well attested during the empire (Libero, “Disability,” 535, apparently doubting its occurrence; cf. Pliny *E.N.H.* 7.3.34).

794. Wiesehöfer, “Exposure,” 224; e.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 2.7.4.

795. Allély, “Enfants malformés”; on the father's right (“until the late fourth century”), see Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 136. Rearing children was a choice of love; Dio Chrys. *frag.* 9 (Stob. *Flor.* 4, 28.13 [Hense, 679]; 85.13 [Meineke]); Crosby in *Dio Chrysostom*, LCL, 5:350–51.

and recognize it as part of the family before it became such does not appear in the ancient sources.⁷⁹⁶

More commonly, infants were abandoned. The head of a family had to manage costs for the family, and in relatively poor families this sometimes led to tragic decisions. The problem persisted even in Augustine's time: "Sometimes when parents have begotten one, two, or three children, they fear to give birth to any more lest they reduce the others to beggary."⁷⁹⁷ Some estimate that as many as 10 percent of infants were either exposed or (less often) directly killed.⁷⁹⁸

Although mothers could attempt to abort before birth, after birth the decision whether to keep the child rested more formally with the father.⁷⁹⁹ Although the father normally decided the child's fate, there were limitations in some regions.⁸⁰⁰ Early Roman law prohibited abandoning sons (unless they were disabled) and first daughters.⁸⁰¹

Midwives might have to decide which children were too sickly to be worth rearing.⁸⁰² In depicting denizens of the underworld, Lucian includes abandoned babies who died.⁸⁰³ Astrologers suggested that astrological conditions determined which babies were salvaged and which perished.⁸⁰⁴ Exposing babies became illegal only in 374 C.E.⁸⁰⁵

Because traditional societies often prefer boys, many scholars assume that females were exposed more often.⁸⁰⁶ Some who deny this assumption appeal to parental love for children and high infant mortality rates,⁸⁰⁷ doubting that the cost of the dowry would prove a deterrent.⁸⁰⁸ Often they also protest that this practice would have reduced the women available for marriage and hence caused population decline;⁸⁰⁹

796. Shaw, "Raising." For an example of the more traditional view (which I also once shared), see Stamps, "Children," 197–98.

797. Aug. *Serm.* 57.2, as quoted in Toner, *Culture*, 17. (On 67, however, Toner estimates that "each woman would need to produce five or six live births" to prevent population decline.)

798. Toner, *Culture*, 47.

799. Gardner, *Women*, 6, 154–55; on the father's authority, see also Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 95; cf. Quint. *Decl.* 306 intro. The mothers seem more hostile to such a decision, but the father holds the final say unless the mother acts behind his back (Diod. Sic. 19.2.3–5; Ovid *Metam.* 9.704–13; *Her.* 11.83–128); Quint. *Decl.* 306.4 appears to assume that a mother would not do this unless her husband ordered her; in 306.32, she is said to have honorably obeyed. In infancy the child would be better known to its nurse than to its father (Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 99.14).

800. For different customs regarding infanticide among various peoples, see Sext. *Emp. Pыр.* 3.211.

801. Cary and Haerhoff, *Life*, 143–44.

802. Soranus *Gynec.* 2.5.9; 2.6.10.

803. Lucian *Downward Journey* 5.

804. Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 3.9.126.

805. Gardner, *Women*, 6. In Rawson, "Children," 172, exposed infants were deemed free fully only under Justinian (*Cod.* 8.51).

806. E.g., Dunand, *Religion en Égypte*, 116–17 (noting boys' usefulness for work); Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 227–28 (even suggesting that men often outnumbered women two to one); for slaves, Osiek, "Female Slaves," 260–61.

807. On high infant mortality, see also, e.g., *Eccl. Rab.* 11:6, §1; Plut. *Consol., Mor.* 608C, 609D, 611D; *CJ* passim, e.g., 1:308, §399; Stamps, "Children," 198; Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Gospels*, 41; Kloner and Eisenberg, "M'rt"; Sussman, "Cave"; Zias, "Remains from 'Caiaphas' Tomb"; Dunand, *Religion en Égypte*, 114; Wiesehöfer, "Mortality," 214; Tropper, "Children"; esp. data in Lewis, *Life*, 54 (in more recent traditional societies, see, e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 153). Toner, *Culture*, 67, estimates 30 percent infant mortality, more than three times the figure for the West today. Our epigraphic data may be skewed in that inscriptions tend to report most often the ages of those who died especially young or old (Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 230), but skeletal remains even in some elite tombs suggest that often fewer than half reached adulthood (Evans, *World*, 111).

808. Ingalls, "Demography." Whether influencing infanticide or not, providing dowries did trouble fathers (e.g., Plut. *Arist.* 1.1; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.39; cf. Pliny *Ep.* 6.32.2). On parental love and high infant mortality, see, e.g., Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 138–39. Some preferred detachment to suffering from the loss of young children (cf. Val. Max. 2.6.16; Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 99.2; Dixon, *Roman Mothers*, 113). At least in (prosperous) Corinth, a higher number received burials than is often thought (Walbank, "Graves," 271).

809. E.g., Engels, "Infanticide"; cf. idem, "Demography"; Wiesehöfer, "Exposure," 224.

given the disparity in marital ages of men and women,⁸¹⁰ however, this scenario is likely (the Greek population did decline at times in some cities).⁸¹¹ Scholars often cite a papyrus in which a husband instructs his wife to discard the baby if it is a girl (P.Oxy. 744.9–10), although we lack many such explicit claims.⁸¹² In an earlier story, a poor husband told his wife to kill the baby if it was a girl, because they did not have the money to raise her.⁸¹³

Census documents from Egypt's nomes speak most eloquently to the question. Although we lack evidence for a serious gender disparity among Romans,⁸¹⁴ the story seems different among Greeks. While infants of both genders were sometimes discarded, females must have been discarded more often. Suggesting that metropolites in Egypt followed the Greek custom, Naphtali Lewis observes, "In only two of the dozens of extant census declarations does a metropolitan family have more daughters than sons (and then only one and two more, respectively)."⁸¹⁵ It is possible that the evidence is skewed, but the conjunction of various lines of evidence suggests that girls were abandoned more often than boys. This does not suggest, however, that all exposed infants died.

A large proportion of the abandoned babies must have died (Lucian *Downward Journey* 5), but this was not the case for all of them. That children were abandoned most often in places such as dung heaps and shrines suggests that parents often hoped the children would survive.⁸¹⁶ Babies who were not taken up ended up as food for vultures and dogs,⁸¹⁷ but abandoned children often ended up as slaves.⁸¹⁸ The female slaves were commonly turned into prostitutes.⁸¹⁹ It was easier for poor persons to bring up a slave they found than to buy one.⁸²⁰ Foundlings who could later prove their free birth would go free without having to pay the cost of manumission,⁸²¹ but it is not likely that most acquired such proof to the satisfaction of those who profited more from their slavery. A father who identified his exposed

810. See comment on Acts 6:1.

811. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 143; see also Sallares, "Infanticide," noted above.

812. The point about gender remains the same even if (as West, "Baby," argues) the husband is not referring to his wife's baby.

813. Ovid *Metam.* 9.669–84, 704–6 (in the story, she raises the girl as a boy, deceiving the father).

814. Rawson, "Family," 18. Of course, the loss of more men during wars and political intrigues could have compensated for a small preference for female exposure, but during most of the early empire, only a relatively small one.

815. Lewis, *Life*, 54–55. More selectively, Tarn, *Civilisation*, 101, notes fourth-century B.C.E. Athenian data with 87 sons to 44 daughters, and 118 sons and 28 daughters in 79 families in a record from Miletus of ca. 228–220 B.C.E. Another source from ca. 200 B.C.E. lists twenty-five males to seven females; out of six hundred families listed in inscriptions from second-century B.C.E. Delphi, only 1 percent "reared 2 daughters" (yet only fifty-seven, about 10 percent, show more than one son either). But possibly some sources considered it less necessary to list all the females?

816. Wiesehöfer, "Exposure," 225. Juv. *Sat.* 6.602–9 also notes that many of those exposed were adopted; yet Quint. *Decl.* 306.22 is probably correct (despite its rhetorical purpose) that most exposed babies died. The charge that infants were sometimes killed directly instead of exposed (Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.114–15) is harder to substantiate, at least as an accepted practice (on Roman sources, Gardner, *Women*, 155) except perhaps, at times, for deformed infants (Boer, *Morality*, 98–99, 113, 116).

817. Ovid *Her.* 11.83–84; Ps.-Phoc. 185. Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.4.21 lists predators, but also cold and starvation, as threats.

818. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 138, think that the majority ended up as slaves. Some ancients reacted viscerally to the idea of such children being abused (Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.4.intro.) whereas others countered that this was better than their having died as infants from exposure (10.4.17).

819. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 140.

820. Dunand, *Religion en Égypte*, 116–17.

821. Pliny *Ep.* 10.65.1; 10.66.2. Discovering free background is common in ancient comedy and novels (Longus 4, esp. 4.36; cf. Menander *Epitrepontes* 294–305), especially in the plays of Terence (*Self-Tormentor*; *Eunuch*; *Lady of Andros*; *Lady of Perinthos*).

child could reclaim the child afterward if he repaid the expenses of whoever had raised the child.⁸²²

Some ancients disapproved of abandoning babies. Thus a Stoic philosopher noted that some people did not want to raise many children because they were poor;⁸²³ but the little birds are poorer, yet they feed their young, and so people can do the same.⁸²⁴ Likewise, Egyptian law opposed discarding babies;⁸²⁵ when metropolitans, following Greek practice, discarded the infants along with their garbage, local Egyptians often raised the children.⁸²⁶ The Roman tax system penalized Egyptians for adopting them, however, and so they usually raised them as slaves.⁸²⁷ Germans were also noteworthy for not destroying their children (Tac. *Germ.* 19).

Jewish people were aware of the Gentile practice of disposing of unwanted babies, including in pagan myth (a euhemeristic version appears in *Sib. Or.* 3.130–55). Although some scholars have provocatively defended the view that Jews participated in the abandonment of babies, the evidence suggests that the vast majority of Jews rejected this practice.⁸²⁸ Josephus notes that the law requires Jews to raise their children,⁸²⁹ and our other Jewish sources clearly oppose exposure.⁸³⁰ Many Gentiles were likewise aware of Jewish opposition to this practice.⁸³¹ The condemnation appears in Philo (*Spec. Laws* 3.110–19) and among later Christian writers (Tert. *Apol.* 9.6–7; *Nat.* 1.15).⁸³²

The opposition to abandoning babies extended, in early Jewish understanding, to opposing abortion,⁸³³ although views on when life began varied as widely then as in modern debates.⁸³⁴ (That born children could be discarded does suggest that most Greeks and Romans drew the line differently than most people do today.)⁸³⁵ Whereas women sometimes sought abortive agents in the Greek and

822. Sen. E. *Controv.* 9.3.intro.; 10.4.6; Quint. *Inst.* 7.1.14; cf. Quint. *Decl.* 376 intro. M. Winterbottom's note to *Controv.* 9.3.intro. (LCL, 2:264n3) observes that this is not Greek practice but may be Roman (citing Quint. *Inst.* 7.1.14; 9.2.89).

823. Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 98.18–19; cf. also Plut. *On Affection for Offspring, Mor.* 497E (Sherk, *Empire*, §188, p. 245). Even a rich family might expose a child, however, if it felt it already had too many (Longus 4.24). So also those that thought themselves poor (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 47, where Quintus Hortensius chooses to have four children despite limited means).

824. Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 98.20–27. Hierocles *On Marriage* (Stobaeus *Anth.* 4.75.14) favored raising “all or at least most” babies (trans. Ramelli and Konstan).

825. Diod. Sic. 1.80.3 says that this was to enlarge the Egyptian population.

826. Lewis, *Life*, 54. Many inscriptions, especially in Roman Africa, attest to exposed children raised as foster children (e.g., *ILS* 1486, from Carthage, in Sherk, *Empire*, §188, p. 245 E). On foster children, cf., e.g., the study on one in Bernstein, “Puer.”

827. Lewis, *Life*, 58; see *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* 41 §92 (*BGU* 1210, in Sherk, *Empire*, §188, p. 245 D).

828. Schwartz, “Infant Exposure.” Breiner, “Abuse Patterns,” argues that ancient China and especially ancient Israel abused children less (including infanticide) than did ancient Greece and Rome.

829. Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.202 (including forbidding abortion).

830. E.g., Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.115–16; *Virt.* 131; *Sib. Or.* 3.765–66; Ps.-Phoc. 184–85; in the rabbis, see Safrai, “Home,” 750 (citing *m. Makš.* 2:7 and *t. Makš.* 1:8).

831. Diod. Sic. 40.3.8; Tac. *Hist.* 5.5.

832. Wiesehöfer, “Exposure,” 225; also *Diogn.* 5.6.

833. Perhaps there was no widespread use of contraception and abortion to limit children among poorer Romans (Frier, “Fertility”), but it appears often in ancient sources (Gorman, *Abortion*, 14–15). For some supposed abortive agents, see, e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 20.52.146.

834. For the debate, Theon *Progymn.* 2.96–99. Simshäuser, “Behandlung,” argues that despite legal prohibitions, the view that the embryo constituted a distinct life dates from the late second century (Simshäuser, “Behandlung”). But it becomes alive apparently soon after the womb receives semen in Soranus *Gynec.* 1.8.33; 1.10.36; 1.12.43; Iamblichus *Soul* 381.31 (VLC.1, pp. 58–59, in Finamore and Dillon) contrasts Hippocrates's view of life beginning at conception with Porphyry's view that it begins at birth. Among some peoples today, the child becomes fully human on the fourth day after birth (Mbiti, *Religions*, 156; but cf. elsewhere, 143–46). Greeks did not allow a woman to be executed during her pregnancy, to prevent the innocent suffering with the guilty (Diod. Sic. 1.77.9).

835. The person became legally protected only once the father accepted the child (Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 59), although this was not a claim that a distinct life began only at that moment.

Roman world,⁸³⁶ among the practice's vigorous opponents⁸³⁷ (in addition to many philosophers⁸³⁸ and physicians⁸³⁹) were early Jews⁸⁴⁰ and Christians,⁸⁴¹ who often called it murder.⁸⁴²

Abandonment was common in myths and legends,⁸⁴³ reflecting both the reality of and the popular fascination with the practice. The story line of the infant exposed but surviving to become a great leader was widely known,⁸⁴⁴ applied, for example, to Cyrus,⁸⁴⁵ Romulus and Remus,⁸⁴⁶ and, more tragically, to Oedipus⁸⁴⁷ and Paris.⁸⁴⁸ (In some stories, usually about the mythical past, animals nurtured the abandoned babies;⁸⁴⁹ stories of adoptive parents better mirrored social reality.)⁸⁵⁰ Jewish tradition also spoke of the ruler wanting to kill the babies because of prophecy of a deliverer,⁸⁵¹ a story line more widespread than in just Judea (in Roman historiog-

836. Cf., e.g., Char. *Char.* 2.9.3 (she decides against it, a decision that the narrator presents as virtuous). A range of purposes were associated with it: e.g., to prevent children being abused by tyranny (Sen. E. *Controv.* 2.5.2) or to prevent the exposure of adultery (Juv. *Sat.* 6.595–601, part of his misogynist satire), or prostitutes aborting formed fetuses a week (!) after conception (Hippocr. *Fleshes* 19, ¶1). Women sometimes died in the process (Suet. *Tib.* 22).

837. E.g., Klauck, *Context*, 66. Laws could oppose it as a form of poisoning (Paulus *Sent.* 5.23.14, 19, in Sherk, *Empire*, §161B, p. 206; Paulus *Dig.* 48.19.38.5, in Grant, *Paul*, 114; cf. Simshäuser, "Behandlung"; but contrast Gregor, "Abortigo"). Further on the usually hostile male attitude, see Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 94–95; Boer, *Morality*, 272–88; Grant, *Paul*, 112 (citing, e.g., SIG³ 985.21; Mus. Ruf. frg. 15, p. 96, Lutz; Plut. *Adv. K. Well* 22, *Mor.* 134F; *Rom.* 22.3; *Lyc.* 3.2; also Aul. Gel. 12.1.8–9; Ulp. *Dig.* 48.8.8).

838. E.g., Heracl. *Ep.* 7. Because they viewed procreation as marriage's purpose, later Stoics also condemned abortion (Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 96.18–19), though the early Stoic Chrysippus believed that the fetus received a fully human soul only at birth (Plut. *Stoic Cont.* 41, *Mor.* 1052EF).

839. E.g., Soranus *Gynec.* 1.2.4; see further Gorman, *Abortion*, 19–32, esp. 20. For diverse views (some modifying the original Hippocratic prohibition), see Soranus *Gynec.* 1.19.60. Most thinkers would not have objected to expulsives for a dead fetus (Pliny E. *N.H.* 26.90.154, 158, 161). Cf. the so-called *Hippocratic Oath* in Hippocrates (CMG 1.1.4, lines 16–17; Grant, *Paul*, 112).

840. Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.202; Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.108–18; *Hypoth.* 7.7; Ps.-Phoc. 184; cf. 4Q270 9 II, 15 (against slaughtering a pregnant animal). See further Safrai, "Home," 750; for concern with corpse defilement from abortions in Gentile homes, see *m. 'Ohal.* 18:7 as construed by deSilva, *Honor*, 286n6. Many Jewish teachers believed that killing a fetus also killed that one's descendants not yet conceived (*Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 4:10). For various views, cf. Gorman, *Abortion*, 33–45; Grisez, *Abortion*, 127–35; Bleich, "Abortion."

841. Grant, *Paul*, 113–14, cites *Did.* 2.2; *Barn.* 19.5; *Apost. Const.* 7.3.2; *Apoc. Pet.* 8 (Ethiopic), 26 (Greek); *Apoc. Paul* 40; Athenag. *Plea* 33.1–2; 35.6; Clem. Alex. *Instr.* 2.95.3; 2.96.1; *Prophetic Selections* 48.1–50.3; Tert. *Apol.* 9.8; *Exhortation to Chastity* 12.5; *On the Soul* 25.5. See further Gorman, *Abortion*; Lindemann, "Unborn Babe"; Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 52.

842. E.g., Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.202; *Did.* 2.2; Athenag. *Plea* 35.6; Tert. *Apol.* 9.8 (though believing that the life was still being formed). In *Sib. Or.* 2.281–82 (possibly a Christian interpolation), it merits eternal punishment.

843. See Oswald, "Exposure"; cf. Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.8; 2.7.4; 3.5.5, 7; 3.12.5. In novels, e.g., Longus 1.2, 5; Heliod. *Eth.* 2.31; in declamation practice, Quint. *Decl.* 338 intro; cf. the alleged ordeal among Celts in Libanius *Narration* 37.

844. In the ancient Near East, see "Sargon Legend," lines 1–10 (*ANET* 119); Gordon, *Near East*, 75; Sarna, *Exodus*, 29–31 (contrasting Sargon, 30). Child abandonment was widely attested, but Kitchen, *Reliability*, 296, notes that even birth legends do not make their heroes mythical (offering Sargon as a plain example).

845. Hdt. 1.107; Val. Max. 1.7.ext. 5.

846. E.g., Diod. Sic. 8.4.1; Appian *Hist. rom.* 1.1.2.

847. E.g., Soph. *Oed. tyr.* 717–19, 1022–34; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.7; Diod. Sic. 4.64.1; Androtion *Atthis* frg. 62.

848. E.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 3.12.5.

849. E.g., Ovid *Fasti* 2.415–16, 420; 3.53–54; Livy 1.4.6; Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.22.61; 15.20.77; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 64.23; Longus 1.2, 5, 16; Prop. *Eleg.* 4.1.55–56; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.1.553 (cf. also 2.1.554); cf. nymphs in Apollod. *Bib.* 1.1.7. For a nonmiraculous analogy, cf. Virg. *Aen.* 11.570–72. Cf. brief discussion in Keener, "Milk," 708.

850. Except when these turned fanciful, e.g., Mordecai nursing Esther (*Gen. Rab.* 30:8; *Tg. Rishon* on Esth 2:7), another man nursing (*b. Šabb.* 53b), or Sarah breastfeeding multitudes (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 22:1; *Gen. Rab.* 53:9).

851. See esp. Jos. *Ant.* 2.205–17, 234–36; widely noted (e.g., Crossan, "Moses"; Soares Prabhu, *Quotations*, 289–90; Overman, *Gospel and Judaism*, 77–78). In rabbinic tradition, astrologers foretold Moses's birth (*b. Sanh.* 101a; *Soṭah* 12b; *Exod. Rab.* on 1:22; noted by Allison, *Moses*, 145).

raphy, cf. attempted preventive action in response to the prediction of Augustus's birth in Suet. *Aug.* 94.3).

This verse alludes to an entire section of the exodus narrative, which it summarizes. That Pharaoh “outwitted” (κατασοφίζομαι can also mean “to conquer by trickery;” LSJ) clearly reflects Exod 1:10 and also appears in a summary of the same events in Jdt 5:11 (two of only three times the verb or cognates appear in the LXX, and only here in the NT).⁸⁵² It may stand in contrast to Moses's wisdom (Acts 7:22). That Pharaoh oppressed Israel's γένος, “race,” alludes to Exod 1:9 LXX; the term used here for Egypt's treating them harshly (κακόω) is from 1:11 LXX, referring to the Israelites' hard labor on building projects.

Pharaoh demanded that the people of Israel expose their infants⁸⁵³ “so they would not live” (alluding to casting boys into the Nile; ζωογονέω is from 1:22 LXX), in response to the fact that the midwives were allowing them to live (also ζωογονέω, 1:17–18 LXX). The term for “infant” appears in the LXX especially where Antiochus was killing Israel's babies (1 Macc 1:61; 2 Macc 6:10; 4 Macc 4:25; cf. the threat to babies' lives also in 3 Macc 5:49; the exception is Sir 19:11). Jewish revulsion against Gentile child abandonment and Antiochus's oppression would both transfer readily to Pharaoh in this narrative.

If this speech draws numerous connections between events in salvation history, it only follows a habit of the exodus narrative itself. Pharaoh's oppression of Israel set the stage for the events of the later Exodus narrative. Because most male babies were ultimately drowned in the Nile (Exod 1:22), God responded to Egypt in the next generation proportionately.⁸⁵⁴

1. The first plague turned the Nile to blood (Exod 7:17), in memory of the blood shed there.⁸⁵⁵
2. The last plague involved the death of Egypt's firstborn males, in response to the death of Israel's boys (Exod 12:29–30; cf. 4:22–23).⁸⁵⁶
3. God drowned Pharaoh's army in the sea (Exod 14:27–28; 15:1–21).⁸⁵⁷

Likewise, Moses was drawn from the water (Exod 2:10; hence his name, according to its Hebrew interpretation),⁸⁵⁸ as Israel would later be brought safely through the water (14:22).

852. Some early Christians extended their Christ-Moses comparison to Herod and Pharaoh (Matt 2:16–19; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 2.205–17, 234–36; Allison, *Moses*, 146); although Luke contrasts Augustus and Christ at the latter's birth, however (Luke 2:1, 14; see Danker, *Luke*, 6–7; idem, *New Age*, 24), he makes nothing of the Moses allusion in that connection.

853. Though the command is given to Pharaoh's people (both the MT and the LXX). The suggestion that Egypt's torment caused Israelites to want to “rescue” their children by killing them (cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 349) fits some slave settings (cf. Sterling, *Sisters*, 40, 57–58) but contradicts Jewish ethics. The Jewish tradition that they stopped intercourse (*L.A.B.* 9:2) till persuaded to do otherwise (*Exod. Rab.* 1:13) is not the same as killing born children; Luke's phrase can mean simply that Pharaoh badly treated them by making them expose their infants. Luke's audience would understand Pharaoh's initial dependence on Israel exposing their infants because childbirth normally happened in the home (Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 53), although Luke's audience was more familiar with individual slaves than with enslaved peoples living in their own communities (as in Exodus).

854. By contrast, a later tradition argues that Pharaoh drowned Israel's babies because his astrologers predicted that Israel's deliverer would suffer from water (but it would be the water of Meribah; *b. Sanh.* 101a).

855. Cf. also the reversal noted in Wis 11:5–7, supplying water to Israel.

856. In later haggadah, God's slaying the firstborn included Pharaoh himself and other adults (*Pesiq. Rab.* 17:5).

857. The last two of these points may be suggested in Wis 18:5.

858. The name is also Egyptian albeit not with the same meaning (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 140–42), amplifying the ingenuity of the wordplay.

IV. MOSES'S INFANCY (7:20)

Discussion of birth, nurture, and education (Acts 7:20–22) follows “the classic biographical triad” of Greek writers (as in 22:3).⁸⁵⁹ The term translated “nurtured” is not in Exodus LXX; it balances the influence of Jochebed with Pharaoh’s daughter, who “nurtures” Moses further in Acts 7:21 before his schooling in 7:22, as Paul was later “nurtured” in Jerusalem before his education with Gamaliel (22:3).⁸⁶⁰

That Moses was ἀστεῖος reflects Exod 2:2 LXX, where his mother hid him because of his beauty;⁸⁶¹ the only other use in the NT is in Heb 11:23, where *both* Moses’s parents hid him (a logical inference, but perhaps patriarchally motivated) because they saw he was beautiful. Jewish tradition expanded considerably on this “beauty” far more than Stephen’s addition, “before God.”⁸⁶² Granted, some expansions, like this speech’s, were minimal. For example, in the second century B.C.E., Ezekiel the Tragedian elaborates little, though recounting the story in iambic trimeter (*Exagōgē* 12–31); nor are miracles mentioned in *Jub.* 47:1–8. Philo (*Mos.* 1.9) simply mentions it, following the likely sense of the LXX (but using the comparative ἀστειωτέρων).⁸⁶³ The level of expansion rises slightly with Josephus. Josephus claims that Moses’s birth was kept secret because his mother experienced little pain at his birth (*Ant.* 2.218) and further insists that Moses’s size and beauty (2.224, 231) were such that they proved even divine in appearance to Pharaoh’s daughter (2.232). His attractiveness continued at age three, when God marvelously increased his stature (cf. Luke 2:52), attracting the attention of all onlookers (*Jos. Ant.* 2.230–31).

One tradition claimed that Moses was born circumcised (*L.A.B.* 9:13; *b. Soṭah* 12a),⁸⁶⁴ like many other biblical heroes (*ʿAbot R. Nat.* 2 A; *Gen. Rab.* 26:3; 84:6);⁸⁶⁵ another, attributed to the Tannaim, claimed that Moses’s birth filled the house with light (*b. Soṭah* 12a). Not surprisingly, our later Samaritan sources also include Moses’s miraculous birth.⁸⁶⁶

Such expansions are understandable. Greeks and Romans expected great leaders’ births to be heralded by signs (e.g., *Ps.-Callisth. Alex.* 1.12) or at least unusual events (e.g., *Val. Max.* 1.8.ext. 5);⁸⁶⁷ dreams were frequent. Sometimes this could include a

859. Various commentators (e.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 125; Witherington, *Acts*, 269), citing Plato *Crito* 50E, 51C; Philo *Mos.* 2.1; *Flacc.* 158; see fuller comment at Acts 22:3. Cf. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:252 (citing, for Moses’s learning, e.g., Philo *Mos.* 1.20–23; *Jos. Ant.* 2.232–37).

860. The term refers to proper Jewish upbringing in 4 *Macc* 10:2; 11:15; it is associated with infancy, probably, in *Wis* 7:4. *Sib. Or.* 3.254 (probably second century B.C.E.) applies a cognate (usually involving feeding, but cf., e.g., *Tob* 14:10) to the queen’s “rearing” Moses.

861. The Greek term can refer to any sort of elegance, which is only a little more specific than the Hebrew’s *tov* (“good”); it refers to beautiful appearance in *Jdt* 11:23 (cf. also *Dan* 13:7–8 LXX, mss), but prudent speech in 2 *Macc* 6:23.

862. Passive verbs used with Moses (as with Abraham and Joseph to some extent) in Acts 7:20–22 may emphasize his initially passive role, drawing further attention to the role of God here (cf. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 65). Pervo, *Acts*, 183–84, treats Moses’s beauty in ancient sources (though his suggestion of “a dative of standard of judgment” seems questionable).

863. Philo’s biography of Moses follows the pattern of many other biographies (Feldman, “View of Birth”).

864. Later attributed to R. Meir (late second century C.E.; *Lev. Rab.* 20:1). Rabbis as early as the schools of Hillel and Shammai debated whether one needed to at least prick a baby born circumcised (*Sipra Taz. pq.* 1.123.1.8; *t. Šabb.* 15:9; *Gen. Rab.* 46:12; *y. Yebam.* 8:1, §12).

865. On thirteen characters in *Midr. Pss.* 9:7, see Kalimi, “Born Circumcised”; cf. idem, “Geboren.”

866. Bowman, *Documents*, 284–97.

867. See further Shuler, *Genre*, 94; Davies, *Matthew*, 31–32 (citing *Plut. Rom.* 2; *Alex.* 2); cf. Klauck, *Context*, 300. For announcement by a dream, cf., e.g., *Plut. Alex.* 2.1–3.2 (Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 37–38); for miraculous omens, cf., e.g., *Suet. Aug.* 94 (Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 43–44); *Aul. Gel.* 6.1.2–4. For supernatural births of famous philosophers, *Diog. Laert.* 3.1–2, 45; *Iambl. VP.* 2.3–5; *Diod.*

flame shining around the boy's head (Val. Max. 1.6.1).⁸⁶⁸ Rhetoricians advised noting any supernatural phenomena attending a person's birth.⁸⁶⁹ Thus orators would praise a king's noble birth, looking for any phenomena that happened at the time that could be interpreted as favorable portents (Men. Rhet. 2.1–2, 371.5–6);⁸⁷⁰ if these were not available, one could invent them (371.11–12), and invent them obviously and extravagantly (e.g., 371.15–17).⁸⁷¹ This could include the baby shining at its birth; thus the deity Apollo shone (λάμψαι) and lit up all the cosmos (2.17, 439.18–19). Early Jewish literature applied some of these motifs especially to Noah (1 En. 106–8, esp. 106;⁸⁷² 1 QapGen II;⁸⁷³ cf. 4Q534).⁸⁷⁴ That others, especially later rabbis, would apply these traditions more to their hero Moses is understandable.⁸⁷⁵ Perhaps countering competing traditions, rabbis argued that Moses was godlier and “more loved by God” than was Noah (*Gen. Rab.* 36:3).

That the child was hidden for three months reflects Exod 2:2 LXX; “in his father's house” is not in the LXX but may be an inference from it; the verb the LXX uses for “hid” can mean “sheltered” or “covered.” It emphasizes again familial connection; compare the omission of Scripture's “from his father's house” in Acts 7:3. Jewish writers and storytellers seem to have been at pains to justify his heroic parents' willingness to finally expose Moses. One Jewish source claimed that someone reported Jochebed, making it impossible for her to hide him longer (*Jub.* 47:3); another contended that his father cast him into the Nile only by trusting the divine assurance of his safety provided him in a dream (*Jos. Ant.* 2.216–19).⁸⁷⁶ Another source claims that his mother “hid” him in her womb for three additional months (*L.A.B.* 9:12; perhaps related to hiding pregnancy for three months in 9:5). In one story adding later haggadic details, the Egyptians, searching for Israelite babies, took an Egyptian baby with them and made him cry, recognizing that this would provoke any Israelite babies to cry (*b. Soṭah* 12a; *Exod. Rab.* 1:20). Others emphasized that Moses's mother birthed quickly, making Moses a seven-month child like various Jewish, Greek, and Roman heroes “miraculously” conceived.⁸⁷⁷ (Although natural seven-month pregnancies

Sic. 4.9.1–10 (Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 33–35). For supposed signs at Zoroaster's birth, see Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.16.72.

868. In this case, the boy, Servus Tullius, was then adopted into the royal family; a flame around a general's head later portended victory (Val. Max. 1.6.2).

869. Hermog. *Progymn.* 7, “On Encomion,” 15–16.

870. This could then be used to invite rhetorical comparison with Romulus and Cyrus, whose births were allegedly accompanied with marvels.

871. The rhetorical principle also applied to praising deities by describing marvelous births (e.g., Men. Rhet. 2.17, 438.30–439.24).

872. For his beauty, esp. 1 En. 106:2; his newborn speech, 106:3; his glowing, 106:4; his further praise in 106:11.

873. The child was so beautiful that Lamech doubted that it was his own (see Fitzmyer, *Apocryphon*, 51, 53, 77–79, esp. 79).

874. This view of 4Q534 depends on the greater clarity of the other texts (see Swanson, “4Q534”). Starcky originally proposed a messianic sense (“Texte messianique”), but the likeliest interpretation is Noah (with Fitzmyer, “Elect of God' Text,” 371; Brown, “Theory of Development,” 51).

875. Even Philo emphasizes that Noah's righteousness was merely relative to his generation (*Abr.* 36–37); cf. anti-Noah polemic in 2 *Enoch* (Orlov, “Brother”).

876. Later, in *Pesiq. Rab.* 43:4, Israel foreknew the redeemer's birth to Amram. Earlier stories claimed that Moses's father and mother were paired because providentially born the same day (*Test. Levi* 12:4).

877. See van der Horst, “Seven Months' Children”; this and other Jewish examples of supernaturally expedited seven-months' births reflect Greco-Roman tradition (e.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 2.4.5). Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 75, cite *Tg. Jer.* on Exod 2 for Moses as a six-months' child.

were known⁸⁷⁸ and some physicians knew that the gestation period was nine months,⁸⁷⁹ ancients commonly believed that ten months was the normal period for a pregnancy, or at least used that expression.)⁸⁸⁰ One early source increased the suspense by having Moses's mother nurse him seven nights among the reeds and by having Miriam drive away ravenous birds during the day (*Jub.* 47:4). But everyone would have marveled at Moses's survival and later achievements (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 88:7).

V. MOSES'S ADOPTION (7:21)

That Pharaoh's daughter "took him away" is intended favorably. The term in Luke-Acts (seventeen other uses in Acts, two in Luke) means "kill" in every other instance, which could fit a context of infanticide, reflecting negatively on Pharaoh's daughter; but this reading cannot fit this context and its biblical background. The term, when used with infants, most often meant what it must mean in this context and in the context of the scriptural story Stephen is retelling (Exod 2:5 LXX). The term ἀναίρειω may apply here (as sometimes in Koine) to adoption (cf. the idea in different words in Exod 2:10), though often it was used simply (as in 2:5 LXX) for taking up newborns (Plut. *M. Ant.* 36.3; LSJ; see esp. BDAG).⁸⁸¹

Pharaoh's daughter is part of the irony of the exodus story: mighty Pharaoh orders the death of Israel's babies, but God uses a series of women to subvert Pharaoh's will (midwives, Exod 1:17–21; Moses's mother and sister, 2:2–9), employing finally Pharaoh's own daughter (2:5–10).⁸⁸² Here, however, the house of Moses's "father" (Acts 7:20) replaces any specific mention of his "mother" (Exod 2:2–3), and the emphasis may be more on Moses's status even among Gentiles (Acts 7:22). Thus 7:21 employs the same term for "nurture" as applied to Moses's birth mother in 7:20, and the speech omits mention of Jochebed's nursing Moses (Exod 2:7–9), despite the great influence attributed to nurses in antiquity.⁸⁸³ Children could be fond of their

878. Hippocr. *Fleshes* 19, ¶3 (insisting that he has seen it himself and that midwives can attest it); Soranus *Gynec.* 2.6.10 (26.79). Cf. Philo *Creation* 124 (claiming that they become alive at the end of seven months and cannot survive after the end of the eighth; Pliny E. *N.H.* 11.96.236 concurs that the fetus becomes alive in the seventh month).

879. See Galen *N.F.* 3.3.147; esp. Soranus *Gynec.* 1.16.56; 2.6.10 (26.79); also Lucian *Dial. G.* 228 (12/9, Poseidon and Hermes), ¶2. Heir to numerous traditions, Pliny the Elder hedges: children can be born between the sixth and the eleventh month, though likeliest to survive from the eighth onward (*N.H.* 7.5.38).

880. Ovid *Fasti* 1.33; 3.43 (by implication); Virg. *Ecl.* 4.61; Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.54; Statius *Silv.* 1.2.268; *Sent. Syr. Men.* 97; *Wis* 7:2; 4 *Macc* 16:7; *Jos. Ant.* 3.271; Arrian *Alex.* 7.12.6; Suet. *Aug.* 94.4; Aul. Gel. 3.16; 6.1.4; Quint. *Decl.* 339.29; *Iambl. V.P.* 31.192; *PGM* 101.36–37; the Isis aretology in Grant, *Religions*, 132.

881. See Bruce, *Acts*¹, 167; Richard, *Composition*, 335; Johnson, *Acts*, 125. Parsons and Culy, *Acts*, 125–26, prefer the LXX sense of taking him up, distinguishing this action from the verse's subsequent emphasis on his adoption.

882. See Sarna, *Exodus*, 31–32; cf. powerful women surrounding Alexander's childhood in Hdn. 5.8.10; 6.1.1. The term might be appropriate for the exaltation of the least in light of Luke's most recent usage, Luke 22:26 (if we suppose that Luke might recall his specific word choice there). Another irony: Moses's exaltation to Pharaoh's house came from the murder of the infants (Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 54 [Martin, *Acts*, 316]).

883. Influence for good or for ill; see, e.g., Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.4–5; Plut. *Educ. S, Mor.* 3DE; Tac. *Dial.* 28–29; *Germ.* 20; Aul. Gel. 12.1; Soranus *Gynec.* 1.1.3; 2.12.19–20 (32.88–89), esp. 2.12.19 (32.88); Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 380, §§126D–127D; Lucian *Anach.* 20; Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 110–11, §111; Bradley, "Wet-Nursing." Although used regularly by the upper classes (Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 3, 120–26; Treggiari, "Jobs for Women," 87), nurses were also used by others (Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 146). In aristocratic homes, the nurses were often slaves (e.g., Hom. *Od.* 1.435; 19.354; Char. *Chaer.* 1.12.9; *CPJ* 2:19 [citing *BGU* 1085; P.Oxy. 91; P.Tebt. 399; *BGU* 1109]; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 139); in Egypt, they were often impoverished peasants (*CPJ* 2:15–19, §146; Horsley, *Documents*, 2:7–8, §1 [citing *BGU* 4.1058, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1153; P.Rein. 2.103, 104; *PSI* 9.1065]); Lewis, *Life*, 146–47; for risks, cf., e.g., P.Oxy. 37), and elsewhere some took the position only through financial necessity (Demosthenes *Euxitheus against Eubulides*). On nurses, see also Gaventa, *Mother*, 21–23.

nurses, with affectionate ties continuing into adulthood;⁸⁸⁴ these did not, however, displace the normal parental bond.⁸⁸⁵

Orators were eager to praise a person's rearing;⁸⁸⁶ given other alternatives for newborns, rearing one was considered an act of love (Dio Chrys. *Or. frag.* 9). (Likewise, giving up a child for a better adoption could be a sign of love; Quint. *Decl.* 346.1. This act could be held to invite special gratitude; Quint. *Decl.* 372.12; 376.6.) The early rearing, however, was done mostly by mothers, nurses, and pedagogues (slave-tutors), the fathers taking over only at a later stage (Lucian *Anach.* 20).

Pharaoh's daughter made Moses her own son.⁸⁸⁷ Naturally, the tradition behind the Exodus narrative here differs from adoption practices familiar to Luke's audience,⁸⁸⁸ but they would still associate with it the only ideas about adoption with which they would have been familiar.⁸⁸⁹ What did adoption mean for a first-century audience?⁸⁹⁰ One major feature of adoption was to make one an heir.⁸⁹¹ Another feature was to free one from former familiar obligations, abrogating one's debts and previous legal family ties.⁸⁹² Some adoptions carried with them special honor. For example, to be adopted by Caesar⁸⁹³ was considered an ideal honor;⁸⁹⁴ naturally, Luke's audience would thus understand adoption by Pharaoh's daughter to constitute a significant improvement

884. E.g., Gen 35:8; Hom. *Od.* 1.435; *ILS* 8536 (in Sherk, *Empire*, §172C, p. 226); Pliny *Ep.* 6.3.1–2; Suet. *Dom.* 17.3; Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 28; Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 145, 148–55; Bradley, "Wet-Nursing," 220–21; Hezser, "Impact," 376–77, 406–7. For her affection for the child, see, e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.11.22; Fronto *Ad Ant. imp.* 1.5.2. Still, it is precarious to extrapolate the pervasive sentiments of slave nurses from aristocratic data (Joshel, "Nurturing"; Bradley, "Wet-Nursing," 221–22; so also Plut. *Educ. S, Mor.* 3CD); many must have resented losing a fully maternal connection with the child they had "mothered" (cf. Fronto *Ad Ant. imp.* 1.5.2).

885. Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 127–29. Sometimes, however, relations were closer with the nurse (Hezser, "Impact," 376–77).

886. So ἀνατροφή, Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 371.17–23; cf. ἀνατρέφω in Acts 7:20–21; 22:3. Nurture was the subject after birth (Hermog. *Progymn.* 7, "On Encomion," 16).

887. See *Sib. Or.* 3.253–54; Jos. *Ant.* 2.232. The tradition persisted much later (e.g., Qur'an 28.8).

888. Women could not adopt under Roman law (e.g., Gaius *Inst.* 1.104). Although this is probably not the point here, exposed children who were adopted were sometimes treated as inferior to others (see Bernstein, "Adoptees").

889. Legal adoption was a widespread practice (cf. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 51; Burke, "Adoption"; Deissmann, *Studies*, 239; idem, *Life*, 174–75; Ramsay, *Teaching*, 203; e.g., Sen. E. *Controv.* 3.3 excerpts; Pliny *Ep.* 5.8.5; Suet. *Galba* 17). This was also true in the Hellenistic era (Tarn, *Civilisation*, 101–2), but not "adoption" imagery seems especially Roman (Lyll, "Law," esp. 466; idem, *Slaves*, 67, 81–99; Hester, *Inheritance*, 59); or ancient Near Eastern examples (e.g., Kitchen, *World*, 70, 145n63; cf. Vellanickeal, *Sonship*, 69–70) are more distant (Lyll, *Slaves*, 70–81).

890. On Roman law, see Buckland, *Roman Law*, 121–28. Adoption by will (e.g., Val. Max. 7.8.5) may be less common (it was also more open to challenge [Isaeus *Apollo.* 2]).

891. See Walters, "Adoption," 44–51, for Greek sources, and 51–55 for Roman sources; see, e.g., P.Oxy. 1206.9–11, 22. Many adopted to acquire heirs (e.g., Isaeus *Menec.* 1, 14; *Apollo.* 1) and carry on the line (Lyll, *Slaves*, 69).

892. See Walters, "Adoption," 57–58; Wansink, "Law," 990. This was probably especially true among Romans, but Mishnaic law shows similarities (cf. Keener, *John*, 543); some may have also given children they could not support (cf. P.Oxy. 1895, though this is from 554 C.E.). One could refuse adoption, preferring to retain birth ties (Sen. E. *Controv.* 2.1.19). Although adoption of freedmen in the early republic conferred freeborn status, they remained freedmen in the late republic (Gardner, "Adoption"). A true father, said one familiar maxim, is the one who rears rather than the one who merely begets (*SPap* 3:476–77, §116; cf. adoptive or stepparents as parents in Luke 2:33; Eurip. *Herc. fur.* 587, 1192). The audience would typically reckon sonship via adoption; see, e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 5.8.5; Quint. *Decl.* 278.5–6; 372.6, 11–12. For potential ambiguities that could arise, see, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 346 intro; 376 intro (where legal relations do not appear to extend to marriage).

893. Such adoptions, placing one in the possible line of succession for the throne, were naturally of great interest in ancient literature; e.g., Vell. *Paterc.* 2.75.3; *Res Gestae* 1.2; Pliny *Ep.* 10.1.1; 10.3A.1; 10.4.2; Tac. *Ann.* 12.25; Suet. *Tib.* 15.2; 23; also in inscriptions, e.g., *I. Ital.* 13.2, p. 187 (Sherk, *Empire*, §1J, p. 4).

894. Epict. *Diatr.* 1.3.2; Tac. *Hist.* 1.16.

in social status.⁸⁹⁵ Legally, one could also be emancipated from the adoptive state, breaking all ties;⁸⁹⁶ Luke’s audience would probably not assume that Moses retained his ties with Egypt’s royal household after his flight.

Later traditions developed about Pharaoh’s daughter. Josephus calls her Thermuthis (*Ant.* 2.224–36); *Jubilees* (second century B.C.E.) similarly has Tharmuth (*Jub.* 47:5). Another early story in Artapanus *On Jews* frg. 3 calls her Meris and claims that she was barren.⁸⁹⁷ Later rabbis called her Bithiah and claimed that she was later spared, though a firstborn, by Moses’s intercession.⁸⁹⁸ Some also explained her love for Moses by claiming that she already rejected idolatry or that Moses’s ark cleansed her from leprosy.⁸⁹⁹

In his compressed account, Luke omits more patterns in the Exodus narratives than he reports here. God delivered both Moses and Noah through “arks” (the only places in the OT where the Hebrew term occurs; Gen 6:14–9:18; Exod 2:3). Moses was rescued in reeds (Exod 2:3) and later led Israel to safety through (according to the usual reconstruction) a sea of reeds (Exod 13:18; 15:4, 22; Neh 9:9; Pss 106:9; 136:13–15).⁹⁰⁰ But Luke focuses on the patterns most relevant to his point.

VI. EDUCATION AND EXPLOITS (7:22)

Moses’s Egyptian wisdom might contrast with Pharaoh’s “trickery” (see Acts 7:19) and certainly parallels the wisdom of Joseph, another Diaspora Israelite, in 7:10.⁹⁰¹ It is surely no coincidence that “wisdom” appears elsewhere in Acts only for Stephen and his colleagues (6:3, 10); Stephen will portray himself as in continuity with Joseph, Moses, and ultimately Jesus whereas his opponents might be like Pharaoh as well as the Jews who opposed Moses.

Eastern and northern Mediterranean peoples generally despised Egyptians in Stephen’s day,⁹⁰² and especially the animal forms of many of their deities,⁹⁰³ but Jews and others were aware of Egypt’s past grandeur, and Stephen can here underline Moses’s Diaspora education. (Egypt, like Babylonia and other “distant” nations, sometimes offered images of “exotic” and occult learning for the Roman world.)⁹⁰⁴ Stephen makes no claim, as Scripture did not, that Gentiles stole their learning from Judaism (a claim especially directed toward Greeks in his day);⁹⁰⁵ rather, Moses learned from

895. Luke’s audience would not be aware that both Ramses and Seti, in contrast to Roman emperors of Luke’s day, had scores of children (Ramses II had fifty-nine daughters; Sarna, *Exodus*, 31). Moses’s adoptive status was significant, but it would appear more significant to a first-century audience (if the audience did not unduly underestimate the power of Seti and Ramses).

896. Buckland, *Roman Law*, 132; cf. Gaius *Inst.* 2.136. Genetic sonship, however, could also be legally annulled.

897. Johnson, *Acts*, 125 (noting that Philo *Mos.* 1.12–15 develops this barrenness psychologically; her barrenness may have been particularly an Alexandrian tradition). Bruce, *Commentary*, 149n43, notes the similarity to the name of a daughter of Ramses II and a Hittite but that in the usual dating she would have been Moses’s junior.

898. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 7:6/9; *Pesiq. Rab.* 17:5; *Exod. Rab.* 18:3.

899. *Exod. Rab.* 1:23. This version might polemically invert the Egyptian polemic that Egypt expelled the Jewish people because of leprosy (see Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.233–35, 251; on the tradition, cf. Raspe, “Manetho on Exodus”).

900. For these connections, see Sarna, *Exodus*, 28–29; Enns, *Exodus*, 62.

901. It could function as a natural midrashic inference from the experience of Hebrews in another royal court in Dan 1:4–5.

902. E.g., P.Oxy. 1681.6–7; see comment on Acts 18:24. They could not become Roman citizens unless they were citizens of Alexandria (Pliny *Ep.* 10.6.1–2).

903. See, e.g., Gordon, “Egyptian Deities,” 512; Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 66; Lucian *Portr.* 11; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.18–19; *Let. Aris.* 138; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.81, 128, 224; cf. Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 3.219; comment on Acts 7:41.

904. Cf., e.g., Egypt in Val. Max. 8.7.ext. 2–3; Iamb. *V.P.* 29.158; Jos. *Ant.* 1.168; Klauck, *Context*, 129; Persia in Plut. *Themist.* 29.4; Eunapius *Lives* 468; Indian sages in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.11.

905. E.g., Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.257, 281; Justin *1 Apol.* 59. See further comment at Acts 17:19–20.

Gentiles, and this education is positive as his power in words and deeds is positive (cf. Dan 1:17). Luke may offer a hint that Gentile learning was not contaminating (cf. Acts 10:28; 19:9).⁹⁰⁶

Educated Alexandrian Jews, naturally enough, had supplied elaborate precedent for this tradition; Alexandria had achieved great fame as an educational center (see comment on Acts 18:24). Stephen and his Hellenist colleagues had Greek education and perhaps valued it. Saul was likewise “educated” under Gamaliel (22:3) but must have been exposed to Greek ideas, whether from Gamaliel or elsewhere (cf. discussion of Acts 17:22–31).⁹⁰⁷ John (Luke 1:80) and Jesus (2:40, 52) also grew in wisdom.

After praising a subject’s birth and rearing (Men. Rhet. 2.1–2, 370.28–371.23), an orator would praise his education (παιδεία; 371.23–372.2; cf. παιδεύω in Acts 7:22; 22:3). Because later Jewish storytellers and writers valued education, they added it to various sources. For example, Jacob, in contrast to Esau, learned writing (*Jub.* 19:14).⁹⁰⁸ This interest naturally would come to bear on someone raised in a powerful royal court (about whom some education could be inferred).⁹⁰⁹ If Daniel learned the wisdom of the Chaldeans (Dan 1:4, 17), how much more, it would be argued, would Moses as a prince in Egypt? In the Greco-Roman world as elsewhere, advanced education was limited to an elite few,⁹¹⁰ but royal households certainly qualified. All this education would occur well before Moses’s fortieth year (Acts 7:23); most ancients would think of even the rare tertiary education (for aristocratic males), often traveling to study with a foreign teacher, as beginning around fifteen.⁹¹¹ (For discussion of ancient education, see comment on Acts 22:3.) Adoption (7:21) and responsibility for education (7:22) were closely linked.⁹¹²

Writers varied on the degree to which they believed Moses was influenced by Egyptian culture.⁹¹³ *Jubilees* attributes Moses’s learning to write to Moses’s father Amram (*Jub.* 47:9); but if some early Palestinian sources were reticent about foreign learning, others were not so reserved. Josephus mentions Moses’s Egyptian education, although he does not expand it extravagantly (*Ant.* 2.236).⁹¹⁴ Josephus did not need to regard Egyptian learning as “foreign,” since he believed that Abraham taught the Egyptians everything they knew about arithmetic and astronomy (1.168).⁹¹⁵ Philo of Alexandria was naturally happy to emphasize Moses’s Egyptian learning (*Mos.* 1.5; cf. 2.1), expanding on it at length in 1.20–24, where Moses learns mathematics, music,

906. In a different direction, Paul’s apologetic emphasis about his Jerusalemite education in Acts 22:3, to prevent his audience assuming that Gentile learning biased him.

907. On training in Greek ideas in the household of Gamaliel II (after 70 C.E.), see discussion at Acts 22:3; it is likelier that the mistrust of Greek learning, rather than attention to it, increased after 70 (Josephus implies little respect for Greek learning earlier in *Ant.* 20.264, but to lower expectations; he notes that he acquired it, 20.263; elsewhere he respects those who possessed both kinds of learning, *Life* 359).

908. Likewise, Enoch seems to have learned writing at an early age (*1 En.* 83:2; on Enoch’s learning, cf. also *Jub.* 4:17; *1 En.* 12:4).

909. See Sarna, *Exodus*, 33; Kitchen, *Reliability*, 295, 297; Harrison in Harrison et al., *Criticism*, 9–10.

910. See Christes, “Education,” 821–22; comment on Acts 22:3.

911. E.g., Lucian *Career* 1; Hock, “Paul and Education,” 204.

912. The rabbis showed familiarity with legal traditions that one who supplied an education to another’s child could be perceived as an adoptive parent (Jacobson, “Adoptive Parents”). For the princess’s care for Moses’s instruction, see Ezek. Trag. *Exag.* 36–38 (noted in Enns, *Problem*, 147).

913. See Römer, “Vie de Moïse” (finding the difference even in OT traditions as well as pre-Christian historians).

914. Josephus claims that Judaism discouraged foreign learning (*Ant.* 20.264), explaining his own supposed deficit in Greek (20.263; this is, however, to highlight his *Jewish* learning, which some ideal readers might consider exotic). For sources regarding Moses’s education, see now most fully Koskenniemi, “Moses.”

915. Following Artapanus in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.18.

astronomy, and so forth—in short, an ideal Hellenistic education.⁹¹⁶ Like Josephus, Philo might suppose that Jewish thinkers provided Egyptian wisdom to begin with.⁹¹⁷ Certainly, many early Jewish and Christian apologists believed that the Greeks obtained their learning from Moses, even if it was mediated through other sources.⁹¹⁸ Like Josephus, Stephen offers what is a natural inference concerning a youth raised in a royal court;⁹¹⁹ but his interest in the subject is the interest of a Hellenistic Jew.⁹²⁰ It points toward where Acts is moving; not everything from the Gentile sphere is negative. (On education, see further comment at Acts 22:3.)

Moses's being "powerful in words and deeds" exactly echoes a Lukan portrait of Jesus (Luke 24:19) and might be echoed to some extent in Luke's mention of Apollo's rhetorical prowess (Acts 18:24). Luke associates this with Moses *before* his call at the burning bush. However eloquent Moses might have become, at least initially he was "slow in speech" (Exod 4:10), but "the handicap is already glossed over as early as Sir 45:3 and is missing completely in Josephus *Ant.* 2.271–72."⁹²¹ Indeed, Josephus makes Moses into a Hellenistic orator (3.14–23).⁹²² Emphasizing such rhetorical weakness may have fit Paul's purpose, at times (1 Cor 2:3);⁹²³ it did not suit Luke's. (Thus Luke's Paul is also a great orator.) The pairing of "words" with "deeds" was standard rhetoric.⁹²⁴

Storytellers expanded on the details of Moses's childhood and young adulthood. He was particularly intelligent and beautiful as an infant (Jos. *Ant.* 2.230–31). As a child he portentously cast Pharaoh's crown down (2.233–34) or (in a later source) placed it on his own head (*Exod. Rab.* 1:26). Again such expansions fit ancient expectations; as suggested above, great adults were often assumed to have been child prodigies.⁹²⁵ Thus, for example, Cyrus revealed his royal character by his authoritativeness already at age ten.⁹²⁶ Pythagoras was respected even while very young (Iambl. *V.P.* 2.10–11); Apollonius was thought wise as a child.⁹²⁷ On the historical level, Fronto attributes such advanced maturity to Marcus Aurelius (*Ad M. Caes.* 4.1).

916. Cf. also Barnard, "Stephen and Alexandrian Christianity," 44; for Alexandrian learning, see Clarke, "Alexandrian Scholarship"; for outsiders impressed with Egyptian learning, see, e.g., Macrobius *Sat.* 1.14.3; 7.13.10 (van der Horst, "Macrobius," 226); Lucian *Lover of Lies* 34 (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 75); comment on Acts 18:24.

917. Cf. the idea in, e.g., Artapanus frg. 3 (Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.4). Still, Philo has Moses learning Egyptian and Greek wisdom in *Mos.* 1.23.

918. Clem. *Strom.* 1.23 (Pelikan, *Acts*, 102).

919. For genuine ancient Egyptian education, see Vanstiphout, "Memory," 2189 (best attested in school exercises ca. 1300–1100 B.C.E.); scribes often handled multiple languages (Daniels, "Scribes," 501–2). Historically, Egyptians began writing hieroglyphics no later than 3100 B.C.E. (Kitchen, *World*, 16).

920. Cf. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 168.

921. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 53 (unfortunately calling this a "divine man" motif; citing Lucian *Dem.* 13ff.; Demosth. *Encomium* 14–15); similarly, Haenchen, *Acts*, 281.

922. Johnson, *Acts*, 126.

923. It often lowered expectations; e.g., Lysias *Or.* 2.1, §190; 12.3, §120; 19.1–2, §152; Isaeus *Astyph.* 35; *Aristarch.* 1; *Rhet. Alex.* 29, 1436b.34–36; Cic. *Quinct.* 1.1–4; 24.77; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.9; 32.39; 42.1; 46.7; 47.1; Tac. *Hist.* 4.73; Fronto *Ep. graec.* 1.5; M. Aurelius to Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 2.6.2. In other genres, e.g., Catull. *Carm.* 49.5–7; Aul. Gel. pref. 10.

924. In early Christianity, see Rom 15:18; 2 Cor 10:11; Col 3:17; 2 Thess 2:17; 1 John 3:18; 1 Clem. 30.3; 38.2; *Herm.* 98.2; cf. Matt 23:3; but more generally, see esp. discussion at Acts 1:1.

925. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 10.50; Val. Max. 3.1.1; 3.1.2ab; Eunapius *Lives* 468; see further examples in Bultmann, *Tradition*, 300–301. For growing in size, cf. e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 45.5; for Moses, Jos. *Ant.* 2.230; cf. Luke 1:80; 2:52. Naturally, such rapid maturation happened even more quickly for a deity (Soph. *Searchers* 224–27, 253–56).

926. Hdt. 1.113–15. On Cyrus's precocity, see also Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.3.

927. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7–8, 11. Supposedly, Zoroaster laughed on the day of his birth, and his head throbbed wildly (Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.16.72).

Biographers thus expanded on material available about famous figures' youth (e.g., Ps-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.13–19; *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*), and Moses was no exception (Jos. *Ant.* 2.233–36; Philo *Mos.* 1.21–31).⁹²⁸ Such prodigies might fit the sorts of parallels Luke likes to draw with Jesus (Luke 2:40, 46–47),⁹²⁹ but beyond Jesus, though John offers something of a literary parallel to Jesus here (Luke 1:80), even Luke's hero Paul (Acts 22:3) is not quite comparable.

Orators praising a person liked to include virtues or deeds from the person's youth when possible (Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 372.5–9). As a young man, Moses achieves a great victory in Ethiopia (Nubia), in a narrative that follows conventions for Hellenistic historiography⁹³⁰ and that Josephus has adjusted for apologetic purposes (*Ant.* 2.238–57).⁹³¹ There Tharbis, the Ethiopian king's daughter, falls in love with Moses; she hands the city over to him peacefully, and he marries her in return (2.252–53).⁹³² Whether for reasons of conviction (cf. 1 Tim 1:4; Titus 1:14) or of brevity, Luke's report of Stephen's speech "leaps the gap" from Moses's childhood to his adult story almost as quickly as Exodus⁹³³ (cf. Luke 2:52–3:1).

VII. MOSES VISITS AND DEFENDS HIS PEOPLE (7:23–24)

Luke divides Moses's life into three periods of forty years (Acts 7:23, 30, 36). Exodus 2:11 specifies only "when Moses had grown to adulthood," not age forty. Forty was a minimum age for some offices in antiquity⁹³⁴ and, in some places, the maximum for war.⁹³⁵ Luke likewise rounds Jesus's age to thirty, which age constituted a qualification for some other offices or activities.⁹³⁶ This is not to imply that Luke necessarily invents such traditions; fifty was even more honorable and also required for some offices.⁹³⁷ For youth, see comment on Acts 7:58.

Jewish interpreters of Luke's era struggled with some chronological complexities in the Scriptures,⁹³⁸ but while Stephen's chronology may not quote a pentateuchal text, it reflects the sort of age approximation standard in his Bible. Some data used in his estimate were plain in the text: Moses was eighty when he spoke with Pharaoh (Exod 7:7); Israel wandered forty years (cf. Acts 13:18); and Moses died at 120 (Deut 34:7; cf. 31:2).⁹³⁹ But the use of forty years often functioned as a generation

928. Johnson, *Acts*, 125. Josephus also presents himself as a prodigy (*Life* 9; cf. Rajak, *Josephus*, 27–29; but given the many ancient prodigy stories, the connections with early Christianity drawn by Herrmann, "Bannoun," are fanciful).

929. Other biographies also used a childhood anecdote to prefigure future greatness (Burrige, *Gospels*, 207; Danker, *New Age*, 39), though not all child prodigies remained advanced (Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.3–5) or pleased their elders (y. *Soṭah* 3:4, §12).

930. See Rajak, "Moses in Ethiopia" (thinking that Josephus's source and Artapanus shared a common source).

931. See Runnalls, "Ethiopian Campaign" (thinking that Josephus subtly challenged Artapanus's account).

932. He won the Ethiopians peacefully also in Artapanus frg. 3 (Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.10). Similar stories are told of Alexander's diplomacy (Ps-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.23), though soldiers eager for plunder must have complicated such intentions in real life.

933. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 67. Ps-Philo *Biblical Antiquities* leaps even more quickly (9:16–10:1).

934. E.g., officers in 1QM VII, 1–3 (though cf. more broadly CD XIV, 7, 9); Aeschines *Tim.* 11–12.

935. Aeschines *Embassy* 133.

936. E.g., Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.49.122; Pliny *Ep.* 10.79.1; 1QSa (=1Q28a) I, 12–13; m. 'Ab. 5:21; t. *Šeqal.* 3:26; cf. Gaius *Inst.* 1.17. Some ended "youth" then (Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.35; cf. Jos. *Life* 80; Philost. *Hrk.* 21.6), but one still lacked honor (Plut. *Demosth.* 12.1); when one assumed a prominent position at this age, it could arouse envy (e.g., Jos. *Life* 80). For Joseph (Gen 41:46) and David (2 Sam 5:4), see Danker, *New Age*, 52–53.

937. Aeschines *Tim.* 23; *Ctes.* 4; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.29.3; m. 'Ab. 5:21; b. *Hag.* 14a.

938. See, e.g., Wise, "To Know" (on 4Q559); DiTommaso, "Note" (on Demetrius the Chronographer frg. 2.11 = Euseb. *P.E.* 9.21.11).

939. Egyptians seem to have used 110 as a round number for a very old age (Sarna, *Genesis*, 226–27; Kitchen, *Reliability*, 351; Walton, "Genesis," 137; cf. Gen 50:22, 26; Josh 24:29; Judg 2:8); 120 would then be older (more blessed) than that.

in ancient Israel and Phoenicia.⁹⁴⁰ Joshua was forty when sent as a spy (Josh 14:7); it is standard language for a generation (e.g., Acts 13:21; Judg 3:11; 5:31; 8:28; 13:1; 1 Sam 4:18; 13:1; 2 Sam 2:10; 5:4; 1 Kgs 2:11; 11:42; 2 Kgs 12:1).

The sum of generations yielded great age for Moses (Deut 34:7). On low estimates, the “average life expectancy at birth” in preindustrial societies was probably twenty to thirty years, skewed by high infant mortality (probably about 25 percent in the first year and 50 percent by age ten), with survivors of “their first decade” on average probably living “another thirty-five to forty years.”⁹⁴¹ To Moses is attributed great age, hence great wisdom⁹⁴² and honor (cf., e.g., Prov 16:31; 20:29). As in the broader Mediterranean culture,⁹⁴³ Jewish tradition emphasized respect for the aged.⁹⁴⁴ For example, in the ancient Mediterranean world, formal settings might require the eldest to speak first;⁹⁴⁵ young men should rise before elders to offer their seats.⁹⁴⁶ Such practices permeated Jewish circles as well.⁹⁴⁷ (Those growing older did, however, privately acknowledge the disadvantages of aging.)⁹⁴⁸

We need not suppose, however, that Stephen made the inference directly from the common use of the number forty himself. His estimate reflects a more widespread Jewish tradition. A rabbinic tradition divided Moses’s 120 years into forty in

940. Cf., e.g., Gen 26:34; Exod 16:35; Num 14:33–34; 32:13; Josh 14:7; Judg 3:11; 5:31; 8:28; 13:1; 1 Sam 4:18; 2 Sam 2:10; 5:4; 1 Kgs 2:11; 11:42; Jos. *Ant.* 5.184, 209, 232, 275; CD XX, 14–15; Bright, *History*, 123 (for Phoenicia, n. 37). Also in Moab (the Mesha inscription [ANET 320–21]; Gordon, *Near East*, 205, takes this as a round, idiomatic number).

941. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 138; cf. Gardner, *Women*, 40 (the average life expectancy being below age thirty, with some estimating as low as 21.11 years of age); Scheidel, “Age Structure” (estimates below thirty are plausible but hypothetical). Garland, “Age,” finds thirty-four years the average for wives, and 46.5 for husbands, in burial epitaphs; in Jewish burials, the average age of skeletons was thirty-eight years (Nagar and Torgeë, “Characteristics”). Against extrapolations from some other societies, ancient Mediterranean nutrition may have been better than is often supposed (Kron, “Anthropometry”; Borowski, “Eat”). Arrian *Ind.* 9.1 seems to suppose forty a low life expectancy (but he was not an Egyptian peasant).

942. Cf. the wisdom of age in, e.g., Aeschines *Tim.* 24; Diod. Sic. 1.1.4; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.15.1; Phaedrus 4.2.16–19; Plut. *Old Men* passim, *Mor.* 783B–797F; Pliny *Ep.* 3.1.10; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.11; *t. ‘Abod. Zar.* 1:19; for local knowledge, Lysias *Or.* 23.5, §167. There were, of course, exceptions (e.g., Aeschylus frg. 224 in LCL, 2:501, from Stob. *Anth.* 3.29.24; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.3; *Sent. Syr. Men.* 170–72; cf. Wis 4:8–9). Not all remained mentally keen into old age (Iambl. *V.P.* 5.21), but some did (e.g., Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 76; Paus. 1.18.8; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.9.494; see much more fully Keener, *John*, 102–3).

943. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.259; 23.616–23; Aeschines *Tim.* 25; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.7.10; Arist. *Pol.* 2.7.5, 1272a; Diod. Sic. 2.58.6; 21.18.1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.15.1; Cato *Coll. Dist.* 10; Livy 5.25.3; 6.24.7; Val. Max. 2.1.9–10; 4.5.ext. 2; Pliny *Ep.* 8.14.4, 6; 8.23.3; Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.206; Diog. Laert. 8.1.22; Men. *Rhet.* 2.4, 394.22; Iambl. *V.P.* 16.69; maxim in *SPap* 3:476–77, §116. The practice is not limited to Mediterranean cultures; cf. the Confucian emphasis noted in, e.g., Kwon, *Corinthians*, 201.

944. Philo *Good Person* 87; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.206; *Ant.* 3.47; 18.12; *War* 2.145; 4 *Bar.* 5:20; *Sent. Syr. Men.* 11–14, 76–93; *Syr. Men. Epit.* 2–4; cf. Wis 2:10; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:14/15; Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 230. Prominent local leaders tended to be those who were aged, as both literary texts (Jos. *Life 266*; *Let. Aris.* 32, 39; Acts 14:23) and inscriptions (CJ 1:294, §378; 1:426, §581; 1:432, §595; 1:433, §597; 2:9, §739; 2:45, §790; 2:46, §792; 2:53, §801; 2:76–77, §828a; 2:77, §828b; 2:79, §829; 2:137, §931; cf. l:xxxxvi–l:xxxvii) testify, as does the LXX (e.g., Josh 24:1; Judg 8:14, 16; 11:5–11; 21:16; Ruth 4:2–11; 2 Chr 34:29; Jer 26:17; Jdt 6:16; 7:23–24; 13:12; 1 Macc 1:26; 7:33; 11:23; 12:35; 13:36; 14:20, 28; 2 Macc 13:13; 14:37). Among Amoraim, see Cohen, “Criterion”; cf. Perelmuter, “Strength.”

945. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.47.1; Aeschines *Tim.* 23–24; Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.64.142.

946. Plut. *S. Sp.*, Lycurgus 14, *Mor.* 227F; Xen. *Mem.* 2.3.16. Roman society also demanded giving way to one’s elder (Cato *Coll. Dist.* 10; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.47.1).

947. Ps.-Phoc. 220–22; *t. Meg.* 3:24. Appropriate etiquette for rising before elders is discussed in *y. Bik.* 3:3, §§4–6.

948. Cic. *Att.* 14.21; 15.1; Mus. Ruf. 17, p. 108.28; *Sib. Or.* 1.299–304. Rabbis opined that Abraham introduced old age to distinguish fathers from sons (*Gen. Rab.* 97 MSV) or because, like all forms of suffering, it atoned for sin (cf. *b. Sanh.* 107b, bar.; *Gen. Rab.* 65:9). Deterioration of beauty was one problem (Cic. *Att.* 15.1; *Sent. Syr. Men.* 397–401), although occasionally it could be supernaturally arrested (*Jos. Asen.* 22:7). Stoics maintained, however, that virtue was what mattered (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11q, pp. 98–99.4–7).

Egypt, forty in Midian, and forty leading Israel (*Sipre Deut.* 357.14.1).⁹⁴⁹ A tradition that antedates Stephen makes Moses forty-two when he struck the Egyptian (*Jub.* 47:10–12), a number easily rounded to forty.⁹⁵⁰ Later rabbis divided the lives of the famous sages Hillel, R. Johanan ben Zakkai, and R. Akiba into three periods of forty years each, expressly following the model of Moses (*Gen. Rab.* 100:10).

That it “arose in Moses’s heart”⁹⁵¹ to visit his brothers” may suggest that he intended to use his position to act on their behalf. “Brothers” underlines his connection and identification with them rather than with Pharaoh’s household (see comment on Acts 9:17; cf. Heb 11:24–25). The term “visit” is more deliberate than Exod 2:11 requires, but Luke has good reason to use it (cf. 3:16; 4:31 LXX). In Luke-Acts it usually refers to God’s salvation-historical activity (Luke 1:68, 78; 7:16; Acts 15:14; the other two uses seem not theologically pregnant); the allusion here might be to God’s visiting Israel through the prophet Jesus in Luke 7:16.⁹⁵² The likelihood that Luke wants his audience to view his description of Moses’s mission here as foreshadowing that of Jesus is increased by the recurrence of “his siblings, the children of Israel,” together again in Acts 7:37, where Moses tells the children of Israel that God will raise a prophet like him.⁹⁵³

“Striking down” the Egyptian (7:24) refers to Exod 2:12.⁹⁵⁴ The one καταπονουμένω (“worn down by work”) might evoke the sound of 2:11 LXX, κατανοήσας . . . πόνον; more important rhetorically, Acts 7:24 balances the sounds of the verb ἀδικούμενον and the noun ἐκδίκησιν. The sentiment that vengeance should be left to God appears often in Jewish literature (Deut 32:35; cf. Luke 21:22).⁹⁵⁵ Some Greek thinkers also eschewed vengeance.⁹⁵⁶ Whether Luke presents the attempt to execute vengeance as wise or as acting before the proper time, however, Luke clearly interprets Moses’s action as just.⁹⁵⁷ His attempt to execute vengeance might prefigure the Passover, when God himself would do it (Exod 12:12; cf. 7:4; Num 33:4; Deut 32:35).⁹⁵⁸

The term for “mistreat,” ἀδικέω, appears twice in Exodus, referring in this case to Exod 2:13—an Israelite wronging his fellow Israelite (5:16 refers to Egyptian

949. The tradition used Moses as a paradigm for Hillel, R. Johanan ben Zakkai, and R. Akiba, dividing each of their lives into three sets of forty years (for this tradition about R. Akiba, see also *Abot R. Nat.* 12, §29 B); cf. three periods of ten years implied in *Hom. Il.* 24.765. For this and other traditions, see Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:679–80 (followed by, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 75; Haenchen, *Acts*, 281; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 53; Bock, *Acts*, 291).

950. See Charles, *Jubilees*, lxxxiv, esp. n. 1. *Jubilees* treats the equivalent of Moses’s adulthood, however, as age 21 (*Jub.* 47:10). *Jubilees* also breaks down Joseph’s 110 years into segments (46:3).

951. The expression about thoughts arising in the heart appears idiomatically elsewhere in Luke (Luke 24:38; cf. elsewhere in the NT at 1 Cor 2:9), and the phrase might be Septuagintal (2 Kgs 12:4 [12:5 LXX]; Isa 65:16; Jer 3:16; 51:50 [28:50 LXX]; 32:35 [39:35 LXX]; 44:21 [51:21 LXX]; Ezek 38:10), as Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 75, suggest.

952. It can apply to the glory of martyrdom in Wis 3:7.

953. “Children of Israel” and “brothers,” indeed, appear nowhere else together in the NT, though they appear in the LXX—Deut 3:18; Judg 20:13; 1 Kgs 12:24; here probably Exod 2:11.

954. Strangely, the verb ἀμύνομαι appears only here in the NT, is not from Exod 2 LXX (it appears only nine or ten times in the LXX, four of them in deuterocanonical books, among the later translated; cf. standing for what is just in 2 Macc 6:20), and may have been rare in Koine (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 168); the likeliest source might be Israel’s vengeance on its enemies in the wilderness period (Wis 11:3), perhaps related to the drowning of the Egyptians (10:19).

955. Sir 28:1–8; Jos. *War* 5.377; Ps.-Phoc. 77; 2 *En.* 50:4; *Sipra Qed. pq.* 4.200.3.4–5; Rom 12:14, 19; cf. CD IX, 3–6; Flusser, *Judaism*, 199, 485; Stendahl, “Hate.” But contrast human vengeance in, e.g., Jdt 9:2; 1 Macc 2:67; *Test. Levi* 5:3. It is indeed an angel that “strikes down” Herod, Peter’s oppressor (Acts 12:23), and Jesus disapproves of such “striking,” even to protect him (Luke 22:49–51).

956. Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.10c, pp. 60–61.8–10. More commonly, however, Greeks would think vengeance appropriate (e.g., Hermog. *Inv.* 1.1.97).

957. This appears more explicit in Acts than in Exodus (cf. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 68).

958. “Avenge” could recall the need to avenge killed slaves in Exod 21:20, but this would not fit the story here (Exod 2:11; 21:21; Lev 19:18).

oppression but in a later setting). Stephen quotes from this passage in Acts 7:26–27 (it appears otherwise in Acts only at 25:10–11), making clear its function here: Egyptians oppressed Israelites, but Israelites also oppressed one another.⁹⁵⁹

Others also portrayed Moses's act as noble. Artapanus, writing as a Greek-speaking Jew in second- or third-century B.C.E. Egypt, claimed that Moses killed the Egyptian in self-defense (Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.18). Josephus quietly omits the episode, claiming that Moses fled because the Egyptians were jealous of him and wanted to kill *him* (*Ant.* 2.254–57). Philo claims that Moses killed “the cruelest of all” the Egyptians, who beat Israelites “to the point of death . . . subjecting them to every outrage. Moses considered that his action in killing him was a righteous action. And righteous it was that one who only lived to destroy men should himself be destroyed” (*Mos.* 1.44 [LCL 6:299]).⁹⁶⁰ Later rabbis claimed that before Moses slew the Egyptian, he considered the future, making sure that none of his potential descendants would ever become a proselyte (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 2:12).⁹⁶¹ Rabbis justified it by various means; some even claimed that Moses slew him by means of the divine Name (*Exod. Rab.* 1:28–29).

Stephen's portrayal of Moses acting for justice would resonate with Luke's audience, reducing the potential offense of Gentiles viewing it as an act of anti-Gentile, Jewish nationalism.⁹⁶² Exodus also suggests that Moses acted for justice, but, in contrast to Acts 7:25, before experiencing his call and perhaps not in faith, since it contrasts Moses's youthful act with God's later use of him when he was humbled (cf. Exod 3:11; Num 12:3).⁹⁶³ Some other traditions also portrayed Moses as deliberately already acting for justice for his people (Philo *Mos.* 1.40–46), but the idea that Moses already knew something of his call is the speech's foreshadowing technique (cf. Acts 7:35). It enables Stephen to further highlight the motif of a deliverer misunderstood and rejected by his people (7:35–37).⁹⁶⁴

VIII. A REJECTED DELIVERER (7:25–28)

Some of Moses's own people fail to appreciate and embrace his God-ordained role for them (7:25). For Luke, even those closest to Jesus often did not understand him (Luke 2:50; 9:45; 18:34) without divine aid (24:45). In this context, however, Stephen most likely alludes to his people's misunderstanding, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26–27; Isa 6:9–10). Moses's “supposing”⁹⁶⁵ that his people would understand highlights their misunderstanding.

Because Stephen emphasizes the connection between Moses and Jesus (Acts 7:37), he lays emphasis on Moses's role in saving his people (7:25, 35; cf. Jesus in 5:31).⁹⁶⁶ The redeemer would be misunderstood (3:17; 7:25) and denied (3:13–14; 7:35)

959. From some thinkers' standpoint, only the worthless harm one another (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11b, pp. 64–65.7–9).

960. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 53, rightly finds “the tendency to excuse Moses by assigning a noble motive to his actions . . . more marked” in Philo's version.

961. See more fully Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 182.

962. It is important to note that deliverance did not come through this action of Moses, either here or in Stephen's biblical source. Luke does not want Jesus or his followers to be identified with revolutionaries (cf. 5:36–37 and comments there), especially if, as I suggest in the introduction, he writes some time in the wake of the consequences of the Judean revolt against Rome.

963. Most commentators mention the contrast with Exodus (e.g., Kilgallen, *Speech*, 68–69; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 169; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 376–77; Johnson, *Acts*, 126).

964. The idea of a rejected leader fits ancient Israelite experience but, more widely, Mediterranean (e.g., Corn. Nep. 19 [Phocion], 4.3; 23 [Hannibal], 1.2) and, perhaps finally, human experience; followers typically both extol and criticize leaders unrealistically.

965. The verb $\nu\omicron\mu\iota\zeta\omega$ often applies to a contrary-to-fact supposition (e.g., *Test. Jud.* 19:4), including six of its seven uses in Acts.

966. Commentators often note this (e.g., Richard, *Composition*, 336).

despite signs (2:22; 7:36).⁹⁶⁷ In Exodus LXX, only God is salvation and savior (Exod 14:13; 15:2; also Deut 32:15; 33:29); here the salvation comes “through” Moses, accurately enough.⁹⁶⁸ The language evokes the frequent use of σωτήρ and σωτηρία for Jesus as Savior in Luke-Acts (e.g., Luke 1:69; 2:11; Acts 4:12; 5:31; 13:23).

The term used here is σωτηρία; in Acts 7:35, Moses is called a λυτρωτής (“redeemer”), a NT hapax legomenon used in the LXX for God (Pss 18:15 [19:14 MT]; 77:35 [78:35]), though not exclusively (Lev 25:31–32). Cognates apply to God (e.g., 1 Kgs 1:29; Pss 25:11 [26:11]; 30:6 [31:5]; 129:7 [130:7]; Dan 6:27; Sir 51:2) and his deliverance of Israel (e.g., Pss 24:22 [25:22]; 110:9 [111:9]; Isa 63:4; Sir 50:24), including (most relevant here) from Egypt (Exod 6:6; 15:13; Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18; 2 Sam 7:23; 1 Chr 17:21; Neh 1:10; Isa 63:9; Mic 6:4).⁹⁶⁹ Josephus speaks of how the Egyptians were “saved” (ἐσωζοντο) by Moses (from the Ethiopians, *Ant.* 2.254); Moses’s father-in-law also recognized him as savior of his people (*Ant.* 3.69), whom he saved from their troubles (*Ag. Ap.* 2.157).

In Acts 7:26, Luke adds the term “appeared” (ὤφθη) to Exod 2:13 (in Exod 3:2 and 16:10, God or his angel “appeared”; cf. also Acts 7:2, 30, 35; 16:9), but this addition fits Moses as a type of Jesus the deliverer after the resurrection. We might think nothing of Moses’s having “appeared” to his people were not Luke’s normal use of ὄραω in the passive for supernatural encounters, usually either for angels (Luke 1:11; 22:43) or for Christ in glory (Luke 9:31; 24:34; Acts 13:31; cf. 9:17; 26:16).⁹⁷⁰ By this unusual wording, Luke again hints of a comparison with Christ.

That Moses tried to reconcile the antagonists (Acts 7:26) paraphrases Exod 2:13; “peace” is a familiar Lukan term (20 times), including with the sense of no hostility (Luke 11:21; 14:32; Acts 9:31; 12:20; 15:33; 24:2).⁹⁷¹ Jesus came to establish peace (Luke 1:79; 2:14; 19:38; Acts 10:36; though cf. Luke 12:51); peace is also what Israel would forfeit by rejecting him (Luke 19:42). The role of establishing peace between offended parties was a familiar one.⁹⁷² Enemies could be “reconciled” (Plut. *Cic.* 33.5);⁹⁷³ “reconciling” with one’s neighbors was virtuous.⁹⁷⁴ Generally, one party would seek forgiveness or reconciliation and the other (often the stronger party) would grant it.⁹⁷⁵ Reconciliation is often linked with friendship, which it is meant to achieve;⁹⁷⁶ some intellectuals opined that turning an enemy into a friend was a higher ideal than harming the enemy.⁹⁷⁷

967. Tannehill, *Acts*, 91.

968. Speaking of Moses as “saving” Israel or being its “redeemer” was, however, a natural enough extension (e.g., *Exod. Rab.* 1:22; 4:2).

969. Isaiah applies redemption language also to the new exodus (Isa 35:9; 41:14; 43:1, 14; 44:22–24; 51:11; 62:12; cf. Jer 31:11 [38:11 LXX]; 50:34 [27:34 LXX]).

970. Also visionary or other miraculous encounters in Acts 2:3; 16:9.

971. “In peace” (with or without the preposition) in the sense of security, wellness, or no hostility in Luke 2:29; 7:50; 8:48; 11:21; Acts 15:33; 16:36. In wish-prayer greetings, see Luke 10:5–6; perhaps 24:36.

972. E.g., Phil 4:3; Cic. *Att.* 1.3, 5, 10; Pliny *Ep.* 1.5.8; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.38; in politics, cf. Welborn, *Politics*, 70–71; some suggest it in 2 Cor 5:20, probably rightly (Särkiö, “Versöhnung”).

973. In personal rivalries, Marshall, *Enmity*, 42–43; in diplomacy, Fitzgerald, “Reconciliation,” 242–44 (following Breytenbach, *Versöhnung*; idem, “Versöhnung”).

974. Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5b.2, pp. 16–17.16–17.

975. Fitzgerald, “Reconciliation,” 249 (citing Libanius [*Epistolary Styles*] 63; Gen 50:15–21; P.Mich. 8.502.7–8; Demet. [*Epistolary Types*] 12); see also Fitzgerald, “Reconciliation,” 256. For steps involving cities, see Dio Chrys. *Or.* 40.16, 23.

976. Fitzgerald, “Friendship,” 334–37; Fredrickson, “Hardships,” 187; e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.11; 40.16. For this role in Paul, cf., e.g., Fryer, “Reconciliation”; Richards, *Letter Writing*, 203.

977. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 5.30.2; Diod. Sic. 21.21.9; Plut. *S. Sp.*, Ariston 1, *Mor.* 218A (Babbitt in the LCL note cites also Plato *Rep.* 1.9; *Crito* 10.49A ff.; *Gorgias* 469AB, 475BD); Hierocles *Love* 4.27.20 (in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 94); Iambl. *V.P.* 8.40; Diog. Laert. 8.1.23; Ps.-Phoc. 142; politically, cf. Suet. *Jul.* 73; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.23.

The vocative use of “men” (ἄνδρες, Acts 7:26) is not a familiar LXX pentateuchal expression,⁹⁷⁸ but it appears twenty-nine times in Acts⁹⁷⁹ and is a standard Hellenistic rhetorical flourish (see comment on Acts 2:14). Moses reminds them they are brothers in 7:26; Moses went to see his brothers in Exod 2:11, and Joseph told his brothers not to quarrel with each other (Gen 45:24). Exodus 2:13 has one wronging the other; Stephen here seems to claim that each is wronging the other, perhaps to emphasize all Israel’s need or to portray Moses as a sage;⁹⁸⁰ but probably the language is simply not precise, as in Acts 7:27 it becomes clear that Stephen also regards one as wronging the other and the former protests to Moses (perhaps as Israel’s leaders opposed Jesus more than did the rest of Israel [13:27]).⁹⁸¹

Members of God’s people “repudiated” (ἀπώσατο) Moses (7:27; see also 7:39), as a synagogue audience might also do to Paul later in the book (13:46). In the demand “Who appointed you ruler?” “appointed” (κατέστησεν) links Moses here (and in 7:35) with Joseph, appointed over Egypt in 7:10, and probably also with Stephen’s own appointment in 6:3 (as a servant of Jesus, Luke 12:42). Luke may have also had this Exodus passage in mind when he wrote about Jesus asking who had “appointed him” as judge or ruler over his audience (Luke 12:14). The speech quotes exactly the words of the oppressor Israelite from Exod 2:14 LXX (though not completing his words), probably because the point here is emphatic, as is clarified further by its repetition in Acts 7:35.⁹⁸² The repetition of Moses’s rejection in 7:35 provides a literary *inclusio* around Moses’s revelation and commission from God and another prophet who would arise like him. Acts 7:28 is an exact quote from Exod 2:14 LXX.

The exodus narrative implies that only Israelites were witnesses to Moses killing the Egyptian, suggesting that it was an Israelite who betrayed this information to the Egyptians (Exod 2:12–15). Only one person directly challenges Moses in Acts 7:27,⁹⁸³ but even in Exodus this rejection prefigures many more rejections Moses will experience. The rejection of Moses was not an isolated instance in the Moses story but reflects a pattern that extended into repeated complaints in the wilderness (e.g., Exod 16:3; 17:3; Num 13:31–33; Jos. *Ant.* 3.13, 295–97, 307; 4.1, 14–63).⁹⁸⁴ After initial warnings, these rebellions often led to divine punishment (e.g., Num 11:33; 14:29, 37; Jos. *Ant.* 3.299, 311–14; 1 Cor 10:5–10), as rejection of Jesus would lead to Jerusalem’s demise (Luke 19:42–44; 21:22). It is not Stephen who rejects Moses (Acts 6:11); that precedent of rejection is followed by his accusers.

e. Moses the Alien (7:29–34)

Moses fled Egypt and apparently abandoned his desire to liberate his ungrateful people, only to be sent back there by God for this very purpose. Stephen

978. Though cf. 1 Esd 3:18, 24; 4:2, 14, 32, 34; 4 Macc 8:19; Jer 4:4; 19:3.

979. The only three additional NT references, all from the Pauline corpus, address husbands.

980. Some commentators (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 53; Johnson, *Acts*, 126–27) contrast Moses’s taking sides in Exod 2:14 (and *Jub.* 47:11) with his apparent neutrality here, comparing sages who were thought to bring peace (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 22, 38; 77/78; Lucian *Dem.* 9; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.15; 6.38).

981. Intervening between fighting brothers (*Sent. Syr. Men.* 133–38) or others (Prov 26:17) was not advised unless with good reason, especially if the contestants were one’s own friends (Diog. Laert. 1.87).

982. Though cf. also how closely *Jub.* 47:12 follows Exodus. *Exod. Rab.* 1:30 offers different reasons for rejecting Moses (such as his age or his association with Egypt). *Inclusio* (e.g., Ps 8:1, 9; Matt 5:3, 10; comment on Acts 28:30) can appear in narratives; see Hermog. *Inv.* 4.8.195; elsewhere in Luke-Acts, in Luke 15:24, 32.

983. Later tradition claimed that Dathan and Abiram were the ones who informed on Moses for killing the Egyptian (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Num 16:26; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 352, cites *Exod. Rab.* 1:29).

984. Most ancient readers would probably have viewed negatively those who revolted because they underestimated a leader (e.g., Polyb. 5.41.1, where the ruler is young). Ancients censured revolt against good leaders (Balch, “Genre,” 14).

highlights this point: God revealed himself on “holy ground” outside both the “Holy Land” and the midst of his people to send his servant into foreign territory with his message.

I. THE FUGITIVE FATHER (7:29)

This verse continues the end of Exod 2:14, though no longer as an exact quote. Stephen’s omission of “feared” might be significant (cf. Heb 11:27); the change of ῥῆμα to λόγος is not significant. Perhaps slightly more significant is the change of ἀναχωρέω (ten times in Matthew but in Luke-Acts only at Acts 23:19; 26:31) to the more graphic verb φεύγω, which seems more amenable to Luke’s style (cf. Luke 3:7; 8:34; 21:21; Acts 27:30; a cognate applies to apostles fleeing persecution [Acts 14:6]; cf. a different cognate in Luke 21:36; Acts 16:27; 19:16).

Artapanus claims that Moses slew the assassin whom Pharaoh sent to kill him (Artapanus frg. 3 [Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.18]). Josephus reports that Moses fled, but because the Egyptians were jealous of him (*Ant.* 2.256). Philo mentions both the killing and the plot against Moses (*Mos.* 1.43–46); Philo then treats “Moses’ exile as a kind of philosophical retreat” (1.47–48).⁹⁸⁵ Hebrews suggests that he fled *without* fear (Heb 11:27; contrast Exod 2:14). Later rabbis claimed that Pharaoh struck Moses with a sword but he proved invulnerable; that the sword slipped, killing the executioner instead; that his assailants struck an angel instead; or that Pharaoh’s counselors became blind and deaf, enabling his escape.⁹⁸⁶

“Settled in the land of Midian” is Luke’s paraphrase of Exod 2:15. Becoming “an alien” (πάρροικος) fits the theme of such alienation in Acts 7:6: one cannot depend on a particular land as a permanent home.⁹⁸⁷ The speech focuses on this section of Exodus because it allows the emphasis on Israel’s deliverer being rejected by his own people (perhaps also in part because Moses, like Joseph after his rejection, has some association with Gentiles).

Moses’s first son is born in Exod 2:22, and he has at least two by 4:20 (though only one circumcision appears in 4:25) and 18:5; explicitly, there are two in 18:3, 6; 1 Chr 23:15. Just as Joseph had two sons by an Egyptian wife (Gen 41:50; 46:27; 48:1), Moses in exile (because of fellow Israelites’ betrayal, as in Joseph’s case) intermarried, as did Timothy’s Diaspora mother (Acts 16:1–3).

After following a few verses closely, Luke skips the details between Moses’s flight and his revelation, except this one. Why does the text digress, of all things, to mention Moses’s two sons? This observation comes in a clause introduced by “where” (οὗ), connecting it closely with the location where this took place and thereby implying Moses’s interethnic marriage (Exod 2:21–22; cf. Num 12:1, though that woman is Nubian). This marriage and the bearing of two sons are not incidental to a theme of reversal in the Exodus account. When Moses left his role as a prince in Egypt,⁹⁸⁸ he married a Midianite priest’s daughter and named his first son for his stay in a foreign land (Exod 2:22). By contrast, when Joseph was exalted to the position of prince over Egypt, he married an Egyptian priest’s daughter and named his first son for God making him forget his homeland (Gen 41:51). Joseph probably ultimately had more than two sons (48:6), but Genesis

985. Johnson, *Acts*, 127, noting the parallel with the Therapeutae (Philo *Contempl.* 18–32).

986. *Exod. Rab.* 1:31; *Deut. Rab.* 2:26–27; *Song Rab.* 7:5, §1.

987. Moses was twice an alien—first, in Egypt, which was not his ancestral or promised land, and second, in Midian (Smith, “Refutation”).

988. I do not intend this in the sense of the modern fiction of a supreme role competing with the next pharaoh; pharaohs often had exceptionally large households, as was the case with both Seti and Ramses (Sarna, *Exodus*, 31).

mentions two (41:50; 46:27; 48:1, 9) who would become tribes in Israel (48:5); Moses had two sons in Exod 18:3, 6.⁹⁸⁹

Although this speech does not mention Joseph’s interethnic marriage, Stephen’s connection between Joseph and Moses suggests other potential connections that could be developed from the same story. These Diaspora, interethnic marriages by two of Israel’s greatest leaders challenged the ethnocentrism and geographic chauvinism of Stephen’s accusers.⁹⁹⁰ Luke *might* see here a foreshadowing of a justification for the Gentile mission: rejected by their own people, God’s agents could turn to the Gentiles until the fuller time of their own Jewish people came (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28).

This parallel was one of the parallels that the Pentateuch drew between the Moses and Joseph stories, and the emphasis on the Gentile priests as the fathers-in-law is probably not coincidental. Although Genesis does not specifically report Aseneth’s father embracing Joseph’s God, elsewhere in pentateuchal narratives some Gentile priests glorified the God of Abraham and Moses:

Melchizedek (Gen 14)	Jethro (Exod 18)
Priest of God Most High (14:18)	Priest of Midian (18:1)
Brought bread and wine (14:18)	Fellowship meal (18:12)
Blessed be God, who helped you against your enemies (14:20)	Blessed be YHWH, who saved you from your enemies (18:10)

Although Stephen does not note this parallel, it is part of the literary and theological repertoire from which he could have drawn.

II. THE BURNING-BUSH THEOPHANY (7:30–31)

Forty years is necessary for a forty-year-old Moses (Acts 7:23, expressed in a parallel manner) to achieve his biblical age of eighty (Exod 7:7).⁹⁹¹ The appearance⁹⁹² of the angel “in the burning flame of the bush” recalls Exod 3:2 LXX closely, except that Stephen adds “in the desert of Mount Sinai,” a familiar LXX pentateuchal phrase,⁹⁹³ but not from this context. The addition is not unnatural but, given the summary’s economy for words, may be emphatic, underlining that a “holy place” (Acts 6:13; 7:33) will be outside the Holy Land. The appearance in Exodus might recall for its first readers Abraham’s encounter with God in Gen 15:17 (which mentions fire); in Acts, a connection with Abraham’s revelation may be strengthened by the proximity of his story (Acts 7:2–8), though Luke does not rehearse the specific account of Gen 15:12–21.

The “wilderness” is integral to the story, but it is possible that its mention provides a further challenge to a holy-land theology such as was articulated by Judean rabbis more than a century later: in the exceptional times when God spoke outside the Holy Land, it was in a pure place near water.⁹⁹⁴ These later rabbis had to specifically defend why God gave his law not in the Holy Land but in the desert (*Mek. Bah.* 5.92ff.; cf. Acts 7:33). More important, the pervasiveness of the wilderness in the rest of the story recalls a seminal period in Israel’s history but emphasizes the rebellion there

989. See fuller discussion of this in Keener, “Interethnic Marriages,” 30–33; idem, “Interracial Marriage,” 8; on Moses’s marriage more fully, 8–9; on Joseph’s, 6–7; cf. Samuel, “Acts of Philip,” 66.

990. Luke does not evoke the more negative cases (e.g., Deut 7:3; 1 Kgs 11:1–4; Ezra 9:1–4; 10:2–3); see discussion in the comment on Acts 16:1.

991. Cf. thirty-eight years in *Jub.* 48:1; Charles, *Jubilees*, lxxiv.

992. On ὄφθη here, see comment on Acts 7:2.

993. Exod 16:1; 19:1–2; Lev 7:38; Num 1:1, 19; 3:4, 14; 9:1, 5; 10:12; 26:61, 64; 33:15–16.

994. *Mek. Pisha* 1.63–64 (Lauterbach, 1:6), on Exod 12:1 (cited in Davies, *Paul*, 206n6).

(Acts 7:30, 36, 38, 42, 44; cf. 13:18).⁹⁹⁵ It may remind Luke's audience of the initial events of the promised new exodus in Luke 3:2, 4; 4:1 (cf. 5:16; 7:24; Acts 21:38).⁹⁹⁶ Though Exodus speaks of Horeb (Exod 3:1), "Sinai" (Acts 7:30, 38) is the more familiar name (Exod 16:1; 19:1–2, 11, 18, 20, 23; 24:16; 31:18; 34:2, 4, 29, 32).⁹⁹⁷

The angel of the Lord who appeared in the bush⁹⁹⁸ often spoke as God's representative in the OT.⁹⁹⁹ Later rabbis typically claimed that both God and the angel were in the bush,¹⁰⁰⁰ and later Christians often claimed the angel as a divine christophany, prefiguring the incarnate Christ,¹⁰⁰¹ perhaps inviting less rabbinic emphasis.¹⁰⁰² Artapanus apparently intensified the miraculous element in the story by replacing the burning bush with fire from the earth without any kindling material (frg. 3, Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.21).

For Stephen's and Luke's audiences, such visionary reports were not simply irrelevant history; they were paradigmatic for their own era (Acts 2:17). In describing Moses's amazement at the sight (7:31), Stephen transposes Moses's description to himself in Exod 3:3 into third-person narration; from here forward, Luke regularly employs the term ὄραμα (from 3:3 LXX) for visions or dreams experienced by God's servants or Cornelius, who was about to become one (Acts 9:10, 12; 10:3, 17, 19; 11:5; 12:9; 16:9–10; 18:9). As Moses saw the Lord's glory (albeit without Luke using δόξα) in 7:30–31, Stephen saw it in 7:55.¹⁰⁰³ The mention of the Lord's voice coming to Moses follows paraphrases and abbreviates part of Exod 3:4.

995. Cf. Mauser, *Christ in Wilderness*, 68. Orators could praise or blame people on the basis of "their willingness to be ruled" (Parsons, *Acts*, 99, citing Men. Rhet. *Epideictica* 3.360.10; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 2.9.2; Jos. *Ant.* 4.186–90).

996. For proposed Lukan exodus allusions, see further O'Toole, *Acts* 26, 106. Many suggest that Jesus's "exodus" in Luke 9:31 may also evoke Israel's exodus or Isaiah's new exodus (e.g., Yoder, "Exodus"), though it can mean "death" more simply (Wis 7:6, contrasting εἴσοδος at birth). Bailey, "Song of Mary," finds allusions to Exod 15 in Mary's song in Luke 1:46–55.

997. "Sinai" appears more than thirty times in the OT, about twice as often as "Horeb"; only the former appears in the NT (Gal 4:24–25). The identification is clear, e.g., by comparing Exod 3:1, 12 and Deut 1:6 with Exod 19:11 (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 169).

998. Missing in *Jub.* 48:1–2; *L.A.B.* 10:1–2 (Johnson, *Acts*, 128); cf. *4 Ezra* 14:1, 3. Josephus and Philo add a few details about the "thornbush" (Jos. *Ant.* 2.266; Philo *Mos.* 1.65–66). On the burning bush, see Luke 20:37 (from Mark 12:26). Samaritans also recognized the angel of the Lord, who in later Samaritan liturgical texts appears as Kebal; but this title is from the "Glory of God" (Fossum, "Angel in Samaritanism"). The laurel was sacred to Apollo at Didyma (Burkert, *Religion*, 86); Clarke, "Spaces," 263, calls it a bush, but while it can be a shrub, the laurel tree can also grow quite tall. In rabbinic sources, some kinds of bushes could harbor spirits (*b. Pesah.* 111b). Moses's bush (Exod 3:2–4; Deut 33:16), twice mentioned here (Acts 7:30, 35), was known enough to be mentioned without explanation (Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37; Jos. *Ant.* 2.276; 3.62–63; *4 Ezra* 14:3; *1 Clem.* 17.5; cf. Philo *Flight* 161; *Dreams* 1.194; *Mos.* 1.65, 67) and could appear in revelatory scenes evoking it (*4 Ezra* 14:1); God chose the burning bush because it was lower (hence humbler) than trees (*b. Šabb.* 67a; *Soṭah* 5a).

999. He spoke for God, but cf. Joseph's agent speaking for him in Gen 43:19, 23; 44:10; cf. human agents as "angels" or "messengers" in 4Q377 2 II, 11; 4Q545 1 I, 8–9, 17–18. But God could also be identified with his angel more clearly (Gen 48:15–16).

1000. Rabbis associated God's presence with this angel (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 354), whom they often associated with Michael (355). Michael was the best-known angel (and one of only two biblically named angels); e.g., 1QM IX, 16; XVII, 6–7; 4QS29 1 I; *1 En.* 9:1; 10:11; 20:5; 24:6; 71:3, 8, 13; *2 En.* 22:6; 33:10; *3 En.* 17:3; 44:10; *Sib. Or.* 2.215; *3 Bar.* 11:2–15:1 passim; *L.A.E.* 25:2; *Apoc. Mos.* 3:2; *Test. Ab.* 1:13; 2:13–14; 7:11; 8:4, 12 A; 4:6 (the first among angels); 14:7 B; *Gen. Rab.* 44:13; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 32:25; *Test. Sol.* 1:7; PGM 1.301; *Jude* 9; *Rev* 12:7.

1001. See Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 24. For Christ identified as an angel in some early Christian literature, see Juncker, "Christ as Angel"; Daniélou, *Theology*, 67, 117; Longenecker, *Christology*, 26ff; cf. perhaps Gal 4:14; 1 Thess 4:16. The practice was discontinued only in the fourth century because of exploitation by Arians (Daniélou, *Theology*, 117); cf. Ebionite use in *G. Eb.* frg. 6 (Epiph. *Her.* 30.16.4–5). For the Logos as the Lord's angel, see, e.g., Philo *Names* 87; *Flight* 5; *Dreams* 1.239.

1002. All three angels in Gen 18 were only angels in *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 18:1; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 18:2.

1003. Interpreters naturally understood the flame with reference to the Lord's glory (e.g., *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Exod 3:1, 6). Ezek. *Trag. Exag.* 99 claims that the divine word (λόγος) shone to Moses from the bush (for a discussion of Alexandrian and others' Logos theology, see Keener, *John*, 339–47, 352).

III. GOD'S COMMISSION (7:32–34)

God first introduces himself (Acts 7:32), in a way that emphasizes continuity with his prior revelation (as in 7:2–16); then God announces that the ground where Moses stands is holy (7:33) and sends Moses to pagan Egypt, where God will save his people (7:34).

In 7:32–33, Stephen inverts the sequence of Exod 3:5–6, perhaps to place God's self-introduction first (Acts 7:32) for rhetorical purposes or for identifying the passage (Luke 20:37), possibly to draw attention to "holy place" in Acts 7:33 (though it is not clear how this move would do so, since it is not technically climactic); or perhaps the change is not significant. God here identifies himself to Moses in terms of his servants the patriarchs; soon, in another theophany, the Lord Jesus will identify himself to Saul in terms of his relationship with his servants (9:4).

In 7:32, Moses was afraid to look (recalling Exod 3:6 though not using the LXX words). This fits the traditional dangers of having seen God (Exod 33:20; Judg 6:22–23; 13:22–23); shortly after Stephen's speech in Luke's narrative, Paul looked and was struck blind (Acts 9:8). (Greek and Roman sources sometimes emphasized God's invisibility;¹⁰⁰⁴ more consistently, Palestinian Jewish tradition emphasized it,¹⁰⁰⁵ as did Diaspora Jewish writers.)¹⁰⁰⁶ Stephen's God is a God to be found not primarily in the institutions emphasized by his accusers but in dramatic theophanies and demonstrations of power through signs and wonders, just as in Jesus's movement (e.g., 2:2–4, 17–18, 43; 6:8).

Luke is not the only early Christian writer to use ἔντρομος for Moses's response to a Sinai theophany (Heb 12:21).¹⁰⁰⁷ Philosophers were supposed to remain unafraid,¹⁰⁰⁸ but Luke's hellenization goes only so far, though the LXX upgrades Moses's attitude here to εὐλαβεῖτο. Trembling was an appropriately humble or awestruck response to divine revelation.¹⁰⁰⁹

Luke changes "God of your father" (Exod 3:6, Amram) to "God of your fathers" (matching the following "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"); the latter expression appears only slightly more often than the former in the OT (about fifteen times versus twelve), though the former applied most often to patriarchs in Genesis, but the latter expression was on the whole perhaps more familiar.¹⁰¹⁰ Certainly in Luke-Acts, this is Luke's preferred style ("God of our fathers" in Acts 3:13; 5:30; 22:14; 24:14). "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" would have been extremely familiar, not only from the

1004. Greek views seem to have varied (cf., e.g., Xen. *Mem.* 1.4.9; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.6.19; Plut. *Isis* 9, *Mor.* 354D; *Isis* 75, *Mor.* 381B; Char. *Chaer.* 1.14.1; cf. Plut. *Isis* 78, *Mor.* 383A; Dio Cass. frg. 1.6.3; Hippol. *Her.* 1.16); for the danger of seeing deities, e.g., Callim. *Hymns* 5 (to the Baths of Pallas), lines 98–102, 111–16; some writers suggested that only the pure intellect could apprehend or "see" the divine (Max. Tyre 11.9–10). Cf. some analogous ideas of God's transcendence in traditional societies (Mbiti, *Religions*, 64).

1005. 1QS XI, 20; 2 *En.* 48:5; *'Abot R. Nat.* 2, 39 A; *Sipra VDDen.* pq. 2.2.3.2–3; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 16:13; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Exod 33:23; *Tg. Onq.* on Exod 33:20, 23; see further Keener, *John*, 247–50, 423–24.

1006. E.g., Aristob. frg. 4 (Euseb. *P.E.* 13.13.5); *Orphica* long version 11–12; a line attributed to Euripides but possibly from a Jewish work, in Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5.14.121.1–3; Euseb. *P.E.* 13.13.47; Philo *Names* 7; *Creation* 69; *Spec. Laws* 1.47; 2.165; *Sib. Or.* 3.12, 17; frg. 1, lines 8–11; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.191; *Test. Ab.* 16:4 A; Rom 1:20; 1 Tim 1:17. Cf. the danger of beholding death in *Test. Ab.* 17:9–18:1 A; 13:15–14:5 B.

1007. This need not suggest direct borrowing, but it may be more than coincidence, reflecting a common retelling of the story.

1008. E.g., Mus. *Ruf.* 8, p. 66.10; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.2.9. Nevertheless, real speakers (Pliny *Ep.* 7.17.13; Lucian *Z. Rants* 41) and others might well tremble; it also could reflect indignation (Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.50.110) or mortal fear (Jdt 15:2; 1 Macc 13:2; 2 Macc 3:17).

1009. E.g., Dan 10:7, 11; cf. Savage, *Power*, 72–73.

1010. "God of our fathers" (never "our father") appears four times; "God of my father," four times, versus one "God of my fathers"; "God of his father[s]" is roughly even; but "God of their fathers" appears twenty times (and "God of their father" only once).

OT but from the first of the regularly recited Eighteen Benedictions.¹⁰¹¹ In Exod 32, in a scene partly inverting the revelation of Exod 3, God later is ready to destroy his people instead of delivering them; at that time, Moses reminds God of his promises to the patriarchs (Exod 32:13).

The quotation in Acts 7:33 is nearly identical to Exod 3:5 LXX (the change from λῦσαι to λῦσον is insignificant),¹⁰¹² with the slight possibility of influence from Josh 5:15 LXX (the only point at which it is closer than Exod 3:5, however, is the preposition ἐφ' versus Exodus's ἐν).¹⁰¹³ Others besides those familiar with the Exodus text would also understand the custom of some taking off footwear to respect a holy place.¹⁰¹⁴ Middle Eastern cultures remove sandals to signify respect or reverence; the removal of shoes before entering a mosque is a case in point.¹⁰¹⁵ Indeed, it could signify respect even for an honorable household. Servants would remove the shoes and wash the feet of a guest before escorting him to the banquet hall.¹⁰¹⁶ Sandals were normally made of leather, although other substances were also used;¹⁰¹⁷ see further comment on sandals at Acts 12:8; 13:25.

Stephen's emphasis in 7:33, as in much of the speech, is that God is not confined to Jerusalem's temple.¹⁰¹⁸ The "holy place" recalls the charge of 6:13 regarding the temple (as in 21:28; Matt 24:15; see comment on Acts 6:13).¹⁰¹⁹ The mentioning of God's plan to deliver his people (Acts 7:34) quotes much of Exod 3:7, plus lines from 3:8, 10.¹⁰²⁰ The mistreatment (κάκωσιν) of the people recalls that Pharaoh mistreated (ἐκάκωσεν) the people of Israel in Acts 7:19.¹⁰²¹ Exodus 3:7's "cry" (κραυγῆς) becomes "groan" (στεναγμοῦ) in view of the groaning of his people that God heard in Exod 2:24; 6:5 (the quotation suggests composite allusions to the context).¹⁰²² Acts 7:34 condenses much of the content of Exod 3:7–8 into three parallel statements of God's activity: he has seen, heard, and come down to deliver them.¹⁰²³ A midrashic reading

1011. For which see, e.g., Oesterley, *Liturgy*, 60. It was borrowed into Christian liturgy as well (*Apost. Const.* 7.33.2).

1012. "Loosing the sandals" of the Messiah (Luke 3:16; Acts 13:25) may be unrelated (both sandal passages are in Luke's tradition; cf. Acts 12:8), but C. Williams, *Acts*, 108, suggests a contrast: whereas Moses was reverencing God, John was reverencing Jesus.

1013. Cf. also Richard, *Composition*, 98.

1014. E.g., Iambl. *V.P.* 18.85; 23.105; *m. Ber.* 9:15; *Sipre Deut.* 258.2.2; *b. Ber.* 62b; cf. further Barrett, *Acts*, 361–62. Pallbearers did this as a sign of mourning during funeral processions (Safrai, "Home," 778, citing *y. Ber.* 3, 6b; *Naz.* 7, 56c; *Gen. Rab.* 96).

1015. Abbott, *Acts*, 87.

1016. Smith, *Symposium*, 27 (citing Plato *Symp.* 175A). This act would also prove more comfortable for the guest, however.

1017. See Le Cornu, *Acts*, 728.

1018. As has often been noted, e.g., Abbott, *Acts*, 87; R. Williams, *Acts*, 72; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 378.

1019. In the Greek of Acts 7:33, "holy" is feminine because it directly modifies "ground." Sacred mountains (cf. *Jub.* 4:26; *1 En.* 18:8; 24:2; 77:4; Heb 12:22; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 2:7, 15; 3:23; 27:27) appear also in Greek (cf., e.g., Ovid *Metam.* 1.212; Iambl. *V.P.* 3.15) and Canaanite (Albright, *Biblical Period*, 22) tradition.

1020. The phrase ἰδὼν εἶδον, following the LXX, renders an emphatic Hebrew construction in Exod 3:7; ἀποστείλω also derives from the LXX and is a "futuristic use of subjunctive" (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 171). Neh 9:9 (2 Esd 19:9; Soards, *Speeches*, 149) summarizes the same passage but less closely.

1021. The νῦν δεῦρω combination is familiar Koine (Gen 31:44; Num 22:6, 11; 1 Kgs 1:12; 2 Kgs 7:9; Neh 6:7; cf. Num 24:14); "into Egypt" may come from the later commission in Exod 4:19 (cf. 4:20, 21). God's promise of deliverance in Exod 3:4–10 might parallel his heavenly voice of deliverance for the promised seed in Gen 22:11.

1022. Paul used this noun and its verb cognate in a new-exodus context (Rom 8:23, 26, probably playing on Exod 2:23 as well as birth pangs). The cries of God's people may precede redemption also in Luke-Acts (Luke 2:37–38; cf. 1:10, 13), followed by a rejected deliverer (though it would be different at the second coming, Luke 21:28, 36).

1023. For God earlier "coming down" in the world of Exodus's audience (before Exod 3:8), see Gen 11:5, 7 (on which see comment at Acts 2:5–13); within Exodus, he also comes down on Sinai (Exod 19:11, 18,

might connect God seeing his people here with God seeing their disobedience in Exod 32:9 (which uses “this people” rather than “my people” in the context of God calling them Moses’s people; cf. 32:7, 11). Stephen will soon mine that context (Acts 7:41). Because a long elapse of time (here forty years, Acts 7:30) sometimes barred prosecution,¹⁰²⁴ Moses’s past offense may now be viewed as forgotten.

Given the comparison between Jesus and Moses in the context (7:37), Luke may link Moses’s call vision with that of Jesus (Luke 3:21–22)¹⁰²⁵ and certainly, soon after, with Paul’s (Acts 9:4–16). For “deliver,” see comment on Acts 7:10. Luke often employs ἀποστέλλω for divine sending, whether for Jesus (Acts 3:20, 26; Luke 4:18, 43; 9:48), John (Luke 7:27), angels (1:19, 26), prophets (13:34; 20:10), Paul (Acts 22:21; 26:17), the Spirit (Luke 24:49), those sent by visions (Ananias in Acts 9:17; Cornelius’s agents in 10:20), the saving message (10:36; 28:28), or, here repeated twice, Moses (7:34–35).

f. Moses, Prototype of the Rejected Deliverer (7:35–43)

God sent the rejected one as deliverer (7:35), with signs and wonders (7:36); Scripture employed Moses as the pattern for one understood to be the ultimate deliverer (7:37). If Stephen was accused of undermining the law, he merely preached the promised successor to the true lawgiver. Moses had God’s living message (7:38), but he was rejected by his people (7:39), whose hearts never came out of ancient Egypt’s paganism (7:40–42). By implication, the prophet like Moses would be a rejected deliverer who might also return and deliver in an unexpected way.

I. REITERATING MOSES’S REJECTION (7:35)

This verse recalls 7:27, emphasizing it and framing Moses’s call with his rejection. (Repeating a statement several times underlined it for rhetorical effect [e.g., Cic. *Quinct.* 16.52–53].) “This Moses” (Acts 7:35), derived from the Scripture quotation in 7:40 (Exod 32:1, 23), probably recalls for the reader the recent and specifically Lukan expression “this Jesus” (Acts 1:11; 2:32, 36; also 9:22; 17:3).¹⁰²⁶ Like a powerful rhetorician, Stephen hammers home his point that the very one whom Israel rejected was the deliverer whom God appointed for them: “*This* [τοῦτον] Moses whom they disowned . . . *this* [τοῦτον] is the one God sent to be your ruler and deliverer” (7:35); “this one [οὗτος] led them forth” (7:36); “this one [οὗτος] is the prophesied prototype of the prophetic deliverer” (7:37); “this one [οὗτος] who mediated God’s own message” (7:38).¹⁰²⁷ Those hearing the speech in Greek would not miss Stephen’s (hence Luke’s) emphasis here.¹⁰²⁸ “This Moses” is not only the

20; cf. 24:16; 34:5). Luke applies the same common Greek verb to the Spirit’s descent (Luke 3:22), a sheet descending from heaven (Acts 11:5), or misinformed belief that deities have descended (14:11), but there is no evidence that Luke makes deliberate use of this language from Exodus in those places.

1024. E.g., Hermog. *Issues* 44.10–12. Cf. discussion of analogies to a “statute of limitations” in comment on Acts 28:30–31.

1025. C. Williams, *Acts*, 108. But Luke’s language, unlike Mark’s (Mark 1:10), is not clearly visionary. Would some have read his language in light of the story known from Mark?

1026. With Johnson, *Acts*, 27. The expression appears with Jesus only in Acts in the NT.

1027. Other scholars also noted the repetition of “this” (Gaventa, *Acts*, 126–27). On anaphora (repeatedly starting with the same term), see, e.g., Mus. Ruf. 14, p. 92.35–36 (repeating the same verb at the beginning of three successive clauses); Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 86 (noting *Rhet. Her.* 4.13.19); Rowe, “Style,” 131; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 579; Lee, “Translations: Greek,” 779 (noting Prov 13:9; Job 28:23–24); cf. Demet. *Style* 5.268. That the opening instances differ from the others (shifting from the accusative to the nominative case) would not ruin the rhetoric (polyptoton, too, was a rhetorical device; Rowe, “Style,” 132–33, citing Hdn. *On Figures* [RG 3:97, line 10]; Cic. *Clu.* 60.167).

1028. Ironically, the later Passover haggadah may play down Moses’s role (Henshke, “Haggadah”; Avioz, “Moses”; cf. John 6:32), but the abundance of Moses haggadah in early Jewish literature warns against pressing

one whom God called, but also the one who had *not* made himself anything; the context in Exodus (after 3:10, some of which Stephen has just paraphrased) goes on to narrate Moses's protests against God's calling (Exod 3:11; 4:1, 10, 13; cf. 3:13).

The expression that the Israelites "denied" Moses does not specifically echo the LXX¹⁰²⁹ but relates to Israel's denial of Jesus (3:13–14; cf. 4:16),¹⁰³⁰ and it was standard early Christian language for repudiating faith (Luke 12:9; 22:57; John 13:38; 2 Tim 3:5; Titus 1:16; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 2:22–23; Jude 4; Rev 2:13; 3:8) or perhaps renouncing privileges (Moses in Heb 11:24). They repudiated Moses as "ruler and judge"; God, by contrast, made him "ruler" (chain parallelism?) and "redeemer."¹⁰³¹ Although Stephen's audience in the story world may not yet catch the connections with Jesus, they would be obvious to Luke's informed audience (see Acts 5:31).¹⁰³² Stephen must emphasize the angel's help (7:35, 38; see comment on Acts 7:38–40) because Moses, for all his significance as a prototype, was not Jesus, one exalted to God's right hand (7:55–56).

II. AN EXODUS WITH SIGNS (7:36)

Some Romans knew of the exodus from a later, Egyptian version, in which Egypt's king removed the Hebrews because they were "hateful to the gods" and caused a plague (Tac. *Hist.* 5.3). Luke, however, assumes his implied audience's knowledge of the earlier, biblical version of the account. This verse closely recalls Exod 15:22. Moses¹⁰³³ "led" Israel (15:22) as he had his flock (3:1) (though those verses do not have ἐξήγαγεν but instead ἦγαγεν). The forty years could recall Exod 16:35, but if it implies an allusion to Israel's guilt and unbelief, it alludes to Num 14:34; 32:13 (or the faithfulness of God's leading and provision, Deut 2:7; 8:4; 29:5).

Exodus also links the "signs" in Egypt with those in the sea.¹⁰³⁴ The "Red Sea" designation reflects the LXX¹⁰³⁵ and most subsequent sources (Heb 11:29; Philo *Mos.* 1.165; 2.1; 1 *Clem.* 51.5), though they apparently understood this as the Persian Gulf (1 QapGen XXI, 17–18; Jos. *Ant.* 1.39).¹⁰³⁶ Greeks used the phrase for "all eastern waters," including the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and even the Indian Ocean.¹⁰³⁷

The final deliverer who would be like Moses (cf. Acts 7:37) could be expected to perform signs as Moses did (cf. 7:36). The conjunction of "signs and wonders" almost

it into the background here. Some scholars date many elements of the Pesach haggadah to the period between the second temple's destruction and the Mishnah (Kulp, "Origins"; Hauptman, "Haggadah"); others emphasize its final medieval form (Leonhard, "Älteste Haggada"; cf. Carmichael, "Haggadah," 343, though supporting earlier tradition); in any case, it is post-NT (Safrai, "Religion," 809; Manns, "Pâque"; Stemberger, "Pesachhaggada"; pace Finkelstein, "Documents"; Wright, "Midrash," 417).

1029. It appears only in Gen 18:15; 4 Macc 8:7; 10:15; 12:27; 16:16; 17:9.

1030. Cf. Jesus's twofold title in Acts 3:14 and title as founding prince in 3:15.

1031. Only here in the NT; in the LXX, never of Moses (Lev 25:31–32; God in Pss 19:14; 78:35; see comment on Acts 7:25); for the judges, the LXX uses σωτήρ in Judg 3:9, 15; Neh 9:27, though it employs this title more commonly for God. As redeemer, Moses foreshadowed the eschatological redemption (Luke 1:68; 2:38) through Jesus (24:21).

1032. E.g., Cribbs, "Agreements," 55. Other possible echoes are less significant for this point: God "sent" Moses (familiar language from the LXX and early Judaism) with "the hand of the angel" (perhaps Exod 23:20 LXX, where God sends an angel); the angel "appeared in the bush" (Exod 3:2–4).

1033. "This man" continues the description of Acts 7:35 (cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 283; Exod 10:7; very common in Lukan style).

1034. *Bela'* appears in both the serpent confrontation (Exod 7:12) and the sea (15:12), bounding the plagues, and the staff is used in both (7:9–10; 14:16, 26; see Currid, *Egypt*, 85).

1035. Exod 13:18; 15:4, 22; Deut 11:4; Josh 2:10; 4:23; 24:6; Judg 11:16; Neh 9:9; Pss 106:7–9, 22 (105:7–9, 22 LXX); 136:13, 15 (135:13, 15); Jdt 5:12–13; Wis 10:18; 19:7; 1 Macc 4:9.

1036. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 379. In earliest tradition it was more likely "a marshy region of the eastern Delta" or "any marshy lakes in the Isthmus of Suez" (Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 214–15; see further 199–22). The moist climate of the Nile Delta virtually obliterated documents from this area, limiting our external controls on researching the biblical exodus narrative (cf. Kitchen, *Reliability*, 246, 255).

1037. Warmington and Salles, "Red Sea."

explicitly evokes the exodus narrative, as throughout the biblical literature (Exod 7:3; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:3; 34:11; Neh 9:10;¹⁰³⁸ Pss 78:43 [77:43 LXX]; 105:27 [104:27]; 135:9 [134:9]; Jer 32:20–21 [39:20–21]; Bar 2:11; Wis 10:16) and sometimes Jewish tradition dependent on it (*Jub.* 48:4).¹⁰³⁹ It also applies, however, to signs performed by Jesus (Acts 2:22), the Twelve (2:43; 4:30; 5:12), Stephen (6:8), and Paul (14:3; 15:12). (This may be why works that Exod 7:3 attributes to God are applied more loosely to Moses here, as in the wording of Ps 105:27.)¹⁰⁴⁰ Those resisting Stephen's message should notice the pattern, for Stephen and Jesus worked signs as Moses did.

The "forty years" recalls Israel's extensive sojourn in the wilderness (Acts 7:42; 13:18), a delay occasioned by sin, which lengthened what should have been an eleven days' journey (Deut 1:2; cf. the observation of *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Deut 1:2). But if disobedience merely delayed and did not prevent God's purposes for Israel in Moses's day, neither would it ultimately thwart God's purposes for Israel through Jesus (Acts 3:19–21).¹⁰⁴¹

III. THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES (7:37)

Luke apparently adapts the LXX, especially by moving "like me" to a more emphatic position at the end of the sentence, underlining the continuity with Moses here.¹⁰⁴² Some scholars have contended that the idea of a messianic figure being like a new Moses is a purely Samaritan idea, reflecting this speech's Samaritan roots.¹⁰⁴³ This passage was certainly important in Samaritan expectation; the Samaritan Pentateuch placed Deut 18:18 near the Ten Commandments in Exod 20.¹⁰⁴⁴

But that the idea was ever uniquely Samaritan should be doubted unless some elements of Jewish theology previously borrowed it from the Samaritans. A Qumran text (4Q175 I, 5–10) links it with at least one messianic text (Num 24:15–17).¹⁰⁴⁵ (See at length comment on Acts 3:22.)¹⁰⁴⁶ Indeed, Moses parallels in the Joshua and Elijah narratives suggest that already in ancient Israel Moses had become in some ways a paradigmatic prophet. Even had there been no such ideas in the milieu or (more likely) had early Christians not known them, early Christians would surely have noticed this text in their Bibles and found it useful for their purposes. Only a limited number of texts lent themselves to such uses.

In what ways would the final Moses be like the first one?¹⁰⁴⁷ Although Stephen mentions signs (Acts 7:36) and other connections, the most prominent connection,

1038. Soards, *Speeches*, 149, emphasizes 2 Esd 19:10 (= Neh 9:10) because of the chain of parallels he finds with this passage (not all equally convincing, since Neh 9 also echoes Exodus).

1039. Elsewhere in the OT or the LXX, only Isa 8:18; 20:3 (relating to Egypt but in a different period); Dan 4:2–3; 6:27; Esth 10:9 LXX; Wis 8:8. Without the full formula, cf. Exod 4:21; 11:9; Num 14:22; Deut 11:3; Josh 24:17; Pss 78:12; 106:7; Philo *Mos.* 1.91.

1040. So Conzelmann, *Acts*, 54 (citing also *Jos. Ant.* 2.276).

1041. Paul also speaks of Israel's disobedience as delaying the consummation in his own day, but he attributes this disobedience to God's sovereign purpose of allowing a delay for the Gentile mission to be fulfilled (Rom 11:11–27).

1042. Kilgallen, *Speech*, 78.

1043. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 61; Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 73. Cf. comments in Longenecker, *Christology*, 34.

1044. Bowman, *Documents*, 21.

1045. For discussion, see Gaster, *Scriptures*, 444–46; Brooke, "4Q175." Xeravits, "Moses Redivivus," even thinks it implied in 11QMelch II, 15–21. As Marshall, "Acts," 563, notes, the citation is closer to Deut 18:15 than to 18:18.

1046. As Borgman, *Way*, 292, notes, Acts 7:37 evokes the new-Moses theme already found in Peter's speech.

1047. The use of $\omega\varsigma$ suits a simile here (cf. Acts 11:5; with $\omega\sigma\epsilon\acute{\iota}$, 2:3); similes were recognized in ancient rhetoric (Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.8.2; Anderson, *Glossary*, 38).

which applies also to Joseph, is the idea of a deliverer rejected by his own people (7:51–52).¹⁰⁴⁸ Jesus's rejection was no complete surprise, no failure in God's plan, but rather fulfilled Scripture (13:27; cf. Isa 53:1–4). We should recall that ancient writers did not believe that they were creating such parallels from whole cloth, but that they found in such historical patterns evidence of divine design (e.g., Plut. *Demosth.* 3.2; see the commentary introduction).¹⁰⁴⁹

Some scholars argue that the lack of extensive parallels with Moses in the Gospel suggests that the new-Moses traditions in Acts 3:22 and 7:22 stem from pre-Lukan sources.¹⁰⁵⁰ Whether or not they stem from pre-Lukan sources, Luke makes much of the idea in Acts 7 (and something of it in 3:22); it is Lukan even if it may also be pre-Lukan. (That he makes comparatively little of this analogy in his Gospel might simply suggest his greater historical restraint there than here.)

IV. PREFERRING EGYPT'S IDOLS TO MOSES'S LAW (7:38–40)

Moses brought Israel the very oracles that Stephen now stood falsely accused of repudiating, yet it was Israel—those whose traditions Stephen's accusers now leveled against the prophetic figure Stephen—that had, from the start, repudiated Moses's message, preferring the ways and idols of Egypt. Using the consensus of God's people as the standard for interpreting God's word, rather than God's word as the standard for evaluating the faithfulness of God's people, could thus prove a dangerous enterprise (when the consensus departed from Scripture). Stephen's appeal to Scripture in a way that violated consensus ought not, therefore, to be dismissed; he is in any case clearly not against the law (6:13–14).

Various Jewish traditions amplified Moses's mediatorial role (Philo *Mos.* 2.166);¹⁰⁵¹ this might be a way, as in Acts 7:53, of glorifying the law's value.¹⁰⁵² But more clearly and critically, it furthers the parallel between Moses and Christ. Moses "received oracles"¹⁰⁵³ for Israel; Christ "received" (though a different term) the promise of the Spirit for his followers (2:33). The mention of "living" oracles¹⁰⁵⁴ might emphasize divine reality against the mere letter; "living" was often a description of God. ("Living God" contrasted especially with idols [see comment on Acts 14:15], relevant in the following context here.)

Jewish tradition elaborated Moses's ascent to receive the law (see also comment on Acts 2:33). Moses ascended higher than the sun and moon (*L.A.B.* 12:1). Angels

1048. On Jesus's death as fulfilling some rejected-prophet motifs, cf., e.g., Cunningham, *Many Tribulations*, 339.

1049. See discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:561–74. Anecdotally, I may note (in addition to anecdotes in *ibid.*, 566) that while narrating my wife's story and deleting much material for lack of space, we preserved the earlier elements that we saw could foreshadow later ones. In so doing, we had narrative cohesiveness in mind, but we did not invent any of the elements.

1050. E.g., Aune, *Prophecy*, 155; see comment on Acts 3:22.

1051. Johnson, *Acts*, 130 (citing also Tannaitic tradition). Such mediation is clear in *b. Ned.* 38a (R. Jose b. Hanina), where God gave the law only to Moses but he shared it with Israel. Cf. Greeks claiming laws from the gods (Plato *Laws* 1.624A; Aphth. *Progymn.* 14, "On Introduction of a Law," 53S, 47R); "godlike" lawgivers (Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 96.24); ideal lawgivers who were of divine parentage (Lucian *Anach.* 39) or spoke directly for the gods (cf. Pythagoras's "law" to his followers in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.1), though the more mundane conception was more common (cf. MacDowell, "Nomothetai"). Qumran apparently envisioned prophets beyond Moses as lawgivers (Jassen, "Presentation," esp. 335).

1052. So Kilgallen, *Speech*, 82–83.

1053. The term often applies to Scripture (e.g., Ps 119 [118 LXX]:11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 103, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 158, 162, 169, 170, 172; Wis 16:11; Rom 3:2; Heb 5:12; *1 Clem.* 53.1) as well as continuing prophecy (1 Pet 4:11; Jesus's sayings in Ign. *Phil.* 7.1; Papias frg. 3.1, 15–16; 5.1; 6.1).

1054. Cf. life-giving oracles in Ps 118:50, 116 LXX (119:50, 116 ET); John 6:63; cf. words of the living God in Jer 23:36.

tried to prevent Moses's ascent to heaven to receive Torah, but God gave him success (*b. Šabb.* 88b).¹⁰⁵⁵ His ascent may have even divinized him in some Hellenistic Jewish interpretations (Aristob. *fig.* 4).¹⁰⁵⁶ Stephen gives this ascent no attention (contrast perhaps Acts 2:33).¹⁰⁵⁷

The LXX often translates *qahal* as συναγωγή but sometimes also as ἐκκλησία (as here, 7:38);¹⁰⁵⁸ Luke's description of the "congregation" of Israel thus fits the LXX (and secular usage, 19:32). But for Luke's audience, it may also connect the congregation in the wilderness with the church; Moses was with the first church (cf. 5:11; 8:3; 9:31).¹⁰⁵⁹ Scholars often note that the Qumran scrolls speak of God's "congregation."¹⁰⁶⁰

Exodus does not mention an angel involved in the giving of the law on Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38; though one is promised for the future in Exod 32:34; 33:2), but it might be inferred midrashically from the previous experience on Sinai (Exod 3:2) or the many angels at the revelation of the law in Deut 33:2 LXX.¹⁰⁶¹

Israel's "unwillingness" (Acts 7:39) might reflect Deut 1:26 but is probably simply Luke's own language.¹⁰⁶² Israel's disobedience in the wilderness is portrayed no less harshly in CD III, 6–12.¹⁰⁶³ Hebrews 3:7–11 also emphasizes the people of Israel's disobedience during their formative period in the wilderness (though Hebrews emphasizes a heavenly tabernacle rather than the defilement of the earthly one as here; Heb 8:2; 9:11–12, 23–24). Israel's continuing disobedience will climax Stephen's speech (Acts 7:53; cf. Luke 16:29–31). The rejection of the prophets (also Luke 11:47–49; 13:34) offers a paradigm for what Jesus (11:50; 13:33–34) and his followers (6:23; 11:49) should anticipate (see comment on Acts 7:52).

People's interior faith becomes an important issue in the speech. On "their hearts," compare the Jewish notion of the heart's intention, a notion apparently emphasized in at least Pharisaic circles (it is unknown whether the Sadducees or most Hellenists emphasized this).¹⁰⁶⁴ The same concept appears at Acts 7:51; the context includes others with evil hearts (5:3–4; 8:21–22), including Stephen's enemies (7:54); contrast Moses's heart in 7:23.

1055. In later versions, angels also sought to slay Moses on his descent afterward (*Exod. Rab.* 42:4); Moses battled various giant angels to receive Torah and escaped the river of fire (*Pesiq. Rab.* 20:4; cf. Greek *Phlegethon*). Cf. also the legions of angels in 3 *En.* 15B:2 (appendix in *OTP* 1:303).

1056. Second century B.C.E., in Euseb. *P.E.* 13.13.5; but it is possible that the divine splendor refers to God. Cf. Scott, "Ascent," 448–50; Fletcher-Louis, "4Q374."

1057. Cf. probable Johannine polemic against this tradition or its abuse in John 3:11–13; see discussion in Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 91; Nicholson, *Death*, 98; Petersen, *Sociology*, 5; Keener, *John*, 562–63; esp. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 295–97.

1058. New Testament scholars regularly note the connection between *qahal* and ἐκκλησία (e.g., Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:38; Foakes-Jackson and Lake, "Development," 327–28; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 54; Richardson, *Theology*, 285; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:629).

1059. See Dunn, *Acts*, 95 (citing Deut 9:10; 18:16; 23:1).

1060. Using *qahal*, Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 121; Brown, Donfried, and Reumann, *Peter*, 92; Harrington, *Matthew*, 29; using *dt*, Pike, "Congregation." This is true even though some individual instances of "congregation" terminology may be disputed (as in Golb, "Qadmoniot," on *yhd*).

1061. The LXX removes an angel (reading "presence" as a substitution for the angel) in the exodus summary of Isa 63:9 (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 172); in Deut 33:2, it makes angels explicit where Jewish readers would probably infer them; cf. their agency in Jos. *Ant.* 15.136. Angels at Sinai are a prominent legend in the later rabbis (see comment on Acts 7:53).

1062. Soards, *Speeches*, 151, emphasizes the idea in 2 Esd 19:16–17. Later sources continued to recount their refusal to enter the land, leading to forty years of wandering (e.g., Qur'an 5:24–25).

1063. Johnson, *Acts*, 130. Josephus also appears to highlight Israel's rebellion against Moses (see Damgaard, "Brothers," suggesting that Josephus parallels Moses with himself; if correct, this could offer a partial analogy to Luke paralleling Moses to Jesus).

1064. See, e.g., *m. 'Ab.* 2:9; *b. Ber.* 13a; rabbinic discussions of *kavanah*, on which see Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 95; Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 272–94; Pawlikowski, "Pharisees"; cf. also Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.183, 217 in Vermes, *Religion*, 32.

So unattached and ungrateful were the people that not long after Moses had left them, they wanted an animal idol (7:40); Stephen might have argued that if this was the case after a few weeks of Moses's absence, how much more in later generations? How did an animal idol mean turning back to Egypt? As noted in more detail below, Egypt was known for its animal deities, including cow deities.¹⁰⁶⁵ Well before (and after) Stephen's day, northern Mediterranean polytheists often derided Egyptians for their animal images (see discussion below). The request for "gods" (plural) reflects the LXX (and is a possible way to read the Hebrew *elohim*).

V. ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY IN THE WILDERNESS (7:41–43)

Part of Israel's repudiation of Moses was in asking for an Egyptian-type animal deity as soon as he went missing (7:40);¹⁰⁶⁶ Stephen here develops this theme of Israel's idolatry in the wilderness, making special use of an earlier interpretation of the wilderness by the prophet Amos (7:42–43). Luke recalls that Israel could mix idolatry with divine worship, just as God calls Gentiles to turn from idols (14:15; 17:29–30); such reminders feed into his emphasis on the Gentile mission, since God is no respecter of persons (10:34–36; cf. Luke 3:6, 8).

In Acts 7:41, Stephen develops Exod 32:4 LXX, but the wording is specifically calculated for the point he will make; whereas the LXX makes "calf" (μόσχος) the object of the verb "make" (ποιέω), here Stephen coins a new term, "to calf-make" (μοσχοποιέω, so far attested only in Christian literature; so BDAG), rhetorically implying the weight of a deed worthy to have its own designation thereafter. (This may reflect the repetition of the conjunction of the two terms in Exod 32:4, 8, 20, 35.)¹⁰⁶⁷ Word coinage could be used for emphasis.¹⁰⁶⁸ Further, ἐμοσχοποίησαν . . . τῶν χειρῶν prepares the reader for what is to come (χειροποιήτοις in Acts 7:48).¹⁰⁶⁹ That term was normally applied to idols in the LXX, emphasizing the foolishness of worshiping what humans create (e.g., Lev 26:1, 30); subsequent Jewish writers also applied this language to the folly of idolatry (e.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.606, 618, 722–23; see more fully comment on Acts 7:48). A major feature of anti-idolatry polemic was the reminder that idolaters worshiped what they had made, not the one who had made them (Ps 115:4–8; Isa 40:18–20 [with 40:21–23]; 46:6–7; Jer 1:16).¹⁰⁷⁰

When Stephen mentions the idolatrous "works of their hands" (Acts 7:41),¹⁰⁷¹ however, he is already thinking ahead to 7:48 (which readers accustomed to using *gezerah shevah*, the linking of key terms, would especially quickly connect to this verse): God

1065. For Egyptian bovine deities, see, e.g., Currid, *Egypt*, 111; closer to Luke's period, Lewis, *Life*, 94.

1066. *Lev. Rab.* 22:8 suggests that Israel had served idols already in Egypt. This is a logical inference; the Sinaitic inscriptions probably suggest that many Semitic slaves worshiped Canaanite deities, partly blended with Egyptian deities (Albright, *Biblical Period*, 13; cf. Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 146).

1067. Cf. Deut 9:21; Neh 9:18; Ps 106:19; Hos 13:2; of Jeroboam's calves in 2 Chr 11:15; 13:8. Luke's own style is also present; a calf, "slay," and "rejoice" all appear in Luke 15:23, though not, as here, in connection with idolatry (rather, implying a banquet provided by God, as in the context; Luke 14:12–24).

1068. E.g., Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.13.1. Except for emphasis, it was better to avoid word coinage (Fronto *Eloq.* 1.4; Rowe, "Style," 123).

1069. The compound ἐμοσχοποίησαν seems a graphic creation from ἐποίησεν (an almost identical-sounding form of the verb) and μόσχον in Exod 32:4 (the compound followed by Justin *Dial.* 19, 73, 102, 132; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 173), meant to highlight the compound employing the same verb root in Acts 7:48.

1070. Sometimes Gentile thinkers likewise critiqued the folly of worshiping one's artwork (Lucian *Sacr.* 11).

1071. "Works of hands" suited idolatry (Deut 4:28; 27:15; 31:29; 1 Kgs 16:7; 2 Kgs 19:11; 22:17; 2 Chr 32:19; 34:25; Isa 2:8; 37:19; Jer 1:16; 25:6; 44:8 [51:8 LXX]; Bar 6:51; Wis 13:10; Rev 9:20), though the work of one's hands also connoted labor (e.g., Gen 5:29; Deut 2:7; 24:19; Jdt 13:4; cf. Artem. *Oneir.* 1.42), like God's creation (Ps 8:6 [8:7 LXX]; 102:25 [101:26]; Heb 1:10; *Barn.* 5.10; 15.3). Joy should be at the work of God's hands (Ps 92:4 [91:5 LXX]); the rejoicing here probably alludes to the "playing" and singing of Exod 32:6, 18.

does not dwell in temples made with hands, which means that God's people could make an idol even of their temple (7:43). Stephen may likewise omit discussion of Israel's sexual immorality on that occasion (in contrast to Wis 14:12–27; 1 Cor 10:7–8) to highlight its idolatry in particular.¹⁰⁷²

Although some of Israel's neighbors employed bulls as throne pedestals for deities during the monarchy period,¹⁰⁷³ first-century readers would view calf worship especially in terms of Egyptian worship of gods wholly or partly in the form of animals.¹⁰⁷⁴ (This is especially relevant in view of the speakers attributing to the calf deliverance from Egypt in Acts 7:40.) Not only Jews¹⁰⁷⁵ but many Greeks and Romans¹⁰⁷⁶ mocked this as superstition, “especially after they heard of a Roman emissary who accidentally killed a cat and apparently was murdered by an Egyptian mob in 59 B.C.”¹⁰⁷⁷ Pliny the Elder complains about those who worship animals, especially “loathsome ones.”¹⁰⁷⁸ Philostratus's Apollonius attacks Egyptian worship of animal shapes, arguing that, by contrast, Greek portrayal of the gods as humans honors the gods.¹⁰⁷⁹ (One who wished to mock Greek myths might point out Zeus's transformation into a bull and other animals.)¹⁰⁸⁰ Maximus of Tyre thought even animal images acceptable if they turned people's thoughts toward God.¹⁰⁸¹ God specifically warned Israel to reject idols of animals (Deut 4:17–18).¹⁰⁸² The sin of the exodus generation is recapitulated by the golden calves of the northern kingdom (1 Kgs 12:28, 32; 2 Kgs 10:29; 17:16; 2 Chr 11:15; 13:8; Hos 8:5–6; 10:5; 13:2).¹⁰⁸³

Josephus, who writes apologetically for Gentile as well as Jewish readers, combines both forty-day fasts of Moses into one so that he can skip the golden-calf episode (*Ant.*

1072. Dunn, *Acts*, 95.

1073. Albright, *Stone Age*, 230; idem, *Biblical Period*, 60; idem, *Yahweh*, 198; Wright, *Archaeology*, 148; Bright, *History*, 238. Use of the bull to signify Baal in Israel might be attested as early as ca. 1200 B.C.E.; see Mazar, “Bull.” Earlier, for El as the “bull,” see, e.g., *ANET* 129–30; KRT A (i–ii) (*ANET* 143); AQHT A (i) (*ANET* 153); Kaiser, “Pantheon,” 24–25, 58; for Baal, Kaiser, “Pantheon,” 58, 218.

1074. People knew that Egyptians worshiped oxen (Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.71.184–86). Cf. the Egyptian god Apis (e.g., Strabo 17.1.31; Mazar, Avi-Yonah, and Malamat, *Views*, 1:171; in this period, Lewis, *Life*, 94; Brenk, “Image,” 227; more extensively, Vos, “Apis”); animal deities or totems in Brenk, “Image,” 230–31. For Egyptian deities as often human-animal hybrids, see Green, “Monsters,” 182; Anubis in Brenk, “Image,” 225 (the only hybrid in Pompeii's Isis temple); of course, Greeks had their own hybrids (e.g., Käppel, “Monsters”; Stenger, “Minotaurus”). On calf deities in the ancient Near East, see Wyatt, “Calf.”

1075. E.g., *Let. Aris.* 138; Wis 13:13–14 (but also mocking Greeks' human images); Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.81, 85, 128–29, 139 (happily excoriating Apion on a point where Josephus knows his hellenized audience will concur; he contrasts Moses in *Ag. Ap.* 2.75–76). Others knew that the Jews felt this way (so Strabo 16.2.35; Tac. *Hist.* 5.5).

1076. E.g., Plut. *Isis* 71, *Mor.* 379DE; Lucian *Parl. G.* 10–11; *Astr.* 7 (if genuine); Max. Tyre 2.5 (but cf. 2.10); see further Pearson, “Idolatry, Jewish Conception of,” 526–28. Paul may mock them in Rom 1:23 (Grant, *Gods*, 47; Pearson, “Polytheism,” 818). Apollod. *Bib.* 1.6.3 claims that the gods disguised themselves as animals in Egypt (ultimately leading Egyptians astray; cf. apparently Egyptian claims in Lucian *Sacr.* 14). Even where Greek and Egyptian culture interpenetrated in Egypt, of course, Egyptian practices remained (see Dhennin, “Necropolis”).

1077. Grant, *Paul*, 67 (citing Diod. Sic. 1.83.6–9). Egyptians lavished care on their sacred animals (1.84.1–8).

1078. Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.5.16.

1079. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.18–19. Max. Tyre 2.3 concurs that human images are nobler for deities than are animal images.

1080. E.g., Lucian *Dial. S.-G.* 305 (11/7, South Wind and West Wind 1); 306, still ¶1; 325–26 (15, West Wind and South Wind 2); 327, ¶3; *Dial. G.* 206 (6/2, Eros and Zeus 1); 207–8 (7/3, Zeus and Hermes 1); 269–71 (2/22, Pan and Hermes 1–2); Byzantine polemic in Ps.-Lucian *Patriot* 4.

1081. Max. Tyre 2.10. Such a position is ridiculed in Lucian *Parl. G.* 11.

1082. Van de Sandt, “Amos 5, 25–27,” thinks that Luke read the calf story (Exod 32) intertextually in relation to Deut 4:1–28.

1083. Israel's own defiling of her temple with carvings of images of animals in the late monarchy was not forgotten in the first century C.E.; see *Test. Mos.* 2:8–9. But in the LXX, Exod 20:3–6 prohibits only idols, not images not used for cultic purposes (Tatum, “Second Commandment”), and animals decorate Roman Jewish epitaphs (Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 196–97; though also “pagan mythological beings,” 228).

3.79–99, esp. 95–99); recording the disgraceful episode could have fed accusations, such as those of Apion, that Josephus would later need to challenge.¹⁰⁸⁴ Jewish writers with potential Gentile audiences sometimes omitted embarrassing episodes for apologetic reasons and, when they included them, needed to explain them.¹⁰⁸⁵ Philo omits Aaron's role (later rabbis also excluded his guilt), perhaps focusing on Israel's imitating an Egyptian bull deity.¹⁰⁸⁶

Those who directed their writings to Israel, however, found the narrative much more useful; Pseudo-Philo in *L.A.B.* 12:1–10 elaborates the narrative, highlighting Israel's unfaithfulness.¹⁰⁸⁷ Later rabbis, whose audience was Jewish and whose goals were more hortatory than apologetic, often emphasized, rather than played down, the story (*Tg. Neof.* 1 on Exod 32) and could be quite harsh (e.g., R. Simeon ben Yohai in *Exod. Rab.* 42:7). For the sin of the golden calf, R. Eliezer ben Jacob lamented, God could justly punish Israel until the resurrection of the dead (*'Abot R. Nat.* 34 A). Granted, they had some ways to tone down the strength of the sin. For example, some Amoraim attributed it to the proselytes and the mixed multitude (e.g., *Lev. Rab.* 27:8).¹⁰⁸⁸ Blaming a mixed multitude (Exod 12:38; cf. Lev 24:10; Num 11:4) made good sense in the ancient world, where citizens of a community might wish to deny that evildoers had been born there (Polyb. 2.55.9). It was also natural to point out that Satan (R. Joshua ben Levi in *b. Šabb.* 89a) or the evil impulse had incited Israel to worship the calf (*Song Rab.* 2:4, §1; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 32:22).

Although rabbis answered pagan critics apologetically,¹⁰⁸⁹ they knew the depth of sin in worship of the calf; they considered it the worst sin of Israel's history (R. Judah commenting on earlier tradition in *Sipre Deut.* 1.9.1–2).¹⁰⁹⁰ Such a condemnation made sense for those who viewed idolatry as the worst of sins (*Mek. Pisha* 5.40–41). Rabbi Eleazar condemned Israel's proneness to idolatry revealed by its worshiping the calf (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 53b). No generation escaped some punishment for the sin of the calf along with its own sins (*Lam. Rab.* 1:3, §28).¹⁰⁹¹ Moses proved Israel's accuser, rather than defender, on the occasion of the calf (*y. Yoma* 7:3).¹⁰⁹²

1084. See also H. St. J. Thackeray in *Josephus*, LCL, 4:362–63 n. c: "this is the most glaring exception" to Josephus's promise "to omit nothing" (*Jos. Ant.* 1.17). *Jos. War* 4.3 refers to the later calf idol of Jeroboam. This presumably reflects Josephus's apologetic for a Gentile audience (though Feldman, "Levites," suggests that Josephus's preference of priests over Levites also helps explain the omission).

1085. Philo and Pseudo-Philo omit the command to destroy Canaan's nations, and Josephus explains it in a manner intelligible to Romans (Feldman, "Command"; for Philo, see also Berthelot, "Conquest"). Josephus may play down negative elements of the biblical picture of Israelites during the exodus (Cheon, "Plagues"), the horror of the raped concubine (Feldman, "Concubine"), and problematic elements in Gen 18:22–33 and Gen 22 (Niehoff, "Two Examples"). Plutarch also could minimize elements of his portrayals (cf. Beneker, "Chaste Caesar").

1086. So Feldman, "Calf," on Philo *Mos.* 2.161–73, esp. 165, 169, though Feldman may overplay this point.

1087. But Fisk, "Scripture," notes that Pseudo-Philo uses biblical citations to provide the interpretive context (Gen 11:6 in *L.A.B.* 12:3; Gen 12:7 in *L.A.B.* 12:4).

1088. Cf. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:554–55; Longenecker, *Acts*, 140 (citing also *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:8; *Exod. Rab.* 42:6). As Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 192, notes, "The intent of the story is not to blacken the name of converts, but to whitenash the reputation of Israel" (citing also other sources). For the mixed multitude, cf. Exod 12:38; historically, see Bright, *History*, 134.

1089. And (at least in Amoraic sources) they believed that God exonerated Israel for the sin of the golden calf in the sight of the *nations* (R. Levi in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:7). God also forgave them when they repented (*Num. Rab.* 19:3; 20:20).

1090. Longenecker, *Acts*, 140, cites *b. Šabb.* 17a; *Meg.* 25b; *'Abod. Zar.* 5a; *Sop.* 35a; *'Abot R. Nat.* 18 B; 21 B; 30 A; *Exod. Rab.* 48:2; *Lev. Rab.* 2:15; 5:3; 9:49; 27:3; *Deut. Rab.* 3:10, 12.

1091. Cf. also judgment for this sin in *Num. Rab.* 7:4; 9:48–49. Park, *Herem*, 126–28, finds in the calf story a contextual allusion to *herem*.

1092. But in *Deut. Rab.* 1:2, only Moses's intercession saved them from destruction (as in Exod 32:10). Later the Qur'an emphasizes Israel's sin with the calf (Qur'an 2.51, 92; 4.153; 7.148; 20.88).

For the rabbis, the contrast with God's love for Israel made the Israelites' sin with the calf appear all the more heinous. While Israel was engraving idols below the mountain, God was engraving his gracious gift of the law above (R. Levi in *Exod. Rab.* 41:1). "Shameless is the bride," Ulla (a Babylonian Amora) lamented, "that plays the harlot within her bridal canopy!" (*b. Šabb.* 88b). Earlier Jews also confessed and repented of sins, including those of their ancestors (1QS I, 22–23); this could include confessing the sin of the calf (Neh 9:18; Ps 106:19).

Stephen's verdict that God "delivered them up" (Acts 7:42) also evokes themes intelligible in his milieu. A similar idea appears in Rom 1:24, 26, 28 with Paul's refrain that God "gave them over."¹⁰⁹³ Because God was sovereign,¹⁰⁹⁴ he could be said to lead the wicked astray or deliver them to their sin.¹⁰⁹⁵ (Some thinkers declared that the greatest punishment for sin was wickedness itself.)¹⁰⁹⁶

"Host of heaven" (Acts 7:42) and "star" (7:43) suggest astrological deities once especially associated with Babylon (cf. 7:43) but now widespread in the Greco-Roman world. Although Jewish people more often considered the stars angels,¹⁰⁹⁷ Romans sometimes viewed them as deities¹⁰⁹⁸ (or immortalized or deified humans);¹⁰⁹⁹ see excursus on astrology at Acts 2:9–11. Scripture had often condemned worship of the "host of heaven," the stars and planets (Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs 17:16; 21:3, 5; 23:4–5; 2 Chr 33:3, 5; Jer 8:2; 19:13; Zeph 1:5; also Jer 7:18 LXX; Isa 24:21; 34:4). The idolatrous perspective was, however, a misinterpretation, for the true "host of heaven" constituted God's court (1 Kgs 22:19; 2 Chr 18:18; cf. Neh 9:6; Dan 4:35; 8:10). Only Luke employs στρατιά in the NT, using it again in connection with heavenly hosts present for angelic worship at Jesus's birth (Luke 2:13). The term στρατιά also connotes military ranks (e.g., Exod 14:4, 9, 17; Deut 20:9); angels were sometimes thought to be arranged in military ranks.¹¹⁰⁰ Apparently, demons could also be described as so arrayed at times (Luke 8:30, though this may be a nickname; from Mark 5:9).¹¹⁰¹

On the wilderness, see comment on Acts 21:38. On the quotation formula "as it is written," see comment on Acts 1:20. "The book of the prophets" refers to the scroll containing the twelve "minor" prophets, including Amos (as here and in Acts 15:15) and Habakkuk (13:40).¹¹⁰² The question as Stephen phrases it contains μή,

1093. Paul refers to Gentiles, but using OT language concerning Israel's idolatry (cf. Rom 1:23 with Ps 106:20; perhaps Jer 2:11), perhaps to foreshadow his turn to Jewish sin in Rom 2.

1094. More finite pagan gods also could take mortals' sense from them to destroy them (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 18.311), but this was more selective and partisan.

1095. E.g., CD II, 13; 4Q266 18 V, 9–10; *Jub.* 21:22. Sometimes this is explicitly as judgment for prior choices (e.g., 1 Sam 2:25; Ps 81:12; Jos. *War* 5.343; 2 Thess 2:11; cf. Exod 8:15, 32; 9:34 with 9:12; 10:20; 14:4, 8; rabbinic tradition in Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 14).

1096. Plato *Laws* 5.728B; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 97.14; cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.30.72; Wis 2:21; Sir 4:19.

1097. 1QM X, 12; Philo *Plant.* 12, 14; cf. Ps.-Phoc. 71; 2 *En.* 4:1; 3 *En.* 46:1; for posthumous humans as angels like stars, see 2 *Bar.* 51:10; perhaps Dan 12:2; 1QM XII, 1; 1 *En.* 51:5; 104:2–4; 4 *Macc* 17:5; 1 *Cor* 15:41; as alive, *Sib. Or.* 5.512–31.

1098. Cic. *Nat. d.* 2.15.39–40 (in Stoicism); *Resp.* 6.15.15; Sen. *Y. Ben.* 4.23.4. Judaism mainly despised this approach (1 *En.* 80:7; *Gen. Rab.* 6:1; *Lev. Rab.* 31:9; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:1), which existed also among Israel's neighbors (2 Kgs 17:16; 21:3; 2 Chr 33:3; Jer 8:2; Bright, *History*, 161). Monotheistic Jews sometimes did borrow pagan language (e.g., Ps.-Phoc. 11, 71, 75, 163; Philo *Creation* 27), like later use of the zodiac in synagogue mosaics.

1099. Val. Flacc. 3.378–82; Ovid *Metam.* 14.824–28, 846–51; 15.749, 843–51, 875–76; Virg. *Aen.* 7.210–11; Val. Max. 3.2.19; 4.6.ext. 3; Lucan *C.W.* 9.1–9. Against earlier speculation (e.g., Cumont, *After Life*, 91–109), astral immortality was not specifically connected with the Mysteries (Gasparro, *Soteriology*, 98).

1100. 1 *En.* 69:3; 72:1; 75:1; 82:10–12; 2 *En.* 29:3; for angelic armies, cf., e.g., 2 Kgs 6:17; 1QM VII, 6; 4Q402 3–4 7–10; 4Q491 Manuscript B 1–3 3, 10; 4Q529; 2 *Macc* 5:1–4 (with 3:24–26); 11:8; 4 *Macc* 4:10; 2 *En.* 17:1; *Apost. Const.* 8.12.27; note especially "the Lord of hosts."

1101. Cf. (later) *Test. Sol.* 11:3, 5.

1102. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 173; Johnson, *Acts*, 236.

which “demands the negative response”;¹¹⁰³ this means that Israel was worshipping idols (including the golden calf) rather than the true God in the wilderness.¹¹⁰⁴ If this was hyperbole,¹¹⁰⁵ it nevertheless rested on a serious truth (see comment on Acts 7:41). In a tragic reversal of God’s purposes (7:7), the people’s worship (the verb *λατρεύω*, also used positively in 24:14; 26:7; 27:23; Luke 1:74; 2:37; 4:8) became idolatrous.¹¹⁰⁶

Stephen was not the only protestor against the temple cult to notice Amos’s denunciation of Israel’s rebellion in the wilderness (Amos 5:25–27, which Amos was applying to the idolatry of his own era);¹¹⁰⁷ it also appears in Qumran’s CD VII, 14–17.¹¹⁰⁸ This passage also contains Amos 9:11 (CD VII, 16; cf. Acts 15:16). For that matter, some of the Tannaim (including R. Akiba) doubted that the wilderness generation would enter the world to come (*b. Sanh.* 110b, bar.; cf. Ps 95:10–11; Heb 3:11, 18). Rabbi Eliezer reportedly taught that “an idol passed with Israel through the sea” (*y. Sukkah* 4:3, §5 [Neusner 17:100]).

The term *σφάγιον* (victim) does not imply a cultic meal, but *θυσία*, the commonest kind of sacrifice, normally does.¹¹⁰⁹ The vast majority of such sacrifices included feasts as part of the religious act.¹¹¹⁰ Although the LXX uses *θυσία* frequently (ca. 350 times), the pagan connotations of Amos’s accusation in Stephen’s speech might suggest an allusion especially to Exod 32:6, where Israel celebrated idolatrous worship and ate before the calf (32:4, 8), which Stephen mentions in Acts 7:40–41. Of the four uses of *θυσία* in Luke–Acts, the only other in Acts besides 7:42 is 7:41, indicating that the golden-calf incident remains in view.¹¹¹¹

Both the star and the tabernacle (7:43) merit further discussion. Some interpreters applied “star” in Num 24:17 messianically, even in relation to Deut 18:18 (see 4Q175, above).¹¹¹² Some later applied this oracle to Simeon bar Kokhba, but for the rabbis, the star (*kokhab*) proved to be a disappointing deception (*kozeba*; R. Akiba in *y. Ta’an.* 4:5, §10). The star here, however, relates to astral deities; see comment on Acts 7:42.

The exact sense of Amos’s prophecy is disputed, and its history of interpretation is diverse. Elsewhere the Hebrew consonants rendered “Sukkoth” appear as a place

1103. Amos 5:25–27 can read as a complaint against lack of sacrifices in the wilderness (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 55), but in view of testimony otherwise from the Pentateuch and texts such as Ps 50:8–10; Isa 1:11–15; 58:5–6; 66:3; Jer 6:20; Hos 6:6; and esp. Amos 5:21–24, Stephen reads it as sacrifices not acceptable to the Lord (so also others, e.g., Bock, *Acts*, 299).

1104. Johnson, *Acts*, 131–32.

1105. An accepted literary and rhetorical technique; e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 11, 1430b.16–19; Cic. *Or. Brut.* 40.139; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.7; Anderson, *Glossary*, 122–24. It was particularly apt for stirring emotion (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 5.16.1). Worshiping idols in addition to God, rather than instead of God, was still no small offense (cf. 2 Kgs 17:28–33).

1106. So also Tannehill, *Acts*, 90.

1107. God was not impressed with Israel’s sacrifices in the wilderness (Amos 5:25) because (5:26) they were coupled with idolatry; its offerings were worthless (5:22–23), for justice was what God required (5:24). Might “house of Israel” appear here for a *gezerah shevah*–type connection with the “house” in Acts 7:46, 47, 49? This would help explain “house of Jacob” in 7:46.

1108. The use of Amos quotes (see Acts 15:16–18) also used in the *Damascus Document* suggests a shared early Jewish tradition, although Luke himself works from the LXX and changes the readings on the basis of his knowledge of LXX terminology (Steyn, “*Vorlage* of Quotations,” 78–80) more familiar to his audience.

1109. Smith, *Symposium*, 68.

1110. *Ibid.*, 67–69 (citing as examples Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.97; Plut. *Table* 693E–694A).

1111. Israel’s idolatry in Exod 32 remained a subject of much discussion (e.g., *t. Soṭah* 6:6; *Exod. Rab.* 41:7).

1112. The application in 1QM XI, 6 could be to “messianic” leaders (cf. “anointed” in XI, 7) or to the elect. The quotation appears in CD VII, 18–19; 1QM XI, 6; 4Q175 I, 12 and probably in (reconstructed) fragments in 4Q266 and 4Q269. The star of Judah in *Test. Jud.* 24:1 is surely messianic, but it may be a Christian interpolation; Jesus is Jacob’s star in Jewish-Christian texts (Daniélou, *Theology*, 214–24).

name,¹¹¹³ a sense that does not work here. Some scholars suggest proper nouns: *Sikkuth* as an Akkadian name for the god Ninib (the planet Saturn), with the vowels of *shiqqūs*, “abomination” (hence “King Saturn”).¹¹¹⁴ *Kiyyun* could thus be “Assyrian *kaiwanu*, another name of Ninib, spelt (like *sikkuth*) with the vowels of *shiqqūs*.”¹¹¹⁵ Others doubt the names of deities here;¹¹¹⁶ more critical for study of Acts, neither name for Ninib (nor Ninib himself) would be known to Luke’s audience or most LXX readers. The sense of idolatry is clear (“your gods which you made for yourselves,” Amos 5:26; in the LXX, note ἐποιήσατε; cf. Acts 7:48).

Stephen’s speech follows the LXX, which speaks not of “Sikkuth” or “Kiyyun” but of “Moloch” (Μόλοχ) and “Raiphān” (Ῥαιφάν). Like the probable meaning of the MT, the LXX seeks to bring out the sense of idolatry, but by a different method; it reads *skvt* as the construct for *sukkah*, hence translating it as σκηνή, “tent,” but *mlk* as Moloch, hence “tent of Moloch.” (Tent-shrines were widely known, though more so among nomadic peoples and earlier in Egypt.)¹¹¹⁷ (“Raiphān”¹¹¹⁸ may resemble Repa, an Egyptian equivalent of Saturn, which would have made more sense for the Alexandrian translators than a more obscure Akkadian name of the same deity.)¹¹¹⁹ But the LXX ignores the Hebrew suffix “your” on *mlk*; if the Hebrew intended “tent of Moloch,” it is “tent of *your* Moloch”—that is, “tent of your god Moloch.”

One could more naturally revocalize *mlk* (given the plural suffix “your”) as “king” (hence “your king”), rather than the LXX’s “Moloch,” alongside *skvt* as “tent” (though *skvt* is not the expected form even in the construct); this approach is taken in CD VII, 15–16. Read as “tent of your king” (VII, 14), it could naturally be connected (and reversed) midrashically in Amos 9:11’s restored “tent of David.” That the *Damascus Document* links the two texts (CD VII, 14–17) is no surprise; the LXX also has σκηνή for both. The LXX has “tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Raipha” (Amos 5:26). Though condemning Israel’s apostasy (e.g., CD VII, 13) and idolatry (VII, 17, on Amos 5:26) just as the LXX does,¹¹²⁰ the *Damascus Document* interprets the passage differently than does the LXX; the royal tabernacle of Amos 5:26 stands for the

1113. Gen 33:17; Exod 12:37; 13:20; Num 33:5–6; Josh 13:27; Judg 8:5–16; 1 Kgs 7:46; 2 Kgs 17:30; Pss 60:6; 108:7; 2 Chr 4:17; associated with a deity in 2 Kgs 17:30 (but contrast LXX).

1114. *Melekh* being read with the vowels of *bōsheth*, “shame” (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 174; cf. idem, *Commentary*, 155; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 382; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 359).

1115. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 174. On the deity and on the Amos reference, see discussion in Stol, “Kaiwan.”

1116. See Prato, “Idolatry” (noting that neither the MT nor the LXX reads the text thus).

1117. Cross, “Tabernacle,” 49, 60; de Vaux, *Israel*, 296–97; Singer, “Hills,” 20; Bright, *History*, 127; Morgenstern, “Ark,” 208–9, 216; Kitchen, “Background,” 8–11; idem, *Reliability*, 275–80; Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 136–37; Averbeck, “Tabernacle,” 818–19; Keener, “Tabernacle,” 838; idem, “Worship”; Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 139–40.

1118. Some early manuscripts of Acts have Ῥομφαν instead of the LXX Ῥαιφάν, allowing that the latter occurrence here may be an early correction. Klein, “Romfan,” suggests that a copyist changed Luke’s correct form to Ῥομφαν because A and M appeared similar when later minuscules were being written; this proposal makes good sense if it can account for not only later manuscripts but the original of Sinaiticus in the fourth century. Bede *Comm. Acts* 7.43 has *Remfam*, a spelling needed to make a connection with pagan worship of Venus, the morning star. While one could explain *Raiphān* as a corruption of Hebrew terms (say, for “heal”), no Greek term is both relevant (radish? cabbage? punishing adultery?) and similar.

1119. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 174; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 359; Marshall, “Acts,” 565; Peterson, *Acts*, 261. Stephen himself might be expected to know this only if he was Alexandrian (Acts 6:9), and perhaps Luke and his ideal audience not at all, as they simply follow the LXX. A derivation from ῥάτω (“destroy”; or ῥομφαία, “sword”) would not explain the ending. (It is not an intelligible “translation”: one might take *kiyyun* as a feminine plural, but of what term? Or related to *kwn*, a verb for straightening, establishing, making firm, or drawing a line—again not easily relevant.) The similar Heb. term *riphin*, “light lattice work” (*t. Kil.* 4:5; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1476), is even less revealing. On Molech, see Heider, “Molech.”

1120. The document seems to portray only the Essenes as faithful Israel (CD III, 13–14; see “Essene Origins,” 55).

“books of the law” (CD VII, 14–15).¹¹²¹ Israel’s disobedience would cause the law (and a righteous remnant, VII, 13–14) to be exiled to Damascus, leading therefore to an Essene settlement there.¹¹²²

Rabbis and other ancient interpreters who had access to various readings usually selected the reading, translation, or interpretation that best fit their point. Even had Stephen known the Hebrew *Sikkun*, his use of the LXX interpretation σκηνή (tent; shared in Hebrew by CD VII) plays into his midrashic application. Israel’s singular “tent” in its wilderness¹¹²³ wanderings (the quoted context in Amos 5:25; Acts 7:42) could be only the tabernacle, but Amos called this “tent” (Heb. *Sikkun*) an idolatrous image (Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43). Thus, with this reading, Israel made an idol even of the holy tabernacle! Stephen then uses the interpretive principle that later rabbis called *gezerah shevah* to link together texts on the basis of a common key word or sometimes (as in Acts 7:46) a cognate. He mentions more favorably the “tabernacle” or “tent” in 7:44 as divinely designed by God (but so were all creations that people perverted into idols). In 7:46, however, David asks to provide a dwelling (σκήνωμα) for God,¹¹²⁴ which in 7:47 turns out to be the temple that Solomon built.

The danger of idolatry in the wilderness, signaled by Amos, had been transferred to the Jerusalem temple. In the context of answering the charge that he denounces the temple (6:11–14), Stephen prepares to respond that his accusers have made an idol of it. Interestingly, the only other use of σκηνή in Acts is another Amos quotation in 15:16 (“David’s tent”), which might be understood as implying a new temple and/or (more likely) a fresh Davidic dynasty (see comment there).¹¹²⁵ Although he does not make the connection explicit, Luke’s usage probably presupposes an early Christian link between the two Amos texts (possibly based on an exegetical tradition like CD VII, with “tent of the king” and “David’s tent”), though Luke here has contextual reason to follow the LXX’s “tent of [the idol] Moloch” rather than revocalizing the Hebrew as “tent of the king.”

Stephen reminds his hearers of exile for their sins (Acts 7:43). Israel’s idolatry merited exile, but while that judgment climaxed in Nebuchadnezzar’s generation, its roots were as old as the exodus. The authors or editors of Kings and Chronicles narrate the exile not in isolation but as the culminating judgment against Israel’s series of sins (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:7–23; 23:26; 24:3). Amos 5:25–27, the text Stephen chooses for comment on the wilderness wanderings, may also ground the coming exile to Assyria in disobedience that began in the wilderness.

What is oddest about Stephen’s version of the quotation is his “beyond Babylon.” Peshier application of Amos’s prophecy to contemporary idolatry led to a practical revision of its geography. “Beyond Damascus” in Amos referred to Assyrian exile;¹¹²⁶ a few centuries later, exile could be applied to Babylon and in the *Damascus Document* may refer to the community *in* (rather than beyond) Damascus.¹¹²⁷ When the people

1121. See Osten-Sacken, “Bücher der Tora.”

1122. Cf. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 82. Burgmann, “Nordemigration,” thinks the *Damascus Document* to be especially for émigrés from Damascus to Qumran.

1123. Particular sorts of demons were often associated with the wilderness as well (e.g., 2 Bar. 10:8; cf. Isa 13:21; 24:14 LXX; Tob 8:3; 1 En. 10:4; 4 Macc 18:8).

1124. Σκήνωμα is probably from Ps 132:5 (131:5 LXX), probably equivalent to σκηνή in 2 Sam 7:2; see Combrink, *Analysis*, 17.

1125. For observation of these connections, though with a different application, see Combrink, *Analysis*, 17.

1126. Damascus was in fact the first city judged on Amos’s list of nations (Amos 1:3–5), judged by Assyria, which lay, and carried captives, beyond it.

1127. One may read CD VII, 15 as “from the tents of Damascus” (conflating from the next line in Amos). Some, by contrast, take “Damascus” as a cipher for Babylon, hence for the community’s exilic origin (Davies, “Birthplace of Essenes”).

of Israel first rejected Moses, he went into exile (Acts 7:27–29); when they rejected Moses (and his law) again, they would be exiled (7:43).¹¹²⁸

“Beyond Babylon” might be a way of deliberately underlining an obvious pesher identification of “beyond Damascus” with Babylonian captivity and noting that the application now reached beyond that first Babylon. Amos’s “Damascus” referred to the Assyrian exile of Israel; Stephen alludes instead to Judah’s under the Babylonians.¹¹²⁹ In doing so, Stephen implies that the idolatry continued well beyond the era that Amos condemned. On the level of Luke’s audience, the oracle probably also points to the captivity inaugurated in 70 C.E. (Luke 21:24, not specified in parallel passages in Mark or Matthew), which revealed an exile not limited to Babylon.¹¹³⁰

In Acts 7:40–50, Israel focused on a house of worship while rejecting the deliverer and his instructions for true worship (7:27–39). God had “removed” or “resettled” Abraham to the land of promise (7:4) but would “remove” or “resettle” his descendants in a foreign land by exile (7:43).¹¹³¹ In Luke’s present application, Israel was rejecting the new Moses and hence faced exile again (Luke 21:22, 24). As many of his Jewish contemporaries also affirmed, the new “Babylonian” captivity was under Rome, a new “Babylon.”¹¹³² (“Babylon” was only one of several ciphers for Rome in early Jewish literature before¹¹³³ and after¹¹³⁴ Jerusalem’s fall, but it was one of the most natural and effective.) By this period, some Romans believed that most of literal Babylon had reverted to desert, apart from its walls and a few structures (Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.30.121–22).

g. God Does Not Need the Temple (7:44–50)

If Scripture showed that Israel practiced idolatry in the wilderness, even with a “tabernacle” (Acts 7:43), a tabernacle or temple might not profit Israel, and God certainly did not need it (cf. Jer 3:16; 7:4–15). Until Solomon’s day, Israel did not have even a stationary temple (Acts 7:47); nor, the prophet showed, did he need one (7:48–50). The temple was an accommodation to human need, but God desired pure worship, not simply a place or institution.

I. THE TABERNACLE (7:44–45)

“Tabernacle of testimony”¹¹³⁵ (7:44) contrasts with “tabernacle of Moloch” (7:43).¹¹³⁶ Likewise, the “form” (τύπον) God showed Moses on the mountain¹¹³⁷ contrasts with

1128. Johnson, *Acts*, 132.

1129. With, e.g., Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 64; Marshall, “Acts,” 565.

1130. Early Jewish texts show that Jews did not believe that Israel’s restoration had yet occurred (cf. Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 143–45), but most Judean Jews may not have seen themselves as still “exiled” before 70 (cf. Kim, *New Perspective*, 136–41).

1131. Tannehill, *Acts*, 90.

1132. Cf. 4Q163 6–7 II, 4–5; frg. 8–10; 4Q386 1 III, 1–2; *Sib. Or.* 5.143, 159–60 (contrast 5.434–46); 4 *Ezra* 3:28, 31; 2 *Bar.* 67:7; *Rev* 14:8; 17:5; 18:2; Assyria (by implication) in *Gen. Rab.* 16:4.

1133. Cf. “Kittim” in some Qumran scrolls; see excursus on God’s kingdom at Acts 1:3.

1134. Cf. “Edom” in later rabbis (with perhaps earlier antecedents; cf. 4 *Ezra* 6:7–10): *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 5:3; *y. Ta’an.* 4:5, §10; *Gen. Rab.* 37:2; 44:15, 17; 63:7; 76:6; 83:4; *Exod. Rab.* 31:17; 35:5; *Num. Rab.* 15:17; *Deut. Rab.* 1:16; *Eccl. Rab.* 5:7, §1; 11:1, §1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 10:1; 12:4; 14:15; further sources at Acts 2:16.

1135. The LXX Pentateuch uses the phrase more than 140 times; it appears only seven times elsewhere in the LXX; also 1 *Clem.* 43.2, 5; for the heavenly sanctuary in *Rev* 15:5.

1136. With, e.g., Bruce, *Acts*’, 174.

1137. Hebrews applies this to the need for the earthly tent to resemble the heavenly prototype (Heb 8:5); the principle recalls not only Platonic or apocalyptic vertical dualism but ancient temple theology (see discussion below; for ancient Near Eastern parallels, see Clifford, “Tent,” 226; Cassuto, *Exodus*, 322; on reading the tabernacle through ancient temple imagery rather than fanciful typology developed in a post-NT era, see, e.g., Keener, “Worship”).

the idolatrous images (τύπους) of a pagan “tent” they worshiped in 7:43. To “make” (ποιῆσαι) the tabernacle contrasts with the making of idols in 7:43 (and 7:40); both were made “in the wilderness” (7:42).¹¹³⁸ Canaanites also spoke of their chief deity, El, as dwelling in a “tent” (perhaps evoking an earlier, nomadic cult),¹¹³⁹ yet we also know that in fact tent shrines were widely used,¹¹⁴⁰ most obviously in Egypt.¹¹⁴¹

The tabernacle was not itself pagan, however.¹¹⁴² That Moses made the tabernacle according to the pattern God showed him (Acts 7:44; Exod 25:8) indicates Stephen’s own view that it was from God.¹¹⁴³ Indeed, this language suggested to some ancient audiences that the tabernacle or temple was a prototype of a heavenly version,¹¹⁴⁴ a point possibly relevant even to the first audiences.¹¹⁴⁵ Many aspects of the tabernacle’s design reflected conventional architectural features for temples, but some specific contrasts—most notably, the absence of an image atop the ark in the holiest place—underlined its peculiarly monotheistic and aniconic intent.¹¹⁴⁶

Some scholars think that Luke and Stephen play on Joshua’s name in Acts 7:45 (Ἰησοῦ).¹¹⁴⁷ Orators sometimes did play on a person’s name, including citing another honorable person with the same name (Theon *Progymn.* 9.52–53), but Luke makes nothing of the comparison, probably less than intended by many Jewish parents who named their sons after the famous conqueror of the past. The name is simply the standard translation for Joshua in the LXX (including all who bear the name, more than 250 times).¹¹⁴⁸ It is difficult to guess what Luke would have called him had he

1138. For the hook words “tent,” “wilderness,” “pattern,” and “make,” see Kilgallen, *Speech*, 88.

1139. Clifford, “Tent,” 222–23. “Tents” might, however, simply reflect an archaic usage (cf., e.g., 2 Sam 20:1; 1 Kgs 12:16). Against Van Seters’s emphasis on exclusively first-millennium B.C.E. usage, tent dwellers may be attested in the third millennium B.C.E. (Bright, *History*, 50) and appear most frequently in second-millennium texts (see Kitchen, *World*, 58–59; Wiseman, “Tents,” 195–200; idem, “Abraham,” 142). That no shrines to El have been uncovered may suggest that his shrine was made only of perishable material (Clifford, “Tent,” 225).

1140. Cf. the portable shrine in the bas-relief in Cross, “Tabernacle,” 49; de Vaux, *Israel*, 296–97; remains of the possible Midianite tent-shrine in Singer, “Hills,” 20; Bright, *History*, 127; comparison with the pre-Islamic *qubbah* in Morgenstern, “Ark,” 208–9, 216; Cross, “Tabernacle,” 60.

1141. Kitchen, “Background,” 8–11; cf. Murray, *Temples*, 2, 87–88; Nelson, “Temple,” 148–49; Lurker, *Symbols*, 120; also possible remains in Timna in Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 136–37. For further comments on tent-shrines, see Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 139–41.

1142. On the importance of the past (and future) tabernacle for Samaritans, see Pummer, “Tabernacle.”

1143. Cf. also L.A.B. 11:15.

1144. Clear in Wis 9:8; Heb 8:5; 2 Bar. 4:5–6; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1:3; cf. *Pesiq. Rab.* 5:11; *Gen. Rab.* 55:7; 69:7. See also, e.g., Philo (influenced by Platonism) *Mos.* 2.76; *Alleg. Interp.* 3.108; *Spec. Laws* 1.66; *Drunkenness* 134; *Test. Levi* 3:4–8; 5:1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:4; see further Cody, *Sanctuary*. The idea of a cosmic temple appears in a range of sources (Cic. *Resp.* 6.15.15; *Leg.* 2.10.26; Heracl. *Ep.* 4; in Jewish sources, Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.66; *Creation* 55; Jos. *Ant.* 3.180; Davila, “Macrocosmic Temple”; in Egyptian temples, Scott, “Tabernacle,” 165–66; Reitzenstein, *Religions*, 196; in Mithraism, Campbell, *Iconography*, 44–90; Gordon, “*Mithraeum*”; Klauck, *Context*, 146; Martin, *Religions*, 116).

1145. See Wilcox, “Pattern”; for heavenly prototypes more generally, see, e.g., *Jub.* 2:30; 6:18; Philo *Creation* 17, 29. Baal’s temples were constructed in the same form in which his house had appeared in ancient myth (Clifford, “Tent,” 226), and Babylonians believed that their glorious Esagila, the temple of Marduk, was situated facing the heavenly Esagila (Cassuto, *Exodus*, 322). For this approach, see also Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 134–35; Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 135–36; Hurst, “Platonic”; cf. also Bruce, “Hebrews or Essenes,” 229–30; MacRae, “Temple.”

1146. See further discussion in Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 139–46, with notes, 201–6.

1147. Dunn, *Acts*, 96. An implicit comparison might be possible in Heb 4:8 (so Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 85; Fuller, “Hebrews,” 11; but cf. Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 52) and is clearer in *Barn.* 6.8–9, but the same problem remains though later writers saw Joshua as a type of Christ (Justin *Dial.* 113) and plays on names were accepted (as noted above). Crawford, “Promised Land,” treats Acts’ relation to the Gospels as analogous to Joshua’s to the Pentateuch; the analogy is reasonable, but Luke, who mentions Joshua only here, probably did not have the idea in mind.

1148. Josephus also uses Ἰησοῦς (altogether 123 times), e.g., both for Moses’s successor (*War* 4.459) and for the later high priest (*Ant.* 11.151). Philo, whose focus is the Pentateuch, uses the name only seven times in his extant work.

wished to avoid this name. The ark continued in the tent even in the promised land (e.g., Josh 3:14; 18:1; 19:51; 22:19, 29; 23:9; 24:18).¹¹⁴⁹ One could conversely argue that the brevity of Luke’s mention reflects a tradition that played down Joshua;¹¹⁵⁰ this, too, would be reading too much into the passage.

The use of the term *κατάσχεσις* for possessing the land shows a partial fulfillment in the land promise to Abram in Acts 7:5 (the only other NT use, though it appears some sixty times in the LXX), but Stephen spends little time on this point of agreement, having focused by contrast on God not being localized in the tabernacle. The theme of disobedient nations being displaced from the Holy Land (7:45; see especially 13:19) fits the implication of judgment on disobedience even in the Holy Land (cf. Luke 19:44; 21:22; Lev 18:28; Ps 78:55–60), preparing for Acts 7:51–53.

II. DAVID WANTS TO BUILD A TEMPLE (7:46)

Even David’s favor with God (7:46) did not cause God to grant his request to build God an earthly temple; this honor awaited his son Solomon (7:47). David’s “favor” before God may connect him with Joseph (7:10), Moses (cf. 7:20), and perhaps Stephen (6:8). Noah (Gen 6:8), Moses (Exod 33:17), and Mary (Luke 1:30) had “found favor” with God (a Hebrew idiom for being pleasing to him). Luke’s audience would already know that David requested permission to build a temple for God. Yet Luke’s biblically informed ideal audience would also recognize, and expect Stephen’s biblically informed audience within the narrative world to recognize, that God honored yet politely refused David’s request (his son would build the temple, 1 Kgs 8:17–19). This turn of events is obliquely implied in Acts 7:47, where Solomon has the privilege of building the house. Although the Chronicler attributes God’s refusal of David to his bloodshed (1 Chr 22:8; 28:3), part of God’s response concerns the fact that God needs nothing more than a wandering tabernacle (2 Sam 7:6–7;¹¹⁵¹ 1 Chr 17:5–6). God deigned to inhabit a fixed and humanly magnificent sanctuary, but God did not need it (cf. Acts 17:24–25; 1 Kgs 8:27). This does not make the stationary temple negative; God blessed David for the good *intention*, promising to build David a house (2 Sam 7:11–14), and allowed Solomon to build a house for God (see comment on Acts 7:47). The point is not that the temple was bad but that it was not essential.

The textual variant in Acts 7:46 is difficult; the early manuscripts and more difficult reading favor “house of Jacob,”¹¹⁵² but the sense plainly favors “God of Jacob.” “Dwelling place for the God of Jacob” clearly echoes Ps 132:5 (131:5 LXX), even down to *σκήνωμα* and the Davidic context.¹¹⁵³ (It is clear from Acts 2:30 that Luke knows this psalm and finds its Davidic promise significant.)¹¹⁵⁴ The context also presupposes that meaning here (*αὐτῶ* in 7:47 and “God does not dwell” in 7:48).¹¹⁵⁵ The context speaks

1149. Dunn, *Acts*, 96.

1150. Samaritans may have embraced Joshua only in the Middle Ages, and even then not as part of their canon (Bowman, *Documents*, ii).

1151. On 2 Sam 7:1–17 in early Judaism (including the OT, 4Q174, and the NT), see, e.g., Robert, “Avenir.” Some sectarians applied 2 Sam 7:10–11 to an eschatological house (4Q174 1 I, 1–2).

1152. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 351–53; Witherington, *Acts*, 272.

1153. This term is rare in other early Christian texts (which apply it to the mortal body, 2 Pet 1:13–14; *Diogn.* 6.8) but frequent in the LXX after the Pentateuch. On the use of Ps 132, cf. also van de Sandt, “Presence.” *Pace* some interpreters, however, the use of Ps 132 does not justify playing off the tabernacle against the temple with the latter as negative (Rhodes, “Tabernacle,” 123–24).

1154. It reaffirms the promise of a Davidic dynasty (Ps 132:11–12, 17); Acts 2:30 quotes Ps 132:11.

1155. Johnson, *Acts*, 133. Cf. “God of Jacob” in Luke 20:37; Luke might play on “house of Jacob” (Luke 1:33), but if so, the sense in this case seems to me obscure (unless intended to blend both as “the house of Jacob’s God”; cf. Isa 2:3). Both expressions are familiar in the OT.

not of Jacob's descendants (the usual meaning of "house of Jacob"; cf. Luke 1:33; Acts 7:42) but of a dwelling place for Jacob's God (and since David found favor with God, we should not think of an idolatrous sense of even a divine "house" here). The context does use "house" as temple (Acts 7:47, 48, 49),¹¹⁵⁶ but 7:46 does not clearly speak of a "house (of God)" in either reading. "God" may have been inadvertently omitted from "house of Jacob's God" from the start, though it would seem strange that the error was not noticed until later scribes.

Thinking of the temple context may have precipitated an early scribe to change "God" to "house" or perhaps the original person dictating (or the scribe), though meaning "God," to inadvertently say (or write) "house" (leaving it to later scribes to try to correct it). Possibly "house" appears as a euphemism for the divine name (though it is rare¹¹⁵⁷ and Stephen is not given in this speech to euphemisms, nor does Luke stress dwelling in God as in Johannine literature); one might compare the later rabbinic circumlocution "place."¹¹⁵⁸ It may serve a *gezerah shevah* function, connecting the temple "house" (7:47, 49) with the "house of Israel" in 7:42. Whatever the textual history (or if Luke somehow used "house" as a euphemism for God), the quotation from the psalm and the context leave the final sense clear enough.

III. SOLOMON'S TEMPLE (7:47)

Luke uses Stephen's challenge to centralized worship to promote mission to the ends of the earth (1:8),¹¹⁵⁹ but this does not mean that he would view the movable tabernacle more favorably than the immobile temple. Many scholars view Stephen's argument as favoring the tabernacle over the stationary temple (cf. 2 Sam 7:5–7).¹¹⁶⁰ There might be an element of truth here, in that a tabernacle proved more flexible and transitory, but it should be remembered that both centralized worship and tabernacle worship were explicitly viewed earlier in the passage as having been perverted (Acts 7:43). Those who think Stephen regarded the temple's construction as, indeed, wrong go beyond the evidence of the text; this cannot be Luke's view (cf. Luke 19:46; Acts 2:46), and we cannot certainly reconstruct Stephen's view apart from Luke's text. Granted, some Greek thinkers and those who influenced them rejected temples (e.g., Zeno in Plut. *Stoic Cont.* 6, *Mor.* 1034BC).¹¹⁶¹ Even some who allegorized the temple (e.g., Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.66) affirmed the sanctity of the actual building (e.g., Philo *Embassy* 212, 278); see comment on Acts 2:46.

1156. See Kilgallen, *Speech*, 90, who argues that the term is necessary for this connection; cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 372; Gaventa, *Acts*, 129.

1157. If it appears in Marmorstein's thorough *Names*, I did not find it, nor do I recall it elsewhere, though cf. God as a "dwelling place" (Deut 33:27; cf. Pss 18:2; 31:3; 32:7; 61:4; 71:3; 91:1–2; 119:114; 144:2; John 14:2).

1158. For God as the "omnipresent one" in rabbinic sources, see 3 *En.* 18:24; *m. 'Ab.* 2:9, 13; 3:14; *t. Pe'ah* 1:4; 3:8; *Šabb.* 7:22, 25; 13:5; *Roš Haš.* 1:18; *Ta'an.* 2:13; *B. Qam.* 7:7; *Sanh.* 1:2; 13:1, 6; 14:3, 10; *Sipre Num.* 11.2.3; 11.3.1; 42.1.2; 42.2.3; 76.2.2; 78.1.1; 78.5.1; 80.1.1; 82.3.1; 84.1.1; 84.5.1; 85.3.1; 85.4.1; 85.5.1; *Sipra VDDen.* *pq.* 2.2.4.2; 4.6.4.1; *Sipra Sav M.d. par.* 98.7.7; *Sipra Sh. M.d.* 99.1.4, 5, 7; 99.2.2, 3; 99.3.9, 11; 99.5.13; *Sipra Qed. par.* 1.195.2.3; *pq.* 7.204.1.4; *Sipra Emor pq.* 9.227.1.5; *Sipra Behuq. pq.* 5.266.1.1; *Sipre Deut.* 1.8.3; 1.9.2; 1.10.4; 2.1.1; 11.1.1; 21.1.1; 24.3.1; 26.4.1; 28.1.1; 32.3.2; 32.5.8; 33.1.1; 37.1.1, 3; 38.1.1, 3; see Keener, *Marries Another*, 150n27, for fuller documentation.

1159. The idea that devotion to the temple could hinder Samaritan outreach is probable (Luke 9:53), but the idea that Stephen opposed it for this reason (Scharlemann, "Speech: Lucan Creation?") lacks sufficient support in the passage.

1160. Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 64 (comparing Heb 8:1–5); Bruce, *Acts*¹, 175–76; Munck, *Acts*, 65; Dahl, "Abraham," 146; Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 52–53; van de Sandt, "Presence." See the stronger counter-argument in Hill, *Hellenists*, 71–78; Larsson, "Temple-Criticism."

1161. Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 316–17 (on Acts 7:48–49), cite also Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5.11.76.

The more nuanced position that Stephen accuses many of his contemporaries of “verging on idolatry,”¹¹⁶² however, seems likely. As noted at Acts 6:14, many pre-70 Jews believed that the temple was invincible,¹¹⁶³ although other Jews challenged this notion (not least among them Jesus of Nazareth).¹¹⁶⁴ The best defense against a charge (here, cf. 6:11–14) was to be able to deny it; the next best defense was to admit that one acted as charged but that what one did was genuinely “lawful [ἔννομον] and just [δίκαιον] and noble and to the public advantage” (*Rhet. Alex.* 4, 1427a.24–27 [LCL, 313]).¹¹⁶⁵ If Stephen challenges the temple or its abuse, it is, he argues, a challenge justified by Scripture.

Jewish writers usually depicted Solomon favorably for Hellenistic readers, such as much of Luke’s ideal audience.¹¹⁶⁶ Still, for Luke, building (which can refer to sponsoring, Luke 7:5) material projects, an expensive activity involving human honor (11:47; 14:28–30), is of tangential relevance (cf. 12:18; 17:28) compared with spiritual building (6:48–49; 20:17; Acts 9:31; 20:32). (Luke expects Jesus to offer the ultimate fulfillment of 2 Sam 7:13, David’s son building him a house and reigning forever; see Luke 1:32–33; Acts 2:30.) After noting that Solomon constructed a house for God, Stephen quotes God in Isaiah: “What sort of house will you construct for me?”

IV. NOT IN HUMANLY BUILT TEMPLES (7:48)

Orators sometimes made an ambiguous, controversial statement to invite attention;¹¹⁶⁷ given the temple charge against Stephen (Acts 6:11–14), there is no question that his use of Isa 66:1 will arouse attention. For “the Most High,” see comment on Acts 16:17. The term used here for “made by hands” (χειροποίητος) was virtually a technical term in Greek-speaking Judaism for idols (cf. also 19:26).¹¹⁶⁸ The LXX normally applied it to idols, emphasizing the foolishness of worshiping what humans create (Lev 26:1, 30; Isa 2:18; 10:11; 16:12; 19:1; 21:9; 31:7; 46:6; Dan 5:4, 23).¹¹⁶⁹ Subsequent Jewish writers also applied this language to the folly of idolatry (e.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.722, where ἔργα . . . χειροποίητα is equivalent to εἰδωλα in 3.723; second century B.C.E.).¹¹⁷⁰ Philo spoke of divine punishment on those who served idols “made with hands” (χειροποιήτοις; *Mos.* 1.303) and condemned the wilderness bull idol as “the work of their hands” (χειροποίητον; 2.165). A dedicatory inscription by one Pamphylia, apparently a God-fearer, likewise distinguishes the true God from those made with hands.¹¹⁷¹ In contrast to idols, the true God was not made by hands (*Sib.*

1162. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 81; cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 90–91; Kilgallen, *Speech*, 92 (perhaps more strongly). Some myths spoke of deities building their own houses or temples (e.g., Baal Epic; *Enuma Elish* 6.62); Solomon’s building of it offers a fitting contrast (though divine orders to build are more common; Cassuto, *Exodus*, 322; de Vaux, *Israel*, 277; Lurker, *Symbols*, 120), but this would be lost on a first-century audience.

1163. E.g., *Let. Aris.* 100–101; see comment on Acts 6:14. Cf. Tob 1:4 (but Tobit recognizes its destruction, cf. 1:10).

1164. E.g., *Test. Mos.* 6:8–9; Mark 13:2; see comment on Acts 6:14.

1165. Orators also debated the letter and intent of the law, arguing either that the just intent was narrower than the explicit law or that it was broader than it (Hermog. *Issues* 40.6–16; 40.20–41.13; cf. 83.19–88.2, esp. 87.14–18; Heath, *Hermogenes*, 77); sometimes one must also show which laws should take precedence over others (Hermog. *Issues* 87.2–9).

1166. For the positive presentation of Solomon to the Hellenistic world, see Feldman, “Apologist of World”; on Solomon in general in early Judaism, see Mayer and Rühle, “Salomo.” (Some later rabbis, by contrast, said that only building the temple kept him from being classed among the kings who were damned; *Pesiq. Rab.* 6:4.)

1167. See Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 88, on *controversia* (citing Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.65–95; Mark 13:14).

1168. Simon, *Sects*, 100; Kilgallen, *Speech*, 90. οτ terms for idols include those emphasizing their shaping or forming (see Barrett, “Idols,” 353).

1169. Cf. MSS of Dan 6:28; cf. Bel 5. Possibly idol sanctuaries are in view in Isa 16:12 LXX.

1170. Also *Sib. Or.* 3.606, 618; *Jub.* 20:8; cf. similar language in *Sib. Or.* 3.586.

1171. See van der Horst, “Waarachtige”; idem, “New Altar?”

Or. 4.6–7; *Jos. Ant.* 8.280).¹¹⁷² The echo of Acts 7:41 (χειρῶν) implied in “by hands” (the first part of χειροποιήτως) drives home the point (cf. ποιέω in 7:40, 43; the compound with this verb in 7:41). (See further documentation in comment on Acts 7:41.) By contrast, it was God’s own “hand” that “made” everything (7:50), evoking the biblical image of folly in a created being worshiping what it created (Isa 46:6–7).¹¹⁷³

Early Christians may have developed the notion of a temple not made by hands, attested in Acts 7:48, from Jesus’s teaching (distorted in Mark 14:58, which uses ἀχειροποίητον) because they employed χειροποίητος for mere human temples (also Acts 17:24; Heb 9:11, 24; cf. 2 Cor 5:1; Heb 8:2) or physical ritual (Eph 2:11; cf. Col 2:11).¹¹⁷⁴ Luke also looks more to a messianic house (Acts 15:16) and spiritual building up (9:31), with Jesus as the keystone (4:11); see comment on Acts 7:47. Early Christians may have contrasted the “spiritual” temple (Eph 2:21–22; 1 Pet 2:5) and worship “in the Spirit” (Phil 3:3; John 4:24)¹¹⁷⁵ with the stone temple made with hands, massive but not eternal.¹¹⁷⁶ The Qumran scrolls also spoke of the Qumran community as a sort of spiritual house or temple (1QS VIII, 5–10).¹¹⁷⁷ Stephen is able to demonstrate how God does not dwell in handmade temples by the rhetorical protest against houses “built” by Isaiah’s audience in the text quoted in Acts 7:49 (the use of hands being implicit in this case).

Some would translate, “It is not the Most High who dwells in temples made with hands”—that is, rather, only false gods do.¹¹⁷⁸ This is certainly not Luke’s view (Luke 2:49; Acts 2:46) and probably not his portrayal of Stephen’s either; Luke regards Stephen as a reliable, Spirit-inspired character (Acts 6:5; 7:51). One need not add harshness to this speech; it is harsh enough as it is! It is possible that a harsher source stands behind Luke’s report here; it is the context of the rest of his work that domesticates it. But the language used does not require total rejection of the temple as originally sanctioned by God or of biblical support for it (see comment also on Acts 7:47, 49).¹¹⁷⁹ It does imply that his opponents’ wrong approach to the temple has become idolatrous.

V. ISAIAH’S TESTIMONY (7:49–50)

Via the principle of *gezerah shevah*, Stephen’s application of “related” wording in Isa 66 (“house,” “build”) qualifies the interpretation of 2 Sam 7:13 implied in Acts 7:47. “What sort of house will you build for me?”¹¹⁸⁰ responds to the claim that Solomon built God a house (7:47), relativizing the importance of Solomon’s temple.

1172. Nor, added one source, did he have a house (*Sib. Or.* 4.8). Neither the Lord (2 *En.* 33:4, esp. A) nor his throne (22:2) was made with hands.

1173. Poetically speaking, one could claim that God made the Holy Land a sanctuary by his own hands (Exod 15:17). Pagans might understand the value of the concept; cf. the deity’s palace built not *humanis manibus* but by the deity’s power (*Apul. Metam.* 5.1; cf. Baal’s divinely built palace, e.g., in Clifford, “Tent,” 226; Cassuto, “Palace,” 55; for divine instructions, Gudea Cylinder A in, e.g., Cassuto, *Exodus*, 322).

1174. For the new Christian use of the traditional LXX terminology, see also Biguzzi, “Mc. 14, 58.”

1175. Contrasting circumcision in Phil 3:3 and the old temple in John 4:20–24 (see discussion in Keener, *John*, 613–18).

1176. See Hanson, *Unity*, 134 (esp. on Eph 2:22; also 1 Pet 2:5 with its “living stones”).

1177. See further Kelly, *Peter*, 90; 4Q164 1 2–3; 4Q511 35 2–3; themselves as the cornerstone in 1QS VIII, 7. Cf. the Teacher of Righteousness in 4QpPs 37 (4Q171) III, 16. Such views were not incompatible with an eschatological temple (4Q509 IV, 2, 12); contrast Caquot, “Secte et temple,” emphasizing primarily the latter.

1178. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 54.

1179. Cf., e.g., the altar “made by hand” associated with idolatry in *L.A.B.* 22:5.

1180. The rhetorical question derives from Isa 66:1, but the oratorical value of rhetorical questions would be widely recognized (see Anderson, *Glossary*, 14, 51, 124; e.g., Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 1.2; *Phil.* 3.6.15; Mus. Ruf. 11, p. 80.22–25; 13B, p. 90.13–16; 15, p. 98.25–27; Lucian *Tyr.* 10; *Pesiq. Rab.* 13:7; Rom 3:1). The rhetorical question in Acts 7:52 strikes still more forcefully.

Solomon himself recognized that only God's benevolence rendered the best of human temples a suitable dwelling place; not unlike Isaiah, Solomon observed that heaven itself could not contain God (1 Kgs 8:27). The "resting place" in Luke's Septuagint quotation of Isaiah here not surprisingly sometimes refers to the ark (Num 10:35–36; 1 Chr 6:31; 2 Chr 6:41; Ps 131 [ET 132]:13–14; cf. Jdt 9:8); including Isaiah, these references constitute nearly half of the term's occurrences in the Septuagint. Isaiah's implication that a temple is not God's "place" also fits the same point earlier in Stephen's speech (7:7, 33), countering the charge in 6:13–14.

Although homilists may have often begun with a key text, Stephen has reasons for quoting Isaiah only here. One is that a person expounding the Torah could weave in a reading from the prophets afterward; another may be that Stephen's presentation is in chronological sequence, and Isaiah is later than Solomon. But it is also strategic to save his most volatile and explicit text for last, providing him opportunity to preface it with the necessary narrative to drive home his counteroffensive. Homilies did at least sometimes reserve their most significant texts for the end of the homily.¹¹⁸¹

Some scholars argue that, for Stephen, Isaiah's prophecy shows that Solomon's temple was unacceptable (see comment on Acts 7:47)¹¹⁸² or at least (in a more nuanced way) was not God's ultimate design.¹¹⁸³ Yet this is not the only way to read the prophet; ancient readers would not have assumed that Isaiah himself was rejecting the temple.¹¹⁸⁴ Many temples in the ancient world were designed to reveal the heavenly splendor of the deity; localization in a special way was not held to contradict a deity's cosmic rule.¹¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, Isaiah was undoubtedly opposing inappropriate worship (Isa 66:1–3), comparing temple rituals to idolatry for those whose hearts are impure (66:3), similar to the point of the Amos passage Stephen quotes in Acts 7:42–43. Further, Isaiah's words do relativize the need for earthly temples (cf. the similar argument for sacrifices in Ps 50:8–14); God is not dependent on human provisions as in pagan temple ideology (see comment on Acts 17:25). The earthly temple might be destroyed (Isa 64:11), but God would establish an eschatological one (66:20; cf. 2:1–2). Long after the temple's destruction in 70 C.E., rabbis could freely associate this prophecy of Isaiah with praise of Solomon's temple (*Tg. 2 Chr. 2:5*).¹¹⁸⁶

Isaiah's sense would be sufficient for Stephen's point in its Lukan context; again, we could argue that the original Stephen meant more than Luke allows him to say, but this would necessarily be an argument from silence. Stephen need not reject the temple's usefulness in some ways to regard its abuse as equivalent to idolatry. Even in the OT, support of the temple was conditional (1 Kgs 6:11–13), and prophets warned against dependence on its ritual (Amos 5:21–27; Mic 3:9–12; Isa 1:12–17; Jer 7:4–15).¹¹⁸⁷ Yet likewise, even in the OT, prophets who appeared to threaten the sanctity of the cult with such words invited retribution from the temple establishment (Jer 20:1–2; 26:8–15).

The closing line of this part of Stephen's speech (Acts 7:50) uses Isaiah's words (the first and most relevant line of Isa 66:2, where he ends his quotation) to cast light

1181. Cf., e.g., all the homilies in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 16, most of which end with Isa 40:1, whether mentioning it earlier or not. For reserving the harshest part of a speech for the end, see, e.g., Demosthenes's *De corona*.

1182. E.g., Barrett, "Eschatology," 392n1 (simply noting that this is how it "is often taken"); Knox, *Jerusalem*, 44.

1183. Dahl, "Abraham," 146.

1184. Ancient readers approached Isaiah as a single work and would have known of Isaiah's divine encounter in the temple (Isa 6:1–2, 4, 6).

1185. Wright, "Temple," 172, 180.

1186. Isa 66:1 was also echoed elsewhere and earlier (e.g., *1 En.* 84:2).

1187. Johnson, *Acts*, 133. Cf. the principle in Isa 58.

on an earlier biblical theme in the speech, which prepared for it. That God made (ἐποίησεν) everything by his own hand (χείρ, Acts 7:50)¹¹⁸⁸ contrasts with those who “made” their own gods (7:40, 43) with their own hands (7:41); moreover, since God created all by his “hand,” there is no reason to limit God to houses made by human “hands” (7:48). Now Stephen is ready to drive home the application in his *peroratio* (7:51–53).

h. Returning the Charge of Undermining the Law (7:51–53)

Most major characters in Luke-Acts are filled with the Spirit and speak God’s message with signs; the apostles and their signs-working colleagues follow the paradigm of Jesus (in the Gospel) and of Moses (7:36) and the prophets in the OT (Luke 1:17; 4:25–26; 9:8, 19). Likewise, the rejection of the apostles fits the paradigm of Jesus’s rejection (4:24; 13:31–35; 24:19–20) and that of the prophets (6:22–23; 11:47–51).¹¹⁸⁹ Stephen himself follows the pattern of the rejected prophet here (see comment on Acts 7:51).¹¹⁹⁰

Stephen saves both his harshest criticisms (Acts 7:51–53) and most explicit christological statements (7:52, 56) for the end of his speech, just as Paul saves the points least acceptable to his audience for the end of his speech in 17:30–31. Sometimes arguments reserved a special, irrefutable, clinching component for the very end (Cic. *Quinct.* 25.78–80; see comment on Acts 28:17–31, esp. 30–31). Orators often also recapitulated points toward the end (or sometimes earlier, e.g., Demosth. *Fals. leg.* 177), but Stephen was unable to offer these points explicitly earlier.

I. STEPHEN’S RHETORIC IN 7:51–53

Had Stephen’s accusers charged him with opposition to the law (Acts 6:11–14)? Stephen now returns the charge with interest (7:51–53). It was in fact his accusers who were the law’s violators—spiritually uncircumcised (7:51), murderers of the prophets (7:52), and general disobeyers of the law (7:53).

Returning charges against one’s accusers was standard rhetorical practice in all periods of Greek and Roman forensic rhetoric.¹¹⁹¹ Rhetorical handbooks advised blaming one’s opponents “for both the charge and the lawsuit . . . at the outset” (Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 24 [LCL, 1:67]). Thus a speaker may concede that an offense is worthy of death, then note that it is his accuser and not himself who is really guilty of the offense (Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.37). In an adaptation of the rhetorical technique called apostrophe, the speaker could shift suddenly from addressing the entire crowd to singling out the accuser, denouncing him, for example, as “you lunatic” (Libanius *Declam.* 36.22) and “You malicious accuser” (36.23).¹¹⁹²

When one Timarchus prepared to prosecute Aeschines in the fourth century B.C.E., Aeschines preemptively charged him, won the case, and hence discredited him (Aeschines *Timarchus*). When Demosthenes accused Aeschines of taking bribes, Aeschines replied that the charge was not credible because Demosthenes was the one

1188. On this OT usage, see further comment on Acts 7:41.

1189. Tannehill, *Acts*, 32–33.

1190. Denova, *Things Accomplished*, 162, 167–68. For Luke’s characterization of Stephen as a prophet, see Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 86–90.

1191. E.g., Eurip. *Cretans* frg. 472e.33–35; Thucyd. 3.61.1; Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 30.82–45.132; Hermog. *Inv.* 4.14.211; see further comment on Acts 24:19; 28:19. Others have noted that Stephen’s speech countercharges his accusers (O’Neill, *Theology*, 79; Kilgallen, “Speech of Stephen”; Neagoe, *Trial*, 174); for harshness in the invective of this period, see Rutledge, “*Delatores*.”

1192. Trans. Heath, *Hermogenes*, 202. On apostrophe, see further *Rhet. Her.* 4.15.22; Usher, “Apostrophe”; Rowe, “Style,” 139; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 581; Anderson, *Glossary*, 25.

involved with bribery (Aeschines *Embassy* 3). The treasonous Philocrates used not Aeschines but Demosthenes (*Embassy* 14, 56). “Consider whether . . . it is I whom Demosthenes has accused, or whether on the contrary he has accused himself in my name” (*Embassy* 69 [LCL, 211]).

Cicero in the first century B.C.E. repelled a charge from Clodia by observing that she was sexually notorious, though he promised to “say no more than what is necessary to repel the charge” (*Cael.* 13.31 [LCL, 13:445]), rhetorically insinuating that she was worse than his best evidence or hearsay. He spends much of the speech accusing her; for example, he implies her guilt for her husband’s earlier death, which, he claims, grieves him so much that he must return to the defense (24.60). Needless to say, orators who returned charges made the process of accusing such orators or their clients unpleasant enough, it was hoped, to deter unnecessary charges in the future.

Stephen does not, however, simply charge the false witnesses (Acts 6:11–13), which Hellenists would have considered good rhetorical form. Instead Stephen here violates a cardinal rule of forensic rhetoric (though he was hardly the only person to do so). Shaming one’s accusers was standard fare (cf. comment on Acts 24:18–19), but one should not reprove one’s *judges* even if they protested one’s words, lest one stir their anger (*Rhet. Alex.* 18, 1433a.20–24). The speaker in a defense speech was expected to praise the judges or jurors “for their justice and competence in their office” (*Rhet. Alex.* 36, 1442a.14–16 [LCL, 415]).

A speaker finishing a case would often leave the matter in the hands of the judges or jurors—for example, among classical Athenian orators: “You are judges of my words” (Aeschines *Tim.* 196 [LCL, 155]); “It remains for you . . . to give the verdict that is just” (Aeschines *Ctes.* 260 [LCL, 511]); one trusts that the jurors, his hearers, “will vote what is just” (Lysias *Or.* 14.47, §144 [LCL, 363]); “For it is you, and none else, who are judges of their worth” (Lysias *Or.* 16.21, §147). One did not normally remind the judges that one had no choice but to leave matters with them; appearing to trust their jurisdiction created a positive rhetorical effect. An orator might insinuate that the judges themselves knew what was right; if his hearers were not the judges, Aeschines contended, he would summon them as witnesses because they themselves knew the truth of his claim (*Tim.* 89).

The Roman orator Cicero also knew how to “encourage” a jury: “[Vote with] the courage of your convictions. . . . Your courage, justice, and honour will . . . meet with high approval [from the one who chose for the jury] the best, the wisest, and the most brave” (*Mil.* 38.105 [LCL, 14:123]).¹¹⁹³ Cicero was sometimes bolder, effecting rhetorical *παρηγορία* (on which see comment on Acts 4:13): for all his guilt, Cicero charges, Verres “is no guiltier than those who, sworn to vote truly, have voted for the acquittal of this man loaded with so many monstrous and horrible crimes” (*Verr.* 2.1.4.9 [LCL, 7:131]). But if such words contained the hint of potential reproach, Cicero quickly assures his hearers that he will prosecute and they will convict so clearly that Verres cannot escape by any stealth (2.1.4.10). (Verres skipped town before the trial was over.)

II. POSITIVE PORTRAYAL OF STEPHEN

How would Luke’s audience have received this portrayal of Stephen? Probably quite favorably. Although attacking one’s judges was poor rhetoric, it was noble philosophy.¹¹⁹⁴

1193. Speakers would also cast themselves on the will of the jury, seeking to arouse compassion (see Anderson, “Glossary,” 54, on *ἐπιτροπή*), although, of course, one was at the jury’s mercy anyway.

1194. Cf. the positive portrayal of Nestor as not flattering but reproving the masses (Philost. *Hrk.* 26.1). On aristocratic condemnations of demagogues, see comment on Acts 4:21; or Keener, *John*, 732.

Thus Socrates, by “exalting” (μεγαλύνειν) himself, angered his jury (*Xen. Apol.* 32) and hence provoked his own execution (*Apol.* 33). Yet it was not Socrates’s accuser who overcame Socrates but the reverse, for Socrates accomplished the greater deeds and achieved the greater reputation over time (*Apol.* 29). Xenophon opined,

Whereas it is the custom of defendants to curry favour with the jury and to indulge in flattery and illegal appeals, and many by such means have been known to gain a verdict of acquittal, he rejected utterly the familiar chicanery of the courts; and though he might easily have gained a favourable verdict by even a moderate indulgence in such stratagems, he chose to die through his loyalty to the laws rather than to live through violating them.¹¹⁹⁵

Thus Socrates allowed himself to be convicted, but “God and the truth sat in judgment over” the court (Max. Tyre 3.8 [Trapp, 30]).¹¹⁹⁶

It was a moralist commonplace that judges’ decrees passed judgment on (i.e., revealed the character of) the judges themselves no less than the defendants (Publ. Syr. 698).¹¹⁹⁷ A prosecutor might claim that the court was on trial (in contrast to the safer rhetorical approach mentioned above) if he was sure he could get away with it. Thus Cicero employs such affected boldness, claiming that the entire world can see Verres’s guilt and so it merely waits to see what the judges will decide. “What still remains on trial? . . . It is the members of this Court; and also, to be candid, it is yourself” (*Verr.* 2.5.69.177 [LCL, 8:665]).

Still, only one who was certain of one’s judges’ agreement or who deliberately wished to provoke them would emphasize this point to them. Epictetus complains about a friend who ruined his case by telling his judges that they were on trial; such behavior was appropriate only if one wished, like Socrates, to provoke the anger of the judges (*Diatr.* 2.2.17–18). If one really wished to be condemned, he advised, one could do it more easily by refusing to answer the summons (2.2.19–20). Probably more relevant here, one might also speak boldly if one expected to be condemned anyway (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 4.34–35).

Perhaps most relevant is that the Jewish martyr tradition included denunciations of tyrannical persecutors (2 Macc 7:14–19; 4 Macc 5–12).¹¹⁹⁸ One martyr, for example, allegedly hurled his bowels at the multitude, expecting to receive them back at the resurrection (2 Macc 14:46).¹¹⁹⁹ Martyrdom stories functioned as legitimation,¹²⁰⁰ so that sages’ willingness to die could vindicate their authenticity and sometimes (as in the case of Socrates) advance their cause.¹²⁰¹ Nevertheless, Gentile, Jewish,

1195. *Xen. Mem.* 4.4.4 (LCL, 309). Plato makes even more of Socrates as a martyr; Socrates also provoked his death in the stories in Diog. Laert. 2.41–42. The orator Maximus of Tyre, however, opined that Socrates must have really kept silent, because speaking truth could only anger his jurors needlessly (*Or.* 3.7; cf. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.2; Jesus in 1 Pet 2:23); under normal circumstances, answering a charge with silence aggravated it (Publ. Syr. 291).

1196. For “turning of the tables” regarding Socrates’s trial, see also Plato *Apol.* 39CD (Trapp, *Maximus*, 30n22). For Socrates as a model martyr, see comment on Acts 17:19.

1197. An orator could claim that outside observers have come to evaluate whether Athens could not only make good laws but execute their punishments (Aeschines *Tim.* 117–18). See further examples below on Acts 7:55–60.

1198. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 56. On martyr stories, including and in addition to most of what follows here, see also Keener, *Matthew*, 607–8; idem, *John*, 1068–69. Berthelot, “Idéologie maccabéenne,” argues that 1 Maccabees favored armed resistance but that 2 Maccabees favored martyrdom, an emphasis naturally developed in post-Bar Kokhba rabbis.

1199. Greeks also respected sturdy resistance; e.g., Zeno of Elea pretended to lean toward a tyrant’s ear to speak in it but bit it off instead (Diog. Laert. 9.5.26).

1200. Talbert, *Mediterranean Milieu*, 110–12.

1201. See *ibid.*, 111.

and Christian sources warn against deliberately seeking martyrdom;¹²⁰² Stephen's boldness in declaring truth provokes martyrdom because of his unjust situation, not because death rather than proclamation was his primary aim. Martyr accounts provided useful propaganda (in the neutral sense of the term); a wide audience could respect the courage and conviction of martyrs even if it might not agree with all their views.¹²⁰³

Jewish sources understood that God was the true judge who would decide the case¹²⁰⁴ and that judicial status could be reversed before God (Isa 54:17; cf. Jer 50:34; 51:36; Lam 3:58–66). God pleads David's case against Saul in 1 Sam 24:15 (cf. 25:39); God pleads the case of the afflicted against their adversaries in Jer 50:34; 51:36; Lam 3:58; in Job 16:19–21, God is Job's witness who can defend him before himself.¹²⁰⁵ In *m. 'Ab.* 4:22, God is judge, witness, and accuser at the judgment;¹²⁰⁶ Amoraim could observe that in God's court, he is judge, defender, and accuser.¹²⁰⁷

Ancient moralists and historians praised honorable and heroic deaths, whether within martyr stories or not.¹²⁰⁸ Writers may have also drawn on a stock arsenal of motifs when expanding martyr stories for dramatic purposes.¹²⁰⁹ At the same time, analogous story lines illustrate the nuances with which an ancient audience would have heard the story, but need not demonstrate that people simply invented all stories of martyrs from whole cloth. Those who stood against the establishment regularly invited repression, and numerous genuine martyrdoms provided the foundation for this sort of story. Some features characteristic of martyr stories, such as betrayal, refusal to compromise, and sentencing¹²¹⁰ (only one of which actually occurs here), reflect the common pattern of ancient law and Jewish resilience rather than borrowed motifs.¹²¹¹

An account of martyrdom by itself need not indicate a specific literary genre (although it reflects a theme of widespread interest). For example, where possible, Diogenes Laertius ends his discussions of the lives of eminent philosophers with their death.¹²¹² That a biographer would include a deceased subject's death is not surprising, especially if it was noteworthy; martyr stories, which could vindicate their protagonist's devotion, offered more rhetorical effect than other death accounts. A legendary figure might even receive a legendary martyrdom;¹²¹³ in Stephen's case, however, it is precisely his martyrdom that makes him most noteworthy, and so it is unlikely to reflect a later invention.

1202. *Ibid.*, 112–14. Similar reservations appear in Luke-Acts (Luke 22:42; cf. Acts 14:6), where martyrs do not seek out martyrdom (Talbert, *Mediterranean Milieu*, 114–15), though Stephen, like Jesus, surely expects it. Rabbinic admonitions concerning circumstances requiring martyrdom may function more as hortatory rhetoric than as a considered plan (Passamaneck, "Mandate").

1203. Cf., e.g., Iamblichus's report (for a probably less committed audience) about the willingness of Pythagoras's disciples to die rather than tread on a bean field (Iambl. *V.P.* 31.191, 193; 32.214). On Stephen's boldness, see discussion in Shelton, "Boldness," 315–17.

1204. See further discussion in Keener, *John*, 956–60, 1032–33.

1205. Cf. Hanson, *Gospel*, 177.

1206. Elsewhere God bears witness on behalf of the righteous (4 *Ezra* 7:94).

1207. *Exod. Rab.* 15:29; cf. *Ruth Rab.* proem 1.

1208. E.g., Plut. *S. Kings*, Epameinondas 2, *Mor.* 192C; cf. accounts of Socrates's brave end (Xen. *Apol.* 1).

1209. Compare, e.g., the mother in Maccabean accounts with the Spartan mother Argileonis in Plut. *S. Sp. Wom.*, *Mor.* 240C. Cf. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher*, 185, following Nickelsburg, "Genre," 156, on the tradition of a righteous sufferer vindicated by God.

1210. Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 152.

1211. On the diversity of Jewish martyr stories, see Van Henten, "Prolegomena."

1212. E.g., with Cleanthes in Diog. Laert. 7.5.176. Against a rigid genre, Philodemus *On Death* 33.7–9 notes that many righteous death accounts lack common features.

1213. Cf. *Life of Aesop*, end, in Drury, *Design*, 29. This is not to deny the possibility of a historical figure behind the Aesop stories (Kanavou, "Names").

III. RESISTING GOD'S SPIRIT (7:51)

The purpose of Stephen's recent indictment of their "ancestors" (7:39, 44; cf. 7:9–11) becomes obvious as Stephen climaxes the challenge that they have repeated their ancestors' crime of rejecting a deliverer (on ancestral ways, cf. also comment on Acts 23:6). His hearers' resistance against the Holy Spirit places them in the same category as those who rejected the biblical prophets (Acts 7:52; cf. Isa 63:10). The relevant LXX use of the same verb, ἀντιπίπτω, applies to Israel's rebellion in the wilderness (Num 27:14).¹²¹⁴ The present tense, however, suggests that they are currently resisting the Spirit's message;¹²¹⁵ given the frequent association of the Spirit with inspired speech (Acts 1:8; 2:17–18; 4:31; cf. 6:8),¹²¹⁶ Stephen is placing himself in the line of the prophets that climaxed with Jesus. Stephen, after all, speaks by the Spirit (6:10; cf. 6:3, 5).¹²¹⁷

Thus, as they rejected and killed the prophets (7:52), Stephen apparently essentially invites them (and certainly at least expects them) to kill him, thereby confirming his message and prophetic status (Luke 6:22–23).¹²¹⁸ Their continued resistance against the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 5:32), however, means that they not only speak against Jesus but are in danger of blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Luke 12:10) through his witnesses when they are on trial (12:11–12).¹²¹⁹ If we envision the municipal aristocracy as part of Stephen's audience (Acts 6:12, 15; 7:1), the charge of opposing Jesus is directly applicable (4:10; Luke 22:2; cf. Acts 4:27), but he has already traced out a broader pattern about the frequent recalcitrance of God's people.

As here (and often in Luke-Acts and the NT), the condition of "hearts" is important throughout the speech (Acts 7:23, 39) and in its effects (7:54). "Stiff-necked"¹²²⁰ and uncircumcised in heart¹²²¹ and ears¹²²² was familiar Jewish language, though not, of course, normally directed against one's judges. "Stiff-necked" and (by implication) uncircumcised hearts appear together in Deut 10:16, which calls Israel to repentance, as Stephen presumably does here (see comment below). Israelite prayers of penitence recalled the stubbornness of the ancestors in the wilderness (Neh 9:16–17).¹²²³ That they were "hard-necked" (σκληροτράχηλοι) resembles those who later slandered

1214. Also Bruce, *Acts*¹, 177.

1215. For a connection between the Spirit and suffering in Luke-Acts, see Mittelstadt, *Spirit*; Warrington, "Suffering"; on Stephen as "Spirit-led martyr," see 103–16 (in Mark, cf. Keener, *Spirit*, 49–90, esp. 70–71). Luke-Acts especially connects the Spirit with proclamation but, in turn, connects proclamation with suffering.

1216. Cf. Neh 9:30; Sir 48:24; Philo *Flight* 186; Keener, *Spirit*, 10–13; Menzies, *Development*, 53–112; Turner, *Power*, 86–104; see further discussion in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:534–37.

1217. On Stephen as a prophetic figure, see Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 86–90.

1218. When used more explicitly (but also more ironically), the rhetorical technique *permissio* or *epitrope* was often used by speakers, who pretended to dare the audience to contradict their position (Rowe, "Style," 147, citing, e.g., Demosth. *Fals. leg.* 57; Cic. *Cat.* 1.5.10; cf. Porter, "Paul and Letters," S82, citing Gal 3:2; cf. somewhat differently Anderson, *Glossary*, 54). For a virtual invitation to follow up one's previous evil by killing the speaker, see Sil. It. 11.254–55.

1219. This arrangement of the context in Luke appears different from Matthew's emphasis on blasphemy against the Spirit (cf. Matt 12:18, 28, 31–32; Keener, *Matthew*, 360, 364–66).

1220. See the exact wording in LXX Exod 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 9:6, 13; Prov 29:1; Sir 16:11; Bar 2:30; also note Exod 32:9; 2 Kgs 17:14; 2 Chr 30:8; 36:13; Neh 9:16–17, 29; Isa 48:4; Jer 7:26; 17:23; 19:15; 1 Esd 1:48; cf. *Jub.* 1:7, 22; *Pss. Sol.* 8:29/35; *Test. Sim.* 6:2. The cluster of such terms in the account of the golden calf is relevant here (Acts 7:40–41).

1221. That is, spiritually pagan or Gentile (Lev 26:41; Jer 9:26; Ezek 44:7, 9; cf. perhaps 1QS V, 26).

1222. Cf. 1QH^a XXI, 5. For uncircumcised lips, 1QH^a X, 18. The idea of shutting ears and eyes against God's message was familiar (e.g., Prov 21:13; Isa 6:10; 33:15; Jer 6:10; see Acts 28:27) and reflects a Hebrew idiom (e.g., Lam 3:56).

1223. With Soards, *Speeches*, 151.

the Way because they were “hardened” (ἔσκληρύνοντο, Acts 19:9).¹²²⁴ One could pile up cognate or other similar-sounding words, as here, to drive home one’s point.¹²²⁵

Qumran scrolls condemned those walking in the “stubbornness” of their “hearts.”¹²²⁶ Some later rabbis claimed that Jews in the Diaspora were stiff-necked.¹²²⁷ Spiritual deafness occasionally appears alongside the more common image of spiritual blindness (cf. Acts 28:27; 1 *En.* 90:7).¹²²⁸ “Ears” functioned as a natural metonymy for listening (e.g., Luke 1:44; 8:8; 9:44; 14:35; Acts 11:22);¹²²⁹ the prophets also denounced Israel for closed ears (e.g., Jer 6:10; see Isa 6:10 in Acts 28:27; cf. comment there). Here the hearers confirm the charge literally by covering their ears (Acts 7:57).

God’s ideal was always that his people’s hearts be circumcised; he called them to circumcise their hearts (Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4) and promised that he would someday turn their hearts to him in this way (Deut 30:6). Scripture complains about uncircumcised hearts (Lev 26:41), which made Israel’s people like spiritual pagans (Jer 9:26; cf. Ezek 44:7, 9).¹²³⁰ Some later Jewish thinkers continued this emphasis; God would circumcise Israel’s heart (*Jub.* 1:23);¹²³¹ God’s servants must circumcise their desire (or inclination; lit., *yetzer*) and remove what was hard (1QS V, 5);¹²³² the wicked leader failed to circumcise his heart (1QpHab XI, 12–13, esp. XI, 13).¹²³³ Rabbi Samuel later prayed that God would circumcise the heart of his people to fear him (*b. Ber.* 29a).¹²³⁴ Philo, who insisted on the literal practice of circumcision,¹²³⁵ interpreted the ritual symbolically as teaching the removal “of sensual pleasures and the other passions.”¹²³⁶ Naturally, their debates over the necessity of circumcision¹²³⁷ forced early Christians to develop this biblical idea of spiritual circumcision (Rom 2:27–29; Col 2:11).¹²³⁸ As noted above, the allusion here is especially to Deut 10:16, where Israel’s circumcising its heart is parallel with no longer stiffening its neck.¹²³⁹ God gave Israel the covenant of circumcision (Acts 7:8), but Stephen’s accusers, who falsely charged

1224. A “hard” disposition could be a “harsh” one, as in Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11o, pp. 96–97.27–28.

1225. Anderson, *Rhetoric*, 33, on διαλλαγή (citing Quint. *Inst.* 9.3.49; cf. Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 3).

1226. 1QS I, 6; II, 26; III, 3; CD VIII, 8, 19; cf. hardness of heart in 1 *En.* 5:4; 16:3.

1227. *Exod. Rab.* 42:9 (expounding Exod 32:9).

1228. On spiritual blindness, see Keener, *John*, 795–96; comment on Acts 9:8.

1229. Elsewhere, e.g., 2 Tim 4:3–4; Quint. *Curt.* 8.1.49; Philost. *Hrk.* 57.1; Symm. *Ep.* 1.4.3. Probably sometimes for memory as well, since hearing properly involved heeding; “plucking the ear” was a gesture appealing to memory (Sen. *Y. Dial.* 7.10.3; Basore, in *Moral Essays*, LCL, 2:124 n. a, cites also Pliny E. N.H. 11.251; cf. Virgil *Copa* 38).

1230. On the sense in Jer 9:25–26 (9:24–25 LXX), with Jos. *Ant.* 13.257–58, see Steiner, “Incomplete Circumcision.” For uncircumcision as negative, and hence an insult here, see also, e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 80:8; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:17. Citing Jer 4:4 and 9:25 here, see, e.g., Mufwata, *Extrémities*, 15.

1231. Cf. also 4Q434 1 I, 4 (on which see Seely, “Heart”); 4Q435 1 I, 1; among Christians, *Barn.* 9.1; 10.12.

1232. Among Christians, cf. *Barn.* 9.5. Some Amoraim later regarded uncircumcision of heart as equivalent to the dominance of the evil impulse (*yetzer hara*; *b. Sukkah* 52a).

1233. Cf. probably also 4Q504 4 11; 4Q509 287 1 (though these are reconstructed). Cf. circumcision of heart (by analogy) in Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.6.

1234. Some Targumim sometimes use circumcision language metaphorically (DeRouchie, “Circumcision”).

1235. See Philo *Migr.* 89–93. Contrast, e.g., *G. Thom.* 53.

1236. Philo *QE* 2.2 (Tobin, *Rhetoric in Contexts*, 116). He recognized biblical teaching on spiritual circumcision in Lev 26 and Deut 10 (Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.304–5), as did others (e.g., 1QS V, 5; 4Q504 4 11; cf. 4Q509 287 1).

1237. Cf. a similar but lesser debate among some Jews in a mission context in Jos. *Ant.* 20.34–48.

1238. It was carried further by later writers (e.g., *Barn.* 9.1–8; cf. *Odes Sol.* 11:2); Justin even regards outward circumcision as a sign of judgment (*Dial.* 16.2), quite in contrast to first-century Christian writers (e.g., 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 6:15). Still later, Pelagius *Comm. Rom.* on 2:26 (de Bruyn, 75–76; Bray, *Romans*, 77), though unfortunately condemning literal circumcision (on 2:27; de Bruyn, 76; Bray, *Romans*, 78); Origen *Comm. Rom.* on 2:29 (*CER* 1:298, 300; Bray, *Romans*, 78–79). Part of the idea in Col 2:11 may be circumcision’s cultural offensiveness to Gentiles (see Smith, “Translation,” 331).

1239. That passage accounts for the wordplay in Hebrew between neck (*ʾrf*) and foreskin (*ʾrlh*).

that *he* undermined the law (6:11–14), themselves cast off the covenant with their uncircumcised hearts!¹²⁴⁰

IV. KILLING PROPHETS (7:52)

Rhetorically, the closing argument was a useful place for pathos,¹²⁴¹ including inciting emotion against the opponent. Thus, for example, in his closing argument, Cicero calls on all the gods whose temples Verres violated to bring Verres to justice (*Verr.* 2.5.72.184–89). Rhetorical questions were often useful for driving home a polemical or apologetic point¹²⁴² (although more so when several were piled up).¹²⁴³

Some scholars contrast later rabbis' explanation of the temple's destruction with Luke's explanation as the difference between confessing "our sins" and pointing out "your sins."¹²⁴⁴ Although this was undoubtedly the historical trajectory that Christian polemic followed (when it moved from intra-Jewish to interreligious polemic), it overlooks the frequency of "our fathers" in Stephen's speech. This is instead part of the polemical turn in the closing argument. "*Your* fathers" rhetorically emphasizes moral continuity among those in all generations who break God's covenant, but it does not repudiate Stephen's ethnic continuity with Israel or hope for Israel.¹²⁴⁵ "Your fathers" is not negative in Acts 3:25 or 7:32 (though it is equivalent toward Acts' conclusion in 28:25), and "our fathers" is far more common (3:13; 5:30; 13:17; 15:10; 22:3, 14; 24:14; 26:6; also at the conclusion in 28:17), including in this speech (7:11–12, 15, 19, 38–39, 44–45).

For Stephen, the killing of Jesus simply climaxes a history of rejected deliverers (e.g., Joseph in 7:9 and Moses in 7:27–28, 35, 37); it fulfills Scripture (cf. 13:27). Because Jesus's death climaxed the entire history of martyrs who preceded him, it would bring judgment on that generation (Luke 11:50–51), which Luke undoubtedly views as fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem (19:42–44; 21:6, 20–24). Martyrdom of prophets was to be *expected* in Jerusalem¹²⁴⁶ (13:34, applied to Jesus's death in 13:33).¹²⁴⁷ Luke's audience knew that Jesus was treated as a false prophet (22:64) but that he had already prophesied that true prophets would be treated thus (6:22–23), versus false prophets (6:26). Because Luke 11:49 adds "apostles" to "prophets" (contextualized differently in Matt 23:34), it undoubtedly implies also the continuing persecution of God's agents (Luke 21:12), as exemplified in

1240. For the implied contrast with Acts 7:8 here, see, e.g., Combrink, *Analysis*, 22; Tannehill, *Acts*, 90. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 114, notes that the Samaritans highly praised circumcision, even "as a means of grace."

1241. E.g., Witherington, *Corinthians*, 431; e.g., Isaacs *Menec.* 44–47 (of 47 paragraphs). On pathos in general, see Anderson, *Glossary*, 61–63.

1242. On various forms of rhetorical questions, see, e.g., Anderson, *Glossary*, 51–52.

1243. E.g., in Xen. *Anab.* 5.8.4–5; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.47; Lucian *Tyr.* 10; Fronto *Ad am.* 2.7.3; 1 Cor 9:1–12; cf. Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 162.

1244. Juel, *Promise*, 76; some even treat the narrative as anti-Jewish rhetorical violence (Matthews, "Stoning"; idem, "Hellenists"). The rabbis did seek to explain the temple's destruction in terms of their sins, though sometimes to justify more rabbinic legislative authority (see Rubenstein, "Gittin"). Hearon, "Read Ourselves," argues that *Sib. Or.* 5 blames Rome, 2 *Baruch* blames the people, and the Gospels and Josephus blame religious leaders (Josephus also blames "bandits" and governors).

1245. Cf. Juel, *Promise*, 76, who may not go so far but finds in such phrases in Luke-Acts evidence of "a decisive parting of the way." But even such an approach may read too much even into the Fourth Gospel (cf. Whitacre, *Polemic*, 65–66; Keener, *John*, 225, 828). Cf. "your fathers" in 1 Sam 12:8, 15 (though the sin there was asking for a king, 12:19; whereas in Acts 7 it is esp. rejecting their king).

1246. Cf. Foakes-Jackson and Lake, "Internal Evidence of Acts," 183: "His defence is nothing but a long argument to show that this is exactly what the Jews might have been expected to do" (except seeing here the rejection of ethnic Israel rather than of Jerusalem).

1247. Future acceptance may, however, be implied in Luke 13:35 (as in Acts 3:19–21); but cf. Luke 19:38 (in contrast to the positioning of each in Matt 21:9; 23:39).

Acts (e.g., Acts 8:1; 9:4–5; 12:1–4; 22:4; 26:11). If God’s people killed the prophets who “announced in advance” (προκαταγγείλαντας, the same verb as in 3:18; cf. 3:24; 1 Pet 1:11) the coming of “the just one,” it is not surprising that they would also unjustly kill the just one himself (Acts 3:14–15). Like Judas (Luke 6:16), they had “betrayed” the righteous one (Acts 3:13). Whereas Peter earlier claimed that God’s people wanted to release a “murderer” (3:14), Stephen now escalates the rhetoric by applying this provocative and explicit title to his entire audience (7:52; cf. Saul in 9:1).¹²⁴⁸

Jewish thought included categories of corporate personality foreign to modern Western individualism. Thus Jewish people confessed the sins of their ancestors¹²⁴⁹ and pleaded that God not hold these against them.¹²⁵⁰ They recognized that they could suffer for the sins of their ancestors¹²⁵¹ and could seek atonement for their ancestors’ sins as well as their own.¹²⁵² Greeks could also appeal to a sense of solidarity with one’s ancestors; thus jurors dared not free a criminal when their ancestors wrote such just laws to convict him (Aeschines *Tim.* 185).¹²⁵³ Likewise, one who killed a man accidentally did, in fact, a helpful thing, since the slain man was a descendant of one who had laid waste the country (thirteen generations earlier; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.5).

The implication that the people had killed “all” the prophets is hyperbole,¹²⁵⁴ but this hyperbole would not long disturb ancient Jewish auditors. Israel had killed “the prophets” (Neh 9:26), a tradition that early Jewish legend and exhortation developed far beyond the OT data.¹²⁵⁵ In addition to Zechariah, mentioned in Luke 11:51 (Q material in Matt 23:35; from 2 Chr 24:20–22),¹²⁵⁶ or Uriah in Jer 26:21–23, Scripture recounted many prophets killed by Ahab in Israel (1 Kgs 18:4, 13), and tradition added many under Manasseh in Judah, usually including Isaiah (Jos. *Ant.* 10.38;¹²⁵⁷ cf. 2 Kgs 21:16). Israel had despised the prophets (CD VII, 17–18)

1248. They unjustly “killed” the just one in Acts 3:14–15, but Peter does not use the explicit verb for “murder,” though that is implied.

1249. Neh 1:6; 9:2, 26–30, 34–35; Ezra 9:7; Dan 9:16; cf. 1QH^a XII, 34.

1250. Tob 3:3; 4QS04 4 6–7.

1251. E.g., Jdt 7:28; 1 Esd 8:77; 4QS50^c 1 I, 1–2. Continuing judgment on descendants (e.g., Exod 20:5; 34:7; Deut 5:9; 2 Sam 21:6; 2 Kgs 22:30; Lam 5:7; cf. also *Sipre Deut.* 332.2.1) presupposed those descendants continuing in the sins of their ancestors (e.g., 2 Kgs 15:9; Ps 106:6; Jer 3:25; 14:20; 31:29–30; Ezek 18:2, 14, 19–20; Dan 9:8; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Exod 20:5). Rabbis were reluctant to view God as simply transferring judgment to subsequent generations (Neudecker, “Iniquity”).

1252. 4Q434 1 II, 3; 4QS04 1–2 VI, 5–6.

1253. One should imitate ancestors’ virtues (cf., for fathers, *Rhet. Alex.* 1, 1422a.30–32); failure to do so was blameworthy (e.g., Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 17; Plut. *Demosth.* 14.2); one could even deny that those who failed to imitate their ancestors’ virtues were their ancestors’ descendants, in some sense (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.25.544). Those who did evil could be accused of foreign descent (Polyb. 2.55.9). For ancestral intentions being most venerable, see, e.g., Hermog. *Inv.* 2.2.110.

1254. On hyperbole, see further, e.g., Anderson, *Glossary*, 122–24; *Rhet. Alex.* 11, 1430b.16–19; Cic. *Or. Brut.* 40.139.

1255. Regularly noted by scholars, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 82; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:465; Cunningham, *Many Tribulations*, 339; Avemarie, “Sterben.”

1256. That this is the Zechariah especially in view seems likely in light of Jewish tradition (see Keener, *Matthew*, 556–57), albeit partly conflated with another (for such confluences, see, e.g., *Liv. Pr.* 9 [Obadiah] 2–4; *b. Sanh.* 39b; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:319; Keener, *Matthew*, 556n70). Bloodshed in the temple desecrated it and invited judgment (Jos. *Ant.* 20.165–66).

1257. See *Ascension of Isaiah* (*Mart. Is.* 1–3). For Isaiah’s own martyrdom under Manasseh, see *Mart. Is.* 5:1–14; *y. Sanh.* 10:2, §6; *Pesiq. Rab.* 4:3; *Liv. Pr.* 1:1 (*OTP* 2:385; Schermann, §24, p. 75, line 1); also *OTP* 2:151 (citing also *b. Yebam.* 49b; *Sanh.* 103b); in Christian sources, presumably Heb 11:37; also patristic sources (Justin *Dial.* 120.5; Tert. *Pat.* 14; *Scorp.* 8) cited by commentators (Knibb, “Introduction,” 149; Hagner, *Hebrews*, 192; Arnold, “Acts,” 273). The active tree in this Isaiah legend resembles Greek hamadryads (cf., e.g., Ap. Rhod. 2.475–483; Ovid *Metam.* 8.758–76).

and killed them (*1 En.* 89:51; *Jub.* 1:12).¹²⁵⁸ One compilation, called *Lives of the Prophets*, recounted legends of various prophets' martyrdoms, including Amos,¹²⁵⁹ Micah,¹²⁶⁰ and Jeremiah.¹²⁶¹ The Bar Kokhba revolt and other events also provided Judaism with subsequent martyrs.¹²⁶² Throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, to murder envoys of any kind was considered a heinous offense (*Jos. Ant.* 15.136);¹²⁶³ how much more when their sender was God! Prophets in ancient Israel enjoyed an analogous form of immunity from the assaults of all but the most wicked rulers.¹²⁶⁴

The climax of the prophetic tradition was the "coming"¹²⁶⁵ of the righteous one." Some scholars argue that "righteous one" is a sign of primitive Christology, probably based on Isa 53:11.¹²⁶⁶ Others suggest that it reflects the righteous-martyr tradition of Wis 2:12–20.¹²⁶⁷ The designation was more widespread, however,¹²⁶⁸ and may lay emphasis here on the innocence of Jesus and his cause (*Luke* 23:47);¹²⁶⁹ this was appropriate in a forensic speech.¹²⁷⁰ Some have suggested that it is primarily Stephen's Christology, rather than his charges against the temple, that lead to his being charged and stoned (for blasphemy) in Acts.¹²⁷¹ This does not fit either the recorded charges (*Acts* 6:11–14) or most of Stephen's defense (7:2–50); certainly, however, Stephen's emphasis on the exaltation of the one whose execution many of the elite supported provokes them (7:52, 55–56).

The speech denounces its audience in the narrative world as the "betrayers" of the righteous one. Luke elsewhere employs this noun only when introducing Judas Iscariot (*Luke* 6:16), but alludes to Jesus being handed over by the Jerusalem elite¹²⁷² to the Gentiles (18:32), specifically to Pilate (20:20; *Acts* 3:13).¹²⁷³ They are the

1258. Cf. further *1 En.* 89:52–53; persecuting the righteous in *1 En.* 95:7; 100:10; *4 Ezra* 8:57; Israel rejecting Elijah and Elisha (*Pesiq. Rab.* 26:1/2); in rabbinic literature generally, see Urbach, *Sages*, 1:560. Islam continued this tradition (*Qur'an* 2:91; 4:155; 5:70; with rejection even more often, e.g., 22:42–44; cf. 43:7).

1259. *Liv. Pr.* 7:1–2 (Schermann §14, p. 51).

1260. *Liv. Pr.* 6:1 (Schermann §17, p. 60).

1261. *Liv. Pr.* 2:1 (Schermann §25, p. 81.2).

1262. E.g., R. Akiba (*b. Menah.* 29b; *Ber.* 61b; *y. Ber.* 9:5, §3; *Soṭah* 5:5, §4); for another, cf. *b. Hul.* 142a. For martyrdom by apostates, see *y. Hag.* 2:1, §8.

1263. Cf. Eurip. *Heracl.* 272; Xen. *Anab.* 5.7.18–19, 34; Apollod. *Epit.* 3.28–29; Polyb. 15.2; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.43.4; Diod. Sic. 36.15.1–2; Dio Cass. 19.61; Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.6.1–2; 3.7.2–3; 4.11; 8.8.53; Val. Max. 6.6.3–4. This immunity was important, since receivers of news sometimes responded positively or negatively to messengers, depending on the news they received (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 17.694–96; 18.15–21; Eurip. *Med.* 1125–29; Appian *Hist. rom.* 12.12.84; Arrian *Ind.* 34.4; 35.1; 2 Sam 1:15; 18:20, 22; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.35, 37). On rare occasions, it was threatened (Polyb. 1.81.2–3).

1264. See, e.g., 1 Sam 10:8; 15:1, 18–19; 1 Kgs 11:29–39; 12:22–24; 13:4; 14:4; 18:13, 22; 19:15–16; 2 Kgs 3:14; 4:13; 9:1–2; 13:14; 1 Chr 16:22 (the patriarchs); 2 Chr 20:20; 25:16.

1265. The word ἔλευσις is a NT and LXX hapax legomenon, but some suggest that it was associated with the Messiah's coming elsewhere (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 177); in Christian texts, perhaps developing the Baptist's language, cf. "the coming one" (*Mark* 1:7; *John* 1:15, 27; 2 *John* 7).

1266. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 65; Robinson, *Studies*, 151; see comment on *Acts* 3:14. Luke uses it only in Jerusalem speeches (Hays, *Conversion*, 126–27).

1267. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 118–19; Doble, *Paradox*, 158.

1268. E.g., for Enoch (*Test. Levi* 10:5; "Enoch the just" in 2 *En.* 1a 1, rec. A).

1269. It fits Pilate's threefold declaration of Jesus's innocence (*Luke* 23:4, 13–15, 22) and that of the thief as well (23:40–41); see Hays, *Moral Vision*, 118–19.

1270. Witherington, *Acts*, 274.

1271. Finsterbusch, "Christologie als Blasphemie." But it should be noted that stoning was not limited to blasphemy, especially when executed by mob lynching (see comment on *Acts* 7:58).

1272. Those immediately responsible are the elite (cf. *Luke* 20:19–20; 24:20), though their function as their people's chief representatives, along with Jerusalemite crowds' participation, invites corporate responsibility; see comment on *Acts* 3:13, 17.

1273. Similarly, to "people" (*Luke* 9:44), to "sinful people" (24:7), or simply to death (24:20). Ironically, Pilate also "hands over" Jesus to the Jerusalem crowds (23:25); this follows the chain of guilt in the standard passion narrative (*Mark* 14:41–42, 44; 15:1, 10, 15; *Matt* 26:48; 27:2–4, 18, 26; *John* 18:5, 30, 35–36; 19:16).

righteous one's betrayers and murderers; the speech in Acts 3:13–15 also conjoins responsibility for betraying and killing Israel's rightful prince.

V. AGAINST THE LAWBREAKERS (7:53)

Rhetoricians distinguished, when necessary, between jurors' convictions and the laws by which they were obligated to judge (they must judge the case, not the law; *Rhet. Alex.* 36, 1443a.18–20). Here, however, the law convicted the accusers (on reversing opponents' charges, see introduction, above, to Acts 7:51–53). Ancient polemic often included the accusation that one's opponents had failed to follow their own claims.¹²⁷⁴ Those who had the greatest knowledge were held most responsible.¹²⁷⁵ Thus those who "received the commandments" and "obtained the law" would be punished all the more severely.¹²⁷⁶

Although interruptions were common fare in ancient courts, advocates did sometimes succeed in finishing their speeches, at least in the abstracts we have of them.¹²⁷⁷ It may seem surprising that the hearers allowed Stephen to go so far before interrupting him,¹²⁷⁸ even in terms of the narrative's internal plausibility, but we should remember that until Acts 7:51 the reality that he was prosecuting *them* would be clear only in retrospect.¹²⁷⁹

The idea that the law was mediated through¹²⁸⁰ angels fits Luke's interest in angels (forty-six times in Luke-Acts), in his second volume predominant especially in this section (5:19–12:23, eighteen times), but it is by no means Luke's invention. It could be related to the support of angels in Moses's mission (Exod 3:2; 14:19; 23:20) but as an explicit construct was postbiblical.¹²⁸¹ It is explicit in Heb 2:2 and Gal 3:19. The idea may be implied in Deut 33:2 and is explicit in the LXX there; it may also be implied in Ps 68:17–18, which provided at least a further textual basis for the later view. It probably appears in Qumran.¹²⁸² It is at best minimal in Philo, who stresses Moses's mediatorial role more (*Dreams* 1.141–48),¹²⁸³ but it figures in *Jos. Ant.* 15.136. Later rabbis also knew this tradition¹²⁸⁴ and commented often on the angels at Sinai,¹²⁸⁵ though some rabbis also emphasized that God gave Moses the law directly, not through an angel (*'Abot R. Nat.* 1, §2 B). Those who claimed

1274. Johnson, *Acts*, 134–35 (citing Plut. *Stoic Cont.* 1–2, *Mor.* 1033BD; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 20.1; Lucian *Hermot.* 79; *Tim.* 54–55; Rom 2:17–24); see further documentation in Keener, *Matthew*, 540.

1275. E.g., Luke 12:47–48; Amos 3:2; Rom 2:12–13; Jas 4:17. Contrast the usual philosophic emphasis that true knowledge brings right behavior (e.g., Lucian *Downward Journey* 24); but cf. the emphasis on ignorance as mitigating guilt, in comment on Acts 3:17.

1276. 4 *Ezra* 7:72 (*OTP* 1:539); cf. also 4 *Ezra* 9:32.

1277. Crook, *Advocacy*, 66–67.

1278. Haenchen, *Acts*, 286, notes how conveniently the interruption is placed; see comment on such procedures in Acts 10:44, but it is more plausible here than he allows.

1279. Cf., e.g., the length of Thomas Cranmer's speech before its interruption, if our report is basically accurate (see Duffield, *Cranmer*, 334–38).

1280. The apparently curious use of εἰς reflects its increasing encroachment on ἐν and the general weakening of the classical force of prepositions in Koine (see Bruce, *Acts*¹, 177; cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, 97, 449, 453, 584–86, 591; Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, 210).

1281. The intervening angel (cf. Exod 3:2) is emphasized in various texts (*Jub.* 1:27, 29; 2:1; *Test. Dan* 6:2); apart from LXX, *Jubilees* offers the mediating-angel tradition's earliest attestation (Charles, *Jubilees*, lxxxiv). Probably the point is simply that God gave Moses the law through an angel (cf. VanderKam, "Author," 217).

1282. 4Q521 2 + 4 II, 2. Cf., by way of analogy, Zedekiah's covenant with Michael in 4Q470 frg. 1, if correctly understood (see Wise, "Introduction to 4Q470").

1283. See discussion in Isaacs, *Spirit*, 130.

1284. Lane, *Hebrews*, 17 (citing *Mek.* on Exod 20:18; *Sipre* 102 on Num 12:5; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:7–8); Le Cornu, *Acts*, 368 (adding to these *b. Sabb.* 88a; *Num. Rab.* 2:8; *Pesiq. Rab.* 10:6; 33:10; *Tanḥ. Bemidbar* 14); earlier, e.g., Peake, "Colossians," 481.

1285. E.g., *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12:22; 16:3; *Num. Rab.* 2:3; *Song Rab.* 2:4, §1; 6:10, §1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:7–9.

that the law was mediated through angels intended by this claim to exalt rather than denigrate the law.¹²⁸⁶ Contrary to usual perspectives,¹²⁸⁷ that might even be the case in Gal 3:19,¹²⁸⁸ the only questionable instance.¹²⁸⁹

4. Stephen Follows His Martyred Lord (7:54–8:1a)

In martyrdom, Stephen follows his Lord's model. Just as Stephen inverts the charges in Acts 7:51–53, so Luke inverts them in 7:56, 58, and 60, confirming Stephen's message.¹²⁹⁰ Jesus vindicates his suffering follower (the application of Jesus's faithfulness to those who suffer with him is similar to 2 Tim 2:11–12). This passage also introduces Saul, the persecutor.

a. Stephen's Martyrdom

The passage evokes other martyr stories, but especially Jesus's passion. It also invites historical discussion of the Sanhedrin's capital authority and whether the Sanhedrin or a lynch mob was more likely responsible for Stephen's death.

I. MARTYR STORIES

Martyr stories (even more than other kinds of atrocity reports) provided a challenge for their hearers to suffer bravely for the chosen cause.¹²⁹¹ In this sense, they functioned like models of brave deaths in war, seeking to inspire other soldiers to such acts of valor (e.g., Thucyd. 2.43.4). (Stephen thus functions as what the church fathers called the "protomartyr"—that is, the "first martyr"—thus offering a model for those who would need to follow.)¹²⁹²

Jews had stories of martyrs for faithfulness to the law (e.g., 2 Macc 7:30, 40; 4 Macc 6:27, 30). Anti-Semitic Alexandrians also had their own martyr stories about Greeks who argued for their rights and died because the emperors were, from their perspective, pro-Jewish!¹²⁹³ (See further discussion of martyr stories above, under sect. 3.h.ii,

1286. With most scholars (e.g., Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 48). Many ancient peoples believed their laws of divine origin (Plato *Laws* 1.624A; Ael. Arist. *Panath.* 382, in 313D, 314D; Iambl. *V.P.* 1.1; Val. Max. 1.2.1–5; 1.2.ext. 1–4; Tac. *Ann.* 3.26; in some other traditional societies, see Mbiti, *Religions*, 52, 268, 270). The Romans may have been unusual in regarding only part of their law as inspired (Cohen, *Law*, 28–29).

1287. E.g., Stendahl, *Paul*, 19; O'Neill, *Theology*, 51–52 (though regarding it as a gloss); Harrington, *God's People*, 51; Martin, *Reconciliation*, 61; cf. Longenecker, *Paul*, 146n109.

1288. See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 139–40.

1289. Sometimes speakers adopted a consensus view on a matter to argue their particular point, without subscribing to that view (e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 23.9; cf. *Sipra Qed. par.* 4.206.1.1; Rom 6:19; Rowe, "Style," 145–46; some commentators on 1 Cor 15:29); to what extent Luke's Stephen accepted these traditions we cannot say, nor is the question germane to Luke's point.

1290. See here Keener, "Inverted Guilt."

1291. Because Luke avoids recounting Paul's death and describes only Stephen's martyrdom in detail, Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 25, suggests that Luke "may have attempted to exhort his readers to avoid a martyr complex." But while Luke is much more positive about the world than are John (John 15:18–25), Revelation (Rev 13:7–8), and 2 Thessalonians (2 Thess 2:3–7), he does expect Christians to be ready to die (Luke 9:23–26; 14:26–34).

1292. Pelikan, *Acts*, 168 (following Lampe, *Lexicon*, 1200); see Barkhuizen, "Proclus" (on Proclus of Constantinople *Homilies* 17); for Stephen as the prototypical martyr, see *Martyre d'Étienne* (BHG 1649c), in Bovon and Bouvier, "Étienne," 318–31; in Chrysostom (Dehandschutter, "Proto-Martyr," emphasizing also Ps.-Chrysostom's anti-Judaic reading). Pelikan, *Acts*, 169, suggests the relevance of this model today, given the estimates claiming "that more Christians may have died for the faith during the twentieth century than during all the preceding centuries combined" (under Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, in the Sudan, etc.). Other interpreters also take Stephen as a model, inviting Jesus's followers to be prepared to die to spread the gospel (Kisau, "Acts," 1312–13).

1293. See CPJ 2:55–107, §§154–59.

“Positive Portrayal of Stephen.”) The tragic irony in this passage is that those who were most “zealous for the temple” (cf. Acts 6:14) here “manifest the blindness that brings its destruction” (Luke 19:44).¹²⁹⁴ They also become like the Gentile persecutors they would have so abhorred.

II. PARALLELS WITH JESUS

Scholars often note the parallels with Jesus’s passion in this section.¹²⁹⁵ This correspondence fits Stephen’s own presentation of himself (Acts 7:51) following the pattern of Jesus and the prophets (7:52), and Moses and the patriarchs (7:5, 9, 27–28, 37), whereas his opponents resemble those who persecuted the prophets (7:52).¹²⁹⁶

Jesus in Luke’s Passion Narrative*	Stephen in Acts
Hearing before Sanhedrin (22:66)	Hearing before Sanhedrin (6:12)
Announces Son of Man at God’s right hand (22:69)	Sees Son of Man at God’s right hand (7:55–56)
Condemned for blasphemy from his own testimony (22:70–72)	Condemned for blasphemy from his own testimony (7:56–57)†
Outside the city (cf. 23:26)‡	Outside the city (7:58)
“Receive my spirit!” (23:46)	“Receive my spirit!” (7:59)
“Forgive them” (23:34)§	“Forgive them” (7:60)

* If one extends beyond the section, one may note both Jesus and Stephen being “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; cf. “wisdom” in Luke 2:52; Acts 6:3, 10; and “power,” Luke 4:14; Acts 6:8); working miracles (Acts 2:22; 6:8); facing a blasphemy charge (Luke 5:21; Acts 6:11); challenging the rejection of prophets (Luke 4:24; Acts 7:52); and experiencing transfiguration (Luke 9:29; Acts 6:15; for these parallels, see Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 100).

† This is an inference, but apparently a reasonable one; see Goulder, *Type and History*, 42.

‡ This parallel lacks evidential value because it is not explicit in the Gospel and was the normal location for ancient executions. Cf. the attempted stoning in Luke 4:29.

§ This prayer is not in all manuscripts, but one would not expect later scribes to insert it specifically in Luke, rather than in another Gospel, to parallel Acts unless they recognized the patterns between the two volumes and not simply between the two characters. Would a scribe that sophisticated introduce the variant? The parallel with a standard Jewish prayer was probably also unknown to the hypothetical scribe.

Some of the Gospel’s information clearly does stem from tradition, especially in the Son of Man statement (Luke 22:69; see Mark 14:62). The prayer to receive Jesus’s spirit (Luke 23:46), though not found in Mark, may reflect a regular Jewish prayer typically uttered at the time of day Jesus uttered it (albeit to different effect),¹²⁹⁷ a datum Luke may not have known (hence a detail he would not have thought to create). On the historical level, Stephen may have chosen to deliberately imitate Jesus’s martyrdom, as many Christian martyrs since then have done,¹²⁹⁸ but Luke certainly chooses to record *these* details (rather than others available to him at least in Mark’s passion narrative) to emphasize the continuity between the martyred Lord and the first of his martyred followers.¹²⁹⁹

1294. Tannehill, *Acts*, 94–95.

1295. E.g., Abbott, *Acts*, 93; Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 21; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 58; Hamm, *Acts*, 40–41; Pervo, *Acts*, 195; Green, “Acts,” 745–46; more fully Goulder, *Type and History*, 42–43; Talbert, *Acts*, 66–67; Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 100.

1296. With, e.g., Combrink, *Analysis*, 22.

1297. See Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 142.

1298. For one example, though a number of traditions in *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* (tendentious in its honor of Protestant but neglect of Catholic martyrs) may be questionable, echoes or the influence of the Lukan Jesus’s final words are sometimes unmistakable (e.g., 132, 133, 212–13, 235, 252). Ancient use of Jesus’s model fits the ancient use of Jewish martyr traditions as models. This comparison stands in contrast to other possible death models; e.g., the mime imitation of the deceased at Roman funerals (cf. Sumi, “Impersonating”) cannot be relevant here.

1299. Goulder, *Type and History*, 189, argues conversely for the historicity of Stephen’s dying words, which provide Jesus’s words in Luke; but if one must choose, disciples (or the women present at the cross) would be more likely to preserve their master’s words.

III. CAPITAL AUTHORITY?¹³⁰⁰

Some scholars think that Rome allowed the Sanhedrin to execute capital sentences directly,¹³⁰¹ but this proposal does not fit what we know of the way Romans administered their provinces. The governor held the power of life and death in a province (Jos. *War* 2.117; cf. *b. Šabb.* 108a). Against Paul Winter,¹³⁰² Acts 23:1–10 constitutes a preliminary inquiry to formulate a charge (22:30; 23:28–29), not evidence for capital authority, even though profanation of the temple (cf. 21:28–29) was the one charge for which the Romans permitted local executions.¹³⁰³ Some cite the passion narrative in favor of the Sanhedrin's capital authority, but the logic of the passion narrative in fact presupposes that the Sanhedrin lacks capital authority; why else would it hand Jesus over to Pilate?¹³⁰⁴ An intermediate position is that Romans rarely delegated capital authority but that Roman governors were authorized to do so;¹³⁰⁵ but whatever governors of some provinces may have wished to do, it is inconceivable from what we know historically of Pilate that he would have shared this authority with the Jerusalem aristocracy.¹³⁰⁶

Later rabbis discussed appropriate grounds¹³⁰⁷ and means¹³⁰⁸ for execution, but rabbinic literature itself shows that these discussions were primarily theoretical.¹³⁰⁹ Some rabbinic tradition traces the loss of Jewish courts' capital authority to 70 C.E.,¹³¹⁰ and other tradition to no later than 30 C.E.¹³¹¹ Although Josephus naturally does not report any precedents unfavorable toward Jewish autonomy, this loss of sovereignty (for so it would be viewed, Ep Jer 14) must have begun much earlier. Rome delegated the right of the sword to Herod and other client rulers, but these were not local aristocracies. Although even Diaspora Jewish communities could enforce corporal penalties on their own members,¹³¹² corporal punishment was not capital punishment. Rome withheld capital jurisdiction from municipal aristocracies who could employ it against citizens loyal to Rome.¹³¹³ For this, local rulers needed at least Roman ratification.

Some precedent existed for Romans overlooking past executions, or even human sacrifices, that could be justified by local custom, but they expected such practices to be discontinued.¹³¹⁴ Provable extrajudicial executions were not therefore in the political interests of the priestly aristocracy. Although councils of subject territories could

1300. Here I am adapting information from Keener, *John*, 1107–9.

1301. Winter, *Trial*, 10–15; Smallwood, *Jews*, 150.

1302. Winter, *Trial*, 75–90.

1303. Cf. O'Rourke, "Law," 174; Sanders, *Judaism*, 61. Paul's Roman citizenship could shield him under normal circumstances (Rabello, "Condition," 738), but not for profaning a temple (Jos. *War* 2.224; Hesiod *Astron.* frg. 3).

1304. Cf. also Catchpole, *Trial*, 247.

1305. O'Rourke, "Law," 174–75.

1306. On Pilate, see briefly comment on Acts 4:27–28. Brown, *Death*, 339, correctly observes that executions required ratification by the Sanhedrin in Jos. *Ant.* 14.167; although this datum is undoubtedly relevant for the discussion, we should note that it describes the time of Herod the Great, not direct Roman rule.

1307. E.g., *Sipre Deut.* 154.2.1.

1308. E.g., *b. Sanh.* 49b–50a.

1309. Unless secret executions (cf. Winter, *Trial*, 70–73) were practiced; but Pharisaic and later rabbinic requirements for evidence were so strict that executions must have remained very rare.

1310. *Sipre Deut.* 154.1.1; *b. Sanh.* 37b. The date appears indeterminate in *Sipra Qed. par.* 4.206.2.9.

1311. E.g., *y. Sanh.* 1:1, §3; 7:2, §3. Safrai, "Self-Government," 398, cites also *b. Šabb.* 15a; *ʿAbod. Zar.* 8b. This was the widespread view at the turn of the twentieth century (Abrahams, *Studies* [1], 73; Sanday, *Criticism*, 127; Edersheim, *Life*, 583).

1312. Blinzler, *Trial*, 164; Winter, *Trial*, 12–13.

1313. With, e.g., Morris, *Luke*, 319.

1314. Plut. *Rom. Q.* 83, *Mor.* 283F (although he notes that Romans had themselves offered such sacrifices).

pronounce a death sentence, they had to bring their sentence before the governor for ratification.¹³¹⁵ Most scholars thus currently recognize that the Sanhedrin lacked the legal authority to execute prisoners in this period (Jos. *Ant.* 20.200).¹³¹⁶ As Roman legal scholar Sherwin-White notes,¹³¹⁷

When we find that capital power was the most jealously guarded of all the attributes of government, nor even entrusted to the principal assistants of the governors, and specifically withdrawn, in the instance of Cyrene, from the competence of local courts, it becomes very questionable indeed for the Sanhedrin.

The Sanhedrin could sentence offenders and recommend them for execution, but apart from violation of the temple (not simply speaking against it), few Jewish religious charges would receive an automatic capital sentence from the Romans (e.g., the case of Jesus ben Ananias).¹³¹⁸ It is not impossible that Roman officials might look the other way in the case of lynchings, but even these would be problematic if they could generate complaints to Rome.¹³¹⁹

IV. LYNCH MOBS?

This is one of the few killings narrated in Acts (cf. Acts 12:2),¹³²⁰ but others may well be implied (22:4; cf. 9:1).¹³²¹ Although specific arguments for (or against) the historical authenticity of this section are not compelling,¹³²² apart from our knowledge of Luke's historiography in general, many scholars acknowledge the possibility of a mob lynching here.¹³²³ Those who support the occurrence of an official trial point out that unless the governor ratified the execution (at least "in retrospect to cover the invalidity"), the ensuing arrests (8:3; 9:2; 22:5) and especially extension of the investigation to Damascus (9:1–2; 26:12) would have proved problematic.¹³²⁴ This would seem to be a reasonable objection but assumes that the governor chose to know and take interest in any of these activities and would have allowed a stoning rather than handling the execution by Roman means (crucifixion). It also presumes that oversight from the ethnarch in Damascus would be necessary for extradition.

Those who affirm that Stephen faced an official hearing also note that the narrative speaks of the Sanhedrin (6:12) and at least something comparable to a vote

1315. Blinzler, *Trial*, 164–68; Ramsay, *Church in Empire*, 293.

1316. Benoit, *Jesus*, 1:135; Lane, *Mark*, 530; Stewart, "Procedure"; Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 17; Bruce, "Trial," 12–13.

1317. Sherwin-White, *Society*, 36; see more fully 32–43.

1318. Brown, *Death*, 363–72.

1319. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 17.

1320. Because 1 Thess 2:14–16 mentions only Jesus and the prophets, Hare, *Persecution*, 36, doubts that "ordinary Christians" were widely martyred. This is probably correct (so long as we do not press from Paul's silence the supposition that it never happened, since prophets and Jesus would take precedence in being mentioned).

1321. See Bammel, "Activity," 359. Perhaps more direct admission of Paul's preconversion involvement in extrajudicial killings would not have played well in a Roman setting, especially for outsiders unsympathetic toward the Christian notion of conversion effecting forgiveness.

1322. Literary factors can account for nearly all of Dunn's arguments (*Acts*, 99) in favor of reliability. At the same time, such literary patterning was common in historians both because of their views of providence and because of their narrative style (see Keener, *Acts*, 1:571–74).

1323. E.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 85; Grant, *Christianity and Society*, 39; Wallace and Williams, *Acts*, 45; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 391; Dunn, *Acts*, 99; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 5; Marguerat, *Actes*, 271–72; Pervo, *Acts*, 193–94 (drawing on evidence for vigilantism in Seland, *Violence*), 196; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 187; Scholl, *Apostelgeschichte*, 47; cf. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 18.

1324. Judge, *Pattern*, 65.

(26:10),¹³²⁵ but U.S. history can illustrate that hearings and lynchings are not always mutually exclusive options (though mob “justice” more often preceded planned hearings than followed them).¹³²⁶ A mob could have responded to Stephen’s speech, cutting short orderly public proceedings.¹³²⁷ Further, the hearing before the Sanhedrin may be Luke’s adaptation of a less formal hearing (see comment on Acts 7:1); or Luke may have telescoped together events that occurred at different times; or even some members of the Sanhedrin may have grown angry enough by this point (cf. 4:18–21; 5:28, 40; esp. 5:33) to refuse to intervene against the mob action (especially if colleagues intent on official procedures were preventing the apparently just or necessary outcome).¹³²⁸ The language of voting is likely figurative (see comment on Acts 26:10).

Mob violence was a common phenomenon of ancient life (its occurrence thus says nothing about specifically “Jewish” hostility, Stephen himself being Jewish). Fights could break out spontaneously in the streets and escalate into violence, requiring subsequent court action (*Sent. Syr. Men.* 139–42). When one comedian made comments in a theater that the Roman audience considered offensive, they lynched him on the spot, complaining that he “was not playing his part as the situation required.”¹³²⁹ Josephus claims that a crowd “lynched” the pious man Onias the Just (Honi the Circle-Drawer) for refusing to curse their enemies (*Ant.* 14.22–24).¹³³⁰

Court settings often degenerated into unruly shouting (see comment on Acts 18:17) but could degenerate further than this (see other examples involving stones in the discussion of stoning at Acts 7:58). Because of tensions between elements of the narrative that point either to a lynching or to a trial, some suggest plausibly that two accounts of Stephen’s death circulated and Luke has failed to harmonize them fully.¹³³¹ But it is equally possible that Luke chose to focus on legal elements in what started as a popular legal action (Acts 6:12–15) and culminated unexpectedly (at least for most of its participants) in a lynching (7:57–60), whether on the same occasion or subsequently.¹³³²

Although such actions were very likely technically illegal under Roman law,¹³³³ they would have fit literal biblical demands—if in fact Stephen had been guilty.¹³³⁴ We should not allow contemporary secular Western perspectives to render unintelligible the commitment first-century Jerusalemites could show for their faith; for example, Jerusalem’s masses preferred death to allowing pagan images in the city (*Jos. War* 2.169–74, 197–98).¹³³⁵ Diaspora Jews could also appreciate stories in which faithful

1325. Noted by Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 390 (though he settles for a lynching, 391).

1326. For mob violence, see, e.g., Woodward, *Career*, 70; Tuttle, *Riot*, passim. In antiquity, cf. Völkl, “Lapidation.”

1327. See Bock, *Acts*, 310.

1328. The rabbis would have required the full Sanhedrin to try a false prophet (see Foakes-Jackson and Lake, “Background of Jewish History,” 33), but Sadducees would have cared little for Pharisaic ideals (*Jos. Ant.* 18.16; cf. Neusner, *Beginning*, 27–28; Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 107) and by definition not at all for (later) rabbinic ones (see Brown, *Death*, 357–63; Blinzler, *Trial*, 138–43; Keener, *Matthew*, 614, 644–45).

1329. Diod. Sic. 37.12.1 (LCL, 12:215).

1330. Noted by Le Cornu, *Acts*, 375–76.

1331. Barrett, *Acts*, 380–81 (the lynching source being Acts 6:9–11 and 7:54–58a; the trial source being 6:12–14 and 7:58b–60).

1332. Luke’s narrative technique prefers a cohesive scene depicting a single occasion, but he has apparently telescoped or conflated clearly chronologically distinct biblical material even in Stephen’s speech (see comment on Acts 7:2–3, 15–16).

1333. See Keener, *John*, 1107–9.

1334. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 374, cites even rabbinic support for extrajudicial measures in emergency situations. The situation depicted here probably was dictated more by mob sentiment than by official design, but the mob undoubtedly felt justified.

1335. Dunn, *Acts*, 101.

Jews executed the Jews who had apostatized, as an example to others (3 Macc 7:14–15). Illegal killings and exploitation are frequent events in much of the world today (e.g., “accidental” bride burnings;¹³³⁶ enslavement; clan killings),¹³³⁷ and at times these can include partly religious motivations.¹³³⁸ To say this is to condemn neither religion in general nor any religion in particular; it is to recognize that historically religion (like irreligion) has been among the many forces that could be harnessed to produce behavior otherwise not normally considered justified. Earlier in Acts, local officers had feared that the masses would support the apostles by stoning those who would detain the apostles (Acts 5:25).

How could such a lynching occur? Some suggest that it best fits the interregnum after Pilate’s removal, perhaps before the winter of 36–37 C.E.¹³³⁹ It is difficult to date Paul’s conversion so late, however (Gal 1:18; 2:1),¹³⁴⁰ and less difficult to believe that an unpremeditated mob lynching could occur during the majority of the year when the governor resided in Caesarea.¹³⁴¹ Governors left all but the most critical decisions to the local council, including all internal religious questions.¹³⁴² Capital sentences were among the exceptions,¹³⁴³ but in this case, in the unpremeditated heat of the moment, more radical elements might have presumed on Pilate’s discretion.

Further, the one area where Rome granted Jerusalem’s council capital jurisdiction was an offense against the temple (cf. also Acts 21:28; 24:6); although it is unlikely that Rome included in this concession mere criticism or even “threats” (cf. 6:14) against the temple (cf. Jos. *War* 6.300–305), some local individuals might have been more willing to press the boundaries on such a matter than on others (cf. Mark 14:58; though this attempt, according to 14:59, failed).¹³⁴⁴

Although only the Roman governor held the official power of execution, after the fact he “may have turned a blind eye to local Jewish justice if no harm (such as an uprising or complaints to Rome) came of it.”¹³⁴⁵ The passion narrative suggests that Pilate was compelled or disposed to accept realities of local politics perhaps as early as 30 C.E. (Luke 23:23–24; John 19:12);¹³⁴⁶ after the fall of his patron Sejanus in 31 C.E., Pilate would need to be even more accommodating (he was eventually recalled on charges brought by local officials).¹³⁴⁷ Because he stayed in

1336. E.g., Hull, “Yoke,” 18. The custom of widow burning (differing from what Hull’s article primarily addresses) has ancient roots (Diod. Sic. 17.91.3; Cic. *Tusc.* 5.27.78; Val. Max. 2.6.14).

1337. E.g., “Sudan—Ravages”; Bhatia, “Booty,” 40; “Child Laborers”; Masland et al., “Slavery”; Gordon, *Slavery*, x–xi; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 94–98.

1338. E.g., during my travels to northern Nigeria, I received oral reports (and have since received more and reviewed written reports) on sectarian violence (initially started by jihadists but then broadened). In the year following September 7, 2001, at least three thousand people were killed in interreligious (and interethnic) strife in Plateau State, catalyzed by mercenaries under the banner of jihad (Keener, “Mayhem”; “Ethno Religion Violence”; cf. Guthrie, “Blast”; see esp. articles by Obed Minchakpu).

1339. E.g., Reicke, *Era*, 190–93; Kistemaker, *Acts*, 280; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 391; D. Williams, *Acts*, 148.

1340. See, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 86.

1341. One could date Stephen’s death after Paul’s conversion, arguing that Luke associated Paul with the most dramatic martyrdom story that he had (cf. Acts 5:36–37) and ended persecution after Paul’s conversion too neatly (9:31; cf. 1 Thess 2:14–16). But the associations run too deep in the story (e.g., Acts 6:9; 8:1–4), and one could as easily argue that Luke would have dated Saul’s conversion as *early* as possible.

1342. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 33.

1343. See discussion in Sherwin-White, *Society*, 32–43; Keener, *John*, 1107–9.

1344. See discussion in Blinzler, *Trial*, 170; more nuanced, Bruce, “Trial,” 12.

1345. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 17. Some argue that Roman governors could also exercise the discretion of delegating this right to local officials (O’Rourke, “Law,” 174).

1346. Not all accept the historicity of this claim, but see Keener, *Matthew*, 665–67; idem, *John*, 1105–7 (examining both possible apologetic and historical motives).

1347. See, e.g., Bruce, *Acts*, 179; idem, *Commentary*, 170; idem, *History*, 226; Riesner, *Early Period*, 63.

Caesarea (cf. Acts 23:33), he may not have known of these events until after the fact. Thus he may have been willing (or politically compelled) to ignore certain local procedures against potential troublemakers; the martyrdom thus could be as early as 31–32 C.E.¹³⁴⁸

b. The Audience's Anger and the Lord's Support (7:54–57)

The audience's hostility to Stephen's message (7:54, 57) frames Stephen's revelation of the exalted Lord (7:55–56), contrasting human resistance against the Spirit (7:51) with obedience to the Spirit (cf. 2:17–18).¹³⁴⁹

I. THE ENRAGED AUDIENCE (7:54)

The language in 7:54 directly recalls 5:33, where hearers (οἱ ἀκούσαντες) also were infuriated (διεπρίοντο, the only other NT use) and wanted to slay the speakers; in this case, however, the sentiment has escalated, and no Gamaliel intervenes. Their “uncircumcised” hearts (7:51) are now pierced. The hearers may think that they have convicted Stephen from his own mouth (cf. Luke 22:71), but the informed audience knows that the witnesses are false (Acts 6:13). The language of “grinding teeth” here applies appropriately to rage, possibly recalling LXX passages¹³⁵⁰ where the wicked do so against the righteous, desiring to kill them (Pss 34:16 [35:16 MT]; 36:12 [37:12]; cf. Ps 111:10 [112:10]; Lam 2:16).¹³⁵¹ But while gnashing of teeth could indicate anger or strong emotion similar to it (e.g., Ps 112:10), it often (and in Luke's Gospel) signifies especially anguish (Luke 13:28).¹³⁵² This gnashing thus probably offers a proleptic fulfillment of the warning that some, finding themselves cast out of the kingdom banquet that they expected to share with the patriarchs and prophets, would weep and gnash their teeth (Luke 13:28; Q material also in Matt 8:11–12).

This portrayal would commend Stephen's heroism to Luke's audience. Greek orators could also depict Socrates's jurors as being irrationally “enraged.”¹³⁵³ Likewise, a Stoic complained that philosophers whose audiences applaud them have accomplished nothing (Mus. Ruf. frg. 49, p. 142.4–12); true success is the audience's shame, repentance (142.12–19), or silence (142.19–21).

II. STEPHEN SEES JESUS EXALTED (7:55–56)

Jesus appears here where the narrative has already indicated his location (1:9–11; 2:33–35). Looking to heaven was a common posture for prayer (cf., e.g., Luke 9:16).¹³⁵⁴ “Lifting up” one's “eyes” was a familiar posture of prayer both among Jewish people¹³⁵⁵

1348. With Riesner, *Early Period*, 63.

1349. Penner, *Praise*, 289–91, also contends that the Stephen narratives practice *synkrisis*, contrasting his character with that of his opponents.

1350. Cited in Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 392, in addition to *Sib. Or.* 2.203, 305; 8.105; cf. Marshall, “Acts,” 571.

1351. With, e.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 99; Chance, *Acts*, 121. The expression is adversarial also in Job 16:9.

1352. See *Sib. Or.* 2.203, 305; 8.86, 105, 125; *Exod. Rab.* 31:5; *Ecl. Rab.* 1:15, §1; cf. Derrett, *Audience*, 70; Matt 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30.

1353. Max. Tyre 3.4 (Trapp, 28).

1354. Shiell, comparing athletes' and others' gesture of pointing to the sky with an index finger when conceding defeat (*Reading Acts*, 156–58), suggests that Stephen here gestures upward to concede his impending death (156). Heavenward gestures (and especially looking, as here) are, however, appropriate for other reasons.

1355. Ezra 9:6; Job 22:26; Ps 123:1; 1 Esd 4:58; Tob 3:11–12; *Jub.* 25:11; 4Q213 1 I, 8; 4 Macc 6:6, 26 (during martyrdom); *4 Bar.* 6:5; *Jos. Asen.* 11:19/12:1; *t. Ber.* 3:14; *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:5; *y. Ber.* 4:6; Mark 6:41; 7:34; John 11:41; 17:1). Prayer toward Jerusalem was, however, normative as well (1 Kgs 8:44; Dan 6:10; 1 Esd 4:58; *m. Ber.* 4:5–6; *t. Ber.* 3:14).

and among Gentiles.¹³⁵⁶ Because God was envisioned as being in heaven,¹³⁵⁷ both Jews¹³⁵⁸ and Gentiles¹³⁵⁹ regularly lifted their hands in prayer, supplication, or worship. Despite the context, the action of looking to God in heaven was familiar enough that readers would think not so much of an alternative temple (though the idea need not be completely ruled out; “heaven is his throne,” Acts 7:49)¹³⁶⁰ as the idea that heaven as God’s dwelling place was where one might witness God’s activity, especially for someone who was being caught up there (Acts 1:10–11; 2:34; 3:21). It was also the locus for some divine revelations (Luke 2:13, 15; 3:21–22; 22:43), such as would soon happen to Paul (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:19) and Peter (10:11–16; 11:5–10).

Thus some other early Jewish texts presented similar heavenly visions.¹³⁶¹ Although speakers could sometimes narrate events as if they were seeing them when, in fact, everyone knew they were not,¹³⁶² Luke intends the claim as genuinely visionary: not only Stephen (7:56) but Luke (7:55) declares that Stephen indeed saw Jesus. The heavens being “opened” recalls Luke 3:21, at Jesus’s calling and empowerment by the Spirit (as Stephen is “filled” with the Spirit here).¹³⁶³ It also reflects the imagery of divine revelation (Ezek 1:1; John 1:51; Acts 10:11; Rev 4:1; 11:19; 15:5; 19:11).¹³⁶⁴ Luke thus compares Stephen to Jesus here as in some other, more explicit aspects of this account of his martyrdom; perhaps he underlines thereby the assurance to both concerning God’s purpose. Further, Stephen sees God’s glory in heaven rather than in the temple,¹³⁶⁵ for, as Stephen has just declared, heaven is God’s throne, rather than any earthly temple containing him (Acts 7:49, quoting Isa 66:1).

Stephen was already “full of the Spirit” (Acts 6:5),¹³⁶⁶ but Luke reminds the reader here that Stephen is prophetically empowered and hence can have genuine visions

1356. Hom. *Il.* 7.178, 201; Xen. *Cyr.* 6.4.9; Virg. *Aen.* 2.405–6 (because she could not lift her hands); 12.195; Sil. *It.* 1.508; Char. *Chaer.* 8.7.2; cf. some (albeit only some) traditional cultures in Mbiti, *Religions*, 84. PGM 4.585 reports closing eyes for prayer, but some parts of the scroll require the eyes to be open (PGM 4.625; cf. Iamblichus *V.P.* 28.156); the magical papyri require many different magical gestures.

1357. E.g., Judaism frequently associates God with “heaven” (e.g., 1 Esd 4:58; Tob 10:13; Jdt 6:19; 1 Macc 3:18, 50, 60; 4:24; 3 Macc 7:6; 1 En. 83:9; 91:7). Greeks also sometimes located Zeus in heaven (Ach. Tat. 5.2.2; cf. Sen. *Y. Dial.* 12.8.5).

1358. Ezra 9:5; Lam 2:19; 3:41; Isa 1:15; 1 En. 84:1; *Jub.* 25:11; Ps 155:2; 1 Esd 9:47; 2 Macc 3:20; 14:34; 15:12, 21; 3 Macc 5:25; 4 Macc 4:11; *Sib. Or.* 3.559–60, 591–93; 4.162–70; *Jos. Ant.* 3.26; 3.53; 4.40; *Ag. Ap.* 1.209; *Test. Mos.* 4:1; *Mek. Pisha* 1.38; *t. Mo’ed Qat.* 2:17. Cf. also 1 Tim 2:8; 1 *Clem.* 29.1; *Acts John* 43.

1359. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.450; 3.275, 318; 5.174; 6.257; 7.130; 8.347; 15.368–72; 19.254; *Od.* 9.294, 527; 17.239; 20.97; Eurip. *El.* 592–93; *Ap. Rhod.* 1.248; 4.593, 1702; Virg. *Aen.* 1.93; 4.205; 9.16; 12.195; Ovid *Metam.* 2.477, 580; 6.261–62; 9.702–3; 11.131; 13.410–11; Diod. Sic. 14.29.4; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.17.5; 15.9.2; Appian *Bell. civ.* 2.12.85; *Hist. rom.* 2.5.5; Livy 7.6.4; Suet. *Nero* 41; Arrian *Alex.* 4.20.3 (a Persian); Epict. *Diatr.* 4.10.14; Plut. *Cleverness* 17, *Mor.* 972B; Char. *Chaer.* 3.1.8.

1360. The blind who could not pray toward the temple could pray toward heaven (*t. Ber.* 3:14; *y. Ber.* 4:6, §2), which was God’s sanctuary also (*Tg. Isa.* 6:3).

1361. Thus Eve stares (ἤρένισεν; cf. Acts 1:10–11) into heaven and witnesses a heavenly chariot coming to take Adam (*Apoc. Mos.* 33:2); Job tells his wife to look into heaven and she will see their children crowned with glory (*Test. Job* 40:3–4/4–5). Cf. perhaps *Test. Sol.* 2:7 (third century c.e.), which speaks of immediate help from heaven in answer to Solomon’s prayer. Cf. perhaps Jesus’s activity in Luke 10:18.

1362. See Anderson, *Glossary*, 125, on φαντασία.

1363. Some note that Acts 7:55 is one of the NT texts mentioning the Spirit alongside the Father and the Son (Humphrey, *Ecstasy*, 22); the same is true of Luke 3:22.

1364. Also *Apoc. Mos.* 35:2; 2 *Bar.* 22:1; *Test. Ab.* 7:3 A; *Test. Levi* 2:6; see also Lentzen-Deis, “Motiv,” citing esp. 2 Macc 3:24ff.; 3 Macc 6:18. For heaven’s parting for revelatory messengers, see, e.g., Virg. *Aen.* 9.20–21; heavenly vision, see, e.g., Max. Tyre 11.11–12.

1365. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 131 (cf. Ps 63:2; Isa 6:1).

1366. Probably the wording does not refer to a fresh empowerment here as in Acts 4:8 and 13:9; see Turner, *Power*, 165–69, esp. 169.

(2:17–18).¹³⁶⁷ Many ancients granted that those nearing death experienced special prophetic abilities,¹³⁶⁸ and this may have been particularly expected for martyrs;¹³⁶⁹ for Stephen, however, the explicit emphasis is on the Spirit's empowerment. (Still, Stephen's vision precedes his martyrdom just as Jesus's transfiguration includes a warning of his impending martyrdom in Luke 9:30–31.)¹³⁷⁰ The "God of glory" appeared to Abraham in Acts 7:2, at the very opening of Stephen's speech; now Stephen himself sees God's glory.¹³⁷¹ Jesus had "entered into glory" (Luke 24:26; cf. 9:31–32) and would return in glory to judge the world (9:26; 21:27), a point undoubtedly significant in this context.

In Acts 7:30–31, Moses sees God's glory in the bush; here Stephen witnesses Jesus along with God's glory in heaven. Stephen's face like that of an angel in 6:15 may also evoke Moses's reflecting God's glory. Far from blaspheming Moses (6:11), Stephen is his true follower. Just as others had "gazed" on Stephen's glorified face in 6:15, so he "gazed" into God's heavenly glory here. Most important, however, is that Stephen's vision of the Son of Man at God's right hand (7:55–56) clearly parallels Jesus's announcement of the Son of Man at God's right hand (Luke 22:69), as scholars commonly observe.¹³⁷² "Son of Man" is rare outside the Gospels and barely ever occurs on anyone's lips but Jesus's; this makes dependence on Jesus's words before the Sanhedrin all the more likely.¹³⁷³ Jesus's claim before the Sanhedrin is what ultimately clinches his condemnation; Stephen's adapting the same claim produces the same effect here.

*Excursus: The Son of Man*¹³⁷⁴

Whatever the ultimate source of early Christian "Son of Man" imagery, there can be no question that it derives in this case from the gospel tradition. The expression appears nowhere else in Acts, and its twenty-six uses in Luke's Gospel all appear on Jesus's lips. In early Christian literature, in fact, it appears almost exclusively in

1367. On the Spirit's connection with prophetic empowerment in many early Jewish sources, see Menzies, *Development*, 53–112; Turner, *Power*, 86–104; Keener, *Spirit*, 10–13. On "full of the Spirit," van der Horst, "Macrobius," 226, compares here Macrob. *Sat.* 3.7.3, *deo plenam*.

1368. E.g., Plato *Apol.* 39; Xen. *Apol.* 30; Cic. *Div.* 1.23.47; Aune, *Prophecy*, 178; many references in Malina and Rohrbaugh, *John*, 221–22. For Jewish testaments, cf. introduction to Acts 20:18–35; others also stressed the importance of final words (see Englhofer, "Ultima verba").

1369. Cf. Munoa, "Merkavah" (though the most persuasive example, *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, is much later and most such visions are not associated with suffering).

1370. See Goulder, *Type and History*, 57.

1371. On the *inclusio*, see, e.g., Knowling, "Acts," 201; further comment on Acts 7:2.

1372. E.g., Dupont, *Salvation*, 114; Focant, "Fils de l'homme" (addressing a range of potential meaning for "Son of Man" in Luke-Acts); Marguerat, *Actes*, 274; cf. Abbott, *Acts*, 92. Although the Markan source for Luke 22:69 speaks of the parousia (Mark 14:62; cf. also Matt 26:64), Matera, *Theology*, 93–94, notes that Luke's eschatological interest involves not only the future kingdom but also eschatology immediately after death (Luke 12:20; 16:23; 23:43), like Paul (2 Cor 5:1–10; Phil 1:23). Sleeman, *Geography*, 165, rightly links "glory" in 7:55 with both the risen, ascended Jesus (Luke 9:31–32; 24:26; Acts 3:13) and the coming Son of Man (Luke 9:26; 21:27).

1373. Cf. Tannehill, *Acts*, 98. Also Dunn, *Acts*, 99–100 (simultaneously arguing plausibly for authenticity because Luke nowhere else introduces it though it could have provided useful parallels elsewhere as well). This unique use of the title is often noted (e.g., Schweizer, "Son of Man Again," 257); some associate its use outside the Gospels with Jesus's solidarity with his saints (Longenecker, *Christology*, 92, developing Moule, "Circumstances," 256–57).

1374. For brief surveys of views, see, e.g., Marshall, "Son of Man Sayings"; Longenecker, *Christology*, 82–87; Marshall, *Origins*, 63–82; Mansfield, *Spirit and Gospel*, 52–53; Keener, *Matthew*, 65–66.

sayings attributed to Jesus.¹³⁷⁵ (In view of the patently Semitic, non-Hellenistic figure of speech involved,¹³⁷⁶ the view that the expression originated among Hellenists such as Stephen¹³⁷⁷ should be rejected outright.)

The supposed distinction between the “Son of Man” and Jesus himself in some of his sayings (Mark 8:38; Luke 12:8) ignores the common polite Aramaic use of third-person speech for oneself.¹³⁷⁸ Sometimes it might even mean “I” in common usage.¹³⁷⁹ Jesus’s use of the term allows some ambiguity,¹³⁸⁰ however, which might be connected with the “messianic secret” and delaying his own conflict with the politically powerful authorities.

Normally, “son of man” was simply good Hebrew and Aramaic for “human one”¹³⁸¹ and sometimes was used as a circumlocution like “that one.”¹³⁸² Although this broader usage allowed Jesus to maintain sufficient ambiguity to protect himself officially, his eschatological usage points to a more specific biblical allusion. Because it can mean a “human being” (or occasionally “I”), some scholars reject its eschatological sense in the Gospels.¹³⁸³ Most, however, recognize that at least some of the Son of Man sayings use the title eschatologically,¹³⁸⁴ whether they derive the title’s background from Daniel¹³⁸⁵ or, less likely, from the Similitudes of *1 Enoch*.¹³⁸⁶ (Some think that the usage is also reflected in *4 Ezra*,¹³⁸⁷ though this is less clear and stems from a period after the gospel tradition was spreading.)

The Similitudes, however, are of uncertain date,¹³⁸⁸ and even the meaning in *1 Enoch* is debated. Some argue that Enoch is himself the “son of man” (human one; see *1 En.*

1375. The exceptions are Heb 2:6; Rev 1:13; 14:14, all reflecting OT language and explicable without allusion to Jesus’s frequent self-title (though they might reflect cognizance of it). Paul likely knew Son of Man sayings (see parallels in 1 Thess 4:13–5:11), but the Semitic construction was not relevant for his audience (Nickelsburg, “Son of Man,” 804).

1376. With, e.g., Jeremias, *Theology*, 260–62.

1377. Walker, “Origin of Concept,” 490.

1378. See Diez Macho, “Hijo del Hombre,” illustrating from the Palestinian Targumim. It also appears in only four sayings; if even one of the many other “Son of Man” sayings is authentic, this distinction between Jesus and the Son of Man would be untenable (Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 257–58; idem, *End*, 170).

1379. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 163–68, shows that *bar nasha* can mean “that one,” which in turn could function as a circumlocution for “I” (some others are less convinced, e.g., Jeremias, *Theology*, 261n1; esp. Chilton, *Approaches*, 75–76). For its use for “I,” see, e.g., *y. Hag.* 2:1, §9; *Ketub.* 4:14, §1; *Sukkah* 5:1, §7; *Ta’an.* 1:4, §1; 4:5, §11; for “you,” see *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:1. But Vermes probably limits the usage too much to focus solely on it.

1380. See, e.g., Marshall, “Son of Man Sayings,” 350–51.

1381. With, e.g., Cullmann, *Christology*, 138; about one hundred times in the Hebrew Bible.

1382. “That one” could refer to significant personages; it became a title for Pythagoras among Pythagoreans (e.g., Iambl. *V.P.* 18.88; 35.255).

1383. Burkitt, *Sources*, 66–68; Montefiore, *Gospels*, 1:44; Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 160–91; Leivestad, “Exit,” 266–67; cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, 138; Chilton, *Approaches*, 75–109. It addresses a prophet in Ezekiel (cf. also *Apoc. Elij.* 1:1).

1384. Lindars, “Re-enter.” Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-existence*, 41, differentiates the use in Daniel (for Israel), the Similitudes (for an exalted Enoch), and *4 Ezra* 13 (for a Messiah) but argues (in keeping with his focus) that all suggest preexistence.

1385. E.g., Manson, *Servant-Messiah*, 72–73; Brown, *Death*, 514; Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 239; Wade, “Son of Man”; Hooker, *Message*, 71–72; Bruce, *Time*, 27; cf. Wright, *People of God*, 292; Lohse, *Mark’s Witness*, 44. Many focus on Daniel but supplement with the Similitudes as a probable source (e.g., Brown, *Death*, 509–14; Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 235–36; Hagner, *Matthew*, 215). Daniel was more widely known than the Similitudes, but early Christians could have known both.

1386. *1 En.* 46:3–4; 48:2; 60:10; 62:5, 7, 9, 14; 63:11; 69:26–27, 29; 70:1; 71:13–14, 17. Many scholars find background for the Gospels’ usage here, e.g., Burkitt, *Sources*, 66ff.; Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 189; Tödt, *Son of Man*; Sandmel, *Judaism*, 88–89; Ladd, *Theology*, 145–58; Lindars, “Re-enter”; idem, *Son of Man*, 99; Boccaccini, *Judaism*, 219; Collins, “Son of Man”; Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism*, 40. Against this, see, e.g., Vermes, *Jesus and Judaism*, 89–99.

1387. Cf. *4 Ezra* 13:1–56; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 143; Collins, “Son of Man”; cf. Wright, *People of God*, 316. For the divine-warrior tradition here and in Dan 7, see Hayman, “Man from Sea” (Stevens, “Warrior,” sees the divine warrior behind Mark’s Son of Man).

1388. The majority today may view the Similitudes as pre-Christian, but some dispute remains. Some scholars date them to the early second century c.e. (Hindley, “Date”) or even the medieval period (Black,

71:14),¹³⁸⁹ or even that “son of man” there represents humanity in general.¹³⁹⁰ Still, whether representing Enoch or not, the figure in most passages in the Similitudes is an exalted one: the son of man was chosen before creation of the world (48:6) and will be worshiped by the whole earth (48:5), a light to the Gentiles (48:4); he appears to be identified with “my Elect” (48:9) and “God’s Anointed” (48:10). He sits on the throne of glory as a judge (69:26–29).¹³⁹¹

In any case, an eschatological usage in Enoch would probably reflect an interpretation of Daniel,¹³⁹² which (as part of common Judaism’s basic “canon”) circulated even more widely than the widely spread traditions of *1 Enoch*. The “son of man” in *1 En.* 46:3, the first occurrence in the Similitudes, reflects the language of Dan 7.¹³⁹³ Some scholars think that the figure of Dan 7:13 is angelic;¹³⁹⁴ this is not clear, since the figure is closely identified with the suffering saints of the most high God (7:18, 21–22). The figure in Dan 7 may be corporate,¹³⁹⁵ but many argue that it reflects a sort of corporate identity between the people (7:18, 21–22) and their ruler (7:13–14);¹³⁹⁶ in any case, it was certainly amenable to such an interpretation in the first century.¹³⁹⁷

When the Pharisees think that Jesus “blasphemes” because he forgives sins, Jesus demonstrates the “Son of Man’s authority on earth” (Luke 5:24; Mark 2:10); he likewise claims authority for the Son of Man as “Lord of the Sabbath” (Luke 6:5; Mark 2:28). The Son of Man’s “authority” may refer to Dan 7:14. But Jesus’s allusion to Dan 7:13–14 becomes most explicit in Mark 13:26 (addressed to Jesus’s disciples; not in Luke) and in Luke 22:69//Mark 14:62 (addressed to Jesus’s opponents, effectively ending Mark’s “messianic secret”).

“Parables”); most, however, date them earlier (see, e.g., Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha and New Testament*, 89; idem, *Jesus within Judaism*, 39–40; Thompson, “Son of Man”; cf. Wright, *People of God*, 317n116: most favor a first-century C.E. date). Some think the title in the Similitudes reflects the Christian usage (Agouridis, “Son of Man”; contrast Thompson, “Son of Man”); some view the Similitudes as anti-Christian polemic, reflecting a different Son of Man (Jas, “Hénoch”).

1389. E.g., Casey, “Son of Man” in Similitudes”; Ricciardi, “Henoc”; Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha and New Testament*, 18, 88–89; Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-existence*, 41; against this, see, e.g., Luke, “Son of Man.” Some argue (plausibly but hypothetically) that Enoch becomes the Son of Man (*1 En.* 71:14) only in later redaction (Schreiber, “Menschensohn”); E. Isaac (*OTP* 1:50) argues that “son of man” for Enoch in this passage is an Ethiopic construction different from that in the earlier passages.

1390. Cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, 140–41.

1391. Thus many view the title as messianic (McNamara, *Judaism*, 107–8; Kim, *Introduction*, 69–70); some view it as divine (Quarles, “Lord”); for a binitarian reading, see Scott, “Binitarian Nature.” Enoch could be or become a superhuman figure himself (as in some other Enoch literature), like Abel or (in the rabbis) Elijah in some other sources.

1392. So Collins, “Son of Man” (reading *4 Ezra* 13 as a similar attestation of this first-century interpretation of Daniel); Nickelsburg, “Son of Man,” 801 (noting the interweaving of Daniel, Isaiah, and Davidic traditions). Cf. the view that Messiah and Son of Man had been merged by the first century (Davies, *Paul*, 279).

1393. Thus *1 En.* 46:3 also alludes to the “Ancient of Days” (Dan 7:9, 13, 22). Possibly even indisputably early portions of *1 Enoch* draw on this part of Daniel (see Glasson, “Son of Man Imagery”).

1394. Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 45.

1395. So Burkitt, *Sources*, 67, and Bright, *History*, 457, contrasting the Similitudes.

1396. See, e.g., Riesenfeld, *Tradition*, 38. For a nonmessianic, heavenly-representative approach, see Koch, “Menschensohn.” Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 241, provides a messianic reading of Daniel’s “son of man,” but not all will find all his arguments compelling.

1397. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 169–76, notes that Daniel’s “son of man” did acquire messianic significance, but not (he argues) as a title. See sources noted above. Certainly, Justin’s Trypho in the second century read Dan 7 messianically (*Dial.* 31–32; Barnard, “Old Testament,” 404; idem, *Justin Martyr*, 48; Shotwell, *Exegesis*, 73), but this may reflect only Justin’s language (Higgins, “Belief,” 301–2). In later rabbinic discussion, see Moore, *Judaism*, 2:335–37. For a possible messianic reading of Daniel’s “son of man” in the Old Greek, see Reynolds, “Son of Man,” 77–79. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 163–64, suggests deliberate suppression.

Although some scholars have argued that the later church created many or all of Jesus's "Son of Man" sayings,¹³⁹⁸ "Son of Man" in early Christian texts appears almost exclusively on Jesus's lips. The proper, positive use of the criterion of dissimilarity thus would suggest that if *any* title of Jesus is authentic, this one is.¹³⁹⁹ Although many scholars agree that Jesus used the title, they dispute the authenticity of one or more groups of sayings in which the title is used. Yet if the title is authentic and barely used by anyone except Jesus, one need not a priori exclude any of the uses. If Jesus proclaimed a kingdom and implied his messiahship, one especially need not exclude the eschatological sayings.

If the Gospels provide any indication at all, Jesus apparently defined his mission—both its suffering and its exaltation—in terms of the son of man of Dan 7:13–14.¹⁴⁰⁰ Daniel's context would explain both the suffering and the exaltation aspects of the title (cf. 7:21–22, 25–27), rendering irrelevant any forced choice between their uses.¹⁴⁰¹ For Luke's source, Mark, the Son of Man who suffered before his exaltation is the forerunner of the community of faith, his audience, now suffering great tribulation at the hands of hostile world rulers (Mark 13:9–20, 26).¹⁴⁰² Yet because of its more common idiomatic associations, "Son of Man" retains an ambiguity that "Son of God" as a title for a specific person would lack.

Luke believes his own usage in his Gospel reflects Jesus's usage. Luke and his Diaspora audience were likely less familiar with Enoch's Similitudes than they were with Daniel. Even without the mention of clouds in Luke 22:69 (contrast Mark 14:62, where Jesus more explicitly recalls Dan 7:13), "Son of Man" there (and consequently in Acts 7:56) evokes the figure in Dan 7.

III. STANDING AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND (7:55–56)

That Jesus is at the Father's right hand (Acts 7:55, repeated at the end of 7:56 as epiphora or antistrophe) emphasizes the claim of his exaltation as sovereign Messiah and Lord (2:33–36), the "Lord" of Ps 110:1 (Acts 2:34). The high priest (Acts 7:1) and others would construe this as political defiance, claiming an alternate kingdom and authority in the hands of one whose execution they approved to maintain political stability (see 3:15; 4:7–10; 5:28).

But whereas other passages portray Jesus sitting at God's right hand (Luke 20:42; Acts 2:33–34; esp. Luke 22:69), why does Stephen emphatically see him *standing*

1398. E.g., Higgins, *Son of Man* (e.g., 53, 118); Borg, *Vision*, 14; idem, *Conflict*, 221–27; Boring, *Sayings*, 239–50; Donahue, *Christ*, 184; Crossan, *Jesus*, 238–55; Koester, *Introduction*, 2:88–89.

1399. Many scholars have concluded thus; cf., e.g., Bowman, *Intention*, 125–42; Jeremias, *Theology*, 260–76; Kümmel, *Theology*, 106; Gerhardtsson, *Origins*, 57; Riesenfeld, "Background," 94–95; Hill, *Prophecy*, 183; Marshall, "Son of Man Sayings"; idem, *Origins*, 63–82; France, "Authenticity," 113; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:43–50; Witherington, *End*, 170; Bruce, *Time*, 27–28; Bock, "Words," 91; Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism*, 42. The negative use of the criterion, by contrast with our approach here, has faced serious challenges in recent years (Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 1:173; Brown, *Death*, 19; Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, 143; Young, *Jewish Theologian*, 257).

1400. Cf. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 160–61; Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 234–45; Brown, *Death*, 509–14; *pace* Crossan, *Jesus*, 238–55.

1401. See Manson, *Servant-Messiah*, 72–74 (emphasizing corporate personality); Riesenfeld, *Tradition*, 38 (noting corporate personality between king and people); Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 245, 269; Hooker, *Message*, 71–72. Kazen, "Son of Man," 87, 108, thinks that Jesus and his movement preserved both corporate and individual aspects. Doeve, *Hermeneutics*, instead finds suffering through a midrashic connection with the Suffering Servant (cf. the favorable review by Boismard, "Review"). Bowman, *Intention*, 142–53, thinks that Jesus added the suffering aspect to the conventional apocalyptic usage.

1402. Matthew also interprets the title in view of Dan 7 (see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:50–52).

there (Acts 7:55–56)? Scholars have offered evidence for various proposals.¹⁴⁰³ Some cite the Samaritan view of Moses as the world ruler who interceded for the faithful during the period called “the Standing.”¹⁴⁰⁴ Even assuming that the extant evidence is early enough, this view is too narrow in light of the many possibilities and would be difficult for either Luke or his audience to know. In light of the parallel with Luke 22:69, others suggest that Jesus’s standing may signify his own eagerness to return, delayed only by the necessity of the Gentile mission (Acts 1:8–11). Because Stephen urges the church to world mission, he receives this proleptic vision.¹⁴⁰⁵ This view is possible but, to be as plausible as some others, requires too many lacunae in the text to be filled by readers’ assumptions.

Some other views draw more on widely available images of standing. A person of higher rank might stand to welcome one with whom he was pleased (1 Esd 4:47).¹⁴⁰⁶ Some suggest that standing is the posture for martyrs in heaven and hence Jesus the martyr prefigures Stephen.¹⁴⁰⁷ Johnson summarizes several views: the posture could be “cultic (see Lev 14:11; Ps 22:3),¹⁴⁰⁸ prophetic (Ezek 1:21; 2:1–2), or forensic, with Jesus playing the role of advocate (Gen 18:22; Exod 8:20; 9:13; Zech 3:1–8; Jer 18:20),¹⁴⁰⁹ or even of judge (Isa 3:13);” or it could apply, as some suggest, to those “attending God in the heavenly court” (cf. Ps 81:1 LXX [82:1 MT]; Zech 3:1–8; esp. Isa 6:2; Luke 1:19).¹⁴¹⁰ In view of other signs of judgment reversal in the passage, it seems likely that the forensic images of advocate, witness, and/or judge are paramount.¹⁴¹¹ The OT depicted witnesses as standing, with a vindicating witness at the right hand; as applied here, it would mean that “condemned by the earthly tribunal, Stephen would be vindicated by the heavenly

1403. For a fairly complete list of views, see Barrett, *Acts*, 384–85 (eleven views); Bock, *Proclamation*, 222–24 (six major views, Bock himself preferring the images of judge and advocate). Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 84, believe it implies (like Luke 16:22; 23:43) “that Stephen would pass straight to the presence of God, without waiting for the judgment or resurrection.” Among signs at one’s death confirming that one’s destination is paradise, an early second-century rabbi included one’s fulfilling a commandment at the time (*Abot R. Nat.* 25 A); some said God softened the death of special ones (*Test. Ab.* 8:10–12 A, for Abraham but not prophets).

1404. Scharlemann, *Stephen*, 15–16 (citing *Memar Marqah* 4.12; Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 377–78). Moses as “God’s Man” (*Stephen*, 15–16, citing *Memar Marqah* 6.6) also cannot take precedence over gospel tradition in explaining “Son of Man.”

1405. Owen, “Stephen’s Vision.” His portrayal of Jesus as an advocate for Stephen is not unlikely. For divine eagerness for the parousia, cf. Rom 8:26 (with 8:22–23).

1406. Though this posture could simply be necessary for Darius to kiss Zerubbabel.

1407. Chibici-Revneanu, “Stehplatz,” plausibly connecting the posture to the context in Acts 7. But the posture (applicable to martyrs in 4 Macc 17:18) appears in heaven as applicable to others besides martyrs (1 Kgs 22:19; 2 Chr 18:18; 4Q405 20 II + 21–22, in DSSNT 374; 2 En. 21:1; 22:2; 4 Ezra 8:21; 2 Bar. 21:6; 51:11; cf. 2 Bar. 6:4; 2 En. 29:3; esp. Aune, *Revelation*, 471); in some cultures, this posture may have connoted respect (cf., e.g., Val. Max. 2.4.2; Neyrey, “Shame of Cross,” 117).

1408. Because Jesus quotes Ps 110:1 while confronting the leading priests (Luke 22:66–69), he might appear as the true high priest (cf. Acts 7:1); the heavenly priest in Hebrews (Heb 3:1; 4:14–16; 5:5, 10; 6:20; 7:21, 26; 8:1; 9:11, 24–25) is rooted especially in Ps 110:4 (Heb 5:6–7:28). But the idea seems more conspicuous in Luke-Acts by its absence.

1409. Cf. perhaps also Hor. *Sat.* 1.9.38–39. But speakers normally arose to speak in various settings (see comment on Acts 1:15; 2:14; 15:7).

1410. Johnson, *Acts*, 139. On standing in the heavenly court, see 4Q405 20 II + 21–22 2 (DSSNT 374); *Test. Ab.* 7:11 A; 1 En. 39:12; 2 En. 21:1; *Odes Sol.* 36:2; *b. Hag.* 13b. This last position resembles (but is more nuanced than) Légasse, “Encore ἐστῶτα,” who contends that the object of visions in the LXX usually was standing; the Lord was usually seated (1 Kgs 22:19; Isa 6:1–2), but his court and others could stand (1 Chr 21:16; Isa 6:1–2; Zech 3:1). Angels also could stand to act in history (Dan 11:1; 12:1).

1411. Sabbe, “Saying,” 275, rejects the judge interpretation because the vocabulary differs from Acts 10:42 and 17:31. The vocabulary recalls, however, Luke 22:69, which is more important here.

one.”¹⁴¹² Though judges generally sat through cases (Acts 23:3),¹⁴¹³ it is said that they rendered the verdict (and witnesses offered testimony) only standing.¹⁴¹⁴ The image of God arising to defend his people is common in Scripture¹⁴¹⁵ and appears elsewhere.¹⁴¹⁶ Although judges in Roman trials could be seated, lawyers pleading cases would stand (Pliny *Ep.* 1.23.2; on standing for speakers in general, see comment on Acts 2:14–15).

Could Stephen be pronouncing judgment on his own (earthly) judges?¹⁴¹⁷ The nearest parallels to the present-tense description of a vision (Acts 7:56) may be visionary judgment oracles found in Philo and Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*.¹⁴¹⁸ But whatever the other parallels, the allusion to Luke 22:69 imports the idea of eschatological judgment; Jesus, who was condemned at his trial but would someday judge his accusers, now stands to vindicate his witness against the same Sanhedrin.¹⁴¹⁹ The Son of Man also testifies on behalf of his witness, as Luke 12:8–9 promised.¹⁴²⁰ If this text refers to Stephen’s judges being the ones really on trial instead of Stephen himself (also suggested by Acts 7:51–53; see comment there), this is one of several ironies in the narrative that suggest a reversal of guilt:

Expectations for Condemned	Events in This Passage
Judge stands to render verdict (or witnesses stand to testify)	Jesus stands as eschatological, heavenly judge or witness (Acts 7:55–56)
The condemned is stripped for execution	The false witnesses strip themselves (7:58)
The condemned must confess sins (see comment on Acts 7:60)	Stephen confesses their sins, not his own (7:60)

The idea of such reversal was readily understood in the Greco-Roman world (for further examples, see comment on Acts 7:51–53).¹⁴²¹ Thus Socrates allowed himself to be convicted, but “God and the truth sat in judgment over” the court.¹⁴²² Cicero

1412. Trites, *Witness*, 132; cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 168; Moule, *Messengers*, 30; esp. Cullmann, *Christology*, 157–58; Bock, *Proclamation*, 224. On the heavenly court, which, however, predominates in Amoraic rather than earlier sources, see Keener, “Heavenly Court”; 3 *En.* 30:1; *’Abot R. Nat.* 32 A; b. *’Abod. Zar.* 36a; B. *Mešī’a* 75a; 85b; 86a; *Git.* 68a; *Mak.* 13b; *Pesah.* 53b; *Šabb.* 129b; y. *Sanh.* 1:1, §4; 11:5, §1; *Gen. Rab.* 49:2; 64:4; *Exod. Rab.* 12:4; 30:18; *Lev. Rab.* 11:8; 24:2; 29:1, 4; *Num. Rab.* 3:4; 18:4; 19:3; *Ruth Rab.* 4:3, 5; *Eccl. Rab.* 1:11, §1; 2:12, §1; 5:11, §5; *Song Rab.* 3:11, §2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 23:4; 24:11; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:19; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Deut 5:31; cf. the Gentile analogues in Bright, *History*, 158–59; Vitruv. *Arch.* 1.pref. 2.

1413. E.g., Exod 18:13, 22; Joel 3:12; Sir 11:9; 38:33; 4Q381 76–77 12; 1 *En.* 55:4; t. *Sanh.* 6:3.

1414. So t. *Sanh.* 6:2. If defendants also stood (as in Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 123), Jesus might stand as Stephen’s codefendant, but the other imagery in the passage makes this suggestion less probable.

1415. As judge in Pss 9:19; 74:22; 82:8; Isa 3:13; as advocate in Ps 109:31; cf. 1 Sam 12:7; Job 31:14; Pss 3:7; 7:6; 10:12; 12:5; 17:13; 68:1; 82:1; Isa 2:19, 21; 14:22; 28:21; 33:10; Jas 5:9. In court, cf. also Isa 50:8.

1416. E.g., *Test. Mos.* 10:3, according to the likeliest reconstruction. In the eschatological time, God will stand to judge the world (*Exod. Rab.* 17:4), though God could render judgment in either position (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 82:8, where standing might imply prosecution); in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 23:3, 8, God rises from the throne of judgment, but only to sit at the throne of mercy.

1417. Cf., e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 60; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 392.

1418. Aune, *Prophecy*, 270.

1419. Goulder, *Type and History*, 57, suggests that this vision even fulfills the promise of seeing the Son of Man coming in his kingdom before death (Mark 9:1; Matt 16:28; Luke 9:27). Some contend that this is Stephen’s personal parousia, an eschatology generated by the parousia’s delay (Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, 77); Luke does have some individual eschatology (Luke 23:46). But Sabbe, “Saying,” 268–69, argues against the personal-parousia interpretation.

1420. Cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 168; idem, *Message*, 76; idem, *Time*, 28n24; Tannehill, *Acts*, 98–99.

1421. The idea of reversal before a heavenly court may be implied in John 16:7–11; see Keener, *John*, 1033. Such reversal provided irony (cf. Aeschines *Tim.* 117–18; Xen. *Mem.* 4.8.9–10; Sen. E. *Controv.* 6.5).

1422. Max. Tyre 3.8 (Trapp, 30); see similarly Xen. *Apol.* 29; Epict. *Diatr.* 4.1.123. For another case (not mentioning Socrates), see Epict. *Diatr.* 2.2.17–18. A prosecutor might claim to simply confirm a verdict already revealed by gods (Hermog. *Inv.* 1.4.106).

presented evidence for Verres's guilt so thoroughly that he declared it was really the jury that was on trial before the rest of the world.¹⁴²³ Philostratus claims that Apollonius left his trial having convicted Domitian rather than himself (*Vit. Apoll.* 7.1; cf. 8.2). When a hero was killed unjustly, he trusted that truth and justice nevertheless supported him (Philost. *Hrk.* 33.37). That Stephen may suggest such reversal even within the narrative world (by Jesus's standing) could incite the narrative response of Acts 7:57; if a group of judges could feel threatened that one was going to judge them, they might react with hostility (Sen. E. *Controv.* 6.5).

IV. THE AUDIENCE'S HOSTILITY (7:57)

The audience's response may imply that it thought Stephen's words blasphemous, associating a mortal too closely with God's power.¹⁴²⁴ Granted, even apart from later Jewish speculation about the heavenly role of Metatron or other potentially dualistic agents,¹⁴²⁵ Ps 110:1 spoke of a "lord" at the Lord's right hand. But a comparison with Luke 22:66–71 suggests that Luke may understand the audience's response as a response to a political claim (Luke 23:2) or possibly (if assuming Markan tradition that Luke omits, Mark 14:64) blasphemy (on the broad usage of this term, as opposed to the narrower Mishnaic definition, see comment on Acts 6:11–14).

Although κράζω applies to any loud speech (Luke 18:39; 19:40; Acts 14:14; 23:6; 24:21), the audience's crying out here fits that of demons or those possessed by them (Luke 4:41; 9:39; Acts 16:17), or hostile mobs (Acts 19:28, 32, 34; 21:28, 36). Likewise, the phrase φωνῆ μεγάλη (sometimes with the terms in reverse sequence), though applicable to loud praise (Luke 17:15; 19:37) and other loud cries (Luke 23:46; Acts 14:10; 16:28), can apply to demons (Luke 4:33; 8:28; Acts 8:7) or hostile mobs (Luke 23:23; Acts 19:34; cf. Acts 26:24). Most important, however, is that the expression contrasts with Stephen's "cry" to the Lord to forgive his hearers (Acts 7:60); this is the only other reference in Luke-Acts to redundantly (but emphatically) include both a form of κράζω and φωνῆ μεγάλη.¹⁴²⁶

Covering one's ears to prevent hearing further blasphemy may have been considered a pious act.¹⁴²⁷ For Luke, however, it illustrates the principle in 7:51 and 28:26–27: they were deliberately deaf to God's summons.¹⁴²⁸ If unjust judges could be described as "hiding their eyes" (*Sipra Qed. par.* 4.206.2.7–10),¹⁴²⁹ "hiding ears" cannot be thought much better. A late first-century orator compared mobs to beasts; they act in rage and close their ears to anything profitable (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.26). The term here for "rush" (ὀρμάω) and its cognates can apply to the violence of demon-inspired suicide (Luke 8:33; from Mark 5:13) and especially hostile mob violence (Acts 14:5;

1423. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.69.177. For Philodemus *On Death* 35.6–8, those who condemn the innocent suffer throughout life from their own vice.

1424. Witherington, *Acts*, 276; Goulder, *Type and History*, 42.

1425. For discussions concerning Metatron (though restricted to later sources), see, e.g., *b. Hag.* 15a; Abrams, "Boundaries"; Fauth, "Metatron"; Stroumsa, "Form(s)." Early Christian Christology, however, plays more on Wisdom than on notions such as Metatron (see, e.g., Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 17–22). Most Christians were not dualists in this sense, despite apparent rabbinic assumptions (*m. Sanh.* 4:5; *Sipre Deut.* 329.1.1; *b. Hag.* 14a; *Sanh.* 38ab; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:6; 3 *En.* 16:2; but these *minim* may not have all been Christians [cf. Bassler, "Cain"]).

1426. One might add the demonic cries of Luke 4:33; 8:28 if one includes the verb ἀνακράζω in the count, but these are nowhere close to this context. Cf. 2 Sam 19:4 LXX.

1427. If the third-century source is literal and reflects widespread practice; Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:684; Haenchen, *Acts*, 292n6; Catchpole, *Trial*, 249. Cf. the danger of hearing and approving *minuth*, heresy (*t. Hul.* 2:24; *b. Abod. Zar.* 16b–17a).

1428. Cf. also Tannehill, *Acts*, 98 (on Acts 28:26–27).

1429. For the Semitic idiom, cf. Job 28:21; Isa 1:15; Jer 16:17; Ezek 22:26.

19:29).¹⁴³⁰ On the use of ὁμοθυμαδόν (their united activity here), see comment on Acts 2:46; it contrasts with the united devotion of the believers (1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; cf. 19:29).

c. Introducing Saul (7:58)

Luke here introduces “Saul” for the first time. Luke often introduces important new characters initially as minor characters (e.g., Barnabas in 4:36–37), perhaps partly to unify the narrative¹⁴³¹ and partly to acclimate the reader gradually to the new character. Stephen’s death is an appropriate time to introduce the church’s persecutor (cf. 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6). Luke will provide Paul-Stephen parallels later (e.g., Acts 21:28 with 6:13), as he parallels Stephen with Jesus here.¹⁴³² That Stephen and his circle influenced Paul’s theology (and perhaps conversion) should not be doubted,¹⁴³³ least of all on the level of Luke’s narrative. It is no accident that the Lord Jesus will show Saul the things he must suffer for his sake (9:16).

I. SAUL’S NAME

Although even some of Luke’s first-time hearers may have eventually guessed that Saul is Paul, Paul’s letters offer no suggestion that most of his churches knew him by the name “Saul.” Thus first-time readers might be kept in suspense until 13:9 (on which see comment) or, more likely, at least until his conversion in 9:3–9.

Some scholars suggest plausibly that Jewish parents who were Roman citizens probably often gave Hebrew names that would resemble the Roman names;¹⁴³⁴ in this case, “Saul” matches “Paul” well, at least in Greek (Σαῦλος and Παῦλος, as opposed to the Hebrew “Shaul” and “Paulus”). Names could play on characteristics,¹⁴³⁵ and so “Paul” might be appropriate for a small baby (Latin *paulus*, small); more likely, however, it is a Roman family name (see fully comment on Acts 13:9). But “Saul” probably evoked for most Jews, and especially most of Luke’s Diaspora audience, the famous king of Israel.¹⁴³⁶ Diaspora readers may have associated the name “Saul” with the persecutor of Jesus’s royal ancestor David,¹⁴³⁷ but we should not doubt that Jewish (especially Benjaminite) parents continued to use the name for their children; not everyone viewed Saul wholly negatively. The name is attested among Greek-speaking Jews in Palestine (Σαούλ, in Joppa; *CIJ* 2:146, §953).

Even in the pro-Davidic books of Samuel, Saul was a positive figure when God first called him;¹⁴³⁸ further, Josephus’s portrait of Saul includes many features appropriate

1430. Fairly frequent in the LXX, especially Maccabean literature (1 Macc 4:8, 30; 6:33, 47; 2 Macc 9:2; 10:16; 12:20, 22, 29, 32; cf. 3 Macc 1:16, 23; 4:5), most often in a military sense.

1431. Tannehill, *Acts*, 99.

1432. *Ibid.*

1433. See, e.g., Harrop, “Stephen.”

1434. E.g., Bauckham, “Latin Names,” 204–14; we know of a few other Jews named Paul, in Asia Minor (Bauckham, “Latin Names,” 207). For evidence supporting Paul’s Roman citizenship, see comment on Acts 16:37.

1435. E.g., they could be named for the circumstances of their birth (Cambridge Geniza Text, col. 3, lines 13–16, with three wordplays).

1436. Children were sometimes named for grandfathers (cf. *y. Šabb.* 2:7, §3; also the house of Gamaliel) or other relatives (Luke 1:61; 3:23–26).

1437. E.g., 1 Sam 19:1, 10–17; 20:31; 23:15, 25–26; *Jos. Ant.* 6.205, 213, 218, 237–38. The name “Saul” might be useful to Luke by way of allusion to the earlier Saul (Acts 13:21, after this name for Paul disappears in the narrative), who persecuted David, but Luke makes nothing of the connection. He does not even mention Saul’s persecuting activity in his single mention of that king’s name (unless it is alluded to in God’s disapproval of Saul, perhaps implied in a form of μεθίστημι in 13:22; Luke uses the same verb for involuntary removal in Luke 16:4). Luke lacks incentive to invent the name, which continues after Saul’s conversion until Acts 13:9; “Paul” was in any case the name by which the churches knew him (perhaps even at an early period in Judea; cf. Gal 1:22–23).

1438. 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6–7, 13; *Jos. Ant.* 6.63; cf. 1 Sam 10:22–24; 15:17.

for a Hellenistic hero.¹⁴³⁹ Benjaminitic names associated with Saul's family ("Kish" and "Shimei")¹⁴⁴⁰ later applied to positive characters (Esth 2:5). Saul remained the most prominent ancestor for Benjaminites to look back to, and Paul himself informs us (though Luke does not) that he was a Benjaminite (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5). (This conjunction of name and tribe from separate sources incidentally provides support for each of the sources, increasing the likelihood that Luke does correctly report Paul's Semitic name.) But as the biblical Saul went from good to bad, so Luke's Saul moves from bad to good (although again, Luke himself does not draw this connection). (In any case, the name "Saul" is not likely Luke's invention, not only given the pro-Davidic slant of Israel's canonical history but also the negative connotations of the name in Greek.)¹⁴⁴¹

II. SAUL'S PRESENCE

Why would Saul be present? Later Jewish tradition claimed that three rows of sages' disciples quietly sat in on meetings of the Sanhedrin.¹⁴⁴² A more likely reason within Luke's story (as well as Paul's background as a persecutor), and less anachronistic, is that Saul of Tarsus was present as a member of the radical wing of the Hellenist synagogue mentioned in Acts 6:9, perhaps as one of Stephen's unsuccessful challengers in debate (6:10). (Certainly the witnesses who laid their cloaks at Saul's feet knew Saul, probably implying that he was part of the group from that synagogue.)¹⁴⁴³ Saul is not himself one of the witnesses, who were obligated by law to begin the stoning (Deut 17:7).¹⁴⁴⁴ (Luke does not, therefore, suggest that Saul was a false witness.)

Saul, however, may have already been influential in the persecution; certainly it diminished after his conversion (Acts 9:31), not because of lack of hostility (9:29) but perhaps for lack of an adequately motivated organizer. If Luke employs "at his feet" the same way in 7:58 as he did in 4:35, 37 and 5:1, the witnesses' laying their cloaks at Paul's feet might symbolize "recognition of Paul as a leader of those opposed to Stephen, a position that he will immediately assume in 8:3."¹⁴⁴⁵ The action also contrasts Saul's harmful leadership with the benevolent leadership of the apostles.

If Saul supervised the false witnesses, then, from Luke's view of the nature of the witnesses, Saul might have knowingly participated in their falsehood (6:11). This suggestion, however, fits the portrait of the preconversion Paul neither in Luke (Acts 9:5; 22:3; 26:9) nor in Paul's own writings (Phil 3:6; cf. 1 Tim 1:13); Luke does not mention it, nor would it have suited his purposes to do so. But if Saul played a role as prominent as Luke may suggest here (perhaps a less prominent role than he later had in Acts 8:3; 9:1–2), we may guess that some of the persecutors were not only sincere in their belief (cf. John 16:2) but also not consciously aware of distorting truth. (The hiring of false witnesses in Acts 6:13 may suggest fabrication of evidence [cf. 17:5] but need not imply that all those opposing Stephen took part in this.)

1439. See Feldman, "Saul."

1440. Admittedly, "Shimei" was not uniquely Benjaminitic (as in the case of the particularly anti-Davidic Shimei in 2 Sam 16:5–13; 19:16–23; 1 Kgs 2:8, 36–44); it applied also to Levites (Exod 6:17; Num 3:18; 1 Chr 6:17; 23:7–10; 25:3; 2 Chr 31:12; Ezra 10:23) and Judahites (2 Sam 21:21; 1 Kgs 1:8; 1 Chr 3:19; 4:26–27).

1441. On the latter, see Leary, "Improper Name"; comment on Acts 13:9.

1442. *M. Sanh.* 4:4; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 27:9. The tradition is suspiciously rabbinic, however, implying that new appointees to courts were from these rabbinic students.

1443. With, e.g., Minnen, "Roman Citizen."

1444. Pace Klausner, *Jesus to Paul*, 303.

1445. Johnson, *Acts*, 140.

III. PAUL'S JUDEAN BACKGROUND

Some writers have found it impossible to harmonize Acts and Paul even on the basic idea that Paul grew up in Jerusalem (22:3). Samuel Sandmel goes so far as to conclude “that Paul, a Hellenistic Jew, had never been in Palestine until after he had joined the new movement.”¹⁴⁴⁶ This perspective drew a rigid dichotomy between Palestinian and Hellenistic that can no longer be seriously maintained (see comment on Acts 6:1).¹⁴⁴⁷ (It also smacks of a denigrating of ancient Diaspora Judaism, but Diaspora Judaism was no less Jewish or diverse than is Judaism outside the nation of Israel today.)

Paul claims to be a “Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5), an expression the meaning of which is much debated. More clearly, he claims to be a Pharisee (3:5)—that is, to belong to a group that apparently existed exclusively or almost exclusively in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem.¹⁴⁴⁸ At the same time, his letters reveal comfort with Greek and thorough familiarity with the LXX;¹⁴⁴⁹ for one who spent enough time in Palestine to be a Pharisee, this Greek aptitude also suggests an educated (and hence economically stable) family in urban Jerusalem. He could either be from an eastern Mediterranean Diaspora Jewish family that settled in Jerusalem, be an aristocratic Pharisee like Gamaliel (whose family taught Greek), or both. The portrait of Saul as zealous for the law to the point of persecuting the church perfectly fits Paul’s frequent summary of his preconversion past (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13, 23; Phil 3:6; cf. 1 Tim 1:13–15)¹⁴⁵⁰ and might be derived from hearing Paul recount it.¹⁴⁵¹

Paul’s account of his own background at this point is that he was “progressing” in Judaism beyond his peers (Gal 1:14);¹⁴⁵² if this progress generated any jealousy, it might have unleashed further enmity after his conversion. Paul’s zeal for traditions (Gal 1:14), perhaps vaguely echoed in Luke (Acts 22:3; cf. 21:20) sounds Pharisaic (cf. Phil 3:5; Jos. *Ant.* 13.297, 408); Paul indicates that such zeal also led to the persecution of Christians (Phil 3:6; cf. Rom 10:2).

Some scholars object that Paul’s responses are unintelligible for a disciple of Gamaliel. This objection challenges Paul’s study under Gamaliel more than his undisputed persecution of Christians, and so we will examine it more fully at Acts 22:3. For the moment, however, two responses are in order. First, Stephen was going further than the apostles whom Gamaliel heard in Acts 5:30–31.¹⁴⁵³ Second and, in my view, a more important point, Luke appears to explicitly contrast Paul’s strategy with that

1446. Sandmel, *Genius of Paul*, 13. He denies Paul’s Palestinian attachment despite conceding that Paul called himself a “Pharisee” (p. 15)!

1447. Scholarship over the past half century has repeatedly challenged the old dichotomy; see, e.g., Lieberman, *Hellenism*; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*; Engberg-Pedersen, *Beyond Divide*. Athens may in fact have something to do with Jerusalem.

1448. See, e.g., Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 198; Horsley, *Galilee*, 256; on Paul, Campbell, *Deliverance*, 147. That is, they may have been active outside Jerusalem at times (as far away as Galilee), but Jerusalem was their home base (and where they appear in Josephus; *Life* 191; *Ant.* 13.401; 15.3).

1449. See, e.g., Légasse, “Career,” 374.

1450. See further Hemer, *Acts in History*, 181–82.

1451. Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 208, believes that Paul’s oral reports of his presence at Stephen’s lynching provided the source for Luke’s own informants (Luke 1:3).

1452. Cf. a comparable claim in Jos. *Ant.* 20.263. “Progress” suggests academic and moral achievement and was applicable, e.g., to Stoic philosophic study and consequent moral development (Cic. *Fin.* 4.24.67; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 87.5; 94.50; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.17.39–40; *Encheir.* 12–13; 51.2; Lucian *Hermot.* 63; Marc. Aur. 1.17.4; Diog. Laert. 7.1.25; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.7, pp. 42–43.26; cf. Motto, “Progress”; Deming, “Indifferent Things,” 390; Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 70–71); but the ideal of advancing pervaded, of course, education and philosophy (Quint. *Inst.* 2.7.1; Plut. *Progr. Virt.*, *Mor.* 75A–86A [esp. 3, *Mor.* 76B, on degrees of progress in the soul]; Suet. *Gramm.* 17; cf. Stowers, “Resemble Philosophy?,” 91).

1453. Longenecker, *Ministry and Message*, 27.

of his teacher (5:39 vs. 26:14), at least after he has revealed that Paul studied with Gamaliel (22:3).¹⁴⁵⁴ Ancient disciples did not always concur with their former teachers on every matter, though generally they respectfully deferred to them; wealthy fathers might send their sons to study with a famous teacher simply because of the teacher's reputation, without expecting (as Greek aristocrats who sent sons to study with philosophers did not) that the sons would always agree with their teachers.¹⁴⁵⁵

IV. SAUL AS A "YOUTH" (7:58)

The noun νεανίας means a "young man" or "youth," but as in the English term "young," νεανίας can span a wide range of meaning. Given Saul's role here, he is probably not a young adolescent merely beginning studies with Gamaliel or some other teacher. Instead, he has probably finished his studies; by the time of 8:3, he has surely finished his studies. Still, the designation must fit him, just as "aged" is appropriate in Phlm 9.¹⁴⁵⁶ The approximate chronology of Paul's life reconstructed from his letters (Gal 1:14–2:1) requires that he be young here (cf. his peer group in Gal 1:14; there is little reason to mention his age peers if he was not young), perhaps born in the first decade C.E.¹⁴⁵⁷ (like, presumably, many of Jesus's disciples).¹⁴⁵⁸

Scholars, however, differ on the precise sense of the term,¹⁴⁵⁹ and for good reason: various ancient sources employ it differently. Some sources define it more carefully as "anyone from 24 to 40 years of age,"¹⁴⁶⁰ others, ages twenty-one to twenty-eight;¹⁴⁶¹ yet the term could also be applied to someone under twenty (Philost. *Hrk.* 10.2–5).

Age classifications in the empire often ran to fourteen, to twenty-eight, to fifty or sixty, and then beyond.¹⁴⁶² Whereas Pythagoreans divided life into four stages (Diod. Sic. 10.9.5) and Hippocratic writers into seven (of seven years each; *Poll.* 2.4), a threefold division into παῖς, νέος, and γέρων may have been more commonly assumed;¹⁴⁶³ still others preferred a sevenfold system.¹⁴⁶⁴ Hellenistic schooling divided

1454. Does Luke withhold this information at first because he has presented Gamaliel so favorably and does not wish to undercut the unexpected character of Paul's conversion?

1455. Some scholars even suggest that Paul was a Shammaite, as opposed to the Hillelite orientation of Gamaliel (see comment on Acts 22:3); I do not think this approach is necessary.

1456. Some count Phlm 9 against "young" here, because they date Philemon early in Paul's ministry (cf. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 146, though he allows for the variant reading and that Acts may be correct here). I date Philemon after 60; if it is dated in the 50s (the earliest possible date) the evidence is still reconcilable with an older "youth" (given the range of meaning), with Paul born closer to the turn of the century. In some schemes, "elder" covered ages forty-nine to fifty-six (Vincent, *Philippians, Philemon*, 184, citing Hippocrates); it refers to one aged fifty-five in Horsley, *Documents*, 2, p. 19, §2b.

1457. Accepted whether one dates the conversion to no earlier than 36 C.E. (Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 394) or, more plausibly, earlier (Riesner, *Early Period*, 213–14; cf. Ramsay, *Other Studies*, 363).

1458. Contrary to usual suppositions today, many of Jesus's disciples may have been, like many other disciples, in their teens, and hence some may have been born in the second decade; but some adult disciples (e.g., Akiba) were also possible.

1459. Schoeps, *Paul*, 17, suggests that Paul left Tarsus for Jerusalem as a νεανίας, probably sixteen to seventeen years old. That may be too young for Paul here and is almost certainly too old for Acts 22:3.

1460. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 394 (citing Diog. Laert. 8.10; Philo *Cher.* 114); also other commentators (e.g., Longenecker, *Acts*, 150; cf. Blaiklock, *Acts*, 83).

1461. Plausibly challenging most examples usually cited in support of the twenty-four to forty division, Overstreet, "Concept," 541–45, argues that the range twenty-one to twenty-eight was much more common.

1462. Suder, "Age Classification." For one (astrological) classification, see Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.204–7; for a suggestion of seven-year cycles in age, cf. Sen. *Y. Ben.* 7.1.3. Earlier Greek views of aging had also evolved (Finch, "Views of Ageing"). For Stoics, reason entered about age fourteen (Iambl. *Soul* 2.15, §609).

1463. Garland, "Age."

1464. See Overstreet, "Concept." For a full survey of Greek and Roman views, see Binder, "Age(s)"; for life stages elsewhere, see, e.g., Confuc. *Anal.* 173 (2.4). Contrast Seneca's simple division of life into past, present, and future (*Dial.* 10.10.2). Life stages were so significant that divine beings were assigned to each (Belayche, "Actors," 279).

youth into three age categories: boys (παῖδες) were twelve to seventeen years old; ἔφηβοι were eighteen to twenty in Athens, though younger in other places; νέοι were “in their twenties.”¹⁴⁶⁵ An inscription from Beroea in Macedonia ranks παῖδες up to age fifteen, ἔφηβοι from fifteen to seventeen, and νέοι or νεανίσκοι from eighteen to twenty-two.¹⁴⁶⁶ Philo, perhaps reflecting the situation among Alexandrian Jews, counted anyone aged twenty-one to twenty-eight years a “young man” (νεανίσκος; old age began around age forty-nine).¹⁴⁶⁷ Some teaching was for specific age-groups.¹⁴⁶⁸ Thus Solon laid down laws prescribing morals for boys, then for lads, “and next for the other age-groups in succession.”¹⁴⁶⁹ Some moral precepts were not applicable to youth but could be saved up for later (e.g., Isoc. *Demon.* 44). On stages of education in general, see comment on Acts 7:22 and especially 22:3.

Roman men achieved full “majority” status at age twenty-five¹⁴⁷⁰ but could be criminally liable once past puberty.¹⁴⁷¹ Roman boys achieved manhood, receiving their *toga virilis*, in their mid-teens.¹⁴⁷² Many senatorial youth in Rome invited senators and many common people to their coming-of-age ceremonies;¹⁴⁷³ such ceremonies became so frequent that a Roman aristocrat could lament the daily time lavished on such social obligations.¹⁴⁷⁴ This often occurred at the Festival of Liber, god of fertility.¹⁴⁷⁵ Once a Roman boy adopted the *toga virilis*, he became a *iuuenis*, a youth of military age.¹⁴⁷⁶ After the coming of age, childish ways were no longer acceptable.¹⁴⁷⁷ Other cultures generally recognized the coming of age in the same range of life.¹⁴⁷⁸ Although the bar mitzvah originated in a later period,¹⁴⁷⁹

1465. Beck and Thomas, “Education,” 508. *Ephebeia* tended to be late puberty (but could range between twelve and twenty), and its end marked the beginning of full citizen rights and responsibilities (Gehrke, “Ephebeia,” 1018).

1466. McRay, *Archaeology*, 296.

1467. Philo *Creation* 104–5 (Grayston, *Epistles*, 71). This division reflects the conventional sevenfold system (see Overstreet, “Concept,” 554; cf. 541–45) and could suggest Saul’s age here.

1468. Cf., e.g., Iambl. *V.P.* 31.201–3; 1 John 2:12–14 (cf. comment in Keener, “Vigor”). Orators could also greet people by age-groups (Men. *Rhet.* 2.4, 392.5–8; 394.21–22).

1469. Aeschines *Tim.* 7 (LCL, 8–9).

1470. Schieman, “Minors,” 23.

1471. *Ibid.*, 24.

1472. E.g., at age fifteen (Suet. *Vergil* 6), at sixteen (Suet. *Aug.* 8.1), or at the shaving of the first beard (Suet. *Calig.* 10.1). The age was not standardized for boys (Wiesehöfer, “Pubertas,” 177); Dupont, *Life*, 229, suggests an average of sixteen or seventeen; Stamps, “Children,” 198, an average of fourteen to sixteen. On the exchange of the youthful for the man’s toga, see Croom, *Clothing*, 122 (placing it about age fifteen to sixteen); cf. Barclay, *Train a Child*, 157–58. Coming of age meant legal independence (Gardner, *Women*, 14), and youths entered adult life then (Wiesehöfer, “Youth,” 854).

1473. Pliny *Ep.* 10.116.1, noting what had become fashionable in his day (and complaining that some invited more than a thousand, 10.116.2). Writing in the early second century, Pliny hosted some of these celebrations in his home (8.23.2, 6). By the NT period, senatorial youths could attend senate meetings once they received the toga of manhood (Suet. *Aug.* 38.2).

1474. Pliny *Ep.* 1.9.2–3 (the only excuse was to be able to be away from Rome, 1.9.4, 6).

1475. North, “Liber Pater.”

1476. Balsdon and Levick, “*Iuuenes*,” dating the ceremony as usually around age fourteen. Guardianship ended at puberty or age fourteen (Gaius *Inst.* 1.196); males could not make a will before age fourteen (though females could from age twelve; *Inst.* 2.113).

1477. Cf. (without mention of coming of age) 1 Cor 13:11; Hom. *Od.* 1.296–97; Polyb. 12.4b.1; 12.25K.9; Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.205; Lucian *Amber* 3; Max. Tyre 36.5; Marc. Aur. 4.28. At puberty, adolescents would dedicate as votive offerings “toys or locks of their hair” (Malkin, “Votive offerings,” 1613); for girls, see Friedländer, *Life*, 1:234.

1478. Persian boys reportedly achieved manhood at sixteen or seventeen (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.2.8). Many (though not all) traditional societies mark coming-of-age initiations to the adult community around puberty (cf. Mbiti, *Religions*, 159, 165, 171; Eliade, *Rites*, 41; Dawson, “Urbanization,” 309; Kapolyo, *Condition*, 43–44).

1479. Safrai, “Home,” 771–72; Sandmel, *Judaism*, 199.

rabbis expected most adult male responsibilities to begin around puberty, or the age of thirteen.¹⁴⁸⁰

Ramsay thinks that Paul would have entered public life around age thirty as was common and hence dates his birth to about 1 B.C.E.¹⁴⁸¹ I allow that Paul may have been younger; my estimate would be that he may have been born in the last half of the first decade C.E., but this is at best a guess.

V. SAUL'S ACTIVITY AND HIS YOUTH (7:58)

That the most violent zeal in the text would be associated with a young man would not surprise most ancient hearers. Some elders might have allowed the younger hotheads to take care of details, while the elders maintained their own dignity (cf. comment on Acts 23:12–16). Young men were associated with vigor,¹⁴⁸² which characterizes Paul here. Some military expeditions preferred citizens below age forty (Aeschines *Embassy* 133); heroic warriors were sometimes viewed as even below twenty (e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 10.2). Youths were more impetuous and hence more eager for battle (e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 2.1–2).¹⁴⁸³ Feelings, including affectionate sentiments, were most intense in youth.¹⁴⁸⁴

This youthful vigor was not always viewed favorably. Homer was thought to have characterized Achilles's fury as the emotions of youth (Max. Tyre 26.5). An adolescent was considered more prone to rash acts (Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 14.39, contrasting with one over forty); youths are impetuous, unable to control their violent impulses (Sen. *Y. Troj.* 250–51).¹⁴⁸⁵ Youthful inexperience might lead one to give unsound counsel (Polyb. 31.11.7; 1 Kgs 12:6–15). Youths were also supposed susceptible to the influences of others; both bad companions¹⁴⁸⁶ and deceptive leaders¹⁴⁸⁷ could corrupt a youth. Conversely, a philosopher could shepherd youthful impulses positively,¹⁴⁸⁸ and youths' self-control would often be attributed to those who governed them.¹⁴⁸⁹

It is not relevant here, but youths were also considered more susceptible to sexual

1480. E.g., *m. Nid.* 5:6; *b. Nid.* 52a; *y. Ter.* 1:3; *Gen. Rab.* 91:3; cf. *b. Yebam.* 80ab; 96b; 97a; Safrai, "Home," 772; they did recognize that not all showed signs of puberty at the same age (*m. Nid.* 5:7–9). Josephus describes himself as still "virtually a boy" (ἀντίπαῖς) at fourteen (*Life* 9), but this is to emphasize his early accomplishments.

1481. Ramsay, *Other Studies*, 363.

1482. Cf., e.g., Job 20:11; 33:25; Prov 20:29; 2 Esd 5:53, 55; 1 John 2:14; Jos. *War* 4.464; 7.384; Babr. 29.5–6; Pliny *Ep.* 3.1.2; cf. Gen 49:3; 4Q252 IV, 3. Among women, see, e.g., Soranus *Gynec.* 1.2.4. Philo identifies the period twenty-one to twenty-eight as the focus of "manly strength" (*Creation* 103). For weakness in old age, see, e.g., Eccl 12:5; 1QSa I, 19; Jos. *Ant.* 10.265; 11.57; Fronto *Ad am.* 2.7.8; cf. Polyb. 5.55.10.

1483. Emphasizing examples from the OT, 4 Maccabees, and Josephus, Spencer notes the stereotype that young men were prone to violence ("Young Man," 36–39), applicable to Paul until a christophany transforms him (41–43).

1484. Pliny *Ep.* 6.8.2. Pliny also opined that some "irregularity and excitement" were suitable for youth, in contrast to the elderly (3.1.2). Josephus probably implies that lawless passions remain difficult to restrain around age thirty (*Life* 80).

1485. Perhaps also Eurip. *Andromeda* frg. 134a (Stobaeus 4.11.4). One writer characterizes ages fifteen to twenty-two as ruled by passion, though young manhood (νεανικὴν) as more serious and ambitious (Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.205); many considered youths prone to mistakes (Libanius *Anecdote* 2.6) and the younger generation prone to libertinism (Piso *frg.* 40; Sallust *Cat.* 14.2; in Laistner, *Historians*, 54). At the same time, old age might make one ill-tempered (Cic. *Att.* 14.21). For susceptibility to drunkenness, see, e.g., Polyb. 31.13.8.

1486. Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 14.39; cf. Prov 1:10–19; 13:20.

1487. Sall. *Catil.* 14.5. These leaders played especially on youths' lusts (Sall. *Catil.* 14.6; Cic. *Pis.* 28.68–69).

1488. Eunapius *Lives* 464; for educators and shaping youth, e.g., Proclus *Poet.* 5, K50.1–2. A philosopher might also use soothing music to calm enraged, drunken youth (Iambl. *V.P.* 25.112–13). A youthful novice to philosophy, however, was no match against an attractive woman (Epict. *Diatr.* 3.12.12).

1489. *Rhet. Alex.* 35, 1441a.16–19.

temptations¹⁴⁹⁰ and hence all the more praiseworthy when they avoided them.¹⁴⁹¹ During adolescence and young adulthood, proper teaching or mentoring, which cultivated virtues, was necessary to restrain youthful indulgence (of various kinds but especially sexual).¹⁴⁹² But youths' vulnerability to temptation made some more willing to forgive them,¹⁴⁹³ and Saul's "youth" here might therefore support Luke's apologetic portrayal of Saul not only as one advanced for his age (cf. Gal 1:14) but as one whose error here was informed by his youthfulness.

Many Roman jurists began moral accountability near the age of puberty; before that time, a boy might not be guilty of theft because the crime depended on intention.¹⁴⁹⁴ Some Jewish pietists felt twenty was the age when a youth could discern morality on his own (1QSa [=1Q28a] I, 8–10).¹⁴⁹⁵ But later rabbis believed that boys were born with the evil impulse and acquired a good impulse only when receiving the Torah at thirteen.¹⁴⁹⁶ For the rabbis and presumably most Jews, personal moral accountability began especially around age thirteen.¹⁴⁹⁷ Saul's relative "youth" may help Luke's apologetic for Paul (cf. Acts 23:1). A rhetorician defending a client on current charges also had to avoid charges based on patterns from the past and hence might plead that some past misbehavior was due only to youth (*Rhet. Alex.* 7, 1428b.37–40).¹⁴⁹⁸

VI. GAINING RESPECT WHILE YOUNG

Achieving leadership at this age would be difficult, since those who were "young" might have trouble gaining respect (1 Tim 4:12), a pattern that persisted from classical Athens through imperial Rome. Young men were expected to have some limitations in ability (e.g., 1 Sam 17:33).

Classical Athens considered those below thirty to be "young" (νέος) and hence easily misled¹⁴⁹⁹ and ineligible to sit in the city council;¹⁵⁰⁰ Athenians over fifty would speak first.¹⁵⁰¹ Speakers could be discredited immediately by their age (*Rhet. Alex.* 29, 1437a.31–34), and so a young speaker should begin by conceding his lack of years but appeal to wisdom from another source (1437b.4–5; cf. Job 32:6–7). Youth should exercise restraint in speaking (Sir 32:7–8 LXX [35:7–8]), and though philosophers

1490. Eurip. *Alc.* 1052–54; Cic. *Cael.* 20.48–49; Sen. E. *Controv.* 2.67–8, 10–11; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.12.12; Lucian *Tox.* 14, 16; Philost. *Hrk.* 21.29; Iambl. *V.P.* 8.41; *Test. Reub.* 1:6; 2:9; 3:8; 4:6; *Gen. Rab.* 87:6; cf. Mus. Ruf. 17, p. 108.27; Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.2; Winter, *Left Corinth*, 89–91. One dealing much with children might need to be forty, hence at a more sexually temperate age (Aeschines *Tim.* 11–12).

1491. Cf. Polyb. 31.25.8; Pliny *Ep.* 7.24.3.

1492. See Isoc. *Demon.* 15; Plut. *S. Rom.*, Cato the Elder 12, *Mor.* 198F; Pliny *Ep.* 3.3.3–4, 7; Men. *Rhet.* 2.3, 385.22–23; Iambl. *V.P.* 31.202–3; 2 Tim 2:22. Marriage was another cure (e.g., Dion. Hal. *Epid.* 2.263).

1493. For youth as a potentially mitigating factor, sometimes even as a plea in court, see *Rhet. Alex.* 7, 1428b.37–40; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 5.9.2; *Epid.* 7.291; Plut. *Alc.* 16.3; Suet. *Aug.* 5; *Nero* 26.1; Quint. *Decl.* 260.2; 267.1, 4; 290.2; 300.2; 357.2; *Test. Jud.* 11:1. Apparently most persons grew out of such behaviors (Cic. *Senect.* 14.47; Plut. *Themist.* 2.5; Suet. *Vergil* 9, 11).

1494. Gaius *Inst.* 3.208. Below age seven no liability obtained; reduced culpability obtained between puberty and twenty-five (Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 16–17).

1495. Cf. an implied age for judging in CD X, 1. Among Greeks, personal moral responsibility began when one was enrolled as an adult citizen (Aeschines *Tim.* 18). Not all rabbis believed that children needed to be sprinkled with the sin offering (*m. Parah* 3:4).

1496. 'Abot R. Nat. 16 A; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 3:2. On the evil impulse from birth, see also 'Abot R. Nat. 30, §63 B; *b. Sanh.* 91b; *Gen. Rab.* 34:10. The concept of the evil impulse is earlier (e.g., CD II, 15–16; 1QS V, 5; 4Q417.2 [+4Q418] II, 12; cf. *Jub.* 1:19; 35:9) and is widespread by the Tannaic era (e.g., *m. 'Ab.* 2:11; *Sipre Deut.* 32.3.1; 45.1.3; *Sipra Sh. M.d.* 99.2.3; *Sipra A.M. pq.* 13.194.2.11; cf. *Test. Jud.* 20:1; the evil yetzer in 4 *Ezra* 7:92 [cf. Thompson, *Responsibility*, 356]; Seitz, "Two Spirits").

1497. *Gen. Rab.* 63:10.

1498. Cf. Aeschines *Tim.* 39 (declaring that he will focus on his object's adult crimes).

1499. As a rule, young men might be more easily led astray by wicked leaders (Sall. *Catil.* 14.5).

1500. Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.35. Paul was not likely part of the Sanhedrin (see comment on Acts 26:10).

1501. Aeschines *Tim.* 23–24; *Ctes.* 4.

ought not to be judged by age,¹⁵⁰² a youth might not be able to acquire many listeners.¹⁵⁰³ In antiquity generally, old age might provide greater eloquence,¹⁵⁰⁴ and assemblies tended to resent younger men addressing them.¹⁵⁰⁵ Thus Cicero at age twenty-seven notes that his words will either be ignored because he has not yet held public office “or pardoned owing to my youth.”¹⁵⁰⁶

Some locations had laws excluding from office anyone under thirty, though in the late republic a very corrupt governor might sell offices to those in their mid-teens (Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.49.122). In the Qumran scrolls, judges of the congregation had to be between twenty-five and sixty years old (CD X, 6–7; cf. 1QS*a* I, 12–13);¹⁵⁰⁷ early rabbis generalized that one could be ready for authority at thirty, and for some offices fifty was required (*m. 'Ab.* 5:21).¹⁵⁰⁸ One writer regarded the age range from fifty-six to sixty-seven as the most respectable (Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.206).¹⁵⁰⁹ (On the age of offices and respect accorded elders, see further comment on Acts 7:23–24.) Inscriptions do attest some young men in their early twenties holding offices in the imperial East; but these offices did not include direct governing functions.¹⁵¹⁰ We also do read of Jewish officials who were just nineteen,¹⁵¹¹ twelve,¹⁵¹² and even two years and ten months,¹⁵¹³ but these are probably (and the younger ages are certainly) honorary.

One could seek wisdom even as a “youth” (νεώτερος, Sir 51:13–14);¹⁵¹⁴ some could be counted advanced in wisdom although they were youths.¹⁵¹⁵ Youths were supposed to be modest before their elders,¹⁵¹⁶ but it was sometimes appropriate for youths to speak;¹⁵¹⁷ likewise, even the youngest member of the Roman senate could gain a hearing and give good advice.¹⁵¹⁸ Although youths were not normally honored,¹⁵¹⁹ exceptions were sometimes appropriate.¹⁵²⁰ Because of his wisdom, Daniel was invited to sit among the elders, though he was a young child (παιδαρίου νεωτέρου),

1502. Max. Tyre 1.10.

1503. Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.1.

1504. Lucian *Heracles* 4, 7–8.

1505. *Rhet. Alex.* 29, 1437a.31–34.

1506. Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 1.3 (LCL, 6:125).

1507. Overseers should be between thirty and fifty (CD XIV, 8–9); Buchanan, “Age,” cites also 1QS*a* I, 13–21. This was the age range for temple service (Num 4:35; cf. 8:24; *t. Šeqal.* 3:26); thirty (Luke 3:23) held wider precedent as a transition age (Gen 41:46; 2 Sam 5:4; Gaius *Inst.* 1.20).

1508. Fifty was necessary to give counsel (*m. 'Ab.* 5:21); for the meturgeman (*b. Hag.* 14a). To be an elder, one should be sixty (*m. 'Ab.* 5:21). Many in the Greek world counted fifty an ideal age for ruling (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.29.3).

1509. Forty was the minimum for a χορηγός so that he could be trusted not to corrupt children (Aeschines *Tim.* 11–12), though Aristotle claimed that fifty was the upper age for the best procreation (Arist. *Pol.* 7.14.11–12, 1335b).

1510. Strubbe, “Young Magistrates.”

1511. *CIJ* 1:195, §277 (an ἄρχων); another who was twice archon in 1:369, §505 (unless it means that his father was the archon); possibly another one of twenty-three in 1:261, §332 (but this is reconstructed).

1512. *CIJ* 1:200, §284 (possibly non-Jewish).

1513. *CIJ* 1:310, §402.

1514. Epicurus opined that one was never too young or old to seek wisdom (Epicurus *Let. Men.* 122; Diog. Laert. 10.122).

1515. E.g., Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.3 (though this is directed toward an imperial prince).

1516. Plato *Charm.* 158C.

1517. Plut. *S. Kings*, Pytheas, *Mor.* 187E.

1518. See Livy 4.48.5–10. A younger man would prove more apt to be flustered before the senate, but it might take that into account and let him just read his message (Appian *Hist. rom.* 9.9.6).

1519. Some honors were inappropriate except for older persons (Suet. *Tib.* 54.1).

1520. E.g., Alexander of Macedon, Polyb. 8.10. Alexander became king at age twenty (Plut. *Alex.* 11.1); he charged ahead because, as a youth, he was impetuous (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 2.1–2). In later history, exceptional characters might achieve even more outstanding leadership in youth (e.g., Metaxas, *Grace*, 35). Education could make a difference (Libanius *Anecdote* 3.13).

because God had given him “elderliness” (τὸ πρεσβεῖον, Sus 50). Likewise, because of wisdom, Solomon could have honor among the elders (πρεσβύτεροις) though he was young (νέος, Wis 8:10). In one tradition, R. Eleazar ben Azariah at the age of sixteen was appointed to the academy of R. Gamaliel II, whereupon (as if to qualify him) all his hair went gray.¹⁵²¹ Some Greek heroes were also young,¹⁵²² though battle and adventure were different from wise governance.

Young men could, however, achieve leadership; their very rareness in such positions could fuel their self-assurance. Cicero tells how his rhetorical teacher matured Cicero’s style, which had been “marked by a youthful impetuosity and lack of restraint” (*Brut.* 91.316 [LCL, 5:275]). Thus he could boast that everyone knew “that few men, if any, of my age have defended more cases” (*Ag. Caec.* 13.41 [LCL, 7:37]) and that he had become consul “at the earliest legal age” (*Brut.* 93.323 [LCL, 5:281]). He praises the young Caesar as qualified for authority, “seeing that by his valour he has overcome age” (*Phil.* 14.10.28).

Advancing beyond one’s age-peers (as Paul himself tells us he did, Gal 1:14)¹⁵²³ often aroused envy and consequent enmity.¹⁵²⁴ Thus, if one assumed a prominent position around the age of thirty, this apparent breach of seniority would arouse envy (e.g., *Jos. Life* 80).¹⁵²⁵ Socrates (who was not particularly young) boasted of being the youngest to address the Athenian judges, which angered them.¹⁵²⁶ If a younger man could outdo an older one (πρεσβύτερος) in wit, the elder was humiliated (*Philost. Hrk.* 33.13).¹⁵²⁷ Creon (foolishly, it turns out) complains that his son Haimon seeks to persuade him: “So men of my age are to be taught sense by a man of your age?”¹⁵²⁸ For example, Demosthenes was only thirty-two when he prosecuted Meidias; lacking political strength and honor (δόξαν), he had to settle for less than he would have otherwise (*Plut. Demosth.* 12.1).

Such sentiments could be overcome. Some might despise a new king on account of his youth,¹⁵²⁹ but as noted above, others could hail a young ruler whose “valor” outweighed his youth.¹⁵³⁰ Initially his family’s enemies in Carthage despised Hannibal because he was young (*Appian Hist. rom.* 7.1.3), but he proved a great general.

If witnesses laying their clothes at Saul’s feet implies his supervisory role (and not mere acquaintance),¹⁵³¹ he has achieved respect early, as he also implies in his own writings (Gal 1:14). Perhaps assuming a leading role in the emerging anti-Nazarene

1521. So *y. Ta’an.* 4:1, §14.

1522. E.g., *Ap. Rhod.* 1.972; 2.43–44.

1523. Luke values precocity (*Luke* 2:46), as did many other sources (*Xen. Cyr.* 1.4.3; *Hdt.* 1.113–15; *Val. Max.* 3.1.1; 3.1.2ab; *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 1.7–8, 11; *Iambl. V.P.* 2.10; *Eunapius Lives* 468; *Dibelius, Tradition*, 107; for an extreme case, *Pliny E. N.H.* 7.16.72; further sources in comment on *Acts* 7:22). On the example of *Josephus (Life 9)*, see *Rajak, Josephus*, 27–29; *Vermes, Religion*, 186n2.

1524. Paul’s conversion would naturally facilitate the expression of such hostility, although, of course, it also had other grounds (*Acts* 9:29).

1525. Or at least surprise (*Philost. Hrk.* 21.6).

1526. *Diog. Laert.* 2.41.

1527. If elders argued with younger persons, they might lose honor by taking them so seriously (*Malina, Windows*, 144).

1528. *Soph. Antig.* 726–27 (LCL, 2:69).

1529. *Polyb.* 5.41.1.

1530. *Cic. Phil.* 14.10.28.

1531. The mention of feet might be meant to convey the impression of Saul’s prominence (cf. *Acts* 4:35, 37; 5:2; cf. the image of disciples in 22:3) without necessarily explicitly claiming that he had achieved advanced leadership at this point. Luke is aware of Saul’s leadership, emerging soon after, in a more organized persecution (8:1, 3; 9:1–2), and he may hint at it here, aware of Saul’s involvement in Stephen’s lynching. Perhaps one should not make too much of the possible differences, however. Given Pauline chronology, the later persecution cannot be long after Stephen’s death, and Paul was advanced for his age (*Gal* 1:14).

movement from his synagogue helped propel him to prominence (though family connections are also likely; see comment on Acts 22:3). Given the other Jeremiah echoes in Acts and Paul's writings (cf. Rom 11:13; 15:16; Gal 1:15–16; Jer 1:5; see comment on Acts 9:15–16; 18:9–10; 26:17), it is possible that Luke would have also seen a secondary association with Jeremiah in Paul's "youth" (Jer 1:6), though it is probably not the main purpose in mentioning his age, especially since Luke mentions it in connection with his persecution of Jesus's followers rather than in connection with his calling by Jesus.

d. Stephen's Stoning (7:58)

Although Stephen essentially implied (and from his opponents' perspective, provoked) his death (Acts 7:51–52), his sudden death in the narrative might still appear jarring.¹⁵³² But even if Luke's audience did not know the account of Stephen per se, they would know that some of Jesus's early followers suffered violent persecution (cf. Gal 1:23; Phil 3:6; 1 Thess 2:15).

Luke's expression for removing him from the city, ἐκβαλόντες, "having cast out," reflects the same wording as for one of God's servants rejected by Jerusalem's leaders in Luke 20:12 and for Jesus in 20:15. Similarly, Paul was cast out of a city, although after being stoned (Acts 14:19). Removing a condemned person from a city before killing him represented normal judicial expectations¹⁵³³ (although one could not always count on lynch mobs to follow these).

I. STONING AS A MOB ACTION

For centuries until Roman law limited local punishments, Greeks and other peoples, like Jews, executed people by stoning.¹⁵³⁴ But even in this period Roman law could not prevent stoning from occurring altogether, since it was a common way for mobs to execute vengeance without regard for official laws. Stoning was often a mob action (Luke 20:6; John 8:59) both in Jewish Palestine¹⁵³⁵ and elsewhere.¹⁵³⁶ Mobs were known to kill unwanted speakers by stoning, as here (Polyb. 1.69.10, 13).¹⁵³⁷ It could be envisioned as happening unexpectedly in a citizen assembly (Libanius *Declam.* 36.19) and be regretted later (36.47).

An individual angered by another's criticism also might hurl a stone and draw blood from the critic's head (Lucian *Dem.* 16). Misdemeanors might also defend someone popular but guilty by hurling stones at his just critics (Lucian *Peregr.* 15; *Alex.* 44); occasionally, however, a speaker might gain sufficient hearing to persuade the mob to drop their stones (Lucian *Dem.* 11).

1532. Cf. Schwartz, "Trial Scenes," 122, although the claim that it "never brings about the death of the hero" must be qualified. Stephen is not Luke's primary hero, and subsidiary heroes did die from group violence (e.g., Palamedes, stoned at Odysseus's instigation in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.22; cf. 4.13; 6.21). His death would strike ancient moderners as jarring in another sense as well, since they would visualize the gory death of stoning in ways most modern Western readers do not.

1533. E.g., Deut 17:5; 22:24; 1 Kgs 21:13; Heb 13:12; Jos. *Ant.* 4.264; *War* 4.360; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 50; Blinzler, *Trial*, 251; Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:541; Gnlika, *Jesus*, 309 (Plaut. *Miles glor.* 2.6–7). Even executioners lived outside the city (Rapske, *Custody*, 247–48).

1534. E.g., Soph. *Ajax* 254; Eurip. *Orest.* 442, 625; Quint. Curt. 6.11.38 (cf. 7.2.1); Plut. *Alex.* 55.4; Paus. 8.23.7; Arrian *Alex.* 4.14.3; Corn. Nep. 4 (Pausanias), 5.3; Iambl. *V.P.* 35.252; Philost. *Hrk.* 33.31, 37; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 50. For Roman disgust with "barbaric" stoning, see also helpfully Matthews, "Stoning," 133.

1535. E.g., 1 Kgs 12:18; 2 Chr 10:18; Jos. *Life* 76, 303; *Ant.* 6.358; 14.24; 16.394; 17.216.

1536. E.g., Virg. *Aen.* 1.150; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.59.1; 9.48.2; Quint. Curt. 7.2.1; Paus. 2.32.2; 8.23.7; Lucian *Peregr.* 19; Libanius *Declam.* 36.19; 1 Kgs 12:18.

1537. Stones grabbed at random, instead of by preparation, might prove unsuitably small to wound enemies in battle (Livy 38.21.6), but a crowd could easily fell an unarmed person.

II. JUDEAN STONINGS

Stoning was simply the most ready-to-hand form of public violence available, including in Judea. When Syrians and Jews in Caesarea came to blows, they threw stones at each other (Jos. *Ant.* 20.176). Nor should we think that, in the heat of the moment, even all priestly aristocrats would have avoided hurling stones. When the high priests were divided from other aristocrats in Jerusalem, they hurled not only insults but also stones (20.180); likewise, when two factions of chief priests were engaged in a great conflict, they threw stones at each other (20.213). The most unscrupulous leaders (much less politically astute, however, than Caiaphas) might even engage in premeditated stoning. During an interregnum between Festus and Albinus, the high priest Ananus had James brother of Jesus and others stoned (20.200). Although Stephen's lynching was probably engineered by his opponents (Acts 6:9–11), not by the priestly aristocrats of the Sanhedrin (cf. 6:12; 7:1), historical considerations alone would not force us to rule out the participation of even some local priestly aristocrats.

Stoning was appropriate for blasphemy,¹⁵³⁸ among other offenses,¹⁵³⁹ and had to be done outside the city (Num 15:35–36). If later idealized (and probably sanitized) procedures can tell us much about how a mob action might proceed,¹⁵⁴⁰ people may have stripped a male victim four cubits from the place of stoning (*m. Sanh.* 6:3), then one of the witnesses would have knocked him off a cliff roughly double his height; the second witness would then drop a large stone on his heart,¹⁵⁴¹ and if that failed to kill him,¹⁵⁴² all the witnesses completed the stoning (6:4).¹⁵⁴³ In cases of blasphemy, his corpse would also be hanged (6:4), an event unlikely here (or at least unknown to Luke, who would have surely reported another parallel with Jesus before recounting Stephen's burial; Luke 23:23).¹⁵⁴⁴

The Bible warned that sometimes God's people tried to stone God's prophets (2 Chr 24:21; cf. Exod 17:4) or others (cf. Num 14:10; 1 Sam 30:6; 1 Kgs 21:13); Josephus claimed that by throwing stones at Moses, the Israelites were opposing God himself (*Ant.* 3.21). Jewish tradition acknowledged and developed this image (cf. Matt 21:35;

1538. Lev 24:11–16, 23; Jos. *Ant.* 4.202; *b. Sanh.* 45b; John 10:33; cf. comment on Acts 7:57. Also elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean world; see Soph. *Ajax* 254; Lucian Z. *Rants* 36; cf. Lucian *Fisherman* 1. For crowds in the temple trying to attack a teacher whose teaching violated their traditions, cf. *t. Pisha* 4:13; John 8:59.

1539. E.g., Exod 19:13; Lev 20:27; Num 15:35–36; Josh 7:25; *Jub.* 30:9; 33:13; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.206; *Ant.* 4.281; *Sipre Deut.* 242.1.6; *b. Ber.* 21b; *Mo'ed Qat.* 9a; *Yebam.* 4a; *B. Qam.* 44b; *Sanh.* 41a; 54ab; 66a; 67a; 79b; *Ker.* 3b; 5a. For allusions to Naboth's stoning (1 Kgs 21:13; Jos. *Ant.* 8.407), see Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:54; see comment on Acts 6:13. Cf. *Jub.* 4:31, where God stones Cain.

1540. New Testament scholars often depend on the Mishnah here (e.g., Reicke, *Era*, 192; Edersheim, *Life*, 602; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 189) precisely because it is our only "procedural" source for Jewish stonings.

1541. The procedure here presupposes rather skillful precision in stone dropping; the instructions' theoretical character does invite the question how much practical experience the rabbis had with executions, and their own literature suggests that it was minimal.

1542. The sanitized tradition sanctioned a second stone only if the first failed (*Sipre Deut.* 220.1.2, 6; *b. Sanh.* 45ab, bar.), which it probably would in reality, but a mob would almost certainly ignore such niceties. A cultural disposition to leave responsibility with the group would have made stoning by the group easier (Malina, *Windows*, 137).

1543. If he died while under the ban, they "stoned" him by laying a stone on his coffin (*m. 'Ed.* 5:6; *b. Ber.* 19a; *y. Mo'ed Qat.* 3:1, §9; unrelated to the Galli's burial beneath stones in Lucian *Syr. G.* 52).

1544. Some rabbis prescribed strangulation as the penalty for a false prophet (*m. Sanh.* 11:1; contrast *b. Sanh.* 50a; on execution for false prophets, see Deut 13:5; Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 208–9), the most lenient form of execution, applied to any execution for which Torah did not specify the mode (e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 178.1.1; 241.1.4; 273.3.1); strangulation (not in the Torah but a rabbinic method in *m. Sanh.* 7:1) may have allowed fewer public executions to continue without Roman knowledge, often for adultery (Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 306–7; cf. Origen *Ad Africanum* 14; Winter, *Trial*, 70–73). Rabbis considered stoning the severest acceptable form of execution (*b. Sanh.* 49b–50a).

Heb 11:37); for example, Jeremiah was said to have died by stoning.¹⁵⁴⁵ Although Luke seems unaware of any tradition that people sought to stone Jesus,¹⁵⁴⁶ he is aware of the tradition of stoning prophets (Luke 13:34) and applies it to Paul as well as to Stephen (Acts 14:5, 19). (This connection with Paul is Luke's application but not his fiction; Paul also alludes to the incident in 2 Cor 11:25.) Stephen's death by stoning raises suspense for the occasion when Paul is stoned as well as when he is mobbed in the temple. Luke also contrasts the true prophets, willing to be stoned, with other leaders of the people who fear to act with conviction lest they be stoned (Luke 20:6; Acts 5:26).

Witnesses were to be the first to cast stones (Deut 17:7), perhaps as a deterrent to false witnesses (cf. 19:19–20). But we should not forget that, from Luke's perspective, these witnesses carrying out the execution are false witnesses (Acts 6:13). Further, Luke probably presumes that God will execute the sentence against them (see comment on Acts 7:59–60); false witnesses were to receive the penalty they sought to bring on the accused (Deut 19:19).

e. *The Witnesses' Nakedness (7:58)*

The hostile witnesses discard their ἱμάτια. What were these garments? In the Greek East, the typical male outer garb was “a calf-length tunic, often unbelted, with a large mantle worn over the top (called a *himation*, the equivalent of the *pallium*), and openwork shoes.”¹⁵⁴⁷ Most people wore a tunic or shirt composed of “two pieces of cloth sewn together”; the simplest form was sleeveless, but in cooler weather one could add “a *himation*, a rectangular piece of cloth draped around the body.”¹⁵⁴⁸ Thus the removal of ἱμάτια does not involve complete nakedness. Nevertheless, the self-stripping is informative, not so much because it would be unusual (it was common during strenuous activity) but because of the shame it could symbolize to Luke's audience in an “execution” context.

I. STRIPPING FOR ACTIVITIES

The report that Stephen's accusers removed their cloaks to engage in the strenuous activity of stoning him is plausible, especially if the day was warm. Greeks normally stripped naked for athletics¹⁵⁴⁹ and admired athletic physiques.¹⁵⁵⁰ Although Greeks originally wore at least loincloths even for exercise, Spartans introduced naked exercise to the rest of Greek athletic culture centuries before the NT period.¹⁵⁵¹ When the sun was hot, Greeks might strip to enjoy it.¹⁵⁵² They also laid aside garments for other strenuous activities;¹⁵⁵³ Jewish men engaged in strenuous labor presumably laid aside at least outer garments as well (cf. John 21:7).

1545. E.g., 4 Bar. 9:31; Liv. Pr. 2:1 (Schermann §25, p. 81, line 2). This also appears in patristic sources (commentators cite Jerome *Adversus Jovinianum* 2.37; Tert. *Scorp.* 8). See also comment on Acts 21:21.

1546. Cf. John 8:59; 10:31–32. That is, unless it was implied as the sequel to throwing him from a cliff in Luke 4:29.

1547. Croom, *Clothing*, 127; cf. Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 47. Cf. also Roman “tunics” (Croom, *Clothing*, 31–41; Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 97); togas (Croom, *Clothing*, 41–49); and the *pallium* (ibid., 51; Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 97–98). On the basic Greek garment beneath the ἱμάτιον, i.e., the χιτών, see Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 43–47.

1548. Jeffers, *World*, 43.

1549. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 28.6; Lucian *Lucius* 8–9; *Anach.* 36; Diogenes *Ep.* 37; Philost. *Hrk.* 15.9; 26.20.

1550. Philost. *Hrk.* 10.4. Greeks associated exercise with nakedness, even etymologically (prolegomenon to Aphthonius *Progymnasmata* [fifth century]). They may have traditionally associated male nudity in special ways with heroes and aristocrats, though less in the empire (see Bonfante, “Naked Greek”).

1551. Thucyd. 1.6.5; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.72.2–3 (King, “Body,” 245). For a Roman in the East stripped for exercise, see Tac. *Ann.* 14.59.

1552. Philosophy students in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.17; cf. Eurip. *Allope* frg. 105.

1553. Ap. Rhod. 1.364; also Romans, e.g., Plut. *M. Cato* 3.2. Naturally people stripped to swim (e.g., Theophr. *Char.* 25.2; Vell. Paterc. 2.43.2; cf. John 21:7).

We need not suppose that the Jewish accusers, Hellenists though they were, stripped off all their clothes, especially with some non-Hellenist supporters present (cf. Acts 6:12; 7:1). Sometimes “nakedness” referred only to inadequate clothing,¹⁵⁵⁴ as in the case of soldiers without their full armor or shield.¹⁵⁵⁵ Thus, for example, Lycaon was γυμνός because he had cast away his helmet and shield (Hom. *Il.* 21.50) because of sweat (21.51–52); the term applied even to one without his shield (Philost. *Hrk.* 23.24–25). Stripping at times might include the groin only by accident (Livy 45.39.17).

II. NAKEDNESS AND SHAME

Many ancients associated nakedness with shame, although this association varied from culture to culture and from one era to another within particular cultures.¹⁵⁵⁶ Persians in particular regarded nakedness as shameful and humiliating.¹⁵⁵⁷ Yet one people in Africa was thought to normally go naked (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.8.45), as also the famous Indian philosophers called “gymnosophists”¹⁵⁵⁸ and some reputed Egyptian and Ethiopian sages.¹⁵⁵⁹ Greek philosophers were also ready to reconsider societal expectations. Cynic philosophers did not mind nakedness, apart from their rugged cloak for protection.¹⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, Middle Platonic thinkers were also more than happy to rid themselves of the metaphoric garments of their body.¹⁵⁶¹

Even Greeks originally wore loincloths for exercise; in Homer nakedness remained embarrassing (*Od.* 6.126–29, esp. 129).¹⁵⁶² Earlier Athenians had been more sensitive to nakedness (e.g., Aeschines *Tim.* 25–26). Theophrastus defined a buffoon as someone who “will lift his shirt in the presence of freeborn women” (*Char.* 11.2 [LCL, 69]). After Spartans introduced naked exercise to the rest of Greek athletic culture,¹⁵⁶³ “only barbarians are represented as feeling shame when a man is seen naked.”¹⁵⁶⁴ Greeks became comfortable with nakedness in some situations, especially (as already noted) athletics.¹⁵⁶⁵

1554. E.g., Eurip. *El.* 308; Livy 45.39.17 (*nudasse . . . se*); Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22.45 (having one cloak); 2 Cor 11:27; probably Tob 1:16–17; 4:16; Rom 8:35; Libanius *Descr.* 2.5; 23.2–3 with 23.8.

1555. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 21.50; 22.124; Hdn. 2.13.8, 10; Philost. *Hrk.* 23.24–25. It could also apply to lack of adornment (Lucian *Hall* 7).

1556. Hittites could employ total nakedness as a humiliation in place of execution (“Instructions for Temple Officials” 11 [ANET 209]).

1557. So Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.24; Jos. *Ant.* 18.356; cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 1.2.16. It is not surprising that women were more secluded, and their head coverings covered more, farther to the east (cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.1.4; Diod. Sic. 17.35.5; Plut. *Alex.* 21.3; *Themist.* 26.3–4; Jos. *Ant.* 11.191; Tg. *Rishon* on Esth 2:7; see further discussion in Keener, “Head Coverings”); a noble Persian woman might seek the death of one who exposed her (Libanius *Narration* 16).

1558. Arrian *Ind.* 11.7; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.5; cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.2.22; Lucian *Runaways* 7; Muckensturm-Pouille, “Gymnosophists.”

1559. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.2; 5.43 (if Philostratus did not model them after the Indian sages; he claims that they migrated from India, 6.6; *Vit. soph.* 2.5.572); Heliod. *Eth.* 10.2. Apollonius points out that their land is too hot to wear clothes anyway (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.8).

1560. E.g., Lucian *Cynic* 4 (cf. 19–20); implied in Quint. *Decl.* 268.12.

1561. E.g., Plato *Phaedo* 87BD; Max. Tyre 7.5; Porph. *Marc.* 33.501–5; cf. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 66.3; Marc. Aur. 10.1; 2 Cor 5:3–4; see more fully Aune, “Duality,” 229. For the nakedness image concerning the afterlife, cf. Lucian *True Story* 2.12; *Downward Journey* 24; *Men.* 12. In Jewish sources, cf., e.g., 2 *En.* 22:8.

1562. King, “Body,” 245. Cf. Juv. *Sat.* 1.71; Plut. *Rom. Q.* 40, *Mor.* 274A; Diog. Laert. 2.73; Libanius *Descr.* 23.2.

1563. Thucyd. 1.6.5; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.72.2–3.

1564. King, “Body,” 245.

1565. But often even outside athletic activities (Plato *Rep.* 5.452C; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.24; Arrian *Ind.* 11.7). Hurschmann, “Nudity,” notes that in everyday life, people were clothed and nudity was reserved for unusual circumstances; by contrast, it was the norm for Greek athletics (though it took time to be accepted among Romans, Cic. *Tusc.* 4.70).

Earlier Romans were ashamed to reveal their nakedness;¹⁵⁶⁶ they would not even bathe with their sons-in-law until they acquired the Greek freedom of going naked.¹⁵⁶⁷ By this period, however, those who took advantage of public toilet facilities (most homes lacking such) would have to do so without a modicum of privacy.¹⁵⁶⁸ Increased comfort with nudity was also inevitable in the pervasive use of public baths (on which see comment on Acts 18:8; 19:5).¹⁵⁶⁹

Still, many people continued to conceal their private parts from a sense of shame (Phaedrus 4.16.5–6). A woman in childbirth might be embarrassed if the midwife stared too long at her genitals (Soranus *Gynec.* 2.3.6 [21.70b]). Nakedness could also appear as a form of affliction (e.g., Mus. Ruf. 9, p. 72.1) or disgrace (Polyb. 14.5.11; see below on naked executions). (There is some debate on what Romans wore to bed, but for most of them, it probably was not much.)¹⁵⁷⁰ Social rank had much to do with considerations of propriety; thus, for example, slaveholders did not care whether slaves saw them bathing.¹⁵⁷¹ The respectable class avoided public nudity as degrading;¹⁵⁷² citizens would not strip in public and could be subject even to penalties for indecent exposure.¹⁵⁷³ Exceptions were made in art, where nakedness could be associated with heroism or beauty.¹⁵⁷⁴

Although considered acceptable before humanity's fall,¹⁵⁷⁵ nakedness had been shameful for Jewish people throughout their history.¹⁵⁷⁶ (Ancient Egyptians, though they dressed lightly, also looked down on full nakedness, at least among the upper classes.)¹⁵⁷⁷ Qumran pietists insisted that there be no nakedness seen near the eschatological war camps of the righteous, and hence they required two thousand cubits to the latrine (4Q491 B 1–3 7–8).

Because of the shame attaching to involuntary nudity, especially for Jews but not limited to them, it was common for public punishments.¹⁵⁷⁸ Thus leaders who would be scourged and beheaded (Polyb. 11.30.2) were first stripped naked (11.30.1). Both beatings (e.g., Longus 2.14; Suet. *Calig.* 26.3) and executions (e.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.69.2; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.53) were undergone naked. This was true also for illegal lynchings, which were also accompanied by degrading mockery (e.g., Suet. *Vit.* 17.1; Hdn. 8.8.6). Later rabbis expected men to be stoned naked, but women were clothed (for the sake of male onlookers).¹⁵⁷⁹

1566. Plut. *M. Cato* 20.5.

1567. Plut. *M. Cato* 20.5–6. Ambrose later emphasized this early Roman practice (Ambrose *Off.* 1.18.79, noting shame to bathe with adult children; cited in Jensen, "Nudity," 301–2).

1568. See, e.g., McRay, *Archaeology*, 85.

1569. On nudity in the baths at least some of the time, and objections by some ancient moralists, see discussion in Jensen, "Nudity," 299–300.

1570. Cf. Jerome *Vigil.* 11 (although this may be just Vigilantius); Adkin, "Underwear."

1571. Jensen, "Nudity," 298.

1572. *Ibid.*, 300–301. It was associated with slaves, fighters in the arena, or captured soldiers slated for execution (*ibid.*, 299).

1573. *Ibid.*, 298, citing (for Romans) Plut. *Rom.* 20.3; Hallett, *Roman Nude*, esp. 61–101.

1574. Jensen, "Nudity," 297.

1575. Gen 2:25; *Jub.* 3:16; *Sib. Or.* 1.35–37.

1576. Gen 3:7, 10–11; 9:21–23; *Jub.* 3:21–22, 30–31; 7:8–10, 20; 1 QS VII, 12–14; *t. Ber.* 2:14, 20; *Sipre Deut.* 320.5.2; *b. Yebam.* 63b, bar.; *y. Ber.* 2:2; *Tg. Rishon* on Esth 1:11; cf. Moon, "Nudity." This was a factor in early alarm over gymnasia (1 Macc 1:14; 2 Macc 4:9, 12). For use in sexual temptation, see *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 6:2.

1577. Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 15.

1578. See Rapske, *Custody*, 297–98. See, e.g., Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.40.86 (though this example was intended to be exceptionally cruel); Vell. Patern. 2.1.5; Herodas *Mimes* 5.20; Quint. Curt. 7.5.36 (an alleged Persian example).

1579. *M. Sanh.* 6:3; *b. Sanh.* 45a, bar. The rabbis abhorred male nakedness before God or inferiors, but female nakedness before men (Satlow, "Constructions"). Greeks would execute women naked as well (King, "Body," 246).

Because Stephen's accusers strip themselves rather than him, some scholars have suggested an emendation of ἀυτῶν to αὐτοῦ (more acceptable in the heyday of emended texts);¹⁵⁸⁰ in view of Acts 22:20, however, this solution is unlikely.¹⁵⁸¹ Another explanation is far more likely. Luke portrays the Hellenist accusers as stripping themselves for a strenuous physical activity (above) but, in so doing, portrays them ironically as the guilty party (note its use in public punishments, above; cf. similarly 22:23).¹⁵⁸²

f. Stephen's Prayers and Saul's Approval of His Death (7:59–8:1a)

A significant feature of religious-martyr literature is the dying prayers of martyrs (e.g., 2 Macc 7:37).¹⁵⁸³ Since ancients typically offered their prayers out loud (relegating silent prayer to purportedly malevolent practices), people generally heard them.¹⁵⁸⁴

I. "RECEIVE MY SPIRIT" (7:59)

The specific prayer in Acts 7:59 recalls Luke 23:46 (which also mentions a "loud voice"); most scholars note the parallels.¹⁵⁸⁵ This is not to say that Luke must have invented Jesus's prayer (not in Mark); that prayer echoes the regular Jewish evening prayer that many Jews would be uttering about the time of Jesus's death on the cross (Luke 23:46),¹⁵⁸⁶ a point that Luke may well not have known. Others also offered similar prayers committing their spirit at death.¹⁵⁸⁷ The idea may resemble the report that a Jewish martyr entreated the master of life to restore his life at the resurrection (2 Macc 14:46).¹⁵⁸⁸

The person addressed in Stephen's prayer is significant. He is "calling on the name of the Lord," fulfilling Acts 2:21 ("whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved").¹⁵⁸⁹ Whereas Jesus's petition in Luke 23:46 addressed the Father, Stephen's parallel petition here addresses Jesus himself. This probably suggests Jesus's deity;¹⁵⁹⁰ parallels for petitions to nondivine figures in Judaism¹⁵⁹¹ seem outside the mainstream, and certainly on the level of Luke's theology, Jesus's deity is implied (see comment on Acts 2:21).¹⁵⁹²

1580. Esp. Conybeare, "Stoning of Stephen."

1581. See, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 85; R. Williams, *Acts*, 76; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 179–80.

1582. Keener, "Inverted Guilt"; idem, *Background Commentary*, 343.

1583. Cf. also, e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 33.37. This may be shaped more by the relationship between religion and death than by an ancient genre; martyr literature from recent centuries also often includes final prayers.

1584. See van der Horst, "Prayer"; Croy, "Religion, Personal," 929. Cf. differently 1 Sam 1:13.

1585. E.g., Kurz, "Models," 186–87; Johnson, *Acts*, 140. Pace Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 35, who regards the differences as "more striking than the agreements." The parallels appear only in Luke among the Gospels (as often noted, e.g., Munck, *Acts*, 68).

1586. With Strack and Billerbeck 2:269; Haenchen, *Acts*, 293; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 60; Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 37; Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 142; cf. Ps 31:5 (Marshall, "Acts," 572). Sometimes people coordinated their prayers with the times of offerings in the temple (Jdt 9:1).

1587. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 60, cites Sen. Y. *Herc. Ot.* 1703–4 (to the stars; cf. 1725–26); Lucian *Peregr.* 36 (to his parents). Magical language in PGM 13.377–78 offers a weak verbal parallel, but the sense is unrelated. Cf. committing (παράδιδωμι) oneself to the jurors at the end of a trial (Aeschines *Embassy* 184).

1588. The idea may also be implied in 1 Pet 4:19, which employs the same verb as in Luke 23:46.

1589. With Johnson, *Acts*, 140; Bock, *Acts*, 315.

1590. With Bruce, *Acts*¹, 180; Haenchen, *Acts*, 293; Marguerat, *Acts*, 277.

1591. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 66 (citing later Catholic prayers to angels and saints). Some later Diaspora Jews did pray to angels (e.g., *CIJ* 2.90–91, §§849–50; for angelic mediation of prayer, 1 *En.* 99:3; see further Cohen, *Maccabees*, 84), but first-century Judean orthodoxy, and presumably the Nazarenes, would not have approved (cf. Luke 4:8). Pagans could, of course, pray to heroes (increasingly popular by the third century C.E., e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 56.4), but Luke-Acts has more than a hero Christology.

1592. Gustafsson argued for one Herodian ossuary inscription's prayer to Jesus for help, and another's for resurrection ("Graffiti," dating them to the early 40s; Bruce, *Documents*, 95; cf. Sukenik, "Records").

II. KNEELING (7:60)

Stephen's posture reinforces the image of his piety.¹⁵⁹³ Some scholars regard the idiom "placing his knees" as reflecting the influence of Latin (also Acts 9:40; 20:36; 21:5; Mark 15:19; Luke 22:41);¹⁵⁹⁴ it does not appear in the LXX. The posture, however, was common enough; kneeling was a common posture for submission (2 Kgs 1:13),¹⁵⁹⁵ including to a deity (1 Kgs 19:18; Isa 45:23), the most relevant form (for all instances in Acts) of which is prayer (1 Kgs 8:54; 2 Chr 6:13; Ezra 9:5; 1 Esd 8:73; Dan 6:10; Eph 3:14).¹⁵⁹⁶ Such kneeling may have sometimes been done with one's face touching the ground,¹⁵⁹⁷ although Stephen's crying out with a loud voice (expecting to be heard) probably militates against this understanding here.¹⁵⁹⁸

Although kneeling was unusual in Greek prayer,¹⁵⁹⁹ Greeks and Romans sometimes fell on their knees to pray to their gods (Val. Max. 2.4.5). Luke elsewhere mentions kneeling (except in Luke 5:8 always employing this same idiom, as in Mark 15:19) always in connection with prayer (Luke 22:41; Acts 9:40; 20:36; 21:5) or entreaty that would, from Luke's perspective, verge on prayer (Luke 5:8). The Venerable Bede noted that Stephen prayed for himself (Acts 7:59) before kneeling, but for his persecutors only after kneeling; their intense sin, he opined, required a greater gesture of supplication.¹⁶⁰⁰ The image of kneeling might seem incongruent if we think of his being thrown down, landing on his back, and then having stones hurled on his chest before kneeling, as in the Mishnah.¹⁶⁰¹ It is, however, the Mishnaic portrait that is artificial here: we do not know how far Stephen would have fallen, and both the angle of his landing and the locations where stones landed would be difficult to control with precision.

III. JESUS'S MODEL OF FORGIVENESS (7:60)

The climax of the scene of Stephen's martyrdom (before his death) is his prayer for his persecutors. That he "cried with a loud voice" for his persecutors' forgiveness draws attention to the contrast with his opponents, who had "cried with a loud voice" against him in 7:57. Jesus taught prayer for one's oppressors (Luke 6:28//Matt 5:44) but also modeled it in Luke's Gospel. Martyrs' prayers often were for vindication

Fishwick, "Ossuaries," compares them with magical papyri, but his sources are several centuries later than ossuary inscriptions (Yamauchi, *Stones*, 122).

1593. This posture may mean that he was not thrown from a cliff as the Mishnah demanded for normal stoning executions (cf. González, *Acts*, 99n89); certainly, most stonings in antiquity were conducted spontaneously by mobs (see comment on Acts 7:58), though this mob had at least rushed him out of the city, as was appropriate (Acts 7:58). It is also possible that Stephen survived the fall well enough to stand, then knelt when battered down by the stones or in order to pray (both circumstances explicit in the text).

1594. Barrett, *Acts*, 387 (citing Ovid *Fasti* 2.438); Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 394 (tentatively).

1595. E.g., *Ahiq.* 4.5; in Greek sources, see Hock, "Novel," 143. *1 Clem.* 57.1 speaks of "bending the knees" of one's "heart."

1596. For kneeling in prayer, see also *L.A.E.* 32:3; *Test. Jos.* 8:1; *Test. Mos.* 4:1; 11:17; Armenian *Ahiq.* 1.3; *b. Ber.* 34b; *Meg.* 22b; *Šebu.* 16b; *y. Ber.* 1:4; on kneeling for supplication, in antiquity, see further Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 158–60. Hermas often mentions kneeling for prayers of confession (*Herm.* 1.3; 5.2; 9.5), though the confession there is of his own sin, not others'.

1597. Robinson, *Ephesians*, 83, emphasizes this "Eastern prostration." But Greek has a clearer way to express prostration (cf. BDAG on the addition of *προσκυνέω*).

1598. One could also pray with eyes lifted toward heaven; e.g., 4Q213 1 I, 8; 4 Macc 6:6, 26; 4 Bar. 6:5; see further comment on Acts 7:55; or Keener, *John*, 1052.

1599. Burkert, *Religion*, 75. Barth, *Ephesians*, 1:372–79, suggests that kneeling is closer to Gentile than to Jewish practice, but Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 201–2, argues that it was attested more often in Judaism.

1600. Bede *Comm. Acts* 7.60 (L. Martin, 76; also Martin, *Acts*, 88, where n. 19 also compares Aug. *Serm.* 315.3.3; 319.4.4).

1601. Noted by Chance, *Acts*, 122.

or vengeance (2 Chr 24:22; Ps 79:10; Rev 6:10);¹⁶⁰² to pray for one's persecutors' forgiveness, by contrast, follows the model of Jesus in Luke 23:34.¹⁶⁰³ Although the wording differs,¹⁶⁰⁴ the dependence on the substance of Jesus's prayer there is clear.

The prayer in the Gospel is missing in several of the earliest manuscripts (notably \mathfrak{P}^{75} ; $\mathfrak{N}^{\text{a-vid}}$; and B; also in one stream of the Coptic tradition);¹⁶⁰⁵ it is present in some other early manuscripts ($\mathfrak{N}^{\text{*c}}$; A) and most church fathers and, in addition, has the widest geographic distribution. It seems most likely original; an early scribe seeking to create a parallel with Acts probably would not have the insight to place it specifically in Luke rather than in another Gospel.¹⁶⁰⁶ Given the anti-Jewish climate of second-century Egypt, after major pogroms had decimated the Jewish community there, it may have been excised by some Egyptian copyists. A prayer to "the Lord" could address God the Father (Acts 1:24) but, in view of 7:59, the prayer in 7:60 presumably addresses Jesus as divine or as, in some acceptable way, a divine surrogate.

Stephen's prayer for those opposing him may focus on the false witnesses hurling stones but could readily be understood to cover Saul as well (7:58). The reader may then approach Jesus's intervention to stop and convert this persecutor in 9:4 as a fruit, in part, of Stephen's prayer. In that encounter, Jesus accuses Saul of persecuting Jesus himself; the one who died testifying of the Son of Man (7:56) and followed his example (7:59–60) was sharing Jesus's death, bearing his cross (Luke 9:23; 14:27). By persecuting Stephen, Saul and his allies were persecuting Jesus (Acts 9:4). By converting Saul, Jesus was answering Stephen's prayer and hence furthering the fruit of Stephen's own ministry.¹⁶⁰⁷

IV. CONFESSING OTHERS' SINS (7:60)

Jewish people believed in confessing sins before God, sometimes corporately.¹⁶⁰⁸ Rabbis believed that various forms of atonement were necessary, depending on one's

1602. E.g., also *Vit. Aes.* 133, 142; *Iambl. V.P.* 32.222; cf. Ps 137:7–9; Jer 15:15; a wise counselor in *Jos. Ant.* 18.346; a dying warrior might curse his slayer (*Hom. Il.* 22.358–60). For prayers for eschatological justice in general, see Johnson, *Prayer*, 31–34. Kalimi, "Murders," compares Stephen, including his prayer, with 2 Chr 24:20–22. Different from here, a priest's prayer during a trial that deities hopefully not avenge him if he is convicted (*Quint. Decl.* 323.3) could actually function as a warning not to convict.

1603. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 35, emphasizes the difference between this idea and the traditional Jewish prayer for vindication; Marshall, "Acts," 572, is more skeptical. Cassidy, *Society*, 36–38, argues that it fits the teaching of nonviolence in the Gospel. Peterson, *Acts*, 269, connects this with offers of forgiveness in Acts 2:38; 3:19; 10:43; 13:38. Matthews, "Clemency," contends that Luke uses forgiveness prayers in the service of his negative construction of Judaism; given examples above, however, would vengeance prayers not have served such a purpose better?

1604. Emphasized by Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 35 (in an argument for the historical likelihood of Luke 23:34).

1605. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 180, thinks that it was added to the Gospel at an early stage.

1606. Unless the scribe was early enough to read Luke-Acts together rather than Luke with the other Gospels, but we have little evidence for such a reading among the scribes, and a parallel fits the other parallels with Jesus's death in Luke in a very Lukan manner. Irenaeus attests that reading Luke with the other Gospels was established usage in a wide range of churches by his time, and early patristic use of the Gospels points in the same direction.

1607. One might perhaps compare something like conversions after Jesus's prayer in Luke 23:34, of a dying thief (23:40–43) and perhaps of one of Jesus's Gentile executioners (23:47). These parallels would not paint Saul's violent activity in a positive light: he was like a Jewish revolutionary or like an imperial oppressor of martyrs.

1608. E.g., 1QS I, 22–23; 4Q393 (see Falk, "4Q393"); 4Q504 1–2 VI, 5–6; *Pss. Sol.* 9:6; *Sipra Behuq.* pq. 8.269.2.1; *b. Sanh.* 43b; *Gen. Rab.* 97 (NV); 1 John 1:9; in the synagogue liturgy, see Oesterley, *Liturgy*, 76–79; for examples, e.g., *Test. Dan* 1:4; *Jos. Asen.* 11:18; 12:3/4; see further Davids, *James*, 195; especially Boda, Falk, and Werline, *Development*; idem, *Impact*. One should confess one's own sin, not that of one's ancestors (*Sipre Num.* 3.1.1). One would pray for forgiveness of "all my sins" on the eve of Yom Kippur (*Lev. Rab.* 3:3); they would be fully forgiven (*b. Yoma* 86b). Among Gentiles, see Horsley, *Documents*, 1:32–33, §7.

crime. Repentance was an important part of atonement.¹⁶⁰⁹ Normally death was considered sufficient suffering to atone for a Jewish person, if coupled with repentance.¹⁶¹⁰ Thus one in danger might pray for safety and add, as a precaution, “May my death atone for all my sins”¹⁶¹¹ (for that prayer’s application more specifically to executions, see below). Then again, some later sages claimed that Jewish martyrs killed by the pagan government would share the coming world even without confessing sins before death.¹⁶¹²

Some individuals, however, committed deeds requiring punishment by the community. Executions might be necessary to turn away God’s wrath from Israel (*Jub.* 41:26), and the executed person’s confession might invite God’s mercy for him at the resurrection (*L.A.B.* 25:7; 27:15).¹⁶¹³ According to later rabbis, in the case of major sins, such as profaning God’s name, denying circumcision, or twisting Torah, one must repent, have the Day of Atonement, *and* die to be forgiven (*b. Šebu.* 13a, bar.; *’Abot R. Nat.* 29 A). Those executed by order of the Sanhedrin were executed justly and hence must have a shameful burial to procure forgiveness (*b. Sanh.* 47b; see comment on Acts 8:2). Posthumous decomposition might be exacted even from a mostly righteous teacher (at least in a story meant to underline God’s justice); when a rabbi’s widow tried to remove a moth she found nibbling behind the ear of her husband’s corpse, a heavenly voice warned that God was still collecting the debt the rabbi owed (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:23).

Though a mob would hardly follow such careful procedure, later teachers insisted that the condemned be invited to make confession ten cubits from the site of execution so that he could share in the coming world (*m. Sanh.* 6:2). The basic confession that later rabbis insisted be repeated by the person being executed was, “May my death atone for all my sins” (6:3). Rabbi Judah (early third century) allowed that a person who knew that he had been convicted by false testimony should exclude the sin for which he was being executed, but the sages ruled that such an exception would motivate everyone to make this claim to clear their names (6:3). Later rabbis claimed that one man asked God to forgive his sins only if he was guilty of the crime and never to forgive the false witnesses who had him convicted.¹⁶¹⁴ We should not suppose that such later rabbinic scruples would have been followed by a lynch mob, but the expectation of confession may have been early enough to render the narrative’s irony intelligible to some more knowledgeable Jewish members of Luke’s audience.

It might thus be shocking to hearers in the story world that Stephen confesses not his own sins but those of his opponents. But as noted above, martyrs sometimes prayed for vindication, and so the greater shock would be that Stephen’s prayer was

1609. This confession accompanied sin offerings (*Lev* 16:21; confession was explicitly part of the atonement in *Sipra A.M. par.* 2.176.1.5–6).

1610. E.g., *m. Ed.* 5:6 (Neusner treats this passage form-critically in *Traditions*, 1:145); *Yoma* 8:8; *t. Kip.* 4:8–9; *’Abot R. Nat.* 39 A. Also *Num. Rab.* 8:5; cf. similarly *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 25:3; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on *Lev* 16:30; see further Urbach, *Sages*, 1:431–33. Some counted death as analogous to repentance, effecting atonement (*y. Šebu.* 1:6, §5, R. Judah ha-Nasi), even without repentance (*b. Šebu.* 13a, bar.). For a request for humans’ forgiveness at death, cf. *ILS* 7479 (near Philippi).

1611. E.g., *t. Ber.* 6:17; *b. Ber.* 60a, bar.; *y. Ber.* 9:4, §2. The wicked confessing only on the day of judgment would do so too late to receive mercy (*1 En.* 63:1).

1612. So *b. Sanh.* 47b; *Ecl. Rab.* 4:1, §1.

1613. It is unclear whether *Jub.* 30:14–17 and 33:13 mean that the executed person cannot be atoned for or that his death might be the only atonement for him. Confession before execution followed the model of Achan (*Josh* 7:19–21; *m. Sanh.* 6:3). The Sibyl’s invitation to stone her for her sins so that she could live on is probably from a Christian portion of the document (*Sib. Or.* 7.161–62).

1614. *B. Sanh.* 44b, bar. The court apparently accepted the probability of his innocence at that point but refused to reverse a sentence already decreed. Stephen’s transfer of guilt to the witnesses would analogously exonerate him for Luke’s audience, but Stephen’s response differs from that of the executed man in this other story.

for mercy rather than justice. Such forgiveness was unusual and would be especially foreign to Greeks.¹⁶¹⁵ Unjust executions were thought to bring judgment on the land that executed them;¹⁶¹⁶ but many Jewish people in this period believed that the suffering of martyrs could atone for the sins of their own people (4 Macc 17:22).¹⁶¹⁷ One could also pray for others' forgiveness, especially when the sin committed was against oneself.¹⁶¹⁸ In one early account, a dying son even prays that his martyrdom will turn God's wrath from Israel (2 Macc 7:37–38);¹⁶¹⁹ another martyr, in a document probably circulating in the first century, also is said to have prayed for his death to atone for his people's sins (4 Macc 6:27–29). Why does Luke not portray Stephen's death as atoning for his people's sins? Probably because this role was filled exclusively and sufficiently by Jesus (Luke 22:19–20; Acts 20:28; cf. 8:32–33).

Luke views Jesus's death as culminating the sins that demand judgment on Jerusalem (Luke 11:49–51; 19:42–44; 21:6, 22; 23:29–31; Acts 7:52), but perhaps he sees such prayers as staying the judgment in that generation (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60). Here, as in Acts 7:59, Stephen imitates Jesus's prayer to the Father but probably redirects his own prayer to Jesus himself.¹⁶²⁰ Although the Father remained the most frequent object of prayer in early Christianity (e.g., John 15:16; 16:23, 26; Rev 4:11), prayer was also addressed to Jesus (John 14:13–14; 2 Cor 12:8–9; Rev 5:9–13).¹⁶²¹

In the context of Stephen's sermon, his closing words also drive home another point. His hearers' ancestors had killed the prophets, his hearers themselves had killed the righteous one (7:52), and now they were going to kill Stephen. For each of these acts, judgment against them was stored up; this generation had climaxed the acts by killing the Messiah, and so the judgments stored up for generations would fall on them (Luke 11:50–51). From Luke's perspective, this threat would be fulfilled at the devastation of Jerusalem, in the "days of vengeance" (Luke 21:22). Stephen is praying that judgment for his death not be added to the overflowing cup against his people.

V. FALLING ASLEEP, SAUL'S APPROVAL (7:60–8:1A)

In describing Stephen's death as "falling asleep" (also in Acts 13:36), Luke uses a common idiom for death (cf. John 11:11–12;¹⁶²² 1 Cor 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thess 4:13–15; 2 Pet 3:4).¹⁶²³ Many ancients compared sleep to death because of the similar

1615. Cf. Leigh, "Forgiveness."

1616. 2 Kgs 21:16; Max. Tyre 3.8; Jos. Ant. 20.166.

1617. See further, e.g., 2 Macc 7:37–38 (on which see Schenker, "Martyrium"); 4 Macc 17:21–22 (on which cf. Grappe, "Intérêt"); y. Sanh. 11:5, §4; on martyrdom as a sacrifice, note also Thoma, "Frühjüdische Martyrer"; Haacker, *Theology*, 133–34; Baslez, "Martyrs." This became part of the larger concept of suffering helping to atone for sins (*Mek. Bah.* 6.142–43 [Lauterbach, 2:247]; *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.2, 5; 310.4.1; 311.1.1; *'Abot R. Nat.* 29 A; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:9; 26:11; b. *Ta'an.* 8a; *Gen. Rab.* 62:2; 96:5; b. *Qidd.* 40b; cf. Isa 40:2; 1QS VIII, 4; Laytner, "Suffering"). On meritorious suffering, see excursus at Acts 9:16.

1618. E.g., Job 42:8–9; *Test. Job* 42:8; 43:15–17/12–13; cf. 1 John 5:16; *Sent. Sext.* 373–75.

1619. Schenker, "Martyrium," even compares this prayer to Jesus's words over the cup (Mark 14:24).

1620. With Bruce, *Acts*¹, 180. "Lord" does not always bear this sense even in prayers in Acts (Acts 4:24, 29), but this reading best suits the immediate context of 7:59 (cf. also 9:5, 10, 13, 17). This observation suggests significant christological implications (cf. comment on Acts 2:21, 38); by comparison, Jewish people prayed to Abraham's God, not to Abraham (Urbach, *Sages*, 1:117).

1621. Cf. also wish-prayers, or blessings, from both the Father and the Son (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:4; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; 2 Thess 1:2; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; Phlm 3; 2 John 3; Rev 1:4–5). The same form is used without the binitarian address in Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 2 Pet 1:2; 1 *Clem.* preface; Ign. *Smyrn.* 12.2.

1622. See fuller discussion in Keener, *John*, 840–41.

1623. See, e.g., Soph. *Oed. Col.* 1578; Callim. *Epig.* 11, 18; Plut. *Apoll.* 12, *Mor.* 107D; Prop. *Eleg.* 2.28.25; Diog. Laert. 1.86; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.6. See also in unrelated societies (Mbiti, *Religions*, 204–5). Speakers employed circumlocution for various reasons (Hermog. *Method* 8.421–23), but this one was obviously traditional.

appearance of nonactivity;¹⁶²⁴ “Sleep” was Death’s twin,¹⁶²⁵ or sleep was mingled by the gods with death to appear like it.¹⁶²⁶ Thus Callimachus opines that good people “sleep” rather than “die” (*Epig.* 11, including ἱερὸν ὕπνον, holy sleep; cf. 18).

The sleep of death was a common image in the LXX,¹⁶²⁷ Jewish tomb inscriptions in Greek¹⁶²⁸ and Latin,¹⁶²⁹ and Jewish literature.¹⁶³⁰ Jewish people also called death “eternal sleep” (probably 4Q549 2 2). Jewish funerary inscriptions often include “peace,” often in Hebrew (שלום),¹⁶³¹ even when the surrounding inscription is in Latin¹⁶³² or Greek.¹⁶³³ The phrase “in peace” (often “here lies in peace”) is pervasive in Roman sepulchral inscriptions.¹⁶³⁴

Luke closes the martyrdom scene proper with the same character with whom he opened: Saul stood by the clothes of the false witnesses killing Stephen (Acts 7:58) and now is said to approve of (συνευδοκῶν) his killing (8:1a; reiterated in 22:20). To “approve of” (συνευδοκέω) murdering God’s prophets is to share the responsibility (Luke 11:48; in Paul’s own usage, see Rom 1:32).

1624. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 16.419–683; Philost. *Hrk.* 39.4.

1625. Hom. *Il.* 16.672; cf. Statius *Theb.* 5.197–99; Ambühl, “Thanatos,” 365.

1626. Fronto *Fer. als.* 3.9.

1627. E.g., Dan 12:2; 2 Macc 12:45; most often in the phrase “slept with one’s ancestors,” e.g., 1 Kgs 1:21; 2:10; 11:21, 43; 1 Chr 17:11; 2 Chr 9:31; 16:13; 21:1; 26:2, 23; 27:9; 28:27; 32:33; 33:20; 36:8.

1628. Where it is one of the most frequent expressions: *CIJ* 1:8, §3; 1:12, §17; 1:17–19, §§16–20; 1:21, §24; 1:26, §35; 1:28, §37; 1:31, §44; 1:34, §50; 1:37, §55; 1:39, §§62–63; 1:41, §69; 1:56, §81; 1:59, §85; 1:60, §86; 1:62, §88; 1:63, §90; 1:65, §92; 1:66, §93; 1:67, §95; 1:70, §99; 1:71, §100; 1:72, §102; 1:73, §103; 1:74, §105; 1:75, §106; 1:76, §109; 1:78, §111; 1:81, §117; 1:84, §121; 1:90, §129; 1:92, §§131–32; 1:95, §136; 1:96, §137; 1:97, §138; 1:102, §144; 1:103, §145; 1:104, §146; 1:105, §147; 1:107, §149; 1:109, §151; 1:110, §152; 1:111, §154; 1:113, §§156–57; 1:114, §159; 1:118–19, §167; 1:121–22, §169; 1:121, §171; 1:124, §172; 1:130, §180; 1:131, §§184–85; 1:135, §192; 1:195, §277; 1:202, §286.

1629. *CIJ* 1:144–45, §206; 1:149, §210; 1:150, §212; 1:160, §224; 1:162, §228; 1:187–88, §265; 1:338, §458; 1:473, §658; 1:473, §659 (with Hebrew also); 1:473, §660. But some Latin inscriptions have this stereotypical phrase in Greek (1:163, §229; 1:166, §222; 1:338, §459; 1:342–43, §464; 1:384, §523).

1630. 1 Thess 4:13; Acts 7:60; Rev 14:13; Sir 30:17; *Jub.* 23:1; 36:18; 1 *En.* 89:38; *Pss. Sol.* 2:31; *L.A.B.* 3:10; 4 *Ezra* 7:31–32; 2 *Bar.* 11:4; 21:25; 36:11; *Test. Mos.* 10:14; *L.A.E.* 48:2; *Test. Dan* 7:1; *Test. Iss.* 7:9; *Test. Zeb.* 10:6; *Gen. Rab.* 62:2.

1631. E.g., *CIJ* 1:230, §292; 1:422f, §570; 1:423, §§572–73; 1:427, §584; 1:432, §595; 1:433, §§596–97; 2:132, §920; 2:133, §922; 2:138, §§933–34; 2:139, §937; 2:142, §943; 2:144, §948; 2:145, §951; 2:147, §956; 2:148, §959; 2:149, §961; 2:156, §970; 2:159, §973; 2:197, §§1078–80; 2:198, §1086; 2:199, §1090; 2:232, §1195; 2:236, §1200; 2:364, §1437; 2:364f, §1438. Many are mostly Hebrew: 1:446, §626; 1:449, §630; 1:461, §644; 1:474, §661; in Palestinian Aramaic inscriptions, 2:120, §892; 2:121, §893; 2:122, §897. In a nonfunerary inscription, 2:9, §739.

1632. E.g., *CIJ* 1:364, §499; 1:412, §558; 1:436, §§606–7; 1:437, §609; 1:438, §611; 1:440, §613; 1:466, §650; 1:473, §659; 1:483, §671.

1633. *CIJ* 1:198–99, §283; 1:233, §296; 1:250f, §319; 1:362, §497 (with שלום four times); 1:464, §649; 1:499, §688 (Hebrew and Greek); 1:597, §732; 2:108, §874 (an Asian inscription); 2:129, §914 (from Jaffa).

1634. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 123, counts 167 instances of “in peace” (in Greek) out of 328 usable inscriptions (hence just more than half).

PHILIP REACHES BEYOND JUDEANS (8:1B–40)

The Diaspora Jewish followers of Jesus in Acts 6:5 provided the bridge for the church's mission to the Diaspora. Geographically universal theology like that presented in Stephen's speech (7:2–53) laid the groundwork for the church's mission, but it was the freshly scattered Diaspora Jewish Christians who began to carry it out (8:4).

Thus, having focused on Stephen in 6:8–7:60, Luke now turns to the second of the seven ministers he listed in 6:5, showing how Philip took the gospel across cultural and ethnic boundaries. If Stephen taught that God was not bound to the sacred land or the temple, Philip now implements the vision by evangelizing Samaritans and the first fully Gentile convert, an African official. Samaritans rejected the Jerusalem temple, and the eunuch was unable to become a proselyte or pass the Court of the Gentiles there; as Stephen had preached, God refused to be bound by the temple's barriers (cf. 21:28).¹

The transition about Saul's persecution (8:1b–4) begins in the account of Stephen's martyrdom (7:58–8:1a) yet provides the direct cause (on account of the dispersion of persecuted believers) of Philip's mission. Philip, in fact, is merely the most prominent (or personally accessible to Luke) example of those who were scattered (8:3–4). Although this paragraph forms a transition relevant to both sections, this discussion includes it with Philip for the convenience of users of this commentary in retaining most of the current chapter together.

1. Introduction to Philip's Ministry

If Philip reached both Samaritans and a representative from the "ends of the earth" (see comment on Acts 8:27), his ministry in Acts 8 proleptically fulfills two of the three points of mission in 1:8: Samaria and the ends of the earth. Geographically, Philip advances the gospel north (to Samaria) and south (to Africans).² It is no wonder that Luke awards him the title "the evangelist" (21:8), the one who brought the "good news" to so many people in Acts 8 (8:12, 24, 35, 40; cf. 8:4; earlier in Acts, only at 5:42). Philip's ministry is strategic in the expansion of the gospel across boundaries, following the pattern laid out by Jesus in his table fellowship with "sinners" in the Gospel.

What is the historical likelihood of the material contained in Acts 8? Dunn again provides useful suggestions:³

1. See here also Dunn, *Acts*, 102. Goulder, *Type and History*, 59, stresses the failure of Israel in Acts 8–13, but he bases this too heavily on his parallel with Luke 10–13; this theme is no more prominent here than before or after.

2. For north and south, see e.g., Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 194.

3. Dunn, *Acts*, 103. For the view of some historical tradition here, reshaped by Luke, see Spencer, "Waiter." Haya-Prats, *Believers*, 16, finds grammatical signs of a pre-Lukan source for 8:14–25.

1. The persecution of 8:1–3 was historical (e.g., Gal 1:13, 23).
2. Luke possibly knew Philip (Acts 21:8).
3. An early Christian success in Samaria may be implicit in John 4:39–42; Matt 10:5.⁴
4. The gap between baptism and receiving the Spirit is not part of Luke’s theological agenda (Acts 2:38) and hence stems from his source.
5. Simon is known independently as founder of a gnostic sect.
6. Because Luke focuses on Peter’s ministry to the Gentiles in Acts 10, the Ethiopian official appears here because of Philip’s material.

One may question whether patristic references to Simon are genuinely independent of Acts (though at least the tradition in Justin Martyr, which is not specifically gnostic, likely has some historical foundation; see comment on Acts 8:9), but the other arguments mostly appear logically sound. The persecution is commented on more fully under Acts 8:1–4.

Some scholars even think that Luke mentions Philip in 21:8 specifically to indicate one of his sources;⁵ certainly, Luke makes clear there that he met the person whose story he describes earlier. Luke (or on other views, his “we” author) stayed with Philip for several days (21:8–10), and in view of common expectations for hospitality in that culture, it is highly unlikely that Philip and his guests would not have spent time talking, including about the early period in which Paul and Philip, from very different vantage points, had been active. Moreover, the “we” of the narrative apparently remains in Judea for up to two years while Paul is in detention in Caesarea (27:1–2); whoever may have been the “we’s” official hosts during that time, we can be relatively certain that Luke had continued access to Philip.

A successful Samaritan mission likely occurred at some point;⁶ otherwise references to the Samaritans in Diaspora Christian texts (such as Luke-Acts and John) make less sense. Luke knows the “official” public version of the Jerusalem church’s accepting Gentiles in Acts 10–11, a precedent useful for the expanding Gentile mission (15:7–9); his inclusion of a different example of the “ends of the earth” before the Cornelius story likely suggests Philip, the lone witness, whom the “we” author met, as his source. In view of the fact that the precedent was apparently unknown to the Jerusalem church in its deliberations in Acts 11 and 15 (if we may argue that this is an otherwise unlikely silence), it is possible that Paul himself did not know the story until the visit with Philip in 21:8, 10.

2. Persecution Disperses the Jerusalem Church (8:1b–4)

This paragraph about Saul’s persecution (8:1b–4) is a transition from the Stephen narrative to the narratives about Philip, continuing the figure of Saul mentioned in 7:58.⁷ The focus here is persecution, particularly harsh from Saul (who contrasts with the devout

4. Matthew employs the saying in Matt 10:5 in contrast to the disciples’ later mission (28:19), but some suggest that in its pre-Matthean form it may have invited Luke’s response in Acts (e.g., Spencer, *Philip*, 86; Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, 190). Pilch, “Samaritans,” briefly explores the differing portraits of Samaritans in Matthew, John, and Luke-Acts.

5. E.g., Ramsay, *Pictures*, 66; Barrett, *Acts*, 51; Witherington, *Acts*, 169, 280; cf. Blaklock, *Acts*, 80–81.

6. See discussion in Keener, *John*, 587–88. Cf. Dion and Pummer, “Synagogue,” for a possible (though disputed) Samaritan-Christian synagogue.

7. Longenecker, “Aversion,” notes the use of rhetorical “chain-link interlock,” a transition device, in Acts 8:1b–2.

men who buried Stephen). The effect of the persecution, however, is the dispersing of the church (fulfilling 1:8 more fully but in a manner undoubtedly not expected by the apostles). This outcome testifies to God's sovereign activity even through opposition,⁸ activity using Paul as a vessel even when he was "kicking against the goads" (26:14). This dispersal includes Philip and hence paves the way for discussing his mission in 8:5–40.

a. Introduction

Although the scattering evidently extended ultimately to Damascus (9:1–2) and beyond (11:19–20), the mention of Judea and Samaria in 8:1 paves the way for the Samaritan mission of 8:5–25 (as well as Peter's Judean mission in 9:32–42).

Luke portrays Stephen's martyrdom as achieving several beneficial effects for the kingdom, though these were not specifically foreseen by Stephen:

1. Stephen's basic message outlines a theology that could function in the Diaspora.
2. Stephen's message provokes persecution, which scatters and spreads the church (8:4).
3. A theological seed was sown in a hearer that would later be reaped on the road to Damascus (9:4–8).

These effects confirm the wisdom of Gamaliel: if the movement was from God, attempts to suppress it would not ultimately stop it (5:39; cf. 28:31).

The theology of the passage is part of Luke's larger theme of persecution in the setting of proclamation. Stephen valued proclamation above survival (7:51–60), and God vindicated this approach by using the church's persecution to spread it (8:4). This paragraph emphasizes that Stephen's martyrdom "was only the beginning of what would be the fate of many Christians—to be persecuted for their witness to Christ."⁹ If this experience was still mostly foreign to much of Luke's potential audience in Achaia, it was not to his colleagues in Macedonia (1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:3–4; Phil 1:28). Just as some Jewish people understood part of God's purpose for Israel in the Diaspora as a witness to the Gentiles (Tob 13:3, 5),¹⁰ Luke sees the dispersion here as propagating the church.¹¹

The basic events of this paragraph are surely historical.¹² Paul himself admits participation in violent persecution of the Christians, mentioning it fairly regularly in his letters (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6; cf. 1 Tim 1:13). Paul treats it as a matter of ironic "boasting" in terms of zeal (Gal 1:13, 23; Phil 3:6) but a matter of shame in light of the truth (1 Cor 15:9).¹³ Thus even those who doubt the Sanhedrin's involvement in Acts 4:3 and 5:40 (and are skeptical of details such as a persecution that scattered everyone but the apostles here) usually concede Luke's perspective on Stephen and Paul.¹⁴

8. Compare how Paul later reaches Rome as a high-status prisoner and symbol of, hence spokesman for, the Nazarene movement rather than as a traveling artisan.

9. Combrink, *Analysis*, 22.

10. For later talmudic evidence, see further Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 156–58.

11. So even with martyrdom in the case of Stephen and in the famous rhetorical dictum of Tert. *Apol.* 50.13. Talbert, *Acts*, 67, also cites Tertullian and similar perspectives in *Diogn.* 7.7–8; Justin *Dial.* 110. The bonding function of suffering (e.g., Phil 1:7, 30; Rev 1:9; Philost. *Hrk.* 20.3) is not emphasized.

12. Haenchen, *Acts*, 298, complains that Saul was just a "youth" in Acts 7:58; but "youth" potentially extended up to forty (see Longenecker, *Acts*, 150) or at least to twenty-eight (see comment on Acts 7:58), and Paul's own writings suggest that he played no small role (Gal 1:13–14).

13. Cf. perhaps Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:13–16. See also Légasse, "Career," 380–84 (noting [383–84] that the language of Paul's letters often agrees with Acts even in wording on this point).

14. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 285.

Although Paul may have been a leader and primary organizer of persecution, he did not act alone; Paul also notes persecution by other Judeans that continued after his own involvement stopped (1 Thess 2:14–16; cf. 2 Cor 11:24, 26).¹⁵ Once some Christian teachings had been caricatured (or the more extreme Christian voices made to appear normative), extremists and political opportunists who viewed them as a threat could act against them; some Jewish ideals praised the execution of apostates (Num 25:7–8; 1 Macc 2:24, 44; 3 Macc 7:14–16).

b. The Great Persecution (8:1)

The “great persecution” (διωγμὸς μέγας) that came on the church may recall Stephen’s recent claim that his accusers’ predecessors “persecuted” (ἐδίωξαν) the prophets (Acts 7:52; cf. Luke 11:49); it also fulfills Jesus’s prediction (Luke 11:49; 21:12, διώξουσιν).¹⁶ It prepares the way for the next occurrence of a cognate term, describing Saul’s own activity (Acts 9:4–5; cf. 22:4, 7–8; 26:11, 14–15); Luke must introduce the idea here to explain the scattering of believers and their message (8:4; picked up in 11:19), which provides the backdrop for Philip’s mission (8:5).

Saul’s “approval” (8:1a) belongs with the preceding paragraph, continuing the thought of 7:58, as mentioned above.¹⁷ Saul’s “approval” of Stephen’s execution (8:1; 22:20)¹⁸ was no less culpable than that of those who stood in continuity with the prophets’ murderers in Luke 11:48 (the only other Lukan reference, to which Luke may allude by using this term; cf. Rom 1:32; 1 Clem. 35.6).¹⁹ Paul clearly did more than approve during the rest of the persecution, however, and he probably participated in Stephen’s death as more than simply an onlooker. He likely belonged to the synagogue faction that opposed Stephen (Acts 6:9; 9:11). Clothing was placed at his feet (7:58), possibly (though not certainly) suggesting his authority (4:35, 37; 5:1), and he quickly emerges as the movement’s leader (8:3).²⁰

c. Who Is Scattered? (8:1)

A major interpretive crux in this passage is what Luke means by “all” the Jerusalem church “except the apostles” (8:1). Few scholars take “all” literally, and most assume that the object of the persecution was the Hellenists.²¹ Luke tells us that the church had been divided (6:1), and the view that the Hellenists alone were persecuted is one common received opinion from F. C. Baur that has remained dominant today (despite rejection of the Tübingen hypothesis in most respects).²² As Marcel Simon puts it explicitly, “When Luke here speaks of the apostles, we are allowed to take it as meaning those following the line of the apostles, the apostolic

15. Most scholars acknowledge some conflict (e.g., Smith, *John*, 292). From Luke’s perspective, some leading aristocratic priests (Acts 22:4–5) are involved; I have argued earlier that this fits the portrait of their abuse of power in other early Jewish sources. The claim that the Pharisees joined (Mason, “Chief Priests,” 152) is not clear here (though probable in Acts 12:3).

16. Paul experiences this toward the beginning of his Gentile mission (Acts 13:50).

17. It must be addressed again here because a commentary must balance other considerations with textual arrangement, and 8:1b is inseparable from the following context.

18. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 180, is right to doubt that the term need imply official activity.

19. Contrast the positive usage for resisting Hellenism in 1 Macc 1:57; 2 Macc 11:24 or God’s failure to approve human sin (*Diogn.* 9.1).

20. Johnson, *Acts*, 141. Paul himself tells us that he advanced beyond his peers (Gal 1:14), which could allow for younger than usual leadership.

21. E.g., Koester, *Introduction*, 2:91; Dunn, *Baptism*, 67n47; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:265; Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 287; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 137, 403n711 (viewing Luke’s “all” as hyperbolic).

22. For summary, see Hill, *Hellenists*, 5–17 (who disagrees with the view).

group.”²³ It seems natural that the Hellenists would have targeted their fellow Hellenists who had caused them the trouble; certainly, they gave more trouble to Saul after his conversion (9:21) than to the Twelve. Supplemental support for this view might be that Paul claims to be unknown to the churches in Judea (Gal 1:22), which might make sense if he persecuted only the Hellenists who were scattered,²⁴ though one might make the same argument for anyone who was scattered.

But there are problems with this approach, although, in contrast with its most ardent critics, I do believe it likely that the Hellenists were probably a special (albeit not exclusive) target.²⁵ The largest problem is simply what Luke says; if only the Hellenists were scattered, saying “all the church” is an unusual way to specify this (especially if they remained a minority). This seems all the more problematic when we consider that Luke’s narrative focuses on the Hellenists. The second largest problem is that the view as generally formulated overemphasizes the theological difference between the Hebrews and the Hellenists in ways not explicit in the text, usually painting the former as loyal to the temple and the latter as disloyal.²⁶ Did Stephen actually oppose the temple in his Lukan speech, and if not, do we have reason to infer that Stephen historically did so in contrast to Luke’s portrayal?²⁷ And even if we conclude that this inference is reasonable, is it reasonable to further transfer what we infer from Stephen’s speech to all the Hellenists? Though Stephen’s opponents may have done so, they could have transferred it just as conveniently to all the disciples as to the Hellenists alone.

The text that is often used to support the Hellenists’ being particularly objectionable theologically specifies only the Hellenist named Stephen (Acts 6:11–14, which charges Luke counts false, in any case). Certainly Luke’s description of those scattered abroad fits Hellenists (Philip in 8:5–40; others in 11:19), but some others could have scattered in Judea (and probably Galilee) without warranting Luke’s attention.²⁸ Further, that some Christians in Jerusalem retained their property (12:12–13) need not suggest that they were allowed to stay because they were Hebrews. Barnabas was surely from the Diaspora (4:36), and because external evidence suggests his relation to John Mark’s family, which retained property in Jerusalem (12:12–13), this family might have also had Diaspora connections. Perhaps Mark’s mother retained property because of being converted later or perhaps Levitical connections or wealth protected her; but she was probably not allowed to remain simply by being a “Hebrew,” which we cannot be sure she was.

“All the church” is surely hyperbole, as often with Luke’s use of “all” (e.g., Luke 1:6; 2:1; 5:17; 6:17; 7:17; see esp. Acts 1:1 [contrast John 21:25]).²⁹ Not all Christians left, but large numbers did, and Luke specifies no single group. Certainly the Jerusalem church was increasingly nationalistic in Acts 11:3; 15:5 and especially

23. Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 28.

24. Dunn, *Acts*, 105.

25. Hill, *Hellenists*, 19–40, argues against the Hellenist thesis here (why would they scatter in Judea and Samaria?), though he also rejects the persecution (while allowing tensions); cf. Hill, “Division,” 133–38; Skarsaune, *Shadow*, 153; Witherington, *Acts*, 244 (less emphatically).

26. See, e.g., critiques in Esler, *Community*, 140; Bruce, *Peter*, 58.

27. Certainly, Stephen’s enemies in the narrative portray him as opposing the temple, and its guardians may have so construed his words in the narrative; but that is not the best way to read them in light of the rest of Luke’s theology, with which he does not present Stephen as clearly disagreeing.

28. First-century Palestine accepted a degree of Hellenism (Meyers, “Challenge,” though warning that maximum hellenization comes only in the third century), while remaining quite Jewish (Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 138), especially in matters not impinging on ideology (Goodman, *State*, 88, 175). A fairly hellenized Galilean town demanded that some refugees be circumcised (Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 172–73, noting Jos. *Life* 112–13).

29. Cf. also Bauckham, “James,” 429. Cf. discussion at Acts 18:2; Luke’s hyperbolic “all” in Acts 19:10.

by 21:20–24, thus participating in the trends of Jerusalem culture in general in this period.³⁰ But this does not mean that most “Hebrews” remained behind here or that the persecution that transpired this early was limited to the Hellenists (though they were probably its most vulnerable targets, as a cultural minority).

These reservations need not deny that Hellenists may well have been the primary target (in view of 6:9–11; 9:29); further, it is, surely, especially the Hellenists who continued into the Diaspora (11:19). Yet Luke’s wording here suggests that some Hebrews may have been affected as well. Probably Christians were persecuted as Christians for a season (until 9:31), and Hellenists, most of whom needed to go to urban centers where Greek was spoken, went farther (in contrast to Philip; see 11:19–20) and hence were less apt to return later than Hebrews were. Most Hellenists left, probably some “Hebrews” left as well, but many remained and many of the “Hebrews,” scattered in Judea, returned (9:31). Paul claims that Judeans drove believers from Judea (1 Thess 2:14–15), and he claims that he persecuted God’s church (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13).³¹

But why are the apostles explicitly excepted? Some scholars suggest that Saul avoids persecuting the apostles because of his teacher Gamaliel’s words in their favor in Acts 5:39;³² one could also claim respect for them as miracle-working holy men.³³ But ancients more often persecuted ringleaders *first*;³⁴ popularity was far more dangerous politically than obscurity.³⁵ More likely, the situation has simply changed since 5:39, and those wishing to persecute the church have gained the upper hand; large numbers of Christians fled, but the apostles remained and went “underground.” Luke does not claim that the apostles escaped persecution (cf. 4:3, 21; 5:18, 40; 12:2–4) but, rather, that they remained in Jerusalem. This contrasts with the next round of persecution (this one openly governmental), which forced some of the apostles out of Jerusalem (12:17) for a time (cf. 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4).³⁶

Luke undoubtedly has reasons for emphasizing that the apostles remained (other than employing them to symbolize the entire “Hebrew” faction). Perhaps Luke wishes to emphasize that they did not leave their posts; they were still contending for the soul of Jerusalem, from which they would presumably rule (Luke 22:30; cf. 1:52). This could present the mother community as retaining (or seeking to retain) its sphere of authority over the believers spreading in the Diaspora;³⁷ certainly some leaders had to remain there for Jerusalem to remain the church’s center (even in Acts 12:17). Luke may record this information also to underline the apostles’ courage (a respected ancient virtue). Conversely, Luke may also wish to emphasize that the expansion beyond Judea was accomplished first not by the apostles (who caught on later, 8:25; cf. 10:28) but by the bicultural precursors of the Diaspora church.

30. Cf. Judge, “Scholastic Community,” 13.

31. See also Witherington, *Acts*, 244. Dollar, *Exploration*, 134, sees “all” as emphatic.

32. Arlandson, *Women*, 182.

33. Witherington, *Acts*, 278n330.

34. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.40.3; 5.43.2.

35. E.g., Corn. Nep. 1 (Miltiades), 7.5–6; 2 (Themistocles), 8.1–7; 3 (Aristides), 1.1–5; 7 (Alcibiades), 4.1–2; Babr. 4.6–8; 31.23–24; 64.10–11; Phaedrus 1.21.1–2; 2.7.14–15; 3.5.1; 4.6.11–13. Prominence could generate envy, hence enmity, as in Corn. Nep. 5 (Cimon), 3.1; 8 (Thrasylbulus), 4.1–2; 12 (Chabrias), 3.3; 14 (Datames), 5.2; 15 (Epaminondas), 7.1; 18 (Eumenes), 7.2; 10.2; 19 (Phocion), 4.3; 23 (Hannibal), 1.2; Hdn. 3.2.3; Plut. *Demosth.* 26.5.

36. See Bauckham, “James,” 429; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 397. Luke 13:33 gives Luke a template for focusing on hostility in Jerusalem, though he does not invent it (Rom 15:31; 1 Thess 2:14–15).

37. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 384.

d. Economic Consequences (8:1)

The scattering would have had serious consequences for those who still held property in Jerusalem. Those who abandoned it may have lost it if anyone brought legal action against them and they failed to show up to answer the charges.³⁸ Confiscation of goods was a common penalty attending execution or other sentences of judgment.³⁹ Those condemned as criminals could also lose their property.

If the believers' enemies were satisfied with their flight, or if their identities were not matters of public knowledge to their enemies, presumably they could reclaim property on their return. Even some Judeans may have lost property at this time, increasing the Judean church's poverty (Acts 11:28–29; Rom 15:26–27). Hellenists who had already sold their property to meet the church's needs (Acts 2:44–45; 4:32) may have felt more freedom to disperse, though apparently some of these (4:37) also remained in (or soon returned to) Jerusalem (9:26–27) despite the risks.

e. Stephen's Burial and Mourning (8:2)

Proper burial is important even in Stephen's speech (7:16), but the primary literary allusion is probably to Jesus's burial.⁴⁰ As at Jesus's burial, there is mourning (Luke 23:27, 48); a good and righteous person secures the body (23:50–52) and burial follows (23:53–56). The courage of those who bury Stephen parallels that of Joseph of Arimathea in asking for Jesus's body (23:52).⁴¹ Helping a prisoner or otherwise identifying with a condemned person sometimes proved dangerous (see excursus)⁴² and certainly would have been for Joseph.⁴³ In addition to the parallel between pious people in both narratives burying an executed person, Luke might imply a contrast. These pious men (ἄνδρες) acted like Joseph and Jesus's *women* followers (23:55–24:1; cf. 23:27) but not like the Twelve during the passion narrative (though Luke is less explicit about the contrast than, e.g., Mark 14:50 or John 20:19). But Luke is not simply emphasizing the piety of (presumed) Hellenists at the expense of the Twelve. If Luke recalls here the failure of most of Jesus's male disciples after Jesus's execution, this recollection may also provide a fitting contrast for the Twelve now remaining in Jerusalem when others were fleeing (cf. Acts 8:1).

Who were the devout (εὐλαβεῖς) men who buried Stephen and mourned over him?⁴⁴ Some commentators think that they were pious Jews who did not belong to the Jesus movement, since disciples had fled (8:1).⁴⁵ This is possible; historically, most Jews insisted on proper burial (see the excursus below; esp. Tob 1:12–19; 2:1–8), and those who respected the Christians (Acts 5:13) may have even undertaken an honorable burial for Stephen with mourning (cf. Luke 23:27), especially if it was

38. Cf. the confiscation of property in Heb 10:34, though the Hellenist Christian audience of Hebrews was especially a formerly persecuted church in the Pauline (and perhaps Apollos's) sphere of ministry.

39. Tob 1:20; *Lysias Or.* 18.20, §151; 19.1, §152; 29.9, §182; *Cic. Fam.* 14.4.4; *Quinct.* 15.50–51; *Phil.* 11.6.15; *Rosc. Amer.* 2.6; *Sall. Catil.* 51.43; 52.14; *CPJ* 2:251–52, §445; 2:255–57, §448; *BGU* 5.16.51–5.17.52; *P.Oxy.* 513; *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 4.5.3; 4.15.6; *Appian Bell. civ.* 4.5.31; *Corn. Nep.* 7 (Alcibiades), 4.5 (cf. 6.5); 8 (Thrasylbulus), 1.5; 3.1; 10 (Dion), 7.1; *Dio Chrys. Or.* 5.4.4; *Plut. Sulla* 31.4; *Cic.* 33.1; *Pliny Ep.* 7.19.6; *Tac. Hist.* 2.84; *Suet. Jul.* 14; 17; 82.4; *Max. Tyre* 12.10; *Hdn.* 7.3.2; *Jos. Life* 370–71; *Heb* 10:34. Unofficially, cf. *Jos. Life* 370. This, naturally, applied to the goods of those who fled; cf., e.g., *Corn. Nep.* 23 (Hannibal), 7.7.

40. With Johnson, *Acts*, 141; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 87.

41. Luke, unlike Matthew and John (which are likely independent), does not explicitly identify Joseph as a disciple. Some thus read Acts 13:29 as applying to Sanhedrists who were not disciples, but see comments there.

42. See Rapske, *Custody*, 388–90.

43. See Keener, *Matthew*, 691, 694; *idem, John*, 1159–60.

44. Having "devout" mourners was important; as an extreme example, in Amoraic haggadah, Jacob insisted that no Gentiles carry his bier lest God's presence depart (*Gen. Rab.* 100:2).

45. Haenchen, *Acts*, 294; Dunn, *Acts*, 106; Witherington, *Acts*, 277.

believed that matters had gotten out of hand at Stephen's hearing and led to a lynching. Luke can apply the title εὐλαβεῖς to religious Jews who were not disciples (Acts 2:5),⁴⁶ and this would not be the only place where he would cite the approval of the people of Jerusalem (2:47). But Luke also uses the term for law-abiding worshipers of Jesus, whether before the passion (Luke 2:25) or afterward (Acts 22:12). Further, he clearly does not literally believe that only the Twelve remained (9:26–27), and the parallel with Joseph of Arimathea, on the one hand, and possibly with the young men who buried the transgressors in 5:6, 10, on the other, might suggest that believers are in view here.⁴⁷

In any case, the proposal that the apostles may not have helped because they disapproved of Stephen's activity (for the reason that he acted rashly in denouncing the temple)⁴⁸ is unlikely. Granted, they seem conspicuously absent at Jesus's burial (Luke 23:50–56)⁴⁹ and fail to pioneer the Samaritan or Gentile missions here (Acts 8:5–13, 26–40). But their first failure was before the resurrection and Pentecost; since then they have acted boldly (4:13; 5:20–21, 28–32, 41). Likewise, they do not specifically disdain Stephen's universal theology; although they do not pioneer the mission to the Samaritans, they quickly approve it (8:14–15) and join in it (8:25). Further, they did not participate in, but did approve, the burial of Ananias and Sapphira (without honor as it may have been; 5:6, 9–10). It was probably more dangerous for the apostles to emerge from hiding than for others (see comment on Acts 8:1).

Some scholars argue that the buriers' mourning for Stephen suggests that behind Luke's court scene lies only a lynching or a court scene that gave way to a lynching without legal approval.⁵⁰ Jewish tradition, at least as we know it from a later period, did not permit open mourning for those executed by approval of a Jewish court (see excursus below). Yet even had the Sanhedrin approved the act (which could at the least be *attributed* to a lynching), it might not have forbidden mourning; unduly severe repression risked a popular backlash and Pilate's consequent intervention. Luke may also report the involvement of these "devout" men to point out their courage in the face of potential danger (see the excursus below).

Excursus: Burial and Mourning Practices and Stephen's Death

1. Varied Burial Customs

Burial customs differed from one culture to another, though Mediterranean cultures shared much in common. Some ancient writers were aware of a diversity of customs among different peoples, even claiming that some peoples deliberately fed corpses to dogs or fish (Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.226–28). Scythians were thought to let bodies rot (Sil. It. 13.486–87). Lucian summarizes, "The Greek burns, the Persian buries, the

46. Cf. also some who argue this case for Joseph of Arimathea.

47. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 181. Munck, *Acts*, 70, provides evidence for both views.

48. Dunn, *Acts*, 106.

49. Though less explicitly so than in Mark (where it contrasts with Mark 6:29); the argument is not entirely from silence, however, resting on contrasts with participants.

50. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 87; Haenchen, *Acts*, 293–94; Hare, *Persecution*, 23; cf. Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 255.

Indian encases in glass, the Scythian eats, the Egyptian salts.”⁵¹ Philosophers often opined that what happened to the body after death was inconsequential.⁵² Most peoples in the ancient Mediterranean world, however, did insist on burial, whether of the corpse or of its ashes.

Some cremated the dead; the Germans were among those who followed this practice (Tac. *Germ.* 27). Earlier Greeks and others had long burned war heroes and other honorable persons.⁵³ Cremation remained the Roman custom from earlier times well into the second century C.E.⁵⁴ That Jews and Egyptians buried rather than burned corpses was distinctive enough to invite note (Tac. *Hist.* 5.5). Romans allegedly began cremating the dead when they learned that their war dead abroad had been dug up (Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.54.187). Romans widely employed cremation in this period; the Greek East, however, by this period mostly practiced inhumation.⁵⁵ (By 200 C.E., the Eastern custom, which Jews and Christians followed, had prevailed even in the West.)⁵⁶ In Roman ideology, cremation apparently released the soul to the heavens for a blissful afterlife.⁵⁷ Even the Romans, however, apparently accepted burial as incomplete until the cremated ashes were buried beneath earth.⁵⁸

2. Location of and Responsibility for Burials

Greeks by this period had long buried outside cities;⁵⁹ most commonly, plots of graves lined the roads near cities (making them accessible for memorials and sometimes for advertising a family’s status).⁶⁰

Those anticipating death did not leave to just anyone this task of supreme importance. Most often a son was responsible for burying his father.⁶¹ Disciples might well bury a teacher without sons.⁶² Usually the trust was merited, but sometimes it was misplaced; for example, Brutus’s freedman, entrusted with responsibility for burying him properly, allegedly stole his cloak (Val. Max. 5.1.11).

51. Lucian *Fun.* 21 (LCL, 4:127); Hdt. 3.24 attributes to Ethiopians the statement about glass, and this is also one of the burial methods attributed to them in Strabo 17.2.3.

52. E.g., Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 92.35; see the reported instructions for Diogenes’s corpse in Diog. Laert. 6.2.79; for Socrates’s in Socratics *Ep.* 14; for Menippus the Cynic, Lucian *Dial. D.* 375 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 12–13).

53. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 7.332–35, 409–10; 23.192–225; *Od.* 11.74; Soph. *El.* 757; Thucyd. 6.71.1; Philost. *Hrk.* 31.9; 1 Sam 31:12.

54. E.g., Varro *L.L.* 5.4.23; Terence *Andr.* 129–30; Tac. *Hist.* 2.45; Suet. *Jul.* 84.3; *Aug.* 100.3; Hdn. 3.15.7; Christ, “Consuming Bodies.” On inadvertently incomplete cremations, see Noy, “Half Burnt.” Pythagoras disallowed cremation because of the divinity of fire (Iambl. *V.P.* 28.154). The change apparently stemmed from fashion, not religion (see Nock, *Essays*, 277–307, esp. 306–7).

55. Morris, “Dead”; on Romans, also Kierdorf, “Burial,” 832–33. Sometimes Romans were cremated even in the Greek East (e.g., Hershkovitz, “Cremation”).

56. Klauck, *Context*, 73. For example, we lack evidence for cremation in Greek-period Corinth; but 43 percent of the Roman-period burials are cremations, and it ceased in the mid-second century C.E. (Thomas, “Dead,” 286). On the ancient Christian preference for burial, see also Jones, “Cremation,” 337–38.

57. Thomas, “Dead,” 288, 291, refusing to limit astral immortality to emperors (but was it for everyone?).

58. Dubourdieu, “Dead, Cult of,” 115, citing Cic. *Leg.* 2.56.

59. Burials were outside city walls (4 *Bar.* 7:13; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem*, 146).

60. See Morris, “Cemeteries”; Stambaugh, *City*, 194. For executions outside cities, see comment on Acts 7:58.

61. Tob 4:3–4; 6:15; 4 Macc 16:11; Demosth. *Aristog.* 54; Quint. *Decl.* 302 intro; 302.4. For sons as pallbearers, see Vell. Paterc. 1.11.7.

62. Mark 6:29 (cf. Luke 23:50–53); Iambl. *V.P.* 30.184; 35.252; Diog. Laert. 6.2.78. Likewise, freedmen might do so (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.1.565).

3. Burial Preparation

Jewish burial preparation normally included anointing and washing the corpse (*m. Šabb.* 23:5), then wrapping it in shrouds.⁶³ Judeans borrowed pagan models for sarcophagi and coffins but, unlike pagans, used only “geometric and occasional floral designs” to decorate them.⁶⁴ In this period they used ossuaries, boxes for bones fitted into slots in the walls.⁶⁵ Historically, we may presume that Stephen would have been buried in one of these.⁶⁶ Because ossuaries were not used in the Diaspora, Luke’s readers probably would not have visualized Stephen’s burial in this way; in the Diaspora, Jews used “underground tombs, or catacombs, depositing bodies in niches, sarcophagi and coffins.”⁶⁷ But if some of Stephen’s mourners belonged to the synagogue of *libertini* (Acts 6:9), and if, as is quite likely, the *libertini* were Roman citizens (see comment on Acts 6:9), their ancestors may have been familiar with analogous (albeit not identical) customs abroad.⁶⁸

Greek funerals included first the *πρόθεσις* (laying out the body), then the *ἐκφορά* (carrying the body to the tomb), and then either burial or cremation; afterward Greeks ate a funeral banquet.⁶⁹ We do not know the specific cultural background of the devout men who buried Stephen except that they must have been Jewish. If they were Hellenists, there may have been some Hellenistic influence, though we cannot be sure how much.⁷⁰

4. Honorable Burials

Honorable burials could demand great expense, and most ancients deemed the most honorable people worthy of the most lavish funerals.⁷¹ Naturally, philosophers

63. See Safrai, “Home,” 776–77 (citing, e.g., *m. Kil.* 9:4; *Ma’as. Š.* 5:12; *t. Ned.* 2:7; *Nid.* 9:17). Those caring for the corpse would also close its eyes as well as close all orifices to deter swelling (*m. Šabb.* 23:5; *Sem.* 1, esp. 1:4; Safrai, “Home,” 773). More fully on funerals, see Safrai, “Home,” 773–87.

64. McCane, “Burial Practices,” 174.

65. Cf. *m. Sanh.* 6:6; *m. Pesah.* 8:8; *Mo’ed Qat.* 1:5; Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 28. Later rabbis still recalled the earlier custom (*y. Mo’ed Qat.* 1:5, §§4–5). It is primarily first century c.e. (Hachlili, “Necropolis,” 239; idem, “Architecture,” 127; Hachlili and Killebrew, “Customs,” suggest a window perhaps as narrow as 10–70 c.e.). It is rare outside the Herodian and (irrelevant here) Chalcolithic periods (Silberman, “Ossuary”; Carmon, *Inscriptions*, 121); a major change occurred after the fall of Jerusalem (Goodenough, *Symbols*, 1:84–89; Safrai, “Home,” 780). But some evidence may suggest a less significant use for more than a century later (Goodenough, *Symbols*, 1:114; cf. Rahmani, “Customs”; idem, “Remarks”). For a possible contrast between ossuaries and Christian reliquaries, see McCane, “Bones”; for a broader sweep of archaeological data on Jewish burial customs, cf. Puech, “Nécropoles”; Goodenough, *Symbols*, 12:22–39.

66. Most Diaspora immigrants who settled in Jerusalem would have known local customs, and Luke does not specify the background of Stephen’s “devout” mourners, in any case.

67. McCane, “Burial Practices,” 174.

68. Palestinian Judaism in the Hasmonean period may have already borrowed the custom of ossuaries from Roman secondary burial (of ashes in urns or boxes; Levine, *Hellenism*, 67; McCane, “Burial Practices,” 174). For Jewish loculi in Rome, cf. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 59.

69. Smith, *Symposium*, 40 (following partly Garland, *Greek Way of Death*, 21–37). On Roman funerals, see, e.g., Shelton, *Romans*, 94–96.

70. Cf. possibly Lebram, “Literarische Form” (if the suggestions stand). Levison, “Character,” compares Roman characteristics of David’s mourning in Josephus (*Ant.* 7.1–7, 39–45, 154–56, 250–57); undoubtedly these reflect Josephus’s audience, but perhaps we should also allow for adaptations in Jewish practice of his day.

71. See Cic. *Fam.* 4.12.3; Suet. *Aug.* 100.2–4; Statius *Silv.* 2.1.157–62; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.24; Apul. *Metam.* 2.27; Philost. *Hrk.* 51.13; cf. Apul. *Metam.* 9.30; the rich in Polyb. 6.53; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.96.1; Hdn 4.2.2; 1 Macc 2:70; Jos. *Ant.* 9.166; 13.406; *Mart. Poly.* 17; a hero’s burial in the forum in Quint. *Decl.* 329 intro. It was counted a final way of showing love (e.g., Apoll. K. *Tyre* 26). For some Jewish ways of showing honor at burial, see, e.g., Tob 4:17; Jos. *Ant.* 9.166; *Gen. Rab.* 96:5. For funerals of the wealthy being “designed to impress” the populace, see Lintott, *Romans*, 153.

demurred;⁷² Josephus likewise claimed that although the law provided for burial of the dead, it did not demand expensive funerals or monuments (*Ag. Ap.* 2.205). States also provided special honors to those killed in war, because such rites offered an example for subsequent heroism.⁷³ A martyr's honorary burial could propagate the martyr's example, though clearly most disciples did not wish to share Stephen's fate if they could avoid it (*Acts* 8:1; 25:11).

Tombs were normally held inviolable.⁷⁴ Romans were concerned even about moving ancestral tombs, though they recognized that cultures varied on these matters.⁷⁵ Philosophers, however, argued that magnificent tombs proved worthless to the deceased (*Lucian Men.* 17). One philosopher, for example, insisted that dogs and birds be allowed to consume his corpse after death so that he could benefit something living (*Lucian Dem.* 66); the Athenians nevertheless lavished an honorable burial on him (*Dem.* 67).

5. Necessity of Burial

To be left unburied was thought to be horrible, whether for Jews⁷⁶ or for Gentiles,⁷⁷ and was to be avoided by whatever steps were necessary.⁷⁸ Burying one's own dead was among the most sacred of military obligations.⁷⁹ Consumption by birds or dogs was a terrifying fate;⁸⁰ unburied corpses were also thought susceptible to abuse by witches (*Lucan C.W.* 6.626). Many considered lack of burial worse than death itself (see, e.g., Euripides *Suppliants*). Thus Greeks told stories of ghosts beseeching burial of their corpses,⁸¹ without burial it was thought that they could not enter Hades.⁸² Roman households provided burial for their slaves,⁸³ and Rome allowed some associations so that the poor could be assured of decent burial after death.⁸⁴

72. E.g., Philodemus *Death* 30.7–17; 30.36–31.2; 31.5–9; *Iambl. V.P.* 27.122–23.

73. E.g., Xen. *Anab.* 4.2.23; *Lysias Or.* 2.66, §196.

74. E.g., *Diod. Sic.* 17.17.3; *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 8.24.6; 11.10.1; *Quint. Decl.* 299 intro; *Appian Hist. rom.* 8.12.89; *Callim. Aetia* 3.64; *Dio Chrys. Or.* 12.10; *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 1.24; *Hrk.* 53.23; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.58. See further comment on *Acts* 2:29.

75. *Pliny Ep.* 10.68–69.

76. E.g., *Jub.* 23:23; *Jos. War* 5.514; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:2, §2. The unthinkable case of Lazarus, whose destitution may have prevented burial despite Jewish custom (*Luke* 16:22), reveals a different view.

77. E.g., *Philost. Hrk.* 19.7; 21.6. Philosophers, of course, disagreed (*Epict. Diatr.* 4.7.31; *Socratic Ep.* 14).

78. E.g., *Diod. Sic.* 15.35.1.

79. *Quint. Curt.* 5.4.3; notable when impossible (e.g., *Tac. Ann.* 4.73). It is said that when their army proved negligent in burying their dead, the Athenians executed the generals (*Libanius Anecdote* 2.20).

80. E.g., *Hom. Il.* 22.42–43, 71–76, 335–39, 353; 23:21; 24:211, 411; *Od.* 21.363–64; 22.476; *Aeschylus Suppl.* 751–52, 801–2; *Soph. Antig.* 697; *Eurip. Phoen.* 1650; *Virg. Aen.* 9.485; *Lucan C.W.* 7.825–35; *Proclus Poet.* 6, Bk. 1, K152.2–4; 2 *Sam* 21:10; *Jos. Ant.* 6.187; 8.270, 289, 361, 407, 417; 9.124; 15.289; *War* 4.324; 5.526; 6.367; cf. also being eaten by fish (e.g., *Libanius Comparison* 4.14; see further comment at *Acts* 27:20). The fate was apparently common in war (*Philodemus Death* 33.21–22, dismissing its importance).

81. *Hom. Il.* 23.65–71; *Od.* 11.71–76; *Eurip. Hec.* 47–50.

82. *Hom. Il.* 23.71; *Virg. Aen.* 6.365–66; *Char. Chaer.* 4.1.3; cf. earlier Babylonian fears in Carpenter, "Deuteronomy," 492. Some other traditional societies fear vengeance from the spirits of those improperly buried (*Mbiti, Religions*, 109).

83. *Buckland, Slavery*, 74 (noting that "memorials to slaves are among the commonest surviving inscriptions").

84. E.g., *ILS* 7360a (from Rome); *Horsley, Documents*, 2:49–50, §14.2; *Cary and Haarhoff, Life*, 151–52; *Stambaugh and Balch, Environment*, 125. More recent studies suggest, however, "that this was a secondary function of associations" in this period (*Pearson, "Associations,"* 136); cf. *Rives, Religion*, 125, allowing both burial societies and other associations that included concern for members' deaths. The rich had extravagant burials (as noted above), whereas those of the poor were less adequate (*Libanius Invect.* 6.15) or worse (cf. *Luke* 16:22).

A number of stories could illustrate the importance of burial, but one example of its importance in Judaism is the account (in various versions) of Moses's burial. The Lord himself buried him⁸⁵ in a place that no one knew (Deut 34:6).⁸⁶ Some traditions eventually argued that the burial place God provided him was lavish, with precious stones and pearls;⁸⁷ some added that God also buried Aaron's body;⁸⁸ and some spoke of an argument between Michael and the devil over Moses's body (Jude 9). What is significant here is that although Moses could not enter the promised land, God showed his favor toward Moses by seeing to his burial. This underlines the importance of burial.

6. Refusal of Burial

Sometimes, however, people refused to allow their enemies burial, whether they were personal enemies⁸⁹ or those slain in battle.⁹⁰ One lurid report says that only after heads had rotted until unrecognizable were family members allowed to gather what relics they recognized (Lucan *C.W.* 2.166–68).⁹¹ Those with absolute power were apt to exercise it: when someone pleaded for a burial, Octavian answered mercifully, “The birds will soon settle that question.”⁹² Tiberius had his grandsons killed and their remains scattered (Suet. *Tib.* 54.2); he had others executed, then hurled into the Tiber (61.4), and yet others hurled into the sea (62.2). The wicked, Dio Chrysostom opines, lacked any right to burial (*Or.* 31.28), and he notes the custom denying it to traitors (31.85).

Normally lack of burial was deemed appropriate only for the most heinous sort of crime.⁹³ Greeks may have left murderers unburied (Sen. *E. Controv.* 8.4.intro.), and classical Athenians forbade burial in Attica of anyone banished for treason.⁹⁴ In one incident during the republic, the Romans were so angry that they reportedly had more than four thousand scourged, executed, and then left in the open to be eaten by animals (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 20.16.2).⁹⁵ Those executed in Rome's state prison

85. Hebrew *qal* third masculine singular, *pace* the more ambiguous translation in the NRSV; cf. *b. Soṭah* 13b (the wings of the Shekinah carried Moses). Later rabbis claimed that God took Moses directly because he had successfully repelled Gabriel and Samael (*Deut. Rab.* 11:10), probably transferring to Moses a story line used of Abraham in *Testament of Abraham*. Suiting his views about mediation of powers, Philo attributes the burial directly to angels (*Mos.* 2.291).

86. That no one knew the place is reiterated in *L.A.B.* 19:12; *Philo Sacr.* 9–10; that it was in Gad is suggested in *b. Soṭah* 13b. God's interest in funerary arrangements also applies to Adam in *Apoc. Mos.* 40:1–2.

87. *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Deut 33:21.

88. *Sipre Deut.* 305.3.2 (not specified in Num 20:28; Deut 10:6).

89. E.g., Soph. *Ajax* 1130–41; Quint. Curt. 7.2.32; Appian *Hist. rom.* 12.16.107; Philost. *Hrk.* 19.6–7. Cf. the advice to forbid funeral rites in Quint. Curt. 8.2.12.

90. Hom. *Il.* 17.126–27, 255, 272; Diod. Sic. 16.16.4. Achilles's anger toward Hector's corpse (Hom. *Il.* 22.395–405; 24.14–18, 21–22) was long remembered (Libanius *Speech in Character* 3.6; *Invect.* 1.19; 2.17; *Encomium* 3.20).

91. Disfiguring a corpse provided a posthumous addition to vengeance (e.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 2.8.1).

92. Suet. *Aug.* 13.2 (LCL, 1:139). An early king crucified the corpses of his enemies and let the birds consume them (Pliny *E. N.H.* 36.24.107); one punishment in Homer was the feeding of someone's raw genitals to the dogs (Hom. *Od.* 18.87).

93. Cf. Lysias *Or.* 19.7, §152; *Vit. Aes.* 132; Char. *Chaer.* 1.5.25.

94. Thucyd. 1.138.6. Cf. later rabbis insisting on “stoning” one who died under the ban (*m. Ed.* 5:6).

95. Cf. also Tiberius Gracchus (Val. Max. 1.4.2); some mutinied soldiers (Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.9.3); those who fled in battle (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.9.4); some disobedient soldiers (Val. Max. 2.7.15–16); a tyrant (Sen. *E. Controv.* 1.7.2; hypothetical; for tyrants' corpses being cast outside the city, see Quint. *Decl.* 274 intro; 274.7; cf. *Decl.* 329 intro); assassinated emperors (Hdn. 8.8.7); parricides (Quint. *Decl.* 299 intro; 299.4, 6); perhaps an adulterer (Quint. *Decl.* 379 intro, though the husband's act here does not preclude subsequent

were normally hurled onto the steps that led to the Capitoline, “then dragged to the Forum with large hooks and thrown into the Tiber river.”⁹⁶ Normally Romans let crucifixion victims rot on their crosses.⁹⁷ Sometimes God also executed judgment in this manner,⁹⁸ though the law forbade Israelites to do so (Deut 21:23; Jos. *Ant.* 4.264–65).

Apart from exceptional crimes of state, it was considered wicked to withhold a body from burial.⁹⁹ Letting his enemies’ corpses rot was attributed to Caesar’s impiety (Lucan *C.W.* 7.809–11). The Carthaginians refused to hand over the corpses of executed captives (Polyb. 1.81.2–3). Cicero alleged that wicked Verres charged parents money for the right to bury their children (*Verr.* 2.1.3.7). Withholding burial even for a wicked person could be considered impious (Appian *Hist. rom.* 12.9.60). Even more impious was a decree to kill anyone who was caught offering burial to those refused it (Philost. *Hrk.* 33.32). This scenario appears in a widely recounted story of antiquity. When the warrior Polynices was dying, he begged his mother and his sister to arrange his burial (Eurip. *Phoen.* 1447–50), but the Theban ruler Creon forbade the burial (*Phoen.* 1627–30) and even mourning (*Phoen.* 1631–34), wishing him to be eaten by dogs (*Phoen.* 1650). So impious was the action¹⁰⁰ that the Argives won Athens’s help in warring against Thebes to recover the bodies (Eurip. *Suppl. passim*).

Conversely, it was considered pious or honorable for a person with authority to grant burial to enemies.¹⁰¹ Normally one granted burial to one’s enemies in war.¹⁰² Roman law officially approved handing over bodies of the executed to relatives or others, with exceptions for some offenses.¹⁰³ Often burial was uninvited but overlooked; many abused Galba’s corpse until a former slave, without facing retribution, provided it a humble burial (Tac. *Hist.* 1.49). Some who would have cast out bodies unburied were restrained by fear of retribution (Suet. *Jul.* 82.4).

Jews did not believe in withholding burial for any circumstances (including the harshest conceivable condemnation of Stephen here); it contradicted their

burial); two evil people (*Apoll. K. Tyre* 50; novelistic, here with biblicalizing language); objects of mob retribution in Iambl. *V.P.* 35.252; or the Christian bishop Polycarp (*Mart. Pol.* 17.2).

96. Rapske, *Custody*, 14 (citing Ovid *Ars* 271–82; Pliny *E. N.H.* 8.145; Dio Cass. 58.1.3; 58.11.3–4; 59.18.3; 60.16.1; 61.35.4; Val. Max. 6.9.13). Those killed in other ways, e.g., Vitellius, could also be dragged and hurled into the Tiber (Suet. *Vit.* 17.2); earlier, see Vell. Patern. 2.6.7. For the exposure of corpses on the “stairs of wailing,” see Barry, “Exposure”; Cadoux, “*Carcer*.”

97. E.g., Petron. *Sat.* 112. Jesus’s case, in Judea, would have been different: Judean custom demanded the burial of the dead (see Deut 21:23; Jos. *War* 4.317; Safrai, “Home,” 774; cf. *m. Sanh.* 6:5; *t. Sanh.* 9:8; Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 311; idem, “Gospel and Rabbis,” 342), and Pilate would hardly capitulate to Jerusalem’s elite regarding Jesus’s execution and then antagonize them regarding his burial, which Roman officials sometimes granted anyway (e.g., Philo *Flacc.* 83–84; see Keener, *Matthew*, 693; Brown, *Death*, 1207–9).

98. 1 Kgs 14:13; 2 Kgs 9:10, 34–35; Ps 79:3; Isa 14:20; Jer 14:16; 19:11; 22:19; 1 En. 98:13; 2 Macc 13:7–8; *Sib. Or.* 3.643.

99. E.g., 2 Macc 4:49; Soph. *Ajax* 1326–69; Val. Max. 5.3.ext. 3c; Libanius *Topics* 4.15. Cf. the fate of some falsely accused and condemned (Diod. Sic. 18.67.6); an excessively harsh father who refused his daughter burial (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.21.8). It was also wicked to remove a tomb, especially of a godly person (Callim. *Aetia* 3.64; see comment on Acts 2:29).

100. By refusing to hand over the bodies, they were defying the laws of the gods (Eurip. *Suppl.* 19). Cf. also the observations in Gordon, *Civilizations*, 268.

101. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 7.79, 84, 409–10; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.14, 41; Val. Max. 5.1.11; 5.1.ext. 6. Cf. Solon’s prohibition of speaking ill of the dead (Plut. *Solon* 21.1); reverence for the dead was deemed virtuous (Men. *Rhet.* 1.3, 361.17–22; 363.15–17).

102. E.g., Livy 38.2.14; also Hannibal’s behavior (though selective) in Sil. It. 10.518–20; 12.473–78; cf. Paus. 1.32.5. Burial of one’s own dead and of allies was, of course, a duty (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.4.21; Diod. Sic. 20.84.3).

103. See thoroughly Brown, *Death*, 1207–8; also the data in Evans, *World*, 129–30. The tension between the codified emphasis on some laws (Ulpian and Paulus in *Dig.* 48.24) and the divergent earlier practice might, however, stem partly from Christian (hence ultimately Jewish) influence in later sources.

law (Deut 21:23; Jos. *Ant.* 4.265; Ag. *Ap.* 2.211).¹⁰⁴ They could, however, offer burials without honor for those felt to be dishonorable (2 Chr 24:25; Jos. *Ant.* 9.104; *b. Sanh.* 47b). Although Scripture reports only Achan's burning and stoning (Josh 7:25) and a sort of burial beneath stones, Josephus uses his night burial as an example of the ignominious burial appropriate for the wicked (*Ant.* 5.44); he also interprets the requirement for the burial of the wicked in Deut 21:23 as a dishonorable burial (Jos. *Ant.* 4.202). Later Jewish texts develop the theme of dishonorable burials; the corpses of those executed according to God's law should spend a year in a common burial plot, though clearly identified so that they could be reburied in a family tomb a year later (*m. Sanh.* 6:5–7).¹⁰⁵ That these devout men give Stephen an honorable burial with public mourning (on mourning, see comment below) is significant.

7. Mourning

For both Jews and Gentiles, mourning was normally of paramount importance.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, mourning customs differed from one place to another no less than burial customs themselves,¹⁰⁷ though some elements were widespread among Mediterranean cultures. Ancients wrote letters and poems of consolation, though speeches may be more relevant here, if any didactic element is.¹⁰⁸ Ancient sources associate a special form of encomiastic funeral oration especially with classical Athens,¹⁰⁹ but other ancients also provided eulogies,¹¹⁰ including Jews.¹¹¹ Romans had funeral orations;¹¹² likewise, a Roman orator could write something to honor a deceased person (Pliny *Ep.* 3.10); a rich father could have memoirs of his son publicly read (4.7.2). Such speeches continued well beyond the period treated here.¹¹³

We cannot say whether mourning at Stephen's death would have included any eulogizing outside of prayers, but if it did, it undoubtedly included praise of his

104. Although changing hanging after death to hanging until death, 11QT LXIV, 7–13a (=4Q254 14 2–4) remains insistent that the corpse should be buried rather than left hanging overnight (Evans, *World*, 120).

105. See discussion in Brown, *Death*, 1209–11; cf. Daube, "Gospel and Rabbis," 342; Bammel, "Trial," 444; Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 209. For reburial, see comment on ossuaries, above, on Acts 7:15–16. Tannaim insisted on burying even Gentiles (Crane, "Burying").

106. E.g., *Gen. Rab.* 100:4, 7; *Virg. Aen.* 11.148–50.

107. As ancients recognized, e.g., *Suet. Jul.* 84.5.

108. For mourning poems, see, e.g., *Catullus* 96.1–6; *Stattius Silvae* 2.1; 2.6; 3.3; 5.1 (though one for his own father has greater feeling, 5.3); for letters, see, e.g., *Cic. Att.* 13.20; *Fam.* 4.5; 5.16; *Sen. Y. Dial.* 1.4.5; 6; 11; 12; *Ep. Lucil.* 99.1; *Plut. Consol., Mor.* 608B–612B; *Apoll.*, 101F–122A; cf. *Dio Chrys. Or.* 30. On consolations as a genre, see Kierdorf, "Consolatio."

109. *Men. Rhet.* 2.11, 418.6–9; *Philost. Hrk.* 35.13; cf., e.g., *Thucyd.* 2.43.3; 2.44.1–4. See more fully *Men. Rhet.* 2.11, 418.5–422.4 (on the ultimate dominance of the encomiastic element, 418.14–32); *Loraux, Funeral Oration*; cf. *Dion. Hal. Epid.* 6 (§§277–83). For a brief description, see *Dobson and Hornblower, "Epitaphios."*

110. On eulogistic dirges, *Favez, Williams, and Scheid, "Nenia."* On the consolatory speech, see *Men. Rhet.* 2.9, 413.5–414.30; on the encomium for the deceased, see *Theon Progymn.* 9.4–5. Cf. the related Greek form *epicedion* (Russell, "Epicedion"). Funeral orations were one of the three main forms of epideictic rhetoric (*Aune, Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 145); *Dio Chrys. Or.* 29.2 emphasizes that the eulogy may be brief but should be from the heart.

111. At least hellenized ones and in a later period, e.g., *b. Šabb.* 153a; *Stern, Parables in Midrash*, 124. Some suggest that Athenian funeral-oration practice affected Hellenistic Jewish practice (*Lebram, "Literarische Form,"* on elements of eulogy in 4 Macc 3:19–18:24).

112. *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 5.17.3–4 finds it an especially Roman custom; cf. also *Plut. Caes.* 5.2; *Cam.* 8.3; on Roman funeral orations (in this period including lament, praise, and rhetoric), see *Schiesaro, "Laudatio funebris"; Kierdorf, "Laudatio funebris,"* esp. 298. For the public quality of most Roman textual depictions of mourning, see *Prescendi, "Deuil."*

113. See, e.g., *Nicolaus Progymn.* 8, "On Encomion and Invective," 47, in the fifth century c.e.

martyrdom.¹¹⁴ Mourning customs also typically included considerable display of emotion (such as is implied here).¹¹⁵ Pagans left offerings for deceased relatives,¹¹⁶ a custom known to (but of course not practiced by) educated Judeans (Jos. *Ant.* 19.272; *Jub.* 22:17).¹¹⁷

Palestinian Judaism required burial of the deceased on the day of death, but six days of intense mourning (for a total of seven [*shiva*], hence “sitting shivah”) followed,¹¹⁸ in which the bereaved family members would remain at home while others came to supply food and express sympathy.¹¹⁹ Such intense mourning for at least a week after death is common to various traditional cultures.¹²⁰ The arrival of more distant relatives might also offer special comfort to the closest relatives.¹²¹ Grief was shared within a community; anyone who passed a funeral procession was to join it and share its lamentation;¹²² visiting the bereaved was an important aspect of piety.¹²³

Because bodies decomposed rapidly, mourners had to gather quickly.¹²⁴ Women mourners¹²⁵ were hired to display grief as ostentatiously as possible,¹²⁶ and flutists normally accompanied them.¹²⁷ Later texts probably reflect the earlier view of many religious people in regarding at least two or three mourners (two flutists and one professional mourning woman) as mandatory for the funerals of the poorest person, though a well-to-do person would be able to afford more.¹²⁸ From an early period, mourners in various cultures often afflicted themselves by cutting or growing hair,¹²⁹

114. An easy death was one basis for praise (Theon *Progymn.* 9.19); by contrast, ancient martyr stories show the likely basis for praising Stephen if it was done.

115. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 22.77, 405–7; Aeschylus *Lib.* 22–31, 423–28; Men. *Rhet.* 2.9, 413.13–14; 2 Sam 15:30; 18:33; Ezra 10:1; Esth 4:3; Job 2:12; Ps 6:6; Lam 2:11. This is also true in many traditional cultures (cf., e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 200; Simfukwe, “Rites”), versus an unhealthy suppression of grief. One ancient proverb opined that a person experienced a personal death whenever he or she lost loved ones (Publ. Syr. 252); some ancients also believed that one could die from mourning too hard (*Jub.* 34:15).

116. Hom. *Il.* 23.175–76; *Od.* 10.536–37; 11.95–96, 153–54, 390; Thucyd. 2.34.2; Ap. *Rhod.* 2.922–26; Ovid *Metam.* 13.447–48; *Fasti* 2.533–54, 563–70; *Virg. Aen.* 10.517–20; *ILS* 4966 (Sherk, *Empire*, §177B, p. 234); *Plut. Rom. Q.* 86, *Mor.* 285A; *Arrian Alex.* 1.11.5; 2.5.9; *Suet. Calig.* 3.2; *Philost. Hrk.* 21.2; 31.8–9; 52.3; 53.4–5, 8, 12, 15, 23; *Vit. Apoll.* 4.11; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 30–31; cf. Klauck, *Context*, 68–80, esp. 61, 77; Johnston, “Dead, Cult of,” 113; Walbank, “Graves,” 257, 272–73; Thomas, “Dead,” 289–90; Fischer and Tal, “*Totenmahlrelief*”; Smith, *Symposium*, 41–42; Antonaccio, “Hero Cult”; Scurlock, “Ghosts.” For Germanicus (19–20 c.E.), Sherk, *Empire*, §36, pp. 63–72, cites *CIL* 6.911 (31199); *Tac. Ann.* 2.73, 82–3; 3.1–6.

117. On ancestor veneration in various traditional societies, see, e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 175, 197, 239–41, 271; for the relationship with kinship organization, see, e.g., Tatje and Hsu, “Variations”; Keesing, “Shrines”; Strauch, “Community,” 45; for kinship’s affecting religion more generally, see, e.g., Orenstein, “Death”; Pereira de Queiroz, “Myths,” 95–96. Such traditions often pose complications for new Christians (cf. Ro, *Alternatives*).

118. The custom is ancient (Sir 22:12; *Jdt* 16:24; Jos. *Ant.* 17.200; cf. *L.A.E.* 51:2; *Apoc. Mos.* 43:3), and the seven days were probably originally related to the isolation period of corpse uncleanness (Num 19:13–20; Jos. *Ant.* 3.262); cf. also seven days of Roman mourning (for the emperor, *Hdn.* 4.2.4; wealthy Romans kept the body for mourning seven days, Jeffers, *World*, 45). Later rabbis did not feel that the mourning period exempted one from most duties except *tefillin* (*b. Ber.* 11a), but popular custom may not have taken this into account.

119. E.g., Jeremias, *Theology*, 132; Sandmel, *Judaism*, 200–201. By the Amoraic period, rabbinic regulations were detailed (*b. Ketub.* 8b and sources in Sandmel, *Judaism*, 201); for reciting mourner’s blessings in the synagogue, see, e.g., *y. Mo’ed Qat.* 1:5, §5.

120. E.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 197.

121. E.g., *Jub.* 36:22. Near relatives mourned deeply (23:6).

122. Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.205; *Abot R. Nat.* 4 A; 8, §22 B; Safrai, “Home,” 778; contrast here the customs in Mbiti, *Religions*, 197.

123. E.g., Sir 7:34–35; *Sem.* 12; Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 151.

124. E.g., *b. Sanh.* 47a.

125. According to rabbis; Jos. *War* 3.437 includes male keeners.

126. E.g., Jos. *War* 2.6; *Ant.* 4.320; *b. Meg.* 3b; *Sanh.* 47a; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 15:4; *Lam. Rab.* proem 2; Safrai, “Home,” 778; cf. women’s lamentation in Hom. *Il.* 18.30–31, 50–51; 19.284–85.

127. Jos. *War* 3.437; *m. Ketub.* 4:4.

128. E.g., *m. Ketub.* 4:4. Having one to mourn was very important (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 100:4).

129. E.g., Job 1:20; Hom. *Il.* 16.844–50; see excursus at Acts 18:18.

wearing sackcloth,¹³⁰ pouring dust on their heads,¹³¹ or even cutting themselves.¹³² As presumably here (μέγαν), mourning could be loud.¹³³

In some cases, mourning—or, in more cases, excessive mourning—was discouraged. Some cultures were thought to avoid most mourning.¹³⁴ Some sought to restrain undue mourning for philosophic reasons.¹³⁵ Instead of encouraging mourning (generally considered psychologically healthier today)¹³⁶ Greco-Roman consolation stereotypically “comforted” a person by discouraging grief.¹³⁷ Do not lament losing the person as if the deceased person’s value to you were only temporary, Seneca the Younger urges (*Ep. Lucil.* 99.4); one should not complain about what is inevitable for all humans (99.7–8).¹³⁸ In his letter of consolation to Marcia, he urges another not to dwell on her departed son (*Dial.* 6.3.3–4); if nature bids sorrow, it must yet be tempered (6.7.1).¹³⁹ Far from bringing back the dead, grief simply brings the mourner closer to death (*Dial.* 11.4.1).¹⁴⁰ A philosopher urges his brother to act philosophically and grieve his wife less (*Philost. Ep. Apoll.* 55). Rhetoricians, too, adopted commonplaces about the uselessness of mourning.¹⁴¹

But although others drew on the language of consolations, not all sounded like Stoics.¹⁴² Mourners on a popular level might acknowledge the inevitability of grief

130. E.g., Baal and Anath g. I* AB (vi) (*ANET* 139); *Jos. Ant.* 2.38; 5.37; 7.40, 154, 327; 8.362, 385; 10.11; 11.221, 223, 256; 12.300; 16.204; 19.349; 20.123; *War* 2.237; *Gen* 37:34; 2 *Sam* 3:31; 2 *Kgs* 6:30; 19:1; *Pss.* *Sol.* 2:21; *Rev* 11:3; *Jos. Asen.* 10:14; *Test. Naph.* 6:8; *Test. Jos.* 15:2; *Asc. Is.* 2:10.

131. E.g., Baal and Anath g. I* AB (vi) (*ANET* 139); 1 *Sam* 4:12; 2 *Sam* 1:2; 15:32; *L.A.E.* C 36:1; see further discussion at *Acts* 22:23.

132. E.g., 1 *Kgs* 18:28; Kaiser, “Pantheon,” 27–28; forbidden in *Lev* 19:28.

133. E.g., *Philost. Hrk.* 35.13; cf. *Gen* 45:2.

134. *Val. Max.* 2.6.7d.

135. See Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 143 (citing, e.g., *Sen. Y. Ep. Lucil.* 99; *Ambrose Epistulae* 39).

136. Cf., e.g., Clinebell, *Care*, 227; Reeves, “Chaplain,” 362; Peretz, “Development,” 13.

137. See Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 142; on stereotyped letters of mourning, see also Lewis, *Life*, 80–81; on status considerations in some Roman examples, see Wilcox, “Rivals.” Thus Seneca notes that one who has encouraged others not to grieve should take one’s own advice (*Dial.* 1.4.5). See also, e.g., Eurip. *Melanippe* frg. 507; but contrast the common sort of sentiments expressed in some tragedies like Eurip. *Oenomaus* frg. 573; *Phrixus* frg. 834. Especially out of greater allegiance to the state, Romans might endure with fortitude the deaths of their sons; see, e.g., *Ovid Fasti* 4.845–48 (though cf. 849–52); *Val. Max.* 5.10.

138. Cf. *Epict. Enchir.* 14. Seneca does allow the expression of grief at the funeral (*Sen. Y. Ep. Lucil.* 99.15), so long as it is not indulged or prolonged (99.16, 26–27). The futility of mourning the inevitable was a commonplace (e.g., *Val. Max.* 2.6.7d; *Sen. Y. Dial.* 1.5.8; cf. *Soph. Ajax* 852; *El.* 1171–73; Eurip. frg. 908b; 1075; *Ino* frg. 418; *Hypsipyle* frg. 757.122–28/921–27); a widower might be told that others had also lost wives (*Eurip. Hippolytus* 834–35; cf. *Pesiq. Rab.* 30:1).

139. It is not nature, he warns, that grief would overwhelm us (6.7.3). Seneca also composed letters of consolation to one Polybius (*Dial.* 11) and, when he was banished unjustly for a time, to his own mother Helvia (*Dial.* 12).

140. In a pseudepigraphic Cynic epistle, Aeschines discourages Socrates’s wife from grieving for him, warning that this would be bad for the children (*Socratic Ep.* 21).

141. Rhetoricians might contend that even the deceased would discourage such mourning (*Men. Rhet.* 2.9, 414.21–23). Theon noted that consolation was one important use of rhetoric (*Progymn.* 8.53), but suggested that rational people were less likely to grieve about what could not be helped (8.55). Cf. also the Jewish philosophic tract *Let. Aris.* 268: reason does not prescribe grief for the dead (cf. *Hadas, Aristees*, 204–5, noting the consolatory commonplace).

142. See, e.g., *Greek Anth.* 7.340; *Plut. Consol., Mor.* 608B–612B (treated in Baltussen, “Grief”), though even here grief must be kept within limits (*Consol.* 2, *Mor.* 608C) and his wife’s refraining from public mourning was good (4, *Mor.* 608F–609A). His condolence letter to Apollonius abounds with stock motifs; thus he includes the example of Pericles, who very wisely refused to mourn his sons (*Apoll.* 33, *Mor.* 118E). Cicero notes that the theme that everyone experiences loss is a consolatory commonplace (*Fam.* 5.16.2) but counters that those without children are better off in the current times of suffering (5.16.3). But while Cicero rhetorically suggests that men should be less prone to grief than women (*Fam.* 5.16.6), he cannot resist it when his own daughter dies (*Att.* 12.38) and cannot understand how people can expect him not to grieve (12.40). Another, who confesses his own grief for her death (4.5.1), urges him to recognize that she has escaped from

and death, yet mourn nonetheless.¹⁴³ Thus Quintilian grieves greatly over his deceased son (*Inst.* 6.pref.). Likewise, Pliny the Younger, annoyed with philosophers' reduction of human mourning to mere economic calculations, questions their humanity (*Ep.* 8.16.3): "A true man," he insisted, "is affected by grief and has feelings, though he may fight them" (8.16.4).¹⁴⁴ Noting that another was consumed by grief (5.16.8), Pliny asked who could blame him (5.16.9), and warned, "If then you write anything to him . . . be careful not to offer any crude form of consolation which might suggest reproof; be gentle and sympathetic" (5.16.10).¹⁴⁵ A consolatory poem urges the bereaved to weep as much as he needs to (Stattius *Silvae* 2.6.12–14).¹⁴⁶ Others in ordinary life sometimes found themselves paralyzed with grief (Symm. *Ep.* 1.54, 83, 101).

Time and gender mattered. An Athenian λόγος ἐπιτάφιος, or encomiastic funeral oration, was to include consolation only if the death was more recent than eight months (Men. *Rhet.* 2.11, 419.2–10). Romans limited to a year the period of mourning by women¹⁴⁷ and considered men's mourning dishonorable (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 63.13).¹⁴⁸ Many men regarded mourning as especially womanly business, so that one ancient people (the Lycians) allegedly even wore women's clothes when mourning (to urge the men to finish quickly).¹⁴⁹ Women traditionally beat their breasts¹⁵⁰ or tore out their hair;¹⁵¹ Josephus was aware of the tradition (*Ant.* 4.320).¹⁵² That mourning was especially (though not exclusively) associated with women¹⁵³ makes its association with men in Acts 8:2 all the more emphatic.

Like Greeks and Romans but probably more consistently, Jewish customs affirmed mourning (cf., e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 13.406). The most intense period of mourning was to be the first week (Sir 22:12; Jdt 16:24).¹⁵⁴ At least according to later practices (which probably had not changed substantially), mourners would rend their garments (*Sem.*

the present evil times (*Fam.* 4.5.2–3), noting that time would heal him, but using wisdom can heal him faster (4.5.6). Cicero takes comfort in these words (4.6.1). Others, however, looked to philosophers for comfort about death's meaning (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 27.9).

143. E.g., *Greek Anth.* 7.339, 389.

144. He does console himself that a great person, though deceased, lives on (*Ep.* 2.1.10–11). Consolers often drew on the portrayal of death as sleep (Plut. *Apoll.* 12, *Mor.* 107DE), or on other notions of immortality (Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 58). Jews with the hope of resurrection might carry this idea further (*Test. Zeb.* 10:1–2; 1 Thess 4:13).

145. A "raw wound," he noted, is not ready for firmness (5.16.10).

146. Likewise, Stattius urges one Melior to go ahead and grieve (2.1.14–15).

147. Greek women normally offered libations for a year (Johnston, "Dead, Cult of," 113, citing Aeschylus *Lib.* 84–164; Soph. *El.* 894–95).

148. Women, Seneca opined, were more deeply wounded by bereavement than were men, just as savages were more wounded by it than civilized persons (Sen. *Y. Dial.* 6.7.3; he is less sexist in 6.16.1). Thus when a man indulged grief, Seneca rebuked him for acting like a woman (*Ep. Lucil.* 99.1–2). Philostratus praises a father who simply lamented his son in three sentences, avoiding "womanish" lamentation (*Vit. soph.* 2.16.597).

149. Val. Max. 2.6.13; the LCL note cites also Plut. *Mor.* 1.13A. Among Germans, lamentation was mostly restricted to women (Tac. *Germ.* 27). Women also dominate mourning in more recent Mediterranean culture (see Pizzuto-Pomaco, "Shame," 51–53). Stoics, however, might seek to reduce even women's mourning (Mus. *Ruf.* 3, p. 40.21–22), because grief was a negative emotion (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.10c, pp. 62–63.3–4).

150. Hom. *Il.* 18.30–31, 50–51; 19.284–85; Menander *Dyskolos* 674; Lucian *Fun.* 12, 19; Philost. *Hrk.* 51.7. For beating the face, see Lucian *Lucius* 14.

151. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 22.405–7 (though also a man in 22.77); Menander *Dyskolos* 673–74; Lucian *Fun.* 12, 16; Philo *Jos.* 16.

152. For tearing clothes, see, e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 46.12; Jos. *Ant.* 2.134; comment on Acts 14:14; dust on the head, see, e.g., Hom. *Od.* 24.316–17; 3 Macc 1:18; comment on Acts 22:23.

153. See, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 4.320 (Israelite society); Hom. *Il.* 18.30–31, 50–51; 19.284–85; Soph. *Ajax* 580; Eurip. *Herc. fur.* 536; Menander *Aspis* 228; Thucyd. 2.34.4; Cic. *Fam.* 5.16.6; Diod. Sic. 17.37.3; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.67.2; 8.39.1; Livy 26.9.7; Val. Max. 2.6.13; see comment on Acts 9:39.

154. See further Sir 38:16–17; *L.A.E.* 51:2; *Apoc. Mos.* 43:3.

9), “assign someone to attend the corpse continuously” (*t. Šabb.* 17:19), and light candles “at the head or feet of the corpse out of respect” (*m. Ber.* 8:6).¹⁵⁵

8. Prohibited Mourning

Given this emphasis, the prohibition of mourning might seem unthinkable,¹⁵⁶ but it does appear. Tiberius, for example, forbade relatives to mourn for his victims.¹⁵⁷ Even relatives sometimes refused to grieve when those destroyed were the wicked (*Jos. Ant.* 4.53).¹⁵⁸ As noted above, some officials refused burial and consequently public lamentation, but although Jewish people insisted on burial even for the dishonorable, at least later Mishnaic regulations prohibited public mourning for one executed under biblical law (*m. Sanh.* 6:6).¹⁵⁹

Ancients often viewed as heroes those who dared violate prohibitions of burial or mourning. This makes sense in a world where burying others was such an act of piety. Plutarch viewed as noble a victor in battle prepared to relinquish the honor of victory rather than abandon the bodies of two fallen comrades (*Plut. Nic.* 6.5–6).¹⁶⁰ Burying bodies one came across was a good deed for both Gentiles¹⁶¹ and Jews.¹⁶² Later rabbis taught that failure to provide honorable burial and eulogy for a righteous person invited judgment on a land (*y. Yoma* 1:1, §6).

When such acts challenged the will of those in power, they could be costly and demanded great courage.¹⁶³ Those whom Tobit found dead he buried (*Tob* 1:17–18); although this cost him the confiscation of his goods (1:19–20), he continued burying them (2:7–10). A woman who privately buried and lamented an enemy of a ruler (*Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 4.40.5) herself died under allegedly suspicious circumstances the next night (4.40.6). Most Greeks knew the story of Antigone’s burial of the dead in defiance of Creon’s decree.¹⁶⁴ Those who buried Stephen would not have risked the wrath of Jewish authorities, who would not have prohibited burial; by publicly lamenting him, however, they expressed great personal courage. Their act would be seen as an act of defiance against those who killed him (whether authorities or vigilantes).

This insistence on burying the dead, whether at small or at great cost, extended especially to those who were highly esteemed. A much later text even claimed that all who mourned righteous Judah ha-Nasi had a share in the world to come.¹⁶⁵ Burial was an essential sign of affection for loved ones (e.g., *Gen* 23), a necessary familial obligation

155. Safrai, “Home,” 774. In some sources, mourners’ blessings would be recited in the synagogue (*y. Mo’ed Qat.* 1:5, §5). Nevertheless, the philosophically inclined urged mourners to leave grief at the tomb, in view of death’s inevitability (*Syr. Men. Sent.* 463–69).

156. It appears as needlessly cruel in *Cic. Pis.* 8.18 (who speaks of the cruelty of forbidding mourning to those one had forced to mourn).

157. *Suet. Tib.* 61.2; cf. *Tac. Ann.* 6.10 (executing an old woman mourning her son’s death); the punishment in *Tac. Ann.* 12.47.

158. Cf. *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 3.21.8. Later, cf. instructions to Muhammad not to mourn the wicked (*Qur’an* 9.84).

159. Most commentators cite this passage (e.g., Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:686; Haenchen, *Acts*, 293–94; Bruce, *Acts*, 182; idem, *Commentary*, 174).

160. Retrieving bones for burial even from a much earlier battle was a way of recouping group honor (*Dio Cass.* 57.18.1).

161. *Alciph. Fish.* 10 (Cephalus to Pontius), 1.10, ¶4; *Hermog. Issues* 49.15–19; *Libanius Narration* 13.

162. *Ps.-Phoc.* 99 (Hellenistic Jewish); *Tg. Ps.-J.* on *Exod* 18:20; after battle, 1QM VII, 2. Digging up the dead was impious (*Ps.-Phoc.* 100–101), and if one uncovered corpses accidentally, one should cover them again immediately (*Philost. Hrk.* 8.10).

163. Cf. the courage attributed to Ajax in burying Palamedes in *Philost. Hrk.* 33.32–33.

164. *Soph. Antig.* passim; also *Aeschylus Seven*, esp. 1011–47; *Eurip. Suppliants*; *Apollod. Bib.* 3.7.1; the story was echoed later, e.g., *Demosth. Epitaph.* 8; *Libanius Narration* 9; 10.1.

165. *Ecl. Rab.* 7:12, §1; 9:10, §3. Cf. the mourning of all Israel for righteous Mattathias (1 *Macc* 2:70).

(*Test. Job* 39:10 [OTP]/7 [Kraft]). To honor his parents,¹⁶⁶ Tobias had to bury them after their death, regardless of the danger this might entail for him (Tob 4:3–4). Because many were being denied burial, he feared that his own death would precipitate his parents' death from grief, since they had no other son to bury them (6:14).¹⁶⁷ In classical Athens, childless people would adopt sons to have someone to bury them and perform annual rites in their memory (Isaeus *Menec.* 10, 25, 46). Failure to attend to such duties was despicable for a son by birth (e.g., Demosth. *Aristog.* 54) or by adoption (Isaeus *Nicost.* 19) and could call an adoption into question (Isaeus *Astyph.* 4, 7).

9. Who Buried Stephen?

In Stephen's case, those who buried him appear not to be members of his family, unless (if these are Christians) they are members of his *Christian* family (cf. Acts 5:6, 11). Against Diogenes the Cynic, most people believed it important to have someone left behind (even a servant) to provide burial (Diog. Laert. 6.2.52).¹⁶⁸ Disciples often filled this role for teachers, as John the Baptist's did (Mark 6:29). Pythagoras, though a famous teacher in his own right, was said to have traveled to care for his aged teacher, staying with him until his death in order to bury him (Iambl. *V.P.* 30.184; 35.252). Diogenes's disciples fought over the privilege of burying him (Diog. Laert. 6.2.78). Assuming that Stephen may have been too recent a teacher to have accumulated disciples, if the Christian movement even retained this model (Matt 23:7–8; though cf. Saul in Acts 9:25), the pious who buried him may have been any who respected his ministry.

f. Saul's Persecution (8:3)

Just as the disciples had been meeting from house to house (2:46; 5:42), now Saul persecuted them from house to house. Because homes were viewed as private, their violation was more grievous than public arrests; because the domestic sphere was associated especially with women,¹⁶⁹ the mention of this outrage leads naturally to the next one.

Women were less often punished than men, though a number of individual women were.¹⁷⁰ Roman law tended to treat women less harshly than men.¹⁷¹ Indeed, when

166. Many Jewish people regarded this as the supreme commandment (*Let. Aris.* 228; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.206; *Ps.-Phoc.* 8; Moore, *Judaism*, 2:132); see further Keener, "Family," 354–56. For the expectation that sons would bury their fathers, see also Tob 4:3–4; 6:14; 1 Macc 2:70; 4 Macc 16:11; Matt 8:21–22 (and comment in Keener, *Matthew*, 275–76; cf. *Test. Job* 39:10/7; Demosth. *Aristog.* 54).

167. On the depth of this tragedy from the ancient perspective, see also Lysias *Or.* 13.45, §§133–34. Ovid lamented the prospect of dying in a distant land and hence unmourned (*Tristia* 3.3.45–46).

168. Lacking surviving children, Herodes left instructions for his freedmen to bury him, but the entire city came to honor him (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.1.565).

169. *Mus. Ruf.* 3, p. 40.10; 1 Tim 5:14; Winter, *Wives*, 160; cf. earlier Hom. *Od.* 1.356–61; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 10.28.3; Val. Max. 6.3.12; Wagner-Hasel, "Roles: Greece," 741; Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 104, §107. These distinctions were not absolute, however, and Palestinian Jews did not restrict women to the domestic sphere as classical Athenians, at least ideally, recommended (Keener, "Head Coverings," 443; idem, *Paul*, 22–24). Entering homes with women (who are explicitly mentioned here) could be scandalous, but given Saul's zeal for the law, we may assume that he ensured that women were prepared before he and others entered private places.

170. Val. Max. 5.4.7 (cited in Rapske, *Custody*, 247); 9.2.1; Polyb. 5.56.15 (mob action); Quint. Curt. 8.3.15 (light compared with 7.5.40); Plut. *Alex.* 12.1–3 (contrast 11.6); 21.1–3; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.267 (on Athenian execution of women); Ovid *Metam.* 13.497 (among captives; cf. Polyb. 5.111.6, in a camp). The rabbis allow women's execution in theory (e.g., *m. Sanh.* 6:3–4; *Arak.* 1:4; for witchcraft, *b. Sanh.* 67a), but a single incident proved so noteworthy that it recurs, in legendary form, in many later texts (e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 221.1.1; *y. Sanh.* 6:6, §2). Reported capital charges for women most often concerned adultery (Ilan, *Women*, 159–62). Women relatives were allowed to visit a man in prison (Lysias *Or.* 13.39–40, §133).

171. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 17, 56. Against some studies, Jewish burials seem to have treated both genders equally (Nagar and Torgeë, "Characteristics").

some were executing a tyrant's widow (Jos. *Ant.* 19.190, 193–94), others tried to intercede for her (19.192, 194). This is not to deny exceptions; women were sometimes killed in war,¹⁷² imprisoned,¹⁷³ executed for capital crimes¹⁷⁴ (even occasionally by crucifixion),¹⁷⁵ killed for their husbands' rebellion,¹⁷⁶ or, in an exceptional circumstance, stoned as individuals by mobs of other women.¹⁷⁷ Though Polybius occasionally mentions such women casualties, he complains about historians who overemphasized women's sufferings to stir pathos (Polyb. 2.56.7–8). Tradition claims that Peter's wife was active enough in ministry to be martyred (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 7.3; cf. 3.6).¹⁷⁸ Men were far more often the targets; thus Sulla was so wicked that "he drew swords even against women, as though the slaughter of men was not enough for him" (Val. Max. 9.2.1 [LCL, 2:309]).

In view of the rest of Luke-Acts, however (cf. esp. Luke 23:55–24:11), this passage probably emphasizes not only Saul's savage hostility to the disciples but also the women disciples' courage and faithfulness.¹⁷⁹ Philosophers often held women capable of the same virtues as men (though in different ways), including courage (Mus. Ruf. 4, p. 48.8),¹⁸⁰ though courage and endurance were considered characteristically masculine virtues;¹⁸¹ as a rule, timidity was more apt to be associated with the stereotype of femininity, and femininity with male cowardice, weakness, or luxury.¹⁸² (At the very least, the etymology for the pervasive virtue ἀνδρεία, "courage," would likely stir mental associations with masculinity.¹⁸³ Plutarch's essay on women's bravery avoids

172. E.g., Polyb. 5.111 (in a camp).

173. Until Constantine's reforms, often with men, predictably often leading to their sexual abuse (Rapske, *Custody*, 279–80, citing numerous texts, most notably *b. Ta'an. 22a*).

174. E.g., Val. Max. 2.5.3; 5.4.7 (for the latter, Rapske, *Custody*, 247; cf. 280).

175. See Ford, "Crucifixion"; in a novel, Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 4.4.

176. Jos. *War* 1.97 (Alexander Jannaeus allegedly having the throats of the wives and children of eight hundred rebel leaders slit as the latter were dying on crosses).

177. Polyb. 5.56.15.

178. Liefeld, "Preacher," 239.

179. See discussion of views concerning Luke and gender in Keener, *Acts*, 1:597–638. Cf. O'Day, "Acts," 307: Saul apparently considered "female Christians . . . as dangerous as male" ones.

180. This was especially applicable to women trained in philosophy (Mus. Ruf. 3, p. 40.33–35). This question is argued both ways by Theon *Progymn.* 10.57–59, 62–65.

181. E.g., Eurip. *Cycl.* 595; *Alc.* 957; *Lysias Or.* 2.25, §193; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.11.2; Polyb. 3.108.5; 38.12.9; Cic. *Fam.* 5.18.1; Val. Max. 3.2.12; 3.8.ext. 3; Mus. Ruf. 9, p. 70.11–12, 24–25; Dio Cass. 58.4.6; Char. *Chaer.* 7.1.8; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.38; *Hrk.* 35.3; cf. Diog. Laert. 6.2.33, 43. This was true even when a woman exhibited this characteristic (Apul. *Metam.* 5.22); it was applicable to the Amazons (Apollod. *Bib.* 2.5.9; Diod. Sic. 17.77.1), on whom see comment on Acts 8:27 (though *Lysias Or.* 2.5, §§190–91, charges that the Athenians made even Amazons behave according to the weakness of their gender!). War was normally masculine activity (Eurip. *Heracl.* 711), and less "courage" was expected of women than men (Arist. *Pol.* 3.2.10, 1277b).

182. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 8.163; 11.389; 16.7–8; Aeschylus *Prom.* 79; *Suppl.* 951–52; Aristoph. *Lys.* 98; Aeschines *Embassy* 148, 167; Xen. *Lac.* 11.3; Polyb. 6.37.10–13; 30.18.5–6; 32.15.7, 9; 36.15.1–2; 38.12.9; Diod. Sic. 12.16.1; 32.10.9; 34/35.2.22; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 9.7.2; 10.28.3; Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.31.81; *Mil.* 21.55; *Fam.* 5.16.6; 16.27.1; Virg. *Aen.* 9.617; 12.52–53; Val. Max. 2.7.9; 3.3.ext. 4; 3.7.ext. 8; 9.1.ext. 1, 7; 9.13.praef.; Sen. E. *Controv.* 1.praef. 8–10; Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 70.6; 78.17; 96.4; 99.1–2; 114.3, 8; Mus. Ruf. 21, p. 128.33–35; Sil. It. 1.445; 9.263; 13.313; Plut. *Alex.* 47.1; *Demosth.* 29.4; Cic. 7.5; 19.5; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.34, 70; 62.5–6; 70.2; Lucian *Anach.* 25; *Nigr.* 18; *Fisherman* 31; Aul. Gel. 3.1; 17.21.33; Max. Tyre 19.4; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.16.597; *Vit. Apoll.* 1.21; *Hrk.* 23.19; 45.8; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.46; cf. Lucian *Dial. D.* 414 (6/20, Menippus and Aeneas 2).

183. Explicit in Plato *Cratyl.* 413E–414A; cf. "be manly" in Hom. *Il.* 15.661, 734. For this virtue, see, e.g., Diod. Sic. 17.45.6; 40.3.6; Arist. *E.E.* 3.1.2–4, 1228a–1228b; Mus. Ruf. 9, p. 74.5–7; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5b.2, pp. 14.16–16.11; 2.7.5b.1, pp. 12–13.21–22; 2.7.5b.5, pp. 18–19.32–34; Theon *Progymn.* 9.22; Lucian *Par.* 54; Crates *Ep.* 19; Men. *Rhet.* 1.3, 364.17–20; 2.1–2, 369.31–32 (Gauls and Paionians); 372.30–31; Hdn. 8.3.5; Philost. *Hrk.* 21.6; 34.6; Wis 8:7; for texts listing all four traditional virtues (including courage), see comment on Acts 26:25. Roman boys, though born male, had to achieve manhood and valor (Barton, *Honor*, 38–39). The LXX also uses ἀνδρῖνον in exhortations to valor (Deut 31:6, 7, 23; Josh 1:6–9, 18; 10:25; 2 Sam 10:12; 1 Chr 19:13; 22:13; 28:20; 2 Chr 32:7; cf. 1 Macc 2:64), though the verb could also refer to machismo in a negative sense (Sir 31:25 [LXX; some versions, 34:25]).

the term, though Musonius readily applies it to women.)¹⁸⁴ Thus, after twelve years of peace, the Roman senate planned a war to keep their citizens from becoming too effeminate.¹⁸⁵

Ancients praised women who achieved this virtue, all the more because it was not expected of them.¹⁸⁶ We should honor courage, opines Diodorus of Sicily, “even when it is women who display it.”¹⁸⁷ Thus, fearing lest her “female nature” betray her under torture, the wife of a Pythagorean philosopher bravely bit off her tongue and spat it at her persecutors (Iambl. *V.P.* 31.194).¹⁸⁸ The martyr mother in 4 Maccabees proves as “masculine” as the men in the story.¹⁸⁹ A brave woman might prove not to be “womanish.”¹⁹⁰ Men counted it shameful to be beaten by a woman,¹⁹¹ and a woman’s valor would provoke men to display their own.¹⁹² Even though ancients characterized such women as exceptions, they did have to acknowledge the value of courageous women who surmounted the expectations of their culture.¹⁹³ As in reports about early Pythagoreans, Christians seem to have been among the groups that cultivated this commitment among women.

The term used to describe Saul’s persecuting activity, *λυμάνιωμα* (“ravage”), was a strong term that could apply to torture, military devastation, or outrages;¹⁹⁴ it could vividly designate mistreatment, including of Jews.¹⁹⁵ Jewish people understood the reality of persecution, having suffered it from the Ptolemies, Seleucids, and Romans.¹⁹⁶ Whereas Western culture might think of solving the problem of persecution by abolishing the practice for everyone, repressed minorities in history have often internalized the practice of repression and applied it to others when they achieved power (cf. many Christians after Constantine). Jews had experienced persecution from others but also persecuted other Jews.¹⁹⁷ Just as “the Wicked Priest” persecuted the Qumran sect,¹⁹⁸ so “Paul seems to have regarded the early community as a separatist group which must be eliminated.”¹⁹⁹

184. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 4, p. 44.23–35 (see esp. comments by Lutz). Similarly others, including with the Latin equivalent (e.g., Val. Max. 4.6.5, *virilem*; 6.1.1, *virilis*).

185. Polyb. 32.13.6–7.

186. E.g., Xen. *Symp.* 2.12; Diod. Sic. 32.10.9; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.82.3; Ovid *Fasti* 2.847; Livy 2.13.6; Val. Max. 3.2.2, 15; 3.2.ext. 8–9; 4.6.5; 5.4.6; 6.1.1; 8.3.1, 3; Appian *Hist. rom.* 7.5.29; Mus. Ruf. 4, p. 44.25; Plut. *Br. Wom., Mor.* 242E–263C; Pliny *Ep.* 7.19.7; Heliod. *Eth.* 4.21 (though here they remain physically weak); cf. Ap. Rhod. 1.770–73. Juvenal’s misogynist perspective ridicules women for competing with men in strength (*Sat.* 6.246–67).

187. Diod. Sic. 10.24.2. Likewise, “even” women help the enemy soldiers in Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.92.6.

188. Plutarch collects many stories of women’s bravery (*Bravery of Women*), but again, these are regarded as (praiseworthy) exceptions, not the norm.

189. Or more so, Moore and Anderson, “Masculinity”; see 4 Macc 15:23, 30; 16:5, 14; cf. likewise 2 Macc 7:21.

190. Val. Max. 3.2.15.

191. Virg. *Aen.* 11.734.

192. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.82.3.

193. That culture was involved should have been evident, since women’s courage was equivalent to men’s among Gauls (Diod. Sic. 5.32.2). That the Amazons reportedly had to maim their male children to keep them from acting manly (Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.217) suggests that even those emphasizing the cultural aspects of gender (e.g., Sextus Empiricus) attached biological significance to it.

194. See Knowling, “Acts,” 210.

195. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 61, cites Claudius’s decree.

196. Kruse, “Persecution,” 775–76.

197. *Ibid.*, 776, cites as examples 1 Macc 2:45–46; Jos. *War* 2.254–57; 4.335–44. This also included the persecution of Jewish Christians (“Persecution,” citing patristic sources and rabbinic texts on the *minim*; for discussion of the latter, see Keener, *John*, 195–203); see further Le Cornu, *Acts*, 387–89.

198. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 388, cites 1QpHab I, 13; V, 9–10; VIII, 8, 16; IX, 2, 9–10; XI, 4–5; XII, 2–3; 4Q171 II, 18–19; IV, 8.

199. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 390.

g. *The Dispersed Spread the Message (8:4)*

Acts 8:4 could be classed either with 8:1–3 or with 8:5–40, since it is transitional (just as all of 8:1–4 is transitional): it addresses both Saul’s persecution and Philip’s ministry, to which Saul’s persecution, ironically, led. That is, Saul was a vessel of God (cf. Acts 9:15; Rom 9:22) before he knew it, though an unwitting agent who merited destruction (cf. Isa 10:5). Philip’s pre-Petrine Gentile mission already betrays the influence of Paul, who will be apostle to the Gentiles!

Whereas Acts 7:54–8:3 has built toward the expectation of the Jerusalem church’s being suppressed by its persecutors, 8:4 provides a surprising turn.²⁰⁰ Because those who are persecuted remain so certain of their message on account of their experience with the Spirit and the Spirit’s people, they carry it everywhere they go. In Luke’s theology, God can sovereignly bring about good from evil, as the Joseph story (cf. Acts 7:9–13; Gen 50:20) and—what is most relevant for his portrait—the passion narrative taught (Acts 2:23–24; 3:18). As Dunn explains here, Stephen’s death proved to be like Jesus’s judicial murder: “The divine purpose overrules human malice to bring to effect the overarching divine plan (2.23; 4.28; 5.38–39).”²⁰¹

Scattering from Jerusalem as a result of Stephen’s persecution proved a major factor in spreading the Jesus movement,²⁰² for which the mere promise of 1:8 had thus far proved less effective. Had the disciples disobeyed Jesus’s teaching in 1:8? Given Acts’ portrayal of them so far as positive (e.g., 1:14–16; 2:14, 42–43; 4:33; 5:12) but as not completely understanding (1:6–7; cf. 10:14–20), it is much likelier that they had simply not understood the mechanism that Jesus intended for their ministry to the nations. Isaiah was clear that Gentiles would be converted; but because Isaiah could be construed to mean that Gentiles would be drawn in by Israel’s exalted glory, some disciples may have insisted that the mission should wait till Israel had accepted the Messiah.²⁰³ In the meantime, they could be a light to the nations in Jerusalem. Only in retrospect would they recognize that the scattering was providential, fulfilling God’s purposes.²⁰⁴

Luke (and the NT) employs the term διασπείρω only here (8:1, 4) and in 11:19,²⁰⁵ which picks up where this statement leaves off; the cognate noun, however, refers to the Jewish Diaspora (διασπορά, Jdt 5:19; 2 Macc 1:27; John 7:35; Pss. Sol. 8:28; 9:2; perhaps Jas 1:1)²⁰⁶ and apparently was applied to early Christians on the analogy

200. This reflects an engaging literary style; cf. the rhetorical παράδοξον in Demet. *Style* 152–53; Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.22–24 (Anderson, *Glossary*, 88).

201. Dunn, *Acts*, 75.

202. With, e.g., Race, “Journeys.” That persecution, ironically, spread the church here was not lost on ancient readers (Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 18; Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.1, citing the principle in Jerome *Commentary on Matthew* 1.10.23 [all in Martin, *Acts*, 89]). Some authors report it happening to some movements since then (e.g., Wesley, *Church*, 45, on the Word of Life Church in China; cf. Yun, *Heavenly Man*, 56; for persecution strengthening the church, *ibid.*, 75).

203. Skarsaune, *Shadow*, 165–66 (observing [166] that Paul inverts this expectation in Rom 11: Gentile conversion will lead to Israel’s repentance). Some might doubt that the apostles would have remained in Jerusalem while also affirming the teaching of Acts 1:8, but for a partial, more recent parallel, Wesley affirmed the value of missions yet wanted to focus first on areas of the British Isles not yet evangelized (Noll, *Rise*, 232).

204. That the scattering providentially spreads the gospel suggests narrative irony (Ray, *Irony*, 64).

205. The verb applies to scattering Israel for judgment until (what would be viewed as) the eschatological regathering in LXX Lev 26:33; Deut 4:27 (cf. 4:30, “last days”); 28:64; Joel 3:2; Isa 11:12; 56:8; Jer 39:37 (32:37 MT); Ezek 11:17; 12:14–15; 17:21; 20:23; 22:15; 34:12; 36:19.

206. Cf. Tob 13:5; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.33; *Gen. Rab.* 73:6. On Diaspora and exile, see some nuanced evaluations of the discussion in, e.g., Trebilco and Evans, “Diaspora Judaism,” 293–94; Bird, *Gentile Mission*, 39–44; Evans, “Exile.” Many commentators view James’s Diaspora as the church (e.g., Ropes, *James*, 118–27; Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 6; Dibelius, *James*, 66; Barth, *People of God*, 14; Laws, *James*, 47–48; Minear, *Images*, 62; Kee,

of that Diaspora (1 Pet 1:1).²⁰⁷ Because the regathering of “scattered” Israel was an end-time phenomenon (see comment on Acts 1:6; among LXX passages that employ *διασπορά*, cf. Deut 30:4; Neh 1:9), the scattering of believers may indicate that the end time has been delayed through Jerusalem’s disobedience (cf. Acts 3:19–21; Rom 11:11–12, 25–32). But in God’s plan, it was so that the Gentiles would hear the word before the end (Acts 1:6–11, esp. 1:8). As Isa 49:6 (quoted at Acts 13:47) declares, God raised up the servant not only to bring back the *διασπορά* of Israel but also to bring salvation to the Gentiles at the ends of the earth.

Luke summarizes the dramatic result (reserving his detailed attention for specific characters). He provides analogous summaries of Jesus’s ministry from place to place (Luke 8:1; 9:6; 20:1). In the Gospel, others are also said to preach good news, whether regarding Jesus’s birth (1:19; 2:10), John’s preaching (3:18), or Jesus’s mission (4:18, 43; 16:16); Luke grounds the activity biblically in Isaiah (4:18; 7:22).

That those scattered went everywhere evangelizing with the message indicates that despite Luke’s focus on some primary figures, he is aware that the Christian movement was spread by large numbers of adherents (also Acts 11:19–24).²⁰⁸ (For the term “evangelize” here, see comment on Acts 5:42.) He is writing not merely a history of the early church or even of its mission but a biographically focused history that parallels major figures with Jesus, underlining the continuity between Jesus’s mission and that of his followers (see Keener, *Acts*, 1:108–15, 555–62). Yet we see that “ordinary” Christians also spread the message, and this was in fact to be expected; in the Roman world, traveling merchants and others often spread their cults in the course of normal geographic relocations.²⁰⁹ Those who traveled with the primary agenda of propagating their views were the minority.²¹⁰

Luke’s account of Stephen is important not only because of his connection with Saul and with the persecution that scattered the church, but also as a foreshadowing of Luke’s apologetic for Paul later in the work. Toward the end of Paul’s life and probably in the aftermath of his martyrdom, Paul had detractors in the churches as well as outside them (Phil 1:7, 12–20; 2:17; 2 Tim 1:8, 16; 4:16). Paul probably used his final hearing to offer his message in some form to the emperor and/or his court (cf. 2 Tim 4:16–18; perhaps earlier, Phil 1:13), as Luke apparently implies (Acts 23:11; 27:24). Some members of the churches may have believed that Paul’s final, bold testimony inflamed Nero’s persecution more fully. In the account of the aftermath of Stephen’s preaching, however, Luke emphasizes that the ultimate outcome of such events was positive. Persecution in response to Stephen’s preaching (explicit in 11:19) scattered the church, but in so doing spread the gospel (8:1–4; 11:19–21). Paul will carry on Stephen’s role as witness (22:15, 20–21), and believers should not despise his legacy.

That the scattered disciples “passed through” or “went everywhere” naturally leads to the specific example of Philip, confirmed by the verbs *διέρχομαι* (at its first

Origins, 149; Davids, *James*, 63–64; less certainly, Sidebottom, *James*, 26), but this is not a foregone conclusion (see Mayor, *James*, 29–31).

207. Cf. Bruce, *Acts* 1, 181: “The new Ecclesia, like the old, was to have its Diaspora (cf. 1 Pet. i.1)” (similarly idem, *Commentary*, 176). Most see this Christian Diaspora as named for a Jewish one (e.g., Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 89–90; Kelly, *Peter*, 40; Harrington, *God’s People*, 83; Minear, *Images*, 62; Aune, *Environment*, 221), much more probable than a borrowing the other way (as in Selwyn, *Peter*, 118–19).

208. With Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 65 (suggesting also Acts 18:2, 24–28; 28:13–15); see here Lim, “Evangelism,” 355.

209. Liefeld, “Preacher,” 21–22, 26, 151; Bowers, “Propaganda,” 320; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 42; Klauck, *Context*, 63–64. On Zoilus, cf. Rigsby, “Sarapeum.” Traveling merchants continued to spread their faiths in later history as well.

210. Bowers, “Propaganda,” 318 (though Paul being “almost the only example” is probably an exaggeration). Certainly we do not read of Jewish “missionaries” (see comment on Acts 1:8).

appearances in Acts, 8:4, 40) and εὐαγγελίζω (8:4, 40) framing Philip's ministry (8:5–40); he was one who “went” and preached as he traveled. It is also employed again in the more general mention of the scattered ones who founded Diaspora churches, including Antioch (11:19), and in Paul's itinerant ministry of evangelism and confirmation (13:6, 14; 14:24; 15:3, 41; 16:6; 18:23; 19:1, 21; 20:2).²¹¹ That they continued propagating the word despite knowing of Stephen's fate for the same “offense” testifies to their courage;²¹² their flight from Jerusalem was practical, not cowardly (cf. Acts 9:24–25; 14:6; 20:3; Luke 21:21).

3. Samaria Receives the Word (8:5–25)

Stephen may not have had the Samaritan mission in mind in Acts 7 (see comment there), but for Luke the sort of message reported in Acts 7 helped make such missions theologically acceptable. A kind Samaritan (Luke 10:33–35) and a grateful Samaritan (17:16–18) prefigure the response and acceptance of Samaritans as neighbors (10:36–37; cf. Lev 19:18 with 19:34)²¹³ and hence the beginning of the mission beyond Jerusalem (Acts 1:8).²¹⁴ Luke, who has emphasized ministry to the marginalized throughout his Gospel, portrays Philip's mission to the Samaritans positively.²¹⁵

Luke has prepared his audience for the revival in Acts 8 and also for the involvement of the apostles only after Philip's ministry (8:14). Samaritans competed with Jerusalem, whose temple they resented (Luke 9:52–53; see comment on Acts 7:15–16),²¹⁶ hence provoking the opposition of the disciples (Luke 9:54–55).²¹⁷ To embrace the Samaritans without serious catechesis (at the least, Luke does not mention it) was to agree not to make the temple or Jerusalem, cornerstones of Jewish faith, a matter of division.²¹⁸

In Acts 8:5–13, Luke traces the success of Philip's Samaritan mission (including the discussion of Simon, 8:9–11). Again, signs invite attention for the gospel (8:6–7, 13). In 8:14–17, Jerusalem ratifies (and assumes responsibility for) the Samaritan mission. This passage also emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit to complete the mission (cf. 1:4–5). Because this mission has the approval of God and the Jerusalem apostles, the reader can anticipate the same for the Gentile mission that follows.

211. Luke sometimes applies the term “went about” to spreading the good news (Luke 5:15; 9:6; Acts 9:32; 10:38), but it is not a technical term for this (most Lukan references; see Knox, *Jerusalem*, 217–18). Because the Hellenists moved north, Baum, *Gospel*, 145, compares them with Matthew's community, believing that many settled in Palestine north of Jerusalem.

212. Continued activity despite grief might be noteworthy (Sen. E. *Controv.* 4.pref. 4–6) but, in the face of challenges, could be heroic (see comment on Acts 20:24).

213. On the theology of Luke 10:25–37, see, e.g., Keener, “Invitations,” 202–7; on its relevance here (and that of Luke 17:11–19), see Spencer, *Philip*, 62–69. For Jesus's relations with Samaritans as prefiguring the Samaritan mission in Acts, see fully Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, 99–121, esp. 121.

214. On the relevance of Acts 1:8 here, see further Spencer, *Philip*, 69–70; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 254.

215. See Spencer, *Philip*, 32–53. On Philip's mission as a missionary model, see Dormeyer and Galindo, *Apostelgeschichte*, 125.

216. Though cf. the apparent obedience of the Samaritan in Luke 17:12–19 (the shared experience of leprosy apparently had broken down other social taboos).

217. They may have been received in another Samaritan village (Luke 9:56), but Luke (who prefers neat, hence more reader-friendly, chronological schemes) makes no effort to emphasize that point so early in his narrative. On the relevance of Luke 9:51–56, see Spencer, *Philip*, 54–62. Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, 125–50, argues that Acts 8:4–25 repeats and reverses many themes in Luke 9:51–56, legitimating the Samaritan mission.

218. Jervell, *People of God*, 126, thinks that the Samaritans' conversion makes them “good Jews,” but Simon's behavior (Acts 8:19; and surprise at the rebuke, 8:24) might count in favor of lack of detailed instruction at this point. See the criticism in Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, 193–97.

In 8:18–24, God’s agents have to confront the syncretistic, magical worldview of a convert (cf. 19:18); Luke’s apologetic regularly dissociates the Christian movement from magic.²¹⁹ The passage also emphasizes the necessity of perseverance and that sound understanding of the ways of God’s Spirit is important to avoid syncretism. Conversion by itself, in isolation from the apostolic message, does not guarantee sound understanding or perseverance. Finally, in 8:25, the apostles follow Philip’s example. The Hellenists thus bridge the gap for the Gentile mission. (Philip will also precede Peter in reaching Gentiles; note 8:27–40 before 10:1–11:18.)

Since Luke is not against Peter or the Jerusalem apostles (rather, Peter is a more central character in the book than Philip) and since Luke appears to have met Philip (21:8–10), it is likely that he believes his account of Philip’s inaugurating the Samaritan mission to be authentic. Likewise, he would hardly invent from whole cloth Philip’s ministry to a Gentile (8:26–40), since he already has the standard, institutional version of the earliest Gentile mission in the Cornelius narrative (Acts 10–11). Assuming that Philip was a fairly reliable informant (and he seems to have been trusted by Paul and the Caesarean church, 21:8–10), Luke’s account of Philip’s ministry in 8:5–40 likely is Luke’s rendition of genuine historical tradition.²²⁰ For further arguments for the essential reliability of Luke’s description of Philip’s Samaritan mission, see the introduction to 8:1b–40, above.

Excursus: Samaritans

Scholars have focused considerable effort on reconstructing the character of Samaritans and of Samaritan-Jewish relations.²²¹ Samaritans would be known by at least some people outside Palestine because of the Samaritan Diaspora (on which see comment below). Nevertheless, many Diaspora Christians would know little about Samaritans beyond what they found in the gospel traditions (Luke presupposes knowledge about them, but its essentials might be obtained from reading his narrative through);²²² it may be noteworthy that the NT epistles never allude to them (although even such Gospel staples as Pharisees occur only rarely in relevant passages, Pharisees being only in Phil 3:5). This probably suggests a genuinely Palestinian tradition behind their occurrences in early Christian sources.

Unfortunately, our sources for reconstructing Samaritanism are relatively late, often influenced by the same social currents that shaped late antiquity and early medieval rabbinic Judaism, sometimes including Islamic elements as well.²²³ Thus these

219. Luke’s emphasis is antimagical apologetic rather than any corrective (or the polemical magic charge) against trends in the Samaritan church (contrast Faivre and Faivre, “Rhétorique”).

220. Cf. Kollmann, “Philippus”: although Luke makes Philip transitional, he preserves the tradition that Philip already evangelized Gentiles, and hence Luke probably preserves genuine historical information. Pervo, *Acts*, 203, accepts a Samaritan mission and that Luke’s source (albeit not Philip himself) associated Philip with it.

221. For the emphasis on Samaritan studies, see, e.g., Hjelm, “Samaritans.” For work on the Samaritans, see, e.g., Crown, *Samaritans*; for Samaritanism and Jewish-Samaritan relations, see Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, 57–98; in the NT, e.g., Sloyan, “Samaritans”; in Luke-Acts, e.g., Böhm, *Samariem*; in Luke’s Gospel, Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, 99–121; in Acts, e.g., Maynard-Reid, “Samaritans”; Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, 125–227. I cite other sources in Keener, *John*, 589–613 passim, on which I also draw at points below.

222. See Luke 9:52; 10:33; 17:16. In other Gospel traditions, see Matt 10:5; John 4:4–42.

223. Scott, *Customs*, 199. Cf. also Christian elements in MacDonald, *Samaritans*, 419ff., passim. Thus the danger of reading Samaritan influence in other documents, whether early Christian writers or the Qumran scrolls (e.g., Ford, “Influence”).

sources are mentioned here where they may be relevant, but we should not rely on them more heavily than necessary. Nevertheless, Qumran confirms some readings in the Samaritan Pentateuch, suggesting a measure of continuity of Samaritan tradition.²²⁴

1. Samaritan Relations with Others

The Samaritans were friendly to Herod the Great (e.g., *Jos. War* 1.229), but Herod's benevolence with tax revenues earned him allies even among foreign Gentiles. After one bloody conflict in the mid-first century, Samaritans appealed to the Roman governor of Syria to punish the Jews (*War* 2.239; *Ant.* 20.125); the emperor, however, listened to Agrippa and executed the Samaritan leaders instead (*War* 2.245–46; *Ant.* 20.136).²²⁵

Both in Eretz Israel and in the Diaspora, Samaritans spoke Greek and were substantially hellenized.²²⁶ Even accounting for Jewish propaganda about the Samaritans, which would tend to overemphasize their paganism, Samaritans were probably already hellenized to a fair degree by the first century.²²⁷ Although the “Samaritan city” of Acts 8:5 might be ancient Shechem²²⁸ or some other Samaritan town (see discussion below) rather than Samaria—the latter having become the pagan city Sebaste²²⁹—receptivity to the antics of Simon the sorcerer suggests hellenization. His claim to be “the great power of God”²³⁰ suggests that Simon was in fact adapting some popular religious motifs of the Hellenistic East—all the more likely if the second-century tradition about what this meant²³¹ has any merit. This in turn suggests that despite the Samaritans' alienation from Sebaste (perhaps greater than Galileans' alienation from Tiberias and Sepphoris, Sebaste being more pagan), it had exercised some influence.²³²

224. See, e.g., 4Q158 frg. 6, expanding Exod 20:19–21 (*DSSNT* 201–2).

225. The tradition of resistance against foreign rulers was probably older, as in Judea (Alexander's era in Quint. Curt. 4.8.9; for genuine conflict between Alexander and Samaritans, see Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 74).

226. Van der Horst, “Samaritans and Hellenism.” Cf. the iconographic image reflecting Greco-Persian influence in Bodzek, “Remarks.”

227. Some writers consider the Samaritans syncretistic (e.g., Reicke, *Era*, 27–30), but often so were popular Judaism and Christianity. For Samaritan phylacteries and amulets, see Gaster, *Studies*, 1:387ff. The pagan dedication earlier thought to be from south Samaria (Di Segni, “Toponym”) may be from southern Judea instead (idem, “Palinode”).

228. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 183; idem, *Commentary*, 177; Judge, *Pattern*, 13.

229. E.g., *Jos. Ant.* 15.292–96; Strabo 16.2.34. On Herod's palace there, see Barag, “Castle”; for his temple to Caesar, *Jos. War* 1.403; *Ant.* 15.298; on Sebaste more generally, see, e.g., the survey in Zangenberg, “Samaria,” 426–29.

230. A divine title in PGM 4.640; Luke 22:69; 1 Cor 1:24. “Powerful one of God” would be a more subdued claim (*Jos. Asen.* 4:7), but Simon claims to be an epiphany (see Ramsay, *Discovery*, 117–18; Haenchen, *Acts*, 303). “Great power” may contrast with the apostles' power in Acts 4:33 (cf. power and “great” signs in 6:8; 8:13) and esp. Luke 22:69. The phrase is familiar from Scripture, where God redeemed his people by great power (Exod 14:31; 32:11; Deut 4:37; 9:29; 2 Kgs 17:36; Neh 1:10; in the LXX, Neh 1:10) and created by great power (Jer 27:5; 32:17); cf. Philo *Mos.* 1.111; *Spec. Laws* 1.307; Mark 13:26; *Herm.* 39.11; 43.21; 51.5. The phrase simply refers to a powerful army in 1 Macc 3:10; 10:48, 69; *Jos. Ant.* 8.292; 9.61; 12.236, 329, 341; 13.58; *War* 1.345; *Life* 23, 378; *Ag. Ap.* 1.251.

231. Justin *1 Apol.* 26.3; *Dial.* 120.6; Iren. *Her.* 1.23.2. See Casey, “Simon,” 151–63; Munck, *Acts*, 305–8. A pagan male-female dyad such as the tradition suggests appears in other polemical sources (e.g., Iren. *Her.* 1.1.1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:2) and may reflect ideas prevalent among Samaritans influenced by Sebaste's paganism (see Flusser, “Goddess of Samaria,” 18–20).

232. Attempted hellenization began there as early as 2 Macc 6:2, but as in Jerusalem, its success was probably qualified.

Inscriptions from the Mediterranean world and papyri from Egypt reveal that Samaritans were known far from Samaria.²³³ A Samaritan Diaspora is attested,²³⁴ by the fourth century, some Samaritan presence (or merchandise) is attested even in Corinth²³⁵ and somewhat later in Thessalonica.²³⁶ Nevertheless, they were probably not well enough known to explain the prominence of Samaritans in Luke's writings, which seem to presuppose some knowledge of Samaritans from the Jesus tradition (cf. Luke 1:4; hence probably some successes by Jesus and/or his followers).

2. Were Samaritans Gentiles?

Samaritan religion, however, seems rooted in the general fabric of early Judaism before 70 C.E.²³⁷ Samaritans were distinct from Gentiles (Jos. *Ant.* 11.340 counts them as Jewish apostates), and Gentiles would have viewed them, despite some Jewish disclaimers, as a variation within Judaism.²³⁸ Josephus says that Jews complained that Samaritans claimed to be Jews when Jews prospered but (from Josephus's perspective, rightly) admitted that they were different when Jews endured hardship (*Ant.* 9.291; 11.341). (Justin Martyr, who grew up as a Gentile in Samaria, considered both Samaritans and Jews part of historic Israel, distinct from Gentiles [*1 Apol.* 53].)²³⁹ They worshiped the same God as Jews and shared roughly the same Pentateuch (see the introductory section on Acts 7 titled "Acts 7 and the Samaritans" [3.a.iv]). Thus this is not yet fully the "Gentile mission" but a transition toward it (cf. Acts 1:8).²⁴⁰ Even in a much later period, they had their own synagogues;²⁴¹ Samaritan tradition mentioned their own high priests.²⁴² Paganism in the Samaritan region²⁴³ was, undoubtedly, mainly due to Gentiles settled there, especially in Sebaste.²⁴⁴

Later rabbinic opinion as to the degree of Samaritans' Jewishness varied according to rabbi, period, and issue, though none of the rabbis viewed the Samaritans in a positive light. These rabbis sometimes debated whether to treat Samaritans more as Jews or as Gentiles on particular matters.²⁴⁵ But they often considered them impure and would have disapproved of intermarriage with them.²⁴⁶ Some ruled that

233. See Montevicchi, "Samaria e Samaritani."

234. See, e.g., *CPJ* 3:103, §513; 3:105, §514; Kraabel, "Evidence"; van der Horst, "Diaspora"; in Thessalonica, Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 156; Llewelyn, *Documents*, 8:148–51, §12 (on Delos, third or second century B.C.E.; more recently, allowing Jewish residents while questioning the synagogue, cf. Matassa, "Myth"). Evidence in Thessalonica, Syracuse, and Rome is from several centuries later (Pummer, "Samaritans," 471).

235. McRay, *Archaeology*, 320.

236. See Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 156, for a bilingual Greek-and-Samaritan inscription (fourth to sixth centuries C.E.), quoting Num 6:22–27.

237. Pummer, "Offshoot"; Crown, "Schism"; Coggins, "Samaritans in Josephus." They probably shared common traditions even in the Persian period (Knoppers, "Gerizim").

238. Coggins, "Samaritans in Josephus"; for common elements, Hjelm, "Samaritans." Many scholars believe that Samaritan and Jewish cults separated only in Hellenistic times (Macchi, "Sacrifice samaritan").

239. Perhaps because of his own upbringing in Neapolis near Shechem (Justin *1 Apol.* 1.2). But while Justin calls himself a Samaritan geographically (*Dial.* 120.6), he was ethnically a Gentile, as he acknowledged (41.3), probably a Roman (see Osborn, *Justin*, 6, from whom I also derived some of the above references).

240. Witherington, *Acts*, 280 (arguing against Johnson, *Acts*, 150), though Witherington's doubt that this ministry leads to the Gentile mission is correct only from the standpoint of those inside the story world, not Luke's overarching perspective. Cf. also Thomas and van Aarde, "Samaria."

241. See Magen, "Bty-knst."

242. Gaster, *Studies*, 493ff.

243. E.g., a Greek pagan prayer for Hadrian in southern Samaria (Di Segni, "Toponym").

244. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 15.292–96; Strabo 16.2.34; for its temple to Caesar, Jos. *War* 1.403; *Ant.* 15.298.

245. E.g., *m. Demai* 3:4; *y. Ber.* 7:1, §7.

246. E.g., Amoraic comments on *m. Qidd.* 4:3; Anderson, "Samaritan Literature," 1053.

the Samaritans were to be treated like Gentiles in some respects.²⁴⁷ Especially later rabbis could view them as Gentiles²⁴⁸ and as “lion-proselytes,” less than genuine converts to the true Jewish religion.²⁴⁹ Later traditions declare that some rabbis openly contended against the Samaritan claim to descent from Joseph (*Gen. Rab.* 94:7), and some scholars marshal earlier Jewish evidence from the Qumran scrolls for the same idea.²⁵⁰

Nevertheless, most Jewish teachers did not regard Samaritans as fully Gentile, and many rabbinic disputes differ over the degree to which particular laws should treat them as Gentiles or as Israelites;²⁵¹ often they appear as an intermediate class somewhere between these standard categories. Thus an Israelite cannot suckle a Gentile child²⁵² but can suckle a Samaritan;²⁵³ an Israelite should beware of the treachery of Gentile barbers, but Samaritan barbers could be trusted.²⁵⁴ Most rabbinic texts present them not as theological heretics or moral sinners but as schismatics defining their own social group as against Judaism.²⁵⁵

This is not to imply that most Jewish people thought well of Samaritans morally or trusted them. Amoraim give examples of wicked Samaritans (*Lam. Rab.* 1:1, §§14–15). Although Jewish sages might acknowledge Samaritan fidelity to their own interpretation of Torah, some Jewish texts present the Samaritans as sinful; thus Samaria was founded by those who rejected Jeremiah’s call to repentance (*4 Bar.* 8).²⁵⁶ Later rabbis rejected most kinds of testimony from Samaritans.²⁵⁷

3. Conflict between Jews and Samaritans

Judaism mostly looked down on Samaritans. Jewish tradition indicated that hostilities had begun immediately after some Jews returned from the exile;²⁵⁸ although many scholars mistrust the OT account of Samaritan origins (2 Kgs 17:24–33) as polemical,²⁵⁹ it is hard to deny at least the mixing of remaining Israelites with

247. E.g., *t. ‘Abod. Zar.* 2:8. Heave offerings were acceptable from either (*m. Ter.* 3:9). Rabbis felt that Samaritans were liable if their cattle gored Israelite cattle, but not the reverse (*b. B. Qam.* 38b, bar.).

248. *B. Sanh.* 57a, unless “Cuthean” was a censor’s substitute for “goy” here (Soncino trans. n. 5). Some rabbis in *b. Meg.* 25b suspect them of idolatry.

249. *B. Qidd.* 75b (R. Ishmael, vs. R. Akiba); *Num. Rab.* 8:9; cf. Hoening, “Conversion,” 58.

250. See Schuller, “4Q372,” on 4Q372 frg. 1.

251. E.g., *t. Ter.* 4:14; *y. Ketub.* 3:1, §3 (late Tannaitic); *Ber.* 7:1, §7.

252. *T. ‘Abod. Zar.* 3:3; cf. *m. ‘Abod. Zar.* 2:1. Contrast later haggadah concerning Sarah nursing Gentiles (*Gen. Rab.* 53:9; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 22:1).

253. *T. ‘Abod. Zar.* 3:1. In 3:1, Israelites could also leave cattle in Samaritan inns because they were not suspected of bestiality.

254. *T. ‘Abod. Zar.* 3:5. They are also more trustworthy than Gentiles in some other respects (*m. Demai* 3:4; *b. Bek.* 11b). People made regular use of barbers (Lewis, *Life*, 136; Goodman, *State*, 59–60; *ILS* 7414), but a hostile one could prove dangerous (Mart. *Epig.* 3.74.1–2).

255. Sonne, “Use,” 154–62. Thus earlier traditions often viewed them as lax Jews (*Deut. Rab.* 2:33).

256. For anti-Samaritanism in Judaism in general, see Dexinger, “Limits.”

257. *M. Giṭ.* 1:5; *y. Giṭ.* 1:4, §2; as also from women (*Jos. Ant.* 4.219; *Sipra VDDeho. pq.* 7.45.1.1; cf. Justin. *Inst.* 2.10.6), slaves (*Jos. Ant.* 4.219; cf. Prop. *Eleg.* 3.6.20), and other groups. In some Amoraic texts, Samaria had its own local *shedim*-demons (Alexander, *Possession*, 29), although these also appear elsewhere.

258. E.g., *Neh.* 4:1–2; *Jos. Ant.* 11.84, 114. Although he seems too skeptical about the biblical schism, Coggins, *Samaritans*, 163–64, is surely right about the continued deterioration of relations through the Hellenistic period to the early first century.

259. E.g., Irudaya, “Samaritans.” In the fifth century B.C.E., Elephantine Jews, whose perspective would have differed from the Jerusalemite settlers, still regarded both Jerusalem and Samaria as Jewish centers (Bright, *History*, 407). But the original report was probably directed generally against Gentiles, not against Samaritans as we know them (see Dexinger, “Limits,” 106–7).

others whom the Assyrians settled there, as this was a standard Assyrian practice.²⁶⁰ In any case, hostility existed by the time of Neh 4:1–2 and is explicit in Sir 50:26.²⁶¹ Later Samaritans raided Judea.²⁶² Judging by Josephus’s rewriting of biblical accounts, more anti-Samaritan retellings of the biblical story were dominant by the first century.²⁶³

In one understanding of the development of Jewish-Samaritan relations, Jews and Samaritans worked together under common pressures between the revolts of 70 and 135, but as Samaritans became increasingly hellenized and syncretistic, second- and third-century rabbis became less tolerant of Samaritans and rejected them as virtual Gentiles by the fourth century.²⁶⁴

4. Animosity against Each Other’s Holy Sites

A major point of contention between Samaritans and Jews concerned their respective holy sites.²⁶⁵ Samaritans regarded Gerizim as “the holiest of mountains” (Jos. *Ant.* 18.85).²⁶⁶ The Judean John Hyrcanus enslaved Samaritans and destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim in 128 B.C.E.²⁶⁷ Scholars have cited some possible archaeological evidence for this destruction,²⁶⁸ but the evidence remains disputed.²⁶⁹ Probably the temple discovered on Tell er-Ras (the northern peak of Gerizim) is a pagan one, the Samaritan temple being on the main summit.²⁷⁰ Excavations have revealed second-century B.C.E. Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions concerning the sanctuary and cultic dedications; their current state shows that they were deliberately smashed,²⁷¹ presumably out of hostility.

260. See Bright, *History*, 271, 276, 283 (he also cites [276n20] evidence for Mesopotamians resettled at Shechem); cf. Gordon, *Near East*, 235; Yamauchi, *Stones*, 75; for Assyrian architecture in post-fall Israel, see Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 251–53. Sargon II (721–705) explicitly claims to have settled other peoples in Samaria (*ANET* 286); 2 Kgs 17:27 also echoes Sargon’s own characteristic language (Paul, “Diction,” 74). I am thus less inclined to view the Judahite portrait as a purely later construct.

261. Cf., e.g., Tournay, “Polémique” (rightly noting much polemic, esp. Sir 50:26 and later sources; but some connections are strained).

262. Jos. *Ant.* 12.156. Josephus apparently has an extrabiblical, specifically anti-Samaritan source (Marcus, “Schism”).

263. See esp. Thornton, “Anti-Samaritan Exegesis” (noting esp. Jos. *Ant.* 4.200, 203, 305–8; 5.68–70, 115–16, 120–317). For the extant Samaritan version of their origin, see MacDonald, *Samaritans*, 15ff.

264. Friedheim, “Relations judéo-samaritaines.” On Samaritan syncretism in the third century, see Meshorer, “Sacrifice.”

265. Cf., e.g., 4Q372 1 12 (with 4Q371 1, 8, 11, in *DSSNT* 333). It was the major known issue of rift between the groups (see Spencer, *Philip*, 73–75).

266. Rabbis viewed Mount Gerizim as the Samaritan counterpart to the Jewish temple (*b. Yoma* 69a); just as Jewish synagogues often pointed toward Jerusalem (see above), so it is reported that an excavated Samaritan synagogue points toward Mount Gerizim (Goodenough, *Symbols*, 1:262–63). For fuller details on Samaritan loyalty to Gerizim, see sect. 3.a.vi.4, “Samaritans and the Temple,” a subsection of “The Land,” in the introduction to Acts 7:2–53 (pp. 1350–51).

267. Jos. *War* 1.63–66; *Ant.* 13.255–56. By contrast, Antiochus IV had sought to paganize both the temple on Mount Gerizim and the Jerusalem temple (2 Macc 6:2). John Hyrcanus’s act was a pivotal event in the Judean-Samaritan schism (see, e.g., Tharekadavil, “Gerizim”). For the Samaritan tabernacle tradition, see Pummer, “Tabernacle.”

268. See Bull, “Report XII” 41; Finegan, *Archaeology*, 35; Kee, “Tell-Er-Ras”; Garner, “Temples”; Schwank, “Berg”; Seger, “Shechem,” 23; cf. Bull and Wright, “Temples.” The first new temple built on the site was apparently the pagan, Hadrianic one (early second century C.E.).

269. Anderson, “Temple,” doubts its existence; but cf. McRay, “Archaeology,” 96. For other evidence proposed for the Samaritan temple, see Stern and Magen, “Evidence.”

270. Zangenberg, “Samaria,” 424–25. Tell er-Ras would have been visible from Jacob’s well (Bull, “Context,” 59).

271. See Naveh and Magen, “Inscriptions.” Cf. this practice in earlier Israel (Albright, *Yahweh*, 194–95).

According to a Jewish atrocity report, some Samaritans in the early first century defiled the Jerusalem temple one night with human bones; this in turn provided the reason for Jews' prohibiting Samaritans' attendance at the Jerusalem Passover²⁷² (perhaps a current "hot" issue in the original incident behind Luke 9:53). Later rabbis believed that Samaritans could be received back into the covenant only by renouncing Gerizim, affirming Jerusalem, and endorsing faith in the resurrection of the dead.²⁷³ In a later story, a Samaritan mocked a rabbi's destination, Jerusalem; the Samaritan insisted that Gerizim was a holy mountain and Jerusalem a dunghill, and the rabbi retorted that the Samaritan wanted the idols hidden at Gerizim.²⁷⁴ In a similar story, a Samaritan jeered that a rabbi en route to Jerusalem was visiting a dunghill whereas Gerizim alone had not been covered in the flood. The rabbi's ass-driver answered wisely from Scripture, prompting the rabbi to exalt the ass-driver over himself.²⁷⁵

Samaritans' very insistence to be descendants of Israel could have rendered their temple all the more suspect to Jews: although some Jews felt that God allowed Gentiles some leeway, the people of Israel were allowed to worship nowhere but the temple.²⁷⁶ Some Jewish sages prohibited Samaritans from circumcising Israelite boys because they expected them to do it "in the name of Mount Gerizim."²⁷⁷ As noted above, a late tradition allows for the acceptance of Samaritan converts (though none are known) only if they embrace the resurrection and also honor Jerusalem instead of Gerizim.²⁷⁸ In another story, R. Ishmael ben Jose provoked the Samaritans to violence by charging that they worshiped idols under their mountain.²⁷⁹ In one apocryphal story, Samaritans kept the Romans from allowing the Jews to rebuild the Jerusalem temple in Hadrian's reign.²⁸⁰

According to Josephus (a partisan on the Judean side), further conflicts between Jews and Samaritans erupted less than two decades after events depicted here. Galileans typically passed through Samaria en route to festivals in Jerusalem (Luke 9:51–53; John 4:3–4), but some Samaritans (probably hooligans) attacked and killed some of these Galilean pilgrims (Jos. *Ant.* 20.118). Unable to secure satisfactory attention from the Roman governor Cumanus, Jews took matters into their own hands and retaliated against Samaritans (20.121). Cumanus then armed and aided the Samaritans in massacring many Jews (20.122).

272. Jos. *Ant.* 18.30. In view of Num 19:11, Samaritans themselves would hardly have approved of touching human bones, but if they could do it when necessary for funerals (for one later probable Samaritan burial ground, see van den Brink, "Burial Ground"), this "atrocity report" is not impossible. On the genre of oral atrocity reports, see discussion in Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 75–77 (noting Luke 13:1); for examples, see, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 17.237; y. *Sukkah* 5:1, §7; *Ta'an.* 4:5, §10; *Lam. Rab.* 3:51, §9.

273. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 403, noting that Epiphanius (*De mens.* 16.7–9) also believed that Jews recircumcised any Samaritan converts.

274. Y. *Abod. Zar.* 5:4, §3; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 81:3.

275. *Gen. Rab.* 32:10; 81:3. One version of the story concerns R. Jonathan, and the other R. Ishmael ben Jose, both Tannaim; the story was popular, and later tradition settled on R. Jonathan (*Deut. Rab.* 3:6; *Song Rab.* 4:4, §5). Probably in response to the Samaritan tradition in this passage denying that the flood covered Gerizim, R. Levi (third-century C.E. Palestine) denied that it covered Eretz Israel (*Gen. Rab.* 33:6; cf. *Sipre Deut.* 37.3.5). On the low status of donkey drivers, cf., e.g., Diog. Laert. 6.5.92.

276. E.g., *Sipra A.M.* par. 6.187.1.1. God gave Israel the temple (and other gifts) as a reward for worship (*Gen. Rab.* 56:2).

277. T. *Abod. Zar.* 3:13 (the tradition probably stems from ca. 200 C.E.); b. *Abod. Zar.* 27a, bar.; y. *Yebam.* 8:1, §10. One rabbi dissents from the ruling but not from the view that Samaritans circumcise in this name.

278. Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 134.

279. Y. *Abod. Zar.* 5:4, §3.

280. *Gen. Rab.* 64:10.

5. The Languages for Preaching

In what language would the Hellenist Philip have preached to the Samaritans? Most Samaritan villagers spoke Aramaic,²⁸¹ hence the importance of the Samaritan Targum.²⁸² Nevertheless, not only did most of the Samaritan Diaspora in the eastern Mediterranean speak Greek; the Greek inscriptions from Mount Gerizim show that Greek was widespread among Samaritans in the homeland as well.²⁸³ Philip (who later ministered on the hellenized coast, especially Caesarea, Acts 8:40) undoubtedly spoke his first language, Greek, in the town; if Luke implies at all that he ventured into the villages, it was only in the company of two native Aramaic-speakers, Peter and John (8:25).

a. Philip's Success versus Simon (8:5–13)

In 8:5–13, Luke traces the success of Philip's Samaritan mission (including the discussion of Simon, 8:9–11). Again signs invite attention for the gospel (8:6–7, 13); Philip is full of the same signs-producing Spirit as Stephen was (6:3, 8).²⁸⁴ Philip in 8:5 is a specific example of the preachers of 8:4, just as Stephen in 6:8 was an example of the word spreading in 6:7. In both cases, however, Luke offers particularly dramatic examples, not merely random ones (cf. 6:5).

I. "A SAMARITAN TOWN" (8:5)

Most scholars envision here a major Samaritan town rather than the other possibility, Sebaste, a Greek city on the site of ancient Samaria.²⁸⁵ Because the textual reading "the town" is better attested than the anarthrous reading "a town,"²⁸⁶ it is possible that Luke refers to Sebaste, which was perhaps the only "city" in the district; certainly it was the only one of the major cities listed in *Jos. War* 1.156; 2.96–97 that lay in Samaria.²⁸⁷ But an anarthrous reading provides a likelier antecedent for "that city" in Acts 8:8.²⁸⁸

Other arguments work against the need to view Luke's "city" as Sebaste. Luke regularly employs πόλις not only for cities like Jerusalem but also for much smaller towns (e.g., Luke 2:3–4, 11; 4:31, 43; 7:11–12; 9:10) and even small villages (e.g., 1:26, 39; 2:39; 4:29).²⁸⁹ The elevated city of Sebaste was also thoroughly hellenized, a characteristic that does not fit this narrative very well.²⁹⁰ Herod the Great had a palace at Sebaste,²⁹¹ but it was a Greek city, not a Jewish one. Herod also built an Augustus temple for the Gentiles he settled here (*Jos. War* 1.403; *Ant.* 15.298).²⁹² He named

281. Van der Horst, "Languages."

282. Cf. Tal, "Traditions."

283. Van der Horst, "Languages."

284. For the pattern of signs inviting attention, see discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:541–49.

285. E.g., Judge, *Pattern*, 13; Munck, *Acts*, 73; Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 70–76; Johnson, *Acts*, 145; Böhm, *Samaritanien*, 279–308.

286. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 355–56, notes the strength of the external evidence (although, on the basis of internal evidence, the editorial committee for the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* preferred the anarthrous reading).

287. See esp. the thorough case of Zangenberg, "Simon Magus," 520–25; noted as a possibility in Barrett, *Acts*, 402. Samaria became Sebaste (*Jos. Ant.* 15.292; *War* 2.69), which remained a "city" (*Ant.* 17.289; *War* 1.64, 229, 299, 403; 2.69).

288. So Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 355.

289. On reasons for the widespread use of πόλις even for towns that did not share republican governments in the Hellenistic sense, see Judge, *Pattern*, 14. On Luke's wide usage, see Oakman, "Countryside," 170.

290. With Barrett, *Acts*, 402.

291. See Barag, "Castle."

292. Now excavated; see Foerster, "Art," 988–89; McRay, *Archaeology*, 146–47. For archaeological material on Herodian and post-Herodian Sebaste, see, e.g., Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 76–77n403c.

it “Sebaste” (Σεβαστός is Greek for the Latin *Augustus*) in honor of the emperor (*War* 1.403; *Ant.* 15.292, 296; Strabo 16.2.34). But the name “Sebaste” quickly grew popular, leaving behind the older name “Samaria.”²⁹³ Sebaste’s strong walls (Jos. *Ant.* 15.297–98) ran for two miles around the city; two of the city’s towers still remain on the west.²⁹⁴ The city’s main north-south thoroughfare entered its forum on the east and was colonnaded with some six hundred columns.²⁹⁵

Luke refers to ethnically Samaritan people (Acts 8:9, 25), and the designation “that city” (8:8) makes less sense when a city name would have been more appropriate (cf. Luke 9:5; 10:12; 18:3; though cf. also Acts 14:20–21). So compelling is the contrast between the narrative and widespread knowledge about Sebaste that some scholars opt (as some early scribes apparently did) for the less attested anarthrous reading.²⁹⁶ A likelier alternative is that Luke means “the [chief, or capital] city of [the region of] Samaria.”²⁹⁷ Luke’s anarthrous “village of the Samaritans” (Luke 9:52) suggests that Luke knew that the Samaritans had many villages, not just one town. Hengel provides several arguments in favor of a reference to Samaria’s capital city here (rather than Sebaste), of which the most significant follow:²⁹⁸

1. Luke always uses “Samaria” for the region of the Samaritan people (Luke 9:52; 10:33; 17:11, 16; Acts 1:8; 9:31; 15:3), including, inescapably, this context (Acts 8:1, 25).
2. Sebaste was a Gentile city.
 - a. Herod refounded Sebaste on the site of Samaria after more than eighty years of desolation there.
 - b. Its territory was much smaller than that of the Samaritans.
 - c. Sebaste remained on Rome’s side (Jos. *War* 2.406; cf. *Ant.* 17.289), but ethnic Samaritans tried to rebel (*War* 3.307–15).
3. Josephus, like Luke, uses “Samaria” only for Samaritan areas; Sebaste was a different city entirely.
4. Syncretism attached to the later gnostic cult of Simon should not be read back into the Simon account here.²⁹⁹

If the town is not Sebaste, some scholars opt for Gitta, Simon’s reputed birthplace (Justin *I Apol.* 26).³⁰⁰ Hengel thinks that this suggestion is clearly wrong; it was too insignificant, mentioned only in sources about Simon in and after Justin.³⁰¹ More often scholars suggest Shechem, usually claiming that this was the chief town of the

293. Hengel, *Jesus and Paul*, 124; Bruce, *Commentary*, 177. Though Strabo and Josephus know the old name and though Luke might prefer a traditional biblical designation, the biblical title best fits the ethnic people (see below).

294. McRay, *Archaeology*, 145.

295. *Ibid.*, 146.

296. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 89, noting that in the NT, “Samaria” indicates “the district, not the city,” and that “the city of Samaria” as a city name is awkward Greek.

297. Munck, *Acts*, 73; Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 70.

298. *Ibid.*, 70–76.

299. I do see syncretism here, but without strong movements to counter it (such as existed in Judea), one would expect some syncretism on the popular level in heavily hellenized Samaria, possibly some of it from Sebaste (see comment on Acts 8:9–11). Greek paganism appears in Samaritan territory (e.g., Di Segni, “Toponym”).

300. Bruce, *Commentary*, 177; idem, *Acts*!, 183; one suggestion in Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 89. Excavations suggest the multicultural character of this town (Zangenberg, “Samaria,” 419–20). Simon hails from Gitta also in Hippol. *Ref.* 6.2.

301. Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 75.

Samaritan people, near Mount Gerizim. It was later refounded as Neapolis (“New City”; modern Nablus),³⁰² which Pliny the Elder in the first century names as one of Samaria’s towns along with Sebaste.³⁰³ This would make good sense of the foreshadowing mention of Shechem in Acts 7:15–16,³⁰⁴ though one wonders why, if Luke knew it to be Shechem, he omits the name here while including it in Acts 7.³⁰⁵

Shechem, however, though prominent earlier, was destroyed in the late second century B.C.E. and never became a genuine Hellenistic polis.³⁰⁶ It did not recover until it was replaced by Roman Neapolis, slightly to the west, under Vespasian.³⁰⁷ Because excavations are incomplete, we cannot yet be certain about the nature of occupation in this period.³⁰⁸ Despite lack of clear evidence for them,³⁰⁹ some inhabitants are likely; nevertheless, a significant city is not.³¹⁰ Certainly it was influential after its refounding in 72 C.E., but then its character was quite different; Justin, who grew up there (*1 Apol.* 1), was a Gentile, likely a Roman by birth.³¹¹ Still, coins so far recovered in Neapolis avoid pagan symbols, in contrast to those from nearby Sebaste.³¹² Whether Luke would have known of Neapolis, built after his visit to Judea and outside his primary geographic range, is uncertain; certainly it did not exist, at least not as Neapolis, during Philip’s early ministry.

Hengel believes that it remained insignificant in this period,³¹³ though limited excavations make this impossible to prove. He suggests instead Sychar (modern Askar),³¹⁴ which may have been an important Samaritan city, was also near Mount Gerizim, and may have already known something of Jesus (John 4:5).³¹⁵ He concludes that Luke refers to this most prominent Samaritan town, whose name Luke either did not know or did not regard as relevant. Luke may have supposed that Samaria had a capital like Judea’s Jerusalem, but whereas he believed that Jerusalem had cities or towns (perhaps suburbs) nearby (Acts 5:16), he knew that Samaria had only villages (8:25).³¹⁶ Whether Shechem or another town is in mind, Luke presumably intends the largest gathering of Samaritans in the region.

302. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 89; Goulder, *Type and History*, 164. Jos. War 4.449 makes the identification explicitly but also notes that its exact location fell at the Samaritan village of Mabartha.

303. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.14.69 (employing *oppida*, “towns,” for Neapolis and Sebaste and not the diminutive *oppidula*, which could be used for “small towns”).

304. See, e.g., Spencer, *Philip*, 70–81, 85 (also citing ancient texts that demonstrate Jewish antipathy toward Shechem as a Samaritan site).

305. The allusion to Acts 7:15–16 is still relevant, since Luke would presumably know Shechem to be in Samaritan territory.

306. Ortiz, “Archaeology of Israel,” 106; Zangenberg, “Samaria,” 404, 416; Wahlde, “Archaeology,” 558.

307. Seger, “Shechem,” 23.

308. Ortiz, “Archaeology of Israel,” 106.

309. See, e.g., Zangenberg, “Samaria,” 404, 416; Wahlde, “Archaeology,” 558.

310. One may compare the Greek residents in Corinth between the destruction of old Corinth and the founding of new Corinth; see comment on Acts 18.

311. He calls himself a Samaritan (Justin *Dial.* 120.6), but he was uncircumcised (*Dial.* 28.2), knew nothing of Scripture until adulthood (7.1), and claims to have been a Gentile (41.3; Osborn, *Justin*, 6). For Neapolis as a pagan city, see Zangenberg, “Samaria,” 429–30.

312. Pummer, “Samaritans,” 471.

313. Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 73.

314. On which see also Zangenberg, “Samaria,” 416–18; on the identification with Askar, see also Wahlde, “Archaeology,” 557–59.

315. Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 74. The sources that he cites are mostly late, but John 4:5 remains relevant, especially if John assumes that some of his audience knows the name of the town. Supporting John’s frequent reliability, see, e.g., Keener, *John*, 3–139; more fully, Bauckham, *Testimony*; Blomberg, *Reliability of John’s Gospel*; for a different perspective, see, e.g., Lincoln, *John*, 26–50. Meier, “Samaritans,” suggests that Jesus was, at the least, not hostile to Samaritans; given the Gentile mission arising from his movement, I suspect that we may grant still more credence to the gospel tradition about Samaritans.

316. Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 76. On the many Samaritan villages, see Zangenberg, “Samaria,” 408–11; for “towns,” see 411–12.

II. PREACHING CHRIST (8:5)

Scholars often suggest that the Samaritans may have heard Philip's "preaching"³¹⁷ of Christ (the Anointed One) in terms of their own traditions of the Taheb.³¹⁸ This was the Samaritan concept most equivalent to the Jewish Messiah, but it was quite different from the Jewish concept. Samaritans spoke not of a Davidic Messiah or, indeed, much of an "anointed" ("messianic") agent per se but of the Taheb, the "Restorer," an eschatological prophet like Moses (*Memar Marqah* 2.40.28; 4.12).³¹⁹ Like Moses (see comment on Acts 3:22), the Taheb would also rule.³²⁰ As best we can tell, they believed that the era of divine favor (*rahutha*) ended soon after Moses, in the time of Eli, with Israel's religious practices becoming defiled from Samuel's time onward. The era of divine displeasure (*panutha*) now prevailed, but the Taheb, the prophet like Moses, would restore the era of divine favor.³²¹ So central was the new-Moses idea to the Taheb's mission that the Samaritan Pentateuch adds Deut 18:18 to the Decalogue in the Samaritan Pentateuch version of Exod 20:21b.³²²

Although this may be how the Samaritans initially related to Stephen's message, such niceties were probably lost on Luke's audience and not essential to his point. Josephus, another early writer who fails to specify the nature of their messianic expectation, also attests that they acted as if they expected a messianic figure of some sort (*Ant.* 18.85–87).³²³

But if Philip was a Hellenist, why would he travel to Samaria, and how would he preach there? Samaritans had writings in Hebrew, but in their largest center, they probably knew Greek no less than did Galileans. The influence of Sebaste on Samaria was probably no more direct than that of Tiberias or Sepphoris on rural Galilee and perhaps less. But it may have had *some* influence, and significant evidence indicates that Samaritans, both in the Diaspora and Palestine, used Greek and were hellenized.³²⁴ This may have been less true of the outlying villages around this town, but it was especially bilingual apostles who preached there (Acts 8:25). It is also of note that Samaria welcomed Judeans rejected by fellow Judeans as apostates (*Jos. Ant.* 11.346–47).³²⁵

III. PHILIP'S SIGNS (8:6–8)

Philip's miracles connect him with other leading figures in Luke's story of Jesus and his followers.³²⁶ Clearly, not only the apostles but also other Spirit-filled leaders whom they approved performed signs (Acts 6:8), as well as others who lacked an explicit connection with the Twelve (9:17–18). On ὁμοθυμαδόν, see comment on Acts 2:46. Although signs had been dramatic in Jerusalem (2:43; 3:6–8; 5:5, 10,

317. On the term κηρύσσω, see comment at Acts 5:42, though the term is first used in Acts here in 8:5.

318. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 282; Dunn, *Acts*, 108.

319. The *Memar Marqah* texts are from Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 264–65. This background is regularly noted; e.g., Klausner, *Jesus to Paul*, 295; Cullmann, *Christology*, 19; Teeple, *Prophet*, 63–64; MacDonald, *Samaritans*, 362–63; Bruce, *History*, 37–38; Longenecker, *Christology*, 34; Olsson, *Structure*, 191; Appold, *Motif*, 72. The Mosaic Taheb was the fifth article of the Samaritan creed (Brown, *John*, 1:172).

320. See Dexinger, "Taheb-Vorstellung."

321. MacDonald, *Samaritans*, 15; Bruce, *Books*, 131–32. Bowman, *Documents*, 263–83, collects materials on the Taheb, but our sources are unfortunately quite late (nineteenth century). Purvis, "Samaritans," 183, adds that the Taheb would also be like Joshua.

322. Bowman, *Documents*, 21; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 264–65. For the emphasis on Moses in the third- or fourth-century C.E. Samaritan *Memar Marqah*, see Bowman, *Documents*, 253.

323. With Witherington, *Acts*, 282. In Acts, Jesus's followers preach him as "Christ" especially to Jewish hearers (Acts 9:22; 17:3; 18:5, 28; 26:23), and Luke's audience probably assumed that the Samaritans would understand this concept as well.

324. See van der Horst, "Samaritans and Hellenism."

325. Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 154; cf. Talbert, *Acts*, 69.

326. See Spencer, *Philip*, 44–45.

12–16, 19; 6:8; probably 4:33), missiologists typically report them with particular intensity in regions that are being evangelized initially (cf. Rom 15:19).³²⁷ Here (Acts 8:6) God confirms his desire to reach the Samaritans (1:8; cf. Luke 17:16–18).

Because Luke emphasizes exorcisms and the healing of paralysis (Acts 8:7), it is possible that Philip specialized in particular kinds of healing (cf. the plural *χαρίσματα* *ιαμάτων* in 1 Cor 12:9), but it is more likely that Luke reports only the most dramatic examples.³²⁸ Mere pain relief might be of benefit to the sufferers but would be of limited evidential value compared with more obvious signs. Lameness and paralysis were among the dramatic maladies most often reported (along with blindness) at the Asclepius temple,³²⁹ just as Vespasian heals both lameness and blindness in the propaganda in Suet. *Vesp.* 7.2.

More important is that healing of disabled limbs appears in Jesus's summary of his ministry in Luke 7:22, borrowing language from Isa 35:6.³³⁰ Luke provides more-detailed accounts of healings of the "paralyzed" in Luke 5:24–25; Acts 9:33–34 (elsewhere in the NT only at Heb 12:12) and of those unable to walk (*χωλοὶ*) in Acts 3:2–8 and 14:8–10 (another summary statement notes that they were healed through Jesus's ministry, Luke 7:22; they are also among the marginalized affirmed in 14:13, 21).³³¹ On *χωλός*, see fuller comment on Acts 3:2.

Paralysis was also a dramatic ailment inviting a dramatic miraculous cure. Ancient writers classed various ailments under similar titles; one may compare Hippocrates's discussions of *παραπληγία* (and cognates); some of the many afflicted with this during a winter epidemic died (Hippocr. *Epid.* 1.14.1–4); paralysis accompanied various sicknesses (2.2.24; 2.3.1.e; 6.7.1; 7.35).³³² Perhaps partly because of their visibility, the healing of those unable to walk continues to figure prominently in modern miracle reports.³³³

Many people could offer unverified claims of exorcism, but Luke reports dramatic confirmations of the exorcisms here, of the sort that ancients seem to have accepted (Jos. *Ant.* 8.48).³³⁴ The "loud shouts" of subject demons fit the parallel with Jesus's

327. I note reports in new evangelistic settings in Keener, *Miracles*, 30, 260n273, 262, 274, 306, 332–34, 367–68, 383, 384n218, 407, 418, 523, 652, 687n250, 704, 710, 729n113, 741n160, 748, 837n341, 839n357, 845.

328. Though ancient healing reports did know how to simply summarize—e.g., "every kind of sickness" (Strabo 8.6.15; Matt 4:23; 9:35; 10:1).

329. Case, *Origins*, 108; cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 90; see *Epid.* inscr. 4, 9 (in Grant, *Religions*, 57–58). For other healing reports of lameness, see Bultmann, *Tradition*, 232–33 (citing Lucian *Lover of Lies* 11; Suet. *Vesp.* 7; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.39; IG 4.951.107ff., 110ff., 113ff.; 4.952.86ff., 110ff., 132–33). Vespasian allegedly healed a lame man and a blind man (Suet. *Vesp.* 7.2); a rabbinic parable also joins them (e.g., *b. Sanh.* 91b; Johnston, "Interpretations," 508), and the rabbis often linked these categories (e.g., *b. Ber.* 58b; *Šabb.* 106b; *Ta'an.* 4a; *Ḥag.* 2a; 4a; 6a; *Ketub.* 17a; 39a; *Soṭah* 27a; *B. Qam.* 78b; *Sanh.* 45b; 71a).

330. Because this Q citation is probably authentic, Sanders thinks that the historical Jesus probably did view his miracles in terms of Isa 35 (*Figure*, 168; cf. also Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 44). Some apparently already counted as messianic the sorts of works depicted there (Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, 186–87, cites 4Q521; 11QMelch II, 18); 4Q521 may blend imagery from Isa 35 with Isa 61 and other precedent, perhaps Elijah's miracles (for discussion, see Wise and Tabor, "Messiah"; Tabor, "Resurrection"; Collins, "Works").

331. For the lame as a character type in the LXX, see Roth, *Blind, Lame, Poor*, 107–8.

332. Hippocrates also referred to temporary paralysis of a leg and arm (*παραπληγικός*, *Epid.* 2.2.8).

333. Bush and Pegues, *Move*, 51–52, 56; Chavda, *Miracle*, 12–13 (a number of such healings, in the Democratic Republic of Congo), 146; De Wet, "Signs," 93–94 (following McGavran, "Healing and Evangelization," 294–96; for multiple healings in the Ivory Coast, 1973, involving J. Girard), 94–96 (multiple, in South Africa), 104 (paralysis, Argentina). I also witnessed one such occasion where I knew the parties involved. See further comment on Acts 9:34; extensive discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 523–36.

334. See Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 66–67 (citing Jos. *Ant.* 8.48; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.10, 20; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 16). In modern times, see Hes, "Role," 376.

story.³³⁵ Such behavior characterized later Christian exorcisms, apparently no less publicly and even more forcefully.³³⁶ (On exorcism, see excursus on Acts 16:16; also comment on Acts 5:16.) The spirits’ uncleanness cannot be limited to the Samaritan milieu, given Acts 5:16; Luke 4:36; 6:18. (On unclean spirits, see comment on Acts 5:16.)

Joy (Acts 8:8) is characteristic of conversions in Luke-Acts (see esp. Luke 15:5–7, 9–10, 23–24, 32; Acts 11:23; 13:48; 15:3; cf. Luke 10:20), including in the immediately following account of Philip’s ministry to an African official (Acts 8:39).³³⁷

IV. SIMON THE SORCERER (8:9–11)

This passage (esp. 8:6–13) contrasts Philip, God’s agent, with Simon the magician, probably as part of Luke’s antimagical apologetic. Spencer outlines the contrasts as follows:³³⁸

Simon the Sorcerer	Philip the Evangelist
Works wonders (8:11)	Works wonders (8:6, 13)
Draws crowds (8:9–10)	Draws crowds (8:6–7)
“Heeded” (8:10–11)	“Heeded” (8:6)*
Simon is “great power” (8:10)	Philip performs “great powers” (8:13)
Simon “amazes” Samaritans with his claims and magic (8:9, 11)	Philip’s miracles “amaze” the Samaritans (8:13)

* This connection (through the verb προσέχω) is also recognized by Witherington, *Acts*, 285 (noting that real conversion is therefore implied only at Acts 8:12). Of ten uses of the verb in Luke-Acts, these three constitute the only instance where the term appears more than once in a narrative. Heeding (προσέχοντες) the world leads to destruction (*Test. Job* 33:4).

I would add another contrast, although it is less verbal and more in terms of the larger narrative portrayal: whereas Simon claims to be someone great, seeking his own status (8:9; cf. 8:19), Philip acts only “in the name of Jesus” (8:12, 16). Simon similarly presupposes worldly notions of power (8:19), whereas Philip obeys counterintuitive, countercultural commands (8:26–30). Such contrasts between true and false signs workers evoke biblical portraits of Moses confronting Pharaoh’s magicians (Exod 7:10–12) or Elijah confronting the false prophets on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:21–40).³³⁹ Pagan sorcerers could duplicate some divine signs (Exod 7:11, 22; 8:7), but they could not go beyond a certain limit (7:12; 8:18–19; 9:11). Such reports recognize other forms of spiritual power while underlining the superiority of the true deity’s power. (For a sample of contemporary missiological power-encounter analogies, see comment at Acts 8:13.)

This extended passage (Acts 8:9–24) functions as the first of several confrontations or contrasts with sorcerers, such as Elymas Bar-Jesus (13:6–11), the Philippian slave girl possessed by a divinatory pythoness spirit (16:16–24), and Sceva’s seven sons (19:13–16).³⁴⁰ Not only in Acts but in ancient writers generally, we encounter

335. E.g., Luke 4:33; 8:28; Mark 1:26; 5:7. Later, cf. *Test. Sol.* 6:9.

336. MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 27–28.

337. Most philosophers viewed happiness (εὐδαιμονία, a term absent in the NT) as the goal of virtuous life (e.g., Mus. Ruf. 7, p. 58.13; 17, p. 108.7), the by-product of genuine freedom from constraint (Lucian *Dem.* 19–20); true joy (χαρά) differed from mere laughter and jesting (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.99–100). For joy in ancient texts, see Keener, *John*, 580, 1004; in Acts, see the survey in Harnack, *Acts*, 277–81; fuller comment on Acts 13:52.

338. Spencer, *Philip*, 88. Some of these observations overlap in practice. For a different set of comparisons, see Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 161.

339. For Luke’s prophetic characterization of Philip, see Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 91–93.

340. Spencer, *Philip*, 96–98 (96 on Acts 13; 96–97 on Acts 16; 97–98 on Acts 19); Johnson, *Acts*, 11, 153. The first power encounter in Luke-Acts, in Luke 4:1–13, is actually the most dramatic, setting the stage for the others’ success.

magicians like this, rendering the account plausible as well as literarily significant.³⁴¹ Simon is a more nuanced, rounded character than Judas, Ananias, or Elymas; he believes (at least temporarily) and fears divine judgment (8:24).³⁴²

*Excursus: Magic and Magicians*³⁴³

Apart from Simon's conversion, followers of Philip and Simon might have labeled each other magicians and credited their own leader with miracle working.³⁴⁴ Scholars have long labored to distinguish magic from miracle or religion, but the dichotomy is not always a clear one.³⁴⁵ One distinction is that magic conventionally seeks to manipulate spirits or forces whereas religion and miracle do not.³⁴⁶ This distinction does not always hold, however,³⁴⁷ since even some civic religion sought to manipulate deities.³⁴⁸ The use of spiritual power for selfish or nonedifying purposes was another criterion of magic, though again the distinction was not always observed.³⁴⁹

Ancients often used a more subjective criterion,³⁵⁰ labeling supernatural activity in alien social groups as magic in contrast to such activity among themselves.³⁵¹ In general, public, civic activity was viewed as religion; secretive and subversive activity was viewed as magic. Ultimately, a major issue was whether people believed that the power was used for personal advantage or the common good.³⁵² Thus, for Apollonius (*Vit. Apoll.* 1.34), various criteria distinguish magic from miracle working, but most important is the issue of greed. Charges of magic were common against all who did miracles (hence Luke's need for antimagical apologetic, below), but the best answer to them is to keep using miraculous power without seeming to desire it and without

341. Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 43.

342. Focusing on what was negative about a character was considered malicious only if it was not necessary to the telling of the story (Plut. *Mal. Hdt.* 3, *Mor.* 855C).

343. On magic generally, see, e.g., Graf, *Magic*; Aune, "Magic"; Martin, *Religions*, 27–29; MacMullen, *Enemies*, 95–127; Yamauchi, "Magic in World"; in the OT, see, e.g., Van Dam, "Divination," 160–61. For collections or discussions of ancient magical texts, see, e.g., *PGM*; *PDM*; Brashear, "Corpora"; Arnold, "Magical Papyri." Although the papyri are late, they reflect practices attested much earlier (Harder, "Defixio," 176).

344. Reimer, *Miracle*, 2, 245. This is a natural rhetorical pattern that also occurs in modern settings (e.g., Lindsay, *Lake*, 28–29).

345. See Aune, "Magic," 1511–12; Grant, *Religions*, 45–46 (though noting that most magic lacked a religious interest). The cognitive processes involved in magical thinking (see now Czachesz, "Magic and Mind") reflect broader cognitive patterns. Crump, *Knocking*, 169–77, offers helpful distinctions between mainstream magic and mainstream earliest Christian prayer.

346. Thus, e.g., Arnold, *Power*, 19; Klauck, *Context*, 215–18, esp. 218 ("Coercion is typical of magic, and petition typical of religion"); Reimer, *Miracle*, 3–7 (summarizing the view), 250.

347. See Remus, *Conflict*, 52–62; Reimer, *Miracle*, 7–8. Some others, e.g., Smith, *Magician*, 69, go too far. In many societies today, diviners themselves use spirits to divine what spirits are causing problems (see, e.g., Berends, "African Healing Practices," 283; Ritchie, *Spirit*, 24–25); shamans can use power for curing or harming (Peters, *Healing in Nepal*, 61, 63; Ritchie, *Spirit*, 28).

348. See, e.g., rainmaking rituals in *b. Ta'an.* 25b; Moore, *Judaism*, 2:44–45 (comparing the functions of libations among pagans); Ringgren, *Religion*, 190; Harrelson, *Cult*, 69; Uval, "Streams"; I have explored this practice somewhat more fully in Keener, *John*, 723–24.

349. See Remus, *Conflict*, 62–67. The purpose for which spiritual power is employed is a criterion for distinguishing good and bad power in African traditions (Mbiti, *Religion*, 258–59).

350. Modern anthropological approaches seek to avoid imposing modern interpreters' value judgments (Aune, "Magic," 1509).

351. Remus, *Conflict*, 67–72; idem, "Magic or Miracle?"; cf. Reimer, *Miracle*, 8–10 (summarizing the view, but see 10–12). For magicians as deviant from the religious community, see Reimer, *Miracle*, 248. For rival witchcraft accusations more recently, see, e.g., Favret-Saada, *Witchcraft*, 165.

352. See Reimer, *Miracle*, 139–41 (emphasizing the importance of fringe status).

seeming greedy.³⁵³ For Simon, the issue is that Philip's power exceeds his own; for Luke, it is that Philip acts for the true God and Simon does not.

1. Magi and Magic³⁵⁴

When Luke claims that Simon was “practicing magic” (Acts 8:9) and amazing people with his “magical activities” (8:11), Luke employs the more pejorative nuances of this word group. The magi were originally a Medo-Persian class of astrologers and diviners (Hdt. 1.101, 140). Some (especially in the “Pythagorean” tradition) allegedly acquired supernatural powers through initiation into Chaldean wisdom.³⁵⁵ In most accounts, magi hail from Persia or Babylon.³⁵⁶ The Chaldeans and Persians were known in the Roman Empire for divination³⁵⁷ and astrology,³⁵⁸ and Greeks and Romans regularly associated Chaldean magi with magical powers,³⁵⁹ prediction of the future,³⁶⁰ dream interpretation,³⁶¹ or specially regarded wisdom.³⁶² Many used them as religious functionaries.³⁶³ Roman officials are known to have received magi with honor.³⁶⁴

The term μάγος could be used positively, referring to the Persian usage (Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 17), even in a context where others had employed it negatively (*Ep. Apoll.* 16). Some Egyptian priests became known for working magic outside Egypt and acquired this title.³⁶⁵ In late antiquity, some confused magi with deities.³⁶⁶

353. Ibid., 246. See Acts 3:6. Heintz, *Magicien*, emphasizes ancient polemic against wonder workers as magicians (55–101) and views Luke's portrayal of Simon in this light (102–42).

354. For ancient perspectives on magicians and magi, cf. also Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 190–92; on magi, see also Yamauchi, *Persia*, 467–91.

355. E.g., Val. Max. 8.7.ext. 2; Pliny E. *N.H.* 25.5.13 (skeptically); Lucian *Lover of Lies* 33 (farically); *Phil. Sale* 3 (farically); *Cock* 18; Iambl. *V.P.* 4.19; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.2, 18, 25–26; Eunapius *Lives* 468; cf. Feldman, “View of Birth.”

356. E.g., Cic. *Leg.* 2.10.26; Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.100; *Good Person* 74; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36; Lucian *Men.* 6; *Runaways* 8; Diog. Laert. 8.1.3; Char. *Chaer.* 5.9.4; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.24; *Vit. soph.* 1.10.494; cf. Philost. *Letters* 8 (46); Assyria in Choliambic fragment, Phoenix, 1.Ninos, 1.2, 5 (the fragment appears in *Herodes, Cercidas, and the Greek Choliambic Poets*, LCL, 242–45). On the magi of Persia, see further Olmstead, *Persian Empire*, 28–29, 196, 251, 372, 449, 477–78, 496, 517.

357. Polyb. 34.2.7; Catull. *Carm.* 90.2; Arrian *Alex.* 7.18.2, 4; Apul. *Metam.* 2.12. In Vell. Paterc. 2.24.3, Persian magi predict Sulla's future from marks on his body.

358. Diod. Sic. 1.81.6; 2.31.8; Quint. Curt. 5.1.22; Juv. *Sat.* 6.553–64; Aul. Gel. 1.9.6; 14.1; Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 1.20.43; Philo *Dreams* 1.53; *Sib. Or.* 3.227; *Pesiq. Rab.* 14:8. On the magi and astrology, cf. Yamauchi, *Persia*, 472–74.

359. Lucian *Men.* 6; Char. *Chaer.* 5.9.4. Romans associated the best magic with the East—namely, Egypt and Persia (Klauck, *Context*, 213).

360. Plut. *Alex.* 3.3–4; Arrian *Alex.* 7.16.5; Marc. Aur. 3.3.1; Chaldeans in Plut. *Sulla* 5.5; 37.1. Cf. further Kuhrt, “Mesopotamia,” 61.

361. Hdt. 1.107, 127; 7.12–19; Plut. *Alex.* 18.4; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 10.195–203; Cic. *Div.* 1.46.

362. Diog. Laert. 8.1.3; 9.11.61; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.38–48; Plut. *Themist.* 29.4; Lucian *Runaways* 8; cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.10.26; Philo *Good Person* 74–75; *Spec. Laws* 3.100; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.24; their silence in Quint. Curt. 4.6.6. Jews may have also viewed their association with dreams as a divine accommodation to pagan inability to hear more clearly (cf. Gnuse, “Dream Interpreter in Foreign Court”).

363. On their involvement in religion, see Xen. *Cyr.* 4.5.14, 51; 7.3.1; 7.5.35, 57; 8.1.23; 8.3.24; Quint. Curt. 3.3.10; 5.1.22; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 49.7; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.29; Iambl. *V.P.* 4.19; in other cases they appear publicly silent about religion (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.10.494). On their involvement with Zoroaster, see, e.g., Dio Chrys. 36.40–41. They are also associated with the Persian (Max. Tyre 2.4) and Zoroastrian (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.40) reverence for fire (Iambl. *V.P.* 28.154). Although Zoroastrianism existed, it probably dominated Parthia only later, with hellenized polytheism dominating at this time (see Yamauchi, *Persia*, 396–97; cf. 401, 420); the magi were polytheistic, but eventually Zoroastrianism influenced at least some, perhaps more, of them (Yamauchi, *Persia*, 468–69).

364. Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 14; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 37.

365. See Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 226–28, 236 (citing, e.g., Dio Cass. *Hist.* 72.8.4); Rives, *Religion*, 169 (giving the reference as 71.8.4). Quack, “Mages égyptianisés?,” attributes pseudo-Zoroastrian sources in Egypt to possible Persian magi there.

366. See Gallagher, *Divine Man*, 174 (while denying an early Hellenistic conception of the divine man); cf. Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 16–17. Later Christians countered the pagan divine man of late antiquity with Christian holy men (for Syria in the late fourth through the late sixth century C.E., see Brown, “Syria”). On “divine men,”

The term, however, could be used (like its cognate verb here) by extension for sorcerers and quacks.³⁶⁷ Some ancients regarded the Persian magi as fraudulent,³⁶⁸ connecting negative magic with them.³⁶⁹ Even those who viewed them positively might wish to be dissociated from them.³⁷⁰ Most relevant for audiences for whom the Greek translation of the Bible was normative as Scripture is that the term applies to magicians in Dan 2:2, 10 and, more explicitly, to Daniel's enemies in some other Greek translations.

2. Malevolent Sorcerers versus Charlatans

Some ancients doubted the efficacy of ritual incantations,³⁷¹ but others noted that such formulas were standard in Roman public religion and claimed that they had often proved effective.³⁷² Some magicians were recognized as charlatans.³⁷³ Intellectuals sometimes set out to expose them,³⁷⁴ as in the case of Lucian's opposition to Alexander the false prophet. Alexander allegedly would open sealed questions to the god, then answer them as he thought best (Lucian *Alex.* 20), gaining up to eighty thousand obols a year by this means (*Alex.* 23); when a prophecy failed, he changed it in the records (*Alex.* 27–28). He also found a way to project a voice into a serpent skin (*Alex.* 26) and offered detailed oracles to people who, unknown to the audience, did not exist (*Alex.* 50). Lucian and others trapped him repeatedly (*Alex.* 53–55), but his ilk were probably common.³⁷⁵ Charlatans of various sorts may have even become a standing object of humor.³⁷⁶

Some opined that a truly well-educated person would not succumb to practicing magic.³⁷⁷ But while magic is thought to have circulated especially among the lower classes,³⁷⁸ adept practitioners of magic had to be able to read with sufficient literacy to use and follow the right spells.³⁷⁹

see further discussion in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:330–34, or in Keener, *John*, 268–70; also, e.g., Blackburn, “ANAPEZ”; Tiede, *Figure*; Holladay, *Theios aner*; Gallagher, *Divine Man*; Pilgaard, “*Theios aner*”; Lane, “*Theios anēr*”.

367. Hermog. *Inv.* 3.10.156; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 184. For negative associations with the magi, see, e.g., Hdt. 3.79–80; Chaldeans in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.41. Even Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.26 recognizes that their wisdom is not in every matter.

368. Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.12.47; 28.27.94; 28.66.228–29; 29.12.53; 29.20.68; 30.1.1; 30.2.3 (with less hostility, cf. 24.99.156; 24.102.160; 25.5.13); Alvares, “Magus” (proposing one in Chariton).

369. Thus Pliny the Elder treats magic in *N.H.* 30 (after having introduced the issue in 30.1.1), attributing magic's origin to Zoroaster in Persia (30.2.3). Claims against magi as sorcerers were appropriated positively by their advocates several centuries before Luke (see Bremmer, “Birth”).

370. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.2 (part of his antimagical apologetic, as in 5.12).

371. Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.3.10 notes that many intellectuals doubted them (cf. 28.4.17). Milo doubts magic, unaware that his wife, Pamphile, is a witch (Apul. *Metam.* 2.12); Plut. *Bride* 48, *Mor.* 145C, considers magic and charms foolish beliefs.

372. Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.3.11–13; 28.4.14; 28.5.29.

373. The term γόησις (cf. 2 Tim 3:13), which can mean “magician” (cf. *Test. Jud.* 23:1; Plato *Meno* 80A, figuratively; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.17; Porph. *Marc.* 33.509), means “impostor” in Babr. 57.13 (cf. deception in 2 Macc 12:24). Some ancients suspected that magic was simply “the illusion of all the greatest liars” (Quint. Curt. 7.4.8 [LCL, 1:153]).

374. See Plato's criticisms as well (*Rep.* 2.364BC).

375. A. M. Harmon in the translator's note in *Lucian*, LCL, 4:173, observes that inscriptions verify Alexander's widespread popularity.

376. Thus Toner, *Culture*, 41, cites the ancient joke about an astrologer who promises a mother that her sick son will live long. When she wants to defer payment until the next day, he protests: “But what happens if he dies in the night?” (*Philogelos* 187; cf. 201–2).

377. Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.10.590.

378. Aune, “Magic,” 1521; Arnold, *Power*, 19. Its use among those without access to other means of social power is probable, but in Egypt, it apparently at least started with the priests. Kee, *Miracle*, 213, argues that sorcery accusations are more common in upper classes, but they may simply be more commonly preserved there. In many traditional societies, more fortunate and wealthy individuals are more often targeted by jealous witchcraft attacks (Gelfand, “Disorders,” 167).

379. E.g., Lucian *Lucius* 11. Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 228–29, connects this literacy especially with the priesthood in Egypt. Koester, *Introduction*, 1:201, notes the use of magic among the well educated.

In a reversal of the deceptive-magician theme, Persian magi persuaded their king that a philosopher at his court was just a magician (γόητα, Eunapius *Lives* 466).³⁸⁰ Rabbis also knew of workers of illusions and considered them far less dangerous than genuine sorcerers (*Sipre Deut.* 171.6.1).

3. Gentile Magic in General³⁸¹

Magical papyri flourished most fully in the third century C.E., perhaps partly because Rome decreased the support for other activities of Egyptian priests.³⁸² Some scholars therefore doubt their utility for understanding the first-century world,³⁸³ but magic hardly began in the third century. For example, fifth- to fourth-century B.C.E. Greek magic reflects concepts of nature dominant in that era.³⁸⁴

Society usually viewed magic as subversive and antisocial because it was often used for harm.³⁸⁵ (This remains true in many societies today.)³⁸⁶ Nevertheless, many were fascinated by stories of magic, even when it was considered malevolent.³⁸⁷ Thus Lucian tells of one Lucius who rejected good advice and craved magic.³⁸⁸ His quest is rewarded with the wrong potion, transforming him into an ass,³⁸⁹ with an implied consonant moral. Some officials eventually tried to suppress the flourishing private practice of magic,³⁹⁰ albeit unsuccessfully.

Curse invocations were central to ancient magic.³⁹¹ Virtually anything harmful

380. Some others also accused some philosophers of being frauds (e.g., Diog. Laert. 8.1.41). Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.10b, pp. 60–61.1–2; 2.7.10c, pp. 60–61.22–23, warns against γοητεία, which depends on deception (cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 16.1; 32.39; Philod. *Crit. fig.* 60.8–12; Lucian *Peregr.* 13).

381. For one survey of nearly twenty recent books on ancient magic, see Cueva, “Texts.”

382. Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 198–237. Magical powers proliferated in the Greco-Roman period, when ritual prerogatives once limited to Egyptian priests were democratized (Ritner, *Mechanics*, 244–45).

383. Kee, *Miracle*, 52, 288.

384. So Collins, “Cause”; cf. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 268. The abusive use of the term “magic” was evolving in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. (Bremmer, “Birth”).

385. E.g., SIG 3.985 (= LSAM 20), lines 12–15, from Asia Minor (Klauck, *Context*, 66); see further Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 239–42; Yamauchi, “Magic?,” 90; Kippenberg, “Magic.” Magic was thought efficacious even against good persons (Apul. *Metam.* 9.30) and was believed to often employ parts of corpses (Apul. *Metam.* 2.20, 30; cf. PGM 1.248–49; Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.2.4, 7; a crucifixion nail in *m. Šabb.* 6:10). Welch, “Miracles,” 369–71, argues for its illegality, but most of his primary evidence concerns predictions of death.

386. “Black magic” remains antisocial in many societies, although others practiced “benevolent” magic (see, e.g., Kadetotad, “Practices,” 383–84); in many societies, it is used to kill (e.g., Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 15) and is thought especially dangerous among co-wives (Stephens, *Family*, 68; Whisson, “Disorders,” 288); for a variety of uses, but especially harmful or selfish, see Mbiti, *Religions*, 196, 200, 203–4, 221, 258, 275, 278, 328; for societies’ condemnation of witches, see, e.g., 209. Through medical diagnosis and rehydration, some persons have recovered after traditional “voodoo death” sequences (Eastwell, “Voodoo Death,” esp. 5). See fuller discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 47, 803–9.

387. Lucian *Lucius* 4; Apul. *Metam.* 3.19.

388. Lucian *Lucius* 4–5. In *Lucius* 56, he acknowledges the danger of his curiosity.

389. Lucian *Lucius* 13.

390. See Horsley, *Documents*, 1:47–51, §12 (from a prefect in late second-century C.E. Egypt).

391. Klauck, *Context*, 223–26; Harder, “Defixio,” 175; see, e.g., Jordan, “New Curse Tablets.” This is also true in some more recent forms of magic (cf. Mbiti, *Religions*, 276; MacNutt, *Power*, 74–75; Peters, *Healing in Nepal*, 61, 63; Lewis, “Possession,” 189, 214; traditions about sorcerers “sending” spirits in Shorter, *Witchdoctor*, 198). On “the evil eye” (though I have listed together various conceptions of it; some mean only stinginess), see P.Oxy. 292.11–12; Aelian *Nat. An.* 11.18; Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.2.16–18; Aul. Gel. 9.4.8; *b. Ber.* 20a; 55b; *Sanh.* 93a; *Lev. Rab.* 16:8; 17:3; *Num. Rab.* 12:4; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 42:5; Kern-Ulmer, “Evil Eye”; Dickie, “Evil Eye”; Elliott, “Fear”; Pilch, “Eye”; cf. Bryen and Wypustek, “Evil Eyes.” Rab attributed nearly all diseases to this cause (Yamauchi, “Magic?,” 124). (Appearance in one translation of 4Q477 2 II, 4, 7 is reconstructed.) Cf. the concept more recently in Kadetotad, “Practices,” 384; Mbiti, *Religions*, 259.

could be attributed to magic.³⁹² Erotic charms were meant to secure sexual influence,³⁹³ contrary to novelists' emphasis on female practitioners, they were employed by both genders.³⁹⁴ Some spells were to cheat in sports—for example, a spell to overturn and wreck chariots.³⁹⁵ Other spells were for defensive magic—for protection,³⁹⁶ for example, in childbirth.³⁹⁷ Magic could also be associated with achieving invisibility³⁹⁸ or changing one substance into another.³⁹⁹ Some apparently claimed to be able to procure whatever they wanted by magic.⁴⁰⁰

The means of magic differ in various cultures.⁴⁰¹ Often in Greco-Roman antiquity, magicians were thought to manipulate spirits⁴⁰² and hence (from a strict monotheistic perspective) to traffic in demons.⁴⁰³ Beings intermediate between mortals and deities were most common,⁴⁰⁴ though deities were also involved.⁴⁰⁵ Magic could employ drugs—that is, potions and poisons.⁴⁰⁶ (Josephus in fact interprets prohibition of witchcraft as against those who poison others.)⁴⁰⁷ Potions could be used to make a rival infertile⁴⁰⁸ or (in pure fiction) turn people into beasts.⁴⁰⁹ Witches were also thought

392. Faraone, "Spells." Tombstones might invoke divine vengeance against those thought to have killed through sorcery (Graf, "Death").

393. See, e.g., PGM 13.304; 32.1–19; 36.69–133, 187–210, 291–311, 333–60; 62.1–24; 101.1–53; Pliny E. N.H. 27.35.57; 27.99.125; Philost. *Hrk.* 16.2; *Test. Reub.* 4:9; Frankfurter, "Perils"; Jordan, "Erotic Spell"; cf. Theocritus *The Spell* (GBP 26–39); the charm in Horsley, *Documents*, 1:33–34. In a novel, a witch might attract young men or other things once she had a piece of their hair (Apul. *Metam.* 3.16–18). In more recent societies, see, e.g., Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 15.

394. Dickie, "Who Practised Love-Magic?"; Lewis, *Life*, 96, emphasizes male practitioners more; cf., e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 385 intro. Apuleius, in fact, had to defend himself against this charge (Bradley, "Apologia").

395. PGM 4.2211–16. Cf. comment in Rives, *Religion*, 171.

396. See some examples in Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 219–20 (along with "black magic"); Faraone, "Stopping Evil"; today, on a popular level, MacNutt, *Power*, 74–75. Cf. Jewish apotropaic use of Scripture in amulets and devices (Lincicum, "Apotropaism").

397. E.g., Dunand, *Religion en Égypte*, 114.

398. E.g., PGM 1.222–31, 247–62 (esp. 256–57); cf. (in farce) Tibullus 1.2.58; further Keener, *John*, 773–74. Similarly, the ring of Midas (Pliny E. N.H. 33.4.8) or Gyges (Lucian *Ship* 42; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.8).

399. Hom. *Od.* 10.239–40; Ovid *Metam.* 14.414–15; *y. Hag.* 2:2, §5; *Sanh.* 6:6, §2.

400. Lucian *Dem.* 23 (noting that Demonax countered this claim by insisting that he could procure by money what he desired).

401. In some societies, magic can even function by violating taboos, not just by sympathetic magic based on analogy (Makarius, "Violation," esp. 232).

402. See, e.g., PGM 1.88–89, 164–66, 179–85, 252–53; 2.52–54; 4.3043–44; Lucian *Men.* 9; *Alex.* 13; cf. Klauck, *Context*, 228; Nilsson, *Piety*, 171; Smith, *Magician*, 97–99; Arnold, *Power*, 18. For modern shamans manipulating spirits, see, e.g., Shorter, *Witchdoctor*, 178.

403. CD XII, 2–3 (which compares those controlled with demons to necromancers; see also Gaster, *Scriptures*, 85); *L.A.B.* 34:2–3; *b. Sanh.* 67b.

404. Klauck, *Context*, 214.

405. Graf, "Initiation"; e.g., PGM 1.298 (Apollo); 2.98–117 (Osiris); 4.2626–29 (requiring a charm lest one anger Selene when invoking her); 12.67 (gods in general). For attempts to manipulate deities, Pliny E. N.H. 28.4.19.

406. E.g., Diod. Sic. 4.45.3; Philost. *Hrk.* 25.13; *Sib. Or.* 5.165 (Rome's destruction for desiring magic [φαρμακίην]); *Test. Jos.* 5:1 (deadly poisons); 6:1 (love charms in the food); *Herm.* 17.7; cf. Guthrie, *Orpheus*, 17–18 (on Orpheus). Judaism opposed their use (*Sib. Or.* 3.225, probably second century B.C.E.; Gal 5:20; cf. the probably later curse invocation against those who secretly "poisoned" a loved one, in Deissmann, *Light*, 424). Roman law harshly treated poisoning (Grant, *Paul*, 114, citing Paulus *Dig.* 48.19.38.5). Drugs could impair the senses (Isaeus *Astyph.* 37, φαρμάκων). The more general medical sense of φάρμακον (which could mean "medicine" as well as "potion" or "poison") was different (Diod. Sic. 17.31.6; Appian *Hist. rom.* 6.14.87).

407. *Jos. Ant.* 4.279.

408. Eurip. *Andr.* 355.

409. Circe in Hom. *Od.* 10.235–36, 290, 317, 326; Parth. *L.R.* 12.2; cf. Diod. Sic. 4.45.3; probably Symm. *Ep.* 1.47.1. Circe also used potions to bewitch animals (Hom. *Od.* 10.212–13). For magic transforming substances, see, e.g., Ovid *Metam.* 14.414–15; *y. Hag.* 2:2, §5; *Sanh.* 6:6, §2; but deities also transformed substances (Hom. *Od.* 13.162–63) or persons (e.g., Hesiod *Astron.* frg. 3; Apollod. *Bib.* 2.1.3.1; Eurip. *Bacch.* 1330–32; Iugon 1.27).

to change themselves into beasts to accomplish their harmful plans.⁴¹⁰ Astrology is prominent in the magical papyri.⁴¹¹

Magicians were feared for their malevolent activity.⁴¹² Particular magical gestures would betray the activity of harmful sorcerers present during childbirth (Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.17.59). Already Rome's Twelve Tables decreed punishments against those who cast spells against crops or did other magical harm (28.4.17).⁴¹³ Some thought it helpful to slay sorcerers if one were able to catch them.⁴¹⁴ In novels, tremendous power was attributed to the most powerful sorcerers.⁴¹⁵ On "magicians," see further comment on Acts 13:6–8.

4. Magic in Judaism

Educated Jewish people were well aware of magical ideas in the Greco-Roman world.⁴¹⁶ Indeed, Greco-Egyptian magical practices influenced Jewish magic and possibly even Hekhalot texts.⁴¹⁷ Though adapting Greek ideas, Jewish magic probably normally remained monotheistic and did not claim to manipulate God.⁴¹⁸

Many Jews also became known for practicing magic, as Acts suggests (Acts 13:6; 19:13–14).⁴¹⁹ Ancients often associated Moses with powerful magic.⁴²⁰ One of the first alchemists known to us was a Jewish woman named Maria, who believed that God had revealed many alchemical secrets to her.⁴²¹ Polytheistic magical invocations

410. Lucian *Lucius* 54; Apul. *Metam.* 2.30. In more recent magic, see Mbiti, *Religions*, 258 (and cf. 220); Prince, "Yoruba Psychiatry," 92; Umeh, *Dibia*, 132; Nanan, "Sorcerer," 82; cf. also the transformation in Zempleni, "Symptom," 99.

411. Klauck, *Context*, 236; Arnold, *Power*, 28 (citing PGM 4.2490); also PGM 4.651; 13.709–11; 36.330–32; 62.52–75; PDM Sup. 183–84; cf. Apul. *Metam.* 3.15; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex* 1.4, 12; y. *Roš Haš.* 3:8, §§1–2; *CIJ* 2:90–91, §849. This confluence may, however, partly reflect the flourishing of both magical papyri and astrology in the third century C.E.

412. This remains true in many societies that believe that sorcery can kill, seduce, etc. (e.g., Tippet, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 15).

413. But Rives, "Magic in XII Tables," contends that these early laws were not originally antimagical. In any case, certainly by the first century B.C.E. Roman law condemned magic (Smith, *Magician*, 75–76).

414. Lucian *Lucius* 54.

415. Apul. *Metam.* 2.5; 3.15.

416. See Smith, "Occult in Josephus." Cf. magic in Amalek (y. *Roš Haš.* 3:8, §1), Thessaly (Lucian *Lucius* 4; *Dial. C.* 1 [Glycera and Thais], 281; *Dial. C.* 4 [Melitta and Bacchis 1], 286 [probably]; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.7), and especially Egypt (PGM passim; PDM passim; "King Cheops and the Magicians" [in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 13–24]; Hom. *Od.* 4.228–34; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 31, 33; Apul. *Metam.* 2.28; Heliod. *Eth.* 6.14; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.2–8; *Abot R. Nat.* 28 A; 48, §132 B; b. *Qidd.* 49b; *Sanh.* 67b; *Gen. Rab.* 86:5; *Exod. Rab.* 9:6; 20:19; Tg. Ps.-J. on Gen 49:22–23; Dauphin, "Amulet"; Frankfurter, "Magic"; idem, *Religion in Egypt*, 198–237, esp. 216–17, 228, 236–37; Klauck, *Context*, 213).

417. Lesses, "Speaking with Angels"; cf. Arnold, "Sceva," 18–20.

418. Kern Ulmer, "Depiction of Magic"; cf. the piling up of divine names in *CIJ* 2:62–65, §819. Late fourth- and early fifth-century C.E. amulets in Galilee are syncretistic but remain monotheistic (Kotansky, "Amulet"). *Sefer ha-Razim* probably goes beyond this (Smith, *Magician*, 69, dating it to late antiquity). Signer, "Balance," 112–13, notes that Jewish miracle workers claimed to offer signs: "The very same deeds, when performed by non-Israelites, were considered magic or manifestations of idolatry."

419. E.g., Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:241; Gager, *Anti-Semitism*, 107–10; on the prevalence of Jewish magic, see, e.g., Goodenough, *Symbols*, 12:58–63; Koester, *Introduction*, 1:380–81; Gaster, *Studies*, 1:356ff; Arnold, "Sceva," 10–19. For magic in Hellenistic Judaism and Acts, see, e.g., Casalegno, "Evangelização." For magical interpretations of Jewish rituals in the Christian period, see Bassler, "Interpretations." For Jewish charms and amulets (or those exploiting Jewish elements), see Goodenough, *Symbols*, 2:153–295.

420. Gager, *Moses*, 134–61, esp. 161; Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 56–57; Apuleius *Apology*, in Stern, *Authors*, 2:201; PGM 5.107–9; 13.345. Cf. the later *Sword of Moses* text (Harari, "Moses"). Celsus accused Moses of teaching Jews sorcery and apparently the worship of angels; Origen replies that Moses expressly condemned sorcery (*Cels.* 1.26).

421. See van der Horst, "Maria," 679. Just as magicians could use drugs without this making all pharmacists magicians (cf. Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 247, §76D, making a similar analogy), alchemy need not have been

mixed with their own deities' names Jewish divine and angelic names, so many magical texts contain Jewish elements.⁴²²

Jewish magic arose before the NT era and expanded rapidly in the period in which magic more generally was growing.⁴²³ Jewish angels are invoked in some magical texts, a practice especially evident after the third century.⁴²⁴ Later magic bowls⁴²⁵ provide incantations to protect from magic.⁴²⁶ Yet incantations were also used to ward off demons in a much earlier period.⁴²⁷ Early sources also employ Scripture in amulets, sometimes in relation to healing (4Q374 line 8).⁴²⁸ Magical beliefs appear in the possibly first-century *Biblical Antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo (L.A.B. 53).⁴²⁹

Many public sources in early Judaism, however, condemned magic.⁴³⁰ Jewish people developed stories about wicked magicians who opposed God's people, expanding biblical reports about Pharaoh's magicians⁴³¹ and adding opposing magicians—for example, a Midianite,⁴³² Egyptian sorcerers in Joseph's day,⁴³³ or Canaanites when Israel entered the land.⁴³⁴

The penalty for sorcery in Judaism was death (Exod 22:18; cf. Deut 13:10; 18:10).⁴³⁵ Seeking to reduce capital offenses, rabbis qualified this penalty as applying only for genuine sorcerers, not just for performers of illusionary tricks.⁴³⁶ Given the frequent association between magic and spirits in paganism, however,

viewed by its practitioners as related to magic (Maria is our first extant source for hydrochloric acid [van der Horst, "Maria"]).

422. E.g. (though some of these may be purely Jewish), *PGM* 1.301–2, 305; 3.405; 4.1200–1204, 2355–56, 3040–41, 3047–48; 5.114–15; 13.327, 815–18; 35.1–42; *PDM* 14.1061–62. Deissmann, *Studies*, 279–93, argues for LXX influence in a magical inscription.

423. On Jewish magic, see, e.g., Schäfer, "Magic and Religion"; in *PGM*, see Betz, "Jewish Magic." For Jewish magic from the late empire to the early medieval period, see Schäfer, "Magic Literature"; mainly medieval and later, Idel, "Magic." In modern times, compare many Yemenite Jews in Israel (Hes, "Role," esp. 370, 374–76).

424. E.g., *CIJ* 2:373–74, §1448; later, 2:90–91, §849. The connection between angels and magic becomes even more dominant in medieval Judaism (Fass, "Angels"). Some Aramaic magic bowls echo curses from Deut 27 (so BM 91767; Morgenstern, "Magic Bowl").

425. All Jewish incantation bowls so far found derive from Mesopotamia, not Egypt (Hunter, "Incantation Bowls"). If this makes them "unrepresentative," it helps them to balance out our other evidence geographically. They are, however, late (popular especially in the fifth through eighth centuries C.E.).

426. E.g., Levene, "Heal"; Isbell, "Story," 13. Cf. further Jewish amulets and other magical sources in the Cairo Genizah (Swartz, "Ritual Procedures"). The "inscribed" skull in Levene, "Inscription," may have been more hostile.

427. As early as 4Q560.

428. See Wise, "Introduction to 4Q374"; for magical use of Scripture in *PGM*, see Judge, "Magical Use."

429. See Jacobson, "Vision." Even in Scripture, God apparently used magical means occasionally, accommodating limited human understanding (Gen 30:37–42 with 31:8–9, 12).

430. E.g., Wis 17:7; Ps-Phoc. 149; 2 Bar. 60:2; 66:2.

431. Exod 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18–19; 9:11; *Jub.* 48:9; CD V, 18–19; *Test. Sol.* 25:4; *Jannes and Jambres* (*OTP* 2:428–42); *Tg. Ps-Jon.* on Exod 1:15; 7:11; 2 Tim 3:13; cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 30.2.11; Stern, *Authors*, 2:201; Gager, *Moses*, 137–40; Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha and New Testament*, 79; Grabbe, "Tradition." L.A.B. 47:1 mentions Jannes, but in the wilderness.

432. L.A.B. 34. L.A.B. 25:12 similarly speaks of pagan healing by the Amorites' idolatrous precious stones.

433. *Tg. Ps-Jon.* on Gen 49:22–23 (cf. Gen 41:8, 24).

434. *Lev. Rab.* 23:7.

435. Also, e.g., *m. Sanh.* 7:10–11; *b. Ber.* 21b (Tannaitic tradition); *Šabb.* 75a; *Yebam.* 4a; *Sanh.* 67a; *y. Hag.* 2:2, §5; *Sanh.* 7:13, §2; for mediums, CD XII, 3; *Sipra Qed. pq.* 9.207.3.3; eternal punishment in 2 En. 10:4. Necromancy was forbidden but was believed authentic (*Gen. Rab.* 11:5; *Pesiq. Rab.* 23:8).

436. So *m. Sanh.* 7:11; *Sipra Qed. pq.* 6.203.2.1–2; *Sipre Deut.* 171.6.1; *b. Sanh.* 67b; cf. mere illusions in *Diogn.* 8.4; *Tert. Test. an.* 57; *Hippol. Ref.* 6.34. On performing illusions, see further *Sipre Deut.* 171.4.1. Amoraim sought to distinguish sorcerers who worked through demons and those who depended only on enchantment (*b. Sanh.* 67b).

it is not surprising that Jewish sources sometimes associated it with fallen angels⁴³⁷ or Satan.⁴³⁸ Judaism also recognized curses as efficacious.⁴³⁹ Witchcraft could cause plagues.⁴⁴⁰ As among Gentiles (above), Amoraic texts sometimes associated astrology with magic.⁴⁴¹

Rabbinic literature reflects widely divergent approaches to magic.⁴⁴² On the one side, most rabbis opposed witchcraft;⁴⁴³ all the world's best magicians could not turn morning to evening;⁴⁴⁴ and Scripture was known to oppose magic.⁴⁴⁵ Some teachers believed that magicians could even produce signs in cosmic bodies (*Sipre Deut.* 84.1.1); others retorted that only a formerly true prophet who later became a false one could do so (R. Akiba, *Sipre Deut.* 84.1.3). Some forbade healing oneself with incantations, though others qualified this prohibition.⁴⁴⁶

On the other side,⁴⁴⁷ some rabbis used or approved the use of some forms of magic.⁴⁴⁸ They may have opposed sorcery yet not the magical “science” of their era.⁴⁴⁹ Thus one rabbi fleeing a lustful married woman used a magical formula to protect himself and finally found refuge with demons.⁴⁵⁰ Another rabbi could cause a field to fill with cucumbers, then reverse it.⁴⁵¹ Still another rabbi created a man and sent him to another rabbi, but because the created “man” could not speak, the other rabbi recognized that he was a fabrication and returned him to dust.⁴⁵² Onqelos brought up Titus from the dead so that he could testify about his torments in Gehinnom (*b. Git.* 56b–57a). It was said that Solomon exploited demons to do his bidding before he sinned.⁴⁵³

Samaritans were no less interested in magic than others.⁴⁵⁴ Early Christian literary sources oppose magic,⁴⁵⁵ but not surprisingly, later Christians on a popular level assimilated some magical traditions.⁴⁵⁶ On false prophets, see comment at Acts 13:6.

437. See *1 En.* 9:6–7; 64:2; 65:6 (cf. the Greeks' Prometheus); *3 En.* 5:9; *Sib. Or.* 1.96; cf. also Orig. *Cels.* 1.60; 2.51; 3.39, 59; Hippol. *Ref.* 6.34.

438. E.g., CD V, 18; *Asc. Is.* 2:5 (this may be a Christian work). Cf. the involvement of spirits of Belial (influencing false prophets) with soothsayer ghosts in CD XII, 2–3; demons in *Test. Jud.* 23:1; *Test. Sol.* 25:3–4.

439. E.g., *Test. Jud.* 11:3–5; *Gen. Rab.* 74:4.

440. *B. Hor.* 10a.

441. Clearly in *y. Roš Haš.* 3:8, §§1–2.

442. Emphasized in Stratton, “Imagining Power.” Some of what we classify as sympathetic magic, the rabbis would not have so classified (Bar-Ilan, “Magic and Religion”).

443. E.g., *b. Sanh.* 65b–66a.

444. *Num. Rab.* 18:4. Just as all the world could not turn a raven's wing white or remove a *yod* from the Torah (*Lev. Rab.* 19:2), or create a single gnat (*Pesiq. Rab.* 43:6).

445. See, e.g., Welch, “Miracles,” 366–67.

446. In *b. Šebu.* 15b.

447. It should be kept in mind, however, that some of the haggadah is tongue-in-cheek, and rarely are the stories told about contemporaries. The genre, then, differs from both historical and novelistic narratives.

448. Cf., e.g., Neusner, *Sat.*, 80. Hayman, “Magician,” argues that the late *Sefer Yešira* even presents God acting as a magician. Cf. whispering charms, apparently accepted in *Lev. Rab.* 9:9 (purportedly Tannaitic tradition). For amulets and protection against magic, see, e.g., *b. Šabb.* 61b; 66b; Goodenough, *Symbols*, 2:163; one could even change a wedding date to evade a witch's spell (*y. Ketub.* 1:1, §2). On some superstitious forms of cures in some rabbinic texts (e.g., *b. Git.* 68b–70b), see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:417–18.

449. Goldin, “Magic.”

450. So *b. Qidd.* 39b–40a.

451. *Abot R. Nat.* 25 A.

452. E.g., *b. Sanh.* 65b.

453. E.g., *Song Rab.* 3:7, §5; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:3 (these stories resemble *Test. Sol.* passim).

454. See, e.g., Bowman, *Documents*, 30; see also Müller-Kessler, Mitchell, and Hockey, “Amulet” (though this source is from the fourth or fifth century C.E.).

455. At least among the “orthodox”; e.g., *Did.* 2.2; 3.4; 5.1; *Barn.* 20.1; *Ign. Eph.* 19.3; *Herm.* 17.7; Justin *1 Apol.* 14; *Diogn.* 8.4; Clem. Alex. *Exhortation to the Heathen* 1; *Strom.* 2.1; Tert. *Apol.* 43.

456. Cf. Gitler, “Amulets.”

5. Antimagical Apologetic

Acts likely articulates an antimagical apologetic (see also discussion under Acts 8:20–24).⁴⁵⁷ Those who performed signs and wonders were typically regarded as exploiting bad magic by those who disapproved of their activity.⁴⁵⁸ This was true whether the accusers were Apuleius’s enemies, or rabbis or Celsus attacking Christians. Such interpretations required apologetic counterinterpretations from those under assault. Thus Apuleius contrasts the benevolent power of Isis with the evil magic of Photis’s mistress,⁴⁵⁹ and Philostratus proves embarrassed about magical traditions concerning his hero Apollonius of Tyana.⁴⁶⁰ Both Philostratus and Luke provide antimagical apologetic on their characters’ behalf and oppose “magicians.”⁴⁶¹ Some circles revered (or criticized) Moses as a magician,⁴⁶² which required Philo and Josephus to suppress potential magical associations.⁴⁶³

Rabbis and others charged Jesus and Christians with performing magic.⁴⁶⁴ Celsus associated the miracles of Jesus and his followers with magic.⁴⁶⁵ Likewise, Porphyry attributed them to demons.⁴⁶⁶ Such charges invited apologetic responses. Jesus’s detractors in the Gospel accused him of performing exorcism by demons (Luke 11:15), but the accusation is proved false (11:17–20), and throughout Acts, Jesus’s agents prove to be forceful opponents of magic.⁴⁶⁷

Miracle workers had to avoid being seen as greedy for power or money.⁴⁶⁸ God’s agents have power but not personal wealth (Acts 3:6) and can abandon homes to preach the good news (8:4–5; cf. Luke 5:11; 18:28–30); Simon, by contrast, uses money to seek power for himself (Acts 8:18–20). Simon preaches his own greatness (8:9); Philip preaches Jesus Christ (8:5–6).

457. See Spencer, *Philip*, 99–102; Trémel, “Risque de paganisation”; Agouridis, “Ἀντιμαγικὴ”; Marguerat, *Actes*, 299 (risk of syncretism). Luke may accomplish the distinction partly by connecting miracles with Christology (Marguerat, “Magie, guérison, et parole”); cf. the emphasis on Jesus’s name (Acts 3:6; 4:10, 30; 16:18; 19:13, 17). Aune, *Environment*, 56, suggests that Luke’s “emphasis on the physicality of Jesus’s resurrection” is also part of this, since ghosts or body parts “of those who died violently were thought ‘available’ for facilitating magical feats” (on witches’ use of corpses, see, e.g., Ap. Rhod. 4.51–53; Lucan C.W. 6.538–68, 626; Ovid *Her.* 6.90; esp. Apul. *Metam.* 2.30; in other cultures, e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 261; see further Keener, *John*, 1181). But Luke has other reasons for this.

458. See Remus, “Magic or Miracle?”

459. See Schmidt, “Einweihung in Mysterien.”

460. See Raynor, “Moeragenes and Philostratus”; Klauck, *Context*, 169–70. Cf., e.g., Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.2; 4.18; 5.12; 7.17, 39; 8.7. In earlier sources, Apollonius seems to have valued the positive use of the title (Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 16–17).

461. Reimer, *Miracle*, 249.

462. E.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 30.2.11 (meanwhile linking him with Jannes [cf. 2 Tim 3:8] and possibly a garbled name of YHWH as well as dating him millennia after Zoroaster though Zoroaster himself can hardly have been much earlier than a millennium before Pliny, at most!).

463. See Gager, “Moses the Magician”; cf. Remus, “Moses.”

464. On Jewish accusations that Jesus was a magician, see also Just. *Dial.* 69:7; *b. Sanh.* 43a; 107b; Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 27–28, 49–51, 293; Dalman, *Jesus in Talmud*, 45–50; Herford, *Christianity*, 50–62; Gero, “Polemic”; Yamauchi, “Magic?,” 90–91; Horbury, “Brigand,” 183–95; Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, 156–58; regarding Jesus’s followers, see, e.g., *Eccl. Rab.* 1:8, §3; Dalman, *Jesus in Talmud*, 37–38; Herford, *Christianity*, 211–15; Bagatti, *Church*, 95–96. For a discussion of possible antimagical apologetic in Matthew’s Gospel, see Keener, *Spirit*, 106.

465. Cook, *Interpretation*, 36–39; Origen *Cels.* 1.6; 2.14, 16, 44, 48, 49, 51, 53; 3.1, 5. Pagans often viewed Christian exorcism as Egyptian or Jewish trickery (Edwards, “Exorcisms”).

466. Cook, *Interpretation*, 138.

467. Garrett, *Demise*, 36 (citing Acts 13:10).

468. Reimer, *Miracle*, 139–41, 246. Cf. Jewish miracle workers who avoided wealth (Reimer, *Miracle*, 252). “Good” intermediaries also put themselves in danger, as the apostles do (85).

(1) *Claims about Simon External to Acts*

Evidence suggests that Luke does not fabricate the story, although not all the potential evidence is clearly compelling. “Simon” was a common name (see comment on Acts 1:13), and the confrontation with “Peter” (rather than an explicit “Simon Peter”) indicates that Luke did not simply create the name to contrast with Peter’s (cf. “Paulus” in 13:7, 9). Moreover, Luke does not report a bitter end for Simon (despite the warning in 8:20–23), though this would suit the parallels with Judas and Ananias earlier and the less harsh judgments on Elymas and Sceva’s sons later.⁴⁶⁹

Patristic sources also report traditions about Simon⁴⁷⁰ that may complement Luke’s portrait, but the independence and reliability of these traditions are more questionable.⁴⁷¹ The earliest of these writers, Justin, wrote about a century after Simon’s reported activity in Acts.⁴⁷² Justin claims that Simon came from a Samaritan village named Gitto and performed magic feats in Rome during the reign of Claudius (*1 Apol.* 26.1–6; cf. 56.2).⁴⁷³ Because Justin was from Samaria (*1 Apol.* 1; *2 Apol.* 15), he may have had access to accurate tradition;⁴⁷⁴ Luke suggests, after all, that Simon was locally prominent (Acts 8:9–11), and the lack of other supporting evidence cannot count strongly against this claim (given the scarcity of our evidence from the East).⁴⁷⁵ Some of Justin’s details, however, may be legendary embellishments by Christian Samaritans that grew over a period of a century.⁴⁷⁶ The evidence Justin offers for Simon’s acceptance as a god in Rome is not fabricated but rests on someone’s misinterpretation. He cites a statue on the Tiber inscribed “To Simon the holy God” (*1 Apol.* 26.3); the statue was genuine and has been recovered, but it is to Semon, a Sabine deity (*CIL* 6.657).⁴⁷⁷

Even Justin’s claims about Samaria are questionable; as noted above, his exposure to ethnic Samaritan or Jewish beliefs before his conversion to Christianity was minimal, and so his contact with Samaritans may have been less than the geographical proximity of his birthplace might suggest. He claims that most of the Samaritans still worship Simon as a deity (*1 Apol.* 26; *Dial.* 120.6), which fits nothing of what we know of Samaria from non-Christian sources. His claim that the Samaritan magician Me[n]ander was a disciple of Simon (*1 Apol.* 26; also *Iren. Her.* 1.23.5) is plausible,⁴⁷⁸ though the connection between the two could be based on his sources’ geographic inference and antimagical polemic.

Irenaeus, writing several decades after Justin, claims that Simon, instead of repenting, competed with the apostles, seeking to be worshiped as a god (*Her.* 1.23.1).⁴⁷⁹ He elaborates beyond Justin’s account by claiming (in what may be suspiciously

469. Goulder, *Type and History*, 195.

470. See, e.g., Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 192–95 (e.g., *Iren. Her.* 1.23.2: “father of all heresies,” p. 192; *Tert. Apol.* 13, p. 194); Samkuttly, *Samaritan Mission*, 179–87; Holzhausen, “Simon Magus” (noting [485] that these traditions are not relevant to the *historical* Simon); more extensively, including apocryphal acts through medieval sources, Cartledge, “Rise and Fall.” Philip baptized Simon as Jesus welcomed Judas (*Chrys. Hom. Acts* 18 [Martin, *Acts*, 90]); Peter later confronts the wicked Simon in Rome (Euseb. *H.E.* 2.14 [Martin, *Acts*, 95]).

471. Certainly, later Simonian doctrines cannot be traced back to Simon (Wilson, “Simon,” esp. 491). Pervo, *Acts*, 206–7, allows for some genuine tradition, though embellished in patristic sources.

472. Thus Conzelmann’s apparent preference of patristic sources over Acts (*History*, 126; cf. 71) is surprising.

473. For surveys of the patristic evidence, see Casey, “Simon,” 151–63; Albright, “Simon Magus.”

474. E.g., Hemer, *Acts in History*, 177.

475. Josephus’s attention to the Samaritans focuses particularly on their interaction with Judeans.

476. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 403, regards the origin in Gitta as an embellishment, though it is the least likely element to have been fabricated (unless from intervillage rivalry). Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:178, think that Simon was a pagan worshiper of Selene and practiced hierogamy.

477. Witherington, *Acts*, 283n18.

478. E.g., Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 43.

479. Cf. also the dispute with Peter in Caesarea (*Ps.-Clem. Hom.* 29.1–30.3; 35.1–5; 38.1–43.3; 58.2); for his claims to deity, see, e.g., Hippol. *Ref.* 10.8.

anachronistic language) that Simon presented himself to the Jews as the Son (did they worship the Son?), to the Samaritans as the Father, and to Gentiles as the Holy Spirit (1.23.1).

The claims that Simon was a gnostic⁴⁸⁰ are later than Justin (our earliest postbiblical reference to Simon) and do not warrant reading later Christian Gnosticism back into this figure.⁴⁸¹ (Had Luke known that Simon held some of the sorts of views attributed to later gnostics, which contradict Luke's own historical approach, it seems likely that Simon would have ended more harshly than in the open-ended Acts 8:24.) Other possibilities are likelier than Simon's being gnostic (quite improbable at such an early period):⁴⁸² Simon provided a convenient polemical bogeyman against a local sect of gnostics reputedly associated with a "Simon"; some gnostics appropriated his figure or tradition, and Irenaeus and later Christian writers reacted against this claim;⁴⁸³ or Simon provided the most obvious false prophet with whom later Christians could associate Gnosticism, and some gnostics appropriated the connection for its antiquity. Thus claims that Luke undoubtedly "uses Simon as a symbol of the Gnostic challenge"⁴⁸⁴ or even necessarily as a representative of "incipient Gnosticism"⁴⁸⁵ are too far reaching.

Other later traditions are also questionable, such as Simon's "flying" in Rome, winning fame, but also dying when, in answer to Peter's prayer, Simon's sorcery miraculously failed (*Acts Pet.* 4, 31–32).⁴⁸⁶ Many magicians claimed to be able to fly (see comment on Acts 8:39), but Christian or gnostic tradition may have developed this claim for Simon to counter Philip's aerial mobility in Acts 8:39 (the only case reported in the NT). The claim that he acquired magic in Egypt (*Ps.-Clem. Hom.* 2.22.2–26.5, esp. ch. 24) may rest on inference from the view that magic was especially prominent in Egypt.⁴⁸⁷

(2) *God's Great Power (8:10)*

With Simon's claim to be someone great (Acts 8:9) we may compare Jesus's warning that many would claim, "I am [he]" (Luke 21:8).⁴⁸⁸ Others embraced and propagated the idea that Simon was someone great, possibly in some sort of divine sense. The

480. For this gnostic system, see discussion in Jonas, *Religion*, 103–11; cf. Chadwick, *Early Church*, 37; for the view that some continuity could exist between Simon and the movement that later appropriated his name, see Fossum, "Simon Magus," 780–81. For precursors of the system attributed to Simon in Greek philosophies, see Hippol. *Ref.* 6.4, 6.

481. Yamauchi, *Gnosticism*, 60; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 403; Witherington, *Acts*, 283; Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 101–2.

482. On the later dating of full Gnosticism, see, e.g., Yamauchi, *Gnosticism*, esp. 170–83; Keener, *John*, 162–69; Smith, *Gnostic Origins*; Wilson, *Gnostic Problem*, 68, 256.

483. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 284n18; Maynard-Reid, "Samaria," 1077. Certainly later gnostics were aware of the accounts in this section of Acts; see an example from the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, Nag Hammadi Codex 8 (in Kaler, "Letter").

484. Davies, *Sermon*, 68. Even the claim of G. Klein that Luke uses Simon to argue against contemporary Simonians is unfounded; as Barrett notes ("Simon Magus," 293), Simon's only "followers," like those of Ananias and Sapphira, are whoever follows in "his theological error and moral perversion."

485. Bruce, *History*, 228.

486. Cited in Johnson, *Acts*, 146; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 16. Simon's alleged conflicts with Peter in Rome appear more concisely in Hippol. *Ref.* 6.15.

487. See, e.g., *PDM* passim; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 31, 33; Apul. *Metam.* 2.28; Heliod. *Eth.* 6.14; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.2–8; *Abot R. Nat.* 28 A; 48, §132 B; Dauphin, "Amulet"; Frankfurter, "Magic"; idem, *Religion in Egypt*, 198–37; idem, "Ritual Expertise"; Klauck, *Context*, 213; Assmann, "Magic and Theology" (ancient Egypt); and other sources above. Celsus associates Jesus's stay in Egypt with his supposed learning of magic (Cook, *Interpretation*, 32–33).

488. Simon does not make the other part of the claim, that the time is at hand (Luke 21:8), which presumably suited more the period after Jerusalem's fall and suffering generated longing to see the Son of Man (Luke 17:22).

adjective “great” (Acts 8:9–10), though by no means necessarily a divine title, was certainly compatible with divine acclamations (19:28, 34);⁴⁸⁹ it appears in a divine self-claim in *CIJ* 2:54, §802 (“I am the Great One who sits in the heavens”; from Pontus). The title “Great God” could apply to Apollo,⁴⁹⁰ allegedly to the ruler of Persia,⁴⁹¹ to the supreme deity,⁴⁹² and to the one true God.⁴⁹³ Whereas Theudas claimed to be “someone” (Acts 5:36; cf. Gal 6:3 for the idiom), Simon claimed to be “someone great” (Acts 8:9).⁴⁹⁴ Indeed, Simon’s claim, when conjoined with his later request for authority, may echo the character of the devil himself (Luke 4:6–7).⁴⁹⁵

That “small to great” were heeding him reflects a familiar LXX idiom.⁴⁹⁶ Titular acclamations after miracles were common in the Greco-Roman world.⁴⁹⁷ The acclamation’s introductory “This man is . . .” could, as some scholars suggest, point to Simon’s prior claim, “I am . . .”⁴⁹⁸ This would fit some divine claims we note in this section, but it should be noted that οὗτός ἐστιν is frequent in Luke’s style (at least eighteen times in this precise form alone), most often (though by no means exclusively) referring to Christ (the most common subject of speech in Luke-Acts). The claim about Simon directly contradicts claims about Moses (Acts 7:37–38) and his successor, Jesus (9:20).

“Power” may be a divine circumlocution (cf. Mark 14:62, clarified in Luke 22:69 as “power of God”), though Luke characteristically associates the term with miracles (Luke 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 9:1; Acts 3:12; 4:7, 33; 6:8; 10:38), which is also relevant here (Acts 8:11, 13). “Power” was a divine title in some pagan texts (e.g., *PGM* 4.640, for Helios as the “greatest deity”).⁴⁹⁹ A Hellenistic Jewish writer could speak of God (or possibly a principle God established) as the “one power [δύναμις]” in creation (analogous to the Stoic Logos; *Let. Aris.* 143). God was “the most powerful one” (*fortissimi*, *L.A.B.* 16:5), and in one source Michael addresses God as “your power [κράτος]” (*Test. Ab.* 4:6 A).⁵⁰⁰ Rabbinic texts also sometimes use “power” as a circumlocution for God.⁵⁰¹ Some scholars compare the title for Jesus (1 Cor 1:24),⁵⁰² a useful comparison even though it may have arisen by different means.⁵⁰³ In any case, Simon is clearly wrong to claim the title; God’s power was revealed especially in Jesus.

489. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 185 (citing also *Jub.* 40:7).

490. Hom. *Il.* 16.531.

491. Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.39, 40.

492. Epict. *Diatr.* 1.16.16–17.

493. 4Q246 II, 7; *Sib. Or.* 1.165, 268, 282, 316, 323; 2.27, 219; 3.71, 91, 97, 162, 194, 246, 284, 490, 556–57, 565, 575, 584, 656, 657, 665, 671, 687, 698, 702, 717, 740, 773, 781, 784, 818; 4.6, 25, 163; 5.176, 405; 3 Macc 3:36; 7:2; cf. *1 En.* 1:3; *Tob* 13:15; *Sib. Or.* 3.56, 735 (Christian interpolation in 3.776). It probably applies to Jesus in *Titus* 2:13 (Cullmann, *Christology*, 313; Longenecker, *Christology*, 138; Harris, “*Titus* 2:13,” 271; idem, *Jesus as God*, 173–85, esp. 185).

494. Tannehill, *Acts*, 53.

495. Samkuttu, *Samaritan Mission*, 168, developing Garrett, *Demise*, 67; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:276.

496. With Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 90; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 261 (noting *Gen* 19:11; *2 Kgs* 23:2; *2 Chr* 34:30).

497. See Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 161.

498. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 63 (citing Origen *Cels.* 7.8–9).

499. Also an inscription cited in Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 318; Horsley, *Documents*, 3:31–32, §7; and Ramsay, *Discovery*, 117–18; and a powerful but not supreme deity in *PGM* 4.1225–29 (Witherington, *Acts*, 284).

500. Also as “your glory” (*Test. Ab.* 8:3 A; cf. 4:7 B). A lesser title such as “God’s powerful one [δυνατός]” (*Jos. Asen.* 4:7/8) can apply to humans; a prayer could also entreat God’s “great power(s)” (μεγάλ[ας] δυνάμ[εις], *CIJ* 1:519, §719, from Argos in Greece).

501. E.g., *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 6:4; though *y. Meg.* 1:9, §17, lists it among divine names (e.g., “Most High”) that are not holy. Others mention the rabbinic title (e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 91).

502. See Goppelt, *Judaism*, 176.

503. Cf. Keener, *Corinthians*, 28.

Following Justin's claim that Samaritans venerated Simon as the highest deity (1 *Apol.* 26.3; *Dial.* 120.6), Haenchen concludes that "the great power" must have been "a Samaritan designation for the supreme deity," so that Simon was claiming to be the highest deity.⁵⁰⁴ In view of *καλουμένη* in Acts 8:10, he suggests that "the great power" may be "an established formula"; Haenchen thinks that "Luke, patently considering it to require an explanation, glosses (wrongly) by appending 'of God.'"⁵⁰⁵ That Luke might gloss such a phrase if he found it in his source is rendered probable by his addition "of God" in Luke 22:69 (contrast Mark 14:62).⁵⁰⁶ But against the *necessary* omission of "of God," it should be noted that the most commonly cited pagan parallel for "great power" as the supreme deity reads fully, "great power of the immortal god."⁵⁰⁷

Many scholars thus think that Simon claimed deity for himself.⁵⁰⁸ He would hardly be the only *μάγος* to be viewed by others as a deity because of wonder-working properties.⁵⁰⁹ Egyptian temple spells may also identify priests with gods on a ritual level.⁵¹⁰ The boundaries between mortal and deity were often blurred in Hellenism (see comment on Acts 14:11), which had intermediate categories and allowed movement from lower to higher. But to "make oneself" something was to claim authority or identity that one did not have;⁵¹¹ to make oneself a deity was universally regarded as an act of foolish, arrogant presumption.⁵¹²

Second-century claims about Simon (and, to some extent, Luke's description) become more intelligible to modern readers against the backdrop of ancient religion. Although we may doubt church fathers' views that Simon himself was a gnostic, their interpretation of him in some other respects comports with the earliest evidence.

(3) Samaritan "Orthodoxy" and Hellenism

Both traditional Semitic and growing Hellenistic influences helped shape the Samaritans' response to Simon. Samaritans certainly affirmed God's oneness (including most of those who were in a later period suspected of tolerating syncretism).⁵¹³ In some respects, Samaritans (who were probably often less cosmopolitan, more rural, and more traditional) were, if anything, more conservative than Judeans, avoiding depictions of animals or people in their mosaics.⁵¹⁴ Despite some Jewish polemic to the contrary, the Samaritans were intensely religious.⁵¹⁵ Palestinian Jews assumed that the Samaritans had their own scribes who interpreted Scripture;⁵¹⁶ they recognized that Samaritans accepted the Torah (though not the prophets), and some even contended

504. Haenchen, *Acts*, 303. See Fossum, *Name*, 171–72, cited in Parsons, *Acts*, 114.

505. Haenchen, *Acts*, 307 (with others, but denying the relevance of 1 Cor 1:24 and the Samaritan Taheb).

506. Also frequently noted; e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 91; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 185.

507. Horsley, *Documents*, 3:31–32, §7.

508. Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 101–2, thinks that Simon was historically worshiped as a god but that Luke then degrades Simon as a mere "magician." For his claim to deity, see also Ramsay, *Discovery*, 117; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 185.

509. See, e.g., Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.4. This attempt of an impostor to "make himself" a deity was frequently ridiculed (Max. Tyre 29.4; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 283, cite also Porph. *Abst.* 2.42).

510. Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 229.

511. See Neyrey, "Shame of Cross," 126–27. Any honor claim was open to challenge (cf. Pilch, "Lying," 132).

512. Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.7; Max. Tyre 29.4; 35.2; Meeks, "Agent," 43; cf. Philo's complaint about Gaius Caligula in Meeks, "Agent," 55; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 267–68, cite Jos. *Ant.* 19.4; Suet. *Calig.* 22; see also discussion in Keener, "Subordination," 41–42; idem, *John*, 647–48.

513. See the Shema (from the fourth to the thirteenth centuries) in Davies, "Samaritan Inscription."

514. On the mosaics and other features of Samaritan synagogues, see Pummer, "Synagogue." Jerusalem's urbanization and the larger population of Jews may have contributed to Palestinian Judaism's greater hellenization in some respects.

515. See, e.g., Dar, "Menorot," on the strictness of rural Samaria. I employed these observations earlier in Keener, *John*, 593.

516. *Y. Yebam.* 1:6, §1.

that they were more meticulous with it than Jewish people were.⁵¹⁷ Extant Samaritan texts detail laws on circumcision, the Sabbath, and so forth, though frequently including polemic against Jewish forms of the rituals.⁵¹⁸ Their calendar must have differed (creating tension for Galilean pilgrims passing through Samaria at festival times; e.g., Luke 9:53), but this divergence was inevitable unless they waited for leaders in Jerusalem to announce the sightings of the new moon and accepted their intercalations.⁵¹⁹

The Samaritans may have been fairly hellenized, however, for more than a century.⁵²⁰ Certainly inscriptions show that the Greek language was widely used in Samaria, even though Aramaic was probably the dominant mother tongue.⁵²¹

As noted above in the excursus on Samaritans, *true* Samaritans did not believe in other gods (cf. “power of God,” Acts 8:10) or, insofar as we can reconstruct their views at this period, even other prophets subsequent to Moses.⁵²² But as in Judaism and elsewhere, such views from some of the movement’s official representatives did not prevent popular religion from being susceptible to signs prophets (cf. John 4:19); many disaffected Samaritans, like many disaffected Judeans, were susceptible to exploitive demagogues. One supposed prophet⁵²³ gathered expectant Samaritans on Mount Gerizim and promised to show them the sacred vessels Moses had put under the mountain (Jos. *Ant.* 18.85), leading to the slaughter of many of them at Pilate’s hands (18.87). Those who worked or promised dramatic signs could undoubtedly attract followers in Samaria just as they could in Judea (cf. 20.167–68). That Simon has drawn a following is not, therefore, surprising.

(4) *Syncretism of Deities*

On a popular level, Samaritans may have proved susceptible to syncretic influences that characterized the Greco-Roman world in general,⁵²⁴ though, like Judean and Galilean monotheists, they must have blended these influences into their faith.⁵²⁵

From an early period, Greeks thought deities belonged to all peoples, though different peoples assigned them different names.⁵²⁶ Herodotus may have begun the practice of providing Greek names to foreign deities to explain them to readers.⁵²⁷ But it was the Hellenistic era that led to syncretism on a much wider scale.⁵²⁸ Greek conquest of Persia led to widespread respect for and embrace of Greek gods and consequent mixing of Greek and local elements.⁵²⁹ When Greeks relocated to other countries

517. B. Ber. 47b.

518. Bowman, *Documents*, 299. On the Sabbath, see Weiss, “Sabbath among Samaritans.”

519. Thornton, “Calendar.”

520. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 182–83 (though the inference from 2 Macc 6:2 would not require rural Samaritans to be as hellenized as urban Jerusalemites).

521. See van der Horst, “Languages.”

522. Bruce, *History*, 37–38; idem, *Time*, 39. If this perspective reflects sufficiently early tradition, perhaps the Samaritans viewed the pseudo-eschatological prophet of Jos. *Ant.* 18.85–87 messianically; the Romans certainly treated him as a political threat.

523. Perhaps envisioned as their eschatological Moses-like prophet, if the Samaritan tradition about this figure is this early. On the Taheb, see discussion above.

524. For paganism in Palestine (related especially to Gentiles there), see, e.g., Grossmann, “Figurine”; Bull, “Mithraic Medallion”; Lease, “Caesarea Mithraeum”; Flusser, “Paganism”; further discussion in Keener, *John*, 1170–72.

525. Although clear synagogue zodiacs are later, first-century Jewish sources also accepted zodiacal and astrological ideas (see excursus on astrology at Acts 2:9–11).

526. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 114 (citing Hom. *Od.* 9.552); certainly Homer assumes it in his depiction of the Trojan War; and see also Soph. *Oed. Col.* 42–43.

527. So Hartmann, “Kanttekeningen.”

528. Grant, *Religions*, xxii.

529. Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism*, 29. Indian religion influenced and was influenced by other religious systems (Thapar, *History*, 119, even if overstated).

during the Hellenistic era, they worshiped the local deities, making “Egyptian” and “Oriental” deities more relevant to them.⁵³⁰ Scholars have often portrayed syncretism of various religious systems as one of the most characteristic features of Hellenistic religion.⁵³¹ Thus Syrian deities such as Baal Shamayim were hellenized as Zeus (or later, for Romans, as Jupiter).⁵³²

The theologically pragmatic Romans likewise identified foreign deities with their own,⁵³³ and syncretism remained characteristic of polytheistic religion in the Greco-Roman world.⁵³⁴ A fairly mainstream rhetorician of late antiquity identifies Apollo (Men. Rhet. 2.17, 445.31–32) not only with the Greek sun deity Helios (445.32–446.2) but with the Persian deity Mithras and the Egyptian deity Horus (446.2) and concludes by leaving the ultimate choice of name with the deity himself (446.8–9). Scholars have also claimed such syncretism in the various Mysteries,⁵³⁵ so that, for instance, Dionysus could be identified with Zeus or with Triptolemus.⁵³⁶ Mithraism was also syncretistic.⁵³⁷

Syncretism characterizes magical texts and perhaps the popular practices they reflect. A later chant addressed to Apollo (PGM 1.298) includes invocations of Michael (1.301), Gabriel (1.302), and “Adonai” (1.305);⁵³⁸ the archangel Michael is identified with the Lord Osiris (4.2355–56); and so forth. Some later Christian gnostic groups proved highly syncretistic.⁵³⁹

In Hellenistic and Roman Egypt the mixing of deities became so pervasive (including deities from Palestine and Asia Minor) that even Greek visitors sometimes complained.⁵⁴⁰ The Egyptians themselves hybridized Osiris and Apis into Serapis,⁵⁴¹ an extremely popular cult widely exported.⁵⁴² Plutarch freely identified Greek and Egyptian deities,⁵⁴³ just as he regarded Zeus as the ancestral god of the Persians (*Fort. Alex.* 2.6, *Mor.* 338F).

Some Hellenistic Jews began to participate in the practice,⁵⁴⁴ though usually by the back door through a euhemeristic approach (see discussion at Acts 17:23).

530. Nilsson, *Piety*, 94; Beaujeu, “Cultes locaux,” 440–41; Kákosy, “Egypt in Greek Thought,” 7–9.

531. See Tarn, *Civilisation*, 339 (noting the influence of Stoic allegorization of myths); Grant, *Religions*, xiii–xx, esp. xiii; Martin, *Religions*, 10–11. This was “contact syncretism” rather than “internal syncretism” (Gordon, “Syncretism,” 1462).

532. Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 16; Pfeiffer, *Scrolls*, 135; Klausner, *Jesus to Paul*, 100. Syrians preserved and adapted the ancient cult of Baal/Bel, and some scholars (Flusser, “Paganism,” 1079–80; Oden, “Persistence”) argue that Canaanite religion maintained its identity without fully blending into Greek categories; but where this was true, it would be for cultural more than theological reasons.

533. For discussion, see Girard, “Interpretatio romana”; Rives, “*Interpretatio Romana*.” This identification of deities (at least on the level of names) fits the larger pattern of how Romans negotiated cultural differences (Ando, “*Interpretatio*”).

534. See, e.g., Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 44–45; Koester, *Introduction*, 1:164–67; Finegan, *Records*, 90. By the third and fourth centuries, this was prominent even for Roman Gaul (Hatt, “Syncretisme”). Some speak of a decline of traditional Roman religion (Carcopino, *Life*, 121–27; the decline of traditional religion is overstated in Case, *Origins*, 84–90) and a corresponding openness to Eastern religion (Carcopino, *Life*, 128–35). Cf. comment on pagan inclusivity at Acts 4:12.

535. See, e.g., Reitzenstein, *Religions*, 117–19; Sheldon, *Mystery Religions*, 36–37. One could be initiated into various cults (Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 267), though occasionally a cult (e.g., the Zeus cult at Sardis) prohibited its leaders from initiation into other Mysteries (Horsley, *Documents*, 1:21–23, §3).

536. For these particular examples, see Ruck, “Mystery,” 39, 45.

537. On the northern coast of the Black Sea, see Blawatsky and Kochelenko, *Culte de Mithra*.

538. Cf. similarly PGM 3.405.

539. See, e.g., Zoroaster in *Ap. John* 19; *Zost.* 132; the nine Muses in *Apoc. Adam* 81.

540. Lewis, *Life*, 84–87. For examples, see also Arnold, *Power*, 18.

541. Tinh, “Sarapis and Isis,” 101.

542. Condemned in *Sib. Or.* 5.487–88 as not truly a deity (491).

543. E.g., *Plut. Isis* 2, *Mor.* 351CF; 3, *Mor.* 352AB; 78, *Mor.* 382E.

544. True of their artwork (see Avi-Yonah, “Archaeological Sources,” 53); true religiously of the fifth-century B.C.E. Elephantine temple (Bright, *History*, 376) and perhaps in later Egypt as well (Urbach, *Sages*, 1:27–28).

For example, some held that the Greek Atlas, who discovered astrology, was simply Enoch.⁵⁴⁵ Nor did later Christians wholly escape, since pagan substructures in religious thought often persisted after mass transfers of allegiance to the new imperial religion.⁵⁴⁶ But full-scale syncretism may have affected some Samaritans more severely, probably because of the local prominence of Greek Sebaste, at least eventually.⁵⁴⁷ One third-century coin seems to associate YHWH with Zeus Hypsistos and his temple.⁵⁴⁸ (On the tendency toward a sort of philosophic monotheism through the blending of deities, see comment on Acts 17:18, comparing atheism with monotheism in ancient thought.)

(5) *Male-Female Dyads*

This assimilation of deities, especially of female deities, becomes most relevant to the discussion of Simon's claims if we admit patristic claims about Simon's consort, Helena.⁵⁴⁹ Justin (combating a form of Gnosticism obviously later than Simon) claims that Simon's followers revered Helena, a former prostitute, as the first principle or idea emanating from his deity (1 *Apol.* 26). Irenaeus elaborates that Simon bought her as a slave in Tyre, claiming that he conceived her by his mind as the mother of all, creating angels; she was successively reincarnated (*Her.* 1.23.2) until, in a lost form, she was redeemed by Simon and the two together offered salvation. The Middle Platonic idea of buffer emanations is a prominent part of Irenaeus's attack on Valentinian gnostics a few decades later.⁵⁵⁰ The claim that Helena was formerly a prostitute is the sort of discrediting charge that would be reported by his enemies if true, or possibly invented by his enemies if false.⁵⁵¹ Some scholars have seen the use of hierogamy (sacred marriage) elsewhere in ancient literature.⁵⁵² (Many of the pillars of the sacred-marriage concept, however, have been undermined in recent years.)⁵⁵³

Emphasis on a female aspect of the divine grew in time;⁵⁵⁴ the Hellenistic era already had begun assimilating the Greek Demeter with the Egyptian Isis as well

545. Ps.-Eup., via Alexander Polyhistor, in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.17.9; see more fully Koester, *Introduction*, 1:264.

546. See examples of syncretism in Lewis, *Life*, 97, 100.

547. Cf. Di Segni, "Toponym." But some earlier notions of specifically Samaritan syncretism stem from wrongly conflating a pagan temple of Zeus discovered in excavations with the Samaritan temple (Zangenberg, "Samaria," 425).

548. So Meshorer, "Sacrifice."

549. Cf. the similar role for Rutilia in Lucian *Alex.* 39.

550. Cf., e.g., Iren. *Her.* 1.1.1–1.4.5. Neoplatonism stressed emanations (Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, passim; e.g., Proclus *Poet.* 6.1, K88.21–89.2; 134.10–15) and a demiurge (p. 7; cf. Philo *Drunkenness* 30; in reported gnostic systems, cf., e.g., Iren. *Her.* 1.1–3; in later Kabbalah, cf. Ginsburg, *Kabbalah*, 108–9). For Simon supposedly advocating veneration of angels, see Tert. *Praescr.* 33; for Simon and emanations, Hippol. *Ref.* 6.7–8, 13; 10.8; his pairing with Helen, whom he bought from slavery, 6.14.

551. For views of prostitution, see, e.g., Keener, "Adultery," 11–12; McGinn, "Brothel"; idem, "Palatine"; some discussion at Acts 16:15. Upper-class critics would also regard a background in slavery as more demeaning.

552. For a divine marriage, Ephesian coins in Riesner, *Early Period*, 215; the report in Hdn. 5.6.5 (meant to sound appalling); in myth, see Hom. *Il.* 14.294–96; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.56; for perspectives on a ritual in Gnosticism, Klauck, *Context*, 496–97; Batey, *Imagery*, 70–76; symbolically, in Philo (Horsley, "Marriage"). Despite concerns below, some evidence remains (Klauck, *Context*, 120, 125).

553. Against earlier speculations (e.g., Reitzenstein, *Religions*, 310–19; cf. perhaps Willoughby, *Initiation*, 136; Ruck, "Mystery," 36, 40; Murray, *Stages*, 32), it is poorly attested as a *ritual* in most Greek religion (Graf, "Hieros Gamos: Term"; Burkert, *Religions*, 108–9; Koester, *Introduction*, 1:177, 193; Wagner, *Baptism*, 73), and the myths do not connect with actual sexual rites (Graf, "Hieros Gamos: Greece"); some reports in antiquity may be polemical (Gasparro, *Soteriology*, 81; Klauck, *Context*, 102). Even the marriage of goddess and ruler at Ur was a legitimation rite, differing from the cosmogenic theogamies of Mesopotamian myths (Renger, "Hieros Gamos"), and even ancient Near Eastern cult prostitution altogether is now debated (Lanci, "Stones," 206–10; cf. Baugh, "Cult Prostitution"; but cf. Val. Max. 2.6.15).

554. See, e.g., Wagner, "Divine Femeness" (for second-century C.E. examples).

as the Syrian Atargatis and Phrygian Cybele.⁵⁵⁵ Ancients universalized the mother goddess figures, identifying Demeter,⁵⁵⁶ Isis,⁵⁵⁷ and even Artemis⁵⁵⁸ and Venus (Apul. *Metam.* 4.30), and also Demeter's daughter Kore ("the girl," a title of Persephone)⁵⁵⁹ with other feminine deities. Isis was assimilated to the "triple face" of Proserpina (Persephone, 11.2), could be called on by a variety of names (11.2), and manifested in herself all gods and goddesses (11.4), though her proper name was Isis (11.5).⁵⁶⁰ Every Egyptian queen was traditionally "an incarnation of Isis," a claim explicitly offered by Cleopatra.⁵⁶¹ Because the witch goddess Hecate was associated also with the earth mother and the moon goddess, she often appears as the "threefold" Hecate, ruling heaven, earth, and sea (*Orph. H.* 1.2);⁵⁶² Jewish people knew such traditions.⁵⁶³

Developing ideas at least as old as the pairing of male heavens with female earth in Babylonian and Greek creation myths,⁵⁶⁴ some ancients developed the assimilation of deities toward a male-female dyadic unity (e.g., Samothracian Mysteries in Varro *L.L.* 5.10.58).⁵⁶⁵ As Irenaeus described Gnosticism, all emanations after the first aeon consisted of two parts each, always a male and a female part (e.g., λόγος and ζωή; ἄνθρωπος and ἐκκλησία; *Her.* 1.1.1).⁵⁶⁶

These ideas likely circulated within the region of the Samaritans, in the Hellenistic city Sebaste, where Kore (identified with Isis and Persephone) was worshiped as the feminine part of deity.⁵⁶⁷ (Herod probably thought Kore more "neutral" for a Hellenistic city than the traditional Isis worship there.)⁵⁶⁸ The idea that Simon was

555. See Martin, *Religions*, 62–72 (Demeter), 72–81 (Isis), 81–83 (Atargatis), 83–84 (Cybele), and esp. 81–84 on "the Universal Goddess"; Rives, *Religion*, 147.

556. E.g., Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 81 (with Cybele); idem, *Religion*, 178 (even with Aphrodite, a different kind of fertility goddess).

557. With Cybele, e.g., in Godwin, *Mystery Religions*, 121; with Demeter in the aretology in Horsley, *Documents*, 1:11, 17, §2; with the moon (Selene) in Diod. Sic. 1.11.1 (like Osiris as Dionysus in 1.11.3). She apparently absorbs the identity of Semele as Dionysus's mother in *Orph. H.* 42.10. Cf. Bultmann, *Christianity*, 159 (also comparing the later Madonna).

558. With Bendis at Philippi (Abrahamsen, "Reliefs," 61–64) and with Astarte in Cyprus (Budín, "Reconsideration," noting a wider blending of feminine deities elsewhere).

559. Cf. Murray, *Stages*, 45, 86, 170; Otto, *Dionysus*, 184. Kore (e.g., Paus. 8.31.1) became very prominent (see Burkert, *Religion*, 159; the myth in Mylonas, *Eleusis*, passim). See the early Christian critiques in Justin 1 *Apol.* 64; Athenag. *Plea* 32.

560. The deities include (their Greek titles are used here except with Bellona) Cybele, Athena, Aphrodite, Artemis, Persephone, Demeter, Hera, Bellona, Hecate, etc. An even longer list of titles appears in the early second-century C.E. document P.Oxy. 11.1380 (available in Grant, *Religions*, 128–30; Kraemer, *Maenads*, 367–68, §133 [cf. also 368–70, §133]; cf. Moore, "Life," 259). This focus on Isis as the highest deity may be more characteristic of Isis devotees in Apuleius's time than in the first century, but the syncretism was hardly new. For the nature allegory involved, see Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 82.

561. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," 358–59; idem, *Sibylline Oracles*, 170–71.

562. See further Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 178 (citing Hesiod *Theog.* 411ff.; Paus. 2.30.2). Though Dionysus is also τριφυής, threefold (*Orph. H.* 52.5). Hecate was also goddess of the three ways (forks in roads) and had a triple face (Athen. *Deipn.* 7.325A).

563. See *Test. Sol.* 15:4 (probably third century; the note also cites Goodenough, *Symbols*, 2:236).

564. For the universe as a hermaphrodite organism, see Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.34.

565. Dyads were feminine in Pythagorean numerology (cf. Hippol. *Ref.* 1.2). Later rabbis also addressed the dyad of male and female principles (*Pesiq. Rab.* 20:2). If we accept a "triad" of the "Great God," the Great Mother, and a semidivine messenger deity (cf. Mitescu, "Sull'ipotesi"; but beyond the dyad, deities could be linked in various configurations and numbers), it appears only in the second to fourth centuries, well after the completion of Acts. Cf. also the treatment of particular deities as androgynous (Mastrocinque, "Choices," 382). On trends toward a sort of monotheism, see also discussion at Acts 17:18; also Nilsson, *Piety*, 115–24; Winslow, "Religion," 242; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 252; Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 326–30; Fürst, "Monotheistische Tendenzen."

566. Zoe is daughter of Sophia in *Hyp. Arch.* 95; *Orig. World* 104.

567. So Flusser, "Goddess of Samaria." For the Kore temple, altar, and large stadium on the north and northeast slopes of Sebaste, see Tappy, "Samaria," 467.

568. Magness, "Cults."

the male principle and his consort, Helena, the female⁵⁶⁹ would have suited ideas already available in the region.⁵⁷⁰ How might Samaritans who heard these ideas have adapted and accommodated them within monotheism? Perhaps they associated him simply with the Taheb, the Mosaic restorer,⁵⁷¹ rather than considering him a deity. But concepts widely available help explain the patristic depictions of Simon, regardless of the degree of historical tradition behind them.

V. PHILIP'S CONVERTS (8:12–13)

As elsewhere, Luke continues to emphasize women as well as men (cf. Acts 8:3). Philip's "great miracles" (δυνάμεις μεγάλας, 8:13) here counter Simon's formerly claimed status as the "power . . . that is called great" (δύναμις . . . ἡ καλουμένη μεγάλη) of God (8:10).⁵⁷² That Simon himself is "amazed," rather than "amazing" others (8:9, 11), emphasizes the reversal: the one who valued signs has now been out-signed by a messenger of God's kingdom.⁵⁷³

Mention of the Samaritans' baptism would have astonished Jewish hearers; since male Samaritans were already circumcised,⁵⁷⁴ baptism was sufficient to signal their conversion without raising the kinds of issues that Cornelius's later, uncircumcised baptism did (cf. Acts 10:47; 11:3). Yet Samaritans usually despised Jews, and their conversion to Judaism was rare; after all, from their perspective, it would have been equivalent to becoming traitors to their people. Similarly, many Jews would have been scandalized that Philip (following Stephen's theology) welcomed them to true faith by baptism without requiring Samaritans' confession of loyalty to the Jerusalem temple versus their heretical allegiance to Mount Gerizim.

Philip successfully evangelized Samaritans with the good news of the kingdom (8:12). The kingdom is both present and future in Luke-Acts (see comment on Acts 1:3, 6);⁵⁷⁵ its promise as a future era in Dan 2:44–45 applies to all the earth, which makes it relevant for Samaritans, whatever their status vis-à-vis Judaism. By proclaiming the kingdom, Philip follows the role of the Twelve (Luke 9:2).⁵⁷⁶ That Philip preaches not only the kingdom but also "Jesus's name" emphasizes that the kingdom involves Jesus, the king (see Acts 1:6–11; 3:19–21); both phrases are Lukan ways of speaking about the good news proclaimed by the apostolic church.⁵⁷⁷

Because this passage describes conversion in the same language as elsewhere in Acts, the Samaritans' conversion cannot be viewed as defective.⁵⁷⁸ The response of

569. Hippolytus emphasizes Simon's view of the male-female duality (*Ref.* 6.13) and divinization of himself and Helen (6.14).

570. Flusser, "Goddess of Samaria," 18–20.

571. Grant, *Gnosticism*, 73 (associating him also with the "prophet" of 36 C.E. and arguing that gnostic reinterpretations stemmed from the failure of that eschatological mission); Spencer, *Philip*, 115–22 (contrasting Jesus as the true Mosaic prophet in Acts 7, though Luke does not present Simon as Mosaic).

572. The two terms appear together in Luke-Acts elsewhere only at Acts 4:33; "great" does, however, directly modify "signs" in 6:8; 21:11.

573. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 137.

574. See, e.g., Bowman, *Documents*, 299. Still, Epiphanius (*De mens.* 16.7–9) believed that Jews recircumcised any Samaritan converts to Judaism (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 403).

575. Nolland, "Salvation-History," 70, sees Acts 8:12 as mainly present, but there is not sufficient context here to determine an emphasis one way or the other (Samaritans did have future eschatology).

576. For the good news of God's kingdom, see Isa 52:7; *Tg. Isa.* 40:9 (though Luke draws esp. on Isa 61:1 in his programmatic statement in Luke 4:18).

577. Rhetoricians would consider such expansion with a parallel phrase synonymia, "a form of amplification based on repetition" (Watson, "Speech," 200, citing Cic. *Part. or.* 15.53; Rowe, "Style," 133, citing Demosth. *Fals. leg.* 208; Cic. *Cat.* 2.1.1; Porter, "Paul and Letters," 580, citing Rom 7:15–16).

578. See Russell, "Believed Philip Preaching"; Marshall, *Acts*, 156; Carson, *Showing Spirit*, 144. See esp. Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, passim (e.g., 219), who shows that Luke defends rather than reduces the authenticity of the Samaritans' experience.

“joy” also followed Paul’s ministry (Acts 13:48, 52), although he often encountered hostility as well. Philip preached “Christ” (8:5) and “the good news about God’s kingdom” (8:12) precisely as Paul would (20:25; 28:31). Some scholars doubt the Samaritans’ conversion because Luke does not explicitly mention their repentance. But Luke apparently assumes repentance normally where he mentions faith and baptism; although he mentions repentance after 2:38 (in 11:18; 13:24; 14:15; 17:30; 20:21; 26:18), he barely ever does so when describing conversions. If the Samaritans’ conversion is deemed inauthentic because Luke does not employ the term “repentance,” very few converts appear anywhere in Acts. In fact, Luke often fails to narrate even baptism, subsuming the assumption of its occurrence under the mention of faith; he is, if anything, more emphatic here than usual (perhaps for the sake of those inclined to doubt Samaritans’ genuineness).

Luke is clear that the Samaritans “believed”—language that elsewhere indicates saving faith,⁵⁷⁹ especially when baptism follows it (16:31–34; 18:8). (Presumably Philip, one of the leaders assisting the apostles in Jerusalem [6:3, 5], would understand conversion well enough not to baptize the Samaritans before they had expressed faith and repentance [2:38].) Although Dunn suggests that “believe” with the dative implies only intellectual assent,⁵⁸⁰ he has only two examples, neither of which is clear;⁵⁸¹ further, the phrase refers to genuine saving faith in 16:34 and 18:8.⁵⁸² Dunn thinks that they accepted Philip as they accepted Simon and compares their initial faith to that of Simon, who fails to persevere.⁵⁸³ But is *any* conversion in Acts secure without perseverance (cf. 14:22; 20:26–30)? That Simon fails to persevere tells us no more about the character of other Samaritan converts’ faith than Judas’s failure to persevere reveals that of the Twelve (1:17).

As noted above, some scholars argue that Simon was not converted to begin with, since he continues in sin;⁵⁸⁴ Luke says what the Samaritans believed (8:12) but not what Simon believed.⁵⁸⁵ But this is typical Lukan shorthand (cf. 16:32 with 16:31). Faith in response to signs may be only the most basic level of faith in Johannine soteriology, but it is never denigrated by Luke or in most ancient literature.⁵⁸⁶ Like John, however, Luke expects persevering faith;⁵⁸⁷ Simon’s faith is not faulted because of what provokes it but because he becomes distracted by other concerns (cf. Luke 8:13–14). As Barrett puts it, “There is nothing in this verse to suggest that Simon, in his believing . . . and in his receiving baptism . . . , was less sincere or in any way a less satisfactory convert than the other Samaritans.”⁵⁸⁸

The conversion of Simon, even if temporary, demonstrates God’s power in the

579. See, e.g., Acts 4:4; 10:45; 11:17; 14:1–2; 15:7, 9; 16:1; 17:12, 34; 19:16.

580. Dunn, *Baptism*, 65.

581. See the critique of Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation*, 29, noting that πιστεύω takes the dative especially when related to a person (noting [30–32] that when the “Lord” is the dative object, Dunn’s case falls completely apart; cf. Acts 5:14; 13:12; 16:34; 18:8; 27:25 [Paul]).

582. With Marshall, *Acts*, 156 (who contrasts Simon in Acts 8:13, where the dative is not used, in any case). Barrett, *Acts*, 408, finds the dative with the preacher as its object unusual but logical here.

583. Dunn, *Baptism*, 64.

584. Cf. Aug. *Tract. Jn.* 6.18.1–5: Simon could not receive the Spirit at baptism because his heart was deceitful. Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.13 (Martin, *Acts*, 91) allows that perhaps Simon believed but thinks more likely that Simon merely “pretended” to do so in order to learn Philip’s power.

585. Witherington, *Acts*, 288.

586. E.g., Pindar *Pyth.* 4.199–200. See Keener, *John*, 275–77, 325–28.

587. For this theme in John, see, e.g., John 8:31; 15:4–6; Keener, *John*, 277, 746–47, 999–1002.

588. Barrett, *Acts*, 409 (citing also Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 275).

community. Mass conversion to foreign movements⁵⁸⁹ with sharp boundaries often reduces or suppresses traditional shamanism⁵⁹⁰ (although, admittedly, not always immediately; see comment on Acts 19:18). The reversal in the narrative fits the expected pattern in those situations that the missiological literature sometimes calls “power encounters.”⁵⁹¹ Historically, such spiritual confrontations (in the broad sense) are reported of earlier missionaries such as Patrick in Ireland, Columba in Scotland, and Boniface in Germany.⁵⁹² In many traditional societies, such “power encounters” have taken the form of burning fetishes or felling a sacred tree or totem without suffering the promised harmful effects.⁵⁹³

Earlier, Irenaeus attests that many nonbelievers in his day became Christians after experiencing successful exorcisms.⁵⁹⁴ Later, John Wesley was reported to have cast out demons from those involuntarily possessed, yielding deliverance.⁵⁹⁵ Early Methodist preachers in Wesley’s day expelled demons from some who were possessed.⁵⁹⁶ Lutheran pastor Johann Christian Blumhardt undertook a lengthy struggle in prayer until a person believed to be severely possessed and with an occult background was freed; this deliverance affected the entire area and, he believed, broke a spiritual barrier.⁵⁹⁷ Karl Barth found in Blumhardt’s account of exorcism a fitting encapsulation of Christ’s gospel triumph.⁵⁹⁸

Missiologists often cite the relevance of power encounters for reaching cultures today that affirm superhuman powers.⁵⁹⁹ “Power encounters” appear commonly in modern accounts of evangelization,⁶⁰⁰ and both popular and academic literature offer

589. On the usefulness of people movements in missiology, see, e.g., Pothen, “Missions,” 308–11, associating (308) the conversion of more than 70 percent of Indian Christians with people movements and noting (309) that such group conversions maintain the social fabric in a way that individual conversions do not. Laing, “Consequences,” addresses mass movements’ great effect on the character of Christianity in India. On people movements, see comment on Acts 9:35.

590. E.g., Murphy, “Aspects of Shamanism,” 56–57.

591. The term also appears now in some other literature on Acts here (see, e.g., Talbert, *Acts*, 71, 170).

592. De Wet, “Signs,” 87. For Boniface felling Thor’s sacred oak (similar to “trial by ordeal”), see Neill, *History of Missions*, 75; Latourette, *To A.D. 1500*, 348; Tucker, *Jerusalem*, 47.

593. De Wet, “Signs,” 82–83. For the spiritual-power dimension in current missiology more generally (noting negative but especially positive features), see Pocock, Van Rheenen, and McConnell, *Face*, 183–208.

594. Barrett-Lennard, *Healing*, 229. The grandfather of fifth-century historian Sozomen was converted through the family witnessing a Christian instantly exorcise a spirit in Jesus’s name, whereas pagans and others had failed to accomplish this by any means (Frend, “Place of Miracles,” 11, citing Sozomen *H.E.* 5.15.14–17).

595. Tomkins, *Wesley*, 72.

596. Rack, “Healing,” 147–49. For Wesley’s views about the demonic world in their eighteenth-century context, see Webster, “Terrors.” Cf. Baer, “Bodies,” 47, for an early Free Methodist exorcism.

597. Ising, *Blumhardt*, 162–89, with clearly therapeutic results (175–76); cf. the gradual deliverance in 327 (and perhaps 327–28). He did not accept all alleged exorcisms, but eyewitness experience opened him to the reality of some (104). See further Macchia, *Spirituality*, 65–68.

598. Barth, *Dogmatics*, 4.3:165ff., noted in Kauffman, “Introduction,” 7–8.

599. E.g., Hiebert, “Power Encounter,” 56; Musk, “Popular Islam,” 214–15; Parshall, “Lessons,” 255–56.

600. See discussion of power encounters in Keener, *Miracles*, 843–56 (including examples from interviews); examples of reports in Pothen, “Missions,” 305–8; Burgess, *Revolution*, 151; Lees and Fiddes, “Healed,” 25; Daniel, “Labour,” 158–59; Crawford, *Miracles*, 144–45; Koch, *Zulus*, 111, 148, 152, 153, 199, 279; Numbere, *Vision*, 40–41, 125–26, 170; Danyun, *Lilies*, 331; Park, “Spirituality,” 52–53; Fant, *Miracles*, 110–12; Jones, *Wonders*, 104; Dunkerley, *Healing Evangelism*, 86, 169–70; Alamino, *Footsteps*, 34–35; further, De Wet, “Signs,” 91, notes the following for more examples of power encounters: Johnson, “Authority,” 102–11; Klassen, “Fire,” 176–82; in Guatemala, Thomas, “Report,” 252–55; in India, several studies (Devadason, “Missionary Societies,” 179–91; Middleton, “Growth,” 109–11; Sargunam, “Churches,” 194–95; Shinde, “Animism,” 261–62; Zechariah, “Factors,” 122–23, 162–65); in Indonesia, Bruckner, “History,” 137–87; in Mexico, Aulie, “Movement,” 128–85; in Sri Lanka, both Chandy, “Discipling,” 117–36, and Daniel, “Labour,” 147–72; in the Solomon Islands, Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, 3–19, 42–44, 57–62, 100–111, 190–200; idem, *Verdict Theology*, passim. For some recent power encounters in Asia, see Pothen, “Missions,” 305–8; cf. the summary about the effectiveness of power encounters in Guthrie, “Breakthrough,” 26.

numerous fairly recent examples of such power-encounter claims. Among indigenous movements in early twentieth-century West Africa, Prophet Braide confronted traditional religions and competed with the older powers; on one occasion when the dibia challenged him to see if his God could bring rain, he knelt and began praying, and within five minutes the rains fell.⁶⁰¹ He and William Wadé Harris both succeeded in winning tens of thousands of their fellow Africans to Christianity especially through power encounters.⁶⁰²

When a woman in northern Thailand became the first Christian in her village in 1963, the traditional priest mocked her as she fell sick and apparently died. When the Christians who had joined her prayed, however, she recovered and began telling villagers “their previously unknown secrets”; the priest’s son became a Christian and eventually an elder in that church.⁶⁰³ In Myanmar, it is reported that a village priest close to death was healed and converted.⁶⁰⁴ Among the Kankana-eyes tribal group in the northern Philippines, healings have converted families and sometimes communities.⁶⁰⁵ An Indonesian witch doctor reports that she was supernaturally converted through a vision and abandoned everything she had for the gospel.⁶⁰⁶ Another Indonesian minister reports witnessing significant numbers of witch doctors becoming followers of Christ and burning their apparatus used for sending curses.⁶⁰⁷

During the healing campaign of black South African evangelist Isak Thlape in Viljoenskroon in 1978, an influential shaman knotted many charms into his own hair, then joined the healing line so that he could see what was happening. When Thlape prayed, everyone in line fell to the ground at the same time—including the shaman. He was semiconscious for more than five minutes, and when he recovered full consciousness he found “that all his hair into which the amulets and charms were knotted, had literally fallen out of his head.” He quickly became a public follower of Christ.⁶⁰⁸ Readers in contexts of confrontation with traditional power religions thus find valuable relevance in ancient power encounters such as those described in Acts or other narratives—for example, Exod 7:10–12.

b. God and Jerusalem Confirm the Samaritans’ Conversion (8:14–17)

In Acts 8:14–17, Jerusalem ratifies (and assumes responsibility for) the Samaritan mission. This passage also emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit to complete

601. Koschorke, Ludwig, and Delgado, *History*, 223–24.

602. Hanciles, “Conversion,” 170. On Harris in this regard, see also Shaw, *Awakening*, 56; Bartels, *Roots*, 174–78.

603. Remaining an elder at the time of writing in Gardner, *Healing Miracles*, 138.

604. Khai, “Pentecostalism,” 269.

605. Ma, “Encounter,” 136; see more fully Ma, *Spirits*; elsewhere in the Philippines, note exorcisms in Cole, “Model,” 264; Johnson, *History in Philippines*, 77–78.

606. Knapstad, “Power,” 83–85 (based on his interview with her); regarding Indonesia, cf. also Wiyono, “Timor Revival,” 278–79, 282; York, “Indigenous Missionaries,” 250–51; Tari, *Wind*, 37–40.

607. Tandi Randa (DMin graduate, Asbury seminary), interview, May 23, 2012; follow-up correspondence, May 25–26, 2012. In the West, we mostly avoid today the terminology “witch doctor,” but because the accounts involve those locally known for “witchcraft,” in that culture involving curses to harm others, I have retained the nomenclature of the reports as they were given to me.

608. De Wet, “Signs,” 84–85, noting (91n2) that the evangelist narrated the event to him and eyewitnesses later confirmed it. Pothen, “Missions,” 189, reports that in Gujarat and Maharashtra in the 1980s, many sorcerers turned instead to Christ; Kisau, “Acts,” 1333, suggests this as a goal in Africa, and Baker and Baker, *Miracles*, 53, note occasions (six former shamans in one church). Asian evangelist Vasanth Edward, report to author, March 10, 2007 (about events of the preceding weeks), notes that one day he warned against witchcraft; one woman, long paralyzed by witchcraft, was healed as she heard this message, and that night someone known for witchcraft died, which led to many conversions. Stories abound of witch doctors who converted and surrendered fetishes (e.g., Braun, *Here*, 160).

the mission (cf. 1:4–5). Because this mission has the approval of God and the Jerusalem apostles, the reader can anticipate the same for the Gentile mission that follows. The passage illustrates that Spirit reception (in the Lukan sense) is not limited to a single pattern, and it helps prepare the narrative for the confrontation with Simon in 8:18–24.

I. APPROVING THE SAMARITAN MISSION (8:14)

As in 11:1, word reached Jerusalem and invited the attention of the church there.⁶⁰⁹ It arrived in Jerusalem without Philip going back there. (He does not seem to have reported back later in 8:40 either, but as one of the Hellenist leaders he may have remained a special target in Jerusalem.)⁶¹⁰ Yet any disciple traveling through Samaria to Jerusalem would have brought the news to the Jerusalem church, and this probably would have happened soon after Philip's popularity spread there (8:6).⁶¹¹ (This situation contrasts with the conversion of the African official in 8:26–40, where word would not reach Jerusalem unless from Philip's testimony in Caesarea or if the official someday made another long pilgrimage to Jerusalem.)

Later the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to check on the church in Antioch, and Barnabas endorsed the work there (11:21–22). Here we find the same pattern for Samaria; apparently the Jerusalem church felt responsibility to make sure that what was propagated in the name of the Jesus movement was genuinely from God, but its chief representatives in this period were ready to embrace activities that they discerned were from God's Spirit. This contributes to Luke's picture of the apostolic unity of the early Christian mission in the midst of its cultural diversity. Depending on how we construe the sequence of 8:14–16, the narrative may also exemplify the apostles' concern about a report that baptized people had not received the Spirit's empowerment; such empowerment was crucial for believers (1:4–8), and the apostles probably expected it to normally accompany conversion (2:38–39).

That Peter and John traveled together fits the usual pattern of ministry companions elsewhere in Luke-Acts (3:1–4; 11:30; 13:2; 15:39–40);⁶¹² it also fits Paul's testimony that they were two of the three most prominent leaders in the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9). That the approval comes from John as well as Peter might speak particularly loudly given Luke's portrayal of John's anti-Samaritan sentiments earlier (Luke 9:54).⁶¹³

Because the post-Pentecost apostles are (mostly) reliable characters for Luke's audience, their approval of the Samaritan mission is important to show the earliest church's unanimity on this important step toward the Gentile mission. More important than their ratification of the mission, of course, is God's direct evidence that accompanies it in Acts 8:17: the coming of the Spirit (for this as a sign of God's approval, see 10:45, 47; 11:15–18).⁶¹⁴ Luke carefully documents how the Jerusalem church recognized each

609. The claim that "Samaria" received the word could be typical Lukan hyperbole, or it could mean "Samaritans as distinct from Jews" (Lanski, *Acts*, 324).

610. In any case, no one appears to have complained about some not reporting back as if it were the standard expectation. Paul returns to Antioch, but only periodically, and his reports in 15:3–4, 12, are testimonies, not time cards or work reports.

611. Travelers did bring news regularly (Eurip. *El.* 361–62; Demosth. *Ep.* 5.1; Cic. *Att.* 2.11; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 47.1; P.Oxy. 32; Apul. *Metam.* 1.26; Apoll. *K. Tyre* 8), and even later Diaspora churches were certainly networked (1 Cor 1:11; Phil 2:19, 23; Col 1:7–8; 4:7; see Bauckham, "Gospels," 33–44; Thompson, "Internet").

612. Though not indicated for Peter in Acts 9:32–43, he had some local companions available when needed (10:23; 11:12).

613. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 285–86 (who suggests that John would want to verify matters).

614. Cf. *ibid.*, 289. Jervell, *Luke and People of God*, 115, 127, emphasizes the apostolic ratification and argues that Luke addresses Christians skeptical about the Samaritan mission; this might fit the Jerusalem church even as late as the early 60s but not the audience I have deemed likeliest. Certainly it was controversial

stage in the church's expansion, showing the continuity between the original apostolic mission and the Diaspora church of his own day.⁶¹⁵ Some scholars suggest that the apostles' real intention was to maintain authority over the new mission,⁶¹⁶ a motive unfortunately often attested in the history of Christian missions.⁶¹⁷ Whether this was a prominent motive or not (it is not clear, and Luke certainly has no reason to emphasize it for his Diaspora audience), the earliest church probably assumed that the apostles would lead the movement, and hence provide it unity, until Christ's return (Luke 22:30).

II. NEEDING THE SPIRIT (8:15–16)

The lack of reception of the Spirit (Acts 8:15–16) naturally concerned the Jerusalem church, for the Spirit was a necessary sign of divine sanction.⁶¹⁸ This initial absence may have indicated, however, that God also desired the Jerusalem church's sanction.⁶¹⁹ Whatever the reason, that the Spirit is apparently received subsequent to conversion here has occasioned considerable discussion.

Historically, various groups have advocated a second experience of the Spirit, often citing this passage, including Anglo-Catholics and Catholics with their views of confirmation; Puritan and Reformed Sealers; Wesleyan, Holiness, and Keswickian groups; and classical Pentecostals.⁶²⁰ Other traditions' accusations that proponents of the second-experience traditions reflect bias are essentially *ad hominem*, since one could suggest such an accusation in either direction. What is often attributed to the "bias" of such traditions could simply reflect a legitimate observation about the text uncovered in the history of interpretation, an observation that contradicts a "bias" read into Luke from an inflexible application of Pauline theology.

Many scholars today also argue that Luke allows for receiving the Spirit subsequent to conversion.⁶²¹ (In most cases they refer to a particular experience of the Spirit releasing a dimension of power for a particular aspect of ministry and are not suggesting that Luke, if pressed, would necessarily repudiate Paul's broader sense of "receiving the Spirit.") Others rightly respond that much of Acts appears to support the reception of the Spirit with conversion (2:38; 10:44–48; cf. Luke 3:16). A single passage supporting subsequence (if that is all there is) might therefore seem a weak foundation for explaining all of Lukan (or early Christian) pneumatology. Nevertheless, it would be sufficient to call into question the frequent practice of assuming that we understand Luke's pneumatology fully by reading into it Paul's. Further examination below calls into question the premise that only a single passage allows for subsequence, although simultaneity may constitute Luke's (apparently as well as Paul's) ideal.

in the early period and required legitimation (see Lindemann, "Samaritaner," for John and Luke-Acts; in Acts 8, Samkuty, *Samaritan Mission*, 188–221).

615. Johnson, *Acts*, 11 (citing Acts 8:14; 11:1–18, 29–30; 12:25; 15:2; 18:22; 19:21; cf. 21:17–21).

616. Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 45–46.

617. E.g., Neill, *History of Missions*, 190–94 (seventeenth-century papal restrictions on the successful Jesuit mission in China), 515–16 (among later Protestants).

618. Caird, *Apostolic Age*, 71.

619. Such reasoning suggests that the delay was theologically abnormal; it also indicates, however, that it is ontologically possible (see discussion below).

620. See Lederle, *Treasures*, 5; Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 36–37; also Bruner, *Theology*, 323–41 (citing Wesley, Finney, Torrey, Andrew Murray, A. J. Gordon, and F. B. Meyer). For one defense of the confirmation position, see Adler, *Taufe*; idem, *Pfingstfest* (summarized and critiqued by Turner, *Power*, 53–55). By the early third century, Tertullian mentions a Spirit-imparting rite accompanying baptism (*De Bap.* 8), and in the Western church confirmation emerged as a distinct sacrament before the close of the first millennium (Bonnah, *Spirit*, 181–82).

621. Menzies, *Development*, 248–60; idem, *Empowered*, 204–25 (on this passage, 204–13); Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 146–48; Franklin, "Spirit-Baptism"; Wyckoff, "Baptism," 426–37; Palma, *Spirit*, 107–32. For a survey of scholarly views, see, e.g., Turner, "Significance of Receiving."

As noted above, James D. G. Dunn has argued that the conversion of the Samaritans was inadequate until the Spirit was given.⁶²² This approach, if followed to its logical conclusion, would suggest that it is possible to embrace God’s message joyfully, believe, and be baptized (elsewhere normal means of conversion in Acts) yet require the imposition of apostolic hands to produce genuine conversion.⁶²³ Dunn appeals to what he sees as irregularities in the account to question the Samaritans’ conversion.⁶²⁴ He thinks the Samaritans superstitious and influenced by magic, yet as already noted (see the excursus on magic at Acts 8:9), the same could be true for much of the ancient world, including Ephesus (Acts 19:18–19), where Luke indicates that some believed and received the Spirit (19:1–6). As noted above, Dunn argues that “believe” with the dative object implies merely intellectual assent, but in fact Luke normally employs the dative with this verb when the object of faith is a person, not thereby indicating the faith as defective (16:34; 18:8; 27:25).

Further, the apostles accepted Philip’s baptism of the believing Samaritans because the apostles do not, in contrast to 19:5, rebaptize those who were baptized without faith in Christ. Other scholars have pointed out weaknesses in Dunn’s argument on this passage, suggesting that he has read the theology of other NT voices into it (this suggestion is ironic, since he has elsewhere been a major advocate for listening to the divergent theology of various NT voices).⁶²⁵

More commonly, scholars argue that 2:38–39 states the norm, which must be assumed unless stated otherwise, but that 8:15–16 represents a very exceptional (but genuinely exceptional) situation.⁶²⁶ Why would Luke have to mention that they did not “receive the Spirit” at baptism unless this was the normal expectation (8:16)?⁶²⁷ Why might this delay have occurred? The most common and plausible explanation is that God waited for apostolic ratification to maintain the unity of the Jerusalem and Samaritan churches.⁶²⁸

Others contend that subsequent narratives in Acts qualify how we should read 2:38–39.⁶²⁹ In either case, however, the delay inadvertently demonstrates that early Christians were aware of anomalies and that the gift of the Spirit (in the Lukan sense that focuses especially on prophetic empowerment) was ontologically distinguishable—and at least on occasion at a time different—from conversion. Further, Luke clearly

622. Dunn, *Baptism*, 55–72; cf. idem, “Baptism.”

623. Happily, other passages in Acts prevent us from making this a standard paradigm for conversion. Yet, as suggested below (and in Keener, *Gift*, 163–66), the larger context of Acts protects us from assuming that Luke must be depicting conversion here.

624. Dunn, *Baptism*, 55–72. For one especially thorough refutation, see Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation*, 28–32 (though on some other passages I find Dunn’s points stronger); for a survey of Pentecostal responses to Dunn, see Atkinson, “Luke-Acts.” Fee, *Gospel*, 96–99, 117–19, who identifies baptism in the Spirit with conversion, nevertheless finds Dunn’s argument here problematic (arguing instead that Samaritans lacked the experiential dimension of their conversion). Most commentators do not follow Dunn here.

625. E.g., Pinnock, “Foreword,” vii. Most Pentecostal scholars emphasize the diversity of NT theology at this point (see the discussion of Pentecostal hermeneutics in Stronstad, *Scripture*).

626. Turner, *Power*, 348, 360–75; idem, *Gifts*, 44–45; idem, “‘Spirit’ as Power,” 337–39; Bruner, *Theology*, 177–80; Ladd, *Theology*, 346; Kistemaker, *Acts*, 302. Gangel, *Acts*, 123, recognizes subsequence here but attributes it to the “transitional” era described, instead of thinking that Luke would expect it in the later church.

627. See, e.g., Turner, *Gifts*, 45. The “not yet” and “only” are significant (Bruner, *Theology*, 178; Spencer, *Philip*, 213).

628. See Marshall, *Acts*, 157–58; Das, “Acts 8”; Green, *Spirit*, 167–68; Deere, *Power of Spirit*, 237; cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 148. Some have also argued that Luke distinguishes two kinds of baptism, only one of which receives the Spirit (a view summarized, and rightly criticized, in Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 171–72), but this explanation introduces into early Christianity a different baptism (against the principle of Occam’s razor) for which we lack concrete evidence.

629. E.g., Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 146; cf. Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 173–74.

does affirm empowerments of the Spirit subsequent to conversion even when it is clear that the recipients had already received the Spirit's empowerment (4:8, 31; 13:9). The Spirit falls before (10:44) or after (8:16–17), and sometimes roughly simultaneously with (19:6), baptism; as many scholars observe, Luke provides variety rather than a single normative pattern of initiation-conversion.⁶³⁰

If Luke associates the Spirit with empowerment rather than conversion (and he most often does, as his Jewish contemporaries most often did),⁶³¹ reception of the Spirit subsequent to conversion does not contradict Paul or others who associate the Spirit with conversion.⁶³² (Luke probably uses the expression “receiving the Spirit” differently from Paul, because his emphasis differs, focusing on empowerment more than on new life.)⁶³³

In fact, one could argue for some subsequence even in most cases of the first mention of people receiving the Spirit;⁶³⁴ in 2:4, 8:16–17, 9:17, and (by at least a few minutes)⁶³⁵ 19:6, receiving the Spirit followed faith, being absolutely simultaneous with it only in 10:44 (see comments ad loc. on these passages). To argue that 2:4 was merely an exception could make sense, if this were all one needed to argue; by contrast, to argue that up to 80 percent of the initial reception passages are exceptions renders the word “exception” meaningless.⁶³⁶ Rather than seeing all these cases as exceptions, it may be more fruitful to view them as illustrations—of the variety of early Christian experience. Acts 2:38 provides the theological norm or ideal but does not constitute an inalienable rule.⁶³⁷ Or perhaps it suggests that all of the gift

630. With Witherington, *Acts*, 289; idem, *Doctor*, 109; cf. similarly Gaventa, *Acts*, 139; Stagg, *Acts*, 197; Hertig, “Mystery Tour,” 110 (Luke may be less interested in articulating a norm than in showing God's unpredictable power); Wall, “Acts,” 139; Yong, *Spirit Poured*, 118; Williams, *Systematic Theology*, 3:44; F. Martin in *Acts* (ACCS), 139; Talbert, *Acts*, 31; Chance, *Acts*, 134. Even many charismatic scholars treat all occasions of filling subsequent to conversion as exceptions (Green, *Thirty Years*, 259–60), an approach that appears to make far too much of Luke's narrative exceptional; conversely, those who overemphasize instances marked with tongues (see comment on Acts 2:4) appear to place too much weight on “initial” fillings in Acts, which seems to neglect the importance of “subsequent fillings” (hence continuing experiences of empowerment) sometimes mentioned (esp. Acts 4:31; probably 4:8; 13:9). For the value of literary variation, see Aul. Gel. 1.4; Max. Tyre 21.4; Anderson, *Glossary*, 53–54, 114; Nock, “Vocabulary,” 137; Cic. *Or. Brut.* 46.156–57; *Fam.* 13.27.1. One should merely take care to avoid “improper” synonyms (Rowe, “Style,” 123–24); for ancient discussion of synonyms, see, e.g., Porph. *Ar. Cat.* 68.5–27.

631. See introductory comments in Keener, *Acts*, 1:520–24, 534–37. Although one cannot infer the sense of empowerment from the laying on of hands in Acts 8:17 (this is not the only function of hand-laying in Luke-Acts, e.g., Luke 4:40; 13:13; cf. Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 40–41), one can infer it as at least part of Luke's point on the basis of his central pneumatological emphasis (Acts 1:8). The Samaritan Christians become thus not merely objects of ministry but ultimately fellow ministers; this expectation of spreading Spirit empowerment, and hence multiplied ministry through indigenous churches, helps explain both earliest Christianity's phenomenal growth rate and that of some Christian movements today that share the same expectation. Of course, we should not infer from Luke's emphasis here that the apostles neglected teaching, which Luke and his apostolic protagonists also value (cf. Acts 2:42; 5:42; 18:11; 20:20).

632. Cf. Menzies, *Empowered*, 230.

633. The expression is the same as at Acts 2:38 and should be interpreted according to the empowerment depicted in that context (1:8; 2:4, 17–18), not according to Paul's somewhat different usage of the same expression (1 Cor 2:12; Gal 3:2).

634. I focus for the moment on the “first” mention because this is the one we would normally identify with conversion if, in fact, Luke always mentioned receiving the Spirit in terms of conversion. Some treat the passages with intervals as “the invariable pattern” (e.g., Stronstad, “Baptized,” 168–69).

635. A few minutes would not disconnect receiving the Spirit from the “conversion process” but could weaken an ontological connection between saving faith and receiving the Spirit in whatever sense in which Luke means the latter experience.

636. As I suggested earlier in Keener, *Gift*, 162.

637. Some scholars, who interpret Acts 2:38 in light of subsequent occasions, even view repentance and baptism merely as prerequisites (and in view of 10:44–48, baptism is not always that), negating a direct temporal connection, though I have treated it here as a norm or ideal (see comment on Acts 2:38).

becomes available in *principle* at conversion, but Luke's narratives illustrate that some *experience* the needed empowerment aspect subsequently.

The Samaritans were already converted; in Luke's theology, though it was normal to anticipate the Spirit with baptism (2:38), prayer often preceded the coming of the Spirit (e.g., Luke 11:13; Acts 1:14). Prayer, along with ministry of the word, was central to the apostolic mission (Acts 6:4),⁶³⁸ and the apostles prayed for the Samaritans (8:15). These Samaritans were surely converted: Samaritans "believed" what Philip preached, and they received baptism (8:12); further, apostolic baptism presupposed confessing Jesus's name (2:21, 38; 22:16).⁶³⁹ The apostles came to impart the Spirit, not to preach (or do miracles) again for Philip's converts and, most significantly, not to rebaptize them (contrast 19:3–5).⁶⁴⁰ It is clear that they did not regard Philip's gospel (8:12) or work as defective.⁶⁴¹ Although the conversions were authentic, however, the Samaritan converts had not yet "received the Spirit."

That the apostles imparted the Spirit⁶⁴² no more demeans Philip's ministry than the apostles' initial failure to reach the Samaritans demeans theirs; their works were complementary.⁶⁴³ Granted, receiving the Spirit at conversion seems to have been the norm and the ideal (2:38), but this is not the only passage to diverge from the ideal (cf. 10:44–48, where the Spirit falls before baptism). Spencer argues that Philip acts as a forerunner and Peter as a culminator, the way John's water baptism prepared the way and served as prototype for Jesus's Spirit baptism (Luke 3:16; Acts 8:12, 15–17).⁶⁴⁴ The passage does suggest, however, that baptism in Jesus's name, like John's baptism, does not *directly* effect the coming of the Spirit (Acts 8:16; cf. 19:5–6; Luke 3:16).⁶⁴⁵

All other extant first-century Christian writers who explicitly address the subject associate reception of the Spirit with conversion (e.g., Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:2; Eph 4:30; Heb 6:4; 1 Pet 1:2; cf. John 7:39; Jude 19). This is probably also true for Luke on the general theological level (Luke 3:16; Acts 2:38), although in his focus Luke more often associates the Spirit with empowerment to speak for God, which at least sometimes occurs clearly subsequent to conversion (e.g., Acts 4:8; 13:9). But we face two differences between Luke's reports and other claims. First, Luke is recounting not simply the theological ideal but the experience of early Christians; he is the only NT writer to do so, and therefore his voice should be weighed very seriously when one considers the experience of the early Christians.

Second, Luke emphasizes, even in the context to which the paradigmatic text 2:38 refers, a particular aspect of the Spirit's ministry, especially prophetic empowerment (1:8; 2:17–18). In a related approach, some scholars suggest that the Samaritans

638. Johnson, *Acts*, 148. For the importance of prayer in such a mission, one need only compare the privileged role of God's intimates in OT ministry to outsiders (Gen 20:7; Exod 8:8–13, 28–31; Job 42:8; cf. Acts 5:12–13; 8:24; Jas 5:16; *Lev. Rab.* 5:4).

639. With Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation*, 29–30.

640. Witherington, *Acts*, 286; Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation*, 29–30.

641. Turner, *Power*, 363–67; Witherington, *Acts*, 286; D. Williams, *Acts*, 156. Many commentators thus affirm that the Samaritans were already converted (e.g., Arrington, *Acts*, 88).

642. For Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.14 (Martin, *Acts*, 92), only the apostles and bishops (i.e., their successors) can impart the Spirit; cf. today Fitzmyer, "Role of Spirit," 182, who contends that the Spirit is given in Acts only when at least one of the Twelve or one of their delegates is present. (Is Paul a delegate of the Twelve in Acts 19:6?) Since Acts mostly concerns apostles, this criterion might seem difficult to falsify, but Ananias's role in 9:17 does just that; again, Luke's narratives do not fall easily into most subsequent patterns prescribed for them.

643. See Spencer, *Philip*, 189.

644. *Ibid.*, 220–41 (also [234–40] comparing Apollos as evangelist in Acts 18:25–27 and Paul as apostle imparting the Spirit in 19:6). Philip also acts as forerunner in bringing the message to the Gentiles (8:26–39; 10:1–11:18) "and even in preaching along the coastal plain (8.40; cf. 9.32–43)" (Dunn, *Acts*, 103, concurring with Spencer).

645. See Spencer, *Philip*, 240.

lacked not the Spirit *per se* but the external signs of the Spirit, such as in 10:46; 19:6.⁶⁴⁶ Thus John Chrysostom opines that “it was the Spirit of signs that they had not received” and the subsequent manifestation of the Spirit of signs that provoked Simon’s solicitation.⁶⁴⁷ This is why Luke can also mention fillings subsequent to an initial one (4:8, 31; 13:9): his focus is on empowerment for speaking God’s message, not on the Spirit’s role in what some other NT writers would call regeneration. Although he does not emphasize this activity to the exclusion of other components, it is noteworthy that in contrast to John (e.g., John 3:5–6) and Paul (e.g., Rom 8:9; Gal 3:2), he rarely associates the Spirit with God converting an individual (most obviously excepting Luke 3:16 and Acts 2:38, on which see comment below).⁶⁴⁸

Thus Luke need not deny the Spirit’s involvement in conversion,⁶⁴⁹ but in his own volumes he emphasizes “receiving the Spirit” as prophetic empowerment, which, at least in this instance (and probably some others), occurs subsequent to conversion.⁶⁵⁰ That is, he focuses on receiving the Spirit for the task promised in Acts 1:8, namely, power to speak Christ’s message across cultural barriers.⁶⁵¹ (I believe this the likeliest interpretation in light of Acts as a whole, although arguments can be marshaled against it.)⁶⁵² Another scholar rightly observes that those who wish to make “receiving the Spirit” either always the conversion experience or always subsequent to conversion err by treating the expression as “a *terminus technicus* that always has the same meaning.”⁶⁵³ Early Christian terminology need not fit the neater categories of some subsequent theologies.⁶⁵⁴

Even Luke 3:16 and Acts 2:38, the programmatic statements that indicate that conversion initiates the believer into the experience of the Spirit, cannot limit the Spirit to the experience of conversion (in light of background and the context of Acts 2:38).⁶⁵⁵ These key passages refer to the entire sphere of the Spirit’s work, into which the believer is *initiated* at conversion. Yet Luke’s focus is not the Spirit’s activ-

646. Calvin, *Acts*, 236 (as cited in Hertig, “Mystery Tour,” 110; Peterson, *Acts*, 286); D. Williams, *Acts*, 156 (though not suggesting a universal pattern, and unpersuasively depending on the anarthrous use of “Spirit”); Kistemaker, *Acts*, 301 (again not suggesting a universal pattern); Packer, *Acts*, 65 (suggesting that tongues were lacking here). For phenomena at times indicating the Spirit’s activity, see also Marshall, *Theology*, 177. Such signs may not have come on every occasion anyway (see comment on Acts 2:4), but they were frequent and they characterized power for cross-cultural witness (Acts 1:8).

647. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 18 (Martin, *Acts*, 93).

648. See more fully my argument in Keener, *Gift*, 52–57, 157–68; for John and Paul, see 139–40, 154–57; for the image of baptism in the Spirit in John 3:5, see Keener, *John*, 546–52.

649. This is not to suggest, with Beasley-Murray, an implicit reception at conversion predicted in Acts 2:38–39; the reception here fits 2:38–39 (Turner, *Power*, 368–69), especially as it is spreading “afar off” (2:39).

650. See, e.g., Kilgallen, *Commentary*, 66 (Luke does not address the baptismal gift of the Spirit known to us from other sources but the prophetic aspect of the Spirit). Kilgallen writes from a Catholic perspective; Pentecostals likewise usually see this as a Spirit experience distinct from conversion (also a Spirit experience; Atkinson, “Responses”; Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 146; Menzies, *Empowered*, 204–13). Turner, “Interpreting,” sees one gift of the Spirit that includes both salvation and empowerment.

651. Luke is aware that the Spirit was active before Acts 1:8 and Pentecost (see, e.g., Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 2:25–27), even though, unlike Matthew (Matt 10:20), he does not specify the Spirit’s activity for the disciples earlier, maintaining his chronological focus (Luke 12:12 is future; cf. perhaps Luke 16:16).

652. One possible argument against this position is that Luke does not narrate subsequent evangelism by the Samaritans but narrates it only by the apostles in Acts 8:25 (see Walton, “Acts,” 29). But Luke’s focus turns quickly to Simon, and his source—especially if Philip soon left Samaria—may not have provided much direct information about Samaritan self-propagation (though cf. 9:31; 15:3).

653. See Carson, *Fallacies*, 46–47, including critique.

654. Luke, like many other ancients (including Plato; Max. Tyre 21.4), allowed freedom in terminology (against many other ancients, including the precursors of much later systematic theology).

655. For background, especially the prophetic associations of the Spirit in biblical and early Jewish sources, see, e.g., Menzies, *Development*, 53–112; Keener, *Spirit*, 10–13; Turner, *Power*, 86–104; for the context of Acts 2:38, see discussion there.

ity in conversion, which he nowhere specifically mentions, but empowerment for a believer's continuing proclamation of Christ. This empowerment could belong to a larger theological sphere of the Spirit's activity implicitly embraced in conversion without being completely experienced then. Just as Paul's thesis that the believer is dead to sin (Rom 6:2–11; Gal 2:20; 6:14) must be actualized in believers' lives (the nature of Paul's argument even in these passages suggesting that this behavioral actualization is yet to fully happen), this full access to the Spirit's power may be fleshed out in subsequent experiences, which are what are apt to appear in Luke's narratives. Luke focuses on the empowerment dimension of the Spirit, which, though theologically implicit in conversion, might be experienced subsequently.

Modern theological discussion about timing can distract us from hearing Luke's own theological emphasis here. Regardless of the timing, this narrative (with apostles diligently seeking to ensure the outcome in Acts 8:15–16) is as emphatic as 1:4–5: the Spirit's empowerment is not optional for the Christian life, and the need for such empowerment must be attended to urgently. If Luke speaks of empowerment here, he also indicates that the believers in Samaria, like the later Gentile Christians, become not mere beneficiaries of Jerusalem's ministry but themselves empowered agents for the spreading of the word.⁶⁵⁶ That is, despite Luke's biographic focus on several key figures, his missiology includes the empowerment of all new indigenous churches for self-propagation and partnership in mission.⁶⁵⁷

III. BAPTISM IN JESUS'S NAME (8:16)

Scholars sometimes make much of baptism εἰς Jesus's name. Because εἰς τὸ ὄνομα appears in commercial transactions for something transferred to a person's account, the expression may refer to one becoming Christ's property.⁶⁵⁸ Others have compared a Semitic expression attested in rabbinic texts, interpreting the phrase as meaning “with reference to Jesus's name.”⁶⁵⁹ While Luke and his source (if Philip) may be only secondarily influenced by Semitisms, the sense “with reference to” or “for” was not unacceptable in Greek (cf. perhaps baptism for repentance in 2:38); the sense would also work in 19:3–5.

The force of prepositions was weakened in Koine, however, and so we probably should not make much of the difference, given Luke's usage of ἐπί Jesus's name in 2:38⁶⁶⁰ and εἰς his name in 8:16; 19:5. As Larry Hurtado argues, the different Greek prepositions Luke employs probably reflect the same Semitic expression, and all simply “indicate that the rite is done with primary reference to Jesus.”⁶⁶¹ See further discussion at Acts 2:38.

IV. RECEIVING THE SPIRIT (8:17)

Few expected the Spirit to be conferred widely in this age, still fewer through these human agents, and—worst of all—Jewish people had no expectation that this would happen among Samaritans! Some other features of the text appear more debatable.

656. Cf. Luke 8:39, where Jesus sends an apparent Gentile, with little prior instruction, to testify of God's works to him. But in Acts, Jew and Gentile are brought together, and more teaching is available.

657. Cf. Wall, “Acts,” 139, accurately: without this empowerment, the Samaritans cannot “participate fully in the community's missionary vocation” (citing Acts 1:4–8).

658. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 187; Tobin, *Rhetoric in Contexts*, 199 (noting BDAG 713; TDNT 5:245); cf. Martin, *Worship*, 127.

659. Hartman, “Name of Jesus,” 439–40 (citing *leshem in b. Pesah.* 60); Le Cornu, *Acts*, 129–30 (see comment on Acts 2:38).

660. The preposition εἰς may have appeared awkward in Acts 2:38 because Luke must employ it with ἄφεσιν a few words later.

661. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 201.

Several times in Acts the Spirit is conferred through laying on hands (8:17–18; 9:17; 19:6).⁶⁶² That this factor is not mentioned in every case warns against our inferring a mandatory rite in this period,⁶⁶³ but neither can we neglect the significant proportion of occurrences of conferring the Spirit that are conjoined with laying on of hands. Conzelmann thinks that laying on hands “must have been customary at baptism” but admits that his first explicit source is a century after Luke (Tert. *Bapt.* 8.1–2).⁶⁶⁴ (Even in a later period, Ambrosiaster notes that God sometimes imparts the Spirit without the laying on of hands.)⁶⁶⁵ Rackham suggests that in ordinary cases such as Acts 8:17 and 19:6 (Acts 2 and 10 being extraordinary), the Holy Spirit was bestowed through laying on hands; this was, he opines, “the beginning of the church’s rite of confirmation.”⁶⁶⁶

Although both sorts of practices naturally evolved from the sorts of practices Luke describes (see esp. 19:6), more chronologically relevant precedents exist. Laying on hands here evokes blessing (Luke 18:15–16; Gen 48:14).⁶⁶⁷ It is not for ordination (Acts 6:6), but it does involve empowerment here (cf. 1:8; Num 27:23; Deut 34:9).⁶⁶⁸ Laying on hands is linked explicitly here with prayer (Acts 8:15; cf. 6:6; Matt 19:13).⁶⁶⁹ It is doubtful that we should think of the practice as conferring conversion (though it might confer some benefits theologically implicit in conversion). It is, rather, an action often associated with “transfer” of the Spirit’s activity through confident prayer.

Simon somehow “saw” that people received the Spirit, and this reception was dramatic enough to provoke his desire for the gift (Acts 8:18).⁶⁷⁰ Thus Dunn suggests that “Luke has in mind here an eye-catching display of ecstasy,” presumably the same mark of receiving the Spirit as in other “initial” receptions in Acts—namely, tongues speaking (2:4; 10:45–46; 19:6).⁶⁷¹ This would mean “that *in every case* where Luke describes the giving of the Spirit it is accompanied and ‘evidenced’ by glossolalia.”⁶⁷²

662. For one discussion of postbaptismal imposition of hands for the Spirit, see Coppens, “Imposition,” 423–32.

663. Kistemaker, *Acts*, 302, noting numerous exceptions.

664. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 65. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 406, much more helpfully cites Acts 19:6.

665. Ambrosiaster *Commentary on Paul’s Epistles* (CSEL 81:34; Vogels, 34; Bray, *Corinthians*, 30).

666. Rackham, *Acts*, 116–17. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 406, regards this as a natural (but later) development of the laying on of hands at baptism. Barrett, “Simon Magus,” 292–95, doubts any rite here, noting that the polemic against Simon’s attempt to treat the Spirit commercially or magically militates against any possibility of controlling the Spirit or subjecting its reception to human stimuli.

667. See also 1Qap Gen^a XX, 22, 29; *Jos. Asen.* 8:9; 21:6; Acts 13:3; cf. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 240n35 (citing 2 Kgs 5:11 LXX). For healing, cf. Flusser, “Laying-On of Hands”; see further discussion at Acts 6:6.

668. Turner, *Power*, 371–73, doubts empowerment for mission here, but missiology is central to Acts and also to its pneumatology (Acts 1:8). For empowerment with a ministry gift at something like ordination, see 1 Tim 4:14.

669. Laying on hands is associated with prayer, which is associated with receiving the Spirit (see Hull, *Spirit in Acts*, 104–5, 109, citing Aug. *Bapt.* 3.16, on laying on hands’ association with prayer).

670. Some scholars regard outward manifestations of the Spirit as an early trait because they are non-Pauline (Ramsay, *Pictures*, 59), but while Paul may not associate them specifically with receiving the Spirit, he does not ignore their connection with the Spirit (1 Cor 12:4, 7–11; 1 Thess 5:19–20; cf. Gal 3:5).

671. Dunn, *Jesus and Spirit*, 188; see also Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 18; Carson, *Showing Spirit*, 145; Rackham, *Acts*, 116; Haenchen, *Acts*, 304; Arrington, *Acts*, 89; Palma, *Spirit*, 152–53 (and sources he cites); Stronstad, “Baptized,” 174–75; Magruder, “Reading” (esp. 299); Starmer, “Co-Laborers,” 232 (plausibly noting that readers will fill the silences from the previous and subsequent occasions in Acts); cf. Stonehouse, *Areopagus*, 80 (“prophecy and tongues”); Faw, *Acts*, 104–5 (tongues, prophecy, or ecstatic praise); Packer, *Acts*, 65. Kistemaker, *Acts*, 303, also suggests signs but “perhaps in the form of miracles”; yet did the Samaritans receive “miracles” (different from those in Acts 8:6–7, which Simon had already witnessed [8:13]) in the laying on of hands to receive the Spirit? Twelftree, *People*, 88, allows for any ecstatic behavior (for Luke’s theology more generally, 98–99).

672. Dunn, *Jesus and Spirit*, 188.

He notes that this pattern comports well with the classical Pentecostal position that “Luke *intended* to portray ‘speaking in tongues’ as ‘initial physical evidence’ of the outpouring of the Spirit.”⁶⁷³ Nevertheless, it is far more likely that Luke uses tongues as a narrative evidence for reception of the Spirit than that he implies that tongues must *always* accompany reception of the Spirit.⁶⁷⁴ We must also entertain the possibility that given Luke’s use of tongues speaking to symbolize cross-cultural empowerment (see comment on Acts 2:4), he would mention it in each case available, and hence in this instance, where he does not mention its occurrence, he lacks a definite tradition of it or expectation that it occurred in every instance.⁶⁷⁵ Whether the response was tongues, prophecy, ecstatic worship, or overwhelming joy, the Spirit’s reception was clearly evidenced, probably with an emotive component.⁶⁷⁶

c. Confronting Simon’s Syncretism (8:18–24)

In 8:18–24, God’s agents have to confront the syncretistic, magical worldview of a convert (cf. 19:18);⁶⁷⁷ Luke’s apologetic regularly dissociates the Christian movement from magic. The passage also emphasizes the necessity of perseverance and that sound understanding of the ways of God’s Spirit is important to avoid syncretism. The act of conversion by itself, in isolation from transformation through the apostolic message, does not guarantee sound understanding or perseverance.

I. MONEY AND MAGIC (8:18–19)

Simon still seeks personal advantage in a conventional way, following the traditional magical worldview; Philip and the apostles experienced signs in conjunction with their proclamation of Christ rather than their own interests. Luke often associates the gift of the Spirit with prayer to God (as in 8:15); the divine Spirit is emphatically to be received as a gift from God (8:20; cf. 8:17; comment on Acts 2:38), not something that can be achieved or acquired by human means. The attempt to buy spiritual power fits the milieu of magicians who traded in magic formulas (cf. 19:19); magicians sought to buy power.⁶⁷⁸ Temples also sold priesthoods, though this could

673. *Ibid.*, 189.

674. See *ibid.*, 189–91.

675. Keener, *Gift*, 179–80. It has, however, been argued conversely that Luke treats tongues like baptism; it is mentioned in enough cases that we should assume it elsewhere (e.g., Horton, *Spirit*, 156; cf. Wyckoff, “Baptism,” 441). This is a plausible argument, but given the limited samples that Luke provides, it would merely prevent us from concluding that Luke rejected the necessity of tongues occurring at Spirit baptism. It would not, on the other side of the matter, guarantee that Luke is *teaching* that it must occur on every occasion (and if Luke does not teach this, we lack early attestation for the view, since, as all parties acknowledge, no other extant early Christian author teaches it).

676. Insofar as the Spirit in Luke’s emphasis involves prophetic empowerment (Acts 2:17–18), it seems expected that believers who receive this empowerment are able to, and presumably sooner or later will, speak by the Spirit’s inspiration. For Luke, the most fundamental expression of this empowerment he emphasizes is witness (1:8).

677. For Luke’s concern about syncretism, see also Klauck, *Magic*, 54. The question is generally a live one in missiological settings addressing conversion (see, e.g., Luzbetac, *Church and Cultures*, 239–48), though it can be discerned in the West no less than elsewhere (Peel, “Christianization,” 448–49).

678. See also Reitzenstein, *Religions*, 31; Garrett, *Demise*, 70; cf. the association of magic with greed in Reimer, *Miracle*, 246. Goppelt, *Times*, 93, views this as a result of Simon’s “Hellenistic syncretism.” He may have craved especially the ability to reproduce the manifestations (Bruce, *Commentary*, 183); for how a pagan would have heard “holy spirit,” see Strelan, “Holy Spirit” (and cf. Keener, *Acts*, 1:530–32). In a modern example, a traditional sorcerer who lost his power in a power encounter reportedly tried to buy it back (Lindsay, *Lake*, 28). Barrett, “Simon Magus,” 292–95, while noting specifically magical and commercial abuse, broadens the principle to any attempt to control the Spirit (“The church possesses the inestimable privilege of having the Spirit as its guide and defender, but it has the privilege as a gift which it may depend on but cannot control, and never possesses in its own right” [295]).

be viewed as corruption if they sold them without proper regard for the first rights of a city's hereditary elite.⁶⁷⁹

No society's cults have proved invulnerable to the temptation of greed,⁶⁸⁰ but the apostles could not risk the church's corruption. The commonness of charlatans⁶⁸¹ forced sincere sages to take special care about how they would be perceived (cf., e.g., 2 Cor 2:17; 1 Thess 2:1–12; see comment on Acts 20:33–35). By showing that the disciples performed miracles without payment (cf. Acts 3:6), Luke differentiates the apostles from magicians.⁶⁸² Others also condemned desiring a good gift for impure motives⁶⁸³ or using divinely given gifts for making money.⁶⁸⁴

In addition to his role as one of the sorcerers of Luke-Acts, Simon is also one of its examples of an apostate and (implicitly) one used by Satan, comparable to Judas and Ananias (Acts 1:18; 5:3; cf. Luke 8:12–14; 22:31–34):⁶⁸⁵

Judas (Luke-Acts)	Ananias (Acts)	Simon (Acts)
Satan entered (Luke 22:3)	Satan filled heart (5:3)	(Magus, 8:9)
Greed (Acts 1:18)	Greed (5:2–3)	Monetary problems (8:18–19)
Condemned (Acts 1:18–20)	Condemned (5:5)	Condemned unless he repents (8:20–23)

As the sin of Ananias could have marred the benefits of the Spirit movements in Acts 2:44–45 and 4:32–35 if not confronted and terminated, Simon presents the threat to the purity of the Samaritan “Pentecost.”⁶⁸⁶ Luke apparently expects Satan to attempt (5:3) to contaminate revival movements. Thus the elders were warned to keep guard against false teachers (20:28–30); subapostolic Christians warned against prophets who sought to receive payment (*Did.* 11.4–6).

In 8:19, Simon employs “authority” (ἐξουσία) the same way it appears in magical documents.⁶⁸⁷ Many ancients recognized that desire for “power” was pervasive (in a political sense, Tac. *Hist.* 2.38), but magicians exhibited a special desire for it through magic.⁶⁸⁸ Missiologists have drawn parallels with contemporary power-encounter situations: sometimes spiritists, observing Pentecostals' signs, have embraced their message; on other occasions, like Simon, they have simply sought to learn and incorporate their power.⁶⁸⁹

679. Horsley, “Inscriptions of Ephesos,” 148 (citing *I. Eph.* 1a.17–18, 19ab). For purchasing priesthods, see also Derrett, “Simon Magus,” 61; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 401; Kistemaker, *Acts*, 304; Larkin, *Acts*, 129 (citing 2 Macc 4:7–10 and following Derrett, “Simon Magus,” 61, in citing *SEG* 4.516B.35–36); Bock, *Acts*, 333 (adding 4 Macc 4:17–18).

680. In ancient Israel, cf. 1 Sam 2:13–16; Isa 56:11; Jer 6:13; 8:10; Mic 3:5, 11. Rackham, *Acts*, 115, cites Gehazi as background for exploiting ministry for profit (2 Kgs 5:20–27). A serious problem in the medieval church was the purchase of church offices (see, e.g., Keen, *Medieval Europe*, 76; Hahn, “Simony”), which we, not surprisingly, call “simony.” Some modern shamans also seek to buy spiritual power (see Elkins, “Sacrifice,” 325, on sacrifices).

681. For charlatans and insincere or hypocritical sages, see, e.g., Philod. *Crit. frg.* 60.8–12; Mus. Ruf. frg. 50, pp. 142, 144; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.4; Plut. *Lect.* 12, *Mor.* 43F; Lucian *Peregr.* 13; *Dial. D.* 374 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 10); Phaedrus 1.14.17–18; Jos. *Ant.* 17.327; 2 Cor 2:17; Liefeld, “Preacher,” 272–84; see further comment on Acts 20:33–35.

682. With Klauck, *Magic*, 21 (noting also the refusal to accept fees even as late as *Acts Thom.* 20).

683. E.g., *y. Hag.* 2:1, §9.

684. Barrett, *Acts*, 414 (citing Soph. *Oed. tyr.* 387–89; Plato *Laws* 10.909AB).

685. See Spencer, *Philip*, 89, 122–26; Johnson, *Acts*, 152. On the theme of apostasy in Luke, see further Brown, *Apostasy*. This pattern speaks against the likelihood that the conflict between Peter and Simon was added after Luke, though by itself it does not resolve its historicity (cf. Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 3:119).

686. Cf. the counterattacks of evil after God's blessings in the curses of Gen 3:1–24; 9:21–27.

687. Ramsay, *Discovery*, 124.

688. For power in magic, see Arnold, *Power*, 36–37, 73–74; cf. *Pr. Jos.* 17.

689. Johnson, “Authority,” 108 (reporting on Brazilian spiritists); Merz, “Witch.”

II. CONFRONTING DEPRAVITY (8:20–23)

One common ancient criterion for distinguishing miracle workers from sorcerers was that the latter were greedy for gain;⁶⁹⁰ the apostles reject wealth here whereas Simon depends on it.⁶⁹¹ The condemnation of greed in Acts 8:20–23 fits a motif that runs throughout Luke-Acts (see comment on Acts 2:44–45; 3:6; 20:33–35).⁶⁹² One cannot serve both God and Mammon (Luke 16:13), and those prominent in a community have special accountability before God (12:41–48). Like Ananias, who loved money, Simon was in danger of destruction (Acts 5:3–5).⁶⁹³ Luke normally uses *voμίζω*, “suppose,” for contrary-to-fact conditions (Acts 7:25; 14:19; 16:27; 17:29; 21:29; Luke 2:44; 3:23), though not quite always (Acts 16:13).

Peter’s language in 8:20 could resemble a curse formula (an appropriate response to a magician);⁶⁹⁴ for example, one could curse a witch by praying that her cup be full of “gall.”⁶⁹⁵ Some scholars thus see it as a sort of statement of excommunication (cf. 1 Cor 5:5).⁶⁹⁶ One might also think of Peter pronouncing judgment, as on Ananias and Sapphira, yet without the same immediate effect (5:4–5, 9–10). The language resembles that found in some later Greek translations of Daniel (including the optative for wishing; Dan 2:5 Theodotion; cf. 3:96 Theodotion).⁶⁹⁷ Peter values and guards God’s holy “gift” (the Spirit, Acts 2:38; cf. 10:45; 11:17)⁶⁹⁸ the way devout Jewish people sought to value and guard God’s “gift” of the law.⁶⁹⁹

Peter goes on to declare (8:21) that Simon has no “lot” (*κληρος*) in this matter (*λόγῳ*, perhaps “message”)—that is, no share in the ministry (cf. “lot” in 1:17, 25–26)⁷⁰⁰ and perhaps no share in the kingdom (26:18).⁷⁰¹ Part (*μερίς*) here seems roughly synonymous, as a “share” in something (Luke 10:42; cf. 2 Cor 6:15; Col 1:12). The terms “part” and “lot” are coupled especially in biblical descriptions of the Levites (Deut 10:9; 12:12; 14:27, 29; 18:1),⁷⁰² but they also apply to possession of the land (Josh 18:6; 19:9; cf. Neh 2:20) and are natural synonyms to employ in parallelism (Isa 57:6; Jer 13:25).⁷⁰³

Simon had no share in the matter because his heart (cf. Ananias’s in Acts 5:3) was not “straight.” A “straight heart” and some people being “straight in heart” reflect familiar LXX idiom (2 Kgs 10:15; Pss 7:11 [7:10 MT]; 10:2 [11:2]; 31:11 [32:11];

690. Reimer, *Miracle*, 139–41, 246.

691. Cf. Cyril Jer. *Cat. Lect.* 16.10 (Martin, *Acts*, 95): Simon did not realize that the money mattered nothing to the apostles.

692. As is often recognized; e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 286.

693. For money and *ἀπώλεια*, see, e.g., Sir 29:10; 31:6; 1 Tim 6:9; 2 Pet 2:3. For judgment in Acts, see Morris, *Cross in New Testament*, 112–13.

694. See Haenchen, *Acts*, 304; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 66 (citing PGM 1.114); *y. Ma’as. Š.* 4:6, §5, reports a rabbi’s curse against a deceptive Samaritan, but Luke treats Simon as a false prophet, not as a Samaritan *per se* (Acts 8:9–11; cf. 13:6). Wenkel, “Speech-Acts,” compares other imprecations in Acts demarcating their objects from God’s genuine servants (see esp. 13:10–11; 23:3; one may compare also 5:3–5).

695. Tibullus 1.5.50 (Latin *felle*, “gall”).

696. Marshall, *Kept*, 97; cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 305; Crowe, *Acts*, 57. Explicit curse texts do not deliver the object to Satan (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 171), but some do to destroying deities (e.g., SIG² 813–15, in Grant, *Religions*, 47–48).

697. C. Williams, *Acts*, 116; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 66. The phrase *εἰς ἀπώλειαν* appears about twenty-five times in the LXX.

698. To be contrasted with magic, which can be bought or manipulated (Johnson, *Acts*, 149).

699. On which see, e.g., Moore, *Judaism*, 398; comment on Acts 2:38.

700. Johnson, *Acts*, 149 (comparing *λόγος* for the apostolic ministry in Acts 6:4); Witherington, *Acts*, 286.

701. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 305.

702. Dunn, *Acts*, 112: “But unlike the Levites . . . , it is not a special commission from God which excludes Simon but his own attempt to manipulate God.” Others also cite Levitical language (e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 94).

703. Cf. Clark, “Construction,” regarding rhetorical balance and litotes.

35:11 [36:11]; 36:14 [37:14]; 63:11 [64:11]; 72:1 [73:1]; 77:37 [78:37]; 93:15 [94:15]; 96:11 [97:11]; 124:4 [125:4]); in Ps 77:37 LXX (78:37 MT), the description is negated to apply to the wicked, as here.⁷⁰⁴ False teachers make straight ways crooked (Acts 13:10).

Peter's command to repent (Acts 8:22) fits the apostolic and preapostolic model in Luke-Acts (2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20; Luke 3:3, 8; 5:32; 24:47).⁷⁰⁵ The command to repent "if possible," employing εἰ with the future subjunctive, "indicates a possible, but far from certain condition"; adding ἄρα "strengthens the measure of doubt."⁷⁰⁶ Although some early Christians allowed for the possibility of repentance after turning away (Jas 5:19–20), at least some believed that, at some level, the unbelief involved in apostasy became irreversible and apostates became incapable of genuine repentance.⁷⁰⁷ Significantly here, Peter's confrontation of greed in Samaria parallels his earlier treatment of greed in the Jerusalem church, valuing the spiritual purity of the Samaritan revival on the same level as that of the earlier Jerusalem revival.⁷⁰⁸

The terms χολή and πικρία (Acts 8:23) appear together in the LXX for both evil (Deut 29:17 [29:18 ET]; 32:32) and suffering (Lam 3:15, 19). The bitter⁷⁰⁹ gall⁷¹⁰ probably suggests paganism; Deut 29:18 refers to poisoning by the apostate following other gods (cf. the allusion in Heb 12:15);⁷¹¹ Deut 32:32 refers to pagan nations. The phrase "bond of unrighteousness" reflects Isa 58:6, where one act of righteousness is to "release the bonds of injustice [σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας, the only LXX text employing both terms]"; the Greek term there translated "release" (λύω) can also mean "destroy," perhaps suggested in Peter's condemnation.⁷¹²

III. SIMON'S REPENTANCE? (8:24)

Irenaeus claims (*Her.* 1.23.1) (and Justin certainly implies) that Simon did not repent.⁷¹³ Whether early Christian tradition would have preferred a story about repentance or needed a figure such as Simon with which to condemn heretics (or simply responded to gnostic appropriation of Simon) is hard to say.

Judgment "coming on" one was a familiar biblical idiom (e.g., Acts 13:11; Isa

704. Scholars often cite esp. Ps 78:37 (Bruce, *Commentary*, 184n38; Haenchen, *Acts*, 305; Dunn, *Acts*, 112).

705. To "repent from [ἀπό]" some wickedness is not Lukan (nor does it occur elsewhere in the NT), but see *Jos. Asen.* 9:2 (turning from false gods); Jer 8:6 LXX. Cf. Ambrose *Concerning Repentance* 2.4.23 (Martin, *Acts*, 94): even Simon was given a chance to repent and hence given hope of forgiveness.

706. Witherington, *Acts*, 287n30 (with Moule, *Idiom Book*, 158); for the possible use of ἄρα for emphasis, cf. Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, 191, §375; Dana and Mantey, *Grammar*, 242. In Luke's theology, of course, one can repent from magic (Acts 19:18–19; Garrett, *Demise*, 148; Parsons, *Acts*, 117).

707. Heb 6:4–6; 10:26–31; cf. 2:2–3; 3:14; 12:16–17; 1 John 5:16.

708. See esp. Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 225.

709. Luke uses a cognate for Peter's own repentance, weeping "bitterly," in Luke 22:62, but the LXX link is much stronger and likelier. Gall was notoriously bitter (Hom. *Il.* 16.203).

710. Some used χολή in relation to wrath, similar to the noun χόλος and the verb χολάω, on which cf., e.g., Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.10c, pp. 60–61.11; 2.7.10e, pp. 62–63.16. Stoics could conjoin χόλος and πικρία in a list of anger terms (2.7.10b, pp. 58–59.34).

711. Commentators often cite esp. Deut 29:17 LXX (29:18 ET; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 94; Bruce, *Commentary*, 184n37; Marshall, *Acts*, 159; idem, "Acts," 572; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 66, noting the paraphrase in 1QS II, 11–12; Dunn, *Acts*, 112; Chance, *Acts*, 135).

712. Others (e.g., Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 167; Chance, *Acts*, 135; Marshall, "Acts," 572) also note the likely connection to Isa 58:6, and Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 167, adds a connection between this Isaiah passage and Luke 4:18–19. Isaiah 61:1 does not employ σύνδεσμος; but it speaks of "captives," and the language can at least illustrate that Simon, unlike the Samaritans as a whole, had not yet experienced the liberation of Luke 4:18–19.

713. Cf. also the dispute with Peter in Caesarea (*Ps.-Clem. Hom.* 29.1–30.3; 35.1–5; 38.1–43.3; 58.2) and their later confrontation in Rome (*Acts Pet.* [2]4–[8]29).

34:5; Ezek 5:16; 30:4; Amos 5:9; 8:11).⁷¹⁴ By asking for prayer when confronted with judgment, Simon may evoke the similar request of Jeroboam I to the prophet who confronted him (1 Kgs 13:6; Jeroboam did not, however, repent).⁷¹⁵ Perhaps still more closely, Simon's language may recall Pharaoh's request that Moses, who has access to Israel's God, pray to him (Exod 8:8, 30; 9:28; 10:17). Such intercessory prayers could prove efficacious; thus an angel appears to Heliodorus and says to thank Onias: God has delivered Heliodorus's life because of Onias's prayers (2 Macc 3:33).

Neither Jeroboam nor Pharaoh genuinely repented, but it remains possible that by recognizing the apostles' superiority to himself in the matter of prayer (contrast Acts 8:18–19), Simon may indicate repentance.⁷¹⁶ (Subsequent tradition, emphasizing the protognostic "Simon Magus," would not view the repentance as permanent, but Luke leaves the matter ambiguous, as, for example, in the open end of Luke 15:31–32.)⁷¹⁷ The prayer of a righteous person for someone could bring blessings⁷¹⁸ and even forgiveness,⁷¹⁹ though there were limits to God heeding prayers for forgiveness.⁷²⁰

d. Apostles Continue Samaritan Ministry (8:25)

In Acts 8:25, concluding Luke's section on Philip's Samaritan mission, the apostles follow Philip's example. Luke now makes clearer the hints throughout the preceding narrative: the Hellenists bridged the gap for the Gentile mission. (Philip will also precede Peter in reaching Gentiles; note 8:27–40 before 10:1–11:18.)

Once the apostles had seen what God was doing among the Samaritans, they immediately joined the mission and preached⁷²¹ further among the Samaritans on their return trip to Jerusalem. They not only ratified Philip's ministry but learned from his example, just as they had shared their authority with him in 6:6. Probably the large majority of Samaritans lived in villages,⁷²² whatever the πόλις of 8:5 is; indeed, villages constitute "the most characteristic form of rural settlement across Western Asia."⁷²³

Some scholars suggest that Philip returns to Jerusalem with the apostles (despite the dangers, 8:25), since the road he will travel on his next journey leads from Jerusalem (8:26).⁷²⁴ Philip, who might speak only Greek, may have been unable to minister in the Samaritan villages, but perhaps he accompanies the Aramaic-speaking apostles now among the villages.⁷²⁵ Yet 8:26 does not *necessarily* claim that Philip starts his

714. One could even speak of a judgment of *gall* (χόλος; cf. 8:23) coming upon one (ἤξει ἐφ', *Sib. Or.* 1.165), though this is coincidence.

715. Cf. also Zedekiah and others requesting Jeremiah's prayers (Jer 37:3; 42:2).

716. The Western text adds his tears here (Bruce, *Acts*, 73), though these need not guarantee repentance (Heb 12:17). Wall, "Acts," 140, contrasts Peter's words to Ananias and suggests a more hopeful "prognosis" for Simon. Though condemning Simon, Peter nevertheless invites forgiveness (cf. Fabien, "Conversion de Simon").

717. Simon's repentance might serve Luke's literary purposes if he could record it, but given the parallels with Judas and Ananias, so would his failure to repent.

718. Luke 18:15–16; Jas 5:16; *Gen. Rab.* 100:7; *Lev. Rab.* 5:4; 16:8.

719. Gen 20:7; Exod 8:8, 28; 12:32; Job 42:8; 2 *En.* 7:4; *Test. Job* 42:8; 43:15–17/12–13; *Gen. Rab.* 59:1; cf. 1 John 5:16; *Sent. Sext.* 373–75.

720. Exod 32:32–33; Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; 15:1; 1 John 5:16; 2 *En.* 7:5; cf. Ezek 14:14, 20.

721. Although Luke's use of διαμαρτύρομαι (here; Acts 2:40; 10:42; 18:5; 20:21, 23, 24; 28:23) is often emphatic (as one expects for this term; cf. BDAG), it seems difficult to regard his rare use of μαρτύρομαι as less emphatic (e.g., 20:26; 26:22); occasionally this is true also of μαρτυρέω (Acts 23:11, where it is probably interchangeable with διαμαρτύρομαι), but at other times, he employs it more specifically for others' attestation of a person (Luke 4:22; Acts 6:3; 10:22; 16:2; 22:5, 12; 26:5) and God's testimony (Acts 13:22; 14:3; 15:8).

722. On the many Samaritan villages, see Zangenber, "Samaria," 408–11. For a full survey of our current knowledge of Samaritan villages, see also the careful and detailed work of Schnabel, *Mission*, 765–69.

723. Moore, "Villages," 301.

724. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 407.

725. Others have also suggested that "they" might include Philip (Longenecker, *Acts*, 156). Aramaic was the dominant language in Samaria, though Greek is also well attested (van der Horst, "Languages"). In

journey in Jerusalem (especially if μεσημβρίαν means “south”), only that he is to find the road that leads south from there, perhaps because he knows this road from his former residence in Jerusalem. In any case, he will now head in the opposite direction (south rather than north) from Jerusalem and carry the good news beyond Samaria to “the ends of the earth” (1:8; 8:27).

4. The Pious African Official’s Conversion (8:26–40)

One may title this section “The African Treasurer’s Conversion” to convey the primary new content of the account, or one could equally well title it “Philip and the Ends of the Earth” to show its connection to its larger context in Acts. In this passage, Luke emphasizes that God so desires to reach the ends of the earth that he contrives extraordinary means to accomplish it (such as the angel, the Spirit’s confirmation, and the coincidence of the appropriate Scripture text). As is common in Acts, the text invokes Scripture’s witness.

a. Introduction

The narrative moves quickly from Samaria to a representative of the “ends of the earth.” Some other Hellenistic historians arranged their material geographically; such an approach arises naturally from Philip’s mission in Acts 8.⁷²⁶ Because 1:8 places “ends of the earth” after the Samaritan mission, this narrative provides a miniature proleptic fulfillment of 1:8.⁷²⁷ Granted, Philip does not travel geographically to the ends of the earth;⁷²⁸ but as 2:5–11 provides a proleptic fulfillment, so does 8:26–39. Some scholars argue that Luke reserves fulfillment of the “ends of the earth” for his chief protagonist, Paul (13:47),⁷²⁹ yet even Paul provides no more than proleptic fulfillment (see comment on Acts 1:8; 28:16–31).⁷³⁰

Clearly “Ethiopia” was one of the primary locations envisioned when people spoke of the “ends of the earth” (see discussion at Acts 1:8);⁷³¹ it fits the mission of salvation to the “ends of the earth” (Isa 49:6; 62:11; Acts 13:47).⁷³² Indeed, if we accept Luke’s possible allusion to the queen of Sheba in the Candace (see comment below), his claim that she came from the “ends of the earth” (Luke 11:31, though the term is πέρας, as in Matt 12:42 [Q]) would surely be more than coincidence. As Luke adds

Alexander’s time, Aramaic was dominant there (Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 74). At least in the second century B.C.E., Hebrew and Aramaic apparently remained cultic languages (Naveh and Magen, “Inscriptions”); later, for Aramaic vernacular rendering of the Torah, see Tal, “Traditions.”

726. Witherington, *Acts*, 290.

727. Ibid.; Spencer, *Philip*, 151–52; Hengel, *Acts and History*, 80; Martin, “Chamberlain’s Journey,” 116–18; Gaventa, *Acts*, 145; Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 32; idem, *Acts*, 221; Marguerat, *Actes*, 20; cf. Thornton, “End of the Earth” (but contrast Melbourne, “Acts 1:8”); as a model for the mission to the peoples, cf. Lindemann, “Anfänge.”

728. Emphasized by Talbert, *Acts*, 74.

729. Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 97. Spencer, *Philip*, 151–52, allows that Paul fulfilled it more fully, but still sees it here.

730. One could use representative fulfillment to make much larger claims (e.g., Col 1:23); likewise, Josephus boasts of Rome’s conquest of “Africa” as a whole (*War* 2.382), though this is certainly hyperbole (characteristic of conquest lists as far back as ancient Egypt; cf., e.g., Kitchen, *Reliability*, 174, 178; stelae in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 335–97).

731. E.g., Martin, “Chamberlain’s Journey,” 118–19; Thornton, “End of the Earth”; Scott, “Horizon,” 536; Hengel, *Acts and History*, 80; Parsons, *Acts*, 119 (citing, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 23.205–6; Strabo 1.2.27–28; 2.2.2); Peterson, *Acts*, 291. Witherington, *Acts*, 290, cites Hdt. 3.25.114; Strabo 1.1.6; 1.2.24; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.1; cf. Hom. *Od.* 1.23, and he argues that *no* one would have viewed Rome as the *ends* of the earth.

732. Witherington, *Acts*, 291.

“north and south” to the Q tradition in Luke 13:29 (par. Matt 8:11–12), so here Philip journeys first north to Samaria and then south toward Ethiopia.⁷³³

Although this commentary retains the Greek name “Ethiopia” because it is used by Luke and most Greek sources as well as many translations, this usage risks confusing modern readers.⁷³⁴ We think of “Ethiopia” as the nation in the horn of Africa, but the Greek term applied to all of Africa south of Egypt, especially ancient Cush (Kush), or Nubia.⁷³⁵ Likewise, this commentary employs “Nubia” in its modern sense as including Meroë rather than in the usual Greco-Roman sense as the border between Egypt and Meroë, between Aswan and the Nile’s Fourth Cataract.⁷³⁶

I. LITERARY FEATURES

One complex structural suggestion for this passage (starting in Acts 8:25) is an elaborate chiasmus, the hub of which is the discussion of Isa 53:7–8.⁷³⁷

Acts 8:25

- A to Jerusalem
- B and many Samaritan villages
- C evangelized

8:26

- D spoke to Philip
- E go on the way

8:27

- F and behold, a eunuch

8:29

- G the *Spirit* said to Philip

8:31

- H *went up* to sit with him

8:32

- I but the *περιοχή* of Scripture

8:32–35

- J Isa 53:7–8 and discussion

8:35

- I' from this Scripture

8:39

- H' *went up* from the water
- G' *Spirit* of the Lord snatched Philip
- F' the eunuch did not know him anymore
- E' he went his way

8:40

- D' but Philip was found at Azotus
- C' evangelized
- B' all the cities
- A' came to Caesarea

733. Felder, *Waters*, 13.

734. Unseth, “Semantic Shift,” suggests a more accurate (if cumbersome) translation, “Meroë in northeast Africa.”

735. Already emphasized in Abbott, *Acts*, 101 (1876).

736. Morkot, “Nubia.” This Lower Nubia (especially around the First and Second Cataracts) was prosperous; Isis worship remained prominent at Philae until supplanted by Christianity by the time of Justinian (ibid.).

737. Spencer, *Philip*, 132 (following others). Cf. the less extensive chiasmic proposals in Meester, “Philippe et l’eunuque”; idem, “Pèlerin d’Éthiopie”; Marguerat, *Actes*, 303; see also the interesting structure in Wall, “Acts,” 142.

Not every element is persuasive; the asymmetry is noticeable when entire verses are unaccounted for while individual words are highlighted elsewhere. But the proposal does at least reveal the repetition of dominant ideas and suggests that Acts 8:25 and 8:40 geographically frame this story.⁷³⁸

Philip’s ministry here follows a model of the risen Jesus, just as Stephen’s death imitates Jesus’s martyrdom. A number of parallels exist with Luke 24:13–35:⁷³⁹

Jesus in Luke 24	Philip in Acts 8
First (narrated) resurrection appearance in Luke;* converts two disciples to resurrection faith	First conversion story of a Gentile in Acts
Begins traveling with two disciples on (Emmaus) road (24:15)	Begins traveling with God-fearer on road (8:29; road specified in 8:26)
They are journeying toward home (24:13)	The official is journeying toward home (8:28)
Jesus opens the conversation with a question (24:17)	Philip opens the conversation with a question (8:30)
Jesus asks about what they are already discussing (24:17)	Philip asks about what he is already reading (8:30)
Jesus explains the Scriptures to them (24:27)	Philip explains this Scripture and others to him (8:35)
Jesus explains Scriptures “beginning with” Moses and the prophets (24:27)	Philip explains Scripture “beginning from” a passage in Isaiah (8:35)
Jesus explains that his <i>death</i> and resurrection were God’s plan (24:14, 18–27)	Philip begins with Jesus’s passion (8:32–33)
The disciples urge him to stay with them (Luke 24:29)	He invites Philip into his chariot (8:31)
Jesus vanishes (24:31)	Philip is snatched away and the eunuch no longer sees him (8:39)
Their hearts burn when he explains Scripture (24:32), and they go to the apostles (24:33)	The eunuch goes home to Ethiopia rejoicing (8:39)
Jesus reappears among the disciples (Luke 24:36)	Philip finds himself elsewhere for ministry (8:40)

* Thus Luke does not *narrate* Jesus’s prior resurrection appearance to the women, though other sources indicate that the tradition of its priority was widely known (Luke does grant them first reception of the news, Luke 24:4–7, 23; possibly, 24:24 implies that they saw Jesus). Resurrection appearances invited a new level of faith (perhaps comparable to conversion here).

Some material reflects recurrent Lukan motifs or themes, attested even in Luke’s programmatic scene. As Abraham Smith rightly points out, “the mention of the prophet Isaiah, the act of reading, the presence of the Spirit, the use of a book, the emphasis on foreigners—all remind the authorial audience of the Nazareth scene where the Spirit-filled Jesus reads from Isaiah the prophet and announces a ministry of beneficence toward all persons, including Gentiles (Luke 4:16–30).”⁷⁴⁰

II. HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

How historical is this narrative? Some scholars argue that it reflects the style of legend,⁷⁴¹ but this is a subjective judgment, given the use of narrative techniques by historians as well as storytellers and novelists.⁷⁴² As Barrett points out, “There is no means of checking the historicity of the narrative unless it can be assumed that angels do not exist or that they do not order missionaries about or provide transport for

738. O’Toole, “Philip and Eunuch,” sees the chiasmus only at the beginning and end; cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 223.

739. Several of these are from Spencer, *Philip*, 141–42, or also appear there; Spencer also includes others that I find less convincing, such as connecting breaking bread (Luke 24:30) and baptism (Acts 8:38), which (in contrast to later eucharistic practice) Luke does not seem to connect regularly. Cf. also Schreiber, “Verstehst du denn?”

740. Smith, “Understand,” 63.

741. Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 15; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 67–68.

742. See discussion in the commentary introduction (Keener, *Acts*, 1:63–64, 67, 71–72, 81–82).

them.⁷⁴³ These are philosophic a prioris, not historical data, particularly when we consider that inscriptions, dream handbooks, and magical papyri attest that Luke's contemporaries, rightly or wrongly, assumed and reported such events not only in novels but in their own real world.

Goulder at least offers a more objective basis when he suspects the story “of being completely mythical” because so many details are symbolic;⁷⁴⁴ but parallels among different accounts in Plutarch show that stories laden with narrative connections and allusions could have historical bases.⁷⁴⁵ Often people engaged in fanciful tales about distant lands beyond the realm of corroboration (cf., e.g., the later *Wonders beyond Thule* by Antonius Diogenes), but Luke's account takes place in the Roman province of Syria, not a distant land. Often people confused material about distant lands (e.g., the “Ethiopian” Troglodytae with northern Troglodytae, or cave dwellers),⁷⁴⁶ but others reported data accurately, and Luke's report matches these more accurate reports.

On the other side of the argument, the Candace is clearly a historical personage (or dynastic title), in contrast to mythical Memnons and exotic novelistic details such as appear in Heliodorus's *Ethiopica*.⁷⁴⁷ But just as these details are known to us, they could also have been known to Luke⁷⁴⁸—though Luke probably could not have known so readily which kinds of details were historical and which were not. Further favoring the account is its very tension with Acts 10; the church's “official” story of the first Gentile convert is Cornelius, and Peter's authority behind that conversion proves useful for Luke's purposes (cf. 15:7–11), so that neither Luke nor his sources would have lightly invented this account.⁷⁴⁹ If Philip did meet a pilgrim from Nubia, such a pilgrim might well have been a person of means to make such a journey.⁷⁵⁰ If Philip was Luke's oral source, as 21:8–10 probably suggests (see introduction to 8:5–40),⁷⁵¹

743. Barrett, *Acts*, 422.

744. Goulder, *Type and History*, 195.

745. See discussion in the commentary introduction (Keener, *Acts*, 1:568–74, esp. 571–74). Even in true accounts today, such literary features can simply highlight material by selection, organization, and arrangement rather than by fabrication.

746. Morkot, “Troglodytae.” Quint. Curt. 4.7.18 refers to the Troglodytae as Arabians south of the Ammon oracle, with Ethiopians to its east; in 4.7.19, the Ethiopians to the west are called “snub-nosed.” For the basic accuracy of Luke's information, in contrast to genuinely novelistic accounts, see Keener, “Official,” esp. 6–20, which uses some of the same material as in this chapter.

747. Cf. Evans, *World*, 9–10, who contrasts the verisimilitude of the Gospels and Acts, which address real historical people (such as Antipas or Pilate) and customs, on the one hand, with much of what appears in later apocryphal gospels, on the other.

748. Thus *pace* Klausner, *Jesus to Paul*, 297n8, it would *not* “have been difficult to fabricate deliberately” (cf. the novelistic use of the Candace in De Weever, “Candace,” noted in Smith, “Understand,” 64); he is likely correct, though, about Philip as Luke's source.

749. See Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 105, for a historical nucleus here (both because of tension with Acts 10 and because this fits the Hellenists' activity); Keener, “Official”; cf. Spencer, “Waiter”; Kollmann, “Philippus.” None of this is to deny that Luke uses this story, once he has it, to good purpose, so that the Hellenist Philip provides a transition to Peter's official ministry and prefigures the “ends of the earth” to the south, a direction in which Luke's narrative (which will follow Paul to the heart of the empire in which Luke's audience lives) will not move. Attentive scholars often seek to balance Luke's use of the story in his larger narrative with his avoidance of upstaging the Cornelius narrative (see, e.g., Shauf, “Eunuch”).

750. Whether he was really a eunuch is harder to test, but if the person was of such means as to be an official of the Candace, the eunuch claim makes sense; further, it would explain why the traveler would make such a long journey to Jerusalem yet not be a proselyte (his Gentile character again being a component that Luke would not invent, given the Cornelius story). Although the eunuch claim implicitly fits Isa 56, it remains plausible historically as well.

751. If one imagines a meeting between Philip and the apostle known as a major leader in the Gentile mission, one could well imagine Philip turning the conversation to his own encounter with a Gentile (had such an event occurred) before Paul's conversion and the more widely known “official” story of Cornelius.

Luke may have known and wished to reveal to his audience an event that prefigured the church’s official story in Acts 10.

It is likely that Luke does select details to use the parallel to good effect, especially in terms of the divine arrangements for the encounters:

Acts 8:26–40	Acts 10
Angelic revelation with absurd command and geographic specificity (8:26)	Angelic revelation with absurd command and geographic specificity (10:5–6)
The recipient’s compliance (8:27a)	The recipient’s compliance (10:7; cf. 10:20–21)
High-status representative of a foreign government (8:27)	High-status (by local standards) representative of a foreign government (10:1)
Description of the foreigner’s office (8:27)	Description of the foreigner’s office (10:1)
Reading Scripture (8:28; cf. worship in Jerusalem, 8:27)	Praying to Israel’s God (10:2, 30)
The Spirit speaks to God’s agent (8:29)	The Spirit speaks to God’s agent (10:19; 11:12)*
Offering Philip a seat beside him (treating him as a peer, 8:31)	Treating Peter with respect (too much, in fact, by prostrating himself; <i>perhaps</i> relevant, 10:25)
The official’s invitation (8:31, 34)	The centurion’s invitation (10:22, 33)
Philip’s preaching (not narrated, 8:35; cf. 8:30–33)	Peter’s preaching (10:34–43)
The narrative concludes with the Gentile’s baptism (8:38)	The narrative concludes with the Gentile’s baptism (10:48)
The Spirit snatches away Philip; the official has joy (8:39)	<i>Possibly</i> parallel: the Spirit falls on Cornelius’s household (10:44–47)
Philip ends up in Caesarea (8:40)	The Cornelius narrative begins in Caesarea (10:1)

* This parallel is no minor one: despite implications in Acts 2:17–18 that the Spirit speaks regularly (and despite the Spirit speaking in Scripture, 4:25; 28:25; cf. in prophecy, 20:23; 21:11), Luke specifically depicts the Spirit “speaking” (with λέγει) only in 8:29; 10:19; 11:12 in this section of Acts (later, in confirming the call of Barnabas and Saul to the Gentiles, 13:2, probably prophetically).

Of course, the accounts also have clear differences. For example, in one, the agent moves toward a southern coastal city, and in the other, north; in one, the angelic revelation comes first to God’s agent (Philip), and in the other, to the person (Cornelius) needing the agent (Peter); Scripture plays a central and explicit role only in the former account (the royal official was likely far more literate than the centurion). The parallels do not require Luke to conform all his prior material to an identical pattern but reveal his consistent interest in the key divine role in the Gentile mission, a role as relevant to Philip’s story as to Peter’s better-known official version.

III. BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Greeks and Romans had a tradition of “noble barbarians,” which they often applied to certain peoples (e.g., Ethiopians,⁷⁵² Scythians,⁷⁵³ and some Germans⁷⁵⁴) as a foil by which to criticize their own peoples. But whatever Gentiles’ selective respect for particular outsiders to the empire, specific biblical models are more relevant.

Israel’s Scriptures often mention “Ethiopia.” Ethiopia lay at the ends of the world (Esth 1:1; 8:9; Ezek 29:10; Zeph 3:10); God was sovereign over Ethiopia’s history as over Israel’s (Amos 9:7).⁷⁵⁵ The prophets spoke of God’s people being gathered

752. For Ethiopians as barbarians, see, e.g., Lucian *Dial. S.-G.* 324 (14, Triton and Nereids 4).

753. Those in the Mediterranean world generally thought some Eastern “barbarians,” particularly the Scythians, to be savage and murderous (2 Macc 4:47; 3 Macc 7:5; 4 Macc 10:7; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.269; Hdt. 1.15; 4.66, 76), but some viewed Scythians as noble barbarians (e.g., Anacharsis *Ep.* 9; Strabo 7.3.7). See the excursus below.

754. E.g., Tac. *Germ.* passim.

755. Like Caphtor, Cush (Nubia; English translations often have “Ethiopians”) may be chosen as an example here because of its geographic remoteness (rather than complexion; so Snaith, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 49; cf. McKeating, *Amos*, 67).

from distant nations (Isa 11:11), even beyond Ethiopia's rivers (Zeph 3:9–10).⁷⁵⁶ Although the prophets may have been thinking especially of Diaspora Jews, on first-century presuppositions this gathering would have to include Gentile converts who had *become* Diaspora Jews. Egypt and Ethiopia would also submit to Israel's God (Pss 68:31 [67:32 LXX];⁷⁵⁷ 87:4 [86:4]); again, a first-century reading could apply this to conversion and salvation reaching the nations.⁷⁵⁸ Early Jewish Christians may have understood the story of the court official, like those of other early Gentile converts, as part of (or a prototype of) the pilgrimage of Gentiles to Jerusalem in the end time. Because this official had come to Jerusalem to worship, he might especially fit this portrayal (Ps 72:10–11; Isa 2:2–3; Mic 4:2–3).⁷⁵⁹

Given the many Elijah and Elisha allusions in Luke-Acts (see comment on Acts 1:8–11), a number of Elijah allusions are possible here, though not all need allude exclusively to Elijah. As Stephen and Philip patterned their ministry after Jesus and various other biblical predecessors, so Philip emulates Elijah here.⁷⁶⁰

Elijah	Philip (Acts 8)
Sent on a mission by an angel (2 Kgs 1:3, 15; cf. 1 Kgs 19:5–7)	Sent on a mission by an angel (8:26)
Hears from God in the desert (1 Kgs 19:4)	Philip obeys God in a “desert” region (8:26)
Elijah meets a pious official (1 Kgs 18:3–7)	Philip meets a pious official (8:27–28)
He runs with a chariot (1 Kgs 18:46)	He runs with a chariot (8:29–30)*
Some think that Elijah can be carried off by the Spirit, and eventually he is carried away (1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:11, 16)	The Spirit carries Philip away (8:39)

* Strelan, “Running Prophet,” finds other allusions besides that to Elijah. Because we may expect that the African official's chariot was moving at a more leisurely pace than Ahab's, the parallel need not imply miraculous speed on Philip's part as it may have on Elijah's part. Some have associated Elijah running (cf. also Jos. *Ant.* 8.346) with runners before chariots (cf. 1 Sam 8:11; 2 Sam 15:1; 1 Kgs 1:5; Jos. *Ant.* 6.40), but this seems unlikely (and is even less likely in Acts 8).

Most of the parallels may be coincidental; “desert,” for example, appears more than three hundred times in the LXX, and many prophetic figures sojourned there, including Moses (e.g., Exod 3:1, 27; 18:5; Lev 7:38; Num 1:1; 9:1, 5) and, more recently, John (Luke 1:80; 3:2; 7:24) and Jesus (4:1, 42; 5:16; 9:12). The strongest (and most exclusively Elijah-related) parallels are those of running with the chariot (Acts 8:30) and especially being carried away by the Spirit (8:39). Although these do not suggest an entire narrative composed to emulate the Elijah narrative, they do support some allusions to Elijah here. Some scholars add parallels with Elisha, though none of these are exclusive or compelling enough to be certain.⁷⁶¹

756. E.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 158; Hengel, *Acts and History*, 80; Reeves, “Eunuch,” 116.

757. Many have seen this background (e.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 310; cf. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 191; Hengel, *Acts and History*, 80; Martin, “Chamberlain's Journey,” 109–10; African-American preachers in Williams, “Acts,” 227–28), including in antiquity (Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.26a [L. Martin, 81; Martin, *Acts*, 97]).

758. Augustine read the text this way (Martin, “Chamberlain's Journey,” 115–16), as did Euseb. *H.E.* 2.1.

759. Cf., e.g., Hirth, “Königin von Saba” (emphasizing also the queen of Sheba allusion). Ps 72:10 may not be eschatological, but it certainly emphasizes gifts from Seba and Sheba.

760. Rackham, *Acts*, 121; Johnson, *Acts*, 158; Spencer, *Philip*, 136; Bruce, *Commentary*, 186; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 190 (noting also Jonah 1:2; 3:2). Some of the proposed parallels cited in Spencer are too strained to place in the table, such as sacrifice at the narrative's center (Acts 8:32–35; 1 Kgs 18:20–40), the provision of water (Acts 8:36; 1 Kgs 18:41–45; if miraculous provision is meant, parallels in Gen 21:19, Exod 17:6, Num 20:11, or Judg 15:19 may be closer), and Obadiah helping prophets (1 Kgs 18:4, 13) and the official reading them (Acts 8:28). Noontime (1 Kgs 18:26–29; possibly Acts 8:26) is not strained but may be too pervasive in texts to offer a substantial parallel by itself.

761. Spencer, *Philip*, 136–40, cites these but is more critical of their value than is Brodie, “2 Kgs 5 as Component.” For Luke's prophetic characterization of Philip, see Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 91–93; for Naaman allusions, see also more recently Schöpflin, “Heilung.”

Elisha (2 Kgs 5)	Philip (Acts 8:26–40)
Naaman is a foreign official in a chariot (5:9, 21, 26)	The eunuch is a foreign official in a chariot (8:27–29, 38)
Naaman supervises money (cf. 5:5)	The official is the queen's treasurer (8:27)
Naaman is immersed in water (5:14)	The official is immersed in water (8:38)
Naaman must be persuaded to wash (5:1–13)	By contrast, the African official is eager for baptism (8:36)
Providential guidance (5:2–3)	Providential guidance (8:26–34)

One expects most officials of status to ride in chariots, and the OT provides many examples of officials riding (e.g., Gen 41:43; 1 Sam 8:11; 1 Kgs 1:5; Jer 22:4), a practice that presumably would be no different for foreign officials. (Likelier than an allusion to Naaman in this narrative, though not incompatible with it, would be an allusion to the queen of Sheba, via the Candace; see comment below.)⁷⁶² Further, Naaman was a general, *not* a treasurer; access to resources again characterizes many officials and others who can travel abroad, not exclusively Naaman. Many Lukan narratives include baptisms without allusion to 2 Kgs 5. Providential guidance appears often in both Luke-Acts and the OT. Because the Gospel's programmatic statement mentions Elisha's healing of Naaman (Luke 4:27), it may provide one intertextual element in the background, but it should not be overemphasized. Although Brodie's keen recognition of possible connections is praiseworthy, Witherington warns that the accumulation of these parallels to argue that they were created as fiction is problematic.⁷⁶³

1. *Pace* Brodie, rhetorical handbooks employ this kind of imitation for *speeches*, not narratives.
2. The speeches use historical examples as models more than fiction (Quint. *Inst.* 2.4.20).
3. Acts 8 differs substantially from 2 Kgs 5 (though it does resemble 1 Kgs 18).

One character this story must have recalled for Luke's informed audience was the pious Ethiopian eunuch official who proved to be one of Jeremiah's only allies (Jer 38:7 [45:7 LXX]). It is probably no coincidence that the only Cushite individual depicted in detail in the OT also is a eunuch.⁷⁶⁴ Ebedmelech continued to appear positively in Jewish tradition.⁷⁶⁵ Luke's biblically informed audience might also think of other Africans in Scripture.⁷⁶⁶

The most obvious theological background, however, is Isa 56:3–5, which speaks of God providing special blessing to foreigners and eunuchs.⁷⁶⁷ Though eunuchs were

762. The chariot here notwithstanding; but although the queen of Sheba narrative mentions no chariots explicitly, her large retinue (1 Kgs 10:2; 2 Chr 9:1) might be presumed to include vehicles in addition to camels.

763. Witherington, *Acts*, 291. For that matter, the potential range of biblical allusions is so great that if one were to insist that Luke composed pure fiction based on such sources, one might be tempted to associate several of these texts with one another or some prototype; but such a relationship is unnecessary. The canon is too large, and the repertoire of details relevant to officials too ample, to demand allusions to all such texts.

764. See Scott, "Horizon," 534; Goulder, *Type and History*, 175.

765. Cf. 4 Bar. 3:12–15, 21–22; 4 Bar. 5 (though renaming him "Abimelech"); Jos. *Ant.* 10.122–23; later, *Apost. Const.* 7.10. *Sipre Num.* 99.3.2 is positive but denies that he was actually Cushite (black African), wrongly claiming that the title was merely an analogy for someone distinct from others.

766. For discussion of Africans in Scripture, from various viewpoints, see, e.g. (among many others), Adamo, "Africa"; idem, *Africa*; Copher, "Presence in Bible"; idem, *Studies*; Felder, *Waters*, esp. 12–36; Hays, "Cushites"; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, esp. 60–82; Yamauchi, *Africa*.

767. See, e.g., Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:289; Martin, "Chamberlain's Journey," 108–9; Williams, "Acts," 227; Faure, *Pentecôte*, 115; Buttica, *Identité*, 220–21. For Luke (cf. Luke 3:8), one could be part of God's people without circumcision (as for Paul, Rom 2:29; 4:12; 11:17; Gal 3:7), but this was not the inherited view in contemporary Judaism.

excluded from the covenant (Deut 23:1), Isaiah claims that those who have obeyed God's commandments will have a name better than Israelites. That Luke quotes from this very servant section of Isaiah in this passage (Isa 53:7–8 in Acts 8:32–33) reinforces the likelihood of this allusion.⁷⁶⁸ The Hellenistic Jewish work *Wisdom of Solomon* also develops the imagery of Isa 56:4–5, promising a special reward in God's temple for the righteous eunuch (Wis 3:14).

IV. LUKE AND AFRICA

In contrast to some later readings, Luke runs against the grain of his own focus (from Jerusalem to Rome) to point out that the first Gentile convert was an honorable official from Africa.⁷⁶⁹ This narrative hints at future ministry outside the empire's borders, while also more generally introducing, through Philip, the ministry to Gentiles that will be ratified by Peter and carried forward through Paul.

(1) *Tension between the Treasurer and Cornelius?*

Some scholars do not think that the African is a Gentile here, as they doubt that Luke would allow this tension with Cornelius's conversion.⁷⁷⁰ But this is a private event unknown or relatively unknown to the church in Jerusalem; its theological importance is that the Spirit acts ahead of the apostles (as in Samaria, Acts 8:12, 14; and Antioch, 11:19–24), whereas the theological importance of Cornelius's conversion is that the Jerusalem church knows of and comes to approve of the event (11:18; as in Samaria, 8:15–17).⁷⁷¹ (In Luke's narrative, although both the eunuch and Cornelius are God-fearers, Cornelius is also less biblically literate, hence further from Judaism, than this Bible-reading official; see 10:25.)⁷⁷² For this African official as the first fully Gentile convert, see discussion on "eunuch" below.

Given the threefold repetition of Cornelius's conversion later, some scholars doubt that Luke gives this African official much significance. But while his significance differs from that of Cornelius (the latter represents the official story), he is no less significant. He is the first fully Gentile Christian, and Luke in a sense allows him to chronologically "trump" the official story even though Luke's own focus is the gospel reaching Rome.

The arrangement of surrounding material also underlines the significance of this account in the plot of Acts.⁷⁷³ Indeed, some find literary connections between Cornelius and the African official; most obviously, they are conversion stories about high-status individuals,⁷⁷⁴ the sort Luke prefers to recount (e.g., 13:12; 17:12). In a sense, both "are royal representatives," though for rulers of different empires.⁷⁷⁵ The African official's

768. Moessner, "Script," 231, sees it as further confirmation of Luke's use of Isaiah's servant section. Jesus's quotation in the temple (Luke 19:46; Mark 11:17) is even closer, from Isa 56:7, though curiously Luke (like Matthew) omits Mark's explicit mention of Gentiles, emphasizing more the judgment of Jer 7:11. Cazeaux, *Actes*, 339, emphasizes the centrality of the servant in Israel's Scriptures and the effect on the nations of the servant's redemptive sufferings.

769. Church fathers, often orators strongly concerned with moral models, emphasized the official's virtue and devotion to God (Chrys. *Hom. Gen.* 35.4; Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.27a [Martin, *Acts*, 97–98]), including his humility though he was an official (Chrys. *Hom. Gen.* 35.5; *Hom. Acts* 19; Athanas. *Fest. Let.* 19.5 [Martin, *Acts*, 98–99]). Readers in a different era, with different questions, thus tended to view Luke's portrayal of him favorably.

770. Haenchen, *Acts*, 314; Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:58–59.

771. See Tannehill, *Acts*, 110; Spencer, *Philip*, 186–87; cf. Watson, *Gentiles*, 61.

772. Likewise, the African official was likely not a proselyte because he could not be one, whereas Cornelius had simply chosen not to be one (though perhaps for military reasons).

773. See the careful study of Smith, "Understand," 54–62. Noting Meroë's military strength, Smith also cautiously suggests (65–66) an implicit parallel with Cornelius's role.

774. See *ibid.*, 65–68.

775. *Ibid.*, 69.

conversion is an early part of a larger series of conversions, soon followed by that of Saul (9:5–9), who will evangelize the Gentiles (9:15); by some mass conversions in 9:35, 42; and finally by that of Cornelius and his household (10:44–48).⁷⁷⁶ Far from competing with the Cornelius narrative, this official's account "anticipates all those from 'the ends of the earth,'" including Cornelius and the Gentile mission.⁷⁷⁷

Scholars differ on the function of this narrative vis-à-vis Africa. Cain Hope Felder argues that though Luke appreciates Africans (13:1), his emphasis on Cornelius's conversion (10:1–11:18; 15:7–9) leads to a relative de-emphasis of this first Gentile convert. He sees Theophilus as a "Roman official," which makes sense of Luke's apologetic concerning Rome, but complains that this feeds Europeans' claims of divine preference for themselves.⁷⁷⁸

By contrast, James Scott reads Luke's "table of the nations" (2:9–11) in light of OT models and concludes that Philip's ministry to the African official here represents the Hamitic mission to the south⁷⁷⁹ and hence does not "compete" theologically with the Japhetic mission.⁷⁸⁰ "If the Book of Acts unfolds along the lines of the Table of Nations," he suggests, "then Philip's transitory mission to the Ethiopian eunuch occupies a more important place in the structure of Acts than is usually appreciated."⁷⁸¹ Because this convert was an official of the queen, readers would expect his influence to continue the spread of the gospel in Ethiopia.⁷⁸²

None of these three missions is considered already completed, but rather somewhere between just beginning (Ham), well under way (Shem), or nearing completion (Japheth?). The crucial link between all three missions is clearly the Stephen Circle.⁷⁸³

(2) Why Does Luke Not Include More about Africa?

Some scholars have complained that Luke focuses on the movement of the gospel toward Rome instead of tracing its further development toward the south. Luke might be faulted for such shortsightedness were his goal a survey of the spread of the gospel in every direction and were he privy to all such information. But Luke sets out only to offer a sample, one most relevant to his own churches and their background and future in the Gentile mission. From his sample we can suggest other samples that might offer similar models for our own or other audiences, but we should keep Luke's audience in mind.

Several considerations are relevant here. First, Luke traveled with Paul—and Paul's goal included Rome. Historically, we know that Paul reached Rome, and the "we" narrative's author (most likely Luke) arrived with him. Second, as a historian Luke is interested in reporting historical information. We know that he did so: the gospel did spread in Rome (cf. Paul's letter to the Romans; also his mixed reception there, Phil 1:13–18). By contrast, the gospel is not *attested* as spreading in Nubia until centuries later. Granted, our sources for Nubia in this period are very incomplete, but so were Luke's. Further, Luke's knowledge of even this encounter was incomplete; he had

776. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 140. The three individual conversions include representatives from Ham (the African), Shem (Saul), and Japheth (Cornelius).

777. *Ibid.*, 145 (following idem, *Darkness*, 106–7).

778. Felder, *Waters*, 47–48; idem, "Racial Ambiguities," 22–23; cf. also Martin, "Chamberlain's Journey," 120.

779. Scott, "Horizon," 537. Schmidt, "Bekehrung," sees a southward journey as a reversal of the expectation of the nations' ingathering to Jerusalem.

780. Scott, "Horizon," 535.

781. *Ibid.*, 533.

782. *Ibid.*, 535.

783. *Ibid.*, 544. I am less confident that Luke viewed the mission to Rome as nearly complete; even the conclusion of Acts represents only *proleptic* fulfillment.

just one report, presumably from Philip, who probably did not hear from the official again. Perhaps Philip, or Luke, could not pronounce the official's name well enough to record it accurately, if Philip knew or remembered it.

Finally, we should keep in mind the limits of Luke's geographic purview. Luke writes as a citizen of the eastern Roman Empire,⁷⁸⁴ for whom his voyages to Judea and Rome constituted major travel; his audience was primarily interested in the world of which it was a part. He welcomes the report of the Nubian official but cannot easily travel to Nubia himself to discover more. Meroë was almost a thousand miles south of the Egyptian coast. Although it is true that the Nile current would have expedited the official's travel north, and the winds his voyage south, the cataracts at Aswan made for an arduous journey.⁷⁸⁵ Nubia's representation in Luke's narrative at all, and particularly in providing the first Gentile Christian, is highly significant.

(3) *Presuppositions Involved in the Contrast*

A problem not always explicit in the discussion of "Africa" versus "Europe" is that our modern geographic categories are deeply (if understandably) anachronistic;⁷⁸⁶ scholars' approaches sometimes vary on the basis of their interpretive goals. After the Islamic Arab conquest, Middle Eastern culture dominated northern Africa; in the Roman period, it remained part of a primarily Mediterranean cultural sphere (albeit with clear ties to the south).⁷⁸⁷ Nubia, the African kingdom in view here, was neither primarily Mediterranean nor Middle Eastern but an indigenously and traditionally African culture, albeit with trade connections to the north, south, and east. If we think in terms of continents rather than cultural spheres, as readers do who associate ancient Greece and Rome with a concept of "Europe" that includes northern Europe, we accept a category much more arbitrary for social significance. (The Jewish people and the first Jesus movement were largely "Asian," though Jewish people were widely scattered in the Roman world as well; see comment on Acts 16:8–9.)

A reader-response approach rightly reveals how texts have been misread to privilege Eurocentric readings, but how Luke's first hearers would have understood him, which is our primary interest here, is a very different question. Although categories such as "Europe" and "Africa" were accepted Greek categories (see comment on Acts 16:8),⁷⁸⁸ Rome controlled a Mediterranean empire and was much closer to the life of northern Africa than to that of northern Europe.⁷⁸⁹ Luke's interests are not "European" in the modern sense; they are Mediterranean, especially eastern Mediterranean and (because of its impact on the eastern Mediterranean) focused partly on Rome itself.⁷⁹⁰ The eastern empire is the world of Luke's audience, which is why he writes in Greek

784. Luke can depict the Roman Empire as the οἰκουμένη (Luke 2:1; Acts 11:28; 17:6; 19:27; 24:5), though he is capable of a broader usage (cf. Luke 21:26; Acts 17:31).

785. Yamauchi, *Africa*, 165.

786. Whether we think in terms of cultural or geographic spheres is an essential question (see more detailed discussion of this methodological consideration in Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 16–18, 52–58, 83, 111, but esp. 41–44).

787. For Roman contact (especially in the west) see Huss, "Africa: Province."

788. Europe, Asia, and Africa were the three parts of the world (e.g., Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 31.103; Pliny E. *N.H.* 3.1.3), the Mediterranean Sea being the divider. Lacking proportionate maps, Pliny emphasized that Europe was the largest of the three (3.1.5; 6.38.210).

789. See Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 27, 32. Nevertheless, they regarded Asia and some other provinces as more civilized than Spaniards, Africans, and Gauls (Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.19.27).

790. Because Rome became a new center, replacing Jerusalem, Luke could be thought to undermine his universalism (Martin, "Chamberlain's Journey," 120). But because Rome stood for the antithesis of the theological centralization that Luke's audience found in Jerusalem, it would not subvert his universalism for his first audience; this would come only when Rome (or any other city except the "city of God," as Augustine put it) would become a new theological center, a post-Lukan development by anyone's dating.

and focuses on Paul's journeys. Further, although Luke, like most writers (ancient or modern, popular or academic), writes for a particular "target audience," he does not actually suppress information about Africa. Those who note the emphasis on Rome are correct; Luke emphasizes Rome as the geographic goal of his work because he writes for an audience in the Roman Empire⁷⁹¹ (for that matter, probably especially in Greece and Macedonia, and hence in what the residents defined as Europe).⁷⁹² But he offers clues of the mission elsewhere despite his focus on what is most relevant to his audience.

(4) *The First Gentile and the African Mission*

Luke certainly does not emphasize Cornelius as the first Gentile convert; otherwise he would not mention the African official. Cornelius was the first Gentile convert publicly ratified by the apostles and the Jerusalem church; in contrast to the Samaritan mission (Acts 8:14–25), Philip's ministry to the Ethiopian was not confirmed and perhaps not even known by the apostles. That Luke nevertheless places Philip's story (with Philip's other stories) earlier in the narrative is a sign of the significance he attributes to it.⁷⁹³ The account of Cornelius is significant for Luke not so much in terms of the conversion of the first Gentile but in terms of the (temporary) conversion of the Jerusalem church's attitude toward Gentiles. Given Luke's overall emphasis on the Spirit's agenda of cross-cultural mission (1:8), the Spirit's involvement here (8:29, 39) may emphasize the importance of evangelizing Africa beyond the boundaries of the empire.⁷⁹⁴ It thus provides a prototype for subsequent chronicles of the expansion of the Jesus movement in Africa⁷⁹⁵ or, by extension, other parts of the world.

Christianity flourished in Nubia several centuries later, which led to a powerful and well-documented Christian kingdom that survived nearly a thousand years till finally crushed by Islamic invaders.⁷⁹⁶ Like Axum, "Nubia was one of the few countries in the ancient world that was converted to Christianity without a prior experience of Roman rule" after the Roman Empire's christianization.⁷⁹⁷ Yet we have no early record of the gospel spreading widely in Nubia as a result of this official's witness (despite early Christian tradition of the eunuch's ministry, possibly inferred from this passage).⁷⁹⁸ Why might this be? Certainly we could not expect Luke to travel to Meroë (given the hazards and distance mentioned above) to locate an unnamed Ethiopian official

791. Rome's conquests had deliberately forced all its empire to focus on Rome, as was widely acknowledged (Dion. Hal. *Anc. Or.* 1.3).

792. See discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:429–34, 517; comment on Acts 16:10; idem, "Asia and Europe."

793. Cf. Bruce, "Philip and Ethiopian," 377, who rightly argues that Luke preserves both Philip's personal account of his freelance evangelism and the official Jerusalem account.

794. With Witherington, *Acts*, 293; Meester, "Philippe et l'eunuque."

795. Cf. Keener, "Aftermath of Eunuch," 113–19; Melbourne, "Gospel in Africa," 19–28.

796. See Roeder, "Geschichte Nubiens," 76–79; Adams, *Nubia*, 400, 417–18, 438–45, 539–44, 553; Trigger, "Ballana Culture," esp. 117; Michalowski, "Christianity in Nubia"; Jakobielski, "Christian Nubia," esp. 223; Bowers, "Nubian Christianity"; Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia*, 63–65; Isichei, *History*, 30–31; Irvin and Sunquist, *Earliest Christianity*, 293–94; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 35–38; Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 15–16; cf. Olsen, "Nubia." Christian refugees may have also fled there during second- and third-century persecutions in Egypt (Ullendorf, "Candace and Queen of Sheba," 53), and a lamp fragment in Greek from 450 to 500 probably refers to a new convert to the Christian faith (Fulco, "Lamp") then spreading there.

797. Isichei, *History*, 31; see similarly Adams, *Nubia*, 435. On ancient theology in Axum and Nubia, see the discussion in the profound work of Oduyoye, *Hearing*, 26–28. Supporting use of Axumite context for early Christianity, see Byron, "Redrawing."

798. Iren. *Her.* 3.12.8; 4.23.2; Cyril of Jerusalem *Lecture* 17.25; Ephrem the Syrian *Pearl: Seven Hymns on the Faith* 3.2; Euseb. *H.E.* 2.1.13; Barrett, *Acts*, 422; Crocker, "Meroë and Eunuch." Ullendorf, "Candace and Queen of Sheba," 55, cites apocryphal acts where "Candacis," Philip's eunuch convert, welcomed the apostle Matthew, who then baptized the king of Ethiopia.

who might not even be alive probably more than two decades after Philip's encounter and attempt to verify Philip's account. Nor can we be sure how many people even an official might have converted (in practice in any given kingdom, despite many notable successes of officials' evangelism through history). Meroë's polytheistic priests were said to have once been more powerful than its kings (Diod. Sic. 3.6.1–2); although this report, if true, did not apply to the current era (3.6.3), we may suppose that a Christian (or a Jewish God-fearer) would have limited public influence against the state religion (cf. 2 Kgs 5:18).

We also would expect, however, limited long-range effect from Meroë in general in this period. Though the Roman Empire would remember the Candace whose empire repelled Roman aggression in the time of Augustus, Meroë was now in decline.⁷⁹⁹ It began declining by the middle of the first century C.E., "almost certainly" because of "the rise of a rival trading empire, with its centre at Axum."⁸⁰⁰ The Nuba people invaded this kingdom in several waves, and the Axumites finished Meroë off in the mid-fourth century C.E. or at least contributed to that civilization's ultimate collapse.⁸⁰¹ Ironically, in the same century the Axumites began to be converted in large numbers to the Christian faith,⁸⁰² and after one or two centuries the same began to happen among the peoples inhabiting the domain once ruled by Meroë.⁸⁰³

b. Divinely Arranged Encounter (8:26–31)

In obedience to an "absurd" angelic command and the Spirit's voice, Philip encounters a God-fearing African official who is not yet a full proselyte. He "happens" to be reading a passage that is a primary messianic text for the Jesus movement and invites Philip's exposition. The accumulation of divinely orchestrated events indicates that God wanted this foreigner to hear this gospel; he will be not only the forerunner of the African mission but, as the first Gentile convert, the forerunner of the Gentile mission in general.

I. ON THE ROAD TO GAZA (8:26)

Philip receives supernatural guidance, an activity that pervades Luke's narrative,⁸⁰⁴ usually (in keeping with his theme) around the focus of mission (e.g., Acts 10:15, 19; 13:2, 4; 16:6, 10).⁸⁰⁵ Commands from angels also appear with some OT figures,⁸⁰⁶ including Elijah,⁸⁰⁷ as noted above. (Revelations from angels are also frequent in

799. Already noted in Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.35.186–87, who observes that in older times, Meroë could have mustered 250,000 armed men (6.35.186) but that Ethiopia was now weakened by division (he claims forty-five other kings [6.35.187]).

800. Oliver and Fage, *History of Africa*, 28. Axum's coins resemble Alexandrian currency (see Mlasowsky, "Axum," 433).

801. Oliver and Fage, *History of Africa*, 29; Morkot, "Axumis"; idem, "Ethiopia"; idem, "Meroe." See Ezana's claim in Burstein, *African Civilizations*, 97–100 (and cf. 79–100 passim); cf. Welsby, *Kingdom of Kush*, 199–200.

802. See Adams, *Nubia*, 386–88; Neill, *History of Missions*, 52–53; Isichei, *History*, 46–47; Yamauchi, *Africa*, 173–78; Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 16–18; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 38–40; Burton, *Blessing*, 136–37.

803. On Nubian Christian civilization, see, e.g., Adams, *Nubia*, passim, esp. 435, 539–44; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 31; Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia*, 64; Yamauchi, *Africa*, 179–81; Davidson, *Africa in History*, 102; Du Bois, *World and Africa*, 186; Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 15–16.

804. See Spencer, *Philip*, 154–55. For divine guidance in this scene, see, e.g., Miller, *Convinced*, 182–86; among other themes in Kowalski, "Exegese."

805. Sometimes the relationship with mission is less obvious (e.g., Acts 11:28; 12:8), but such examples nevertheless belong to a larger narrative that concerns mission.

806. E.g., Gen 16:9; 19:15; Num 22:32, 35; Judg 6:14; 13:13–14; among prophets, e.g., 1 Kgs 13:18 (false, in this case); Zech 1–6 passim.

807. 1 Kgs 19:5, 7; 2 Kgs 1:3, 15. Elijah appears somewhat like an angel himself in later rabbinic sources (e.g., *b. Ber.* 4b; 6b; *Sabb.* 33b; *Deut. Rab.* 5:15; *Tg. Rishon* on Esth 4:1).

postbiblical sources,⁸⁰⁸ including throughout apocalyptic literature.)⁸⁰⁹ See further comment on Acts 27:23. An “angel of the Lord” is a frequent character in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:11; 2:9; Acts 5:19; 12:7, 23); it need not be the same angel in every instance, but at least in one case, the angel was afterward identified as Gabriel (Luke 1:19).

(1) *The “Absurd Command”*

One outstanding feature of the narrative is its “absurd command,” the sort that in the Bible demanded faith of its recipient.⁸¹⁰ This pattern also appears in subsequent Jewish literature. When the Lord’s angel sends Habakkuk to Babylon, this is an absurd command because the prophet does not know where Babylon is (Bel 34–35); the angel has to carry him there (to bring Daniel his dinner, Bel 36).

“Absurd commands” appear elsewhere in Acts (Acts 5:20; 10:13–20; 20:22–23; 21:4–14), and the theme of obeying or opposing divine guidance appears throughout (e.g., 4:19–20; 5:29, 32–33, 39; 7:51).⁸¹¹ “Arise and go” was, to be sure, an appropriate command for a prophet to the nations (cf. Jonah 1:2; 3:2;⁸¹² on this characteristic Lukan language, see comment on Acts 9:11). But a “desert” caravan route was hardly a promising, significant forum for a prophet or an evangelist. If we read “midday” (as may be more likely; see below), this was hardly a time to be traveling on the road; as the hottest time of day, it was used especially for resting (Gen 18:1; 2 Sam 4:5; Song 1:7); see comment below on travel at noon. One would also not expect to find the eunuch and his companions traveling then (depending on how late after noon he meets them). This too is an “absurd command.”⁸¹³

The narrative might imply one other “absurd” aspect of the command even when it is being vindicated. The official had undoubtedly spent considerable time in Jerusalem, yet God apparently did not send him the gospel in Jerusalem, where the apostles resided (Acts 8:14, 25); instead God sent one of the dispersed Hellenists to meet him outside the city. But perhaps we should not make too much of this in its narrative context; much of the Jerusalem church had been scattered and the apostles had been driven underground (8:1).⁸¹⁴

(2) *Travel at Noon?*

Whether we should read *μεσημβρίαν* as “midday” or “south” is disputed. Certainly “south” fits the context of a road “from Jerusalem to Gaza” (8:26).⁸¹⁵ Other scholars,

808. E.g., *Jub.* 4:21; 32:21; *Test. Reub.* 5:3; *Test. Jud.* 15:5; 21:5; *Test. Levi* 2:9; *b. Ber.* 51a; *Ned.* 20ab; *Gen. Rab.* 50:2; *Ps.-Eup.* in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.17.9; cf. Derdekeas in *Paraphrase of Shem* 1 and passim; sources in Daniélou, *Theology*, 140.

809. E.g., *1 En.* 1:2; 18:14; 21:5, 9; 24:6; 27:1; 32:6; 61:3; 67:12; 71:3, 14; 72:1; 74:2; 75:3; 80:1; 93:2; *4 Ezra* 4:1; *5 Es.* 15, 31; 10:29; *2 Bar.* 55:3; 63:6; *3 Bar.* 1:3, 6, 8; 2:4–5; 3:1; 4:2, 7, 8, 10; 5:3; 6:5, 8, 10, 13; 7:1, 6; 8:4, 5; 9:3, 8; 10:5, 9; 11:1, 2, 4; 12:3; 14:2; 17:2; *Rev* 1:1; cf. also the observation of angelic mediation in Russell, *Apocalyptic*, 242–43; Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 35, 91; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 34–35; cf. the literary function of Hermes in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.69. Sometimes they are sent in response to prayers (e.g., *4 Bar.* 6:1–2; Johnson, *Prayer*, 63–65).

810. See Van Unnik, “Befehl an Philippus”; Witherington, *Acts*, 294. With explanations attached, see, e.g., *Exod* 14:15–16; *Josh* 3:12–13; *1 Kgs* 17:3–4, 9, 13–14; 18:1, 41; *2 Kgs* 6:9, 32; without recorded explanations, e.g., *Gen* 22:2; *Exod* 4:4; *1 Kgs* 18:8, 19, 43–44; 19:19; *2 Kgs* 4:4; *5:10*. Popular miracle accounts report these today as well (e.g., Koch, *Zulus*, 239).

811. See Van Unnik, “Befehl an Philippus.” One may compare Jewish attitudes toward apparently absurd commands in the law (Grant, *Judaism and New Testament*, 61).

812. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 190. This is for a mission that Luke regards as a northern mission parallel to the southern one, in Luke 13:29 (the Q-parallel in Matt 8:11 has only east and west, probably illustrated by the magi and the centurion).

813. Spencer, *Acts*, 90; Van Unnik, “Befehl an Philippus.”

814. Cf. also Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 19: Philip was sent to a “desert” area to protect him from persecution.

815. Sánchez de Toca, “*Μεσημβρίαν*.”

however, prefer “noon” because of the sense of the term in 22:6 (the only other NT use; cf. the supernatural guidance also at 10:9).⁸¹⁶ The lexical evidence may favor the latter interpretation: of twenty-five uses in the LXX, twenty-three refer to “noon”⁸¹⁷ and only two to “south” (Dan 8:4, 9). Thus readers might more likely assume “noon” unless context dictated otherwise; a reference to Ethiopia could thus dictate otherwise, but whether a southward road would do so remains debated. (Then again, when the noun appears with this preposition, it may mean “south,” as in Jos. *War* 3.460; 5.347, 505; Philo *Dreams* 1.175; *Gaius* 89; yet it remains “noon” in Philo *Dreams* 1.202. A double entendre is possible, though Luke, unlike John, follows the rhetorical caution not to overuse them.)⁸¹⁸ In Zeph 2:4, God threatened the desolation of Gaza, paralleling it with judgment on other Philistine cities, including Ashdod (LXX “Azotus”; cf. Acts 8:40) “at noon.”⁸¹⁹ In its context, God would destroy the nations to the north (Zeph 2:13) and also Ethiopia to the south (2:12); all coastlands⁸²⁰ would bow to God (2:11), and God would ultimately exalt Israel among the nations (3:20), bringing his remnant from beyond Ethiopia (3:10). If any one text is in view here (a point that is uncertain), Luke may suggest a reversal of Zephaniah’s judgment.⁸²¹

The narrative suggests divine vindication of the angel’s “absurd command,” particularly if Luke specifies the time as “noon.” This hour would be hot.⁸²² Thus at midday one would temporarily break from most agricultural work,⁸²³ from hearing legal cases,⁸²⁴ from hunting,⁸²⁵ from allowing animals to graze,⁸²⁶ and sometimes from battles.⁸²⁷ (One of the few exceptions to midday breaks was the urgency of the harvest.)⁸²⁸ As the hottest time of day, it also made people thirsty⁸²⁹ and invited wild animals to drink in the shade.⁸³⁰

One would not expect anyone to travel at noon, but a covered carriage (see comment on Acts 8:28) probably mitigated the heat, and shade might not have been available anyway (contrast likely 8:36); in any case, Philip soon discovers a person traveling. Philip may have also supposed, after meeting him, that the official would

816. Spencer, *Philip*, 156; Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 52.

817. Gen 18:1; 43:16, 25; Deut 28:29; 2 Sam 4:5; 1 Kgs 18:26–27; 21:16; 2 Kgs 4:20; Pss 36:6 (37:6 MT); 54:18 (55:18); Song 1:7; Job 11:17; Isa 18:4; 58:10; 59:10; Jer 6:4; 15:8; 20:16; Amos 8:9; Zeph 2:4; Sir 34:16 (31:16); 43:3.

818. For the caution, see sources in Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 283–85; cf. idem, *Glossary*, 91–92, 93.

819. In the context, Gaza is abandoned (though this is not same term for “deserted” in the LXX; instead, in the LXX, it is more like “snatched away as plunder”). This context involves judgment against the Philistines (Zeph 2:5); Judah will possess the coast (2:6–7).

820. One could construe this to include Gaza, but in the LXX, it is simply “islands.”

821. Marshall, “Acts,” 573, notes the interest of Clarke, “Septuagint,” 101–3, in these very parallels but moderately suggests that Luke might shape the narrative with a view to Zeph 3:10, not simply midrashically composing around it. Some have suggested an ancestral reason for Zephaniah’s special interest in Cush (Zeph 1:1; Rice, “Roots”).

822. E.g., Aeschylus *Seven* 430–31 (compared with lightning!); Soph. *Antig.* 416; Ap. Rhod. 2.739; 4.1312–13; Ovid *Metam.* 1.591–92; Sen. *Y. Nat. Q.* 4.2.18; Libanius *Encomium* 7.11 (shade); Sir 43:3; Jos. *Asen.* 3:2/3:3. See further comment on Acts 26:13.

823. Colum. *Arb.* 12.1; Longus 2.4.

824. Sus 7 (= Dan 13:7 LXX); Aul. Gel. 17.2.10. Cf. also breaks from school at noon (Watson, “Education,” 312).

825. Ovid *Metam.* 3.143–54; Philost. *Hrk.* 11.7.

826. Virg. *Georg.* 3.331–34; Longus 1.8, 25.

827. Livy 44.35.20; 44.36.1–2. Because of this practice, guards might be caught unprepared at midday (Thucyd. 6.100.1). One might exercise then, however (Tac. *Ann.* 14.59).

828. Virg. *Georg.* 1.297–98; for another case of urgency, see Acts 26:13.

829. Livy 44.36.1–2; Longus 3.31; Philost. *Hrk.* 15.6; cf. John 4:6–7.

830. Ovid *Metam.* 10.126–29; also people (Alciph. *Farm.* 9 [Pratinas to Epigonus], 3.12, ¶1); cf. Philost. *Hrk.* 3.2 for watering plants then (in the dry season).

not object to traveling at noon, since Ethiopians were assumed (by others) to be more inured to heat than peoples to their north.⁸³¹

Another vindication of this command is probably the exactness of its timing. It is possible that Luke meets the eunuch more than a day later, farther on the road toward Gaza (this would probably make more sense of Acts 8:40, though it need not do so). If, however, the narrative makes any specific sense of “noon,” perhaps Philip meets the eunuch soon enough after the latter’s departure from Jerusalem to make noon departure a major factor in meeting him.⁸³² Luke is unclear how long they talk before the eunuch is persuaded and they encounter water (8:35–36), but that the eunuch continues on his way in 8:39 suggests that it is not yet near sundown. Even if the commands seem absurd, Philip obeys,⁸³³ providing a model of obedience to the Spirit in evangelism; God confirms this model by vindicating his command.

(3) *The Road to Gaza*

Why does the angel specify the road from Jerusalem to Gaza? Commentators usually note that there were two roads leading south from Jerusalem.⁸³⁴ If Philip took the wrong route, he would have missed the encounter.⁸³⁵ One route led through Bethlehem and Hebron, joining the main coastal road south of Gaza (though less traveled routes from Hebron presumably could reach the coast more quickly). The other turned more quickly to the west and hence joined the coastal road before Gaza. Some scholars prefer the road through Hebron despite its joining the coast after Gaza,⁸³⁶ but the other road, which led to the later Roman Eleutheropolis (Bet-Govrin, or Betogabris), seems more likely.⁸³⁷ Since the angel specifies that the road goes as far as Gaza, Philip may not expect to travel beyond this; the shorter route to the coast may have taken less time and thus may be more likely.⁸³⁸ Both routes, in any case, led to the coastal road, which stretched from Tyre in the north to Egypt in the south.

Scholars also debate which noun “desert” modifies: does Luke refer to a desert road or “deserted” Gaza? Both nouns are feminine, and hence either could function as the antecedent of αὐτή. Many think application to the road is more likely.⁸³⁹ If Luke refers to the road, some think he refers to its extension beyond Gaza;⁸⁴⁰ the route as far as Gaza was not through a desert,⁸⁴¹ but Strabo claims that the way from Gaza southward is “barren and sandy” (Strabo 16.2.32) as one heads south toward Egypt

831. Thus the novelistic Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.8 suggests that the “naked philosophers” of Ethiopia are not very impressive because their land is too hot to wear clothes anyway. Readers would often think in terms of lands being too hot or cold (cf., e.g., Men. Rhet. 1.2, 347.13–16, 31–33; 348.4–7; 351.2, 10–11).

832. This would also be the case if it allows Philip to arrive after the eunuch’s caravan’s midday rest in a village or shady area, but it is less probable, since the eunuch would likely have traveled as much as four hours before that rest.

833. Perhaps “by now . . . used to the Lord’s surprises” (Faw, *Acts*, 105).

834. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 95; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 190. Roman milestones attest each road (see Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 63).

835. Bruce, “Philip and Ethiopian,” 378.

836. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 190 (but Bruce seems to have reversed this position later).

837. Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 63; Bruce, “Philip and Ethiopian,” 378; cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 413 (noting that the “Sea Road” passed through Lydda farther north; cf. Acts 9:32, 38). The site was occupied in the Herodian period (Monson, *Map Manual*, sect. 15.2.218).

838. Conversely, though routes to the coast from Hebron would be less traveled and less safe, they might better qualify for the title “desert” (if the adjective applies to the road).

839. Bruce, “Philip and Ethiopian,” 378; cf. Rainey, “Gaza,” 417.

840. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 95; C. Williams, *Acts*, 119; Munck, *Acts*, 78.

841. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 411–12. Romans were able to build roads through a variety of inhospitable, including desert, terrains (see Roll, “Roads”).

and, beyond it, Ethiopia (16.2.31).⁸⁴² Roads through deserted territory or land filled with wild animals were less favored than others.⁸⁴³ This description could be Luke's way of explaining that the angel specified more clearly which road to take: the less traveled, less likely one under normal circumstances.

Others think that it is more likely Gaza that is "deserted" here.⁸⁴⁴ A city destroyed by war might well lie deserted (ἔρημος) until rebuilt (Strabo 8.6.23; cf. 13.1.51).⁸⁴⁵ If Luke's "desert" refers to Gaza, scholars usually aver that he refers to the ruins of old Gaza;⁸⁴⁶ some early interpreters of the passage held this view.⁸⁴⁷ Jews earlier sacked the city (Jos. *Ant.* 13.358–64; *War* 1.87), but Gabinius rebuilt Gaza in 57 B.C.E. during his tenure as governor of Syria (cf. *Ant.* 14.76, 87–88).⁸⁴⁸ New Gaza was hardly "deserted" in this period. Some have suggested that Luke refers to its state while he was writing, after it was sacked about 66 C.E. (*War* 2.460),⁸⁴⁹ but Luke nowhere so refers to other cities ravaged by the war, and coins show that even that city quickly revived.⁸⁵⁰ The newer Gaza was closer to the Mediterranean, but Strabo claims that the older one "remains uninhabited" (μένουσα ἔρημος, Strabo 16.2.30 [LCL, 7:277]).⁸⁵¹ Another geographer dated to the same period also "places 'deserted Gaza' between Ascalon and 'New Gaza.'" ⁸⁵² Luke could thus be clarifying that he knows that the Gaza on this route, a bit more than two miles inland,⁸⁵³ was mostly deserted and should be distinguished from newer settlements nearby.

Another possibility is that Luke, like the LXX (which renders *negev* by ἡ ἔρημος) and some other writers, simply thinks of the *negev* (Judean south) as "desert"; Gaza borders the Negev.⁸⁵⁴ As Arrian put it, Gaza "was the last town on the edge of the desert on the way from Phoenicia to Egypt," and the approach to it even from the sea was covered with "deep sand."⁸⁵⁵

Luke and his audience would be most familiar with cities such as Gaza and Azotus (Ashdod, 8:40) from the LXX, where they were "former Philistine strongholds."⁸⁵⁶

842. Later Ethiopian tradition about Ethiopia controlling Gaza aside, an inhabitant of "Syrian" Gaza appears as black (μέλας) in Dion. Hal. *Lit. Comp.* 18; but Greeks applied such designations at times to many peoples to their south, including Egyptians (see below).

843. See Galen 10.633 in Sherk, *Empire*, §123, p. 164. The Greek term can signify land barren of people, not necessarily vegetation (e.g., Eurip. *Hypsipyle* frg. 752h.14; Acts 1:20).

844. E.g., Pythian-Adams, "Deserted 'Gaza'"; C. Williams, *Acts*, 119; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 190; Haenchen, *Acts*, 310; Witherington, *Acts*, 294. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 412 (allowing the possibility but also allowing for Luke's "defective" geography in unfamiliar regions).

845. Such was a tragic fate for a city (Rev 18:2; Mus. Ruf. 14, p. 92.19).

846. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 95; Munck, *Acts*, 78; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:423; Witherington, *Acts*, 294.

847. So Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.26B (Martin, *Acts*, 97) (citing Jerome *De situ et nominibus locorum hebraicorum* [PL 23:899]).

848. Archaeology might suggest that Josephus exaggerates the extent of Gaza's destruction (Hoover, "Coinage"). Some writers place the new town south of the old one (Strabo 16.2.30), but others contradict this (Diod. Sic. 17.49; Arrian *Alex.* 2.26; so Rainey, "Gaza," 417). It was earlier destroyed and repopulated as a fortress under Alexander of Macedon (Arrian *Alex.* 2.27.7), who besieged it (Quint. Curt. 4.6.7), had tunnels dug beneath its walls (4.6.8), and killed its leader by an agonizing death (4.6.25–29).

849. Cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 95; C. Williams, *Acts*, 119 (though both mention this only as an option).

850. For the continuance of new Gaza, see Rainey, "Gaza," 417.

851. Bruce, "Philip and Ethiopian," 378. For Gaza being a "coastal" city, see Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.14.68.

852. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 95 (citing GVSGM 4:39).

853. Arrian *Alex.* 2.26.1 places it twenty stadia inland (also Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 95). Strabo 16.2.30 places the same Gaza seven stadia inland; ancients did not possess odometers.

854. Scott, "Horizon," 537 (citing also Diod. Sic. 18.6.4).

855. Arrian *Alex.* 2.26.1 (LCL, 1:213). Undoubtedly the primary source for Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 95; Haenchen, *Acts*, 310. Gaza appears as a Judean seaport in *Let. Aris.* 115.

856. Spencer, *Philip*, 153. The early Philistines apparently adopted Canaanite religion (Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 188).

Gaza was under the jurisdiction of the Roman province of Syria at this point, though Herod had previously ruled it in connection with Idumea.⁸⁵⁷ Jewish people lived in Gaza, though especially after Jerusalem's destruction.⁸⁵⁸ Ashkelon, which was nearby (Strabo 16.2.30), was heavily hellenized and romanized but retained its older Phoenician flavor;⁸⁵⁹ it also had a Jewish population.⁸⁶⁰ Thus Philip, while still in areas where other Jews lived, was ministering in heavily Gentile areas.

One reason for mentioning Gaza, though the road continued beyond it, may be to imply a play on words; oracles often had ambiguous double meanings.⁸⁶¹ The term "Gaza" appears only twice in the NT, and it is probably more than coincidence that these are in these two successive verses (Acts 8:26–27): Γάζα is the city Gaza (twenty-two times in the LXX) but, as a common noun, is also the Greek word for a royal treasure (six times in the LXX; a Persian loanword).⁸⁶² Later Ethiopian tradition even interprets "her treasury" in this verse as "administrator of Gaza," claiming that Solomon had earlier given Gaza to the queen of Sheba as a gift and that this administrator was therefore heading there.⁸⁶³ Thus by sending Philip toward Gaza (beyond which lay desert region and then Egypt and Ethiopia), the angel was also sending him toward "[the one in charge of] the treasury."⁸⁶⁴

II. THE OFFICIAL'S NATION (8:27)

Luke depicts succinctly Philip's response to the command, "Get up and go" (8:26): "After he got up, he went" (8:27a). The command fits biblical and Semitic idiom as well as Luke's own style presumably informed by such idiom (see comment on Acts 9:11); Philip's obedience, even to an "absurd command," matches other biblical examples, such as Abram's going out "as God said," after God told him to go out (Gen 12:1, 4). Only the account's hearer who has already heard the story once knows just how much is really at stake in this obedience: the beginning of Gentiles coming to faith.

Although later history has led readers to identify Ethiopia with the current state of that name (including the region of ancient Axum and later Abyssinia) and the Greek term would not have excluded this, that nation is not directly in view here (central as Axum became in Christian history by the early 300s). The Greek title "Ethiopia" technically included all of Africa south of Egypt,⁸⁶⁵ but the Candace's title has con-

857. Stern, "Province," 340; for screening out Josephus's bias in its relation with Judea, see Rosenfeld, "Josephus and Coast." In earlier times, too, Gaza was viewed as part of Syria, but its people were regarded as more loyal to each other and courageous (Polyb. 16.22a.2). Nabateans had also long made use of Gaza as a port (Patella, "Gaza," 162).

858. See *CIJ* 2:155, §967; Goodenough, *Symbols*, 1:223; Rainey, "Gaza," 418 (also noting that Jerusalemites were sold as slaves there after Bar Kokhba's revolt).

859. See Stager, "Eroticism at Ashkelon." For Greco-Roman architecture there, see Schloen, "Ashkelon," 223; on paganism there, see also Flusser, "Paganism," 1086; Kushnir-Stein, "City Goddess"; some Isis worship is suggested in Bricault, "Deities."

860. Goodenough, *Symbols*, 1:219–21. Ashkelon's relations with Jewish neighbors were apparently positive under Herod but degenerated toward the time of the revolt (Fuks, "Antagonistic Neighbours").

861. See comment and sources in Keener, *John*, 856–57. For wordplay, see, e.g., *Rhet. Her.* 4.21.29–4.22.31; Rowe, "Style," 132 (citing Thucyd. 2.62; Aug. *Ep.* 143.4); Anderson, *Glossary*, 91–92, 93, 127; for examples of wordplay, see τρυφᾶν and τρέφειν in Mus. Ruf. 9, p. 70.28, 31; Porter, "Paul and Letters," 580 (on Phil 3:2–3); Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 227 (on Rom 1:20).

862. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 296n66, also suggesting the wordplay; Pervo, *Acts*, 224.

863. *Kebrā Nagast* 33, end (in Ullendorf, "Candace and Queen of Sheba," 54; Bruce, "Philip and Ethiopian," 385).

864. This wordplay could help explain why "desert," if modifying Gaza, is added in a statement separate from the commission; the eunuch was *not* "desert," for the prophet declared that a faithful eunuch would not be a dry (infertile) tree (Isa 56:3).

865. It included other Ethiopians besides Meroë (Diod. Sic. 3.8.1; also Hdt. 3.17–24; 4.183 in Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 105). Egypt itself included a range of peoples (Leahy, "Diversity in Egypt") and complexions

vinced nearly all scholars that the Nubian kingdom of Meroë is specifically in view here.⁸⁶⁶ James Bruce discovered Meroë in 1722, and John Garstang's work (1909–14) identified the site archaeologically.⁸⁶⁷

(1) *Meroë's Location*

Meroë's Nubia was what was then a black African kingdom between Aswan and Khartoum, the two leading cities of which were Meroë and Napata; it had endured since about 760 B.C.E. and since at least the early third century B.C.E. had ruled from its capital in Meroë.⁸⁶⁸ Even under Napata, Meroë was a significant site; it was founded by 1000 B.C.E. and expanded significantly about 590 B.C.E. At about one square mile (2.59 sq. km. or 640 acres), it is, apart from Egyptian cities, "the earliest large-scale city" we know of in Africa.⁸⁶⁹ People in the Mediterranean world often spoke of Ethiopia as near Egypt (Plut. *Exile* 7, *Mor.* 601DE) or directly south of Egypt (Jos. *Ant.* 2.239; *War* 4.608; Appian *Hist. rom.* pref. 9;⁸⁷⁰ *Juv. Sat.* 10.150)⁸⁷¹ and also described Meroë as south of Egypt (Μερόν, Arrian *Ind.* 25.7).⁸⁷² Even a later novelist who fictionalized freely about Ethiopia recognized its capital as Meroë (Heliod. *Eth.* 9.16, 20, 24; 10.3, 5).⁸⁷³

Meroë was between the Nile's Fifth and Sixth Cataracts, four miles (6.4 km.) north of modern Kabūshīyah in the Sudan—that is, some two hundred miles south of modern Egypt and one hundred miles northeast of Khartoum. The fame of Nubia and its location indicate that this official "had traveled no small distance, and was an official of no minor kingdom."⁸⁷⁴ Any of Luke's contemporaries who derived information from sources such as Herodotus might in fact expect Meroë to be nearly a two months' journey south of Elephantine, and more exotic expanses yet two months farther south (Hdt. 2.29–32).⁸⁷⁵ Given the length of the journey in each direction,

(Trigger, "Nubian, Nilotic?," 27; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 62–68, esp. 66), though Greeks distinguished Egypt from the rest of Africa, by which they especially meant the rest of North Africa (Rives, *Religion*, 71). Nevertheless, Nubia had sometimes dominated Egypt, including under the current kingdom (e.g., Hawass, "Nubia," 171; Kitchen, *Orient*, 82–84; Snowden, *Color Prejudice*, 25–26).

866. E.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 95; Haenchen, *Acts*, 310; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 190–91; idem, *Commentary*, 186; Munck, *Acts*, 78; Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 202–3. For Meroë as Ethiopia in early imperial sources, see, e.g., Losch, "Kämmerer der Königen," 499 (citing Lucan *Phars.* 10.219–331; Sen. *Y.Nat. Q.* 6.8); cf. Roeder, "Geschichte Nubiens," 72–76.

867. O'Connor, "Meroë," 472. For the archaeology of nearby Axum, see Isaac, "Ethiopia."

868. Noted by most of the commentators above. See esp. Leclant, "Napata and Meroë"; Hakem et al., "Napata and Meroë." For the transfer of sovereignty from Napata to Meroë as late as 270 B.C.E., see O'Connor, "Meroë," 472.

869. O'Connor, "Meroë," 472.

870. Appian also mentions that it is higher in elevation than Egypt. They were near the Nile, which originated in Ethiopia (Sil. It. 3.265; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.38; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.26; Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.5, 7). The three-continent geographic scheme would place Egypt in "Africa," but some (e.g., Sall. *Jug.* 17.3–4; Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.9.47) placed it in Asia (albeit adjoining Africa, *N.H.* 5.9.48).

871. Thus a plague beginning there spread to Egypt and thence to Greece (Thucyd. 2.48.1; cf. Libanius *Speech in Character* 24.5). They were thought the people to the farthest south (Paus. 1.33.3–6).

872. The boundary came up to the Nile's First Cataract in Augustus's day (Losch, "Kämmerer der Königen," 479).

873. Heliodorus depicted it as a triangular island surrounded by three navigable rivers, including the Nile (*Eth.* 10.5), but claimed that it was so big that it looked like a mainland (10.5); others claimed that a river surrounded Meroë (Vitruv. *Arch.* 8.2.6). The island did, indeed, lie "between the White Nile, the Blue Nile, and the Atbara River" (Yamauchi, *Africa*, 165). Nero's expedition claimed that the town Meroë lay a full seventy miles from the entrance to the island (Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.35.185). Some claimed that Phaethon died on an Ethiopian island and was worshiped there (37.11.33, rejecting the claim).

874. Witherington, *Acts*, 295; cf. likewise Yamauchi, *Africa*, 145.

875. See also Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 105. Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.112.245 estimates 705 mi. from the Ethiopian coast to Meroë, and 1,250 from Meroë to Alexandria; in 6.35.184, he notes that Nero's scouting expedition reported 945 mi. from Syene to Meroë and 360 mi. from Nabata to Meroë; in 6.35.189 he claims

the official presumably remained at least a month in Jerusalem after coming,⁸⁷⁶ which could suggest at least a quarter of a year for the journey⁸⁷⁷ and perhaps considerably more. For an official with important duties (and perhaps political considerations in the court), this was no small sacrifice and expression of devotion.⁸⁷⁸

(2) Information and Myths

Some scholars contend that Luke includes the story of the African official because he was “exotic,” being from far away,⁸⁷⁹ but whatever appeal a remote land might have for the story, Meroë was a real place, and Luke does not elaborate at any length on the location. Whereas many ancients indulged in wild speculations about exotic distant lands, both fictitious and real, Luke, as a good historian, avoids adding speculations. Based on their knowledge of the Sahara, some Romans thought that Ethiopia and the interior of Africa were mainly desert (Sen. *Y. Nat. Q.* 3.6.2; *Dial.* 5.20.2) and that just as much sand lay between Ethiopia and Egypt (*Nat. Q.* 1.pref. 9); all knew that it was hot (Arrian *Ind.* 6.7).⁸⁸⁰ Some thought that Ethiopia north of Meroë lacked trees (Pliny *E. N.H.* 12.8.19) except for those yielding cotton (13.28.90).⁸⁸¹ For lack of better information, many writers compared Ethiopia to India, comparing their rains and crocodiles (Arrian *Ind.* 6.8); India was sometimes counted as eastern Ethiopia.⁸⁸² But an expedition sent in the time of Nero noted that desert began giving way to foliage around Meroë, with more forest and even elephant and rhinoceros tracks (Pliny *E. N.H.* 6.35.185).

In contrast to information and plausible surmises, some exotic “knowledge” was pure invention designed to “sell” on a popular market.⁸⁸³ Polybius complained about the fables invented by various writers about Ethiopia (Polyb. 3.38.1, 3) and other distant locations (34.5.1–12; 3.57.1–59.9, esp. 3.57.1–9; 3.58.2) in his day. Thus the Ethiopians were said to mine metal by pulling it up only by magnets (Sil. It. 3.266–67).⁸⁸⁴ Arrian complained that others spoke of water monsters and griffins in India, plus ants that mined gold for Indians, and other unverified fantasies (*Alex.*

a three days’ journey from Napata to the Red Sea, and in 6.35.196 he claims twenty-four days’ sailing plus six days’ land journey from Meroë to the Ethiopian Ocean (“all” agreeing this to be 625 mi.). Note the fanciful proportions of Ethiopia in *b. Pesah.* 94a; *Ta’an.* 10a; *y. Ber.* 1:1, §12; *Song Rab.* 6:9, §3.

876. If he came for Passover, he would likely stay for Pentecost; if he came for the autumn festivals, he might stay during the winter (a difficult delay for an official), though winter travel would be less difficult once he passed the Judean hill country for Gaza and Egypt.

877. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 417. For travel alone, 20 mi. a day would yield nearly three to four months, but some of the travel, especially on the Nile, may have been faster than this.

878. Noted also by ancient commentators, e.g., Chrys. *Hom. Gen.* 35.4; cf. Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.27a (Martin, *Acts*, 97–98).

879. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 32; idem, *Acts*, 221. For my argument against this view, see also Keener, “Official.”

880. Vitruv. *Arch.* 8.2.7 opined that Africa had few rivers because it was hot and moisture comes from the north.

881. Pliny *E. N.H.* 12.8.17 notes that Hdt. 3.97 attributes ebony to Ethiopia, but with Virgil *Georg.* 2.116–17, he attributes it to India.

882. The southeast corner of the world, i.e., India, was called east Ethiopia, as opposed to the southwest, which was Libya (Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 2.3.60, following Hom. *Od.* 1.23–24, in contrast to Ptolemy *Geography*); the region was thought to generate much drought and heat (1 *En.* 76:5). In Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 2.18, the sun rose near India and set near Ethiopia; in *Vit. Apoll.* 6.1, India covered the entire southeast region of the world, and Ethiopia all the southwest. Cf. “black” people of the eastern dawn (Eurip. *Phaethon* frg. 771.2–4).

883. Some stories told to Herodotus fit this description (see Hdt. 3.17–24; 4.183 in Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 105); certainly, novelistic works (e.g., Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.21; Heliod. *Eth.* 10.4–5) and rabbinic speculations (e.g., *b. Pesah.* 94a; *Ta’an.* 10a; *y. Ber.* 1:1, §12; *Song Rab.* 6:9, §3; cf. similarly fanciful dimensions in Heliod. *Eth.* 10.5) do. Cf. *Tg. Šeni* on Esth 1:2, where the queen of Sheba was from an exotically distant country without war, whose foundations were as old as Eden.

884. Somewhat more plausibly, their companion Nubians wore no armor but linen, including on the head, and they tipped their javelins with poison (Sil. It. 3.269–73).

5.4.3). One swift monster held native to Ethiopia supposedly had a lion's body with a human face, and three rows of teeth useful for eating humans.⁸⁸⁵ Ultimately writers often mixed genuine and fictitious information, lacking resources to distinguish them: thus Ethiopia produced not only hyenas and monkeys but also “winged horses armed with horns.”⁸⁸⁶

Pliny the Elder offers some of the most thorough information about what the Roman world thought of Meroë in Luke's era. In *Natural History* 6.35.178–80, he lists towns and peoples reported south along the Nile to Meroë but notes (6.35.181) that most no longer exist, as attested by Nero's scouts who found there only desert. While researching his work on Ethiopia, one Greek writer allegedly lived in Meroë for five years (6.35.183). Nero's scouts found few buildings in Meroë (6.35.185); although it apparently had a sizable population, it was probably more rural.

The Roman world claimed knowledge of some other African, “Ethiopian” regions in addition to Meroë. Besides northern African regions (see comment on Acts 13:1) and Axum, these included explorations in western Africa in the second century B.C.E. (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.1.9–10). Discoveries included forests (5.1.9), rivers with crocodiles (5.1.9–10), and, among coastal peoples, the “Ethiopian Daratitae” (*Aethiopas Daratitas*, 5.1.10; using “Ethiopia” for all of sub-Saharan Africa). Elsewhere in Africa, after a desert and the Egyptian Libyans, came the “white Ethiopians” and, after them, “the Ethiopian clans of the Nigritae, named after the river.”⁸⁸⁷ But the further Pliny moves from his known world, the less certain (and often more skeptical) we can be of his information. He speaks of mute, snake-eating cave dwellers (5.8.45);⁸⁸⁸ the naked Gamphasantes (5.8.45); the Blemmyae, whose mouth and eyes are (utterly fancifully) on their chests (because they lack heads, 5.8.46); and leather-footed people who crawl rather than walk, along with Satyrs and other creatures (5.8.46).

Even around Meroë, Pliny assures us, strange peoples lived: on the east, some flat-faced peoples lack noses; some had neither mouth nor nostrils but one opening both for breathing and for sucking in fluids through “oat straws,” using gestures instead of speech (6.35.187–88). Likewise (but now again more reliably), some also report a race of Pygmies closer to where the Nile originates (*Pygmaeorum*, 6.35.188).⁸⁸⁹ All quadrupeds around “Nubian Ethiopia” (*Nubaei Aethiopes*), including elephants, lacked ears; a still more distant people “have a dog for a king and divine his commands from his movements” (6.35.192 [LCL, 2:481]).⁸⁹⁰ Some plants around Meroë were useful medicinally whereas others caused suicidal madness.⁸⁹¹ A mineral category

885. Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.30.75 (attributing this “information” to Ctesias).

886. Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.30.72 (LCL, 2:53).

887. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.8.43 (LCL, 2:249, 251); the river is the Niger (among African tribes, called *Tarraelii* and *Oechalicae*, 5.8.44), though not necessarily the modern river by this name. “Niger” was a common river name, perhaps partly because, in the Libyan language, *gher* (or *ghir*) applied to “any flowing waters” (Huss, “Niger”); on the Latin “Niger,” see comment on Acts 13:1.

888. Unfortunately, following Hdt. 4.183. Pliny the Elder deals further with the *Trogodytae*, cave dwellers, at *N.H.* 6.34.169; beyond Meroë, all were cave dwellers (6.35.189). In 5.5.34, cave dwellers lived seven days to the southwest of Libyan desert dwellers who built houses of salt; Rome's only contact with the cave dwellers was carbuncle imported through Ethiopia. Reports of “cave dwellers” might confuse the “Ethiopian” *Trogodytae* with northern *Troglodytae*, or cave dwellers (Morkot, “*Trogodytae*”). Cf. Agatharchides (fig. 21) on the snakebite-immune *Psylli* (Brown, *Historians*, 190).

889. Beyond Meroë, Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.25 lists nomadic Ethiopians (living in wagons!), elephant hunters, cannibals, and pygmies. There were also people who were “shadow-footed”; nevertheless, the travelers found hospitality in a village there (6.27). Most tales of Pygmies are fictitious, but they apparently lent their title to the central African peoples called this today (Bloch, “Pygmies”).

890. Some ideas, such as that of a ruling dog, may have grown from outsiders' views of sacred totems, but plainly, Pliny's sources are not fully accurate.

891. Pliny E. *N.H.* 24.102.163; cf. 27.1.2; detailed in 27.3.11–12.

including diamonds was found in mines near Meroë (37.15.55), though also in India and Arabia (37.15.56).

How might Luke's audience have pictured the African official? Although everyone knew of Africa south of Egypt, some of the most widely circulated stories about particular Africans south of Egypt belonged to myth and legend. One of the most popular characters was Memnon, though his Ethiopia was placed in the "east," the land of the dawn.⁸⁹² (Some later writers, however, also associate him with Egypt.)⁸⁹³ Dawn (Ἠώς), a goddess who lived in the east, consorted with the mortal Tithonus and bore him two sons, including Memnon, in Ethiopia (Hesiod *Theog.* 984–85; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.12.4).⁸⁹⁴ Memnon was black (*nigri*, Virg. *Aen.* 1.489);⁸⁹⁵ Odysseus claimed that Memnon was the handsomest man he had ever seen (Hom. *Od.* 11.522). By all accounts, he was a mighty warrior, yet finally he was killed by Achilles (Apollod. *Epit.* 5.3).⁸⁹⁶ In some versions, after Achilles slew Memnon, Zeus made the latter immortal (*Aethiopsis* 1–2).⁸⁹⁷ Pliny the Elder reports the view of some that birds fly annually from Ethiopia to fight over Memnon's grave at Troy and that another source claims that the birds do the same around his palace in Ethiopia (*N.H.* 10.37.74).⁸⁹⁸ For centuries his death remained a subject for Greek art and rhetorical descriptions (Philost. Elder *Imag.* 1.7).

Some ancients suggested that the Ethiopians originated astrology.⁸⁹⁹ Others claimed that they stole their wisdom from India (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.11), from which they were expelled for murdering many Indians, including King Ganges, the river's son (3.20). Ethiopian sages could make the trees salute Apollonius (6.10); after Apollonius argues that the Indian sages are superior to them (6.5–11), the youngest of the Ethiopian sages follows him as a disciple (6.16). Some opined that Ethiopians were as wise because of their warm climate as Scythians were fierce because of their harsh climate.⁹⁰⁰

The Roman public proved infatuated with stories about Ethiopia after the return of Nero's expedition (61–62 C.E.).⁹⁰¹ By contrast, Luke (unlike, e.g., Heliodorus) does not even describe Ethiopia; Philip does not journey to Ethiopia to meet him. We know that Nubians are a *real* people (unlike Amazons; see discussion below) and the Candace was a *real* queen. Comparison with ancient fictions shows us that

892. E.g., Sil. It. 3.332–34; Sen. Y. *Troj.* 10. For fragments of the *Aethiopsis*, including dealing with Memnon, see *GEF* 108–17. On Memnon, see also Scherf, "Memnon."

893. See Rose and March, "Memnon" (citing Paus. 1.42.3).

894. In less detail, also Ovid *Pont.* 1.4.57; *Am.* 1.8.3–4; Philost. Elder *Imag.* 1.7.

895. Further, Ovid *Am.* 1.8; *Pont.* 3.3.96–97. But his mother, Aurora (the Latin name for Eos, "Dawn"), as a goddess, had golden hair (Ovid *Am.* 1.13.2). In Philost. Elder *Imag.* 1.7, his skin has a trace of ruddiness mitigating the black. Greek vase paintings portray him according to Greek heroic conventions but often his attendants as black Africans (Rose and March, "Memnon").

896. Also Pindar *Nem.* 3.62–63; 6.49–53; *Isthm.* 8.55; Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.35.182; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 11.114, 117; for his war exploits, e.g., Philost. Elder *Imag.* 2.7. His mother then mourned him (Ovid *Am.* 3.9.1–2). For his armor made by Hephaestus, see *Aethiopsis* 1.

897. Excerpted, and hence preserved, in Proclus *Chrestomathia* 2 (in Hesiod, LCL, 506–7; also *GEF* 113). A revisionist version claims that the Memnon slain at Troy was a Trojan (Philost. *Hrk.* 26.16–17), though Memnon of Ethiopia ruled during the Trojan War, and is worshiped in Ethiopia and Egypt (26.16; cf. similarly Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.4).

898. On this myth, see further Scherf, "Memnonides." Memnon's statue in Ethiopia could speak and was so realistic that it helped Eos to stop mourning her son (Callist. *Descr.* 9; cf. more cautiously Tac. *Ann.* 2.61: when struck by sunlight, the statue offered sounds resembling a voice).

899. Lucian *Astr.* 3, suggesting also (*Astr.* 5) that they passed it to Egyptians; but Lucian is being satirical in this essay.

900. Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.80.189.

901. Klauck, *Magic*, 25–26 (following Plümacher, *Lukas*, 12–13). Josephus may play up the exotic character of the queen of Sheba's visit (cf. Begg, "Visit").

Nubia would be of interest to Luke's audience, but unlike some other locations that fictitious reports claim, Nubia was not fictitious. Far from indulging in speculations about distant lands, Luke stays close to the most sober model of historiography. Though he could not have known which reports of his contemporaries were reliable and which were not, what he reports does not contradict what we know.

(3) *Exotic Analogies*

Many Greeks had long enjoyed speculating about distant, exotic lands where life differed from what was known, as far as imagination could allow. Comparison with some other peoples helps set their speculations about Ethiopia in context. In the far north lived the Hyperboreans,⁹⁰² who enjoyed such longevity that finally, when they tired of living, they would banquet and then hurl themselves into the sea.⁹⁰³ Another people in the distant north lived in the remote location of Thule (possibly Iceland or Norway) at the ends of the earth;⁹⁰⁴ one first-century writer calls Thule the farthest of lands (Sen. *Y. Med.* 379).⁹⁰⁵

Likewise, some claimed that India had rivers of milk, honey, wine, and olive oil⁹⁰⁶ and people ate the lotus, which grew without need for cultivation;⁹⁰⁷ their Brahman sages drank from the "fountain of truth," making them incapable of lying.⁹⁰⁸ Ants larger than foxes dug gold, and at midday, when the ants retreated underground because of the heat, Indians stole their gold, which often led to battles with the ants.⁹⁰⁹ Less fantastically, some claimed a powerful king there⁹¹⁰ or estimated 118 peoples in India.⁹¹¹

Speculation (mixed with more accurate knowledge)⁹¹² had also been rife about the Scythians, because they were remote enough⁹¹³ that knowledge about them was limited (though by this period it was more accurate than before Alexander's conquests). Their remote land provided the scene for Prometheus's torture in some sources.⁹¹⁴ Because of their distance in the cold north⁹¹⁵ and the east,⁹¹⁶ they are naturally linked with

902. Cf., e.g., *Epigoni* frg. 5 (so Hdt. 4.32) and in Hesiod frg. 150.21 M.–W. (so *GEF* 59).

903. Pliny E. *N.H.* 4.12.89, though himself unsure if the reports were correct.

904. See Warmington and Millett, "Thule."

905. Pliny E. *N.H.* 4.16.104 makes it the land farthest north.

906. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.18 (noting that all flow one month of the year only for the king, as his tribute). In contrast to Hebrew idiom (e.g., Exod 3:8, 17; 33:3; Lev 20:24; Num 16:13–14; Deut 6:3; 26:9; 27:3; 31:20; Josh 5:6; Job 20:17; Ezek 20:6, 15; Sir 46:8; cf. echoes in Bar 1:20; 2 Esd 2:19; *Barn.* 6.8, 10, 13), this claim appears intended literally.

907. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.19. The trees brought their fruit down to whoever wished to eat (35.21).

908. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.22. On the Brahman "gymnosophists," see comment on Acts 7:58.

909. Hdt. 3.102–5 (claiming that he learned this from the Persians); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.23–24.

910. In Cyrus's day in Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.1–8; Alexander later reportedly met one.

911. Arrian *Ind.* 7.1. See further Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.21.56–60. He writes on northern India (6.21.61–64), on regions around the Ganges (6.22.65–70), on the Indus (6.23.71–72), on races beyond the Indus (6.23.73–79), on some islands off India (6.23.80), and on Taprobane (what is now Sri Lanka) (6.24.81–91).

912. For some modern research, see, e.g., Minns, *Scythians*; briefly, Yamauchi, "Scythians," 13–15; Bredow, "Scythae."

913. On their remoteness, see, e.g., Aeschylus *Seven* 728, 817; Cic. *Nat. d.* 2.34.88 (mentioned alongside Britain); Ovid *Tristia* 1.3.61; 3.3.46; 3.4.49; 4.6.47; 5.2.61–63; 5.10.13–14; *Pont.* 2.1.66; 2.7.31; 3.2.46; 3.5.45; 4.14.14; Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.67.167; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.64. Legendary Colchis is portrayed as Scythian in Val. Flacc. 1.745; 3.496, 653; 5.525; 6.7, 428; 7.42; 8.209; Libanius *Speech in Character* 1.3; 17.2; so also Tauri in Ovid *Pont.* 3.2.45. Hdt. 4.11 recounts divergent versions of the Scythians' origin. In Jos. *Ant.* 1.123, they are Magog.

914. E.g., Aeschylus *Prom.* 2; Apollod. *Bib.* 1.7.1; Mart. *Epig.* 11.84.9.

915. The cold north in Lucan *C.W.* 1.18; Photius *Bibl.* 166.109a (summarizing from Antonius Diogenes *Wonders beyond Thule*); the north wind is "Scythian" in Lucan *C.W.* 5.603; its farthest border is icy in Ovid *Metam.* 8.788–89; the "icy" Scythian in Hor. *Odes* 4.5.25. It was perpetually cold there (Virg. *Georg.* 3.349–83).

916. Associated with the east in Ovid *Fasti* 3.719. They roamed the northern part of Asia and the northeast quarter of the world (Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 2.3.60). The northeast was one "edge of the earth" (Cic. *Agr.* 2.19.52).

Hyperboreans⁹¹⁷ and Indians.⁹¹⁸ Scythia was too cold for thunderbolts, just as Egypt was too hot for them.⁹¹⁹ One plant there reportedly preserved one from hunger and thirst so long as one kept it in the mouth.⁹²⁰ In their land, a wild country,⁹²¹ one hairy animal changed its color to blend in with its surroundings.⁹²²

The Scythian tribes were innumerable, and the Parthians did not outnumber them.⁹²³ Scythians were rightly known to be nomads,⁹²⁴ not interested in farming⁹²⁵ or trade.⁹²⁶ Because they were accustomed to a nomadic lifestyle, living in cities could ruin their health.⁹²⁷ The Scythians were known for their ferocity in battle⁹²⁸ (though not for their military discipline)⁹²⁹ and for rejecting the Greek lifestyle.⁹³⁰ Greeks thus counted them barbarous⁹³¹ and indeed unlearned and ignorant (i.e., of what Greeks considered knowledge).⁹³² Unlike “civilized” Greeks, Scythians drank their wine straight, unmixed with water;⁹³³ a Greek was said to have gone insane from drinking too much strong wine with Scythians.⁹³⁴ More commonly, they were said to drink primarily milk,⁹³⁵ especially mares’ milk;⁹³⁶ some claimed that they subsisted primarily on mares’ milk.⁹³⁷ They wore animal skins, said to be woven from foxes and mice.⁹³⁸ Some Greeks had claimed that they shared wives in common, but Herodotus disagreed.⁹³⁹

917. Proximity to the Hyperboreans is probably implied in Iambl. *V.P.* 19.90.

918. Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 1.80 (contrasting them physically); Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 2.3.60; Mart. *Epig.* 4.28.4; Suet. *Aug.* 21.3 (“nations known to us only from hearsay” [LCL, 1:153]); cf. Philo *Dreams* 2.59.

919. Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.51.135. They are contrasted with Egyptians also in Philo *Mos.* 2.19; Max. Tyre 23.4.

920. Pliny E. *N.H.* 25.43.82.

921. Aristoph. *Birds* 941.

922. Philo *Drunkness* 174.

923. Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.19.50 (the former claim is likely, the latter implausible). For various groups of Scythians, see, e.g., Jos. *War* 7.90, 244. They are linked poetically with Parthians as Rome’s enemies in Hor. *Odes* 4.5.25; Lucan *C.W.* 2.552–53 (and actually were Rome’s enemies in Jos. *War* 7.89).

924. Aeschines *Embassy* 78; Hdt. 1.15; Pindar *Hyporchemata* frg. 105b; Hor. *Odes* 1.35.9–10; 4.14.42; Strabo 11.6.2; Arrian *Ind.* 7.2; Lucian *Icar.* 16; *Fly* 9; *Carousal* 13.

925. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 64.14; Max. Tyre 23.4.

926. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.5.

927. Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.5.572 (which suggests that some Scythians had begun doing so by the late second century C.E.). Well before this time, some Scythians were thought to have settled in Palestine’s Scythopolis (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.16.74; cf. Flusser, “Paganism,” 1065–68).

928. E.g., Thucyd. 2.97.5–6; Corn. Nep. 1 (Miltiades), 3.4 (they beat back Darius); Mart. *Epig.* 10.62.8; Tac. *Hist.* frg. 7 (feared even by Alexander); Max. Tyre 23.4 (known as warriors); Philost. *Hrk.* 28.12 (killing Cyrus); Jos. *Ant.* 18.97.

929. Cf. Celtic warriors, viewed as disorderly and undisciplined (Polyb. 3.78.5; 3.79.8). They were thought prone to anger (Sen. *Y. Dial.* 4.15.1). The Medes defeated them, however, in Hdt. 1.104.

930. Hdt. 4.76, 79; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.44. Historically, despite their rejection of Greek lifestyle, their aristocrats wore jewelry that Greeks had designed for them (Bouzek, “Scythians,” 504); their land produced emeralds (Mart. *Epig.* 4.28.4). Aeschines denounces Demosthenes for Scythian, non-Greek ties (*Embassy* 78, 172–73, 180).

931. E.g., Aristoph. *Acharn.* 704; Philo *Embassy* 10; cf. Horsley, *Documents*, 1:16–17, §2.

932. Thucyd. 2.97.6; Lucian *Critic* 2–3. A “Scythian reply” was short and rough, as in Aelian *Farmers* 14 (Cnemon to Callipides).

933. Athen. *Deipn.* 427AB, 432A. Athenaeus notes with amazement that even their wives do it (*Deipn.* 432A).

934. Hdt. 6.84.

935. Max. Tyre 21.6 (noting that some other Scythians drink only water).

936. Cf. Philo *Contempl.* 17 (adapting Hom. *Il.* 13.5–6). That they drank much mares’ milk and made food from it is likely.

937. Hesiod *Cat. W. E.* 39–40 (from Strabo 7.300, 302). Some ancients said that they drank fermented mare’s milk “from bowls made of human skulls,” as well as the blood of the first enemy killed in any battle (so Olmstead, *Persian Empire*, 148).

938. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 90.16.

939. Hdt. 1.216.

Some associated them with cruelty,⁹⁴⁰ so that a mother who murdered her children could be called a “savage Scythian”;⁹⁴¹ warriors who had not killed at least one enemy were disgraced at an annual feast;⁹⁴² some even portray them as cannibals.⁹⁴³ Related to the tale of Iphigeneia, they were sometimes said to practice human sacrifice.⁹⁴⁴ They were said to worship a scimitar.⁹⁴⁵ When their fathers became aged, they allegedly cut their throats;⁹⁴⁶ they let bodies rot openly rather than bury them.⁹⁴⁷ Herodotus accuses them of plundering a temple (angering the deity)⁹⁴⁸ and claims that when they ruled Asia for twenty-eight years, they wasted it with their plundering; finally some Medes made them drunk and slew them.⁹⁴⁹ Yet sometimes their simple, barbaric lifestyle was presented as virtuous and noble,⁹⁵⁰ as in the case of the articulate spokesman whom Greek writers used for them, Anacharsis.⁹⁵¹ Though poor, they were at least free.⁹⁵² Scythians were especially associated with horses⁹⁵³ and archery;⁹⁵⁴ some texts about them pair both together.⁹⁵⁵ To aid in their riding, Scythians avoided using swaddling clothes.⁹⁵⁶ Scythians were considered neighbors and associates of the fierce Amazons.⁹⁵⁷

Another major area of exotic geographic speculation concerned the renowned Amazons themselves,⁹⁵⁸ though by this period (when more geography was known) they are more often mentioned with regard to the past. Amazons were, in short, the opposite of what Greek men thought of women—a fertile ground for their imagination. It was thought that Amazons had once subdued much of Asia and Europe (Diod. Sic. 2.44.2–3);⁹⁵⁹ it was more difficult for more recent people to believe such reports, one historian opines, because their strength had died out (2.46.6).

Most ancient historians and other writers took for granted the historical

940. 2 Macc 4:47; 3 Macc 7:5; Apollod. *Epit.* 6.26; Cic. *Pis.* 8.18; Plut. *Fort. Alex.* 1.5, *Mor.* 328C; Lucian *Dial. C.* 10 (Chelidonium and Drosis ¶4), 307; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.269; cf. Philost. *Letters* 5 (41). So also the Getae, with whom Ovid links them (*Pont.* 2.7.31). This includes scalping (Hdt. 4.64; 4 Macc 10:7).

941. Char. *Chaer.* 2.9.3.

942. Hdt. 4.66.

943. Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.20.53; 7.2.9 (on many, not all, Scythian tribes; for other cannibals farther east, see 6.20.55); Philost. *Hrk.* 57.9. When wronged by Cyaxares, they allegedly cooked a boy and fed him to Cyaxares, escaping before the latter realized what had occurred (Hdt. 1.73; cf. the story of Pelops).

944. Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 3.208 (cf. the Tauri in 1.149); Lucian *Sacr.* 13.

945. Lucian *Z. Rants* 42.

946. Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 3.210.

947. Sil. It. 13.486–87.

948. Hdt. 1.105.

949. Hdt. 1.106.

950. E.g., Strabo 7.3.7. Lucian also uses them thus in *Toxaris* passim.

951. Anacharsis *Ep.* 9 (advocating simplicity); Fronto *Ep. graec.* 1.5; Max. Tyre 25.1; Diog. Laert. 1.101–5; cf. Paus. 1.22.8. Supposedly, he was hellenizing the Scythians (*Gr. Anth.* 7.92) but was killed by his brother for being too pro-Greek (Hdt. 4.76; Diog. Laert. 1.102).

952. Arrian *Alex.* 4.11.9 (not subdued by Persians); Max. Tyre 23.4 (because they were warriors).

953. E.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.2.17.

954. E.g., Aeschylus *Lib.* 161; Hdt. 1.73; Hor. *Odes* 3.8.23–24; Ovid *Pont.* 1.1.79; 1.7.9; 2.1.65 (cf. 3.5.45); Lucian *Nigr.* 36–37.

955. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.32 (as with Indians).

956. Hippocr. *Airs* 20.13–15. Swaddling clothes were usual in the Mediterranean world; see, e.g., Pindar *Nem.* 1.38; *Pyth.* 4.114; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.10.2; Soranus *Gynec.* 2.9.14–15; 2.19.42 (39.111); Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 371.19; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.15; Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.26; Philost. *Younger Imag.* 5; Heliod. *Eth.* 2.31; Libanius *Narration* 24.2; Wis 7:4; Hurschmann, “Swaddling Clothes”; Croom, *Clothing*, 119–20; Safrai, “Home,” 766.

957. E.g., Isoc. *Panath.* 193; Hdt. 4.111–17; Diod. Sic. 4.27.2; Sen. Y. *Troj.* 12; Statius *Theb.* 5.144; Philost. *Hrk.* 57.9. Cf. Lefkowitz, *Women in Myth*, 22.

958. Cf. the Amazon statue found in Corinth (Sturgeon, “Amazon”).

959. More fully, see Diod. Sic. 2.44.2–46.6.

authenticity of the Amazons.⁹⁶⁰ Herodotus assumes the existence of Amazons.⁹⁶¹ Xenophon did not see any Amazons in the East but notes that some of his comrades captured a man with weapons like those attributed to the Amazons.⁹⁶² Pompey's Asian captives included women thought to be Amazons, but it was uncertain whether they belonged to a separate kingdom or their local translators simply called any warrior women "Amazons."⁹⁶³ Later, Strabo still apparently believes in Amazons but thinks that, despite various claims, no historian in his day, in fact, knows their location.⁹⁶⁴ Arrian reports that some in Alexander's day claimed the existence of Amazons⁹⁶⁵ but suspects that they must have died out by Alexander's day, since he did not run into them.⁹⁶⁶ In the second century C.E., Pausanias still treats them as real figures, citing earlier historians.⁹⁶⁷ Some philosophers depended on their authentic existence for their argument.⁹⁶⁸

Others proved more skeptical about their existence, though sometimes because such warlike women seemed to them unthinkable.⁹⁶⁹ Although Greek art contains many Amazons, they do not appear in the art of other peoples, for whom Amazons would also have been a matter of interest.⁹⁷⁰ Clearly Amazons exercised the Greek imagination, but because they are attested primarily in stories from centuries earlier, and then primarily in exotic distant locations, we have little historical data to work from.

Amazons were known for their bravery,⁹⁷¹ and some philosophers used their example to demonstrate the potential of women.⁹⁷² In war, they were men's "equals";⁹⁷³ some opined that they were warlike because they were daughters of Ares.⁹⁷⁴ It was said that their right breast was seared when they were infants so that they could use their right arm in war like men (using their left breast to nurse infants).⁹⁷⁵ Like other Eastern peoples, they were mounted⁹⁷⁶ archers.⁹⁷⁷ Supposedly they procreated with a neighboring tribe, raising the girls themselves and allowing that tribe to raise

960. E.g., Lefkowitz, *Women in Myth*, 22–23; in Greek historians, see Sobol, *Amazons*, 81–90; in literature and art, 91–112. For the question of their actual existence, see *ibid.*, 113–47, doubting that historicity can be proved either way (147). Accounting for their origin in Greek sources is speculative, since "they left behind no artifacts, no cuneiform tablets, no ruins" (139).

961. E.g., *Hdt.* 4.111–17.

962. Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.16 (the weapons are not all that distinctive). Amazons' supposed location changed as Greek geographic knowledge expanded (van der Horst, "Amazons," 28).

963. Appian *Hist. rom.* 12.15.103. Since local language was presumably translated into Greek and Latin, it may be the translators who explained the warriors as "Amazons."

964. Strabo 11.5.1, 4.

965. Arrian *Alex.* 4.15.4. Some ancients claim that the Amazon queen came to meet Alexander (Diod. Sic. 17.77.1; uncertainly, Plut. *Alex.* 46.1–2) or sent tribute (Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.26, an unreliable source). In *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:1, a place inhabited only by women, possibly in Africa, dissuades Alexander from warring with them.

966. Arrian *Alex.* 7.13.4–6.

967. Paus. 1.2.1.

968. E.g., Crates *Ep.* 28. The artistic portrayal of Pericles fighting Amazons in the historical period (Plut. *Per.* 31.4) is an artistic recollection of Theseus's and the Athenians' battle with them.

969. Tatian *Or. Gks.* 32.

970. Lefkowitz, *Women in Myth*, 22.

971. E.g., Diod. Sic. 17.77.1; cf. Libanius *Speech in Character* 12.2.

972. Mus. Ruf. 4, p. 44.33; Crates *Ep.* 28.

973. Hom. *Il.* 3.189; 6.186; Crates *Ep.* 28.

974. Ap. Rhod. 2.987–91; Philost. *Hrk.* 57.3.

975. Apollod. *Bib.* 2.5.9; Strabo 11.5.1. This theory connected with an etymology of their name (Philost. *Hrk.* 57.6, believing that they nursed infants with mares' milk [like Scythians]). Cf. the Androgyni, who had one male and one female breast (Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.2.15).

976. E.g., Philost. Elder *Imag.* 2.3. They were like any other women except when mounted (Philost. *Hrk.* 57.12).

977. Pindar *Ol.* 13.87; Philost. *Hrk.* 57.3.

the boys.⁹⁷⁸ Some ancients claimed that they were taller and more beautiful than ordinary women.⁹⁷⁹

Unfortunately, most Greek narratives treat them as enemies and hence employ their reputation as powerful warriors as a foil for various reported Greek victories over them.⁹⁸⁰ Thus the great Achilles slew Penthesileia but, seeing her beauty afterward, regretted it.⁹⁸¹ The Amazon queen represented the final barrier to Troy's capture.⁹⁸²

Amazons were associated with the founding and naming of Ephesus⁹⁸³ and Smyrna⁹⁸⁴ and may have links with Artemis.⁹⁸⁵ Interest in Amazons apparently remained in Ephesus;⁹⁸⁶ some statues of Amazons were dedicated in Ephesus's temple of Artemis.⁹⁸⁷ The question of the Amazons' original location is more complicated. Aside from their proximity to the Scythians (a very general indicator), there was ambiguity about their exact location once the geography of their original alleged region became known. Strabo noted the different locations given but felt that few reputable historians still knew where they were.⁹⁸⁸ (One writer even locates them in Thrace, which appears relevant only because it was north and east of Rome.)⁹⁸⁹ One novelistic writer places them on an island across the river Amazon.⁹⁹⁰ Diodorus thinks that the Libyan Amazons preceded the Asian ones but died out before the Trojan War.⁹⁹¹

The Amazons spawned (or amplified) tales of other warlike women,⁹⁹² including the Lemnians⁹⁹³ and various individuals;⁹⁹⁴ some Amazons and Scythians allegedly

978. Strabo 11.5.1; Philost. *Hrk.* 57.4–5. Alternatively, they maimed male children to prevent them from becoming manly (Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 3.217). They were “husbandless” (Aeschylus *Suppl.* 287), spurned marriage (Staius *Ach.* 1.352–53), and hated all men (Aeschylus *Prom.* 723–24).

979. Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.27.

980. E.g., Lysias *Or.* 2.4–6, §§190–91 (noting that the Athenians made them like others of their gender); Demosth. *Epitaph.* 8. Reported victors over them included Heracles (Apollod. *Bib.* 2.5.9; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 63), Bellerophon (Hom. *Il.* 6.186; Pindar *Ol.* 13.87; Apollod. *Bib.* 2.3.2), Theseus (Apollod. *Epit.* 1.16–17; Plut. *Thes.* 26–28; for their battle with Athens, also see Isoc. *Panath.* 193), and others. They were the hardest women to conquer but not really very difficult (Dio Chrys. 4.73). Cf. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 23–25; interpretation of portraiture of defeated Amazons noted in Lopez, *Apostle*, 44; Taussig, “Melancholy,” 284–87.

981. Apollod. *Epit.* 5.1; Lycophron *Alex.* 995–1001; *Aethiopsis* 1 (GEF 111); Libanius *Speech in Character* 12; *Encomium* 2.21; *Invect.* 1.22; cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 11.117. Philost. *Hrk.* 57.15–17 seems to revel in the gory description of Achilles's ghost slaughtering the Amazons who invaded his island, mangling them mercilessly. Along the same troublesome lines, 23.27–28 also emphasizes the beauty of another fallen warrior queen stirring the Achaians.

982. Sen. *Y. Troj.* 243 (cf. 12–13). They came, like Memnon, toward the war's end (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 11.117).

983. Strabo 11.5.4; Pliny *E. N.H.* 5.31.115. For the naming, see Strabo 12.3.21.

984. Strabo 11.5.4; Pliny *E. N.H.* 5.31.118; Tac. *Ann.* 4.56. For the naming, see Strabo 12.3.21. They sail from Ephesus in Plut. *Gk. Q.* 56, *Mor.* 303DE.

985. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 5. At least one scholar thinks Artemis's many “breasts” were sacrifices from Amazons (noted without approval in Sobol, *Amazons*, 111), but this is very unlikely (see comment on Acts 19:27).

986. Cf. a person named Ἀμαζόνοχος in *I. Eph.* 941. Cf. Taussig's association of a powerful Amazon with Asia's precolonial past (“Melancholy,” 286, citing Kahl, *Galatians Re-imagined*, 31–204).

987. Pliny *E. N.H.* 34.19.53.

988. Strabo 11.5.1.

989. Sil. *It.* 2.73, 80.

990. Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.25.

991. Diod. *Sic.* 3.52.1–3; they were near Ethiopia (3.53.4); cf. possibly an allusion to African Amazons in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:1. On the Libyan Amazons, see Sobol, *Amazons*, 19–31 (much more is reported in Asia; see 32–77).

992. E.g., Quint. *Curt.* 5.6.18 (alongside their husbands); Philost. *Hrk.* 23.26–27. For another warrior queen, Rhodogoune, see Philost. *Elder Imag.* 2.5; for Queen Semiramis of Assyria, see, e.g., Juv. *Sat.* 2.108.

993. E.g., Ap. *Rhod.* 1.609–19; Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.17; Val. Flacc. 2.196–241 (after slaying their husbands, they replaced them as rulers, 2.307–10); cf. discussion in Dräger, “Lemnian Women.” Some women also conspired to murder their husbands in historical times (Val. Max. 2.5.3, claiming at least 170 conspirators).

994. E.g., Virg. *Aen.* 11.734; Philost. *Hrk.* 28.9, 12. Cf. also Atalanta (Apollod. *Bib.* 3.9.2). The goddess Athena is also portrayed in warlike and masculine terms, without embarrassment; Aeschylus *Eum.* 734–41; Lucian *Dial. G.* 225 (13/8, Hephaisotos and Zeus 1).

mated and produced a nation where husbands and wives went to war together.⁹⁹⁵ Historically, certainly there were women who aided in battles;⁹⁹⁶ Rome even knew some women gladiators⁹⁹⁷ (one of whom was nicknamed Amazon).⁹⁹⁸ Tacitus also reports a German people among whom women were believed to rule,⁹⁹⁹ as well as a British warrior queen (noting that Britons did not discriminate by gender in assignment of the royal office).¹⁰⁰⁰ All such reports, both the historical and fictitious ones, were objects of fascination in the androcentric Greco-Roman world.¹⁰⁰¹

(4) *The African's Color*

Most obviously, Luke's audience would assume that the Ethiopian was black.¹⁰⁰² Although this feature might seem irrelevant to the story for some modern readers,¹⁰⁰³ it was a primary element of most Mediterranean conceptions of Ethiopians¹⁰⁰⁴ (like the whiteness of Scythians), though lacking the connotations attached by modern notions of race. (Texts sometimes contrasted Scythians with Ethiopians as the northern and southern extremes of peoples.)¹⁰⁰⁵ "Black" complexion was the most common defining feature of Ethiopians in ancient Mediterranean literature.¹⁰⁰⁶ Diaspora Jewish texts and later rabbis both work from the assumption that "Ethiopians" are "black."¹⁰⁰⁷ So pervasive was the characteristic that people used Ethiopians as a symbol of something black.¹⁰⁰⁸ Black complexion was linked with flat noses, woolly hair, and broad lips and feet as characteristics of African Ethiopians.¹⁰⁰⁹ Woolly hair

995. Hdt. 4.111–17.

996. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.92.6; Livy 2.13.6; Appian *Hist. rom.* 7.5.29. Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 21, §39, cite also Plut. *Mor.* 24SCF.

997. E.g., Tac. *Ann.* 15.32; Suet. *Dom.* 4.1.

998. See Sherk, *Empire*, §172E, p. 226 (the opponent, Achillia, may have been so nicknamed because of Achilles's defeat of an Amazon).

999. Tac. *Germ.* 45; elsewhere, German women watched the battle and spurred their men to valor (*Germ.* 7–8). Ant. Diog. *Thule* 109b claimed a place in northern Spain where women were the warriors and men attended to domestic activities.

1000. Tac. *Agr.* 16, on Boadicea.

1001. Greeks generally thought it terrible to be ruled by women (Aeschylus *Seven* 712; cf. Isa 3:12).

1002. Hardly a new observation (see, e.g., Abbott, *Acts*, 101, in 1876). For approaches to race in classical studies, see, e.g., Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*; idem, *Color Prejudice*; idem, "Black-White Relations"; McCoskey, "Imperative" (on one course design). Ethnicity is a social construction, not genetic, but it is also "a real social factor" (Barreto, *Negotiations*, 54) in how peoples relate to one another, as anyone involved, for example, in ethnic conflicts or wars can testify. Barreto notes that ethnicity as we know it is a modern conception, but one that modern readers cannot avoid (*ibid.*, 29–45, esp. 29–31, following esp. Buell, *Race*, 13–21).

1003. Its relevance to most modern readers, at least in the United States, would probably be more racialized than in antiquity, given the modern Western (e.g., Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 21–22, 78–79; and often) and medieval Arab (Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, passim, esp. 45–48, 89–93; Gordon, *Slavery*, passim, esp. 102–3; Talib, "Diaspora," 721–22; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 88–90) racial stereotypes.

1004. Martin, "Chamberlain's Journey," 110–11, thus complains about most commentators' "glaring lack of concrete descriptive detail" here, "surprising in view of the prodigious classical evidence." Traditionally, Western scholars treated Africa's countryside as African but its cities (and Egyptian civilization) as classical; Nubia's cities, however, were no less "African" than its countryside (LaViolette and Fleisher, "Archaeology," 333).

1005. E.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.80.189. On some rabbis perhaps substituting "barbarians" for Ethiopians (cf. Col 3:11), Goldenberg, "Scythian-Barbarian." Texts also contrast Scythians and Indians (light and dark; Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 1.80).

1006. E.g., Petron. *Sat.* 102; Lucian *Indictment* 6; Lucian *Patriot* 4; Heliod. *Eth.* 4.8; Hippol. *Ref.* 4.6; cf. Juv. *Sat.* 6.600. Statius *Theb.* 5.427–28 describes them as *rubentum*, "red," but this was rare. Their immutable blackness seems to have been proverbial (Jer 13:23; Lucian *Book-Coll.* 28).

1007. E.g., *Gen. Rab.* 73:10; 86:3. *Sib. Or.* 3.322 even speaks of Ethiopians' "black blood" (αἷμα κελαινόν).

1008. Philo *Alleg. Interp.* 2.67; *Apoc. Mos.* 35:4; 36:2–3; perhaps *Martyrdom of Bartholomew*. A dark-colored citron was called "Kushite" (*m. Sukkah* 3:6).

1009. Diod. Sic. 3.8.2; [Virg.] *Moretum* 32–35; Sext. Emp. *Eth.* 3.43; Lucan *C.W.* 10.131–32. Cf. the "snub-nosed" group of Ethiopians in Quint. Curt. 4.7.19. A dark Egyptian might also have thick lips (Lucian *Ship* 2).

is a fairly common description, distinguishing African “Ethiopians” from the dark but straight-haired Indian variety.¹⁰¹⁰

Mediterranean peoples sometimes attributed Ethiopians’ complexion to their skins being burned by the sun.¹⁰¹¹ Thus Pliny the Elder opined that certainly “Ethiopians are burnt by the heat of the heavenly body near them, and are born with a scorched appearance, with curly beard and hair” whereas peoples of the north are frosty white; only in the center of the world (i.e., Pliny’s region) were people normal and healthy, with better intelligence and governments.¹⁰¹² Many peoples of north and south were also considered unusually tall, in contrast to Mediterranean peoples, who essentially regarded themselves as the norm.¹⁰¹³

Yet many ancients understood that ideals of beauty varied from one culture to the next.¹⁰¹⁴ Thus it was thought that Nubians preferred women as dark as possible and Persians preferred them as light as possible.¹⁰¹⁵ Scholars often suggest that in ancient Egypt women lightened their skin whereas men darkened theirs.¹⁰¹⁶ (From my very limited acquaintance with Egyptian artwork, I would guess that this practice was particularly characteristic of Old Kingdom Egypt;¹⁰¹⁷ where lighter women appear with darker men later,¹⁰¹⁸ this must be balanced with darker women alongside lighter men.¹⁰¹⁹ The realism of Amarna period artwork may have been short lived,¹⁰²⁰ but it suggests that the average complexions for both genders in daily life were reddish brown.)¹⁰²¹ Stoics

1010. See Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 6.

1011. Ovid *Metam.* 1.235–36; Lucan *C.W.* 10.221–22; Sil. It. 3.268–69; Sen. *Y. Nat. Q.* 4.2.18; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 2.18; cf. Egyptians in Aeschylus *Suppl.* 155; and a dark-tanned Israelite in Song 1:5; cf. possibly Apul. *Metam.* 11.5 (but this may refer to “east Ethiopian” Indians).

1012. Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.80.189–90 (LCL, 1:321). Thus the north and south poles were too cold, and the equator too hot, but the temperate zones were habitable (Heracl. *Hom. Prob.* 50.2–5, following Eratosthenes). Later Arabs often adopted this approach, except with themselves in the middle; e.g., in 828–89 C.E., Ibn Qutayba, *Al-Ma’arif* (ed. Tharwat ‘Ukasha; 2nd ed.; Cairo, 1969), 26 (as cited in Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 46); Sa’id al-Andalusi (died 1070), in *Tabaqat al-Umam* (ed. L. Cheikho; Beirut, 1912), 9 (as cited in Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 47–48); Ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadani, in *Mukhtasar Kitab al-Buldan* (ed. M. J. de Goeje; Leiden, 1885), 5:162 (as cited in Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 45–46). For such environmental determinism as a factor in “proto-racism,” see Isaac, “Proto-racism”; also Niang, “Seeing,” 163–64 (citing Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 149–68).

1013. Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.80.189.

1014. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 21.16–17.

1015. Sext. Emp. *Eth.* 3.43.

1016. Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 26; Gordon, *Civilizations*, 230–31 (comparing also Cretan paintings and, with regard to men, Etruscan paintings).

1017. Fitting examples in Aldred, *Egypt*, 108; Smith, *Art and Architecture*, plate 29; Groenewegen-Frankfort and Ashmole, *World*, plate 6; Harris, *Art*, plate 5; Stewart, *Pyramids*, 66; Forman, *Art*, 49, plate 35. On conventions for coloring in art, see Harris, *Art*, 19.

1018. Cottrell, *Egypt*, plate facing p. 174.

1019. See, e.g., Quirke and Spencer, *Museum Book*, 152–53 (Eighteenth Dynasty); Harris, *Art*, plate 22A; James, *Egypt*, 23. For other women comparable in hue to the men, see Ruffle, *Egyptians*, 184, 185; Woldering, *Art*, 87, 91, 93, 111, 112, 113, 132, 133, 162 (all from the 1300s to 1400s B.C.E.); Quirke and Spencer, *Museum Book*, 140–41; Cottrell, *Egypt*, 204; Stewart, *Pyramids*, 131, 116; James, *Egypt*, 154; Jordan, *Egypt*, 105 (Middle Kingdom, before 1600 B.C.E.), 148–49, 193 (New Kingdom); Smith, *Art and Architecture*, plates 74 (also in Forman, *Art*, plate 41), 141, 151, 164; Harris, *Art*, plates 21B, 24AB, 33–35. Some women are clearly black even by traditional racial definitions (e.g., Ruffle, *Egyptians*, 147; Woldering, *Art*, 94; Smith, *Art and Architecture*, plate 144; Groenewegen-Frankfort and Ashmole, *World*, plates 13, 15). Queen Nefertari was clearly dark (e.g., Corzo, *Wall Paintings*, 8, 27, and passim; Smith, *Art and Architecture*, plate 159B; light brown in Woldering, *Art*, 134).

1020. Forman, *Art*, 33–37; Groenewegen-Frankfort and Ashmole, *World*, 62. Egyptians were aware of, and capable of, reproducing various shades of colors (Ruffle, *Egyptians*, 129, 159; Harris, *Art*, plate 22A); one may also compare the consistent colorations of deities, e.g., dark green for Osiris (Quirke and Spencer, *Museum Book*, 29, 220; Woldering, *Art*, 139; cf. Ruffle, *Egyptians*, 181, 192) or blue for the Nile god (Quirke and Spencer, *Museum Book*, 16).

1021. In their own artwork, especially in the realistic Amarna period, some Egyptians are black (e.g., Ruffle, *Egyptians*, 120–21, 147, 202–3; cf. very dark brown in Quirke and Spencer, *Egypt*, 12; Aldred, *Egypt*,

regarded complexion as a matter of complete indifference, so that neither paler nor darker (λευκότητα και μελανότητα) skin was preferable.¹⁰²² People treated as a freak one man supposedly half-black and half-white.¹⁰²³ But a wise sage was said to have identified an unusual woman (who was allegedly black from head to breast and white from there down) as a special beauty, as she would have been in India.¹⁰²⁴ One could conceive of an Ethiopian supposing that all people were “black” (μέλανας), though more prudent Ethiopians would reject the verdict from one who had never been abroad.¹⁰²⁵

“Black,” however, was a relative term, sometimes applied to whatever was not white (Philo *Abr.* 10). People from the north sometimes called darker peoples to their south “black,” whether in Gaza (Dion. Hal. *Lit. Comp.* 18), in Egypt,¹⁰²⁶ or among other African peoples such as Libyans¹⁰²⁷ and Mauretanians.¹⁰²⁸ (Another southern people, undoubtedly dark by Mediterranean standards, was called “white Ethiopians” by virtue of the object of their comparison.)¹⁰²⁹ This was truest of Indians, who were sometimes called “black” (Arrian *Ind.* 1.2 [μέλανες]; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.8.490; cf. *Sib. Or.* 11.68–69).¹⁰³⁰ Their land was sometimes compared to¹⁰³¹ or confused with¹⁰³² Ethiopia, and they were sometimes compared to or confused with Ethiopians.¹⁰³³ Greek observers distinguished them physically especially because Indians were more apt to have straight hair and less flat noses (Arrian *Ind.* 6.9).¹⁰³⁴

Complexion varied by gradation from lighter in the north to darker farther south along the Nile.¹⁰³⁵ This was true even in Nubia itself.¹⁰³⁶ Thus Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.2

131); most are dark red to reddish brown (Woldering, *Art*, 24, 26, 90, 110, 112, 139, 205; Ruffle, *Egyptians*, 40–41, 129, 140–41, 144; Quirke and Spencer, *Museum Book*, 12, 19, 20–21, 25, 26, 27, 55, 75, 87, 91, 142–43; Jordan, *Egypt*, 136, 153; Cottrell, *Egypt*, plates 66, 109, 110, 112, 113–17, 126, 129; Stewart, *Pyramids*, 32, 43, 70, 112–13, 115–17, 121, 130; Aldred, *Egypt*, 39, 105, 108, 128–29, 132; James, *Egypt*, 90–91, 118–19, 163; Smith, *Art and Architecture*, plates 58A, 64, 94, 107, 109, 141, 162–63; Forman, *Art*, plates 18, 21, 27–28, 32, 45, 48, 58, 62, 69, 74, 77, 85–86). Most portraits in the Roman period are of Greeks, but native Egyptians remain darker (Quirke and Spencer, *Museum Book*, 57; James, *Egypt*, 74). In all periods, Egyptians appear darker than typical western Asiatics (Semites), such as the Syrians (Quirke and Spencer, *Museum Book*, 199; Smith, *Art and Architecture*, plates 105, 106, 160A; cf. Woldering, *Art*, 166). Cf. one exploratory investigation in Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 65–66.

1022. Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.7b, pp. 46–47.5.

1023. Lucian *Prom. in Words* 4. Cf. the alleged “exotic” tastes of some wealthy Romans for persons of “foreign color” or deformities in Quint. *Decl.* 298.12.

1024. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.3.

1025. Lucian *Hermot.* 31.

1026. E.g., Aeschylus *Suppl.* 154–55; Isaeus *Dicaeog.* 40 (an “Egyptian” named Μέλας); Lucian *Ship* 2 (also for a boy’s plaited hair, *Ship* 3; an older Egyptian’s curly hair, *Ship* 6). Egyptians were in fact a mixture of Asian and African peoples (see, e.g., LaSor, “Egypt,” 32; Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia*, 7; for their culture, Wilson, *Culture of Egypt*, 16–17, 27, 145).

1027. In “inner” Libya (*Sib. Or.* 11.289), though Egyptian Jews seem to have included among its peoples “dark-skinned Ethiopians” (Ezek. *Trag. Exag.* 60–65, esp. 61–62).

1028. Sil. It. 7.682–83 (*nigra*). On Roman Mauretania (mostly the current location of Morocco and western Algeria), see Huss, “Mauretania,” esp. 495–96; for archaeology, Niemeyer, “Mauretania: Archaeology.”

1029. Pliny E. N.H. 5.8.43 (Latin *Leucoe Aethiopes*, transliterated from Greek).

1030. In Callist. *Descr.* 4, an Indian is fairly (but not completely) black. Dark complexion also characterized another eastern (though not southern) people in Greek legend, the Colchians (Pindar *Pyth.* 4.212).

1031. E.g., Arrian *Ind.* 6.8; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 4.1. Both were near the sun (Ovid *Metam.* 1.778); also linked as farthest extents southward (Esth 1:1; 8:9; Jos. *Ant.* 11.33, 186, 216, 272).

1032. E.g., *Sib. Or.* 5.206; 11.61–79, esp. 62, 64–65; cf. Strabo 1.2.

1033. E.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 8.5; *Tg. Jer.* 13:23 (changing “Ethiopian” to “Indian”).

1034. Arrian *Ind.* 6.9 also claims that north Indians more closely resembled Egyptians. Cf. further Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 6. Callist. *Descr.* 4, unusually, gives even the Indian woolly hair.

1035. Trigger, “Nubian, Nilotic?,” 27; cf. similarly Du Bois, *World and Africa*, 103; in Egyptian art, see, e.g., Quirke and Spencer, *Museum Book*, 209; James, *Egypt*, 199. Against those who argue that the range of ancient Egyptian complexions is that of average Western “whites,” see Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 65–66; against those who argue that this observation is biologically significant, see 66–68.

1036. Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia*, 7; cf. Trigger, “Nubian, Nilotic?,” 33.

claims that dwellers in marshes between Egypt and Ethiopia are not completely black (μέλανες); they are not as black (μελαίνονται) as the Ethiopians but are so more than the Egyptians. And even a black (μέλανα) Ethiopian sage was thought able to blush (6.12). Apart from Ethiopians, “blackness,” like other colors, was understood in relative terms, a practice carrying into a later period as well, when Arabs considered themselves “black” compared with the Persians (who were “red”) but “red” or “white” compared with Africans, whom they considered black.¹⁰³⁷

Ancient Mediterranean literature uses Africa south of Egypt as the standard of blackness for skin.¹⁰³⁸ Nor would Luke’s audience likely wonder to which Ethiopia he referred; the direction of the official’s journey, the standard use of “Ethiopia” in Greek literature of this period, and the queen’s title all specify the kingdom Luke has in mind here.

Ancients tended not to racialize differences in the modern sense; certainly they did not have three or four clearly defined races (a modern legacy of nineteenth-century ethnocentric anthropology,¹⁰³⁹ now repudiated by most physical anthropologists).¹⁰⁴⁰ Nor did they divide humanity only into “black” and “white” categories (a legacy primarily of the Western slave trade and ideologies generated to justify it;¹⁰⁴¹ these were partly inherited from earlier Arab models).¹⁰⁴² Greeks and Romans, who often first met black Africans as mercenaries, generally did not reflect severe color prejudices by later standards.¹⁰⁴³ The negative associations of dark or black in antiquity related to the contrast between day and night, not to complexion¹⁰⁴⁴ (see extended comment on Acts 1:10); they appear even in some traditional African cultures.¹⁰⁴⁵

This is not to deny the dominance of ethnocentrism but to reject that it was informed primarily by complexion.¹⁰⁴⁶ Mediterranean ancients recognized various physical traits of different peoples (e.g., *PGM* 5.257–59, 289–90)—for example, that the Gauls were tall, “white,” and blond (Diod. Sic. 5.28.1) or the Germans red-haired (Sen. *Y. Dial.* 5.27.3).¹⁰⁴⁷ Intellectuals considered such differences merely characteristic of different peoples.¹⁰⁴⁸ Views of blacks ranged from negative (e.g.,

1037. Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 22. But Arabic *sudan* (“black”) applied only to Ethiopians or peoples south of the Sahara (50). Arab artwork depicted Arabs as white and African slaves (plates 1–10, 16, 19), battle enemies (plates 11–15), and also the Prophet’s companion Bilal (plate 18) as black. The “blackening” of faces in hell in Qur’an 39.60 does not concern complexion (cf. 80.41).

1038. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, passim.

1039. See Clarke, *Wrestlin’ Jacob*, 108–12; Livingstone, *Defenders*, 59–64; Jordan, *Burdens*, 99–110; Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 371.

1040. Trigger, “Nubian, Nilotic?,” 27; Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 168, 371; Mack, *Race*, 57–58; Olsen, “Race,” 360; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 78–79.

1041. Cf. Clarke, *Wrestlin’ Jacob*, 108; Livingstone, *Defenders*, 59–60; Felder, *Waters*, 37.

1042. See Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 53, 56, 59, 77.

1043. Snowden, “Black-White Relations”; Snowden, *Color Prejudice*, passim; but for greater ambiguity than Snowden’s work affirms, see Barreto, *Negotiations*, 8, following especially Dench, *Asylum*, 8–9. Evidence shows that some did exist, but not much compared with later eras (Frost, “Attitudes toward Blacks”).

1044. The rare association was speculative; e.g., Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 2.19, supposing that Indians may prefer black to white because their own color is dark; or pertaining to a particular case, e.g., *Martyrdom of Bartholomew*.

1045. White is associated positively with the spirit world in various traditional African societies (Mbiti, *Religions*, 73, 277; Isichei, *History*, 64).

1046. E.g., Spawforth, “Race.” This may be true even in a terrible case such as Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.17.134, where Roman soldiers hacked to death an unfortunate Ethiopian whom they chanced upon, supposing him a bad omen, but they probably would have done the same to an albino or anyone viewed as unusual by their standards. For “proto-racism,” see discussion in Isaac, “Proto-racism.”

1047. That Ethiopians were “black” and woolly-haired contrasted with Germans and Gauls being white-skinned and straight-haired (Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.203); cf. the contrast between Ethiopian and German complexions in *m. Neg.* 2:1 (with Israelites in between, cf. *m. Bek.* 7:6).

1048. E.g., Sen. *Y. Dial.* 5.27.3; Sext. *Emp. Eth.* 3.43; *Pyr.* 1.79–80; cf. Porph. *Isag.* 12.25–13.3. Cf., e.g., Cleopatra’s attendants as differing in complexion and hair types (Lucan *C.W.* 10.128–30).

Virgil [*Moretum*] “to the admiring (the dignified negroid head-vases of Attic Greek pottery, or the Mauretanian with skin ‘like Corinthian bronze’ of a Roman epitaph, *SEG* 40.397).”¹⁰⁴⁹ By contrast, Romans sometimes expressed distaste for the pallor and height of northern barbarians (Caesar *Gall. W.* 2.30.4; 4.1.9).¹⁰⁵⁰

(5) *Jewish Sources on Africa and Black Complexion*

Luke’s ideal audience would understand “Ethiopia” from the LXX if nowhere else; it normally rendered “Cushites” as “Ethiopians” and “Cush” as “Ethiopia” (forty-four times, though not for Cush himself, in Gen 10:6–7; 1 Chr 1:8–10).¹⁰⁵¹ Even had they heard nothing else about “Ethiopia” (which is quite unlikely), they would have known of Nubians from the LXX.

Jewish views varied. Since Greeks believed that Ethiopians and Egyptians started circumcision,¹⁰⁵² Jewish apologists claimed that these peoples learned it from Moses.¹⁰⁵³ Tharbis, the daughter of the Ethiopian king, fell in love with Moses (Jos. *Ant.* 2.252) when he was besieging Meroë as an Egyptian prince (2.249); she aided his conquest, and he married her (2.253; cf. Num 12:1). Josephus believed that the queen of Sheba was ruler of Egypt and Ethiopia (Jos. *Ant.* 8.159, 165, 175),¹⁰⁵⁴ a woman interested in philosophy, and otherwise praiseworthy (8.165). At times Ethiopia was among Israel’s many enemies (Jos. *Ant.* 8.292–94; 2 Chr 12:3; 14:9–13; 16:8), but the Nubian prince of Egypt, Tirhakah, was allied with Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:9; Isa 37:9;¹⁰⁵⁵ cf. Jos. *Ant.* 10.17). Ethiopia could be linked with Gog and Magog (*Sib. Or.* 3.319–20; cf. Ezek 38:5), but all Gentiles would face eschatological judgment.

Rabbinic literature seems more ambiguous.¹⁰⁵⁶ Rabbis could tell of a wise African king who instructed Alexander the Great to avoid materialism (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:1). Later rabbis viewed unusually dark skin (by Judean standards), along with albino skin, as praiseworthy signs of God’s creative variety, explicitly distinct from disabilities,¹⁰⁵⁷

1049. Spawforth, “Race.” While acknowledging some early, positive views, Parsons, *Body*, 132, cites two texts as negative toward Ethiopians (Hdt. 1.134, merely citing others’ view about distant peoples more generally; Ps.-Arist. 812a12–13, about Egyptians and Ethiopians being cowardly). Other texts, however, aver the opposite (including about Egyptian courage).

1050. Spawforth, “Race.”

1051. For Cush as “Ethiopia” in Greek, see also Jos. *Ant.* 1.131. “Cush” might be related to the Egyptian and Ethiopian terms for the people; see Hansberry, *Africa*, 8–9. For Africans in the Bible, see, e.g., Adamo, “Africa”; Yamauchi, *Africa*; Hays, “Cushites.”

1052. Noted also in Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.169–70; for the Greek view, see Hdt. 2.104; Diod. Sic. 1.28, 55 (*OTP* 2:899 n. s). Egyptians apparently claimed that Ethiopians learned it from them (Jos. *Ant.* 8.262). Egyptian priests (and in this period, only the priests; see Lewis, *Life*, 92) were circumcised (P.Tebt. 293.11–22; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.141) and had to have circumcision affidavits (Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 199n4).

1053. Artapanus in Euseb. *PE.* 9.27.10. For Egyptian ideas as borrowings from Jewish figures, see comment on Acts 17:19. But Josephus knows Herodotus’s claim that Syrians (Jews) obtained it from Egyptians (*Ag. Ap.* 1.169; cf. Hdt. 2.104; Diod. Sic. 1.28.3).

1054. For support, see Green, “Queen”; on Josephus’s treatment of this narrative, cf. also Begg, “Visit.” Origen and Jerome viewed her as a black African (Felder, *Waters*, 12–13; Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 202–3); Luke’s contemporaries viewed her as African (Jos. *Ant.* 8.159, 165, 175; *Liv. Pr.* 1.8/12 [Schermann, §24, p. 76, lines 13–14]; Scott, “Horizon,” 536n203); Twelfth Dynasty Egyptian sources are said to speak of a Saba as capital of Cush, i.e., as Meroë (Adamo, “Africa,” 139; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 2.249). Both Ethiopian and Arabic (Manson, *Sayings*, 91) traditions about her claim her for themselves; for further discussion, see Kitchen, *Reliability*, 116–20; Felder, *Waters*, 22–36; Hansberry, *Pillars*, 33–58; Adamo, “Africa,” 137–44; Sanders, “Biblical Perspective.” In any event, southern Arabia (the most frequent site reconstructed for historic Saba, or Sheba) overlapped ethnically with eastern Africa (cf. Rashidi, “Africans in Civilizations,” 22–29; though not so much Nubia; cf. Felder, *Race*, 16).

1055. On Tirhakah, see Yamauchi, *Africa*, 125–37; Kitchen, *Orient*, 82–84; idem, *Reliability*, 16; Bright, *History*, 299–306.

1056. Positively, later rabbis claimed that God blessed the descendants of Heth with the good land, Africa, for honoring Abraham (*Mek. Pisha* 18.8–11). Negatively, they associated drunkenness especially with Ethiopia (*b. Qidd.* 49b; like magic with Egypt).

1057. *T. Ber.* 6:3; *b. Ber.* 58b; *y. Ber.* 9:1, §16.

but such characteristics also disqualified from the priesthood as blemishes (*m. Bek.* 7:6). An apparently Tannaitic tradition also claimed that Ham was punished (for having intercourse on the sacred ark) with black skin (*b. Sanh.* 108b, bar.; *y. Ta'an.* 1:6, §8), though this idea may resemble Greco-Roman conceptions of Ethiopians' "burnt" skin. But its date and narrower audience make rabbinic literature less relevant to understanding how Luke's ideal audience would have heard this passage.

III. THE OFFICIAL'S JEWISH STATUS (8:27)

No one can dispute that this official was a devout fearer of Israel's God; the question is his official status as Jew or Gentile. The issue of whether this African official was a full convert to Judaism offers a major interpretive crux in the narrative; if he was not a full convert to Judaism, he represents the first Gentile convert to the Jesus movement.

(1) *Worshipping God*

The African official had come to Jerusalem to worship.¹⁰⁵⁸ Perhaps some of Luke's first audience would have thought of the legendary piety that Greeks sometimes attributed to Ethiopians (*Hom. Il.* 23.206–7; *Diod. Sic.* 3.2.4),¹⁰⁵⁹ believing that they merited visits from and banquets with the gods (*Hom. Il.* 1.423).¹⁰⁶⁰ In a later novel, "Queen Kandake of Meroë" (whom the author identifies with Semiramis) tells Alexander the Great not to "think the worse of us for the color of our skin. We are purer in soul than the whitest of your people" (*Ps.-Callisth. Alex.* 3.18).

Some ancient writers claimed that all Africans (including Ethiopians), Indians, and Arabians worshiped only one god, the horned Amun, whom they identified with Jupiter (*Lucan C.W.* 9.511–21).¹⁰⁶¹ Although Ammon was probably an important deity in Meroë,¹⁰⁶² Ethiopians undoubtedly worshiped many gods (*Diod. Sic.* 3.6.1).¹⁰⁶³ Meroë did indeed boast a huge temple to the Egyptian god Amun; it was 450 feet (137 m.) long.¹⁰⁶⁴ Outside Meroë was "a so-called Temple of the Sun" approached by a route used for religious processions.¹⁰⁶⁵ One of the temples along this route held a statue of Augustus, though apparently as plunder from Aswan in 23 B.C.E.¹⁰⁶⁶

Meroë was too far from Jerusalem, however, for the official to be merely a tourist there; this official came to worship God and, having an Isaiah scroll (8:28), must have

1058. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 191, notes that προσκυνήσων is a future participle "indicating purpose, rare in NT outside Lk.-Ac."; for this verb, the only other future participle is in Acts 24:11, describing the purpose of Paul's visit to Jerusalem (cf. the idea, expressed differently, in 7:7).

1059. Note also the description of the people as ἀμύμονας, "blameless," in *Hom. Il.* 1.423; it was also widely held that Ethiopians possessed great longevity (*Sen. Y. Dial.* 5.20.2).

1060. Also *Sil. It.* 12.605–6; *Statius Theb.* 5.427–28; *Lucian Prom.* 17; *Sacr.* 2; *Indictment 2*; *Patriot* 4. Cf. visits from Poseidon in *Hom. Od.* 1.22; 5.282. Poseidon had a daughter in Ethiopia and hence was very involved locally (*Apollod. Bib.* 3.15.4).

1061. Stories of Alexander's visit to the Libyan temple of Ammon had made this god common knowledge. *Orig. Cels.* 5.34, 37, 38 claims that those in Meroë worship only Jupiter and Bacchus.

1062. Nero's expedition claimed a major temple of Ammon (*Hammonis*) in Meroë proper and many shrines for Ammon throughout the surrounding area (*Pliny E. N.H.* 6.35.186). Less reliably, Ethiopians were said to live to the east and west of the Libyan oracle (*Quint. Curt.* 4.7.18–19).

1063. Some ancients thought that they worshiped Day (an Epicurean in *Lucian Z. Rants* 42, also thinking that Persians worshiped fire, and Egyptians water), probably on the basis of the prominence of sun worship or (more likely) their association with the dawn in Greek myth. In *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 6.4, they worship Helios (the sun), Dawn, and Memnon. In *Strabo* 17.2.3, they worship Heracles, Pan, Isis, and "some other, barbaric god"—a nameless god.

1064. O'Connor, "Meroë," 472; Lohwasser, "Meroë," 717. Pyramid tombs of early rulers (O'Connor, "Meroë," 473) also suggest Egyptian connections.

1065. O'Connor, "Meroë," 472; cf. Lohwasser, "Meroë," 717 (on Temple M 250). On worship of the sun elsewhere in antiquity, see, e.g., Carbó García, "Sol Invictus"; sources in Keener, *Acts*, 1:919n630.

1066. O'Connor, "Meroë," 473. By contrast, we know little about pre-Christian Axumite religion (Heldman, "Axum," 240).

been committed to the Jewish faith. How he heard of the Jewish faith is not easy to answer. There had been Semitic-speaking Jews in Elephantine, near Aswan, at least as early as the fifth century B.C.E. (cf. also Jer 44:1), and at least some in Ethiopia as well.¹⁰⁶⁷ (The legend that the royal house of Ethiopia descended from King Solomon's son through the queen of Sheba¹⁰⁶⁸ is attested too late to be plausible;¹⁰⁶⁹ some Jewish influence in this period is not implausible, although, if it was significant, one wonders why Josephus and Philo would not mention it.) Trade in Alexandria certainly could have brought him into contact with the Jewish community (and further trade there would have made a detour to Jerusalem comparatively short).

(2) *Proselyte or God-Fearer?*

Was the official a full proselyte (see comment on Acts 6:5) or only a God-fearer (see comment on Acts 10:2)? Some scholars doubt that Luke portrays him as a Gentile God-fearer;¹⁰⁷⁰ they protest the tension this would create with Cornelius's conversion. But as argued in this section's introduction, this official's conversion is a private event unknown or relatively unknown to the church in Jerusalem, in contrast to the later matter, which was debated by the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:3–18).¹⁰⁷¹ Others object that only a full proselyte would likely have an Isaiah scroll.¹⁰⁷² But since God-fearers attended synagogues, where Torah (often the LXX) was read, possession of such a scroll would signify not one's circumcised status but one's wealth. Could not wealth secure an Isaiah scroll in Alexandria or Jerusalem? (And would not one who took time and expense for the journey be more likely to purchase a scroll regardless of his precise convert status?) The official is not a nonproselyte because of lack of full commitment, like most God-fearers; he simply was not able to become a full convert by virtue of his being a eunuch (Deut 23:1).¹⁰⁷³ Further, special arrangements were sometimes made for both converts and God-fearers of high status, as may be seen from discussions surrounding the conversion of the royal house of Adiabene (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.41).¹⁰⁷⁴

To some degree, the debate may be semantic; the official was Jewish in his faith and may have seen himself as faithful to Judaism; certainly his fellow Nubians would have viewed his Jewish religious commitment as notable.¹⁰⁷⁵ But while he was more "Jewish" than Cornelius (cf., e.g., Acts 8:28 with 10:25),¹⁰⁷⁶ befitting the progression

1067. See, e.g., Youngblood, "Ethiopia," 196. Isaac, "Identity," defends connections from the First Temple period.

1068. Although the *Kebra Nagast* dates to the fourteenth century C.E., versions in various languages attest that its contents are older (Reeves, "Eunuch," 116–17, citing Pritchard, *Solomon*).

1069. The legend of a Solomonic royal house in Abyssinia is apparently a later cultural apologetic (Irvin and Sunquist, *Earliest Christianity*, 474).

1070. E.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 310; Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:58–59; Simon, *Stephen and Hellenists*, 32; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 270–71.

1071. See Tannehill, *Acts*, 110; Spencer, *Philip*, 186–87.

1072. Haenchen, *Acts*, 310; Soards, *Speeches*, 205n45 (noting personal conversation with R. E. Brown); Le Cornu, *Acts*, 420 (though [416] she takes him as a literal eunuch).

1073. Exceptions to normal rules in that context (Deut 23:3) were made for Ruth, but the explanation was that she was a Moabitess rather than a Moabite (*m. Yebam.* 8:3; *Sipre Deut.* 249.1.1–2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 49:2). It should go without saying that Jews did not castrate their own children.

1074. On this conversion see, e.g., Schiffman, "House of Adiabene" (Josephus may have used the account to show Jews' acceptance of Gentiles); Neusner, "Conversion." Probably Ethiopians, like Libyans, were also treated under the more lenient proselyte laws for Egyptians (*y. Sabb.* 5:1, §2).

1075. I am grateful to Robert M. Johnston and Keith Burton for dialogue on this point.

1076. The Cornelius story, however, moves beyond this one sufficiently by virtue of being the church's official account and hence the one involving the conversion of the church's perspective. Some compare Peter's greater reticence with Cornelius, overcome only by a vision and a word from the Spirit, but two factors should be kept in mind: first, Luke portrays Philip, as a conspicuous example of the bicultural Hellenists, crossing

of events in Acts, he was also a step beyond the Samaritans, the account of whose conversion preceded his. For reasons noted below, the guardians of temple Judaism, following the letter of the Torah, could not have admitted him past the Court of the Gentiles.¹⁰⁷⁷ And as noted below, interested Gentiles often visited the temple but could not proceed even to the Court of Women.¹⁰⁷⁸

If the official is a full proselyte, the present narrative does not advance very much the depiction of the promised universal mission (1:8) beyond the Samaritan mission (8:5–25);¹⁰⁷⁹ proselytes had already joined the church in 2:10 and even achieved leadership positions in 6:5. Nubia was not represented among hearers at Pentecost, but other parts of Africa were (2:10). If the official was a genuine eunuch, however, he was not a full proselyte, a point we must explore before returning to the question of his status with respect to Judaism.

(3) A Genuine Eunuch?

Part of the debate concerns the sense of “eunuch”; if it means merely “high official” rather than “castrated man,” then the man could indeed be a full proselyte.¹⁰⁸⁰ Frequently the LXX uses εὐνοῦχος to mean “official,” though never for anyone who is clearly able to produce children.¹⁰⁸¹ But in other texts the term may indicate (as normally in Greek) “eunuchs,” especially where (as here) foreigners are involved¹⁰⁸² or (as here) they are working in relation to royal women;¹⁰⁸³ the Jewish Greek texts closer to Luke’s time also prefer this usage (Wis 3:14; Sir 20:4; 30:20), and some texts, in a manner similar to the one here in Acts, depict divine reversal of the marginalization inherent in the position (Isa 56:3–4; Wis 3:14). “Eunuchs” could also be slaves not only of kings¹⁰⁸⁴ but of people who did not belong to the royal household (e.g., Jos. *Life* 429).

The arguments in favor of this man’s being a eunuch (and hence merely a God-fearer) are stronger than those favoring his being a full proselyte. First, Luke has already mentioned a proselyte in 6:5; if this narrative does not move further toward

barriers ahead of the apostles (with a Gentile as with the Samaritans); second, Philip is sent by an angel and also hears from the Spirit.

1077. This is not to suggest that anyone was checking whether anyone entering the temple was a eunuch but merely to suggest how Luke’s ideal audience, knowing the LXX, would view him vis-à-vis the Pentateuch. Of course, this audience also knew Isa 56, where eunuchs and foreigners could transcend the pentateuchal prohibition; but that text concerns what would be viewed as an eschatological restoration rather than the current Levitical norm, and appeal to that text reinforces the point that this eunuch is *also* a foreigner. Although Philo seems to have been more lenient (QE 2.2, cited by Watson, *Gentiles*, 75–76), the potential exception for Izates (Jos. *Ant.* 20.38–44) concerns a king, not normal practice, and Philo’s approach contradicts a more literal reading of Scripture.

1078. See discussion of the barriers at Acts 21:28; the barriers, warning signs, and even the narrative in Acts 21 make little sense if God-fearing Gentiles did not visit (and experience restriction to the [massive] outer court). On ancient tourism, see, e.g., Weeber, “Travels,” 876–77.

1079. Pace Bruce, *Commentary*, 190 (who thinks that this narrative advances the depiction of the mission either way). It would advance it geographically but not with regard to the broader mission to the Gentiles.

1080. E.g., Larkin, *Acts*, 133.

1081. For texts where it may refer to officials, see LXX Gen 39:1; 40:2, 7; 1 Sam 8:15; 1 Kgs 22:9; 2 Kgs 8:6; 9:32; 20:18; 23:11; 24:12, 15, 19; 2 Chr 18:8; Jer 36:2 (29:2 MT); 48:16 (41:16); 52:25. Cf. *Jub.* 34:11; 39:2, 14. Some later interpreters understood Potiphar as divinely castrated (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 39:1).

1082. With foreign influences (2 Kgs 9:32; 23:11); associated with foreigners (as a parallel marginal group, Isa 56:3–4); in a foreign land (perhaps 2 Kgs 20:18); or, as here, when the eunuch is a foreigner, often including foreign officials (Esth 1:10; 2:21, 23; 6:2, 14; 7:9; 12:1, 3, 6 LXX; perhaps, but not necessarily, Gen 39:1; 40:2, 7).

1083. Esth 1:12, 15; 2:3, 14–15; 4:4–5; cf. Jdt 12:11; just possibly Jer 29:2.

1084. For kings, e.g., *Mart. Is.* 3:11; Jos. *Ant.* 6.41; 8.403–4; including Herod’s household, 16.230; 17.44; *War* 1.488, 511; for Cleopatra, Paus. 1.9.2; for the emperor’s son’s household, Tac. *Ann.* 4.8, 10. For wealthy houses, *Test. Jos.* 12:1; 16:2–6.

the Gentile mission than that incident, it probably would not merit so much space in Luke's narrative. Luke knows how to speak of "proselytes"; that he does not do so here suggests that he does not intend a proselyte.

Second, many of the texts that describe eunuchs as officials refer to literal eunuchs; the eunuch who ruled for the young Ptolemy in Caesar *C.W.* 3.108 was likely a literal one, entrusted as the boy's tutor;¹⁰⁸⁵ some ancients felt that eunuchs were the most highly trusted members of the Persian court because they lacked children and "family ties" to compete with their allegiance to the king (Helioid. *Eth.* 8.17).¹⁰⁸⁶ The use of castrated men in royal service continued in that region until relatively recent times.¹⁰⁸⁷

Third, the lexical evidence does not unambiguously favor the term meaning *only* "official," often even when it includes officials. The Hebrew *saris* was originally a court title, but by late Hebrew (and even by Isa 56:3–5), it was "purely physiological."¹⁰⁸⁸ Sometimes in the LXX the term clearly indicates castrated persons (Isa 56:3–4; Jdt 12:11; Wis 3:14; Sir 20:4), especially the Persian officials who might come in contact with the king's harem (Esth 1:10, 12, 15; 2:3, 14, 15, 21, 23; 4:4, 5; 6:2, 14; 7:9).¹⁰⁸⁹ Despite some circles of eunuchs around other rulers, eunuchs did not hold an official office by virtue of their eunuch state outside Persia (and even there were genuinely castrated).¹⁰⁹⁰ The only other NT use suggests castration (Matt 19:12). Whereas the LXX sometimes changes "eunuch" to "official" (Jer 41:19 [34:19 MT], δυνάστης), here the man is called a "eunuch" in addition to being called an official (δυνάστης, in the NT only here and Luke 1:52; 1 Tim 6:15), which would surely be redundant if not understood in the more common sense by this period.

Fourth, Luke identifies him as an official once but as a eunuch five times (four times after this verse; Acts 8:27, 34, 36, 38, 39).¹⁰⁹¹ It is clear where he places emphasis in terms of the man's identity for his purposes in the narrative. How else could Luke have made the claim any clearer?

Fifth and probably most important, this official is a servant of the queen, who handled the kingdom's secular affairs but was also married to a king (see comments below). Outside the empire, many kings desired officials relating to queens or harems to be eunuchs (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.12.593);¹⁰⁹² Luke's audience would probably be familiar with this pattern at least with regard to reports about the East (where even many of the king's attendants unrelated to the harem were eunuchs).

One could suggest that the eunuch was born in the Jewish faith before being castrated, but as Judaism (unlike pagan worship) is not attested in Meroë in this period,¹⁰⁹³

1085. Cf. Polyb. 28.21.1 (a eunuch so close to the king that he persuaded him to surrender his kingdom).

1086. Persians used eunuchs as treasurers (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 68, citing Plut. *Demetr.* 25.900); other castrated males also held high positions in Eastern courts (Johnson, *Acts*, 155, citing Hdt. 8.105; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.33–36; Kee, *Every Nation*, 110, 319n31, citing Diod. Sic. 11.69.1; 17.5.3). Persia had apparently long used eunuchs (Plut. *Mal. Hdt.* 13, *Mor.* 857BC), and those sent to Persia as captives or tribute were sometimes made eunuchs (Jos. *Ant.* 10.33, 186; see Guyot, "Eunuchs," 172); thus *y. Šabb.* 6:9, §3, assumes that Daniel's three friends, as officials, were eunuchs but claims they were healed in the furnace (Dan 3:25).

1087. Bruce, *Acts*³, 225; Gordon, *Slavery*, 92–93.

1088. Barrett, *Acts*, 424–25.

1089. Jos. *Ant.* 11.191, 200–201, 223–24, 227–28, 260–61, 266. For eunuchs as Queen Jezebel's servants, see Jos. *Ant.* 9.122; for Mariamne's, 15.226; some of Cleopatra's attendants, Lucan *C.W.* 10.133–34; for a slave guarding his Roman mistress, Ovid *Am.* 2.3. When this was applied to human guardians of a female goddess statue, some protested (Heraclitus *Ep.* 9).

1090. Guyot, "Eunuchs," 173.

1091. See Spencer, *Philip*, 166–67; idem, *Acts*, 93; Dollar, *Exploration*, 147; D. Williams, *Acts*, 161; cf. Klauck, *Magic*, 25 (cf. also Reeves, "Eunuch," 117–18, although he paradoxically thinks the eunuch to be Jewish!).

1092. See, e.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 114; Spencer, *Philip*, 166–67; idem, *Acts*, 93; Witherington, *Acts*, 296.

1093. One scholar has suggested to me that the eunuch was born a Jew, before being eunuched (despite Deut 23:1), on the basis of the tradition of long-standing Judaism in Ethiopia. He noted that the character of

it is far likelier that he encountered it in Egypt, where it is well attested. Moreover, even being born a Jew would not readily overcome his eunuch status for guardians of the temple.¹⁰⁹⁴ Thus most scholars conclude, as I do, that this official was in fact castrated,¹⁰⁹⁵ and most thus view him as an uncircumcised God-fearer.¹⁰⁹⁶

(4) *Castration and Status*

Although an official who was castrated clearly fell into a different and more honorable category than, for example, the Galli who mutilated themselves in honor of the Anatolian mother goddess Cybele,¹⁰⁹⁷ castration was normally not an honorable state.¹⁰⁹⁸ (People regularly ridiculed the Galli,¹⁰⁹⁹ especially with regard to their self-castration.¹¹⁰⁰ They were counted effeminate,¹¹⁰¹ a characteristic that most Mediterranean men viewed negatively for men.) In earlier times rulers could use castration to punish particular sexual crimes.¹¹⁰² Most of humanity was said to despise eunuchs,¹¹⁰³ although Cyrus of Persia allegedly thought otherwise, comparing their usefulness to that of gelded animals.¹¹⁰⁴

A eunuch was reckoned such a bad omen that a superstitious person seeing one might retrace his steps and restart his day to evade the bad luck.¹¹⁰⁵ When one king

Ethiopia's Jewish heritage is neither Pharisaic nor Essene, which suggests that it preexisted the divisions between the Pharisees and Essenes. But Josephus shows that these sects together constituted less than 1 percent of even Palestinian Judaism, and so, even after their divisions (but outside the reach of later rabbinic influence), we need not expect their features; we also know of large numbers of Jewish converts in other regions, including Arabia, before the spread of Islam yet after this eunuch. In any case, while scholars debate the precise degree of antiquity for the traditions behind the medieval *Kebrä Nagast*, their "Ethiopia" is not this official's Meroë, where pagan temples have been unearthed.

1094. In the few texts that address the issue, even a Jew by birth who was born with crushed testicles was considered excluded from the covenant (*Sipre Deut.* 247.1.1–2; *y. Šabb.* 19:3, §3; cf. *Matt* 19:12).

1095. E.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 155; Spencer, *Acts*, 93; idem, *Philip*, 166–72, esp. 172; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 68; Polhill, *Acts*, 224; Barrett, *Acts*, 425; Witherington, *Acts*, 296; Dollar, *Exploration*, 147; Gaventa, *Acts*, 143; Parsons, *Body*, 133–34; idem, *Acts*, 119–20; Peterson, *Acts*, 293.

1096. E.g. (besides sources just cited), Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, 54; Lenski, *Acts*, 337; Arrington, *Acts*, 91; Kisau, "Acts," 1314; Bock, *Acts*, 347; Talbert, *Acts*, 76; Chance, *Acts*, 136; Schmidt, "Bekehrung"; Arnold, "Acts," 286; Green, "Acts," 747.

1097. On their self-castration, see, e.g., Ovid *Fasti* 4.237–44; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.20.17; Pliny E. *N.H.* 11.109.261; cf. Val. Flacc. 7.635–36; *Rhet. Her.* 4.59.62; *Gr. Anth.* 6.220; Gasparro, *Soteriology*, 26–28, 53; for religious castration more generally, see Nock, *Essays*, 7–15. Romans "romanized" the cult of Cybele, not using a eunuch for *archigallus* (Nock, "Developments," 499). Some think that bull testicles were offered for those who did not want to castrate themselves (Koester, *Introduction*, 1:193). Their state was also associated with Attis in *Catull. Carm.* 63.5, 12, 34.

1098. For the stigma, see, e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.39; Spencer, *Philip*, 166–72; Guyot, "Eunuchs," 173; Parsons, *Body*, 134–36; idem, *Acts*, 120. It was a disadvantage but not a merited one (Phaedrus 3.11.6–7). Cf. their earlier exclusion from the priesthood in Assyria in Carpenter, "Deuteronomy," 498.

1099. E.g., Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 108.7; Mart. *Epig.* 7.95.15; Lucian *Alex.* 13. On the Galli, see further briefly Heinze, "Galli"; e.g., Ovid *Fasti* 4.361–64; Babr. 141.1–2; Hdn. 1.11.2. Some of them may have turned to homoerotic pleasure (cf. Lucian *Lucius* 35–41, though this is satire; also Taylor, "Subcultures," but subsuming them all too readily in the category of gay). Their begging (e.g., Phaedrus 4.1.4–5) sometimes brought them into competition with Cynics (Diogenes *Ep.* 11).

1100. E.g., Sen. *Y. Dial.* 7.26.8; *Juv. Sat.* 2.110–16 (cf. 6.514–16); Lucian *Syr. G.* 51; cf. Lucret. *Nat.* 2.614–15; Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.120–21 (where it is probably implied); Mart. *Epig.* 1.35.15; 3.24.13; 3.91; 9.2; 13.64. Nevertheless, in Strabo's time, the temple of Artemis still had virgins and eunuchs as priests (Strabo 14.1.23; on vestal virgins, see comment on Acts 21:9); in contrast to the Galli, such priests were respectable.

1101. E.g., *Iambl. Myst.* 3.10; *Catull. Carm.* 63.6, 27; on their being viewed as half-male and half-female, see Vermaseren, *Cybele*, 96–101; cf. Parsons, *Body*, 134–35. Constructing a cultural relativism, Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 3.217 contends that the goddess approves their effeminacy. Hester Amador, "Queers," argues that ancient heterosexist norms informed critiques of eunuchs.

1102. "The Middle Assyrian Laws," tablet A, 20 (ANET 181).

1103. Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.61.

1104. Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.62.

1105. Lucian *Critic* 17.

castrated another ruler's son out of jealousy,¹¹⁰⁶ the young man would certainly have wanted vengeance.¹¹⁰⁷ Julius Caesar counted castration worse than death, a loss of manhood (*Alex. W.* 1.70).¹¹⁰⁸ The younger Seneca mocked the effeminacy of an official publicly escorted by two eunuchs.¹¹⁰⁹ The elder Seneca complained about some perverted rich men who had castrated youths to entertain their lusts; they want as “few men to exist as possible” (*Controv.* 10.4.17 [LCL, 2:441]).¹¹¹⁰ Later emperors made such castration of slaves illegal, with serious penalties attached for violations.¹¹¹¹ Some philosophers regarded those who castrated others as committing a crime against nature.¹¹¹²

Calling a man a “eunuch” was an insult against his manhood (cf. Gal 5:12), indicating, for example, that he would be easily beaten in battle.¹¹¹³ Castration was thought to remove a man's status as a male,¹¹¹⁴ and eunuchs were considered neither men nor boys (nor, for that matter, women);¹¹¹⁵ one lacking some male traits might be subject to ridicule as a eunuch.¹¹¹⁶ Eunuchs (at least those made so before puberty) tended to have shriller voices and other effeminate characteristics;¹¹¹⁷ Mediterranean men tended to look down on effeminacy as a vice among other adult men.¹¹¹⁸ (Given the status tensions, not everyone would have appreciated Luke's portraying this man as a protagonist in his narrative.)¹¹¹⁹ Others considered eunuchs lacking in self-control (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.35); desperate to prove their virility, they would (so Dio claimed) lie with women, albeit unproductively (4.36).¹¹²⁰

1106. From jealousy because his concubine had praised the other's appearance (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.2.28).

1107. Xen. *Cyr.* 5.2.29; 5.3.8. On wanting vengeance, see also Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.4.569.

1108. Some rabbis also considered it worse than death (*y. Šabb.* 19:3, §3); it functions as a judgment in Jos. *Ant.* 10.33 (cf. 10.186).

1109. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 114.6.

1110. On dealers who catered to this segment of the slave market, using especially depilatories but also castration, see Bradley, *Slaves*, 115 (and his citations in Mart. *Epig.* 9.6; Juv. *Sat.* 6.373). Cf. sexually used eunuchs in Herod's household in Jos. *Ant.* 16.230–31; 17.44; *War* 1.488. Greeks adopted from Persians the use of eunuchs as luxury slaves in an early period (Guyot, “Eunuchs,” 172–73). Alexander reportedly loved a eunuch boy, though some Persians seem to have ridiculed the sexual use of eunuchs (Quint. Curt. 6.5.23; 10.1.25; 10.2.26–27, 29).

1111. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 51–53 (Domitian and especially Hadrian). Bosworth, “Vespasian,” thinks that Vespasian, however, participated in this trade (using Suet. *Vesp.* 4.3, which might be interpreted otherwise). Domitian apparently had a favorite eunuch (Henriksen, “Earinus”).

1112. Heraclitus *Ep.* 9. Josephus charged that one who castrated himself was already effeminate in soul (*Ant.* 4.291).

1113. Virg. *Aen.* 12.99, *semiviri* (“half-man”); Statius *Ach.* 2.78.

1114. E.g., Lucan *C.W.* 10.133–34; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.1.31. On the half-male, half-female status of the Galli, see Vermaseren, *Cybele*, 96–101.

1115. E.g., Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.4.569; not a man in Babr. 54.4; ambiguous status in Libanius *Speech in Character* 26.3.

1116. Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.25.541. Cf. the female equivalent for women who failed to reach puberty (cf. Lev, “Aylonit”).

1117. Dio Chrys. 62.6; Lucian *Eunuch* 9 (beardlessness); Jos. *Ant.* 4.290; Guyot, “Eunuchs,” 173; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 416 (noting lack of beards, etc., in *b. Yebam.* 80b); they might calm down yet remain hard workers (Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.62). Castrated animals grew heavier and gentler (Lucian *Lucius* 33; Galen *De semine*; cf., in persons, perhaps Pers. *Sat.* 5.185–89); castration in a younger animal produces a “larger adult with more female characteristics” (Schneider, “Castration,” 1188, citing Arist. *Hist. An.* 545a; 590a; 631b–632a; etc.). Philost. *Hrk.* 8.12 describes such animals as “eunuchs.”

1118. E.g., Cic. *Phil.* 3.5.12; Val. Max. 9.1.ext. 7; Sen. E. *Controv.* 1.pref. 8–10; 2.pref. 1; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 114.3; Mus. Ruf. 1, p. 34.8–10; 11, p. 84.4–6; Plut. *Themist.* 6.1; Cic. 7.5; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.56; 77/78.36–37; Suet. *Aug.* 68; Lucian *Lucius* 36–37; *Ship* 27; *Peregr.* 19; *Posts* 33; *Tim.* 28; *Dem.* 12, 15, 18, 50; *Nigr.* 18; *Cynic* 17; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.19; 4.21, 27; *Ep. Apoll.* 63; Jos. *Ant.* 19.29–31, 53.

1119. Gaventa, “Daughters,” 57, suggests that, given the bias against eunuchs “in a world that worried very much about preserving the male from any hint of effeminacy,” Luke's focus on him would not reinforce the ideology of masculinity.

1120. Whether a eunuch lying with a married woman constituted adultery was a cause for debate (Hermog. *Issues* 60.20–61.1), but castration clearly did not eliminate desire (Epict. *Diatr.* 2.20.19; Libanius *Speech in Character* 26.1–2).

One of Lucian's essays illustrates the savage treatment a eunuch might receive from opponents, particularly because of his gender-ambiguous status. A speaker opposing a particular eunuch's receiving an academic position contended "that a eunuch was neither man nor woman but something composite, hybrid, and monstrous, alien to human nature" (*Eunuch* 6).¹¹²¹ The other replied that eunuchs ought not be excluded from philosophy, "in which even women had a part" (*Eunuch* 7). Debate ensued as to whether eunuchs ought to be allowed to oversee boys (*Eunuch* 8), to which the eunuch replied that eunuchs would be less likely to incur blame than others, certainly less than Socrates (*Eunuch* 9). Then one claimed that the eunuch was really a man who had started pretending to be a eunuch to escape an adultery charge (*Eunuch* 10), whereupon some joked that he should be made to lie with a woman while the eldest judge should observe to determine whether he was a eunuch (*Eunuch* 12).

Even high-ranking officials suffered a stigma for this condition.¹¹²² Although eunuchs seem to have achieved increasing acceptability and prominence from the second to the fourth centuries C.E.,¹¹²³ achieving significant positions of influence in the imperial court, this state remained dishonorable even in the late empire.¹¹²⁴

Whereas Gentiles might honor a high official who was castrated (without respecting his castrated state), ancient Israelite law made no distinction among reasons for castration. Despite Isaiah's promise for the future (Isa 56:3–5), in the present eunuchs were marginalized in the Israelite cult (Deut 23:2).¹¹²⁵ Some foreigners who were not fully Jewish discovered, on their arrival in Jerusalem, that they could not enter the temple or eat of sacrifices they had sponsored.¹¹²⁶ Because eunuchs could not become full proselytes, they were always outsiders, though some accommodations were presumably made for a person of prominence.¹¹²⁷ A high official who was also castrated thus experienced serious status inconsistency.¹¹²⁸ What provided advancement in Meroë prevented full assimilation in Judaism.¹¹²⁹ By emphasizing that the official is a "eunuch" (unnamed but five times called by this title), Luke highlights his marginal status in Judaism and hence the crossing of a new barrier in Acts.¹¹³⁰

IV. THE OFFICIAL'S SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS (8:27)

Luke often reports on prominent persons, since they are key models in a socially top-down culture. Although the official has status inconsistency with regard to Judaism (economically high but less positive as a eunuch), in terms of his socioeconomic status within his own ancient and respected nation, he is one of the most prominent individuals Luke reports. The official is a treasurer, and not merely of any kingdom or ruler but of the powerful Candace of Meroë.

1121. LCL, 5:337.

1122. Spencer, *Philip*, 167–68 (citing Hdt. 8.104–6; Lucian *Eunuch* 6).

1123. Stevenson, "Rise of Eunuchs."

1124. See Hunt, "Eunuchs."

1125. Cf. Jos. *Ant.* 4.290–91; Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.325; *m. Yebam.* 8:2; 1QSa II, 5–6; 4QMMT B 39–44. Some Jews considered castration worse than death (*y. Šabb.* 19:3, §3; *Yebam.* 8:1, §11); castration was one of the worst possible crimes (*Gen. Rab.* 34:8); one who eunuched himself was counted as if he had murdered his own children (Jos. *Ant.* 4.290). The piercing of a single testicle or cutting off the penis would exclude one from the congregation (*Sipre Deut.* 247.1.1–2).

1126. Talbert, *Acts*, 76, rightly cites Jos. *Ant.* 3.318–19; *War* 6.426–27. Luke himself testifies to hostility toward foreigners' entrance (Acts 21:28–29; Chance, *Acts*, 136).

1127. For one prominent (but converting) foreigner's temple visit, see Jos. *Ant.* 20.49. The rabbis did allow some privileges for any eunuch (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 416, cites *m. Yebam.* 8:4–6).

1128. On status consistency, see, e.g., Lenski, "Status Crystallization."

1129. See Spencer, *Acts*, 93; idem, *Philip*, 168–69.

1130. Luke also challenges the prejudice against eunuchs (with Parsons, *Body*, 141), which is linked with anti-Gentile prejudice in Isa 56:3–8.

(1) *A Meroitic Treasurer*

Greeks probably envisioned Ethiopia sometimes on the analogy of another great empire they knew outside the Mediterranean world—namely, Persia. They believed that Persian rulers sometimes employed eunuchs as treasurers.¹¹³¹ The keeper of a Persian king's treasure might well be supposed to know what went on in the king's court.¹¹³² The position also required great trust; some treasurers exploited their position to personal advantage.¹¹³³ (Presumably, since this treasurer was permitted to undertake such a long journey away from his work, he was trusted and favored [cf. Neh 2:6–8].)

To supervise the queen's wealth was no small matter, given the famous wealth of Meroë.¹¹³⁴ (This is all the more the case if Luke links the Candace with the queen of Sheba; see 1 Kgs 10:1–2, 10.) Although Meroë historically had relied on livestock both “for subsistence and trade,”¹¹³⁵ Meroë by this period also had a well-known “iron-smelting industry.”¹¹³⁶ Trade, however, offered special abundance (leaving little surprise that a royal treasurer would be able to speak Greek with Philip). Although plunderers ravaged much of Meroë's wealth over the centuries, excavators have found many expensive imports as well as hoards of gold jewelry.¹¹³⁷ As the link between the Mediterranean world and Egypt, on the one hand, and the wealth of Africa's interior, on the other, Meroë was strategically positioned for trade.¹¹³⁸

Meroë's artwork reveals its position among various cultures; it betrays “an eclectic mixture of pharaonic Egyptian, Greco-Roman and non-Egyptian African elements.”¹¹³⁹ Before Meroë became a kingdom, earlier Nubian empires in the region existed. Nubian civilization stretches back to perhaps before 3000 B.C.E.,¹¹⁴⁰ and Nubian kings sometimes ruled Egypt (and vice-versa), among them the OT king Tirhakah.¹¹⁴¹ Greeks apparently had widespread contacts with Africa south of Egypt as far back as the Minoan period.¹¹⁴²

Such contacts with the northern Mediterranean world were even more prominent in the Roman imperial period.¹¹⁴³ Meroë was never isolated. Ancient Egypt continued

1131. Plut. *Demetr.* 25.5 (cited in Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 96; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 68).

1132. Corn. Nep. 14 (Datames), 5.3.

1133. E.g., Aeschines *Tim.* 56; see further comment on Acts 6:3.

1134. With also Smith, “Understand,” 64. On Cush's economy (including in the Meroitic period), see esp. Welsby, *Kingdom of Kush*, 153–76. Among legendary portraits, Ethiopians valued gold less than Mediterranean peoples valued lead (Hdt. 3.23; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 79.3).

1135. Gifford-Gonzalez, “Pastoralism,” 199.

1136. Childs and Herbert, “Metallurgy,” 280 (noting its existence from perhaps the third century B.C.E., and the use of copper as early as ca. 3000 B.C.E.). Because of hard rock, miners dug shafts, into which they then descended to procure ore, raising it in baskets (283).

1137. O'Connor, “Meroë,” 473.

1138. See Adam with Vercoutter, “Importance of Nubia.” Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.35.18 claims that another island joined with Meroë's own to form a harbor; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.2 claims that Ethiopia-Egypt trade was more equitable than Greek trade.

1139. Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia*, 54.

1140. E.g., Hawass, “Nubia,” 170; Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia*, 9; O'Connor, “Nubia,” 47; cf. Felder, *Waters*, 8–9; Adam with Vercoutter, “Importance of Nubia.” As early as 1912, see Roeder, “Geschichte Nubiens,” 57–60, on the fourth millennium B.C.E.; 60–68, on the third and second millennia B.C.E. (though he betrays nineteenth-century racial categories, e.g., 68, 81–82). On Nubia before Meroë's kingdom, see esp. Sherif, “Nubia before Napata”; also, e.g., Taylor, *Egypt and Meroe*, 9; O'Connor, “Nubia,” 47; Youngblood, “Ethiopia,” 193–96. Greeks also recognized the Nubians' antiquity (Diod. Sic. 3.2.1).

1141. On Tirhakah, see Yamauchi, *Africa*, 125–37; Kitchen, *Orient*, 82–84; idem, *Reliability*, 16; Bright, *History*, 299–306. Alexandrian Jews knew of the earlier wars between Egypt and Ethiopia (*Let. Aris.* 13; cf. *Jos. Ant.* 2.239–41) and of Ethiopians' rule (*Sib. Or.* 3.160; cf. 2 Kgs 19:9; Isa 37:9).

1142. See Hansberry, *Africa*, 37–39. For the history of Greek contact with Africa, see the survey in Huss, “Africa: Discovery”; for Greek sources in translation, see Burstein, *African Civilizations*, 23–52.

1143. See Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia*, 48; Burstein, *African Civilizations*, 53–75; cf. Yamauchi, *Africa*, 165–66; Seidlmayer, “Nubia,” 869. Although Wheeler, *Beyond Frontiers*, 95–114, addresses trade between Rome and Africa, it offers little on Ethiopia or Nubia (except p. 116); cf. Carandini, “Pottery.”

to influence it, but so did the Ptolemaic dynasty, the Romans, and central Africa; still, its art, architecture, and many of its gods are distinctive.¹¹⁴⁴ Ethiopia was considered a source for ebony (Paus. 1.42.5) and ivory,¹¹⁴⁵ though at this time some elephants also inhabited North Africa.¹¹⁴⁶ Even those writing fictitious geography recognized the strategic location for trade (cf. Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 4.1).

Meroë was known for its wealth (Diod. Sic. 1.33.1–4);¹¹⁴⁷ hence a novelist could claim that Ethiopians cared little for gold or jewels, heaps of which the royal palace had in storage (Helioid. *Eth.* 9.24).¹¹⁴⁸ Not far from Meroë was the strategic horn of East Africa, from which the Axumite empire would eventually rise to challenge Meroë's dominance. Ships trading in Roman Egypt would make "a two year round trip" along the coast of eastern African "as far south as Zanzibar," purchasing "ivory, tortoise shell, myrrh and incense" en route.¹¹⁴⁹

Although Luke presents Jesus as the savior of the oppressed (Luke 4:18), he also portrays him as the redeemer of rich oppressors and other people of wealth (5:29; 7:2–5, 36; 18:29–30; 19:2–10; 23:50–53; Acts 4:36–37; 10:1–7; 17:4).¹¹⁵⁰ (People of means could demonstrate repentance by sharing with those in greater need; see comment on Acts 2:44–45.) This court official is another example of a person of high socioeconomic status in his society.¹¹⁵¹ Emphasizing how a group's "special claims have met with approval from respectable people" was a major component of apologetic in the Roman Empire.¹¹⁵²

(2) Queen Candace

Presumably the queen whom the official served worshiped traditional deities of Meroë; nevertheless, she (and perhaps her society) must have known and tolerated Jewish faith. The treasurer could hardly have taken an excursion for months, along with his presumed entourage, without the queen's approval (cf. Neh 2:5–8).

Most scholars, including nearly all commentators on Acts,¹¹⁵³ hold that "Candace" (pronounced *kan-dak'e*) was not the queen's name but her dynastic title, presumably comparable to "Pharaoh" or "Ptolemy";¹¹⁵⁴ Pliny the Elder claims that this name was passed on to each queen ("through a succession of queens for many years," *N.H.*

1144. Hawass, "Nubia," 171.

1145. It had access to elephants (Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 85.41; Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.13.35; Juv. *Sat.* 10.150; Helioid. *Eth.* 10.5) and ivory (Polyb. 34.16.1; Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.47). One could also secure these from India (e.g., Catull. *Carm.* 64.48; Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.11.32; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 79.4), and ivory was more available in Egypt (at least by the period of Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.21.603). For luxury goods from Ethiopia, as from India, see Clem. Alex. *Instr.* 3.2.

1146. Cf. Weeber, "Environment," 1007; Bauckham, *Climax*, 357; Simpson, "Bone," 346; Schneider, "Ivory."

1147. See also Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia*, 46–47; Crocker, "Meroë and Eunuch."

1148. Cf. also Helioid. *Eth.* 10.5 for its marvelous fertility, including three-hundredfold harvests.

1149. Kraybill, *Cult and Commerce*, 104; cf. Reynolds, "Africa"; for details on the first-century mariners' guidebook for this voyage, including the merchandise acquired there (such as spices, ivory, and tortoise shell), see Casson, *Mariners*, 203–4. Unfortunately, the coast's strategic location rendered it useful for the subsequent centuries of slave trade (Gordon, *Slavery*, 116–29). Jos. *Ant.* 8.181 may imply slaves (though these do not appear in Josephus's biblical source).

1150. The emphasis on the poor continues in second-century sources (*Did.* 5.2; 13.4; *Barn.* 20.2; *1 Clem.* 15.6; 52.2; *Ign. Phil.* 2.3; *Herm.* 51.5–8), but they also encourage good relations between the poor and the rich (*1 Clem.* 38.2).

1151. Johnson, *Acts*, 158; Spencer, *Philip*, 159–60; Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 62; Witherington, *Acts*, 71, 295.

1152. Johnson, *Acts*, 158 (citing, as an example, Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.176–212).

1153. E.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 96; Haenchen, *Acts*, 310; Bruce, *Commentary*, 186; Munck, *Acts*, 78; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 68; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 271; Marguerat, *Actes*, 306. Much earlier, see also Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.27b (L. Martin, 82).

1154. Cf., e.g., Paus. 1.8.6, commenting on the line of Ptolemies (with distinct individual surnames).

6.186).¹¹⁵⁵ Although Greek and Roman authors thought it a proper name, it is a Meroitic construction, *kdke* or *ktke*, from “woman” (*kd*) and the titular suffix *-ke*.¹¹⁵⁶ Historically, we know of several Candaces from the late first century B.C.E. to the mid-first century C.E.; the title seems to stop in the mid-first century C.E.,¹¹⁵⁷ suggesting that Luke’s tradition predates that time (unless our data are simply incomplete, or, as is plausible, he simply employs a title from older literature).

Because the kings were considered sons of the sun god (similar to ancient Egypt’s pharaohs), Bion of Soli claims that they did not specify their fathers, but only their mothers, the mother of each king being called the Candace (*Aethiopica* 1).¹¹⁵⁸ Because of the king’s holiness, it was thought, the queen was then left with tasks of secular administration.¹¹⁵⁹ Nero’s scouting expedition claimed that a queen ruled Meroë.¹¹⁶⁰ As late as Eusebius, the Roman Empire believed that queens ruled in Meroë (Euseb. *H.E.* 2.1.13).¹¹⁶¹

The Greco-Roman conceptions of this queen were not entirely accurate (and we should note that Luke does not specify these for the queen), but they were close enough for ordinary purposes.¹¹⁶² Nubian society was not matriarchal, but its queens were wealthy and did exercise significant power, sometimes as regents for sons.¹¹⁶³ William Adams argues that the name Candace appears to have been “a corruption of a Meroitic title (*kdke*) which was borne by all the royal consorts or queen-mothers of Kush; it does not specify a queen regnant.”¹¹⁶⁴ From a minimalist perspective (i.e., on the basis of only the extant evidence and not inferences from it), though “at least five queens” reigned directly “during the latter centuries of the Kushite dynasty,” no two of these known queens are known to have “reigned in succession, and it is not certain that they bore the title *kdke*.”¹¹⁶⁵

Did Luke’s informant (with many, I think Philip likely) know the details of the Candace, or did Luke fill in this information relevant to the official’s position on the basis of the popular Greco-Roman view of his era? “Candace” was the title by which she was known to the Greco-Roman world, and Adams concurs that it was apparently related to the indigenous Nubian title for all queens. Further, this eunuch could work for her without implying that no king held power at the same time;¹¹⁶⁶ there

1155. LCL, 2:477. Often noted, e.g., Abbott, *Acts*, 102 (in 1876); Bruce, *Commentary*, 186n43 (citing also Strabo 17.1.54; Dio Cass. 54.5.4).

1156. Lohwasser, “Kandake.”

1157. Yamauchi, *Africa*, 171.

1158. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 96; Bruce, *Commentary*, 186n43.

1159. Bruce, *Acts*’, 191; Longenecker, *Acts*, 159; Larkin, *Acts*, 132. Examining also novels, De Weever, “Candace,” 530, notes that in Ps.-Callisthenes’s *Alexander Romance*, “Candace, rather than her adult son, rules the country.”

1160. Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.35.186, *regnare feminam Candacen*; undoubtedly true in the generation of their visit.

1161. Johnson, *Acts*, 155.

1162. Cf. the Nubian inscription noting the reigning queen in 13 B.C.E. (Deissmann, *Light*, 352; Bruce, *Acts*’, 191).

1163. Adams, *Nubia*, 260. He notes cases of patrilineal and possibly some matrilineal succession but points out that brother-sister marriages may have been common. These were also common in Egypt; see, e.g., Diod. Sic. 1.27.1; Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 1.152; Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.203; Lewis, *Life*, 43–44; in the Ptolemaic royal house, e.g., Paus. 1.7.1; Lucian *Icar.* 15; in royal houses of the East, see, e.g., Hdt. 3.31; Plut. *Alex.* 30.2, 5; Jos. *Ant.* 20.18. Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 2.3.70 notes that they were common in Egypt and the rest of Africa even in royal families. Matrilineal society (which is rarer but not uncommon; e.g., Bohannon and Middleton, “Introduction,” xii; for examples, Fortes, “Kinship”; Schusky, *Variation*, 12–14; MacGaffey, “Structure”; changing in Phiri, “System,” 274) is not, in any case, necessarily matriarchal in authority (e.g., often the wife’s brother retains authority over her, Ottenberg, *Double Descent*, 229) or even matrilineal (e.g., Schusky, *Variation*, 15–18; Grunlan and Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology*, 180).

1164. Adams, *Nubia*, 260.

1165. *Ibid.*

1166. E.g., even a general could have his own treasurer (Aeschines *Tim.* 56).

can be no question that the queen mothers in this period held significant political power.¹¹⁶⁷ Even at this point, where we could readily forgive Luke if he (like some other historians) were slightly confused, his sparse report does not clearly conflict with so-far-known facts.

Still, it is not impossible that this Candace was also a queen regnant. Some scholars have suggested that a Candace named Amanitare (25–41 C.E.) ruled in this period.¹¹⁶⁸ The newer chronology identifies a different queen for this period, for whom the particular title “Candace” is not yet attested; she may have borne this title (alongside a name, like other Candaces), or Luke may simply employ the title familiar to a Greco-Roman audience (or to his source). “Candace” was probably the queen mother’s title, and we know of four queen mothers who ruled (holding the title *qore*, “ruler”) in this period: Queen Amanirenas (both *qore* and *kdke*, Candace), in the final third of the first century B.C.E.;¹¹⁶⁹ the prosperous Queen Amanishakheto (also bearing both titles), traditionally dated from the late first century B.C.E. to the early first century C.E.; Queen Amanitare, mentioned above, coregent reigning with King Natakamani, now dated from 12 B.C.E. to 12 C.E.;¹¹⁷⁰ and Queen Nawidemak, ruling in the first half of the first century C.E. The Candace here might thus be Queen Nawidemak, who is attested as *qore* and hence ruled Nubia.¹¹⁷¹

Although we lack portrayals of these queens to match more detailed portraits of, for example, the Caesars, Meroë’s art typically depicts the queens as laden with jewels and many-fringed robes and as notably corpulent; their wide girth, probably intended as a display of prosperity, persisted in representations from the third century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E.¹¹⁷²

(3) *Mediterranean Perspectives on the Candace*

For Luke’s audience, this queen unquestionably held high status. Roman sources claimed that Augustus defeated the Candace’s troops, but this is likely one of the empty claims of victory common among losers in antiquity.

The concessions of a Roman emperor to the Ethiopian Candace must have resulted from a different set of circumstances. . . . Reliefs on the temple of the sun at Meroë depicting bound prisoners under the feet of a conquering king are perhaps a record of some of the Roman captives taken by the Ethiopians. It is likely that Candace did not return all the statues of Caesar which the Ethiopians had torn down, for a splendid head of Augustus . . . , apparently buried ceremonially as an important trophy, was discovered in excavations at Meroë.¹¹⁷³

Rome continued diplomatic relations with Meroë, working together in the time of Nero¹¹⁷⁴ and even in later times after the kingdom’s strength vis-à-vis Axum was waning.¹¹⁷⁵

1167. See Hakem, “Napata and Meroë,” 302–4; Oliver and Fage, *History of Africa*, 32. Cf. the high status of queens in some traditional African societies, including the Amhara (Mbiti, *Religions*, 234, 243).

1168. E.g., Larkin, *Acts*, 132; Crocker, “Meroe and Eunuch,” 67. Sen. Y. *Nat. Q.* 6.8.3 mentions a “king” in Ethiopia, but this is a few years later, in Nero’s reign.

1169. Yamauchi, *Africa*, 171 (noting that she may be buried in Barkal pyramid 4).

1170. *Ibid.*

1171. *Ibid.*, 172 (noting her burial in Barkal pyramid 6).

1172. *Ibid.* (following Kendall, “Ethnoarchaeology,” 655).

1173. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 133. For Augustus’s exaggerated account of victory, see *Res Gestae* 5.26.

1174. See Sen. Y. *Nat. Q.* 6.8.3; further Losch, “Kammerer der Königen,” 495. On Nero’s expedition, see, e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.35.178–85.

1175. See Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 133–36.

Novelists also seem to have preferred alliances with Ethiopian queens to battling them.¹¹⁷⁶ In a work praising Alexander, a novelist portrays the Candace as extremely tall, looking like “a demigod”; she proves smarter than Alexander and freely tells him so (Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.22).¹¹⁷⁷ Greek and Latin sources tend not to describe the Candace’s color, since it may be assumed from her being Ethiopian,¹¹⁷⁸ but it is certainly only some of the later European romances that portray her as European.¹¹⁷⁹ Another Greek novel, set in the Persian period, makes Ethiopia’s queen, Persinna, the priestess of the moon (Heliod. *Eth.* 10.4) and attributes to her a revelatory dream (10.3); like all women, she was barred from attending special sacrifices lest she accidentally defile them (10.4). The story’s heroine, her daughter, is nearest to the throne for succession (10.12, 15).

Earlier Greeks recognized strong women like the Amazons (Aeschylus *Suppl.* 287) from Libya (*Suppl.* 279), the Nile (*Suppl.* 281, Egypt), Cyprus (*Suppl.* 282), and the land near Ethiopia (*Suppl.* 286). Another island kingdom in the Nile was ruled by a queen (Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.35.191).¹¹⁸⁰ Some claimed the existence of Libyan Amazons earlier than the Asian ones (though they died out before the Trojan War; Diod. Sic. 3.52.1–3).¹¹⁸¹

Greeks and others of lighter complexion sometimes viewed men and women of dark complexion as beautiful.¹¹⁸² A famous Ethiopian woman was Andromeda, who was (in some versions of the story) black.¹¹⁸³ Perseus found and rescued her in Ethiopia¹¹⁸⁴ and asked her hand in marriage.¹¹⁸⁵ Andromeda and her mother had earlier incurred Poseidon’s anger by vying with the Nereids in beauty (Apollod. *Bib.* 2.4.3).¹¹⁸⁶ Because she was “Ethiopian,” one would normally assume that she was black. Heliodorus, however, counters that whereas most Ethiopians are black, Andromeda was white (*Eth.* 10.14–15).¹¹⁸⁷ (Tastes for beauty are often ethnocentric,¹¹⁸⁸ and reports of their

1176. Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.19–21; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 2.252–53 (less helpfully to the other Ethiopians). This approach does not stem from favor toward women in general; both Achilles and Theseus supposedly slaughtered Amazons freely (e.g., Plut. *Thes.* 26–28).

1177. Also emphasized by Du Bois, *World and Africa*, 140. The image of the Candace also appealed, as a model, to African-American educator Nannie Helen Burroughs, who opined that these Africans knew how to obey a woman (Sanders, “Biblical Perspective,” 127).

1178. See De Weever, “Candace,” 533.

1179. See *ibid.*, 537, 540–44.

1180. Romans also noted a people in Egypt with ruling queens (Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.23.76) and mentioned other barbarian queens (e.g., Tac. *Agr.* 16; an even more broadly egalitarian tribe in Tac. *Germ.* 45). For another non-Amazon warrior queen, see Philost. *Elder Imag.* 2.5 (Rhodogoune). Other peoples also seemed fascinated by Cleopatra (e.g., *Sib. Or.* 11.254–59) and the power of queens in old Egypt (Diod. Sic. 1.27.2), which was great (Manetho *Aeg. fig.* 10 [from the Armenian version of Euseb. *Chron.* 1, p. 96], frg. 20–21). Polyb. 22.20 does portray Attalid queens as exemplary, virtuous women (Verner, *Household*, 65–66).

1181. For more on Libyan Amazons, see Sobol, *Amazons*, 19–31 (the Asian variety were far more prominent, 32–77). In *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:1, a place populated entirely by women, possibly in Africa, dissuades Alexander from attacking them.

1182. E.g., Song 1:5; Aeschylus *Suppl.* 154–55; see esp. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 105, 154, 178–79, 198–99. Note esp. Hdt. 3.20 on the handsome Ethiopian men (Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 105).

1183. E.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.35.182. She became famous as a constellation (e.g., Aratus *Phaen.* 354).

1184. Ovid *Metam.* 4.669–71; Lucian *Hall* 22; *Dial. S.-G.* 323 (14, Triton and Nereids 3); [Eratosthenes] *Catasterisms* 15, 17 (in Euripides, LCL 7:130–31); Eurip. *Archelaus* 228a.10–11.

1185. Ovid *Metam.* 4.700–705.

1186. See also some of this story line in Ovid *Metam.* 4.665–803; Libanius *Narration* 35. A Nereid in Lucian *Dial. S.-G.* 324 (14, Triton and Nereids 4) complains that this was especially inappropriate behavior for barbarians, i.e., non-Greeks.

1187. Despite his interest, Heliodorus’s approach to Ethiopia was not altogether positive; he believed that they practiced human sacrifice as an ancestral custom (*Eth.* 10.9). Some others also made Andromeda fair-skinned (Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.29, remarking that most of the other Ethiopians looked alike). For the range in portrayals of Andromeda’s complexion, darker toward this period than earlier, see Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 152–58.

1188. I document heavily here because I am forced to disagree with Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 179, that preference for blackness or whiteness was roughly equal. Most peoples tend to be ethnocentric, though certainly many Greeks did appreciate dark beauty (noted above).

heroes, deities, and those praised for beauty reveal that many Greeks preferred blond hair¹¹⁸⁹ and pale skin,¹¹⁹⁰ including being “white-armed.”¹¹⁹¹ Yet they also commonly preferred a trait said to be more common among Ethiopians¹¹⁹²—namely, tallness.)¹¹⁹³

The attitudes of Jewish sources toward Nubian women varied. Josephus accepted that Moses had a Nubian wife (Num 12:1), and further claimed that she was a princess (Jos. *Ant.* 2.252).¹¹⁹⁴ For later rabbis, by contrast, she was not really Cushite (Nubian); rather, the text simply meant that as Nubians had skin different from others, so Zipporah the Midianite differed from all others by her superior beauty.¹¹⁹⁵

This queen’s gender obviously did not marginalize her from power;¹¹⁹⁶ even supporters of patriarchal tradition generally made exceptions for women of rank, especially members of the royal household (e.g., Philo *Embassy* 320). This was even easier for foreign queens, such as Boadicea¹¹⁹⁷ and the mythical Dido as founder of Carthage;¹¹⁹⁸ one may compare the Greeks’ mythical Amazons (see extensive comment above). Greeks considered as great the role of Persia’s queen mother, before whom people prostrated themselves (Aeschylus *Pers.* 150–57); as mother of Xerxes, she was mother of a god (*Pers.* 157). The Greco-Roman world knew that Egypt had long boasted

1189. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.197; Eurip. *El.* 515, 521–23; *Herc. fur.* 993; *Hipp.* 220, 1343; *Iph. Aul.* 758, 1366; Ap. Rhod. 1.1084; 3.829; 4.1303; Alciph. *Court. frg.* 5, ¶4; Virg. *Aen.* 4.590 (a Phoenician!); 10.138; Tibullus 1.5.44; Ovid *Metam.* 9.715; *Fasti* 3.60; Longus 1.17; Ach. Tat. 1.4.3; expected among Greek deities, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 19.282; *Od.* 4.14; Aristoph. *Birds* 217; Pindar *Nem.* 10.7; *Isthm.* 7.49; *Ol.* 6.41; 7.32; *Pyth.* 2.16–17; *Hymns* frg. 34; Ap. Rhod. 2.676; 4.1407; Virg. *Aen.* 4.558; Ovid *Fasti* 6.652; *Metam.* 11.165; *Am.* 1.1.7–8; 1.13.2; 2.4.39–43; Statius *Silv.* 3.4.22; Max. Tyre 11.3; Apul. *Metam.* 5.22; Athen. *Deipn.* 15.694C. The dark-haired sea goddess Thetis (Pindar *Paeans* 6.84) is golden-haired in Helioid. *Eth.* 3.2. Cf. the fair complexion of even an Egyptian queen praised for her beauty in Manetho *Aeg. frg.* 20–21.

1190. Eurip. *Med.* 30, 923; Ovid *Metam.* 1.743; 2.607, 852; 3.423; 4.354–55; 13.789; *Am.* 1.5.10; 2.4.39–41; 3.3.6; *Her.* 16.251; Virg. *Aen.* 12.67–69 (with rosy cheeks, 12.606); *Ecl.* 2.15–17; Catull. *Carm.* 55.17; 86.1; Statius *Silv.* 2.3.32; *Sil. It.* 7.446; Plut. *Thes.* 23.2; Longus 1.16–17; Char. *Chaer.* 2.2.2; Babr. 141.7. Cf. white lead in Lysias *Or.* 1.14 (*Murder of Eratosthenes*); Xen. *Oec.* 10.2; white lead and rouge in Alciph. *Farm.* 8 (Dryantidas to Chromium), 3.11, ¶3; for courtesans, Alciph. *Court.* 6 (Thais to Thettale), 1.33, ¶4; Athena turned Penelope whiter supernaturally to make her more beautiful (Hom. *Od.* 18.196).

1191. Hom. *Il.* 5.314; *Od.* 18.198; 19.60; 23.240; Pindar *Paeans* 6.87; *Pyth.* 3.98–99; *Hymns* 1.29.5–6; Catull. *Carm.* 63.8 (a contrast with Attis’s blood in 63.7); Lucian *Judg. G.* 10; *Demosth.* 19 (a bride); in Homer, quite commonly of Hera (*Il.* 1.55, 195, 208, 572, 595; 5.711, 755, 767, 775, 784; 8.381; 14.277; 15.78, 92, 130; 19.407; 21.377, 418, 434, 512; 24.55; followed in Lucian *Gout* 93–94); or of Helen (Hom. *Il.* 3.120; *Od.* 22.227), Andromache (*Il.* 6.371, 377; 24.723), and Nausicaa (*Od.* 6.101, 186, 251; 7.12; her maidens, 6.239; her mother, 7.233). Cf. fair-ankled in Hom. *Od.* 11.603 (quoted in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 74.16) and white feet (Eurip. *Bacch.* 862–64).

1192. Among Ethiopians, see Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 105 (citing Hdt. 3.20).

1193. Hom. *Il.* 3.167 (contrast Odysseus in 3.193, who seems to have grown by the second volume!); *Od.* 1.207, 301; 3.199; 6.276; 8.19–20; 9.508; 10.396; 13.289; 15.418; 18.195; 21.334; Xen. *Oec.* 10.2; *Anab.* 3.2.25; *Cyr.* 4.4.3; 5.1.5; 5.2.7; Arist. *Rhet.* 1.5.13, 1361b; Apollod. *Bib.* 2.4.9; Cic. *Cael.* 15.36; Corn. Nep. 17 (Agesilaus), 8.1; Catull. *Carm.* 86.1; Ovid *Am.* 3.3.8; Sen. *Y. Nat. Q.* 4A.pref. 8; *Ep. Lucil.* 66.26; Plut. *Lyc.* 17.4; *Alex.* 21.3, 5; *Cim.* 5.3; *Arist.* 17.7; *Div. V.* 33, *Mor.* 568A; Arrian *Alex.* 5.19.1; Longus 1.16; 2.23; Char. *Chaer.* 2.5.2; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.21.515; 1.25.450; 2.1.552; *Hrk.* 10.4; *Hdn.* 4.9.3; 6.4.4; Eunapius *Lives* 467, 481, 487; 11Q5 XXV, 9–10; Artapanus in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.37; Jos. *Asen.* 1:4/6, 5/8; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 17:6. One might pretend to be taller by stretching on one’s toes (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 111.3); a short man might need a short woman (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.4.20). One need not be tall by modern Western standards to qualify by ancient Mediterranean standards (cf., e.g., Nagar and Torgeë, “Characteristics”).

1194. For discussion, see comment on Acts 7:22; Rajak, “Moses in Ethiopia”; Runnalls, “Ethiopian Campaign.” Iren. *Her.* 4.20.12 uses her as a type of the Gentile church.

1195. *Sipre Num.* 99.3.2; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Num 12:1. Philo *Alleg. Interp.* 2.67 allegorizes her positively (but cf. his negative allegorization of Ethiopia, 1.68).

1196. See Arlandson, *Women*, 117.

1197. Tac. *Agr.* 16.

1198. Virg. *Aen.* 1.340–64, 446. Attributing Carthage’s founding to a woman may have demeaned it in Roman eyes, but the attribution is more crucial for the tragic prefiguring of Carthage’s hostility toward Rome and the latter’s triumphant destiny.

powerful queens who sometimes ruled.¹¹⁹⁹ Egyptian and Macedonian culture may have each contributed to the prominence of Ptolemaic women; for example, Caesar left both the younger son and the elder daughter (the final Cleopatra) of Ptolemy in charge of Egypt (Caesar *Alex. W.* 1.33).

(4) *Queen of the South?*

Luke's biblically informed audience, however, might think especially of the queen of Sheba, who came to Jerusalem nearly a millennium before this queen's official did so.¹²⁰⁰ Luke's audience might think of her especially because she is the only other person designated as "queen" in his work (Luke 11:31; though cf. Acts 25:13); depending on which Meroitic royal woman was in view, it may even be possible that Luke favored this term to draw attention to his earlier usage. She came from the "ends of the earth" (Luke 11:31, though using a different term than Acts 1:8), just as Philip was now evangelizing someone from the "ends of the earth" (see comment on Acts 1:8). Luke calls her not "queen of Sheba" but (following Q; Matt 12:42) "queen of the South";¹²⁰¹ many would join the kingdom from the "south" (Luke 13:29, Luke's probable addition to Q's "east and west") and no place was farther south in Greek thought than "Ethiopia."¹²⁰²

Probably because of her honorable response to Solomon, Jewish tradition magnified the queen of Sheba's power, extending her rule to Ethiopia. She ruled Egypt and Ethiopia (Jos. *Ant.* 8.159, 165) and could be called simply "Queen of Ethiopia" (8.175). Josephus calls Saba (Sheba) Ethiopia's royal city, which he claims was later renamed Meroë (2.249).¹²⁰³ Another document claims that Solomon received gold from "Ethiopia," presumably identifying it with Sheba.¹²⁰⁴ Later Ethiopians naturally also identified the queen of Sheba with a queen of Ethiopia (*Kebrā Nagast* ch. 33, end).¹²⁰⁵

The queen of Sheba, who traveled a great distance to hear Solomon's wisdom, would serve as a prosecution witness against unrepentant Israel (Luke 11:31).¹²⁰⁶ Likewise, this representative of a later queen, as the first Gentile Christian, proved that the rejection by much of Jerusalem (Acts 7:51–52; 8:1) would disqualify only those who rejected the message, not the message itself. The gospel announced that someone greater than Solomon had come (Luke 11:31; Matt 12:42). By recalling biblical accounts of the queen of Sheba and Jeremiah's Ethiopian ally in Judah's royal

1199. Manetho *Aeg. frag.* 10 (from the Armenian version of Euseb. *Chron.* 1, p. 96), 20–21 (from Syncellus and the Armenian version of Eusebius); Iambl. (nov.) *Bab. St.* 20 (Photius *Bibl.* 94.77b).

1200. For proposed allusions here, see, e.g., Hirth, "Königin von Saba." Some later Jewish traditions amplify her paganism (*Test. Sol.* 19:3; still later, cf. her response to Solomon in Qur'an 27.22–44), but this is irrelevant here.

1201. Cf. "king of the south" in Dan 11:9, 11, 14, 25, 40; i.e., the Ptolemaic ruler of Egypt (11:8).

1202. If Acts 8:26 speaks of going "south" (a matter much debated; see comment above), it would be the only relevant reference in Acts to "south" (elsewhere in the NT, Luke 12:55; Acts 27:13; 28:13; Matt 12:42; Rev 21:13), but it would also be the only possible NT instance of "south" that uses a term different from all the others.

1203. Scott ("Horizon," 536n203) notes that Silberman, "Queen of Sheba," "considers Josephus idiosyncratic at this point," but counters that *Liv. Pr.* 1:8 confirms the connection between the queen of Sheba and Ethiopia. By contrast, in the probably third-century *Test. Sol.* 19:3, she is an arrogant witch forced to bow before Solomon.

1204. *Liv. Pr.* 1:12 (Schermann, §24, p. 76, lines 13–14, on Isaiah).

1205. Bruce, "Philip and Ethiopian," 385; Ullendorf, "Candace and Queen of Sheba," 54–55.

1206. So also Jonah's Ninevites (Luke 11:29–30, 32), who would condemn Israel (11:32); cf. possible Jonah parallels in Acts 27. The south (Ethiopia) and west (Rome) received the gospel, but Israel proved disappointing. Using a group's receptive representative to testify against the excuses of the group on the day of judgment, as Jesus does in Q, fits Jewish tradition (*Abot R. Nat.* 6 A; 12, §30 B; *b. Yoma* 35b; 3 *En.* 4:3; for Gentiles specifically, see *Lev. Rab.* 2:9; *Pesiq. Rab.* 35:3; Keener, *Matthew*, 368); the principle of a successful member of a group removing the group's excuses was also more generally intelligible (e.g., Plut. *Coriol.* 1.2; Max. Tyre *Or.* 1.9).

court, Luke connects the events of the gospel's initial spread with the faith of Gentiles earlier in salvation history.

V. THE ENCOUNTER (8:28–31)

When Philip comes alongside the official's carriage, he hears him providentially reading from a passage in Isaiah, and the official welcomes Philip's help in understanding the passage. One depending on God's providential guidance would recognize that the timing was no coincidence (cf., e.g., 2 Kgs 8:4–5).¹²⁰⁷ Also, the passage may remind those involved in the mission (Acts 1:8) that God has already worked before their arrival (cf. also the readiness of Cornelius in ch. 10).

(1) *The Chariot and the Scroll* (8:28–29)

Most travelers, like Philip, moved on foot, but persons of greater means used donkeys or, more expensively but quickly, horses or even camels. Those with the most resources, like the man portrayed here, could undertake their journeys “in chariots or carriages pulled by mules or horses.”¹²⁰⁸ Traditionally, racing chariots were drawn by four horses.¹²⁰⁹ We should not, however, think here of ordinary chariots or the racing chariots most familiar to modern readers from films about the Roman Empire.¹²¹⁰ Drawing on Celtic models, designers improved traveling carriages significantly in imperial times.¹²¹¹ These varied from simple models (with wheels “permanently fixed to the axle”) to (more likely for a wealthy official) elaborate, expensive wagons (with twelve spokes on the wheels).¹²¹² A wealthy man might exhibit his wealth by traveling in a carriage with four wheels (Eunapius *Lives* 468).¹²¹³

Scholars sometimes suggest a four-wheeled covered wagon, at times adding that it might be pulled by oxen,¹²¹⁴ though donkeys and mules were also used for transport on Roman highways (and camels for deserts).¹²¹⁵ Such a carriage would allow for more luggage, make travel more comfortable, and perhaps increase the distance

1207. One may compare similar accounts today from those who share the same premises (e.g., Jackson, *Quest*, 75).

1208. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 38. Within a city, they could use even litters, a luxury item borrowed from Hellenism (Hurschmann, “Litter”), but this would be impractical for a long journey such as this one. Roman laws seeking to limit luxury had prohibited women from using animal-drawn wagons in cities (Livy 34.1.3), and Claudius apparently reinforced the need for litters in Italy (Suet. *Claud.* 25.2; Raepsaet, “Land Transport,” 208).

1209. Pindar *Ol.* 2.5; *Pyth.* 2.4; 10.65; probably implied in *Nem.* 3.74. For earlier Egyptian war chariots (presumably similar to the Ethiopian variety), see Littauer and Crouwel, “Chariots,” 888–89.

1210. BDAG notes a traveling chariot (as distinct from a war chariot), citing Dio Chrys. *Or.* 64 [14].20; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.7.5; also Gen 41:43; 46:26; Jos. *Ant.* 8.386. To these one might add 1 Kgs 1:5; 1 Esd 3:5–6; cf. perhaps God's chariot in Sir 49:8; Jos. *Ant.* 7.378. The Josephus reference (*Ant.* 8.386, with 8.380–87 *passim*, 415–17) could be a war chariot (as in 2.324; 5.64–67, 128, 177, 199, 206–7; 6.97, 130; 7.99; 8.41, 254, 378; 9.54–55, 76, 97, 114–34; 10.77; *War* 6.298; for Ethiopian war chariots, *Ant.* 8.292); much better would be 2.90; 7.194, 345; 8.186, 221; 19.6; perhaps 8.183.

1211. Raepsaet, “Land Transport,” 204.

1212. *Ibid.*; in contrast to rustic and two-wheeled carriages was “the comfortable and expensive *carruca dormitoria*” (207). For drawings of various models of carts in the period, see 205–6. Four-wheeled transport vehicles seem to have been common, but two wheels also persisted (see Libanius *Descr.* 2.6).

1213. In the diagrams in Raepsaet, “Land Transport,” 205–6, the more complex carriages also have two wheels on each side.

1214. Bruce, *Commentary*, 186; Witherington, *Acts*, 297; Larkin, *Acts*, 133. Carriages could use one, two, or four horses (Raepsaet, “Land Transport,” 202), with two horses (or mules) being most common (203); four-wheeled wagons are attested in the ancient Near East as early as the third millennium B.C.E., providing a more comfortable, albeit slower, means of transport (Littauer and Crouwel, “Chariots,” 892). For wheeled transport vehicles (for goods) in the Roman period, see, e.g., the summary in Dorsey, “Travel,” 895.

1215. Applebaum, “Economic Life,” 685–86 (citing *m. B. Meši'a* 1:6; 5:5; *B. Bat.* 2:14); also horses (Weeber, “Travels,” 872).

one could travel.¹²¹⁶ (The eunuch probably would use this carriage only as far as Alexandria, taking a boat south from there.) The driver might well be in the front, with plenty of room for the official and his guest in the back.¹²¹⁷ In such a vehicle sometimes there might be only one attendant, though a wealthy official might have more; there would thus normally be room for a guest such as Philip.¹²¹⁸ This sort of vehicle was not, however, most often called a “chariot” (ἄρμα), as here;¹²¹⁹ that Luke employs this term here might reinforce his allusion to the Elijah narrative, in which Elijah outran Ahab’s chariot (1 Kgs 18:44–46; *Jos. Ant.* 8.346).¹²²⁰

It is not only the chariot but his leisure in it (Acts 8:28, indicating a driver, as in 8:38) and its spacious sitting area (8:31) that reveal the official as a person of wealth and status. The Isaiah scroll demonstrates the same point. Someone traveling with a servant or servants and his own Isaiah scroll was undoubtedly fairly wealthy,¹²²¹ which underlines more dramatically his status as a royal treasurer (8:27). With literacy perhaps averaging no more than 20 percent even among eastern Mediterranean urban dwellers who knew Greek,¹²²² this foreigner must have come from an elite class in Nubia, which afforded him education. In the Mediterranean world, most wealthy people had readers;¹²²³ since we do not know the size of the possible entourage, we cannot be certain whether this official’s wealth was expressed by a literate servant or by his own literacy, but in either case, even the wealthy who used readers were themselves literate (see comment on Acts 8:31).

Further, a royal treasurer with means to travel such a long distance in comfort might also have companions or servants traveling with him, for the sake of safety on the road. Although they would presumably travel only during the day, robbers were a serious enough problem¹²²⁴ that obviously wealthy persons¹²²⁵ might undertake long journeys most safely in caravans; it is thus possible that some other wagons from his party (or perhaps other travelers, though this would be less likely at “noon”) were also traveling with him. Later rabbis, at least, would have found praiseworthy the official’s passing his journey in study of Scripture.¹²²⁶

1216. Rapske, “Travel,” 9. For space to read in larger carriages, and even sleep space in the finest models, see Weeber, “Travels,” 872.

1217. Also Faw, *Acts*, 106.

1218. Ramsay, *Discovery*, 314. Smaller war chariots of the epic age held two riders in each (e.g., Pindar *Nem.* 4.30).

1219. Though traveling chariots are noted above, “chariot” does not seem to be a long-range luxury vehicle’s most common title.

1220. See comments above, in the introduction to Acts 8:26–40, under “Biblical Background.”

1221. The servants may be safely inferred from his ability to read while the carriage moved (cf. also Acts 8:38; Spencer, *Acts*, 92). Possibly some individuals have scrolls in 1 Macc 1:57 (unless they had simply removed them from public places for safekeeping, 1:56–57), but they may be wealthy citizens of their Judean communities.

1222. Scholer, “Writing,” 1283; Gamble, “Literacy,” 644; see, in greater detail, Harris, *Literacy*.

1223. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.3. Cf. similarly the literate elite’s use of scribes for writing; e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 16.14.1–2; 16.22.1.

1224. Cf., e.g., P.Oxy. 1408.11–21; Hom. *Il.* 3.10–11; Phaedrus 4.23.16; Ach. Tat. 2.16.2; 2.18.5; 3.9.3; 2 Cor 11:26; *m. Ber.* 1:3; *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 25b; *Ber.* 11a; *B. Qam.* 116b; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 27:6; *Gen. Rab.* 75:3; *Exod. Rab.* 30:24; cf. further sources in Friedländer, *Life*, 1:294–96; Goodman, *State*, 55. Sometimes they murdered their victims (*Gr. Anth.* 7.310, 516, 581, 737; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 4.3; *Gen. Rab.* 80:2; 92:6), and they were generally feared and hated (Hor. *Ep.* 1.2.32–33; Apul. *Metam.* 8.17; 1 Esd 4:23–24; *Sib. Or.* 3.380; *Jos. Ant.* 14.159–60, 415, 421; 20.5, 113, 124; *Life* 105; *Tr. Shem* 6:1; 7:20; *b. Sanh.* 108a; *Lev. Rab.* 9:8). Cf. the use of desert police in Egypt (Lewis, *Life*, 141).

1225. The poor may have been less frequent targets (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 7.9–10).

1226. For emphasis on traveling with those who hold divine favor, see *t. ’Abod. Zar.* 1:17; *Šabb.* 17:2; on finding a good traveling companion to talk with, see Aul. Gel. 17.14.4; cf. Babr. 15.1–4; Plut. *Cic.* 39.4; Hock, *Context*, 28; for discussing Torah, *b. Soṭah* 49a (for speaking always of Torah, in accordance with Deut 6:7, see, e.g., *b. Yoma* 86a; *Soṭah* 46b). Cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 96 (following Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*: rabbis required reading Torah aloud on journeys); Barrett, *Acts*, 428 (citing *b. ’Erub.* 54a; cf. *’Ab.* 3:8).

(2) *Running to Obey the Spirit* (8:29–30)

That it is “the Spirit” that tells Philip to join the chariot is no less significant than that “the Spirit” will tell Peter to accept and accompany Cornelius’s messengers (10:19–20).¹²²⁷ In both cases, the Spirit helps God’s agent violate conventions and expectations at strategic moments to fulfill God’s mission.¹²²⁸ This is not to suggest that the Spirit works only rarely and only at strategic salvation-historical moments (hardly an accurate reflection of early Christian pneumatology)¹²²⁹ but to notice that Luke’s narrative focus keeps to reporting his theme: the Spirit empowers Christ’s witnesses to cross cultural barriers with his message (1:8).

For some Jews it would have been culturally difficult to approach an obvious foreigner on the road, especially before Philip hears him reading Scripture and surmises that he is a God-fearer.¹²³⁰ Luke’s ideal audience will recall that Jews were not to “associate” with foreigners (10:28, the only other text in biblical or early Christian Greek employing precisely the same two verbs, προσέρχομαι and κολλάομαι, including the latter, rarer verb for Philip’s “joining” or “attaching” himself to the chariot here).¹²³¹ Hellenists, however, may have had more experience with idolatrous Gentiles (at least the first-generation immigrants would), and so the bicultural Hellenists formed a natural bridge for the Gentile mission (see comment on Acts 6:1). Whatever the natural tendencies, Philip obeys the Spirit; this fits the theme of obedience to supernatural guidance in Luke-Acts.¹²³²

Although other Elijah allusions may suggest an allusion to Elijah outrunning Ahab’s chariot here (1 Kgs 18:44–46),¹²³³ we need not think that this chariot was moving at a rapid pace. Like most of the best of long-distance land transportation, the carriage could probably travel only twenty-five to thirty miles a day.¹²³⁴ (A pedestrian might average just twenty; for Philip to overtake the chariot from behind probably means that he is moving quickly.)¹²³⁵ That the official is reading reinforces the point; no matter how smooth the road might have been by ancient standards (and we may

1227. On the Spirit’s activity as a narrative “character” here, see, e.g., Hur, *Reading*, 242. The attempt to coalesce the Spirit here with the earlier angel (Haya-Prats, *Believers*, 38) misses the parallel in 10:19; 11:12 (in view of Luke’s most common use of “Spirit”); Luke appeals to multiple confirmations here.

1228. For the Spirit and “guidance” in Acts, see discussion in Warrington, *Discovering*, 63–65 (noting Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:4; 15:28; 16:6–7; 20:22–23). For obvious matters, no guidance is needed (e.g., 10:47; 11:23; 12:10–11; 16:10), but convention made this case less than obvious.

1229. Rather, Philip’s heeding the Spirit’s voice functions as a model (with, e.g., Bede *Acts* 8.29 [Martin, *Acts*, 98; L. Martin, 83], taking the voice as internal). To suppose that Luke would limit acts of the Spirit to those that he specifically narrates not only argues from silence in a short monograph but also ignores Luke’s paradigmatic depiction of the era of the Spirit (Acts 2:17–18), which he can at most illustrate. His depiction is representative, not comprehensive, and if Luke limited the Spirit’s activity *only* to his emphasis on witness (which he does not; e.g., 9:31; 11:28; 13:52; 21:4, 11) he would believe less about the Spirit’s activity than does his hero Paul (e.g., Rom 9:1; 15:13; 1 Cor 2:12–14; 12:4–11). On the Spirit speaking in some early Christian literature, see, e.g., Rom 8:16; John 16:13–15; Rev 2:7; 14:13; 22:17; Keener, *John*, 1038–39 (cf. 234–51; also the prophetic association of the Spirit, noted in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:534–37). By contrast, many Jewish sources from this era played down dialogues with God even in biblical narratives (Koskeniemi, *Miracle-Workers*, 294).

1230. We cannot know how far they were from Jerusalem along the road at this point, that distance also perhaps affecting perceptions of a foreigner’s intentions.

1231. See Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 92, overemphasizing the point.

1232. See Spencer, *Philip*, 154–55. On the Spirit’s activity in this passage in light of Lukan pneumatology as a whole, see Casalegno, “Espírito disse a Filipe.” Some modern charismatic Christians also claim incidents of supernatural guidance in the service of evangelism (e.g., Pullinger, *Dragon*, 143, 176; Keener, *Gift*, 44).

1233. See comments above, in the introduction to Acts 8:26–40, under “Biblical Background.”

1234. Rapske, “Travel,” 9.

1235. Alternatively, the chariot may have passed Philip already, or it may have entered this road recently from another one.

especially doubt its smoothness if they had already passed Gaza, though this is less likely), reading would be more easily done at a fairly leisurely pace (though carriage travel did “permit reading”).¹²³⁶

If Philip approaches from behind, he would still need to run to catch up (Acts 8:30). Running could be considered indecorous,¹²³⁷ especially for a respectable older man;¹²³⁸ by contrast, this would probably be viewed as honorable behavior for an athletic young man (as Philip may well have been),¹²³⁹ though it would not entail the miraculous speed perhaps envisioned for Elijah. If Philip found the official early after starting out and the noonday heat had not yet subsided (cf. comment on Acts 8:26 for this possibility, though Luke is not clear how far Philip traveled before sighting the chariot), this is also an act of obedience in the face of effort.¹²⁴⁰ Running may also imply eagerness, as when the loving father embraced his lost son (Luke 15:20) or Peter ran to the tomb (24:12). Compare the command in Zech 2:3–4.

(3) *Discussing the Official’s Readings (8:30–31)*

Recognizing the foreigner reading Isaiah (particularly a passage Christians regarded as messianic; see comment on Acts 8:32–33) would signal to both Philip in the narrative world and Luke’s audience how providential the arrangement was.¹²⁴¹ (Ancients recognized such connections. Thus, for example, when a future king in one story happened to be reading something relevant exactly when someone proposed a way to recover his kingdom, he concluded that a deity had arranged this omen.)¹²⁴² Reading Scripture is precisely what one would expect a well-to-do God-fearer with leisure to be doing (Jos. *Ant.* 20.44).

Asking the man if he understood what he was reading suggests a familiar method for joining conversation, both in Luke-Acts (see esp. Luke 24:17–19, 25–26; on literary connections with that passage, see introduction to this section) and in the broader culture.¹²⁴³ The wording in Greek is paronomasia, a wordplay: γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις.¹²⁴⁴ Some scholars suggest that it may also reflect the familiar “contrast between reading and understanding” in Jewish thought.¹²⁴⁵ That Philip essentially offers to help the man interpret what he is reading would probably commend him

1236. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 96 (citing Pliny *Ep.* 3.5).

1237. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.52. It was accepted for noble causes, such as running to hear a Torah teacher (y. *B. Meṣi’a* 2:11, §1; *Hor.* 3:4, §4), encountering a loved one after a long or dangerous absence (Gen 33:4; Tob 11:9–10; Luke 15:20; Livy 4.40.3; Appian *Hist. rom.* 2.5.3), meeting a king (*b. Ber.* 58a), or an emergency (*Apoll. K. Tyre* 25).

1238. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, xv.

1239. In Acts 21:9, two decades later, he has young daughters. Cf. Luke 24:12; John 20:4 (cf. also 1 John 2:14); see comment in Keener, *John*, 1184, 1230–31 (noting, e.g., Jos. *Life* 15; Hom. *Od.* 5.388–89, 399, 438–41; 7.276–77, 280–81; 23.23–38; Philost. *Hrk.* 27.1–13); Keener, “Vigor.” This emphasis could appeal to a Greek audience, which probably would have culturally valued bodily health (Platonic dualism aside).

1240. Presumably Philip, since he was traveling, might have with him his heavier outer cloak, since this was used for sleeping at night (Deut 24:13); it is not among the prohibited items for missionaries in Luke 10:4 (cf. Mark 6:8–9).

1241. With also Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 19. God’s sovereign arrangement of encounters also appears in Luke’s Scripture (e.g., Gen 24:14–27; 29:5–6; 37:15–17, 25; 40:3; Exod 2:5–6). Le Cornu, *Acts*, 424–25, surmises that the official was reviewing the week’s haftarah reading, but it seems unlikely that such readings had yet been standardized.

1242. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 2.32.

1243. Casual conversation functions as an instrument of religious invitation in Philost. *Hrk.* 1.1–5.6 (though this pagan work may betray the influence of Christian models); more generally, see, e.g., Keener, *John*, 468–69 (regarding politeness and hospitality conventions). A conversational, dialogical approach need not prove antithetical to seeking conversion (cf. Gaventa, “Witnessing,” noting that the real focus is God’s activity); Kowalski, “Exegese,” uses Acts 8:30 as a model for communication.

1244. Bruce, *Commentary*, 187n46; Barrett, *Acts*, 428.

1245. Barrett, *Acts*, 428 (following Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 434); cf. also Philo *Spec. Laws* 1.214.

to the official: a Jew knowledgeable enough to help him and neither intimidated by his obvious status nor put off by his apparent foreignness.¹²⁴⁶

READING

How would Philip hear the man reading?¹²⁴⁷ Most reading in antiquity was done aloud;¹²⁴⁸ some even regarded exceptions such as Ambrose (*Aug. Conf.* 6.3) as unusual.¹²⁴⁹ There is a fair amount of evidence for quiet reading with lips moving,¹²⁵⁰ but this was not the most common method;¹²⁵¹ because ancients used continuous script instead of dividing words or punctuating, reading aloud was important to catch the flow of thought.¹²⁵² Ancient writers expected their works to be read aloud,¹²⁵³ and hence some even designed them for pleasant sounds and melodic recitation.¹²⁵⁴ Reading aloud helped children memorize, an important skill since they would have to recite from memory.¹²⁵⁵ Sources suggest that students normally learned the Torah out loud as well.¹²⁵⁶ Even had reading been done aloud only occasionally (which is not the case), it would indicate why Luke need not explain why this reading is done aloud.

Given the likely bumps of even the smoothest carriage ride on the best of roads, it would be possible for a servant to be reading to the official;¹²⁵⁷ some of the wealthy in the empire might have their own readers as well as scribes.¹²⁵⁸ But Luke's wording in both Acts 8:28 and 30 probably suggests that the official himself is reading, which underlines this official's skill and intellectual curiosity.¹²⁵⁹ Scripture scrolls could be cumbersome; they were not wide, but they could be up to 145 feet (44 m.) long,¹²⁶⁰ so that one would need to hold the scroll with one hand while unrolling it with the

1246. Emphasizing the anticipated negative answer, Miller, *Convinced*, 184–86, views it as an “insulting query” (186), though providential. Offering offense to such a dignitary may have been possible, but a foreigner so easily put off would probably not have come to Jerusalem; and given the complexities of the passage, even a Jew might have answered negatively.

1247. The older skepticism of Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 96, about “educated Greeks and Romans” being unable “to read silently” is refuted by some ancient sources (see below).

1248. Accurate reading aloud was part of basic grammar education (Heath, *Hermogenes*, 11; cf. McNelis, “Grammarians,” 286). On differences between ancient and modern reading patterns, see Johnson, “Sociology of Reading.” People also memorized by reciting aloud rather than reading silently (Small, “Orator,” 202, citing Quint. *Inst.* 11.2.33).

1249. Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 18; Hendrickson, “Ancient Reading,” 192–93; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 98; Hanson, *Acts*, 110; Johnson, *Acts*, 155; cf. Witherington, *Corinthians*, 44; Harvey, *Listening*, 52; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 130, 397.

1250. Slusser, “Reading Silently,” cites Cyril Jer. *Procatechesis* 14 (on women ca. 350 C.E.; were women required to keep silent?).

1251. Gilliard, “More Silent Reading,” argues that reading aloud was not unusual; for evidence from classical Athens through the empire, see Burfeind, “Philippus” (with seven examples); Gavrilov, “Techniques”; for Roman poets (e.g., Ovid *Am.* 1.4.19–20), see Benediktson, “First Silent Reader.” It did happen, but reading aloud was far more common.

1252. Gamble, “Literacy,” 647; Harvey, *Listening*, 53; Bruce, *Commentary*, 187. Torah was read aloud (*m. 'Ab.* 6:5 [Danby, 6:6]; *b. Erub.* 54a); those who read consonantal scripts such as Hebrew would certainly have had to read aloud.

1253. For public recitations, see esp. Starr, “Reading Aloud”; Carcopino, *Life*, 193–201.

1254. See Gerhardtsson, *Memory*, 163–67, on the rabbis.

1255. Cf. Townsend, “Education,” 145.

1256. Talbert, *Acts*, 76 (citing *m. 'Ab.* 6:6 and also noting that rabbis often studied Torah on journeys; for discussion, see Keener, *Acts*, 1:589).

1257. Burfeind, “Philippus,” includes this among examples of being read to.

1258. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.3; for a close scribe, see, e.g., 16.14.1–2; cf. also public readers in court settings (e.g., Isaëus *Pyrr.* 37–38) and religious settings (1 Esd 8:19). An awkward speaker could use a professional reader to deliver his work in public (Suet. *Claud.* 41.2). Use of scribes and readers did not reduce the prestige of the elite who could read and write (cf. McDonnell, “Writing”).

1259. Cf. Luke 4:16–17, where Luke presents favorably Jesus reading from Isaiah (albeit with messianic understanding, 4:21, in contrast to here).

1260. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 419.

other as one moved forward. Depending on the size of the carriage, the official may have had a servant to aid in unrolling the scroll. People traveled with scrolls,¹²⁶¹ and although some sages (at least in later sources) discouraged removing them from the Holy Land, it is doubtful that most people heeded this concern.¹²⁶²

LANGUAGE

Meroë had its own language, with (by this period) an alphabetic script.¹²⁶³ The official was probably not reading a scroll in Meroitic, but would he be reading it in Hebrew? If Philip was primarily Greek-speaking, how could he talk with the Ethiopian or understand that he was reading from Isaiah? It is possible that Philip could have known enough Hebrew to recognize a Scripture text, but it is probably too much for us to expect a Nubian God-fearer to read Hebrew poetry as well as converse with Philip in (presumably) Greek.¹²⁶⁴ Luke's Greek audience would know that Ethiopians were not normally among Greek-speaking peoples (cf. even northern Africans in Acts 2:10; the association with foreign languages in *Sib. Or.* 3.516). Even if Philip was a first-generation immigrant to Jerusalem and happened by chance to be from Alexandria, he probably was ignorant of the Egyptian language in the countryside and would surely be ignorant of Nubian languages many weeks' journey southward.

No person of means, however, would come from Ethiopia to Jerusalem without a translator or some knowledge of language. As a presumably educated member of the Nubian elite, this treasurer would likely speak several languages, including those relevant for trade ties with places such as Greek-speaking Alexandria in Egypt, to Meroë's north.¹²⁶⁵ Greek appears in Nubian inscriptions, including one mentioning the queen in 13 B.C.E.¹²⁶⁶ Coins from nearby Axum, dated before Ezana's conversion (in the early fourth century), use Greek inscriptions as well as a Roman design and a gold standard.¹²⁶⁷ An earlier king of Meroë appearing in Greek sources is said to have had a Greek education, which suggests one or more teachers of Greek there.¹²⁶⁸ Certainly knowledge of Greek would have been essential in relations with Ptolemaic Egypt,¹²⁶⁹ and in this period the ruling elite in Egypt, as in much of the eastern empire, continued to speak Greek.

Would Philip the Hellenist have recognized the words of Isaiah if they were being read in Hebrew, especially with a less familiar Nubian accent? It is possible that the official was reading Hebrew in a manner similar to the readings in Jerusalem, but it is no less possible that he was reading the Greek version, which prevailed in Alexandria and in most of the Mediterranean Diaspora.¹²⁷⁰ Although Jerusalem's own scribes

1261. *Ibid.*, 420, cites *m. Yebam.* 16:7; *y. Soṭah* 41a.

1262. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 420, citing *y. Sanh.* 3.6.21d.

1263. Hawass, "Nubia," 171; cf. the use of Egyptian hieroglyphs and its own alphabet in Seidlmayer, "Nubia," 869. From no later than the mid-second millennium B.C.E., Meroitic, apparently a north Sudanese language like Nubian, used "18 single-sound characters (15 consonants and 3 vowel signs) and 4 syllabic signs in a hieroglyphic form and the usually employed cursive form" (Lohwasser, "Meroitic").

1264. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 412–13, thinks the scroll "in Hebrew, or less likely Greek." But while Hebrew Torah scrolls may have been preferred, MSS of the LXX show that Greek versions also existed, and if some people needed Greek scrolls, this official may have been among them. Admittedly, multilingualism is common (even among those lacking formal education), a pattern characteristic of much of the past generation in Africa (my wife, who is educated, speaks five languages).

1265. Cf. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.32, where the Persian king knows Greek fluently.

1266. Wilcken, *Chrestomathie*, 4.11 (followed by "the Lord Hermes!"); Deissmann, *Light*, 352.

1267. Heldman, "Axum," 239.

1268. Welsby, *Kingdom of Kush*, 194–95, noting Diod. Sic. 3.6.3 and an alphabet inscribed perhaps for educational purposes.

1269. Welsby, *Kingdom of Kush*, 67.

1270. Cf. LXX quotations in Asian Jewish funerary inscriptions (Trebilco, *Communities*, 58–84, esp. 60–78). Most of the LXX was in wide circulation long before this period (cf. Lewis, *Life*, 28–29; on the legend of its

probably did not produce biblical scrolls in the native language of Meroë, they would undoubtedly provide some in Greek,¹²⁷¹ whether for Jerusalem’s “Hellenists” (see comment on Acts 6:1) or for eastern Mediterranean Diaspora pilgrims.

Further, the treasurer undoubtedly passed through Alexandria on his way to Jerusalem, and wealthy Jews’ scrolls there would have been mostly in Greek. If he is reading in Greek, the official’s confusion is all the more understandable; the extant form of the LXX at this passage differed from the Hebrew and was confusing.¹²⁷² One might also point out that Greek was likely not his first language (in contrast to many members of urban elites in the eastern Mediterranean); but if he knows it well enough to converse intelligently with Philip, a reading knowledge would probably come even more easily. (Certainly there is no lapse in Greek fluency in his reported words; see comment on Acts 8:31.) Whatever the language the official was reading in, Luke reports the conversation in Greek and hence follows the LXX, as he normally does.

In Acts 8:31, the official uses sophisticated Greek, demonstrated in “the optative with ἄν”;¹²⁷³ because good writers sought to present speakers realistically (and Luke elsewhere does so, limiting Semitisms, e.g., primarily to particular settings), Luke portrays this Gentile as extremely well educated, articulate even in a language that was not his mother tongue.

The official wants someone to “lead” him.¹²⁷⁴ For an official to invite one into his chariot was to confer a great honor on him.¹²⁷⁵ This member of a royal court asks Philip to guide him in understanding Scripture; although wealthy people and kings hired sages and tutors, this reflects honor and certainly honors Philip’s knowledge and competence in this area above the official’s own. Such humility¹²⁷⁶ may flow partly from status inconsistency: though the official was of high status in his own culture, he was marginal in the world of his faith (especially if he was a literal eunuch). Yet Luke can use his humility toward Philip to encourage his own status-inconsistent audience: they may belong to a faith socially marginal in the empire, but various people of high status, including this official, listened to their spokespersons.

origin [*Let. Aris.* 301–11; *Jos. Ant.* 1.10–11; 12.48–49, 57], e.g., Greenspoon, “Mission”), although variants show divergent forms.

1271. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 419, notes that later rabbis wanted Torah scrolls written in Assyrian Hebrew script (*t. Sanh.* 4:7–8) but that some allowed for use of Greek, sometimes alongside Hebrew (*m. Meg.* 1:8; 2:1–2; *t. Meg.* 4[3]:13). For the sages’ approval of Greek translation, see also *Abot R. Nat.* 37, §94 B; *b. Meg.* 9a; *y. Meg.* 1:9, §4; *Gen. Rab.* 36:8 (though they favored the later work by Aquila, *y. Meg.* 1:9, §4; *Qid.* 1:1, §13; *Gen. Rab.* 70:5; 93:3; *Song Rab.* 1:3, §3; cf. changes that the LXX made, according to *y. Meg.* 1:9, §14). Even if the sages’ concerns are this early (the Torah sounded less pleasant in Greek, Sirach prol.), surely merchants and probably some scribes would have ignored them, given the prevalence of the LXX in Alexandria and trade ties between that massive Jewish center and Jerusalem.

1272. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 64–65.

1273. Barrett, *Acts*, 428: the construction by this period was viewed as “old-fashioned . . . or as a mark of education . . . ; certainly it is a sign of conscious style (cf. 17.18; 26.29; see Blass, Debrunner and Funk, *Grammar*, §385.1).”

1274. The term can apply to leading on a road (e.g., Luke 6:39; Rev 7:17; perhaps relevant to this road scene), but often it applies to leading in wisdom or moral rightness (Johnson, *Acts*, 156, cites LXX Pss 5:8; 22:3; 26:11; 72:24; 118:35; Eccl 2:3; Wis 9:11; 10:10; John 16:13; Rom 2:19; see also Wis 7:15). Philosophers spoke of deities (Epict. *Diatr.* 2.7.11; 3.21.12; Xen. *Cyr.* 7.1.10; cf. the δαίμων in Marc. Aur. 5.26–27; Iamb. *V.P.* 1.2; an angel in *Test. Benj.* 6:1) or reason (Plut. *Lect.* 1, *Mor.* 37E; Crates *Ep.* 31) as guides.

1275. 2 Kgs 10:15–16; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.488.

1276. Also Chrys. *Hom. Gen.* 35.5; *Hom. Acts* 19; Athanas. *Fest. Let.* 19.5 (Martin, *Acts*, 98–99). Chrys. *Hom. Gen.* 35.5 praises the official for inviting a lowly Jew into his chariot; more to the point (given the official’s devotion to the law) is the invitation to a pedestrian with obviously less means. Yet the official might expect a Jew who volunteers his knowledge in Scripture (as in Acts 8:30) to help him in the faith, probably more than (or at the very least, in addition to) his own attendants who were with him for the long journey. Seating arrangements also reflect a teacher’s status (Acts 22:3; Luke 10:39); most of the official’s attendants may be walking.

c. Scripture about Jesus the Servant (8:32–33)

Against some scholars, Luke applies the text quoted here, Isa 53:7–8, directly to Jesus instead of merely making a type or an analogy.¹²⁷⁷ This is not merely a righteous sufferer in general (as Luke could evoke with some other biblical citations; cf. comment on Acts 1:17, 20), since the official specifically asks of *whom* the text speaks.¹²⁷⁸

I. CORRELATIONS WITH JESUS

Jesus does not open his mouth (Acts 8:32)¹²⁷⁹ because he accepts his death as God's plan (2:23).¹²⁸⁰ In light of Luke's teaching elsewhere, the servant's "humiliation" invites his exaltation (cf. Luke 1:48; 3:5; 14:11; 18:14). The term used here for "humiliation" (ταπείνωσις) also connects Jesus, who is God's "servant" (a title in the Isaian passage's context), with Mary, the Lord's "servant," on whose ταπείνωσις (the only other Lukan use of the exact term) God looked favorably (cf. discussion at Acts 20:19, where Paul serves humbly).¹²⁸¹

Luke could understand the servant's "justice taken away" (Acts 8:33) as either Jesus's unjust condemnation (3:13–15; Luke 22:66–71; 23:23–24) or God's removing his condemnation by vindicating him.¹²⁸² In view of his life being "taken from the earth,"¹²⁸³ the former probably remains the primary sense, though the latter may be offered as a secondary wordplay. Luke includes the line about "explaining" (διηγέομαι bears this sense in Acts 9:27; 12:17; Luke 8:39; 9:10) the servant's "generation" (γενεά); Luke normally applies the noun γενεά to Jesus's wicked temporal "generation" (Luke 7:31; 9:41; 11:29–32, 50–51; 17:25; 21:32; Acts 2:40).¹²⁸⁴

The only other mention of a single "lamb" in Luke-Acts is the Passover lamb in Luke 22:7; the paschal lamb may have coalesced in early Christian thought with Isa 53:7.¹²⁸⁵ (Luke 22 also includes a saying that resembles a Markan saying alluding to

1277. Bock, *Proclamation*, 227–30. Appeal to a charismatic peshet technique at Qumran (Hill, *Prophecy*, 100) reads "charismatic" interpretation into both this Acts text and the Qumran scrolls. For the importance of this passage (and Acts 8 more generally) for Luke's theme of Scripture fulfillment (and no partiality), see Fabien, "Interprétation."

1278. Though Parsons, *Luke*, 104, and idem, *Acts*, 121, interestingly suggests that the foreign official himself (cf. Acts 8:34) may have been able to identify with the exclusion and subsequent exaltation of the servant here. Those who see new-Moses imagery in Isaiah's servant (Koester, *Paul in World*, 98) could connect this passage with the new Moses and servant of Acts 3:13, 22–23. For discussion of how the Isaian servant passages cohere, cf. comment on Acts 3:13; comment in Keener, *Matthew*, 273, 360–61.

1279. Although one might suppose a contrast with Philip opening his mouth (Acts 8:35), if there is any connection it is probably just one phrase suggesting the next (which Luke employs elsewhere, Luke 1:64; more relevant, Acts 10:34; 18:14).

1280. Tannehill, *Acts*, 111.

1281. Czachesz, "Logic," draws attention to the humiliation-exaltation pattern in Luke-Acts.

1282. Tannehill, *Acts*, 111; Gaventa, *Acts*, 144. A midrashic interpreter might associate the removal of "his judgment" with the removal of God's eschatological judgment on the people (Luke 10:14; 11:31–32); but "justice" (11:42) makes better sense here, and Luke (unlike Matthew) rarely uses midrashic wordplays. This sense would also fit Luke's emphasis on justice and concern about injustice (see, e.g., Luke 4:18–19).

1283. Some take this phrasing, too, as ambiguous (lit. "taken up from the earth"), allowing for the ascension (Acts 1:9–11; cf. Gaventa, *Acts*, 144; Wall, "Acts," 144), but this proposal, though possible, would again be at most the secondary sense (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 13:10/11). Interestingly, Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.33a applies Jesus's "judgment being taken" to a miscarriage of justice, but in 8.33c he applies Jesus's life's removal to his relocation to heaven. In any case, the variations in interpretive possibilities help explain the official's perplexity!

1284. Given Luke's usage, it is not impossible that Luke thinks here of Jesus's followers as Jesus's "people" in a sense (cf. γενεάν in Luke 16:8; Hamm, *Acts*, 45: "his growing band of post-Easter disciples, now including this eunuch"), but this is not very likely (at least, Luke has offered few clues). The original point was presumably that the servant's posterity was cut off because he died before he could have heirs, a matter of shame in the culture nevertheless reversed by God's exaltation (Isa 52:13; 53:10, 12). Some suggest that here the term applies to the servant's "family history" (see BDAG, definition 4), meaning that no one would regard him highly.

1285. Cf. Keener, *John*, 453–54.

Isa 53.)¹²⁸⁶ Sheepshearing was a familiar image because wool was a familiar substance.¹²⁸⁷ Although linen was becoming more dominant, wool was still used (see comment on Acts 1:10), and so, presumably, the cosmopolitan official would know it well despite its warmth for his region.¹²⁸⁸

II. THE ATONING SERVANT?

Luke's appeal to a servant context to which he has earlier made allusion reinforces the importance of this passage for understanding Luke's approach. (On Luke's use of "servant" passages in Isaiah, see also comment on Acts 3:13.) Further, contrary to what some scholars have argued, the concept of vicarious atonement was available in Judaism in this period.¹²⁸⁹

Many scholars stress Jesus's obedience or submission to suffering rather than vicarious atonement here,¹²⁹⁰ which could reflect the apocalyptic-sapiential tradition that looks on the fate of the persecuted wise man.¹²⁹¹ The quoted verses indicate a theology of Jesus's suffering but, indeed, not necessarily *vicarious* suffering.¹²⁹²

Yet are we to think that Luke knows only the verses that he cites here? Some doubt that early Christian authors¹²⁹³ expected their ideal audiences to recognize contexts, but Luke probably not only knew the context himself but (given the familiarity of the passage in early Christianity)¹²⁹⁴ expected his ideal audience to recognize it as well. If *testimonia* stand behind this quotation, the entire context may be implied; certainly Luke knew the context (Isa 52:13 in Acts 3:13; Isa 53:12 in Luke 22:37).¹²⁹⁵ Rhetoricians instructed students not to quote the entire passage if it was well known (Men. Rhet. 2.9, 413.30–31); writers also could assume a certain level of knowledge on the part of educated readers (Dion. Hal. *Isaeus* 14).¹²⁹⁶

Jewish authors frequently assumed knowledge of context.¹²⁹⁷ Because the law of tassels (Num 15:37–41) and Korah's rebellion (16:1–3) are near each other,

1286. Compare Mark 14:24 and esp. Mark 10:45 with Luke 22:27 (discussion in Keener, *Matthew*, 487–88, 631–33; cf. now Pitre, *Tribulation*, 416–17).

1287. See, e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.73.190–93; 8.74.194–97; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 1.8.3; Croom, *Clothing*, 26; Bauckham, *Climax*, 364–65.

1288. Linen was more common in Egypt (Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 20) and presumably Nubia as well; but dyed garments tended to be woolen (Croom, *Clothing*, 26). Linen helped reduce perspiration (Ezek 44:18).

1289. See, e.g., 4 Macc 17:22; Kim, "Atonement"; cf. Kim, "Targum Isaiah 53." For the sacrificial value of death in the OT, see also Green, "Death," 208.

1290. E.g., Zehnle, "Salvific Character" (salvific but not atonement); cf. Jones, "'Servant' in Luke-Acts," 158–59.

1291. Decock, "Isaiah 53:7–8."

1292. Bruce, "Philip and Ethiopian," 382.

1293. Whether Paul (Tuckett, "Paul and Ethics") or Jesus (Mead, "Opinion," challenging Edgar, "Respect"); but this may underestimate memory skills for oral cultures.

1294. It was also familiar in early Judaism (see, e.g., Tångberg, "Justification"; Betz, "Servant Tradition") and is found in early haftarah readings (for seder 36; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 425, citing both a genizah manuscript and *b. Meg.* 24a, bar.), though excluded from later haftarah readings, undoubtedly in response to Christian apologetics.

1295. Bruce, "Philip and Ethiopian," 381–82; cf. Seccombe, "Luke and Isaiah"; Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 90–92, and sources cited there; Peterson, *Acts*, 295; for Luke's use of Isaiah's servant, see also Morris, *Cross in New Testament*, 141–42; (though he might appeal to psalms for the suffering image more often; cf. Jipp, "Messiah"). *First Clement*, which cites these verses of Isa 53 (*1 Clem.* 16.7), reproduces the entire context (16.3–14). Bos, "Prophet," uses Acts 8:32–33 to explain and illustrate hermeneutically how christological reading need not neglect the original context.

1296. Even allusions can sometimes evoke the general tenor of the context (e.g., tragedy; suggested in Trzaskoma, "Chariton and Tragedy" [for Char. *Chaer.* 2.9.3; 3.8.8; 3.10.6; evoking, e.g., Soph. *Ajax* 550–51; Eurip. *Her.* 1307–8]).

1297. Instone-Brewer, *Techniques*, esp. 167 (noting every case examined; cited in Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 29, though he suggests [n. 149] that this may not apply to "non-scribal exegetical traditions").

Pseudo-Philo makes the former the cause of the latter (*L.A.B.* 16:1). Although rabbis did not always assume a passage's context,¹²⁹⁸ they sometimes did.¹²⁹⁹ Thus, for example, one Tanna quotes part of Ps 1:1, assuming without repeating the context of meditating in the Torah (*m. 'Ab.* 3:2). Another passage quotes part of Exod 20:20, and a reference just beyond the quoted part appears in the explanation (*y. Qidd.* 4:1, §2).

Clearly, early Christians did understand Isa 53 as messianic prophecy,¹³⁰⁰ and the idea was widespread enough that Luke could not have been unaware that Isaiah was being used this way. Yet Luke not only fails to polemicize against this common idea but elsewhere does use a part of Isa 53 that would suggest atonement (Isa 53:12 in Luke 22:37).¹³⁰¹ Why appeal to a section of Scripture pregnant with vicarious imagery¹³⁰² and so often mined by early Christians for its applicability to atonement? Luke does not emphasize Jesus's vicarious death like some other NT writers (e.g., Paul in Rom 5:6–10; cf. also 1 John 2:2; 4:10), but neither does he appear to disagree with it,¹³⁰³ and some scholars find sufficient data to believe that he accepted it.¹³⁰⁴

This differed from what is thought to be the usual Jewish interpretation of the passage. There are some early messianic-type applications of the passage,¹³⁰⁵ and so it is possible that interpreters abandoned this approach in response to Christian usage.¹³⁰⁶ But it is hard to be sure even of this, given the scarcity of our sources. And even when the later Targum on Isa 52:13 and 53:4 applies it to the Messiah (perhaps in response to Christian claims?), the suffering applies only to other kingdoms (*Tg. Isa.* 53:3) or Israel (*Tg. Isa.* 53:4). (See comment on the servant at Acts 3:13.)

d. Eagerly Embracing the Message (8:34–39)

The official's intelligent question (Acts 8:34) immediately invites Philip's preaching of the good news of Jesus to him (8:35). Likewise, the official himself requests

1298. Rabbis often simply read tradition into passages, e.g., *y. Ber.* 2:2, §5; *Gen. Rab.* 44:7; Moore, *Judaism*, 1:428.

1299. Hilton and Marshall, *Gospels and Judaism*, 63 (citing *y. Ber.* 2:8).

1300. E.g., Matt 8:17; 1 Pet 2:22–25; 1 Clem. 16.3–14; Barn. 5.2; Poly. Phil. 8.1; Justin 1 Apol. 50; Dial. 13, 43; cf. Mark 10:45; 14:23; John 12:23, 32; Rom 4:25; Phil 2:7; cf. Taylor, *Atonement*, 14; Cullmann, *Christology*, 64–65; Higgins, *Son of Man*, 43; Jeremias, *Theology*, 292–93; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:95–97; Osborn, *Justin*, 103. The Peshitta may reflect a very unbiased Christian interpretation (Greenberg, "Indications").

1301. Larkin, "Old Testament as Key."

1302. Bright, *History*, 358–59, claims an almost unanimous consensus that Isa 53 is vicarious. For corporate personality in Isa 53, see Bright, *History*, 359; comment on Acts 3:13.

1303. He could not but have known of it. Belief in vicarious atonement was part of the larger Jewish milieu as well (see Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 11; Kim, "Atonement," esp. 143–45; Büchler, *Atonement*, 178). It is hardly plausible that the early Jewish sources (e.g., 4 Macc 6:27–29) derived it from the Christians (although later rabbis might or might not react against them). Rabbinic tradition mostly develops biblical teaching on the atonement sacrifice but emphasizes intention more (Neusner, "Sacrifice"; idem, "Sin, Repentance"). Atonement was also intelligible to Greeks (Hengel, *Atonement*, 28). For early Christianity, see, e.g., Morris, *Cross in NT*; some essays in Hill and James, *Glory*; despite concerns in some of modern theology, some other theologians continue to argue for a nuanced form of the view (e.g., Boersma, *Violence*; McKnight, *Community*).

1304. On Luke's theology of the atonement, see Peterson, "Atonement Theology," esp. 70 (noting dependence on Isa 53; surveying Luke's often proclaiming forgiveness in the setting of the cross and resurrection; and discussing Acts 20:28); Carpinelli, "Memorial" (noting specifically Lukan cultic motifs alluding to biblical atonement rituals); Parsons, *Luke*, 135 (following helpfully Moessner, "Christ," esp. 167); Zyl, "Meaning" (noting its salvific value). Cf. Park, *Herem*, 177–78 (though the connection with Canaanite kings in 149–53 based on contexts of some LXX vocabulary in Acts may be oversubtle).

1305. Qumran may use it in conjunction with the messianic era; Isa 53:5 might appear in 4Q521 2.7–8, 11–12, along with Isa 35:5–6; 61:1; with 2 III, 2 alluding to Mal 4:5–6 (Evans, "Messianic Apocalypse," 696 [on 4Q521]). Some also argue that Qumran applies the servant to the community's founder (Betz, "Servant Tradition"), and justification by the servant to themselves (Tängberg, "Justification").

1306. So, e.g., Bruce, *Acts*³, 227–28; idem, *Acts*¹, 193, noting the excision of precisely this portion from the later haftarah.

baptism (8:37) and orders the chariot to stop so he can enter the water (8:38). Much of the action is driven by the official (as in 8:31) or by God (8:26, 29, 39); apart from Philip's question in 8:30, Philip simply obeys and follows the lead of God and the official (8:27, 30, 35, 38, 40). The official's reading Isa 53 at the precise time of Philip's arrival (Acts 8:28–33) also points to divine coordination of the human behavior here. Just as Peter could justify his mission to Cornelius as obedience to God's command (both directly, 11:9, 12, and through obviously fortuitous circumstances, 11:13–16), Philip's mission bore God's initiative and approval.

I. EXPLAINING SCRIPTURE (8:34–35)

In 8:34 the official asks Philip of whom the text speaks. Joachim Jeremias identifies three traditional Jewish interpretations of the servant, though not all are demonstrably pre-Christian: Israel, the prophet himself (though esp. using Isa 49:5; 50:10), or some other individual.¹³⁰⁷ Some of the servant material in Isaiah appears in the first-person singular (49:5; 50:4–5), and prophets could describe themselves in this manner (Jer 11:18–20).¹³⁰⁸ The Qumran *Peshar Habakkuk* applies Habakkuk's words to individuals;¹³⁰⁹ later rabbis applied Isa 50:6 to the prophet himself (*Lev. Rab.* 10:2, even more surprisingly applying Mic 5:1 to Micah). But because other verses refer plainly to Israel (e.g., Isa 41:8–9; 44:1–2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3) and some appear to distinguish the servant from Israel (Isa 49:5–7; 53:4–6), it is hardly surprising that the official was confused. (For a messianic reading of the servant's mission possible for Luke's setting, see comment on Acts 3:13.) For Luke's audience, however, it will be clear that the prophet does not speak concerning himself. Those who spoke concerning themselves were false leaders (note *ἑαυτοῦ* in 5:36; 8:9; cf. Luke 9:23; 16:15; 20:20), and the prophets spoke concerning Jesus (Luke 24:27, 44; Acts 3:18, 24; 10:43; 26:22; 28:23).

As Philip expounds Scripture (Acts 8:35), the informed reader may well think of another reading scene, Luke's programmatic scene in his Gospel where Jesus applies the Isaiah scroll to his own ministry.¹³¹⁰ One might start from an interlocutor's objections, making this the beginning of one's account (*ἀρχὴ τοῦ λόγου*, Philost. *Hrk.* 7.12); "beginning" from the start is also a familiar Lukan way of putting matters (Acts 1:22; 10:37), including how he presents Scripture exposition in a more directly parallel scene (Luke 24:27).¹³¹¹

II. THE OFFICIAL'S BAPTISM (8:36–38)

The first Gentile conversion story, this narrative is part of a much larger body of conversion accounts in Acts.¹³¹² The Nubian official's saving faith may recall that of another Nubian eunuch official in Jer 39:18 (46:18 LXX).¹³¹³ At the point of his baptism, the eunuch, previously excluded from full initiation into Judaism through

1307. Jeremias, "Παῖς," 684–89.

1308. Witherington, *Acts*, 299.

1309. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 414 (citing 1QpHab II, 1–15).

1310. Cf. Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 90.

1311. Cf. also Parsons, *Luke*, 105. For the road to Gaza passage as parallel to the road to Emmaus passage, see "Literary Features" in my introduction to Acts 8:26–40.

1312. Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 11, assigns to them more than a quarter of Acts' narrative. For conversion narratives in Luke's Gospel, see Méndez-Moratalla, *Paradigm*. Henderson, "Baptized," focuses on the conversion aspect of the narrative (though probably playing down too much the "Ethiopian" and "eunuch" significance).

1313. Scott, "Horizon," 534 (the LXX language for "saving I will save" is effective, though there it refers to the sword and Acts 8:36 lacks the same terminology; the LXX does use, however, a form of *πεῖθω* instead of the expected *πιστεύω*).

circumcision, is now welcomed into the eschatological heart of Judaism (via the other Jewish initiatory rite, baptism, on which see comment on Acts 2:38).

The Nubian treasurer’s “What prevents [κωλύει] me from being baptized?” is a natural question, given his background. Some scholars have viewed this as a liturgical question asked of those seeking baptism, given its use with baptism in Acts 10:47.¹³¹⁴ But the issue in both cases is not a general “If anyone has objections” (as at modern Western weddings) but the controversial issue of uncircumcised Gentiles being baptized (see 11:17),¹³¹⁵ a point quite important to Luke (cf. ἀκωλύτως, the final word in 28:31).¹³¹⁶ Further, it is not the ministrant but the candidate who asks the question here,¹³¹⁷ and the expression τί κωλύει “seems to be a fairly common idiom whose meaning differs little from Why not?”¹³¹⁸

Some, especially Stoic philosophers, used κωλύω to refer to no one’s being able to hinder one’s obedience to the divine will.¹³¹⁹ More important is that it applies to the threat of exclusion in several passages in Luke-Acts. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus opposes disciples who exclude others not part of their group (Luke 9:49–50), teachers of the law whose teaching keeps others from the kingdom (11:52), and disciples who exclude children (18:15–17); this principle carries over into God’s not excluding Gentiles in Acts (Acts 10:47; 11:17).¹³²⁰

Scholars today are accordingly more skeptical that this question represents a liturgical formula.¹³²¹ The parallel with Acts 10 suggests not an earlier liturgical pattern (however useful some may find it as a foundation for a later one) but the parallel between the two “first Gentile conversions”: the chronologically first account that Luke has and the first one recognized through an official debate of the Jerusalem church.

The real issue is that this African God-fearer has been denied full conversion to Judaism, offered through circumcision (see comment on Acts 15:1) and baptism (see comment on Acts 2:38).¹³²² If Philip “started” with Isa 53 (Acts 8:32–35), Luke’s biblically informed audience would not be surprised if his exposition reached the relevant passage about God accepting foreigners and eunuchs just three chapters later (Isa 56:3–8).¹³²³ Now the eunuch puts the matter to the test. Depending on the nature of his castration, he might have even been physically incapable of being circumcised (more likely he was simply ritually prohibited because of removal of the testicles), but Christian baptism¹³²⁴ would be available to him (and less painful to

1314. Cullmann, *Baptism*, 71–80 (citing also some possible patristic evidence); cf. Anderson, *Mark*, 247; Haenchen, *Acts*, 313; Bruce, *Commentary*, 231n60. *Ps.-Clem. Hom.* 13.5.1 does involve baptism, but it surely depends on the model stemming from Acts.

1315. Barrett, *Acts*, 432.

1316. The verb appears twelve times in Luke-Acts, about half the NT uses; the adverb appears only in 28:31 in the NT.

1317. Bruce, “Philip and Ethiopian,” 383–84.

1318. Barrett, *Acts*, 432 (citing Plato *Euthyphro* 9D; *Jos. War* 2.395; an analogous Latin construction in *Virg. Aen.* 5.631; *Petron. Sat.* 104, 127).

1319. E.g., *Test. Job* 3:7/6; *Mus. Ruf.* 16, p. 104.30 (cf. 11, p. 80.27); *Epict. Diatr.* 1.25.3; 2.17.22; 2.19.32; 4.13.24 (cf. also 1.12); *Marc. Aur.* 3.12. The Stoic use applies primarily to being unhindered if one desires nothing but God’s will.

1320. Cf. also Spencer, *Philip*, 183–85.

1321. E.g., Lewis, “Mark 10:14”; Bruce, “Philip and Ethiopian,” 383–84; Barrett, *Acts*, 432.

1322. Cf. also Spencer, *Philip*, 183. Removal of the penis would render circumcision physically impossible, but castration normally involved only the testicles (e.g., *Dio Chrys. Or.* 33.39; *Soranus Gynec.* 2.17.40 [37.109]) and hence would exclude circumcision for ritual, rather than physical, reasons.

1323. Even skipping ahead to suitable passages would not be prohibited, even during public readings of the prophets (Abrahams, *Studies* [1], 8–9, citing *m. Meg.* 4:4); later rabbis warned against skipping backwards, however (*b. Meg.* 24a). In later haftarah readings, if the reading of ten verses ended on a sad note, the reader would, for his final words, skip as far as necessary to end on a happy note (Patte, *Hermeneutic*, 40).

1324. Perhaps some Jewish baptisms apart from proselyte baptism would have been available.

him) either way.¹³²⁵ This step, in the case of one barred from circumcision, prefigures the church's decision in favor of accepting Gentile converts without circumcision (cf. Acts 11:18; 15:29).¹³²⁶

The question of where the eunuch sighted water may interest us but is not relevant to Luke's narrative, since it is unlikely that Luke himself knew the site and unlikelier still that his audience would have recognized any name had he given it.¹³²⁷ Writers list four primary alternatives:¹³²⁸

1. Wadi el-Hasi, near the coast north of Gaza, supported by tradition¹³²⁹
2. Ein ed Dirweh, on the southern road from Jerusalem to Hebron, in the hill country
3. Ein Hanniya, just west of Ein Yael (below)
4. Ein Yael, only five miles south of old Jerusalem on the northern and most direct route between Jerusalem and Gaza (that it was paved [helpful for chariots] and people appear to have lived there in this period also favors it)

Which of these views is likeliest depends on other reconstructions: how far was Philip on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, and had he passed Gaza (and hence needed an oasis in the desert) or was he in a well-watered region? These are questions for which the text, our only early source, provides no answers. Springs and possibly wadis appeared within visual range of both roads that Philip could have taken.¹³³⁰ Further, the terrain has changed over two millennia, and so other sites that may have once presented themselves may be no longer available. Any location is therefore a guess.

Some think that Luke might envision "a pool or even a stream . . . or possibly a small oasis (if he thought of it as a desert road—8.26),"¹³³¹ but if the official knew and approved of Judean tradition, he would probably at least have waited for a place with running water¹³³² and a volume of more than forty *se'ahs*.¹³³³ The tradition of any site

1325. Gage and Beck, "Barren Woman and Eunuch," argue that his conversion symbolically reverses his sterility.

1326. Detractors in Acts 11:3 and 15:5 might have protested, but practitioners on the "mission field" such as Philip and Paul were far enough removed from potential protests to pursue the Spirit's leading without immediate concerns about such constituencies.

1327. Perhaps even Philip, had he had occasion to travel the road again after two decades, would not have been able to distinguish one site from another. But even if he could identify it by sight, it is unlikely that he or the official, neither of whom often traveled in that region, would know the site's name; and Luke does not report from Philip even the official's name. There were Jewish settlements at some oases (for late Roman and Byzantine En-gedi, see Hirschfeld, "En-Gedi").

1328. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 69; Larkin, *Acts*, 135; esp. Rapuano, "Ein Yael?," 48. There also are some mikvaot, presumably for pilgrims, on the road south from Jerusalem (Amit, "Miqveh Complex"; Peleg and Amit, "Another miqveh"; further from the road, Zissu and Ganor, "Horvat 'Ethri"). Bede *Comm. Acts* 8:36a (following Jerome *De situ et nominibus locorum hebraicorum* [PL 23:882AB]) notes a spring at the foot of a mountain at the twentieth milestone when one travels from Helia to Hebron.

1329. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 194: "This place is still pointed out, whether rightly or wrongly who shall say?" The well "lies between Eleutheropolis and Ashkelon, according to the *Itinerarium Antoninianum* 32" (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 69). Supporting this site, see esp. Horton and Blakely, "Behold, Water!" (noting that as pointed out in 1838, the site fits clues in the text, such as an obvious site with fresh water on the old road).

1330. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 433.

1331. Dunn, *Acts*, 115. Even baptism in public baths could be possible (cf. Acts 2:41; comment on Acts 18:8; 19:5; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 237n49).

1332. Later rabbis allowed only a small part of drawn water (*m. Ter.* 5:6; *'Ed.* 1:3; 7:3–4; *Miqw.* 2:3ff.; 3:1–4; 4:1–5; 5:1–6; *t. Miqw.* 2; *'Ed.* 1:3; *Sipra Sh. par.* 9.118.1.1; *b. Šabb.* 16b; 65a; 144b; *Pesah.* 17b, 34b; *Bešah* 18; *Giṭ.* 16a; *Mak.* 4a; *Bek.* 55b; *y. Ter.* 4:12, 5:7); for archaeological confirmation that this reflects more widespread and early tradition, see Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 139; Pearlman, *Zealots*, 180–81; Yadin, *Masada*, 166; Hachlili and Killebrew, "Saga," 44, 46.

1333. Cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 433. Later rabbis demanded forty *se'ahs* (*m. Miqw.* 2:1–2; 7:6–7; *t. Ber.* 2:12; *Sipra VDDen. pq.* 6.9.7.1; *Sipra Sh. par.* 9.118.1.1; *Sipra Zabim pq.* 6.158.2.1–2; *b. Ber.* 22ab; *Qidd.* 66b, 79a;

apart from those nearest Jerusalem would surely be later local inference or boasting, since haggadah abhors a vacuum; no accidental local witnesses of the event would have understood and preserved it, and Philip the evangelist is unlikely to have revisited the site simply to signal its location for later pilgrims. If we read “noon” and assume that the “absurd command” is explained by Philip’s encounter, however, a site near Jerusalem is likelier than the farther sites.¹³³⁴ Coming on water at precisely this time (especially if “desert” refers to the road, 8:26, though this would imply a site farther south) shows God’s sovereign timing, just as Philip’s meeting the African official did.¹³³⁵

There is no catechetical or trial period as in later Christian practice, though neither is there opportunity for one here (8:39). Acts 8:37 may have answered the church’s need for at least elementary questioning,¹³³⁶ but Philip has engaged the man in a lengthy conversation from Scripture, and Luke is more content to trust Philip’s sense from the conversation that has been going on (8:35–36).¹³³⁷ Metzger rightly points out, “There is no reason why scribes should have omitted the material, if it had originally stood in the text.”¹³³⁸ All the earliest Greek manuscripts omit 8:37, as do the third- and fourth-century Coptic manuscripts, fifth-century Syriac manuscripts, the Ethiopic manuscripts, and even the majority of the Byzantine lectionary readings. Though manuscripts including it have also a wide geographic distribution (including to the north [e.g., the Armenian and Georgian] and west [the Italic]), the only early support appears in Old Latin manuscripts; they begin appearing in Greek under the influence of Latin, notably in a sixth- or seventh-century manuscript in Greek and Latin.¹³³⁹ The wide range of variation even among the manuscripts that include them is common among passages interpolated at a late date. Church fathers quote the passage widely (Iren. *Her.* 3.12.8), but what probably began as oral tradition and marginal notations took some time to work its way into the text.

The eager official appears to drive the action here; Luke reports Philip’s cooperation but not his speech (there is little likelihood that 8:37 is original).¹³⁴⁰ That both “descended”¹³⁴¹ into the water in Acts 8:38 is in keeping with the Jewish custom of immersing proselytes (see comment on Acts 2:38) and John’s pattern of baptism in the Jordan (Luke 3:3, 7, 21). One could supervise ritual immersions without entering the water oneself, but given John the Baptist’s pattern in the Gospel, we might well take for granted Philip’s presence without its explicit mention. Luke’s specification of both descending into the water (8:38) is emphatic, since the implied subject of the

Erub. 35b; *Pesah.* 109; *Yoma* 31; *Zebah.* 22a; *Hul.* 31a; *y. Hag.* 2:5, §3), so that the water covered the body (*m. Miqw.* 9:1–4; *Sipra Zabim* pq. 6.158.2.1–2, 3.5; *b. Hul.* 10a, 106b; *Qidd.* 25a).

1334. This could favor Ein Yael, with Rapuano, “Ein Yael?” and Larkin, *Acts*, 135.

1335. Witherington, *Acts*, 294.

1336. Contrast Carson, “Acts 8:37,” who thinks that Constantine ordered the verse omitted to make Cornelius the first convert, but this leaves the silence of early Egyptian sources implausible. Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.36b–38 acknowledges the textual variation but also thinks that the line was removed (“through scribal error” [L. Martin, 84–85; quote, 85]).

1337. Cf. Klauck, *Magic*, 28. Though some (I believe wrongly) question whether the Samaritans were genuinely converted, and hence object to Philip’s readiness to baptize in Acts 8:12, they normally do not repeat that questioning here; it would run counter to the supernatural character and positive function of the narrative.

1338. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 359.

1339. An earlier Greek and Latin text (Codex Bezae) omits them (Ladd, *Criticism*, 68). But 88 may be fifth century; E is from the sixth. This is a later Western expansion than the generally (on Acts) expansive Western tradition.

1340. See also Parsons and Culy, *Acts*, 167; esp. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 359–60.

1341. The presence of the same verb at Acts 8:26 (signifying there the geographic and perhaps theological elevation of Jerusalem) is likely coincidence; Luke employs καταβαίνω some thirty-two times; it was natural language for descending into an immersion pool (though, in the NT, cf. only John 5:7; in other baptismal contexts, the Spirit descends, Matt 3:16; John 1:33).

plural verb would have been sufficient to make the same point. Perhaps (though it is difficult to be certain) Luke explicitly mentions their joint descent to emphasize that Philip participated in the water alongside the official instead of simply supervising him, as was common in baptisms; being in the water together placed them on the same level before their Savior. Or perhaps Luke emphasizes the official's humility (though it is difficult to envision how a first-century Jewish immersion could have been undertaken without him entering the water).

If Philip met the official on the same day as he departed (cf. Acts 8:26), then, given the eunuch's continued journey in 8:39, the hour must be early to mid-afternoon. Depending on the time of year and which road they took (see discussion at Acts 8:26; the Judean hills would be cooler than the coastal plain, and they may still be near Jerusalem), the water might have been refreshingly cool in contrast to midday heat or perhaps unpleasantly cool.¹³⁴² But the text does not provide enough details to resolve the question; the function of proselyte baptism was conversion, not momentary refreshing.¹³⁴³

III. THEIR PARTING (8:39)

The closing verses of the section (8:39–40) recall earlier joy at conversions (8:8, 39) and frame Philip's recorded ministry with "passing through evangelizing" (8:4, 40).¹³⁴⁴

Pagan Greeks might think of invisibility in their stories. The helmet of Hades caused invisibility,¹³⁴⁵ and deities could shroud themselves¹³⁴⁶ or their favorite mortals¹³⁴⁷ in mist or a cloud to render them invisible. Greek folklore also assumed that deities assumed various familiar shapes to communicate with people or to disguise themselves or escape;¹³⁴⁸ Jewish texts speak of the disguises of angels¹³⁴⁹ and sometimes of God disguising mortals;¹³⁵⁰ Jesus himself is unable to be recognized at times after the resurrection (Luke 24:16).

Philip, however, does not become invisible or wear a disguise here; he is carried away. Divinely aided transport of some sort appears in various ancient sources.¹³⁵¹ Deities were thought able to fly when needed (Hom. *Od.* 1.319–20; Eurip. *Bacch.* 655) and could also lift favorite mortals out of danger¹³⁵² or carry them off by means of

1342. Ancients appreciated hot water for bathing (Xen. *Mem.* 3.13.3; Ap. Rhod. 3.272–73; Vitruv. *Arch.* 5.10.2; Sen. *Y. Nat.* Q. 3.24.2–3; Petron. *Sat.* 72; Forbes, *Technology*, 6:43–57; in Palestine, Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 482, 488), and hot springs were often used therapeutically (e.g., Vitruv. *Arch.* 8.3.4; Pliny E. *N.H.* 31.31.59–61; Plut. *Sulla* 26.3; Soranus *Gynec.* 1.15.49; Philost. *Hrk.* 23.30; others in Keener, *Matthew*, 158, esp. nn. 247–49).

1343. The Essenes, who emphasized purity, allowed one to descend to bathe even on the Sabbath where one finds water (CD XI, 1).

1344. Tannehill, *Acts*, 112.

1345. E.g., Aristoph. *Acharn.* 390; Soph. *Inachus* frg. 8, 26 (*SPap* 3:24–25); Apollod. *Bib.* 2.4.2.

1346. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 16.788–89; 17.551–52; Ovid *Metam.* 12.598–99; Sil. It. 9.488. They could also escape by flying over walls (Eurip. *Bacch.* 655, reflecting staging limitations).

1347. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 3.381; 5.23, 344–45; 20.321, 443–46; 21.597–98; 24.334–38; *Od.* 7.14–17, 41–42; 13.189–93; Soph. *Ajax* 70, 83–85; Eurip. *Hel.* 44–45; *Iph. Taur.* 27–30; *Orest.* 1629–36; Ap. Rhod. 3.210–13; 4.647–48; Virg. *Aen.* 1.411–14, 439–40; 12.52–53, 416; Ovid *Metam.* 5.621–24; 12.32–34; 15.538–39; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.16; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.6.8; Sil. It. 9.484–85. Mist was also used to conceal horses (Hom. *Il.* 5.776; 8.50) or to rape mortals (Ap. Rhod. 1.218; cf. Ovid *Metam.* 1.601–6); transformations also concealed mortals (Hom. *Od.* 16.454–59; Ovid *Metam.* 8.851–54, 872–74); cf. temporary invulnerability (Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.23).

1348. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 4.86–87, 121–24; Apollod. *Bib.* 2.4.8; 3.8.2; 3.10.7; 3.12.6; 3.13.5; see the much fuller listing of sources in the comment on Acts 1:3 (Keener, *Acts*, 1:667–68). They could also disguise the appearance of mortals (e.g., Hom. *Od.* 13.397–99) and become invisible (*Il.* 5.845).

1349. See Gen 18; Tob 5:4–6, 12; 9:1–5; 12:19; Philo *Abr.* 114; *Sipre Deut.* 38.1.4; y. *Pe'ah* 3:8, §3; Heb 13:2; cf. Judg 6:22; 13:20–23; Luke 24:16, 31. Also Satan in *Test. Job* 6:4; 17:2/1; 23:1; cf. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 26:2. 1350. *L.A.B.* 12:1; 61:9; 64:4.

1351. On instant teleporting, see, e.g., Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.10–11; a Greek source in Bultmann, *Tradition*, 238n1; or (for Pythagoras teaching in two locations simultaneously) Iambl. *V.P.* 28.134; in Jewish circles, see John 6:21; Verman and Adler, "Path Jumping"; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 59:11; and further discussion below.

1352. Hom. *Il.* 20.325–27 (if redactional, it is still pre-Christian); *Cypria* 8 (as summarized in Proclus *Chrestomathia*, which the editor supplements by Apollod. *Epit.* 3.1–33; *GEF* 75).

the winds.¹³⁵³ A deity could also lend a mortal means for flight; Athena gave Perseus winged feet.¹³⁵⁴ Later sources claimed that Abaris flew on a magic arrow¹³⁵⁵ and gave one to Pythagoras so that he could do the same;¹³⁵⁶ Protesilaus, a semidivine hero, was said to lift off the ground when running (Philost. *Hrk.* 13.2–3). Witches, too, were thought to fly at night,¹³⁵⁷ and one deliberately fantastic tale speaks of seeing the Hyperborean magician flying in daylight.¹³⁵⁸ Apparently such claims were familiar enough for magicians that one curious about magic might wish to see someone flying (Lucian *Lucius* 4).¹³⁵⁹ Brahman sages could levitate two cubits off the ground as part of their homage to the sun (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.15, 33).¹³⁶⁰

Philip does not fly or levitate; he is carried, which appears in some of the Greek stories above but is more dominant in Jewish accounts. In Jewish sources, Baruch was carried away by a strong spirit (or wind) in 2 *Bar.* 6:3 (though the sense may be visionary).¹³⁶¹ In a clearly early and widespread story, the angel of the Lord lifted Habakkuk by his hair, bringing him to Babylon to bring Daniel his dinner (Bel 36). Such Jewish sources could claim dependence on biblical tradition: Ezekiel was carried away by the Spirit (albeit in visions; Ezek 3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 43:5).¹³⁶² Relevant in view of other probable Elijah parallels in the story (see comment on running to the chariot at Acts 8:29–30) is that some thought that Elijah could be carried from one place to another (1 Kgs 18:12) and eventually he was, indeed, caught up, albeit to heaven (2 Kgs 2:11; cf. comment on Acts 1:8–11 for ancient analogies, though Luke does not provide sufficient literary parallels to Jesus’s ascension here to provide any direct connection with that). Later rabbis spoke of sages teleported from one place to another or the earth contracting, sometimes resembling broader Greco-Roman ideas.¹³⁶³

Luke emphasizes the eunuch’s joy, which occurs in conjunction with some other conversions in Luke-Acts (e.g., Luke 15:5–10, 32; Acts 8:8; 16:34; see comment on Acts 8:8). Because the eunuch’s reception of the Spirit is not narrated, some scholars think that his “rejoicing” is intended to signify reception of the Spirit.¹³⁶⁴ Paul and

1353. Philost. *Hrk.* 25.10.

1354. E.g., Lucian *Dial. S.-G.* 323 (14, Triton and Nereids 2).

1355. Iambl. *V.P.* 28.136.

1356. Iambl. *V.P.* 19.91; 28.140. Pythagoras was also able to be in two places at once, though the locations were days apart (Iambl. *V.P.* 28.134, 136; cf. John 6:21).

1357. Lucian *Dial. C.* 1 (Glycera and Thais), 281.

1358. Lucian *Lover of Lies* 13.

1359. The mistress would turn into a bird (Lucian *Lucius* 12). For other sources, including Lucian’s Hyperborean magician, see Blackburn, “ΑΝΑΠΕΣ,” 190. Note the same claim about Simon; see comment on Acts 8:9–11. On witches’ (and shamans’) flight in some unrelated traditions, see, e.g., Filson, “Analysis,” 76.

1360. Attempts to verify levitation have so far tended only to disconfirm it (see Benson, *Healing*, 166), though cf. McClendon, *Events*, 216–17 (including a case he witnessed on 217, while allowing for the possibility of fraud; cf. another’s claim on 144–45; idem, *Healing*, 59).

1361. Perhaps most interesting is that 4 *Bar.* 6:1–2 has Jeremiah’s Ethiopian eunuch, here called Abimelech, taken by an angel to find Baruch; but 4 *Baruch* is too late and not widely enough read to reflect a tradition used by Acts here, and the parallel is not close.

1362. Cf., e.g., 1 *En.* 14:25; 71:1 (his spirit), 5–6; 87:3; 2 *En.* 7:1 (by angels); 2 *Bar.* 6:3–4; *Test. Ab.* 8:3 B (by Michael, bodily, i.e., while still alive); Rev 4:1; 17:3; 21:10; *Odes Sol.* 36:1; *Herm.* 1.1.1; 1.2.1. Cf. also sources in Furnish, *II Corinthians*, S25; Keener, *Revelation*, 170.

1363. See Verman and Adler, “Path Jumping” (citing *b. Sanh.* 95ab; *Yebam.* 116a; also medieval “path jumping”; cf. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.10.363–64); *Gen. Rab.* 59:11. Cf. also Muhammad’s “Night Journey” (Qur’an 17.1), traditionally interpreted as a miraculous flight from Mecca to Jerusalem; modern claims of rapid teleporting, e.g., Yun, *Heavenly Man*, 39. The surmise of Blaiklock, *Acts*, 81 (cf. Peterson, *Acts*, 297; cf. perhaps Mark 1:12), that the Spirit merely urged Philip to withdraw is a naturalistic modern reading that likely would have eluded Luke’s audience. For some modern claims of supernatural relocation, see, e.g., Llewelyn, “Events,” 260; Koch, *Revival*, 145–46; Wiyono, “Timor Revival,” 288; Sithole, *Voice*, 178; Yun, *Heavenly Man*, 39; Kay Fountain, interview, Jan. 29, 2009.

1364. Lampe, *Seal*, 65.

occasionally Luke associate the Spirit with joy (Acts 13:52; Rom 14:17; 15:13; Gal 5:22; 1 Thess 1:6), yet the Samaritans received joy without the full ministry of the Spirit (Acts 8:8, 15).¹³⁶⁵ Was Philip unable to impart the Spirit through the gospel and baptism without the laying on of apostles' hands (8:15–17; cf. 2:38)? If so, we may doubt whether the official, lacking the Spirit, could accomplish much evangelism in his homeland (1:8), and Luke's own generation would also fail in its implied task. But even when apostles are present, the reception of the Spirit is usually not narrated (e.g., in 2:41, despite the likelihood that this happened [2:38]; also 16:33–34), yet when the Spirit was not received, this deficiency was thought worthy of immediate attention (8:15–16). Thus Luke presumably expects us to assume that the African official did receive the Spirit.¹³⁶⁶ Certainly we are not left to doubt whether the Spirit was active through Philip, since it was the Spirit who initiated the encounter (8:29) and the Spirit who in this same verse carried Philip away (8:39).

If, as suggested above, the African official was not a full proselyte, he might have felt disappointed that he could not enter the temple beyond the outer court; his high status in his own society did not translate much into high status in his adopted faith.¹³⁶⁷ Now, however, his visit to Jerusalem has proved amply rewarded by Israel's God. As noted above, his rejoicing parallels that of the Samaritans during their conversions (8:8).

Later traditions elaborate on the eunuch. The most plausible among them is that he became a missionary to his own people (Iren. *Her.* 3.12.8). Later Epiphanius claimed that the eunuch preached in Arabia Felix and the coasts of the Red Sea and was martyred and that his tomb worked miracles; other apostles also allegedly preached in Nubia.¹³⁶⁸ But these traditions probably simply seek to fill some of the many gaps in our knowledge.

e. Philip's Continuing Ministry (8:40)

Luke frames Philip's ministry with "passing through" and "evangelizing" (Acts 8:4, 40). The only other conjoining of διέρχομαι and εὐαγγελίζω in Luke-Acts (or the NT) is the apostles' mission in Luke 9:6, which shows that Philip carries on this line of work (perhaps, but not necessarily, also suggesting that the apostles should have continued to do the same). Because preaching the gospel on the way to one's destination resembles the summary of continuing ministry in Acts 8:25, it frames Philip's climactic ministry to the African official and caps off each of the two sections on Philip's ministry with continuing ministry (even though 8:25 may refer only to that of Peter and John).

The summary of 8:40 reveals that Philip's evangelistic mission extended throughout the coastal plain en route to Caesarea; Luke has simply provided the most dramatic (and in terms of the Gentile mission, foundational) example in more detailed form.¹³⁶⁹ "Azotus" is the ancient Philistine city of Ashdod (twenty-four times in the LXX),¹³⁷⁰

1365. Also Spencer, *Philip*, 215.

1366. Some later MSS and patristic tradition sought to make this more explicit; see Crehan, "Confirmation of Eunuch."

1367. Esler, *Community*, 154–57. Luke thus had to address the centrality of the temple in Acts 7 before the conversion of Samaritans and God-fearers in Acts 8.

1368. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 98.

1369. Spencer, *Philip*, 152–53. We cannot be sure whether Philip provided details on the rest, but if not, he offered, presumably, his "best story." By itself, that Philip "found himself" at Azotus perhaps could simply mean that he went there (Turner, *Grammatical Insights*, 158; for the idiomatic use of this verb in the passive voice, common in the LXX [e.g., Gen 2:20; 18:29–32; Exod 9:19; 1 Sam 25:28; Mal 2:6], cf. Luke 9:36; 17:18; Acts 5:39, though not in the Diaspora parts of Acts), but in view of Acts 8:39 the *means* of his arrival presupposed in 8:40 remains dramatic.

1370. E.g., Jdt 2:28; 1 Macc 4:15; 5:68; 9:15; 10:77–78, 83–84; 14:34; 16:10. Ancient Ashdod comprised some ninety acres, including twenty for the citadel (Kitchen, *World*, 12).

a well-planned town in Hellenistic times.¹³⁷¹ Azotus was about 2.5 miles (or about 4 km.) from the sea, nine miles (or 15 km.) from Ashkelon, twenty miles northeast of Gaza (about a day's walk from there), more than thirty miles (more than a full day's walk) "almost due west of Jerusalem," and "about halfway between Gaza and Joppa."¹³⁷² This might suggest that Philip and the eunuch were farther along the road than one would guess if it were still near "noon" (8:26); then again, we need not suppose that the Spirit carried him only nearby (cf., e.g., Ezek 8:3).¹³⁷³ The coastal towns between Azotus and Caesarea included Yavneh, Antipatris (Acts 23:31), Lydda, and Joppa (9:32–43; 10:5–23).¹³⁷⁴ Because some of these towns soon appear in Peter's ministry, Philip again functions as a forerunner of Peter's ministry, as he did in Samaria.¹³⁷⁵ The reader is thus not surprised to find disciples in Lydda (9:32) and Joppa (9:36) later;¹³⁷⁶ as the Jerusalem church heard of revival in Samaria (8:14), it presumably had also received word of the believers there. Samaritans settled in Caesarea in later centuries, perhaps because of the magnet of urbanization, but there is no clear evidence for them in the first century, and so it is not clear that Philip stops in Samaria because of his previous evangelistic success with Samaritans.¹³⁷⁷

Jewish people knew that many Gentiles lived in these cities, both from the familiarity of names such as Azotus and Gaza in the LXX and from subsequent Jewish sources. *Lives of the Prophets* (Jonah) 10:1 has Jonah from the "Greek" city of Azotus; though destroyed by Jonathan Maccabeus (1 Macc 10:84; 11:4), it was later restored by Rome.¹³⁷⁸ Herod left it to his sister Salome along with Yavneh (also mixed but more Jewish); in 67 Vespasian deported Jews from both cities (Jos. *War* 4.130).¹³⁷⁹ Luke would be well aware that Gaza, Azotus, and Caesarea had large Gentile populations,¹³⁸⁰ and this is his point: the Hellenist Philip is evangelizing in mixed areas, paving the way for the subsequent ministry of Hellenists in Acts 11:20.¹³⁸¹

Caesarea also proves strategic for the Gentile mission (10:1, 24; 11:11), and Philip apparently finally settles there (21:8).¹³⁸² Although he is therefore probably in Caesarea when Cornelius is converted, on that occasion God sends one of the Twelve, who can make the case successfully in Jerusalem for accepting Cornelius as a fellow Christian (11:4–18).

1371. Dever, "Ashdod," 270.

1372. Quotes from Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 415; some of the other data from Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 53 (also in Bruce, *Acts* 1, 195). On Ashkelon and Gaza, see also comment on Acts 8:26.

1373. The road "to Gaza" could simply specify his (and the eunuch's) destination, in contrast to Paul's "approaching" Damascus around noon (Acts 22:6).

1374. Witherington, *Acts*, 300. Most are named in Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.14.68 (along with Samaria!).

1375. Witherington, *Acts*, 301; cf. Dormeyer and Galindo, *Apostelgeschichte*, 161–62.

1376. With Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 99.

1377. See Levine, *Caesarea*, 107–12, 107. Outsiders might suppose their proximity (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.14.69).

1378. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 53–54.

1379. See *ibid.*, 54. It was probably more Jewish than Ashkelon and Gaza farther south (see Avi-Yonah, "Geography," 102).

1380. With Spencer, *Philip*, 153. Luke's ideal audience knew enough Scripture to recognize Philistine associations with the former and, at least after its first reading of Acts, would know of the latter (Acts 10:1). On Gentile populations in Palestine, see further comment on Acts 10:1.

1381. The later apocryphal *Acts of Philip* goes further, without restraint, recounting Philip's fictitious travels in Galilee (*Acts Phil.* 1), from Athens to Parthia (*Acts Phil.* 2), then from Parthia to Azotus (*Acts Phil.* 3–4) (Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 18).

1382. At least for a base of operation (Luke 10:5–9); but as Paul's ministry goes from stationary (Acts 13:1) to mobile (13:4), Philip's ministry may also change—in his case, in the opposite direction.

SAUL BECOMES A NEW WITNESS (9:1–31)

Luke earlier shifted from introducing a young persecutor (7:58–8:3) to describing a representative of those he scattered (8:4–40), indicating that God was using the persecutor to disperse the message beyond Judea and fulfill God’s plan in spite of him (cf. 26:14). Nevertheless, Philip, not Saul, was the focus of Acts 8. At this point, however, Luke’s narrative returns to the persecutor, converting him into a willing participant in his mission. Although the mission will ultimately be to the Gentiles, Luke focuses on Saul’s beginning among his own people, where he is located, and then in Jerusalem.¹

1. Saul’s Conversion and Call to the Gentiles (9:1–19a)

God, who is sovereignly bringing about the Gentile mission despite his church’s resistance (cf. 10:14, 28; 11:3, 8), not only converts a persecutor (9:1–9) but calls him to be a special agent of his mission (9:15), just as God called some biblical prophets in earlier theophanies. The Lord’s summary of Paul’s mission (9:15, proclaiming Jesus’s name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites) and coming sufferings (9:16; this includes his captivity in Acts 21–28) foreshadows most of the rest of Acts (esp. Acts 13–28).²

a. *Jesus’s Theophany Blinds and Converts Saul (9:1–9)*

Jesus’s glory, revealing his divine identity, blinds his persecutor, Saul. Realizing that he has been fighting the Lord he claimed to be serving, by persecuting the pious remnant with whom the Lord is identified, Saul repents and obeys.

I. INTRODUCTION

Why does Luke place Paul’s conversion at this point in his narrative?³ It appears here immediately after the first Gentile’s conversion (8:26–40) but immediately before Peter’s Judean mission (9:32–43), which leads to Cornelius’s conversion, apparently more widely known in the early Christian movement (10:1–11:18).⁴ It holds a strategic position in the narrative’s logic: the conversion of the apostle to the

1. In Pauline terms, Saul moves from an involuntary to a voluntary doer of God’s will (cf. Rom 9:22–23; 1 Cor 9:16–17). As in Acts, Paul apparently starts with his own people (cf. Rom 1:16), including in Jerusalem (15:19), and was converted near Damascus (Gal 1:17; cf. 2 Cor 11:32).

2. Paul’s conversion is naturally chronologically ahead of the “Pauline” section, but it is also good organization; Luke introduces the character in advance (Talbert, *Acts*, 82, cites Lucian *Hist. 55* for linking sections by overlapping material).

3. The placement is especially significant if Luke inserts the conversions of Paul and Cornelius into the midst of a “continuous Hellenist source” found in Acts 6–8 and 11:19–30 (Dunn, *Acts*, 76).

4. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 143; Dunn, *Acts*, 76. Paul also functions as a historic link between the later Gentile church, on the one hand, and the Twelve and Jesus, on the other (Slater, “Presentation of Paul”). On conversion stories as a genre, cf. Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 111–13; for various Jewish and Greek examples, see,

Gentiles. It thus stands as one of three almost consecutive conversion stories (minus the material in 9:32–43 that prepares for Peter’s ministry to Cornelius): the African official, Paul, and Cornelius.⁵

We cannot be certain of the chronology here; Luke, like other historians, struggled with arrangement, seeking to balance the need to follow the stories of characters and regions with the need to follow chronology. Saul’s Damascus mission could have preceded the revival in Samaria⁶ and the conversion of the eunuch, if Luke simply wished to follow up the second of the seven leaders from 6:5, after Stephen’s death before recounting Saul’s conversion. Luke traces the positive effects of Saul’s persecution (8:4) before recounting his conversion, thereby underlining how futile was his resistance; it was pointless for him to kick against the goads (26:14).

This is a strategic section of Acts, which includes two events that Luke ultimately reports three times: the conversions of Paul (9:1–8; 22:4–16; 26:6–18) and Cornelius (10:1–48; 11:5–15; 15:7–9). Ancient storytellers often delighted in following Homer’s lead by reporting stories within stories, but Luke mainly repeats and develops the same ones; in its later retellings, the account of Paul’s conversion becomes the longest substory within Acts’ longer plot.⁷ Sometimes deliberately and sometimes simply because three was a small plural number, rhetoric often used triplets.⁸ The accounts in this section show God surprising his people by lavishing mercy on the unexpected, whether a former persecutor (9:13–14, 26) or Gentiles (10:14; 11:3). Though initially resistant, God’s church does learn (9:17; 10:28; 11:18)—at least temporarily (15:5).

(1) *Comparing Luke’s and Paul’s Accounts*

Although Luke naturally includes many details that Paul does not, since he is writing historical narrative rather than narrative examples of points in epistles, his claims are confirmed at numerous points by Paul’s own writings.⁹ Luke claims that Jesus revealed himself to Paul unexpectedly near Damascus and called him to preach to Gentiles. Paul makes the same claims. Whatever else he may have “received” as tradition from others (cf. 1 Cor 11:23),¹⁰ he received his gospel not this way (Gal 1:11–12) but through a revelation of Jesus Christ (1:12), presumably meaning a revelation the

e.g., Diog. Laert. 6.5.87; Diogenes *Ep.* 38; *Sipre Num.* 115.5.7; further, Keener, *Matthew*, 153, 476 (though these might also be compared with “call” stories).

5. Given the table of nations tradition in Acts 2:9–11, one might think of these as representatives from Ham (the African official), Shem (Saul), and Japheth (Cornelius) respectively; but Luke values Paul as apostle to the Gentiles, and so ministry to Gentiles is the theme that binds the three examples together. Luke’s Gospel also includes “conversion narratives” (see, e.g., Luke 5:8; 19:1–10; cf. 8:38–39; 15:7, 10), as well as nonconversions (e.g., 18:18–23) and examples of both together (7:36–50; 8:12–15; 17:11–19; 23:39–43).

6. We need not infer this, however, from Saul failing to pursue the Jesus movement into Samaria. Saul’s interest was in stopping it among Jews (cf. Chance, *Acts*, 146); there were Jewish synagogues in Damascus, but not likely among less urbanized Samaritans (who had their own, alternative synagogue).

7. Cf. Rosenblatt, “Narration,” 105. Commentators regularly note the triple repetition of Paul’s conversion (e.g., Langner, *Hechos*, 327). Repetition is often deliberate; thus Schultze, “Cincinnatus,” 404–5, argues that Dionysius repeats the story of Cincinnatus’s plowing twice deliberately rather than ineptly. For repetition for reinforcement in rhetorical expansion, see Hermog. *Inv.* 2.7.120–21; cf. Proclus *Poet.* 6.2, K171.1–5.

8. Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 473 (noting twenty triplets in Jude); cf., e.g., Peter’s denials (Luke 22:34, 61) and (as repetition for reinforcement, as here) visions (Acts 10:16; 11:10).

9. Cf. also Ware, *Synopsis*, §99, pp. 180–85; §162, pp. 290–93; §163, pp. 292–97; noting divergences but finding correlations more striking, Campbell, *Deliverance*, 145–47.

10. Paul may use the language of tradition in 1 Cor 11:23 (with, e.g., Hunter, *Gospel according to Paul*, 41; Davies, *Paul*, 248; Cullmann, *Early Church*, 73; Beus, “Traditie”; Farmer, “Peter and Paul,” 54–55; Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 321; Cerfaux, *Church*, 257; Koenig, *Hospitality*, 49n41).

content of which was Jesus Christ (1:16).¹¹ This fits the context (1:15–16) and other Pauline passages (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8).¹² As noted above, Paul did not solicit the revelation; it came freely by divine grace (Gal 1:15),¹³ a point for which Luke may well depend on Paul's own perspective.¹⁴

Further, it came in the context of his call to preach among Gentiles (Gal 1:15–16; Acts 9:15; 26:20). This occurred somewhere near Nabatean Arabia near Damascus (Gal 1:17) and in the period when he was persecuting Christians (1:13). Paul himself claims to have experienced a “revelation” of Christ (1:12, 16) and (more explicitly than Luke here or in Acts 22:6–7; 26:13–14; but see 9:17; 22:14–15; 26:16) to have *seen* Jesus (1 Cor 9:1) in a sort of belated resurrection appearance (1 Cor 15:8).¹⁵ Paul's letters compare it to the resurrection appearances that the other disciples experienced (1 Cor 15:8),¹⁶ though Luke's account might make Paul's experience more theophanic and less personal than that of the disciples in Luke 24.¹⁷

Lüdemann complains that if Luke really had traveled with Paul, we should expect more information “about Paul's early days.”¹⁸ But Acts implies that Luke was not with Paul during his early days (the “we” begins only in Acts 16:10); further, Acts compresses considerable material into a small space, and so there is much missing we would like to know more about. What Acts does recount of Paul's early days some other scholars find doubtful because it is more than what Paul tells us!¹⁹ Acts recounts Paul's conversion, however, as Paul does; Luke undoubtedly heard Paul recount this numerous times, if the relatively few autobiographic notes in Paul's writings are any indication (1 Cor 15:8–9; Gal 1:12–16; Phil 3:6; cf. 1 Tim 1:13).²⁰

11. In 2 Cor 12:1, the revelations may be “from” the Lord, but one need not draw too sharp a distinction or exclude the Lord from also being often the content (Lincoln, *Paradise*, 73), as also sometimes (but not always) in Acts. Or Paul might claim the Lord as their primary content, as in the example in Acts 12:8–9 (Keener, *Corinthians*, 238).

12. Others also note light that Paul's letters shed on his encounter with Christ (Matlock, “Road”) or how it influenced his theology (Kim, *Origin*).

13. Augustine also emphasized Paul's conversion as a model of grace, following the testimony of the letters (Pelikan, *Acts*, 121, citing Aug. *C. du. ep. Pelag.* 1.19.37; see 1 Tim 1:15–16), though he did not pattern his own conversion after it (Asiedu, “Self,” on *Ep. 22*; *Conf.* 8.12.29). For suggested reasons for Augustine's frequent emphasis on Acts 9:4, see Guevin, “Saul.” For this experience's possible influence on Paul's subsequent formulation of reconciliation to God, see Kim, *New Perspective*, 214–38.

14. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 41–42, contrasting the revelation to Cornelius for his pious works (Acts 10:2–4).

15. Others also note the mutual corroboration of the sources (e.g., Hemer, *Acts in History*, 182; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 41). Some argue that the apocryphal *Acts of Paul* knows only Gal 1, not Luke's account of Paul's conversion (Rordorf, “Conversion”). For one comparison of the different Lukan Acts accounts of Paul “seeing” Christ, plus those in Paul's letters, see Diefenbach, “Sehen.”

16. Haacker, *Theology*, 9.

17. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 39, argue that even Paul's letters assume seeing Christ in his “glorified” state (Phil 3:21; cf. Rom 8:11, 18; citing [42] 2 Cor 4:4–6). The language of “revelation” (Gal 1:12, 16) probably supports this thesis. Even the context quickly following 1 Cor 15:8 specifically depicts resurrection corporality as glorified.

18. Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 6.

19. Townsend, “Acts 9:1–29,” 97–98, compares Luke's elaboration beyond Paul's own testimony to the very tradition that Paul denies in Gal 1:11–20, but the mirror-reading procedure in Gal 1 is disputable. Pervo, “Converting,” prefers Paul, and naturally we should recognize that Luke tells the story his own way (note, e.g., parallels with other Lukan revelations, e.g., Luke 2:9). Nevertheless, anyone who heard Paul speak (see our comment on Acts 16:10) or used such hearers as a source would have access to Paul's basic conversion story, which Paul apparently retold (see esp. 1 Cor 15:9 and Phil 3:6, probably both assuming his hearers' prior knowledge). Thus one may note differences while also underlining some common features between the accounts (as in, e.g., Towey, “Damascus”).

20. Note that Paul sometimes addresses his past persecutions (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13) and conversion by revelation (1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:12, 16) together, suggesting that the latter terminated the former. Paul

(2) *Luke's Three Accounts*

Although the basic picture is secure, a comparison of the three accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts raises questions concerning some of the details:²¹

- Who fell (Acts 26:14; 9:4, 7)?
- Did they all hear Jesus (9:7; 22:9)?²²
- Ananias's role is omitted in Acts 26 (where it is less relevant).
- Did the commission come on the road (26:16–18), through Ananias (9:15–17), or in Jerusalem (22:21)?²³

That Luke is the author of all three accounts shows how far our modern concern for details (particularly displayed in redaction criticism of the Gospels, including my own work there) is from Luke's own agenda as an ancient historian.²⁴ Ancient historians were less concerned with the consistency of "minute details" than we are today.²⁵ The words of dialogue, however, are virtually identical (9:4–6; 22:7–10; 26:14–16), suggesting a rigorous preservation of the story's core.²⁶ Additional expressions, such as "kick against the goads" (26:14), are possible paraphrases to amplify the point (an acceptable rhetorical technique).²⁷

Are Luke's changes among these accounts deliberate clues for how his audience should interpret them? Since ancient audiences would hear the work read, they might not catch such subtle "clues" on the first reading, but because they would hear the work read more than once, they might well catch such differences. The narrator speaks "as an objective observer and teller" in Acts 9, providing various perspectives in the later accounts.²⁸ Ancient historians sought to present speeches appropriate to the speakers, and Paul's retellings of his conversion fit this pattern.²⁹

This difference does not require us to think that Luke portrays the later accounts as inaccurate. The reports by Lysias and Festus differ from the reliable narrator's description, and these may well be "slanted for the speaker's benefit"; we need not, however, suppose the same for Paul's conversion accounts. Paul is one of Luke's most "reliable" characters and is next to Jesus perhaps the reliable character par excellence (with a few possible exceptions, such as 15:39). The differences are too minor and do

occasionally included other autobiographic elements, especially—though not exclusively—from his earlier years (2 Cor 11:32–33; Gal 1:17–2:14).

21. Dunn, *Acts*, 117. For fuller comparison tables of the three accounts and their differences, see Marguerat, *Actes*, 319–22; Dormeyer and Galindo, *Apostelgeschichte*, 333–34; Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 210–12; Chance, *Acts*, 404–5; also comparisons in Baptist, "Conversion." For Luke's narrative portrait of Paul's conversion in Acts as a whole, see Calambrogio, "Saulo."

22. Discussed from an early period; Martin, *Acts*, 103n2, cites Didymus (PG 39:1672); Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 47.

23. On this question, all three are possible, but Paul has reason to delay mentioning his call until Acts 22:21 in that speech, where it could provoke his audience if he has not yet built sufficient rapport (and even, apparently, if he has!).

24. Dunn, *Acts*, 117. In 1876, Abbott, *Acts*, 111, contended that of all the comparisons, only four constituted discrepancies, "and these present no serious difficulties, except to those who desire to find contradictions in Scripture, or who needlessly multiply them by a theory of verbal inspiration, such as the Scriptures nowhere claim."

25. Witherington, *Acts*, 311.

26. Dunn, *Acts*, 121.

27. On amplification, see, e.g., *Progymn.* 4.37–42, 80–82; Heath, "Invention," 95; Anderson, *Glossary*, 26–29. Witherington, *Acts*, 311, regards "kick against the goads" as a likely example of Luke's "literary freedom."

28. Rosenblatt, "Narration," 104–5.

29. See Spencer, "Approaches," 402–3 (following Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 125); cf. also Witherington, "Editing," 335–44; Chance, *Acts*, 404.

not present Paul as dishonestly seeking to make himself look better at the expense of truth.³⁰ Further, as speeches, the accounts in Acts 22 and 26 follow rhetorical conventions less applicable to Luke's narrative in Acts 9;³¹ it was also rhetorically proper to select the elements and slant appropriate to the particular audience in view.

Some suggest that the three accounts show development, although scholars differ concerning what is developed.³² Whether the narratives show linear development is not clear, but clearly they are meant to be read as part of the larger unified work, since each narrative includes some details missing in the other accounts. The differences thus leave "a cumulative effect."³³ The same may be said for the two versions of Jesus's ascension (Luke 24:44–53; Acts 1:6–11), which provide different details, use different words, but recount the same event, at the same time revealing the broad latitude of literary freedom Luke apparently expected his audience to allow him. As Pheme Perkins puts it: "When Luke repeats an episode, he gives the reader a different version. Usually that version contains new information that is appropriate to the particular setting in the story."³⁴ Those who regularly heard the Scriptures would have understood this way of hearing narrative repetition; for example, the report of Joseph's brothers in Gen 47:3 adds new information to the author's bare narration in 42:11, yet 44:19 reveals that it should be understood as a legitimate part of the original incident. Luke complements each report with the others, minimizing repetition except of central features that cannot be omitted.

Ancient literary and writing techniques help explain both Luke's method and his first audience's likely understanding of his work. Aune suggests that Luke implicitly uses a procedure more explicitly employed by other historians—namely, that of presenting varying versions of an event from different sources and letting the reader decide.³⁵ But such a procedure is effective in Greco-Roman historians only when explicit, mentioning the variation among sources; otherwise it looks as if the writer was not paying attention to his story.³⁶ Luke does have variations, but they are not substantial enough (at least in the accounts of Paul's conversion) to constitute divergent "versions." A more helpful approach in this case is "recitation composition." In a rhetorical culture, variation is valued; thus there is often extensive verbatim agreement, but also variation, with "no commitment to verbatim copying."³⁷ Cicero acknowledged that he and other orators sought rhetorical variation when restating the same matter or reusing a term or expression.³⁸

30. Tannehill, *Acts*, 321. Selecting the most useful points for narration differs from fabricating them. As Luke is a reliable narrator, the converted Paul is (usually) a reliable character, and Jesus (always) is. Retellings in slightly different words are also accepted in Luke's Bible (e.g., Gen 41:3 with 41:19).

31. With Witherington, *Acts*, 666.

32. E.g., Witherup, "Functional Redundancy" (Paul's development as a witness); Reymond, "Paul sur le chemin" (from the story of a man to a Jew to a people).

33. Witherington, *Acts*, 666. On the complementary nature of the different reports, cf. also Hedrick, "Paul's Conversion/Call," 432; cf. Pervo, "Converting."

34. Perkins, *Reading*, 255–56.

35. Aune, *Environment*, 135 (citing Hdt. 3.3; 4.11, 179; 7.150, 167, 214; Polyb. 1.36.4; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.2.1).

36. Apparently ancient Israelite practice was more like what Aune suggests here (e.g., in multiple versions of David's preregnal story); but even here the ultimate desired effect could well be cumulative, most clearly with the two creation accounts laid side by side in Gen 1–2, both of which the author employs theologically.

37. Robbins, "Writing," 155 (more fully, 146–55, critiquing earlier forms of redaction criticism); cf. Blomberg, *Gospels*, 157–58; for parallel stories in the ancient Near East, cf. Knoppers, "Problem." Anyone who has endured messengers' verbatim presentations in some classical texts will appreciate this emphasis. Repetition of refrains was a different matter; see, e.g., Catull. *Carm.* 62.4–5, 10, 19, 25, 31; comment on Acts 6:7.

38. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 13.27.1; *Or. Brut.* 46.156; 47.157. For one example, cf. the varied terms for "listen" in Xen. *Anab.* 5.1.8–10.

Scholars differ as to the sources of the three accounts of Paul's conversion. Some think that Luke heard other stories besides Paul's and may not have known Paul's firsthand.³⁹ Hedrick regards Acts 9:1–19 as "a traditional miracle story of Paul's conversion that has been adapted as a commissioning narrative by Luke," 22:4–16 as "Luke's edited version of the traditional legend," and 26:12–18 as "Luke's own abbreviated composition."⁴⁰ Witherington notes that all three reveal Luke's style and argues that Luke was present for Acts 26 (the author of the "we" narrative presumably remained in Judea between 21:8–18 and 27:1–2) and probably had information from Paul for Acts 9 and 22.⁴¹ Luke could have been present in Acts 22 but probably was not, especially if he was (as I think most likely) ethnically Gentile and we accept his implication (ἐνόμιζον) that Trophimus was not with Paul during the riot (21:29).

(3) Date

The date of Paul's conversion has generated considerable discussion based on varied chronologies of the rest of Paul's life.⁴² For a sample, Robert Jewett provides the following chronology (I have omitted some of his dates):⁴³

- Conversion: August to October 34 C.E.
- Three-year span (Gal 1:18): 34–37
- Escape from Aretas: August to October 37
- Fourteen years (Gal 1:21): 37–51
- Paul's arrival in Corinth: January to February 50
- Departure from Corinth: mid-July to late August 51
- Apostolic conference: August to October 51⁴⁴

He allows eighteen months for resurrection appearances (on the basis of early Christian and gnostic sources) and hence dates Paul's conversion to October 3 or 8, 34.⁴⁵ This chronology, however, is likely too tight. A larger number of scholars date the resurrection to 30 rather than 33, and this allows more time for Pauline chronology.⁴⁶ Thus Riesner argues for Jesus's crucifixion on April 7, 30 C.E.; for Stephen's persecution probably about 31/32, and for Paul's conversion probably in the second year after Jesus's crucifixion (31/32).⁴⁷ (Ramsay suggests Paul's conversion in 32 C.E. on

39. Lake, "Conversion," 188–95. He prefers Paul's own account; but for problems in comparing Acts and Pauline letters, which belong to different genres and often reflect different concerns, see, e.g., the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:231–33, 409, esp. 231–32; Hillard, Nobbs, and Winter, "Corpus"; and Wenham, "Corpus." As to one's own account always being most reliable, there are points where I would trust ancient historians regarding Augustus over his *Res Gestae* (including material in Suetonius that few of Augustus's contemporaries dared write), and even the adulations of Ovid and Virgil contain some relevant material.

40. Hedrick, "Paul's Conversion/Call," 432. Pervo, *Acts*, 236, argues that Luke in Acts 9:1–19a adapts a source.

41. Witherington, *Acts*, 309. See similarly Bock, *Acts*, 350; allowing for variation and adaptation, Marshall, *Acts*, 167.

42. For a thorough review of views from the 1600s through the twentieth century, see Riesner, *Early Period*, 3–28 (7–28, on the twentieth century). Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 138–39n279, prefers Riesner's defense of the traditional chronology (as against Lüdemann).

43. Jewett, *Chronology*, 99.

44. Most scholars date this conference to the late 40s (e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 86).

45. Jewett, *Chronology*, 100 (dating [29] Jesus's passion to 33 C.E.). Campbell, "Anchor," suggests 33 C.E.; Kistemaker, *Acts*, 19, suggests 35 C.E. For discussion of the duration of resurrection appearances, see comment on Acts 1:3.

46. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 8, dates the crucifixion to 32 C.E.

47. Riesner, *Early Period*, 35–58, esp. 57–58, for Jesus's crucifixion; 59–63, for Stephen's persecution; 64–74, for Paul's conversion. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 86, suggest 29–32 C.E. if Galatians means

January 19, the traditional day,⁴⁸ but apart from this substantially later tradition, we cannot render so specific a guess.) Further, people counted by parts of years, so that three years (Gal 1:18) might mean little more than a year (at minimum) and three and fourteen (Gal 2:1) might be reckoned inclusively; these observations require “a total period of at least twelve and not more than seventeen years.”⁴⁹ The chronology becomes unduly tight again only for those who seek to date Stephen’s martyrdom to the interregnum after Pilate’s recall in 36.⁵⁰ Most scholars agree that Paul must have been converted in the early 30s, since he was in Corinth in 50 or 51 (Acts 18:12) and Gal 1:17–2:1 allows only so much leeway even in the most compressed reading of the chronology.⁵¹

(4) Various Explanations

Readers have approached Paul’s conversion from various angles.⁵² Enlightenment scholarship tried to explain Paul’s conversion experience as ecstatic and solely internal, attributing it to some psychological abnormality or a hallucination.⁵³ By itself, this experience would not explain the independent and roughly simultaneous revelation to Ananias (Acts 9:10–16), but since Paul himself does not record that, it is often dismissed as part of Luke’s apologetic.⁵⁴ Although psychoanalytic approaches to Paul’s conversion have not vanished,⁵⁵ they generated more attention in their heyday.⁵⁶ Richard Rubenstein explains Paul’s vision as “an instance of hallucinatory wish fulfillment”; though not pathological, it is common under stressful conditions, such as the noonday heat (cf. Acts 26:13).⁵⁷ Others have claimed that Paul was neurotic, prompting the reply that Paul’s unusual characteristics reveal

seventeen years, 32–34 C.E. if it means fourteen years. Witherington, *Acts*, 88–90, suggests Paul’s conversion in 34 C.E., his first visit to Jerusalem about one and a half years later in early 37, then the second visit in 48, but I am inclined, with Riesner, to date Paul’s conversion earlier. The earliest suggestion for Paul’s conversion date is Vardaman, “Lectures” (esp. 3:10–11, 13), arguing for 25 C.E. (to my knowledge, no one else argues this).

48. Ramsay, *Other Studies*, 363.

49. Koester, *Introduction*, 2:102.

50. Cf., e.g., Moody, “Chronology,” 230, though he probably rightly includes the three years in the fourteen.

51. E.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 86; Dahl, *Studies*, 2.

52. For a survey, see Corley, “Interpreting Paul’s Conversion.”

53. See summary, *ibid.*, 13–15. Lightning striking Paul could have produced all the phenomena in Acts and Paul’s letters (Bullock, “Converted by Lightning?”)—except the content of the revelation. Other countervailing factors (such as likely travel conditions and Paul’s companions) could be more readily explained differently or would have to be dismissed (possibly a case of dismissing data incongruent with the hypothesis). One might also wonder if Luther’s call experience during a storm has affected some readers’ perception of Paul’s story.

54. From a literary standpoint, it matches the paired revelations of Acts 10:3–6 and 10:10–16; a theist, however, could counter that Luke reports legitimate patterns in divine activity (undoubtedly Luke’s own perspective). As one among many potential examples, my wife had experiences in Africa confirming the possibility of simultaneous and independent revelatory experiences.

55. Cf., e.g., Clerget, “Lumière”; Ellens, *Light*, 109 (though Ellens avoids reductionism). In response to (but without discounting) Lüdemann’s view that Paul was emotionally conflicted about persecuting Christians, Wedderburn, *Beyond Resurrection*, 76, notes that the hard evidence that we do have (Paul’s descriptions of his pre-Christian life) shows little anxiety.

56. Segal, *Convert*, 294, notes that psychoanalytic studies of Paul tend to suffer from worse bias than other psychoanalytic studies of conversion.

57. Rubenstein, *Paul*, 48. Pilch, *Visions*, 69–70, suggests either travel (e.g., “road trance”) or (more likely) intense concentration, but Paul was not likely meditating as he traveled. Various stimuli can generate trance states in normal people (Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 39); psychiatrists can induce them without mystical explanations (*ibid.*, 40), and various cultures interpret them differently (41, 44). Cognitive neuroscience shows that one need not reject vision reports as ahistorical literary devices (Pilch, “Trance Experience”; *idem*, *Flights*, 216–30).

his genius, not neurosis.⁵⁸ (In response to a more neurological approach based on epilepsy, Paul's visions do not resemble those experienced in epileptic seizures, contrary to a view once often held.)⁵⁹

As cultural standards of acceptability have changed, so have psychological and social approaches to conversion, although many insights offered along the way have often been applicable to converts. William James argued that conversions are often of one previously unhappy⁶⁰ and that they are a normal adolescent phenomenon.⁶¹ Robert Thouless viewed Saul's persecution of Jesus's followers as a form of unconscious resistance to what threatened his previous belief system.⁶² Thouless argues against the durability of adolescent conversions⁶³ but links Paul's adult conversion with other more durable adult conversions.⁶⁴ Whether general modern Western patterns shed much light on conversions in other settings may be explored, but they explain neither all the dimensions of every specific case nor Paul's revelatory experience near Damascus.⁶⁵

The exclusively psychological explanations have traditionally failed, in part because they rest on faulty premises, such as the alleged harshness of Jewish faith, the deeper spirituality of Hellenism, or repressed guilt for persecuting Christians.⁶⁶ W. G. Kümmel's argument that Rom 7 is not autobiographical was meant to target and demolish precisely the argument that guilt drove Paul's conversion (cf. Phil 3:4–6).⁶⁷ It is also

58. Copestake, "How Neurotic?," replying to Barker, *Church's Neurosis*.

59. Ramsay, *Teaching*, 306ff. Psychomotor epilepsy does have some neurological similarities to trance states (Prince, "EEG," 122–24), but so do sleepwalking (124–25) and even (more distantly) REM sleep (Bourguignon, "Introduction," 14; cf. Prince, "EEG," 131).

60. James, "Self," 122–23. Many converts have explored various solutions to metaphysics or other religious options (Campbell, *Deliverance*, 134–35, noting Dawson, "Movements," 120). While many lack satisfying group attachments, they are often gradually socialized into the new group before conversion (Campbell, *Deliverance*, 132–33).

61. James, "Self," 125. More recent studies confirm that many converts are young and educated (Campbell, *Deliverance*, 134).

62. Thouless, "Psychology," 138. On resistance to conversion, see also Pasquier, "Experience," 196–97.

63. Thouless, "Psychology," 142, suggesting that they involve feelings rather than behavior (though psychology today offers a more positive role for emotions, sometimes connecting them with cognitive faculties; see Elliott, *Feelings*, 19–48). Following ideas more dominant in his day, Thouless contends that adolescent conversion relates to repressed sexual impulses (Thouless, "Psychology," 142), because adolescents are taught to feel guilty about sex (143; on adolescent sexual development, see also, e.g., Dominion, *Growth*, 34–35). Although some have associated Paul's preconversion struggle with sexual temptation (see Gundry, "Frustration," 233), most find the purported evidence too ambiguous (e.g., Johnson, *Romans*, 121; Schreiner, *Romans*, 369; Das, *Debate*, 216; Jewett, *Romans*, 448, 465); some even think that association of the evil impulse primarily with sexual sin is distinctively Babylonian (Rosen-Zvi, "Yeser"), though I am less convinced (besides the *Midrash Rabbah*, cf. similar language in the hellenized *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*). Ancient adolescence also included sexual temptation (see comment on Acts 7:58), but the possibly relatively early age of marriage in Palestinian Judaism (cf. *Test. Levi* 9:10; *m. 'Ab.* 5:21, 32; *b. Qidd.* 29b–30a; Cohen, *Law*, 297–98; elsewhere *CIJ* 1:409, §553; but contrast Philo *Creation* 103; *Test. Iss.* 3:5; Thornton, "Bachelors"; Jeffers, "Families," 134–35) may have limited its impact.

64. Thouless, "Psychology," 144. Thouless emphasizes the value of mature, "mystical" conversions (145–46). That Paul may have been younger than some of Thouless's adult convert examples (see comment on Acts 7:58) need not detain us here, since in Paul's culture his contemporaries achieved adulthood at the age we define as adolescence. Again reflecting on modern Western culture, Hiltner, "Theology," 179, views conversion in one's thirties as particularly valuable, suggesting (190) its importance for a mature life.

65. Citing studies, Oates, "Conversion," recognizes various kinds of conversion (e.g., 162–63) and avoids reductionism. In terms of the basic psychological structures, he notes (165–67, esp. 167) conversions to secular ideas also.

66. Munck, *Salvation*, 11–13; Hurtado, "Convert" (emphasizing the christological focus of Paul's experience). Despite his better scientific grounding, even Segal, *Convert*, 289, cites frequent conversion factors that do not easily apply to Paul if he was satisfied before his conversion with his performance of the law (as it appears in Gal 1:14; Phil 3:6).

67. Kümmel, *Römer* 7, in Corley, "Interpreting Paul's Conversion," 14–15. Most contemporary scholars, whether they regard Rom 7 as autobiographical or not, deny that it is Paul's *preconversion* view of his condition

virtually impossible to apply effectively and extensively the psychoanalytic method (and most other psychological exploratory methods, useful as they may be on living subjects) to someone who has been dead for two millennia, especially when the person has left us only bits of autobiographic material.⁶⁸

Social-scientific explanations of conversion today tend to be “less pathological” and “more sympathetic” than in the past and are less reductionist (neither purely cognitive nor purely affective).⁶⁹ The last few decades have witnessed a shift from psychology to sociology for models of conversion because, its advocates urge, it is more quantifiable.⁷⁰ A potential weakness in this approach is that the preestablished categories are limited and they look only for anthropological continuity, not possible theological discontinuity. Provided we take into account the approach’s limits, however, it provides useful insights. We look at some of this discussion further below in section I.a.i.8, “Calling or Conversion?”

Our modern explanations reflect a worldview quite different from that of Luke’s first audience. Ancients were familiar with conversion and conversion stories, which appear in both Jewish and broader Greco-Roman sources.⁷¹ Both Jewish proselytism and Greek philosophic conversion entailed moral and long-term change, as in Acts;⁷² outsiders would have objected not to the “formal components” of Christian conversion but only to its “object/content.”⁷³ Most important is that ancients were more open to the possibility of divine and angelic encounters, and even some who disagreed with parts of Paul’s theology may have nevertheless granted the reality of his experience (Acts 23:9).⁷⁴

Many pagans took for granted the postmortem ascent of the soul,⁷⁵ although often more quickly for those not excessively burdened down by earthly interests;⁷⁶ some philosophers, most commonly later Platonists, prepared for such ascents by “ascending” out of bodily attention into contemplation of the divine.⁷⁷ Some also sought various forms of visionary ascents while alive.⁷⁸ Ascension claims were apparently familiar enough to warrant parody.⁷⁹

(e.g., Enslin, *Ethics*, 12–13; Bornkamm, *Paul*, 125; Blank, “Mensch”; Bultmann, *Old and New Man*, 16, 33, 45; Ridderbos, *Paul: Outline*, 129–30; Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 478–79; Wenham, “Tension,” 83–88; Stowers, “Self-Mastery,” 537; Gundry, “Frustration,” 228–29, 238; Fee, *Paul, Spirit, and People*, 134–35; pace, e.g., Rubenstein, *Paul*, 11). Still, Qumran texts show that claims to perfect obedience and consciousness of sin may coexist (Campbell, *Deliverance*, 139).

68. See esp. Segal, *Convert*, 299.

69. Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 302.

70. Segal, *Convert*, 16.

71. See, e.g., MacMullen, “Conversion”; Nock, *Conversion*; briefly, Talbert, *Acts*, 83–85. See further Keener, *Matthew*, 150–51, 153–55, 276–77, 476. This is not to claim that all conversions match ancient models; for studies of conversion in modern experience, see, e.g., Eigo, *Experience*; Gillespie, *Dynamics* (for both sudden and gradual transformation); among nineteenth-century slaves, see Sanders, “Slavery and Conversion.” Scholars offer various other conversion stories as analogies (for one, see Theissen, “Nasir Khusraw”).

72. Talbert, “Conversion in Acts.” Segal, *Convert*, 182, argues that while Paul’s Gentile converts had a moral transformation, for Paul himself, conversion involved other factors.

73. Talbert, “Conversion in Acts,” 153.

74. For ancient views of superhuman activity, see briefly the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:325–50, esp. 346–50.

75. E.g., *Book of Dead Sp.* 7, 145–46; Plut. *Isis* 78, *Mor.* 382F–383A; Max. Tyre 10.3 (cf. 9.6; 11.11); Heracl. *Ep.* 5; Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 261–62; Aune, “Duality,” 228. The soul returns to its place of heavenly origin (e.g., Max. Tyre 41.5; Men. *Rhet.* 2.9, 414.21–23); this can be portrayed as divinization (Men. *Rhet.* 2.9, 414.25–27).

76. E.g., Cic. *Resp.* 6.26.29; *Tusc.* 1.31.75 (cf. 1.19.43).

77. E.g., Max. Tyre 11.10; 21.8; Porph. *Marc.* 6.103–8; 7.131–34; 10.180–83; 16.267–68; 26.415–16.

78. E.g., PGM 4.930–1114; 12.325–34; 77.1–5; Lucian *Icaromenippus*; Lincoln, *Paradise*, 83.

79. Esp. Lucian *Icar.* passim (balanced by a descent to Hades in *Menippus*).

Although later rabbinic traditions develop the theme in great detail,⁸⁰ the original story of Moses's heavenly ascent probably did circulate in the first century.⁸¹ For other spiritual "explorers," the goal of visionary states culminated in the vision of the throne chariot;⁸² although rabbinic reports are later,⁸³ early stages of such pursuits seem to appear at Qumran,⁸⁴ and many scholars infer them from throne visions in apocalypses. On the throne chariot and other visionary claims, see further comment in the excursus on visions and dreams at Acts 2:17. (For Jewish visionary travel or ascents, see also, more briefly, comment on Acts 8:39.)

Some scholars have viewed Paul as a mystic visionary who was converted during one of his *merkabah* experiences⁸⁵ or propose that *Merkabah* mysticism provided at least the framework for his experience.⁸⁶ Certainly such a context could have rendered it intelligible among some of his contemporaries. And certainly, Paul's letters do include mysticism⁸⁷ in the general sense of the expression (in terms of visionary experiences of Christ, not absorption or dissolution of identity).⁸⁸

Paul's reported spiritual experiences as a believer give no indication, however, as to whether he was involved in mysticism, and specifically *Merkabah* mysticism, before his conversion.⁸⁹ Moreover, mysticism in general, and *Merkabah* mysticism in particular, is not the only way visions may occur.⁹⁰ (The Hebrew Bible, most notably,

80. E.g., *b. Šabb.* 88b; *Lev. Rab.* 1:15; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:4; 3 *En.* 15B:2; though cf. the impossibility of such ascents for mortals in *b. B. Mešī'a* 94a (possibly reflecting early antimystic polemic). For Moses's heavenly ascents in rabbinic texts, see further Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 205–9; for his ascent at the end of his life, 209–11; in Samaritan literature, 241–46. Angelic opposition to Moses's ascent in later sources (e.g., *Exod. Rab.* 42:4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:4) may reflect gnostic and other mythical patterns of powers in the heavenlies opposing the soul's ascent (Schultz, "Angelic Opposition"), found earlier in Egyptian afterlife conceptions.

81. Aristob. frg. 4 (Euseb. *P.E.* 13.13.5); cf. *L.A.B.* 12:1. Halperin, "Ascension," compares heavenly invasion myths (e.g., Isa 14:12–14; his rooting in a model of childhood development is less palatable). For Moses's mystic ascents in various early Jewish sources, see, e.g., Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 122–25, 141, 156–58.

82. See, e.g., *b. Hag.* 13a, bar.; 14b, bar.; Safrai, "Education," 960; Scholem, *Trends*, 42.

83. On the rabbinic tradition's development, see Neusner, "Merkabah Tradition."

84. Dupont-Sommer, *Writings*, 333–34; Davila, "4Q534"; Dimant and Strugnell, "Vision," citing 4Q385 4. Some scholars suspect some *Merkabah* speculation even in the LXX (Halperin, "Midrash").

85. See esp. Segal, *Convert*, 34–71 (for *merkabah* visions, see 39–52). Some think the connections between Paul and *Merkabah* mysticism clear (Bowker, "Visions"), but see discussion below. Segal, *Convert*, seems eager (see esp. p. 71) to contrast Paul's subjective revelation with the more objective experience of other apostles, who passed on traditions from Jesus himself. This may be because, in his view, they were more tolerant of the law; in my reading, however, Paul himself did not reject the law but rejected only pride in status based on it (or anything else) before God.

86. Cf. Bowker, "Visions"; cf. Kim, *New Perspective*, 174–76; idem, *Origin*, 252–53; contrast Schäfer, "Journey"; for a Jewish context including such rabbinic sources and apocalyptic sources, see Young, "Motif."

87. See, e.g., Thuruthumaly, "Mysticism"; Mary, *Mysticism*; Verlaquet, "Mystique" (also noting how mystics such as Mechthild of Magdeburg have understood Paul).

88. For the shortcomings of "mysticism" language, see Campbell, *Union*, 412. Even Philo's mysticism did not involve complete union with God (Winston, "Philo's Mysticism"), but some Jewish mystics may have sought closer identification with deity (cf. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism"; Paul did embrace transformation into the divine image and a degree of identification with Christ, but not a dissolution of the distinction between Creator and created). For Philo and others, mysticism also remained compatible with philosophy, including Platonism (e.g., Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.1; Plut. *Isis* 77, *Mor.* 382D).

89. We lack any indication of fasting and other ritual preparations characteristic of *merkabah* ascents in Paul's encounter (Philip, *Pneumatology*, 179–81).

90. Segal, *Convert*, 52, notes that "visions normally took place in religiously altered states of consciousness." Yet most religions (not simply *Merkabah* mysticism) treat mystic, revelatory states as positive (see Ludwig, "Altered States," 88). Pilch, "Call" (and idem, "Apostle"), emphasizes Paul's "altered states of consciousness," while appealing to a wider range of human experiences than *Merkabah* mysticism. Such visions could be experienced as real; one account even claims that the imaginary monk on which a Westerner in Tibet meditated became so real that sometimes others also could see the monk image until, after six months of intense concentration, she was able to suppress it (Ashe, *Miracles*, 144–45). See discussion of visionary states in Keener, *Miracles*, 870–84.

reports large numbers of divine and angelic encounters long before this mysticism is attested).⁹¹

Visions, like other spiritual experiences, could be solicited and sought. For example, Egyptian priests requested the deity to manifest himself.⁹² Those seeking revelations from Trophonius at his oracle followed specified procedures.⁹³ Magical texts give instructions for securing visions or divinatory revelation.⁹⁴ Some ancients fasted for revelations.⁹⁵ One trajectory of Jewish ascent traditions, found in the Hekhalot literature (the antiquity of which is debated),⁹⁶ provides instructions on how to participate in ascents.⁹⁷ Although Paul reports visions, including at least one visionary ascent (2 Cor 12:1–4), the emphasis apparently rests (as elsewhere in his theology) on the agency of the Spirit (cf. Rev 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10) rather than on instructions for ascent.⁹⁸ Paul’s “caught up” in 2 Cor 12:2 may specifically contrast with solicited revelations.⁹⁹ More important is that his report of his conversion (which is surely not the same event reported in 2 Cor 12:2–4)¹⁰⁰ certainly indicates that it was not solicited. He was, after all, at the time of his conversion engaged in persecuting the side he afterward joined (1 Cor 15:8–10; Gal 1:12–16).

Further, although we may speak of Paul’s “vision,” we should be clear what we mean. Paul does not confuse his transforming encounter with Christ (comparable to others’ experiences of resurrection appearances, 1 Cor 15:5–8) with a subsequent heavenly journey in 2 Cor 12:2–4.¹⁰¹ Because Paul’s companions experienced the light and (by whatever manner) the sound, Luke (who used theophanic language) portrays this experience as more than a vision despite visionary elements.¹⁰² Like Luke, Paul himself speaks of meeting Christ (1 Cor 15:8) in a manner distinct from his later visions (2 Cor 12:1). (For Paul’s visions, see also comment on Acts 26:16.)¹⁰³

91. Philip, *Pneumatology*, 194–95, points out that the closest parallels are with OT call narratives (see discussion below).

92. Plut. *Isis* 9, *Mor.* 354D.

93. Max. Tyre 8.2.

94. *PGM* 4.930–1114. For magic to receive revelations, see, e.g., *PGM* 77.1–24, specifically 1–5.

95. E.g. (among Christians), *Herm.* 1.3.10; see comment on Acts 13:2.

96. One might argue that the lack of early attestation reflects the secret character of transmission (Séd, “Traditions secrètes,” following *t. Hag.* 2:2), but this only means that we cannot verify their antiquity either way. Throne visions themselves are earlier, as already noted above, but this does not mean that all later Hekhalot traditions are.

97. See Himmelfarb, “Ascent”; cf. possibly magical preparations in Swartz, “Angels.”

98. Cf. Ezek 1:26–28; 2:2; Isa 6:1–5; the Spirit also carries the visionary in 1 *En.* 71:5 (Similitudes); *Herm.* 1.1.1; 1.2.1 (obviously echoing Ezekiel or Revelation here); *Odes Sol.* 36:1. On the Spirit in Paul’s experience (in contrast to most *merkabah* experiences), see Philip, *Pneumatology*, 181–82. This would fit earliest Christianity’s pervasive emphasis on the activity of the Spirit (cf., e.g., Fee, *Presence*; idem, *Spirit*; Keener, *Spirit*); on the inspiring role of the Spirit in these passages in Revelation, see Bauckham, “Spirit”; idem, *Climax*, 150–51; Hill, *Prophecy*, 90.

99. With Alexander, “Introduction,” 247; Bruce, *Corinthians*, 246; cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 525.

100. Knox, “Reflections,” 110, who once identified them, retracted his view. The revelation in 2 Cor 12:2–4 was a secret one, in contrast to his conversion, and belonged to a larger series of visions of his as a believer in Jesus (12:1).

101. Philip, *Pneumatology*, 177n43, suggests that Segal does make this confusion (but Segal, *Convert*, 37, does admit that the experience in 2 Cor 12 could be postconversion). Although there are more similarities between *Merkabah* mysticism and 2 Cor 12:2–4 than between the former and Paul’s conversion, *Merkabah* connections have been disputed even with regard to 2 Cor 12:2–4 (Schäfer, “Journey”; still, they are plausible; see, e.g., Morray-Jones, “Paradise”). Segal (“Resurrection”) identifies Paul’s resurrection appearances with apocalyptic visions and hence contrasts them with the Gospels’ physical resurrection, but some apocalyptic notions of resurrection are quite corporal (e.g., 2 *Bar.* 50:2).

102. Craig, “Resurrection,” 50.

103. Paul’s distinctive revelations led to tension with early Christians who did not share them (cf. Sim, “Appearances”); on visions and revelations in Paul, see, e.g., Ware, *Synopsis*, §110, pp. 198–201. Later gnostics also

However we choose to explain Paul's experience, he was thoroughly convinced that he had experienced a divine encounter, enough to move from being persecutor to joining a persecuted sect (Gal 1:12–13).

(5) *A Parallel in Joseph and Aseneth?*

Paul claimed a direct divine encounter, something not claimed by most converts to Judaism, to philosophy, or from one Jewish sect to another. There are a few exceptions, the closest (aside from the Merkabah proposal) being in *Joseph and Aseneth*, an Alexandrian Jewish work, from which Johnson cites some apparently impressive parallels with Luke's account of Paul's conversion:¹⁰⁴

<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>	<i>Acts</i>
Aseneth repents with seven days of fasting (10:17) and prayers (12:1–15)	Saul repents with three days of fasting (9:9)
The heavens open, revealing a light (14:2)	A heavenly light flashes around Saul (9:3)
Aseneth falls on her face (14:3)	Saul falls to the ground (9:4)
An angel calls, "Aseneth, Aseneth" (14:4, 7)	Jesus calls, "Saul, Saul" (9:4)
She asks, "Who are you?" (14:5, 8; 15:12)	Saul asks, "Who are you?" (9:5)
He claims to be chief of God's host (14:8)	Jesus replies that he is Jesus (9:5)
He tells her to arise and he will give her a message (14:8)	He tells him to arise and he will receive instructions (9:6)
She washes her face (14:15)	Saul is baptized (9:18) and "washes" away sins
She receives a prediction (15:2–6)	Ananias has a prediction for Paul (9:15–16)

Not all the parallels are compelling, even if we do date *Joseph and Aseneth* before Acts (which is not impossible but is unlikely).¹⁰⁵ Given some of the more concrete yet potentially incidental parallels, some of the others simply follow as natural descriptions of this kind of reported event. Fasting often accompanies repentance, but the sequence differs in the two accounts. The double name and the heavenly light and voice are not surprising in divine-call accounts (resembling earlier biblical models), of which each is only one example among several (i.e., neither need be dependent on the

developed the apocalyptic/mystical aspect of Paul (see esp. *Apocalypse of Paul* in NHL 239–41). Some gnostic texts developed early Egyptian mortuary rituals for a heavenly ascent (Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 261).

104. Johnson, *Acts*, 167–68, cites revelatory conversions in 4 Macc 4:1–14 and esp. *Jos. Asen.* 10:17–15:6. See also Pervo, *Acts*, 234–35, citing Burchard, *Dreizehnte Zeuge*, 90–91 (Pervo also notes differences).

105. Most think this work non-Christian Jewish (Collins, "*Joseph and Aseneth*"; Koester, *Introduction*, 1:265); for a survey of proposed dates, with openness to an early date, see Humphrey, *Joseph and Aseneth*, 28–38, and the sources she surveys. If, as is likely, it comes from Egypt, its latest possible date if it is not a Christian work is the second decade of the second century (Burchard, "Introduction," 187); if it is non-Christian, its peaceful appraisal of Egyptian culture may suggest that it was written before the beginning of severe anti-Semitism (West, "*Joseph and Aseneth*," 79–80; Doran, "Narrative Literature," 290), which might well make it even pre-Christian. It is a Greek romance (e.g., West, "*Joseph and Aseneth*"; Doran, "Narrative Literature," 290–91), but this need not make it late, since extant samples of the genre need not constitute its earliest (nonextant) exemplars. Nevertheless, a Christian reading is also quite plausible (e.g., Kraemer, *Aseneth*; I owe this source to Humphrey). Levi as a prophet (*Jos. Asen.* 22–26) might not sound Christian, but Christian material in *Testament of Levi* shows that Jewish Christians did appreciate the figure of Levi. Moreover, apparently Christian material does not stand out as if interpolated: *Jos. Asen.* 13:13 sounds like virgin birth typology; *Jos. Asen.* 14 resembles Acts 9; Joseph appears in *Jos. Asen.* 14 like Jesus in Rev 1:13–16; there are the putting off and putting on of tunics in conversion. *Joseph and Aseneth* contains possible typology of Christ and the church: it speaks of preparation for marriage since eternity (*Jos. Asen.* 15; also 21:3); Aseneth is the City of Refuge, and her virgins are pillars therein (Aseneth the bride as a type of the heavenly Jerusalem? *Jos. Asen.* 17; again in 19:8–9); Joseph imparts the spirit of life to her by his breath (19:11; cf. John 20:22) and may function as a type of Christ (he is called Son of God several times and portrayed like Helios earlier in the book). *Jos. Asen.* 16 includes the bread of life, cup of immortality, ointment of incorruptibility (cf. anointing in later baptisms), and the sign of the cross made by blood. Still, the story line may be older (Gen 41:45, 50; 46:20; *Jub.* 34:20; cf. variants in *Test. Jos.* 20:3), and Philo had already perfected the art of allegory.

other). Falling on one's face was a standard response to awesome divine revelations.¹⁰⁶ "Who are you?" is an obvious question when one is encountering an unexpected revealer,¹⁰⁷ though for different reasons (Aseneth because she does not understand, Saul because he cannot conceive).

Given the likelihood that proselyte baptism was fairly widely known,¹⁰⁸ Aseneth's merely washing her face is, in fact, a disappointing "parallel" to Saul's baptism; we might have hoped for more. Predictions are common in divine calls (see Jer 1:5, 7–10, 14–19). The cumulative weight of the parallels, especially the stronger ones, may suggest dependence on a common pattern. What the parallels especially emphasize, however, is that many of the features we encounter in the narrative are those we would expect when discussing an experience involving both conversion and a revelatory call.

(6) Revelatory Calling

The elements that most distinguish Paul's conversion story from the majority of others are the revelatory features; that is, what is most distinctive about these accounts is that they focus on Paul's divine encounter and calling. Once viewed from this perspective, they fall naturally into the pattern of divine-call accounts in the OT (Isa 6:1–13; Jer 1:4–19; Ezek 1:1–3:15; cf. Exod 3:1–4:17; Judg 6:11–24).¹⁰⁹ That is, the work that shapes the remainder of Paul's function in Acts, his life mission, is inaugurated in this scene similarly to the call narratives for the biblical prophets for whom a calling is recorded (especially Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel).¹¹⁰ Some of those inaugural calls (Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel) occurred in theophanies, as here. Moses's experience has just been narrated (Acts 7:30–34), as has that of Abraham (7:2–3, relevant for Paul also leaving his community and venturing where God leads him). The context of Isaiah's call will also be important to Luke (28:26–27).

This passage (Acts 9:10–19) and others in Acts (e.g., 18:7–11) evoke OT commissioning accounts (and may reflect their literary influence).¹¹¹ (Such commissioning narratives are so important to Luke that according to some counts, he includes as many in his two-volume work, as broadly defined, as in the entire OT.)¹¹² Both Paul's letters and Luke depict Paul's conversion and call experience in ways that recall Jeremiah (see comment on Acts 9:15). Paul's experience resembles that of OT prophets, whose credentials rested on their charismatic experience of divine calling rather than on hierarchical authority.¹¹³ This resembles one qualifying method

106. See, e.g., Dan 8:17–18; 10:9–10; Ezek 1:28; Tob 12:16; *Jub.* 18:10; *1 En.* 14:13–14; 89:30–31; 102:1; 4 Macc 4:11; and other texts below.

107. E.g., Gen 32:29; Exod 3:13; Judg 13:17–18; *Herm.* 25.3; in a negative case, 11Q11 V, 6. For the commonness of similar questions in antiquity (about origin), see Keener, *John*, 556. In divine revelations, the revealer often identified himself, rendering the question unnecessary (e.g., Gen 17:1; 35:11; 46:3; 28:13). Luke parallels his own account of Cornelius here more than his narrative of Paul's conversion parallels *Joseph and Aseneth* (Marguerat, *Actes*, 325).

108. See, e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 2.9.20; Keener, *John*, 446–47; idem, *Spirit*, 64; Rowley, "Baptism"; White, *Initiation*, 78–79; Schiffman, "Crossroads," 128. See fuller comment at Acts 2:38.

109. See also Ukachukwu Manus, "Conversion Narratives"; cf. Munck, *Acts*, 82; Bruce, *Apostle*, 75; Ehrensperger, *Power*, 83–85. Continued repetition of a divine call appears also in the Isis cult in Apul. *Metam.* 11.19.

110. Also for other figures, such as Gideon and (before their births) Ishmael and Samson.

111. See in detail Hubbard, "Commissioning Accounts." For OT call and commissioning accounts, see, e.g., Phinney, "Narratives."

112. See Estrada, *Followers*, 41 (following Mullins, "Commissioning Forms," 609–10). For one comparison with the commission accounts in later apocryphal acts (noting the typical actantial structure), see Czachesz, *Commission Narratives*.

113. Cf. Hill, *Prophecy*, 12 (on the prophets).

for some shamans in traditional religions (others being hereditary profession and “personal ‘quest’”).¹¹⁴ Gentiles, too, could understand resting a missionary vocation of sorts on a theophany.¹¹⁵

Paul, like Luke, associates his calling with his conversion experience (Gal 1:12–16);¹¹⁶ though Luke unfolds various elements of the calling in different retellings (Acts 9:15–16; 22:21; 26:16–18), it is Paul’s calling as apostle to Gentiles that makes the story so important to Luke’s theme as to require its threefold repetition. It provides the climax of Paul’s speech in 22:17–21 (where it provokes renewed hostility) and the basis for his mission and his opponents’ hostility in 26:19–23.¹¹⁷ (Since Luke’s retellings can be brief, as in 15:7–8, we might even think of Saul’s conversion being recounted four times [see 9:27; cf. 9:21]. But Luke avoids repetition by merely summarizing.)

(7) Paul’s Theological Reversal

Although purely psychological explanations of Paul’s conversion are not adequate, it is helpful to examine elements of transformation implied in our historical information about Paul’s conversion. Gager argues that Paul’s conversion fits a paradigm for values reversal; since following the law once led him to reject Christ, he rejected the law after following Christ.¹¹⁸ Donaldson likewise suggests that Paul perceived Jesus and Torah as rival ways to define covenant membership before his conversion and hence simply shifted loyalties to Jesus against the law afterward.¹¹⁹ Current readings of Paul’s letters, however, reveal that he did not reject the law nearly so much as scholars, especially in some earlier traditions emphasizing theological discontinuity, have supposed.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, Paul’s new view of Christ must have demanded a radical rethinking of his approach to the law, eschatology, and everything else (cf. 2 Cor 5:16–17).¹²¹ Many scholars suggest that if Paul’s Jewish heritage provided most of the structures for his thought as a believer in Christ, his revelation of Christ provided much of the

114. Eliade, *Rites*, 87; cf. idem, *Shamanism*, 3–66 (for diverse approaches); Filson, “Analysis,” 74; Walsh, *Shamanism*, 49–56; Mbiti, *Religions*, 89, 218, 226; Horton, “Possession,” 34; Verger, “Trance,” 51; Peters, *Healing in Nepal*, 62; for misfortune followed by a message from a medium confirming a call to be a medium, see, e.g., Tanner, “Theory,” 275. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 37, notes that mystical “call” experiences appear in some form of many major religions as well as in tribal religions (including Eskimo shamans, the focus there); in Majority World Christian movements, see, e.g., Akinwumi, “Idahosa”; Dayhoff, “Vilakati”; Hayes, “Mthembu”; Khai, “Pentecostalism,” 269 (the vision of Kam Cin Hau in Myanmar); Lynch-Watson, *Robe*, 18 (Sadhu Sundar Singh, Dec. 17, 1904, previously hostile to Christians). Dreams are often involved in callings (many Catholic and Protestant clergy in Africa; Sundkler, *Bara Bukoba*, 98, cited in Shorter, *Witchdoctor*, 153; in Zionism, Daneel, *Zionism*, 13–14) and are sometimes factors in the rise of new religious movements (Lanternari, “Dreams”; Shorter, *Witchdoctor*, 153).

115. Talbert, *Acts*, 82, cites Eurip. *Bacch.* 467–70 (spreading Dionysus’s new religion based on a claimed theophany of Zeus).

116. On the language of “conversion,” see discussion below.

117. For the emphasis on Paul’s call (as opposed to his “conversion”), see Stendahl, *Paul*, 7–16.

118. Gager, “Notes on Paul’s Conversion.” Cf. similarly, regarding the law for salvation, Sloan, “Paul and Law”; Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 19.

119. Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 185.

120. See, e.g., Rhyne, *Faith*; Longenecker, *Paul*, passim; cf. Nanos, *Mystery*; for one mediating approach, see Thielman, “Law”; see fuller comment at Acts 13:39.

121. Cf., e.g., Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 13; cf. Keck, *Romans*, 174, on Gal 2:19. Davies, *Paul*, 216, sees Paul as a Pharisee who believed that the messianic era had come (cf. Davies, *Introduction*, 27–28; earlier Ramsay, *Other Studies*, 89–90). As a Pharisee and persecutor of Christians, Paul undoubtedly had some knowledge about Jesus before his conversion, though he had disagreed with claims about him (see, e.g., Murphy-O’Connor, “What Paul Knew”). The idea that Paul was acquainted more personally with Jesus (cf. Ramsay, *Teaching*, 21), however, cannot be based on 2 Cor 5:16 (see sounder approaches in, e.g., Haacker, *Theology*, 147; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 330; Kreitzer, *Corinthians*, 107–8; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 95–96; Scott, *Corinthians*, 134; Betz, “Christuserkenntnis”; pace, e.g., van Unnik, *Tarsus*, 54).

content.¹²² This claim can, of course, be overstated; Paul's Christian theology was not complete at conversion but undoubtedly developed as he grappled with his mission.¹²³ Further, because apostolic tradition already was circulating and few primary elements of Paul's theology proved unique, it might be more accurate to claim that his encounter brought him to accept the content that already existed.¹²⁴

But even so, some components associated particularly with Pauline theology may involve meditating on his experience.¹²⁵ This would undoubtedly include his approach to the law, as scholars have often contended. If Paul's own zealous pursuit of the law's righteousness had found him fighting against God (cf. Acts 5:39; 26:14),¹²⁶ there was something flawed about pursuing the law's righteousness by that means (cf. Rom 9:30–32); but for Paul, the problem is not the law but any human approach to righteousness not dependent on God's climactic revelation in Christ. (More broadly, Paul emphasizes dependence on Christ and the Spirit for everything significant; see comment below.) Paul's attempts to achieve righteousness by his interpretation of the law's standard produced only hubris; God revealed himself to Paul not because of, but in spite of, Paul's behavior (1 Cor 15:9–10; Gal 1:12–16; Phil 3:6, 9; cf. Rom 2:23; 3:27).¹²⁷

Paul's letters reveal a theology consistent with this approach. If righteousness was no longer a goal but a gift, subsequent acts of righteousness were themselves fruit, and service to God thus flowed from further "gifts" of the Spirit and Christ working in him (Gal 5:22–23; Rom 12:3, 6–8; 1 Cor 12:4–11; Col 1:29). God birthed new creations in his image through the pattern of Christ as divine wisdom (2 Cor 4:4–6; 5:17; Col 1:15; 3:9–11). Paul celebrates such ideas more than any other NT author (though the Fourth Gospel reflects some of them), and Luke himself seems aware of this (Acts 13:38–39).

Sandmel suggests that the law was a "problem" to Paul but not to all Judaism; his personal solution came in his conversion, but it was his personality that made him "first the persecutor and then the convert."¹²⁸ Paul's writings need not imply, however, that the law was a problem to him before his conversion. If psychoanalytic approaches fail partly for lack of information, we do have sufficient psychological evidence at least to affirm something about a persecutor who converts to what he persecuted: he is likely a person of strong conviction both before and after conversion, with clear-cut and

122. See Kim, *Origin*; Ladd, "Pensée de Paul"; idem, *Theology*, 366–69; Thrall, "Origin," 304–16, esp. 315. Cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 21; White, "Image."

123. See Räisänen, "Conversion and Development." Various scholars have critiqued Kim not for associating his theology with the Damascus experience but for apparently implying that this theology was "fully formed" at that point (e.g., Philip, *Pneumatology*, 171–72); but Kim now nuances more clearly what he meant by his original argument, contending that Paul's theology was implicit in his conversion yet may have developed over time (*New Perspective*, 4, 165–74). Dunn, *New Perspective*, 36–38, does not insist that justification by faith is a late development in Paul's theology.

124. For this accurate balance, see also, e.g., Obijole, "Influence of Conversion."

125. Kim, *Origin*, 268, argues thus for Christ as God's image, which he developed along the lines of Jewish Wisdom ideas (Wis 7:26; Philo) as well as Adam (Gen 1:26; cf. Kim, *New Perspective*, 175); for unmerited reconciliation with God, see Kim, *New Perspective*, 214–38.

126. Neither Gal 1:13–14 nor Phil 3:6 explicitly connects Paul's zeal for (his misinterpretation of) the law with his background as a persecutor of disciples, but the mention of these elements together in both cases probably suggests that such a connection existed in Paul's preconversion perspective.

127. At the heart of Paul's theology of dependence on Christ is avoidance of boasting in earthly matters and of human competition (esp. Rom 2:17, 23; 3:27; 4:2; 1 Cor 1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7; 2 Cor 10–12 passim; Phil 3:3–9). Although the *New Perspective* rightly emphasizes the role of Jewish ethnic particularism, those who find a broader principle are also correct (cf. Rom 11:20–22).

128. Sandmel, *Genius of Paul*, 25. Others also have recognized that Paul was a distinctive sort of convert (e.g., Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 303).

passionate beliefs.¹²⁹ Still, Luke's Paul is more complex and ambiguous than many later Christian readers recognize.¹³⁰

Why had Paul persecuted Christians? Intra-Jewish conflict was common¹³¹ and had sometimes led to violence. For example, the temple hierarchy had persecuted Essenes.¹³² Raymond Brown summarizes examples of sectarian violence: the high priests persecuted the Essenes (cf. 4QpNah I, 5–6; CD I, 14–21); John Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan sanctuary and later crucified eight hundred (probably including some Pharisees); Pharisees incited violence in 135–67 B.C.E.¹³³ Maccabean literature shows that some praised violence against apostates;¹³⁴ indeed, 1 Maccabees uses Phinehas, who stayed God's judgment on Israel by killing the sinful, as a pattern for Maccabean zeal (1 Macc 2:26; 3:8).¹³⁵ Later rabbis also claimed that an early sage ordered eighty women in Ashkelon executed for sorcery and immorality.¹³⁶

Granted, large-scale, planned, violent persecution is better attested in the pre-Roman period, political factors (i.e., Roman rule) being one obvious reason for the difference. Violence does occur in the first century, but less regularly; the sporadic violence in *Jos. Ant.* 20.213 was apparently spontaneous, and the assassination in 20.163 was attributed to personal animosity and bribery. Far more common are violent attacks, in which not only Josephus's "robbers" but even young Sadducees participated, in the years leading up to the revolt against Rome; yet these were not organized from the top down, because in this period those at the top needed to maintain Roman order.

Yet Paul's epistolary admissions are explicit, and he certainly had plenty of respected precedent for persecuting those viewed as a threat to the faith. Such persecution was far more difficult under Roman rule, but if Pilate was "looking the other way" between 31 and 36 C.E., when his own political situation was more precarious,¹³⁷ some individuals (such as the young Paul) may have taken advantage of the new situation

129. Some note that his epistles show ability to nuance and entertain various aspects of a case, but his soteriology remains typically binary (one is either "in" or "out"; e.g., Rom 1:17–18; 2:7–8; 5:12–21; 1 Thess 1:9). Then again, such binary structures with nuancing for practical reality are hardly uniquely Pauline (see, e.g., the proposed Stoic structure in Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*; various binary structures, including Qumran and Johannine dualism and antitheses in Jewish Wisdom literature, in Keener, "Spirit Perspectives").

130. See Brawley, *Centering on God*, 148–58, esp. 158 (though Paul may be more "flatly" positive than Brawley suggests).

131. E.g., Pharisaic conflict with Sadducees (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 18.17; *m. Yad.* 4:7; *t. Hag.* 3:35; *Nid.* 5:3; *'Abot R. Nat.* 5 A; 10 B; *b. Nid.* 33b; *Sukkah* 48b); members of the priestly aristocracy came to blows with each other in the first century (*Jos. Ant.* 20.213). Later some even claimed Shammaite murder of Hillelites (allegedly Tannaic tradition in *y. Sabb.* 1:4; but cf. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 87–88). See further Keener, *Matthew*, 351–53, some of which is employed below.

132. 1QpHab VIII, 8–12; IX, 4–7; XII, 5; 4QpNah I, 11. This was, admittedly, earlier: the "Wicked Priest" has been identified with Jonathan (Rost, *Judaism*, 163), John Hyrcanus (Brownlee, "Messianic Motifs," 13–15), or "the false priesthood of the Temple at any time between the Maccabean period and the fall of the Hasmonean dynasty" (Fritsch, *Community*, 83–84). Some identify the "Young Lion" of 4QpNah I, 5 with Alexander Jannaeus (Allegro, "Light," 92; Eisenman, *Maccabees*, 35); some hold that a specific identification is impossible (Rowley, "4QpNahum"); and others even identify him with Pontius Pilate (Thiering, *Gospels and Qumran*, 70, with little support). As the original Teacher of Righteousness became a model for the future one (CD VI, 10–11) and the title probably applied to all his successors (Buchanan, "Office"), the identity of the original Wicked Priest may have applied to the priesthood in perpetuity. Some scholars find clues of Essene antagonism toward Pharisaism (Roth, "Subject Matter of Exegesis," 65; idem, "Reference"; Dupont-Sommer, *Manuscripts*, 33) or Pharisaic or rabbinic opposition to the Essenes (Lieberman, "Light," 396–400). The rabbis nevertheless reflect legal or cultural traditions often shared with Qumran, though reasons for such parallels are debated (e.g., Baumgarten, "Qumran Studies," 256; Neusner, "Testimony"; Schiffman, *Law*).

133. Brown, *Death*, 393–95.

134. With Witherington, *Acts*, 302; Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 63–65.

135. See Goulder, *Type and History*, 11–12.

136. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:572 (though it is not clear that all approved; see *m. Sanh.* 6:4).

137. After the fall of Sejanus, his patron in Rome.

to reinstate ancient models of zeal they considered biblical (e.g., Num 25:7–13; 2 Kgs 10:16; Ps 106:30–31).¹³⁸ Revolutionary movements shortly before and after this period suggest a continuance of pockets of violent resistance. That is, apart from government action, individuals instigated violence in this period, and Paul was one such individual.

More important is that intra-Jewish violence not officially sanctioned by the government continued; Josephus faced life-threatening opposition from rivals within his own social class (e.g., *Life* 272–75, 302–3). The ideal of executing offenders against the law surely survived even if the practice normally could not, because Jewish revolutionaries killed those they regarded as Roman collaborators before and after they seized control of Jerusalem in the revolt of 66–70.¹³⁹ Even a municipal aristocracy could certainly sanction the application of corporal punishments under Jewish law (see 2 Cor 11:24); letters such as those Paul requested from the high priest need not have explicitly endorsed the lengths to which Paul might wish to carry them (even apart from what our sources suggest about the corruption and abuse of power among some members of the priestly elite).

Mainstream Judaism emphasized toleration, but toleration had its limits, and different individuals recognized different limits. Granted, most Jews did not view the Jesus movement as apostate, and some (especially outside Jerusalem) condemned the temple no less harshly than did Stephen. But those were the views of others; Paul had his own, strict views,¹⁴⁰ and perhaps suppression of Nazarenes was part of a personal crusade that also advanced his status among his zealous colleagues (cf. Gal 1:13–14), though he presents his motives as God-fearing (Phil 3:6; cf. 1 Tim 1:13).

Beyond this, scholars have offered various theories. Some propose that his eschatology had invited such activity. Perhaps he shared, and hence labored according to, a widespread view that sins and false teaching could delay the final redemption, though apostasy was part of the messianic travail.¹⁴¹ Paul's Hellenism and Roman citizenship might have also motivated him as well as given him a greater sense of legal security for his actions. That he and fellow Hellenists felt that they had something to prove in terms of orthodoxy and hence were exceptionally motivated to persecute "apostate" Hellenists makes some psychological sense, though (especially given the fragmentary and chronologically distant character of our sources) it cannot be proved.

There may have been more personal reasons, though this, too, is at best a vague possibility (one could argue as easily that the same connections would have deterred, rather than motivated, his persecution). Saul may have had some friends or distant relatives who were Nazarenes before him; given the history of the movement, they, too, would have been in Jerusalem (cf. perhaps Rom 16:7, though probably this is not relevant).¹⁴² Whether these were relatives who moved to Jerusalem along with the

138. Some examples were, however, "zeal without knowledge" (Num 11:29; 2 Sam 21:2), as Paul later believed (Rom 10:2).

139. E.g., Jos. *War* 4.140–41, 146, 196; cf. also Witherington, *Acts*, 303. The rabbis reveal little of this; the failure of the Judean revolt probably discredited such sentiments, which were probably never shared by most of the surviving Pharisees, in any case (especially aristocrats such as Gamaliel II and probable advocates of peace such as Johanan ben Zakkai).

140. For one attempt to understand how Paul would see the Jesus movement differently from the way he would view other more mainstream Jewish sects, see Nock, *Paul*, 64, 73–74.

141. Longenecker, "Hope," 23. On the necessity of extirpating dangerous teaching, cf. Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 208–9.

142. Rom 16:7 would be relevant only if Paul does not intend the term only as "fellow Jews" (as in Rom 9:3); given the number of other fellow Jews in the list in Rom 16, the term might be more specific here (as Bauckham, *Women*, 170, concedes, though applying it to fellow Jews; for the view that they were Paul's physical kin, cf. Ambrosiaster *Comm.*, on Rom 16:7). Yet Paul mentions a number of "kinsmen" in Rom 16:11,

entire family from Tarsus (cf. Acts 23:16), relatives who were not enslaved with Paul's immediate ancestors (and hence not Roman citizens),¹⁴³ or relatives who migrated from elsewhere in the Diaspora¹⁴⁴ is unclear. If Rom 16:7 is relevant at all (again, it very likely is not), at some point some kin were apparently imprisoned (Rom 16:7), but even if they were close kin and not simply fellow Jews we cannot be sure that it was in Jerusalem or that Paul had anything to do with it; if their family shared the high status or even citizenship of Paul's family, it would have complicated any efforts to prosecute them.¹⁴⁵ As (probably) Hellenists they may well have left Jerusalem during the persecution of Acts 8:1–4. Such clues are tantalizing from a historical perspective; we cannot even be certain that Paul knew they were Christians at this time.

Wright suggests that Paul's hostility to Gentiles may be explained by his affiliation with the Shammaite branch of Pharisaism, then dominant, despite his studying under the Hillelite Gamaliel.¹⁴⁶ If Saul could later repudiate his anti-Christian views, he could have easily, in an intellectual climate moving in a different direction, rejected his teacher's views.¹⁴⁷ (He remained, at least, a Pharisee, though this was apparently also his father's affiliation, perhaps explaining the choice of teachers [23:6].) But if this is the case, he could have also selectively rejected the views of his minority Hillelite school if he belonged to it. We cannot conclude to which of the Pharisaic schools Paul adhered on most issues or even that Gamaliel himself would have remained as tolerant as he appears in 5:34–39 (if Luke knew that Gamaliel later took a harder stance, would he have reported it?). Much of Paul's background and psychological motivation is impossible to reconstruct with any substantial measure of certainty.

(8) *Calling or Conversion?*

Krister Stendahl rightly challenges the traditional view that Paul “converted” from “Judaism” to “Christianity,” surely an anachronistic understanding of early Christianity.¹⁴⁸ However later Christians may have viewed him, Paul believes that he continues to remain faithful to his Jewish heritage and that it is those who do not join him whose

21, and so either he had many relatives with Greek names who immigrated to Rome or (much more likely) he means the term broadly, e.g., for a household in Benjamin (see also discussion at Acts 3:16) or simply (as above) for fellow Jews.

143. The ancestral “Pharisees” in 23:6 may well be a generalizing plural, but if not, Paul would have likely had ancestors who were Pharisees *before* the move from Tarsus (unless we should think that his grandfather resettled the entire family from there and converted to Pharisaism before his death [on aged people migrating, cf. comment on Acts 6:1]; this is not impossible but, in view of average longevity, less probable). But Pharisees are virtually unknown in the Diaspora, though they existed before Pompey and the possible enslavement of Paul's ancestors.

144. In Rom 16:7, “Andronicus” is a good Hellenist name, and “Junia” (certainly a woman; see, e.g., Epp, *Junia*) is a Latin name—in fact, a praenomen—probably indicating Roman citizenship (Judge, *Rank*, 36n18), fitting the “synagogue of freedpersons” (Acts 6:9). But if the two are a married couple, we cannot be sure which was Paul's relative by birth, if either (see note above). Bauckham, *Women*, 165–86, identifies Junia with Joanna of Luke 8:3; 24:10 (this would locate her in Galilee rather than Jerusalem, making relations with Paul highly unlikely); on her Roman name, see Bauckham, *Women*, 182–85.

145. On the difficulty of prosecuting those with higher status (though more explicit in the early second century), see, e.g., MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 40; Winter, *Welfare*, 111–13; idem, *Left Corinth*, 44, 60; Rapske, *Custody*, 56–62; Mitchell, “Rich”; Jos. *Ant.* 19.12–14; Juv. *Sat.* 3.140–46; Suet. *Aug.* 5; Claud. 15.4; Dig. 47.21.2 (though later rabbis would have disapproved, *t. Sanh.* 1:7–8; *'Abot R. Nat.* 20, §43 B; so also others on an ideal level, e.g., Suet. *Tib.* 33). Family ties need not have deterred prosecution for following heresy (Deut 13:6), though in practice it is possible; many viewed prosecution of kin as shameful, but they might express such sentiments in court (e.g., Isaicus *Cleon.* 6.35).

146. Wright, *Founder*, 26–30. He sees Paul's later Christian views as closer to Hillel as a *result* of his conversion, not because of his previous commitment (30).

147. For modern examples, one thinks of E. Stauffer or Norman Perrin rejecting their teacher's views.

148. Stendahl, *Paul*, 7, rightly placing the emphasis on his calling; followed by many others, e.g., Roetzel, *Paul*, 10–12; Ashton, *Religion*, 75–76; cf. Hollander, “Bekering”

faith is inauthentically Jewish.¹⁴⁹ He was not converted “from one religion to another, since he considered Christianity to be the true Judaism”; rather, “he was converted from one understanding of righteousness to another—from his own righteousness of works to God’s righteousness by faith (Rom. 9:30ff.).”¹⁵⁰ This narrative retains elements of earlier biblical call narratives (already echoed in earlier Lukan stories concerning Mary and Peter) not found in some of Luke’s conversion stories.

Nevertheless, conversion is also an appropriate way to describe a central component of Paul’s experience. Although Paul was not converted to another religion, he was converted to a new way of life and thinking (as well as from one Jewish sect to another).¹⁵¹ Even his letters might suggest continuing remorse (1 Cor 15:9), and Luke claims that he was baptized (Acts 9:18), a mark of conversion to Judaism (see comment on Acts 2:38). Recent scholarship tends to accept the designation “conversion” for Paul’s experience, while retaining Stendahl’s insight about the continuity of Paul’s Jewish self-identity.¹⁵² It constituted “a reconfiguration rather than a repudiation of his essential Jewishness.”¹⁵³ We should reject the common dichotomy (“Was Paul ‘called’ or ‘converted?’”) and recognize that Paul was both converted (Phil 3:4–11; Acts 9:1–18) and called (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8–11; Gal 1:11–23; Acts 22:10, 14, 17–21; 26:4–20).¹⁵⁴ Luke certainly views Paul’s transformative encounter as a conversion, presenting it according to his pattern of conversion stories and placing it between the conversion of the African official and that of Cornelius.¹⁵⁵

Segal argues persuasively for Paul as a convert in the sociological sense, noting that sudden converts often have strong convictions.¹⁵⁶ Some arguments for this view are too weak to bear any weight; for example, Segal suggests that radical antitheses such as those in Rom 5:12–21 and 1 Cor 15:42–49 fit the either-or mentality of a convert.¹⁵⁷ But apocalyptic literature abounds with vertical dualism, and Paul’s contrasts function as good rhetorical antithesis.¹⁵⁸ Some arguments also may be too determined by the cultures from which the examples are drawn or by circumstances different from Paul’s.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Segal’s discussion raises valuable questions. Did Paul need to

149. Sandmel, *Genius of Paul*, 62 (himself naturally demurring from Paul’s perspective).

150. Ladd, *Theology*, 368.

151. Dunn, *Acts*, 119–20; similarly, Parsons, *Acts*, 135; Peterson, *Acts*, 303; using the sociological definition, Campbell, *Deliverance*, 166. Those approaching Paul’s letters from a sociological standpoint (Segal, *Convert*, 32–33; Elsdon, “Converted”) argue that they do employ the rhetoric anticipated for conversion claims.

152. Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 17, 302; Roetzl, *Paul*, 10–14; Bock, *Acts*, 349; Talbert, *Acts*, 83; and sources below.

153. Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 49.

154. Haacker, *Theology*, 9–10 (noting also both aspects in 1 Tim 1:12–16); Elsdon, “Converted.”

155. For a comparison of this conversion account with others in Acts, see esp. Kern, “Conversion”; Miranda, “Chiamata di Paolo”; Saout, “Annonce.”

156. See Segal, *Convert*, passim (see esp. 288–99). More widely on psychological and other approaches to conversion, see Brandt, “Retournement” (highlighting esp. the case of Peter in Luke-Acts); discussion from social identity theory, initiation rituals, and other anthropological material in Lamoreaux, “Identity.”

157. Segal, *Convert*, 65–66. On the antithesis between flesh and spirit, see p. 71; yet this dualism appears at Qumran (though we might view those who joined the Essenes as “converts” in some sense; Duhaime, “Dualisme,” associates it with their “sectarian” identity) and, as a contrast between flesh and God’s Spirit, already appears in Gen 6:3; Isa 31:3. More general anthropological dualism pervaded Judaism by this period (see, e.g., *1 En.* 102:5; *t. Sanh.* 13:2; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.203; Keener, *John*, 553–54; esp. Gundry, *Sōma*, passim). Pauline moral dualism resembles Stoic, Qumran, and especially wisdom perspectives (see Keener, “Spirit Perspectives”).

158. See, e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 26, 1435b, lines 25–39; Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 14; Anderson, *Glossary*, 21–22; Rowe, “Style” 142; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 87; Cosby, “Language,” 216; Keener, *Corinthians*, 131–34.

159. In modern Western studies, conversions are particularly common in emotional settings among young adolescents, especially those prone to guilt, with men about six times as likely to experience crisis conversions as women (Segal, *Convert*, 287–88). Cognitive converts tended to be older, with more gradual conversions (288). Yet it is difficult to expect a “gradual” conversion after an encounter such as the one Paul claims, at any age. Moreover, ancient “conversions” did not all follow the pattern that Segal depicts (see Nock, *Essays*, 469–80).

take a while after his conversion to sort out his theology, as scholars often suggest?¹⁶⁰ What influence did the Christian community in Damascus and/or Nabatea play in helping to solidify Paul's faith?¹⁶¹

Segal mistrusts Luke's and Paul's interpretive grids for Paul's conversion, noting that the structure of conversion is often stereotyped according to the values of the community into which one converts.¹⁶² Paul, however, converted to Christ before being socialized into his community.¹⁶³ Segal thinks Luke even less trustworthy, for depicting Paul's conversion in prophetic terms;¹⁶⁴ yet as many point out, Paul also uses prophetic language,¹⁶⁵ and it is natural that this would be the grid to which both authors would appeal.¹⁶⁶ Although conversion differs substantially from brainwashing,¹⁶⁷ Segal notes that converts (as opposed to lifelong believers) tend to engage in "biographical reconstruction," using the language of "self-transformation," as in Paul's letters.¹⁶⁸ He suggests that converts' new communities exert such strong interpretive influences that one cannot take at face value converts' depictions of their preconversion lives.¹⁶⁹ Certainly Paul's postconversion view of preconversion life under the law differed from his preconversion understanding of it,¹⁷⁰ but memory studies also show that the gist of information remains accurate despite the mind's interpretive grids.¹⁷¹

Some argue that Christ replaced Torah but that Paul's preconversion view of Gentile conversion remained intact. On this view, Paul was involved in a different kind of "Gentile mission" before his conversion, advocating that Gentiles become full

160. Sudden converts often take longer to accept beliefs of sects, retaining as many mental reservations and doubts as before; gradual converts are more accepting, having more time to internalize the new beliefs (Segal, *Convert*, 288). (Conflict with doubts for several years remained, to some extent, in my own experience as a sudden convert from atheism.)

161. The highest commitment usually takes place after sudden conversions followed by "other members' thorough education to the values of the group," establishing the new believer in the community's plausibility structures (Segal, *Convert*, 74). I am not convinced that this would work as well in the case of those converted to a belief rather than to a new community (as initially in Paul's case); despite "reeducation," I always wanted more proof.

162. Segal, *Convert*, 17. Thouless, "Psychology," 141–42, argues that converts often overemphasize preconversion sinfulness (as sometimes seen in child converts).

163. On conversion and social networks, Douglas Campbell cites, among other studies, the seminal Lofland and Stark, "Conversion"; Stark and Bainbridge, *Religion* (critiques of some aspects of these works appear, e.g., in Snow and Phillips, "Model"; Bruce, *Choice*; Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred*); for proposed relevance to Paul, see Campbell, *Deliverance*, 129–32. While group attachments and prior socialization may be common features of conversion in many cultures, however (and may even constitute a factor for Augustine's conversion; see Campbell, *Deliverance*, 282), they do not fully fit Luke's or Paul's views of Paul the persecutor. My own conversion from atheism illustrates that conversions do occur without such prior attachments, though (better fitting what the common pattern would predict; cf. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 132–33) my subsequent socialization was admittedly not easy.

164. Segal, *Convert*, 21, 29.

165. Note even Segal himself (*ibid.*, 70), acknowledging that "Paul's language constantly invokes the concept of prophetic commissioning" (in addition to entailing conversion).

166. As to whether this approach is unreliable because it represents Paul's ancestral faith, one can make this assumption only on the prior assumption that either the God of Israel did not reveal himself in this manner or this God would not have done so to Paul. And even on nontheistic premises, writers can describe an experience in prophetic language without inventing the data they thereby arrange and interpret.

167. Segal, *Convert*, 290, noting that those who depict conversion as brainwashing usually display an antireligious bias.

168. *Ibid.*, 28.

169. *Ibid.*, 29 (following Brian Taylor).

170. Cf. Rom 7:7–25; Phil 3:7 with Gal 1:14; Phil 3:6.

171. See Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 333–34. For what it is worth (a single case study counts as merely anecdotal evidence), however my postconversion community shaped my interpretation, I have clear and detailed memories of my preconversion life and conversion experience. Like Paul, I came to the community only after conversion; the community helped shape my early faith, but there were too few other "converts" in the community—and none from my background—to help shape the telling of my narrative.

proselytes by circumcision instead of remaining God-fearers (on the basis of a literal reading of Gal 5:11).¹⁷² He would thus be comparable to Eleazar in Adiabene (Jos. *Ant.* 20.38–48, esp. 20.43–46).¹⁷³ He also took the strictest Jewish view of Gentile salvation, one that required Gentiles' conversion; he carried this perspective into his Christian work after his conversion to Christ.¹⁷⁴ This is all very possible, though our sources are not clear regarding (or interested in) Paul's views about Gentiles before his conversion.¹⁷⁵ If Paul experienced any psychological struggle over the Gentile mission, Luke neglects depicting it.¹⁷⁶ But given all that Paul had to relearn, this may have been just one piece among many.

(9) *Theology and Structure*

What is Luke's theology in the passage? He emphasizes God's sovereignty in converting the persecutor (cf. 2 Macc 3:24–36).¹⁷⁷ Further, he emphasizes that Paul's Gentile mission was God's idea, God's initiative, and ultimately God's accomplishment.¹⁷⁸ Gamaliel warned that one could not prevent the realization of God's central purposes (Acts 5:39); now this thesis is demonstrated in the life of one whom Luke will later identify as Gamaliel's student (22:3).¹⁷⁹ Perhaps Luke highlights Paul as persecutor in part to emphasize that Christ can save anyone, even the most hostile (cf. 1 Tim 1:16, which in context suggests that even false teachers can repent; 1:13, 20).¹⁸⁰ Probably Luke highlights Peter's confession of his sinfulness at his "conversion"/calling (Luke 5:8, 10) in part to prepare the way for Paul's conversion.¹⁸¹ Jesus deliberately chose "sinners" and ordinary people as his disciples (5:8, 27; 6:15; 19:8–9); the real test was whether they would forsake all (5:1, 28; 19:8) or betray him (6:16). Paul plainly forsook all (Acts 9:18, 20, 24–25, 29). Whereas one might expect Stephen or Philip to emerge as leader of the Gentile mission in Luke's narrative, with Saul last of all, Luke's theology agrees with Paul's that God chooses whom he will (cf. Luke 5:8, 10; Acts 15:7; perhaps 7:21–27). As in the claim of 1 Tim 1:16, this mercy is a model for those who would follow;¹⁸² Luke uses Paul's life as a model for the Gentile mission, a technique that Paul would have undoubtedly approved of (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6).¹⁸³

172. Brändle and Stegemann, "Formation," 122–23. This view does not argue for an ancient Jewish "missions movement," now largely doubted, but simply that many successfully sought proselytes; see discussion at Acts 1:8.

173. Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 78.

174. Donaldson, "Convert," 81–82. On proselytism as necessary for salvation in one model of Jewish soteriology, see idem, *Paul and Gentiles*, 54–60. I regard this point as stronger than the claim that Paul sought proselytes before his conversion.

175. Thus, e.g., Ashton, *Religion*, 98, finds Donaldson's proposal here attractive but remains unpersuaded.

176. It might have proved useful for his narrative parallels in view of Jesus's struggle in Luke 22:42; but it would not fit Jesus's interest in Gentiles, shown from the start (Luke 4:25–27). Ancients regularly emphasized and perceived the tragic conflict of characters' internal values in their narratives, though without having to spell these out explicitly (Barton, *Honor*, 272; in the OT, see, e.g., Gen 22:1–19).

177. Implicitly, perhaps partly in response to his people's prayers (cf. Luke 6:28).

178. Paul's call here fits Luke's mission theology elsewhere as well as Paul's own; see Kowalski, "Widerstände."

179. Johnson, *Acts*, 166.

180. God's desire for the wicked to repent—and promise to receive them—also appears in the prophets (Ezek 18:21–23, 27–28).

181. Narratives of God's calling also tended to expose humans' inadequacy (Exod 3:11; Judg 6:15), including morally (Isa 6:5, 7), but Paul as a persecutor pushes that category much further (cf. 1 Cor 15:9).

182. Contrast the response of Greek "heroes" to insults, usually by violently killing their challengers (e.g., Paus. 3.16.2–3; 4.3.1; *Aethiopsis* 1 [Achilles killing Thersites]).

183. Sages could use their own lives as models for imitation (Diogenes *Ep.* 14; Diog. Laert. 7.1.10–11; cf. Xen. *Apol.* 16; 4 Macc 9:23; other examples in Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 100–101, 114 [e.g., Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 6.5]), though usually not as explicitly as Paul (contrast, e.g., Sen. *Y. Dial.* 7.18.1). It was understood

One suggestion for the passage's structure is chiastic:¹⁸⁴

- A Paul plots against disciples in Damascus (Acts 9:1–2).
- B Paul sees a vision, is blinded, fasts (9:3–9).
- C Ananias sees a vision and is sent to Paul (9:10–14).
- D Christ foretells Paul's mission (9:15–16).
- C' Ananias reports the vision to Paul (9:17).
- B' Paul's sight is restored; he eats (9:18–19a).
- A' Paul preaches Christ in Damascus, and members of the Jewish community plot to kill him (9:19–25).

As often in proposed chiastic structures, the asymmetry is problematic (i.e., A is two verses whereas A' is seven; B is seven verses whereas B' is two; C is five verses whereas C' is one), and the dominant elements are selected on the basis of where parallels appear. More serious is that this proposed structure omits 9:26–30. Nevertheless, at least the inverted parallelism between Paul's mission to persecute and his experience of persecution, and between his being blinded and its undoing, appears plausible. That Paul's call would be at the heart of the narrative fits Luke's theology as well as Paul's perspective on his experience (Gal 1:15–16).

II. COMMISSIONED BY THE HIGH PRIEST (9:1–2)

Luke's mention of the high priest's role here serves multiple literary functions: it connects this persecution with a major enemy of Jesus and an opponent of the Jerusalem church; it reveals Paul's influence and status in the Jerusalem elite;¹⁸⁵ and it prepares for Paul's defense later in the book by undermining some of his accusers.¹⁸⁶ Luke later makes good use of Paul's commission from the chief priestly circle; when the leading priests later accuse Paul, he not only attributes it partly to Sadducean bias against his Pharisaic resurrection views (Acts 23:6–8) but indicts the Sadducean class as accessories in his only genuinely legal offense. Rome rarely meddled with local judgments against local persons, but it would have little tolerance when this judgment extended to extrajudicial lynchings; it is thus significant that Paul links his own participation with such behavior to a commission from the very ruling priestly class that accuses him (26:10, 12).

(1) *Saul's Hatred* (9:1)

The language of "breathing threats" is idiomatic¹⁸⁷ and evokes OT images of breathing anger (cf. Job 4:9; Ps 18:15; Ezek 13:13; 21:31; 22:20–21).¹⁸⁸ The language of "threat" (ἀπειλή) is also common in 3 and 4 Maccabees;¹⁸⁹ in one of these passages, the threats (4 Macc 4:8) are met with a terrifying vision that leads to the persecutor's

that disciples would imitate sages (cf. Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.3; Sen. E. *Controv.* 9.3.12–13; Lucian *Peregr.* 24; *Dem.* 2; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.21; *b. Ber.* 62a; Fiore, "Exemplification," 233–34).

184. Bligh, *Galatians*, 95.

185. Although this is a Lukan emphasis, I do not mean to imply that Luke fabricated the idea (cf. Gal 1:14 and comment on Acts 22:3).

186. Note the helpful plural "high priests" in Acts 9:14, 21; 26:10, 12, even though Luke's narrative specifies only a single high priest's involvement and only as a letter of recommendation. Acts 9:14 and esp. 9:21 heighten the chief priests' responsibility, but because these comments appear in the mouths of less directly informed characters, Luke assumes less direct narratorial responsibility for their precision.

187. See BDAG; Bock, *Acts*, 354.

188. Cf. Bruce, *Acts'*, 196. These probably relate to a Semitic expression (cf. Meshah's Moabite inscription).

189. 3 Macc 2:24; 5:18, 30, 33, 37; 4 Macc 4:24; 7:2; 8:19; 9:32; 13:6; 14:9. Elsewhere in the LXX, Job 23:6; Prov 17:10; 19:12; 20:2; Isa 50:2; Hab 3:12; Zech 9:14; cf. also *Pss. Sol.* 17:25.

repentance (4:11–14).¹⁹⁰ Earlier the apostles, threatened by the Sanhedrin, prayed that God would notice their enemies’ “threats” (Acts 4:29; elsewhere in NT only Eph 6:9); here God notices their enemies’ threats again.

“Threats and murder” need not suggest that Saul actually killed the disciples; the terms together probably function as a hendiadys, hence “threats of murder.”¹⁹¹ Whether Saul was involved in carrying out any of these threats (apart from Acts 7:58 and as an intended recipient in 9:24, 29) is unclear here (but cf. 22:4; 26:10). Whatever the case, however, the text suggests irony: normally one is thrown into prison for murder (Luke 23:19, 25; cf. the commandment in 18:20),¹⁹² yet Saul, the one threatening murder, is himself hypocritically imprisoning others (Acts 8:3; 9:1–2; 22:19). The “threats,” too, might simply provoke believers to pray for greater boldness (Acts 4:29, the other use of ἀπειλή in Luke-Acts).¹⁹³ Yet Saul, who opposes “the disciples of the Lord,” will soon receive a disciple (9:10), join the disciples (9:19), make disciples (9:25), and find some skeptical that he is really a disciple (9:26).¹⁹⁴

(2) *Saul’s Commission (9:1–2)*

Both Luke (8:3) and Paul (Gal 1:13–14) suggest that Paul was a leader in the persecution, not simply an obscure part of a larger movement to which his activities were a mere addendum (cf. Acts 9:31). Paul’s letters indicate that some significant persecution continued in Judea even after his conversion (1 Thess 2:14–16), a perspective compatible with but not specifically confirming Luke’s claim that members of the aristocratic priesthood were involved (Acts 26:10 may be a generalizing plural, since the high priest in view no longer remained in office, or it may point to more general support).¹⁹⁵ (For the value of this portrayal for Paul’s later reversal of charges against his accusers in Acts, see comment on 26:12.)¹⁹⁶

Even Luke, however, does not claim that the high priest or his colleagues initiated this mission of persecution. In Acts, Saul initiated it, and the high priest merely offered supporting letters, which may have asked local synagogues’ cooperation in assisting Jerusalemites’ discipline of errant members (see discussion below). Saul’s conversion and exit from the scene seems to have inaugurated a more peaceful period for the church (9:30–31).

Luke may portray Paul as something like an agent of the high priests, a claim that does not diminish his own status. Letters of recommendation would not necessarily imply historically that the priests conceived of the persecution; Paul may have

190. See Johnson, *Acts*, 162, who emphasizes this allusion. Accounts of (a proportionately small number of) persecutors converted through visions circulate today as well (e.g., Bush and Pegues, *Move*, 140–41; Rutz, *Megashift*, 31; also a report I heard from someone I knew well, who reported being close to the source, in northern Nigeria in summer 2000, before some Christians began to retaliate after later massacres); persecutors have also converted through more traditional means (e.g., in Sung, *Diaries*, 161).

191. Witherington, *Acts*, 315. Saul was part of the group accused (on a corporate level) of Jesus’s murder (Acts 7:52, 58).

192. For homicide in Roman law, see Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 41–46 (noting [45] some accepted justifications, of which the closest here [but not very close] would be killing a “deserter” to the enemy).

193. For the verb, see Acts 4:17, to which 4:29 alludes. Elsewhere in the NT, the noun appears only at Eph 6:9 (for the verb, cf. 1 Pet 2:23), though it appears in later Hellenistic Jewish works, esp. in 3 Maccabees (3 Macc 2:24; 5:18, 30, 33, 37) and 4 Maccabees (4 Macc 4:24; 7:2; 8:18–19; 9:32; 13:6; 14:9), where, with the possible exception of 4 Macc 13:6, it refers to harsh pagan persecutors of God’s servants.

194. “Disciple” may be Luke’s terminology to establish continuity with Jesus’s first disciples in the Gospel (Trebilco, “Self-Designations,” 37).

195. Sadducean participation in the persecution is more compatible with our sources than the idea that primarily Pharisees were involved, though Paul was a Pharisee.

196. The high priestly class proved complicit in Paul’s only mission that by Roman standards was truly illegal. For Luke’s apologetic for Paul’s innocence, see Keener, “Apologetic”; idem, *Acts*, 1:223–24, 445–49.

conceived it and simply obtained a chief priest's endorsement of his general mission. Luke, however, makes good use of the priestly connection, as already noted. Elsewhere a person "sent" (ἀπέστειλεν) authoritative letters by messengers (e.g., 1 Macc 1:44); the high priest himself could send (ἀποστείλαι) exemplary representatives (*Let. Aris.* 32, 40).¹⁹⁷ Often those sent as envoys of the later rabbinic leadership in Judea were respected scholars.¹⁹⁸ Some scholars think that when Paul claims to be "not an apostle of men" in Gal 1:1 (cf. 1:12), he contrasts his apostleship with his former role, when he was a persecutor of the church (cf. 1:13).¹⁹⁹ Whether the Galatians knew enough of Paul's story already to infer this connection is unclear, but the contrast is at least consistent with the perspective of one who was formerly an "apostle of men."

The concept of a commissioned messenger, authorized by a sender, was not restricted to Judaism.²⁰⁰ When Caesar sent (ἀποστέλλω and cognates) a governor or representative, the representative was both authorized to act on Caesar's authority and responsible for carrying out his wishes.²⁰¹ Philosophers could send disciples to teach in their stead and act as their representatives.²⁰² Greeks could likewise associate such sending with cultic or revelatory purposes. Temples could send representatives—for example, the envoys dispatched by the hierophant of Eleusis to seek contributions for the shrine.²⁰³ Hermes, as messenger of the gods, was sometimes "sent from heaven."²⁰⁴ Epictetus advised that the genuine Cynic was a messenger sent from Zeus to people to show them their depravity.²⁰⁵

An equivalent custom existed in ancient Israelite circles as far back as Proverbs²⁰⁶ and eventually became formalized under Jewish law. Although we cannot determine the date at which some aspects of the custom of agency became law, the custom's practice in surrounding cultures suggests that the Jewish custom is older than the rabbinic sources that comment on it. Thus, for instance, both Roman and Jewish law recognized the function of proxies, or intermediary marriage brokers, in betrothals.²⁰⁷ (This sort of custom occurs fairly commonly in societies where parents must negotiate the terms of marriage contracts.)²⁰⁸ Although Jewish law did not require agents in betrothals,²⁰⁹ they were clearly common,²¹⁰ and rules were created regulating their conduct.²¹¹ Agents were also used in divorce²¹² and business.²¹³ Other evidence indicates that the practice was early. The language of agency might appear in Qumran halakah.²¹⁴ Eventually the Nasi

197. In a more historical example from the relevant period, Josephus acted on orders from the Jerusalem Sanhedrin (*Life* 62).

198. *Y. Sanh.* 1:2, §10; cf. De Ridder, *Discipling*, 125–26.

199. Cf. also Dio's contrast between charlatans and divine callings (Malherbe, "Gentle as Nurse," 215).

200. Here I borrow material from Keener, *John*, 310–13 (see further also 314–15, not used here).

201. Cf. *Jos. Ant.* 18.1, regarding Quirinius; 18.265, regarding Petronius; for the Latin equivalent, see *Pliny Ep.* 10.18.190–91.

202. Zeno in *Diog. Laert.* 7.1.9.

203. Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 244. One may also compare traveling holy men seeking to spread their cults abroad, although the establishment generally viewed them as charlatans (Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 42).

204. *Cornutus Summ.* 16 (Lang, 20, lines 18–19), in van der Horst, "Cornutus," 169.

205. *Epict. Diatr.* 3.22.23; cf. 4.8.31.

206. E.g., *Prov* 10:26; 13:17; 22:21; 25:13; 26:6.

207. See Cohen, *Law*, 295–96 (citing *Ulp. Dig.* 23.1.18); cf. Friedländer, *Life*, 1:234.

208. See examples in Jochim, *Religions*, 164; Gelfand, "Disorders," 158; Mbiti, *Religions*, 179.

209. *M. Qidd.* 2:1.

210. E.g., *b. Qidd.* 43a; *Exod. Rab.* 6:3 (a parable attributed to R. Meir); 6:4.

211. *T. Yebam.* 4:4.

212. *B. Git.* 23a; *Qidd.* 43a.

213. Assumed in the parable in *Gen. Rab.* 8:3.

214. Cf. CD XI, 2, 18–21; certainly messengers, at least, were known (1Q20 XX, 18; 4Q169 3–4 II, 1; 4Q200 4 7).

sent “envoys” to the Diaspora, a practice attested in the church fathers and Roman law as well as rabbinic literature;²¹⁵ but earlier texts attest the same practice of the high priest.²¹⁶

That this sort of agency provides a contrast with Paul’s “apostleship” in Gal 1:1 is, as already mentioned, not implausible, since many scholars have connected the practice of agency with a major background for the early Christian concept of apostleship.²¹⁷ The agent was viewed as the apostle’s prototype at least as early as Jerome²¹⁸ and was recognized by Lightfoot in the nineteenth century, in part through his vast knowledge of patristic sources.²¹⁹ Many other scholars reject this background,²²⁰ but on the whole the arguments do favor it.²²¹

Although Luke’s text allows the interpretation that Paul was the high priests’ “agent” (he claims to act on their authorization and commission, Acts 26:12), letters of recommendation also could serve as endorsements without implying agency (see discussion below). In the text, Paul takes the initiative and secures the authorization; if he has become an “agent” for the high priest here, it is apparently only because he secured the latter’s backing for a mission he conceived. Nevertheless, Luke portrays some aristocratic priests’ complicity and general approval; the letters somehow serve the function of securing Damascus synagogues’ cooperation in rounding up followers of the Way (9:2), which implies that they would at least construe the letters as commissioning Paul. The leaders’ desire to weaken the movement appears earlier in the text and could also have been a factor influencing Saul (cf. 5:17, 21, 27; 7:1), against Gamaliel’s former tolerance (5:34–39).

(3) Access to the High Priest (9:1–2)

Which high priest does Paul consult? The answer to this question depends on the chronology one favors for Paul’s career; Caiaphas remained high priest from 18 to 36 C.E., and Jonathan son of Ananus held authority briefly in 36–37 (Jos. *Ant.* 18.95). Given the chronological observations above, Caiaphas surely remained high priest at this point. The high priest’s identity, however, is not relevant to Luke’s account; Luke mistrusts the high priestly class as a whole (cf. Acts 23:14–15; 25:2–3). Moreover, in Acts, as noted above, this persecution abroad is Saul’s agenda, and the high priest merely approves his initiative.²²² If the high priest was morally committed to Paul’s agenda, he was best served by leaving the details, and hence potential liability, to Paul.²²³ Because letters constituted public approval (cf. Acts 9:14), Luke would not envision them explicitly endorsing extrajudicial lynchings; rather, they must have merely endorsed Saul’s mission of bringing fugitive Jerusalemites home for interrogation (cf. 22:5; 26:12).

Saul’s access to the high priest seems startling for a “young man” (7:58),²²⁴ particu-

215. Safrai, “Relations,” 205 (citing, e.g., Epiph. *Her.* 25.11; Euseb. *Comm. Is.* 18:1; *Cod. theod.* 16.8, 14).

216. 2 Macc 1:18; cf. 1 Macc 15:17; *Let. Aris.* 32; Safrai, “Relations,” 204–7. But the “apostles” of *CJ* 1:438, §611, might simply be “messengers of the congregation” in question (1:439; see *m. Ber.* 5:5).

217. E.g., Rengstorf, *Apostolate*, 27; Dix, *Ministry*, 228–30; Wanamaker, “Agent”; Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 133–35; Meier, *Matthew*, 115; Grayston, *Epistles*, 125; Hunter, *Romans*, 24; Héring, *First Corinthians*, 1; Ladd, *Theology*, 381; Bruce, *History*, 184. It is probably fair to claim that this is the majority view (so Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:153).

218. Jerome *Comm. Gal.* 1.1 (cited by Dix, *Ministry*, 228).

219. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 93–94 (citing Epiph. *Her.* 30).

220. E.g., Richardson, *Theology*, 324; Malan, “Apostolate,” 57.

221. See fuller discussion in Keener, *John*, 311–13.

222. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 422–23.

223. Cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 1262–63, who notes that later rabbinic law convicted of murder only someone guilty of the act (*Yad*, Murder 3:10–11; though divine accountability went further, *Yad*, Murder 2:2). But this may reflect the tradition of Pharisaic leniency.

224. Some time (though not much, in view of Pauline chronology) may have now passed; but “young man” need not mean “youth” in the modern sense (see comment on Acts 7:58).

larly a Hellenist (6:9) and a Pharisee (23:6).²²⁵ (Historically, Paul may have finished the bulk of his education only recently—see the mention of his peers in Gal 1:14—and hence might be in his late teens or early twenties.) But Saul must have had some high status (see comments below), and this may not have been his first mission (cf. Acts 26:11, though this might well be a generalizing plural).²²⁶ One who was young but had achieved many successes could be thought more inclined toward greater (and sometimes excessive) ambitions if they were suggested to him (Polyb. 5.102.1).

Saul was surely from a well-to-do family if he studied under Gamaliel, who was of high status and wealthy (Acts 22:3). Though Gamaliel was himself a Pharisee, his family became highly respected members of the municipal aristocracy (5:34; cf. Jos. *Life* 190, 309; *Ant.* 20.213, 223; *War* 4.159). The outcomes of Paul's trials later in Acts, despite condemnation from the municipal aristocracy, suggest high status (Acts 24:22, 27; 26:1, 31–32). Paul was born in Tarsus but was reared in Jerusalem (22:3); his family probably moved to Jerusalem when he was quite young, because his father was apparently a Pharisee (23:6, though see discussion there) and this movement is not known outside Palestine (and was concentrated in Jerusalem). Although one cannot rule out that Paul's nephew, like Paul himself, could have been sent to Jerusalem, it seems likelier that his sister's family (23:16) lived there, which in turn suggests that the family as a whole likely immigrated to Jerusalem.²²⁷ As Roman citizens in Jerusalem, Paul's family probably exercised some influence; a Roman citizen might also have the least to fear from Roman questions about any lynchings that might occur.²²⁸

Paul's letters address only his religious and not his social status at the time of his conversion, but they are consistent with Luke's picture. Paul was "advancing" in Judaism (Gal 1:14), which, along with his zeal for ancestral traditions and accurate interpretation, probably suggests good Jewish training (his Pharisaism [Phil 3:5] makes Jerusalem the probable site).²²⁹ His letters betray a better-than-average Greek education as well, with at least some training in rhetoric (albeit not a specialist's proficiency).²³⁰ Such training was not available to everyone, and such factors suggest that Paul belonged to a wealthier-than-average family.

(4) Letters of Authorization (9:2)

Letters from Jerusalem to the Diaspora are attested over a long period.²³¹ Official letters from a person in an office to others also in office were often posted in public locations, which made them a readily recognizable letter form.²³² Here, however, the letters are letters of recommendation that Paul carries.

Those who carried letters from a high official acted on that official's authorization (1 Esd 4:61; Neh 2:7, 9). Letters of recommendation of various sorts reflect a pervasive custom (Rom 16:1–2; 1 Cor 16:15–18; Phil 2:29–30; 4:2–3; 1 Thess 5:12–13;

225. One could send letters even through a Gentile, though some scrupulous priests avoided it (*t. Šabb.* 13:11), but this is not the same as endorsing them with letters of recommendation (see discussion below).

226. Rapske, *Custody*, 100 (the caveat about the generalizing plural, however, is mine).

227. Other relatives may have either moved with them or already been there, welcoming them when they arrived (cf. possibly Rom 16:7, but note my serious reservations offered above). Other, more distant relatives in Jerusalem were not necessarily Roman citizens, however, a benefit apparently conferred after enslavement in the Diaspora (see comment on Acts 6:9).

228. Disciplines short of execution, such as beatings, were permitted at the discretion of local authorities; cf. *m. Mak.* 3:10–12; *t. Tem.* 1:1; *Sipra Qed.* pg. 4.200.3.3; *Sipre Deut.* 286.5.1; Applebaum, "Organization," 496.

229. Cf. also Rom 15:19; Gal 1:17, explored more fully below. See also comment on Acts 22:3.

230. See Hock, "Paul and Education"; discussion at Acts 22:3.

231. Bauckham, "James," 423–24, cites the Elephantine papyri (fifth century B.C.E.) and 2 Macc 1:1–10.

232. Aune, *Environment*, 164–65.

Phlm 8–17; Heb 13:17; 3 John 12);²³³ thus, for example, leaders in Jerusalem sent letters confirming Josephus in his authority (Jos. *Life* 310–11).²³⁴ Sometimes people of rank sent such letters for their clients or others to provide them “credentials for some activity rather than merely to introduce” them.²³⁵ In general, travelers could carry letters of recommendation so that the receiver would know to welcome them.²³⁶

Some comments about the context of recommendation letters can illustrate their general function, although many of the specific elements mentioned here (perhaps especially in formal Roman letters) would not appear in the high priest’s letters for Paul. Recommenders placed their own credibility on the line when writing such letters,²³⁷ but they socially indebted to themselves those so recommended.²³⁸ Appeal to the potential benefactor’s generosity was a natural element in many recommendation letters.²³⁹ Further, when two people shared a mutual friend, *they* became friends, part of the same in-group.²⁴⁰ The receiver of the recommendation would act on the basis of the receiver’s relationship with the recommender, and hence recommendations might spell out the beneficiary’s relationship with the recommender.²⁴¹ By generosity to the beneficiary, the benefactor displayed friendship with the recommender²⁴² and also guarded the recommender’s honor in the eyes of the beneficiary.²⁴³ When the letter’s receiver was of the same (rather than lower) social station as the recommender, the receiver might express or anticipate reciprocity for the favor done.²⁴⁴

Despite conventional forms, writers could prove creative in articulating reasons for receiving the recommendations.²⁴⁵ Powerful writers sometimes claimed that the person on whose behalf they wrote was more deserving than any other (cf. Phil 2:20) or that this beneficiary was a particularly special one—even when they had written

233. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 7.5.2–3 (with 7.6.1; 7.7.1; 7.8.1; 7.10.3); 13.1–79 (all of *Fam.* 13 except 13.68); Socratics *Ep.* 28; cf. Men. *Rhet.* 2.5, 397.21–24; see esp. Kim, *Letter of Recommendation*, passim (for NT examples, 119–20; for papyri, 150–238); also Agosto, “Conventions,” 70–117; Keyes, “Letter of Introduction”; Marshall, *Enmity*, 91–129, 268–71; more briefly, Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 153–65; Aune, *Environment*, 166–67; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 102; Keener, *Corinthians*, 166–67.

234. For a later rabbinic example, see, e.g., *y. Mo’ed Qat.* 3:1, §2.

235. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 153. Writers normally interceded for the third party to establish his positive relationship with the receivers or secure him some other favor with them (*ibid.*, 155); they also often identify the sender with the one recommended (Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 102–3, citing P.Oslo 55).

236. E.g., Lucian *Lucius* 2.

237. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 2.9.2. Although writing many letters, Cicero assures his receiver that he is sensitive to his reputation and thus does not recommend indiscriminately (*Fam.* 13.48.1). Thus some letters are worded more cautiously (e.g., *Symm. Ep.* 1.72).

238. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 2.13.9; 3.2.6; 3.8.2.

239. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 13.44.1; Pliny *Ep.* 10.4.1; 10.94.3; 10.120.2; Phlm 14.

240. Malina, *Windows*, 48.

241. E.g., P.Oxy. 292; Cic. *Fam.* 13.3.1; 13.5.3; 13.44.1; Dio Chrys. *Ep.* 2; Pliny *Ep.* 2.13.7, 10; 3.2.4; 7.16.5; 10.4.1, 4; 10.5.1; 10.11.1; 10.87.1; 10.94.1; Fronto *Ad Ant. Pium* 9.2. For the papyri, see further Kim, *Letter of Recommendation*, 37–42. Cf. the recommendee’s readiness to depend on the recommender’s relationship with the receiver of the letter (e.g., *Symm. Ep.* 1.70; 1.81; 1.106; 1.107).

242. So explicitly in Pliny *Ep.* 10.4.6; see also *Symm. Ep.* 1.30; 1.71. In some parts of the world today, such social demands lead to considerable corruption; this was true in Rome as well, but ethical constraints did impose some limitations.

243. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 1.3.2. Cicero’s letters of recommendation often ask the benefactor to *prove* to the recommended person how good a recommendation Cicero had written on the recommended one’s behalf and how influential Cicero had been for good (e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 13.19.3; 13.20.1; 13.26.4; 13.30.2; 13.35.2; 13.36.2; 13.44.1; 13.45.1; 13.46.1; 13.49.1; 13.58.1; 13.77.2; 13.78.2); cf. also *Symm. Ep.* 1.93; 1.106. For correspondents proving their love, cf., e.g., *Symm.* 1.14.1; 1.27; 1.43.2; 1.87; 1.98; 2 Cor 8:24.

244. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 2.13.1–2; 3.2.1; 4.4.2–3; 7.31.7. If the letter receiver’s status was less, the receiver would respond especially with gratitude (Fronto *Ad Ant. Pium* 9.1). Gratitude was critical, both for the recommender and for the beneficiary (e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 13.3.1; Pliny *Ep.* 4.12.1, 5–7).

245. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 3.3.5; 6.8.1–2, 5. Articulating reasons was essential (Dio Chrys. *Ep.* 1; esp. Pliny *Ep.* 2.13.11).

many other such letters with superlative claims.²⁴⁶ They could also request that the beneficiary be treated as if the beneficiary were in fact the recommender.²⁴⁷ Or they could simply request that the letter recipient receive well its bearer.²⁴⁸ Sometimes, at least in later times, they might assert that the receiver already knew the worth of the one recommended, or that no letter was really necessary.²⁴⁹

Among Romans of rank, such letters were often only one²⁵⁰ to four paragraphs in length. At least in Egypt, the usual structure of letters of recommendation was as follows:²⁵¹

1. Opening
 - a. Salutation formula
 - b. *Formula valetudinis*
2. Background
 - a. Identification formula
 - b. Background proper
3. Request period
 - a. Request clause
 - b. Circumstantial clause
 - c. Purpose or causal clause
4. Appreciation
5. Closing
 - a. Closing *formula valetudinis*
 - b. Closing salutation

The letters usually began by identifying the person recommended and designating the person's relationship to the sender;²⁵² for Saul, then, it would be a great honor to carry such a letter (cf. Gal 1:1, 14). Later, as an apostle "not from men" but from Christ (1:1), Paul would eschew dependence on such letters of recommendation (2 Cor 3:1–3).²⁵³ (Even when Paul writes recommendations in his letters, the basis differs from that in most other letters of recommendation.)²⁵⁴

(5) *Extradition Requests Here? (9:2)*

People of higher rank expected subordinates to obey their letters (e.g., 1 Kgs 21:8; Esth 1:22; 8:10; 9:20, 30; 1 Macc 1:44). But is obedience demanded here? Some scholars have argued that the high priest had extradition rights for Judean fugitives

246. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 3.1.3; 13.1.5; 13.5.3; 13.18.2; 13.19.1; 13.26.1; 13.32.2; 13.34.1; 13.35.1; 13.36.1–2; 13.39.1; 13.45.1; 13.51.1; 13.78.2.

247. E.g., P.Oxy. 32; Cic. *Fam.* 13.5.3; cf. 1 Cor 16:10; Phlm 17; Kim, *Letters of Recommendation*, 7, 37–42.

248. See, e.g., P.Grenf. 2.77.34–38 (from the third or fourth century C.E.). Officials could also use public recommendations to commend their friends (e.g., P.Lond. 1912.105–8).

249. E.g., Symm. *Ep.* 1.22; 1.67; 1.75; 1.81. In *Ep.* 1.63, Symmachus claims that he recommends one for the letter receiver's benefit; in *Ep.* 1.94, he hopes his letter adequate to communicate the recommendee's merits; in *Ep.* 1.104, the recommendee is better than the letter is able to convey.

250. For one paragraph, see, e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 13.45–49.

251. Kim, *Letter of Recommendation*, 7 (mostly using his words). Paul's letters do not share this form (128), but most Christian letters of recommendation from Egypt do (99–118); for the eighty-three letters that Kim analyzed, see 156–238.

252. *Ibid.*, 37–42.

253. Paul does send his own recommendations, usually embedded in larger letters; see *ibid.*, 120; Agosto, "Paul and Commendation," esp. 110–28. But like some philosophers (Diogenes *Ep.* 9; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.9.27, 33–34; 2.3.1–2; cf. 4.12.12), he did not want to depend on them for himself.

254. See esp. Agosto, "Paul and Commendation," 127: Paul commends especially on the basis of work in the church rather than of social connections. But even with Paul, such connections remain; e.g., Rom 16:2; Phil 2:22, 30; Phlm 10–13.

that would be respected by rulers in the region.²⁵⁵ This may have been true in the second century B.C.E. if we may trust our sources on this point; the Romans granted Judea extradition rights from Egypt's ruler (1 Macc 15:21),²⁵⁶ and Julius Caesar presumably reconfirmed these rights in 47 B.C.E. by making the high-priestly family ethnarchs over all Jews and arbiters of Jewish customs (Jos. *Ant.* 14.189–95). Rome also granted King Herod extraordinary rights for extraditing fugitives from the region of his jurisdiction (*War* 1.474, acknowledging this situation as unusual).²⁵⁷

In this period, however, Judea had a Roman governor.²⁵⁸ Even if Pilate in Caesarea remained aloof from the Jerusalem aristocracy's affairs, other governors were under no legal or political obligation to another city's aristocracy. The letters, however, are not to local governments but, as Luke expressly claims, to synagogues (Acts 9:2).²⁵⁹ Local Jewish communities retained rights to practice their own customs as ethnic conclaves in foreign cities;²⁶⁰ consequently, they would be able to continue practicing disciplines in their own synagogues (Luke 21:12; Matt 10:17; 2 Cor 11:24) so long as no one renounced Judaism and complained of subsequent abuse.²⁶¹ Just as Alexandrian Jews had an ethnarch and Nabateans in Damascus had an ethnarch (2 Cor 11:32), Damascene Jews would possess a measure of autonomy. Most synagogue leaders would have acted out of respect for the high priest.²⁶² If conflicts arose, local municipal authorities probably would have (though need not have) chosen to defer to the rights of minority communities in disciplining their own members.²⁶³ In this case, they may have secured the cooperation of other groups as well (2 Cor 11:32).

But at minimum, the letters could encourage support less forcefully, simply commending Paul (see discussion of recommendation letters, above) and authorizing his mission in more basic ways. Saul and his companions would not have the advantages

255. E.g., Reicke, *Era*, 149; Bruce, *Apostle*, 72.

256. Bruce, *Apostle*, 72, noting that the author Lucius (1 Macc 15:16) is presumably Lucius Caecilius Metellus, consul in 142 B.C.E. Not all accept as certain the document's authenticity (Wallace and Williams, *Acts*, 52, who favor unofficial action here).

257. Bruce, *Apostle*, 72; idem, *Commentary*, 193; Johnson, *Acts*, 162 (providing the information but not committed to the conclusion). Cities normally agreed to extraditions only if they were on good terms (Livy 41.23.1–5; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.41–42).

258. Some argue that Damascus may not have even been under direct Roman rule in this period (see Barrett, *Acts*, 446); for further discussion, see excursus on Nabateans at Acts 9:23.

259. With Barrett, *Acts*, 446. Haenchen, *Acts*, 320–21n3, has therefore misread Acts (in averring that Luke read the Maccabean situation into it) no less than its attempted defenders above. For influential festal letters uniting Jewish communities, see Whitters, "Observations" (citing Esth 9:20–32; 2 Macc 1:1–9; 1:10–2:18; Elephantine's "Passover Papyrus"; and later 2 *Bar.* 78–87); for some early encyclical letters from sages, see Aune, *Environment*, 185.

260. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 14.213–16, 223, 227, 242, 245–46, 258, 260, 263; 16.162–65; see discussion in Sanders, *Judaism*, 212; Rabello, "Condition"; Rajak, "Charter."

261. For a discussion of proper scourgings as outlined in *m. Mak.* 3, cf. Gallas, "Fünfmal."

262. Many scholars doubt that the high priest exercised authority over other Diaspora Jews; others argue the contrary (Bruce, *Commentary*, 193) or against doubting Luke without firm evidence (Munck, *Acts*, 81). I doubt that the high priest had in the Diaspora any legal authority recognized by the empire; nevertheless, the effectiveness of the temple tax (Jos. *Ant.* 18.312) and the biblical and Maccabean roles for the high priesthood indicate the respect and influence that he commanded (rightly, Dunn, *Acts*, 120–21; Witherington, *Acts*, 316; Haenchen, *Acts*, 71). Nevertheless, later rabbinic arguments about the Sanhedrin's Diaspora influence (*m. Mak.* 1:10, cited in Rapske, *Custody*, 101; *t. 'Or.* 1:8; *Sanh.* 3:10; *Sipre Deut.* 59.1.2; 188.1.2; perhaps *y. B. Qam.* 4:1, §3; *Git.* 5:6, §3; cf. negative relations in *t. 'Abod. Zar.* 4:6) are uncertain for their own period and certainly cannot be retrojected into Paul's (see Keener, *John*, 212–13). And even later rabbis allowed courts outside the land (*t. Sanh.* 3:10).

263. This may have been especially the case if Damascus's minority communities had influential ethnarchs, as at least the Nabateans seem to have had; see comment on Acts 9:23–24. Cf. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 147: "With the permission of the local authorities, the Jerusalem authorities could have claimed jurisdiction over Jews in other regions. . . . Moreover, the 'letters' in question may have been 'requests' rather than 'orders' and Luke a little hyperbolic at this point."

of travel given to those traveling on Rome's business,²⁶⁴ but letters of recommendation from the high priest would guarantee them aid along the way from local Jewish communities. The objects of Saul's quest would not be local Jewish Christians (he and his allies may well have hoped there were none) but fugitives from Jerusalem, where the high priest exercised direct civic authority.²⁶⁵

Synagogues appear often in Luke-Acts, but the reference to their involvement in persecution here (cf. Acts 22:19; 26:11) partly fulfills the warning of Luke 21:12: soon after Jesus's ministry but before predicted wars and earthquakes (21:10–12), his followers would be handed over to synagogues for discipline. "Binding" free people was a terrible insult to their dignity (Polyb. 1.69.5; see comment on Acts 21:33–34). That women were also targets indicates the vicious lengths to which Saul went to eradicate the movement (cf. Val. Max. 9.2.1); see comment on Acts 8:3.

(6) "The Way" (9:2)

"The Way" as a title for the Christian movement appears only in Acts (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22; possibly in 16:17; 18:25–26; 24:14) but probably reflects genuine tradition about one of the movement's titles for itself, probably in a Semitic context. It does not seem to have been used much by the later Gentile church, of which Luke was a part, at least if we may infer from the silence of other early Christian sources.²⁶⁶ The movement is related to the narrow "door" of salvation (Luke 13:24–25; cf. Matt 7:13–14) and to "the way of peace" (Luke 1:79), the Lord's way prepared by John (1:76; 3:4), "the way of God" (20:21, despite the speakers), and "the way of righteousness" (Matt 21:32; cf. Acts 13:10; 16:17).²⁶⁷

The "way" was the right moral path or lifestyle in which the upright would walk.²⁶⁸ Occasionally philosophic schools could be compared to roads or ways.²⁶⁹ The expression is, however, more pervasive in Jewish sources. Thus Scripture speaks of the way of righteousness, justice, and so forth.²⁷⁰ This expression appears also in early Jewish literature,²⁷¹ especially the Qumran texts.²⁷² In these texts it refers to the way of the

264. On which see Casson, *Travel*, 188; cf. 197. Paul's companions could have been Levite police delegated to him (e.g., Lenski, *Acts*, 357) but may have simply been other young and zealous members of the Hellenist synagogue (6:9) who shared his commitments.

265. With, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 100. It is possible that these events occur before the Samaritan and Gentile conversions in Acts 8 and hence too early for many local conversions to have occurred; otherwise, they may occur only shortly later.

266. We still read of a moral "way" (of love, Ign. *Eph.* 9.1), the two ways as moral paths (*Did.* 1.2; 4.14; 5.1; *Barn.* 5.4; 11.7; 19.1–2, 12; 20.1; *Herm.* 35.2), the "way of truth" (*1 Clem.* 35.5), the "way of righteousness" (*Barn.* 1.4; *2 Clem.* 5.7), and Jesus as the "way of salvation" (*1 Clem.* 36.1), but all these ideas are attested in the NT as well (e.g., "way of truth," 2 Pet 2:2; "of righteousness," 2:21).

267. On the sense in Matt 21, see, e.g., Jeremias, *Theology*, 46; Gundry, *Matthew*, 423; Keener, *Matthew*, 509. Addressing an Indian context, Pathrapankal, "Way," suggests that Luke's presentation of the movement as a "way" (as opposed to the institutional church) may help in some interreligious discussion and proclamation.

268. Although the Jewish sources below are Luke's primary context, analogous ideas about a "way" appear elsewhere, e.g., the Chinese *tao*, as in Confuc. *Anal.* 40 (6.15); 104 (6.18).

269. Lucian *Hermot.* 15, 25–27, 30. Cf. pedagogic or epistemological approaches in Plato *Phileb.* 16BC; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.4.29; Marc. Aur. 6.22; Iamb. *V.P.* 19 (on which see Dillon and Hershbell, "Introduction," 28).

270. E.g., Exod 18:20; 32:8; Deut 8:6; 9:16; 10:12; 11:22, 28; Ps 23:3; Prov 2:8; 8:20; 12:28; 16:31; Isa 30:11, 21; 33:15; 40:14; 42:24; 48:17; 58:2; 63:17; 64:5; cf. Wis 5:6. The expression is particularly prominent in the wisdom tradition, with more than seventy references to "ways" as behavior in Proverbs alone.

271. E.g., *Jub.* 20:2; 23:20–21; *1 En.* 82:4; *4 Ezra* 5:1; for "ways" as behavior, see, e.g., Tob 1:3; *Jub.* 20:2; 23:20–21; 4Q400 1 I, 14; *Sib. Or.* 3.233. Charles, *Jubilees*, lxxxiv, notes esp. *Jub.* 23:20. Cognate expressions remain in Islamic Arabic (see Bishop, *Apostles*, 107–8); Bruce, *Acts*¹, 197, also compares the Indian *pathin* and *mārga* and the Chinese *tao*.

272. E.g., CD I, 11, 13, 16; II, 3; 1QS IX, 18–21; X, 21; XI, 13; 1QSa I, 2; 1QH^a XII, 18–25; XIV, 10, 23–24; 1Q22 II, 8; 4Q185 1–2 II, 1–2, 4; 4Q260 V, 1; 4Q400 1 I, 14; 4Q405 23 I, 11; 4Q429 4 I, 10; 4Q473 1; 4Q511 2 I, 6; 11QT LIV, 17.

community, who are “the perfect of way.”²⁷³ In 1QS IX, 17 those who have chosen the way (of truth and righteousness) are part of Isaiah’s highway in the wilderness (Isa 40:3), quoted in 1QS VIII, 14²⁷⁴ and alluded to in IX, 19–20.²⁷⁵ Fitzmyer points out that the origin of Acts’ “absolute use” of the term was unknown until the discovery of the Qumran scrolls, which use it “to designate the mode of life of the Essenes.”²⁷⁶ Rabbis spoke of “the way” of the Torah (*b. ’Ab. 6:4, bar.*);²⁷⁷ this expression fit their image of *halakah*, proper behavioral “walking.”²⁷⁸

Whereas the usual Jewish use focused on ethical wisdom and orthopraxy (albeit defined differently by various Jewish sects), the Jesus movement made obedience to Christ part of its orthopraxy.²⁷⁹ The Christ claim of Jesus’s followers was the distinctive element by which they defined themselves as heirs to the way of truth and righteousness as distinct from others.²⁸⁰ Analogously, the highly sectarian Essenes regarded their “way” as normative, including for Israel.²⁸¹ God would judge the nations in battle by “the perfect of way” (1QM XIV, 7); Jews saved in the end time would be those who joined their ranks, for other Jews would prove apostate and suffer judgment with the nations.²⁸² Some other early Christians also employed “the way” in exclusivistic terms.²⁸³

It seems significant that Paul ends up converting to the Way “on the way” (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, Acts 9:17, 27; κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν, 26:13) to Damascus, although Luke omits the opportunity to connect the two in immediately adjacent verses (he could have mentioned the “road” in 9:3 or in the context of 22:3, or the movement by that name in the context of 26:13).²⁸⁴

(7) Damascus (9:2)

Travel was popular in the Roman world and was undertaken with a degree of safety and efficiency unrivalled in subsequent centuries until the steamers.²⁸⁵ To

273. 1QM XIV, 7; 1QH^a IX, 36; 4Q403 1 I, 22; 4Q405 13 6; 4Q491 8–10 I, 5; cf. 1QS IV, 22; VIII, 25; XI, 11, 17; 1QH^a XX, 34; 4Q404 2 3; 4Q405 3 II, 13.

274. Also in the fragmentary 4Q176 1–2 I, 7; 4Q259 III, 5. On Isa 40:1–11, esp. 3–5, in Luke-Acts, see Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 37–69; for the “way,” 59–68. For Isaiah’s highway for the exiles’ return to Zion, see Isa 35:8; 40:3; 42:16; 43:16, 19; 49:11; 57:14; 62:10; cf. 19:23; it evokes the earlier exodus (51:10; cf. e.g., Exod 13:21; Deut 1:31; Jos. *Ant.* 3.18).

275. Note the “way of truth” in 1QS VIII, 13; 4Q259 III, 4 (ways of truth in 1QS IV, 17; 4Q213 4 5; 4Q416 2 III, 14; 4Q418 9 15); 4 *Ezra* 5:1. Qumran documents also refer to the “two ways” of Deut 11:26–28, between which they must choose (4Q473 1).

276. Fitzmyer, “Christianity in Light of the Scrolls,” 240 (citing also CD I, 13 and other texts). McCasland, “Way,” suggests that Christians derived the term from Qumran by way of John the Baptist, but the sapiential usage is common enough that this may not be necessary. On the term in the Scrolls, see also Zon, “Droga.”

277. See also Ps 119:32; Jer 5:4–5; 2 *Bar.* 44:3; 4 *Ezra* 7:79; *Lev. Rab.* 29:5; *Exod. Rab.* 30:12.

278. Cf. also Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 77–78. For behavioral “walking,” see also 1 *En.* 91:19; 94:1; *Jub.* 21:2; 25:10; 1QS III, 9, 18; IV, 6, 12; V, 10; VI, 2; IX, 8, 19; CD II, 15–16; VII, 4, 6–7; VIII, 9; 1 *Cor* 7:17; *Gal* 5:16, 25; 6:16; *Phil* 3:17–18; *Col* 1:10; 2:6; 1 *Thess* 2:12; 4:1.

279. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 584, who contrasts the early Christian conjunction of right belief and practice with Jewish orthopraxy and Greco-Roman ritual; cf. Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 67.

280. The implicit exclusivism in the “way” claim may be illustrated also by the “two ways” model, which was widespread (e.g., Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 8.3; *Diogenes Ep.* 30; *Deut* 30:15; *Ps* 1:1; *Test. Ash.* 1:3, 5; *m. ’Ab.* 2:9; *Did.* 1.1–6.2; *Barn.* 18.1–21.9; see some additional sources in Keener, *Matthew*, 250) and with which Luke was familiar (*Luke* 13:23–27; cf. *Matt* 7:13–14).

281. The Qumran community viewed itself and its lifestyle as the “way” (e.g., 1QS IX, 17; X, 21; 4Q403 1 I, 22).

282. Cf. 4QpNah IV, 3. Other Jews also could acknowledge some of their compatriots as apostate (1 *Macc* 1:51–53) or even expect apostasy of most in the end time (*Test. Iss.* 6:1), but the Essenes were more sectarian, usually identifying their own community with the true remnant of Israel (Flusser, *Judaism*, 49).

283. See esp. *John* 14:6, characteristically applying it christocentrically (see Keener, *John*, 940–43).

284. Others view “the way” even as a unifying theme (including words such as πορεύομαι and διέρχομαι) through Luke-Acts (Geiger, “Weg”; cf. Combet-Galland, “Voyage,” emphasizing passages focused on roads, e.g., *Luke* 9:51–19:28; 24:13–35; *Acts* 8:26–40). Still, travel was common.

285. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 62–63; see more extensive discussion of travel in antiquity in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:585–89.

reach Damascus from Jerusalem, one would travel the Great North Road;²⁸⁶ it lay on the trade route from the Parthian east to Egypt in the south. The distance was not short; Damascus was about 135 miles north of Jerusalem, a journey of roughly six days by foot.²⁸⁷

How Paul and his companions traveled is disputed. It seems unlikely that one traveling such a distance with the high priest's blessing (9:1–2) and coming from a wealthy family (cf. 22:3) would have made the trip on foot, whether he owned animals or rented them.²⁸⁸ Further, if his mission was so urgent as to require travel even at midday (22:6), surely he would have taken faster transport than walking if it were available to him. Riding a horse could easily double or triple the distance one could travel on foot in the same amount of time.²⁸⁹

The narrative, however, seems to picture the journey differently. In favor of walking one can cite Paul's being led by the hand in 9:8, though one could counter that it would undoubtedly be dangerous for him to ride while blind, whether or not most of his companions were mounted.²⁹⁰ More explicitly in favor might be his companions' "standing" (9:7), so that Luke might envision them on foot; even if "standing" in 9:7 is simply Luke's editing of his tradition (cf. 26:14), it indicates how he viewed the journey. If Luke's apparent perspective here is accurate, it suggests that the high priest may have authorized the mission (9:1–2), but he certainly did not provide for it. This possibility would reinforce the claim that the mission was Paul's agenda (9:1)—though, even so, his lack of transport seems extraordinary. The journey would be a long one by foot, requiring many nights spent at villages along the way.

Both Acts and Paul (Gal 1:17, which claims that he "returned" there, esp. *πάλι*) state that Paul was in Damascus after his conversion (which presumably happened near there, 2 Cor 11:32) before traveling again to Jerusalem.²⁹¹ Tradition places Paul's encounter at Kaukab, "where 'the Way of the Sea' crosses a very slight ridge" roughly twelve miles south of the city.²⁹² Many scholars, ignoring Acts, claim that Paul's pre-conversion persecution of Christians occurred in Damascus. But pure dismissal of a source (Acts) that is so often confirmed by Paul's letters where we can test it, including in this context,²⁹³ is unwarranted and arbitrary, a contrast to classicists' use

286. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 423 (and the sources he cites). Ramsay, *Pictures*, 100, speaks of "the way of the Sea" (of Galilee). The alternative to this coastal route was through Samaria and Gadara (mentioned noncommittally in Blaiklock, *Acts*, 87).

287. Barrett, *Acts*, 447; Witherington, *Acts*, 316. See also Finegan, *Apostles*, 58 (estimating 130–150 mi., i.e., 200–240 km.): "Beside the present road from Quneitra, 6 mi (10 km) south of Damascus, a Christian shrine atop a hill called Kaukab (Celestial Light) marks the traditional site where Paul fell to the ground."

288. Modern Protestants usually doubt that he was on a horse, whereas Catholics think that he fell off (influenced by Renaissance paintings); both are usually influenced by how they have heard or seen the story (see Dougherty, "Did Paul Fall?").

289. Rapske, "Travel," 9.

290. If we did conclude that he traveled only by foot, as on many of his later travels, it would at least explain why word reached the saints in Damascus before he arrived (Acts 9:13–14); but if Saul publicized his mission in Jerusalem (even to disciples there who were soon after released) before going, word could have spread ahead of him.

291. With Riesner, *Early Period*, 263; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 182; Witherington, *Acts*, 316, 321; Dunn, *Acts*, 121.

292. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 100. Whether the site is correct or not, it bears much likelier claim to having been preserved (because Paul remained in the vicinity for some time) than the site of the eunuch's baptism in Acts 8:36 (see comment there).

293. See discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:237–50. One cannot guarantee that Luke always had sufficiently detailed information, but Luke is our fullest source and likelier to be correct than arguments from Paul's silence against him, given how often he is correct. Given the significance of Damascus in both sources and other correspondences, Luke can hardly be accused of simply compensating for lack of information by randomly inventing it.

of comparable sources. The persecution likely happened in the same place as his advancement in Judaism (Gal 1:13–14), where he obtained his Pharisaic training (Phil 3:5–6), which would be in Jerusalem.²⁹⁴ One cannot use Gal 1:22 to deny that Paul had been in Judea, because the same context notes that he had spent at least some time there (1:18, before 1:23)²⁹⁵ and that he had persecuted Christians there (1:23).²⁹⁶ Until the time of Ignatius, none of our sources specify that Jews persecuted Christians as a group in Syria (including Damascus); rather, Judea is mentioned (1 Thess 2:15).²⁹⁷

Like Iconium, Damascus may have exaggerated its antiquity;²⁹⁸ it nevertheless is quite old.²⁹⁹ It was a fairly wealthy city located on trade routes with the East, and most ancient authors claimed that it belonged to the Decapolis League (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.16.74).³⁰⁰ Like most ancient cities, it embraced multiple deities; it housed the massive temple of the Damascene Jupiter (the old Syrian deity Hadad-Ramman), the largest temple we know of in Roman Syria, recently built.³⁰¹ Although Damascus belonged to the Decapolis in this period, Rome later incorporated it into the province of Syria under Trajan (98–117 C.E.); Trajan's successor, Hadrian, named it a metropolis.³⁰²

(8) *Jews in Damascus* (9:2)

Most relevant for this account (e.g., Acts 9:22–23) is that many Jews and also proselytes³⁰³ lived in Damascus; Josephus (who sometimes exaggerates numbers) claims that a generation later ten to twenty thousand were slaughtered as a result of the Judean war (Jos. *War* 2.561; 7.368; cf. *Life* 27).³⁰⁴ Some estimate that some thirty to forty thousand Jews lived there in this period; in the Middle Ages, estimates of the Jewish population varied from some three thousand (plus four hundred Samaritans) to ten thousand.³⁰⁵ That Luke mentions multiple synagogues here (Acts 9:2, 20; also in Jerusalem [24:12; 26:11] and Salamis [13:5]) but usually a single “synagogue” in other cities suggests that he is well aware of the large Jewish community in Damascus.³⁰⁶

294. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 36–37.

295. *Ibid.*, 38 (suggesting, with, I believe, a weaker case, that Paul had persecuted and driven out only Hellenists, so that others there would not know him, 37).

296. It may also be noteworthy that the church grew rapidly during this period (cf. Acts 9:31), and Paul's own chronology leads us to suppose that up to three years passed between his persecuting role and his visit to Jerusalem (Gal 1:18), and additional years in Syria and Cilicia (Gal 1:21; cf. 2:1). Many of the church members thus may have been added after Paul's initial departure from Jerusalem.

297. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 90.

298. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 355.

299. Finegan, *Apostles*, 56 (arguing that it is attested in third-millennium B.C.E. Ebla tablets and later Egyptian and Hittite records; it was conquered by the Aramaeans ca. 1200 B.C.E.); Pitard, “Damascus,” 103, suggests that its first attestation is in the fifteenth century B.C.E., when it was an important caravan center (Albright, *Biblical Period*, 8).

300. It was part of Syria from 64 B.C.E. but retained “municipal independence as part of the Decapolis” (Witherington, *Acts*, 316).

301. Pitard, “Damascus,” 104, noting inscriptions from 15/16 and 37/38 C.E. The temple was ca. 156 by 97 m., with an outer court of ca. 360 by 310 m. Further on Damascus, see Blaiklock, *Cities*, 13–17; Patella, “Damascus.”

302. Finegan, *Apostles*, 57.

303. Josephus claims that many Gentiles' wives favored Jewish religion (*War* 2.560). For sympathizers to Judaism in the empire, see Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 61–70; for the attractiveness of Judaism in Syria, pp. 76–80.

304. Noted by most commentators, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 100; Bruce, *Commentary*, 194; Carter and Earle, *Acts*, 125; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 436; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 51–52; Barrett, *Acts*, 447. Estimates that Jews were a fifth of the eastern Mediterranean population may well be too high (Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 47), but there were certainly large numbers in Damascus.

305. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 54. On the Jewish community in Damascus, see further 55–61. Those who estimate Damascus's total population at 45,000 (such as Stark, *Cities*, 36) would need to estimate the Jewish population much lower.

306. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 51, 54.

It is possible that many Essenes settled in Damascus in an earlier period, likewise refugees from the Jerusalem high priesthood (see CD VI, 5, 19; VIII, 21; XIX, 34; XX, 12),³⁰⁷ but many scholars interpret the *Damascus Document's* reference to the city symbolically.³⁰⁸

Some later Jewish and Muslim traditions attribute to the city special eschatological significance, Islamic tradition specifying that Jesus will destroy the antichrist there. The tradition might stem from the Christian community there; some suspect pre-Christian tradition about its eschatological significance,³⁰⁹ but its antiquity is harder to demonstrate.

Luke's claim that Christians already had settled in Damascus is historically probable. It does not fit his scheme in Acts 1:8 and so is not likely his invention;³¹⁰ also, we know from Paul's letters that he was engaged in persecuting Christians in the period when he was converted in or near Damascus (Gal 1:13–17). Some scholars argue that the dispersed disciples in Damascus are Hellenists;³¹¹ it is reasonable that at least many of those who traveled so far were. Damascus's synagogues probably exhibited the usual tolerance of ancient Judaism; only an outsider such as Paul could stir up the persecution, and perhaps only an outspoken "zealot" such as Paul would bring persecution of himself there.³¹²

A generation later, when Damascenes and other Syrians suspected their Jewish population of siding with the Judean revolt, attention turned also to the Ἰουδαῖζοντες there (Jos. *War* 2.462–63, 465). This phrase very likely includes pagan sympathizers but, if so, even more likely includes monotheistic Gentile Christians, who would still be viewed as a part of Judaism.³¹³ Although Jesus's followers in Damascus would mostly be ethnically Jewish at the time of this account (perhaps three years after Jesus's resurrection), they eventually would have attracted God-fearers, just as local synagogues in Damascus were doing in large numbers.³¹⁴ Given the ultimate decision of most of the Jesus movement not to require circumcision for Gentile converts, it seems likely that they would have attracted an even larger number of full converts than the rest of the Jewish community did.

III. SAUL'S THEOPHANY (9:3–6)

Jesus appears to Saul with a bright light, charges Saul with persecuting him, and gives him instructions that he must now obey. The form of revelation is sufficiently close to biblical accounts of angelophanies and especially theophanies to leave Saul no doubt what has taken place.

307. See Riesner, *Early Period*, 238. Cf. 4Q266 3 II, 12; 3 III, 20; 4Q267 2 12; 4Q269 4 II, 1.

308. Rabinowitz, "Reconsideration of 'Damascus'"; Jaubert, "Pays de Damas"; Wieder, "'Damascus' and Redemption" (though the allusion to Gen 14; *Gen. Rab.* 42:2 is questionable); cf. the appraisals of Gaster, *Scriptures*, 74–76; Milikowski, "Again: DAMASCUS." Essenes reportedly settled in many cities, not just one (Jos. *War* 2.124; Hippol. *Ref.* 9.15). The use of "Damascus" to suggest that Paul studied at Qumran and there believed Jesus (Trudinger, "Damascus Road") appears fanciful.

309. Bruce, *Apostle*, 76–79, esp. 77. Riesner, *Early Period*, 238, argues that the messianic king would come from there according to CD VII, 14–18 (at the least, the house of David exiled there would be restored).

310. Légasse, "Career," 387.

311. With Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 85 (against the proposal that they represented an alternative Jesus movement in Galilee, a proposal that lacks the support of concrete evidence); cf. also Samuel, "Acts of Philip," 52.

312. So Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 90 (noting persecution only in Judea in 1 Thess 2:15). The argument rests partly on silence, but it does fit the narrative; had believers there been more widely persecuted, we might have expected such a mention (esp. at Acts 9:24–25, where others would also be in danger).

313. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 53.

314. *Ibid.*, 83 (adding that the Jesus tradition offered no reason to be stricter about Gentiles than other Jews were). For sympathizers to Judaism in the empire, see 61–70; for the attractiveness of Judaism in Syria, 76–80.

(1) *Appearances* (9:3)

Paul himself claims to have experienced a “revelation” of Christ (Gal 1:12, 16) and (more explicitly than Luke here or in Acts 22:6–7; 26:13–14; but see Acts 9:17; 22:14–15; 26:16) to have *seen* Jesus (1 Cor 9:1) in a sort of belated resurrection appearance (1 Cor 15:8); Gal 1:16 associates this with Paul’s call to the Gentiles, as does Luke (cf. Acts 9:6, 15–16; 26:17).³¹⁵

Pagans were familiar with apparitions of deities³¹⁶ (see fuller comment on Acts 1:3), sometimes with light shining around them³¹⁷ and sometimes with a light shining around mortals as a sign of divine favor.³¹⁸ (Dream-visions were probably a more common form of apparition in this period.)³¹⁹ In most of these epiphanies, deities used forms familiar from their statues, and the dead resembled their prior appearance,³²⁰ but whether or not Paul had known Jesus’s preresurrection appearance (cf. discussions on 2 Cor 5:16),³²¹ Jesus appears here quite differently from the way he appeared before his resurrection.³²² Jewish readers would be more familiar with the sorts of revelations in apocalyptic literature, which Munck summarizes as follows:³²³

1. A bright light (*1 En.* 14:17–21; Ezek 1:26–28; cf. Dan 7:9–10; *1 En.* 71:2, 5–6)³²⁴
2. A vision of God enthroned (*1 En.* 14:18–20; Ezek 1:26–28)
3. The recipient falling to the ground (*1 En.* 14:13–14; Ezek 1:28)
4. The recipient raised to his feet (*1 En.* 14:24–25; Ezek 2:1–2)
5. A call to prophesy (*1 En.* 15–16; Ezek 2:3–7; Isa 6:8; Jer 1:9–10; cf. *1 En.* 71:14–16)

315. Others also note the mutual corroboration of the sources (e.g., Hemer, *Acts in History*, 182). Kremer, “Wiedergabe,” argues that Luke uses the triple account of Paul’s conversion to help interpret the Lukan “Easter gospel.”

316. E.g., Epid. inscr. 3, 4 (Grant, *Religions*, 56–57); Dionysus in Otto, *Dionysus*, 74–78; also of demigods (Philost. *Hrk.* 4.2). Sometimes the apparitions were shown to be false (e.g., the spirit of a low-status deceased gladiator impersonating Apollo through an Egyptian’s magic, Eunapius *Lives* 473).

317. E.g., Sil. It. 13.640–42; cf. Zeus turning to lightning in Lucian *Dial. G.* 228 (12/9, Poseidon and Hermes 2); glowing with fire in Aristoph. *Lys.* 1285; the shining of Helios (PGM 4.635–38) or Mithras (PGM 4.696–99, 703–4); the construction of the Eleusis sanctuary for initiates to experience light in Clarke, “Spaces,” 262 (noting architectural accommodations to this suggested in Clinton, “Epiphany,” 85–101). A windstorm always accompanied the appearance of Achilles’s ghost in Philost. *Hrk.* 22.2.

318. Xen. *Cyr.* 4.2.15; Val. Max. 1.6.1, 2; Heliod. *Eth.* 10.9; cf. fire blazing from Achilles in Hom. *Il.* 18.205–6.

319. See Graf, “Epiphany,” 1122, on Hellenistic and imperial cults.

320. *Ibid.* But contrast Proclus *Poet.* 6.1, K114.3–4.

321. Cf., e.g., van Unnik, *Tarsus*, 54; but as already noted, “according to the flesh” modifies the verb (e.g., Davies, *Paul*, 195; Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 89–91; Betz, “Christuserkenntnis”), and probably Paul simply refers to his former perspective, which denied Jesus’s messiahship (with, e.g., Scott, *Corinthians*, 134; Bruce, *Message*, 27).

322. Though Jewish people sometimes expected the resurrection body to appear initially like the person at death (2 Bar. 50:2–4; *Gen. Rab.* 95:1; *Eccl. Rab.* 1:4, §2; perhaps Mark 9:43, 45, 47).

323. Munck, *Salvation*, 31–32 (following others); for eschatological glory, cf. also texts in Cerfaux, *Church*, 39. See other texts cited in Keener, *Matthew*, 437–38; *idem*, *Revelation*, 94–96.

324. Light was useful in theophanies because it attracted attention (4Q377 2 II, 7–8). Angels and archangels sometimes appear as brighter than the sun in Jewish texts (Dan 10:6; Rev 10:1; 2 *En.* 19:1; 3 *En.* 18:25; 22:4–9; 26:2–7; 35:2; *Test. Ab.* 7:4; 13:1 A; *Jos. Asen.* 14:9; *Apoc. Zeph.* 6:11–15). The righteous after death (4 *Ezra* 7:97) or in the eschatological time (see 1 Cor 15:53; Phil 3:21; 2 Bar. 51:3) would shine in the same way, as could Noah (1 *En.* 106:2, 10; 1QapGen. Apoc. II), Abel (*Test. Ab.* 12:5 A), Enoch (1 *En.* 71:11; 2 *En.* 22:10; 3 *En.* 15:1), Zion in a vision (4 *Ezra* 10:25), and God himself (Dan 7:9–10; 1 *En.* 14:18–20; 46:1; 71:10; 3 *En.* 28:7). After Moses beheld God’s glory, his own face shone with that glory (Exod 34:29–35; cf. L.A.B. 12:1; 19:16; *Abot R. Nat.* 13, §32 B; *b. B. Bat.* 75a).

Some scholars compare especially Ezekiel's vision,³²⁵ noting that Israel's obstinacy had not changed;³²⁶ but while these allusions are likely, Saul's experience echoes a variety of biblical theophanies³²⁷ and other call narratives.³²⁸ These probably include especially those accompanied by admissions of inadequacy (Exod 3:11; 4:10;³²⁹ Isa 6:5; Jer 1:6; cf. Judg 6:15)—except that Paul has proved more inadequate and unworthy than all of his predecessors by actively *opposing* the revealer. The OT theophany probably freshest in the minds of Luke's audience would be the one given to Moses (Acts 7:30–34); as Christ repeats some of Moses's mission (7:37), he now calls Saul in a manner that recalls Moses's call.

Divine glory would evoke a variety of associations for an early Jewish audience. For example, in the exodus, God's "glory" led his people.³³⁰ As in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 60:1–3), Judaism continued to associate an ultimate revelation of "glory" with the eschatological time.³³¹ "Glory" when applied to God may invite comparison with the related Jewish concept of Shekinah,³³² which appears especially in rabbinic literature. These texts personify the Shekinah but do not hypostatize it; it functioned essentially as a circumlocution for God,³³³ indicating his nearness.³³⁴ God himself could be addressed as "Glorious One"³³⁵ or called "the Glory of the World."³³⁶ God's presence could be banished by sin³³⁷ or invited by merit.³³⁸ Although these associations can vary widely, they typically involve the divine.

325. See Kim, *New Perspective*, 174–76.

326. Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:122–24.

327. Biblical theophanies are rehearsed or developed in early Jewish texts (e.g., *Test. Job* 42:3/2), though emphasis on mediation (cf., e.g., discussion in Keener, *John*, 349–50) has reduced the emphasis on theophanies (apart from throne visions) in the present. On theophanies, see concisely Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 459.

328. For parallels with OT prophetic calls, see, e.g., Philip, *Pneumatology*, 194–201; on call narratives in Scripture, see concisely Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 85. Less close is Jos. War 3.351–54 (cited by Le Cornu, *Acts*, 495).

329. Cf. other objections in Exod 3:13; 4:1, 13.

330. Exod 13:21; 40:36–38; Neh 9:12; Ps 78:14; *Mek. Shir.* 3.67ff.; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 5:1; cf. Ps 80:1; Isa 63:14; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:43 (citing *Sipre Num.* 80, 84). Glory, of course, had always been associated with that event (e.g., 2 Macc 2:7–8; *Pss. Sol.* 11:2–6). From at least the second century, however, rabbinic tradition indicated that the Shekinah also participated in Israel's captivity in Egypt and Babylonia (*Mek. Pisha* 14.87ff.; *Mek. Besh.* 3.82–83; *Sipra Behuq.* pq. 6.267.2.6; *Sipre Num.* 84.4.1; *y. Ta'an.* 1:1, §10, citing a Tanna; *Exod. Rab.* 15:16; *Num. Rab.* 7:10; *Lam. Rab.* 1:5, §32; cf. Cohen, "Shekhinta"; as late as the Zohar, cited in Siegel, "Israel," 106).

331. E.g., CD XX, 25–26; 1QM XII, 12; 4Q174 1 I, 5; *Sib. Or.* 3.282; *Lev. Rab.* 1:14; *Num. Rab.* 21:22; *Deut. Rab.* 6:14; *Esth. Rab.* 1:4. Some eschatological-glory texts refer to a new exodus (e.g., Isa 40:5; 2 Macc 2:7–8; *Pss. Sol.* 11:6; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 5:1).

332. Abelson, *Immanence*, 380–82, notes that although Kabod (glory) sometimes is identified with Shekinah, they are not always the same; but he feels that δόξα in the NT covers the semantic range of both terms (380).

333. E.g., *Num. Rab.* 20:10; see Kadushin, *Mind*, 223–26 (against medieval philosophers); cf. Abelson, *Immanence*, 98–134, followed also by Isaacs, *Spirit*, 25–26. In one late personification, the departing Shekinah kissed the walls of the temple (*Lam. Rab.* proem 25).

334. Kadushin, *Mind*, 226–29; cf. Abelson, *Immanence*, on the Shekinah as the "immanent God" (117–34).

335. E.g., 1QM XII, 10. God's face was "glorious" as he led Israel out of Egypt (*1 En.* 89:22).

336. Marmorstein, *Names*, 88, finds it especially in the Targumim; for "glory of the Lord" as a divine circumlocution, see, e.g., *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 1:17, 28; 2:3; 9:27; 11:5; 17:22; 18:33; 22:14; 28:16; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Exod 17:7, 16; 19:11; 33:23; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 17:22; 18:1, 33; 28:13; *Tg. Onq.* on Lev 9:4. Rabbis disputing an interpretation of R. Isaac, a second-century Tanna, call God "The Glory of the Life of all worlds" (*Gen. Rab.* 100:5).

337. E.g., 'Abot R. Nat. 38 A; *Sipra Qed.* pq. 8.205.2.1; *par.* 4.206.2.6; *Sipre Deut.* 258.2.3; 320.2.1; *b. Ber.* Sb; *Roš Haš.* 31a; *Šabb.* 33a; 139a; *Yebam.* 64a, bar.; *Yoma* 21b; *y. Sanh.* 8:8, §1; *Deut. Rab.* 5:10; 6:14; *Ruth Rab.* 1:2; cf. *Sipre Num.* 1.10.3; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:286–87 (citing *Mek. Pisha* 5); pagan deities in Ovid *Fasti* 1.247–50; *Plut. Themist.* 10.1; so with Wisdom (*Wis* 1:4; 6:12–25, esp. 23; cf. *Wis* 7:25–26; *Babr.* 126). The Shekinah was progressively banished from and then reintited to earth ('Abot R. Nat. 34 A; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1:1; *Gen. Rab.* 19:7; *Song Rab.* 5:1, §1); because of sin, his tabernacle or temple was necessary to bring his presence (*Pesiq. Rab.* 7:4). For the Shekinah's continuing with Israel's people even when they sin, see Abelson, *Immanence*, 135–42.

338. Especially on the clouds of glory in the wilderness or revealed to Moses: *Sipre Deut.* 305.3.1; 313.3.1; 355.6.1; *Gen. Rab.* 60:16; *Exod. Rab.* 45:5; *Num. Rab.* 19:20; *Song Rab.* 4:5, §2; 7:6, §1; cf. *Pesiq. Rab.* 10:2 on a later period.

That Christ appears to Paul in the form of a theophany makes his glory comparable to the Shekinah and suggests Luke's comfort with portraying the exalted Christ as divine (Acts 2:21, 38);³³⁹ some scholars also see this revelation as the beginning of Paul's meditation on Christ's deity³⁴⁰ (though Paul was probably not the first or only early Christian thinker to conceive of this idea).³⁴¹ Some believe that Paul's mention of Christ's light in 2 Cor 4:4–6 may stem from this experience³⁴² (although Paul's immediate source may include a midrash on Gen 1).³⁴³

Luke's literary context is important for grasping his point. Although the biblical theophany recently narrated in Acts was the one given to Moses, Peter and his companions had received a theophany like Moses's when seeing Jesus transfigured on the mountain (Luke 9:32–35).³⁴⁴ The most recent such christophany was to Stephen in Acts 7:55–56; it provoked his martyrdom at the hands of Saul's compatriots. Now Saul himself receives such a vision, and it recalls the Stephen story in other respects as well. Saul's vision occurs not in Jerusalem but en route to Damascus (9:3; cf. Gal 1:17); Stephen had insisted that revelations were not limited to the Holy Land (Acts 7:2, 30, 33, 48–50). Jesus's "Why do you persecute me?" alludes directly to Stephen's warning about his people's persecuting the prophets, with continuing resistance in Stephen's own day (7:52). Jesus's church is thus like the prophets of old (Luke 6:22–23). Luke's Saul, though converted "belatedly" (cf. 1 Cor 15:8), stands in continuity with Peter and Stephen and the prophets.

Some other details simply reveal characteristic Lukan vocabulary for revelations, as we would expect. Elsewhere Luke uses "suddenly" (Acts 9:3; 22:6) for another revelation (Luke 2:13; elsewhere he employs it only in Luke 9:39); much more important is that though Luke describes light "from heaven" only in the accounts of Paul's conversion (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13), that light's shining accompanies other divine revelations (such as the angelic appearance in 12:7; glory shining in Luke 2:9). The verb for the light's flashing about (περιαστράπτω) recurs only in Acts 22:6 (though it appears in the angelophany that stops a persecutor in 4 Macc 4:10). But "flash" (ἀστράπτω) appears in the angelophany at the empty tomb in Luke 24:4 (and for lightning compared to Christ's return in 17:24).

(2) *Struck Down* (9:4)

Prostration, often in terror, was a standard response to theophanies (e.g., Ezek 1:28), angelophanies (e.g., Dan 8:17), and Christ's glory (Matt 17:6; Rev 1:17).³⁴⁵ In most such encounters, the Lord or an angel tells the prostrated person to stand up (e.g., Ezek 2:1; Dan 8:18; Matt 17:7) or at least not to fear (e.g., Rev 1:17);³⁴⁶ that no such command follows immediately here probably signifies that Paul is genuinely in

339. Witherington, *Acts*, 316n47.

340. Kim, *Origin*, 268.

341. See Keener, *John*, 298–310; esp. Hurtado, *One God*, passim.

342. Dunn, *Acts*, 121 (though noting that glory appears often in heavenly visions, cf. Acts 7:55); Riesner, *Early Period*, 237 (following Kim, *Origin*, 5–13).

343. Possibly Gen 1:27 (with Wis 7:25–26) in 2 Cor 4:4, followed (more certainly) by Gen 1:3 (blended with Isa 9:1) in 2 Cor 4:6; cf. Matera, *II Corinthians*, 102, 104; Ridderbos, *Paul: Outline*, 71; Riesner, *Early Period*, 237–38 (suggesting that the use of Isa 9:1 LXX applies the light of creation to a light among *Gentiles*).

344. For Moses parallels in the transfiguration tradition, see esp. Moses, *Transfiguration Story*. For his shining, see Exod 34:29–35; cf. *L.A.B.* 12:1; 19:16; *Abot R. Nat.* 13, §32 B; *b. B. Bat.* 75a. For Moses-Sinai and transfiguration themes in Philo, see Moses, *Transfiguration Story*, 50–57; in Josephus, 57–61; in Qumran, 61–66; in other sources, 66–83.

345. Before a spectacular vision (1 *En.* 14:14; 2 *En.* 21:2; 4 *Ezra* 10:30); especially before the Lord (1 *En.* 60:3; 71:2, 11; 2 *En.* 22:4) or before an angel (4 *Ezra* 4:12; *Test. Ab.* 9:2 A; *Jos. Asen.* 14:10–11). Terror is to be expected in such circumstances (e.g., 1 *En.* 102:1). For prostration in prayer, see, e.g., *Test. Ab.* 18:10 A.

346. E.g., 1 *En.* 60:4; 71:3; 2 *En.* 22:5; 4 *Ezra* 10:30; 2 *Bar.* 13:2; see further discussion below.

trouble. (He is told to arise only in Acts 9:6, after hearing the message.) Early Jewish Christians might have thought of the story in 2 Macc 3:28–29, where a persecutor was overthrown by a theophany and fell.³⁴⁷ Likewise, the appearance of a heavenly host struck down Apollonius “half-dead” when he was preparing to desecrate the temple (4 Macc 4:11). (“Half-dead” was a common expression that often signified that the person appeared outwardly to be dead.)³⁴⁸

Elsewhere in Acts, others who opposed God or his church (Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, and later Herod Agrippa I) died for their sin (Acts 1:18; 5:5, 10; 12:23), creating a reader expectation that is subverted in this case.³⁴⁹ It may perhaps function as a testimony that Saul acted in ignorance (cf. Acts 3:17; 1 Tim 1:13; Gen 20:5) but especially to God’s mercy and providential plan (cf. 1 Tim 1:16). God will overcome opposition to his movement by one means or another (Acts 5:39).

(3) Heavenly Voice (9:4)

A Jewish audience might think of the heavenly voice in some Jewish traditions, developed in the later rabbinic *bat qol*,³⁵⁰ but its antiquity seems assured in view of sufficient analogues in a wider range of early Jewish³⁵¹ and, to a much lesser extent, other Mediterranean³⁵² literature (cf. Dan 4:31). Later rabbis considered the *bat qol* subordinate to Scripture and prophecy,³⁵³ but a person experiencing the voice conjoined with the Shekinah would likely regard it as even more compelling than prophecy without such phenomena.

In the later rabbis, a *bat qol* could come in Aramaic;³⁵⁴ the voice here especially

347. See Conzelmann, *Acts*, 73 (his “thrown down, but not converted” is true in the sense of proselytism, but the persecutor’s view of Israel’s God was certainly “converted”); cf. the idea in Gaventa, “Overthrown Enemy” (cf. perhaps also Marguerat, *Actes*, 329, though idem, *Historian*, 195–96, attributes this to Luke’s source rather than to his own literary purpose; idem, *Actes*, 325, finds stronger parallels in Cornelius’s Lukan conversion [I do not find the parallels incompatible]); Yamazaki-Ransom, “Antiochus,” 118, compares Antiochus’s belated plea in 2 Macc 9:17. Windisch and others emphasized this connection by 1932 (see Windisch, “Christusepiphanie”; noted by Hedrick, “Paul’s Conversion/Call,” 416). Cf. later stories celebrating the conversion of persecutors (Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 244, citing *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 18a). Some Romans also envisioned reversed epiphanies, in which a deity might (in a dream) withdraw support for an emperor (see Hekster, “Epiphanies”).

348. Luke 10:30; Callim. *Hymns* 6 (to Demeter), line 59; Livy 23.15.8; 40.4.15; Corn. Nep. 4 (Pausanias), 5.4; Suet. *Aug.* 6; cf. Eurip. *Alc.* 141–43; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 2.20; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 42; Robertson, *Luke*, 97.

349. Allen, *Death of Herod*, 129–30 (suggesting [129] also that Saul may now die instead as God’s agent, Acts 9:15). This was also the most common expectation in other Jewish literature (Haacker, *Theology*, 9), though cf. 2 Macc 3:35–36.

350. E.g., *m. ’Ab.* 6:2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:16, 23; 15:5; *b. B. Bat.* 73b; 85b; *Mak.* 23b; *’Erub.* 54b; *’Šabb.* 33b; 88a; *Soṭah* 33a; *y. Ber.* 1:3, §4; *Pe’ah* 1:1, §15; *Soṭah* 7:5, §5; *Lev. Rab.* 19:5–6; *Eccl. Rab.* 7:12, §1; 9:10, §3; *Lam. Rab.* proem 2, 23; 1:16, §50; *Ruth Rab.* 6:4; *Song Rab.* 8:9, §3; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 22:10; 27:33; 38:25; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Num 21:6; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 38:26; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Num 21:6; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Deut 28:15; 34:5.

351. *Jos. Ant.* 13.282–83; Artapanus frg. 3 in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.36; *Sib. Or.* 1.127, 267, 275; 2 *Bar.* 13:1; cf. Johnson, *Prayer*, 62–63.

352. Outside early Judaism, potential parallels are weaker but can be noted, e.g., Plut. *Isis* 12, *Mor.* 355E; *Mart. Pol.* 9.1; from terrestrial locations in Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.56.3; 5.16.2–3; 8.56.2–3; Val. Max. 1.8.5; 2.4.5; 7.1.2; Lucan *C.W.* 1.569–70; Plut. *Cam.* 6.1; 14.2; Philost. *Hrk.* 18.4. For other superhuman, but not divine, speech, cf. talking serpents in Arrian *Alex.* 3.3.5; the speech of all beasts in the golden age in Babr. prol. 5–7. Most regarded talking trees and animals as fictitious (Phaedrus 1.prol.; contrast talking birds in Statius *Silv.* 2.4.1–2; Pliny E. *N.H.* 10.117), although, when animals speak, it is a serious omen (Hom. *Il.* 19.404–7; Livy 24.10.10; 27.11.4; 35.21.4; 41.13.2; 41.21.13; Val. Max. 1.6.5; Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.1.4; Lucan *C.W.* 1.561). They appear even in Jewish texts, in addition to Scripture (Gen 3:1–5; Num 22:28–30; on the latter, cf. *Gen. Rab.* 93:10; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Num 22:30); note that the talking tree of *Test. Ab.* 3:1–4 A; 3:1–4 B might evoke Greek examples such as Dodona’s oak (Allison, “Tree”; cf. Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.16; Ap. Rhod. 1.526–28; Dion. Hal. *Epid.* 1.258–59).

353. See, e.g., *b. B. Meši’a* 59b; *Song Rab.* 8:9, §3. Rabbis sometimes claimed that the *bat qol* became active before the Spirit of prophecy departed from Israel (*b. Pesah.* 94a; *Hag.* 13a; *Sanh.* 39b), and they occasionally associated it with the future as well (*Lev. Rab.* 27:2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 17:5).

354. E.g., *b. Soṭah* 33a; *Song Rab.* 8:9, §3.

addresses Saul not in Greek but in Aramaic or Hebrew, implied by the form Σαούλ (as in Acts 9:17; 13:21; 22:7, 13; 26:14, instead of the usual Σαῦλος, forty-three times in Acts) and also later explicitly noted in 26:14.³⁵⁵

(4) *The Voice's Charge* (9:4)

The double naming of Saul would further secure his attention. People could repeat names for endearment (e.g., Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.3.1) or rhetorical pathos (Demet. *Style* 5.267; cf. 2 Sam 18:33; 19:4). In early Jewish literature, God (*Apoc. Mos.* 41:1) or an angel (*Jos. Asen.* 14:4 MSS; 14:6) sometimes addresses people in this manner at special moments.³⁵⁶ Most important is that God sometimes addressed his servants this way in biblical theophanies, such as when God restrained Abraham from sacrificing Isaac (Gen 22:11), renewed his promise to Jacob (46:2), and—most relevant here—appeared to Moses in the burning bush to call him (Exod 3:4) and called Samuel (1 Sam 3:10).³⁵⁷ (Later rabbis interpreted the doubling of names in these cases as expressions of endearment or, less plausibly, claims that it was the same person both before and after the revelation.)³⁵⁸ Doubled names appear twice in Luke's Gospel in tender reproofs to individuals (Luke 10:41; 22:31) and once to Jerusalem (13:34; Q material also in Matt 23:37).³⁵⁹

It is undoubtedly the question “Why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9:4)³⁶⁰ that throws Paul into confusion about the identity of the voice in 9:5.³⁶¹ By speaking for Jesus (7:56) and closely imitating his example (7:59–60), Stephen shared in Jesus's death (Luke 9:23; 14:27); persecuting Stephen was thus persecuting Jesus, and the same principle would apply to the many believers' suffering that Luke only summarizes. In Paul's own developed theology, Christ's unity with his suffering church means that Christ suffers with his people (cf. Rom 8:26) just as they share in his sufferings (cf. 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; 4:10–11; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24). (The unity of Christ and his church is a major Pauline emphasis, exemplified by Paul's “in Christ” terminology³⁶² and his

355. Haenchen, *Acts*, 685.

356. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 198, cites also 4 Ezra 14:1 (“Ezra, Ezra”); 2 Bar. 22:2 (“Baruch, Baruch”), following Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 18; cf. also Johnson, *Acts*, 435. The repetition of the title in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 18:5 may reflect respect or (probably) emotion. Repetition of names sometimes was hostile, as in some examples of epanalepsis in Hermog. *Method* 9.424–25 (citing Hom. *Il.* 5.31; Demosthenes *Or.* 22.78; 23.210). For the emphatic repetition of words more generally in epanalepsis, see Rowe, “Style,” 129–30 (Demosth. *Cor.* 208); Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 579 (citing Phil 2:8); Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 86 (citing Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.51; Mark 13:8, 12); for the consecutive repetition of words for emphasis, as here, see Parsons, *Acts*, 341–42 (citing Phoebammon *De figuris* 1.3).

357. That such texts are in Luke's mind may be suggested by the response of Ananias (contrasted with Paul's here), “Here I am,” as in Gen 22:11; 46:2; Exod 3:4; cf. 1 Sam 3:4–8. Luke has narrated the revelation to Moses recently, in Acts 7:31–34. Scholl, *Apostelgeschichte*, 68, develops the connection here especially with Gen 46:2–3.

358. *T. Ber.* 1:14; *Sipra VDDen. par.* 1.1.4.3–4. In one tradition, some claims in Isaiah (such as “Awake, awake,” Isa 51:9, 17) were doubled to show Isaiah's special empowerment (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 16:4); similar doubling (“Listen! Listen!”) appears in Cic. *Phil.* 2.17.43 (in Rowe, “Style,” 130).

359. Also, less relevant here, once when the disciples call on Jesus in distress (Luke 8:24).

360. For Luke, the διωγμός began in Acts 8:1 (with Paul becoming one of the leaders apparently in 8:3) but had earlier roots (7:52).

361. Statues were often not identified (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.91–92), but people would often recognize familiar figures; in visions, characters were sometimes labeled or explained (e.g., Rev 17:5; 19:11–13).

362. Taken relationally, see Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 396–401; more mystically, Deissmann, *Paul*, 135–38; Mary, *Mysticism*, 15–28; Wikenhauser, *Mysticism*, 21–33, 50–65, 110–11; Hatch, *Faith*, 38–39; for exegetical examination of the range of usage, see Campbell, *Union*, 67–199. Others view it as corporate in light of Jewish models (Gibbs, *Creation*, 132–33; Richardson, *Theology*, 250), e.g., comparable to the solidarity of the exodus community (cf. Davies, *Paul*, 103–4) or Israel (cf. 85); on analogy with solidarity with Adam (cf. 1 Cor 15:22; Ridderbos, *Paul: Outline*, 60); or “in [the body of] Christ” (Manson, *Paul and John*, 67). Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 70, compares identification with wisdom; identification with a deity appears in Egyptian

“body” metaphor,³⁶³ though his most explicit uses of the latter apply especially to the unity of the Christian community.)³⁶⁴

Jesus suffered in the Gospel; in Luke’s second volume, where the church carries forward Jesus’s mission (see comment on Acts 1:1), he suffers through the church. Jesus taught that however one treated the agents who represented him, one treated him (Luke 10:16; cf. Matt 10:40; John 13:20); this also applied to how one treated children and those who seemed least in his kingdom (Luke 9:48; cf. Mark 9:37; Matt 18:5). The idea of Christ’s ministers as his representatives appears outside Luke-Acts in Matt 10:40–41; 25:40, 45; and 2 Cor 5:20–21; it reflects the standard notion of agency, where treatment of envoys constitutes representative treatment of those who sent them.³⁶⁵ In Scripture, God counted the treatment of some individuals or groups as treatment toward himself (Exod 16:8; 1 Sam 8:7; Prov 19:17; Zech 2:8). Letters of recommendation, such as Paul carried (Acts 9:2), often identified the recommended person with the recommender;³⁶⁶ but if the high priest has somehow identified Paul with himself, Christ more eloquently identifies his suffering church with himself here.

Paul’s conversion will change him from one persecuting those who represent Christ to one who himself is a persecuted representative of Christ. Becoming part of the people persecuted with Christ will also entail Paul’s facing persecution (Acts 9:16); as Christ shares his agents’ sufferings, so his agents share in sufferings directed toward him. Luke probably heard Paul recount his conversion more than once (likely once even during Paul’s defense before Agrippa in 26:10–18 or, if Luke was excluded from being present, at least in the report of it afterward), and an encounter like this one could have contributed to some elements of Paul’s theology.³⁶⁷ Later Paul writes of sharing Christ’s sufferings (2 Cor 1:5; 4:10–11; Phil 3:10; cf. Rom 8:17). When Paul suffers for the same mission for which Christ suffered, he experiences more of what Christ suffered and more of Christ’s mission, hence of Christ working in him and intimacy with Christ (cf. Col 1:24–29).

(5) *The Voice’s Identity* (9:5)

The particular wording of Paul’s response might be Lukan style (cf. Acts 10:4, “What is it, Lord?”);³⁶⁸ regardless of the question of pre-Lukan tradition, we must

immortality ritual as well (*Book of Dead* passim, e.g., Sp. 30, part P-2; Sp. 43a, part P-1; Sp. 43b; Sp. 79, part S-2; Sp. 85a, part S-1; Sp. 131, parts P-1–2, S-1; Sp. 145–46; PGM 1.178–81; outside immortality, cf. PGM 1.251–52; 4.169–70, 186–87, 385–90; PDM Sup. 131–32, 163, 183; Apul. *Metam.* 11.24), but this is ritual magic, not the result of the Spirit’s indwelling or incorporation at conversion.

363. Cf. Bede *Comm. Acts* 9.4 (Martin, *Acts*, 104; L. Martin, 87), noting here that the church is Christ’s body.

364. In this case, the many proposed Jewish analogies are less compelling than the standard Gentile usage for a community, starting with Menenius Agrippa (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.86.1–5; Livy 2.32.9–12; Plut. *Coriol.* 6.2–4; Dio Cass. 4.17.10–13); after him, many compared the state to a body (e.g., Sall. *Ep. Caes.* 10.6; Cic. *Resp.* 3.25.37; Phil. 8.5.15; cf. Arist. *N.E.* 1.7; *Test. Naph.* 2:9–10). Stoics compared even the universe to a cohesive body (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 95.52; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.12.26; Marc. Aur. 7.13; cf. Diod. Sic. 1.11.6).

365. E.g., Diod. Sic. 4.10.3–4; Jos. *Ant.* 8.220–21; see more fully Keener, *John*, 310, 313–14; on sending, see discussion above. Later rabbis deemed agents equivalent to the senders themselves (*m. Ber.* 5:5; *t. Ta’an.* 3:2; *b. Naz.* 12b).

366. E.g., Kim, *Letters of Recommendation*, 7, 37–42; P.Oxy. 32. As suggested above, Paul later becomes an “apostle of Christ” rather than of people (Gal 1:1).

367. For this as one source for Paul’s view of “the solidarity of Christ and Christians,” see also Longenecker, *Paul*, 204 (following Robinson, *Body*, 58); Kim, *Origin*, 253. By contrast, Lampe, “Lukan Portrait of Christ,” 174–75, doubts any suggestion of a mystical union here (rightly emphasizing more Luke’s emphasis on those who speak in Christ’s “name,” Acts 3:6, 16), arguing that “this is certainly a different doctrine from that of Paul.”

368. An appropriate expression of astonishment (Mark 1:27) but also a normal question (Acts 23:19; Eph 4:9; Gen 21:17; Josh 15:18; Judg 1:14; 18:23; 1 Sam 1:8; 2 Sam 14:5; in response to a vision, Zech 6:4).

ask how it functions within the narrative world of Acts.³⁶⁹ Confusion about who speaks appears also in response to an angelic revelation in *Joseph and Aseneth* (*Jos. Asen.* 14:5, 7), though probably because the specified recipient is unfamiliar with biblical tradition. Saul also has reason to be uncertain about precisely who is speaking; perhaps an angel addresses him (cf. Acts 23:9). “Lord” is certainly more dramatic than “Sir” in this instance (an acceptable translation of the vocative κύριε in some contexts)³⁷⁰ but does not yet for Paul necessarily imply that he addresses God himself.³⁷¹

Nevertheless, even the angel of the Lord spoke for God in the first person in some OT passages,³⁷² and so Jesus’s words must stun Saul, whatever their source.³⁷³ Normally such revelations in the OT were theophanies, but the call is not like that given to Moses or Samuel, despite the element of surprise contained in each of those accounts. How could *God* say that Saul was persecuting him? Genuinely believing that he was doing right by the standards he knew (cf. also Phil 3:6), Saul would more likely expect God to *commend* him for what he was doing. This was a stark revelation: in his fervor for the righteousness he thought he achieved by the law, he found himself opposing God. It is not surprising that Paul developed a clearer understanding of the inadequacy of legal achievement for righteousness than did some of his contemporaries (see discussion above in the introduction to this narrative, sect. 1.a.i.7: “Paul’s Theological Reversal”).

The phrase “I am Jesus, whom *you* are persecuting” includes two emphatic pronouns; because the person would be assumed in the verbs (εἰμί, διώκεις), the ἐγώ and σύ are superfluous (cf. Acts 9:4) except for the purpose of emphasis (the repetition of “persecute” in 9:4–5 is also rhetorically emphatic, analogous to rhetorical antistrophe).³⁷⁴ Self-identification by an “I am” oracle is relevant in a theophany (cf. 7:32; Gen 15:7; 17:1; 26:24; 28:13; 31:13; 35:11; 46:3; Exod 3:6, 14–16). The emphatic “you” presumably penetrates Saul’s secure sense of righteousness. If any experiences helped shape Paul’s subsequent theology, an experience identifying Christ as the exalted Lord would certainly be among them³⁷⁵ (although there is no evidence that this christological identification proved controversial among his fellow followers of Jesus).

369. Walaskay, *Acts*, 228, compares Jacob asking his adversary’s name (and the adversary not answering; Gen 32:29). Jacob’s subsequent limp (Gen 32:31; which he compares with Saul’s blindness in Acts 9:8) illustrates the danger in theophanies.

370. See, e.g., Dickey, “Κύριε” (for respect, not full submission). Apart from a theophany or analogous supernatural experience, the vocative was simply a respectful title (e.g., *Test. Ab.* 2:7; 18:4 A). This use was appropriate even for a relative of higher rank (e.g., P.Oxy. 1231, 26; *SPap* 1:338–39, lines 1, 24; P.Giss.Univ. 21.11; *Jos. Asen.* 4:5/7; 4:9/12; cf. the Latin complimentary title more generally in Fronto *Ad am.* 1.25).

371. Pace Johnson, *Acts*, 163, who insists on its full divine force: “Saul does not yet know it is *Jesus* who is Lord, but he recognizes that he is involved in a theophany!” One could address a revealing angel as κύριέ μου (*Test. Ab.* 14:1; 15:4 A; 8:9; 10:1; 11:1; 12:3 B; *Test. Job* 3:5), although this usage is not common. But Paul must ultimately think of a sort of theophany here.

372. E.g., Gen 16:10; 22:12; Exod 3:2–10; Num 22:35; Judg 2:1; 6:22; 13:18, 22. On other occasions the angel speaks for the Lord as distinct from him (e.g., Gen 16:11; Judg 6:12; Zech 1:12). Gideon addresses the Lord’s angel as “Sir” before recognizing his identity (Judg 6:13, 15), but as God himself afterward (Judg 6:22).

373. In contrast to Saul here, Luke and his audience understand the vocative “Lord” for Jesus (Acts 1:6, 24; 4:29; 7:59–60; 9:10, 13; 10:14; 11:8; 22:8, 10, 19; 26:15); it applies to merely an angel in 10:4, but Cornelius may not understand the difference fully (cf. 10:25–26).

374. On antistrophe, see, e.g., Anderson, *Glossary*, 23; Rowe, “Style,” 131; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 579; Lee, “Translations: Greek,” 779; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 86. Given typical sorts of answers examined in conversation analysis (cf., e.g., examples in Person, “Analysis,” 88), Jesus’s answer to Saul would be quite shocking.

375. For Paul’s subsequent theology of Jesus’s “lordship,” see, e.g., Hurtado, “Lord”; Longenecker, *Christology*, 120–36.

(6) *Instructions to Saul (9:6)*

Recipients of superhuman revelations typically fell on their faces,³⁷⁶ and supernatural revealers often told the recipient to stand on his or her feet and/or to stop fearing.³⁷⁷ Here, however, Saul is promised more instructions later; like most theophanies, this one does not waste words. By telling Saul to enter the city and await further instructions, Jesus is also indicating that he has matters in place already in Damascus. Jesus already knew arrangements for the Passover meal (Luke 22:10–12), and his disciples found it as he had promised (22:13); he knew arrangements for the donkey for the triumphal entry (19:30–31), and his disciples found it as he had promised (19:32). So here Jesus sends Saul into the city, where he will find the situation to be as Jesus promised.

The message to Saul will probably dictate the terms of his repentance (cf. “fruits of repentance,” Luke 3:8), completing his conversion process: “what thing you must do” (ὃ τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν) alludes (more explicitly in light of the question in Acts 22:10) to Luke’s standard soteriological question. Thus, later in Acts, Paul’s jailer asks him, “What must I do to be saved?” (τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ, Acts 16:30). Earlier in Acts, when the crowds ask, “What ought we to do?” (τί ποιήσωμεν,³⁷⁸ 2:37), Peter calls for repentance and baptism in Jesus’s name (2:38). Paul, who will fast until his baptism (9:9, 18), probably shows correct understanding of the first part of Peter’s twofold “formula” (i.e., repentance).³⁷⁹

But what are the “fruits of repentance” (Luke 3:8) in his case? When the crowds ask John, “What ought we to do?” (τί . . . ποιήσωμεν, 3:10), the particular responses differ in detail according to the person’s means and profession (3:11–14). The general response to these questions is to share possessions (3:11; 18:18–22) and to have faith in Jesus (Acts 16:31), apparently confirmed by baptism (16:32–33). We know nothing of Paul’s possessions, but clearly he trusts in Christ, whatever the personal cost, and accepts baptism (9:18).

But what is the *particular* response to Paul’s own case, in addition to such general considerations? If the narrative is specific on this point, Paul’s calling is part of his required obedience to Christ (cf. 9:15; also Paul’s view, 1 Cor 9:16–17), and one element of it probably³⁸⁰ echoes the voice on the road: “how much he *must* suffer” (ὅσα δεῖ αὐτὸν . . . παθεῖν, Acts 9:16).

IV. RESPONDING TO THE THEOPHANY (9:7–9)

Saul’s companions cannot see the vision (9:7); by contrast, Paul, who sees the theophany, can see nothing else afterward (9:8–9). His refusal to eat or drink (9:9) constitutes a culturally understood form of mourning and repentance, broken only when he is welcomed into Christian fellowship through baptism (9:18–19).

376. Gen 15:12; 28:17; Dan 8:17–18; 10:9–10; Ezek 1:28; 43:3; Tobit 12:16; *Jub.* 18:10; *1 En.* 14:13–14; 60:3; 71:2–3, 10–11; 89:30–31; 102:1; *2 En.* 1:8; 20:2; 21:2; 22:4; 4 *Macc* 4:11; 4 *Ezra* 4:12; 5:14; 10:30; *Jos. Asen.* 14:10–11; *Test. Job* 3:4/5; *Apoc. Zeph.* 6:9–10; Matt 17:6; Rev 1:17; cf. Exod 34:30; *PGM* 4.725.

377. E.g., Ezek 2:1–2 (cf. 43:5); Dan 8:18; 10:11–12; Tob 12:17; *1 En.* 60:4; 71:3; *2 En.* 1:8; 20:2; 21:3; 22:5; *3 En.* 1:7–9; 4 *Ezra* 5:15; *2 Bar.* 13:1–2; *Jos. Asen.* 14:8/7, 11; Matt 17:7; Rev 1:17; cf. *PGM* 1.77–78.

378. The aorist active subjunctive, which focuses not so much on the future time element (Robertson, *Grammar*, 18.2.1.c.α, p. 848) but is “closely allied” with both the future indicative and the imperative (19.2.1.a–b, pp. 924–25); Robertson classifies Luke 3:10 (below) as “deliberative” (19.2.3.c, p. 934).

379. Fasting often shows repentance; see comment on Acts 9:9.

380. Luke uses δεῖ twenty-two times in Acts, but this is the first use since Acts 5:29 and the last use until 14:22 (the latter, coincidentally, also speaks of suffering for the kingdom). Apart from 27:21–26, in no other place in Acts do two instances of δεῖ occur so close together.

(1) *The Companions' Partial Experience (9:7)*

Although the text is not clear, Saul's companions (9:7) were *probably* more than simply travelers finding safety in numbers.³⁸¹ They could be members of the Levitical temple guard, but it is unlikely that the high priest delegated a force to Saul (and also unlikely that, if he had, Luke would have found no reason to mention it). Most likely, they are fellow Hellenist zealots defending the temple against the Jesus movement. Their failure to see Jesus here (9:7) may contrast with Paul's sight of Jesus and his blindness in 9:8.³⁸²

The clearest apparent contradiction among narratives of Paul's conversion is 9:7's claim that his companions "heard" the voice as compared with 22:9's claim that they did *not* "hear" it.³⁸³ Some scholars seek to resolve the difference by appealing to classical usage: ἀκούω with the genitive (as in 9:7) means to "hear a sound" whereas with the accusative (as in 22:9) it means to "hear with understanding."³⁸⁴ Luke, however, does not observe this distinction in his writings (e.g., Luke 2:47; 6:18, 47),³⁸⁵ and it appears that the LXX, other NT writers, and Epictetus also do not.³⁸⁶ It is possible that Luke, who sometimes archaizes, may employ classical usage, yet inconsistently, and that he therefore does so here.³⁸⁷ But this is at best a possible solution. (With or without appeal to classical usage, Luke could have simply used ἀκούω inconsistently.³⁸⁸ Some early interpreters also harmonized the passages by suggesting that others heard the sound but only for Paul did it communicate distinct words.)³⁸⁹

Yet another possible solution may also rise from the genre of Acts as ancient rather than modern historiography. Ancient historians fleshing out minor details of a simpler account might flesh it out differently on different occasions. Such variation could also function as a deliberate rhetorical device; Tannehill suggests that when recounting events that he has treated before, Luke likes "to vary details and emphasis" and sometimes goes further than modern readers feel comfortable with, creating conflicts for attentive readers.³⁹⁰ The difference is less consequential than modern arguments often make it (cf. comment on Acts 22:9); it is certainly less than many differences between accounts of the same events in Josephus's *War* and his *Antiquities of the Jews*. That Josephus composed differently even in such elite works, each potentially read by the same audience as the other, suggests that ancient audiences normally saw little problem with, and probably often expected, such rhetorical variation. This proposed

381. Pace Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 101; also pace Dunn, *Acts*, 122, if I understand him correctly here.

382. Nevertheless, Gaventa, *Acts*, 150, makes too much of a distinction between perception here (θεωρέω) and physical sight in Acts 9:8–9 (βλέπω). The semantic ranges of the terms overlap too much for the distinction (e.g., "seeing" signs in 8:6, 13).

383. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 71, attributing one account to Luke's desire to provide further witnesses and the other to his desire to reserve it for Paul only. Ancient commentators also noticed the discrepancy (Martin in *Acts* [ACCS], 103n2, cites Didymus and John Chrysostom).

384. Moulton, *Grammar*, 1:66 (cited in Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 426); Turner, *Grammatical Insights*, 87–90; cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 197. For hearing without understanding, see John 12:29.

385. Luke uses the verb with the genitive and accusative basically interchangeably (see Bratcher, "Acts ix.7").

386. See Moehring, "Acts IX 7."

387. Witherington, *Acts*, 312–13. A possible distinction between the genitive (with content) and the accusative (without content) hearing of the voice might be suggested by hearing with the accusative in Acts 9:4. Cf. Steuernagel, "ΑΚΟΥΟΝΤΕΣ." Perhaps the voice they heard was Paul's answering the other one (Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 19, 47), but the definite article in Acts 9:7 points back to the same voice as in 9:4 (Witherington, *Acts*, 313).

388. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 71, doubts that there is a difference between the genitive and the accusative use with the verb.

389. Arator *Acts* 2 (Schrader, 86–87); Bede *Comm. Acts* 22.9 (Martin, *Acts*, 270).

390. Tannehill, *Acts*, 10 (n. 6 compares Paul's colleagues standing in Acts 9:7 and falling in 26:14).

solution may be right or wrong in the present instance, but it certainly falls within what was allowed in ancient historical writing.

Selective revelation (cf. Acts 10:40–41) was a divine prerogative.³⁹¹ In Dan 10:7, only Daniel saw the vision; others felt dread and ran off.³⁹² Some rabbis thought that when God spoke to Moses, he alone heard it despite its might.³⁹³ Because his companions experienced the light and (by whatever manner) the sound, Luke portrays this experience as more than a vision despite visionary elements.³⁹⁴ Like Luke, Paul himself speaks of meeting Christ (1 Cor 15:8) in a manner distinct from his later visions (2 Cor 12:1).

(2) *Physical and Spiritual Blindness (9:8)*

Blindness was apparently common in antiquity.³⁹⁵ Although, according to legend, Homer had been blind,³⁹⁶ blindness was considered a terrible malady. One senator who had gone blind had to be persuaded not to end his life (Suet. *Aug.* 53.3); most men who became blind could not earn wages, and this produced difficult situations for their wives (e.g., Tob 2:10–11).³⁹⁷ Physicians associated blindness with various ailments. Sickness could “darken” vision (Hippocr. *Reg. Ac. Dis.* 7); an epileptic attack could cause sudden blindness (Hippocr. *Epid.* 2.5.11); one could also experience temporary blindness while walking, after surviving a quartan fever (7.45).³⁹⁸ If an eye ruptured, it would be difficult to fix; if it then putrefied, the person would go blind (Hippocr. *Prorr.* 2.19). (Physicians often treated eye problems with eye salves.)³⁹⁹

Blindness could also, however, stem directly from divine judgment, according to ancient ideology (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 6.139). Blindness was often associated with sin or preventable failures.⁴⁰⁰ Thus one source suggests that a person was struck blind because he failed to perform sacrifices properly,⁴⁰¹ though some thinkers did object that blindness could come on anyone.⁴⁰² Occasionally judgments came for looking

391. When Athena seized Achilles in Hom. *Il.* 1.194–200, he alone saw her; Barrett, *Acts*, 452, cites also Hom. *Od.* 16.154–63; cf. also the divinized Apollonius in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.31. See further comment on Acts 10:41; Keener, *John*, 975, 1186.

392. Johnson, *Acts*, 163, compares also Deut 4:12; Wis 18:1 (so also Marshall, “Acts,” 576, though cf. 597); Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 319, rightly cite Num 22:22–35 and also the later *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 22:10.

393. *Sipra VDDen. pq.* 2.2.1.19; 2.2.2.1.

394. Craig, “Resurrection,” 50.

395. With, e.g., Toner, *Culture*, 132. An estimated 87 percent of the world’s visually impaired people today live in the Majority World (Brown, Mory, Williams, and McClymond, “Effects,” 868), often in conditions probably comparable to those of Mediterranean antiquity.

396. E.g., Proclus *Poet.* 6.2, K175.3–5; Lucian *Indictment* 1 (playing on physical and moral senses of blindness); but the fictitious protagonist in Lucian *True Story* 2.20 can recognize (from looking at him in the afterlife) that Homer was not blind, and some others rejected the claim that he was born blind (see Vell. *Paterc.* 1.5.3, charging proponents of the view with lacking all senses).

397. Cf. the difficult situation for Sitis in *Test. Job* 21–23, though blindness is not what disabled Job here.

398. As already noted, the argument that Paul had epilepsy is not well founded. Nor would Paul have been traveling soon after a fever, although malaria attacks can recur under stress and heat (cf. Acts 26:13).

399. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 2.21.20; 3.21.21; *m. Šabb.* 8:1; *b. Šabb.* 108b; *Lev. Rab.* 12:3; *Deut. Rab.* 8:4; *Lam. Rab.* 4:15, §18; cf. Tob 11:11–13 (on which see Kollmann, “Offenbarung”); Horsley, *Documents*, 3:56, §17; Hemer, *Letters*, 196–97; esp. Berger, “Kollyrium.” For wax salves, see Pliny E. *N.H.* 22.56.117; for the use of hemlock, 25.95.153. For eye specialists, see, e.g., Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.3; for the danger of performing eye operations in earlier times, see Hamm. 215–18, 220; for the story of a physician using destructive eye salve to destroy a tyrant’s eyes, see Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 20.5.2–3; Diod. Sic. 22.1.2; Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.9.2.

400. In many cultures, some associate another’s affliction with specific avoidable causes to reduce the observers’ anxiety (cf. Job 6:21); see, e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 272–75.

401. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 16.3.1. Tiresias’s blindness was judgment from Hera (Ovid *Metam.* 3.335). In one inscription, a daughter suffered blindness because her father failed to fulfill his vow (Toner, *Culture*, 30, citing TAMV 1.509). For blindness as punishment, see further Hartssock, *Sight*, 68–72.

402. E.g., Plut. *Profit by Enemies* 5, *Mor.* 88F.

on images; Ilus was blinded for looking on the Palladium but regained his sight after propitiating Athena (Plut. *Par. St.* 17, *Mor.* 309F); the demigod Protesilaus used his own apparition to blind a barbarian who troubled him (Philost. *Hrk.* 4.2).⁴⁰³ Jewish literature provides many examples of the connection;⁴⁰⁴ one who saw a blind, lame, or otherwise seriously afflicted person should praise God as the righteous judge.⁴⁰⁵

Jewish readers knew of miraculous blindings for judgment (Gen 19:11), including a temporary one in a context that also plays on spiritual sight (2 Kgs 6:17–20).⁴⁰⁶ Visions of the divine did not normally result in blindness in ancient literature,⁴⁰⁷ but ancients knew the danger of staring at the sun or close encounters with lightning. (Luke attributes Paul's blindness directly to the intensity of the light; see Acts 22:11.)⁴⁰⁸ Luke's own audience may think of Zechariah's being temporarily muted for disbelieving a revelation (Luke 1:20),⁴⁰⁹ but Paul's disobedience has been more severe than Zechariah's unbelief (which was more like Abraham's and Sarah's, Gen 17:17; 18:12). (His companions are here speechless [9:7], but probably from astonishment rather than judgment; cf. 21:14; Luke 14:4; 20:26.)

Later in Luke's narrative, another opponent of the truth who is spiritually blind is physically blinded temporarily as judgment (Acts 13:11). Ironically, Paul's blinding leads to enlightening (cf. 26:18), followed by further spiritual visions (9:12, probably not part of the present vision). Although his companions did not see the revelation (9:7), he lacked natural vision, and so they had to lead him by the hand (9:8; 22:11; cf. 13:11; Luke 6:39, 41–42). (The blind are often depicted as needing to be led by the hand.)⁴¹⁰ Another irony remains: Saul had come to "lead" Jesus's followers "bound" from Damascus as captives (9:2, 21), but he, now vanquished, must be "led by the hand" and "led into" Damascus (9:8).

Luke would not be the first ancient author to play on physical and spiritual blindness in his sources.⁴¹¹ Greek and Roman tradition could play on the irony of the spiritual sight of a blind seer such as Tiresias;⁴¹² one Greek philosopher allegedly blinded himself

403. For blindings by Isis, see Heyob, *Isis*, 65 (citing Ovid *Pont.* 1.1.53–54; Juv. *Sat.* 13.93; she also cites claims of eye healings); by Ceres, see Val. Max. 1.1.ext. 5.

404. E.g., *b. Ta'an.* 21a. See fully Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:135.

405. *T. Ber.* 6:3; *b. Ber.* 58b. The response was to be the same, however, for bad news to oneself (*m. Ber.* 9:2).

406. For temporary blindness to turn a writer from profaning God's law by secular use of it, see *Let. Aris.* 316. Blindness as a temporary judgment (reversed at repentance) also appears occasionally in modern missionary accounts (see McGee, "Radical Strategy," 91–92, citing Crawford, *Shantung Revival*, 35). In Trousdale, *Movements*, 28, a nocturnal revelation of Jesus left the recipient converted but physically blind.

407. Washing one's eyes and face after a vision seems to have been a fairly common procedure, as in Eunapius *Lives* 464 (Wright, LCL, 391n2, cites as analogues Aristoph. *Frogs* 137–38; Aeschylus *Pers.* 201).

408. See Ephrem Syr. *Hom.* 26.1–2 (Martin, *Acts*, 271). If no one blames the sun for damaging eyes that look on it, neither should the Lord be blamed for Paul's blindness (*Hom.* 27.2–3 [Martin, *Acts*, 295]). But blindness from light and from judgment need not be incompatible. Looking at bright light can produce photoretinitis, sometimes temporary but often permanent, burning the retina (Wilkinson, *Healing*, 159).

409. On ancients either muted or suddenly freed from being mute by anger, see Val. Max. 1.8.ext. 3–4. Greeks sometimes observed muteness to follow fourteen days of fever (Hippocr. *Reg. Ac. Dis.* 28) and sometimes treated it by bloodletting (Hippocr. *Reg. Ac. Dis.* 6; *Epid.* 2.5.7). In Zechariah's case, people may assume that κωφός includes deafness as well (Luke 1:22, 62; cf. BDAG).

410. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 62.1 (figuratively); guide in Quint. *Decl.* 297 intro; 297.8, 13; see further comments on Acts 13:11.

411. Here, see also comments in Hartsock, *Sight*, 187–88; elsewhere, see, e.g., John 9:39–41; Porph. *Marc.* 18.307. On blinding and seeing in ancient literature, cf. also Rosaeg, "Blinding"; Hartsock, *Sight*, 73–81; in the OT and Tobit, Hartsock, *Sight*, 102–24. I adapt comments here primarily from Keener, *John*, 796.

412. E.g., Soph. *Oed. tyr.* 371, 375, 402–3, 419, 454, 747, 1266–79; Ovid *Metam.* 3.336–38, 525; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.6.7. Cf. discussion in Heinze, "Teiresias"; cf. Phineus in Ap. Rhod. 2.184, 195–96; Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.21; Marcus Perperna in Val. Max. 8.13.5; Homer in Proclus *Poet.* 6.2, K175.3–5. Lest one assume that Luke's use of the figure required his creation of Paul's blindness: his predecessors who played on spiritual blindness and sight did not likely invent the blindness of Tiresias or their other characters in their tradition.

physically to make his mental contemplations more accurate.⁴¹³ But Gentile sources more frequently employed blindness figuratively for intellectual, rather than moral, faults,⁴¹⁴ and the Jewish tradition provides a more direct source for Luke's irony.⁴¹⁵ A passage offered by Isaiah the prophet about spiritual blindness was adopted by Luke as his closing programmatic text (Isa 6:9–10 in Acts 28:26–27),⁴¹⁶ but the image was common in the biblical prophets (Isa 29:9; 42:18–19; 56:10; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2) and the Jesus tradition (cf. Matt 15:14; 23:16; Mark 4:12; 8:17–18; perhaps Luke 4:18) and appears in other early Jewish sources.⁴¹⁷

(3) *Entering Damascus* (9:8)

Saul obeyed the vision and entered Damascus. One could argue that he had to enter this nearby city after a long journey anyway, obedience aside, especially now that he could not see; but his three days of dry fasting (Acts 9:9; see comment there), conjoined with his praying (9:11) and expectation of fulfillment of another vision (9:12, 17), indicate that he now recognized Jesus as the true Lord. He merely awaits the external confirmation of baptism (9:18).

Saul stayed with one Judas (a common name in this period; see 9:11), presumably because arrangements had already been made there⁴¹⁸ or because Saul carried a recommendation for lodging there from the high priest or someone else influential. Given Saul's status and that of his backers, Judas may have also been a person of status in the Damascene Jewish community. (This might explain the brevity of directions to the house of Judas [a common Jewish name] on Straight Street [usually thought to be a long street].⁴¹⁹ That Ananias knows immediately of which Saul the Lord speaks in 9:11–13 suggests that either "from Tarsus," or the name of his host, or both indicated the particular Saul's identity.) Despite one early conflating tradition,⁴²⁰ Judas was probably not a Christian;⁴²¹ had he been, Ananias might not have needed a vision to locate Saul.

(4) *Saul's Fast* (9:9)

A person who was sick might be unable to eat (cf. comment on Acts 27:33), but Luke does not expect his audience to infer that Paul was unable to eat because of

413. Democritus in Aul. Gel. 10.17.1.

414. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.18; Plato *Rep.* 6.484BD; Catull. *Carm.* 64.207–9; Iambl. *V.P.* 6.31; 32.228; inferior thoughts about the divine in Porph. *Marc.* 18.307. The impious cannot judge piety, for the blind would call seeing blindness (Heracl. *Ep.* 4). Plato's Socrates maintained that he exposed the ignorance of those who claimed knowledge (Plato *Apology* in Bruns, *Art.* 45); less relevant would be some philosophers' teaching on the deceitfulness of the senses (Plato *Phaedo* 83A; contrast Arist. *Soul* 3.1, 424b; Sen. *Y. Dial.* 5.36.1; 7.8.4; Diog. Laert. 7.1.52, 110; *Let. Aris.* 156; Philo *Spec. Laws* 4.92; *Conf.* 19; Heb 5:14). Many writers shared an emphasis on moral discernment (Cic. *Off.* 3.17.71; *Leg.* 1.23.60; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 45.6; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.4.1; 1.7.8; 2.3.1; Marc. Aur. 2.1, 13; 4.41; 9.1.2; Diog. Laert. 7.1.122). Greeks usually viewed "sin" less in stark moral terms than did most of Judaism (Eurip. *Hipp.* 615; Arist. *N.E.* 4.3.35, 1125a; Nock, "Vocabulary," 137).

415. Cf. the blind seer in 1 Kgs 14:4–6; the clearer play on sight and blindness in 2 Kgs 6:17–18. The language would surely be intelligible in a very hellenized Jewish framework (e.g., Philo *Creation* 53, 66).

416. Also prominent in the Jesus tradition (Luke 8:10; Mark 4:12; Matt 13:14–15; John 12:40).

417. *1 En.* 99:8; 4Q424 1 3; 4Q434 1 I, 3–4; Wis 2:21; Rom 1:21; Eph 4:18; *Test. Levi* 13:7; *Exod. Rab.* 30:20. Rabbis also played parabolically on the contrast between seeing and blindness (*y. Pe'ah* 8:9 in Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 411).

418. Bruce, *Commentary*, 198.

419. One cannot, of course, press much certainty into this apparent brevity: possibly, few Jews lived on this street (if the Jewish quarter lay elsewhere), and there is no reason to suppose that Luke, who often abbreviates, or even his source, would have supplied full directions.

420. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 374n432, note an unpublished Coptic version of *Acts of Paul* that implausibly identifies this Judas with Jesus's brother.

421. With *ibid.*, 81.

physical complications from the Damascus road encounter. Grief also led to physical inability or volitional refusal to eat, and this is surely the case here. Learning Jesus's true identity has transformed Paul's own self-identity from God's righteous servant to the basest of rebels against God.

Paul apparently fasts in repentance. Like other writers, Luke often mentions "eating" and "drinking" together (Luke 5:30, 33; 7:33–34; 10:7; 12:19, 29, 45; 13:26; 17:8, 27–28; 22:30; Acts 10:41) but only rarely (in Acts 23:12, 21)⁴²² negatively, for *avoiding* eating and drinking. Luke does not employ here his customary language for "fasting" conjoined with prayer (Luke 2:37; 5:33–35; 18:12; Acts 13:2–3; 14:23; cf. 27:9), though clearly Saul is praying (Acts 9:11) and even receiving visions (9:12). Luke may be using the different terminology only for variation, but given his overall pattern, it may be that he emphasizes a different kind of fasting with a different objective than in most cases. It is possible that his adversaries later abstain, at least in part, as a vow of mourning over the corruption of Israel. Whether this is the case or not, it is likely that Saul is here mourning his own sin, following a traditional Jewish method of repentance (at least as early as "the fast," cf. 27:9).

Devout people could undertake fasts for various reasons (see comment on Acts 13:2–3); the reason here is likely penitence. Fasting was a means of mourning (Judg 20:26; 1 Sam 31:13; 2 Sam 1:12; 1 Chr 10:12), especially for the self-humbling involved in repentance (1 Sam 7:6; 2 Chr 20:3; Ezra 8:21–23; Jer 14:12; 36:9; Joel 1:14; 2:15; Jonah 3:5; Zech 8:19); sometimes its function in self-humbling was coupled with prayer for a specific request (2 Sam 12:16; *Tg. Rishon* on Esth 1:9). Greeks also knew fasting as a sign of mourning.⁴²³ Alexander was so troubled about having killed Clitus (while drunk) that he refused to eat or drink for three days,⁴²⁴ and he refused to eat or care for his body for two days after his friend Hephaisstion's death (Arrian *Alex.* 7.14.8). Another mourned three days without food because of deprived love (Eurip. *Hipp.* 275). Three days was the length of time spent in dry fasting by Queen Esther (Esth 4:16). More than three days of dry fasting can be dangerous, although Aseneth, in one Hellenistic Jewish romance, *Joseph and Aseneth*, abstained from food and drink for seven days as she mourned, repenting of idolatry (*Jos. Asen.* 10:1/2, 10/11, 17/20). Some Christians later (possibly following the Lukan tradition of Paul's fast, but probably following the more general use of fasting for mourning and repentance) urged that fasting should precede baptism (*Did.* 7.4).

Some scholars suggest that Luke specifies three days to connect Paul's blindness and restoration with the time between Jesus's death and resurrection.⁴²⁵ The text, however, connects the three days most explicitly with the fasting, and (as already noted) three days was a common duration for fasts.⁴²⁶ Had Luke intended an analogy with resurrection (in itself a not implausible suggestion), perhaps we could have

422. Where some zealous adversaries want to kill Paul, who is here repenting of the same sort of zeal.

423. See also Hom. *Il.* 19.156, 206–14; *Od.* 4.787–90; Soph. *Ajax* 324; Eurip. *Med.* 24; Ap. Rhod. 1.1071–72; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.22.1; Ovid *Metam.* 14.423–25; Arrian *Alex.* 4.9.4; Apul. *Metam.* 2.24. Some used abstinence from food, but not water, as a means to reduce fever (Epict. *Diatr.* 2.14.21).

424. Arrian *Alex.* 4.9.4; cf. his seclusion for three days in Quint. Curt. 8.2.11.

425. Papadopoulos, "Σαῦλος," arguing that, historically, the lightning on the road detached Saul's retina and that even after healing, his vision remained weak enough to require scribe assistants. But such assistants were common; the illiterate needed help (e.g., P.Tebt. 104.40; P.Lond. 1164 [h], line 30), but (closer to Paul's case) those who could afford them used them on a different level (e.g., Cic. *Att.* 14.21; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 18.18; Fronto *Eloq.* 2; *Ad M. Caes.* 5.26); on Paul's use of a secretary, see Richards, *Letter Writing*, *passim*.

426. Again, Arrian *Alex.* 4.9.4; Eurip. *Hipp.* 275; Esth 4:16; cf. (involuntarily) 1 Sam 30:12; *Jos. Ant.* 6.360. Also *Test. Jos.* 3:5; *As. Mos.* 9:6; cf. 2 Macc 13:12; perhaps *Jos. Ant.* 11.134 (though the fast itself may not be three days); Philo *Contempl.* 35; *Decal.* 45.

expected him to connect the three days more explicitly with regaining sight, not just with the duration of blindness.⁴²⁷

b. Paired Visions Confirm Saul's Call (9:10–19a)

Paired visions to Ananias and Saul underline the dramatic nature of Paul's transformation (Acts 9:13–14), reveal the centrality and confirm the veracity of his calling (9:15–16), and lead to Saul's restored vision and empowerment by the Holy Spirit for his mission (9:17–19a). Clearly "the Lord" has revealed himself to Saul,⁴²⁸ but the instrumental role of the community of disciples,⁴²⁹ especially as exemplified in Ananias, should not be underestimated. Rather than expend space narrating all of Ananias's involvement here, Luke reserves some material for Paul's account of the event in 22:12–16, where Ananias's scrupulous observance of the law makes him a particularly ideal witness on behalf of Paul's calling. As Cornelius is directed to a messenger of the gospel rather than given the saving message directly, so Saul here is confirmed in his new faith through Ananias.

I. SENT TO SAUL OF TARSUS (9:10–12)

Saul's vision in 9:4–6 is matched by Ananias's in 9:10–16, which is further matched by a vision telling Saul of Ananias's arrival, narrated only indirectly in 9:12.⁴³⁰ If more skeptical ancients could explain a single person's vision psychologically, such explanations would falter with paired visions to different individuals. Doubling a vision or dream even to one individual made it emphatic (Gen 37:7, 9; 41:1–7),⁴³¹ but paired visions or dreams given to different individuals were recounted as the strongest evidence (cf. Judg 7:9–15).⁴³² Thus, for example, God speaks to both Moses and Aaron with complementary messages (Exod 4:27–28). Complementary visions appear several times in Luke's accounts: Zechariah and Mary (Luke 1:8–38), Saul and Ananias (Acts 9:1–16), and Cornelius and Peter

427. This is merely an argument from probability, since Luke often fails to conform to our expectations on such matters.

428. "Lord" appears in various cases: "nominative (9:10, 11, 17), genitive (9:1, 28, 31), accusative (9:27, 35, 42), and vocative (9:5, 10, 13)," albeit not the dative (Parsons, "Progygnasmata," 60n50, noting [60] that orators would repeat a term in different inflections to identify the subject of speech). In Paul's speech in Acts 26, the inflection criterion suggests God as the subject (p. 58).

429. Parsons, "Progygnasmata," 60, and idem, *Acts*, 130, notes "disciple" in the accusative plural in Acts 9:1, the nominative singular in 9:10, the genitive plural in 9:19, the nominative plural in 9:25, and the dative plural and nominative singular in 9:26 (also noting that the emphasis differs in Paul's later reports of the event).

430. Luke employs the term ὄραμα only in his second volume, including for Moses's revelation (Acts 7:31), Saul's conversion and call (9:10, 12), Cornelius's conversion account (10:3, 17, 19; 11:5), Paul's night visions (16:9–10; 18:9), and something that Peter wrongly assumed a night vision (12:9).

431. Cf. also Polyb. 10.4.5; Val. Max. 1.7.7; the inscription in Horsley, *Documents*, 1:29–32, §6; cf. perhaps Rev 7:1–8, 9–17; in the ancient Near East, see Walton, "Genesis," 129–30. Military operations are likewise most safely conducted, Polybius opines, with the confirmation of double, rather than merely single, signals (Polyb. 9.17.9–10, commenting on the failure of 9.17.1–8).

432. E.g., Plut. *Alex.* 24.3; Val. Max. 1.7.3; Apul. *Metam.* 11.13. Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 319–20, cite Epid. inscr. 21; Parsons, *Acts*, 129, cites Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.57.4; Jos. *Ant.* 11.327; Jos. *Asen.* 14–15; *Herm. Vis.* 3.1.2; Apul. *Metam.* 11.1–3, 6, 21–22, 26–27; Heliod. *Eth.* 3.11–12, 18; Char. *Chaer.* 1.12; for other examples, see Wikenhauser, "Doppelträume" (cited in Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 59, noting esp. Livy 8.6.8–16; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.55–59). For a different but analogous sort of double oracle, see Val. Max. 1.6.3; cf. the double working in Tob 3:7, 16–17. Some modern popular literature claims such paired revelations: e.g., Yun, *Heavenly Man*, 28–30, 123, 263–64; Tari, *Breeze*, 25 (three people having the same vision simultaneously), 42–43 (the entire group having the same vision simultaneously); Sithole, *Voice*, 157–58 (multiple persons with the same revelatory dream independently); MacNutt, *Angels*, 41–42; cf. Crandall, *Raising*, 17–18; Long and McMurry, *Collapse*, 54–55; Trousdale, *Movements*, 22; a parapsychological explanation for one non-Christian example, Emmons, *Ghosts*, 46.

(10:3–16).⁴³³ In each case the individuals are brought together afterward, confirming the independent visions (Luke 1:39–56; Acts 9:17–18; 10:17–44). It is of interest, however, that this is the only one of the three paired visions in which it is Jesus appearing (though of course this would not have been possible in Luke 1:11). Luke has already prepared his audience for numerous visions in the announcement of the era of the Spirit in Acts 2:17.

One may note some parallel features in the visions, features that call attention to Luke’s desire that we parallel them. Some of the parallels (such as both being named when addressed) are simply standard in vision reports; the contrasts underline the contrast between a disciple’s obedience and Saul’s disobedience.

Ananias	Saul
“Ananias” (Acts 9:10)	“Saul, Saul” (Acts 9:4)
Expression of submission (9:10)	Accusation of wrongdoing (9:4–5)
Recognition of the Lord (9:10)	Inquiring who is this Lord (9:5)
“Rise and go” to where Saul is staying (9:11)	“Rise” and go into the city (9:6)
Jesus tells Ananias about Saul (9:11)	Jesus has told Saul about Ananias (9:12)
Ananias is sent to restore sight (9:12)	Saul’s vision has blinded him (9:8)
Jesus sends Ananias to his former persecutor (9:13–14)	Saul is restrained from persecuting Christians (9:4–5) and will himself suffer (9:16)
Ananias obeys (9:17)	Saul obeys (9:8)

(1) *Jesus Appears to Ananias (9:10–11)*

As in the vision to Saul, this vision opens by calling the recipient’s name (9:10), as also in 10:3 (cf. 9:4). We should not be surprised to encounter another Ananias, given the commonness of the name.⁴³⁴ It is the Greek form of the biblical “Hananiah” (thirty-two times in the LXX; e.g., of one of Daniel’s compatriots, Dan 1:6–11, 19; 1 Macc 2:59), and it appears frequently in early Judaism (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.34–35; see comment on Acts 5:1).⁴³⁵ (Thus even those prone to overemphasize the symbolic use of names need not seek literary contrasts with the more negative characters in Luke-Acts who share this name.)

Just as God used Stephen and Philip in some ways in advance of the Twelve, God here uses an otherwise unmentioned disciple (Luke’s description of him as “a certain disciple” indicates that he did not expect his audience to know about him). Although Acts focuses on particular characters, paralleling his historical monograph with his biographic first volume, Luke is well aware that many followers of Jesus were engaged in spreading the word (Acts 8:4; 11:19) and that all should have experienced the empowerment of 2:17.⁴³⁶

Ananias’s response to the calling of his name is appropriate for traditional biblical piety: “Behold, I” (Ἴδοὺ ἐγώ) often translates the traditional biblical Hebrew phrase often rendered “Here I am.” When God calls some servants by name, they

433. See Green, “Repetition,” 293; Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 59–60. Cf. also the parallels between the heavenly revelations from the angel of the Lord in Gen 21:17–18 and 22:11, 17–18 (cf. also Gen 16:11–12; 17:19); note the two or three sets of paired dreams in the Joseph story (37:6–10, arousing envy; 41:1–7; cf. 40:5–19).

434. Rabbi Jose b. Hanina (a Palestinian Amora) agreed that one could not tell whether a person would prove good or bad on the basis of the name (*Gen. Rab.* 71:3).

435. E.g., *CIJ* 1:244, §310 (in Greek); 2:155, §967 (Greek and Aramaic); *CPJ* 1:165–66, §24. The name was more popular in Palestine and appears in shortened form as “Annas” (see comment on Acts 4:6; Williams, “Names,” 85). Pervo, *Acts*, 237, offers good arguments for Ananias’s being in Luke’s source rather than Luke’s invention.

436. Cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 201, who notes that this presentation challenges any “rigidly formal” notion of apostolic succession assumed to happen invariably in the same manner.

respond, “Here I am,” either with the same Greek expression in the LXX (Gen 22:1, 11)⁴³⁷ or with the same thought in the Hebrew (31:11;⁴³⁸ 46:2; Exod 3:4; cf. 4 *Ezra* 14:2).⁴³⁹ When God calls for a volunteer to serve him, Isaiah responds, “Here I am” (Isa 6:8). A closer verbal parallel in Greek is Mary’s “Behold, [I am] the Lord’s servant” in Luke 1:38.⁴⁴⁰ Whereas Abraham (who says, “Here I am,” in Gen 22:1) apparently heeds the call to sacrifice Isaac without complaint (22:2–3), Moses (who says, “Here I am,” in Exod 3:4) raises objections to his call (3:11–4:13). Ananias will not object as strenuously as had Moses, but he *will* ask an astonished question (Acts 9:13–14).

“Arise” (9:11) was common after a vision⁴⁴¹ but makes sense especially when one is being commanded to act.⁴⁴² “Arise and go” connects Ananias’s mission with Paul’s (9:6, in different words; 22:10, using the same terms); it is also familiar Lukan idiom (the terms appear together in Luke 1:39; 15:18), especially in a command of Jesus requiring faith (Luke 17:19) or a commission to go forth for a divine task (Acts 8:26–27; 10:20), as here.⁴⁴³ Where he must go and to whom is specified by the rest of Jesus’s words here.

(2) *Saul from “Tarsus” (9:11)*

Although only Luke mentions Paul’s origin in Tarsus (repeated several times, 9:11; 21:39; 22:3; cf. 9:30; 11:25),⁴⁴⁴ it is rarely disputed today.⁴⁴⁵ This is partly because Luke lacks sufficient reason to have invented this (rather than another) site. Tarsus was prominent (cf. 21:39), but why would Luke have invented an origin there rather than in some more famous city (with a strong Pauline church), such as Ephesus or Corinth, which would have also provided more literary unity to his work? (Luke tells us virtually nothing of Paul’s ministry in Tarsus except whatever we might surmise from 9:30 and 11:25.) Paul’s connection with Jerusalem is much more critical for Luke’s account.⁴⁴⁶

Further, people were named by places of origin (e.g., Mary of Magdala and Simon of Cyrene) only once they had left the places of their birth; the title does not indicate

437. Cf. 4Q225 2 II, 9; Philo *Dreams* 1.195.

438. Cf. 4Q364 frg. 4b, e.2.22.

439. This was a standard, respectful way to respond to superiors (Gen 27:1; 37:13 [cf. Philo *Worse* 5, 10]; 1 Sam 3:4–6, 8, 16; 22:12) or others (Gen 22:7 [heightening the pathos by its contrast with 22:1, 11]; 27:18; Tob 2:3; 6:11); for submission to another’s will, 1 Sam 14:43; 2 Sam 15:26; Jer 26:14; for the response to a voice that proved to be God’s, 1 Sam 3:4–8 (also 4Q160 1 4). That Luke has some such call scenes fresh in his mind is suggested by the doubling of name in Gen 22:11; 46:2; Exod 3:4; Luke reports such an event in Acts 9:4.

440. Despite parallels with or birth announcement narratives, Stock, “Berufung,” shows that Luke 1:26–38 has significant parallels with a *call* narrative; it provides a seminal call narrative for Luke-Acts.

441. E.g., Ezek 2:1; 2 *En.* 22:5; 2 *Bar.* 13:2; see comment on Acts 9:4.

442. “Arise and go” is a common phrase (e.g., 2 Kgs 8:1; Jer 18:2; Mic 2:10; *Jub.* 27:10; 31:1; *L.A.E.* 2:4; 9:3; *L.A.E. C* 6:1; 36:1; *Ahiq.* 3.8–9; Philo *Posterity* 76; *Dreams* 1.189).

443. With this wording, nowhere in the NT outside Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 5:24). The exact wording is familiar from the LXX (Haenchen, *Acts*, 323; see Gen 22:3; 24:10; 2 Sam 15:9; Tob 8:10; of these, Gen 22:3 is particularly relevant, given “Here I am” in Gen 22:2; Acts 9:10).

444. Supposed traces of Cilician dialect in Paul’s letters (Jerome *Ep.* 121; Förster, “Sprach Paulus”) do not appear sufficient by themselves to make the case.

445. Légasse, “Career,” 366; Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 104; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 150 (noting that scholars selectively skeptical of Paul’s Judean background therefore welcome Luke’s accuracy about Tarsus; also Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 2); cf. Ramsay, “Tarsian Citizenship” (cited in Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 427). The other two Jewish “Pauls” we know of were also from Asia Minor (Sardis and Aphrodisias; Bauckham, “Latin Names,” 207). The probably Palestinian tradition of Galilee (as in Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 2; Jerome *On Illustrious Men* 5A; Kovacs, *Corinthians*, 1) first appears much later and does not as easily explain Paul’s facility with Diaspora life (see also Saffrey, “Juif”). Paul’s own letters confirm Luke’s picture of a Diaspora background for Paul (Huttungen, “Stoic Law,” 39).

446. Légasse, “Career,” 366.

how many years (probably not many) that Paul had spent there.⁴⁴⁷ Finally, arguing from silence on the basis of what Paul's occasional letters omit is a precarious exercise. Thus, for example, had not Paul had incidental reason to mention his Pharisaism in Phil 3:5, we would lack explicit Pauline corroboration of this feature of Luke's presentation.

Luke's audience, if attentive, might recall Luke's earlier mention of Cilicia (Acts 6:9) when it hears of Saul's background in Tarsus, at least in its second or third hearing of the work. Most educated readers of antiquity knew that Tarsus was capital of Cilicia.⁴⁴⁸ In contrast to conditions in western Cilicia, Tarsus lay in the part of Cilicia that was much more densely populated than most of the rest of Asia Minor.⁴⁴⁹ Tarsus was widely engaged in trade and hence widely known; it lay on the main trade route from west to east, since the two major eastern routes coalesced just fifty miles east of Tarsus.⁴⁵⁰

(3) *Political and Economic Life of Tarsus*

Many scholars argue that these trade connections led to a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures.⁴⁵¹ Tarsus was the center of the cult of Sandan (or Sandas), whom the Greeks identified with Heracles but whose iconography indicates his more Eastern character.⁴⁵² (Nevertheless, the earlier claim that Sandan was a dying-and-rising deity has proved false,⁴⁵³ nor do we have explicit evidence for mystery cults in Tarsus.)⁴⁵⁴ Heracles was named as Tarsus's "founder" (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.47).⁴⁵⁵ Yet not only these more distinctive traditions but a variety of cults, especially Greek but also more recent imports, also flourished there. Gözlu Kule, a site in the southeast part of Tarsus, is one of the few parts of the city for which we have access to remains from the period. It has yielded many Hellenistic and Roman terra-cotta figurines, often of mythical personages or deities such as "Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Dionysos, Harpokrates, Isis, and Serapis."⁴⁵⁶ These match well with an outsider's perspective concerning Tarsians' objects of worship: Apollo, Athena, Heracles, Perseus, and others.⁴⁵⁷ We also know that at some time Tarsus embraced the official imperial cult.⁴⁵⁸ Against some earlier scholars, however, few scholars today find any trace of syncretism with Tarsian cults in Paul's letters.⁴⁵⁹

Tarsus held some of the coast. The river Cydnus was navigable inland from the sea to the city (Val. Max. 3.8.ext. 6),⁴⁶⁰ and it flowed through the midst of the

447. See van Unnik, *Tarsus*, 49–50.

448. E.g., Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 2.13; Dio Cass. 47.30.1; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.17; 34.7; cf. Jos. *War* 7.238; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.12. See further Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 191–98; Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 225–26; Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 1–4; for bibliography, see Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 427–28; esp. Böhlig, *Geisteskultur von Tarsos*; very helpfully, Jones, *Cities of Provinces*, 192–209. For Tarsus's prestige and status among cities of Asia, see Neyrey, "Location of Paul," 271; comment on Acts 21:39.

449. Schnabel, *Missionary*, 41, following Hild and Hellenkemper, *Kilikien*, 23, 99.

450. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes*, 79 (cf. 82–84); Finegan, *Light from Past*, 253.

451. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 348, argues that this happened here "more fully than in any other city" (probably an exaggeration, in view of stronger candidates such as Antioch).

452. Gill, "Religion," 90; Walton, "Sandas"; Müller, "Sandon" (Tarsus's patron deity, also linked with Zeus and Baal, p. 954); on the indigenous deity Tarku, see Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 9–12. The oracular shrine of Amphiaraus was also in Cilicia, though not in Tarsus (Philost. *Hrk.* 17.1).

453. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 167.

454. *Ibid.*, 168.

455. When Tarsus supposedly regards Apollonius as a "second founder" (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.34), Philostratus probably is comparing Apollonius with Heracles.

456. Finegan, *Apostles*, 55. The figurines also include animals and people, and they were often realistic.

457. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.45, probably less than a half century after Paul's death. For Perseus as a possible founder, see Amm. Marc. 14.8.3, in Müller, "Sandon," 954.

458. Klauck, *Context*, 323–24 (citing Price, *Rituals*, catalogue nos. 154–56).

459. Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 4.

460. See also Jones, *Chrysostom*, 71 (citing Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.2, 17, 24, 29).

city.⁴⁶¹ Philostratus, portraying a youth in first-century Tarsus, presents Tarsians as always sitting along the Cydnus.⁴⁶² Tarsus was so active in trade that it maintained agent offices in other major commercial cities to act as local consulates for its citizens there.⁴⁶³ Such trade connections naturally provided the city great wealth (a situation that may have affected the background of Paul's family before their immigration to Jerusalem). A classicist notes the praise of Tarsus's prosperity in Dio Chrysostom, who was writing in the late first century:

Tarsus of Dio's day was highly prosperous (*Or.* 33.2), the largest city of Cilicia (*Or.* 34.7), full of splendid buildings (*Or.* 33.18). It . . . lay in the middle of a very fertile plain (*Or.* 33.17, 24, 28). Its extensive territory stretched north to the foothills of the Taurus (*Or.* 33.2) and south to the sea (*Or.* 34.8), though in Dio's time some of this coastal area was claimed by another city, Mallos (*Or.* 34.45–46). Among the main products of Tarsus' territory flax was particularly important, and the city contained a large number of linenworkers (*Or.* 34.21).⁴⁶⁴

Some think the linen-working trade there a background for Paul's tentmaking skills (but see comment on Acts 18:3). The city was a "great city" (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.17), the greatest of Cilicia, a "metropolis" from the start and bearing Augustus's favor (34.7).⁴⁶⁵

Archaeological work in Tarsus has been relatively sparse, since modern Tarsus overlies (by 6 m., or 20 ft.) most of its ancient counterpart,⁴⁶⁶ but what excavation has been done does tend to confirm that it was "no insignificant city" (Acts 21:39). The city had three major gate complexes, the Mountain, Valley, and Sea Gates.⁴⁶⁷ Both the massive temple and the late Roman colonnaded street with basalt paving and canals to drain rainwater⁴⁶⁸ date from after Paul's era, but they illustrate an important city. Certainly Tarsus was among the Asian cities competing in public-works projects by the early second century (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 40.11).⁴⁶⁹

The city had long been hellenized. Some Greeks had lived in Tarsus for six centuries before Alexander, but after he conquered the Cilician Gates in 312, the Greek presence intensified.⁴⁷⁰ Coins attest that hellenization began in the fourth century

461. Quint. Curt. 3.5.1. Tarsians apparently boasted about this river flowing through their city (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.17). The Cydnus was especially noted for the clearness of its water and lack of torrents (Quint. Curt. 3.4.8); its reputation for cold (3.4.9; 3.5.3; Strabo 14.5.12) might apply to any water in the vicinity (Rolfe in *Quintus Curtius*, LCL, 1:90 n. b).

462. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7 (the youth, Apollonius, left for a smaller town, despising urban luxury, 1.7; later, 6.34, the Tarsians liked him). Although Philostratus's portrait of first-century Tarsus probably derives from his own early third-century setting, this is a local trait apt to persist over time. The Cydnus may have been especially appealing in summers, said to be quite hot in this part of Cilicia (Quint. Curt. 3.5.1); it was said to have so tempted Alexander (3.5.2).

463. Casson, *Travel*, 129.

464. Jones, *Chrysostom*, 71. For its fertility, see also Strabo 14.5.1.

465. Dio's favorable claims may be mitigated by his admission in *Or.* 34.38 that he has acted the part of a demagogue, but the admission itself is probably rhetorical exaggeration. For the "metropolis," see also *Jos. Ant.* 1.127.

466. Finegan, *Apostles*, 54; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 325.

467. Finegan, *Apostles*, 54, noting that part of the Sea Gate remains. The supposed tomb of Sardanapallus probably belongs instead to "a Greco-Roman temple"; a deep well, where local tradition surmises that Paul drank, remains (54).

468. See Mitchell, "Archaeology," 190. For a summary of 1990s archaeological publications on Cilicia, see 188–91.

469. For the emphasis on public works in this period, see, e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 10.37.1; 10.116.1. Royal patrons had long counted public works among their achievements (e.g., 1 Kgs 22:39; 2 Kgs 20:20; Suet. *Tib.* 47; *Calig.* 21; note especially Herod the Great in McRay, *Archaeology*, 95, 129–49).

470. Magness-Gardiner, "Cilicia," 10. The Persians sought to burn Tarsus to keep its resources from falling into Alexander's hands (Quint. Curt. 3.4.14), and so Alexander, checking their intentions, entered Tarsus as its deliverer (3.4.15).

B.C.E., and Antiochus IV accelerated this process.⁴⁷¹ In time, Tarsus revised its history to claim mythical Greek heroes as its founders, overlaying older Anatolian traditions with Greek names.⁴⁷²

For more than a century Tarsus had held close ties with Rome (though not always to Rome's satisfaction). Tarsus was about ten miles inland, probably, in part, originally to avoid the pirates who plagued the coast.⁴⁷³ Pompey's defeat of Cilician pirates in 67 B.C.E. encouraged Roman interests, and Cilicia became a Roman province in 64 B.C.E.⁴⁷⁴ Cicero had governed Cilicia (Cic. *Fam.* 13.67.1, 51 B.C.E.) and hence mentioned Tarsus, where he lived, frequently in his writings;⁴⁷⁵ he sought to keep peace with neighboring peoples less friendly to Rome than Cilicia was (Plut. *Cic.* 36.1–2). Divided into factions, Tarsus proved less loyal to Cassius in the Roman civil war of 43 B.C.E. than he had hoped (Cic. *Fam.* 12.13.4); he enslaved some free people to raise money, but the suicides of many of these forced him to relent (Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.8.64).⁴⁷⁶ Augustus, however, found the inhabitants loyal to his cause and rewarded them by confirming for them the status of a free city originally conferred on them by Marc Antony (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.7–8, 39).⁴⁷⁷ This status granted local autonomy and sometimes could exempt a city from Roman taxation (Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.6.13), although it is not clear that it always did so.⁴⁷⁸ A number of important Tarsians who supported victorious factions in Rome probably also achieved Roman citizenship as a reward for their allegiance.⁴⁷⁹

Cilicians, however, acquired a reputation for viciousness (Plut. *Caes.* 2.1). Some of this reputation may have stemmed from prejudice toward western Cilicia (Cilicia Trachea), which was mountainous, poor, and quite unlike fertile Tarsus; whatever the other particulars, however, the province had a reputation for its pirates (though these were suppressed in the first century B.C.E.).⁴⁸⁰ But the bad reputation extended to Tarsus as well. Tarsus shared a reputation for immorality with other major Eastern cities;⁴⁸¹ Dio Chrysostom condemns its moral decadence (*Or.* 33–34 passim, esp. 34), and so, reportedly, did Apollonius of Tyana (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.34). Moving from

471. See Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 427. The coins appear early; Alexander established the mint at Tarsus (Magness-Gardiner, "Cilicia," 10).

472. Jones, *Chrysostom*, 72 (citing Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.1, 45, 47; 34.48).

473. Blaiklock, *Cities*, 19. For Tarsus being "inland," see, e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.22.91–92.

474. On these pirates, see Casson, *Mariners*, 177–83; on Cilicia, see Bing, "Cilicia," and sources cited there; for Pompey's defeat of the pirates, esp. on the Cilician coast, see, e.g., Vell. Paterc. 2.32.4; more fully, Tröster, "Hegemony." Caesar's tale of his conflict with Cilician pirates advertised himself (see Osgood, "Caesar"), probably ultimately useful in propaganda against Pompey. For a brief history of Cilicia, see Schnabel, *Missionary*, 41, citing at greater length Mutařian, *La Cilicie*.

475. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 2.17.1; 3.8.6 (assizes there), 10; 3.11.1 (receiving letters from there).

476. Could Paul's family have been enslaved here rather than taken by Pompey from Jerusalem?

477. For Tarsus as a "free" city, see also Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.22.92. See further Jones, *Chrysostom*, 72; Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 197; cf. also Dio Cass. 47.31; Appian *Bell. civ.* 5.7; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 32.

478. See Spawforth, "Free Cities."

479. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 198 (who suggests that Roman Tarsians of Paul's era would bear Roman names of their patrons: Gnaeus Pompeius, Gaius Julius, or Marcus Antonius); Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 427 (citing Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.23). It is doubtful that many Jews would have been included in this franchise.

480. Harrill, "Asia Minor," 133; Souza, "Pirates"; see claims in *Res Gestae* 5.25; Vell. Paterc. 2.126.3 (for pirates surrounding Sextus Pompey, see Vell. Paterc. 2.73.3; for Julius Caesar's earlier encounter with pirates near Rhodes, see Suet. *Jul.* 4; Plut. *Caesar* 1.4; 2.4). On the "wild" part of Cilicia's population, see, e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 12.55 (during Claudius's reign). Cilicia's client kings were forced to choose sides in the conflict under Tiberius, 2.78, 80. Apparently a few pirates persisted in the Mediterranean later; see Weeber, "Travels," 870; cf. hypothetical ones in Max. Tyre *Or.* 5.7; Quint. *Decl.* 257 intro; 342 intro; 388 intro; Lucian *Dial. D.* 450 (24/30, Minos and Sostratus 1); Alciphron *Fish.* 8 (Eucolymbus to Glaucē), 1.8; in later novels, Ach. Tat. 5.18.4; Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 3.8; Heliod. *Eth.* 1.28; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 32, 44.

481. Jones, *Chrysostom*, 72–73.

hints about their gait (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.52), Dio charged that the sound particular to Tarsians revealed that they were androgynes and hence to be viewed as effeminate or worse (33.54–63).

Dio (not known for sparing other cities either) accuses Tarsians of riotous insolence, reckless folly, “scorn for all that is honourable,” and their treatment of nothing as shameful (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.50).⁴⁸² The rival Cilician towns just east of Tarsus, Aegae and Adana, he claims, rightly reviled it (33.51); if all their neighbors detested them, perhaps it was because Tarsus really *did* abuse its prominence (34.10, 14, 27).⁴⁸³ He charged that Tarsians were divided among themselves, needing concord (34.17–19); he doubted (hyperbolically) that one could find even two Tarsians who shared a common mind (34.20). If there is anything to Dio’s report of such division, it might warn us against inferring too much about Paul from his Tarsian background!

(4) *Tarsus and Education*

Paul’s Gentile context in Tarsus, at least after his conversion and resettlement there (Acts 9:30), should have included an abundance of exposure to public philosophy and rhetoric, which also may have influenced local synagogue teaching.⁴⁸⁴ Strabo contends that Tarsus was the greatest philosophic center of his day (Strabo 14.5.13): “The people at Tarsus have devoted themselves so eagerly, not only to philosophy, but also to the whole round of education in general, that they have surpassed Athens, Alexandria, or any other place that can be named where there have been schools and lectures of philosophers.”⁴⁸⁵ He further notes that in contrast to most university cities, it is the natives, and not foreigners drawn by its reputation, who proved zealous for learning; but many of its natives went abroad to study.⁴⁸⁶ Many famous philosophers, including many Stoics,⁴⁸⁷ were originally from Tarsus (Strabo 14.5.14–15).⁴⁸⁸ Augustus’s teacher Athenodorus, a Stoic, was from there, and Augustus entrusted him with administrative reforms there (e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.48; Lucian *Oct.* 21).⁴⁸⁹

In addition to philosophers, the city boasted a famous Greek grammarian of the first century B.C.E.⁴⁹⁰ It also had “all kinds of schools of rhetoric” (Strabo 14.5.13). In a much later period, it remained a major center for sophists along with Rome and Antioch (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.5.571, 577).⁴⁹¹ It was among the small minority of communities (along with Athens, Antioch on the Orontes, Alexandria, Pergamum, and Cos) to have a library, already in the Hellenistic period (330–133 B.C.E.).⁴⁹² We may

482. LCL, 3:321 (Cohoon and Crosby). Dio mastered rhetorical *parrēsia*.

483. Dio admitted that some accusations were false (*Or.* 34.43) but pointed out that it was excessive pride to require other Cilicians to come to Tarsus for litigation and sacrifice (34.47). The statement about sacrifice is likely hyperbolic; cf. the temple of Asclepius in Aegae in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7.

484. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 169 (contrasting the unlikely proposed religious backgrounds, 167–68).

485. LCL, 6:347; this passage is often noted (Nock, *Paul*, 22; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 534; Culpepper, *School*, 141; Adinolfi, “Tarso”; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 75). Some add Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.48; 44.3. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 231, doubts that Tarsus was in fact one of the greatest, though it was important.

486. Ramsay thinks that Paul was one of the young scholars who went to study abroad (*Discovery*, 134); I have argued, by contrast, that the entire family probably came (Acts 23:6, 16).

487. E.g., the Stoics Heraclides and Antipater (Diog. Laert. 7.1.120), and possibly Chrysippus himself (7.7.179). Culpepper, *School*, 141, adds Barea Soranus (citing *Juv. Sat.* 3.116–17).

488. Culpepper, *School*, 141, adds that Apollonius of Tyana studied near there (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7).

489. See Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 217; Bruce, *Acts*, 208; Jones, *Chrysostom*, 72. Further on philosophy in Tarsus, see Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 22–24; cf. Glover, *Paul*, 5–23 *passim* (sometimes simply on philosophy in general).

490. Montanari, “Artemidorus.”

491. Cf. also Philagrus “of Cilicia” (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.8.578).

492. Christes, “Education/Culture,” 827–28.

also infer the significant academic strength of Tarsus's citizen body from an oration that Dio Chrysostom thought suitable to give there: his *First Tarsic Discourse* (*Or.* 33) is full of classical quotations, presupposing his audience's familiarity with "Greek poetry and myth and history" alongside the older indigenous backgrounds.⁴⁹³

Such training (or more likely its Jewish equivalent) presumably would have affected Paul only at the most primary level, since his family probably moved to Jerusalem when he was young (Acts 22:3; cf. 23:16),⁴⁹⁴ but it might also suggest that he could have grown up in a very educated family, which often affects learning no less than schooling.⁴⁹⁵ (Even had the family not moved, Tarsians, more often than residents of other cities, tended to receive their advanced education abroad, and we would expect this practice especially for zealous Jews seeking Jewish learning.)⁴⁹⁶ Such academic excellence would also affect the public reputation of Tarsus, and hence what both Luke's audience and characters in the narrative world would think of Paul's training (cf. 18:4, on Apollos hailing from Alexandria; on Tarsus's honor, see also comment on Acts 21:39).

Because Cilicia adjoined Syria, it is not surprising that many Jewish people lived there, as ancient sources confirm (Philo *Embassy* 281; *CIJ* 2:39–48, §§782–95).⁴⁹⁷ (Because Tarsus had long been divided into civic "tribes," some scholars suggest that some Tarsians may have treated the Jews as such an entity,⁴⁹⁸ though this is questionable, since they were not considered indigenes.) Cilician imports to Judea probably began with Jewish farmers in the region.⁴⁹⁹ As noted at Acts 6:9, Cilician Jews maintained contacts with Jerusalem (see *CIJ* 2:137, §931).⁵⁰⁰ In the first century the Cilician king even converted to Judaism temporarily (for the brief period that his marriage to Berenice lasted, on whom see comment on Acts 25:13; *Jos. Ant.* 20.145–46). Cilicians tended to be less hostile toward Jews than Syrians were (*Jos. War* 1.88). By some point before the time of Constantine, inscriptions indicate that coastal Cilician Jews were fully integrated into the rest of Cilician society;⁵⁰¹ given the fragmentary state of our information, this verdict probably also represents the status of Tarsian Jews in an earlier period.⁵⁰² Some Jewish interpreters conflated Tarsus with the western port to which Jonah had sought to flee (*Jos. Ant.* 9.208), but Luke makes nothing of that potentially fertile connection.

493. So the translator, Cohoon, LCL, 3:335.

494. Van Unnik, *Tarsus*, 49, doubts that he was more than ten when he immigrated. Compared with those of Jerusalem, Tarsus's distinctive traits would exert little influence on Paul (Philip, *Pneumatology*, 127). Unwilling to depend on the Tarsus connection, Shea, "Educating," insists that one must infer Paul's education only from what he writes.

495. Thus cf., e.g., ancient comments about securing educated nursemaids (see comment on Acts 7:21). The education there had been available only to the higher class, but this fits Luke's portrait of Paul (Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 227–28).

496. Cf. Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 342 (citing Strabo 4[14].5.13); see further comment at Acts 22:3.

497. See further Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 169–73 (citing third-century accounts); Stern, "Diaspora," 147–48 (citing also *Epiph. Her.* 30.11.2 from a later period; inscriptions from the Augustan period of a sect influenced by Judaism; and evidence from various towns); Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 12–14; and esp. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 158–67. On the settlement there in 171 B.C.E., see Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 180–86. Jewish Tarsian citizens were later viewed as allies of the Judeans who revolted in 66 C.E. (*Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 6.34; Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 178–79). Some cite 2 Macc 4:30–31 for the Jewish settlement there, although it does not specify this.

498. Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 8. On "tribes" in cities, see comment on Acts 26:7; but would resident aliens be so enrolled?

499. Applebaum, "Social Status," 716 (citing *m. Ma'as.* 5:8; *Neg.* 6:1; *t. Šeb.* 5:2).

500. In the Amoraic period, some Palestinian rabbis discoursed in Tarsus (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5:17).

501. Williams, "Jews of Corycus."

502. Further on Tarsus, see, e.g., Glover, *Paul*, 5–23; Blaiklock, *Cities*, 18–21; esp. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 322–28; Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 3–24; Gasque, "Tarsus."

(5) *Straight Street (9:11)*

Most streets in pre-Hellenistic cities would be winding, narrow, and easy to become lost in; such cities grew haphazardly, in contrast to the ideal of Hellenistic urban planning, where streets crossed the straight main street at right angles.⁵⁰³ Though Damascus was one of the empire’s oldest cities, its construction on relatively even ground facilitated its transformation to the newer standards of Greek and Roman design. The spacing of streets reflects this pattern: east-west streets lie more than “300 ft (100 m) apart,” with north-south streets “about 150 ft (45 m) apart.”⁵⁰⁴

Many argue that “Straight Street” was the large east-west street,⁵⁰⁵ then colonnaded and with large porches on each end. This street remains today in the eastern section of Damascus’s Old City and is called *Derb el-Mustaqim*.⁵⁰⁶ Finegan surveys the remains:⁵⁰⁷

The main east-west street, the Roman *decumanus maximus* and the “street called Straight” of Acts 9:11, is plainly recognizable in the present Midhat pasha and Bab Sharqi streets, which run directly through the Inner city, parallel to the Barada River, for a distance of nearly 1 mi (1,600 m). In Roman times this street was 50 ft (15 m) wide and bordered with colonnades, consisting of two rows of Corinthian columns on either side.

The eastern city gate (the Bab Sharqi, the Sun Gate or East Gate), which opens to the street, had three arches. Of the seven Roman gates, only this one, probably dating to the second century C.E. in its current form, remains.⁵⁰⁸ It had a large central entrance flanked by two smaller ones; the central entrance opened onto the street, 13.68 meters wide, and the other entrances led to sidewalks beside the street.⁵⁰⁹ Two arches to the west suggest a minor directional shift; if this was Straight Street, it was not really straight.⁵¹⁰ One of the arches, about 2,000 feet (600 m.) west of the East Gate and roughly halfway along the street, probably commemorated Pompey’s conquest and hence was standing in Paul’s day.⁵¹¹

The house where, traditionally, Paul stayed is close to the street’s western end.⁵¹² There were no signposts designating streets, but they had names and locals knew them; once one found the correct street, one asked for a particular house by the name of its owner.⁵¹³ It is also possible that Luke or his source abbreviates the directions (since they were no longer relevant many years later). (Against the traditional identification of Straight Street, in late Greek *ῥύμη* was often a narrow street or alley; for a major

503. Jeffers, *World*, 51. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 104, say that planners designed most streets to be straight and narrow. Roman influence also spread paved streets, projects to which patrons often donated (Owens, *City*, 157).

504. Finegan, *Apostles*, 61.

505. On main streets, see, e.g., Scott, *Customs*, 240; Owens, *City*, 113, 131; Watson, “Cities,” 214; Kraybill, *Cult and Commerce*, 211; Pliny *Ep.* 10.98.1.

506. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 102; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 427 (whose transliteration I follow); on the same street, Abbott, *Acts*, 113; McRay, *Archaeology*, 233–34.

507. Finegan, *Apostles*, 61, noting that archaeologists have uncovered some street columns while others appear “in the bazaar shops” alongside the street, which is now just a quarter of its Roman width.

508. *Ibid.*

509. Pitard, “Damascus,” 104 (noting that the gate, though refurbished in the early third century C.E., probably dates to the early first century C.E.).

510. *Ibid.*

511. Finegan, *Apostles*, 61.

512. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 102.

513. See Ling, “Stranger in Town.” A barbershop, hub of local gossip, was a good place to discover where people lived (*Lysias Or.* 23.3, §166).

street, we might expect πλατεῖα.⁵¹⁴ But the distinction was not pervasive enough to count securely against the tradition. Would an alley monopolize such a prestigious title?)⁵¹⁵ Traditions such as the site of the house may or may not have been preserved by the early Christian community there, but a street's name might well persist.

Travelers normally preferred accepting hospitality, where it was available, to staying at inns; this was especially true of Jewish travelers (see comment on Acts 16:15).⁵¹⁶ Here, as regularly in Acts, a host is named, perhaps suggesting the virtuous nature of that activity (cf. Acts 9:43; 10:6; 11:3; 12:12; 16:14–15, 25–34, 40; 17:5–9; 18:1–4, 7; 21:8–14, 16; 27:1–3; 28:1–10).⁵¹⁷

Tradition might support the idea that Ananias, like Judas, lived near “Straight Street,” shortening the distance he needed to travel (for whatever this might be worth). The traditional site of Ananias's house is north of the street's eastern end (traditionally, Paul stayed on the western end). We would expect both homes in mainly Jewish areas, but below this site is a temple dedicated to Jupiter-Hadad, possibly (from the lettering) from the second century C.E. The contours of subsequent Jewish settlement must have changed, however, after the massacres of thousands of Jews a generation after Paul's conversion (see Jos. *War* 2.561; 7.368; comment on Acts 9:2). Some scholars suggest that pagans may have dedicated this temple over a Christian holy site.⁵¹⁸ Yet the accuracy of this tradition remains uncertain; Christians often “recouped” earlier pagan holy sites (hence the later church on the site, though this could stem from the Ananias tradition).

Why does Luke specify the particular street in this case? Elsewhere, revelations might include sufficient directions for travelers to find their way (cf. Acts 10:6)—“Judas” was, after all, a common name and hence could hardly specify the house's location in Damascus by itself.⁵¹⁹ But the street's name in this case may have also supplied Luke a fortuitous opportunity for a literary connection: those who twisted God's “straight” road (13:10) must be blinded (13:11), but the kingdom mission of true prophets entailed straightening that road again (Luke 3:4–5). Saul has turned to the Lord's right path, to “the Way” (Acts 9:2).⁵²⁰

(6) Ananias's Mission (9:12)

Prayer (9:11) is connected with a vision here (9:12), as often in Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 1:10; 3:21; 9:28; Acts 10:2–4, 9–10, 30; 22:7; cf. Luke 22:44; Acts 10:3–4).⁵²¹ The vision sounds like instructions subsequent to the Damascus road encounter

514. See BDAG; for πλατεῖα, see, e.g., Esth 6:9, 11 LXX; Tob 13:17. The two appear together in summary fashion in Luke 14:21; Luke uses ῥύμην in Acts 12:10 for what was probably historically a significant route to the Upper City, but he may not have known this. Rohrbaugh, “Pre-industrial City,” 144, notes that poor and nonelite people lived along the narrower lanes, which were often “little more than open sewers, so narrow that donkeys could not pass along them.” Goodman, *State*, 30, also notes that groups of homes often were on alleys off main streets.

515. Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, 564–65, include as definitions “street” (e.g., “Royal Street,” BGU 4.1037.16, from 47 C.E.; “public street” from P.Ryl. 2.156.4, first century C.E.) as well as “lane” (e.g., “blind alley,” P.Oxy. 1.99.9, from 55 C.E.); a distinct diminutive, apparently retaining diminutive force, is also attested (P.Meyer 20 verso 5, from the early third century C.E.). LSJ also allows both senses.

516. See, e.g., Hock, *Social Context*, 29, 79nn28–29; Koenig, *Hospitality*, passim.

517. Koenig, *Hospitality*, 87.

518. Finegan, *Apostles*, 62. Against early Christian tradition (see comment on Acts 9:24–25), one would normally presume that Ananias lived in the Jewish rather than the Nabatean quarter. (The exception might be if he too faced danger among his people; yet if he maintained Jewish purity practices, he would need to secure food in the Jewish quarter or have friends to secure it for him.)

519. See Williams, “Names,” 89–90; further comment on Acts 1:13.

520. In Acts 9:11, in contrast to the other texts, Luke uses ῥύμην, following his source for the nature of the street, but his mention of its name is nevertheless suggestive.

521. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 103.

(though that, too, was a “vision,” Acts 26:19), none of the accounts of which report these words; Jesus has promised subsequent instructions (9:6; 22:10). For the laying on of hands here, see comment on Acts 9:17.

The restoration of Saul’s sight (9:12, 17) is a major part of Ananias’s commission here. In addition to Saul needing his physical sight back to fulfill his own mission, the healing of his sight provides a further confirmation of divine activity surrounding Saul’s calling. It also may symbolize his spiritual transformation; Jesus blinded the one who thought he saw, so he might see anew (see comment on Acts 9:8; cf. John 9:39–41).

II. RESOLVING ANANIAS’S CONCERN (9:13–16)

Astonished at the commission, Ananias offers the warning he has already received about Saul’s commission against Jesus’s followers (Acts 9:13–14). In Luke’s account, Jesus responds not with a report of Paul’s conversion but with a more detailed articulation of Saul’s calling (9:15–16).

(1) *Ananias’s Concern (9:13–14)*

Reports traveled quickly, both by letters⁵²² and by word of mouth;⁵²³ apparently Saul’s mission was well known in Jerusalem, and travelers, both Christian and otherwise, had brought news to Damascus ahead of him (cf. 9:21). Because Ananias knew of Saul only indirectly, some scholars doubt that he was originally one of the fugitives from Jerusalem (Acts 8:1–4; cf. Gal 1:23).⁵²⁴ This doubt may be correct, but it is also possible that he left before Saul became widely known as a major leader of the persecution (cf. Acts 7:58). Not everyone who fled initially would know the names of all their persecutors, and certainly most would not recognize Saul by sight if they had not been arrested by him (Gal 1:22).⁵²⁵

In contrast to Paul’s apparently immediate compliance (Acts 9:8),⁵²⁶ Ananias has a question.⁵²⁷ Ananias is not unwilling to obey (he does in fact obey, 9:17), but he is interested in clarification (just like Paul in 22:19–20, who by contrast must be *dis-suaded* from danger). God often sent prophets into situations that could be dangerous; for example, God sent Elijah to Ahab after some three years of successful hiding (1 Kgs 18:1), and Elijah obeyed (18:2). But many who heard God’s call could raise objections (e.g., Exod 4:10; Acts 10:14) or at least questions⁵²⁸—sometimes even

522. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 2.4.1; 14.1.6; 15.18.1; *Att.* 1.1, 3; 2.11; 6.3, last ¶; 9.15; 10.4, end; 12.12, end; *Quint. fratr.* 2.12.5; Pliny *Ep.* 2.11.24; 2.12.7; 4.11.15; 5.5.1; 5.17.1, 6.

523. E.g., P.Oxy. 32; Eurip. *El.* 361–62; Pindar *Nem.* 5.2–3; Cic. *Fam.* 1.6.1; 3.1.1; 9.2.1; 12.30.3; Diogenes *Ep.* 20; Apul *Metam.* 1.26; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 8; Ezek 24:26; Jos. *Ant.* 18.104; *y. Hag.* 2:1, §10; 1 Cor 1:11; Col 4:7. On the rapid spread of rumors, see comment on Acts 19:10.

524. Bruce, *Commentary*, 199.

525. Cf. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 146–47: “conceivable in an age when figures were known largely by reputation and not visually,” especially if Saul’s Judean persecution was limited to Jerusalem. (My wife notes a man who infected women with HIV in her hometown in Congo; those who did not have a television did not know what he looked like.) Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 24, notes that he knows very few of the sixty thousand residents of Tübingen (roughly ancient Jerusalem’s population) and knows “only a tiny proportion of the teaching staff of the university ‘by sight.’” After Paul’s conversion, the account of it probably became widely reported (Gal 1:23); conversions of celebrities or others respected by a dominant and/or hostile culture provide a minority culture with apologetic value (even if they are also often doubted initially, Acts 9:26).

526. Paul does ask a question (Acts 9:5) but does not question the orders received in 9:6.

527. Marguerat, *Historian*, 195–96, suggests that although Luke’s tradition may employ the overthrown-enemy motif, Luke’s own purpose is more complex: Jesus does triumph over the enemy, persuading him at once, but takes longer to persuade Ananias (here) and other disciples in Acts 9:26–27! For resistance in both 9:13–14 and 10:14, see also Park, “Barriers” (further applying the pattern to cross-cultural settings).

528. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 498, compares those reluctant to preach to audiences that they expected to be hostile (Exod 3:11; 4:10–11; 6:12; Jer 1:6–7; Jonah 1:1–2). For dialogues in dreams and visions, see Parsons, *Acts*, 312 (citing, e.g., Gen 20:3–8; 31:10–13; 46:2–6; Hom. *Il.* 23.64–119; *Od.* 4.786–841; 20.1–55).

after saying, “Here am I” (Exod 3:4), as Ananias had (Acts 9:10). What the Lord tells Ananias differs starkly from the reports he has heard, and so some assurance may be in order (cf. Judg 6:36–40; 7:10–14). The structure of the dialogue is thus consonant with call and commissioning narratives in the earlier Scriptures.

“The saints” may have applied especially as a title for believers in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25–26, 31; 1 Cor 16:1; 2 Cor 8:4), as here (cf. Acts 26:10).⁵²⁹ But Luke, like other early Christian writers, also uses it more generally (Acts 9:32, 41; cf. Luke 9:26), for those set apart in Christ (Acts 20:32; 26:18), and here for those who call on Jesus’s name (as in 2:21; cf. comment there). Jewish tradition recognized that God had sanctified Israel—that is, set Israel apart for himself;⁵³⁰ some early texts associate this setting apart with God’s commandments.⁵³¹ On “holy ones,” see further the comment on Acts 20:32 or 26:18.

(2) *Vessel to the Nations* (9:15)

Responding directly to Ananias’s concern, Jesus explains that he is sending Ananias to Saul not because of Saul’s former commission from the high priests (9:14) but with a new one from himself (9:15). Instead of inflicting suffering on those who bear Christ’s name (9:14), Saul himself will now suffer for this name (9:16).⁵³² The Lord has the right to choose the instruments he wishes, and Ananias is not reported to offer further objections after hearing the Lord’s explanation (9:17).

The term σκευός applies to any sort of instrument, but since this one “will carry” (βαστάσαι) something, perhaps “vessel” is the likeliest translation.⁵³³ Paul is a “vessel,”⁵³⁴ a term that Greeks sometimes applied metaphorically to the body (1 Thess 4:4)⁵³⁵ but that here applies to a utensil used by God (cf. Rom 9:21–23; 2 Cor 4:7; 2 Tim 2:20–21).⁵³⁶ Because the term appears only five times in Acts and three of the others involve Peter’s vision soon afterward (Acts 10:11, 16; 11:5), it is possible that Paul’s status as a “vessel” is connected with the bringing in of Gentiles; this suggestion is difficult to prove, however, since other echoes of his calling are lacking in Peter’s vision. “Vessel of choice” is a Semitism for a vessel that God has chosen; like the vessel image itself, it emphasizes God’s sovereignty in choosing and working through this person.⁵³⁷ In keeping with both a Lukan theme and his Pauline apologetic, one could not complain that the Lord chose a “sinner” (cf., e.g., Luke 5:8).

529. Witherington, *Acts*, 318; especially Trebilco, “Self-Designations,” 45–49.

530. E.g., *Jub.* 22:29; 30:8; 1QS VIII, 21; IX, 6; 1QM XIV, 12; *Wis* 18:9; 3 Macc 6:3; *Exod. Rab.* 15:24; cf. 1QM IX, 8–10; 1 Cor 1:2; 1 *Clem.* 1.1.

531. E.g., *Jub.* 2:19, 21; 15:27. Among later texts, see, e.g., *b. Ber.* 33b. Jewish blessings regularly praised God for sanctifying his people through the commandments that he had given them; these blessings usually included a reaffirmation of the particular commandment that the person was fulfilling (e.g., *t. Ber.* 5:22; 6:9, 10, 13, 14; *b. Ber.* 51a, bar.; 60b; *Pesah.* 7b; *Šabb.* 137b; *y. Sukkah* 3:4, §3; *Pesiq. Rab.* 3:2).

532. Ray, *Irony*, 64, finds here an example of narrative irony.

533. Johnson, *Acts*, 165. Pots could be inscribed, but the verb may suggest the container’s *contents*.

534. The common suggestion (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 72; Hanson, *Acts*, 115; Johnson, *Acts*, 165) of a background in Jer 50:25 (27:25 LXX) works much better for Rom 9:22 (instruments of wrath) than here. Augustine *Sermon* 332.2–4 (Kovacs, *Corinthians*, 4) compares Rom 9:22 with the present text. Some also compare the later *Ps.-Clem. Rec.* 3.49.

535. E.g., 4 *Ezra* 7:88; *Test. Naph.* 2:2; apparently Marc. Aur. 3.3.2; 12.2 (perhaps 8.27). A wife may be compared to a vessel in *y. Ketub.* 1:1, §4; perhaps 4Q416 2 II, 21 (Strugnell, “Wives”; but see Kister, “Parallel”); *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:24; *y. Šabb.* 10:5; a couple in Plut. *Bride* 3, *Mor.* 138EF.

536. For people as instruments of others, Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 428, cites also Polyb. frg. 13.5.7; 15.25.1. Cf. also individuals in God’s hands (2 *Clem.* 8.2), similar to Jeremiah’s pot; the body (in a dualistic sense) in *Barn.* 7.3; 11.9; 21.8; *Herm.* 33.2; people as potential utensils for God in *Herm.* 43.13; empty idols in *Diogn.* 2.2–4; other comparisons with vessels, *b. Ber.* 17a; 40a; *Gen. Rab.* 14:7.

537. Cf. here Marshall, “Acts,” 576. Much of Scripture reflects such a theme (e.g., Gen 6:8; 12:1–3; 18:19; Deut 7:6; Neh 9:7; Ps 78:70), as also in Luke-Acts (Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2, 24; 10:41), though it also portrays

A vessel does not belong to itself but is an instrument of another, employed wholly for another's purposes; in antiquity, ordinary clay pots (as opposed to expensive metal ones) were fragile, quickly broken, and hence replaceable.⁵³⁸ The prophets spoke of nations as vessels in God's hands that he could use as he desired (Isa 29:16; 41:25; 45:9; 64:8; Jer 18:6; 50:25 [LXX 27:25]; 51:20 [LXX 28:20]), an image Paul himself adopts (Rom 9:21). As noted above, vessels could carry (βαστάζω) contents (though more naturally one might speak of carrying a vessel, e.g., Luke 22:10; the verb usually connotes something burdensome, e.g., 14:27), but vessels could also include writing, sometimes specifying contents or ownership.⁵³⁹ Paul here bears a name, for which believers may be called to suffer (Luke 21:12).

Although the more surprising element for characters in the narrative world would be the Gentile mission, the calling here explicitly includes the "children of Israel"; the Gentile and the Jewish missions are complementary for Luke, not contradictory.⁵⁴⁰ But Paul is especially noted as a distinctive apostle of the Diaspora mission, notably among Gentiles. Both Luke and Paul associate Paul's Damascus encounter with his commission to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17; Gal 1:15–17).⁵⁴¹ His mission to the Gentiles, or "the nations," recalls Jeremiah's calling as a "prophet to the nations" (Jer 1:5), a text also alluded to by Paul himself with reference to his ministry (Rom 11:13; cf. 1 Tim 2:7).⁵⁴² Like Paul, Luke seems to understand Paul's call in terms of Jeremiah's call narrative. God knew Jeremiah before forming him and called him before birth (Jer 1:5; Gal 1:15–16).⁵⁴³ God tells Jeremiah not to fear, because he is with him to rescue him (Jer 1:7–8, 19; cf. Acts 18:9–10; 26:17);⁵⁴⁴ Jeremiah would build, plant, and tear down (Jer 1:10; cf. 2 Cor 10:8).⁵⁴⁵ The commission to make Christ known to both Israel and Gentiles (Acts 9:15) may also reflect Isaiah's servant passages (Isa 42:6; 49:6), as in Acts 13:47.⁵⁴⁶

Although Paul was not the first to evangelize Gentiles (Acts 8:27–39; 10:28–43; 11:20), he advanced the Gentile mission more than others and historically viewed it as a task the Lord had especially appointed for him (Rom 1:5; 11:13; 15:16, 18; Gal 1:16; 2:7–9; Eph 3:1–8, esp. 3:2–3, 8; Col 1:25–27; cf. 1 Tim 2:7).⁵⁴⁷ This is not to imply that Paul began with a comprehensive plan. The full contours of Paul's calling undoubtedly took years to develop; thus, for example, his later views on matters such as circumcision and food laws were not all revealed in his initial calling.⁵⁴⁸ Nor

God working with human obedience and disobedience (for Jewish understandings of chosenness, see the excursus "Providence, Fate, and Predestination" at Acts 2:23).

538. Cf. Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 167–68; Keener, *Corinthians*, 174, on 2 Cor 4:7. See the comparison between foolish people and cracked vessels in Plato *Gorg.* 493A; Heracl. *Ep.* 8; perhaps Epict. *Diatr.* 2.4.4. But God uses broken vessels in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:5 and humble vessels in *Sipre Deut.* 48.2.7.

539. For commercial vessels, see Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, 618 (though most writing on ostraca was simply recycling the surface).

540. With Dunn, *Acts*, 123; cf. Bovon, *Studies*, 31.

541. See further Riesner, *Early Period*, 235–36.

542. Cf. Munck, *Acts*, 82; Stendahl, *Paul*, 8; Bruce, *Apostle*, 75; Young and Ford, *Meaning*, 70; Gorman, *Apostle*, 57; Ehrensperger, *Power*, 84–85. Cf. also Kim, *New Perspective*, 101, though emphasizing Isa 42:6–7 here. Cerfaux, *Church*, 177–78n3, emphasizes Isa 49:1–6 instead.

543. See also Bruce, *Apostle*, 146.

544. This promise is not, however, unique to Jeremiah (see comment on Acts 18:9–10).

545. Jeremiah is a pillar (Jer 1:18), but Gal 2:9 applies this image to others, following a familiar ancient image of strength or importance (Pindar *Ol.* 2.81–82; Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.76.176; Ps 144:12; 1QSa I, 12; 2 Bar. 2:1; 4 Bar. 1:2; 'Abot R. Nat. 25 A; Jos. *Asen.* 17:6 MSS; *Gen. Rab.* 43:8; 75:5; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 46:28; 49:19; on Exod 15:15; on Num 20:29).

546. Cf. Munck, *Acts*, 82; Bruce, *Apostle*, 146.

547. Stendahl, *Paul*, 15, contends that Paul's identity as apostle to the Gentiles was central in his theology.

548. Dollar, *Exploration*, 163–65.

is it clear that he was evangelizing Nabatean Gentiles as early as Gal 1:17;⁵⁴⁹ Gentiles were available in Damascus if this was his interest.⁵⁵⁰ Paul evangelized all the nations not directly but representatively (cf. Rom 15:19); he reached strategic centers from which the gospel could spread.

The mention of “kings” recalls Jesus’s promise that his disciples would testify before kings and governors (Luke 21:12–15), fulfilled more than once in Acts (Acts 13:7–12; 24:10–25; 26:2–29).⁵⁵¹ Courage to speak boldly before kings was praiseworthy among Greeks (Men. Rhet. 2.3, 386.7–9) and Jews alike (Ps 119:46; cf. 119:23, 161). Whatever Paul may have thought of the commission (especially in view of Acts 9:16), he dare not refuse it (cf. 1 Cor 9:17). To refuse a commission, like refusing any other gift, could insult the giver, leading to serious consequences (Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.1, in exile because he offended Caesar).

Many years intervene between the time of receiving the calling to the Gentiles and its fulfillment in the “missionary travels” reported by Luke (cf. Acts 13:2; Gal 1:18–2:1),⁵⁵² although Luke, perhaps more interested here in narrative action, does not highlight the duration (cf. “many days” in Acts 9:23).

(3) *Paul’s Future Sufferings (9:16)*

Like the promises about Paul’s mission in 9:15, the promise of his sufferings foreshadows in summary fashion much of the rest of the story in Acts. (It may also provide a model, since Jesus’s mission should be expected to entail facing hostility; Luke 9:23, 57–62; 14:26–35.)

Luke here allows for further, complementary revelation about Paul’s calling (the Lord will “show” him what he must suffer), which Luke at least partly explains in Acts 22:18–21. Ὑποδείξω, the term for “showing” Saul what he must suffer, can connote warning (Luke 3:7; 12:5) or offering an example (6:47; Acts 20:35); either sense is appropriate here, but certainly Saul has a concrete example in the suffering of Jesus and the followers who bear his name (Acts 9:4–5). In any case, Saul will suffer for the name he “bears” (9:15), the name he once opposed (26:9).

Saul had persecuted the church, whose Lord shared their sufferings (9:4); now he would share the sufferings of Christ. Ananias was concerned that Saul came to inflict suffering on those calling on Jesus’s name (9:14); the Lord now explained that instead Saul himself would⁵⁵³ suffer for this name (9:16). The term πάσχω in Luke-Acts almost always refers to Christ’s own passion (Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:26, 46; Acts 1:3; 3:18; 17:3; the exceptions are here, Luke 13:2, and Acts 28:5). Saul thus has his own early passion prediction (cf. Luke 9:22; 17:25),⁵⁵⁴ although his death will not be narrated in Acts. The fulfillment begins as early as Acts 9:29. Paul’s sufferings are thus not unique but reflect Jesus’s call to take up the cross daily and follow him,

549. As some argue, e.g., Murphy-O’Connor, “Paul in Arabia”; idem, “Doing in ‘Arabia?’” See fuller discussion at Acts 9:23–25.

550. Dollar, *Exploration*, 163–64.

551. Paul started to speak but was unable to in Acts 18:14. If we count the promise more widely, there are many other “officials” (e.g., 4:8).

552. As often noted; e.g., Thomas, “Worshipping,” 130.

553. On δεῖν in this context, see comment on Acts 9:6. The term functions as a rhetorical authenticating device in Luke-Acts, invoking divine necessity (Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 185–212), and is especially helpful when—as here—the narrative would seem improbable (Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 97, noting parallels in other literature). Paul’s subsequent sufferings are neither divine judgment nor an accident, despite his detractors, but belong to God’s plan, as part of his call.

554. Also Tannehill, *Acts*, 114. On parallel figures in Luke-Acts, see the discussion in the commentary introduction (Keener, *Acts*, 1:555–62).

giving up life (Luke 9:23; 14:26; cf. 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 1:9).⁵⁵⁵ Demosthenes at the end of his life allegedly lamented that if he had known the sufferings entailed in public service, he would have preferred death to public service (Plut. *Demosth.* 26.5); Paul, however, knows the cost from the start. Having deeply repented (cf. Acts 9:9) for having persecuted God's people (9:4–5), he now is committed to do whatever necessary to promote the truth (cf. Gal 1:23). Some later rabbis recognized that the prophetic calling necessarily included a call to suffer.⁵⁵⁶

Luke's narratives of Paul's sufferings probably serve the same basic function as the suffering catalogues in the Corinthian correspondence and in stories of philosophers: they portray one whose character has been tested and comports with his teaching.⁵⁵⁷ A sage's sufferings tested the genuineness of his commitments (e.g., Diog. Laert. 6.2.38; 6.2.74; 6.8.100). Luke is not arguing that Paul now experiences punishment for his past misdeeds, but there does remain an irony in the persecutor now joining the ranks of the persecuted.⁵⁵⁸

Excursus: Meritorious Suffering in Judaism

Among various perspectives on suffering among Luke's contemporaries was a view that it was meritorious, a view that some members of Luke's real audience may have connected with this passage (though it is by no means clear that Luke envisioned the point so narrowly).

Judaism, especially in its later, rabbinic form, developed the idea of meritorious suffering.⁵⁵⁹ In earlier texts, God punished his people when they sinned, lest the judgment build up against them as among other nations that would be destroyed (2 Macc 6:13–17). The righteous are grateful for the Lord's discipline because it is only for a time (*Pss. Sol.* 3:3–4; cf. 13:8); God blesses them by disciplining them to turn them from sin (10:1–3).⁵⁶⁰ God punished his own people Israel for their sins so they might be forgiven in the end (2 *Bar.* 13:9–10). The same sort of ideas apparently existed at Qumran.⁵⁶¹

Later, in the rabbis, Israel's sufferings drew God's attention and favor.⁵⁶² Sufferings,

555. Thus Paul's Roman custody should not be used to discredit his mission, a recurrent point in Luke's larger apologetic for the Gentile mission (cf., e.g., Keener, "Apologetic").

556. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:560.

557. See most fully Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, passim.

558. For such a turn from a literary perspective, cf., e.g., Joseph adding silver to the sacks of his brothers who sold him for silver (Gen 42:35; 44:1–2) or testing how they will respond to the enslaving of Rachel's other son (44:17), inviting them to believe that God is exposing their sin (42:28; 43:23; 44:16). Paul comes close to suffering for the same charges as Stephen (Acts 6:13; 21:28).

559. For a survey of rabbinic texts on suffering, see, e.g., Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 541–55; also treated by many others, e.g., Marmorstein, *Names*, 60, 193; Davies, *Paul*, 262–65; Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 20, 29, 81, 111, 114–16; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:270, 445. *Pace* Urbach, Sanders, "Suffering," argues that Akiba saw suffering as, in part, punishment (cf. also Laytner, "Suffering"). See further, e.g., *b. Ber.* 63a and references below. The concept of meritorious or atoning suffering was also intelligible to Greeks (so Hengel, *Atonement*, 28).

560. God judged Israel rightly (*Pss. Sol.* 8:23–32), but Israel will not be judged at the end (8:33). After the righteous were disciplined briefly, they would receive God's benefaction (*Wis* 3:5). For earlier conceptions of suffering (linked with sin, enemies, or other sources), see Thomas, "Suffering" (esp. 759–63).

561. Cf. 1QS VIII, 4; 1QpHab VIII, 1–3; possibly 4Q183 1 II, 7 (if it means that they paid their debt of judgment by suffering).

562. E.g., *Mek. Bah.* 6.142–43 (Lauterbach, 2:247), making them beloved by God.

some opined, appeased God even more than offerings did.⁵⁶³ The sufferings of the righteous in this life often constituted their share of punishment to free them from greater punishment in the world to come.⁵⁶⁴ (The blessings of the wicked likewise compensated them in this life so that they would have no reward in the coming world.)⁵⁶⁵ Thus a wicked tax collector who had done one righteous deed received a blessing in this life before being damned, whereas a righteous man suffered in this life for his one misdeed and entered life.⁵⁶⁶ Often something belonging to a person would perish instead of the person, God counting this possession as standing for the person himself.⁵⁶⁷ Even posthumous suffering, such as the stoning of a coffin⁵⁶⁸ or the corpse's decomposition,⁵⁶⁹ could atone for sin and bring forgiveness.

Israel received God's blessings only after sufferings,⁵⁷⁰ and suffering was a special gift for Israel;⁵⁷¹ Israel was punished for its sins while other nations enjoyed comfort,⁵⁷² and Jerusalem received 90 percent of the world's suffering.⁵⁷³ Present sufferings promised rewards in the world to come;⁵⁷⁴ thus one should rejoice over suffering in this life because it produced forgiveness.⁵⁷⁵ "Beloved is suffering," said the rabbis, because God's name rested on the one who suffered.⁵⁷⁶ Thus Abraham sought affliction,⁵⁷⁷ and its increase kept the world from being punished as severely as in earlier times.⁵⁷⁸ It is said that Abraham prayed for old age to come into being, Isaac for suffering, and Jacob for sickness;⁵⁷⁹ illness was thought to purge away sin.⁵⁸⁰ It was said that Samson prayed for victory on the basis of one eye⁵⁸¹ and that the temple's destruction settled Israel's account of sin.⁵⁸² An Amora nevertheless prayed that God would forgive his sins without afflictions.⁵⁸³ Martyrs could enter the life of the coming world even without confessing their sins,⁵⁸⁴ and

563. *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.2. Such a view would have been convenient, since the temple had long since been destroyed. The death of the righteous atoned for Israel's sins no less than did Yom Kippur (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 26:11).

564. So *Sipre Deut.* 307.3.2–3; *'Abot R. Nat.* 28, 39 A; 44, §123 B; *b. Qidd.* 40b; *Šabb.* 30b; *Lev. Rab.* 27:1; 32:1; *Lam. Rab.* 3:3, §1; 3:18, §6; 3:22, §8; *Midr. Pss.* 90:11; *Tg. Qoh.* 8:14; cf. *Lev. Rab.* 9:1. This was especially the case with particularly grievous sufferings (*b. Ber. Sab.*; *'Eruv.* 41b); God was especially stringent with the very righteous (*b. B. Qam.* 50a; cf. *y. Hag.* 2:2, §5; *Sanh.* 6:6, §2), but God would reward them for their sufferings (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:2).

565. So *Sipre Deut.* 307.3.2–3; *'Abot R. Nat.* 28, 39 A; 44, §123 B; *b. Qidd.* 40b; *Šabb.* 30b; *Lev. Rab.* 27:1; *Tg. Qoh.* 8:14; cf. *Lam. Rab.* 1:5, §31.

566. So *y. Hag.* 2:2, §5; *Sanh.* 6:6, §2.

567. So *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:17.

568. E.g., *b. Ber.* 19a.

569. E.g., *b. Sanh.* 47b.

570. So *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.10; *b. Ber.* 5a; *Exod. Rab.* 1:1. For the idea that suffering was sometimes connected with the formation of a community, see Leaney, "Significance."

571. So *Exod. Rab.* 30:13.

572. *Sipre Deut.* 43.10.1.

573. *'Abot R. Nat.* 48, §132 B. But in one rabbi's opinion, the golden calf merited Israel's suffering until the resurrection (*'Abot R. Nat.* 34 A).

574. *Sipre Deut.* 310.4.1.

575. E.g., *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.5. Enduring them joyfully invites deliverance for the world (*b. Ta'an.* 8a).

576. *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.8.

577. So *Song Rab.* 3:6, §2. He suffered during circumcision to increase his reward (*Song Rab.* 4:6, §1); on Abraham's sufferings in view of future reward, see also *Midr. Pss.* 90:11.

578. *Sipre Deut.* 311.1.1.

579. So *b. Sanh.* 107b; *Gen. Rab.* 65:9; 97 MSV. The broader and earlier tradition attributed pain and sickness to Adam's sin (*L.A.E.* 30–34; *Apoc. Mos.* 5–8). Some stories toned down the effects of old age, e.g., for Jacob (*Jos. Asen.* 22:7, some mss); in *Sib. Or.* 1.299–304, there was neither old age nor sickness in the years immediately following the flood.

580. E.g., *Gen. Rab.* 62:2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 22:5.

581. So *Num. Rab.* 9:24 (saving for the coming world the reward for his other eye).

582. *Ruth Rab.* proem 7; *Lam. Rab.* 4:22, §25.

583. So *b. Ber.* 17a.

584. *Eccl. Rab.* 4:1, §1.

martyrdom could secure for righteous Gentiles a place in the world to come.⁵⁸⁵ Later, among Christians, only martyrs would sit on Christ's right; others would sit on his left.⁵⁸⁶

Already in pre-Christian sources, the sufferings of the righteous could also atone for others, bringing them various blessings. God's elect at Qumran atoned for sin by their sufferings (1QS VIII, 3–4).⁵⁸⁷ Some also pleaded that their martyrdom constitute a sacrifice to appease God's wrath and turn back his judgment on the nation as a whole.⁵⁸⁸ (A related conception is that for Israel to be forgiven, the perpetrators of heinous offenses, such as intermarriage with unconverted Gentiles, must be executed.)⁵⁸⁹ The rabbis, however, elaborated further. Even just one drop of blood from a righteous prophet atoned for all Israel.⁵⁹⁰ Thus R. Judah ha-Nasi suffered with a toothache for thirteen years because he was not kind to a calf; meanwhile no animals died in Israel, nor did any women miscarry.⁵⁹¹ Moses's death redeemed the wilderness generation for the world to come, and Hosea's father's death in exile would restore the ten tribes to the land.⁵⁹² See also comment on martyrdom and views about its atoning value at Acts 7:58–60.

Luke's view of suffering here is more closely connected with sharing Christ's sufferings (e.g., bearing the cross, Luke 9:23; 14:27), but some of these elements of ancient Jewish conceptions of sufferings may help us appreciate what some of Luke's first audience may have heard more sensitively than purely modern Western assumptions would.

III. SAUL'S RESTORATION (9:17–19A)

Ananias, one of the former objects of persecution, now comes as Jesus's agent to the former persecutor so that Saul will receive sight, be filled with the Spirit, and (assuming that Ananias shared the report of Acts 9:15–16, as 22:14–16 suggests) receive further confirmation of his calling.

(1) *Ananias's Mission (9:17)*

That Ananias went as the Lord commanded him (9:17), despite initial concerns of danger, fits repeated biblical models (e.g., Gen 12:4; Exod 4:27; Judg 6:27); the command itself is another "absurd command" (see comment on Acts 8:26; cf. 5:20). He provides a model of courage in the face of fear.⁵⁹³ Courage was one of the Aristotelian tradition's widely appropriated four virtues⁵⁹⁴ and is widely praised in ancient literature.⁵⁹⁵ Ananias's words in Acts 9:17 confirm that he believes what Jesus has told him (and that Jesus told him more than Luke narrates in his report of the vision); despite his initial objection, that he went indicates his trust, even before he can witness that Saul has been blinded. (Like some other early Christian writers, Luke often uses ἀποστέλλω for divine commissions [e.g., 7:35].)⁵⁹⁶

585. *Sipre Deut.* 307.4.2.

586. *Herm.* 1.3.2.

587. Suffering also invites God's deliverance in 1QpHab VIII, 2.

588. See 2 Macc 7:37–38 (on which see Schenker, "Martyrium"); 4 Macc 17:21–22 (on which cf. Grappe, "Intérêt"). Cf. also Thoma, "Frühjüdische Martyrer." Silberman, "Challenge," suggests that the atonement of martyrdom in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 26 may respond to Christian claims.

589. *Jub.* 30:14–17.

590. So *y. Sanh.* 11:5, §4.

591. So *y. Kil.* 9:3, §4; *Gen. Rab.* 96:5, some mss.

592. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:9.

593. See Barber, "Courage of Ananias."

594. On these, see comment on Acts 24:25, which provides references for some of these sources.

595. See comment on Acts 8:3, with a number of sources.

596. On the likely background of this concept, see Keener, *John*, 310–15.

Some scholars doubt Ananias's historical role here, pointing out that Paul received his gospel directly from Christ (Gal 1:12). But the grounds for this skepticism are problematic. Granted, Luke makes good use of Ananias's orthodoxy to connect Paul with the Jerusalem tradition (Acts 22:12), but an apostle (or other earlier-named character, such as one of the Seven) would have done better⁵⁹⁷ had Luke simply been inventing stories.⁵⁹⁸ When he focuses so much on major characters, why create a new character here who is significant only in reports of Saul's conversion? Further, Paul also has an apologetic agenda in Galatians that leads him to emphasize the independence and equality of his own revelation, playing down intermediaries.⁵⁹⁹

Ananias, however, does not in fact bring Paul the gospel here, in any case. Paul already knew something of Christian beliefs before his conversion (Acts suggests that at the least he had heard Stephen's speech, probably in addition to interrogating believers [cf. 7:58; 8:3; 9:2; 22:4; esp. 26:11]); he embraced them when confronted by the revelation in 9:5 (on the genuineness of Saul's conversion at that point, see comment on Acts 9:8). Luke claims that Ananias learns of Paul's calling (9:15), but Luke also claims that Paul learned of it directly from the Lord (26:16–18).⁶⁰⁰ In Acts as well as in Galatians, Paul can omit Ananias from the testimony (26:18–19). Ananias's role is to confirm the vision, reverse the blindness, and offer baptism, not to supplant direct revelation.

(2) Filled with the Spirit (9:17)

That Paul should be "filled with the Spirit" here is critical for his mission both from the standpoint of Luke's portrayal (cf. 1:8; 13:4, 9, 52; 16:6–7; 19:6)⁶⁰¹ and from Paul's own (cf. Rom 15:16, 19; 1 Cor 2:4; 7:40; 2 Cor 3:3–18; Gal 3:2–5; Eph 3:5; 1 Thess 1:5).⁶⁰² Whether the laying on of hands here is intended to confer healing (as in Luke 4:40; 5:13; 13:13),⁶⁰³ the Spirit (as in Acts 8:17; 19:6), or both is debated, but given the laying on of hands for initial reception of the Spirit in most cases of such reception that were anticipated (i.e., except 2:4; 10:44) and the possible symbolic imparting of a fuller dimension of the Spirit in 6:6, the Spirit is probably at least part of the reason for laying on hands here. If the recent impartation of God's Spirit through the apostles' hands to the Samaritans would have seemed astonishing to outsiders, this impartation through an otherwise obscure believer to the movement's best-known persecutor would have appeared more so!

Did Paul have a glossolalic experience at this time, as reported in 2:4, 10:47, and 19:6? Some scholars infer that he did.⁶⁰⁴ From his own writings we know that he did

597. Pace Fitzmyer, "Role of Spirit," 182, an apostle is not always present. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 20 (Martin, *Acts*, 107) also notes that a nonapostle lays hands on Paul, suggesting that this is to humble Paul (plausible, though no apostles were in Damascus, in any case), but he doubts that Paul was filled with the *signs-working* Spirit at this point.

598. Paul's point in Galatians may be especially the lack of *apostolic* mediation (Gal 1:12; 2:6–9), as often noted (e.g., D. Williams, *Acts*, 173). Moreover, Gal 1:12 speaks of the origin of Paul's *gospel*, which he may have received by revelation on the Damascus road (implicit in the experience of Acts 9:4–6; see Kim, *Origin*; cf. idem, *New Perspective*, 4, 165–74; Bruce, *Apostle*, 80), whereas Acts 9:15 refers to confirmation of Paul's calling (Witherington, *Acts*, 314).

599. Given the Twelve's year or more of discipleship with Jesus, Paul's claims in this regard probably were a "hard sell," except perhaps among his own circle.

600. Noted also by Witherington, *Acts*, 314.

601. The Spirit is not mentioned with special frequency in Paul's ministry in Acts but appears in most of the crucial turning points in his ministry there (Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 93–94).

602. Fee, "Conversion," connects the centrality of the Spirit in Paul's theology with his dynamic conversion encounter with Christ. (On the Spirit in Paul, see, e.g., Fee, *Presence*; Paige, "Spirit").

603. See Hull, *Spirit in Acts*, 102–3; Turner, *Power*, 376–77. With blindness, cf. Mark 8:23, though Luke omits that story (cf. Luke 18:42).

604. E.g., Arrington, *Acts*, 100.

pray in tongues, even more than most glossolalists in Corinth (1 Cor 14:18), as well as engaged in what we might call mystical experiences (2 Cor 5:12; 12:1–4). Because we have tentatively located Luke’s audience especially in Achaia and (most directly) Macedonia, we would expect both Luke and much of his audience to be aware of Paul’s experience, especially if Paul was the one who first informed Corinthians about the gift (as is likely).

Given Luke’s emphasis on tongues as a sign of cross-cultural empowerment, however, it may appear surprising if this experience happened to his apostle to the Gentiles already on this occasion and Luke does not pause to record it here.⁶⁰⁵ One might thus surmise that (from a historical standpoint) Paul’s practice of tongues began on a later occasion. We cannot, however, argue too much from Luke’s abbreviated narrative; he narrates not even Paul’s reception of the Spirit, for whatever reasons, but only his baptism (Acts 9:18).⁶⁰⁶ Moreover, Luke hardly needs to narrate here what he employs elsewhere as a sign of cross-cultural empowerment (see discussion at Acts 2:4); Paul is his example par excellence of the Gentile mission, and so those who read about his being “filled with the Spirit” can infer that he certainly did receive cross-cultural empowerment.

This text is one locus for the debate as to whether baptism in the Spirit can occur subsequent to conversion.⁶⁰⁷ In contrast to 8:15–17, however, this text is less relevant for the debate; the expression “filled with the Spirit” appears for subsequent empowerments of the Spirit as well as “initial” ones (4:8, 31; 13:9). It may have some bearing (as an “initial” experience) because it is the first mention of the Spirit in connection with Paul. But would this mean, as some argue, that Paul was fully converted only here?

Part of the answer depends on what we mean by “conversion”; he recognized and submitted to Jesus’s authority (9:5–6, 8), deeply repented (9:9), and apparently continued to receive and submit to revelations from Christ (9:12). He had not, however, undergone the official early Christian act of conversion in baptism (9:18).⁶⁰⁸ We might argue whether he had experienced spiritual regeneration or forensic justification before his baptism, but these are largely Pauline or Johannine categories, not Luke’s own. Luke speaks of Spirit empowerment primarily in terms of empowerment for mission (1:8), not regeneration.⁶⁰⁹

605. One could argue that, like some other historians, Luke plays down this element so as not to offend rationalistic readers (tongues perhaps being a specially offensive category, cf. 1 Cor 14:23); but Luke does not mind reporting miraculous phenomena even for Paul (and his summary of tongues experiences is also more positive than Paul’s assessment of the Corinthian practice).

606. It is possible that the experiences were simultaneous, which might be Luke’s ideal (Acts 2:38). The way the narrative reads, Paul may have even received the Spirit before baptism, as in 10:44–47 (cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 201n36), but Luke has so compressed the action that one cannot be sure (cf. Acts 22:16). In any case, Luke reports Ananias’s mission, which includes that Paul will be filled (9:17), and presumably expects his audience to understand this mission as fulfilled (Escobedo, “Lens,” 142).

607. In favor, see, e.g., Franklin, “Spirit-Baptism”; Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation*; Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 148–50; Miller, *Empowered for Mission*, 168; against, see esp. Dunn, *Baptism*, 38–102, for Acts (90–102 for summary; 73–78 on Acts 9).

608. Turner, *Power*, 375, also concedes “that Paul had probably come to christological faith” but argues that “his conversional *commitment* was yet to be formalised in baptism”; see esp. Acts 22:16.

609. See the commentary introduction (Keener, *Acts*, 1:520–24; some early Jewish sources associate the Spirit with purification [532–34], but most with inspiration [534–37]). In contrast to Acts 1:8, this passage does not specify the purpose, but it may be inferred (in conjunction with 1:8) in its proximity to Paul’s call (9:15) and perhaps also his quickly subsequent activity in 9:20 (cf. Miller, *Empowered for Mission*, 173). That Luke’s reports occasionally deviate chronologically from his own pattern in Acts 2:38 (see comment on Acts 8:14–17) does suggest a distinction between ontology and official pronouncement, the former potentially preceding the latter. (Thus, in the language of other early Christian theology, Paul may have already been “regenerated” by faith.) But this is incidental to his interest and not primary.

Had Luke framed Paul's experience in such terms, we might view his initial salvific faith as preceding the baptism and filling by a few days. But the modern debate (and distinction between initial and subsequent fillings) may try too hard to formalize Luke's categories; for Luke, the more central emphasis was that disciples depend on the Spirit, not how many encounters with the Spirit they ought to have (perhaps the more the better, at least when needed). Insofar as we are concerned with the question, however, Paul's being filled with the Spirit here, a charismatic-prophetic empowerment, is associated not with his conversion but with equipping for his call.

(3) "Brother" Saul (9:17)

Part of the debate about the timing of Paul's conversion has hinged on what Ananias means by "brother."⁶¹⁰ Insofar as ancient Mediterranean society was group oriented,⁶¹¹ close bonds within groups would lend themselves to fictive kinship ties.⁶¹² (Thus, for example, one could think of an older woman affectionately as "mother.")⁶¹³ The concept of fictive kinship is widely recognized in anthropological literature.⁶¹⁴ Patterns of such language vary throughout the world.⁶¹⁵ In one culture, children may call their mother "sister" if they all live with her parents;⁶¹⁶ a people might employ one kind of language for biological relationships to designate another;⁶¹⁷ many societies apply sibling language to certain parallel cousins;⁶¹⁸ in some societies spouses apply sibling terms for each other;⁶¹⁹ and so forth. In many cultures those who describe others with kinship terms feel as close to them as to natural kin.⁶²⁰

Central as sibling language is to Pauline ethics,⁶²¹ kinship language was in no wise "uniquely Christian."⁶²² Literal genetic brotherhood created special bonds,⁶²³ making it

610. This is too much theology to have depend on such a debatable point, but Luke provides us few other clues; answering such later theological questions, important as they might appear to us, was not his agenda.

611. Malina and Neyrey, *Portraits*, 154–69.

612. See *ibid.*, 160–61; cf. Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 189; *idem*, *Letters*, 362–63. For documentation of fictive kinship language in the papyri, see Dickey, "Terms"; for extension of kinship language to more distant kin, see, e.g., Hierocles *Siblings* (Stobaeus *Anth.* 4.84.23).

613. See Lucian *Lucius* 4; *Gen. Rab.* 47:3; Rom 16:13 (on which cf., e.g., Theodoret of Cyr *Interp. Rom.* on Rom 16:13; IER, Migne PG 82 col. 221; Bray, *Romans*, 374); cf. 1 Tim 5:2; Horsley, *Documents*, 4:34, §9; for unofficial adoptive relationships, see, e.g., Virg. *Aen.* 9.297; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 2.20; John 19:26; for respected public titles, Hemelrijk, "Kinship."

614. Though some conclusions drawn from this terminology are debated (e.g., Nerlove and Romney, "Sibling Terminology"; Faris, "Sibling Terminology"; on such terminology producing transference, cf. Hsu, "Effect").

615. E.g., Murdock, "Patterns"; Vatuk, "Reference"; cf. Barnard, "Universal Systems." In my wife's culture, young children respectfully call mothers, maternal aunts, and other close caregivers "mothers," distinguishing them each by their given name (e.g., "Mama Médine"), though there is no doubt as to who is the actual mother.

616. Buchler and Selby, *Kinship*, 35 (in the Cayman Islands).

617. Cook, "Conversion," 195.

618. E.g., Fields and Merrifield, "Kinship," 27.

619. Haas, "Sibling Terms" (on southeast Asia; this is a generational description [232] and only in a rare society produces confusion [234]); cf. Song 4:9; Tob 5:20; 8:4, 7; *Jub.* 27:14, 17; Ovid *Metam.* 1.351 (but she was his cousin); Sen. *Y. Phaed.* 611; P.Oxy. 528.1–2; 744.1; P.Hamb. 86.2; PSI 209.1; also Egyptian love songs in ANET 467–69 (although, in some of the Egyptian sources, the sibling terminology may well reflect genetic reality).

620. E.g., Ballweg, "Extensions."

621. See Aasgaard, "Role Ethics"; Tonlieu, "Family"; Horrell, "Ἀδελφοί" (esp. on the undisputed Paulines); Paddock, "Family Language" (contrasting Paul with Plutarch and others); cf. Bony, "Ecclesiologie, II"; *idem*, "Ecclesiologie, III" (kinship language); Taylor, "Reciprocity" (inviting a sibling kind of love). Lucian *Peregr.* 13 mocks Christians for following Jesus's "sibling" teachings and hence sharing possessions.

622. Pace Witherington, *Corinthians*, 92 (on the uniqueness of Christian usage of kinship for shared faith). "Beloved brother" may have originally developed from Christian usage (Nobbs, "Brothers," esp. 150).

623. E.g., Xen. *Mem.* 2.3.4; Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 100.3–16; deSilva, *Honor*, 166–70 (citing esp. Arist. *N.E.* 8.12.3, 1161b 30–35; Plut. *Br. Love* 1, 2, *Mor.* 478CD, 479A, 480BC); in practice, see Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 19

ideal as a figure for other close relationships. Thus intimate friends were like brothers.⁶²⁴ For example, in one letter of recommendation, Cicero urges, “I love Pomponius Atticus as a second brother.”⁶²⁵ Likewise, Ahiqar tells a friend that he cares for him the way one “would care for his own brother.”⁶²⁶ Just as friendship language was employed in military alliances, allies⁶²⁷ sometimes used the language of brotherhood.⁶²⁸ Mystery cults spoke of co-initiates as “brothers”;⁶²⁹ the language was also common in many other associations.⁶³⁰ Greek intellectuals spoke of all humanity,⁶³¹ or at least one’s fellow citizens,⁶³² as sharing kinship on a general level.⁶³³

Sharing common character and conviction also created fictive kinship.⁶³⁴ Such titles designated affection:⁶³⁵ one could love those with whom one grew up as one’s sisters;⁶³⁶ one could generously display affection by means of the term “brother” even to a stranger to whom one wished to show hospitality.⁶³⁷ More important here is that Jewish people could address fellow Jews as brothers.⁶³⁸ As rabbis called their masters “fathers” and their disciples “children,”⁶³⁹ they naturally could call another rabbi “brother.”⁶⁴⁰

Outside the vocative, Luke usually uses the term technically to refer to believers (e.g., 1:14–15; 9:30; 10:23; 11:1, 12, 29; 12:17; 15:1, 3, 22–23, 32–33, 40; 18:18, 27; 21:7, 17; 28:14–15), including new believers (14:2; 15:36; 16:2, 40; 17:6, 10,

(citing *CIL* 6.9868, 12564, 22423); cf. affectionate amplification of kinship language in Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.3.3, 10; fictive kinship language in Diod. Sic. 17.37.6.

624. E.g., Eurip. *Iph. Taur.* 497–98; Plut. *Many Friends* 2, *Mor.* 93E; Pliny *Ep.* 7.23.1; Marc. Aur. 1.14. According to many ancient Mediterranean ideals, a brother was better than a good friend (Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 100.6–8; but contrast Prov 18:24; 27:10). But evidence for a suggested practice of formal “brother” adoptions (especially in an erotic context) is at best quite sparse in the Roman period (Shaw, “Brotherhood”).

625. Cic. *Fam.* 13.1.5 (LCL, 3:13). Symmachus employs “brother” for friends abundantly, often in letters of recommendation (*Ep.* 1.28; 1.43; 1.63; 1.70; 1.90.1; 1.91; 1.94).

626. *Ahiq.* 49, col. 4 (*OTP* 2:496). Cf. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 62, commenting on ZPE 22 (1976): 51 (a late second-century C.E. papyrus): “Since brother is often used loosely for friends it is impossible to determine the exact relationship with certainty.” It appears in a loose, nonfamilial, and nonreligious sense in Egypt (e.g., *CPJ* 3:41, §479, third or fourth century C.E.; cf. “sister” as wife in Egypt, in sources noted above).

627. Or potential allies (cf. 1 Kgs 20:32–33; 1 Macc 10:18).

628. 1 Macc 12:6, 10, 21; 14:20, 40. Curty, “Parenté,” suggests that the language might stem from the ambiguity of the Hebrew term for “brother” as “relative” (comparing 2 Macc 5:9), but it makes sense on Greek premises also. For ancient Near Eastern application to fellow kings, see, e.g., 1 Kgs 20:32; kings writing to Pharaoh in Pfeiffer, *Tell el Amarna*, 45–46.

629. Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 45 (citing Andocides *Myst.* 132; Plato *Ep.* 7.333E; Plut. *Dion* 56; Sopatros [*Rhet. Gr.* 8:123, line 26]); Deissmann, *Studies*, 87–88. Cf. συνετελέσθην in Dio Chrys. *Ep.* 5, to Sabinianus, for “co-initiated.”

630. Harland, *Associations*, 31–33; idem, “Dimensions”; for parental language, idem, “Mothers’ and Fathers.”

631. Diod. Sic. 1.1.3; Libanius *Anecdote* 2.2 (Diogenes); Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 44.

632. Men. *Rhet.* 2.4, 394.21–23.

633. Zeno held that only “the good” (the wise) were relatives (Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 74–75, citing Diog. Laert. 7.32–34); but in general, members of Greek philosophic schools tended to relate to each other more in the language of friendship than in that of kinship (Stowers, “Resemble Philosophy?” 100).

634. DeSilva, *Honor*, 194 (citing esp. 4 Macc 13:24–26; Philo *Virt.* 195; *Spec. Laws* 1.316–17).

635. Affection, not equality (i.e., not contradicting authority in the community; Clarke, “Brother,” 156–58; idem, *Leadership*, 93). Papyri often use it unequally (e.g., an older brother as “my lord brother,” 158–60), and Plutarch’s *On Brotherly Love* emphasizes loving despite inequality (160–63); thus “brotherly love is concerned with mutuality, rather than equality” (164).

636. *Jos. Asen.* 17:4.

637. *Test. Ab.* 2:5 B.

638. Tob 5:10; 6:10; 7:3; 2 Macc 1:1; 1QS VI, 22; 1QSa I, 18; 1QM XIII, 1; XV, 4; fellow Essenes in Hippol. *Ref.* 9.15. Cf. Skemp, “Ἀδελφός,” who argues that sibling language in Tobit supports endogamy within Judaism and one’s kin group.

639. E.g., *Sipre Deut.* 34.3.1–3, 5; 305.3.4; cf. 4 *Bar.* 7:24; Porph. *Marc.* 1.6–8; see further Keener, *John*, 922.

640. *Sipre Deut.* 34.5.3; *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 18a, bar.

14), though he recognizes that this pattern is based on Jewish usage for fellow Jews (22:5; 28:21). That the use for fellow Christians and (especially when addressing crowds) fellow Jews is so similar merely emphasizes how little the later separation between “Israel” and “church” should be read back into Luke.

What does the term mean in 9:17? It could simply mean “fellow Jew,” as often in the vocative (2:29, 37; 3:17; 7:2; 13:15, 26, 38; 22:1; 23:1, 5, 6; 28:17);⁶⁴¹ but Luke applies this title to non-Christian Jews especially for addressing large audiences (except in traditional material in Luke 6:41–42; plus this use also applies to Christian audiences),⁶⁴² and it hardly fits the intensity of the encounter for Luke’s audience in Acts 9.⁶⁴³ Although “brother” has many possible senses and the ethnic sense remains possible here, probably Ananias comes as one with whom Paul shares the faith (Luke 8:21; 14:26; 22:32), on the basis of what Jesus has told him (Acts 9:11–16; cf. 22:14–16).⁶⁴⁴ Ananias is thus welcoming explicitly a fellow believer who needs to hear this affirmation.

(4) *Saul’s Sight Restored (9:17–18)*

Restoration of his sight provides Saul a further confirmation in addition to the paired visions concerning Ananias’s mission to him (9:10, 12).⁶⁴⁵ The healing of blindness appears on other occasions in Luke-Acts, by chance all referring to Jesus’s ministry (Luke 4:18; 7:21–22; 18:42–43). The restoration of sight to one who has learned his lesson resembles the restoration of Zechariah’s speech in Luke 1:64.⁶⁴⁶ Jesus’s mission includes sight to the blind (e.g., Luke 18:42–43), especially in the Isaian messianic summaries (4:18; 7:22). Luke can also employ this imagery to challenge the spiritually blind (Q material in 6:39–42).⁶⁴⁷

Ancients frequently believed that, under extraordinary circumstances, blind persons could be supernaturally healed;⁶⁴⁸ thus some contended that Isis both cured eye diseases and made blind,⁶⁴⁹ and in a list of healings at Epidaurus, the lame and blind appear in a summary (perhaps as the most dramatic of cures).⁶⁵⁰ In a later report, some Brahmans healed a man whose eyes had been put out (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.39). The Jesus tradition multiply attests reports that Jesus healed some blind people;⁶⁵¹ there the opening of blind eyes, like the healing of the lame, is a sign of the messianic era (Isa 35:5–6; Luke 7:22).

641. So Dunn, *Baptism*, 74.

642. In Acts 1:16; 6:3; 15:7, 13; it applies to Jewish audiences more only because they are addressed more frequently. But these references are so much like other addresses to Jews that we might translate “friends,” “comrades,” not yet pressing the distinction between “Jews” and “disciples, whether Gentiles or Jews,” too far. In any case, vocative addresses to crowds differ from the affectionate personal address to a fellow believer (Acts 21:20).

643. The same cannot be pressed for Paul’s recounting of the same story for a mostly non-Christian Jewish audience in Acts 22:13.

644. With, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 104.

645. On the signs confirming the message in Luke-Acts, see 4:29–30; 14:3; further discussion in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:542–44, 546–49.

646. Such a loosening of the tongue could constitute a sign to Israel, as in Ezek 24:26–27. The loosening of the tongue in 1 En. 106:3, 11 is of the infant Noah; Aesop’s muteness is healed in *Vit. Aes.* 6–8.

647. Tabitha’s eyes were “opened” in resuscitation (Acts 9:40), an event that could also generate symbolic analogies, but the connection is probably too tenuous to suggest a deliberate narrative connection.

648. Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 170–71, cites, e.g., Tob 11:10–14; *SIG* 1173.15–18; *SIG* 3.1168; see also *IG* 4.951.120–21 (quoted in Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 212). Some Jews believed that Amorite precious stones could give sight to the blind (*L.A.B.* 25:12).

649. Horsley, *Documents*, 1:15, §2.

650. Epid. inscr. 4 (Grant, *Religions*, 57). In Epid. inscr. 4, Asclepius cuts open an eye and pours in medicine; in inscr. 9, he again opens eyes and pours in medicine.

651. Also Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 170, citing Mark, John, and Q (the Matthean summary and uniquely Markan examples that he cites do not add to these).

In later centuries, reports of blindness being supernaturally healed continue in a wide range of sources.⁶⁵² Today such reports continue to remain common, especially in much of the Majority World, where medical treatment by Western means is often less available.⁶⁵³ In some cases I know the eyewitnesses personally.⁶⁵⁴ Such claims also occur in the West.⁶⁵⁵ Some of these phenomena seem difficult to explain on naturalistic terms, but explaining them is beside the point here. More critical for NT scholars is to note that such phenomena are widely claimed by firsthand sources and hence it is not imperative to deny the possibility of firsthand claims for such phenomena in the first century, however we may choose to explain them.⁶⁵⁶

Luke's description of the healing (Acts 9:18)⁶⁵⁷ fits ancient medical texts, although it is by no means limited to them; from both medical and other literature, one gathers that the "scales" were something like a scab. Hippocrates once uses *λεπίς* to describe the removal of a "scab, caused by burning in a medical operation, from the eyelid."⁶⁵⁸ Luke's audience might think most naturally of the imagery in the story of Tobit, whose eyes had been "whitened" with blindness (Tob 2:10); there the angel Raphael came to "scale away" (*λεπίσαι*) the whiteness, or film (3:17). After Tobit's son Tobias anointed his eyes, he rubbed them (11:11–12), and the whiteness "scaled" (*ἐλεπίσθη*) from his

652. See here discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 511–14.

653. E.g., Brown, Mory, Williams, and McClymond, "Effects" (providing medical documentation; see further Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 194–233); Ramirez, "Faiths," 94–95; Ma, "Vanderbout," 130, 132; idem, "Encounter," 137; Castleberry, "Impact," 108, 112; Wiyono, "Revival," 286; Sung, *Diaries* (mostly in 1930s China), 28, 36, 56, 111 (multiple cases), 116 (multiple cases), 153 (a girl in Singapore), 158 (multiple cases), 161 (four cases); Harris, *Acts Today*, 22–23; Menberu, "Mekonnen Negera" (in Ethiopia); Negash, "Demelash" (in Ethiopia, 1991); De Wet, "Signs," 93–94 (in the Ivory Coast, 1973), 94–96 (in South Africa), 104 (in Argentina), 121–23 (in Indonesia); Protus, "Latunde" (after fasting, as here, and washing with water, as in John 9:7); idem, "Chukwu" (healed from blindness after a priest sprinkled on him consecrated water); Chavda, *Miracle*, 122–23 (a seventy-year-old woman, healed completely on her seventh, persistent entreaty); Baker and Baker, *Enough*, 145, 169, 174, 182 (with further accounts of eyes white with blindness changing color as they were being healed, 76, 171–72, 173; idem, *Miracles*, 189); idem, *Miracles*, 8, 39–40, 68, 78 (often), 108, 113, 159, 160, 192, 193 (partial healing); Chevreau, *Turnings*, 19, 166–67 (partial damage); Clark, *Impartation*, 21 (tunnel vision), 121, 125, 133, 166, 169 (several), 211 (six instances, including one case where new corneas and pupils were formed); idem, *Mind*, 53 (also [36] healing of lesser visionary impairment, so that glasses were not needed); Wagner, *Acts*, 202. (I recognize that not quite all the above locations are Majority World or are weak in medical resources.) See further discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 514–20 (and for the West, 521–22).

654. E.g., Bungishabaku Katho (university president, Democratic Republic of Congo), interview, March 12, 2009; Flint McGlaughlin (Director of Enterprise Research at the Transforming Business Institute, Cambridge University), personal correspondence, Feb. 6–7, 2009 (on an event in India also attested by Robin Shields, personal correspondence, Feb. 7, 8, 2009); Gebru Woldu (Ethiopia), interview, May 20, 2010; Gary A. Dickinson (Congo), personal correspondence, June 3, 2010. Other interviews include Chester Allan Tesoro (Philippines), interview, Jan. 30, 2009; Bruce Collins (concerning an experience in Kenya), phone interview, April 11, 2009; Jacob Beera (India), personal correspondence, Nov. 2, 2009; for a nonblindness eye condition, Joy Wahnefried (United States), personal correspondence, Nov. 4, 5, 6, 8, 20, 26, 2009 (with documentation dated June 8, 2006; Oct. 16, 2009; cf. Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 129–31). Cf. Keener, *Miracles*, 752–56.

655. Parker, "Suffering," 216 (a firsthand account); Gardner, *Healing Miracles*, 31–35 (where the sight returned to better than its pre-accident state, 34; cf. also the medically inexplicable disappearance of a scar in the eye, 15); Harris, *Acts Today*, 8, 18, 28–29, 47–49, 82, 159–60; Jackson, *Quest*, 254–55; cf. cataracts in Ogilbee and Riess, *Pilgrimage*, 43; historically, Duffin, *Miracles*, 61.

656. This is intended as an argument against the a priori assumption that such claims can never stem from eyewitnesses, not an argument against specific literary claims as to whether a particular healing claim is traditional or redactional.

657. Luke's "like [*ὡς*] scales" fits his usual historical caution (cf., e.g., Luke 3:22; 10:18); similes (e.g., 11:44; 17:6) were common enough in ancient literature and rhetoric (see, in some detail, Anderson, *Glossary*, 79–81).

658. Hobart, *Medical Language*, 38–39, noting this use for the verb and also the more regular use of *λεπίς* for scales or particles falling off the body in skin diseases (cf. "leprosy"). Cf. also *squama* in eyes in Pliny E. N.H. 29.8.21 (Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 429). Hartsock, *Sight*, 191–92, notes that the language is not specifically medical (preferring dragon associations, 192–95).

eyes (11:12 LXX).⁶⁵⁹ Medically, if the text refers to something like actual scales, it could involve “the crusts of dried secretion” building up around his eyes while he was blind.⁶⁶⁰

(5) *Saul’s Baptism and Restoration (9:18–19a)*

Saul “rises” and is baptized,⁶⁶¹ fitting the instructions in Acts 22:16 (as if Luke knows a fuller conversion narrative—whether written or, more likely, oral—but parcels out different elements of it to different locations). Damascus offered an abundance of locations for baptisms, regardless of the physical or volitional availability of any Jewish mikvaot.⁶⁶² Perhaps the most obvious location is the river Barada, which runs east-west through Damascus, close to Straight Street.⁶⁶³

For taking food when encouraged (as often in ancient texts, e.g., *y. Ber.* 2:7, §3), cf. also Acts 27:36. As here, eating offers strength (cf. Acts 27:33–34; 1 Sam 14:29–30). Yet Paul’s taking food here also signifies something further. Food connotes fellowship in Luke-Acts, including with Gentiles (Acts 11:3); that others eat with Paul indicates their new relationship as siblings in Christ (cf. 9:17).

2. Saul Begins Ministry and Faces Conflict (9:19b–31)

In 9:19–30, Luke offers a first sample of Saul’s controversial ministry. As predicted (9:16), the converted persecutor faces persecution. He faces opposition from his own people in both Damascus (9:19b–25) and Jerusalem (9:26–30). In both cases, his fellow Jewish followers of Jesus help him escape.

a. *Opposition to Ministry in Damascus (9:19b–25)*

On Damascus, see comment on Acts 9:2. From Paul’s writings, we gather that Luke omits most details concerning a formative period in Paul’s life here, a period that Luke, if he knows of it, might consider less strictly relevant to Paul’s call to the Gentiles. Nevertheless, Luke preserves enough of the details to provide a fitting parallel between Jesus and his apostle to the Gentiles. If we compare the programmatic scene of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus faces similar opposition. Witherington sketches out the parallels:⁶⁶⁴

Jesus in Luke 4:16–30	Paul in Acts 9:20–25
Opens ministry with a message in a synagogue	Opens ministry with messages in synagogues
Audience is astonished (4:22)	Audience is astonished (9:21)
Is this not the son of Joseph? (4:22)	Is this not the one who opposed Christians? (9:21)
Jesus escapes violent response (4:28–30)	Paul escapes violent response (9:22–25)

659. Tob 11:13 in the NRSV. Most recognize the imagery of Tobit here (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 104; Haenchen, *Acts*, 325; Bruce, *Commentary*, 201n35; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 429). The LXX elsewhere uses the noun for scales (Lev 11:9–12; Deut 14:9–10) and the verb for peeling back (Gen 30:37–38) or prying loose (1 Macc 1:22).

660. Wilkinson, *Healing*, 159.

661. Some have argued that Paul was a special case, remaining unbaptized like the first apostles, and that Luke demotes him and separates him from the first apostles by giving him subsequent believers’ baptism (see discussion in Fuller, “Baptized”), but this view, though not historically impossible (given the not unexpected silence of Paul’s letters on the subject), dismisses Luke’s testimony on the basis of the weakest of speculations. Paul was a subsequent believer and would hardly have been treated differently.

662. Our most abundant evidence for mikvaot is from Jewish Palestine, and Acts 9:20–23 does not suggest that they would have been available for Paul’s immersion as a member of the Jesus movement, in any case.

663. On this river, see, e.g., Finegan, *Apostles*, 58 (noting that the oldest part of Damascus lay on the river’s south side, in what is the southeastern part of the modern city).

664. Witherington, *Acts*, 320. See further Neiryneck, “Luke 4,16–30,” 359–63.

The specific component of opposition to ministry to the Gentiles, though important in Luke 4:25–27, is not repeated here, whether because Luke will treat it later (Acts 22:21–22) or because he simply had no historical tradition that Paul made an issue of his calling to Gentiles at this point.⁶⁶⁵

I. COMPARING PAUL AND LUKE

Although they write from quite different perspectives (making Luke’s dependence on Galatians here doubtful), the autobiographic *narratio* of one of Paul’s own letters confirms the outline of Luke’s account here, casting light on the accuracy of Luke’s sources even this early in Paul’s career. Despite differences in detail (noted in comments on verses in Acts), this passage (and some that follow) comports well with the one passage offered in Paul’s letters that provides a secure, extended chronological sequence for his life (the events whose sequence is explicit or strongly implied specifically in Gal 1–2 are asterisked):

Event in Galatians	Gal 1:17–2:1 (and other epistles fitting Galatians’ chronology)	Acts 9:19–30; 15:2 (Acts 9:27 presumably corresponds with Gal 1:18–19)
*Paul persecuted Christians	Gal 1:13–14; cf. 1 Cor 15:9; Phil 3:6; 1 Tim 1:13	Acts 7:58; 8:1–3; 9:1–2
*Conversion near the city of Damascus	Gal 1:17 (implied)	Acts 9:3, 19
*Conversion through encountering the risen Christ	Gal 1:12; cf. 1:15–16; 1 Cor 15:8	Acts 9:3–6
*Time in Arabia	Gal 1:17; cf. 2 Cor 11:32	—
*Damascus three years later	Gal 1:17	Acts 9:23 (“many days later”)
Escapes Damascus, let down in a basket from the wall	2 Cor 11:32–33	Acts 9:25
*Visits Jerusalem	Gal 1:18–19	Acts 9:26–29
*Syro-Cilicia	Gal 1:21	Acts 9:30 (Caesarea, probably briefly; Tarsus); 11:26; 13:1 (Syrian Antioch)
Syrian Antioch as Paul’s home base (or at least a place where his ministry is accepted on a par with Peter’s)	Cf. Gal 1:21; Gal 2:11 (Paul a well-known minister in Antioch)	Acts 11:26; 13:1; 14:26; 15:22–23, 30, 35; 18:22
Evangelism in and near the southern part of the province of Galatia	Gal 4:13–14; cf. 1 Cor 16:1; cities in 2 Tim 3:11	Acts 13:14–14:24
Troubles with Judaizers in Antioch	Gal 2:11–14 (by implication; this event probably occurs after 2:1–10)	Acts 15:1–2
*Return to Jerusalem after fourteen years’ absence†	Gal 2:1	Acts 15:2 (some scholars prefer Acts 11:30)

† Riesner, *Early Period*, 232 (noting that the Antioch incident of Gal 2:11–12 could be chronologically before the Jerusalem Council of Gal 2:1–10 but that this is debated; Paul is certainly in Antioch earlier, Acts 11:26; 13:1; 14:26).

From Paul’s writings we learn that Luke compresses the narrative here so as to omit parts of three years (a total of one to three years) of events not relevant to his story (if Luke knew of this period). Such compression or omission was acceptable historical and rhetorical practice.⁶⁶⁶ Luke’s narrower purpose and theme do not allow

665. Since Paul was addressing synagogues initially (Acts 9:20), he had no reason to raise the Gentile issue unless he specifically wished to provoke hostility; his claims about Jesus would prove controversial enough here. His commitments apparently develop by 22:21.

666. See Satterthwaite, “Acts,” 345 (citing esp. Lucian *Hist.* 56–57; cf. also *Hist.* 27–28; Cic. *De or.* 3.27.104–5; 53.202–3; Quint. *Inst.* 8.4; Longin. *Subl.* 11–12). The concise summary in Libanius *Narration*

space to narrate every detail of Paul's life, even if he knew all of it.⁶⁶⁷ Some scholars have also argued plausibly that Luke simply did not know of this period and that unlike hagiographers a century later, he omitted, rather than invented, what he did not know.⁶⁶⁸ (Oral history always leaves large gaps; this is the nature of oral history, and omission is much better historiography, by modern standards, than fabricating data to fill such gaps would be.)⁶⁶⁹ More often Luke provides us details missing in Paul's letters, but the reverse is true in this instance.

What Luke omits is not, strictly speaking, part of the "teaching" of Acts to which a commentary must attend, but because Acts is a historical monograph (and because commentaries on Acts also serve those interested more generally in the history of early Christianity), it also makes sense to compare fuller historical data where it is available. (One may compare Luke's compression of material in Acts 20:1–5, the historical details of which we may fill in amply from the Corinthian correspondence.) What Paul's writings add are especially some of the details behind Luke's "many days" in 9:23.

Paul declares that after being in Nabatean Arabia, he *returned* to Damascus (Gal 1:17, *πάλιν ὑπέστρεψα*), implying that he had been there before, apparently before he went off to Arabia after his conversion.⁶⁷⁰ His conversion was apparently between just more than one and up to three years (parts of each of three years) before going to Jerusalem, apparently from Damascus (1:18). How much time he spent in Nabatea and how much in Damascus is unclear, though Paul sounds as though more of the time was spent in Damascus after his return from Nabatea (which would suggest a gradual, rather than sudden, escalation of the hostility in Acts 9:19–24). Did Paul go to be disciplined by Jewish believers in Nabatea shortly after his conversion (cf. 9:20, "immediately") because of initial hostility in the Damascus synagogues (cf. 9:21), which he later expected to have died down? Or (though this is not a mutually exclusive option) did he attempt to begin fulfilling his call by trying to evangelize Nabatean Gentiles (which might fit the theme of Gal 1:16–17), something Luke would have reason to omit if it was unsuccessful?

Neither Paul nor Luke satisfies our curiosity here, but if Paul spent a long time in Damascus after being in Nabatea, the opposition turned deadly only after his return (Acts 9:23). Thus it is possible that Luke omits a relatively brief foray into Nabatea,⁶⁷¹ and Paul's longer Damascus ministry afterward is covered in the "many days" of 9:23. Still, Paul's Nabatean ministry must have been long enough, at least, to provoke the hostility of the Nabatean community in Damascus (2 Cor 11:32).

Galatians' "Arabia" is generally understood with reference to the Nabatean Arabs, whose territory ran east and south of Damascus, running south of Judea. See fuller

27 conspicuously connects events that in mythical legend spanned over a decade. Laistner, *Historians*, 58–59, notes that Sallust telescoped events in his historical monographs (though perhaps not in his larger works where more space was available); cf. also, e.g., Matt 8:5–6 with Luke 7:3–5; Matt 9:18 with Mark 5:23, 35.

667. With, e.g., C. Williams, *Acts*, 23.

668. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 106 (contrasting *Acts of Paul* and the *Pseudo-Clementines*, which omit gaps).

669. *Ibid.*, 106; Hengel notes (385n554) that his 1992 obituary on classicist G. Zuntz included information on his early life that even Zuntz's daughter did not know, but that the biographic information still had gaps, even with help from "the family and from older friends." My wife, a historian by training, has faced the same problem when researching even some recent Congolese ministers whom her family knew.

670. The aorist, as opposed to the imperfect, suggests that he returned to Damascus only at the end instead of using it as a periodic base for reaching Nabatea; one should not press too much from Koine verb tenses if other evidence points elsewhere, but in this case, we have little other evidence.

671. Bede *Comm. Acts* 9.26 (Martin, *Acts*, 112) suggests that Luke may have omitted mentioning Nabatea because Paul did not preach much there (an idea that he finds suggested also by Acts 26:20).

comment on these and Nabatean opposition at Acts 9:23–25 below. Luke is aware of at least the Ituraeans, an Arab people (cf. Luke 3:1).⁶⁷²

II. SUCCESS IN THE SYNAGOGUES (9:19B–22)

Paul is “with the disciples” for some time (Acts 9:19b) before he begins preaching. Perhaps he is learning from them before preaching (something Paul would not have emphasized in Gal 1:12); in this case, his learning from them would highlight how quickly Paul went from solely learner to especially teacher (cf. “his disciples” in Acts 9:25). Whether it suggests learning or not, it does suggest becoming part of the Christian community.⁶⁷³ The phrase also contrasts the welcome he received from disciples in Damascus with the mistrust he later encountered in Jerusalem, where he had been known as a persecutor (9:26). Perhaps most clearly, it emphasizes that these believers welcomed him (as the apostles did in 9:27–28 once they could trust him) despite his past as a persecutor (cf. Luke 6:27–29; 11:4; 17:3–4), an attitude illustrated elsewhere in Acts (e.g., Acts 21:8).

Paul preaches Jesus as God’s Son in the synagogues, which, like Ananias and his “many” oral sources (9:13), had already heard of Paul’s mission. Paul’s practice of starting in the synagogues here (9:20) sets a pattern for his ministry in the rest of Acts (13:5, 13–16; 14:1; 17:1; 18:4; 19:8; cf. 16:13, 16; 28:17).⁶⁷⁴

(1) *Son of God* (9:20)

C. H. Dodd sees this summary of Paul’s teaching as authentic, arguing that “Son of God” is part of the Pauline kerygma not stressed in the kerygma of Acts’ speeches; notably, Paul is the first person in Acts to proclaim Jesus as “God’s Son.”⁶⁷⁵ This perspective is mostly right but needs to be nuanced. It is not Paul’s most characteristic title for Jesus by any means (“Lord” appears more than ten times more frequently),⁶⁷⁶ but “Son of God” is indeed a Pauline expression (Rom 1:4; 2 Cor 1:19; Gal 2:20; Eph 4:13), even more common as simply “Son” or “his Son” (Rom 1:9; 5:10; 8:3, 29, 32; 1 Cor 1:9; 15:28; Gal 1:16; 4:4, 6; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 1:10).⁶⁷⁷

Luke speaks of Jesus as God’s Son in Luke 1:32, 35 and also includes earlier gospel tradition to this effect in 3:22; 4:3, 9, 41; 9:35; 10:22; 22:70 (which Luke is ready to comment on theologically, 3:38). Luke clearly affirms the idea but never introduces it into speeches or the direct speech of characters in Acts except at Acts 9:20, the exegesis in 13:33, and possibly by implication in 20:28 (depending on the variant reading).⁶⁷⁸ (These other speeches are also attributed to Paul.)

Thus Dodd seems to be right, for the most part, that this is a Pauline expression here. Yet it can be explained in one of two ways. The first is that Luke knew directly from Paul or from another source that Jesus’s sonship was central to Paul’s preaching in Damascus. The second is that Luke may have simply known it to characterize Paul’s Christology in general and uses the practice of *prosopopoeia* to provide a realistic summary of what Paul would have taught in Damascus. (If Luke traveled with Paul or knew those who did, he could provide realistic speech in character for

672. On Ituraeans, see Healey, “Ituraea.”

673. Cf. Acts 14:28 (using instead *σὺν*, as in Mark 8:34); perhaps Luke 22:11.

674. Johnson, *Acts*, 170. For this pattern, see esp. comment on Acts 13:5.

675. Dodd, *Preaching*, 25.

676. See Hengel, *Son*, 7–10, esp. 7; Longenecker, *Christology*, 98.

677. On “Son” in Paul, see, e.g., Hurtado, “Son”; Witherington, “Christology,” 109.

678. If we accept Acts 8:37 as authentic, Luke’s eunuch apparently learned about Jesus’s sonship shortly before Paul’s preaching (and we cannot test Philip’s idiom from sources external to Acts), but the variant is almost certainly inauthentic. Matera, *Theology*, 67, notes that Luke identifies “Son of God” with “Christ” (Luke 4:41), preferring the latter title in Acts.

him.) Prosopopoeia and ethopoeia were favorite rhetorical exercises, and some writers excelled in this skill; for example, Alciphron wrote letters as if from fishermen, farmers, parasites, or courtesans.⁶⁷⁹ In either case, Luke seems to reflect knowledge of Paul's usage here.

Excursus: Son of God

What did Paul mean by calling Jesus God's Son? Luke evokes earlier use of the title in his Gospel (Luke 1:32, 35) but later supplies the exegesis behind the Christology in Acts 13:33, which he also attributes to Paul.⁶⁸⁰ Speaking of God's Messiah as his "son" may not have been common in early Judaism, but it was certainly intelligible.⁶⁸¹

Scripture and Jewish tradition apply the "son of God" title to those who belong to God,⁶⁸² to Israel (most commonly),⁶⁸³ and to a righteous person in general.⁶⁸⁴ Favorite members of Israel—for example, Moses—could be called God's "son";⁶⁸⁵ in another rabbinic text, a heavenly voice identifies a beloved rabbi as his son.⁶⁸⁶ Angels, too, could be called "sons of God,"⁶⁸⁷ although, given that angels were not human and "son of God" bore many other senses, probably no Jew would interpret a human as "God's son" in the angelic sense without an explicit statement to that effect in the narrative.⁶⁸⁸ Yet the problem with most "son of God" parallels, both Hellenistic and Jewish, is that early Christians controversially proclaimed Jesus as not merely *a* son of God, but *the* Son of God, his beloved and unique Son.⁶⁸⁹ How did the early Jesus movement employ the title?

Often the most appropriate background of the term when applied to Jesus was the specific sense "Messiah." This need not rule out figurative nuances of sonship such as obedience, submission,⁶⁹⁰ intimacy, and delegated authority,⁶⁹¹ which would

679. On prosopopoeia and related exercises, see, e.g., Rowe, "Style," 144; fuller comment in the commentary introduction (Keener, *Acts*, 1:284–86).

680. Cf. Knowing, "Acts," 238.

681. I have abbreviated what follows from Keener, *John*, 294–96, 401–2 (more broadly, see also 291–94 on the Hellenistic usage).

682. Hengel, *Son*, 21–23.

683. Longenecker, *Christology*, 97, cites Exod 4:22–23; Hos 11:1; Isa 1:2; 30:1; 63:16; Jer 3:19–22; Tob 13:4; Sir 4:10; Pss. Sol. 13:9; 17:27–30; 18:4; *Jub.* 1:24–25; 2:20; 1QH^a XVII, 35–36; Wis 11:10; *m. 'Ab.* 3:15; *Sipra Behuq.* pq. 2.262.1.9; *Sipre Deut.* 43.16.1; 45.1.2; 96.4.1; 308.1.2; 352.7.1; 'Abot R. Nat. 35, §77; 44, §124 B; *b. Šabb.* 31a, 128a; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:5; 14:5; *Exod. Rab.* 46:4–5; *Num. Rab.* 5:3; 10:2; *Deut. Rab.* 1:6; 3:15; 7:9; *Lam. Rab.* proem 23; *Lam. Rab.* 3:20, §7; *Pesiq. Rab.* 27:3. Besides these, cf. the singular in Exod 4:22; Hos 11:1; Wis 18:13; *Sipre Deut.* 43.8.1; *b. Šabb.* 31a; *Yoma* 76a; *Exod. Rab.* 15:30; *Lev. Rab.* 10:3; *Num. Rab.* 16:7; *Deut. Rab.* 2:24; 10:4; *Lam. Rab.* proem 2; *Lam. Rab.* 1:17, §52; *Song Rab.* 2:16, §1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:17.

684. Wis 2:13, 16, 18; 5:5; cf. 4Q416 2 (+ 4Q417) II, 13 (in DSSNT 384); 4Q418 81 5; Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 195–97.

685. *Sipre Deut.* 29.4.1, a parable. *1 En.* 105:2 could refer to God's son but most likely (106:1) refers to Enoch's son Methuselah.

686. *B. Ber.* 7a (R. Ishmael); *y. Mo'ed Qat.* 3:1, §6 (R. Eliezer); cf. Honi in *b. Ber.* 19a; *y. Ta'an.* 3:10, §1; cf. *b. Sukkah* 45b (R. Simeon ben Yohai). On "charismatic rabbis," see Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 210–11; but Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 153, correctly notes that the expression, when applied to "charismatic rabbis," is not used as distinctively as in early Christianity.

687. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 200. Cf. El's court in Parker, "Sons of Gods," 794–95.

688. Later rabbinic polemic explicitly emphasizes that the "son" of Dan 3:25 was merely an angel (*y. Šabb.* 6:9, §3).

689. So also Hengel, *Son*, 24, on Greek usage.

690. Hooker, *Preface*, 55–65, sees this sense (which is plausible), rather than messiahship, in Paul, but the options are not mutually exclusive (cf. Rom 1:4).

691. See Harvey, *History*, 172–73.

be part of the metaphor in a Jewish context. Nathan's oracle in 2 Sam 7:14 (cf. 1 Chr 17:13; 22:10; 28:6) indicated that God would adopt David's royal descendants (his "house," 2 Sam 7:11), starting with Solomon, as his own sons, perhaps borrowing this special status from Israel (Exod 4:22) and from divine adoption of kings in other ancient Near Eastern cultures.⁶⁹²

The temple cultus came to celebrate this promise (Pss 2:7; 89:26–29);⁶⁹³ the prophets reminded God's people of the qualification of obedience (cf. 2 Sam 7:14b), even suggesting that the tree would become a stump and the house a tent until a time of restoration came (Isa 11:1; Amos 9:11). But the prophets also recognized the promise to David (e.g., Isa 55:3; Jer 33:17–26; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Zech 12:10), sometimes fulfilled in his lineage or his ultimate descendant, who would rule forever, in Isaiah's words, as a "mighty God" (Isa 9:6–7), a title applied in the context to YHWH himself (10:21; cf. Jer 23:5–6, but note Jer 33:16; Zech 12:8).⁶⁹⁴

Although hope for an eschatological anointed leader or leaders ran high, and the Davidic Messiah remained prominent in many expectations, a description of him as "son of God" was no more common than was people's having in mind Dan 7 when they used the more generic expression "son of man."⁶⁹⁵ But in at least some circles, 2 Sam 7:14 was interpreted with direct reference to the Davidic Messiah as "son of God" (note some clear Qumran examples).⁶⁹⁶ Some other texts (e.g., 4Q369 I II, 6–7⁶⁹⁷ and, according to some views, also 4Q246 II, 1)⁶⁹⁸ have been thought to apply the phrase similarly.⁶⁹⁹ Hints may be found that others also understood Ps 2 messianically in the period of formative Christianity.⁷⁰⁰ As in the NT generally (Rom 1:3–4; Heb 1:5; 5:5), the OT title applied especially to enthronement rather than birth (see comment on Acts 13:33).

692. Dahood, *Psalms*, 11–12; cf. de Vaux, *Israel*, 109; Harrelson, *Cult*, 86–87; Fossum, "Son of God," 788.

693. See Bright, *History*, 225.

694. Given the prevalence of divine kings in parts of the ancient Near East (de Vaux, *Israel*, 111; even Akhenaton in "The Amarna Letters" passim [ANET 483–90]), one sin to which Israel's and Judah's rulers had not succumbed (de Vaux, *Israel*, 113), one may question whether Isaiah would have risked implying that God would be Israel's ultimate Davidic king if that was not what he meant (*pace* Berger and Wyschogrod, *Jewish Christianity*, 43; on the structure, cf. de Vaux, *Israel*, 107; Kitchen, *Orient*, 110). This idea admittedly lacks parallels elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, but explicit messianic material is scarce in it to begin with. (*Tg. Isa.* 9:6 deliberately alters the grammar to distinguish the Davidic king from the Mighty God.)

695. Before the Qumran texts, indeed, scholars generally agreed that first-century Judaism did not employ "son of God" as a messianic title, in contrast to some OT usage (see Conzelmann, *Theology of Luke*, 76–77; Jeremias, *Parables*, 73; Montefiore, *Gospels*, 1:85; Stevens, *Theology*, 104–5). Bultmann, *Theology*, 50, does recognize its use in OT messianic vocabulary before its later Hellenistic "mythological" sense.

696. 4QFlor I I, 10–11; 1QSa II, 11–12; see Longenecker, *Christology*, 95; Stanton, *Gospels*, 225; García Martínez, "Sonship"; further on 4QFlor, see Brooke, "4Q174." Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 198–99, rightly notes that 1QSa (1Q28a) II, 11–12 is not as clear as 4QFlor; Hengel, *Son*, 44, also cites a Daniel apocryphon as yet unpublished at the time of his book. 4Q174 I I, 10–11 uses 2 Sam 7:11–14 in an explicitly messianic context (4Q174 I I, 11–13; the passage may also stress, as Bergmeier, "Erfüllung," argues, the eschatological elect and their temple).

697. See Evans, "Son"; idem, "Prayer of Enosh" (including 4Q458); Abegg, "Introduction to 4Q369," 329.

698. Collins, "Son of God"; and, noting also the close parallels with Luke 1:33–35, both Evans, "Son of God Text" (on 4Q246), and Kuhn, "Son of God." Fitzmyer, "Son of God," applies it positively to a coming ruler but not in a messianic sense.

699. But recovery of the context in the latter case (4Q246 I, 5–9; II, 2–3) suggests to some that 4Q246 is simply polemic against pagan claims for divine sonship (Fabry, "Texte"; Cook, "4Q246").

700. Cf. Bons, "Psaume 2." *Pss. Sol.* 17:23 uses Ps 2:9 in a messianic passage, although "son" (2:7) is not mentioned. Gero, "Messiah," finds "son of God" in 4 *Ezra* (cf. also 4 *Ezra* 13:37, 52), but more scholars think that the Greek behind the passage read "servant" (Jeremias, *Parables*, 73n86); the Ethiopic, an Arabic version, and the Armenian omit "Son" (*OTP* 1:537 n. e).

(2) His Hearers' Amazement (9:21)

Although one should not read too much into such a common phrase (roughly eighteen times in Luke-Acts), the repetition of οὗτός ἐστιν from Acts 9:20 soon afterward in 9:22 may connect Paul (and his imminent sufferings; see 9:16) with the Christ whom he proclaimed (9:20). The phrase has not appeared since 8:10, nearly fifty verses (roughly nine hundred words) earlier, but after occurring three times in these three successive verses (roughly sixty-seven words total) does not appear again until 10:36, roughly fifty-seven verses later (roughly one thousand words later). Perhaps for them Saul is the issue, whereas for Saul, Jesus is the issue.⁷⁰¹

More critical is that the audience of Jesus's inaugural sermon in Luke's Gospel responded with similar questioning ("Is this not Joseph's son?" Luke 4:22), based on authentic tradition (Mark 6:3).⁷⁰² Employing his historian's freedom to summarize in his own words, Luke parallels the response to Paul with that to Jesus. This does not require us to doubt that Paul's hearers responded in this way. Whether Luke has a source (probably Paul himself) or simply infers that people responded this way, the inference certainly would seem to be a legitimate one.⁷⁰³

Paul himself reports to the Galatians the similar amazement of Judean Christians at his conversion (Gal 1:23–24) and may well have reported the surprise of hearers in Damascus as well (or at least approved of such an inference on Luke's part). In favor of Luke perhaps reporting speech based on even Paul's very words (heard from Paul's subsequent preaching or other sources), the only other NT use of ποροθέω is Paul's report of his persecution of Christians (Gal 1:13) and his summary of Judean believers' response to his persecution (1:23). In any case, its only appearances in the LXX (another possible source if Luke knows 4 Maccabees) are in the relatively late 4 Macc 4:23; 11:4, reporting Gentile persecution of Jews. That Paul's persecution of those he thought unfaithful to Judaism should be described (by himself and by Luke) in terms some Jews used to describe pagan repression of Judaism is the epitome of irony, but in keeping with the thought of both NT writers.

Given that Luke omits the role of Aretas's ethnarch (2 Cor 11:32),⁷⁰⁴ Luke surely emphasizes the tragic-ironic Jewish character of Saul's opposition here, as in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29). This emphasis belongs to Luke's overall picture of the shift in focus from heritage to mission; Israel retained privilege and priority, but frequent rejection justifies preaching to the Gentiles as well.

(3) Saul's Success (9:22)

That Saul kept "increasing in strength"⁷⁰⁵ recalls earlier Lukan characters, John (Luke 1:80) and Jesus (2:40, 52). The disciples were also increasing (probably numerically) in Acts 6:1. The phrase might also suggest rhetorical strength for the debates (cf.

701. One could argue that the term was simply on Luke's mind; but the correspondence between 9:20 and 9:22, at least, must be deliberate, with roughly equivalent force in these instances.

702. On the level of Luke-Acts, the question of Acts 9:21 functions rhetorically (on the ancient use of rhetorical questions, see, e.g., Rowe, "Style," 139–40).

703. In northern Nigeria in July 2000, I was told of a jihadist who had recently planned to lead a surprise attack on Christians but had been converted by a dream (in which Jesus appeared to him) the night before the planned attack. Naturally, according to this report, this conversion did not go over well with his previous comrades, and he was now said to be in hiding in the home of someone known to my informant. Similarly, Trousdale, *Movements*, 164–65, recounts the public preaching of a converted persecutor and the potentially fatal hostility he suffered. Segal, *Convert*, 25, notes that those from whose religion one is converted always resent the conversion.

704. Despite his usual interest in rulers, where he has sources about them (cf. Luke 2:1–2; 3:1–2).

705. The particular term appears nowhere else in Luke-Acts but is common in Pauline literature, where it applies to Abraham's faith (Rom 4:20), Paul's ministry (Eph 6:10; Phil 4:13; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 4:17), and an exhortation to Timothy (2 Tim 2:1). It appears in some MSS of Judg 6:34 (for Gideon; cf. Johnson, *Acts*,

18:24). Paul’s successful debates here foreshadow those of himself (19:9–10) and others (18:28) later in Acts, such debating being a strategy probably learned from Stephen (6:10; cf. 7:2–53, 58). Damascus had a massive Jewish community (see comment on Acts 9:2; on κατοικέω, see comment on Acts 2:5).

III. SAUL ESCAPES THE FIRST PLOT (9:23–25)

Even if the synagogues of Damascus had not been persecuting Jesus’s followers, Paul’s radical allies in Jerusalem (cf. 6:9–10) would know of his conversion, and some might well seek action against him. Some “plotted together” (συνεβουλεύσαντο) to kill him;⁷⁰⁶ although this is Luke’s only use of the term, the reader might think of the cognate verb in 5:33, where the apostles’ audience “wished” (ἐβούλοντο) to kill them, and other plots against him using different vocabulary (e.g., 23:12–15). Luke does not tell us how Paul “learned” of the plot (cf. likewise 20:3), but presumably, either it was an open threat (cf. perhaps 9:29–30) or a “leak” occurred (cf. 23:16, 30).

Just as the Pentecost crowd was divided (2:13, 41–42), so some Jews in both Damascus and Jerusalem heeded Paul (cf. “his disciples” in 9:25) whereas others plotted against him (9:23, 29; cf. “suffer” in 9:15).⁷⁰⁷ Nonbelieving Jewish opposition to Paul’s ministry becomes a pattern in much of the rest of Acts (13:45, 50; 14:2, 19; 17:2–5; 18:4–6; 19:9), though this picture should not be exaggerated (the response is positive in 17:11, unstated in 13:5; 17:17, and negative but shared with Gentiles in 14:5). Even where the recorded response is negative, much of the synagogue, indeed, followed Paul (17:4; 18:7–8; 19:9). The scandal is not that no Jews believed but rather that so many did not; for Luke, this simply continued the biblical pattern that God’s covenant people often had failed to heed God through history.

(1) Comparing Luke’s and Paul’s Accounts

Paul’s own writing confirms the accuracy of the basic event briefly reported by Luke here; in fact, Luke’s account here is closer to Paul’s description than usual when both mention the same event, possibly suggesting that Paul often recounted this story.⁷⁰⁸

The one significant difference between the two accounts, however, is the identity of Paul’s opposition:

Acts 9:23–25	2 Cor 11:32–33
Jews plotted to kill Paul (9:23)	Ethnarch tried to seize Paul (11:32)
Jews were watching the gates (9:24)	Ethnarch was guarding the city (11:32)
Let down in a basket from a wall (9:25)	Let down in a basket from a <i>window</i> in a wall (11:33)

The mention of a window in one case but not the other is not significant; if we should envision a house on the wall,⁷⁰⁹ a “window” in the wall is a reasonable specification of how they lowered him “through” a wall here.⁷¹⁰ Windows came in various shapes and sizes, but many were large enough to fit a person through (see extended comment

171). If it involves the Spirit (cf. Acts 1:8; 10:38; Parsons, *Acts*, 133, and Peterson, *Acts*, 313, both citing Judg 6:34; 1 Chr 12:18), it may suggest growth beyond Acts 9:17.

706. For the sense “plotting together” here, BDAG compares Jos. *Ant.* 8.379; *Test. Jud.* 13:4; in a somewhat different construction, Matt 26:4.

707. Spencer, *Acts*, 100.

708. Riesner, *Early Period*, 261–62. *Peristasis* catalogues sometimes inserted isolated episodes; this particular one may appear in 2 Cor 11 because Paul’s “lowering” balances his exaltation to heaven in 12:1–4 (cf. *Early Period*, 261). Paul’s lowering here employs the same term as in the large sheet lowered in the vision of Acts 10:11; 11:5, but this may not be significant (Luke 5:19).

709. So Bruce, *Corinthians*, 245.

710. This is a possibility whether we read διά with the genitive here as instrumental or with reference to place. The window might even project out from the wall, as in some houses in the region that were observed in the nineteenth century (Abbott, *Acts*, 115).

at Acts 20:9). Even in homes, however, windows open to the street tended to be on upper floors or high on the first floor, to avoid unwelcome ingress;⁷¹¹ on the wall, the basket would need to be let down from a potentially dangerous distance.

The opposition, however, requires further comment. Perhaps Luke altered the ethnarch to the Jewish community to fit a pattern of opposition to the gospel in his work;⁷¹² but we should remember that Luke elsewhere reports Gentile opposition as well, sometimes even partly because Paul is Jewish (Acts 16:20; 19:26, 33–34). If both sources of hostility existed (for various reasons), Luke might well mention only the one (even the possibly lesser one) that fit his account best, given the abbreviated form of the entire story in Acts. That is, Luke’s focus on Jewish opposition here fits his interests, but while this could mean that he invented it, it need not do so. In this case it seems likely that Luke has some reason to envision a significant Jewish component to the oppression (see the discussion and excursus below).

Should we be surprised if Paul’s radical change of mission and his preaching in the synagogues engendered some hostility? We know from Paul (from the same context, in fact) that he had been beaten in synagogues multiple times (2 Cor 11:24; cf. 11:26). (Far from exaggerating Jewish hostility, Luke omits these five synagogue beatings mentioned by Paul, which were received before the period depicted in Acts 20.)⁷¹³ Plausible motives are indeed easier to find for the Jewish opposition in Luke’s account than for the Nabatean opposition in Paul’s (though this is largely because of lack of information about the latter). As a Pharisee (Phil 3:5) and one advancing in Judaism (Gal 1:14), Paul was from Judea, not from Damascus; he was in the process of persecuting Jesus’s followers (1:13) when he had an encounter with Christ somewhere near Damascus (to which he “returns” after his foray in “Arabia,” 1:16–17). If Paul had any allies among fellow Jews in Damascus at all in his mission of persecuting Jesus’s followers, it is patently likely that he would inherit some opponents when he was converted.

There is no reason, however, that Jewish and Nabatean opposition could not make “common cause.”⁷¹⁴ It would be politically savvy for a Nabatean ethnarch to accommodate Jewish concerns⁷¹⁵ (or vice versa); if some of Jerusalem’s official Jewish leadership approved of a crackdown (as suggested in Acts 9:2), as Luke suggests, we might expect even further incentive to cooperate. If Paul incurred one group’s hostility, it is plausible that it would have sought the political help of other local factions.⁷¹⁶ As is the case in 9:26–30 when compared with Gal 1:17–20,⁷¹⁷ both Luke and Paul pursue their own emphases in recounting the event.

711. Note Herr, “Window,” 1068. One could have windows on each floor of a house later embedded into a new city wall (Packer, “Housing,” 80).

712. Harding, “Historicity of Acts”; Haenchen, *Acts*, 331.

713. Also Witherington, *Acts*, 322–23; cf. Ravens, *Restoration*, 247–49. It can be argued that beatings are not the same as death threats, but Paul’s writing also suggests the sense that he sometimes faced mortal danger from some of his people (Rom 15:31; cf. 2 Cor 11:26; 1 Thess 2:15); he sometimes also faced mortal danger from unspecified (but apparently Gentile) sources (2 Cor 1:8–10).

714. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 434; Bruce, *Commentary*, 204; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 182.

715. Thrall, *2 Corinthians*, 770–71; cf. Matera, *II Corinthians*, 273. Although I am less convinced than most that the ethnarch governed Damascus, the case would be no less true for an ethnarch governing only the Nabateans there. A generation later, Damascenes suspected not only Jews but apparently their “sympathizers” (Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 52, cite Jos. War 2.462–65), but in this generation, they were still accumulating sympathizers.

716. Luke later supports the portrayal of Paul as a political “hot potato” whose conviction would have functioned as a favor to a powerful political constituency (Acts 24:27; 25:9).

717. See Dunn, *Acts*, 126.

Excursus: Nabatean Opposition

Luke tells us only of Jewish opposition, but Paul's own recounting of the events reported here includes Nabatean opposition (2 Cor 11:32–33); those who knew much of Damascus might also infer Paul's contact with Nabateans there (some discussion of the Nabateans is also important for the mention of Arabia in Gal 1:17, noted above). Although discussing Nabateans does not therefore directly affect our understanding of Luke's message here, it does affect our reconstruction of the history for which some readers use Acts and Acts commentaries. (It is more explicitly relevant to the text at Acts 2:11, and so the reader unpersuaded of its relevance here may use this digression to illumine that passage exclusively if desired.) In principle it could also bear on the question of Luke's historical accuracy, which affects our understanding of a major part of Luke's purpose in writing (Luke 1:1–4; though in the final analysis it is best seen simply as something that Luke leaves out as less relevant to his story; see discussion on Luke's "many days" at the introduction to Acts 9:19b–25).

1. Traditional Nabateans

Josephus and others reckoned Nabateans among the Arabs (Jos. *Ant.* 13.10, 179).⁷¹⁸ Nabateans began as a small tribe but surpassed other Arab tribes because they could procure water in the desert; Petra was the center of their kingdom, and they controlled a caravan route that stretched especially to Damascus in the northeast and Sinai in the southwest.⁷¹⁹ Strabo claims that the Arabian region stretched as far south as adjacent to Ethiopia, with farmers in the northern regions and tent dwellers in the barren south (Strabo 16.4.2);⁷²⁰ many camel traders traversed the region (16.4.23). Others also defined Arabia broadly, covering various regions and tribes (e.g., Pliny *E. N.H.* 5.12.65–6.32.162), including tent-dwelling nomads (5.15.72; 6.32.143) but also town dwellers in Petra (6.32.144).

Nabateans controlled the trade in "spices from the Far East" and aromatic plants from South Arabia, and they were known for trade "as far east as Han dynasty China, which knew Petra as Rekem."⁷²¹ According to Strabo, they had few slaves and held common meals (with limits on drinking), but they did not eschew all possessions like the Essenes (Strabo 16.4.26). Pliny the Elder claims that Arabs wore turbans or

718. Josephus makes them his prime example of Ishmaelites (Millar, "Ishmael"). Patella, "Edom," suggests that the Edomites were absorbed into them. Though part of Edom bordered "Arabia" (Jos. *Ant.* 5.82; cf. Arab connections in 14.10; 16.292; 20.5; *War* 2.76), Edomites were Idumeans (*Ant.* 2.1), who were force-converted to Judaism (13.257; cf. 13.395; *War* 2.96, 566).

719. See Negev, "Understanding Nabateans"; for their water conservation, cf. also Lawlor, *Nabataeans*, 76–81; briefly, Tarn, Gray, and Spawforth, "Arabia," 135; for Petra's hydraulic engineering, see Bedal, "Desert Oasis"; Lindner and Hübl, "Daughter" (at nearby Sabra, Lindner, "Water Supply"); cf. Parr, "Dating" (arguing that Petra's hydraulic engineering could be as late as the mid-first century C.E. rather than some decades earlier); for their advanced technology, see also Hammond, "Patterns." (Petra apparently even had gardens; Macaulay-Lewis, "Pots.") Petra imported Eastern goods also via a Nabatean settlement in northwestern Arabia (Cockle, "Leuce Come"). On Petra more generally, see also Belt, "Petra."

720. Nabatean trade in the Arabian Peninsula is well known (e.g., Parr, "Arabian Peninsula," 163), and they controlled the only genuine kingdom in the northern Arabian Peninsula (Pahlitzsch, "Arabia," 940).

721. Graf, "Nabateans," 84 (noting inscriptions also found in places such as Rhodes and Rome); for Nabatean trade, see also Lawlor, *Nabataeans*, 68–76 (for their agriculture, 81–85; though their soil was said to be mostly barren, Pliny *E. N.H.* 5.12.65). Some of the Arabian luxury trade, however, apparently shifted to alternate routes to bypass Nabatea (Parker, "Transjordan," 237). Pliny complains about the wealth that southern Arabia ("Arabia Felix") acquired through trade (*N.H.* 12.41.82–84, esp. 84; for spices, 83; cf. 5.12.65).

left their hair uncut; most wore mustaches, but some retained beards as well (*N.H.* 6.32.162). Some stereotypes were negative. Many Nabateans had become pirates and brigands until suppressed by Roman soldiers in Syria (Strabo 16.2.20; 16.4.18, 21); Pliny thought that half remained brigands while the other half engaged in trade (*N.H.* 6.32.162).⁷²² Strabo complains that they deliberately deceived and misled the Romans till a deceptive guide was beheaded (Strabo 16.4.22–24); not good fighters, they were, he contends, “hucksters and merchants” (16.4.22–23).⁷²³

2. Nabatea and Damascus

Why would a Nabatean ethnarch be in Damascus, and over how many people would he assert authority? “Arabs” traditionally lived outside Damascus, especially in the mountainous regions (Strabo 16.2.20); the “Arabian mountains” stood above Damascus (16.2.16). Paul’s forays into “Arabia” could have gone much farther than this. Some ancient writers included in Arabia (a term often used broadly) not only traditional Nabatea but also all the cities of the Decapolis.⁷²⁴ Although Pompey politically “liberated” the Decapolis from Nabatean and Judean rule, the ties remained, and Trajan incorporated the region into a new Roman province called Arabia in 106 C.E.⁷²⁵ Especially if Paul spent time among urban Nabateans, he may have passed through the cities of the Decapolis.⁷²⁶ The entire area to the east of Judea could be described as Arabia (*Tac. Hist.* 5.6).

But we need not simply envision Jews guarding the inside of the gates and Nabateans the outside;⁷²⁷ many Nabateans also lived within Damascus. Excavations show a Nabatean settlement, originally outside Damascus’s walls, that came to be inside the new walls of the first century B.C.E. This became a Nabatean quarter, the name of which was preserved as late as the fourteenth century; it lay in the northeastern part of the city, between the Saint Thomas Gate and the old East Gate.⁷²⁸

Nabateans had trading colonies in Gerasa and elsewhere, and the ethnarch could represent Nabatean interests as leader of Nabatea’s trading colony in Damascus.⁷²⁹ This ethnarch would represent the Nabateans who controlled most caravan routes and hence would impact the economic life of Damascus. This evidence attests that the Nabatean ethnarch could have been very influential, a fact that would prove

722. Pliny’s bitter words about their accumulation of wealth through trade reflects partly his aristocratic disdain for the ethics of acquiring wealth through trade but also his disdain for Rome’s trade deficit: he complained that Romans made Arabs wealthy by buying expensive luxuries whereas the Arabs bought nothing from Rome.

723. Babr. 57 claims that Arabs (Ἀραβες) are all liars. “Arabians” also appear negatively in *Jos. Ant.* 15.123–24, 130, and their military skills thus in 14.31.

724. Riesner, *Early Period*, 256–57 (including East Jordan in *Let. Aris.* 119; *Jos. War* 1.89; 3.47; 5.160; *Ant.* 8.179; *Ag. Ap.* 1.133; 2.25; including even Damascus itself, *Justin Dial.* 78.10; followed by *Tert. Adv. Jud.* 9; *Marc.* 3.13). Cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.16.74 (where Damascus belongs to the Decapolis); North, “Damascus.”

725. Parker, “Decapolis,” 129. See also Bowersock, *Arabia*.

726. See Ciampa, “Decapolis,” 268. Some emphasize Pella (Bietenhard, “Dekapolis”).

727. A view also doubted by Barrett, *Acts*, 466; Jewett, *Chronology*, 31; Riesner, *Early Period*, 84–85; pace Haenchen, *Acts*, 332n2. These scholars point out that if the Nabateans were a threat only outside the city, Paul would have been safer remaining inside (unless, as is possible, he had need to travel outside anyway). Guarding all seven of Damascus’s gates would demand no small contingent, and it would be easier if the interested Nabateans lived in the city.

728. Riesner, *Early Period*, 86; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 511. On ethnic enclaves within ancient cities, see, e.g., Rohrbaugh, “Pre-industrial City,” 144 (although this idea would be familiar to many urban audiences today).

729. Riesner, *Early Period*, 85–86, pointing out that the title “ethnarch” functioned this way for analogous Jewish officials (*Jos. Ant.* 14.117; Strabo 17.1.13); Knauf, “Ethnarchen”; cf. Bruce, *Apostle*, 81; idem, *Corinthians*, 245.

dangerous for Paul especially if some of his activity was in Nabatea. It is interesting, for what it is worth, that the pre-Arabic tradition for the site of Ananias's house is in this Nabatean quarter.⁷³⁰

Scholars differ in their understanding of the Nabatean ethnarch, other than concurring that there was one because in this period Paul, who was in a much better position to know than we or any of our other limited sources, reports that an ethnarch of Aretas governed the Nabateans in Damascus (2 Cor 11:32).⁷³¹ Aretas IV Philopatris reigned from 9/8 B.C.E. to about 40 C.E.⁷³² Because no coins of the emperor Gaius Caligula appear in Damascus, many think that Aretas ruled the city about 37 to 39 C.E.; Caligula changed earlier policies for client kings.⁷³³ (Some date the beginning of Aretas's rule even before Caligula, since the Roman coins break off about 34 to 62.)⁷³⁴ Classicists sometimes argue for this view on the basis of Paul's claim in 2 Corinthians.⁷³⁵ But this date is later than the Pauline chronology in Galatians suggests is likely,⁷³⁶ and reads more into Paul's language than is warranted. Further, there is no evidence that Nabateans controlled Damascus; neither the lack of Gaius's coins⁷³⁷ nor Paul's claims that an ethnarch exercised authority there need imply this conclusion.⁷³⁸

Damascus had a Nabatean ethnarch precisely because it contained a Nabatean minority community with its own rights.⁷³⁹ Just as the "ethnarch" of Jewish people in Alexandria did not rule all Alexandria but governed only its massive Jewish population,⁷⁴⁰ we would expect the ethnarch for Nabatea in Damascus to govern only the significant community of Nabateans there.⁷⁴¹ Those rights need not officially include arresting

730. Riesner, *Early Period*, 86. As noted above, the tradition may or may not be correct on this point; although a Jew could live in the Nabatean quarter, this seems statistically less probable than in the Jewish quarter, unless opposition to Jesus's followers was stronger there.

731. The Greek term "ethnarch" might be Paul's, but Nabateans did borrow titles for officials (e.g., chiliarchs and hipparchs) from Greek (Graf, "Nabateans," 83).

732. Riesner, *Early Period*, 75–77 (citing Jos. *Ant.* 16.294). On Aretas IV, see Lawlor, *Nabataeans*, 103–18 (noting [118] that the evidence is insufficient to decide the extent of his control over Damascus in this period).

733. Thrall, *2 Corinthians*, 766–70; Jewett, *Chronology*, 31–33; Bruce, *Apostle*, 81; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 433 (tentatively); Taylor, "Ethnarch"; Hemer, "Observations," 4 (tentatively); Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 521 (as one among several possibilities); Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 303 (as a possibility); idem, *Acts*, 466, though noting that the ethnarch, watching the city (2 Cor 11:32), might be operating outside it (cf. Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 304; the same allowance is made by Héring, *Second Corinthians*, 87–88). Barrett also notes the view that Jewish Damascenes accused Paul to the ethnarch (citing Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 315). Witherington, *Acts*, 80–81, accepts this view as plausible but notes that neither Acts nor Paul requires Aretas to be in authority. Campbell, "Anchor," suggests that Aretas took control in 36 C.E. after defeating Herod Antipas; but the connection between the events does not necessarily follow, and even 36 does not fit Pauline chronology easily (Campbell's chronology leaves little time for extended ministry in Antioch between Damascus and Cyprus).

734. E.g., Finegan, *Apostles*, 57; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 164 (tentatively); cf. Hemer, "Observations," 4; Héring, *Second Corinthians*, 87–88; Vardaman, "Life," 71–72 (arguing for Aretas IV's controlling Damascus till 37 C.E.). But as Wallace and Williams, *World*, 166, note, in view of the scarcity of evidence, this is at best an argument from silence.

735. See Healey, "Aretas"; Jones, Kuhrt, and Spawforth, "Damascus."

736. Given the association of Paul's earliest experience with Damascus in Gal 1:17, "this problem of chronology affects" Paul's account more than Luke's (Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 433). Some argue that Aretas controlled Damascus earlier (cf. Ramsay, *Other Studies*, 364).

737. The lack of coins is an argument from silence (though a stronger one than some if surrounding years have sufficient coins).

738. With Riesner, *Early Period*, 80–89.

739. *Ibid.*, 85–86.

740. See Jos. *Ant.* 14.117; 19.283. The Jerusalem high priest had been "ethnarch" of Judeans generally (13.214; 14.148, 151, 191, 194, 196, 200, 209, 211, 226, 306, 314, 317; 1 Macc 14:47; 15:1–2) but, as a leader of the Jewish people, not of Gentile cities where they resided; more broadly, Archelaus in *Ant.* 17.317; *War* 2.93, 115 (cf. also Ego, "Ethnarchos," 85), though here the ethnarch is apparently connected, rather than identified, with Aretas.

741. Cf. Matera, *II Corinthians*, 273.

those who are not members of one's own community, but ancient literature is full of groups acting in their own interests without official permission to do so. Particularly if local Nabateans and Jews colluded, their joint political interests could prove too compelling to make interference politically advantageous (if other authorities were even cognizant of the events); Paul was plainly making more politically influential enemies than friends.

Whether or not the Nabatean ethnarch ruled the city (archaeology might eventually settle the question), Damascus appears to be a less strictly policed environment in this period than many other parts of the empire,⁷⁴² a place where the Jewish community could cooperate with Jerusalem's high priest in arresting fugitives (Acts 9:2) and Nabateans could seek to arrest Paul.

Aretas was a Roman client king and, though less directly under Rome's control than most others, recognized Roman authority. Rome's Pompey had subdued an earlier Aretas, king of the Nabatean Arabs, in 63 B.C.E. (Appian *Hist. rom.* 12.16.106);⁷⁴³ now they were subject to Rome (Strabo 16.4.21). The emperor Augustus reluctantly confirmed the rule of Aretas IV two years after he began ruling Nabatea (Jos. *Ant.* 16.353–55).⁷⁴⁴ Aretas IV and Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, had a conflict that would have destroyed Antipas's kingdom but for Roman intervention.⁷⁴⁵ Nabatea remained powerful in the early Roman Empire,⁷⁴⁶ and tensions between Aretas and Antipas made Jewish-Nabatean cooperation all the more important.⁷⁴⁷ Such tensions may have also made the meddling of a Jewish preacher like Paul more problematic, if that was what Paul was doing (see discussion below). Jewish documents in Nabatean and other evidence (see discussion below) confirm close ties between the peoples.

3. Paul's Business in Nabatea

What was Paul doing in this region? Perhaps some believers who were scattered in hellenized Decapolis cities (Acts 8:4) welcomed their former persecutor to protect him from persecution in Damascus while his faith was growing (although he says, with good reason for his argument, that he consulted with no one, Gal 1:16). Yet some contend that Paul preached to the Nabateans, following his "Gentile mission" from the start.⁷⁴⁸ A number of scholars argue that if Paul incurred the hostility of the Nabateans (and hence that of the Nabatean ethnarch in Damascus, 2 Cor 11:32), it was probably "not by meditating in the desert . . . , but by preaching in flourishing Hellenistic cities such as Petra, Gerasa, Philadelphia, and Bostra, whose remains have recently been excavated."⁷⁴⁹ Despite Nabatea's topography, travel in much of

742. Finegan, *Apostles*, 57, claims that Roman coins break off from 34 to 62 C.E. This could at least suggest more local control and less Roman interference.

743. "Aretas" was a common name among Nabatean kings (see, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 13.360, 392, 414; 14.14, 124; BDAG cites also inscriptions).

744. Riesner, *Early Period*, 76. Augustus had planned to bestow the region on Herod, but permitting Aretas to retain it proved more politically viable (because Aretas had already acted and Herod was aged, with potential complications concerning his heirs).

745. Jos. *Ant.* 18.109–16; cf. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 89.

746. See Fiema, "Roman Petra."

747. Judea and its Arab neighbors also had long-standing trade ties (e.g., *Let. Aris.* 114).

748. Murphy-O'Connor, "Paul in Arabia"; idem, "Doing in 'Arabia?"; cf. Bruce, *Corinthians*, 245.

749. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 10; cf. Schnabel, *Missionary*, 63; Campbell, *Deliverance*, 145; more tentatively, cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 204. Kim, *New Perspective*, 103, suggests that Paul interpreted his mission partly in light of Isa 42:11, hence to bring Kedar to God; Kedar was linked with Nebaioth (60:7) and hence, by at least some Jews, with the Nabateans (Jos. *Ant.* 1.220–21).

the Decapolis would have been facilitated by an adequate road system.⁷⁵⁰ Petra itself lay on (and hence controlled) two major routes, the one from Palmyra to Syria and the other leading to Gaza.⁷⁵¹

Nabatea's sedentary cities were geographically accessible and strategic. King Aretas lived in Petra ("Rock"), a steep, fortified site in the midst of the desert but with springs and gardens inside (Strabo 16.4.21).⁷⁵² If art, inscriptions, massive building projects, and architecture are clues, his reign was a high point of Nabatean civilization.⁷⁵³ The Nabateans did experience some challenges in this period when Arabian desert tribes seized control over the northern trade route between India and Arabia.⁷⁵⁴ But Nabatea had grown in prosperity, as may be illustrated by excavations of one spacious mansion (more than 1,000 sq. m.) with a scenic view.⁷⁵⁵

Some scholars suggest the possibility of missionary ventures there that were unreported by Luke because unsuccessful.⁷⁵⁶ Yet ministry in Nabatea would not have begun with, and perhaps never included, ethnic Nabateans. Among the many foreigners in Petra (Strabo 16.4.21) were many Jews.⁷⁵⁷ The Babatha archive and other Jewish sources employ not only Aramaic and Greek but also Nabatean, demonstrating significant Jewish and Nabatean contact in the region.⁷⁵⁸ The entire Decapolis area's "Hellenistic Jewish communities . . . with their God-fearing Gentile associates would have been attractive contexts for his ministry."⁷⁵⁹ Given Paul's practice of starting with the Jewish community (see comment on Acts 13:5), even his call to the Gentiles probably would have led him to the Nabateans only afterward at most, or through Jewish contacts there.

Nabateans themselves may have offered a more difficult beginning, being polytheistic.⁷⁶⁰ Strabo reports that they daily worshiped the sun, offering libations and

750. E.g., the Gerasa-Pella road, restored ca. 162 C.E. (see Atallah, "Milestone"); more generally, see Roll, "Roads." In addition, the ancient "king's highway" led south to the Gulf of Aqaba (Podella, "King's Highway").

751. Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.32.144 (estimating 600 mi. to Gaza; he says that Petra lies in a valley surrounded by impassable mountains).

752. All members of the royal family held office, according to seniority (Strabo 16.4.25). For a map of Petra based on excavations, see Kanellopoulos, "Plan." Trajan later refounded Bostra as Arabia's Roman capital (Healey, "Bostra," 254).

753. Riesner, *Early Period*, 76. For impressive Nabatean architecture and landscaping, see, e.g., Schmid, "Wadi Farasa Project"; Joukowsky, "Petra Great Temple"; the architecture reflects considerable Hellenistic influence, adapted for temples and tombs hewn from rock (Graf, "Nabateans," 82). Other possibly pre-Pauline Nabatean architecture reveals Greek, Roman, and various Eastern influences (Bikai, Kanellopoulos, and Saunders, "Beidha"). Nabateans settled into a sedentary lifestyle only over an extended period, however (Twaissi, "Edom").

754. Riesner, *Early Period*, 76. Although there was extra coinage in 18–40 C.E., it had diminished silver content.

755. On which see Kolb, "Mansion." On their prosperity due to caravan trade, see Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 88–89; on their trade and relations with others, see also Matthiae, "Nabatäer."

756. Witherington, *Acts*, 321n71.

757. Roman soldiers, merchants, and other foreigners are attested in Nabatean Bir Madhkur, northwest of Petra (Smith, "Bir Madhkur Project"). Jewish contacts with Nabatea were long-standing (see, e.g., Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 89); Meshel, "Rock," argues that the Hasmonians and Herod adapted Nabatean techniques for their own desert fortresses.

758. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 112.

759. Ciampa, "Decapolis," 268 (emphasizing an overlap of Nabatea with the Decapolis), following Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*; cf. Watson, *Gentiles*, 72 (though unnecessarily doubting Paul's earlier call to Gentiles [70]; if Paul looked to the OT for models, he would recognize that many callings were fulfilled only over time). For one discussion of Paul's activity there, see Hengel, "Paul in Arabia."

760. See Riesner, *Early Period*, 258–60. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 120, argue that the various tribes worshiped their own "tribal deities" but as virtual agents of a supremely powerful deity. On Nabatean religion, see Lindner, "Heiligtum"; Jones, "Petra Inscription"; for their national deity Dushara, see Rives, *Religion*, 64; for traditional fertility practices, el-Khouri, "Fertility."

incense on housetop altars (16.4.26).⁷⁶¹ Perhaps more dependable is that the earliest extant Nabatean Aramaic inscriptions are religious, in a shrine honoring an earlier king Aretas in 168 B.C.E.;⁷⁶² a number of Nabatean temples remain,⁷⁶³ including one with dining halls and anthropomorphic statues of deities.⁷⁶⁴ At least by the early second century, a period of greater Roman control in the region, the Roman emperor was also worshiped in Petra.⁷⁶⁵ Outsiders often held views of Nabatean culture that looked negative to their critics.⁷⁶⁶ According to Strabo (but this is probably slander), brothers shared wives and other property and also slept with their mothers, counting as adultery only one from outside the family (Strabo 16.4.25).⁷⁶⁷ Some claimed that they buried their dead as if they were dung (Strabo 16.4.26).⁷⁶⁸

Language might also pose a potential barrier, though Paul could have found people who understood him. Although most Nabatean inscriptions are in a Nabatean form of Aramaic, Nabateans seem to have traditionally spoken an ancient dialect of Arabic,⁷⁶⁹ attested in their names;⁷⁷⁰ other inscriptions, however, are in Greek.⁷⁷¹ By the early second century C.E., Greek “replaced Nabatean as the official language,” and hellenization began before this.⁷⁷² If Paul ministered among them, he probably focused on their more hellenized cities.

4. Preaching among Nabateans?

Richard Bauckham makes the interesting case that Paul may have initially planned to fulfill his call to the nations by going east.⁷⁷³ Paul may have started ministry among the Nabatean “Arabs” (though Gal 1:17 does not specify what he was doing there); they mainly spoke Aramaic, and there were Jewish communities among them (cf.

761. Max. Tyre 2.8 claimed that Arabs worshiped “a square stone” (Trapp, 22); could this be related to the objects in the pre-Islamic *qubbah* (cf. Morgenstern, “Ark,” 216; Cross, “Tabernacle,” 60; Wright, *Archaeology*, 65; de Vaux, *Israel*, 296–97; Gordon, *Near East*, 145n12)?

762. Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions,” 81.

763. E.g., Joukowsky, “Petra Great Temple”; Eddinger, “Nabatean/Roman Temple”; Atiat, “Sanctuary.” On worship of Isis as Petra’s protectress, see Schluntz, “Protectress.”

764. See McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes, “Reconstruction.” On local sculpture style, see McKenzie, “Sculpture.” Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 120, argue that traditional Nabatean deities were more Semitic than the hellenized interpretations of traditional deities in Damascus. They also argue (123) for the existence of triads of deities in Syria and Arabia (but these belonged to larger pantheons).

765. Bodel and Reid, “Dedicatory Inscription.”

766. Some regarded Arabs as “exotic” Eastern peoples; thus, by eating the innards of serpents they learned the language of birds and hence could predict the future (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.20).

767. Arabs, like Medes, were conversely known for completely covering their bodies (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.3). The claim that they slept with their mothers may be adapted from Greek and Roman views of Persian mother-son marriages (e.g., Catullus 90.1–4; Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 1.152; 3.205; Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.203; Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.13; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 10.30; 21.5; Tatian *Or. Gks.* 28; Tert. *Apol.* 9.16).

768. For authentic Nabatean burial practices, see Perry, “Life and Death.”

769. Healey, “Nabataeans.”

770. Graf, “Nabateans,” 83–84.

771. Drijvers, “Inscriptions,” 165. Many inscriptions from this period are by soldiers in Greek and Latin (Negev, “Nabatean Inscriptions,” 81). Nabateans borrowed their titles for most officials from Greek and Latin (Graf, “Nabateans,” 83).

772. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 189. The language of 140 sixth-century C.E. papyri found is Greek, but the local vernacular may have remained preclassical Arabic (Lehtinen, “Petra Papyri”). Greek culture flourished in Roman-period Decapolis, sometimes in Roman forms (see Segal and Eisenberg, “Sussita-Hippos,” noting Hippos’s Roman architecture in the early empire). For Nabateans’ relations with Rome over the centuries, see, e.g., Barrett, *Oil Lamp*.

773. Bauckham, “East Rather Than West?,” 171–84. If Paul wanted to go to Spain at the world’s western end (Rom 15:24, 28), he may have also wished to go east.

Acts 2:11).⁷⁷⁴ If Paul left Nabatea for Damascus (Gal 1:17), it was not initially to travel to Jerusalem (1:18), for which shorter routes were available, but to follow “the other main route from Damascus: the caravan route north-east to Palmyra and thence to Mesopotamia.”⁷⁷⁵ The road east from Damascus led to the Jewish communities of Babylonia, but the Nabateans, who had come to oppose him (2 Cor 11:32), controlled all the northeast and southern routes, so that Paul could only return to Jerusalem.⁷⁷⁶

This argument coheres with the evidence of Paul’s early years, but because that evidence is scant, the argument is accordingly speculative. If Paul could slip away to Jerusalem, where he would face danger (Acts 9:29), could he not have slipped eastward in a caravan, facing danger along the way but more likely unnoticed? More important is that Paul’s facility in Greek, his Roman citizenship, and his facility in Greco-Roman culture qualified him especially for a westward mission; the Twelve and other Aramaic-speakers would have done just as well for Babylon.⁷⁷⁷

As already noted, others dispute the idea entirely that Paul preached among Nabateans. Paul could have preached to Jews among Nabateans, could have gone as a recluse for a time,⁷⁷⁸ or could have been disciplined by Jewish believers in the Hellenistic cities there.⁷⁷⁹ If Ananias’s house was in the Nabatean quarter⁷⁸⁰ and Paul escaped from there (an argument admittedly heavily dependent on subsequent tradition), Paul would hardly have taken refuge in the Nabatean quarter if it was hostile to him. But if Damascus’s large and politically powerful Jewish community (see comment on Acts 9:2) opposed Paul (9:23–24) and discovered him taking refuge in the Nabatean quarter,⁷⁸¹ it might have negotiated with the Nabatean ethnarch.⁷⁸² In the end, we cannot be certain that Paul preached among the Nabateans or that this was the basis for their hostility; it simply remains a very plausible hypothesis. In my opinion, the likeliest reading of the evidence is that Paul preached not only in the synagogues in Damascus (9:20) but also among Jewish people in the outlying areas, including during an extended trip there.

What is important to our discussion of Acts is that Paul’s comment about Nabatean opposition is compatible with the Jewish opposition.⁷⁸³ This is true whether we think that the Nabateans acted to curry favor with the Jewish community or because of their own hostility toward Paul.⁷⁸⁴ The Nabatean ethnarch had good reason to cultivate positive relations with Jews during the king’s conflict with Antipas in this period (in-

774. *Ibid.*, 176.

775. *Ibid.*

776. *Ibid.*, 177. One of the most important routes between Damascus and the Gulf of Aqaba was the “king’s highway” (Podella, “King’s Highway”).

777. Cf. 1 Pet 5:13, but this probably stands for Rome. For “Babylon” as a cipher for Rome, cf. 4Q163 6–7 II, 4–5; frg. 8–10; 4Q386 1 III, 1–2; *Sib. Or.* 5.143, 159–60 (contrast 5.434–46); 4 *Ezra* 3:28, 31; 2 *Bar.* 67:7; Rev 14:8.

778. The first two suggestions appear in Riesner, *Early Period*, 260.

779. If Paul was disciplined by associates of Ananias and if the latter lived in the Nabatean quarter as Riesner thinks (*ibid.*, 86; but we cannot be sure), a connection of this sort is reasonable (though hypothetical).

780. See Riesner, *Early Period*, 86. The thesis is open to question, since Ananias, being Jewish, would more likely live in a Jewish area (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 511) unless he, too, faced hostility from his people, of which Luke offers no clue.

781. Paul’s “Arabia” does not, however, mean only this, since he afterward “returned” to Damascus (Gal 1:17).

782. Riesner, *Early Period*, 88–89.

783. Also Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 434; Bruce, *Commentary*, 204; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 182; contrast Barrett, *Acts*, 466 (who thinks joint action unlikely).

784. Even as resident aliens, synagogue communities could participate in the larger life of their cities at times (see Harland, *Associations*, 200–210).

deed, some deserters from Antipas's army helped the Nabateans devastate his army, *Jos. Ant.* 18.114).⁷⁸⁵ Still, Arabs displayed notable animosity toward Judea during the Judean revolt against Rome a few decades later (*Tac. Hist.* 5.1).

If, by contrast, Paul worked among the Nabateans, this alone could have proved sufficient to generate Nabatean hostility; but even this work need not have remained isolated from a larger context as suggested above. Wherever else Paul preached, he certainly preached in Jewish communities. Because any work among Nabateans would have begun with Jews among them (see above), it is reasonable that Jewish and Nabatean opposition would have been united, though Paul saw the Nabatean threat as deadlier or at least on a higher official level (2 Cor 11:32–33). Luke articulates a pattern of rejection in the synagogues and keeps his narrative less complicated by focusing on that frequent opposition; although Paul tells us nothing of it in Damascus, he does recount an abundance of Jewish opposition (Rom 15:31; 2 Cor 11:26; 1 Thess 2:14–16; cf. 1 Cor 1:22–23), clearly some of it in periods like this one, which Luke simply summarizes (2 Cor 11:24).⁷⁸⁶

(2) *Paul's Escape* (9:24–25)

That the plot against Paul did become known to him emphasizes God's repeated protection of him (as in Acts 20:3, 19; 23:16, 30; cf. 1 Sam 19:2, 11; Esth 2:22; more peripherally, cf. Jer 11:18–20; Job 5:12–13).

Watching the gates both "day and night" (Acts 9:24) entails careful guarding, recognizing that Paul might escape at any time. City gates were closed at night,⁷⁸⁷ but presumably individuals traveling alone could exit smaller doors there with permission from guards. (On the phrase "day and night," see comment on Acts 20:31.) Even if people were watching, however, a night escape would be more difficult to observe (9:25).⁷⁸⁸ Those who wished not to be observed typically acted at night or in darkness.⁷⁸⁹ Thus honorable sages normally would not commence a journey at night, whether to avoid danger (which was common at night)⁷⁹⁰ or to prevent scandal generated by suspicions about secretive, immoral behavior.⁷⁹¹

Despite volunteer adversaries watching the gates both day and night (9:24), a night escape (9:25) would be more difficult to see if from a different location; such escapes were generally safer (cf. 17:10). Especially if those guarding the gates were near the gates, they would not see the parts of the walls away from the gates (particularly, as noted, at night).⁷⁹² Paul's friends probably learned this method of escape from their

785. Riesner, *Early Period*, 89.

786. Cf. also Witherington, *Acts*, 322–23.

787. For an extreme case, see Hermog. *Inv.* 2.6.118–19. During war, gates might be closed even during the day (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.16) to prevent enemies from gaining entrance (Polyb. 4.18.2, 4); certainly it was imprudent to open them at night (Sen. E. *Controv.* 5.7). For gates to be open always implied peace (Isa 60:11; Rev 21:25).

788. Cf., e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 18.159; Philost. *Hrk.* 31.6.

789. E.g., Judg 6:27; 1 Sam 28:8; 2 Kgs 25:4; 4Q183 II, 4–6; Soph. *Ajax* 47; *Antig.* 494; *El.* 1493–94; Eurip. *El.* 90; *Iph. Taur.* 1025–26; Aeschines *Tim.* 9–10, 12; Livy 27.5.18; Ovid *Metam.* 7.192; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.52, 60; Lucian *Icar.* 21; *Phal.* 1; Hermog. *Issues* 50.14–16; Max. Tyre 19.4; *Gen. Rab.* 74:7; *Pesiq. Rab.* 8:2.

790. Especially from thieves and robbers (Hor. *Ep.* 1.2.32–33; Catull. *Carm.* 62.34–35; Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 2.11; *Sib. Or.* 3.238, 380; *Gen. Rab.* 92:6), when they were also considered most potentially deadly (Exod 22:2; Schieman, "Furtum," 627, citing Twelve Tables 8.12–13); this was a danger even in towns (Stambaugh, *City*, 201; Jeffers, *World*, 61).

791. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 941–42 (*y. Sanh.* 11.3.30b; *Tanḥ.* 26c; *Der. Er. Zut.* 6:1; *b. Erub.* 85b; *Yoma* 21a).

792. The skepticism of Barrett, *Acts*, 466, that an escape across the walls would be missed by guards outside demands sufficient distance from the walls as well as visibility (of both terrain and light).

Scripture (Josh 2:15, where the window is also in a wall; 1 Sam 19:12).⁷⁹³ Luke's audience might also think of the friends who lowered the paralytic to Jesus (Luke 5:19), though both of Luke's accounts are pre-Lukan (Mark 2:4; 2 Cor 11:33) and Luke does not make any such connection clear.⁷⁹⁴

Given the context in 2 Cor 11:33 (11:23–33, esp. 11:30), Paul may have thought of this escape as humiliating,⁷⁹⁵ something like a retreat.⁷⁹⁶ (Some scholars view it as the opposite of the Roman honor for the first soldier over an enemy city's wall, the *corona muralis*.)⁷⁹⁷ Having to escape through a hole certainly was considered cowardly behavior (Epict. *Diatr.* 4.1.167). The humble way Paul must leave Damascus contrasts starkly with the arrogant way he first approached it.⁷⁹⁸ Still, others may have appreciated the ingenuity used to evade the aggressors.⁷⁹⁹

The pre-Arabic tradition for the site of Ananias's house places it in the Nabatean quarter against the Hellenistic-Roman period city wall.⁸⁰⁰ It is possible that this story gave birth to the tradition,⁸⁰¹ but if the tradition for the site is authentic, it is possible that it was even Ananias's house from which Paul escaped.⁸⁰² Once Paul removed far enough from the city walls, he could head toward Jerusalem on foot⁸⁰³ while his enemies continued to be distracted with keeping him in Damascus; it is a reasonable guess, given concerns for hospitality and the dangers of night travel, that some Jewish believers from Damascus might have also been waiting for him outside the city and accompanied him for the first night.⁸⁰⁴ Because many cities had outgrown

793. The method was intelligible; cf., e.g., one rescued by being raised up a wall with a rope tied around his waist (Plut. *Sulla* 28.7; cf. Jer 38:12–13). Ultimately following Wettstein, other commentators (e.g., Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 523; Danker, *Corinthians*, 186) list Athen. *Deipn.* 5.214a; Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 26.2 for escapes through walls. For similar concealment in earlier texts, cf. the Trojan horse (Hom. *Od.* 4.271–89) or men concealed in baskets on donkeyback in the Egyptian Tale of the Taking of Joppa (Gordon, *Civilizations*, 264–65). Subsequent escapees have also been lowered from windows, whether because informed by the biblical account or independently (e.g., John Hut in Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 226).

794. The paralytic was justified by faith and let down (Luke 5:19–20) in the face of religious opposition (5:21); but the latter did not precipitate the former, and despite many parallels between Luke and Acts, stories in Luke lack clear allusions in Acts. The other use of the verb for “letting down” in Luke-Acts is Acts 10:11 and (retold) 11:5; if there is a connection, it is tantalizingly weak.

795. So Lincoln, *Paradise*, 75; Bruce, *Corinthians*, 245. Some contrast this descent with Paul's heavenly ascent in 2 Cor 12:2–4 (Lincoln, *Paradise*, 84–85).

796. Cf. the contrast between Hannibal's current confidence and his former escape from a city at night (Polyb. 1.23.4).

797. E.g., Judge, “Boasting,” 47; Witherington, *Corinthians*, 458–59; Peterson, *Eloquence*, 123; these commentators cite Polyb. 6.39.5; Livy 6.20.8; 10.46.3; Aul. Gel. 5.6.16. It was made of gold (Polyb. 6.39.5). Some have even suggested that Paul's opponents in Corinth used this story against him (Trocmé, “Rempart”); given its climax of (or afterthought to) his list of sufferings, however, and his lack of explicit defense here in a section elaborating a defense, this proposal seems unlikely.

798. Carson, *Triumphalism*, 128.

799. Cf. the tale of Johanan ben Zakkai's escaping Jerusalem in a coffin (e.g., *Abot R. Nat.* 4 A; 6, §19 B; further below). Although Jews would be more familiar with the method of escape (down a wall), given canonical models, it was intelligible to Gentiles (see examples in Danker, *Corinthians*, 186).

800. Riesner, *Early Period*, 86. The Greek city wall and the Roman wall that probably followed it would have been rectangular, in contrast to the current oval wall built in the twelfth century (Titard, “Damascus,” 104).

801. Why would Ananias, a Jew, live in the Nabatean quarter? If he faced persecution from other Jews, it is possible, but the Damascus synagogues apparently depended more on outside advocates to organize persecution (Acts 9:2).

802. Many ancient homes, however, used city walls as a “rear house wall” (Jeffers, *World*, 68–69).

803. Cf. the officer who escaped through enemy lines “by disguising himself as a peasant and using his knowledge of the district” (Tac. *Hist.* 3.59 [LCL, 1:429]). Paul would presumably at least know the road by now; he may have been blind coming into the city, but his times among Nabateans should have oriented him to the area.

804. They could also have been believers outside the city proper. Probably, as with most cities, more people lived in houses in the surrounding countryside than within the city walls (cf. Watson, “Cities,” 214).

their walls,⁸⁰⁵ Paul's friends would have to select carefully the site of his descent; landing in a populated area might make his escape more difficult to detect from afar but more apt to be noticed from nearby. Lowering a basket, however, would not appear suspicious, in any case (and especially in a populated area), so long as someone below could signal when to lower it and discern when to take Paul from it. Perhaps he might also wear dark clothing and perhaps also something like a turban⁸⁰⁶ that would cover much of his face.

The σφυρίς or σπυρίς is a large, round, plaited basket, often used for fish (cf. Mark 8:8, 20, not in Luke); the expression in 2 Cor 11:33 (σαργάνη) could be a wicker-work basket but also a woven container that could hold hay, straw, wool, and the like.⁸⁰⁷ Both passages presuppose that the container was large and sturdy enough to lower Paul discreetly in it. Moses was rescued in a sort of “basket” (though because θίβις is a different term, it is unlikely that Paul's “basket” is intended as an allusion to Moses).⁸⁰⁸ Later tradition claims that Johanan ben Zakkai escaped watchful eyes in Jerusalem by being carried out in a coffin.⁸⁰⁹

The phrase “his disciples” appears nowhere else in Acts.⁸¹⁰ Philosophers had disciples—that is, those who learned from them and (ideally) became adherents of their distinctive schools.⁸¹¹ The same basic concept is evident in various early Jewish sources.⁸¹² Some scholars suggest that the master-disciple relationship may be evident as early as Proverbs and Sirach⁸¹³ and probably the Prophets as well.⁸¹⁴ Certainly early Judaism assumed that the prophets had disciples.⁸¹⁵ Early Pharisaic teachers had disciples;⁸¹⁶ rabbis emphasized making disciples.⁸¹⁷

Perhaps we could think of some disciples of Paul from before his conversion who

805. E.g., Stambaugh, *City*, 191, on imperial Rome (so that a mile away from the walls now counted as part of the city); Rohrbach, “Pre-industrial City,” 144 (noting, among those outside most city walls, members of some ethnic groups, tanners, merchants, beggars, prostitutes, and other less desirable residents).

806. Something like the turban was already worn among Arabs (so Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.32.162), although the modern version seems to stem from the fifteenth century. The conical caps of early Persians, sometimes wrapped with additional strips of cloth, might represent an early version. Travelers in the desert might well wear face cloths for protection, in any case.

807. Bruce, *Commentary*, 204n46. Bede *Comm. Acts* 9.25B (Martin, *Acts*, 110) suggests that such baskets usually were made of palm leaves and rushes (but goes on to allegorize). On smaller, less relevant kinds of baskets, see, e.g., Hirschmann, “Kalathos”; idem, “Kanoun.” Ladders could also be used (e.g., *b. Ber.* 33a; *ʿErub.* 84a; 85a; 89b; *Pesah.* 112b; *B. Bat.* 22b; cf. *y. ʿErub.* 9:1, §3; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 43) but may have been less accessible and more difficult to lower and raise inconspicuously.

808. The Hebrew for Moses's basket includes a wordplay with Noah's ark (see, e.g., Sarna, *Exodus*, 28).

809. E.g., *ʿAbot R. Nat.* 4 A.

810. One could argue that it is an error for “the disciples,” but a scribal error would likelier go the other direction.

811. E.g., *Mus. Ruf.* 1, p. 36.6–7; *Lucian Alex.* 2; *Diog. Laert.* 8.1.39; 9.1.4–5; *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 5.21; cf. Liefeld, “Preacher,” 222–25. For exceptions, see *Dio Chrys. Or.* 4.14; 12.13.

812. In Philo, see Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher*, 94–97; in Josephus, see 97–99; cf. “disciples of the law” in the Diaspora (*CIJ* 1:79, §113; 1:136, §193). For adherents of schools in this period, see, e.g., Shammaites and Hillelites (e.g., *m. Ber.* 1:3; *Demai* 3:1; *t. Šabb.* 1:16; *ʿEd.* 2:3; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 6:4; *b. Ber.* 23b; *Šabb.* 14b; *Bešah* 20b; *y. Qidd.* 1:1, §8).

813. E.g., Gilbert, “École.” In contrast to Sirach, Proverbs may be questionable, since “my son” was merely part of the Egyptian wisdom genre's format of a king allegedly addressing his son.

814. Cf. 1 Sam 19:20; 2 Kgs 2:3–15; 4:38; 6:1; Isa 8:16; on ancient discipleship, see in greater detail Wilkins, *Discipleship*, 43–91.

815. E.g., CD VIII, 20–21; *Mek. Pisha* 1.150–53; *ʿAbot R. Nat.* 11, §28 B; *Tg. Jon.* on 1 Sam 19:23; 2 Kgs 6:1; 9:1, 4.

816. *Jos. Ant.* 15.3, 370.

817. E.g., *m. ʿAb.* 1:1; especially among Hillelites (*ʿAbot R. Nat.* 3 A; 4, §14 B). Such disciples were highly regarded (*m. Hor.* 3:5) and were supposed to reproduce their mentors' teaching (*Sipre Deut.* 48.2.3, 6). On the importance of this relationship, see Neudecker, “Relationship”; Gerhardsson, *Origins*, 16–17. Cf. different details in Keener, *Matthew*, 152–54, 476.

had accompanied him to Damascus, though it would seem quite odd that Luke does not honor Paul by describing his companions thus in 9:7 or the parallel texts. Given the forcefulness of his christocentric preaching, however, and the original basis for Paul’s trip to Damascus, it seems more probable that they were Jewish believers in Jesus whom Paul had been teaching, whether he started teaching them before or after his conversion and whether they became believers before or after his teaching. Although it indicates that Paul’s mission was “not . . . unfruitful,”⁸¹⁸ it also may suggest that Paul, as a former disciple (Acts 22:3), had assumed the role of a Christian rabbi or sage. Undoubtedly he had the educational credentials to present himself as such (cf. 22:3).

Lack of such language as “rabbi” for Christian teachers elsewhere in the NT and opposition to it in Matthew’s very Jewish Gospel (Matt 23:8) may suggest that it was a model Paul later had to abandon (though he frequently mentions his “children” [e.g., 1 Cor 4:14–17], a good rabbinic description of disciples in some sense).⁸¹⁹ Luke might prefer not to elaborate on an activity that Paul later abandoned. Dio Chrysostom claimed that he did not acquire “disciples” because he had nothing to teach them (*Or.* 12.13; cf. 12.15–16), though such “humility” is probably less relevant to Luke’s presentation.⁸²⁰ In any case, the dissonance with the rest of Acts and, so far as we can tell, mainstream early Christianity suggests that the statement reflects genuine early tradition about Paul.

More important from a literary perspective is that it appears ironic that one who had first gone to Damascus to persecute “disciples” now has embraced these disciples as his own.⁸²¹ Moreover, Paul’s initial experience in Damascus was being “with the disciples,” welcomed by them (Acts 9:19); now his ministry has added to their number.

b. Opposition to Ministry in Jerusalem (9:26–30)

The persecutor from Jerusalem now faces persecution there and barely escapes Stephen’s fate at the hands of his former “zealot” compatriots. Like 9:19b–25, this section also prefigures the shape of Paul’s ministry among his own people. Ironically, as in 9:24–25 (and, in a different sense, 9:17–18), it is members of the group he formerly persecuted who now save his life (9:30).

I. PARALLELS WITH DAMASCUS MINISTRY

Paul’s experience in Jerusalem turns out to parallel his experience in Damascus: his conversion seems too astonishing; he preaches boldly; he faces threats; and he escapes. Scholars have suggested some detailed parallels:⁸²²

Event	Acts 9:13–25 (Damascus)	Acts 9:26–30 (Jerusalem)
Reticence to believe Saul	9:13–14	9:26
Reassurance	9:15–16	9:27
Saul’s association with disciples	9:19b	9:28a
Saul’s bold preaching	9:20–22	9:28b–29a
A plot against him	9:23–24	9:29b
Paul’s escape	9:25	9:30

818. Bruce, *Commentary*, 204n45.

819. For “children” as a title or analogy for students, see, e.g., 4 *Bar.* 7:24; *Sipre Deut.* 34.3.1–3, 5; 305.3.4; *b. Pesah.* 112a; *Šabb.* 25b; 31a; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:6 (Moses to Israel); 51:1; Eunapius *Lives* 486, 493. For teachers as fathers, see, e.g., 2 *Kgs* 2:12; 4 *Bar.* 2:4, 6, 8; 5:5; *t. Sanh.* 7:9; Matt 23:9; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.490; 1.25.536, 537; *Iambl. V.P.* 35.250; in second- to fifth-century Christian usage, see Hall, *Scripture*, 50.

820. Dio’s claim to know nothing was modeled after that of Socrates (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.14), whom Dio in fact surely considered wise.

821. Gaventa, *Acts*, 154. Because Luke employs μαθητής so frequently (twenty-eight times) in Acts, however, we cannot be certain that the connection is deliberate.

822. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 438; and Talbert, *Acts*, 88, both following Gill, “Structure of Acts 9.”

The events are parallel because of Saul's conversion and evangelistic zeal; although we might well therefore expect such events in both locations, Luke underlines the parallel by choosing to record the same sorts of details in both places.

II. COMPARING LUKE AND PAUL

Although Luke structures his material to parallel events in Damascus, he draws from genuine tradition. Paul mentions this trip to Jerusalem in his own correspondence (Gal 1:18–19), incidentally corroborating the major point in Luke's narration.⁸²³ That Paul must have evangelized here as Luke claims is clear from Paul's own claim that he began his ministry in Jerusalem (Rom 15:19);⁸²⁴ although he probably preached earlier in and around Damascus (cf. Gal 1:17), Jerusalem took pride of place as the theological starting point.

Acts 9:26–30	Gal 1:17b–19
Paul went from Damascus to Jerusalem (9:25–26)	Paul went from Damascus to Jerusalem (1:17b–18)
Barnabas made the introduction to the disciples (9:26–27)	— (though Paul's letters attest Barnabas's prominence)
Paul met the apostles (9:27)	Paul met Cephas and James (1:18–19)
Paul continued in association with the apostles (9:28)	Paul stayed with Cephas fifteen days (1:18)
Paul's stay was apparently relatively brief (9:29–30)	Paul's stay was brief (1:18)

Apart from omissions that betray different emphases, the one element of Paul's account that contrasts starkly with Luke's is Paul's claim that he met only Peter and James (Gal 1:18–19) whereas Luke claims he met the "apostles."⁸²⁵ Paul's claim could be understood as a polemic against the tradition later followed by Luke here, but this solution does not comport well with how frequently the majority of elements in the two narratives correspond. The difference between the two accounts need not reflect polemic; in addition to reflecting the distinct interests of the two authors, the different narration fits Luke's tendency to generalize and summarize. The more complete Jerusalem endorsement of Paul's ministry probably came later (Gal 2:2, 7–9), but the present occasion may (with Acts 15:25–26) serve this rhetorical function for Luke.

Some other elements that are prominent in one account (such as persecution in Acts and meeting with Peter in Galatians) are omitted by the other, as one would expect from different writers making different points. Luke, like other ancient historians, "is summarizing and generalizing a great deal of data in a small space."⁸²⁶ Paul is emphasizing his lack of dependence on the prior apostles, and his oath in Gal 1:20 might suggest that some questioned his own account of matters, perhaps because some of "the facts were . . . ambiguous."⁸²⁷

Although both Paul and Luke are sincere, the former emphasizes his independence from Jerusalem and the latter his continuity with it.⁸²⁸ Luke is summarizing, not fabricating; although on this occasion Paul presumably met only with Peter and James (as he claims in Gal 1:18–19), Luke is not freely inventing material for his apologetic,

823. See further esp. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 133–42.

824. On Paul starting in Jerusalem, see also Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 278.

825. Bruce, *Commentary*, 206, suggests that this is probably a "generalizing plural." Reconciling Acts and Gal 1:17–18 was an issue for John Chrysostom in *Cat. Act.* 15.2–4 (Martin, *Acts*, 181).

826. Witherington, *Acts*, 325n88.

827. Johnson, *Acts*, 174.

828. *Ibid.* (noting that these divergences further underline "the essential historicity of those points held in agreement"); cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 118, 126.

since by his day specifying “Peter and James” would probably sound more authoritative than simply generalizing “the apostles” (cf. Acts 15:6–13).⁸²⁹

III. TRYING TO JOIN THE DISCIPLES (9:26)

Both Acts and Paul testify that Paul went from Damascus to Jerusalem (Gal 1:17–18; Acts 26:20);⁸³⁰ Paul may have already viewed Jerusalem as the place to start the mission (Rom 15:19; cf. Acts 1:8).⁸³¹ Because the Nabateans “controlled the caravan routes that passed through the Sinai or the Arabian desert to the south, as well as the routes to the east,”⁸³² a journey to Jerusalem also might be safest; Paul had relatives there and had grown up there. Yet Paul certainly would have to expect to face hostility there as well. If we take seriously both Paul’s chronology (Gal 1:17–2:1) and Luke’s claim that he faced Jewish opposition in Damascus (Acts 9:23), the historical Paul must have anticipated some opposition; word would have traveled from Damascus not only to Christians but to their enemies. Even without either of these elements, Paul might hope to testify (as he did in 22:3–21) and plead his case (cf. 26:2–23) but would have to wonder how his former colleagues in persecuting Nazarenes would respond to him.

That Jerusalem’s Christians are afraid of Paul is understandable, though it does not suit the philosophic ideal of a wise sage that Luke may later apply to Paul (e.g., 20:24; 27:21).⁸³³ Ironically, people were earlier afraid to associate (κολλᾶσθαι) with the Christians in Jerusalem (5:13), and it was the hostile authorities who feared rather than the disciples (5:26). Here, however, the disciples (plainly meaning all the Christians, 6:1–2, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 38; 11:26, 29; 13:52; distinct from the “apostles,” 9:27) are reticent to let Paul associate (κολλᾶσθαι) with them because they (for a very different reason) fear him.⁸³⁴

Their skepticism concerning Paul seems more plausible on Luke’s vague chronology of Paul’s conversion (“after many days,” 9:23) than in Paul’s two years or so (see comment on Acts 9:23).⁸³⁵ Surely they would have heard of his conversion by now from travelers from Damascus, as Damascus believers had learned quickly of Paul’s mission (9:13).⁸³⁶ Disciples in Damascus—at least the ones Paul had made (9:25)—risked their own safety to help him, but disciples in Jerusalem were afraid to associate with him.

829. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 139 (their argument that Paul must have been at least accepted by the apostles for Gal 1:23–24 to be true is less convincing).

830. Despite disagreement on the identification of Gal 2:1–10 with either Acts 11:30 or Acts 15, nearly all agree that the visit of Gal 1:18–24 is the same as Acts 9:26–30 (e.g., Morgado, “Paul in Jerusalem”); for some differences of perspective, see comment on Acts 9:30.

831. Riesner, *Early Period*, 263. C. Williams, *Acts*, 23, suggests Luke’s emphasis on the gospel going from Jerusalem, but it was Paul’s as well.

832. Riesner, *Early Period*, 262 (noting that Paul thus could not carry out a mission in those regions once he incurred their opposition). Nabatean graffiti appear along the Negev and Sinai caravan routes as well as in the Arabian Peninsula (Drijvers, “Inscriptions,” 165).

833. On sages’ discouragement of fear, see, e.g., Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 66.10 (though Musonius frankly admits that even sages struggled to fulfill this ideal, 6, pp. 54.35–56.7). Marguerat, *Historian*, 195–96, suggests that God continues to overcome the resistance of his own followers (in this case, in their fear to trust Saul’s conversion) even after having overcome Saul, their enemy.

834. Luke did not believe that the basis for such “association” always accorded with God’s will (cf. Acts 10:28).

835. Barrett, *Acts*, 460–61, suggests that they would have doubted only “his theological understanding of the Christian faith” rather than his conversion.

836. Paul speaks of their glorifying God because of his conversion (Gal 1:24), but this was *after* he had visited Jerusalem (1:18–24). (Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 137–38, think that people may have feared his theological extremism, that he would attract trouble, or that his proximity raised the stakes for those who had merely heard from a distance.)

The problem of the disciples in Jerusalem, however, is not one of information, since Paul certainly claims to be a disciple here; it is one of trust. (In Acts, ironically, the plural participle of “believing,” used here, normally designates “believers,” albeit in Jesus.) We should remember that some of the Jerusalem disciples had suffered at Paul’s hands, as had fellow disciples close to them. They may have believed, despite reports from the smaller Christian community in Damascus, that he was a spy;⁸³⁷ Paul himself later uses this image figuratively for those he counts as false Christians (Gal 2:4).⁸³⁸ Meanwhile, and far more dangerously, Saul will have real enemies among his former allies (Acts 9:29).

IV. BARNABAS INTERCEDES (9:27)

Although feared by the majority of Christians (9:26), Paul is introduced to the leaders, the apostles, by Barnabas (9:27). This comports with the basic outline of his own account, where he meets only with a small group (Peter and James in Gal 1:18–19), though Luke reports the encounter more generally as concerning the “apostles.”⁸³⁹ Early interpreters seeking to reconcile the accounts sometimes noted that “the historian, for conciseness, often omits incidents and condenses the times.”⁸⁴⁰

As others narrated the works of God or Christ (employing this verb, Luke 8:39; Acts 12:17; cf. Luke 9:10; Acts 8:33), so Barnabas here testifies on Saul’s behalf. That he was already favorably known to the apostles (as shown in Acts 4:36) cannot have hurt his testimony. That Barnabas and Paul came to be closely associated through later ministry together (11:25, 30; 12:25; 13:2, 7; 14:12) is clear from Paul’s own writings (Gal 2:1, 13; 1 Cor 9:6). Both Paul (2 Cor 5:19–20; Phil 4:3) and Greco-Roman ideology appreciated agents of concord who reconciled opposing factions.⁸⁴¹ A friend was one who shared one’s confidences,⁸⁴² sorrows, and dangers;⁸⁴³ Barnabas here becomes a staunch ally of Paul, coming to his aid in a friendship that endures at least until Acts 15:39.

Barnabas is also a fairly consistent character in Acts: as he here defends Paul against detractors, he later defends Mark against Paul (15:37); he welcomes Paul in his

837. Despite the proximity of this report to Paul’s being let down (Acts 9:25), and the possible common background of both in Josh 2:1–16, Luke makes nothing of the possible connection (he could have specified it with explicit wording related to spying as in Josh 2:1). The disciples could think of “spies” against Jesus (Luke 20:20).

838. He might reverse and reapply the image once applied to himself, but the image was common enough that this suggestion is at most a possibility like any other speculation. For the widespread use of spies, see, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 10.326–27, 465–514; Xen. *Cav. Com.* 4.16; Cyr. 6.1.39–43; 6.2.2, 11; Caesar *Sp. W.* 13; Tac. *Hist.* 2.34 (and deserters); Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.42; Gen 42:9–34; Num 13:2–32; 14:7, 36, 38; Josh 2:1; 7:2; Judg 1:24; 18:2, 14; 1 Sam 26:4; 2 Sam 10:3; 1 Chr 19:3; 1 Macc 5:38; 12:26; 4Q365 32 3–4; *Jub.* 42:5; *Test. Sim.* 4:3; *Jos. Ant.* 7.118; 13.175; 15.285, 289, 295, 366; 16.236; 18.321, 323; *War* 1.318, 492; 2.491; *Sipre Deut.* 344.3.2; *b. Me’il.* 17a; see further Richmond, “Spies”; Onken and Umbach, “Espionage”; cf. Epict. *Diatr.* 4.13.5; Campbell, “Exploratores,” 277.

839. One cannot dismiss the meeting with Barnabas on the grounds that he was later an “apostle” (1 Cor 9:5–6; cf. Acts 14:4); he was not one of the Jerusalem apostles, which is Paul’s point (Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 140), and probably not yet designated an apostle before his sending out in Acts 13:2–4; cf. 14:4, 14).

840. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 21 (Martin, *Acts*, 112); see also Bede *Comm. Acts* 9.26 (Martin, *Acts*, 112).

841. E.g., Cic. *Att.* 1.3, 5, 10; Pliny *Ep.* 1.5.8; Tac. *Hist.* 2.5; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.38; Symm. *Ep.* 1.55; Phil 4:3; Welborn, *Politics*, 70–71. The rabbis highly praised peace and making peace (*m. ’Ab.* 1:12; 2:8; *Pe’ah* 1:1; *t. Sanh.* 1:2; *Sipra Behuq.* p. 1.261.1.14; *Sipre Num.* 42.2.3; *Sipre Deut.* 199.3.1; *’Abot R. Nat.* 4; 28; 40 A; 6; §19; 48, §134 B).

842. See, e.g., Isoc. *Demon.* 24–25; *Ad Nic.* 28; Philo *Sobr.* 55; Sen. *Y. Dial.* 10.15.2; Mus. *Ruf.* 9, p. 68.13–15; Max. *Tyre* 14.6; Sir 6:9; 22:22; 27:17; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.207; Keener, *John*, 1010; Mitchell, “Friends,” 259.

843. E.g., Isoc. *Demon.* 25; Val. *Max.* 4.7.pref.; even to die together (Eurip. *Orest.* 1069–74, 1155; *Iph. Taur.* 674–86; Char. *Chaer.* 4.3.5; 7.1.7; cf. *Sent. Syr. Men.* 406–7; *Syr. Men. Epit.* 22–23) or for one another (Diod. *Sic.* 10.4.4–6; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.7.3; Val. *Max.* 2.6.11; 4.7 passim, e.g., 4.7.2; Mus. *Ruf.* 7, p. 58.23). See more fully Keener, *John*, 1004–6.

ministry in Antioch (11:22–25).⁸⁴⁴ Here he reports that Paul has “spoken boldly” (ἐπαρρησιάσατο), as Luke reports of Peter (2:29; 4:13), Apollos (18:26), and the Spirit-empowered church (4:29, 31), and as he often reports concerning Paul himself later (13:46; 14:3; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31); Paul did so “in the name of the Lord” just as the authorities recognized that the Jerusalem apostles had done (4:18; 5:40). Given the unfortunate parting of the ministry team in 15:39 and Luke’s focus on Paul, it is unlikely that Luke would have simply invented the report of Barnabas befriending and aiding Paul.

V. SPEAKING BOLDLY (9:28)

Paul continued to speak “boldly” in the Lord’s name in Jerusalem exactly as in Damascus (9:27; cf. 9:20); this was a mark of being filled with the Spirit (4:29, 31) and continues to characterize Paul to the end of his ministry (13:46; 14:3; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31; cf. 2 Cor 3:12; Eph 6:19–20; Phil 1:20; 1 Thess 2:2). For the meaning of παρρησία and its cognate verb, see comment on Acts 4:13. Given both Paul’s account of Judean churches’ unfamiliarity with him by sight (Gal 1:22) and the disciples’ initial fear of him (Acts 9:26), most of his preaching was undoubtedly evangelistic. Given Paul’s firsthand knowledge of the depth of hostility against vocal followers of Jesus, this preacher “in the Lord’s name” is clearly completely devoted to Jesus, aware of Jesus’s warning that Paul will suffer “for my name” (9:16).

Luke does not mention much time being spent with disciples beyond Barnabas and the “apostles” (9:27), though clearly some others knew Paul (9:30). That Paul was “going in and out”⁸⁴⁵ with the apostles suggests that he was welcomed into their company; though Paul’s writings claim that he knew only Peter and James personally at this point (see comment on Acts 9:27), Paul and Luke may both imply that Paul was accepted as something of a colleague in ministry. (Peter, as leader of a growing movement, would hardly give Paul fifteen days without somehow recognizing his importance, which may be part of Paul’s point in recounting their time together in Gal 1:18.)

Paul’s own account of this trip to Jerusalem suggests that any time he spent preaching there must have been brief, since he saw only two of the leaders of the Jerusalem church (Gal 1:18–19). Nevertheless, it does not necessarily exclude such preaching, as if Galatians “hardly allows time” for these events.⁸⁴⁶ In Galatians, Paul had reason to emphasize the brevity of his stay, and the “fifteen days” are only the amount of time he stayed with Peter (though Paul does suggest that this was the main purpose for his visit). We should not be surprised if Paul’s preaching in Jerusalem, which appears in Acts, was likewise necessarily short lived (see comment on Acts 9:29).

VI. ARGUING WITH HELLENISTS (9:29)

If Paul’s boldness in Acts 9:28 resembles Peter’s in 4:13, his debating recalls Stephen (the only analogous use of the verb in Luke-Acts is 6:9). He once helped fellow Hellenists to kill Stephen, and many in antiquity believed that God repaid evildoers with the same suffering they had given others (e.g., Esth 9:25).⁸⁴⁷ Although this idea of suffering need not be in view here, the reversal of Saul’s state is significant. By

844. For Barnabas as a mediating character in both Acts and Paul’s letters, see, e.g., Öhler, *Barnabas*.

845. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 106, regard this as “a Semitism for free intercourse.” See comment on Acts 1:21; for the biblical echo, see further Keener, *John*, 811; cf. *Jub.* 35:6–7; *1 En.* 71:8; *2 En.* 16:1.

846. Hanson, *Acts*, 117.

847. See, e.g., Diod. Sic. 20.62.2; *Jub.* 4:32; 35:10–11; more fully, comment on Acts 3:2.

taking “the role of the fallen Stephen,” Paul again experiences the fulfillment of the warning of suffering in Acts 9:16.⁸⁴⁸ Especially if Luke anticipates any first-time hearers still unaware that Saul is Paul (13:9), the parallel will especially build suspense as to Saul’s likely fate.

Jerusalem Hellenists were, if anything, probably more zealous for the traditions than many other Jerusalemites were; that they had left their homelands to settle in Jerusalem shows “that they were not average Jews.”⁸⁴⁹ (On the identity of the “Hellenists,” see discussion at Acts 6:1.) That Paul was their former ally and probably a member of their synagogue (6:9–10) made the situation all the more desperate; whereas one should seek to honor one’s hometown by one’s behavior,⁸⁵⁰ Paul had embarrassed his associates. That they sought to “attack” him fits the pattern in Acts;⁸⁵¹ “kill” recalls most recently 9:23, reminding the reader that Paul is so radical that he will preach openly regardless of the cost to his life—just like Stephen. In so doing, Paul merely follows and models Jesus’s teaching (e.g., Luke 9:23; 14:27). Apparently before the confrontation ends with his being sent away, he knows that his testimony will be rejected (Acts 22:18).

Historically, it is likely that Paul would have sought to correct the falsehoods about Christ he had once propagated, after he realized his error (cf. 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13–14). Some might question whether he did so in Jerusalem (Gal 1:18–19 might be used to argue against it, but cf. 1:23), but one of his own letters shows that he clearly did preach Christ’s good news “beginning in Jerusalem” (Rom 15:19).

On the historical level, would any of Paul’s relatives who may have lived in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 23:6, 16) have repudiated him at this point? There is no reason to assume that they must have done so (cf. 23:16). Though much public sentiment in Jerusalem concerning the Jesus movement seems to have moved from favorable (2:47; 5:13) to unfavorable (12:3) after Stephen’s death,⁸⁵² some Pharisees (perhaps including some relatives; cf. discussion at Acts 23:6) may have held to Gamaliel’s more tolerant line (5:34–39), disapproving of Paul’s previous excesses in persecution. They may have also listened to his testimony (if not already turned against it by intervening reports) or even heard earlier reports from his companions on the road to Damascus. But Paul’s family members in Jerusalem were probably also part of the synagogue from which the persecutors originated (6:9), and we cannot be sure where they stood regarding the Jesus movement.⁸⁵³ The likeliest guess is that they would have remained publicly silent

848. Tannehill, *Acts*, 114.

849. Skarsaune, *Shadow*, 154 (comparing [n. 13] “present day English-speaking Brooklyn Jews, settling in Jerusalem’s ultra-orthodox quarters”).

850. E.g., Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 44, 47, 69.

851. Although ἐπιχειρέω has a broader sense of “undertake” (e.g., Luke 1:1; Acts 19:13; 2 Macc 2:29; 7:19; 10:15), it can mean “attack,” even in the same document (e.g., 2 Macc 9:2; cf. Men. Rhet. 2.1–2, 375.15–17; cf. the idiom “lay hands on,” e.g., John 7:30).

852. Though the evidence of Acts 12:3 also reflects a period of broader changes, when nationalism was becoming increasingly prominent.

853. If Luke knew that Paul was rejected by his family, he had good reason to report it (Luke 12:53; 14:26; 18:29; 21:16; cf. 2:48), but Paul may have chosen never to mention it (cf. 18:20), so that Luke may not have known. Those converted to radical philosophies such as Cynicism (Alciph. *Farm.* 38 [Euthydicus to Philiscus], 3.40, ¶1) or Essenism (4Q477 2 II, 8 if its sense resembles that in II, 6) might reject earthly families. Indeed, even Socrates (Xen. *Apol.* 20), Stoics (Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 102.14–16, 21–31; p. 104.30–32), Pythagoreans (Iambl. *V.P.* 34.246; 35.257), and others (Lucian *Hermot.* 23) recognized a higher allegiance; Romans also valued duty to the state above family (Val. Max. 2.2.4). Some Judeans, however, would consider Paul a traitor to Judaism regardless of his relation with his family (cf. Barclay, “Paul among Jews”). Some attacked Christianity for valuing spiritual above natural families (Mac. Magn. *Apocrit.* 2.7–12); others similarly attacked converts to Judaism (Tac. *Hist.* 5.5).

during the opposition⁸⁵⁴ and perhaps experienced some public shame,⁸⁵⁵ but some of his family, at least, continued to value him (23:16). Unless they openly converted, it is unlikely that they would face persecution (apart from gossip); if they were of high social status, they may have been persecuted only if, like Paul, they were speaking out.⁸⁵⁶

Paul does not mention opposition on this occasion in his account in Galatians, but there he describes only his relationship with the Jerusalem church (Gal 1:18–19). He elsewhere may suggest that he was among the evangelists driven from Judea (1 Thess 2:14–15, if “us” in 2:15 literally includes Paul;⁸⁵⁷ cf. Acts 8:1–4). Opposition could have risen relatively quickly if Paul was preaching publicly (Acts 9:28) and if Paul’s former allies had already learned of his turnabout in Damascus, as they surely would have.⁸⁵⁸

VII. ESCAPING JERUSALEM TO TARBUS (9:30)

As disciples had to help the bold preacher escape Damascus (9:25), so believers now aid his flight from Jerusalem (cf. 17:10, 14; 19:30–31). In the larger context of Luke’s narrative, a vision in the temple presumably helped persuade Paul to leave (22:18), since he was otherwise unwilling to go (22:19–20);⁸⁵⁹ including that information may help protect Paul’s honor further. Historically, the relative brevity of Paul’s stay in Jerusalem after his conversion is suggested by the fact that most churches in Judea did not know him by sight (Gal 1:22)⁸⁶⁰ and especially by the fact that he stayed with Peter only fifteen days though this relationship was a major purpose of his visit (1:18). Paul probably traveled overland by road (note *κατήγαγον*)⁸⁶¹ to Caesarea on the coast (cf. Acts 21:15–16; 23:23, 33; on Caesarea, see comment on Acts 10:1). Luke might imply that Paul spent some time ministering in Caesarea before leaving, because Luke mentions (in probable Lukan hyperbole) that Paul ministered in “all Judea” before reaching the Gentiles (26:20), but a wider Judean ministry might fit better if it at least includes the journeys in 11:30 and 12:25, a suggestion that could also comport better with Judean believers’ lack of direct relationship with Paul in

854. Relatives normally sought to conceal other relatives’ behavior that would shame the whole family; hence the concern of Jesus’s family in Mark 3:20–31 (cf. Malina, *Windows*, 80).

855. Family strife is attributed to a demon in *Test. Sol.* 18:15; is part of Socrates’s tests of endurance in Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 104.27; and is the cause of a young man’s suicide in Val. Max. 5.8.3. Betrayal by relatives was considered particularly heinous (cf. slaughter by relatives in an evil time, Diod. Sic. 17.13.6; Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.4.18; *Hist. rom.* 7.5.28; Lucan *C.W.* 2.148–51; Ovid *Metam.* 1.144–48; Sen. *Y. Ben.* 5.15.3; Jos. *War* 6.208–12).

856. Cf. comments on Paul’s *possible* (albeit not probable) relatives in Rom 16:7 under “Paul’s Theological Reversal” in the introduction to Acts 9:1–19a; cf. also believers still meeting in Mary’s apparently well-endowed home in 12:12–13.

857. Instead of being a generalizing plural. In favor of its including Paul, he specifically uses “they” in the context when not including himself. As in Damascus, Jerusalem might account for one or more of his synagogue beatings (2 Cor 11:24).

858. Although it can only be speculation at this remove, it would fit human behavior (including in religious circles) if his previous progress beyond peers (Gal 1:14) generated jealousy and hence facilitated later enmity (as well as esteem for his gifts, facilitating recognition of how dangerous he would be).

859. Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 84, thinks that this Gentile commission made Paul less welcome with the Jerusalem church. But mainstream Jewish teaching did not oppose making proselytes, nor do we have reason to believe that Paul would have raised circumcision as an issue at this point. The Jerusalem church may have been ready for Paul’s departure, but in order to reduce conflict with their peers, conflict that they would not readily court after Stephen’s martyrdom and Saul’s earlier persecution of them. Granted, if historically Peter had opposed Paul’s Gentile mission here, Luke would not have reported it, but Paul might well have, especially in view of Peter’s own change of heart reported in Acts 10 and Peter’s support in Gal 2:8–9.

860. Although we might distinguish “churches of Judea” from those in Jerusalem (C. Williams, *Acts*, 23; Bruce, *Commentary*, 207), this distinction may characterize Luke (Luke 5:17; 6:17; Acts 1:8; 2:14; 8:1; 26:20; cf. Matt 2:1; 3:5; 4:25) more than Paul (cf. Rom 15:31). We should not deny that Paul’s persecution occurred in Judea simply because of Gal 1:22, since, presumably, Paul was able to arrest only a fraction of the disciples.

861. Contrast perhaps 28:12, but here Paul is the active indicative verb’s object.

Gal 1:22. From Caesarea Maritima on the coast, one could easily catch a ship sailing north along the coast of Syria toward Cilicia.

The believers “sent away” (ἐξαπέστειλαν) Paul, perhaps with someone accompanying him (as in Acts 17:14–15; he was probably accompanied at least en route to Caesarea).⁸⁶² We cannot be certain (especially if he had relatives in Jerusalem) that he lacked resources, but it is also possible that their “sending” him included paying the cost of his voyage to Tarsus.⁸⁶³ Whether Paul had had property of his own that might have been confiscated while he was away in Nabatea, after word of his behavior got back to Jerusalem, is hard to say; we do not even know for sure to what extent persecution may have continued in his absence (cf. 9:31; though he also seems not to have been the only persecutor, 1 Thess 2:15).⁸⁶⁴

If they sent him to Tarsus, his hometown, rather than to some other community where they themselves had contacts (e.g., Barnabas’s Cyprus, Acts 4:36), then presumably Paul retained some relatives in Tarsus (see comment on Acts 9:11; 21:39). Although it has been argued above that some of Paul’s family settled in Jerusalem (23:6, 16; otherwise he was simply sent there for advanced study, as Tarsians often went abroad for such study), he probably had other relatives in Tarsus.⁸⁶⁵ Family friends might also receive him if he could count on the name of his family, though Luke’s emphasis is on his new, spiritual family sending him on, rather than his genetic family in Jerusalem.

Whereas Paul’s earlier years in Tarsus may have been too few (see comment on Acts 22:3) to have provided extensive training for his future ministry among Greeks, this period would have been more influential.⁸⁶⁶ Tarsus was a great intellectual center, especially in this period (see more fully comment on Acts 9:11), though it was declining by the end of the first century.⁸⁶⁷ Paul’s call to the Gentiles would probably encourage him to learn their culture during this period (9:15; Gal 1:16), and even Pharisaic tradition apparently encouraged accommodating local customs that did not violate Torah.⁸⁶⁸

Luke does not mention missionary work during this period of Paul’s life,⁸⁶⁹ but it seems unthinkable, in view of Acts 9:20, 22, and 27–28, that he would neglect at least the Jewish community of Tarsus, and Paul appears to imply his preaching in this period in Gal 1:21–23.⁸⁷⁰ It seems likelier than not that Paul may have helped start the

862. On the greater dangers especially as far as Antipatris, see comment on Acts 23:31–32, though that situation reflects a more volatile period.

863. So Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 68. Cf. Rom 15:24, 28; 1 Cor 16:6; 3 John 6 (though not always; cf. 1 Cor 16:11). If Paul was well liked, people might count it an honor to show him hospitality (cf., e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 6.28.2; Lucian *Dem.* 63; *Lucius* 3; *Affairs* 9; *Jos. Asen.* 3:2–3/3–4).

864. His relatives’ property would not have been confiscated, and they may have been willing to help him escape privately; but Luke tells us only of the help of the disciples here in contrast to Acts 23:16. We should not infer from this later silence that the Jerusalem church did not want to help him in Acts 23 (this would virtually imply that it wanted him dead!), since it seems unlikely, despite the church’s size, that many of its members would have been privy to this information (unless the church associated not only with Pharisees [15:5] but with this particular group of assassins).

865. Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 87, suggests that he returned to his aged parents and that he (now about thirty) could take over their trade. His parents’ residing there makes better sense of his long stay there versus his failure to visit Jerusalem from Damascus—unless (as is likely) Jerusalem remained too dangerous for the former persecutor. From Acts 23:6, I think it likelier that his father (even if not his grandfather; “son of Pharisees” may be a generalizing plural) had settled in Jerusalem, though the case is not certain.

866. Cf. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 35.

867. See Rapske, *Custody*, 74–75.

868. Cf. the proverb (possibly cited at least as early as R. Meir in the late second century) in *Exod. Rab.* 47:5.

869. Philosophic students were sometimes urged to learn to practice the discipline before attempting to teach it to others (Epict. *Diatr.* 4.8.35–36).

870. If Paul preached all around Jerusalem (Rom 15:19) and was in Syria and Cilicia (Gal 1:21), he surely preached in the latter as well (Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 156). Schnabel,

churches of Cilicia later mentioned (Acts 15:23, 41),⁸⁷¹ possibly suggesting that they were in Paul's sphere of ministry. Still, lack of mention of church-planting ministry there during Paul's early Asian ministry (13:13–14:25; contrast Barnabas's homeland of Cyprus in 13:4–12; 15:39) might suggest that he had not been well received by everyone there (perhaps supplying some of the beatings of 2 Cor 11:23–25 omitted by Luke). Although Luke mentions only Tarsus here, it is not impossible that Paul would have also spearheaded, influenced, or been involved in outreach to other cities in Cilicia with Jewish communities.⁸⁷² Given the link between the Cilician Tarsus and Jonah's "Tarshish" in popular thought,⁸⁷³ some hearers may have envisioned Paul's migration there as foreshadowing his Gentile ministry (as Jonah evangelized Nineveh, Luke 11:32); Luke makes nothing of this, however, nor is Paul's return to his home area compared or contrasted with Jonah's flight from God's will.⁸⁷⁴

Paul's own writings seem to confirm that he left for Cilicia (whose most prominent city was Tarsus) after his brief stay in Jerusalem (Gal 1:21).⁸⁷⁵ Paul's mention of Syria as well as Cilicia in that passage could be explained in several ways compatible with Acts 9:30. First, Syria is a location where he may have stayed briefly en route to Cilicia after Caesarea (at the least, ships would stop at various ports along the way, though this would probably be too insignificant to warrant mention). Second and more significant, it may refer to his later ministry in Antioch (11:26; 13:1), which Paul seems to assume that his Galatian audience knew was a base of operation for him (Gal 2:11). Third, even though both locations are articular in Gal 1:21 (hence the phrase there is not technically a hendiadys), Syria and Cilicia were linked administratively in this period as a single Roman province, making it natural to mention them together (see also comment on Acts 23:34–35).⁸⁷⁶

Given Luke's emphasis on placing the kingdom before family (Luke 9:59–62; 18:29; 21:16), his silence about abandonment of Paul by a wife (which would have probably happened during the three years of Gal 1:17–18 if it occurred) probably speaks against its likelihood. Marriage was the norm for young Jewish men, especially according to later rabbis.⁸⁷⁷ But it was not as mandatory in this period as later rabbis made it (there were many exceptions, almost certainly including John and Jesus),⁸⁷⁸ and Paul may have been still a young man (cf. comment at Acts 7:58) at this point.

Missionary, 260, offers reasons why Paul would have preached in Tarsus, including local connections, local citizenship that offered some protection, a Jewish community, and the city's strategic significance.

871. See esp. Wilson, "Cilicia" (suggesting six primary cities in which Paul may have begun churches, including Tarsus and Adana); Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 157. Riesner, *Early Period*, 250–51, brilliantly argues that Paul's mission started at Tarsus to follow the sequence of Isa 66:19 (its Tarshish was interpreted in the NT period as Cilician Tarsus; Jos. *Ant.* 1.127; 9.208), but other elements in the sequence seem too incongruent with Paul's ministry to support this interpretation. (Others think that Paul applied Isa 66:19 to the original Tartessus in Spain [Jewett, *Romans*, 924, following Aus, "Plans," 240–41].)

872. See Schnabel, *Missionary*, 69, noting (from east to west) "Anazarbos, Mallos, Soloi, Sebaste, Korykos, Seleucia and Olba."

873. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 175; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 521 (citing Jos. *Ant.* 1.127; 9.208; Tg. *Jon.* on Gen 10:4; Tg. 1 Chr. 1:7; Gen. Rab. 37:1; y. Meg. 71b).

874. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 176, note that Paul went to Tarsus for reasons opposite those of Jonah—to preach.

875. As often noted (e.g., Hanson, *Acts*, 117; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 182–83; Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 83).

876. Green, "Syria and Cilicia"; cf. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 275–79. One governor in this period was Polemo, though probably briefly (in 41 C.E.; Dio Cass. 60.8.2; Dmitriev, "Grant"). Syria was adjacent to Cilicia's eastern border (cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.18.80; 5.22.91; Dio Cass. 47.30.1; 48.41.2).

877. For marrying, see, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 4.290; *m. Yebam.* 6:6; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 22:2; *Gen. Rab.* 23:4; 34:14; for marrying young, see, e.g., Ps.-Phoc. 175–76; *m. 'Ab.* 5:21; *b. Qidd.* 29b–30a; see further discussion in Keener, "Marriage," 681–84.

878. See Keener, "Marriage," 682–83; McArthur, "Celibacy"; Thornton, "Bachelors."

Some scholars believe that Paul must have been married to be a member of the Sanhedrin and hence vote against Stephen (Acts 26:10), but he was almost certainly not a member of the Sanhedrin (cf. comment on 26:10) and likely was never married.

Luke leaves Saul in Tarsus,⁸⁷⁹ where Barnabas later retrieves him in 11:25. Because of the competing demands of chronology, geography, and biography, historians could not follow all stories the entire way through. Luke uses geography to connect interrupted stories, so that he picks up Paul in Tarsus (11:25), Philip in Caesarea (8:40; 21:8), and the implied author of 16:10 in 20:5.⁸⁸⁰ It was customary to “return to the point” after a digression.⁸⁸¹ In a different way than do predictions and foreshadowings of suffering, such shifts in focus can create suspense; ancient storytellers and writers might tease their audiences with promises of developing a topic more fully later (e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 25.16–17).

c. Temporarily Positive Conclusion (9:31)

If Luke will end his entire work on a positive note (instead of Paul’s execution, Acts 28:30–31), we should not be surprised if he ends various sections positively, too, in accordance with his theme (cf. 1:8; 28:31) that nothing will stop the gospel. This verse summarizes the preceding section (on summary statements, see comment on Acts 2:41–47; 6:7); ancient speakers and writers often recapitulated the substance of what they had treated so far, sometimes long before the end of their work.⁸⁸²

This verse serves a transitional function to the next section but is also a positive conclusion to 9:1–30. In this respect it is comparable to 12:24. In the latter case, the church has peace because God strikes the persecutor dead; in the present case, the church has peace because God converts the persecutor. God is sovereign in how he brings peace about, but in every case in Acts, persecutions are local or temporary. Devastating as they may prove to the disciples who experience them, they belong to a larger picture of God’s work in history, which ultimately prevails.

Although 9:32–43 will continue with the Judean ministry (as part of the Petrine material that leads into the Cornelius story), Luke is preparing to transition into the evangelization of Gentiles. What he immediately summarizes, however, is not so much the Judean and Samaritan mission but the way God ended the persecution by converting the chief persecutor (ending the Pauline material until 11:25).⁸⁸³ The idea of a period of peace after testing and before the next period of testing was familiar from Scripture (Judg 3:11; 5:31; 8:28) and probably Luke’s perspective on Jesus’s

879. The complaints of some scholars that Luke says little about Paul’s stay in Tarsus (and hence had something to hide) argue from silence, ignoring (1) Luke’s space constraints in one volume to cover everything (even had he omitted speeches, which few historians would consider); (2) Luke’s focus on reaching Rome; (3) his focus on the Gentile mission from Antioch; and (4) his historiographic commitment not to report information that he lacks (as opposed to novelistic fabrication; he has much more information for Paul’s mission in Acts 13–28). Still, it is not impossible that Paul made himself unwelcome in Tarsus for some time afterward (until 15:41).

880. Cf. Tannehill, *Acts*, 112, 124. Witherington, *Acts*, 326, compares here Hellenistic historians’ arrangement “κατὰ γένοϋς, on the basis of regions and to some extent on the basis of ethnic groups who live in those regions or locales.”

881. E.g., Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.1; Polyb. 3.9.6; 3.39.1; 3.59.9; 31.30.4; Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 13; Cic. *Fin.* 2.32.104; *Or. Brut.* 43.148; *Att.* 7.2; Val. Max. 4.8.1; Mus. Ruf. 1, p. 34.34; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.38; 36.7 (after 36.1–6); Max. Tyre 19.1 (returning to 18.9); Philost. *Hrk.* 20.1 (after 18.6–19.9); cf. introductions to digressions, e.g., Thucyd. 1.23.6; Polyb. 3.2.7; Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.1.1 (introducing a digression consuming all of *N.H.* 28–32); Tac. *Hist.* 2.2.

882. E.g., Demosth. *Fals. leg.* 177 (though the speech runs to 343). On recapitulation, see the excursus on summary statements at Acts 2:41–47 (Keener, *Acts*, 1:992–93); comment on Acts 28:16–31.

883. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 107, by contrast, think that the verse introduces Peter’s ministry in Acts 9:32–43.

own ministry (Luke 4:13–14). More generally, Luke’s language evokes earlier biblical descriptions of God giving his people rest from all their enemies.⁸⁸⁴

Luke here uses “church” in a much broader way than merely the local assembly in Jerusalem,⁸⁸⁵ suggesting that the expanding Christian movement carried with it its concept of the disciples as God’s “assembly.” The Greek term could designate any gathering,⁸⁸⁶ even an army (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.94.1), but would probably remind most Greek hearers unfamiliar with Judaism or the Christian movement of a citizen assembly.⁸⁸⁷ Luke’s ideal audience, however, was steeped in the LXX (and, as Paul’s letters indicate, by now conventional Christian usage); they would recognize the traditional label for God’s community. Analogously, the Essenes described themselves as the *qahal*,⁸⁸⁸ the Hebrew term for God’s congregation in the exodus narrative, which the Greek versions translate as ἐκκλησία, or “church.”⁸⁸⁹

That the church “continued”⁸⁹⁰ in fearing the Lord suggests continuity with Acts 5:5, 11; that it was “built up” while enjoying peace could suggest internal cohesion and unity (cf. Rom 14:19; 1 Cor 8:1, 10; 10:23; 1 Thess 5:11)⁸⁹¹ but probably indicates spiritual or numerical growth (cf. 1 Cor 14:3–5, 12, 17, 26; 2 Cor 12:19; 13:10) now that persecution has stopped.⁸⁹² Biblical tradition already spoke of “building up” the community of God;⁸⁹³ Qumran texts indicate that the usage remained familiar among Jesus’s contemporaries.⁸⁹⁴

Luke mentions the three major areas of greater Judea west of the Jordan: Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.⁸⁹⁵ Some scholars suppose that by mentioning Galilee before Samaria, Luke thinks that the former is nearer Judea than the latter,⁸⁹⁶ but whatever one’s view of Luke’s geographic skills outside Judea proper, such a conclusion is hardly warranted from evidence as scant as the sequence in which he names the regions. If he

884. Deut 12:10; 25:19; Josh 21:44; 2 Sam 7:1, 11; 1 Kgs 5:4; 1 Chr 22:9, 18; 2 Chr 14:7; 15:15; cf. Neh 9:28; Esth 9:17. Cf. perhaps 4Q174 1 I, 7.

885. Cf. comment in Hunter, *Message*, 69.

886. Cf. Deissmann, *Light*, 112–13.

887. Including in republican Rome (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.87.1; 7.17.2; 11.50.1) and Jerusalem (Jos. *War* 4.162). See comment on Acts 19:32, 39.

888. With, e.g., Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 121; Brown, Donfried, and Reumann, *Peter*, 92; Harrington, *Matthew*, 29.

889. Frequently noted; e.g., Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:38; Foakes-Jackson and Lake, “Development,” 327–28; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 54; Richardson, *Theology*, 285; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 79; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:629; cf. 1 Macc 2:56.

890. Πορευομένη is probably used here for manner of life, comparable to Heb. *halakah* (see Bruce, *Acts*¹, 209).

891. For political use of the term in ancient literature, see esp. Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 99–101 (citing Soph. *Antig.* 559–662; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.15; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.15; 48.14; Ael. Arist. *Or.* 23.31, 62; 24.8, 32–33; Cic. *Amic.* 7.23; and 1 Corinthians *passim*), despite its rarity in inscriptions (Winter, *Welfare*, 175). For the metaphoric sense of οἰκοδομέω (“edify”) in Luke-Acts, see Luke 6:49; esp. Acts 20:32 (though Luke usually employs the term literally).

892. “Comfort” (παράκλησις) here refers to encouragement (Acts 15:31), not exhortation (13:15), perhaps (but not necessarily) as a foretaste of eschatological hope (Luke 2:25; 6:24). Luke rarely couples the Holy Spirit with nouns of comfort in this manner, but cf. Luke 4:14 (power); Rom 15:13, 19, 30; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:3; Phil 2:1; 1 Thess 1:6.

893. E.g., Ruth 4:11; Pss 51:18; 69:35; 147:2; Jer 1:10; 24:6; 31:4, 28; Ladd, *Theology*, 109; Keener, *Matthew*, 428; cf. Prov 9:1.

894. 4QpPs 37 (4Q171) III, 16; Jeremias, *Theology*, 168.

895. Ancient writers emphasized cities more than regions in the imperial period (Judge, *Pattern*, 20–21), but Luke is certainly capable of noting both (he knows “provinces,” Acts 23:34; 25:1; specifically, e.g., Achaia, 18:12, 27; 19:21; Asia, 6:9; 16:6; 19:10; Macedonia, 16:9–12; 18:5; Pontus, 18:2; and Bithynia, 16:7).

896. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 75 (comparing Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.70); on Luke’s lack of firsthand acquaintance with Judean geography, see esp. Bechard, “Judea,” 682–83 (comparing various other distant non-Judean authors, in contrast to Josephus). The same misinterpretation is often offered for Luke 17:11.

has any rationale at all for the sequence, he could arrange them according to popular Judean views of their Jewish orthodoxy, wishing to keep the predominantly Jewish areas together. Another passage (Acts 15:3–4) provides better evidence that Luke recognized that one could reach Jerusalem from Samaria to its north.⁸⁹⁷

Peace in these regions suggests that the period of persecution that scattered believers in Judea and Samaria (8:1) had ended for the moment, allowing Peter's travels (9:32–43; previously the apostles alone were not scattered, 8:1). It also suggests that the church is now established in the "Judea and Samaria" part of Jesus's words in 1:8, paving the way for the mission to the ends of the earth.

Others doubt that the apostolic movement spread much in Galilee in this period because Luke mentions it only here.⁸⁹⁸ But Luke knew far more than he was able to narrate, and his urban Mediterranean focus left Galilee behind once Jesus began his journey to Jerusalem (though the disciples remained "Galileans," 1:11).⁸⁹⁹ As in Paul (and in contrast to Matthew and Mark, which may be more rooted in conservative Galilean Christian perspectives [perhaps including the originally Galilean Jerusalem apostles] than either Luke or Paul was), Luke's Palestinian geography is Jerusalem-centered.⁹⁰⁰ It was from Jerusalem that the Hellenists provided a bridge to the Gentile mission, on which he focuses, and it is in Jerusalem rather than Galilee that he finds Paul. If we take into account the *Tendenz* of both Paul and Luke, we need not exclude Galilean churches, which Luke does mention at least here. Archaeology supports churches in Galilee (at least from a later period), and the successes reported in the Gospels makes their presence likely.

Excursus: Galilee

Whereas we have dealt elsewhere with Samaria (see comment at Acts 8:5), Galilee merits brief discussion here.⁹⁰¹ Although not prominent in Acts (and, when mentioned there, it usually refers to the disciples or Jesus's mission from the Gospel; Acts 1:11; 2:7; 10:37; 13:31; cf. 5:37), it is common in Luke's Gospel (Luke 1:26; 2:4, 39; 3:1; 4:14, 31; 5:17; 8:26; 13:1–2; 17:11; 22:59; 23:5, 6, 49, 55; 24:6).⁹⁰² Galilee served a positive theological role in the Synoptics in general,⁹⁰³ which may reflect the strength of the Christian movement in the region where Jesus had ministered.⁹⁰⁴

897. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 69.

898. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:473; Witherington, *Acts*, 326. But even if we distrust some of Luke's assumed geography, we need not distrust his explicit information here (Patzia, *Emergence*, 87).

899. See discussion on different Gospel writers' Jerusalem and Galilean perspectives at Acts 1:8.

900. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 35n32, compares the centrality of Jerusalem (Rom 15:19–21, 30; 1 Cor 16:3; Gal 1:17–18; 2:1) and Judea (Rom 15:31; 2 Cor 1:16; Gal 1:22; 1 Thess 2:14) for Paul and his lack of mention of Galilee (though the movement would not have invented its obscure Galilean origins).

901. I borrow the material below from Keener, *John*, 228–31. On Galilee, see fuller discussions in, e.g., Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*; idem, *Galilee and Gospel*; Horsley, *Galilee*. Many emphasize the light that a Galilean context could shed on Jesus's ministry (e.g., Freyne, "Jesus and Archaeology"; idem, "Geography"; Reed, *Archaeology*; Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee*; Race, "Influence").

902. Luke does not include Mark's postresurrection emphasis on Galilee, however; see comment on Acts 1:4.

903. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 50–68, 82–90, 103–15.

904. For a survey of the abundant archaeological evidence, see Saunders, "Synagogues"; Meyers, "Judaism and Christianity," 69, 71. Much earlier, Julian the Apostate repeatedly calls Christians "Galileans" (see Stern, *Authors*, 502–72 passim); cf. Epict. *Diatr.* 4.7.6. His purpose was to emphasize their cultural inferiority (Judge, *Athens*, 222). But while some construct a Galilean "community" for Q, its Galilean features likely simply represent authentic Jesus tradition (Dunn, *Perspective*, 27), whether composed in Galilee or not.

Although Josephus claims three million residents in Galilee in 67 C.E. (*Life* 235; *War* 3.43), some scholars propose that his 60,000 recruits from there may suggest a likelier population of perhaps 750,000 (*War* 2.583).⁹⁰⁵ Others offer even lower estimates,⁹⁰⁶ but some of these figures may overestimate the extant data we have to work with. Galilee seems to have been densely populated with villages.⁹⁰⁷

1. Ethnicity

Following Schürer, many scholars supposed that Galileans, having converted to Judaism little more than a century before Jesus, were not very Judaized; by 1941 Grundmann took this thesis so far as to argue that Jesus was not Jewish.⁹⁰⁸ But whereas Jewish literature describes the force-converted Idumeans as half-Jews, it never does the same regarding Galileans.⁹⁰⁹ This may be partly because Galilee had mainly been resettled by Judeans after the Hasmonean conquests; archaeological surveys indicate that the area became heavily populated only after the Judean conquests.⁹¹⁰

Gentile cities abounded around Galilee,⁹¹¹ and social intercourse occurred.⁹¹² Upper Galilee had robust commercial ties with Tyre.⁹¹³ But Gentiles did not predominate,⁹¹⁴ and Greek cultural influence was far less in Galilee's villages than in urban Jerusalem before 70 C.E.⁹¹⁵ Whereas the Golan included both Jewish and Syrian elements, Lower Galilee was nearly completely Jewish by the time of Josephus.⁹¹⁶ And whereas Lower Galilee may reflect more hellenized art and speech because of its contact with larger cities,⁹¹⁷ it has been questioned whether it was appreciably more hellenized in other respects.⁹¹⁸ The theater of Sepphoris seated only four thousand and hence, at most, half of Sepphoris's own population; it was not intended for, nor did it likely attract, Galilean villagers.⁹¹⁹ In the first half of the first century, the theater seated at most

905. Avi-Yonah, "Geography," 109.

906. Hoehner, *Antipas*, 291–95, suspects roughly 200,000 (about 266 persons per square mile). Multiplying the number of known settlements (from literary or archaeological sources) by Galilee's population density in the late nineteenth century, Goodman, *State*, 32, suggests 300,000.

907. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 144 (citing the 204 villages in Jos. *Life* 235).

908. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 2 (citing Grundmann, *Jesus der Galiläer*, from 1941). Schürer's construct is now recognized as fallacious (Reed, *Archaeology*, 53–54). Most readers will not need to be reminded of the dominant ideology in the time and place in which Grundmann was writing. Larger worldviews have long shaped constructs of Galilee (see Moxnes, "Construction").

909. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 169.

910. *Ibid.*, 170; Reed, *Archaeology*, 52; see also Cromhout, "Judeans." For some Jewish habitation in the second century B.C.E., see Syon, "Evidence."

911. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 143–44. For an earlier period, see esp. 1 Macc 5:15. Gentile sites cluster on Galilee's perimeter (Reed, *Archaeology*, 51–52).

912. Goodman, *State*, 41–53; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 93; cf. Overman, "Archaeology."

913. Vale, "Sources."

914. See Eddy and Boyd, *Legend*, 116–19, and the sources they cite (esp. Jonathan Reed, Mark Chancey, Sean Freyne, and Eric Meyers).

915. See Levine, *Hellenism*, 94–95; Strange, "Galilee," 395–96; Chancey, *Galilee*; Gregory, "Galilee." Pace Mack, Crossan, and others, we lack evidence for a significant Cynic presence in Galilee (Eddy, "Diogenes," 463–67; Boyd, *Sage*, 151–58; the contrary response of Seeley, "Cynics," is helpful on details but does not affect this general picture).

916. Goodman, *State*, 31–32.

917. Meyers, "Regionalism"; cf. Crossan, *Jesus*, 19.

918. Goodman, *State*, 88–89.

919. Horsley, *Galilee*, 250–51, also commenting on the lack of public baths in the villages. Public baths were a necessity for urban Hellenists (e.g., Diog. Laert. 6.2.40; Mart. *Epig.* 12.82; Paus. 2.3.5; Apul. *Metam.* 2.2; Yegül, "Complex"; among Palestinian Jews, cf. *t. Ber.* 2:20; *B. Qam.* 9:12).

2,500 (the date of its earliest construction is debated).⁹²⁰ Urban centers, whether in Galilee or in Judea, tended to be more hellenized in language and, in some respects, in culture (see comment on Acts 6:1).

2. Orthodoxy?

Although Galileans were clearly Jewish, they were not well respected by all Judeans. They appear negatively in some rabbinic texts.⁹²¹ Opposition derives especially from later Babylonian texts⁹²²—notably after the Palestinian rabbis had settled in Galilee following the abortive Bar Kokhba revolt of 132–35 C.E.—but some earlier rabbinic texts also question Galileans’ observance of the law.⁹²³ According to the rabbis, regional differences helped determine whether one could trust that food had been properly tithed⁹²⁴—perhaps because not everyone followed rabbinic interpretations of the law. But first-century sources indicate Galileans’ loyalty to the law (cf., e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.43),⁹²⁵ and later Palestinian sources can approve Galilean customs even though they differed from the norms of, for instance, R. Akiba.⁹²⁶

Archaeology confirms Galilean Jewishness and “orthodox” practice.⁹²⁷ Stone vessels, which are less susceptible to impurity,⁹²⁸ predominate, common even in pre-70 Sepphoris.⁹²⁹ Jewish purification pools are common, again even in Sepphoris; so are Jewish burial practices such as ossuaries.⁹³⁰ Studies of Galilean bones show pork-free diets, and pig remains are missing in pre-70 Jewish Galilee.⁹³¹

Some scholars argue that charismatic teachers, less amenable to traditional restrictions than Pharisaic scribes were, may have been more common in Galilee than Pharisees.⁹³² Galileans were loyal to the Jerusalem temple but not particularly to the Pharisees or their successors (probably accounting for some subsequent calumnies).⁹³³ Regional bias may have blended with class bias, an urban Jerusalem elite mistrusting the education of rural clients on its frontier.⁹³⁴ Galilean respect for Jerusalem in Josephus warns us not to press matters too far, but regional prejudice

920. Evans, *World*, 28 (though his references to theatrical allusions in Jesus’s teaching on 28–30 do not appear persuasive).

921. E.g., *b. Erub.* 53b; *y. Hag.* 3:4, §1; Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 1–2.

922. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 216–17.

923. Although most of the texts cited by Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 54, do not support his case, *m. Ned.* 2:4 does. The Palestinian Amoraic account of Johanan ben Zakkai’s rejection in Galilee might also be instructive (*Jesus the Jew*, 56–57).

924. *T. Demai* 1:10. Most cities and regions in the empire had some idiosyncratic traditions (e.g., Paus. 2.1.1).

925. Malinowski, “Tendencies”; Horsley, *Galilee*, 152–55; cf. Mayer, “Anfang”; Manns, “Galilée”; Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 37–38, 45; Dunn, “Synagogue,” 207–12.

926. *y. Roš Haš.* 4:6, §1. That halakic customs varied is clear (e.g., *y. Ketub.* 4:14, §1, following *m. Ketub.* 4:14; *y. Ned.* 2:4, §3).

927. See, e.g., Reed, *Archaeology*, 44–51; Dunn, “Synagogue,” 207–12.

928. Cf. Reed, *Archaeology*, 44–45; Reich, “Jars”; Safrai, “Home,” 741; Avigad, “Flourishing,” 59; idem, *Jerusalem*, 183; cf. Schwank, “Wasserkrüge”; Magen, “Yrwslym”; Gal, “T’syyt.”

929. Reed, *Archaeology*, 49–51, esp. 49 on Sepphoris; Evans, *World*, 24–25. Cf. John 2:6.

930. Reed, *Archaeology*, 49; he deals with the usefulness of these in identifying Jewish sites (45–47) and Jewish burial practices (47–49); on purification pools, see also Evans, *World*, 25; for menorahs, 25; for coins, 25–26.

931. Reed, “Contributions,” 53; Evans, *World*, 24.

932. Vermes, *Jesus and Judaism*, 5, 153n8; Davies, *Setting*, 450; Liefeld, “Preacher,” 144.

933. See Freyne, “Religion.” For Galilean loyalty to Jerusalem, see esp. *Jos. Life* 198.

934. Urban dwellers could despise rural dwellers as uneducated, especially if from less respectable regions (*Aelian Farmers* 20 [Phaedrias to Sthenon], end). See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:590–96.

seems to have served some polemical value among Galilean Christians and the Judean elite.⁹³⁵

Josephus indicates that most Galileans were loyal to Jerusalem and the priesthood.⁹³⁶ Although Jerusalem exercised no political control over Galilee, he shows that its status as Judaism's center gave it special influence.⁹³⁷ Yet even in the second century, Galilee did not accept the rabbis' leadership.⁹³⁸ The rabbis tried to control Galilean Jewry purely in religious matters, but Galileans generally did not accommodate them even here.⁹³⁹ The rabbis' idealism concerning tithes probably did not commend itself to more agrarian peasants.⁹⁴⁰ Galileans apparently shared with Judeans religious customs and some elements of material culture, but they differed in some other aspects of culture, such as wealthy Jerusalemites' decorations and foreign styles.⁹⁴¹ That is, they were likely more culturally conservative, rather than more liberal, than Judeans.

3. Revolutionaries?

"Judas the Galilean" (Acts 5:37), leader of the infamous and ill-fated tax revolt during Jesus's childhood, was naturally considered Galilean.⁹⁴² This does not, however, mean that Galileans were particularly predisposed toward revolution, as some scholars have suggested.⁹⁴³ Zeitlin and others have argued that Josephus used "Galilean" as a revolutionary rather than geographical title,⁹⁴⁴ but this approach omits a significant body of evidence.⁹⁴⁵

When Josephus's rhetoric is taken into account,⁹⁴⁶ Galilee was clearly unprepared at the time of the first revolt; it hardly proved an ideal base for Zealot sympathizers.⁹⁴⁷ Sepphoris, in fact, refused to join the revolt of 66–70, perhaps recalling its earlier destruction under Varus. Further, the messianic uprisings of the Samaritan, Theudas, and the Egyptian prophet that Josephus reports neither transpired near Galilee nor boasted explicit Galilean support.⁹⁴⁸

4. Distinctions within Galilee

Literary and archaeological sources both suggest a cultural distinction between Upper Galilee (the Golan) and Lower Galilee. The latter included larger and more culturally mixed urban areas; although most of its inhabitants lived in villages, the wider cultural diversity in Galilee's cities must have regularly influenced the villages.⁹⁴⁹

935. Cf. Malina, *Windows*, 62.

936. Freyne, "Relations"; idem, *Galilee, Jesus*, 178–90 (the exception being Sepphoris, *Jos. Life* 348–49).

937. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 150–52.

938. Goodman, *State*, 93–118; cf. Freyne, "Religion."

939. Goodman, *State*, 107.

940. *Ibid.*, 178.

941. Berlin, "Life."

942. Technically he was from Gamala across the Jordan (*Jos. Ant.* 18.4; Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 88–89).

943. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 46–48; idem, *Jesus and Judaism*, 4–5 (esp. on Upper Galilee).

944. Zeitlin, "Galileans"; Loftus, "Note"; cf. idem, "Revolts" (though he may be correct about continuing Hasmonean sympathies).

945. Armenti, "Galileans"; Freyne, "Galileans"; Bilde, "Galilaea."

946. E.g., his military praise in *Jos. War* 3.41.

947. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 162.

948. *Ibid.*, 195; Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 88–90.

949. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 171.

Nevertheless, Galilee as a whole had some homogenous cultural characteristics.⁹⁵⁰ Moreover, archaeological and literary evidence confirm that the heavy population of Lower Galilee was primarily rural and agricultural,⁹⁵¹ and villages, despite cultural influences, were mainly autonomous politically and economically.⁹⁵² Differences and hence misunderstandings between rural and urban Mediterranean culture were pronounced⁹⁵³ despite the influence of the latter on the former.⁹⁵⁴ This clash between urban and rural life obtained in Galilee as well.⁹⁵⁵ At the same time, it should not be exaggerated.⁹⁵⁶

950. Reed, *Archaeology*, 215–16.

951. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 144–45, citing *Jos. Life* 58; cf. Freyne, “Galileans.”

952. Goodman, *State*, 120; Horsley, *Galilee*, 251. Freyne, “Ethos,” argues for some limited trade connections but notes that this does not indicate a cultural or religious continuum.

953. Finley, *Economy*, 123–49; Lee, “Unrest,” 128; MacMullen, *Relations*, 15, 30, 32; e.g., Longus 2.22; *Cic. Rosc. Amer.* 14.39; *Philost. Vit. soph.* 2.5.573. In Palestine, cf. Applebaum, “Economic Life,” 663–64; Neusner, *Beginning*, 24–25; *m. Meg.* 1:3; *y. Meg.* 1:3.

954. Cf. Millar, “World of Ass,” noting that Greek villages were not isolated; see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:589–96.

955. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 146–47.

956. Reed, *Archaeology*, 97.

PETER'S MINISTRY BEYOND JERUSALEM (9:32–12:24)

Except for the preparatory digression on the events in Antioch (11:19–30), this section emphasizes key events¹ beyond Jerusalem. Although Jerusalem remains the theological and institutional center for the movement, the significance of any “center” is decreasing. Peter, the leading Jerusalem apostle, ministers elsewhere in Judea (as earlier in Samaria in 8:14–25; see 1:8) and ultimately finds Jerusalem unsafe (12:1–24, esp. 12:17). The lengthy center of this section (10:1–11:18) concerns ministry to the Gentiles, epitomized in this case by an officer of the occupying army in Judea’s Roman administrative center.

In the “Hellenist” transition between the Jerusalem church and Paul’s ministry (Acts 6–12), Luke prepares for the focus on Paul (Acts 13–28) by alternating between Saul (7:58–8:3; 9:1–31; 11:19–30) and Peter (8:4–40, with Philip; 9:32–11:18; 12:1–24) after Saul is introduced in 7:58–8:3.²

1. Or, in the case of Acts 9:32–43, prominent sample events indicating Peter’s Judean ministry.

2. Allen, *Death of Herod*, 130–31. This shifting of focus between characters appears not only in novels (see Pervo, *Mystery*, 72), which relevantly illustrate Luke’s popular storytelling style, but also in historiography (see, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 18.194; Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3; see the commentary introduction, ch. 6, sect. 2.g [Keener, *Acts*, 1:193–94]).

HEALINGS ON THE COASTAL PLAIN (9:32–43)

Luke surveys Peter's ministry on the coastal plain, focusing on two healings. The signs reported in this section draw attention to the gospel on the Judean coast (9:35, 42), just as analogous apostolic signs have done in Jerusalem (5:12–16). Luke thereby emphasizes that the locus of divine activity belongs not to a place (Jerusalem or the temple) but to Christ's agents who carry on his work.

Following the frequent pattern of Jesus's ministers in Acts recapitulating elements of Jesus's ministry, Peter's ministry here provides parallels with that of Jesus in the Gospel. Scholars naturally often compare the healing of the paralytic (Luke 5:18–26; Acts 9:33–35) and the raising of Jairus's daughter (Luke 8:40–56; Acts 9:36–42)¹ or (less closely) the healing of the paralytic and the raising of the widow's son (Luke 7:11–16).² Echoes of Elijah and Elisha stories here (e.g., 1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:32–37) portray Peter as in continuity with them.³ The accounts also suit Luke's narrative approach in that he often pairs miracle stories, parables, and other stories to include both a man and a woman.⁴

Luke surveys powerful miracles here to show that we can trust the Peter who gets the vision in Acts 10. He *merely* summarizes these impressive miracles because of his interest and probably because of that of his sources: his focus must be the encounter with Cornelius, which offered a significant turning point in the direction of the early Christian mission.

The geography is significant. Luke's geographic perspective on Palestine is as sketchy as that of most other ancient writers, especially concerning the places he had not visited personally.⁵ His portrayal of the coastal plain, however, is "completely correct,"⁶ fitting his claim to have traveled by road from Caesarea to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15–17).⁷ The most important cities on the coastal plain that were nearly completely Jewish were Lydda and Joppa. The distance directly northwest from Jerusalem down to the mainly

1. Karris, *Invitation*, 110. Pervo, *Story*, 36, compares Luke 8:40–56.

2. Witherington, *Acts*, 327.

3. Most commentators note the parallels (e.g., Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 298; Pervo, *Mystery*, 85–86). Early Jewish writers retold these biblical stories (see Koskenniemi, *Miracle-Workers*, 290); later Christian wonderworkers also followed the model of Elijah (see Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 20).

4. Marguerat, *Actes*, 348; Witherington, *Acts*, 328; see comment on Acts 1:14. Witherington, *Acts*, 330–31, argues that Luke portrays Tabitha's story as more significant than that of Aeneas, fitting Luke's pattern. For a number of linked words and patterns clearly connecting the two miracle stories in this section, see Parsons, *Acts*, 137.

5. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 27, 78. For other writers confused on Palestine's geography, see 29–30, citing Strabo 16.2.16–46, esp. 16.2.21, 28–29, 34; Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.66–73; Tac. *Ann.* 12.54.2; Ptolemy *Geog.* 5.15.1–7 (= 5.16.1–10 [Nobbe]); *Let. Aris.* 115–18; Ps-Hecataeus in Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.196–97; Philo *Prov.* 2.107 (= Euseb. *P.E.* 8.14.64). As Hengel also notes ("Geography of Palestine," 30–31), eyewitnesses did better (e.g., 1–2 Maccabees; the military source in Polyb. 5.61.3–62.6; 66.1–72.12).

6. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 59.

7. *Ibid.*, 27.

Jewish area of the coast to Lydda, the “first large Jewish place in the plain,” was about twenty-five miles (cf. Jos. *War* 2.244). Joppa, the only important Jewish port (though it became less important after Caesarea’s founding), was eleven miles farther in this direction.⁸ Beyond this lay Caesarea (cf. Acts 10:1, 5), thirty miles north along the coast. In contrast to Philip’s ministry (8:40), Peter’s is limited to Jewish cities and to already established churches.⁹ Peter’s ministry to Jewish circles fits the picture of Gal 2:7 but makes all the more significant his involvement in the Cornelius story in Caesarea, though Philip had already ministered there.

Recollection of the locations and, in contrast to most miracle reports in Acts, the names of those healed suggests particularly vivid reminiscences, perhaps still told by Christians on the coastal plain through which Luke traveled to Jerusalem.¹⁰ (As noted below, the Christian presence in Lydda apparently remained strong much later, including in the second century.) Some scholars concur that Peter stayed in Lydda and Joppa as part of his Jewish mission (Gal 2:7) but doubt the miracle reports.¹¹ Yet it is difficult to see why these particular traditions would be preserved apart from the miracle reports that are central to them; Peter must have traveled many places (1 Cor 9:5).

1. Healing Aeneas at Lydda (9:32–35)

The healing at Lydda draws attention to the gospel (Acts 9:35), just as apostolic signs in Jerusalem did (5:12–16). By recounting this healing and extending the geographic frontiers of the pattern of signs bringing attention to the message, Luke emphasizes that the locus of divine activity belongs not to a place (Jerusalem or the temple) but to Christ’s agents who carry on his work.

a. Saints in Lydda (9:32)

Peter came to “saints” in Lydda, which could mean devout Jews (e.g., LXX Pss 33:10 [34:10 MT; 33:9 ET]; 82:4 [83:3]; Dan 7:18, 21) but which Luke elsewhere uses for Christians (Acts 9:13, 41; 26:10), the likely sense here. (On κατοικέω, see comment on Acts 2:5.) Probably he is following up the fruits of Philip’s labors (8:40) as he did in 8:14–16.¹² Lydda was significant as a place where Jerusalemites could connect with the coastal road south to Gaza and Egypt, about a day’s journey (ca. 25 mi. due northwest of Jerusalem).¹³ It was the Sharon plain’s most significant Jewish city, added to Judea from Samaria (1 Macc 11:34 [cf. 10:30; 11:28]; Jos. *Ant.* 13.127).¹⁴ It had long been a Jewish city (1 Macc 11:34) whose men attended Jerusalem’s feasts (Jos. *War* 2.515). Like Joppa, Lydda was one of the ten or eleven governmental districts of Judea in this period (3.55; Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.15.70).¹⁵

8. *Ibid.*, 59. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 211; idem, *Commentary*, 211, argues that Gentiles also lived here; surely there were more per capita than in Jerusalem in any case.

9. See Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 60. Later rabbis debated whether Israelites or Gentiles were predominant in the Holy Land (*y. Demai* 2:1 [22c]).

10. Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, 246; Dunn, *Acts*, 129. All of Acts 9:32–11:18 is Peter material; although it could be collected from disparate anecdotes about him (Crowe, *Acts*, 70), the vivid memories probably suggest authentic, pre-Lukan connections among the stories.

11. Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 123.

12. With, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 444; Witherington, *Acts*, 328.

13. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 413, 526 (citing *m. Ma’as.* š. 5:2).

14. For its significance, see also Jos. *Ant.* 14.208, 412; *War* 1.302; 2.244, 567. For its nearness to Samaria and its size, see also *Ant.* 20.130; *War* 2.242; for its Jewishness, *War* 2.515. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 526, cites in addition *b. Meg.* 4a; texts about Lod in 1 Chr 8:12; Ezra 2:33; Neh 7:37; 11:35.

15. As often noted (e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 108; Johnson, *Acts*, 177).

Josephus calls Lydda a κώμη, or “village,” but almost a city and large enough to be a city (*Ant.* 20.130);¹⁶ like Joppa, it was known not to have the republican government and civic rights characteristic of a Greek πόλις.¹⁷ Lydda acquired a reputation for wine, figs, linen (with a guild of *tarsiim*), and the making of pottery.¹⁸ By surrendering to the Romans, it was spared the destruction suffered by Jerusalem and some other locales (*War* 4.444), and it eventually became a center of rabbinic thought.¹⁹ After taking the town in 68 C.E., Vespasian established there Jews he considered still faithful to Rome.²⁰ This was probably the largest Jewish town soon after 70 C.E., and R. Gamaliel taught there before moving to Yavneh.²¹ Perhaps two centuries after Peter's visit, Lydda was sufficiently hellenized to bear the Greek name Diospolis (“Zeus's City”), but it was quickly christianized.²²

b. Aeneas's Sickness (9:33)

Luke does not explain the details of Peter's contact with Aeneas, but pious Jewish people did normally visit the sick;²³ this was also a standard Gentile custom.²⁴ Some scholars think that Aeneas was a Gentile because of his name. The name “Aeneas” could be Jewish, however; it appeared among Palestinian Jews as early as the time of Hyrcanus I (*Jos. Ant.* 14.248) and continued through the Judean-Roman war (*War* 5.326–28) and as late as the fourth century (*CIJ* 2.1209) and (less surprisingly) in the Diaspora (*CPJ* 1.24.23).²⁵ Indeed, before Acts 10, a Gentile in Peter's ministry is extremely unlikely (Acts 10:28), and Aeneas would have warranted specific mention as such if he had been one. Lydda was a mostly Jewish town (see comment on Acts 9:32).

Because the Trojan Aeneas was the legendary ancestor of the Roman people,²⁶ some suggest that the name could, like Troas in 16:8, foreshadow the Gentile mission.²⁷ This is, however, at best speculation here; although Luke often omits the names of

16. See Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 59; Barrett, *Acts*, 480. Though less significant for trade than maritime centers such as Joppa or Caesarea, it apparently had its share of merchants (*m. B. Meši'a* 4:3 apparently critiques them for defrauding) and was well known into later times (e.g., *Lam. Rab.* 3:9, §3).

17. Judge, *Pattern*, 13 (following Jones, *Cities of Provinces*); cf. Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 60.

18. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 527 (citing *m. Kelim* 2:2; *t. Ma'as.* Š. 5:15; *b. Naz.* 52a; *Beṣah* 5a; *Roš Haš.* 31b); she offers that *tarsiim* may suggest Diaspora Jews from Asia Minor, who were commonly linen workers.

19. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 527 (citing *m. Roš Haš.* 1:6; *Ta'an.* 3:9; *B. Meši'a* 4:3); *m. Yad.* 4:3; *b. 'Erub.* 53b. For the later rabbinic center there, see, e.g., *y. Sanh.* 3:5, §2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 18:5.

20. Pahlitzsch, “Lydda.”

21. Rosenfield, “M'ndw.” Because Lydda was larger than Yavneh and became the primary rabbinic center after Bar Kokhba, Oppenheimer (“Jewish Lydda”) even thinks that leadership was concentrated at Lydda in the so-called Yavneh period (though this may be going too far).

22. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 108 (identifying it with the biblical Lod, 1 Chr 8:12; Neh 11:35; cf. *Ezra* 2:33; *Neh* 7:37); Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 444.

23. *Sir* 7:35; *4 Bar.* 5:22–23; 7:37; *'Abot R. Nat.* 30; 41 A; *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.12; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 18a, bar.; *Gen. Rab.* 13:16; *y. Hag.* 2:1, §10; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on *Exod* 18:20; *Tg. Job* 2:11; *Apoc. Zeph.* 7:4–5; *Matt* 25:36; *Jeremias, Parables*, 207; van Unnik, “Teaching of Good Works,” 96–97; Jones, *Parables*, 258–59; Keener, *Matthew*, 605; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 529–30 (citing *Sir* 7:35; *Gen. Rab.* 49:4; *Soṭah* 14a; *Ned.* 39b–40a; *B. Qam.* 100a; *B. Meši'a* 30b).

24. See, e.g., *Thucyd.* 2.51.5–6; *Val. Max.* 2.5.2; *Babr.* 103.6–8; *Suet. Tib.* 51.2; *Claud.* 35.1; *Fronto Ad M. Caes.* 4.2.1; 5.10–11; *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 7.30; cf. *Xen. Hell.* 2.1.15; *Pliny Ep.* 7.23.1; 9.13.4; *Diog. Laert.* 1.70; *Friedländer, Life*, 1:210–11.

25. Williams, “Names,” 110; cf. also Kee, *Every Nation*, 125; Marshall, *Acts*, 178.

26. Cf., e.g., *Tac. Ann.* 4.9; esp. *Virg. Aen. passim*. On Aeneas, see, e.g., Dowden, “Aeneas.”

27. Reardon, “Homings to Rome,” goes further, suggesting a connection with the narrative's specifically Rome-ward direction. Yet “Jason” in Acts 17:6 hardly evokes the northeast (Colchian) direction of Apollonius of Rhodes's (or Valerius Flaccus's) *Argonautica* for the narrative. Still, Christians would recognize the name “Aeneas,” though some scholars overstate the connection; Georgi, “Aeneas und Abraham,” and Elliott, *Arrogance*, 136–41, even think that Paul's audience in Rom 4 may have compared Abraham with Aeneas, Rome's founder; cf. also the approach in Harrison, *Authorities*, 321.

those who are healed (e.g., 3:2–11; 4:14, 22; 14:8–10; 16:16–18; most healings in the Gospel and all summary statements), he is not averse to naming them (cf. 13:8, 11; 28:8), most relevant in this context (9:36).²⁸ What can be argued is that as he moves toward Joppa (9:36) and especially Caesarea (10:1), Peter, like Philip before him, is moving in “increasingly more Hellenized territory,”²⁹ with broader exposure to a more cosmopolitan world. A Greek or Roman name is therefore hardly surprising here (e.g., “Dorcas” in 9:36).

Luke often mentions the duration of a sickness, whether eighteen years (Luke 13:11), twelve years (8:43; cf. Mark 5:25), more than forty years (Acts 3:2; 4:22), or eight years, as here.³⁰ The point of mentioning the duration is to underline the reality of the sickness and hence the reality of the miraculous healing (see comment on Acts 4:22). Aeneas’s lower body could have been paralyzed from an accident that injured his spinal cord, or from tuberculosis affecting the spinal cord, or from other ailments.³¹ The most common cause of paralysis is stroke,³² but falling from a roof or other problems could have caused the infirmity as well.³³ Although caregivers could massage the paralytic with olive oil (a remedy also applied to other ailments), no other sustained treatment for the condition was known.³⁴ Those with disabilities were often viewed negatively (see comment on Acts 3:2; cf. other healings of this disability in 8:7). But unlike some infirmities emphasized in the gospel tradition, paralysis did not make one impure.³⁵

c. The Healing (9:34)

The command to rise and make a bed (στρωσον) for himself could mean either to prepare his bed for sleeping (which may seem odd in view of 9:33, but cf. commands related to beds in Luke 5:24; John 5:8) or to prepare his couch for eating (cf. Luke 22:12; this idea may seem irrelevant, but cf. commands to feed one just healed, 8:55).³⁶ Presumably he had been lying on a bed. The poorest of Romans had, if only a single piece of furniture, a bed;³⁷ rabbis likewise considered it an essential piece of furniture.³⁸ Some poor Judeans might have only a bedroll that doubled as their coat,³⁹

28. It seems plausible that he hears local reports that include the names of earlier church members, in contrast to those healed in transitory evangelistic efforts, but the memory of names in his sources often is probably simply haphazard.

29. Witherington, *Acts*, 330.

30. Noted by Hobart, *Medical Language*, 40 (though to emphasize Luke’s medical interest, which is a possible but hardly necessary corollary). One could read the Greek in this case as “since eight years old,” but this is less likely (cf. Luke 8:43 and contrast Luke 8:42; Acts 4:22; see Bruce, *Acts*¹, 210).

31. Wilkinson, *Healing*, 162; cf. idem, *Health*, 88, for “some disease or injury of the central nervous system”; for tuberculosis, see also Larkin, *Acts*, 150 (following Harrison, “Disease,” 958).

32. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 529 (noting that the more severe the stroke, the more severe the paralysis is apt to be).

33. Ibid. notes injuries as the cause of paralysis in *b. Hul.* 51a.

34. Ibid. (citing *t. Šabb.* 12:11; *y. Ma’as.* Š. 2.1.53b; *Git.* 69b).

35. Ibid., 531. Qumran, however, restricted even this (see CD XV, 16–17; 1QSa II, 2–8; 1QM VII, 4; 4Q266 8 I, 8; 4Q270 6 II, 8; Berthelot, “Infirmes”).

36. Cf. Marshall, *Acts*, 178–79; Johnson, *Acts*, 177. For “preparing” something to lie on, cf. also the LXX uses of στρωννύω (Esth 4:3; Isa 14:11; Jdt 12:15); Mark also used the term for spreading garments to pave Jesus’s entrance to the city (Mark 11:8). In contrast to Luke 5:24, Peter could not tell Aeneas to go home, since he was already there.

37. Carcopino, *Life*, 33–34. For a photograph of a bedframe (1.10 by 2.12 m.; a child’s in the same room is 0.7 by 1.20 m.; both preserved in ash from Herculaneum), see Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses*, 97, figure 5.2. Greeks, too, considered a bed essential (Hurschmann, “Furniture,” 623).

38. Safrai, “Home,” 735–36; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 530 (noting that only the poorest slept on the floor, *t. Ketub.* 6:8; *b. B. Meša’* 113b). But the rabbis tended to speak for a more elite circle, the poor being more common.

39. Cf. Exod 22:27; Deut 24:12–13; Lane, *Mark*, 470. Sleeping on bare ground was discouraged (*b. Ber.* 62b).

but while Aeneas was surely unemployed at this point, relatives might help. More permanent beds, such as someone bedridden eight years would have probably used, included canopies to ward off mosquitoes and other insects.⁴⁰ We cannot be certain, however, what he had available.

Miracle stories normally recounted acts that demonstrated that a healing or exorcism was genuine (e.g., Luke 4:39; Acts 3:7–9).⁴¹ (This pattern seems inherent in the demand of the genre miracle account regardless of specific cultural parallels.)⁴² The emphasis on the miracle's suddenness also fits the Gospels' and other ancient sources' miracle accounts (Luke 4:39; 5:13, 25; 8:44, 47, 55; 13:13; 18:43; Acts 3:7; 5:10; 16:26; cf. Luke 22:60; Acts 12:23; 13:11); emphasizing that the miracle occurred immediately helped rule out coincidence or other rationalistic explanations as factors.⁴³

The claim that Jesus is the one performing the healing reminds Luke's audience that Jesus, though exalted, remains active in Acts; the apostles' works are, in fact, Jesus's works in and through them.⁴⁴ This is also the sense of the use of Jesus's name for healing, on which see comment on Acts 3:6. The healing of people paralyzed or unable to walk also features prominently in many modern accounts of God's activity and especially frequently in the Majority World,⁴⁵ including in evangelism modeled after methods in Acts.⁴⁶ (In one report, to take but one example not initially intended as evangelism, a Christian doctor, recognizing that the North Indian patient's legs,

40. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 531. Safrai, "Home," 736, provides many sources: on large beds, see *t. Ned.* 2:7; on smaller beds, *Abot R. Nat.* 6A; *b. Sanh.* 20a; on canopies, *b. Sukkah* 10b–11a; 26a; *Nid.* 17a. Although Aeneas's lack of ability to work may have made purchase of an expensive bed difficult, the extended kin network might view his relative comfort as an important investment. But although Lydda had resources, we cannot know what resources were available to this family.

41. See, e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 8.48; Keener, *Matthew*, 283.

42. Cf., e.g., the healing of paralyzed children, converting most of the village, in Anderson, *Pelendo*, 58–60 (cf. other healing accounts, 99–100, 121–22, 129–33); the healing of a paralyzed woman in Rabey, "Prophet," 32.

43. See esp. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 66 (adding to earlier commentators Lucian *Lover of Lies* 7; *Lex.* 12; *Disowned* 5; *True Story* 1.40; 2.41; *Charon* 7; *Lucius* 12; Antiphanes frg. 154, *Metragyrtes*; *PSI* 4.435; and the stereotypical formula in, e.g., *PGM* 3.35–36, 84–85, 123–24; 4.122, 153, 1593, 1924, 2037, 2098, 2911–12; 7.248, 254, 259, 331, 373, 472–73, 993; 8.52, 63, 84; 12.58, 81, 143, 396).

44. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 162; Marguerat, *Actes*, 350; cf. Warrington, "Healing Narratives."

45. E.g., Khai, "Pentecostalism," 270; Ma, "Encounter," 137; idem, "Vanderbout," 129–32; Daniel, "Labour," 160; Filson, "Study," 154; Green, *Asian Tigers*, 108–9; Alamino, *Footsteps*, 15–16, 46; Bush and Pegues, *Move*, 51–52; Sung, *Diaries*, 44, 48, 56 (many cases), 91, 111 (multiple cases), 121, 134, 135, 140, 162; Osborn and Osborn, *Evangelism*, 1:930, 938, 944; 21:368, 369; 21:370 (three cases); 21:400; 22:65 (about six cases); 22:66 (two cases); 22:67; 22:68 (two cases); 22:779; 22:784; 23:440 (three cases); 23:441 (three cases); 23:592; 23:597 (two cases); 23:716–17 (multiple cases); Baker and Baker, *Enough*, 168–69 (beginning to walk immediately after the command to rise, for the first time in two years, in Mozambique, though strength apparently came less immediately); idem, *Miracles*, 9 (two cases), 40 (after a crippled foot for ten years); Clark, *Impartation*, 143, 170; Chevreau, *Turnings*, 105–6, 142; Menberu, "Mekonnen Negera" (the healing during prayer of someone bedridden for eight years in Ethiopia); Odili, "Osaale" (healing after twenty years' paralysis from stroke); Bernard Luvutse, personal correspondence, Aug. 17, 2006; Steve and Sheila Heneise, interview, April 5, 2009; personal correspondence, Aug. 20–21, 2008; Jacob Beera, personal correspondence, Nov. 2, 2009; a woman paralyzed from birth in Mina KC (interview via John Lathrop, March 2, 2010); Gebru Woldu, interview, May 20, 2010; Eliseo Navarro Jordan, interview, Aug. 7, 2010 (with follow-up Aug. 23, 2012); Lindsay, *Lake*, 30–31, 49, 57; Hickson, *Heal*, 29, 43–44, 53, 62–66, 71, 75, 76, 78, 85–87, 124, 128, 141–42, 148, 151, 159, 162, 176, 180, 191, 196, 205–6, 217–18 (in newspapers, 120, 122, 123, 130–35, 140, 152–53). Those who have the time would find many of these stories intriguing (e.g., in Hickson, *Heal*, 205, the formerly disabled twelve-year-old who announced to his four-year-old cousin, "Look, I can walk"). See more fully the discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 523–36.

46. E.g., De Wet, "Signs," 94–95, 114; Edmunds, "Sick"; cf. claimed healings in Buckingham, *Daughter*, 128, 133, 187–88; Chavda, *Miracle*, 12–13 (in Congo-Kinshasa), 146 (in the U.S.); in other Western accounts, Heron, *Channels*, 142–43; Todd Hunter, phone interview, Jan. 5, 2009; an instant healing of a damaged leg, reported to me by Bill Jackson, interview by author, Nov. 13, 2007. In earlier history, cf. Coptic Christian examples of healing of this ailment (Godron, "Healings," 1213).

paralyzed in a permanently sitting position, were inoperable, simply prayed for him, and the man was instantly healed.)⁴⁷

I myself witnessed a man command a woman to walk in the name of Jesus; she had complained of inability to walk since I had known her, but to her surprise and mine she found herself able to walk at that moment and from that time forward. My point is that, against some critics' assumptions, such experiences reported by dependable eyewitnesses do occur, even though scholars may differ among themselves as to the causes.⁴⁸

d. Many Turn to the Lord (9:35)

The mass turning to the Lord⁴⁹ compares with people glorifying God after another paralytic's healing (Luke 5:26). Here, however, the commitment runs deeper; the apostles solidified the work begun by Jesus. "Turning to the Lord" was the language of national repentance in the prophets;⁵⁰ although the term for "turning" had other, more mundane uses (e.g., Acts 9:40), it could serve technically to indicate such repentance (Luke 1:16–17; Acts 3:19; 26:18–20; 28:27),⁵¹ and Luke uses it in a similar description in Acts 11:21.⁵²

Sharon is the coastal plain that can be said to stretch as far north as Mount Carmel (cf. 1 Chr 5:16; Song 2:1; Isa 35:2; 65:10);⁵³ Josephus and the LXX (except in Josh 12:18; 1 Chr 5:16; Isa 33:9) usually render it "the plain," "the thicket," or by other titles, but Luke reproduces the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew expression here.⁵⁴ (This may reflect Luke's oral source for this information.) Lydda was "at the foot of the Shephelah" and could not "always be clearly distinguished from the plain of Sharon";⁵⁵ see comment on Lydda at Acts 9:32.

That "all" turned may be typical Lukan (and general ancient literary) hyperbole (see, e.g., comment on Acts 3:24; for success, cf., e.g., Luke 3:21). Certainly in a later period (albeit probably especially after an influx of Judeans in the wake of Jerusalem's devastation), many rabbinic voices critical of early Christians lived there. Thus, for example, some early second-century critics were apparently from there;⁵⁶ rabbinic tradition also associates the "deceiver" Ben Stada, likely a Christian,⁵⁷ with Lydda, a

47. Bush and Pegues, *Move*, 56.

48. I report the incident in more detail in Keener, *Miracles*, 737–38.

49. Far from being anomalous, mass people movements have often characterized the spread of Christianity (Neill, *History of Missions*, 31, 235, 257, 364, 405, 446, 479–81; Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 365, 371; Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 87–89; Noll, *Shape*, 34–35; for examples, see Khai, *Cross*, 130–31; Devadason, "Missionary Societies," 224–30 [esp. 228; cf. 22–23]; Wiyono, "Timor Revival," 276; among the Nagas, Philip, "Growth," 162–64; Longkumer, "Study"; among Karens, Say, "History"; for some other rapidly growing religious movements, cf., e.g., Hesselgrave, *Movements*). Other ancients also could characterize entire cities rather than simply individuals (see, e.g., Isa 13:1–19:25; Mic 1:10–15; Luke 10:13; Heracl. *Ep.* 9).

50. E.g., Isa 6:10; 19:22; 31:6; 44:22; 59:20; Jer 3:12, 14, 22; 4:1; 18:11; 25:5; 26:3; 35:15; 36:3, 7; 44:5; Lam 3:40; Ezek 3:19; 13:22; 14:6; 18:23, 30; 33:9, 11; Hos 12:6; 14:1–2; Joel 2:12–13; Zech 1:3–4; Mal 3:7; for Gentiles, cf. Isa 45:22; Jonah 3:8. See comment on Acts 2:38; 3:19.

51. Cf. Luke 17:4; 22:32; Acts 14:15; 15:19; 2 Cor 3:16; 1 Thess 1:9; Jas 5:19–20. The biblical text in Acts 28:27 might function as Luke's paradigm for the notion.

52. Cf. also Dupont, *Salvation*, 71, 79.

53. Eusebius of Caesarea claimed that it stretched from Caesarea to Joppa, but Jerome included in it Lydda, Joppa, and Yavneh (Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 59).

54. See Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 109. Rome ceded this territory to Judea in 47 B.C.E. (see Udoh, "Plain").

55. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 59 (citing *Jos. Ant.* 15.33, 41).

56. Schwartz, "Peter," 413; also Strack, *Introduction*, 113, citing *b. Šabb.* 111a, though probably wrongly identifying R. Tarfon with Justin Martyr's debate partner Trypho.

57. Although *b. Sanh.* 67a identifies Ben Stada with Jesus, earlier sources probably refer to Jewish Christians instead (Schwartz, "Peter," 396).

tradition that some scholars associate (perhaps overzealously) with Peter's ministry there.⁵⁸

Rabbinic complaints about the movement's success in Lydda, however, probably reflect the enduring influence of the Jesus movement there. Under extraordinary conditions, we have sufficient reports of entire towns being converted in more recent times⁵⁹ so as to suggest that a massive conversion is plausible. Such growth is especially documented in response to signs, both in earlier centuries⁶⁰ and more recently.⁶¹

2. Raising Tabitha at Joppa (9:36–43)

As with the healing at Lydda (Acts 9:32–35), so in the resuscitation at Joppa a dramatic sign draws attention to the gospel (9:42). Joppa also offers a temporary base for Peter's ministry (9:43; cf. Luke 10:7–9), again illustrating the trajectory of the apostolic movement away from Jerusalem alone (Acts 1:8). Luke often pairs stories about men (e.g., 9:32–35) and women (e.g., 9:36–42), including in resuscitation narratives, such as a mother's son (Luke 7:11–16, only in Luke) and a father's daughter (8:49–56).

a. Literary Parallels

Scholars often note the close parallels between the raising of Tabitha in Acts and the raising of Jairus's daughter in the Gospel (Luke 8:40–42, 49–56).⁶² Elijah and Elisha also raised children from death in ways similar to the Gospel account; their ministries provide one important paradigm for signs in Jesus's and his followers' ministries (see comment on Acts 1:8–11). Some parallels (e.g., prayer) are to be expected (especially given Luke's emphasis on this motif); others (e.g., a northern location)⁶³ do not appear strongly significant. Some other parallels are more noteworthy; for example, though upper rooms may have been a common place to keep bodies until burial, their appearance in Scripture is relatively rare, and the upper rooms in the Elijah and Elisha narratives are not used for undertaking (1 Kgs 17:19; 2 Kgs 4:10).⁶⁴

58. Schwartz, "Ben Stada and Peter"; idem, "Peter" (citing *m. Sanh.* 7:10; *t. Sanh.* 10:11). Coincidentally, rabbis could also experience miraculous phenomena there in the tradition (*Pesiq. Rab.* 32:3/4).

59. One may also compare many people movements (e.g., Neill, *History of Missions*, 31, 235, 257, 364, 405, 446, 479–81), as mentioned above. In the nineteenth century, note, e.g., Finney's revival in Rochester, NY (cf., e.g., Hardman, *Awakeners*, 183); in the past generation, note, e.g., some villages in the Hebrides (e.g., Peckham, *Sounds*, 69); Nagaland in northeast India; over the past century, much of sub-Saharan Africa (with Islam showing comparable expansion rates in many regions).

60. E.g., accounts regarding Columba (Latourette, *To A.D. 1500*, 344; Tucker, *Jerusalem*, 41). For church growth in Acts associated with miracles, see Hardon, "Miracle Narratives."

61. Wood and Wood, "Preparation," 61 (for eyewitness testimony concerning a village in Togo, October 1979); Hickson, *Heal*, 137, 141; Pothen, "Missions," 189–90 (on the Filadelfia movement in 1980s Gujarat and Maharashtra); Stephen, "Church," 58 (suggesting the cause of more than 40 percent of Christian converts in Nepal); Bergunder, "Miracle Healing," 297–98 (India); Baker and Baker, *Enough*, 74–76 (including resuscitations), 171, 173; Clark, *Impartation*, 209; De Wet, "Signs," passim (for the breadth of his research, see 92), esp. 1–2 (John Lake, in South Africa), 89 (in Madras, following Sargunam, "Churches," 194), 110–11 (among Nishi tribals in India, following Cunville, "Evangelization," 156–57), 114 (in Sri Lanka, following the eyewitness, Daniel, "Signs and Wonders," 105–6), 119–21 (in the Philippines). Among oral reports I collected are two dramatic accounts from Dr. Douglass Norwood (June 6, 2006). For the resultant conversion of the healed individuals or their families or immediate acquaintances, see, e.g., Hickson, *Heal*, 75, 86, 88, 128–29.

62. E.g., Hays, *Moral Vision*, 122; Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:125–26 (also noting the parallel with 2 Kgs 4:24–35).

63. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 327, on the correspondence with the tradition of northern prophet-healers.

64. For one comparison of Acts 9:36–42 and 20:7–12 with 1 Kgs 17 and 2 Kgs 4, noting the different emphases of each, see Stipp, "Vier Gestalten"; cf. Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 238; Chance, *Acts*, 162; for a comparison of Acts 9:37–41 with 1 Kgs 17, 2 Kgs 4, and Luke 8, see Marguerat, *Actes*, 353.

Luke 8:40–42, 49–56; cf. 7:11–16*	Acts 9:36–42	1 Kgs 17:9–10, 17–24	2 Kgs 4:8, 32–37
Apparently Capernaum (8:40; cf. Matt 9:1, 18)	Joppa, a northern seaport (9:36)	Zarephath near Sidon (17:9–10)	Shunem (4:8), in the hill country of Issachar (cf. Josh 19:18; 1 Sam 28:4)
Jairus's daughter dies, apparently from sickness (8:42)	Tabitha dies from sickness (9:37)	The boy dies from sickness (17:17)	The boy dies from sickness (possibly heatstroke, 4:19–20)
Comes to Jesus (8:41)	Peter is sent for (9:38)	— (Elijah is staying there)	Elisha is sent for (4:22–28)
Those around Jairus's household weep (8:52)	Tabitha's advocates weep (9:39)	The widow's complaint (17:18)	The woman's complaint (4:28)
Keeps most people out (8:51)	Puts everyone out (9:40)	Elijah acts in private (17:19)	Elisha shuts the door (4:33)
—	Peter kneels and prays first (9:40)	Elijah prays (17:20–21)	Elisha prays (4:33)
Jesus raises a widow's son (7:14–15); also a community benefactor's daughter (8:54–55)	Peter raises a benefactor of widows (9:37)	Elijah raises a widow's son (17:23); the widow is his benefactress (17:9–16)	Elisha raises the son of a woman (4:34–37) who is his benefactress (4:9–11)
"Arise" (7:14; 8:54)	"Arise" (9:40)	—	—
Takes by hand (8:54)	Takes by hand (9:41)	Stretches on the child to impart life (17:21)	Stretches on the child to impart life (4:35)
—	She opens her eyes (9:40)	—	The boy opens his eyes (4:35)
A resuscitated boy or girl sits up (7:15; 8:55)	She sits up (9:40)	—	—
Jesus hands resuscitated person to his mother (7:15; cf. 8:56)	Peter hands her over to her (widowed) dependents (9:41)	Elijah presents boy to widowed mother (17:23)	Elisha presents boy to mother (4:36)
The parents are amazed (8:56); the people are amazed (7:16)	The people believe (9:42)	The mother believes more fully (17:24)	(The mother is respectful, 4:37; she already had faith)
—	Upper room (9:37)	Upper room (17:19, 23)	Upper room (4:10–11, 32)

* For comparisons between the raisings of this passage, Luke 7:11–17, and Acts 20, see, e.g., Lindemann, "Einheit," 243–48. Hill, *Prophecy*, 53, rightly points to many similarities between Luke 7:11–17 and 1 Kgs 17:7–24; but Drury, *Design*, 71, implausibly attributes the story in Luke 7:11–17 to a midrashic weaving together of the story of Jairus's daughter and 1 Kgs 17:8–24 (doubting the use of 2 Kgs 4).

b. Historical Tradition

Luke clearly underlines parallels with earlier raisings in biblical history and the ministry of Jesus. Yet like Luke's internal parallels in general, these parallels need not mean that Luke invents the event he is paralleling.⁶⁵ Indeed, Mark's biblical framing of mostly undisputed Jesus tradition, Matthew's biblical framing of Markan narratives, Qumran's biblical interpretation of historical events, and other analogies warn us that biblical allusions or literary models do not require us to assume that stories are simply invented without historical basis.⁶⁶

Given the name, location, and vivid details, some scholars allow that the story reflects historical tradition, but they question the details of Tabitha's raising in view of

65. See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:562–64, 569–74; on biblical models, esp. 573–74 and comment on Acts 7:8 and 7:9–16. Again, I have found such patterns in accounts today that are genuinely true but where the true material has been selected in a way that highlights the parallels (including in accounts I know firsthand). A professor of creative nonfiction notes that people writing and recounting their own experiences often discover patterns (Fields, "Story," 40); highlighting connections is part of the process of good narrativization.

66. See Allison, *Jesus*, 389 (following here also Goodacre, "Scripturalization," including 40; Le Donne, *Historiographical Jesus*, e.g., 52–59, 115–36).

the echoes of the raising of Jairus's daughter and how both reports echo the miracles of Elijah and Elisha.⁶⁷ One wonders why the story would be preserved at all without the raising,⁶⁸ but the assimilation of details could make sense. Luke uses different verbs, however, and the parallel in Acts is closer to Mark (cf. Mark 5:40–41); further, Peter, like Stephen in Acts 7:56–60, may deliberately imitate his mentor here (the rareness of raisings might invite all the more careful imitation). Luke also passes up the opportunity to repeat various details, such as Jesus's exhortations not to fear (Luke 8:50) or weep (8:52). Thus, although historians had considerable freedom on such details, we cannot be certain to what extent Luke exercises such liberty here.

That he believed that the resuscitation took place, however, should no more be doubted⁶⁹ than the confidence of many later in history⁷⁰ and today⁷¹ who believe that they have seen—and who have offered eyewitness evidence for—analogue miracles, whatever alternative explanations different observers might suggest for the same events. These claims occur in India⁷² and elsewhere in Asia,⁷³ Africa,⁷⁴ and Latin America.⁷⁵ In

67. Dunn, *Acts*, 129.

68. Normally *inventing* a significant event, such as a raising, goes beyond the liberties historians would feel comfortable taking.

69. Price, *Son of Man*, 20–21, rejects ancient resuscitation accounts because people are not raised from the dead today. He literally refers to “the rotting dead,” perhaps not referring to any kind of corpse, but there is only one account of such a late resuscitation in Scripture (John 11:39–44), and some of today's accounts do involve those dead for two or more days (e.g., Bush and Pegues, *Move*, 118–19; cf. Tari, *Wind*, 76–78; Miller and Yamamori, *Pentecostalism*, 152). Some sociologists of religion have also warned against ruling out such claims on the basis of ideological bias (Miller and Yamamori, *Pentecostalism*, 153).

70. Iren. *Her.* 2.31.2 claims that the gathered church in his day “often” accomplished such resuscitations (following the example of Jesus and the apostles); later, Augustine *City of God* 22.8 (claiming attesting eyewitnesses); Herum, “Theology,” 63; Straight, *Miracles*, 135–37; Wesley, *Journal*, Dec. 25, 1742; Gardner, *Healing Miracles*, 84–85. In popular sources, see, e.g., Lindsay, *Lake*, 12–13, 32–33 (she remained well at the time of Lindsay's writing, twenty-five years after the event; cf. Maxwell, *African Gifts*, 40); Smith Wigglesworth (fourteen occasions) in Pytches, “Anglican,” 194; a 1907 account from the western United States (reported in Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 67).

71. Many of these surface in popular Christian literature, e.g., an example in Lewis, *Healing*, 64–65; a baby in Osborn and Osborn, *Evangelism*, 1:940–41; Wagner, *Acts*, 476–77 (and less dramatically, 321–22); Wilkerson, *Beyond*, 14–21, 25–32 (esp. 32), 47–54 (esp. 53), 56–58, 89–97 (esp. 94–95), 97–104 (esp. 101–3; his father-in-law's story), 105–6 (17.5 hours after being pronounced dead, without breathing), 107–9 (esp. 108), 109–14 (esp. 113–14); Clark, *Impartation*, 203; Johnson, *Mind*, 122 (the cited witness claiming that the woman's eye, torn out in the accident, also “was back in its socket”; also a testimony on his church website, posted June 22, 2007); a doctor's testimonies in Leclair, “Cardiologist”; Rutz, *Megashift*, 3–14, 21–22, 29–34, 79, 104–5 (collecting many claims); Rumph, *Signs*, 155–73 (including a small number of North American examples); Harris, *Acts Today*, 98–99, 101–3; see also McGee, *People of Spirit*, 524–25. Cf. also physicians in Stegeman, “Faith”; Mervin Ascabano, personal correspondence, Feb. 6, 2009; Chauncey Crandall, phone interview, May 28, 30, 2010. For a range of historical and modern accounts, see further Keener, *Miracles*, 543–79.

72. E.g., De Wet, “Signs,” 110–11 (following Cunville, “Evangelization,” 156–57); three accounts in Bush and Pegues, *Move*, 57–58, 59, 60; Thollander, *Mathews*, 88 (through Mathews [the book's informant], a boy who died from drowning three hours earlier; later, two reported raisings through others). Miller and Yamamori, *Pentecostalism*, 152, note several reports in addition to those cited below.

73. E.g., Khai, “Pentecostalism,” 270 (a raising through the prayers of Baptist minister Lang Do Khup in Myanmar); Gardner, *Healing Miracles*, 138 (a woman in northern Thailand in 1963, with Robin Talbot and his wife, Overseas Missionary Fellowship missionaries, as witnesses); Tari, *Wind*, 76–78 (Timor, Indonesia); Wilkerson, *Beyond*, 77, 81–83 (also in Timor, a four-year-old boy, dead four days, p. 81; an infant restored, 82; etc.), 83 (Philippines); cf. Pullinger, *Dragon*, 224–25 (secondhand, of a boy pronounced dead in two hospitals).

74. E.g., Tarr, *Foolishness*, 329–30 (plus personal correspondence, Oct. 20, 2010); Anderson, *Pelendo*, 69–70; Trousdale, *Movements*, 137–39; Deere, *Power of Spirit*, 123–24 (citing Garnett, *Duma*, 40ff.). In Mozambique, see Sithole, *Voice*, 73, 176; Baker and Baker, *Enough*, 74–76; idem, *Miracles*, 89 (at least fifty-three by 2007), 169; also in Clark, *Impartation*, 207, 209 (perhaps fourteen cases in Mozambique through the Bakers' extended ministry since 1998); cf. also interviews concerning one of these resuscitations on the Wanderlust DVD “Finger of God.”

75. E.g., Sánchez Walsh, *Identity*, 43–44; Bomann, “Salve,” 195–96; Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil*, 86; Gardner, *Healing Miracles*, 139–40.

some cases I know the witnesses personally,⁷⁶ and in many others where reports have come to me I have at least interviewed witnesses.⁷⁷

One may disagree about how to explain the claims, but one cannot simply act as if they are not offered.⁷⁸ For example, one book documents a boy in Kinshasa, Congo, returning to life hours after being pronounced dead and left in the morgue, at the moment of being prayed over.⁷⁹ Mozambique provides several recorded examples. While Pastor Surpresa Sithole was praying for comfort for the family twelve hours after a six-year-old girl's death and holding the child's hand, he reports that she returned to life, which had a dramatic impact on the village.⁸⁰ One pastor's wife is said to have raised three persons from the dead, praying over the corpses as she was washing them for their funerals. The first was a three-month-old girl who had died from dehydration caused by cholera; after being raised, she remained alive and healthy. The other two, a girl of five months and a middle-aged woman, had died of malaria.⁸¹ Mozambican pastor Jorge was said to have raised seven from the dead, some after a more extended period of prayer, some fairly quickly, one two days after death. He seemed surprised at the foreign interviewer's interest, since his movement apparently did not consider such activity unusual.⁸²

In another case, local residents (including the Hindu village elder) in India affirmed that a woman who returned to life after being pronounced dead (with no breathing or pulse), and several hours after a pastor had begun praying over her, had been raised from death.⁸³ Another pastor in India prayed for a girl who allegedly “not only was dead but actually had worms coming out of her nose”; after about half an hour of prayer, she returned to consciousness and shared her postmortem experience. This generated “considerable attention in the community and was written up in the local papers, resulting in this pastor being visited by various government officials.”⁸⁴

Philip Jenkins notes that house church Christians in China have many testimonies of the dead being raised.⁸⁵ A Three-Self pastor also reports such an event in his church courtyard.⁸⁶ After noting the raising (and healing) of a dead woman in Ethiopia, the

76. E.g., J. Ayodeji Adewuya (a New Testament professor from Nigeria), personal correspondence, Dec. 14, 2009; Leo Bawa (Nigeria), personal correspondence, Aug. 10, 2009; Gebru Woldu (Ethiopia), interview, May 20, 2010; Elaine Panelo, interview, Jan. 30, 2009 (Philippines); James Watson, correspondence, Nov. 27, 2009 (with Dr. Deborah Watson, Nov. 30, 2009; United States); from Congo: Antoinette Malombé, interview, July 12, 2008 (confirmed with an independent eyewitness, Ngoma Moise, phone interview, May 14, 2009); Jeanne Mabilia, interview, July 29, 2008; Albert Bissouessou, interviews, July 29, 2008 (by myself); Dec. 17, 2009; Julienne Bissouessou, interview, Dec. 15, 2009 (by Dr. Emmanuel Moussounga); cf. briefly Keener, “Comparisons,” 3. More recently, my Indonesian neighbor Yusuf Herman shared supporting photographic evidence (July 10, 2011) and assisted me in interviewing a person (Dominggus Kenjam) who reported dying and being raised (Aug. 7, 2011); also note André Mamadzi (interview, Yaoundé, Jan. 17, 2013).

77. E.g., Chester Allan Tesoro, interview, Jan. 30, 2009 (Philippines); Iris Lilia Fonseca Valdés (Cuba), interview, Aug. 11, 2010; Shelley Hollis (Sri Lanka), phone interview, Jan. 10, 2009. See further sources and discussion in my *Miracles*, 536–79, 752–58.

78. Writers who have denied that such accounts are offered today (e.g., Bishop, *Healing*, 231; Jeffries, “Healing,” 71) have been misinformed on this point.

79. Chavda, *Miracle*, 9, 13–15, 131–41 (see esp. 137–41), including photographs of the raised boy and his earlier death certificate (between pp. 78–79), as well as his address (140); also mentioned in Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 111, 113; Deere, *Power of Spirit*, 204–6.

80. Sithole, *Voice*, 72–74; Clark, *Impartation*, 209; cf. Chevreau, *Turnings*, 54 (where Surpresa notes that it has happened to him only once). Pastor Surpresa is a colleague of the Bakers (noted in, e.g., Baker and Baker, *Enough*, 72, 150; idem, *Miracles*, 25–26, 37, 63; Chevreau, *Turnings*, 54, 135).

81. Chevreau, *Turnings*, 53–54, from his interviews with Florinda, wife of Pastor Antonio Tanueque.

82. *Ibid.*, 54–56, including more names and details.

83. Miller and Yamamori, *Pentecostalism*, 151–52.

84. *Ibid.*, 152.

85. Jenkins, *New Faces*, 114. Earlier, see, e.g., Sung, *Diaries*, 43 (but only for an hour), 45 (but secondhand), 59 (secondhand, after a day of death).

86. Lambert, *Millions*, 109, citing both his personal interview and articles. He notes another resuscitation in answer to prayer, after two days of death, published in 1990 in a Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) bulletin in Beijing (Lambert, *Millions*, 118–19).

researchers cite a major Ethiopian church leader's claim that such raisings are common there.⁸⁷ As noted above, a number of my own friends, relatives, and acquaintances claim to have witnessed such events firsthand; one involved the raising of my sister-in-law after three hours. Even if one attributes all such claims to misdiagnosis and coincidence, one should not doubt that many others would find at least some of these claims convincing, or that many come from sincere eyewitnesses. There is no reason to deny that such experiences could have also characterized the early Christian movement, just as many of their sources claim.⁸⁸

c. *Tabitha of Joppa (9:36)*

Joppa was under twelve miles—perhaps a four or five hours' walk—from Lydda.⁸⁹ This is important because custom (and climate) required urgent burial; those seeking Peter could reach him quickly (see comment on Acts 9:38). Joppa was also near Yavneh, which was relatively close to Azotus and Ashkelon (Strabo 16.2.28–29; Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.14.68), a region that Luke has associated with Philip's ministry (Acts 8:40). Joppa was roughly halfway between Jerusalem and Caesarea, about fifty kilometers (30 mi.) from each, a location important for trade.⁹⁰ It had long been an important seaport,⁹¹ though it had recently been surpassed by Caesarea. Because it was a boundary between primarily Jewish and more Gentile territory, Peter's mission beyond it will advance the plot laid out in 1:8.⁹²

Joppa (modern Yaffa, today united with Tel-Aviv) controlled one of the ten or eleven administrative districts of Judea (Jos. *War* 3.56; Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.15.70).⁹³ Once a Philistine city, it was later hellenized and used by Ptolemies and Seleucids;⁹⁴ it was now, however, predominantly Jewish.⁹⁵ Judeans seized it from the Philistines in 148 B.C.E.,⁹⁶ and it remained under their power for most of the remaining period before direct Roman rule of all Judea.⁹⁷ Pompey did detach it from the province of Judea (Jos. *War* 1.156; *Ant.* 14.76), but it was ceded to Judea by Rome in 47 B.C.E.⁹⁸ Its Jewish loyalties led to its capture and destruction⁹⁹ by Rome; its inhabitants continued to offer resistance until this became impossible (*War* 3.414–27). Luke's audience may have known of Joppa's recent destruction,¹⁰⁰ but this knowledge is less obvious than in the case of Jerusalem (Luke 21:6), and the narrative provides no clues suggesting that he expects this inference.

87. Bush and Pegues, *Move*, 52, citing the general secretary of Evangelical Church Fellowships of Ethiopia.

88. See discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 536–79.

89. See, e.g., Monson, *Map Manual*, 13-1. The road would be good; Lydda lay on the road from Caesarea to the inland town of Antipatris (Dar and Applebaum, "Road," 91). Both lay on the coastal plain, with Joppa nearer the lower coast (see, e.g., Cleave, *Satellite Atlas*, 1:46–47); for an aerial photograph, with a marking for the fairly straight Roman road, see 2:128.

90. The Judean hills would obstruct any view of Jerusalem, *pace* Strabo 16.2.28.

91. E.g., 2 Chr 2:16; Ezra 3:7; Jonah 1:3; *Let. Aris.* 115; Strabo 16.2.28; Jos. *Ant.* 14.76; 15.217, 333; *War* 1.156, 396, 409.

92. Reimer, *Women*, 33; cf. the emphasis on boundary tensions and transitions in Erichsen-Wendt, "Tabitha."

93. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.14.68 elsewhere calls Joppa a Phoenician city, perhaps following an earlier source. On Joppa, see further Blaiklock, *Cities*, 68–71; plans for excavations in Peilstöcker, "Archaeology."

94. Pagan associations include the mythical chaining of Andromeda there (Strabo 16.2.28; Jos. *War* 3.420).

95. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 60. Contrast the idea that it was a Greek city (cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 482, citing Jos. *War* 3.56), unless the claim simply implies its hellenization (as in Jerusalem). Its inscriptions are 90 percent Greek, about 12 percent more than in Rome or Beth She'arim and 55 percent more than in Jerusalem (Levine, *Hellenism*, 182).

96. See 1 Macc 10:76; 12:33; 13:11; Jos. *Ant.* 13.91–92, 180, 302, 215, 395.

97. Commentators (e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 109) often note much of this. It appears to be a free city in Jos. *Ant.* 14.202.

98. See Udoh, "Plain," on Jos. *Ant.* 14.205–8; cf. also 13.261.

99. Jos. *War* 2.507–9; 3.414, 417, 427–28.

100. Reimer, *Women*, 34.

Luke might explicitly use the name “Tabitha” because it evokes the Aramaic *talitha* in Mark 5:41, an account with which he parallels his report here. But the proposal that he or his source invented the name on the basis of that story¹⁰¹ is more difficult to sustain: why would a storyteller (or presumably Luke himself, who specializes in narrative parallels) wish to transpose even the name? And why would Luke “parallel” the name here and then omit it in his own retelling of Mark’s account (Luke 8:54)?

More telling is that Luke had read Mark and would know that *talitha* was not a proper name, since Mark explicitly translates it. “Tabitha” is Aramaic for “gazelle” and is related to the Hebrew name “Zibiah” (2 Kgs 12:1; 2 Chr 24:1).¹⁰² It is a rare Aramaic name but appears, along with the masculine “Tabi,” as “generic slave names” in Gamaliel II’s household.¹⁰³ “Dorcas” was likewise Greek for “gazelle”¹⁰⁴ (a much more comprehensible translation than in Acts 4:36) and functioned as a Greek name (cf. Jos. *War* 4.145; the first-century B.C.E. name in *Gr. Anth.* 5.182).¹⁰⁵ Luke’s note need not indicate that “Dorcas” was an additional name for Tabitha (although it is plausible that she might have used the Greek name in some settings)¹⁰⁶ but, rather, that the common Greek name “Dorcas” was the Greek equivalent of the much rarer Aramaic name “Tabitha.”¹⁰⁷

d. Tabitha’s Good Deeds (9:36)

By calling Tabitha “a certain female disciple” (and elaborating on her good works) Luke honors her above Aeneas, whom he designates only “a certain man.”¹⁰⁸ This is his only use of μαθήτρια (though the masculine plural “disciples” elsewhere in Acts seems equivalent to “saints” and “Nazarenes” and would include both genders), but the concept of women as disciples likely appears also in Luke 8:2–3; Acts 16:14–15; 17:34; and especially Luke 10:39. Luke’s use of the term here presumably indicates the same as what μαθητής indicated for a male disciple: an adherent of the Jesus movement and Jesus tradition whose faith was demonstrated by good works.¹⁰⁹ Various readings through history have recognized Tabitha, as well as Peter, as a positive model here (e.g., John Chrysostom¹¹⁰ and Virginia Broughton).¹¹¹

101. Smith, *Magician*, 95, arguing that “the storyteller” mispronounced *talitha* and then “mistook [it] for a proper name.”

102. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 110; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 445. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 21 (NPNF 11:137) unfortunately allegorizes the name: “As active and wakeful was she as an antelope.” Bede *Comm. Acts* 9.36 (Martin, *Acts*, 115–16; L. Martin, 91) also allegorizes, though (as allegory always risks) differently. There is no need to find allegorical significance (cf. Strelan, “Tabitha,” on gazelles symbolizing proselytes); granted, some later rabbis, while recognizing gazelles as biblically clean (Deut 12:15, 22; 14:4–5; 15:22; 11Q19 LII, 11; LIII, 4) though not domesticated (*b. Mak.* 18b; *Zebah.* 34a), found them somehow unclean (*b. Hul.* 28a; Gentiles could eat of them, *b. Bek.* 33a), used in comparisons with the clean and unclean (*b. Yebam.* 73b; *Mak.* 20a); though wild, a gazelle could be crossed with a goat to yield a domesticated koy (*b. Yebam.* 113a). But gazelles were also images for swiftness (*m. ’Ab.* 5:23; *b. Soṭah* 13a); for the land of Israel (*b. Roš Haš.* 13a); and apparently (most relevant for naming of a child) youthful beauty (Song 2:9, 17; 4:5; 7:3; 8:14; *b. Ketub.* 17a).

103. Williams, “Names,” 96 (citing *y. Nid.* 1:5; 2:1; see also *Lev. Rab.* 19:4). This was also the name of some Amoraim (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 535, citing *b. Roš Haš.* 22a; *Meg.* 6b).

104. E.g., Athen. *Deipn.* 9.397A; Deut 12:15, 22; 14:5; 15:22; Song 2:9; 4:5; 7:3; 8:14; Sir 27:20. Witherington, *Acts*, 331n16, notes, “It was not uncommon in the Roman era to give women the names of female animals, especially slave women.” On gazelles, see Hünemörder, “Gazelle” (the “dorcas gazelle” appeared as a form of antelope in the Middle East and North Africa [716]).

105. For examples of the Greek name, see Williams, “Names,” 103; Horsley, *Documents*, 4:177–78.

106. Barrett, *Acts*, 483, suggests that “in the mixed society of Joppa both names . . . would be in use.” Possibly her parents formed the name as an Aramaic equivalent to the Greek name Dorcas, known in their community.

107. Williams, “Names,” 103; cf. Kurzinger, *Apostelgeschichte*, 40. This seems clear from Luke’s wording.

108. With, e.g., Spencer, *Acts*, 106–7. Calvin emphasized Tabitha more “than many of his male contemporaries” did and more than some modern scholars as well (Anderson, “Reading Tabitha,” 118–19). For ancient medical gender-specific constructs of illness, see Weissenrieder, *Images*, 298–302.

109. Cf. Reimer, *Women*, 34–35.

110. Anderson, “Reading Tabitha,” 115–17.

111. *Ibid.*, 124 (an African-American evangelist in 1907 who read Tabitha as a missionary).

Luke's phrase "full of good and charitable works" fits one of his ways of expressing virtues (using πλήρης; cf. Acts 6:3, 5; 11:24), though only in Tabitha's case is the virtue summarized as "good and charitable works."¹¹² God favors such behavior (10:4, 31). (For giftedness in charity, cf. Rom 12:7–8.) Particularly significant is that Luke often stresses Jesus's demand (Luke 11:41; 12:33; 18:22) and some followers' fulfillment (19:8; 21:1–4; Acts 10:4; 11:29; 20:35; 24:17).¹¹³ This expression includes but need not be limited to her ministry to widows (Acts 9:39), an issue for which Luke has special concern (6:1), especially in his first volume, where he addresses the marginalized of Israel (Luke 2:37; 4:25–26; 7:12; 18:3–5; 20:47; 21:2–3).¹¹⁴ Many Jewish women engaged in charitable service.¹¹⁵ Her role as benefactor guaranteed her special status in the assembly of disciples in Joppa, and some scholars suggest that, in a patronage society, it could have given her special rank as well.¹¹⁶

c. Preparing the Body (9:37)

In view of Acts 9:36, dying from sickness (as here) cannot imply lack of piety (cf. 2 Kgs 13:14). Greeks and Romans (typically female relatives) washed corpses before burial;¹¹⁷ they also bathed wounds¹¹⁸ and anointed corpses.¹¹⁹ Jewish tradition also had adopted the anointing and washing of corpses (*m. Šabb.* 23:5).¹²⁰

Burial was expected to be carried out as soon as possible (Acts 5:6–10). Judean traditions emphasize the urgency of burial.¹²¹ If we may trust rabbinic sources on

112. "Good works" is more characteristic of Pauline literature (cf. Eph 2:10; for "every good work," 2 Cor 9:8; Col 1:10; 2 Thess 2:17; in the singular, Rom 2:7; 13:3; Phil 1:6), especially the Pastorals (1 Tim 2:10; "every good work," 1 Tim 5:10; 2 Tim 2:21; 3:17; Titus 1:16; 3:1); and 1 *Clement* (33.7; 38.2; "every good work," 2.7; 33.1; 34.4).

113. Cf. here also Tannehill, *Acts*, 45. In the NT, only Luke employs ἐλεημοσύνη in the plural (but see also *Did.* 15.4), and only here and in Acts 10:2, 4, 31; 24:17. The term is frequent in the LXX, but especially in later books, particularly Tobit (Tob 4:7–16; 12:8–9; 13:8; 14:10–11; often in the plural, 1:3, 16; 2:14; 3:2; 14:2) and Sirach (Sir 3:14, 30; 7:10; 12:3; 16:14; 17:22, 29; 29:8, 12; 35:2; 40:17, 24; in the plural only in 31:11); in the plural also in Ps 102:6 (103:6 ET); Prov 14:22; 15:27; Dan 4:27.

114. After noting her function as a model disciple, O'Day, "Acts," 310, complains that Luke calls the apostles' ministry to widows a "ministry" (Acts 6:1–2) but hers only "good works." But although Luke does not employ ἔργον as much as Pauline literature does, the term is significant: Luke 24:19 (pl.; Jesus); Acts 7:22 (pl.; Moses); 13:2 (sing.; Paul's apostolic ministry); 14:26 (sing.; Paul's apostolic ministry); 15:38 (sing.; Paul's apostolic ministry); 26:20 (pl.; discipleship); cf. ἐργαζόμενος in Acts 10:35 (discipleship). "Alms" appears in Luke 11:41; 12:33 (for discipleship); Acts 3:2–3, 10; 24:17; in this context, 10:2, 4, 31, where it is highly valued in the Cornelius story. Διακονία, "ministry," is a form of "service" and applies to preaching ministry (Acts 20:24; 21:19; Judas's apostolate, 1:17, 25) and corporate service to the poor (6:1, 4; 11:29; 12:25), and once for a matron feeding guests (Luke 10:40). The contrast is thus not helpful. Reid, "Power," 87, goes further, complaining that Luke seeks to mask widows' power (see discussion at Acts 6:1).

115. See Safrai, "Home," 762–63 (citing, e.g., *b. Ketub.* 106a; *Sanh.* 43a). For comments on Tabitha's charity and other, broader sorts of "good works," see Reimer, *Women*, 36–41, 262.

116. Spencer, *Acts*, 108 (suggesting that she headed the assembly). For the prominent status of patronesses for early Christian assemblies, see, e.g., Keener, *Paul*, 240. On patronesses, see also Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 200; Hemelrijk, "Patronesses"; Winter, *Left Corinth*, 199–201; comment on Acts 16:15; 17:4. Nevertheless, patronage in the more technical sense is questionable in the Greek East outside colonies (see, e.g., MacGillivray, "Patronage," 46–54).

117. Hom. *Il.* 18.345, 350; 24.582; Eurip. *Phoen.* 1667; Virg. *Aen.* 6.219; 9.487; Ovid *Metam.* 13.531–32; Apul. *Metam.* 9.30. Women attended bodies even of male relatives (Isaeus *Philoct.* 41; *Ciron* 22).

118. Virg. *Aen.* 9.487; Ovid *Metam.* 13.531–32.

119. Hom. *Il.* 18.350–51; 24.582; Virg. *Aen.* 6.219; Mart. *Epig.* 3.12; *Test. Ab.* 20:11 A; for ointments in embalming, e.g., Hdn. 4.2.8; Hagner, *Matthew*, 758, cites P.Oxy. 736.13; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.5; Gen 50:2 LXX. For mention of both bathing and anointing, Lucian *Fun.* 11; Klauck, *Context*, 72 (adding the use of flowers). For some other references, see Conzelmann, *Acts*, 77; Barrett, *Acts*, 483 (including Plato *Phaedo* 115A); cf. Johnson, "Dead, Cult of," 113; in traditional African societies influenced by Islam, cf. Mbiti, *Religions*, 329 (on uncleanness taboos in African traditional societies more generally, cf. Adogbo, "Pollution"). Romans often assigned the washing and anointing to a slave of the undertaker (Stambaugh, *City*, 150).

120. See further discussion in Safrai, "Home," 776 (citing *Lev. Rab.* 34:10; *Ruth Rab.* 2 in the Amoraic period); much later, see Maimonides *Yad. Abel* 4.1 (cited by Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 110).

121. Safrai, "Home," 774 (citing *t. Neg.* 6:2; *'Abot R. Nat.* 35 A; 39 B; *b. B. Qam.* 82a).

this point, even outside Jerusalem it was considered disrespectful to leave a corpse unburied overnight; it was “permitted only if more time was needed for the preparation of shrouds or a coffin.”¹²² The first week following the death was the period of the most intense mourning both among Romans¹²³ and among Jews.¹²⁴ That Peter is urged to come quickly (9:38) is not surprising. Raisings, however, normally required urgency (2 Kgs 4:29; cf. John 11:21–24, 39); people may have considered decomposition to be too late.¹²⁵

Though it was customary to bury corpses immediately, people may have sometimes prepared them in upper chambers.¹²⁶ The upper room here specifically recalls those in the raising stories in both 1 Kgs 17:19, 23 and 2 Kgs 4:10–11 (with 2 Kgs 4:21), which are meant to parallel each other.¹²⁷ The Elijah story is mentioned in Luke’s programmatic scene (Luke 4:25–26) and hence provides an obvious subtext. The resurrection story in Acts 20:7–12 also includes an upper room (20:8), which may allude back to this one (but must be mentioned, in any case, to explain the injury, 20:9).¹²⁸

Although Romans undoubtedly received guests especially on the ground floor, the design of well-to-do Roman homes suggests that at least Romans (who heavily emphasized patronage) might expect even upper rooms to be seen by guests.¹²⁹ Judeans built upper rooms because of new family members, guests, and tenants and perhaps occasionally even for meetings of the sages¹³⁰ (for the last, see comment on Acts 1:13). One might build such a chamber for a son’s new marriage,¹³¹ but such rooms were also provided for daughters (especially childless ones) returning home after being widowed.¹³²

f. Requesting Peter’s Coming (9:38)

Luke emphasizes that Lydda was near Joppa because custom demanded rapid burial of the corpse, as Luke’s audience would presumably know.¹³³ Word about healing sanctuaries and miracles traveled quickly, generating many petitioners;¹³⁴ word of Peter’s miracle in Lydda (9:34) surely would have reached Joppa (cf. 9:35), as well as of Peter’s presence in Lydda (“when they had heard that Peter was there”). Parents or others sometimes sent to miracle workers requesting them to come and perform

122. Safrai, “Home,” 774 (citing here *m. Sanh.* 6:5; *Sem.* 11:1).

123. Jeffers, *World*, 45; cf. *Hdn.* 4.2.4.

124. Sir 22:12; Jdt 16:24; Jeremias, *Theology*, 132; Sandmel, *Judaism*, 200–201; cf. *L.A.E.* 51:2; *Apoc. Mos.* 43:3; John 11:19; cf. also other cultures (e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 197).

125. On urgency and claims of miraculous resuscitation generally, see Keener, *Miracles*, 538–39.

126. For corpses being prepared in either upper or lower chambers, see comment on Acts 9:39 below.

127. The term ὑπερῶν appears twenty-two times in the LXX, and so these uses account for nearly one-fifth of them. Commentators often note the allusion (Karris, *Invitation*, 110; Reimer, *Women*, 51).

128. The only other use of ὑπερῶν in the NT is Acts 1:13, which probably recalls Luke 22:12 (despite the different term).

129. Balch, “Paul, Families, and Households,” 265 (commenting on decorations there; for the penetration of at least Greek architecture as far as Galilee, see Meyers, “Gendered Space,” 51–58). In other cases, Romans easily converted upper rooms into living space (Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses*, 108).

130. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 535 (citing Jdt 8:5 [relevant to widowhood?]; *m. Šabb.* 1:4; *B. Meši’a* 10:2; *B. Bat.* 1:4; *b. Ketub.* 50b; *Menah.* 41b). Cf. Hillel sitting in the roof window in *b. Yoma* 35b.

131. Cf. Safrai, “Home,” 732–33. On newlyweds initially living with the husband’s family cf. also, e.g., Derrett, *Audience*, 38; Blue, “House Church,” 185n255.

132. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 536 (citing *m. B. Bat.* 6:4; cf. *m. Ketub.* 12:3; *t. Ketub.* 11:5–7). For a corpse being left temporarily in either an upper or a lower room, cf. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 185.

133. Safrai, “Home,” 774, esp. n. 7; cf. *b. Sanh.* 47a. Greek funerals allowed one or two days for burial (Klauck, *Context*, 72; perhaps in a cooler region).

134. See Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 72 (citing NT references and Paus. 2.26.5); cf. 51 (citing oracular referrals).

healing.¹³⁵ The sending of two men¹³⁶ parallels the sending of three men in 10:5–8; were they expecting resurrection or comfort (cf. John 11:3)?

The partly parallel account in Luke 8:41 is a request for healing, but the daughter is not yet dead (8:42); the implied request in 2 Kgs 4:28, however, is for resurrection. Likewise, the messengers of Luke 7:4 “urged” (παρεκάλουν) Jesus to come for healing, as the two men here urged (παρακαλοῦντες) Peter to come.¹³⁷ The wording of the request might suggest hesitation.¹³⁸ That the corpse has not yet been buried, despite the time required for the messengers’ journey and Peter’s, probably confirms that they seek more than comfort.¹³⁹ Perhaps the petitioners would waver because the request was so enormous or out of respect for the famous apostle (cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5), who, though nearby, might face many other requests. Peter might hesitate because of responsibilities elsewhere (cf. Luke 4:43);¹⁴⁰ he does, however, come (Acts 9:39).

g. Benefactress of Widows (9:39)

The widows’ weeping shows Tabitha to be an endearing person who was very special to them (cf. comment on Acts 20:37–38). Most ancient Mediterranean cultures expected women in particular to offer lamentation for the dead (e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 5.16.6; Thucyd. 2.34.4; see comment on Acts 8:2), and deceased women were also objects of mourning.¹⁴¹ Many also treated widows as objects of compassion. Their mourning (cf. Luke 7:12) would generate special pathos; they would know it and perhaps exploit it to good effect here (cf. Luke 18:3–5),¹⁴² and Luke would also expect his audience to recognize this effect as well.

Although some scholars (arguing from the definite article and the distinction from the saints in Acts 9:41) have suggested that this is an order of widows that assists her, it is more likely that these widows are dependent on her here,¹⁴³ as the widow in Luke 7:12 would have been dependent on her deceased son, deepening the sense of tragedy. (They may be distinguished from the “saints” in 9:41 to increase the pathos.)¹⁴⁴ Three fifth-century papyri speak of Christian women who support widows, but reading this data back into the first century seems precarious.¹⁴⁵ It is possible that Luke implies a

135. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 49 (citing *b. Ber.* 34b; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 11; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.10); in early Christian literature, cf. *Acts John* 19.

136. “In accordance with Jewish custom” (Reimer, *Women*, 42); cf. *y. Roš Haš.* 2:8, §4; quite abundantly, Liefeld, “Preacher,” 225–27; Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1; Acts 13:2. For double messengers, see Hom. *Il.* 1.320; 9.182; cf. Gordon, *Near East*, 110.

137. The request not to “delay” or “hesitate” (ὀκνήσης) was familiar language in urgent requests to come (Num 22:16; Jdt 12:13; cf. Tob 12:13) as well as an invitation to visit the sick (Sir 7:35).

138. Barrett, *Acts*, 484.

139. For oblique, polite Middle Eastern requests, see, e.g., John 1:38; 2:3.

140. Greek moralists warned against needless delay (e.g., Hesiod *W.D.* 410, 413; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11s, pp. 100–101.24–35; cf. also Prov 3:28).

141. Romans offered orations only for older women until the death of Caesar’s wife (68 B.C.E.), after which they also offered them for young women (Plut. *Caes.* 5.2); before ca. 396 B.C.E., they allegedly offered them only for men (Plut. *Cam.* 8.3).

142. The bereavement of a father could also generate pathos (e.g., Quint. Curt. 6.10.30–32), but for the entreaties of women (often widows or others in grave need) securing what they need (and often getting away with requesting what men did not dare), see Luke 18:2–5; Aeschines *Embassy* 148 (similarly other dependents, 179); Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.44.1–8.54.1; Tac. *Ann.* 16.10; Plut. *Coriol.* 34.1–2 (despite the cost, 36.4); *Alex.* 12.3; 21.1–3; 39.7; 2 Sam 14:1–21; 20:16–22; 1 Kgs 1:11–16; 2:17; Matt 20:20; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 134; Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 179. Erker, “Voix dangereuses,” suggests that in Rome, women’s mourning sometimes even carried political power. Women’s intercession was often effective, but not always (Sherk, *Empire*, §3, p. 7).

143. Johnson, *Acts*, 178, lists both options.

144. Cf. “saints and apostles” in Rev 18:20; of course, in either view, καί does not always connect mutually exclusive categories (see, e.g., Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, 227–29, §442).

145. Thurston, *Widows*, 32–33.

special group of widows here, but even if this is the case, it is unclear whether “they were nurses and professional mourners, or simply recipients of charity”; either way, Tabitha had taken responsibility for them.¹⁴⁶ On the whole, it seems safer to read no more into the text than Luke would probably assume his first audience to have gathered, though the significant possibility of an order of widows as early as 1 Tim 5:3–16¹⁴⁷ admittedly leaves open what that may have been.

Tabitha was probably the widows’ benefactor, a model suggested by other ancient evidence both inside and outside early Christianity (cf. 1 Tim 5:16).¹⁴⁸ Widows were often counted as legally defenseless because they lacked a husband to fight for their cause.¹⁴⁹ (This would prove especially true of widows who failed to remarry, following some minority ideals of the era.)¹⁵⁰ Caring for widows was an important component of genuinely practical piety (e.g., Deut 24:19–21; Job 29:13; Isa 1:17, 23; Jas 1:27).¹⁵¹ Widows appear regularly throughout Luke’s Gospel (Luke 2:37; 4:25–26; 7:12; 18:3; 20:47; 21:2–3) and fit the Gospel’s heavy emphasis on the marginalized (see esp. 4:18; 6:20; 7:22).¹⁵² In Acts, they appear here and in Acts 6:1 but are not as prominent as in the Gospel (the second volume emphasizing ethnic more than economic marginalization).

Perhaps Tabitha made garments (cf. Prov 31:19–24) for a living,¹⁵³ but this would also prove a useful form of charity (cf. 31:20); on charity, see comment on Acts 3:2. (Some scholars compare Tabitha to Priscilla and Lydia, who also dealt with textiles,¹⁵⁴ but Lydia sold expensive fabrics, and Paul and Aquila also manufactured, although probably with leather.)¹⁵⁵ Jewish women’s garments, at least insofar as we may infer from a later painting farther east in Dura-Europos, probably roughly matched the Syrian style (perhaps because of the painting’s location):

... an ankle-length undertunic with wide, elbow-length sleeves and a shorter tube-dress over the top, fastened on the left breast. They have a hip-length veil over their heads,

146. Ibid., 34.

147. See *ibid.*, 36–55, esp. 44–46; Scott, *Pastoral Epistles*, 57; Pelser, “Women,” 105; Verner, *Household*, 164–65; Keener, *Marries Another*, 90–91. Others doubt such an order in this period (Fee, *Timothy*, 85; Winter, *Welfare*, 63). In the second century, see Thurston, *Widows*, 56–91.

148. See Verner, *Household*, 139. Parsons, *Acts*, 139, suggests plausibly that if she made the garments herself, she was not wealthy but gave from her poverty (cf. Luke 21:4).

149. E.g., Deut 27:19; Isa 1:17, 23; 10:2; 4 Ezra 2:20; cf. Deut 10:18; Pss 68:5; 146:9; Prov 15:25; Jer 7:6; 22:3; CD VI, 16; Jos. *Ant.* 4.240; *Sib. Or.* 3.242; 2 *En.* 50:5. Exceptions of women who pleaded their cases were noteworthy; see Val. Max. 8.3; Luke 18:3.

150. See, on these, e.g., Luke 2:36–37; 1 Tim 5:9 (perhaps); Ovid *Her.* 1.81–84; Val. Max. 2.1.3; Char. *Chaer.* 3.6.6; Jdt 8:4; 16:22; cf. further Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 149–50, 161; Gardner, *Women*, 50–51; Verner, *Household*, 62–63; Maclean and Aitken, *Heroikos*, liv; Safrai, “Home,” 788–89; Keener, *Marries Another*, 93–94. Some sources even praise those who committed suicide at a spouse’s death (see comment on Acts 16:27). But in this period, the culture more often demanded remarriage (Suet. *Aug.* 34.1; *t. ‘Abod. Zar.* 2:7; *‘Abot R. Nat.* 3 A; *y. Ketub.* 9:8, §4; see further Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 22, 24, 71–103; Rawson, “Family,” 31; Gardner, *Women*, 82; O’Rourke, “Law,” 180; Keener, “Marriage,” 680–82; Harrell, *Divorce*, 58; Safrai, “Home,” 788; Ilan, *Women*, 148–49; earlier, Plut. *Lys.* 30.5; *Cam.* 2.2).

151. See discussion at Acts 6:1.

152. Green, “Good News,” argues that for Luke, the “poor” are those with “low social status,” which would certainly apply here.

153. Cf. Reimer, *Women*, 43. Most garments were made at home (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 538, citing *m. Ketub.* 5:5, 9; cf. Prov 31:13, 19, 21–22, 24).

154. Spencer, “Cloth,” 134–54. On women as weavers, see Stambaugh, *City*, 99; see more generally Treggiari, “Jobs for Women.” Architecture does not suggest strict limits on women’s activity even in Galilee (Meyers, “Gendered Space,” 68).

155. See comment on Acts 18:3. Ancients might connect Lydia and Priscilla as “businesswomen,” but even so, Lydia’s clientele are more explicitly of high status.

and their mantles (decorated with L-shapes) are wrapped round their hips with the top part folded over, although it is not clear how this is fastened.¹⁵⁶

Widows, at least, might not wear the head coverings unless they so wished.¹⁵⁷

That the widows showed the garments to Peter¹⁵⁸ is intended to increase the pathos,¹⁵⁹ especially given the use of the middle participle, which might suggest that the garments that they showed him were the garments they were wearing¹⁶⁰ and at least suggests that they were displaying them “with pride, or satisfaction.”¹⁶¹ (The public reader of Acts would likely seek to communicate this pathos with gestures and inflection while reading the work.)¹⁶² Pathos and pity for the powerless (such as widows) provided important components of entreaties and were used even to sway courts.¹⁶³ Showing the garments might also show how much they all needed Tabitha, so that raising her would constitute a benefaction not only to herself but to all her beneficiaries.

Peter's benefit to the widows by restoring her might evoke the resurrecting of widows' sons (hence future providers) in 1 Kgs 17:23 and Luke 7:15; the benefit is not only to the person raised but to the survivors dependent on the person. (Readers of Acts will be well aware that Peter's benefaction tended to be miraculous rather than directly financial; see Acts 3:6; 4:9.) It also would answer any residual suspicion that Peter and the apostles had genuinely neglected widows in 6:1.¹⁶⁴

Bringing Peter to the upper room would make him ritually impure even before he takes Tabitha's hand (9:39). Corpse uncleanness was the severest form of uncleanness, lasting seven days (Num 19:11–13), and in much contemporary Jewish belief it was propagated even by overshadowing.¹⁶⁵ (Greeks could understand this, since Greeks also believed that death made mourners unclean.¹⁶⁶ Visitors to the

156. Croom, *Clothing*, 132 (noting that they could wear colorful clothes except for red). The veil may reflect the specifically Eastern milieu of the painting (see Keener, “Head Coverings”). For Jewish garments, see, e.g., Goodenough, *Symbols*, 9:168–74; Croom, *Clothing*, 130–32 (noting the similarity to Greek styles, 131); on the sort of garments noted here, see comment on 7:58; on the sort of χιτῶν worn by women, see Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 44.

157. See discussion in Keener, “Head Coverings,” 445–46; for further on ancient head coverings, see Llewellyn-Jones, *Tortoise*.

158. Concerned for homiletic application, Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 21 thinks that this feature was recorded to highlight Tabitha's example, as a model of caring for the poor.

159. Cf. Libanius *Topics* 3.2 (though this passage might imply displaying torn clothing reflecting mourning, just as people sometimes displayed their wounds to generate pathos; see sources in Keener, *John*, 1202; comment on Acts 20:19). My wife tells of an earlier custom that she learned about in rural Congo and according to which mourners would wave something that the deceased had given them, or would at least name the gifts (although this belonged to a practice of artificially inflating grief).

160. Marshall, *Acts*, 179; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 445; Larkin, *Acts*, 152; Parsons, *Acts*, 139.

161. Barrett, *Acts*, 485 (noting that the middle of this verb is more frequent than the active and need not imply that they were wearing them).

162. For grief gestures, see Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 71–74, who notes the gesture of moving one's hand toward one's cheek (71; found in artwork and Terence, 74). See 87–89 for “rules for evoking emotion in vocal inflection,” esp. 88 for grief: muffled and suggesting tears (Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.64).

163. See, e.g., Lysias *Or.* 32.11–18, §§506–11; Val. Max. 8.1.abs.2. Some, e.g., Cato, objected to this means of emotional appeal (e.g., using children; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.20).

164. On this point, see Spencer, “Neglected Widows.”

165. E.g., *m. Kelim* 1:4; *Ohal.* 2:1; cf. Luke 10:31–32; *b. Bek.* 29b; *Ber.* 19b; *B. Meši'a* 114b; Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 34, 232; Borg, *Conflict*, 104–5; on the emphasis in *m. Ohal.*, see Maccoby, “Corpse.” On corpse uncleanness, see esp. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 184–92; on the issue in Tiberias, see Jos. *Ant.* 18.38; Levine, “Purification.”

166. Klauck, *Context*, 72 (noting that even Artemis had to avoid this in Eurip. *Hipp.* 1437–38). Some Gentile traditions associate burial with impurity (cf. Pythagorean tradition in Iambl. *V.P.* 35.256; in some traditional cultures today, see, e.g., Radcliffe-Brown, “Taboo,” 73; Mbiti, *Religions*, 198), though others considered this

house of mourning sprinkled themselves with water when they departed, but close relatives required more elaborate purification after a few days.)¹⁶⁷ Thus, according to early Jewish exegesis of Num 19:14, being in the same room with a corpse could make one unclean; indeed, the uncleanness of either upper or lower rooms might contaminate the entire house (4Q284 4;¹⁶⁸ *m. Naz.* 9:2; *Ed.* 3:1; *’Ohal.* 2:4; 7:2–3; *t. ’Ohal.* 11:10).¹⁶⁹

For purposes of mourning, Jewish people had to incur such uncleanness; nevertheless, for Luke’s purposes, Peter’s involvement here (though he touches her only after raising her, Acts 9:40–41) may foreshadow Peter’s involvement with apparent Gentile impurity in 10:23, 48 (cf. 11:3), though ultimately God declares it not really impure (10:15, 28; 15:9). By crossing such purity barriers to bring restoration, Peter follows Jesus’s example (Luke 5:13; 8:44–48, 51, 54).¹⁷⁰ (See further Peter’s sojourn with a tanner in 9:43, associated with carcasses.)

h. Raising Tabitha (9:40)

Peter follows Jesus’s example in the Gospel, both “putting out” the others (Luke 8:51)¹⁷¹ and commanding Tabitha¹⁷² to “rise” (8:54).¹⁷³ Pagan signs and magic were best performed in private,¹⁷⁴ but the motivation behind Jesus’s and Peter’s putting people out (aside from the messianic secret for the former) might have been to avoid the presence of skepticism (cf. Mark 6:5–6).¹⁷⁵ Most clearly, putting others out at least echoes the privacy of the resuscitations in 1 Kgs 17:19 and 2 Kgs 4:33.

superstitious (Theophr. *Char.* 16.9). Some regarded placing the emperor’s statue near a tomb to be sacrilegious (Pliny *Ep.* 10.81.2; but Trajan dismisses this view, 10.82).

167. Kierdorf, “Burial,” 832 (in some regions, the third day; in others, the ninth). Adler, “Tombs,” suggests that Jewish baths found beside tombs also addressed corpse impurity.

168. Qumran sectarians were particularly stringent regarding ritual purity (see, e.g., Harrington, “Holiness”).

169. See further Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 185 (noting also the passage of uncleanness between upper and lower rooms in *t. ’Ohal.* 5:9; cf. *m. ’Ohal.* 5:5). For the same reason, people marked graves to prevent others from unknowingly contracting impurity by overshadowing them (e.g., *m. Mo’ed Qat.* 1:2; *Ma’as. Š.* 5:1; *Šeqal.* 1:1; *b. B. Meši’a* 85b; *y. Mo’ed Qat.* 1:2, §7; *Ma’as. Š.* 5:1, §6; for other warning markers, see *t. Ma’as. Š.* 5:13), as Luke may know (Luke 11:44). Even a piece of bone could communicate corpse impurity (4QMMT B 72–74; cf. *m. Yad.* 4:6). In the stricter 11QT L, 10–18, a miscarrying woman who enters a home defiles (with corpse impurity) anything in its earthen vessels (Charlesworth, “Sketch,” 96).

170. Weissenrieder, *Images*, 248–49, 303, accepts the purity associations in Luke 5:12–16 and 17:11–19 but doubts that Luke envisions them in 8:43–48. Luke does not emphasize the specific language of impurity there (and, with Weissenrieder, does use medical language, 250–56), but he seems to write for an ideal audience familiar with Levitical rules (e.g., Luke 2:24). For the historical Jesus’s contacts with the unclean, see Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, 233–37; but in a sense, Jesus removed impurity rather than contracted it—and hence opposed impurity more successfully than his contemporaries who sought to avoid it when possible.

171. Conservative concerns about a man being alone with a woman (see comment in Keener, *Acts*, 1:636; or here taking her by the hand) would undoubtedly need to be dismissed in the case of a corpse being raised.

172. Witchcraft specified the name so that the spell did not affect the wrong corpse (Apul. *Metam.* 2.30; but this is to steal a corpse), and magical texts often designate which person of a particular parentage (e.g., PGM 36.82–83). But addressing the deceased by name or title appears in many nonmagical accounts (John 11:43; cf. Luke 7:14; 8:54), fitting the language of healing by command (see comment on Acts 3:6).

173. This is not to imply that Luke exploits all possible parallels; Luke does omit Mark’s Aramaic *talitha*, which would have well paralleled Tabitha’s name; nor does Peter keep the raising secret as Jesus does in the case of Jairus’s daughter. The comments of Weissenrieder, *Images*, 256–67, esp. 263–67, regarding virgins’ hysteric illnesses and a version of the story of Jairus’s daughter would not apply to Tabitha.

174. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 61 (citing Ovid *Metam.* 7.255–57; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 16; Apul. *Apol.* 42; PGM 3.616–17; 12.36–37; for cultic healings, cf. Epid. inscr. 11; SIG³ 3.1173); for witchcraft, cf., e.g., Ovid *Am.* 1.8.13–14.

175. Practices vary among modern practitioners; only 30 percent of healers surveyed in Tilley, “Phenomenology,” 546, felt that the presence of nonbelievers was problematic; I also noted onlookers in Keener, *Miracles*, 559, 561, 710.

Peter knelt¹⁷⁶ to pray before commanding Tabitha to rise. Jewish people commonly associated pious prayer with healings,¹⁷⁷ though in the Gospels Jesus typically commands rather than prays at the time of the healing.¹⁷⁸ That Peter prays first distinguishes this account from the otherwise very similar report of the raising of Jairus's daughter;¹⁷⁹ it may imply that Peter, unlike his Lord, needs further preparation for his initial resuscitation (cf. Mark 9:29), or it may simply echo 1 Kgs 17:20–22 and especially 2 Kgs 4:33.¹⁸⁰

That she opens her eyes first might be “a reversal of the first act of preparation for burial, closing the eyes of the deceased”;¹⁸¹ more clearly, however, it recalls 2 Kgs 4:35, where it is one of the first signs of awakening.¹⁸² She “sat up,” just like the formerly dead young man in Luke 7:15; both verses use ἀνεκάλισεν, the only uses of ἀνακαθίζω in the NT.¹⁸³

Luke's literary models are, as already noted, biblical and the gospel tradition, but understanding other resuscitation stories from antiquity will help us better appreciate how various real first-century hearers may have encountered Luke's report.¹⁸⁴ Although some ancients told resuscitation stories with a degree of skepticism, most of the ancient Mediterranean world, including reports from the Hebrew Bible, accepted that raisings sometimes occurred.¹⁸⁵ (Some ancients were selective in what they would accept; Pliny the Elder, for example, doubted ancient reports that certain herbs brought people back to life.)¹⁸⁶ Reports appear commonly enough in both Greek¹⁸⁷ and Jewish¹⁸⁸ sources, though the records tend to follow the reported events by a much greater span of time than those in the Gospels.¹⁸⁹

Many of these accounts have nothing in common with the earliest extant Christian reports. Thus, for example, Gentiles spoke of witches resuscitating the dead,¹⁹⁰ using drugs and various occult means (drilling holes to pour in hot blood, the moon's poison, the froth of dogs, and the like).¹⁹¹ Witches also worked at night when no one could see them,¹⁹² for their works were considered impious and worthy

176. “Placing the knees” appears to be a “Latinism” (Barrett, *Acts*, 387, citing Ovid *Fasti* 2.438); certainly Luke employs it often (Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60; 20:36; 21:5; elsewhere *Herm.* 1.3; 5.2; 9.5; not in the LXX, Philo, or Josephus; see comment on Acts 7:60). Is his model for kneeling prayer in Acts Jesus (Luke 22:41), the language from Mark 15:19?

177. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 65 (citing 1 Kgs 17:21; *b. Ber.* 34b; *Ḥag.* 3a; cf. Plut. *Pyrr.* 3.7–9); Aune, “Magic,” 1533–34.

178. Aune, “Magic,” 1533–34.

179. Rackham, *Acts*, 145.

180. For σῶμα as corpse, as here, cf. Luke 17:37.

181. Larkin, *Acts*, 152 (citing *m. Šabb.* 23:5; *Sem.* 1:4).

182. With Reimer, *Women*, 51.

183. It does not appear in the LXX. Hobart, *Medical Language*, 11, provides examples in the intransitive sense in the medical literature.

184. Because we have already identified closer literary models, these analogies tell us more about widespread human aspirations concerning cures for death than about any sources of Luke.

185. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:773.

186. Pliny E. *N.H.* 25.5.13–14 (against such fanciful claims as in Apul. *Metam.* 2.28).

187. E.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 2.5.12; 2.6.2; 3.3.1; 3.5.3; Bultmann, *Tradition*, 233–34; Blackburn, “ΑΝΑΠΕΣ,” 190, citing, e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.124; Apul. *Florida* 19). Often even deities proved unable to resuscitate the dead (Ovid *Metam.* 2.617–18; 4.247–49).

188. Fairly rarely in the rabbis but elsewhere in Jewish (*Test. Ab.* 18:11 A; 14:6 B) and Christian (*Acts John* 47, 52, 73–80; *Acts Pet.* [8] 28) sources. Cf. 1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:18–37.

189. Cf., e.g., Harvey, *History*, 100, on the differences.

190. E.g., Ovid *Am.* 1.8.17–18; Heliod. *Eth.* 6.14–15. In a Latin novel, an Egyptian magician could reportedly resuscitate a corpse (Apul. *Metam.* 2.28), although the person might not wish to leave Hades (2.29; cf. 1 Sam 28:15).

191. Lucan *C.W.* 6.667–775. Cf. the use of Gorgon's blood in Apollod. *Bib.* 3.10.3; an herb in Apollod. *Bib.* 3.3.1. Cf. charlatans in Lucian *Alex.* 24; *Lover of Lies* 26 (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 77).

192. Ovid *Am.* 1.8.13–14.

of death.¹⁹³ They also spoke of unaided, natural resuscitations,¹⁹⁴ such as the ex-consul who revived on the funeral pyre but was then burned alive (Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.52.173). Novelists favored especially the reviving of those only apparently dead (*Apoll. K. Tyre* 27).¹⁹⁵ Somewhat more analogously, Greeks had stories of heroes who resuscitated the dead, such as Asclepius,¹⁹⁶ Heracles,¹⁹⁷ Dionysus,¹⁹⁸ and, in historical times (albeit recorded a century or more after the personages' decease), Empedocles¹⁹⁹ and Apollonius.²⁰⁰

In one story, God raised people in answer to the prayer of Abraham.²⁰¹ Later rabbis also told stories of earlier rabbis who miraculously raised the dead.²⁰² Traditions indicate a popular belief that at least on some occasions, Jesus raised the dead.²⁰³ It may be significant that third-century rabbis acknowledged these raisings but attributed them to necromancy;²⁰⁴ but they may well be responding to later Christian claims from the Gospels rather than to the traditions behind the Gospels. Resuscitations became particularly popular in the later apocryphal acts, for example, *Acts John* 47, 52, 73–80;²⁰⁵ but whereas an apostle such as Peter can resuscitate the dead (as here), a magician such as Simon could at best fake it (*Acts Pet.* [8] 28). Resuscitations also feature in some modern accounts of Christian expansion.²⁰⁶ Raising the dead is paired with healing the sick in the eschatological time in a Qumran fragment,²⁰⁷ but this might refer to the final resurrection.²⁰⁸

i. Presentation and Response (9:41–42)

Peter follows Jesus's example in taking Tabitha by the hand (Luke 8:54), an act that required faith (as in Acts 3:7). Jesus and others used touching for resuscitation and other healing miracles (Luke 7:14).²⁰⁹ In contrast to Jesus's ministry in the Gospel, however, there is here (Acts 9:41–42) no messianic secret (cf. Luke 8:55); after the resurrection, Jesus's identity and mission were to be publicized (Luke 24:47–48).

193. Heliod. *Eth.* 6.14–15.

194. Val. Max. 1.8.12; 1.8.ext. 1; Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.52.176–79 (some of these accounts appear more plausible than others). Pliny also claims that Hermetimus often traveled outside his body until his enemies burned his body to prevent his soul's return (*N.H.* 7.52.174).

195. For this novelistic motif in detail, see Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 99–119, esp. 104–10; cf. Perkins, "Fictive *Scheintod*" (surprisingly also finding political symbolism). Fake death is a comic motif (e.g., Menander *Aspis* 112–13, 343–87). Because Jesus's resurrection is no mere resuscitation, the parallels are more relevant for discussing resuscitation narratives as here.

196. Aeschylus *Ag.* 1022–24; Eurip. *Alc.* 124–30; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.10.3; Paus. 2.26.5; 2.27.4; Lucian *Dance* 45; Panyassis frg. 5, in Sext. *Emp. Math.* 1.260.

197. Apollod. *Bib.* 2.5.12; 2.6.2; Libanius *Narration* 15.

198. Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.3. Cf. the mysterious resuscitation of Protesilaus in Philost. *Hrk.* 2.9–11.

199. Diog. Laert. 8.2.59.

200. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.45. Philostratus reduces Apollonius's activity to this, as part of his antimagical apologetic (Klauck, *Context*, 174).

201. *Test. Ab.* 14:11–15 A (his earlier prayer had killed them, 10:6–11). See further 18:11 A; 14:6 B.

202. E.g., *b. B. Qam.* 117a; *y. Šeb.* 9:1, §13.

203. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:773–873.

204. Stauffer, *Jesus*, 101, unconvincingly seeks to make Luke 16:31 an early response to that charge.

205. See more fully Achtemeier, *Miracle Tradition*, 182 (citing *Acts John* 23, 24, 47, 51, 75, 80, 82–83; *Acts Thom.* 33, 53–54, 81; *Acts Pet.* 27–28; and other examples). The report in Papias frg. 6 (from Euseb. *H.E.* 3.39) apparently belongs to the apostolic period, the source being Philip's daughters.

206. E.g., Rabey, "Prophet," 32 (Simon Kimbangu); Akinwumi, "Idahosa"; Menberu, "Mekonnen Negera"; Rutz, *Megashift*, 21–22. On other modern raising claims, see discussion at the introduction to the section.

207. 4Q521 2 II, 12. Cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 1388; 4Q521 may blend imagery from Isa 35 with Isa 61 and other precedent, perhaps Elijah's miracles (for discussion, see Wise and Tabor, "Messiah"; Tabor, "Resurrection"; Collins, "Works").

208. Cf. 4Q521 7 + 5 II, 6, 8; the context does involve physical death (4Q521 7 + 5 II, 5, 11).

209. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 62 (citing Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.45; Ovid *Fasti* 6.753–54).

The presentation²¹⁰ to the widows contrasts with the messianic secret. More significantly, it also fits the pattern of handing the resuscitated person over to the mother (1 Kgs 17:23; 2 Kgs 4:36–37; Luke 7:15),²¹¹ reinforcing the picture of the church as spiritual family (Luke 14:26; 18:29–30; see comment on Acts 9:17). Tabitha had cared for these widows as if they belonged to her family (cf. 1 Tim 5:16); Peter understood that they would now receive her as a part of their family.²¹² As in Luke 7:15, dependents receive back their means of support.

The response (Acts 9:42) fits many of Luke's summaries (6:7; 9:31), especially the recent 9:35. Although this miracle is more dramatic, Joppa was large, and Luke's summary here is more restrained and less hyperbolic than in 9:35 ("many" as opposed to "all"). Although the word's spreading everywhere in response to signs is a frequent Lukan motif (e.g., 19:17–20), it is difficult to imagine that a miracle such as this one would not become widely known. If Tabitha's own deeds of kindness (9:36) had made her well known, interest in her welfare would have spread the word all the more.

The designation of "saints and widows" may suggest two groups (especially since both groups are prefaced with distinct definite articles rather than grammatically linked by a common article). Naturally, widows are part of the larger group of "saints" (cf. "saints and prophets" in Rev 11:18; 16:6; 18:20, 24), but they are designated separately because they fulfill a distinctive role in this narrative. From a literary perspective (and a rhetorical perspective within the narrative world), they add pathos; Tabitha also had a special ministry to them. Luke may be aware of the special ministry role (particularly in prayer) available to otherwise unoccupied widows in some developed Pauline churches (1 Tim 5:5).²¹³

j. Staying with a Tanner in Joppa (9:43)

Although he has recently come from fruitful ministry in Lydda (Acts 9:32, 35, 38), Peter naturally stays on in Joppa after Tabitha's resuscitation to follow up on the new interest that this event has generated (9:41–42). Luke reports Peter's stay in Joppa to prepare for the next scenes (10:5–6).

It was customary to name people by their occupations, as funerary inscriptions attest.²¹⁴ This was true for tanners no less than for others (e.g., *ILS 7555*, from Rome). Tanners produced the sort of leather useful for shoes,²¹⁵ and their mention may prepare the reader for another (probably) leatherworker in Acts 18:3 (see comments below); like most other trades, many would also work from their home (or live above their workplace), presumably the reason for mentioning the trade here. One might have expected Peter, staying near the sea (10:6, 32), to have lodged with a fisherman, someone of kindred occupation (cf. Luke 5:2–3);²¹⁶ fishermen in Joppa had something of a kinship organization there.²¹⁷ But we should remember that Jesus instructed his

210. The verb *παρίστημι* carries this sense also in Acts 23:33 (but not in a celebratory sense there).

211. Handing a healed person over to relatives also appears in Luke 9:42; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.45 (Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 68).

212. When no family members were available, others near a person could see to burial and other such matters (cf. Mark 6:29); this applied to the family of Christians (Acts 5:5, 10).

213. Some scholars make this prayer focus a point of comparison with Rome's vestals (cf. Hardy, "Priestess").

214. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 117. Parsons, *Acts*, 140, also shows that when Luke notes a character's profession, it becomes significant for the narrative (Acts 8:9, 27; 10:1; 13:6; 16:14; 18:3; 19:24), and that Luke reiterates this one (10:6, 32).

215. Stambaugh, *City*, 152.

216. Cf. Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 5.1, where a poor fisherman by the sea provides hospitality and lodging to an honored guest.

217. Applebaum, "Economic Life," 68Sn5 (citing *CIJ* 2.945).

followers to stay wherever they were offered hospitality (Luke 9:4; 10:5–8); perhaps like Jesus, Peter had no other place to lay his head (9:57–58).

Throughout the Mediterranean world, tanners were among the despised trades. Many scholars argue that they were usually among groups that had business in cities and hence needed to be near them, yet were located at the edge of town or outside the walls: “ethnic groups,²¹⁸ tanners, and traders (along with the more commonly noted beggars and prostitutes).”²¹⁹ Some members of the elite stereotyped them as particularly crude, along with smiths,²²⁰ and even some nonelite persons viewed them as liars, along with, but even worse than, workers in crafts.²²¹ If for no other reason, their odor required most tanneries to reside on towns’ outskirts.²²² Polite Roman society looked down on tanners as well as smiths and butchers,²²³ though it is doubtful that workers from these groups shared outsiders’ opinions (see comment on Acts 18:3).²²⁴

That professional Jewish teachers shared such scruples comes as no surprise, especially given the association of tanning with carcasses (regarding corpses, see comment on Acts 9:39).²²⁵ To keep “the camp” holy, the sages decided that one “should not recite the Shema standing beside a chamber pot, nor enter a bath or a tannery with scrolls or phylacteries in hand.”²²⁶ People needed tanners, chamber pots, and baths, but they were all profane.²²⁷ The Mishnah reports that tanneries, like graves, were permitted not within cities but only outside (*m. B. Bat.* 2:9).²²⁸ Judean professionals despised the odors associated with tanners so much that the rabbis ruled that a tanner must grant his wife a divorce if she could not endure it (*m. Ketub.* 7:10),²²⁹ though certainly tanners would not have agreed with these judgments! They were both “suspected of immorality” and associated with a trade involving foul odors; Peter was thus residing “in a low class area, and with one of very doubtful repute in Jewish eyes.”²³⁰

218. Many cities had quarters for various ethnic groups (certainly Jews were prominent in Alexandria and many other predominantly Gentile cities), and so this item, at least, must be qualified.

219. Rohrbaugh, “Pre-industrial City,” 145 (cf. 144); also 135 (following Sjoberg, *Preindustrial City*, 97–100); cf. 2 Kgs 7:3; Neh 13:15–16, 19–20.

220. Libanius *Or.* 15.77, as cited and applied in Toner, *Culture*, 142.

221. Toner, *Culture*, 29, citing Aesop *Fable* 103 (which probably stems from nonelite circles).

222. Anderson-Stojanovic, “Leather,” 339.

223. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 115. Lucian *Phil. Sale* 11 counts them among low-class occupations with little education (alongside carpenters and fish sellers).

224. Cf. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 120 (tombstones advertise even occupations despised by the elite). For tanners’ guilds, see Anderson-Stojanovic, “Leather,” 339.

225. See Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 304 (citing, e.g., *t. Ketub.* 7:11; *b. Qidd.* 82b, bar.; *Pesah.* 65a, bar.); see further *m. Šabb.* 1:2; *Meg.* 3:2; *Kelim* 15:1. Similarly, in *‘Abot R. Nat.* 36 A, butchers held no share in the world to come! In practice, however, skinning beasts in the marketplace was more honorable than depending on charity (Moore, *Judaism*, 2:177, citing *b. B. Bat.* 110a; *Pesah.* 113a). Gentile tanners were worse (*m. Šabb.* 1:8), and Simon is surely not Gentile (cf. Acts 10:28, Peter’s later realization).

226. *Sipre Deut.* 258.1.1 (Neusner, 1:187).

227. That tanners were restricted from tanning on the Sabbath (*t. Šabb.* 8:23) indicates that they were not altogether forbidden to do it; allowances could be made for them (*m. Kelim* 26:8).

228. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 6 (*m. B. Bat.* 2:9 also requires that tanneries be on Jerusalem’s east side, i.e., downwind from the city, as Danby points out). Akiba develops this further in *b. B. Bat.* 25a (Basser, “Allusions,” 98, citing it for a different purpose).

229. Barrett, *Acts*, 486 (citing also, on the uncleanness or odor of tanneries, *m. Šabb.* 1:2; *Meg.* 3:2; *B. Bat.* 2:9; *b. Pesah.* 65a; *Qidd.* 82b).

230. Barrett, *Acts*, 486 (though he concludes [487] that this “residence with the tanner” is not greatly significant). Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 446, and Parsons, *Luke*, 158, note the scorning of trades because of their odors (citing, for later sources, Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:695). Many commentators suggest tanners’ uncleanness (Harnack, *Acts*, 85; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 111–12; Bruce, *Commentary*, 213n68; Johnson, *Acts*, 179; Talbert, *Acts*, 92–93; Chance, *Acts*, 163), though the sources are more explicit about odors. Regardless of ritual uncleanness, Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 21 (Martin, *Acts*, 117) suggests that Peter’s staying with a tanner (rather than with someone prominent) showed his humility (a “working-class apostle,” we might say).

That the tannery was near water (Acts 10:6, 32) may have allowed more purification (both hygienically and ritually);²³¹ some rabbis thought a tannery in Sidon clean because it was near a river (though others disagreed, *t. 'Ohal.* 18:2). But such a location was not uncommon for tanneries in general,²³² and this did not keep them from being marginalized from mainstream society throughout the Mediterranean world:

Tanning was a complicated and smelly business. The hides of animals were tanned using tannic acid, which was extracted from lime, from the juice of certain plants, or from the bark of trees. Tanners often worked by the seashore to facilitate the disposal of chemicals and because they used salt water in the tanning process. Because of the very unpleasant odors the work generated, its practice was not allowed in cities.²³³

The location by the sea would make it easier to find the tanner's home, though other tanners may have also lived and worked in the same district (the title "tanner" may have thus helped inquirers looking for him, Acts 10:6, 32).²³⁴ The place would stink, but as a fisherman (who also would have cut many dead fish), Peter might be accustomed to the odor (and to the social disdain of the elite if he had found it noteworthy).

Although Luke does not despise trades (16:14; 18:3),²³⁵ he and his audience would surely know that this was a traditionally despised one. The uncleanness of this profession, in the eyes of some contemporaries, develops a theme in the Gospel (e.g., Luke 3:12; 5:27–30; 7:29, 34; 15:1–2) and provides a noteworthy transition to Peter's ministry to an "unclean" Gentile in Acts 10:28–43. That Peter would defend biblical kosher practices on a tanner's roof (10:14) might strike some as ironic, but his location suggests that he had fewer cultural hurdles to cross at this point than some more elite contemporaries did.²³⁶ The specification of Simon the tanner's trade may also pave the way for Paul as a leatherworker in 18:3. Leatherworking produced fewer odors and would prove less offensive than tanning, but Paul is a far more central character in Luke's history, and so it would be helpful to prepare Theophilus or other high-status members of Luke's ideal audience for Paul's manual labor in whatever ways possible.

231. Similarly, fullers needed water for processing wool; cf. the canal for fullers in the Syrian stela, 73–74 c.e., in Sherk, *Empire*, §174, p. 231 (for the process, see, e.g., Stambaugh, *City*, 151–52; Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses*, 139; Pekridou-Gorecki, "Fulling"). Fullers not only cleaned but had a function in textile production (Wilson, "Fullonica"; Pekridou-Gorecki, "Fulling," 576; Croom, *Clothing*, 24). Their use of sulfur (Pliny E. *N.H.* 35.50.175) and urine (Pekridou-Gorecki, "Textiles," 345) associated them with unpleasant odors (cf. Bradley, "Fullonica" [though overemphasizing their importance to civic space; Flohr, "Fullones"]). Indeed, they reportedly later nicknamed their urine repositories "Vespasians" in response to that emperor's tax on them (Toner, *Culture*, 168, citing Suet. *Vesp.* 23 [for the tax]; Dio Cass. 65.14.5). In Judea and Galilee, cf. *t. Miqw.* 4:10 (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 18); perhaps Mark 9:3. It was a common occupation (Lewis, *Life*, 136).

232. Tanneries in Rome were especially alongside the Tiber (Stambaugh, *City*, 152).

233. Jeffers, *World*, 28.

234. For members of related trades living near each other, see discussion at Acts 18:3. Jewish tanners may have worked in an area different from Gentile ones, but Joppa was predominantly Jewish in this period.

235. Emphasized by Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 111–12 (their citation of Acts 19:27 does not help).

236. Cf. Spencer, *Acts*, 113; comments in Green, "Acts," 748.

A ROMAN OFFICER ACCEPTED BY THE CHURCH (10:1–11:18)

In this section, a Roman officer is welcomed into God's people without being circumcised first (i.e., without converting to ethnic Judaism in the way prescribed by law and tradition). Although Cornelius is not the first Gentile convert (Acts 8:26–40), his symbolic role here is quite significant.¹ It is in this extended section that God leads first Peter (10:46–47) and then the Jerusalem church (11:18) to officially recognize that God has brought an uncircumcised Gentile into God's covenant people. Cornelius's role is, moreover, useful for advancing Luke's narrative beyond where it has already gone ethnically. Whereas Jews had little reason to resent Nubians (8:27–39), they had considerable cause for offense with Romans;² yet Cornelius foreshadows where Luke's narrative is moving (28:16–31).³

God confirms this plan through paired visions (10:1–8; 10:9–16; cf. similarly 9:1–19); through the Spirit's leading (10:19–20; 11:12); and, most decisively, through endowing the Gentiles with God's promised Spirit (Acts 10:44–48; 11:15–17; cf. 2:39; Gal 3:14). These signs confirm that it was the very God who had once sealed his covenant with circumcision who now adopted⁴ these uncircumcised seekers into his covenant. If God accepted them, his people dare not count them unclean (Acts 10:15, 28; 11:9; 15:9).

1. Introduction

This introduction addresses especially questions of Luke's theology but also (related to the work's genre) questions about the narrative's historicity. Other introductory issues, such as background on Caesarea (10:1); the "Italian cohort" (10:1); centurions (10:1); God-fearers (10:2); Cornelius's household (10:2); and so forth will be treated under the texts where they first appear.

1. On his positive characterization in Acts, see, e.g., Green, "Cornelius," 243–44.

2. For Judeans, a Roman centurion, like a tax collector, is an extreme example: if tax collectors can be saved (e.g., Luke 5:27, 29; 7:29, 34; 15:1; 18:13; 19:2; linked with soldiers in 3:12–14) or if Roman soldiers can, then anyone can be saved (for the principle, cf. 1 Tim 1:15–16).

3. His function thus parallels that of the centurion in Luke 7:2–10: a positive and God-fearing (cf. Luke 7:4–5) Gentile "exception" who serves as a harbinger for future exceptions. Luke's favorable portrayal of the Roman military may reinforce his apologetic objective, reminding Rome that Christians offer no threat to security (Mauck, *Trial*, 224), an issue important in the years leading up to and following 70 C.E.

4. "Welcomed" and "embraced," though accurate, do not capture the sense of divine initiative as well as Pauline images such as "adopted" or "grafted" here.

a. *The Message*

The issues the story was addressing were burning ones. Given the severity of Gentile anti-Semitism in Luke's environment and the recent events of the war in Jerusalem (on the dating that we have deemed most probable),⁵ the relations of Gentile believers to their Jewish heritage would be a matter of grave concern to Jewish and Gentile Christians as well as to inquirers and opponents.⁶ In Luke's day, a debate also raged in the wider Jewish community: the principle of hating the enslavers of one's people was widespread (including beyond the Jewish community, e.g., Thucyd. 2.68.9), but Rome's defenders, such as Josephus, undoubtedly articulated a minority⁷ Judean position in seeing God's favor on Rome. Less controversially, Josephus spoke, as here, of God's favor toward virtuous Romans (e.g., *Ant.* 18.282, 305–9).

The importance of this account for Luke's larger story is clear from the fact that it, like Paul's conversion narrative (Acts 9:1–18; 22:3–21; 26:9–18), is repeated three times (10:1–48; 11:5–16; 15:7–11).⁸ Nor is the repetition coincidental; it bears signs of deliberate literary artistry.⁹ Although the African official's conversion is significant for Luke as the story of the first Gentile convert, Luke's target here is also the conversion of Jerusalem Christians' perspective.¹⁰ The Jerusalem church may well have been unaware of the eunuch;¹¹ Luke may have learned of him only from Philip himself (cf. 21:8). In any event, Philip was not one of the Twelve and did not eat with the eunuch, nor did the official live in the Holy Land (and hence risk further contact with Judean Christians) as Cornelius did.¹² The conversion of Cornelius, by contrast, would establish a precedent, one that many of Peter's colleagues would consider dangerous.¹³

Because Luke has apparently interwoven discrete blocks of material in his work (as historians sometimes had to do), it is possible (though hardly certain) that unnamed Hellenists evangelized Gentiles before Peter did (11:19–21).¹⁴ Again, however, they did not speak officially for the Jerusalem church the way that Peter did. For Luke, it was apostolic ratification that proved decisive, confirming the continuity between Jerusalem (and the church's Jewish heritage stressed in the Gospel) and the Gentile mission (stressed in Acts). The conversion of Cornelius is thus a major turning point in the work's plot development.¹⁵ The issue is not just a Gentile's conversion but, as already noted, the *church's* fuller conversion to Jesus's agenda in 1:8 (as happens again in Acts 15).¹⁶

5. See fuller discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:383–401.

6. Cf. Daniel, "Anti-Semitism," 65. Thus the issue is relevant however we reconstruct Luke's first-century audience.

7. Although the revolt of 132–35 C.E. was not unprovoked, it probably reflected the continuance of undercurrents of opposition.

8. See, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 73 (who also cites Paul's trial narrative; but there it is multiple hearings rather than three narrations of one hearing). Counting only those in Acts 10–11, Marguerat, *Actes*, 366, finds four accounts of Cornelius's vision (10:1–6, 22, 30–32; 11:13–14); on its significance, see, e.g., 369. In particular, Eisen, *Poetik*, highlights the narrative's significance as part of the "middle" of Acts (see esp. 169–87).

9. See Witherup, "Cornelius Over Again."

10. Others also speak of the "conversion" of Peter or the church here (e.g., González, *Acts*, 136; Van Engen, "Peter's Conversion," 135–36). Cf. further Tiede, "Conversion," noted below.

11. E.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 131; Green, "Acts," 749.

12. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 359; Spencer, *Philip*, 86–87.

13. Watson, *Gentiles*, 61, speaks of this narrative's "paradigmatic significance" as the (official) "origin of the Gentile mission."

14. That it is possible (but not certain) is often recognized (e.g., Bruce, *Peter*, 26–27; Dunn, *Acts*, 132–34).

15. Some earlier interpreters also approached this story as pivotal for salvation history (e.g., Newton, *Observations*, 136).

16. Cf. Tiede, "Conversion." Djomhoué, "Histoire," sees the story's point to be not so much conversion as reconciliation (exemplified in Cornelius and Peter).

The marvel here is not that a Gentile becomes a believer (proselytes were already accepted even in leadership as early as 6:5) but that he becomes a believer without the normal process of conversion to Judaism by circumcision first—and the Jerusalem church is forced by God to accept this practice. Although Luke portrays the matter starkly in terms of Gentiles' salvation (11:18),¹⁷ the vast majority of Jews allowed that some Gentiles would be saved, whether by keeping only a few commandments or, according to stricter views, by becoming full proselytes.¹⁸ Whatever the ideas of the characters within the narrative world (who could be stricter than other Jews, by historical recollection or by Luke's literary design), Luke's point goes beyond the mere observation that Gentiles can be saved. The narrative's striking point may be not that Gentiles can be saved as isolated individuals (or even as "exceptions," without circumcision, as Peter's detractors in 11:18 may concede) but that God has "given" (cf. 3:16; 4:12) or provided "repentance" to them as a group, as also to Israel (5:31). This point appears in 11:18 but is clearest in 15:11: Jew and Gentile alike are saved through grace, the same way.¹⁹

In Luke's narrative, the apostles already appear to know something of a Gentile mission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 3:25–26),²⁰ but it is hardly their focus. They appear to be waiting for the church to be established fully in Jewish areas of Judea, Galilee, and (since Acts 8:5–25) Samaria (9:31).²¹ Just as table fellowship with marginalized groups within Israel was an issue in the Gospel (Luke 5:29–30; 15:2), table fellowship between Jew and Gentile becomes a central question in this story (Acts 11:3) and in the momentous decision (for which it serves as a precedent, 15:7–9, 14) in 15:20.²²

God, rather than Peter, is clearly the initiator here (10:13–20, 28, 44–47), as Peter is later more than happy to emphasize to his detractors (11:7–12, 17).²³ Indeed, despite Peter's earlier centrality, his primary function at this climactic point in the narrative is to introduce the Gentile mission and in 15:7–11 to confirm it. It can be said that Cornelius's conversion and baptism constitute Peter's most "decisive contribution to Luke's history," after which Luke's attention turns quickly to Paul.²⁴ Once the church becomes open to Gentiles, Luke is ready to recount Paul's ministry to Gentiles, which will consume more of his account.²⁵ Cornelius represents Rome, the heart of the world of Luke's audience, and foreshadows where the narrative is headed (28:16–31). As Peter "opened a door of faith to Jews on the day of Pentecost," he "now performs the same service for Gentiles."²⁶

17. Cf. perhaps likewise Acts 15:1 with Gal 3:29; 6:12; many believe that Paul's opponents in Galatia required circumcision for membership in God's people, not for escaping eschatological wrath (see comment on Acts 15:1).

18. See discussion at Acts 15:1; the options are summarized best in Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 52–69.

19. Cf. esp. Jervell, *Luke and People of God*, 65; Knox, *Jerusalem*, 150.

20. Historically, Luke is likely right about this: it is so pervasive in our sources as to have good claim to being primitive (Matt 24:14; 28:19; Mark 13:10; 16:15; Rom 15:8–9; cf. Rom 1:5; 11:11–13; Col 1:23); it is Luke, in fact, who reports the most resistance to the idea (though cf. Matt 10:5–6; 15:24). Whatever may be said of Acts 1:8, it is difficult to restrict Luke 24:47 to Diaspora Judaism.

21. Cf. Tannehill, *Acts*, 134–35.

22. Cf. discussion in Blue, "Influence," 490–94; Talbert, *Mediterranean Milieu*, 172–73. On table fellowship in the Gospel, see, e.g., Smith, "Fellowship"; on Jesus's opposition to Pharisaic purity regulations, including in table fellowship, see esp. Borg, *Conflict*, 73–121.

23. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 173.

24. Dupont, *Salvation*, 24.

25. González, *Acts*, 136, compares Paul's conversion from persecuting God's servants in Acts 9 to the Jerusalem church's conversion from excluding Gentiles, both receiving a fuller understanding of the gospel.

26. Bruce, *Peter*, 25. Cf. the image of Peter's "keys" (Matt 16:19), which, despite some traditional Protestant polemic, is probably authentic (see the case in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:609–15; Hagner, *Matthew*, 465–66; Keener, *Matthew*, 423–28).

Peter's reluctance might be something Luke would not want to invent (and which is incidentally supported by Gal 2:12–13), but it serves an important purpose for Luke when he finds it in his tradition. It was not the apostles' predisposition but only an act of God that brought the church to embrace the Gentile mission. The narrative thereby points to the divine goal of the church's ethnic and cultural unity in diversity (to borrow a complementary Pauline image, Rom 12:4–6; 1 Cor 12:12–30).²⁷

b. Biblical Allusion?

Though direct echoes are lacking, some scholars suggest that Peter's location in Joppa may providentially recall Jonah's story, the accumulation of parallels to which here is suggestive:²⁸

Jonah (book of Jonah)	Peter and Cornelius (Acts)
Joppa (1:3)*	Joppa (9:43)
God overcomes messenger's reluctance (1:17)	God overcomes messenger's reluctance (10:16)
"Arise and go" (3:2)	"Arise and go" (10:20)
Report of Gentiles' faith (3:5)	Report of Gentiles' faith (10:43)
Hostile response (from Jonah, 4:1)	Hostile responses (from Peter, church, 10:14; 11:2)
God's response (4:2–11)	God's response (10:15; 11:17–18)

* This may be the clearest echo if any appear; Joppa appears only four times in the traditional OT (Josh 19:46; 2 Chr 2:15; Ezra 3:7), though more when Maccabean literature is included (1 Macc 10:75–76; 11:6; 12:33; 13:11; 14:5, 34; 15:28, 35; 2 Macc 4:21).

Whether Luke's audience would immediately recall this story in particular is unclear; Luke could certainly have made it clearer by more direct allusions or even citations (like the Ezekiel allusion in Acts 10:14–15). At the same time, Jonah was the clearest OT example of a reluctant, nationalist Israelite missionary to the Gentiles,²⁹ and so at least some of Luke's audience might compare the accounts.

c. Structure

The narrative alternates between scenes surrounding Cornelius and Peter in 10:1–43, so that Gaventa suggests the following structure:

Visions	Cornelius	10:1–8
	Peter	10:9–16
Journey and Welcome	Cornelius	10:17–23a
	Peter	10:23b–29
Speech	Cornelius	10:30–33
	Peter	10:34–43
Confirmation	Holy Spirit	10:44–48
	Community	11:1–18

I do not believe that the structure carries into 11:1–18; although it is persuasive in 10:1–43, the Spirit's outpouring (10:44–48) is probably part of 10:34–43, and 11:1–18 does not fit the pattern. The threefold alternation between Cornelius and

27. In the spirit of the text, Jiménez, "Spirit," employs the text as a model for approaching cultural diversity and dealing with cultural conflict.

28. Wall, "Son of Jonah"; Green, "Repetition," 293; Spencer, *Acts*, 112; Royer, "God Who Surprises"; Oxley, "Certainties."

29. Perhaps inverting Balaam, the reluctant Gentile prophet on behalf of Israel, but meant especially to challenge nationalistic exclusivism (cf. also Ruth).

Peter, however, enlivens the narrative with paired visions, paired testimonies, and finally the gospel message.³⁰

d. Historicity?

Scholars dispute the measure of historicity in the story.³¹ Thus some allow that Peter may have been involved in a Gentile's conversion in Caesarea, but because Peter went mainly to Jews (Gal 2:7–8), they contend that later Petrine Christians going mainly to Gentiles developed this story.³² Further, the church's resolution in Acts 11:18 seems to contradict the need to revisit the matter in Acts 15.³³

A focus on Israel, however, no more precluded Peter's ministry to Gentiles than Paul's focus on Gentiles (Gal 2:7–8) precluded the reverse (1 Cor 9:20; 2 Cor 11:24). Perhaps the members of the Jerusalem church could accept Cornelius's conversion as a single incident without assuming that they were opening floodgates to welcome uncircumcised Gentiles.³⁴ More clearly, nationalism was rising in the church as well as in Jerusalem's culture in general in the years following Agrippa I's reign; the Jerusalem church was no more immune to a shift from liberal to conservative, or conservative to liberal, elements than are nonmonolithic church bodies or political institutions today.³⁵

Whatever the case, Luke certainly selects the details that he will emphasize according to his agenda here as elsewhere in his work. Although the debate in Acts 15 need not conflict with 11:18, it is likely that Luke's concise and triumphant summary of the church's opinion in 11:18 overstates the historical degree of consensus; even if all those who spoke openly voiced support for Peter, tradition typically dies harder than this, and those who fail to speak when perceiving themselves in a minority often work to build support for their position afterward. What we can say from Paul's writings is that Peter at a later point continued to accept eating with Gentiles (Gal 2:12)—and that he was concerned about offending a sizable part of the Jerusalem church that expressed serious qualms with it (later in 2:12).³⁶

Some scholars argue that the grammatical and syntactical peculiarities of Acts 10:1–11:18 suggest a source, possibly Luke's "Petrine or Caesarean source, material which he derived while there."³⁷ But Acts does not readily yield to such stylistic

30. It might also function as threefold confirmation (as in the threefold repetition in Acts 10:16; 11:10), but this is not likely. Lists of three (e.g., *m. 'Ab.* 2:1; 3:1; *'Abot R. Nat.* 4, §17; 31, §68 B) and sets of three admonitions (e.g., *m. 'Ab.* 1:1, 4–8, 10, 15–17; 2:10) were common among rabbis, but they were more obvious. A rhetorical thesis ideally should have three illustrations to support it (Quint. *Inst.* 4.5.3; alluded to in Pliny *Ep.* 2.20.9; cf. Cic. *Quinct.* 10.35; *Mur.* 5.11), but again this is not clear here.

31. In contrast to the unofficial account in Acts 8:26–40, it may constitute an official "foundation story" for the Gentile mission (cf. Wilson, "Urban Legends"), but note that whereas many of Livy's foundation stories are mythical (because addressing many centuries past, unlike Luke), Livy takes them over directly from his sources. "Foundation story" identifies an account's purpose, not its historical reliability. Shea, "Imitating," 51–58, finds many points of similarity between Acts 10:1–11:18 and Virg. *Aen.* 8 (she summarizes the latter, 52–58).

32. Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 132–33.

33. Haenchen, *Acts*, 356 (apparently approving Preuschen's skepticism in *Apostelgeschichte*, 69).

34. Cf. Hill, *Hellenists*, 123.

35. For an example, many conservative Christian groups in the United States that welcomed or accepted women pastors in the early twentieth century, when they often seemed exceptional, became far more resistant to them by the end of that century (see, e.g., Robert, "Introduction," 15–21; cf. Blumhofer, *Sister*).

36. In support of Peter's reticence to break kosher restrictions (Acts 10:14) and of the account in 10:44–48, Dunn argues that Peter remained hesitant to eat with Gentiles even later (Gal 2:11–12) and notes that 10:44–48 does not fit Luke's favored sequence (2:38; Dunn, *Acts*, 133). Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 109, argues that Luke did not invent the story, because his additions clash with his tradition; this approach expresses more confidence in our ability to distinguish sources than is common today. See Watson, *Gentiles*, 63–64, for one critique of Dibelius.

37. Witherington, *Acts*, 344–45 (doubting Dibelius's skepticism of the vision and emphasis on uncleanness, since Luke omits Mark 7:1–23).

measures, and any such identification of sources appears highly speculative.³⁸ Others argue plausibly that Luke's informant was Philip, since he had settled in Caesarea (8:40; 21:8); as he omitted his own presence after 8:40, so he omits mentioning himself here even after Peter's arrival in 10:24.³⁹ But the Peter material starts before Caesarea (9:32–43), though the Caesarean church may well have learned of it, and those who see literary disjunctions between the "Hellenist" material (6:1–8:40 and 11:19–21, possibly much from Philip)⁴⁰ and this account (10:1–11:18) would find attribution to Philip problematic. Whoever the informant(s), this was probably remembered as "a major turning point" in the life of the church of Caesarea, a turn of events that Philip, being one of their leaders (8:40), would have approved.⁴¹ Paul's extensive stay in Judea, presumably with Luke's company much of the time, would have afforded Luke ample opportunity to learn the local church's stories.

2. A Roman Officer's Vision (10:1–8)

Cornelius has a vision in 10:1–8, which will be paralleled by Peter's vision in 10:9–16 (just as the paired visions of Paul and Ananias confirmed each other). These paired visions arrange for a Jew to bring the gospel to a Gentile without the prior step of the latter's circumcision.

a. Cornelius (10:1–2)

Before examining the story, we need to investigate various elements of Luke's description of Cornelius's background relevant to his portrayal of his actions. It is important to survey information about Caesarea, particularly the Roman military presence there; obtain some understanding of centurions' status; discuss Cornelius's household; and investigate the meaning of "God-fearers."

I. CAESAREA (10:1)

Luke knew Caesarea well and explicitly mentions it frequently (8:40; 9:30; 10:1, 24; 11:11; 12:19; 18:22; 21:8, 16; 23:23, 33; 25:1, 4, 6, 13)—of cities in Palestine, second only to Jerusalem.⁴² Luke undoubtedly knew many stories of the church there from his time in Judea. Although his presence is not explicit in Caesarea after 21:16, he apparently spent more than a year (up to two years) in Judea with Paul (23:33–27:1), and since Paul was in Caesarea and Luke had acquaintances who may have lodged him there (21:8–10), Caesarea was likely his home base. The attentive reader will also recall that Philip preached in Caesarea before Peter did, acting as his forerunner.⁴³

Caesarea was formerly a place named Strato's Tower. The Palestinian coast offers few adequate natural harbors south of the Bay of Haifa, but starting in the third century B.C.E., Phoenicians founded a small harbor at Strato's Tower, a Ptolemaic enclave later subdued by Alexander Jannaeus and then liberated by Pompey.⁴⁴ From

38. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 162.

39. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 88–90.

40. If, as already argued, Luke was Paul's traveling companion (see comment on Acts 16:10), Paul would be the likeliest source for the Antioch material in Acts 11:22–30 and 12:25–13:3; if Luke worked from memory here of past conversation, its sketchiness would not be surprising.

41. See Witherington, *Acts*, 352. The later reports in *Apost. Const.* 6.2.8; 6.3.12 depend heavily on Acts; Ps.-Clem. *Rec.* 10.55; *Hom.* 20.13 are late and novelistic.

42. Cf. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 56.

43. Dormeyer and Galindo, *Apostelgeschichte*, 161–62.

44. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 55; Finegan, *Apostles*, 184. On Strato's Tower from its founding in the early third century B.C.E., see Arav, "Straton's Tower"; for the Persian and Hellenistic periods, Levine,

about 22 to 10 or 9 B.C.E., Herod the Great refounded and rebuilt the site, renaming it Καισάρεια, Caesarea, to honor the emperor Augustus (Jos. *Ant.* 15.293; 16.136).⁴⁵ The artificial harbor there (cf. Jos. *Ant.* 15.332–440)⁴⁶ was larger than Athens’s Piraeus (15.332; cf. comment on Acts 17:16) and made the city a major mercantile force on the coast.⁴⁷ Whereas earlier construction techniques especially exploited natural shelters, it was only in the Roman period, when “concrete which could set underwater” was developed, that workers could attempt such “ambitious offshore constructions” as at Caesarea.⁴⁸

After Jerusalem’s destruction, a foreign writer praised Caesarea as the largest and strongest city in Palestine (Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 11).⁴⁹ The area displayed much wealth; one may take as an example a country villa, three miles east of the city, that contained 150 rooms, perhaps belonging to a member of the Herodian dynasty.⁵⁰

Although well known, this city would not feel culturally welcoming to a Galilean or even the average Jerusalemite. By this period, Gentiles dominated the city (Jos. *War* 3.409);⁵¹ the patron deity, as of many other cities in the East, was the goddess Fortune.⁵² Although Jewish inhabitants controlled more of the city’s wealth (*War* 2.268)⁵³ and claimed that Herod, its builder, was a Jew, the Syrian “Greeks” who lived there argued that its statues and temples indicated that it was designed for Greeks (2.266). And indeed, the city held magnificent temples and a theater⁵⁴ (though Jewish Sepphoris also held the latter). The city functioned as a Hellenistic republic, and the Roman prefect of Judea resided there between 6 and 41 C.E. and after 44.⁵⁵ Still, evidence shows that some Gentiles did convert to Judaism in and around Caesarea.⁵⁶

In fact, tensions often ran high between Jew and Gentile in Caesarea, making the location of Cornelius’s conversion all the more remarkable. In times of conflict, the

Caesarea, 5–10. Further on Caesarea, see Holum, “Caesarea”; Patella, “Caesarea Maritima”; McRay, *Archaeology*, 139–45; Bull, “Caesarea”; Hohlfelder, “Caesarea”; Vann, “Construction”; earlier, Negev, “Caesarea”; Blaiklock, *Cities*, 72–76; for its history under Rome and Agrippa II, see Levine, *Caesarea*, 18–29; and further discussion at Acts 23:23.

45. Cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.14.69. For details on his building there, see Jos. *Ant.* 15.331–32 (the work being completed in 16.136); *War* 1.408–14; for archaeological material, see Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 80–83; Holum, “New Dig.” For a summary, Levine, *Caesarea*, 11–14. For a “Sebaste” (named for Augustus) near Caesarea, see Jos. *Ant.* 16.13; *War* 1.551; 2.288; for the Sebaste in Samaria as named for Augustus, see *War* 1.403.

46. See, e.g., Raban et al., “Harbours.” For the earlier access of Strato’s Tower for ships, cf. Strabo 16.2.27. Designers would choose natural harbors when available, building harbors only when necessary (Vitruv. *Arch.* 5.12.1–2).

47. E.g., Dor lay in the immediate vicinity (cf. Stern, Berg, and Sharon, “Tel Dor”), but it declined after Caesarea Maritima’s rise after ca. 22 B.C.E. (Raveh and Kingsley, “Status of Dor”).

48. Souza, “Harbours,” 667.

49. Aelia Capitolina (on the site of Jerusalem) took 120 hectares, and Caesarea, 95; other cities (Sepphoris at 60 and Tiberias at 40 hectares) were smaller (Horsley, *Galilee*, 166).

50. Hirschfeld and Vamosh, “Estate.”

51. For paganism there, see, e.g., Lease, “Caesarea Mithraeum”; Bull, “Mithraic Medallion”; Gersht, “Reader of Scroll”; nearby, Hirschfeld and Peleg, “Gemstone.” Caesarea’s “Tiberium,” however, may have been simply a lighthouse (so Alföldy, “Tiberiëum”). For predominantly Gentile areas of Palestine (which typically included many Jewish residents), see, e.g., Hirschfeld, “History of Town-Plan”; for pagan inscriptions even in predominantly Jewish areas, see, e.g., di Segni, “Giv’at Seled Cave.”

52. Depicted on a coin commissioned by Agrippa I; Carmon, *Inscriptions*, §211 (English, p. 100; Hebrew, 216). Although we lack evidence for a cult of Tyche there, she appears on many city coins, often assimilated to the Roman Fortuna or to Dea Roma (Gersht, “Tyche”).

53. Cf. a Roman estate from this general period, probably owned by a wealthy Jewish family, in Hirschfeld and Birger-Calderon, “Estates near Caesarea.”

54. Cf., e.g., McRay, “Caesarea Maritima,” 176; Holum, “Temple Hill.” The theater seated 4,500 (Finegan, *Apostles*, 185), and the amphitheater’s arena was larger than Rome’s later Colosseum (186).

55. See Judge, *Pattern*, 13. The prefect took over Herod’s old palace (on which see Burrell, Gleason, and Netzer, “Seaside Palace”).

56. E.g., Horbury, “Inscription.”

Roman auxiliaries, which were mainly Syrian, would side with the local Syrians against the Jewish residents (*War* 2.267–68).⁵⁷ Josephus estimated that Syrians in Caesarea massacred twenty thousand Jews in a single hour in 66 C.E. (2.457), provoking Jewish slaughter of Syrians elsewhere (2.458). Despite Josephus's pro-Jewish position, it is clear from reading him that "the Jews initiated the struggle and on a number of occasions escalated it" by claiming the city to be theirs.⁵⁸ (See further comment on the conflict at Acts 23:23.) In a later period,⁵⁹ Jews continued to live in Caesarea (e.g., *y. Demai* 2:1), and it included an influential rabbinic school.⁶⁰ But Gentiles predominated, and rabbis felt its produce could be safely assumed untithed.⁶¹ It was in such a city that a major Gentile conversion was about to take place.⁶²

II. THE MILITARY PRESENCE IN CAESAREA (10:1)

Some scholars doubt that Roman soldiers would have been stationed in Caesarea at the time Luke describes in Acts 10 and hence are skeptical of Luke's reliability on this matter. Haenchen, followed by some others, argues that no Roman soldiers would have lived there during Agrippa's rule (from 41 to 44 C.E.) and that the event Luke describes must have occurred in this period.⁶³ Roman legions certainly did not exist in Palestine during this period, but if Haenchen means that no Gentile auxiliaries were stationed there (under Agrippa's authority), his claim would be remarkable, for such a supposition flies in the face of explicit contrary evidence from Josephus, a writer who was alive and present in the period described. This question will be addressed in two parts. First, does the Cornelius narrative occur during Agrippa's reign? (I will suggest that it may, but need not, have done so.) Second, what was the military presence in Caesarea at the time?

(1) *During Agrippa's Rule?*

Arguments exist for dating Cornelius's conversion before, during, and after Agrippa's rule. Agrippa's rule is mentioned in 12:1–23, and so it appears that Luke's story does not follow Agrippa's death. But this conclusion need not certainly follow (probable as it is); Luke could have moved a later story earlier in his narration⁶⁴ (so that Peter's Gentile mission and Jerusalem's approval precede the Gentile ministry of the anonymous believers of 11:20). Peter's "tour" of coastal cities (starting in 9:32) occurs only after his return to Jerusalem (8:25), and in 12:17 he left for "another

57. Although there is some evidence for some Jewish auxiliaries under Rome (cf. *Jos. Ant.* 15.317; 18.84; *CPJ* 2, §229), other sources seem to support their more common exemption; see evidence in Kraft, "Judaism on Scene," 86–87. Syrian recruits were sometimes considered the least disciplined and the most discontent and prone to mutiny (*Fronto Pr. Hist.* 12).

58. Levine, *Caesarea*, 29. On Jewish-Gentile conflict there, see further the summary, 29–31; for the war, 31–33.

59. On Caesarea as a second-century Roman colony, see *ibid.*, 34–45; in the third and fourth centuries, see 46–61.

60. See, e.g., *y. Hal.* 1:1, §2; *Or.* 2:8 (some mss, 2:10); *Bik.* 3:3, §9; *Šabb.* 1:1, §§2, 15; 1:2, §1; 1:4, §3; 2:5, §§1–3; 6:1, §10; 7:2, §1; 13:1, §1; 14:4; 19:3, §3; *Erub.* 1:1, §§10, 13; 2:4, §1; *Pesaḥ.* 1:3, §3; 3:3, §2; 8:8, §3; *Ma'as.* Š. 2:1, §5. It is a part of "Israel" (albeit not very orthodox) in *Song Rab.* 1:6, §1.

61. *Y. Demai* 3:3; cf. *t. Demai* 3:14. Cf. pagan themes on second- and third-century C.E. sarcophagi there (Gersht, "Dionysiac Sarcophagi").

62. Caesarea functions as an intersection of East and West in both Josephus and Acts (so Painter, "Caesarea"), helping point Luke's narrative toward Rome.

63. Haenchen, *Acts*, 360; cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 81. Perhaps Haenchen excludes only legionaries rather than auxiliaries, and hence cohorts of Roman citizens rather than noncitizens, but it is difficult to see how such a claim would call Luke's narrative into question. I have responded to Haenchen's argument in Keener, "Troops," which adapts and expands some of the following material.

64. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 81, notes that the dating is not certain and that Luke could have transferred it from a different time.

place.” Thus some scholars suggest that “the *cohors Italica* may have come in with the reconstitution of the province in 44” and the story may be dated to that time.⁶⁵

The Gentile mission, however, should have been well under way in Antioch by then and not merely beginning; thus another alternative seems somewhat likelier and is plausible given our lower Pauline chronology: that the events here occur before Agrippa’s rule began in 41 C.E.⁶⁶ Still, let us assume for the sake of argument that the events occur during Agrippa’s rule; even if this meant that he had his own Jewish soldiers in Caesarea, the area would retain many former soldiers who were from the area or who had settled there. Yet even if we further excluded the possibility of soldiers settled there, literary evidence indicates that Gentile soldiers lived in Caesarea then as they did afterward (albeit not legionaries in either case).

(2) *Soldiers in Caesarea*

Literary evidence indicates that in most of the early first century, Caesarea held a cavalry unit and five infantry cohorts of auxiliaries; archaeological evidence also shows an increasing Roman presence and influence.⁶⁷ Further, an explicit passage in Josephus describes Gentile soldiers already stationed in Caesarea at the close of Agrippa’s rule.⁶⁸

If the Cornelius story is set in Agrippa’s time, it is relevant that Josephus indicates the presence of Gentile soldiers during that time. Many soldiers in Caesarea and Sebaste during Agrippa’s time hated Agrippa; they were nearly relocated after his death but were allowed to remain, being very attached to the locale. Caesarea and Sebaste ungratefully rejoiced at Agrippa I’s death (*Jos. Ant.* 19.356); the numerous soldiers there went to his house and carried out images of his daughters, which they then abused on top of brothel houses (19.357).⁶⁹

The emperor Claudius was angry about this report (19.361) and ordered Fadus there in order to punish Caesarea and Sebaste for their insults both to the deceased Agrippa and to his living daughters (19.363). He then ordered that the soldiers in Caesarea and Sebaste be removed to Pontus, being replaced by Roman legionaries stationed in Syria (19.364). But these soldiers managed to persuade the emperor to allow them to stay; Josephus concludes that these same soldiers later led to disasters for his people (19.365).⁷⁰

It is virtually impossible lexically to deny that Josephus refers to soldiers in Caesarea during this time.⁷¹ Even if we were to argue that these soldiers must have been angry because of disfranchisement from active service under Agrippa (which the text does not indicate),⁷² they would be soldiers nonetheless (we cannot allow Josephus to employ that language and then forbid it to Luke).⁷³

65. Smallwood, *Jews*, 147n13.

66. With, e.g., Levinskaya, “Cohort,” 106; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 215; Munck, *Acts*, 92; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 820.

67. In addition, for Roman-style artwork in the Herodian period, see Ovadiah, “Pavements”; cf. a Roman villa even in the countryside (though in the late second century; Edelstein, “Villa outside Jerusalem”).

68. Speidel, “Army,” argues for Roman soldiers in Judea even in 41–44 C.E. (so Levinskaya, “Cohort,” 106–7).

69. The exact meaning of the abused images may be debated, but it does not affect the present point.

70. Given the dates, it is unlikely that many of these soldiers would remain active during the Judean war just more than two decades later, the years of service normally being twenty. But the same sentiments would have been passed down to newer recruits.

71. *Jos. Ant.* 19.357 employs *στρατεύομενοι*, a verb that BDAG defines as “do military service, serve in the army” (or “engage in a conflict”). Josephus employs the verb 143 times, normally in military contexts. More clearly still, it is the military cohorts (*σπείρας*, to be replaced by legionary *στρατιώτας*, 19.364) stationed in these cities who are nearly moved (19.364–65).

72. The proposal would be unlikely, in any case. The emperor forced Agrippa to desist from expanding Jerusalem’s city wall, out of concern for preventing the accumulation of independent power (*Jos. Ant.* 19.326–27; *War* 5.152). The emperor surely would have allowed Agrippa his own elite guards, but to deactivate Rome’s auxiliaries (as opposed to allowing Rome to transfer them elsewhere) would be seen as meddling in the affairs of the Syrian legate. Kingship afforded greater independence for Herod than for Agrippa (cf., e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 19.327; *War* 5.152).

73. Nor can we easily attribute Josephus’s portrayal of Gentile soldiers in Caesarea to his apologetic bias; why would he invent Gentile soldiers who hated a Jewish king? If he was prone to invent all such

From Josephus's account we learn that the soldiers stationed in Caesarea felt very attached to the locale; although the climate was pleasant, we may surmise that many were recruits from this area or had entered into unions with local women. We may also surmise their hostility against Agrippa I in particular and Judaism in general.

In general, soldiers often became attached to local areas. By the second century, soldiers were usually recruited locally and stationed in a single location;⁷⁴ such stability was less characteristic in the first century but more common than in earlier times. Military camps were often closely connected with their locales. In peacetime, soldiers could function as builders and engineers; some projects were solely for their own benefit⁷⁵ but others (like bridges and roads) would ultimately generate more civilian use.⁷⁶ Rome also used military engineers and soldiers to help local public projects.⁷⁷ Localities helped supply army camps, in turn helping to stimulate local economies.⁷⁸ Temporary settlements (*canabae*) often grew around army camps, including merchants, artisans, and women who often bore children to the soldiers.⁷⁹ It appears that the soldiers stationed in Caesarea felt at home there and wished to remain there.

What we know of Gentile soldiers in Caesarea underlines the special character of Cornelius's conversion. During the later governorship of Felix, Jews provoked Syrians in Caesarea (Jos. *Ant.* 20.175). The Syrians had less wealth than Jews there, but counted on connections with the soldiers stationed there, most of whom were from either Caesarea or Sebaste (20.176). Conflict escalated, and when the Jewish side refused to desist, Felix set his soldiers against the crowd and let them plunder the homes of well-to-do Jewish citizens (20.177). From this we may gather that, within a few decades of Cornelius's encounter with Peter, the majority of the Gentile soldiers in Caesarea were anti-Jewish, or at least would prove pro-Syrian if a conflict between the two groups arose. They also had local ties.

(3) A Retired Soldier?

Even if the events occurred in 41–44 C.E., and even if we (against the evidence of Josephus) deny the possibility of active Gentile soldiers residing there in that period, Cornelius could well be a retired soldier (who may have served in the region) who settled in Caesarea, as his own home (perhaps in Caesarea rather than an adjoining camp) and the presence of family might suggest (see comment on soldiers' families at Acts 10:2). Romans had traditionally provided land grants for veterans (sometimes—especially in earlier times—in a colony but sometimes on their own).⁸⁰ Although land grants were not systematic, they continued until the second century C.E.⁸¹ By this period, cash gifts appear more common than land grants (at least for common soldiers), but soldiers, in any case, usually preferred to settle “near their last camp” rather than in a veteran colony.⁸² Centurions became members of the equestrian

opposition, we could then explain away the entire conflict by which he explains the war, an approach that is not plausible.

74. Campbell, *Army*, 212.

75. *Ibid.*, 120–21 (noting that they had to build their own fortresses, water supplies, and so forth).

76. *Ibid.*, 121. They could also sell their products locally.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*, 140.

79. *Ibid.*, 141 (noting that the camp commander decided the location of the *canabae*, whether a mile distant or directly beside the camp).

80. C. Williams, *Acts*, 134; Barrett, *Acts*, 499; Dunn, *Acts*, 135; on land grants for veterans, see esp. comment on Acts 16:23.

81. Campbell, “Veterans.”

82. Thompson, “Military,” 994 (though noting [993] that centurions often remained in the army for their entire lives); Campbell, *Army*, 212. They do not seem to have been especially involved with local politics, and

order when they retired, which could further explain Cornelius's prominence here.⁸³ Although veterans could choose to remain as reservists⁸⁴ and Rome would recall veterans to war in emergency situations (e.g., the civil wars of the first century B.C.E.), they normally spent their retirement in peace (Cic. *Phil.* 5.16.44).

Luke apparently does not envision Cornelius as retired unless (as is possible) the soldier mentioned in Acts 10:7 is also retired or Cornelius hired him as a part-time worker, but one could argue that Luke's sources reflect a retired centurion. Some scholars have even argued, on the grounds that Archelaus's and Agrippa's auxiliaries both passed into Roman service (in 6 and 44 C.E., respectively; cf. *Jos. Ant.* 19.364–65), that Cornelius belonged to an auxiliary unit later absorbed into Roman service and attached to the Italian cohort in Syria.⁸⁵ (Nevertheless, if so, I would argue from *Ant.* 19.356–65 that these units already consisted of Gentiles.)⁸⁶

When all has been examined, it is difficult to see why anyone would find impossible Luke's portrait of a Gentile centurion becoming a Christian unless one was driven by implacable skepticism. Whether the Gentile was ethnically Roman (a matter Luke does not explicitly address) is a separate question.

(4) Italian Cohort

Commentators often identify the "Italian cohort" here with the Cohors II miliaria italica civium romanorum voluntariorum (quae est in Syria),⁸⁷ apparently an auxiliary unit of archers (*ILS* 9168).⁸⁸ Given our current limited surviving information from antiquity, this is a reasonable surmise (though no more than a surmise).

But just as some are skeptical of troops in Caesarea during Agrippa's reign, some are skeptical that the Italian cohort was dispatched to the East this early, since it is first attested clearly in an inscription of 69 C.E. (*ILS* 9168).⁸⁹ This objection is, however, a very weak argument from silence, given the sporadic nature of our epigraphic evidence (we know little about the units in Judea in this period and no names for the period 38–41 C.E., which is the period somewhat most likely here).⁹⁰ Given our scant information, that they are mentioned at all, in fact—and as in Syria (rather than in the West) and only three decades from the period Luke portrays—may support Luke's portrait.⁹¹

Another inscription in the region that mentions an Italian cohort (*CIL* 11.6117) is of uncertain date, but the location is helpful. We have no evidence that this unit was located outside this province, and hence did not have a presence in Caesarea, at

it is not clear to what extent they contributed to stimulating local economies or to romanization (Campbell, *Army*, 222–23).

83. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 38; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 34. This claim might refer particularly to legionary centurions.

84. Campbell, "Vexillum." For calling up veterans in times of earlier, severe military crises, see Vell. Paterc. 2.111.1; 2.113.1; in the most severe emergency, like Hannibal's invasion, fewer soldiers were mustered out or settled abroad (Vell. Paterc. 1.15.1). Neither sort of situation would prove relevant to Cornelius in Caesarea at this date.

85. Witherington, *Acts*, 347 (though allowing that the account may refer to 39–40 C.E.).

86. Jewish soldiers were rare in Roman armies (see Kraft, "Judaism on Scene," 86–87; Applebaum, "Legal Status," 458–60).

87. Bruce, *Acts*, 215; Haenchen, *Acts*, 346; Smallwood, *Jews*, 147; Barrett, *Acts*, 499; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 449 (citing *CIL* 6.3528; 11.6117).

88. Barrett, *Acts*, 499; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 449; cf. D. Williams, *Acts*, 186 (following Sherwin-White, *Society*, 160). Scholars usually assume that this inscription refers to the same "Italian cohort" as in another inscription in this region (*CIL* 11.6117).

89. Haenchen, *Acts*, 360.

90. See also Witherington, *Acts*, 346.

91. Probably the earlier approach of Ramsay, *Bethlehem*, 261–62; cf. also D. Williams, *Acts*, 186.

this time. In any case, even if Luke reports a different cohort in a different location or period, we cannot argue that there was only one cohort so named (we know, in fact, of two Italian cohorts).⁹² There were in fact even different legions with the same names in different places and at different times: Nero's *Legio I Italica*, recruited from Italians about 66 C.E. and sent to Gaul in 68;⁹³ the *Legio II Italica* and the *Legio III Italica*, both raised a century later;⁹⁴ and so forth. The animal symbols for *Legio I Italica* were the boar and the bull; for *II Italica*, the she-wolf, the ibex, and the stork; and for *III Italica*, the stork.⁹⁵ Legions had distinctive animals on their standards;⁹⁶ auxiliary cohorts also had their own identifying emblems.⁹⁷

If Cornelius is a retired member of a cohort not in Caesarea (explaining why it is so significant to identify his cohort), the objection would be irrelevant. (I think his retired status only one, and not the strongest, possibility among several, but it should be entertained no less seriously than the mere dismissal of the cohort's presence on the basis that it is not attested till 69 C.E.) If this is an auxiliary cohort, the name would not involve the legion, though some might wonder how "Italians" would end up in an auxiliary cohort (rather than a legion) in Syria. Then again, Cornelius could be lent from a legionary cohort yet be commanding auxiliary troops. There is too much that we do not know; Luke likely was better informed than we are.

Although it remains debated how legions received their names, it is possible that the names reflect the origin of the legions' recruits; that this was probably at least sometimes the case would be valuable to Luke, who wants this narrative to point toward Rome. Yet Luke could employ the name symbolically, whatever its source. Some scholars suggest that the Ninth Legion adopted the names "Macedonica" and "Hispana" because of courage displayed during campaigns in Macedonia and Spain; because it was called Macedonica when this legion was in Pannonia in 30–40 C.E., however, the title more likely implies that the troops were drawn from Macedonia at that time. It was called Hispana when it was in Britain probably because many recruits were from Spain, though it had not served in Spain for more than sixty years.⁹⁸ There was probably not a single rule for names, however. Units could be named for earlier commanders, for districts, or for the weapons they used (e.g., "the archers"), and the emperor's name might be added (e.g., I Augusta Thracum).⁹⁹

A Roman legion, with a nominal six thousand troops (but actually generally closer to five thousand),¹⁰⁰ consisted of ten cohorts, each of which in turn consisted of six centuries (on centuries, see comment below on centurions).¹⁰¹ The first cohort was twice as large as any of the others and included "headquarters personnel, clerks, technicians, medical personnel, supply personnel," and a *haruspex* to examine omens.¹⁰² Other cohorts were supposed to include about 600 soldiers, though they could have

92. Levinskaya, "Cohort," 107–8. The location of one cohort is uncertain until the second century (124), and that one is equally possible (125).

93. Campbell, "Legion," 839.

94. *Ibid.*, 840; Campbell, *Army*, 363–64 (dating them to 165–66 C.E.).

95. Le Bohec, "Ensigns," 993–94.

96. *Ibid.*, 993–95.

97. *Ibid.*, 995.

98. West, *Inscriptions*, 35, on no. 54.

99. Campbell, "Auxilia," 420.

100. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 38; Campbell, "Legio," 358.

101. Jones, "Army," 194; Malherbe, "Life," 8. Cohorts replaced an older military unit, the maniple (Campbell, "Manipulus"). Other sources give six tribunes commanding cohorts with 480–500 soldiers. Millitary cohorts may postdate the 40s (Levinskaya, "Cohort," 125).

102. Jones, "Army," 194. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 449, notes that σπεῖρα usually is the Latin *cohors* (Polyb. 11.23.1), but argues that it can sometimes be a *manipulus* (Polyb. 6.24.5).

fewer at given times (cf. 505 troops in *BGU* 696.11–15, from 156 C.E.; but more were added later), and cohorts may have often been smaller in this period (see comment on Acts 23:23).¹⁰³

Whereas Rome's legate in Syria had ample troops,¹⁰⁴ the usual prefect in Judea had less than a legion; this required his dependence on Syria's governor in times of crisis.¹⁰⁵ During most periods, Judea's prefect had one cohort in Jerusalem and five in Caesarea.¹⁰⁶

(5) *Cornelius and Rome*

Was Cornelius a Roman citizen? Some scholars note that the presence of relatives in Caesarea (Acts 10:24) suggests that he may have been a provincial.¹⁰⁷ These could be simply local in-laws, but there are other reasons to believe that Cornelius is from the East. New recruits for auxiliaries sometimes took a Roman cognomen when enlisting, although they did not become citizens (and hence take a Roman praenomen and nomen, from the reigning emperor's name) until retirement.¹⁰⁸ Conversely, Cornelius had been a common Roman name especially since 82 B.C.E., when Publius Cornelius Sulla freed ten thousand slaves who then adopted the name from his *gens*.¹⁰⁹ It suggests to many that even if Cornelius was attached to one of the largely Syrian auxiliary units, he may have been himself a Roman citizen.

Well into the first century A.D., Roman citizen soldiers maintained the old tradition of referring to one another by *praenomen* and *nomen*, not by *cognomen*. Because of the small number of *praenomina* [*sic*], in practice this meant using primarily the *nomen*. Such a practice would also make clear his Roman citizen status since it identified the Roman family through which he was enfranchised, such as Corneli or [in 27:1] Julii.¹¹⁰

Although a person could receive citizenship for a variety of reasons, it seems statistically more probable, given the family name, that "he was a non-Roman ethnically who was a Roman citizen because an ancestor had come under the patronage of a Cornelius, probably a general but possibly a Cornelian slave-owner."¹¹¹ Some scholars argue that his centurion rank probably also suggests that he or his ancestors became citizens at some point before he became a centurion.¹¹² Not all centurions in the auxiliaries were

103. Even during the republic, the size of legions varied (Roth, "Legion," notes that the standard was 4,800, but the number could be expanded to 5,280; Campbell, "Legion," 839, has 4,200 to 5,000 in the early republic).

104. For the normal organization of legions under Roman governors, see Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 18.

105. In other settings, too, a legate rather than a proconsul might control a legion (see Tac. *Hist.* 4.48, in Vespasian's era).

106. See Jos. *Ant.* 19.364; further comment in, e.g., Jones, "Army," 197; Reicke, *Era*, 140; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 34. Against the overestimates of Roman "occupation" sometimes assumed, see the cautions of Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 17.

107. Witherington, *Acts*, 347n82.

108. Jeffers, *World*, 203–4. Some argue by contrast that the use of a nomen without cognomen particularly characterized military usage in this period (e.g., D. Williams, *Acts*, 185–86).

109. Many commentators (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 214; idem, *Commentary*, 214n1; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 81; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 448–49; D. Williams, *Acts*, 185; Bock, *Acts*, 386). If he was descended from one of these freedmen, he would be a Roman citizen (with, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 346). He would not, however, be a freedman himself (*pace* some commentators' wording), since former slaves were excluded from the military (Finley and Treggiari, "Freedmen").

110. Jeffers, *World*, 206–7; cf. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 177. Luke's usage matches first-century expectations (see Jeffers, *World*, 204–5). Because "Cornelius" was not part of a current emperor's name, this could not be simply this centurion's retired name.

111. Jeffers, personal correspondence, Dec. 19, 2005.

112. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 449; Campbell, personal correspondence, June 16, 2006 ("There were no non-citizen centurions"). Higher officers were normally Roman equestrians (Campbell, "Auxilia").

in fact Roman citizens, but some were, since “many auxiliary centurions were citizen legionaries promoted to the position,” and Cornelius’s name indicates citizenship.¹¹³ For that matter, any auxiliary who was not a citizen would become one on retirement;¹¹⁴ but his citizenship does not require us to suppose that Cornelius must have been retired. Some scholars point out that members of the “Italian cohort” would have been Roman citizens;¹¹⁵ this claim could be quite relevant here, although the citizenship (and the title “Italian”) might apply to the original cohort rather than to its current membership.

It is possible (though not the only possibility) that Cornelius was lent as a low-ranking officer from the legion. A legionary centurion could be placed in charge of some auxiliaries (Pliny *Ep.* 10.77.1). Another possibility also remains. Roman military historian John Brian Campbell kindly responded to an inquiry about the possibility of Cornelius being lent from the legion:

From time to time centurions were put in command of small bodies of troops separate from their legionary command (as you suggest); for example, they might be seconded to command a detachment of part of a cohort of auxiliaries on special guard duties etc.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, centurions because of their standing came to fulfil a kind of administrative role in small local areas (we sometimes find the phrase “centurion of the region”). . . . In this way centurions sometimes came to have a kind of justice of the peace role.¹¹⁷

Campbell suggests very tentatively that Cornelius may have been sent here “with some kind of special military or civilian responsibility, possibly because there had been numerous complaints about the local auxiliaries.”¹¹⁸ Luke elsewhere assumes centurions among troops stationed in Judea (Luke 7:2–6; 23:47; Acts 21:32; 22:25–26; 23:17, 23; 24:23; 27:1), and the only one named also has a Roman name (Acts 27:1).¹¹⁹ In the final analysis, Cornelius is probably a Roman citizen, and (more important) Luke’s audience would almost surely assume him to be a Roman citizen. What matters still more for our purposes, however, is that for Luke’s audience, both his name and his office make him a representative of Rome.

Cornelius is undoubtedly associated with auxiliaries here. Before the Judean-Roman war,¹²⁰ Judea had no legion, and hence Rome’s soldiers there were mostly local

113. Campbell, personal correspondence, June 19, 2006. Some auxiliary officers were also promoted to legionary centurion roles (Campbell, *Army*, 47), presupposing (or granting) their citizenship.

114. Campbell, “Auxilia,” 420; Witherington, *Acts*, 347. Jeffers, personal correspondence, Dec. 19, 2005, notes that he is not aware of auxiliaries receiving citizenship before retirement, although this does not mean that it never could have happened. Probably Claudius (the next emperor) was the first to issue official diplomas attesting that individual, serving auxiliaries held citizenship (Campbell, *Army*, 193–94). Achieving it for family members required a special grant (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 10.106).

115. See Levinskaya, “Cohort,” 108.

116. See likewise Campbell, *Army*, 47. Such duties could be relevant in Caesarea, especially given the many prisoners held there (cf. Jos. *Ant.* 20.215).

117. Campbell, personal correspondence, June 16, 2006. He suggests this as a possibility in part because Cornelius appears to have some local status (idem, personal correspondence, June 19, 2006); cf. the soldier sent in Acts 10:7 (but perhaps as a guard). His many “friends” and “relatives” (10:24) could simply reflect the long-term resident status of most of the soldiers stationed in Caesarea, but if Cornelius worked his way up to centurion status before being lent from the legion, he may not have been there as long.

118. Campbell, personal correspondence, June 16, 2006. Given tensions with the soldiers stationed in Caesarea, as already noted, this suggestion is a plausible one. He thinks that Acts’ author rightly understood Cornelius’s status even if the cohort with which he associates him may have been in that area only later.

119. Josephus, too, assumes centurions in Judea (e.g., *Ant.* 17.199, 282; *War* 2.63, 319), at least some of whom have Roman names (e.g., *War* 2.298).

120. For (later) archaeological evidence for the Sixth Legion, see Hershkovitz, “Cremation”; Tsuk, “Aqueduct.” Later Palestinian rabbis demonstrated knowledge of Rome’s legions (tradition possibly as early as the second century C.E. in *Gen. Rab.* 94:9).

non-Roman Gentile auxiliaries, mostly Syrian (cf. Jos. *War* 2.268).¹²¹ At Augustus's death, Rome had twenty-five legions and about 150,000 troops, too small to hold the empire by themselves. It therefore depended also on a provincial force of roughly equivalent size;¹²² during the period described in Acts, most of these auxiliaries "retained their national character and were stationed not far from their homes."¹²³

Certainly auxiliary units, like legions, had centurions,¹²⁴ and such centurions were valued.¹²⁵ (Retired auxiliaries received citizenship rather than land grants.¹²⁶ But they would normally settle on land, in any case.) Some might count against this view Cornelius's Roman name. But as already noted, a Roman name need not make him a legionary; one could argue that he could have adopted this name when he received Roman citizenship on retirement, or when enlisting (without citizenship),¹²⁷ or for some special service, or because it was a hereditary grant in his family,¹²⁸ or perhaps because he was borrowed from the legion to oversee an auxiliary century. In any case, an auxiliary centurion was a better position than a regular legionary.

Even had the recruits belonged to legions (and hence would have been citizens), we should expect most of them to be non-Italian ethnically (aside from a possibly special case such as the "Italian cohort"). Whereas most soldiers in the western legions were Italian before the Flavian period, those in the Greek-speaking East were drawn largely from the eastern provinces; most soldiers in first-century legions in Egypt, for example, came from Asia Minor, Syria, or Egypt itself.¹²⁹ They held citizenship as freedmen or received it on enrollment.¹³⁰ Most auxiliaries, however, received citizenship only on their discharge (after twenty to twenty-five years of military service);¹³¹ on the different case of some centurions, see comment above.

Although Luke's audience may not know that most of the Roman auxiliaries in Caesarea were Syrian (Jos. *War* 2.268), Luke was undoubtedly aware of it from his involvement with them (cf. Acts 24:23) and hence had reason to emphasize that Cornelius belonged to the "Italian cohort" (though his name alone might suggest for Luke's narrative purposes, whether or not his rank would, the claim that he was a Roman citizen). This auxiliary force was probably originally recruited in Italy, though replacement soldiers, by now the majority, were presumably local.¹³² Other scholars have argued that both known "Italian cohorts" were, though auxiliary units, citizen cohorts and hence analogous to legionaries.¹³³ Wherever its individual soldiers were

121. Cf. Jeffers, *World*, 177; cf. also 206; Munck, *Acts*, 92; Witherington, *Acts*, 346 (following Millar, *Near East*, 44, 60).

122. Stevenson, "Army," 228.

123. *Ibid.*, 230 (see, e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 4.46; on auxiliaries in general, see 228–32).

124. Parker and Watson, "Centurio," 311 (though noting that the higher-ranking among them lacked special titles); Campbell, "Auxilia," 420; *idem*, "Centurio," 127.

125. Trajan grants the request of an auxiliary cavalry unit's centurion for his daughter's citizenship (Pliny *Ep.* 10.106–7).

126. Campbell, "Veterans."

127. Sometimes those enlisting as auxiliaries received Roman names (Jeffers, *World*, 203). The problem in this case is that "Cornelius" is a family name (Jeffers, personal correspondence, Dec. 19, 2005).

128. Suggested in Jeffers, personal correspondence, Dec. 19, 2005.

129. Stevenson, "Army," 226–27; Campbell, "Legion," 839.

130. Cf. Stevenson, "Army," 226; Jones, "Army," 191.

131. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 31; cf. *ILS* 1986; *CIL* 16.1. From the late first century, legionaries served twenty-five years (Campbell, "Legion," 839).

132. Jeffers, *World*, 206; cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 346n1; Dunn, *Acts*, 135. Barrett, *Acts*, 499, is, however, right to say that we do not know what the connection with Italy was.

133. Levinskaya, "Cohort," 108 (noting that under Augustus their donative was that of legionaries; Tac. *Ann.* 1.8). She contends that they were Roman citizens, but with the appropriate qualification "at least when these were originally raised."

from, the cohort's title would hint at Luke's agenda.¹³⁴ Cornelius is not simply a "random" Gentile; he represents the heart of the empire, as centurions necessarily did (Luke 7:8).

Although Luke can present Roman armies as agents of judgment (Luke 21:20, 24)¹³⁵ and of injustice (23:11, 36),¹³⁶ he respects God-fearing (3:14; 7:9) or just (23:47; Acts 23:10–30; 27:1–43) individual soldiers. Soldiers and tax gatherers could do their jobs provided they did not abuse their positions (Luke 3:13–14; cf. 20:22–25). If Luke was a physician as tradition claims,¹³⁷ it might be noteworthy that each cohort probably included four physicians.¹³⁸ Luke himself would not have been a military doctor, even if stationed near Philippi (he could not freely travel with Paul during his twenty years of military service), but he may have encountered some appreciation for his profession during Paul's custody, when he presumably visited Paul regularly.

III. CENTURIONS (10:1)

It was common to name people by their occupations (e.g., Acts 9:43);¹³⁹ Luke names Cornelius as a centurion. As already noted, Luke does not seem to pass judgment on this profession,¹⁴⁰ though it is possible that receptive Roman soldiers appear in his narrative in a manner comparable to tax collectors, underlining the extensive reach of the gospel. Tribunes commanded cohorts, but they generally gained their office by their equestrian status and, like most other higher officers, lacked previous military experience.¹⁴¹

Centurions, however, offset the inexperience of higher officers; many or most had worked their way up through the ranks.¹⁴² It could take as many as twenty years for a common soldier to become a centurion.¹⁴³ (In this period, some equestrians also became centurions for the sake of the pay and retirement prospects;¹⁴⁴ a number were also former Praetorians. But these were not the majority, and most were probably quickly promoted.)¹⁴⁵ These formed, in a sense, the backbone of the Roman army, and they were the legion's "most important tactical officers."¹⁴⁶ Traditionally, the best

134. From the standpoint of Jews in the East, "Italians" could stand for Romans (*Sib. Or.* 3.353–55, 464, though these are pre-Christian).

135. Cf. Walaskay, *Came to Rome*, 45–48 (citing Luke 19:41–44; 21:20–24; 23:27–31).

136. Luke does, however, omit the Roman soldiers' abuse in Mark 15:16–20 (despite Luke 23:11, 36).

137. See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:410–11, 414–16; on physicians, 416–22.

138. See in abundant detail Friedländer, *Life*, 1:169.

139. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 117.

140. Hedrick, "Samaritan," 133, even notes that soldiers in Luke 3:14 (and implicitly here) do not change their profession (though one wonders how they could have done so legally) and, by comparing the Good Samaritan parable, suggests that use of force may be ethically appropriate on behalf of the helpless (she asks [129] how the Samaritan could have helped had he arrived during the robbery). The need for just force to prevent genocide may indeed go beyond the situations envisioned or addressed in Jesus's nonresistance instructions. But while Hedrick makes a logical inference on the basis of the texts, Luke does not seem to directly *teach* this.

141. Stevenson, "Army," 226; Jones, "Army," 201. See further comment on Acts 21:31, although Lysias will prove to be an exception to the general practice (see comment on Acts 22:28).

142. E.g., Stevenson, "Army," 226; Jones, "Army," 203; Friedländer, *Life*, 1:194. The exceptions were those of higher birth (even some *equites*) who began as centurions but would be quickly promoted beyond this rank (Stevenson, "Army," 226; Campbell, *Army*, 46). But Campbell, *Army*, 47, notes centurions' "above-average education" and benefits that left them "little in common" with rank-and-file soldiers. (Regarding a degree of literacy for even some ordinary soldiers, at least in the West, see Evans, *World*, 69, on tablets from Vindolanda.)

143. Thompson, "Military," 993.

144. Parker and Watson, "Centurio," 311; Campbell, "Centurio," 127. Cf. Severus's later "equestrian"-like treatment of soldiers, including centurions (Hdn. 3.8.5).

145. Campbell, "Centurio," 127.

146. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 38; cf. Bruce, *Commentary*, 215. They normally knew the sympathies of the other soldiers (e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 2.76) and are often noted as key officers (e.g., 3.74; 4.3).

soldiers became centurions (Polyb. 6.24.1); they were chosen not for their eagerness to attack but for preferring death to retreat (6.24.9).¹⁴⁷ The position was honorable for one of low birth, who might protest being demoted from the rank of centurion to that of a common soldier (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 9.39.1). A centurion had assistants covering paperwork and other duties.¹⁴⁸

The first centurion of the six in each cohort outranked the others, who may have held relatively equal rank vis-à-vis each other apart from seniority.¹⁴⁹ The senior centurion in each legion was called the *primus pilus* or *primipilus* and his office the *primipilatus*; he could achieve this office in his sixtieth year, when many others were retiring, and could retire after a year as a wealthy equestrian.¹⁵⁰ The *primus pilus* commanded the first century in a legion's first cohort and functioned as the legate's chief advisor.¹⁵¹ The legate's advisory council of centurions was called the *primi ordines*, the members of which were the first cohort's centurions, possibly in addition to the senior centurions of the other cohorts.¹⁵² Since Judea lacked a legion, it would contain no centurion of this high rank.

A century held sixty to eighty men (no longer the hundred presumably enrolled in the earliest times);¹⁵³ this would have been true also for auxiliary units.¹⁵⁴ A century consisted of ten *contubernia*. Two centuries could be treated together as a maniple for billeting, but the maniple lacked tactical significance.¹⁵⁵

Despite its sacrifices, military service was a preferred occupation.¹⁵⁶ To join a Roman legion, one had to be a Roman citizen, normally nineteen to thirty-five years old (though sometimes as young as fourteen), and physically fit (strong and usually at least nearly five feet tall).¹⁵⁷ Roman military training was harsh and included twenty-mile-a-day marches carrying full supplies.¹⁵⁸ Such troops were not always friendly to local peoples;¹⁵⁹ some Romans complained that their armies were employed genocidally at times (presumably outside the empire's boundaries; Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 95.30). Soldiers sometimes exploited local residents¹⁶⁰—for example, by beating an old man (P.Graux 4, from 248 C.E.). But as noted above, they also provided frequent economic and domestic interchange with local communities.

147. Normally there were two trained as centurions per company in case one died (Polyb. 6.24.3–7); the second was what Roman sources called the *optio* (see Thompson, "Military," 993).

148. Thompson, "Military," 993.

149. Campbell, *Army*, 46. Old centurions might be assumed particularly loyal (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 2.55).

150. Friedländer, *Life*, 1:194; Jones, "Army," 202; Thompson, "Military," 993; Campbell, "Primipilus." For the "first" centurion's higher role than that of other centurions, see, e.g., Vell. Pat. 2.112.6.

151. Jones, "Army," 202; this was no small office, often producing intimate friendship with the superior (cf. Pliny *Ep.* 10.87.1) and mentioned alongside tribunes (Tac. *Ann.* 4.73). On experienced centurions advising higher officers more generally, Campbell, *Army*, 47. The *primus pilus* was also in charge of the legion's eagle (Campbell, *Army*, 47).

152. Including the other senior centurions, Stevenson, "Army," 226; excluding them, Parker and Watson, "Centurio," 311; presumably Campbell, *Army*, 46–47.

153. In Greek, cf. the similar diminution of the "hecatomb" (cf., e.g., Heliod. *Eth.* 3.1). For eighty by the late republic, see Campbell, "Centurio," 127; idem, "Centuria: Military."

154. Campbell, "Centuria: Military," 127.

155. Jones, "Army," 194. Thus we should not read it into the "two centurions" at Acts 23:23.

156. See Friedländer, *Life*, 1:191. For the Roman army during the imperial period, see sample sources in Shelton, *Romans*, 252–67; esp. Campbell, *Army*.

157. Jones, "Army," 205–6.

158. *Ibid.*, 206.

159. See Friedländer, *Life*, 1:192.

160. E.g., P.Hal. 1, lines 166–85 (pre-Roman); PSI 446; Polyb. 9.26; Appian *Bell. civ.* 5.3.18; Apul. *Metam.* 9.41; Hdn. 2.3.4; 2.5.1; Jos. *Life* 244. On the use of extortion, cf. Jeffers, *World*, 176; perhaps Luke 3:14 (cf. here Campbell, *Army*, 178, §295).

Luke seems to deliberately parallel this centurion with Q's centurion in Luke 7:2–10,¹⁶¹ possibly by adapting some details in each.¹⁶² The different locations indicate different centurions (7:1–2 at least implies Capernaum), but Luke is more interested in the parallel than in their identity. The centurion in Luke 7 functions as a “good Gentile,” an exception that opens the possibility for others to come (cf. 23:47); Cornelius in Acts functions the same way.

Luke 7	Acts 10
Supplicant is centurion (7:6)	Supplicant is centurion (10:22)
Has a slave (7:2)	Has a household of some sort (10:2, 24), including servants (10:7)
Pious regarding Jewish law (7:3–5)	Pious regarding Jewish law (10:2)
Centurion recognizes barrier between Jew and Gentile (7:6–7)	Peter recognizes barrier between Jew and Gentile (10:28)
Man of God willing to come to him (7:6)	Man of God willing to come to him (10:23, 29, 33)
Messengers, intermediaries praise centurion (7:3, 6)	Messengers praise centurion (10:22)
Miracle of healing sought and granted (7:7, 10)	Salvation sought (11:14); outpouring of Spirit granted (10:44)

Historically, the Gospel's centurion in Capernaum may have been part of Antipas's local army; Antipas used Roman terminology for his soldiers.¹⁶³ Luke certainly understands and portrays him, however, as a Gentile (Luke 7:5, 9), as does Matthew (Matt 8:10–12), our other extant source.¹⁶⁴ This picture would not surprise most readers in the eastern Mediterranean world, where retired soldiers could live (see comments above) and civilians sometimes encountered individual soldiers not on duty. On a local level, a centurion could exercise high authority,¹⁶⁵ especially if he was the highest-ranking representative of Rome whom most villagers or townspeople regularly encountered. Locals would sometimes encounter individual soldiers in areas that held Roman troops (cf. P.Graux 4; the poor man's encounter with a legionary in Apul. *Metam.* 9.39). When they were at peace, soldiers could be engaged in “guard duty, patrols, foraging expeditions, . . . and manning outposts.”¹⁶⁶ And again, we could be dealing with a retired centurion. A Roman bathhouse not far from the remains of Capernaum's first-century synagogue might suggest a Roman resident who lived in or near the Jewish town,¹⁶⁷ and there were probably others.

161. The basic parallel is noted by others, e.g., Watson, *Gentiles*, 62–63 (adding historical skepticism, but if anything, Luke could have augmented Q to match Cornelius here); Bruce, *Commentary*, 215; Munck, *Acts*, 93. Luke might characterize the encounter between Peter and Cornelius as the outworking of what Jesus had done during his ministry (Wilk, “Apg 10,1–11,18,” 616).

162. We should note, however, that Luke does not exploit the opportunity to parallel every point (indeed, Acts 10:1–48 is not a healing story at all), which suggests historical limits to his adaptation. Further, rather than Luke adding intermediaries in Luke 7:3, 6 to parallel messengers in Acts 10:5–8, 22 (where the messengers are not really intermediaries though they similarly praise the centurion's piety), Matthew may omit them, as he does Mark's messengers in Matt 9:18 (cf. Mark 5:35; Keener, *Matthew*, 302; Marshall, “Historical Criticism,” 131).

163. Jeffers, *World*, 178. On the use of Greek and Roman terminology for Jewish units, see, e.g., Jos. *Life* 242; Keener, *John*, 1078–79; Catchpole, *Trial*, 149; Blinzler, *Trial*, 64–65.

164. With many, I attribute their common source here to Q which I deem (based on arguments offered elsewhere) pre-Markan.

165. E.g., *Sipre Deut.* 309.1.1. Cf. *CIJ* 2:132, §920 (a centurion of a locale in Egypt, though this is fourth century); also appeals to centurions for justice in some Egyptian papyri (which eventually created problems; see P.Oxy. 1101, 367–70 C.E.). For centurions functioning as local judges, Campbell, *Army*, 171–75, cites *ILS* 5950 (from 37–41 C.E.); P.Oxy. 2234 (from 31 C.E.); P.Ryl. 2.141 (from 37 C.E.); P.Mich. 175.

166. Thompson, “Military,” 995.

167. Riesner, “Synagogues in Jerusalem,” 203–4.

IV. CORNELIUS'S HOUSEHOLD (10:2)

Luke emphasizes households, including households as a basis for reaching communities (Luke 10:5; Acts 16:15; cf. 2:46; 5:42)¹⁶⁸ and households coming to faith (Acts 16:15, 31–34; 18:8; cf. Luke 19:9).¹⁶⁹ Luke also emphasizes Jesus's staying in homes more than do the other evangelists.¹⁷⁰ Households were apparently often converted along with the *paterfamilias* in early Christianity (cf. Rom 16:10, 11; 1 Cor 1:16; 16:15–16; 2 Tim 4:19), though some members of Christian households were not (Phlm 10; for the probably common reverse situation, cf. 1 Pet 3:1).¹⁷¹

Luke's emphasis on households, however, invites us to consider what he might mean here by a "household." A Roman definition of *familia*, in the narrowest sense, included all members directly under the father's *potestas*, or power (wife, children, sons' children); more broadly, all relatives through male blood (e.g., brothers' children); and, most broadly, slaves.¹⁷² Typically Romans lived only in nuclear households, however, not with extended families.¹⁷³

(1) Infant Baptism?

Who is included in Cornelius's "household" here? The later Christian theological question of infant baptism has raised the question of whether young children were present at household baptisms in Acts.¹⁷⁴ Young children were apparently initiated into the cult of Dionysus (e.g., Pseudo-Theocritus *Bacchanals*), but this was not true for other Mysteries.¹⁷⁵ Whereas the Eleusinian Mysteries initiated foreigners, women, and slaves, children were initiated only very rarely.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately the question is a moot one for Luke himself, since young children are not in his purview in Acts.¹⁷⁷ In his second volume (in contrast to the Gospel), he mentions few children; the probably somewhat older children are engaged in what were usually judged more adult activities (Acts 2:17; 16:16–18; 21:9).¹⁷⁸ Against Pelikan's own ecclesial tradition (though it does not rest its case on NT support), Pelikan notes Luke's silence on children's baptism even when Luke summarizes "men and women" baptized in Samaria (8:12), though he mentions "wives and children" in a nonbaptismal setting (21:5).¹⁷⁹

Apart from Jeremias, the vast majority of scholars have concluded that the household conversion passages are not clear enough to address infant baptism,¹⁸⁰ but the question of who might be present at the baptisms remains a legitimate (if ultimately largely insoluble) one historically. Barrett argues that since the household members

168. See further Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 40–44.

169. All four of the "household" conversions in Acts occur in economically established homes that "could be expected to have included slaves and servants" (Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 73).

170. See Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 53–83, persuasively.

171. See Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 75–76; on 1 Pet 3, see Balch, *Wives*, passim.

172. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 127 (citing Ulp. Dig. 50.16.195).

173. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 129 (citing evidence for all social classes, though their evidence for the well-to-do is probably stronger). Even most slaves (at least those attested in inscriptions) lived in nuclear families (Martin, "Slave Families," 208), but extended families do appear (208–13).

174. Some opine cautiously that they may have been (e.g., Hanson, *Acts*, 127, noting Acts 11:14).

175. Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 209.

176. Klauck, *Context*, 99.

177. The issue arose from practical questions of high infant mortality and uncertainty about the fate of the unbaptized (see Rawson, "Death," 295, also noting second- and third-century funerary monuments showing children in a happy afterlife).

178. Robbins, "Location," 316.

179. Pelikan, *Acts*, 241, also noting that faith often explicitly precedes baptism in Acts.

180. See the summary in Fee, *Corinthians*, 62n72; earlier, e.g., Abbott, *Acts*, 178; recently, see, e.g., Twelftree, *People*, 100. Somewhat differently from the usual division of views, Caird, *Language*, 81, argues for baptism only of converts, albeit with their households; yet he denies that children in already-converted households needed baptism.

“share Cornelius’s attitude to religion” (cf. 10:2, where his household also fears God), they must be “of an age to do so consciously.”¹⁸¹ This is a reasonable surmise if children are present, though it is difficult to know if they would have been. One argument that leads nowhere is based on an attempted distinction between two Greek words generally rendered “house.” Thus A. Strobel argued that whereas οἰκία can include slaves, οἶκος (the term here) applied to family members with legal rights (i.e., not minors or slaves).¹⁸² Scholars have shown, however, that this claim does not hold in Greek literature;¹⁸³ most important, Acts always employs οἰκία for buildings.¹⁸⁴

Where families were present, they normally shared the religion of the head of the household; this was expected of wives (Plut. *Bride* 19, *Mor.* 140D), and so the many women who flirted with other religions often contributed to household tension (Juv. *Sat.* 6.489, 511–29, 542–47).¹⁸⁵ But whether Cornelius, as a Roman centurion, would have even had a wife, much less children, is open to at least some debate unless he was retired.¹⁸⁶ Conversely, it is not impossible that Cornelius had taken a local woman as a concubine.

(2) *Soldiers, Marriage, and Concubinage*

Roman law from Augustus onward prohibited soldiers from marrying, and Roman camps lacked domiciles for wives; any children born to their unions with local concubines were thus counted illegitimate and not Roman citizens.¹⁸⁷ It is even possible that any marriage that did exist at enlistment was dissolved.¹⁸⁸ The military did not need to take local attachments into account when transferring troops, although this transfer became less common in later times.¹⁸⁹ By such arrangements, soldiers were supposed to bond most closely with their fellow soldiers instead of risking loyalties outside the military.

The duration of soldiers’ service makes it clear how difficult this inability to legally marry would have been. In this period soldiers normally served a minimum of twenty years, often from about age seventeen to thirty-seven; the period was extended to twenty-five years under Hadrian.¹⁹⁰ Centurions sometimes chose to stay longer, as career soldiers (one had been in the army more than thirty-six years in Caesar *Afr. W.*

181. Barrett, *Acts*, 501.

182. Strobel, “Houses” (cited in Theissen, *Setting*, 114n37).

183. Theissen, *Setting*, 83–87; Verner, *Household*, 8–9 (contrasting Latin); Fee, *Corinthians*, 62n72.

184. Barrett, *Acts*, 501; see Acts 4:34; 9:11, 17; 10:6, 17; 11:11; 12:12; 17:5; 18:7; with the only questionable use οἰκία for a building (Winter, *Left Corinth*, 208–9, though many of his distinctions [206–11] are oversubtle).

185. Witherington, *Corinthians*, 102, cites this usual (though not inflexible) pattern to support the possibility of infants and children being baptized. The role of a male head of household in family religion also appears in many traditional societies (Mbiti, *Religions*, 84).

186. A local Jewish wife would help explain his God-fearer status. A Jewish woman might seem less likely to be a concubine (see discussion on concubines below), but insofar as concubinage was viewed by locals as a marriage with economic but no Roman legal benefits (and non-Roman locals were not under Roman law anyway), this remains possible.

187. Stevenson, “Army,” 227–28; Gardner, *Women*, 58; O’Rourke, “Law,” 181–82; Campbell, *Army*, 151; for popular knowledge that marriage was not for soldiers, see, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 306.17. More than four thousand offspring of Roman soldiers with Spanish concubines in 171 B.C.E. were counted illegitimate (Livy 43.3.2). Thus even a high officer, at least in the more rigid past, might count it below his dignity to take for himself a female captive (Plut. *S. Rom.*, Scipio the Elder 2, *Mor.* 196B).

188. Jones, *Empire*, 155–56.

189. Campbell, *Army*, 152.

190. Friedländer, *Life*, 1:192; Stevenson, “Army,” 227 (though noting that some complained they had been kept thirty to forty years under Tiberius). In earlier times, only sixteen years were demanded (Polyb. 6.19.2) except in times of special danger (6.19.4); the early first-century figure was sixteen years plus four years “as reservists” (Thompson, “Military,” 993–94; cf. gratuities in 6 C.E. for those with at least twenty years’ service in *Res Gestae* 3.17). Mortality was high, probably most often from natural causes (on the latter, cf. Hope, “Trophies”); but it seems that the majority did survive (see *Res Gestae* 1.3 with the LCL note).

45). Because centurions were “often transferred from one legion to another,”¹⁹¹ forming long-term local relationships might be particularly difficult for them.

Nevertheless, the official policy was rarely enforced. Soldiers formed marital unions with provincials, which the women often found economically suitable.¹⁹² Such unions could include “dowries from their wives’ parents.”¹⁹³ Many soldiers probably considered themselves married, regardless of official rules, especially as legions became increasingly stationary in later times.¹⁹⁴ *Tariff* lists reveal that the authorities knew that soldiers and sailors had attachments to local women.¹⁹⁵ Concubinage was unofficially permitted, and even the general Vespasian had a concubine (Suet. *Vesp.* 3).¹⁹⁶ Legionaries in Cologne married locals (Tac. *Hist.* 4.65).¹⁹⁷ These unions lacked some securities that legal Roman marriage would have protected.¹⁹⁸ Once a soldier was discharged, however, his children were sometimes or perhaps even often retroactively legitimated as a reward to the soldier provided he sought it for the children of no more than one concubine.¹⁹⁹ Claudius made the same grant to soldiers who had served twenty-five years or more.²⁰⁰

Roman law later noted that emperors typically allowed veterans to legally marry foreigners, counting (subsequent) offspring as Romans (Gaius *Inst.* 1.57). But what of offspring born during one’s term of service in the provinces? Even in earlier times, generals sometimes pardoned soldiers who stole away from camp nocturnally because of romance (Plut. *S. Rom.*, Fabius Maximus 4, *Mor.* 195EF). In the late second century, Severus granted soldiers “the right to live at home with their wives,” legally ratifying a widespread existing situation but further weakening traditional military discipline (Hdn. 3.8.5 [LCL, 1:309]).

Roman law did recognize concubinage, but the loss of rank incurred by the woman generally led men to seek concubines of lower rank.²⁰¹ Concubinage as a substitute for marriage was common in the early empire²⁰² and perhaps especially dominant among slaves and freedpersons.²⁰³

A man could legally hold only one concubine, however, and not concurrently with a wife.²⁰⁴ (This rule involves only Roman law, however; some other cultures

191. Jones, “Army,” 203. So also Stevenson, “Army,” 226 (but noting exceptions).

192. That soldiers had prostitutes and other women was public knowledge (see, e.g., Höcker, “Prostitution,” 60), requiring toll fees at customs stations (*IGRR* 1.1183 in Sherck, *Empire*, §106B, p. 149).

193. Jones, *Empire*, 156 (the form often being “interest-free loans”).

194. Campbell, *Army*, 152, noting military families “in nearby *canabae* or other settlements.” This would presumably already be true in places such as Caesarea, where Josephus indicates the soldiers’ local attachments.

195. Lewis, *Life*, 141 (*OGIS* 674 = *IGRR* 1.1183, from 90 C.E.).

196. Schieman, “Concubinatus,” 682. An officer praises Tiberius’s moderation in usually pretending not to see infractions (Vell. Paterc. 2.114.3).

197. Epitaphs from Roman Algeria indicate that although soldiers (and other romanized men) nearly always married romanized local women in some areas, intermarriage with nonromanized women was higher in other areas (13.2 percent in the sample; Cherry, “Marriage”).

198. In the second century C.E., soldiers could bequeath property but only to those of their own nation (*BGU* 5.34), and their children could inherit if they died intestate only if of the same nation (*BGU* 5.35). Cf. Thompson, “Military,” 994.

199. See *BGU* 140.10–33; *ILS* 1986; *CIL* 16.1, 42; *FIRA* 1.78; Sherck, *Empire*, §111, p. 154; Gardner, *Women*, 143; O’Rourke, “Law,” 182. An auxiliary in 131 C.E. is happy with his daughter’s birth (*BGU* 1690), and Rome might grant an auxiliary centurion’s request for his daughter’s citizenship (Pliny *Ep.* 10.107).

200. See Llewelyn, *Documents*, 6:148, §19.

201. Buckland, *Roman Law*, 128.

202. Gardner, *Women*, 57.

203. *Ibid.*, 58 (also noting that the men were more often the partners with higher status).

204. Buckland, *Roman Law*, 128. Concubinage was prohibited during marriage (Paulus *Sent.* 2, in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 193, §196; cf. Gardner, *Women*, 56–57); a married man’s concubine was considered dishonorable, at least traditionally (Aul. Gel. 4.3.3).

allowed different practices.)²⁰⁵ In these circumstances, the children were related to the mother but not legally related to the father, though he could bequeath to them property provided that it did not infringe on the rights of legitimate heirs.²⁰⁶ The offspring's lack of claim on an estate sometimes made concubinage preferable to a second marriage for a man with heirs.²⁰⁷

Auxiliaries like Cornelius, many of whom served near their homes (see discussion above), may not have faced the same restrictions as legionaries. "Senior officers and *auxilia*" could live with their wives before the time of Severus.²⁰⁸ Those who were not Roman citizens did not have legal marriages regulated by Roman law anyway and hence might have less immediate concern with regulations about their children's "legitimacy" (though the children born after they acquired citizenship on retirement would have higher status and be able to inherit by Roman law).²⁰⁹ As suggested above, however, Cornelius may be a Roman citizen at this point (Luke certainly views him this way). If, as some scholars have suggested (see above), Cornelius was retired, regulations against having a family would not affect him, regardless of his auxiliary or citizen status. Given the official rules, however, it may have seemed discreet for Luke the apologetic historian to remain vague about Cornelius's household even if (and this is uncertain) he knew more details; an earlier source might also be discreet or uninformed.

(3) *Servants*

Slaves were also considered a part of the household²¹⁰ and hence could be in view here (cf. two οἰκέται, household servants, in Acts 10:7; cf. Luke 7:2). These were probably not among his "relatives" in Acts 10:24, but since he called the latter together, they seem not to have been staying with him (again suggesting that he was retired or else came from local stock, even if as a citizen, unless they were in-laws).²¹¹ (For much more extensive background on slavery, see the lengthy excursus at Acts 12:13.) Could a Roman soldier have afforded many slaves? Most could not. "The highest paid of the rank and file Roman soldiers . . . would have had to spend nearly one third of a year's salary to buy even the cheapest slave."²¹² A common soldier under Augustus received 225 denarii a year (Tac. *Ann.* 1.17; 300 denarii under Domitian at the end of the century, Suet. *Dom.* 7.3),²¹³ which had to pay for their own clothing,

205. Royal houses of the East, especially Persian (Athen. *Deipn.* 13.556b–557e) but occasionally Judean (Jos. *Ant.* 13.380; *War* 1.97; cf. 1.511; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 90; but these were not positive examples), were known to have multiple concubines. Multiple concubines appear to be presupposed in Ps.-Phoc. 181; the rabbis refer to concubinage, but in biblical times (Safrai, "Home," 748).

206. Buckland, *Roman Law*, 129. Eventually sons in such unions, by entering the military, could receive "rights of succession" (129).

207. Harrell, *Divorce*, 30–31.

208. Whittaker in *Herodian*, LCL, 1:309n5.

209. On status in mixed unions, see comment on Acts 16:1–3; briefly, Keener, *Marries Another*, 59–60.

210. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 9.36.4; Barrow, *Slavery*, 22–64; Judge, *Pattern*, 31; Verner, *Household*, 30, 33; Falk, "Law," 509.

211. Luke seems to prefer the term for distant relatives (Luke 1:58; 2:44; 14:12; 21:16; cf. Rom 9:3; 16:7, 11, 21; 2 Macc 5:6); it is doubtful that he would use a term with this root for freedpersons.

212. Verner, *Household*, 61. This appears to have been a dramatic increase over the much lower prices during early Roman expansion reported in Grant, "Economic Background," 104.

213. For inflation, see Lewis, *Life*, 208, where the daily pay of a legionary rose from 2.5–3.3 drachmas in the first century to 4.2–5.5 in the second and 8.3 in the third (comparable wages for harvesters rose from .3–.5 to .8–2.0 in the second and 2.0–2.3 in the third), not at all comparable to the inflation of costs: a male slave cost an average of 1,200 drachmas in the second (Lewis lacks data for the first) and 1,960 in the third (female slaves, 950 in the first, 1,200 in the second, and 3,000 in the third). Cf. the earlier figures in Polybius's time: two obols daily for an infantry soldier, four for a centurion, and a drachma for a cavalryman (Polyb. 6.39.12); cavalry might receive more than centurions, who received only double infantry's wages in that period (Livy

weapons, and food, though the highest-paid soldier earned nearly three times this (675 under Augustus; 900 under Domitian).

Most centurions, on the other hand, earned 3,750 denarii a year (i.e., sixteen to seventeen times the common soldier's pay; 5,000 denarii under Domitian); the highest-ranked centurions earned 7,500 a year (10,000 under Domitian); and the *primus pilus* would earn 15,000 during his year of service (20,000 under Domitian).²¹⁴ Thus, according to another estimate, the base pay of centurions was fifteen or more times the salary of the average legionary.²¹⁵ By average living standards in the empire, Cornelius, like the African official (Acts 8:27) and some others in Luke's account, was of high status, analogous to Theophilus.²¹⁶ If an inscription is correctly reconstructed, we read of an early first-century C.E. centurion in active duty with freedmen (*CIL* 13.8648; *ILS* 2244).

Pay for auxiliaries was even lower: some estimate 200 denarii a year "for elite troops, 150 for cavalry, 100 for infantry,"²¹⁷ or roughly five-sixths a legionary's pay.²¹⁸ (Auxiliary horsemen did better.)²¹⁹ Still, fifteen times the base pay would be more than 1,000 denarii annually, probably more than six times the sort of wages an Egyptian peasant could earn even during harvest (by far the most lucrative time of year). If Cornelius was a Roman lent from the legion to supervise some local soldiers (as some think), his pay could have been higher. Sometimes wages were delayed, which generated unrest,²²⁰ as Luke must have known (Luke 3:14). Particularly foolish leaders also might deprive retiring centurions of rank or lower their retirement payment to save money (Suet. *Calig.* 44.1), but these were all exceptional situations. Rome normally preferred to keep all its soldiers content.

Slaves generally ranged in price from around 750 sesterces (187.5 denarii) to as high as 700,000 sesterces (175,000 denarii), with 2,000 as a general standard.²²¹ Whatever the relative wages of soldiers and the price of slaves, some recruits held slaves, at least in periods and places of lax discipline. Thus one earlier general improved military discipline by requiring soldiers to carry their own supplies, without using slaves or pack animals (Val. Max. 2.7.2). Many servants accompanied Roman armies (e.g., Vell. Paterc. 2.82.3, though not specifying private owners),

40.43.7). Cf. legionary pay records from 81 C.E. in Sherk, *Empire*, §94, pp. 135–36; development of costs in Le Bohec, "Soldiers' Pay."

214. Jones, "Army," 208; Jeffers, *World*, 176. Cf. Dobson, "Centurion or Officer?" (cited by Jeffers); Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 39. For estimated daily rations, see Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 88–95. (Soldiers also received on rare, special occasions an additional bonus, a *donativum* [Campbell, "Donativum"; Weiss, "Donativum"]; but this could not be predicted.)

215. Jones, "Army," 202–3 (the *pilus primus* more than sixty times higher), also noting that centurions sometimes gained more wealth by bribery and corruption; Campbell, "Centurio," 127. The base wages were five times higher than a praetorian soldier's, and ten times higher if the centurion belonged to the first cohort (Parker and Watson, "Centurio," 311).

216. Noted by Witherington, *Acts*, 71; Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 62.

217. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 94 (admitting that the estimates are conjectural), followed by Jeffers, *World*, 176. Stambaugh, *City*, 356n41, gives the range of 100–200 denarii per year for auxiliaries.

218. Campbell, "Auxilia," 225 (750 sesterces a year under Augustus); cf. more generally Jones, "Army," 196.

219. Receiving 300 *sestertii* in 38 C.E. (Speidel, "Pay Scales"; a *sestertius* [sesterce] is about a quarter denarius).

220. Cf. Xen. *Anab.* 7.6.11–22; 7.7.48; Polyb. 5.50.1; 11.25.8–10; Diod. Sic. 27.4.3; 33.22.1; Suet. *Aug.* 17.3; Jos. *Life* 78, 244. Soldiers also had access to plunder during war (Xen. *Anab.* 5.3.4; 6.6.37; *Cyr.* 7.3.1; Polyb. 9.26; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 8.57.1; Livy 40.43.7; 41.11.8; 45.35.6; Val. Max. 4.3.10; Appian *Hist. rom.* 7.1.2; Plut. *Cam.* 7.4–5; *Coriol.* 10.2; Arrian *Alex.* 7.5.4; Tac. *Hist.* 4.60; Suet. *Jul.* 26.3; 38.1; Philost. *Hrk.* 31.4; 48.5; cf. Appian *Hist. rom.* 6.10.60) and might even wish to preempt a surrender (Tac. *Hist.* 3.19; cf. 3.60) or conquer friendly peoples (Suet. *Jul.* 54.1–2) for this reason. But Cornelius is at peace (when such plundering was negatively viewed, e.g., Caesar *C.W.* 3.31). For a sample pay order for (earlier) soldiers' wages, see *BGU* 1749.

221. Stambaugh, *City*, 154.

though aristocrats apparently did not take their household servants to the battle-front (Vell. Paterc. 2.114.2). The Gospel's centurion also has a servant (Luke 7:3).²²² The narrative of Acts suggests that Cornelius has more than two servants (Acts 10:7; see comment there), whatever their status, but we cannot say to what extent his "household" includes more than these. Soldiers also could keep in contact with relatives during their years of service and, at least conceivably, settle together when they retired.²²³ But again, we cannot do more than speculate on whom Cornelius's household contained.

V. GOD-FEARERS (10:2)

As he did with the African official (8:26–40), Luke focuses here on a particularly virtuous Gentile "in order to choke at source every conceivable objection to the Gentile mission."²²⁴ In both cases, he makes fairly clear that the convert in view was a devout sympathizer but not a full (circumcised) convert. That Luke omits use of "proselyte" here (in contrast to 2:10; 6:5) is significant;²²⁵ Cornelius is another example of the sort of convert introduced in 8:27, though it is toward the people Cornelius represents (more than is the case with the African official) that the narrative of Acts will point (28:14–31).

(1) During Worship

That both Cornelius (10:2–3) and Peter (10:9) experienced their revelations during prayer fits the emphasis on prayer in Luke-Acts. More important, this spiritual setting specifically emphasizes that the revelations are truly divine, since the God of Israel would not have allowed those seeking him to be led astray. That Cornelius gave alms may recall most recently Tabitha (9:36; on the term, see comment there) but also the entire theme on economic sharing in Luke-Acts (e.g., Luke 3:11; 12:33; 14:33; 18:22; Acts 4:32–35; 6:1–3; 11:29–30; see comment on Acts 2:44–45; 3:2). That God takes note of such offerings (Acts 10:4) also fits the previous teaching of the work (Luke 11:41; 21:3; cf. perhaps 1:6, 10–13).

The designation "continually" may allude to language such as that of the incense offering in Exod 30:8,²²⁶ the lamp in the tabernacle (Lev 6:13; 24:2–4), or other analogous ritual acts of devotion (e.g., Lev 6:20).²²⁷ Some such allusions also appear in prayer as a "memorial" in Acts 10:4 (see comment below). The LXX consistently employs the Greek expression used here (διὰ παντός) to translate *tamid*, which appears in a large number of cultic passages.²²⁸ It may indicate, by analogy, observance of the regular hours of prayer,²²⁹ of which the ninth hour (10:3, 30) was one.

222. Matthew's wording is more ambiguous, but Luke does not adjust the term to fit Acts 10 here, since his term for "servant" here is a different one.

223. See Lewis, *Life*, 22, for a letter from one soldier about to retire to a brother already discharged.

224. Klauck, *Magic*, 32.

225. Cf. Spencer, *Acts*, 110.

226. C. Williams, *Acts*, 134–35.

227. Rituals repeated frequently and regularly could be called continual and unceasing even though they did not occur every moment (e.g., Plut. *S. Sp.*, *Lycurgus* 22, *Mor.* 228D). Jewish references to continually praying (e.g., *Let. Aris.* 196; 1 Thess 5:17) probably similarly do not mean continuously without rest; rabbis counted attempts to pray nonstop throughout the day impractical (*t. Ber.* 3:6).

228. For a sample (most from Johnson, *Acts*, 182), see Exod 25:29–30; 27:20; 28:30, 38; Lev 24:2, 8; Num 4:7; 28:10; 2 Sam 9:7, 10; 1 Chr 16:37, 40; 2 Chr 9:7; Pss 15:8 (16:8 ET); 24:15 (15:15); 33:2 (34:1); 34:27 (35:27); 37:18 (38:18); 39:12 (40:11); 50:5 (50:8). Its usage is not, of course, exclusively cultic (cf. Acts 2:25; 24:16) and can apply to other forms of worship (Luke 24:53; Heb 13:15; cf. 9:6).

229. So Jeremias, *Theology*, 188. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 552, compares regular prayers (citing *m. Ber.* 1:1–2; 4:1; 6:1–4; 8:1, 5) but wonders how much a God-fearer would have known or practiced.

(2) A Class of “God-Fearers”?

Scholars long spoke of a class of Gentile sympathizers, not yet full proselytes, called “worshippers” of God, drawing in part on Luke’s portrait in the book of Acts.²³⁰ In the 1980s some scholars, most notably A. T. Kraabel, doubted Luke’s picture of a class of uncircumcised Gentile sympathizers and denied that they were ever called “God-fearers,” arguing that Luke merely creates this class for his literary agenda.²³¹ Although it has long been recognized that Luke has a literary agenda in using the God-fearers to transition to Gentile Christianity,²³² such a literary strategy does not necessarily deny that he could reflect earlier Christian missions strategy (which could be his source). Further, since Luke fails to explain the God-fearers, how would his audience know what they were intended to represent if they corresponded to nothing in their world? Greco-Roman historians may not have always achieved historical precision, but at the very least they certainly strove for historical verisimilitude.

Perhaps the expression used for “fearing God” or “God-fearer” is not a technical one in this period; certainly, at the least, it has a variety of other uses (including sometimes in Luke-Acts; Acts 13:16; Luke 18:2, 4; 23:40).²³³ In addition to “one who fears God” (φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν; cf. Acts 10:22; 13:16, 26), Luke uses other language for those who fear God, employing two essentially synonymous expressions: “reverent” (σεβόμενος; cf. 13:43; 17:4, 17) and “devout” (εὐσεβής and cognates; cf. 10:7).²³⁴ What could he mean by such expressions? Expressions about “fearing” God (using various verbs) certainly were not limited to Gentile sympathizers. Jewish people treated fearing God as an essential virtue,²³⁵ often praising a person who was θεοσεβής,²³⁶ including in funerary inscriptions.²³⁷ Jewish people usually spoke of all the righteous or wise fearing the Lord (e.g., Sir 2:15; Pss. Sol. 2:33; 12:4; 15:13)²³⁸ and of “sinners” not doing so (e.g., 1 En. 101:9). Like Greeks,²³⁹ they valued the virtue of piety toward the divine.²⁴⁰ They could use such expressions to describe the entire Jewish people (e.g., εὐσεβέων, Sib. Or. 3.573, probably second century B.C.E.)²⁴¹ or the particularly pious (Jos. Asen. 4:7/9; cf. 4 Macc 9:7); Qumran texts apply the expression to members of the community.²⁴²

230. Nock, *Christianity*, 2.

231. See Kraabel, “Disappearance”; idem, “Lutherans in Acts”; MacLennan and Kraabel, “Invention”; recently, cf. White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:89, 183n102.

232. Schweizer, “Concerning Speeches,” 214; cf. Gager, “Gentiles and Synagogues.”

233. Lake, “Proselytes,” 85–87; Barrett, *Acts*, 500; Witherington, *Acts*, 341–44.

234. Philo regarded εὐσεβεία as the foundational virtue (Sterling, “Queen of Virtues”). Although εὐλαβής and its cognates carry a similar semantic range, Luke always applies εὐλαβής to Jews (Acts 2:5; 8:2; 22:12; Luke 2:25).

235. E.g., Sir 1:11–30; 25:10–11; 34:13–15 (34:14–16 NRSV; 31:13–15 in another version); Tob 4:21; 4 Macc 15:8; *Let. Aris.* 95, 159, 189; *Test. Jos.* 10:6; *Test. Benj.* 3:4; *Syr. Men. Epit.* 2, 9; *y. B. Meši’a* 2:5, §2; cf. commands to fear God in *Test. Levi* 13:1; *Test. Jos.* 11:1; *Sent. Syr. Men.* 9; *m. ’Ab.* 1:3. It is equivalent to loving God in Sir 34:16 (31:16).

236. Such as Abraham (*Test. Ab.* 4:6 A).

237. E.g., *CIJ* 1:365, §500.

238. Also, e.g., *1 Clem.* 21.7; 45.6; *Herm.* 26.2; 37.1, 5; 45.4; 77.2.

239. E.g., *Pyth. Sent.* 11 (in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 111); εὐσεβεία in Men. Rhet. 1.3, 361.17–19; 2.1–2, 368.17–20; Burkert, *Religion*, 272–74. Stoics classified εὐσεβεία as a form of justice (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5b.2, pp. 14–15.18–19) and defined it (2.7.5b.2, pp. 16–17.13) as proper knowledge of how to serve the gods.

240. E.g., εὐσεβεία in *Test. Iss.* 7:6/5; *Let. Aris.* 2, 131, 179, 210, 229; 2 Pet 1:3–7. It describes Ptolemy in *Let. Aris.* 42, 261. In Jewish names, see, e.g., *CIJ* 1:79, §113; 1:80, §114; 1:260, §§330–31; 1:261, §332.

241. Cf. *CIJ* 2:14, §748 (from Miletus); but Baker, “Theatre,” suggests that “God-fearers” here refers to the cult of Theos Hypsistos (Jews being related to, but not identical with, them).

242. Romaniuk, “Crainte” (though De Vries, “Fear of God,” challenges his view on the source of Qumran’s fear of punishment); cf. Driver, *Scrolls*, 520.

Although such expressions were not limited to Gentile sympathizers, they were appropriate enough to them.²⁴³ Such expressions at times also could apply to proselytes (τοὺς σεβουμένους, *Test. Jos.* 4:6) and Gentile sympathizers who respected Jews (θεοσεβής, *Jos. Ant.* 20.195; cf. 14.110),²⁴⁴ though not exclusively or technically so. Although such expressions thus could apply to pious Jews as well as Gentiles (even in Acts 13:16),²⁴⁵ it is not accurate to claim that they never apply to Gentiles.

Even if the particular expression did not apply (which is debatable, as we will see below), the existence of Gentile sympathizers (with varying degrees of commitment) who were not full converts or adherents to Jewish ways of life is difficult to dispute.²⁴⁶ Many Jews (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.41) apparently welcomed many “natural law” proselytes without articulating a name for them.²⁴⁷ Gentiles also recognized a category of Jewish sympathizers who had not yet undergone proselyte baptism (Epict. *Diatr.* 2.9.20) and that such “Sabbath-fearers” often formed a bridge of toleration that led their children into full conversion (*Juv. Sat.* 5.14.96–106).²⁴⁸ Luke could have taken the phrase from the LXX to describe a category of people that did exist without the title having been widespread.²⁴⁹ But eventually even the term may have become a semitechnical one, and its occasional usage both in later rabbis and in Acts, which cannot depend on later rabbis, may be more than coincidental.²⁵⁰

In the final analysis, even Kraabel's argument against the terminology has proved unconvincing.²⁵¹ As G. H. R. Horsley points out, Kraabel argues from silence: “The absence of reference in the inscriptions from six major Diaspora synagogues, only one of them of the first century, scarcely justifies a denial. ‘Sympathisers’ were presumably not [after all] accorded any status in Judaism.”²⁵² Subsequent archaeological discoveries have challenged Kraabel's argument most fully; as numerous scholars have emphasized, the Aphrodisias²⁵³ inscription notes more than fifty donors, apparently

243. Clements, “Background,” 209–16, suggests that the emphasis on fearing God in OT wisdom texts (209–12) and wisdom texts' universalism (212–16) already set the stage for this development.

244. On *Jos. Ant.* 20.195, see, e.g., Lifshitz, “Sympathisants”; cf. further Das, *Debate*, 77–79. Feldman in *Josephus*, LCL, 10:104–5 n. d, doubts that this Josephus passage employs the term “technically,” and is likely correct in this assessment. Though Josephus attests nonproselyte sympathizers, his definitions of such categories are not consistent from one work to the next (Cohen, “Respect for Judaism”).

245. Cf. Wilcox, “God-Fearers—Reconsideration.”

246. See, e.g., Finn, “God-Fearers Reconsidered” (citing considerable evidence, even if the designation was not yet “technical”); Overman, “Neglected Features”; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 61–70; the evidence in Feldman, “Omnipresence”; Siegert, “Gottesfürchtige”; Liebeschuetz, “Influence”; Das, *Debate*, 79–81, 111–12. Some philosophers were experimenting with forms of monotheistic expression; see comment on Acts 8:10; also others (e.g., van der Horst, “New Altar?”).

247. Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 60–65 (noting that they were not fully members of Israel). Many apparently viewed welcoming interested Gentiles as fundamental to Judaism (cf. *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.210, interpreting biblical *gerim* [“strangers”] as converts).

248. See Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 34n1; Moore, *Judaism*, 1:325. Others cite Dio Cass. 60.6.6; Suet. *Dom.* 12.2 (Segal, *Convert*, 94). Gentile adherence to the synagogue was diverse, displaying a range of attachments (note Barreto, *Negotiations*, 101, following Collins, “Symbol,” 184).

249. Overman, “Neglected Features”; cf. Das, *Debate*, 73–74.

250. Cf. Lifshitz, “Sympathisants”; Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 135–38; Hoenig, “Conversion,” 65–66; cf. *Pesiq. Rab.* 43:4. Eventually Amoraim required semiconverts to decide because Roman and Christian challenges made them more a danger than a benefit (Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 289).

251. E.g., Gager, “Gentiles and Synagogues” (though arguing that Luke invented their rapid conversion); Trebilco, *Communities*, 145–66; Segal, *Convert*, 93–94. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:32n179, notes that Kraabel is increasingly outnumbered on this issue.

252. Horsley, *Documents*, 3:54, §17. Whereas uncircumcised sympathizers were more apt to hold higher status in Gentile society, proselytes held higher religious status in Judaism (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 317).

253. On the Carian city of Aphrodisias, see briefly Reynolds, “Aphrodisias”; Kaletsch, “Aphrodisias”; Schnabel, *Mission*, 1246–47; archaeology in Smith, “Aphrodisias” (distinct from the Aphrodisias in Hild, “Aphrodisias”).

Gentiles, described as θεοσεβεις.²⁵⁴ If one argues that a third-century inscription (or later)²⁵⁵ is too late to shed light on Luke's usage, we may note that most of Kraabel's material is also later. We may also respond that neither Luke nor the inscription can depend on each other, which suggests the likelihood of a common (even if not technical) usage already understood in Luke's day. Luke in any case expected his language to be intelligible to his audience without explanation.

(3) Soldiers' Religion

Cornelius's Jewish piety is respected and accepted but probably not orthodox and certainly not on the level of a proselyte.²⁵⁶ Evidence allows for varying degrees of commitment on the part of sympathizers, much of it from those who did not attend synagogue.²⁵⁷ Soldiers seem to have had many feast days, most of which were religious in nature.²⁵⁸ The later spread of Mithraism²⁵⁹ testifies to the spiritual hunger of these generally uprooted men,²⁶⁰ its spread is associated particularly with the Roman army in later centuries²⁶¹ (though limited to particular regions).²⁶² In Dacia, for example, Mithraic materials appear especially around military installations, both legionary and auxiliary.²⁶³ The cult was associated especially (albeit not exclusively)²⁶⁴ with males,²⁶⁵ which may have facilitated (or perhaps stemmed from) soldiers' involvement. Mithras worship probably also appeared in Caesarea itself in the third century.²⁶⁶ This is not

254. Tannenbaum, "God-Fearers"; Feldman, "Sympathizers"; Levinskaya, "Inscription and Problem"; idem, *Diaspora Setting*, 51–82 (cf. also 105–26); van der Horst, "Aphrodisias"; Gempf, "God-Fearers"; Trebilco and Evans, "Diaspora Judaism," 286–87; Trebilco, "Communities," 566; Noy, "Inscriptions," 540; Segal, *Convert*, 94; Matthews, *Converts*, 66; Das, *Debate*, 75–77; Judge, *Athens*, 121–29. The inscription certainly employs the term in the Lukan sense even if also using it more ambiguously (Murphy-O'Connor, "Lots of God-Fearers?"; cf. Koch, "God-Fearers").

255. Bonz, "Inscriptions," argues that one inscription is fifth century and refers to a pious Jew, although the other may be a third-century Gentile. Gilbert, "Administration," suggests that Jews would have more favor in the fourth than in the fifth century.

256. See comment on Acts 10:25. Evidence for Jewish soldiers is sporadic at best (see Kraft, "Judaism on Scene," 86–87; Applebaum, "Legal Status," 458–60; cf. perhaps *CIJ* 1:52, §79); Roman soldiers ate a great deal of pork (Polyb. 2.15.3). There were more Jewish soldiers in Ptolemaic Egypt (*Let. Aris.* 13; *CPJ* 1:11–13, 147–78).

257. Cf. Siegert, "Gottesfürchtige"; Lake, "Proselytes," 96. Some ethnic Gentiles who viewed themselves as more faithful adherents to Judaism called themselves Jews apparently without conversion (see Kraemer, "Meaning of 'Jew'"; for the designation more generally, see comment on Acts 28:19).

258. Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 54 (following Fink, Hoey, and Snyder, "*Feriale Duranum*," though there may have been fewer in Luke's day).

259. Comparatively little is known because the cult was secretive (Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 42) and it did not attract as much literary attention as some alternative cults. A Persian cult, it never succeeded in Greece (Klauck, *Context*, 148); Herodotus thought Mithra a goddess (Hdt. 1.131.3), and in the Greek world Mithraic worship seems limited, with isolated exceptions, to Persian families (Gordon, "Mithraism," 394). It had seven stages of initiation (Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 7). For the cult's astrological associations, see, e.g., Apul. *Metam.* 11.22; Angus, *Mystery-Religions*, 165; Sheldon, *Mystery Religions*, 33–34; Koester, *Introduction*, 1:372–74; in magic, cf. *PGM* 4.620–70. Identified with Helios (Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 2.3.64), Mithras was portrayed as young and blond (*PGM* 4.696–99) with lightning in his eyes and stars on his body (4.703–4). On the bull-slaying ritual, see, e.g., Hinnells, "Reflections," esp. 311; Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 7.

260. Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 54.

261. As widely noted (e.g., Gager, *Kingdom*, 134; Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 7, 42; Koester, *Introduction*, 1:372–74; Gordon, "Mithraism," 396); see esp. Serban and Baluta, "Mithraism"; Daniels, "Army." One third-century Mithraeum in Spain might be in a centurion's home (Alvar, Gordon, and Rodríguez, "Mithraeum at Lugo").

262. See this cautionary note by Nock, "Genius of Mithraism," 113; esp. Daniels, "Army," 273. Even some of the evidence that we do have may reflect recruits from areas where it was more common (cf. Frank, *Aspects*, 50).

263. Serban and Baluta, "Mithraism," 578.

264. David, "Exclusion."

265. Many scholars claim that it was for males (Gager, *Kingdom*, 133; Martin, *Religions*, 114; Drijvers and de Jong, "Mithras," 580), with a few exceptions (Klauck, *Context*, 141, 148). Griffith, "Women," contends that women were not involved but finds symbols of the "female principle."

266. See Lease, "Caesarea Mithraeum"; Bull, "Mithraic Medallion," 190 (third or fourth century); Flusser, "Paganism," 1099 (ca. 200 c.e.). Given the date, Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha and New Testament*, 82, warns

to imply that any soldiers noted in Acts followed Mithraism. Although the empire already had contact with Mithraists,²⁶⁷ it does not seem to have spread in the empire before the second century²⁶⁸ (and, against some earlier speculation, certainly cannot be supposed to have influenced first-century Christian thought).²⁶⁹

At the same time, many soldiers were not above sacrilege if the occasion invited it (Hdn. 4.4.5). But most important in this case (because it applied to all Roman soldiers), soldiers had to swear a sacred oath (a *sacramentum*) to the emperor, and units engaged in “official religious activities” together.²⁷⁰ The eagle of each imperial legion, carried by the *aquilifer*, clutched the bolt of Jupiter in its talons; another soldier, the *imaginifer*, carried the emperor's image; legionary emblems could include deities.²⁷¹ Soldiers could worship privately whatever deities they wanted, so long as it did not interfere with discipline, but the imperial cult pervaded communal military life.²⁷² Like God-fearers in Aphrodisias, Cornelius would have to participate in the official cult,²⁷³ which could help explain why he bows to Peter inappropriately in Acts 10:25.

What is Luke's literary agenda in mentioning “God-fearers”? Some suggest that Luke addresses Jewish Christians: the many “God-fearer” converts resemble the

against overemphasizing the later Caesarea Mithraeum's relevance. For some Roman soldiers worshipping Christ in third-century Palestine, see Tzaferis, “Inscribed.”

267. Grant, *Gods*, 40 (citing Plut. *Pomp.* 24.5; Dio Cass. 63.5.2). Later forms may have absorbed motifs from a wide range of sources, including Christianity (Latourette, *First Five Centuries*, 247), though even then it remained quite distinct (see, e.g., Mattingly, *Christianity*, 5). Griffith, “Mithras,” argues (from Statius *Theb.* 1.717–20) that at least some in Rome apparently knew of it by 79 C.E.; Beck, “Mysteries,” argues for its presence among Commagenian soldiers before the end of the first century. Gordon, “Mithraism,” 395, concedes that Mithraism existed even before this time but notes that its first attestation (in the source behind Plut. *Pomp.* 24) was quite different from the cult known to us from the Flavian period. Persians and others from the East, of course, worshiped Mithras well before the second century (Reitzenstein, *Religions*, 23; Tarn, *Civilisation*, 341; Grant, *Gods*, 40, citing Plut. *Pomp.* 24.5; Dio Cass. 63.5.2), but Decharneux, “Cult,” 104, suggests that Roman usage may have domesticated Mithraism against Parthia. Names appear to attest at least some Mithras worship in Achaemenid Persia (Campos Méndez, “Dios Mithra”). For (later) evidence from Dura, see, e.g., Cumont, “Mithraeum”; Francis, “Graffiti.”

268. Grant, *Gods*, 40–41; cf. “Mithras,” 74; Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 343; Rives, *Religion*, 141 (starting at the end of the first century). Use of Mithraic caves (on which see Campbell, *Iconography*, 6–11), as Mithraists called them (cf. discussion in Gordon, “Mithraism,” 394; Rives, *Religion*, 125), belongs especially to the second through fourth centuries (Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 2; on caves in ancient religion, see also Keener, “Cave”); although Mithras is known from the Bronze Age, “the characteristic mysteries” do not predate 100 C.E. (Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 6–7; cf. Nock, *Christianity*, 58). With or without Christian competition, Mithraism would not have survived (Bianchi, “Epilegomena,” 879).

269. Some have argued that Christianity and Mithraism competed in later centuries (Latourette, *First Five Centuries*, 28–29; Gager, *Kingdom*, 133), but others contend that even in the later period, their competition was limited (see Martin, “Mithraism”); similarities are also limited (Nock, *Christianity*, 29; Mattingly, *Christianity*, 5). Some suggest that the fourth-century inscription promising immortality may reflect Christian influence (Grant, *Hellenism*, 18); in any case, Mithraism was a highly syncretistic movement (cf. data in Blawatsky and Kochelenko, *Culte de Mithra*). Later Christian and Mithraic iconographies have some resemblances (Demian, “Mithras and Christ”), but these may derive from a common source (Gervers, “Iconography,” 598). Mithraism may have adapted the Lord's Supper (cf. Justin 1 *Apol.* 66; cf. also the second-century cup in Beck, “Ritual,” though one ought not to infer much from a cup); Cumont's reading of the Mithraic meal in eucharistic terms has been seriously questioned (see Yamauchi, *Persia*, 517).

270. Jones, “Army,” 212; on the oath, see further Pliny *Ep.* 10.52, 100; Watson and Spawforth, “*Sacramentum*.” Epict. *Diatr.* 1.14.15 admonishes others to swear allegiance to God as Caesar's soldiers do to Caesar. Were auxiliaries less strictly bound, or would Cornelius view the activities as mere formalities (cf. 2 Kgs 5:18–19)? But probably he would escape such questions only at retirement. Public figures avoiding the oath could be noted and accused (Tac. *Ann.* 16.22, under Nero).

271. Le Bohec, “Ensigns,” 993, 995 (citing for the *aquilifer* Tac. *Ann.* 1.39.4; *Hist.* 1.56.2; 2.89.1; cf. *ILS* 2338–42). Auxiliary cohorts would also be exposed to paganism.

272. Campbell, *Army*, 127; for primary sources covering soldiers' religion, see 127–36.

273. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 121.

kind of Gentiles already acceptable to Judaism, so why not welcome them into the church?²⁷⁴ More scholars think that Luke's audience is predominantly ethnically Gentile; many of these, however, may have been God-fearers. Others, perhaps more dominant by this period, would have at least identified with them. Whatever Luke's audience, however, God-fearers, like proselytes (6:5) and Hellenists (Acts 6–8), provide useful transitions to the Gentile mission.²⁷⁵ The church's bridge to Gentiles did not arise in a vacuum but owed much to Jewish connections and apologetics that had been growing for centuries.²⁷⁶

b. Cornelius's Encounter (10:3–8)

An angelic visitor during prayer instructs Cornelius how to secure the true knowledge of God that can save him and his household (cf. 11:14). In 10:7–8, Cornelius immediately obeys.

I. ANGELIC VISITOR DURING PRAYER (10:3)

Cornelius is presumably in prayer when the vision takes place; sometimes Luke's abbreviation of his material leaves connections unclear (10:4 is not quite explicit), but that the appearance occurs during prayer is clear in 10:31 and is strongly implied in the timing of 10:3. Luke has already introduced the ninth hour as one of the hours of prayer observed in the temple (3:1).²⁷⁷ The angel's use of the term "memorial" (10:4) may respond to Cornelius's regular times of prayer, which can be described as "remembering" in prayer.²⁷⁸ An angelic revelation at this hour of prayer in the temple recalls the opening vision of Luke's work, Gabriel's announcement of John's birth at the hour of incense offering in the temple (Luke 1:10–11);²⁷⁹ this too is a critical point in salvific history.

An angel reveals the truth of God to a seeker in *Test. Job* 3 (cf. 2:3–4) and perhaps the gospel to the world in Rev 14:6, though these documents are probably of later date than our narrative. Jewish apocalyptic literature regularly speaks of revelations from angels (cf. Rev 1:1).²⁸⁰ Those who founded various groups (e.g., associations or clubs) sometimes claimed divine sanction through dreams, visions, or oracles. "The point of making such a claim is that the divine sanction for the association's founding

274. Jervell, "Church," 20.

275. Valuable though the comparison might be for recognizing Luke's appreciation for the socially marginal, Schweizer's comparison of God-fearers with the Gospel's Galileans ("Concerning Speeches," 214) may overestimate both their centrality and their orthodoxy. Flusser, *Judaism*, 630, believes they kept the Noahide laws, hence the relevance of Acts 15:20 (see comments there) in instructing them.

276. Despite his undue historical skepticism, Kraabel is correct that Luke has a literary agenda; Kraabel views this agenda as explaining how Christianity maintained a Jewish heritage while becoming a Gentile religion ("Disappearance"; MacLennan and Kraabel, "Invention"; it might be better expressed as becoming a faith that welcomed Gentiles).

277. The hours of prayer also carried over into early Christianity (*Did.* 8.3; Tert. *Fasting* 10; see Jeremias, *Theology*, 188; Oesterley, *Liturgy*, 125). On the hours of prayer, see Jeremias, *Prayers*, 69–73; further comment on Acts 3:1. Luke's indication of approximation, "about," is characteristic of his estimates (see comment on Acts 1:15; 2:41).

278. E.g., 1 Macc 12:11; Rom 1:9; 2 Tim 1:3; cf. 1QM XVI, 3–4; XVIII, 4. Paul's references may allude to the formal prayer times (Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 16–17), though the terminology *μνησθῆναι* could simply mean "making mention" (Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 11; Robinson, *Ephesians*, 278–79). God also "remembers" Cornelius's piety (Acts 10:31), as prayers sometimes invited (1Q34bis 1 + 2 6; 4Q508 2 2; 4Q509 131–32 II, 5; 2 Bar. 84:10).

279. Dunn, *Acts*, 136. One might be tempted to contrast favorably Cornelius's vision of an angel with Peter's vision of a sheet, but the descent of the latter from heaven may mitigate this, as does Peter's experience in 12:7–11 (and possibly his other presumed angelic visions; cf. 12:9). In any case, Cornelius's angelic visitation, like those of Luke 1:11, 26; 2:9, offers him a significance some might not have expected for Gentiles.

280. E.g., 1 En. 1:2; 72:1; 74:2; 3 Bar. 1:8; see further comment at Acts 8:26.

would then be seen as beyond dispute.”²⁸¹ The Gentile mission, Luke emphasizes, is God's idea.

II. ACCEPTABLE OFFERINGS (10:4)

That Cornelius is terrified (ἔμφοβος) is to be expected in the case of a revelation,²⁸² including the first one in Luke's work (Luke 1:12; for another allusion to Zechariah, see comment on Acts 10:31). Luke elsewhere employs ἔμφοβος for responses to divine revelations, whether of angels (Luke 24:5) or of the risen Christ (24:37; Luke's only other use is Acts 24:25). “What is this [about]?” seems a natural reaction,²⁸³ but in Luke's (or Cornelius the God-fearer's) composition seems particularly appropriate for a response to a surprising angelic revelation (Zech 1:9, 19; 4:4–5, 13; 5:6; 6:4).²⁸⁴ (Cf. Saul's related question in 9:5, “Who are you, Lord?”)

The angel, however, immediately assures Cornelius that God is pleased with him. As two forms of pious deeds, prayers and alms often appear together in early Jewish sources.²⁸⁵ Early Jewish tradition claimed that angels saw people's good deeds and brought their prayers²⁸⁶ to God (Tob 12:12–13, 15) and that the prayers counted as a “remembrance” (12:12). When the angel declares that Cornelius's prayers (and especially alms, cf. Acts 10:31) have risen²⁸⁷ as a “memorial” to God, the angel alludes to a concept widely known in early Judaism. Prayer itself could count as a “memorial” before God (Tob 12:12), but given the common cultic usage, prayer as a memorial might evoke a wider range of cultic imagery.

Some biblical offerings were called “memorials,”²⁸⁸ language that was sometimes transferred to times of prayer in early Judaism (see comment on Acts 10:3).²⁸⁹ It also applied to the high priest's continual representation of Israel's tribes before God (Exod 28:12, 29; 39:7; cf. Sir 45:9, 11) and to atonement funds for Israel (Exod 30:16; Num 31:54). Scripture compared prayer to offerings to God (Ps 141:2) and spoke of spiritual sacrifices (Pss 50:14, 16, 23; 51:16–17, 19; 69:30–31; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6–8).²⁹⁰

281. Witherington, *Acts*, 341.

282. For fearing at a revelation, cf., e.g., Dan 7:15; PGM 4.725 (in Mithraism); Rev 1:17; and sources cited for falling to the ground at Acts 9:4.

283. The idiom may convey surprise (cf. Exod 16:15; Mark 1:27; John 16:17–18; 1 Cor 10:19), although it does not always do so (Acts 23:19; 1 Cor 14:15, 26; Eph 4:9); response to a subordinate's request is irrelevant (Josh 15:18; Judg 1:14; 2 Sam 14:5; 1 Kgs 1:16; 2 Kgs 4:2; 6:28; Esth 5:6; 7:2). Le Cornu, *Acts*, 554, compares the simple son's question at Passover (*Mek. Pisha* 18; cf. Deut 6:20), but this is too specific.

284. Cf. Ezek 37:18; also Philo's translation of Moses's and Jacob's “Here I am” in response to divine revelation in *Dreams* 1.194 (on Exod 3:4), 196 (on Gen 31:11; cf. 46:2).

285. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 551; cf. Keener, *Matthew*, 207 (citing *y. Ta'an. 2:1, §9; Pesiq. Rab Kah. 28:2; Eccl. Rab. 7:14, §1*). Luke here develops Cornelius's character (Parsons, *Acts*, 143, citing *Rhet. Her. 4.50.63* and noting also synonymia; see discussion of “character” at Acts 24:5).

286. Luke employs προσευχή in the plural only here and in 2:42, but it is frequent elsewhere in early Christianity.

287. Prayers are compared to incense rising before God in Rev 5:8; 8:4 (the fragrance of offerings rises before God, e.g., Gen 8:21; *Jub. 6:3–4*). Some traditions also speak of angels presenting prayers before God (Tob 12:15; Rev 8:3–4), though here the angel merely announces their effect.

288. Lev 2:1, 9, 16; 5:12; 6:15; Num 5:15, 26; Sir 38:11; Philo *Names* 234, 249; *Dreams* 2.71; cf. 4Q512 29–32 10; 11QT XX, 11; perhaps 1QS X, 5; 1QM VII, 13; 11QT XIX, 9; XXV, 3; XXVII, 5, 9; XXXIX, 9; 11Q20 III, 26; IV, 21; VII, 24.

289. Cf. also remembrance (though this may simply mean “mention”) in prayer, e.g., Rom 1:9; Eph 1:16; Phil 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Tim 1:3; Phlm 4; cf. Luke 23:42; and God “remembering” his people, Luke 1:54, 72; Heb 6:10.

290. Cf. also Pss 107:22; 116:17; Jer 6:20; 7:22; Amos 4:4–5; 5:25–27; Jonah 2:9; but sacrifices of thanksgiving were compatible with thank offerings (Lev 7:12–15; 22:29). For de-emphasis on traditional sacrifice, cf. Ps 40:6. Most commentators recognize the relevance of the OT passages (e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 113; C. Williams, *Acts*, 135; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 451; Johnson, *Acts*, 183, citing also 1QS VIII, 1–9; 4QFlor 1 I, 1–6; Marshall, “Acts,” 577, citing also 1 En. 99:3).

Jewish tradition developed these emphases more fully; they became particularly helpful after the temple's destruction²⁹¹ but were already widespread in Judaism, especially Diaspora Judaism²⁹² and Qumran,²⁹³ before that time. (Some thinkers also rejected animal sacrifices,²⁹⁴ and some Gentiles were ambivalent or negative toward traditional sacrifices.)²⁹⁵ Perhaps because Cornelius, as a Gentile, was barred from the Court of Israel in the temple, "spiritual" sacrifices were of special relevance to him.²⁹⁶

III. SEND FOR PETER (10:5–6)

The command to send to another for further instructions resembles the recent command to Paul to await further instructions in Damascus (Acts 9:6). Not only Jews²⁹⁷ but also Gentiles would have grasped without difficulty the concept of sending to hear an oracle or prophet;²⁹⁸ they often claimed that divine revelations referred them to particular healing sanctuaries²⁹⁹ or healers.³⁰⁰ By directing Cornelius to seek the saving message from Peter rather than communicating it directly, the present revelation retains the usual pattern of God bringing the message through human agents (see 1:8).³⁰¹

Although it also makes historical sense in terms of population and proximity to Caesarea, it might be significant that Peter has his vision in Joppa, where Jonah went to sail to Tarshish (Jonah 1:3); like Jonah, Peter will initially object to a call to Gentiles, particularly to a call to the very nation that has been oppressing Israel the most. (Some scholars also draw connections between the book of Jonah and Acts 27; perhaps the Jonah narrative is part of Luke's biblical subtext for the Gentile mission, but if it is at all, it is not very prominent.)³⁰²

291. See, e.g., 'Abot R. Nat. 4 A; 8, §22 B; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 6:3; 16:7; 24:5; *b. Ber.* 15a; *Sanh.* 43b; *Gen. Rab.* 34:9; cf. *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.2. Cf. even eschatologically in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 9:12.

292. See esp. *Let. Aris.* 234; *Sir* 35:1–3 (32:1–3); *Wis* 3:6; cf. *Jdt* 16:16; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.137–39; *Sent. Sext.* 47; among Gentiles, cf. *Isoc. Ad Nic.* 20; *Porph. Marc.* 11.191–98; 16.278–81; cf. Stern, *Authors*, 1:8–11.

293. At Qumran, cf. CD XI, 21 (citing Prov 15:8; but cf. CD XI, 17–18); 1QS III, 4, 6–9, 11; VIII, 3; IX, 4–5; X, 6 (*terumah*); 4Q403 1 I, 39–40; Ps 154:10–11 (11QPs^a 154; cf. 5ApocSyr Ps 2, in *OTP* 2:619–21). Some contend that Essenes were even less comfortable with the temple than Josephus suggests (*Ant.* 18.19) and hence were compelled to develop the notion of spiritual sacrifice (Nolland, "Misleading Statement"; cf. Flusser, *Judaism*, 39–40, 43); certainly they emphasized law keeping more than temple sacrifices (cf. Arnaldich, "Sacerdocio"; Gärtner, *Temple*, 30, 44–46).

294. E.g., *Sib. Or.* 4.29–30; among Gentiles, *Heliod. Eth.* 10.9; especially among Pythagoreans (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.1, 31–32; 4.11; 5.25; 8.7; *Ep. Apoll.* 27; *Diog. Laert.* 8.1.22; *Iambl. V.P.* 11.54; 18.85; 24.108; 28.150). The few animal bones at Qumran do not indicate regular sacrifices there (Duhaime, "Remarques"; Laperousaz, "Dépôts"). Sanders, *Judaism*, 53, argues that Philo was wrong to suppose that Essenes were against animal sacrifices (*Good Person* 75), even though some people were. Heger, "Prayer," contends that the view that Essenes replaced sacrifice with prayer simply reads later rabbinic sentiments into the Qumran scrolls.

295. Some felt that deities desired less sacrifice or no sacrifice (*Dio Chrys. Or.* 13.35; *Lucian Dem.* 11; *Max. Tyre* 2.1–2; *Porph. Marc.* 17.282–84; *Pyth. Sent.* 20; for the composite Stoic position, cf. *Plut. Stoic Cont.* 6, *Mor.* 1034C; *Diog. Laert.* 7.1.119); others mocked sacrifice altogether (e.g., *Lucian Sacr.*).

296. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 348.

297. At least on the basis of Scripture; cf. 1 Sam 9:9; 1 Kgs 22:5; 2 Kgs 3:11; 22:13, 18; 2 Chr 18:4; 34:21, 26; Jer 21:2; 37:7; Ezek 20:1. Cf. perhaps 2 Bar. 34:1; but in this period, it was apparently more common to seek guidance through Scripture (cf. 1 Macc 3:48).

298. Cf. already 2 Kgs 1:2, 6, 16; *Jos. Ant.* 9.20, 26; for Israel's God, 2 Kgs 8:8; *Jos. Ant.* 9.88–89.

299. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 51, cites SIG³ 1173; *Ael. Arist. Or.* 2.83, 103; *Epid. inscr.* 48.

300. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 51, cites *Tac. Hist.* 4.81; *Suet. Vesp.* 7; *Dio Cass.* 65.8; *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 1.9; 4.1. For a twentieth-century example of a vision or dream leading someone to a church where the person was converted, see McGee, *People of Spirit*, 432.

301. Paul is a partial exception in Acts 9:4–5, but even there he needs further instruction and initiation (9:6). Reports of revelations to non-Christians today also often include sending to specified believers (e.g., Pankau and Siemon-Netto, "Revolution," 45).

302. Perhaps Luke knew that Paul later went to Spain (*Rom* 15:24, 28; *1 Clem.* 5.5–7; see comment on Spain at Acts 1:8), or thought of connections between Tarshish and Tarsus, but he never exploits these

The angel necessarily provides a way to locate Peter in the large city of Joppa (10:6). Just as Ananias's vision instructed him to find Saul at Judas's house on Straight Street (9:11), the angel provides Cornelius directions here (Simon the tanner's home, near the sea). That both individuals named in the vision are called Simon is probably not what a mere storyteller would create, but it reflects the reality that "Simeon," especially through its Greek analogue "Simon," was "the commonest male name by far in 1st-century Palestine."³⁰³ Identifying Simon by his trade would help a visitor to find him (especially if members of the trade lived in the same district, as was common; see comment on Acts 18:3), but it also invites Cornelius's humility if he cooperates, since tanners were not of high status anywhere in the Roman world (see comment on Acts 9:43).

That the house is by the sea fits the need of water for tanning and cleaning (see more detailed comment on this point at Acts 9:43), but it was not a necessary location and might possibly differentiate Simon's place from the Gentile tanning district (if it was located elsewhere; Joppa was predominantly Jewish in this period).³⁰⁴ Apart from its being near the sea, we cannot further specify its location today.³⁰⁵

IV. OBEYING THE ANGEL (10:7–8)

The centurion immediately obeyed the angel's orders—an obedience he would have learned well as part of Roman discipline (cf. Luke 7:8).³⁰⁶ (A connection with Roman discipline need not be in view specifically here, however, since all individuals in Acts obey their visions [e.g., Acts 9:11–17; 16:9–10; esp. 26:19]; but in this context some others question them [10:14; cf. 9:5, 13–14].) That Cornelius sends two servants is not surprising; messengers often traveled in pairs, when available, especially over significant distances.³⁰⁷ A third member increases safety, particularly given his training as a soldier, and especially if the journey will include a night.

The servants here are probably household slaves. On the money necessary to acquire them, see comment at Acts 10:2; for a discussion of slavery, including household slavery, see the excursus on slaves and slavery at Acts 12:13. Despite what we today recognize as the unjust inequity of the system, some masters and household slaves became very close (as in Luke 7:2–3).³⁰⁸ Well-treated servants on missions did not

connections. The term Tarshish appears twenty-eight or twenty-nine times in the OT, often for a distant and/or wealthy mercantile place; only two references are in Jonah.

303. Williams, "Names," 93. Haenchen, *Acts*, 347, opines that "Peter" is used to distinguish Simon from his host; although this might be true within the story world, Luke calls the apostle "Peter" far more often, a name that would have easily distinguished him. Thus it is not impossible that Luke includes "Simon" here from his oral source, although we cannot be certain at this remove. Cf. the first naming of "Paul" in a context with another "Paul" (Acts 13:7–9).

304. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 62, suggests that Luke mentions it to show that "Peter really had reached the ultimate border of Judaea."

305. The traditional site of Simon's home has a freshwater spring, useful for tanning, and the sea waves beat against its low wall (Abbott, *Acts*, 123); but were this site correct, the sea would likely have eroded it away long ago.

306. Centurions were expected to obey unquestioningly, and questioning invited a reprimand (Caesar *Gall. W.* 1.40). To the centurion's zeal to obey, Abbott, *Acts*, 125, compares receiving the kingdom like a child (Luke 18:17) and contrasts Naaman (2 Kgs 5:12).

307. On paired messengers, see, e.g., Gordon, *Near East*, 110; my comment on Acts 13:5. Witnesses might also travel in pairs (e.g., *y. Roš Haš.* 2:8, §4); some also preferred two travelers because of safety in numbers (the tradition attributed to R. Meir in *Eccl. Rab.* 4:9–10, §1).

308. E.g., Statius *Silv.* 2.6; cf. Philo *Decal.* 167. Some servants were said to prove extremely loyal, sometimes even at the risk or expense of their own lives (Appian *Hist. rom.* 7.1.2; 8.3.17; *Bell. civ.* 4.4.26; Val. Max. 6.8.1–4; Mart. *Epig.* 3.21; Suet. *Aug.* 16.3; Tac. *Hist.* 4.50)—though the reverse is much more difficult to attest (cf. sacrificing one's servants in Plut. *Alc.* 21.2–4). Emphasis on slave loyalty served the purposes of the elite who generated the texts (so Bradley, *Slaves*, 37).

usually run off, and Cornelius’s “household” seems to have shared his faith (Acts 10:2); he thus has little reason for concern about their simply deciding not to return, and this is not the likely reason for the soldier accompanying them.³⁰⁹

Just as centurions were expected to obey their superiors, whatever a centurion or other Roman officer commanded, soldiers were obligated to obey superiors out of obedience to Rome’s authority, which stood behind them (cf. Luke 7:8).³¹⁰ The presence of the soldier seems to suggest that Cornelius remained on active duty instead of being retired, but it is possible that the soldier was “a military orderly” who was “part of his household.”³¹¹ If other reasons are compelling for viewing Cornelius as retired (a matter of debate, as already noted), we should remember that most troops were from the area (see comment on Acts 10:2). It might therefore be possible for some to quarter in their own homes and others in other local homes,³¹² though this might be a breach of camp discipline.³¹³ It is also possible that the soldier is retired and maintains loyalty to his centurion (for some soldiers’ loyalty to their centurions, see, e.g., Tac. *Hist.* 2.60), that he is hired to work for him part-time (presumably with the knowledge and perhaps complicity of his superiors), or that he simply acts as a coreligionist.

Barrett allows that if Cornelius was retired, he “might have retained on a private basis the services of a soldier” who was also now only a reservist or retired;³¹⁴ he thinks that τῶν προσκαρτερούντων, “attending on him,” may suggest retirement.³¹⁵ One wonders why Cornelius would hire (or perhaps at least provide room and board for) a soldier when he already had servants,³¹⁶ but soldiers might be better qualified for guard duty,³¹⁷ and where labor was cheap, hiring a soldier for this role (instead of buying and feeding an additional slave) could make sense. Sending a soldier as a guard with those who would be traveling at night (on one reading of Luke’s chronology) would also make sense. But because Luke does not specify “the soldier who worked for him,” his language might imply that Cornelius had more than one at his disposal and chose a “pious” one who would be most disposed toward, and best perform, such a mission. We simply lack sufficient evidence for more than guesswork here. Correspondingly, we do not know the extent to which the soldier wears any military attire;³¹⁸ but in contrast to the troubles of a generation later, the appearance of a soldier traveling on the coastal plane at this time might inhibit rather than invite attack.

That the soldier is devout suggests a common bond between the two. Because centurions were responsible for discipline and could beat soldiers with vine staffs,

309. Some slaves, of course, did run off (e.g., Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.2.4.14; Verr. 2.1.33.85; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 66.2), but most who were trusted on their holders’ business did not do so (Cic. *Fam.* 13.45.1; Stambaugh, *City*, 149). See further discussion of slavery and escapes in the excursus at Acts 12:13.

310. On that passage, cf., e.g., Haslam, “Centurion.” One did, however, need to command individuals specifically rather than employ a general “Let someone do such-and-such” (see Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.49–50).

311. Witherington, *Acts*, 348.

312. This is a speculative proposal that may be either confirmed or refuted by concrete archaeological or literary data that I do not currently have available, but it on the whole seems more unlikely than probable.

313. We have reason to believe that discipline was not strictly enforced in Caesarea (*Ant.* 19.357–59, 365), but we lack sufficient information to be certain whether that would be the case here, or whether Luke could expect his audience to accept that possibility.

314. Barrett, *Acts*, 503.

315. *Ibid.*, 504 (comparing Demosth. *Neaer.* 120: “servants who remained . . . in employment”).

316. Unless their common piety, which is mentioned here, endeared this particular soldier to him, which is possible.

317. Cf. Pliny *Ep.* 10.19.1–2; but also cf. 10.20.1.

318. Presumably even if in service he would not be dressed in full battle gear (undoubtedly not carrying the heavy infantry shield and probably not even wearing a breastplate or helmet) or parade regalia, but probably would at the least wear his belt over his military tunic, with a weapon attached to the belt.

they were typically hated; in mutinies, centurions were sometimes assassinated.³¹⁹ That the two are coreligionists, however, probably suggests a friendlier relationship. The sending of these messengers may recall those sent to Peter in Acts 9:38.

3. No Longer Unclean: Peter's Vision (10:9–16)

Peter's vision emphasizes that Gentiles whom God has accepted are no longer unclean. Through paired visions (10:1–8; 10:9–16) and the Spirit's voice (10:19–20; 11:12), God persuades Peter to be his agent to Cornelius.³²⁰

a. Introduction

Just as Ananias and Paul received complementary visions (9:3–6, 10–16; esp. 9:12), so do Peter and Cornelius (10:3–6, 10–16). Complementary or doubled visions reinforce their validity,³²¹ when experienced by two different persons, such visions rule out error through a single individual's excessive subjectivity.³²² That the two events that Luke repeats three times in Acts each involve such complementary visions underlines his view of the events' importance for salvation history.³²³

A dramatic revelation, confirmed by circumstances and a matching revelation, thus provides a new grid for understanding God's plan for his people.³²⁴ Although later rabbis insisted that traditional interpretations took precedence over apparently divine interventions (such as miracles and heavenly voices),³²⁵ and even most Christians dared not let an experiential hermeneutic run amok (Gal 1:8; Col 2:18; 1 John 4:1–6; Rev 2:14, 20),³²⁶ duly confirmed revelations played a central role in readjusting the church's approach to biblical tradition. Further, later rabbis aside, most Jews (and others in antiquity) would undoubtedly have thought twice before contradicting an explicit voice from heaven. It is notable that Jesus is not mentioned in this revelation;³²⁷ Luke perhaps intends to avoid a Jewish observer skeptical about Jesus arguing, "The error of following Jesus leads to the error of embracing Gentiles." Instead, the wisdom of heeding God's revelation leads to both following Jesus and embracing Gentiles.

This account of sending Peter to a Gentile household is significant not only by virtue of its placement but also by virtue of its structure. Various call narratives in Acts

319. Le Bohec, "Disciplina," 538 (citing Tac. *Ann.* 1.17.4; 1.18.1; 1.23.3–4; 1.32.1).

320. For patristic and medieval reception of Acts 10:9–16, see the survey in Candiard, "Vision."

321. See Val. Max. 1.7.7; Horsley, *Documents*, 1:29–32, §6; Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 59–60 (citing Livy 8.6.8–16; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.55–59); Johnson, *Acts*, 182 (citing Ach. Tat. 4.1.4–8; Apul. *Metam.* 11.6, 13, 22); cf. Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 252; in the ancient Near East, see Gordon, *Near East*, 134, 139. See fully comment on Acts 9:10–16. MacDonald, *Imitate Homer*, 19–65, more narrowly compares the visions of Cornelius and Peter with *Iliad* 2, noting that the twin visions fit the dream and portent, with the motifs following the dream's sequence (55; on the dream and portent, 23–28). Although MacDonald argues for distinctive features in Homeric story found in Acts (56–64), I do not find these distinctive; such features as "command to the mortal" (60) are common in ancient texts, the sequencing fits what one would expect in any such revelatory report, and we have closer examples of paired visions in antiquity.

322. Cf., e.g., Val. Max. 1.6.3; 1.7.3; Exod 4:27–28; Judg 7:10–14.

323. Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 111–13, thinks this vision Luke's own composition. But while Luke makes good use of it, visionary experiences are known in early Christianity (2 Cor 12:1–4), and the content here is much more specific than in Cornelius's vision; we cannot therefore be sure that Luke lacks tradition here.

324. Cf. Alexander, "This Is That," on the flexible hermeneutic here. Tyson, "Coming to Dinner," thinks that Peter or others claimed that a heavenly voice authorized him to decide about food purity.

325. So, e.g., R. Joshua in *b. B. Mešī'a* 59b; *y. Mo'ed Qaṭ.* 3:1, §6.

326. What Peter already knows of God's will creates cognitive dissonance with the new revelation, a tension between sources of authority gradually resolved in the narrative (and James's biblical argument in Acts 15:15–18; see further Brown, "Resonance Perspective").

327. Unless implied in Peter's "Lord" in Acts 10:14; but given the wider use of the title in Acts, this is unclear.

reflect characteristics of OT commissioning accounts (e.g., Acts 26:16–18), but this one may include more elements characteristic of OT accounts than the others. One scholar finds here several discrete elements typical of OT commissioning accounts:³²⁸

1. Introduction (10:9–10a)
2. Confrontation (10:10b–12)
3. Commission proper (10:13)
4. Protest (10:14)
(commission repeated, 10:15–16)
5. Reaction (10:17a)
6. Commission (10:19–20)³²⁹
7. Reassurance (10:20)
8. Conclusion (10:21–23)

Whether Luke patterns the narrative in all respects after OT commissioning accounts may be debated, but the narrative here does follow the frequent OT pattern of protesting one's call or commission (Exod 3:11–4:13; Judg 6:15; Jer 1:6; cf. Isa 6:5). Peter's protest against eating unclean food in Acts 10:14 especially echoes that of Ezekiel in Ezek 4:14, though here the protest is against a specific command, not a general commission. (In the Ezekiel text, unlike here, God makes a concession, replacing human dung with cow's dung as fuel [4:15].) That God commissions Peter (whom Paul recognizes as an apostle to Jews, Gal 2:7–8) to go to the Gentiles here fits Luke's theme of underlining the continuity between the Jewish and the Gentile missions (cf. Acts 9:15).³³⁰

What had Peter learned (Acts 10:33–34)? Tannehill argues that Peter already knew that Gentiles could be saved (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2:39; 3:25–26); what he learns in this passage is that they are not unclean (Acts 10:28; 15:9). By removing this social barrier to table fellowship with Gentiles, God makes possible mission to the Gentiles.³³¹ Even in Lev 11, the purpose of the kashrut was at least partly to separate Israel from the nations (11:44–45).³³² Gentiles regularly complained about Jews' unwillingness to eat with Gentiles,³³³ a primary reason for which was the desire to avoid *κοινοφωγία*, eating unclean food.³³⁴ The invitation to eat thus develops the theme of table fellowship found in the Gospel,³³⁵ just as the church's hostile response (Acts 11:3) reflects that of the Pharisees in the Gospel (Luke 5:30; 15:2).

328. Hubbard, "Commissioning Accounts," 188–89 (finding three full commissioning accounts in the Gospel, only this one in Acts, and only this one including all seven elements).

329. A different one than in Acts 10:13, but with the same point.

330. Cf. Refoulé, "Discours de Pierre."

331. Tannehill, *Acts*, 134–37.

332. On this purpose, see deSilva, *Honor*, 260–62, 264, 273, and esp. 280 (developing esp. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*; idem, "Abominations"). Gentiles viewed Jews' sitting apart at meals as hateful separatism (Tac. *Hist.* 5.5); some Egyptians thought that Jewish food habits were constructed against those of Egyptians (Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.239). Hellenistic Jewish apologists presented the purpose of the food laws as self-mastery (see Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 60–61).

333. Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*, 139, cites Diod. Sic. 34.1; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.258; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.33; Justin (Marcus Junianus Justinus) *Historiae Philippicae* 36.2; Tac. *Hist.* 5.5. Jos. *Asen.* 7:1 presents eating with Egyptians as an abomination to a pious Jew (reversing Gen 43:32). Jos. *Ant.* 11.346 complains that Judeans wishing to "eat unclean food" defected to the Samaritans.

334. Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*, 139. Although the Seleucids in Judea imported Rhodian wine, the observant Hasmonians seem to have regarded foreign wine as impure (Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 79), and many near Jerusalem may have gone to special lengths to preserve the purity of wine and oil (if the interpretation of Adler, "Adjacent," is correct).

335. See, e.g., Neyrey, "Ceremonies," 378.

b. The Setting (10:9–10)

Peter receives his vision during prayer at noon on the rooftop. Each of these features is significant. This was no secretive experience in Peter's sleep at night, which would be more readily questioned (see comment on Acts 26:26); it was in the brightness of day (cf. comment on Acts 26:13) and in a public location—that is, on a rooftop (Luke 12:3). Most of all, the vision comes during the prayer to God, both offering a model regarding the importance of prayer and vindicating this significant vision against charges of spiritual unreliability.

I. REVELATION AT NOON (10:9)

Like Cornelius (Acts 10:30), Peter receives his vision while in prayer. In contrast to the ninth hour in 10:3, noon was not a fixed prayer time.³³⁶ Rather, it was a time for rest³³⁷ and food (10:10).³³⁸ Peter is not fasting (10:10), but he uses part of this siesta time³³⁹ for prayer while others prepare the food. This prayer outside the fixed times fits the apostolic schedule of prayer along with ministry of the word (6:4); Peter clearly spent much of his time in prayer (cf. the behavior of “the pious of earlier times” in *b. Ber.* 32b, bar.).

That this vision occurred when Cornelius's messengers were drawing near the city (Acts 10:9) provides another example of providential timing (as in 8:29–30; 9:9–12). The noon revelation connects Peter's vision of mission to the Gentiles with that of Paul (26:13, 16–18; cf. 22:6, 10) and probably Philip's call to evangelize the first Gentile (8:26). Such midday revelations (balancing nocturnal ones, such as 16:9; 18:9; 23:11; 27:23) in broad daylight might help Luke guard against accusations of Christian claims being about false or immoral things hidden from public view (see comment on Acts 26:26). Perhaps the emphasis is also on the preacher's willingness to go at an unusual and difficult (hot) time of day.³⁴⁰

Noon was also not a usual time for travel (10:9; see comment on Acts 8:26); but neither was departure on the same day after the ninth hour (10:3)—that is, 3:00 p.m. (A messenger needing to leave might grow anxious close to 4:00 p.m., as in Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 1.3.9; it would be difficult to go far before nightfall.)³⁴¹ Since the messengers are near the city, it makes more sense to continue than to seek shade outside, but in view of Acts 26:13 (where Paul was approaching Damascus), noon travel may be one way Luke can depict the urgency of a mission (cf. another way in Luke 10:4, end).

Although Luke's audience probably would not know the distance the messengers traveled, the distance would also suggest haste to any readers who might have been familiar with the distances, as Luke himself likely was.³⁴² From sometime after 3:00 p.m. (Acts

336. See Jeremias, *Prayers*, 79; Haenchen, *Acts*, 347. Some mention the possibility that it functioned as an optional and third hour (citing Ps 55:17; Dan 6:10; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 114; Dunn, *Acts*, 136–37).

337. E.g., Polyb. 9.17.3; Sil. It. 13.637–38; Plut. *Themist.* 30.1; Heliod. *Eth.* 4.8; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 1.13; Philost. *Hrk.* 11.7; 16.3; 2 Sam 4:5. See further documentation at Acts 26:13.

338. E.g., Suet. *Claud.* 34.2; Alciph. *Paras.* 1 (Trechedeipnus to Lopadecthambus), 3.4, ¶1; cf. 1 Kgs 20:16. See further documentation at Acts 26:13. Some other commentators also recognize the connection with dinner (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 81; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 454).

339. Cf., e.g., Suet. *Vesp.* 21; *Vit. Aes.* 6; on siestas, see further comment on Acts 26:13. Normally, however, the siesta was after lunch rather than before it (several hours in *Test. Ab.* 5:2 A).

340. Even in winter, the coastal plain would not be cool like Jerusalem. Spencer, *Acts*, 112, finds symbolic significance in midday's being the brightest point, fitting an enlightening vision (cf. Acts 9:3); the connection is especially logical in 26:13 (cf. light in 26:13, 18, 23), though Luke does not employ narrative symbolism as much as John (John 3:2, 19–21; 11:10 with 13:30).

341. Cf. John 1:39, where 4:00 p.m. is too late and hence requires hospitality so that the disciples can spend the night (Morris, *John*, 157; Keener, *John*, 470–71).

342. Luke seems to know, and probably traveled, this route to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15–17); he also presumably remained in or near Caesarea for up to two years (23:23, 33; 24:27; cf. 21:18; 27:1). The coastal road was easy to travel (cf. *Lam. Rab.* 3:9, §3, on the road between Lydda and Jerusalem).

10:3) to roughly noon the next day was a relatively brief time to cover roughly thirty miles.³⁴³ It was not, however, impossible “for a Roman soldier who is used to marching, and able-bodied slaves.”³⁴⁴ A mission urgent enough to send them out after 3:00 p.m. might well have entailed traveling even after sundown,³⁴⁵ though this was done under only the most urgent of circumstances (cf. Acts 23:31; Luke 24:29). On the other hand, some scholars argue that the “next day” refers to the day after the messengers started, not the day after Cornelius’s vision.³⁴⁶ This would allow the same rate of travel as in Acts 10:23–24 and makes better sense of the four days in 10:30. It does not appear the most natural way to take Luke’s words here (cf. Origen *Cels.* 2.1) but is possible (perhaps especially on the historical level) in view of his frequent abbreviating technique.

II. HOUSETOPS (10:9)

Palestinian homes had flat roofs, which were sometimes leveled by pushing back and forth a flat stone with a long handle, or a log.³⁴⁷ Rooftops served various purposes, such as drying vegetables or storing items (Josh 2:6),³⁴⁸ drying washed or dyed textiles,³⁴⁹ sleeping (1 Sam 9:26; cf. Tob 9:9–10),³⁵⁰ eating,³⁵¹ recreation and obtaining a better view (2 Sam 11:2; 18:24; cf. Dan 4:29; Jos. *Ant.* 6.49), and talking with neighbors (Luke 12:3;³⁵² private conversation in 1 Sam 9:25; cf. mourning in Isa 15:3; Jer 48:38).³⁵³ Although Luke transforms the roof of earlier Jesus tradition (Mark 2:4) to fit his northern Mediterranean setting,³⁵⁴ changing the tradition here would prove too problematic.

Excavations show that many poor houses had “inadequate ventilation and tiny windows” whereas rooftops offered “privacy and . . . cooler temperatures.”³⁵⁵ Some scholars envision an awning for shade that would keep the site cool,³⁵⁶ arguing that it would be too hot otherwise.³⁵⁷ This suggestion is fairly likely for the hotter summer

343. Bock, *Acts*, 387, has 31 mi.

344. Hengel, “Geography of Palestine,” 62, who cites a 45-mi. march in twenty-eight hours (with three hours’ rest for night) in Caesar *Gall. W.* 7.40–41; 27 mi. in one night (despite harsh conditions) in Plut. *M. Ant.* 47.2; the 42 mi. from Sebaste to Jerusalem in a day (Jos. *Ant.* 15.293; cf. *Life* 266–70).

345. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 347: “The messengers walk throughout the night (with, of course, pauses for rest).”

346. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 114; C. Williams, *Acts*, 135; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 81.

347. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 558 (noting that rainwater went into the gutters). Galilean homes could be small, clustered around courtyards (Goodman, *State*, 30–31); a Judean tanner’s home by the sea might be more independent and spacious. Rabbi Meir counted homes as a common domain for purposes of calculating Sabbath travel, when roofs of the same height adjoined each other, but the sages disagreed (*m. Erub.* 9:1). On the simple construction of village roofs, see, e.g., Evans, *World*, 13–14 (regarding Nazareth); for the strength of roofs to support weight, see Cotter, *Miracle Stories*, 98–100, and sources she cites.

348. See, e.g., *b. Beṣah* 26b; *Meg.* 28a; *B. Qam.* 29a; *Šabb.* 45a; *Menah.* 86a. Cf. drying grapes in the sun (Aelian *Farmers* 1 [Euthycomides to Blepaeus]); for drying olives, see Goodman, *State*, 31. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 559, cites *t. Ma’aš.* 2:9 (drying figs on the roof), 10 (eating them there), 19 (storing onions, dried figs, or carobs there); *t. Šeb.* 1:12 (growing aloes there).

349. Stambaugh, *City*, 152.

350. Cf. celebration of booths there (Neh 8:16; 11QT XLIV, 7); but it was not usually comfortable (Prov 25:24; cf. 21:9).

351. See *t. Pesah.* 6:11; perhaps relevant here (Acts 10:10).

352. Probably visiting neighbors or others is also implied in the parapet of Deut 22:8; 11QT LXV, 6.

353. Sometimes house roofs were joined, “creating, as still seen in Mediterranean cities, a separate domain above the street, despite the frequent lack of solidarity underfoot” (Goodman, *State*, 31).

354. Luke’s “tiles” fit northern Mediterranean roofs (Luke 5:19) but not the story (such a roof would probably collapse; cf. Aristoph. *Clouds* 1486–89).

355. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 83; cf. perhaps Judg 3:20–25, though this is not a roof but an upper room (ὑπερφῶν, as in Acts 9:37, 39; for roof chambers, see also 3Q15 X, 1; 11QT XXXI, 6–7).

356. Haenchen, *Acts*, 347; Hanson, *Acts*, 121. Perhaps in this case it would consist of tanners’ leather (Blauklock, *Acts*, 95).

357. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 114.

months, but the heat might be more appreciated in the cool of fall or winter.³⁵⁸ It was believed that fishermen, unlike some other people, were well inured to the heat of the sun and warmed themselves by it on the decks of their boats;³⁵⁹ this is perhaps relevant for Peter (Luke 5:2–3).

Thus one could be found on a rooftop for various reasons (Luke 17:31).³⁶⁰ But one important use was for worship or prayer if occasion or disposition so warranted,³⁶¹ though not always to the true God (2 Kgs 23:12; 2 Chr 28:4; Jer 19:13; 32:29; Zeph 1:5). People also apparently used roofs for Torah study.³⁶² With houses built adjacent to one another in most cities (though we cannot be sure that this fits Simon's house "near the sea"), most afforded little privacy.³⁶³ Simon's might be larger than average (and its odor might have spaced other homes farther than average), but given Peter's presence, it probably also had more visitors than most (cf. perhaps Acts 10:23), and the roof might afford an opportunity for more private prayer, a practice he could have learned from Jesus (cf. Luke 4:42; 6:12; 9:28; 22:41; for learning from Jesus's prayer, cf. 11:1).

One could ascend to the roof by means of a ladder (*t. Erub.* 7:10; *y. Erub.* 9:1), but Palestinian homes frequently had an external staircase (Mark 13:15).³⁶⁴ Spencer suggests that the Lord here "exposes hypocrisy on a rooftop," as promised in Luke 11:37–12:3, but here "not of the Pharisees, . . . but of his own leading apostle!"³⁶⁵ Whether Luke's mention of the housetop evokes all the nuances of this precise allusion, however (he also employs the term in Luke 5:19; 17:31), is unclear. What is clear is that Peter's vision will be meant for public disclosure. If whatever is heard in inner rooms is proclaimed on housetops (Luke 12:3), how much more what is heard on a housetop.

III. TRANCE BEFORE LUNCH (10:10)

The term for "hungry" (πρόσπεινος) is a biblical hapax legomenon and extremely rare in extant literature; it appears once in a sixth-century quotation (Aëtius Amidenus p. 74, 26) of a first-century C.E. medical writer (Demosthenes Ophthalmicus; BDAG), which coheres with traditions about the author being a physician if (as we think likely) other grounds exist for the identification.³⁶⁶ The shared use by itself would not, however, indicate that the term is a specifically medical one. Yet even if the

358. See Le Cornu, *Acts*, 559. Winter rains would not prevent urgent travel between Caesarea and Joppa, though this would not be the ideal traveling season.

359. Alciop. *Fish.* 15 (Nausibius to Prynnaeus), 1.12, ¶¶2–3; cf. Luke 5:2–3.

360. Used for urban warfare against aggressors below in Xen. *Anab.* 5.2.22–23; Thucyd. 2.4.2; Jos. *Ant.* 13.138, 140; cf. 14.459; *War* 4.25–28.

361. *B. Ketub.* 104a; *y. Ta'an.* 1:4, §1; 3:8, §2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:18; cf. *Jdt* 8:5. Sarah so employs her upper chamber (ὑπερφῶν) in Tob 3:17, though this was not a roof (also Dan 6:10). Probably most rabbis would have disapproved a standing posture for prayer on the roof (cf. *t. Ber.* 3:17). Lane, *Mark*, 470, also affirms that roofs were often used for prayer. Some scholars have suggested that the roof could be used here because the tanner's house was unclean (cf. Nodet, "Humanity"); it may have been unclean (see comment on Acts 9:43), but purists might respond that Peter was already unclean by his residence there or that the roof was itself unclean.

362. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 559, cites, e.g., *m. Erub.* 10:3; *Šabb.* 5b; perhaps *b. Yoma* 75b (where one apparently hears a child reading Scripture). See also *b. Erub.* 97b.

363. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem*, 29; Goodman, *State*, 30–31; Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*, 153; Lewis, *Life*, 65, 67; for cities of the empire in general, see MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 63, 68; Jeffers, *World*, 68–69. Moreover, villages and towns in the Galilean countryside often lay close together (Goodman, *State*, 29; Horsley, *Galilee*, 190).

364. See Jeffers, *World*, 68; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 83; on stairs to a roof, see also 11QT XLII, 7–10. These roofs typically consisted of beams crossed by smaller pieces of wood, then covered with branches and finally clay (Jeffers, *World*, 68)—not the Greek sort that Luke expects his audience to assume (Luke 5:19, in contrast to Mark 2:4).

365. Spencer, *Acts*, 112.

366. C. Williams, *Acts*, 135; esp. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 217 (citing the doctor Demosthenes in Aëtius Amidenus 7.33).

term is a technical one, Luke's audience would grasp the import from the related and frequent verb πεινάω in view of the rest of the sentence (he wanted to eat). Peter's hunger is a very human trait, perhaps unusual for divine men but not for other heroic protagonists;³⁶⁷ certainly Luke found it acceptable even for the Lord (Luke 4:2).

Noon was also a natural time for hunger, given the frequent pattern of eating then after a hard and full morning of work.³⁶⁸ The midday meal tended to be light, often ending at noon but starting roughly an hour earlier;³⁶⁹ if Peter has not eaten, he will naturally be hungry. That others were preparing the meal could refer to the meeting of his needs in Simon's home by local Christians, or women in Simon's family (cf. Luke 4:39; 10:40), or both working in concert.³⁷⁰ Sharing meals was a common form of hospitality central to early Christians' fellowship together (Acts 2:42, 46). Although Palestinian homes often had fire pits in the floor for cooking or heating, poor ventilation in homes often invited the use of ovens in the outdoor courtyard when it was not the rainy season;³⁷¹ either could be in view here.

If the meal was being prepared before the unexpected guests arrived, and the home provided them lodging (10:23a), the food that was already prepared would probably be shared (especially after the vision in 10:10–16), or all would wait until more food was prepared. In any case, Peter would not eat it without his guests eating, whether they ate together or separately. Gentile guests would lack the sort of dietary restrictions Jews observed.

Although Luke can use ἔκστασις in its more common sense, for astonishment (Luke 5:26; Acts 3:10; cf. Mark 5:42; 16:8), he also employs it for Paul's vision in Acts 22:17, as here (10:10; 11:5). The language undoubtedly alludes to foundational visions earlier in Israel's history and prehistory (Gen 15:12; cf. 2:21).³⁷² It provides an example of the visions and dreams promised in Acts 2:17. Because Peter saw the heavens opened (10:11; cf. Luke 3:21; Acts 7:56), this may be the sort of vision said to be experienced with eyes open (Num 24:4, 16; possibly *1 En.* 1:2).³⁷³ (On "ecstasy," see excursus on prophecy at Acts 2:17–18.)

c. The Vision (10:11–16)

Peter sees a sheet let down from heaven with a "mixed bag" of animals, apparently both clean and unclean. Although the heavenly voice orders Peter to slaughter and consume the food God has provided, Peter objects; it violates his understanding of

367. Ancient narratives sometimes portrayed even deities as hungry (cf. Ovid *Metam.* 6.366, where Latona loses hunger temporarily only because of anger). Exhaustion indicates mortality (Plut. *Table* 8.1.3, *Mor.* 717F, on Alexander; cf. Plut. *Flatt.* 25, *Mor.* 65F). Plutarch portrays Lysimachus's surrender because of thirst as a sign of weakness (*S. Kings*, Lysimachus 1, *Mor.* 183E; cf. Char. *Chaer.* 3.3.17). Rabbis felt that one should avoid interruptions to prayer or study, however (*m. 'Ab.* 3:7; *t. Ber.* 3:20; *b. Ber.* 32b–33a, bar.; *Exod. Rab.* 9:3; cf. *t. Ber.* 2:6).

368. E.g., Alciph. *Paras.* 1 (Trechedeipnus to Lopadecthambus), 3.4, ¶1; see also Stambaugh, *City*, 200 (citing Plut. *Mor.* 726E). Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 115, knew the Roman custom but were uncertain of evidence in the East. See fuller note above on Acts 10:9.

369. Smith, *Symposium*, 20–21; cf. Sallares, "Meals" (earlier Greek and contemporary Roman meals occurred about midday).

370. For culinary diversity, see discussion on cookbooks in Gutsfeld, "Dishes"; but such diversity depended on wealth (cf. Acts 3:6). A distinguished guest might require special care at noon (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.26).

371. Jeffers, *World*, 68; Safrai, "Home," 733 (citing *m. Ned.* 5:1; cf. *Kelim* 5:1). If the latter is in view, it would presumably need to be far enough from, or shielded from, winds from the sea.

372. Hobart, *Medical Language*, 41, compares the use in medical writers, but it is hardly limited to them (cf. the cognate verb in 2 Cor 5:13; some twenty-seven times in the LXX; eighteen times in Philo; also Jos. *Ant.* 17.247). Philo construes the LXX use in Gen 2:21 as a trance (*Alleg. Interp.* 2.31; *Heir* 257); naturally also the case with Abraham (*Heir* 249, 258, 263); for the prophets, see *Heir* 265.

373. This interpretation of *1 En.* 1:2 works better with Isaac's translation (p. 13) than with Knibb's (p. 57).

Scripture, another source of God's word. God is insistent, creating a conflict that the narrative afterward resolves.

I. A SHEET FROM HEAVEN (10:11)

Explanations of Peter's experience vary. Some ancients expected to experience divine revelation only during contemplation of the perfect realm beyond the heavens (Max. Tyre 11.10). Some modern interpreters prefer psychologizing explanations—namely, that the proposed awning or the ships' sails offshore provided a basis for Peter's vision of the sheet.³⁷⁴ It is not impossible that such sights provided a stimulus for the visual effects in his trance, but such stimuli are hardly necessary; they are unavailable for comment in most visions in Acts or elsewhere (and hence are not necessary to the experience) and in any case were not part of Luke's point.

Likewise, one could attribute the diverse array of potential meat to Peter's hunger, but animals are common in apocalyptic visions, where they often symbolize various nations.³⁷⁵ Dogs, which were unclean, might symbolize Gentiles³⁷⁶ or other oppressors³⁷⁷ or wicked persons,³⁷⁸ and ancient thinkers (especially Gentiles) used "beasts" (including "dogs")³⁷⁹ for unthinking, irrational people led by their passions.³⁸⁰ (For

374. Listed as "not impossible" by Barrett, *Acts*, 506; mentioned with perhaps greater skepticism by Bruce, *Commentary*, 218. Ship's apparatus, including gear (cf. Acts 27:17) and sails, could be called σκεῦος (BDAG cites, e.g., Arrian *Peripl.* 5.2); more important, a sail was often called an ὀθόνη (BDAG lists, e.g., Lucian *Z. Rants* 46; *True Story* 2, 38; *Test. Zeb.* 6:2; *Mart. Pol.* 15.2); linen was used for both sails and theater awnings (Pekridou-Gorecki, "Linen," 620; for sails, Schneider, "Rigging," 593), though a tanner might have animal hides for awnings (Blaklock, *Acts*, 95). A fisherman would be quite familiar with sail scenes. But Luke offers merely a simile, in any case (on which figure see Anderson, *Glossary*, 38, citing Demet. *Style* 80, 89, 160, 273; on broader comparisons, cf. Anderson, *Glossary*, 79–81). One might also connect the tanners' setting for animal hides (Acts 9:43; 10:6) with the command to slay the animals, but Peter's use is to be for food, not the animals' hide. If anything, the "linen" would connect with Jesus's resurrection (cf. the cognate term in Luke 24:12; the tradition appears also in John 19:40; 20:5–7) or signify the value of the setting (Jos. *Ant.* 5.290; 12.117).

375. E.g., Dan 7:3–8; 1 En. 89–90; 4 Ezra 11:39–40; Rev 9:3–10; 13:2; cf. Ford, "Animal Symbolism." Bede *Comm. Acts* 10.12 (Martin, *Acts*, 127) construed the animals as all nations. Animals stand for Israel's righteous in 1QpHab XII, 4 but for wicked Gentile rulers in 4QpNah (= 4Q169) 3 + 4 I, 1–6, 9 (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 563). For animal symbolism in Zoroastrianism (e.g., reptiles, insects, and various other "evil" creatures), see Moazami, "Evil Animals"; for a range of figurative uses in biblical prophets, see Klingbeil, "Animal Imagery." Cf. the figurative individual use in Gen 49:8, 14, 17, 21, 22, 27; *L.A.B.* 24:6.

376. Although, *pace* some commentators (Beare, *Philippians*, 103; Brandon, *Zealots*, 172–73; Theissen, *Gospels*, 62n1), this is not well attested in specific early Jewish sources (Abrahams, *Studies* [2], 195; Johnston, "Interpretations," 596; Vermes, *Religion*, 89). Manson, *Sayings*, 174, cites esp. 1 En. 89:10, 42–43, 46–47, 49; 90:4, though dogs are merely one animal among many here and are mentioned ad hoc (cf. 3 Bar. 3:3); for some other scant references, cf. *t. Beṣah* 2:6; Smith, *Parallels*, 167; on associations with Rome, cf. Hayward, "Pseudo-Jonathan."

377. Pss 22:16; 59:6, 14.

378. E.g., *Exod. Rab.* 9:2. Cf. their association with sexual immorality in *y. Ta'an.* 1:6, §8; *Gen. Rab.* 36:7; Rev 22:15 (though there were good dogs, e.g., *y. Ter.* 8:7; see Keener, *John*, 804; Schwartz, "Dogs"). Miller, "Dogs," points out positive OT uses (such as Job 30:1).

379. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 18B, p. 116.14; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 77/78.29; Plut. *Bride* 7, *Mor.* 139B; cf. Lucian *Book-Coll.* 30. "Dog" was a familiar insult, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 8.527; 9.373; 11.362; 20.449; 22.345; *Od.* 17.248; 22.35; Callim. *Hymns* 6 (to Demeter), line 63; cf. the female derivative in Hom. *Od.* 11.424; 18.338; 19.91. For its application to Cynics, see comment at Acts 14. They were associated with anger (Callim. *Minor Poems* 380), immorality (Theophr. *Char.* 28.3; Plut. *Bride* 7, *Mor.* 139B), uncleanness (Mart. *Epig.* 1.83), lack of bowel control (Phaedrus 4.19), and attachment to dung and sniffing other dogs' rear ends (1.27.10–11; 4.19); more commonly they were linked with birds as scavengers that devoured unburied corpses (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 17.127, 255, 272; 22.42–43, 66–70, 335–36, 339, 348, 353; 23.21, 183–87; 24.211, 411; *Od.* 3.258–60; 21.363–64; 22.476; Eurip. *Phoen.* 1650; Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.8.72; Lucan *C.W.* 7.829). Cf. further comment in Keener, *Matthew*, 416–17.

380. E.g., Lysias *Or.* 2.19, §192; Xen. *Hiero* 7.3; *Mem.* 2.3.4; *Rhet. Alex.* pref. 1420ab.4–5; Dion. Hal. *Epid.* 2.262; Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 22.63; *Mil.* 12.32; 31.85; *Pis.* 1.1; *Sest.* 7.16; Philod. *Crit. frg.* 52.2–3; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 95.31; 103.2; Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 78.27–29; 14, p. 92.21–22; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.9.3, 5; 4.1.127; 4.5.21; Plut. *Cic.* 46.4;

the example of wolves, see comment on Acts 20:29.) But apocalyptic usage of animal images in general is far more relevant for understanding Peter's Jewish vision than would be any one of these specific Jewish metaphoric examples noted above.

The "heaven" or "heavens" opening is common in visions or revelations of God (Acts 7:56)³⁸¹ because heaven was associated with the dwelling place of God (cf. Luke 6:23; 10:20; 12:33; 18:22; 22:43; Acts 2:2; 7:49; 11:9–10), of the exalted Jesus (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:10–11; 2:34; 3:21; 7:55–56; 9:3; 22:6), and of angels (Luke 2:15; 15:7; 22:43); sometimes it was even a surrogate name for God (15:18, 21; 20:4–5; cf. 18:13).³⁸² Thus both Jesus (3:21) and Stephen (Acts 7:56) experienced the heavens opened. That something related to the "unclean" Gentile mission would descend from "heaven" might surprise Peter more than it would the repeated hearer of Luke-Acts; the Spirit supporting the Gentile mission came from heaven (Luke 3:22), and fire on non-Jews, desired by Galilean nationalists, would not (9:54).

The "vessel" (σκεῦος, Acts 10:11, 16; 11:5) might allude to Paul's mission to the Gentiles, since he is described as a "vessel" in 9:15,³⁸³ but the term is appropriate for (among other items) culinary receptacles,³⁸⁴ and the long-range Gentile mission is hardly limited to Paul. The great sheet (ὀθόνην μεγάλην) might evoke a tablecloth³⁸⁵ (though the LXX never uses this term; cf. Num 4:7; Isa 21:5). The use of tablecloths is well documented in Coptic Christian Egypt³⁸⁶ and in medieval Europe of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.³⁸⁷ I have not, however, found extensive literary evidence in Mediterranean antiquity;³⁸⁸ perhaps this stems from the perishable character of cloth and the lesser attention given in literature to the low and comparatively small tables used beside diners' couches.³⁸⁹ (Still, we know of expensive tabletops with

Statecraft 5, *Mor.* 802E; *R. Col. 2, Mor.* 1108D; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 8.14–15, 21; 32.26, 62; Max. Tyre 15.2; 33.7–8; Diogenes *Ep.* 28; Marc. Aur. 3.16; 4.16, 28; Porph. *Marc.* 29.463–65; Eunapius *Lives* 472; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.2; 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Pet 2:12; cf. Plato *Prot.* 324B; Plut. *Demosth.* 26.4; 4 Macc 14:14, 18; 4 Ezra 8:30; tyrants in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.30; 4 Macc 12:13; cf. also Malherbe, "Beasts" (on hedonists). Animals lack much reason (Polyb. 6.6.4; Cic. *Fin.* 2.14.45; 2.33.109–10; *Tusc.* 1.33.80; *Off.* 1.4.11; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.8, pp. 52–53.3–4; Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 403, §137D; Max. Tyre 6.1–4; for some reason, cf. Mossman, "Plutarch on Animals") and rhetorical ability (Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 379, §126D; 398, §135D; *Panath.* 2, 150D); the bodily element of humans is the part shared with animals (Epict. *Diatr.* 1.3.7, 9; Max. Tyre 7.5; 33.7–8; *Sipre Deut.* 306.28.2).

381. See Ezek 1:1; Luke 3:21–22; Mark 1:11; Matt 3:16; John 1:51; Rev 4:1; 11:19; 15:5; 19:11; 4Q213 1 I, 18; 3 Macc 6:18; 2 Bar. 22:1; *Test. Levi* 2:6; 5:1; *Test. Ab.* 7:3 A; *L.A.E.* 35:2; *Jos. Asen.* 14:2/3; 3 *En.* 31:2; cf. 1 *En.* 14:15; Lentzen-Deis, "Motiv."

382. E.g., Dan 4:26; 1QM XII, 5; 1 *En.* 6:2; 13:8; 83:9; 3 Macc 4:21; Rom 1:18; Diod. Sic. 40.3.4; cf. *m. 'Ab.* 1:3; *t. B. Qam.* 7:5; *Sipra Behuq.* pq. 6.267.2.1; *Sipre Deut.* 79.1.1; 96.2.2; *b. Ta' an.* 14b; *Pesah.* 66b; *'Abod. Zar.* 18a, bar.; *Mo'ed Qat.* 17a; *B. Qam.* 76a; *Nid.* 45a; *Num. Rab.* 7:5; *Ruth Rab.* 7:1; *Ecl. Rab.* 7:8, §1; 7:27, §1; 9:12. "Received into heaven" (10:16) could echo Jesus's exaltation but probably reflects not so much analogy as Luke's style for depicting anything returning to heaven.

383. The apostle to the Gentiles also was "let down" in a basket in Acts 9:25—perhaps viewed by some of his detractors as a dishonorable escape, just as this food is viewed as dishonorable. But any connection (as with Luke 5:19) is tantalizingly weak.

384. See BDAG (for containers of various kinds, including culinary ones, citing, e.g., Aristoph. *Thesm.* 402; Xen. *Mem.* 1.7.5; Aelian *Var. hist.* 12.8; Hdn. 6.7.7; *Jos. Ant.* 7.106; 8.89).

385. Later rabbis used the image of a "set table" with respect to how Moses should explain God's judgments (Exod 21:1; Spero, "Judgments"). Unless this notion was widespread, though, we could not expect Luke to know or allude to it.

386. California Academy of Sciences, <http://www.calacademy.org/research/anthropology/coptic/coptic/Coptweav.htm> (updated May 3, 2004; accessed May 5, 2004; apparently since discontinued). On Coptic textiles in general, see Rutschowskaya et al., "Textiles"; Carroll, *Looms* (for tablecloths, esp. as evidenced in art, see 9).

387. Pritchard, "Textiles," 366–69.

388. The reference (*mappas*) in Pliny E. *N.H.* 19.4.19 is not to tablecloths in the modern sense but to table napkins. Its use may be taken for granted in *m. Šabb.* 21:3.

389. Cf. Carcopino, *Life*, 34; on the low, shared dining tables, cf. Jeffers, *World*, 39; Smith, *Symposium*, 26; Dupont, *Life*, 98–99 (these are in Diaspora settings, but Judeans also shared tables; cf. *m. 'Ab.* 3:3). Even in dry areas, we often have only fragments of fabric from excavations (cf., e.g., Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 136–37).

decorated edges, for example, in wealthy areas of pre-70 Jerusalem.³⁹⁰ Expensive tables might suggest covers.)³⁹¹ We do know that some of the wealthiest households in late antiquity used purple table covers as well as couch covers;³⁹² undoubtedly, less exotic table covers existed as well. But the sheet need not be a tablecloth.

The sheet's "four corners," conjoined with ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, might represent the universality of all peoples.³⁹³ Although this association is not impossible, it is probably safest to see it simply as reflecting the quadrilateral character of most sheets (cf. Deut 22:12).³⁹⁴ Although Peter is on the roof, not the ground per se, "earth" belongs with the verb, not with the corners.

II. A MIXTURE OF ANIMALS (10:12)

Luke uses biblical idiom, such as "birds of the air," representing the LXX's "birds of heaven" (more than forty times combined with "creeping things" in summaries of creation, Gen 1:20, 26, 28, 30; and of a destructive reversal of creation, Gen 6:7; 7:23; Hos 2:12, 18; 4:3; Ezek 38:20). Likewise, the LXX often defines "creepers" (ἐρπετὰ) or (more often) "beasts" (θηρία, Acts 11:6) as "of earth."³⁹⁵ Lists of animals often appear together, though the three listed here appear in Rom 1:23, the only other NT use of τετράπους.³⁹⁶

Some Gentiles, especially Egyptians (Rom 1:23; see comment on Acts 7:41), were thought to worship such creatures. But God creates all these things (Gen 1:20–30); God then plans to destroy them (6:7; 7:21, 23) but brings representatives of all of them together in the ark (6:7, 19–20; 7:14; 8:1, 17–19). These representatives include both clean and unclean (7:2, 8), though only the clean could be sacrificed (8:20; hence the extra in 7:2).³⁹⁷ Given the pervasive use of this language in the Noah narratives of Genesis, the location of Simon's house as near the sea (Acts 10:6, 32) might possibly support in the sheet from heaven an allusion to Noah's ark.³⁹⁸ Noah was, after all, considered the common ancestor of Jews and Gentiles (see comment on Noahide laws at Acts 15:20). This allusion might be lost on much of Luke's audience, however, and perhaps is even too much to expect from Luke himself; at the very least, the vivid LXX language might recall God's sovereignty and concern for all creatures, as well as Levitical purity considerations.

390. Killebrew, "Furniture," 360. Most of the scarce furniture surviving from ancient Greek and Roman homes is elegant (Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 102); for expensive tables, cf., e.g., Hom. *Od.* 10.354; 15.137; Hdt. *Hist.* 1.181.5; Aristotle *Oec.* 1353b.20; Strabo 15.3.7; b. *Šabb.* 119a; *Ketub.* 67b; 77b; *Ta'an.* 25a.

391. Nevertheless, even expensive tables may not have had them; cf., e.g., Ovid *Ars.* 1.638.

392. Croom, *Clothing*, 27 (citing Amm. Marc. 26.8.8; elsewhere one reads 16.8.8; cf. linen cloths of some sort in 30.1.22). For couch covers, see, e.g., Catullus *Carm.* 64.

393. Cf. Isa 11:12; Rev 7:1; 20:8; *Test. Ash.* 7:3/2; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 39:10. Some church fathers compared these to four corners of the earth (e.g., Bede *Comm. Acts* 10.11B; Arator *Acts* 1; Aug. *Serm.* 203.3 [all in Martin, *Acts*, 126–27]). If we associate ἀρχαῖς with "rulers," one could even think of Judaism's "four kingdoms" over Israel, but Luke's sense of the term as simply "corners" appears elsewhere (BDAG offers Hdt. 4.60; Diod. Sic. 1.35.10).

394. Some might be tempted to associate the four corners with those of the prayer shawl (Jewish tunics had four corners with tassels, Croom, *Clothing*, 131), but in Peter's day, the tzitzit were attached to regular garments, not specifically a tallit; the tallit was not yet connected specifically with prayer (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 562).

395. Acts 11:6 adds "beasts" to the list in 10:12, making a fourfold formula there, with "of the earth" moved back to the first element. The LXX frequently lists "beasts" with "birds" and "creepers"; see LXX Gen 1:30; 7:14, 21; 8:1, 17, 19; Ps 148:10; Hos 2:14, 20; 4:3; Ezek 38:20.

396. This similarity may be coincidental; τετράπους appears more often in the LXX, and Jas 3:7 lists birds, creepers, and "beasts" (as in Acts 11:6) without τετράπους. Haenchen, *Acts*, 348, thinks that the similarity "shows that such lists were customary."

397. Rules identifying animals clean for consumption may be related to animals clean for sacrifice (Houston, "Foods," 330–31).

398. Selwyn, *Peter*, 333, thinks that Peter's vision recalled Noah's flood and came to be associated with baptism. The term for "cloth" was often used for sails, though as we have noted, this usage is not decisive.

More important, the appearance of “all” animals in the sheet probably suggests that they cannot be limited to either clean or unclean.³⁹⁹ But some, at least, must be unclean (certainly the ἐρπετὰ),⁴⁰⁰ which explains Peter’s reticence to eat them. The other, clean animals are not necessarily irrelevant either. It is probably not that Peter does not know how to butcher them in a kosher manner, in contrast to his tanner host; this ignorance would seem strange for a fisherman.⁴⁰¹ But if clean animals are present, their mixture with the unclean might seem to contaminate them for a strict observer of kashrut.⁴⁰²

Jewish people had preferred death to eating “common” (κοινά) food (1 Macc 1:62; cf. Dan 1:8–16; priests in Jos. *Life* 14).⁴⁰³ They were to abstain from Gentile pollutions (4 Bar. 7:37), and some later rabbis cited instances of judgment due to eating Gentiles’ foods (*Song Rab.* 7:8, §1).⁴⁰⁴ Avoiding table fellowship with Gentiles was a major issue (see comment on Acts 10:23; 11:3); Gentiles also viewed it as a sign of separatism and hatred of humanity.⁴⁰⁵ Jewish people protested that their separation (χωρισμός, “division”) from particular foods did not keep them from being good citizens, against those who claimed that it made them haters of humanity or disloyal (3 Macc 3:3–7, esp. 3:4, 7).

That Jews avoided pork, for example, was widely known (and derided)⁴⁰⁶ and diverged greatly from standard practice among most Gentiles⁴⁰⁷ (though there were exceptions).⁴⁰⁸

399. Witherington, *Acts*, 349; contrast Marshall, *Acts*, 185 (who suggests that all were probably unclean). Cf. the gathering of both clean and unclean animals into the ark (Gen 7:8–9).

400. For their uncleanness, see Lev 11:20–21, 23, 29, 31, 41–44; 20:25; 22:5; Deut 14:19; yet they were among God’s good creations (Gen 1:20–21, 24–26, 30), useful for humans (1:26, 28).

401. That is not to imply that fish are present. Haenchen, *Acts*, 348, notes that fish are unmentioned and would be difficult to contain in the sheet.

402. Cf. *b. Nid.* 4a; Lev 7:19; 11:32; but cf. limits in *m. Zebah.* 11:8. Certainly anything touching their carcasses became unclean (Lev 11:24–25, 27–28, 31–38); an unclean person makes clean food unclean (*b. Zebah.* 106a; cf. *Hag.* 24a). What Egyptian priests regarded as defiling to eat they also avoided touching (Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 199); some cults required abstention from touching pigs (Diod. Sic. 5.62.5; Hdn. 5.6.6).

403. The application of κοινός to foods represents a distinctively Jewish usage (so Jewett, *Romans*, 859).

404. The strictest may have even avoided eating with menstruants (*t. Šabb.* 1:14, R. Simeon ben Eleazar, citing a much older rule), although it is difficult to see how the majority of Palestinian Jews, with one-room homes, could have avoided this.

405. E.g., Tac. *Hist.* 5.4–5; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.33; cf. Cic. *Flacc.* 28.69; see comment on Acts 16:20.

406. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.22.4 (cf. 1.11.12–13); Plut. *Table* 4.4.4, *Mor.* 669C; Juv. *Sat.* 6.160; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 2.137; Leary, “Pork and Proselytes”; Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 39; Sanders, *Figure*, 37; Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 73–80; Gager, *Anti-Semitism*, 57; Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*, 136–39. In Plut. *Table* 4.5, *Mor.* 669E–671C, Gentiles debate the reasons for Jewish abstention; the thought of consulting someone Jewish seems not to have occurred to them. Jewish texts also address avoidance of pig (e.g., *Sipra* A.M. *pq.* 13.194.2.11), even in magical texts (*PGM* 4.3079–81); some scholars suggest original health associations with the prohibition (Albright, *Yahweh*, 177–78). Pig bones have turned up in excavations from later Sepphoris (Groh, “Jews and Christians,” 89); but these could come from Gentiles (like those at Masada, Zias, “Bones”), and such bones are missing in pre-70 strata (Reed, “Contributions,” 53). (Dionysiac imagery in Sepphoris stems from the late second or early third century C.E.; see, e.g., Dunbabin, “Dionysus.”) Pig remains are also missing from pre-70 Jerusalem (Bar-Oz et al., “Garbage”). Jewish practice of kashrut remained known in later centuries (e.g., Qur’an 6.147) and perhaps influential (16.115).

407. E.g., Ananius frg. 5; Alciph. *Farm.* 29 (Comarchides to Euchaetes), 3.73, ¶1; Athen. *Deipn.* 9.376D; 9.396B; 14.655F–656B; especially in Rome, King, “Diet”; MacKinnon, “Hog.” “Clean” foods in Lev 11 mostly corresponded to the diet in Bronze and Iron Age Palestine, except for pork (though even that declined; Houston, “Foods,” 330). In sacrifices to particular deities, see, e.g., Phaedrus 5.4.1; Guthrie, *Orpheus*, 154 (citing Aristotle. *Peace* 1.372); Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 202; among Hittites, *ANET* 351; Moyer, “Purity,” 96, 127.

408. Some other Eastern peoples also avoided pork (Jeffers, *World*, 41; Hesse, “Pigs”; cf. Carpenter, “Deuteronomy,” 477), including Phoenicians (Hdn. 5.6.6), perhaps some Syrians (Lucian *Syr.* G. 54), and Egyptian priests (Hdt. 2.47; Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 3.223; Plut. *Isis* 5, *Mor.* 352F, 353F; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.141; Lewis, *Life*, 131; *ANET* 10); cf. pigs’ uncleanness among Hittites in *ANET* 209; Moyer, “Practices,” 29; idem, “Purity,” 106. Somehow, however, it appears that Jewish abstainers remained more notorious and ridiculed than others, except perhaps Egyptians.

Jews would rather die than eat pig's flesh, it was thought;⁴⁰⁹ they also saw no difference, Juvenal complains, between eating pork and cannibalism (*Sat.* 14.98–99). Some anti-Semites forced Jews to eat pork or face torment.⁴¹⁰

Most Diaspora Jews observed food laws;⁴¹¹ other peoples would hardly have ridiculed Jews for this practice otherwise. The Diaspora therefore must have had kosher butchers;⁴¹² although only the smallest fraction of evidence from antiquity has survived, one may be known from Rome as early as the third or fourth century.⁴¹³ In the early second century, Christians themselves were supposed to have recognized some foods as forbidden (whether these were Jewish believers keeping kosher or, more probably, whether it indicates wider acceptance of the short list of demands of Acts 15:20).⁴¹⁴ Some other cults,⁴¹⁵ sects,⁴¹⁶ and peoples⁴¹⁷ also had special food regulations. Some of these groups influenced other persons not belonging to the group.⁴¹⁸ Given the Hellenistic intellectual milieu, however, groups had to justify their taboos or risk appearing superstitious to outsiders.⁴¹⁹

Some Jewish people debated among themselves whether there was a higher moral significance to the laws and what this significance was.⁴²⁰ Philo kept the food laws

409. Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.223.

410. E.g., Philo *Flacc.* 96; cf. 4 Macc 5:2, 6; 6:15; cf. carrion meat in *y. Sanh.* 3:5, §2. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 24–25, notes that particularly pious Jews often avoided nonkosher food at great cost (Jos. *Life* 13–14; *War* 2.143–44); see earlier, e.g., 2 Macc 5:27; 7:1; Josephus's interpretation of Dan 1:8 (avoiding animal food, *Ant.* 10.190).

411. So Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.282; see also evidence in Trebilco, *Communities*, 18. Conservative Judeans, however, might suspect them of idolatry because they attended Gentile banquets, though bringing their own food and drink (*t. 'Abod. Zar.* 4:6; cf. *Tob* 1:10).

412. Rome accommodated Jewish customs even in Jews' various enclaves (Winter, *Left Corinth*, 288–93).

413. Williams, "Bubularius."

414. Lucian *Peregr.* 16.

415. E.g., garlic in Cybele's cult (Athen. *Deipn.* 10.422D); temporary meat abstinence for a magical ritual (PGM 4.52–55); various foods for priests of Isis (Apul. *Metam.* 11.21; Plut. *Isis* 2, *Mor.* 351F). Pigs were used in some cults' sacrifices (Klauck, *Context*, 99; Aune, "Religion," 920; Manetho *Aeg. frg.* 81 [from Aelian *Nat. An.* 10.16]) but were kept away from some cults (Diod. Sic. 5.62.5; Sil. It. 3.22–23). Different cults preferred different animals (Aune, "Religion," 920; Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.220–22); e.g., the cow was sacred to Isis (Diod. Sic. 1.11.4).

416. Most notably Pythagoreans, who avoided especially meat and beans, Diod. Sic. 10.6.1; Plut. *Eating Fl.* 1.1, *Mor.* 993A; Lucian *Dial. D.* 415 (6/20, Menippus and Aeacus 3); *Phil. Sale* 6; *Cock* 4–5, 18; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.1, 8, 21; 6.10–11; 8.5, 7; *Ep. Apoll.* 8, 43, 84; Iambl. *V.P.* 16.68–69; 24.106–9; 30.186; Diog. Laert. 8.1.12–13, 19, 24; cf. Iambl. *V.P.* 21.97–98; 32.226 (in Iambl. *V.P.* 31.191, 193–94, they preferred death to harming beans). Cf. Grant, "Dietary Laws," comparing most Pythagoreans, Jews, and Christians. Some others also taught vegetarianism (Edwards and Reasoner, "Rome," 1015; Ovid *Metam.* 15.72–73, 75–110, 453–78; Orphics in Linforth, *Arts of Orpheus*, 263; Guthrie, *Orpheus*, 16–17, 197, 201), at least as a preference (Mus. Ruf. 18A, p. 112.19–23). For the diversity of philosophic preferences, cf., e.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 20.9.19; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 95.25; for Cynics' usual rejection of dietary restrictions (despite their simple diet), see Downing, *Cynics*, 114–15.

417. E.g., Britons (Caesar *Gall. W.* 5.12); Romans (Plut. *Rom. Q.* 21, *Mor.* 268E, avoiding woodpeckers); Libyans (Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.223, avoiding sheep); Egyptians (abstaining from some kinds of fish, Plut. *Isis* 7, *Mor.* 353C; Gane, "Leviticus," 300, notes that most traditional Egyptian restrictions varied locally); Syrians, avoiding fish (Diod. Sic. 2.4.3; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.8) and doves (Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.223); Indians (avoiding meat, Hdt. 3.100); Assyrians (*ANET* 391); perhaps not Hittites (Moyer, "Purity," 110). On varying cultural tastes, see, e.g., Aeschylus *Suppl.* 761. Cf. discussion in Schedl, *History*, 2:186. For food restrictions also among peoples today, see, e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 65, 164, 169; Luzbetak, *Church and Cultures*, 74–75; Boyer, "Folk Psychiatry," 409; Schmidt, "Psychiatry," 144; Fuchs, "Techniques," 133 (holy persons); Umeh, *Dibia*, 129 (avoiding "some European foods"); Turner, *Drums*, 174 (for particular rituals); Ndofunso, "Prayer," 594 (pig and monkey, among Kimbanguists influenced by Scripture).

418. E.g., Romans in a state of holiness (Plut. *Rom. Q.* 95, *Mor.* 286D) and Pythagoreans (see above) avoided legumes; the practice might ultimately go back to Egyptian priests (Plut. *Isis* 5, *Mor.* 352F).

419. Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 434.

420. Cf., e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 75.2.1. Cf. the private view attributed to Luke's contemporary Johanan ben Zakkai (but reported much later) in Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 142; Flusser, *Sage*, 38 (surprisingly similar to Mark 7:14–23).

literally but found in them allegorical significance that led to higher moral behavior.⁴²¹ Nor was Philo the first Alexandrian Jew to think in these terms.⁴²² (Luke, in any case, has inherited a tradition in which even Pharisees were spiritually impure; Luke 11:39–42, 44.) For food offered to idols, see comment on Acts 15:20.

III. GOD'S COMMAND TO EAT (10:13)

While others prepare Peter's midday meal (Acts 10:10), God offers him food from heaven whose uncleanness is (especially given its heavenly origin) utterly shocking. Peter's hunger (10:10) was mentioned probably not to provide a psychological explanation for the vision⁴²³ (which probably would not have occurred to most ancient hearers) but to emphasize the piety of his resistance to the idea of eating nonkosher food in 10:14.⁴²⁴

The voice is presumably like the rabbinic *bat qol* and its earlier analogies, though certainly God spoke often enough in Scripture (including in visions; see fuller comment on Acts 9:4). The command to "get up" fits a common pattern in revelations (e.g., 9:11; see comment on Acts 9:4).⁴²⁵ The command to "kill and eat" might be construed in a cultic manner;⁴²⁶ although sacrifice might not be—and priestly butchering certainly is not—in view in Luke 15:23, 27, 30, this idea is present in Luke 22:7 (though dependent on Mark 14:12); Acts 14:13, 18 (cf. also 1 Cor 5:7; 10:20; not in Matt 22:4; John 10:10). The conjunction of killing and eating is usually sacrificial in the LXX (Gen 31:54; Exod 34:15; Deut 12:15, 21; 27:7; 1 Kgs 19:21; Hos 8:13).⁴²⁷ Yet it also can simply refer to gaiety in feasting (Isa 22:13) and seems to have this sense in the only other conjunction of the terms in Luke-Acts (Luke 15:23).⁴²⁸ But regardless of how Peter might kill the animals, genuinely eating them would be difficult;⁴²⁹ no provision exists here for cooking.⁴³⁰ Peter stays with a tanner (Acts 9:43; 10:6), who would have other use for animals; Peter's use here, however, is to be as food.

IV. PETER'S RELUCTANCE (10:14)

Peter's initial resistance to God's summons (10:14) resembles Ananias's objection concerning Saul (9:13–14) but contrasts with Cornelius's immediate obedience (10:7).⁴³¹ Luke is not portraying Peter as disobedient (cf. the apostles' misunderstanding-

421. See Philo *Spec. Laws* 4.100–118; Rhodes, "Diet"; Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 273. Philo was critical of extreme allegorizers (*Migr.* 89–93; Hay, "Extremism"). Pigs were thought unable to control their sexual appetite (*Xen. Mem.* 1.2.30).

422. See *Let. Aris.* 128–29, 147 (cf. 223); cf. *Test. Ash.* 2:9–10. Some scholars think that the *Letter of Aristeas* reflects Pythagorean influence (Berthelot, "Interprétation symbolique"). Some ancients also allegorized regulations concerning Isis's priests (which included food rules; see Plut. *Isis* 4, *Mor.* 352DE).

423. Pilch, *Visions*, 9, notes the effect of sensory deprivation (see comment on Acts 13:2 for fasting and revelations); note also the noonday heat here and in 26:13 (but balanced by the mention of nocturnal visions, 16:9; 18:9). In Luke's theology, God authors natural conditions, so natural elements would not preclude divine revelation; dreams are from the Spirit of prophecy (Acts 2:17).

424. The warning against eating before prayer times (presumably to avoid praying late; from *m. Šabb.* 1:2 in Le Cornu, *Acts*, 561) might be relevant if widespread, but it may be isolated.

425. Some (e.g., Gaventa, *Acts*, 166) instead contrast this command with Peter's command to Aeneas and Tabitha (Acts 9:34, 40), who, unlike him, are ready to obey.

426. By itself, killing might in a Roman setting evoke the slaughter of animals in the arena for public entertainment (on which, see, e.g., Lindström, "Animals"), but conjoined with eating—the emphasis here regarding unclean foods—it must mean more than this.

427. For a suggested allusion to Deut 12:13–27, see Dion, "Vision de Pierre." 1 Sam 14:34 is not cultic.

428. Most (e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 81; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 455; pace Barrett) doubt cultic connotations here.

429. Food would be consumed without benefit of forks, which may not predate the Middle Ages (Baratte, "Cutlery"; but cf. the possibility of a few in Baratte, "Table Utensils").

430. Abbott, *Acts*, 125.

431. Park, "Barriers," also notes the paired visions of chs. 9 and 10 and underlines the resistance to the second vision in each.

ing in 1:6–7); rather, the apostle (like Ezekiel in Ezek 4:14) has scriptural reservations.⁴³² (Thus, after the clear word of Acts 10:20, he does obey immediately, 10:21.) Peter is thinking of Lev 11, not Ezek 4; for Luke and his audience, however, Peter's words echo Ezek 4:14.⁴³³ As God instructed the prophet-priest to eat food that contravened the normally acceptable diet, God could do the same with his apostle.

Some scholars have plausibly argued that the "common" (as opposed to the "unclean") animals may refer to the normally clean kinds, here rendered impure by their contact with the unclean ones.⁴³⁴ (Thus the "common" animals could represent Jews defiled by contact with "impure" Gentiles.)⁴³⁵ The vision might concern both groups, but the terms are synonymous on a popular level, where *κοινός* can mean what is "unclean" (1 Macc 1:47, 62; Jos. *Ant.* 3.181; 11.346; 12.320).⁴³⁶ Some early Christians also employed the term this way (Mark 7:2, 5; Rom 14:14; Heb 10:29; Rev 21:27); most significantly, Peter uses the term this way later in the same context (Acts 10:28, along with "unclean"). His application to Gentiles whom God "cleansed" (15:8–9) (and to whom he gave the Spirit, 10:47) renders any real distinction between the adjectives unlikely.⁴³⁷

Luke portrays Peter here, like Mary (Luke 2:21–24) and Paul (Acts 18:18), as a pious and faithful Jew, at least regarding ritual practice. In the Gospel, Peter also functions as an example of the motif of sinners responding to Jesus (Luke 5:8), but that portrayal involved his heart (and was provoked by awe, 5:9), not dietary regulations. To approximate Peter's revulsion, we might think of foods accepted in some cultures but revolting in our own, then add to this revulsion religious scruples as well.

V. GOD'S RESPONSE (10:15–16)

The voice, correcting Peter's inappropriate attitude, commands him to stop regarding as common what God has cleansed (Acts 10:15).⁴³⁸ This passage should probably be included among the early Christian texts that challenged the necessity of kashrut, at least for the Gentiles (Mark 7:18–19; probably Rom 14:2–3; Col 2:21–22; 1 Tim 4:3; Heb 13:9).⁴³⁹ Some scholars cite a later Jewish tradition about the cleansing of

432. Gaventa, *Acts*, 166, compares Ananias's also objecting to God's plan (Acts 9:13). Peter does seem more adamant than Ananias, however.

433. As commonly noted, e.g., Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:127; Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 264; Longenecker, *Acts*, 183; Kistemaker, *Acts*, 379.

434. House, "Defilement by Association"; Witherington, *Acts*, 350. "Common" sometimes simply means "public" as opposed to private (2 Macc 4:5; 15:6; Men. Rhet. 1.1, 331.6), developing the idea of something shared together (e.g., Sir 50:17; 2 Macc 8:29; 9:21; 10:8; 12:4; 15:36; 3 Macc 2:33; 4:4; 7:17; 4 Macc 3:21); it need not signify uncleanness in creation (Wis 7:3; Sir 18:1). Kilgallen, "Acceptable," distinguishes "clean" from "saved"; see comment below.

435. Parsons, "Defiled AND Unclean," emphasizing the conjunction; also Smith, "Refutation"; idem, "Function of Refutation," 112.

436. Johnson, *Acts*, 184 (also noting the use in *Let. Aris.* 315 for "profane" people); Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 455; deSilva, *Honor*, 285–86n5.

437. DeSilva, *Honor*, 286n5.

438. That the negation of the present imperative means to stop what he is doing, as often, is clear here; cf. Acts 18:9; 20:10; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 218. With the juxtaposition of "purified" and "impure/common," Parsons, *Acts*, 146, compares rhetorical *commutatio* (*Rhet. Her.* 4.28.39).

439. These claims seem to stem from Jesus's teaching, the relevance of which was probably discovered in the context of the Gentile mission (cf. 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 2:12–14), rather than specific exegesis of the OT. Mark 7:15 is undoubtedly authentic (see Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, 239–49), though initially construed only as relativizing, rather than abrogating, food laws (241, 245–45). Though Matthew must have respected Mark's orthodoxy (he reproduces most of his material), he did not find Mark's explicit application relevant for his own Jewish audience (Matt 15:17–18; cf. Keener, *Matthew*, 413–14). Later Gentile Christians widely believed that NT teaching abolished the distinction between clean and unclean foods; see, e.g., Chrys. *Hom. Rom.* 25; Novatian *Jewish Foods* 5.6; Diodore of Tarsus, on Rom 14:14, in *Pauluskommentare* 110 (all in Bray, *Romans*, 346).

unclean animals in the world to come, as they were clean before Noah's day;⁴⁴⁰ this tradition is probably too late to constitute background for this text, however.⁴⁴¹

The primary point, in any case, is not the cleansing of foods but the cleansing of people who eat them (Acts 10:28).⁴⁴² Not calling foods impure in context refers to not calling Gentiles impure,⁴⁴³ but there is a reason that the image for Gentiles involves cuisine.⁴⁴⁴ The image of pure foods represents the Gentiles in two ways. First, because ancient moralists used the language of external "purity" also for the soul and moral behavior,⁴⁴⁵ the analogy between "pure" foods and pure people was a natural one.⁴⁴⁶ But second, table fellowship between Jew and Gentile was a major factor in emphasizing Gentiles' impure status. Food purity is related to the basis for table fellowship with Gentiles (cf. esp. 15:20, 29) and is an important issue in Peter's interaction with Cornelius, at least from the perspective of its critics within the Jerusalem church (11:3). Both in Rom 14:2–23 (in the entire context of Romans) and in Mark 7:19 (if closely related to its following context), the debate over pure foods also addresses the welcoming of Gentiles into the Jesus movement.

Part of the original purpose of the kashrut was separation (Lev 11:44); various nations had their own respective food customs (see comment above on Acts 10:12). Acts 10 does not forbid the usefulness of kashrut for Jews, but it forbids making food rules (except the minor ones in Acts 15:20, 29) a basis for eating together.

Not all Gentiles are included in "what God cleansed"—only those "cleansed" (15:9) and "set apart, made holy" (26:17–18) by faith. Some scholars regard the cleansing here as ritual cleansing preliminary to receiving the gospel (10:28), distinct from the cleansing of conversion (11:14; 15:9).⁴⁴⁷ It might, however, refer to cleansing at conversion, followed by table fellowship (10:48). Most likely Luke employs the image

440. Witherington, *Acts*, 350. See *Midr. Pss.* 146:7 (in Davies, *Torah*, 57–58; also Le Cornu, *Acts*, 579, though [probably rightly] not seeing that as the background here). Another later tradition claims that no meat coming from heaven can be unclean (*b. Sanh.* 59b in Le Cornu, *Acts*, 563). But in Noah's day, cf. already Gen 7:2, 8; 8:20.

441. The entire theme of adaptations in the Torah in the eschatological era (e.g., Davies, *Torah*, 70–74, citing, e.g., *Tg. Isa.* 12:3; *Eccl. Rab.* 2:1; 12:1; *Tg. Song* 5:10; *Yal. Isa.* 26) is mainly late and rare (Schäfer, "Torah"; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:297–302, 309; Barth, "Law," 154–56; Keener, *John*, 358–59).

442. For the focus on people rather than on foods, cf. Miller, "Vision."

443. That is, the unfolding narrative interprets the imagery in a manner distinct from the way one might construe it taken by itself, with reference exclusively to food (see the discussion in Humphrey, "Collision," 80–82, contrasting [82] the more explicit technique of angelic interpretation in apocalyptic; also Humphrey, *Voice*, 76–79). Noting the conflict otherwise with Acts 15:20, Wahlen, "Visions," argues that the vision applies to people and *not* to food; the Jerusalem church may have so applied it in Cornelius's case.

444. Marshall, "Acts," 578, does think that God has also cleansed foods (with Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:339; and Hübner, *Theologie*, 3:132, though the latter's view that God was annulling much of the Mosaic law might not have occurred to Peter, who may think in terms of God making provision for Gentiles without retracting the appropriateness of food customs in another setting).

445. E.g., *Mus. Ruf.* 3, p. 40.17, 28; 4, p. 44.25; 16, p. 104.35; 18B, p. 118.4–5; *Epict. Diatr.* 4.11.3, 5; 11.8; *Encheir.* 33.6, 8; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5b.12, pp. 26–27.20–21; *Men. Rhet.* 2.10, 416.7–8; *Iambl. V.P.* 16.70; *Philost. Hrk.* 7.3; *Porph. Marc.* 11.204; 15.255–56; 24.374–76 (cf. also 23.368; 24.374–76; 26.402–3); *Test. Reub.* 6:1. This is not to suggest that ancient Judaism simply conflated ritual and moral impurity (see Himmelfarb, "Impurity and Sin"); Klawans, "Purity," 283, argues that only Qumran, in fact, identified the two (and [275] that the rabbis normally distinguished impurity from sin). On purity in ancient Judaism more generally, see, e.g., essays in Haber, *Purify*.

446. Cf. also "pure" and light foods that keep the soul "pure" and light, hence reader to ascend to the heavens (*Mus. Ruf.* 18A, p. 112.27–28; see the context in pp. 112.11–114.8).

447. Cf. Dunn, *Baptism*, 79–80. Kilgallen, "Acceptable," distinguishes "unclean" (Acts 10:28), "acceptable to God" (10:35), and "saved" (11:14), so that all are clean without all being saved; but if 15:9 speaks of the same kind of cleansing, it speaks against this interpretation. Menzies, *Empowered*, 217, suggests that "cleansing" in 15:9 represents conversion but is distinct from the subsequent Spirit reception (15:8). See comment on each of these verses.

imprecisely to straddle both concepts: Peter should already treat them as potentially pure, although the actual cleansing comes through faith (15:9).

Various explanations could be offered for why the vision is repeated three times (10:16); is it repeated once for each of the three visitors (10:7; cf. 11:10–11)? More plausibly, does it match Peter's three denials, with Peter again resisting God's purpose (Luke 22:34, 61)? Most likely (though not necessarily incompatibly with the previous suggestions) it is repeated three times for emphasis, like the accounts of Cornelius's and Paul's conversions (Acts 9:1–11:18; 15:7–9; 22:6–21; 26:10–18).⁴⁴⁸ Dreams could be repeated for emphasis (Gen 40:1–8). The "vessel" (σκεῦος) here is the sheet or table cloth, so to speak; "vessel" is a generic term that Luke employs in various ways (Luke 8:16; 17:31; Acts 9:15; 27:17), though regularly for this object (Acts 10:11, 16; 11:5).⁴⁴⁹

4. The Apostle and the Occupier Meet (10:17–33)

After much divine arrangement, the apostle meets the representative of Rome—from a typical Judean or Galilean perspective, a representative of the occupying power. Surmounting his view that Gentiles are unclean, Peter welcomes Cornelius's hospitality.

a. Welcoming the Gentiles (10:17–23)

Luke devotes nearly as much space to Peter meeting and providing lodging for Cornelius's agents (10:17–23) as to Cornelius's (10:1–8) or Peter's (10:9–16) visions. This section of the narrative is essential because it portrays Peter's understanding of and obedience to the vision, what appeared (certainly in retrospect) a major turning point for the church's multiethnic future.

I. GENTILES ARRIVE (10:17–18)

Peter's perplexity in 10:17 is not an unusual response to a vision (cf. Luke 1:12, 29).⁴⁵⁰ Luke elsewhere employs the specific term used here for perplexity (διαπορέω) for overwhelming astonishment at miracles, elsewhere attributed to unbelievers or outsiders (Luke 9:7; Acts 2:12; 5:24).⁴⁵¹ As Gaventa points out, Luke rhetorically emphasizes the pivotal character of the event by a series of words in their intensive forms: "greatly puzzled" (*diaporeō*), "asking" (*dierōtaō*), "thinking" (*dienthumeō*), and "hesitation" (*diakrinomai*) all bear the same intensive prefix (*dia*).⁴⁵²

Because people of related trades often lived in the same districts, tanners normally lived outside or at the edge of a city,⁴⁵³ and the angel had specified "by the sea"; the

448. Triplets were widely used in rhetoric (Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 473); Dunn, *Perspective*, 115, also notes their prominence in oral storytelling; cf. Proclus *Poet.* 6.2, K171.1–5 on Homeric triple repetition. The idea that repetition of a voice twice represents an evil spirit but three times an angel (*L.A.B.* 53:4, referring to 1 Sam 3:4, 6, 8; cf. the superstition of pairs in rabbinic literature, *b. Pesah.* 110a, bar.; *B. Meši'a* 86a; *Qidd.* 29b; perhaps broader in Virg. *Ecl.* 8.75) is not relevant to Luke's worldview (cf. Acts 9:4).

449. It could evoke a Levitical usage if the context demanded (e.g., Exod 25:39; 27:3; 30:27–28; 31:8; 35:13–16, 22; 37:16; 38:3; 39:33, 36, 38, 40; 40:9–10; Lev 6:28; 8:11; 11:32–33; 1 Kgs 7:51; 2 Chr 4:16; 36:19; Ezra 1:6–11; Dan 5:2, 23), one of its commonest OT uses, but its use in the LXX (267 times) is also generic.

450. E.g., *1 En.* 90:42, though there it is because of what appears to be bad news.

451. Elsewhere in earliest Christian texts, only in the visionary text *Herm.* 79.5–6, though ἀπορέω (as in Acts 25:20), which sometimes bears a similar meaning, is more common (I count nine uses).

452. Gaventa, *Acts*, 167. A single case might represent Koine inattention to form, but four examples are clearly rhetorically significant.

453. See Rohrbaugh, "Pre-industrial City," 135, 145 (citing Sjöberg, *Preindustrial City*, 97–100). Jewish tanners might work separately from Gentile ones, but Joppa was predominantly Jewish in this period.

messengers, who had been nearing the city about noon (Acts 10:9), probably located the neighborhood quickly. After that, it was most natural to request directions (see comment on Acts 9:11).⁴⁵⁴ Given that Simon was a tanner, odor might have also aided their quest.

The gate may suggest a house of considerable means (see comment on Acts 12:13), able to provide the apostle sufficient hospitality and care (cf. Luke 10:5–7). A location by the sea (or one that produced unpleasant odors) may have allowed for more space than in the heart of Caesarea’s business districts anyway, but Simon may have acquired some means. Less likely, this might represent a gate to “a craftsman’s quarters”⁴⁵⁵ (with the residence behind or above the workplace) or perhaps even a business district or a street entered by a gate. Although complete strangers might not enter unannounced anyway, this might be especially true if a soldier was in attendance (Acts 10:7). It was respectful to stand outside (Deut 24:10–11); the messengers enter only once invited (Acts 10:23).

We cannot be certain whether the Gentiles asked if Peter lodged there (10:18) because they had some doubt about their instructions (cf. 10:6), because directions other locals had offered had been uncertain, because Simon was such a common name that they needed to be sure that they had the right house, because Peter might have moved on since the revelation,⁴⁵⁶ or because this was a polite, nonthreatening way to ask if they might see him.⁴⁵⁷ The term for “inquire” here (ἐπυνθάνοντο) is characteristically Lukan (Luke 15:26; 18:36; Acts 4:7; 10:29; 21:33; 23:19–20, 34), appearing only three other times in the NT, twice in the Apostolic Fathers (*Barn.* 13.2; *Diogn.* 1.1), and a few more times in the LXX (esp. in Maccabean literature, 2 Macc 3:9; 3 Macc 1:13; 5:18, 27; 4 Macc 9:27; 11:13).

II. GOD ENDORSES THE GUESTS (10:19–21)

Now the Spirit (Acts 10:19), the direct and normal agent of divine revelation (2:17–18; cf. 16:7; probably 19:21) and prompter of the Gentile mission (1:8), provides the interpretation for Peter’s vision. The unclean animals that God cleansed represent these Gentiles. In claiming that he has sent them, God claims responsibility for them.⁴⁵⁸

Sometimes those who went to inquire of oracles found that their mission was already known (cf. 1 Sam 9:19–20; Plut. *Cim.* 18.7); here the Spirit prepares Peter to greet the inquirers, though he does not yet know their mission (Acts 10:21). The Spirit’s specific direction to speak with Gentiles here parallels that in 8:29 (see comments there), in both instances reflecting the promise that the Spirit would guide God’s servants in evangelizing cross-culturally (1:8). That the Spirit identifies them initially generically as “three men” (10:19; 11:11) rather than more specifically as

454. See Ling, “Stranger in Town”; cf. 1 Sam 9:11, 18. In Galilee, groups of homes typically surrounded courtyards and were reached by alleys from larger streets (Goodman, *State*, 30); the same was likely true in Damascus.

455. Longenecker, *Acts*, 184.

456. The term ξενίζω does not require the assumption of a quickly passing stay (see BDAG), but most of the other uses in Acts (which accounts for 70 percent of NT uses) refer either to this occasion (Acts 10:6, 18, 32) or to stays of only one to three days (10:23; 21:16; 28:7). Luke might play on the “surprised” sense of the term (cf. 17:20), given Peter’s vision, but such puns are not characteristic of Luke; likelier is a connection with housing being shared with the guests in 10:23.

457. For roundabout ways of making requests (e.g., John 1:38; 2:3), cf. Keener, *John*, 469–70; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 108.

458. This is not quite the same as an agent consciously and legally representing the sender or a herald (cf. Keener, *John*, 313–14), but it involves identifying with them and assuming responsibility for their trustworthiness as one would in a letter of recommendation (see discussion at Acts 9:2).

Gentiles (the issue at hand; contrast 11:3) emphasizes their common humanity (10:28, 34–35).

Peter's descent (10:20) was probably via stairs on the side of the house, as was common in Judean homes.⁴⁵⁹ Luke uses διακρίνω only four times, all in connection with this account (11:2, 12; 15:9), but only here and in the parallel 11:12 possibly for doubting or questioning.⁴⁶⁰ Even here the term may have the idea of “making distinctions” (regarding Jew and Gentile).⁴⁶¹ Although technically Cornelius had sent the men (10:8, 33), he had done so at the command of the angel of God (10:5), who spoke for the God who now spoke to Peter. God could “send” people without their knowledge (e.g., 1 Sam 9:16).

Peter obeys the Spirit's instructions (Acts 10:21). Earlier he had accompanied messengers in a case involving corpse uncleanness (9:38–39), but such events were less avoidable in Peter's circle than the sort of uncleanness he would now be viewed as risking (cf. 10:28). Whether Peter could distinguish the two servants as Gentiles (rather than hellenized Jews) from their appearance we cannot say, but the soldier (10:7) would be obviously a Gentile. “I am the one you are seeking [ζητείτε]” reflects the Spirit's words in 10:19, “See, three men are seeking [ζητοῦντές] you.”⁴⁶²

III. THE GENTILES' INVITATION (10:22)

The emissaries present the supplicant in the best possible terms, seeking to commend Cornelius's efforts to follow Judaism to Peter the Jew. That he was well spoken of (even “borne witness to”) by the Jewish people recalls Luke's centurion in Luke 7:3–5. That he is well spoken of “by the whole nation”⁴⁶³ is, of course, hyperbole, or Peter would not need to hear about him.⁴⁶⁴ Praise was, however, the appropriate response concerning a benefactor;⁴⁶⁵ although Greeks associated public benefaction especially with “entertainments or buildings” (cf. Luke 7:5), caring for the poor (Acts 10:2) would also count.⁴⁶⁶ That they present him as “righteous” may link him with other honorable figures in Luke's story (Luke 1:6; 2:25; 23:50), but we need not presume, based on their epideictic speech, that he is already converted (cf. Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15). In Luke's theology, those who first admit their unrighteousness are those who can receive

459. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 83; Jeffers, *World*, 68; Safrai, “Home,” 731; also Le Cornu, *Acts*, 572 (though her correct comment about houses being built around a common courtyard off an alley would probably not apply to a tanner's house by the sea).

460. A usage not found in classical Greek (BDAG; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 239n105) but attested in the NT, especially in connection with faith (Mark 11:23 followed by Matt 21:21; Rom 4:20; 14:23; Jas 1:6; perhaps Jude 22). Paul and James both preserve the more traditional use of the term as well.

461. Smith, “Refutation,” also suggesting that its use in Acts 11:12 could function as a double entendre (referring to “distinguishing” but heard by the audience as “doubting”); see further Smith, “Function of Refutation,” 112–14. Parsons, *Acts*, 147, also suggests a play on words (citing *Rhet. Her.* 4.53.67). Some plausibly prefer a traditional sense of the term here, involving conflict (see Spitaler, “Doubting”), in 10:20 a warning against resisting the Spirit (Spitaler, “Shift,” finds no evidence for a semantic shift in subsequent authors).

462. Luke sometimes uses πάρεμι, the term for their “coming” in Acts 10:21, for appearing before honorable persons (Acts 12:20; 24:19; again for Peter at 10:33), but this is not an essential part of its meaning (17:6; Luke 13:1; cf. BDAG).

463. “The Jewish nation” functions as “an official designation” in documents (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 82, citing 1 Macc 10:25; 11:30, 33; Jos. *Ant.* 14.248; but for the phrase elsewhere, cf., e.g., 1 Macc 8:23, 25, 27; 13:36; 15:2; 2 Macc 10:8; Jos. *Ant.* 11.123, 184, 270, 303, 340; 12.6, 135, 357, 412, 417; 13.1, 38, 48, 126–27, 143; 14.196, 199, 212, 248, 320).

464. Such hyperbolic praise of a subject was common (e.g., Lysias *Or.* 2.1, §190; Val. Max. 2.7.5; 3.8.ext. 1; Pindar *Nem.* 4.33–34; *Ol.* 2.95; *Pyth.* 4.247–48; Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 78.22; 1 Macc 9:22; John 21:25; see further Keener, *John*, 1214, 1241–42).

465. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 6.18.2; Suet. *Tit.* 7.3; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 17; pervasive in civic inscriptions (e.g., *CIL* 14.409; *ILS* 6146, in Sherk, *Empire*, §182, p. 240; cf. Harrison, *Grace*, 40–43). This was also true in Diaspora synagogues (e.g., Kroll, “Greek Inscriptions”).

466. DeSilva, *Honor*, 125–26n9.

Christ (Luke 5:32; 15:7; 18:9; 20:20). Naturally, Gentiles would not normally appear “righteous” (compare Luke 18:32 with 24:7; 22:25; Rom 9:30; 1 Cor 5:1; Gal 2:15).

The term ἐχρηματίσθη signifies a revelation or prophecy in Luke’s writings (Luke 2:26; Acts 11:26), dreams in Matthew (Matt 2:12, 22), and divine communication in Hebrews (Heb 8:5; 11:7; 12:25); it is revelatory also in a number of LXX passages (Jer 25:30; 26:2; 29:23; 30:2; 36:2, 4).⁴⁶⁷ But Jewish people borrowed the usage from pagan Greek, and so even apart from the piety of Cornelius’s servants (as members of his house, Acts 10:2) and the soldier (10:7), we should not be surprised at the language.⁴⁶⁸ Luke does not provide a verbatim repetition of the visions, as if in a ritual text, but follows the rhetorical preference for paraphrase.⁴⁶⁹ (The phrase “holy angel” is not meant to reflect the Gentiles’ ignorance [cf. Luke 9:26; Mark 8:38; Rev 14:10].)

IV. THE JEWISH HOME’S HOSPITALITY (10:23)

Despite the possible haste of the original journey (for the debated possibility, see comment on Acts 10:9), the return journey is leisurely enough, demanding no night travel. Especially if the messengers traveled part of the night to reach Peter, they would need to rest before their return journey began, and the hospitality obligations of feeding them (Acts 10:23) would leave little enough of the afternoon for travel before sundown. “The next day” (ἐπαύριον) of 10:23 implies an overnight stay, as “the next day” of 10:24 implies a journey spread over two days.

Hospitality’s obligations (see comment on Acts 16:15) demanded that the Jewish household provide lodging⁴⁷⁰ for their guests; although this action might have raised some questions (cf. comment on Acts 10:28), it might not be as serious as eating together with them⁴⁷¹ (depending on who supplied the food). Since the food was, presumably, about ready when they arrived (10:10), Peter could not eat without sharing—especially after God’s lesson about what was clean at table (10:15, 17). Peter also had an earlier lesson in eating whatever a household would offer without questioning whether food was clean or unclean, tithed or untithed (Luke 10:7).⁴⁷²

Food the Jewish household provided would be kosher, whether they ate with their guests or separately; that provided by the Gentiles in Caesarea would be more suspect (cf. Acts 11:3).⁴⁷³ Later rabbis also favored acts of kindness toward Gentiles, for the sake of maintaining peace.⁴⁷⁴ Still, some would probably look down on allowing Gentiles into one’s home (*m. Ṭehar. 7:6*); within the Holy Land, some opined, one should not even rent homes or lands to Gentiles (*t. ‘Abod. Zar. 2:8*).

Many Gentiles lived in the land, and so Israelites worked in Gentile shops and vice versa (*t. Šabb. 2:7–8*);⁴⁷⁵ later teachers also allowed Jews to buy houses from

467. Possibly the revelatory sense is present in Rom 7:3, the only other NT use, because it implies the voice of Scripture; but the revelatory sense is also unclear in Job 40:8, Jer 5:8, and probably 1 Kgs 18:27.

468. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 117 (citing esp. *SIG*³ 3.1173); Johnson, *Acts*, 185 (citing Plut. *Obsol. 46, Mor. 435C*; Lucian *Critic 8*; among Hellenistic Jewish writers, *Jos. Ant. 3.212*).

469. Tannehill, *Acts*, 132.

470. The term for displaying hospitality by providing lodging is the same as used for Peter’s own lodging (Acts 10:18; cf. 10:6, 32).

471. Also Witherington, *Acts*, 351.

472. Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 47–48.

473. Cf. *y. Demai 3:3*: food from Caesarea could be assumed untithed, hence *demai*, produce. As will be argued (see comment on Acts 10:48), a God-fearer would hardly insult his honored Jewish guests by offering pork, but the food was probably untithed—or at least his guests could not assume it tithed.

474. See, e.g., Poulin, “Loving-Kindness”; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 578.

475. A later account claims that some Tannaim were trading silks at Tyre (*Gen. Rab. 77:2*), but priests entering Ashkelon needed to immerse after they left because of Gentile impurity (*y. Šeb. 6:1, §12*). Some Judeans opposed doing permanent business with Gentiles (*t. ‘Abod. Zar. 1:1*), but this would be impossible to enforce in mixed cities (cf. Longenecker, *Acts*, 186, citing *b. Šabb. 150a, 151a*; but noting uncleanness, cf.

Gentiles (*y. Mo'ed Qat.* 2:4, §2). Even Qumran's *Damascus Document* warns against being near Gentiles especially on the Sabbath (CD XI, 14–15), implying that contact was sometimes possible.⁴⁷⁶ Halakah sought to guard Jews from excessive contact with Gentiles, but it could not, and was not meant to, cut off all contact.⁴⁷⁷ Nor did pietists' theory restrict all Jews' practice.⁴⁷⁸

Stricter theorists' principles did, however, apply especially to eating together.⁴⁷⁹ *Jubilees* 22:16, which contains one of the strongest warnings against association with Gentiles, is emphatic about eating together: "Separate yourself from the gentiles, and do not eat with them" (trans. Wintermute, *OTP* 2:98). Gentiles in fact widely regarded Jewish people as separatist and hateful for avoiding Gentile food, though Jews protested that they were not hateful but simply observing their distinctive custom (3 Macc 3:4–7). Judith brought her own food to the enemy camp (Jdt 10:5; 12:2, 9, 19); even Esther was thought to have abstained from royal food and wine (Esth 14:17 LXX = Add Esth 4:17). Unlike others, Tobit avoided Gentile food (Tob 1:10–13).⁴⁸⁰ Jewish people tried to avoid dependence on foreign oil (Jos. *War* 2.591; *Ant.* 12.120; *Life* 74).⁴⁸¹ Compare some additional sources in comment on Acts 10:12.

This issue was of special interest to the Pharisees (Luke 5:30; 15:2), for whom table fellowship was a central concern;⁴⁸² not surprisingly, Pharisees lead the objections to full fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles in Acts 15:5 (a view apparently more widely held in 11:3). Even if a Jewish man brought his own food to eat with a Gentile, rabbis felt that the Gentile might contaminate the food while the Jewish person stepped out (*m. 'Abod. Zar.* 5:5).⁴⁸³ One rabbi complained that Diaspora Jews were "idolaters" because they attended Gentile banquets, even though bringing their own food and drink (*t. 'Abod. Zar.* 4:6).⁴⁸⁴ Peter is not a Diaspora Jew (in Luke's parlance, he is a "Hebrew" rather than a "Hellenist," Acts 6:1), and he is well aware that other Hebrews will challenge him for eating with Gentiles (11:3; cf. Gal 2:12), which may be one reason he brings potential witnesses (Acts 10:23; 11:12).⁴⁸⁵

V. THE JOURNEY (10:23B–24)

The journey of 10:23b–24a is necessarily transitional.⁴⁸⁶ In 10:23, Peter brings others with him from the church in Joppa; many believers lived there (see 9:36, 42–43).

m. 'Abod. Zar. passim). This mixing posed serious problems when tensions later escalated into mutual attempts at genocide (Jos. *War* 2.463).

476. Purity was a central issue generally in Qumran's sectarian documents (for the emphasis in current Qumran studies, see Harrington, "Purity").

477. See Cohen, "Attitude and Reality."

478. With Conzelmann, *Acts*, 82 (citing Jos. *Ant.* 20.34–53, especially relevant for the Diaspora).

479. On the impurity of Gentiles' vessels, see, e.g., *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 67b (R. Meir citing earlier tradition); 75b, bar.; *Pesah.* 44b (citing R. Akiba).

480. See Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 274, citing many of these sources as well as Jos. *Asen.* 7:1; 8:5; 18:5; 20:8. For an anthropological approach to ancient Jewish avoidance of eating with Gentiles, see Esler, *Community*, 73–86.

481. See Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 274. Rabbis used Dan 1:1–16 as their biblical grounds for avoiding Gentile wine because Gentiles often poured libations (Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 273).

482. See, e.g., Neusner, *Beginning*, 27. Neusner estimates that about two-thirds of Shammai/Hillel pericopes concern table fellowship (*Politics to Piety*, 86). Luke knows something of Pharisaic tithing practices (Luke 11:42), but in his tradition, Pharisees have failed to truly evade uncleanness (11:39–44).

483. Hare, *Persecution*, 9, thinks that this text presupposes Jews and Gentiles eating together; it may, however, be a warning (albeit probably with little effect on common people, as Hare, 9n3, observes).

484. Also *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 8a, bar.; 8b. Eating together established a covenant of friendship; see Aeschines *Embassy* 22, 55; further discussion in Keener, *John*, 912–13. One could also raise issues of import there that one could not raise elsewhere (Cic. *Fam.* 1.2.3).

485. On taking witnesses for legality's sake, see, e.g., Char. *Chaer.* 2.5.1.

486. For the convenience of following versification in the commentary where possible, our outline obscures this transition.

Although bringing uninvited additional guests sometimes could cause problems,⁴⁸⁷ Peter needs witnesses for what the vision has prepared him to experience (11:12).

Although they presumably left in the morning, Peter probably preferred not to travel at night, requiring an overnight stop before the journey's completion. If the messengers had come swiftly by riding horses, Peter and his six companions would probably lack horses and/or the skill to ride them; even had Cornelius sent an animal for Peter or the church provided one, his entourage of six (11:12) would lack them. They could have perhaps lodged in a place such as mixed Apollonia, just under half the journey, but may have preferred a full day of travel the first day, lodging perhaps two-thirds of the way and arriving in the afternoon or late morning the next day. If the messengers had actually reached Peter in less than one day (scholars diverge on this point; see comment on Acts 10:9), Peter may be in less of a hurry to reach Caesarea. Nevertheless, this need not reflect theological or ethnic reservations.⁴⁸⁸ Even assuming that every member of Peter's group was capable of such haste (and that none of Cornelius's messengers were sore from the previous journey's haste), the group probably began the journey in the morning, and arriving in the night would not be ideal for Cornelius or those he would gather (10:24; cf. Luke 11:7).

b. Welcoming the Jews (10:24–33)

Just as Peter and his hosts, directed by Peter's vision and Spirit-led interpretation, welcomed the Gentile messengers in 10:17–23, so here Cornelius, earlier directed by a vision, welcomes the Jewish delegation. We might view Peter as something like an ambassador for Israel's God (cf. 2 Cor 5:20; Eph 6:20). What Roman policy failed to achieve in ethnically divided Caesarea, God could achieve in the church: the reconciling of normally hostile peoples.⁴⁸⁹ The visions and other confirmations in the narrative, however, reveal that even for the church, such reconciliation initially required divine intervention.

I. CORNELIUS'S RELATIVES AND FRIENDS (10:24)

Cornelius calls together those with whom he especially wishes to share the privilege, presumably without overcrowding his home beyond what it could accommodate.⁴⁹⁰ Since they could not predict the time of Peter's arrival, their presence suggests significant anticipation, with those who live a farther walk away perhaps even sleeping there at night.⁴⁹¹ Who are the "relatives" (συγγενεῖς)? Although servants (Acts 10:7) were members of the household,⁴⁹² as mentioned above, it is unlikely that the term applies to them (especially if any nuances from its etymology remain).⁴⁹³ Perhaps Luke

487. On "shadow" guests, see Plut. *Mor.* 707–710A in Winter, *Left Corinth*, 300n56; private banquets were ideally limited to more intimate company (Aul. Gel. 13.11.2–3). But this principle did not apply to all celebrations. At weddings and some other public events, often (within reason) the more guests the better: for large banquets, see, e.g., Char. *Chaer.* 3.2.10; Phaedrus 1.6.1; Alciph. *Farm.* 15 (Eustachy to Pithacnion), 3.18, ¶1; Men. *Rhet.* 2.6, 404.17; Jos. *Ant.* 13.18–21.

488. It need not even reflect a resistance on Peter's part to laboring at night (see Luke 5:5; cf. Acts 5:19; others in Luke 2:8, 37; 6:12; 18:7; 21:37; Acts 9:24–25; 17:10; 20:31; 23:23, 31; the noon nap in 10:10), though he appears to be a sound sleeper in Acts 12:6 (cf. Luke 8:23; negatively, 22:45–46). Deliberate night arrivals were unusual (Philo *Flacc.* 27); people usually sought to spend the night somewhere (cf. Gen 19:2; 24:23, 54; Judg 19:6–20; 20:4).

489. Because Cornelius is a God-fearer, this "reconciling" has already occurred on some level. Nevertheless, Cornelius has not yet become a full member of God's people but only a sympathizer.

490. Cf. Methuselah calling together his relatives (including brothers) to hear when Enoch prepares to reveal the future to him (1 *En.* 91:1–2).

491. I have observed this expression of eagerness in many African settings.

492. Pliny *Ep.* 9.36.4; Barrow, *Slavery*, 22–64; Judge, *Pattern*, 31; Verner, *Household*, 30, 33; Falk, "Law," 509.

493. Thus σύν, "with," + γένος, "ancestral stock, ancestral group" (etc.; see BDAG).

is being discreet about a soldier's "illegal" family, but for reasons offered above, this is not particularly probable. Luke usually employs this term, "relatives," for family more distant than immediate nuclear family (i.e., beyond siblings and children; Luke 2:44; 14:12; 21:16; cf. 2 Macc 15:18), though they could be first cousins and other close relatives (Lev 18:14; 20:20; 2 Sam 3:39; Tob 6:11; 1 Macc 11:31; 2 Macc 11:1, 35).⁴⁹⁴

Presumably these were not family members staying with him, since he "had called them together." Normally, the extended family did not stay with the nuclear family, but their connections were often close.⁴⁹⁵ This particular piece of evidence might favor the idea that Cornelius was from the area (had his relatives lived far, he could not have contacted and brought them so quickly); if he was retired, he could have brought family members to live with him, but again, this would probably be in the same house, which is not the case here. An alternative is that he married locally (as many soldiers did, although Rome was not obligated to recognize legally marriages contracted before retirement); thus his in-laws would be local.

In addition to relatives, Luke mentions ἀναγκαίους, "friends." When different from relatives (as here) the term can designate necessary ties,⁴⁹⁶ perhaps members of the extended household not living there, such as freedpersons and other clients.⁴⁹⁷ "Friendship" also could include patronage, especially for a Roman household, in this case referring to Cornelius's clients (cf. Luke 7:6; 14:10; Acts 19:31; esp. Luke 16:9).⁴⁹⁸ Because he was a God-fearer and presumably known as such, these "friends" probably had exposure to, and (given their gathering) presumably sympathy for, Judaism.⁴⁹⁹

If they have been gathered awaiting Peter's arrival, Cornelius would have assumed the expensive responsibility of feeding them in the meantime. Had Peter refused his invitation, Cornelius would have faced severe loss of honor in front of his guests (cf. the note of appreciation in Acts 10:33) as well as something far more serious (cf. 11:14); he hinged his urgent invitation, however, on the angelic message to him (10:22). If 11:14 supplements the information here, his household was welcome to hear the message, and Cornelius eagerly expands that definition as widely as possible.

II. REFUSING CORNELIUS'S HOMAGE (10:25–26)

Luke does not elaborate on Peter's entrance. Perhaps Cornelius (being informed of the delegation's approach) had a servant or another mediator escort Peter in

494. Given Luke's summarizing technique, he could use it to include closer family (cf. two brothers who are soldiers corresponding near their retirement in Lewis, *Life*, 22).

495. Saller and Shaw, "Tombstones," note the extended family in Western legal sources but emphasize the nuclear family in inscriptions; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 129, insist that Romans usually lived in nuclear rather than extended families; Stambaugh, *City*, 158, argues that these were small (also Rawson, "Family," 7). Martin, "Construction," using evidence from the East, argues (against Saller and Shaw) that Roman-period inscriptions did not generally distinguish nuclear from extended families. (Yarbrough, "Paul," 410, argues for larger wealthy households because his count includes slaves and clients; cf. George, "Architecture." The Roman *familia* extended to anyone under *patria potestas*, wherever the person domiciled; Gardner, *Women*, 5–6; Rawson, "Family," 7–8.) It seems precarious to extrapolate from well-to-do Romans to a centurion in Caesarea, but Goodman, *State*, 36, contends that the nuclear family is dominant even in Galilee, with attachment even to neighbors before extended family.

496. Witherington, *Acts*, 352, arguing that it refers to Cornelius's retainers ("reciprocity relationships, through business or military connections or both"; cf. Acts 10:7). For various "levels" of friendship, see Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5 L, pp. 34.30–37.3; friendship based on kin relations is one (pp. 36–37.2–3), but Luke's grammar explicitly distinguishes the friends from kin here.

497. On freedpersons as household clients, see, e.g., Suet. *Jul.* 2; Dupont, *Life*, 62–66; Chow, *Patronage*, 69–72; Lampe, "Patrons," 489.

498. Keener, "Friendship," 381–82; idem, *John*, 1008; see more extensive comment at Acts 19:31.

499. With Le Cornu, *Acts*, 582.

before the scene takes place, but Luke is not concerned to narrate extraneous details.⁵⁰⁰

From the standpoint of Luke's literary purposes, Cornelius "worshiped" Peter so that Peter could reject this inappropriate response, just as Paul rejects such a response in 14:15 (cf. 28:6).⁵⁰¹ By contrast, those who "fell at the feet" of Jesus (Luke 8:41; 17:16)⁵⁰² or "worshiped" him (24:52)⁵⁰³ were not reprovved because such veneration was appropriate for him. Cornelius's misplaced veneration is the sort of behavior a Jew would expect of a misunderstanding Gentile (cf. Dan 2:46), though Peter also has to warn a Jewish audience against a lesser sort of veneration (Acts 3:12), and Herod Agrippa I, though catering to Jewish politics (12:3), accepts divine worship (12:22).⁵⁰⁴

Nevertheless, this scene must raise for Luke's audience the question of what this God-fearer (10:2) has in mind. As a mere God-fearer, Cornelius may not have been completely orthodox in his beliefs;⁵⁰⁵ if he remained in active duty, he might have had to venerate Caesar as a deity (representing Rome) to demonstrate allegiance to Rome.⁵⁰⁶ Would a God-fearer consider Peter a divine man or perhaps an angel (of higher rank than the one who referred Cornelius to him)?⁵⁰⁷

But Cornelius may not act idolatrously (cf. 10:2), though Peter has reason to refuse honors that could be so construed (and Luke to record the obeisance and its refusal). Within the narrative world, those falling at Jesus's feet (Luke 8:41; 17:16) did not (in contrast to Luke's audience) recognize his divinity (cf. perhaps analogously Rev 19:10; 22:8–9); Cornelius means no harm,⁵⁰⁸ but Peter cannot leave any ambiguity as to who is to be venerated.

The verb προσκυνέω can mean obeisance, of the sort offered to rulers, especially Persians and others in the East.⁵⁰⁹ Yet Greeks and Jews often refused to offer it to the Persian king precisely because of what it signified.⁵¹⁰ Perhaps in Cornelius's mind it differed little from falling at benefactors' feet to grasp their knees, the normal posture of

500. Bruce, *Acts*³, 73, finds it attractive that Cornelius sends a servant to welcome Peter in the Western text. But this is easily enough the expansive editor's inference, with no clear indication of tradition.

501. Cf. Tannehill, *Acts*, 53, contrasting Theudas and Simon, who both claimed to be "someone" or "someone great."

502. Cf. Mark 5:22; John 11:32; Rev 1:17; note that angels also rejected this prostration (Rev 19:10; 22:8–9, the only other texts in the NT including both "falling at feet" and προσκυνέω; though the one conjunction of these terms in the LXX, 2 Kgs 4:27, was not rejected, it could not have been confused with idolatry). Only in *Herm.* 10.3 is it not turned aside (by the visionary woman); Sapphira "falling at the feet" of Peter dead (*Acts* 5:10) belongs in a different category.

503. For anyone but deity, such prostration was to be rejected (Luke 4:7–8; *Acts* 7:43; cf. 8:27; 24:11).

504. Seeing Peter's powers, people in Rome wanted to venerate him as a god in *Acts Pet.* (8) 29.

505. One might compare the progressive conversion and instruction of peoples in subsequent Christian history, whether in much of western and northern Europe or Russia through the Middle Ages (cf., e.g., Bredero, *Christendom*, 42–43, 356) or, e.g., in parts of rural Africa in the twentieth century (Yates, *Expansion*, 179).

506. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 121. Their social status obligated some other God-fearers to participate in public pagan rituals (123). Pressure to venerate Caesar might be even greater in the city that Herod named Caesarea, with its prominent Caesar temple (cf. Holm, "Temple Hill").

507. Cf. the liberal compromise of *Acts John* 27, where Lycomedes acknowledges only one true God but sees John as divine in the sense that benefactors are. Cf. also Rev 19:10, including the immediate correction.

508. Bede *Comm. Acts* 10.25 (Martin, *Acts*, 131) even construes Cornelius's prostration as a sign of his humility.

509. E.g. (including equivalent expressions), Plut. *Themist.* 27.3–4; Val. Max. 7.3.ext. 2; Arrian *Alex.* 4.11.8; Char. *Chaer.* 5.2.2. Cf. *Jos. Asen.* 5:7/10 (to Joseph). It can also be used for entreating (e.g., *Jos. Life* 138; Men. *Rhet.* 2.13, 423.27; Hdn. 7.5.4).

510. Plut. *Themist.* 27.3–4; Helioid. *Eth.* 7.19; Corn. *Nep.* 9 (Conon), 3.3; Esth 3:2 (to an official); cf. *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 19:1 (changing the Hebrew); *Tg. Ps.-j.* on Gen 26:35; Wiesehöfer, "Proskynesis," 50; but cf. also *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 18:2; 24:48, 52; 33:3; 42:6; 43:26. But Jews do bow in some texts (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 1.335; 6.240, 285; 7.187; *Test. Jos.* 13:5).

a supplicant.⁵¹¹ Thus, for example, an Alexandrian supplicant to the general Vespasian falls to his knees to seek healing (Tac. *Hist.* 4.81). The term can communicate supplication rather than worship of a deity (Matt 8:2; 9:18; 20:20; perhaps John 9:38), but usually early Christian literature—and elsewhere Luke always—employs the term for “worship” (Luke 4:7–8; 24:52; Acts 7:43; 8:27; 24:11).⁵¹² Biblical precedent might grant someone in the imperial service permission to make necessary obeisance while keeping a monotheistic heart (2 Kgs 5:18–19).

Pagan writers often portrayed their heroes and heroines as mistaken for deities,⁵¹³ sometimes complete with someone falling before the person to worship (Ach. Tat. 3.23.1; Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 1.1). (Josephus so read Dan 2:46.)⁵¹⁴ For those who were not deities,⁵¹⁵ the appropriate response was to disavow deity and refuse divine honors.⁵¹⁶ This refusal avoided hubris and impiety (contrast Acts 12:22–23), though (and this is important for recognizing how Luke applies the account) this refusal of divine honors was itself honorable.⁵¹⁷ Refusal to reject divine honors could lead to diminution of long-term honor (Quint. Curt. 4.7.30) and, worse yet, divine judgment (Jos. *Ant.* 19.346–47).

*Excursus: “Divine” Humans*⁵¹⁸

In contrast to the Jewish monotheistic tradition, in the Greek tradition boundaries between exalted humanity and incipient divinity often proved fluid⁵¹⁹ (this was widespread, against some earlier scholars who connected the practice too narrowly with the Mysteries).⁵²⁰ For example, popular tradition divinized many heroes,⁵²¹

511. Hom. *Il.* 1.427; Eurip. *Orest.* 382; *Hypsipyle* frg. 757.67–68, 62 (856–57, 861); Livy 45.7.5 (the entreaty is answered in 45.42.4); Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.9.2 (a deity, figuratively); cf. Matt 18:26, 29; Men. Rhet. 2.13, 423.27.

512. That Jesus is accorded divine worship in the NT fits the Christian tradition that he is within the identity of the one God (Bauckham, *Crucified*, 34–35); most preresurrection occurrences in the Gospels are meant to be read from the standpoint of resurrection faith.

513. E.g., Hom. *Od.* 16.183–85; 19.280; Ovid *Metam.* 14.127–28; Char. *Chaer.* 3.2.17; Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 1.2, 12; 2.2.

514. Jos. *Ant.* 10.211–12 (Gaventa, *Acts*, 207).

515. Or occasionally a deity pretending not to be one, Virg. *Aen.* 1.335.

516. Hom. *Od.* 16.186–89; Ovid *Metam.* 14.129–31; Char. *Chaer.* 2.3.7; Eunapius *Lives* 470; *Gen. Rab.* 42:5; 43:5. Cf. also Conzelmann, *Acts*, 110 (citing Ps.–Callisth. *Alex.* 2.22.12), 82 (contrasting Aelian *Var. hist.* 8.15).

517. Refusing honors in general could be honorable, leading to the person's greater praise (Val. Max. 4.1.6a); emperors who insisted on their own deity in their lifetimes were the only first-century emperors not deified afterward.

518. I borrow here from Keener, *John*, 178–79, 291–92.

519. Cf., e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.9.6–11; 2.8.10–11; 2.19.26–28; Plut. *Pomp.* 27.3; Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7; Ovid *Metam.* 8.723–24; cf. Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.232.

520. Although divinization is alleged to occur in some other groups' initiations (Eliade, *Rites*, 71), the common view that it occurred in mystery cults in the NT period (e.g., Reitzenstein, *Religions*, 70, 200; Angus, *Mystery-Religions*, 108; Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism*, 42; Tarn, *Civilisation*, 354–55; Dibelius, “Initiation,” 81) has come under challenge in recent years (see Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 239). Given the frequency in Greek culture in general, however, claims for some cults (e.g., Tinh, “Sarapis,” 113) are not unlikely, even in this period. Certainly it is clear in the later Hermetica (Reitzenstein, *Religions*, 70–71; Conzelmann, *Theology*, 11; Wikenhauser, *Mysticism*, 179) and other gnosticizing (Ménard, “Self-Definition,” 149; Jonas, *Religion*, 44–45) and later Christian sources (Tatian *Or. Gks.* 7; Taylor, *Atonement*, 206, cites Iren. *Haer.* pref.; Athanas. *Inc.* 54.3). In magic, see PGM 1.178–81; Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 229.

521. E.g., Eurip. *Andr.* 1253–58; Cic. *Nat. d.* 2.24.62; 3.15.39; Virg. *Aen.* 7.210–11; Ovid *Metam.* 9.16–17; Lucan *C.W.* 9.15–18, 564; Paus. 8.9.6–8; 9.22.7; Philost. *Hrk.* 2.11. On the deification of heroes, cf. Nock, *Paul*, 96; Hadas and Smith, *Heroes*; Edson and Price, “Ruler-cult”; Graf, “Hero Cult.” Greek veneration of departed

among them Dionysus,⁵²² Heracles,⁵²³ the Dioscuri,⁵²⁴ Asclepius,⁵²⁵ Achilles,⁵²⁶ Trophonius,⁵²⁷ and Palamedes,⁵²⁸ and sometimes any memorable protagonist of ancient narratives.⁵²⁹ Homer regularly described heroes as “peers of gods” or “godlike.”⁵³⁰

Heroes constituted an intermediate category between deities and mortals⁵³¹—that is, demigods.⁵³² This intermediate class consisted of the deified dead invoked by the living.⁵³³ Ancient heroes, especially those supposed to have literally sprung from divine seed, were also often sons of gods⁵³⁴ (though most often in a figurative or distant sense,⁵³⁵ such as the “Zeus-born” son of such-and-such a human father⁵³⁶) or “nurtured” by gods.⁵³⁷

Even a particularly eloquent orator might be compared to gods or titled “divine.”⁵³⁸ The same could be done with poets, especially “godlike Homer.”⁵³⁹ Romans offered sacrifices to spirits of the deceased but deified their founder, Romulus, only after the fourth century B.C.E., because of Greek influence.⁵⁴⁰

Philosophers and other sages, too, were often divinized or said to be divine in some sense,⁵⁴¹ including Democritus,⁵⁴² Pythagoras,⁵⁴³ Empedocles,⁵⁴⁴ Epicurus,⁵⁴⁵

heroes may have begun in the eighth century B.C.E. (Antonaccio, “Hero Cult”), though the cults may have flourished especially in the third and late second centuries C.E. Lucian mocks the notion of heroes compounded of human and divine elements in *Dial. D.* 340 (10/3, Menippus, Amphilocus, and Trophonius 2) (revealing some of the sorts of conceptions that subsequent Eastern Christian Christologies sought to address; for the compounding idea elsewhere, see, e.g., Max. Tyre 6.4).

522. E.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.3.

523. Apollod. *Bib.* 2.7.7; 2.8.1; Cic. *Tusc.* 1.12.28; 2.7.17; Sen. E. *Suas.* 1.1; Men. *Rhet.* 2.9, 414.23–24.

See further Graf, “Heracles: Cult.”

524. See comment on Acts 28:11.

525. E.g., Paus. 6.11.9.

526. E.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 53.8. The ghost of Patroclus also attends the sacrificial feast (53.12–13).

527. Max. Tyre 8.2; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.19; contrast Lucian *Dial. D.* 340 (10/3, Menippus, Amphilocus, and Trophonius 2).

528. Cf. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.22; 4.13; *Hrk.* 33.48.

529. E.g., all of Odysseus’s family in *Telegony* 4; cf. invocations of deceased Ajax in Philost. *Hrk.* 31.7. But Diomedes disqualifies himself by needless brutality (*Thebaid* frg. 9, from scholiast D on Hom. *Il.* 5.126).

530. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 2.407; 7.47; 13.295, 802; *Od.* 3.110; 17.3, 54, 391; 19.456; 20.369; 21.244; cf. also Soph. *Oed. tyr.* 298; Philost. *Hrk.* 21.9; 26.11; 48.15, 19; “godlike Telamon” (while he is killing someone) in *Alcmeonis* frg. 1 (in scholiast on Eur. *Andr.* 687).

531. E.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 16.4.

532. E.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 23.2 (ἡμιθεοίς); cf. Eunapius *Lives* 454.

533. Kearns, “Hero-cult.”

534. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 2.512; see esp. Heracles (Epict. *Diatr.* 3.26.31; Grant, *Gods*, 68–69).

535. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 4.489; 16.49, 126, 707; *Od.* 10.456 (mss), 488, 504; 11.60, 92, 405, 473, 617; 13.375; 14.486; 16.167; 18.312; 22.164; 23.305; 24.542. For divinity in this figurative sense, Aeschylus *Suppl.* 980–82.

536. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 4.358.

537. Hom. *Il.* 17.34, 238, 685, 702; 21.75; 23.581; 24.553, 635, 803; *Od.* 4.26, 44, 63, 138, 156, 235, 291, 316, 391, 561; 5.378; 10.266, 419; 15.64, 87, 155, 167, 199; 24.122. The title was often bestowed cheaply (*Od.* 22.136), but sometimes it applied to a deity (*Il.* 21.223).

538. E.g., Cic. *De or.* 1.10.40; 1.38.172; Pliny E. *N.H.* pref. 59.

539. E.g., *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* 316, 325; Men. *Rhet.* 2.15, 430.13; 2.16, 434.11; Proclus *Poet.* 6.1, K70.21; 6.2, K55.26–27; K198.29–30; together with Hesiod in *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* 313.

540. Hammond and Price, “Ruler-cult,” 1338.

541. E.g., Longin. *Subl.* 4.5; Diog. Laert. 6.2.63 (Diogenes’s claim); 6.9.104.

542. Diog. Laert. 9.7.39.

543. Diog. Laert. 8.1.11; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 50; Iambl. *V.P.* 2.9–10; 5.10; 10.53; 28.143–44; 35.255; cf. the intermediate category in 6.31; his golden thigh in 19.92; 28.135, 140. Cf. Abaris in Iambl. *V.P.* 19.91. See also Thom, “*Akousmata*,” 103.

544. E.g., Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.1; Diog. Laert. 8.2.68.

545. Cic. *Pis.* 25.59 (ironically also noting Epicurus’s skepticism about gods’ concern for the world).

Theophrastus,⁵⁴⁶ Theodorus,⁵⁴⁷ Apollonius,⁵⁴⁸ Indian sages,⁵⁴⁹ a divine lawgiver such as Lycurgus,⁵⁵⁰ and especially “the divine Plato.”⁵⁵¹ This might be expected, since philosophy was held to divinize people,⁵⁵² as was philosophy’s goal, virtue⁵⁵³ or happiness,⁵⁵⁴ likewise, proper knowledge of one’s humanity,⁵⁵⁵ faithfulness,⁵⁵⁶ or, in some views or eulogistic rhetoric, simply death⁵⁵⁷ was held to divinize. Greeks bestowed such honorary language still more freely, many regarding the human soul or rational mind as divine⁵⁵⁸ or even the cosmos as divine.⁵⁵⁹ (Although this language influenced Judaism,⁵⁶⁰ even Philo employed it only “in a highly qualified sense”;⁵⁶¹ especially in Palestinian Judaism, such promises still belonged to the serpent (Gen. 3:5; *Jub.* 3:19).⁵⁶²

Luke’s critique of the worship of mortals would have implicit bearing on the imperial cult, even if he does not directly link this representative of Rome with it.⁵⁶³ Under Eastern influence,⁵⁶⁴ Greeks had divinized Hellenistic rulers;⁵⁶⁵ the practice began

546. Cic. *Or. Brut.* 19.62.

547. Diog. Laert. 2.100.

548. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5, 15; *Ep. Apoll.* 44; 48; Eunapius *Lives* 454; also a probably third- or fourth-century inscription; see Jones, “Epigram”; a demigod in Eunapius *Lives* 454. He looks “godlike” in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.31 but denies his divinity in 7.32.

549. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.29; 7.32. Also, to a lesser extent, the magi in Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 16–17.

550. Hdt. 1.65–66; Val. Max. 5.3.ext. 2; Plut. *Lyc.* 5.3. Lawgivers are “godlike” in Mus. Ruf. 15, p. 96.24.

551. Cic. *Opt. gen.* 6.17; *Leg.* 3.1.1; *Nat. d.* 2.12.32; Plut. *Profit by Enemies* 8, *Mor.* 90C; *Apoll.* 36, *Mor.* 120D; Philost. *Letters* 73, §13; Porph. *Marc.* 10.185–86; Athen. *Deipn.* 15.679A. Cf. patristic sources in Grant, *Gods*, 63–64.

552. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 48.11; Marc. Aur. 4.16; Iambl. *V.P.* 16.70; Porph. *Marc.* 17.286–88; cf. Epicurus *Let. Men.* 135; Cic. *Tusc.* 5.25.70; Crates *Ep.* 11; some claimed that “divine” was applicable to every good person (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 73.12–16; 124.14, 23; Max. Tyre 35.2; 38.1; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5). In Neoplatonism, see Klauck, *Context*, 214, 424; for the ideal in Stoicism, see Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 62.

553. Sen. *Y. Dial.* 1.1.5; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.19.26–28; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.18, 29; 8.5; Plot. *Enn.* 1.2.7; cf. also Koester, *Introduction*, 1:353; divine virtue within, in Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 92–93.15–16.

554. Εὐδαιμονία, “blessedness”; cf. Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11g, pp. 70–71.36; Max. Tyre 26.9.

555. Plut. *Pomp.* 27.3.

556. *Sent. Sext.* 7ab, a Hellenistic Christian source.

557. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Epid.* 6.283; Cic. *Leg.* 2.9.22; 2.22.55; *Att.* 12.36; 37a; Men. *Rhet.* 2.9, 414.23, 25–27; 2.11, 421.16–17; cf. PGM 1.178–81; in *Poimandres*, see Wikenhauser, *Mysticism*, 179.

558. Cf. Plato *Rep.* 10.611DE; Cic. *Parad.* 14; *Resp.* 6.24.26 (Scipio’s dream); *Tusc.* 1.24.56–1.26.65; *Leg.* 1.22.58–59; *Div.* 1.37.80 (citing a Stoic); Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 32.11; 78.10; *Nat. Q.* 1.pref. 14; Mus. Ruf. 18A, p. 112.24–25; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.1; 1.9.6–11, 22; 1.12; 1.14.6; 1.17.27; 2.8.10–11, 14; Plut. *Face M.* 28, *Mor.* 943A; Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 409–10, §139D; Max. Tyre 2.3; 6.4; 33.7; 41.5; Marc. Aur. 2.13, 17; 3.5, 6, 12, 16.2; 5.10.2; 5.27; 12.26; Men. *Rhet.* 2.9, 414.21–23; Iambl. *V.P.* 33.240; cf. *Rhet. Alex.* pref. 1420b.20–21. For a historical survey of divinization of humans, cf. Koester, “Being.”

559. In Stoic pantheism (e.g., Cic. *Nat. d.* 2.7.19–20), a view ridiculed by Epicureans (e.g., Cic. *Nat. d.* 1.10.24).

560. Philo *Mos.* 1.279; Jos. *War* 3.372 (Urbach, *Sages*, 1:222); Tabor, “Divinity”; postmortem deification in *Test. Adam* 3:2–3 (possibly Christian material); at the resurrection in Ps.-Phoc. 104; cf. immortality or divine character in Jos. *Asen.* 16.16; *L.A.E.* 14.2–3; *Pr. Jos.* 19; y. *Sukkah* 4:3, §5; perhaps 4Q181 1 3–4.

561. Holladay, *Theios aner*, 236; see Philo *Virt.* 172; *Creation* 135. Cf. Lycomedes’s use of the term for benefactors such as an apostle while acknowledging only the true God (*Acts John* 27).

562. *Apoc. Mos.* 18.3; cf. Gen 11:4; Exod 20:3–5; Isa 14:14; *Jub.* 10:20; *Exod. Rab.* 8:2.

563. Luke would likely undermine his apologetic by addressing the issue directly, in any case; though the Jewish apologetic historian Josephus is certainly more than ready to denounce Gaius Caligula’s hubris, which (after his death) was universally condemned (*Ant.* 18.256–309, esp. 256; 19.4, 11). While less antagonistic than Revelation’s John the seer, Luke cannot accept venerating humans (Witetschek, “Christus und Caesar”).

564. Cf. earlier Egyptian deification of pharaohs (e.g., Bright, *History*, 38; still recalled in Qur’an 26.29); some parallels exist even between ancient Egyptian and Roman divine kingship (Ockinga, “Divinity”). In Persia, see Aeschylus *Pers.* 157; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.36, 39–40 (challenged in 1.38).

565. Perhaps as early as Philip of Macedon (Diod. Sic. 16.95.1); but philosophers such as Diogenes the Cynic could mock this practice (Diog. Laert. 6.2.63; cf. 6.9.104). On ruler and emperor cults, see in detail Klauck, *Context*, 250–330; Thomas, *Revelation* 19, 45–55; Van Henten, “Ruler Cult”; for Hellenistic rulers, Klauck, *Context*, 252–60; cf. Lucian *Cock* 24.

in earnest under Alexander of Macedon, after his eastern conquests.⁵⁶⁶ (Greeks and Macedonians in Alexander's generation were said to resent his demand for veneration, a demand influenced by Persian culture.)⁵⁶⁷ In the late republic, Cicero could caricaturize Greeks as viewing benevolent governors as divine,⁵⁶⁸ but the language so pervaded the culture of the empire that a late first-century C.E. Roman could poetically depict the senate as rivaling deities with their virtue.⁵⁶⁹

In view of its propagandistic value and Roman religious toleration, the Eastern practice of ruler veneration, in turn, helped shape the imperial cult in the East. Divine honors had long before been accorded Julius Caesar with the permission of his successor, Augustus;⁵⁷⁰ Tiberius continued the tradition for Augustus,⁵⁷¹ and most other emperors were posthumously deified in the West⁵⁷² but were regarded as divine even during their lifetimes in Roman Asia.⁵⁷³

Many scholars have argued that in the West the gesture was more or less symbolic, but the imperial cult throughout Italy may suggest otherwise.⁵⁷⁴ Although in a more subdued form than in the East, the imperial cult existed even in the West as early as Augustus.⁵⁷⁵ Nevertheless, enthusiasm for ruler worship ran much higher in the East: Claudius, who supported the worship of Augustus in Alexandria and permitted its people to grant himself divine honors,⁵⁷⁶ warned that excessive divine honor would offend his colleagues in the western empire,⁵⁷⁷ and demanding worship during one's

566. For Alexander as a divine son, see Arrian *Alex.* 7.29.3; Diod. Sic. 17.51.1–2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.95; Plut. *S. Kings*, Alexander 15, *Mor.* 180D; *Alex.* 2.2–3.2; 27.5–11; 28.1; also known by Egyptian Jewry in the centuries immediately surrounding the birth of Christianity (*Sib. Or.* 5.7; 11.197–98; 12.7). Some ancient authors believed that Alexander used the notion only as political propaganda (Plut. *Alex.* 28.3; Lucian *Dial. D.* 395 [12/14, Philip and Alexander 1] [Lucian denies his divinity, 397–98, ¶5]; 390 [13/13, Diogenes and Alexander 1]).

567. For the demands, see, e.g., Quint. Curt. 4.7.30; 6.6.2–3; 8.5.5–6; 8.8.14; for his flatterers, see 8.5.8, 10–11; 8.10.1; for Macedonian's displeasure, see, e.g., 4.7.31; for one's critique (albeit couched in the author's imperial Roman language), e.g., 8.5.14–16; for falsification, see, e.g., 8.10.29. The oracle of Ammon allowed his worship (4.7.28) but should have been discredited (4.7.29). For a friend of Alexander whose frank critique of the practice curtailed his life, see Brown, *Historians*, 126.

568. So Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.1.2.7; Romans in his day drew the line between deity and mortal more strictly. Latin distinguished, at least by the beginning of the empire, between an immortal god who had never been mortal (*deus*) and a mortal who had been posthumously deified (*divus*).

569. *Sil. It.* 1.611.

570. E.g., Ovid *Metam.* 15.745–50, 843–51; Strabo 4.5.4; 17.1.6; Suet. *Julius* 76; Aul. Gel. 15.7.3; Corn. Nep. 25 (Atticus), 19.2; Dio Cass. 51.20.6; Paus. 3.11.5; in Alexandria, cf. Philo *Embassy* 151; Fishwick, "Caesar"; idem, "Caesareum." Cf. his "divine spirit" in Val. Max. 4.5.6.

571. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 10.65.3; Tac. *Ann.* 1.10–11, 41–42; 2.20; 3.62; Dio Cass. 56.46.1. See further discussion in Filson, "Ephesus," 77; Fishwick, "Ovid"; Deissmann, *Light*, 344–46; Yamauchi, *Cities*, 17, 28.

572. E.g., Virg. *Aen.* 9.642; Tac. *Ann.* 15.74; Hdn. 4.2.1, 5, 11; for deceased relatives, e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 15.23; 16.6, 21–22; Hdn. 6.1.4; cf. Seneca's questions about Tiberius in Green, "Undeified Tiberius" (on *Apocol.* 1.2). Fishwick, "Numen Augusti," argues that although early emperors possessed *numen*, they were not identified with it before the second century; cf. discussion in Herz, "Emperors," 307–9. For invoking an emperor as a deity while the emperor was still alive, see (for Nero) Tac. *Ann.* 15.74; 16.31.

573. Tiberius (e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 4.15); Caligula (e.g., Philo *Embassy* 81; Suet. *Calig.* 22); Claudius (Tac. *Ann.* 12.66; 13.2; Suet. *Nero* 9); Nero (Suet. *Nero* 31; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.22, 73; Massa, *Pompeii*, 116); and Vespasian and Titus (Pliny *Ep.* 10.65.3; *Panegy.* 11.1); later, Hadrian (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.25.534). For the imperial cult, see Klauck, *Context*, 288–330; surveyed by the emperor deified, see 288–313; on forms and diffusion of the emperor cult, see 313–25; see also Rives, *Religion*, 149–53.

574. See Horsley, *Galilee*, 121. For the impact even in Judea and Galilee, see 120–22. Nevertheless, Seneca felt free to satirize it (in Claudius's case; Paschalis, "Afterlife," on *Apocol.*).

575. Hammond and Price, "Ruler-cult," 1338.

576. P.Lond. 1912.9, 28–29, 60–62.

577. P.Lond. 1912.48–51. Cf. the similar "humility" of Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.* 4.38; Sinclair, "Temples"). See other differences between East and West in Lozano, "*Divi Augusti*."

lifetime in the West usually seemed to be madness⁵⁷⁸ and impiety.⁵⁷⁹ In any case, in the East, the very antiquity of ruler worship there would lead to a more serious interpretation of the act.⁵⁸⁰ In the early empire, even those too illiterate to understand inscriptions were surrounded by the emperor's image on statues and coins.⁵⁸¹ See also some further comments on deification (where it relates to ascension) at Acts 1:9–11.

Polytheism remained strong in Gentile parts of Judea,⁵⁸² although not all of our archaeological sources are clear about the period. We know later of the Mithras cult,⁵⁸³ the Serapis cult,⁵⁸⁴ and so forth. In this period, we may already assume extensive polytheism because of the large Gentile presence. Caesarea had its share of such cults not only because of its large Gentile population but because of sailors there.⁵⁸⁵ More significant, Peter's rejection of worship in Caesarea highlights the contrast with Agrippa I, who receives worship in precisely the same city, which is named for the divine emperor (Acts 12:19–23).

III. PETER ENTERS AND SPEAKS (10:27–28)

The house (10:27) appears to be sizable. It is often estimated that well-to-do homes in the Roman style could accommodate nine to twelve people reclining in the triclinium, plus a further thirty, forty, or even fifty gathered in the atrium if needed,⁵⁸⁶ and even more standing. (Scholars have, however, raised questions about these estimates, since homes varied in size.)⁵⁸⁷ Peter would have entered the vestibule and probably, if the house was in the Roman style, proceeded to meet those waiting in

578. As with Caligula, Nero, Domitian, and Commodus; e.g., Hdn. 1.14.8. This inspired flattery during their lives (e.g., Lucan *C.W.* 1.63–66) but cost them their posthumous “deification” (e.g., Dio Cass. 60.4.5–6; Hdn. 1.15.1). Although scholars often describe Caligula as insane (e.g., Dudley, *Civilization of Rome*, 162; Benko, “Early Empire,” 52–53; Caird, *Revelation*, 166; Knox, *Gentiles*, 92–93; cf. Sen. *Y. Dial.* 10.18.5), some more recent views suggest a neurological disorder (Benediktson, “Madness”), or a disorder from his starkly dysfunctional family background, or simple corruption by power (Sidwell, “Mental Illness”). The latter may have yielded to conventional depictions in antiquity; the tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes reportedly suffered madness (Polyb. 31.9.4; cf. 26.1.1–3; a committer of sacrilege in 32.15.8).

579. E.g., Virg. *Aen.* 6.585–94; earlier for Macedonians, Arrian *Alex.* 4.11.1–9; 4.12.1. Even Greeks regarded neglect of one's mortality as hubris (Soph. *Ajax* 758–79).

580. See P.Petr. 3.43 (2), col. 3.11–12 (Ptolemies); Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.27–28; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.26. Scholars regularly refer to this phenomenon (cf., e.g., Brown, “Kingship”; Jones, *Chrysostom*, 105; Ramsay, *Luke the Physician*, 139; Knox, *Gentiles*, 11; Conzelmann, *Theology*, 11; Lohse, *Environment*, 216–18).

581. See Harrison, *Authorities*, 22–23.

582. See Flusser, “Paganism”; from coins, Avi-Yonah, “Archaeological Sources,” 60.

583. Lease, “Caesarea Mithraeum”; Bull, “Mithraic Medallion,” 190; Flusser, “Paganism,” 1099.

584. Behar, “Témoignages” (citing coins, amulets, and rabbinic material).

585. Cf., e.g., Ovadiah and Mucznik, “Zodiac” (though Galilean synagogues themselves boast zodiacs in late antiquity); Bull, “Mithraic Medallion”; Lease, “Caesarea Mithraeum”; Flusser, “Paganism,” 1099.

586. Esp. Murphy-O'Connor, *Corinth*, 156, for a figure widely followed (e.g., Talbert, *Corinthians*, 75; Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 861; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 196). Even Mithraea generally held twenty to forty people at maximum (Klauck, *Context*, 146; Gordon, “Mithraism,” 400, estimates eighteen to forty-two), although associations could host between ten and two hundred (Klauck, *Context*, 43). On atria and triclinia, see further Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses*, 82–87; for multiple triclinia in extremely wealthy homes, see Stambaugh, *City*, 164, 170 (for triclinia in antiquity generally, see Dunbabin, “Triclinium”; idem, “Convivial Spaces”); Balch, “Families,” 265; for a triclinium in an elite Judean palace, see Evans, *World*, 51 (though these were apparently rare in Judea; McRay, *Archaeology*, 79); for elite Roman villas in Palestine, see Roll and Tal, “Villa.”

587. See, e.g., Horrell, “Space,” 368–69; Horrell and Adams, “Introduction,” 11; idem, introduction to Murphy-O'Connor's essay, 130. Horrell's critique is widely cited (e.g., Adams, “Placing,” 25; MacDonald, “Reading,” 49). Homes certainly varied in size in various locations (Vitruv. *Arch.* 6.5.1–3; Libanius *Description* 2.2), and certainty in most given cases is unattainable (for larger villas, cf. Höcker, “Villa”; houses in some towns, cf. Balch, “Houses”; particularly massive examples in Suet. *Claud.* 32; Friedländer, *Life*, 1:225).

the atrium.⁵⁸⁸ A typical Roman home received visitors in the atrium, which was also where the shrine for family deities was located,⁵⁸⁹ but it is unlikely that Cornelius, as a God-fearer, would have household deities there, which could have proved a cause of serious discomfort to Peter.⁵⁹⁰

For “you yourselves know” (10:28), see comment on Acts 20:18, 34; Peter would expect their knowledge of Judean customs, since he cannot but have been aware of the population and ethnic tensions in Judea’s official capital. The interpretation of Peter’s vision (10:10–16) is now (in contrast to earlier, in 10:17) clear. Ancients believed that many oracles remained obscure until their fulfillment (which, in turn, confirmed them because they were not brought about by human attempts to fulfill them).⁵⁹¹

IV. PROHIBITING ASSOCIATION WITH GENTILES (10:28)

Peter begins with a controversial statement,⁵⁹² although he immediately “corrects” it.⁵⁹³ Gentiles often regarded Jews as separatist, comfortable only with their own people (Tac. *Hist.* 5.5), but even Gentile readers unfamiliar with Judaism could grasp Luke’s basic point here, since ritual purity was also a Gentile concept.⁵⁹⁴ Obviously Luke’s biblically literate, God-fearing ideal audience would understand his point most clearly.⁵⁹⁵

The term ἀθέμιτος, “unlawful,” “prohibited,” though applicable to foods and offerings (2 Macc 6:5; 7:1; polemically, *Diogn.* 4.2) or behavior (1 Pet 4:3; *1 Clem.* 63.2; *Did.* 16.4), is a strong (hyperbolic?) term to apply to people.⁵⁹⁶ It is possible that by “associating” (κολλᾶσθαι) with foreigners, Luke envisions close association with them or adherence to them (cf. Acts 5:13; 9:26; 17:34; Luke 15:15; but contrast Acts 8:29);⁵⁹⁷ Luke elsewhere employs the term with reference to rejecting everything unclean (Luke 10:11). But προσέρχομαι (twenty times in Luke-Acts) is a much more general term, used for an act as general as “approaching” someone (e.g., Luke 7:14; 8:44; 9:12)—for example, to speak with him or her (e.g., 8:24; 9:12; 13:31; 20:27). Does Luke have something more specific in mind (such as approaching someone and ultimately staying with that person, as in Acts 18:2–3)?

588. Perhaps commenting on a Judean adaptation, Le Cornu, *Acts*, 582, makes the triclinium (טריקלין) the center of household activity and the largest room (citing *m. 'Ab.* 4:16 [Danby, 454, translates “vestibule”]; *t. 'Erub.* 7:8).

589. Stambaugh, *City*, 164.

590. First, Cornelius was a God-fearer; second, depending on how ancient Cornelius’s ancestral citizenship was, he might not feel as attached to household deities as some would; third, as a dislocated military officer, he would not likely have Roman parents or siblings with him from whom he would feel pressure to maintain this cult; and fourth, if he married or took a concubine locally, the partner would not be Roman and have such expectations.

591. On obscure oracles, see comment on Acts 21:4, 11; Keener, *John*, 856–57.

592. Such statements were useful in seizing attention (see *controversia* in Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 88, citing Quint. *Inst.* 9.2.65–95).

593. For the utility of correction in ancient rhetoric, see, e.g., *Rhet. Her.* 4.26.36; for an example, Men. *Rhet.* 2.9, 414.26.

594. See the survey in deSilva, *Honor*, 249–53 (for Jewish sources, see 253–77); also (cited by deSilva) Parker, “Pollution”; Wright and Hübner, “Unclean and Clean”; Hauck, “Μιαίνω”; Soph. *Oed. tyr.* 95–101, 136, 353, 1423–29 (murder uncleanness); *Oed. Col.* 280–84 (retraction of hospitality); Epict. *Diatr.* 2.8.13. The problem in Aeschines *Tim.* 43 is probably not the meal with foreigners but their susceptibility to inequitable local prosecution.

595. Levitical purity considerations in the Torah would remain paramount, including for readers in this period (contrast Maier, “Torah”). Cf. Sosa, “Purezza”: Acts 10 redefines purity not by ethnicity but by the gift of God’s “holy” Spirit.

596. It depicts the wicked (2 Macc 10:34) or the wicked’s perception of Jews (3 Macc 5:20).

597. The unconverted feared to casually join the new movement (and/or its apostles, Acts 5:13); but Philip had already pioneered the way before Peter, directed by the Spirit to “associate” with a Gentile (8:29).

It seems probable that Luke chose these two verbs to echo 8:29 (the only other text in the NT, the LXX, the Apostolic Fathers, Josephus, or Philo including both verbs together) as a reminder that the Spirit had already led Philip across these barriers. Yet Peter also explicitly uses these terms as synonymous here with “unholy” or “unclean” (recalling his vision, in 10:14).

Some scholars complain that Luke here caricaturizes ancient Judaism, exaggerating its separatism;⁵⁹⁸ thus Haenchen emphasizes that “Jews were not hermetically sealed off from dealings with Gentiles.”⁵⁹⁹ Although Luke has a tendency to summarize,⁶⁰⁰ many Palestinian Jews’ experience of Judaism was, indeed, as separatist in principle as here, especially if they lived in mainly Jewish enclaves.⁶⁰¹ According to later rabbis,⁶⁰² Gentiles’ domiciles were unclean (*m. ’Ohal.* 18:7; *b. Pesah.* 9a; cf. John 18:28), probably (on the basis of the context) because of corpse impurity; Gentiles were thought to bury stillbirths and abortions in their homes (cf. also 11QT XLVIII, 11–12).⁶⁰³ Some texts emphasizing separatism were already discussed above (with respect to food, *Jub.* 22:16; 3 Macc 3:4–7; *Jdt* 10:5; 12:2, 9, 19; LXX *Esth* 14:17; *Tob* 1:10–13); see comment on Acts 10:23 above.

How impure strict pietists thought Gentiles to be⁶⁰⁴ may be illustrated by a later debate as to whether their proselyte immersion cleanses Gentiles within a day or whether they require seven days, as for removal of corpse impurity (*m. Pesah.* 8:8).⁶⁰⁵ Gentiles’ spittle was impure (*m. Šeqal.* 8:1, according to the likeliest sense), and if Gentiles entered a Jewish home, they could be expected to touch things, rendering everything impure (*m. Ṭehar.* 7:6). In rabbinic ideals, even the patriarchs’ camels avoided houses containing idols (*’Abot R. Nat.* 8 A). Idolatry, a key issue in what caused Gentiles’ uncleanness, might not accrue directly to a God-fearer such as Cornelius⁶⁰⁶ but might well contaminate him (from the strictest view) through contacts with others and certainly through some at least formal involvement with the imperial cult in the army. Even God-fearers would undergo proselyte baptism if they became full proselytes (see comment on Acts 2:38). On the major question of eating with Gentiles, see also separate comment on Acts 11:3.

598. As in Gentile perceptions of Judaism (*Juv. Sat.* 14.103–4; *Tac. Hist.* 5.5). With many scholars, however, I have suggested that Luke’s background more resembles that of a God-fearer than that of a typical polytheistic Gentile.

599. Haenchen, *Acts*, 350n4. This position is developed more fully by Hill, *Hellenists*, 118–20 but, in my opinion, by explaining away too much evidence in piecemeal fashion. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 282, warns against exaggerations based on anti-Semitic Gentile reports but recognizes some social reality (274, 279–80; idem, *Judaism*, 216). Theissen, *Sociology*, 83, attributes the exclusivism more to the Shammaites, dominant before 70 C.E.; their later extinction makes them a more convenient target than Hillelites, but rabbinic reports do suggest that the former welcomed Gentiles less.

600. And is more interested in the general theological principle than in cultural details (cf. similarly Mark 7:3–4).

601. Cf. Wright’s critique (*People of God*, 239–40) of the emphasis in Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*: though Sanders presents everyone as unclean all the time anyway, much Jewish literature presents excessive contact with Gentiles as undesirable.

602. For whose views here see esp. Safrai, “Religion,” 829; cf. also *t. Demai* 3:14; *’Abod. Zar.* 4:11 in Larkin, *Acts*, 161.

603. See deSilva, *Honor*, 286n6; cf. Keener, *John*, 1099–1100. Israelites in the land should not even rent homes to Gentiles (*t. ’Abod. Zar.* 2:8); later teachers allowed Jews to buy houses from Gentiles (*y. Mo’ed Qat.* 2:4, §2).

604. On Gentiles communicating ritual impurity, see also *b. ’Abod. Zar.* 69b–70a (though this is Amoraic).

605. Hayes, “Converts,” doubts that impurity is at issue in proselyte immersions in the talmudic interpretations of *m. Pesah.* 8:8 and *t. Pisha* 7:13–14. But purification was the usual purpose of immersions; even touching anything on which a menstruant sat required this (*Lev* 15:22); the strictest pietists forbade eating with a menstruating woman (*t. Šabb.* 1:14, R. Simeon ben Eleazar, citing a far older rule).

606. Smith, *Symposium*, 160–61.

Le Cornu summarizes her own findings in this regard. Different sages held differing views; some sages even advocated hospitality to Gentiles and visiting them, “for the sake of peace.”⁶⁰⁷ Yet Hyrcanus’s plea that Herod not bring troops into the city might reflect concern for defilement (*Jos. Ant.* 14.285; *War* 1.229).⁶⁰⁸ Some later rabbis compared eating with uncircumcised persons to eating unclean flesh, bathing with the uncircumcised to bathing with a leper, and touching the uncircumcised to touching the dead.⁶⁰⁹ Le Cornu regards as particularly compelling evidence for Gentile impurity the requirement for new proselytes to be immersed,⁶¹⁰ and (of certainly relevant date) the physical segregation in the temple for purity reasons.⁶¹¹ On purity regulations and the confinement of Gentiles to the temple’s outer court, see comment on Acts 21:28.⁶¹² Our later sources amplify but do not contradict our early sources regarding Gentile impurity.⁶¹³

In practice, of course, some Jews were much more ethnically separatist than others. The wilderness Essenes took separatism to an extreme (although this is not decisive here; contrary to some early reconstructions, specifically Essene influence on early Christianity was probably not great). *Damascus Document*^a XI, 14–15 prohibits being even near Gentiles on Shabbat;⁶¹⁴ 4QMMT opposes Gentiles’ being allowed to sacrifice in the temple because idolatry remains in their hearts;⁶¹⁵ and 4Q274 applies cleanness regulations to any inhabited settlements in the Holy Land.

The *Letter of Aristeas*, which seems to include apologetic for Gentiles, nevertheless includes (albeit with a positive spin) purity laws (including food, *Let. Aris.* 142) separating Israel from all other nations to make it holy (*Let. Aris.* 139–40).⁶¹⁶ Philo, an agitator for Jewish citizenship in Alexandria, acknowledged that Jewish customs set Jews apart from other peoples, preventing mingling (*Mos.* 1.278). Likewise, even for Josephus, who certainly writes with a broader audience (including Gentiles) in view, the law forbids excess intermingling between foreigners and Jews (*Ag. Ap.* 2.257).⁶¹⁷ But Jewish refusal to fellowship with those who live otherwise (2.258) was not dif-

607. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 577–78 (citing *m. Šeb.* 4:3; 5:9; *Git.* 5:8; *t. ‘Abod. Zar.* 1:3; *y. Demai* 4.4.24a; *b. Ber.* 17a), also noting that some rabbis visited a Gentile in Tyre (citing *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 6:2; *Esth. Rab.* 2:4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 16:6; *Midr. Prov.* 13).

608. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 575.

609. *Pirque R. El.* 29 (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 574). This may be hyperbole, working on the assumption of the uncircumcised being idolaters.

610. Contrary to the arguments of some, this practice was early and known by some Gentiles even outside the land (see Keener, *John*, 446–47; comment on Acts 2:38).

611. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 576, citing *Jos. Ant.* 15.417; *War* 6.124–25; *Ag. Ap.* 2.103–4; *Philo Embassy* 212; *m. Kelim* 1:8; *b. Yebam.* 46ab.

612. Even if one holds that later rabbis associated purity laws with the temple simply to negate those laws’ present relevance (Poirier, “Purity”), the architecture in Josephus supports the connection.

613. Klawans, “Gentile Impurity,” excludes much of the evidence by arguing that the Tannaim initiated a new understanding of Gentiles as being ritually defiling. But our earlier sources (proselyte baptism, the temple, Acts, and the Qumran evidence) suggest that the Tannaim simply refined ideas already held (though one could read even Acts as referring to moral rather than ritual impurity; Klawans acknowledges the former). The claim of Hayes, “Intermarriage,” that Gentile impurity was a late construct based on the prohibition of intermarriage (because the earliest sources against intermarriage do not cite this rationale) is also unpersuasive (see comment on Acts 16:3); Gentile impurity need not be the primary (or earliest) reason for prohibiting intermarriage for it to be held in the first century.

614. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 575.

615. Wise, “General Introduction,” 264 (connecting the First Jewish Revolt’s revolutionaries’ immediate ending of sacrifices on behalf of Caesar).

616. Distinctive customs need not entail hatred: those who followed pagan customs and “joined themselves to pagans” apostatized from Israel (1 Macc 1:14–15), but the same document welcomes Gentile allies (8:17–29; 12:2, 5, 16; 14:16, 24, 40) and considers Spartans “siblings” (12:6, 21; 14:20).

617. No less a Hellenistically competent Judean writer than Josephus might be construed as warning against welcoming Gentiles who lack genuine commitment to Judaism (*Ag. Ap.* 2.210; Barclay, “Paul among Jews,”

ferent from the similar exclusivism of other peoples (2.259); in contrast to some others, in fact, Jews did welcome converts (2.260–61). Certainly the Hellenistic and Roman pragmatic ideal of multiculturalism (cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.89.1–90.1) contrasts with Jewish prohibitions of mixing, however strictly or leniently applied.⁶¹⁸ But in practice, Romans and Greeks were ethnocentric; both Roman and Hellenistic cultural mixing was meant to spread their own “superior” cultures. See fuller comment on table fellowship at Acts 10:23; 11:3.⁶¹⁹

If Pharisees limited their intercourse with the *amme ha'aretz* within Israel,⁶²⁰ certainly at least Pharisees (who came to constitute a conservative wing within the Jerusalem church, Acts 15:5) would be no less concerned with Gentiles.⁶²¹ Later rabbis looked askance at the *amme ha'aretz*⁶²² and apparently felt that they communicated uncleanness to scrupulous Pharisees,⁶²³ with whom they may often be contrasted.⁶²⁴ One should not eat the food of an *am ha'aretz*;⁶²⁵ a pious person who eats with such a common person becomes debased;⁶²⁶ and a pious person who eats at the common person's house must assume that the food has not been tithed.⁶²⁷ A pious person (by rabbinic standards) should oversee the banquet of an *am ha'aretz* only if he may supervise and be certain that everything has been properly tithed.⁶²⁸

One could never be certain whether the garment of an *am ha'aretz*, who did not observe proper purity regulations, was unclean (*m. Tehar.* 4:5);⁶²⁹ having one's pos-

104), but while this draws community boundaries, it need not exclude positive contact. Jewish exclusivity was a major charge against them (Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 272, citing *Ag. Ap.* 2.148).

618. Scholars cite, e.g., Lev 20:24–26; Ezra 10:11; 1 Esd 8:70–71, 86–87; 2 Macc 14:3, 37–38; *Let. Aris.* 138; Philo *Mos.* 1.278; see Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 320–21; Dunn, *Acts*, 139. In contrast with modern multicultural ideals, however, the closest ancient ideal equivalent usually both coexisted with xenophobia in the homeland and functioned as a tool of imperialism; see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:516–17; for xenophobia against Jewish people in antiquity, see comment on Acts 16:20–21.

619. For the range of views regarding Gentiles, see Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 52–74; Boccaccini, *Judaism*, 251–65; briefly, see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:512–13.

620. Rabbinic reports express the social distance that existed between Pharisees and the *amme ha'aretz* (for the contrast, see, e.g., *m. Git.* 5:9; *Ḥag.* 2:7; *t. Demai* 2:5, 14–15, 19; 3:6–7; 6:8; *Ma'as.* 2:5), the common people who often ignored their legal interpretations. Hillel reportedly doubted that such unlearned people (such as the *amme ha'aretz*, *b. Ber.* 61a) could be pious (cf. *m. 'Ab.* 2:5/6); some Tannaim doubted that those who neglected learning Torah if they had the opportunity would share in the coming world (*'Abot R. Nat.* 36 A); some apparently felt that undue fellowship with an *am ha'aretz* would deprive one of (eternal?) life (*m. 'Ab.* 3:10/11). Still, some rabbinic accounts may be intended hyperbolically (*b. Ber.* 61a; *Pesah.* 49b); cf. kinder sentiments in *m. Git.* 5:9; *'Abot R. Nat.* 16, 40 A.

621. An *am ha'aretz* was more trustworthy than a Gentile (*b. Bek.* 11b; cf. *'Abot R. Nat.* 16 A; contrast *b. Pesah.* 49b, but this is extreme; one should not intermarry with them, *b. Pesah.* 49a). Views about them shifted over time (Jaffé, “*Amei-ha-ares*,” regards the Tannaim as more hostile than Pharisees or Amoraim).

622. E.g., *m. 'Ab.* 3:11; *b. Pesah.* 49b.

623. E.g., *m. Demai* 2:2; *Ma'as.* Š. 3:3; *Ḥag.* 2:7; *Tehar.* 4:5; 8:3, 5; *t. 'Ohal.* 5:11. On their uncleanness and carelessness about purity (by rabbinic standards), see also, e.g., *t. Demai* 3:10; 6:8; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 69a; *y. Ḥag.* 2:6, §3; *Lev. Rab.* 18:1.

624. Cf., e.g., *t. Ma'as.* 2:5; *Demai* 2:5, 14–15, 19; 3:7; 6:8; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 70b; cf. Luke 18:10. Whether the categories of *haberim* and Pharisees overlap fully has been debated and would affect the texts used here.

625. *'Abot R. Nat.* 32, §72 B. Sanders, *Judaism*, 441, concedes that Pharisees normally avoided eating with persons lower “on the purity scale” but warns against NT scholars' frequent assumption that this entailed total separation or a soteriological judgment.

626. *'Abot R. Nat.* 31, §68. For avoiding meals with them, cf. also *b. Ber.* 43b; *y. Demai* 2:3.

627. So *t. Demai* 3:7; for related cautions, 3:9; cf. Pharisaic concerns in Luke 11:42. On the untithed food of *amme ha'aretz*, see also *m. Demai* 2:2; 4:5; *Ma'as.* 5:3; *Ma'as.* Š. 3:3; *b. Beṣah* 35b; *Ned.* 20a; 84b; *Pesah.* 42b; eating it could be regarded as deathworthy in late sources (*Lam. Rab.* 1:3, §28). Some viewed this as the distinctive mark constituting an *am ha'aretz* (*b. Ber.* 47b, bar.).

628. So *t. Demai* 3:6.

629. Cf. *m. Ḥag.* 2:7. This was true, by Pharisaic standards, even though some *amme ha'aretz* were priests (*'Abot R. Nat.* 32, §72 B; *y. Ter.* 6:1), who were supposed to represent a higher standard of holiness than Pharisees (*m. Ḥag.* 2:7).

sessions on an *am ha'aretz's* property made them unclean (8:3); if one allows *amme ha'aretz* into one's house, they render it unclean (though not if they enter without permission, 8:5). Their vessels were unclean (*t. 'Ohal. 5:11*). These sentiments toward the *amme ha'aretz* probably extend earlier separatism between the righteous and the wicked in Israel⁶³⁰ (which is not to say that “sinners” in the Gospels refers to the *amme ha'aretz*;⁶³¹ the rabbis did tolerate the latter).⁶³²

Even God-fearers remained unclean as unconverted Gentiles; their food might be clean, but the seating in their home was not.⁶³³ Some strictures against interaction with Gentiles would be less relevant for a God-fearer who avoided idolatry. Avoiding business with Gentiles for three days before a festival to avoid idolatry uncleanness (*m. 'Abod. Zar. 1:1–2*)⁶³⁴ would not be relevant to a God-fearer. Not only Gentiles' homes but their land counted “as אבות טומאה (avot tum'ah—‘fathers of uncleanness’)—i.e., primary sources of impurity.”⁶³⁵ Yet a Jew might enter even a house originally built for idolatry if the idol was removed (*m. 'Abod. Zar. 3:7*).⁶³⁶

Despite the report in Acts 10:22, Peter may not know the extent of Cornelius's “God-fearing”; Cornelius's bow in 10:25 rendered the situation more ambiguous. Whatever Cornelius's precise relationship to idolatry, he, as a Roman soldier bound by oath to Caesar, cannot be completely free from that sphere. Peter seems to have held to a more stringent, “religious” view than some of his contemporaries, at least after his leadership in the Jerusalem church may have required him to be “above reproach” to avoid needless scandal that could alienate conservatives inside or outside the community.⁶³⁷ (One might suppose that the more conservative position reflected those who lived in exclusively Jewish areas; Peter, however, came from an area where some contact with Gentiles was inevitable.)⁶³⁸

Does Peter mean that literally all people are clean, making them “acceptable to God” (10:35) and “saved” (11:14)? This interpretation would press soteriology into a statement of cross-cultural relationship at the expense of its larger Lukan theological context (cf. 4:12; 10:43). Later Peter argues that God “cleansed” Gentiles through faith (15:9, 11)—a faith that occurs (at least in its fullest sense) only after Peter preaches to them (10:43–44; 11:17; 15:7).⁶³⁹

630. E.g., Ps 1:1; Prov 13:20; Sir 13:16–19; 33:14 (LXX; in a different version, 36:14).

631. Some (Jeremias, *Theology*, 118; idem, *Parables*, 132) included *amme ha'aretz* in this category; others disagree (Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 176–99; Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 73). If the *amme ha'aretz* comprised the vast majority of first-century Judeans, the Pharisees could scarcely have excluded them entirely from the covenant (*m. Sanh. 10:1*). The Pharisees probably looked down on those uneducated in the Torah no less than much of the modern academic elite tends toward impatience with the politically uninformed “masses” (cf. *m. 'Ab. 2:6*, 3:11; *'Abot R. Nat. 36 A*; *b. Ber. 61a*; *Pesah. 49b*, including baraitoth), but “sinners” normally specified blatant violators of the law (*Tob 4:17*; *1 En. 1:9*; *5:6*; *22:10–13*; *91:11–12*; *94:5*, 11; *95:2–3*, 7; *98:10*; *108:6–7*, 15; *Pss. Sol. 2:34*; *13:1*; *14:6–7*; *Sib. Or. 3.304*), though it can include any human who sins (e.g., *Test. Ab. 9:5–7 A*; *4 Ezra 7:138–40*).

632. E.g., *m. Git. 5:9*; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:632–34. The rabbis viewed the *amme ha'aretz* negatively primarily in relation to the law as the rabbis had come to understand it (633). A son of an *am ha'aretz* could be apprenticed to a *haber* provided he followed the latter's rules when there (*t. Demai 2:19*). Sometimes an *am ha'aretz* would respect and learn from rabbis (*Gen. Rab. 78:12*; contrast *b. Pesah. 49b*). The rabbinic usage differs from that in the Hebrew Bible (de Vaux, *Israel*, 70–71; Nicholson, “Expression”).

633. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 583, citing *m. Ger. 3:1–2*.

634. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 576; cf. *y. 'Abod. Zar. 1:2*, §3.

635. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 576 (citing *m. Kelim 1:1*; *'Ohal. 18:7*; *Naz. 7:3*; *y. Šabb. 1.4.3c*; *Sem. 4:23*, 25; *b. Šabb. 14b–15a*; *'Abod. Zar. 8b*).

636. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 577. Some Tannaim claimed that Moses spoke with Pharaoh outside the city because of idolatry (*Mek. Pisha 1.40–41* [Lauterbach, 1:4]).

637. The principle could be taken too far (*Gal 2:12–13*; 6:12), but Paul himself allowed the principle more generally (*1 Cor 9:20–21*).

638. See Le Cornu, *Acts*, 566–67.

639. Cf. also discussion in Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 23–25.

Perhaps here Peter simply claims that he cannot evaluate people's *potential* for conversion on the basis of their ethnicity; his actual eating with them (11:3) seems to occur after their faith and baptism. A less likely alternative is that Luke simply uses "cleanse" in two different ways, one referring to those acceptable for table fellowship (because they are God-fearers) and the other to full cleansing of those who become something like spiritual proselytes; either way, we cannot press Luke's language or imagery too strictly here.⁶⁴⁰ (This is not the only place where he is less concerned with the chronology of conversion than we typically are; see comment on Acts 2:38; 8:14–16.)

As in the Gospel Jesus embraced "sinners" (Luke 5:8, 30, 32; 7:34, 37, 39; 15:1–2, 7, 10; 19:7) without approving of their ways (6:32–34), regarding all as genuinely sinners (cf. 5:8, 32; 13:2; 15:25–32; 18:13; 24:7), in Acts (which lacks the term) the morally marginalized now welcomed are the Gentiles.⁶⁴¹ Yet Peter is certain to be questioned for his action here (Acts 11:3), and his speech here defends him in advance with the forensic technique of metastasis: he "transfers the responsibility for his seemingly unorthodox behavior to God."⁶⁴²

V. COMING WITHOUT OBJECTION (10:29)

In Luke 7:6, Jesus was going to a centurion's home, but the centurion deterred him, claiming to be unworthy (apparently based on pre-Lukan tradition, though Matt 8:7 may be a question).⁶⁴³ But Luke here shows that the sort of practice that Jesus began, Peter has fulfilled; Jesus did not go to a centurion's house, but his agent Peter now does so.

One could refuse a request, but even to a stranger one ought to do so politely by saying "if possible" rather than a direct "no" (Cic. *Att.* 8.4); Peter, however, had not even raised any objections. His claim that he lacked an objection might be viewed as disingenuous since he had serious initial objections (Acts 10:14);⁶⁴⁴ in this case his report would be rhetorically self-serving (or at least inoffensive) like Lysias's later report to Felix (23:27). Rhetorical handbooks suggest portraying characters distinctively and realistically, in ways appropriate to the situation.

Peter's objection was to God, however, not to the messengers (the issue in question), and the lack of objection he affirms here follows his lesson from God not to regard anyone as unclean (10:28); he later does not hesitate to confess his objections to his conservative colleagues in Jerusalem (11:8). Thus Peter presumably refers to his lack of objection to the messengers.

Since Peter has already heard Cornelius's request through his messengers in 10:22, asking why Cornelius had sent for him may reflect inconsistent editing of the story⁶⁴⁵ or simply a desire to hear a fuller account. Granted, 10:22 does not specify the content of the message; neither, however, does 10:30–33, though the invitation to speak what God has commanded (10:33) may invite Peter's dependence on spontaneous inspiration of the Spirit. Perhaps protocol simply invites him to hear the message more formally from Cornelius's own lips; the verb for his inquiry might balance the inquiry of Cornelius's messengers in 10:18, though the term (used seven other times by Luke, 75 percent of NT usage) may simply be fresh on Luke's mind.

640. Kilgallen, "Acceptable," distinguishes "clean" in Acts 10:28 from "saved" in 11:14.

641. For the transposition of "sinners" and "saved" in Luke's rhetoric, cf. Neale, *None but Sinners*.

642. Soards, *Speeches*, 71.

643. For the view that it is a question, see Jeremias, *Promise*, 30; Martin, "Pericope," 15; France, "Exegesis," 257; Carson, "Matthew," 201; Keener, *Matthew*, 266.

644. Spencer, *Acts*, 115.

645. Cf. Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 61.

VI. CORNELIUS'S SUMMARY (10:30–33)

Because most of this summary rehearses information already provided, Luke covers it concisely. In 10:30, it sounds as if it took the messengers two days to reach Peter; now they were arriving (undoubtedly after a nocturnal rest in some village along the road) between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. But “four days” may be three days, since part of a day counted as a whole by ancient reckoning.⁶⁴⁶ If the return journey to Caesarea included an overnight stay along the way, the group may have reached Cornelius's house before 3:00 p.m. (or perhaps even before noon), perhaps allowing for a hospitable meal before official business.⁶⁴⁷ Conversely, they may have simply arrived late, having stopped en route to eat kosher provisions or, less likely, to purchase food from sellers.

The summary in 10:30–32 provides the gist of 10:3–6, though the wording is different; such paraphrase was accepted in ancient rhetoric and Luke's own methodology and reduced the verbal redundancy in literary repetitions. Cornelius's depiction of the angel as one in “radiant apparel” does not suggest that he was unaware that his visitor was an angel (cf. 10:22); this is typical language in Luke-Acts (1:10).⁶⁴⁸ Cornelius's “petition” (10:31), if for salvation or acceptance, might draw on the language of regular Jewish prayer,⁶⁴⁹ although it need not have done so. That Cornelius's righteous acts were “remembered by God” evokes LXX language, where God remembers his righteous ones or his covenant with them.⁶⁵⁰

The attentive reader of Luke-Acts may also notice an implicit comparison of two recipients of revelation: Gabriel told the aged priest Zechariah that his prayer had been heard (Luke 1:13), just as an angel now declares to this uncircumcised Gentile. We cannot say for certain whether the echo is deliberate or simply the product of Luke's distinctive style, but it does draw our attention to the first angel appearance in Luke-Acts, unexpectedly placing Cornelius on a par with other (Jewish) seekers of God.

Nowhere in this chapter is it clear that Cornelius specifically sought salvation, only a message from God (Acts 10:5–6, 22, 32); still, although we might construe this to mean that Cornelius was already converted (cf. 11:9; 15:9), Peter's first summary of the events seems to suggest otherwise (11:14).⁶⁵¹ It is possible that Peter understood and articulated Cornelius's need as conversion (“salvation,” in Luke's language), but Cornelius should not be expected to have understood that language or precisely how to describe his need.

“All that the Lord commanded” Peter to say (10:33) recalls 1:2 for the ideal reader: Jesus had left commands with his disciples. The specific term, *προστάσω*, appears

646. Kistemaker, *Acts*, 389.

647. See *ibid.* Although it might seem questionable whether Luke would skip such a meal as irrelevant to his point, it is possible that meals together could be inferred on the basis of Acts 11:3 (though these meals are more certain afterward). Luke does not feel compelled to specify them in 10:48, though they may be safely assumed there.

648. The particular term for “radiant” here (*λαμπρός*) can simply mean “bright” and clean (Luke 23:11; Jas 2:2–3; Rev 18:14; 19:8; Sir 29:22; Bar 6:60), though it applies to angels in Rev 15:6, to Jesus in Acts 26:13 (in a noun cognate); Rev 22:16, and to Wisdom in Wis 6:12. Cornelius recognizes that the “man” (Acts 10:30) is an “angel” (10:22; cf. 11:13), as elsewhere (Luke 24:4, 23; cf. Acts 1:10).

649. Talbert, *Acts*, 96, cites the Eighteen Benedictions—benedictions 1, 6, and 7 regarding redemption and 6 for forgiveness (the answer in Acts 10:43).

650. Johnson, *Acts*, 190–91, cites Gen 4:1; 9:15; Exod 2:24; 6:5; Lev 26:42; Pss 105:45; 135:23; also Luke 1:54, 72; 23:42.

651. Acts 11:14 seems to supply a key element supporting the conclusion of 11:18, but the timing of the household's conversion need not be significant for that conclusion if the outpouring of the Spirit could follow conversion in some cases (cf. 8:14–17).

in Luke's writings only at Luke 5:14 (the law), Acts 10:48 (for Peter's command to baptize),⁶⁵² and Acts 17:26 (God's decree in creation).⁶⁵³

5. Peter Recounts Jesus's Story (10:34–43)

Peter recounts here the nucleus of Jesus's story, the same story preached at greater length by Luke's Gospel.⁶⁵⁴ The climactic message of forgiveness for whoever believes (10:43) is confirmed by the outpouring of the Spirit on Gentiles (10:44–48).

a. Introduction

This speech summarizes major themes of Luke's Gospel, starting from John's baptism and including healings as deliverance from the devil, the movement from Galilee to Jerusalem, rejection, appearances, and commission.⁶⁵⁵ Likewise, the mention of God "anointing" Jesus with the Spirit (10:38) is Luke's most obvious allusion in Acts back to the programmatic statement of the Gospel (Luke 4:18).

Peter is interrupted only shortly after his *narratio* (depending on how we view the speech's structure),⁶⁵⁶ but Luke allows him to rehearse in a micronarrative⁶⁵⁷ what Luke's own Gospel did more extensively: Gentiles need to hear the gospel story. This portrayal suggests a model for the continuing Gentile mission. Its summary form also provides an interpretive crux for the Gospel of Luke, recounting key themes central to his emphasis.⁶⁵⁸

The rhetorical structure is something like the following:

- Complimentary *exordium* (Acts 10:34–35)
- *Propositio* (possibly; 10:36)
- *Narratio* (10:37–42)⁶⁵⁹
- Beginning of proofs (10:43)

It is also possible to make 10:43 the *propositio*.⁶⁶⁰ In any case, Peter is unable to complete the speech (cf. 11:15, despite the idiom). Some scholars regard the speech as

652. Probably the term was fresh on Luke's mind, but perhaps Acts 10:48 suggests that Peter gives this order on the basis of God's command.

653. It appears elsewhere in the NT only rarely (Mark 1:44; Matt 1:24; 8:4) but often in the LXX, especially later parts such as Esther (Esth 1:15, 19; 2:23; 3:2, 14; 13:6), Daniel (Dan 2:8, 12, 14; 3:10, 13, 24; 4:14; 13:32, 34), and Maccabean literature (1 Macc 10:37, 62; 2 Macc 5:24; 6:21; 7:3–4; 13:4; 14:16; 15:3, 5, 30; 3 Macc 3:25; 4:11, 13; 5:3–4, 19, 37, 40; 7:8); also in the Apostolic Fathers, esp. 1 *Clement* (1 *Clem.* 20.11; 40.4–5; 54.2) and *Hermas* (*Herm.* 29.10; 66.1, 5; also *Ign. Poly.* 8.1).

654. Kennedy, "Source Criticism," 148–49, notes the connection to the gospel story and compares Mark, whose source early tradition deems Peter.

655. Johnson, *Acts*, 195; for connections with some key themes in Luke-Acts, see Neiryneck, "Luke 4,16–30," 379–87. Park, "Berichte," thinks that Acts 10:37–43 resembles the summary in *Jos. Ant.* 18.63–64, but the overlap might reflect the same historical subject and a similar audience.

656. Peter notes that the Spirit came as he was "beginning to speak" (Acts 11:15), but this may also reflect Lukan idiom with this verb (Luke 7:15; Acts 2:4) and others like it (see comment on Acts 2:4).

657. Greek epic poets such as Homer mastered the use of a story within a story, but one finds it much earlier, e.g., in the serpent's account in the Egyptian story "The Shipwrecked Sailor" (ca. 2000 B.C.E.; in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 45–53).

658. On speeches interpreting history, etc., see, e.g., Plümacher, "Missionsreden."

659. This is the appropriate location for a *narratio*, though deliberative speeches could omit them (Heath, "Invention," 105–6); presumably, Luke focuses on the *narratio* because of his popular-narrative genre (though most historians composing speeches did not normally do so; oratorical narrative functioned differently than rhetorically informed historical narrative, cf. *Pliny Ep.* 5.8.9–11).

660. Cf., e.g., the defense speech *narratio* in *Cic. Quinct.* 3.11–9.33, followed by a statement of the case in 10.36, proofs in 11.37–27.85, and a summary of what was proved, 28.85–29.90. Marguerat, *Actes*, 389 (cf. 395), views Acts 10:34–36 as the *propositio*, 10:37–42 as the *narratio*, and 10:43 as the *peroratio*.

forensic, which fits the structure and the context of Peter's defense in 11:4–17;⁶⁶¹ in this setting in the story world, however, Peter's intention is deliberative⁶⁶² if he calls for conversion.

Others regard this speech as a general missionary sermon, only loosely connected with the context;⁶⁶³ if the connection is loose, Luke might give a sample of the traditional preaching without needing to know the exact words spoken on the occasion. Of course, the alternatives need not be stark; Luke could have some specific tradition about the speech and fill in with general information, for example. Some argue that Luke may follow a written source here,⁶⁶⁴ though others regard it as a Lukan creation.⁶⁶⁵ Whatever sources Luke may have had available, he certainly makes them his own.

Luke is sensitive to the rhetorical situation; thus Peter, preaching now to a Gentile, includes less Scripture than in Acts 2 and 3; Luke provides a sufficient sample of OT exposition in sermons to Jewish audiences (including Acts 7; 13). Nevertheless, Scripture remains foundational as a source and template (Acts 10:43; Luke 24:44–45), and there are a number of proposed biblical allusions here (Deut 10:17 in Acts 10:34; Isa 52:7 and 59:17 in Acts 10:36; Ps 107:20 and Isa 61:1 in Acts 10:38; and possibly Deut 21:22 in Acts 10:39).⁶⁶⁶

We need not be concerned about Peter's means of communication. Latin was used in Palestine especially by the army and provincial administration, and many Latin inscriptions appear in Caesarea.⁶⁶⁷ It was important enough to appear on signs in Jerusalem's temple forbidding foreigners' entrance (Jos. *War* 5.194), but apart from milestones, nearly half of all its occurrences in Palestine are from Caesarea.⁶⁶⁸

Nevertheless, no one would suppose that Peter had speedily learned Latin for the occasion. This was the Greek East, and whether Cornelius is a Roman who had worked in the East or an urban Syrian from the East, he would understand Greek.⁶⁶⁹ Even in Caesarea, although Latin was the language of the governor's office, the army, and inscriptions belonging to the city's post-70 colonial status, Herod's Caesarea was more Hellenistic than Roman.⁶⁷⁰

b. Rehearsing Common Knowledge (10:34–38)

Luke portrays some key events of the Jesus story as common knowledge in Judea (Luke 24:18; Acts 26:26). In Acts 10:37–38, Peter affirms that his audience in Caesarea

661. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 355; cf. Soards, *Speeches*, 71 (with both judicial and deliberative elements). It would be epideictic (with Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 123) if its focus was the praising of righteous Gentiles.

662. With, e.g., Humphrey, *Voice*, 76.

663. Cf. Ehrhardt, *Acts*, 61.

664. Zehnle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 40. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 459, thinks that the apposition between λόγος and ῥήματα in Acts 10:36–37 indicates source material, but it may simply be literary variation (cf. p. 464 on the sense of the Heb. *dabar* here). The grammatical problems of 10:36–38 could suggest a source (Witherington, *Acts*, 355); Dodd thinks that 10:35–38 makes much more sense as a close translation of the Aramaic (*Preaching*, 27–28, following Torrey). (Dodd's view makes sense if the Palestinian church transmitted the message in Aramaic, but Peter certainly did not deliver it in Aramaic unless Cornelius was Syrian, which is not impossible but certainly not how Luke presents him.)

665. E.g., Wilckens, "Kerygma und Evangelium."

666. Witherington, *Acts*, 355–56.

667. Aune, "Latin," 335.

668. Eck, "Spiegel."

669. If a Syrian, he might even understand Aramaic. Whatever Cornelius's background in Luke's source, however, his own Cornelius, in literary terms, stands more for Rome than for Syria (which already had its first mentioned representative in the church, Acts 6:5). Although military inscriptions would be in Latin, Cornelius would presumably converse with his subordinates in Greek for everyday matters.

670. See Isaac, "Latin and Greek."

knows of the famous deeds of Jesus in greater Judea (or, following the sequence of Luke's Gospel, Galilee, Perea, and Judea proper). But in 10:34–35 Peter affirms that he has himself discovered something he had not known; though the point that God shows no partiality (10:34) was a common idea, its application in 10:35 would have been more controversial among Peter's countrypeople. After building on this common ground, Peter can turn to more specific information verified by witnesses.

I. NO PARTIALITY (10:34)

Luke does not strictly need to report that Peter "opened his mouth" at the beginning of a speech (Acts 8:35; 18:14; Luke 1:64), since this is self-evident; it reflects familiar biblical idiom,⁶⁷¹ generally found in the more Semitic parts of the NT.⁶⁷² "Of a truth" (ἐπ' ἀληθείας), or "certainly," appears elsewhere as an idiom in Luke (Acts 4:27; Luke 4:25; 20:21; 22:59; see comment at 4:27). Acts 10:34–35 here constitutes a complimentary *exordium*; this would be appropriate for addressing Gentile hearers (and, even if one knew little about rhetoric, might seem a matter of polite propriety, in any case). Peter may have already known, at least on some level, that Gentiles could become saved (Luke 24:47; cf. Acts 1:8; 2:39; 3:25–26); what he has certainly learned newly here is that he cannot presume uncircumcised Gentiles to be impure or treat this as a barrier to fellowship with them (cf. Acts 15:9).⁶⁷³

The foundation for this argument is God's impartiality,⁶⁷⁴ a thesis affirmed by both Jewish and Gentile thinkers (Deut 10:17 is foundational for the Jewish perspective).⁶⁷⁵ People expected and praised a ruler's⁶⁷⁶ or judge's impartiality;⁶⁷⁷ Greeks and those influenced by them could also apply this impartial judgment to the activity of Zeus.⁶⁷⁸ Jewish people recognized that judges should be impartial,⁶⁷⁹ and affirmed that God was impartial.⁶⁸⁰

Paul also applied God's impartiality to the matter of Jews and Gentiles (Rom 2:9–11, esp. 11). But whereas Paul stresses divine impartiality in the usual Jewish

671. More than forty times in the LXX; so also many commentators on Matt 5:1 (e.g., Gundry, *Matthew*, 67; Guelich, *Sermon on Mount*, 54).

672. Matt 5:2; 13:35; Rev 13:6; but also 2 Cor 6:11; the apparent exceptions in 1 Clem. 16.7; 18.15 echo biblical language. This might, but need not, reflect a Semitic source (Philip the Hellenist may be the source for Acts 8:35, though 8:32 may influence the wording there).

673. Tannehill, *Acts*, 134–37.

674. This text's more recent reception history in a racialized context suggests its continued effectiveness in demanding reconciliation between ethnically estranged groups (Scott, "Acts 10:34," esp. 138–39), including in African-American history (Williams, "Acts," 231, 236), not least the antislavery movement (see esp. Washington, *Fellowship*, 27).

675. Despite the absence of this specific term, the concept of impartiality is frequent in the LXX (e.g., Job 13:8; 32:21; expressed with πρόσωπον in Exod 23:3; Deut 1:17; 10:17; 16:19; 2 Chr 19:7; Job 13:10; Ps 81:2 [82:2 ET]; Prov 18:5; 24:23; 28:21; Sir 7:6; by πρόσωπον with λαμβάνω, Lev 19:15; Mal 2:9; Sir 4:22, 27; 35:13 [35:16]; 1 Esd 4:39). Sometimes these texts describe God (2 Chr 19:7; Job 34:19; Sir 35:12 [35:15]) or truth (1 Esd 4:39); the sense is different in Mal 1:8. For divine impartiality in Scripture, see in more detail Bassler, *Impartiality*, 7–17 (focusing on 2 Chr 19:7; Deut 10:17; Job 34:19; Ps 82:1–4).

676. E.g., Isoc. *Ad Nic.* 18; Men. *Rhet.* 2.10, 416.8–9, 15.

677. E.g., Demosth. *Cor.* 1–2; Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.2.3.10. In different wording, e.g., Plut. *S. Rom.*, Cato the Elder 13, *Mor.* 198F; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.27.616.

678. E.g., Aeschylus *Suppl.* 403–4. In different wording, e.g., Sil. *It.* 6.467.

679. Besides LXX texts above, see, e.g., 4Q364 frg. 21a–k (reproducing Deut 1:17); *Jub.* 40:8; Sir 42:2; Ps.-Phoc. 9–12, 137. In different wording, e.g., Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.207.

680. In addition to LXX texts noted above (2 Chr 19:7; Job 34:19; Sir 35:12 [LXX; 35:15 NRSV; in another version, 32:15]), see *Jub.* 5:16; 21:4; 33:18; *Pss. Sol.* 2:18; Wis 6:7; L.A.B. 20:4; 2 Bar. 13:8; 44:4; *Test. Job* 4:7–8; 43:13; *Sipre Num.* 42.1.2; *Sipre Deut.* 304.1.1; Rom 2:11 (which Bassler, "Divine Impartiality," regards as the center of Paul's argument in Rom 1:16–2:29); cf. similar ideas in Wis 12:13. In the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha more fully, see Bassler, *Impartiality*, 17–44; in the rabbinic literature (where it often is used for theodicy), see 45–76; in Philo (where it retains nationalistic overtones), 77–119.

setting of God's judgment, Luke's articulation of this idea may be closer to typical Gentile portraits of universality.⁶⁸¹ Luke's particular term for one who shows partiality or favoritism, προσωπολήμπτης, is a NT hapax legomenon and perhaps the earliest occurrence in extant literature,⁶⁸² but it is probably not Luke's own coinage. Even if it were, it would be readily understandable; early Christians used cognates for the same concept, applicable both to God (Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25) and to others (Jas 2:1, 9; Ign. *Phil.* 6.1). Luke elsewhere employs the constituent noun and verb, πρόσωπον and λαμβάνω, for the showing of partiality (receiving someone's "face," Luke 20:21),⁶⁸³ as does Paul in denying that God shows partiality (Gal 2:6).

The terms προσωπολήμπτης, προσωπολημπτέω, and προσωπολημπσία in early Christian texts echo the conjunction of λαμβάνω and πρόσωπον in the LXX (so BDAG), perhaps suggesting an implicit wordplay here between καταλαμβάνομαι and προσωπολήμπτης. The verb καταλαμβάνω can refer to seizing or grasping, but particularly refers to apprehending or recognition in Luke's usage (always used by him in the middle voice, Acts 4:13; 25:25).⁶⁸⁴

II. WELCOMED GENTILES (10:35)

Gentiles here who "fear" God and do what is right refer back to God-fearers (10:2, though the term here differs). ("Working righteousness"⁶⁸⁵ probably corresponds to "almsgiving" in 10:2, analogous to "good and charitable works" in 9:36. It fits the testimony of the messengers to Cornelius's "righteousness" in 10:22 and certainly cannot rest on Cornelius's response to Peter in 10:25.)

If Luke identifies God-fearers with righteousness workers fully (which is not certain), then "acceptable" or (perhaps better in this context) "welcomed" here means that the gospel will come to them and they will respond to it, not that they are already saved (as Cornelius was not, at least in Peter's view; 11:14; 15:9).⁶⁸⁶ The term δεκτός can imply acceptability in a ritual sense—that is, no longer unclean⁶⁸⁷ (though it is not clear whether Luke uses this term on only one level; compare 10:28 with 15:9)—but it also has a more direct moral sense (e.g., Prov 11:1; 12:22; 16:7; Sir 2:5; 3:17; 35:6 [35:9]).⁶⁸⁸

Those welcomed before God here are not Gentiles as a whole but a specific class of Gentiles, what many Jews traditionally considered "righteous" Gentiles.⁶⁸⁹ This minority of Gentiles avoided predominantly Gentile sins such as idolatry and fornication;

681. Bassler, "Luke on Impartiality" (regarding Paul's abolition of categories as more radical than Luke's transfer of individuals from one category to the other).

682. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 224; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 462; cf. BDAG.

683. Cf., also opposing partiality with these terms, *Did.* 4.3; *Barn.* 19.4.

684. Cf. the wordplay in Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 94–95.20–22, where κατάληψιν is a certain assurance in contrast to mere υπόληψιν (line 20) or τὸ ὑπολαμβάνόμενον (22), "unfounded assumption." Note the wordplay on καταλαμβάνω in John 1:5 (comments in Keener, *John*, 387; Barrett, "Κατέλαβεν," 297); also in Lucian *Phil. Sale* 27.

685. Cf. "exploits for righteousness" in Heb 11:33. Early Christians (at least in the Pauline circle) would not have regarded these as intrinsically salvific (Rom 4:6; Titus 3:5; but cf. Rom 2:6–8), but they would not have rejected their value (1 John 3:12; 1 *Clem.* 33.8; 2 *Clem.* 6.9; *Barn.* 1.6; *Herm.* 36.3, 8).

686. Cf. Dumais, "Salut" (some passages may suggest that pagan cultures provide some form of access to God, but in these passages' full Lukan context, this can be fulfilled only in Christ).

687. E.g., Lev 1:3–4; 17:4; 19:5; 22:19–21, 29; 23:11; Prov 15:8; Isa 56:7; 58:5; 60:7; Jer 6:20; Mal 2:13; cf. Job 33:26. On the cultic sense, see also Clements, "Background," 205; cf. Arnold, "Acts," 312.

688. Balch, "Accepting," emphasizes Luke's acceptance theme. Dunn, *Acts*, 142, suggests that Gentiles who act like members of the covenant people should not be excluded (Rom 2:13–29), but the ultimate test will be reception of the Spirit. Luke's use of δεκτός in Luke 4:19, 24, is not cultic; of the other two NT uses, Phil 4:18 is, and 2 Cor 6:2 probably is not.

689. For diverse views regarding Gentiles, see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:512–15; Boccaccini, *Judaism*, 251–65; Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 52–74; for God-fearers, see comment on Acts

much of Judaism already acknowledged their existence (perhaps as an apologetic device for theodicy), and the church later apparently embraced those who followed Jesus as fellow members (Acts 15:19–21, 28–29) without circumcision (15:5, 20).⁶⁹⁰

These righteous Gentiles would be “saved” (11:14), their hearts cleansed by faith as God also cleansed Jewish hearts by faith (15:9).⁶⁹¹ It is only when the Spirit falls (10:45), however, that Peter and his colleagues recognize their hearers not only as “righteous Gentiles” but as members of the covenant people, like full proselytes.⁶⁹²

III. GOD OFFERS PEACE (10:36)

Peter's words evoke biblical allusions to the universal God who offers peace to Israel and to others; this peace includes reconciliation to God and the withdrawal of the judgments attached to the previous state of enmity. The “good news of peace” of which Peter speaks is expressly directed toward Israel, but it has implications for Gentiles as well.⁶⁹³ (The “word” [λόγον] here recalls Luke's frequent use of this term for the apostolic message in Acts.)⁶⁹⁴

Sending a message of peace can be diplomatic language for nonaggression or ending hostilities (Deut 2:26; Judg 21:13), such as God would send for Jerusalem (Isa 52:7; 54:10; 57:19). “Proclaiming good news of peace” (here εὐαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην) appears in only two texts, one celebrating judgment on Israel's oppressor (Nah 1:15 [2:1 LXX]), the other celebrating God's forgiveness and restoration of his people (Isa 52:7; cf. Rom 10:15).⁶⁹⁵ The latter is likely in view here, probably along with (in view of other clues in Luke-Acts) the section of Isaiah that it evokes.⁶⁹⁶

Isaiah 52:7 speaks of preaching God's kingdom (“Your God reigns,” demonstrating his rule on behalf of his people), certainly central to Luke's understanding of the gospel (Luke 4:43; 8:1; 16:16; Acts 8:12). That Isa 52:7 almost immediately precedes the Suffering Servant's sacrifice (52:13–53:12) was undoubtedly significant for early Christians (see comment on Acts 8:32–33).⁶⁹⁷ It could be linked midrashically with

10:2. Long before the rabbinic discussions, Wisdom literature distinguished the righteous from the wicked, often in ways that Diaspora Jews could apply broadly.

690. The decision was ambiguous enough, however, about the membership; probably, in Galatians, salvation (which most Jews allowed “righteous Gentiles”) is not at issue but, rather, membership in God's people.

691. Acts 15:9 may undercut the proposed distinction between “clean” (10:28) and “acceptable” (Kilgalen, “Acceptable”), but Luke's Peter may employ the language of “cleansing” in two ways.

692. The debate in Paul's day may have, in fact, been more nuanced than Luke presents it as being in Acts 15:1 (or may have evolved beyond that more careless formulation): not whether righteous Gentiles could be saved but whether they could become part of Israel's covenant as physically uncircumcised, spiritual children of Abraham (Rom 2:28–29; 4:9–12; Gal 3:29). But whatever Peter's understanding here, it is not clear that the entire Jerusalem church welcomes Gentile believers as *full* members of the covenant even in Acts 15:20.

693. Although some were concerned about wishing “peace” to a Gentile during idolatrous feasts (*t. Abod. Zar.* 1:3), such greetings were permitted “for the sake of peace” (*m. Šeb.* 4:3; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 595). Some later rabbis suggested a different greeting for Gentiles (*y. Git.* 5:10, §5; cf. 2 John 10).

694. If the “word” were “evangelizing,” we would have prosopopoeia in the narrower sense (see Rowe, “Style,” 144; Anderson, *Glossary*, 106–7), but the antecedent of εὐαγγελιζόμενος is certainly God (Acts 10:34), the nominative subject of the verb “sent” in this verse. Omitting the relative pronoun ὃν might smooth the Greek grammar, but textually this might support its retention (which might be an Aramism; cf. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 379). Later application of “word” here to Jesus (based on John 1:1–18; Justin Martyr *1 Apol.* 5; 63; *Dial.* 128; Tert. *Apol.* 21.10; contrast Theophilus *Autol.* 2.10; cf. Rainbow, “Christology,” 666) is not surprising (Hippolytus *Against the Heresy of One Noetus* 13), but not to Luke's point.

695. Cf. also 11Q13 II, 16. For similar language, cf. 4Q440 3 I, 16; 4Q511 63–64 III, 4. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 594, notes that contemporary texts treat Isa 52:7; 57:19 and Nah 1:15 messianically (11QMelch II, 1, 4, 6, 15–18).

696. Cf. Allison, *Jesus*, 114, noting allusions to both Isa 52:7 and 61:1 in Acts 10:36–38, and noting the presence of both passages also in 11Q13 II, 15–20. By contrast, Bock, *Proclamation*, 233, doubts that Luke alludes to Isa 52:7 per se, thinking that he simply uses “scriptural language” in general.

697. Evans, *World*, 79, argues that sigla in both the Qumran Isaiah Scroll and the Masoretic Text underline the relationship between Isa 52:7–12 and 52:13–53:12.

Isa 61:1–2 (cited in Luke’s programmatic statement in Luke 4:18–19) and Isa 57:19 (whose “afar off” Luke probably interprets with reference to Gentiles in Acts 2:39). The only other extant NT reference to “evangelizing peace” includes a more explicit reference to Isa 57:19 (Eph 2:17); if we include the noun cognate of “evangelize,” “good news of peace” further clearly refers to Isa 52:7 in Eph 6:15.⁶⁹⁸

Preaching “peace” in Isaiah meant good news that God was no longer angry with his people; Luke’s use, which is informed by so-called Deutero-Isaiah as a whole, presumably means good news of reconciliation to and peace with God.⁶⁹⁹ Here as at other key points, Isaiah’s portrayal of mission informs Luke’s understanding of mission (Luke 4:18–19; see comment on Acts 1:8; 13:47). Jesus is the bringer of peace for earth and for heaven (both with glory in the highest; Luke 2:14; 19:38), and his agents would offer peace (10:5–6), though his coming also brought the figurative sword of division (12:51; see comment on Acts 7:26).⁷⁰⁰

As mentioned above, “peace” meant the cessation of hostilities. The language of “peace” often applies to war⁷⁰¹ or human relationships,⁷⁰² though some ancients (especially Stoics) could apply it to tranquility in the midst of hardship.⁷⁰³ Others applied it to the posthumous bliss of the righteous;⁷⁰⁴ it also belonged to the eschatological hope for Israel.⁷⁰⁵ The pacifist Pharisaic tradition that survived in rabbinic literature⁷⁰⁶ highly extolled the value of peace.⁷⁰⁷ But just as Caesar established the Roman “peace” (the *Pax Romana*) forcibly,⁷⁰⁸ so also God would ultimately subject all his enemies

698. For a possible challenge to imperial propaganda in Eph 6:15, see Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 121.

699. See Isa 40:2; 51:17, 22; 52:7–8; 54:8; specifically on “peace,” esp. 42:19; 48:22; 54:10; 57:19, 21; 60:17; 66:12. Cf. 1 En. 71:15; for the centrality of this theme, see O’Toole, “Eiprvn.” Here, too, it is (at least first) to “the children of Israel” (Acts 10:36), a biblicizing pleonasm Luke employs elsewhere (Luke 1:16; Acts 5:21; 7:23, 37; 9:15; elsewhere in the NT, only in quotations [Matt 27:9; Rom 9:27], summaries of passages [2 Cor 3:7, 13; Heb 11:22; Rev 2:14], and biblical allusions [Rev 7:4; 21:12]).

700. Some of these texts may contrast with Augustus’s fictitious *Pax Romana* (on which see, e.g., Bowley, “Pax”); for contrasts between the Bethlehem narrative and the imperial cult, cf., e.g., Kodell, *Luke*, 20; Flender, *Theologian*, 58; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 32; Brent, “Cult.” For “peace” in Luke-Acts, see also discussion in Villiers, “Peace.”

701. *Isoc. Peace*; *Cic. Phil.* 1.1.1; *Sib. Or.* 3.751–55.

702. *T. Sanh.* 1:2; *Abot R. Nat.* 40 A; usually in Paul (with fellow believers, Rom 14:19; Eph 2:14–15; 4:3; Col 3:15; 1 Thess 5:13; with outsiders, Rom 12:18; 1 Cor 7:15; perhaps 2 Thess 3:16; with God, Rom 5:1; Eph 6:15).

703. Epict. *Diatr.* 3.13.9–11; probably *Let. Aris.* 273; cf. Epict. *Diatr.* 2.2.3; Sen. *Y. Dial.* 7.8.6; Iamblichus *Letter* 9.4–10 (Stobaeus *Anth.* 2.33.15); perhaps Rom 7:23 with 8:6.

704. *Wis* 3:3.

705. Tob 13:14; 1 En. 1:6–8; 5:7–10; 71:17; 105:2 (contrast 98:11, 15; 99:13; 101:3; 103:8 for the wicked); *Jub.* 1:15; 23:29–30; 31:20; 1QM I, 9; XII, 3 (after the battle); *Sib. Or.* 2.29; 3.367–80, 751–55, 780–82; 5.384–85; *Test. Jud.* 22:2; *Lev. Rab.* 9:9, bar.; Christian material in *Test. Dan* 5:11.

706. This wing of Pharisaism may have been a minority in the first century (see, e.g., Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 86, 324). For early Christian pacifism, see Sider, *Killing*.

707. Cf. the standard rabbinic “Great is peace, for . . .” (*Sipre Num.* 42.2.3; *Sipre Deut.* 199.3.1; *Gen. Rab.* 38:6, Tannaitic attribution; 48:18; 100:8, Tannaitic attribution; cf. *Sipra Behuq.* p. q. 1.261.1.14). It is associated with keeping the commandments (*Sipra VDDen.* p. q. 16.28.1.1, 3) and is a fruit of righteousness (*m. Ab.* 2:7, attributed to Hillel). Cf. *Abot R. Nat.* 48, §134 B; *Num. Rab.* 21:1.

708. For subjugation as pacification, see, e.g., *Res Gestae* 5.26; *Cic. Prov. Cons.* 12.31; *Vell. Paterc.* 2.90.1–4; 2.91.1; 2.115.4 (cf. perhaps Col 1:20 in view of 1:16); cf. the interpretation of Roman iconography in Lopez, “Visualizing,” 83; idem, *Apostle*, 49–50. This peace was propagandistic; cf. Seneca’s critique in Huttner, “Zivilisationskritik.” In Roman political propaganda, see *Res Gestae* 2.13; 6.34; also Sherk, *Empire*, §24, p. 40 (citing Orosius *Hist.* 6.22.1–2); Grummond, “Pax Augusta”; also Bowley, “Pax,” 774. In historiography during Tiberius’s reign, e.g., *Vell. Paterc.* 2.89.3; 2.92.2; 2.103.4–5; 2.126.3. For the image’s wide propagation (on coins, etc.), see Muth, “Pax Augusta.” “Pax” was deified but prominent only from the time of Augustus (Rose, “Pax”; cf. Bowley, “Pax,” 774); for its association with emperors, see Harrison, *Authorities*, 139. For Paul’s likely rejection of the propaganda of “Roman peace,” see, e.g., Koester, “Silence,” 341; Horsley, “Assembly,” 386; Harrison, *Authorities*, 61–62; cf. Bammel, “Romans 13,” 377; Niang, “Seeing,” 171; for the challenge here, cf. also Rowe, *World*, 107 (noting the idea in Wengst, *Pax*).

(cf. Acts 2:35; Luke 20:43); in the present, meanwhile, God offered terms of peace to those willing to accept it. Whatever “preaching peace” might signify in other texts, it is highly significant when Peter addresses it to a military officer belonging to the occupying power.⁷⁰⁹ God announced good news of peace (εὐαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην) to Israel (Acts 10:36); now Peter is preaching good news of peace to a traditional enemy and his associates (cf. 9:13–17; Luke 6:27).

That God “sent” (ἀπέστειλεν) this message could naturally refer initially to John (Luke 7:27), Isaiah’s “voice crying in the wilderness” (Luke 3:4; Isa 40:3), and to those “sent” by Jesus (Luke 9:2, 52; 10:1, 3; 11:49; 13:34; 24:49; Acts 26:17).⁷¹⁰ But Luke explicitly applies it especially to Jesus here, who is also “sent” (Luke 4:43; 9:48; 10:16; Acts 3:26), including in the words of Isaiah that are programmatic to Luke’s Gospel (Luke 4:18; Isa 61:1). A number of scholars find an echo of Ps 107:20 (106:20 LXX) here; in that passage, God “sent his word” and brought healing (the healing appears in Acts 10:38).⁷¹¹ This allusion is possible, though it is not the only text in the LXX where God “sends” his “word” (cf. Ps 146:18), and it is common Lukan terminology.⁷¹²

Peter provides a christological aside in a rhetorical parenthesis.⁷¹³ The Lukan Peter’s wording reflects a biblical description of God as “Lord over all the earth” (Josh 3:11, 13; Ps 97:5; Zech 4:14), revealing God’s sovereignty to judge (Mic 4:13) and rule (Zech 6:5) all nations. This title remained familiar in early Judaism as “Lord of all” (ὁ πάντων δεσπότης, Wis 6:7; 8:3; cf. 11:26; Sir 36:1; ὁ κυριεύων πάντων θεός, *Let. Aris.* 18) or “Lord of all creation” (δέσποτα πάσης κτίσεως, 3 Macc 2:2).⁷¹⁴ (The term would also be familiar for Gentiles, whether for rulers⁷¹⁵ or for deities,⁷¹⁶ but the most obvious allusions for members of Luke’s biblically literate audience would be biblical, referring to the God they accepted.)

If one Lord rules over all, then he is for all (Rom 3:29–30);⁷¹⁷ in light of God’s lack of partiality, including welcoming Gentiles (in the immediate context, Acts 10:34), this statement, too, is likely ethnically universalistic. Paul likewise uses the phrase “Lord of all” with specific reference to Gentile inclusion (Rom 10:12). As in Peter’s

709. Likewise, the people of Tyre and Sidon wrongly look to the doomed Herod Agrippa I for “peace” (Acts 12:20), whereas the Lord is its true source. Cf. Tertullus’s claim that Felix had provided peace (24:2).

710. Calling it the “word” or “message” fits Luke’s (and early Christian) usage in general (e.g., Luke 1:2; 4:32; 5:1; 8:11–15, 21; 10:39; 11:28; 24:19; Acts 2:41; 4:4, 29, 31; 6:2–5, 7), applicable also to Luke’s own telling of the gospel story (Acts 1:1).

711. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 355; Dunn, *Acts*, 142 (who sees an allusion in Acts 13:26; cf. also Marshall, “Acts,” 584). On Jesus as “sent one,” cf. also Keener, *John*, 310–16.

712. See Bock, *Proclamation*, 232; cf. Marshall, “Acts,” 579, for various allusions, but noting (580) the relevance of the “healing” connection.

713. On rhetorical parenthesis (*interpositio*), see Rowe, “Style,” 147 (citing, e.g., Gal 2:6–7; Cic. *Phil.* 1.7.16); Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, §465 (on Pauline sentence structure); Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 87 (citing Quint. *Inst.* 9.3.23); Anderson, *Glossary*, 89–90 (adding Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 24; Quint. *Inst.* 8.2.15).

714. Also Jos. *Ant.* 1.20; 1Q20 V, 23; Philo *Creation* 100; *Cher.* 107; *Sacr.* 129; *Spec. Laws* 1.30; QG 1.21; 4Q409 1 I, 8; *Pr. Jos.* 9; *Test. Jos.* 1:5; *Test. Mos.* 4:2; 2 *En.* 66:5; cf. similarly Jos. *Ant.* 1.272; 4Q510 1 2; *Jub.* 31:13; *Let. Aris.* 269. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 463–64, cites also 11QPs^a XXVIII, 7; Jos. *Ant.* 20.90.

715. Cf. Jos. *Ant.* 7.151; 16.134. These include Alexander (Plut. *Alex.* 27.4) and, more relevant here, Caesar (Epict. *Diatr.* 4.1.12, cited by Conzelmann, *Acts*, 83; Barrett, *Acts*, 522; Jos. *Ant.* 16.118; *War* 1.669; for Caesar’s “worldwide,” hence multiethnic, empire, see Luke 2:1; comments on “pagan ‘universal’ ideals” in the commentary introduction, *Acts*, 1:516–17). For a Roman officer, Caesar was Lord of all (for Luke, centurions are agents of imperial authority, Luke 7:8); Peter corrects this notion (cf. Acts 17:7); cf. helpfully Rowe, “Cult”; Howell, “Authority” (in contrast to Rowe, finding a challenge to centurions’ role as the emperor’s agents). This correction fits the reinterpretation of the *Pax Romana* in the “peace” with God that Peter announces in Acts 10:36 (with Rowe, *World*, 105).

716. Osiris (Plut. *Isis* 12, *Mor.* 355E, cited also by others); fate (Demosth. *Epitaph.* 21); or Zeus (Pindar *Isthm.* 5.53).

717. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 142; Abbott, *Acts*, 128. “Lord of all” in Acts 10:36 undercuts the distinction between “clean” and “unclean” peoples, providing part of the basis for 10:34–35 (Rowe, “Authority,” 107).

preaching of Jesus's lordship from Joel 2:32 (Acts 2:21, 34, 36, 38), Peter's language here implies Jesus's deity,⁷¹⁸ although his Gentile hearers (perhaps even God-fearing Cornelius) would more likely assume this on the basis of typical Gentile use of exalted lords than on familiarity with biblical phraseology.

IV. JESUS'S MINISTRY (10:37)

After beginning to narrate the gospel story, Peter points out that Cornelius has already heard its basics. Although Peter has learned something new from God (Acts 10:34), here is something his audience already knows about. Peter points this out not simply to compliment his hearers' knowledge (although a compliment may be included, the *captatio benevolentiae* was complete in 10:35) but as a rhetorical appeal to common knowledge. Appealing to what an audience already knew or agreed on reduced or eliminated the need for demonstration (*Rhet. Alex.* pref. 1421a.4–6) and was common in ancient texts.⁷¹⁹ Luke elsewhere assumes that the events he narrates are widely known, even for those within the narrative world (Luke 24:18; Acts 26:26).⁷²⁰ Paul sometimes makes the same rhetorical appeal (Phil 4:15; 1 Thess 2:1, 10; 3:3; 5:2; 2 Thess 3:7) or offers appeals to eyewitness knowledge (1 Cor 15:6). (Peter earlier appeals to his Gentile audience's knowledge of Jewish custom in Acts 10:28.)

The use of ῥῆμα here probably picks up the thought of λόγος in 10:36 (the term is changed merely for variation).⁷²¹ One could construe Peter's words as including Galilee in Judea; this was the standard Diaspora perspective, since Galilee, as Judea's "frontier," was part of the Judean ("Jewish") homeland.⁷²² (Luke uses "Judea" several different ways, as did his contemporaries; cf. his "land of Judeans and Jerusalem" in 10:39.)⁷²³ The Galilean beginning comports well with Luke's emphasis on decentralization and on the lowly rather than on centers of power.⁷²⁴ The promise to Israel first is a standard Lukan (Acts 3:26; 13:46) and Pauline (Rom 1:16; 2:9–10; 11:11, 15) idea.

One should begin a narrative with the most natural starting point (Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 10–12), and Luke has an abundance of precedents for beginning this narrative where he begins it.⁷²⁵ Starting with John fits the pattern elsewhere in Acts' recitations of God's

718. As also Paul's quotation of the same Joel text in Rom 10:13 in the context of 10:9; his "Lord of all" (10:12) is in the same context.

719. E.g., Aeschines *Embassy* 44, 56, 122–23, 182; *Tim.* 89; Isaeus *Pyrr.* 40; Dion. Hal. *Lit. Comp.* 22; Quint. *Decl.* 269.3–4; cf. Men. *Rhet.* 2.14, 429.1–4; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.17; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 114. In philosophic logic, one reasons from the known to prove what is unknown (Mus. Ruf. 1, p. 32.27). Cf. κεκριμένον in Anderson, *Glossary*, 67.

720. The Gospels and Acts claim that Jesus was widely known, but Josephus (our one other relevant source) mentions him, at most, briefly (most scholars believe that Josephus mentioned him but that the present text includes some Christian redaction; e.g., Thackeray, *Josephus*, 125–26; Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 55–58; Feldman, "Methods," 591; Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 510; Baras, "Testimonium"; Meier, "Jesus in Josephus"; idem, "Testimonium"; Whealey, "Josephus"; cf. Pelletier, "Josèphe"; Dubarle, "Témoignage"; Gramaglia, "Testimonium"; contrast Olson, "Eusebius"; for a survey of views a generation ago, see Winter, "Bibliography"). Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 395n13, contrasts Jesus with John's greater role in Josephus; but Jesus does not fit Josephus's revolutionary paradigm, and even individual messianic revolutionary figures warranted only small space. See discussion at Acts 26:26.

721. Its dominance in *Joseph and Aseneth* argues against its necessarily representing a Semitic source (see Burchard, "Note on 'PHMA'").

722. Cf. Bruce, *Message*, 17; the sense of "Judea" in Mason, "Jews."

723. See Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 32: the Roman province (cf. Luke 3:1; 23:6); Palestine (Luke 1:5; 7:17; 23:5; Acts 10:37); usually Jewish Palestine minus Samaria and Galilee (Luke 4:44; 5:17; Acts 1:8; 9:31; 11:29; 12:19; 15:1; 20:10; 26:20; 28:21; etc.). For the "whole of Judea," cf., e.g., Luke 7:17; 23:5; Acts 9:31 (cf. Luke 1:65; 4:37; not found in other NT authors, but cf. earlier 1 Esd 1:32; 9:3).

724. On Galilee in Luke's theology, see comment on Acts 9:31; in general, see Keener, *John*, 228–32; more extensively, Horsley, *Galilee*; Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus*; Strange, "Galilee."

725. Biographies often opened from a subject's adulthood (e.g., Plut. *Caes.* 1.1–4; also the *Life of Aesop*, Drury, *Design*, 29).

acts (Acts 1:22; 13:24), Luke's introduction (Luke 1:5–80) and body (3:1–20), and Mark, whom he follows (Mark 1:2–8);⁷²⁶ it also fits, for the most part, the distinctive tradition in the Fourth Gospel (John 1:19–28). Starting from Galilee (Luke 23:5) also fits the pattern. To Cornelius, “Galilee” might sound like Judea's less-civilized or educated backwater or “frontier.”⁷²⁷ For John's “baptism” as his message of repentance, see Luke 7:29; Acts 13:24; 18:25; 19:3–4 (cf. Mark 1:4; Luke 20:4; Acts 1:22).

V. ANOINTED FOR HEALING AND DELIVERANCE (10:38)

For “you know,” cf. Acts 10:28; 20:18; for wide knowledge of Jesus as a recent popular leader, cf. Acts 26:26 (and comments regarding the claim's plausibility); cf. *Jos. Ant.* 18.63–64. Although the Spirit's anointing very rarely appears elsewhere in early Jewish and Christian sources,⁷²⁸ the anointing here refers back to Luke's programmatic quotation of Isa 61:1 (Luke 4:18)⁷²⁹ and (especially in view of “Christ” in Acts 10:36) may also reflect Luke's knowledge that *χριστός* means “anointed one” (cf. Acts 4:27, following Ps 2:2).⁷³⁰ This passage therefore interprets Jesus's mission to “deliver the prisoners” (Luke 4:18) in the present era especially as liberating captives of the devil (here), in the Gospel exemplified most obviously in exorcisms. The connection between the Spirit and the anointing that invites it may be quite early, both in Scripture⁷³¹ and in the Qumran scrolls.⁷³² Seers, or prophets, are called “anointed ones” in 1QM XI, 7–8 and probably also in CD V, 21–VI, 1.⁷³³

What did it mean to be “oppressed”⁷³⁴ by the devil?⁷³⁵ Many Jewish circles viewed the devil's influence as pervasive, whether through Satan's general dominion over the

726. Mark's “beginning” (Mark 1:1) might reflect standard early Christian terminology (Robinson, *Problem of History*, 69), the “beginning” referring to the narrative about John (e.g., Bruce, *Message*, 15); for others, “beginning” may belong to the entire work's title (Kingsbury, *Christology*, 56). On the “beginning” in Luke's narrativization (citing Luke 1:3; 3:23; 23:5; Acts 1:1, 22), see Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 268. Although this correspondence is not limited to Mark, if Mark's Gospel and Acts 10:36–43 both summarize the Petrine message (cf. Batten, “Acts 10”), one might expect some parallels. For Jesus's ministry as part of the kerygma, see Konings and Carmo, “*Querigma*.”

727. See discussion at Acts 9:31.

728. E.g., 4Q270 9 II, 14; 2 Cor 1:21–22; cf. 1 John 2:20, 27. The image was probably originally figurative, based on the Spirit accompanying royal anointing (1 Sam 16:13), though not everyone expected kings descended from kings to be anointed (cf. *y. Hor.* 3:2, §10). For priests, cf. 1QM IX, 8; for Israel, *Sib. Or.* 5.68; for very limited proposed analogies in the ancient Near East, see, e.g., Gane, “Leviticus,” 298; de Vaux, *Israel*, 104; *ANET* 338.

729. As most concur, e.g., Bock, *Proclamation*, 233; Bruce, *Commentary*, 226–27; Cyran, “*Namaszczenie Jezusa*”; Neirynek, “Luke 4,16–30,” 380; Haya-Prats, *Believers*, 6.

730. Some scholars view the comparatively “mundane” Christology here as a primitive feature (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 226; Dunn, *Acts*, 143; though the same criterion obviously cannot work in Acts 10:36). Strikingly, however, 4Q521 2 + 4 II, 8 may apply Isa 61:1 to “the Lord” (God); though the Messiah is possible (4Q521 2 + 4 II, 1), the Lord seems likelier (II, 4–7, 11–12).

731. 1 Sam 10:1, 6, 10 (e.g., Schweizer, *Mark*, 37, citing also Isa 61:1).

732. See CD II, 12; VI, 1; 4Q266 2 II, 12; 3 II, 9; 4Q267 2 6; 4Q269 4 I, 2; 4Q270 9 II, 14; 4Q287 10 13; 6Q15 3 4; 11Q13 II, 18.

733. Cf. likewise the parallelism in 1 Chr 16:22; Ps 105:15 (though contextually the patriarchs and/or early Israel are in view). Naturally, in light of the OT, priests are also anointed (e.g., 1QM IX, 8). Israel is God's anointed in *Sib. Or.* 5.68.

734. The term for “oppressing,” *καταδυναστεύω*, is rare in early Christian texts (Jas 2:6; *Diogn.* 10.5; for the devil oppressing, see *Herm.* 48.1–2, perhaps echoing Acts) but appears thirty-two times in our LXX, including for slavery in Egypt (Exod 1:13; Wis 15:14; 17:2), other enslavement (Exod 21:16; Deut 24:7), and exploitation (e.g., 1 Sam 12:3–4; Amos 4:1; 8:4; 2 Macc 1:28; Wis 2:10).

735. From an early period, this image was applied to humanity's captivity to Satan and demonic powers (Pelikan, *Acts*, 134, citing Origen *Cels.* 8.54). Although liberation theology rightly emphasizes Jesus's concern for economic justice and for the poor and marginalized prominent in Luke, even Luke 4:18–19 also addresses a dimension of spiritual power (including healings and exorcisms) that exclusively political theologies (often with Western philosophic roots, including Marxist materialism) sometimes neglect.

world⁷³⁶ or through people being surrounded by demons.⁷³⁷ Luke at times illustrates liberation of captives held by the devil with respect to sickness or infirmity (Luke 13:12, 15–16), but even where no demon was directly active (he typically distinguishes sickness and demonization, Luke 6:18; 7:21; 9:1; Acts 5:16; 8:7),⁷³⁸ he apparently views sickness and suffering in general as the devil's activity.⁷³⁹ The connection between sickness and the devil's hostility is clear as early as Job 2:7.⁷⁴⁰ Although some cultures do not associate spirits with sickness, many cultures do;⁷⁴¹ many also associate sickness with witchcraft or sorcery.⁷⁴² (On sickness and sin, see comment on Acts 3:2.)

Sickness or other bodily harm, however, can also come from God (thus a doubter's muting, Luke 1:20–22; the blinding of opposers in Acts 9:18; 13:11).⁷⁴³ In Jewish understanding, the devil's activity was also limited, subject to God's sovereignty. Perhaps Luke would allow that God permits the devil's activity in many cases (e.g., Job 1–2) but sends his agents to thwart this activity and accomplish his higher purposes. Luke himself does not offer a full resolution of the tensions, which are not his focus.

Luke often couples God's "power" with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:17, 35; 4:14; Acts 1:8)⁷⁴⁴ and more often than not uses the term "power" with regard to signs and

736. E.g., 1QS X, 21; 1QM XIV, 9; 11Q5 XIX, 13–16; *Jub.* 19:28; Eph 2:2; 1 John 5:19.

737. E.g., *Num. Rab.* 11:5; *Midr. Pss.* 17:8; cf. CD XII, 2; 4Q444 1 I, 4; *Test. Benj.* 6:1; *Test. Job* 26:6; 27:1. This idea appears mainly in Amoraitic texts, after the greater profusion of magic and exorcism in the third century; it probably existed on a popular level before surfacing among the rabbis (cf., on a lesser level, *Jos. Ant.* 8.47; more fully in Keener, *Miracles*, 779–84), but it was not as dominant in first-century Jewish Palestine.

738. Perhaps Luke 13:32; cf. Thomas, *Deliverance*, 191–228, esp. 227–28. Weissenrieder, *Images*, 338–39, argues that demonization is linked with sickness much more in the Gospel than in Acts. Acts 19:12 appears unclear in this regard, but this is because it is a concise summary; "healing" covers both categories in 5:16, but there the categories remain discrete.

739. Luke associates sickness with demonic activity more than any other NT writer; see the summary of the evidence in Thomas, *Deliverance*, 227; also Twelftree, *Name*, 154; Pilch, *Healing*, 105 (noting four references from Mark, two shared with Matthew, and seven distinctive to Luke, of which four appear in Acts).

740. Demons were thought to cause some diseases (Luke 13:11; *Midr. Pss.* 17:8; sources in Alexander, *Possession*, 32).

741. Bourguignon, "Spirit Possession Belief," 20–21; idem, "Distribution," 17; Murdock, *Theories*, 72–76; Neyrey, "Miracles," 30–31; for examples, see Ejizu, "Exorcism," 13, 15, 21; Hien, "Yin Illness"; Cho, "Healing," 123–24; McClenon and Rooney, "Experiences," 53; Ward, "Possession," 126; Shoko, *Religion*, 57–63; Bergunder, "Miracle Healing," 288; Lake, *Healer*, 118–19; Gray, "Cult," 171, 178; Lewis, "Possession," 193; Southall, "Possession," 259, 262; Welbourn, "Spirit Initiation," 292; Firth, *Ritual*, 319; Ikeobi, "Healing," 57; Saunders, "Zar Experience," 179; Morton, "Dawit," 193, 220; Pressel, "Possession," 339; Umeh, *Dibia*, 200; Berends, "African Healing Practices," 278–79; Evans-Pritchard, *Religion*, 98; Turner, *Drums*, 34, 119, 296; Colson, "Possession," 71–72; Beattie, "Mediumship," 164; Peters, *Healing in Nepal*, 65–68; Shorter, *Witchdoctor*, 174–76 (regarding what are considered morally neutral water spirits); idem, "Spirit Possession," 124; Rosny, *Healers*, 116–19; Luling, "Possession Cults," 175; Ferchiou, "Possession Cults," 214–15. Some cultures where many still attribute sickness to spirits nevertheless depend more on medicine (see, e.g., Wyllie, "Effutu"). For fuller discussion, see also Keener, *Miracles*, 802–4, and references there.

742. See, e.g., Murdock, *Theories*, 64–71; Ajibade, "Hearthstones," 198; Hultkrantz, *Healing*, 29–31, 53–54, 82, 89, 111, 151, 162; Daneel, "Zionism," 30, 40–41; Jules-Rosette, "Healers," 128, 131–33, 141, 145; Sofowora, *Traditional Medicine*, 26–27; Uzukwu, "Address," 8; Ejizu, "Exorcism," 13–15, 21; Ikeobi, "Healing," 57; Lee, "Possession," 144; Beattie, "Mediumship," 164; Middleton, "Possession," 225; Rosny, *Healers*, 74, 80, 83, 85; Turner, *Drums*, 14–15, 34, 119, 128–29, 296, 298; Shorter, *Witchdoctor*, 94 (a lion attack); further comment in Keener, *Miracles*, 804–5 (esp. sources in 804n103). For witchcraft accusations, see comment at Acts 8:9–11. For belief in killing through witchcraft, see discussions in Grindal, "Heart," 66; Turner, "Actuality," 5; Hair, "Witches," 140; West, *Sorcery*, 3–5, 9–10, 88; cf. Scherberger, "Shaman," 57–59; Azenabor, "Witchcraft," 30–31; McNaughton, *Blacksmiths*, 69; Binsbergen, "Witchcraft," 243; Favret-Saada, *Witchcraft*, 124–27; Bergunder, "Miracle Healing," 293–94; Koch, *Zulus*, 151–52, 292–93.

743. See Thomas, *Deliverance*, 227–28, and his treatment of judgments in Acts (231–43, 262–78). In this passage, he argues (in light of his conclusions from Luke's Gospel) that Acts 10:38 addresses two categories of ministry: those sick from various causes, and those sick specifically as a result of demonic oppression (258–62, esp. 260–61). Discerning between the two was important both in the Gospel (227–28) and in Acts (293–95).

744. Elsewhere in the NT, Rom 1:4; 15:13, 19; 1 Cor 2:4; Eph 3:16; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 1:7 (on the link in Paul, cf. Gräbe, "Δύναμις"). Of these verses, Rom 15:19 clearly applies to signs and wonders, and some others may be associated with them (Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 2:4–5; 1 Thess 1:5).

wonders (see fully comment on Acts 1:8), relevant to the healing mission of Jesus here. Others also spoke of a deity's powers (Men. Rhet. 2.17, 440.32–441.2), included pleas for a deity to provide "power" for speech (437.25–26), or spoke of the Messiah "powerful in the Holy Spirit" (δυνατὸν ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, *Pss. Sol.* 17:37).⁷⁴⁵ One could be clothed with "the Spirit of power" (*L.A.B.* 27:10); see further comment on the connection at Acts 1:8.

That Jesus went about "doing good" (εὐεργετῶν), providing benefaction, evokes the image of benefactors in antiquity, who were often gracious kings⁷⁴⁶ or others with wealth or power (see much fuller discussion at Acts 4:9). Epideictic speeches and inscriptions regularly praise such benefactions; deliberative rhetoric can present these benefactions to invite gratitude.⁷⁴⁷ Jewish people applied the language especially for caring for the poor;⁷⁴⁸ it also applied to the activity of physicians and healers (which is relevant here)⁷⁴⁹ and to feeding guests at a banquet (which fits Luke 9:13–17),⁷⁵⁰ and (perhaps most relevant) some other people in antiquity could view miracle working in these terms.⁷⁵¹ Luke has already presented healing as "benefaction" (Acts 4:9).⁷⁵² On God being "with" Jesus (cf. Luke 1:28, 66; Acts 11:21; 14:27; 15:4; 18:10), see comment on Acts 7:9.⁷⁵³

c. Appeal to Witnesses (10:39–43)

The apostles are witnesses and guarantors of Jesus's public ministry (Acts 1:21–22), about which Cornelius and his friends would have heard (10:37–38), but also of events that Peter has not yet mentioned (10:41); Peter will also cite the prophets as witnesses (10:43).

I. WITNESSES AND THE CRUCIFIXION (10:39)

Peter's claim "We are witnesses" is a central feature of his preaching (2:32; see comment on Acts 1:8), appealing to (and providing for Luke's Gospel) eyewitness attestation. Appeal to witnesses is standard in forensic rhetoric (e.g., *Lysias Or.* 3.14, §97; 3.20–21, §98). Either the narrative and proofs are mixed here (which was possible in rhetoric)⁷⁵⁴ or this statement remains part of the *narratio* and merely introduces the proofs appealed to in Acts 10:41 (though this may well also be part of the *narratio*). The witnesses' testimony of all that Jesus did, mentioned here, is fleshed out more fully in the Gospel, which is based on their testimony (Luke 1:2; cf. Acts 1:21–22).

745. Turner, *Power*, 188–266, emphasizes the messianic anointing in Luke 4:18 and its context, but I have argued that in addition to this point, Jesus's anointing functions as a model for the church. Russell, "Anointing," thinks that the anointing metaphor provides continuity with the Spirit empowerments in Acts, but this may also affirm too much, since Luke uses the term only for Jesus's empowerment.

746. E.g., Luke 22:25; Xen. *Cyr.* 3.3.3; 5.5.34; Mus. *Ruf.* 8, p. 60.9; 8, p. 66.11.

747. See, e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 3.2.6; 4.13.10; 7.15.3; Suet. *Claud.* 25.1; Lucian *Fisherman 5*; *Tim.* 35; Fronto *Ad Ant. Pium* 9.1; Jos. *Ant.* 19.356, 361; Harrison, *Grace*, 40–43. Use of this category allows Luke to interpret his portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel as communicating his virtue, a more standard feature of biography than generally features in the Gospels (see Aune, "Problem of Genre," 48).

748. See Harvey, *History*, 9.

749. DeSilva, *Honor*, 133–34 (following Danker, *Benefactor*, 57–64); cf. also teaching (*Honor*, 134, citing Sen. *Y. Ben.* 1.2.4).

750. See deSilva, *Honor*, 134.

751. Some (e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 84; Johnson, *Acts*, 192) cite Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.7 (though substantially later than the Gospels, it fits what we would expect to find from other evidence).

752. As noted by, e.g., Parsons, *Luke*, 175.

753. Bock, *Proclamation*, 233, rightly points out that a specific allusion to Gen 39:21 is unclear here because the language appears elsewhere as well.

754. Proofs may often repeat events (e.g., Cic. *Quinct.* 11.37–27.85 *passim*) but are not arranged chronologically as in the *narratio*. For a *narratio* containing proofs, see, e.g., Amador, "Revisiting," 110–11; esp. Hughes, "Rhetoric," 252–53 (with documentation).

Luke uses “Judea” in various ways (see comment on Acts 10:37) and may sometimes vary his descriptions as a rhetorical flourish; here his point is not so much to distinguish the Judean “countryside”⁷⁵⁵ from urban Jerusalem as to emphasize the inclusion of the whole by pleonastically citing both. He could be surveying Jesus’s entire ministry in greater Judea (as in 10:37) or focusing on the new information of Jesus’s passion, chronologically following what he recounted in 10:37–38. Because most of Jesus’s passion was in and immediately outside Jerusalem, the former interpretation may carry more weight.

Luke does not need to explain what he means by Judeans having killed Jesus by crucifying him; the attentive reader already knows that the Judeans did it by the hands of others (2:23; 3:14–15), a point that might not be rhetorically strategic to emphasize to Peter’s new Roman hearers (though “cross” does not conceal it, and he expects his audience to know something of Jesus’s story already; cf. 10:37). That “they” (Jerusalemites and Judeans) hanged Jesus on a cross also reflects the same theology of rejection as 2:23; 3:14–15; 7:52; 13:27–28 (and as understood in some sense by Jerusalem’s aristocratic leaders in 5:28).⁷⁵⁶

Peter’s term for “cross” here (ξύλον) is simply “wood” or “tree.” Biblically literate members of Luke’s audience would catch the allusion to Deut 21:22–23, as in Acts 5:30–31⁷⁵⁷—a shameful punishment of public exposure that contrasts strikingly with Jesus’s benevolence in 10:38. Not only did they prove ungrateful to their benefactor (a crime greatly despised in Roman society; see comment on Acts 4:9); they killed him, and by the most shameful death possible. (On the nature of crucifixion, see comment on Acts 2:23.) Even without knowledge of the biblical allusion, however, Cornelius would understand what “hanging on a tree” meant and the shame of crucifixion.⁷⁵⁸

II. RESURRECTION WITNESSES (10:40–41)

Jesus appeared only to selected witnesses (noted in 10:39). Although petitions for invisibility do appear in magical sources,⁷⁵⁹ appearances to chosen witnesses would more closely resemble the epiphany tradition for a Greco-Roman audience (on which see comment on Acts 1:3). A deity might reveal himself only to the magician (PGM 1.186–87), or to those who are good and socially respectable (Callim. *Hymns* 2 [to Apollo], lines 9–10), or to a particular hero (Hom. *Il.* 1.194–200) or skeptic (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.31).⁷⁶⁰ (Romans also knew the principle of selective availability with regard to the custom of patronage.)⁷⁶¹

Selective visibility was not limited, however, to pagan tradition. Thus, for example, in Jewish sources Balaam’s donkey, but initially not Balaam himself, saw the menacing angel (Num 22:23, 27–28); only the most spiritually sensitive saw the armies of

755. Luke can use χώρα as “region” more generally (Luke 3:1; 8:26; 15:13–15; 19:12; Acts 8:1; 13:49; 16:6; 18:23; 27:27; cf. Luke 15:15; Acts 12:20), but it makes sense here to follow his occasional usage as “countryside” (Luke 2:8; 12:16), given the distinction from Jerusalem (as in Luke 21:21; cf. Acts 26:20).

756. Modern readers seeking to hear the text as closely as possible to its original setting should note that even when it is preached to Gentiles (as here), it sounds different on Jewish lips (e.g., Peter’s) than those of Gentile Christians after a history of anti-Semitism.

757. See comment at Acts 5:30–31; also, e.g., Bock, *Proclamation*, 234; Morris, *Cross in New Testament*, 142.

758. This is true whether we read ξύλον as “wood” (as in classical Greek) or as “tree” (with some papyri). On the shame of the cross, see excursus on crucifixion at Acts 2:23; esp. Hengel, *Crucifixion*.

759. PGM 1.222–31, 247–62 (esp. 256–57); cf. Tibullus 1.2.58, though this is farce. Sometimes apparitions were mere phantoms or disguised animals (e.g., Apollod. *Epit.* 3.5, 22); see Keener, *John*, 1152, 1189–90, 1201.

760. Founding heroes or gods might visit the cities they founded yet remain invisible to the people there (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.47; Grant, *Gods*, 57).

761. Chow, *Patronage*, 75 (citing Sen. *Y. Ben.* 6.34.2; *Const.* 10.2; *Juv. Sat.* 1.100–101).

heaven defending Elisha (2 Kgs 6:16–17); in another account, everyone saw the two angels except the Jewish people they were protecting (3 Macc 6:18).⁷⁶²

Jesus's selective and temporary visibility is illustrated more completely in the resurrection appearances of Luke 24, especially on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:16, 31). Jesus was known to "all the people" (Luke 24:19; cf. 21:38), God's Jewish people who were to be led in the true way (cf. Acts 4:10; Luke 2:10), and many had been responsive to God's message until deterred by the elite (Luke 3:21; 7:29; 18:43; 19:48; 20:6, 45; 21:38; Acts 2:47; 3:9, 11; 13:24).⁷⁶³ Nevertheless, Jesus appeared only to chosen witnesses. Johannine tradition is also explicit that Jesus appeared only to those who followed him closely before the resurrection (John 14:21–23).

That the witnesses were "chosen" (προκεχειροτονημένοι)⁷⁶⁴ beforehand recalls Acts 1:2 (hence Luke 6:13); that he ate and drank with them⁷⁶⁵ recalls Luke 24:42–43 (see comment on Acts 1:4) and hence underlines the concreteness of their experience (as opposed to their having merely seen an apparition).⁷⁶⁶ (Given the emphasis on "eating" and "drinking" in Luke-Acts and the prominence of hospitality in the context, Luke undoubtedly also communicates the role of sharing food in true table fellowship, preparing for the discussion in Acts 11:3.)⁷⁶⁷ The witnesses of the resurrection are given a special role because they had witnessed the entire story of Jesus's public ministry from the beginning (1:21–22; cf. 10:37–39). By reminding his audience of these matters, Luke stresses not only the reliability of Peter's claims in the narrative but also his own in his first volume.⁷⁶⁸

Although the revelation was selective, it encompassed a large number of people, as did the most highly preferred claims for testimony (cf., e.g., *Lysias Or.* 3.27, §98, claiming more than two hundred eyewitnesses; 1 Cor 15:6, claiming more than five hundred for the risen Jesus). Had Luke intended only the Twelve in the pool of "witnesses," the church would not have had Matthias, Justus, and potentially others to choose from in Acts 1:21–26.⁷⁶⁹

III. PROCLAIMING THE JUDGE (10:42)

Jesus ordered the witnesses (cf. his commands in 1:2, 4) to preach to the people (reflecting Luke 24:47;⁷⁷⁰ Acts 1:8); this order conflicts with the council's order not to do so (the same term in Acts 4:18; 5:28, 40), but they had to obey God rather than humans (5:29, 32).⁷⁷¹

Luke's report of Peter's words here, however, seems ironic, revealing just how difficult it was for Peter to grasp Jesus's message. He claims that Jesus commanded

762. In a nonsupernatural analogy for selective revelation, Joseph reveals himself exclusively to his brothers (Gen 45:1; cf. Acts 7:13).

763. The phrase is also, however, a favorite Lukan idiom even for other purposes (Luke 8:37, 47; Acts 25:24). Contrast the phrase's rare occurrences in Matt 27:25; Mark 1:5; John 8:2 (which is not Johannine); Heb 9:19; *Barn.* 12.8; Papias frg. 4.2.

764. Cf. the cognate terms in Acts 3:20; 22:14; 26:16; Josh 3:12; Dan 3:22; 2 Macc 3:7; 8:9; 14:12 (but not all emphasize preceding action).

765. This greater specificity concerning their qualification as witnesses may function like epimone, which can nuance a thought while repeating it (Rowe, "Style," 144–45).

766. Tannehill, *Luke*, 291, reasonably interprets Acts 1:4's "eat salt with" as "share a meal" in view of 10:41.

767. With Gaventa, *Acts*, 171.

768. Celsus criticizes the claim that Jesus appeared only to his allies and not to his enemies (Cook, *Interpretation*, 57), but Luke has also included the conversion of Saul by an appearance (Acts 9:3–9).

769. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 25, adding the disciples en route to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35), Jesus's brothers (Acts 1:14), and (they think) even the 120 of 1:15.

770. On the resemblance to Luke 24:47 (including preaching forgiveness), see also Neiryneck, "Luke 4,16–30," 379.

771. In rhetoric, appeal to divine authority counted as very persuasive (cf. again in Acts 11:17; 26:19).

them to preach to “the people” (τῶ λαῶ), a term Luke uses some eighty times with reference to Israel (e.g., 2:47; 3:12, 23). Although Jesus commanded them to begin in Jerusalem, he was explicit that their mission was to all nations and the ends of the earth (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). “All nations” was not easily construed (though Peter might have construed it thus) as referring merely to Diaspora Jews. To the very Gentile audience to whom Peter here preaches, in fulfillment of the Lord’s command, he mentions only Jesus’s command to preach to Israel!

This “judge” (cf. also Acts 17:31) will be absolutely accurate, having been appointed⁷⁷² by the God known for his impartiality (10:34).⁷⁷³ Though Jewish tradition⁷⁷⁴ sometimes adapted the more familiar Greek image⁷⁷⁵ of human agents assisting in judging, the ultimate judge in Jewish sources was always God,⁷⁷⁶ the “judge of all the earth” (Gen 18:25; cf. *Test. Ab.* 20:3 A).⁷⁷⁷ If this depiction leaves unclear whether Jesus is here assuming a divine prerogative (in view of Acts 10:36, he may be, from Luke’s standpoint at least; see comment there),⁷⁷⁸ it does not leave the scope of Jesus’s eschatological authority in question.⁷⁷⁹

“Living” and “dead” function together as a merism, thereby including everyone.⁷⁸⁰ The bulk of the reported speech (or its *narratio*) is framed by a universal Christology: Jesus is “Lord of all” (10:36) and judge of all (10:42).⁷⁸¹ Early Christian tradition elsewhere portrays Jesus as “judge of the living and the dead” (2 Tim 4:1, 8; *Poly. Phil.* 2.1; *Barn.* 7.2; 2 *Clem.* 1.1), though 1 Pet 4:5 could be using the title for God (cf. 1:17; 2:23).⁷⁸²

What is the point of mentioning “judging,” apart from emphasizing the universality of its scope? Perhaps, as in 2 Tim 4:1 and to some extent in 1 Pet 4:3–5, the appeal to Jesus’s role at the judgment adds a sense of urgency (cf. Luke 12:58).⁷⁸³ Further,

772. Luke elsewhere employs this verb (ὀρίζω) (Acts 11:29), especially emphasizing God’s sovereignty over creation (17:26), Jesus’s execution (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23), and his establishment as universal judge (Acts 17:31). He offers the predominant NT usage (Rom 1:4; Heb 4:7), though it is not uncommon in the LXX and the Apostolic Fathers.

773. For Jesus as eschatological judge in early Christian tradition, see, e.g., Matt 7:22–23 (related to Q = Luke 13:25–27, though Matthew may supply the identification of Jesus with the householder); 25:31–32; 2 Cor 5:10; cf. Q in Matt 19:28 = Luke 22:30; John 12:47–48; for God as the eschatological judge, see Rom 2:16; 3:6; 14:10; Heb 12:23; Jas 4:12; 5:9; Rev 20:11–12; cf. Luke 18:2–8.

774. For Abel, e.g., *Test. Ab.* 12:5–13:3 A; 11:2 B (for comparison of the two recensions of *Testament of Abraham’s* judgment scene, see Nickelsburg, “Eschatology,” 29–40). The saints in 1QpHab IV, 4; 1 Cor 6:2.

775. For Minos and Rhadamanthus as judges, see, e.g., Hom. *Od.* 11.568; Eurip. *Cycl.* 273; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.1.2; Virg. *Aen.* 6.431–33, 566–69; Sen. *Y. Herc. fur.* 733–34; Lucian *Fun.* 7; *Z. Cat.* 18; *Men.* 11–13; *True Story* 2.6–7, 18, 23; *Downward Journey* 13, 24; *Dial. D.* 380–89 (25/12, Alexander, Hannibal, Minos, and Scipio 1–7); 450 (24/30, Minos and Sostratus 1); *Dial. G.* 276 (4/24, Hermes and Maia 1); Max. Tyre 9.7; Proclus *Poet.* 6.2, K156.9–10; Libanius *Encomium* 6.3; further, Rose et al., “Minos”; March, “Rhadamanthus”; cf. Stenger, “Minos.” For Minos’s reputation for judging before death, see, e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.40; 53.11; but those who considered him unjust denied his posthumous role (*Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 3.25; cf. 4.34).

776. E.g., *Sib. Or.* 4.183–84; 1 *En.* 9:4; 60:2; 62:2; 47:3 with 46:2; cf. *Test. Ab.* 14:9, 13 A.

777. Cf., e.g., 2 Macc 12:6 (God the righteous judge).

778. Pace Dunn, *Acts*, 144, who emphasizes comparison with human judges (Enoch and Abel) in Jewish tradition.

779. For this eschatological authority, cf., e.g., 1 Pet 4:5; Matt 25:31–46; Matt 7:23//Luke 13:27; Mark 8:38; John 5:22, 27–30; 2 Cor 5:10; *Poly. Phil.* 6.2; 2 *Clem.* 1.1.

780. E.g., Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.44.114; Ruth 2:20. Cf. Plouton as judge of works “both manifest and hidden” (*Orph. H.* 18.16). That some would still be alive at the parousia is suggested in 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:15, 17; perhaps Rev 19:19; the contrary view may appear in 4 *Ezra* 7:29, 31; cf. perhaps Rev 20:4–5.

781. With Witherington, *Acts*, 358. That “Lord of all” is equivalent to “Lord of the dead and the living” is clear (Rom 14:9; cf. 10:12).

782. The ambiguity in 1 Pet 4:5 does not help the claim that 1 Peter and Petrine speeches in Acts share much the same Christology (cf. Smalley, “Christology Again”); is Petrine Christology noticeably distinctive from “mainstream” early Christian Christology?

783. Whether the Lukan form of this Q saying includes urgency is debated. Many think that this text, like others representing Lukan eschatology, lacks urgency (Dunn, *Acts*, 144), and Robinson even doubted

though Greeks did not emphasize eschatology, even older Greek myths (like Egyptian eschatology) sometimes spoke to the question of moral judgment in the afterlife.⁷⁸⁴ Those who denied the afterlife⁷⁸⁵ might be thought especially wicked.⁷⁸⁶ For Luke's Christian audience and for Peter as a Jewish speaker within the story world, however, this judgment was not merely in the individual's afterlife (though such postmortem judgment could be included, Luke 16:22–23; 23:43) but in the day of judgment.⁷⁸⁷ Although some elements of Hellenistic Judaism and Christianity may have played down eschatological judgment, it was used as a summons to moral living by others (cf. 2 Pet 3:3–4, 11–14; 1 Cor 15:29–34; Col 3:4–6; 1 Thess 3:13; Titus 2:12–14).

IV. THE PROPHETS ATTEST THE GOSPEL (10:43)

Although the appeal to “witness” carries throughout Acts 10:39–43, most of this witness reinforces the *narratio*, the account about Jesus. In Greco-Roman rhetorical terms (relevant for Luke's ideal audience if not for Peter), it is thus probably only 10:43 that begins the “proofs” of the speech (the *probatio*); Luke need only report where the proofs are headed for the attentive reader (who has already encountered sufficient scriptural proofs in 2:25–31, 34–35; 3:22–26; and 7:2–53) to know what would be said and make its repetition unnecessary here (though see again in 13:17–22, 33–37, 40–41).

The global reference to “all the prophets” (i.e., the prophets pervasively as a whole) is a characteristically Lukan way of summarizing the biblical message (see comment on Acts 3:18).⁷⁸⁸ Only some of the texts used by early Christians as messianic referred to forgiveness (notably Isa 53:6, 10–12), but more generally, the prophets testified of forgiveness and restoration before God in the messianic time to come (e.g., Jer 23:5–6; 31:34; Dan 9:24). Cornelius and other God-fearers present might know some particular prophecies from attending synagogue as adults, but these would be less relevant to them than to previous Jewish audiences in Acts.

“Everyone” presumably implicitly includes Gentiles, as in Pauline preaching.⁷⁸⁹ For at least the circle of early Christians most engaged in the Gentile mission (as exemplified in Paul's letters), salvation “for everyone who believes” is at the heart of a message that welcomes Gentiles on equal terms with Jews (Rom 1:16; 3:22; 4:11; 10:4, 11–13; cf. Gal 3:22).⁷⁹⁰

(tentatively, I believe) that it implies a second coming (*Coming*, 28; idem, *Studies*, 143n13). For crisis, see Caird, “Expounding”; eschatological urgency in Jeremias, *Parables*, 43–44 (cf. 96).

784. The most extreme example was Tartarus; e.g., Hesiod *Theog.* 717–19; Plato *Phaedo* 113E–114A; Apollod. *Bib.* 1.1.2; *Epit.* 2.1; Virg. *Aen.* 6.540–43; Tibullus 1.73–80; Statius *Silv.* 5.1.192–93; 5.1.206 (poetically); 5.5.78; *Theb.* 1.85.102; Sen. *Y. Herc. fur.* 749–59; Sil. It. 6.40 (poetically); 13.833–49; Men. *Rhet.* 2.17, 438.30–439.1; in Jewish sources, *1 En.* 20:2; *Sib. Or.* 1.10, 101; 2.291 (possibly interpolated); 4.186; 5.178; *L.A.B.* 60:3; *Test. Sol.* 6:3; 2 Pet 2:4; for its extreme distance, Hom. *Il.* 8.13–15; Hesiod *Theog.* 722–25 (for distance). Even without using the terminology, some Jews employed some equivalent depictions for Gehinnom (e.g., *1 En.* 67:4, 7; 103:8; *y. Sanh.* 6:6, §2; *Hag.* 2:2, §5). Cf. also the river of fire (e.g., Sil. It. 13.836, 871; 14.61–62).

785. E.g., Epicureans denied Tartarus (Lucret. *Nat.* 3.978–1023); Lucian played with it (*Fun.* 8; *Icar.* 33; *Downward Journey* 28) as well as with the notion of judgment in the afterlife (e.g., *Z. Cat.* 17).

786. Cf., e.g., Wis 2:1–24; *Abot R. Nat.* 5 A; *b. Roš Haš.* 17a; *Gen. Rab.* 53:12; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 4:8; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 4:8. For Gentile critiques of the Epicurean denial, see, e.g., Plut. *Pleas. L.* 23, *Mor.* 1103D; *Aul. Gel.* 9.5.8.

787. On the Last Judgment in Acts (see also Acts 17:31; 24:25), see discussion in Morris, *Cross in New Testament*, 114.

788. For the prophets “testifying,” cf. 2 Chr 24:19; Rom 3:21 (Luke might reflect the Pauline thought attested here); *1 Clem.* 43.1.

789. With Marshall, *Acts*, 228.

790. Although we are most familiar with the message through Luke's mentor Paul, “apostle to the Gentiles,” the belief presumably was or became more widespread, though less explicitly linked with the Jewish-Gentile

Here Peter, like Paul in Acts 13:38–39, preaches forgiveness by faith (he speaks similarly in 15:11); few Gentiles would have access to God’s grace otherwise (cf. Rom 3:28–29). Luke presents this not as a soteriological alternative to repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38; cf. 19:4; 20:21) but as another perspective on the same demand, another way of articulating the summons to a radically new life through Christ.⁷⁹¹ Although Peter does not go as far as directly demanding a response (cf. 2:38; 3:19), this explanation of the appropriate soteriological response effectively climaxes Peter’s message, inviting faith in what he has already spoken.⁷⁹² God’s response to Peter’s hearers’ response is the gift of the Spirit (10:44–48; cf. 2:38).

6. The Spirit Confirms the Gentiles’ Acceptance (10:44–48)

In this paragraph, the Spirit graphically confirms the Gentiles’ acceptance. When uncircumcised Gentiles receive the same gift of the Spirit that the original Jerusalem church received, and with the same evidence, Peter orders their baptism into the covenant community without further ado.

In view of some prior examples (though cf. 2:4), the Spirit comes in an unexpected way, without laying on of hands (8:17) or even baptism (2:38), but God surprises his Jewish agents even more by sovereignly conferring the Spirit on Gentiles—an “exception” that opens the door to the future. The Spirit was a gift promised only for the covenant people (cf., e.g., Isa 42:1; 44:3; Ezek 36:26–27; 37:14, 29; Joel 2:28–29; see comment on Acts 1:6); that Gentiles received it without circumcision indicated that God had accepted them into the covenant by their faith alone, without circumcision (or even baptism). God would hardly pour his Spirit (Acts 10:45) into vessels he had not already purified or cleansed (cf. 10:28; 15:9). Paul also appeals to the presence of the Spirit as certain evidence of conversion (1 Cor 2:4; Gal 3:2, 5),⁷⁹³ a sign of the Gentiles’ reception of covenant status (Gal 3:14; cf. Rom 15:16).⁷⁹⁴ (In contrast to some earlier occasions, most obviously Acts 8:15–17, the gift of the Spirit appears to coincide directly with conversion temporally here,⁷⁹⁵ although departing from the norm of 2:38 on this occasion by preceding water baptism.)

From this point forward (10:44–48; 15:7–11, 14) the emphasis rests more on Cornelius’s household than on Cornelius as an individual,⁷⁹⁶ though from the start

divide than in Romans (cf. John 3:15–16; 6:40; 11:26, 48; 12:46; 1 John 5:1; for a Gentile in *1 Clem.* 12.7). Saving faith does appear in Petrine literature, apparently for a mixed community (1 Pet 1:5–9, 21; 2:6–7; 2 Pet 1:1; cf. 1 Pet 5:9; 2 Pet 1:5), and 1 Peter quotes the same text (Isa 28:16) on which Paul appears to base his language in Romans (1 Pet 2:6; Rom 9:33), although Paul has augmented it interpretively (Rom 10:11).

791. One cannot relegate repentance to Peter’s preaching to Israel (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; cf. Paul summarizing John’s message in 13:24; 19:4) and faith to his preaching to Gentiles (as here) because the pattern cannot hold: Gentiles also receive repentance (11:18; 17:30), and it applies to both (20:21; 26:20). A terminological *preference* for either repentance or faith is possible, however, and when Paul is not recalling John the Baptist, he uses the term “repentance” less frequently than Peter (fitting the rare use in Pauline literature, of which Rom 2:4 is most significant; although, analogously in Petrine literature, it appears only at 2 Pet 3:9).

792. Until this point only the narrator has employed the title “believers”; Trebilco therefore suggests that it originated among Greek-speaking Christians outside Jerusalem (“Self-Designations,” 40–41, 49).

793. On the possible sense of “demonstration” in 1 Cor 2:4, cf., e.g., Mus. Ruf. frg. 44, p. 138.28; Porph. *Marc.* 8.142–43; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 265–66; Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 153–55; Keener, *Corinthians*, 35. For the likely attesting function of tongues-speech in early Christianity, cf. Esler, “Glossolalia and Admission.”

794. Similarly, in Eph 3:5–6, it is the Spirit that revealed to the apostles the inclusion of Gentiles in Christ’s family.

795. Even if Cornelius had heard of Jesus’s followers through Philip’s work in Caesarea (as suggested by Blacklock, *Cities*, 75) and knew something about Jesus (Acts 10:37), he does not yet appear to be converted (11:14).

796. Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 113.

Luke's interest in him has been especially his symbolic significance for the Gentile mission. Further, the Spirit that signals empowerment to witness to the nations (1:8) has now fallen even on those "afar off" (2:39) themselves. This implies that these Gentiles are now equipped spiritually to propagate the message further.⁷⁹⁷

a. The Spirit's Fall Interrupts Peter (10:44)

The same Spirit that sent Cornelius's messengers (10:20) and sent Peter (10:19) now graphically confirms God's acceptance of the Gentiles, marking them with the same sign by which God attested his messianic community on Pentecost (cf. 2:33) and promised to attest subsequent disciples (2:38–39). That the Spirit fell on them as on the Jewish disciples (10:47) and as on Jesus (10:38) presumably indicates that God was equipping them for participation in the same mission to the rest of the world (1:8; 10:38).

Among extant early Christian sources, Luke's work speaks by far the most abundantly of the Spirit's coming "upon" someone (Luke 1:35; 2:25; 4:18; Acts 1:8; 2:17; 10:44–45; 11:15; 19:6). Other writers speak of the Spirit coming "on" one (e.g., 1 Pet 4:14; *Jos. Asen.* 4:7/9; the case in Mark 1:10 fits the narrative and is not idiomatic), but Luke's language derives especially from the OT. Old Testament instances nearly always concern empowerment to prophesy (Num 11:17, 25–26, 29; 24:2; 1 Sam 10:6, 10; 19:20, 23; 1 Chr 12:18; 2 Chr 20:14; probably 2 Kgs 2:9; Isa 59:21; 61:1; Ezek 11:5; 37:1), or to lead (Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 1 Sam 16:13), or to exhibit superhuman strength (Judg 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam 11:6).⁷⁹⁸

The expression appears in both of Luke's programmatic texts, Isa 61:1 in his Gospel (Luke 4:18) and Joel 2:28–29 in Acts (Acts 2:17–18). The Spirit's "falling" appears in Acts 10:44 and 11:15 but also reflects biblical idiom (Ezek 11:5). The suddenness of the Spirit's coming here parallels that of the Spirit's coming at Pentecost (Acts 2:2; cf. 11:15).⁷⁹⁹ For the significance of those "hearing" the saving message, compare Rom 10:14; Gal 3:2, 5; 1 Thess 2:13; and often Luke-Acts itself (e.g., Luke 5:1, 15; 6:18; 8:8, 18).⁸⁰⁰

The Spirit here interrupts Peter's words.⁸⁰¹ Most commentators suggest that "Peter's address is really at an end," proposing that "the alleged interruption" is Luke's literary device.⁸⁰² Rhetorically,⁸⁰³ the speech is nowhere close to complete,⁸⁰⁴ having just left the *narratio* for the *probatio*; though Luke usually uses "begin" idiomatically

797. Jesus has already sent an apparent Gentile (Luke 8:39), but in that case, he could not have brought the Gentile back to Galilee (cf. 8:38) for cultural reasons. Now the barrier between Jew and Gentile is beginning to be surmounted in the church (see comment on Acts 10:48).

798. The supposed distinction between the Spirit "in" believers in the NT and "upon" believers in the OT does not hold for 1 Peter (1 Pet 1:11; 4:14) or Luke; it is sometimes only stylistic preference, perhaps reflecting the different idioms of Hebrew grammar (preferring "upon") and Greek anthropology (preferring "in"), overlap though they do. Still, Paul's and other early Christian "in" passages often do evoke more the transforming activity of the Spirit characteristic of Ezek 36, whereas Luke's "upon" passages typically evoke the more frequent OT idiom that more often refers to empowerment.

799. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 23.

800. In Gal 3:2, as here, the Spirit came through "hearing" (Borgen, "Reception," 233).

801. His "words" (ῥήματα) have already been introduced as divinely appointed for Cornelius (Acts 10:22; cf. their function as his means of salvation, 11:14).

802. Quoting Haenchen, *Acts*, 353.

803. From the standpoint of rhetorical patterns that Luke's urban audiences, familiar with speeches, would recognize. Theologically, however, because the kerygma is especially the gospel story, the *narratio* delivered a complete message.

804. One could leave a thought incomplete but implied (cf. Luke 13:9; *Rhet. Her.* 4.30.41; Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, §482; Porter, "Paul and Letters," 583), but even if the interrupted speech so functions on the Lukan level (which is doubtful), it does not within the narrative world.

with “speak,” it may therefore be meant literally in Acts 11:15: the Spirit fell when Peter had “begun” to speak. From the standpoint of Luke’s purpose, however, enough has been said to make the point. The interruption also appears providential from a narrative standpoint, since Peter might well have been uncomfortable granting baptism had the Spirit not preempted him.⁸⁰⁵

That believing Peter’s narration, without full proofs or emotional pleas at the end, is sufficient to bring the Spirit also indicates that, for Luke, the saving message proper is the gospel story itself—what God has done—more than a full theological explanation of what response is required (important as the latter is for other reasons; cf. 15:7–11), though a summons to respond is generally included (e.g., 2:38; 3:19; 16:31) and seems implied at the climax here (10:43). That is, Luke’s soteriology demands faith in the message of Christ rather than faith in a methodology of faith itself (though understanding the role of faith in soteriology is important for explaining the gospel).

Although interruption is more frequent in Acts than in other ancient histories (and its speeches are shorter to begin with, perhaps to keep the monograph to a single volume), it does appear elsewhere.⁸⁰⁶ In any case, interruptions characterized real life as well as the narratives that sought to depict it.⁸⁰⁷ (See fuller discussion at Acts 2:37.) Good orators would silence those who interrupted them (Cic. *Or. Brut.* 40.138)—for example, complaining that they are contravening one’s right to speech (*Rhet. Alex.* 18, 1432b.35–40) or refusing to allow jurors to decide for themselves (18, 1433a.14–18).⁸⁰⁸ There were, however, positive interruptions, in which an audience demonstrates that it is already persuaded (e.g., Acts 2:37; Caesar *C.W.* 2.33). This verse signals a positive interruption from the hearers as they exalt God in other tongues (Acts 10:46), but ultimately the interruption is from God’s own Spirit.

b. Gift of the Spirit on the Gentiles (10:45)

Luke calls the Jewish believers with Peter the “circumcised,” a common NT metonymy for the technical physical distinction (Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 7:18–19; Gal 2:7), even among those who reject its soteriological significance (Rom 2:25–29; 3:30; 4:9–12; Gal 5:6; 6:15; Eph 2:11; Col 2:13; 3:11; 4:11).⁸⁰⁹ On circumcision and its role in early Judaism, see the excursus at Acts 15. The phrase highlights the distinction between the Jewish believers and the Gentiles who are receiving a gift once assumed to be confined to Israel. That it recurs in this sense almost immediately afterward (Acts 11:2; cf. also its antonym in 11:3), and nowhere else in Luke-Acts, reinforces the emphasis here. Luke distinguishes the Jewish believers from other Jewish people

805. Cf. similarly Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 24: God arranged it this way both to justify what Peter would do and to teach him along with the other Jews present. The claim that the Spirit is given only through the Twelve or when they are present (Fitzmyer, “Role of Spirit,” 182) falters at Acts 9:17, and even here, Peter is present as a witness and not a mediator of the Spirit except insofar as the Spirit is connected with his message.

806. Soards, *Speeches*, 138 (following Plümacher, “Griechischer Historiker,” col. 249); Aune, *Environment*, 127; Horsley, “Speeches.” Cf. now Smith, *Rhetoric of Interruption*, 42–166.

807. Cf., e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 18, 1432b.35–40; 1433a.14–25; Livy 3.40.5; Cic. *Prov. cons.* 8.18; *Or. Brut.* 40.138; Lucian *Dem.* 14; see fuller comment on Acts 2:13, 37. In somewhat analogous charismatic-type settings in popular sources, cf. the Spirit “falling,” apparently interrupting, during preaching in Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 59; reports of spontaneous healings interrupting preaching in Osborn, *Healing*, 321 (Mexico, 1978).

808. If most of the hearers clamor (the same term or its cognates appear in Acts 17:5; 20:1; 21:34; 24:18), the Rhetor advises, one should beg the judges to hear one out, thereby (usually) restoring attention (*Rhet. Alex.* 18, 1433a.19–25).

809. On metonymy in ancient rhetoric, see *Rhet. Her.* 4.32.43; Rowe, “Style,” 126; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 578; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 85; Anderson, *Glossary*, 77 (adding Cic. *Or. Brut.* 93; against its being employed too poetically, Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.23–27).

by the adjective “faithful” (πιστοί), which may imply faithfulness to God’s covenant (Luke 12:42; 16:10–12; 19:17), presumably through faith in Christ (Acts 16:1, 15).

Their amazement that the Spirit was poured out on Gentiles—when biblically it had been promised only and exclusively to people of the covenant (e.g., Isa 42:1; 44:3; Ezek 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28–29; applied still more narrowly at Qumran; see comment on Acts 1:6)—is repeated by the Jerusalem assembly in Acts 11:18. Some later rabbis even emphasized that Balaam’s revelation was necessarily incomplete;⁸¹⁰ rabbis may have felt uncomfortable with the idea of God’s Holy Spirit resting on an unclean Gentile.⁸¹¹ A later tradition specifies that the Spirit of prophecy distinguished God’s people from the Gentiles.⁸¹²

The language of “pouring” evokes Joel 2:28–29 as quoted in Acts 2:17–18 (using a cognate term in the Greek), indicating that Joel’s “all flesh” includes Gentile believers as well as Jewish ones.⁸¹³ On the significance of the “gift” of the Spirit, see Acts 2:38; 8:20; 11:12 (Luke’s uses for “gift”), especially comment on Acts 2:38.⁸¹⁴ Although Peter uses “pouring” in the passive voice, God clearly has given the gift (11:17); see discussion on Luke’s theological Christology with regard to the Spirit at Acts 2:33.

c. Tongues as Confirmation (10:46)

Praise in tongues is the sign that convinces the Jewish believers that the Spirit has been poured out (“for they were hearing”).⁸¹⁵ Anything less obvious would not have been sufficiently compelling for the Jewish observers,⁸¹⁶ who are here able to recognize the phenomenon from its parallel with the analogous Jewish experience of the Spirit first reported at Pentecost (2:4).

Peter then concludes that the Gentiles have received the Spirit “the same way that we did” (10:47; cf. 11:15); the wind and fire (2:2–3) were not repeated, but the tongues speaking was, and it will be repeated again in 19:6. Luke probably highlights tongues speaking more frequently as a sign of the Spirit’s outpouring because of his emphasis on the Spirit enabling the witnesses cross-culturally (1:8); on Luke’s use of tongues to evidence the Spirit’s cross-cultural prophetic empowerment, see comment on Acts 2:4.⁸¹⁷ But probably historically, and not just in Acts, Gentiles’ glossolalia sometimes confirmed their reception of the Spirit and hence invited their admission to Christian communities.⁸¹⁸

810. *Gen. Rab.* 52:5; 74:7; *Lev. Rab.* 1:13; cf. *Sipre Deut.* 357.18.1–2. On Balaam, see excursus on prophecy at Acts 2:17–18.

811. Cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 602. Balaam was, however, moved by the divine Spirit in Num 24:2; *Jos. Ant.* 4.118.

812. Talbert, *Acts*, 99, citing *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 33:16.

813. See also others, e.g., Mufwata, *Extrémities*, 61.

814. Jewish teachers sometimes associated the concept of “gift” especially with Torah (Moore, *Judaism*, 398; see comment on Acts 2:38); no such associations are clear here, though they would fit the Jewish-Gentile contrast indicated here. Associations with hospitality (Parsons, *Acts*, 155, noting hosts giving gifts to guests in antiquity) fit this context, though not specifically Acts 2:38 or 8:20.

815. Cf. also Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 24. For the connection between praise and the Spirit in Luke-Acts, see, e.g., Cullen, “Euphoria.”

816. With Lampe, *Seal*, 75.

817. Severus of Antioch in *Cat. Act.* 10.44 (Martin, *Acts*, 140) opines that in earlier times, people receiving baptism “both spoke with tongues and prophesied in order to prove that they had received the Holy Spirit.” For the “sign value” of tongues speaking regarding baptism in the Spirit here, see, e.g., Chuen, “Acts 10,” 72. Luke does not report it in every case, rendering it of course doubtful that it constitutes “an invariable sign of conversion” (Marshall, *Acts*, 194); against it invariably functioning as evidence, see esp. Turner, *Power*, 446–49; idem, *Gifts*, 225.

818. See Esler, “Glossolalia and Admission.” Perhaps analogously, the shared experience of glossolalia emphasized equality among disparate groups of early Pentecostals, though cultural divisions often quickly

One could suggest that Gentiles' reception of this sign might function as merely an initial attestation rather than a continuing experience, like the prophetic empowerment of the seventy in Num 11:25 (in contrast to Eldad and Medad [11:26–29], which is closer to the ideal [11:29]); but we should not read so much into Luke's silence about further manifestations,⁸¹⁹ especially when we know (and surely Luke knew) that some early Christians did continue to use the gift (1 Cor 14:2–39, esp. 14:18).⁸²⁰ Since for Luke tongues speaking marks power for cross-cultural witness, his claim seems to be that Gentiles, too, can receive this power (see Acts 2:38–39).⁸²¹ This is not to say that Luke would expect tongues in every case when someone receives this empowerment (see discussion at Acts 2:4) but to suggest that it is also unreasonable to treat their occurrence as “exceptional,” as if Luke supposed that tongues never or rarely occurred except on the occasions where they are recorded.⁸²² Nevertheless, narrating their occurrence here is theologically significant. Their reception of the empowering Spirit reveals that, rather than remaining objects of mission, Cornelius and his household immediately become partners in mission.

Believers experienced tongues speaking unexpectedly here as in 2:4, with no prior instruction concerning its nature; sometimes prophecy came roughly similarly in Israelite experience (1 Sam 19:20; cf. 10:6). Some scholars argue that the “tongues” of Acts 10:46 and 19:6 are probably meant as merely ecstatic speech, in contrast to the tongues of 2:4.⁸²³ This approach, however popular today, is quite unlikely for Luke's narrative; even if no one is present to recognize the languages here, the phenomena are portrayed in essentially the same way in each instance and make the same point. The Jewish observers in 10:47 claim that the Gentiles received the Spirit the same way the Jewish Christians had (cf. also 11:15).⁸²⁴ We have no record of the Jewish Christians' having experienced nonlinguistic “speech” and thus no reason to think that they would have known how to recognize or interpret such a phenomenon. Presumably they believed that genuine languages were involved, although they could not understand them; this again signified cross-cultural prophetic empowerment. Most compellingly, “tongues” means “languages”; this is probably, therefore, also Paul's interpretation of the gift in 1 Cor 12–14, even if (as even more scholars argue in that case) the experience behind Paul's linguistic

reasserted themselves (e.g., Yong, *Spirit Poured*, 56–57). Ezekiel spoke of Israel being as unreceptive as people of foreign, unintelligible speech (Ezek 3:5–6).

819. He narrates nothing else about these Gentiles' lives thereafter, either; nor does he describe the particulars of worship in later gatherings of believers.

820. For a caution against reading too much into Luke's silence (in contrast to Paul, Luke gives few samples of church life), see esp. Turner, *Gifts*, 224.

821. Menzies, *Empowered*, 215–18, argues that the connection is with prophetic inspiration, not salvation, since the focus is on tongues-speech; cf. Stronstad, *Baptized*, 66–67. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 601–2, cites a tradition regarding eschatological renewal of language with regard to the Gentiles (Zeph 3:9; cf. *b. Ber.* 57b, noting circumcision of Gentiles' lips in some sources).

822. Which would argue from silence rather than from Luke's pattern. Green, *Thirty Years*, 259–60, though charismatic himself, reads all the instances in Acts (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6) as exceptional, performing particular functions (in this case, demonstrating that some Gentiles have received the Spirit). Although the recorded cases do serve literary functions, treating them all as exceptions fragments Luke's larger narrative, especially when we consider that these cases constitute a remarkably high proportion of Luke's descriptions of people “receiving the Spirit” for the first time in Acts. Conversely, overemphasizing tongues might put too much weight on these “initial” fillings in Acts, taking them out of the context of other (“subsequent”) fillings sometimes mentioned (esp. 4:31; probably 4:8; 13:9).

823. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 134.

824. With Forbes, *Prophecy*, 51n16; Everts, “Tongues or Languages?”; Faw, *Acts*, 319. Although Peter's colleagues from Joppa may not have all been present at Pentecost (Acts 10:23; though some of the believers scattered in 8:1, 4 may have eventually found themselves in Joppa) and hence could have experienced the Spirit subsequently, they speak as representatives of the Jewish church that received the Spirit then.

interpretation was to be ecstatic speech rather than unknown languages. See much fuller discussion at Acts 2:4.

Luke elsewhere applies the term *μεγαλύνω* to praise (Luke 1:46; Acts 19:17; though not in Luke 1:58; Acts 5:13), and this is a common usage in the Psalms (e.g., Pss 34:3 [33:4 LXX]; 35:27 [34:27]; 40:16 [39:17]; 69:30 [68:31]; 70:4 [69:5]). By itself, conventional praise would not have persuaded Peter's colleagues that the Spirit had been poured out, since this activity occurred regularly in the temple and perhaps in many synagogues, but its mention does not occur in isolation here. Tongues speaking in Acts apparently always functions as inspired praise, not as a message to someone else.⁸²⁵ The use in Acts 2:11 is debatable, since one could declare God's greatness either in epideictic speech directed toward hearers or in praise directed toward God, but here it is probably grammatically linked with praise,⁸²⁶ in contrast to the way it is distinguished from prophecy at 19:6 (which uses not merely *καί* but *τε . . . καί*). Certainly, tongues speaking is primarily prayer and praise in 1 Cor 14:14–17, our other clearest early Christian source on the subject.

d. Water Baptism for the Spirit-Baptized (10:47)

If these Gentiles were baptized in the Holy Spirit, thus experiencing the ultimate baptism, surely they were qualified to receive baptism in water, the lesser baptism (Acts 11:16). This functions like an implicit *qal vahomer* argument: if the greater was true, then how much more the lesser should be true (Luke 3:16).⁸²⁷ Although they undoubtedly expected water baptism first (Acts 2:38), they found that God was more interested in the fact than the sequence.⁸²⁸ Even in a much later period, some observers noticed anomalies with respect to baptism's sequence and sought to understand their theological significance; when some were forgiven without baptism, Ambrosiaster asked, "Was such a person invisibly baptized, considering that he received the gift which belongs to baptism?"⁸²⁹

Most Jewish people required baptism and circumcision of Gentile converts, but here Peter requires only what he required for Jews (2:38); because both received the Spirit in the same way, he recognizes that both come to God on the same terms (15:8–11). The controversy in Jerusalem arises not over Peter's failure to demand circumcision, however (many Jews already accepted the tradition of some righteous Gentiles who were not full converts), but because, without circumcising him, Peter treats Cornelius as if he is a circumcised member of the covenant. That is, he eats with him (11:3).

Even once this barrier is surmounted in Cornelius's individual case, it is applied to recognizing Gentile Christians in general as equal partners in the gospel only in Acts 15. This reticence to embrace ethnically and culturally different newcomers is not a distinctively Jewish problem but simply human nature when believers from one culture "evangelize" another culture, not always distinguishing their own enculturation of the gospel from its transcultural story. One may consider the often-patriarchal relations of Protestant missions and their converts in the nineteenth century (and sometimes later); of the Vatican reining in enculturated Jesuits in Asia in earlier

825. Prophetic speech could also apply to prayer and worship (Luke 1:67–75; 1 Chr 25:1–3; for musical inspiration in the stead of mantic, cf. Men. Rhet. 2.17, 437.31–438.1), and the Spirit could forbid speech (Acts 16:6–7) as well as inspire it; even Hill, *Prophecy*, 98, allows the possible excepting of 10:46 and 19:6 from Spirit-empowered speech in Acts as always being to persuade people to turn to Christ.

826. Turner, *Gifts*, 224–26 (cf. also idem, *Power*, 395), thinks that exalting God might be *mixed* with tongues, with some doing one thing and others doing the other. This view is possible although, for the reasons above, I think it less likely.

827. Also deSilva, *Honor*, 286–87.

828. With, e.g., F. Martin in *Acts* (ACCS), 139; see comment on Acts 2:38; 8:14–17.

829. Ambrosiaster *Commentary on Paul's Epistles* (Vogels, 34; Bray, *Corinthians*, 30).

centuries; of Arab cultural colonialism in much of the history of Islamic expansion; and so forth.⁸³⁰ Religious institutions, like institutions in general, tend toward conservative preservation of their cultures and traditions, in contrast to the more radical spirit of the earliest Jesus movement and other prophetic or apocalyptic movements.⁸³¹

Although the narrated sequence violates the expected pattern (2:38) and the outpouring itself is unexpected, it may fit the usual pattern of prayer preceding the outpouring of the Spirit (10:2, 4, 9; as in 1:14; 4:24–31; 8:15).⁸³² Peter’s climactic question as to who can “hinder” their baptism⁸³³ anticipates the climactic question at his defense in 11:17: “Who was I to hinder God?” It also recalls the earlier Gentile conversion, employing the same term, “hinder” (κωλύω), as in 8:36 (see comment there), its first appearance in Acts. Luke indicates that just as no one dare hinder children (Luke 18:16) or outsiders (9:49–50) from God’s kingdom (cf. 11:52), neither dare anyone hinder Gentiles. The significance of this term is evident from the cognate on which Acts ends: the apostle to the Gentiles continued preaching “unhindered” (Acts 28:31). The second part of Peter’s question, like a large percentage of questions in Luke-Acts,⁸³⁴ grounds the point in the preceding narrative: in this case, these Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit the same way that the Jewish believers had.

e. Baptism and Hospitality (10:48)

By ordering baptism in Jesus’s name, Peter grants that the Gentiles share the experience of 2:38, though the sequence has been altered by the believers’ receiving the Spirit before formal acceptance into the church. Peter ordered baptism instead of carrying it out himself (cf. John 4:2; 1 Cor 1:14–16).⁸³⁵ Water for baptism naturally would be no problem in Caesarea.⁸³⁶ Although Caesarea was by the sea, springs in the area also supplied plenty of fresh water, some piped in (at some time in the first century) through an aqueduct tunnel ingeniously carved through rock.⁸³⁷

Like Lydia later (Acts 16:15), Cornelius prevailed on the preachers to accept his hospitality, allowing him the honor of serving as host,⁸³⁸ as well as undoubtedly

830. See, e.g., Neill, *History of Missions*, 190–94; Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, passim; Gordon, *Slavery*, passim.

831. That social movements usually emerge in flux and, if successful, tend to become institutionalized is often recognized (e.g., Broom and Selznick, *Sociology*, 304; Spencer, *Foundations*, 505–6).

832. With, e.g., Grassi, *Laugh*, 112; Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 51–52. Cf. Luke 10:2; 11:13. Yet Bonnah, *Spirit*, 190, is also right to note that the connection is less clear than in those passages. Tert. *Fasting* 8 notes that Cornelius received the Spirit before baptism, associating this with God heeding his fasting (Cyprian *Treatise 4: On the Lord’s Prayer* 32 connects Cornelius’s vision with his prayerfulness, citing Acts 10:4; cf. his alms in *Liturgy of Mark* 3.15). Cyprian *Ep.* 71 [Oxford ed. 72].¹ cites the case of Cornelius to show that orthodox water baptism is necessary even when the Spirit has come.

833. Possibly functioning like epitrope, where a speaker may challenge anyone to contradict (as defined in Rowe, “Style,” 147; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 582; cf. the somewhat different definition in Anderson, *Glossary*, 54, citing *Rhet. Her.* 4.39). Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 24 suggests that Peter is deploying a rhetorical advantage over those who would question the propriety here.

834. On this pattern among many of Luke’s questions, see Elbert, “Observation” (comparing Homeric style). He claims that thirty-eight of the seventy questions in Acts have dual components (p. 102), of which thirty-one (82 percent; in the Gospel, 77 percent) are connected deliberately to the preceding context in the second element.

835. As noted also by Ambrosiaster *Comm.*, on 1 Cor 1:17 (CSEL 81.12–13; Vogels, 12–13; Bray, *Corinthians*, 12). One could connect the name formula with the order (cf. Acts 3:6; 16:18), but other baptismal uses associate it with the baptism instead (2:38; 8:16; 19:5; 22:16). Being baptized “in” or “into Jesus’s name” (always with baptism in the passive, focusing on the action of the recipient of baptism rather than the supervisor) implied calling on his name (2:21, 38; 22:16) and hence receiving the message of Jesus (his name, 8:12, 16).

836. Some early Christians at some time (perhaps a few decades) after our period seem to have preferred immersion in running water; but failing that, they used what water they could, and failing sufficient water for immersion, they poured (*Did.* 7.2–3).

837. See Porath, “Hmnhrh,” noting that the aqueduct is not Herodian, as was previously thought.

838. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 66–67.

securing more teaching. In the ancient Mediterranean world, sharing food and drink with guests was often the greatest kindness one could offer (e.g., *Xen. Cyr.* 8.2.2), and in view of obligations to repay benefaction (which Cornelius would see as relevant here, Acts 10:33), this would be the least that Cornelius could offer and also the most culturally acceptable way of expressing his gratitude.⁸³⁹ Dinner invitations established and strengthened friendship ties, thereby sustaining the Roman civic virtue of *societas*.⁸⁴⁰ In Acts 10, shared table fellowship and hospitality provide a context for converting these Gentiles—and the attitudes of the Jerusalem church.⁸⁴¹

That they ask Peter to stay for a few days will create trouble with the Jerusalem church because, under such circumstances, he has to eat with them (11:3). But the Fourth Gospel claims that Jesus accepted Samaritan hospitality for several days (John 4:40), and Acts has recently reported Peter's time in Samaria (Acts 8:14–25, esp. 8:25). Further, Jesus and his disciples ate with "sinners" in the Gospel (Luke 5:29–30; 7:34; 15:1–2); why not with Gentiles whom God has clearly accepted?⁸⁴²

Certainly a God-fearer⁸⁴³ would not have been so insensitive as to offer Jewish guests pork or other unclean foods;⁸⁴⁴ if they served meat (which was more unlikely than not),⁸⁴⁵ they could have obtained it kosher-butchered in Caesarea. But if the food had not been *tithed* on, the more scrupulous Jews (of whom there were probably a number in the Jerusalem church; Acts 15:5; cf. 6:7; 15:20, 29)⁸⁴⁶ would have had reason to protest (see comment on Acts 10:23). Further, conservative Judean Jews often disapproved of sharing a table with Gentiles (against some Diaspora Jews' values; see discussion at Acts 10:23, 28), and Cornelius's guests may have included not only the uncircumcised (the explicit issue in 11:2–3) but also those defiled by idolatry.

7. Peter Defends Welcoming Gentiles into the Covenant Community (11:1–18)

Peter here defends his acceptance of Gentiles as members of the covenant community. He recounts the very evidences that Luke has already reported; the consequent repetition for Luke's audience reinforces the divine initiative contained in the event.

839. Monetary payment would be insulting (cf. Acts 8:18–20; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 10) because it demeaned the gift and giver as if it could be bought; on appropriate responses to benefaction, depending on the relative status of giver and receiver, see Sen. *Y. Ben.* passim.

840. Winter, *Left Corinth*, 56, following Slater, *Dining*.

841. Cf. Arterbury, "Hospitality."

842. Cf. Urbach, *Sages*, 1:43 (quoting *Sipre Deut.* 173.220; cf. *b. Sanh.* 65b): "If on one who cleaves to uncleanness the spirit of uncleanness rests, then it follows that on one who cleaves to the Shekhina, the Shekhina rests upon him."

843. Even the Roman government, as a matter of respect for local customs, accommodated Jewish kashrut in local marketplaces (*Jos. Ant.* 14.261; Winter, *Left Corinth*, 288–93); also, God-fearers were not suspected of supplying unclean food, though their couches and seats were unclean (*m. Ger.* 3:1–2, in Le Cornu, *Acts*, 583).

844. On pork, see the digression above at Acts 10:12.

845. Many scholars think that most people (i.e., poorer people) ate meat especially at festivals (Cary and Haahrhoff, *Life*, 93; cf. Willis, *Idol Meat*, 13; but contrast Meggitt, "Meat Consumption"), though those with resources could preserve meat (Frost, "Preservation"). Though Cornelius might wish to spare no expense, he would also be sensitive to his guests' customs; fish would be more abundant in Caesarea. For typical diets for fairly well-to-do Gentiles, see Jeffers, *World*, 40–41. Shemesh, "Vegetarian Ideology," argues that later rabbis often believed that primeval people were vegetarian; although they did not expect vegetarianism in their own era, Shemesh argues that they recognized the value of limiting meat intake for various reasons.

846. Pharisaism emphasized purity in handling food, but probably not at a priestly level (see Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 131–254). Indeed, the dominance of Shammaites among Pharisees in this period may have exacerbated the concern more than our surviving sources (predominantly descended from Hillelite sages) reflect (see Theissen, *Sociology*, 83).

In some respects, this section may resemble a trial scene, the sort of scene commonly used in Hellenistic novels as part of the action, suspense, and entertainment.⁸⁴⁷ This scene is not a literal trial, however, despite its forensic elements;⁸⁴⁸ more important, Luke uses it pedagogically rather than primarily for entertainment. The accusation against Peter brings some suspense, but this is not its primary purpose; rather, the conflict clarifies that the Gentile mission was God's idea, not that of the church. It also provides Luke an opportunity to repeat, and hence emphasize, the central points of the preceding narrative, which is particularly strategic for Luke's concerns.⁸⁴⁹ Luke is interested in not only the conversion of these Gentiles but also the conversion of Peter's and the Jerusalem church's perspectives.⁸⁵⁰

Some scholars complain that Luke portrays church councils as orderly and decorous, in contrast to often riotous public assemblies (19:29–40; 21:27–35; 23:7–10).⁸⁵¹ Although it does suit Luke's purpose to make this contrast, it is also the case historically that Christians did experience more dangerous hostility from outside their own ranks, that the idea of orderly sectarian assemblies was not new (cf. 1QS), and that Luke does mention the conflicts (including here 11:3; also 15:5), though naturally preferring to emphasize the united outcomes.

a. *The Setting (11:1–4)*

The heart of the setting of Peter's speech in 11:5–17 is the controversy over his eating with uncircumcised Gentiles. That it might seem incongruous for a leading miracle-working apostle to be called on the carpet in Jerusalem may indicate something of the nature of the early church's "government" (Luke's Greeks would be happy to know that it was not autocratic). More important, however, this apparent dissonance underlines just how serious the breach appeared to be. Peter was respected (and his argument carried the day, 11:18), but apparent breach of Scripture (at least as it had been interpreted) required a serious justification.

I. CONCERNS IN JERUSALEM (11:1–2)

From their experiences reported in the Gospel, "the apostles" knew about eating with sinners, those unclean or serving untithed or even unclean food; in the light of Luke's larger story, their cultural prejudice against eating with Gentiles thus appears inconsistent and ripe to be challenged.⁸⁵² There is irony here: they heard that the Gentiles had "received God's message" (exactly like the Samaritans in 8:14), but here they appear more concerned about the breach of custom than about the miracle of conversion, despite the fact that in this case (unlike Samaria) the believers had already received the Spirit. Perhaps they are yet unaware of this latter detail, which will ultimately compel their acceptance at the close of Peter's defense (11:16–18). What they have "heard" secondhand bears far less evidential weight than what the eyewitnesses "heard" in 10:46.

The text does not specify whether Peter started back to Jerusalem immediately

847. Johnson, *Acts*, 199 (citing Ach. Tat. 7.7, though emphasizing the summarizing or explaining of events' significance as the purpose of novels' trial narratives).

848. See also Witherington, *Acts*, 363n143 (noting that public opinion is the only judge here). It could have become a case for censure, but no more, and is not yet at that stage.

849. As often noted (e.g., Witherup, "Cornelius Over Again"; Witherington, *Acts*, 73). Cf. rhetorical recapitulations as summaries of what was just said (Anderson, *Glossary*, 85).

850. Cf., e.g., Dollar, *Exploration*, 179; González, *Acts*, 136; Van Engen, "Peter's Conversion," 135–36; Tiede, "Conversion."

851. Pervo, *Profit*, 39–42.

852. For marginalized groups in Luke's first volume prefiguring the Gentile mission in the second, cf. Dollar, *Exploration*, 57–81; Lane, *Gentile Mission*, 48–57; Tannehill, "Ethics," 120; Mallen, *Reading*, 132; for understanding Paul's mission to Gentiles (as conquered subjects of Rome) as a mission to the marginalized, see Lopez, *Apostle*, 22.

after the “few days” in Caesarea (10:48)—only that word preceded him (11:2). Even the most direct route from Caesarea to Jerusalem would normally take two days, except perhaps in an urgent situation (cf. 23:31–33).⁸⁵³ “Those who were from the circumcision” (see comment on Acts 10:45; 15:1) is Luke’s title for the Jerusalem believers, anachronistic in the narrative world (where only Cornelius’s household and a distant African official are yet uncircumcised).⁸⁵⁴ Yet it underlines part of the point under dispute (11:3). The language by which Luke describes their criticism of Peter might recall for a particularly attentive reader the contrasting warning of the Spirit in 10:20: Peter was not permitted to “doubt” or “make distinctions” about Gentiles, but now his fellow Jewish believers do the same with him.⁸⁵⁵

That others in the church can debate with Peter, despite his prominence from the beginning (e.g., 1:15; 2:14), reveals how diffuse the church’s authority structures were in the early period and, for Luke’s narrative, diminishes the significance of later Jerusalem criticisms against Paul (21:21).⁸⁵⁶ If Jerusalem Christians can criticize Peter after a relatively brief absence, how much more Paul (who had raised some uncomfortable issues in 15:12), whom they barely knew after his conversion and who had been absent for years?⁸⁵⁷ Like Peter’s critics, Paul’s also miss the point of God’s activity (15:1, 3–5, 12).

It is possible historically that Peter’s influence in the Jerusalem church declined precisely because of such “relative laxness towards the Torah”; James, by contrast, recognized that the tolerance of at least the Pharisees and rising nationalists depended in part on the church’s strong identification with its Jerusalem environment (Gal 2:12).⁸⁵⁸ The differences between Peter and James (as opposed to those of many incoming members of the church) might have been tactical, but they reflected the uncomfortable tensions faced by members of a community united by faith yet divided by increasingly polarized social or ethnic conflict; evangelism and even survival may depend on social or ethnic identification and accommodation whereas unity with other believers must transcend these. Stephen’s preaching had challenged dominant views in Jerusalem in ways that had led to the church’s suppression (Acts 8:1–3), a matter still recalled in this context (11:19). The Jerusalem church was hardly inclined to appreciate an apparent threat to its newfound stability (9:31).⁸⁵⁹

II. THE CHARGE (11:3)

The charge is stated baldly in 11:3: “You entered to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”⁸⁶⁰ That Peter “entered” (εἰσῆλθε) among the Gentiles was part of the

853. The Western text elaborates on Peter’s ministry along the way; although Bruce, *Acts*³, 73, notes that this makes the text more “colorful,” it is also likely secondary (see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 382–84).

854. See Hanson, *Acts*, 126. Pauline texts employ the title both for Jews (Rom 4:12; 15:8; Col 4:11) and for those who demand Gentiles’ circumcision (Gal 2:12; Titus 1:10), a distinction perhaps not yet relevant (because not yet considered) in Acts 11:2–3. Luke’s wording might, however, betray knowledge of Paul’s polemical usage such as is also reflected in Gal 2.

855. Johnson, *Acts*, 197; Dunn, *Acts*, 150, on the polyvalence of διακρίνω, which appears in Luke-Acts only in the Cornelius story (Acts 10:20; 11:2, 12; 15:9). If members of Luke’s audience had forgotten the term in 10:20, they would soon hear that use repeated in 11:12. In this case, it applies to “disputing” (the fifth sense in BDAG, citing Polyb. 2.22.11; Jude 9), somewhat like a “halakic dispute”; the term often translates $\Psi\Phi\Omega$ in the LXX (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 609).

856. On Luke’s apologetic for Paul, see more fully, e.g., Keener, “Apologetic.” For an examination of Peter’s leadership style in Acts, with application to a South African church context, see Nell, “Leadership.”

857. One might compare politics against Caesar in Rome while he was away enjoying military successes; but Caesar responded by marching his army across the Rubicon.

858. Hengel, *Acts and History*, 97.

859. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 230.

860. This is one way to translate the phrase, though I have compromised English idiom to echo the Greek. Barrett, *Acts*, 537, notes that ὅτι can sometimes be used as “Why?” (replacing τί; Acts 9:11, 28), but admits that LJS counts this as “rare and late”; the usual sense of ὅτι as introducing direct speech is thus more likely.

problem,⁸⁶¹ since strict observers of custom would consider Gentile homes impure (see full comment on Acts 10:28). The focus of the problem, however, and the part that would be viewed as most difficult to defend was that he ate with them. Strangely enough for modern readers, it is this table fellowship, rather than Peter's preaching or administering baptism, that invited the charge⁸⁶² (though conversion to Judaism, which the Jerusalem believers doubt has occurred, would resolve the problem, 11:18).

Although Luke did not narrate Peter's eating with them (the verbs are singular, and so Peter's responsibility as a leader, rather than that of his colleagues, is stressed), it is implied in the "some days" of 10:48. The reader understands, however, that Peter had little choice: the locus of God's revelation to him apparently involved the purity of table fellowship with Gentiles (10:13).⁸⁶³ (Historically, Peter would have eaten in the circumstances described here. This case is more exceptional and special than that in Gal 2:12, since he can defend it on the basis of a revelation and since there were no conservative critics present at the time of eating. In Gal 2:12, he ate before such potential critics arrived.)

Luke's compressed narrative does not explain the source of the information used by Peter's critics; they may have inferred it from the length of his stay (though there were hospitable Jewish Christians in Caesarea also; Acts 8:40; 21:8–10).⁸⁶⁴ But if Peter had remained in Caesarea for several days, word about his behavior could have preceded him to Jerusalem (cf. 8:14a). One was naturally judged by one's associates, which often required a defense of one's character if that of one's associates was in question (see, e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 7, 1429a.1–5).

Avoiding table fellowship with Gentiles was a major issue in early Judaism (e.g., *Jub.* 22:16; 3 *Macc* 3:4, 7; *Jos. Asen.* 7:1). This should not surprise us, since eating any untithed food, including from fellow Israelites, was defiling from the standpoint of strict pietists (and most of the early Christian movement did apparently feel comfortable with and want to identify with Jewish piety). One was to buy food only from a man known to tithe and not accept hospitality unless his wife was trustworthy in tithing (*t. Demai* 3:9). If it was bad to eat the food of an *am ha'arets* (*m. Demai* 2:2–3; *y. Demai* 2:3), how much more that of a Gentile (*m. Demai* 3:4)!⁸⁶⁵ Similarly, some complained that Samaritan foods were unclean, treating them like pork;⁸⁶⁶ most would not have treated Samaritan food as being as impure as Gentile food.⁸⁶⁷

Some scholars object that reciprocity requirements for hospitality would have required eating with Gentiles,⁸⁶⁸ but Gentiles clearly thought that Jews isolated themselves (*Tac. Hist.* 5.5). Undoubtedly, many Jews did eat with Gentiles; but also undoubtedly, many did not. Judean Jews held more conservative scruples on the matter than did many of their Diaspora cousins, and the believers in Jerusalem were religiously strict, not lax. Even strict Jews might eat with Gentiles if they took

861. Cf. Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 114–15.

862. With most commentators, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 125; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 230; Haenchen, *Acts*, 354, 362; Dunn, *Acts*, 148. If news had preceded Peter's arrival, it was table fellowship over the period of several days (Jews at a notable Gentile's home) that might have been most obvious to travelers in Caesarea.

863. The problems that Gentile inclusion created for purity practices constitute a major issue in Acts 10–11 (with, e.g., Steffek, "Juifs et païens"). Table fellowship and inclusion are issues more intelligible today in some cultural settings (such as some Asian cultures) than in others (such as in much of the West; see, e.g., Yao, "Barriers," 33–35).

864. Cf. discussion in Barrett, *Acts*, 533.

865. On strictness for *haberim*, see, e.g., *b. Bek.* 30b, bar.; further comment on Acts 10:28.

866. See, e.g., *m. Šeb.* 8:10; *y. 'Abod. Zar.* 5:11, §2; see discussion in Keener, *John*, 600.

867. See *t. Demai* 5:24; *b. 'Eruv.* 36b–37a; *y. 'Abod. Zar.* 5:4, §3.

868. Smith, *Symposium*, 161 (though he does acknowledge [163–65] meal separatism for foods).

the proper precautions (*m. 'Abod. Zar.* 4:9–5:10),⁸⁶⁹ but it is not clear that Peter concerned himself with precautions in view of his newfound acceptance of some uncircumcised believers. Even Diaspora Jews and Judeans writing for Diaspora audiences acknowledged that Israel's customs deliberately separated them from other nations.⁸⁷⁰

Some conservative Judeans suspected Diaspora Jews of idolatry because they attended Gentile banquets, though bringing their own food and drink (*t. 'Abod. Zar.* 4:6). They might emphasize that God caused Israel not to talk or have close contact with Gentiles, thereby arousing Gentiles' anger (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 19:2; 21:3). In earlier stories, only a small, particularly pious remnant refused to eat Gentile foods.⁸⁷¹ See further discussion on the question of separatism at Acts 10:28 (and of Gentile anti-Judaism at Acts 16:20).

Cornelius would not have served unclean food in the strictest sense (see comment on Acts 10:48),⁸⁷² but it may not have been tithed on (see comment on Acts 10:23, 48); as a God-fearer he surely would not have served idol food or provided the typical pagan after-dinner fare of prostitutes,⁸⁷³ but the Jerusalem church could not yet know these details. Yet a greater issue is at stake in this narrative. Treating Gentile adherents as full members of the covenant without their circumcision was far more outrageous and divisive within first-century Judaism than merely claiming to follow a particular messiah.⁸⁷⁴ Granted, the latter could bring one into political conflict (and indeed secure one's discipline or even execution from political authorities if the movement was deemed politically subversive), but the former was a matter of Jewish identity and had even further-reaching political implications about relationships between Jew and Gentile.⁸⁷⁵ Diaspora Jews presumably would not view eating with Gentiles as treating them as fellow members of the covenant, but it is not difficult to see how serious the offense would appear in Jerusalem.⁸⁷⁶ Throughout the Mediterranean world, eating together created a common bond of trust (*Xen. Cyr.* 8.7.14); it also allowed for settings of greater intimacy and dialogue (e.g., *Cic. Fam.* 1.2.3).⁸⁷⁷ Most threatening of all in this case was that it constituted an endorsement and a component of a friendship relationship.⁸⁷⁸ Eating with a representative of Rome might appear even more scandalous to some; friendship with a conqueror could constitute treason, inviting

869. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 493 (following Cheung, *Idol Food*, 44).

870. E.g., *Let. Aris.* 138–42; *Philo Mos.* 1.278; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.257.

871. So *Tob 1:10–13* (modeled after *Dan 1:8*); this is, however, an idealization, not necessarily social reality. *Tobit's* author was perhaps from ca. 200 B.C.E. western Syria (*Rost, Judaism*, 63) or, on the basis of the Aramaic fragments in the Qumran scrolls, as early as the fourth century B.C.E. (*Bright, History*, 432).

872. A major reason that many Jews avoided dining with Gentiles (see Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*, 139). Cornelius has enough income (see comment on Acts 10:2) that he would not simply serve them from army rations (on which see Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 88–95); it is unlikely he depends on these anyway, given his house.

873. On this practice, see Winter, *Left Corinth*, 86–88.

874. Ravens, *Restoration*, 247–49.

875. Some could accept God-fearers as saved and righteous without circumcision (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.41), but so far as we can tell, no one claimed that they were incorporated into God's people without circumcision (*Donaldson, Paul and Gentiles*, 58–59).

876. For table fellowship with Gentiles as a major issue in Acts, see Esler, *Community*, 71–109 (on Cornelius, 93–97; on the apostolic council, 97–99); cf. Blue, "Influence," 490–94; Dollar, *Exploration*, 178–79.

877. See also Derrett, *Audience*, 39 (citing most relevantly *1 En.* 62:14; *Rev* 3:20). See comment on Acts 1:4; also Keener, *John*, 912–13.

878. Winter, *Left Corinth*, 56. On friendship and patron-client relationships, see, e.g., Keener, "Friendship," 381–82; such relationships were often expressed in banquets (though peer friendships and dinner invitations were also common). If eating with the angel confirms Aseneth's conversion in *Joseph and Aseneth* (Lieber, "Table"), Peter's implicit acceptance of Cornelius here serves to confirm his (although baptism has done so more forcefully).

retaliation (Diod. Sic. 19.66.6).⁸⁷⁹ For fuller discussion of the ancient sources, see comment at Acts 10:23.

Luke has, however, prepared his own audience for the direction of the narrative with earlier narratives, such as Jesus and the disciples eating with “sinners” (Luke 5:29; 15:1)⁸⁸⁰ or Jesus telling his disciples to eat what was set before them (10:7).⁸⁸¹ Probably Luke was not alone in connecting the issues of table fellowship in Jesus’s ministry with table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers: Paul’s response to rupture in Jewish-Gentile table fellowship may presuppose knowledge of the Jesus tradition about eating with “sinners” (Gal 2:12, 14–15).⁸⁸² What is ironic here is that the complaints about eating with sinners (attributed to Pharisees⁸⁸³ and scribes in Luke 5:30; 15:2) or, as here, “entering” as well as becoming a guest of a sinner (Luke 19:7) now appear in the mouths of apostles and other disciples. The Pharisees of the Gospel, ironically often vilified by subsequent Christian readers, become Luke’s prototype for the ethnocentric Christian church in Acts.⁸⁸⁴ Happily, Luke’s church is able to learn through its experience with the Spirit (Acts 11:12, 15–18).⁸⁸⁵

III. INTRODUCING PETER’S SPEECH (11:4)

The constructions in this summary sentence are, as we would expect, noticeably Lukan. Note the expressions for explaining (all four occurrences of ἐκτίθημι in the NT are in Acts, the other relevant ones being 18:26; 28:23) and the use of “orderly” (καθεξῆς; all five NT uses are in Luke-Acts, including Luke 1:3; 8:1; Acts 3:24; 18:23) and of “beginning” to speak (roughly half the NT uses; see Luke 1:64; 3:8; 4:21; 6:20; 7:15, 24, 49; 11:29; 12:1; 13:25–26; 20:9; 23:2, 30; Acts 11; 2:4; 4:31; 5:21; 9:20; 11:15; 13:5; 18:26; 24:2; 28:6; cf. Luke 5:21).⁸⁸⁶

Elsewhere καθεξῆς refers to traveling from one place to the next (Luke 8:1; Acts 18:23) or to those who spoke in succession (Acts 3:24), but here it refers to providing a point-by-point narrative (as in Luke 1:3).⁸⁸⁷ The term indicates not chronology necessarily (although Luke follows Mark’s sequence closely at most points in the Gospel) but clarity of logical arrangement;⁸⁸⁸ it was appropriate for

879. Such strictures would not have applied to Agrippa or others who had regular interaction with Diaspora Gentiles. But Peter leads a minority Judean religious movement that cannot afford to give conservative opponents grounds for criticism.

880. On these, see, e.g., Smith, “Fellowship”; Grassi, *Laugh*, 48–56; Just, *Luke*, 28. These stories are not simply Luke’s invention (cf., e.g., Mark 2:15; Q material in Matt 11:19 = Luke 7:34); for Jesus’s opposition to Pharisaic regulations on purity, including regarding table fellowship, see Borg, *Conflict*, 73–121. On meals in Luke-Acts (including those welcoming Gentiles) foreshadowing the messianic banquet, see Heil, *Meal Scenes*, esp. 312.

881. See Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 47–48. Peter’s recent speech also reiterates the theme of eating with Jesus (Acts 10:41).

882. See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 192.

883. Table fellowship was a major issue of pre-70 C.E. Pharisaism (Goodman, *State*, 77). This is not to claim that Pharisees intended to follow a priestly level of purity (against which see Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 131–254).

884. Nor is this portrayal Luke’s invention, though he makes artistic use of it. Receiving uncircumcised Gentiles as equal members (e.g., Gal 3:26–29; Rev 5:9–10) was radical enough that many early Jewish Christians would surely have resisted it, as Paul’s letters also testify (e.g., Gal 4:17; 5:12; 6:12; Phil 3:2–3). The issue of table fellowship also recurred on other occasions (Gal 2:11–14).

885. For Christian opposition to God’s work in Acts (here and in Acts 15:1–5) as one form of Luke’s opposition theme, see Rapske, “Opposition,” 239–45.

886. Though the use of infinitive often changes in Acts from the more generic λέγειν preferred in the Gospel, the construction remains.

887. See discussion in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:96, 135. A specific connection of the term to halakic dispute (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 609, tentatively) appears tenuous, although a sort of halakic dispute is what we have here.

888. Parsons, “*Progymnasmata*,” 52 (citing, for the importance of such arrangement, Theon *Progymn.* 87.13; Quint. *Inst.* 4.2.83; and contrasting emphasis on exact sequence in *Rhet. Alex.* 30.28–31; *Rhet. Her.* 1.9.15).

historiography.⁸⁸⁹ Thus Peter's interpretation of the previous events, reported in Acts 11:5–17, is also Luke's, and the climactic response of the audience (11:18) is the appropriate one.

b. Peter's Narration of Divine Confirmations (11:5–15)

Most of Peter's speech is narration, apart from the one summary of narration turned into an argument in 11:17, but this one argument is compelling to a church for whom the experience of the Spirit is a fundamental key to its identity. Not all claims to speak by the Spirit would be received as equally certain (cf. 1 Cor 14:29; 1 John 4:1–3), but for his audience, Peter's integrity is unquestioned, his apostolic sensitivity to the Spirit demonstrated, and his cumulative evidence for the Spirit's involvement utterly compelling.

I. INTRODUCTION

Most scholars rightly recognize this speech as primarily judicial; although Peter is not on trial per se, he is answering charges. He does not address, however, the explicit charge of eating with Gentiles but appeals instead to the more fundamental issue that dictated his actions; his vision was about foods but ultimately symbolized the welcome of Gentiles who had received the Spirit.⁸⁹⁰ Johnson and others structure the speech according to forensic conventions (citing Plato *Phaedr.* 266DE; Arist. *Rhet.* 1354b):

- Peter (or Luke, who condenses speeches) omits the *prooemium* and moves directly into the *narratio* (διήγησις).
- He includes proofs, a *probatio*: witnesses (Acts 11:12) and signs (11:15).
- The *peroratio* is noticeably brief, “taking the form of a rhetorical question (11:17).”⁸⁹¹

I would adjust this outline: the witnesses (11:12) and signs (11:15) remain part of the *narratio* (narration and proofs could be mixed, or the former could anticipate the latter), with 11:16 being a proof from authoritative citations. In any case, the dominance of the narration here fits the “point-by-point” narrative method (11:4) that Luke follows as central to the nature of his own work (Luke 1:3).⁸⁹²

As was appropriate in forensic rhetoric, Peter defends his actions “through *narration* that transfers the responsibility for Peter's actions to God (metastasis).”⁸⁹³ Attributing one's actions “to dreams and oracles” was a potent method for “justifying motives” and of self-legitimation in ancient sources.⁸⁹⁴ The emphasis on narrative also fits what we know about reporting ambassadorial missions (relevant especially in Acts 11:12–16). At least some rhetoricians claimed that speeches reporting embassies

889. Cf. Polyb. 38.5; BDAG.

890. See Smith, “Refutation,” who points out that in rhetoric one need not respond to irrelevant accusations and hence contends that Peter addresses only the real issue here.

891. Johnson, *Acts*, 200; also Witherington, *Acts*, 363 (following him); Parsons, *Acts*, 157. Marguerat, *Actes*, 400, sees Acts 11:5–10 as the *exordium* (including a *propositio*), 11–14 as the *narratio*, and 15–17 as the *probatio*. Luke's divisions are not clear (because Peter was not a rhetor, because Luke condenses, and/or because real speeches tended to be more flexible).

892. Johnson, *Acts*, 200.

893. Soards, *Speeches*, 77. But cf. Smith, “Function of Refutation,” 113 (arguing against Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 113n25): Peter does not transfer responsibility for the basic charge but ignores it, which is (113, 115) the appropriate response to arguments not worth refuting.

894. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 60 (citing Plato *Apol.* 33C; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.34; Lucian *Alex.* 22–24; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.161–62).

would be almost entirely narrative and that the narrator, by virtue of being the one to recount the events, can show that he was not the reason the embassy failed or, if successful, that he was the reason for the success (*Rhet. Alex.* 30, 1438a.6–19). Peter lacks political motives to credit himself with the mission's success but credits God with its success and does exonerate himself from blame.⁸⁹⁵

The primary function of the changes in Acts 11:5–17 is “to add variety and interest,”⁸⁹⁶ and this retelling follows the same basic structure as other retellings in Luke-Acts (e.g., Luke 24:33–35; Acts 4:23–31).⁸⁹⁷ Some changes fit proper rhetorical method by taking into account the new intradiegetic narrator (Peter) and his particular rhetorical situation.⁸⁹⁸ Individual verses are commented on here only briefly because most comments would differ little from the comments made in more detail on the descriptions in Acts 10 that they summarize.

II. PETER'S VISION (11:5–10)

Peter's vision constitutes less than a quarter of the entire section (10:1–11:18) but is central to Peter's strategic retelling of the events, where it constitutes roughly half the speech. This vision is foundational for Peter's apologetic point: the events reflect “God's initiative and not that of Peter.”⁸⁹⁹

In 11:5, Peter begins by emphasizing that he was in prayer (10:9); Luke understands that this is a favorable time for revelations (10:30; 13:2; 22:17), though God can also grant them even during sleep (2:17; 16:9; 18:9). God's revelation was trustworthy, and Peter would not be misled during prayer (cf. 6:4). That the sheet “came to me” means that it came uninvited by Peter and was solely dependent on God's activity. The term for “descending” here is particularly Lukan in the NT (Luke 5:19; Acts 9:25; 10:11; 11:5). On the events in Acts 11:5, see comment on Acts 10:9–11 (Peter's prayer and trance in 10:9; the sheet and object descending in 10:11). On the events in 11:6, see comment on Acts 10:12; here Peter adds *θηρία*, but as part of a summary it does not differ substantially from the summary in 10:12.

God speaks in 11:7. Even if staying with a tanner (9:43; 10:6, 32) and Peter's hunger (10:10) might possibly have been factors suggesting components for the vision, Peter (insofar as we may infer anything from Luke's obviously terse summary) follows the good rhetorical principle of emphasizing only what is relevant for his point to his audience. That Peter should eat emphasizes God's command to surmount earlier food laws, at least under the special conditions soon in view.

Peter recounts his objection in 11:8. Although Luke omitted Mark 7:1–23, he includes in his Gospel plenty of examples of Jesus violating traditional mores. Still, the command to Peter goes beyond anything he has been asked to do before in terms of uncleanness; it goes even beyond the call to Ezekiel.

Judicial speeches often return charges against the accusers (see comment on Acts 7:51–53; 24:18–19), but Peter is self-effacing, showing that he himself previously

895. Gregory the Great *Letters* 45 (Martin, *Acts*, 142–43) viewed Peter as humble because he reasoned with them instead of ordering them. But Peter likely did not possess as much centralized authority as Gregory in his office would assume.

896. Maloney, *Narration of Works*, 67.

897. *Ibid.*, 67–100. Drama often would recount events seen by speakers to avoid staging limitations (Nünlist, “Teichoscopy,” noting earlier origins in Homeric epic), but these considerations are irrelevant to Luke's narrative.

898. See Kurz, “Effects of Variant Narrators”; on adaptation for the Jewish audience, cf. Scott, “Cornelius Incident”; on literary artistry in the changes, see Witherup, “Cornelius Over Again.” The claim that the story's repetition “is Luke's rather clumsy, Semitic way of stressing the event” (C. Williams, *Acts*, 140) reflects insufficient familiarity with Greco-Roman rhetoric. Verbatim repetition is more common in Mesopotamian sources (Heidel, *Genesis*, 7n1; cf. Gen 41:1–8, 17–24) and sometimes Homer.

899. Maloney, *Narration of Works*, 69.

held the views of the “circumcisionists” (Acts 11:2, 8, 17; cf. 22:3–5). He identifies with his hearers instead of condemning them; his agenda is to persuade the whole church, not to split it into factions.

Peter again mentions the voice in 11:9, this time clarifying that the voice is “from heaven.” (On the voice from heaven, analogous to the later rabbinic *bat qol*, see comment on Acts 9:4.) The threefold repetition in 11:10 (also 10:16) provides additional confirmation and emphasis (cf. Gen 41:32), just as the complementary visions of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 11:13–14) do. Two or three witnesses were required under biblical law for confirmation (Deut 17:6; 19:15; cf. Num 35:30). Peter missed the opportunity to eat visionary food⁹⁰⁰ but was ready to catch the main point.

III. THE SPIRIT AND UNEXPECTED GUESTS (11:11–12)

The arrival of the Gentile messengers at the very completion of Peter's vision suggests timing too improbable for coincidence, the sort of event in which early Christians would see divine coordination (cf. Acts 8:27–33; 21:32; 23:16; 27:26).

Peter's mention of the Holy Spirit (cf. 10:19) would weigh heavily with early Christians (1:5, 8; 2:17–18, 38; 5:32; 6:3, 5, 10); even later rabbinic Judaism valued the testimony of the Holy Spirit (the prophetic Spirit that inspired Scripture) more highly than a *bat qol* (11:9),⁹⁰¹ although it generally denied that the prophetic Spirit was inspiring prophets in its own era.⁹⁰² Appeals to divine sanction for authority constituted a long-standing tradition in rhetoric (e.g., Isoc. *Nic.* 13 [*Or.* 3.29]). An act could not be condemned—even a wife's pregnancy by one other than her husband—if it was from a god (Ps-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.9). In Acts, resisting the Spirit (Acts 7:51; cf. 5:32) is tantamount to rebellion against God.

Nevertheless, we miss how shocking this narrative would have been in a first-century Jewish context and perhaps even to God-fearing Gentile believers in Luke's day: a Galilean fisherman claims, on the basis of “a dream and his interpretation of it,” that God has reversed one thousand years of teaching from Scripture.⁹⁰³ Had not Jesus in the flesh called and authorized Peter, his revelation might not have carried so much weight (i.e., Philip or Paul alone could not have carried the brunt of such an argument, and probably only Paul would have even tried).

“These six brothers” emphasizes that Peter's witnesses are present.⁹⁰⁴ This is the first time Luke tells us how many accompanied Peter. Two or three witnesses were required under biblical law for confirmation (Deut 17:6; 19:15), and Peter has twice the maximum number required. That, along with Peter, the Jewish entourage consists of seven men may be significant (cf. Acts 6:3, a group that also prefigures the Gentile mission),⁹⁰⁵ but Luke makes nothing explicit of it. That they “entered the house” in obedience to the Spirit's command to go with the messengers answers the first part of the charge in 11:3 (they entered to the uncircumcised).

900. By which I mean not heavenly food (cf. Ps 78:25) but simply to appear to eat in a visionary state.

901. E.g., *Song Rab.* 8:9, §3; see comment on Acts 9:4.

902. E.g., 1 Macc 9:27; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.41; Best, “Pneuma,” 222–25; Aune, “Προφήτης”; see Keener, *Spirit*, 13–19; idem, *Acts*, 1:890–92.

903. Walaskay, *Acts*, 107. This would appear to epitomize charismatic audacity.

904. Johnson, *Acts*, 198, thinks that the demonstrative pronoun also indicates that other circumcisionists were participants along with Peter. This claim seems unclear but, if accurate, could respond to the singular verbs in the accusation (Acts 11:3).

905. See comments there. Cf. the tradition of seven judges per city (Jos. *Ant.* 4.214), though this may be an average. Bede *Comm. Acts* 11.12 notes the total of seven yet implausibly allegorizes (for the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit or the days of creation).

IV. CORNELIUS'S VISION (11:13–14)

Whether or not Cornelius was “cleansed” before Peter’s coming (cf. 10:28; but 15:9 suggests that this occurred after or else that there were two levels of cleansing), Cornelius would be converted only through Peter’s preaching. Presumably the “salvation”⁹⁰⁶ referred to here includes eternal life (Luke 13:23; 18:26; Acts 2:21, 40; 4:12; 16:30–31; for “eternal life,” Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; Acts 13:46, 48), which could be described in the present tense (Acts 2:47). Instead of focusing on ambiguous language about cleanness at this point, Peter is explicit that the Gentiles were lost but are given eternal life, like Zacchaeus or others the disciples knew about (Luke 19:10); his case ultimately proves persuasive, since his hearers accept that Cornelius’s household experienced the repentance leading to life (Acts 11:18).

For Luke’s purposes, it is most significant that this claim about salvation (like Peter’s words again in 15:11) contradicts that of the circumcisionists, who require circumcision for salvation in 15:1. The promise of household conversion here resembles that in 16:31; it is not explicit in Acts 10 but could easily be presupposed in 10:24, 27 and simply omitted through Luke’s abbreviation technique. As in 16:31, the gospel’s proclamation to the household makes possible their response. Since the larger number of Gentiles (with its correspondingly greater risk of some having contact with idolatry) may have compounded the apparent offense of Peter eating there, mentioning that God commanded the entire household to be present simplifies his defense. For household conversions, see comment on Acts 10:2, 24; especially 16:31–34.

V. BAPTIZED IN THE SPIRIT (11:15)

Luke’s use of “began” with speaking is usually idiomatic (see comment on Acts 11:4) but here might reflect the fact that Peter had barely finished his *narratio* (10:36–42) and was only beginning his *probatio* (10:43) when interrupted by the Spirit’s vindicating activity. This characterizes some other speeches in Acts; in 22:22, Paul is interrupted during his lengthy *narratio*. But for Luke as a writer of narrative, narrative was the most important component to emphasize, best able to hold the attention of his ideal audience. (This was not, however, a standard characteristic of speeches in histories, and it may reflect Luke’s own idiosyncrasy or his view of the centrality of narrative as exemplified in the kerygma.)

“As on us at the *beginning*” refers to the “beginning” of their life as a community of believers in 2:1–4; “at the beginning” appears occasionally as an idiom (Phil 4:15; Dan 9:23).⁹⁰⁷ That Cornelius’s household and friends experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit “even as” (ὡσπερ) the Jewish believers had (Acts 10:47; 11:15, 17) refers to the one sign from Pentecost that is repeated—namely, tongues (2:4; 10:46; on the function of tongues as a frequent sign of the Spirit’s empowerment for inspired cross-cultural evangelism in Acts, see comment on Acts 2:4). “As on us at the beginning” might also echo the suddenness of the Pentecost narrative (2:2), emphasizing divine initiative.⁹⁰⁸

906. “Salvation” is here Peter’s language, not Cornelius’s; it might relate to members of his conservative audience skeptical of Cornelius’s previous salvation and seems to be maintained in Acts 15:9 by the same speaker for a similar audience.

907. Cf. more commonly “from the beginning” (e.g., Acts 26:4; Luke 1:2; John 15:27; 1 John 2:7, 24; 3:11; 2 John 5–6; Josh 24:2; Isa 1:26; Ezek 16:55). Diod. Sic. 4.8.5 seeks to recount Heracles’s acts “from the beginning” (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς), i.e., starting with the first act; cf. Proclus *Poet. S.*, K43.26. The phrase often signifies the beginning of the period in question (*Test. Ab.* 15:14 A; 4:13 B). Luke might view Pentecost theologically as the “beginning” of the church (Goulder, *Type and History*, 162), but it may simply be idiomatic. Moessner, “Arrangement,” 163, notes this connection to Pentecost in Acts 11:15, followed by a connection with 1:4–8 in 11:16, hence with the pivotal transition between volumes.

908. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 23.

c. *Obeying the Spirit (11:16–17)*

Peter's clinching (and only explicit) argument flows directly from the final point narrated, namely, the Spirit falling on the Gentiles (11:15), although all the Spirit's revelation in 11:5–14 also supports his argument. Using Jesus's "word" in a manner equal to using Scripture (11:16), Peter shows that God confirmed these Gentiles' acceptance in the very way God confirmed Jesus's followers as his people at Pentecost (11:17). If God granted them the greater baptism in the Spirit, Peter could hardly withhold the lesser baptism in water (see comment on Acts 10:47); and if this was the case, then they belonged to God's people, with whom eating constituted no scandal.

I. JESUS'S PROMISE (11:16)

In Israel's Scriptures, "word of the Lord" (11:16) was regularly the prophetic message (well more than two hundred times); in Acts it is often the inspired, prophetic gospel message about Jesus (e.g., 8:25; 12:24; 13:48). Here it refers to a saying of Jesus before the resurrection, as in Luke 22:61 (cf. 1 Thess 4:15). That the phrase "YHWH's message" can be so readily transferred to "Jesus's message" reveals Luke's Christology (see comment on Acts 2:21).

Luke repeatedly refers back to one of his seminal Spirit texts, Luke 3:16, a text that summarizes Jesus's mission as the Spirit baptizer.⁹⁰⁹ Remembering Jesus's words afterward appears elsewhere in gospel sources (John 2:17; 12:16; see here esp. Luke 24:6–8). If the imperfect bears its usual force, Jesus apparently repeated John's promise of Spirit baptism regularly, and not only in Acts 1:5; the Gospels attribute it only to its first prophet, John (Luke 3:16; Mark 1:8; Matt 3:11; John 1:31–33). Possibly the quotation from Jesus here and in Acts 1:5 employs the passive, in contrast to John's way of putting it (Luke 3:16), because of ancient conventions of avoiding self-boasting (the messianic secret would be less relevant after the resurrection, i.e., in Acts 1:5).⁹¹⁰ Because Jesus's baptism in the Spirit is greater than John's water baptism, Peter could scarcely withhold water baptism from those who had already received the Spirit (10:47), and hence could not stand in God's way (11:17).⁹¹¹ Because baptism in Judaism could accompany conversion (see comment on Acts 2:38), God, who had baptized these Gentiles, clearly accepted their conversion without circumcision (cf. the complaint of 11:3). He had also given them the reality of the covenant of which circumcision was merely an outward sign.

II. PETER ACCEPTED GOD'S CONFIRMATION (11:17)

Here Luke emphasizes the identity of the gift of the Spirit (on which see comment on Acts 10:45) given to the Gentiles with that given to Israel, by employing the term ἴσος, "equal" (cf. Luke 6:34, his only other usage). The term applied, for example, to equal treatment of others (e.g., 2 Macc 9:15; 1 Clem. 21.7; Ign. Phil. 4.2). Although it had a much wider range of usage, the use in friendship texts might be significant for Luke's larger vision of an international, multicultural movement under Jesus's lordship. On equality, see more extended comment at Acts 2:44–45.⁹¹²

909. On Luke's repeated reference to Luke 3:16 in Luke-Acts, see the detailed treatment in Bock, *Theology*, 213–18.

910. On avoiding self-boasting, see Thucyd. 1.86.1; 3.61.1; Dion. Hal. *Isaeus* 10–11; *Ant. rom.* 1.1.1; Publ. Syr. 597; Cic. *Ag. Caec.* 11.36; *Fam.* 5.12.8; Val. Max. 4.1.6a; 7.2.ext. 11b; Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.15–21; Plut. *Praising* 19, *Mor.* 546F; *Alex.* 23.4; *Cic.* 24.1–2; *M. Cato* 14.2; 19.5; *Comparison of Aristides and Marcus Cato* 5.2; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.27.616; Prov 27:2; Jos. *Ant.* 19.318; *Ag. Ap.* 2.135–36; *'Abot R. Nat.* 22, §46 B.

911. Cf. similarly Johnson, *Acts*, 198, connecting Acts 11:16 and 11:17.

912. Cf., e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.18; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 10.1.2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 45.2; Pliny *Ep.* 1.8.4–6; 7.4.10; 9.15; Marc. Aur. 1.14; Diog. Laert. 8.1.10; Jambl. *V.P.* 30.167; Erskine, *Stoa*, 118–22; briefly, Keener, *Corinthians*, 205–6.

For Peter, as apostle to Israel (Gal 2:7–8), to advocate the Gentile mission carries more weight with the hearers than would that of one evangelizing only Gentiles (cf. Acts 8:14–16; 15:13–21). Rhetorical invention included using characters in the most appropriate ways; for example, because an old man is normally viewed as cautious, if he takes “a hard line,” it “carries more weight” than it would with “a younger, more impetuous speaker.”⁹¹³ Peter’s claims for a mission to the Gentiles similarly carry special weight in the narrative.

“Hinder” becomes a significant though rare term in Acts (8:36; 28:31); that Peter repeats the same term as in 10:47 reinforces its force here.⁹¹⁴ The believers with Peter would not “stand against” the Gentiles’ baptism (10:47), for Peter could not “stand against” God’s purpose (here). Ancient orators sometimes used appeals to divine authority in their proofs.⁹¹⁵ Ancient stories sometimes reflect the theme that fate could not be resisted; attempts to evade it were often thwarted, and sometimes fate was fulfilled by the attempt.⁹¹⁶ Jewish people also believed that God’s purposes could not be thwarted (1 Kgs 22:30–34; cf. Acts 26:14). Thus Peter’s argument at this point resembles the broader rhetorical category of an argument from necessity.⁹¹⁷

d. Accepting Gentiles’ Salvation (11:18)

The temporary silence after hearing Peter means that there were no objections. The silence in Acts 11:18 is analogous to that in 21:14 (cf. 15:12; much less so in 22:2, which is *before* a speech about God’s will), both times in response to persuasion about God’s will, persuasion that silenced the hearers’ objections. Silence could characterize respectful attention to another’s speech.⁹¹⁸ More relevant here is that a compelling argument could silence opposition⁹¹⁹ and opponents could be shamed into “silence.”⁹²⁰ Given their own experience, Peter’s appeal to the cumulative acts of the Spirit in his account invited their submission. Jesus likewise silences his (generally more hostile) interlocutors in Luke’s Gospel (Luke 14:4; 20:26).

Luke likes to recount people’s recognition of God’s works and hence that, as here, they “glorified” God (Luke 2:20; 5:25–26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47; Acts

913. Heath, “Invention,” 91 (cf. 1 Kgs 12:7–11); cf. 92: but “open invective” could present an old man as “malicious and vindictive.”

914. One might “imitate” one’s own statement for rhetorical effect, but in a speech, not in a narrative per se (Anderson, *Glossary*, 77, citing Demetr. *Style* 226); cf. John 13:10–11. Within Peter’s speech here, this statement might function like epiphonema (ἐπιφώνημα), an exclamatory conclusion to an argument (cf. Rowe, “Style,” 148), if the rhetorical question bears exclamatory force.

915. See Black, *Rhetoric of Gospel*, 128. Sometimes a religious figure could depend especially on this appeal; thus a priest climaxes his case by claiming that the deity commanded him to do it (a sort of argument from necessity), while calling the deity to witness (Quint. *Decl.* 323.20).

916. E.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.7; Babr. 136; Lucian *Z. Cat.* 12; see comment on Acts 2:23.

917. On which see Anderson, *Glossary*, 17; Hermog. *Issues* 77.6–78.21; Aphth. *Progymn.* 7, “On Commonplace,” 35S, 20R; Nicolaus *Progymn.* 7, “On Commonplace,” 44; for examples, see 2 Cor 12:1, 11; Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.18; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.91; Fronto *Eloq.* 1.12.

918. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 19.255–56; Virg. *Aen.* 11.241, 300; cf. Pliny *Ep.* 2.18.2; Tac. *Hist.* 3.20; the appropriate state of a courtroom in Char. *Chaer.* 5.4.9. Silence was necessary before the true God, whether in shame or in awe (Isa 41:1; Jer 8:14; Lam 2:10; 3:28; Hab 2:20; 4Q405 20 II + 21–22 13; among Gentiles, cf. Virg. *Aen.* 10.100–103; Diog. Laert. 8.1.33; Porph. *Marc.* 16.278–79); for awe of a mortal, Char. *Chaer.* 5.5.9. See further comments on silence at Acts 12:17; 15:12; 19:33–35; 22:2.

919. E.g., Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.10; Cyr. 5.5.21; Demosth. *Cor.* 112; Plut. *Cic.* 12.5; Aul. Gel. 1.2.13; Lucian *Phil. Sale* 22; Char. *Chaer.* 8.2.12; Eunapius *Lives* 497–98; for *perplexed* silence, see Libanius *Narration* 7.2. Better to remain silent when one might not be able to make one’s case (Isoc. *Demon.* 41; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 81–82 [Stob. *Flor.* 33.12; 36.28]).

920. Arrian *Alex.* 7.8.3; 7.11.2; Neh 5:8; Jos. *Life* 298–99; Tg. *Ps.-J.* on Deut 28:15. Or from grief (Arrian *Alex.* 7.14.8; Ach. Tat. 1.13.1; Jos. *Ant.* 6.337); cf. dread or apprehension in Xen. *Cyr.* 7.1.25; Tac. *Hist.* 3.67; Appian *Hist. rom.* 6.4.18.

13:48; 21:20; cf. 4:15).⁹²¹ That people “glorified God” on account of miracles serves an apologetic purpose (cf. Acts 4:21): it is difficult to charge Jesus or the apostles with misleading people if the result of their actions is God’s honor.⁹²²

The claim of Peter’s hearers that God had “granted repentance even to the Gentiles” for life contrasts with the apostles’ claim in 5:31 that God had granted repentance to *Israel*.⁹²³ This expression, “grant repentance” (idiomatically using δίδωμι with μετάνοια), appears in the LXX only in Wis 12:10, 19, where God mercifully gave Israel repentance (cf. 12:18–19) and allowed it to Canaan but with the knowledge that the Canaanites would never avail themselves of repentance (cf. 12:3–11).⁹²⁴

“Even to the Gentiles” (reading καί here as “even”)⁹²⁵ reflects their surprise (albeit a *pleasant* surprise, since they were glorifying God for it). Surely they are not surprised that Gentiles who become proselytes (cf. Acts 2:11; 6:5) can be saved; they are referring instead to uncircumcised Gentiles. Yet most Jewish views reported in our sources allowed some Gentiles to be saved from eschatological destruction without circumcision; why then were the disciples surprised?

Four reasons (which are not mutually exclusive) are possible. One is that the disciples were expecting the Gentiles to be drawn by Israel’s exaltation (a possible reading of Isaiah) and therefore they were not expecting such an event before they had finished leading Israel to God.⁹²⁶ Second, the early Christians, like the Qumran documents, may have been more conservative in their soteriology than most mainstream Jews; like the sectarian documents from Qumran, they did not believe that even most Jews were saved, and so they naturally might prove more skeptical than most of their contemporaries that Gentiles would be.⁹²⁷ Third, it is possible that they mean salvation of Gentiles in a broader sense. Finally, Luke sometimes simplifies Jewish controversies, especially making circumcision a matter of “salvation” in Acts 15:1 whereas Paul presents it as a matter of belonging to the covenant (Gal 2:12; 5:3; 6:13; esp. Paul’s central argument in 3:6–4:31). (For later rabbinic Judaism at least, this would signify confusion between the categories of righteous Gentiles, who could be saved, and proselytes, who could enter the covenant.) Merely allowing their salvation and cleanness for table fellowship does not settle their inclusion in the people of God; even Acts 15:20 does not necessarily accomplish this (at least not from the standpoint of the conservative Jerusalem faction). (Paul’s arguments might carry the future for Diaspora believers but probably never convinced all of the Jerusalem church.)

For the ancient meaning of repentance, see comment on Acts 2:38. “Life” is shorthand for “eternal life” (Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; Acts 13:46, 48; in the shorthand form,

921. Luke may have initially borrowed the phrase from tradition (Mark 2:12; cf. Matt 9:8; 15:31), but he used it characteristically thereafter. It was appropriate as a response to divine works (e.g., *Test. Ab.* 15:5; 18:11 A; 14:8 B; *Test. Sol.* 5:13).

922. For “glorifying” as “honoring,” see Keener, *John*, 885–86.

923. Other than in these two verses, the exact expression “grant repentance” appears only in 2 Tim 2:25 in the NT, though Rom 2:4 conveys the idea: even human ability to repent reflects God’s mercy. (The terms do appear together later in *1 Clem.* 7.5; *Barn.* 16.9; *Herm.* 22.3; 72.2; 77.1; cf. 31.5.) But the two references in Acts explicitly mention Israel and the Gentiles.

924. Cf. 2 Tim 2:25; *Barn.* 16.9; *Herm.* 22.3; 72.2; 77.1; “give space for repentance” in Wis 12:10; *1 Clem.* 7.5. For the idiom “give repentance,” cf. also *Jos. Ant.* 20.178; giving time for repentance in *War* 3.127; *Philo Alleg. Interp.* 3.106; the idea in Rom 2:4.

925. As in, e.g., *Diod. Sic.* 10.24.2, honoring the bravery “even if” (καὶ, the crasis of καί with εἴν) it was that of women.

926. Skarsaune, *Shadow*, 165–66.

927. For Qumran attitudes toward Gentiles, see, e.g., Wise, “General Introduction,” 264. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 213–17, argues that the Scrolls’ “narrow soteriology” is “unrepresentative” (p. 217).

see Acts 5:20; cf. 2:28; 3:15).⁹²⁸ Greeks and Romans could imagine a long life without perpetual youth (as in the case of the Sibyl),⁹²⁹ but this differs appreciably from the Jewish emphasis on the transformed, immortal life of the resurrection. “Eternal life” occasionally appears in Hellenistic sources,⁹³⁰ but it is rare in Gentile circles in this period.⁹³¹ The vast majority of its occurrences are in Jewish sources, beginning with Dan 12:2, where it refers to the life inherited at the resurrection of the dead; at that time the righteous would be “raised up to eternal life.”⁹³² Jewish sources often speak of “the life of the world to come” (חיי העולם הבא), or “life of the age” (“eternal life”),⁹³³ often abbreviating it to “life”⁹³⁴ as in John’s Gospel. Thus the righteous are preserved for the life of the coming world at death,⁹³⁵ or (in more Hellenistic sources) the righteous dead currently “live out the age of blessing.”⁹³⁶ Most early Christian literature also employs “life” as the “life of the coming age.”⁹³⁷

928. I earlier used the following material on eternal life in Keener, *John*, 328–29.

929. Ovid *Metam.* 14.136–44 (she would live a thousand years, Ovid. *Metam.* 14.144, 146); cf. Aul. Gel. 2.16.10. A more helpful Hellenistic analogy would be “immortality” (cf. 1 Cor 15:53–54), although, to some Greeks, this would connote apotheosis.

930. E.g., Plutarch employs it to describe God’s character (τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, *Isis* 1, *Mor.* 351E).

931. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 144–50.

932. *Pss. Sol.* 3:12, using the full expression; 4 Macc 15:3; *Test. Ash.* 5:2; 6:6; 2 *En.* 65:10.

933. E.g., *m. Ab.* 2:7, attributed to Hillel; *b. Ber.* 28b; *Lev. Rab.* 13:2; *CIJ* 1:422, §569 (Hebrew funerary inscription from Italy); 1:474, §661 (sixth-century Hebrew inscription from Spain); 2:443, §1536 (Semitic letters, from Egypt); cf. Abrahams, *Studies* (1), 168–70; Philo *Flight* 77. The usage in 1 *En.* 10:5, 10, 12 (cf. 15:6; 25:6) and *Jub.* 5:10 (cf. 30:20) is more restrictive, perhaps figurative; the Similitudes, however, seem to follow the ordinary usage (1 *En.* 37:4; 40:9; 58:3, 6), and the circles from which 1 *Enoch* and *Jubilees* derive probably used “long duration” language to represent eternity as well (CD VII, 5–6; cf. Sir 18:10); for “eternal life” in the Scrolls, see also 4Q181 (Vermees, *Scrolls*, 251–52); Coetzee, “Life,” 48–66; Charlesworth, “Comparison,” 414; it is conditional in 1 *En.* 15:4, 6. “Eternal” occurs with other nouns (e.g., Wis 10:14; 1QS II, 3) far more rarely.

934. Tob 12:9–10; Ladd, *Theology*, 255, also cites *Pss. Sol.* 14:7; 2 Macc 7:9–14; 4 *Ezra* 7:137; 14:22; see Manson, *Paul and John*, 112n1.

935. *Sipre Deut.* 305.3.2, 3.

936. 4 Macc 17:18, using a cognate of βίος rather than of ζωή. Cf. *Test. Ab.* 20:14 A.

937. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 159; Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:159; Ladd, *Theology*, 255–56. See, e.g., Mark 10:17, 30; Matt 25:46; Rom 2:7; 5:21; 6:22–23; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Jude 21; 2 *Clem.* 5.5; 8.4; Ign. *Eph.* 18.1; *Poly.* 2.3; *Mart. Pol.* 14.2; *Did.* 10.3; *Herm.* 7.2; 16.4; 24.5.

ANTIOCH REACHES GENTILES AND HELPS JERUSALEM (11:19–30)

The Jerusalem church's acceptance of Cornelius's conversion allows Luke to narrate the active evangelization of Gentiles in Antioch with the reader's assumption that this is something that the Jerusalem church would approve.¹ Some scholars even suggest that the process of reaching Gentiles probably began as soon as Hellenists left Jerusalem, and not just in Antioch.² Yet Antioch must have at least been the most prominent point of transition, where Jews in contact with Gentiles persuaded some to be God-fearers with faith in Jesus and eventually even accepted them into corporate table fellowship. It is important to Luke as the subsequent base for the Pauline Diaspora mission.

1. Introduction

Although we explore further details in the comments on the passage itself, some introductory observations are in order, both literary and historical.

a. Literary Observations

After introducing Saul in Acts 7:58, Luke alternates between narratives of Saul and the Jerusalem church. Acts 11:19–30 interrupts a larger section in which Peter predominates for the final time in Acts (9:32–12:24); Luke prepares for his focus on Barnabas and Saul as agents of Antioch's Diaspora mission (Acts 13–15). The interruption is obvious, since the section begins and ends with pivotal verses that bracket other material with a continuous story: 11:19 picks up where 8:4 leaves off; 11:30 leaves off where 12:25 will pick up. Together these verses bracket an important summary section about the mixed church in Antioch, offering our only brief survey of what must have been a dramatic locus of transition in the early Christian movement. Although Luke's narrative focuses on Paul, he is clear that Paul's mission to the Gentiles had historical precedent (even if his deliberate transgeographic program did not).³

1. In terms of narrative sequence, Antioch's success involves the logical unfolding of the mission after Cornelius (Rowe, *World*, 134). If the Jerusalem church would not have approved it but it would have been for the good of their movement, some Antioch Christians might have still viewed the mission as something similar to compliance with the Jerusalem church's will (Aul. Gel. 1.13). For one attempt to place Antioch's ministry in the larger development of mission in Acts, with an interest in models for adapting to contemporary cultures, see Niemandt, "Missional Church."

2. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 196.

3. In addition to Paul's deliberate missionary program and his earlier role in the Jerusalem church's leadership, his work may have been distinctive as an articulate voice in the battle for keeping the Gentile mission free from the requirement of circumcision (see Skarsaune, *Shadow*, 168).

The interruption is, however, relevant to its context: just as Hellenists pioneered carrying Jesus's message to the Diaspora (8:4–40), so now the Hellenist Jews reach Hellenist Gentiles (11:19–21), in continuity with Peter's public case in 11:1–18. The Jerusalem church, having accepted Peter's argument (11:18), confirms God's work in Antioch through Spirit-filled Barnabas (11:22–24) as it had confirmed God's work in Samaria through two agents of the Spirit, Peter and John (8:14–17). Barnabas thus becomes a link between the Jerusalem church and Paul's Gentile mission because he recruits Saul, called partly to the Gentiles (cf. 9:15), to help in the work (11:25–26). This Gentile-reaching Antioch church then reaches back to Jerusalem (in response to Jerusalemite prophets) to meet its need, through Barnabas and Saul (11:27–30). For Luke, Antioch becomes (and probably historically was, albeit less monolithically) the pivotal link between the church's heritage in Jerusalem and its mission in the Diaspora, including among Gentiles.

b. Historical Tradition

The majority of scholars see historical tradition behind 11:19–30.⁴ Even though Luke's emphasis is on Peter's breakthrough to the Gentiles (10:1–11:18), he fails to suppress the tradition that the full-scale, active Gentile mission stemmed from many dispersed Hellenists (8:4) rather than his heroes Peter or even Paul.⁵ Luke writes biographic history focusing on major characters; this makes his inclusion of summary material that does not fit this general pattern all the more likely to reflect information that is authentic, pre-Lukan, and probably was too widely known to ignore.

Chronological questions are more problematic. Because Luke follows Peter from 9:32 to 11:18, then returns to the Hellenist summary of 8:1 in 11:19, his arrangement in the section is as much biographic (and somewhat geographic) here as chronological (a tension all ancient historians had to straddle).⁶ Because Luke lacks clear chronological markers at this point, however (except that this evangelism began between Stephen's death and Agrippa I's persecution), we cannot say whether disciples in Antioch, such as Philip, may have preceded Peter's ministry to Cornelius's household.⁷ For Luke, it was important that theologically Peter's activity took precedence, and so this may be why the Cornelius story appears before this summary.⁸ Paul himself could easily be Luke's source for the events in Antioch, which would have been known to Paul from his later ministry there (11:26–30; 13:1);⁹ the ancient tradition that Luke himself was from Antioch is less likely, since "we" first appears in 16:10.¹⁰

4. So Witherington, *Acts*, 367.

5. Riesner, *Early Period*, 108–9.

6. E.g., sometimes Josephus explicitly follows a topic out of chronological sequence (*Ant.* 18.194); at other times, he does so without explicitly informing readers (e.g., he narrates an event from 33–34 C.E. in *Ant.* 18.106 yet noted Pilate's recall in 18.89).

7. E.g., Bruce, *Peter*, 26–27; Witherington, *Acts*, 368. Many attribute the specific arrangement of the accounts to distinct sources, which is plausible though not certain. The objection to a source that some raise—namely, that Luke fails to display sufficient concrete material (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 87)—is not compelling in view of his limited space, but oral tradition does seem most likely here (Barrett, *Acts*, 52–53).

8. If the Cornelius story preceded Antioch's Gentile mission historically, this would help explain the lack of reported resistance to the latter (Gaventa, *Acts*, 177); but Antioch's great distance might also help account for this.

9. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 19, reject any continuous Antiochene source (*pace* Jeremias's and Hengel's own earlier views), apart from simply Luke's notes.

10. With Witherington, *Acts*, 367, contrasting the Western text of Acts 11:28. His attribution (168) of some details to Luke's weeklong stay at Tyre (21:3–7) is less likely. One could allow that Luke omits the "we" here because he is not part of the action, but the tradition rests on conflating this Luke with the Lucius of 13:1; the name was common, and later Christian writers often conflated earlier figures who bore identical names.

New Testament scholars sometimes assign an inordinate amount of the early church's theological formation to this early period of the Antioch church.¹¹ This hypothesis is convenient precisely because so little is known about the Antioch church that it allows speculation a freer hand.¹² (Reading too much from Luke's partial silence about the church is also speculative,¹³ since, apart from Gal 2:11, Luke remains our most thorough source.) Bultmann, Bousset, and others argued that the son-deity's suffering and rising derived from mystery cults and Gnosticism,¹⁴ requiring an "acute 'Hellenization,' or more precisely a *syncretistic paganization of primitive Christianity*." Yet they assigned this apparently uncontrolled transformation of the movement's beliefs to a period when the Jerusalem apostles led the church in Jerusalem (Gal 1:19; 2:1, 9) and the Antioch leaders included Barnabas of Jerusalem and Paul (Acts 13:1; cf. Gal 2:11, 13), whose biblical argumentation probably betrays advanced, formal Jewish training in Scriptures.¹⁵

The one part of earliest Syrian Christianity attested for us belongs to Antioch,¹⁶ and most of this evidence involves the Pauline circle.¹⁷ It seems problematic for modern scholarship to construct a radically distinctive new form of Christianity in ancient Antioch, which somehow nevertheless was able to work with the Jerusalem pillars (Gal 2:9; quarreling over ethnic issues but not Christology, 2:11–14) and was, if anything, more willing to accommodate Jerusalem than Paul was (2:13). After extensive consideration, Hengel and Schwemer conclude, "We have no reason to regard the community in Antioch in the first roughly ten years of its existence as having been theologically far more creative than the other communities in Jerusalem, Syria or Cilicia."¹⁸

2. Hellenists Carry the Gospel to More Gentiles (11:19–26)

This passage shows the cross-cultural spread of the gospel, through Diaspora Jews to Gentiles in Antioch, and introduces Paul's ministry there. Luke thus connects Paul to

11. Donfried, *Thessalonica*, xxvi, thinks that much of Paul's distinctive theology reflects pre-Antiochene Palestinian influences (resembling Qumran), and argues against "pan-Antiochenism."

12. Cf. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 21–22.

13. E.g., Winter, "Antioch," believes that Luke is silent partly because he disapproves of the Antioch church elevating law observers over others (given the expectations of proselytes, this probably *did* happen in the early period; but Winter's article extrapolates too much from later Antiochene exegesis's Jewish elements). In view of the silence, however, we can only speculate. The argument that Luke wishes to focus on the journey to Rome is likely, however, in view of the text of Acts itself.

14. Despite the problems with dating now known; see Yamauchi, *Gnosticism*; Smith, *Gnostic Origins*; Keener, *John*, 164–69. For Gnosticism's debt to earlier Christianity, see Wilson, *Gnostic Problem*, 68, 256; Yamauchi, *Gnosticism*, 20; Burkitt, *Gnosis*, viii; Grant, *Gnosticism*, 13–14.

15. Hengel, *Son*, 18; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 260–61. Bultmann speculatively made very selective use of Acts and counted Paul's letters as evidence for this distinctive "Antiochene Christianity" (Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 279, responding on 279–86). Hengel and Schwemer also refute (286–91) the speculative claims of Antiochene traditions in Paul; these "traditions" are likelier just Paul. "Pre-Pauline" phrases in Romans were probably recognized by the Roman Christians, too, and the common source is far likelier Jerusalem (which Paul mentions four times in Rom 15) than Antioch (287–88).

16. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 21–22. They also note that this part of Syria in the first century was oriented culturally toward Rome and the West (cf. Gal 1:21); the oft-cited orientation toward the east came after the addition of Edessa in the second century (22). (Lucian *Hist.* 24 proves particularly peeved when a historian places his native Edessa in Mesopotamia instead of Roman Syria.)

17. If later sources used Petrine tradition to "domesticate" the Pauline tradition, to bring it more in line with traditional Jewish Christianity (Brown and Meier, *Antioch and Rome*, *passim*), this pattern does not characterize Antioch in Acts.

18. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 286 (concluding 279–86).

the seminal spread of the movement to Gentiles (though he arrived after it began) and the time and location when the movement's detractors began to call them "Christians."

a. Transition in Antioch (11:19–21)

The Hellenist believers scattered abroad zealously carry the message with them wherever they go, including cosmopolitan Antioch. In Antioch the movement begins to reach (apparently) Gentiles as well as Jews, inviting the attention of the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:22–24).

I. THE MESSAGE SPREADS (11:19)

Luke returns here to those providentially "scattered" from the affliction that came about with respect to Stephen (8:1). Luke has already mentioned that they were evangelizing, carrying the message wherever they went (8:4).¹⁹ Although, at Luke's last mention, the scattering extended only throughout Judea and Samaria (8:1; the specific illustration being 8:5–40), Luke's claim in 11:19 that disciples went to minister among Jews in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch fits clues already offered in his narrative.

The Hellenists leaving Jerusalem had to scatter in places where their Greek language and cultural differences would be welcome, and urban centers in these cities were much more workable than rural Galilee. The sudden shifts from a rural Galilean movement to an urban Jerusalem movement, and then to a cosmopolitan mission in Antioch, were virtually unprecedented.²⁰ Cities, where many people were already uprooted from previous centuries of traditions, tended to show greater openness to new ideas than the countryside, and first-century churches spread initially there (along trade routes) and usually only later to outlying villages.²¹

Luke has already mentioned contacts for Cyprus and Antioch, although, because they represent leaders, they probably are only some of the connections that existed. Barnabas would have contacts and relatives in Cyprus (4:36; cf. 13:4) and hence could provide letters of recommendation (on which see comment on Acts 9:2). Nicolas was presumably already a proselyte when in Antioch (a Gentile from Antioch without interest in Jewish religion had little other reason to migrate to Jerusalem, unless possibly as a merchant); thus he probably also had connections with synagogues there (6:5).²² Nicolas himself may not have settled or remained there (he is conspicuous for his absence among the leadership in 13:1),²³ but he may have had some influence on the Gentile mission there; ancient hospitality required the welcoming of friends' friends.

Phoenicia also makes sense as a destination, and its cities were heavily hellenized.²⁴ Although some counted Joppa (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.69) and Caesarea (Jos.

19. Many recognize this scattering as a crucial factor in the spread of the Jesus movement (Race, "Journeys").

20. See Hengel, *Acts and History*, 99 (though perhaps overstating the case by claiming "hardly any parallels in the sociology of religion" for such a rapid shift).

21. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 63. Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and other major cities set the new fashions of thought in the empire (Meeks, *Moral World*, 24). Given the rapid increase in rural population of Antioch's χώρα during the first two centuries C.E., possibly partly due to retired veterans (De Giorgi, "Antioch"), Antioch's countryside may have been influenced by events in its nearby city more than most rural areas would have been.

22. Some scholars think that Nicolas influenced even the choice of Antioch as a destination (Blaklock, *Cities*, 9); but it was a major center, though it was far.

23. Especially since Barnabas, who was apparently a Hellenist disciple not among the Seven in Acts 6:5, is included. If Nicolas remained alive, he may have traveled elsewhere, at least by the time of 13:1.

24. Though from a later century, note Philost. *Hrk.* 1.1, despite their apparent greed (1.1–7, esp. 1.3; Hom. *Od.* 14.288–89; Maclean and Aitken, *Heritkos*, lxxxiii). Phoenicians' nautical skills (*Hrk.* 1.3) would

Ant. 15.333) as part of Phoenicia (evangelized by Philip in Acts 8:40 and Peter in 9:43; 10:24), most of Phoenicia (and the parts that Luke would surely call by that name) were farther north, especially Tyre and Sidon (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.75–78).²⁵ Those who did not include Caesarea in Phoenicia, however, recognized that Phoenicia was directly beyond it (5.14.69); see comment on Acts 12:20. We know of Jewish communities in Phoenicia (Philo *Embassy* 281). The Phoenician mission was successful, producing churches (Acts 15:3; 21:2–5; 27:3); though details of the church's origins are lacking, the mission was prefigured by some Tyrians and Sidonians who listened to Jesus (Luke 6:17) and by Luke's programmatic appeal to a Sidonian widow (4:26) as well as a Syrian leper (4:27) as examples of the sorts of people who would respond to Jesus's ministry.²⁶ Jesus claimed that Tyre and Sidon would fare better on the day of judgment than Galilean towns where he had spent much of his ministry (10:13–14), and so we are not surprised to discover disciples there later (Acts 21:3–4; 27:3).

II. ANTIOCH AS A STRATEGIC LOCATION (11:19–20)

Antioch²⁷ was near Seleucia Pieria, Apamea, and Syrian Laodicea, called its “sister” cities; Antioch itself was divided into four parts (Strabo 16.2.4). It was the “metropolis” (μητροπολις), or “mother-city,” of Syria, ruling the rest of Syria, and was where the Seleucid rulers of Syria had lived (Strabo 16.2.5; cf. *Jos. War* 3.29).²⁸ Some scholars doubt that evidence is conclusive that Syria had a “capital” per se in the Roman period,²⁹ but in any case, Antioch was powerful and on coins called itself the “capital of the East.”³⁰ It was also the seat of the Roman governor (*Jos. Ant.* 18.95, 126).³¹ Since 47 B.C.E., Antioch had been a “free city”—that is, one that the Romans allowed to govern itself mostly by its own laws.³² Romans complained about Antioch's morality (*Juv. Sat.* 3.62),³³ but the truth of the complaints probably ran no deeper (or less deep) than those against other Mediterranean cities.

Josephus claims that the city ranked third in size and wealth after Rome and Alexandria (*War* 3.29); some placed it fourth (with Seleucia on the Tigris as third; Libanius *Or.* 20).³⁴ Strabo thought it nearly the size of Alexandria in Egypt and Seleucia on the Tigris (Strabo 16.2.5), and some thought it nearly the size of Rome

also provide mobility for ideas. Greeks made one Phoenix the land's mythical ancestor, supposedly related to Cilicians (Eurip. *Phrixus B.* frg. 819.7–8). Canaanite religion apparently did persist (Oden, “Persistence”; Rives, *Religion*, 66; Steiner, “Rise”). On Phoenicia, see, e.g., discussion in Grainger, *Phoenicia*.

25. Johnson, *Acts*, 202–3; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:351; Parsons, *Acts*, 165–66.

26. For Jews there (and in Syria), see Stern, “Diaspora,” 137–42; Luke does omit Mark's Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7:26; changed by Matthew to a Canaanite, Matt 15:22), but perhaps because he reserves his emphasis on the Gentile mission especially for his second volume.

27. On Antioch, see, e.g., Norris, “Antioch”; Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*; for archaeological data, see, e.g., Johnson, “Antioch”; McRay, *Archaeology*, 227–32; idem, “Antioch”; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 143–52; Blaiklock, *Cities*, 9–12; for summary of background, Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 254–55; for earlier sources, see the seven entries in Mattill and Mattill, *Bibliography*, 203 (including Downey, *History of Antioch*, 272–316; Reynolds, “Antioch”; Tenney, “Antioch”).

28. For this title on its coins, see Tracey, “Syria,” 238 (section on Antioch, 236–39). Bruce, *Acts*¹, 235, notes that it was “now to become the metropolis of Gentile Christianity.”

29. Tracey, “Syria,” 239.

30. Witherington, *Acts*, 366. Most scholars call it Syria's capital in Roman times (Koester, *Introduction*, 1:70; Reicke, *Era*, 194). Vell. Pat. 2.37.5; 2.38.6 claims that Syria became a Roman province through Pompey.

31. See also, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 127; Reicke, *Era*, 194; further Tracey, “Syria,” 243–46.

32. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.18.79; Jones, Seyrig, Liebeschuetz, and Sherwin-White, “Antioch”; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 32. On the meaning of “free cities” (limited autonomy contingent on Roman goodwill), see Spawforth, “Free cities.”

33. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 127, claim that *Daphnici mores* became a “byword.”

34. Riesner, *Early Period*, 111.

(Hdn. 4.3.7). Estimates of its population vary widely. Many scholars cite the figure of half a million³⁵ or even 600,000; others estimate about 150,000.³⁶ Ancient estimates reveal little more consensus: in the first century B.C.E., Strabo estimated 300,000 (Strabo 16.2.5); in the next century, Pliny the Elder suggested twice that number (*N.H.* 6.122); in the fourth century, John Chrysostom estimated only 200,000 (*Pan. Ign.* 4).³⁷ Although Westerners would think the modern town, Antakya, Turkey, “fairly crowded” and it consumes “somewhat less than half the area of the ancient city,” its population appears no more than 75,000. Even the low estimates for the ancient city (about 250,000) require “a high density in a relatively small area.”³⁸ Though its location made it a battleground “between Rome and Sassasian Persians” and, in a later period, between Byzantines and Arabs, it “remained an important city into the Middle Ages.”³⁹

Although we know the course of the walls, Antioch is difficult to excavate, being thirty-five feet (11 m.) deep.⁴⁰ That the modern city of Antakya covers part of the site⁴¹ may also complicate excavations. Although the excavations in 1932–39 were very limited, they did confirm what ancient literature leads us to expect: “Antioch was a typical Hellenistic Roman metropolis.”⁴² The Roman bridge over the Orontes has survived, although it has been repaired many times.⁴³

Antigonus I founded Antioch in 307 B.C.E.; Seleucus I Nicator defeated Antigonus in 301 B.C.E., renaming the city and moving it in 300 B.C.E. to its present site (where Antakya lies today). It became the capital of the Seleucid kingdom; various distinct settlements, each with its own walls, were united into a tetropolis. Romans made it their capital for Syria after conquering the Seleucids in 64 B.C.E.⁴⁴ Agrippa and Herod provided wide sidewalks on either side of Antioch’s main thoroughfare, which had shops along at least its eastern side and in alleys meeting it; Tiberius added a colonnade.⁴⁵

Antioch was large enough to boast its own marketplace, theater, and amphitheater; the island also had a palace and a circus.⁴⁶ Augustus instituted games at the stadium, which some say that Claudius elevated to Olympic Games, eventually competing with those held in Greece.⁴⁷ Antioch was known for its love of dance, so that its residents would call out positive or negative evaluations as dramatic dances were under way (*Lucian Dance* 76). Dio Chrysostom, in his day, could spur his native city, Prusa, to build projects in light of those of other prominent cities in or near Asia Minor, including Antioch (*Or.* 40.11; cf. 47.13). He conceded that Antioch needed more space than Prusa did, since it was thirty-six stadia long (roughly 4.5 mi.) and its main street was famously full of colonnades (*Or.* 47.16).

35. Haenchen, *Acts*, 365; Jeffers, *World*, 57; Reicke, *Era*, 194; in Abbott, *Acts*, 134, more than half a million. Jones, Seyrig, Liebeschuetz, and Sherwin-White, “Antioch,” estimate 250,000 for Antioch.

36. See Riesner, *Early Period*, 111. Stark, *Cities*, 37, still more modestly estimates 100,000.

37. McDonald, “Antioch,” 34, correctly noting that who was counted (citizens or residents) and how far beyond the city proper was included may account for some of the disparity.

38. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 28.

39. Koester, *Introduction*, 1:70.

40. Finegan, *Apostles*, 67.

41. *Ibid.*, 68.

42. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 268.

43. Finegan, *Apostles*, 68.

44. Wittke, “Antioch on Orontes.” (See additional comment at Acts 13:4.)

45. Tate, “Antioch on Orontes,” 144.

46. Finegan, *Apostles*, 68.

47. *Ibid.*, 65–66 (citing Libanius *Or.* 11). Remijsen, “Introduction,” argues that despite many games and much entertainment, the Olympic Games in Antioch are uncertain before 212 C.E.

III. GENTILE RELIGION IN ANTIOCH

Although many Jews lived in Antioch, it was predominantly Gentile and pagan. Egyptian deities, such as Isis and Serapis, and Greek deities, such as Demeter, were prominent in Antioch's worship.⁴⁸ A later writer also opines that Antioch enjoyed far more festivals than most cities (Hdn. 2.7.9; 2.8.9). In Syria as a whole, most deities worshiped in this period remained Semitic (most prominently Baal), although many were identified with Greek or Roman deities (e.g., Bel with Zeus).⁴⁹

Antiochus IV Epiphanes began the building of a major temple to the Olympian Zeus on Mount Silpius, but it was finally completed only by Tiberius in the early first century.⁵⁰ Julius Caesar built, presumably around the center of the city, the Kaisareion for the cult of Roma; a statue of Caesar was in the building. Caesar also rebuilt the declining Pantheon in Antioch.⁵¹

Near Antioch was the cult center Daphne (Strabo 16.2.4; Jos. *War* 1.328), about forty stadia (ca. 5 mi. or 8 km.) away, with a temple of Apollo and Artemis, the grove of which was eighty stadia around (Strabo 16.2.6).⁵² Tradition said that the nymph Daphne was metamorphosed into a laurel tree there, and this led to worship of a laurel tree at the Apollo temple.⁵³ Daphne was so famous as a cult center that many called Antioch ἐπὶ Δάφνῃ (cf. also Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.18.79)—hence the burial at “Epidaphna” in Tac. *Ann.* 2.83.⁵⁴ Titus built a theater in Daphne; according to some reports, he destroyed a synagogue and used its site for the theater.⁵⁵

IV. JEWS AND ANTIOCH

It would not be difficult for the scattered Hellenist Christians to “speak the word” to Jews in Antioch. Josephus indicates that the city held a sizable Jewish population (*Ag. Ap.* 2.39), indeed claiming (perhaps exaggeratedly) that this was the heaviest concentration of Jewish people in the Diaspora (*War* 7.43).⁵⁶ Although it was founded later than some other Diaspora communities (by Seleucus Nicator in 300 B.C.E.), it grew quickly, and there is an abundance of evidence for its popularity with Jewish people.⁵⁷ The highest estimates range from 45,000 Jewish residents in Augustus's day to 65,000 in the fourth century, but others estimate a total population for Antioch of only 150,000 (though 400,000 in its territory) in the fourth century. More recent scholars tend to estimate about 22,000 Jews in Antioch, but most admit that this is at best a useful guess.⁵⁸ Likewise, many estimate about 10 percent of the population,

48. Norris, “Isis, Sarapis, and Demeter.” On the Mysteries there, cf. also Metzger, “Antioch-on-Orontes,” 78–80.

49. Healey, “Syrian Deities”; Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 260.

50. Finegan, *Apostles*, 65.

51. McRay, *Archaeology*, 230.

52. For its springs, waterfall, and abundant trees (cypress, laurel, and oak), see also Finegan, *Apostles*, 65; for other discussion, see Dowden, “Daphne,” 221. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.18.79 places Daphne across the Orontes.

53. So Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.16, claiming that Apollonius rejected this superstition; see also Ovid *Metam.* 1.452–567; Libanius *Narration* 17; *Speech in Character* 27.4; Mader, “Pursuit.”

54. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 127. Nevertheless, Daphne also had a synagogue (Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 9).

55. Finegan, *Apostles*, 65–66. The theater included a sculpted satyr struggling with a hermaphrodite, an image characteristic also of some other theaters (Retzleff, “Group”).

56. See Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 128; Metzger, “Antioch-on-Orontes,” 81–82; Kraeling, “Jewish Community at Antioch.” For Jewish inscriptions from Syria and Transjordan, see *CIJ* 2:55–105, §§803–68; for Syria being less unclean than other Gentile lands, see *b. Git.* 8a. The estimates tend to be significantly lower than those for Alexandria, however (see comment on Acts 18:24). Kennedy, “Demography,” estimates Greater Syria's population at three or four million in Augustus's era.

57. Kraeling, “Jewish Community at Antioch,” 131–36. It also appears among mighty cities destroyed in the end time in *Sib. Or.* 4.140 (perhaps written ca. 80 C.E.).

58. Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 8; Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 134.

whatever its number, was Jewish, though this, too, is a guess.⁵⁹ Because of Syria's connections with the East, the Jewish community here was probably more like that in Palestine than were most Diaspora Jewish communities.⁶⁰

Most scholars believe that most Jews, or "Judeans," lived outside Judea, even when we discount the Jewish residents of Parthia. Some estimate 4.5 million Jews in the Roman Empire, or about 7 percent of its total estimated population;⁶¹ others, about 7 million, or about 10 percent of the empire's estimated population;⁶² still others note both figures as a range⁶³ or suggest a mediating 5 to 6 million.⁶⁴ The percentages may be right for some cities (with probably higher percentages in Alexandria, Antioch, and certainly Judea itself), but with only perhaps 10 percent of the empire living in cities (and rural areas unable to sustain Jewish community practices), I suspect that the real percentage was lower (perhaps 5 percent of the empire overall). Still, by not practicing the common (albeit inadvertent) methods of population control (such as infant exposure and abortion), Jews (like Egyptians) would naturally multiply more than other groups (with a temporary decline due to wars in Judea, the Decapolis, and North Africa from 66 to 135).

All such figures are in any case only guesses, but they probably at least offer a fairly accurate sense of orders of magnitude.⁶⁵ All the estimates reckon a much larger percentage of Jews outside Palestine than inside it in this period. Jewish people had to settle throughout the rest of the world, Philo insists, because they were too numerous to fit in any one land (*Flacc.* 45–46);⁶⁶ an earlier, Gentile historian notes their large population, which he attributes to their refusal to abandon babies.⁶⁷ Like most immigrant groups, they clustered in cities, so that some scholars estimate that they constituted 10–15 percent of the populations of average coastal towns in the Roman world;⁶⁸ we must adjust higher for Antioch and Alexandria and lower for some other cities.

We know of a synagogue in Antioch in the Seleucid period (*Jos. War* 7.44); a different synagogue after 70, located in the city's southern quarter, became the main one, but other synagogues existed there as well.⁶⁹ Presumably the Hellenist Jewish Christians who came to Antioch found many prospective disciples in one or more of these synagogues (speaking "to Jews alone," Acts 11:19). How long the connections remained we cannot say. Whereas in Luke's day being part of the ancient Jewish religion may have remained advantageous, it may have appeared a

59. Riesner, *Early Period*, 111; also Schnabel, *Missionary*, 71 (estimating 20,000 to 35,000).

60. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 79–80. On Judaism in Syria, see Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 242–58 (for the Roman period, 249–58), also noting ties with Judea.

61. So, e.g., Schoeps, *Paul*, 221–22; Bornkamm, *Paul*, 4–5; Malherbe, "Life," 25.

62. E.g., De Ridder, *Rejected*, 5; cf. an ancient Syrian church historian's estimate at 6,944,000 (Avi-Yonah, "Geography," 109; Rabello, "Condition," 691), though he may have exaggerated like Josephus. This higher figure is sometimes broken down as 2.5 million in Palestine; more than a million each in Syria with Asia Minor, in Egypt, and in Mesopotamia; and about 100,000 each in Italy and North Africa (Jeffers, *World*, 213). S. W. Baron estimated one-fifth of the eastern Mediterranean world, but this may be too high (Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 47).

63. Caird, *Apostolic Age*, 21.

64. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 34.

65. Cf. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 23.

66. It is of course to Philo's advantage to exaggerate here and to inflate some of his estimates. But he could have avoided criticism for such hyperboles or estimates only because they would have struck potential hearers as sound enough to be plausible.

67. Diod. Sic. 40.3.8; on abandoning babies, see comment on Acts 7:19.

68. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 34; followed by Gill, "Élites," 113.

69. Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 8–9; cf. de Vaux, *Israel*, 343–44. Cf. also evidence for synagogues in Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 53–54; *CIJ* 2:56, §804.

liability after Hadrian; throughout the empire, in varying degrees, Gentile Christian converts or sympathizers could escape some anti-Jewish sentiments against themselves by distancing themselves from Judaism. Even by the early second century, Ignatius attests theological conflict between Jews and Christians;⁷⁰ nevertheless, they remained in active contact into the fourth century.⁷¹ Thus Judaism apparently remained strong there in that century, when John Chrysostom tried to keep Christians from synagogues.⁷²

During the war of 66–73, Antioch (along with Sidon, Apamea, and Gerasa, *Jos. War* 2.479–80) was among the few predominantly Gentile cities in the region to spare their Jewish inhabitants. Josephus allows that this may partly reflect the large number of Jewish people in Antioch, but he thought it especially reflected good relations there (2.479). In contrast to Caesarea (a hotbed of Jewish-Gentile tension; see comment on Acts 10:1), Antioch was a more natural site to bridge the Jewish-Gentile divide in a major way.

Nevertheless, we should not exaggerate Antiochene Gentiles' trust of their Jewish neighbors, especially in the wake of the Judean revolt.⁷³ That Antioch loved Germanicus, Caligula's father, and hence showed great affection for Caligula⁷⁴ would not have boded well for local Jews sympathetic with Judean hostility toward Caligula.⁷⁵ After Jerusalem's destruction, Antiochenes asked Titus to banish Jews or at least restrict their rights in Antioch; he refused (*Jos. War* 7.100–111; *Ant.* 12.121–24) but dedicated some figures there, meant to emphasize his defeat of Jerusalem.⁷⁶ Some scholars thus suspect that Christian life in Antioch about 36/37 was probably not as peaceful as Luke portrays.⁷⁷ It probably was not violent, but even in Gentile cities with large Jewish populations such as Antioch, followers of the one Jewish God would not be able to forget their minority status. Jewish believers here presumably evangelized Gentiles more through personal contact than through public proclamation.

V. EVANGELIZING ANTIOCH

Word undoubtedly spread through house church meetings as well.⁷⁸ Perhaps a range of types of homes existed in Antioch. Syrian homes preserved from the first millennium C.E. used stone slabs for their roofs, topped by clay terraces reached by stone staircases.⁷⁹ Presumably, Hellenistic models had produced change in urban Antioch in a direction more like known forms of Greek architecture.⁸⁰ Perhaps ministry after dark was easier here than elsewhere. Antioch seems to have been one of

70. Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 19–20.

71. *Ibid.*, 21–24.

72. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 145.

73. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 187–90, esp. 189–90, think that most Antiochenes were anti-Jewish despite the willingness of many others to embrace Judaism.

74. *Ibid.*, 184.

75. *Ibid.*, 180–83. The claim of John Malalas *Chronographia* that a Jewish high priest sent thirty thousand Jewish soldiers to kill many Antiochenes in 39/40 C.E. is certainly confused, but it might reflect Jewish-Gentile conflicts in Antioch in Caligula's reign (so Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 184–85).

76. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 145.

77. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 186.

78. On the church in Antioch, see, e.g., Patzia, *Emergence*, 96–104; for how it has been used as a misological paradigm in history and today, see, e.g., Orme, "Antioquia." White, *Origins of Architecture*, 2:144, addresses an example of a converted Syrian *insula* complex that developed into a later church building.

79. Robertson, *Greek and Roman Architecture*, 314. See further Holladay, "House," on pre-Hellenistic Syro-Palestinian homes.

80. Limited excavations reveal that Antioch resembled most Greco-Roman metropolises (Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 268); for the city's Hellenistic gridiron plan, see below.

the few ancient cities to hang lamps to light streets after nightfall, since most people in antiquity went to bed early.⁸¹

Although ministry probably started in mainly Jewish parts of the city,⁸² Antiochene believers would undoubtedly traverse the city, which retained some older topographic elements but had greatly expanded them. The traditional Hellenistic and Roman gridiron plan structured the city, which originally filled “an oblong area on the flat ground between the river and” a major Hellenistic road. The original city also provided for two distinct walled quarters, one for Greeks and Macedonians and a smaller one “for the native Syrians.”⁸³ Antiochus I Soter (281–261 B.C.E.) constructed another quarter following the gridiron pattern,⁸⁴ and Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164) provided the final quarter.⁸⁵ In the Roman period, the old Hellenistic road, once along the side of Antioch, passed through its middle and constituted the main axis street of the city, lined with columns.⁸⁶ It “ran from the Aleppo Gate on the northeast to the Daphne Gate on the south”—that is, for about two miles (i.e., 3 km.).⁸⁷ The road was paved with stones, but in the time of Herod it was paved with marble, with broad walkways on its sides and, beyond them, many shops.⁸⁸

Because synagogues in Antioch welcomed proselytes and God-fearers, it is not surprising that the Jewish Jesus movement in Antioch would do the same.⁸⁹ Because God-fearers were not circumcised, Gentiles welcomed on these terms (as allies but not members of the covenant) may have constituted a sort of lower tier within the church at the very beginning, although at some early point such a distinction must have changed (Acts 14:26–15:2; Gal 2:11–12);⁹⁰ whether Paul was an influential voice in establishing this change or (perhaps more likely) simply became its most articulate defender,⁹¹ we cannot say. (Practice may have also taken time to follow theory. In some parts of Judaism, although proselytes should be fully welcome in terms of religious status,⁹² their social status was more marginal.)⁹³ A variety of cultural factors would contribute toward making Greek-speaking Antiochene Gentiles more open to Jewish and Christian values, facilitating the way for Gentile converts.⁹⁴ But Judaism, and hence the church, also apparently faced anti-Jewish challenges from

81. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 106.

82. Cf. a modern (but pre-1975) community in Lebanon, where a particular cultural group usually dominated in a neighborhood despite some mixing (Eickelman, *Middle East*, 218).

83. Finegan, *Apostles*, 64.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*, 65.

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*, 68.

88. *Ibid.*, 65, 68 (noting that it was expanded to nearly 130 ft., or 40 m., wide in Justinian’s day).

89. Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 103, suggests that the mission to Gentile God-fearers in Antioch would inevitably spill over to pagans as well; there was no way to know whether a Gentile had already accepted the God of Israel beforehand, since synagogues did not keep records of God-fearers. Perhaps the Antioch believers viewed both pagans and uncircumcised God-fearers, in contrast to proselytes, as newly converting to allegiance to the God of Israel when they entered the Jesus movement.

90. Cf. Winter, “Antioch.”

91. Cf., e.g., Horn, “Verzicht,” who is probably right that Paul spread the circumcision-free Gentile mission abroad but did not start it.

92. See, e.g., Kern-Ulmer, “Bewertung”; Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 145–61; McKnight, “Proselytism,” 840–41.

93. Cf. *m. Hor.* 3:8; *Sipre Deut.* 253.2.2; Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 161–69; McKnight, “Proselytism,” 841–42; Keener, *Spirit*, 146–47; Cohen, “Fathers”; 4Q279 1 6. Kunin, “Proselytes,” emphasizes the positive but notes the negative.

94. See Mena Salas, “Condiciones” (supporting the relevance of these factors also from Syrian Christian sources); cf. Feldtkeller, *Identitätssuche*.

members of the Gentile majority during the period of Paul's ministry there, which Luke's summary omits.⁹⁵

Tradition speaks of the Antioch church's leadership after the depiction of Acts 13:1. After Peter's ministry, Evodius became the city's first bishop, followed by Ignatius (martyred ca. 107 C.E.; Euseb. *H.E.* 3.22.1). Despite severe persecutions under Decius (250 C.E.) and Diocletian (303 C.E.), the church experienced enormous growth, and thirty church councils were held at Antioch from the mid-third to the early sixth centuries.⁹⁶ Although eventually vying with Alexandria and surpassed by Constantinople, the bishopric of Antioch was ranked second only to Rome in the earliest period.⁹⁷ When the church made the transition from multiple leaders (see comment on Acts 13:1) to a bishop over other leaders is not clear, but, given evidence elsewhere, it is not likely that it occurred before the closing years of the first century.

VI. CYPRIOTS AND CYRENIANS REACH GENTILES (11:20)

Most ancient hearers of Acts would understand that Antioch was a major cosmopolitan center with considerable involvement in trade.⁹⁸ This helps explain why believers there could send an offering for the saints in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29).⁹⁹ Its geography aided its engagement in trade (though it was its history that sparked its role). After breaking through the hills, the river Orontes flowed near Antioch and emptied itself into the Mediterranean Sea, just about 40 stadia (5 mi.) from the port city of Seleucia.¹⁰⁰ This coastal city was 120 stadia from Antioch (ca. 15–16 mi.), making river transport natural (cf. 13:4). A traveler from Antioch could reach the sea on the same day (Strabo 16.2.7). The city's cosmopolitan character undoubtedly engendered much more cross-cultural contact than would have been possible in Jerusalem or even coastal Caesarea, helping to explain the transition to a ministry to Greeks here (Acts 11:20).¹⁰¹ Urban Antioch also positioned the growing church with access to other major cities of the Mediterranean world.¹⁰²

The Jewish community in Antioch, though part of the larger city, would have also formed a distinct ethnic enclave, as ethnic groups (especially among recent immigrants and, more relevant in this case, groups that cannot or will not assimilate) often do in urban communities.¹⁰³

The mention of Cyprus (see comment on Acts 11:19) and Cyrene anticipates two leaders in the Antioch church, Barnabas (among the Cypriots, 4:36) and Lucius of Cyrene (13:1); the latter may have been among the evangelists Luke has in view here.¹⁰⁴ Barnabas had not yet arrived (11:22) but probably knew many of the Cypriot

95. See Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 184–90; cf. Finegan, *Apostles*, 65–66.

96. Finegan, *Apostles*, 67.

97. *Ibid.*

98. For trade between Syria and Rome, see Charlesworth, *Trade Routes*, 36–56. Some members of the Jewish community there became quite wealthy (Jos. *Ant.* 17.24), though they were probably a minority (Riesner, *Early Period*, 111).

99. In contrast to the grinding poverty of the rural empire (see MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 1–27), though the truly wealthy were only a tiny fraction even in the cities (88–120; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 86).

100. Seleucia Pieria was also a free town, on the cape but associated with Antioch inland (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.18.79); see further comment at Acts 13:4.

101. Cf. Bruce, *Documents*, 88; McRay, *Archaeology*, 232. Sociologists have shown that groups with minimal contact with each other tend to harbor greater prejudices (Allport, *Prejudice*; as cited in Ecklund, *Science*, 49); although without eliminating prejudice, cities like Antioch provided significant cross-cultural exposure.

102. Judge, *Pattern*, 14.

103. Wallace, *Urban Environment*, 134–84, esp. 135–52.

104. If Luke was privy to such details. In view of the probably historical tradition in Acts 13:1, Dunn therefore also thinks 11:20 historically likely (Dunn, *Acts*, 154).

believers scattered from Jerusalem.¹⁰⁵ Cyprus had a large Jewish population,¹⁰⁶ and so its Diaspora was probably also significant. The Ptolemies had ruled Cyprus for more than two centuries, but Rome annexed it in 67 B.C.E. and ruled it as part of the province of Cilicia from 58 B.C.E.¹⁰⁷ Although Cyprus was naturally prosperous (see comment on Acts 13:4), Rome's exorbitant taxes (and interest rates for funds lent to pay the taxes) in the early period of Roman rule exploited the province severely.¹⁰⁸

Cyrene was in Libo-phoenicia (as opposed to Syro-phoenicia), and besides Lucius the Jerusalem church probably had produced other believers from Cyrene (2:10; probably some came from the synagogue mentioned in 6:9), probably including Simon (Luke 23:26), whose naming and identification in the tradition (Mark 15:21) strongly suggests that he continued to be known among the believers.¹⁰⁹ Simon's sons, or at least Rufus, may have later ended up in Rome (Mark 15:21 with Rom 16:13);¹¹⁰ at some point, their mother knew Paul and became a "mother" to him (Rom 16:13), and if this was (as is likely) when Paul was already a believer, Antioch is the likeliest single location.¹¹¹ (Simon is probably not the Simeon of Acts 13:1, however, since Luke would hardly have relinquished the opportunity to identify them explicitly had they been the same person.)

Cyrene was known for the fertility of its land (Strabo 2.5.33; 17.3.21). In the Hellenistic period, Cyrene was part of a five-city Pentapolis, but Ptolemy Apion (116–96 B.C.E.), the final Greek king of Cyrenaica, willed his realm to Rome, and it became a Roman province in 74 B.C.E. Augustus later combined it with Crete into a senatorial province.¹¹² We know of prominent and well-educated Jews in Cyrene (2 Macc 2:23), and in this period it had a large Jewish population (Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.44; *Ant.* 14.118), which Josephus (sometimes prone to exaggeration) treated as a fourth distinctive part of the population (*Ant.* 14.115).¹¹³ Nevertheless, the Jews were not always well treated (16.160, 169).

105. Watson, *Gentiles*, 68, thinks that Luke's tracing of all the Hellenists (including Barnabas) originally to Jerusalem reflects his neat schema (Acts 1:8) "but the historical reality may have been more complex." Paul, however, also treats Jerusalem as the center (Rom 15:19; Gal 1:17; 2:1, 9). The movement had to begin somewhere; we know of Hellenists in Jerusalem (see comment on Acts 6:1), and Jerusalem would provide the source of the earliest, hence usually most mature, believers. Luke does not attribute a Jerusalemite origin to all the characters in the Gentile mission (such as himself) and denies it for some of Paul's other colleagues (Timothy; Aquila and Priscilla; Apollos). Luke goes out of his way to emphasize the diversity of background locations in Acts 13:1, not a Jerusalemite background. Watson's skepticism is thus unwarranted.

106. See the evidence in Stern, "Diaspora," 154–55.

107. On Cyprus's history (Neolithic through 750 B.C.E.), see further Schulzki, "Kypros"; more generally McRay, "Cyprus"; in the Roman period, Mitford, "Cyprus"; Nobbs, "Cyprus."

108. Muhly, "Cyprus," 95. For archaeology on Cyprus, see Muhly, "Cyprus"; Swiny, "Research Institute."

109. Keener, *Matthew*, 677 (the use of a place of origin rather than a patronymic may be significant; for the possible transmission of the passion narrative in Jerusalem, see Theissen, *Gospels*, 166–99).

110. Cf. Hunter, *Romans*, 132; Morris, *Romans*, 536; Murray, *Romans*, 2:231. "Alexander" and "Simon" are both common names (there is a burial cave of Alexander son of Simon in Jerusalem, which some also identify with Simon of Cyrene's family; Powers, "Treasures"; Evans, "Excavating," 338–40). But Paul knows only one Rufus in Rome (Dunn, *Romans*, 897), and so the argument is strong if Mark wrote his Gospel to Rome (a widely accepted thesis but one that is not currently susceptible of proof). "Rufus" was a Latin name common especially among slaves (Morris, *Romans*, 536); some Jews used it (*CIJ* 1:103, §145; cf. the feminine form, 1:401, §541; possibly the cognate "Rufinus," 1:52, §79).

111. They could have moved to Rome because of ancestral connections as members of Jerusalem's synagogue of freedpersons (Acts 6:9), allowing a preconversion connection, though this thesis requires multiple speculations. Paul did not have the opportunity to spend much time in Jerusalem as a believer (Gal 1:18; cf. Acts 9:29–30; though cf. also 11:30 and 12:25, when he would have needed hospitality), and Antioch was long his base (cf. Acts 13:1–4; 14:26; Gal 2:11). The designation could involve familial hospitality (cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 969), but probably in more than a casual sense; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 60, suggests a benefactress.

112. White, "Cyrene," 97. On the geography and archaeology of Cyrene, see Yamauchi, *Africa*, 187–202.

113. Cf. Caird, *Apostolic Age*, 21; Brown, *Death*, 915. On Jews in Cyrene, see most fully Applebaum, *Jews and Greeks in Cyrene*, esp. 130–200; also Yamauchi, "Cyrene in Libya"; Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 232–42.

Cyrenaic Jews were susceptible to rabble-rousing (*Life* 424; *War* 7.437–39); this led to the false accusation of three thousand Jews, especially rich ones, and the confiscation of their property for Roman coffers (*War* 7.442–46). In the early second century, Jews in Cyrenaica revolted, which led to the massacre of many there and in Egypt.¹¹⁴ This revolt crippled the region's prosperity, but Trajan and Hadrian helped rebuild Cyrene (cf. *SEG* 17.584).¹¹⁵ Apart from its Jewish residents, it was a pagan city whose most notable temple was that of Apollo,¹¹⁶ whose temple also housed shrines for Artemis, Hades, and Hecate.¹¹⁷ See additional comment on Cyrene at Acts 2:10; 13:1.

If we read those whom the scattered believers evangelized here as “Hellenists,”¹¹⁸ it makes no sense to think of hellenizing Jews as in Jerusalem (see comment on Acts 6:1); rather, one should think of hellenizing Syrians. This would apply to the citizens of Antioch who viewed themselves as culturally Greek although they were ethnically Syrian.¹¹⁹ Such hellenizers could also be called “Greeks,” as in Mark (Mark 7:26) and Josephus,¹²⁰ but perhaps Luke expects readers to understand his usage because of his previous uses of “Hellenist” as “hellenizing non-Greek.” Some scholars argue in favor of reading “Greeks” here because only this seems to make sense of the context;¹²¹ possibly scribes changed “Greeks” to “Hellenists” to avoid the appearance of contradiction with Acts 11:19; but a contrast with 11:19 is likely precisely what Luke had in mind. “Hellenists” is the likelier reading, which was changed to “Greeks” to make better sense of the context.

However one reads the text, it likely refers to Gentiles, a direct contrast to 11:19. After all, the Jews of 11:19 living in Antioch would be “Hellenists” themselves, obviating the need for Luke's comment. From the Maccabean era, Greeks had been the primary cultural force with which pious Judeans clashed and to which they assimilated; now Greek culture was beginning to receive the Asian and Jewish good news of Israel's Messiah. Many or most of these cultural and linguistic Greeks may have been ethnically Syrian, but it is the symbol of Greek culture, and the consequent demonstration of the gospel's cross-cultural power to reach its possessors, that Luke periodically emphasizes (14:1; 17:4; 18:4; 19:10, 17; 20:21).¹²²

VII. GOD'S BLESSING (11:21)

God showed his blessing on this ministry to Gentiles, just as he had shown it with regard to Peter's ministry to a Gentile household (11:15–17). In Luke-Acts, God's “hand” being with a person can be equivalent to God being “with” him or her in a positive way (Luke 1:66;¹²³ cf. comment on Acts 7:9 for God being with a person)

114. See Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 206–7.

115. Huss, “Cyrene: History,” 9.

116. *Ibid.*; for archaeology of the temple, see Niemeyer, “Cyrene: Archaeology.” For a map of the city, see Huss, “Cyrene: History,” 6–7; for intellectuals from there, p. 9.

117. Niemeyer, “Cyrene: Archaeology.” For excavation reports of the temple of Demeter and Persephone, see Rose, “Return to Cyrene.”

118. For the textual possibilities and a survey of much of the secondary literature, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 386–89, favoring (probably rightly) “Hellenists” (as Greek speakers from Antioch's mixed population, in contrast to Acts 11:19's “Jews,” 388–89). Some, however, have read these “Hellenists” as Jewish (e.g., Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 82), not a necessary inference.

119. Ferguson, “Hellenists”; Stanton, “Hellenism,” 470.

120. Josephus describes “Greeks” as all residents of Greek cities (including Jews, Rajak, “Location,” 1) or as Gentile inhabitants of the same (distinct from “Syrians,” rural provincials; Rajak, “Location,” 11–13). Traditionally and through the period of the empire, Greeks understood their ethnicity differently; cf. Malkin, *Greek Ethnicity*.

121. E.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 203; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 409n775.

122. Also Paul, Rom 1:14; 3:9; 1 Cor 1:22, 24; 10:32; 12:13.

123. So also Dormeyer and Galindo, *Apostelgeschichte*, 179 (comparing 2 Sam 3:12).

though the “hand” could also be against a person for judgment (13:11); compare similarly the “finger of God” (Luke 11:20) and God’s arm (Luke 1:51; Acts 13:17). This reproduces the basic range of expression concerning God’s “hand” in Luke’s Bible, where God’s hand could be with someone (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:46; 2 Kgs 3:15; 2 Chr 30:12; Ezra 7:6, 28; Isa 66:14; Ezek 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1)¹²⁴ or against someone (Exod 9:3; Deut 2:15; Judg 2:15; Ruth 1:13; 1 Sam 5:6, 9, 11; 7:13; 12:15; Job 19:21; Isa 25:10).

Although later Christian theology’s antipathy toward anthropomorphism is borrowed from Greek philosophy rather than biblical imagery,¹²⁵ a literal understanding in either English or Greek would read too much into the idiom, which applies to others as well as God without thought for their literal hands (Luke 1:71, 74; Acts 12:11).¹²⁶ Like “believe,” “turning” to the Lord is also an idiom familiar in Luke’s soteriology (see comment on Acts 9:35), though by chance Luke uses them together only here (cf. the conjunction between repentance and faith, Acts 19:4; 20:21).

Given the openness of Gentiles to Judaism in Antioch, it is not surprising that many would turn to the Jesus movement’s Jewish faith (especially if, as is almost certain, the Antioch church was not imposing circumcision; cf. 15:1; Gal 2:12). Significant for Acts (cf. Acts 6:5) is that many Greeks were becoming proselytes in this period, swelling the Jewish community further (Jos. *War* 7.45).¹²⁷ Many Antiochene Gentiles who were not becoming proselytes at least respected their Jewish neighbors.

Under Rome, Jews had rights to maintain their customs there,¹²⁸ and the only place in Syria where Jews were spared persecution in 66–70 was Antioch (Jos. *War* 2.457–79, esp. 462–63, 479).¹²⁹ Though members of Luke’s audience who knew only the LXX (in a form containing later sources) might think of Antioch in terms of earlier Seleucid oppression of Jews, Seleucus had settled Jews there and given them the same citizenship privileges as other residents (Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.39). Herod the Great had supported Jewish influence in Antioch by paving the central street with polished marble and adorning it with colonnades more than two miles long.¹³⁰

Josephus has reason to argue that governments had long affirmed Jewish privileges there (e.g., *Ant.* 12.119–20; *Ag. Ap.* 2.39; *War* 7.43–45), but the crisis in *War* 7.46–57 suggests that even in Antioch, a Jewish minority sometimes faced hostility.¹³¹

124. Cf. Wis 3:1; *Sib. Or.* 3.709, 795; 1QMI, 14; *Test. Ab.* 18:7 A (χειρ . . . μετά). Cf. being “in” God’s hand in a favorable way, Wis 3:1; *Jub.* 12:17; John 10:28–29. Cf. also ancient Near Eastern usage for judgment in Carpenter, “Deuteronomy,” 434–35 (less relevantly, 465); an expression of authority in Hess, “Joshua,” 28.

125. See Cohen, *Maccabees*, 86–87.

126. Cf. 1QS I, 3; III, 20; IV, 12; VIII, 15; CD II, 12; III, 21; IV, 13; V, 21; VIII, 2; XI, 19; 1QpHab IX, 6–7; perhaps CD V, 17–18. Cf. also abundantly in Scripture, e.g., “hand of the Philistines” (Judg 10:7; 13:1, 5; 1 Sam 7:3, 8, 14; 9:16; 12:9; 18:17 [not LXX], 21, 25; 2 Sam 3:18; 8:1; 19:9; 1 Chr 18:1).

127. Many were probably God-fearers rather than full proselytes, paving the way for the welcoming of Gentiles in Acts 11:20 (with McRay, *Archaeology*, 227).

128. Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 2–4; Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 128–31. Antiochus IV had curtailed their citizen rights, but even his successors restored them (Jos. *War* 7.44).

129. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 132. A sixth-century source claims pagan attacks on Jews ca. 40 C.E. (perhaps during the conflict over Caligula’s statue; Malalas *Chronogr.* 1; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 147). False rumors then incited pogroms against them (Jos. *War* 7.47, 58–61, 100–103), but Titus restored their rights (7.109–11); by ca. 190 C.E., Antioch even “had a Jewish magistrate” (Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 5–6; quotation, 6). By the fourth century, they could appeal to patrons connected with the imperial government and had close ties with Palestine (Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 11–12), though this may reflect increasing centralization in the empire.

130. Jos. *War* 1.425; *Ant.* 16.148; McDonald, “Antioch,” 34 (including data external to Josephus). McRay, *Archaeology*, 230, notes that the Byzantine author John Malalas says that Tiberius built colonnades after Herod paved it, and some think that Malalas obtained this information from local records (antipathy toward a Jewish donor might have decreased reports of his gift?).

131. Barrett, *Acts*, 549.

Although we do not have evidence that the Jewish mission in Antioch fared badly (Acts 11:19), we know that the Gentile mission fared well (11:20–21); this success may fit Luke's theme of going to the Jewish community first but finding great receptivity among Gentiles (13:5–7, 46; 18:6; 19:8–10; 28:28).

As noted above, many people in cities were already uprooted from previous centuries of traditions and hence showed greater openness to new ideas than those in the countryside.¹³² Some ancients negatively characterized Syrians as always eager for political change (Hdn. 2.7.9); if any truth exists in this caricature, it might further support the idea of people open to change rather than bound too closely to ancient traditions.

Although Luke has previously recorded Gentile conversions (Acts 8:27–39; 10:1–48), none have occurred on this scale. Luke prepares us for this mission by showing the Hellenists' receptivity to it (especially through Philip), but he treats matters here only briefly. This could reflect the scarcity of his source material here, but it probably also (or instead) reflects his biographic interests; the mission here is carried out not by major figures but by minor characters who would distract from his larger architectural patterns.

b. Barnabas Helps the Antioch Church (11:22–26)

The Jerusalem church needed to be assured that the developments in Antioch remained in continuity with the direction of God's Spirit, and so it sent Barnabas as it had earlier sent Peter and John to Samaria. In this case, Barnabas does not find even the deficiency that Peter and John found in Samaria. What the disciples in Antioch do need for perseverance, however, is teaching; Barnabas recruits another Hellenist, one with an exceptional Jerusalem academic background (cf. 22:3), to join him and other Antioch leaders in the task.

I. APPROVAL FROM JERUSALEM (11:22–24)

God's blessing (11:21) might not necessarily ensure Jerusalem's blessing (cf. 11:3); yet the latter was important for the church's unity, and the Jerusalem church (so long as it existed and exerted influence) had an interest in ensuring that the movement remained faithful to its founding vision. Luke emphasizes that Jerusalem's agent recognized and immediately approved God's work in Antioch because Jerusalem sent the right agent, someone full of the Spirit and faith.

(1) Investigating the New Work (11:22)

Word reached Jerusalem, as it had in 8:14 and 11:1; gossip networks and travelers made the quick spread of word to the Christian "capital" almost inevitable.¹³³ As the Jerusalem church earlier sent Peter and John as emissaries to Samaria (8:14–15) and invited an accounting for events in Caesarea (11:3), it now sends Barnabas, who apparently remained in Jerusalem when many of his fellow Cypriot Jewish believers were scattered (9:27). He is thus an apostle of the Jerusalem church,¹³⁴ though accorded the title of "apostle" in the narrower sense only in 14:4, 14 (though even there not as narrow as Luke's usual restriction of the term to the Twelve).¹³⁵

132. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 63.

133. On the quick spread of word orally, see, e.g., Ezek 24:26; Eurip. *El.* 361–62; Pindar *Nem.* 5.2–3; Cic. *Fam.* 12.30.3; Apul. *Metam.* 1.26; comment on Acts 19:10.

134. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 129; Barrett, *Acts*, 553; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 619.

135. Cf. apostles of churches in 2 Cor 8:23 (delegates of the churches for the offering, Martin, *Corinthians*, 278; comparing Jewish sources, Bruce, *Corinthians*, 225; Nickle, *Collection*, 88); perhaps Phil 2:25; perhaps an analogous usage in *CIF* 1:438–39, §611 (where two *apostuli* are mentioned alongside two rabbis in a congregation). On the background and nature of "agency," see Keener, *John*, 310–15.

Perhaps the Jerusalem church sent him to investigate (cf. 8:14–15) to be certain that the new movement's or new believers' faith was sound; he was happy to discover that it was (11:23). (The choice of emissary may have influenced this outcome;¹³⁶ not everyone in Jerusalem turned out to be pleased with the way Christians in Antioch made Gentile converts without circumcising them [15:1, 5] and then would even wish to eat with them in that state [Gal 2:12].) The Antioch church's ministry thus receives Jerusalem's seal of approval here as the Samaritan believers did in Acts 8.¹³⁷

(2) *Barnabas's Approval (11:23–24)*

The summons to new believers to persevere (cf. also 13:43) is also part of Luke's summary of the message to new churches in 14:22, emphasizing the importance of perseverance in his theology of discipleship (cf. Luke 22:32; in Paul and other early Christian authors, cf., e.g., Rom 11:22; 1 Cor 15:2; Col 1:23; Heb 3:6, 14; 4:14; 10:23; Rev 2:25; 3:11). His "exhortation" stands in continuity with John (Luke 3:18), Peter (Acts 2:40), and Barnabas's later apostolic ministry with Paul (14:22; cf. Paul with others, 16:40; 20:1–2).¹³⁸ It also fits the way Luke reads the name the apostles gave Barnabas (4:36). Luke (among a wide range of other early Christian writers)¹³⁹ commonly speaks of "the grace of God" (Luke 2:40; Acts 13:43; 14:26; 20:24) and "the grace of the Lord" (Acts 15:11, 40); here he probably means that God has shown his favor and generosity by turning so many Gentiles to himself.

Barnabas's joy over the Gentile conversions¹⁴⁰ and his ministry to the church occur because ("for") he is a good man and full of the Spirit (11:24). Although technically no one was absolutely good (Luke 18:19; cf. 11:13), Luke is ready to use the common language (cf. also Luke 6:45; esp. 23:50) to communicate Barnabas's character, as with another Joseph, of Arimathea (23:50; cf. Acts 9:36).¹⁴¹ One might also infer from this description a negative moral judgment on those who did not celebrate the conversion of outsiders (cf. Luke 5:30; 15:2; contrast 15:6–7, 9–10, 23–24, 32).

Being "full of the Spirit" (cf. Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3; 7:55) may indicate a special and more continuous empowerment than Luke's more common "filled with the Spirit."¹⁴² That Acts 6:3 and 7:55 apply to Stephen, who challenged narrow ethnic and geographic conceptions, and that Luke 4:1 applies to Jesus, who soon after did the same (cf. 4:18, 26–27), may point again to the close connection between a life "full of the Spirit" and Luke's perspective regarding the Spirit's mission (Acts 1:8).¹⁴³ Luke sometimes pairs the Spirit with qualities associated with the Spirit, such as

136. Though he may have been selected less for his disposition than for his connection with the Cypriot founders of the Antioch church (Acts 4:36; 11:20; Johnson, *Acts*, 207). Barnabas appears a mediating figure both in Acts and Paul (see Öhler, *Barnabas*).

137. If prior to Barnabas's sending to Antioch (as it probably was), Peter's revelation (Acts 10:1–11:18) undoubtedly played a role in this acceptability (Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 98–99).

138. Cf. also the prophets in Acts 15:32 and the cognate relevant to prophecy in Luke 2:25; cf. 1 Cor 14:3, 31.

139. E.g., Rom 5:15; 16:20, 24; 2 Cor 1:12; 6:1; 8:1, 9; 9:14; 13:14; Heb 2:9; 12:15; 1 Pet 4:10; 5:12; Rev 22:21; 1 Clem. 8.1; 55.3; Ign. *Magn.* 2.1; *Smyrn.* 11.1; 13.2; *Mart. Pol.* 7.3.

140. See R. Williams, *Acts*, 96.

141. On characterization (χαρακτηρισμός; sometimes explicit, as here) in ancient rhetoric, see Anderson, *Glossary*, 125. Bonnah, *Spirit*, 322, rightly notes the very similar depiction of Joseph in *Test. Sim.* 4:4; one significant difference is Luke's characteristic pneumatological term, "full."

142. Turner, *Power*, 168.

143. Stephen also was "full of faith and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5; others also see this connection, e.g., Wall, "Acts," 176). As noted, one may also compare the other "good man" in Luke-Acts—namely, another Joseph, of Arimathea (Luke 23:50), who used his rank justly.

“faith” (6:5), “wisdom” (6:3), and “power” (10:38; Luke 1:17).¹⁴⁴ Barnabas’s approval fits his welcoming character throughout Acts, where he trusts God’s work in both Saul (9:27) and John Mark (15:37–39) even when others do not.¹⁴⁵ Even more important here, his approval of the Gentile mission in Antioch fits the Spirit’s agenda throughout Acts (e.g., 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 15:28). The verse sounds as if Barnabas, like Paul (Acts 9:20–22, 28–29), participated in the evangelism already occurring (11:21), prefiguring his later apostolic ministry (14:14).¹⁴⁶

II. RECRUITING SAUL (11:25–26)

Barnabas exhorted the new believers (11:23) and recognized that they needed teaching (11:26). Why did he look for Saul in particular to recruit him? Although some of the church’s founders may have also helped teach (13:1), Barnabas knew well of another zealous believer who had special academic training to prepare himself to teach Scripture (22:3) and experience doing so as a believer (9:27–29).

Further, Barnabas had undoubtedly heard Saul’s full testimony (9:27) and hence remembered his calling (9:15; cf. 26:16–18).¹⁴⁷ The conversion of Gentiles that was occurring in Antioch (11:20–23) was something that Paul, given his divine calling, should be a part of.¹⁴⁸ This might allow Paul to ultimately overshadow Barnabas’s own ministry (cf. 13:9–11; 14:12), but genuine concern for another’s interests above one’s own was counted a mark of true friendship¹⁴⁹ and, among Christians, viewed as a virtue (Rom 12:10; 1 Cor 10:24). Likewise, beyond Christian circles, looking out for another’s interests¹⁵⁰ and honor¹⁵¹ above one’s own was often considered virtuous behavior. Paul’s writings also attest the close connection that developed between Paul and Barnabas (Gal 2:1, 13; 1 Cor 9:6).

Another supporting reason for pursuing Paul may have been that Tarsus was only about a hundred miles from Antioch (as the crow flies; farther by overland journey) whereas Jerusalem was more than three hundred. Paul was more accessible than recruits from Jerusalem. Luke surely expects us to assume that Barnabas knew of Paul’s being sent away to Tarsus in Acts 9:30, given his close connection with him when they were in Jerusalem (9:27). Because Luke has last mentioned Paul in Tarsus (9:30), it also makes literary sense for Luke to resume speaking of him there (11:25). Luke often picks up characters where he left them off, using geography to remind his audience where he left them; thus Philip is found in Caesarea (21:8; cf. 8:40), and “we” near Philippi en route to Troas (20:5; cf. 16:10–16).¹⁵² Given the

144. Cf., in Paul, 1 Cor 2:4; 1 Thess 1:5; for the association of faith with the Spirit, 1 Cor 12:9; 2 Cor 4:13; Gal 5:22; cf. 3:14; 5:4; perhaps Phil 1:27; Jude 20; 1 En. 61:11.

145. Cf. later rabbinic tradition about gentle Hillel’s welcome of Gentiles (*b. Šabb.* 31a).

146. For those being “added,” cf. Acts 2:47; 5:14; possibly based on the image in Isa 14:1 LXX (Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, 42). Here they are added “to the Lord,” perhaps suggesting the church’s union with Christ as in Acts 9:4–5 and Pauline theology (cf. being “added” to the community in 2:41, 47; 5:14; A. J. Gordon in Barr, Leonard, Parsons, and Weaver, *Acts*, 506; on union with Christ in Paul, cf. Campbell, *Union*).

147. This remains relevant whether or not he knew of Paul’s apparent ministry in Cilicia (Gal 1:21), which Luke does not narrate.

148. Whether Luke is aware of the chronological gap of perhaps a decade since Acts 9:30 (Gal 1:18; 2:1; Haenchen, *Acts*, 367, supposes not, but this cannot be proved) need not concern us.

149. See Grant, *Paul*, 38 (citing Arist. *Pol.* 2.2.6; *N.E.* 8.2.3).

150. E.g., Cic. *Att.* 13.6a; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 95.63; *Jub.* 36.4; *m. ’Ab.* 2:12; applied to one’s people in Cic. *Fin.* 3.19.64; Pliny E. *N.H.* pref. 16; Fronto *Ad am.* 2.11. Cf. the mythical example of Castor and Pollux in comment on Acts 28:11. The ideals of ambition and self-honor may have often vitiated this principle in practice (see Winter, *Left Corinth*, 267).

151. See, e.g., 4 Macc 13:23–27; *m. ’Ab.* 2:10; 4:12; *’Abot R. Nat.* 15 A; 29, §60 B; Rom 12:10; for brothers, e.g., Plut. *Luc.* 1.6. Contrast Epict. *Diatr.* 1.14.17.

152. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 326.

limited Jewish community in Tarsus, Barnabas could have begun looking for him there simply by inquiring at synagogues. (This is true whatever Saul's relationships with some members may have been; it is possible, though not certain, that some of his synagogue beatings in 2 Cor 11:24 stem from this period.)

Paul joins Barnabas in teaching the church in Antioch (11:26). Paul is not said to "teach" believers before this point (though it is implied at least in "his disciples" in 9:25, unless they were and remained non-Christian, which would be unlikely by that point). Because Tarsus was known as a significant center of philosophic learning, Luke might imply that Paul had acquired more training while there;¹⁵³ but he certainly already had more education than most (22:3). We lack clear evidence as to what Paul experienced during the interim period, though his mention of beatings unrecorded in Acts (2 Cor 11:23–25) probably suggests that he was continuing to do evangelism. (The three shipwrecks of 2 Cor 11:25 are harder to account for during the interim period; Luke mentions only the voyages of Acts 9:30 and reports in greater detail only voyages undertaken during a later period in Paul's ministry. Some scholars suggest an earlier Aegean ministry; travel between Antioch and Cilicia or between Antioch and Cyprus seems inherently more probable.)

Luke reports Paul's extended periods of ministry in strategic places, such as Antioch (Acts 11:26), Corinth (18:11), and Ephesus (19:8–10), as well as his extended captivity in Caesarea (24:27) and Rome (28:31, which also mentions his ministry in Rome). He spent enough of a year in Antioch to warrant Luke's summary as a year there (11:26), before undertaking the journey to Jerusalem (11:30). Scholars sometimes opine that after this year, Paul and Barnabas used Antioch as their home base but traveled in ministry elsewhere in Syria and Cilicia.¹⁵⁴ It is likely that their ministry in and/or around Antioch was a lengthy one before their itinerant ministry began; some estimate eight or nine years (ca. 39 or 40 to 48 or 49 C.E.),¹⁵⁵ although we cannot be sure at what point Paul left Tarsus (where, it is argued above, he was probably also in ministry). This passage suggests that Paul was in Antioch when the nickname "Christians" arose, a name probably more widespread by the time Luke is writing probably some three decades later (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.44).¹⁵⁶

III. CHRISTIANS IN ANTIOCH (11:26)

Opponents of the Jesus movement in Antioch apparently derided the disciples with a new coinage based on Roman political parties: "the partisans of Christ" (i.e., of the Judean king). The term *Χριστιανοί* is formed on the analogy of Latin political terms, such as *Herodiani* (Ἡρωδιανοί), *Sullani*, *Neroniani*, *Asiani*, *Pompeiani*, *Caesariani*,

153. So Heinger, "Tarsus und zurück" (though supposing it Luke's invention).

154. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 261, citing Gal 1:21, but this text could refer to simply Tarsus and Antioch. They suggest (475n1356) places such as "Nabataean Arabia, the Decapolis," and also that the Cyprus and southern Asia Minor missions reported in Acts are only samples of apostolic activity (see also p. 205). Luke, however, treats these missions not as samples but as something new (note the commissioning in Acts 13:2–4). Some journeys are possible, but the long ones are both "sent" here, including 11:30.

155. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 205. In any case, the combined period (cf. Gal 2:1) is longer than the Aegean ministry emphasized in Paul's letters.

156. This passage in Tacitus probably reflects more than simply the nomenclature of Tacitus's era, since he explicitly attributes the title to Romans in 64 C.E., years before Luke's writing and perhaps two decades after its first use. The claim of Pervo, *Acts*, 295, that the title originates in the 90s rather than the 30s or 40s, mainly because Paul does not cite it, is unduly skeptical; he himself notes that this was probably an external nickname rather than an internal title. Although it is widespread later (Pliny *Ep.* 10.96–97; Suet. *Nero* 16.2; *Did.* 12.4; Ign. *Eph.* 11.2; *Magn.* 4.1; 10.1, 3; *Trall.* 6.1; *Rom.* 3.2–3; *Philad.* 6.1; *Mart. Pol.* 3.2; 10.1; 12.1–2; *Diogn.* 1.1; 2.6, 10; 3.1; 4.6; 5.1; 6.1–9), it is already familiar to Josephus's audience in *Ant.* 18.64 (if authentic).

and so forth.¹⁵⁷ Later in the generation here depicted, partisans of various factions after Nero's demise were called Othonians,¹⁵⁸ Vitellians,¹⁵⁹ and Flavians (loyal to Vespasian).¹⁶⁰ Luke's use of the term further signals his shift of focus away from Judea to the larger Roman world¹⁶¹ (though even in Jerusalem Jesus's mission had been misunderstood politically; Luke 23:2, 5).

Some scholars suggest that the Latin formation points to an origin for the title in the West rather than in Antioch.¹⁶² But Luke, who would also recognize the Latin formation, probably lacks good reason to suppress that origin,¹⁶³ and in fact all that would be needed for the term's origin was someone familiar with Latin political terminology, not a difficult hurdle for members of the educated elite of a major city in the empire. The title's composers may not have understood the message about Jesus well; its formation sounds like it treats "Christ" as a proper name, though Josephus also might speak of "the tribe of Christians, so named after him" (*Ant.* 18.64, if authentic).¹⁶⁴ But given the political coinage, someone understood "Christ" as head of the group and perhaps as Judea's king (the normal use of "Christ").¹⁶⁵

Some think that the term's Latin formation indicates "that it was coined by the Roman authorities,"¹⁶⁶ yet no persecution is reported, which probably weakens this proposal.¹⁶⁷ If the authorities understood what "Christ" meant to Jews, they might have concerns—though at least in the West they sometimes did not understand (see comment on Acts 18:2). Alternatively (and I think this somewhat more likely), it might stem from high-status Roman citizens in Antioch. Some think that Jewish residents with a good relationship with the Roman government may have coined the phrase in complaining about the Jesus movement to the government.¹⁶⁸ Yet even if

157. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 130; Reicke, *Era*, 194; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 478; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 225–30; Judge, *Athens*, 269; for the significance of political partisans named for leaders, see Welborn, *Politics*, 8–9. For examples of Pompeians as Pompey's partisans, see Appian *Bell. civ.* 2.12.87; Vell. Patern. 2.49.3; 2.51.3; 2.62.1, 6; 2.63.3; 2.65.1; 2.73.2; for their conflict with Caesarians, see, e.g., Caesar *Alex. W.* 1.59 (this work may not be by Caesar); Iuliani in Vell. Patern. 2.84.1; Brutiani and Cassiani, e.g., in Vell. Patern. 2.74.1. Use as a patronymic is possible (cf. Matthews, "Names, Greek," 1023) but less likely.

158. Tac. *Hist.* 1.34 (*Othionianis*).

159. E.g., Tac. *Hist.* 2.27, 31, 34, 42; 3.9, 17, 22, 25, 29, 35, 61, 73, 77, 84; 4.1 (*Vitellianos*).

160. E.g., Tac. *Hist.* 3.6, 23, 59, 63, 69, 82 (*Flavianos*).

161. See Aune, *Environment*, 140–41.

162. Gilbert, "Propaganda," 233 (suggesting possibly Rome). Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 295, regarding Rome as likely but Antioch as possible. From its absence in Paul and other sources of Paul's generation, he dates the term to the 90s, but (the testimony of Acts and 1 Peter aside) arguing from silence in Paul seems tenuous on Pervo's own recognition that the title was not yet a self-designation in Jesus's movement.

163. One could say that he wanted to associate the title with Paul and Antioch's Gentile mission (Acts 11:26); but given the term's association with external derision and persecution by the mid-60s (more or less by Luke's day?), would the connection with Paul really have furthered his apologetic? The term and its cognates are much more common in the Apostolic Fathers (including Ignatius of Antioch), without negative associations (1 *Clem.* 1.2; 48.4; *Did.* 12.4; *Ign. Eph.* 11.2; *Magn.* 4.1; 10.1, 3; *Trall.* 6.1; *Rom.* 3.2; *Philad.* 6.1; 7.3; *Poly.* 7.3; *Diogn.* 1.1; 2.10; 3.1; 4.6; 5.1; 6.1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8; Papias frg. 26.1); texts mentioning the name *Christian* with a context of persecution (*Ign. Rom.* 3.3; *Mart. Pol.* 3.2; 10.1; 12.1–2; *Diogn.* 2.6; 6.5–6, 9) need not imply persecution because of that name.

164. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 622. The line may not be authentic, however. The title suggests that outsiders knew the group's leader especially more as "Christ" than as "Jesus" (Kee, *Every Nation*, 149–50, citing Suet. *Claud.* 25.4).

165. Cf. the Syrian Stoic Mara bar Sarapion, who claimed (ca. 73 C.E.) that Jesus was a "wise king of the Jews"; on this source, see Theissen and Merz, *Guide*, 76–80 (suspecting the influence of Syrian Christians, 80); Evans, "Non-Christian Sources," 455–57.

166. Dunn, *Acts*, 156; Haacker, *Theology*, 11.

167. Luke often emphasizes persecution, which could suggest that he would have mentioned it had it happened; conversely, Luke likes to emphasize Roman toleration, which could explain why Luke omits it.

168. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 229, as a possible suggestion.

relations between Jesus's followers and other Jews were strained at this point in Antioch (a suggestion for which we lack evidence), non-Christian Jews probably would not have coined a term that appears to concede Jesus's messiahship (cf. John 19:21).¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, some suggest that they might have accepted it once it was coined; the full entry of uncircumcised Gentiles into the sect might demonstrate its distinctness from traditional Judaism, warranting use of a special name for the movement.¹⁷⁰ In Judea, however, the movement continued to be called the "Nazarenes" (possibly another title of derision) by outsiders (Acts 24:5).

That the title "first" appeared in Antioch suggests that by Luke's day the designation was widespread, though his audience was unfamiliar with where it began. Among first-century Christian sources, the title only appears later in Acts, in the mouth of a non-Christian (26:28), and apparently as a legal charge in 1 Pet 4:16.¹⁷¹ Already by 64 C.E., people in Rome were calling the disciples "Christians" when it became a chargeable offense under Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 15.44, unless Tacitus simply substitutes later language for an earlier title, which is not impossible), and Roman governors continued to apply the term to the group in legal settings in the early second century (Pliny *Ep.* 10.96). A Pompeian graffito (dated between 62 and 79 C.E.) uses the name to ridicule Christ's followers (*CIL* 4.679).¹⁷² Beginning early in the second century, Christian sources themselves adopt the title;¹⁷³ by the mid-second century, Justin uses it extensively and proudly.¹⁷⁴

The Jesus movement may have soon appeared as a philosophic sect in much of the Diaspora (see comment on Acts 19:9), but in Antioch, "Christians" were first portrayed as political partisans of the executed leader Jesus. Had the opponents meant that the Christians were literally "preaching another king" (Acts 17:7), the charge could prove dangerous. That Luke does not associate it with persecution here suggests that Antiochenes used it as derision, not as a charge of membership in a political group competing with Caesar.¹⁷⁵ The title, however, cannot have counted

169. So also Judge, *First Christians*, 437; Schnabel, *Mission*, 73. They also would not have turned it into a proper name (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 624) with a Latin formation.

170. Judge, *Pattern*, 44–45; cf. Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 16. This approach apparently assumes that outsiders could distinguish the Antiochene Jesus movement's treatment of Gentiles as full members as opposed to Antiochene synagogues' treatment of them as God-fearers, but the real situation was probably much more complex and clarified only gradually. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 157, suggests that they received a new name because they stopped practicing the law. That Jewish believers gave up such practices seems unlikely, however; it is the Gentile connection that appears in our limited evidence at this stage (Acts 11:20; Gal 2:11–12). Josephus does use the term once coined, if this part of *Ant.* 18.64 is authentic (but that point is disputed). But depending on how one defines terms, Christianity and Judaism became distinct religions in Antioch only later, by the time of Ignatius of Antioch (*Magn.* 10.3; Haacker, *Theology*, 11).

171. This is probably the accusers' title for them; see, e.g., Beare, *Peter*, 167; discussion in Horrell, "Label." It seems to have become a nickname by the mid-first century in Rome (Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 159; Selwyn, *Peter*, 225, cites Tac. *Ann.* 15.44; Suet. *Nero* 16), though these reports may be colored by the period of the historians who convey them. If Judge, *Athens*, 211, is correct about the variant spelling in P.Oxy. 42.3035 (Feb. 28, 256 C.E.), "Christian" remained a legal charge in third-century Egypt.

172. Barrett, *Acts*, 556–57. Lucian also uses it for ridicule in the second century (*Alex.* 25, 38, cited in Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 478).

173. Scholars (e.g., Selwyn, *Peter*, 225; Kelly, *Peter*, 190; Dunn, *Acts*, 1) cite the term or its cognates in *Did.* 12.4; *Ign. Magn.* 10.1–3; *Rom.* 3.2–3; *Philad.* 6.1; see also *1 Clem.* 1.2; 48.4; Papias *frag.* 26.1; *Ign. Eph.* 11.2; *Magn.* 4.1; *Trall.* 6.1; *Poly.* 7.3; *Mart. Pol.* 3.2; 10.1; 12.1–2.

174. Osborn, *Justin*, 171; cf. also *Diogn.* 2.6, 10; 3.1; 4.6; 5.1; 6.1–9.

175. With Dunn, *Acts*, 156. Taylor, "Christians' at Antioch," suggests that their preaching in Antioch's Jewish community was blamed for the disturbances of 39–40 C.E. there; Jews may have been attacked then, but for other reasons (see comment on John Malalas above), and although that situation fits Rome (Suet. *Claud.* 25.4; Acts 18:2), it is not clear in Antioch. Then again, if Christians were involved in the unrest, we should not expect Luke to emphasize this point (cf. comment on Acts 18:2).

in the movement's favor when members in the West were later accused of sedition (cf., e.g., 1 Pet 4:16).¹⁷⁶

Clearly, Christians did not employ the title for themselves until later, possibly (for most of them) as late as the second century.¹⁷⁷ Luke does find a useful theological purpose to which he can put the information about the mockery: Christians now “bear” Christ’s “name” (Acts 9:15–16) on an entirely new level.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Luke does not choose to use the term elsewhere except on the lips of a critic (26:28). Christians called themselves “saints,” “brothers,” “believers,” “the way,” or “disciples,” several of these being terms that outsiders would not readily concede to them; that Luke himself uses such terms rather than “Christians” supports the reliability of his account of the name’s origin.¹⁷⁹ Thus Gentiles mocked the disciples by calling them “partisans of Christos,” a Jewish king. (For mocking Jesus himself as a false king, see, for example, Luke 23:11, 35–38; for the Gospel writers and their audiences, such mockery constituted the supreme irony, since Jesus was in fact king.)¹⁸⁰ At least by a later period, Antioch’s residents were well known for mocking people.¹⁸¹ (“Nazarenes” in Acts 24:5 probably was a similar designation of ridicule by outsiders; cf. 24:14.)¹⁸²

3. Relief Mission to Jerusalem (11:27–30)

The relief mission to Jerusalem fits not only Luke’s emphasis on care for the poor (e.g., Acts 2:44–45; 4:32–37; 6:1–3; Luke 3:11; 12:33; 14:33; 18:22) but his pervasive effort to reconcile the tension between heritage and mission. The very church most engaged in reaching Gentiles (Acts 11:19–26) remains in continuity with the mother church in Jerusalem (11:27–30).¹⁸³

a. Prophets Arrive from Jerusalem (11:27)

“In those days” may stress the momentous character of those times (cf. Luke 1:24; 5:35; 21:22–23; 24:18; Acts 2:18; 3:24; perhaps Luke 1:39; 4:2) or simply serve as a chronological marker of the time something happened (Luke 2:1; 6:12; 9:36; 23:7;

176. Though Tacitus, at least, does not seem to regard them as politically dangerous. The negative connotations weaken the comparison (offered in Balch, “ΜΕΤΑΒΟΛΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΩΝ,” 170) to historians’ reports about colonies’ early name changes (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.9.3; 1.10.2; 1.25.2; 1.26.1; 1.30.3; 1.45.2; 1.53.1; 1.65.1; 2.2.2; 2.46.2; 2.49.1).

177. Riesner, *Early Period*, 112–13; cf. Pilch, “Jews and Christians”; Horsley, “Assembly,” 373–75. I employ the title for NT times, aware that it is an anachronism, solely because it currently remains the standard designation today in the language in which I write.

178. Gaventa, *Acts*, 180. Given Luke’s use of the verb for divine messages elsewhere (10:22; Luke 2:26)—its other primary meaning—it may be at least possible that he plays on words here. Surely there were other ways to say “named” (e.g., Acts 1:19; 4:36). A play on the similar sound of Χριστιανούς is also not impossible, though it appears at the end of the sentence to provide emphasis, framing the clause.

179. Haenchen, “Acts as Source Material,” 270 (suggesting that “disciples” was probably archaic even by Luke’s time).

180. See Keener, *Matthew*, 673, 675; cf. the early observations of Cyprian *Good of Patience* 7; Cyril Jer. *Sermon on the Paralytic* 12 (Oden and Hall, *Mark*, 226–27).

181. So Yamauchi, *Stones*, 114, citing reported insults against Apollonius of Tyana and the emperor Julian.

182. Though Luke uses “Nazarene” simply to describe Jesus’s place of upbringing (Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 22:8; Luke 24:19), Nazareth was a lowly village (cf. John 1:46), and some applied “Nazarene” as a title of derision even to Jesus (Acts 6:14).

183. Schnabel, *Missionary*, 72, even regards the Jerusalem church as the “mother church” of the Gentile mission because of Cornelius. One’s verdict will hinge on one’s definition of “mother church”; clearly Luke associates the concerted, large-scale movement instead with Antioch.

Acts 1:15; 6:1; 7:41; 9:37; 21:15).¹⁸⁴ Its greatest significance for Luke may be its evocation of biblical phraseology, especially in the form “in those days.”¹⁸⁵

That the prophets “came down” from Jerusalem reflects its higher elevation (cf. Luke 10:30), but for Christians who believed that they had entered the eschatological time of fulfillment, such language might possibly evoke also the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa 2:3). That it is more topographic (or conventional) than symbolic is clear from Luke’s usage, however (see esp. Acts 15:1).

Despite the common depiction of “wandering charismatics” in the literature of NT scholars,¹⁸⁶ there is no reason to read this anachronistic typology into this passage. Gerd Theissen in particular (in his early work) overemphasized the type of early Christian “wandering prophets,” based especially on material in the Gospels.¹⁸⁷ Wandering charismatics may appear at times in early Christianity, such as in the *Didache*,¹⁸⁸ and, if the prophetic element is dominant enough, in the activities of both Paul (Rom 15:19) and some of his opponents. Elsewhere in antiquity, wandering prophets often traveled outside their land, preserving oracle collections.¹⁸⁹ But all three explicit first-century Christian examples of traveling prophets (i.e., Acts 11:27–28; 21:8–11; 15:32) represent a specific purpose, not aimless itinerancy, and probably the prophets returned to their sending communities when they finished their mission.¹⁹⁰

Moreover, itinerancy marked teachers at least as much as prophets,¹⁹¹ and the landless often wandered as well.¹⁹² In other words, mobility characterized first-century Roman society in general rather than merely prophets in particular.¹⁹³ The mobility of these prophets may be simply an instance of the general mobility of travelers in the first-century empire, when travel was easier than ever before.¹⁹⁴ Given our uncertainty about the events’ chronology, it is even possible that these prophets left Jerusalem because leaders faced persecution there (12:1) or for some other specific reason; Agabus seems not to have left permanently (21:10).

184. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 239, suggests that the phrase marks a new beginning (citing Acts 1:15; 6:1), but this does not seem persuasive here.

185. E.g., Gen 6:4; Deut 17:9; 1 Sam 28:1; 2 Chr 21:8; 32:24; 1 Macc 1:11; 2:1; 9:24; 11:20; 13:43; 14:13.

186. See critique in Keener, *Matthew*, 57, from which I have drawn some of the material in the critique here.

187. Cf. Theissen, *Sociology*, 8–16 (sometimes “mirror-reading” Jesus’s sayings); Gager, “Review,” 176. Theissen highlights socioeconomic factors in Palestine that could have led to such itinerant charismatics (*Setting*, 28–35) while curiously contrasting Paul (35–40)—part of whose mission in the NT was itinerant. Some evidence supports traveling Galilean teachers at this time, although it is probably exceptional rather than the norm (Vermees, *Religion*, 46). For a critique of Theissen’s “wandering charismatic” thesis, see Witherington, *Christology of Jesus*, 249. Galilee was small enough that Jesus could have traveled without spending most nights away from home (Overman, “Deciphering,” 194; idem, *Crisis*, 67).

188. Aune, *Prophecy*, 213, however, notes that visiting teachers (*Did.* 11.1–2; 13.2) and apostles (11.3–6) are more prominent in the *Didache* than are itinerant prophets (13.1); Harnack overstated the itinerant nature of early Christian prophecy (Aune, *Prophecy*, 202, 211). New Testament itinerancy (Philip, John) more often resembles the apostolic model (*ibid.*, 215); some cultists of the Mysteries were itinerant (Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 31); and Theissen himself (*Sociology*, 14–15) parallels Cynics in the Greek tradition.

189. Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 6.

190. Aune, *Prophecy*, 212.

191. Cf. Dio Chrys. *passim*, e.g., *Or.* 3; 4; 80; Socrates *Ep.* 2 to Xenophon; Diog. Laert. 2.22; *Sent. Sext.* 18–19; Liefeld, “Preacher,” 26–133, esp. 33–59, 89–133; Bowers, “Propaganda,” 318–19.

192. Goodman, *State*, 39.

193. Aune, *Prophecy*, 211–12; cf. Boyd, *Sage*, 122–23. Aune, *Prophecy*, 214, is too generous; he regards Theissen as basically convincing, but after undercutting both the prophetic composition of sayings for Jesus and the idea that such sayings reflect the social reality of those among whom they circulated, he has dismantled the entire foundation for Theissen’s thesis.

194. On this status of travel, see, e.g., Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 37; Purcell, “Travel,” 1547; for news circulated by travelers, see, e.g., 1 Cor 1:11; Phil 2:19, 23; Col 1:7–8. Nontravelers, however, often did spend most of their lives in a single area (Schneider, “Traffic”). See discussion of travel in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:582–83, 585–89.

The Jesus tradition, though charismatic, provides no evidence that specifically links Jesus or his disciples with the wandering prophets proposed by Theissen.¹⁹⁵ Paul himself provides our best concrete evidence for the lifestyle commitment commanded in the Gospels,¹⁹⁶ and he is as much teacher as prophet. The travels of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha indeed provide the strongest Palestinian models for Jesus's itinerancy, but these otherwise dominant models in the Jesus tradition make all the more striking the lack of clear evidence for groups of itinerant followers of Jesus after the resurrection.

For wandering, one might compare wandering philosophers in classical Greece and their growth in the Roman Empire (albeit with no specifically charismatic dimension).¹⁹⁷ (The itinerant apostles and prophets of the *Didache* may follow the deliberate model of Paul more than that of Agabus.)¹⁹⁸ The prophets may arrive already knowing their message; in contrast to most pagan prophecy, biblical prophecy was not always (though it was often) spontaneous (Jer 7:2; 17:19–20; 26:2; 35:2; 36:4–15, 32).¹⁹⁹

New believers in Antioch previously less familiar with Christian (or LXX) prophecy would have some knowledge about prophetic-type arts from Syria itself²⁰⁰ as well as the Greek oracular tradition.²⁰¹ On the popular level, Syrian religion was pragmatic and materialistic, though most people were aware of some cults of peculiar intensity.²⁰² Perhaps (though this is only speculation) these Jerusalemites' prophetic ministry influenced the development of that of some Antioch church leaders in Acts 13:1.

By this period the Greco-Roman world had some traveling prophetic figures, but most people viewed this form of prophecy as largely past and focused either on divination or on oracular shrines with priesthoods answering specific questions.²⁰³ Although the ancient world believed in prophets and oracular shrines, it did not expect religious movements full of prophets or characterized by large percentages of their members being prophets.²⁰⁴ Luke, however, leads his audience (whatever their prior experience in the church)²⁰⁵ to expect prophetism as pervasive in the church (2:17–18).²⁰⁶

Prophets appear later in Antioch (13:1), as well as elsewhere (19:6; 21:9; cf. Luke 2:26–27, 36), and regularly in Pauline churches (1 Cor 11:4–5; 12:10, 28–29; 13:2, 8–9; 14:1–39; Eph 3:5; 4:11; 1 Thess 5:20; 1 Tim 1:18; 4:14), as well as apparently in non-Pauline churches of which Paul knows (Rom 12:6), and other prophets appear in the NT (Rev 1:3; 10:11; 11:3, 6, 10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 19:10; 22:6–10, 18–19). Paul apparently anticipates multiple prophets even in the Corinthian house

195. Cf. Boring, *Sayings*, 59–61; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Memory*, 74.

196. Many of Jesus's radical sayings are hyperbolic (see Tannehill, *Sword*, 73–76, 139–40), but even if they are to be taken literally, they may function as much as a critique of the community as a description of it (see Keck, "Ethos," 450; Aune, *Prophecy*, 243). Cf. the proposed competition of local and translocal traditions in Scroggs, "Present State," 172.

197. See, e.g., Montiglio, "Wandering Philosophers"; Lucian *Peregr.* 16.

198. *Did.* 11.1, 4, 5; for Christian travelers on missions, see, e.g., 1 Cor 16:10, 12, 17; Phil 2:30; 4:18; 2 John 7–10.

199. See also Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 633. It was often, perhaps usually, spontaneous; many (e.g., Dunn, *Jesus and Spirit*, 228; Talbert, *Corinthians*, 89) cite 1 Cor 14:30. Yet the point is extrahuman inspiration, rather than when it is received or the duration over which it comes.

200. Aune, *Prophecy*, 41 (citing Arrian *Alex.* 4.13.5–6; Plut. *C. Mar.* 17.1–3; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 15–16; *Dial. C.* 288; cf. Florus *Epitome* 2.7.4–8).

201. On which see, e.g., Nilsson, *Cults*; Aune, *Prophecy*, 23–79, 349–68; cf. Forbes, *Prophecy*, passim; part of the excursus on prophecy at Acts 2:17–18. See fuller discussion at Acts 16:16.

202. Tracey, "Syria," 258–59.

203. Forbes, *Prophecy*, 288–308.

204. The only possible exceptions would have been far less mainstream than the Christians if we count ecstatic frenzies of bands of Galli as prophetic (which is dubious); on the Galli, see comment on Acts 8:27.

205. It may have included significant prophetic elements; see 1 Cor 14 and, for Macedonia, 1 Thess 5:20. It is not explicit in the brief letter to Philippi, but cf. perhaps Phil 1:19; Acts depicts miracles there (Acts 16:26), including one against false prophetism (16:18).

206. For earlier studies of "prophets" relevant to Acts, see Mattill and Mattill, *Bibliography*, 298–99, §§4174–88.

churches (1 Cor 14:29–32; cf. 12:28–29). Given the prevailing views of most of contemporary Judaism regarding the cessation or (perhaps more commonly outside later rabbinic circles) diminution of prophecy, the unanimity of early Christianity in this regard seems a remarkable evidence of the character of the Jesus movement’s spiritual experience.²⁰⁷ Although Josephus allows that many Essenes prophesied, he avoids speaking of true “prophets” in the present era; Greek and Syrian culture, though valuing oracles, would find this plurality of “prophets” even more striking (see fuller excursus on prophecy at Acts 2:17–18).

b. Agabus Prophecies (11:28)

“Agabus” is a rare name (the closest extant parallels being in Ezra 2:45–46; Neh 7:48; 1 Esd 5:30).²⁰⁸ Paul is Luke’s likeliest source for this material, but Luke would probably have special interest in Agabus (more than in the other prophets) also because Luke later met this itinerant prophet personally in Caesarea (Acts 21:10–11).

One would “rise” to speak in an assembly (e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.55; see comment on Acts 1:15); it sounds as if Agabus may be speaking in the Christian assembly in Antioch. Agabus “declared” God’s message; the term σημαίνω need not include (cf. Acts 25:27),²⁰⁹ but often does, prophetic associations (cf. John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19; Rev 1:1; Dan 2:23, 30, 45).²¹⁰ The term also often implies the use of symbolism,²¹¹ this suits how Agabus communicates another prophetic message in Acts 21:11, and might (though need not) imply something about his form of presentation here.

Like some other Christian prophecies in Acts, this one predicts what the reader should expect (20:25; 21:11; cf. 19:21), and hence advances the narrative (11:29–30; 12:25).²¹² (Prophecy did not always concern the future but often did so.)²¹³ This prophecy’s form (like the prophecy Agabus gives in 21:10–11) would be recognizable to those familiar with Greek and Roman oracles as well as to those familiar with the OT.²¹⁴

c. Predicting Famine (11:28)

Many people in antiquity viewed famines as divine judgments²¹⁵ or tests,²¹⁶ and Luke also affirms that God controls famines (Luke 21:11). In Scripture, when famines

207. See 1 Macc 9:27; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.41; Best, “Pneuma,” 222–25; Aune, “Προφήτης”; Keener, *Spirit*, 13–19. The later diminution of the prophetic gift in Christian circles may reflect an analogous institutional domestication of prophecy (Johnston, “Leadership,” 12–17, noting that this reaction is less than ideal).

208. See Williams, “Names,” 84 (noting its absence in Josephus and inscriptions).

209. Cf. “signaling” with a horn (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.44); Papias 21.1 (Euseb. *H.E.* 2.15).

210. Epict. *Diatr.* 1.17.18; Jos. *Ant.* 7.214; 10.241; Plut. *S. Sp.*, Callicratidas 6, *Mor.* 222F; *Or. Delphi* 21, *Mor.* 404E (in Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 131; Johnson, *Acts*, 205); through “signs,” Xen. *Mem.* 1.1.4; Philost. *Hrk.* 16.5. The claim that the wording suggests something less authoritative than OT prophets (Grudem, *Prophecy*, 76) is therefore unwarranted; that the prophetic experience of believers is rooted in and superior to that of the OT prophets is at the heart of Luke’s theology and apologetic (cf. Acts 2:17–18).

211. As commentators sometimes observe with reference to Rev 1:1 (e.g., Beale, *Revelation*, 50–52). Even the reference in Plut. *Or. Delphi* 21 (above) may indicate “that oracles require interpretation” (Aune, *Prophecy*, 51), i.e., are often obscure (on oracles’ obscurity, see Keener, *John*, 856–57; comment on Acts 21:4).

212. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 12.

213. E.g., Isa 45:11; Jer 29:11; 31:17; Sir 48:24; Jos. *War* 1.78–80; 2.159; 3.351; *Gen. Rab.* 91:6; cf. 4Q268 1 3, 8. For prophesying the future in paganism, see, e.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 1.31.1; Livy 38.18.9; Plut. *Or. Delphi* 7, *Mor.* 397C; Arrian *Alex.* 4.13.5; Paus. 9.39.11; Aul. Gel. 15.18.2; Lucian *Dem.* 37.

214. Forbes, *Prophecy*, 287.

215. E.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 53.20; Amos 4:6–9; *Pss. Sol.* 17:18–19; *Sib. Or.* 3.235–36, 476; *Test. Jud.* 23:3; *L.A.B.* 3:9; *t. Sukkah* 2:6; *b. Ber.* 55a; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Exod 20:15; on Deut 5:19; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 20:13; on Deut 5:19; Rev 6:5–6; cf. drought in *Sipre Deut.* 43.9.1. For plagues as judgment, cf. Diod. Sic. 14.69.4–14.71.4. Others attributed famine to fate (Men. *Rhet.* 1.3, 364.17–20).

216. *Jub.* 17:17.

were judgments they were judgments on societies, not on all the individuals who experienced them; Scripture also portrays God's concern for people in famine (Gen 50:20), and not all famines are said to be judgment (e.g., Gen 12:10; 26:1; 41:27). Although God could miraculously reverse a famine (2 Kgs 7), sometimes God simply announced that a famine would take place so that people could prepare for it (e.g., 8:1–2). God sometimes supplied direction in times of famine (Gen 26:1–2); biblically literate hearers would think especially of Pharaoh's dreams and Joseph's interpretation in Gen 41:29–36 (cf. Acts 7:10–12)²¹⁷ and perhaps also of Elisha (below).²¹⁸ Some might think of Elijah helping someone outside the Holy Land in time of famine (Luke 4:25–26, the only other NT passage speaking of a "great famine," though a synonymous expression appears in 15:14).²¹⁹ Elisha also predicted a famine (seven years, like Joseph; 2 Kgs 8:1). As God used Joseph's involuntary exile from the Holy Land to provide food for his family and others (Gen 45:5; 50:20), God uses the scattered Christians of Antioch (cf. Acts 8:1; 11:19) to provide for their siblings in Jerusalem. As Elisha, a prophet of ancient Israel, provides wisdom for God's servants in the time of impending famine, so does a prophet here.

Many scholars think that Agabus predicted an eschatological famine here, especially because it is to be worldwide;²²⁰ this could be one prophecy driven by the early church's passionate expectation of the end, which was later reinterpreted historically. Famines could have an eschatological orientation (e.g., Rev 6:5–8),²²¹ including in Luke (esp. Luke 21:11–12).²²² But famines were also a regular part of ancient life,²²³ again including in Luke (15:14); they were so common that one noted historian suggests that most people in the empire suffered sustained hunger at least at some point in their lives.²²⁴ Famine was even personified.²²⁵ As today, dearth killed more people through disease—to which malnourished bodies were particularly susceptible—than through starvation proper.²²⁶

Granted, "famines" often reflect the political rhetoric of urban culture, where,

217. Cf. Joseph as "one to whom divine secrets are revealed" (*Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 41:45). Although we know that the "Claudian" famine lasted several years, Luke resists the temptation to make it seven (Gen 41:30; 2 Kgs 8:1) or even half that figure (Jas 5:17; cf. 1 Kgs 18:1) to reinforce the biblical allusion.

218. Major coming events would have to be revealed to prophets; see Amos 3:7; cf. Gen 18:17.

219. Cf. Luke 21:11, which conjoins famines with "great" earthquakes; and Acts 7:11, which conjoins a famine with "great" tribulation. A famine in Elisha's time is called "great" (2 Kgs 6:25); for others, cf. Job 30:4 LXX; 1 Macc 9:24. Much later rabbis treated Elijah's famine as worldwide (*Esth. Rab.* 1:5). If the younger brother in Luke 15:11–32, who represents sinners returning to God, also points to the Gentile mission, one might connect Antioch's help to Jerusalem here (Luke 15:14), but the connection lacks other support and is too tenuous to sustain. For Luke's use of the famine motif, note also Paffenroth, "Famines."

220. Aune, *Prophecy*, 265; Knox, *Jerusalem*, 166; Nickle, *Collection*, 25.

221. Scholars cite *Jub.* 23:18 (with 23:13–14); *1 En.* 80:2; *Sib. Or.* 3.540–42; *4 Ezra* 6:22; *2 Bar.* 27:6; 70:8 (Aune, *Prophecy*, 265; see also *Sib. Or.* 2.23; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5:9; *Gen. Rab.* 25:3; 40:3; 64:2; *Ruth Rab.* 1:4; *Song Rab.* 2:13, §4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:14/15), though often these appear among a wide range of ills. See also *Sib. Or.* 4.149–51 (perhaps written ca. 80 C.E.). Some Amoraim spoke of ten worldwide famines, the final in the messianic era (*Gen. Rab.* 25:3; 40:3; 64:2; *Ruth Rab.* 1:4). For the language, cf. the famine and "great tribulation" in Acts 7:11.

222. This is more eschatological than in Mark 13:8 because Luke applies the saying related to the idea of "the end is not yet" only to false prophets of Luke 21:8–9; but it may not directly precede the end (cf. 21:9–11). Famine (Acts 7:11), like eschatological distress (possibly 14:22), could be θλιψις.

223. MacMullen, *Enemies*, 249–54; cf. Men. Rhet. 1.3, 364.17–20; the Ptolemaic stela in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 386–91.

224. MacMullen, *Enemies*, 249.

225. Cf. Schaffner, "Fames"; along with other ills in Hesiod *Theog.* 4.211–336; Rev 6:5–6.

226. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 76; cf. Garnsey, "Malnutrition," 208. Like plagues (Thucyd. 2.47.3), famine often followed war (Polyb. 5.10.3–4; 5.19.8; 9.11a.1–4; Tac. *Ann.* 14.38; *Sib. Or.* 3.236).

some argue, “famine was a frequent threat but a very infrequent experience.”²²⁷ The poor were chronically malnourished,²²⁸ but residents of towns²²⁹ could pressure leaders to intervene quickly; food was usually available elsewhere in a region.²³⁰ There were, however, shortages of food covering large swathes of the Mediterranean world, such as those known in 328 B.C.E., 45–47 C.E.—the period relevant here—and 500 C.E.²³¹ Lack of food in the cities could lead to unrest and even riots;²³² lack of adequate transportation prevented surpluses in some areas from readily reaching areas experiencing shortages.²³³

“The entire inhabited world” is probably Lukan hyperbole (or Agabus’s prophetic overstatement), but if so, it is hardly uniquely Lukan.²³⁴ The scope of Roman rule was often described as the οἰκουμένη²³⁵ (as in Luke 2:1; Acts 17:6–7; 24:5; though Luke could use the term more broadly), even though everyone who knew even a little about Rome’s archenemies the Parthians²³⁶ would have understood that the Roman Empire was merely the “world” or civilization in which they lived; it was not the entire inhabited world. The same phraseology also applied to other, earlier empires.²³⁷ Josephus also uses the term hyperbolically (*War* 1.426; 2.372; 6.442); Luke’s hyperbole, however, makes good sense in the oracle of a prophet (Isa 10:14, 23; 13:5, 9, 11; 14:17, 26; 23:17; 24:1, 4; 27:6; 34:1; 37:16, 18).²³⁸ Luke means at most the Roman world in well over half his uses of the term (Luke 2:1; Acts 17:6; 19:27; 24:5); of the three remaining instances, two are eschatological (Luke 21:26; Acts 17:31; cf. Luke 4:5). The famine need have occurred everywhere at once no more than did Luke’s “universal” census in Luke 2:2; it was universal from the standpoint of the characters in the narrative world, and its timing in other locations was not relevant to Luke’s point.²³⁹

227. Rathbone, “Famine.” On the persistent reality of the threat, see Finley, *Economy*, 169; on the grain supply and means to compensate for shortfalls (much better organized in the empire than by Greek city-states), see, e.g., Foxhall, “Food Supply”; Rathbone, “Food Supply”; on official responses to famines, see Winter, “Shortages,” 72–75; idem, *Left Corinth*, 222.

228. Garnsey, “Malnutrition,” argues that food shortages were common (205) but that the effectiveness of measures taken against them varied from one region to another (205–6); Rome’s policies were most effective, but they drew on its empire’s resources (206).

229. Especially in favored regions such as Italy, Achaia, Macedonia, and Asia.

230. Famines often fanned enmity “between the people and local elites” (Toner, *Culture*, 66).

231. Rathbone, “Famine.” Vespasian’s policies helped renew the empire’s prosperity (Grant, “Economic Background,” 111). Famine raised food prices exorbitantly (e.g., Plut. *Sulla* 13.2–3; 2 Kgs 6:25; *Tr. Shem* 2:5); it was always to be expected during long sieges (e.g., Thucyd. 4.26.5; Hermog. *Issues* 73.16–74.1). Those who feasted while the people were starving were negatively regarded (e.g., Polyb. 38.8.10–11).

232. See, e.g., Appian *Bell. civ.* 5.8.67; Tac. *Ann.* 12.43; 1 Macc 9:24; Stambaugh, *City*, 143; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 66.

233. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 33.

234. With many, e.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 131 (who also allow a Semitism for “the whole land” of Palestine but rightly view that as less probable); Chance, *Acts*, 189. Most famines “had only regional effects” (Wiesehöfer, “Mortality,” 214).

235. E.g., Lucian *Oct.* 7; Jos. *War* 3.29 (Johnson, *Acts*, 206); Strabo 1.1.13, 15; 2.24.2; 3.3.1 (Winter, “Shortages,” 67); “almost” the whole world in Diod. Sic. 4.2.5; 5.40.2; 12.2.1 (Winter, “Shortages,” 68); Polyb. 1.1.5; 1.2.7; 3.118.9; 6.2.3; 6.50.6; Men. *Rhet.* 2.12, 422.9–10. Luke favors the term, employing it seven times (vs. Matthew and Paul once each, Mark never, and Revelation thrice). Lopez, *Apostle*, 51–54, identifies Roman artwork that could signify Rome’s rule over the world.

236. See Hor. *Ep.* 2.1.256; *Odes* 1.12.53; 1.21.13–16; 3.5.3–4; 3.8.19–20; see much more thorough discussion of the Parthians at Acts 2:9. Nevertheless, Roman artwork could transform Rome’s more ambiguous conflicts with Parthia into propaganda of Roman triumph; see Lopez, *Apostle*, 41.

237. For Alexander’s empire, see Men. *Rhet.* 2.3, 388.8–9; cf. the idea (in different words) for Cyrus’s Persian empire (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.20).

238. Winter, “Shortages,” 68.

239. The census of Luke 2:2 may have been carried out at different times in different locations (in contrast to the later fourteen-year cycles). See discussion and sources in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 74–75n210.

d. The Famine during Claudius's Reign (11:28)

Most scholars doubt that a single famine swept the entire world, or even the entire Roman world, during Claudius's reign (41–54 C.E.).²⁴⁰ Allowing for Lukan hyperbole, however, many data corroborate widespread famine conditions during much of Claudius's reign,²⁴¹ and these crises in various locations were severe enough to invite new imperial measures to address them.²⁴² Unless Josephus's account diverges far from the chronology of its context, it was during Claudius's reign that Queen Helena of Adiabene arrived in Jerusalem to discover a famine (*Ant.* 20.51). "Famine" regularly meant dearth, which was indeed widespread.²⁴³ Sources less than a century later reported continuing droughts (*assiduae sterilitates*) that caused many famines during Claudius's reign (*Suet. Claud.* 18.2). During shortages, Rome always took priority in the allocation of Egyptian grain, to maintain stability in the imperial city;²⁴⁴ sometimes this distribution pattern exacerbated hunger elsewhere.²⁴⁵ Yet even Rome itself experienced severe food shortages in 42 C.E. (*Dio Cass.* 60.11) and 51 C.E. (*Tac. Ann.* 12.43).²⁴⁶ Some ancients viewed the latter famine as a divine warning, and Claudius was nearly mobbed in the streets.

Most relevant to the eastern Mediterranean world, including Palestine, is our knowledge that a severe famine appears to have struck Egypt about 45–46 C.E.; Egypt was the primary source of grain in the eastern Mediterranean world.²⁴⁷ One local list in Egypt notes that 1,222 people defaulted on their taxes in 45/46, with 1,678 doing so the following year (P.Mich. 594).²⁴⁸ Already by the summer of 45, grain prices were more than double any grain prices in Roman history before the Flavian era, in which Luke probably wrote.²⁴⁹ Although this famine was not worldwide, it affected "Egypt, Syria, Judaea and Greece."²⁵⁰ During the reign of Claudius an official in Corinth three times filled the office of *curator annonae*, which was held only during times of famine.²⁵¹

240. E.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 157, objecting that Antioch would have suffered as much as Jerusalem. But Antioch's Christians may have been wealthier than Jerusalem's; indeed, their sacrifice in view of their own impending suffering may be part of Luke's point.

241. Most commentators accept this solution (e.g., Munck, *Acts*, 109; Johnson, *Acts*, 206; Aune, *Prophecy*, 430n113; cf. Conzelmann, *History*, 82). Cf. Winter, "Shortages," 63, who applies Pliny *E.N.H.* 5.58; 18.11.68 to the excessive Nile flooding of the mid-40s (following Gapp, "Universal Famine," 259). On imperial finance in general in Claudius's reign, see Burgers, "Coinage."

242. Riesner, *Early Period*, 131–32.

243. *Ibid.*, 127.

244. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 98–99; on the danger of food-related riots in Rome, see, e.g., *Tac. Ann.* 6.13; 12.43.

245. See Winter, "Shortages," 65.

246. Ramsay, *Traveler and Citizen*, 48–49; *idem*, *Bethlehem*, 251–52; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 164; Winter, *Left Corinth*, 223; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 482.

247. Gapp, "Universal Famine"; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 482. When even grain-producing locales ran out of grain, they depended on Egypt (*CIG* 2927, 2938; *Jos. Ant.* 15.307; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 98–99), and those with greatest wealth probably bought the now scarcer Egyptian grain even during this period (cf. *Jos. Ant.* 20.51). Famine struck Egypt in *Gen* 41:54–57.

248. September–October 51 C.E.; Winter, "Shortages," 63 (who also suggests that more than half the males of Philadelphia defaulted, citing Browne, *Michigan Collection*, 64–67; again in Winter, *Left Corinth*, 221). In extreme conditions, Rome granted tax abatements (P.Cair. 49359, 49360; Lewis, *Life*, 114–15).

249. Witherington, *Acts*, 373.

250. Winter, "Shortages," 68. Eusebius reports this for Greece, and an inscription for Asia Minor (Ramsay, *Traveler and Citizen*, 48–49; *idem*, *Bethlehem*, 251–52, claiming that no period in Roman history has so many allusions to widespread famine). Famine in Alexandria causes many Jewish deaths (*Sib. Or.* 11.239–42), but this may refer to Cleopatra's earlier refusal to share grain with Jews there (*Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.56–61; see *OTP* 1:440 n.y2).

251. Winter, *Left Corinth*, 216–20 (noting that when an official had done so in the mid-third century B.C.E., it was due to a long famine); on famine in 51 C.E., cf. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 75 (citing *Tac. Ann.* 12.43.1; *Suet. Claud.* 18.2; Euseb. *Chron.* 2, p. 152).

Josephus reports that the ensuing dearth struck Judea with great force, probably starting when Fadus was Judea's governor but growing problematic especially in the early governorship of Tiberius Alexander (46–48 C.E.; *Ant.* 20.100–101).²⁵² A small portion of wheat sold for four drachmas (3.320). Some scholars think that a Sabbatic Year also fell in 47–48, complicating possible dependence on local production.²⁵³ Only friendly rulers outside Judea (Helena and Izates of Adiabene) were able to provide sufficient aid to reduce the effects of the famine; visiting Judea with gifts for the poor a decade later, Luke may well have heard the famous stories of help sent by the royal house of Adiabene (*Jos. Ant.* 3.320–21; 20.51–53, 101).²⁵⁴

Luke shows that the Diaspora church also sent support. Like Helena and Izates (*Ant.* 20.52–53), others who contributed funds toward feeding the hungry would be viewed as benefactors. As in the case of Corinth's *curator annonae*, noted above, local governments normally depended especially on individual benefactors to alleviate shortages;²⁵⁵ it is possible that Antioch Christians may have responded to Agabus's prophecy with "a subscription list (ἐπίδοσις) of rich Christians."²⁵⁶ (Outside the Christian community, such benefaction was not always voluntary; the "liturgy" system often drafted wealthy individuals to balance civic budgets, and those drafted often protested their poverty or named a richer person more appropriate for the "honor.")²⁵⁷ Although some, such as Manaen (Acts 13:1), probably had some means, 11:29 emphasizes that *everyone* contributed. Many suggest that assigning the role of benefactor to the entire Christian community could have appeared innovative and perhaps even revolutionary to Greco-Roman society.²⁵⁸

Some scholars contend that Luke moves a later famine of 47–48 C.E. to an earlier period to fit it into his narrative in 11:27–30.²⁵⁹ Others argue that the famine specifically in view occurred in 43–44, so that Luke has not dislocated anything chronologically.²⁶⁰ Neither approach is warranted; not the famine itself but its prediction appears in 11:28, which may be one reason "Luke completes the story" only after Agrippa's death, in 12:25.²⁶¹ As we have seen, historians writing anything but local history or a monograph about a single event had to dislocate some events either chronologically or geographically; like most, Luke probably simply struck the most effective balance available.²⁶²

252. Josephus attaches it to the time of Claudius the emperor and Ishmael the high priest in *Ant.* 3.320, but this synchronization offers less precision than that in 20.100–101 (especially if we must question Josephus's mention of Ishmael; cf. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 143). Zias, "Remains," suggests that the high childhood mortality (68 percent) in one burial cave reflects this period of drought.

253. Barrett, *Acts*, 563 (citing *m. Sotah* 7:8); cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 80 (more tentative, 373). This suggestion cannot be more than speculation, given the nature of the source.

254. Discussed further in Reicke, *Era*, 212–13. Euseb. *H.E.* 2.12.1 assumes that Paul's famine visit coincides with the famine that Josephus reports here; Bede *Comm. Acts* 11.29 (L. Martin, 108–9) also notes Helena's charity here. Later rabbis also praised the generosity of the royal house of Adiabene (*y. Pe'ah* 1:1, §6, on Izates's father).

255. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 101; cf., e.g., Val. Max. 4.8 passim, esp. 4.8.1, 2. Donations for the poor individually were usually too small to warrant significant discussion (Hahn, "Alms," 522).

256. Winter, "Shortages," 75.

257. See esp. Lewis, *Public Services*; idem, *Life*, 177–84; Jones and Spawforth, "Liturgy"; cf., e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 46.14. In classical Athens, MacDowell, "Antidosis"; Schmitz, "Eisphora," 865 (particularly during crises, such as war); Jones and Rhodes, "Liturgy"; cf. Millett, "Finance," 596. Excessive taxes (Bell, "Egypt," 300–306) and liturgies (301–2) led to Egypt's economic collapse (315).

258. Winter, "Shortages," 75; Harrison, *Grace*, 303; Parsons, *Acts*, 169.

259. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 90.

260. Tornos, "Fecha del hambre" (arguing against placement of the famine in 49 C.E. [based on *Jos. Ant.* 20.100–102] from other evidence in Josephus for a famine in 43, e.g., *Ant.* 3.320).

261. With Barrett, *Acts*, 563–64; cf. also Witherington, *Acts*, 77; Dunn, *Acts*, 158.

262. Biographies were not necessarily chronological (see, e.g., Görgemanns, "Biography"), but even history sometimes had to adapt strict chronological sequence by region, etc. (see Keener, *Acts*, 1:175n70,

Some scholars suggest that the famine prompting the collection occurred no later than 45 C.E.,²⁶³ whereas others prefer 45–46²⁶⁴ or 46.²⁶⁵ Still others suggest perhaps 48 C.E. or a little earlier.²⁶⁶ Any time during the famines before Paul's missionary journeys could technically fit, but we also need not suppose that the Antioch Christians, armed with a prophecy, waited for the strongest signs of famine to strike Judea before sending their offering. Luke provides no clear chronology (11:28–30).

Why does Luke mention Claudius's reign, which was long, without defining the period more narrowly with more detailed synchronisms? The possible answers are legion. Luke has not provided synchronisms since Luke 3:1–2, and so perhaps we should make nothing of it. It is possible, however, that Luke uses a generalizing reference to long periods of dearth instead of referring to only the troubles of a particular year; indeed, it is probable (as one expects from oral history) that he did not know the specific time. It is also possible that he intends to depict in a general way that the fulfillment followed the prophecy within a few years—that is, under the next emperor.²⁶⁷

Because everyone in the urban empire would know who Claudius was,²⁶⁸ Luke's other mention of this ruler (Acts 18:2) need not imply a deliberate connection between the texts.²⁶⁹ Perhaps famine in the empire (the part of the οἰκουμένη Luke seems to specify) during any named emperor's reign exposes the pretense of an emperor ordering all of that domain to organize for taxation (Luke 2:1), but in writing an apologetic work seeking the movement's legal toleration in the empire, Luke could hardly make such a connection clear.

e. Sending Assistance (11:29)

As already noted, Antioch was a wealthy city heavily engaged in trade,²⁷⁰ and at least some members of the Jewish community had also achieved wealth there (Jos. *Ant.* 17.24).²⁷¹ As in the case of others' benevolence during shortages, the Antiochene Christians contributed funds toward the buying of food instead of trying to ship food directly (cf. 20.51, 53; though wealthy donors could also oversee the buying and distribution of food, 20.51–52, 101).²⁷² Food was not easily transported long distances

193–94). See, e.g., Quint. Curt. 5.1.1–2, explaining his need to finish one “course of events” before pursuing another elsewhere. At least in some narrative genres, some ancient writers create forced transitions to link together disparate stories as if they happened sequentially (e.g., Ovid *Metam.* 2.708–13; 6.1–5, 148–50; some might suggest Mark 1:21, 29); stories within stories were common in ancient storytelling (e.g., Ovid *Metam.* 4.37–388, within 4.1–415).

263. Riesner, *Early Period*, 125–36 (dating the strongest period of famine between 44 and 46 C.E., pp. 132–34).

264. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 165.

265. Bruce, *Commentary*, 244.

266. Witherington, *Acts*, 373; cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 90 (47–48 C.E., complaining that Luke dates it too early).

267. Bede *Comm. Acts* 12.1 argues that the famine occurred in Claudius's fourth year and Agrippa died in his third; hence he dates the offering to that time. But the offering follows the prophecy, not the famine itself, and so we cannot infer too much about the chronology from the famine's timing, in any case.

268. On Claudius, see, e.g., Eck, “Claudius,” and sources there.

269. If a connection existed, the famine (Acts 11:28) could constitute judgment for the expulsion of Jews in 18:2, but given the portrayal of Jerusalem's judgment in Luke 21, this is unlikely.

270. For trade between Syria and Rome, see Charlesworth, *Trade Routes*, 36–56. Various parts of the empire were intertwined economically (see, e.g., Purcell, “Economy,” 505), providing a model for the Christians here.

271. Some of this wealth undoubtedly made its way back to Jerusalem (though the description of serving the “temple” in Jos. *War* 7.45 is ambiguous).

272. Basic staples in some locations were grain, wine, and cheese (Thucyd. 4.26.5); wheat was basic (Diod. Sic. 4.3.5), and Palestinian staples could include bread and fish (Neusner, *Beginning*, 23; cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 22.68.138; Lewis, *Life*, 68). Here grain would be most important (cf. grain and dried figs, imperishables, in Jos. *Ant.* 20.51).

in antiquity, making one region's surpluses less valuable to redress another region's dearth.²⁷³ Yet such supplies were more easily procured from Egypt and Cyprus, in any event (20.51).

If the Antiochenes sent the money during the famine rather than before it (which is not really clear, though it would reinforce the need to send money rather than food), we should note that later historians report that Syria suffered the famine as well as Judea (Orosius *Hist.* 7.6.12). Certainly Antioch faced its share of disasters in this period, perhaps generating compassion but also local needs that would demand attention.²⁷⁴ The Christians sacrificed there on behalf of others in the face of prophesied, impending famine in their own region also. Moreover, Luke indicates that each gave in proportion to what he or she had.²⁷⁵

Why would Jerusalem be targeted for help when rural Christians might also see the results of famine?²⁷⁶ Although Jerusalem had a higher living standard than the surrounding Judean countryside, it also had a correspondingly higher cost of living.²⁷⁷ Moreover, most cities depended for food on their rural surroundings; the size of most cities was limited by the ability of countrysides (or, exceptionally in Rome, the massive grain fleet; or in Corinth, probably, trade) to sustain them.²⁷⁸ Presumably the persecution narrated in Acts 12:1–2 would have also exacerbated economic distress (though cf. comment on Acts 12:13). Yet an offering for the needs of the Jerusalem church not only demonstrated Christian solidarity across cultural and geographic boundaries (cf. 2 Cor 8:1–2, 13–15; 9:1–4, 11–14); it also demonstrated loyalty to and solidarity with the faith of the earliest Jewish church (cf. Rom 15:26–27).²⁷⁹ Diaspora Jews were already accustomed to send money to Jerusalem on other occasions (e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 16.171). The church in Antioch might not be large enough to help all Jerusalem, but they were obligated to sacrificially assist at least those considered their spiritual siblings.

Luke elsewhere uses *διακονία* and its cognates for financial ministry (Luke 8:3; Acts 6:1–4) as well as ministry of the word;²⁸⁰ as the Twelve had performed social ministry (Acts 4:35–37) and the Seven began with such ministry (6:3) before larger ministries of preaching (6:8–10; 8:5), so Barnabas (who had donated under the ministry of the Twelve, 4:37) and Saul engaged in social *διακονία* (11:29–30; 12:25) before entering on their Gentile mission (13:1–5).²⁸¹ Paul's letters also use *διακονία* for a collection (2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12–13).²⁸²

Although Jesus had multiplied food miraculously (Luke 9:16–17), the same passage invited disciples to share what food they had (9:13), a command that fits Luke's larger

273. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 33. Feeding a small tribe (Gen 42:3) would be less difficult, and again, Egypt was much closer than Antioch.

274. For earthquakes in Antioch during the reigns of Caligula (April 9, 37 C.E.) and Claudius, see McRay, *Archaeology*, 231–32.

275. People might give in proportion to what they had (Deut 16:10; Sir 14:13; Tob 4:8, 16), as Paul also hopes concerning the Diaspora churches' later offering for Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:12, 15).

276. Some areas were more susceptible to dearth than others; in some locations, grain prices were always at a level that they reached elsewhere only during shortages (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 46.10).

277. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 632 (citing *m. Arak.* 6:5; *Ma'as.* Š. 4:1; *y. Yoma* 4.1.41b).

278. It is possible too that though the greater number of needy believers would be centered in Jerusalem, food could be disseminated more readily from there if needed elsewhere in Judea.

279. Knox, *Jerusalem*, 166. Cross-cultural solidarity was one purpose for Paul's offering for Jerusalem (Rom 15:27).

280. For background, see comment on Acts 6:1–4.

281. This may be Luke's simplifying schema, since Paul was likely preaching in Tarsus as well; see comment on Acts 9:30; note Acts 15:23, 41.

282. Betz, *Corinthians*, 46–47, treats *διακονία* as an administrative term here; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 401, cites parallels in *Testament of Job*; Nickle, *Collection*, 107, likewise locates the background in Jewish usage. This appears in a context of nonmonetary terms (see Dahl, *Studies*, 37–38; Matera, *II Corinthians*, 181).

emphasis on sharing possessions (12:33; 14:33; Acts 2:44–45; though Luke finds the command in his source, Mark 6:37). In earlier times of famine, those with means had shared resources (2 Kgs 4:38, 42). Luke portrays the Antioch church's mission here as a positive example and a model for economic sharing;²⁸³ he also underlines thereby the ideal unity of the Jerusalem and Diaspora churches. Whereas in 11:22 the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to check on the Antioch church, in 11:29–30 the Antioch church “sends” Barnabas and Saul to serve the Jerusalem church.

f. The Jerusalem Church's Elders (11:30)

The “elders” to whom the Antioch Christians sent the offering are leaders in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:2; 21:18), just as other churches had elders (14:23; 20:17; see much fuller discussion at Acts 14:23). The practice was borrowed from the traditional Israelite leadership structure (e.g., Exod 17:5; 18:12; 19:1; Lev 4:15; Num 11:30; 16:25; Josh 7:6; 2 Chr 5:2; 1 Macc 12:35; 13:36; 14:20; 3 Macc 1:8), including in towns and villages (e.g., Ruth 4:2–11; 1 Sam 16:4; 1 Kgs 21:11; 2 Kgs 23:1; 1 Esd 9:13; Jdt 6:16, 21; 7:23; 8:10; 10:6) and in Jerusalem (1 Esd 6:5; 9:4; 1 Macc 7:33; 2 Macc 14:37).²⁸⁴ It also appears in Luke's descriptions of Galilean towns (Luke 7:3) and in Jerusalem (9:22; 22:52; Acts 4:5, 8, 23; 6:12; 23:14; 24:1; 25:15).

The Jerusalem church's elders appear alongside the apostles (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4), hence probably not simply as a replacement for the two lost apostles (12:2, 17).²⁸⁵ Because the apostles had relinquished financial oversight of the community to the Seven (6:2–3, on the likeliest interpretation of the passage), the elders may have assumed many of these responsibilities when the surviving members of the original Seven scattered (8:1). “Through the hand of” Saul and Barnabas reflects a frequent LXX idiom, simply meaning “through.”²⁸⁶

g. The Visit's Timing (11:30)

I believe that the data surveyed above suggests that this trip probably occurred later than the point at which it is described (to retain the narrative connection between the fulfillment and the earlier prophecy); it may also contain elements, known from Paul's later collection, that (for whatever reason; see comment on Acts 24:17) Luke will not include.²⁸⁷ This is not the only time the Antioch church sends this pair as representatives to Jerusalem (15:2); their connection with Antioch in the context of a rift with Jerusalem also appears in a different setting in Gal 2:13.²⁸⁸ Further, if a famine occurred, Diaspora Jewish Christians might well be expected to respond in such a way;²⁸⁹ certainly, Diaspora Jews had long shown their fiscal loyalty to Jerusalem

283. With, e.g., Chrys. *Hom. Acts 25* (Martin, *Acts*, 150–51), on caring for the poor (given Chrysostom's own associations with Antioch, his appreciation for this model is not surprising). From a Majority World perspective, this text also models “stewardship without paternalism” (Kisau, “Acts,” 1321).

284. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 482–83, cites also an extrabiblical reference to Jerusalem elders in SEG 8.170.9. For fuller discussion of background, see comment on Acts 14:23.

285. Pace Bauckham, “James,” 433. He finds doubtful the comparison with elders functioning alongside tribal princes in the Pentateuch (430; cf. Deut 5:23; Josh 24:1; 1 Kgs 8:1; 2 Chr 5:2; Isa 3:14; Bar 1:4).

286. Haenchen, *Acts*, 375n4; e.g., 1 Chr 29:5, 8. In the NT, διὰ χειρὸς appears only in Acts (Acts 2:23; 7:25; 11:30; 15:23).

287. For the visit's occurring after Agrippa's death in 44 C.E., see, e.g., Peterson, *Acts*, 358. For one discussion of the offering here in light of information about the collection in Paul's letters, see Horn, “Kollektenthematik.”

288. Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 559 (though unsure whether the sending in Acts 15:1–5 represents a separate event or a doublet of this one).

289. Marshaling considerable evidence, Watson, “Collection,” argues that Paul's collection is rooted in Jewish practices of aid for the poor. It would have been less intelligible, and hence more difficult to raise money, among those without a synagogue background.

in their annual half-shekel tax.²⁹⁰ In such a case, like other Diaspora communities, they would send trusted representatives,²⁹¹ and it would be natural in a case like this one, where it was possible, to send representatives who knew Jerusalem well.²⁹²

Other historically plausible views have also been suggested, although in the absence of other sources they necessarily require a greater degree of speculation. Some scholars think that Luke created this visit out of other data (such as Paul's later collection).²⁹³ Although this suggestion is not impossible, it is not strictly necessary; Paul's commitment to the collection in his writings of the mid-50s need not imply that he had never before been involved in such an undertaking.²⁹⁴ Indeed, an undertaking a decade or so earlier on a smaller scale could help explain what was the seed for his larger plan later in his ministry, though Luke does not report the larger one (see comment on Acts 24:17).²⁹⁵ (Some suggest that there were multiple collections.)²⁹⁶ Or this could be a trip by Barnabas and some other colleague into which Luke has compressed Paul's later collection activity because he cannot focus on it later yet wishes to include its most important point (including Paul's concern for the Jerusalem poor; cf. Gal 2:10) here.²⁹⁷

Many others see this visit as the Jerusalem visit of Gal 2:1–10, citing discrepancies between Gal 2 and Acts 15;²⁹⁸ Luke's emphasis on concern for believers' sharing leads to the emphasis described here (cf. Gal 2:10).²⁹⁹ But the parallels between Gal 2 and Acts 15 are far stronger than any discrepancies; parallels seem compelling (see comment there), and the discrepancies can be explained mostly on the basis of the writers' different perspectives and agendas.

A major objection to Acts 15 representing Gal 2 is that Gal 2:1 sounds like Paul's *second* visit to Jerusalem (1:18). (Others use the same argument to make Acts 11:30 and Acts 15 doublets for the same visit.) But must it really disallow the possibility of brief intervening trips? Paul's point in Galatians is to define his relations with the

290. Some compare Paul's collection with the half-shekel temple tax (esp. Nickle, *Collection*, 74–99; cf. Panikulam, *Koinōnia*, 36ff.; Bruce, *Commentary*, 429n28), though a larger component of the imagery is probably the nations bringing tribute (e.g., Isa 60:5–11; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 93). Some count the collection's voluntary character against the temple-tax parallel (Witherington, *Corinthians*, 426n62), but the analogy may be useful without being exact.

291. De Ridder, *Discipling*, 125; Nickle, *Collection*, 130. The number of delegates was also not unusual (cf. Betz, *Corinthians*, 72).

292. Admittedly, Barnabas was closer to the apostles than Saul had been (Gal 1:18–19; cf. 2:13; though cf. Acts 9:27–28), and it would have taken some of his boldness for Paul to venture back to this city (cf. Acts 9:29).

293. Cf. Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:131–32; Johnson, *Acts*, 208 (though noting that every detail disagrees); cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 158 (though he ultimately regards another view as more likely).

294. Blomberg, *Poverty*, 178n5.

295. Nickle, *Collection*, 72; Witherington, *Acts*, 426n62. Occam's razor in this case might cut either way; is it simpler to assume a single collection explaining all the reports or to accept the reports we have in Acts and the Pauline corpus that imply two collections, each mentioned only by the other source? But in the final analysis, the two-collections explanation seems somewhat simpler to me because to harmonize the two requires explaining Barnabas in the one report though his presence seems impossible in the later corpus (only Acts details when Barnabas and Paul stopped traveling together, but 1 Thess 1:1 implies that Silas was Paul's traveling companion by the time he reached Macedonia; cf. 2 Cor 1:19; 2 Thess 1:1).

296. Watson, "Collection," 183–84, concludes that the collection reflected common early Christian practice of caring for the poor.

297. Streeter, *Gospels*, 556–57n1 (following Renan), thinks that Luke knew of a trip undertaken by Barnabas and another person and wrongly assumed that the other was Paul. A deliberate foreshortening of narratives would, however, seem more likely.

298. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 90–97, 375, 440–43; Hoerber, "Galatians and Acts"; Morgado, "Paul in Jerusalem"; Faw, *Acts*, 170; Larkin, *Acts*, 218; Schnabel, *Mission*, 988–92; Rainer Riesner, "Pauline Chronology," 20, attributes this view to a "growing number of exegetes." Cf. Bunine, "Réception," suggesting that Luke moved the Jerusalem Council to Acts 15 but that it occurred here in his source.

299. Witherington, *Acts*, 375.

Twelve, not to recount any minor journeys to Jerusalem;³⁰⁰ he may have recounted only visits where his purpose included conferring with the apostles. Further, that details sometimes slipped Paul's memory elsewhere (1 Cor 1:14–16, if this is not a rhetorical device) means that he need not have recalled every detail, relevant or not; Galatians, though not a totally spontaneous composition, was undoubtedly composed with less forethought than was Acts. Further, Acts 11:30 could be a later trip, placed here because it involves the *future* famine that Agabus prophesied, fulfilled only later in Claudius's time (11:28). (That the trip is later is probable; the problem with attempting to date this trip after the Jerusalem Council, however, is that Barnabas and Saul were no longer traveling companions after 15:39 nor working directly for the church in Antioch. If it is Paul's later collection, mentioned only in passing in 24:17, Luke has certainly exercised more literary liberty than is usual for him.)

Another objection, often unstated, might be that some scholars wish to date Galatians early to deny that justification by faith is a late development in Paul's theology.³⁰¹ This interest is understandable, but even the most conservative scholars will agree that, by itself, this should not dictate the outcome of our inquiry, which should follow the best textual evidence rather than follow pragmatic lines. In any case, 1 Thessalonians (probably Paul's earliest letter) already provides a basic outline of the gospel message,³⁰² even if not as explicit or directed to the same polemical settings as Romans and Galatians later. The evidence seems to me to better fit a correspondence with the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15; see comment there.

More important than ascertaining the precise events that lay behind Luke's narrative is hearing the point that he makes from them. The church members' caring for one another's economic needs (2:44–45; 4:32–27; 6:1) had now crossed geographic and (given the Gentile Christian influx, 11:20) even ethnic and cultural boundaries. Luke's model of economic sharing should extend beyond the local level (outside Jerusalem, e.g., 9:36, 39) to believers from other peoples and places. This sharing stresses the church's ideal translocal unity, including economic unity. If Luke hoped that his readers would embrace his views, he would certainly be sorely disappointed by modern Western Christendom.

Yet Luke's views on the matter hardly formed in a vacuum. Paul also agrees that believers in one location are obligated to care for needy believers in other parts of the world (2 Cor 8:13–14); because Paul's later collection included Macedonia (Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:5; 2 Cor 8:1; 9:2–4) and was a major component of the trip surveyed in Acts 20:3–5, Luke (present from 20:5 forward) certainly knew Paul's collection and the ideology behind it, though he did not report it (apart from 24:17). But whereas Paul emphasizes the salvation-historical dimension of the connection between the Jerusalem church and Gentile believers in the Diaspora (Rom 15:27; cf. Gal 2:10), Luke emphasizes the ideal of *κοινωνία*, economic partnership,³⁰³ already modeled in the earliest church after Pentecost (Acts 2:44–45).³⁰⁴ Just as Stephen and Philip, like the apostles before them, began in a ministry of service to the poor before their public preaching ministries (6:3–5, 8), so Barnabas and Saul serve the poor before their coming mission (13:1–4).

300. With Robinson, *Redating*, 40.

301. Campbell, *Deliverance*, 197–98, who rejects “justification theory,” notes the convenience of the early date for justification's supporters (although most would not regard this date as necessary for their view).

302. First Thessalonians employs *πίστις* or *πιστεύω* thirteen times, especially for embracing the gospel message; it speaks of deliverance from God's wrath, etc.; see more fully Kim, *New Perspective*, 85–99.

303. See comment on Acts 2:42 (though Paul also uses the term in explaining the collection, Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:13; cf. Gal 2:9–10).

304. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 208.

Luke interrupts his narrative here and completes it at 12:25, revealing that the entire process took place over time and perhaps also implying that Paul again came to Jerusalem at a dangerous time (12:1–3). Temporary suspension of narrative and other forms of suspense were common in ancient novels,³⁰⁵ but they also appear in other genres. Thus Polybius leaves Carthage about to destroy Rome at the end of book 3 of his *History of the Roman Republic*, then shifts to an account of Greece during the same period, returning to Rome only later. This approach fits the needs of chronology (as noted above, geography and chronology offered competing demands) but also creates suspense.³⁰⁶

Though Luke's arrangement of the narrative is due partly to competing demands of chronology and geography (as noted), the Antioch church's gift to Jerusalem frames it in such a way as to imply (at least on the narrative level) some sort of relationship. Certainly the Jerusalem church was oppressed and needed outside help; a situation like that depicted in Acts 12 might allow a few prominent Christian landowners in Jerusalem (12:12–13), but they might have trouble attracting many new ones.³⁰⁷ Moreover, it appears that the Antioch church's leading emissaries came to Jerusalem (their long-standing "home") at a time of great danger (whether before or during the prophesied famine), perhaps leaving only when Agrippa died (12:24–25). Because of Luke's historical method, we cannot be certain when this happened historically, but what we gather from the way the narrative world is portrayed is the narrative impression that Paul and Barnabas shared some of the Jerusalem apostles' period of potential peril. Possibly some other Antioch Christians accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the ship to Caesarea and by land to Jerusalem, for safety's sake (Mark returned with them from Jerusalem, 12:25), but Luke focuses on the key individuals for his account.

305. E.g., Heliod. *Eth.* 1.1 (opening in the middle of a scene whose background does not appear until 5.28–33); 2.11; 2.25–4.21; in fictitious dialogue in Philost. *Hrk.* 25.16–17.

306. Likewise, in a different narrative genre, Cicero teases his audience, taking the story forward, thwarting expectations and asking, "Are you expecting more?" before reaching the climax of Verres's crime (*Verr.* 2.5.5.10–11). Luke's break does not so much produce a parenthetical narrative (Acts 1:18–19 suits that better) but certainly isolates 12:1–24 as a distinct unit.

307. On the confiscation of property in antiquity, see comment on Acts 18:2.

PETER VERSUS HEROD (12:1–24)

The narrative has shifted back and forth between Paul (Luke’s primary agent of the foreign Gentile mission) and Peter (leader of the Jerusalem apostles); this is the last major narrative with Peter as the central human character. During a previous persecution, the apostles remained in Jerusalem (8:1); now the persecution becomes so harsh that even Peter leaves (12:17), if only for a time (cf. 12:23; 15:7). The locus of God’s activity, and focus of Luke’s narrative, is gradually shifting. God continues to be active in the Jerusalem church, as 21:20 demonstrates, but especially if Luke’s ideal audience hears this work anytime after 66 C.E., it will know that the movement’s future must lie beyond Jerusalem.

In 10:1–11:18, an apostle welcomed a military officer of Rome into God’s people. Here the supposedly pro-Roman king of Judea, like the Sanhedrin before him, opposes the same apostle—contributing (along with, ironically, Agrippa’s own acceptance of pagan values) to the king’s own demise (12:23). (Historically, Agrippa’s catering to Jewish nationalism indeed seems to have encouraged nationalist resistance to Rome, although he undoubtedly would have tried to check this trend had he survived.) Yet it is the Jewish rather than the Roman perspective that is most vital here. Although it is not yet time for the kingdom to be restored to Israel (1:6–7), Luke leaves no doubt that Jesus’s apostolic witnesses (1:8) are God’s agents, who (like Israel’s ancient prophets) bear an authority ultimately more consequential than that of political authorities.

That the mission of Paul and Barnabas to serve the Jerusalem church frames the account of Agrippa’s persecution suggests that (in terms of narrative implications, not necessarily historical chronology) representatives of the Antioch church face risks and share the Jerusalem church’s sufferings. It is also part of Luke’s technique for transitioning from a story especially about Peter and the Jerusalem church to his story about Paul and the Gentile mission, in this section of Acts cutting back and forth between them (Paul or the Antioch church in 7:58–8:3; 9:1–31; 11:19–30; 12:25–13:3; Peter or the Jerusalem church in 8:14–25; 9:32–11:18; 12:1–24). Once Peter leaves Jerusalem (12:17), the narrative soon follows Paul through the rest of Acts (12:25–28:31).

1. Peter’s Deliverance (12:1–17)

Although James dies, God’s angel rescues Peter from prison and imminent execution. Ironically, however, neither he nor the people praying for him initially believe it. This irony is close to the heart of the narrative, reminding the reader that although God often acts behind the scenes or through angels, it is still God’s purposes, rather than the excellence or faith of the narrative’s chief human characters, that drive the church’s expanding mission.

Agrippa I is the most dangerous and potentially lethal human oppressor of the church in Luke's narrative so far. Granted, he is less personally committed to destroying the young movement than Paul had been, and in focusing on the leaders, he possibly participated in the killing of fewer Christians than Paul had (we do not know how many of Paul's detainees died). Nevertheless, he succeeds in killing one apostle and nearly kills a second; he also holds more power to expand the persecution than previous oppressors had. The hostility of this king thus raises the narrative's suspense to a new level.

a. Introduction

Although martyr stories constitute a common genre or topic,¹ this passage is hardly a martyr story. James's execution is mentioned almost in passing to build suspense for Peter's situation, which leads to escape. For whatever reasons (such as for positive legal precedents, for miraculous demonstrations of God's power, or for "marketability" in Theophilus's circle), Luke keeps his narrative focus mostly positive and upbeat. Stephen's martyrdom is depicted in detail to provide Luke's sufficient sample, though even here positive (albeit inadvertent) effects are described (8:4). Other martyrdoms are, generally, at most hinted at (9:1; 22:4)² or passed over quickly (12:2; 26:10 [if not a generalizing plural]), and Luke ends his work happily without explicit reference to Paul's martyrdom (28:31). Luke probably writes for a church that needs to be ready for persecution (cf. Luke 9:23; 14:26–27; Acts 14:22) but is not facing major persecution (except perhaps ridicule) at the time.³ Luke's portrayal of the persecution is less fresh and less angry than Paul's (1 Thess 2:14–16).

Even after Peter departs from Jerusalem, however, Luke is not quite finished with the events of Acts 12:1–17; the passage goes on to speak of Herod's miserable death (12:23). His description fits typical pictures of the divinely ordained, horrible ends of tyrants in Jewish literature (see comment on Acts 12:23) and carries forward the narrative contrast between the powerful oppressor and the powerless saints who depend on God.⁴

Some scholars point to the persecution of Acts 12 and argue that it explains why the base for the Gentile mission dare not be Jerusalem, justifying the shift in narrative.⁵ The persecution and the need for Antioch's offering do indicate that the church is stronger if not dependent on the circumstances of any one location. But we should also keep in mind that Jerusalem is not persecuting Jewish Christians in 21:20, though fiercely opposed to the Gentile mission (22:21–22); even in a single location, time may bring change. What the opposition of 12:1–3 (and especially its popular support base, 12:3; cf. 12:11) reveals is that the church cannot depend on the vagaries of popular support in any one location (cf. Luke 23:21); it must be universal if it is to flourish.⁶

Dibelius thinks the section legendary but nevertheless preserved carefully by Luke in the form in which it reached him, since it presupposed knowledge of John Mark

1. E.g., 2 Macc 6–7; Wis 2:12–20; CPJ 2:55–107, §§154–59. See fuller discussion at Acts 7:54–60.

2. Whether to de-emphasize Paul's role in saints' deaths or (by contrast) to emphasize his harshness by implication though in historical fact he had not killed anyone.

3. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 25, noting the same phenomena, attributes them to Luke's possible warning against "a martyr complex," but I think this less likely. In any case, Luke's work is less overshadowed by the specter of persecution than is Mark's Gospel.

4. Cf. Maciel del Río, "Pedro dormía" (emphasizing that political powerbrokers are not the final arbiters of history).

5. Witherington, *Acts*, 383.

6. If I am correct in dating Acts after 70 C.E., Jerusalem's fall would confirm the same point for Luke's audience with greater finality.

(12:12) and James the Just (12:17).⁷ Given our greater confidence in Luke's literary skills, we would attribute this presupposed knowledge not to Luke's source but to Luke himself; his ideal audience knows something more of these stories than we generally can today. Still, Luke's oral source here provides him substantial material.⁸ Although the section is full of strong literary connections with other material in Luke-Acts, the timing fits Agrippa's brief reign, the escape fits Jerusalem's topography, and Agrippa's death fits Josephus's account. (Agrippa's personality depicted here also fits the more negative side of his personality in Josephus.) Agrippa was a popular king, and it would not make sense to have invented his persecution of the church if it did not occur. As noted below, James (who figures heavily in gospel tradition) probably did die at this time, whereas Peter did not (Gal 2:9; cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 9:5).

The oral story on which Luke here depends may have been shaped, from its first telling, by the events of Agrippa's time. If most Jerusalemites had viewed Caligula's sudden assassination as judgment for opposing God's temple,⁹ Agrippa's sudden death for accepting divine praise would fit the same pattern. By claiming the right to take the lives of God's people (12:1–3), Agrippa had usurped a divine prerogative; God countered this offense both by sparing one of his servants (12:3) and by taking Agrippa's life (12:23).

Luke frequently parallels Peter, Paul, and some other characters in Acts with Jesus.¹⁰ Whereas Peter is not executed (in contrast to Stephen, whose martyrdom follows details of Jesus's), there are clear parallels between this final major story of Peter in Acts and Luke's passion narrative for Jesus. Johnson provides one of the most complete summaries:¹¹

Jesus in Luke 22–24	Peter in Acts 12
Passover setting (22:1)	Passover setting (12:2)
A Herod is among the powerful oppressors (23:6–12; Acts 4:27)	Herod is the powerful oppressor (12:1)
Laying on hands (9:44; 20:19)	Laying on hands (12:1)
“Arresting” (22:54)	“Arresting” (12:3)
“Handing over” (23:25; 24:7)	“Handing over” (12:4)
“Angels” announce to women (24:23)	An angel guides Peter (12:7–10), and he announces his freedom to a woman (12:13)
Women are disbelieved (24:11), and disciples later disbelieve “for joy” (24:41)	Rhoda leaves Peter “because of joy” (12:14), and disciples disbelieve her (12:15)
The disciples think Jesus a “ghost” (24:37)	The disciples think Peter a ghost of sorts (12:15)
After conversation, Jesus withdraws (24:51)	After conversation, Peter withdraws (12:17)

Wall rightly notes that these parallels facilitate Luke's transition from Peter to James in the Jewish mission and from Peter to Paul in the Gentile mission.¹²

7. Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 21. Dibelius's view is more defensible than that in MacDonald, “Acts 12:1–17 and Iliad 24” (despite MacDonald's undeniable ingenuity, more helpfully displayed at some other points); MacDonald argues that Luke composed this passage as a retelling of Hom. *Il.* 24, with an angelic appearance, an escape, and a gate scene. The parallels are tenuous: whereas angels, escapes, and gates are common, Acts, e.g., does not include a handing over of a corpse, lacks a parallel to the miraculous transport of Priam to beg for the body, and does not function as an anticlimactic ending. See further comment below.

8. If we need to conjecture a particular oral source, Luke could have heard from Paul (see comment on Acts 16:10) what Paul could have learned from John Mark (see Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13); this would account for the names of the homeowner (12:12) and the servant (12:13) as well as the architecture (12:13). The events of 12:20–23 were public knowledge, making a particular oral source impossible to isolate.

9. See Theissen, *Gospels*, 232.

10. See the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:555–62, and sources cited there.

11. Johnson, *Acts*, 218; for a somewhat different list, see Green, “Acts,” 751. See now even more extensively Marguerat, *Actes*, 429.

12. See Wall, “Successors to ‘Twelve.’”

b. Herod's Persecution (12:1–5)

Pleasing his constituency, Herod Agrippa I executes James and prepares to do the same with Peter after the Passover festival. Agrippa acts in character with some of what is known of him extrinsic to Acts and in character with opposition to the gospel in Acts.

I. KING HEROD AGRIPPA I (12:1)

Agrippa I had curried favor with influential people in Rome until achieving the authorization to rule Judea and eventually being sent back to Judea to rule. Josephus's portrait of this king is fairly positive, but it is also clear that Agrippa remained eager to please his constituency. Luke's name for him ironically links him with his relative "Herod" (Antipas), also a persecutor of God's servants.

(1) Agrippa as King

Agrippa I assumed control of Philip's tetrarchy in 37 C.E., added Galilee and Perea at Antipas's exile in 39, and in 41 received all Judea.¹³ Although he came to power through his friendship with Caligula, he was unable to relocate to Judea until after Gaius Caligula's assassination in 41, when Agrippa, sent by Claudius, achieved the height of his power.¹⁴ He reigned in Judea only briefly, dying in (possibly) 43 or (much more likely) 44.

Although Agrippa was particularly loved by his people and known for his piety (see comment on Acts 12:3), this affection was partly due to contrast with the other alternatives since self-rule under the Hasmoneans. Agrippa's youth was notoriously dissolute; he squandered his wealth in Rome (Jos. *Ant.* 18.143–46) and returned to Palestine in debt and suicidal until his sister Herodias helped him (18.147–49).¹⁵ He retired to his friend Flaccus, governor of Syria, but fell out with him also (18.150–54).

He did endear himself to Gaius Caligula (18.167–68), but his desire for Caligula to become emperor (18.168) led to Agrippa's imprisonment by Tiberius (18.187) until Caligula became emperor and helped his friend (18.237; Dio Cass. 59.8.2).¹⁶ Some historians have even complained (though probably with a Roman cultural bias) that Gaius "learned unwholesome lessons from Herod Agrippa and other young Oriental princes with whom he was allowed to associate."¹⁷ Josephus claims that Agrippa's later slander against Antipas helped lead to the latter's banishment (*Ant.* 18.250–54, esp. 250); after this, Agrippa added Antipas's territories of Galilee and Perea to his own. Although the Jewish people had good reason to appreciate him, Luke is not condemning a persecutor who lacked known character flaws.

Agrippa had long socialized on familiar terms with the politically powerful. Agrippa was lavish with gifts to Caesar's freedmen, seeking to acquire favor even to the point of ruining himself financially (Jos. *Ant.* 18.145). He further borrowed a million drachmas from one of Caesar's freedmen, lavishing the surplus (after paying his previous debt) on honoring Gaius Caligula (18.167). Although politics may have informed his choice of friends, he was not always politically discreet; indicating his hope that

13. For discussion of Agrippa I, see Stern, "Herod," 288–300 (and bibliography, 304–5); Feldman in *Josephus*, LCL, 9:474–75; Reicke, *Era*, 195–97.

14. The assassination did not upset the legal status of client kings whom Gaius appointed; see Wardle, "Caligula and Client Kings."

15. Agrippa reportedly exchanged drunken taunts with Herod (Jos. *Ant.* 18.150).

16. Josephus lacks incentive to connect Agrippa (whom he likes) with Caligula (whom by Josephus's day no one liked), unless for historical reasons, i.e., that his sources supported this connection.

17. Dudley, *Civilization of Rome*, 162.

Tiberius would die and Caligula would become emperor led to his ruin (18.168); fortunately for him, Tiberius died soon after and Caligula succeeded him.

Josephus shows, however, that Agrippa would expend his political favor on behalf of his people when necessary; this helps to explain his popularity with people who hated his old friend Caligula. Living in Rome, Agrippa acquired increasing favor with Gaius Caligula and threw him the most splendid of banquets (*Ant.* 18.289). Having drunk too much and not wanting Agrippa to outdo his own generosity (18.291), Gaius promised Agrippa whatever he wanted, expecting him to request a territory or wealth (18.292–93). Instead, Agrippa requested that Gaius not set up his image in the temple (18.296–97); he would have been risking his life with this request had not Gaius first made the offer (18.298), but because he had promised publicly (18.299), Gaius sent to Petronius to remove the statue (18.300–301).¹⁸ Assuming the essential reliability of Josephus's account, Agrippa's zeal to show himself orthodox (despite having partied with the Roman elite in Rome) makes sense for one who had already risked his neck to protest Gaius's desecration of the sanctuary.

After Gaius Caligula's death, Josephus claims that it was especially Agrippa who persuaded Claudius to lay hold on the kingdom (*Ant.* 19.236).¹⁹ Josephus also claims that Agrippa encouraged Claudius to treat the senators more gently, thus reconciling them (19.265–66). Soon after his accession, Claudius decreed that Agrippa would have the kingdom Gaius had already assigned to him (19.274), and sent him to Judea (19.292).²⁰ Agrippa thus received a third of his ancestral kingdom (*Philo Flacc.* 25).

(2) Agrippa as "Herod"

It seems odd at first that Luke calls King Agrippa I "Herod the king." Although the title "king" is fully appropriate for a Herod who was king,²¹ the name "Herod" allows for less informed hearers' confusion with another "Herod the king" (Luke 1:5) and another oppressive Herod more prominent in Luke's narrative (Antipas the tetrarch; 3:1, 19; 9:7, 9; 13:31; 23:7–15; Acts 4:27; 13:1).²² Sometimes Josephus calls Antipas the tetrarch simply "Herod" (*Ant.* 18.104–6, 243–55), but he regularly calls Agrippa I "Agrippa." (I use Josephus's title to avoid historical confusion with Luke's other Herods.)

Certainly Luke's varying depiction of these characters reveals that he distinguishes them, does not confuse them, and takes for granted historical knowledge on the part of at least the most informed members of his audience. From a literary standpoint, however, this sharing of names connects the various characters who share the name;²³

18. He nevertheless ordered Petronius to kill himself when he learned that the latter had not yet erected the statue (*Jos. Ant.* 18.302–4); the order was prevented only by Gaius's prior death (18.305–9).

19. More fully, *Jos. Ant.* 19.236–44. Of course, Josephus may simply be exalting a Jewish leader here; Philo earlier (but with different rhetorical agendas) narrates Agrippa's success (*Embassy* 333) but also Caligula's further hostile plans (334–37).

20. Cf. Agrippa's earlier commission to Syria in *Philo Embassy* 179.

21. The title appears for other Herods (cf. perhaps *Pers. Sat.* 5.180, though this may be Herod the Great), including Archelaus (*Dio Cass.* 55.27.6; he used the title on his coinage, as noted by E. Cary in *Dio Cassius*, LCL, 6:465n2) and Antipas (*Dio Cass.* 60.8.3; Mark 6:14, 22, 25–27; though in fact he was only a tetrarch). Josephus mentions about seven or eight other Herods (Williams, "Names," 98); kinship in the family fit traditional patterns (see Hanson, "Herodians and Kinship"). Ancient audiences would be more prepared than modern ones to recognize multiple "Caesars," "Ptolemies," "Candaces," and common names within dynasties (e.g., "Cleopatra"), and so multiple "Herods" would not surprise them.

22. Antipas ultimately lost his status by seeking the title "king" (*Jos. Ant.* 18.240–44, 250–54; *War* 2.182–83; for the danger of such presumption, cf. *Plut. Themist.* 29.5); Luke's audience might not know this, however (though cf. Mark 6:14, 22, 25–27).

23. Sievers, "Name," argues that Josephus deliberately exploits negative connotations of the name "Antiochus" in *War* 1.

the murderer of James and attempted murderer of Peter is the same type of character as the murderer of John the Baptist.²⁴ This title also prevents any confusion between Agrippa I and (in Acts 25:13, 22–26; 26:1–12, 19, 27–28, 32) Agrippa II, whose character is presented in a distinctly different and more positive way (and, it might be relevant, who further remained alive and respected even while Luke was writing). Moreover, the name “Agrippa,” unlike that of Herod, would sound positive to romanized ears.²⁵

(3) *Agrippa as Persecutor*

Agrippa persecutes some members of the movement (12:1), especially after he finds popular support for his actions (12:3). Messianists had long been a potential thorn in the side of the Herodian dynasty.²⁶ But no one had yet persecuted Christians as a revolutionary movement per se (barring the founder’s execution for *majestas*); it is unlikely that Agrippa’s motives included the suppression of political competition.²⁷ But he did strive to curry popularity with his subjects, Gentile and (especially) Jewish, just as he had with elite persons in Rome.²⁸ On this subject, see further comment at Acts 12:3.

Some scholars argue that the persecution’s target was probably especially those most open to the Gentile mission, such as Peter and one of Zebedee’s sons.²⁹ There is something to be said for this proposal, though it echoes too closely the traditional consensus on the earlier persecution in 8:1. Certainly the controversy surrounding Peter’s acceptance of uncircumcised Gentiles (11:3) would have generated friction in a period when revolutionary sentiment was growing;³⁰ although Agrippa’s reign was marked by no Roman misadministration as later became prevalent, it allowed nationalist aspirations to flourish in a way that had not been possible since the death of Herod the Great. This was especially true in the wake of Caligula’s death after he had sought to desecrate the temple, widely seen as divine judgment. Anyone thought to oppose the temple (a charge that had been associated with some Christians, 6:14) thus invited triumphalist repression; even in Alexandria the turn of events agitated some Alexandrian Jews against Gentile Alexandrians,³¹ with serious long-range repercussions. What renders this view open to some suspicion is that it reproduces Luke’s

24. See Allen, *Death of Herod*, 23; Spencer, “Approaches,” 405; Witherington, *Acts*, 382; Weaver, *Epiphany*, 209–10 (suggesting “a conscious name-play”); Marguerat, *Actes*, 431. Because John’s beheading (Luke 9:9) foreshadows Jesus’s passion, James’s beheading by another Herod raises suspense regarding Peter (Parsons, *Acts*, 171).

25. Agrippa was traditionally a Roman family name (e.g., Sen. *Y. Ben.* 6.32.2–4; Tac. *Ann.* 1.3, 4, 12; 2.39; Suet. *Aug.* 16, 19, 25; *Cal.* 7; *Claud.* 18; *Tib.* 7; *Tit.* 7, 8); so also the feminine “Agrippina” (e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 1.33, 41, 44; 3.17, 18; 4.75; 11.12).

26. Cf. Atkinson, “Herodian Origin” (on Pss. *Sol.* 17; 4Q161; 4Q285; 4Q246; 4Q252; 4Q174).

27. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 247. Others have suggested revolutionary associations with Simon “Baryona” (Matt 16:17), a rebel title (cf. *b. Git.* 56a), and “sons of thunder” (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 640–41; but there is no agreement on the background of “sons of thunder,” e.g., Buth, “BONEPEFEM”; Rook, “Boanerges”; Beattie, “Boanerges”). The Akkadian connection for *baryona* (Cullmann, *State*, 16; Theissen, *Sociology*, 11) is grasping at straws. But nationalists gave Agrippa little trouble.

28. So also Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 248 (citing Jos. *Ant.* 19.328–31).

29. Riesner, *Early Period*, 123. Less plausibly, Knox, *Jerusalem*, 168–69, thinks that Agrippa targeted the Galileans, because Jerusalemite leaders were now on good terms with the Pharisees. But by this point the Galilean apostles had lived in Jerusalem for more than a decade.

30. Further, the situation “can hardly have been helped” by memories of Stephen’s earlier preaching (Acts 6:14) and, especially, recent news of Gentile conversions without circumcision (11:20–22; Judge, *Pattern*, 66).

31. See Theissen, *Gospels*, 232. Some argue that Christians’ inability to support other Jerusalemites’ opposition to Caligula (partly because of Christian eschatology) led to a serious breach (Taylor, “Jerusalem and Temple”).

perspective on the overarching problem in a place where not even Luke, who has every reason to report it if his sources allowed him to do so, presents this perspective.

Still, in support of the basic idea is the narrative's assumption that James the Lord's brother could lead the Jerusalem church in a way that Peter no longer could (12:17). Peter's Gentile commitments (cf. 11:3) may have compromised him politically among the pious masses in Jerusalem in ways that James the Lord's brother's obvious devotion to the law may not have (cf. Gal 2:12),³² helping to explain subsequent efforts to conciliate conservatives. Thus James was a natural leader to lead that part of the Jesus movement forward (Acts 12:17), and he did, indeed, prove successful both in witness (21:20) and in forging compromises that preserved the church's cross-cultural unity without raising tensions for the church in Jerusalem (15:19–21; though cf. Gal 2:12).

Moreover, it is fairly certain that both Gaius Caligula and Agrippa, in their opposite ways, helped shape a tide of nationalism that yielded a bitter harvest a generation later, evident in Acts 21:21, 28–30; 22:21–22 but especially in the Judean revolt that began in 66 C.E. Gaius's order to set up his image in Jerusalem's temple (Jos. *Ant.* 18.261) proliferated resistance against Rome (18.263–64, 270–72),³³ and his death provoked confidence that God would help God's people defeat Rome. Josephus himself viewed Gaius's death as divine judgment (18.305–9), as did (in his narrative) the Roman governor of Syria, Petronius (18.309), and Philo (who predicted it, 18.260). The short-lived hopes stirred by a Jewish king who (far more than Herod the Great) showed respect for the law restored the popular plausibility of imminent eschatology.

What is clear from the narrative is that the authorities targeted especially the movement's leaders (Acts 12:2–3); that Peter was not in hiding but susceptible to arrest when Agrippa found this move convenient (12:3) and that presumably known Christians retained their property (12:12) reinforces this impression. Authorities often targeted only movements' ringleaders at first,³⁴ as the Jerusalem authorities had initially settled for arresting Jesus and letting his disciples escape (Mark 14:50–52; cf. Acts 4:13, 21). As a rule in antiquity, prominent individuals were most often the targets.³⁵ Removing leaders often was sufficient to kill a nascent movement and could even weaken political bodies of long standing (e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 12.30.4).

Although most scholars (including, tentatively, myself) date the famine somewhat later, the persecution could have coincided with the food shortage mentioned in Acts 11:28. In that case, it may have appeared good politics to distract public attention from the famine itself by dealing strictly with a group that some may have suggested as a scapegoat (like the Christians for Nero in Tac. *Ann.* 15.44), a group supposed to have invited divine judgment (cf. 2 Sam 21:1–9).³⁶

That Agrippa "laid hands" on some in the church (in contrast to the positive use of laying hands, e.g., Acts 6:6) might recall the warning of Luke 21:12, where disciples'

32. His lengthy absences from Jerusalem (Acts 9:32–11:2) may also be relevant, but it appears that at least at some point, James also engaged in ministry travels (1 Cor 9:5).

33. This was not the first time Jews gathered to protest, but this proved a particularly aggressive and effective occasion, notably including (Jos. *Ant.* 18.270–72) forty days' protests in Tiberias, with farmers neglecting their fields.

34. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.40.3.

35. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 5.43.2; Phaedrus 1.21.1–2; 2.7.14–15; 3.5.1; 4.6.11–13; Babrius 4.6–8; 31.23–24; 64.10–11; Corn. Nep. 1 (Miltiades), 7.5–6; 2 (Themistocles), 8.1–7; 3 (Aristides), 1.1–5; 7 (Alcibiades), 4.1–2.

36. Later Celsus urged that no deity would avenge the persecution of Christians (Cook, *Interpretation*, 89–90).

enemies would “lay hands” on them, bringing them before kings and imprisoning them (cf. Acts 12:4–5);³⁷ but the hair on their heads would not perish (Luke 21:18), and they would gain their lives (21:19).³⁸ More important, the wording also prepares for Acts 12:11, where God has delivered Peter from Herod’s “hand.” The use of *κακῶω* is frequent in the LXX (more than sixty times)³⁹ but appears in the NT only in Acts (7:6, 19; 12:1; 14:2; 18:10) and in 1 Pet 3:13. Most of these uses apply to the sufferings of Christians (ironically in Acts 14:2; 18:10, to Jewish opposition to Paul); those that are clear biblical allusions are 7:6, 19, referring to Pharaoh’s oppression of God’s people (Gen 15:13; Exod 1:11; 5:22–23). Given the explicit setting of Passover (Acts 12:3–4), Luke might implicitly present Herod against the backdrop of the prototypical tyrant and oppressor of Israel, Pharaoh,⁴⁰ though the allusions are limited (see comment on Acts 12:4).

II. BEHEADING JAMES (12:2)

Some apostles have remained in Jerusalem (8:1) or have returned there (11:2), but now Jerusalem is also the preferred residence of the new king (Jos. *Ant.* 19.331),⁴¹ which increases the difficulties of evading his attention. Only the bare fact of James’s execution is narrated,⁴² without further description that would supply pathos to the narrative.⁴³ (Church tradition elaborated further, so that James converted his jailer, leading to the execution of both together.)⁴⁴ A good historian was to focus on what was important rather than what was not (Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 13),⁴⁵ and Luke is more interested in recounting a deliverance and its relation to his theme of prayer (Acts 12:5, 12) than in elaborating James’s death. That the names “James” (12:17) and “John” (12:12) both quickly recur, for different characters from those mentioned here, is not surprising in view of the commonness of both names in this period.⁴⁶

37. It would also precede “famines” (Luke 21:11; cf. Acts 11:28). This idiom for hostile “laying on hands” appears elsewhere (Luke 20:19; Acts 4:3; 5:18; 21:27).

38. The dangerous urgency may explain why Peter does not also appear in court to testify here (Luke 21:13–15), in contrast to disciples in some other detentions in Acts (Acts 5:26; 24:27; 26:32; cf. 17:10).

39. As Haenchen, *Acts*, 381n3, emphasizes.

40. With also Allen, *Death of Herod*, 98; for God “striking” Pharaoh, cf. p. 104 (citing Exod 3:20; 7:25, 27; 9:15; 12:12; Acts 12:23). Genesis and Exodus themselves apply the term *κακῶω* not only to Israel’s oppressors but to the danger of God’s people abusing power over others (Gen 16:6; Exod 22:21–23). For traditions coalescing the images of oppressors, see, e.g., Matt 2:16; Pharaoh and Haman in Qur’an 28.6, 8 (but Haman works for Pharaoh, 28.38; cf. 29.39). Tyrants took on typical traits in literary portrayals, as in Caesar’s depiction of Ariovistus (Vasaly, “Characterization,” 247–51) or post-Flavian portrayals of Domitian (often noted, e.g., Vout, “Emperor,” 261), although historically as well as literarily, power probably corrupted many of them similarly.

41. Although he usually resided there, he did spend time in Berytus (Jos. *Ant.* 19.335–37) and in Tiberias (19.338–42) and came to Caesarea, where he died (19.343–52). Judea’s Roman governors normally spent most of the year in Caesarea.

42. “The wording conveys the impression of a summary execution” (Haenchen, *Acts*, 382, comparing Mark 6:27–28).

43. Rhetoricians complained if historians failed to evoke the appropriate horror for sufferings (e.g., Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 15), though more restrained historians sometimes critiqued the sensationalism of others who overemphasized such pathos (e.g., Polyb. 2.56.7–11).

44. Euseb. *H.E.* 2.9.1–3. Since it is doubtful that Luke would have known such a story and not reported it or that it was known in his day but not reported to Luke with the rest of the account, it appears improbable enough that we may ascribe the story to legendary embellishment; a similar rabbinic martyr story reinforces this probability (cf. *b. Abod. Zar.* 18a, in Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 244, although this story includes the executioner’s suicide).

45. He expounds this more fully in Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 13–17.

46. For “James” (“Jacob”), see Williams, “Names,” 86 (including *DJD* 40, 42, 103); for “John,” 87–88. Postulating a deliberate literary connection is thus in this case tenuous.

James's death is not shocking to Luke's audience, though it must have shaken the earliest church in Jerusalem.⁴⁷ Luke clearly applies Luke 9:27 not to the second coming but rather to the transfiguration (9:28–36; as in Mark 9:1–2; Matt 16:28–17:2). Luke reports Jesus's promise that the twelve apostles would rule from twelve thrones (Luke 22:29–30; minus Judas, 22:21–22) but already understands this as potentially distant future eschatology. He also omits Mark 10:39–40, which could suggest that James and John would die the same way or at the same time (though it need not be so understood).⁴⁸ Although such matters were not a problem for Luke, they must have caused some confusion for the Jerusalem church. There is no reason to question the historicity of James's early martyrdom, which fits the tradition in Mark 10:39; that his brother John's is not narrated, by contrast, fits John's evident survival (Gal 2:9).⁴⁹

Such events could challenge people's faith, and Luke answers this challenge partly by the contrast with Peter's miraculous deliverance (Acts 12:7–11), which underlines God's unfettered ability to deliver and hence God's sovereign purposes even when he does not do so (cf. the apparent antinomy in Luke 12:16–19). Seneca notes that we often complain that it is unfair that one dies while another lives, but we need to trust the wisdom of the gods and of fate (*Ep. Lucil.* 93.1). Musonius had been happy about Galba's power, but at the ruler's assassination he reaffirmed that his belief in providence did not depend on Galba (*Mus. Ruf. frag.* 47, p. 140). Later rabbis recognized that the angel of death acted only at God's command,⁵⁰ and they regarded martyrdom (most evident during the Hadrianic persecution) as the ultimate expression of sanctifying God's name.⁵¹ Still, it was hard for even people of great faith not to ask why. When R. Simon and R. Ishmael were killed, R. Akiba told his disciples that they must have been taken to escape greater suffering to come (*Mek. Nez.* 18.63ff.; cf. Isa 57:1).

The most specific datum about James's execution Luke provides is that he was executed by the "sword." Although some, cognizant of genuine exodus echoes in this passage, have compared Pharaoh's "sword" in the exodus story (Exod 5:21; 15:9),⁵² the description is too common to evoke a specific passage. Decapitating enemies was also common practice in war⁵³ and other settings;⁵⁴ sometimes people were decapitated after death, and their heads displayed.⁵⁵ But it was also a common form of execution, mentioned among some other peoples⁵⁶ but most notably among Romans.⁵⁷

47. Cf. later rabbinic tales about the execution of Jesus's disciples (esp. *b. Sanh.* 43a; cf. Herford, *Christianity*, 90–95).

48. Because it contradicts later tradition, it may be thought authentic (Jeremias, *Theology*, 243–44; Hill, *Matthew*, 288; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 147). Val. Max. 1.8.ext. 17 reports, as among strange plans of Fate, that two Epicurean disciples were born the same day and in old age died in the same instant.

49. The James in that passage is clearly a different one; see Gal 1:19. For later traditions about John's extended survival, cf. early Christian tradition concerning the author of the Fourth Gospel (Keener, *John*, 91–100); the probable sense of Rev 1:1; and, much later, *Acts of John*.

50. Moore, *Judaism*, 1:410.

51. Montefiore, "Spirit of Judaism," 63; cf. *b. Pesah.* 53b; *Num. Rab.* 4:6; *Song Rab.* 2:7, §1; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:14.

52. Allen, *Death of Herod*, 99. Exod 18:4, which in the LXX changes "sword" to "hand," might, indeed, be echoed in Acts 12:11. Later rabbis depicted Moses's escape from Pharaoh's "sword" in Exod 18:4 as literal, with the sword miraculously breaking (*y. Ber.* 9:1, §8).

53. E.g., Polyb. 3.67.3; 11.30.2; 21.38.5; Livy 30.43.13; Val. Max. 2.7.12; Tac. *Hist.* 2.16.

54. E.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.14.48; Philost. *Hrk.* 28.12.

55. E.g., Virg. *Aen.* 9.465–67.

56. Cf. 2 Kgs 6:31–32. Rabbis recognized but did not usually favor decapitation as a form of capital punishment (*m. Sanh.* 7:3; cf. *b. Sanh.* 52b; *Gen. Rab.* 9:10; *Exod. Rab.* 2:4). Some other Eastern peoples practiced decapitation (Plut. *Luc.* 25.1); the rabbis anachronistically attributed it to Pharaoh (*y. Ber.* 9:1, §8). Massilia retained its ancient rusty sword for when needed (Val. Max. 2.6.7c).

57. E.g., Val. Max. 2.7.15–16; 5.8.1; Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.9.3 (280 B.C.E.); Hdn. 3.4.6; 3.7.7; Jos. *Ant.* 19.270–71; *Abot R. Nat.* 38 A (by sword); 41, §115 B (without mentioning the sword).

Given Agrippa's background in Rome, he may regard execution by the sword (cf. Rom 13:4) as the most efficient and rapid method, which was also less sadistic than more torturous methods. The two standard forms of Roman execution were the *summum supplicium*, which included such "vindictive" modes of death as drowning, burning, crucifixion, or a violent death in the arena, and *capite puniri*, "a simple death by decapitation." Decapitation could be by sword (*decollatio*) or (at least in the republic) by axe (*capitis amputatio*; Dig. 48.19.8.1–2).⁵⁸ Provincial governors could use the sword only (48.19.8.1),⁵⁹ though presumably a client king such as Agrippa could have exercised more liberty had he wished. To be executed was to "offer one's neck";⁶⁰ those who offered the neck boldly were more often decapitated with a single stroke, avoiding the more painful necessity of multiple strokes.⁶¹

Crucifixion and other such punishments were meted out to slaves and people of low status; Roman citizens and people of status more often died by decapitation, which was considered more dignified.⁶² In principle, this form of execution was supposed to be a solemn event whose contours were constrained by custom, at least in Rome (Sen. E. *Controv.* 9.2.10). That Agrippa would prefer the more merciful method of execution is not implausible; Josephus claims that on other occasions Agrippa showed mercy even to his enemies. When an interpreter of the law named Simon denounced Agrippa (Jos. *Ant.* 19.332), the latter confronted him privately (19.333), and when Simon apologized, Agrippa pardoned him and sent him away with gifts (19.334). This may have been a politically astute way to defuse enmity, but it certainly would appear merciful. On the other hand, Agrippa did not simply pardon everyone; even in his younger days, before Caligula's accession, he was severe in demanding punishments (18.183).

We need not detain ourselves with how a pious king beheaded one not guilty of murder, against Mishnaic prescriptions;⁶³ these rulings are later, may be particularly Pharisaic, and would not have constrained a Roman client king, in any case. Since the Mishnaic penalty also covers corporate apostasy (for an apostate city), it is possible that Agrippa treats James as an apostate and hence pleases "the Jews."⁶⁴ But granting that many Jews disagreed with James or even believed him in error that warranted public discipline, on what grounds would James be held guilty of apostasy?⁶⁵ And as noted, the antiquity of the rules in *m. Sanhedrin* is much in question, in any case.

58. Aune, *Revelation*, 1086; Schiemann, "Decollatio" (citing Paulus *Sent.* 5.17.2). In general, the republic employed the axe (e.g., Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.50.133; Livy 2.5.8), and the empire the sword (Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 35); but sometimes a sword was also used during the republic (Livy 39.43.2–3; Val. Max. 4.7.4). Rabbis considered the axe more merciful than Rome's sword (*m. Sanh.* 7:3), but decapitation was more merciful than some other methods (*b. Sanh.* 50a).

59. Aune, *Revelation*, 1086. Cf. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 247: as a king, he literally exercised the *ius gladii*. For governors' *imperium* for executions, see, e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 10.30.1; yet one who executed too freely might be removed from office (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.24.607).

60. Sen. Y. *Nat. Q.* 2.59.7; *Dial.* 3.18.4.

61. Sen. E. *Suas.* 6.17–18; Jos. *Ant.* 19.270–71. In practice, decapitations have often required multiple strokes; Evans, *World*, 126, notes not only later English examples (Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1586 and James, Duke of Monmouth, in 1685) but hundreds of decapitated skeletons from the Roman era, in which roughly half reveal "two or more strokes."

62. See, e.g., O'Rourke, "Law," 174; Pucci, "Arenas," 113. On crucifixion, see comment on Acts 2:23. Romans could sometimes be executed more harshly than Latins if needed, e.g., to make an example (Livy 30.43.13; Val. Max. 2.7.12).

63. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 382 (following Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:706); cf. earlier Knowling, "Acts," 272 (following J. Lightfoot and Wetstein). Scholars cite *m. Sanh.* 9:1 (but it also allows beheading for citizens of an apostate city).

64. E.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 211.

65. This may be true of the *minim*, which I admitted as background for John's Gospel given the milieu I think it addresses (Keener, *John*, 197–214). It seems less likely for James's own day, and it seems questionable whether Luke's audience would be familiar with it; but it is not impossible (2 Cor 11:24; Luke 21:12).

Beheading typically followed stripping and scourging.⁶⁶ One might be flogged, then immobilized by being tied to stakes for beheading.⁶⁷ Those who dispatched executioners sometimes demanded the disembodied head as evidence of the deed;⁶⁸ others also sent back heads⁶⁹ or displayed them vengefully or as a shocking warning (or sometimes for a lover's entertainment).⁷⁰

The vast majority of people in various cultures approved of capital punishment.⁷¹ Plato insisted that those in charge of it should be just⁷² and claimed that Socrates refused to flee unjust execution lest he undermine the authority of law, which did more good than harm.⁷³ Some disapproved of capital punishment, at least under particular circumstances.⁷⁴ Others respected those who chose not to inflict such vengeance but to reform a person,⁷⁵ or even advocated this as a better way of life.⁷⁶ Later rabbis allowed capital punishment in principle⁷⁷ but objected to its abuse⁷⁸ and evaded it in practice.⁷⁹

III. PETER'S DETENTION (12:3–5)

Catering to many Judeans' resentment of the Jesus movement, Agrippa has Peter arrested, planning to have him executed after the Passover festival.

(1) Agrippa's Political Savvy (12:3)

On the "feast of unleavened bread," which appears in Acts 12:3 in a parenthetical interposition,⁸⁰ see discussion concerning Passover at Acts 12:4. That Agrippa would act here to "please" people is in keeping with his character attested in other historical sources.⁸¹ Agrippa may have been unwise in financial matters in his youth, but he had sometimes been quite astute politically. Not only had he been an intimate "party buddy" of Caligula; his support for Claudius's bid for the throne had yielded further political power for himself.⁸²

66. E.g., Polyb. 11.30.1–2; Livy 9.24.15; 10.1.3; 26.40.13; Val. Max. 2.7.15–16. (Not all these texts mention the stripping explicitly, but it may be inferred from the scourging.)

67. E.g., Val. Max. 5.8.1 (on an early period).

68. E.g., Val. Max. 9.2.1; Hdn. 3.7.7; 8.5.9; 8.6.7.

69. E.g., Sall. *Jug.* 12.5; Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.3.1, 5; *Suas.* 6.20; Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.14.48; Sil. It. 11.319–20; Quint. Curt. 7.4.40; Plut. *Sulla* 32.2; *Caes.* 48.2; Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.8.72; 2.12.86; Arrian *Alex.* 4.17.7; Hdn. 3.7.7; 5.4.4; 8.5.9; 8.6.7; Jos. *Ant.* 20.98; 2 Kgs 10:6–7.

70. See, e.g., Polyb. 8.21.3; 11.18.6; Cic. *Phil.* 11.2.5; Virg. *Aen.* 9.465–67; Val. Max. 9.9.1; 9.10.ext. 1; Sen. E. *Controv.* 9.2.intro.; Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.8.71 (87 B.C.E.); 4.4.20; Sil. It. 2.202–5; 15.813–14; Plut. *M. Cato* 17.2–3; Cic. 49.1; Tac. *Hist.* 1.49; 2.49; 3.62; Suet. *Aug.* 13.1; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 3. Cf. Livy 39.42.8–39.43.5; Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.4.20; Tac. *Ann.* 14.57, 59, 64; Suet. *Calig.* 32.1; *Galba* 20.2; Dio Cass. 62.14.1; other executions for entertainment, e.g., Sil. It. 11.51–54; Jos. *Ant.* 13.380.

71. Germans practiced it, though differently from Romans (Tac. *Germ.* 12). The executioner's job, however, was recognized as unpleasant (Iambl. [nov.] *Bab. St.* 12, in Photius *Bibl.* 94.76a).

72. Plato *Pol.* 293D.

73. Plato *Crito* 50Cff.

74. E.g., Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.24 (though he also opposes killing animals).

75. Mus. Ruf. frg. 39, p. 136.

76. Diogenes *Ep.* 28.

77. Cf., e.g., Börner-Klein, "Killing." Earlier in Judaism, see, e.g., 11QT LI, 16–18.

78. Thoma, "Death Penalty."

79. If God wanted someone decapitated, he handed them over to the Romans or to robbers (*b. Soṭah* 8b); Rome was useful at least for this (*Gen. Rab.* 9:13; but less pleasantly, see Rome as God's chastening sword, 75:1).

80. On *interpositio*, or *parenthesis*, see Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 337.

81. Luke's portrait is selective, but then so was often that of other historians' ruler figures (see Laistner, *Historians*, 132, regarding Tacitus). Lest anyone seek to explain the similarities between Luke's and Josephus's (less negative) portrayal of Agrippa as the former's literary dependence on the latter, Mark's portrayal of Herodias also resembles Josephus's; both depend on earlier information or perspectives. Dunn, *Acts*, 162, emphasizes the distinction between Agrippa and "the Jews," based on self-consciousness of his partly Idumean ancestry (*m. Soṭah* 7:8), but this does not fit Josephus's portrait of his self-certainty.

82. Dio Cass. 60.8.2–3; Jos. *Ant.* 19.236–44.

He was also politically prudent regarding the people he governed. Caligula's attempt to desecrate the temple left Judea in ferment, and so, as soon as Agrippa returned to Judea (after Caligula's death), he identified with the most conservative sentiments of his people, thereby calming some of their hostility against Roman rule. He provided lavish gifts for the temple, provided for Nazirites, and so forth (Jos. *Ant.* 19.294).⁸³

He was able to use his influence in Rome on behalf of his people, gaining Claudius's favor for Judaism early in his reign⁸⁴ (though cf. comment on Acts 18:2). Before Caligula's death, Agrippa interceded with the emperor not to place his statue in the temple (Philo *Embassy* 276–329), offering this intercession even at grievous risk to his own status and safety, as already noted. That the Alexandrian delegation (including Philo) knew so many details about his attempted intervention suggests that word spread; such reports would have won Agrippa much favor in Judea, especially after Caligula's assassination.

Agrippa's political savvy that kept the favor of his Jewish people sometimes alienated the Gentile subjects who felt less pressed under his grandfather Herod the Great.⁸⁵ Still, Agrippa had political sensitivity even regarding Gentiles, especially outside Judea.⁸⁶ He gave generously to Gentiles and was less cruel than his grandfather (Jos. *Ant.* 19.328). He commissioned a coin for Caesarea depicting its patron deity, Tyche (Fortune).⁸⁷

When a scribe, described in the way Josephus typically describes Pharisees ("devout in the law"), publicly denounced him, Agrippa I surprisingly won him over, appeasing any conservative nationalists (*Ant.* 19.332–34), and the king otherwise followed the strict customs of the people (19.331).⁸⁸ Jewish people appreciated his piety, remembered even in much later tradition (e.g., *y. Šeqal.* 5:1).⁸⁹ Later rabbis emphasized that, despite his mixed ancestry (on Herod the Great's side), Israel welcomed him as a full Israelite.⁹⁰ They also preserve the tradition of his piety, though emphasizing that every Israelite, including King Agrippa, came before God in the temple on the same terms (*t. Bik.* 2:10). Agrippa's contacts and strong support base in Rome allowed him to cater to nationalists in a way that many other Jewish leaders would not have dared.

(2) Agrippa's Excessive Nationalism (12:3)

Nevertheless, Agrippa sometimes overplayed his power. Some scholars suggest that flaunting his magnificence in Alexandria may have contributed to the immediate backlash against Jews there;⁹¹ nor does Luke praise him for his humility (Acts 12:22–23). More clearly, Syria's new governor (42–45 C.E.) grew suspicious of Agrippa's project to extend Jerusalem's wall, and this led to its discontinuation (Jos.

83. Riesner, *Early Period*, 118; cf. also Theissen, *Gospels*, 232.

84. See Riesner, *Early Period*, 97–98.

85. Schürer, *Time of Jesus*, 221, citing "the unconcealed jubilation with which the news of his death was received by the Caesareans and Sebasteans" (Jos. *Ant.* 19.358). Cf. also the political conflict in Acts 12:20.

86. Cf. Reicke, *Era*, 200; see comment on Acts 12:23.

87. Carmon, *Inscriptions*, §211 (Engl., p. 100; Heb., p. 216).

88. Theissen, *Gospels*, 232.

89. Commentators often note his piety, e.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 161–62; e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 19.301.

90. *M. Sotah* 7:8; *Sipre Deut.* 157.3.1 (on the question of qualifications for Israel's throne in Deut 17:15), though its portrayal of Agrippa's self-consciousness about his heritage is questionable. For most, his descent from the Hasmonean rulers through Herod's chief wife, Mariamne, made him the most authentically Jewish of anyone in Herod's line and a far better choice than Roman governors! See Jos. *Ant.* 16.133; 18.110, 126, 131; cf. 19.274, 359.

91. Cf. Reicke, *Era*, 195–96. On the other hand, this may be like blaming the victim (cf. Philo *Flacc.* 39). Gentile Alexandrians cannot have appreciated Judean demands for an exemption, for their temple, from involvement in the imperial cult; no one else needed such exemptions.

Ant. 19.326–27). Likewise, Claudius cancelled Agrippa's invitation of six vassal kings to a conference in 43 C.E. (19.338–42) and divided his kingdom when he died (*War* 2.219–20; *Ant.* 19.343–52, 360–63; *Tac. Hist.* 5.9).⁹² Claudius rightly was concerned about Agrippa's political independence and power, which, intentionally or unintentionally, probably emboldened Jewish nationalism. Agrippa presumably planned to ride the tide of increasing power without any disloyalty to Rome, but the forces he unleashed outlived him. The memory of such nationalism remained alive under the corrupt Roman governors who followed, perhaps contributing to the war two and a half decades later.

His royal status also meant that Agrippa, unlike the Sanhedrin under Roman governors,⁹³ could freely exercise capital jurisdiction in ways that Rome might not have officially approved, including repressing unpopular minority sects to curry favor with rising nationalism. His campaign against the church leaders may have been part of his program of identification with conservative elements in Judea. If, in the wake of Caligula's attempt to have his image set up in the temple, some Judeans still felt that members of the Jesus movement undermined the temple (*Acts* 6:14), venerated too highly a mortal, or proved too friendly to uncircumcised Gentiles, suppressing the cutting edge of the movement by executing some of its leaders may have seemed a small price to pay to increase stability and unity in Judea. Peter had convinced many people but had apparently generated more enemies than allies at this point, perhaps leaving him more politically vulnerable.⁹⁴

This persecution could, then, occur in the period leading up to Agrippa's first Passover as Judea's king, "which in A.D. 41 fell on 5 April."⁹⁵ Some other scholars, dating Peter's arrest and escape closer to Agrippa's death, suggest 43 or 44 C.E.⁹⁶ Because Agrippa was struck during spectacles honoring the emperor (*Jos. Ant.* 19.343) in 44, this could have taken place on Claudius's birthday on August 1 or the annual commemoration of Caesarea's foundation on March 5;⁹⁷ Passover came after March in 44, and so Peter's arrest could be no later than 43 C.E. if we accept the March date and 44 if we accept the August date.⁹⁸ But the events Luke narrates could also be earlier; we cannot be sure that the events of *Acts* 12:20–23 follow closely on 12:19, which is not required by the narrative.⁹⁹ The exact point in Agrippa's reign when Peter was arrested is difficult for us to recover and was probably not known or important to Luke or his audience.

The irony of the situation would not be lost on Luke's audience. The nationalistic king, eager to please Judeans, also welcomes worship as a deity from Gentiles. Similarly, Jewish enemies help stone Paul or, apparently, repudiate association with him after his defenses of monotheism (14:11–19; 19:26–28, 33). In Luke's narrative, his protagonists are theologically better Jews than are their opponents, but the opposing rhetoric prevails on a popular level.

92. Riesner, *Early Period*, 101–2.

93. The Sanhedrin apparently was not functioning, or at least exercised minimal influence, under Agrippa (see Levine, *Hellenism*, 88–90).

94. Schwartz, "Peter," 410–11 (also comparing the execution of a beguiler in Lod, *t. Sanh.* 10:11). Popularity with the poor would help less than popularity with the rich (such as the Sadducees) unless there was a public outcry (as later with James, Jesus's brother; *Jos. Ant.* 20.200–203).

95. Riesner, *Early Period*, 118.

96. Some have allowed for a dating of even Agrippa's death to 43 (cf. Lake, "Chronology," 452), but evidence today points more readily to 44 (Jewett, *Chronology*, 33–34; Barrett, *Acts*, 592).

97. Witherington, *Acts*, 385. Barrett, *Acts*, 592, favors March 5. Agrippa died three years after he became king (*Jos. Ant.* 19.351); his latest coins are also from 44.

98. Barrett, *Acts*, 592; Witherington, *Acts*, 385, 389.

99. Riesner, *Early Period*, 117–18; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 639.

(3) “Pleasing” Judeans (12:3)

Executing an innocent person to please or pacify a constituency was considered morally disgusting behavior.¹⁰⁰ The most extreme tales are told of those who executed a person to indulge the voyeurism of women or boys for whom they lusted;¹⁰¹ political considerations might be more understandable, but it is clear that Luke condemns Agrippa along with those he seeks to please (cf. Acts 12:11; Luke 23:4, 23–24; Acts 4:27). Luke has earlier denigrated crafty politicians appealing to the people (Luke 19:48; 20:5–7); demagogues appear negatively in most ancient sources, at least from the aristocratic social stratum that most opposed them.¹⁰² Jerusalem believers in Jesus later regained favor (Acts 21:20; cf. 2:47), which allows us to assume a much more gradual change in attitude toward the Jewish believers than the crowds exhibit in their attitudes toward Jesus in Luke 23:13, 21; ancient literature often views the crowds as fickle and changeable.¹⁰³ The masses, aristocrats complained, sometimes condemned the leaders who had offered them the greatest services.¹⁰⁴ Demagogues who followed public whims could stir crowds, but (at least as aristocratic writers presented it) crowds sometimes regretted the change in leadership (e.g., Plut. *Cic.* 33.1–4). Ironically, Herod’s concern for public opinion leads to his destruction later in the chapter (Acts 12:22–23);¹⁰⁵ likewise, Jerusalem’s opposition to God’s agents ultimately leads to its destruction (Luke 19:44; cf. 21:23; comment on Acts 22:21–22).

Agrippa, however, did strive to win popularity among his subjects, Gentile and (especially) Jewish,¹⁰⁶ just as he had with elite persons in Rome.¹⁰⁷ Some scholars suggest that he carried favor especially with the Sadducean elite, restoring a particular high-priestly family;¹⁰⁸ the evidence for indulging this group in particular is questionable,¹⁰⁹ although it makes political sense. If anything, we have somewhat better evidence for his accommodating the more populist Pharisees.¹¹⁰

In any case, he certainly was eager to please. Josephus highlights Agrippa’s continued generosity after reaching Judea, specifically noting his desire to please people and acquire honor (*Ant.* 19.328).¹¹¹ He presents this as a stark contrast to Herod

100. It was also hard-hearted, though even a kind person would support executions if needed for the public good (Plut. *Cic.* 19.5).

101. E.g., Livy 39.42.8–39.43.5; Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.4.20; Tac. *Ann.* 14.57, 59, 64; Suet. *Galba* 20; Dio Cass. 62.14.1.

102. See comment on Acts 4:18–22; Keener, *John*, 732–33.

103. Usually this is the negative perspective of the aristocracy (again, see comment on Acts 4:18–22; Keener, *John*, 732), though anyone who follows U.S. politics will recognize that popular opinion can shift significantly. For condemnations of fickleness, see, e.g., Caesar *Gall. W.* 4.5, against the Gauls; similarly, Cic. *Flacc.* 11.24, against the Greeks (because they are here witnesses for the other side); at greater length, see Keener, *Acts*, 1:1037, with documentation. For one modern example of shifting attitudes, popular sentiments toward early Methodists improved as the movement became established (see, e.g., Wigger, *Saint*, 185).

104. E.g., Corn. Nep. 1 (Miltiades), 7.5–6; 2 (Themistocles), 8.1–7; 3 (Aristides), 1.1–5. Cf. “the rhetorical commonplace . . . that it was impossible to please the crowds (Meeks, *Moral World*, 57, citing Epicurus frg. 43 [Bailey, *Epicurus*, p. 131]; cf. Themistius *Or.* 26 [*Epicurea* §551]; *Vatican Sayings* 58).

105. Pervo, *Story*, 41.

106. So also Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 248 (citing Jos. *Ant.* 19.328–31).

107. For his extravagant (and financially ruinous) generosity in Rome, seeking and often winning favor, see, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 18.144–45, 167, 352.

108. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 249 (citing Jos. *Ant.* 19.297, 312–16; 20.198).

109. Agrippa had to deprive one high priest of the office to give it to another, and he replaced more than one high priest (Jos. *Ant.* 19.297, 313, 342), as did others after him (20.15, 103, 179, 195–96, 203, 223).

110. The suggestion that Simon, toward whom Agrippa showed mercy, belonged to the “priestly nobility” (hence, by implication, probably to the Sadducees; Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 248–49) is questionable (his stated prowess in the law in Jos. *Ant.* 19.332 more likely aligns him with the Pharisees).

111. Cf. also his generosity toward royal guests (Jos. *Ant.* 19.339).

the Great, who was severe and friendlier to Greeks than to Jews (19.329).¹¹² In the context of pleasing his people, Josephus notes Agrippa's piety; he delighted to live in Jerusalem, following the laws carefully and never missing a sacrifice (19.331; cf. also 19.293). He helped Nazirites and dedicated to the temple the golden chain Gaius Caligula had given him (19.294).

In Rome, Agrippa learned a strategy of the Roman elite for contenting the masses: destroying "criminals" for public entertainment. He displayed his munificence in the theater and gladiators (Jos. *Ant.* 19.336), and Josephus reports that he managed to entertain the public while exterminating 1,400 criminals on a single occasion (19.337). That he would publicly execute an unpopular leader (Acts 12:2) is not surprising; that the popularity of this decision would invite him to execute another (12:3) also fits this pattern. If he had announced in advance Peter's impending execution (12:3–4), Peter's escape would seem to offer him a major political embarrassment, only partially alleviated by holding the guards capitally responsible (12:19).¹¹³

Some scholars associate Agrippa's desire to please "the Jews" here with his close alignment with the Pharisees (Jos. *Ant.* 19.292–316).¹¹⁴ Yet if later rabbinic writings are representative at all of first-century Pharisaic sentiment, Pharisees had grown reluctant to approve death sentences lightly.¹¹⁵ Some of their reluctance may have developed from the general illegality of carrying out executions under Rome; perhaps, under a Jewish king who favored them, they might have approved it (cf. 13.410), but their tradition advocated mercy under normal circumstances (cf. 13.294). But Luke does not specify Pharisaic involvement, in any case, and one wonders how some would have been defending tolerance toward disciples in Acts 5:34–39 and 23:9 yet most would have been advocating their death in the period between.¹¹⁶ That Paul was both a Pharisee and a persecutor (Acts 23:6; Phil 3:5–6) need not mean that all or most Pharisees agreed with him (though much of Paul's circle apparently did; cf. Gal 1:13–14); Acts associates his behavior more with the high priests than with the Pharisees (Acts 9:1–2; 26:10).¹¹⁷ Although Pharisaic involvement is therefore possible, it is far from certain here.

(4) *Passover* (12:4)

"Passover" here is used broadly to include the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread then occurring; by this period, they were commonly described as the same festival (cf. Luke 22:1, 7; Jos. *Ant.* 14.21; 18.29).¹¹⁸ Romans normally did not hold trials

112. Herod the Great had to keep outsiders happy; Agrippa I probably felt that he had earned in Rome, where he lived among the Gentiles, the right to be as Jewish for his subjects as he pleased; and perhaps he felt that he had something to prove to his own people. Still, Josephus quickly emphasizes, Agrippa was kind to foreigners and treated all equally (*Ant.* 19.330).

113. The personality profile of a disenfranchised son of royalty who craved honor and had learned to buy it with gifts at any cost might also fit the successful king who ultimately committed hubris in the tradition behind both Acts 12:23 and Josephus (see comment on Acts 12:23). Whereas his character portrait in Luke is flat (wholly negative), Josephus fleshes out more fully the tragic dimension of this character. Even Luke may allow some complexity in one who catered to Jewish nationalism while accepting worship; but in Acts both actions relate to desiring honor (cf. 12:3a).

114. E.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 93; Johnson, *Acts*, 211; on his alignment with Pharisees, cf. also Theissen, *Gospels*, 232.

115. Cf. Jos. *Ant.* 13.294; 20.199; cf. *War* 2.166; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Lev 24:12; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Lev 24:12; see comment on Acts 5:33–34.

116. The rhetoric after 70 C.E. addresses a different sociopolitical situation in Judea; see Keener, *John*, 194–214. In the earliest stage of Synoptic tradition, Jesus had conflicts with Pharisees, but it was only the Sadducees who could engineer his execution (see Keener, *Matthew*, 251–53, 613–16).

117. Though this could be apologetic, since after 70 the Pharisees emerged less tainted by the war and more powerful than the chief priests.

118. Various commentators also cite other sources, such as Deut 16:1–4; 2 Chr 35:17 (less plausibly); Ezek 45:21–25; Jos. *Ant.* 6.423; 17.213; 20.106; *War* 2.280 (though Josephus could also distinguish them in

during festivals except in extraordinary circumstances (Cic. *Cacl.* 1.1); consequently, punishments were usually delayed during their festivals.¹¹⁹ Jewish tradition, however, seems to have allowed executions on festivals, when they could offer the optimum propaganda effect.¹²⁰

Because the early Christians claimed that the executed messianic claimant Jesus rose during this festival, Agrippa or his advisors may have counted it expedient not to create another martyr at a festival celebrating nationalistic freedom. Arresting Peter before the festival and executing him afterward might also prevent problems with crowd control (cf. Luke 22:2; Mark 14:2), especially if Peter's supporters included many Galileans who would be present for the feast. Yet Agrippa's political planning conflicted with the divine plan: the God who freed his people at Passover and raised Jesus would also liberate Peter.

The mention of Passover surely recalls the passion narrative.¹²¹ When the Feast of Unleavened Bread was near (Luke 22:1), Jerusalem's chief leaders plotted to kill Jesus (22:2); but whereas then they feared the people (22:2), now Agrippa acts to please the people (Acts 12:3–4). Mentioning Passover probably also invites a reading against the backdrop of the original Passover narrative. Allen offers the following comparisons:¹²²

Subject	Exodus	Acts 12
Night	11:4; 12:8, 12, 29, 42	12:6
Angel is revealed	3:2	12:7
Gird on sandals, clothes; make haste	12:11	12:7–8
Vision	3:3	12:9
Sea opens; gate opens	14	12:10
God rescues	18:8–10	12:11

Of these, the angel parallel (12:7) and the gate opening (12:10) appear quite weak, at least in isolation;¹²³ the girding on of sandals and clothes appears stronger, as is the language of “rescue,” given an explicit Passover context. Peter's use of ἐξάγω to describe his release (12:17) is also consistent with the exodus model of deliverance (often in the OT, e.g., Exod 3:8–12; Deut 5:15; Ps 136:11 [135:11 LXX]).¹²⁴

Ant. 3.249); see Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 487; Johnson, *Acts*, 211; Burton, “Passover.” They remain distinct in 4Q326 1 2–3; 11QT XI, 10.

119. Sen. E. *Controv.* 5.4. The different example of Tiberius was thus considered deplorable (Suet. *Tib.* 61.2).

120. See *m. Sanh.* 11:4; cf. Jeremiah, *Theology*, 78; Hill, *Prophecy*, 52; Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 209; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 644. For scheduling executions for propaganda, see, e.g., Quint. Curt. 7.5.43.

121. As often noted, e.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 211; Pervo, *Story*, 41. Allen, *Death of Herod*, 98, argues that this festival invites comparison with the Exodus narrative. Although the season makes sense for propaganda reasons noted above, and was likely remembered, Luke probably mentions it for more than merely chronological reasons. It may or may not be relevant, by means of comparison, that he does not provide the year in Agrippa's reign (this was less likely remembered). The gate opening may parallel a pre-Christian tradition about Moses; see comment on Acts 12:10.

122. Allen, *Death of Herod*, 100–101; cf. Marguerat, *Actes*, 426. Focusing instead on Dionysiac parallels, Weaver, *Epiphany*, 155–59, 191, 203 (addressing the three parallels of Strobel, “Passa-Symbolik,” 212–13), views the exodus allusions as “suggestive” but not yet demonstrated, since a wider array of Jewish deliverance stories existed (e.g., 2 Macc 3; 3 Macc 6).

123. The angel, both textually in Exodus and because of closer alternative texts; the gate, because it is not comparable to the sea.

124. The term is common, appearing more than two hundred times in the LXX, but a significant percentage refers to the exodus (especially in the Pentateuch after Genesis). Luke accounts for nine of twelve uses in the NT, including another release (Acts 5:19), but specifically for the exodus in 7:36, 40; 13:17—the uses nearest this one in the text. (Elsewhere in early Christian literature, see, e.g., Heb 8:9; 1 *Clem.* 53.2; *Barn.* 4.8; 14.3.)

Although such a term by itself need not evoke the exodus, it may fit the larger context of possible allusions. In fact, Luke has already spoken of Jesus's mission of freeing prisoners (Luke 4:18). The Isaiah passage refers to Israel's restoration, but just as Luke would read Isaiah's promises of blind sight restored literally (Isa 35:5 in Luke 7:22) as well as spiritually (cf. Isa 6:9–10 in Acts 28:26–27), the God who delivered his people physically at Passover and would do so at the eschatological restoration could also do so for some of his present servants who were agents of the end-time restoration.

Although Luke's mention of the season may evoke the exodus and certainly evokes Jesus's passion, we need not suppose that he invented it. He speaks of an execution planned for "after" the Passover, which ruins an exact correspondence;¹²⁵ and even had the correspondence been exact, festivals were (as noted above) ideal seasons to exploit the didactic value of executions with the largest numbers of people.¹²⁶

(5) *The Guards* (12:4)

Peter's imprisonment is significant. During Jesus's passion at a Passover likely more than a decade earlier, Peter declared his willingness to face "both prison and death" for Jesus (Luke 22:33). On that occasion, he had proved unwilling after all (22:34, 57–61); after the resurrection and Pentecost, however, Peter was ready for prison and death. John the Baptist was imprisoned before he died (3:20), and Jesus warned his followers to expect imprisonment (21:12), a situation many had already experienced (Acts 8:3).

Many parts of the Mediterranean world used public slaves to guard prisons;¹²⁷ here, however, soldiers are explicitly in view (12:4, 6, 18). Despite military terminology suitable to Roman units (a τετραδίων is a quaternion, a unit of four soldiers), these were not necessarily Roman recruits, lent to Agrippa from Roman legions,¹²⁸ or Syrian auxiliaries.¹²⁹ Jewish armies could employ titles of Roman military units,¹³⁰ and since Rome granted Agrippa the title of client king, his Jerusalem guard could be members of his own Jewish army, further pleasing his people. Yet this is not to say, with some scholars, that Agrippa lacked access to Rome's Syrian auxiliaries stationed in Caesarea or Sebaste; Josephus, in fact, suggests that those soldiers remained in those cities that had mainly Gentile populations (*Ant.* 19.356–65); see comment on Acts 10:1.¹³¹ Although it is less likely that Agrippa retained their services for Jerusalem, it is not impossible that the soldiers would be Syrian auxiliaries stationed in the Fortress Antonia.¹³² If the soldiers were Gentile, it could weaken Luke's recent portrayal of Cornelius to emphasize this point.

125. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 251.

126. Cf., e.g., Jeremias, *Theology*, 78; Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 209; *m. Sanh.* 11:4.

127. Pliny *Ep.* 10.19.2 supplements public slaves with soldiers, viewing the former as undependable (10.19.1); but Trajan does not want soldiers transferred to guard service (10.20.1) and insists that public slaves will prove adequate if discipline is adequate (10.20.2). See also Rapske, *Custody*, 252.

128. Nevertheless, as "king," he had capital authority and could have executed even citizen soldiers for dereliction of duty or conspiracy.

129. Though King David had used elite Philistine mercenaries (2 Sam 8:18; 15:18; 20:7, 23; 1 Kgs 1:38, 44; 1 Chr 18:17; on the titles, cf. 1 Sam 30:14; Ezek 25:16; Zeph 2:5), the use of Syrian auxiliaries in Jerusalem during this period would hardly help Agrippa identify with Judean nationalism.

130. Jos. *Life* 242; Catchpole, *Trial*, 149 (citing, e.g., Jdt 14:11; 2 Macc 8:23; 12:20, 22; Jos. *Ant.* 17.215); Blinzler, *Trial*, 64–65; Bammel, "Trial," 439–40. Some of the terms, like χιλίαρχος, are common in the LXX (e.g., Exod 18:21, 25; Num 1:16; 31:14, 48–54; Deut 1:15; Josh 22:14, 21; 1 Chr 13:1; 15:25) as well as elsewhere (Jos. *War* 2.578; *Ant.* 17.215).

131. Also see Keener, "Troops."

132. Witherington, *Acts*, 385, argues for Agrippa using Roman troops here, comparing Acts 10:1 (if Cornelius's conversion occurred during Agrippa's reign, though this timing is uncertain).

Sometimes guards were civil toward prisoners,¹³³ but more often they were harsh,¹³⁴ and sometimes they were chosen for harshness (Jos. *Ant.* 18.203).¹³⁵ Guards often demanded bribes and other favors; this practice eventually led many early Christians to pay guards' "wages" (bribes) to support better treatment of prisoners.¹³⁶

Agrippa entrusted Peter to four quaternions of soldiers—that is, four units consisting of four soldiers each.¹³⁷ These soldiers need not have been a special unit assigned to this task, but they may have been. A *contubernium* was a Roman unit, originally referring to those who shared a tent or barracks (Tac. *Ann.* 1.41.1; Suet. *Tib.* 14.4; Caesar *C.W.* 2.29); originally eight men (Ps.-Hyginus *De munitionibus castrorum* 1), it came to be ten, with one in charge (Veg. *Mil.* 2.8, 13).¹³⁸ A water clock could be employed to divide the night into four watches;¹³⁹ each group could thus work in three-hour shifts, ensuring that none of them would fall asleep during the night watch. If the soldiers worked four shifts, Peter was chained to a soldier at either arm, leaving two unchained soldiers at the gate (Acts 12:6). Agrippa is taking no chances that Peter might escape—at least by natural means, the only sort he entertains.

(6) *Prayer for Peter (12:5)*

Prayer is a regular theme of Luke and plays a major background role in this narrative (cf. 12:12).¹⁴⁰ Luke often presents prayer as a means by which God brings about his purposes in history,¹⁴¹ even if, as in this instance, the petitioners' faith proves comically imperfect (12:15).¹⁴²

Prayer could characterize Passover season, since Passover was a night of remembrance,¹⁴³ but Luke leaves no question as to what they were praying about. Jewish people often prayed for deliverance from adversaries;¹⁴⁴ perhaps some of those praying echoed the language of the Psalms (e.g., Pss 17:13; 22:20; 31:1, 15; 43:1; 142:7). One of the most relevant biblical examples was the three days of corporate fasting for Esther as she went to petition the king.¹⁴⁵

133. Rapske, *Custody*, 254–56.

134. *Ibid.*, 256–59. Sometimes governments planted spies in prisons to gain information to convict prisoners.

135. *Ibid.*, 258, noting also that guarding prisoners sometimes made guards worse (Philo *Jos.* 81–84). One offended his guards, leading to their ensuring his death (Diod. *Sic.* 31.9.5; Rapske, *Custody*, 259).

136. Rapske, *Custody*, 259–61, esp. 261.

137. On the arrangement here, commentators cite Veg. *Mil.* 3.8; Philo *Flacc.* 111 (e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 93; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 270; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 487; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 108; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 134; Johnson, *Acts*, 211). Cf. also the unit of four guards in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.31.

138. Le Bohec, "Contubernium." The Roman army's basic unit was a *contubernium*, originally eight men who shared a tent; normally half of such a unit would be dispatched for a work detail such as a crucifixion (Jones, "Army," 193–94; see John 19:23).

139. Romans used four watches (Livy 36.24.1) instead of the traditional Jewish three watches (*b. Ber.* 3a; also found in Hom. *Il.* 10.253); rabbis debated it, some preferring four (*t. Ber.* 1:1; *b. Ber.* 3b). On night watches, see, e.g., Ps 63:6; *Jub.* 25:2; 1QS X, 2. Agrippa's soldiers, whether Gentile auxiliaries or even (given his background in Rome) Judean guards, would presumably follow the Roman discipline. A sundial worked during the day, but a water clock (κλεψύδρα) was needed at night; water clocks had been fairly accurate since the third century B.C.E. (Toomer, "Clocks"; see comment on such clocks at Acts 24:4).

140. Rakocy, "Struktura Ap 12," even suggests that Acts 12:5 is the *dispositio* of 12:1–19, introducing the themes of Peter's deliverance (12:6–11) and prayer (12:12–17).

141. See, e.g., O'Brien, "Prayer in Luke-Acts"; Smalley, "Spirit, Kingdom, and Prayer"; Trites, "Prayer Motif."

142. This in spite of the prayers being made ἐκτενῶς, "fervently," i.e., passionately or sincerely, as in Luke 22:44 (apart from 1 Pet 1:22, the only other NT occurrence), or persistently (cf. Acts 12:12; Luke 18:7); it applies to prayer in all its LXX uses (Joel 1:14; Jonah 3:8; Jdt 4:12; 3 Macc 5:9; also in 1 Clem. 34.7).

143. Reimer, *Women*, 241. Before the exodus, God heard the cries of Israel's people because of their bondage (Exod 2:23, though this was not prayer per se).

144. See Johnson, *Prayer*, 7–12.

145. Faw, *Acts*, 140–41.

Their prayers intensify the narrative's suspense (especially for members of Luke's audience unfamiliar with the time and location of Peter's death): will the prayers of the church prevail, or will Herod's plans? The church had earlier prayed about another oppressive Herod (Acts 4:27), and the apostles had earlier been delivered miraculously from a lesser threat in prison (5:19). But Agrippa I, as a client king, could exercise the capital prerogative legally, in contrast to the Sanhedrin, and the narrative emphasizes that the prisoner was now chained between two guards (12:6).

c. *God's Angel Releases Peter (12:6–10)*

At almost the last possible moment for a discreet deliverance, an angel awakens Peter, guiding him step-by-step to safety until he is awake enough to know the rest of what he must do. Whereas the church is praying fervently for his deliverance (12:5, 12), he is sound asleep (12:6–7). But just as the people praying do not initially believe it when he is released (12:15), neither does he (12:9).

I. ASLEEP BEFORE EXECUTION (12:6)

Peter is heavily guarded, his death imminent, yet he is sleeping so soundly that even after the angel prods him awake, he thinks that he is still dreaming until he is out in the cool night air (12:9, 11). That Peter is chained between two guards parallels him with Paul later in Luke's narrative (21:23; cf. 16:26; 22:29; 26:29; 28:20).¹⁴⁶ Lighter detentions for lesser crimes or for those of higher status lacked chains, but public city prisons required them.¹⁴⁷ Over a period of time, iron chains were hard on the skin,¹⁴⁸ and if adjusted tightly, they functioned as a form of torture;¹⁴⁹ more certainly here, they were often heavy, tiring prisoners and restricting or preventing mobility.¹⁵⁰ Chains also would shame a person (e.g., Polyb. 1.69.5). Often, as here, prisoners were shackled to their guards, usually (when chained by just one hand) the prisoner's "right wrist to the soldier's left."¹⁵¹ Shackled between two guards, Peter should have been more secure than normal.¹⁵²

The purpose of imprisonment was often to secure the person's appearance at trial.¹⁵³ Some persons of high status were executed in prisons to minimize the public shame;¹⁵⁴ here, however, Agrippa plans to bring Peter out before the people for public execu-

146. This connection would reduce the appearance of Paul's shame for any readers inclined to respect Peter. The primary reason for mentioning two guards in the narrative itself, however, is to underline the impossibility of escape by natural means (excepting collusion, which the presumed and actual consequences may safely rule out).

147. See Rapske, *Custody*, 9, 25–28; apparently, however, it was often used even for house arrest (Rapske, *Custody*, 31, citing *Jos. Ant.* 18.237). The binding of prisoners' hands was a common image (e.g., Ovid *Amores* 1.2.19–20).

148. Rapske, "Prison," 828 (citing Lucan *C.W.* 72–73; Sen. *E. Controv.* 1.6.2); Rapske, *Custody*, 207–8. Some also report that they can be painful when it is cold (Yun, *Heavenly Man*, 85). Ancient chains could resemble modern ones, apart from the handcuff (Abbott, *Acts*, 139, on an example preserved in Rome).

149. Rapske, "Prison," 828 (citing *Cod. theod.* 9.3.1); Rapske, *Custody*, 208–9.

150. Rapske, "Prison," 828 (citing *ARS* 8, "The Twelve Tables," 3.3; Ovid *Con. Liv.* 273–74; Suet. *Nero* 36.2; Sen. *E. Controv.* 1.6.2; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.36). Those just released from chains might remain sluggish (cf. Libanius *Fable* 2.2).

151. Rapske, *Custody*, 31. Commentators cite *Jos. Ant.* 18.196; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 5.7 (e.g., Knowling, "Acts," 274; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 93; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 488).

152. Chains could be fastened to either or both legs and wrists, the neck, and even more (Rapske, *Custody*, 206–7).

153. *Ibid.*, 10–12.

154. *Ibid.*, 13–14. Such executions were usually by strangulation (Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.147; Sall. *Catil.* 55.5–6; Tac. *Ann.* 5.9; 6.39–40, 58; Suet. *Tib.* 61.4–6; Pliny *Ep.* 2.11), but also from starvation and cold (Plut. *Mar.* 12) or sword (Lucan *C.W.* 2.76–81; Rapske, *Custody*, 14). Cf. Plut. *Cic.* 22.2, though this prison execution may also involve dangerous notoriety.

tion (Acts 12:4, 6).¹⁵⁵ Neither Greeks nor Romans generally used imprisonment as a punishment in itself, though there were exceptions.¹⁵⁶ Roman imprisonment was usually for brief detentions—for example, as a holding place before swift executions (Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.3.26; Plut. *Cic.* 20.3).¹⁵⁷

That this is “the night when Herod planned to bring him out” does not mean that Agrippa planned to have him executed at night, which was a very unusual practice (cf. Val. Max. 4.6.ext. 3). He plans to “bring him to the people” (Acts 12:4), and a public execution would not be possible at night, when most people slept (see comment on Acts 4:3). Jewish people reckoned days starting from nightfall, and so this is the night immediately preceding Peter’s scheduled execution during the coming daylight. Presumably this is nearly the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (12:3–4),¹⁵⁸ and Herod may have already announced his plan for a speedy execution (cf. 12:15). As at some other points in Scripture, deliverance comes close to the last moment, building faith for those in the narrative world (and suspense for the first-time reader).

One could parallel Peter’s sleep here with his failure to guard Jesus at Gethsemane (Luke 22:45–46) or to stay awake at the transfiguration (9:32). More likely, however, in this situation it indicates his trust in God’s plan (cf. Luke 8:23–25), though he, like everyone else (cf. Acts 12:15), apparently anticipates his death (cf. 12:9). Although exhaustion may have been the cause for sleep (cf. 20:9),¹⁵⁹ fear¹⁶⁰ or other anxieties¹⁶¹ were also often cause for sleeplessness (though cf. also Luke’s justification of the apostles as sleeping “from grief” in Luke 22:45). Ancient readers might have seen this as a sign of virtuous serenity or fearlessness; thus, for example, a Stoic praises Cato’s bravery and tranquility in spending the night of his expected death in reading (Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 71.11).¹⁶² Whereas Peter refuses to fear those who kill the body (Luke 12:4), Herod, by usurping divine prerogatives (Acts 12:2–4, 22–23), fails to fear the one who can cast into hell (Luke 12:5). Resisting a tyrant was considered praiseworthy,¹⁶³ and here Peter may fail to even dignify the ruler’s threats with fear.

The prison’s location is of interest for Peter’s ready access to the house of John Mark’s mother (Acts 12:12), probably not the most private place he could have gone; it suggests a prison near the Upper City, such as the Fortress Antonia. Given the large

155. Greek republics employed the same expression, “bring forth [ἀνάγω] to the people,” for public prosecutions (cf. Acts 17:5), though this may not be relevant here (Judge, *Pattern*, 66).

156. Berger and Lintott, “Prison”; Lintott, “Punishment”; Rapske, *Custody*, 12–14.

157. Perhaps also Vell. Paterc. 2.91.4. Rapske, *Custody*, 12, also emphasizes that detentions even after conviction could be brief (e.g., Dio Cass. 58.27.5; Sen. Y. *Tranq.* 14.6–7), but detainees could be kept alive longer (e.g., to be tortured for evidence against others, Gaius *Dig.* 48.19.29). For detention before trial, see, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 348 intro (though the trial is preempted); prison is probably the implied place of holding for thirty days while awaiting execution in Quint. *Decl.* 313 intro.

158. The “night” could then evoke God’s activity in the Passover narrative (Exod 12:8, 12, 30–31; *Jub.* 49:1–2, 10; *Jos. Ant.* 2.313), a “night to be observed” (Exod 12:42). Those associating the Feast of Unleavened Bread with present deliverance might also strike at night (cf. *Jos. War* 4.402; but night was the most strategic time for them to attack, in any case).

159. Cf., e.g., hard workers (*m. Ab.* 3:4). If emotional distress had prevented sound sleep on some earlier nights, he could well be exhausted by this point; in any case, his sleep here is portrayed as deep, not fitful and vigilant, so that it takes some time for him to fully awaken (Acts 12:9).

160. E.g., Pub. Syr. 359; Plut. *Alex.* 31.4; Sil. It. 13.256–57.

161. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 2.2–3; Aristoph. *Lys.* 27; Livy 40.56.9; Plut. *Cic.* 35.3; *Virt.* 2, *Mor.* 100F; perhaps 2 Cor 11:27; also mourning.

162. Philotas in Quint. Curt. 6.10.14 claims that only one with a clear conscience would sleep (in this case, oblivious to the possibility of arrest; in Peter’s case, one who also has nothing to fear). Pervo, *Acts*, 304n35, helpfully compares Socrates before his execution (Plato *Crito* 43B). Cf. also Otho, though his death appears “nobler” than his life (much sleep in Suet. *Otho* 11.2; some sleep in Tac. *Hist.* 2.49).

163. E.g., Sen. E. *Controv.* 2.5.intro.; 2.5.8. Cf. comments on tyrannicide at 12:23.

numbers of prisoners reported and Josephus's plural "prisons,"¹⁶⁴ probably Jerusalem had multiple locations for detention.¹⁶⁵ The Antonia is the most commonly suggested site here.¹⁶⁶ Prisons were sometimes in citadels (Polyb. 5.39.4–5), and the Temple Mount, which the Antonia guarded, would qualify as a citadel.¹⁶⁷ Prisons were also often near other major public buildings (Vitruv. *Arch.* 5.2.1), as was the Antonia, on the corner of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Prisoners could be detained in the Antonia (Jos. *War* 1.118); see further discussion below.

II. ROUSED BY AN ANGEL (12:7)

Undeterred by prison or guards, an angel suddenly is present.¹⁶⁸ That "angel of the Lord" here (and in Acts 12:23) is anarthrous does not rule out that a prominent angel is in view.¹⁶⁹ Luke never employs the article with this phrase (Luke 1:11; 2:9; 5:19; 8:26; 12:23), with the possible exception of Acts 12:11 (and, on the most likely textual reading, not even there). Yet when doubted, the Lord's angel in Luke 1:11–20 identifies himself as Gabriel (1:19; he appears again in 1:26). Gabriel was certainly a prominent angel (Dan 8:16; 9:21),¹⁷⁰ the only named angel in the OT (minus the Apocrypha) besides Michael (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1).¹⁷¹

Greeks had stories in which deities or other beings entered rooms through bolt holes, like mist;¹⁷² but those familiar with Scripture would already understand that angels could appear and disappear without explanation (Judg 6:12, 21; 13:9, 20; 1 Kgs 19:5, 7).¹⁷³ (The claim of angelic interventions continues in modern popular Christian literature, often referring to sudden rescues by those who appear to be human and then are no longer to be found.)¹⁷⁴

164. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 645, cites Jos. *War* 4.353, 385; 5.526; see also *Ant.* 20.215; *War* 2.273; 6.412.

165. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 645.

166. *Ibid.*, 646.

167. Although a client king would be free to ignore the rule, Roman law (at least in a later period) prohibited detaining prisoners in private prisons (Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 49).

168. Likewise, in contrast to human inquirers seeking Peter (Acts 10:17), angels did not need to ask directions.

169. Though, e.g., in Tob 12:22, the articular angel of the Lord is Raphael. The angel of the Lord can be either articular (e.g., Num 22:31, 34; Judg 13:13–21) or anarthrous (e.g., Gen 22:11, 15; Exod 3:2; 4:24; Judg 5:23) in the LXX, sometimes both in the same context (Gen 16:7 is anarthrous, but 16:8–11 articular; Judg 2:1 anarthrous, but 2:4 articular; Judg 6:11–12 anarthrous, but 6:14, 16, 20–21 articular, with 6:22 having both). Michael is an "angel of the Lord" (anarthrous, *Test. Ab.* 6:1 A; though this is a predicate nominative, where anarthrous forms are more common, cf. Metzger, "Translation," 125); but it is not always possible to make the distinction (especially in Greek, but cf. also 1QSb IV, 24–26).

170. As one of the two named angels in Daniel, he figures prominently in early Jewish speculation, e.g., 1QM VIII, 16; 1Q19bis 2.4; 4Q285 10.3 (reconstructed); 4Q529 1.3–4; 4Q557 1.2; 1 En. 9:1; 10:9; 20:7; 40:6, 9; 54:6; 71:8–9, 13; 2 En. 21:3, 5; 24:1; 72:1 A; 3 En. 14:4; 17:1, 3; *Sib. Or.* 2.214–20; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5:3; *b. B. Bat.* 74b–75a; *Ber.* 4b; *B. Meši'a* 86b; *Sanh.* 19b; *Šabb.* 55a; *Soṭah* 12b; 33a; *Yoma* 77a; *Gen. Rab.* 50:2; 63:14; 78:1; *Exod. Rab.* 2:5; 18:5; *Deut. Rab.* 5:12; *Song Rab.* 2.4, §1; 6:10, §1; *Lam. Rab.* 3:23, §8; *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:9; 35:2; 46:3; PGM 3.405; 7.1012–13; 90.1–13; Goodenough, *Symbols*, 2:174–88.

171. Angels also help God's agent in the Gospel. Jesus rejected the devil's use of Ps 91:11–12 to argue for Jesus's throwing himself down and depending on angels (Luke 4:9–12), but angels did indeed serve Jesus (e.g., 2:13–15; 24:23) and continued to be active on behalf of the spreading movement (e.g., Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:23; 27:23).

172. E.g., Hom. *Od.* 4.795–803, 838–39; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Commentary*, 306, cite Hom. *Hymns* 4.145–46 (to Hermes).

173. On angels in the OT, see, e.g., Meier, "Angels."

174. E.g., Bryson, "Angels," 46; missionary reports in Davis, "Surrounded," 123; Bray, "Angel"; Johnson, "Alone"; Stewart, "Guardian Angel"; Malek, "Stranger"; Harris, *Acts Today*, 132–40; for angels obvious as angels, see Tari and Tari, *Breeze*, 171; Khai, "Pentecostalism," 269; Numere, *Vision*, 202; in a symbolic vision, Rumph, *Signs*, 90–93; most extensively, Moolenburgh, *Meetings*. Two less ambiguous reports, both involving children, are Caldwell, "Prayers"; Jones, "Rumors," 22 (for children, see also Hickson, *Heal*, 115 [cf. 116], from 1922 South Africa); a number of claims also appear in Schlink, *World*, 127–38; Baker and Baker, *Enough*, 18,

The term for “appeared” or “stood” is distinctively Lukan (eighteen of the twenty-one NT uses), and Luke occasionally uses it elsewhere for the sudden appearance of an angel (Luke 2:9; 24:4). The light shining evokes other superhuman appearances, through various terms (2:9, where an angel of the Lord also stood [ἐπέστη]¹⁷⁵ and where the Lord’s glory similarly shone around [περιέλαμψεν]; Acts 9:3, where “light” flashed).¹⁷⁶

The term Luke uses for the angel’s blow to Peter (πατάσσω) is a harsh one (Luke 22:49–50; Acts 7:24),¹⁷⁷ but Luke has good reason to employ it. In Acts 12:7, the angel “strikes” Peter to deliver him; in 12:23, the angel “strikes” Herod to kill him. These are the only two verses in the NT where an angel “strikes”; Luke may have chosen the term to evoke 2 Kgs 19:35 in Acts 12:23. This harsh term also implies the depth of Peter’s sleep, which is not shaken off fully until Acts 12:11; it takes a blow to rouse him, yet he is still not convinced that he is awake as late as 12:9.

The angel commands Peter to rise (ἀνάστα) quickly; the chains apparently drop off when Peter obeys, as the gate also opens as they proceed (12:10). This fits the familiar pattern of miracles following a demonstration of faith (e.g., Luke 17:6; Acts 3:6–7; Mark 11:23). The verb ἀνίστημι appears in the imperative for divine commands (Acts 8:26; 9:6; cf. 26:16) and miracles (9:34, 40; 14:10).

Because they could not have imagined Peter escaping, it is possible that Luke wants us to envision the guards drifting off to sleep, by a divinely heavy sleep.¹⁷⁸ Given the three-hour shifts and high penalties for sleeping on duty, however, it is also possible that they remained awake throughout the angelic intervention.¹⁷⁹ Yet they did not notice the slackening of chains attached to their wrists (12:7), Peter putting on his cloak (12:8), or his walking through the gates (12:10) any more than they saw the angel or the light (12:7). (The inner cell might have been dark, as in 16:24, 29,¹⁸⁰ but torches may have burned near the gates where the guards stood. And a new light in the cell in 12:7 should have awakened sleeping guards [though it did not suffice for Peter] or startled those who were awake.) All this suggests selective visibility and selective revelation, as in 9:7 and 10:41 (see comment there; with angels, cf. also, e.g., presumably 12:23; 27:23). If there was light in the cell, how would the guards not at least notice Peter’s absence? Did his image remain as a phantom, as was common in Greek literature?¹⁸¹ Or were their eyes simply adjusted so as not to notice (Luke

62, 64–65 (most visionary); beyond easy attribution to coincidence is the testimony in Moreland and Issler, *Faith*, 155–56; Ritchie, *Spirit*, 122 (to one who had not heard of this phenomenon), 206. For some claims from a wider range of religious perspectives, see Woodward, “Angels”; Wuthnow, *Heaven*, 114–41 (noting on 121–22 that roughly a third of Americans claimed to have had at least one angelic encounter).

175. Again, eighteen of the twenty-one uses of this verb in the NT appear in Luke-Acts, so this stylistic feature is not surprising; but Luke 2:9 and Acts 12:7 are the only two texts linking the verb with a form of “shines.”

176. In ancient texts, cf., e.g., 4Q377 2 II, 7–8; Xen. *Cyr.* 4.2.15; Heliod. *Eth.* 10.9; see comment on Acts 9:3. Perhaps a century or more later some would tell a story about bright light filling the room when Peter prayed (*Acts Pet.* 21, in Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 16).

177. E.g., Barrett, *Acts*, 580. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 93–94, cites literary parallels for sound sleepers aroused only by touch (Hom. *Il.* 10.157–59; Curt. Ruf. 4.13.20, §49), although, even without parallels, no one disputes this.

178. Escapes and adventures in enemy camps while enemy sentries slept are common in ancient texts, e.g., 1 Sam 24:5; 26:7–12; Hom. *Il.* 10.465–514; Virg. *Aen.* 9.314–66 (but cf. 9.375–445); Plut. *Cam.* 33.4; cf. Hom. *Od.* 2.395–96; spying in Hom. *Il.* 10.326–27 (which fails); *Little Iliad* frg. 2, from scholiast on Aristoph. *Knights* 1056–57; Judg 7:11. In Lucian’s satire, Zeus could order the night extended to cover up his adultery (*Dial. G.* 231 [14/10, Hermes and Helios 2]).

179. For invisibility, see comment on Acts 8:39; further below.

180. This would fit the language of light shining suddenly (Acts 12:7) best, although such descriptions were also possible even at midday (9:3; 22:6–11; 26:13).

181. Cf. Hom. *Il.* 5.449–53; Helen in Euripides’s *Helen* (following Stesichorus’s *Recantation*) and Apollod. *Epit.* 3.5; Iphigeneia in Lycophron *Alex.* 190–91 and Apollod. *Epit.* 3.22; Ovid *Fasti* 3.701–2 (allowing Caesar’s snatching up to heaven despite his apparent death, 3.703–4); Ixion’s cloud in Apollod. *Epit.* 1.20; cf.

24:16, 31)? Other cases of selective visibility leave angelic or other supernatural activity unseen; here even the natural activity of Peter goes unnoticed.

Miraculous escapes from prison were depicted in fairly standard terms, and Luke's language may evoke that tradition.¹⁸² Prison escapes often appear in Hellenistic fiction,¹⁸³ whether due to human means or supernatural aid.¹⁸⁴ The prototype for such stories was Dionysus's escapes and rescues of his followers from Pentheus's prison, as has long been noted.¹⁸⁵ Some scholars think that Luke borrows images from this source;¹⁸⁶ others, that he seeks to rival and supplant it;¹⁸⁷ and others, that the language was too widespread and familiar by this period to evoke a single source.¹⁸⁸ Some Diaspora Jews would have known the story about Moses attributed to the much earlier Jewish writer Artapanus, which employs the same Dionysiac escape imagery;¹⁸⁹ in a Passover context, a Moses allusion would be significant.

Though Luke especially evokes biblical language and parallels in this context, he is not averse to some Greek cultural allusions that are also fulfilled (or in this case, perhaps supplanted) by God's activity in the church (cf. Acts 17:18). Though Luke has other escapes (5:19) or nonescapes (16:28; 24:27), this context may also evoke Israel's liberation from Egypt (see comment on Acts 12:4). By whatever means, God could free a prisoner condemned to execution (Ps 102:20); in Peter's case, this would lead to at least some praise in Jerusalem (102:21).¹⁹⁰ For further discussion of the parallels (especially the valuable connections with Dionysiac release narratives), their significance, and the degree of their relevance to the question of the historical reliability of Luke's sources in his escape stories, see extended comment on Acts 5:19.

III. DRESSING BEFORE ESCAPE (12:8)

The angel must command Peter to get dressed because Peter does not know that they are going out; he also may need detailed instruction because he does not believe that he is genuinely awake (12:9). The instruction also shows the reader that God has the guards' sleep well in hand; under normal circumstances, fugitives should so

the angel arrested in Moses's place in *y. Ber.* 9:1, §8. This led to the docetic idea of a wraith crucified in Jesus's place (cf. *Iren. Her.* 1.24.4), apparently followed in the Qur'an (cf. Cook, *Muhammad*, 79).

182. Bruce, *Acts* 1, 245 (citing the familiar Eurip. *Bacch.* 443ff.; Ovid *Metam.* 3.696ff.; often cited, e.g., Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 271). See here much more fully the discussion at Acts 5:19–20.

183. Johnson, *Acts*, 217, cites Lucian *Tox.* 28–33; Ach. Tat. 3:9–11; others (e.g., Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 284–85) also cite examples. MacDonald, *Imitate Homer*, 123–45; idem, "Acts 12:1–17 and Iliad 24," compares Peter's prison escape (Acts 12) with Hom. *Il.* 24; but Weaver, *Epiphany*, 153, argues that "there is little that is convincing about MacDonald's analysis" here, complaining that he inaccurately conforms the sequence in *Il.* 24 to Acts and, worse still, portrays the opening of gates as part of Hermes's delivering Priam when, in fact, they belong to Priam's *entrance*, not exit. (The problem, Weaver notes [154], comes in seeking to identify a single text as background.) Talbert, *Acts*, 110, compares also later apocryphal acts that employ the motif (*Acts of Paul*; *Acts Thom.* 142, 153–55).

184. Johnson, *Acts*, 217, cites Ovid *Metam.* 3.690–700; Artapanus *Concerning the Jews* frg. 3; *Acts Paul* 7; *Acts Thom.* 162–63; for a much longer list of sources, including Pacuvius, see Rapske, *Custody*, 412–18. Cf. also *Hist. Rech.* 10:5 (probably a monastic Christian work; I am skeptical that it contains pre-Christian material). Conzelmann, *Acts*, 94, contrasts Peter with a divine man who can free his own chains (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.34, 38; 8.30).

185. Eurip. *Bacch.* 346–57, 434–50 (esp. 443–48), 498, 510–643; later, Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.1; Ovid *Metam.* 3.699–700; see further comment in Otto, *Dionysus*, 97. The standard narrative elements in this tradition appear here and elsewhere in Acts; see Weaver, *Epiphany*, 22, 149–217. There are too few verbal connections with *Bacchanals* to suggest a direct allusion to that work; instead, there are shared motifs with the broader Dionysiac escape tradition (including loosing of both chains and doors and inadequate guards; Weaver, *Epiphany*, 195–96).

186. Renehan, "Quotations," 22.

187. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 277.

188. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 94.

189. With, e.g., Le Cornu, *Acts*, 649 (citing Artapanus 3.27.23 [= OTP 2:901, from Euseb. *PE.* 9.27.1–37]).

190. That God cared for the life of the righteous was also a commonplace (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 58:1).

value haste that they leave even their outer cloaks behind (cf. Mark 13:16),¹⁹¹ but here preparation is more crucial than is immediacy.¹⁹² Once outside, being dressed normally would prevent him from arousing suspicion on the street (which would not contain many people, though wheeled traffic presumably would be transporting goods at this time; see comment on Acts 12:10).

The cloak and sandals would be Peter's own; prisons did not supply these items, and prisoners sometimes depended even on outside help for food.¹⁹³ An outer garment (ἱμάτιον) doubled as a covering for sleep at night,¹⁹⁴ and Peter may have been employing it "as bedding or a sleep covering" here as well.¹⁹⁵ This mantle would protect him from the cool air of the night.¹⁹⁶ The command to "gird" (ζῶσαι) himself may suggest wrapping something around his waist, like a sash or belt,¹⁹⁷ or tucking up his long robe into such a sash, so that he can move more freely (cf. 2 Kgs 4:29; 9:1; Job 38:3; 20:7).¹⁹⁸ The latter activity (often expressed by περιζώννυμι or cognates) was normal for soldiers before battle (Plut. *Coriol.* 9.2) and (perhaps significantly in view of this being the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Acts 12:3–4) for the Passover (Exod 12:11, also with sandals on their feet). But such language also stands for any kind of readiness for movement or quick action.¹⁹⁹ A prisoner wishing to escape at night might gird himself and don sandals (cf. perhaps Vell. Paterc. 2.41.3, describing how Caesar avoided the suspicion by wearing them all the time).

Although urban people usually went barefoot indoors (or wore slippers),²⁰⁰ those in the eastern Mediterranean preferred outdoor coverings for their feet with open-work upper sections (i.e., lattices of leather straps rather than the closed design noble Romans preferred with togas).²⁰¹ Whereas Greeks preferred to go barefoot

191. Omitted in Luke 21:12, perhaps because Jerusalem's fall was past (not likely simply to avoid conflict with his telling of Peter's escape here). Night could be cool in Jerusalem during Passover season (Craig, "Tomb," 184).

192. Jews escaping Egypt were to be girded in faith, in advance of their deliverance, aiding their haste (Exod 12:11). The contrast makes Peter's unpreparedness at this season—because he was not expecting escape—all the more ironic.

193. See Rapske, "Prison," 828–29; idem, *Custody*, 209; comment on Acts 24:23.

194. Deut 24:13; Jos. *Ant.* 4.269. Cloaks also could do double duty as blankets among Romans (Croom, *Clothing*, 30).

195. Rapske, *Custody*, 199.

196. On this garment more fully, see, e.g., Croom, *Clothing*, 127; comment on Acts 7:58; for Jewish apparel in general, see Goodenough, *Symbols*, 9:168–74.

197. Cf. two almost identical verbs in LXX Exod 29:9; Lev 8:7, 13; 16:4; 1 Sam 17:39; 25:13; Isa 11:5; Ezek 9:11; 16:10; 23:15; 2 Macc 10:25; the noun cognate ζώνη in Exod 28:4, 39–40; 29:9; 39:29; Mark 1:6; 6:8; Rev 1:13; 15:6; and esp. Acts 21:11. This may be minimal for making himself presentable (cf. the cognate verb in Luke 17:8). One could, however, wear the basic tunic even without a belt (Croom, *Clothing*, 127).

198. See Jeffers, *World*, 43; on "shortening" a (woman's) long garment by tucking it into the belt, cf. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 97. Interestingly, the one other NT use of ζώννυμι is a Johannine tradition about Peter's final (and fatal) imprisonment, where he cannot gird himself (John 21:18). Luke may here play off a Petrine martyr tradition later recorded in John 21.

199. See 1 Kgs 18:46; 2 Kgs 4:29; 9:1; Prov 31:17; Jer 1:17; Luke 12:35, 37; 17:8; Eph 6:14; 1 Pet 1:13; Poly. *Phil.* 2.1; soldiers before battle in Plut. *Coriol.* 9.2; cf. perhaps Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.5; tavern work in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 72.2. For comment about the ancient Middle Eastern custom, cf., e.g., Kelly, *Peter*, 65; Best, *Peter*, 84; Mounce, *Peter*, 18.

200. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 98 (noting that boots or clogs prevailed in rural areas). The indoor footwear of the well-to-do differed from their outdoor wear (Croom, *Clothing*, 59, 63); Romans often wore ankle- or knee-high socks, and in Gaul, men even wore trousers (Croom, *Clothing*, 59).

201. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 98; Croom, *Clothing*, 63. That sandals would be a luxury for free persons (Jeremias, *Parables*, 130) may be an exaggeration, but they would be more common for free persons than field servants (cf. Bailey, *Poet*, 185); observations from more recent peasant life may tell us more about norms for the poor than literary sources, but Judea was not as impoverished as Egypt, nor was Peter a peasant (even before being called).

indoors,²⁰² only the poorest people did so outside.²⁰³ (In poorer Egypt, villagers, in contrast to metropolitans, went barefoot and had more foot problems.)²⁰⁴ Although some later rabbis (concerned with halakic precision) debated over whether to don the right or left sandal first,²⁰⁵ undoubtedly this was a matter of personal habit for most people. Although footwear could consist of palm or other atypical substances, people usually made it from “vegetable- or alum-tanned leather.”²⁰⁶

Roman shoes often appear to be simply slippers with the upper leather and leather soles “seamed together.”²⁰⁷ The most basic form of sandal included simply a sole with narrow leather straps holding it to the foot; more respectable shoes could be made from a single piece of leather or, most elaborately, multiple pieces of leather connected with the sole.²⁰⁸ The Roman variety of shoes, at least, lacked heels and contained iron nails to hold the shoe together, but such shoes also slipped easily on pavements.²⁰⁹ At least in later times, Judeans avoided nails in their shoes.²¹⁰ The usual basic form of sandal was “a fan-shaped splay of straps passing from between the toes up to the top of the ankle.”²¹¹ Because the straps were light, a person with sandals seemed almost barefoot except on the bottom.²¹²

IV. LEAVING THE PRISON (12:9–10)

Although Peter obeys and follows the angel, he is not yet interpreting his deliverance literally (Acts 12:9). Since night “visions” might at times be dreams,²¹³ it is reasonable that Peter supposes that he is dreaming,²¹⁴ perhaps of a symbolic liberation to be accomplished in his execution.²¹⁵ Sometimes an event seems so surprising that a symbolic interpretation initially appears more plausible.²¹⁶ Yet Peter's skepticism may seem most odd since an angel has delivered him before (5:19);²¹⁷ but he has

202. Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 48; this was opposite the ancient Egyptian pattern of footwear indoors but not outside (25) but probably accorded with the Minoan custom (35).

203. *Ibid.*, 48. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 10.8 prefers going barefoot to being poorly shod, probably associating this behavior with the poor; some others who were philosophically minded also preferred going barefoot (Mus. Ruf. 19, p. 122.5; cf. Matt 10:10). Runners also went barefoot (Mus. Ruf. 19, p. 122.9–11), as did farmers when working (Max. Tyre 24.6); the humbling of fasting might require the removal of sandals (*y. Ta'an.* 3:11, §4). By contrast, rabbinic circles expected most people to have different sandals for the Sabbath from those worn on other days (*y. Sabb.* 6:2, §1).

204. Lewis, *Life*, 69; in earlier times, see Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 25. In contrast to Greeks, Egyptian women were traditionally denied shoes; this required them to stay home (Plut. *Bride* 30, *Mor.* 142C).

205. Jacobson, “Shoes,” thinks that the debate reflects Pythagorean interests (*b. Šabb.* 61a).

206. Croom, *Clothing*, 64. Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 25, notes that people often made sandals of “tooled leather or of purple leather with piped edges that were attached to the sandal by a clasp hanging on a strand of plaited leather.” Some strict Jews might use reeds or bamboo footwear instead of leather on Yom Kippur (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 728). Egyptian gentry might have leather or papyrus rind, with decorations of beads (Lewis, *Life*, 52). Wealthy footwear could also be alluring (Jdt 10:4; 16:9).

207. Forbes, *Technology*, 5:59; on Greek footwear, see 5:57–59, and for Roman, 5:59–60; much more extensively, see Goldman, “Roman Footwear.”

208. Croom, *Clothing*, 60–61.

209. *Ibid.*, 60 (the nails might have to be purchased separately [63, citing Diocletian's later price list]).

210. *Ibid.*, 131 (claiming that the tradition began in times of persecution); cf. Evans, *World*, 151.

211. Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 48.

212. *Ibid.*

213. Eleven of twelve NT uses are in Acts, of which two (both Paul's) refer to visions at night (Acts 16:9–10; 18:9); visions and dreams are connected in 2:17.

214. So Haenchen, *Acts*, 384. Because epiphanies were often connected with dreams and visions (Weaver, *Epiphany*, 166–72), Peter has to realize that his release is real (172).

215. Cf. the later symbolism in the dream in *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (in, e.g., Friend, *Rise of Christianity*, 291, 412–13; Walsh, *Dictionary*, 964–65). The vision in Acts 10:11–13 had a figurative point but, unpredictably, the present experience was literal.

216. In one modern narrative, see MacNutt, *Angels*, 21–22.

217. For parallelism between the scenes in some respects, cf., e.g., Goulder, *Type and History*, 26.

also experienced an object-lesson vision earlier in Acts (10:10–16), and Luke may well expect the informed reader to assume that Peter has had other visions periodically (cf. 2:17; 2 Cor 12:1–4). Angels could appear in dreams (Gen 28:12; 31:11; cf. Matt 1:20; 2:13, 19; perhaps 1 Kgs 19:5–7, including striking awake). Perhaps he has been sleeping so soundly (Acts 12:7) that it takes a few moments to be fully awake.

This portrayal of Peter serves well an irony in the context. Peter doubts the reality of the angel in 12:9, then realizes that it was real (12:11); by contrast, those praying for Peter will believe that he is an angel and doubt that he has really come. Peter thinks the angel he is seeing is a “vision” just as the doubting disciples claimed that the women saw only a “vision” of angels in Luke 24:23. As in other biblical narratives, the “hero” is God; even the most faithful of human agents remain “humans just like” others (cf. Acts 14:15).

That the iron²¹⁸ (thus, heavy) gate opened “by itself” (αὐτομάτη, 12:10) reflects a long Hellenistic tradition associated with the escapes mentioned above (see comment on Acts 12:7).²¹⁹ When Dionysus freed prisoners, the fetters fell from their feet αὐτόματα, of themselves (Eurip. *Bacch.* 447), and the doors likewise unbarred themselves without a human hand (*Bacch.* 448).²²⁰ A consort of Zeus was freed by her bonds loosening αὐτομάτως (Apollod. *Bib.* 3.5.1); door bolts sprang back αὐτόματοι from Medea’s enchanted music (Ap. Rhod. 4.41–42). In the same tradition, Apollonius released his own bonds, then ran to the prison doors, which opened for him without his touch; then he vanished (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.30).

The language also applied to divine activity when not connected to prison release: thus the gates of heaven opened αὐτόματα, “self-bidden,” as Hera’s horses moved forward (Hom. *Il.* 8.392–93 [LCL, 1:367]); when Apollo visits his shrine, Callimachus poetically calls for its doors’ bolts and bars to push themselves back (Callim. *Hymns* 2 [to Apollo], lines 1–8).²²¹ Greeks also spoke of animals that offered themselves willingly for sacrifice (Philost. *Hrk.* 17.3–4), sometimes using this term (56.4, αὐτόματον).

Similar images also appear in Jewish sources. Like Callimachus’s summons to the doors of Apollo’s shrine,²²² Josephus mentions the temple doors opening by themselves (*War* 6.293), though this was a negative portent (6.289–96; Tac. *Hist.* 5.13).²²³ The closest LXX use of the same term as here is undoubtedly Josh 6:5, where Jericho’s walls collapse unaided (a case of miraculous ingress rather than egress).²²⁴

The closest parallel here, however, is Artapanus’s third- or second-century B.C.E. story of Moses in Pharaoh’s prison, when Moses came to release the Jews (relevant again to this context, Acts 12:3–4). “When night came, all the doors of the prison opened of themselves,²²⁵ and some of the guards died, while others were relaxed by

218. Ironwork was well more than a millennium old by this point and fairly sophisticated (see Riederer, “Ores”; idem, “Iron: Greece”; Riederer and Wartke, “Iron”). Rabbinic literature attests even case hardening and Indian steelwork as early as the fourth century C.E. (Levene and Rothenberg, “Evidence”).

219. The term appears elsewhere in the NT only at Mark 4:28 (for growing seed; cf. seed without farmers’ assistance in Lev 25:5, 11; 2 Kgs 19:29). One may contrast the gate in Acts 10:17, opened by more natural means but after God secures Peter’s cooperation.

220. Ovid *Metam.* 3.699–700 is even more dramatic here, with the prison doors flying open and the chains dropping.

221. For discussion of the motif, cf. also Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 58; Haenchen, *Acts*, 390. Such stories sometimes also emphasized “the weight and solidity of the door” that moved (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 136, comparing Mark 16:4); here the gate is “iron.” For deities associated with gates (as guardians), see Johnston, “Gates” (on Hecataea, citing Aeschylus in *TrGF* 388; Aristoph. *Wasps* 804; on Hermes, e.g., Theocritus *Idylls* 25.4; Aristoph. *Plut.* 1153; Paus. 1.22.8).

222. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 94, also notes the opening of heaven’s gates (Hom. *Il.* 5.749; 8.393).

223. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 94; cf. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 246; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 649.

224. Cf. perhaps self-kindled fire for judgment in Wis 17:6.

225. Eusebius’s αὐτομάτως here might be an additional accommodation to Greek tradition, however, since Clement has “according to God’s will” (Collins in *OTP* 2:901 n. j2).

sleep and their weapons were broken.”²²⁶ Peter's encounter is less spectacular, since it does not slay the guards, nor does he proceed to Agrippa's palace to wake up the king, as Moses did with Pharaoh (Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.24). But Artapanus's account shows that the motif had been accepted in hellenized Jewish circles for centuries before Luke wrote. It seems at least possible that the self-opening gate might also remind hearers of the stone that has been rolled away²²⁷ (Luke 24:2, employing a perfect passive participle; although *self*-rolling is not specified in the extant first-century gospels).²²⁸

Since the shift had four guards (Acts 12:4) and half of them remained in Peter's cell (12:6), he passed only two guards going out, neither of whom saw him any more than the first two had.²²⁹ Peter and the angel pass the door of the cell, and possibly a prison door beyond the guards, if the gate mentioned here is outside a courtyard. That the gate led “to the city” almost certainly does not place the prison outside the city (even allowing for possible executions there). If the Fortress Antonia is in view, it probably means the *inhabited* city, away from the prison and presumably from the temple courts, since one could exit the Antonia tower either toward the temple or toward the city.²³⁰ The temple was not easily exited at night and was full of Levite watchmen (on the Levite police, see comment on Acts 4:1),²³¹ but one would not need to leave the Antonia directly through the temple; a street alongside the temple ran straight to the Upper City.

We cannot be certain of the street or alley (ῥύμην)²³² along which the angel led Peter, probably for safety from night watchmen, even if we could be sure that Peter exited from near the fortress and the temple.²³³ Nevertheless, knowledge of Jerusalem's design may give us a general idea of the route that Peter might have taken. Jerusalem's major street, a paved Herodian thoroughfare, ran (in one branch) from the Antonia in the north alongside the temple's Western Wall toward the south of the city; to its west lay the Tyropoeon Valley.²³⁴ This major street probably connected the northwestern upper market and the southern lower market, the temple's

226. Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.23 (*OTP* 2:901).

227. On such stones, see, e.g., *m. Erub.* 1:7; *Naz.* 7:3; *'Ohal.* 2:4. Robbers would roll away the stone (*Char. Chaer.* 3.3.1), but normally not single-handedly; even smaller stones could require enormous strength (*Gen* 29:8, 11).

228. In contrast to *G. Pet.* 9.37 (Maurer, 186).

229. Greek sources also spoke of divinely enabled invisibility (*Hom. Il.* 3.381; 5.23, 344–45; 20.321, 443–46; 21.597–98; 24.334–38; *Od.* 7.14–17, 41–42; 13.189–93; *Soph. Ajax* 70, 83–85; *Eurip. Hel.* 44–45; *Iph. Taur.* 27–30; *Orest.* 1629–36; *Ap. Rhod.* 3.210–13; 4.647–48; *Virg. Aen.* 1.411–14, 439–40; 12.52–53, 416; *Ovid Metam.* 5.621–24; 12.32–34; 15.538–39; *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 4.16; *Apollod. Bib.* 3.6.8; *Sil. It.* 9.484–85; for the helmet of Hades, see *Aristoph. Acharn.* 390; *Soph. frg. of Inachus* 8, 26 [*SPap* 3:24–25]; *Apollod. Bib.* 2.4.2), an objective also in magical papyri (*PGM* 1.222–31, 256–57; cf. Smith, *Magician*, 120). See more fully Keener, *John*, 773–74.

230. Barrett, *Acts*, 581; cf. Carter and Earle, *Acts*, 168.

231. Cf., e.g., *Jos. War* 4.298; 6.131, 136. Priests normally opened the temple gates shortly after midnight (*Jos. Ant.* 18.29) and also engaged in offerings at night (*War* 6.299; *Ag. Ap.* 1.199). Priests also guarded other temples' doors at night (e.g., *Ant.* 18.74).

232. These could be narrow alleys (Rohrbaugh, “Pre-industrial City,” 144); see comment on Acts 5:14; 9:11. That Luke himself knew the exact route is doubtful; Peter was not likely present during Luke's visit to Jerusalem, and had he been present he would not likely have been offering tours.

233. Cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 136, for the difficulties of the Greek. The Western text includes a descent of seven steps, appearing to presuppose the reader's understanding (Bruce, *Acts*³, 73; for discussion, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 394). Steps appear in the temple area (*Acts* 21:35; *Jos. War* 5.207); but we cannot identify these (there were more than seven descending from the Antonia into the temple courts), and the Western tradition probably postdates the temple's destruction. Maloney, *Narration of Works*, 101–15, suggests that Luke may have redacted the details of Acts 12:11–17, after Peter's deliverance, to fit his general schema of retelling accounts; the retellings here (cf. 12:11, 17), however, are relatively minimal.

234. Mare, *Archaeology*, 151; McRay, *Archaeology*, 108, 124.

southwestern corner being the city's center of daily activity.²³⁵ Instead of following the street all the way south until finding other roads connecting with the Upper or Lower City, he could cross Robinson's Arch to enter the Lower City.²³⁶ More quickly still, he could cross the earlier Wilson's Arch, six hundred feet before the southern wall. Wilson's Arch carried a forty-four-foot-wide street from this main street into the Upper City.²³⁷

Would Peter have dared take the main thoroughfare? If the angel made Peter's escape invisible to the guards and led him to the street, Peter probably could feel more confident valuing speed over secrecy. Would Peter risk being recognized on the main street? This was not likely in the dark and without chains; unlike Antioch, few cities had torches illuminating the streets at night.²³⁸ In Rome, wheeled traffic traversed the streets at night;²³⁹ this could have been true in Jerusalem as well, especially on a street near the markets and running near rather than through elite neighborhoods in the Upper City.²⁴⁰ Peter would not then be on the street completely alone but would be relatively inconspicuous. A more circuitous route is possible (especially given the term *ρύμη*; we cannot be sure what information Luke himself had here) but would have taken longer.

Knowing his way around the city, Peter would follow a fairly straightforward route once he exited the major street into the Upper City; its design followed the standard Greek pattern of "crisscrossed streets flanked by houses."²⁴¹ The Upper City made sense in part because it was closest; Peter's choice of this believer's house may be determined by its being in the nearest residential neighborhood available. Some parts of the Upper City were closer than others, of course, but the palaces of the high priest (consuming about the southern third) and Herod's old palace (consuming more or less the rest of the western quarter) were the farthest points, leaving most of the residential areas closer at hand.²⁴²

Unlike some other writers (such as Matthew, e.g., Matt 1:20–24; 28:2–6, though one may assume that his angels did not remain permanently), Luke sometimes narrates an angel's departure as well as the angel's appearance (cf. Acts 10:7; Luke 1:38).

d. Visiting the Prayer Meeting (12:11–17)

Once free, Peter visits some believers at a nearby house church to let them know what has happened to him and to leave instructions to spread the word. He discovers that even believers spending the night in prayer for him are astonished that he has been delivered and has visited them.

I. RECOGNIZING DELIVERANCE (12:11)

Peter's recognition of deliverance (Acts 12:11) could belong to the unit 12:6–10 as well as to 12:12–17; at many points, modern outlines can only approximate transitions in Luke's action. The verb for "deliver," *ἐξείλατο*, appears in 7:10, 34 (Joseph and Israel in the exodus) and 23:27 and 26:17 (Paul); although not limited by any means to an exodus context, it might evoke such associations in this Passover setting

235. Mare, *Archaeology*, 152 (following Mazar).

236. Cf. McRay, *Archaeology*, 108–9, 124.

237. Cf. *ibid.*, 109.

238. Cary and Haerhoff, *Life*, 106. Presumably, however, wheeled traffic moved slowly, and it seems likely that they carried torches.

239. E.g., McRay, *Archaeology*, 87; Clarke, "Italy," 474.

240. It should go without saying that wheeled traffic could be noisy.

241. Bahat, "Jerusalem," 230.

242. See the map in Mare, *Archaeology*, 169.

(12:3–4).²⁴³ God had delivered Peter from the “hand” of Herod just as God saved Israel from the “hand” of the Egyptians (Exod 14:30).²⁴⁴ (“Deliverance from the hand” was extremely common OT language; we should not think of a single, specific textual allusion on this basis alone.)²⁴⁵ The closest allusion (besides perhaps Exod 3:8, to which Luke refers in Acts 7:34) would be Jethro’s praise of Israel’s God in Exod 18:9–11: God “delivered” them from the “hand” of their oppressors (18:10); “Now I know²⁴⁶ [that God is the greatest God]” (18:11; echoed in Acts 12:11).²⁴⁷ Cf. similarly the use of *κακόω* in Acts 12:1. Mention of “the Jewish people” along with Herod alludes back to the sentiments mentioned in 12:3.

Ancient texts praised the heroic people who returned to prison and death because they had given their word (e.g., Val. Max. 1.1.14) or for other honorable reasons (e.g., Socrates refused to escape lest he undermine the laws). Peter, however, has no honorable reason to return and celebrates his deliverance. Peter’s coming “to himself” means coming to his senses²⁴⁸ (cf. the similar expression in Luke 15:17);²⁴⁹ that is, he is finally fully awake and recognizes it. Although Luke also employs *ἐν ἑαυτῷ* for interior monologues (Luke 7:39; 12:17; 18:4), the expression might recall Peter’s previous experience that was genuinely visionary in Acts 10:17; in both cases God’s activity is so contrary to expectations that Peter cannot grasp the message fully while the event is occurring.

II. MARK’S MOTHER’S HOUSE (12:12)

Peter could find his way if there was any moonlight;²⁵⁰ this would make him more visible to the city’s night guards or whoever might see him moving about (increasing the suspense in Acts 12:14–16), but without drawing close with torches, they would probably not recognize his face.²⁵¹ No one would yet be looking for Peter (his absence was noticed at daybreak, 12:18). That believers were together may fit the setting of persecution (cf. Luke 24:33; John 20:19) but is useful especially for Luke’s theme of unity, especially in prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:1, 42, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25).²⁵² Believers had prayed together both in their homes and in the temple (2:42, 46), but a prayer

243. The only other use for *ἐξείλατο* (contrast Matt 5:29; 18:9) in the NT is Gal 1:4. The term is frequent in the LXX, but Luke’s one use in a citation is related to Israel’s exodus (Exod 3:8; cf. 18:4, 8–10). In some ways, however, the deliverance is closer to the individual rescues suggested in Dan 3:17; 6:16. Passover involved protection, and some exegetical traditions even linked this protection with the term “pass over” (Büchner, “Psh”).

244. Also Exod 3:8; 18:4, 9–10; 1 Sam 10:18. Also Gaventa, *Acts*, 184–85.

245. Likewise, it could contrast with Herod’s laying “hands” on some in Acts 12:1, but the language is too common to draw this inference (cf. Luke 1:74; Sir 51:8; 3 Macc 6:10; the specific verb linked with *ἐκ* (*τῶν*) *χειρῶν* or *ἐκ χειρὸς* is extremely common).

246. Talbert, *Acts*, 108, notes other “interior monologues” in Luke (e.g., Luke 7:39; 12:17–19, 45; 15:17–20; 16:3–4; 18:4–5; 20:13, all specifically Lukan; see also 18:11, also Lukan; cf. 3:15; but also Mark 2:6–7; Matt 9:3), the OT (e.g., 1 Sam 18:17, 21), and Gentile sources (Talbert cites Ap. Rhod. 3.772–801; Virg. *Aen.* 4.534–52; Ovid *Metam.* 10.319–33; Longus 1.14.18; Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 1.4.1–7).

247. See Le Cornu, *Acts*, 650 (emphasizing the exodus allusion). Exodus 18:11 LXX has *νῦν ἔγνων ὅτι* (cf. Philo *Drunkness* 41, quoting Exod 18:11; elsewhere in the LXX, only Judg 17:13; Ps 19:7 [20:7 ET]), compared with *νῦν οἶδα ὅτι* (elsewhere in the NT, only at John 11:22; nowhere else in this form in the LXX, Josephus, or Philo) here.

248. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 488 (comparing Soph. *Philoc.* 950; Xen. *Anab.* 1.5.17; Polyb. 1.49.8).

249. On which cf. perhaps Jeremias, *Parables*, 130; less strongly, Bailey, *Poet.*, 173–75.

250. For the significance of moonlight for night visibility, see Pindar *Isthm.* 8.44; Polyb. 7.16.3; 9.15.12; Virg. *Aen.* 7.9; Ovid *Fasti* 2.697; Sil. It. 15.616; Plut. *Alc.* 20.5; Tac. *Hist.* 3.23; contrast (strangely) Plut. *Nat. Phen.* 24, *Mor.* 917F.

251. Cf. the need for the betrayer to identify Jesus at Gethsemane, Luke 22:47 (more complete in Mark 14:44–45).

252. The term used here for gathering, *συναθροίζω*, appears elsewhere in the NT only at Acts 19:25, though it appears more than thirty times in the LXX.

meeting late at night would naturally occur only in homes, and persecution would probably prevent public corporate prayer in the temple. Although the situation was dangerous for believers, it seems that at the moment (perhaps in contrast to 8:1) it is especially the chief apostles who have been targeted for execution (12:2–3).

Why would many people gather at this particular home? Normally, large groups favored the homes of well-to-do people with enough space to accommodate them (cf. the upper room in 1:13). Features that support the home's being well-to-do are the servant girl and the gate (on each of which, see comment on Acts 12:13). Barnabas had been a landowner (4:36–37) and was probably part of the same extended family (Col 4:10; Luke's audience may not have known this detail, but John Mark's identity at least is already presupposed in Acts 12:12). (Luke explains which "John"—an extremely common Jewish name—by the Roman second name but may presuppose that his audience has heard of him. He will treat him further in 12:25; 15:37.)

For Luke, this offers a convenient opportunity to introduce both John Mark and his mother by name, perhaps also taking advantage of the opportunity to suggest another probable widow in the church (on her widowhood, see discussion below; on widows, see discussion at Acts 6:1; 9:39–41). Luke did not need to specify her social power, since the audience would understand this on the basis of her prominence;²⁵³ this may also serve his purposes for gender balance.²⁵⁴

That the house is identified as belonging to John Mark's "mother" likely means that she was widowed²⁵⁵ and hence exerted a degree of control over her property higher than usual among women.²⁵⁶ Women controlling homes had fewer status concerns and so tended to be more open to joining and providing meeting places for new religious movements (see comment on Acts 16:15).²⁵⁷ We know of women patrons for religious associations elsewhere in antiquity (perhaps a tenth of all religious associations);²⁵⁸ like male patrons, they probably exercised considerable influence on the groups that met in their homes.²⁵⁹

Because the house is described as well known, Luke probably is drawing on authentic local tradition for it.²⁶⁰ The criticisms sometimes leveled against movements depending too much on women's support²⁶¹ also speak against its being Luke's invention, though he is not shy to report the benefaction of women of status where he

253. Arlandson, "Lifestyles," 169.

254. On Luke and gender, see the discussion and sources in Keener, *Acts*, 1:597–638; on balancing, see 598–99 and sources cited there.

255. It would not be to protect her husband's identity (given generally harsher punishments for men), since this would not likely be an issue after Agrippa I's death.

256. See discussion at Acts 16:15, concerning another woman patron.

257. Cf. *Jos. Ant.* 20.34; *Iren. Her.* 1.13.1–3; Liefeld, "Preacher," 239–41; esp. 1 Tim 5:13, probably implying (in the context of the Pastorals) that false teachers were targeting and working through widows to procure access to their homes (see 2 Tim 3:6; cf. Keener, "Perspective," 232–33). For targeting women's households as more susceptible, see Aeschines *Tim.* 171 (and the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:629–34, esp. 630–31); thus Lucian emphasizes widows among Christians (*Perigr.* 12).

258. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 24 (describing MacMullen's figure); cf. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 200 (for about half that figure); Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 24, §48; 243–44, §232; Matthews, "Ladies' Aid"; see further comments on women patrons at Acts 16:15; 17:4.

259. Lampe, "Patrons," 495. The term *προστάτης* can apply to a governing role (e.g., *Xen. Mem.* 1.2.40; *Mus. Ruf.* 8, p. 66.6), and Greco-Roman financial patrons often exercised authority (Jeffers, *World*, 83, though doubting this connection in Pauline congregations) if they were involved in a congregation. On women's leadership roles in Luke-Acts, see Kee, *Origins*, 91.

260. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 94 (Luke has "factual support" for it). Such information would have been available during Luke's visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15–18).

261. See, e.g., Ilan, "Women to Pharisaism"; further comment on Acts 16:15.

has reason to do so (Luke 8:2–3; Acts 16:15).²⁶² This is probably not, however, the home with the upper room of Acts 1:13 unless Luke simply lacks tradition on this point; if he knew of a connection, he surely would have made it (especially given the prayer meetings at both homes, 1:14).²⁶³

Some scholars link this Mary with the earlier Mary at the prayer meeting before the Spirit's coming (1:14);²⁶⁴ although the connection of women mentioned at prayer meetings may be significant for showing Luke's interests, it is not surprising that Luke mentions this patron's name (he tends to name women where his tradition supplies this information). Nor should we make too much of the shared name: "Mary" was "easily the most popular woman's name in 1st-century Palestine" across all social strata,²⁶⁵ and so, once Luke names her, it makes sense to identify her further (even had Luke not been introducing John Mark).

We might anticipate names such as "Mark" and perhaps "Rhoda" more in a Hellenist's home²⁶⁶ (allowing, though not requiring, the relationship with Barnabas; compare Col 4:10 with Acts 4:36). The son's name could imply some status and a household with Diaspora connections. "Marcus" is a Latin praenomen, and praenomens did not necessarily indicate Roman citizenship;²⁶⁷ still, the name was most in use among Jews in the West and is otherwise unknown in Palestine. Among Jews, it seems normally a praenomen of those who had acquired citizenship.²⁶⁸ Many Diaspora Jews used variants of this name, including "Marcia" and "Marcellus" (see, e.g., *CIJ* 1:97, §138 [Appian Way; a child, hence not a proselyte]; 1:98, §139 [Appian Way]; 1:176, §248; 1:177, §249 [Latin]; 1:178, §250 [Latin]; 1:293, §377 [Greek, but "wife of Maximus"]). But John may have acquired this Latin *epiklesis* later, while on his mission travels (cf. Acts 12:25; 13:5; 15:39); certainly Gentiles would have found "Marcus" a much easier name to accommodate "than the outlandish and unfamiliar Yehohanan" ("John").²⁶⁹ Roman praenomens in use were so few (the favorites, besides "Marcus," being "Gaius," "Lucius," and "Titus") that these became very common,²⁷⁰ requiring the distinguishing "John"²⁷¹ unless context (as in 15:39; cf. 15:37) or audience knowledge (Phlm 24; 2 Tim 4:11; 1 Pet 5:13) allowed the simple "Mark."

For comment on how the motif of prayer here fits Luke's broader emphases, see comment on Acts 12:5. Much more than any unjust judge (Luke 18:2–4), God hears those who cry to him day and night (Luke 18:7); here God, in answer to fervent prayer (Acts 12:5), delivers Peter from a real unjust judge (12:2–4). But just as Jesus

262. This is undoubtedly historical; see, e.g., Rom 16:2, 5; Col 4:15; perhaps 1 Cor 1:11; note that Acts 16 appears in "we" material and Luke 8 reflects earlier tradition from or related to Mark 15:40–41. Given the culture, it is intrinsically likely that a house church's host would have exercised significant influence, despite the relative silence of our earliest sources (see Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 33).

263. Had Luke written before 66 C.E. and simply wished to suppress information dangerous to the homeowner, naming the site in Acts 12:12–13 (where Peter fled after escaping Agrippa) would have been far more dangerous than naming the site in 1:13. The upper room of Luke 22:12 belonged to a home with perhaps only a male servant (22:10), since his task was one normally performed by women (contrast Acts 12:13).

264. Rius-Camps, "Maria en Hechos."

265. Williams, "Names," 90–91. It exploded in popularity after Herod the Great killed Judea's beloved Hasmonean queen, Mariamne (Williams, "Names," 107; on the dominance of Hasmonean names in the Holy Land in this period, see 107–9).

266. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 138.

267. Judge, *Rank*, 36n19; idem, *First Christians*, 561. Whether Mark was a Roman citizen or not, use of the name could suggest that Mark derived from a wealthy family comfortable with Roman rule, if he had the name before leaving Judea.

268. Williams, "Names," 105.

269. *Ibid.*

270. Stambaugh, *City*, 94.

271. Or "Barnabas's cousin" (Col 4:10).

warned that his followers might lose faith by the time they were delivered (Luke 18:8), so here neither Peter (Acts 12:9) nor the disciples praying for him (12:15) really expect God's intervention.

III. HOUSE CHURCHES (12:12)

Although Jesus called disciples to abandon their possessions (Luke 12:33; 14:33; 18:22), not all became literally homeless. Thus disciples could be simply itinerants away from their homes (18:28–30).²⁷² For others, Luke seems to have accepted as adequate fulfillment the selling of whatever they had in excess of their needs, whenever others' greater needs arose²⁷³ (and presumably not acquiring more, if its "selling-off" value would be less than its acquisition price).

Christians met in homes for prayer, worship, study of Scripture, and other corporate activities we associate with the early church.²⁷⁴ This pattern fit Jesus's instructions (Luke 9:4; 10:5, 7; Mark 6:10). Sociological studies suggest that conversions most frequently occur through relationships,²⁷⁵ making the house church model an effective one for the growth of a new religious movement. There can be little doubt that this pattern belongs to the earliest period of the church's formation. The house church model preceded Paul's church-planting ministry, the Roman church used it (Rom 16:5),²⁷⁶ synagogues often started in homes,²⁷⁷ and there was no other practical place to meet in difficult times. It is also reasonable to believe that this part of the Jesus tradition is authentic, attested in both Markan (Mark 6:10; Luke 9:4) and Q (Luke 10:5–7; Matt 10:12–14) forms (though Mark may depend here on Q).

This use of a domestic venue for worship and teaching, unfamiliar to many modern Western Christians accustomed to larger and more formal "services," would not have surprised their contemporaries.²⁷⁸ Associations of various sorts too small for constructing their own meeting hall typically met in areas of temples (which were public buildings; cf. Acts 2:46), rented a hall, or, as here, met in homes.²⁷⁹ Some mystery cults were practiced in houses;²⁸⁰ some philosophic schools met in houses.²⁸¹ Religious associations often began in homes, then grew, requiring architectural adaptation of existing properties²⁸² and finally often building their own religious structures.²⁸³ Sometimes a residential block was converted into a Serapion or even a temple for

272. See, e.g., Kim, *Stewardship*, who offers a strong case. Tannehill, "Ethics," 119–20, finds Kim's case appealing yet warns that Luke may not be concerned to offer systematic or consistent presentation.

273. See discussion at Acts 2:44–45; esp. 4:34.

274. See, e.g., Acts 2:46; 5:42; 8:3; 10:24; 18:7; 20:20; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phlm 2; 2 John 10; cf. *t. Sabb.* 13:5. On house churches in the NT, see, e.g., Smith, "House Church"; White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:103–10; in second-century sources, see 1:110. House churches allowed a level of relationships and participation in corporate charismatic experiences (cf., e.g., Langner, *Hechos*, 317–18, citing 1 Cor 14:26) unusual in traditional churches today.

275. See Campbell, *Deliverance*, 131–33, and the sources cited there. One should note that most of these studies involve modern Western culture, where religion is not always an acceptable topic for public discourse; but new religious ideas are undoubtedly controversial in many cultures.

276. Though possibly learned from Paul's colleagues in Rom 16:5 (cf. 1 Cor 16:19); Paul did not found that church (Rom 1:10–13; 15:20–23).

277. See discussion below.

278. It is also familiar in some Western and many non-Western settings, and it tends to prove useful for church growth (e.g., Obed, "House Fellowship"; Pothen, "Missions," 300–302).

279. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 126; Jeffers, *World*, 77.

280. Klauck, *Context*, 63.

281. *Ibid.*

282. See White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:26–59.

283. Generally, see White, *Origins of Architecture*, passim (and Meeks, "Aliens," 131, who cites White in this regard); White, "Synagogue in Ostia," 33–34 (citing even Mithraists).

Zeus.²⁸⁴ Homes were certainly well suited to the needs of Christian worshipers, who lacked a sacrificial cult and practiced a common meal.²⁸⁵

Palestinian Jewish scribes sometimes taught students in their houses' courtyards;²⁸⁶ apparently, others also welcomed sages to teach in their homes (*m. 'Ab.* 1:4).²⁸⁷ Philo compared the paschal use of homes to the temple (Philo *Spec. Laws* 2.148).²⁸⁸ Following the above-noted pattern often used by other religious associations, most current scholars argue that most early Diaspora synagogues began as houses and were gradually redesigned and rebuilt for use as synagogues,²⁸⁹ and some even retained their basic domestic structure after renovations.²⁹⁰ (Not all synagogues took the domestic form; in contrast is the massive third-century C.E. synagogue in Sardis.)²⁹¹ White suggests that an early second-century C.E. Ostia synagogue may have evolved from an *insula*, a regular apartment building.²⁹² Of the six excavated Diaspora synagogues, White notes, "five were renovated from private domestic edifices, and in each case they had been houses typical of domestic architecture in that locale."²⁹³

Christians presumably followed, for their assembly halls, the practice that was common for synagogue buildings. The earliest excavated churches (probably built long after the first century) also suggest the pattern that renovations were an early stage in adapting house churches.²⁹⁴ For example, a house lies beneath Capernaum's later church building.²⁹⁵

Clubs were increasing in the eastern Mediterranean during the empire.²⁹⁶ These included associations with household,²⁹⁷ ethnic or geographic (e.g., synagogues),²⁹⁸

284. White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:34.

285. Schnabel, *Missionary*, 303.

286. Watson, "Education," 312.

287. The attribution and probably the custom are pre-Christian. The piety of opening one's home to sages in *m. 'Ab.* 1:4 parallels that of opening one's home to the poor in 1:5.

288. See Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 140, for discussion.

289. Avi-Yonah, "Archaeological Sources," 54, citing those at Delos, Miletus, Priene, and Dura-Europos; cf. Meeks, *Moral World*, 111; see most fully White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:60–101 (summary, 101). On the house synagogue at Priene in Asia Minor, see Kraabel, "Judaism in Asia Minor," 24. For probable particular examples, see, e.g., Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 141; Strange and Shanks, "House in Capernaum," 29–30; see more fully the excursus on synagogues at Acts 6:9–10. On Jewish associations, see also Instone-Brewer and Harland, "Associations."

290. White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:64, on the synagogue in Delos. Even the contested Ostia synagogue may have originated as a domestic site (1:69); if not, it may have originated as public space used by the Jewish community (see this alternative case in Runesson, "Synagogue"); see further debate in White, "Synagogue and Society"; Runesson, "Oldest Building." For the renovation of buildings for special synagogue usage, see Evans, *World*, 51, 55; of course, when synagogues do not exhibit distinctly synagogal features, we cannot recognize them as synagogues.

291. On Sardis's synagogue, see Hanfmann, "Campaign," 23–28; Goodenough, *Symbols*, 12:191; Mitten, "Sardis," 61–62; Meyers and Kraabel, "Remains," 184–85, 192; Botermann, "Synagogue"; Cross, "Inscriptions from Sardis"; Kroll, "Greek Inscriptions"; Bonz, "Approaches"; esp. Seager and Kraabel, "Synagogue." Given eight Jewish members of the city council, however, Sardis hosted no ordinary Jewish community (Seager and Kraabel, "Synagogue," 171, 178).

292. White, "Synagogue in Ostia," 43–46, 49–50; inscriptions show that it was renovated by patrons' donations (53–66). This upwardly mobile Jewish community seems well connected with wealthy donors (62, 66–67). But see the sources challenging White's interpretation in Das, *Debate*, 191–93.

293. White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:62.

294. *Ibid.*, 1:114–18; e.g., a converted *insula* complex in Syria, 2:144. White, 2:33–120, gives literary sources for early Christian assembly, including from the second (some mentioning the house, 2:36–48) and third centuries (2:48–87), and (2:121–257) provides archaeological sources and documents.

295. E.g., Strange and Shanks, "House in Capernaum," 33–34. Archaeology also attests early house churches in Syria (Blue, "House Church," 137).

296. Smith, *Symposium*, 105 (for Egypt, see 106–7). On associations, see also Kloppenborg, "Associations"; Bernabé Ubieta, "Asociaciones"; Jeffers, *World*, 72–77; Ascough, "Associations"; now esp. Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *Associations*; on their earlier development, see Gabrielsen, "Brotherhoods."

297. Harland, *Associations*, 30–33.

298. *Ibid.*, 33–36.

neighborhood,²⁹⁹ occupational,³⁰⁰ and cultic connections.³⁰¹ Workers' trade guilds were very common,³⁰² often meeting in houses they owned.³⁰³ Another form of association that scholars have often noted is the burial association,³⁰⁴ though many now think that joint investment in members' burials remained a secondary concern before the second century C.E.³⁰⁵ Associations with this interest often met near burial grounds outside the town.³⁰⁶

Many associations were primarily religious,³⁰⁷ though religious elements pervaded all associations.³⁰⁸ Rome usually tolerated religious associations, and even the rule that they meet only once a month was often ignored.³⁰⁹ Religious associations often met in temples.³¹⁰ All guilds, whatever their basis, had patron deities; thus a Syrian merchants' guild had Poseidon as a patron and called themselves the "Poseidoniasts."³¹¹ Imperial deities were honored in Asia's associations along with other gods.³¹²

Given Philo's protest against cultic associations in Alexandria (*Flacc.* 136–37), many Jews and Christians probably would not have viewed their groups primarily as cultic associations.³¹³ Nevertheless, given their voluntary character, regular meetings and meals, and so forth, outsiders would naturally so understand them.³¹⁴ Some Jewish groups probably also viewed themselves in these terms,³¹⁵ and both pagans and Christians later described Christian groups in such contextualized terms.³¹⁶ (See discussion on synagogues at Acts 6:9 and on Diaspora synagogues at Acts 13:5.) Differences, including different titles for leaders, suggest that the first Christians did not deliberately model their groups on associations, though later Christians did adopt more elements.³¹⁷ Similarities, however, offer fertile grounds for comparison, comparisons Christians themselves found useful in time as one model for understanding

299. *Ibid.*, 36–38. Given relations among neighbors (Osborne, "Neighbours," 617), house churches may have attracted some neighbors; knowledge of the meetings would have proved inevitable in urban apartment buildings, where, beyond more ample ground floor dwellings, meetings would have to employ the broader shared visiting space (see comment on Acts 20:8–9).

300. Harland, *Associations*, 38–44.

301. *Ibid.*, 44–50.

302. See much fuller comment at Acts 18:3; 19:24; Harland, *Associations*, 38–44.

303. Smith, *Symposium*, 93, 103.

304. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 125.

305. Pearson, "Associations," 136.

306. Smith, *Symposium*, 104.

307. E.g., Klauck, *Context*, 50; Barton and Horsley, "Cult Group"; Meeks, *Moral World*, 114; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 140. Associations may have originated among sharers in the expense of sacrifice (Smith, *Symposium*, 87).

308. Harland, *Associations*, 55–87, esp. 55, 61–74.

309. *Ibid.*, 168.

310. Smith, *Symposium*, 104, 110.

311. *Ibid.*, 105.

312. Harland, *Associations*, 115–36. This might help assuage any Roman concerns about large gatherings. Associations could also be involved in civic imperial honors (137–60).

313. Klauck, *Context*, 54.

314. Harland, *Associations*, 211; Klauck, *Context*, 54; cf. Meeks, *Moral World*, 113; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 140–41.

315. Cf., e.g., *CPJ* 1:252–53, §§138–39 (possibly); White, "Revisited" (possibly); Pearson, "Associations," 137. Mantel, "Nature of Synagogue," develops this insight at length but may press it too far (especially referring to Judean institutions).

316. Pliny *Ep.* 10.36.7 (the former Christians' confession violating the law against *collegia*, a prominent concern, e.g., in 10.92–93); Lucian *Peregr.* 11 (θιασάρχης); Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 88. Judge, *Patterns*, 47–48, argues that Pliny so viewed Christians.

317. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 77–79, esp. 78–79. The lack of association language in the NT itself suggests that in the first century, the association functioned as "legal cover" rather than a model for churches (Jeffers, *World*, 80).

and articulating the nature of their activity.³¹⁸ Whereas Christian groups were initially modeled after synagogues, the later Roman distinction between synagogues and churches made the voluntary-association model appealing.³¹⁹

Nonpolitical private clubs existed in fourth-century B.C.E. Athens and began to flourish from 300 B.C.E. onward, with private temples and usually about a hundred members.³²⁰ Nevertheless, from an early period, some ancients recognized that political associations could pose a danger to monarchies.³²¹ *Collegia* (associations) never represented a standing offense, but their potential for disorder and subversion led to their regulation (as early as the first century B.C.E.).³²² Most notably, there is little evidence for membership beyond the local level, suggesting an important limitation.³²³ Because Rome normally regulated the right to assemble, Roman authorities sometimes had to issue special edicts reiterating the Jewish exception to such limitations.³²⁴ Romans allowed certain kinds of meetings, including for religious purposes, so long as they did not contradict statutes against banned meetings.³²⁵ Activities done in secret were considered subversive,³²⁶ which made house meetings less than ideal—but their private venue also often kept them free from surveillance (where anyone would have cared enough to check on them anyway).

Associations ranged in membership from about ten to two hundred,³²⁷ most often twelve to forty and only rarely more than a hundred.³²⁸ Whereas some associations admitted women and slaves, others were limited to free men;³²⁹ there is little evidence for all-women clubs.³³⁰ Some required members who joined to remain for at least a year.³³¹ These associations sometimes had patrons who helped sponsor the group financially.³³² Associations sometimes had concerns for their members' moral behavior.³³³ They also invariably included meals,³³⁴ which varied in the dominance of religious elements; all included sacrifice and libations.³³⁵

Most house churches were probably small, since most homes were smaller than the estimates for maximum size offered above. Anyone seeking to teach in multiple house churches would need to move from one to another once they began to spread (Acts 20:20; cf. 1 Tim 5:13).³³⁶ Homes remained ideal in part because they contained

318. See, e.g., Schmeller, "Gegenwelten."

319. Jeffers, *World*, 72.

320. Tarn, *Civilisation*, 93–94.

321. *Isoc. Nic.* 54 (*Or.* 3.38). Some also mistrusted their moral character (Foucart, *Associations religieuses*, 5–12), a concern that carried into the Roman period (Smith, *Symposium*, 97).

322. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 80–81.

323. Pearson, "Associations," 136–37. Christian networking among churches and, by the time of Ignatius, a connective structure may have aroused concerns.

324. Rabello, "Condition," 719.

325. *Dig.* 47.22.1 (in Sherk, *Empire*, §177A, p. 234).

326. See, e.g., Blue, "Influence," 482; see further comment on Acts 26:26; Keener, *John*, 1094–95. Probably even in Rome, household meetings were not illegal (Das, *Debate*, 181–82, 188).

327. Klauck, *Context*, 43.

328. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 31.

329. Klauck, *Context*, 47.

330. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 24.

331. Klauck, *Context*, 50, citing P.Lond. 2710 (a first-century B.C.E. cult association).

332. E.g., Chow, *Patronage*, 64–68; Lampe, "Patrons," 493.

333. See Seesengood, "Rules" (although the connection should be with associations in general, not with specifically religious associations); Batten, "Moral World."

334. See Smith, *Symposium*, 96.

335. Harland, *Associations*, 74–83, esp. 77.

336. Their size has implications for the group dynamics there; sociological literature includes hundreds of works on group dynamics, including a large number on the effectiveness of small-group dynamics for reinforcing learning (for a random sampling, see, e.g., Rice and Stacey, "Dynamics"; Keedy, "Leadership"); for their dynamics over an extended period of time, see, e.g., Ziller, "Dialectics."

the kitchen facilities necessary for communal meals,³³⁷ but they would also be useful because the household provided wide kinship and patronal networks that allowed news about the Christian faith to spread.³³⁸

Because the house owners served as host and (in some settings) patron, their names typically identified the group that met there, as here (Acts 18:7; Rom 16:3–5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phlm 2).³³⁹ Some argue that the formula Paul often uses for this (κατ' οἶκον, Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phlm 2) may imply that in Roman settings the church was viewed as an extension of the patron's household (like clients in the Roman patronage system).³⁴⁰ Like all private associations, immigrant groups (such as Diaspora synagogues) depended on benefactors internal or external to their group.³⁴¹ Some features of Diaspora house churches do not fit the expectations for Greco-Roman households. For example, they lacked contact with homes' domestic cult;³⁴² they lacked hierarchical structures characteristic of the Roman family, including the patron's extended household;³⁴³ they shared unity with Christians in other cities.³⁴⁴ Some Christian groups probably also met in different kinds of dwellings (such as apartment space) not provided by patrons.³⁴⁵

A Roman home received visitors in the atrium, which was also where the shrine for family deities was located.³⁴⁶ The family altar venerated the Penates and Lares.³⁴⁷ The household cult followed the model of the Roman state cult,³⁴⁸ and the state cult's hierarchy generally followed that in the household.³⁴⁹ Early Christian meetings shared little in common with this model, even if some later Roman Christian gatherings of households may have assumed elements of it (by, e.g., reflecting household hierarchical patterns).

Eventually Christians were sufficiently wealthy and secure to procure meeting halls specifically designated for that function. The earliest that is currently known is at Dura-Europos, from about 240 C.E.; they became common in the third century and were even permitted by an emperor.³⁵⁰ Like the nearby synagogue and Mithraeum,

337. Blue, "House Church," 121.

338. Meeks, *Moral World*, 111–12; on conversion and social networks, see discussion in Campbell, *Deliverance*, 129–32. Blue, "Influence," 481–82, 486, emphasizes that the primary goal in homes was Christian edification; given frequent opposition, however, the household probably became the locus of evangelism as well (cf. 1 Cor 14:23). Social affiliation sometimes proved a factor even in philosophic conversion (Eshleman, "Affection").

339. With Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 55.

340. See Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 75; cf. White, "Pater familias," 457.

341. See White, "Synagogue in Ostia," 34; Meeks, "Aliens," 131; for Jewish groups, Meeks cites esp. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs*.

342. The supposition that its meeting in homes would classify the Jesus movement as primarily a domestic cult (Pearson, "Domestic Religion," 300) ignores the frequency with which private associations met in homes.

343. For household hierarchical structures, see, e.g., Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 150–52; Verner, *Household*, 33; Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 31; Keener, *Paul*, 159–66; idem, "Marriage," 687–91; idem, "Family," 357–58. The household hierarchical structure was normally reproduced in household cults (Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 31) and created the potential for some of the social conflicts that appeared in early churches (cf. idem, *Moral World*, 112).

344. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 77; such features may comport better with aspects of voluntary associations (77–80; Barton, "Values," 1132; cf. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 91).

345. See Jewett, *Romans*, 64–65. For the sake of privacy, however, houses may have been preferred when available (see Heid, "Romanness," 407).

346. Stambaugh, *City*, 164; cf. Höcker, "Lararium," 244. For mural paintings on shrines for household cults, see Lipka, "Domestic Cults."

347. Klauck, *Context*, 60; cf. Höcker, "Lararium"; Mastrocinque, "Lares" (on the private cult, 248–49).

348. Klauck, *Context*, 62. On household religion more generally, including in the ancient Near East, see Bodet and Olyan, *Religion*; for Roman household cults, see Rives, *Religion*, 118–22; for Greeks, Nilsson, *Folk Religion*, 65–83.

349. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 31.

350. Scriptores Historiae Augustae *Severus Alexander* 49.6, in Jeffers, *World*, 78–79.

Dura's church was originally adapted from a private home.³⁵¹ Church buildings became prevalent only in the fourth century, especially under Constantine,³⁵² a specifically Christian architecture emerged only after the Edict of Milan (313 C.E.).³⁵³

IV. SPACIOUS JERUSALEM HOMES (12:12–13)

Early twentieth-century commentators stressed the relatively low social origins of early Christians; they emphasized that many were poor and were slaves.³⁵⁴ Although this generalization about early Christians may be true (cf. 1 Cor 1:26),³⁵⁵ it is far from the whole story, especially given the urban focus of the expanding movement. Whereas the truly elite were a tiny minority, early Christianity, as an urban movement, likely contained a higher percentage of individuals in the middle-range professions than did the largely rural Mediterranean world as a whole.³⁵⁶ At least in Luke-Acts, Christians interact favorably with persons of high status;³⁵⁷ Paul's letters suggest the same scenario.

The home Peter visits, then, would probably be in the Upper City, near the temple and other wealthy homes, many of which would have belonged to members of the Sadducean aristocracy.³⁵⁸ (The members of John Mark's family themselves may have been Levites, given their relation to Barnabas [cf. Acts 4:36].) The neighborhood would not be the safest place for a fugitive such as Peter (cf. 4:1), both raising the suspense during the delayed entry in 12:13–15³⁵⁹ and explaining why Peter is wise to depart soon after reporting his deliverance (12:17). The fact that, coming from Antonia, Peter had most immediate access to the Upper City would explain why he stops there first, in contrast to poorer homes that might have also been known to host nocturnal prayer meetings or hold influential Christians.

351. Blue, "House Church," 161; Meeks, *Moral World*, 111; Grant, *Christianity and Society*, 146. For discussion of some archaeological evidence regarding pre-Constantinian house churches, see also Riesner, "House Churches"; for one discussion of Blue, see Lockwood, "House Church."

352. See Blue, "House Church," 120; Grant, *Christianity and Society*, 146–63.

353. Blue, "House Church," 121–22.

354. See, e.g., Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 1:39; Case, *Origins*, 79; summary and critique in Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 29–59. More recently and skillfully, see Gager, *Kingdom*, 94; idem, "Class," 99; esp. Meggitt, *Poverty* (critiqued by Theissen, "Structure"; more harshly by Martin, "Review of Meggitt"); Friesen, "Poverty."

355. Friesen, "Demography," 352–58, points out that the "cross-section hypothesis" depends on evidence from Corinth and Rom 16, i.e., may not be demographically representative. (Paul probably tended to name more often persons of status.) Conclusions depend on the groups chosen for comparison; the second-century rabbinic movement, e.g., was of generally higher status and wealth than the Christian movement (Cohen, *Maccabees*, 122) whereas most of Paul's churches were more on the margins than 1 Clement's church (Chow, "World").

356. For the recent general consensus that Christians were a cross section of society, see, e.g., Judge, *Rank*, 9–10; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 29–30; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 51–52; cf. Verner, *Household*, 3–5. This does not mean that members with surplus funds or with status constituted a majority, but they were present and would exert influence beyond their numbers (see Theissen, "Schichtung"; idem, *Setting*, 69–96, 99; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 29–30, 118–19). Even the early "poor" consensus allows for some persons of diverse stations (Case, *Origins*, 133); in critiquing Malherbe, Gager insists that only romantics and Marxists defined early Christians as *wholly* proletarian and argues not against some high-status members but only against those of high class (such as Roman senators and equestrians; see Gager, "Review," 178–80). But no one argues that they drew from the higher Roman orders (Judge, *Pattern*, 52); part of the division has been semantic.

357. Grant, "Social Setting," 22 (noting that the status was even higher in the second-century apocryphal acts). Some have attacked the cross-section-of-society consensus especially for its dependence on Acts as opposed to the Gospels' critiques of wealth (Scroggs, "Present State," 170), but the author of Acts also wrote the Gospel most radical concerning wealth.

358. Cf., e.g., the Bar Kathros stone weight in the "Burnt House" (Carmon, *Inscriptions*, §233, pp. 113, 239). In addition to their own mikvaot, wealthy homes included "mosaic tiles, plastered and painted walls" (Evans, *World*, 96). Luke's average Diaspora reader would not know Jerusalem's layout but would recognize that poor and rich were normally concentrated in different sections of a city.

359. At least for anyone who knew something of Jerusalem's topography. But given the design of most ancient cities, the proximity of wealthier homes to the main city center (where jails were more often located) would probably be assumed by others as well.

The nature of homes varied according to region and especially wealth.³⁶⁰ Rural peasants in the Mediterranean world often lived in small homes built from wood or compressed clay whereas most poor urbanites lived in upper stories of wooden tenements (the sort that burned in Rome in 64 C.E.).³⁶¹ Wealthier Greeks used stone, and Italians often employed concrete with burned brick facings; wealthy Greeks had quadrangular chambers surrounding an oblong inner court, with the most private chambers farthest from the street and with others holding quarters for slaves, offices, and storage space.³⁶²

Wealthy Roman homes could cost 875,000 denarii; on the other end of the scale, the simplest apartment in Rome could run 100 to 125 denarii a year for rent.³⁶³ As already noted, most of the poor in Rome lived in multistory tenements, the price, utility, and safety decreasing with altitude.³⁶⁴ In Rome, although some neighborhoods were poorer than others, often the well-to-do (full-scale aristocrats being far below 1 percent of the population) and poor people lived in the same neighborhoods, sometimes with the rich having luxury housing on the bottom floor.³⁶⁵ Housing usually would cost much less in other cities than in Rome, but good housing would not be cheap in any urban area.

Because Pompeian homes remain intact, they provide a useful illustration of a mixed Western style.³⁶⁶ They used an *atrium* near the front entrance for receiving guests and hosting receptions, following the Italian plan, with a Greek-style *peristylum*, or courtyard dwelling, further back.³⁶⁷ (For the patronal class,³⁶⁸ privacy was determined by time of day, not by architecture.)³⁶⁹ The *atrium* was a columned, mostly roofed hall open to the sky and sunlight in the rectangular center, beneath which lay a shallow, rectangular pool to catch rainwater.³⁷⁰ The walls of the front of a house typically bordered the street.³⁷¹ Some city dwellers even had palaces in addition to rural villas.³⁷² In imperial times, Italians with wealth preferred more spacious villas near the edge of town, or courtyard suites on the first floors of apartment buildings.³⁷³ Following a more Eastern style, larger Palestinian Jewish homes also had courtyards, sometimes so-called Tyrian courtyards.³⁷⁴

360. For homes varying according to social rank of their occupants, see, e.g., Vitruv. *Arch.* 6.5.1–3. Some Roman homes in northern regions used hypocaust central heating systems, piping heat under the floors and up the walls (Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 102); furniture was scanty except for the wealthy (102).

361. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 100. Most “lived in one or two room storefront and upper story apartments” (Verner, *Household*, 80).

362. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 100 (noting women’s quarters sometimes in an upper story or in the rear of the house).

363. Stambaugh, *City*, 154. Thus an average agricultural worker in Galilee (cf. Matt 20:1–16) or Roman auxiliary (100–200 denarii per year) could not easily have afforded housing in Rome (cf. 356n41). Greek homes varied in price by place, even within the same city; thus in Olynthus they ranged from 900 to 5,300 drachmas (averaging 1,000–2,000 drachmas, with day’s wages of one drachma; Höcker, “House”).

364. See, e.g., Carcopino, *Life*, 24–26, 29–32.

365. See further Stambaugh, *City*, 90; on Pompeii (where the most evidence remains), Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses*, 141, 183.

366. Pompeii held a greater concentration of wealth per capita than Rome, however (Carcopino, *Life*, 23–24).

367. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 100; Hardy, *World*, 79.

368. In urban nonpatronal settings, Greeks and Romans tended to perform their socializing outside the homes (Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 150); the very poor lacked room to do otherwise.

369. White, “*Pater familias*,” 462.

370. E.g., Hardy, *World*, 79 (based on Pompeian homes); Friedländer, *Life*, 1:208 (noting benches for those who needed to wait); Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 110.

371. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 100.

372. For the luxury of city palaces, see Friedländer, *Life*, 2:185–93; villas and gardens, 2:193–202; on luxury in domestic arrangements, 2:202–10.

373. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 110 (with less affluent neighbors in higher stories).

374. Safrai, “Home,” 728–30 (for homes, 730–35).

More relevant is information about Jerusalem's housing. Poor Jerusalemites lived in the Lower City (downwind of the sewers), with outcasts on the fringes; well-to-do people lived in the Upper City.³⁷⁵ The Upper City was distinct from the Fortress Antonia but approachable from it; the supreme example of its extravagance was Herod's lavish palace (Jos. *War* 1.401).³⁷⁶ One entered a wealthy Jerusalem home by means of a vestibule, which opened into the dining hall, or triclinium; in wealthy homes, other rooms surrounded the triclinium.³⁷⁷ Archaeologists have excavated various wealthy homes in pre-70, Upper City Jerusalem, providing a sense of their magnificence.³⁷⁸ Even the wealthy homes, though equipped with both ritual and other baths, lacked indoor toilet facilities because of the lack of running water in Jerusalem.³⁷⁹

Luke says that "many" were praying (Acts 12:12), but estimates can only approximate the order of magnitude, not the number.³⁸⁰ It is usually thought that most well-to-do homes in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Mediterranean world could not comfortably accommodate more than fifty people, though a peristyle might allow up to 120 altogether if necessary.³⁸¹ Some wealthier houses (especially in areas with more space available) could hold more,³⁸² but it should be remembered that the larger the dwelling, the smaller the percentage of the population to whom such homes would have been available.

Upper City Jerusalem had many luxury villas built close together.³⁸³ In one splendid Upper City mansion, the largest room is about twelve or thirteen meters by about seven meters; the second largest room (apart from courtyard) is about seven meters

375. See, e.g., Fiensy, "Composition," 224.

376. On this palace, see further Jos. *War* 5.176–83; for its current use as a praetorium, see Philo *Embassy* 299; Jos. *War* 2.301, 328; Brown, *Death*, 705–10; Blinzler, *Trial*, 173–76; Benoit, *Jesus*, 1:167–88; idem, "Reconstitution"; Keener, *John*, 1099.

377. Safrai, "Home," 732.

378. See Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 95–138, noting that many architectural patterns are borrowed from the larger Gentile world (e.g., p. 120); see also photos and reconstruction designs in Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 352, 447; for relief designs, 446. For art decorations in wealthy Jerusalem homes, see Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 144–50; for one huge palatial mansion in the Upper City, see 95–120, including many Hellenistic details. On the "Burnt House," revealing the Roman destruction of 70, see Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 120–39 (with the skeletal forearm of a woman caught in the fire, 137; idem, "Burnt House," 67, 71–72).

379. Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 143; but for some toilets, see more recently Shanks, "Channels"; for chamber pots, cf. *y. Ber.* 3:5, §5. Heating did exist for baths, however (e.g., Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 482, at Masada; for the steam room at Masada, see 488). Even in Rome, latrines with running water were available only on the first floor when at all (McRay, *Archaeology*, 85); for latrines (mostly public) and chamber pots in Rome, see, e.g., Friedländer, *Life*, 4:284–85; Carcopino, *Life*, 40–43; Koloski-Ostrow, "Latrines"; Stambaugh, *City*, 132–33; only the wealthy had private toilets (Jansen, "Distinctions"). Public toilets in Ephesus (Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 191, on a later period) and Corinth (64) were near the public baths; cleaning public toilets and baths was an extremely low-status job (Pliny *Ep.* 10.33.2).

380. Given the apparent size of the household (with a gate and a servant who doubles as porter), we might estimate between fifteen ("many" for a secret night meeting during persecution) to fifty ("many" for the house).

381. Witherington, *Acts*, 211 (following Blue, "House Church," 131n44); cf. Witherington, *Corinthians*, 114 (following Murphy-O'Connor, *Corinth*, 156–57). Some scholars have more recently suggested possibilities broader than Murphy-O'Connor's estimates; see, e.g., Smith, "House Church," 13 (though partly from discounting Acts); Horrell, "Space"; Adams, "Placing" (esp. 25–35); summarizing views, MacDonald, "Reading," 49. One house in Pompeii consumed an entire block (31,000 sq. ft.) whereas some cramped living quarters atop shops were but 220 sq. ft. (Balch, "Paul, Families, and Households," 260). A shop's space might accommodate ten to twenty people (Jewett, *Romans*, 64). Gordon, "Mithraism," 400, estimates that meeting places for later Mithraic groups in Ostia could hold from roughly eighteen to forty-two, averaging at about thirty-five people. Under duress, of course, more people can be seated than can be reclined comfortably.

382. See esp. Balch, "Houses." Country homes varied in size (Libanius *Descr.* 2.2); for some massive villas, see designs in Höcker, "Villa," 411–14, 417–18; for a romanized first-century Palestinian villa, see Roll and Tal, "Villa."

383. McRay, *Archaeology*, 77. McRay notes (78) one many-roomed palace (ca. 2,000 sq. ft.) with a large waiting room.

by almost five meters. The courtyard is about eight meters by eight meters.³⁸⁴ But John Mark's mother's house, though probably in the Upper City, would not be this large unless she belonged to the high-priestly family (which probably would have made prayer meetings in her home difficult).³⁸⁵

V. DOORS AND PORTERS (12:13)

That Peter knocks at a gate and a servant answers suggests a larger than usual Jerusalem home, as one might expect for a gathering place. Palestinian Jews expected all homes to include doors with bolts, and both doors and courtyard gates were bolted.³⁸⁶ Here, however, the door is part of a larger gate entrance, probably one that could admit more people when opened during the day.³⁸⁷ (Luke's language in 12:14 is less precise, suggesting that Rhoda needed to open the entire gate; but it does not negate the more precise language here.) Such a gate (πυλῶν) normally belonged only to a wealthy home (Luke 16:20; cf. Matt 26:71; Gen 43:19). Granted, we cannot be certain that the gate in Acts 10:17 belonged to a wealthy home,³⁸⁸ but a spacious area near the sea should not be compared with the luxury of having a private gate in urban Jerusalem. Πύλη could include the door of a house (though it bore other meanings as well, many interchangeable with πυλῶν; e.g., 12:10), but πυλῶν refers to a gateway, gatehouse, or vestibule. Barrett suggests here "a large house with a large gateway in which was set a wicket-door that would be used for ordinary purposes."³⁸⁹

Although there is no clear indication that Agrippa is seeking to round up ordinary Christians at this point, the air of persecution may have intensified any anxiety about an unexpected knock on the door. This would not, however, be the reason that Rhoda was sent, as if the others were cowering and concealing themselves. Doorkeepers were of low status, like ditchdiggers and water drawers (Lucian *Phil. Sale* 7). Well-to-do people counted on slaves to function as porters;³⁹⁰ one who answers a knock on the door himself could be counted ignorant (Theoph. *Char.* 4.9). Women of the home who answered the house's door by themselves could be suspected (by gossipers) of having a paramour.³⁹¹ Well-to-do homes might have heavy gates that required a strong person to admit visitors (Ovid *Am.* 1.6.1–2), but the door in the gate (mentioned above) would prove less cumbersome, especially if Rhoda was not strong (cf. Mark

384. Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 98. Such spaciousness would count more in this period than before the Herodian period; if we can extrapolate from burial caves (assuming they were family caves), nuclear households predominated in Herod's day, with large extended-family households declining (Regev, "Family Burial"), probably because of increased prosperity.

385. Mary had a sizable home, but certainly not a palace. One named servant doubles as porter; Mary does not have her own specialized porter (in contrast to, e.g., the high priest; cf. Luke 22:56; John 18:16–17). From an aristocratic perspective, a wealthy person who had only one servant (here again a servant girl) appeared miserly (Lucian *Lucius* 1).

386. Safrai, "Home," 734; cf. Luke 11:7. On doors in the Greek East, including frames and locking mechanisms, see Höcker, "Door," 671; esp. Hurschmann, "Lock," 766, 768; on bolted or barred doors, see, e.g., Aristoph. *Wasps* 154–55; on slave girls' often opening them, Tibullus 1.2.7, 15–24.

387. It could conceivably be a gate that opened to a number of homes, to which a resident in any of the homes would respond, but that the home includes a servant and holds a number of visitors (Acts 12:12) suggests that this is the home's own gate. Otherwise Peter's knocking might prove too dangerous from the start.

388. Cf. Reimer, *Women*, 241. We should not, however, confuse the tanner's marginal status with his income level.

389. Barrett, *Acts*, 584.

390. Slave doorkeepers were sometimes of low status (Suet. *Rhet.* 3), but among slaves, they could sometimes be higher (two in Livia's household were married to freedwomen; Treggiari, "Jobs in Household," 51); they were counted on to guard doors (Suet. *Aug.* 19.2). Especially in Rome, with wealthy homes on ground floors throughout the city, the wealthy had to post guards at doors (Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 27). Doorkeeping constituted a common role for slaves in ancient literature (Hezser, "Impact," 402; idem, *Slavery*, 140).

391. See Theophr. *Char.* 28.3; Tibullus 1.2.7, 15–24, 41, 55–56.

16:3). Women could be doorkeepers (John 18:16–17; cf. Cic. *Att.* 1.12). A Jewish story includes a female slave who watches the door, carrying messages between a visitor and the householder.³⁹²

The term Luke uses here for Rhoda's "answering" the door, ὑπακούω, applied to a doorkeeper's task (Plato *Phaedo* 59E).³⁹³ One wishing to enter a wealthy home first knocked (Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.4.22). Those who knocked were normally not to enter, even if nothing was bolted, until invited to do so (Plut. *Cim.* 17.1). A person of status might be annoyed by a slack servant doorkeeper who took too long to answer and then further delayed the caller (Lucian *Lucius* 2).

Full-time doorkeepers (unlike Rhoda) stood watch to guard a well-to-do household;³⁹⁴ when someone came at night, a doorkeeper was to ask, "Who are you?" (Cic. *Phil.* 2.31.77). One writer summarizes a porter's job as observing who enters and who exits (Ovid *Fasti* 1.138).³⁹⁵ Doorkeepers normally screened callers;³⁹⁶ some prominent leaders bade a doorkeeper awaken Cicero at night (Plut. *Cic.* 15.1); a porter might need to check with an owner before admitting the caller.³⁹⁷ Doorkeepers also watched for the home's owner, to openly immediately upon his or her return.³⁹⁸ To refuse to admit a family member at the door was to reject him or her (Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.3.intro.), and this was presumably the message in refusing entrance to anyone else who would have normally been permitted ingress (cf. Matt 25:12).³⁹⁹ One whose knock was not answered might leave (Song 5:2–6) even if the streets were dangerous (5:7).

Whereas the most well-to-do homes had porters, servants in smaller households performed multiple functions (Luke 17:7–8), so that a pedagogue or other servant might also act as doorkeeper (Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 380, §127). (This might explain why no one is simply guarding the door at Mary's house—in addition to the observation that Rhoda is participating in the prayer meeting.) Cicero sought to reduce the expenses of provincial administration by doing without a doorkeeper when he was governor (Plut. *Cic.* 36.3).⁴⁰⁰ Sometimes servant girls were known to help men (suspected of adultery) in or out of a house where they did not belong (Cic. *Att.* 1.12).

VI. RHODA AS A SERVANT (12:13)

The priestly aristocracy had many slaves (Mark 14:4–7; Jos. *Ant.* 20.181, 206–7); other wealthy residents might have some slaves, though not as many (cf. *m. Ed.* 5:6;

392. *T. Job* 7:1–12 (graciously brought to my attention by Richard Pervo, personal correspondence, Oct. 3, 2012). This passage employs the same term as Luke for the female slave, although also another term designating her as the regular doorkeeper (naturally this work depicts Job as far wealthier than Mary appears in Luke's depiction of her).

393. So Conzelmann, *Acts*, 94–95. BDAG includes also Plato *Crito* 43A; Xen. *Symp.* 1.11; Theophr. *Char.* 4.9; 28.3; Lucian *Icar.* 22.

394. See Lucian *Slander* 30 (comparing intellect as a superior guardian). In prosperous but less wealthy households, any servant might answer if the door was bolted (e.g., Menander *Epitrepontes* 1075–77).

395. Apparently they were also supposed to keep out snakes and animals (cf. Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.32).

396. Treggiari, "Jobs in Household," 51 (noting that they also checked departing slaves). Perhaps relevant here, friends were more welcome to knock than others; Menander *Dyskolos* 481–82; cf. Luke 11:5–10.

397. Lucian *Lucius* 2, although this is not depicted as a normal home.

398. Cf. Mark 13:34–36; a faithful night watchman allegedly watched each night until Agamemnon's return (Aeschylus *Ag.* 1–25). Being ready for a householder's return was an important emphasis, since his absence in a distant land provided a temptation for those left behind (Prov 7:19–20; Eurip. *Hipp.* 281; Diod. Sic. 17.108.4; Char. *Chaer.* 1.4.8; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 19:4). Indeed, because they might return unexpectedly early (e.g., Aelian *Nat. An.* 7.25), Roman men normally warned their wives in advance when they were about to return (Plut. *Rom. Q.* 9, *Mor.* 266A), unless one returned at night unexpectedly to examine a wife's faithfulness (Phaedrus 3.10.18–20).

399. Cf. comment in Keener, *Matthew*, 598.

400. Joking aside, he did not go without a doorkeeper simply because of the one who was to get him out of bed in Plut. *Cic.* 15.1!

Roš Haš. 1:7).⁴⁰¹ Some scholars think it slightly more likely that Rhoda as παιδίσκη was simply a young woman in the family (or the church praying there), since she is named.⁴⁰² As helpful as this would seem for our modern sensitivities (including my own),⁴⁰³ it seems more likely that she is a slave. This is the more common use—indeed, the only use elsewhere in Luke-Acts (Luke 12:45; 22:56; 16:16) and elsewhere in the NT (Mark 14:66, 69; Matt 26:69; John 18:17; Gal 4:22–23, 30–31).⁴⁰⁴ Would an ancient home have a locked gate (large enough to contain its own door) but no one to serve (at least when needed) as porter?⁴⁰⁵

Rhoda's name does appear for a slaveholder (*Herm. Vis.* 1.1.1)⁴⁰⁶ and was a good Greek name borrowed from mythology (Poseidon's daughter in Apollod. *Bib.* 1.4.5). The name was, however, most common for slaves, and by this period, "Rhoda" ("Rose") and its cognates ("Rhodion," "Rhodia," "Rhodopis," "Rhodope") "had become well established in the servile onomastikon of the Graeco-Roman world."⁴⁰⁷

The name is attested among Jews (*CIL* 9.2619) only rarely and in fifth- and sixth-century Diaspora sources, and so she may have been born into a Gentile family and bought by Jerusalemites.⁴⁰⁸ Then again, the high priests' households, which probably produced a surplus of slaves, might have slaves with Greek names because they often used Greek themselves (cf., e.g., "Alexander" in 4:6). Some would be descended from Gentiles (Jewish servants were freed in the Jubilee Year)⁴⁰⁹ but be Jewish by faith, at least after the first generation.⁴¹⁰ If she was a Gentile, we might expect Luke to mention this if he knows it (cf. Acts 6:5); but he may not know it, or extraneous details might distract the reader from the main action. Thus the matter cannot be decided with certainty.

She could be a slave of some disciples present, or a slave of another aristocratic household in the area, allowed in and out by the porter of her own household. Her coming to the gate probably implies, however, that she is part of Mary's household; given the circumstances for prayer that night, it certainly implies that she was trusted as a member of the Christian community.⁴¹¹ Associations that admitted women and slaves probably thereby promoted social integration more than those that did not.⁴¹² For the

401. So Fiensy, "Composition," 224, also noting that elsewhere elites used "scores or even hundreds of slaves . . . as household servants, body guards, eunuchs in the harem" (Jos. *War* 1.511; *m. Yebam.* 8:4).

402. Barrett, *Acts*, 584.

403. See, e.g., Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 100–110.

404. It is also by far the dominant usage in the LXX, e.g., Gen 12:16; 16:1–8; 20:14, 17; 21:10–13; Exod 20:10, 17; 21:20, 32; 23:12; Esth 7:4; Jdt 8:7; 10:10; Tob 8:12–13; Sir 41:22/24; also the standard use in the Apostolic Fathers (1 *Clem.* 60.2; *Did.* 4.10; *Barn.* 19.7), Philo (*Alleg. Interp.* 2.94; 3.146, 244; *Cher.* 9; *Flight* 1; *Prelim. St.* 1, 12, 14, 71, 153–54), and one of two references in Josephus (*Ant.* 18.40, vs. 4.248).

405. Even today, gated homes I visited in northern Nigeria typically had workers because labor was abundant and inexpensive. Danny McCain, professor at the University of Jos, Nigeria, offers a similar observation (personal correspondence, July 16, 2012) regarding walled homes with gates: "All moderately wealthy people would have a gate man to answer the gate"; those with somewhat lesser wealth would have a worker delegated to answer the gate along with other responsibilities, and in other cases "there is almost always" a boy or girl working there to open it "rather than one of the family members doing it." An immediate family member does it only if no one else "of lesser rank" is available.

406. Barrett, *Acts*, 584.

407. Williams, "Names," 111 (following Reilly, *Slaves*, §§2412–26); Witherington, *Acts*, 387.

408. See Williams, "Names," 111.

409. Cf. Lev 25:40–42 (on Gentile servants, see Lev 25:44–46); Fiensy, "Composition," 224.

410. Whether a slave who converted to Judaism had to be freed became a problem for later rabbis (cf. *b. Yebam.* 45b–46a), but it would probably not have troubled Sadducees to the same extent. Later rabbis circumvented the problem by ensuring that a symbol of bondage remained on the slave during proselyte baptism (*b. Yebam.* 46a).

411. Slave girls sometimes betrayed household secrets (e.g., Val. Max. 2.5.3).

412. Klauck, *Context*, 47.

significance of Rhoda's (and Mary's) gender, see the discussion of gender in the commentary introduction.⁴¹³ For the significance of her slave status, see the excursus below.

Excursus: Slaves and Slavery

The “slave stereotypes” that some scholars have proposed as relevant for this passage can hardly fail to have existed, given the vast array of existing stereotypes, but the same might well be true of competing “slave stereotypes” that could be proposed. Ancient literature concerning slaves is vast, a range of stereotypes existed, and slaves filled a wide range of roles. Some of these roles are more relevant for this passage than others, but instead of selecting narrow associations, this excursus surveys slavery in general, with special attention to household slaves, women slaves, and stereotypes of slaves.

Others have produced extensive monographs and other works on slavery in antiquity;⁴¹⁴ here we simply survey basic information as background to this passage. Nevertheless, this excursus requires more extensive treatment than most of our other excursuses for four reasons: first, slavery is a subject of considerable interest to interpreters of the text in our era; second, it is relevant for the explication of the text in its historical setting; third, some scholars debating issues relevant to this text have provided extensive documentation regarding ancient slavery, inviting sufficiently ample documentation in a response; and fourth, the plethora of ancient material on the subject precludes hasty dismissal of the subject without at least cursory treatment here of the various topics involved.⁴¹⁵ Although some of the material surveyed here will ultimately prove much less relevant to Rhoda than to the slave woman in Acts 16:16–19, this cohesive excursus supplies the background for both (and for other passages, such as 2:18; 3:13; and 10:7).

The distinction between slave and free was the most basic distinction among people under Roman law.⁴¹⁶ That the master's role is to command and the servant's is to obey was a commonplace;⁴¹⁷ likewise, the master was held to be superior to the slave.⁴¹⁸ There was no single religious perspective regarding slaves. Some Roman goddesses would not let female slaves approach (Ovid *Fasti* 6.551–53); another goddess could be worshiped by slaves, since the worshiper who started her temples was the son of a slave woman (6.783–84). The sacred island of Delos was long used as a central slave market in the East, some scholars estimating that as many as ten thousand slaves could be sold there on a highly efficient day.⁴¹⁹

413. Keener, *Acts*, 1:597–638.

414. See, e.g., Buckland, *Slavery*; Barrow, *Slavery*; Harrill, *Slaves*; more briefly, Harrill, “Paul and Slavery,” 575–85; idem, “Slavery”; Gager, *Kingdom*, 103–6; Keener, “Family,” 361–66; idem, *Paul*, 196–207; for sample sources, Shelton, *Romans*, 163–85; van der Horst, “Macrobius,” 229 (citing Macrobi. *Sat.* 1.11.6–15). For their ambiguous status, see Lintott, “Freedmen and Slaves.” For civil bondage distinct from slavery in Jewish and Roman law, see Cohen, *Law*, 159–78.

415. The treatment here is also arranged more topically than chronologically despite significant differences between, e.g., Athenian and Roman slavery (Harrill, “Slavery,” 1124). Geographic differences will also be relevant, but most readers will recognize the relative dates and peoples represented by the authors cited. My approach has been to accumulate sufficient data for the general state of affairs to try to fill the significant lacunae in our knowledge about a slave in a moderately well-to-do Hellenist Levitical home in first-century Jerusalem; the class and background both suggest the relevance of Hellenist as well as traditional Judean culture.

416. Gaius *Inst.* 1.9–17, esp. 1.9; Justin. *Inst.* 1.3–4.

417. Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 128, §40D.

418. Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 130, §41D.

419. Grant, “Economic Background,” 104.

Although slavery has been pervasive in human history, scholars usually identify only a handful of full-scale “slave societies”—entire socioeconomic systems dependent on slavery. Even by the narrowest definitions, however, Greek and Roman societies are among them.⁴²⁰ Egyptian law reportedly treated slaves and free as equals regarding their humanity;⁴²¹ German slavery was more like serfdom, with slaves ruling their own homes;⁴²² India, most unusually of all, was thought by Greeks to lack slaves.⁴²³ Greco-Roman society, however, had a highly sophisticated differentiation of slave roles. Judean slavery was influenced by the larger milieu but was not a slave society (see comment on Judean slavery below).

1. Estimates of Numbers

Estimates of the numbers of slaves vary widely. Some scholars have claimed that slaves far outnumbered (by as much as three to one) free persons in Italy, with their numbers roughly equal in Rome;⁴²⁴ others estimate that those of slave descent far outnumbered those of free descent in Rome.⁴²⁵ The number for Italy is far too high, a slave population closer to one-third being likelier.⁴²⁶ Some in fact argue that free persons outnumbered slaves even in very urban areas;⁴²⁷ some estimate that between one-third and one-half the population of early imperial Rome consisted of slaves or families with a recent background in slavery.⁴²⁸ Galen estimated that the number of slaves in Pergamum was close to the number of citizens, which might yield an estimate of one-third slaves in that city in Asia Minor;⁴²⁹ this was perhaps an average for urban areas.

During the late republic, Roman expansion and economic growth fueled the demand for slaves;⁴³⁰ the late republic and the early empire probably used more slaves than any earlier society.⁴³¹ Finley estimates that the proportion of slaves in late republican Italy (with two million slaves, 35 percent of the population) was roughly comparable to the proportion of slaves (33 percent) in the southern United States in 1860.⁴³² Likewise, just as three-quarters of southern whites held no slaves,⁴³³ some

420. Finley, *Slavery*, 9 (listing only five, which is too narrow), 67 (making Greeks and Romans the first; he does not count Pharaonic Egypt); Padgug, “Problems,” 21–22 (narrowly identifying *only* Greco-Roman society).

421. Diod. Sic. 1.77.6 (regarding slavery as an accidental, not inherent, condition).

422. Tac. *Germ.* 25. Freeborn children and servants were raised in the same conditions (*Germ.* 20). Nevertheless, some slaves were used to cleanse sacred vessels, then drowned (*Germ.* 40). Gaul’s nobles also reportedly oppressed their poor peasants (Caesar *Gall. W.* 6.13).

423. Diod. Sic. 2.39.5; Arrian *Ind.* 10.8. Nevertheless, India also had castes (seven, in Diod. Sic. 2.40.1).

424. Ladd, *Theology*, 529. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 320–21, thinks that slaves outnumbered free three to one in classical Athens and outnumbered citizens four to one. Finley, *Slavery*, 80, prefers a figure of 30 percent slaves for classical Athens.

425. Carcopino, *Life*, 61, estimating 80 percent of non-Roman names on Rome’s inscriptions.

426. Finley, *Slavery*, 80 (giving an estimate of 35 percent for late republican Italy). The slave system proved economically profitable (for the slaveholders) in agrarian Italy (idem, *Economy*, 83–84). Scheidel, “Mobility,” estimates perhaps more than half a million slaves in Roman Italy.

427. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 130; see most of the varied estimates for Rome in Barrow, *Slavery*, 21.

428. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 103. Finley, *Economy*, 71, argues that persons of freed descent outnumbered freeborn persons in first-century Rome.

429. Verner, *Household*, 63. Slaves also abounded in some other attested areas in the Greek East (see, e.g., Harper, “Census Inscriptions”).

430. Grant, “Economic Background,” 104.

431. Verner, *Household*, 41–42 (following Hopkins, *Conquerors*, 99). This would be true at least in the northern Mediterranean world.

432. Finley, *Slavery*, 80; idem, *Economy*, 71.

433. Finley, *Economy*, 71 (according to census figures in Stamp, *Institution*, 29–30).

estimate that, at most, one-quarter of free persons held slaves in Roman Italy.⁴³⁴ Some argue that slavery was declining by the period of early Christianity because it was inefficient and the supply was diminishing;⁴³⁵ even if this is so, the numbers of slaves remained high, especially on Italian estates, in the mines, and in other high-volume industries.⁴³⁶ Our Jewish sources (below) suggest that slavery was less common in Judea than in Greece or Rome.

Prices also varied widely. In an earlier period, manual laborers might sell for just three or four minas whereas a well-educated person might fetch 100 to 120 minas.⁴³⁷ Closer to this period, slaves sold in Rome from as little as 750 sesterces (187.5 denarii) to as much as 700,000 sesterces (175,000 denarii), 2,000 sesterces being “a legally recognized norm.”⁴³⁸ In contrast to the Americas, however, slaveholders in the Greco-Roman world did not necessarily belong to the social or economic elite.⁴³⁹

2. Slave Occupations

The ancient sources suggest that most long-term hired labor was slave labor.⁴⁴⁰ The overhead cost of housing and feeding slaves even in off-seasons complicated matters, however, and scholars debate the proportion of free to slave labor.⁴⁴¹

The range of occupations among slaves was roughly the same as among free persons,⁴⁴² and slaves and free persons often worked beside each other.⁴⁴³ Slaves were often physicians,⁴⁴⁴ managers of houses or estates,⁴⁴⁵ pedagogues (who escorted boys to school and assumed attendant responsibilities),⁴⁴⁶ readers in well-to-do houses,⁴⁴⁷ and so forth. Temples held slaves to maintain their grounds;⁴⁴⁸ undertakers also could use slaves to obtain bodies ready for burial.⁴⁴⁹ Slaves often worked in masters' shops

434. Verner, *Households*, 60 (with comparable figures for classical Athens); Toner, *Culture*, 185 (a quarter). Verner estimates (60) that only a fifth of free persons in Roman Egypt held slaves (and usually a small number, since only 10 percent of the population there were slaves); but most of the metropolite households in the nome capitals did have one or two slaves (Lewis, *Life*, 57).

435. Mattingly, *Christianity*, 13.

436. Koester, *Introduction*, 1:331.

437. Grant, “Economic Background,” 104, suggesting 15–20 dollars (5–6 pounds) for the former figure and 500–600 dollars for the latter (Grant offered these equivalents in 1964). Infirmities lowered the slave's “market value” (see, e.g., Nutton, “Epilepsy,” for epilepsy).

438. Stambaugh, *City*, 154; cf. Verner, *Household*, 61.

439. Finley, *Slavery*, 80.

440. Finley, *Economy*, 73–74.

441. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 72.

442. Finley, *Slavery*, 81–82; Martin, *Slavery*, 11. For examples, see Barrow, *Slavery*, 22–64; for a briefer list of occupations, see Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 130. The range of occupations was higher than in the American South, although even the latter included a wider range than often assumed (including a small minority of managers, urban artisans, and carpenters; see Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 38, 41).

443. Finley, *Economy*, 79; note also Lintott, *Romans*, 95, on slaves as well as freedpersons in a variety of professions.

444. E.g., the inscriptions in Sherk, *Empire*, 150 (*FIRA* 1.73), 223–24 (*ILS* 5152; 7812); Friedländer, *Life*, 1:167–68; Stambaugh, *City*, 136.

445. E.g., Lucian *Affairs* 10; Char. *Chaer.* 1.12.8; 2.2.1; 3.7.1; Treggiari, “Jobs in Household,” 49; Stambaugh, *City*, 149; Judge, *Pattern*, 38; see more fully Martin, *Slavery*, 15–22; in novels, see Hock, “Ethnography,” 113–14 (citing Char. *Chaer.* 1.12.8; Ach. *Tat.* 5.7.3–10; 6.3.3; 7.7.3; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 2.10.4). The manager in Luke 16:1–13, however, is probably free, since he is concerned with unemployment rather than being sold (Luke 16:3; Bailey, *Poet*, 92; cf. Derrett, *Law*, 52).

446. E.g., Ael. *Arist. Def. Or.* 380, §127; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 1.14.

447. Pliny *Ep.* 8.1.1.

448. DeSilva, *Honor*, 192.

449. Stambaugh, *City*, 150.

or managed their businesses.⁴⁵⁰ Public slaves sometimes represented a particularly privileged class of slaves;⁴⁵¹ municipal slaves ranged from menial laborers to wage-earning clerks and officials.⁴⁵²

Slaves were abundant in agriculture, especially in the West,⁴⁵³ though many scholars argue that rural tenants outnumbered them by this period.⁴⁵⁴ Slaves on farms may have outnumbered those in the cities,⁴⁵⁵ but others argue the reverse,⁴⁵⁶ perhaps better reflecting conditions under the early empire. Farms employed massive numbers of slaves during the republic, but in the late republic and the empire, it became more common to depend on free labor, which could be laid off when weather or ill health made such workers less profitable.⁴⁵⁷ Yet even in the early second century C.E., Pliny the Younger, faced with nonpaying tenants, considered replacing them with some quality slaves to work his estate.⁴⁵⁸

Pliny the Elder warned against hiring “slave-gangs hired from houses of correction”;⁴⁵⁹ he also strongly urged maintaining the farmhands’ health.⁴⁶⁰ Most scholars believe that life was much harder for agrarian workers than for household slaves.⁴⁶¹ Granted, household slaves faced greater scrutiny from slaveholders, which could yield periodic discipline,⁴⁶² but field slaves also had supervisors and were subject to beatings. Household slaves had better access, on average, to food and health care and far better access to manumission.

3. Slaves versus “Free” Peasants

Agrarian slaves’ lot was bad, but they had an abundance of miserable company from free subsistence workers. Peasants could be hired seasonally without the capital and continuous maintenance required for slaves;⁴⁶³ most “free” peasants lived at subsis-

450. *Ibid.*, 149.

451. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 10.31.2; a stela inscription in Sherck, *Empire*, §48, pp. 90–91; Barrow, *Slavery*, 130–50. Some public slave jobs were of higher status than others: a city manager could be a slave (Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 58); some slaves performed public rituals (Livy 9.29.9); one was a public executioner, required to live outside the town (Rapske, *Custody*, 247–48); another had been mistreated (Aeschines *Tim.* 54).

452. Jones, *Empire*, 243. Jeffers, *World*, 222, suggests that a free person might temporarily sell himself into slavery when it was a matter of a high civic office such as that of civic manager.

453. Barrow, *Slavery*, 65–97; for a first-century example, note Petron. *Sat.* 37–38; later, Alciph. *Farm.* 23 (Lenaeus to Corydon), 3.26. Some rich landlords in republican Italy employed massive numbers of slaves (Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.1.8). Slaves were more common—because more easily supervised—on medium-sized villas than on large estates (Pucci, “Pottery,” 116).

454. Finley, *Slavery*, 79. Slavery also occurred in urban settings in the American South (Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 101), though it was predominantly rural.

455. Bradley, *Slaves*, 75.

456. Finley, *Slavery*, 79.

457. Shelton, *Romans*, 155–56 (citing Colum. *Rust.* 1.7.1–3, 6–7 for tenants on estates). Slave labor proved profitable only if slaves were treated better; this recognition improved their treatment during the empire (Barrow, *Slavery*, 97).

458. Pliny *Ep.* 3.19.6. Likewise, free workers who protested conditions could be displaced by slaves (Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 120).

459. Pliny E. *N.H.* 18.7.36 (LCL, 5:213), advising also the hiring of a supervisor almost as smart as the owner but who did not recognize it. His nephew wants more expensive, higher-quality agrarian slaves than the cheap kind who need to be chained (Pliny *Ep.* 3.19.7).

460. Pliny E. *N.H.* 18.8.44.

461. E.g., Crossan, *Jesus*, 47; cf. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 119. Mommsen, *History*, 28–30, contends that it was hard enough to lead the slaves to insurrection during the republic. But for some provisions for agrarian slaves, cf. Roth, “Food.”

462. D’Arms, “Slaves,” 179–80. Female household slaves, however, were at much higher risk of sexual abuse (see discussion below).

463. Lewis, *Life*, 57; Shelton, *Romans*, 155.

tence level,⁴⁶⁴ and this, in some respects, made their lot worse off *economically* than that of male household slaves.⁴⁶⁵ (On tenant farmers, see the discussion concerning poverty at Acts 3:2.)

Some ancients remarked that it made little difference whether one was a slave or a peasant; it simply entailed a change of masters.⁴⁶⁶ The “freer” a peasant became from a landholder’s control, the less security the peasant had;⁴⁶⁷ Cato’s chained slaves had more regular access to bread than did the typical peasant in Egypt.⁴⁶⁸ When Pliny visited his estate, he relaxed, letting the urban servants who had accompanied him supervise the peasants working for him;⁴⁶⁹ if he allowed the peasants to remain on his estate, he planned to let his servants supervise them.⁴⁷⁰ Nor were peasants much more upwardly mobile than agrarian slaves; they were in fact far less mobile than urban freedpersons, and social mobility was difficult for “free” peasants. Peasants who rose from such a life to the municipal aristocracy were few and far between.⁴⁷¹ Small farmers who owned their own land would have more freedom, but circumstances were rarely ideal.

4. Slavery in the Mines and the Arena

The primary job almost exclusive to slaves (and criminals) was work in the mines, and the one almost exclusive to free persons was service in the military.⁴⁷² Slaves who enlisted in a Roman legion, knowing that this was forbidden, could be executed⁴⁷³ (though once during the republic, Rome bought slaves for use as soldiers in an emergency).⁴⁷⁴ Mines in Egypt either hired free persons for high wages (given the difficulty of the work) or used convicts.⁴⁷⁵ A forger, for example, could be condemned to the mines.⁴⁷⁶ Mines were the harshest form of slavery, both in the Hellenistic era⁴⁷⁷ and in the Roman period.⁴⁷⁸ Threats of sending slaves to the mines were used as a form of behavioral control.⁴⁷⁹ Members of the elite could not be sent to the mines;⁴⁸⁰

464. Lewis, *Life*, 57. Peasants’ workdays even in Jewish Palestine could run from sunrise to dusk (Applebaum, “Economic Life,” 657).

465. Libanius *Invective* 6.12–16; Lee, “Unrest,” 129–31; Jeffers, *World*, 225 (on the urban poor). In the American South, although slaves faced intolerably worse conditions psychologically and in terms of beatings and families being broken up, some of their physical conditions (access to food and housing; even some work conditions and longevity) bore some resemblance to some of the free poor (cf. Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 5). Freedom was desirable, but it did not guarantee the alleviation of all other circumstances.

466. Phaedrus 1.15.

467. Finley, *Economy*, 108.

468. *Ibid.*, 107.

469. Pliny *Ep.* 9.20.2.

470. Pliny *Ep.* 9.37.2. He is annoyed at the peasants’ complaints and their desire for more of his time (9.36.6).

471. For one notable example, see *CIL* 9.3088 (in MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 47).

472. Harrill, “Paul and Slavery,” 583. For slaves and criminals in the mines, see also Forbes, *Technology*, 7:223.

473. Pliny *Ep.* 10.29.1; 10.30.2.

474. Val. Max. 7.6.1a. Rome was normally paranoid about large numbers of slaves in arms (cf., e.g., Vell. Patern. 2.73.3; Quint. *Decl.* 352 intro).

475. Lewis, *Life*, 138 (noting temperature extremes between night and day and that soldiers, supervised by a centurion, would control the mine).

476. Pliny *Ep.* 10.58.3.

477. Tarn, *Civilisation*, 104.

478. See, e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 10.31.3 (somewhat lesser forms of penal labor included cleaning sewers and public baths; 10.33.2).

479. Boer, *Morality*, 225.

480. Lewis, *Life*, 138. Caligula, however, violated this protocol (Suet. *Calig.* 27.3). Someone who would have a Roman knight condemned to the mines merited harsh punishment (Pliny *Ep.* 2.11.8).

such a “demeaning and cruel” penalty was meted out only to “lower-class criminals and slaves, notable among them being captives from the Jewish revolts and later, Christians.”⁴⁸¹

Ancient mining⁴⁸² required arduous labor. Mountains were mined with lamps, and miners might not see the light of day for months at a time.⁴⁸³ Periodically the ceilings of the mines would collapse, crushing the miners.⁴⁸⁴ Fire and vinegar could be used on flint, but to avoid excess smoke and heat in the tunnels, miners often used heavy machines to smash the flint. The miners would then remove the loads of flint “on their shoulders, working night and day, each man passing them on to the next man in the dark, while only those at the end of the line see daylight.”⁴⁸⁵ A gravel-clay mixture was even harder, requiring very heavy labor to penetrate.⁴⁸⁶ Strabo and Pliny the Elder both report dangerous gases in the mines, and some ancient authors attributed miners’ sickly pallor to this cause.⁴⁸⁷

Besides slavery in the mines, the most degrading form of slavery was that in the arena, as a gladiator.⁴⁸⁸ Not all gladiators were equally despised. Although most gladiators were slaves, the most skilled were professionals, often popular with the people.⁴⁸⁹ Professional gladiator instructors were known for their skill, at one point called in to train Roman soldiers how to parry blows and give them.⁴⁹⁰ Once condemned to be gladiators, whether against other people or animals, slaves could never achieve citizenship even if they survived and were freed.⁴⁹¹ Gladiatorial exhibitions made their sponsors politically popular,⁴⁹² but some ancients complained of the depravity of a society entertained by watching armed combatants kill each other.⁴⁹³

5. Household Slavery

Household slavery represented another common form of slavery,⁴⁹⁴ most relevant to our text and most references in early Christian sources. Slaves were viewed as members of the household,⁴⁹⁵ although this status did not necessarily affect their

481. Lewis, *Life*, 138. Cf. Weisgerber, “Mining,” 8–9, for the use of slaves and criminals.

482. On ancient mining and quarrying, see Forbes, *Technology*, 7:104–91; Weisgerber, “Mining”; for Greek mining, see esp. Forbes, *Technology*, 7:139–49; for Roman, 149–62. For mining techniques, see 192–243. The early empire belonged to the heyday of Roman mining (155).

483. Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.21.70.

484. Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.21.70, suggesting that this work was more dangerous than that of pearl divers.

485. Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.21.71 (LCL, 9:55).

486. Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.21.72–73, also describing the cracking of the roofs.

487. Forbes, *Technology*, 7:223. On silver mines, see Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.31.96.

488. Conjoined with mine slaves in Pliny *Ep.* 10.31.2. Seneca the Younger praises a gladiator for killing himself, noting that the worst death is better than the best slavery (*Ep. Lucil.* 70.20–21). (Seneca was later forced to commit suicide himself.) On gladiators, see further Flaig, “Gladiator”; Lintott, *Romans*, 156; on their vegetarian diet (at least in Ephesus), see Curry, “Diet.”

489. Jeffers, *World*, 33. The senate forbade knights to work as gladiators (Suet. *Aug.* 43.3). On female gladiators, see McCullough, “Gladiators.”

490. Val. Max. 2.3.2.

491. Gaius *Inst.* 1.13.

492. Suet. *Jul.* 10.1–2. For this reason, the emperor became their primary sponsor.

493. Sil. It. 11.51–54 (in this case, on an earlier period). Pliny the Elder reports a superstition in which drinking gladiators’ blood cures epilepsy (*N.H.* 28.2.4).

494. See, e.g., Barrow, *Slavery*, 22–64.

495. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.15; *CPJ* 1:249–50, §135; cf. Lewis, *Life*, 57; Dixon, *Mother*, 16; Verner, *Household*, 30, 33; White, “*Pater familias*,” 457; Aune, *Environment*, 59–60; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 30; Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 31; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 53; Safrai, “Home,” 750. Also freedpersons (*CPJ* 2:20–22, §148; Cic. *Fam.* 1.3.2; Pliny *Ep.* 5.19.1–2, esp. 5.19.2; 9.24). Cf. also οἰκέτης, “household slave” (e.g., Luke

treatment. Household slavery was generally the most benevolent (or, more accurately, the least oppressive) form of slavery.⁴⁹⁶ Most slaves in Jerusalem probably worked in a domestic capacity.⁴⁹⁷ A Jewish sage advised treating one's only servant like one's sibling (Sir 33:31).

The matron of a Roman home could be expected to supervise the household staff during most of the day;⁴⁹⁸ a tyrannical matron could spell untold suffering for the household slaves,⁴⁹⁹ although this portrait emerges most forcefully in Juvenal's misogynist complaint against unruly matrons. A large household also held slaves of varying ranks⁵⁰⁰ (probably unlike here). One form of household slave in the wealthy household was the food waiter, most often a well-dressed male.⁵⁰¹ The wine waiters were usually young males without facial hair, often Greek, and subject to sexual harassment.⁵⁰² By contrast, homosexual exploitation would be far less likely in Jewish settings, where homosexual activity of any sort was loathed and treated as an exclusively Gentile vice.⁵⁰³

6. Housing, Food, and Clothing

Where slaves were quartered depended on the size of the home; they lived in closer contact with slaveholders in working-class homes.⁵⁰⁴ Most slaves in Rome had to live in the slaveholders' homes; the many homes that could not afford separate slave quarters⁵⁰⁵ might consign a slave's sleeping area to a cot in the kitchen or elsewhere.⁵⁰⁶ Slaves with families were likelier to receive separate quarters in a large enough home.⁵⁰⁷ But slave quarters, where they existed, were less decorated than the main parts of the household, and their service areas were kept from the center of free activity.⁵⁰⁸ Although servants worked throughout a house, particular areas with more menial responsibilities were particularly "servile" areas.⁵⁰⁹

Slaveholders were expected to provide their slaves with adequate food.⁵¹⁰ Nevertheless, slaves ate a form of food inferior to that of the slaveholders,⁵¹¹ though some

16:13; Acts 10:7; Rom 14:4; 1 Pet 2:18; Sir 4:30; 6:11; 10:25; 23:10; 37:11; 42:5; some fifty times in the LXX; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.14.18).

496. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 119. This would not be true, however, for sexually exploited boys, girls, and young women in some households (see my separate discussion of sexual abuse below).

497. Fiensy, "Composition," 224.

498. Mus. Ruf. 3, p. 40.11–12; cf. Stambaugh, *City*, 158.

499. See Juv. *Sat.* 6.219–24, 474–86; comment in Friedländer, *Life*, 1:244.

500. Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses*, 39.

501. D'Arms, "Slaves," 171, 173.

502. *Ibid.*, 173, 175–76.

503. E.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.596–600; 5.166, 387; Ps.-Phoc. 3, 191–92; *Philo Abr.* 135; *Spec. Laws* 2.50; 3.37–39; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.215; *Sipra A.M. par.* 8.193.1.7; *Sipra Qed. pq.* 10.208.2.12; *y. Qidd.* 4:11, §6; *Sanh.* 6:3, §3; 7:7, §1–2; *Gen. Rab.* 50:7; *Lev. Rab.* 23:9; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:2; cf. possibly Ps.-Phoc. 189; Tobin, *Rhetoric in Contexts*, 109; Szesnat, "Homoeroticism."

504. Stambaugh, *City*, 159.

505. Pliny the Younger had for his residential slaves and freedpersons nice enough quarters that he could also welcome guests there (*Ep.* 2.17.9).

506. Jeffers, "Families," 132; *idem*, *World*, 56. Likewise, most excavated homes elsewhere in the West lack specific "slave quarters" (White, "Pater familias," 461).

507. Jeffers, *World*, 56.

508. Balch, "Families," 261.

509. Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses*, 39.

510. E.g., *Xen. Cyr.* 8.1.43; Ps.-Phoc. 223–24; cf. also Philod. *Household* 30.18–31.2 in Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 415. Failure to provide slaves enough nourishment helped provoke revolt during the republic (Diod. Sic. 34/35.2.32).

511. Romans despised a wealthy father who, being miserly, made his son work with slaves in the fields and eat their food (Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.2); freedpersons also usually ate food inferior to that of the patron

austere thinkers advocated eating the same kind of food the slaves ate.⁵¹² One such exception was the rigorous Cato, who, after working alongside his slaves, dined with them on the same food.⁵¹³ (This, however, reflected his frugality rather than his generosity; he overworked his slaves, then sold them when they were old.)⁵¹⁴ Normally, wealthy Romans ate with slaves in attendance rather than together with them.⁵¹⁵ One king was thought benevolent for allowing his slaves to eat and drink before him,⁵¹⁶ and he shared food from his table when they worked hard, earning their appreciation.⁵¹⁷

Most slaves wore clothing comparable to that of the free poor,⁵¹⁸ and they probably could not change them often; in the second century B.C.E., the austere Cato listed one tunic and one cloak per male farm slave every other year.⁵¹⁹ In Rome, female slaves, as well as slaveholders' young daughters, could wear "a tube-dress with a long overfold, belted at the waist, possibly over a short-sleeved undertunic."⁵²⁰ In contrast to free Romans, Roman slaves typically wore their hair long and did not shave; freedpersons could shave their heads and wear a wool cap.⁵²¹

7. Sources of Slaves

Extant evidence suggests that male slaves outnumbered female slaves, and so, unless this evidence is skewed, slave numbers could not be maintained purely by natural reproduction.⁵²² People entered slavery in a variety of manners.⁵²³ For example, in some cultures thieves could be enslaved to the victims of their theft,⁵²⁴ though this would account for a very small number of slaves; self-sale to pay a debt⁵²⁵ also generated a small portion of the slaves in this period. Many infants discarded on trash heaps were adopted as slaves.⁵²⁶

With the decline of foreign wars as a source of slaves, slaveholders encouraged slaves to reproduce; at least in Egypt, many slaves in the first two centuries C.E. appear in the papyri as "homeborn."⁵²⁷ Although many slaves were born in slavery, most slave

(Pliny *Ep.* 2.6.4). Most advocated that slaves' food and work be kept moderate (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 415, again citing Philod. *Household* 30.18–31.2).

512. See Mus. Ruf. 18A, p. 114.21–26; 18B, p. 118.35–36.

513. Plut. *M. Cato* 3.2; he continued this practice even as an official (4.3).

514. Plut. *M. Cato* 5.1. Although he never complained about preparation of food for himself, he flogged slaves who did not prepare or serve well when he entertained others (21.3).

515. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 47.2–3 (who disagrees with the practice). Even eating with freedpersons was considered noteworthy (Pliny *Ep.* 2.6.3; Pliny saved money by eating the same food they ate, 2.6.4–5).

516. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.44 (just as he allowed animals to do; for this benefit, the slaves loved him and called him "father"). The *Cyropaedia* is Xenophon's idealization, not a reflection of his Athenian culture.

517. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.4 (again comparing the appreciation of animals).

518. Croom, *Clothing*, 23, noting this explicitly in Diocletian's price edict (301 C.E.).

519. *Ibid.*, 23–24 (citing Cato *E. Agr.* 59; also Colum. *Rust.* 1.8.9).

520. Croom, *Clothing*, 128.

521. Cosgrave, *History of Costume*, 78.

522. Osiek, "Female Slaves," 260–61 (citing lists of slaves from antiquity, even those serving aristocratic women). That those with sufficient slaves to produce lists preferred male to female slaves is possible but not clear.

523. See, e.g., Lyall, *Slaves*, 29–35 (mentioning capture, birth to a slave mother, self-sale or submission to slavery); Buckland, *Slavery*, 397–436 (by capture, 397; by birth, 397–401; for criminal actions, 401–19 *passim*; the sale of children, 420; an ungrateful freedperson, 422; fraudulent sale of freemen, 427); Barrow, *Slavery*, 1–21; Bartchy, *Slavery*, 45–50; Hezser, *Slavery*, 221–46; more briefly, Koester, *Introduction*, 1:59.

524. Cohen, *Law*, 163.

525. Jeffers, *World*, 222.

526. E.g., Dunand, *Religion en Égypte*, 116–17; Lewis, *Life*, 54, 58; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 59; Baugh, "Paul and Ephesus," 46–47 (citing esp. *I. Eph.* 18c); Pliny *Ep.* 10.65.1; 10.66.2; see comment on Acts 7:19.

527. Lewis, *Life*, 58.

families initially entered slavery as prisoners of war⁵²⁸ (as Luke knew, Luke 21:24); this required sufficient wars to sustain the numbers unless natural reproduction could supplant it. This source for slaves was originally viewed as a merciful alternative to killing the prisoners of war.⁵²⁹ Those spared for slavery most often tended to be women and children, the males sometimes being slaughtered.⁵³⁰ Since wars declined and apparently manumissions increased during the empire, slavery inevitably decreased.⁵³¹

8. Slaves Viewed as Property

Although the humanity of slaves was obvious, their services and, in ancient views, their persons were purchased financially; hence ancient law treated them from the economic standpoint, as property.⁵³² Aristotle articulated the philosophic foundations of such an approach: a slaveholder cannot be said to treat a slave “unjustly” because he owns the slave as his property.⁵³³ The slave was the master’s “living tool,”⁵³⁴ just as one’s soul owns one’s body.⁵³⁵

As such, slaves were naturally compared to animals, living beings also owned by people. Seeking to portray Cyrus as benevolent, Xenophon notes that he treated his slaves as well as his animals, and they appreciated him the same way dogs appreciate their masters.⁵³⁶ Plutarch criticizes Cato for selling his slaves when they grew too old to work for him, then adds that a kind person should care even for his or her horses and dogs when they are old.⁵³⁷ Slaves were, of course, recognized as more intelligent than animals, but they shared an analogous legal situation in many respects. Aristotle employed this analogy to support slaves’ subordination.⁵³⁸ Insofar as the slave was viewed as a slave, there could be no more friendship with or justice toward a slave than toward any inanimate object.⁵³⁹ Their offspring, like those of livestock, were legally “fruits” analogous to those of other animals.⁵⁴⁰ Slave dealers concealed slaves’

528. Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.15; Diod. *Sic.* 2.18.5; 14.68.3; 20.105.1; Livy 4.29.4; 5.22.1; 26.34.3; 26.40.13; 41.11.8; Plut. *Alex.* 11.6; Suet. *Jul.* 26.3; Tac. *Hist.* 3.33; Gaius *Inst.* 1.13–17; Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 377.17–19; Eustathius *Paraphrase of Dionysius Periegetes* (GGM 2:253, lines 8–10, in Sher, *Empire*, §20, p. 37). Cf. slavery by capture in Grant, “Economic Background,” 104. Although Romans enslaved members of any people (many slaves were Greeks), descendants of Libyans in Rome might be accused of servile descent (Plut. *Cic.* 26.4).

529. So Justin. *Inst.* 1.3.3. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.24.2 insisted that this method of acquiring slaves revealed Romans’ justice.

530. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 10.26.3; Diod. *Sic.* 17.46.4; Vitruv. *Arch.* 1.1.5; Paus. 3.23.4; Plut. *Alc.* 16.4–5; Hdn. 3.9.11.

531. Koester, *Introduction*, 1:59. Scheidel, “Quantifying,” doubts that manumissions increased and thinks natural reproduction the leading source of slaves; Harris, “Demography,” demurs, emphasizing instead such factors as the enslavement of foundlings. Noting images of captives, Bradley, “Captives,” contends that war provided for slaves in the empire more often than many suppose.

532. E.g., Buckland, *Slavery*, 10–38; Lyall, *Slaves*, 35–37; long recognized by commentators, e.g., Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 311, 321–22. On slaves as people and property under Roman law more briefly, see, e.g., Buckland, *Roman Law*, 62–65. For mainly modern examples of chattel slavery, from a sociological approach, see van den Berghe, “Institution.”

533. Arist. *N.E.* 5.6, 8–9, in Kelly, *Peter*, 116.

534. Arist. *E.E.* 7.9.2, 1241b; *Pol.* 1.2.3–6, 1253b–1254a; *N.E.* 8.11.6, 1161b.

535. Arist. *E.E.* 7.9.2, 1241b; *Pol.* 1.1.4, 1252a; 1.2.10, 1254a. They were also united like body and soul (*Pol.* 1.2.21, 1255b).

536. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.44; 8.2.4.

537. Plut. *M. Cato* 5.1–6 (the comment about animals appears in 5.2).

538. Arist. *Pol.* 1.2.8–14, 1254a–1254b; slaves’ utility differed “little from that of animals” (1.2.14 [LCL, 21:23]).

539. Arist. *N.E.* 8.11.6–7, 1161b. Like animals, slaves lacked their own direction in life (*Pol.* 3.5.10, 1280a); like animals, but unlike free persons, slaves were also built by nature for manual labor (1.2.14, 1254b).

540. Gardner, *Women*, 209–13.

flaws just as horse sellers did with their merchandise.⁵⁴¹ Even some rabbis prohibited funeral orations over or condolences for slaves, comparing them to animals, for whom one would offer no condolences.⁵⁴²

This ideology expressed itself in a variety of legal and economic ways. Slaves could be sold;⁵⁴³ some were children.⁵⁴⁴ In the Black Sea region, Greek slave traders calculated slaves' financial worth in barrels of wine.⁵⁴⁵ Slaves would be divided (and hence separated) as part of a deceased's estate.⁵⁴⁶ Slaveholders had to pay taxes on slaves as on other kinds of property.⁵⁴⁷ They could be liable for their slaves' behavior.⁵⁴⁸ Failure to register slaves in a census could lead to the confiscation of one's slaves.⁵⁴⁹ When masters in Egypt tried to export slaves without knowing proper tax regulations, the slaves were to be sold by the state;⁵⁵⁰ matters were more severe if one knowingly violated the regulations.⁵⁵¹ Although one was free to beat one's own slaves (see discussion below), beating another's was offensive.⁵⁵²

Although this analogy to animals was used for legal and economic purposes, in principle it left masters legally free to abuse slaves (see discussion of abuse below); if a slaveholder did not beat, torture, or otherwise abuse slaves, it was not because the law kept him or her from doing so.⁵⁵³ The Mishnah agrees: one could do what one wished with one's slave, because the slave was one's chattel, one's property.⁵⁵⁴ Slavery's financial component inevitably affected even personal perceptions. One may note Pliny's offhanded comment about his reader's illness: it would be disappointing if Encolpius could no longer read, since this was the reason for which he was purchased.⁵⁵⁵

Slaves normally held a lower status and social "value" than they would have had if they had been free.⁵⁵⁶ Slaves have the same illnesses as free persons, Pliny notes, but it is obvious which group receives kinder treatment from physicians.⁵⁵⁷ Servants were not normally friends with whom one shared one's most intimate confidences;⁵⁵⁸ indeed, slaves were often contrasted with friends.⁵⁵⁹ Slaves had to live with their holders' decisions; they could offer good advice, but they could not compel their slaveholders to accept it.⁵⁶⁰ Most of Galen's slaves in Rome died from a plague (*Grief 1*),

541. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 80.9. But Seneca himself complains about treating slaves like animals (47.5).

542. Rabbi Eliezer in *y. Ber.* 2:7; cf. similarly R. Eliezer in *b. Ber.* 16b, bar.

543. E.g., P.Cair.Zen. 59003.11–22; P.Oxy. 95. For various forms of sale, see Buckland, *Slavery*, 30–72.

544. E.g., the twelve-year-old girls in *CPJ* 1:119–20, §1 (a Sidonian); *CPJ* 3:73, §490 (a Phrygian).

545. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 123–24.

546. Horsley, *Documents*, 1:69–70, §24; also *PSI* 903 (47 C.E., about one slave apiece).

547. P.Col. inv. 480 (much earlier, ca. 198–197 B.C.E.).

548. Aelian *Farmers* 3 (Eupeithides to Timonides). Llewelyn, *Documents*, 7:163–96, §8, contends that either could be responsible in earlier texts but that the slave was normally held responsible in the Roman period (pp. 188–89).

549. *BGU* 5.60.155 (second century C.E.).

550. *BGU* 5.65.164.

551. *BGU* 5.66.165–5.67.170.

552. Demosth. *Con.* 4.

553. Finley, *Slavery*, 73–74; Gager, "Class," 110.

554. *So m. Git.* 1:6; cf. *Exod* 21:21, though the interpretation is debated (cf. the analogy to free persons in 21:18–19. On the tension between slaves as persons and chattel, see Hezser, *Slavery*, 55–68).

555. Pliny *Ep.* 8.1.1.

556. E.g., in Massilia, the corpses of free people were carried to burial in one coffin, and slaves in another (*Val. Max.* 2.6.7d).

557. Pliny *Ep.* 8.24.5.

558. E.g., Theophr. *Char.* 4.2; Pliny *Ep.* 1.12.7; John 15:15; Keener, *John*, 1010; slaves also were not apt to confide in their holders (Mitchell, "Friends by Name," 259, citing *Cic. Amic.* 6.22; *Arist. N.E.* 8.11.6, 1161a).

559. E.g., *Xen. Cyr.* 1.6.45; *Arist. N.E.* 8.11.6–7, 1161b; *Sall. Jug.* 102.6–7; *Philo Migr.* 45; *Sobr.* 55; see Keener, *John*, 1013–14.

560. Aristoph. *Plut.* 1–5. A Jewish sage, by contrast, advises accepting a slave's wise counsel (*Ps.-Phoc.* 227).

but he considered far worse the recent loss of his possessions (*Grief 2*), especially his research (12b, 31–36).⁵⁶¹

The exploitation of slaves showed its worst side in the slave trade itself.⁵⁶² Dehumanizing indignities on the slave market included being presented naked and bearing placards identifying one's marketable features.⁵⁶³ In principle, such slave trade could include the illegal⁵⁶⁴ kidnapping of children⁵⁶⁵ or others,⁵⁶⁶ but mostly, in this period, it was a matter of trade in existing slaves. Roman aristocrats, however, worked with slave dealers, and contempt for this occupation on the basis of concern for slaves is not well attested before Augustine.⁵⁶⁷

9. Denigrating Slaves

Free persons often held negative stereotypes of slaves. Most thought it degrading to eat with their slaves.⁵⁶⁸ Aristocrats often despised freedpersons' servile origins; thus the Roman senate briefly debated requiring freedpersons to wear a special identifying uniform to expose their "derelictions."⁵⁶⁹ Some rabbis added that one should praise God for not making one a slave, which was baser than being a woman.⁵⁷⁰

A slave's nature was considered base, and free people of dignity were to avoid having a servile nature.⁵⁷¹ Cicero lumps slaves with mad persons and exiles.⁵⁷² In numerous texts, "slave" (often ἀνδράποδον) functioned as an insult.⁵⁷³ Portraying free persons as if being auctioned on a slave market was insulting to them;⁵⁷⁴ treating people as stupid is also treating them as slaves.⁵⁷⁵ One who acted as a slave to gain can be beaten with the thirty-nine lashes; this would be disgraceful for a free person but is appropriate since the person acted as a slave.⁵⁷⁶ Attributing slave birth or character to free persons

561. Nevertheless, he says that he would have counted a tyrant's abuse of one of his friends as worse than any of this (*Grief 72a*).

562. On abuses by slave dealers, see Bradley, *Slaves*, 114–16.

563. *Ibid.*, 115; on nakedness in slave markets, see Jensen, "Nudity," 299.

564. E.g., Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.62 (prescribing death, as also in Exod 21:16; Hamm. 14); Lucian *Phil. Sale* 7.

565. Terence *Eun.* 108–9; cf. Scroggs, *Homosexuality*, 120; many would be sexually exploited (cf. Suet. *Dom.* 7.1). Technically, however, theft of a slave was not kidnapping (Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 33); dealing with fugitive slaves, in contrast to kidnapping, remained a minor offense under Roman law (34). One who colluded with a free person entering slavery to secure part of the price of the sale could be enslaved (Buckland, *Slavery*, 71).

566. E.g., Iambl. *V.P.* 3.14; Goodman, *State*, 38; Gagnon, *Homosexual Practice*, 333–34; for other kinds of kidnapping, see, e.g., Xen. *Anab.* 6.1.1.

567. Bodel, "Caveat emptor" (arguing that outrage at the enslavement of free persons generated even that protest). But for the wickedness of kidnapping, cf., e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 69.9; 1 Tim 1:10.

568. Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 47.2–3; cf. Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.2; the atypical approach toward freedpersons in Pliny *Ep.* 2.6.3–5.

569. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 104–5.

570. So *b. Menah.* 43b–44a, bar. Freed slaves stood low on the social pyramid in various texts (*Num. Rab.* 6:1; Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 334–37).

571. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.35; cf. Dio Cass. 8.36.3. On slaves' distinctive nature, see Arist. *Pol.* 1.1.4, 1252b; 1.2.7, 1254a; they differed not only in body but also in soul (1.2.14–15, 1254b).

572. Cic. *Acad.* 2.47.144.

573. E.g., Demosth. *Lept.* 132; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.6.30; 1.9.20; 1.12.24; 1.13.3; 1.24.17; 1.29.16; 2.7.13; 2.13.18; 3.24.74; Diog. Laert. 6.2.33, 43; probably Plut. *Virt.* 2, *Mor.* 100E; slave ancestry in *Vit. Aes.* 126, 130, 140. Also Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 351, citing a baraita in *b. Qidd.* 28a. To call one a "son of a slave" was to imply one's illegitimate birth (Jos. *Ant.* 13.292).

574. Lucian *Fisherman* 4.

575. Lucian *Fisherman* 5. Iambl. *V.P.* 8.44 suggests that education often distinguishes free persons from slaves. Yet we know that in practice slaves were often highly educated.

576. Jos. *Ant.* 4.238.

was a conventional insult.⁵⁷⁷ In earlier Rome, a plebeian complained that patricians were treating the plebeians as if they were merely slaves or freedpeople.⁵⁷⁸ Their lives and character are often cheap in novels.⁵⁷⁹

Somehow people of noble birth were supposed to be obvious by appearance,⁵⁸⁰ just as one could discern slaves by their servile appearance;⁵⁸¹ sometimes these are contrasted explicitly.⁵⁸² Free persons could not tolerate being treated as slaves,⁵⁸³ especially if they were of noble birth.⁵⁸⁴ Aristotle had claimed that Greeks, unlike other peoples, were unfit for slavery;⁵⁸⁵ by the first century, many slaves were Greek. Likewise, some Romans claimed that unlike other peoples, they could not endure slavery.⁵⁸⁶ Josephus also claimed, despite recent history, that it was inappropriate for Israelites, whom God had exalted over the nations, to take the roles of slaves.⁵⁸⁷

Because extant literature generally derives from the slaveholding class, it portrays slaves as base;⁵⁸⁸ slaves were associated with a variety of moral faults.⁵⁸⁹ Slaves were thought to be generally cowardly.⁵⁹⁰ An adulteress would be humiliated before free persons but not before slaves.⁵⁹¹ When Socrates claims that evil is characteristic of slaves, and virtue of free persons, his interlocutor agrees that free persons should avoid slavishness.⁵⁹² In practice, some were viewed as worse than others; the “bad servant” was despised.⁵⁹³

Slaveholders in various cultures have sometimes viewed slaves as lazy, perhaps because slaveholders often have more incentive to want work to be done than slaves have to do it.⁵⁹⁴ Thus one person complained about how much his slave ate and slept.⁵⁹⁵

577. Demosth. *Lept.* 132; Mart. *Epig.* 1.81; Libanius *Invective* 4.2; cf. Vell. Patern. 2.73.1; 2.91.3; applicable to the condition of parasites in Quint. *Decl.* 252.12; 298.9–11.

578. Livy 4.3.7 (this was before freedpersons began achieving high status).

579. E.g., Xen. *Eph. Anithia* 1.14 (unnecessary for the plot, most die; one's death, at least, serves the literary function of pathos). For slave girls specifically, “King Cheops and the Magicians” 12.8–28 (in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 23–24); Heliod. *Eth.* 2.11 (exulting over an immoral slave girl's death; but she had acted partly in fear for her life); and worst of all, Philost. *Hrk.* 56.6–10.

580. E.g., Hom. *Od.* 4.63–64; 24.253–55; Char. *Chaer.* 2.1.5; 2.2.3; 2.3.10; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 31. Noble lineage could often remedy the disgrace of slavery; see, e.g., Byron, “Lineage.”

581. E.g., Hom. *Od.* 24.252–53.

582. E.g., Hom. *Od.* 24.252–55; Arrian *Alex.* 5.19.1; Char. *Chaer.* 1.10.7; 2.1.5; *Test. Jos.* 11.2–3.

583. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 19.9.4; Philo *Rewards* 137; *Good Person* 36.

584. Char. *Chaer.* 1.11.3.

585. Arist. *Pol.* 1.1.4, 1252b; 1.2.18, 1255a; cf. Arist. *Pol.* 3.9.3, 1285a; Eurip. *Iph. Aul.* 1400–1401. Free people were not built for manual labor, Aristotle opined, but slaves, like animals, were (*Pol.* 1.2.14, 1254b).

586. Cic. *Phil.* 6.7.19.

587. Jos. *Ant.* 8.161.

588. Bradley, *Slaves*, 26–30. Plautus created the comic use of mischievous or base slaves (not borrowed from Greek comedy, 28–29). Even Seneca thought that virtue was rarely found in slaves, though he considered them equals as humans (Seventer, *Seneca*, 185–89).

589. E.g., brutality in Pliny *Ep.* 3.14.5; runaway slaves could be identified by their extravagant use of money in Char. *Chaer.* 4.5.5.

590. Ach. *Tat.* 7.10.5.

591. *M. Soṭah* 1:6, probably implying their lewdness. Male slaves loved robbery, and female slaves were vulnerable to immorality (*m. 'Ab.* 2:7; cf. also Moore, *Judaism*, 2:137).

592. Plato *Alcib.* 1.135C.

593. *Sent. Syr. Men.* 154–67.

594. Cf. Toner, *Culture*, 165 (offering an example from *Querolus* 74, an early fifth-century comedy); he also notes (28) from the same source the stereotype that slaves were all apt to steal and were undependable. Similarly, elite sources worried that an estate left to slaves might yield nothing to the owners (Philost. *Hrk.* 4.6); slaves would lose fear of a master who proved benevolent (Pliny *Ep.* 1.4.4, possibly joking but playing on stereotypes). Sometimes, however, servants were commended for diligence; cf. Alciph. *Farm.* 23 (Lenaeus to Corydon), 3.26; Matt 25:21 (only one as lazy, in 25:26). In fact, it was slaveholders whom slavery made lazy (with Barrow, *Slavery*, 25–26).

595. Alciph. *Farm.* 36 (Eudicus to Pasion), 3.38.

Slaves did not want to work if masters were not there to direct them.⁵⁹⁶ Diogenes reproved a master angry with his slave: you ruined him by allowing excessive idleness, which ruins anyone.⁵⁹⁷ One sage advised sufficient food, work, and discipline for a slave (Sir 33:25; cf. 33:28, 30); without sufficient work to keep him busy, he would want freedom (33:26) or find mischief in his idleness (33:29). Thus some later rabbis said that slaves wanted ten times as much sleep as anyone else.⁵⁹⁸

Slaves were thought guilty of flattery⁵⁹⁹—no surprise since this was demanded of them.⁶⁰⁰ Slaves were often accused of deceptiveness,⁶⁰¹ sometimes of recommending themselves,⁶⁰² and of much gossip.⁶⁰³ Thus their testimony might be challenged,⁶⁰⁴ and prudent persons were to confide nothing to slaves.⁶⁰⁵ Josephus rejected the testimony of slaves because of their base character,⁶⁰⁶ and the rabbis were not much more appreciative of slaves' testimony.⁶⁰⁷ For negative figurative uses of slavery (politically and morally), see comment on Acts 15:10.

10. Various Abuses of Slaves

A later section of this excursus addresses the sexual abuse of slaves and the separation of families; here are surveyed some other forms of abuse.⁶⁰⁸ Luke knew that slaves could be abused by wicked masters (cf. Luke 12:45, using the same term παιδίσκη). One fictitious slave lamented that if a slave died, her life was too difficult anyway.⁶⁰⁹

Cato overworked slaves, then sold them when they were old and tired instead of taking care of them;⁶¹⁰ fearing their unity, he also kept slaves divided against one another.⁶¹¹ Hadrian jabbed out the eye of a slave; others struck their slaves' teeth so

596. Hom. *Od.* 17.320–21; the passage goes on to opine that people lose half their worth when they become slaves (17.322–23).

597. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 10.6–7.

598. So *b. Qidd.* 49b.

599. E.g., Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 309, §100D. By contrast, slaves were also thought to be insulting to their masters (Sen. *Y. Dial.* 2.11.3; when more free to do so in Jos. *Ant.* 19.14).

600. With MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 116.

601. Terence *Self-T.* 668–78; *Andr.* 495; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.26; Plut. *Educ.* 14, *Mor.* 11C (who does exempt “decent” slaves); Char. *Chær.* 2.10.7; cf. the concern in Pliny *Ep.* 1.21.2. In Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.21.517, the slave uses deception to have the master's son disinherited and supplant him.

602. Char. *Chær.* 6.5.5.

603. Lucian *Lucius* 5; Barrow, *Slavery*, 27. The greater danger would actually be slandering a slave to his holder, against which Jewish sages warned (Prov 30:10; Ps.-Phoc. 226). The prejudice might be greater for a woman slave (cf. Tac. *Dial.* 29), in view of prejudices that women were more prone to deceive (Fronto *Ep. graec.* 2.3) or apt to gossip (Sent. *Syr. Men.* 118–21, 336–39; *b. Qidd.* 49b; *Gen. Rab.* 45:5; 70:11; 80:5; perhaps *Lev. Rab.* 26:2; for widows in *y. Soṭah* 3:4, §12; Miriam in *'Abot R. Nat.* 9A; *Deut. Rab.* 6:11); they were more talkative (Hom. *Il.* 20.251–55; Livy 6.34.6; Lucian *Prof. P.S.* 23; *Deut. Rab.* 6:11) and better at reviling (Lucian *Prof. P.S.* 23), though Greeks associated talkativeness (e.g., Theophr. *Char.* 3; 7; 8) and gossip (Livy 44.34.4–5) with anyone.

604. Lysias *Or.* 5.2–3, §§102–3; Hermog. *Issues* 45.10–20. In Apul. *Metam.* 10.7, a slave lies under oath (and, in 10.10, even under torture). But perjury also applied to slaves (Prop. *Eleg.* 3.6.20).

605. E.g., Theophr. *Char.* 4.2; Pliny *Ep.* 1.12.7; cf. John 15:15; Keener, *John*, 1010; comments above.

606. Jos. *Ant.* 4.219.

607. Stern, “Aspects,” 628–29.

608. For examples of abuse, see further Bradley, “Traffic”; idem, *Slaves*, 113–37; Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 131; abundant examples in Barrow, *Slavery*, 30–31.

609. Eurip. *Andr.* 88–90. Another character likewise complains about the inability of slaves to resist injustice (Eurip. *Hec.* 332–33).

610. Plut. *M. Cato* 5.1.

611. Plut. *M. Cato* 21.4.

hard the slaveholders bruised their hands.⁶¹² Slaves could be branded,⁶¹³ a practice apparently common in Italy under the republic⁶¹⁴ though not standard in this period⁶¹⁵ except among the “basest” of slaves,⁶¹⁶ sometimes as a punishment.⁶¹⁷ A Jewish sage advised against branding, as an insult to the slave’s dignity.⁶¹⁸

Slaves could be beaten,⁶¹⁹ even in Jewish circles;⁶²⁰ they could, for example, be harshly beaten with sticks.⁶²¹ Public disciplines were more severe for slaves than for free persons.⁶²² Cicero contrasts beating a parent, which is terrible, with beating a slave.⁶²³ Quintilian argues against beating free children—a stance more progressive than many or most of his contemporaries—but by noting that beatings were fit only for slaves.⁶²⁴ Slaves could, naturally, take such abuse very badly.⁶²⁵

Nevertheless, excess savagery sometimes drew the scorn—albeit not generally the intervention—of others.⁶²⁶ Juvenal complains about a merciless mistress of the house who had slaves beaten for minor failings when the householder was not there to protect them.⁶²⁷ If she was in a hurry, she might tear her slave hairdresser’s hair and rip

612. Toner, *Culture*, 70.

613. Cf. Herodas *Mimes* 5.28; Deissmann, *Studies*, 349 (also noting soldiers); Lampe, *Seal*, 9; Aune, *Revelation*, 456–59; in the ancient Near East, see Mendelsohn, “Slavery,” 80–82. But it was apparently a special indignity rather than a norm (Plut. *Nic.* 29.1). The Getae did it to their slaves (Artem. *Oneir.* 1.8).

614. Diod. *Sic.* 34/35.2.32.

615. It did happen, much to slaves’ displeasure (Mart. *Epig.* 3.21). But Caligula did it even to persons of rank (Suet. *Calig.* 27.3); for hypothetically branding adulterers, see Hermog. *Issues* 90.2–3; for prisoners, Lampe, *Seal*, 10. Cultic or other tattooing was often associated with Egyptians, Sarmatians, and distant peoples (3 Macc 2:28–29; Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 1.148; 3.202; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.8; Lucian *Syr. G.* 59; Jones, “*Stigma*”). Against some claims (e.g., Angus, *Mystery-Religions*, 97), branding was apparently not practiced in Mithraism (Beskow, “Branding,” esp. 499–500).

616. See Gaius *Inst.* 1.13 (classed with those chained, tortured, or sent to the arena).

617. For “delinquent slaves,” Aune, *Revelation*, 458, cites Aristoph. *Birds* 760–61; *Frogs* 1508–14; Menander *Samia* 321–24; Petron. *Sat.* 103.2; Diog. Laert. 4.46; cf. Jones, “*Stigma*.”

618. Ps.-Phoc. 225. (*OTP* 2:582 n. h points out that later rabbis did allow it.)

619. Often noted, e.g., Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 131; Boer, *Morality*, 225; Bradley, *Slaves*, 119–20; Stambaugh, *City*, 96 (citing Plaut. *Men.* 966–77); deSilva, *Honor*, 191; see, e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 16.19 (Petronius’s acts toward slaves before his death); Libanius *Anecdote* 2.9 (“beating and choking and torturing”). In ancient Egypt, e.g., “King Cheops and the Magicians” 12.8–28 (in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 23–24); in a later novel about ancient Egypt, *Test. Jos.* 13.3; in Mesopotamia, *Ahiq.* 3.2; Syriac *Ahiq.* 3.2; 4.14. It is difficult to quantify the average frequency of beatings, but one antebellum Louisiana plantation averaged 0.7 whippings per slave annually, with all those going to about half the slaves (Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 145–46), assuming that the records are complete.

620. Bloodying the back of a bad slave was appropriate (Sir 42:5; cf. 33:25; Prov 29:19); note the analogy in *Deut. Rab.* 3:2; Moore, *Judaism*, 2:137, says that flogging was common. Excess discipline, however, warranted punishment (Exod 21:20–21; cf. 21:18–19 for free persons).

621. Apollod. *Bib.* 2.8.2. In one novel, a wicked pirate leader has a young slave flogged with whips and fire, causing him to lose much blood (Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 2.6).

622. Earlier Athenians gave them fifty stripes for loving free boys (Aeschines *Tim.* 139); Plato recommends a hundred stripes for a slave who fails to protect a parent beaten by a child, but manumission if the slave does help (*Laws* 9.881C).

623. Cic. *Fin.* 4.27.76.

624. Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.13–14 (also observing that the most recalcitrant slaves become only more hardened by blows). For beating of children, see, e.g., Sir 30:1–2, 12 (esp. with Pilch, “Beat”); *Ahiq.* 81–82 (sayings 3–4); *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 15.4; Aristoph. *Clouds* 1409–10; Xen. *Lac.* 6.1–2; Columbanus, (probably) Catonian lines, line 52; Quint. *Curt.* 8.8.3; Ael. *Arist. Def. Or.* 380, §127; Libanius *Anecdote* 2.9–10; *Invective* 7.8; discussion in Townsend, “Education,” 145; Safrai, “Home,” 770–71; for opposition to beating them, see Plut. *M. Cato* 20.2; Ps.-Phoc. 150 (cf. 207); for limits, *t. B. Qam.* 9:11.

625. A slave might hang himself after a flogging, but this is an unusual and unexpected response (Theophr. *Char.* 12.12).

626. Cf. Seneca’s complaint (*De Ira* 3.32) about slaveholders’ eagerness to flog or break slaves’ legs (cited in Toner, *Culture*, 70). In the empire, laws did arise governing excessive cruelty (Jeffers, *World*, 228). Beating others’ slaves had long been offensive (Demosth. *Con.* 4), but perhaps only in the sense of abusing another’s property.

627. *Juv. Sat.* 6.474–85; Juvenal certainly exaggerates and also targets matrons for dishonor, but his critique presumably reflects knowledge that abuse was occurring. Such sadistic abuses are documented outside ancient satire in modern eyewitness reports of slavery (see Sterling, *Sisters*, 10).

off her clothing;⁶²⁸ another hairdresser was struck to the ground for not securing one pin in the matron's locks.⁶²⁹ A cook might be beaten for a poor dinner.⁶³⁰ Disfiguring slaves by beating them was also excessively harsh.⁶³¹

Some recommended that punishment be kept moderate;⁶³² the philosopher Seneca approved of lashing only with the tongue, not with a whip,⁶³³ advising that slaveholders should earn loving respect, not fear.⁶³⁴ He opined that particularly wise people, when angry, might refrain from discipline,⁶³⁵ or entrust discipline to another,⁶³⁶ rather than risk disciplining excessively.

Not all valued moderation. Whenever Cato found a slave guilty of a capital offense, he executed him in front of the other servants;⁶³⁷ instilling fear in the servants was considered a useful means of maintaining control.⁶³⁸ Spartans held the Helots, as a group, in servitude to Sparta;⁶³⁹ on one occasion, the Spartans promised to reward with freedom those who thought themselves the best fighters; once two thousand volunteers came forward, the Spartans executed them, fearing lest they genuinely want freedom.⁶⁴⁰

11. Torture

Torture for information appears regularly in our sources, though it should be understood that, in contrast to beatings, most individual slaves would never have faced torture (other than the aforementioned beatings themselves).⁶⁴¹ Slaves had long been tortured to procure information for court testimony,⁶⁴² and even protagonists in novels were portrayed as using it.⁶⁴³ This was practiced on slave women as well as men⁶⁴⁴ and

628. *Juv. Sat.* 6.490–91.

629. *Mart. Epig.* 2.66.1–8. Statues from the period depict numerous curls; to have missed one thus stands for a minor offense at best.

630. *Mart. Epig.* 8.23; Cato did this only if the food was not good for a guest (*Plut. M. Cato* 21.3). Presumably the trouble in *Gen* 40:2 similarly involved Pharaoh's indigestion.

631. *Ach. Tat.* 5.17.8–9.

632. *Philod. Household* 30.18–31.2 (in Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 415). Such advice did not necessarily define moderation.

633. *Sen. Y. Ep. Lucil.* 47.19.

634. *Sen. Y. Ep. Lucil.* 47.18.

635. *Val. Max.* 4.1.ext. 1.

636. *Val. Max.* 4.1.ext. 2.

637. *Plut. M. Cato* 21.4.

638. *Bradley, Slaves*, 113–14.

639. Still known in imperial times, e.g., *Arrian Ind.* 10.9. On Helots, see, e.g., Cartledge, "Helots."

640. *Thucyd.* 4.80.3–4. When the Helots revolted, the Plataeans helped the Spartans subdue them (*Thucyd.* 3.54.5); even Athenians recognized them as a danger for the Spartans comparable to the serfs of Thessaly (*Arist. Pol.* 2.6.2, 1269a).

641. Torture apparently lowered a slave's market value (*Gaius Inst.* 1.13). A holder could nevertheless torture a slave even apart from the desire for testimony (*Quint. Decl.* 328.12). *Sen. E. Controv.* 10.5.intro. portrays someone in classical Athens purchasing a slave to torture to death for aesthetic reasons, which is considered morally repugnant (but not illegal at the time). Those tortured were unwashed (*Libanius Descr.* 19.4), and torture could include "fire" and "lash" (*Quint. Decl.* 272.10); occasionally it proved fatal (hypothetical cases in *Sen. E. Controv.* 8.3.intro.; *Quint. Decl.* 328 intro.; 338 intro).

642. E.g., *Demosth. Pant.* 27; *Olymp.* 18–19; *Tim.* 55–58; *Con.* 27; *Rhet. Her.* 2.7.10; *Tac. Ann.* 3.22, 67; 4.11, 29; 6.47; *Suet. Galba* 10.5; *Quint. Decl.* 269 intro; *Apul. Metam.* 10.28; *Hdn.* 4.5.4. Scholars often comment on this (e.g., Ramsay, *Church in Empire*, 205; cf. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 64–66).

643. *Char. Chaer.* 1.5.1.

644. E.g., *Sen. E. Controv.* 6.6; *Pliny Ep.* 10.96.8; *Tac. Ann.* 14.60; *Lucian Demosth.* 49; *Char. Chaer.* 1.5.1; cf. Osiek, "Female Slaves," 262; Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 102. In the hypothetical case in *Sen. E. Controv.* 8.3.intro., the slave woman is tortured to death but found innocent. The nurse (possibly a slave) is also tortured to death in the hypothetical case in *Quint. Decl.* 338 intro.

even used on freedwomen.⁶⁴⁵ (In this period, nonslaves were not normally tortured, but apparently even they experienced this abuse on occasion.)⁶⁴⁶

Some ancients defended torture of slaves as a means of securing reliable information,⁶⁴⁷ whereas others (or the same rhetor in a different case) opposed it.⁶⁴⁸ The basic rhetorical rule of thumb was that those who found the results of torture useful to their case should defend the value of information so obtained; those who did not should argue against it.⁶⁴⁹ Slaveholders who refused to hand over slaves for torture could be accused of having something to hide;⁶⁵⁰ others freely offered their slaves for torture, implying that their opponents' denial of the value of such evidence was suspicious.⁶⁵¹

Torture sometimes compelled slaves to fabricate false charges.⁶⁵² Thus one slave under torture confessed that he had killed another person's slave; after his execution, the supposedly murdered man was discovered alive.⁶⁵³ Another slave denied a crime despite being tortured six times; he was crucified anyway.⁶⁵⁴ Another was tortured eight times to make him accuse his master, but he did not do so.⁶⁵⁵ Augustus and Hadrian limited the use of torture on slaves, suggesting that it should be employed only when other means to learn the truth had failed.⁶⁵⁶

Since women slaves could be interrogated by torture, did Rhoda have much to fear in this situation? Despite Agrippa's years in Rome, it seems doubtful that Rhoda

645. Suet. *Calig.* 16.4; Tac. *Ann.* 15.57. A free woman is in view in Jos. *Ant.* 19.34; one may be in view in Sen. E. *Controv.* 9.6.intro.

646. See Livy 32.38.8; Sen. E. *Controv.* 9.6.intro. (probably); Tac. *Ann.* 4.45 (a barbarian); 11.22; 14.24 (a barbarian aristocrat); 16.20 (a freedman); Apul. *Metam.* 3.8 (but it turns out to be an idle threat); *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 15:7; earlier, Quint. Curt. 6.8.15; 6.10.10; 6.11.13–14, 31; 7.2.34; 8.8.20–21; Arrian *Alex.* 6.29.11. Those who tortured free persons were typically tyrants (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 47.24), such as Gaius Caligula (Jos. *Ant.* 19.34) or Domitian (who allegedly tortured free persons with fire on their genitals; Suet. *Dom.* 10.5). It was also applicable to criminals (Lucian *Tox.* 28) or during investigations of *majestas* (Gizewski, "Maiestas," 187; Schiemann, "Torture," 795); perhaps also homicide (Quint. *Decl.* 324 intro) and poison (Quint. *Decl.* 381 intro) investigations. For slaves, rather than free, being subject to torture, see, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 312.9. Rank may have been more critical than free status in this respect (Rowe, *World*, 67–68).

647. Isaeus frg. 2, *Hagnoth.* 2; Lysias *Or.* 1.16 (*On the Murder of Eratosthenes*). Some claimed that it was the best test (Isaeus *Ciron* 12), the surest evidence (Demosth. *Neaer.* 122).

648. Cic. *Sull.* 28.78 argues *against* examining slaves by torture, since pain directed by the inquisitor determines the outcome; thus the hearers should test instead this man's life of character rather than the slaves. It was illegal to accept testimony from a slave against his or her slaveholder, even with torture (Cic. *Deiot.* 1.3). A slave might well guard a slaveholder's secret under torture anyway (Val. Max. 6.8.1), and opponents might accuse those who continued denying under torture of simply lying anyway (Quint. *Decl.* 269.5).

649. Arist. *Rhet.* 1.15.26, 1376b; *Rhet. Alex.* 16.1432a.12–33; Quint. *Inst.* 5.4.1; against torture's value, see, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 353.4; 379.5.

650. Isaeus *Ciron* 10–11; Lysias *Or.* 4.10–12, §101; Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 28.77–78; 41.120. One way to keep slaves from revealing something under torture was to emancipate them, thereby preventing them (normally) from being subject to torture (Cic. *Mil.* 21.57).

651. Lysias *Or.* 7.34, §111; Aeschines *Embassy* 126–28; Tac. *Ann.* 3.14; Quint. *Decl.* 269 intro.

652. E.g., a minority of slaves in Tac. *Ann.* 14.60, 62. The report of Scipio's tortured slaves (Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.3.20) was quite improbable (he had died without a mark during the night). One man under torture deceptively implicated a tyrant's loyal aide, thereby depriving the tyrant of a loyal friend (Val. Max. 3.3.ext. 5). A torturer could torment a victim until she gave the response he desired (as in Quint. *Decl.* 338 intro; 338.10, 16, 23–26); thus respective parties' slave stewards in a case could each claim the opposite of their slaveholders (Quint. *Decl.* 353 intro; cf. 353.4), and one might accept only the convenient part of the tortured person's testimony (Quint. *Decl.* 381 intro; 381.1). For the view that slaves could lie under torture, see, e.g., Apul. *Metam.* 10.10.

653. Val. Max. 8.4.1.

654. Val. Max. 8.4.2. Opponents might accuse those who continued denying under torture of simply lying anyway (Quint. *Decl.* 269.5).

655. Val. Max. 8.4.3. Roman aristocrats note with distaste slaves used to inform on their holders (e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 16.18).

656. *Dig.* 48.18.1 (Sherk, *Empire*, §178C, pp. 236–37). Cf. also, e.g., Llewelyn, *Documents*, 7:176–77, §8. Arguments from probability had long counted more strongly, in any case (*Rhet. Alex.* 7, 1428a.19–23).

would run much risk of being interrogated by torture unless clear evidence suggested that she or members of her household were accomplices to Peter's escape. Letting Peter in would make her an accomplice, but it would also reduce the likelihood of Peter's visit becoming known. (The text is not even explicit that Peter entered [Acts 12:16–17], but this ambiguity might simply reflect Luke's conciseness.)

12. Slave Executions

Attacks by slaves to kill their masters were well known,⁶⁵⁷ and the state sought to deter them with horrific examples. If one slave murdered a master, all the slaves of the household would be executed.⁶⁵⁸ On one occasion, many people, including in the senate, opposed carrying out the measure, since most of the slaves were obviously innocent, but the stricter voices prevailed.⁶⁵⁹ One pseudoprophet allegedly told a man to kill his servants for murdering his son; after they had been executed, the son returned home alive.⁶⁶⁰ Once, when it was not known how a consul had died, many argued for his freedmen's death; Pliny defended the latter's freedom, but the compromise measure won out and they were banished.⁶⁶¹

These were not the only circumstances under which slaves' lives were cheap. In earlier times, one slaveholder tortured a slave to death, and although other people did not protest, they thought ill of the slaveholder for his cruelty.⁶⁶² One betrayed his master to Sulla; Sulla rewarded him with freedom, then executed him for being an untrustworthy servant.⁶⁶³ If slaves joined a Roman legion, they were to be executed (for seeking citizenship illegally).⁶⁶⁴ When Cato found one of his slaves guilty of a serious offense, he executed him in front of the others to set an example.⁶⁶⁵ Julius Caesar was considered more merciful; when a slave tried to assassinate him, Caesar had him executed without torture.⁶⁶⁶ When someone, to spare his own life, needed to implicate some others in his crime, he named some of his servants to make the charges more believable.⁶⁶⁷

Slaves could be crucified,⁶⁶⁸ one of the cruelest and most degrading forms of death by torture (see comment on Acts 2:23). Some slaveholders were thought to dispense the punishment cavalierly, at least in satirical literature.⁶⁶⁹ In a case where the slave was merely an accomplice, the slave could be crucified whereas the noble was merely

657. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 3.14.1. That some slaves would be interested in the slaveholder's death is not surprising (e.g., Sen. *Y. Clem.* 1.26.1; Hermog. *Issues* 56.16–18), though others would try to prevent the slaveholder's death (Tac. *Hist.* 4.59), including at the hands of other slaves (Pliny *Ep.* 3.14.3–4).

658. E.g., Tac. *Ann.* 13.32 (the law passed in 58 C.E., reinforcing earlier law); 14.42; Barrow, *Slavery*, 55–56. Under the law of 10 C.E., slaves were first tortured to see if the guilty and negligent parties could be narrowed down; failing that, all were executed; if the master died on a journey, only those with him were executed (Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 45).

659. Tac. *Ann.* 14.42–45 (61 C.E.). Many people in general did not approve of cruel executions of slaves (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.73.5).

660. Lucian *Alex.* 44. When a master disappeared, the servants might be suspected (Pliny *Ep.* 6.25.4).

661. Pliny *Ep.* 8.14.12, 24–25.

662. Plut. *Coriol.* 24.4 (claiming that in earlier times, people were more benevolent toward their slaves).

663. Plut. *Sulla* 10.1.

664. Pliny *Ep.* 10.29.1; 10.30.1–2.

665. Plut. *M. Cato* 21.4.

666. Suet. *Jul.* 74.1.

667. Plut. *Alc.* 21.2–4.

668. E.g., Terence *Andr.* 622–24; Sen. *Y. Clem.* 1.26.1; Hdn. 5.2.2; Llewelyn, *Documents*, 8:1–3, §1.

669. Mart. *Epig.* 2.82; Juv. *Sat.* 6.219–24; cf. Sen. *E. Controv.* 3.9 excerpts; Quint. *Decl.* 380 intro (the slaveholder decreed crucifixion for refusing to help him commit suicide).

banished.⁶⁷⁰ A slave might be falsely accused yet allowed to be crucified without further investigation because he was merely a slave.⁶⁷¹ The crucifixion of Roman citizens was humiliating because they thus died the deaths of slaves.⁶⁷² None of the circumstances described above would seem applicable to Rhoda, the potential exception being if this household were implicated in Peter's escape (which apparently did not happen).

Executions were relatively rare, but slaves often died young⁶⁷³—for example, one young woman at eighteen,⁶⁷⁴ another at nineteen,⁶⁷⁵ and another at twenty.⁶⁷⁶ Some scholars suggest that even among wives of imperial slaves and freedmen, more than half died before thirty, mostly between twenty and twenty-five.⁶⁷⁷ This information must be balanced somewhat, however, with the high mortality rate among young women in general, especially during childbearing years.⁶⁷⁸ Moreover, slaveholders had economic incentive to keep slaves healthy, which suggests that household slaves and perhaps some other slaves as well were better fed than free peasants.⁶⁷⁹

13. Slaves Understood as Human Beings

Treating slaves as property created inevitable tensions with the obvious recognition that slaves were, after all, human beings. Thus masters held the power, recognized among all peoples, over their slaves' life and death, as well as possessions.⁶⁸⁰ By the second century C.E., however, laws restricted this right in practice.⁶⁸¹

Roman law recognized slaves' humanity and distinction from normal "property."⁶⁸² Even if Roman law treated slaves as property, it recognized that, unlike other "property," slaves could achieve manumission. Further, slave women could produce children fathered by free men, and the gods viewed slaves as human.⁶⁸³ Even Aristotle recognized that slaves, though treated as property, were humans with reasoning capacities.⁶⁸⁴

Attitudes were shifting, perhaps partly because of continuing contact between slaves and slaveholders, and laws in the imperial period increasingly limited the abuse of slaves.⁶⁸⁵ Disgusted with slaveholders who left sick slaves on the island of Aesculapius to die, the emperor Claudius decreed that any such slaves who recovered were

670. Apul. *Metam.* 10.12. Likewise, an enemy spy was maimed and released, but twenty-five slaves charged with conspiring were crucified (Livy 22.33.1–2).

671. Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 4.2 (the false accusation is in 3.12). When the prefect learns the truth, however, he has the free accuser crucified instead of the slave (4.4).

672. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.66.169; Val. Max. 2.7.12.

673. Slaves could also die older, however, such as the man who died at sixty-five, a ship's pilot (*IGRR* 1.417, in Sherk, *Empire*, §173Y, p. 230).

674. *ILS* 7420a (Sherk, *Empire*, §173E, p. 228).

675. *ILS* 5215 (Sherk, *Empire*, §172K, p. 227).

676. *ILS* 7428 (Sherk, *Empire*, §172J, p. 227).

677. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 194. Among U.S. slaves in the South, perhaps 40 percent died before age nineteen, though mortality rates were high among free persons as well (Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 154).

678. Perhaps less severe than once estimated, but nevertheless substantial (Wiesehöfer, "Mortality," 215).

679. *Ibid.* (naturally excepting slaves working in the mines).

680. Gaius *Inst.* 1.52. Technically the *paterfamilias*'s power of life and death (*patria potestas*) originally extended to all members of the Roman household.

681. Gaius *Inst.* 1.53.

682. See Barrow, *Slavery*, 151–72; Buckland, *Slavery*, 73–130 (for noncommercial relations), 131–86 (for commercial relations, excepting the *peculium*, addressed below); Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 132.

683. Finley, *Economy*, 62.

684. Arist. *Pol.* 1.5.3, 1259b.

685. See, e.g., *Dig.* 48.8.11.2 (in Sherk, *Empire*, §178 B, p. 236); Carcopino, *Life*, 57–58; Jeffers, *World*, 227–28.

free.⁶⁸⁶ These restrictions should not be read as making the system unduly humane,⁶⁸⁷ many abuses remained, as noted above. Minimal limitations in laws left much to slaveholders' discretion; thus servants on an estate with a benevolent slaveholder might well fear the change of masters.⁶⁸⁸ But recognition of slaves' humanity, as well as concern to reduce resistance and increase productivity,⁶⁸⁹ generated rewards as incentives. Moralists might advise slaveholders to converse with slaves and so train them in intelligence.⁶⁹⁰ Some strict Jewish pietists insisted that Jewish slaveholders not sell servants to Gentiles.⁶⁹¹ Not only hostile literary sources, which may exaggerate, but inscriptions attest that manumission was a frequent event, at least in the Latin West.⁶⁹² This is quite in contrast to the slavery in the American South familiar to many modern Western readers.⁶⁹³

One of the clearest legal affirmations of a slave's humanity was the Roman institution of the *peculium*, in which a slave, in practice, owned money or property (sometimes including slaves), even though technically what the slave owned, like the slave himself or herself, belonged to the slaveholder.⁶⁹⁴ (Jewish law resembled Roman law in this matter.)⁶⁹⁵ By saving funds from the *peculium*, the slave might purchase freedom.⁶⁹⁶ Slaves could purchase and own property,⁶⁹⁷ including other slaves.⁶⁹⁸ In practice, even during the republic, Cato lent money to some of his slaves, who would then buy boys, train them for a year, and sell them at a higher price.⁶⁹⁹

Although most humane regulations and acts could have self-serving motives, it was inevitable that many human beings in close contact would bond despite the various inequities in their relationship.⁷⁰⁰ Some examples simultaneously reveal both inequity and a measure of intimacy. Thus Cicero expresses his own surprise at how upset he is with the death of his amiable slave reader; he did not think most people would expect

686. Suet. *Claud.* 25.2 (adding that slaveholders who killed them instead of abandoning them would be charged with murder).

687. See Watson, "Slave Law."

688. Cf. Apul. *Metam.* 8.15.

689. For this correct emphasis on the self-serving goals, see esp. Bradley, *Slaves*, 44–45. Some apparently humanitarian moves may not have been. Cicero preferred freeing his slaves to having them confiscated with his estate, but this way he would retain their services as freedpersons (*Fam.* 14.4.4).

690. DeSilva, *Honor*, 192, citing Xen. *Oec.* 13.6–13; Arist. *Pol.* 1.13, 1260b3–7. But as noted above, animals were also trained. Many slaves were well educated, so the counsel is condescending.

691. CD XII, 10–11; 4Q159 2–4 1–3 (following Lev 25:47–55).

692. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 124–25; Jeffers, *World*, 230, 239; Bartchy, *Slavery*, 87–125. For manumissions and limitations, see Gaius *Inst.* 1.20, 41–44; Justin. *Inst.* 1.6. See much further comment at Acts 6:9.

693. Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 150, who tend to be optimistic on other points, allow manumission for less than one in two thousand slaves (below 0.05 percent). On differences between U.S. and Greco-Roman slavery (though sometimes exaggerated), see, e.g., Dodd, *Problem*, 87–89. For current slavery, see, e.g., Masland et al., "Slavery," 30, 32, 37–39; "Forgotten Slaves"; "Sudan: Caught," 3; Bhatia, "Booty"; Pohor, "Slavery"; Gordon, *Slavery*, xi, 231; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 94–98. In the early 1990s, a U.S. scholar visiting that region told me that he personally was shown Sudanese sales receipts for "Christian slaves."

694. E.g., Buckland, *Slavery*, 187–238; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 119; Finley, *Economy*, 64; Martin, *Slavery*, 7–11; for even agrarian slaves in Italy, cf. Roth, "Food." Again, this does not alleviate the horror of the slave system; even in the United States, slaves on some estates were allowed to earn money or land as bonuses or to secure some income on the side (Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 148–51), and slaves, when freed, sometimes bought other slaves (Koger, *Slaveowners*).

695. See Cohen, *Laws*, 179–278; cf. also Stern, "Aspects," 628 (perhaps too reluctant to recognize Roman influence).

696. Stambaugh, *City*, 96–97; Lewis, *Life*, 59.

697. Apul. *Metam.* 10.13; *y. Yebam.* 7:1, §2; cf. 1 Sam 9:8 (though the "lad" here might simply belong to the extended household).

698. E.g., Plut. *M. Cato* 21.7; *y. Yebam.* 7:1, §2; Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 119; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 20.

699. Plut. *M. Cato* 21.7.

700. Cf., e.g., Barrow, *Slavery*, 64.

him to be so concerned by a slave's death.⁷⁰¹ Others also offered consolation over the death of a favorite slave.⁷⁰² Although some looked on a slave's death as only an economic loss,⁷⁰³ Pliny could not avoid grief over the death of some of his young slaves.⁷⁰⁴ Rabbi Gamaliel ruled that one may not accept condolences for slaves, but when his own slave Tabi died, he mourned, claiming that Tabi was exceptional.⁷⁰⁵ Greek novels sometimes depict close relationships between slaveholders and high-level servants.⁷⁰⁶

Slaves often proved loyal to the slaveholders,⁷⁰⁷ sometimes even dying for⁷⁰⁸ or with⁷⁰⁹ them. The elites who authored most extant literary sources deemed slaves who defended their holders' lives deserving of freedom and great reward.⁷¹⁰ Naturally, most ancient literature, produced from the elite, slaveholding class, chose to emphasize "loyal" rather than "disloyal" slaves,⁷¹¹ but they did have genuine (in addition to fictitious)⁷¹² examples to choose from. Following standard epistolary conventions for conveying affection, one slave girl complained to her absent holder, "We die if we do not see you daily," and urged him to write soon.⁷¹³

Not all slaveholders earned affection or even toleration;⁷¹⁴ it was said that some slaves even betrayed⁷¹⁵ or falsely accused⁷¹⁶ them. Pliny complains about a slaveholder attacked by his slaves, struck in the face, stomach, and privies, and then left to die⁷¹⁷ though rescued temporarily by some faithful slaves.⁷¹⁸ While admitting that the slaveholder was a cruel master,⁷¹⁹ Pliny worries that not even benevolent masters are safe, attributing the attack to slaves' intrinsic brutality.⁷²⁰ (That brutality characterized the institution seems not to have occurred to him.) Further, slaves who were too loyal to their masters might merit the ridicule of other slaves.⁷²¹

701. Cic. *Att.* 1.12.4. Naturally, the grief is nothing like what he later expresses over the death of his daughter, Tullia.

702. Statius *Silv.* 2.6 (encouraging the slaveholder to weep as much as he needs to, 2.6.12–14).

703. Pliny *Ep.* 8.16.3.

704. Pliny *Ep.* 8.16.1, 3–4. He paternalistically consoled himself that he was always good to his slaves, better than law required (8.16.1). Scholars have sometimes used him as an example of a caring slaveholder (Barrow, *Slavery*, 51–52).

705. In *y. Ber.* 2:7 (where R. Eliezer also insists against accepting condolences for slaves, comparing them to animals). Tabi practiced Judaism (*y. Sukkah* 2:1, §3).

706. Hock, "Ethnography," 114, cites Char. *Chaer.* 1.12.9; 2.1.2; 2.3.6; 2.6.1.

707. E.g., Val. Max. 2.5.3; 6.8; Appian *Hist. rom.* 8.3.17; Mart. *Epig.* 3.21; *Test. Ab.* 15:5 A. So also freedwomen (Suet. *Calig.* 16.4) and freedmen (Tac. *Hist.* 1.49). In one novel, a servant's murders are excused as loyalty to his master (see Hock, "Ethnography," 116, citing Char. *Chaer.* 3.7.2); in another, former servants who had become masters of an estate gladly handed it over to their former master when he passed through (Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 5.10).

708. E.g., Val. Max. 6.8.6; Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.4.26; Tac. *Hist.* 4.50. Slaves might give their lives to avenge their slaveholders (Val. Max. 3.3.ext. 7; Appian *Hist. rom.* 7.1.2; Suet. *Aug.* 16.3) or endure torture to protect the master (Val. Max. 6.8.1); in Tac. *Hist.* 4.59, slaves and freedpeople prevent their patron's suicide; in Tac. *Ann.* 13.44, a freedman confesses to his patron's crime to try to save his life.

709. Val. Max. 6.8.3–4; perhaps the freedman in Tac. *Ann.* 14.9.

710. Cic. *Mil.* 22.58.

711. Bradley, *Slaves*, 37. E.g., an ideal society included slaves' obedience (Pliny *Panegy.* 42.2).

712. In ancient Egypt, a slave brother rejoices over his sister's death for mistreating the mistress ("King Cheops and the Magicians" 12.8–28 [in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 23–24]).

713. P.Giss. 17, in Richards, *Letter Writing*, 13–14.

714. See Bradley, *Slaves*, 44–45.

715. See, e.g., Plut. *Sulla* 10.1; Hdn. 5.2.2; also freedpersons, e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 15.54–55.

716. See, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 19.12–14; Tac. *Ann.* 16.18; also freedpersons, e.g., 16.10.

717. Pliny *Ep.* 3.14.2.

718. Pliny *Ep.* 3.14.3. Only the guilty, most of whom were apprehended, were executed (3.14.4).

719. Pliny *Ep.* 3.14.1.

720. Pliny *Ep.* 3.14.5. In many letters, Pliny favors a more benevolent approach toward slaves than was dominant in his day; this passage in Pliny exposes a deeper level of anxiety.

721. Alciph. *Farm.* 23 (Lenaeus to Corydon), 3.26. Earlier slaves in a household might abuse newcomers (Tac. *Agr.* 31); seniority seems to have been one means of slave peers' establishing their own pecking order.

14. Slaves with High Status⁷²²

Urban household slaves were more apt to have better opportunities for social mobility than did most freeborn people who were poor.⁷²³ The lowest-ranking slaves in society, who constituted the majority, had little hope for advancement, but educated and skilled slaves had much more reason for hope.⁷²⁴ Slaves who managed their holders' businesses or estates usually had considerable freedom.⁷²⁵ Even in the republic, some slaves could become bankers, estate managers, and government officials.⁷²⁶

Education was often one means of advancement in status.⁷²⁷ Athenians erected a statue of Aesop, thereby, Phaedrus remarked, giving fame to a slave and showing that honor comes by merit, not by birth.⁷²⁸ Some ancients viewed highly educated servants as valuable dialogue companions⁷²⁹—the agenda normally being set, of course, by the slaveholder. Some philosophers were slaves,⁷³⁰ including the famous Stoic Epictetus before his freedom.⁷³¹ One slave teacher who rose to freedom and intellectual prominence accumulated a library of some thirty thousand volumes;⁷³² many renowned teachers, in fact, were freedmen.⁷³³ One skillful slave was freed to help his patron with rhetoric and later became a prominent teacher of rhetoric.⁷³⁴

Some people even voluntarily entered particular forms of slavery to improve their status or secure other benefits;⁷³⁵ this was especially the case if they could enter Caesar's household.⁷³⁶ Free women sometimes improved their status by marrying into imperial slavery.⁷³⁷ In one papyrus, a person proposes to go to Rome and become an imperial freedman to secure a government office.⁷³⁸

Some slaves of rulers could exercise considerable power.⁷³⁹ A slave of the imperial household could wield more power than free aristocrats;⁷⁴⁰ the emperor often used imperial slaves in accounting, assisting provincial officials, and civil administration.⁷⁴¹

722. Slavery itself represented a status rather than a class (Martin, "Slavery").

723. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 124; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 124; cf. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 20.

724. Martin, *Slavery*, 49. The divergence of ranks is frequently noted (e.g., Boer, *Morality*, 83). The hierarchy of slaves' roles in the American South (Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 149–50) was more difficult to ascend, more clustered toward the bottom, and without truly high-ranking or wealthy slaves.

725. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 119; cf. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 113. In such a setting, the state of being a fugitive slave, with little hope of income and status, would normally have seemed a poor alternative.

726. Dupont, *Life*, 56–57.

727. For highly educated slaves, see, e.g., Barrow, *Slavery*, 60–63; for slaves as teachers and readers, see, e.g., Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 31–32.

728. Phaedrus 2.9.1–4. Aesop had to use fables because, as a slave, he could not speak openly (3.prol. 33–40). In the tradition, Aesop proved wiser than the slaveholder (*Vit. Aes.* 33–55); historically, the same is likely true of Epictetus and many others.

729. Pliny *Ep.* 9.36.4.

730. E.g., Aul. Gel. 2.18; Diog. Laert. 6.2.74. Cf. also the former slave of Pythagoras who taught Pythagoreanism (Iamb. *V.P.* 30.173).

731. Fronto *Ad verum imp.* 1.1.5.

732. Suda, s.v. "Epaphroditos" (in Sherk, *Empire*, §178I, p. 238).

733. Suet. *Gramm.* 15–20; 23. When one was freeborn, this is noted (*Gramm.* 21; and this one became a slave).

734. Suet. *Rhet.* 3.

735. Winter, *Welfare*, 154–59. For slavery as a means to social mobility, see also Martin, *Slavery*, 30–42.

736. See, e.g., P.Oxy. 3312.99–100, in Horsley, *Documents*, 3:7–9, §1; cf. Judge, *Rank*, 20.

737. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 196. In 52 C.E., a law passed that free women marrying a slave without the slaveholder's knowledge would be reduced to slavery (or to freed status if the slaveholder knew; Tac. *Ann.* 12.53).

738. Weaver, "P. Oxy. 3312," suggests that the writer may be overly optimistic.

739. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.19.19; 4.7.23; inscriptions in Sherk, *Empire*, 89–90; Deissmann, *Light*, 325ff. passim; cf. Char. *Chaer.* 5.2.2; Martin, *Slavery*, 49.

740. E.g., Hdn. 1.12.3 (though this slave, Cleander, was later executed for treason, 1.13.4); cf. also Carcopino, *Life*, 62–63.

741. DeSilva, *Honor*, 192.

One slave of Claudius, who administered Hispania Citerior (Nearer Spain) for him, had a silver dish weighing five hundred pounds and eight more, each weighing half of that.⁷⁴² Dale Martin notes the power of one of Tiberius's slaves, a finance officer working for him in Gaul; among this slave's own household slaves traveling with him were a "buying agent; . . . treasurer; . . . physician; [two persons] in charge of silver; . . . in charge of wardrobe; two chamberlains; four attendants; and [two] cooks."⁷⁴³

Certainly, freedpersons exhibited significant social mobility.⁷⁴⁴ Banking tablets from Pompeii illustrate this point well: one imperial freedman lent ten thousand sesterces to a man of rank in a loan arranged by means of the free man's slave manager; the free man also borrowed three thousand sesterces more from this managerial slave himself.⁷⁴⁵ Imperial freedmen achieved the height of their power under Claudius and Nero.⁷⁴⁶ The Jewish king Agrippa also freed a slave of Caligula who had once shown him kindness, and made him master of his own estate.⁷⁴⁷ For readers who intuitively assume the forms of slavery practiced in the Americas, use of the same terminology to describe a different range of slavery in the Roman Empire can sometimes obscure the differences. At other times, of course, parallels are all too clear.

15. Slave Families

Slaveholders controlled slaves' marriage options. Centuries earlier, Xenophon felt that family life was beneficial for a good slave but simply made a bad slave more perverse; in any case, he recognized the expectation that slaves could not breed without the slaveholders' permission.⁷⁴⁸ Inscriptions suggest the difficulties slaves had in establishing their own families,⁷⁴⁹ especially if partners belonged to different households. Some groups of slaves had more opportunities for family life than did others, depending partly on their household, available partners, status differences, and the like.⁷⁵⁰ Breeding was apparently one of the reasons for purchasing female slaves.⁷⁵¹ Jewish people also knew that Gentile slaveholders, rather than the slaves themselves, had ultimate say in choosing slaves' mates.⁷⁵²

Roman law counted slaveborn children as illegitimate;⁷⁵³ a free person could not legally marry a slave, although Roman law did provide a legal category for this sort of union.⁷⁵⁴ A male slave could not charge his companion with adultery because their union

742. Pliny E. *N.H.* 33.52.145.

743. Martin, *Slavery*, 7 (citing *CIL* 6.5197). On prominent slaves and freedmen in powerful households, see also Harrison, *Authorities*, 21–22, suggesting that some believers in Rome probably belonged to these circles (Phil 4:22; Rom 16:11).

744. See, e.g., López Barja de Quiroga, "Mobility"; Jeffers, *World*, 232–33; extended comment on freedpersons at Acts 6:9.

745. Balch, "Families," 273.

746. Jeffers, *World*, 234; for imperial freedpersons of high office under Claudius, see Sherck, *Empire*, §47, pp. 89–90 (including *ILS* 1533, 1546, 1643, 1682, 2816). See comment on Pallas at Acts 23:24. Even in the late republic, a freedman of Sulla had a free hand to exploit the state (Cic. *Rosc. Amer.* 49.141). In that era, Cicero approved the promotion of trustworthy slaves but warned against entrusting public matters to them, lest it stir gossip that the householder was influenced by slaves (*Quint. fratr.* 1.1.6.17; 1.2.1.3).

747. Jos. *Ant.* 18.194.

748. Xen. *Oec.* 9.5 (LCL, 441).

749. Rawson, "Family," 24.

750. Bradley, *Slaves*, 47–80, esp. 79–80.

751. Gardner, *Women*, 206–9.

752. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 2:4; Sup. 3:2.

753. Gardner, *Women*, 143; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 123.

754. Treggiari, "Marriage and Family," 170. Martin, "Slave Families," 214, comments on these mixed households.

was not legal.⁷⁵⁵ But inscriptions show that slaves did in fact form unions essentially like marriages, despite the lack of legal recognition (*contubernium*, “cohabitation”).⁷⁵⁶ A number of inscriptions from Roman Asia reveal nuclear families,⁷⁵⁷ and some even extended families,⁷⁵⁸ among slaves. At least in larger households, most slaves probably became couples within the same household, but some did so with partners outside.⁷⁵⁹ Family life remained precarious until the entire family could achieve manumission.⁷⁶⁰

One of the greatest horrors of the slave trade was the involuntary rupture of family bonds when slaves were “sold off” or estates divided.⁷⁶¹ Of some sixty extant documents recording the sale of slaves in Egypt, not one male is recorded to have been sold with his wife or child; only rarely do we know of mothers being sold with their children.⁷⁶² For example, the texts reveal eleven girls under seventeen being sold; seven under thirteen; and a fourteen-year-old already now being sold for the fourth time; since they cannot all be orphans, even this limited evidence is suggestive.⁷⁶³

16. Women Slaves⁷⁶⁴

Because Rhoda was both a slave and a woman, comments here are particularly relevant to her case. That women slaves faced double prejudice⁷⁶⁵ seems likely from how frequently ancients paired wives and slaves as subordinates,⁷⁶⁶ including in their household codes.⁷⁶⁷ (Still, although wives were subordinate, they were not subordinate in the same way or to the same extent that slaves were.)⁷⁶⁸

755. Justin. *Cod.* 9.23 (in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 183, §193).

756. Buckland, *Roman Law*, 64; Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 193; Gardner, *Women*, 213–18; Martin, *Slavery*, 2–3; Jeffers, *World*, 228. Similarly, in the American South, slaves formed families, though not legally by U.S. law (Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 128).

757. Martin, “Slave Families,” 208.

758. *Ibid.*, 208–13.

759. *Ibid.*, 214–22.

760. Bradley, *Slaves*, 80.

761. See, e.g., Bradley, “Traffic”; Dixon, *Mother*, 17–18; Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 131. Earlier politicians might use their children’s marriages politically, even when this required breaking their existing marriages or engagements (Suet. *Jul.* 21; 27.1); but this does not match the scale of slave mating.

762. Finley, *Slavery*, 76. Conversely, many slaves were not sold but were retained in families for multiple generations or manumitted (Lewis, *Life*, 58).

763. Finley, *Slavery*, 76, also noting a study on slavery in the American South: if just 1.92 percent of slaves were sold each year, half of all slaves would be sold in a thirty-five-year lifespan, and the average slave would see 11.4 immediate family members sold. Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 5, 49–51, argue that the numbers were probably much lower than has often been supposed from the limited documents, but they are probably too optimistic. Certainly the slave narratives reveal that it was a persistent fear.

764. On women slaves, see Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 95–117 (ch. 5, “Female Slaves: Twice Vulnerable”); Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 196–98. Ironically, slave women field workers in the American South were closer in equality to their husbands than were white women in the same period (Sterling, *Sisters*, 37), but this was partly because they were equally subjected.

765. Women, slaves, and minors, as household dependents, often appear together (Hezser, “Impact,” 377–90, including Jos. *Ant.* 4.209, 219 [p. 384]; Hezser, *Slavery*, 69–82). Cf. the emphasis regarding racial and gender oppression in Grant, *Black Women’s Jesus*, e.g., 195–201. For some theological or biblical reflections focusing specifically on African-American women’s situation, see, e.g., Grant, “Black Woman”; Martin, “Interpretations”; Sanders, “Biblical Perspective”; Weems, “Reflections.”

766. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.15; Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 128–30, §§40–41D; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.24; Jos. *Ant.* 4.219; y. *Sukkah* 2:9; *Ter.* 8:1; Stern, “Aspects,” 628–29 (citing *m. Hag.* 1:1; *Sukkah* 2:8; *b. Hag.* 4a); Swidler, *Women*, 84, 117–18.

767. Arist. *Pol.* 1.1.6, 1252b; 1.2.1–2, 1253b; 1.5.3–4, 1259b; 3.4.4, 1278b; cf. Balch, “Household Codes,” 27; in Pauline codes, e.g., Jewett, *Male*, 138–41, 144, 148; Giles, *Woman*, 43, 46; Keener, *Paul*, 186–88, 207–9.

768. E.g., Arist. *Pol.* 1.5.3–11, 1259b–1260b; one view in Livy 34.7.13; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 38.15. Because barbarians fail to distinguish the householder’s relationship with his wife from his relationship with his slave, Aristotle opines, they are like slaves themselves (*Pol.* 1.1.5, 1252b).

Girls were not as economically valuable as boys in terms of diverse labor, but they could be used to produce more slaves and hence often warranted the investment of their rescue as foundlings and two years of subsequent nursing contracts.⁷⁶⁹ Women in households filled a wide range of functions.⁷⁷⁰ For example, slave women were often nurses.⁷⁷¹

Nevertheless, slave men seem to have outnumbered slave women, even in households ruled by women, perhaps because of the greater incidence of female child abandonment⁷⁷² (or the greater labor utility of males rescued from such abandonment). Such child abandonment would not, however, be relevant in Judea (see comment on Acts 7:19).

Women slaves were subject to abuse just as male slaves were.⁷⁷³ A new slave girl might be terrified by her slave tasks and a cruel mistress.⁷⁷⁴ In the late first century, a satirist mocked the cruel matron who would beat a poor slave woman because of one misplaced lock in the matron's hair.⁷⁷⁵ Nor did gender always protect women slaves from male masters' cruelty; in a familiar Greek tale, the hero Odysseus mercilessly hanged twelve women servants who had acted shamelessly.⁷⁷⁶ When reports of the early Christians made them seem not dangerous, Pliny resolved to secure the full truth by torturing two deaconesses, who were slave women.⁷⁷⁷ Some scholars estimate that more than half of slave women died by age thirty, most dying between twenty and twenty-five.⁷⁷⁸ But surviving epitaphs may overemphasize young deaths, and similarly low longevity figures obtain for free persons.

17. Sexual Abuse

Women were subject specifically to a form of abuse comparatively rarely employed on adult male slaves—namely, sexual abuse.⁷⁷⁹ That this was less common with male slaves (and less often reported when it happened) is to be expected given the society's sexual double standard for the slaveholders.⁷⁸⁰ When a male slave was known to be sleeping with the master's wife, this was regarded as an especially vile form of adultery.⁷⁸¹ A man who discovered his mother's love for a slave could kill her, and it was considered honorable for him to stop loving her.⁷⁸² A woman who had intercourse with someone else's

769. Saller, "Women," 203–4.

770. See esp. Treggiari, "Jobs for Women"; cf. also idem, "Jobs in Household."

771. E.g., Char. *Chaer.* 1.12.9; see discussion of nurses at Acts 7:21.

772. Osiek, "Female Slaves," 260–61.

773. *Ibid.*, 262.

774. Ap. Rhod. 4.35–39 (fictitious but realistic).

775. Mart. *Epig.* 2.66.1–8.

776. Hom. *Od.* 22.465–73. In an ancient Egyptian tale, a slave girl's brother beats her and celebrates her death because of her misbehavior toward the mistress ("King Cheops and the Magicians" 12.8–26 [in Simpson, *Literature of Egypt*, 23–24]).

777. Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.8.

778. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 194. Complications in childbearing may have been a major cause of early death.

779. See, e.g., Sen. E. *Controv.* 4.pref. 10; Arlandson, *Women*, 99–102; Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 192; Gardner, *Women*, 118, 221; Dupont, *Life*, 117–18; Dover, "Attitudes," 147–48; Osiek, "Female Slaves," 262–64; Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 103–5 (cf., more broadly, 95–117); Bradley, *Slaves*, 116–18; Keener, "Adultery," 12; Glancy, "Obstacles"; Hezser, *Slavery*, 179–201, esp. 191–94.

780. On the double standard allowing male but not female slaveholders to sleep with slaves, see Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 22 (though cases of women sleeping with slaves do appear, e.g., 44).

781. Lucian *Downward Journey* 11; *Sat.* 29; Tac. *Ann.* 14.60 (a false accusation); Iambl. (nov.) *Bab. St.* extract 2. Cf. also stories where the male slave rebuffs the mistress's advances, e.g., Gen 39:7–12; *Adulteress* (MS from 2 c.E. in *SPap* 3:350–61); Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 2.5; 3.12.

782. Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.25.610.

slave could be reduced to slavery.⁷⁸³ Slave boys were also the object of attention, but the vast majority of cases involved homosexual use,⁷⁸⁴ and so the slaves' sexual exploiters remained male in the overwhelming majority of reported cases. The Stoic philosopher Musonius challenged the double standard: men thought it acceptable to sleep with female slaves but would be scandalized by a free woman's sleeping with male slaves.⁷⁸⁵

Roman men's sleeping with their slave girls was common⁷⁸⁶ but became an object of crude humor.⁷⁸⁷ One could legally cohabit with a slave⁷⁸⁸ (though the offspring were not considered "legitimate" under Roman law);⁷⁸⁹ it was legal even if subject to ridicule.⁷⁹⁰ Sleeping with one's slave (whether male or female) in a dream was a good omen, according to one dream handbook, since slaves were one's possessions and this behavior portended prosperity and increase.⁷⁹¹ An agricultural specialist might seriously advise that an overseer be given a woman companion to keep him from the household women.⁷⁹² A man might prefer a freeborn woman, but if she was unavailable, then he might want a freedwoman; if she was unavailable, he might settle for a slave.⁷⁹³

Beautiful slaves brought higher prices on the slave market,⁷⁹⁴ and buyers might plan to have intercourse with them immediately.⁷⁹⁵ The offspring of such a union remained a slave.⁷⁹⁶ Rape of freeborn women was a crime; nothing was said of slaves.⁷⁹⁷ In the distorted androcentric perspective of most of our fictitious sources, the women apparently liked the attention⁷⁹⁸ and sometimes were happy for any partner available.⁷⁹⁹

Women captured in war were common sexual objects.⁸⁰⁰ Honorable was the man

783. Suet. *Vesp.* 11 (noting that the ruling's purpose was to decrease sexual sin).

784. Cf., e.g., Aeschines *Tim.* 16; Val. Max. 8.1.abs.12; Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 70; Hartmann, "Homosexuality," 470; esp. here Bradley, *Slaves*, 115. Solon's law prohibited this abuse of slave boys in classical Athens, but it was said that this was only to prevent the habit from spilling over to free youth (Aeschines *Tim.* 17). Slaves who loved free boys would be severely punished (*Tim.* 139).

785. Mus. Ruf. 12, p. 86.33–38. He disapproves of men sleeping with prostitutes and unmarried free persons (86.13–16) and also with his servant woman (86.14); sleeping with his servant is wrong (86.30–32; p. 88.4–5).

786. Hezser, "Impact," 377, even suggests that slave-holding married men may have had intercourse more often "with their female slaves than with their wives." Hezser notes (411) that they offered "a cheap alternative to prostitutes"; her observation that this must have annoyed wives (411) may be an understatement, though some wives seem to have adopted the expected posture of tolerance.

787. E.g., Mart. *Epig.* 1.84.1–5.

788. See Paulus *Sent.* 2.1–9 (in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 193, §196); Schieman, "Concubinatus," 682. Sex with another's slaves also was not illegal (Paulus *Sent.* 2.26.1–17, in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 182, §193), even if it was not highly viewed.

789. Treggiari, "Marriage," 391. Thus, in contrast to the patriarchal era, slave children could not compete as heirs (Hezser, "Impact," 412).

790. Justin. *Cod.* 9.25 (in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 184, §193). Josephus views passion for slaves as degrading (Hezser, "Impact," 415; idem, *Slavery*, 195–96); Romans, like Josephus, opposed marrying slaves ("Impact," 416; *Slavery*, 194–95).

791. Artem. *Oneir.* 1.78.

792. Colum. *Rust.* 1.8.5.

793. Mart. *Epig.* 3.33 (cf. 5.37).

794. Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 2.2. This remains true in sexual slavery today (see, e.g., Pierce, "Faith," 80).

795. As in Xen. Eph. *Anthia* 3.11.

796. E.g., Plato *Laws* 11.930DE. In Sen. E. *Controv.* 6.3, a father could, however, acknowledge, and hence legitimize, his child born through a slave girl; cf. *ILS* 7479 (Sherk, *Empire*, §178E, p. 237), where a man is buried with his son, "born a slave in the house."

797. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.52.116. A free woman raped by a tyrant might not be considered unchaste, because she was forced (Sen. E. *Controv.* 9.4.10).

798. Lower-class and slave women are easily won over by affection (Char. *Chaer.* 1.4.1–2). In Soph. *Ajax* 485–91, a woman captured in war wishes her captor well because she is his sexual partner.

799. E.g., Lucian *Lucius* 5, 8–11; Apul. *Metam.* 3.

800. Cf. also Deut 21:11. Priests could not marry those who had been captives or slaves, since they may have had sex with Gentiles (see Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.35; *Ant.* 13.292).

who refused to disgrace his captives.⁸⁰¹ One man made a widowed war captive his mistress and raised her son, but this hardly reveals him as a kind person; he had supported the decree to execute all the males of the town.⁸⁰² Despite apparent examples to the contrary,⁸⁰³ it was clear that some captive women resented their new bed partners.⁸⁰⁴ It was said that dignified Teuton women hanged themselves rather than allow themselves to be abused sexually.⁸⁰⁵ Sexual abuse extended beyond prisoners of war to all other slave women as well.

Later rabbis, who opposed sexual abuse of slave women, warned about the temptation they posed: to the early sage Hillel is attributed the warning, “The more female servants, the more sexual immorality.”⁸⁰⁶ Another sage warns that a man who lusts for female slaves will be ashamed in his own house,⁸⁰⁷ and a still earlier sage warns against sleeping with other men’s slave women.⁸⁰⁸ The many warnings against the practice suggest that it happened, though it was not approved as it was among Gentiles; a man impassioned with his slave had to first free her and then marry her.⁸⁰⁹ Although later Islamic slavery often included slave concubines,⁸¹⁰ Jewish and subsequently Christian sources condemned sexual abuse of slaves.⁸¹¹ The only way to eliminate it altogether, of course, would have been to eliminate slavery.

One might buy a slave’s freedom and marry her (possibly to his parents’ disdain).⁸¹² A Gentile patron might well later free his former slave mistress, and he could even pay her dowry when she married someone else.⁸¹³ It was perfectly legal to free a slave woman in order to marry her,⁸¹⁴ and it seems to have been often done.⁸¹⁵ As slave women grew older and less attractive to the patrons, they grew less “valuable” and hence perhaps could purchase their freedom at a lower cost.⁸¹⁶ Often the slaveholder

801. It was said that Alexander married Roxane rather than disgrace her sexually as a prisoner of war (Arrian *Alex.* 4.19.5).

802. Noted by Plut. *Alc.* 16.4–5.

803. Soph. *Ajax* 485–91, again.

804. A captive concubine could be suspected of murder, alongside a stepmother (Hermog. *Issues* 56.16–18).

805. Val. Max. 6.1.ext. 3.

806. *M. 'Ab.* 2:7 (although the comment may include the danger of their immorality with others, a concern also of Jewish fathers). A rabbinic parable tells of a king who warned his son not to touch the servant women; but the son disgraces himself thus anyway (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 20:6). A priest could not marry a freedwoman because her virginity was suspect (Cohen, *Law*, 147, citing *m. Qidd.* 4:1; *Yebam.* 6:5; *t. Qidd.* 5:3; see also *t. Hor.* 2:11; *y. Hor.* 3:5, §1). Ilan, *Women*, 206–7, notes the abuse and argues that the rabbis were protecting the man from temptation, not the slave woman.

807. *Sent. Syr. Men.* 347–53.

808. *Sir* 41:22.

809. Safrai, “Home,” 748–49 (contending, perhaps optimistically based on idealized sources, that Jewish women were not used as slaves and so the Gentile slave woman would have to be converted before the marriage). Technically, rabbis disapproved of his marrying her if he had intercourse with her before freeing her, but this would not invalidate the union (Cohen, *Law*, 149, citing *m. Yebam.* 2:8).

810. Gordon, *Slavery*, 43, 57, 79–104, esp. 79, 83. It is common to most slave societies. Fogel and Engerman, *Time*, 132, note that in the 1860 census, 39 percent of urban freedpersons and 20 percent of urban slaves were mulatto (counted as even one-eighth white ancestry), but only 9.9 percent among rural slaves; they also claim (133) that surveys and genetics suggest that less than 5 percent of fathers were white. This seems lower than expected, but in any case, one would expect the lower numbers among field slaves in rural areas, especially in the Deep South, where slaveholders had less personal contact with individual women slaves.

811. Gordon, *Slavery*, 83. Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 106–7, argue that the restriction was not complete.

812. Aelian *Farmers* 19 (Mormias to Chremes).

813. Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.4.24.

814. Gaius *Inst.* 1.19.

815. E.g., Jeffers, *World*, 239; Osiek, “Female Slaves,” 261.

816. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 195.

wished to take the freedwoman as a concubine⁸¹⁷ or marry her himself.⁸¹⁸ Some ancients condemned this outright as driven by passion.⁸¹⁹ If the man freed the woman for the purpose of marrying her, she could not legally refuse.⁸²⁰ Although a freedwoman married to her patron could divorce him, this did not grant her the freedom divorces normally conferred on wives.⁸²¹

Slaves did not always reciprocate affection, and this was true not only for prisoners of war. One writer seeks to entertain his audience by depicting a man who bought a woman slave to love her and make her his heir; she, however, kept mocking him, and so he threatened to teach her that he was also her master.⁸²² She responded that she would endure anything rather than have intercourse with him⁸²³ and would even kill herself, if need be, to evade his advances.⁸²⁴ An honorable freeborn slave could be presented as resisting a master's advances.⁸²⁵

Ancient men were not oblivious to the reality that wives sometimes grew jealous of slave women,⁸²⁶ a man who refused to sleep with a slave woman lest he anger his wife was honorable.⁸²⁷ But men might praise as honorable a wife who pretended not to notice and who even rewarded the slave with freedom and a marriage after her husband's death.⁸²⁸ It was nice, one man opined, when a wife appeared more beautiful than a slave, especially since the wife, unlike a slave, provided intercourse voluntarily.⁸²⁹ Some ancients found aging men particularly vulnerable to ridicule for their interest in young girls, slave or free.⁸³⁰

That a large number of women slaves in the empire were prostitutes⁸³¹ probably only reinforced the perspective that women slaves were sexually available.⁸³² In New Comedy, often a free man becomes impassioned for a slave, but she turns out to be freeborn, and her father, who had exposed her when he was poor, now provides a dowry for the couple to marry.⁸³³

As already noted, all Jewish (and, later, Christian) teaching opposed any sexual abuse of slaves. Because Mary's household is Jewish and seems to be headed by a believing widow,⁸³⁴ Luke's audience would not assume that Rhoda faced such dangers

817. Treggiari, "Marriage and Family," 169; Gardner, *Women*, 221.

818. Augustus's legislation allowed freeborn males to marry freedwomen, probably for demographic reasons (and perhaps more; cf. McGinn, "Missing Females").

819. *Jos. Ant.* 4.244–45 (thinking not of abuse of power over the slave but of breach of class distinctions).

820. Buckland, *Roman Law*, 88.

821. *Ibid.*, 117.

822. *Alciph. Farm.* 24 (Gemellus to Salaconis), 3.27.

823. *Alciph. Farm.* 25 (Salaconis to Gemellus), 3.28, ¶1.

824. *Alciph. Farm.* 25 (Salaconis to Gemellus), 3.28, ¶2.

825. E.g., *Ach. Tat.* 6.20; *Xen. Eph. Anthia* 2.4; 3.11 (cf. 4.5).

826. Cf., e.g., *Gen* 16:5. In *Ap. Rhod.* 1.609–19, the terrible women of Lemnos had slain all the men for taking slave-maids to bed instead of them. In *Babr.* 10.1–5, a married man sleeps regularly with a slave girl, who quarrels with her mistress.

827. *Hom. Od.* 1.428–33. Cato slept with a slave after his wife's death until his children heard and were displeased; so he took another free wife (*Plut. M. Cato* 24.1–3).

828. *Val. Max.* 6.7.1. Questions of matronly honor aside, we might guess that the widow's purpose was wanting the slave out of her house. Plutarch also advised the wife to look the other way if necessary (*Friedländer, Life*, 1:243). A wife might jest that a husband should have sex with a slave woman (*Lysias Or.* 1.12 [*On the Murder of Eratosthenes*], though the wife turns out to be adulterous in this story).

829. *Xen. Oec.* 10.12.

830. *Alciph. Farm.* 7 (Phoebianē to Anicetus), 1.28; 31 (Anthylla to Coriscus), 3.33; cf. also *Alciph. Court.* 17 (Leontium to Lamia), 2.2.

831. E.g., *Mart. Epig.* 9.6.7; 9.8; *Apul. Metam.* 7.9; *'Abot R. Nat.* 8 A. See further, e.g., Hezser, *Slavery*, 179–82; Keener, "Adultery," 11–12.

832. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 147.

833. Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 139.

834. Mark also appears to share his mother's faith in this period (*Acts* 12:25).

(perhaps in contrast to the servant in Acts 16:16–19, for which text this background may be relevant).

18. Philosophers and Others

Some ancients insisted that they needed no slaves, claiming that they worked hard and lived simply;⁸³⁵ others, especially in the more agrarian republic, worked alongside slaves in the field.⁸³⁶ Such views were exceptional in this period but are presented as honorable. Roles between slaves and slaveholders were reversed at the Roman festival of Saturnalia,⁸³⁷ but Saturnalia was playful and boded no long-term freedoms.⁸³⁸

Some aristocrats also proved more sympathetic to slaves than did others.⁸³⁹ Pliny, in a period when tyranny had receded and mores were becoming less stern, defended slaves' freedom⁸⁴⁰ and even survival⁸⁴¹ in various cases. He is particularly remembered for interceding on behalf of a freedman, seeking to reconcile him to his patron.⁸⁴²

More striking are the views of some philosophers.⁸⁴³ Most recognized slavery as an "accident," not a result of one's character.⁸⁴⁴ Some ancients who were philosophically minded thought that people were better off without, or at least with fewer, slaves.⁸⁴⁵ Early Cynics and Stoics even challenged social values to the extent that many scholars believe that they wanted to do away with slavery;⁸⁴⁶ they almost certainly believed that it was against nature,⁸⁴⁷ which Aristotle construed as an argument for slavery's abolition.⁸⁴⁸ As Stoics became guardians of society's values instead of its challengers, however, they moved away from such radicalism; the concern was no longer whether slaveholding per se was just but simply that slaves should be treated justly.⁸⁴⁹

835. Philost. *Hrk.* 33.44.

836. Plut. *M. Cato* 3.2.

837. Lucian *Sat.* 2, 13, 17; cf. Leach, "Essays," 111. Luke 12:37 depicts a reversal of roles that would fit Saturnalia (but more likely bursts the bounds of parabolic realism to depict Jesus's striking service).

838. See Harrill, "Paul and Slavery," 594. Since slaves outnumbered slaveholders in wealthy households, implementation would also be at best partial (cf. Lucian *Sat.* 22); e.g., how often can a rich man's friends aid him waiting on slaves (*Sat.* 18) when his peers would have slaves of their own?

839. Cic. *Fam.* 13.23.1–2 writes a letter of recommendation on behalf of another wealthy person's freedman.

840. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 4.10.1–2; cf. 10.31.2–3.

841. Pliny *Ep.* 8.14.12; 10.29.2.

842. Pliny *Ep.* 9.21.1–3. His intercession proved successful (9.24). New Testament commentators often cite this example (e.g., Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 318; Martin, *Colossians*, 146; Lohse, *Colossians*, 196).

843. See esp. Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery*; idem, "Stoics and Slavery." Aristotle, by contrast, supported the institution of slavery (Deming, "Indifferent Things," 393; Kelly, *Peter*, 116).

844. E.g., Lucret. *Nat.* 1.455–58; cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.23.1; Cic. *Inv.* 1.25.35. That it could affect character may have constituted a different sort of question.

845. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 10.9–13; 13.35.

846. Grant, "Economic Background," 105. Deming, "Indifferent Things," 393, doubts that Stoics ever rejected slavery per se.

847. Erskine, *Stoa*, 46 (contending that Philo *Spec. Laws* 2.69 [SVF 3.352] reflects Chrysippus); cf. *Stoa*, 61; certainly the view in Heracl. *Ep.* 9; cf. Epict. *Diatr.* 1.13.4. Ironically, Chrysippus apparently approved flogging as a discipline for boys (Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.13). Stowers, "Resemble Philosophy?," 94, notes that Zeno abolished slavery, along with marriage (because of its hierarchical application; see also Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 76–77).

848. Arist. *Pol.* 1.2.3, 1253b (Aristotle being hostile to this position). This position was eventually watered down, so that Roman law acknowledged that slavery was against nature, without thereby abolishing slavery (Justin. *Inst.* 1.3.2; 1.5.intro.). Aristotle himself believed that nature supported slavery (*Pol.* 1.2.8, 1254a) because it subordinated the inferior to the superior (1.2.12, 1254b), and that such subordination was just (3.5.8–9, 1280a).

849. Erskine, *Stoa*, 48, 181; cf. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 77; for Stoics on slavery, see Fitzgerald, "Slaves," 154–62. On just treatment, see Lutz, "Musonius," 29–30 (citing Mus. Ruf. 12.86.29–32); cf. Dio Chrys. frg. 5 (Stob. *Flor.* 4, 19.46 [Hense, 430]; 62.46 [Meineke]). Usually without drawing a connection with Stoicism, many scholars suggest a similar move away from egalitarian radicalism in early Christianity

Despite Seneca's view that virtue is rarely found in slaves, he argues that they are human beings and equals in many respects.⁸⁵⁰ Slaves are fellow human beings, who equally breathe, live, and die.⁸⁵¹ One should be kind to slaves and converse with them on friendly terms;⁸⁵² he argues for loving, benevolent, and gentle treatment of slaves.⁸⁵³ He and some other philosophers contended that there was nothing wrong with eating with slaves, contrary to standard custom.⁸⁵⁴ But Seneca's agenda was the just treatment of slaves, not the abolition of slavery.⁸⁵⁵

Likewise, when a Stoic became emperor, he praised policy based on the "equality" of all;⁸⁵⁶ he did not, however, try to liberate slaves.⁸⁵⁷ Stoicism had become too mainstream, co-opted by society's values. Although many philosophers taught and practiced some egalitarianism (with Epicureans doing so most dramatically), few philosophers of this period were willing to consider abolishing hierarchical roles.⁸⁵⁸ Nevertheless, many philosophers' emphasis on treating slaves justly⁸⁵⁹ probably exercised a restraining influence on some slaveholders who heeded them.

19. Ancient Abolitionists?

Luke includes some passages with slave images that would be unusual and striking in his day,⁸⁶⁰ as well as others reflecting the expectations of his culture. Nevertheless, we should not expect the issue of abolition to come up explicitly in Luke or the earliest Christian sources, since it was barely an issue of discussion in that era.⁸⁶¹ Greek and Roman writers of this period did not attack slavery.⁸⁶² A culture with no slaves was considered unusual and noteworthy.⁸⁶³ Freed slaves could find it difficult to earn a livelihood unless they had previously acquired marketable skills.⁸⁶⁴

(cf., e.g., Beavis, "Origins"; Thurston, *Widows*, 18–19); I believe that even *1 Clement* was less restrictive than later sources (Keener, "Woman," 1211–12).

850. Cf. Sevenster, *Seneca*, 185–89. Further, a pious soul could enter a slave as easily as a knight (Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 32.11).

851. Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 47.10.

852. Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 47.13. One should keep in mind that one may have a master someday (47.11).

853. Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 47.18–19; cf. 47.4–5; *Clem.* 1.18.1; 1.26.1. Cruel masters are loathed (*Clem.* 1.18.3).

854. Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 47.2–3; Heracl. *Ep.* 9.

855. See Watts, "Seneca on Slavery."

856. Marc. Aur. 1.14; cf. 1.16.7.

857. Even the early Stoic Zeno himself reportedly held slaves and beat one (Diog. Laert. 7.1.23).

858. Meeks, *Moral World*, 60. Balch, "Household Codes," 31, observes that "Roman Stoics were egalitarian in theory but Aristotelian in practice." Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 78, suggests that the only known attempt to put Stoic communal values into practice in genuine communities was Paul's own.

859. Also, e.g., Hierocles *Love* 4.27.20 (in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 94); Epict. *Diatr.* 1.13.2; Porph. *Marc.* 35.525–29; Epicurus in Diog. Laert. 10.1.9; 10.118.

860. Particularly notable is that in Luke 12:37 (mentioned briefly above), the divine master serves the servants (Buckwalter, "Saviour," 121).

861. Cf. Martin, *Slavery*, 42; Bartchy, *Slavery*, 63–67; Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 323. That Scripture provided ready principles for the abolitionist cause is clear from history (e.g., Sunderland, *Manual*; idem, *Testimony*; cf. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 103–9, 122–24; Noll, *History*, 161); for Pauline readings both for and against slavery, see, e.g., Callahan, "Witness"; Horsley, "Paul and Slavery"; Martin, "Language"; Patterson, "Slavery"; Smith, "Back Together"; Still, "Slavery." Some Christians in the patristic era simply advised benevolent treatment of slaves (Longenecker, *Social Ethics*, 63–64, noting, e.g., Augustine; Rupprecht, "Attitudes," 261–77, esp. 277), but others did argue for their emancipation (Longenecker, *Social Ethics*, 65, citing Chrys. *Hom.* 1 *Cor.* 40, on 1 *Cor.* 10; Balch, "Families," 272, citing Greg. Nyssa *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* 4, on 2:7; Latourette, *First Five Centuries*, 262–63, citing *Apost. Const.* 4.9). Some sold themselves into slavery to help others (1 *Clem.* 55.2); on later Christian abolitionism, see, e.g., Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 33–41, and sources cited there.

862. Jeffers, *World*, 235.

863. Arrian *Ind.* 10.8, on reports of India.

864. Cf. Jeffers, *World*, 235. Those with such skills generally retained a more secure economic situation as their patron's slaves or freedpersons.

Slaves themselves might purchase slaves,⁸⁶⁵ as might freedpersons;⁸⁶⁶ slaves often sought their own freedom but not the wholesale end of slavery. Someone might promise freedom to slaves to maintain his power,⁸⁶⁷ but again, slaves' incentive lay in their own liberation, not in the abolition of the institution of slavery per se. Likewise, a massive slave revolt might free and enlist other slaves to overthrow their Roman oppressors, but this was to guarantee their movement's victory in the war, not to abolish slavery universally or permanently.⁸⁶⁸ Those who spoke of a totally egalitarian world treated it as unattainable and utopian.⁸⁶⁹

Slaves had revolted on various occasions during the republic,⁸⁷⁰ especially because of severe abuses,⁸⁷¹ and the memory helped shape Roman fears. Spartacus the gladiator led a particularly notorious slave revolt,⁸⁷² joined also by the Gauls.⁸⁷³ When Cicero wants to revile Mark Antony, he calls him "an assassin, a brigand, a Spartacus."⁸⁷⁴ Likewise, Herdonius summoned slaves in Rome to freedom,⁸⁷⁵ but he was killed.⁸⁷⁶ When slaves sought to revolt by setting fire to homes and then seizing the Capitol,⁸⁷⁷ it was said that Jupiter punished their evil plans, whereas the slaves who betrayed (and so foiled) the plot were rewarded with money and freedom.⁸⁷⁸ Roman law mandated the death of any slaves found guilty of plotting revolt.⁸⁷⁹

Ultimately, none of the Roman slave wars was successful in freeing the slaves.⁸⁸⁰ Abolition by force came closer to destroying the system than anything else, but failed; slavery's economic inconsequence had more to do with its decline in late antiquity.⁸⁸¹

865. E.g., Plut. *M. Cato* 21.7; Martin, *Slavery*, 42. Occasionally this happened even in the American South (Koger, *Slaveowners*).

866. E.g., *ILS* 7503 (Sherk, *Empire*, §173, p. 229). Occasionally this happened even in the American South (Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 141).

867. Cic. *Att.* 4.3. Revolting soldiers might also liberate those in slave prisons to join them (Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.1.1). Earlier a Spartan allegedly conspired with the Helots to revolt, so that they could gain freedom and he could gain power (Thucyd. 1.132.4).

868. Bradley, *Slaves*, 145.

869. Harrill, "Paul and Slavery," 594 (citing Lucian *Hermot.* 24).

870. E.g., Diod. Sic. 34/35.2.5–23 (the leader rotting in prison, as he was said to deserve, 34/35.2.22–23); 34/35.2.24–48; 36.4.1–36.11.3 (lasting four years and culminating in the death of the slave rebels, 36.11.3); Livy 32.26.4–8; 39.29.8; Val. Max. 4.3.10; 6.9.8 (along with pirates). During the empire, see Tac. *Ann.* 3.43; 4.24. On ancient slave revolts generally, see now especially Urbainczyk, *Revolts*. Other forms of slave resistance were probably more common than our sources betray, if we may reason from more recent slavery analogies (Callahan and Horsley, "Resistance").

871. On the abuses, see, e.g., Diod. Sic. 34/35.2.32–33, 37 (an exceptionally kind slaveholder receiving mercy from them in 34/35.2.39). This probably constituted a factor in more humane treatment during the empire.

872. Vell. Patern. 2.30.5; Appian *Bell. civ.* 1.14.116–20 (joined by slaves, 1.14.117; death of Spartacus, 1.14.120). Spartacus was skillful and strategic (Fronto *Ad verum imp.* 2.1.17).

873. Appian *Hist. rom.* 12.16.109. Slave revolts in the empire benefited Rome's enemies; thus Jugurtha tried to induce Rome's slaves to revolt (Sallust *Jug.* 66.1).

874. Cic. *Phil.* 4.6.15 (LCL, 15a:249).

875. Livy 3.15.9.

876. Livy 3.18.10.

877. Livy 4.45.1.

878. Livy 4.45.2. Other slaves betraying slave revolts (and hence foiling them, 32.26.9) were also rewarded with money and freedom (32.26.14).

879. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.5.10.

880. Finley, *Slavery*, 114–15, contending that only Toussaint's later revolt in Haiti was successful. There have, however, been other successful large-scale slave revolts in history (e.g., the Mamelukes in Egypt; African slaves in the Baghdad caliphate's salt mines; Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 56–57).

881. So Finley, *Slavery*, 123–49, downplaying ideological factors such as Christian and Stoic teaching. His economic evidence appears ambiguous to me (he himself says that more work needs to be done); it is possible that Christian and Stoic teaching may have contributed to a climate that limited abuses of slavery and hence helped make it less profitable, as other factors had reduced its severity in the early empire (cf. Jeffers, *World*, 235–36).

As noted above, slaves' interest was in their own freedom, not in the institution itself; this was the objective of the slave wars as well.⁸⁸²

20. Escaped Slaves

Virtually no one, including the slaves themselves, sought to free all slaves, but individual slaves sought freedom (see comment on Acts 6:9), and not always through legally accepted channels. Everyone recognized that all other factors being equal, the state of freedom was preferable to being a slave;⁸⁸³ thus, not surprisingly, some slaves fled their captivity.⁸⁸⁴ Slaves might flee because of slaveholders' cruelty or other reasons.⁸⁸⁵ Slaveholders generally despised them.⁸⁸⁶

Catching runaway slaves became a familiar topic, even in jests.⁸⁸⁷ Their names were announced publicly to aid their capture,⁸⁸⁸ and members of the slaveholding class would write letters and supply other help to enable a peer to recover a runaway slave.⁸⁸⁹ During the empire, professional slave catchers checked inns, slave dealers, and elsewhere;⁸⁹⁰ at least in a later period, the government might participate in seeking the capture of runaways.⁸⁹¹ Some ancients believed that vestal virgins had the power to magically detain runaway slaves;⁸⁹² some people may have also invoked curses against runaway slaves.⁸⁹³

In one story, Diogenes the Cynic reproves a man looking for his runaway slave; since the man now considers the slave a bad slave, why would he be pursuing the slave to obtain him back?⁸⁹⁴ The penalty for dealing in fugitive slaves, a fairly minor crime, remained a fine.⁸⁹⁵ The penalties for runaway slaves depended on the slaveholder,⁸⁹⁶ but it was generally in the slaveholder's interests not to render the slave unfit for further service. The slaveholder suffered loss, in any case; sales contracts often addressed a slave's practice of running away, and apprehended runaways sold for lower prices.⁸⁹⁷

882. The nearest possible exception of which I am currently aware may appear in Dio Cass. 77.10.7: escaped slaves desiring to stop brigandage should liberate their slaves (Toner, *Culture*, 172).

883. E.g., Xen. *Symp.* 4.29.

884. See, e.g., Bradley, *Slaves*, 44.

885. Llewelyn, *Documents*, 8:36, §3.

886. Cic. *Deiot.* 1.3.

887. Lucian *Phil. Sale* 27. Finley, *Slavery*, 111, also notes that the topic was frequent in ancient literature.

888. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 66.2.

889. Cic. *Quint. fratr.* 1.2.4.14; Plut. *Alex.* 42.1.

890. Finley, *Slavery*, 112.

891. P.Oxy. 51.3616 (probably third century C.E.; Llewelyn, *Documents*, 8:9–46, §3); P.Oxy. 5.3617 (third century C.E.). Apparently, extradition of runaway slaves is practiced already in Livy 41.23.1–5. Earlier, in the Ptolemaic period, see, e.g., *UPZ* 1.121 (= P.Paris 10); but while officials posted notices, the owner probably had to track down runaways except when the officials might wish to grant a favor to a prominent owner (Llewelyn, *Documents*, 8:19–26, §3). Also, even in Roman Egypt (8:26–36, §3; P.Oxy. 12.1422; P.Panop. Beatty 1.149–52), when the state was involved in apprehending slaves (*Documents*, 8:26–31), it was probably usually unsuccessful, as owners usually acted on their own (8:32–34).

892. Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.3.13.

893. Possibly SB 14.12184, in Llewelyn, *Documents*, 8:4–8, §2.

894. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 10.2–5.

895. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 34. Stealing a slave counted as theft rather than the harsher offense of kidnapping (32). It was illegal to encourage a slave to run away or to harbor a runaway (Llewelyn, *Documents*, 6:56, §7).

896. Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.13, presumably reflecting one of the more benevolent views of his era, has an escaped slave put in chains to work; but if the slave returns willingly, he is beaten to teach him a lesson and then treated as before. Slaves suspected of seeking to escape were sometimes chained (Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 131; Finley, *Slavery*, 111).

897. Llewelyn, *Documents*, 6:57, §7, citing P.Turner 22. The cost of finding a slave could also be substantial (*Documents*, 6:57, §7, citing P.Cair.Zen. 59015 verso, line 5).

Nevertheless, slaves caught trying to escape to barbarian peoples were dealt with harshly; they might have a foot amputated or be consigned to the mines.⁸⁹⁸ Some scholars estimate that fewer than half of runaways were ever apprehended.⁸⁹⁹

Some slaves apparently stole money to aid in their escape, and unaccustomed to handling money, some were thought to spend it lavishly.⁹⁰⁰ A runaway slave meeting a friend of the slaveholder in another city might pretend to have been freed; if the ruse failed, the slave would be in serious trouble.⁹⁰¹ Some temples, like that of the Ephesian Artemis (see comment on Acts 19:29), provided refuge even to escaped slaves.⁹⁰² Biblical law mandated giving refuge to an escaped slave (Deut 23:15–16),⁹⁰³ but Josephus brings it into line with Roman law instead, urging that runaways be punished even if the masters are cruel (*War* 3.373).⁹⁰⁴

Trusted slaves in higher positions were given relative freedom and often traveled on their slaveholders' business.⁹⁰⁵ Such slaves had little incentive to become hunted refugees, but some did occasionally flee. Flight was rare enough that it probably proves irrelevant to the slaves mentioned in Acts.

21. Judean Slavery

Much of our evidence above derives from Roman or sometimes Greek slavery. Although this provides a broader context in which to read urban Mediterranean slave customs, it does not give us the particulars of this case. Rhoda was a household slave working for a woman; this narrows the range of abuses that she would have likely faced.⁹⁰⁶ Additionally, the household was Jewish, further constricting the possibilities.⁹⁰⁷ Catherine Hezser notes the hardships of slaves but also contends that for most urban domestic slaves (the majority of Judean slaves), “in a number of respects the master-slave relationship resembled the wife-husband, child-father, and student-teacher relationships,” taking note of ties of affection.⁹⁰⁸ Slave girls sometimes became their mistresses' confidantes.⁹⁰⁹

Judea had never used agrarian slaves on a large scale,⁹¹⁰ but a few slaves⁹¹¹ were em-

898. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 35. A runaway slave might even face death if working for Rome's enemies (Polyb. 1.69.4–5). Occasionally a runaway might prefer suicide to recapture (Barrow, *Slavery*, 55).

899. Toner, *Culture*, 49, although his estimates are somewhat precariously extrapolated from oracular responses.

900. Char. *Chaer.* 4.5.5.

901. Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.2.4.14.

902. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.33.85.

903. In contrast to ancient Near Eastern collections (Eshn. 49–50; Hamm. 15–16).

904. Jewish sources also warned that a slave left too idle might acquire unhelpful ideas of freedom (Sir 33:26).

905. E.g., Cic. *Fam.* 13.45.1; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 40, 113; Stambaugh, *City*, 149.

906. Cf. Judith freeing her maid in Jdt 16:23 (and their earlier, sometimes dangerous, activity together in 8:10, 33; 10:2, 5, 10, 17; 12:15, 19; 13:3, 9). On possible bonding at times between persecuted Christians who were women slaveholders and women slaves in the same situation, cf. Osiek and MacDonald, *Place*, 153–54 (noting accounts in Euseb. *H.E.* 5.1.17 and *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas* ch. 20).

907. On Palestinian Jewish household slavery, see esp. Hezser, “Impact”; idem, *Slavery*, 123–48.

908. Hezser, “Impact,” 375, noting that “mutual ties of dependency . . . counteracted the basic powerlessness of slaves.”

909. *Ibid.*, 391.

910. Judeans were, however, well aware of Gentile exploitation of large-scale slavery for farms, mines, etc. (see Wright, “*Ebed/Doulos*”).

911. Usually between one and four (Goodman, *State*, 37, cites *m. Ketub.* 5:5); cf. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 320; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 114–15. The Talmud presupposes at least one slave per family (Stern, “Aspects,” 627), but this halakah is from the perspective of a more privileged class than peasants. The most powerful priestly families had large numbers of slaves (e.g., John 18:18; Jos. *Ant.* 20.181, 206–7), but these families constituted a small minority.

ployed in households⁹¹² for both field work⁹¹³ and domestic chores.⁹¹⁴ This setting brought slaves and slaveholders into close contact, and there is little evidence that relations were strained or threatening in the manner often depicted in elite Roman households.⁹¹⁵

Slaves were, however, sometimes susceptible to beatings (though the evidence from this period is not as abundant as in Gentile households),⁹¹⁶ as were children.⁹¹⁷ Many Jews also looked down on them, in a manner analogous to views about them among Gentiles;⁹¹⁸ rabbis who formulated law viewed them as property, again like Roman jurists.⁹¹⁹ Slaves were “dangerous, greedy, dishonest, lazy”;⁹²⁰ they were associated with theft,⁹²¹ ought not be believed,⁹²² and were arrogant.⁹²³

Conversely, one should not mistreat good servants but should love them as oneself and ultimately grant them liberty.⁹²⁴ One should even serve the servant, in a sense,⁹²⁵ and treat the servant as oneself, in a sense.⁹²⁶ Many Jewish sources insist on treating slaves kindly;⁹²⁷ halakah reflects some ambivalence but appeals to a higher ideal than some current practices.⁹²⁸

Individuals may have chosen whether to follow the former, harsher disciplinary approach or the latter, more benevolent approach. On the whole, Jewish law encouraged the more benevolent approach, at least toward Jewish slaves,⁹²⁹ one later saying was that whoever buys a Jewish slave buys a master.⁹³⁰ Following biblical law, rabbis

912. Goodman, *State*, 37 (citing, e.g., *Did.* 4.10; *m. B. Meši'a* 7:6). Most slaves with Jewish holders were domestic slaves (Hezser, “Impact,” 375; González Echegaray, “Esclavos”).

913. Goodman, *State*, 37, citing *Sipre Deut.* 308, p. 74; Luke 17:7.

914. Goodman, *State*, 37, citing Luke 17:7; *Md Rashbi Bo* p. 38, 11.12–13. Rabbinic sources are later, but they seem to have fairly close parallels in Philo (Belkin, *Philo*, 89–103, esp. 89–97). Fiensy, “Composition,” 224, argues that most slaves in Jerusalem did domestic work in wealthy households.

915. Goodman, *State*, 38. Josephus reports that a thief who could not repay what he stole would become slave to the victim (Cohen, *Law*, 163); such a relationship might not begin with much trust. Jews could be enslaved for theft or debt (Fiensy, “Composition,” 224).

916. E.g., Prov 29:19; Sir 33:25; 42:5; Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.142; *Deut. Rab.* 3:2; cf. Moore, *Judaism*, 2:137; Thoma, “Death Penalty”; perhaps Philo *Alleg. Interp.* 3.201; *Cher.* 80–81.

917. Prov 13:24; 23:13; 29:15; Sir 30:13; 42:5; cf. *Ahiq.* 2.23; Syriac *Ahiq.* 2.22; Ethiopian *Ahiq.* 10; Elephantine *Ahiq.* 4.14; Philo *Worse* 49; *Jos.* 74; *Spec. Laws* 2.232; by teachers, *Worse* 145.

918. See, e.g., *Sipre Num.* 39.6.1; *b. Menah.* 43b–44a (though, on the other side, see *Exod. Rab.* 21 in Montefiore, “Spirit of Judaism,” 76); see esp. Hezser, “Impact,” 391–92, 397–98. In Tobit, Susanna, and Judith, slave women function more as stage props than as sentient characters (see Glancy, “Dialectic,” also noting some abuse); the elite expected their characters to have servants, and even read this into some biblical narratives (e.g., 4QEx^b, adding to Exod 2:3b; see Rofé, “Slave-Girl”).

919. E.g., *y. Ber.* 2:7.

920. Hezser, “Impact,” 391. She compares *m. 'Ab.* 2:7 with its probable source in a Roman proverb: “One had as many enemies as one had slaves” (Sextus Pompeius Festus *De verborum significatu* 314L; Sen. *Y. Ep.* 47.5; Macrobius *Sat.* 1.11.13). Gentile comedy’s “image of the clever, scheming slave” appears in *Test. Gad* 4:4; *Jos. Ant.* 17.55–56 (Hezser, “Impact,” 397). Slaves could be bribed financially to work against masters (*Jos. Ant.* 17.55–56, 141; Hezser, “Impact,” 397–98).

921. Hezser, “Impact,” 392, citing *t. B. Qam.* 11:4. *Gen. Rab.* 86:3 includes theft, unchastity, and other details.

922. Hezser, “Impact,” 392, citing *y. Hor.* 3:5, 48b.

923. Hezser, “Impact,” 392, citing *y. Qidd.* 4:14, 66b.

924. Sir 7:18, 20–21; 10:25; cf. *Jdt* 16:23. Similar advice is given for animals (Sir 7:22) and children (7:23). For Akiba’s views for human equality for slaves, see Finkelstein, *Akiba*, 191–94.

925. Sir 10:25; cf. Eph 6:9 (in the context of 6:5).

926. Sir 33:31.

927. Hezser, “Impact,” 393, cites Ps.-Phoc. 223–27; Sir 7:20–21; Philo *Spec. Laws* 2.83; *Sipra Behar* pq. 7:2, 80a. Many Roman sources said the same (“Impact,” 392).

928. Hezser, “Impact,” 394, notes that masters were not considered obligated to feed their slaves (*m. Git.* 1:6) but were to do so nonetheless (*y. Ketub.* 5:5, 30a). Masters apparently often gave slaves unnecessary work, but *Sipra Behar par.* 6.2–3 argues against doing this.

929. See Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 312ff.

930. *Ibid.*, 316, cites *b. Qidd.* 20a; 22a (and interprets this saying in light of restrictions on abuse); also Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 147. Add to these *b. 'Arak.* 30b.

also forbade killing or maiming Gentile slaves.⁹³¹ Rabbis also apparently recognized the equality of all before God.⁹³²

Some scholars argue that there were no Jewish female servants in this period, only Gentiles;⁹³³ although there were some (a minority) of Jewish slaves in this period,⁹³⁴ Gentile slaves were apparently common among the Jewish aristocrats.⁹³⁵ Yet some sources suggest that Gentile slaves had to be circumcised (if male) and converted to Judaism;⁹³⁶ because this is a natural reading of the law (Gen 17:12–13, 23, 27; Exod 12:44), it was probably widely followed regardless of sectarian differences. Since some later rabbis concluded that a slave converting to Judaism had to be freed, rabbis eventually found a way around this emancipation.⁹³⁷ It is doubtful, however, that most Judean slaveholders in this period exercised such scruples. Strict pietists opposed the sale of slaves to Gentiles once they had been brought into the covenant of Israel.⁹³⁸ Luke's audience would not have known the scruples of Judean practice, and if Rhoda was a Gentile at this point in the narrative, Luke might well have found this datum useful to mention. If, however, she was a proselyte, Luke might well not mention it, since his narrative has already moved beyond the significance of proselytes (cf. Acts 6:5) to Gentiles.

Sexual harassment was forbidden;⁹³⁹ Josephus disapproves also of marrying slaves, though he does not portray it as forbidden.⁹⁴⁰ That harassment sometimes happened is likely,⁹⁴¹ but it would have happened less frequently than in Greek and Roman settings, where social restrictions and stigmas were much less.

One Judean sect that held no slaves was the Essenes.⁹⁴² Because the Essenes avoided private property altogether (see discussion at Acts 2:44–45),⁹⁴³ they could not have held slaves as property unless they were communally owned. Josephus also claims that the Essenes avoided slaveholding because it constituted a temptation to act unjustly.⁹⁴⁴ Josephus and Philo present the Essenes as a radical utopian (or anti-utopian) philosophic sect (see comment on Acts 2:44–45); the Essenes' approach would have been extremely rare, and Josephus's estimates of four thousand members altogether

931. Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 148, notes that the penalty for killing a slave was death (*Mek.* on Exod 21:23; cf. Exod 21:20) and that a slave, if physically damaged, had to be freed (Exod 21:26–27; *b. Qidd.* 24a, bar.); cf. Stern, "Aspects," 629. This differs from the ancient Near Eastern setting of Israel's laws (Hamm. 199, 213–14, 219–20) and from Gentile customs noted above. On the whole, though, Jewish slaveholders' Gentile slaves were in a much worse social position than Jewish ones (Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 346–51).

932. *T. Bik.* 2:10. Certainly God was the master of all (*Test. Jos.* 1:5; *Lev. Rab.* 6:3; *Num. Rab.* 13:2). But "equality" was probably expressed primarily in benevolent treatment (cf. Philo *Decal.* 167).

933. Safrai, "Home," 748. When Romans enslaved Jews, Roman Jews apparently bought their freedom (Stambaugh, *City*, 95, citing Philo *Embassy* 155). We read of Jewish slaves in Ptolemaic Egypt (probably *CPJ* 1:125–27, §4, though some Egyptians were also circumcised).

934. See Goodman, *State*, 38.

935. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 345.

936. Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 148, citing *b. Yebam.* 47b; Falk, "Law," 509; Stern, "Aspects," 628. In later sources, they were quickly and forcibly converted to prevent them from claiming emancipation (Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 127; Buchanan, *Consequences*, 206). We do read of scrupulous slaves in scrupulous households (especially reported of Gamaliel's household; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12:15; *y. Sukkah* 2:1, §3).

937. Cf. *b. Yebam.* 46ab; cf. further Bamberger, *Proselytism*, 127; Buchanan, *Consequences*, 206.

938. CD XII, 10–11; 4Q159 2–4 1–3 (following Lev 25:47–55).

939. Safrai, "Home," 748–49; cf. Hezser, "Impact," 417, allowing more variation.

940. *Jos. Ant.* 4.244. Rabbis believed that Gentile slaveholders paired slaves at the slaveholder's will (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 2:4).

941. Cf. *m. 'Ab.* 2:7; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 20:6; Safrai, "Home," 749; Hezser, "Impact," 375.

942. Philo *Good Person* 78. 4Q416 2 (+4Q417) I, 17, probably from the Essenes, denies becoming servants by sale but affirms all members' serving the overseers.

943. Cf. Philo *Good Person* 77, 86; *Hypoth.* 11.4–5.

944. *Jos. Ant.* 18.21.

(including those living in cities) makes them only a small portion of Judaism. Luke's portrayal of the Christian community in a major summary (2:44–45) fits Essene ideals, but passages such as 12:12–13 show that the ideals were not being applied in this period as radically as 2:44–45 could be construed.

22. Slavery and a House Church

Whereas some associations admitted women and slaves,⁹⁴⁵ others were limited to free men.⁹⁴⁶ Rhoda, however, appears a trusted part of the house congregation, requiring no supervision to guarantee that she will not betray the meeting. If early Christian soteriology (such as articulated in, e.g., Gal 3:28) eventually affected Jewish-Gentile relations, there is no reason that it could not have done the same with slave and free structures as well.⁹⁴⁷ At least in later Christianity, slaves' status in the external society did not dictate their status in God's church; slaves could rise to the office of bishop.⁹⁴⁸ Less than half a century after Luke wrote Acts, we hear of slave women as possibly "deacons" of some sort in churches in the interior of Asia Minor.⁹⁴⁹

Luke is reporting, not commenting on, the morality of slaveholding. His portrayal of Rhoda is, however, sympathetic, especially when she is viewed alongside figures performing parallel narrative functions in Luke-Acts. Luke's ideal in Acts 2:44–45 and 4:32–35 (along with its closest analogues in Essene practice and perhaps Greek utopias) militates against slavery, but even the style of home implied in 12:13 suggests that the Jerusalem church did not fully implement the ideal (at least in the radical sense of Luke 3:11; 14:33).

The Pauline Christian movement of which Luke was a part was more radical on slaveholding than most of the surrounding culture, apparently applying the Christian principle of mutual submission (Eph 5:21) even to slaves and slaveholders (6:9).⁹⁵⁰ Although the only explicit, concrete expression of this position would have seemed more mainstream among moralists, such voices were clearly among the more progressive of the culture. Nevertheless, slaveholding remained an integral part of the culture, and protesting the institution was not a sufficiently prominent category among cultural options to have invited direct comment in texts not addressing that point, much to our appropriate post-nineteenth-century dismay. Since slaves provided a model for the Christian life in general (esp. Luke 22:26),⁹⁵¹ Rhoda's role could offer a positive model. On Luke's positive portrayal of Rhoda, see comment on Acts 12:14.

945. E.g., the cultic association in Gager, "Class," 102; cf. also some cults (Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 282; Klauck, *Context*, 66; McRay, *Archaeology*, 279; Evans, "Sanctuaries") and philosophic sects (Smith, *Symposium*, 58).

946. Klauck, *Context*, 47.

947. Cf. Lowe, "Rethinking"; less dramatically, Dahl, *Studies*, 16; Fee, *Corinthians*, 81. This would not necessarily entail expectations of abolition among ancient readers (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 418).

948. Latourette, *First Five Centuries*, 262–63.

949. Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.8. The meaning of *ministra* here may be debated (Harrill, "Functionaries," makes a case for slave cultic functionaries), but it may well be, in Latin, the feminine equivalent of διάκονος, which probably had an official meaning by this period (1 *Clem.* 42.4–5; *Did.* 15.1; *Poly. Phil.* 5.2–3; *Ign. Eph.* 2.1; *Magn.* 2.1; 6.1; 13.1; *Trall.* 2.3; 3.1; 7.2; *Philad.* 4.1; 7.1; 10.1–2; 11.1; *Smyrn.* 8.1; 10.1; 12.2; *Pol.* 6.1), perhaps somewhat developed beyond the usage in Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8, 12 (but not necessarily as far as the patristic Greek use of the feminine article with the noun).

950. See, e.g., the argument in Keener, *Paul*, 204–7; Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 37–38, and sources cited there. Not everyone would agree with this understanding; for a survey of current approaches, see Byron, "Paul and Background." Although Paul's words go far beyond most of his contemporaries, they did not force on his hearers the issue of emancipation the way the Essene approach apparently would have (cf. the non-Essene approach in Sir 33:31).

951. Also, for serving God or Christ, e.g., Luke 1:2; 12:37–38, 42–47; 14:17, 21–23; 16:13; 17:7–10; 19:13–22; 20:10–11; as a title for Israel, Luke 1:54, 74; for David, Luke 1:69; Acts 4:25; for Jesus, Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30. (I draw here on several Greek terms that usually apply to servants.)

23. Conclusions

Some of the abuses reported above provide a relevant range of potential nuances that Luke's audience may have associated with the status of the slave woman in Acts 16:16–19, especially after she is exorcised. Luke's audience would not, however, likely assume such abuses for Rhoda. She belonged to a female-headed Judean Christian home; she appears as a trusted part of the congregation. Moralists advised positive treatment of servants, and Luke's audience would more likely infer that an essentially positive figure such as Mary probably complied with such advice (the gathered believers are, after all, devout enough to take risks to meet and pray). Some of Luke's audience may have even been familiar with the traditional Jewish admonition to treat one's only servant as a family member (Sir 33:31).

This commentary's examination of the narrative will both support this partly favorable approach to Rhoda and also qualify it. Rhoda is not only a trusted member of the congregation; she appears as a positive character (providing some comic relief, but no more than Peter himself, and being more reliable than the others in the prayer meeting). It is possible that those in the prayer meeting briefly express some conventional, negative stereotypes of talkative or gullible servants; but if so, Luke subverts much of that stereotype.

Unfortunately, there is no call to slavery's abolition, a question that was probably barely ever framed in these terms in that era; even if Luke favored slavery's abolition (a perspective his ideal in Acts 2:44–45 renders at least not implausible, and perhaps very plausible), he has no reason to raise the issue in this narrative. There is no clearly implied condemnation of Mary either for having a substantial home (12:12–13) or for holding a servant, though Luke's ideals elsewhere militate against these practices being a norm (cf. Luke 12:33; 14:33; Acts 2:44–45; 4:32–35), and he may well have wished more of the church to come up to those standards. Luke writes history as well as theology, and the usefulness of the scene for its ironies about prayer, as well as the opportunity to portray Rhoda favorably (as a contrast to Acts 16:16 and Luke 22:56), would likely outweigh any hesitation to include the outer gate and servant. That is, we should not infer Luke's theology of slavery from an incidental historical datum that is not his focus.

But if we frame the questions less anachronistically, in terms of expectations of Luke's contemporaries, had Luke chosen to address issues of justice, he might have preferred to start with the oppression of the rural poor or the poor in Jerusalem's Lower City (cf. Luke 4:18; 6:20; 7:22; 14:13, 21; 16:22–23; 18:22; 19:8; Acts 6:1; 9:39). Rhoda may well hold a place in the socioeconomic spectrum higher than that of most Galilean peasants who followed Jesus in the Gospel.⁹⁵² Her status was not the same as that of slaves, including household slaves, in the Americas;⁹⁵³ there is value in modern readers comparing the text with later historical situations, but this is done most fruitfully when we understand also the differences. Indeed, readers implicitly engage in such comparisons, so engaging them in a nuanced way is important, especially on the level of human experience. Simply reading ancient social institutions through the prism of modern ones, however, without some sensitivity to differences, is not doing history.⁹⁵⁴

952. This is not to portray her situation as positive or ideal but to challenge the inconsistency of the modern critique sometimes leveled against ancient writers' relative silence on issues that are not their focus. Modern critics are often selective in our own critique of, and hence ourselves silent on large areas of, ancient injustice.

953. Indeed, to read the text through that lens is to embrace the slaveholders' rather than the abolitionists' hermeneutic (see, e.g., Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 101–10). For one summary of the difference between the two forms of slavery, see Dodd, *Problem*, 85–91.

954. I complain here about anachronistic readings that claim to represent a "Lukan" or "early Christian" perspective, not genuine historical description of the text's actual reception history (or even claims about its

Rhoda's role in Luke-Acts is, however, worthy of consideration as that of the only Christian slave named there, with whom some members of Luke's real audience may have identified. Her uniqueness may also reveal something about the early church, Luke's perspectives, or both. Mary is the only Christian slaveholder in Acts (we exclude Cornelius in Acts 10:7, since he has not yet become part of the movement); none of the primary protagonists in Luke-Acts (Jesus or the apostles) holds slaves. Most, in fact, follow a lifestyle that values people radically above possessions. This is also a lifestyle that demands few possessions and hence in any case could not accommodate slavery (which in its various forms treats people in varying degrees as property), whatever their beliefs about that institution per se. We therefore cannot read too much about Luke's views on the institution of slavery into this example; Luke has limited historical examples from which to choose.

VII. ANNOUNCING INSTEAD OF OPENING (12:14)

Whereas Peter's guards in 12:6, 10 failed to keep him in, this well-meaning doorkeeper inadvertently keeps Peter out.⁹⁵⁵ And whereas the iron gate in 12:10 opened "by itself," here the gate of the house where fellow Christians pray for his safety remains barred to him.⁹⁵⁶

Although Luke is generally positive toward women, some scholars note that ancient comedies often portray young (or old) women, and especially slave girls, as silly.⁹⁵⁷ The previously tragic texture of the narrative (12:2) becomes akin to comedy, with bumbling heroes rescued despite themselves.⁹⁵⁸ Despite comic elements, however, Rhoda is the most positive character in the house; she fulfills the role of Jesus's female proclaimers in Luke 24:10–12 whereas her skeptical hearers fill the role of the intransigent male disciples of that passage.⁹⁵⁹ Her "announcing" good news resembles the activity of the women in Luke 24:9⁹⁶⁰ (although Luke uses ἀπαγγέλλω frequently, about twenty-six times, the other parallels with Luke 24 imply that the term ἀπαγγέλλω here is a parallel as well). Given dominant male attitudes toward the testimony of women⁹⁶¹ (as well as toward that of slaves,

potential reception in various settings). For nineteenth-century arguments for and against slavery, the former often involving extrapolations of principle and the latter a range of prooftexted examples, see, e.g., Keener and Usry, *Faith*, 36–41; Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 102–8.

955. Cf. similarly Pervo, *Profit*, 63.

956. With also Spencer, *Acts*, 126; Gaventa, *Acts*, 185; Chambers, "Knock," 96. This contrast provides not only humor but theology, suggesting that it is not God's power to work but the church's faith that is limited. This idea matches the progress of the gospel in Acts, where God must persuade the church to embrace the Gentile mission; in some cases, God has things already set up (e.g., Acts 8:30). The gate in 12:13–14 may serve an emphatic role (Parsons, *Acts*, 176, suggests antistrophe in its strategic repetition).

957. See, e.g., Cic. *Off.* 2.16.55–57 (including women alongside children and slaves). The associations were common with old women in particular (not relevant to a παιδίσκη); see Pliny *Ep.* 7.24.5 (idleness); Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.25.541 (talkative); Rosivach, "Anus" (overimbibing alcohol, talkative, and superstitious); for superstitions associated with older women, cf. Cic. *Nat. d.* 1.20.55; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.14; Iambl. *V.P.* 32.227; 1 Tim 4:7 (on which see sources in Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 50–51; esp. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 68).

958. Pervo, *Profit*, 63, also mentions that Rhoda "is like a figure from New Comedy."

959. With, e.g., Spencer, *Acts*, 128; Johnson, *Acts*, 213. Ancient interpreters also discerned the parallel with the unbelieving women of Luke 24; see Arator *Acts* 1 (Schrader, 55–56; Martin, *Acts*, 155); cf. also Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 26 (Martin, *Acts*, 155); noting just a woman announcer in both cases, Bede *Comm. Acts* 12.13 (L. Martin, 113).

960. Johnson, *Acts*, 213.

961. See, e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 4.219; Plut. *Publ.* 8.4; Justin. *Inst.* 2.10.6; *Sipra VDDeho. pq.* 7.45.1.1.

above), Luke's citation of women's testimony in both places subverts expectations and challenges convention.⁹⁶²

J. A. Harrill develops more fully the doubt that Luke's portrayal of Rhoda is favorable, arguing that Rhoda provides comic relief by fitting the convention of the *servus currens*.⁹⁶³ Rhoda blunders like the typical "running slave" "of New and Roman Comedy."⁹⁶⁴ Such servants imagined falsehoods and argued with superiors; here, the argument goes, Rhoda foolishly runs inside and leaves Peter waiting at the gate. Though appreciating Harrill's scholarship, not all scholars have, however, followed his line of interpretation.⁹⁶⁵

Although the account of Rhoda offers comic relief,⁹⁶⁶ it is less at her expense than at that of the other characters: Peter thinks he sees a vision (Acts 12:9), and Rhoda's critics think that she is hallucinating (12:15), whereas she is the only character who accurately perceives the truth. As Kathy Chambers notes, Rhoda "recognizes not fiction but fact: Peter really is at the door. She does not 'lecture' her social betters; to the contrary, they silence her" and appear foolish to Luke's informed audience. Their failure to listen "actually serves to enhance her status" for Luke's audience.⁹⁶⁷

Indeed, if Harrill is right about the *servus currens* background here, Luke actually subverts that perspective in his narrative.⁹⁶⁸ In light of the convention, one would anticipate foolish speech, yet she speaks truth.⁹⁶⁹ That is, Rhoda proves a fairly reliable character for Luke's audience; the cliché may function for her hearers within the narrative world, but they are themselves objects of Luke's comedy. Further, Peter's helplessness to gain entrance is comedy partly at Peter's expense; "inability to gain entry to the house is also a comedic convention."⁹⁷⁰ The end of the passage may confirm the joke, because Peter leaves without Luke's ever narrating his entering the house (12:17).⁹⁷¹

Rhoda does not in fact fit the most common slave stereotypes. Slaves could be associated with the insane (cf. 12:15),⁹⁷² but more often moral connotations were attached to their reports. Ancient literature regularly portrays them as flatterers, liars,⁹⁷³ and twisters of the truth to ingratiate themselves with their slaveholders (Char. *Chaer.* 6.5.5). Novels portrayed them as unafraid to lie under oath (Apul.

962. The Gospels' claim that women were witnesses also invited pagan criticism of the Gospels (Cook, *Interpretation*, 57).

963. Harrill, "Dramatic Function," 156; idem, *Slaves*, 64–66; followed by Pervo, *Acts*, 306.

964. Harrill, *Slaves*, 65. Harrill argues (66) that Luke thus uses Rhoda as the butt of a standard joke about slaves that reinforces slave ideology. Price, "Rhoda," 101–3, goes further (conveying, with unsupported assertions, speculations about what stands behind the text), arguing that Luke suppresses Rhoda. But John Chrysostom had a different perspective on why Rhoda runs: "She does what we all would do: she runs in so that she might be the one bringing the good news" (*Hom. Acts* 26 [Martin, *Acts*, 155]).

965. Cf., e.g., Chambers, "Knock," 92–93, 97; Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 181; Weaver, *Epiphany*, 173.

966. Gentile comedy's "image of the clever, scheming slave" appears in *Test. Gad.* 4:4; *Jos. Ant.* 17.55–56 (Hezser, "Impact," 397)—though we should note that these are not the images employed here or in Harrill's thesis. See Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 85–87, for voice inflections indicating humor and wit (including irony). Historians could draw on comic conventions; cf. the admittedly later Ammianus in Rohrbacher, "Digressions," 470.

967. Chambers, "Knock," 92, 97.

968. *Ibid.*, 92, arguing from a liberationist perspective; Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 181–82 (noting that Harrill's stereotype does not fit Luke's portrayal of other women and that Rhoda does not cause problems in the text).

969. Chambers, "Knock," 93.

970. *Ibid.*, 92 (citing Frost, *Exits*, 9, who notes that only a single instance of successful knocking appears in extant Greek comedies).

971. Chambers, "Knock," 93. This may well reflect Luke's abbreviation of irrelevant details, but the story as we have it portrays Peter simply addressing astonished disciples at the opened gate. Peter not entering might reduce their potential liability.

972. Cic. *Acad.* 2.47.144 (but this probably simply designates their marginal status).

973. Char. *Chaer.* 2.10.7; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.21.517.

Metam. 10.7), even under torture (10.10). Masters taught them to deceive by the servile behavior for which they rewarded them.⁹⁷⁴ Rhoda's gender and slave status together conspire against her credibility with others in the narrative world; Josephus, perhaps our best extant reflection of what some Hellenists in the Upper City would have thought, warns against trusting women's testimony because of their instability, and that of slaves because they lack virtue (*Ant.* 4.219).⁹⁷⁵ Yet Luke emphasizes that Rhoda brings not deception but truth (and happily, even those gathered for prayer in the narrative do not accuse her of deception). Somewhat less harshly, a slavewoman porter in a Jewish work (possibly later than Acts) disobeys her master Job (*Test. Job* 7:3–6) and confesses that she has done evil (7:8–9).⁹⁷⁶ This work's sympathies lie with Job rather than her, yet it probably depicts even her act of disobedience as motivated by virtue (7:5–6), which in turn reflects favorably on Job's virtue.⁹⁷⁷ In that case, however, the porter acts wrongly, whereas in Acts it is Rhoda and not the others present who speaks truth.

Though Rhoda is a slave, some scholars point out that she does not act like a stereotypical slave.⁹⁷⁸ She, as a member of the Christian community, recognizes Peter (by voice, Acts 12:14) and keeps asserting her claim despite others' skepticism.⁹⁷⁹ In antiquity, probably many household slaves exercised such assertiveness in practice (she was, after all, certain she was right), and this might be the more anticipated (as a generalization) in a house with few servants⁹⁸⁰ and headed by a widow (and Mark himself perhaps not fully grown). Some argue that Luke uses not Harrill's servant caricature but the typical ancient caricature of the "hysterical woman," implied by the other characters' designation of her as "mad."⁹⁸¹ But if Luke uses either such caricature, he inverts them. As noted above, Luke's portrayal is informative especially in light of the way that Rhoda parallels the women at the tomb: she is a true proclaimer of good news who is not believed by more prominent figures in the movement.⁹⁸²

She may also remind readers of the unnamed⁹⁸³ servant girl who recognized Peter in Luke 22:56, also in a wealthy home near the Temple Mount.⁹⁸⁴ Although it was a commonplace that one encountered servants in wealthy homes, these two

974. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 116 (cf. also Petron. *Sat.* 75–76 [p. 102]).

975. Halakah also linked the status of slaves and women, e.g., in their status as witnesses (*b. Hag.* 4a) or in obligations to perform Torah (*m. Sukkah* 2:8; *m. Hag.* 1:1; Stern, "Aspects," 628–29).

976. My gratitude is due Richard Pervo (personal correspondence, Oct. 3, 2012) for bringing this passage to my attention. The woman porter in 2 Kgdms 4:6 (LXX; the detail does not appear in 2 Sam 4:6 MT) appears somewhat negligent, although the text offers an explanation for her sleepiness (followed by *Jos. Ant.* 7.48); she probably serves as the model also for the woman doorkeeper in *Jos. Asen.* 10:3, as she is also found asleep. For other feminine uses, BDAG lists also *BGU* 1061.10 (14 B.C.E.); P.Ryl. 36.6 (34 C.E.); P.Stras. 24.17.

977. In antiquity (as in this work), the behavior of members of one's household could reflect favorably on the householder.

978. Aristotle claimed that the slave, in his or her role as a slave, could have no friendship with a master because slaves were property (*N.E.* 8.11.6–7, 1161b). Texts concerning slaves' humanity were more nuanced.

979. Reimer, *Women*, 242. Rhoda's full status as member of the Christian community fits what our other sources lead us to expect (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; Philemon passim; esp. Eph 6:9; cf. Col 3:11).

980. Although perhaps not often followed, Sir 33:31 advised treating one's only servant as if one's sibling.

981. Weaver, *Epiphany*, 173–74, associating madness with prophetic experience. But ecstasy is only one association of "madness" (see comment on Acts 26:24).

982. Arlandson, *Women*, 195–96; Chambers, "Knock," 92; Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 181–82.

983. Her anonymity is hardly to be blamed on Luke. It is extremely unlikely that pre-Markan tradition would have preserved her name; would Peter have chosen to return and interview her? Even the Gospel that claims a contact known to her (John 18:16) neither names the contact (possibly, though not certainly, the beloved disciple; cf. Collins, *Written*, 42; Wiles, *Gospel*, 9; for different suggestions, see, e.g., Charlesworth, *Disciple*, 336–59; Vicent Cernuda, "Desvaído") nor indicates that the contact necessarily would have known her name.

984. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 213 (who also compares the gate here to the ἀύλη in Luke 22:55).

references together compose half of Luke's use of παιδίσκη, and the contrast seems deliberate. In one case, a servant girl accuses Peter to those around her, and he fears arrest for following Christ; in the other, a servant girl announces Peter positively to those around her after the Lord has freed him from prison for following Christ. Just as Luke likes to balance stories about men with stories about women, he here balances a negative story about a female slave with a positive one. Because Rhoda has the higher role than her mistress here, Luke is able to hint at his larger portrayal of good news as transcending class as well as gender (cf. Luke 4:18–19; esp. 1:48, 51–53).⁹⁸⁵ Noble treatment of (parabolic) female (as well as male) slaves excludes abuse (12:45), and later another female slave is delivered (Acts 16:16–18).

Running off and leaving someone standing is not culpable behavior if excused by overwhelming emotion; Luke and his audience knew of the young woman Rebekah's doing just this to Abraham's servant (Gen 24:28–30; cf. 29:12; Exod 2:20). Moreover, Luke makes the emotional excuse explicit: she acts overwhelmed by "joy," exactly as the disciples could not believe their risen Lord because of joy (Luke 24:41)—that is, because it seemed too good to be true.⁹⁸⁶ Peter's deliverance initially seemed to himself too good to be true as well (Acts 12:9).

VIII. NOT BELIEVING HIS DELIVERANCE (12:15)

Although only women are named as present (12:12–13), the masculine plurals (ἱκανοί, 12:12; αὐτοῖς, 12:17; cf. οἱ, 12:15) indicate that at least some men are included.⁹⁸⁷ Women, when meeting together, would have less to fear from the authorities (see comment on Acts 8:3), but they would also be less likely to be out at night alone, at least under normal circumstances.⁹⁸⁸

God's grace often surprised his church in Acts (e.g., 9:26; 10:44; 11:18), and this instance is no exception. The disciples are praying for Peter's release (12:5) but hardly expecting to see him. They presumably did not think Peter already dead when they started praying that night (cf. 12:5).⁹⁸⁹ Why might they have disbelieved that it was Peter? Perhaps it was a matter of expectation: they were praying that Agrippa would show mercy and release Peter, something that would not occur in the middle of the night (forgetting the supernatural nocturnal release of 5:19). Perhaps it was a matter of weak faith, despite their meeting together to pray; since they were so close to the time when the execution was scheduled (12:6), they had simply begun to assume that Peter would meet the same fate as James (12:2) and Stephen (7:57–60). Though faith is the norm, even if as small as a mustard seed (Luke 17:6), lack of it did not always negate the value of prayer (1:13, 20).

985. Arlandson, *Women*, 195–96. Two of the proclaimers in Luke 24:10 are named Mary, but as already noted, this was the most common feminine name in first-century Judea.

986. This represents Luke's defense of them; cf. Luke 22:45, where he uses sorrow the same way. We might compare her "running" with Peter's (Luke 24:12; cf. joyful running in 15:20). Cf. similarly Haenchen, *Acts*, 385n3; esp. Johnson, *Acts*, 213 (comparing emotions preventing proper responses in Longus 2.30; Ach. Tat. 1.3; 2.23). Sudden joy was thought traumatic enough to sometimes bring death (Aul. Gel. 3.15). For a survey of emotions in Acts, see Pauw, "Influence of Emotions."

987. With Witherington, *Acts*, 387.

988. E.g., after the formal part of the dinner, nocturnal carousing (among Gentiles) tended to be a predominantly male pastime (apart from less reputable women), even in this period. See Friedländer, *Life*, 1:249; Witherington, *Corinthians*, 193; contrast the other side of the evidence in Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 95.20–21; Winter, *Wives*, 153, but again, it was *predominantly* male (dinner lists were not exclusively, but predominantly, male; Stambaugh, *City*, 207). Earlier times had been more segregated (Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.26.66; *Cael.* 20.49; Vitruv. *Arch.* 6.7.4–5).

989. Most rabbis did not believe that prayer worked retroactively, though the matter was debated (*Gen. Rab.* 72:6, on prayer for a child's gender after it is conceived).

Like Rhoda, they take long to open the gate; there may be some fear of whoever claims to be Peter, given the persecution, because, like Rhoda, they do hear the knocking. But Luke focuses only on their skepticism, paralleling them with disciples doubting the testimony of the women from the tomb in Luke 24.

Their unbelief also echoes Peter's own in Acts 12:9. Accusing her of being "out of her mind" may imply an ecstatic vision (cf. female servants in 2:17–18; Peter's thought of his own in 12:9). This might not seem too out of place in a prayer meeting, especially since Luke apparently accepts the same charismatic phenomena (e.g., 2:17–18) that Paul anticipates in corporate prayer (cf. 1 Cor 14 passim; the same term appears in 1 Cor 14:23). It is the same sort of reproof that Festus later offers to Paul (Acts 26:24, using the identical expression, and putting Rhoda in very good company), not personally hostile but utterly unable to believe; at other points, God's servants are thought crazed by drunkenness (2:13). The unbelief in this case is probably also partly associated with her gender; the testimony of women was widely denigrated, particularly because men thought them susceptible to emotional instability.⁹⁹⁰ This disbelief of a woman's testimony is ironic in view of Luke 24:11, where the disciples thought the women's resurrection testimony to be idle nonsense:⁹⁹¹ Jesus's followers still have not learned their lesson. But also ironically, while they accused Rhoda of being crazy⁹⁹² for affirming that Peter was present, Peter had "come to his senses" (Acts 12:11; cf. Luke 15:17) only when he recognized that the "vision" was real.

The irony in this scene would probably strike ancient readers as mildly humorous, as it does us (since none of them were the butt of the joke, just as none of us are).⁹⁹³ Its critique of human skepticism might, however, come at the expense of most ancient readers as of most modern ones. The fool was a common character in ancient comedy;⁹⁹⁴ here the gathered Christians fill this role to some extent. Yet in view of James's death and the real danger Agrippa posed, Luke was hardly writing comedy; harmless fools (like Mark's disciples) were safer than mortal enemies, yet the story's true moral hero, though never appearing directly except by his actions and others' references, is God himself. Interspersing light with serious elements was considered good design for holding an audience's attention (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 8.21.1).

Assuming Peter to be an angel that had come perhaps to announce his death⁹⁹⁵ provides another irony: God did not send an angel to them to announce Peter's death but sent one to Peter to rescue his life (Acts 12:7–11). When the risen Jesus appeared to his disciples, some also thought him a "spirit" (Luke 24:37). Ghosts do

990. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 4.219; cf. Justin. *Inst.* 2.10.6. For women's supposed instability, see Polyb. 2.56.9; Cic. *Fam.* 16.27.1; Livy 34.2.13–14; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.34; b. *Šabb.* 33b; also Seneca in Lavery, "Never Seen."

991. Cf. similarly Spencer, *Acts*, 128; note that Paul's "madness" is also associated with his resurrection claim in 26:23–24. The disbelief in their "nonsense" (λίπος) resembles Antiochus's denunciation of a Jewish martyr's faith in 4 Macc 5:11 (though there is no thought of any literary connection), or a later apologist's denunciation of philosophers (*Diogn.* 8.2).

992. Cic. *Acad.* 2.47.144 lumps slaves with mad persons and exiles (but probably emphasizing their marginal status). Men viewed women in general as more emotional (e.g., Publ. Syr. 6; Lucian *Disowned* 30; Shelton, *Romans*, 301–3; cf. Polyb. 2.56.9; see also comment on mourning in Acts 8:2) and therefore less trustworthy in their reports (Jos. *Ant.* 4.219).

993. For humorous irony in antiquity (acceptable to most if kept within bounds), see, e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33; Plut. *Cic.* 27.1; Pliny *Ep.* 5.13.10; Tert. *Apol.* 40.2; Anderson, *Glossary*, 39; Rapallo, "Umorismo." On humor here, see, e.g., Faw, *Acts*, 136; Larkin, *Acts*, 185; Goldingay, "Comic Acts?"; Grassi, *Laugh*, 112; Pelikan, *Acts*, 148–49. Humor appears not only in Greek and Roman comedy but also in Jewish haggadah (Kovelman, "Farce").

994. Cf., e.g., Welborn, "Runaway Paul"; jesters in Schäfer, "Entertainers," 998.

995. So Haenchen, *Acts*, 391, reasonably. Stephen looked like an angel before his martyrdom (Acts 6:15).

not fit Luke's view of Jesus's eschatology (23:43; 24:38–43), but they were popularly accepted, perhaps particularly in moments of panic (cf. Mark 6:49).⁹⁹⁶ The ghosts of those who died violently were thought to lurk about, sometimes terrorizing those who lived nearby.⁹⁹⁷ (Gentiles fairly widely accepted the existence of ghosts,⁹⁹⁸ though more educated Judean circles would have frowned on it.) Classical Greek sources claimed that a long-deceased golden race of people became pure δαίμονες or spirits (Hesiod *W.D.* 122), living on earth and guarding mortals (*W.D.* 121–23). Thinkers in the Platonic tradition also spoke of souls leaving bodies at death and becoming spirits in the air realm.⁹⁹⁹ For Jewish people, however, an angel would be likelier.

Jesus compared those who are raised to angels (Luke 20:36). Some Jewish sources speak of an angelic afterlife; thus one pre-Christian work offers the righteous dead a hope like heavenly angels (1 *En.* 104:4). The possibly first-century C.E. Similitudes of Enoch may speak of the righteous becoming angels in heaven;¹⁰⁰⁰ the late second-century Christian novel *Acts of Paul* (*Acts Paul* 3.5 [*Paul Thec.* 5]) agrees. The Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch* (probably early second century) compares the resurrected righteous to both angels and stars (2 *Bar.* 51:10).¹⁰⁰¹ *Prayer of Joseph* 19 (perhaps second century C.E.) apparently requests transformation into an angel along with immortality.¹⁰⁰² A still more hellenized Jewish source claims that after resurrection (Ps-Phoc. 102–3), the dead will become gods coming from the earth (θεοὶ, Ps-Phoc. 104).¹⁰⁰³ Paul's comparison of the resurrection body to heavenly bodies (1 Cor 15:40–41, 48–49) and “spiritual” existence (15:44–46) might contain an implicit comparison to angels.¹⁰⁰⁴ This fits a common expectation that the righteous would become stars after death (1 *En.* 43:4);¹⁰⁰⁵ some pre-Christian Jewish sources promise the righteous dead that

996. For dangerous ghosts in some traditional worldviews, see, e.g., Mbiti, *Religions*, 113; Fuchs, “Techniques,” 135–37. Though Confucius elsewhere expects sacrifices to deceased parents (*Anal.* 29 [2.5]), he seems to express agnosticism about ghosts and the afterlife (206 [11.11]; 326 [7.20]).

997. E.g., Plut. *Cim.* 1.6; 6.5; *Brut.* 36; *Caes.* 69.5, 8.

998. E.g., Ovid *Metam.* 13.447–48; Lucan *C.W.* 1.11; Plut. *Cim.* 1.6; 6.6; Dio Cass. 42.11.2–3; Ach. Tat. 5.16.1–2; Dubourdieu, “Dead, Cult of,” 116; cf. Ovid *Fasti* 2.551–54, 563–70; among Pythagoreans, cf. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.38; 4.11; Thom, “*Akoumata*,” 104–5. Deities also sent phantom images made only of cloud (e.g., Apollod. *Epit.* 1.20; 3.5); some contended that the particular identity of ghosts was difficult to distinguish, since they interchanged their appearances (Philost. *Hrk.* 21.1). Pliny *Ep.* 7.27.1, 15–16 asked whether a friend believed in ghosts, and proceeded (7.27.2–3, 5–14) to provide evidence supporting his own tendency to believe in them. In the ancient Near East, see Scurlock, “Ghosts.”

999. Philo *Conf.* 174; *Giants* 6, 9, 12; *Dreams* 1.135; Max. Tyre 9.6; 10.2; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 288. Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 564F for individual guardian spirits (Betz, Dirkse, and Smith, “Numinis,” 225); among Stoics, see Klauck, *Context*, 358; cf. Diog. Laert. 9.1.7; among Pythagoreans, Diog. Laert. 8.1.32.

1000. 1 *En.* 51:5; so Knibb, 136, but differently in Isaac, 37 (1 *En.* 51:4 in the Isaac enumeration). Cf. probably also angel-like existence in 2 *En.* 22:8–10.

1001. *Sipre Deut.* 306.28.2 compares the righteous in life to angels, but 2 *Baruch's* comparison is more complete. Stars could be angels (1QMX, 12; 1 *En.* 80:6–8; probably 1 *En.* 46:7; 2 *En.* 29:3 A; Ps-Phoc. 71, 75; Philo *Plant.* 12, 14; *Sipre Deut.* 47.2.3–5); angels govern stars in 2 *En.* 4:1. Jewish people condemned pagans for worshipping stars as deities (1 *En.* 80:7; *Gen. Rab.* 6:1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:1); for the view of stars as divine, see Cic. *Resp.* 6.15.15; *Nat. d.* 2.15.39–40; Sen. *Y. Ben.* 4.23.4; earlier, Bright, *History*, 161.

1002. The document is probably not a Jewish-Christian composition but resembles magical texts.

1003. Van der Horst in *OTP* 2:578 n. g suggests that this means angels. Cf. just *perhaps* 1 Sam 28:13, where the LXX has gods coming up from the earth. Josephus may speak of the wicked dead as “demons” that could enter and possess the living (Isaacs, *Spirit*, 33–34, citing Jos. *War* 7.185; for appeasing the ghosts of the departed, cf. *Ant.* 13.317, 416; *War* 1.521). Demons were bodiless (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 7:5).

1004. See, e.g., Riesner, *Early Period*, 391; Martin, *Body*, 117–18; Keener, *Corinthians*, 131; idem, *Background Commentary*, 488.

1005. For deceased persons ascending to the stars, cf., e.g., Cic. *Resp.* 6.26.29; Virg. *Aen.* 7.210–11; 9.641; *Ecl.* 5.56–57; 9.47; *Georg.* 4.226–27; Ovid *Metam.* 14.824–28, 846–51; 15.749, 843–51, 875–76; Sen. *Y. Herc. fur.* 959; *Ep. Lucil.* 73.15; Lucan *C.W.* 9.1–9; Val. Flacc. 3.378–82; cf. 4 Macc 17:5; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:197; souls numbered like stars in Plato *Tim.* 41E.

they will shine like the heavenly luminaries (Dan 12:3; *1 En.* 104:2). On “angels” for those who have died, see further comment on Acts 23:8.¹⁰⁰⁶

Some interpreters think that the disciples refer to Peter's guardian angel.¹⁰⁰⁷ Commentators often view the disciples' belief here in terms of later rabbinic views of “guardian angels . . . as the double” (one sharing the same appearance) of the person they protected.¹⁰⁰⁸ Angels could otherwise appear as humans (cf., e.g., Judg 13:6, 8; Tob 5:4–5; Mark 16:5; John 20:12–13; Heb 13:2).¹⁰⁰⁹ Although corporate guardian angels of nations are better attested,¹⁰¹⁰ guardian angels of individuals also do appear in our sources.¹⁰¹¹ The individual's protective spirit, or *genius*, in Roman thought might provide another ancient Mediterranean analogy.¹⁰¹² But why would those in the house expect Peter's guardian angel to have left him unless they supposed that he had died (in which case, Peter as a posthumous “angel” seems likelier)? The parallel with Luke 24:37 suggests the righteous-dead interpretation.

IX. PETER'S REPORT (12:16–17)

That Peter continues knocking¹⁰¹³ (Acts 12:16) heightens the suspense. Haenchen perceptively asks, “Will they let him in before the neighbours are alerted and endeavor to capture the fugitive?”¹⁰¹⁴ Even the large luxury villas of Upper City Jerusalem were located in close proximity to each other,¹⁰¹⁵ and it has been argued that most of those who owned homes there were Sadducees.¹⁰¹⁶ Homes in cities offered a degree of privacy, but not so private that neighbors had no idea what went on there.¹⁰¹⁷

Most neighbors would be asleep, but some servants, especially guards at nearby gates, would not be asleep and would be well aware that many people were gathered and awake at the widow's house. Probably they knew that followers of Jesus met there (since it would not have been secret before Agrippa's repression, unless Mary had been converted only recently); perhaps they spoke at times with servants there, such

1006. Note also the Jewish (though perhaps Jewish-Christian) inscriptions in Corinth portraying the dead as angels (see Wiseman, “Gymnasium Area”).

1007. Origen *Comm. Matt.* 27–28 (in Pelikan, *Acts*, 147); Le Cornu, *Acts*, 654; Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 85.

1008. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 247; Marshall, *Acts*, 219; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 489; Witherington, *Acts*, 387 (citing *Gen. Rab.* 78); many of these follow Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:707–8. This use of the “double” may stem from Persian sources (see Reitzenstein, *Religions*, 108); a similar idea (for an invisible person along with the visible one) appears among traditional Douala people (Rosny, *Healers*, 59). For Zoroastrian guardian spirits, see Yamauchi, *Persia*, 408.

1009. Cf. also, e.g., *Test. Job* 23:2 (Satan in disguise); *2 En.* 1:4–10; 7:1–2; 8:1, 8; 10:1, 4; 11:1; 13:1; 14:1; 16:1; 18:1, 9; 19:1; 20:1–2; 21:2, 4; 38:1; *Gen. Rab.* 50:2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:4; Rev 21:17. For humans portrayed as angels in the Qumran scrolls, see Fletcher-Louis, “Reflections.”

1010. See comment on Acts 16:9.

1011. E.g., Tob 5:22 (the informed reader will catch the irony here); Heb 1:14; Matt 18:10; *L.A.B.* 11:12; 59:4; *t. Šabb.* 17:2–3; *Sipre Num.* 40.1.5; *Gen. Rab.* 44:3; 60:15; *Song Rab.* 3:6, §3; Hermas 1.5. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 654, cites, in addition to some of these, *L.A.B.* 15:5; *Jub.* 35:17; *b. Hag.* 16a; *Ta'an.* 11a; see also Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 2:770–72.

1012. On this, see Pearson, “Domestic Religion,” 299; Rives, *Religion*, 19; cf. Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 110.1 (skeptically).

1013. In what may be consummate Lukan narrative irony, those inside, by continuing in prayer for Peter (12:5, 12), are continuing to “knock” that a figurative door may be “opened” for them (Luke 11:9, esp. in the context of 11:5–8)—even while they fail to believe that the answer to their prayers is knocking on their own door!

1014. Haenchen, *Acts*, 391.

1015. Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 83 (noting construction from the Herodian period); McRay, *Archaeology*, 77.

1016. Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 83 (noting, however, that they were not lax in observing ritual purity; cf. also 139); McRay, *Archaeology*, 78.

1017. Cf. Meeks, *Moral World*, 111. Indeed, they could watch quite carefully (see esp. Osborne, “Neighbours,” 617). Lopez and Penner, “Houses,” 93, warn that the distinction between public and private is largely a modern one.

as Rhoda (12:13), through whom they would have received a more favorable report about the goings-on there. Guards at gates would often notice neighborhood activity (so long as they remained awake), but since Mary's home has only a female servant to answer, and one stationed inside rather than at the gate (she "came" to answer), perhaps many of these are less endowed homes, with less access to neighborhood business. Even if guards noticed the person knocking at the gate, they might assume him to be simply a latecomer to the nocturnal meeting. Perhaps neighbors were not inclined to accuse neighbors or members of their own class.

Perhaps another factor reducing suspicion is the narrative's indication of the timing: it may be the final night of the Festival of Unleavened Bread (see 12:3–4, though "after" need not specify *immediately* after). More endowed Jerusalemite homes might swell with visitors during the Passover, perhaps especially distant kin.¹⁰¹⁸ This would necessarily include not only providing the Passover meal itself but also housing the guests until the end of the festival, since those who traveled from afar would want to attend the entire festival. Under such circumstances, nocturnal gatherings might arouse less suspicion even if such an extremely late arrival might stir curiosity.

Should the prison guards detect¹⁰¹⁹ Peter's escape before morning light, however, or should any other enemy by chance realize, even retroactively, that the knocker was Peter, the stakes for Peter (and for those inside) would be high. If the authorities knew that Christians met in Mary's house, it might be one of the first places for them to check.¹⁰²⁰ Mary's status and gender might count against harsh interrogation, but the less known contact Peter had with the group after leaving, the better for everyone. Again, the escape was not yet known (12:18), but the protagonists in the narrative cannot count on continued ignorance. If the visitor was seen and accusers subsequently recalled his resemblance to Peter, investigations could follow.

Those gathered are astonished (12:16); Peter's presence naturally creates a commotion, and he has to quiet¹⁰²¹ his audience with a hand motion (12:17); these can be rhetorical gestures (13:16; 26:1), but they can also be used to seek attention in the midst of noise (19:33; 21:40).¹⁰²² The gesture a speaker used to alert an audience that he (usually public speakers were male) was about to begin was to stretch out "the thumb, index, and middle fingers while folding the other two into the palm (Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.98)."¹⁰²³ The gesture for silence, however, differed from this;¹⁰²⁴ one would raise one's right hand with the smallest finger extended.¹⁰²⁵ Silence is needed so he can speak quickly; it may also reduce unwanted neighborhood attention.

After Peter reports the miracle, he urges them to report the matter to "James and the brothers." Luke's audience will be familiar with "the brothers": Peter refers to

1018. Cf. *m. Pesah.* 7:13; 8:4; Lane, *Mark*, 497. On the Passover proper (now past), later sources suggest that ten to twenty people shared each lamb, gathering together as households for purposes of the festival (Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 47; Reicke, *Era*, 167).

1019. And dare to announce, since they and their immediate superiors might do their best to locate him before making his escape widely known (to reduce their shame and danger at his escape).

1020. Cf., e.g., the hypothetical freedman who bravely hid his patron in his own home (Sen. E. *Controv.* 4.8).

1021. Luke often employs the term *σιγάω* (six of ten times in the NT; e.g., Luke 9:36; 18:39; 20:26; Acts 15:13), including for listening to God's acts (Acts 15:12). See comment on Acts 11:18. Silence could also serve a transitional function to new speech (3 Macc 6:1; Plut. *Table* 8.2.1, *Mor.* 718B).

1022. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 19.254. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 385; also his surmise that Peter did not enter, although, given the circumstances, this may simply be Luke's abbreviation technique.

1023. Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 52–54 (quote, 52).

1024. *Ibid.*, 140.

1025. *Ibid.*, 145, suggesting that the lector of Acts would also perform this gesture (in the picture on 142, the thumb and index finger were pressed together). More fully, see 140–45 (documenting the gesture from art and literature). For the right hand and commands, see Libanius *Descr.* 2.3, 4.

the whole of the Jerusalem church (see Acts 1:15–16; 11:1, 29).¹⁰²⁶ But Luke also speaks of James as if he is known; though Luke has not mentioned him by name, his audience already knows of him (cf. Jesus's brothers in 1:14, without specifying that James is one of them, as Gal 1:19 does). Though his ministry was limited to Jerusalem, he was well known in the Diaspora (1 Cor 15:7; Gal 1:19; 2:9, 12; Jas 1:1; Jude 1).¹⁰²⁷ That Peter does not need to explain James's special prominence to those in Mary's home indicates that James was already a leading figure there (perhaps as early as Peter's travels in Acts 9:32–11:2).¹⁰²⁸

Though not a follower of Jesus before the resurrection (see comment on Acts 1:14), James received a personal resurrection appearance (1 Cor 15:7) just like Peter (15:5; cf. Luke 24:34) and, in a different way, Paul (1 Cor 15:8). He remained one of the three chief leaders of the Jerusalem church along with Peter and John in the period after Acts 15 (Gal 2:9). That Paul lists James first of the three probably suggests that he was the most prominent in the Jerusalem church, a role Paul would likely not have conceded him lightly in view of his own opponents' probable appeal to James's views (2:12).¹⁰²⁹ In many societies, kinship produces sociopolitical bonds;¹⁰³⁰ Middle Eastern custom would certainly have produced the expectation that some of Jesus's authority would pass to his brother.¹⁰³¹ Although Jesus warned against anything close to nepotism (Luke 8:21; 9:59–62; 14:26; 18:29; 21:16; esp. 14:12),¹⁰³² appointing brothers was common (Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.29; Otho's brother in Tac. *Hist.* 1.75, 77, 90; 2.23, 33; Plutarch *Otho* 7.4; 8.1; 13.3), since family honor bound them to oneself as trustworthy allies (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.7.14).

Paul regards James as very conservative or as one who wished to conciliate conservative elements in the church (Gal 2:12). He met with Paul after Paul's conversion, and despite their differences, Paul recognized him as an apostle and brother of the Lord (1:19). In contrast to Peter, James seems to have established positive relations with conservative elements in established Jerusalem religion, allowing him to function as a safe leader during Agrippa's persecution.¹⁰³³ So appreciated was his piety that when a Sadducee later did have him executed, the outcry among those considered more devoted to the law led to that high priest being deposed (Jos. *Ant.* 20.200–203).

Some scholars suggest that this James replaces the martyred apostle James (Acts 12:2).¹⁰³⁴ Since Matthias replaced Judas (1:20–26), it is possible that Luke presup-

1026. He could refer to the Lord's brothers, brothers of James as in Acts 1:14; but they do not recur in Acts whereas the usage for the church is much more common.

1027. Bauckham, "James," 427n37, argues that James appears less dominant outside Acts and Gal 1–2 because the Jerusalem church's role became anachronistic after 70 C.E.

1028. On James, see Martin, *James*, xxxiii–xli (esp. in the NT); in Jewish-Christian circles, xli–xlvi; for other traditions (esp. patristic and gnostic), xlvi–lxi; for the authenticity of Josephus's report, see, e.g., Dibelius, *James*, 14–15; Hare, *Persecution*, 32–33. His nickname "the Just" was not unique; see, e.g., Corn. Nep. 3 (Aristides), 1.2; likewise, "the good," Corn. Nep. 19 (Phocion), 1.1.

1029. Bauckham, "James," 441, suggesting that James achieved this authority because Peter and John "were no longer permanently based in Jerusalem."

1030. E.g., Chock, "Kinship," 88–89 (in that society, more social than political); Kaeppler, "Rank" (affecting rank); Spooner, "Politics"; Lewin, "Implications." For kinship and class, see, e.g., Kottak, "Kinship"; connections between messianic movements and lineage-based societies (Pereira de Queiroz, "Myths," 95–96) seem too generalized to be compelling, but kinship could affect lineage and authority in some religious groups (Solomon, "Kinship"). The loyalties that kinship generates sometimes also affect perceptions of events involving kin (e.g., Lucas, "Influence").

1031. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 164; Malina, *Windows*, 65; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 7. Tradition claims that another relative of Jesus succeeded James (Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 108, rightly notes Euseb. *H.E.* 3.32).

1032. Cf. also 4Q477 2 II, 8 (where loving a relative is probably related to mingling with outsiders; see II, 6).

1033. See Knox, *Jerusalem*, 169–70; cf. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 41.

1034. Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, 62. Luke might introduce this James after the other's demise to avoid confusing them, but this would constitute a literary courtesy, not a narrative identification of the two.

poses knowledge that this James replaces his deceased namesake among the Twelve. It is not clear, however, that the Twelve were a permanently self-perpetuating group, because Luke, at least, presents their role as eyewitnesses of Jesus's public ministry (1:21–22; which James was not); Paul distinguishes them from a larger body of "apostles" (1 Cor 15:5, 7). More likely, he is chosen *instead* of the Twelve: with the apostles as obvious targets (cf. Acts 8:1), with James brother of John dead, and with Peter and presumably John in hiding, another leader made better sense.¹⁰³⁵ As a Jewish cultural conservative, James seems to have been able to relate better to the groups that wanted his colleagues dead (Acts 12:3; 15:13–22; 21:18–20; Gal 2:12) and seems a more irenic figure (for a Jerusalem setting) to advance the church's status in Jerusalem.¹⁰³⁶

It is thus not clear that James the Lord's brother replaces John's brother; but even if he does, their shared names are likely simply coincidence. "James" (lit. "Jacob") was a common name,¹⁰³⁷ and namesake coincidences were common even for less frequent names.¹⁰³⁸ More often scholars suggest that James replaced Peter.¹⁰³⁹ But Peter and other apostles function alongside James (though he remains most prominent) in Acts 15:2, 4, 6–7, 22–23 and 16:4; moreover, James apparently already held a leadership role before Peter's flight.¹⁰⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the departure of Peter (and John) from Jerusalem would have allowed James to achieve the possibly highest rank among the three there, as suggested by the sequence of their names in Gal 2:12.¹⁰⁴¹ Luke certainly begins reporting James's prominence in Jerusalem and Paul's Gentile mission only once Peter has finished his early role in Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴²

The text is not clear as to whether Peter initially intended to stay at this home, but probably he did not. He would not have known that people were gathered there for prayer at this time of night (Acts 12:12); he probably came only to give out word before fleeing the city or to obtain help for such a flight (cf. 9:30; 17:10, 14). Staying in the home of a known Christian would risk rearrest and also cause serious trouble for whoever housed him (Agrippa was not patient with the guards, whom he treats as either accomplices or negligent in 12:19). Peter's departure does not indicate unwillingness to die if necessary (cf. continued preaching after a supernatural release in 5:20–21, 29–32), but his miraculous escape probably suggested to him that God wished to preserve him, and James's execution (12:2) illustrated that Agrippa was

1035. *G. Thom* 12 attributes directly to Jesus a transfer of authority from Jesus to James. Although this work includes enough gnosticizing features, and is generally far enough from early Palestinian features, to deny its authorship in the first century, it predates most other gnostic writings and, in this case, may reproduce an earlier Palestinian tradition. Speaking of people or an important person "for whose sake the world was created" probably echoes Jewish tradition outside the document's own community (see, e.g., *2 Bar.* 15:7; 21:24; *Sipre Deut.* 47.3.1–2; *b. Ber.* 6b; 61b; *Šabb.* 30b; *Gen. Rab.* 1:4; esp. for individuals in *b. Sanh.* 98b; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 1:20; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Num 22:30; *Tg. 1 Chr.* 4:23; see more fully Keener, *John*, 381).

1036. His relation to Jesus may have also encouraged even the authorities, for whom Jesus himself, human memory being what it is, might now be recalled as a much less radical threat than Peter. They could also claim that they aimed to stamp out not the entire movement (virtually impossible at this point) but only its most "radical" leaders (a way of eliminating those with whom they had experienced conflicts).

1037. E.g., *Jos. Life* 96; *CPJ* 2:137, §235; 3:179; *CIJ* 1:267, §340 (Rome); 2:117, §890 (Caesarea); 2:155, §967 (Gaza); 2:186, §1017 (Beth She'arim in Galilee); 2:212, §1161 (Beth She'arim); 2:391, §1467 (Egypt); 2:414, §1505 (Egypt).

1038. E.g., *Xen. Hell.* 1.2.13; *Dion. Hal. Din.* 1; *Philost. Vit. soph.* 1.483; 2.20.600.

1039. E.g., Knox, *Jerusalem*, 169–70; cf. Cullmann, *Peter*, 55. Heiligenthal, "Petrus und Jakobus," doubts this historically.

1040. E.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 388.

1041. Bauckham, "James," 441. This may have begun even with Peter's imprisonment (cf. Cullmann, *Peter*, 41). *G. Thom.* 12 (*NHL* 119) suggests that James's leadership was planned from the start.

1042. See Wall, "Successors to 'Twelve.'"

far less reluctant to kill than the Sanhedrin had been. Peter would be free to return after Agrippa's death (12:23; cf. 15:7).

X. WHERE DID PETER GO? (12:17)

"To another place"¹⁰⁴³ could mean a place in Jerusalem different from Mary's house; but given the need to avoid endangering Peter's hosts and given the message here to James (who at some point afterward emerges as particularly prominent, 15:13; 21:18), it is reasonable to suppose that the place (whether that night or later) would be outside Jerusalem;¹⁰⁴⁴ this would be safer. More than likely, Peter's ultimate destination would be outside Agrippa's jurisdiction altogether.¹⁰⁴⁵ Early Christian tradition strongly indicates that he eventually went to Rome; church tradition (Euseb. *H.E.* 2.14.5)¹⁰⁴⁶ and earlier Roman Catholic scholars, along with some Protestants, have often suggested this destination here.¹⁰⁴⁷ It is unlikely, however, that he journeyed to Rome this early (cf. Rom 15:20).¹⁰⁴⁸ Certainly he did not establish a permanent ministry there at this point: would he have traveled back to Jerusalem in Acts 15:6–11 only for the church conference?¹⁰⁴⁹ Contemporary Catholic scholars have thus often moved away from this position.¹⁰⁵⁰

Some scholars have suggested that Peter returned to the area of his ministry along the coast (9:32–43), but this remained in Judea and hence under Agrippa's jurisdiction¹⁰⁵¹ (though, if he avoided both Jerusalem and Caesarea, at least not under Agrippa's nose). Certainly Peter travels abroad during some later years (1 Cor 9:5), possibly including parts of Asia (1 Pet 1:1).¹⁰⁵² Despite potential intervention in Galilee, he could probably expect to remain fairly undisturbed there. Because he knew Galilee well, that is a likely destination for him historically.¹⁰⁵³ At some point (probably later), he appears in Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, receiving there mes-

1043. The phrase is not very specific (e.g., a place of symbolic exile in Exod 12:3; other geographic locations in 1 Macc 12:2; Philo *Abr.* 67; places other than prayer houses, Philo *Flacc.* 49; other places in one's writing in Jos. *Ant.* 14.114; or in Scripture, 1 *Clem.* 8.4; 29.3; 46.3). If we expand the range to include ἄλλος, the phrase remains quite general (e.g., Num 23:13, 27; 1 Esd 2:16; Jos. *Ant.* 6.270; 13.65; *War* 6.346; cf. Philo *Creation* 20). Smaltz, "Peter," 214–15, argues that Acts 12:17 refers to Peter's death; Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 273, thinks his arguments "quite strong" here but is less persuaded about a different Simeon in Acts 15:14.

1044. Unless Luke's pre-70 C.E. tradition remains mute to avoid implicating a host; but then why mention Mary's house? She may have passed away like her husband before her, and perhaps no Christian relatives owned the property; but this view requires so many such caveats that it is not the simplest explanation for Peter's place of hiding. If, as I believe, Luke's source is oral and probably secured during his Judean visit some fifteen years after Agrippa's death, anonymity would be irrelevant.

1045. Probably outside Palestine (with, e.g., Finegan, *Apostles*, 40).

1046. Cf. Peter as founder of the Roman church in Gennadius of Constantinople, on Rom 15:20, in *Pauluskommentare* 416; Bray, *Romans*, 363). Bray, *Romans*, xvii, notes that Rome emphasized a Petrine foundation especially after the rise of Constantinople (350 C.E.), probably in a bid to maintain primacy.

1047. Citing *Acts of Peter*; *Ps.-Clementine Recognitions*; *Ps.-Clementine Homilies*. See, e.g., Wenham, "Peter to Rome?"

1048. With, e.g., Polhill, *Acts*, 283; Peterson, *Acts*, 367; esp. Das, *Debate*, 24–25. One would also expect Peter to be named in Romans, as he is (perhaps without even personal acquaintance) in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5) and Galatians (Gal 1:18; 2:9, 11, 14).

1049. It is not clear that Christians far from Jerusalem received extended advance notice unless they were on the route between Antioch and Jerusalem (Acts 15:2–4).

1050. See, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 489; summary in Longenecker, *Acts*, 207.

1051. For the objection, see, e.g., Longenecker, *Acts*, 207; Larkin, *Acts*, 186.

1052. Some have even suggested Edessa (Osborne, "Peter?") or Mesopotamia (Foakes-Jackson, *Peter*, 117, cited in Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 490; cf. 1 Pet 5:13, though this probably refers to Rome). Riesner, *Early Period*, 119, suggests that wherever he went, he left twelve years after Jesus's crucifixion, hence in 41–42 C.E. (citing *Acts Pet.* 5.22; Euseb. *H.E.* 2.14.6).

1053. Though it would have been helpful in that case for Luke to have mentioned it, his possibly Judean source may not have known where Peter went; the matter was probably kept discreet at the time.

sengers from James (Gal 2:11–12); Antioch is a reasonable guess here¹⁰⁵⁴ (though it was quite some distance, much farther from home than Damascus or Alexandria). Yet we cannot be sure.

Luke may not name the place because he does not know or because it does not concern him; perhaps the place had even been kept secret, but Luke's point in any case is simply that Peter slipped away unharmed.¹⁰⁵⁵ He reappears in Jerusalem by Acts 15:7–11, though only temporarily (cf. 21:18);¹⁰⁵⁶ perhaps he returned soon after Agrippa's death.¹⁰⁵⁷

2. Herod's Pride and Death (12:18–23)

This portion of the narrative underlines Agrippa's arrogance and abuse of power over life and death; it also reminds the reader that the power over life and death ultimately belongs to God, who intervenes when appropriate. Agrippa killed James and tried to kill Peter. Yet Peter's escape shortly before his planned public execution (undoubtedly announced in advance) publicly detracts from Agrippa's honor; by executing the guards, he can recoup a modicum of this lost honor. Angrily, he treats the delegates of Tyre and Sidon (who are concerned about feeding their people) arrogantly but warms to their offering him honor. In contrast to Peter (10:26; cf. 3:12) and other characters in Acts (14:15), he welcomes divine honor. Thus the Lord's angel who struck Peter to deliver him (12:7) now strikes Agrippa to slay him. Most relevant is that all of Agrippa's power (even when expressed in killing a key leader) fails to stop the church's growth (12:24). Luke thus reinforces his point, through yet another dramatic example, that nothing could stop the gospel (5:39; cf. 28:31).

a. Herod Kills the Guards (12:18–19)

Given the obvious threat to the guards' lives (soon fulfilled), "no small disturbance" (12:18) clearly means "a great disturbance."¹⁰⁵⁸ This is thus a typical Lukan example of litotes (also characteristic of Thucydides, whose historiographic style, some scholars think, may have even influenced Luke's indirectly).¹⁰⁵⁹ ("Guards" were not always soldiers,¹⁰⁶⁰ but 12:4, 6 makes clear that the guards here are the soldiers.) If the guards worked different shifts, ideally only the guards who had been on duty would face examination and death, and so perhaps the quaternion of four soldiers on whose watch Peter escaped would be those executed in 12:19.

Since we do not know on what watch of the night he escaped and it appears that the discovery awaited daylight (12:18), it is difficult to ascertain how many quaternions would be implicated. Perhaps it was only one, since changing the guards to which Peter was chained would presumably reveal his absence. Thus it may be the last watch of

1054. Favored as a possibility by, e.g., Marshall, *Acts*, 211; Longenecker, *Acts*, 207.

1055. With Conzelmann, *Acts*, 95; Polhill, *Acts*, 283; cf. Cullmann, *Peter*, 38–39.

1056. Longenecker, *Acts*, 207, suggests "in transit"; but Peter's presence for this conference is probably no coincidence, and our reading of Gal 2 keeps him in Jerusalem for some time afterward.

1057. With Munck, *Acts*, 114.

1058. Luke employs the same term for "disturbance" (the only other NT use) for the riot in Acts 19:23.

1059. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 248, noting the same litotes in Acts 14:28; 15:2; 17:4, 12; 19:23–24; 27:20; and other examples of litotes in 14:17; 17:27; 19:11; 20:12; 21:39; 26:19, 26; 28:2. Cf. also Conzelmann, *Acts*, 95; on litotes, see *Rhet. Her.* 4.38.50; Rowe, "Style," 128 (offering as examples Lysias *Or.* 12.22 [*Against Eratosthenes*]; Cic. *Cat.* 3.7.17); Porter, "Paul and Letters," 579 (citing Rom 1:16); Robertson, *Grammar*, 1205 (selecting all his examples from Acts, where it is common); e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 54.3. For understatement, as here, the reader of Acts might use an ironic tone, sometimes with an indignant undertone (Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 85).

1060. See Rapske, *Custody*, 252 (citing Pliny *Ep.* 10.19–20).

the night before daybreak, or if it was the penultimate nocturnal watch, the discovery may have occurred a few hours before daybreak (the explication of which would have required of Luke more words than his simple “when day had come”). Or perhaps Luke envisions Peter not only being invisible during his escape but also seeming to remain so during the changes in shifts (a phantom, as in some Greek myths). If each shift believed that they changed the chains for different guards, only the final shift would prove incapable of denying complicity in Peter's escape.

In any case, Agrippa has lost face by Peter's escape after an execution was publicly announced;¹⁰⁶¹ he can recoup some lost honor only by executing those he can hold responsible for the fiasco (12:19). Given the survival of the guards during Peter's escape and their failure to even claim that they had been overpowered, the only naturalistic explanations were complicity and/or that some or all had fallen asleep and been careless in chaining him besides.¹⁰⁶² (When warehouses storing wealth were burglarized, guards could be punished on the assumption of being accomplices.)¹⁰⁶³ The possible complicity of one and negligence of the others seemed reason enough for the execution; that their examination apparently yielded no evidence of their being secret sympathizers with the widely spread movement of Christians must, however, have seemed curious.

A critic could also attribute the escape to sorcery (cf. comment on Acts 5:24), but Hellenistically educated Agrippa would not presume such an explanation in the guards' defense. That there is another explanation, which Luke presents, Agrippa cannot consider without admitting the possibility of serious error (hence risking further dishonor), and so he must assume the guards' culpability. Even before his friend Caligula's accession as emperor, Agrippa had been severe in demanding punishments (Jos. *Ant.* 18.183).

When soldiers, even Roman soldiers, failed in vigilance at their watch, enemies could break in,¹⁰⁶⁴ or the besieged could break out (Polyb. 1.19.12). Sometimes people sought to free prisoners by force (5.39.4–5 [which failed]), but making a guard drunk might work better (Jos. *Life* 388). (On guards' negligence and falling asleep, see comment on Acts 20:28.) The captain of the Levite temple guard could beat any guard he found asleep (*m. Mid.* 1:2), but Agrippa, raised in Rome, could prove far more exacting than the Jerusalem priestly establishment (contrast Acts 5:23–24).

Long before the Romans, camp discipline demanded severe punishment for guards who fell asleep on duty. Thus guards who failed to keep the killers out could face scourging and/or beheading (Eurip. *Rhes.* 812–19) and protest vociferously that they did not fall asleep (*Rhes.* 825–27); punishments could be so dreadful that some Assyrians who fell asleep at the night watch allegedly deserted to the Indians to escape the penalty (Diod. Sic. 2.18.8). Among Romans, if a soldier was found asleep during the night watch, all those endangered by his negligence would strike him with hands or stones; if he survived, he could never return to his country.¹⁰⁶⁵ When a Roman

1061. Even if the execution's timing was not announced in advance (its announcement is not explicit in Acts 12:4), at least the Christians would know that Peter had been taken prisoner and might face the same fate as James (12:2–3, 5).

1062. Cf. Keener, *Matthew*, 713–14. Sometimes a prisoner could escape through bribing guards (Tac. *Ann.* 2.68).

1063. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 27.

1064. E.g., Hom. *Il.* 10.309–12, 416–21; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 5.47.1; 7.11.2–3; 9.34.4; Diod. Sic. 3.55.1; 19.95.5–6; Virg. *Aen.* 9.314–66, 375–445; Livy 24.46.4; 36.23.10–36.24.6; 44.33.8–9; Sall. *Jug.* 58.1; Jos. *Ant.* 18.356, 370; *Life* 405; see further comment at Acts 20:28.

1065. Polyb. 6.37.1–6; see further Dupont, *Life*, 126; cf. punishments, often lethal, after investigation of “any misdemeanour on watch” in Le Bohec, “Vigiliae.” An officer who failed in properly making rounds of the night watch was also subject to punishment (Val. Max. 8.1.damn.6).

garrison fell asleep and was nearly captured, the Romans hurled the captain of the guard over a cliff the next morning.¹⁰⁶⁶ Punishments were similar for deserters (see comment below).¹⁰⁶⁷ Some cultures showed mercy by requiring disgrace, not death.¹⁰⁶⁸ Rome had sometimes banished deserters,¹⁰⁶⁹ cut off their hands,¹⁰⁷⁰ or selectively executed them in a battle¹⁰⁷¹ but more often and, by this period, more consistently, executed them.¹⁰⁷²

It is thus not surprising that Romans counted it a capital crime for anyone on guard duty to abandon his post or retreat (Polyb. 1.17; Livy 24.37.9). Any soldier who failed to appear for roll call (Livy 3.69.7), who was too distant to hear the trumpet during battle, or who strayed from his unit without permission could be enslaved, mutilated, or killed.¹⁰⁷³ If an entire unit proved negligent, one rare punishment was random execution:¹⁰⁷⁴ every tenth (or sometimes hundredth) man was selected by lot, then beaten to death by his colleagues.¹⁰⁷⁵ Although rarer in the empire than in the republic, it still occurred.¹⁰⁷⁶ The death penalty for rank-and-file soldiers who left their posts was extended by Augustus to centurions who did so (Suet. *Aug.* 24.2).

The issue here is neither abandonment nor, given the chains, even solely negligence; and the punishment could be severe. Most who escaped prison did so through the guards' negligence, collusion, or both (Plut. *Demosth.* 26.2). Later sources consistent with Acts (cf. Acts 16:27; 27:42) suggest that a guard whose prisoner escaped would face the penalty originally assigned to his prisoner (Justin. *Cod.* 9.4.4),¹⁰⁷⁷ and more contemporary sources also suggest the possibility of executing negligent guards (Petron. *Sat.* 112; cf. Char. *Chaer.* 3.4.18).¹⁰⁷⁸ Because the negligence of multiple guards becomes cumulatively improbable, a leader ruling out divine rescue would probably view collusion as a likelier explanation in this instance.

1066. Plut. *Cam.* 27.2, 5.

1067. Cf., e.g., Lysias *Or.* 14.5–6, §140; Val. Max. 2.7.13; 2.7.15a–15c. Homicide was considered justifiable in killing a deserter to the enemy (Robinson, *Criminal Law*, 45). For hypothetical court cases regarding desertion, see, e.g., Quint. *Decl.* 246 intro; 371 intro; 378.4; 387 intro; cf. reluctance to receive even too many deserters from the other side in Quint. *Decl.* 255.1 (disrespecting them in 255.3, 6). Cf. disgust for deserters in Vell. Pat. 2.85.3–5; 2.119.4; Quint. *Decl.* 304 intro; disgust for traitors in Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.22; Cic. *Finib.* 3.9.32; Virg. *Aen.* 6.621; Livy 1.11.6–7; 5.27.6–10 (though cf. Livy 4.61.8–10); Val. Max. 1.1.13; Sen. *Controv.* 7.7.intro.; Libanius *Encomium* 1.8–9, 11; 4.19; *Invect.* 5.11, 17; *Topics* 2 (esp. 2.13–14, 17–18); *Refutation* 2.12; such behavior invited the hatred of even one's family (Livy 2.5.7–8; Corn. Nep. 4 [Pausanias], 5.3).

1068. Egyptians in Diod. Sic. 1.78.1; Charondas's laws, 12.16.1. Diodorus seems to appreciate the benevolence.

1069. Sil. It. 10.654–56 (during the Punic War). Cf. traitors in the hypothetical law in Quint. *Decl.* 334 intro (with their advocates); 366 intro.

1070. Val. Max. 2.7.11; Appian *Hist. rom.* 7.7.43.

1071. E.g., one-tenth; Dio Cass. 48.42.1–2.

1072. Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.30.7, on deserters and traitors; 6.9.4, on those who fled in battle; Val. Max. 2.7.12; Quint. *Decl.* 246.3; 287 intro; 315 intro; for traitors, see Quint. *Decl.* 272 intro; 294 intro; 331.5; 348 intro. Tyrants might also execute those accused of trying to desert (Livy 34.27.9). Camps that executed deserters reportedly saw fewer than did those known for leniency (Tac. *Ann.* 13.35).

1073. Le Bohec, "Desertor" (citing Suet. *Otho* 11.1; *Dig.* 49.16.14). In times of peace, imprisonment was common (Tac. *Ann.* 1.21.3), but the offender could be executed (Suet. *Aug.* 24; Jos. *War* 3.103; Le Bohec, "Desertor").

1074. Le Bohec, "Decimatio," cites Polyb. 6.38; Frontin. *Str.* 4.1.34; 4.1.37; Quint. *Decl.* 348.

1075. Polyb. 6.37.1–6; Tac. *Ann.* 3.21.1; Le Bohec, "Decimatio." One could also execute a chief centurion (Vell. Pat. 2.78.3).

1076. Le Bohec, "Decimatio," citing Suet. *Aug.* 24.2; *Calig.* 48.1; *Galba* 12.2; Tac. *Ann.* 3.21.1; *Hist.* 1.37.3; 1.51.5.

1077. Commentators regularly cite this later code here (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 139; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 95; Witherington, *Acts*, 389; Bock, *Acts*, 430). Although much later, it codified earlier traditional practice.

1078. With Barrett, *Acts*, 588; Johnson, *Acts*, 214.

Romans decided appropriate penalties based on the significance of the escape and on the extent to which the guard appeared culpable; if one soldier was clearly at fault, the others would not require punishment.¹⁰⁷⁹ Similarly, in laws of obligations regarding objects, a guard lacked liability when an “act of god” destroyed an object.¹⁰⁸⁰ When the interrogation (Acts 12:19) yielded no one willing to admit guilt, however, and the prisoner’s escape should have at least been noticed by each of the guards, their collusion could only be assumed. A Roman penalty would not apply automatically in Agrippa’s jurisdiction, but given his Roman experience and ample pre-Roman precedents, “it would be surprising if it did not.”¹⁰⁸¹

How were the guards interrogated here? The questioning would likely have included cross-examination (see comment on Acts 6:13) but probably also more than this.¹⁰⁸² Since the offense is a capital one, it is possible that they were scourged—that is, tortured—as part of the interrogation;¹⁰⁸³ certainly, scourging frequently preceded executions.¹⁰⁸⁴ Roman citizens were exempt from torture, but if these soldiers are part of Agrippa’s own force, they likely are not Roman citizens. Torture could also be acceptable in some circumstances—for example, to make a traitor reveal accomplices (Quint. *Decl.* 307 intro); those who denied under torture, as these men may have, would not always be believed (Quint. *Decl.* 269.5). That the guards were “led away” could imply that they were led to prison (Luke 23:26; Gen 39:22; 40:3; 42:16, 19; cf. 1 Esd 1:38),¹⁰⁸⁵ but as noted above, prison was normally temporary detention awaiting further trial or, in this case (since they have already been examined), execution (cf. 2 Kgs 25:20–21).¹⁰⁸⁶ The likelier sense here is thus simply that they were being led to execution (cf., e.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 12.6.7, ἀπήχθησαν [to crucifixion]).¹⁰⁸⁷ The attentive reader might recall the cognate verb in Acts 12:4, where Agrippa had planned to bring Peter out to the people for public execution; now he has to settle for four of his own soldiers instead.

While the blame for the action rests with Agrippa rather than with Peter or the

1079. Rapske, *Custody*, 30–31.

1080. “Custodia,” 1029 (although this is not civil law involving prisoners).

1081. Barrett, *Acts*, 588.

1082. Johnson, *Acts*, 214, mentions cross-examination (citing Plato *Symp.* 201E) but notes that when performed by tyrants or household owners, it could include torture (citing Char. *Chaer.* 5.1–2; Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.8).

1083. For *coercitio* as part of preliminary examinations, cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 282–83; on various forms of beatings, see Brown, *John*, 2:874 (though Brown concedes in *Death*, 851, that the NT writers and their audiences probably did not recognize these distinctions). For the possibility of torture in the examination here, see Johnson, *Acts*, 214; Bock, *Acts*, 430 (and sources that they cite). Torture in the strict sense was normally reserved for slaves, but exceptions existed (Schiemann, “Torture,” 795; see the discussion of slaves’ torture in sect. 11 of the excursus at ch. 12).

1084. Jos. *War* 2.306–8; 5.449; Livy 2.5.8; 9.24.15; 10.1.3; 26.40.13; 33.36; 41.11.8; Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.9.3; Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.62.162; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.40.3; 5.43.2; 7.69.1; 9.40.3–4; 12.6.7; 20.16.2; 20.17.2; Arrian *Alex.* 3.30.5. As with Jesus in the Gospels (Keener, *Matthew*, 672–73, from which I borrow this information), they may have been stripped and tied to a pillar or post (Plaut. *Bacch.* 4.7.25; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.78 in Blinzler, *Trial*, 222; see also *m. Mak.* 3:12), then beaten with *flagella*—leather whips into whose thongs a spike or pieces of iron or bone were woven (Apul. *Metam.* 7.30.154; *Cod. theod.* 8.5.2; 9.35.2; Goguel, *Life*, 527; Blinzler, *Trial*, 222). Such a flogging left skin hanging from the back in bloody strips (Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 350; Blinzler, *Trial*, 222). Various texts (e.g., Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.119; Cic. *Rab. Post.* 5.15–16; Brown, *Death*, 851) attest the horror with which this punishment was viewed. Soldiers normally executed this task in the provinces (cf. Suet. *Calig.* 26; Blinzler, *Trial*, 222); in this case, the soldiers executing the task could take warning for themselves.

1085. Johnson, *Acts*, 214, cites also Hdt. 2.114; 6.81. Years earlier Caesar’s guards “led” (ἦγον) Agrippa himself to detention, slated for eventual execution (Jos. *Ant.* 18.191).

1086. Luke also employs the verb ἀπάγω for one led away to trial (Luke 21:12; 22:66), but that again does not suit this context.

1087. Also ἀπάγει, lead to punishment, in Porph. *Marc.* 25.400; εἰσῆχθη in Xen. *Anab.* 1.6.11; *duci*, the infinitive of the Latin equivalent, in Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.3 (for Christians).

angel, it is noteworthy that the normal course of human events follows here; there is no divine intervention for the guards. Luke does not invite his hearers to celebrate the guards' demise; elsewhere, one of his reliable characters intervenes to preserve a guard's life, where this was possible (16:28).¹⁰⁸⁸

Whereas at Jesus's trial the abuse of a Passover amnesty led to Barabbas's release at Jesus's expense (Luke 23:17; see comment on Acts 3:14), here Peter's release at a Passover comes at his guards' expense. Peter escapes death, but his captors (and in the next paragraph, Agrippa himself) unexpectedly meet death.¹⁰⁸⁹ Luke's tone here, however, does not appear vindictive toward the guards, whose personal treatment of Peter has not been mentioned. Daniel's enemies (some of the older of whom may have even been rescued by Daniel's intervention in Dan 2:12–16) plot his death in 6:4–5, and the narrative includes in Daniel's vindication the death of his accusers and their families (6:24). Here there is neither gloating over the deaths of the guards (cf. Paul valuing his captors' lives in Acts 16:28; 27:24) nor the sense that their death is part of Peter's vindication (contrast 12:23–24). Rather, their death, like James's execution, underlines the seriousness of the threat that Peter has escaped; Agrippa is a much more serious foe than the Sanhedrin has been. Luke's narrative highlights the tyrant's power and cruelty, yet the tyrant who meant to kill Peter wreaks his anger against his own guards instead, in both instances acting as if he holds authority over life and death morally as well as legally.¹⁰⁹⁰ His own fate in 12:23 will set the record straight.

Agrippa then moves from Jerusalem to Caesarea (see comment on Acts 10:1), where he can make use of another palace built by his grandfather (see comment on Acts 23:35; 24:23). Tyre and Sidon are much closer to Caesarea than to Jerusalem, and it is presumably here that the embassy of the Tyrians and the Sidonians finds him. The ideal reader, however (and perhaps especially a northern Mediterranean reader for whom the name Caesarea connotes primarily its Lukan use), recalls that Caesarea was where God employed Peter miraculously (10:28–48). This invites a brief contrast with Herod:

Herod Agrippa I	Simon Peter
Moves from Jerusalem to Caesarea (12:19)	Moves from Caesarea back to Jerusalem (11:2)
Herod claims the power of life and death over others (12:2–6, 19)	Peter is prepared to die for his witness and brings others the message of life (3:15; 5:20; 11:18)
Herod treats Gentiles arrogantly (12:20–21), reluctant to share food with them (12:20)	Peter treats Gentiles humbly (10:25–28, 46–48), even eating with them (11:3; cf. 10:23, 48)
Herod accepts pagan worship in Caesarea (12:22–23)	Peter rejects pagan worship in Caesarea (10:25–26)
The Lord's angel strikes Herod dead (12:23)	The Lord's angel strikes Peter awake, delivering him from Herod (12:7)

None of this suggests that Luke invented the site of Caesarea; Josephus confirms that this was the location of Agrippa's death.¹⁰⁹¹ But Luke chooses to report the location, and this was a location he had already made familiar to his audience.

1088. The literary function of including the guards' death is not vindication (cf. perhaps Dan 6:24) but reinforcing the recognition that Peter's detention had seemed fully secure, so that Agrippa holds the guards responsible.

1089. Cf. also Pervo, *Profit*, 63.

1090. He did hold the power legally, albeit as a Roman client king, in contrast to the Sanhedrin (see comment on Acts 7:54–8:1a). Rome reserved for itself and its delegated authorities the "right of the sword" (also delegated to governors; e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 10.30.1).

1091. Jos. *Ant.* 19.343 (though he had lived especially at Jerusalem, 19.331).

b. Herod Flaunts His Power (12:20–21)

Herod's "anger" (12:20) and arrogance (12:21–23) are in keeping with his behavior in 12:19. God's bringing down the arrogance of kings fits God's character in parts of Luke's Bible¹⁰⁹² and the announcement by Mary in Luke 1:52.

Caesarea (Acts 12:19) was an ideal location for a meeting about trade not only because it was more accessible to Tyre and Sidon¹⁰⁹³ but also because it was heavily engaged in trade. Excavations demonstrate that Josephus's description of Caesarea's harbor, which had constituted a massive undertaking, is accurate in most details, although there were some splendid features of which even Josephus was unaware. Blocks, some of them more than fifty tons, were used to build two breakwaters (one of them 150 ft. wide, the other 200 ft.) running 1,500 feet into the sea. These met to form a sixty-foot entrance for ships northwest of the harbor.¹⁰⁹⁴ Such a site was designed for and naturally invited substantial trade, and archaeologists have discovered five groups of twenty massive storage vaults each (100 in all) along the coast.¹⁰⁹⁵ Because these storage chambers lay on bedrock and included Herodian coins in the lowest level,¹⁰⁹⁶ it is clear that they belong to Herod's massive building program and hence were built about a half century before Agrippa's reign.

The events described in 12:20–23 occurred in 44 C.E. (Jos. *War* 2.219; cf. *Ant.* 19.343), as the latest coins from Agrippa's reign demonstrate. If Agrippa's collapse (described also in Josephus) occurred on Claudius's birthday, it may date to August 1, 44 C.E.;¹⁰⁹⁷ the alternative is the anniversary of Caesarea's founding (as a city dedicated to Caesar), on March 5 of the same year.¹⁰⁹⁸ Just as Peter refuses to fear those who kill the body (Acts 12:6; Luke 12:4) and Agrippa refuses to fear the one who casts into hell (Acts 12:22–23; Luke 12:5), Agrippa here also values wealth more than future judgment (Luke 12:16–21).

Tyre and Sidon shared close ties with each other and with Aradus (Strabo 16.2.15).¹⁰⁹⁹ The geographic proximity of Phoenicia to Palestine had led to important contacts for most of Israel's history as a nation, and Jews were settling in Phoenicia even in the Hellenistic period (Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.194); by the first century, Jews had settled in Ptolemais (*War* 2.477), Tyre (2.478), and Sidon (*Ant.* 17.324; *War* 2.479).¹¹⁰⁰ Archaeological evidence suggests that parts of Galilee were economically tied to Tyre.¹¹⁰¹ Tyre was known for its international trade, purple-dye and

1092. E.g., Isa 10:12; 14:4–6; Dan 4:30–33 (cf. repentance in 4:34–37); 5:20 (cf. repentance in 5:21); the king (perhaps apocalyptic?) in Dan 8:23–25; 11:36–39. Intertextual examination with respect to some Greek mythical traditions in the context may also be relevant: in view of connections with Dionysus narratives of prison escapes and judgment on repressive rulers (see Weaver, *Epiphany*, 149–217), Herod plays the role of King Pentheus here (though, again, Luke most certainly does not "invent" his death).

1093. Phoenicia is directly beyond Caesarea in the summary of Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.14.69.

1094. McRay, *Archaeology*, 140.

1095. *Ibid.*

1096. *Ibid.*, 142.

1097. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 166 (citing Suet. *Claud.* 2.1).

1098. Barrett, *Acts*, 592; Witherington, *Acts*, 80; cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 139–40. Some have preferred March 10 (cf. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:368, cited in Bock, *Acts*, 431, who notes both views).

1099. Sidonians had rescued many Tyrians from Alexander's massacre (Quint. Curt. 4.4.16), remembering their kinship, i.e., their alleged common founder (4.4.15).

1100. Stern, "Diaspora," 142. For earlier Phoenicia, see, e.g., Harden, *Phoenicians*; Moscati, *Phoenicians*; Muhly, "Homer and Phoenicians"; accessibly, Peckham, "Phoenicia" (and sources cited there); on Tyre in this period, see, e.g., Edwards, "Tyre" (and sources cited there, including Hanson, *Influence*); earlier, Katzenstein, "Tyre"; on Sidon, Schmitz, "Sidon." Tyre supplanted Sidon's economic prominence in the early first millennium B.C.E. (Liwak, "Tyros," 72).

1101. Meyers, "Judaism and Christianity," 74.

glass industries, and two harbors.¹¹⁰² Recovering from Alexander's conquest in 332 B.C.E., Tyre had regained its old prosperity under the Seleucids, and under Rome it was one of the eastern Mediterranean's chief commercial centers.¹¹⁰³ Phoenician (probably Tyrian) wares in Hellenistic Palestine reveal considerable trade in that period.¹¹⁰⁴ Agrippa had provided public benefactions for the Phoenician city Berytus (modern Beirut), just north of Sidon.¹¹⁰⁵

Phoenicia, however, had long depended on nearby territories such as Palestine for its food (1 Kgs 5:9, 11); this was especially true of Tyre, traditionally an island kingdom completely dependent on trade (Ezek 27:17).¹¹⁰⁶ Joppa exported wheat to Sidon each year (Jos. *Ant.* 14.206); Rome had reminded the Phoenicians that they had no claim on Judean territories (14.197).¹¹⁰⁷ Such economic dependence could prove disastrous if supplies were suddenly cut off; thus, for example, the Phoenician colony Carthage had once depended on the Libyan countryside, taking half its crops until the Libyans revolted (Polyb. 1.71.1–2).

Agrippa had been withholding trade from Tyre and Sidon, and his economic sanctions had achieved their purpose:¹¹⁰⁸ the republics were now suing for terms of "peace," in this case economic nonaggression and a trade agreement.¹¹⁰⁹ (The term "peace" could apply to the ending of civil discord [e.g., Cic. *Phil.* 1.1.1]. On the term, see more fully comment on Acts 10:36; there, as in Luke 2:14, but in contrast to the tyrant here, Jesus brings true peace.) Luke's portrayal here fits Josephus's indication that Agrippa was demonstrating political independence, beginning to build Jerusalem's walls and establish contacts with other client rulers (*Ant.* 19.326–27, 338–41).¹¹¹⁰ Prices rose in time of famine (probably relevant here, at least on a narrative level, in view of the famine context in Acts 11:28–30),¹¹¹¹ and those with wealth would pay

1102. E.g., Jones, Seyrig, and Salles, "Tyre"; Wallace and Williams, *World*, 174. For Tyrian purple in this period, see Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.17.76; further comment on Acts 16:14.

1103. Ward, "Tyre," 249.

1104. Berlin, "Monarchy."

1105. Jos. *Ant.* 20.211 (following his grandfather's precedent, *War* 1.422); Reicke, *Era*, 200. Josephus's nationalism may color his picture of Jewish control of the coast as far north as Sidon (Rosenfeld, "Josephus and Coast").

1106. Cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 96. Tyre also had its surrounding countryside on the mainland (Mark 7:24; Judge, *Pattern*, 15); all cities in at least the Greco-Roman world depended on their surrounding χώρα, or countryside (Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 8).

1107. Theissen, *Gospels*, 73.

1108. Cf. Judge, *Pattern*, 21.

1109. Cf. the language of friendship for alliances; e.g., Hom. *Il.* 3.93, 256; 4.17; 16.282; Xen. *Cyr.* 3.2.23; Polyb. 1.62.8; 14.1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.28.7; 3.51.1; 5.26.4; 5.50.3; 6.21.2; 6.95.1; 8.9.3; 8.36.3; 15.7.2; Diod. Sic. 14.30.4; 14.56.2; 17.39.1; 17.54.2; 19.66.6; 19.67.1; 21.12.6; 31.5.3; 32.16.1; 33.28b.4; 40.1.2; Livy 6.2.3; 27.4.6; 43.6.9; 45.12.6; Sall. *Jug.* 14.17; 102.6; Virg. *Aen.* 11.321; Lysias *Or.* 2.2, §192; Aeschines *Embassy* 30, 39; Demosth. *Navy* 5; *Fals. leg.* 62; *Ep.* 3.27; Strabo 8.5.5; Plut. *Comparison of Lycurgus and Numa* 4.6; *Pel.* 5.1; 29.4; S. *Kings*, Epameinondas 17, *Mor.* 193DE; Corn. Nep. 7 (Alcibiades), 4.7; 5.3; 7.5; 14 (Datames), 8.5; 23 (Hannibal), 10.2; Arrian *Alex.* 1.28.1; 4.15.2, 5; 4.21.8; 7.15.4; Hdn. 4.7.3; 4.15.8; 1 Macc 12:1, 3, 8; 14:40; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.109 (but cf. similar interests in 1.111); 2.83; *Life* 30, 124; cf. *Rhet. Her.* 3.3.4 (*societates atque amicitias*); Max. Tyre 35.7–8; Philost. *Hrk.* 35.4. Further in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, see Balch, "Friendship"; in general, Keener, *John*, 1007; idem, "Friendship," 381.

1110. Dunn, *Acts*, 166.

1111. Possibly, on the historical level, Judea was not yet hungry from the famine (if the visit of Acts 11:30; 12:25 indeed belongs to after Agrippa's death); but if he died in August 44, some might already be aware of failing harvests in Egypt. It is also the case that the elite could trade their region's resources more for politics than for the region's need. For the most notorious example, Egypt, the empire's breadbasket, was often underfed because it was feeding Rome (Kraybill, *Cult and Commerce*, 107; see comment on Acts 27:6; cf. *Sib. Or.* 11.279, 290; Charlesworth, *Trade Routes*, 16–34). (Aune, *Revelation*, 1010, generally positive on Roman economic policy, acknowledges Egypt as an exception.) Fertile Asia produced wine for export and hence had to import grain (Kraybill, *Cult and Commerce*, 66–67).

the inflated prices (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.51). Tyre and Sidon were wealthy enough to pay extra for their food but certainly would avoid this if possible.¹¹¹²

Tyrants were known to often exploit their people's wealth for their own pleasures (Max. Tyre 33.4). A brother could warn a governor not to let his temper hurt his governorship (Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.1.13.37–39), but there was probably no one giving such advice to Agrippa about his anger mentioned here, and he had achieved his aims in producing the submission of the republics of Tyre and Sidon. Pompous rulers to whom local populations deferred are common in ancient literature (e.g., Polyb. 28.20.10–11), and some rhetorically warned that any ruler who became angry and exploitative could become a tyrant (Libanius *Invect.* 7.21). A common OT model relevant here, however, is that of the arrogant king—whether of Babylon (Isa 14:13–14; cf. Dan 3:1–7; 6:7),¹¹¹³ Egypt (cf. Ezek 32:2–3), or, perhaps of ironic relevance here, Tyre (Ezek 28:6, 9)—who exalts himself as divine.¹¹¹⁴

Like Tyre, Sidon remained a pagan city. Its temple of Eshmun was a healing sanctuary, and ruins of its throne of Astarte remain even today.¹¹¹⁵ Sidon was known for the continued worship of Astarte (Ach. Tat. 1.1.1–2). Like Tyre, it was also fairly prosperous. Classical sources such as Homer treat Sidon as synonymous with Phoenicia.¹¹¹⁶ Sidon became a republic after Alexander's conquest and a free city in 111, later confirmed by Pompey.¹¹¹⁷ Its coastal location also secured its status as a major commercial center, and the city was known for “two industries, purple-dyeing and glass-blowing.”¹¹¹⁸ Sidon's relations with its Jewish population were better than those of some areas nearer Judea; it was among the few cities to spare their Jewish populations in the wake of Judea's revolt against Rome (*Jos. War* 2.479).

Ironically in Luke's narrative, God was working among many Phoenicians (Acts 11:19; cf. 15:3; Luke 6:17), explicitly including Tyre (Acts 21:2–3, 7) and Sidon (27:3). As Luke indicates elsewhere, God would tolerate Tyre and Sidon more than his own people's unwillingness to heed his message (Luke 4:26; 10:13–14).

The king's “chamberlain” (τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ κοιτῶνος, Acts 12:20) was an important official who controlled access to the king.¹¹¹⁹ Although we know of the office, the chamberlain's name is not reported elsewhere, and his omission from other accounts of Agrippa's death emphasizes that Luke's source is independent of Josephus.¹¹²⁰ Luke does not explain what he does, probably suggesting that Luke is again abridging a more complete source or report to which he had access.¹¹²¹ Again, since Philip lived in Caesarea during this period (8:40) and since Luke (or his “we” source) resided in

1112. See Le Cornu, *Acts*, 660. Rulers could not afford to hold out indefinitely, however; the masses were often patient, but not in times of hunger (see Toner, *Culture*, 169; Stambaugh, *City*, 143).

1113. Cf. the possible allusion to Isa 14 in Luke 10:15.

1114. For an allusion to Ezek 28 here, with Agrippa as “king of Tyre,” see Strom, “Background to Acts 12.”

1115. Khalifeh, “Sidon,” 40. Sidon was not as known for rhetoric as some other cities were, but we hear of an apparently half-rate sophist from there in Lucian *Dem.* 14.

1116. Jones and Salles, “Sidon.” In early sources, it was especially the southern region (Tsirkin, “Canaan”).

1117. Jones and Salles, “Sidon” (it became a Roman colony only in the third century C.E.).

1118. *Ibid.* See Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.17.76 (attributing purple to Tyre, as was traditional, and glass to Sidon).

1119. Johnson, *Acts*, 215, cites cognates (Epict. *Diatr.* 1.19.17–23; cf. 3.22.15; 4.7.1–19; BDAG). The term κοιτῶν in the LXX often means a royal bedchamber (Exod 8:3; Judg 3:24; 2 Sam 4:7; 2 Kgs 6:12; 1 Esd 3:3; for others' bedchambers, cf. Judg 15:1; 1 Kgs 20:30; Eccl 10:20; Joel 2:16; Ezek 8:12; wealthy ones in 2 Sam 13:10; Jdt 13:3–4; 14:15; 16:19).

1120. Barrett, *Acts*, 589.

1121. *Ibid.* Pervo, *Acts*, 313–14, thinks that some of Luke's failure to be “coherent” here reflects “excessive compression.” The unexplained involvement of Caesarea's δῆμος also supports an abridgment. Some (e.g., Watson, “Blastus”) think that their “persuasion” of Blastus includes bribery (cf. Xen. *Mem.* 3.11.1), but while this would not be surprising and is not unlikely (see comment on Acts 24:26), Barrett, *Acts*, 589, notes that this meaning is not clear here.

Caesarea at length, it is not surprising that he would have oral access to some details from this location.¹¹²²

One wonders why, in such a compressed account, Luke pauses to mention Herod's having donned royal apparel (12:21), but in this instance we possess another source that indicates why mention of apparel would be preserved in Luke's source (though this is probably not why Luke thought it worthy of mention, since he does not explain it). Josephus notes that Agrippa donned "a garment woven completely of silver," which in the sunlight generated such awe (Jos. *Ant.* 19.344 [LCL, 9:377]) that his flatterers spoke to him as if he were divine (19.345).¹¹²³ Apparel counted for more then than it does today: one could portray as ambition's object an expensive robe and human applause (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 69.4). It could generate a public reaction: before one declaimer could speak, his Athenian audience was so moved by "his appearance and costume . . . that . . . a low buzz of approval went round as a tribute to his perfect elegance" (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.5.572 [LCL, 195]).¹¹²⁴

Luke himself mentions such splendid royal apparel in connection with luxurious palaces in Luke 7:25 (part of Luke's condemnation of accumulating wealth; cf. 3:11; 12:33; 14:33). There the portrayal likely constitutes a deliberate contrast between the pomp of Herod Antipas (3:19–20, where Luke simply calls him "Herod," as with Agrippa I here)¹¹²⁵ and the humble prophet John, whom Herod martyred.¹¹²⁶ Thus, although Luke's tradition undoubtedly stressed Agrippa's apparel, Luke probably mentions it here to recall the earlier contrast: now a Herod, seeking to murder God's prophets (Acts 12:2–6), will meet the end appropriate to his wicked and luxurious lifestyle. As noted above, God casts down proud rulers from their thrones but exalts the humble (Luke 1:52).¹¹²⁷

c. Herod Receives Worship (12:22)

Shouts were customary in such settings;¹¹²⁸ acclamations were public, united shouts of approval (or, on some occasions, disapproval), often to a ruler or important official.¹¹²⁹ (For acclamations to deities, see comment on Acts 19:28.) Flattery was a common means of nonelites obtaining favors from elites,¹¹³⁰ but the level of flattery here is higher than usual. Because Hellenistic republics such as Tyre and Sidon were

1122. Agrippa would have little reason to persecute Christians in Caesarea (and political disincentive to do so); Jewish-Gentile relations were far more delicate there than intra-Jewish conflicts in Jerusalem (see comment on Acts 10:1).

1123. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 96, compares Nero's extravagant and divine costume during his public tour in Suet. *Nero* 25. Within Josephus's own narrative, Agrippa's ultimately futile apparel might recall his earlier being bound and led away "even in his purple apparel" (*Ant.* 18.191). Roman writers also critiqued the "flattery" of those who called a ruler divine (e.g., Quint. Curt. 8.5.8, 10–11). On flattery more generally, see comment on Acts 4:13.

1124. Lucian mocks one (egged on by flatterers, *Book-Coll.* 8) whose gold, gems, and purple raiment impressed the crowd until his speech proved empty (*Book-Coll.* 9).

1125. Cf. Antipas's mocking gift of a bright robe to Jesus in Luke 23:11.

1126. Theissen, *Gospels*, 26–41, suggests that even the "reed" is a backhanded allusion to Antipas, arguing for the reed as Antipas's emblem on coins before 26 C.E. (pp. 33–34). Although the allusion itself could be broader, the context offers some support for Theissen's proposal, and if he is right, the saying must have originated in Palestine while the memory of Antipas's reed emblem remained fresh—probably in the late 20s, i.e., the time of John's ministry (cf. pp. 39–41).

1127. See esp. discussion in Allen, *Death of Herod*, 116–20, on the divine-retribution theme in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:51–52; noting both "pride" and Herod's *bēma* in Acts 12:21; the vineyard in Luke 20:9–18; Jerusalem in Luke 21:20–24; cf. Luke 10:12, 16). A rich fool's life would be required without prior notice (Luke 12:20).

1128. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 96; also Toner, *Culture*, 158, noting from Pliny *Panegy.* 28 that people shouted acclamations to the emperor, hoping "for largesse in return. They even taught their children the formula to chant."

1129. Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 1.

1130. Toner, *Culture*, 35.

dependent on others, they honored “royal patrons as benefactors” and hence could include them among their heroes or deities¹¹³¹ (see comment on divine benefactors at Acts 4:9).

Whereas Herod's audience praises his voice as divine, Luke's audience knows that the real divine voice endorses instead Jesus and his movement (10:13, 15; 11:7, 9; Luke 3:22; 9:35–36; cf. Jesus's exalted voice in Acts 9:4, 7; 22:7, 9, 14; 26:14). Perhaps the hearers mention Herod's voice only to speak of his character (Josephus mentions public response to Agrippa's apparel, not his speech), but probably their mention of “voice” is deliberate. Voice intonation¹¹³² and other aspects of delivery¹¹³³ were essential elements of ancient rhetoric, and Agrippa would have had ample training in rhetoric, enough to elicit praise (normally more restrained). Literature provides other examples of people hailing a great speaker as divine because of his voice.¹¹³⁴ Cicero claims that one Servius Galba “spoke as a god” though he was ignorant of the law (Cic. *De or.* 1.10.40 [LCL, 3:31]); he quotes another Roman with reference to the orator Marcus Antonius's “godlike [*divina*] power of genius” (1.38.172 [LCL, 3:119]). A philosopher was renamed Theophrastus because of “his divinely beautiful [*divinitate*] language” (*Or. Brut.* 19.62 [LCL, 5:351]). In novels, crowds seeing a heroine's beauty might cry out that she was really a goddess (Char. *Chaer.* 3.2.17). Perhaps most relevant is that people in Rome called for Nero's “divine voice,” inviting him to perform for the people.¹¹³⁵ On Agrippa I's pride, ambition, and sometimes overplaying his political capital, see comment at Acts 12:3.

Some ancients warned, however, against the superfluity of applause. Musonius warns that if an audience is moved by a philosopher's rhythm and other signs of rhetorical sophistication, so that they praise him and shout, he has accomplished nothing for philosophy (Mus. Ruf. frg. 49, p. 142.4–12). Truly useful speech, he continues, produces not applause but shame and repentance (142.12–19), silence rather than words (142.19–21; cf. also 142.21–28, citing Hom. *Od.* 18.1–2). Lucian mocks insincere praises of flatterers, such as some parasites who publicly praise a rich man but secretly pray for his death, hoping to obtain some of his wealth.¹¹³⁶ Plutarch condemns the hypocrisy of Athenians for honoring Philip of Macedon and making him a citizen when he was alive but celebrating wildly when he was assassinated (*Demosth.* 22.3). Such flattery was no less insincere in Agrippa's case; after his death, Gentiles (the majority of Caesarea's residents) celebrated (Jos. *Ant.* 19.358).

1131. Judge, *Pattern*, 24. The tyrant's corrupt “benefactions” here contrast starkly with the honorable benefaction in Acts 11:29–30 and 12:25 (with Parsons, *Acts*, 180, following Pervo, *Story*, 180).

1132. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Lit. Comp.* 11; Cic. *Brut.* 43.158; 55.203; 66.234; 91.316; Sen. E. *Controv.* 3.pref. 3; cf. Plut. *Demosth.* 6.3; 11.2; Cic. 3.5; Lucian *Z. Rants* 16; Fredrickson, “Tears,” 172; Marshall, *Enmity*, 385–86; see esp. Dion. Hal. *Demosth.* 54. Some (e.g., Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 75.2) claimed to leave such theatrics to orators. Along with “physical movement,” “voice quality” constituted the major part of delivery (*Rhet. Her.* 3.11.19–20; Olbricht, “Delivery and Memory,” 161).

1133. E.g., Cic. *Brut.* 82.283; Plut. *Demosth.* 7.2; Pliny *Ep.* 2.3.9; 2.19.2–4, 6; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.25.537–38; cf. Fredrickson, “Tears,” 170; Savage, *Power*, 71. Good delivery could be compared with acting (Cic. *Brut.* 55.203; Sen. E. *Controv.* 3.pref. 3), whence it originated (Winter, *Left Corinth*, 35; cf. Plut. *Cic.* 4.3).

1134. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 96, compares another's citation of Dio Cass. 62.20.5 (but notes differences from it; cf. also Tac. *Ann.* 14.15; 16.22, usefully; cf. Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 276).

1135. Suet. *Nero* 21.1 (LCL, 2:117). In view of Luke's date and likely non-Italian primary audience, however, I do not see a direct and specific allusion to Nero (contrast, e.g., Schmidt, “Friede”).

1136. Lucian *Dial. D.* 344–45 (15/5, Pluto and Hermes 1); for another case of one praying for another's death to obtain his possessions, see 347 (16/6, Terpsion and Pluto 1); one old man was taking too long to die, and so a beneficiary tried to poison him (accidentally poisoning himself instead), 356–57 (17/7, Zenophantus and Callidemides 2–3). Another designated an aged rich man as an heir, hoping for the latter to die and leave him wealth (instead, the former died first), 358–59 (18/8, Cnemon and Damnippus 1).

Such praise to rulers was customary, especially in the East. In imperial orations (encomia on the emperor, βασιλικοί λόγοι, *Men. Rhet.* 2.1, 368.3), “we propitiate [ἰλασκόμεθα] the emperor with words as we do the divine with hymns and praises [ὑμνοῖς καὶ ἄρεταῖς]” (369.5–7). If his family of origin was not particularly praiseworthy, orators would praise his origin as divine (*Men. Rhet.* 2.1–2, 370.21–23, 25–26); if his birth was not noble, they would claim that he was born from the gods (370.29–371.2). Philo complains that Caligula believed that the Alexandrians really thought him a god, because they addressed him in terms normally reserved for deity (Philo *Embassy* 164). A poor cobbler thought of King Megapenthes as if he were a god because of his wealth (Lucian *Downward Journey* 16). For treating humans, and especially rulers, as divine, see comment on Acts 10:25–26.

Even Gentiles, however, recognized that the proper response to sycophancy toward one who was not the emperor was to deflect the praise. For example, the popular general Germanicus noted that as much as he appreciated his supporters’ goodwill, he rejected their shouts of acclamation as appropriate only to a deity such as the emperor Tiberius.¹¹³⁷ Even Greeks, for whom the line between mortals and deities was sometimes razor thin, felt that taking the honor due only a god (Aeschylus *Ag.* 925) risks provoking the gods’ jealousy and consequent judgment (*Ag.* 946–47).¹¹³⁸ Indeed, many felt that such hubris merited the harshest hell.¹¹³⁹ Maximus of Tyre ridicules those who sought to make themselves objects of others’ worship;¹¹⁴⁰ philosophers¹¹⁴¹ and others¹¹⁴² sometimes summoned hearers to remember that they were but human. The tradition that the noble emperor Vespasian joked that his death would turn him into a god exemplifies the proper response to such praises in the West even for an emperor: he should take such convictions lightly (Suet. *Vesp.* 23).

The only emperors not deified after death in the first century were those who, even in the West, insisted on their deification even in their lifetime. Romans thought self-deification an act of hubris, and such emperors’ “divinity” was typically effaced after death.¹¹⁴³ (The senate decreed *damnatio memoriae* for Domitian and discussed it for Caligula; Nero was also punished posthumously.)¹¹⁴⁴ In Lucian’s satire, those judged most harshly in the afterlife were those who forgot their mortality, expecting others’ reverence (*Men.* 12). On deification, see the more extensive excursus at Acts 10:25–26.

The example of the imperial cult undoubtedly influenced conceptions of power more widely. Ironically, as some of Luke’s audience might know, the events in this narrative follow historically soon after the claims of Gaius Caligula to be divine; his attempt to establish his image in the Jerusalem temple was probably long remembered by early Christians, possibly even helping to shape their eschatological tradition (Mark 13:14; 2 Thess 2:3–4). (On Gaius and other emperors claiming to be

1137. SB 3924 (from Egypt, 19 C.E.). His deflection of honor was insufficient to prevent his assassination or his son’s (Caligula) later claiming divine honors.

1138. The story of Salmoneus was a case in point (Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.7; Max. Tyre 35.2), and others were like it (Max. Tyre 29.4; Hermog. *Inv.* 1.1.96–97). Cf. the practice, attributed to Philip of Macedon, of having one remind him daily that he was but mortal (Aelian *Var. hist.* 8.15, cited in Conzelmann, *Acts*, 82).

1139. Lucian *Men.* 12.

1140. Max. Tyre 29.4; 35.2. Others also rejected excessive “divinization” (Cic. *Quint. fratr.* 1.1.2.7) or the folly of a barbarian who claimed to be a god so that he could fight Rome (Tac. *Hist.* 2.61).

1141. E.g., Heracl. *Ep.* 9.

1142. Pindar *Isthm.* 5.14–16.

1143. Caesar stopped short of this, but he exceeded the bounds of propriety in Suet. *Jul.* 76.1. On Lucan’s portrayal of Caesar’s hubris against Jupiter, see Nix, “Caesar.”

1144. Gizewski, “Damnatio,” 61 (noting Suet. *Calig.* 60; *Nero* 49).

divine, see comment on Acts 10:25–26.) Josephus's portrait of Agrippa's death for accepting adulation is undoubtedly informed by his knowledge that Agrippa, who once intervened against Gaius's arrogance, should have known better. Josephus says that Gaius, in his arrogance, thought himself a god (*Ant.* 18.256; 19.4) and deals at length with his attempt to erect his statue in the Jerusalem temple and with his death (18.257–309); Gaius also supposedly claimed that his daughter belonged to both himself and Jupiter, leaving ambiguous which of the two fathers was superior (19.11). Although no one in Luke's day would have thought favorably of Caligula, the imperial cult remained in Luke's day a reality with which Luke's theology here could never be reconciled.¹¹⁴⁵ Although Luke was positive toward Roman authority ("Render to Caesar what is Caesar's"), he would not condone the imperial cult ("but to God what is God's," Luke 20:25);¹¹⁴⁶ still, the issue is more safely raised by Luke in connection with Agrippa than with Caesar himself.¹¹⁴⁷

Some of Luke's hearers might remember that Agrippa was known for having tried to prevent Gaius Caligula from exacting worship of himself in the Jerusalem temple (*Jos. Ant.* 18.297–98; *Philo Embassy* 276–329).¹¹⁴⁸ Though the emperor demanded Jewish worship in the temple and Agrippa accepts the less politically sensitive—and presumably, from his standpoint, more tolerable because less biblically informed—praise of pagans, now he is struck down for permitting toward himself the very acclamation he warned the emperor not to demand. His repression of the church presumed divine prerogatives over the lives of God's servants (cf. Acts 9:4); now he reveals this same arrogant attitude for all to see.¹¹⁴⁹ Ironically, Agrippa's mortality is starkly revealed "the very moment he considers himself divine."¹¹⁵⁰

Whereas Peter rejected worship (10:25–26; cf. 3:12), as will Paul (14:11, 15; cf. 28:6), Satan invites worship for himself in return for political favor (Luke 4:6–7).¹¹⁵¹ In this narrative, Agrippa thus follows Satan's model of usurping God's prerogative. The narrative contrasts humble Peter, who escapes death at Agrippa's hands (Acts 12:11), and arrogant Agrippa, who dies at God's (12:23). This contrast also points to a deeper one: not leaders popular with Jerusalemites (12:3) but followers of Jesus truly embody the spirit and heritage of Jewish piety.¹¹⁵²

1145. Klauck, *Magic*, 43–44, even suggests carefully veiled "criticism of the imperial cult" (perhaps rightly, though Klauck's specific connection with the emperor's "voice" appears to presuppose that Luke's audience would read Acts with Josephus in front of them). In the wake of 70 C.E., even Jews might need to be cautious in their critique. Arguing more extensively for polemic against the ruler cult here, see Kauppi, *Gods*, 42–63; again, Josephus indicates that the setting was spectacles for the emperor (*Ant.* 19.343–50; Kauppi, *Gods*, 45), a setting that Luke omits (Acts 12:21's "appointed day"). Josephus's note might reflect pre-Josephan polemic against the imperial cult.

1146. With Talbert, *Acts*, 113.

1147. The latter's claims, happily, do not arise in the course of Luke's narrative, but given the furor surrounding Caligula's claims, the lack of direct critique of the imperial cult (potentially dangerous for a minority sect full of Gentiles) might reflect Luke's deliberate forethought.

1148. Agrippa's letter reported by Philo may well be genuine (see Rajak, "Gaius," 620). Herod the Great had supported the imperial cult among Gentiles but limited its direct impact among Jewish Judeans (see discussion in McLaren, "Jews and Cult").

1149. Cf. Allen, *Death of Herod*, 91. Much of Luke's audience probably would not be familiar enough with Agrippa to catch the connection with Caligula, but probably Luke was (and still more probably his source or sources were).

1150. Ray, *Irony*, 59.

1151. Cf., e.g., Allen, *Death of Herod*, 110–14. Jesus refuses the kingdom offered if he would worship Satan, instead following the way of the cross (Luke 4:5–8).

1152. Later rabbis also condemned Israel for flattering King Agrippa (*t. Soṭah* 7:16; *b. Soṭah* 41b [citing Israel's enemies]), though they also praise him (e.g., *m. Soṭah* 7:8) and do not refer to this incident. Luke does like Gamaliel (Acts 5:34–39; cf. 22:3) and thinks preconversion Saul at least sincere (9:5–8), but he has a lesser opinion of most leaders (23:14–15; 25:3).

d. God Strikes Herod Down (12:23)

In 12:7, the angel “strikes” Peter to deliver him; in 12:23, the angel “strikes” Herod to kill him. These are the only two verses in the NT where an angel “strikes” (πατάσσω), but the LXX uses the verb where the angel of the Lord went out and “struck” the Assyrian army (2 Kgs 19:35), including in the retellings of that same story (Sir 48:21; 1 Macc 7:41).¹¹⁵³ Like the Assyrian king, Herod was a tyrant oppressing God’s people and usurping divine prerogatives (2 Kgs 18:33–35; 19:10–13, 22–24), and God overthrew him.¹¹⁵⁴

As noted below, the more recent tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes provides an even closer model for Agrippa as a tyrant cast down by God. Scripture sometimes announced the destruction of rulers who deified themselves (e.g., Isa 14:12–14), and biblical narratives include the type-scene of the demise of proud rulers (Dan 4:30–33; 5:2–4, 30). Indeed, Agrippa appears here before Tyrians, whose ancient ruler God threatened to bring down to death for thinking himself a god (Ezek 28:2–10). Romans thought of apotheosis; when emperors died, they became deities (see comment on Acts 12:22).¹¹⁵⁵ Luke’s description of Agrippa’s brutal death stands in sharp contrast to such notions.

Luke explicitly declares that the reason for Herod’s demise is that “he did not give God glory.”¹¹⁵⁶ Some commentators suggest a possible connection between giving God glory and the confession of sin,¹¹⁵⁷ but Luke’s other use of the expression “give God glory” (Luke 17:18) is equivalent to “glorifying” or “honoring” God (17:15) for being cured (in Jesus’s ministry, cf. also 2:20; 5:25, 26; 7:16; 13:13; 18:43; 23:47).¹¹⁵⁸ “Glory” often means “honor,”¹¹⁵⁹ and it can include popular “opinion,” the concern for which philosophers condemned as vain.¹¹⁶⁰ Agrippa kept divine honor for himself instead of glorifying the true source of his honor (cf. Rom 1:21). By contrast, the ministry of the apostle he had sought to kill, Peter, led to people glorifying God (Acts 4:21; 11:18), as would the ministry of Paul (13:48; 21:20).

I. JOSEPHUS’S REPORT OF THE EVENT¹¹⁶¹

Josephus also reports the death of Herod Agrippa I; his details differ sufficiently to indicate different sources,¹¹⁶² but points of agreement reflect a clear historical

1153. Cf. also the promise of the angel of the Lord (in the LXX version) to strike the Midianites in Judg 6:16. The term is also used for Balaam striking his donkey, which, in contrast to him, feared the angel (Num 22:23, 32); the only other text using this verb and ἄγγελος together refers to human messengers (2 Sam 11:22). Cf. an angel striking people in 2 Sam 24:16. In *y. Šabb.* 6:9, §3, an angel struck Nebuchadnezzar for speaking of a divine son in Dan 3:25, making him retract.

1154. Luke would not be the only Gospel writer to suggest an implicit comparison between an oppressive Herod and a pagan tyrant (cf. Matt 2:16; Keener, *Matthew*, 107–8).

1155. E.g., Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.25.534; see comment on Acts 1:9–11.

1156. Cf. a comparable editorial aside explaining that some of Caesar’s murderers suffered vengeance for killing him (Appian *Bell. civ.* 4.1.1).

1157. Cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 140; Haenchen, *Acts*, 387n2. See Josh 7:19; 1 Esd 9:8; John 9:24; Rev 11:13; 16:9.

1158. This is also a frequent sense of the idiom in the LXX (e.g., 1 Sam 6:5; 1 Chr 16:28–29; 4 Macc 1:12) and in early Christianity (Rom 4:20; Rev 4:9; 19:7) and Judaism (1 *En.* 90:40; *Jub.* 25:11; *Test. Ab.* 6:8; 18:11 A). As Neyrey, “Lost,” correctly notes, translating the expression in Luke 17:18 as “thanking God” misses the cultural connection with honor and benefaction.

1159. E.g., Plut. *Themist.* 1.1; *Demosth.* 12.1; Eunapius *Lives* 465.

1160. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 76.30; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.21.12–14; cf. Diogenes *Ep.* 9; Porph. *Marc.* 15.253; *Test. Benj.* 6:4. Human reputation depended on people’s whims (Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 123.16; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 66).

1161. Comparison with Josephus here is not new; John Chrysostom’s exposition of the passage includes a comparison with Josephus’s account of Agrippa’s death (*Hom. Acts* 27); cf. Bede *Comm. Acts* 12.23 (following Euseb. *H.E.* 2.10).

1162. *Pace* those who think Luke dependent on Josephus here (e.g., Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 170–78; idem, *Acts*, 312–13).

tradition behind them. (In many respects it appears to be a common tradition; Josephus and Luke both even draw morals from the story.)¹¹⁶³ As a competent rhetorical historian, Josephus portrays Agrippa's death according to tragic conventions. His use of, for example, the owl as an omen¹¹⁶⁴—if the passage may be so read on the basis of its allusion to an earlier omen in Josephus's account—displays his liberties as a rhetorical historian (much more interested in Hellenistic rhetorical and tragic conventions than is Luke); but no one supposes that he invents Agrippa's death on that occasion, and many aspects of the story will stem from genuine information Josephus possesses.

Although Josephus plainly connects Agrippa's death with his failure to reject divine honors (*Ant.* 19.345–47; cf. also the portent in 19.346), he does not highlight *direct* divine intervention the way Luke does. Perhaps Josephus or his source played down the element of divine intervention because Agrippa I was such a popular king¹¹⁶⁵ or because Hellenistic historians were often restrained in such portrayals.¹¹⁶⁶ The setting in Josephus is games honoring the emperor; that Phoenicians would have come at this time to negotiate, expecting him in Caesarea, is not unlikely.¹¹⁶⁷

Josephus explicitly sets this scene in Caesarea's theater, constructed by Herod the Great,¹¹⁶⁸ where Agrippa often appeared.¹¹⁶⁹ Populations sometimes ventured public requests to rulers in public places (Rome's hippodrome in *Jos. Ant.* 19.24–25), where public requests would place a ruler's reputation for beneficence at stake, providing an opportunity for honor and the danger of shame. Although Acts does not detail the public assembly in Caesarea's theater, Luke's use of δῆμος in Acts 12:22 for hearers almost certainly presupposes it: this was the citizen body, as in 17:5; 19:30, 33 and always in ancient literature.¹¹⁷⁰ (One could argue that these delegates represent citizens of Tyre and Sidon, which were Hellenistic republics, but these are only embassies, not entire citizen bodies.¹¹⁷¹ Thus it almost certainly implies the citizens of Caesarea, thereby assuming a setting more like Josephus's than Luke has made explicit.) One feature of Luke's compression of the story is that the five days

1163. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 165. For Agrippa's death in Josephus, see, e.g., Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 274–75.

1164. *Jos. Ant.* 19.346; if βουβών refers to an owl (as is likely from 18.195, since Josephus refers to Roman usage, and *bubo* is Latin for "owl"), it seems odd to have a nocturnal woodland creature in the outdoor theater (the term can also mean "groin," *War* 3.335; *Ag. Ap.* 2.21, 27; cf. Agrippa's stomach pains here); Aelian *Nat. an.* 5.2 thought Euripides used an owl (γλαῦξ) as an omen. Whatever the bird is, it provides literary cohesiveness with the earlier omen in *Ant.* 18.195. The "messenger" (ἄγγελος) may suit Luke's "angel of the Lord," though here it is clearly "messenger."

1165. Haenchen, *Acts*, 388 (though Haenchen's suggested connection between the portentous owl, as an ἄγγελον of bad news [*Jos. Ant.* 19.346], and Luke's angel [also in Klauck, *Magic*, 42] is improbable; the angel of the Lord has already appeared more than once in Acts, including in the preceding context, and so Luke has defined "angel" more narrowly in view of OT narratives).

1166. See the commentary introduction; Keener, *Acts*, 1:344–50, esp. 344–46.

1167. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 388 ("not mutually exclusive").

1168. The theater's Herodian foundations remain today (Avi-Yonah, "Archaeological Sources," 53); on its later use, see, e.g., Retzliff, "Theatres." On this and Herod's other "entertainment" complexes as displays of political power, see Holum, "Building Power." Aerial photography suggests that Josephus may confuse its location with that of the amphitheater (McRay, *Archaeology*, 144).

1169. See Levine, *Caesarea*, 27.

1170. Judge, *Pattern*, 14; Bruce, *Acts*, 250; e.g., Libanius *Topics* 5.4. The NT hapax legomenon δημηγορέω in Acts 12:21 could connect with δῆμος (supporting the connecting with the embassy), but it refers to any deliberative speech to the public assembly (cf. 4 Macc 5:15; Prov 30:31), which could fit speech in the theater.

1171. Tyre's hippodrome could seat about sixty thousand spectators (Ward, "Tyre," 249); one would be hard pressed to fit Tyre's citizens in Caesarea's theater (which seated about four thousand; McRay, *Archaeology*, 144).

of suffering Josephus mentions (*Ant.* 19.350) are eliminated,¹¹⁷² but such compression seems characteristic of many of Luke's accounts, especially where he was not present (Acts 9:23; 20:2–3).

The Acts account is less detailed than Josephus but also less rhetorically embellished for Hellenistic consumption.¹¹⁷³ The differences are mostly matters of omission or perspective (certainly to be expected if they are independent), not contradictions of fact. Likewise, Luke's version lays more of the guilt on the visiting embassy from Phoenicia than on the Caesarean populace (though it also contained many Gentiles; see comment on Acts 10:1), though the latter must have joined in (cf. the δῆμος of 12:22). One would expect Luke's *Tendenz* to point in a different direction (cf. Luke 10:14).

Josephus <i>Ant.</i> 19.343–50	Acts 12:22–23
Agrippa was in Caesarea (19.343)	Agrippa was in Caesarea (12:19)
Setting of games in theater in honor of Caesar; no mention of embassy (19.343–44)	Mention of embassy (12:20), with no description of setting of the event (except that he was on a βῆμα [12:21] and his hearers included ὁ δῆμος, the citizen body of Caesarea [12:22])
Mentions Agrippa's glorious robe as a cause for praise (19.344)	Mentions his royal apparel, though without details that show why this is important (12:21)
No mention of Agrippa's speech before he is struck, but a rhetorically apt one is composed for afterward (19.347)	Agrippa is speaking when he is praised (12:21)
Flatterers acclaim Agrippa as divine (19.344–45)*	Flatterers acclaim Agrippa as divine (12:22)
Agrippa struck just afterward (19.346–48)	Agrippa struck just afterward (12:23)
Because he did not rebuke the acclamation (19.346–47)	Because he did not defer the glory to God (12:23)
He suffered stomach pains for five days (19.348–50)†	He was eaten by worms (12:23)
He died (19.350)	He died (12:23)

* They also plead for mercy ("Be propitious to us," Josephus *Ant.* 19.345 [LCL, 9:378]), which might fit Luke's context of at least the embassy (Acts 12:20).

† Eusebius treats Josephus's account here as corroborating Acts (*H.E.* 2.10.10; Witherington, *Acts*, 390n112).

Some modern scholars reading Josephus's description of the death of Agrippa I suggest that it may portray a ruptured appendix;¹¹⁷⁴ the two accounts taken together might point to peritonitis plus intestinal roundworms.¹¹⁷⁵ Peritonitis could stem from inflammation or rupture of a digestive organ (such as a peptic ulcer), appendicitis that leads to a ruptured appendix, or a perforation of the abdominal wall. It results in severe pain and leads to repeated vomiting; eventually the pain deceptively decreases, at which point death follows quickly.¹¹⁷⁶ The sort of roundworms caused by eating raw pork¹¹⁷⁷ are unlikely for the Jewish King Agrippa; other kinds of intestinal worms, however, are possible, such as tapeworms from infected meat, which can

1172. Unless Josephus created these to parallel five days that Herod survived Antipater in *Jos. War* 1.664–65; *Ant.* 17.191; but this is not likely.

1173. Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 20, thinks that the Jewish legend here is in a less embellished, hence earlier, form than in Josephus; also Johnson, *Acts*, 21 (who suspects a Herodian source, Acts 13:1); cf., e.g., Josephus's omen (*Ant.* 19.346) and use of pathos (19.346–50). Like Luke, Josephus had his agendas (with Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 124).

1174. Haenchen, *Acts*, 388. For this condition and its usual eventuation in peritonitis, see conveniently *AMA Medical Guide*, 512 (though it is sometimes confined, 514).

1175. Dunn, *Acts*, 167 (also suggesting, less probably, poisoning); Larkin, *Acts*, 188 (noting that the roundworms would have been "ten to sixteen inches long" if fully developed and can block the intestines). Allen, *Death of Herod*, 15n31, lists proposals but (15–21) understandably doubts whether modern medical analysis of ancient death scenes is appropriate, especially when literary convention is involved.

1176. *AMA Medical Guide*, 503.

1177. Cf. *ibid.*, 607–8 (on trichinosis).

embed themselves in the intestinal wall and reach a length of more than thirty feet.¹¹⁷⁸ Jewish literature reports diseases of various organs caused by worms.¹¹⁷⁹

Luke's use of *σκωληκόβρωτος* does not characterize ancient medical writers, although similar language does appear in them;¹¹⁸⁰ it appears in Theophr. *Caus. plant.* 3.12.6 and in papyri with regard to plants that are worm-eaten.¹¹⁸¹ Physicians noted various kinds of worms, such as some common in autumn (Hippocr. *Epid.* 2.1.3; 6.1.11); worms in the mouth (in a sickness accompanied by fever, 4.10); or some that one suspects might grow in a cavity caused by a hemorrhage (Hippocr. *Prorr.* 1.138). It appears in some very sick women who vomit up round worms (2.28).

II. DEATHS OF TYRANTS

Such painful deaths were considered appropriate to tyrants, though not recounted of them alone. Thus Sulla died while having a temper tantrum because someone was not paying him money quickly enough (cf. Agrippa's anger in Acts 12:20, though it may not be relevant in 12:21–22); after he shouted angrily, he “vomited his life-breath mingled with blood and threats” (Val. Max. 9.3.8 [LCL, 2:329]). Some of these stories (including Sulla's, below) referred specifically to worms. Not everyone who suffered from worms was thought divinely punished;¹¹⁸² such suffering often followed as punishment for the wicked, however, though sometimes after death (Isa 66:24;¹¹⁸³ *I En.* 46:6).¹¹⁸⁴ Some applied the Isaiah passage to eschatological judgment; so Mark 9:48; probably Jdt 16:17; cf. also the variants in Mark 9:44, 46. Scholars cite many texts in which the wicked were eaten by worms or lice.¹¹⁸⁵ Lucian notes that Alexander the false prophet died of gangrene in the leg and groin, infested by maggots (*Alex.* 59)—a fitting end, he opined, for such a wicked man (*Alex.* 60). Later rabbis told of a high priest who disobeyed Pharisaic teaching and hence was found with worms streaming from his nose and a calf's footprint on his head.¹¹⁸⁶ A later Targum claimed that worms left the excrement of the unfaithful spies who spread a negative report about the land; they crawled into the spies' mouths and devoured their tongues, killing them (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Num 14:37). The same source claims that worms crawl from the heifer's dung and swarm a murderer, so identifying him for the judges (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Deut 21:8).

Consumption by worms was counted a fitting end for tyrants.¹¹⁸⁷ The tyrant Sulla's extravagance exacerbated his bowel ulcers, and worms spread through his flesh (Plut.

1178. *Ibid.*, 609. For ancient knowledge about intestinal worms of various kinds, see the sources (Aristotle, Hippocratics, etc.) in Hünemörder, “Worms,” 761.

1179. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 666, cites *b. Hul.* 48a; *Šabb.* 109b (also comparing the gnat in Titus's brain, in *b. Git.* 56b, with nasal myiasis, a “maggot infestation”; this story, however, probably lacks basis in fact) and (p. 666) notes a talmudic “remedy for anal worms” (in *b. Git.* 69b).

1180. Hobart, *Medical Language*, 42–43.

1181. Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, 580 (citing *PSI* 5.490.14; *P. Grad.* 7.11; Theophr. *Caus. plant.* 5.9.1; cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* 3.67325.2.verso); Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 38; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 250; cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 387n3.

1182. E.g., *Test. Job* 20:8–9/20:8–10 (Spittler in *OTP* 1:847 n. f notes other texts associating worms with Job, including *ʿAbot R. Nat.* 26–28; *Tert. Pat.* 14.2–7; cf. *Job* 7:5; 21:26).

1183. Interpreted eschatologically in Mark.

1184. Cf. *Eccl. Rab.* 5:10, §2; rabbis associated even posthumous consumption by worms with premortem sin (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:23; cf. *Sir* 7:17; 10:11; 19:3; *Jdt* 16:17). Normally, rotting precedes worms (*Exod. Rab.* 25:10, remarking on the unusual order in *Exod* 16:20, referring to manna).

1185. E.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.172; Cassander in Paus. 9.7.2–3; Theodoret *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.9 (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 250; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 96–97; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 491; Barrett, *Acts*, 591).

1186. *Y. Yoma* 1:5 (cf. *t. Kip.* 1:8); cf. *b. Yoma* 19b (esp. R. Hiyya's later comment attributing this act to an angel).

1187. With, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 390. The terrible death of tyrants was a classical motif (Klauck, *Magic*, 41; Marguerat, *Actes*, 441). For characteristics applicable to stock tyrants, see Keitel, “Vitellius,” passim (on *Tac. Hist.* 3.36–39).

Sulla 36.2); he was among those known to have died of worms (36.3–4). A ruler too zealous in vengeance died a terrible death from worms (Hdt. 4.205). In a later tradition, a worm split the huge mountain that Og prepared to hurl against Israel, allowing Moses to slay him (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Num 21:35). Later Christians applied the image to persecutors in *Apoc. Pet.* 27 and Euseb. *H.E.* 8.16.4.¹¹⁸⁸

Of more direct relevance here is that Josephus declares that Agrippa's grandfather Herod the Great had gangrene in his genitals, which bred worms (cf. *Ant.* 17.169; *War* 1.656).¹¹⁸⁹ Josephus describes Herod's suffering as punishment (*Ant.* 17.168), especially for killing those who had torn down his golden eagle (17.167). Whether Luke deliberately transfers the story of the grandfather to the grandson (which is possible), Josephus transferred the worms the other direction (less likely),¹¹⁹⁰ Luke simply confused stories about the two, or worms afflicted both, we cannot easily at this remove conclude.

The closest parallel, however, and one likely known by at least the Jewish Christians in Luke's Diaspora audience (its inclusion in some versions of the LXX demonstrates its popularity) is the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, who made himself a god.¹¹⁹¹ In 1 Maccabees, Mattathias told his sons that the glory of any oppressor of the righteous would be worms (σκώληκας, 1 Macc 2:62); further, Antiochus Epiphanes died in agony because of his sins against Jerusalem (6:8–13, 16). It is thus not surprising that 2 Maccabees should elaborate Antiochus Epiphanes's death in these terms.¹¹⁹² He had tormented others' bowels, and so, when he spoke arrogantly against God, he was smitten with an incurable bowel disease (2 Macc 9:5–6); nevertheless, he continued in his arrogance (9:7). Then worms came up from his flesh and his flesh decomposed so that he stank (9:9); he finally repented, but it was too late (9:12–13). The comparison of a popular Jewish king (cf. Acts 12:3) who oppressed the church (12:2–4) with a Gentile oppressor of God's people fit the early church's sense of identity as the true remnant of Israel (comparable to the Qumran community's view of itself).¹¹⁹³

Everyone would recognize that dying from worms or from something that generated worms would be painful, since diseases of bladder and intestines were considered among the most painful (Cic. *Fin.* 2.30.96).¹¹⁹⁴ Being disemboweled in battle was a hideous way to die (Hom. *Il.* 4.525–26; 20.416–20; 21.180–81; cf. treachery in Judg 3:22; 2 Sam 20:10). Some rabbis considered bowel diseases so painful that they claimed (probably hyperbolically) that these atoned for sin, sparing one from Gehinnom (*b. Erub.* 41b).¹¹⁹⁵ This horrifying end allows a connection of the image with the death of Judas, whether the bursting of his bowels preceded or followed his

1188. Also Claudius Lucius Herminianus in Tert. *Scap.* 3; Judas in Papias frg. 3 (Haenchen, *Acts*, 387n3; Barrett, *Acts*, 591; a parallel perhaps more fitting than Luke's version).

1189. For various opinions of possible medical descriptions today that would fit his sickness, see Cornfeld, *Josephus*, 122n656[a]; Kokkinos, "Herod's Death" (noting that most scholars today suppose cardio-renal failure). Rumor assigned Cambyses a gangrene death as just punishment (Hdt. 3.64; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 125).

1190. That Josephus was fond of such descriptions cannot be denied; he claims that the anti-Semite Apion's genitals rotted as he died in the agony that he deserved (*Ag. Ap.* 2.143–44).

1191. For a survey of various royal oppressors, notably Antiochus IV, and the contribution of their model for the emerging portrait of eschatological "antichrist" figures, see Keener, *Matthew*, 573–75.

1192. See further Diod. Sic. 29.15; Polyb. 31.9; *Jos. Ant.* 12.354–59 (Allen, *Death of Herod*, 35–65). For Antiochus's death in 2 Maccabees as Luke's literary model here, see also Yamazaki-Ransom, "Antiochus," 118–20.

1193. Cf. the same technique, linking Herod the Great with Pharaoh, in Matt 2 (Keener, *Matthew*, 103–4, 107–8). The charge that Jesus was making himself "equal with God" in John 5:18 might reflect 2 Macc 9:12 (overlooked in my John commentary).

1194. Fatally, in this example. Such abdominal pains could result when an eater of simple foods shifts too suddenly to luxurious fare (Cic. *Fam.* 7.26.1–2, nonfatally).

1195. They knew that the righteous could suffer bowel disease, R. Judah ha-Nasi being a case in point (Dvorjetski, "Medical History").

death (Acts 1:18).¹¹⁹⁶ As mentioned above, this affliction also characterizes tyrants¹¹⁹⁷ such as the wicked Jehoram, who was stricken with bowel disease till his bowels came out (2 Chr 21:15, 18–19); later writers amplified this by noting that Jehoram watched as it happened to him (Jos. *Ant.* 9.103)¹¹⁹⁸ or by specifying two days of diarrhea (Tg. 2 Chr. 21:19). Josephus applies the same description to a wicked, anti-Jewish governor named Catullus (*War* 7.439–53), whose bowels fell out to demonstrate that God punishes the wicked (7.453). More generally, God struck down a high priest who sought to demolish a sanctuary wall, so that he died after days of torment (Jos. *Ant.* 12.413; 1 Macc 9:51–56, esp. 9:56). The miserable fate of Flaccus, mangled by his executioners before he died, was judgment for murdering Alexandrian Jews (Philo *Flacc.* 188–91).¹¹⁹⁹ Later rabbis also elaborated on the death of Titus, claiming that a mosquito entered his brain, ingesting his blood till it grew to resemble a small pigeon.¹²⁰⁰

The image of receiving just punishments—that is, those corresponding to the evils one had done to others—was a frequent one in antiquity, as early as the judgments on Pharaoh and his nation for drowning Israel's babies (Exod 1:22; 7:19; 12:29; 14:27).¹²⁰¹ A Jewish historian writing in Greek before Luke claimed that Antiochus was tormented in his bowels δίκαιώς (“justly”) because he had tormented the bowels of others (2 Macc 9:5–6). Even Polybius, who is far more nuanced than earlier Hellenistic historians in dealing with retributive justice, was happy to report “fitting personal ends where he could.”¹²⁰²

Most Mediterranean city dwellers, by this period, shared the conviction that tyranny was a bad system.¹²⁰³ The ideal ruler was gentle and merciful.¹²⁰⁴ Whereas murder was reprehensible under normal circumstances, most considered tyrannicide a praiseworthy act;¹²⁰⁵ this recognition even provided the basis for a standard declama-

1196. Cf. Allen, *Death of Herod*, 23, 120–29 (the narration of retribution in Luke 22:21–22; Acts 1:15–26; as well as retribution in 4:32–5:11).

1197. For a fuller treatment of the conventional type-scene of tyrants' deaths, see Allen, *Death of Herod*, 35–65 (citing, in addition to others above, Diod. Sic. 36.13; Jos. *Ant.* 13.301–19; *War* 1.70–84).

1198. Cf. again Hom. *Il.* 20.418, 420, where Priam's son Polydorus holds his bowels in his hands as he dies; the injury resembles (though with less graphic depiction) 2 Sam 2:23.

1199. Faw, *Acts*, 141, rightly points out other examples of God striking kings in various ways (Gen 14:13–16; Exod 14:10–31; 2 Kgs 19:36–37; Ps 2:1–4); God was glorified by executing judgment (Rev 15, esp. 15:4; purportedly Tannaic tradition in *Lev. Rab.* 24:1). For the retribution theme in philosophers' elaborations of providence, see Allen, *Death of Herod*, 151–55; in apologetic historiography, 155–95 (for Josephus, 182–95).

1200. E.g., *'Abot R. Nat.* 7, §21 B; *b. Git.* 56b; *Lev. Rab.* 20:5; 22:3; *Num. Rab.* 18:22; *Ecl. Rab.* 5:8–9, §4; for his afterlife, cf. *b. Git.* 56b–57a. Some infer from the combined Roman (a fever, Suet. *Tit.* 10.1) and talmudic evidence that Titus died of a brain tumor (Murison, “Death of Titus”); the diagnosis fits the talmudic evidence, but the latter is late and full of fictitious polemical hyperbole. He was accused of entering the holy of holies and blaspheming (*Sipre Deut.* 328.1.1–5; *'Abot R. Nat.* 1 A; *b. Me'il.* 17b); Romans, by contrast, praised him (Val. Flacc. 1.12–14; Suet. *Tit.* 5.2; Tac. *Hist.* frg. 2 [possibly spurious]; cf. Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 2.30 in Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 31–32).

1201. See elsewhere Diod. Sic. 20.62.2; *Jub.* 4:32; Sir 27:25–27; 2 Macc 4:38; 13:7–8; *L.A.B.* 44:9–10; *m. 'Ab.* 2:6; *Sipre Deut.* 238.3.1. See further comment at Acts 3:2.

1202. See Trompf, *Retributive Justice*, 30, citing Polyb. 4.81.5; 4.87.10–11; 5.27.5–9; 32.11.1 for fitting ends, but also noting that he had to do without them wherever history turned out otherwise.

1203. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13.1; 31.29; 47.24; Max. Tyre 33.4; 36.2; Quint. *Decl.* 267; 274 intro; 351 intro; 352 intro; Libanius *Topics* 4; Hermog. *Inv.* 1.2.103; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.13; 7.30; Men. Rhet. 1.3, 359.22–28 (though it could be disguised, 359.28–360.2); Aphth. *Progymn.* 7, “On Commonplace,” 33–35S, 17–21R; Nicolaus *Progymn.* 7, “On Commonplace,” 42; Sopater *Division of Questions* 220.11–223.11. See further comment at Acts 23:3.

1204. E.g., Polyb. 1.72.3; Diod. Sic. 27.16.2; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 3.54.2; 3.99.7; 39.7.3–6; Sen. Y. *Clem.* (passim, addressed unsuccessfully to Nero); Arrian *Alex.* 1.17.12; 4.19.6; Appian *Hist. rom.* 10.4.24; Corn. Nep. 8 (Thrasybulus), 2.6; Hdn. 1.2.4; 1 Macc 2:57; see most fully Good, *King*, 47–49 and passim.

1205. E.g., Polyb. 2.56.15; 11.18.6; Val. Max. 3.3.ext. 2–3; 5.6.ext. 2; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.25; Athen. *Deipn.* 15.69SB.13; Jos. *Ant.* 19.42; they might end up in Tartarus (Men. Rhet. 2.17, 439.1). Occasionally philosophers persuaded tyrants to abdicate or otherwise freed people from tyranny (Mus. Ruf. 9, p. 72.9–10; Iambl. *V.P.*

tion topic.¹²⁰⁶ By portraying Agrippa as a tyrant, Luke invites readers to celebrate his death, something Agrippa's Jewish citizens did not do,¹²⁰⁷ though some Gentiles did.¹²⁰⁸

Although many hailed Agrippa's becoming king of Judea in 41, he died in 44, just three years later (Jos. *Ant.* 19.351). He actually reigned eight years, but most of these were spent outside Judea, with relatively little direct effect on affairs there. When Agrippa I died, he left three daughters, including Berenice and Drusilla, and a son, Agrippa II (War 2.220; *Ant.* 18.132; 19.354), whom we shall meet later (Acts 24:24; 25:13).

Although the continual prayer earlier in this chapter was for Peter's release (12:5), it might also be associated with the judgment on his persecutor. When Esther and her people fasted, the antagonist ended up dying instead of God's people (Esth 4:16; 7:9–10). The narrative invites the sentiments that generally followed a tyrant's death: people rejoiced when tyrants such as Tiberius (Suet. *Tib.* 75.1; Jos. *Ant.* 18.226–27) or Nero (Suet. *Nero* 57.1) died. Some celebrated Agrippa's death, though these were mainly Gentiles who had chafed under his rule (Jos. *Ant.* 19.356–58); most of his own people mourned (19.349). Herod expired (ἐξέψυξεν)—a description employed elsewhere in the NT only for the judgment deaths of Ananias (Acts 5:5) and Sapphira (5:10).¹²⁰⁹

3. Positive Conclusion (12:24)

Here, as with some other sections (9:31), Luke prefers to end on a positive summary note (12:24). The Greek tragic tradition often ends on sadder notes; most narratives in the biblical tradition, however, had positive endings for the protagonists (even in the book of Job). Herod's death brings closure to the persecution and the literary unit that describes it,¹²¹⁰ just as Paul's conversion brought the church rest earlier (9:31). The mention of Paul immediately afterward may highlight the contrast: Agrippa persecuted the church and died terribly; Paul persecuted the church and God mercifully converted him. Paul's own writings confirm his sense that he had received mercy from the Lord (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:15; cf. Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:13–16).

This verse is another Lukan summary statement; see comment on Acts 2:41–47; 6:7.¹²¹¹ That the message or the church “grew and multiplied” reflects a Lukan summary motif (cf. Acts 6:1, 7; 9:31; see fuller discussion at comment on Acts 6:7) but also the creation mandate (Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7; 17:20). Luke is aware that such a motif is specifically applied to Israel (Gen 22:17; 26:4, 24; 28:3; 35:11; 48:4; Exod 1:7, 10, 20; Deut 1:10; 7:13), probably citing this as historical precedent for his own formula

32.220; Hermog. *Issues* 59.17–60.8; Syrianus *Commentary on Hermogenes' "On Issues"* 101.21–102.18). Cf. statues of tyrannicides in the Athenian agora (*Athenian Agora*, 58). There was no one whom a tyrant could trust (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.59, 116–17; Lucian *Downward Journey* 11; Max. Tyre 14.7); sometimes assassinations came from one's own circle (see, e.g., Collins, “Revolution,” arguing that a palace conspiracy killed Domitian).

1206. E.g., Sen. E. *Controv.* 1.7.intro.; 1.7.1; 2.5.intro.; 2.5.1; 3.6 excerpts; 4.7 excerpts; 9.4 passim; Quint. *Decl.* 2.53; 274.5; 282 intro.; 288; 322 intro.; 329 intro.; 345 intro.; 382 intro (cf. also 269 intro); Hermog. *Issues* 34.10–14; 47.17–48.2; 59.17–60.8; Lucian *Tyr.* passim, e.g., 1; Sopater *Division of Questions* 95.21–98.11; Libanius *Topics* 4.6; 5; Hermog. *Inv.* 3.14.165. This applied also to Zeus's overthrow of the Titans (Men. *Rhet.* 2.17, 438.30–439.1).

1207. In contrast to their probable response to the death of his grandfather (Jos. *War* 1.660, 666; *Ant.* 17.193).

1208. Jos. *Ant.* 19.356–58.

1209. In the LXX, it depicts Sisera's violent death (Judg 4:21, the only use except Ezek 21:7).

1210. See Allen, *Death of Herod*, 77–92.

1211. “The word of God was growing and multiplying” is identical in Acts 6:7; the phrase “the word of the Lord was growing and becoming stronger” in 19:20 is synonymous.

(Acts 7:17). Just as Pharaoh's oppression of Israel caused Israel to multiply still more (Exod 1:12, 16–20; *Jub.* 46:15), so Agrippa's oppression led to the church's increase. In the end, nothing could stop the word of God (cf. Acts 6:7; 19:20; 28:31).¹²¹²

Luke connects his summary statements with their preceding contexts (thus *καί* in 6:7; *οὐν* in 9:31); the weak adversative *δέ* here emphasizes that evil rulers cannot stop the spread of the gospel.¹²¹³ Though Luke may not write to believers facing persecution, the suffering of Christians elsewhere and the warning that all would suffer persecution in time (Luke 21:12–19, esp. 21:17; cf. Acts 14:22) would invite them to find encouragement in this conclusion. Further, the principle extended beyond overt persecution to other obstacles: nothing could hinder the spread of the gospel, which is God's plan.

1212. Ray, *Irony*, 59, notes as irony the contrast between the persecutor's death and the word's continuing spread.

1213. In Acts 13:36, even God's servants have a limited role in his plan; how much more ephemeral the legacy of a tyrant who seeks to usurp God's honor.

PAUL'S DIASPORA MISSIONS (12:25–19:41)

The texture of the narrative of Acts changes once Luke's attention turns fully to Paul. He has oscillated between Paul and others for several chapters (Acts 7:58–12:25) but will now follow Paul's career through the end of the book. Luke's sources appear more often more detailed in this part of Acts. Although the play between heritage and mission continues throughout the book, this second "half" of Acts focuses on mission, exemplified in Paul's calling (9:15–16). When Barnabas leaves on another valid mission, Luke continues to follow Paul's story (15:39–40).

1. Pauline Focus

Luke's attention to Paul might at first seem odd. Ministry to Israel found fertile soil—hearers having sufficient familiarity with Scripture and foundational background that Judean believers grew rapidly to massive numbers (21:20). Paul, by contrast, started what we might call home Bible study groups across the Roman Empire, usually traveling farther from his home base than the Twelve and having to adapt his presentation cross-culturally to audiences that often lacked grounding in the Jewish Scriptures.¹ Even by today's standards, small churches pioneering unfamiliar soil seem unable to compete with well-endowed megachurches.

Moreover, not until 19:11–12 do we hear of Paul's signs on the same level as with the Jerusalem apostles in 5:15–16, and from a human perspective Paul seems to flounder initially when, without Barnabas, he presses into unevangelized territory (16:6–9). He could not, in any case, command the respect the church accorded the Twelve, known to have followed Jesus's earthly ministry. Yet Luke knew that the

1. As Just, *Luke*, 28, notes, "With the beginning of the Gentile mission (Acts 13–28), there are no longer any reports of fantastic numbers of quick converts."

future (or, by Luke's day, the present) of the Jesus movement lay especially with the Diaspora mission that Paul's ministry embodied and nurtured; as the movement's Lord had warned, Jerusalem's days were numbered.

Luke's presentations of Peter, Stephen, and perhaps even (in a different manner) Jesus have prepared for his portrayal of Paul; as Hengel puts it, Luke would have agreed with Paul that he labored more than all the apostles (1 Cor 15:10).² Paul's literary function extends beyond his historical identity: he parallels many of his predecessors in signs and sufferings, thereby vindicating his ministry.³ More critically, he exemplifies the model for the Gentile mission that is Luke's focus (Acts 1:8).⁴ As the high priest once commissioned Saul to stop the spread of the Christian movement (9:1–2; 22:5; 26:10), here the Spirit sends him forth to spread it (13:2–4). He had once inadvertently spread the church by participating in scattering its laborers (8:1, 3–4), but now, as a laborer himself, he spreads it deliberately and among the very Gentiles whose influence he may have once regarded as a threat.

Others had spread the gospel before Paul and Barnabas, including to Cyprus (11:19), but this new mission differed in its deliberate, premeditated, and commissioned focus on evangelization instead of simply carrying the message as one traveled for other reasons. The Pauline mission would also prove distinctive because the theological agenda emerging from it would shape the future of the church (15:1–2). The Antioch mission to Gentiles may have already assumed or argued that circumcision was not necessary (cf. Acts 11:20; 13:1; 15:1; Gal 2:11–12; Jos. *Ant.* 20.40–41), but Paul's training in Scripture and possibly rhetoric, as well as his reports from the Gentile mission, rendered him the most articulate spokesperson for this perspective to the mother church and in the Diaspora (Gal 2:2, 7–9).

2. Narrative Cohesion

Although the Pauline section of Acts relies more on detailed information and less on parallel patterns and summary statements than do previous chapters, patterns (or at least repetition of themes) appear. Goulder's observations, even if overstated, are helpful. He divides Acts 13–28 into four journeys:⁵

Activity	Cyprus and Galatia (Acts 13–15)	Macedonia and Greece (15:40– 18:22)	Asia (18:23–20:38)	Rome
Choosing	13:1	15:40	18:24	20:4
Holy Spirit	13:2	16:6	19:7	21:10
Sermon	13:15	17:22	20:18	28:17
Healing	14:8	16:16	(20:7)*	28:8
Council	15:1	—	21:18	—
False disciple	13:6	15:36	19:13	23:1
Passion†	14:19	16:22	19:23	21:27
Resurrection‡	14:20	16:25	20:7	Acts 28

* I would have cited instead the summary of Pauline miracles in Acts 19:11–12.

† Better: "Suffering" or "Danger."

‡ Better: "Deliverance" or "Upturn in the narrative."

2. Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 50.

3. On Luke's apologetic for Paul, see the fuller discussion in Keener, "Apologetic."

4. Puskas, "Conclusion: Investigation," 154; cf. Rosenblatt, *Paul the Accused*; for Luke's focus on the Gentile mission, see further comment in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:506–11.

5. Goulder, *Type and History*, 99; the table, 101 (I omitted one category that was subsumed under another). Italicized references represent those deviating from the anticipated sequence.

The specific pattern is easy to debate. For example, Acts 21–28 (which is certainly not a “missionary journey” in the sense in which Acts 13–14 is) includes journeys to Jerusalem as well as Rome (with a long stay in Caesarea between them). The geographic breaks are not clean and must overlap to support this structure. Also, some themes (such as the Holy Spirit) are mentioned frequently enough that we would expect them to recur in various sections—multiple times, in fact. Some categories (particularly the false-disciple and resurrection categories) are forced.

Nevertheless, what Goulder's pattern on the whole illustrates is the repetition of themes, and one could have discovered others if one were not committed to repeating a particular sequence.⁶ One could have added spiritual-power encounters in the first three sections (13:8–11; 16:16–18; 19:11–20).⁷ The view of some that the Paul of Acts 21–26 corrects rather than recapitulates the wonder-working Paul of Acts 13–19 has little to commend it;⁸ Paul resumes his wonder-working once out of prison (28:8–9), and the idea that the two are incompatible reflects modern Western presuppositions unintelligible both to ancients and to many non-Western Christians (the majority of Christian believers) today (cf. 19:9–12).⁹

The fruits of Paul's mission can fit the pattern Jesus provides of his own mission among Galilean Jews in Luke 8:5–8, 11–15 (from Jesus tradition; Mark 4:3–8, 14–20): some ignore or reject the message immediately; some receive but fall away through hardship (cf. Acts 14:22; 20:30); some fall away through easy lives (cf. perhaps 13:43, 45); but some persevere and bear good fruit. Like the Gospel, Acts focuses on the first and fourth kinds of soil and so does not specifically schematize narratives according to this pattern.

Nevertheless, Luke closes Acts by providing the same Isaiah passage in more detail and revealing that the frequent Jewish rejection in Acts is merely part of the larger pattern already present in Galilee. Some reject, some accept but do not persevere, and others do persevere, and the outcomes cannot be predicted by ethnic heritage. The mission also fits, in addition to Luke's explicit mission material (such as Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–16), the paradigm of compelling people to enter the banquet (14:21–23) and the model of material self-sacrifice (14:26–33).

3. Luke's Own Milieu

This second half (technically more than half) of Acts moves into a broader Greco-Roman framework more clearly than the first part of Acts; moving beyond Jerusalem, Samaria, and Judea, the narrative now advances toward the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). From this point to the end of the book, Luke is in geographically familiar territory for himself and his audience;¹⁰ he proves particularly detailed in the “we” narratives (16:10–16; 20:5–28:16) and probably has secondhand (rather than tertiary) knowledge from Paul for the details the “we” narratives do not cover.

Although Scripture continues to be quoted explicitly (especially in the synagogue in 13:17–47), cultural allusions in these later chapters additionally presuppose a higher

6. Goulder, *Type and History*, 26, cites also the various helpers (note especially Barnabas in Acts 13–15; Silas in Acts 15–18; Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos, and convert companions later).

7. Some add Acts 28:3–5 in the fourth.

8. Hickling, “Portrait in Acts 26” (though the later portrait might, as he allows, supplement the earlier one).

9. See further comment in Keener, “Teaching Ministry.”

10. See Taylor, “Paul's Missionfield.” The idea that the Greek in these chapters reflects translation of an Aramaic original (Torrey, *Composition*, 62) is difficult to sustain.

degree of Greco-Roman cultural literacy than do the early chapters. Such allusions may include the following:

- A fairly clear allusion to the Phrygian Baucis and Philemon story, in Phrygia (14:11–12)
- Possible allusions to the Trojan War and especially Alexander of Macedon (16:8–10)
- An explicit allusion to the Delphic cult of Apollo (16:16)
- A possible allusion to the Dionysiac theme of liberation (16:26, though this also appeared earlier in Acts 5; 12)
- A barely possible (but quite unlikely) allusion to Jason of Thessaly in Jason of Thessalonica (17:5; the city bears little affinity to the very different region)
- A fairly strong allusion to Socrates, whose role Paul fills (17:18–19)
- Two marked quotations from Greek poets (17:28)
- An explicit challenge to the famous Ephesian Artemis cult (19:24–27)
- Acts 22–26 moving in the world of rhetoricians, especially forensic rhetoric, with its long history
- An oft-cited allusion in 27:9–28:1 to the literary motif of dangerous sea voyages (Hom. *Odyssey*; Ap. Rhod. *Argonautica*; parts of Virg. *Aeneid*; Jonah 1:3–2:10)

Even though he cannot provide classical citations on the same level that Scripture pervades his narrative (undoubtedly disappointing expectations of any non-Jewish elite hearers), Luke makes clear that, like a good intellectual of his era, he is culturally adept. He straddles classical Jewish and Greek, as well as contemporary Hellenistic and Roman, cultures.

4. Historical Reliability

Luke's travel narratives about Paul provide the same entertainment value as their analogues in novels, but they are not novelistic. The geographic movement in the rest of Acts especially parallels the travel narrative in the Gospel of Luke, which arranges genuine tradition (evident at numerous points) as a travelogue (Luke 9:51–19:44).¹¹ Yet good evidence supports Luke's essential reliability here:

1. Both Paul's letters and the rapid growth in the number of eastern Mediterranean Diaspora churches that later claimed him as one of their founders testify that Paul did undertake such travels.¹²
2. Luke's Paul does not visit major centers such as Alexandria or Seleucia on the Tigris but confines his mission, as in his letters, mainly to the "major east-west routes leading to Rome"¹³ (excepting Spain [Rom 15:24, 28], presumably after the strategic mission to Rome is complete).

11. On this section and its arrangement, see, e.g., Bock, *Luke*, 957–64, helpfully (the chiasmus in Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 111–12, is dubious). Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 6–7, argues that the itinerary is the basis of composition in Acts 13–19, as speeches are in later chapters; Johnson, *Acts*, 10, points out how Luke uses the form of journeys to structure his narrative. Some suggest that Luke constructed the Gospel's travel narrative on the model he found in Mark 10:1–52 (Aune, *Environment*, 122).

12. This is especially likely if Paul followed the principles of Rom 15:20 (cf. 2 Cor 10:14–16); cf. Kümmel, *Theology*, 138. Some others expressed a desire to do only what was not yet done (Philost. *Hrk.* 33.2).

13. Liefeld, "Preacher," 148.

3. Luke's itinerary for Paul is not contrived;¹⁴ that Paul omits prior evangelization in Macedonia or Greece from his itinerary in Gal 1–2 (cf. Rom 15:19) suggests that, as in Acts, Paul evangelized the nearer province of Galatia before the farther locations.¹⁵
4. It is noteworthy that events belonging to the “we narrative” appear in greatest detail, even when the same itinerary earlier was summarized in cursory fashion.¹⁶

Classical historians find Acts one of the most valuable (even the “most valuable of all”) among our few sources for travel conditions for “the plain civilian or merchant” in this period.¹⁷ Luke's story is driven neither by romance nor by adventures primarily characteristic of specific locations but by the mission that drives the entire second volume (Acts 1:8).

Paul's letters also imply that Paul and Barnabas shared a common mission (Gal 2:1, 9, 13). Moreover, Paul's letter to the Galatians is consistent with the knowledge that Antioch was their base (2:11), so that decisions there could affect Galatia's churches (hence the potential magnitude of 2:11–14).¹⁸ If one accepts the South Galatian hypothesis, which has strongest support from classical historians and seems to fit better with the whole of our evidence (see introduction, below, to Acts 15), Paul's letters also suggest the evangelization reported in Acts 13–14 (though the early date of Galatians, often drawn as a corollary from this reconstruction, need not and probably should not follow).

5. Traveling Missionaries¹⁹

Paul preached in Damascus (9:20), Jerusalem (9:28), and likely (although Luke does not record it) Cilicia (9:30; cf. 15:41); so why does Luke focus so much attention on the new start here? Paul was already in Damascus when he began preaching, and he was from Tarsus in Cilicia, but in this section Paul deliberately crosses geographic barriers for the gospel. Moreover, Paul's mission in this section also deliberately crosses the ethnic and religious barrier by turning to Gentiles (esp. 13:12, 46); although Paul may well have ministered to Gentiles before this, Luke does not give explicit evidence to that effect.

Nevertheless, the team started with the connections most readily available to them. They moved first to Barnabas's home region, where Barnabas may have had

14. See Campbell, “Journeys.” The elaborate chiasmus for Acts 12:25–21:16 (proposed in Miesner, “Narrative,” 204) is, like most chiasmic proposals, too artificial. Dockx, “Voyage,” 215–21, contends that Luke simply created the journey of 13:4–14:28, but this is incredible, given the many points of contact with known geographic detail (especially in the interior of Asia; see discussion below, loc. cit.) as well as Luke's lesser interest in this section (its events are far less detailed than in the “we” material; and why would Luke invent travels to more obscure places such as Iconium and Lystra?).

15. Riesner, *Early Period*, 269–70 (noting that “first” in Phil 4:15 refers not to Paul's first preaching altogether but to his first preaching in Philippi).

16. Knox, *Acts*, 57–58.

17. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes*, 85–86; on the usefulness of Acts for classical scholars, cf. further Nobbs, “Historians”; some additional sources in Keener, *Acts*, 1:197–98.

18. Riesner, *Early Period*, 271. Although being one's spiritual “father” should have counted for something (cf. 1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:14–15), Paul's competitors in Galatia apparently hailed from Jerusalem and claimed to speak better for the “original” churches than did Paul.

19. The term “missionary” nowhere appears in early Christian literature, but I am seeking to avoid overusing the title “apostles” for Paul and his coworkers since this is also not Luke's preferred usage outside Acts 14. Simply using “Paul and Barnabas” every time would sound repetitious. While they fit broad modern definitions of missionaries as those commissioned to communicate a religious message cross-culturally, however, we cannot read into their activity all the models usually characterizing modern missions.

contacts or connections that gave them readier inroads to synagogues; they moved afterward to Pisidian Antioch, perhaps with a referral from Sergius Paulus (although Luke does not indicate this connection). By contrast, when Paul becomes sole leader of a new mission and the Spirit leads into new territory, the mission moves into fully uncharted territory and begins with some uncertainties (16:6–10).

Travel was often difficult and dangerous, as noted in the commentary introduction.²⁰ Most people avoided travel when possible.²¹ In 2 Cor 11:26–27, Paul includes in his list of sufferings “many journeys” (fitting Acts), along with more specific dangers that he faced on such journeys (such as robbers and dangers from rivers and seas); he likewise notes that he faced dangers in both cities and countryside as well as the sufferings of cold and inadequate clothing. Ancients, however, often respected rugged austerity undertaken for good reasons (e.g., Sall. *Catil.* 54.4–5; *Jug.* 85.33; see comment on Acts 20:33–35). Paul's singleness made his calling easier, as did that of Jesus and John the Baptist (cf. Jeremiah, Jer 16:2–4),²² though the more popular ideal of marriage and children in antiquity²³ is also recognized by Luke (Luke 1:7; 16:18; Acts 18:2; 21:5).

People of means might travel by donkey, by carriage (cf. Acts 8:28) or (especially for rapid journeys) horse, or, especially in the arid East, by camel;²⁴ Paul and Barnabas would have traveled most of the way by foot, necessitated at least by their frequent use of ships, which would have forced them to leave travel animals behind. They could have rented animals, though the cost would be multiplied by the number of travelers on their ministry team. Boats could make a trip much faster than could land travel and were also more economical in the long run.²⁵

Missionaries in the modern sense did not exist; the mobility of religions sometimes depended on traveling merchants or teachers who propagated them,²⁶ though traveling teachers also sought to propagate philosophy or gain honor or income by teaching. Traveling students (e.g., Cicero's two years abroad in *Cic. Brut.* 91.315–16) were far more common than traveling teachers, but we do read of a number of wandering preachers,²⁷ a category that fits Paul's ministry as well.²⁸ (See extended discussion concerning “wandering prophets” and others at Acts 11:27.) Paul does return regularly to the home base of Antioch (14:26; 15:35, 40; 18:22), which, in contrast to Jerusalem, is the center of the Gentile mission.²⁹

Paul's mission differs, however, from most nineteenth- and twentieth-century models of Western Protestant missions³⁰ in that Paul was not dependent on the sending church for support.³¹ Like the first traveling preachers Jesus sent out, he trav-

20. Keener, *Acts*, 1:585–87; cf. also the urban/rural divide in 589–96.

21. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 97.

22. For familial sacrifice in Luke-Acts, see esp. Luke 14:26; 18:29; perhaps also 2:36; 14:20. Texts such as Luke 17:27; 20:34–35 should not be construed as opposing marriage.

23. See Keener, “Marriage,” 681–82.

24. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 38.

25. Jeffers, *World*, 37, even estimates 100 mi. a day. This assumes favorable weather conditions and infrequent stops for picking up or delivering cargo.

26. See Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 41–46.

27. See Hock, *Social Context*, 27–28. See, e.g., Pythagoras in *Iambl. V.P.* 32.214.

28. See Liefeld, “Preacher,” 146–51.

29. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 173, arguing that this creates conflict with Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15; Gal 2; 2 Cor 11:5), though Paul visited Jerusalem earlier (Acts 9:26; 11:30; 12:25).

30. Cf., e.g., Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 91, 355. The language of “missionary journeys,” with the implication of returning to a home base in Antioch, may reflect the lens of the modern Protestant missions movement rather than ancient or medieval commentators (cf. Townsend, “Journeys and Missionary Societies,” more strongly).

31. See Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 38. Support and full-time ministry was an ideal (Acts 6:4; 1 Cor 9:3–14), but one not practical in his case (Acts 20:33–35; see comment there; 1 Cor 9:15–18). The Pauline model

eled lightly (Luke 9:3; 10:4), a lifestyle respected for traveling teachers.³² When (on missions after his first return to Antioch) he settled in locations at greater length, he worked and lived as a part of the cultures that he visited (1 Cor 4:12; 1 Thess 2:9), like (though usually more intentional than) traveling merchants who spread various cults in the empire. This was easier for Paul than for some modern missionaries crossing major cultural chasms. Local customs varied, but Paul knew much of urban eastern Mediterranean culture, and what he did not know he learned along the way. Of course, Paul also differed from most traditional Western missionaries in his emphasis on signs and wonders and in his claim of direct commission from Christ himself.³³

has successors; e.g., much of the missions movement in India involves “tentmakers” (Pothen, “Missions,” 311–13).

32. E.g., Val. Max. 7.2.ext. 3; cf. Liefeld, “Preacher,” 246; Hock, *Social Context*, 29–30; see comment on Acts 20:33–35.

33. For the latter element in Paul's epistolary view of apostleship, see Dahl, *Studies*, 71–72.

PAUL AND BARNABAS IN CYPRUS AND PHRYGIA (12:25–14:28)

Although the narrative has been shifting between Paul (or the Antioch church) and Peter (or the Jerusalem church; with Barnabas connecting the two circles), it is in this section that the focus shifts more narrowly to Paul and his circle.

Antioch appears as the home base for both the benevolent mission to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30; 12:25) and the evangelistic mission in 13:4–14:25; that prayer and fasting are coupled with Paul and Barnabas’s departure from both Antioch and the mission churches reinforces this framing with a double frame. Bligh’s chiasmus here,¹ asymmetrical in the length of its units but more plausible than many he offers, at the very least highlights this double framing:

- A Departure from Syrian Antioch (13:1–2)
- B Prayer and fasting (13:3)
- C Ministry in Cyprus (13:4–13)
- D Paul’s discourse at Pisidian Antioch (13:16–41)
- C’ Ministry in Galatia (13:43–14:22)
- B’ Prayer and fasting (14:23)
- A’ Return to Syrian Antioch (14:24–26)

Reinforcing this framing, Luke rehearses the original commissioning explicitly in 14:26. More symmetrical is the approach of Talbert, who notes the Antioch frame in 13:1–3 and 14:24–28, within which an A-B-A’-B’-A’’-B’’ pattern fits Paul’s “to the Jew first” (Rom 1:16) ideal.²

From Antioch (13:1–3)

- A To Jews (13:4–5)
- B To Gentiles (13:6–12)
- A’ To Jews (13:13–43)
- B’ To Gentiles (13:44–52)³
- A’’ To Jews (14:1–7)
- B’’ To Gentiles (14:8–18, 19–23)

To Antioch (14:24–28)

1. Bligh, *Galatians*, 7.

2. Talbert, *Acts*, 116.

3. Gentiles do appear in Acts 13:43, and Jews appear in 13:45, 50 (though not as objects of positive good news).

The focus of some sections overlaps (e.g., 14:1–7 really addresses both Jews and Gentiles), but the pattern of continuing to start with Israel and then reaching others remains. The ministry of Paul and Barnabas opens with a reaffirmation of the calling (13:2–3), a dramatic power encounter and an official's conversion (demonstrating that God is genuinely with this new mission team, 13:4–12), a speech connecting biblical history to the present gospel, and a typical (somewhat paradigmatic) mission scene providing theological explanation for targeting Gentiles, with attendant conflicts (13:13–52).

1. Consecrated for the New Mission (12:25–13:3)

Like the Seven (6:3), Barnabas and Saul fulfilled “social” ministry for the needy of the Jerusalem church before embarking on ministries reproducing more dramatic elements of the apostolic example. Now they are ready for their apostolic mission beyond where the church has already been established.

a. Return from the Jerusalem Mission (12:25)

Acts 12:25 and 11:30 geographically frame the Jerusalem account of 12:1–24 with leaving and returning to Antioch. This trip for the poor may prefigure a later one (24:17) or, for Luke's narrative, replace it (though Barnabas would not have been involved on a later occasion). It fits Luke's consistent concern for the poor (e.g., 6:1), including earlier by Barnabas (4:36–37).

The famine visit may well have occurred after Agrippa's death but was mentioned earlier only because the prophecy was given earlier (11:28–30).⁴ From a purely narrative standpoint, however, the arrangement may leave the appearance that Paul and Barnabas were in Jerusalem during the time of Agrippa's repression of leaders not acceptable to his religiously conservative popularity base.

Although this verse functions most notably with reference to 11:30, it also leads into 13:1–3. The first mission of Barnabas and Saul was successful; now they would be “sent” (11:30) again (13:3–4). Just as the Seven were engaged in social ministry (6:2–5) before their evangelism ministry (6:8–15; 8:5–40) and just as the Gospel focuses on care for the poor and marginalized more than does Acts, which focuses on proclamation (compare Luke 1:51–53; 4:18 with Acts 1:8; 2:17–18), so Barnabas and Saul proved themselves by caring for needy disciples before being sent on their full evangelism ministry.

Mark had apparently remained in Jerusalem (like Barnabas himself until Acts 11:22), despite the scattering of many Hellenists (11:19), and accompanied Barnabas and Saul to Antioch (12:25). (His presence was not explicitly stated in his mother's house in 12:12, but Luke apparently implies it here.)⁵ Disciples traveled with rabbinic mentors in Judea and Galilee,⁶ and Mark may have wanted to serve Barnabas and

4. E.g., Bruce, *Commentary*, 257; Witherington, *Acts*, 77. For Acts 12:25 and other passages as transitional structural cues, see Longenecker, “Aversion.” We here follow the reading ἐξ (P⁷⁴, A) against εἰς; if the latter is preferred, Luke repeats the mission of 12:25 (the other options would be to translate εἰς “with respect to,” which would be unusual, or to offer an emendation as in Pervo, *Acts*, 316–17 and some MSS); for the debate, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 398–400.

5. If the collection mission occurred after Agrippa's death historically, John Mark could have also returned to Jerusalem at that time. Nave, *Repentance*, 215n320, points out that the mention of Mark in both 12:12 and 12:25 connects the ministry of Barnabas and Saul with that of Peter. Less compelling (though not impossible) is the tentative suggestion that they could have been among the “many” at the house at the time (12:12). Would Luke have neglected the opportunity to articulate such a connection?

6. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 669 (citing *Abot R. Nat.* 6:1 A; 11 B), though noting that there is no clear evidence for traveling outside the land with them. This is, however, what we would expect if this concept of deliberate travel for “mission” is a new one.

Paul as something of a disciple, hence as an apprentice. He remains with them until 13:13, though no judgment is passed on his departure from them until 15:37–38; Luke provides these brief statements in 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13 to prepare for the narrative later in 15:37–39. If what we today call Mark's Gospel was already associated with this Mark, as later tradition claims,⁷ Luke could contrast Mark's companionship with Paul unfavorably with his own;⁸ but as already noted, Luke neglects the opportunity (frequently exercised by others) to severely criticize his predecessors in Luke 1:1 (and does not seem to mind building on Mark's Gospel as a useful framework).⁹

b. The Spirit Sends Barnabas and Saul (13:1–3)

Although Paul has been proclaiming and teaching about Christ (Acts 9:20–22, 25, 28–29; 11:26; 13:1; 26:20), it is only at this juncture that he will begin to enter on the wider ministry to which the Lord called him in 9:15 (also 22:14–15; 26:16–18). The entire leadership of the church has been praying, and again praying together, it sends Paul and Barnabas out; the Antioch church's vision is not simply for its own outreach in Antioch but for God's larger purposes in his world.

I. LEADERS OF THE ANTIOCH CHURCH (13:1)

Before describing the commission, Luke first introduces the extraordinary leadership of the Antioch church, consisting of prophets and teachers. These were spiritually and intellectually mature leaders, who helped to confirm the Gentile mission of Saul and Barnabas. They were also from a geographically diverse background, emphasizing the cosmopolitan character of the church God used at the foundation of the Gentile mission.

(1) Prophets and Teachers

Just as Jesus sent his messengers out by twos (Luke 10:1) and Paul and Barnabas will go forth together (Acts 13:2), team leadership is a frequent characteristic of church leadership in Acts (1:21–26; 2:14; 6:3–5; 13:1; 14:23; see especially Jerusalem's "apostles and elders" in 15:2–6).¹⁰ Luke tells of prophets and teachers in leadership in the church (prophets are respected elsewhere, e.g., in 11:27; 15:32).¹¹ Some scholars argue that the grammar may imply two groups, each introduced by the postpositive coordinating conjunction τε: the first three are prophets, and the final two (Manaen and Saul) are teachers.¹² In favor of this possibility, we can be relatively certain that Manaen, like Saul, would have been well educated (see comments below).

This distinction, however, probably divides their ministries too neatly for the sake of serving our historical curiosity for details. Barnabas was likely also well educated (cf. his Levite and economic status in 4:36–37), and he joined with Paul in teaching

7. See Collins, *Mark*, 2–5; Hengel, *Mark*, 50–53, 81–82; Boyd, *Sage*, 229–37. Mark's limited knowledge of Galilean geography would be expected for the average Jerusalemite (Hengel, "Geography of Palestine," 33n19).

8. Cf. Collins, *Mark*, 5. Since Luke probably depended on neither Pauline nor Petrine epistles, it is possible that he could portray Mark quite differently than they do (Black, "Mark in Acts," 119–20), though he also portrays an earlier stage of Mark's career than they do, and not everyone in Acts shared Paul's opinion (Acts 15:39).

9. Discussed more fully in Keener, *Acts*, 1:173–74, 650, and especially 658–60.

10. See, e.g., comments in Shenk and Stutzman, *Communities*, 48–49; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 7–8; Murray, "Evangelism"; Green, *Thirty Years*, 210–11; for Paul in both Acts and the letters, Paimoen, "Missionary Team"; Harrington, "Co-workers"; idem, "Collaborative Nature"; Ehrensperger, *Power*, 46–53, 61–62 (in the letters); cf. (for possible coauthorship) Loubser, "Media Criticism."

11. This strongly challenges the notion that Luke, while reporting prophecy, plays down prophets as "a fringe role in the leadership of the church" (Boring, *Sayings*, 40, probably following too closely the traditional Tübingen perspective on Luke's early catholicism); cf. Acts 2:17–18.

12. E.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 172–73; Longenecker, *Acts*, 212 (distinguishing forthtelling from or exposition).

in 11:26.¹³ Further, Paul functions like a prophet in 13:9–11. Part of the logic of the list's arrangement is that the names of Luke's special protagonists Barnabas and Saul frame it. Thus probably all are prophets and teachers¹⁴ (even if some were stronger in one gifting than the other), and the distinction between prophets and teachers is not absolute.¹⁵ Although the connection between the two terms is not technically a hendiadys, teaching and prophecy were probably closely related gifts relevant for leadership in the church.¹⁶

The church's Jewish contemporaries emphasized the teaching role in synagogues, but early Christianity's charismatic/prophetic dimension was quite distinctive (see comment on Acts 2:17–18). Paul's letters rank prophecy second only to apostleship itself and higher than teaching (1 Cor 12:28; cf. 12:29–30; Rom 12:6; Eph 4:11).¹⁷ In Pauline literature, Paul is a teacher (1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11) but certainly also a prophet (1 Cor 14:37; cf. 2 Cor 12:1–4; Eph 3:5).¹⁸

In the *Didache*, prophets and teachers appear as charismatic ministries alongside what became more institutional offices such as overseers and deacons (*Did.* 15.1). Both kinds of leadership also appear in Acts (e.g., Acts 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4), suggesting diverse, coexisting structures.¹⁹ This is certainly true in Paul's epistles, with leadership gifts being "charismatic" no less than the others (Rom 12:8; governments in 1 Cor 12:28; cf. Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 4:14). Did the prophets noted here migrate from Jerusalem in Acts 11:27?²⁰ There were Cyrenians and others there (Luke 23:26; Acts 2:10), as here, but most of these believers probably migrated earlier, in Acts 11:20. This prophetic leadership may earlier hail from Jerusalem, but it may have simply been trained or motivated by the example of the Jerusalem prophets.²¹

(2) Diverse Leaders

Luke provides a list of the church's leadership, which resembles other leadership lists in Luke-Acts (Luke 6:13–16; Acts 1:13; 6:5) and elsewhere in antiquity (see comment on Acts 1:13). Just as the list of leaders in Acts 1:13 is followed by prayer (1:14) and the designation of another apostle (1:25–26), so here the leaders pray and God sends forth laborers (cf. Luke 10:2).²²

The list suggests a measure of diversity, important for cosmopolitan Antioch.²³ (For a fuller discussion of Antioch and the distinctive shape that early Christian ministry must have assumed there, see comment on Acts 11:19–30.) At least four and probably five of the leaders of the Antioch church were not from Antioch. Because

13. Some see Barnabas and Saul as the teachers, and others as the prophets (Dormeyer and Galindo, *Apostelgeschichte*, 197). Again, this may go beyond Luke in offering distinctions.

14. E.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 395; Witherington, *Acts*, 391; Twelftree, *People*, 158.

15. Many regard them as interchangeable here; see esp. Aune, *Prophecy*, 265 (noting also Greeven, "Propheten," 29; Bonwetsch, "Prophetie," 420; Baumgarten, *Paulus und Apokalyptik*, 51; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 141–42); cf. Bock, *Acts*, 439, noting the overlap. Moses is both prophet and teacher in *Test. Mos.* 11:16.

16. Cf. the prophetic empowerment of the two kings who did not inherit or usurp their office (1 Sam 10:6; 16:13; Acts 2:30) as well as of two of the most faithful judges (Judg 4:4; 1 Sam 3:10–21).

17. Paul apparently employs the term "prophet" for whoever prophesies regularly (1 Cor 14:29, 32).

18. For Paul as a prophet in his writings, see Hill, *Prophecy*, 111–15.

19. Dunn, *Acts*, 172.

20. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 220.

21. Certainly, pagan mantic phenomena occurred around Antioch (cf. Jos. *War* 1.328), but the teachers would have been immersed in Jewish Scripture as a nearer source. For Antioch in general, see comment on Acts 11:19.

22. Cf. also Matson, *Conversion Narratives*, 51–52.

23. Many scholars today emphasize this point (e.g., DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey, and Kim, *United*, 27–28; Thomas, "Church at Antioch," 152; Dormeyer and Galindo, *Apostelgeschichte*, 198). Some forms of diversity appear even among the Twelve (cf. Keener, *Matthew*, 311).

recent immigrants tend to be less socially rooted, many converts may have come from among the vast numbers who were originally from elsewhere (though long-term ethnic enclaves²⁴ would be more stable).

Luke's mention of their geographic diversity is undoubtedly deliberate; although it is not surprising that more-experienced teachers from elsewhere (Acts 11:20, 25–26) would initially lead a church just fairly recently founded, cosmopolitan Antioch probably also provided members with a variety of geographic backgrounds. Most important, this geographic diversity serves as a harbinger of the Gentile mission, mirroring the range of delegates later traveling with Paul from the Diaspora to Jerusalem (20:4).

The ethnicity of the leaders is less clear than their geographic diversity (which would entail some cultural diversity); although all are from either Asia or Africa (by ancient definitions), none are natives of Antioch, and together they cover at least Cyrene, Cyprus, Galilee, Tarsus, and Jerusalem (though perhaps many or all have lived in Jerusalem at one point). As teachers of Scripture, all are probably Jewish or have a long experience with the synagogue;²⁵ this is clear at least for Saul, Barnabas, and Manaen. But it is possible that some have been proselytes or descended from proselytes (see comments on Niger, below). In urban Antioch, they would speak Greek (helpful for Luke's scattered "Hellenists"), but in Syria's interior and countryside, Aramaic would also be spoken.²⁶ The social level and education are probably high, more so for the leaders than for the church as a whole, especially if Simeon Niger is a Roman citizen like Paul; Manaen certainly has high status even if he is a freedman (see comment below).

We know from Paul's writings that he and Barnabas were associated with Antioch (Gal 2:13).²⁷ The other leaders mentioned here do not appear in Paul's writings (with the possible but unlikely exception of Lucius), but the very detail Luke provides (in light of his method elsewhere, which does not include fabricating names for use in a passing list) supports the likelihood of authentic tradition here.

(3) *Simeon Called Niger*

Simeon was "called Niger," as John was "called Mark" (Acts 12:25), both being common names (see comment on Acts 1:13) that warranted a second name to distinguish them from others with the name. It is thus a reasonable surmise that "Niger" is, in this case, a nickname rather than a given name.²⁸ Luke's normal usage is not so restrictive (Luke 19:2; Acts 1:12; 3:11; 9:11; 10:1; 27:14), but certainly the formula fits second names for those with common names (Luke 6:15; 22:3; Acts 1:23). It could be a Roman citizen name (which would fit Acts 13:9 in the same context, though employing a different formula), but it differs from the other designations; even a Roman birth name of this sort might be given to a darker baby (the way *tertius* would fit a third son, etc.). The name distinguishes this Simeon from others of the same common Jewish name (cf. Gen 29:33; Luke 2:25; 3:30; 15:14): "Simeon the Black" or "Simeon the Dark."

24. Many cities, including Antioch, would have had these (cf. Rohrbaugh, "Pre-industrial City," 144).

25. All except Lucius have Semitic, probably Jewish, names (also Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 148). For the large number of Jews and their status in Antioch, see Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.39; further comment on Acts 11:19–20.

26. Millar, *Empire and Neighbours*, 197, noting that "near the Mediterranean coast, all the known documents are in Greek (plus a few in Latin)." See also Rives, *Religion*, 63.

27. Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 15; Barrett, *Acts*, 559, also noting the sending of Barnabas and Saul in Acts 15:1–5, whether it is a separate event (as I would argue) or a doublet of 11:30 (cf. Gal 2:1).

28. At an earlier period, all Roman surnames were nicknames (Plut. *Cic.* 1.2).

Given Luke's concern for diversity in this list and for ethnography (and Africa, cf. Acts 8:26–40) elsewhere, the Cyrenian origin of many of the church's founders (11:20), and the following mention of Lucius from Cyrene, many scholars think that Simeon may have been an African, or (in many cases) more specifically, a North African Jew, descended from African proselytes.²⁹ Far from this being a purely modern, "politically" sensitive interpretation, a nineteenth-century commentator could also point out, "Niger means *black*; and it is not an unreasonable surmise that he was an African convert."³⁰ (Although Luke does not specify a Cyrenian origin here as with Lucius, one might attribute this omission to the nickname "Niger" being more informative; but "dark" complexions were not limited to Cyrene or even North Africa.)

North Africa had long been a prominent part of the Roman Empire; in the imperial period, the fertile Roman province of "Africa," along with Egypt, replaced Sicily as Rome's primary source of grain.³¹ The region had a typical Mediterranean climate, with a moist, cool winter in contrast to its arid and hot summer.³²

Phoenician settlers in North Africa found indigenes, all of whom were reportedly called "Libyans" by others.³³ Greeks called the entire region between the Nile and Gibraltar "Libya," probably following Egyptian sources.³⁴ They could apply the term loosely to North Africans of lighter complexion than dark Egyptians or Ethiopians, though they also sometimes employed the designation "purely geographically"—for example, for Cyrene (Soph. *El.* 701–2, most likely; Paus. 6.19.10).³⁵ Because Greek historians neglected them,³⁶ much of our knowledge of the local eastern Libyan population of Cyrenaica comes from Greek documents from there.³⁷ Archaeological evidence shows, however, that despite considerable nomadism (cf. Fronto *Ep. Graecae* 1.5), many settlements existed, and in the Carthaginian (e.g., Polyb. 1.71.1–2) and Roman periods many coastal Libyans settled as farmers.

Local Libyans also intermarried and traded with the colonists, producing "racial and cultural mixes,"³⁸ although marriages were most common among one's own ethnic stock there.³⁹ (Thus, if non-Jews married Jews in this area with a large Jewish population, it was likely only after conversion to Judaism changed their primary sphere of identification.) Romanized Libyans could also become prominent, such as the famous orator and imperial tutor Fronto (Fronto *Ep. graec.* 1.5).

29. E.g., Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:17; Witherington, *Acts*, 392; Dunn, *Acts*, 172; Felder, *Waters*, 47–48; idem, "Racial Ambiguities," 22; idem, *Race*, 39; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 674; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 340–41; Dormeyer and Galindo, *Apostelgeschichte*, 198; Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 279; Kisau, "Acts," 1323; Bock, *Acts*, 439; Peterson, *Acts*, 374; though contrast Pervo, *Acts*, 322n28 (it "offers no clue"). The connection with "Simon of Cyrene" is plausible but speculative (Johnson, *Acts*, 220; Witherington, *Acts*, 392); Luke spells the names differently (Marshall, *Acts*, 214), and Luke would have likely noted any connection (cf. Luke 23:26) if he knew of it.

30. Abbott, *Acts*, 145.

31. Warmington and Wilson, "Africa, Roman." On Roman Africa (including the Roman literature, church fathers, etc., from there, e.g., p. 169), see Millar, *Empire and Neighbours*, 169–81.

32. Greene, "North Africa," 155.

33. *Ibid.* Discussing North Africa will be relevant as background for Lucius's Cyrenian context regardless of one's conclusions about Simeon Niger's geographic origin. For discussion of the possible relationship with OT peoples, see Heard, "Libya."

34. Greene, "Libya," 357; see Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.1.1.

35. Zimmerman, "Libyes," 515.

36. For Greek prejudice against indigenous North Africans (as against immigrant Jews), see, e.g., Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 2.3.70.

37. Masson, "Greco et Libyens," 387.

38. Reynolds, "Libya," 856.

39. See the study in Cherry, "Marriage."

If “Niger” is a Roman birth name rather than a nickname, it need not designate ethnicity; it was a common Roman name.⁴⁰ Of Paul's many associates with Roman names in Acts and the epistles, the most “respectable” cognomen next to “Paulus” itself may have been “Niger.”⁴¹ The name “Simeon” indicates that the leader here is also Jewish (if a citizen, he, like Paul, would bear his Roman *tria nomina* in addition to his Jewish name; see comment at Acts 13:9; 16:37); it leaves open the question, however, of his original ancestry. Jews sometimes bore the name “Niger”;⁴² because it was a Roman name, some who bore it may have been Roman citizens. We should take note of Frank Snowden's caution at this point:

Conclusions as to racial identity or provenance based on nomenclature, however, must be reached with the greatest caution. In some cases, for example, there may be no relation between the name of a slave and his provenance.⁴³ Further, names denoting color such as *Niger*, *Fuscus*, and *Melas*, type of hair such as *Iras*, or shape of nose such as *Simus*, although sometimes perhaps given to Ethiopians by their masters [in the cases where they were slaves], by no means necessarily implied Ethiopian extraction and may have referred only to the spread of physical characteristics observable in white races. In addition, just as today Mr. Blackman may be a white man and Mr. White a black man, the same was true in the ancient world.⁴⁴

But he notes that some slaves did receive such names and that Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman world often “carried Greek or Latin names.”⁴⁵

If, as seems more likely, the name was a nickname, it may offer a significant pointer to complexion in a way that a birth name would not. We need not assume that Simeon Niger was “Ethiopian”—that is, Nubian (see comment on Acts 8:27)—to warrant the nickname “Dark.”⁴⁶ Although Nubians represented the standard by which blackness was evaluated (see comment on Acts 8:27), northern Mediterranean peoples could call some Egyptians and North Africans “black,” using it in a relative manner.⁴⁷ Thus an Egyptian who settled or was raised in Greece might well bear a nickname or birth name such as “Melas” (Isaeus *Dicaeog.* 40)—that is, “Black.”

Precisely such nicknames based on complexion could be used, however, to distinguish individuals on the basis of the lighter or darker among them. Thus a Ptolemaic list of soldiers distinguishes two individuals named “Apollonius” by calling one μέλας (“black”) and the other λευκός (“white”), the two color extremes (though descriptions of individuals were typically more nuanced in terms of shade).⁴⁸ Thus we have

40. E.g., Brutteditus Niger (Sen. E. *Controv.* 2.1.36; *Suas.* 6.20; Tac. *Ann.* 3.66), Aquilius Niger (Suet. *Aug.* 11), and others (Suet. *Julius* 17.1–2; Fronto *Fer. als.* 3.1; Hdn. 2.7.3–3.4.7; inscription in Deissmann, *Light*, 443).

41. Judge, *Rank*, 36n20.

42. E.g., Jos. *War* 3.11 (killed in 4.359–60). For a Hellenist Jew, too, one name (Theodorus) may be conjoined with “who is also Niger” (*CPJ* 2:140, §§248, 249; 2:143, §261; 2:145, §§269–70; 2:146, §274; 2:147, §§275–76; cf. 2:139, §243; 2:141–42, §254).

43. He cites here Westermann, *Slave Systems*, 96–97.

44. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity*, 12, noting also that by the second and third generations, descendants of mixed marriages were no longer clearly discernible.

45. *Ibid.*, 12–13. Former slaves of Roman citizens were also citizens, with Latin names (see comment on Acts 6:9; 22:28).

46. Libyans in the Cyrenian countryside were Berbers, not “black” by our usual Western definition (Yamauchi, *Africa*, 186).

47. Aeschylus *Suppl.* 154–55; Sil. It. 7.682–83; Lucian *Ship* 2; *Sib. Or.* 11.289; see comment on Acts 8:27. Judeans generally considered themselves between black and white complexions (*m. Neg.* 2:1) and could apply the term “Kushite” to anything (*m. Sikkah* 3:6) or anyone (*m. Bek.* 7:6) of dark complexion. Most peoples considered themselves “in between” and the norm.

48. Cameron, “Black and White” (on P.Amh. 62.6–7).

suggested above that because “Simeon” was one of the most popular names, it, like John (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37), warranted a nickname.

Different peoples have employed color labels with different meanings throughout history, leading to considerable confusion. Color was typically understood in relative terms (see comment on Acts 8:27), a practice retained much later in history; for example, Arabs considered themselves “black” compared with the Persians (who were “red”) but “red” or “white” compared with Africans, whom they considered black.⁴⁹

(4) *Lucius of Cyrene*

“Lucius” (Λούκιος) was also apparently a fairly common name in the Roman world.⁵⁰ It is therefore not necessary to identify the various Lukes in first-century Christian literature; one, for example, is likely Jewish (Rom 16:21) and another likely a Gentile (Col 4:10–14).⁵¹ Attempts to connect the present Luke with the author of Acts are even more improbable despite the antiquity of the church tradition favoring the identification.⁵² Luke elsewhere signifies his presence only by inclusion in the “we,” and it begins much farther north than Antioch. Lucius “of Cyrene” might point away from Lukan authorship for another reason: Luke designates a “Simon” as “from Cyrene” (Luke 23:26) perhaps partly to avoid confusion with other “Simons” (see, e.g., Luke 2:25; 5:4) and could distinguish this “Lucius” from another known to his audience—namely, himself. But he would probably wish to emphasize Cyrene in any case.

Presumably, Lucius was one of the leading Cyrenian Jewish founders of the Antioch church movement (Acts 11:20). Cyrene had an exceptionally large Jewish population in this period.⁵³ Cyrene and the land near it were fertile and prosperous;⁵⁴ it was noted for its grain, oil, and animal products (including ostrich feathers) but especially for silphium, a product unique to this province.⁵⁵ Cyrene produced the philosopher Aristippus, a student of Socrates; members of his philosophic school were called Cyrenaics, after his hometown.⁵⁶ It also produced Eratosthenes son of Aglaos, a noted grammarian, poet, and philosopher (Lucian *Oct.* 27).

The earliest known Greek settlement in Africa was Cyrene (631 B.C.E.; Hdt. 4.150–51), which lent its name in turn to the surrounding region of Cyrenaica.⁵⁷ The five major cities of the region formed a Pentapolis; besides Cyrene, these cities were Apollonia, Euesperides (called Berenice; modern Benghazi), Ptolemais, and Tauchira (Arsinoë).⁵⁸ A praetorian proconsul administered Cyrenaica (with Crete) after 27 B.C.E.⁵⁹ Rome combined Crete and Cyrenaica into a single province governed from Cyrene, but a Roman garrison protected the city after a war during the time of

49. Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 22. Arab artwork depicted Arabs as white and African slaves (Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, plates 1–10, 16, 19), battle enemies (plates 11–15), and also the Prophet’s companion Bilal (plate 18) as black. See further discussion on relative color also in Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 63–68.

50. It appears among the four praenomina most common; all others were much rarer (Stambaugh, *City*, 94). It need not indicate Roman citizenship here (Judge, *First Christians*, 561).

51. Danker, *New Age*, xii.

52. See, e.g., Bruce, *Commentary*, 260; Hengel, *Acts and History*, 72; Moo, *Romans*, 934. Dunn, *Romans*, 909, thinks that someone with such a significant and long-standing association with Paul would merit fuller greeting in Rom 16:21. Cadbury, “Lucius,” 494, is less dismissive but notes that this “conjecture has not more to commend it than have most such conjectures.”

53. E.g., Jos. *Ant.* 14.115; Ag. *Ap.* 2.44; see comment on Acts 11:20.

54. Strabo 2.5.33; 17.3.21; cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.3.24; 5.5.33.

55. Huss, “Cyrene: History,” 9.

56. Döring, “Cyrenaics.”

57. Greene, “Libya,” 357.

58. *Ibid.*, 357–58.

59. Huss, “Cyrenaica.”

Augustus. Veteran colonists were later settled there “to compensate for the casualties” occasioned by the Jewish revolt of 115–17 C.E. During times of peace, Cyrene apparently enjoyed a “modest prosperity.”⁶⁰ See additional comment at Acts 11:20.

(5) *Manaen, Brought Up with Antipas*

“Manaen” (Μαναιήν) is the LXX name Μαναιημ (2 Kgs 15:14–23; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 9.229–33)—that is, the Greek form of “Menahem” (“Comforter”). Given that king’s wickedness in the OT, it is not surprising that his name did not become common among first-century Jews.⁶¹ (Although some ancient Jews highlighted the Chronicler’s emphasis on Manasseh’s repentance, for some others he was too wicked to have been forgiven.)⁶² Luke informs us that this member of the Antioch leadership team was a person of high social status (a Lukan interest; e.g., Acts 8:27; 10:1; 13:7, 12; 17:4), one who had grown up with Herod Antipas (“the tetrarch,” Luke 3:1, 19; 9:7). This positive member of the Herodian circle contrasts starkly with the demise of a Herod just reported in Acts 12:23. Luke has a special interest in the Herod family (e.g., Luke 23:8–12) and seems to have contacts within Antipas’s extended household, who may have provided Luke or his sources with information (8:3);⁶³ the wife of Herod’s business manager⁶⁴ was a disciple firsthand and perhaps influenced Manaen. Historically, Manaen’s connection with Antipas had long since become useless politically; Antipas was exiled in 39 C.E.,⁶⁵ at which time Agrippa I (Acts 12:1) had taken over his realm. Such a past connection nevertheless spoke well for his social status, especially outside Palestine (and after Agrippa’s death).⁶⁶ This status (and his age, below) did not prevent his participation in a leadership team with progressive outlook on the Gentile mission; his connection with Antipas’s court, in fact, would have given him a far greater exposure to Gentiles and cosmopolitan perspective than would have been available to the vast majority of non-Hellenists growing up in Judea or Galilee.

60. Reynolds, “Cyrene.”

61. Only two appear in Josephus (an Essene in *Ant.* 15.373–78; son of Judas the Galilean, *Life* 21; *War* 2.433–49), and only a few more on ossuaries; the name is probably even rarer in the Diaspora (Williams, “Names,” 92). Winter, “Shortages,” 75, suggests the possibility that this Manaen was grandson of the Essene Manaen who prophesied to Herod the Great (Jos. *Ant.* 15.373); this is plausible but, from extant evidence, currently impossible to aver as more than speculation. Those instances of the name that do appear (cf. Jdt 8:2, 7; 10:3; 16:22–24) presumably evoke the patriarch (Gen 41:51; 46:20).

62. For repentance, see esp. 2 Chr 33:12–15; Pr Man title (Ode 12 title); *b. Sanh.* 103a; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:11; *Tg. 2 Chr* 33:12–13. Josephus presents Asa largely positively and even tones down Manasseh’s idolatry; cf. Feldman, “Manasseh.” Against R. Judah, the majority of early third-century rabbis insisted that Manasseh would not inherit the world to come (*m. Sanh.* 10:2; cf. *Num. Rab.* 14:1; for a survey, Hoffer, “Manasseh’s Repentance”).

63. Bauckham, *Women*, 189, thinks that much of the “inside” information on Herod (Luke 9:9b; 23:4–12) must derive from the circle of Jesus’s disciples (13:1–5, 31–32), so that Joanna plays a role in originating the traditions. On 165–86, he brilliantly argues that Joanna is Paul’s “Junia” (Rom 16:7), establishing the possibility (though not the certainty, since Andronicus was apparently also an apostle before Paul; Junia may have simply belonged to the synagogue of freedpersons, cf. Acts 6:9). Luke’s own “inside source,” however, could be from Manaen’s reports via Paul. Why would Joanna have information about a former “Herodian” contact in Antioch many years later?

64. Ἐπίτροπος can mean “steward” or “guardian,” quite a high office when serving a king (2 Macc 11:1; 13:2; cf. 14:2) or tetrarch; Chuza was some sort of manager. We need not identify Chuza with Manaen, since Luke, the author of both reports, does not connect them and reports quite different matters about them (Chuza is not himself said to be a believer).

65. It is possible that Luke and some members of his audience would know that this exile was due to Herodias’s machinations and would know that judgments on Antipas were seen as vindicating John (see Jos. *Ant.* 18.113–19, 124–25; Keener, *Matthew*, 397–402, esp. 399; on Antipas, see at length Hoehner, *Antipas*); but neither Luke nor other NT writers mention it.

66. Any ally of the Herodian family may have been respectable in Antioch; Antipas’s “father had been a major benefactor of the city” (Meeks and Wilken, *Antioch*, 15, citing Jos. *War* 1.425).

What does it mean that Manaen grew up with Antipas? The term σύντροφος applies to officials and others “brought up with” a king (e.g., 2 Macc 9:29), such as those brought up with Rehoboam (LXX 3 Kgdms 12:24, based on 1 Kgs 12:8, 10, 14) or with Alexander of Macedon (1 Macc 1:6; despite πάντες, the reference is to free persons here).⁶⁷ It originally meant “nurtured with” (Arist. *N.E.* 1161b),⁶⁸ sometimes connoting “adopted” as a “childhood playmate” (Hdt. 1.99), and was sometimes extended to “a court ‘familiar’ or ‘companion’” (Lucian *Nigr.* 12, 15).⁶⁹ The term applied to anyone raised in the royal court with the princes;⁷⁰ it included princes of other kingdoms raised in Caesar’s court (SIG³ 798).⁷¹ That an emperor was brought up in the palace was considered a basis for praising his status (Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 371.18–20), and being brought up in a palace presumably would increase status for others as well. Rulers’ children did not grow up in total isolation; other noble children or royal relatives were often educated by the same teachers in the royal court,⁷² though the circle was deliberately kept small.⁷³ The laws of guest friendship obligated a prince to remember someone brought up in his grandfather’s home (Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.2). Some scholars think that Manaen would have been a grandson of another Menahem, who was honored by the Herodian dynasty for predicting Herod’s reign (Jos. *Ant.* 15.373–78),⁷⁴ but since this Menahem was an Essene (15.373–74), he would hardly have joined the aristocracy; more likely, if the names have any connection at all, a different child in the household would have been named in his honor.

We need not assume that Manaen was a prince; in fact, he could have been a high-status servant. The Herodian dynasty held numerous slaves,⁷⁵ and the term σύντροφος applied to slaves brought up with the future master of the house, who sometimes became intimate friends of the free child (e.g., Jos. *Asen.* 10:4/6; cf. 17:4, with the verb cognate συντετραμμένα).⁷⁶ Even the birth child of one’s wet nurse shared a special relationship, for which Latin employed the term *conlacteus*, an equivalent to the original sense of σύντροφος.⁷⁷ Some of the nurses would be slaves, though in a wealthy household the preference was for an educated servant whose Greek was excellent.⁷⁸ Slaves raised with a young master were often freed when the master attained maturity.⁷⁹ Royal freedpersons could wield consider-

67. Scholars cite also Polyb. 5.9.4; Diod. Sic. 1.53.5; 1.54.5 (Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:17). Cf. 1 Kgs 11:20 (concerning a political marriage).

68. Although cognates are not always determinative, it is noteworthy that the cognate verb συντρέφω can apply to brothers brought up together (4 Macc 13:21, 23; the use in Sir 38:29 is irrelevant). It probably connotes the Greek ideal of age-groups raised together in Dan 1:10 LXX.

69. Johnson, *Acts*, 221.

70. Bruce, *Commentary*, 260–61 (also noting, though not selecting, the looser meaning “courtier” or “intimate friend”).

71. From 37 C.E.; available in Sherck, *Empire*, §42B, p. 79.

72. Suet. *Tit.* 2.

73. Thus one teacher was allowed to bring his whole school to the palace when he was hired to tutor Augustus’s grandsons, on the condition that he not add other students (Suet. *Gramm.* 17).

74. A view noted in Le Cornu, *Acts*, 676, who also mentions a Menahem who later sources claimed served with Hillel as father of the court but left the Sanhedrin for a different “principle” (possibly the same person if he joined the Essenes; cf. *Midr. Cant. Zuta* 8:14; *m. Hag.* 2:2; *y. Hag.* 10b; *b. Hag.* 16ab). Grandchildren often did take a grandparent’s name (Finegan, *Apostles*, 63).

75. Fiensy, “Composition,” 224 (citing Jos. *War* 1.511, 673; *Ant.* 17.199).

76. Hock, “Ethnography,” 112, points out this special relationship in Longus 4.9.3. Romans, however, usually raised freeborn children separately from slaves (Tac. *Germ.* 20, contrasting the German custom).

77. Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 128. Epitaphs often display the affection of grown children for their wet nurses (e.g., in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 28; cf. Gen 35:8); nurses also cared about the grown children (Suet. *Dom.* 17.3).

78. Plut. *Educ.* 5, *Mor.* 3DE; Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.4–5; Lefkowitz and Fant, *Life*, 110–11, §111; cf. Tac. *Dial.* 29; Lucian *Anach.* 20. On nurses in general, see comment on Acts 7:21.

79. Note, e.g., Rawson, “Family,” 12–13.

able power in this era.⁸⁰ Many freedpersons were teachers,⁸¹ and many educated slaves who served their masters well—for example, by helping their rhetoric—were freed;⁸² one who was freeborn stayed a slave as a master's grammarian and was soon freed.⁸³ Whatever the specific sense of the term,⁸⁴ associates of one's youth normally remained trusted confidants.⁸⁵

To be on intimate terms with a ruler was no small matter. A king should have friends, Dio Chrysostom lectures (*Or.* 3.86), and should have the best friends (3.128); he should avoid flatterers (3.129) and value especially loyalty (3.86–89). “Friend of the king” had long been a particular designation for those close to the ruler.⁸⁶ Roman emperors conferred “friendship” on trusted associates, from whom they drew their primary advisors.⁸⁷ That Antipas was a tetrarch rather than a king would not have diminished the honor among Galileans or those familiar with Antipas through political knowledge or the gospel tradition.⁸⁸

Not only was Manaen of high status because of his background (a background Luke is happy to emphasize); his age would also be of importance. If he was brought up with Antipas (who must have been counted an adult when given his office in 4 B.C.E.), he was probably in his mid-60s at this time.⁸⁹ Age, too, was highly respected in the culture (see comment on Acts 7:58; 14:23).

Alongside two probable Roman citizens (Saul and Simeon, both also Jewish) and a person probably born to at least some wealth (Barnabas, Acts 4:36–37), Manaen filled out a leadership team that would have been socially respectable (cf. 1 Tim 3:2, 7; Titus 1:6).⁹⁰ As in synagogues, socially influential people may have often filled positions of leadership (provided they were also morally qualified). Though elite members in Corinth (where many were Roman citizens) may have resented Paul's artisan status and comparative rhetorical deficiencies (cf. 1 Cor 9:1–18; 2 Cor 10:10; 11:6), the church in Antioch was probably pleased with the standing of its leaders in the broader society. Spiritual qualifications were more important, but in a hostile society, “good reputation” still had its value for the church's public representatives (Acts 6:3).

II. THE COMMISSION (13:2–3)

Like some other critical revelations regarding the Gentile mission in Acts (cf. 10:9, 31), this revelation concerning the mission of Saul and Barnabas came during prayer—indeed, concerted prayer among spiritual and intellectual leaders of a successful church movement. Moreover, although God takes responsibility for calling Barnabas and Saul (for Saul's calling, cf. 9:15–16; 22:14–15; 26:16–18), the Spirit calls the church's

80. On freedpersons of status, especially of the emperor, see, e.g., P.Oxy. 3312.10–13; Pliny *Ep.* 10.27–28; at greater length, excursus on freedpersons at Acts 6:9.

81. Suet. *Gramm.* 15–20; 23.

82. Suet. *Rhet.* 3.

83. Suet. *Gramm.* 21.

84. Witherington, *Acts*, 392, notes my suggestion that Manaen might have been a royal freedman (*Background Commentary*, 357), but emphasizes (as I had noted) the term's broader possibilities.

85. See Judge, *Pattern*, 33; cf. also Isaeus *Dicaeog.* 40.

86. E.g., Diod. Sic. 17.31.6; Diog. Laert. 1.54; Corn. Nep. 9 (Conon), 2.2; 18 (Eumenes), 1.6; Char. *Chae.* 8.8.10; 2 Sam 15:37; 16:16–17; 1 Kgs 4:5; 1 Chr 27:33; 1 Macc 10:20; 15:28, 32; 2 Macc 7:24; *Let. Aris.* 40–41, 44, 190, 208, 225, 228, 318; *Jos. Ant.* 12.366 (though cf. 12.391); 13.146, 225; *Life* 131; cf. *Sipre Deut.* 53.1.3; *Gen. Rab.* 34:9; for Alexander of Macedon, Diod. Sic. 17.31.6; 17.39.2; 17.100.1; cf. Diod. Sic. 33.4.4a.

87. Judge, *Pattern*, 33–34; see Epict. *Diatr.* 4.1.45–50; Mart. *Epig.* 5.19.15–16; Hdn. 4.3.5; inscriptions in Deissmann, *Light*, 378. King Agrippa employed this title on his coins (Meysan, “Coins”). Friendship with Caesar also applied to alliances with peoples (e.g., Strabo 8.5.5).

88. Cf., e.g., friends of Cassander (Diod. Sic. 18.55.1). On tetrarchs, see Bringmann, “Tetrarches.”

89. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 166.

90. Judge, *First Christians*, 565, treats Manaen as a likely Roman citizen, but we cannot be sure.

leadership to share responsibility for sending them out. They are “sent” by the Spirit (13:4) but also by their fellow prophets and teachers who follow the Spirit (13:3).

(1) *Worshipping and Fasting* (13:2)

The verb *λειτουργέω*, which Luke employs only here, could include any kind of public service,⁹¹ but it clearly bears a narrower sense here. The LXX usually applies it to priestly, cultic worship,⁹² an activity difficult to perform without the temple. The term also, however, included the Levitical temple worship of thanks and praise (1 Chr 6:32; 16:4; 2 Chr 31:2).⁹³ To the extent that it retains its frequent cultic associations from the LXX, it is helpful to think of spiritual sacrifices of worship (cf., e.g., Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15; 1 Pet 2:5–9).⁹⁴

Although fasting characterized Jewish tradition (Luke 5:33; 18:12; cf. Acts 27:9) and did not always characterize Jesus’s disciples (Luke 5:33–34),⁹⁵ Jesus himself had fasted at length (4:2), and Luke respected this discipline (2:37); it was appropriate now that Jesus had ascended to the Father (Luke 5:35; Acts 14:23). Fasting was employed only rarely and for brief periods by Greeks⁹⁶ and was even rarer among Romans.⁹⁷ (It was used as a physical remedy as well, either complete fasting or fasting from meat and wine, probably in response to excessive diets.)⁹⁸ As with the Greeks, it was not a common practice in the ancient Near East.⁹⁹ (More generally, fasting for mourning was more widespread; see comment on Acts 9:9.)

Jewish people employed fasting for various purposes.¹⁰⁰ It was particularly prominent in mourning (Jdt 8:6; *Test. Zeb.* 4:1–3),¹⁰¹ sometimes in individual repentance

91. Often compulsory service (Lewis, *Life*, 177–84), perhaps most frequently as a form of taxation (Bell, “Egypt,” 301–2; Llewelyn, *Documents*, 7:93–105, §5), which contributed to Egypt’s economic collapse in the early third century (Bell, “Egypt,” 315). For its most general usage, see Thiselton, “Semantics,” 81.

92. Scores of times, e.g., Exod 35:19; Num 3:6, 31; 4:3–43 passim; 18:2–7; 1 Chr 23:28, 32; Ezek 43:19; 44:11–19; Jdt 4:14; Sir 45:15; Heb 10:11; figuratively, Sir 24:10. This is the usual use of the cognate noun in the LXX (e.g., Exod 38:21; Num 4:24–33; 1 Chr 6:48; 9:13, 19, 28; cf. also Heb 8:6; 9:21), and Luke so employs it (Luke 1:23). Le Cornu, *Acts*, 676–77, notes that Qumran texts employ the equivalent Hebrew terms for temple ministry (1QM II, 1–2; 4Q400 1 I, 4–5; 11QT XXXII, 12; LVI, 9), but as at Qumran, all believers could offer “spiritual sacrifices” (1QS IX, 3–6; X, 6, 8, 22–24).

93. It could also be extended more broadly for others offering worship (Sir 4:14) or service to other people (Sir 8:8; 10:25). Michael is a *λειτουργός* in *Test. Ab.* 15:1 A.

94. See comment on Acts 2:46; esp. 10:4.

95. Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, 128–57, argues that fasting was a covenant marker, treated by Jesus with relative indifference (Mark 2:18–22).

96. E.g., for a day before initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries (Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2.21.2; see discussion in Klauck, *Context*, 92, 96; Rives, *Religion*, 60; cf. Sallustius *Gods* 4 in Parsons, *Acts*, 185); for the Pythia, who fasted before giving oracles (Klauck, *Context*, 186); ten days’ fasting and abstinence before the Dionysiac Mysteries (116).

97. See Henrichs, “Fasting” (offering other examples). Holmén, *Covenant Thinking*, 129, views it as an innovation of the era (noting [133] its specific attachment to Judaism in Tac. *Hist.* 5.4; Suet. *Aug.* 76.3).

98. Pliny E. *N.H.* 28.14.53. Some ancients also abstained from particular foods to avoid harmful spirits (Wimmer, *Fasting*, 115–16). John Chrysostom praises fasting but says that he would be happy if his hearers would merely abandon luxury, eating only what is healthy (*Hom. Acts* 27). Contrary to what one might expect, short-term fasting (but more than twenty-five hours) appears not to have negative health effects (Reiter et al., “Diabetes and Fasting”).

99. Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *Background Commentary*, 275.

100. See, e.g., Safrai, “Religion,” 816; for fasting in the Jerusalem Talmud, see Lehnhardt, *Ta’aniyot*; in the OT and early Judaism generally, Berghuis, *Fasting*, 1–35 (3–26 in the OT; 26–34 in early Judaism). Some Pharisees apparently approved of fasting twice a week, as in Luke 18:12 (p. 816; hypothetically in *b. Ta’an.* 12a; on some weeks in *Gen. Rab.* 76:3; Abrahams, *Studies* [1], 125; some fasting four days a week in *b. Ta’an.* 27b, bar.); given the *Didache’s* polemic, the custom may have been widespread (Borg, *Conflict*, 108). Some later Christians rejected Jewish fasts (*Did.* 8.1; *Diogn.* 4.1; cf. *Barn.* 3.1–3, following Isa 58:5–7; *Barn.* 7.3–5). *Herm.* 54.3–56.8 also recalls Isa 58.

101. Cf., e.g., *b. Ta’an.* 18ab; *Meg.* 5b; 6b; *Ḥag.* 17a; 18a.

(Acts 9:9; Sir 34:31; *Pss. Sol.* 3:8;¹⁰² *Did.* 7.4).¹⁰³ Sometimes one fasted in mourning for one's people, for their sins or sufferings (e.g., 2 Bar. 5:7; 9:2; 12:5); Scripture often associates fasting with the mourning for sin involved in corporate repentance (e.g., 2 Chr 20:3; Neh 9:1–2; Dan 9:3; Joel 2:12).¹⁰⁴ Pagans fasted for mourning as well (e.g., Apul. *Metam.* 2.24).¹⁰⁵ (On fasting for mourning, see fuller comment on Acts 9:9.) It could be conjoined with weeping and beseeching God's help (Neh 1:4; Esth 4:3, 16; *Pss* 35:13; 69:10; 2 Macc 13:12; Bar 1:5; Jos. *Ant.* 20.89). Probably growing from the idea of mourning and humbling oneself voluntarily before God, fasting came to be valued for intense prayer,¹⁰⁶ including among later Christians.¹⁰⁷

Some circles used fasting to prepare for revelations (e.g., Dan 10:3; 2 Bar. 20:5; 43:30,¹⁰⁸ as among some later Christians;¹⁰⁹ cf. Exod 34:28; Deut 9:9).¹¹⁰ But though a revelation does occur here (Acts 13:2), it does not seem to be the only purpose of the fasting, which is conjoined with “worshiping” the Lord (13:2) and continues after the revelation conjoined with prayer (13:3). The emphasis here, as in 14:23, is on fasting associated with prayer. Although we do not know for certain whether the leaders' time of praying and fasting sought specific direction for Saul's calling or the revelation simply came in the context of worship more generally, the prophets would not have lacked Jewish models for requesting revelation if they did so; such requests appear commonly in early Jewish texts.¹¹¹

102. *Pss. Sol.* 3:9–10 in a different enumeration.

103. Also *L.A.E.* 6:1; *Test. Sim.* 3:4. Perhaps also *Herm.* 54.1–2 (*Sim.* 5.1.1–2), where it is a regular discipline (albeit one shown inadequate, 54.3–5).

104. This was understood as “humbling” oneself (e.g., Ezra 8:21; Isa 58:3, 5; Sir 34:26 [LXX; 34:31 NRSV; in some versions, 31:26]; *Test. Jos.* 9:2; 10:2; 1 *Clem.* 53.2; 55.6), and hence applicable to OT passages about that demand.

105. Extreme mourning or anxiety, of course, causes loss of appetite (e.g., Dan 6:18; Acts 27:33). Fasting was included in initiation rites at Eleusis (Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 241, 243, 258; for initiation rites in some other cultures, cf. Eliade, *Rites*, 67).

106. E.g., Tob 12:8; Jos. *Life* 290, 293, 295; *Test. Jos.* 4:8; 10:1; *Test. Benj.* 1:4–5; b. *Ketub.* 106a; *Mo'ed Qat.* 15b; *Tg. Rishon* on Esth 1:9; cf. *Ahiq.* 8.10; Armenian *Ahiq.* 2.49. Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 82, adds Jdt 4:9–11; *L.A.B.* 30:4–5; and for facing drought, esp. *m. Ta'an.* passim, esp. 1:3–7; 2:9; 3:8; cf. similar use of fasting in entreaty in some other cultures (e.g., Fox, “Witchcraft,” 181). Some rabbis believed that fasting could cancel a bad dream (presumably the evil fate portended in it; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 28:2). Pagans probably used fasting for prayer and worship as well (Aristoph. *Thesm.* 984; Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.280–81, 291).

107. E.g., *Did.* 1.3; Poly. *Phil.* 7.2 (for help against temptation). Indeed, fasting is better than (κρείσσων) prayer alone (2 *Clem.* 16.4); Iren. *Her.* 2.31.2; Lactantius *On the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died* 11; a number use Tob 12:8–9 (2 *Clem.* 16; Cyprian treatise 4.32 [citing it as Scripture]; 8.5). *Test. Jac.* 7:17 associates fasting with exorcism and is probably a Christian Egyptian monastic work (cf. the variant in Mark 9:29). For fasting in the NT, see Fink, “Responses” (cited by Berghuis); Wimmer, *Fasting*; Berghuis, *Fasting*, 37–76; in the patristic era, *ibid.*, 77–118; monastic practice before the Reformation, 119–28; and subsequent practice, esp. in 128–49 (and sources cited there).

108. Some used fasting in seeking to procure visions or dreams of deceased rabbis (*y. Ketub.* 12:3, §7). Lincoln, *Paradise*, 111, cites also 4 Ezra 5:13, 20; 6:31, 35; 9:23–25; 12:51–13:1; 2 Bar. 5:7ff.; 9:2ff.; 12:5ff.; 21:1ff.; 47:2ff.; *Apoc. Ab.* 9, 12; Merkabah traditions; and *Corp. herm.* 4.5–8; 13.6–7. In paganism, see the possibly first-century C.E. source in Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 168 (the story of Thessalos of Tralles); some think that Greco-Roman magic may have influenced Jewish abstention for revelations (Swartz, “Angels”). For sensory deprivation producing trance experiences, see, e.g., Pilch, *Visions*, 9; Field, “Possession,” 7; cf. also Gelfand, *Religion*, 169 (citing Field, *Search*, 56, on the Ga people but not observing this phenomenon among the Shona).

109. *Herm.* 9.2 (*Vis.* 3.1.2.); 18.6–7 (*Vis.* 3.10.6–7). Afterward Hermas was warned that his continual fasting for revelations would damage his body (18.7 [*Vis.* 3.10.7]) and hence was exhorted to stop seeking revelations, which would come when God chose (21.4 [*Vis.* 3.13.4]). Earlier, cf. perhaps Col 2:18, 21 (cf. Francis, “Humility,” 168–71, noting patristic sources; Rowland, “Visions”).

110. For Moses's fast as preparatory to receiving revelation, see Philo *Mos.* 1.67–70; *Dreams* 1.33–37 (Lincoln, *Paradise*, 111); perhaps 1 *Clem.* 53.2; *Barn.* 4.7; 14.2.

111. See Johnson, *Prayer*, 34–36, thoroughly citing *Let. Aris.* 314, 315; 1 *En.* 9:4–11; 25:2; 40:8; 43:3; 46:2; 52:3; 54:4; 56:2; 60:9; 61:2; 108:5; 2 *En.* 7:3; 18:2; 68:7 A; 2 *Bar.* 14:1–19; 38:1–4; 49:1–3; 54:6;

As a form of self-humbling, fasting was ascetic in the general sense, and such asceticism naturally appealed to pagans who devalued the body.¹¹² The situation in Judaism is more complicated (partly because scholars lack a single, agreed-on meaning for “asceticism”). Although some have viewed Qumran practices as ascetic,¹¹³ and Gentiles viewed some Jewish practices as ascetic,¹¹⁴ Jewish practices were normally meant more as rigorous expressions of self-sacrifice¹¹⁵ than as a devaluing of the body.

Later rabbis particularly limited the ascetic element to prevent dangerously extreme acts of rigor.¹¹⁶ Even on Yom Kippur,¹¹⁷ they refused to require fasting for minors, though the latter were to begin accustoming themselves to it before reaching maturity.¹¹⁸ Those whose health or safety would be endangered were not to undertake fasts (*t. Ta'an.* 2:12);¹¹⁹ pregnant and nursing mothers were excused from even most regular fasts, except the most crucial (2:14).¹²⁰ Because the Sabbath was for rest and joy, one normally was to avoid fasting then (*Jub.* 50:12, a capital offense; *b. Ta'an.* 27b;¹²¹ *Erub.* 41a; *y. Ta'an.* 3:11, §3; 4:3, §2; but cf. *b. Šabb.* 11a).¹²² Some rabbis went so far as to claim that fasting for the purpose of self-denial was sinful.¹²³ Fasting conjoined with prayer need not be ascetic in the strictest sense; it is, however, a deliberate sacrifice and expression of commitment.

(2) *The Spirit's Call* (13:2)

Since Luke has already mentioned that the leaders are (or at the least include) prophets, he does not need to explain how “the Holy Spirit spoke.” Early Judaism,

3 *Bar.* 1:1–2, 7; 2:4, 6; 3:5; 4:1, 5, and passim; 17:3; 4 *Ezra* 2:44, 46; 3:4–36; 4:23; 6:38–59; 8:63; 12:7–9; 13:14–20.

112. Cf. the philosopher Carneades in Val. Max. 8.7.ext. 5; possibly Pythagoras in Iambl. *V.P.* 3.16–17. In subsequent centuries, Syria was a dominant center of Christian asceticism.

113. E.g., Simon, *Sects*, 81, 110; Thiering, “Source,” 444 (emphasizing Qumran’s consistency with the rest of Judaism); idem, “Suffering”; cf. Yamauchi, “Qumran and Colosse,” 143–44. Steiner, “Warum asketisch?,” thinks that Josephus and Philo interpreted Qumran “asceticism” through a philosophic grid but it, in fact, was simply following Torah from an extreme eschatological orientation.

114. Cf. Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 2.7. Pagans wrongly associated the Jewish Sabbath with fasting (Strabo 16.2.40; Mart. *Epig.* 4.4.7; Suet. *Aug.* 76; Sevenster, *Anti-Semitism*, 130–32; Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 70).

115. Although I mean “sacrifice” more generally, see also the narrower sense in *b. Ber.* 17a. Fasting was often used for repentance (e.g., Sir 31:26; *Test. Reub.* 1:10; *Test. Jud.* 15:4) and desperate prayer (*Jdt* 4:13).

116. On the nonasceticism of the rabbis, see Abrahams, *Studies* (1), 12; Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 523–29; Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 159–60; with regard to fasting, Abrahams, *Studies* (1), 125. It may appear occasionally (*Song Rab.* 3:6, §2).

117. For the atoning value of fasting then and on other days, see (for later rabbis) *Eccl. Rab.* 9:7, §1.

118. *M. Yoma* 8:4; *t. Kip.* 4:1–2; *b. Ketub.* 50a. Because the Tosefta reference apparently opposes Shammaite practice, it may not represent the dominant view of pre-70 c.e. Judean Pharisees.

119. Voluntary fasts were usually from sunset until sunset (*y. Ned.* 8:1, §6).

120. And sometimes even then if necessary (*m. Yoma* 8:5); see further discussion in Safrai, “Home,” 764 (citing also *t. Ta'an.* 3:2; *Miqw.* 7:6). The Targum recognizes that fasting was expected on Yom Kippur (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Lev 23:27), and adds a punishment for those who do not fast then—but also with the qualification “those who are able” (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Lev 23:29).

121. Earlier tradition attributed to “our rabbis” a warning against fasting even on Friday (because of the Sabbath) or Sunday (for other reasons, including because of “Nazoreans”); by that period, Christians also forbade fasting on Sunday, but because of celebrating the resurrection (*Tert. Cor.* 3, in Cullmann, *Worship*, 11n1).

122. Also true in Dupont-Sommer’s reconstruction of CD XI, 4–5 (cf. the old Zadokite document, XIII, 13), but many read it differently (the parallel in 4Q271 5 I, 1–2 also has a lacuna). The *Fasting Scroll* listed other particular days when fasting was not permitted, but many rabbis fasted on those days anyway, not regarding it as authoritative (*y. Ned.* 8:1, §1). For a prohibition during Hanukkah, see *b. Šabb.* 21b (“our rabbis”). Some think that the Qumran sectarians rejected Esther partly because of its fast during Passover (Kalimi, “Esther”).

123. Some rabbis in *b. Ta'an.* 11a.

like the OT, most often associated the Spirit with prophecy or with divinely imparted wisdom or knowledge.¹²⁴ Thus Josephus, for example, frequently interprets texts about the Spirit's coming on one as meaning that one prophesied;¹²⁵ when he comments on passages in which God spoke, he often introduces prophetic spokesmen.¹²⁶ Given the context of Acts 13:1, therefore, scholars often accept the likelihood that the Spirit spoke here through the prophets.¹²⁷ Luke follows the style of some OT passages in not specifying how God spoke, but his contemporaries would understand well enough.¹²⁸ Oracles often function as a plot-moving device (see comment on Acts 2:23),¹²⁹ including here. (On the historical level, one may note that in charismatic movements prophecies need not be fictitious to serve this narrative function. In some circles real people do arrange their lives around prophecies.)¹³⁰

The content of the oracle commands the church or its leaders to “set aside” Barnabas and Saul. Paul employs the same term (ἀφορίζω) for his calling (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15),¹³¹ and both in Acts (Acts 19:9; cf. Luke 6:22) and in one of his letters (2 Cor 6:17) he calls people away from the dangers of compromise with false ideologies. Paul in Gal 1:15 probably echoes Jer 1:5 with reference to Jeremiah's prophetic calling, though the LXX employs a different term. “The work” refers to their ministry (Acts 14:26; 15:38), as at times in Paul (1 Cor 9:1; 15:58; 16:10; Eph 4:12; Phil 1:22; 2:30; 1 Thess 1:3; 5:13; cf. 1 Tim 3:1; 2 Tim 2:21; 3:17; 4:5). Luke uses the term here for “calling” (προσκαλέομαι) both for salvation (Acts 2:39, following Joel 3:5 LXX) and for immediate direction by the Spirit (Acts 16:10). The perfect tense indicates that they are already called to this work (cf. 9:15), information they may well have already shared with their colleagues.

A message from the Spirit (reemphasized in 13:4) will encourage the missionaries when they face hardships. Dio Chrysostom declares that an oracle instructed him to “travel ‘until you come to the farthest part of the earth’ (243.10–11), an Odyssean lifestyle only bearable under direct orders from God (243.12–17).”¹³² Yet this revelation is only one of many encouragements and directions from the Spirit they will receive (see Acts 13:9; 15:28; 16:6–7; 20:22–23): the Spirit not only is intimately connected with their mission but is its author (1:8; 2:17–18).

Luke can presume that his audience will understand that the commission includes reaching Gentiles; the Antioch church has already begun this outreach at home (11:20–21), and Paul's mission (the work to which the Spirit has already called him, 13:2) includes bringing Christ's name to Gentiles (9:15).

124. See, e.g., Keener, *Spirit*, 10–13. Turner, *Power*, 105–18, correctly notes some other texts, but apart from the moral and salvific texts mostly related to Ezek 36–37 (pp. 119–37; Keener, *Spirit*, 8–10), many of these are related to expectations for prophets. See excursus on prophecy at Acts 2:17–18.

125. Isaacs, *Spirit*, 47 (comparing Jos. *Ant.* 4.165 with Num 27:18; 5.285 with Judg 13:25; 8.295 with 2 Chr 15:1; 9.168 with 2 Chr 24:20).

126. Aune, *Prophecy*, 265.

127. E.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 396.

128. Aune, *Prophecy*, 265.

129. See, e.g., Aune, *Environment*, 134, citing Herodotus in particular for a historian emphasizing oracles (e.g., Hdt. 8.77), revelatory dreams (e.g., 1.34; 2.141; 3.124; 7.19), and portents (e.g., 6.27; 9.120).

130. This became obvious to me when writing an account of how my wife and I came together (forthcoming); at least in my own initial draft (at this point we are not sure how the work will be edited), the prophecies provided narrative cohesiveness, foreshadowing, and sometimes theological commentary, yet they were not fictitious and were sometimes preserved almost verbatim.

131. Some scholars have compared his use of the verb with LXX language for sanctification (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:53; cf. Betz, *Galatia*, 108), including in the prophets (Cerfaux, *Church*, 177–78); others, less compellingly, with the root meaning of Pharisaism (Nygren, *Romans*, 45–46; Hunter, *Romans*, 24).

132. Alexander, “Biography,” 59 (on Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13), contrasting this message with a different oracle to Socrates.

(3) *Sending Off with Prayer* (13:3)

Antioch “sends off” the team by commissioning and probably provisioning them (13:3),¹³³ as Antioch will do on other occasions (15:3; cf. 15:40). (Not all Paul’s sendings-off will prove so pleasant; cf. 17:10, employing the same Greek term as 13:4.) It is reasonable to assume some exchanges of affection when the party was departing, as found in 20:36–38; 21:5 (though these are precipitated by a more certain finality in the farewells). When superiors sent off inferiors, they typically gave advice (Men. Rhet. 2.5, 395.8–10), but peers normally just expressed deep love (395.12–17).

Although the church has already been worshiping and fasting (Acts 13:2), it now fasts and prays more for Barnabas and Saul before sending them out on their enormous task (13:3). It is possible that the continued prayer here is to test the prophecy,¹³⁴ but three reasons suggest that a different idea is in view. First, Christian prophets apparently usually discerned prophecies more quickly (1 Cor 14:29; 1 Thess 5:20–22),¹³⁵ although we need not assume that they always did so. Second, the prayer here is probably connected with the laying on of hands; various ministry-related functions of laying on of hands (noted here and unrelated to discernment) frequently accompany prayer for the same purposes as the laying on of hands (Acts 6:6; 8:15, 17; 28:8). Third and most important, Lukan parallels point to the prayer’s being for ministry. Jesus prayed before appointing apostles (Luke 6:12–13); prayer normally precedes the sending of laborers (10:2; cf. Acts 1:24–26). Commissioning or divine or angelic declarations of calling also appear elsewhere in Luke-Acts (e.g., Mary, Luke 1:26–38; Jesus, 3:21–22; the Twelve).

That the church leaders who laid hands on them were prophets is significant, and prophecies may have followed at this sending off (cf. 1 Tim 4:14),¹³⁶ just as prophecy may have precipitated the sending (Acts 13:2). Laying on of hands appears frequently in Acts, often conjoined with prayer (6:6; 8:15–17; 28:8); it applies to commissioning for a ministry task (6:6),¹³⁷ imparting the Spirit (8:17; 19:6), and healing (9:12, 17–18; 28:8; cf. 14:3; 19:11).¹³⁸ In view of the earlier biblical background of blessing (see comment on Acts 6:6), the primary focus in view here is prayer for God’s empowerment for their task (as in 6:6, and related to 8:17; 19:6).

2. Mission in Cyprus (13:4–12)

This mission of Paul and Barnabas goes beyond previous ministry to Gentiles by its deliberate nature.¹³⁹ In view of Paul’s dramatic calling (9:15), it starts small, with preaching from one place to another; Paul and Barnabas could persist, however, through faith in Christ’s calling. This new mission further exemplifies Luke’s emphasis on the Spirit’s power for mission. They are “sent by the Spirit” (13:4), and in a crucial moment Paul is “filled with the Spirit” (13:9) to confront a sorcerer.

133. Cf. 1 Cor 16:6, 11; cf. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 68.

134. Dunn, *Acts*, 173.

135. That is, during the same meeting, not after a further period of concerted fasting.

136. Scholars often compare 1 Tim 1:18; 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6 here (Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 32; Aune, *Prophecy*, 266).

137. Best, “Acts xiii.1–3,” finds the background in laying hands on Levites in Num 8:10.

138. This case is a blessing rather than an ordination per se (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 99; Hanson, *Acts*, 139–40) and is not for imparting the Spirit as in Acts 8:17 (Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:231).

139. Cf. Best, “Acts xiii.1–3.” This is the case whether or not we should think that the Antioch church is pushing beyond what the Jerusalem church would have approved (as suggested by Knox, *Jerusalem*, 193–94); certainly Luke portrays it as being on good terms with the Jerusalem church at the time (Acts 12:25).

At that moment the team's recorded ministry in Cyprus culminates in a dramatic power encounter and the conversion of the island's chief Roman official; Luke thereby demonstrates that God is clearly with this new team even at the inception of their mission.

This passage (13:4–12) is readily recognized as a literary unity connected by various themes, though scholars debate its exact boundaries.¹⁴⁰ That the boundaries are so easily debated (though mainly because of the geographic transition in 13:13; the Cyprus narrative proper ends in 13:12) simply reinforces the sense that Luke's entire work is very much a narrative unity. The narrative focuses on a particular encounter, which emphasizes several points of interest to Luke, including (a) Roman authorities' sympathy; (b) Paul's link with Peter in confronting servants of evil with dramatic judgment (5:3–5, 9–10); and (c) the incompatibility of Christian signs with the practices of magicians.¹⁴¹

Why is the Cyprus section so much briefer than the ministry in southern Asia Minor (albeit longer than, e.g., Iconium, 13:51; 14:1–6)? It may be because Paul, who is Luke's primary protagonist and source of information, never returns to Cyprus whereas he continues to follow up the churches of Asia Minor (15:36; 15:39–16:1). Such a shift in Luke's Pauline source would also account for the limitations of his own information, as well as his interest, in the Cyprus section.

Neither Luke's brevity in summarizing the mission (esp. 13:4–6a) nor the group's failure to revisit Cyprus in 14:21–26¹⁴² should be counted against the mission's success. Luke elsewhere abbreviates accounts where Paul's letters reveal flourishing evangelistic successes (e.g., 17:1–10 with 1 Thess 1:7–9). Further, Luke focuses on one highly placed convert (Acts 13:12), a Roman official, whose presence points the direction for Luke's narrative (19:21; 23:11; 28:14) and reveals Luke's emphasis.

a. Beginning the Cyprus Mission (13:4–5)

The "sending by the Spirit" looks back to 13:2–3, but the rest of 13:4 looks ahead to the Cyprus mission of 13:5–12. Cyprus is the most logical place for Barnabas and Saul to start (in view of its proximity and connections there; cf. the Eleven in Jerusalem, 1:8; Luke 24:47), and in Acts 13:5, the team begins in the most natural places on Cyprus—namely, in its synagogues.

The meaning of Barnabas and Saul's being "sent by the Holy Spirit" (13:4) is clear enough in the context: they were commissioned by prayerful leaders (13:3) who were obeying the Spirit (13:2).¹⁴³ The guidance as to where to start, however, was another question, and they probably proceeded initially to the most logical place. Barnabas was originally from Cyprus (4:36) and knew people (or would have contacts who knew them) who could host them and invite them to speak in their synagogues (13:5). Although Saul and Barnabas brought special skills, they would not be working in totally unevangelized areas as they later would in Phrygia; others had preceded them (11:19; cf. 11:20). Further, even a Tarsian might have ties there; Cyprus had become part of

140. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 73, notes the unifying theme of the Spirit in Acts 13:2, 4, 9. Blich, *Galatians*, 9, believes that he discerns the following chiasmus in 13:4–14: A. Journey to Salamis (13:4–5a); B. Mark as assistant (13:5b); C. Arrival at Paphos (13:6a); D. Proconsul well disposed (13:7); E. Opposition from Elymas (13:8); F. Paul rebukes Elymas (13:9–11a); E'. Elymas is blinded (13:11b); D'. Proconsul believes (13:12); C'. Departure from Paphos (13:13a); B'. John Mark returns to Jerusalem (13:13b); A'. Journey to Pisidian Antioch (13:14a).

141. Nock, "Magus," esp. 188.

142. On this point, see Boisnard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:233.

143. Though not mentioned with special frequency in Paul's ministry in Acts, the Spirit appears at the crucial turning points (e.g., Acts 9:17; see Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 93–94).

the Roman province of Cilicia in 55 B.C.E., though it became a distinct province in 27 B.C.E., perhaps in the lifetime of Paul's father or grandfather.¹⁴⁴

I. SAILING FROM SELEUCIA (13:4)

The travelers would have made their way down the river Orontes to Seleucia on the Mediterranean Sea; Seleucia was about fifteen miles west-southwest of Antioch (a bit less as the crow flies and a bit more, perhaps sixteen miles, for a traveler) but only five miles north of where the Orontes emptied into the sea.¹⁴⁵ The Orontes carried Antioch's sewage out to sea, exiting near Seleucia in what was called "the Cyprian Sea" (Polyb. 5.59.10–11).¹⁴⁶ The town of Seleucia was a smaller sister city to three other cities in the Syrian coastal region of the same name (Seleucia), the largest of which was Antioch (Strabo 16.2.2–4).¹⁴⁷ Rome had granted it the status of a free city, confirmed in 64 B.C.E. for its support against Tigranes.¹⁴⁸ It was apparently known for its piety.¹⁴⁹

Seleucia lay not only on the sea west of Antioch¹⁵⁰ (Polyb. 5.59.4) but also on the southern slope of Mount Coryphaeum, across a great ravine (5.59.4–6). From the coast of Cyprus, one could see a Syrian coastal mountain near this town;¹⁵¹ Cyprus was only sixty miles from Seleucia.¹⁵² Pliny the Elder calls the mountain Mount Casius, noting that it is so high that it dominates the skyline.¹⁵³ Seleucia's "artificial harbor" interrupted "an otherwise straight coast line"¹⁵⁴ and must have served its purpose well.

Its mercantile setting provided Seleucia with sufficient wealth that it was heavily fortified throughout, with expensive temples and other public works (5.59.8). At the base of the town's slope, on the level land near the sea, lay the business district and a heavily fortified suburb (5.59.7).¹⁵⁵ The city's wall, more than seven miles long, surrounded both the upper and the lower parts of the city.¹⁵⁶ Beyond this area, the town's terrain may not have appeared hospitable to foreigners. Cliffs and jagged rocks

144. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 254. It became a senatorial (as opposed to imperial) province five years later (pp. 254–55).

145. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 142; Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, 67, B4; also Mark Wilson, estimating sixteen miles (26 km.; personal correspondence, Nov. 25, 2011). Further on Seleucia Pieria, see Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 314–17; Smith and Hoppe, "Seleucia" (sect. 4).

146. Cf. Juvenal's wry comment about the "filth of the Orontes" (meaning Eastern "cults") pouring into the Tiber (i.e., Rome; *Sat.* 3.62). The Orontes flowed between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon ranges (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.18.80).

147. The region was so named because the Tetrapolis, or "Four Cities," was founded by Seleucus Nicator (Strabo 16.2.4), who died in 280 B.C.E. Not all Strabo's information, however (e.g., his view of the Orontes, 16.2.5ff.), is accurate (Gray, "Orontes").

148. Jones, Seyrig, and Sherwin-White, "Seleucia"; "Seleucia Pieria"; Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.18.79.

149. So Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 12, assuming that the same Seleucia is in view (Seleucids gave the name to many cities; but this letter follows a letter to Caesarea in Palestine). For a temple from the Hellenistic period there, see Finegan, *Apostles*, 68; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 317 (it also had a Roman-period theater, Finegan, *Apostles*, 69).

150. Polyb. 5.59.4 places it "on the sea between Cilicia and Phoenicia" (Paton in LCL, 3:147); Strabo 16.2.2 places it near the seaboard.

151. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 109, reports this for Mount Casius, south of the town. Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.89.202 thought that earthquakes (cf. 2.87.201) had long before sundered Cyprus from Syria.

152. Dunn, *Acts*, 174.

153. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.18.80, estimating 4 mi. high or, by the winding route to the top, 19 mi. of walking.

154. Munck, *Acts*, 118. Vespasian later improved the harbor (Jones, Seyrig, and Sherwin-White, "Seleucia"); two pieces of the old breakwater have survived (Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 315), but the harbor is now mostly silted up (Finegan, *Apostles*, 69).

155. Excavations also reveal an ancient market with many shops not far from the harbor (Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 316).

156. *Ibid.*, 315. It is doubtful that the entire area enclosed was occupied (Wallace and Williams, *World*, 173, following Grainger, *Syria*, 84). Archaeology shows an upper town built on various levels of a plain sloping up the sides of Mount Amanus, with a lower town located on the plain to the upper town's southwest, surrounding the harbor (Finegan, *Apostles*, 68; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 315).

surrounded most of the town, which descended by uneven terraces to the Mediterranean sea (5.59.6); one descended to the sea only by twisting steps (5.59.9).

Taking a trading ship to Cyprus would require the fare for each of Paul's companions, probably provided from the Antioch church (cf. "sent" in Acts 13:3). Small boats stayed near the coast and spent the night in ports; larger ships plied the open sea. In either case, one seeking passage needed to remain close to the port to hear signals; ships departed when weather conditions (and perhaps cargo ideals) were favorable rather than according to a regular schedule.¹⁵⁷ Barnabas and Saul were probably moving into an even more predominantly Gentile environment. Despite Herod's construction of Caesarea's harbor,¹⁵⁸ many (presumably especially inland) Jewish people disliked sea travel, though we do know of Jewish sailors.¹⁵⁹

Although many people who did not live near coasts feared sea travel,¹⁶⁰ the experience would not be new for Paul (9:30; cf. 2 Cor 11:25) and perhaps his companions; Antioch's proximity to the sea and its distance from Jerusalem (making overland travel lengthy) probably had provided them all with some experience, which, especially on a lengthy voyage, would fit that of most travelers, who

on large ships simply booked passage as deck passengers, sleeping in the open or under a small tent. They would travel with bags (*viduli*, or *manticae*) which would contain not only clothes but also cooking ware, food, bathing items, and sometimes bedding as well.¹⁶¹

II. STARTING WITH CYPRUS

Although some early Cypriot traditions of their visit might reflect Luke's account,¹⁶² the mission at Cyprus makes good sense of other data Luke reports. Barnabas was from there (Acts 4:36) and continued to feel comfortable in ministry there (15:39); other Hellenists undoubtedly would have provided additional connections there (11:19–20), as would the many synagogues (for the Jewish population, see comment below).¹⁶³ The team was not simply starting a mission from scratch, preaching in marketplaces (in contrast to some later, more difficult places of ministry; cf. perhaps 14:6–10). Their education and teaching experience probably would provide many open doors for their ministry there.

Barnabas thus seems the natural leader for the mission until Paul's prophetic activity in 13:9–12; at some point (perhaps from the start), Paul was the primary speaker (14:9, 12), though some villagers attribute to Barnabas the superior position (14:12).¹⁶⁴ But it was Barnabas who would be the guide and perhaps the manager of the expedition in Cyprus. Because Rome ruled Cyprus as part of the province of Cilicia after 67 B.C.E.,¹⁶⁵ Paul likely had some knowledge of Cyprus as well.

Because Paul and Barnabas would certainly have visited the Jewish churches (perhaps house congregations supplementing synagogues) if some were founded in 11:19,

157. Witherington, *Acts*, 639.

158. For sailors and ships, obviously (Jos. *War* 1.414).

159. *M. Ketub.* 5:6; *b. Ketub.* 61b; 62b; *Qidd.* 82a; *Nid.* 14a; apparently *b. Sotah* 48a; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 683. One should praise God for forming the sea (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 684, citing *m. Ber.* 9:2).

160. Cf. *1 En.* 101:4, 9.

161. Witherington, *Acts*, 639.

162. But the claim of "Paul apostle" inscribed in an early Christian basilica (cf. Harris, "Paul on Map") reflects a reconstructed text (apart from the question of the basilica's date).

163. Riesner, *Early Period*, 272–73.

164. The sequence of names is not significant, at least after Acts 13:7: Barnabas is mentioned before Paul in 13:1, 2, 7; 14:12, 14; 15:12, 25, but Paul before Barnabas in 13:43, 46, 50; 15:2, 22, 35.

165. Muhly, "Cyprus," 95. For their proximity, cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.22.92; Pliny says that Cyprus lies in the "Cilician sea" (5.35.129), just 50 mi. from Cilicia (5.35.130).

some scholars discount the claim of 11:19.¹⁶⁶ But even apart from the fact that not all missions are successful, we should not expect Luke to report every detail, any more than we expect that of any ancient historian. Outside the “we” narratives, he abbreviates frequently, and evangelism is a far more central focus for him (cf. Luke 24:47); return visits to confirm faith warrant only the briefest mention even with churches Paul founded (Acts 14:21–25; 20:1–6), except in a strategically placed speech report (20:18–35). Others think that because this mission was preceded by evangelization in 11:19–20 (though not explicit in 2:9–11), it would generate less tension with the Jerusalem church than a mission elsewhere.¹⁶⁷ Probably Cyprus was simply the closest place to Antioch and the place where the team had the best initial contacts.

Cyprus was strategically located for having an impact on other eastern Mediterranean sites; it was centrally located, a place where sea routes from Egypt, Asia Minor, and Syria converged.¹⁶⁸ Recognized as one of the largest islands (Strabo 14.2.10),¹⁶⁹ Cyprus passed from Ptolemaic to Roman rule in the time of the final Cleopatra (14.6.6; 17.1.5).¹⁷⁰ Its topography would affect the missionaries’ travel there; Cyprus has two significant mountain ranges, a northern one named Kyrenia (more than 3,000 ft., or 900 m., high) and a western one called Troodos, its highest peak (Mount Troodos) 6,404 feet (1,952 m.) in elevation.¹⁷¹ Two rivers (the Yalias and the Pedias) flow through the central plain (named Mesaoria), running together to flow into the Mediterranean at Salamis.¹⁷²

Cyprus was relatively prosperous (see comment on Acts 4:36–37). The island had good harbors (Strabo 14.6.3); Alexander built some of his boats in Cyprus and Phoenicia (16.1.11). Because rainfall is unpredictable, fertility often depends on irrigation.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, in the Roman period it was apparently usually tranquil and prosperous.¹⁷⁴ Pliny the Elder mentions fifteen noteworthy towns, including Old and New Paphos and Salamis (*N.H.* 5.35.130). (On Cyprus, see further comment at Acts 11:20.)

III. SALAMIS AND ITS SYNAGOGUES (13:5)

Salamis was the island’s main port city and the one nearest Syria;¹⁷⁵ some of the ancient harbor’s foundation stones, near where Paul’s company must have landed, remain.¹⁷⁶ Greek tradition attributed its ancient founding to Teucer, son of Telamon, in the legendary past.¹⁷⁷ Teucer was from a different Salamis¹⁷⁸ but was banished from

166. Barrett, *Acts*, 610–11 (reporting, not endorsing, the view).

167. Knox, *Jerusalem*, 199.

168. Finegan, *Apostles*, 73, noting that it was 50 mi. (80 km.) from Asia Minor, 70 mi. (113 km.) from Syria, and 240 mi. (386 km.) from Egypt. In creating a fiction, Lucian writes of a Cypriot sailing from Cyprus (*True Story* 1.34).

169. By modern measure, 3,584 sq. mi. (9,282 sq. km.), the “third largest Mediterranean island” (Catling, “Cyprus,” 419).

170. For the Roman perspective (including Ptolemy’s just suicide), see Vell. Paterc. 2.38.5–6; 2.45.4–5. For recent excavations in Cyprus, see, e.g., Herscher, “Archaeology”; Steel, “Archaeology.”

171. Finegan, *Apostles*, 73.

172. *Ibid.*

173. Catling, “Cyprus,” 419. The rains usually start in late October, with the harvest in April–May; the summer was typically lengthy, hot, and arid (Finegan, *Apostles*, 77).

174. Catling, “Cyprus,” 420.

175. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 99; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 340. On Salamis, see further Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 339–47; Gempf, “Salamis”; Rupp, “Salamis.”

176. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 345. The Pediaeus River had a sandy delta with islands, which made a harbor adequately shielded from the sea (Finegan, *Apostles*, 76).

177. Strabo 14.6.3 also notes that the island is narrow at Aphrodisium, with a voyage of only seventy stadia to Salamis from there.

178. Ajax and his half-brother, Teucer (cf., e.g., Hom. *Il.* 8.266–315), brought twelve ships from an island called Salamis, ca. 3 mi. from Attica, to the Trojan War (Hom. *Il.* 2.557).

there by his father; he founded this city by the same name near the harbor of Carpasia (Strabo 14.6.3; Vell. Paterc. 1.1.1). Historically, the site was settled in the eleventh century B.C.E.¹⁷⁹ Salamis therefore had a very old Greek history, and it served as the island's capital under Ptolemaic rule.¹⁸⁰ It remained one of Cyprus's major cities, although Rome moved the capital to New Paphos in 22 B.C.E. (13:6),¹⁸¹ "possibly because the harbour at Salamis had become silted up."¹⁸²

A large city, Salamis had a theater that, at some point in its history, seated about 15,000;¹⁸³ given frequent estimates that cities usually had ten times the number of people as could fit in the theater, Salamis might have boasted even 150,000 residents.¹⁸⁴ It had a long forum lined with porches, probably first built before 22 B.C.E. and rebuilt "in the first or second century CE."¹⁸⁵ Reminding us of the city's dominant Gentile population, to the forum's south lay the temple of Zeus Olympios, built in the late second century B.C.E., with a significant addition toward the end of the first century C.E.¹⁸⁶ The city also had a gymnasium with a marble pool; around this pool were headless pagan figures, one of them representing Persephone, an underworld deity.¹⁸⁷

Given ancient reports of the island's Jewish population, it is not surprising that Luke implies that Salamis had several synagogues.¹⁸⁸ Jewish people outside Cyprus were well aware of the island's large and famous Jewish population (e.g., Philo *Embassy* 282; Jos. *Ant.* 13.284).¹⁸⁹ Diaspora Jews often became permanent residents (albeit not citizens) of Hellenistic cities.¹⁹⁰ The Jewish minority in Cyprus was apparently quite conscious of its distinctiveness;¹⁹¹ in 116 C.E., about seventy years after this mission, Cypriot Jews allegedly killed a massive number of Cypriot Gentiles and destroyed Salamis, leading to retaliation and the destruction of the Jewish community.¹⁹²

179. Rupp, "Salamis," 456.

180. Greek connections are very early (e.g., Hdt. 4.162); Salamis revolted against the Persians but was again subdued (5.110–16).

181. It either remained the major city (Finegan, *Apostles*, 76; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 500; Witherington, *Acts*, 395) or yielded primacy to Paphos ca. 200 B.C.E., regaining primacy in the fourth century C.E. (Catling, "Salamis"). Finegan, *Apostles*, 78, writes that New Paphos was also the capital in the Ptolemaic period.

182. Barrett, *Acts*, 611.

183. Finegan, *Apostles*, 76; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 342.

184. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 342, 344.

185. Rupp, "Salamis," 457.

186. *Ibid.*

187. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 342 (noting that many think that Salamis had a gymnasium for girls separate from the one for boys).

188. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 255; Munck, *Acts*, 118; Riesner, *Early Period*, 273. We cannot be sure of the synagogues' sizes; some may have been large (cf. the pre-70 C.E. Gamla synagogue, which could seat three hundred; Sanders, *Judaism*, 200). Le Cornu, *Acts*, 685, doubts that we may infer the Jewish population's size from multiple synagogues, since they could be established for various population segments (as in Acts 6:9), such as guilds, but this presupposes at least enough Jews for specialized niche audiences. Some synagogues may have been organized like guild associations (White, "Revisited").

189. Haenchen, *Acts*, 396–97n10, rejects 1 Macc 15:23 as spurious but accepts the evidence of Philo and Josephus (also accepted by most others, e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 99). For further evidence for Cyprus's Jewish population, see Stern, "Diaspora," 154–55. Note the many Jewish coins in Destrooper-Georgiades, "Coins."

190. More common than living there without the legal right of domicile, though this also happened (Rabello, "Condition," 725).

191. In general, each immigrant subculture, including Jewish subculture, developed internal cohesion—in the Jewish case, around synagogues (MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 83).

192. Stern, "Diaspora," 155 (citing Jerome *Chronicon*, in *Die Chronik des Hieronymus* [ed. R. Helm; 2nd ed.; Berlin: Akademie, 1956], 196; Orosius *Hist.* 7.12.8; Syncellus *Ecloga chronographica*, in *Georgius Syncellus et Nicephorus* [ed. W. Dindorf; 2 vols.; Bonn: Weber, 1829], 1:657); Barrett, *Acts*, 611. The reported casualty figures may be inflated, both because no one could have counted and because atrocity reports are often inflated (except by governments who wish to maintain the appearance of having unrest under control).

Luke's expression "synagogue[s] of the Jews" (Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:1, 10) appears elsewhere in antiquity (an official permission in the Bosphorus, *CII* 1:495, §683; 1:497, §684).¹⁹³ Given the broader possible meaning of the term "synagogue" in the Diaspora (any meeting place; see LSJ), Luke may have thought it a technically proper qualification for his earlier Diaspora references to the institution (in contrast to Acts 17:17; 18:4, 7, 8, 17, 19, 26; 19:8), though no one was likely to miss his point. The imperfect verb suggests that Paul and Barnabas regularly started with the synagogues, as the Hellenist Jewish Christians before them had done (11:19). (On synagogues, see excursus on Acts 6:9–10; on "prayerhouses," see comment on Acts 1:14.)

Especially if synagogues also provided schools throughout the week,¹⁹⁴ the evangelists could minister to some people in a number of synagogues there in a short amount of time as well as in Jewish gatherings in towns along the road to Paphos (13:6a). Then again, they may have remained longer in Salamis to teach in all the synagogues, since Sabbath crowds would be the largest (13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4).¹⁹⁵ Further, though Tannaim mention Scripture readings on Mondays and Thursdays as well as the Sabbath, this custom may have taken place in the market,¹⁹⁶ and first-century sources are more apt to support regular synagogue assemblies on the Sabbath.¹⁹⁷ Practices may have differed in various parts of the Diaspora in this period, although Diaspora Judaism (still paying the half-shekel tax for the temple and sharing common institutions, such as the synagogue) saw itself as faithful to the Torah.¹⁹⁸ Educated Gentiles knew about Jewish Sabbaths,¹⁹⁹ even if their understanding of them was sometimes distorted.²⁰⁰

IV. STARTING WITH SYNAGOGUES (13:5)

Interestingly, Luke reports that the apostle to the Gentiles,²⁰¹ when in a new city, always began his ministry in the synagogues (e.g., 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8) or, where necessary, other Jewish gatherings (16:13). Possibly some others did the same (18:19). Scholars frequently argue that the sequence reflects salvation-historical priority; Israel needed the first chance in every setting because God offered his work to the Gentiles only because Israel failed to accept it (cf. Rom 11:11, 30, where Paul interprets it as providential).²⁰² Paul's passionate sacrificial love for his people and their salvation (Rom 9:1–3; 10:1)

193. "Synagogue of the Hebrews" appears as a distinguishing title in Rome and Corinth. This distinction was valuable because συναγωγή simply meant "gathering" and, outside Jewish settings, was not limited to Jewish assemblies (see BDAG).

194. As in our extant (but later) sources; see Watson, "Education," 312; Evans, *World*, 58–59 (who cites *Jos. Ant.* 16.163–64 as a possible early source; but the relevant term may simply designate a dining hall). Apart from harvest season, people may have gathered on short notice in Galilean villages (Luke 8:4; 9:6, 12). Jewish communities may have been harder to gather in Diaspora cities, though probably most Jewish people lived in largely Jewish enclaves.

195. Qumran texts could warn against going out on Shabbat, even to read or explain Torah (if this is the correct understanding of 4Q251 1 5), but this was sectarian, not common, practice. Tigchelaar, "Sabbath Halakha," argues for Sabbath readings in 4Q421 11 and 13 (but the text is reconstructed).

196. Safrai, "Synagogue," 919. These were also the preferred days for fasts among some Pharisees (idem, "Religion," 816).

197. Safrai, "Synagogue," 918 (citing, e.g., Philo *Contempl.* 30–32 for the Therapeutae). People might meet for special meetings there on other days (*Jos. Life* 277–79).

198. See also Safrai, "Relations"; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 693–94.

199. E.g., Suet. *Tib.* 32.2 (who uses the Jewish term "Sabbath" for "Saturday"; cf. also *Aug.* 76.2).

200. E.g., Strabo 16.2.40; Mart. *Epig.* 4.4.7; Suet. *Aug.* 76; Tac. *Hist.* 5.4 (noting that some associate the Sabbath with Saturn); cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.9.68–69.

201. If I may borrow a Pauline phrase to describe an equally Lukan concept, despite Luke's generally very different use of ἀπόστολος.

202. E.g., Stendahl, *Paul*, 29.

would be expressed in going first to them, including in the Diaspora, whatever his distinctive mission.

Another reason for this sequence, however, is missions strategy: where else would he find those who shared his basic premise about Israel's God and history on which the gospel proclamation built? This would be true even if Paul saw his mission as solely to Gentiles (which, as observed above at Acts 13:5, is an exaggeration of the epistolary Paul). The largest concentration of Gentiles open to the God of Israel and respectful of Israel's salvation history (a new phase of which Paul proclaimed), and with at least some basic knowledge of each, would be in the synagogues.²⁰³ Here Paul would find the greatest common ground and would probably initially feel most comfortable. If we are tempted to doubt this consideration of strategy, we need only consider the alternatives: where else might Paul have started to obtain an initial hearing and a base for operation (cf. Luke 10:5–7)?

Although scholars often oppose the two main proposed reasons for Paul's ministry starting in synagogues, both reasons may be factors.²⁰⁴ Synagogues were the most natural gathering place to find Jewish people (e.g., Acts 22:19), especially in the Diaspora (9:2), to whichever factor we assign the dominant role. Since both factors pointed, for Paul, in the same direction, the choice of which mattered more for him may not have been one he was forced to make. Although the historical Paul emphasized Israel's priority, missions strategy probably played a more prominent role in his praxis than it does in his theology. The Jewish people had at the least logical precedence in God's plan (Rom 1:16) but also the advantage of the Scriptures (3:1–2). Luke, like Paul, stresses Israel's theological priority (Acts 3:26; 13:46; 28:26–28) but probably hints at strategy as well (Luke 10:5–7). Again, theology may have been the primary concern, but even if no theology had undergirded it, any Jewish proclaimers starting in a given community would have begun with the synagogue anyway.

In view of Paul's perspective that his mission focused on Gentiles (Rom 1:5, 13–15; 11:13; 15:16–20; Gal 1:16; 2:7–9), some scholars doubt that he would have begun in synagogues as reported in Acts.²⁰⁵ This skepticism, however, is utterly unwarranted, ignoring alternative evidence even within Paul's letters:²⁰⁶

1. Paul's letters rarely address his initial evangelistic strategies, and Acts shows that although Paul started in synagogues, he often left them.²⁰⁷
2. Paul saw the priority of salvation history as for the Jew first and then the Gentile (Rom 1:16; 2:9–10)²⁰⁸ and affirmed that the gospel was for all (e.g., Rom 10:12; Gal 3:28), including in his congregations (1 Cor 1:24; 10:32; 12:13).²⁰⁹
3. Paul explicitly claims to have adapted himself to reach Jews as well as Gentiles (1 Cor 9:20) so that all might be saved (9:22); no place in the Diaspora was better suited for religious discussion with gathered Jews than the synagogues.

203. With, e.g., Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 95–96. Synagogues also could participate in the life of Gentile cities (Harland, *Associations*, 200–210).

204. With, e.g., Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 95–96.

205. E.g., Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 26.

206. Similarly against the skepticism, see Barrett, *Acts*, 628; also others (e.g., C. Williams, *Acts*, 23–24; Witherington, *Corinthians*, 26, 245; Strelan, *Artemis*, 22, 205–6; Watson, *Gentiles*, 69, 72–73; Miller, "Context"; Dunn, *Beginning*, 557–60). The consensus today is, indeed, that Paul began with synagogues (Jewett, *Romans*, 75; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:xlvii; Talbert, *Romans*, 273; and sources they cite). Where else would he have begun?

207. So Strelan, *Artemis*, 206.

208. See, e.g., Nanos, *Mystery*, 16, 21–40, 240, although perhaps overstating the case; Hvalvik, "Jøde"; Brindle, "Jew First." This need not dictate his own practice everywhere, but it presumably would where the local Jewish community had not yet heard the gospel.

209. See esp. Miller, "Context," 103–8, on Paul's agenda in Romans.

4. Even contexts emphasizing Paul's mission to the Gentiles (e.g., Rom 11:13; 15:16, 18) reflect deep concern for reaching his own people (11:14) or starting in Jerusalem (15:19), Judaism's center.²¹⁰
5. Paul agonized over his people and their rejection (Rom 9:1–5; 10:1), which suggests both a compelling interest in including them in ministry and a knowledge of the rejection firsthand (cf. 1 Cor 1:23).
6. Paul would not have been disciplined in synagogues (2 Cor 11:24, in a context of sufferings for his ministry) if he had remained uninvolved in them.
7. Synagogues provided the most strategic bridge for finding even Gentiles with some attraction to monotheism and biblical tradition.²¹¹
8. Even apart from theological and missiological considerations, a Jewish traveler, for practical reasons, would meet the synagogue community first. "Literary, documentary, and archaeological evidence all point to the fact that synagogues provided the traveling Jew with accommodation and food."²¹²
9. Paul's letters regularly assume biblical knowledge on the part of at least the most informed members of his audience, which suggests Paul's assumption of at least some Jewish and God-fearing elements with synagogue backgrounds.²¹³
10. Synagogues provided a useful model for churches that was far better adapted than discarded.²¹⁴

Although opposition to many associations in the eastern empire²¹⁵ made beginnings in a synagogue desirable, much of the apologetic value in reporting such beginnings would have been lost in a document attesting that many of the congregations begun there had left.

In the case of Luke's report about Cyprus, his lack of mention of opposition in the synagogues (in contrast to many of his accounts) also suggests that the report is not simply "a Lukan fixation."²¹⁶ Scholars even debate whether the later "comity agreement" that Peter would go to Jews and Paul to Gentiles was meant to *bar* either from the other's field; it is likelier that, as Paul presents it, each was affirming the validity of the other's mission (Gal 2:7–9). Paul certainly did not observe such boundaries geographically (Rom 15:25–31), nor was he expected to do so (Gal 2:10); ethnic boundaries would be even more difficult to observe if Paul preached in mixed areas to those he expected to find most receptive. Peter likely influenced Christians in Corinth and possibly Rome and Galatia (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; Gal 1:18; cf. 1 *Clem.*

210. Even Rom 1:5 may refer not simply to "all Gentiles" but to "all peoples" (cf. 16:25–26). Certainly Paul was not evangelizing primarily Gentiles in Jerusalem. Rom 10:18 (in light of 15:18–19) may also suggest that Paul has been preaching to Jews (so Grieb, *Story*, 103).

211. Cf. likewise, e.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 174. "[God-fearers] had already demonstrated their independence from their native religious traditions" (Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 77). To Gentiles, synagogues, which lacked sacrificial cult, would seem like philosophic schools (Lake, "Proselytes," 75; Moore, *Judaism*, 1:323–24). Some scholars think that many believers in Jesus remained in synagogues in Paul's day (Nanos, *Mystery*, 14), and many think that this remained common even in the late first century (see, e.g., Keener, *John*, 207–8, 215).

212. Llewelyn, *Documents*, 7:89–90, §4 (citing, e.g., *CIJ* 2:333, §1404). On synagogues with guest rooms for travelers, see Koenig, *Hospitality*, 17 (following Sukenik, *Synagogues*, 49, 69–70).

213. Admittedly, this is less so for churches where Paul spent less time (e.g., Thessalonica) but also where the Jewish population was lower (such as in Philippi); he assumes a large Jewish element in Romans (though he has not visited Rome) and Galatians (perhaps Acts 13–14) and a very hellenized Jewish element in 1 Corinthians (cf. Acts 18:11).

214. Although arguing for connections with philosophic schools, Judge, *First Christians*, 615, treats synagogues as the most relevant model for early Christian gatherings.

215. Cf. the need to request permission for a fire brigade in Pliny *Ep.* 10.33.1–3, given the potential for unrest (10.34.1).

216. Concurring with Dunn, *Acts*, 174–75.

5.4), and a letter from at least his circle addresses Diaspora Christians (1 Pet 1:1), probably including Gentiles (1:18).²¹⁷

It is most often estimated that more than four million Jews lived in the Diaspora;²¹⁸ this was far more than sufficient to provide a small apostolic team with an initial basis for ministry. Some earlier scholars made Diaspora Judaism less “orthodox” than Palestinian Judaism,²¹⁹ often using later rabbinic Judaism as the criterion of orthodoxy or seeking to explain Paul’s “heterodoxy” vis-à-vis rabbinic Judaism.²²⁰ In reality, Diaspora Jews on the whole found ways to show loyalty to their locales while retaining loyalty to Jerusalem.²²¹ It is no longer argued that Palestinian Judaism was pure and Diaspora Judaism debased.²²²

Still, Diaspora Judaism was diverse and, indeed, was probably more liberal or hellenized than Palestinian Judaism, on average.²²³ Diaspora Jews saw themselves as Judeans living elsewhere,²²⁴ but they adopted elements of their environment that they felt did not contradict their Judaism.²²⁵ For the elite, this could include Greek philosophy or education;²²⁶ for some others, it might include interaction with pagan magic. Yet they also shared a variety of traditions with Palestinian Judaism.²²⁷ Moreover, we should be careful about what we are comparing: Jerusalem’s elite was hellenized, but most rural Palestinian peasants would have been no more hellenized than other rural peasants in this period. A greater portion of Diaspora Jews was urban.²²⁸ That is, the difference reflects urbanization more than it reflects a neat geographic divide.

V. JOHN MARK AS AN ASSISTANT (13:5)

Although they had a “helper” (ὀπηρετήν), the public ministry of the word seems to involve primarily Barnabas and Saul. This fits the pattern of sending preachers two by two (Luke 10:1; cf. Mark 6:7). Ancients often sent messengers in pairs,²²⁹ Judaism expected a minimum of two witnesses (e.g., Deut 17:6; 19:15),²³⁰ and rabbis expected disciples to learn especially in pairs (apparently for the interaction, *m. ’Ab. 1:6*).²³¹ At

217. See Bruce, *Peter*, 31–32.

218. See fuller comment on Diaspora Judaism’s population at Acts 11:19, though it should be remembered that any such figures are, at best, estimates. On Diaspora Judaism, see, e.g., inscriptions in *CIJ*; Meyers and Kraabel, “Remains,” 183–200; Kant, “Inscriptions.” On the hellenization of, e.g., Alexandrian Judaism, see *CPJ* 1:25–47.

219. Even then, voices of caution were raised (Kennedy, *Epistles*, 14, 22).

220. Some rabbis also doubted Diaspora Jews’ fidelity to the law (e.g., *t. ’Abod. Zar. 4:6; Exod. Rab. 42:9*).

221. See esp. Gruen, *Diaspora*. For relations between Palestinian Judaism and the Diaspora, see also Safrai, “Relations.”

222. Trebilco and Evans, “Diaspora Judaism,” 282. For various degrees of assimilation, see 288–91. Moreover, if Diaspora Judaism was extremely liberal and tolerant, as one scholar puts it, “Paul did not find much of it” (Robinson, *Redating*, 294; cf. 2 Cor 11:24, 26).

223. E.g., Isaacs, *Spirit*, 3; Shutt, “Aristeas,” 10. For emphasis on the differences (while allowing overlap), see Sandmel, “Hellenistic Judaism”; Vermes, *Jesus and Judaism*, 26; others react against the excessive traditional dichotomy (Davies, “Aboth,” 138–51).

224. Safrai, “Relations,” 185.

225. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 165.

226. For the extent to which this could be taken, see, e.g., Tarn, *Civilisation*, 233–34; or read fragments of Artapanus or Alexander Polyhistor.

227. Some earlier scholars portrayed this as rabbinic influence on, e.g., Philo (Bamberger, “Philo and Aggadah,” noting some significant parallels), but it is better to speak of shared traditions.

228. Note especially commercial centers, e.g., *CIJ* 1:lxv.

229. Gordon, *Near East*, 110 (citing Hom. *Il.* 1.320ff. and Ugaritic materials; cf. Hom. *Il.* 7.274; 9.182); 2 Kgs 5:23 (but cf. 2 Sam 18:21). Pairs were also safer than going alone, even against demons (*b. Ber.* 43b; Edersheim, *Life*, 644), despite superstitions about pairs and demons (*b. Pesah.* 110a).

230. Also *y. Git.* 4:1, §2; Keener, *John*, 656, 740; Vliet, *No Single Testimony*.

231. Safrai, “Education,” 968; cf. rabbis learning in dialogue, *Gen. Rab.* 69:2. Travel was safer in pairs than alone (*Ecl. Rab.* 4:9ff., §1).

least in early Greek tradition, even when a third person was added to a pair of messengers, he was not strictly counted as a part, since the dual is still employed.²³² But as here (Acts 13:5), groups of messengers often did include more than two members.²³³

Mark's office as "helper" may reflect biblical tradition, appreciated in the nascent church; though the term is not used, Timothy may have been among those filling this role later (cf. 16:3; 19:22).²³⁴ The particular term Luke uses for "assistant" here is quite generic: Luke elsewhere employs it for the apostles themselves (Luke 1:2, in relation to their eyewitness message; cf. Acts 1:21–22), for Paul (in relation to his eyewitness message, Acts 26:16; cf. 1 Cor 4:1), and also for a synagogue officer (probably the *hazzan*, Luke 4:20)²³⁵ and other officers (Acts 5:22, 26).

Yet biblical tradition provides analogies for Mark's office. Elite soldiers had armor bearers (1 Sam 14:1; 16:21; 17:41; 31:4). Prophetic leaders such as Moses (Num 11:28), Elijah (1 Kgs 19:21; 2 Kgs 3:11), and Elisha (2 Kgs 4:12; 6:15) had assistants;²³⁶ among prophets, these servants were often apprentices and, ideally, successors of their masters. Failure to live up to the standards of the calling could have serious consequences (2 Kgs 5:26–27). Even in the Greek philosophic tradition, for a student to live with a sage and do all under his supervision was a privilege (Mus. Ruf. 11, p. 84.9–14). It is no wonder that Mark's departure (Acts 13:13), apparently under unpleasant or perhaps even acrimonious circumstances, disappointed Paul (15:38).

The company may include more than three members here (though this is not absolutely clear; the plural substantival article *oi* in 13:13 probably does include Mark, who apparently left them at Perga), two or more after 13:13, and at least four on Paul's later journey into Macedonia and Achaia (cf. 16:3, 10; 17:14–15).

However large the company, traveling companions were valued. Later rabbis claimed it safer to travel in the company of godly persons who carried divine protection.²³⁷ A good traveling companion to talk with could make walking as pleasant as riding (Aul. Gel. 17.14.4), and one might undertake extra labor for a long distance to talk with a friend (Plut. *Cic.* 39.4). Even those who had previously been strangers could become lively conversants on a journey, debating about their favorite heroes (Babr. 15.1–9) or sharing their stories (Heliod. *Eth.* 2.26) or with a younger learning from an elder (Tob 6:3–18). Later rabbis would often discuss Torah on their journeys (cf. also Luke 24:27).²³⁸ Most traveling teachers had students or associates on their travels.²³⁹ Certainly, finding a traveling companion who already knew the roads was advantageous (Tob 5:4–7), an advantage Barnabas would have at least for Cyprus (Acts 13:6; cf. 4:36).

232. Hom. *Il.* 9.168–70, 182; see Murray in LCL, 1:394n1.

233. E.g., Kehne, "Legatio," 351 (Rome usually dispatched three or more *legati*).

234. Mark may have later become "useful" to Paul for ministry again (cf. 2 Tim 4:11; see fuller comment at Acts 15:39).

235. Cf. *t. Meg.* 3:21; Applebaum, "Organization," 496; Safrai, "Synagogue," 935; Moore, *Judaism*, 1:289; Reicke, *Era*, 121; some sort of title in *CIJ* 1:124, §172; 2:94–95, §855; see further 1:xcix (found in Rome, 1:123–24, §172; Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 190).

236. Also *Mek. Pisha* 1.150–53; *Abot R. Nat.* 11, §28 B. In addition to primary assistants, prophets could have other disciples who could work for them; e.g., 2 Kgs 9:1. Mark's temporary "apostasy" (Acts 13:13) could be like Gehazi's (2 Kgs 5:26) but is probably not so serious; Barnabas, at least, is later reconciled to Mark (Acts 15:37; contrast the more negative assessment in Black, "Mark in Acts"). Later rabbis viewed prophets' disciples on the analogy with rabbinic academies (e.g., *Tg. Jon.* on 1 Sam 19:23; on 2 Kgs 6:1; 9:1, 4); likewise CD VIII, 20–21 assimilates Jeremiah's Baruch to Elisha's Gehazi.

237. *T. Abod. Zar.* 1:17–18; *Šabb.* 17:2–3.

238. Liefeld, "Preacher," 229 (citing *b. Yebam.* 42b; *Yoma* 85a; *Gen. Rab.* 35:3).

239. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 144.

b. Conflict in Paphos (13:6–8)

Luke's summary of Paul and Barnabas's ministry in Cyprus might have been brief indeed but for his record of the dramatic incident in the governor's court in Paphos. Here they overcome a sorcerer by divine power, leading to the governor's faith.

Luke is likely accurate about Sergius Paulus being the proconsul as well as about Elymas Bar-Jesus.²⁴⁰ Luke would not give such a precise name if he were fabricating on a matter that could be checked by any visitors from Cyprus, any more than he fabricated Felix and Festus for his Diaspora audience. And if Sergius Paulus later became, as Mitchell and others argue, a consul known from history, falsifying information about him could prove downright dangerous²⁴¹ (unless Luke wrote before 70, when Sergius achieved the consulship, or so far after 70 that no one close to Sergius remained alive to dispute the account).²⁴²

One would not expect Luke to be accurate on Gallio, where we can check him, yet fabricate a name where, by chance of what remains extant, we cannot check him; reporting nonexistent officials whom someone might have been able to dispute would have hurt his credibility more than would remaining silent where he lacked data (cf. the unnamed officials in most cities, including even the speaker in 19:35). Luke likewise would hardly dare report Sergius Paulus's "believing" if nothing of the sort occurred, whether the governor's commitment ultimately proved exclusive to the Christian faith or not (and whether or not Luke had access to that information).²⁴³

I. PAPHOS (13:6)

When Luke declares that the company covered the entire island as far as Paphos, he probably refers to ministry especially along the long but relatively recent Roman road on the southern coast from Salamis to Paphos. The travelers probably preferred this shorter southern route, which was 115 miles, to 142 miles for the northern route. The southern road was built by Augustus sometime after 12 B.C.E. and was at least a week's journey; stops along the way may have included such cities as Citium, Amathus, and Curium.²⁴⁴ Citium was one of the island's best-known harbors (Strabo 14.6.3).

It would not have been difficult to find places to preach.²⁴⁵ Aside from preaching in the synagogues, much of their time would be spent on the road, which

240. Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 151.

241. Cf. Pliny the Younger, who happily preserves (and sometimes apparently unnecessarily generated) correspondence with the emperor (*Ep.* 10) but would not dare have fabricated any of it (and had he done so, the correspondence would surely have sounded quite different, just as Luke might have elaborated further here, this being Paul's "highest-ranking" convert).

242. One could argue that Luke knew of the consul and made him governor here, at the appropriate stage in his senatorial career, to claim a high Roman official for the faith. But if so, we might expect to hear more about him, and Luke would also recognize that few would be impressed with this "conversion": as consul, Sergius Paulus would necessarily participate in Roman civic religion and had necessarily been doing so.

243. Admittedly, Luke might avoid reporting the governor's faith to avoid endangering the status of Sergius Paulus if he knew (he may or may not have) that the latter remained alive and active in Rome (as he may have been ca. 70 C.E.). But one filling the role of *consul suffectus* in Rome (as he may have done in 70) would necessarily practice pagan rites, and so the former governor would not be a practicing, or at least public (cf. 2 Kgs 5:18), Christian at this time. Had he remained active in southern Asia Minor, from which he hailed, however, his status would probably not be in danger—certainly no more from believing the Christian message about Jesus than from consulting with a Jewish magician.

244. Gill, "Travels through Cyprus"; also noted by Witherington, *Acts*, 396n144, following Gill; similarly Finegan, *Apostles*, 77 (though not ruling out a route with the Pediaeus River over the mountains); Schnabel, *Missionary*, 262. Wilson (personal correspondence, Nov. 25, 2011) estimates 112 miles (180 km.). Scholars long listed as large cities (in addition to Salamis and Paphos) both Citium (Kition) and Amathus, on the south, and Soli, on the north (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 143).

245. Schnabel, *Missionary*, 262, notes that the same verb was connected with preaching in Acts 8:4; see also, e.g., 8:40; cf. 9:32; 10:38; 11:19. The verb is certainly not decisive (e.g., 9:38; 11:22; 12:10) but allows the possibility.

would resemble many other Mediterranean roads. Most cities in the empire grew up where trade would naturally converge, on harbors, rivers, or roads. The road would mostly pass agrarian areas and, when near a city, would pass tombs on the sides of the road. Close to the gates of walled cities would be shrines, wells, and some shops whose odors kept them outside the city, such as those of tanners and leatherworkers.²⁴⁶

New Paphos itself, on the western end of the island (Strabo 14.6.4), had a harbor and magnificent temples (14.6.3). Jewish interpreters could refer to this city alongside Salamis to epitomize Cyprus.²⁴⁷ The empire's cities were mostly polytheistic, and Paphos was no exception; the most prominent deity there was Paphian Aphrodite,²⁴⁸ apparently a Syrian goddess overlaid with Greek traits.²⁴⁹ (Syncretism among goddesses was common [see comment on Acts 8:10], but in Cyprus, Aphrodite was combined particularly with another queen goddess, Astarte.)²⁵⁰ The Paphians were first to worship "Heavenly Aphrodite" after the Assyrians, opined Pausanias (Paus. 1.14.7); "Cyprian Aphrodite" was said to have fallen from heaven.²⁵¹ Some culturally informed members of Luke's audience, hearing of Paphos, may have associated it in their mind with a specific deity known to be venerated there;²⁵² Paphos was said to be dedicated to Aphrodite just as Athens was to Athena, or Delphi or Delos was to Apollo (Lucian *Sacr.* 10).²⁵³

Just sixty stadia (about 7 mi. or 15 km.) to the southeast, in originally Phoenician Palaepaphos (Old Paphos), which had its own harbor, was the famous temple of Paphian Aphrodite, to which both men and women from Paphos made an annual procession (Strabo 14.6.3).²⁵⁴ It was said that in a special court of this temple, rain would never fall (Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.97.210). Old Paphos was greatly loved by Aphrodite (Hom. *Od.* 8.362–63), whose birthplace was supposedly in the sea foam by the rocky coast nearby.²⁵⁵ The focus of the cult, evident from some portrayals of Aphrodite on

246. Jeffers, *World*, 51.

247. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 143 (citing *Sib. Or.* 4.128ff.; 5.450ff.). For further detail on New Paphos, see Gempf, "Paphos"; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 352–62; on Old Paphos, 363.

248. "Famous both among natives and strangers" (Tac. *Hist.* 2.2 [LCL, 1:163]; at greater length, see Tac. *Hist.* 2.2–4; *Ann.* 3.62; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 3.58).

249. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 256 (referring to both Old and New Paphos); cf. Knowing, "Acts," 285. Possibly older traditions survived as symbols on first- to second-century coins, since the excavated plan of the rebuilt sanctuary (ca. 100 c.e.) is notably different (Catling, "Paphos").

250. See Budin, "Reconsideration" (warning against seeing a blending only with Astarte in Greece). Undoubtedly this Aphrodite cult did interact with the cult of Aphrodite in nearby Cilicia (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.22.92). The Roman Venus would have little relevance except insofar as some features derived from Greek Aphrodite (for these, see, e.g., Rives, "Venus," 284–85).

251. Lucian *Gout* 87–88, perhaps confusing goddesses; on goddess statues from heaven, see comment on Acts 19:35. For the contrast between "heavenly" Aphrodite and Aphrodite Pandemos (connected with prostitution and lust), see Llewellyn-Jones, "Tortoise," 189.

252. My point in mentioning this is to help capture the way the first audience would have heard these stories. Yet whether or not its members knew of particular deities associated with particular cities, they knew that their environment was mainly polytheistic and were conscious that the apostles who spoke boldly articulated a perspective then held by a tiny minority, not a dominant culture. The earliest Christian mission had little in common with imperialism.

253. Cyprus's Mount Olympus also held a temple of Aphrodite Acraea (Strabo 14.6.3).

254. Strabo notes that nearby Arsinoë had a sacred complex as well. If we may trust the report of Dio Chrysostom (since the other women rulers he names are noted elsewhere), Cyprus's history or legends included one tragic but wise female ruler and lawgiver, Demonassa (*Or.* 64.2–4). For a concise history of the Aphrodite cult there, see Graf, "Aphrodite," 67; for archaeology of the Aphrodite temple, and the argument that Rantidi contains the sanctuary of her male consort, see Young, "Aphrodite Cult."

255. See Grant, *Gods*, 22–23 (though he does not explain his claim that this distinction is significant for Acts); esp. Tac. *Hist.* 2.3; Hesiod, *Theog.* 199; cf. Libanius *Speech in Character* 18.3 (for foam); for her epithet "Cyprian," e.g., Libanius *Speech in Character* 17.3; 18.1, 3.

local coins, was the sacred rock in her temple.²⁵⁶ Old Paphos lay on a low elevation about a mile (less than 2 km.) from the coast.²⁵⁷

More relevant to the narrative is that New Paphos, also named Augusta, was Cyprus's capital under Rome and the Roman proconsul lived there.²⁵⁸ New Paphos, also on the coast, was about 12 miles (19 km.) to the northwest of Old Paphos.²⁵⁹ (Other cities in antiquity and more recently have also relocated from their previous sites.)²⁶⁰

The Jewish community in Paphos was likely significant enough to have attracted Paul and Barnabas to travel there, given their use of synagogues as a base for evangelization (Acts 13:5). Paphos certainly maintained trade with Judea, as evidenced by coins from Hasmonean, Herodian, and directly Roman-governed Judea.²⁶¹ It seems less likely that Barnabas and Saul had planned to visit the proconsul himself, though they were undoubtedly delighted with the invitation.

Traveling teachers gave orations, which sometimes secured them permanent resident-teaching positions;²⁶² an official might wish to meet visiting sages if he heard good reports about them.²⁶³ This would especially appear to be the case with Sergius Paulus, since he clearly already appreciated some Jewish (or perhaps generally Eastern) religious matters.²⁶⁴ Provincial governors typically had leisure time available (Sen. Y. Nat. Q. 4A.pref. 1) and followed the Roman patronal custom of receiving early-morning guests who came to pay respects (Plut. Cic. 36.3).²⁶⁵ On the missionaries' part, a favorable interview with a person of influence could reduce social complications and send positive signals to others who might be interested.²⁶⁶ Although his interview with the proconsul here may have been unplanned, Paul's subsequent ministry targeted centers of Roman administration as well as (like Cynics and sophists) urban centers.²⁶⁷

II. ELYMAS BAR-JESUS (13:6, 8)

Although Elymas was presumably the son of someone named Jesus (i.e., Joshua, a common name in this era),²⁶⁸ Luke probably plays on the name "Bar-Jesus" (Aramaic,

256. Gill, "Religion," 87 (also mentioning other evidence for the worship of sacred rocks on Cyprus); Tac. Hist. 2.3.

257. Maier, "Paphos," 245.

258. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 501.

259. Maier, "Paphos," 245.

260. E.g., on new Jericho, see Hachlili, "Jericho"; for old Jericho, see Holland, "Jericho"; for Gaza, see comment on Acts 8:26. In more recent history, cf. the old Burmese capital at Ava (Anderson, *Shore*, 244, 276).

261. Stern, "Diaspora," 155; also Le Cornu, *Acts*, 683.

262. See Winter, *Left Corinth*, 36–37; Pogoloff, *Logos*, 176.

263. With Rackham, *Acts*, 200.

264. Many in the Greco-Roman world were attracted to the exotic and esoteric lore of the East or Egypt (Val. Max. 8.7.ext. 2–3; Lucian *Cock* 18; *Phil. Sale* 3; *Iambl. VP* 3.14; 4.19; cf. Hippol. *Ref.* 1.11 [including magi]; for magic, e.g., Lucian *Lover of Lies* 31; Klauck, *Context*, 213; among Stoics, Mastrocinque, "Choices," 381; with Germanicus, in the imperial household, 383); thus, e.g., a Roman matron heeds a Jewess who claims to interpret Jerusalem's laws and people's dreams, for a fee (*Juv. Sat.* 6.542–47). Such exotic connections aided Diaspora Jewish apologetic (cf., e.g., Stowers, *Rereading of Romans*, 62).

265. For the custom, see also Hor. *Sat.* 1.1.9–10; *Ep.* 2.1.103–5; Mart. *Epig.* 3.36.1–3; for this practice among Roman governors, see Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.66.147; Plut. *Cic.* 36.3; see further Keener, *John*, 1098.

266. In societies with high power distance, such as traditional African villages where the chief's and elders' approval could prove decisive, following protocol with leaders proved especially strategic. Roman administration does not fit the high power distance model as well as such villages, but it is much closer to that than Western society in general is (cf. Malina, *Windows*, 142–45).

267. See discussion in Liefeld, "Preacher," 213–15.

268. Josephus has Ἰησοῦς 123 times, the majority for the biblical Joshua, but also for more recent figures, in *Life* 66–67, 105, 108–10, 134, 178, 186, 193, 200, 204, 246, 271, 278–79, 294–95, 300–301; *Ant.* 11.298–301; 12.237–39; 15.41, 322; 17.341; 20.200, 203, 213, 223, 234; and *War* 2.566, 599; 3.450, 452, 457, 467, 498; 4.160, 238, 270, 283, 317, 322, 325; 6.114, 300, 387. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 700, points out that "Jesus" (ישוע) was presumably an updating of the longer biblical יהושע (Joshua).

“son of Jesus”) here:²⁶⁹ he is revealed as “son of the devil” instead in Acts 13:10.²⁷⁰ Scholars note some ironies in the passage.²⁷¹

Elymas	Saul
A “false prophet” (Acts 13:6)	A true prophet (Acts 13:1)
Elymas has two names (13:6, 8), one that provides Luke a wordplay (Bar-Jesus becomes instead son of the devil, 13:10)	Saul has two names (13:9), one of which provides a connection with Sergius Paulus (13:7)
Elymas twists the Lord’s straight “ways” (13:10)	Saul once opposed the “way” (9:2); now he preaches it (16:17) (the way John made straight, Luke 3:4–5)
Was blinded and sought someone to lead him by the hand (13:11)	Was blinded and led by the hand (9:8)
A false prophet (13:6), full of all deception (13:10)	Filled with the Holy Spirit (i.e., as a true prophet, 13:9)

Whether because of Jewish use of a mysterious divine name²⁷² or because of Jews’ apparently exotic customs, many Gentiles regarded Jews as particularly adept at magic.²⁷³ Ancient magical papyri reveal considerable Jewish influence, including in papyri from Gentiles lacking understanding of the formulae and names they were exploiting.²⁷⁴ (See fuller excursus on magic, including magic and Judaism, at Acts 8:9.) Some pagans viewed Moses as a magician,²⁷⁵ but Judaism countered by appealing to Moses’s defeat of Egyptian magicians (Exod 7:11–12). (Given the stereotypes about Egyptian magic,²⁷⁶ this charge would probably prove more persuasive than the one about Moses, despite Jewish involvement in magic.)²⁷⁷ This fits Luke’s polemic against Jewish spirituality without Jesus.

III. FALSE PROPHETS (13:6)

This passage contains Luke’s only use of the title μάγος (Acts 13:6, 8); see discussion on this title at Acts 8:9–11. This passage also contains one of Luke’s only two explicit uses of “false prophet” (ψευδοπροφήτης), the other passage warning that the prophets of whom all others think well are likelier false prophets (Luke 6:26). The term appears in Zech 13:2 LXX and is particularly prominent in Jeremiah (LXX

269. Plays on names were a common practice; see, e.g., Lucian *Dem.* 31; Max. Tyre 18.1; Hermog. *Method* 13.429 (citing Hom. *Il.* 2.758; Plato *Gorg.* 467b; Demosth. *Or.* 19.248); probably Jas 1:1; perhaps “remember” and “Zechariah” in the Hebrew of 2 Chr 24:20, 22; they were also used for humor or teasing (as among children today; “Jokes,” 1202, citing Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.121; Petron. *Sat.* 36.5–8). Ancients also offered mnemonic associations among namesakes (e.g., Val. Max. 4.6.2–3).

270. E.g., Dunn, *Acts*, 176; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 704; Klauck, *Magic*, 49. Bede *Comm. Acts* 13.6 doubts that a son of the devil could genuinely be named Bar-Jesus, and implausibly suggests a textual corruption for the latter.

271. Esp. Johnson, *Acts*, 227 (with my adaptations, including from Tannehill, *Acts*, 162–63).

272. See comment on Acts 3:6; and esp. on Acts 19:13.

273. E.g., Pliny E. N.H. 30.2.11 (cited in Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 180–81); Lucian *Alex.* 13 (in Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 95).

274. See further comment on Acts 19:13. Cf. also the corpus of Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls (Isbell, *Bowls*). Egyptian hieroglyphics were likewise redeployed without understanding in magic (see Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 254; comment on Acts 2:4).

275. Gager, *Moses*, 134–61, esp. 161; Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 56–57; Apuleius *Apology* in Stern, *Authors*, 2:201; PGM 5.107–9; 13.345. See excursus on magic at Acts 8:9–11.

276. Hom. *Od.* 4.228–34; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 31, 33; Apul. *Metam.* 2.28; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.2–8; Helioid. *Eth.* 6.14; Philost. *Vit. soph.* pref. 480; *Abot R. Nat.* 28 A; 48, §132 B; b. *Qidd.* 49b; *Gen. Rab.* 86:5; *Exod. Rab.* 9:6; 20:19; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 1:15; 7:11; cf. the prefect’s circular in Horsley, *Documents*, 1:47–51; Dauphin, “Amulet”; Frankfurter, “Magic”; idem, *Religion in Egypt*, 198–237; Lewis, *Life*, 95–96; Klauck, *Context*, 213. (Other locations, e.g., Thessaly, were also associated with magic; Lucian *Lucius* 4; *Dial. C.* 1 [Glycera and Thais], 281; implied in *Dial. C.* 4 [Melitta and Bacchis 1], 286.)

277. Early Christianity’s enemies associated Jesus’s stay in Egypt with magic (Dalman, *Jesus in Talmud*, 33; Cook, *Interpretation*, 32–33).

6:13; 33:7, 8, 11, 16 [26:7, 8, 11, 16 MT]; 34:9 [27:9]; 35:1 [28:1]; 36:1, 8 [29:1, 8]), was common in Josephus,²⁷⁸ and became a fairly common designation in early Christianity.²⁷⁹

Following biblical passages such as Deut 13 and 18, Jewish people sought ways to distinguish true prophets from false. Thus 4Q375 developed ideas in Deut 18 for this goal; the false prophet should be killed (4Q375 1 I, 4–5).²⁸⁰ Later Christians also urged discernment concerning false prophets (*Did.* 11.5–10); they often associated false prophecy with demonic spirits (Iren. *Her.* 1.13.3).²⁸¹ Some Jewish people also associated sorcerers and false prophets with misleading demons.²⁸² (This is not surprising, since even idolatrous false prophets could provide signs [Deut 13:1–3].) Many associated false prophets with pecuniary motives.²⁸³ It was expected that false prophets opposed true prophets and even sought to have them killed.²⁸⁴

Because of the respect for true oracles in antiquity, oraclemongers and interpolators of Sibylline oracles were common among Gentiles, Jews, and Christians.²⁸⁵ So widely were Sibylline oracles and other oracles fabricated or distorted that ancient literature frequently warns against and even lampoons the phenomenon.²⁸⁶ Some Jewish writers even compiled lists of canonical false prophets (4Q339).²⁸⁷ Balaam was the prototype for false prophets.²⁸⁸ Some believed that later false prophets were more dangerous than Balaam, who was at least able to be used by God.²⁸⁹ Whereas Jews were particularly concerned about false prophets, for Greeks they simply belonged to the larger spectrum of spurious rulers²⁹⁰ and fake philosophers.²⁹¹ Jewish people expected false prophets to continue until the time of the end (*Test. Jud.* 21:9; Mark 13:22).

As a “false prophet,” Elymas stands in deliberate and explicit contrast to Saul and Barnabas, who are true prophets (Acts 13:1).²⁹² Their message was incompatible with, and hence could challenge the influence of, Elymas’s in 13:8.²⁹³ Elymas would hardly stand idly by as others’ claims challenged his own livelihood. Although he would probably suffer nothing more severe than dismissal from the proconsul’s court, in principle he could be viewed quite harshly; some ancients considered it morally

278. Sixteen times (Jos. *Ant.* 8.236, 241–42, 318, 402, 406, 409; 9.133–34, 137; 10.66, 104, 111; *War* 2.261; 6.285). Strangely, it appears only once in Philo (*Spec. Laws* 4.51), perhaps because he focuses on the Pentateuch. Cf. also false prophets in 1QH^a XII, 17; 4Q430 1 4; 4Q177 5 VI, 6; 2 Bar. 66:4; *Mart. Is.* 2:12, 15; 5:2, 12; *Test. Jud.* 21:9.

279. Eleven times in the NT; six times in the *Didache* (*Did.* 11.5–10; 16.3); five in Shepherd of Hermas (*Herm.* 43.1, 2, 4, 7).

280. See also 1Q29 1, reconstructed by means of 4Q376 (*DSSNT* 178–79).

281. Cf. also demonic foreknowledge in the third-century *Test. Sol.* 15:8 (in Grudem, *Prophecy*, 42); cf. other texts in Stauffer, *Jesus and Story*, 207.

282. 1 En. 65:6; L.A.B. 34:2–3; *Asc. Is.* 2:5; b. *Sanh.* 67b; cf. CD XII, 2–3 (false prophets); *Test. Jud.* 23:1 (some MSS); Iren. *Her.* 1.13.3–4; sorcerers and false prophets tried to manipulate their spirit-guides through incantations (*PGM* 1.80–81, 88–90, 164–66, 181–85, 252–53; 2.52–54). Ironically, the use of angels became dominant in medieval Jewish “good” magic (Fass, “Angels”). Cf. divination by spirits in some traditional religions today (Mbiti, *Religions*, 233).

283. Mic 3:11; Aune, *Prophecy*, 228 (with 414n235).

284. *Asc. Is.* 2:12–3:12, esp. 3:6; cf. 1 Kgs 18:4, 13, 19–22; 19:10, 14.

285. See Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” 320 (citing Cic. *Div.* 2.54.110–11).

286. See Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” 320.

287. Possibly emulating Greek list-making practices (Cohen, “False Prophets”).

288. See, e.g., 2 Pet 2:15; *Sipre Deut.* 357.18.2; in 4Q339, see Shemesh, “Note on 4Q339”; see comment in the excursus on prophecy at Acts 2:17–18.

289. Kim, “Complexity,” on 4Q339.

290. E.g., Lucian *Book-Coll.* 20.

291. E.g., Lucian *Peregr.* passim; *Runaways* passim, e.g., 4, 15, 19–20; *Dial. D.* 370 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 8); *Indictment* 6, 11.

292. Tannehill, *Acts*, 162.

293. Rackham, *Acts*, 200.

just to punish deceivers (*Rhet. Alex.* 1, 1422b.5–8)²⁹⁴ and to execute a diviner who deliberately lied about omens (*Val. Max.* 7.2.5).²⁹⁵ Crowds might also seek to burn someone alive who employed dangerous magic (*Lucian Lucius* 54).

Perhaps relevant to false prophets in Luke's account, criticizing rival itinerants was also a way of distinguishing and defending the nobler itinerants about whom one was writing.²⁹⁶ Conflicts between competing teachers often appear; for example, Persian magi allegedly persuaded their king to send away a philosopher who sought to turn him from riches, claiming that the philosopher was a magician (γόης, *Eunapius Lives* 466) though in fact the magi deserved the title more. A false prophet might seek the death of true prophets (cf. 1 Kgs 18:4, 19)—for instance, by false accusation (*Asc. Is.* 2:12–3:12, esp. 3:6), the latter danger being relevant here (13:8). Claims that some prophets spoke only for financial gain went back many centuries (e.g., *Soph. Antig.* 1061; *Mic* 3:11). Here the missionaries' opponent is a magician, a "child of the devil" (*Acts* 13:10), which probably implies demonic power rather than mere fakery (on views of magic, see the excursus on magic and magicians at *Acts* 8:9–11). In light of Luke-Acts as a whole, detractors' accusations that Jesus or his followers act by demons (*Luke* 11:15) come to appear ironic and, from their accusers, even disingenuous (11:19).²⁹⁷ Outside Roman state cults, individuals (most often Greeks) could devote themselves to whatever cults proved most effective. Two spiritual spheres here vie for the governor's attention.²⁹⁸

That the false prophet is "Jewish" fits Luke's motif of the competition between Christian and non-Christian forms of Jewish faith; instead of bringing true faith to Gentiles, this Jewish magician distorts it.²⁹⁹ Other power encounters also occur with Jewish magicians (*Acts* 19:13–16) or magicians operating in a Samaritan (hence, from an external perspective, heterodox Jewish) sphere (8:9–13).³⁰⁰ Some scholars have compared this confrontation to Moses's confrontation with Pharaoh's magicians (mentioned above);³⁰¹ some Jewish tradition attributed their power to Satan (*Jub.* 48:9) just as Luke attributes that of Elymas to Satan (*Acts* 13:10). But whereas Moses confronted pagan magicians (*Exod* 7:11–12),³⁰² Saul here confronts an ethnically Jewish magician whose practice is pagan. This also fits a pattern in much of Luke's antimagical apologetic (see comment on *Acts* 8:9–11).³⁰³

The encounter described here accords with larger patterns in confrontations claiming to represent competing forms of spiritual power. Confrontations between different

294. On widespread opposition to falsehood in ancient literature, see comment at *Acts* 5:3–4.

295. Both early Judaism (see *b. Sanh.* 101a, in Alexander, *Possession*, 32) and early Christianity (Augustine, in Chadwick, *Early Church*, 79) acknowledged that demons could sometimes foretell the future.

296. See Liefeld, "Preacher," 298; Malherbe, "Gentle as Nurse."

297. See further Garrett, *Demise*, 36.

298. See Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 29–30.

299. Cf. Kilgallen, "Role of *magos*"; Robinson, "Paul in Cyprus."

300. Goulder, *Type and History*, 108–9, seeks to add some less persuasive parallels for "false disciples" (*Acts* 15:36; 23:1). Another power encounter appears in 16:16–18; cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 11.

301. E.g., Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:234; Robinson, "Paul in Cyprus." This is more noteworthy if we recall a possible comparison of Agrippa I with Pharaoh in *Acts* 12 (see comment there). Later rabbinic texts also narrated a conflict with magicians (*b. Sanh.* 67b–68a; *y. Sanh.* 25d; in Levinson, "Gbwltwt").

302. Cf. 2 *Tim* 3:8, which employs the same verb (ἀνθίστημι) for magicians opposing Moses as for Elymas here. Luke employs this verb elsewhere for (and only for) opposition to the word (*Luke* 21:15; *Acts* 6:10), as does 2 *Timothy* itself (2 *Tim* 4:15). On Pharaoh's magicians, traditionally Jannes and his brother, see, e.g., CD V, 17–19; 4Q467 2 2; *L.A.B.* 47:1; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on *Exod* 1:15; 7:11 (cf. Grabbe, "Tradition," denying that it is early enough to be the background for 2 *Tim* 3:8); *Apul. Apol.* 90 (in Stern, *Authors*, 2:201); Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha and New Testament*, 79; Gager, *Moses*, 137–40.

303. See esp. here Klauck, "Paphos and Lystra." Cf. antimagical polemic as a method for distinguishing itinerants in Liefeld, "Preacher," 298.

religious groups or individuals with an active view of spiritual power often produce what missiologists call “power encounters.”³⁰⁴ Often, when those who doubt a religious system defy its taboos and escape unscathed, many insiders are convinced and abandon the taboos.³⁰⁵ Protestants grew enormously in Haiti through confronting vodun³⁰⁶ and through power encounters there;³⁰⁷ power encounters are also reported with the spread of the Christian message in parts of Asia.³⁰⁸ In one relatively recent report, when shamans gathered around a sacred tree were cursing the Christians' God (during a meeting of Christians seven miles away), lightning destroyed the tree, apparently producing a widespread response.³⁰⁹ See further discussion (with examples and some sources) at Acts 8:13.

IV. USE OF A COURT MAGICIAN (13:6–7)

That Sergius Paulus should employ a court magician,³¹⁰ or at least depended heavily on a magician as a consultant, is not surprising, for a number of reasons. Even though sorcery in the negative sense could invite official hostility,³¹¹ views varied on the private utility of magic,³¹² and Elymas may not have promoted himself as a magician (in contrast to Luke's label for him).³¹³ The empire's approximately forty provinces maintained as little Roman bureaucracy and staff as possible to keep the empire running;³¹⁴ governors would be free to draw on local expertise in addition to their official *consilium* (on the *consilium*, see comment on Acts 25:12). People of status often employed philosophers or others to lecture at their banquets;³¹⁵ Cyprus itself produced many philosophers and philosophic students.³¹⁶ Rulers might thus value speakers or other sorts of entertainment,³¹⁷ even without any intention of changing their behavior to accommodate philosophers or prophets.³¹⁸ Kings often valued a diviner in their royal court;³¹⁹ divination had long been employed for

304. Of the three definitions in De Wet, “Signs,” 82–83, I include the second (such as burning fetishes) but refer especially to the third, the “challenge-oriented power encounter in public.” See lengthier discussion of the subject at Acts 8:12–13; Keener, *Miracles*, 843–56.

305. See, e.g., Tippett, *People Movements*, 80–84, 164–67; De Wet, “Signs,” 81; Tandi Randa, interview, May 23, 2012; follow-up correspondence, May 25–26, 2012.

306. Johnson, “Growing Church,” 54–58.

307. E.g., destroying an “indestructible” sacred rock, in Johnson, “Growing Church,” 55–56.

308. Pothen, “Missions,” 305–8; cf. protection from witchcraft in Bali, in Hang, *Crushing*, 63–64; elsewhere in Indonesia in Tandi Randa, interview, May 23, 2012.

309. Chavda, *Miracle*, 9–10, 128–29, including photographs (between pp. 78 and 79) and the claim of eyewitnesses. One of my students, Paul Mokake, has shared with me several eyewitness accounts of power encounters in his homeland of northern Cameroon (noting demonstrations of what was believed to be supernatural power from both sides; May 13, 2009).

310. Witherington, *Acts*, 398, suggests that this magician functioned as part of Sergius's “official *comitatus* or entourage.”

311. E.g., Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.17, though this is probably a novelistic element.

312. Classical Greeks sometimes distinguished what has come to be called “black” and “white” magic, but the dominant perspective on “magic” was pejorative (Klauck, *Context*, 211).

313. Cf., e.g., Jos. *Ant.* 20.97, calling Theudas a “magician” (not likely Theudas's own perspective).

314. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 21.

315. See, e.g., Lucian *Posts* 35–36; Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 13. On philosophers lecturing at banquets, see, e.g., Max. Tyre 22; cf. Slater, “Introduction,” 2–3; Pogoloff, *Logos*, 264–71.

316. Such as Demonax (Lucian *Dem.* 1, 3) and Rufinus (*Dem.* 54).

317. Governors also sought ways to employ their leisure time (Sen. *Y. Nat.* Q. 4A.pref. 1; Acts 24:24–26).

318. As in Mark 6:20. For people being entertained by, but not heeding, philosophers, see, e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 8.11; for the same behavior with prophets, see, e.g., Ezek 33:32.

319. Johnson, *Acts*, 223, cites Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.1–12; Simon the magician in a senator's house in *Acts Pet.* 8 (also Philo *Spec. Laws* 3.100, noting that kings could study “true magic”); Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 285–86, also notes magicians and mantics as rulers' advisors, e.g., Tiberius's (Suet. *Aug.* 98.4–5; *Tib.* 14.4; *Cal.* 19.3); Pervo, *Acts*, 325, cites Josephus himself (*War* 3.399–408) and refers helpfully to Potter, *Prophets*. Other commentators (Witherington, *Acts*, 399; Klauck, *Magic*, 51; esp. Talbert, *Acts*, 117) compare Tiberius's

matters of state,³²⁰ including war.³²¹ Romans had long respected the predictions of Eastern magi (Vell. Paterc. 2.24.3, on Sulla). It had also long been noted that charlatans claiming magic powers specifically sought out the wealthy (e.g., Plato *Rep.* 2.364BC).³²²

The very term μάγος (Acts 13:6, 8) most technically referred to a class of diviners on the staff of the Persian king. Μάγοι were typically adept in astrology (cf. Matt 2:1–2),³²³ and even many Jewish people by this period had developed skill in this discipline. Many intellectuals justified astrology,³²⁴ and in general, people in the empire, especially in the East, took astrology very seriously. See the excursus on magic and magicians at Acts 8:9–11 and the excursus on astrology at Acts 2:9–11.

Although we should not think of a large number of magicians moving between Paphos and Judea in some sort of magician “exchange program,” it is noteworthy that Cyprus probably had other high-status Jewish magicians; one of governor Felix’s friends was a Jewish Cypriot who successfully pretended to be a magician (Jos. *Ant.* 20.142), thus seducing Drusilla to abandon her husband and marry Felix (20.142–43).³²⁵ Everyone knew that such behavior was against God’s law (20.143), warranting the deceiver’s judgment (20.144); likewise, Elymas here is a figure whom most early Jewish critics of Christians would have also viewed negatively. Many Jewish people recognized the importance of testing and discerning prophets.³²⁶

We also have strong reason to believe that Sergius Paulus was from southern Anatolia and hence grew up as a Roman surrounded by Eastern culture; given widespread interest in the alleged esoteric powers of Eastern religious castes (somewhat akin to nineteenth-century “orientalism”),³²⁷ his interest in both a Jewish magician (Acts 13:6) and Jewish agents of a new (13:7) and signs-working (13:11–12) message is plausible.³²⁸ He may have also had some “God-fearing” relatives in Pisidian Antioch (cf. 13:50).

Perhaps Sergius Paulus invited Elymas to be present to help him evaluate the new Jewish teachers, or perhaps Elymas, wishing to counteract competitors, simply used his access to the court when he heard that they were coming. That the governor

well-known dependence on an astrologer named Thrasyllus (Suet. *Tib.* 14.4; Chaldeans in Juv. *Sat.* 10.93–94); Nero’s on Tiridates (Pliny E. *N.H.* 30.17) and Babillus (Suet. *Nero* 36.1); Otho’s on astrologers (Tac. *Hist.* 1.22.2) such as Seleucus (Suet. *Otho* 4.1; 6.1); Domitian’s on the astrologer Ascleterion (Suet. *Dom.* 15.3); Marcus Aurelius’s on an Egyptian magician (Dio Cass. 71.8.4); Valerian’s on another Egyptian magician in persecuting Christians (Euseb. *H.E.* 7.10.4–6). (Emperors and rulers often feared astrologers, however; Tac. *Ann.* 14.20; Suet. *Nero* 36; see Keener, *Matthew*, 100–101.) Although it is more scandalous in the modern world, we may compare the alleged dependence of a U.S. president’s wife on an astrologer about a quarter century ago.

320. On divination, see comment in excursus at Acts 2:17–18; also at Acts 16:6–7.

321. See comment in excursus at Acts 2:17–18.

322. A magician is attached to a senator’s household in *Acts Pet.* 8 (Talbert, *Acts*, 117).

323. E.g., Diod. Sic. 1.81.6; 2.31.8; Juv. *Sat.* 6.553–64; Aul. Gel. 1.9.6; 14.1; Philo *Dreams* 1.53; *Sib. Or.* 3.227; *Pesiq. Rab.* 14:8. For further comment on magi, see excursus at Acts 8:9–11. Magic could also be associated with astrology (e.g., *y. Roš Haš.* 3:8, §§1–2).

324. Beck, “Astrology.”

325. Others also make the comparison, e.g., Wikenhauser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 150; Lampe, “Wolves,” 259.

326. E.g., Deut 13:1–5; 1Q29 1 (reconstructed with the help of 4Q376, in *DSSNT* 178–79). On false prophets, see also comments on magicians at Acts 8:9.

327. The Greek and Roman world also associated the best magic with the East (Klauck, *Context*, 213); for “Egyptomania” analogous “to the Egyptian romanticism spread by Freemasonry in the eighteenth century,” see Klauck, *Context*, 129. On exotic views of distant lands, see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:68, 74n207, 109, 137, 208, 337, 433, 517, 584.

328. Even apart from the likelihood of Sergius Paulus having multiple polytheistic allegiances (Israel’s God being only one interest), the pagan decorations in the likely governor’s palace (Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 357) reflect a long period of official use by various governors, not Sergius Paulus’s personal tastes. Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 346, even thinks him a God-fearer.

“summoned” (προσκαλέω, see BDAG) the apostles does not suggest harshness (given the motives mentioned for the invitation) but might imply that his attendants ushered them into his presence.³²⁹

V. SERGIUS PAULUS (13:7)

We do not know of a Sergius Paulus who governed Cyprus at this time, but this omission is not surprising; we know the names of only forty-six, or about one-sixth, of Cyprus's proconsuls between 22 B.C.E. and the close of the Severan period.³³⁰ That leaves only about one chance in six of his name being preserved as governor, which, as we would expect, it is not. Nevertheless, we can speak firmly of the aristocratic family of Sergii Paulli, of which he was a member.³³¹ Scholars have cited three inscriptions in this connection, though only the last of these dates to the right period. A later proconsul Paulus (*IGRR* 3.930) probably dates to the period of Hadrian (ca. 126 C.E.);³³² given that he belonged to a different generation, he can at most attest to the continuing influence of this family in Cyprus. Another inscription from Cyprus may speak of a Quintus Sergius there (*IGRR* 3.935 = *SEG* 20.302.9–11); this might suggest the influence of the family there in this general period. It is probably, however, not the same person; the inscription may date to Gaius Caligula's rather than Claudius's reign,³³³ may not be correctly restored, and may not refer to the governor.³³⁴

The third inscription (*CIL* 6.31545.3 = *ILS* 2.5926) may be more relevant; it refers to a Lucius Sergius Paullus, a Claudian senator, perhaps at an earlier stage of this proconsul's senatorial career.³³⁵ That the name is “extremely rare” counts in favor of identifying the third inscription's Sergius Paullus with Luke's (in view of the fairly narrow senatorial pool), especially given a later L. Sergius Paulus (noted below).³³⁶ He is “the only senator attested from this generation of the family” and hence, classicist Stephen Mitchell concludes, surely the one whom Paul met in Cyprus.³³⁷ Classical scholars are more open to the identification with Luke's Sergius Paulus than biblical scholars tend to be.³³⁸ This inscription probably dates between 41 and 47; Paul was in Cyprus sometime between 45 and 50. A praetor could be as young as thirty; consuls

329. See Treves and Lintott, “*Viatores*.” That the verb appears so soon after its use in 13:2 might imply only that it was fresh in Luke's mind, but someone might suggest that it could imply divine providence behind this summons (Luke employs the verb thirteen times, but nowhere else in Acts 7–15).

330. Horsley, *Documents*, 1:45, §10. For this period in particular, the evidence is patchy; see Riesner, *Early Period*, 143. For other information on the governor of Cyprus, cf. Kapera, “Administration.”

331. Cf. the caution of Hemer, *Acts in History*, 109; Marshall, *Acts*, 219; esp. Van Elderen, “Archaeological Observations,” 151–56.

332. Nobbs, “Cyprus,” 283; Riesner, *Early Period*, 138 (noting a revision of the earlier dating of 50–53 C.E.).

333. Nobbs, “Cyprus,” 283–84 (comparing also Pliny E. *N.H.* 1.2).

334. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7. Campbell, “Attestation” (cf. idem, “Anchor”), suggests a Quintus Sergius Paul(us) from the time of Tiberius and accordingly rearranges Pauline chronology, but this view depends on his textual reconstruction and (though claiming only to contradict the chronology in Acts) faces greater obstacles from Gal 1–2. If the Pisidian family of Sergii Paulli had long-term connections with Cyprus, even the reading “Sergius” would not specify which one.

335. Nobbs, “Cyprus,” 284–87; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 255–56; idem, *Commentary*, 264; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 501–2. Witherington, *Acts*, 80n265, notes that he could have gone to Cyprus after his curatorship or could have taken an office abroad while retaining that office. On the normal career path for Roman aristocrats, see, e.g., Levick, “Careers,” 291; Brennan, “*Cursus honorum*”; Gizewski, “*Cursus honorum*,” 1021; Eck, “*Cursus Honorum Inscriptions*” (esp. comments on imperial times).

336. Riesner, *Early Period*, 140; Schnabel, *Mission*, 1084; for further arguments for identification, see *ibid.*, 1084–86.

337. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7.

338. Nobbs, “Cyprus,” 285, citing Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 112; Mitchell, “Population and Land,” 1073; see also idem, “Antioch (OCD)”;

were generally forty-two and over.³³⁹ Acts 13 and the inscription both fit together well with the way senatorial careers usually proceeded in this era, and could indicate the same individual.³⁴⁰ Given the rareness of the name and the normal pattern of a senatorial career, Mitchell is also convinced that this would be the same Sergius Paullus who became *consul suffectus* in 70 C.E. (*CIL* 6.253).³⁴¹ If so, he was the first “senator from the eastern provinces to reach the consulship.”³⁴²

If L. Sergius Paulus of Pisidian Antioch was his son,³⁴³ perhaps Paul left for Pisidian Antioch after Cyprus because of a referral through the governor’s family connections there;³⁴⁴ certainly the Sergii Paulli, like the Caristanii, though Italian by descent, “were native to Pisidian Antioch.”³⁴⁵ The size and remoteness of Pisidian Antioch reduces the probability that the connection with Paul’s following journey is mere coincidence. This connection might help explain some Gentiles welcoming them (Acts 13:44, 48), though the local Jewish community’s long-term ties with aristocrats (13:50) would count more strongly. Some scholars even argue for attestation of Sergius Paulus as proconsul of Cyprus in Pliny E. *N.H.* 18, in the table of contents, against the earlier text-critical evaluation of Kirsopp Lake.³⁴⁶

Luke provides the governor with the correct title; Cyprus was a senatorial province in this period, with proconsuls residing in Paphos.³⁴⁷ Luke emphasizes Sergius Paulus’s intelligence for at least two reasons. First, Luke’s presentation of people with higher status receiving the message includes intellectuals (Acts 17:34; 18:24). Second, Luke cites Sergius Paulus’s intellectual acumen as helping to explain why he responds so quickly to the gospel (even signs did not always persuade others).³⁴⁸ When the apostles entered, both the governor’s seating and his garb would immediately identify him. Like priests, magistrates typically wore a distinctive garb, probably including purple on their toga.³⁴⁹

VI. THE GOVERNOR’S RESIDENCE (13:7)

To what sort of building would the missionaries have been summoned? In 1966 archaeologists discovered what is usually thought to be the governor’s palace. The largest ancient home discovered on Cyprus and one of the largest known from the Mediterranean world, its east-west length was more than 360 feet, and its north-south width more than 250. Both its separate areas for private living and public activity and a Latin inscription found there reinforce the likelihood that this was the governor’s residence.³⁵⁰ The surrounding neighborhood was also a wealthy one.³⁵¹ The north wing probably

339. Nobbs, “Cyprus,” 286.

340. *Ibid.*, 287.

341. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6; cf. also Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 112.

342. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:152. In 48 C.E., Claudius had to defend senators from the provinces (*CIL* 13.1668; *ILS* 212; Tac. *Ann.* 11.23–24; in Sherck, *Empire*, §55, pp. 97–98).

343. See a full survey of evidence already available in Ramsay, *Discovery*, 150–62 (including other probable members of the prominent family into the second century).

344. Nobbs, “Cyprus,” 287; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6.

345. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7. On the Caristanii, see also Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 111–13.

346. Riesner, *Early Period*, 141–42, citing also possibly Pliny E. *N.H.* 2 (Pliny addresses Cyprus in 2.210; 18.68).

347. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 108 (citing *IGRR* 3.933, for 29 C.E.; 3.971, for 52 C.E.; and 3.978, for the Claudian period); Gasque, “Acts and History,” 55. For the difference between such provinces, cf. Strabo 17.3.25; Dio Cass. 53.12–15. For a proconsul’s responsibilities, see Jones, *Empire*, 180–83 (reproducing at length *Dig.* 1.16.4–13).

348. Some teachers opined that smarter students raised in wiser homes learned with less need for persuasion and argument (*Mus. Ruf.* 1, pp. 32.34–34.2). Like Josephus (e.g., *Ant.* 18.88–126), Luke is happy to report “good” Roman officials at times.

349. See Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 97–98, 152.

350. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 354, 356 (noting that Latin was used in the East only for official business).

351. See the map in *ibid.*, 355.

contained servants' quarters and laundry facilities. The south wing housed a bath complex, dressing room, and toilet facilities large enough for multiple simultaneous users.³⁵²

Although we cannot be certain in what room Paul and Barnabas would have met Sergius Paulus, we might venture a guess as to which of the rooms excavated in this palace is likelier than others. Passing beyond the bath area, Fant and Reddish note, "on the left is a large double room consisting of a rectangular hall and a horseshoe-shaped apse that is slightly elevated. Two steps lead up to it. The Roman governor likely held audiences in this room, seated within the elevated apse." The rectangular room had mosaics on the floor, and the wall panel that survives depicts Achilles's infancy. Paul must have met Sergius Paulus in such a hall.³⁵³

VII. OPPOSITION FROM "ELYMAS" (13:8)

The origin of Luke's basis for translating "Elymas" as "magician," if that is what he is doing, is unclear, though Arabic (*alim*, "wise man," perhaps "magician") and Hebrew (*hōlēm*, "dream interpreter") cognates have been proposed.³⁵⁴ If "El" means "God," it might connect with "Jesus" (as in "Bar-Jesus") for Luke's audience on a theological level, but this is an extreme stretch. Even if Luke were from Syrian Antioch (a tradition I do not consider very likely), he, as an urbanite, may have known little Aramaic;³⁵⁵ most of his target audience would know even less. The closest LXX term would seem to be "Elamite" (Tob 2:10; Jdt 1:6; 1 Macc 6:1; Dan 8:2); an association with Persia could then provide the connection with μάγος here,³⁵⁶ but this also seems far-fetched. Probably by "translated" Luke simply intends "understood to mean" in a nontechnical manner (cf. Acts 4:36).³⁵⁷

Elymas "opposed" or "resisted" (ἀνθίστατο, perhaps chosen partly for its phonetic similarity to ἀνθύπατος, "proconsul")³⁵⁸ Paul and Barnabas, but Jesus had promised that their enemies could not oppose them (Luke 21:15), and Stephen had demonstrated this victory (Acts 6:10).³⁵⁹ The reader attentive to Luke's use of this term will therefore expect Elymas to be silenced quickly (13:11).

By seeking to turn one from the faith, Elymas was the sort of person through whom stumbling blocks would come (Luke 17:1–2), and he was emulating Satan's role (cf. 22:31–32; Acts 13:10). That he sought to "turn" the proconsul from the faith may sound as if the governor had already believed but in context suggests rather that he was seeking to turn him from believing the message (Acts 13:12).³⁶⁰ (For "the faith"

352. Ibid., 357.

353. Ibid. In some respects the excavated hall could have been typical for such elite venues. Homeric scenes on walls were common (Petron. *Sat.* 29). For wall paintings, often with mythological scenes, see Kaufmann-Heinimann, "Religion," 189–91; floor mosaics became increasingly popular in the later empire (191). For depictions and descriptions of Achilles's childhood in Roman sources from the early empire, see Cameron, "Achilles."

354. See the proposals in, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 401; favoring the Semitic form of "magician," Kisau, "Acts," 1323. But Fitzmyer, a specialist in Semitic languages, while noting the Arabic possibility, points out that the "relationship is still unexplained" (*Acts*, 502). Had Elymas been struck mute instead of blind, like Zechariah in Luke 1:20–22, we might have thought of a Hebrew pun on מָלֵךְ; but etiological explanations work better for old legends and midrashic fables.

355. Cf. Millar, *Empire and Neighbours*, 197.

356. In this case, "Elymas" would translate "magician" in Acts 13:8 rather than "Bar-Jesus" in 13:6, though "translate" must in any case be taken as an interpretation rather than a direct translation.

357. Johnson, *Acts*, 223.

358. Three of Luke's five uses of ἀνθύπατος occur in this passage, and this is one of only three uses of ἀνθίστημι in Luke-Acts.

359. Cf. the use of ἀνθίστημι for magicians who opposed Moses in 2 Tim 3:8 and for opponents of the gospel in 2 Tim 4:15.

360. Luke associates this opposition with spiritual causes (Acts 13:6, 10); spiritual conflicts between worldviews are also expected in some settings today. E.g., in some traditional cultures today, diviners tend to

as the Christian message, see 6:7; 14:22; 16:5; the context here refers to the message the governor was seeking to hear, 13:7.)

Elymas undoubtedly expected some sort of response, since the usual form of confrontation included challenging another's honor, followed by an attempt at riposte, responding to the challenge. The winner would be decided by the hearers,³⁶¹ but Elymas must have been confident that, having the governor's ear already, he would succeed.

c. *Paul's Power Encounter (13:9–12)*

The conflict proves to be not merely an academic competition between differing religious perspectives but a confrontation between spiritual powers: because Paul is "filled with the Holy Spirit" (13:9), he is able to oppose a "son of the devil" (13:10). It is at this crucial juncture, vying for a Roman governor's faith, that Paul begins going by his Roman name. If Luke has less information for (or less interest in) Paul's Cypriot and Phrygian ministries than for much of his later ministry, this is nevertheless one incident too dramatic, and apparently too seminal for Paul's future ministry, for him to omit.

Although Paul was probably the stronger intellectually or better educated than Barnabas,³⁶² that he acts here instead of Barnabas is attributed only to the activity of the Spirit³⁶³ and may be related to his distinctive calling to reach Gentiles as well as Jews. The Spirit has sent Paul and Barnabas on this mission (13:2, 4); now the Spirit empowers Paul to confront the opposition.³⁶⁴ The next mention of being filled with the Spirit describes their converts in another location (13:52); the ministry of the Spirit multiplied itself. That Paul "looked intently" (ἀτενίσας) at Elymas reflects a favorite Lukan expression (twelve of fourteen NT uses), on two other occasions conjoined with miracle working (3:4; 14:9).³⁶⁵

I. SAUL CALLED PAUL (13:9)

Emphasizing the connection with the Jerusalem church, Luke has been speaking of "Barnabas and Saul," with Barnabas as the senior partner (11:30; 12:25; 13:2). Now that the Gentile-welcoming Diaspora mission is under way, Paul becomes the leading figure (emphasized most obviously in 13:13: "Paul and his colleagues," lit. "those around Paul").³⁶⁶ Just as the disciples were first called "Christians" during Saul's

divine against Christians (see Prince, "Yoruba Psychiatry," 94), and spirit practitioners may not want Christians around (Turner, *Experiencing Ritual*, 155).

361. On this challenge-riposte schema, see, e.g., deSilva, *Honor*, 29–31 (noting its frequency in the Gospels); Malina, *Windows*, 8–10.

362. See Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 219.

363. The present text is not an exorcism, but God's Spirit could be associated with exorcisms (Mark 3:29–30; Matt 12:28). Klutz, *Exorcism Stories*, 196–97, notes the spirit possession of shamans in some cultures, playing a role in traditional Sri Lankan exorcisms (although first-century Jews might well have viewed this as Satan casting out Satan).

364. This is probably an example of "subsequent filling" (as at Acts 4:8). Though πλησθεῖς, "having been filled," is an aorist passive participle, it need not refer to an event as antecedent as Pentecost was; if it refers to chronology at all, it simply demands action antecedent to that of the main verb (cf. the discussion in Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, 174–75, §339).

365. Haenchen, *Acts*, 400, rightly dismisses the relevance for this phrase of some rabbis disintegrating the impious by gazing at them (cf. Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 2:713). Those rabbinic passages are more relevant for illustrating sudden judgments (see comment on Acts 5:5).

366. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 29, on 13:16 (Martin, *Acts*, 163) emphasizes Barnabas's humility in henceforth yielding to Saul, as John did with Peter, because they looked "to the common advantage." Luke mentions Barnabas first in Acts 13:1, John Chrysostom says, because Paul has not yet performed a sign (*Hom. Acts* 27, on Acts 13:1; contrast Acts 13:42–43).

ministry in Antioch (11:26), so now Luke begins to call Saul by his better-known name, “Paul,” as he ministers among Gentiles (13:9).

(1) *The Non-Roman Name “Saul” (13:9)*

At this point Luke clarifies that his protagonist Saul is also called “Paul,” a Roman name. This is an alternative name (as signified by ὁ καί), not a new one. Double names were common, sometimes with the formula “So-and-so, who is also ἢ or ὁ καί” (e.g., *CJ* 1:24, §30; 2:111, §879; or the equivalent Latin *qui et*, e.g., *ILS* 2839);³⁶⁷ the formula was not confined to Roman citizens (e.g., Peter in Acts 10:18, 32).³⁶⁸ Evidence from Doura reveals that Greek-speaking Jews there often retained Aramaic as well as Greek names.³⁶⁹ (Similarly, Greek pride could lead to dissatisfaction with Hellenists taking Latin names; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.5.) Even citizens could add an unofficial *signum* or *supernomen* to their three official Roman names.³⁷⁰ Scholars usually agree that “Saul” is the *signum*.³⁷¹

Paul had apparently worked hard to affirm his identity as a “Hebrew” in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 9:1–2; 2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5) despite his Diaspora ancestry (see comment on Acts 6:9);³⁷² in the Diaspora mission among Romans, however, he found useful his Roman name (Acts 13:9) and eventually also his citizenship (16:37). “Saul” was not a name that would have served Paul well in his mission among Gentiles, the vast majority of whom neither knew nor cared about his ancestral Benjaminite king. In Greek, σαῦλος meant “conceited” or “effeminate,” the cognate verb suggesting walking in an effeminate or arrogant manner.³⁷³ (For further discussion of the name “Saul,” see comment on Acts 7:58.)

(2) *The Roman Name “Paul” (13:9)*

Luke will later explicitly reveal Paul to be a Roman citizen in 16:37; 22:25–28, but readers might have guessed as much from his Roman name (see fuller comment on Acts 16:37).³⁷⁴ Roman citizens had three names (the *tria nomina*). The nomen was the clan name, inherited on birth (or adoption into a Roman household’s citizenship; see comment on Acts 22:28).³⁷⁵ The early republic used a praenomen to distinguish clan members; with some thirty available praenomens, it originally fulfilled this purpose most effectively. By the late republic, however, only about half of these remained in use, and so emphasis shifted from the praenomen to the cognomen as the distinctive “first” name.³⁷⁶ The cognomen began as a nickname,³⁷⁷ a distinctive epithet that was not always positive.³⁷⁸ But by the early imperial period it came into widespread and more positive use and became the primary identifying name of an individual.³⁷⁹

367. See Riesner, *Early Period*, 143–44, esp. for the Latin reference; Matthews, “Names, Greek,” 1023.

368. Though in these cases and in the nearer 13:1 the formula differs (“who is called”).

369. Jeffers, *World*, 205. In the Diaspora, Jews made less use of alternative, ethnic-specific names than Egyptians did (Williams, “Alternative Names”).

370. Rapske, *Custody*, 85; cf. Rix, “Supernomen.” Cf. the frequent Greek use of a fourth name, an agnomen, as a cognomen (Judge, *First Christians*, 563); Greek cognomens are frequent in largely Greek areas like Thessalonica and Ephesus (564).

371. E.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 399n1; Marshall, *Acts*, 220; Rapske, “Citizenship,” 216.

372. If there were any women slaves in his ancestry, which is likely, some Jews could have even questioned the purity of his blood line; cf. *t. Hor.* 2:11; Cohen, *Law*, 147 (citing *m. Yebam.* 6:5).

373. LSJ, twenty-sixth edition. Leary, “Improper Name” (followed by Witherington, *Acts*, 402), suggests that hearers in Greek would associate σαῦλος with the seductive gait of prostitutes.

374. E.g., Goppelt, *Times*, 71; Judge, *First Christians*, 562.

375. Claudius forbade the use of Roman clan names by non-Romans (Suet. *Claud.* 25.3).

376. Solin, “Names, Roman,” 1025; Jeffers, *World*, 203; cf. Riesner, *Early Period*, 146. “Gaius,” “Lucius,” “Marcus,” and “Titus,” each of which appears in the NT, were the most common praenomens (Stambaugh, *City*, 94).

377. Plut. *Coriol.* 11.2–4; Cic. 1.2.

378. Stambaugh, *City*, 94, gives examples: “Scipio (‘Staff’), Cicero (‘Chickpea’), Calvus (‘Bald’), Naso (‘Nose’).”

379. Solin, “Names, Roman,” 1026; Jeffers, *World*, 202–3. For the development of all three names through Roman history, see most fully Salway, “Onomastic Practice.”

Fathers often gave sons their own cognomens,³⁸⁰ as earlier in the republic many sons bore their fathers' praenomens (e.g., six of the eight Roman names in Cic. *Fam.* 8.8.5); a daughter might share her mother's name (e.g., Gratia in Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 4.6.2).³⁸¹ Thus cognomens were often inherited together with the family name (the nomen).³⁸² Not only among Romans but among other peoples, sons could be named for ancestors,³⁸³ and a Benjaminite (which Paul was though Luke omits to mention it; Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5) might well be named for the ancestral king Saul.³⁸⁴ But Saul is his signum, not his cognomen (see comments above).

New citizens in the eastern Mediterranean took Roman praenomens and nomens, but they went by their distinctive third name and also gave their sons distinctive third names.³⁸⁵ Freed slaves of a citizen (as Paul's ancestors may have been; see comment on Acts 6:9; 22:28) generally retained the name they had gone by as their cognomen but took their patron's (their former master's) praenomen and nomen.³⁸⁶ Some Greeks, however, would use Latin cognomens if citizenship had been passed on for several generations,³⁸⁷ and non-Greeks often preferred a Latin name with a sound or meaning like that of their original name.³⁸⁸ Among Jews in Rome, Latin was far more common in daughters' names than in sons', for whom traditional Greek names were more common.³⁸⁹ When male Roman Jews had two names, the first normally identified the *gens* (Roman tribe), and the second was most often a Roman cognomen.³⁹⁰

"Paul" ("Paulus") was uncommon among Romans, but "it was extremely rare among non-Romans, above all in the Greek East," and even rarer among Jews.³⁹¹ It is highly unlikely that Paul would have received this name in addition to his traditional Jewish birth name if he were not a Roman citizen.

(3) Why the Name "Paul"? (13:9)

Most scholars agree that "Paul" was the apostle's cognomen;³⁹² this would explain why he is called this almost exclusively (apart from Luke's "Saul," exclusively) in

380. Jeffers, *World*, 203.

381. A daughter could also bear a feminine form of her father's name (cf. the Greek-speaking Jewish family in Rome, *CIJ* 1:121–22, §169).

382. Stambaugh, *City*, 94.

383. E.g., a grandparent, Isaeus *Pyrr.* 30; *y. Šabb.* 2:7, §3; a parent in Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 4.6.2; Joseph in Luke 3:24. Alternating names between generations was common (Finegan, *Apostles*, 63). Palestinian Jews also often named children for parents or grandparents (Ilan, *Women*, 53; cf. Mattathias in Luke 3:25–26).

384. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 183, rightly notes that Acts' attestation of his Hebrew name and Paul's of his tribe inadvertently and independently support the likelihood of the other. Although Paul may have rhetorical reasons for mentioning his tribe (cf. Cohen, "Benjaminite"), he would not have invented it (Judah or esp. Levi would have been more expedient). Cf. also Saulide names among Benjaminites (Esth 2:5; cf. comment on Acts 7:58).

385. Jeffers, *World*, 204. Cf., e.g., the Greek and other additional names of "M. Aurelius Diodorus Koriaskos, also called Asbolos," whose third Roman name was his original Greek name (Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 213); cf. also linguistic combinations such as "Faustinos" (Latin name in Greek) "son of Isaac" (*CIJ* 1:434, §600).

386. Jeffers, *World*, 204. Free Romans had Roman names and were enrolled in tribes (Quint. *Decl.* 311.5).

387. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 214, noting that Paul's Latin cognomen might thus suggest that his citizenship went back at least as far as his father or grandfather (Acts 22:28).

388. Jeffers, *World*, 205.

389. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 111–12.

390. *Ibid.*, 113.

391. Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 8, noting that the closest equivalent to "Paul" in Jewish Palestine is "Paulinus," one to three centuries after Paul (8–9). We know of two other Jews named Paul, both from Asia Minor (one in Sardis, one in Aphrodisias; Bauckham, "Latin Names," 207).

392. E.g., Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 214; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:25; Wallace and Williams, *Acts*, 26; Nobbs, "Cyprus," 288; Rapske, "Citizenship," 216; contrast Jewett, *Romans*, 99, who thinks it Paul's *signum*. It was not likely derived from a family patron (*pace* Riesner, *Early Period*, 146), since "Paulus" was not common among Roman aristocrats of this period (Jeffers, *World*, 205). Scholars have also debated which of the three names

first-century Christian texts. (Some, though, argue that it is Paul's family name.)³⁹³ Provincials who became citizens used cognomens as their personal names; only official documents would need the citizen's full "three names" and related information such as father's praenomen and tribe.³⁹⁴ Further, "Paul" appears in Roman names most commonly as a cognomen (e.g., Lucius Aemilius Paulus), though occasionally it also appears as a praenomen.³⁹⁵ We can only guess concerning Paul's other two names. If his ancestors acquired citizenship through Pompey, Julius Caesar, or Marc Antony, in a period when many Jewish slaves were being freed, his name might be Gnaeus Pompeius Paulus, Gaius Julius Paulus, or Marcus Antonius Paulus.³⁹⁶

At least some other Jewish people of status held the name "Paul" (thus a later Paul from Alexandria leading a deputation to the emperor).³⁹⁷ Of all the Latin names in Paul's epistles, his own was among those that sounded most respectable to Romans.³⁹⁸ Roman cognomens were originally nicknames (e.g., "Rufus" for "Red"), and had Paul's been a nickname (though this is unlikely in this period), he could have received the name "Paulus" ("Small") because he was a small baby.³⁹⁹ As Roman citizens in the East, Paul's family may have known little Latin,⁴⁰⁰ but they could easily learn Latin equivalents for names. Thus, for example, Syrians named for Baal frequently adopted the Roman name "Saturninus" (an equivalent deity) on receiving citizenship.⁴⁰¹ Sadiq ("Righteous") became Justus or Justissima; Gad ("Fortune") became the Greek Eutyches; Isaac ("Laughter") became Gelasios or Hilarus.⁴⁰² "Small" fits the later description of Paul in the second-century *Acts of Paul*,⁴⁰³ but this description may have been partially inferred from his name.

Sometimes assonance mattered more than sense, so that "Esther" (ΛXX Ἑσθηρ), for example, became the Greek Ἀσθήρ.⁴⁰⁴ Some scholars argue that Paul's parents gave him the name "Paulus" (Greek Παῦλος) because it sounded similar to the Aramaic

some other names from antiquity are, e.g., Strabo (see Pothecaray, "Strabo," concluding that "Strabo" was his given, personal name from his parents).

393. Rapske, *Custody*, 86, by comparison with Sergius Paulus; "Paulus" might be the governor's cognomen as well (though cf. comment on the Sergii Paulli).

394. See Hemer, "Name of Paul."

395. Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 70; Riesner, *Early Period*, 145.

396. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 128n77. Given the probabilities, Wallace and Williams, *Acts*, 26, suggest "Gaius Julius Paul[1]us."

397. Deissmann, *Studies*, 316.

398. Judge, *Rank*, 36n20.

399. Aug. *On the Spirit and the Letter* 7.12 (Martin, *Acts*, 160) suggests that Paul chose this name to emphasize "his own smallness as the least of the apostles." This is not very plausible, since none of the *tria nomina* used by a citizen was primarily a nickname in this period. But one could receive a nonfamily name through the circumstances of birth—e.g., "Secundus" as the second child. Smallness, if carried into adulthood, was considered not physically helpful athletically but could be overcome (Philost. *Hrk.* 14.4; 15.1–3). Jewish people could name children according to the circumstances of their birth (Cambridge Geniza Text, col. 3, lines 13–16, with three different wordplays); for paronomasia in OT names, see, e.g., Arnold, *Samuel*, 57. McDonough, "Small Change," suggests that the name shift exemplifies the shift from the arrogant persecutor Saul to "Paul," i.e., "small." Yet because Luke does not translate the sense as he does, e.g., with "Elymas" in the same passage, and because we cannot be certain that even his ideal audience was competent in Latin (though in Philippi many would have been), it seems unlikely that Luke makes any point of the Latin meaning. Luke's audience already knows Saul by his more familiar name, "Paul."

400. Even in Rome, more Jews spoke Greek regularly (Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 75–77), though they must have known some Latin. Nearly 50 percent of Jewish names in Rome are exclusively in Latin, with nearly 10 percent more being double names including Latin (ibid., 107). But see discussion at Acts 18:1–11.

401. Jeffers, *World*, 205. For patterns in the interchange of Greek and Semitic names, see Astour, "Names in Semitic World."

402. *CIJ* 1:lxvii.

403. *Acts Paul* 3.3 (*Paul Thec.* 3); see, e.g., in Ramsay, *Church in Empire*, 31–32.

404. *CIJ* 1:lxvii. See more fully Bauckham, "Latin Names," 204–14.

“Saul.”⁴⁰⁵ The Aramaic form does not really sound much like Παῦλος,⁴⁰⁶ but the Greek transliteration used in Acts is generally Σαῦλος (following LXX Σαούλ [as in Acts 13:21; 314 times in the LXX] only when reproducing a Semitic form, 9:4, 17; 22:7, 13; 26:14), which was probably how his Hellenist family and friends had reproduced it in Greek, a language they often spoke. If Paul’s cognomen is individual and not hereditary,⁴⁰⁷ it is possible that this correspondence of sound (in Greek) provided a consideration in selecting Paul’s Roman cognomen. It may be likelier, however, that his name “Saul” (in its common Lukan form) is conformed to “Paul” (in contrast to the LXX form of “Saul”).⁴⁰⁸

That Paul shares part of the same name as Sergius Paulus may be “sheer literary coincidence,”⁴⁰⁹ but there might be literary reasons Luke first introduces Paul’s name here.⁴¹⁰ We should not, of course, press the possibility very far; certainly Sergius Paulus does not become his patron in a technical sense,⁴¹¹ nor would Paul take the name the way a freed slave would from his householder.⁴¹² But the primary reason for Luke’s transition at this point is that Paul’s ministry to Gentiles begins here, inviting Paul as well as Luke to shift to emphasis on his Roman name.⁴¹³ The graphic coincidence of the names reinforces the point that Paul’s is an acceptable Roman name.⁴¹⁴

Name changes could occur to signal raised social status,⁴¹⁵ cultural reaffiliation,⁴¹⁶ or religious transformation,⁴¹⁷ and the OT showed God (or other superiors) renaming people at times when establishing or confirming a covenant with them (Gen 17:5; 32:28; 35:10).⁴¹⁸ Paul’s name is not of course changed at this point,⁴¹⁹ but the

405. Deissmann, *Paul*, 91.

406. Riesner, *Early Period*, 145.

407. Some were hereditary by this period, but mostly in the aristocracy (Solín, “Names, Roman,” 1025).

408. Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 9. Whether Paul’s name was already this way or Luke changed Σαούλ to Σαῦλος, it is close enough to remain a sound equivalent (Bauckham, “Latin Names,” 209–10).

409. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 502; Nobbs, “Cyprus,” 288–89. Origen *Comm. Rom.* on 1:1 (CER 1:70–78; in Bray, *Romans*, 2) notes that some think Paul took the name the way a conqueror might take the name of conquered territory (e.g., “Parthicus”), but Origen rejects this view himself. Certainly both the Sergii Pauli and the apostle Paul existed; neither name was *invented* to correspond to the other.

410. E.g., Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 9–10. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 100, sees it as a literary connection but denies its historicity, which is unnecessary; cf. Riesner, *Early Period*, 144. Romans did use plays on names (e.g., Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.53; Val. Max. 4.6.2–3).

411. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7, thinks that Paul adopts the name here to express gratitude to Sergius Paulus, the way Herod honored Agrippa by naming his son Agrippa. But Paul is not naming a son but going by a name himself, and if we should infer it as a patron-client relationship, Luke would surely have made more of it (thereby honoring Paul’s status as not only a citizen but the governor’s client). Most important, the renaming should occur after the governor believes—not simply when Paul confronts Elymas. Jerome *Vir. ill.* 5.4 (Martin, *Acts*, 160) suggests that Paul took the name to honor Sergius Paulus.

412. Nor could the governor have bestowed Roman citizenship (hence Paul taking the name of his patron in this manner; see comment on Acts 23:26); the governor would have had to appeal to the emperor on Paul’s behalf to provide this grant.

413. Most recognize the Gentile mission as reason for changing to this “public” name, e.g., Bruce, *Acts*¹, 257; Marshall, *Acts*, 220; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:25; Johnson, *Acts*, 223; Dollar, *Exploration*, 202–3.

414. It would be most significant, of course, if both shared the same family name (see Rapske, *Custody*, 86); they probably share only the cognomen.

415. Johnson, *Acts*, 223, notes Lucian *Cock* 14; *Tim.* 22 (though doubting this is at issue here).

416. Cf. an application for a name change from Egyptian to (higher-status) Greek (W.Chrest. 52, from 194 C.E.; *SPap* 2:312–15, §301).

417. Horsley, “Name Change.” Some later rabbis claimed that God changed the names of Abram and Sarai to free them from their planetary destiny (*Gen. Rab.* 44:10; *Pesiq. Rab.* 52:3). Pelagius *Comm. Rom.* on 1:1 (Bray, *Romans*, 5) compares Abraham, Sarah, and Cephas and attributes Saul’s “new name” to progress in virtue.

418. Conquerors (2 Kgs 23:34; 24:17; 2 Chr 36:4) and others (Gen 2:19–20; perhaps 3:20) exercised authority in this way, replacing the role of birth parents as the naming authority. It could be understood as redefining a person’s destiny (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 28:2; *b. Roš Haš.* 16b).

419. Origen *Comm. Rom.* on 1:1 (CER 1:70–78; Bray, *Romans*, 2) rightly affirms that, like many persons, Paul simply had multiple names.

changed usage (at least in the narrative) is meant to command our attention no less than in those cases. On the narrative level, *Luke* changes use of “Saul’s” name to “Paul,” hereafter always employing the latter.

That he introduces Paul’s Roman name here, during ministry to a Roman official, rather than at Paul’s conversion, signals that the Diaspora mission leading to Rome⁴²⁰—and hence Paul’s call—is the focus of his role in the book.⁴²¹ (It may also signal to any very uninformed first-time hearers that the Saul about whom Luke has been narrating the story is the otherwise famous Paul.)⁴²²

Possibly Luke implies that Paul himself usually used his Jewish name until this point (perhaps even as a prophet and teacher in Antioch, Acts 13:1, where the church was also reaching Gentiles, 11:20–21). If so, it might imply that Paul began using his Roman name reluctantly at first, just as even later he apparently appealed to his Roman citizenship only when absolutely necessary (16:37; 22:25–28). This reticence fits his epistles, where (lacking the above life-and-death reasons to appeal to it) he never mentions his Roman citizenship, though many hearers would infer it from his name. If “Saul,” named for Israel’s sole Benjaminite ruler (who later apostatized), was a popular name among Benjaminites (cf. Acts 13:21; Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5), it would not necessarily commend itself to non-Benjaminite Jews who were biblically literate. But it would at least be more conspicuously Jewish than “Paul.”

II. PAUL PRONOUNCES JUDGMENT (13:10–11)

Paul utters a judgment oracle in Acts 13:10–11; this was a common form of prophetic speech in the OT, but there it was usually introduced by a messenger formula, even in narratives (e.g., Exod 7:17; 2 Chr 12:5), whereas here it emphasizes the same point by noting Paul’s state of inspiration through an aorist passive participle: “filled with the Holy Spirit.” As Aune notes, the emphasis on the inspiration of prophetic speech, “though rare in the OT (cf. Balaam in Num. 23–24), is more frequent in early Judaism (probably through Hellenistic influence) and pervades Greco-Roman paganism and early Christianity.”⁴²³

(1) *The Rebuke (13:10)*

Paul’s rebuke (Acts 13:10) includes several wordplays with the context, appropriate for prophetic language (cf. Hebrew puns in Mic 1:10–15; Jer 1:11–12; Amos 8:1–2) in inspired history. Whereas Paul is “filled with the Spirit” (Acts 13:9), Elymas is “full of deception.”⁴²⁴ Elymas is not truly *bar Jesus*, “son of Jesus” (13:6), but “son of the devil.”⁴²⁵ As Elymas tried to “twist” (διαστρέψαι) the proconsul from the faith (13:8), here he “twists” the Lord’s ways (13:10).⁴²⁶ Luke elsewhere uses the term for a “twisted” generation disbelieving Jesus (Luke 9:41),⁴²⁷ the charge that Jesus was a

420. This being the first narrated incident of Paul’s ministry after the sending forth of 13:2–4.

421. With Stendahl, *Paul*, 11.

422. Perhaps some potential first-time hearers in Luke’s target audience mistrusted Paul and would respond negatively to the portrait of Paul the persecutor; in anticipation of this possibility, Luke might veil Paul’s identity by using his *signum*. But despite Luke’s apologetic for Paul, I think it likelier, on the whole, that Luke’s target audience respects Paul but must simply answer outsiders’ objections against him and his perspectives.

423. Aune, *Prophecy*, 269–70.

424. Also Johnson, *Acts*, 227. Texts regularly condemn δόλος (e.g., LXX Lev 19:16; Deut 27:24; 1 Macc 1:30; 7:10, 27, 30; 2 Macc 4:34; Wis 1:5; 4:11; 14:25, 30; *Let. Aris.* 246), including one who is πλήρης δόλου (Sir 1:30; 19:26; Jer 5:27), as here. Deception or leading astray could be linked with demons (e.g., *Test. Jud.* 23:1; cf. *1 En.* 65:6; *L.A.B.* 34:2–3; on the devil and deception, see Keener, *John*, 760–61; comment on Acts 5:3–4).

425. With, e.g., Witherington, *Acts*, 402. For Satan filling the heart, cf. Acts 5:3; implicitly, Luke 22:3.

426. With, e.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 227.

427. This phrase is from the Jesus tradition (Q material in Matt 17:17; cf. the echo in Phil 2:15), in turn echoing Deut 32:5. Acts 2:40 also echoes Deut 32:5 (see comment there).

misleader (23:2), and the warning of other misleaders to come in the church (Acts 20:30). The true prophet John prepared the Lord's "way" (Luke 1:76; 3:4; cf. 7:27; Acts 9:2), which included straightening the crooked (Luke 3:4–5); the false prophet Elymas, by contrast, was making the straight way crooked.⁴²⁸

In some later sources, the devil was Cain's literal father,⁴²⁹ but Paul means "child of the devil" in a figurative, not a genetic, manner; this magician follows the devil and imitates his activity.⁴³⁰ The devil deceives (Acts 5:3), seeks to counter God's true message (Luke 8:12), and seeks to keep people under his alternative dominion (Acts 26:18). (For further comment on Satan, see comment on Acts 5:3.) Paul's inspiration comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit (13:9), but Elymas's, from being full of deception and from Satan (cf. being "filled" with Satan to speak, 5:3; *Test. Job* 41:5/7).⁴³¹

(2) Judgment (13:11)

Ancient readers could have interpreted Paul's word of judgment as a magical curse,⁴³² but Luke's antimagical apologetic counters this perception; ancients defined magic partly on the basis of the source of power.⁴³³ Luke's biblically informed audience would more likely consider OT analogies,⁴³⁴ such as Elijah summoning fire from heaven (2 Kgs 1:10–12) or the withering of Jeroboam's hand (1 Kgs 13:4). Luke clearly employs a biblicism, "and now behold" (as also in Paul's speech in Acts 20:22, 25);⁴³⁵ this phrase, καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ, appears seventeen times in the LXX. Perhaps coincidentally, one of the stories in which it appears (1 Kgs 22:23; 2 Chr 18:22) refers to lying spirits in the mouths of false prophets.⁴³⁶

On the biblical idiom that the "hand of the Lord" is "against" one, see comment on Acts 11:21. (The Lord's hand being against Elymas may also contrast with the need for someone to lead Elymas by the "hand" later in the verse [likely implied in the verb there], though χεῖρ is a common term.) For judgment falling "on" one as a biblical idiom, see comment on Acts 8:24.

"Darkness" was a biblical judgment (Exod 10:21–22) that lent itself to symbolic evocations (cf. Luke 1:79; 11:35; Acts 26:18), but here it refers to total (presumably as opposed to light-sensitive) blindness. Being struck blind⁴³⁷ was a divine punishment in both biblical (Gen 19:11) and pagan tradition,⁴³⁸ though it is only one of several judgments that could be visited on mortals⁴³⁹ (cf. being struck mute in Luke 1:20, for a lesser offense). Perhaps the most relevant biblical parallel is 2 Kgs 6:18:

428. See Tannehill, *Acts*, 163. Unlike Acts 2:40, this text does not use σκολιός but employs διαστρέφω, which is paired with σκολιός in Phil 2:15; see discussion on the concept at Acts 2:40.

429. *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 4:1; 5:3; cf. Reim, "Joh. 8.44," citing *Tg. Neof.* on Gen 4:7; Dahl, "Mandraperen"; McNamara, *Judaism*, 223–24.

430. See Keener, *John*, 760–61.

431. Luke on occasion employs "filled" with negative as well as positive characteristics (e.g., Luke 6:11).

432. See, e.g., Walz, "Cursing," 168.

433. Garrett, *Demise*, 86.

434. On the efficacy of benedictory or imprecatory speech in the OT, see, e.g., McKeown, "Blessings," 83.

435. With Haenchen, *Acts*, 400.

436. "Hand" appears with the phrase in 1 Sam 24:20 but is clearly irrelevant.

437. Harnack's argument for a historical nucleus here, based on lack of equally dramatic punishment against the still viler Simon Magus (*Acts*, 153), is questionable (cf. Acts 5:5, 10; even if one agrees with his conclusion). Nor are the medical terms cited in Hobart, *Medical Language*, 44, strictly medical. Many who are blind can see light; inability to see the sun, therefore, might imply total blindness (cf. Isa 59:10; the expression for life in Ps 58:8; Eccl 7:11; 9:13; 11:7 does not appear relevant, nor is the idolatry in Deut 4:19 [contrast Jos. Ag. Ap. 2.192; 1 En. 80:1], despite Elymas's profession).

438. E.g., Val. Max. 1.1.17; 1.1.ext. 5; *Juv. Sat.* 13.93; also Heyob, *Isis*, 65. It might appear as a human punishment in Quint. *Decl.* 357 intro.

439. E.g., Ovid *Metam.* 3.513–18; Val. Max. 1.1.20; cf. Hierocles p. 48.22–49.9 from Stob. *Ecl.* 1.3.54 (in van der Horst, "Hierocles," 157–58); *y. Hag.* 2:1, §3.

the blindness there was temporary,⁴⁴⁰ as here, and it plays on the contrast between physical and spiritual sight (6:17–18, 20).⁴⁴¹

Elymas has been blinding others spiritually, and now he is blinded; Elymas has been making crooked the straight ways of God, and now he needs someone to lead him by the hand.⁴⁴² Paul recovered spiritual sight when struck blind; now Elymas, who also has opposed the faith, receives the same opportunity (see comment on Acts 9:8).⁴⁴³ This judgment miracle, in contrast to one associated with Peter, which it parallels (Acts 5:5, 11), ends more gently, just as Peter's prison liberation proves gentler to his captor (16:28 vs. 12:19).⁴⁴⁴

Elymas sought someone to lead him by the hand (cf. 9:8; 22:11, using the verb cognate); blind people would need someone (e.g., a παῖς, a boy or a servant,⁴⁴⁵ or some other guide⁴⁴⁶) to do this.⁴⁴⁷ Elymas had been what Luke already called a "blind guide of the blind" (Luke 6:39, fleshed out more fully in 6:41–42; Q material in Matt 15:14).⁴⁴⁸ Presumably, Elymas would at least be impressed with Paul's "magic" at this point. Much later tradition makes Elymas, like Simon Magus, a continuing problem, claiming that he stirred Cyprus's Jews to martyr Barnabas on his later return to evangelize (Acts 15:39).⁴⁴⁹ This is probably simple haggadic recycling of named characters; we cannot know what became of Elymas.

It is possible that Luke presents Paul as growing in faith for miracles. This is not clear, since not enough has been reported about Paul's ministry so far to argue from silence that they have been sparse. But the disciples in the Gospel had to grow in faith (Luke 8:24–25; 9:40–41; 17:5), and even in Acts, Peter continues learning (Acts 10:28); Luke's portrait of their faith is not "flat," in literary terms. Many miracles are performed through Paul and his colleague soon after this in 14:3, 9–10, perhaps from the encouragement of his experience here; by 19:11–12 he seems to be acting on a much more intense level (though this might simply reflect greater popular interest), comparable to Peter's intense ministry in 5:15–16. What is most clear is that these signs help fulfill and vindicate the Gentile mission (15:12).

III. THE GOVERNOR'S FAITH (13:12)

Why does not Luke, who emphasizes believers of status, include more information about this prominent person's conversion? First, Luke's narrative follows Paul, with

440. Cf. also the temporary blindness, for the purpose of securing repentance, in *Let. Aris.* 316. This connects with healing the blind (Luke 18:42–43; Acts 9:12, 18; the Isaian summaries in Luke 4:18; 7:22).

441. For play on the two concepts, see also sources in Keener, *John*, 796. For metaphorical use of blindness, see, e.g., Cic. *Phil.* 12.2.3. See further comment on Acts 9:8.

442. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 705, noting the Jewish principle of like-for-like judgment (citing *Mek. Besh.* 7). For like-for-like judgment, see also *Jub.* 4:32; *m. 'Ab.* 2:6/7; *Sipre Deut.* 238.3.1; further discussion at Acts 3:2.

443. Cf. similarly Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 28 (Martin, *Acts*, 161); for the view that its purpose here is redemptive, see also Isidore of Pelusium in *Cat. Act.* 13.10 (Martin, *Acts*, 161). Some cite here Deut 28:28–29 (the judgment of groping due to blindness; Parsons, *Acts*, 189).

444. Some expected that God himself was more merciful than his servants (*Test. Ab.* 10:12–14 A). Ancients were not disturbed by reports of judgment miracles so long as the worker did not act for personal ends (Reimer, *Miracle*, 247).

445. E.g., Soph. *Oed. tyr.* 444; *Judg* 16:26.

446. E.g., Soph. *Antig.* 989–90; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 62.1 (figurative).

447. E.g., Soph. *Oed. Col.* 199–201; Philost. *Hrk.* 51.4; Rom 2:19; Quint. *Decl.* 297 intro; 297.8, 13; for the danger of blind guides, see, e.g., Matt 15:14; 23:16, 24; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 62.7; Lucian *Indictment* 1 (a play on both senses of "blind").

448. The image circulated in the Mediterranean before its use by Jesus; cf. Xen. *Mem.* 1.3.4 (ἡγεμόνα τυφλὸν), though this similar metaphor could arise by coincidence. See also Hesiod *Astron.* frg. 4; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 62.7.

449. Finegan, *Apostles*, 78, noting *Acts of Barnabas* (fifth or sixth century, i.e., about half a millennium after the events depicted here).

whom he later travels (16:10); had the narrative followed Barnabas's later mission (15:39), the focus would have surely been quite different, with more interest in and information about Cyprus. Second, this is not a "we" section; even aside from "we" material, Luke seems to lack as much detail for Paul's first mission (apart from the synagogue speech) as his next. Third, we cannot be certain that (and Luke may not know whether) the governor's faith produced a permanent transformation (cf. Luke 8:12–14); if he is the senator who became consul in 70 C.E. (see comment on Acts 13:7), he must have at least accommodated Roman religion in public. If Luke knew this, he probably would not feel compelled to abandon notice of the governor's initial faith. Even if the governor responded only temporarily, he illustrated Luke's point: people of status could respond to the gospel. But under such circumstances, Luke would probably not make him a central focus of a lengthy narrative.

Because we lack other evidence from this period of anyone of such status converting, some scholars suggest that "believes" means only that Sergius Paulus trusted Paul and Barnabas the way he had trusted Elymas, not that he was converted.⁴⁵⁰ This is not, however, the normal sense of "believed" in Acts (so far, Acts 2:44; 4:4, 32; 5:14; 9:42; 10:43; 11:17, 21), and we should not expect to find external attestation of a proconsul's faith when Acts is the only document from this period that would have reason to comment on it.⁴⁵¹ Further, such a view ignores this passage's brevity and Luke's frequent abbreviation of his material.⁴⁵² Given Luke's emphasis on persons of status, the spread of the message, and the Lord being with Paul, he is undoubtedly happy to report the team's success here whether or not he has secure information about the governor's perseverance in the faith.⁴⁵³

We cannot be certain that the historical Sergius Paulus did go on to become a permanent disciple (cf. Luke 8:12–15), as much as Paul and Barnabas would have wished to ensure that outcome.⁴⁵⁴ That Luke presents his initial faith as genuine, however, need not be questioned. The respect of a high official had propaganda value for apologetic historians.⁴⁵⁵ Some philosophers also advised gaining attention from the influential (Mus. Ruf. 11, p. 84.16–17). On the historical level, the faith of one who already was following a Jewish prophet (albeit a false one, from Luke's standpoint, Acts 13:6) is not implausible.

Nevertheless, since this is the highest-level Roman official whose conversion Luke reports, one might expect him to elaborate further. Whether on the historical level the faith did prove tenuous,⁴⁵⁶ or it was equivalent to that of a mere God-fearer for Judaism (or replaced his former trust in Elymas), or (quite plausibly) Luke simply lacked further information on the story, we cannot say. Luke is often brief where we expect more information (which is how he keeps to a single volume for Acts).

450. E.g., Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 113. Cf. Queen Olympias's persuasion when the magician's prophecy was fulfilled (Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.9). "Religious" affiliation entailed less moral transformation than philosophic reorientation (Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 45–46; Nock, *Conversion*, passim; for nuancing to allow for progress, see Stowers, "Resemble Philosophy?" 91). For moral responsibility to embrace the correct counsel, see the wordplays on counsel in 2 Chr 25:16–17.

451. For a harsher evaluation ("merely idle speculation"), see Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 504 (against Lake and Cadbury).

452. Munck, *Acts*, 119.

453. Cultural outsiders also appreciated accounts of outsiders' success before rulers (cf. Gnuse, "Prison," noting Gen 41; Hdt. bk. 3).

454. It was possible to "believe" temporarily yet fail to persevere (Luke 8:13; Acts 8:13).

455. E.g., Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.45–47; cf. Dan 4:37; *Let. Aris.* 35 and passim; 3 Macc 7:6–9, 18; cf. also the accounts in Donaldson, "Royal Sympathizers."

456. If one speculates his connection with prominent families in Pisidian Antioch (see comment on Acts 13:13–14), perhaps the reaction to the apostles there could have embarrassed his patronage, either into reversal or into silence. This, too, however, is purely speculation.

Historically, however, it is possible that Sergius Paulus's faith did not lead him to join the Christian movement or to abandon at least public practice of civic religion (cf. 2 Kgs 5:18–19)—not for the entire remainder of his life, in any case. Christians were not officially persecuted in Rome until 64, and if Sergius Paulus did not live there at the time, he may have escaped notice. But if the same Sergius Paulus was *consul suffectus* in 70 (as some classicists think), he cannot have followed Jesus and Israel's God in an exclusive way. Nevertheless, he probably supplied the recommendation to their next goal: Pisidian Antioch (see comment on Acts 13:14).⁴⁵⁷ Just as Paul and Barnabas started in Cyprus because Barnabas knew Cyprus, they could move to Pisidian Antioch on the basis of contacts.

Luke chooses his words carefully: Sergius Paulus is amazed at the “teaching” of the Lord because signs are inseparable from the teaching they confirm (14:3). This phrase also evokes Luke 4:32, where people were amazed at Jesus's teaching⁴⁵⁸ because it was expressed in authority against the demonic (4:32–36, with “authority” as an *inclusio*), as here. Most Gentiles (though especially Greeks) were pragmatic about faith; if one deity proved particularly effective, devotion to that deity seemed natural.⁴⁵⁹

If the building mentioned above (see comment on Acts 13:6) was genuinely his palace, the governor's faith would contrast starkly with the pagan surroundings in the room.⁴⁶⁰ Probably neither Luke nor anyone in his ideal audience knew this specific palace, but we might imagine the contrast in this or similar settings striking Paul, probably Luke's source for the information in this paragraph.

3. Ministry in Pisidian Antioch (13:13–52)

Acts 13:13–52 is a literary unity.⁴⁶¹ Early in his depictions of Paul's ministry, Luke presents a typical (somewhat paradigmatic) mission scene, providing salvation-historical justification for preaching also to the Gentiles and revealing the conflicts attending the mission.⁴⁶² Paul's message here connects biblical history to the present gospel, just as Luke does in the broader schema of his two-volume work.

The governor of Galatia when Paul was planting churches there was Annus Afrinus (49–54 C.E.), portrayed on Galatian coins of the time.⁴⁶³ In contrast to Paul's ministry in Cyprus, however, probably neither Paul's mission nor his conflicts brought him into contact with the governor; although he was responsible for the affairs of the province, governors entrusted most questions to the judges they appointed over local courts.⁴⁶⁴

457. It is possible that the turn of events in Pisidian Antioch, embarrassing any of Paul's benefactors there, soured the governor's relatives, and eventually the governor himself, to the faith. This can at most be a plausible speculation, however, since Acts is our only source.

458. The same term for “amazed” appears in Luke 2:48; 4:32; 9:43; but it appears together with “teaching” only in Luke 4:32 and here in Luke-Acts (borrowed from Mark 1:22; 11:18). Philosophers seeking to categorize “amazement” could list it as a form of fear (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.10c, pp. 60–61.24–30, esp. ἔκπληξις in line 26).

459. Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 29.

460. The panels in the suggested meeting hall included a scene of Achilles; the probable living area included many statues, and “a mosaic of Poseidon” appeared in a room in the palace's southwest corner (Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 357).

461. See O'Toole, “Acts 13, 13–52,” for discussion of the structure.

462. This turning to welcome Gentiles does not exclude all Jews, nor does it imply a permanent rejection of the Jewish people or the heritage that Luke has so labored to cultivate (see comment on Acts 13:46–47).

463. Hansen, “Galatia,” 388.

464. *Ibid.*

a. *Journey and Setting (13:13–15)*

After a stint in Barnabas's country, a trip to Paul's Cilicia would have made sense, unless (as is possible) he had made himself unwelcome there—or at least in some synagogues there—during the earlier years of 9:30 (cf. 11:25; but cf. later 15:41). Rome administered Cyprus as part of its province of Cilicia after 67 B.C.E.,⁴⁶⁵ and so even political ties existed between Cyprus and Cilicia. But whereas Salamis (13:5), where the missionaries began in Cyprus, was closer to Tarsus, Paphos, on the other side of Cyprus (13:6), would be closer to Pamphylia.

Further, some scholars suggest that Sergius Paullus (the Latin spelling) may have provided a letter of recommendation for people he knew in Pisidian Antioch.⁴⁶⁶ He probably had relatives there, or at least connections that invited relatives to settle there; it is possible that a later inscription referring to L. Sergius Paullus in Pisidian Antioch refers to his son.⁴⁶⁷ By the Flavian period and probably earlier, the Sergii Paulli owned significant estates in this region,⁴⁶⁸ and it is logical that they were relatives of the proconsul of Cyprus, whose name is not a common one. That this family comes from the same region as the missionaries' next place of ministry is probably more than coincidence; granted, the move from Cyprus to the southern coast of Asia Minor is not unexpected, but such a move by itself in no way entailed a trip to the interior. Pamphylia and Lycia were well-populated areas on the coast. Paul and Barnabas had previously begun where they already had some connections (13:4 with 4:36) and historically probably followed the same procedure here. This might explain some Gentiles welcoming the group (13:44, 48), though the local Jewish community's long-term ties with aristocrats (13:50) would count more strongly. But Luke does not recount these connections.

I. FROM THE COAST TO PERGA (13:13)

Although Antioch was the goal, Luke must first at least summarize the missionaries' travel en route to Antioch. In contrast to most of Luke's probable target audience, Pamphylians, Pisidians, and Phrygians might be familiar with some of the geography behind Luke's descriptions.

(1) *Journey through Pamphylia (13:13)*

A ship from Paphos would have arrived first in the Pamphylian seaport Attalia (more explicit in 14:25).⁴⁶⁹ Because Attalia is not mentioned as a destination here, the band may have transferred from a larger coastal ship to a smaller boat to travel most of what was reported to be sixty stadia (ca. 13 km.) north on the river Cestrus (Κέστρος) from Attalia to Perga (Strabo 14.4.2); though unnavigable today, the Cestrus may have then been navigable for smaller boats for the approximately eight miles (11 km.) to Perga's river port.⁴⁷⁰

465. Muhly, "Cyprus," 95.

466. Nobbs, "Cyprus," 287; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 154 (following Mitchell, "Population and Land"). Pervo, *Acts*, 320, and the sources he cites (esp. Christol and Drew-Bear, "Sergii Pauli") are skeptical; but Luke may have reason to omit the connection in retrospect, and Paul would be expected to go to a synagogue, in any case (see comment on Acts 13:5).

467. Nobbs, "Cyprus," 287. Hudson, "Principal Family," argues that the town's principal family was related to Sergius Paulus.

468. Riesner, *Early Period*, 140, 275–76. Cf. a pagan freedman of Sergii Paulli in *MAMA* 7.486 (and introductory comments in *MAMA* 7, p. xxxiii; 89 C.E.); Sergia Paullina (7.319). "Sergius" appears commonly in eastern Phrygia (7.321, an *epitropos* of Paullus; 7.14, 330, 486). On the use of large estates in this period more generally, see Rathbone, "Latifundia."

469. E.g., French, "Roads," 52; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 109. For a high-class Roman presence in Attalia, see, e.g., Mitchell, "Archaeology," 170; on Attalia, see also Wineland, "Attalia." Wilson estimates the voyage from Paphos to Perga as 186 mi. (300 km.; personal correspondence, Nov. 25, 2011).

470. On inland navigation (for both travel and trade), see Höckmann, "Inland Navigation" (esp. 816, on sailors and wharves). Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.26.96 gives Eurymedon and Catarrhactes as the names of Pamphylia's major rivers.

Despite sources claiming that one could reach Perga by boat on the river (*Stadiasmus maris magni* 219), a five-mile (8-km.) walk remained to the main part of Perga once one reached the port.⁴⁷¹ Thus some scholars argue that the band may have simply walked the entire seven to twelve miles inland to Perga;⁴⁷² though boats upriver were probably frequent, half a day's trek would be less expensive than fare for the whole party, and one would endure a long walk in either case. Further, a paved road led from Attalia to Perga.⁴⁷³ That Luke mentions only Perga here and only Attalia on their departure for Syria (Acts 14:25) fits historical reality, since Perga was the appropriate goal if they wished to catch the Via Sebaste for travel into the inland highlands, whereas Attalia was the more appropriate goal for a departure port.⁴⁷⁴ Pamphylia was the coastal region south of Pisidia, with Attalia on its far southwest border and Perga on its northwest border.⁴⁷⁵

Paul would have known something of Pamphylia already;⁴⁷⁶ most said that it adjoined his homeland of Cilicia (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.23.94), and Pamphylia's sea was said to adjoin that of Cilicia (5.26.96). The boundaries of provinces changed often, though Perga remained in Pamphylia in any case (5.23.96). Pamphylia was a distinct province from 25 B.C.E. to 43 C.E., then was combined with Lycia, as it would have been during Paul's visit (ca. 48); sometime after Paul's ministry there, under Nero or Galba, it was removed from Lycia and attached to Galatia; then, still later, it was restored to Lycia.⁴⁷⁷ We should not think that the travelers found any trouble communicating in a general sense; various distinctive dialects existed in Pamphylia, but few seem to have persisted into Roman times.⁴⁷⁸ There were some Jewish people living in Pamphylia⁴⁷⁹ (cf. Acts 2:10 and comment there).

(2) Perga (13:13)

Perga was one of the five major cities of Pamphylia, competing with the neighboring city of Side (whose efficient harbor allowed profit from slave trading)⁴⁸⁰ for the honor of "first city" in the region.⁴⁸¹ One indicator of its size is its large theater,

471. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 103; cf. also Lake, "Route," 224; Barrett, *Acts*, 626; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 509; Finegan, *Apostles*, 85.

472. Favored by Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 147; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 259. For 7 mi., see Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 168; for 8 mi., see Haenchen, *Acts*, 407; for 10 mi. (16 km.), Wilson, personal correspondence, Nov. 25, 2011; for 11 mi. (18 km.), Finegan, *Apostles*, 85; for 12 mi., Bruce, *Acts*¹, 259; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 509, says 13 km. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 5, after 1:78, places Perga ca. 13 km. northwest of Attalia as the crow flies (it appears to be ca. 10 mi. [16 km.] in Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, 65, E4), both remaining in the lower coastal area; but the road may have been a bit longer.

473. French, "Roads," 52; cf. Riesner, *Early Period*, 274.

474. Attalia's more heavily trafficked harbor, directly on the sea, provided the better port for a return voyage to Syrian Antioch (Acts 14:25–26; Campbell, "Paul in Pamphylia," arguing, from this information and the asymmetry of Luke's references in 13:13–14 and 14:24–26, for the virtually assured historical accuracy of Luke's itinerary here). Perga, however, does better fit the alliteration (mostly topographic) pointed out by Parsons, *Acts*, 191 (citing *Rhet. Her.* 4.22.18).

475. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 5, after 1:78.

476. On Pamphylia, see Carroll, "Pamphylia"; for a summary of 1990s archaeological publications on Pamphylia, see Mitchell, "Archaeology," 170–72.

477. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 147; Haenchen, *Acts*, 407 (citing Dio Cass. 53.26; 60.17); Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 163–64; Strobel, "Galatia," 651. Probably it was united politically with Lycia by Acts 27:5, but inhabitants would not have confused them. Pamphylia was near Caria (Jos. *Ant.* 11.305), near Lycia. Alternatively, Lycia was an autonomous province from 43 to 74 C.E., after which Vespasian joined it to Pamphylia (Zimmermann, "Lycia," citing Suet. *Claud.* 25.3; but it need not be so construed).

478. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:172.

479. Stern, "Diaspora," 148.

480. For some information on Side, see Mitchell, "Archaeology," 171; it is the first town of Pamphylia mentioned in Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.26.96 (the others being in the hills).

481. Harrill, "Asia Minor," 133. For detailed archaeological data, see Sahin, *Inschriften von Perga*. For more detail on Perga, see Breytenbach, *Provinz*, 166–67; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 264–73.

whose colonnaded, covered cavea (seating section) could seat between 13,000 and 15,000.⁴⁸² (Compare the theater of Ephesus, which may have seated around 20,000 in this period and perhaps 24,500 in the next century; see comment on Acts 19:29.) Although the estimate for Perga's cavea might reflect later growth (its stage building, like the city's Roman stadium, is from the second century),⁴⁸³ it illustrates that this was a significant city that could at the least attract such growth.

About sixty-five feet wide and with colonnades on both sides, Perga's major north-south thoroughfare likewise indicates a city of significant size and resources.⁴⁸⁴ Roman baths lie west of this major street;⁴⁸⁵ a gymnasium from this period (dedicated to Claudius, who reigned 41–54 C.E.) lies north of the principal east-west thoroughfare.⁴⁸⁶ The colonnaded agora, lined with shops, was 215 feet (65 m.) long and wide.⁴⁸⁷ The older Hellenistic agora probably lay farther north than the later (fourth-century C.E.) Roman one.⁴⁸⁸ Two round towers remain from Perga's Hellenistic gate.⁴⁸⁹ Some scholars argue that the region of Pamphylia as a whole was relatively poor;⁴⁹⁰ others stress the prosperity resulting from its fertility and good harbors.⁴⁹¹

Antiochus surrendered Perga peacefully to the Romans (Polyb. 21.41.1–5), and it soon hosted a Roman presence. Mitchell notes that some Italian settlers “played a leading role in civic life during the 1st and 2nd cents. AD at Attaleia, Perga, and Aspendus, and several of the earliest Roman senators from the eastern provinces came from this background.”⁴⁹² Significant Roman evidence from a later period probably also reinforces the Roman connection for Perga.⁴⁹³ Attalia and Perga had significant settlements of Roman *negotiatores* engaged in commerce, with names revealing their Italian origin.⁴⁹⁴

Religiously, Perga's range of divinities resembled that of other cities in the region; statues in the theater include “Marsyas, Heracles, Hermes, Dionysus . . . , Tyche and Hera,” as well as emperors;⁴⁹⁵ mythological reliefs in the theater emphasize Kestros (deity of the local river) and the wine deity Dionysus.⁴⁹⁶ A “street lined with tombs” lies northwest of the city; Perga's acropolis, a flat hill, lay to the north, with a fountain at its base displaying “a reclining statue of Kestros.”⁴⁹⁷ Perga also had links with Syrian priesthoods—hence the later statue of a Syrian priestess.⁴⁹⁸ Perga at some point also

482. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 266. Barrett, *Acts*, 626, estimates about 20,000 each for theater and stadium; Judge, “Perga,” 767, estimates at least 12,000; McRay, *Archaeology*, 240, estimates 14,000 for the theater; Finegan, *Apostles*, 86, estimates 15,000 for the theater and 12,000 for the stadium.

483. Finegan, *Apostles*, 86; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 268.

484. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 271. The north-south and east-west grid fits Hellenistic planning.

485. Finegan, *Apostles*, 88.

486. *Ibid.*; cf. McRay, *Archaeology*, 240.

487. Finegan, *Apostles*, 88; cf. McRay, *Archaeology*, 240, for the Roman market “south of the Hellenistic Gate,” “300 feet by 175 feet.” Archaeologists have also found some of the main street's shops (Mitchell, “Archaeology,” 170).

488. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 270–71.

489. *Ibid.*, 270. The gate was originally part of the south wall, but the Romans moved the south wall of the city farther south.

490. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 147; Haenchen, *Acts*, 407; Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 163–64.

491. Mitchell, “Pamphylia,” 1103. Apamea constituted a market for Pamphylians but also for Pisidians and others (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.14; cf. Strabo 12.8.15).

492. Mitchell, “Pamphylia,” 1103.

493. Mitchell, “Archaeology,” 170–71.

494. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 57, 99.

495. Mitchell, “Archaeology,” 171. Besides being an ill-fated satyr, Marsyas was a river in southern Phrygia famous in Greek mythology (Quint. Curt. 3.1.2; see fully Dowden, “Marsyas,” citing for the river also Hdt. 5.118; 7.26.3; Paus. 10.30.9).

496. Finegan, *Apostles*, 86.

497. *Ibid.*, 88.

498. Mitchell, “Archaeology,” 171.

had a temple for the imperial cult.⁴⁹⁹ Pamphylians laid claim to ancestry from Trojans scattered after the Trojan War (Strabo 14.4.1, 3); it is thus not surprising that statue bases in Perga claim two of the heroes of that war as the city's founders.⁵⁰⁰

Not far from Perga was the elevated and highly visible Syllium, forty stadia above the sea; here stood the temple of Artemis Pergaia, which hosted an annual festival (Strabo 14.4.2).⁵⁰¹ It was said that the Greek poet Sappho and a Pamphylian woman with whom she was intimate composed hymns honoring Artemis Pergaia (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.30). Perga's coins portray the local Artemis as a baetyl (rock),⁵⁰² much like Aphrodite in Paphos (see comment on Acts 13:6).

A number of Jews lived in Pamphylia, probably including some in Perga (1 Macc 15:23; Philo *Embassy* 281).⁵⁰³ Some scholars contend that we lack clear evidence of a Jewish community in Perga; if there was none, it is possible that Luke's silence about Paul's preaching there is because he did not do so.⁵⁰⁴ Others also suggest that Paul bypassed Perga; this may infer too much from Luke's brief mention (see comment on Acts 13:14) but might explain why Luke explicitly notes preaching in Perga in Acts 14:25.

(3) John Mark's Departure (13:13)

John called Mark had been close to Barnabas and Saul since their return from Jerusalem in 12:25. Luke's narrative focuses on the primary protagonists and only rarely mentions the "companions" (which could refer only to Barnabas and, before his departure, John Mark but may have included a few others as well). Biblical narratives often focused on a single person, such as Abraham's steward or David, while briefly mentioning those who aided him or her (Gen 24:32; 1 Sam 18:27; 2 Sam 12:28).⁵⁰⁵ The mention of Mark's departure, however, is noteworthy, especially in view of (and from a literary standpoint, preparatory for) Paul's ill feeling concerning it in Acts 15:38. The verb ἀποχωρέω could refer to turning away from fear (Jer 26:5 LXX; 46:5 MT) or something like apostasy (3 Macc 2:33).⁵⁰⁶ Jewish sources often warn about apostasy⁵⁰⁷ (especially end-time apostasy).⁵⁰⁸ Honorable Jews preferred death to apostasy (4 Macc 9:24).

There is no thought here of Mark's leaving the faith (especially in view of Acts 15:37), but abandoning a mentor was also viewed as a form of unfaithfulness. Later rabbis complained about a disciple who would leave a sage (*m. Hag.* 1:7). No one proved more hostile to rabbinic teaching, later rabbis opined, than a disciple who

499. Klauck, *Context*, 323–24 (citing Price, *Rituals*, catalogue no. 140).

500. Finegan, *Apostles*, 86.

501. *Ibid.*, 88, suggests that the famous Artemis Pergaia temple may have stood on the city's acropolis. Contrast the more widely popular temple of "Ephesian" Artemis in Acts 19:27. Cicero mentions it earlier (*Verr.* 2.4.32.71) and speaks of wicked officials who plundered the temple in his time (2.3.21.54).

502. Gill, "Religion," 87.

503. See esp. Stern, "Diaspora," 148 (citing also *CIJ* 2:38–39, §781); Barrett, *Acts*, 626.

504. Barrett, *Acts*, 626. Probably at least some Jews lived in a town of this size, and Luke often passes over details (e.g., Acts 13:6a); but if they were difficult to locate, the company may well have proceeded to its target city, especially if Sergius Paulus had provided contacts there.

505. Cf. Philost. *Hrk.* 48.13, who critiques Homeric hyperbole by noting that some things that Homer attributes to Achilles alone were, in fact, accomplished by all the Greeks, emboldened through Achilles's presence.

506. Johnson, *Acts*, 229; Witherington, *Acts*, 396. The only other LXX use simply means "withdraw," without moral connotations (2 Macc 4:33).

507. E.g., Ezek 33:12–13, 18; 1 Macc 1:41–51; 2:15; *Pss. Sol.* 17:13–15; *b. Qidd.* 40b; see data in Caird, *Apostolic Age*, 29–30; Schiffman, "Crossroads," 144–46; cf. CD V, 21; *Sipre Deut.* 318.1.10, 15.

508. E.g., *1 En.* 91:7; *Test. Iss.* 6:1; *Test. Naph.* 4:1; *3 En.* 48A:5–6; *m. Soṭah* 9:15; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5:9; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:14/15; cf. *4 Ezra* 5:1–2; 14:16–18.

had turned from the way (*b. Pesah.* 49b). Normally a disciple would *obey* a teacher;⁵⁰⁹ abandonment of a teacher would thus appear humiliating.⁵¹⁰ Not everyone agreed with such reasoning, of course; one should not blame Pericles if Athens failed to learn virtue, or the gods if humanity did so, or orators if hearers did so (Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 336, §111D).⁵¹¹ Philosophers also recognized that many of their students failed to turn out right because they refused to change (Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 108.5–6). But a disciple's abandonment would still lay the teacher's honor open to challenge.⁵¹² One trusted associate's abandonment could create scandal and even generate mass abandonment in times of difficulty (Corn. Nep. 14 [Datames], 6.3).⁵¹³

Paul expected Mark to act differently (Acts 15:38). True friends should remain loyal in adversity.⁵¹⁴ They would not abandon one even if one were exiled; those who abandon us, one thinker opined, we are better off without (Mus. Ruf. 9, p. 68.13–15). Those who deserted in war were treated most severely,⁵¹⁵ but any breach of trust was viewed harshly. Although Luke views Mark's actions here negatively, this need not mean that he would assume that Mark could not change. He might be unaware of Paul's later reconciliation with Mark (Col 4:10; Phlm 24; 2 Tim 4:11),⁵¹⁶ but he is aware that Barnabas believed that Mark became ready for ministry (Acts 15:37), and probably shared the widespread view that character could change over time.⁵¹⁷ That Luke later uses a cognate of the verb for Mark's departure to refer to Paul and Barnabas separating over Mark (15:39) might sug-

509. E.g., Xen. *Anab.* 3.1.5–7; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 2.30; John 13:13–14; for rank granted to sages, *t. Sanh.* 7:8; *b. Hor.* 13b, bar.; *y. Sanh.* 1:2, §13; *Ta'an.* 4:2, §§8–9. Correcting a teacher was rare (*Abot R. Nat.* 1 A); some sages believed that even teaching law in the presence of one's teacher was wrong (*y. Seb.* 6:1, §8) and merited death from God (*Sipra Sh. M.d.* 99.5.6; *b. Erub.* 63a; *Tem.* 16a; *Lev. Rab.* 20:6–7). Some later rabbis also claimed that striving with one's teacher was equivalent to contending with the Shekinah (*Num. Rab.* 18:20), though some ancient teachers did affirm critically evaluating claims (Mus. Ruf. 1, p. 36.6–7). Pointing something out to a teacher or former teacher required great respect (Fronto *Ad verum imp.* 2.3; though cf. the objection in Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.22). One rabbi refused to accept an office before his teacher was appointed (*y. Bik.* 3:3, §9).

510. See comment on Acts 1:16; see further, e.g., Malina, *Windows*, 17–18. The loyalty of one's followers reflected positively on one (e.g., Jos. *Life* 84); positively or negatively, disciples' behavior reflected on their teachers (Aeschines *Tim.* 171–73; *t. Ed.* 3:4; *Abot R. Nat.* 27 A; 34, §76 B; Mark 2:18, 24; perhaps Acts 4:13; Alciph. *Court.* 7 [Thais to Euthydemus], 1.34, ¶¶6–7), as Luke knew (Luke 6:1–2).

511. Betrayed trust reflected badly only on the betrayer if the betrayed had taken appropriate precautions (Polyb. 8.36.4).

512. Thus Acts Paul 3.1 (*Paul Thec.* 1) emphasizes that Paul knew Demas's insincerity from the start (cf. 2 Tim 4:10); cf. similarly Jesus regarding Judas in John 6:64, 71; 13:11. Even a disciple's abandonment of a teacher's position could be used against the position (Heracl. *Hom. Prob.* 78.4).

513. Such traitors merited and received death (Corn. Nep. 14.6.8; also other traitors among friends in 14.9.5). Betrayal by one's own soldiers was tragic (Vell. Paterc. 2.24.5); loyalty remained the ideal for clients to patrons in trouble as well (deSilva, *Honor*, 115, citing Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 81.27; *Ben.* 4.20.2; 4.24.2).

514. E.g., Isoc. *Demon.* 25; Val. Max. 3.8.ext. 5–6; 4.7 passim (esp. 4.7.pref.; 4.7.1, 4); Fronto *Ad Ant. Pium* 3.4; Char. *Chær.* 3.3.1; 3.5.7–8. Cf. the willingness to die together in Eurip. *Orest.* 1069–74, 1155; *Iph. Taur.* 674–86; Char. *Chær.* 4.3.5; 7.1.7. For further discussion, see Keener, *John*, 1005, 1009–10.

515. E.g., Val. Max. 2.7.11–13; 2.7.15ac; Jos. *Ant.* 20.79; see fuller comment at Acts 12:18–19. Loyalty to country could take precedence even over hospitality-friendship (Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.34; Corn. Nep. 13 [Timotheus], 4.4), but disloyalty to friends remained despicable (e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 36, 1442.13–14).

516. Although I allow this possibility, I believe more likely that these passages do suggest that Luke (also mentioned in the contexts of these passages) would be aware of the reconciliation with Mark if (as I think) he is the author of Luke-Acts. Black, "Presentation of Mark," is probably right about Luke's ignorance of the letters and perhaps (also idem, *Rhetoric of Gospel*, 95–113) is also right that Mark functions as a foil. But Black's suggestion that Mark's emphasis on the Jewish mission was the cause of his pulling back (113; whatever his association with Jerusalem, 111) is only one of several possibilities.

517. See, e.g., Gen 37:26–27; 44:17, 33; 1 Sam 10:6; 2 Chr 24:17–22; Val. Max. 6.9.pref.–6.9.9 (e.g., Scipio Africanus the Elder, 6.9.2); Polemo in 6.9.ext. 1. That Luke is critical of Mark as author of a prior Gospel (suggested in Collins, *Mark*, 5) is not impossible, but any possible criticism would have to be limited in force (Luke is, after all, heavily dependent on Mark in his Gospel).

gest that Paul, who rejected Mark, committed the same error of division himself in his division with Barnabas.⁵¹⁸

II. PISIDIAN ANTIOCH (13:14)

The heart of the action in 13:13–52 transpires in Antioch. The city was not significant enough to figure heavily in literary sources outside the region, and hence would not likely merit Luke's attention apart from historical tradition about Paul. At the same time, archaeology shows that it *was* significant within the Anatolian interior. Although Antioch was no large and famous city like Rome, Ephesus, or Corinth, it was one of the largest and most strategic towns of the interior highlands of Asia Minor. Paul's ministry here took place in smaller and more isolated towns before moving to the giant cities.

(1) *Reaching Pisidian Antioch*

The suggestion that Paul bypassed ministry in Perga for Antioch because he contracted malaria by the marshy coast and needed time in the hill country (cf. Paul's sickness in Galatia in Gal 4:13)⁵¹⁹ is possible but speculative.⁵²⁰ Luke could have simply omitted discussion of minor events in Perga to focus on more eventful ministry in Antioch, perhaps due to a larger Jewish community there. Since the “we” narratives never come near southern Asia Minor, Luke lacks firsthand acquaintance here and chooses not to invent information that he does not have.⁵²¹ If Paul's team wished to travel to the mountainous interior, however, a well-known and widely traveled route, the paved Via Sebaste, now existed.⁵²² Those wishing to enter Asia's interior from Syria or Egypt might sail to Attalia⁵²³ with this route in view.

The likelier Alexandrian reading here for the city is “Pisidian Antioch.” Although the city was technically in Phrygia, the title fits the known character of the city in this period as the Phrygian Antioch that, from a Phrygian perspective, was near Pisidia (Strabo 12.3.31; 12.6.4, Antioch τὴν πρὸς τῇ Πισιδίᾳ, “as it is called”).⁵²⁴ The genitive reading in later manuscripts reflects the situation after Diocletian's reorganizing of the provinces and is anachronistic.⁵²⁵ (Because of its title, even Pliny the Elder wrongly assumed that it was part of Pisidia in his day [*N.H.* 5.24.94], and it is possible that Luke would have made this assumption as well, since he did not travel here.)⁵²⁶

Inscriptions place it in Phrygia,⁵²⁷ but the title “Pisidian” Antioch distinguished it from another Phrygian Antioch in Caria, on the Meander River.⁵²⁸ For less geographically informed members of Luke's audience, this title would also serve to distinguish

518. The verb ἀποχωρίζω of Acts 15:39 appears nowhere else in Luke-Acts (and only one other time in the NT); the cognate verb in 13:13 appears only two other times in the NT.

519. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 421; subsequently others, e.g., Walaskay, *Acts*, 128; as one view, Schnabel, *Missionary*, 368. Certainly such a sickness is likelier than the eye disease that some propose on the basis of Gal 4:15 (see Keener, “Eyes”).

520. Larkin, *Acts*, 197, rightly critiquing Ramsay.

521. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 103, argues that Luke lacked the itinerary here, though his suggestion that Luke might have inferred from a map the information that he does have may be too optimistic about the widespread availability of maps.

522. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:70.

523. Finegan, *Apostles*, 84–85.

524. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 404–5; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 109; MAMA 7:xi.

525. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 405.

526. With, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 509. Pliny the Elder (*N.H.* 5.145) thought that the northeast of Phrygia “marches with Galatia” and its southeast “with Lykaonia, Pisidia and Mygdonia,” but Pliny wrongly excluded the “part of Galatic Phrygia . . . along the Pisidian border” (MAMA 7:xi).

527. See Calder, MAMA 1:xii.

528. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 509.

the town from its much larger and more famous namesake in Syria (Acts 13:1); like Alexander and Seleucus, the kings named Antiochus had many cities named in their honor.⁵²⁹

By the time the group reaches Antioch, they will have spent considerable time in Pisidia.⁵³⁰ Although Antioch was technically part of the province of Phrygia in this period (see discussion below), it lay on Pisidia's border and shared much of the character of the Pisidian highlands. Thus the Pisidian setting is described here (Phrygia will be discussed more fully in terms of the group's subsequent destinations).

As part of the earlier kingdom of Amyntas,⁵³¹ Pisidia qualified as part of the Roman province of Galatia; within this province, it invited a significant share of the governor's early military attention.⁵³² It is possible that much of Pisidia was detached from Galatia and adjoined to Lycia and Pamphylia a few years before Paul's arrival; in any case, Galatian governors are still said to govern "Pisidia" in sources a few decades later. This claim might cover just "the northern edge of the region,"⁵³³ but certainly that would cover Antioch in Phrygia, which bordered on Pisidia's north.

Pisidia was remembered for its rugged, independent, warrior tradition;⁵³⁴ warrior deities were prominent there, and Roman settlers apparently identified such deities with their own war god.⁵³⁵ This history had invited a strong Roman military presence in the region;⁵³⁶ consequently it is not surprising to find epigraphic evidence for military units in Pisidian Antioch. Rome recruited both legionaries and auxiliaries from this area.⁵³⁷

(2) *The Route Taken*

It would be difficult to cross the Taurus Mountains⁵³⁸ (or other mountain ranges) in winter,⁵³⁹ but if it were winter Paul's company probably would not have sailed from Cyprus in any case (for the danger even over that short distance, cf. Acts 27:4–5); if they reached Cyprus (13:4) in early spring, they could have months remaining for travel even if they spent several months in Cyprus. Although the Taurus Range, which becomes the Anti-Taurus Range in eastern Turkey, could have provided a formidable obstacle for trade routes, merchants did pass through these mountains.⁵⁴⁰ Travel northward was limited; apart from the Via Sebaste (noted below), east-west travel (after leaving Antioch) was virtually impossible.⁵⁴¹

Besides a multitude of less desirable goatherd trails, only two or three major routes existed through the Taurus Mountains from Perga north to Antioch; all were in use

529. Luke is not drawing deliberate literary connections between the two cities; there were at least sixteen Antiochs in antiquity, since Seleucus I named many cities for his father (or his son; Finegan, *Apostles*, 63).

530. For a summary of 1990s archaeological publications on Pisidia, see Mitchell, "Archaeology," 173–78; on Pisidia, see also the summary and sources in Schnabel, *Mission*, 1092–93.

531. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:38.

532. *Ibid.*, 1:64.

533. *Ibid.*, 2:154.

534. Ancient sources mention their warlike character, never subdued by Hellenistic kings, and archaeology confirms this picture (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:72; 2:26).

535. *Ibid.*, 2:27–28.

536. *Ibid.*, 1:72–73.

537. *Ibid.*, 1:74.

538. On this range, which connected with other mountains in Armenia near the Caucasus Range, see Warmington, "Taurus Range"; Olshausen, "Taurus."

539. Hdn. 3.3.7; Vell. Paterc. 2.105.3 (Alps); Rapske, "Travel," 4; Riesner, *Early Period*, 278 (citing Cic. *Att.* 5.21.14); cf. Carter and Earle, *Acts*, 183. Among one general's exploits was his having been the first Roman to lead an army across the Taurus Range (Plut. *Comparison of Lucullus and Cimon* 3.1). The average lowest winter temperature in central Turkey is about -18°C (Lamprecht, "Heating," 27).

540. Yener, "Taurus Mountains," 155. For the Cilician Gates farther west, see comment on Acts 16:1.

541. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:70.

in this period.⁵⁴² The shorter route ran through the Cestrus River valley, following “deep, rocky valleys” and the “high ridges” of western Taurus; the circuitous western route was longer but easier (through flat alluvial valleys).⁵⁴³

The company probably would have taken the circuitous but preferable western route, the Via Sebaste, built about five decades earlier in 6 B.C.E. and reaching Antioch via Comama. This road was central to Rome's earlier project to pacify and control Pisidia.⁵⁴⁴ (In contrast to Ramsay's earlier informed guess, archaeology shows that this road ran to Perga but may not have extended as far as Attalia.)⁵⁴⁵ It was more than 3.5 meters wide on average;⁵⁴⁶ others estimate even wider (6–8 m.) for the overall average of the road throughout its length.⁵⁴⁷ Unlike Hellenistic and other Roman trails in these highlands, “narrow, often stepped, stone tracks designed for pedestrians and pack-animals,” this paved road was designed for wheeled traffic.⁵⁴⁸

Mark Wilson provides valuable information regarding the route. The road started “at Perga and climbed out of the Cestrus River valley before heading northwest across the plain of Pamphylia.”⁵⁴⁹ Travelers would soon reach a natural pass through the Taurus Mountains called Klimax; a Roman marker indicates that it was 139 Roman miles (about 128 modern miles) from Pisidian Antioch.⁵⁵⁰ If a traveler stopped at significant towns, the first would be Comama, on “a flat plain” where two roads met. Comama, holding some thirty-five acres and apparently lacking city walls, was a small town by the standards of ancient Mediterranean megacities;⁵⁵¹ travelers would now be 122 Roman miles from Pisidian Antioch.⁵⁵²

From Comama one would walk northwest “through pine-covered hills passing several smaller villages,” following the plain on the western side of the saltwater Lake Ascania. At the lake's northwest corner the road ran up to where the great Southern Highway, which Paul would take on later journeys, met the Via Sebaste.⁵⁵³ Then travelers would descend into a valley toward Apollonia and proceed further northeast along the base of Mount Gelincik and then by a freshwater lake, Lake Limnae.⁵⁵⁴ Finally, they would ascend again “into the foothills leading to Pisidian Antioch.”⁵⁵⁵

542. French, “Roads,” 51 (two roads); Wilson, “Route,” 471 (noting three). Paved roads and trails through the mountains connected various highland towns even in the Hellenistic period (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:70). Wilson, “Route,” 480, notes that Broughton's alternative shortcut proves only four miles shorter than the Via Sebaste.

543. French, “Roads,” 52; see also Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:70 (also noting a third route through the mountains to Iconium); Wilson, “Route,” 482; Finegan, *Apostles*, 90 (preferring the Roman road to Side, then another going north past Lake Beyşehir). The third route might have made more sense had they landed at Side farther east (perhaps 65 or more km. to the east of Attalia), then gone north (perhaps through a few more mountains) and connected with the road to Iconium, but because of the mountains, this might not have saved much time.

544. Mitchell, “Via Sebaste”; cf. idem, *Anatolia*, 1:77.

545. French, “Roads,” 52.

546. Hansen, “Galatia,” 384; also French, “Roads,” 53. Much earlier, Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 62, also opined that at least through Antioch and Lystra, Paul followed the Via Augusta; cf. Reicke, *Era*, 218.

547. Mitchell, “Via Sebaste,” 1596.

548. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:70; also Wilson, “Route,” 477.

549. Wilson, “Route,” 477, following the more detailed Takmer and Önen, “Surveys,” for this part of the route.

550. Wilson, “Route,” 477. Roman miles are normally estimated as 8 percent shorter than modern miles, hence 128 miles here; but given the actual distance between Roman mile markers of roughly 5,000 (instead of 4,856) feet, a figure of 131.6 modern miles may be closer.

551. Ibid., 478, following Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 94n4 (who estimates 6,300–9,450 residents of the territorium).

552. Wilson, “Route,” 478, citing the Roman milestone (*CIL* 3.6974).

553. Wilson, “Route,” 478, noting the nearby boundary between Galatia and Asia.

554. Ibid.

555. Ibid., 479.

(3) *Why Antioch?*

The road from Perga to Antioch covered about 125 miles (200 km.), and so this was no small journey. Pisidian Antioch lay about ninety miles (150 km.) north (and slightly west) of Perga, as the crow flies.⁵⁵⁶ But the company's members could hardly have traveled straight as the crow flies; some of the highest mountains in the Taurus Range obstructed their path.⁵⁵⁷ If they took the Via Sebaste from Perga, bypassing mountain trails, as argued below (with most scholars), they would travel approximately twenty-three miles to Klimax Pass, nineteen more miles to Comama, seventy-one miles to Apollonia, and forty-three further miles to Pisidian Antioch, a total of 156 miles (roughly 250 km.).⁵⁵⁸ The journey cannot have been a short one. One writer, who proposes a shorter route of eighty miles (130 km.) or more, estimates a six days' journey on foot, "considering the terrain."⁵⁵⁹

Moreover, although the terrain varied, much of the journey was uphill from the coastal plain to the interior highlands,⁵⁶⁰ as Antioch was located in a mountainous region west of the Taurus Range, about 3,600 feet above sea level.⁵⁶¹ Why walk so far, and so far uphill? Pisidia is on the northernmost border of Pamphylia, and Attalia on the southern coast, adjoining Lycia. One would think a westward move into Lycia would bring one into contact with more cities and people (see comment on Acts 27:5), yet Paul moved north.

Although there were other towns in or on the border of Pisidia, Antioch was among the six largest (as was Perga, on the border of Pisidia and Pamphylia). Antioch was also one of four known Roman colonies in the Pisidian region from any time in the Roman era,⁵⁶² and of them only Cremna was comparable in size.⁵⁶³ Why would Paul not have chosen Cremna instead of Antioch? Cremna is less than 50 kilometers from Perga as the crow flies (i.e., much closer than Antioch), and if one walked up the Cestrus Valley, through much less hill country en route (such a north-south route from Perga to Cremna⁵⁶⁴ was fairly close to sea level until reaching Cremna).⁵⁶⁵ Cremna, like

556. It appears just below 100 mi. (perhaps ca. 96) in Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, 3, B2.

557. French, "Roads," 51–52 (noting especially the northernmost part "of the Anamas Dagl between the lakes Beysehir and Egridir," p. 52).

558. Wilson, "Route," 479; idem, personal correspondence, Nov. 25, 2011. His map measurements differ by only about 4 percent from the Roman mile markers ("Route," 479n47). My own much rougher estimates (apparently roughly 20 percent off) from map 5 after p. 78 in Mitchell, *Anatolia*, without adjustment for increases due to elevation, were over 65 km. from Perga northwest to Comama (a Roman colony), over 75 km. north (west and then east) to Apollonia, then perhaps 60 or more to Antioch: in all, a trek of about 200 km. (some 125 mi.) from Perga to Antioch.

559. Finegan, *Apostles*, 90.

560. See Levick, *Roman Colonies*, "Mountains and Routes in Southern Anatolia" (mostly pre-Roman), 7–20.

561. Witherington, *Acts*, 405; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 713. Karris, *Invitation*, 143, indicates 3,900 ft.; Finegan, *Apostles*, 90, indicates more than 3,000 ft. (915 m.) and, for the site of Antioch, "3,500–3,800 ft (1,067–1,158 m) above sea level" (91).

562. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 5, after 1:78. Altogether there were thirteen colonies under Augustus in Galatia, twelve of them in South Galatia (1:77).

563. Augustus founded Cremna as a colony well before this period (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:77). For a summary of archaeological work on Cremna, see Mitchell, "Archaeology," 176.

564. Inferred from Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 5, after 1:78. A narrow Roman road led from the Augustan colony of Comama, to the west, through more rugged terrain into Cremna's west gate (1:128). Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 39, suggests that the Via Sebaste "presumably" reached Cremna as well as the documented sites, but from Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 5, it is clear that Cremna is too far from the main road unless we think of a branch road, which would have to run through the mountains. Surely travelers from Perga to the south could approach it much more easily from there, even without a major Roman road.

565. Cremna itself was less accessible; even today one must drive up a winding route with dense woods (Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 46; she notes [15] that modern road systems resemble ancient ones because of terrain and difficulty of travel there). The traditional road of today has made no use of the Cestrus Valley

Isaura, had been important in Amyntas's kingdom, and these two cities were the only colonies "in the heart of the mountainous district."⁵⁶⁶ Cremna also had fertile plains.⁵⁶⁷

Some proposed reasons for choosing Antioch are possible but not certain, such as the need for a cooler climate because of malaria,⁵⁶⁸ as noted above. But this proposal would not have necessitated Antioch as the choice rather than Cremna or some other sites. Another suggestion is that Antioch offered connections with Sergius Paulus's relatives, as already noted. Although this suggestion is unprovable, the known connections between the governor whom Paul and Barnabas just left and the town where their preaching is next recorded (see discussion below) are probably⁵⁶⁹ more than coincidence. But even if Sergius Paulus recommended the site, why did Paul's company take the advice? His recommendation and geographical proximity are likely factors but may be supplemented by others.

More important for one entering the region is that Antioch was on the Via Sebaste, allowing for ministry elsewhere in the interior. Antioch was also much larger than Cremna (which was the second-largest colony in the region). The city wall apparently surrounded about 115 acres, making Antioch moderately sized for a colony.⁵⁷⁰ The larger *territorium* was about 540 square miles, at the lower end of the normal range for colonies;⁵⁷¹ this size was fairly substantial for the Pisidian hill country. The two towns' ranking in terms of numbers of colonists was also substantial for this region; Antioch probably had more than 5,750 colonists and Cremna around 2,000.⁵⁷² Cremna was isolated, controlling no major route;⁵⁷³ Romans made it a colony because of its undefeated military status, not its location.⁵⁷⁴ (The colonists constituted only a portion of the population⁵⁷⁵ but controlled civic administration;⁵⁷⁶ even after Greco-Phrygians joined the citizen body, Italians remained central to it.)⁵⁷⁷

Some scholars have gone so far as to claim that Antioch was "the principal Roman colony in the Greek East."⁵⁷⁸ (It was certainly no rival in size for Ephesus, Syrian Antioch, Jerusalem, or Alexandria, but these were not colonies.) It continued to grow with major building projects in Tiberius's day and probably also in that of Gaius Caligula and

(Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 46), but it is likely that ancients took such a route to Cremna and Sagalassus (see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:70).

566. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:77. Isaura was in Isauria to the east (map 5, after 1:78).

567. *Ibid.*, 1:71.

568. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 421. If Paul had a bout of malaria, he likely would have stayed in place till it subsided before traveling; but malaria is recurrent.

569. The geographic proximity of Antioch to Cyprus might account for both cases, allowing coincidence (assuming that Sergius was able to influence the securing of that province instead of simply getting it by lot). Antioch was, after all, a significant city. But a connection remains likelier, though Luke himself does not make it (and may well not have known of it).

570. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 43.

571. *Ibid.*, 45. This *territorium* was divided into allotments for Roman settlers (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:151).

572. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 94. In an earlier period, Romans sometimes established colonies with as few as 300 men; in the (pertinent) Augustan period, this was more often closer to 6,000 (p. 92). Augusta Praetoria obtained 3,000, implying a total population of more than 10,000 (assuming a population density comparable to Pompeii's); since Pisidian Antioch was founded the same year (25 B.C.E.) and was roughly the same acreage (115 acres for Pisidian Antioch, 102 for Augusta Praetoria; p. 92), Antioch may have received 3,000 colonists, for a total Roman population of more than 5,750. A comparable British Roman town was estimated at 2,500–7,500 in population (p. 94).

573. *Ibid.*, 46.

574. *Ibid.*, 47.

575. Of the 465 persons named in sources for Antioch and its *territorium*, "297 are citizens, 168 non-citizens" (63.87 percent vs. 36.13 percent); the latter names could belong to either slaves or *peregrini* (Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 98).

576. *Ibid.*, 189.

577. *Ibid.*, 190.

578. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7, following Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 76–78.

Claudius. It was Galatia's second city, after Ancyra, the capital, but its Italian settlers made it more important than Ancyra, and the rise of the senatorial family of Sergius Paulus in this period further augmented its prominence.⁵⁷⁹ In South Galatia, it was easily the most prominent city.⁵⁸⁰ Further, if Rome was Paul's long-range goal (Rom 1:13–15), "Antioch, the *simulacrum* of Rome in the East, providentially offered itself as a substitute."⁵⁸¹ Paul normally targeted strategic cities, especially Roman colonies and major metropolitan areas;⁵⁸² Antioch qualified at least as the former (as would Troas and Philippi on his next mission).

(4) *Connections with the Sergii Paulli?*

Paul's company might visit Antioch because of its prominence if they traveled to that region, but just as Paul once carried letters of introduction on a different sort of mission (Acts 9:2) and Paul and Barnabas first sailed for Barnabas's homeland, it is likely that the group would have sought connections in Pisidian Antioch. Their encounter with Sergius Paulus before sailing from Paphos may have provided those connections.

Landholding is documented around many towns, but "the best attested of these large domains is the estate of the senatorial family of the Sergii Paulli."⁵⁸³ The estate lay near the boundary between the *territorium* of Ancyra (in North Galatia) and Laodicea Catacecaumene.⁵⁸⁴ That is, it lay about equidistant from Galatia's capital (Ancyra) and South Galatia's most prominent city, Antioch.⁵⁸⁵ The estate is well attested, including a gravestone erected by a senator's wife, Sergia L. f. Paullina (112 C.E.; MAMA 7.319); a tombstone of a freedman named Sergius who worked for one Paullus (7.321); and an L. Sergius Corinthus, a wealthy freedman in the late first century (7.486).⁵⁸⁶ Mitchell notes, "Several other Sergii or Sergiani mentioned on inscriptions of the central plateau were clearly connected with the estate, which was evidently a large one" (1.108; 7.14, 330, 331).⁵⁸⁷ Scholars debate the exact contours of the estate, but it is clear that even its freedpersons exercised considerable local influence.⁵⁸⁸ The family itself was among the most prominent in Asia; L. Sergius L. f. Paulus was the first senator from the East to become consul (in 70 C.E.).⁵⁸⁹ Such connections would not likely be known outside the region but would be well known in the region.

Although it was influential over a wider area of the region, at least part of the family had a home in Pisidian Antioch. One of the inscriptions from Antioch honors "L. Sergius L. f. Paullus *filius*, presumably the son of the proconsul of Cyprus, who also entered the senate."⁵⁹⁰ The other leading family of Italian colonists in Pisidian Antioch was the

579. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7.

580. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 122.

581. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7.

582. *Ibid.*, 2:8. For the progressive movement of Luke-Acts from a rural to an urban setting, see the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:589–90. Acts 13–14 offers a key period in the transition.

583. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:151.

584. *Ibid.*, 1:151 (concurring with Ramsay and Calder).

585. As best I can estimate from *ibid.*, map 10, after 1:164, the estate of Sergii Paulli in the area of Vetissus is ca. 110 km. south-southwest of Ancyra, ca. 110–20 km. north of Iconium, and ca. 110 km. northeast of Pisidian Antioch. Travel from Antioch would take more than this distance, however, since it would not be "as the crow flies"; mountains would likely require one to travel from Antioch to Iconium and then north to reach the estate.

586. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:151.

587. *Ibid.*

588. *Ibid.*

589. *Ibid.*, 1:152. This remains true whether this is the same Sergius Paulus whom Paul met (as Mitchell and Levick both reasonably affirm) or simply a relative.

590. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:152.

Caristanii,⁵⁹¹ and the two families formed a marriage alliance through this younger Sergius Paulus's sister or daughter; her husband later became *consul suffectus* in Rome in 90 C.E.⁵⁹² After surveying various sources of evidence, Mitchell concludes, "The accumulation of evidence leaves little room for doubt that although the Sergii Paulli, like the Caristanii, were ultimately of Italian origin, they were native to Pisidian Antioch."⁵⁹³

(5) *Life in Pisidian Antioch*

Remains of Pisidian Antioch are found about a mile to the northeast of contemporary Yalvaç (or Yalovatch).⁵⁹⁴ It was located in a mountainous region west of the Taurus Range, about 3,600 feet above sea level.⁵⁹⁵ Unlike some settlements, Antioch could not be designed very symmetrically, given the rugged Pisidian terrain.⁵⁹⁶ From the north, Antioch's hill looks like a plateau but is less flat than it might appear; the hill is much higher in the east, then drops steeply "to the river Anthios, which, in winter and spring, flows past the colony."⁵⁹⁷ An aqueduct provided Antioch water from the Sultan Dagh Mountains on the east and north.⁵⁹⁸

Although Pisidian Antioch's location seems remote, we have an inscription from Alexandria that apparently found its way there in antiquity (*ILS* 2696).⁵⁹⁹ Romans planned the roads they constructed in mountainous country so as to avoid avalanches as much as possible.⁶⁰⁰ East of Apollonia, north of a lake in Pisidia, is a valley, the southern side of which touches the northern side of "Pisidian Tauros"; the northern ridge of the valley contained Antioch.⁶⁰¹

Antioch was relatively prosperous.⁶⁰² The colony sustained itself from its *territorium's* produce, needing to import food only rarely.⁶⁰³ It probably specialized in grain but also raised various vegetables as in this area of Turkey today.⁶⁰⁴ Despite its advantages, the city suffered a famine in 91–93 C.E.⁶⁰⁵ Although its countryside was fertile, its location on the Via Sebaste eventually brought it greater importance.⁶⁰⁶ Its location on the southern branch of the Via Sebaste, the land route connecting Ephesus with Syria, as well as its being a key point of entry to the highlands of Pisidia must have made it an important commercial center.⁶⁰⁷ Still, although inscriptions show

591. Further on the Caristanii, see Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 111–13. A newer inscription from 5–48 C.E. (close to Paul's arrival) shows a certain Caristianus fulfilling a vow on behalf of Claudius (Mowery, "Caristianus").

592. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:152; Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 112.

593. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6–7; quote, 7.

594. McRay, *Archaeology*, 237. Much more fully on Pisidian Antioch, Mitchell, "Antioch of Pisidia"; Schnabel, *Mission*, 1098–1103; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 152–61; briefly, Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 295–96; earlier, Ramsay, "Pisidian Antioch"; idem, *Cities of Paul*, 247–314; Unger, "Pisidian Antioch."

595. Witherington, *Acts*, 405. Karris, *Invitation*, 143, has 3,900 ft.

596. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 43.

597. *Ibid.*, 43–44.

598. Finegan, *Apostles*, 91.

599. Conveniently in Sherk, *Empire*, §49C, p. 92.

600. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 138.

601. *MAMA* 7:xi.

602. The expensive decorations of the Augustus temple probably suggest this (with McRay, *Archaeology*, 238).

603. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 97. Many of the colonists farmed the surrounding *territorium* (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:151).

604. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 97–98, suggesting, from modern evidence, "broad beans and chick-peas," grapes (attested on coinage), apples and other fruit, nuts, probably opium poppies (attested on coins and sculpture), but not olives.

605. The inscription is translated in Sherk, *Empire*, §107, pp. 149–50.

606. Weiss, "Antioch," noting that this increased after the third century C.E.

607. Thus Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 42, 99 (though admitting [101] that this is inference); Mercury, patron deity of commerce (among other activities), figures prominently on coins of Antioch and Cremna (99).

that merchants from other towns were often active abroad, little evidence suggests this for Antioch's merchants. Most of them apparently did their trade in Antioch itself with those whom the Via Sebaste brought their way.⁶⁰⁸

Like the rest of Phrygia and northern Pisidia, Antioch belonged to the southern part of the large Roman province of Galatia, and hence its believers are potentially among the addressees of Paul's letters to and concerning Galatia (1 Cor 16:1; Gal 1:2; 3:1; cf. 2 Tim 4:10). Antioch was part of this province from 25 B.C.E. to 295 C.E.⁶⁰⁹ (see comments on "South Galatia" at Acts 14:1–7).

The town grew in magnificence and functioned as an administrative center for southern Galatia; inhabitants may well have boasted in their honorable city's status (cf. Acts 13:50).⁶¹⁰ By the mid-first century C.E., visitors could compare the city's architecture and sculptures to Rome's own; most striking was the temple to Augustus in the town square. A three-arched gateway (a *propylaeum*) connected the colonnaded "Tiberius Street" (Tiberia Platea) with a stairway leading to the main square, completed probably soon after Paul's arrival.⁶¹¹ The wealthy and elaborately decorated Augustus temple lay on the east end of the square.⁶¹² One of the city forums was named after Augustus, and the other after Tiberius.⁶¹³ The bath house, theater, and other sites have been excavated.⁶¹⁴ The main street running north-south opened at the northern end into a wide area that eventually hosted a public fountain building, constructed perhaps a few decades after Paul's visit.⁶¹⁵

(6) Antioch and Rome

Pisidian Antioch was originally settled by colonists from Magnesia on the Meander.⁶¹⁶ Marc Antony donated it to the final Galatian king, who in turn wisely donated it to Augustus at his own death; Rome made the territory into the Roman province of Galatia and refounded Antioch as a colony, in which it settled many veterans.⁶¹⁷ Augustus "founded" several colonies here and built the Via Sebaste to help secure this easily defended, mountainous region under Roman military control.⁶¹⁸ Colonists in Pisidia "provided a military presence when legions could not be afforded."⁶¹⁹

Antioch was Colonia Caesarea (Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.94),⁶²⁰ a place that took Roman citizenship very seriously.⁶²¹ Mitchell believes that it "was the most important Roman

608. Ibid., 100–101.

609. With, e.g., Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 152.

610. Most scholars follow Ramsay's argument that it was part of Galatia (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 148; Witherington, *Acts*, 405).

611. Pearson, "Antioch," 32 (dating the gate's completion to 50 C.E.); cf. McRay, *Archaeology*, 237 (to 50 or 62 C.E.); Mitchell, "Antioch (OCD)." The gate would not have been complete during Paul's visit. A much later Hadrianic inscription (ca. 129 C.E.) appears on the city gate (Mitchell, "Archaeology," 178).

612. McRay, *Archaeology*, 238.

613. Finegan, *Apostles*, 91. It may be no coincidence that all extant copies of Augustus's *Res Gestae* derive from the Roman province of Galatia, including one from Pisidian Antioch (see Harrison, *Authorities*, 24).

614. Mitchell, "Archaeology," 178. On the typical Roman bath there, see Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 159, but it is probably from after the time of Paul.

615. McRay, *Archaeology*, 237.

616. Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism*, 123.

617. Pearson, "Antioch," 32. On veterans more generally, see Schneider, "Veterans" (esp. 352–53).

618. Mitchell, "Pisidia"; idem, "Via Sebaste," 1595. Augustus settled vast numbers of veterans in the empire (*Res Gestae* 1.3).

619. Sherwin-White, Levick, and Bispham, "Colonization," 364.

620. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 103, also noting that it "was one of the Roman colonies which offered protection against the highlanders."

621. Long-term cultural influences were not exclusively Roman; for its Hellenistic character, see Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 261–62. The strength of Greek culture resisted romanization better than some other cultures did (Hus, "Résistance des Étrusques," 159).

colony in Asia Minor and the home of several senators and equestrians in the 1st cent. AD.”⁶²² Pisidian Antioch was built on seven hills—a helpful reminder that it was to be “a little Rome.”⁶²³ Antioch maintained its Roman forms and institutions for a long time.⁶²⁴

Early reports on inscriptions in the region point out that 70 percent of the inscriptions in Antioch are in Latin but perhaps 14 percent elsewhere in Phrygia (outside Antioch and Iconium). The Latin on the inscriptions is usually reasonably good (“at the worst, respectable”).⁶²⁵ After further decades of collected data, Barbara Levick notes that whereas most private inscriptions and especially offerings to Mên Askaēnos are in Greek, the vast majority of inscriptions produced by the civic administration are in Latin.⁶²⁶ Latin remained strong for the colony’s first two centuries; although the lower classes were not romanized, the presence of the army may have helped keep Latin in use.⁶²⁷ Despite other cultural influences, the colonists continued using Latin for official matters at least as late as 297 (when Antioch became metropolis of Pisidia as a new province).⁶²⁸

Except in Italy, colonies were traditionally founded by settling retired soldiers there, but during the early empire, “when veteran colonies were discontinued,” the title *colonia* came to function honorifically, “conferred by special grant, linking a city in its title with an emperor but carrying no substantive privileges.”⁶²⁹ That Antioch received veterans and the title when it was meaningful gave the town higher status in practice than more recent colonies. Even in a colony, most inhabitants were not necessarily Roman citizens,⁶³⁰ but the colony’s citizens, who were Roman citizens and the town’s most influential members, would certainly respect citizenship. Names on inscriptions suggest that most of the original veteran colonists probably were from families in central and northern Italy, especially Etruria, with some others having been recruited in Campania and perhaps Cisalpine Gaul.⁶³¹

The only situation where his citizenship might have helped Paul in Pisidian Antioch would have been in Acts 13:50, but even then it is not clear that, given the opposition of so many other citizens, a plea based on his citizenship would have proved effective. Luke does not emphasize that it was a colony the way he does for Philippi (16:12), but this need not mean that he was unaware of its status;⁶³² the fact is not

622. Mitchell, “Antioch (OCD)” (including among these L. Sergius Paulus). More modestly, Weiss, “Antioch,” considers it the most significant colony “in the western Taurus-region.”

623. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 78; cf. also McRay, *Archaeology*, 237. For Rome’s seven hills, see, e.g., Varro *L.L.* 5.7.41; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 4.13.2–3; Ovid *Tristia* 1.5.69–70; Pliny E. *N.H.* 3.5.66 (cf. 36.24.122); Sil. It. 10.586; 12.608; Statius *Silv.* 2.3.21; 4.1.6–7; *Sib. Or.* 2.18; 11.113, 116; Rev 17:9; cf. further Langdon, “Hills” (including more than seven); Aune, *Revelation*, 944–45 (though I doubt that the image originated with Varro); Caird, *Revelation*, 216; Clarke, “Italy,” 457; for the “Seven Hills” festival, see, e.g., Suet. *Dom.* 4.5. Some sources also identify seven hills in Jerusalem, perhaps for parity (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 624), hence also seven hills of paradise (*1 En.* 24:2; 32:1; cf. 4Q403 1 II, 10).

624. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 91 (concluding the chapter on Roman forms in government, especially of Antioch, 68–91). On Antioch’s Roman connections, cf. also Blaiklock, *Cities*, 22–26.

625. *MAMA* 7:xxx.

626. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 134. Seventy out of eighty-five funerary inscriptions are in Greek (and three of the Latin examples belong to original veterans); only eighteen of 125 dedications to Mên are in Latin (p. 135), and the names of those offering Greek dedications to Mên reveal that they belonged to “the lower, native strata” (136); some of the lower class could not even write proper Greek (137).

627. *Ibid.*, 143–44.

628. *Ibid.*, 136.

629. Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 27. Still, veterans were sometimes settled later to colonize a town, thereby honoring it (e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 12.27, in Claudius’s reign) or guarding it (12.32; cf. 13.31); further veterans could settle later in colonized areas (14.27).

630. Jeffers, *World*, 208.

631. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 66.

632. Pace the suggestion in Conzelmann, *Acts*, 129–30.

essential to this story the way it is to Paul's ministry in Philippi,⁶³³ and Luke, not writing a work focused on geography (or offering eyewitness information here as in the "we" narrative), lacks incentive to report an extraneous detail. That Paul goes to several colonies, however, is suggestive for his historical missions strategy of reaching influential bases (cf. Luke 10:5–8).

Indigenous and Roman elements predominated in the city; hellenization became dominant only after the third century C.E.⁶³⁴ Although Roman colonists controlled civic administration (and remained a force even after Greco-Phrygians were admitted to the citizen body),⁶³⁵ Greek, Pisidian, and Phrygian influence grew in the south Anatolian colonies not because only these ethnic groups lived there but simply because the fewer Italians who settled there intermarried with them and did not insist on raising children as if in Italy.⁶³⁶ This cultural mix may not have proved easiest to the missionaries; despite Paul's Roman citizenship (see comment on Acts 16:37), he and his coworkers were probably more conversant with Greek culture.

(7) Religion in Antioch

Although residents of Antioch worshiped multiple deities (cf. Gal 4:8–10), two objects of worship thoroughly dominated their attention.⁶³⁷ First, it was a famous center for the worship of the god Mēn, the city's patron deity; it originally had its own priesthood of Mēn Askaēnos, but this was destroyed (Strabo 12.8.14); a temple of another Mēn remained in Antiochene territory (12.3.31).⁶³⁸ In Paul's day, two Hellenistic temples stood within the sacred enclosure of Mēn (near the imperial temple); hundreds of cult dedications to Mēn Askaēnos have been recovered there.⁶³⁹ Like the Mother Goddess and Zeus, Mēn and his cult centers were pervasive throughout central Asia Minor, but the most prominent center of his cult there was his temple in Pisidian Antioch (where he was patron deity), the temple of "Mēn Askaēnos."⁶⁴⁰

Just as other peoples had a distinctive object of worship, the Phrygians had Mēn.⁶⁴¹ Reliefs and coins typically portrayed him as "wearing a Phrygian cap and cloak, with a crescent moon behind his shoulders, carrying a pine cone and often a cock."⁶⁴² Worshipers were initiated,⁶⁴³ and archaeology shows purification pools; the cult included

633. Conzelmann himself (*Acts*, 128) recognizes that Philippi's colony status is essential to the story of Paul's ministry there.

634. See Weiss, "Antioch."

635. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 189–90.

636. *Ibid.*, 191. Levick notes (130) that a distinctly Italian culture could not survive when even a "diluted" Hellenism had not penetrated beyond the cities in Pisidia and southern Phrygia.

637. Despite an abundance of inscriptions at Mēn's temple, very "few other deities" are mentioned there (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:24–25).

638. See also *MAMA* 7:xxxiii; 7.4 (on the sanctuary there, with the epithet "Askanius," Ἀσκανιανός); cf. 7.486 (a freedman of the Sergii Paulli builds a temple of Mēn, 89 C.E.); Horsley, *Documents*, 3:30–31, §6; Gill, "Religion," 89; Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 285; Weiss, "Antioch." For other references to Μῆν, see (without epithets) *MAMA* 7.244, 311; and (with epithets besides "Askanius") 7.243, 244, 245. For recent excavations, Mitchell, "Archaeology," 178.

639. McRay, *Archaeology*, 238–39.

640. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:24. In other locations, the deity went by names such as Mēn Gaineanos and Mēn Andronēnos (2:25).

641. Lucian *Z. Rants* 42.

642. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:24. See also Petzl, "Men," 656 (on Mēn as a moon deity), 657 (for his crescent). His Phrygian cap was "a soft cap folded over in front, associated by the Greeks and Romans with eastern peoples . . ." (Rives, *Religion*, 60).

643. Characteristic of the Mysteries; see, e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.33–34; 17.5; 45.9; *Ep.* 5; Paus. 9.39.7–14; *PGM* 70.13–15; Guthrie, *Orpheus*, 17; Heyob, *Isis*, 57; Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 7, 40–41, 91; idem, *Religion*, 288; Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 237–39, 250; Klauck, *Context*, 86–88, 94–96, 102–3, 116–17, 144. The language became common enough to provide a popular metaphor or comparison (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.33–34; 17.5; Ach. Tat. 1.2.2; 1.9.7; 5.15.6).

initiated freedmen, and members of the local elite apparently could become priests.⁶⁴⁴ Mēn's two temples overlooked Antioch's plain. Mitchell notes that the temple that was more visible in Antioch stood on the hill locally called Karakuyu, "an hour's climb above the city"; the other was "about fifteen miles away, in the north-west part of its territory, at the modern village of Sagir."⁶⁴⁵ Until Roman times, the Karakuyu temple controlled most of the land below, and many who lived there were "sacred slaves." Rome dissolved this practice, but Roman names on dedications indicate that the new colonists adopted the cult as well.⁶⁴⁶

By Paul's day, however, the cultic site that dominated Antioch's urban center was, as noted above, an imperial sanctuary.⁶⁴⁷ Roman settlers brought other Roman cults, but none compared with the worship of Augustus and his family; Augustus was honored as the colony's "founder."⁶⁴⁸ The imperial cult, with its civic celebrations on special days and months (cf. Gal 4:10), regulated much of public life in Antioch, making the incompatible commitments of aniconic monotheists inescapably obvious.⁶⁴⁹ Pisidian Antioch was a Roman colony, proud of the Roman status that this honor conferred on its own citizens (see comment on Acts 13:14). This meant that most of its citizens would also be eager to demonstrate their loyalty in the city's imperial temple.

The imperial temple was so large that Paul would have seen it miles before reaching the colony as he journeyed along the Via Sebaste.⁶⁵⁰ A "podium temple and a propylon" constituted the sanctuary's focus; sculptures commemorating Augustus's triumphs decorated the building, "dated to 2–1 BC."⁶⁵¹ Tiberius began the building project, and it was probably still in progress under Gaius and the early part of Claudius's reign and hence only recently completed (if yet completed) when Paul arrived.⁶⁵² Antioch's Roman priesthoods began either at Antioch's founding or in the first century C.E., then persisted for centuries.⁶⁵³

In nearby Pisidia, temples show a fairly consistent form;⁶⁵⁴ evidence shows that earlier traditional deities were hellenized and assimilated in time.⁶⁵⁵ Warrior deities had long been prominent in the region, given Pisidia's warlike traditions.⁶⁵⁶ Mercury, perhaps as a patron deity of commerce, also appears on many coins in both Cremna and Antioch.⁶⁵⁷ On Phrygian religion, see comment on Acts 14:11–12.⁶⁵⁸

644. Gill, "Religion," 89. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:10, points out that the priesthood of Mēn, "combined with that of Demeter," went to the most prominent citizens (citing *CMRDM* 1.164–74; 4.52). The cult had its own treasury, and its festivals included athletic contests (citing *CIL* 3.295 = 6829; *CMRDM* 1.178). In most locations, members of provincial elites served priesthoods, sometimes in a hereditary role (Rizakis, "Elites," 317–18).

645. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:9. Worshipers ascended the steep route to the temple on Karakuyu, leaving dedicatory inscriptions both at the site and on the way (2:9–10, citing *CMRDM* 1.160–294; 4.1–161; 3.55–66).

646. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:10; on Romans adopting such local cults, see also 2:29.

647. Mitchell, "Antioch (OCD)"; cf. Klauck, *Context*, 323–24 (citing Price, *Rituals*, catalogue no. 123). For the imperial cult in the interior of Asia Minor in general, see esp. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:100–117.

648. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:10. On the imperial temple in Antioch, see further 1:101 (fig. 14), 104–6, 106 (figs. 15–16).

649. *Ibid.*, 2:10.

650. Hansen, "Galatia," 395; cf. Winter, "Imperial Cult," 94.

651. Mitchell, "Archaeology," 178.

652. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:10.

653. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 87.

654. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:13 (including five temples from Cremna, albeit from the mid- to late second century C.E.).

655. *Ibid.*, 2:18.

656. *Ibid.*, 2:27–28. On the pre-Roman prominence of Ares in southern Asia Minor, see Gonzales, "Oracle."

657. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 99. On Hermes, see comment on Acts 14:12.

658. For pagan religion in Anatolia generally (from the first through the third centuries C.E.), see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:11–31.

(8) *Judaism near Antioch*

Luke indicates that many Jewish people lived in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14), but some non-Lukan evidence previously cited for this claim⁶⁵⁹ is debated today.⁶⁶⁰ Until the late empire, only Acts specifically indicates Jewish people in Antioch or Iconium, and even Acts does not point to the size of these communities. This is not unusual, since what survives is often by chance, but we do have an abundance of evidence for a Jewish presence in the region as a whole, and if in the region, then likely in a town such as Antioch, one of the more prominent of the region. Josephus testifies that large numbers of Jewish people lived in Phrygia from the time of Antiochus the Great (*Ant.* 12.147–53, esp. 12.149).⁶⁶¹ (In general, next to Diaspora communities in Babylonia and Egypt, that in Asia Minor assumed the greatest importance.)⁶⁶² Jewish inscriptions from southern Asia include a number from Aphrodisias (see comment on Acts 10:2) and Acmonia,⁶⁶³ including one with an OT quotation in Hebrew, with a blessing on Israel and Jerusalem (*MAMA* 6.334).⁶⁶⁴

As a Roman colony Antioch may have attracted even more Jews than many parts of Phrygia (certainly more than rural locations).⁶⁶⁵ Even allowing that Acts 13:44 (“almost all the city”) is Lukan hyperbole (21:30; Luke 8:37, 39; 21:38; cf. also Mark 1:33; Matt 8:34; 21:10), the synagogue must have been significant (Acts 13:45).⁶⁶⁶ Though it was not, conceivably, among the larger synagogues in Asia (most notably the later, massive synagogue complex in Sardis),⁶⁶⁷ large synagogues were hardly impossible in this period; some estimate that the pre-70 Gamla synagogue in Palestine could seat about three hundred people.⁶⁶⁸ One would naturally find more local Jewish people gathering on the Sabbath (see comment on Acts 13:5).⁶⁶⁹ If the Jewish community was not large, it would nevertheless provide a base to begin making proclamation to Gentiles, as Paul’s interpretation of Isaiah here demands (13:43–47).

659. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 256–57 (citing a Phrygian epitaph, *CIJ* 2:33, §772, concerning one Δεββωρα, a LXX name, e.g., Gen 35:8; Judg 4:4–14).

660. The evidence’s wording probably suggests a more distant Antioch, e.g., in Caria or Syria (Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 150); other scholars think that Pisidian Antioch is more probable but allow for the possibility of a different Antioch (Stern, “Diaspora,” 149n8; cf. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 128n1, cited by Stern).

661. For Jews in Asia’s interior, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:31–36 (for Phrygia, 33–36); in South Galatia, Breytenbach, *Provinz*, 167–68; in Asia Minor generally, Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 259–81.

662. Koester, *Introduction*, 1:223. According to the highest estimates, Jewish people composed a fifth of the eastern Mediterranean population (Baron, *History of Jews*, 1:171; this is, however, probably too high, as noted by Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 47).

663. *MAMA* 6.177, 316, 323 (perhaps), 325, 334, 335, 335a, 347; possibly also 339. For evidence from Apamea, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:33, 35; for Acmonia, 2:35.

664. Acmonia is north-northwest of Apamea; Apamea is in western Phrygia, more than 150 km. from Iconium and fewer than 100 km. southwest of Pisidian Antioch; Aphrodisias is more than 100 km. farther southwest than Apamea (though ca. 150 km. east-southeast of Ephesus; see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 7, after 1:119). Thus Jewish populations seem more strongly attested to the west.

665. Nevertheless, because Antiochus III settled especially farmers on the land, many Jews in Phrygia and Galatia, like the Gentiles even in the towns, worked the land (see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:35).

666. If the synagogue did not control a prime piece of real estate, it might have enjoyed more spacious accommodations than would be available in, e.g., Rome, where property was expensive; but since the synagogue has not yet been identified, this is at best a guess.

667. See the comments of Seager, “Synagogue.” For a very different picture of Asian Judaism, see Trebilco, “Communities,” 564. Some now date the Sardis synagogue as late as the Byzantine period (Magness, “Synagogue”).

668. Sanders, *Judaism*, 200. For synagogues in Asia Minor, see Goodenough, *Symbols*, 2:77–83.

669. Luke’s expression, lit. “the day of the Sabbaths,” is distinctive to him in the NT (Luke 4:16; Acts 16:13; cf. *Diogn.* 4.3), but it clearly recalls the LXX (Exod 20:8; 35:3; Lev 24:8; Num 15:32–33; 28:9; Deut 5:12, 15; Jer 17:21–22, 24, 27; Ezek 46:1, 4, 12; Jdt 10:2; 1 Macc 2:32, 34, 41; 9:34, 43; 2 Macc 15:3).

Luke says that they “sat” in the synagogue. People of status or elders might sit on benches around the synagogue walls;⁶⁷⁰ some synagogues also had additional tiers of benches.⁶⁷¹ At least in less prosperous synagogues, people of less status might sit on floors (cf. Jas 2:3). Those who would teach could be invited to a seat of special honor, such as the special seat in a synagogue that many scholars call “Moses’s seat” (Matt 23:2),⁶⁷² or another seat of prominence (23:6). (Not only in Jewish settings⁶⁷³ but throughout antiquity,⁶⁷⁴ the “best seats” were generally determined by rank, even if sequence of arrival could exert some advantage [cf. Luke 14:8–10].) If various later sources are a guide, those who would read, translate, or teach, along with the synagogue leader (and perhaps others of very high status), might be located on a dais along with the Scripture scrolls.⁶⁷⁵ At least in Judea and Galilee, sages normally sat to teach,⁶⁷⁶ but there were exceptions,⁶⁷⁷ and the Diaspora practice was to stand, which Paul will do in Acts 13:16 (see further comment there).

III. SYNAGOGUE SETTING (13:15)

The immediate setting in the synagogue service offers several points at which exploration of the ancient context can illumine our understanding of the text. Who were synagogue officials? Why would they invite Paul and Barnabas? How were Scripture readings conducted?

(1) *Why Invite Paul and Barnabas? (13:15)*

The text does not indicate how the officials recognized Paul and Barnabas as potential speakers. Several factors are possible. First, in a town with a Jewish community of limited size, the arrival of two Jewish men at the synagogue from out of town would be recognized, which might have prompted inquiry into their profession or background.

670. E.g., Le Cornu, *Acts*, 718 (citing *y. Meg.* 3.1.73d). The first-century Palestinian synagogues have seating on benches around all the walls, perhaps suggesting that those who spoke did so from the room’s center (Sanders, *Figure*, 100–101).

671. Note “two tiers of benches along the walls” at the Herodium synagogue (Evans, *World*, 51) and Qiryat Sefer (57) and four tiers at Masada (55; more general mention of benches for Magdala, 53, and Modi’in, 57).

672. Suggested by Le Cornu, *Acts*, 719, as a possibility here. Many scholars link “Moses’s seat” in Matt 23:2 with a seat that has been found in synagogues (Manson, *Sayings*, 228; Filson, *Matthew*, 243; Yamauchi, *Stones*, 102; Avi-Yonah, “Archaeological Sources,” 53; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 400; Newport, “Seat of Moses”; Rahmani, “Synagogue Chairs”; Young, *Jewish Theologian*, 185–86; Evans, *World*, 60; for literacy sources, cf. esp. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1:7; *Song Rab.* 1:3, though these references are more easily construed differently). Although these seats are well attested, the label “Moses’s seat” may be applied to them later on the basis of a broader figurative usage (such as being Moses’s successors). On Matt 23:2, I am thus more apt to follow Carson, “Matthew,” 472, who lists many examples showing that the formula “to sit on X’s seat” frequently indicates someone succeeding X.

673. In schools, see, e.g., *’Abot R. Nat.* 6 A; in assemblies (often by seniority), Gen 43:33; Philo *Contempl.* 66–69; *m. Sanh.* 4:4 (the Sanhedrin); *t. Sanh.* 8:1; *y. Ta’an.* 4:2, §12; *b. Hor.* 13b, bar.; at banquets, Luke 14:7–11; *y. Ta’an.* 4:2, §§9, 12; *Ter.* 8:7; at other events, 1QS II, 19–23; 1QSa II, 11–17; *y. Ketub.* 12:3, §6; *Roš Haš.* 2:6, §9.

674. In schools, e.g., Diog. Laert. 7.1.22 (normally); assemblies, Val. Max. 4.5.ext. 2 (by age); at banquets, Plut. *Table* 1.2.3, *Mor.* 616E; Smith, *Symposium*, 33; at other events, Tac. *Ann.* 3.31; Apul. *Metam.* 10.7. Those not accorded seating commensurate with their rank could be gravely offended (Diog. Laert. 7.1.22; cf. Smith, *Symposium*, 33).

675. See *t. Meg.* 3[4]:21; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 688–89 (though acknowledging that we lack archaeological support for such a dais; if made of wood, it might well be less apt to survive); Lachs, *Commentary*, 367. Excavated synagogues have such platforms (Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 400), but these are later.

676. Palestinian Jewish teachers customarily stood to read (Luke 4:16; Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 45) and sat to teach (Luke 4:20; Matt 5:1; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 18:5; cf. further Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 45–46; Safrai, “Education,” 968; Davies, *Setting*, 423; *b. Meg.* 21a, bar.).

677. See the differences in practice, attributed to the first-century schools of Shammai and Hillel, in *t. Ber.* 1:3; *Sipre Deut.* 34.5.3. At least in later times, only ordained rabbis sat to teach whereas disciples stood (*’Abot R. Nat.* 6 A; *Gen. Rab.* 98:11).

Paul's training in Jerusalem (22:3) would have made him an exceptional candidate for a guest speaker in this relatively out-of-the-way Jewish community. Second, some scholars suggest that teachers, both Jewish and Gentile, wore special apparel that indicated their status,⁶⁷⁸ though it is not clear that Paul and Barnabas wore such apparel.⁶⁷⁹

Third, there is no suggestion in this verse that Paul and Barnabas reached town on the Sabbath (when, presumably, they would be resting rather than traveling, especially if they wished to gain a hearing in local synagogues). If they have already arrived, they probably would have already made contact with the synagogue community and would be housed with a fellow Jew rather than in an inn (cf. 17:5; see comment on Acts 16:15). Their entrance to the synagogue appears to be on the first Sabbath after their arrival, and by now they have probably begun making contacts and are known to be from the "Holy Land" and well versed in the Torah. Fourth, Paul and Barnabas might have volunteered their availability beforehand; Luke is not, after all, providing a blow-by-blow account.

Finally, Barnabas was a Levite (4:36), and if this was known he might have been invited, choosing to defer to Paul as a better speaker (14:12).⁶⁸⁰ Later tradition, probably reflecting more general preferences, specified that those calling forward readers should give first preference to priests and second to Levites.⁶⁸¹ Even aside from Barnabas's being a Levite (perhaps along with some regular members), such practices may illustrate the tendency to defer to those expected to know the law best.⁶⁸²

Although Philo presents more-formal services in his circle (*Hypoth.* 7.13), in many congregations (certainly in smaller ones), it seems likely that "anyone with something important to say would be allowed to speak."⁶⁸³ The synagogue leaders must have had the freedom to invite whomever they thought best to expound, with preference for sages, educated persons, or at least someone respectable.⁶⁸⁴ It would also be natural to recognize visitors from Judea who could both read the Hebrew text and provide encouragement from the Holy Land, especially if the synagogue leaders recognized that they were sages.

(2) Synagogue Leaders

"Synagogue head" (ἀρχισυνάγωγος) is a widely attested title, frequent in the Diaspora.⁶⁸⁵ At least in a later period, Roman officials treated these leaders as Jewish

678. E.g., Le Cornu, *Acts*, 717 (citing *Der. Er. Zut.* 5:3; *b. Šabb.* 114a); *y. Bik.* 3:3, §8 (signifying high office); cf. honorable apparel in *b. Šabb.* 114a; the possibility that Essenes wore distinctive clothing even in public (Baumgarten, "Essene"). Among Gentiles (philosophers' rough garb or, among some Romans, a Greek pallium), see, e.g., *Mus. Ruf.* 16, p. 106.13; *Dio Chrys. Or.* 70.8; *Lucian Tim.* 56; *Fronto Eloq.* 1.12; *Just. Dial.* 1; *Tert. Pall.* 6; *Eunapius Lives* 471; Liefeld, "Preacher," 168–70; *Croom, Clothing*, 51; contrast the apparel of Cynics. The evidence for Jewish scribes (cf. *b. B. Bat.* 98a; *Matt* 23:5; Liefeld, "Preacher," 180; *Lane, Mark*, 439–40; *Goodman, State*, 77) is weaker, especially in the Diaspora, where we have little information.

679. Presumably, they wore their tzitzit, or fringes (*Num* 15:38–40; *Deut* 22:12), openly, at least for synagogue worship, but this would merely identify them as Jewish (cf. *Jesus* in *Matt* 9:20; 14:36). It is possible that Shammaites may have prescribed longer fringes than Hillelites (*France, Matthew*, 325) and that the tallit of a scholar may have been particularly long (*b. B. Bat.* 57b; *Lachs, Commentary*, 367). The tallit was not yet a "prayer shawl" in this period (*Le Cornu, Acts*, 562).

680. Cf. *Sanders, Jesus to Mishnah*, 79, on the preference for priests as readers in *Neh* 8:4–8 and for synagogue leaders in the Theodotus inscription (*CIJ* 2:332–35, §1404) and *Philo Hypoth.* 7.13. Cf. also (for a priest) *CIJ* 2:76–77, §828a.

681. *Moore, Judaism*, 1:302 (citing *m. Git.* 5:8; cf. scholars in *m. Hor.* 3:8, where learning takes precedence over social rank). On priests teaching, see, e.g., *Deut* 24:8; *Ezek* 44:23; *Mal* 2:4–9; in a negative case, *Mic* 3:11.

682. Later rabbis insisted that a town's true guardians were not their elite citizens but their scribes and teachers (*y. Hag.* 1:7, §2). Although I do not mention it above, there is also the possibility, given the local prominence of Sergii Paullii and the interest of Cyprus's governor in Judaism, that a letter of recommendation from Sergius Paulus would have introduced them favorably to the synagogue leaders.

683. *Sanders, Jesus to Mishnah*, 80–81; cf. *idem, Figure*, 101.

684. *Safrai*, "Synagogue," 932.

685. See, e.g., *MAMA* 4.90; *CIJ* 1:187–88, §265; 1:297–98, §383; 1:369, §504; 1:409, §553; 1:428, §584; 1:433, §596; 1:457, §638; 1:492, §681; 1:522, §722; 2:10, §741; 2:12, §744; 2:27–28, §766; 2:55–56, §§803–4;

communities' "responsible representatives."⁶⁸⁶ Traditionally this office has been identified with a similarly constructed Hebrew phrase in rabbinic texts, the *rosh ha-kneset* (ראש הכנסת), head of an assembly, typically the highest office in the synagogue.⁶⁸⁷ More recently some scholars have offered significant evidence in support of the view that most who were honored as synagogue benefactors in the Diaspora were Gentile patrons.⁶⁸⁸ Rajak argues forcefully that the title ἀρχισυνάγωγος⁶⁸⁹ involved especially socioeconomic patronage.⁶⁹⁰

Clearly, however, the holders were not always Gentile; a Jewish woman in Smyrna, for example, held the office.⁶⁹¹ Moreover, Theodotus's grandfather in Jerusalem held this position, perhaps in the first century B.C.E.⁶⁹² It is quite likely that most were benefactors, but the Jewish benefactors were probably also respected leaders in the Jewish community and would be accorded some influence in the synagogue. It is likely that not everyone employed the term, in the many locations where it was used, in the same manner.⁶⁹³ Official duties may have depended on whether the office was honorary or performed a substantial role in a synagogue (though honorary synagogue rulers may have participated in the service as part of their role, this is much less likely for Gentile benefactors). The ἀρχων of a synagogue⁶⁹⁴ was probably generally equivalent (Luke 8:41, 49).⁶⁹⁵ (Another

2:175, §991 (Sepphoris, but fourth century); 2:332–35, §1404; 2:339, §1414; discussion, 1:xcvii–xcix; Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 171–72; Chilton and Yamauchi, "Synagogues," 1146. For women filling this role in some (a minority of) locations, see Brooten, *Women Leaders*, 5–33.

686. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 172, citing *Cod. theod.* 16.8.4, 13, 14.

687. Applebaum, "Organization," 492; cf. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 186–87 (noting the debate); Goodman, *State*, 119, 123; Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 171; on the rabbinic office, see, e.g., Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 454. One handles the Torah in *m. Yoma* 7:1 and *Sotah* 7:7 (cited in Larkin, *Acts*, 197), but this is clearly a later construct (involving the high priest). The rabbis may reflect usage especially in Palestine and the East (perhaps more relevant for the Gospels). Because the terminology is too close for coincidence, where the function differs, both offices probably overlap and sprang from the same roots (the honorary use, especially as applied to Gentile benefactors, presumably being derivative and later).

688. Witherington, *Acts*, 204, following Rajak, "Synagogue within City." On donor inscriptions honoring patrons, see, e.g., White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:77–85. One freedman renovated an Isis temple in Pompeii in the name of his six-year-old son, who unlike him was eligible to receive decurion status for this benefaction (1:30–31).

689. The term appears often enough in Asia; e.g., *MAMA* 4.90.

690. Witherington, *Acts*, 204–5, and Winter, *Left Corinth*, 204–5 (both following esp. Rajak, "Community and Boundaries"); cf. also Goodman, *State*, 119, 123; Rajak and Noy, "Office and Status" (see further also for the influence of Greco-Roman ideals on the office).

691. Goodenough, *Symbols*, 80. Stern, "Diaspora," 150, applies it to local synagogue leaders in a first- or second-century inscription from Synnada in Phrygia, relatively close to Luke's area.

692. Meyers and Strange, *Archaeology*, 83; Kloppenborg Verbin, "Dating Theodotus."

693. See Trebilco and Evans, "Diaspora Judaism," 287 (noting even the change in Alexandrian leadership from *Let. Aris.* 310 to *Jos. Ant.* 14.117 to *Philo Flacc.* 74, 117). Some Jewish-Christian congregations in Palestine also used this title (*Epiph. Her.* 30.18, cited in Bruce, *Acts*¹, 261).

694. See, e.g., *CIJ* 1:6, §1; 1:8, §4; 1:15, §13; 1:20, §22 (perhaps); 1:23, §26; 1:49, §78; 1:59, §85; 1:62, §88; 1:67, §95; 1:77, §110; 1:82, §118; 1:83, §120; 1:88, §125 (probably); 1:99, §140; 1:103, §145; 1:104, §146; 1:154, §216; 1:176, §247; 1:187–88, §265; 1:191–92, §271; 1:195, §277 (age nineteen); 1:200, §284 (age twelve, possibly non-Jewish); 1:230, §291; 1:240, §304; 1:249, §317; 1:255, §324; 1:256, §325; 1:261, §332 (but mostly reconstructed); 1:266, §338; 1:272, §347; 1:295, §380; 1:310, §402 (less than three years old); 1:332, §442; 1:343, §465 (ἐξάρχων; for worship leading, cf. Williams, "Exarchon"); 1:346, §470; 1:355, §483 (μελλάρχων); 1:367–68, §503; 1:369, §505 (age nineteen); 1:399, §538; 1:399, §539 (προάρχων); 1:476, §663; 2:76–77, §828a; in Europe, see further 1:lxxxvii–lxxxix. In Rome, the title was sometimes conferred on children (Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 179), i.e., as an honorary or hereditary title. That it could be held "twice" (*CIJ* 1:15, §13; 1:205, §289; 1:248, §316; 1:265, §337; 1:298–99, §384; 1:303, §391; 1:369, §505) or "three times" (1:360, §494) suggests that in at least some locations, it was held for a particular duration of time. The most common Jewish office title in Rome (Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 173), it was borrowed by Jews from Greek civic usage (Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 454).

695. Cf. ἀρχων "of [or from] the synagogue," e.g., *CIJ* 1:269, §343; 1:298–99, §384; 1:303, §390; but apparently it was sometimes added to the archisynagogue title (e.g., 1:187–88, §265; 1:409).

synagogue title, γεροσιάρχης,⁶⁹⁶ may have sometimes been equivalent and would have been especially applicable to elders.)

Why is the plural used? Though many synagogues may have had only one person with this title (Luke 13:14), others had several (Mark 5:22; cf. Acts 18:8, 17); this may have been especially the case where a synagogue community enjoyed multiple benefactors and employed the title in an honorary way. There is also the possibility of several synagogues meeting for joint services⁶⁹⁷ (though the service mentioned in this passage appears to be a regular service, not one arranged simply to hear the visiting teachers).

Although such leaders would not need to be known as sages themselves, they would have to be knowledgeable enough to be able to evaluate “the competence of those who were invited to read the Scriptures, translate, or address the people.”⁶⁹⁸ The synagogue official might invite a member of the congregation to explain the text, but an available sage would undoubtedly prove welcome.⁶⁹⁹ Officials might well be delighted to invite travelers from the Holy Land known as teachers, but when the congregation rejected their message (Acts 13:45), the officials might well have been embarrassed by their teaching. Although Paul and Barnabas had the appropriate credentials and no one could know their unusual views in advance, the leaders might still feel personally dishonored in the situation.

On the address, “Men” (“Ἄνδρες; also in 13:16), see comment on Acts 2:14; on the frequently ethnic function of “brothers,” see comment on Acts 9:17. Most commentators suggest that a “word of exhortation” (λόγος παρακλήσεως) is an exposition of the Scripture that has just been read⁷⁰⁰ (often citing Heb 13:22, the expression’s other NT appearance, which does not mean this;⁷⁰¹ 1 Tim 4:13 is a more likely parallel to the concept).⁷⁰² Such a phrase could apply to a prophetic message of consolation (2 Bar. 81:1, referring to the message of consolation that follows in 2 Bar. 81). The phrase here probably indicates simply “encouraging” or “hortatory words” (as in the LXX of 1 Macc 10:24; 2 Macc 15:11). The reader knows in advance what basic message the invited guests will bring (cf. Acts 9:20) and that true “comfort” (παράκλησις) comes from the Holy Spirit (9:31), right teaching (15:31), and the promised hope (Luke 2:25) and so will not be surprised that the honored visitors’ “message of exhortation” is a “message of salvation” (Acts 13:26), the message of God and the Lord (13:44, 46, 48–49).⁷⁰³

(3) Scripture Readings

Some scholars argue for the lack of concrete evidence for Scripture readings in synagogue services in the first century,⁷⁰⁴ but given our fragmentary evidence from

696. *CIJ* 1:13, §9 (age sixty-five); 1:67, §95; 1:75, §106; 1:83, §119; 1:105, §147; 1:133, §189 (perhaps); 1:238, §301; 1:276, §353; 1:286, §368 (54); 1:312, §405; 1:313, §408 (probably); 1:323, §425 (probably); 1:374, §511; 1:393, §533; 1:413, §561; 1:434, §600. The title was significant enough to go back three generations to record (1:440–41, §613). Cf. *ιερευσάρχων*, 1:369, §504.

697. Witherington, *Acts*, 406 (also noting that husbands and wives could share the title).

698. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 717.

699. *Ibid.*, 692.

700. E.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 230; cf. Reicke, *Era*, 123.

701. Some interpret Heb 13:22 in light of Acts 13:15 and hence as a sermon on a text (e.g., Lane, *Hebrews*, 568; Goppelt, *Theology*, 2:240); despite the pervasive use of Ps 110, however, Hebrews does not follow this precise form.

702. Cf. Justin 1 *Apol.* 67; in synagogues, cf. sources in Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 78, 81 (Philo *Hypoth.* 7.13; *Good Person* 81; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.175); Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 461; Aune, *Environment*, 202.

703. Although Luke employs λόγος about sixty-five times in Acts alone, genitive nouns of content (or nouns other than “God” or “the Lord”) rarely follow it (exceptions include “message of his grace” in Acts 14:3; 20:32), and so the connection between “encouragement” and “salvation” may be noteworthy (compare Luke 2:25 with 2:38). On Luke’s use of the LXX, see comments in our introduction to Acts 7 and in the commentary introduction, ch. 14; for Luke’s use of the LXX here, see especially Sterling, “Understanding,” 115–18.

704. Cf. Aune, *Environment*, 27.

this period, an argument from silence against such readings would be completely unwarranted even if the silence were as total as some claim.⁷⁰⁵ Many synagogues must have also expounded Torah readings even before 70 C.E.; Luke is unlikely to have inadvertently invented a custom that coincidentally became dominant over a wide geographic range later (Luke 4:16–20).⁷⁰⁶

Moreover, other pre-70 sources also clearly *do* indicate such readings.⁷⁰⁷ The Theodotus inscription attests reading of Scripture as an important function of a synagogue in Second Temple Jerusalem.⁷⁰⁸ Philo knew not only of meetings on the Sabbath⁷⁰⁹ but of Scripture reading and, in some of his writings, (explicitly) exposition by someone more learned.⁷¹⁰ Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.175) thought that Moses prescribed weekly meetings to hear the Torah read and to learn it precisely (the latter practice presumably suggesting either teaching or discussion); he claims that Asian Jews in the time of Herod the Great already believed that they were obligated to learn their laws on the Sabbath (*Jos. Ant.* 16.43). Beginning in the next century, early church fathers also attest the synagogue practice,⁷¹¹ just as Luke does in the first century. Reading followed by exposition may fit one form of school exercises developed in antiquity;⁷¹² apparently, Jewish people had developed a technique similar to this independently, or the pattern was already widely known from an early period (Neh 8:7–8).

Certainly, synagogues often read the law on Sabbaths (Acts 13:27; 15:21). Though poorer synagogues meeting in homes perhaps could not afford them, the norm seems to have been that even Diaspora synagogues had Torah scrolls (*Jos. Ant.*

705. Some Jewish gatherings may have omitted Scripture readings if they could not yet afford scrolls (in *t. B. Meši'a* 11:23, people of a town would fund construction of a synagogue and purchase of Torah and scrolls of the Prophets), and we should not think of the later schedule of readings. But it is impossible to believe that later practice simply emulated a fiction widely reported in our first-century sources. First-century practice probably emulated still earlier tradition (Neh 8:5–8, 18; 9:3).

706. In the early second century C.E., Christians maintained a heavy emphasis on Scripture reading (to a prisoner in Lucian *Peregr.* 12); it was standard practice in the churches by the middle of the century (Justin *I Apol.* 67; later, Murat. Canon 73–80) and probably had simply persisted from the beginning in all early Christian assemblies with Scripture available (cf. 1 Tim 4:13). Naturally Paul expected his letters to be read to the gathered assemblies (1 Thess 5:27; Col 4:16), as did John with his apocalypse (Rev 1:3; 22:8). For the compatibility of Luke's portrayal with other information known about first-century synagogues, see, e.g., Oster, "Rejoinder to Kee."

707. Oesterley, *Liturgy*, 38–40; Levine, "Synagogue," 15–17; Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 78–81; Aune, *Environment*, 202; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 692; Dunn, "Synagogue," 219; Graves, "Reading"; by the late first century, cf. the tradition in *m. Ber.* 1:2; much later, Shinan, "Sermons," esp. 107. Though Luke may schematize his reports, items such as a synagogue attendant's title (ὑπηρέτης, Luke 4:20) are no mere guesses, since independently attested elsewhere (Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 202; see comment on Acts 13:5) even if not universally used. Formal, permanent Torah arks did not survive from before the third century (for some suggested reasons, see, e.g., Hoffman, "Torah Service"); but Hachlili, "Torah Shrine," argues that Torah shrines were prominent after 70 C.E. The scrolls may have been kept in the small room found in many synagogues (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 689).

708. *CIJ* 2:332–35, §1404.

709. In the Diaspora; Philo *Embassy* 156; *Good Person* 81. In a later time, Scripture was read in some places on Mondays and Thursdays as well (Safrai, "Synagogue," 919; for this later practice, see further 927–33), but in this period, regular assemblies were primarily for the Sabbath and, for those who had not made pilgrimage, festivals (idem, "Education," 966–67).

710. Philo *Good Person* 81–82, esp. 82; *Spec. Laws* 2.62; *Mos.* 2.215–16; *Dreams* 2.127; cf. *Creation* 128. Possibly also in the Qumran scrolls (cf. Tigchelaar, "Sabbath Halakha," on 4Q421, 4Q264a), but this depends on a reconstructed reading.

711. Cohen, "Evidence on Synagogue," 164–65, citing esp. Justin *Dial.* 72.3; Justin *Exhort.* 13 (PG 6:268); Hippol. *Ref.* 9.12.8 (Wendland, 247).

712. For the pedagogic technique, cf. perhaps Epict. *Diatr.* 1.10.8 (in light of LCL, 1:77n1); reading and then explaining a law (Demosth. *Aristocr.* 28–36); paraphrase and then exposition (Townsend, "Education," 146); philosophic lecture followed by questions and answers in philosophic schools (Watson, "Education," 311). Others might also lecture on relevant matters at other cult associations (Smith, *Symposium*, 121–22).

16.164),⁷¹³ and it is difficult to imagine that they kept such expensive works only for decoration.⁷¹⁴ Perhaps it was employed for individual study during the week, but optimum use of the scroll would include readers reading it to the assemblies (some of whose members probably could not read). Later rabbis expected that the Jewish residents of a town were responsible for deciding to buy scrolls of the law and the prophets (*t. B. Meši'a* 11:23). Some scholars, while wrongly playing down a role for public prayer in ancient synagogues (see comment on Acts 1:14), provide abundant evidence that pre-70 synagogues were used for reading, study, and teaching of Torah (e.g., *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.175; Philo *Spec. Laws* 2.62).⁷¹⁵ Given most people's lack of personal ownership of scrolls and the generally low level of reading literacy in the wider culture, how else would Jewish men have maintained biblical literacy even if they had been instructed to recite as children?

The language in which the Scriptures were read is a more difficult question. Some rabbis apparently claimed that even Hellenist synagogues included a reading in Hebrew,⁷¹⁶ but this is questionable for Diaspora synagogues that may have lacked any members sufficiently proficient in Hebrew to read it well⁷¹⁷ and also for synagogues that lacked resources to procure both Greek and Hebrew scrolls (especially if the latter would need to be procured in Jerusalem and brought back by pilgrims).⁷¹⁸ If read in Hebrew, Scripture would surely be translated into Greek (or Aramaic, where that was the dominant language). Even in Palestine, translations probably usually accompanied the readings.⁷¹⁹ Expositions probably focused not simply on exegetical details but on practical ethical questions relevant to the audience.⁷²⁰

Readings from the prophets may not have been mandatory in this period, but at least some locations must have read from them, since many people knew the prophets and some synagogues owned prophet scrolls (which would not make sense if they did not use them).⁷²¹ Luke assumes readings from them to be at least a regular occurrence in Jerusalem (Acts 13:27), using language similar to his accurate assumption that Moses was read each Sabbath in synagogues (15:21).

None of this, of course, settles the question as to whether there was a regular lectionary reading assigned to each Sabbath this early. We cannot be certain whether, in this period, lections sometimes dictated Sabbath Torah readings or, perhaps more frequently,

713. Earlier in Palestine, scrolls are mentioned in towns of Judah in 1 Macc 1:55–56, although some may have belonged to individuals (1:57; cf. *Jos. Ant.* 12.256), perhaps individuals of substance. Scrolls did appear in villages in the first century (*Jos. War* 2.229); in the prominent city of Tiberias, cf. *Life* 134. The books were precious, so that Jews leaving Caesarea carried them (*War* 2.291–92).

714. For that matter, ornamentation in the earliest Palestinian synagogues as well as the synagogue on Delos lacked artwork, *menoroth*, other Jewish symbols, or, it is thought, even a shrine for storing the Torah scroll (Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 85).

715. See Falk, "Prayer Literature," 277; arguing for Scripture exposition, see also Safrai, "Education," 967. For later rabbinic discussion of minimum lengths for Torah readings, see *y. Ta'an.* 4:3, §1.

716. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 40, citing *t. Meg.* 4:13. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 690, cites *m. Meg.* 2:1; 4:4; *t. Meg.* 4[3]:20ff. Hebrew scrolls would unwind from right to left (Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 92).

717. Readings in the LXX were undoubtedly common (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 691, notes *m. Meg.* 1:8; 2:1; *Yad.* 4:5 as arguing against this practice; *t. Meg.* 4[3]:13).

718. Despite six Hebrew fragments, the overwhelming majority of the more than eighty inscriptions from the Sardis synagogue are in Greek (Kroll, "Greek Inscriptions"), although, admittedly, these are mostly donor inscriptions, not Torah.

719. Safrai, "Education," 966–67.

720. See Goodman, *State*, 7–8 (comparing philosophers), 223n175 (comparing the frequently ethical discussions of the *Sipre* to more strictly legal interests in Mishnah and Tosefta).

721. Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," 202–3, cites Luke 4:17 and also "the Ezekiel scroll buried in the Masada synagogue." The prophets' works were not as prominent as the Law (Philo, e.g., focuses almost entirely on the Pentateuch). Longer scrolls, e.g., Isaiah, would have two rollers (Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 92). In contrast to Acts 13:15–16, the prophetic lesson's reader sometimes also preached it (Abrahams, *Studies* [1], 4).

readers chose their own texts.⁷²² On the whole, it seems improbable that we should assume a fixed system of lectionary readings applicable even to the interior of Asia Minor at this early date.⁷²³ If there are questions surrounding the antiquity of scheduled readings from the Torah, assigned haftarah portions are even less likely for this period.⁷²⁴

Public readers were used in other settings—for example, in Gentile courts of law⁷²⁵—and so Diaspora synagogues probably would not have objected to particularly competent readers dominating the readings when necessary. Most synagogues, however, would have contained a number of literate readers (urban areas and Jews having higher concentrations of literacy), at least for readings in Greek. The *chazan* gave the scroll to a reader, who would unroll and then read it after the blessing.⁷²⁶

The expression “law [or “Moses”] and prophets” (13:15) appears frequently in Luke-Acts (Luke 16:16, 29, 31; 24:27; Acts 24:14; 26:22; 28:23), much more than does a tripartite expression as in Luke 24:44. “Law” (or “Moses”) “and the prophets” is also more common in early Jewish sources, especially in those preceding Luke’s day.⁷²⁷ Although some scholars have argued for a tripartite expression in 4QMMT, this has been questioned,⁷²⁸ and most examples of this expression are later (especially among the rabbis),⁷²⁹ though the rabbis may be emulating an earlier sage.⁷³⁰

b. Proem and Biblical narratio (13:16–22)

Like Stephen, Paul begins with a sweep of biblical history; Luke’s Paul wishes it to be clear that his message is grounded not solely in isolated proof texts but in the pattern of God’s working throughout biblical history, particularly in the key moments revealing the development of his plan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Here we must survey the nature of synagogue homilies, literary connections with other Lukan speeches, distinctively Pauline characteristics, and proposals regarding the speech’s structure.

(1) Synagogue Homilies

There is little evidence to suggest that synagogues had regular preachers or teachers; the Scripture exposition does not seem to have been a prescribed part of the service

722. Cf. Safrai, “Synagogue,” 927; Morris, *Lectionaries* (passim, esp. 15–16; cf. 25, on the second-century Justin 1 *Apol.* 67); Morris, “Lectionaries”; Patte, *Hermeneutic*, 37. Cf. the practice of bibliomancy, randomly opening sacred texts (pagan, Jewish, or Christian) for a relevant message (van der Horst, “Bibliomancy,” citing 1 Macc 3:48; 2 Macc 8:23; though he thinks [167] that Jesus in Luke 4:17 followed the lectionary). For one survey of the synagogue service’s development (noting its early simplicity), see Langer, “Study.”

723. Safrai, “Synagogue,” 927. Even without a regular cycle of readings, some later principles about public readings likely follow earlier practice (cf. Perrot, “Lecture de la Bible”).

724. Even after the triennial cycle for Torah was established, readers had more freedom in the Prophets (Moore, *Judaism*, 1:296–301). Cohen, “Earliest Evidence,” notes that more than three-quarters of Philo’s rare Minor Prophets quotations coincide with readings from a particular part of the haftarah cycle, suggesting that it predates 70 C.E.; while both reflect a common tradition of usage, this argument may merit further investigation. Haftarah readings normally corresponded significantly to the Torah readings (Goswell, “Hermeneutics”).

725. Isaeus *Pyrr.* 37–38; Demosth. *Aristocr.* 28–36; Cic. *Sest.* 4.11.

726. See Le Cornu, *Acts*, 691. On the *chazan*, see further Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 462; comment on ὑπηρέτην in Acts 13:5.

727. See 2 Macc 15:9; 4 Macc 18:10–18; Matt 5:17; 7:12; Q (Matt 11:13 = Luke 16:16); Rom 3:21; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:484, cite also *t. B. Meši’a* 11:23.

728. Ulrich, “Non-attestation”; Campbell, “4QMMT^d”; Lim, “Reference.”

729. E.g., ‘*Abot R. Nat.* 14 A; *b. ‘Abod. Zar.* 19b; *B. Bat.* 13b, bar.; *B. Qam.* 92b; *Mak.* 10b; *Sanh.* 90b (attributed to Gamaliel II); 106a; *y. Meg.* 1:5, §3; *Ned.* 3:9, §3; *Šeqal.* 3:2; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12:13; *Gen. Rab.* 76:5.

730. Sirach’s prologue, though more often speaking of “law and prophets,” does include the phrase “law, prophets, and other writings [τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων].” Although Philo focuses primarily on the Pentateuch himself, he notes also the prophets and “hymns” as objects of the Therapeutae’s sacred study (*Contempl.* 25).

per se. The expositions were usually haggadic, focusing on moral exhortation and comfort.⁷³¹ There can be little doubt, however, that Diaspora synagogues allowed educated members to explain the Scripture readings to hearers, as is clear in Philo.⁷³²

Because only Jews and Christians combined worship with speaking, they alone among religious groups practiced “rhetorical activity” in a corporate religious setting.⁷³³ Scholars have pointed to parallels between Paul’s synagogue homily and those characteristic of synagogue homilies in general.⁷³⁴ By some estimates, some two thousand examples remain, though most of these are in rabbinic literature from the Amoraic period.⁷³⁵ Although reconstructing first-century models based on subsequent sources may be hazardous,⁷³⁶ it does seem promising that this speech matches the examples we have, which cannot reasonably be assumed to be based on Acts 13 or other NT examples.

Further, the basic form of the later homily is likely based on Greek rhetorical forms, which more prominent educated Diaspora Jews, possibly even earlier than their Judean counterparts, would have adapted for use in public Scripture exposition.⁷³⁷ Some scholars have compared Acts 13 to the pattern in a variety of nonrabbinic texts, both Jewish and Christian (e.g., 4 Macc 16:16–22; Jos. *War* 5.362–415; 7.341–80).⁷³⁸ This is helpful so long as the contrast with Greco-Roman speeches is not overemphasized.⁷³⁹

Synagogue homilies could prove quite hellenized, reflecting the culture of those who offered them; two possibly first-century sermons in Asianic style lack allegory (contrary to what some other Diaspora Jews, e.g., Philo, may have preferred) or apocalyptic elements and include few LXX quotations (perhaps because of the translation’s “low stylistic level”). These hellenized homilies are favorable toward Gentiles, betray a high level of rhetoric, and reveal a Stoic “conceptual framework.”⁷⁴⁰ But the LXX⁷⁴¹ was well known in Asia Minor; Jewish inscriptions from Acmonia often cite it, including funerary inscriptions.⁷⁴²

As good rhetoric demanded, this speech suits local color (especially the synagogue setting, Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.24); speeches in histories could also contribute to events, as does this one.⁷⁴³ The speech focuses on the fulfillment of promises concerning David through Jesus (Acts 13:23, 32; cf. 7:5, 17; 26:6);⁷⁴⁴ the promise theme has an unfulfilled eschatological component (24:15 with 26:7; 28:20), but in Luke’s theology its

731. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 692.

732. Philo *Good Person* 82; *Spec. Laws* 2.62; cf. *Mos.* 2.215–16; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.175.

733. Berry and Heath, “Oratory and Declamation,” 420.

734. Bowker, “Proem and Yelammedenu Form” (with the comparison tending toward authenticity); Stegner, “Homily,” 66; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 721; for a survey of views on the rhetorical form of the passage (homily, Greco-Roman rhetoric, etc.), see Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 219–21. It should be noted, however, that our extant rabbinic midrash was academic discourse among sages, not homiletic expositions for synagogues (Porton, “Midrash”).

735. Stegner, “Homily,” 52 (noting esp. Heinemann, “Profile”).

736. Aune, *Environment*, 202, argues that fixed sermonic patterns are later.

737. Davids, “Homily,” 515–17; for sources, cf. esp. Black, “Form of Sermon.”

738. Wills, “Form of Sermon”; followed by others, e.g., Lane, *Hebrews*, lxxii.

739. See Black, *Rhetoric of Gospel*, 119–23.

740. Siegert, “Homily,” 435–37. For examples of Judaism’s cultural adaptation to its surroundings in southern Asia Minor, see Williams, “Jews of Corycus.”

741. That is, the basic text type that is summarized today as LXX; the textual diversity of the early Greek version leads some to distinguish various recensions.

742. Trebilco, *Communities*, 58–84, esp. 60–78.

743. See Plümacher, “Missionsreden.”

744. Strauss, *Messiah*, 148–80 (not only in Jesus’s resurrection but also in his earthly life and ministry); Lövestam, *Son and Saviour*, 84; on David and messiahship in early Judaism and Luke-Acts, see further Miura, *David*. Lövestam, *Son and Saviour*, 87, connects Jesus as “Savior” (Acts 13:23) with the Davidic promise, hence the kingdom, hence forgiveness and the rest of what Paul preaches in this speech. Although fulfillment

realized eschatological component is available in the present era through the gift of the Spirit (1:4; 2:33, 39; Luke 24:49).

(2) *Literary Connections*

In many respects, Paul's inaugural speech here (as opposed to merely a summary about speeches, Acts 9:20) closely parallels Peter's inaugural evangelistic speech in 2:14–39.⁷⁴⁵ Goulder cites the same "theme, text, and exposition":⁷⁴⁶

Subject	Peter's Sermon (Acts 2)	Paul's Sermon (Acts 13)
You killed Jesus	2:22–23	13:27–28
God raised him up	2:24	13:30
David says in Ps 16	2:25–28	13:35
David remains dead	2:29	13:36
God raised up Christ from David's seed	2:30	(13:23)
Jesus did not see corruption	2:31	13:37

Such parallels deliberately underline the continuity between the two apostles.⁷⁴⁷ The parallels are not surprising, in view of the way Luke connects various characters.⁷⁴⁸ (That Paul's first and last long speeches in Acts are to Israel is also significant.)⁷⁴⁹

(3) *Pauline Characteristics*

Despite connections with other Lukan speeches, this speech contains some distinctively Pauline elements; if Luke adds these himself,⁷⁵⁰ he does so with a knowledge of Paul's typical style, which he acquired from Paul or a Pauline source.⁷⁵¹ Comparisons between Paul's speeches in Acts and the historical letters of Paul are not easily made because of both Luke's (and other ancient historians') range of acceptable literary freedoms and the different literary genres involved.⁷⁵² Paul was not writing speeches or hybrids between letters and speeches,⁷⁵³ although standard argumentative patterns

of earlier biblical promises is a Lukan theme, it is hardly foreign to Paul (Rom 1:2–3; 3:21; 16:25–26; 1 Cor 15:3–4; cf. Ware, *Synopsis*, §97, pp. 176–77).

745. Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 116–17, though acknowledging the distinctiveness of each. Others compare also the Scripture-laden speech of Stephen, some (e.g., Soards, *Speeches*, 81–88) arguing that negative elements escalate in the speech whereas others think this speech much less negative than Stephen's. See especially Zhang, *Paul Among Jews*, for comparison with inaugural sermons of Jesus (34–64) and Peter (65–109); for a detailed survey of previous research on Paul's speech in Acts 13, see *ibid.*, 11–31.

746. Goulder, *Type and History*, 83; cf. Stronstad, *Prophethood*, 111.

747. Zehle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 41.

748. Cf. also Jesus's inaugural speech scene in Luke 4:16–30 (Neiryneck, "Luke 4,16–30," 365–75; Longenecker, "Character," 143; Chance, *Acts*, 228). Some of these parallels are dictated by the synagogue settings (Acts 13:14; Luke 4:16), such as the welcome to speak (Acts 13:15; Luke 4:17) and reading or expounding Scripture (Acts 13:16–41; Luke 4:18–19); the note of fulfillment in each naturally fits the gospel message as a fulfillment of Scripture. Nevertheless, Luke includes these details though he was not obligated to report them. More important is the contrast between initial openness and a violent response after the affirmation of Gentiles (Acts 13:42–50; Luke 4:22–29).

749. Borgman, *Way*, 309, argues that Acts 13:16–41 and 28:25–28 provide Paul's "Two Framing Speeches to Israel."

750. Zehle, *Pentecost Discourse*, 41, contending that the Pauline conclusion does not fit the rest of the speech.

751. See discussion of *prosopopeia* in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:284–85. Sabugal, "Dios cumplio," seeks to isolate genuinely Pauline, pre-Lukan tradition from Luke's redaction; although it is not impossible that Paul may have recounted the speech's essentials to Luke, this approach probably is too optimistic about ancient historiographic method and especially about the effectiveness of source criticism. See more helpfully Pillai, *Preaching*, 77–111, esp. 105–10, who shows that everything in the speech is compatible with the historical Paul; he concludes (111; also 121) that Luke "is composing" but this composition reflects genuine Pauline theology.

752. See Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 109–15 (noting that much of the rhetoric in the Acts speeches may be Luke's).

753. See *ibid.*, 102–9, though I am much more amenable to rhetorical criticism of Paul's epistles. If Dionysius of Halicarnassus critiqued literature on rhetorical grounds, people of status must have, consciously or unconsciously, done the same with letters.

would be common to both argumentative letters and argumentative speeches. Still, there are elements of Paul's missionary speeches distinct from those of other speakers in Acts, and some of these do comport particularly well with passages in Paul's letters (e.g., Rom 1:18–32).⁷⁵⁴ The approach in Paul's speeches is consonant with the complex, epistolary Paul and with the sort of character we would expect of one who accomplished what the epistles testify that he accomplished.⁷⁵⁵

Though the specifically quoted texts here are favorites of Luke's, the themes may be also Pauline. Certainly Jesus's resurrection is central to Paul's soteriology; he preached this as part of his gospel to unbelievers in accordance with apostolic tradition, and he believed that it could be defended from Scripture, apparently amply (1 Cor 15:4).⁷⁵⁶ His letters to Christian congregations do not emphasize Davidic Christology; but he believed it (Rom 1:3; 15:12),⁷⁵⁷ and it would have made sense that he sometimes used it evangelistically or in inevitable debates in synagogues. Even the piling up of quotations from Scripture (3:10–18; 10:18–21; 15:9–12), though done in a different way, appears when Paul addresses particularly Jewish audiences or issues. Paul could summarize segments of salvation history (e.g., 9:7–18).

Luke's accurate preservation of midrashic features in the speech suggests the authenticity of the basic portrayal.⁷⁵⁸ Though Luke, as a historian, would have freedom to fill in a speech with midrashic details if he knew or surmised that midrash occurred, he derived his knowledge of such midrashic exposition somewhere, and he certainly provides here at least the kind of exposition Paul was known to offer presumably especially in synagogues.⁷⁵⁹ Perhaps most in favor of the idea that the speech includes recollections of some Christian exposition prior to Luke's composition are the implicit midrashic connections in the speech that are never explored.

(4) *Proposals regarding the Speech's Structure*

Scholars have proposed a range of structures; samples of four types of them are noted here. Bligh's chiasmic type of outline is most complex and perhaps least discernible for Luke's average audience (even notwithstanding a slight dislocation):⁷⁶⁰

- A God's work for Israel in the past (Acts 13:16b–19)
- B Unsatisfactory interim before the first David (13:20–21)

754. See Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 150; Baum, "Paulinismen," 414–15 (comparing Acts 13:38–39 with Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9), 416–17 (comparing Acts 13:29–31 with 1 Cor 15:3–7), 418 (comparing Acts 13:27–28 with 1 Cor 2:8; 2 Cor 3:15; 5:21), 419–20 (comparing Acts 13:46 and 28:27–28 with Rom 1:16; 10:14; 11:8, 11, 16; 1 Cor 11:3), and 421–22 (comparing Acts 13:32–33 with Gal 1:9; 3:14, 16; Rom 1:2, 4; 4:13, 16).

755. See Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 170–71. For an example closer to Paul's letters, see comment at Acts 20:18–35, the only Lukan speech of Paul addressing a Christian audience and hence closer in character to Paul's letters.

756. See further Ware, *Synopsis*, §34, pp. 64–69.

757. It is precarious, in view of our limited Pauline corpus and its occasional nature, to pontificate on what must have been characteristic of his preaching. The biblical David promise is also likely presupposed in the "Christ" title (see, e.g., excursus on messiahship at Acts 2:36; Keener, *John*, 284–86). In any event, the sparse evidence in Paul is sufficient to prevent us from supposing that he would have repudiated as contrary to his theology the Davidic material in the present Lukan speech. For evidence supporting the early tradition of Jesus's Davidic ancestry, see Brown, *Birth*, 505–12.

758. Ellis, "Midrashic Features" (putting the matter more strongly; but while midrashic features are consistent with tradition, Luke could write speeches in character if he had learned something of midrash). Bruce, "Paul's Use of Old Testament," allows that Luke composed the speech but argues that he preserved the substance of Paul's exposition. Sterling, "Understanding," 111, follows Dibelius in attributing to Luke this speech, which he sees as inadequately Pauline.

759. That is, this is a sample of Pauline synagogue exposition, nowhere else fleshed out so fully (Acts 9:20), just as 17:22–31 provides a sample of Paul's philosophic apologetic, only hinted at elsewhere (19:9), and just as several Acts speeches flesh out Jesus's Scripture exposition in Luke 24:44–45.

760. Bligh, *Galatians*, 10–11.

- C God's promise to David is fulfilled in Jesus the Savior (13:22–23)
- D Word of salvation is now sent to you (13:26)
- E John bore witness to Christ (13:24–25)
- F Jerusalemites condemned him, fulfilling Scripture (13:27)
- G They had him crucified (13:28)
- F' Fulfilled Scriptures, buried him, God raised him (13:29–30)
- E' His disciples now his witnesses (13:31)
- D' We bring good news to you (13:32)
- C' God's promise to David is fulfilled in Christ (13:33–37)
- B' Unsatisfactory interim before the second David (13:38–39)
- A' God's wondrous work for Israel in the present (13:40–41)

This outline legitimately recognizes the repetition of some ideas in the speech but at other points is unnaturally asymmetrical and forced.

Second is a basic outline based on purported content:⁷⁶¹

1. 13:17–23: history of the chosen people
2. 13:24–25: history of John
3. 13:26b–31a: history of Jesus
4. 13:31b–37: history of disciples
5. 13:38–41: history of listeners

Although such an outline does note some shifts in content, it claims for the *narratio* more than is reasonable in this case (i.e., the entire speech after the proem); this speech is not interrupted like some others. A better proposed rhetorical outline follows:⁷⁶²

1. Narration (13:17–25)
2. Division (13:26, a single proposition)
3. Demonstration (13:27–37)
4. Conclusion (13:38–41)

This outline may be accurate. I would suggest, however, that the *narratio* may extend through all of 13:17–31; given his work's genre, Luke knows that narrative appeals to his ideal audience, and he keeps their attention by including fuller narrative even within his speeches.⁷⁶³ In this case, the outline would be as follows:

1. Proem (13:16)
2. *Narratio* (13:17–31)⁷⁶⁴
3. *Propositio* (13:32)

761. Pillai, *Interpretation*, 3.

762. Black, "Form of Sermon," followed by Satterthwaite, "Acts," 359; Black, *Rhetoric of Gospel*, 123–26. This also overlaps with an outline structured by points of direct address at Acts 13:16, 26, 38 (Gaventa, *Acts*, 196); see esp. Pichler, *Paulusrezeption*, 124–31, as cited in Schnabel, *Missionary*, 158. Varo, "Hacia," uses rhetorical analysis to examine the speech's OT usage.

763. Stories within stories were common fare in antiquity, at least as early as Homer (e.g., the descriptions of the shields, or Odysseus learning of his fellow heroes' demise); in Philostratus's *Heroikos*, the overarching narrative allows the inclusion of numerous shorter stories that are the heart of Philostratus's point.

764. Admittedly, the mention of witnesses in Acts 13:31–32 may fit the "proofs" section and function transitionally. Despite the handbooks, actual speeches exercised flexibility in their outlines, and so NT critics ought not to impose ideal structures on biblical texts that they do not fit (cf. Black, *Rhetoric of Gospel*, 21).

4. *Probatio* (proofs, from texts; 13:33–37)⁷⁶⁵
5. Deliberative *peroratio* (13:38–41)

The narrative could function epideictically (here christologically) for Luke's audience (though as part of his larger salvation history apologetic). In view of 13:32, 38–41, however, the speech's function as a whole is deliberative within the narrative world.

In any case, most important is that the theme of Paul's message (Paul is already the main speaker, as in 14:12) is God's gifts to Israel (God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt; his mercy in the wilderness; and his gifts of the land, judges, kings, and finally a Savior) and the fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus (see comment on Acts 13:18). Whereas Stephen, following one line of the prophetic tradition, preached to resistant persecutors about God's judgment, Paul here offers mostly a model of preaching grace to first-time hearers. (This apparent dichotomy probably reflects the same pattern observable at various points in Luke's Gospel: Jesus's preaching grace to sinners yet his harsh words to the resistant religious elite [Luke 5:30–32; 11:37–54; 15:1–32; 18:9–14].) One may note, in contrast to some patterns of Protestant theology shaped mainly by Paul's approach in Romans, that speeches in Acts sometimes begin with grace, either with God's blessings in Israel's history (as here) or with God's benevolence to humanity (Acts 14:15–17; cf. 17:24–28).⁷⁶⁶ The themes are not, however, mutually exclusive, and Paul concludes with a warning of judgment for those who reject God's mercies (13:40–41).

II. OPENING THE SPEECH (13:16)

As the more academically trained and rhetorically skilled speaker (cf. 14:12; 22:3), Paul, rather than Barnabas, delivers the homily, which is (apart from 13:40–41) very affirming and positive. Following rhetorical expectations, he rises and then addresses his audience.

(1) *Rising to Speak*

Luke does not specify that Paul and Barnabas came forward, perhaps envisioning them having taken prominent seats to begin with; Paul might speak from that location, but he is said here to “stand.” Scholars often note that a Palestinian Jewish teacher would normally sit to expound Torah (Luke 4:20; see comment on Acts 13:14), and sometimes contend that Paul does not do so because he offers a general exhortation rather than an exposition of a particular passage read that day.⁷⁶⁷ But although Luke does not give the text here, he does note that there was one (Acts 13:15a), and pulling various other texts into one's teaching was not uncommon in an exposition of a particular text (cf., e.g., Luke 4:24–27).

Others more relevantly cite Diaspora parallels for teachers rising to expound (Philo *Spec. Laws* 2.62), following standard Greek rhetorical practice (e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.55; see comment on Acts 1:15).⁷⁶⁸ Even among Palestinian Jewish sages, there was not

765. These could conceivably extend into Acts 13:41, but probably this is part of the *peroratio*; 13:41 may function more like a closing *gnome* (see comment there) than a proof. One could argue that in 13:30–41, the speech uses all the forms of appeal emphasized by Quintilian: “things perceived by the senses—credible witnesses of the resurrection (vv. 30f)”; “material established by written authorities—in this case the scriptures (vv. 32–35)”; “principles on which his audience would agree (the providence and power of God, vv. 33, 37)”; and “relevant facts that would be admitted by all honest parties” (such as Jesus's death and burial; Green, *Thirty Years*, 101).

766. Even in Acts 3:12–26, where the audience's guilt and rejection of their own deliverer come toward the beginning of the speech (3:13–14), the occasion of the speech is an act of divine benevolence (cf. 4:9). This is not to deny that Paul also grounds his theology in Israel's history (including in Rom 9–11).

767. E.g., Abrahams, *Studies* (1), 8; followed by Bruce, *Commentary*, 271; apparently Longenecker, *Acts*, 220.

768. With Larkin, *Acts*, 198; cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 103.

yet a single rule observed by everyone in the first century.⁷⁶⁹ Even the two Pharisaic schools disagreed about whether one should sit or stand when expounding, with the Shammaites, dominant in the first century, preferring reclining; the issue survived into the second century (*t. Ber.* 1:3; *Sipre Deut.* 34.5.3). Since speakers in most of the Mediterranean world would typically stand at the beginning of their speeches,⁷⁷⁰ those who wished to speak in an assembly might indicate this intention by standing.⁷⁷¹

Luke often depicts speakers quieting hearers with hand motions (Acts 12:17; 19:33; Paul again in 21:40). Here the hand motion will be like not the gesture for silence in 12:17 but the gesture used to begin a speech.⁷⁷² Here it may have been “two fingers extended with the thumb uplifted and fingers four and five folded.”⁷⁷³ Stretching out the right hand was a common rhetorical gesture (e.g., Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.25.541), sometimes used even when one was preparing to speak just a single sentence (Plut. *Caes.* 44.6).⁷⁷⁴ Many statues (especially of equestrians) from the period portray a man with a right arm stretched out and raised.⁷⁷⁵ The summons to listen fits a wide variety of rhetoric, including that of traditional Jewish sages,⁷⁷⁶ but was also part of Greco-Roman rhetoric (see comment on Acts 2:14, 22). Rhetorical handbooks warned orators to beg the jury for continued attention (Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 24).

(2) Address

The address “men of Israel” may not have been common in the Diaspora,⁷⁷⁷ but it provides a connection with God’s people in Judea (Acts 2:22; 3:12; 5:35; 21:28) that allows for shared responsibility (cf. 13:27) and especially hope (13:32). (For the formation of addresses in Acts with the plural of *άνθρωπος*, as in 1:11, 16; 2:14, 22, 29, 37, see comment on 2:14.)

“Those who fear God” (cf. 10:2) is probably distinct from “Israelite men” here (and from “descendants of Abraham’s stock” in 13:26), since (1) it makes simpler sense grammatically; (2) Gentiles present (though not explicit before 13:44–48) cannot be included in “Israelite men” (though technically it does not explicitly include the women either);⁷⁷⁸ (3) “God-fearers” is a standard Lukan expression for Gentiles

769. Among Gentiles, forms also could vary individually. Not bound by convention, some orators varied their practice as the mood struck them; one would begin speeches in a sitting posture but would be standing by the end (Suet. *Rhet.* 6). Seneca the Younger’s Stoic teacher Attalus even paced back and forth when he lectured (*Ep. Lucil.* 108.3); for perambulatory lectures, see, e.g., Eunapius *Lives* 481; Aune, *Prophecy*, 186 (cf. the joke about Peripatetics in Lucian *Dem.* 54).

770. E.g., Xen. *Anab.* 5.1.2; Pliny *Ep.* 4.9.18; 9.13.18; see further comment on Acts 1:15.

771. E.g., Xen. *Anab.* 5.1.5; 6.4.12; Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.64.142.

772. Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 145–48.

773. *Ibid.*, 148, also noting that another gesture, the sort used when one began an *exordium*, might follow soon after. Hall, “Delivery,” 226, cites Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.92 for the common gesture for speech opening: the middle finger would be against thumb with the remaining three fingers extended, as the hand glided gently forward to the left and then right; head and shoulders would then follow the hand. The gentle and dignified hand or arm gestures beginning a speech differed from more vigorous gestures during more emotional parts of a speech (Hall, “Delivery,” 224, citing *Rhet. Her.* 3.26–27).

774. The rhetorical character of the gesture is also noted by others (e.g., Soards, *Speeches*, 81). Idealizations of preclassical Athens included too much modesty to expose one’s arm (Aeschines *Tim.* 25–26).

775. Hurschmann, “Gestures,” 837. Stretching out the right index and middle fingers (and sometimes thumb) toward one’s hearer added emphasis (832), the index finger being significant for a variety of gestures (836). On Roman hand gestures in Cicero and esp. Quint. *Inst.* 11.3, see Hall, “Cicero and Quintilian”; on gestures more generally, Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 47–78.

776. E.g., Prov 1:8; 4:1, 10; 5:7; 7:24; 8:6, 32–33; 22:17; 23:19; Sir 3:1; 6:23; 16:24; 23:7; 31:22; 32:22; 33:19; 39:13; 51:28.

777. Pillai, *Interpretation*, 8. Certainly, Luke’s exact wording is not found in the LXX, though the idea of “men of Israel” is common.

778. Women were not yet segregated from men in synagogues, at least not by any barriers that left archaeological evidence; see Safrai, “Segregated”; idem, “Place of Women”; esp. Brooten, *Women Leaders*,

sympathetic to Judaism (10:2, 22; see comment on Acts 10:2); and (4) even though the term applies to proselytes in 13:43 rather than uncircumcised observers, it is distinguished from “Jews,” as it is here distinguished from “Israelite men.”⁷⁷⁹

III. GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO ISRAEL (13:17–22)

Paul’s survey of biblical history (and Luke presumably intends only a précis here) focuses on God’s faithfulness to Israel: God chose, multiplied, and saved the people of Israel (13:17); he nurtured them or (depending on the variant reading) endured their disobedience (13:18); he gave them land as a gift (13:19) and judges to lead them (13:20); when they asked for a king, God even granted this request (13:21) and ultimately provided a virtuous king, David (13:22), from whose seed God promised to bring the Messiah (13:23, 34–36).

(1) *God Chose and Delivered (13:17)*

God chose the people of Israel, multiplied them in Egypt, and delivered them from Egypt. A proem homily often began with a “remote” verse not obviously connected with the pentateuchal reading because the expositor recognized “some inner connection between that verse and the pentateuchal text for the day.”⁷⁸⁰ The opening verses of the speech proper (13:17–19) recall Deuteronomic language, especially for Israel’s election and redemption (Deut 1:31; 4:34, 37; 5:15; 9:26, 29; 10:15).⁷⁸¹ The choosing of the ancestors is implied in Deut 4:37; 10:15. Although a common expression in Luke, “the people” (Acts 13:17, 24, 31) connects the discourse with the Israelite center of the audience (13:15).

The exaltation of the ancestors may reflect Luke’s motif of the exaltation of the humble (Luke 1:52; 14:11; 18:14; for cities, 10:15), fulfilled especially in Jesus (Acts 2:33; 5:31). It might echo patriarchal blessing language (Gen 48:19), but it is probably Luke’s adaptation of Israel’s multiplying in Egypt (Exod 1:7), since it refers to the sojourn and not to the exodus proper.⁷⁸² Perhaps it also prefigures the exaltation of others after suffering: David (Acts 13:22) and especially Jesus (13:23, 30, 33, 34, 37) are raised up.⁷⁸³

God’s “uplifted hand” was standard LXX language for divine deliverance in the exodus⁷⁸⁴ (Exod 6:1, 6; 13:3, 9, 14, 16; 32:11; Deut 3:24; 4:34; 5:15; 6:21; 7:8, 19; 9:26, 29; 11:2; 26:8; 2 Kgs 17:36; Ps 135:10–12 [136:10–12 MT]; Jer 39:21 [32:21]; Dan 9:15; Bar 2:11).⁷⁸⁵ Stephen earlier emphasized God’s gracious deliverance of Israel in the exodus (Acts 7:34, 36), which, as perhaps here (one reading in 13:18), highlighted in turn Israel’s rebellion against God in the wilderness (7:39–43).

103–38; idem, “Segregated.” Before Brotoen, it was often thought that such gender segregation happened earlier (May, “Synagogues,” 14; Swidler, *Women*, 89–90). This would fit the exclusion of women from the inner courts of the temple (e.g., Jos. *War* 5.199, 206, 227; 6.415; *Ant.* 15.419; *m. Mid.* 2:6); if purity or other considerations kept men from sitting with adult women (esp. other men’s wives) in many synagogues, however, it was apparently by seating arrangement rather than permanent architecture.

779. Many scholars note that numerous Gentiles attended synagogues (cf. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 263; Dibelius and Kümmel, *Paul*, 21), though Josephus seems to indicate that Gentile women outnumbered men (cf., e.g., *War* 2.560–61; *Ant.* 20.34; see Acts 13:50).

780. Stegner, “Homily,” 53. Homilies could begin with a halakic question or a verse from the Writings (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 722).

781. Dunn, *Acts*, 179. Ramsay speculates that the readings on this occasion were Deut 1 and Isa 1 (*Cities of Paul*, 297). The reading in Acts 13:18 and Deut 1:31, however, is debated (see comments there).

782. “Sojourn” (παροικία) was more commonly applied to the later captivity in the LXX, but the speech does not turn to this period (despite Acts 13:41). Perhaps Paul omits the sufferings emphasized by Stephen because he addresses a more prosperous Diaspora audience (Spencer, *Acts*, 144).

783. Pillai, *Interpretation*, 81.

784. For a proposed route for the exodus, see Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 164–98.

785. The language was more rarely applied in any other way (2 Chr 6:32; Isa 26:11; Jer 39:17 [LXX; 32:17 MT]; Ezek 20:33–34).

(2) *Israel in the Wilderness* (13:18)

The wilderness evoked a formative period in Israel's history, one also rich as a paradigm for eschatological deliverance; Israel's prophets had predicted a new exodus in the wilderness (Hos 2:14–15; Isa 40:3). (See further discussion on early Jewish memory of the wilderness as a place of deliverance at Acts 21:38.)

Although Paul's survey of Israel's pre-Davidic history emphasizes God's love for and faithfulness to Israel, part of this survey might foreshadow Israel's later rejection of the Messiah (Acts 13:27, 29). Israel's rebellion in the wilderness teaches about God's patient endurance (the contextual emphasis) but also reminds the audience that the majority Jewish viewpoint about God's agent could be mistaken (cf. 7:35, 39–44). The question is whether the speech foreshadows this point here or addresses it only later, a question that hinges on an uncertain variant reading.

Depending on a debatable textual variant, the speech may stress either Israel's rebellion here (as in Stephen's depiction of the wilderness period) or God's benevolence. In favor of the former view (reading ἐτροποφόρησεν, "put up with"), the earliest manuscript evidence seems to slightly favor this reading, although not decisively so. Moreover, a speech in Acts has already portrayed the forty years in the wilderness (7:36; see comments there) as a time of rebellion (7:39, 42). In this case, the wording may prepare the reader for the negative period of Saul (13:21). That God "put up with them" would be Luke's own wording, but it would reflect one OT view of God's relationship with Moses's generation (Josh 5:6; Ps 95:10; Isa 63:10; Amos 5:25 in Acts 7:42; God was more positive with the rising generation, Deut 8:2–4; 29:5) and of Israel's frequent rebellion in general (Neh 9:30).⁷⁸⁶

Conversely, the early variant ἐτροφοφόρησεν ("nursed")⁷⁸⁷ better reflects Luke's predilection toward use of LXX language in such speeches (God nursed Israel in the wilderness, Deut 1:31); while the LXX text reflects the same variant as here, this reading is the dominant one. Although scribes might have altered the text here to fit Deut 1:31,⁷⁸⁸ one wonders how many later scribes would have thought of 1:31 or, still less, been inclined to introduce a favorable view of Israel here. The immediate context seems to emphasize not Israel's rebellion but God's benefaction to Israel; God afterward gave the people of Israel land (Acts 13:19), judges (13:20), (at their request) a king (13:21), and finally a Savior (13:23); eventually Paul notes that God "grants" the holy promises to David (13:34) and does not "give" his holy one to decay (13:35). This speech is less about Israel's rebellion (until 13:41) than about God's love for and grace toward his people (cf. "grace" in 13:43). Stephen preached to those who had already demonstrated opposition to his message; Paul becomes harsh only when the offer of grace is rejected (13:45–46). Whichever variant one chooses, the rest of the context emphasizes God's benevolence toward Israel.

(3) *God Gave Israel the Land* (13:19)

The destruction of "seven nations" reflects the count in Deut 7:1 (though multiple nations are also listed elsewhere, e.g., the six in Exod 23:23);⁷⁸⁹ the term for taking pos-

786. Although Soards, *Speeches*, 152, emphasizes the contrast with God's compassion in the wilderness in 2 Esd 19:19–21, the idea is present in 19:26–30, esp. 19:30 (Neh 9:26–30, esp. 9:30), which may be read as including behavior during that time.

787. Well attested from an early period (with \mathfrak{P}^{74} and A, though ἐτροποφόρησεν has \aleph and B) with somewhat wider geographic distribution, especially in the south (less so in the west). This variant is tentatively favored by Barrett, *Acts*, 632; Marshall, "Acts," 583; Pervo, *Acts*, 335–36; Zhang, *Paul Among Jews*, 130.

788. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 405–6.

789. Cf. Jos. *Ant.* 5.88; the expanded thirty-nine kings in L.A.B. 20:9 (Johnson, *Acts*, 231); cf. thirty-one kings in Josh 12:24 (LXX twenty-nine kings).

session (κατακλιρονομέω) is frequent in LXX discussion of the conquest, especially in Deuteronomy.⁷⁹⁰ So essential is the conquest narrative to the early books of the Bible that language associated with it, such as fear of God's chosen agent on others (Exod 23:27; Deut 2:25; 11:25; Josh 2:9) or subduing the earth (Num 32:22, 29; Deut 20:20; Josh 18:1), is prefigured in creation and patriarchal narratives (Gen 1:29; 9:2; 35:5). Luke mostly passes over the conquest narratives, however, failing even to use them as a pattern for the gospel's expansion (though he uses Israel's multiplying this way, with its creation associations, e.g., in Acts 6:7; 12:24; see comment on Acts 7:17).⁷⁹¹

Nevertheless, that God "gave them as an inheritance" (κατεκληρονόμησεν) the land fits the context of God's generosity; God also gave them judges (13:20), a king when they requested him (13:21), and other signs of his kindness and favor (13:17–18, 22). (Luke apparently affirms God's providence in their receiving Canaan's land in Joshua's time also in 7:45. On theological ramifications of "inheritance," see comment on 20:32.)

(4) God Gave Judges (13:20)

This passage's mention of the distribution of the land might refer to the period of the judges.⁷⁹² Yet if so, Luke's desire to be concise has sacrificed full clarity; the text more naturally sounds as if this distribution precedes the judges period (μετὰ ταῦτα, 13:20). The figure of 450 years⁷⁹³ might consist of what was mentioned previously—hence four hundred years in Egypt (Gen 15:13)⁷⁹⁴ plus forty years in the wilderness (Exod 16:35; Num 14:33–34; 32:13; Deut 2:7; 8:2, 4; 29:5; Neh 9:21; Heb 3:9, 17)⁷⁹⁵ and perhaps another decade for the conquest to commence.⁷⁹⁶ It is at best a rough estimate (like most broad estimates in the OT, excepting more carefully preserved regnal calculations) and should not be pressed too far; as Johnson complains, this "makes an already obscure chronology . . . even more obscure."⁷⁹⁷ Ancients also sought creative solutions to the details of early chronology, in the Qumran scrolls,⁷⁹⁸ Hellenistic Jewish writers,⁷⁹⁹ and even different renderings of the biblical text in the

790. Soards, *Speeches*, 152–53, compares 2 Esd 19:22–24 with God giving Israel the land in Acts 13:19; cf. *Barn.* 6.8. See also comment on Acts 7:45, although the term is different.

791. Philo is among Diaspora Jews who feel compelled to play down the conquest, especially the extermination of Canaanites (Berthelot, "Conquest"; among later rabbis, cf. Krygier, "Extermination"). It was likely not a popular subject among Diaspora Jews (just as it is not very popular among most Bible readers today). Cf. here also comments on *herem* in Acts 7:45 in Park, *Herem*, 128–29 (noting the shift from biblical to Second Temple approaches to *herem* in 53–114); see our comment on Acts 7:45 for what might be larger Lukan connections.

792. Merrill, "450 Years," counts this as the period between Othniel and Eli, arguing that Paul calculated literally, without synchronisms. Some synchronists in Paul's day might have explained the figures for the judges period (cf. 480 years in 1 Kgs 6:1 MT; 440 in 1 Kgs 6:1 LXX; 592 years in *Jos. Ant.* 8.61; as Conzelmann, *Acts*, 104, notes, Josephus is inconsistent; contrast *Ant.* 8.61; 10.147–48 with 11.112–13; 20.230) as including overlapping periods, like the list of Egypt's kings ruling different parts of Egypt (Manetho *Aeg. frg.* 1.7). For overlapping Egyptian and other dynasties, see Kitchen, *Orient*, 74 (who regards Judges as less complicated than others).

793. In Acts 13:19 in many English translations.

794. The more technical estimate was 430 (Exod 12:40–41; Gal 3:17), but Luke elsewhere follows the 400-year estimate from Genesis (Acts 7:6). Josephus offered precise but sometimes varying estimates of biblical periods; see *Ant.* 8.61 (592 years from the exodus to the temple); 10.147 (again, 592 years); 20.230 (612 years from the exodus to the temple); cf. 10.148 (3,513 years from Adam to the temple's destruction); 11.112 (more than five hundred years for the judges); comments in Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 293.

795. The thirty-eight years may start after the forty had begun (Deut 2:14).

796. Witherington, *Acts*, 410. A decade is too brief to complete the conquest by any passage's estimate, even despite the typically hyperbolic ancient Near Eastern conquest list summaries (see Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 25–51, esp. 34–35, 40, 42).

797. Johnson, *Acts*, 231; similarly, Conzelmann, *Acts*, 104.

798. 4Q559, addressed in Wise, "To Know."

799. DiTommaso, "Note." On various interpretations of the 430 years in Exod 12:40, see Andrei, "430 Years." Various modern solutions have been proposed (e.g., Poirier, "Generational Reckoning," probably

LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch, and so forth.⁸⁰⁰ More important is the theological point: it is God and his promise, not any mortal or human lifespan, that are central, a point reiterated elsewhere in the speech (see 13:36). Paul points his audience to God's activity as author of salvation history and salvation for them.

The language of "giving" judges is not specifically familiar from the LXX (cf. Deut 16:18) but prepares for God's "giving" a king in Acts 13:21. (Occasionally, though not regularly, the LXX notes that God "gave" kings [1 Sam 12:13].) The idea reflects God's grace in the era of judges in raising up leaders for his oppressed people; God's graciously providing leader-deliverers for oppressed people provides the pattern of his working that leads naturally to the overt messianic proclamation in the speech (Acts 13:22–23). The era of judges, which technically ran until the era of kings (2 Sam 7:11), was a distinct era in Israel's history (Ruth 1:1; 2 Kgs 23:22; 1 Chr 17:10).

Samuel represents the beginning of the era of the "prophets" (Acts 3:24).⁸⁰¹ That Luke does not develop the emphasis on prophecy here, however, is understandable. Stephen's speech focused on the prophet like Moses and rejected prophet Christology; Paul here focuses on the Davidic-king Christology (as in Acts 2). Luke repeats themes but does not develop them at the expense of failing to develop new ones he has not previously had opportunity to elaborate. Thus he covers the entire narrative ground of 7:2–44 in 13:17–18 but develops at greater length the point of 7:45–46 in 13:19–22. Acts 13 thus continues Luke's interpretation of the biblical metanarrative from Acts 7, but Luke has divided his material to address different situations. Jesus's unspecified teaching about himself in the Scriptures (Luke 24:44–45) whets the appetite of Luke's audience, but the promise-fulfillment theme in Acts' speeches develops Jesus's role in that larger story more explicitly.

(5) *God Granted a King (13:21)*

God gave the people of Israel good leaders (Acts 13:20, 22) and also gave them a king they asked for (13:21). The length of Saul's reign in the OT depends entirely on the textual tradition one reconstructs; 1 Sam 13:1 (omitted in most LXX manuscripts), referring to two years in the Hebrew (and generally reckoned as fragmentary), does not resolve the question.⁸⁰² Forty was, however, a standard summary number for the long reign of a judge or king (Judg 3:11; 5:31; 8:28; 1 Sam 4:18; 1 Kgs 2:11; 11:42; 2 Kgs 12:1; 1 Chr 29:27; 2 Chr 9:30; 24:1; cf. 2 Sam 5:4; 15:7). The Greek text of Josephus at one point also cites forty years for Saul's rule (*Ant.* 6.378), possibly suggesting a broader haggadic or even textual tradition; but elsewhere he claims twenty years (10.143), and the Latin version of 6.378 also claims twenty, which fits later Jewish sources.⁸⁰³ The forty years at least provides a literary connection with the

rightly viewing Gen 15:13 as a rounding of Exod 12:40, and more controversially proposing a connection with Hesiod).

800. Cf., e.g., Larsson, "Septuagint" (also citing *Jubilees*), suggesting that these were meant as "improvements" of the tradition that became Masoretic.

801. Although Philo's extant work addresses 1 Samuel fairly rarely, Josephus makes abundant use of 1–2 Samuel, which also appears in Qumran texts (on which see Parry, "Retelling *Samuel*"; see references in 4Q160 1 1–7; 4Q174 II, 19–III, 2; III, 7, 10–11; 4Q389 4; 4Q522 1 I, 13; 11Q5 XXVIII, 3–11, noted in the index of *DSSNT* [509]). Yet as Hannah's song (after Samuel's birth) turns to the anointed king (1 Sam 2:10), so Zechariah's prophecy (after John's birth) turns to the Messiah (Luke 1:69); Samuel is David's forerunner as John is Jesus's.

802. For problems there, see, e.g., Ackroyd, *1 Samuel*, 104; Keil and Delitzsch, *Samuel*, 123–24. *Seder 'Olam Rabbah* 13 gives three and one-third years (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 151).

803. Johnson, *Acts*, 232; cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 151. Normally one would prefer the Greek, but that later Christian scribes conformed the Greek text to Acts cannot be ruled out. At the same time, it could be likelier that the Greek is original, the Latin harmonizing Josephus internally. Josephus's Greek text of 1–2 Samuel seems closer to 4QSam^a than to the MT (Ulrich, "Text for Samuel," 93).

wilderness period of Acts 13:18, perhaps emphasizing how long (a generation) Israel had to wait for this promise (fully fulfilled even later still, 13:19). Added to earlier figures (13:19),⁸⁰⁴ the sermon's chronology indicates that Israel had waited a long time, which should reinforce the sense of privilege that salvation had finally come in the hearers' own era (13:26, 38; cf. Luke 10:24).

Would the historical Paul (as Saul the Benjaminite, Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5) pass over the negative portrayal of King Saul, presumably having grown up with some pride in the Benjaminite king?⁸⁰⁵ Although this suggestion is possible, it seems more likely here (or at least more to the point here) that King Saul serves as the foil for David (Acts 13:22).⁸⁰⁶ That Israel requested a king (against Samuel's advice) and received a bad one vindicates God and traces further the history of God's purpose for the leadership (and ultimate king) of his people. Ironically, people of Jesus's generation rejected the divinely appointed king and instead asked for (ἠτήσαντο) Barabbas to be given them (Luke 23:18, 25; Acts 3:14); the same verb appears in Acts 13:28 (its only other use in this sermon).

(6) *God Chose David (13:22)*

God may be said to have "removed" Saul by taking away his office from him (cf. Luke 16:4; 1 Sam 16:1) or by his death (1 Sam 31:4–5); Josephus employs the term both ways.⁸⁰⁷

The biblical quotation is composite, which was acceptable in midrash (since all the texts were God's word anyway). It employs Ps 89:20 (88:21 LXX); 1 Sam 13:14; and Isa 44:28.⁸⁰⁸ God, who alone knows human hearts (Acts 1:24), can best "attest" someone's heart (15:8). "I have found David" reflects Ps 89:20 (esp. 88:21 LXX); the context of this passage includes "exalting" him (89:19 [88:20 LXX]; cf. exalting Israel in Acts 13:17; raising up David in 13:22) and God's strengthening by his arm (Ps 89:21 [88:22 LXX]; cf. Acts 13:17; Luke 1:51).⁸⁰⁹ The source of David's being "a man after God's heart" is straightforward (1 Sam 13:14).⁸¹⁰ The last part of the composite quotation reflects Isa 44:28,⁸¹¹ viewing Cyrus (the Lord's anointed, 45:1) as a type of a divinely appointed king, who would also order the building of God's house (44:28).

The numerous potential midrashic connections that are at most assumed rather than stated suggest that Luke condenses a larger source or exegetical tradition that presupposes these connections. "All my wills [πάντα τὰ θελήματά μου, plural]"

804. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 151, add this 40 to the 450 to yield 490, for an allusion to Dan 9:25–27. But we can add 450 to 40 only if 450 covers the era of judges and only if we omit the 40 in the wilderness.

805. That Benjaminites appreciated Saul may be suggested by preservation of Saulide family names among later Benjaminites (Esth 2:5; though cf. also 1 Chr 23:21). Acts employs φυλή for "tribe" only here, and Paul only in Rom 11:1 and Phil 3:5 (mentioning the Benjamin connection; but cf. Luke 2:36; 22:30). The Greek transliteration of "Saul" differs here from that of Paul's Semitic name; see discussion in Bauckham, "Latin Names," 208–10.

806. Cf. also Barrett, *Acts*, 635; Larkin, *Acts*, 199.

807. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 265.

808. Most scholars concur here; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 104; Johnson, *Acts*, 232; Witherington, *Acts*, 410; cf. Arnold, "Use of Old Testament in Acts," 319. Most note the identical combination in *1 Clem.* 8:1, probably dependent on Acts 13.

809. Johnson, *Acts*, 232, also connects "holy" (ἅγιος) in Ps 89:20 (88:21 LXX) with ὁσιος in Acts 13:34; but ἅγιος appears more than seventy times in Luke-Acts, and so Luke's use of ὁσιος points in a different direction (2:37; 13:34–35). "Son of Jesse" appears as a synonym for David too often to require any single passage to be in view (e.g., 1 Sam 16:18; 20:27, 30, 31; *pace* Witherington, *Acts*, 410, who focuses on just one).

810. Cf., e.g., Schmitt, "Kerygme," 160.

811. Cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 104. The closest alternative allusions, 2 Sam 23:5 and 1 Kgs 5:8, are much more distant both in wording and in sense.

may reflect a Septuagintalism.⁸¹² It might be translated as “all my purposes,” or “all my desires,” or “all my wishes”;⁸¹³ this would fit David’s serving God’s “purpose” in Acts 13:36. Though less often proportionately than Matthew or John, Luke elsewhere emphasizes doing God’s will (Luke 12:47; 22:42; Acts 21:14; 22:14; cf., e.g., Mark 3:35; Matt 26:42). “In his own generation” reinforces that David died and contrasts with the permanence of the risen son of David (Acts 13:36–37; cf. 2:29, 34), countering expectations of a literal David (as one could understand Jer 30:9; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Hos 3:5) rather than his seed (Isa 9:7; Jer 23:5; 33:15, 17, 21; Zech 12:8).⁸¹⁴

Paul does not emphasize Davidic messiahship in his letters to Christians, but he accepts that view (Rom 1:3), which is probably therefore presupposed in his discussion of messiahship in general.⁸¹⁵ Indeed, he includes it, when he does mention it, in his summary of the gospel he preaches (Rom 1:3; cf. 2 Tim 2:8). It is not therefore unnatural that he would have preached it in synagogues, as here, but Luke selects what fits his overarching emphasis, which certainly includes the Davidic Christ (Luke 1:32, 69; 2:11; Acts 2:25–36). Some scholars think that the focus on the royal promise and eschatology, consonant with early expectations of the kingdom restored to Israel (Acts 1:6; 3:19–26), fades later in Paul’s preaching in Acts and in his letters,⁸¹⁶ but this cannot be sustained, certainly in Acts (26:7; 28:20). The “raising up” here prefigures that of Jesus in 13:30; Luke sometimes finds in “raising up” a double entendre for resurrection (see comment on Acts 7:37).⁸¹⁷ For the Davidic Messiah in early Judaism, see extensive comments at Acts 2:36.

c. *The Narrative about Jesus (13:23–31)*

Speeches often included a narrative of events leading up to the current situation; after Paul provides a survey of God’s benevolence in biblical history in general, he surveys the recent history of God’s generosity in continuity with biblical history. This survey of Jesus is like a survey of much of Luke’s Gospel and serves, in concise form, much the same purpose: Jesus’s story continues the earlier story of God’s faithfulness to Israel. As such, the survey also weaves its hearers into that story, to act like either the disobedient or the righteous remnant of Israel (13:40–41).

I. THE PROMISED SAVIOR (13:23–26)

Just as God gave the people of Israel the land (13:19) and gave them leaders (13:20–22), now God has given them the Savior (13:23). Jesus’s coming fulfills both the promises of the prophets about David’s descendant (13:23) and the proclamation of a recent prophet, John (13:24–25). In turn, the same message of salvation was now being sent through the apostolic prophets (13:26, 47).

812. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 725, plausibly suggests an Aramaism (רעוּתִיָּה); but this may make little sense for a synagogue audience in Pisidian Antioch. This plural appears nowhere else in the NT except with reference to more than one possessor (Eph 2:3; so also *1 Clem.* 14.2).

813. 2 Chr 9:12; Isa 58:3, 13; Jer 23:17, 26; for *God’s wishes*, Ps 103:7 (102:7 LXX); Isa 44:28; Sir 43:16; for *doing God’s wishes*, 2 Macc 1:3.

814. Although David is very important for Luke (cf., e.g., comment on Acts 2:25; 15:16; Strauss, *Messiah*), “son of David” is far more important for Matthew (cf. the comparison with usage in *Psalms of Solomon* in Willitts, “Messianism”) than for Luke (who simply repeats Mark’s uses in Mark 10:47–48 in Luke 18:38–39).

815. See also Haacker, *Theology*, 143 (noting that Paul was more apt to emphasize this in Romans, one of his letters more situated in Judaism). Even “Son of God” may presuppose this; see 4QFlor; fuller discussion in Keener, *John*, 284–88. Early Christian emphasis on the Davidic character of Jesus’s messiahship may be one reason one version of the Amidah omits the fifteenth benediction (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 726, citing *Num. Rab.* 18:21).

816. Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 1:28–29.

817. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 232; Witherington, *Acts*, 410; see esp. Bock, *Proclamation*, 243–45.

(1) *God Gives a Davidic Deliverer (13:23)*

That Jesus is a “Savior” (σωτήρ) also continues the pattern of divine leadership summarized in 13:20, since some judges were “saviors” (Judg 3:9, 15; Neh 9:27); the cognate verb σώζω frequently applies to the judges (Judg 2:16, 18; 3:9, 31; 6:14, 15, 36, 37; 7:2, 7; 8:22; 10:1; 13:5) and to the first kings (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1, 27; 11:3; 2 Sam 3:18).⁸¹⁸ On Jesus as the Savior, see comment on Acts 5:31.⁸¹⁹ On the “promise,” see Acts 13:32 (cf. 7:5). Although most of Paul’s narrative here covers the events of Luke 3–24, Luke may hint at the Davidic Savior of the Gospel’s infancy narrative⁸²⁰ in Acts 13:23.

(2) *John’s Mission (13:24–25)*

The gospel story (when distinct from the larger history of Israel) properly starts with the announcement of John (Acts 1:22; 10:37; cf. also 1:5; 11:16; 18:25; 19:4; Mark 1:1–8; John 1:19; esp. Luke 1:5–25).⁸²¹ The forerunner’s mission is as much a part of the story as the predictions of the prophets, all of which confirm Jesus’s identity.⁸²²

Luke reports John’s message of repentance in his Gospel (Luke 3:3, 8).⁸²³ This message of repentance also allows an important element of Lukan soteriology here (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18) and continuity with Jesus’s message as well (Luke 5:32; 10:13; 11:32; 13:3–5; 15:7, 10; 16:30),⁸²⁴ though it will not be the focus of the sermon’s soteriological language (Acts 13:38–39; though cf. 13:41).⁸²⁵

There is no reason to doubt that John preached repentance to Israel. The report about John in Josephus (*Ant.* 18.116–19) is likely authentic. It fits the language of this section of *Antiquities of the Jews* and does not fit expectations for a Christian interpolation (contradicting the Gospels at points, focusing on John more than on Jesus, and omitting any connection between them).⁸²⁶ Nevertheless, if one compares Josephus and the Gospels, Josephus has hellenized his portrait of John much more than the Gospels do.⁸²⁷

818. Although the Qumran scrolls are known particularly for their pesher application of prophecies, they also reapplied principles from narratives (e.g., 4Q370 I; see Wise, “Introduction to 4Q370”).

819. It is not frequent in Paul’s undisputed letters (Phil 3:20; but cf. Eph 5:23; 1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:3–4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6; cf. further Luter, “Savior [DPL]”; Longenecker, *Christology*, 142–43), but neither is it a dominant Lukan description (Luke 2:11; for God in Luke 1:47). Some of Jesus’s followers apparently were playing on “savior” (σωτήρ) and “Jesus” (Ἰησοῦς) from an early period (Matt 1:21; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 726).

820. Cf. David in Luke 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4, 11; for the messianic savior, see Luke 1:69, 71, 77; 2:11, 30 (cf. God the savior in Luke 1:47).

821. For parallels between John’s and Jesus’s infancy narratives in the Gospel, see discussion in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:556–57. That Paul does not mention John in his letters does not make Luke’s portrayal unrealistic; Paul’s letters are to churches (like the analogous speech in Acts 20:18–35), not reporting how he would have preached in a synagogue. But this is an undeniably Lukan emphasis.

822. The wording (πρὸ προσώπου before εἰσόδου) is unusual but may evoke Mal 3:1 LXX, associated with John in Luke 1:17; 7:27 (Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 513). Contrast perhaps Luke 9:31.

823. That some of the Gospels’ sources would have had access to some key teachings of John is likely, since John had disciples who could preserve his teachings and at least some joined the early Jesus movement (Webb, *Baptizer*, 87–88).

824. Thus John’s preaching is valued for its content here (Pillai, *Interpretation*, 25, against Conzelmann).

825. Just as it is not the focus of Pauline soteriology elsewhere, though he affirms it (Rom 2:4; cf. 2 Cor 7:9–10; 12:21; 2 Tim 2:25; in different language, clearly in 1 Thess 1:9). Paul does mention it in Acts (Acts 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20). Paul’s extant letters do not mention John the Baptist, but as “occasional” letters, they lacked reason to do so (Pillai, *Preaching*, 91).

826. Feldman, “Methods,” 591; for authenticity, see also Webb, *Baptizer*, 39–41 (emphasizing [87] points of congruence with the Gospels’ portrait); Park, “Untersuchung.”

827. See Meier, “John the Baptist,” 234; cf. Liefeld, “Preacher,” 146n31; Park, “Untersuchung.” On the historical John, see also Webb, *Baptizer*; for a survey of research, see idem, “John,” 179–86.

John's completion of his course in Acts 13:25 resembles Paul's description of his own ministry in 20:24. Athletic metaphors were common in both Gentile⁸²⁸ and Greek-speaking Jewish⁸²⁹ sources; these included metaphors about running.⁸³⁰ Running was one of several areas of competition favored by Greeks.⁸³¹

Luke's summary of John's testimony (13:25) begins with a leading rhetorical question (τί ἐμὲ ὑπονοεῖτε εἶναι;) ⁸³² not recounted in the Gospel's questions about John's identity (Luke 3:15–16; cf. John 1:19–23) and perhaps modeled (consciously or unconsciously) after Jesus's question about his identity (Luke 9:20, τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι;) to underline the contrast between the two figures. John's submission to Jesus's role is not simply polite deferment⁸³³ but rather an acknowledgment of Jesus's superiority.⁸³⁴

John's proclamation of the coming one⁸³⁵ also reveals his submission. The most servile tasks performed by a household servant concerned the master's feet—for example, washing the feet.⁸³⁶ Likewise, servants carried sandals for their masters or unfastened the thongs of the sandals;⁸³⁷ people of status expected others to remove their sandals⁸³⁸ or had slaves to put them on.⁸³⁹ The wealthier might bring a slave to replace their outdoor shoes with house shoes during the meal.⁸⁴⁰ (For more information on ancient shoes and sandals, see comment on Acts 12:8.)

Dealing with the feet was the one servile activity that was too demeaning for Jewish disciples to fulfill for their teachers.⁸⁴¹ In other respects, ancient teachers often expected disciples to function as servants,⁸⁴² but later rabbis' one caveat was that,

828. E.g., Isoc. *Ad Nic.* 11; *Rhet. Her.* 4.3.4; Cic. *Att.* 13.21; *Brut.* 67.236; 69.243; *Rosc. Amer.* 47.136; Sen. *Y. Ben.* 5.3.1; *Dial.* 1.2.3; 4.15.2; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.2.25–26; 1.4.13; 1.18.21–23; 2.5.15–20; 2.17.29; 2.18.27–29; 3.20.9–10; 3.22.52; 4.4.30; *Encheir.* 51.2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 2.18; 8.11–20, 27; 9.11–12; 32.20; 37.34; 52.3; Lucian *Hermot.* 33; Max. Tyre 8.7; 15.2; 34.9; Marc. Aur. 6.20; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 24; Char. *Chaer.* 1.2.2–3; Diog. Laert. 6.2.27; Men. *Rhet.* 2.7, 410.11–13; Iambl. *V.P.* 9.49; cf. Cagniart, "Attitude"; Garrison, "Metaphor"; Cousland, "Athletics," 142; Lateiner, "Contest." In philosophy and other Greek thought, see further esp. Pfitzner, *Agon Motif*, 23–37; for one view on the Diogenes tradition's portrayal of his challenge to athletics, see Bosman, "Athletes." Athletic imagery was used even for warfare (Plut. *Cim.* 13.3; *Comparison of Lucullus and Cimon* 2.1) and politics (Plut. *Luc.* 38.4). Perhaps the metaphoric element grew as the original civic function in the polis (before the empire) declined (cf. Brown, "Privatization").

829. E.g., *Sib. Or.* 2.39; 3.738–39; Philo *Worse* 33; 4 Macc 9:8; 15:29; 17:12, 15; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.217–18; *Test. Job* 4:10; 27:3–5/27:5–8. For Hellenistic Jewish sources, see further esp. Pfitzner, *Agon Motif*, 38–72; in both Stoic and Hellenistic Jewish sources, see Schwankl, "Lauf."

830. E.g., Men. *Rhet.* 2.7, 406.14–24; Diog. Laert. 6.2.34; Porph. *Marc.* 32.500.

831. See Cousland, "Athletics," 141; see comment on Acts 20:24.

832. Rhetoricians sometimes asked the audience's opinion when the answer was obvious or (as perhaps here) simply to hold their attention. For various forms of rhetorical questions, see Anderson, *Glossary*, 51.

833. Cf. this cultural principle in Malina, *Anthropology*, 78.

834. Whether or not this was polemical; see comment on Acts 19:1–3.

835. On John's proclaiming an expected figure, see Webb, *Baptizer*, 261–306.

836. For its servile character in early Jewish circles, see Thomas, *Footwashing*, 40–41; in the broader Mediterranean culture, 50–55, 115; Hom. *Od.* 19.344–48, 353–60, 376, 388–93, 505. I borrow here from Keener, *John*, 448–49, 903–4.

837. E.g., Diog. Laert. 6.2.44; *b. B. Bat.* 53b (though both sources ridicule treating slaves in such a demeaning manner); see Daube's and Urbach's citations below. Other commentators have noted that this is the work of a slave (Westcott, *Gospel*, 19; Hunter, *John*, 23). Palestinian Amora'im might even lean on disciples when walking (Ehrlich, "Lending Shoulder").

838. E.g., Aeschylus *Ag.* 944–45. One might also read John's statement in light of removing shoes in a holy place (Acts 7:33), but John's emphasis on unworthiness makes this approach less likely.

839. E.g., Pliny *Ep.* 3.16.8.

840. Croom, *Clothing*, 63. Dinner guests removed their shoes for a banquet and asked for them when ready to depart (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 9.17.3).

841. Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 266.

842. Exod 24:13; 33:11; Josh 1:1; 1 Kgs 19:21; 2 Kgs 5:20; 6:15; 8:4; Zeno in Diog. Laert. 7.1.12; Cleanthes in Diog. Laert. 7.5.170; *t. B. Meši'a* 2:30; cf. *'Abot R. Nat.* 27, §56 B; *y. Soṭah* 5:5, §4. Commentators cite also *b. Ketub.* 96a. Cf. Joshua as Moses's disciple and other "disciples of the prophets" (CD VIII, 20–21; *Mek. Pisha* 1.150–53; *'Abot R. Nat.* 11, §28 B).

unlike slaves, disciples did not tend to the teacher's sandals.⁸⁴³ John is thus claiming to be unworthy to be the coming one's servant. This is quite a remarkable christological claim when we consider that the Hebrew Bible and later tradition regularly call the Israelite prophets "slaves of God,"⁸⁴⁴ also applying the title to David,⁸⁴⁵ Moses,⁸⁴⁶ the patriarchs,⁸⁴⁷ and Israel as a whole;⁸⁴⁸ other ancient hearers would have also received the image of being God's slave as one of great honor.⁸⁴⁹ By contrast, the prophet John here claims his unworthiness to be even Christ's slave.⁸⁵⁰

Some scholars think that Luke emphasizes Jesus's superiority to John because of groups of John's followers in Asia (Acts 19:3);⁸⁵¹ this may be a factor, though Luke would certainly emphasize Jesus's superiority to everyone, in any case.

(3) *Salvation for Israel* (13:26)

The promised Savior has come (13:23), and in accordance with God's activity through history, this is a gift to Israel (13:17–22), climaxing God's gift of leaders (13:20–22), and especially his gift of a Davidic-type deliverer. The message about "this salvation" concerns the salvation brought by the new deliverer, which Paul will expound (in terms of Jesus's death and resurrection) in the following verses (13:27–31).

The new address (cf. 13:16; for the same words, 13:15) may begin a new section here;⁸⁵² repetition of address does not always function as a transition marker, but it can do so (cf. 2:14, 22, 29; 3:12, 17).⁸⁵³ Certainly the emphasis shifts to Jesus's death and resurrection immediately afterward (13:27–31). Paul addresses both ethnic descendants of Abraham and God-fearers (see comment on Acts 13:16, 43; on God-fearers, see comment on Acts 10:2).⁸⁵⁴ (One may compare the "place of the Jews and God-worshippers" (*theosebion*) inscribed at the theater of Miletus in Asia Minor.)⁸⁵⁵

Such respectful language toward his people in a synagogue fits what we would expect of the epistolary Paul, as best we can reconstruct how he would have addressed

843. B. Ketub. 96a, cited by various commentators (e.g., Daube, *New Testament and Judaism*, 266; Lachs, *Commentary*, 45; cf. Davies, *Sermon*, 135).

844. E.g., 2 Kgs 9:7, 36; 10:10; 14:25; 17:13, 23; 21:10; 24:2; Ezra 9:11; Isa 20:3; Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Dan 3:28; 6:20; 9:6, 10; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6; cf. 'Abot R. Nat. 37, §95 B; Martin, *Slavery*, 55–56; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 3; Käsemann, *Romans*, 5.

845. E.g., 2 Sam 3:18; 7:5, 8, 19–21, 25–29; 1 Kgs 3:6; 8:24–26, 66; 11:13, 32, 34, 36, 38; 14:8; 2 Kgs 8:19; 19:34; 20:6; 1 Chr 17:4, 7, 17–19, 23–27; 2 Chr 6:15–21, 42; Pss 78:70; 89:3, 20; 132:10; 144:10; Isa 37:35; Jer 33:21–22, 26; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; cf. 'Abot R. Nat. 43, §121 B.

846. E.g., Exod 14:31; Num 12:7–8; Deut 34:5; Josh 1:1–2, 7, 13, 15; 8:31, 33; 9:24; 11:12, 15; 12:6; 13:8; 14:7; 18:7; 22:2, 4–5; 1 Kgs 8:53, 56; 2 Kgs 18:12; 21:8; 1 Chr 6:49; 2 Chr 1:3; 24:6, 9; Neh 1:7–8; 9:14; 10:29; Ps 105:26; Dan 9:11; Mal 4:4; cf. 4Q378 22 2; L.A.B. 30:2, *famulum*; 'Abot R. Nat. 43, §121 B.

847. Cf. Gen 26:24; Exod 32:13; Deut 9:27; Ps 105:6; 2 Macc 1:2; *Jub.* 31:25; 45:3; *Test. Ab.* 9:4 A; 2 *Bar.* 4:4; 'Abot R. Nat. 43, §121 B.

848. Lev 25:42, 55; Deut 32:43; Isa 41:8–9; 42:1, 19; 43:10; 44:1–2, 21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3; Jer 30:10; 46:27–28; Ezek 28:25; 37:25; 2 *Bar.* 44:4; *t. B. Qam.* 7:5; 'Abot R. Nat. 43, §121 B; *Gen. Rab.* 96 NV; *y. Qidd.* 1:2, §24; cf. *Tob* 4:14 mss.

849. Inscription in Grant, *Religions*, 122; Martin, *Slavery*, xiv–xvi (citing Soph. *Oed. tyr.* 410; Plato *Phaedo* 85B; Apul. *Metam.* 11.15; inscriptions), 46, 49 (against, e.g., Beare, *Philippians*, 50); cf. Rom 1:1 (cf. Minear, *Images*, 156). On the high status of slaves of rulers, see excursus on slaves at Acts 12:13.

850. E.g., Anderson, *Mark*, 72–73; Taylor, *Mark*, 157. For one discussion of implications, see Webb, "John," 200–201.

851. Stählin, *Apostelgeschichte*, 182. On this likelihood as a reason for the Fourth Gospel's emphasis, see Keener, *John*, 388–91.

852. Munck, *Acts*, 123.

853. Direct addresses sometimes signal transitions in ancient letters; see Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 219, citing P.Mich. 206.4–5 (which uses "brother"); note also his citation of Mullins, "Formulas," 387.

854. Munck, *Acts*, 123. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 29 (Martin, *Acts*, 165) suggests that Paul allows his Jewish audience to distinguish themselves from Jerusalemite leaders who rejected Jesus (Acts 13:27).

855. C. Williams, *Acts*, 167 (using the spelling in Williams).

his own people evangelistically (cf. Rom 11:1–2; 1 Cor 9:20; Phil 3:5). Abraham's role as father was pivotal for Paul, though he especially emphasized Abraham's spiritual fatherhood of believers (Rom 4:1–16; Gal 3:6–18; 4:22); this was also true of early Christian theology in general (spiritual in John 8:39–40; 1 Pet 3:6; probably ethnic in Jas 2:21). Luke emphasizes both the spiritual (Luke 3:8) and the genetic (13:16, 28; 16:24, 30; 19:9) aspects as well as the promised blessing to Abraham's descendants (Acts 3:25–26). (Luke opens with an allusion to Abraham's narrative even in Luke 1:5–7 and implies the covenant privileges available to, but not automatic for, his descendants also in Luke 13:16; 19:9.) Paul addressed spiritual Jewishness mainly when addressing Jewish-Gentile conflicts in his churches, but he also recognized ethnic Jewishness and descent from Abraham (Rom 9:5; 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22).

The epistolary Paul also accepted Israel's special heritage and privilege (Rom 3:1–2; 9:4–5) and priority (1:16; 2:9–10), though contending that individuals who repudiated God's new work in Christ also joined the outsiders in repudiating their salvation-historical heritage (9:6–7; as in Acts 13:46). Luke is so emphatic that this priority appears in his work's structure (no serious historical scholarship disputes the historical expansion of the Jesus movement from Israel to the Gentiles, but Luke continues to reiterate this point) and Paul's repeated pattern in the synagogues (cf. Acts 3:26). For fuller discussion of the pattern, see comment on Acts 13:5.

The “word” plays on the word they have been invited to give (13:15)⁸⁵⁶ and the gospel message Paul is proclaiming here (13:44, 46, 48–49).⁸⁵⁷ The message of salvation here can be John's message of repentance in view of the coming one (13:24–25), more likely the rehearsal of the gospel story (13:27–31), or both; God “sent” his “message” to Israel (10:36). Jesus's story (13:23–31) is the climax of Israel's story (13:17–22), from David (13:22–23). This is especially clear because the message of salvation in 13:26 is the good news of the promise to the ancestors in 13:32.

“Salvation”⁸⁵⁸ is one of the themes in the preaching in Acts, for both Peter (2:40; 4:12; 11:14; 15:11) and Paul (13:47; 16:31; 28:28), as well as in some quoted speech in the Gospel (Luke 19:9–10), especially in the special Lukan introduction (1:71, 77; 2:30). (For “salvation,” see further comment at Acts 2:20; 27:20.) Here “this salvation” is “sent” first to Israel (Acts 13:26; cf. 3:26; a “message sent” to Israel in 10:36); later Paul will emphasize that “this salvation” has also been “sent” to the Gentiles (28:28). As noted above, in the immediate context, the “message of this salvation” refers to the message about the promised Savior (13:23).

Although Paul tactfully includes himself among those who are hearing the message (“us” referring to all Jews and God-fearers of his day), Paul is clearly the vehicle for his audience's hearing and hence stands in continuity with the prophets presupposed in 13:23–25 (see also 13:47 and comment there).

II. JESUS'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION (13:27–31)

Paul shifts here from announcing the promise about the Davidic deliverer and John's prophecy about the greater coming one to focusing on Jesus's death and resurrection, the means of salvation announced in 13:26.

856. A biblical passage was also a “word” (1QpHab II, 5; V, 3; X, 9; XII, 2, 12).

857. For the kerygmatic history of “word” in the OT, see Pillai, *Interpretation*, 30–32 (although in Hebrew, even more than in Greek, the term bore a variety of senses).

858. C. Williams, *Acts*, 163, cites the nuance of “life” in the Aramaic or Syriac word for “salvation” (cf. “this life” in Acts 5:20; cf. Marshall, *Acts*, 118), but neither Paul nor Luke's source would have used Aramaic in addressing a Greek-speaking synagogue (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 267). The connection simply attests independently the obvious association between life and salvation in ancient thought.

(1) *Executing Jesus* (13:27–29)

Like Peter preaching to Jerusalemites in 3:17, Paul here notes the ignorance of Jesus's enemies to seek to mitigate the guilt of Israel, in order to appeal to his Diaspora hearers (13:27).⁸⁵⁹ Still, ignorance could be deliberate (Luke 11:52). Jerusalem's role in salvation history may help explain its mention here⁸⁶⁰ (cf. Acts 13:31; its priority in 1:8 as well), or it may dissociate Paul's Diaspora audience from the full force of the moral responsibility for Jesus's rejection in Jerusalem. But the historical content of Paul's speech made such mention natural, in any case.

Many Jewish hearers could cite Jesus's death at the hands of the Jerusalem leaders (cf. the lament in Luke 24:20–21) to argue against his being genuinely the Messiah, but rhetoric customarily sought to turn potential disadvantages into advantages.⁸⁶¹ How did the leaders' hostility to Jesus fulfill Scripture? In addition to particular texts about righteous sufferers, Stephen's speech may suggest a way that Luke will not rehearse here: salvation history includes a history of God's people in which they (and sometimes their leaders) rejected the deliverers and prophets God gave them. The hostile leaders of Jerusalem, in fact, contrast starkly with the deliverer leaders God had given through history (Acts 13:20–25). That those who condemned Jesus fulfilled Scripture fits an irony that runs throughout Luke-Acts.⁸⁶²

Other early Christian writers, including Paul (Rom 3:21; 16:26), summarized the foretelling of Jesus's sufferings with global citations of "prophets" (1 Pet 1:10–12; John 1:45), but Luke is the most prominent user of this technique. Luke elsewhere recognizes that Scripture was read in synagogues "on every Sabbath" (Acts 15:21; see comment on Acts 13:15). Although most scholars doubt assigned readings from the prophets for various Sabbaths already in this period,⁸⁶³ there is little question that the prophets were also read, at least in synagogues that could afford scrolls beyond the law (cf. 8:30).⁸⁶⁴

The text emphasizes that the leaders executed Jesus without grounds (13:28). Luke's apologetic includes an emphasis on Jesus's innocence (e.g., Luke 23:4, 14–15, 22, 47).⁸⁶⁵ "Found" echoes Pilate's finding no guilt in Luke 23:4, 14 and especially finding no "cause for death" (αἴτιον θανάτου) in 23:22; "requesting" his death echoes 23:23, 25; Acts 3:14.⁸⁶⁶ Luke includes no formal Jewish trial, and so "condemn" in Acts 13:27 need not by itself signify formal condemnation in a court setting.⁸⁶⁷ In the larger context of Luke's work, such language also connects Paul with Jesus, since the authorities sought to ascertain the "cause" of charges against Paul (22:24; 23:28; 25:27) and found them baseless (25:18; 28:18), the real cause being his genuine faithfulness to his heritage rather than to how others had defined that heritage (28:20).

859. Cf. Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 117; O'Neill, *Theology*, 86; Pillai, *Interpretation*, 34 (rightly comparing the excuse for both Jewish and Gentile hearers, in 3:17 and 17:23, 30). On degrees of culpability for ignorance, see comment on Acts 3:17; cf. 1 Tim 1:13. For Jewish and Gentile ignorance behind rejecting Christ in Paul, see Rom 10:2–3; 1 Cor 2:8; for the ignorance of leaders who opposed Jesus, see 1 Cor 2:8 (according to the most probable interpretation).

860. Pillai, *Interpretation*, 33.

861. E.g., Heath, "Invention," 97. Paul also knew how to turn apparent disadvantage to advantage; e.g., 2 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:13.

862. See Ray, *Irony*, 155–56 (in his larger work connecting Luke's motifs of prophecy fulfillment and Israel's rejection by way of irony). Luke may have found irony in passages such as Isa 53:3, 8.

863. Cohen, "Earliest Evidence," finds some evidence for readings in Philo; if correct, at least some later standard seasons' readings may reflect early tradition used by some ancient scholars.

864. Without such readings, it seems difficult to explain the many allusions to the prophets in the NT, at least some of which the authors probably expected their audience to notice. They were viewed as Scripture (Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 1.40); the Essenes may have focused on them more than others (cf. *War* 2.159).

865. Cf. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 153; Witherington, *Acts*, 411.

866. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 234.

867. See Harvey, *History*, 174–75. Luke of course knew the tradition in Mark.

For Pilate's role (not of major relevance to his hearers), see comment on Acts 4:27. We should not think it implausible that some members of a synagogue in Asia Minor would have heard of Pilate's name. Travelers networked Jewish communities throughout the empire, but even if they knew little about other locations, they would know something about the administration of Judea. Pilate was notorious and also was deposed only about a decade earlier, and so it is reasonable that many members would have heard of him; anyone who had not, however, might well infer his role from the context, as well as that Paul had reliable knowledge of the affairs he was describing.⁸⁶⁸ Luke's own audience, of course, knows Pilate well enough from Luke's Gospel and probably from the earlier passion tradition as well.

Paul's description may include an element of ironic pathos in mentioning the "tree" (13:29). The term here for cross is "tree" or "wood" (see 5:30 and comment there). The cross had evolved from a torture stake; Latin sometimes paraphrases *crux* as *arbor infelix*.⁸⁶⁹ Further and most relevant (see Gal 3:13 for Paul's own citation), the LXX spoke of hanging a dead victim on a ξύλον to expose the corpse to posthumous shame before sundown (Deut 21:22–23).⁸⁷⁰ A "rejected deliverer" (see comment on Acts 7:9–42, esp. 7:35–37) could hardly be rejected in a more grotesque and shameful manner.⁸⁷¹

Luke's précis of Paul's speech includes Jesus's burial (Acts 13:29), perhaps underlining the genuineness of Jesus's physical death and resurrection. Some scholars think that the text claims that Jesus's elite Jerusalemite accusers buried Jesus, but they probably read too much into "a concise summary."⁸⁷² A member of that class, however, did provide Jesus's burial, attested in all four Gospels (with somewhat different details, Luke 23:50–53).⁸⁷³ What "is written" about Jesus's suffering here presumably fits the rejected-deliverer pattern (see comment on Acts 7:35–37; including the persecuted-prophets motif [e.g., Luke 11:47–50], on which see comment on Acts 7:52) and probably the righteous-sufferer pattern (see comment on Acts 1:20) and Suffering Servant passages as well (see comment on Acts 8:32–33). In any case, Luke, like a number of other NT writers (e.g., 1 Cor 15:3; 1 Pet 1:10–11; Mark 9:12; 12:10; 14:21, 27; 15:34; Matt 26:24, 31; John 2:19–22; 19:24, 28, 36–37), believed that Scripture foretold Jesus's sufferings (Luke 24:26–27, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:2–3; 26:22–23). On the use of "written" for Scripture, see comment on Acts 1:20.

(2) *God Raised Jesus (13:30–31)*

The motif of raising up appears throughout the section, referring both to David (Acts 13:22) and to Jesus's resurrection (13:30, 33, 34, 37).⁸⁷⁴

868. "Pilate" was not, however, a common Roman name (Sherwin-White, "Pilate," 867).

869. Pillai, *Interpretation*, 40. Cf. Sen. Y. Ep. 101.14 (crucifixion as "the 'accursed tree'") in Brown, *Death*, 947. Non-cross trees had also been used for hanging (Diod. Sic. 33.15.1); early Christian tradition supported the t-shaped cross for Jesus (Evans, *World*, 77); the earlier report of the "inscription above him" (Luke 23:38; also Matt 27:37; though Mark 15:26 and John 19:19–20 are not specific) also suggests that the *palus* extended above the *patibulum*.

870. Jos. Ant. 4.202 depends on this passage; but Philo allegorizes it (Knox, *Jerusalem*, 132, citing Philo *Posterity* 17). Given the rarity (though not uniqueness) of calling the cross a "tree," Deut 21 is probably in view (Morris, *Cross in New Testament*, 142, though Luke need not emphasize the curse here). On Paul's theology of the cross, see, e.g., McGrath, "Cross"; treating the Messiah's crucifixion as a contrast with imperial honor (cf. 1 Cor 1:18–29), see Kim, *Introduction*, 73–74.

871. On various early Jewish approaches to the curse in Deut 21:23, see Bernstein, "Study." Justin may follow Paul's usage in Gal 3:13 (Stylianopoulos, *Justin*, 105). In the *Temple Scroll*, one should be hanged on a tree for treason (11QT LXIV, 7–8) and evading the law (LXIV, 10–12).

872. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 105; also Pillai, *Interpretation*, 39. If they did offer such a burial, it would presumably be a dishonorable one (see McCane, "Shame," 452).

873. For the reliability of this tradition, see Brown, *Death*, 1240; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:647; Keener, *Matthew*, 690; idem, *John*, 1158–59; supporting Jesus's burial, see, e.g., Brown, "Burial"; Evans, *World*, 117–30, esp. 120–30.

874. Pillai, *Interpretation*, 81. For Jesus's resurrection in this speech, see fuller discussion in Anderson, *Raised*, 234–60.

On the character of the appearances in 13:31, see comment on Acts 1:3. Appeal to witnesses was standard in forensic rhetoric (e.g., Lysias *Or.* 3.14, §97), and this could mean to as many witnesses as available (even if the speaker avers their existence without summoning all to testify; 3.27, §98). See discussion on witnesses at Acts 1:8. Although Paul's speech is primarily deliberative in its intent (Acts 13:41, 46), mixed speech genres were common;⁸⁷⁵ witnesses appear in forensic rhetoric because a matter under dispute must be proved, which is also the case with the basis for the deliberative appeal here.

d. Proofs and peroratio (13:32–41)

Having claimed Jesus's resurrection on the basis of witnesses (13:30–31), Paul now establishes that it fulfills the Scriptures (including the pattern of God's benevolence he has already narrated). He moves from scriptural proofs (13:32–37) to a concluding *peroratio*, inviting faith (13:38–39) but warning (again from Scripture) against unbelief (13:40–41).

I. JESUS'S RESURRECTION FULFILLS SCRIPTURE (13:32–37)

(1) The Promise Fulfilled (13:32)

The ancestral promise that Paul now announces is founded in Scripture, including the Scripture passages he will now lay out (13:33–37). When Paul transitions from the Galilean witnesses (13:31) to "evangelizing" in the first-person plural (13:32), he links himself with the first witnesses not so much by mentioning his analogous experience (as in 1 Cor 15:5–8; compare ὠφθῆναι in Acts 13:31 with ὀφθεῖς in 9:17) as by the continuity of their shared message.⁸⁷⁶ The good news of the promise being preached to them is identical with the message of salvation in Acts 13:26; Luke consistently grounds Jesus's story (13:23–31) in Israel's story (13:17–22), as its proper climax. The promise here includes the promise of a Davidic Savior (13:23), fulfilled in raising up Jesus (13:33) as God raised up David (13:22).⁸⁷⁷ This fits the Davidic promises in Pss 2 and 16 (Acts 13:33, 35), since David prophesied of his descendants (Acts 2:25–31), and also the promise to David in 13:34. Yet this passage describes it as the promise "to the patriarchs" (as in 26:6); although this could simply mean to the ancients in general, it probably includes the promise to Abraham (7:17). For Luke, though the promise must extend beyond what Abraham explicitly heard, all the promises simply unfold the one promise of blessing made to Abraham (7:17; 13:23, 32–33; 26:6–7).⁸⁷⁸

(2) Resurrection Sonship (13:33)

The repetition of "promise" from 13:32 clarifies the syntax and might be emphatic.⁸⁷⁹ Perhaps both Acts' public reader and first-century hearers' construal of Paul in the narrative world would have used here a gesture for quotations, extending "a slightly

875. Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 307, 419.

876. This is a Lukan emphasis, though one with a genuine historical foundation (see 1 Cor 15:1–11; Gal 1:8–9; 2:7–9). See fuller discussion in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:304–8 (esp. 307–8); cf. 499–500.

877. Luke clearly understands the Davidic promises in a manner quite different from the often-political framework in which they were traditionally read (cf. Tuckett, "Christology," 162). Nevertheless, Acts 13:33 does recall a specifically Davidic promise (Cotton, "Gospel," 285).

878. See Dahl, "Abraham," 148. The promise concerns especially his seed and (land) inheritance, narrowed down through the Davidic promise to the Messiah, and (concerning the land) the consequent restoration of the kingdom.

879. On repeating a word for clarity, see Anderson, *Glossary*, 37 (noting that Demet. *Style* 103 thought it elevated speech stylistically).

drooped index finger, with the two outer fingers curved.”⁸⁸⁰ For the frequent formula “it is written,” see comment on Acts 1:20.

Identifying a work as “the second book” (Polyb. 3.26.5) or second psalm was a natural way to help the reader locate it; given the size of the Psalter, this was a useful specification. Yet the manuscript tradition is quite divided on the mention of the “second” psalm here. This is not surprising since there remained differences of opinion in arranging and designating some psalms. Not only the sequence but to some extent the content of the canonical book of Psalms remained in flux when many of the Qumran psalms scrolls were written (see, e.g., 4Q88; 11Q5).⁸⁸¹ Perhaps most to the point, some treated Ps 1 as the introduction to the Psalter, making our Ps 2 the “first” psalm in some Western manuscripts,⁸⁸² as in *Midrash Tehillim*.⁸⁸³ Regardless of its numeric designation, its role as introductory to at least the first two books of Psalms (which, as the superscriptions suggest, early Judaism mostly regarded as Davidic) made it prominent and ripe for messianic application.

Originally an enthronement psalm,⁸⁸⁴ by this period Ps 2 was naturally usually understood by interpreters with reference to the ultimate Davidic ruler, the Messiah, and hence eschatologically.⁸⁸⁵ This is clear in 4QFlor 1 I, 18–II, 1. The rabbis also interpreted it messianically.⁸⁸⁶ Probably the cultic acclamation of Davidic rule in Israel's royal psalms provided the earliest commentary on the promise of 2 Sam 7. Qumran's 4QFlor combined discussion of 2 Sam 7:10–14 with Ps 2:1–2 (and Ps 1:1).⁸⁸⁷ This work (4Q174 1 I, 11–13) also applies 2 Sam 7:11c, 12b, 13b–14a (quoted in 4Q174 1 I, 10–11) to the end-time “shoot of David” (Isa 11:1) and raised-up fallen booth (Amos 9:11; cf. Acts 15:16) and branch (cf. Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12).⁸⁸⁸ Some scholars find an implicit connection between 2 Sam 7 and Ps 2 here, linked via *gezerah shevah*.⁸⁸⁹

In Acts' speeches, “Son of God” appears only in Paul's preaching (though it occurs only here and in Acts 9:20), although Luke affirms the same claim (Luke 1:32–35). It also appears in Paul's letters (e.g., Rom 1:4; 2 Cor 1:19; Gal 2:20) but likewise

880. Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 56, noting that orators often gestured before quotes instead of mentioning (as here) that they were quoting.

881. Wise, “Introduction to Apocryphal Psalms”; cf. Wilson, “Date.” Various editions continued to circulate at Qumran in the first century c.e. (Flint, “Psalms in Light of Scrolls”). The way the canonical psalms were divided, rabbis counted 147 (*y. Šabb.* 16:1, §9); many kept writing psalms (e.g., 4Q380; 4Q381; 4Q88; 11Q5–6; 4Q448; 1 Cor 14:26).

882. Wilson, *Psalms*, 1:92; idem, *Editing of Psalter*, 204–6.

883. Hansberger, “Mose.”

884. Bright, *History*, 225–26; Harrelson, *Cult*, 86–87; de Vaux, *Israel*, 109. The enthronement decree resembles those in Assyrian and other texts (cf. *ANET* 267, 370, 383; Dahood, *Psalms*, 1:11–12; Gordon, *Near East*, 254) and an adoption formula (de Vaux, *Israel*, 112).

885. Longenecker, *Christology*, 113. Bons, “Psaume 2,” even argues that it was redacted after the exile for an eschatological application, such as appears in the Qumran scrolls and the NT. It could easily be linked with Ps 110 in Acts 2:34–35 (see Hengel, *Son*, 23). *Pss. Sol.* 17:23 uses Ps 2:9 in a messianic passage, although “son” (Ps 2:7) is not mentioned.

886. See, e.g., *b. Sukkah* 52a, bar.; *Gen. Rab.* 44:8; *Midr. Pss.* 2, §9 (on Ps 2:7; though late). More fully, see Lövestam, *Son and Saviour*, 17–21 (noted by Bauckham, *Jude*, 219). Part of Josephus's apologetic may have played down potential messianic overtones in 2 Sam 7 (Avioz, “Nathan's Oracle”).

887. E.g., Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 98 (also noting [n. 67] Ps 2:7 in 3Q2); see discussion of 4QFlor (= 4Q174) in Brooke, “4Q174.”

888. Bergmeier, “Erfüllung,” argues that 4Q174 II, 17–III, 13 may apply 2 Sam 7:10–14 to the end-time community and temple. On 2 Sam 7:1–17 in early Judaism (OT; 4Q174; NT), see, e.g., Robert, “Avenir.” On the “branch,” see Isa 4:2; 11:1; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12; 1QH^a XIV, 15; XV, 19; XVI, 6, 8, 10; cf. *Test. Jud.* 24:4 if not an interpolation. *Nezer* may be associated with Jesus in later rabbinic texts (*b. Sanh.* 43a, bar.; cf. Herford, *Christianity*, 95–96).

889. See Doeve, *Hermeneutics*, 172–73; Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 98 (noting also Lövestam, *Son and Saviour*, 6–15). Dumais, “Language,” finds adaptations in the language of 2 Sam 7 in Acts 13.

elsewhere.⁸⁹⁰ Paul also spoke of the resurrection as declaring Jesus's sonship in fulfillment of Scripture (Rom 1:2–4).⁸⁹¹

The announcement of Jesus's sonship here sounds as if it is declared by Jesus's resurrection, his exaltation to the Davidic throne of which Ps 2:7 speaks.⁸⁹² This interpretation fits the analogous use of Ps 2 in Heb 1:5⁸⁹³ as well as Paul's teaching (or adaptation of earlier tradition)⁸⁹⁴ in Rom 1:4 (cf. perhaps, but not likely, also 1 Thess 1:10). All of this fits the association of the psalm's sonship declaration with enthronement in the psalm's probably original context. The entire Lukan context is somewhat more complex. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is already Son (Luke 1:35;⁸⁹⁵ cf. 1:32, though it is future; 22:70), and the Father announces Jesus's sonship in language echoing Ps 2 (Luke 3:22; cf. 9:35; acknowledged by demons, cf. 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28).⁸⁹⁶ Luke is not, then, "adoptionist" in associating Jesus's sonship with the resurrection, as if Jesus became God's Son only at the resurrection.⁸⁹⁷ Nevertheless, this verse seems to argue that Jesus's sonship is made publicly known to humanity in a special way at his resurrection (Acts 2:36), which baptism merely prefigured.⁸⁹⁸ The use of ἀνίστημι in 13:33 and 13:34,⁸⁹⁹ synonymous with ἐγείρω (13:22, 30, 37), may evoke 2 Sam 7:12,⁹⁰⁰ though it also applies to resurrection (Isa 26:14, 19; Dan 12:2, 13). If so, however, it is Luke's play on words; in view of Acts 13:30–31 and especially 13:34, Luke clearly points to Jesus's resurrection (cf. 2:24, 32).⁹⁰¹

(3) Promise to David (13:34)

The sermon introduces the verses not randomly but based on the standard exegetical technique *gezerah shevah*, linking keywords.⁹⁰² (Most of the early Jewish exegetical

890. E.g., Mark 1:1; John 3:18; 5:25; Heb 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10–13, 20; Rev 2:18.

891. Noted by Baum, "Paulinismen," 421–22.

892. It probably includes the exaltation to God's right hand (Acts 2:33–35) as well as the resurrection, in contrast to following quotations (Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations*, 172–76). This passage treats Christ as the fulfillment of the promise in Ps 2:7 (Bellinger, "Psalms and Acts," 140–42).

893. Cf. also Heb 5:5, where it is midrashically linked with Ps 110:4 (cf. the exaltation in 110:1, in Heb 1:13) in Heb 5:6. Heb 1:5 links it with 2 Sam 7:14 (noted further below).

894. Pre-Pauline tradition is possible in the passage, but Schweizer's claim that Paul is "correcting" it ("Davidic 'Son,'" 186) is excessive.

895. Nevertheless, Luke did not apply the psalm's "begetting" to the incarnation, as did some church fathers (Cyril of Alexandria in *Cat. Act.* 13.33; Bede *Comm. Acts* 13.33 [both in Martin, *Acts*, 167]), who appear to have read their later, more limited theological vocabulary into the text.

896. Bock, *Proclamation*, 245–49, argues that the text claims that Jesus must be raised *because* he is already the Son. For the likely allusion to Ps 2:7 at Jesus's baptism, see, e.g., Marshall, "Son or Servant?," 332–33; for some detractors, see, e.g., Cranfield, "Baptism," 61.

897. Noted by Dunn, *Acts*, 180–81; cf. also Goulder, *Type and History*, 53. In some sense, the virgin birth made him God's Son (Luke 1:32–35); in another, his baptism declared it (3:22); ultimately, his resurrection confirms it.

898. Cf. Lampe, *Seal*, 39; Robinson, *Studies*, 160–61; Uprichard, "Baptism."

899. The noun cognate is Paul's typical phrase for the resurrection both in his letters and in Acts (Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 157), though it is by no means limited to either (John 5:29; Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 33; Heb 6:2; 1 Pet 1:3; 3:21; Rev 20:5–6).

900. Heb 1:5 links 2 Sam 7:14 with Ps 2:7. The connection is midrashic (via *gezerah shevah*) but not artificial. When David died (2 Sam 7:12), God would adopt and defend David's son, taking the role of the new king's father (7:14); because the promise was for David's house "forever" (7:13, 16), it applied beyond Solomon to David's entire lineage. Israel's cult celebrated this promise (Pss 2:7; 89:26–27), and prophets echoed it for the idealized king of the future restoration (cf. Isa 9:6–7; Jer 23:5–6). The connection with 2 Sam 7:12, however, is at most suggestive; ἀνίστημι appears about 450 times in the LXX (including books of the Apocrypha; 24 times in Psalms and more than 110 times in 1 Samuel–2 Kings) and more than 100 times in the NT (with varied senses).

901. With, e.g., Hansen, "Preaching," 302; contrast Larkin, *Acts*, 202. Schweizer, "Davidic 'Son,'" 186, 190, thinks that Luke exploits the ambiguity of the language, as in Acts 3:22; 7:37.

902. *Mek. Pisha* 5.103; *Mek. Nez.* 10.15–16, 26, 38; 17.17 (Lauterbach, 1:41; 3:75–77, 130); *b. Ber.* 9a; 35a; *B. Qam.* 25b; *Git.* 49a; *Ker.* 5a; *Qidd.* 15a; 35b; *Menaḥ.* 76a; *Naz.* 48a; *Nid.* 22b–23a; *Roš Haš.* 3b; 34a;

middot have analogues in Greek logic, from which they were borrowed,⁹⁰³ and so the method was familiar over a broad geographic and cultural range. Only those with significant biblical literacy would catch all the allusions to context of the passages cited, but the connections among the explicit citations here are obvious enough to be caught by everyone who is attentive.)

The verse cited here (Isa 55:3) is connected by means of an implicit *gezerah shevah* with David the (implicit) royal psalmist in Acts 13:33, as also the next citation in 13:35.⁹⁰⁴ “Holy” (ἁγία) here especially explicitly connects with “holy” (ἁγιόν) in 13:35. As a measure of the significance of the term’s recurrence for the midrashic connection that Luke makes here,⁹⁰⁵ we may consider the term’s rareness (eight NT occurrences, three in Luke-Acts) compared with Luke’s use of ἅγιος (seventy-one times); these two verses represent two of the three uses in Luke-Acts (the other is again Ps 16:10 [15:10 LXX] in Acts 2:27).⁹⁰⁶ The exegetical link with Ps 16:10 (15:10 LXX) is essential to connect the promise in Isaiah explicitly to the resurrection hope.⁹⁰⁷ In light of Acts 2:27–29, however, Luke may find it implicit even in the use of Isa 55:3: an eternal covenant and faithful mercies to David make sense, on Pharisaic and Christian presuppositions, only if David will be raised from the dead.⁹⁰⁸ But the promise must extend beyond David personally (Acts 13:36), as a promise on behalf of the people.⁹⁰⁹ Jesus, then, does not annul the promises to David or the prophets but demonstrates God’s faithfulness to fulfill them.⁹¹⁰

The term “holy” appears only in the LXX form of Isa 55:3, but Diaspora Jews would use this text as authoritative, and even Palestinian rabbis mixed and matched text types (including the Greek) to argue their case. In the LXX, the “holy things” may refer to the promises or oracles to David.⁹¹¹

Luke probably shows awareness of the context of Isa 55:3. This passage affirms God’s promise to Israel’s people that if they turn to him (55:1–3a), he will make an

Sanh. 40b; 51b; 52a; *Šabb.* 64a; *Tem.* 16a; *Zebah.* 18a; 49b–50b; *Exod. Rab.* 1:20; cf. Chernick, “Application”; the use of one authoritative text to interpret another also appears elsewhere (e.g., CD VII, 15–20).

903. So, e.g., Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 47–82; Levine, *Hellenism*, 113–16; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 103.

904. Readers by the NT period considered the first book of Psalms especially Davidic, although the superscriptions developed over time and Davidic associations need not be construed as authorship claims even there (cf. Wilson, *Psalms*, 75–81).

905. It is far less significant in the LXX itself, which includes fifty-six uses, mostly in Psalms (twenty-six uses), Proverbs (nine uses), and Wisdom (eight uses) (elsewhere in Greek-speaking Judaism, cf. twenty uses in *Pss. Sol.* 2:36; 3:8; 4:1, 6, 8; 8:23, 34; 9:3; 10:5–6; 12:4, 6; 13:10, 12; 14:3, 10; 15:3, 7; 16:0; 17:16). But this is the only occurrence in Isaiah. Less relevant for Luke’s audience or most of Paul’s synagogue audience, the paired deities “Holy and Just” were deities distinctive to Phrygia; see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:25–26; Rives, *Religion*, 60; Niang, *Faith*, 51. Two of Luke’s three uses of this term for “holy” appear only here (Acts 13:34–35; elsewhere 2:27), in a synagogue familiar with surrounding religion; yet his cognates of “just” (13:38–39) are far more frequent (close to thirty times), and his term for “holy” appears more than seventy times in the LXX. For the more traditional divine title “holy one” in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Middle East, see van Koppen and van der Toorn, “Holy One.”

906. “Corruption” also appears only in the quotations of Acts 2:27, 31 and here (13:34–37) in the NT (Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations*, 184).

907. Doeve, *Hermeneutics*, 186. To make the connection even more explicit, διαθήσασθαι (the verb is often used with establishing covenants in the LXX) in Isa 55:3 LXX is rendered δώσω (since Luke omits explicit mention of the covenant), preparing for the δώσεις of Acts 13:35 (Pillai, *Interpretation*, 88).

908. The covenant in Isa 55:3, not part of Luke’s quotation (as Schmitt, “Kerygme,” 163, emphasizes), probably alludes to the covenant of peace in 54:10.

909. See Bock, “Scripture and Realisation of Promises,” 50.

910. Kee, *Every Nation*, 167. Bock, *Proclamation*, 254, points out that the resurrection guarantees the Davidic covenant’s “eternal character” instead of exhausting the promise of Isa 55:3 (see further 249–54).

911. So Johnson, *Acts*, 235; followed by Witherington, *Acts*, 412 (citing *Jos. Ant.* 8.115; *Wis* 6:10). The term appears often in funerary inscriptions, for the deceased among the holy (*CIJ* 1:37, §55; 1:71, §100; 1:78, §111; 1:253, §321; 1:267, §340; 1:282–83, §363; 1:468, §652; in Latin, 1:166, §233).

eternal covenant with them as he showed mercy to David (55:3, end) and made him a witness (μαρτύριον; cf. the Isaian motif in Acts 1:8) and leader (ἄρχοντα; cf. Acts 7:35) to nations (Isa 55:4);⁹¹² so also will Israel be glorified and call to and draw nations (55:5), at its restoration (55:12–13). In the further context, Gentiles and eunuchs (cf. Acts 8:27) are welcome in this covenant (Isa 56:4–7). Isaiah 55 may also be linked in the author’s mind with the servant passage in Isa 52:13–53:12 (cf. Acts 8:32–33); compare “glorified” in Isa 55:5 with 52:13, and nations in both 55:4–5 and 52:15. Luke might also use the more common verb δίδωμι as part of the link.⁹¹³ God would “give” the “holy” and confirmed promises; therefore God would not “give” the “holy” fruit of these promises over to decay.

(4) *Incorruptible Holy One (13:35–37)*

The final prophecy in the series (Acts 13:33–35) naturally concludes the preceding context, and it becomes the basis for comment in 13:36–37. The connection between Isa 55:3 (in Acts 13:34) and Ps 16:10 is natural midrashically, given the common key term ὅσιος⁹¹⁴ (and possibly also δίδωμι, as suggested tentatively above). See comment on Acts 13:34. That Ps 16:10 must apply to Jesus in its ultimate, literal sense rather than to David is demonstrated by the fulfillment, in Acts 13:37, for Jesus and lack of fulfillment, in 13:36, for David. On Ps 16, see also comment on Acts 2:27, 31; whereas here Paul links Ps 16 with Ps 2 (in Acts 13:33), in Acts 2 Peter linked it with Ps 110, another psalm about an exalted one.

In Acts 13:36–37, Paul shows (as Peter did in 2:29, 34) that David could not have fulfilled the promise himself, so that this reference must look beyond David to his ultimate royal descendant. David served⁹¹⁵ not himself, as if God’s purposes for David were for David’s own sake alone, but God’s plan,⁹¹⁶ the same plan of God that elsewhere in Acts is revealed in Scripture and eventuates in Jesus’s death and resurrection (2:23; 4:28; 5:38–39; 20:27; cf. Luke 7:30).⁹¹⁷ His service to God’s will was, however, voluntary (cf. Acts 13:22), not simply as an unwitting instrument like some other biblical characters (e.g., Isa 10:5–7, 15; Rom 9:17), as Acts 13:22 makes clear.⁹¹⁸

For “sleep” as a standard figure for death, see comment on Acts 7:60. “Added to his fathers” is an idiom for joining one’s deceased ancestors in their deceased state (Gen 49:29; Judg 2:10; 2 Kgs 22:20; 2 Chr 34:28; 1 Macc 2:69); David “slept with his fathers” in 1 Kgs 2:10.⁹¹⁹ That David died shows that the promise was not immediately

912. For this context of Gentiles, see also van de Sandt, “Acts 13, 32–52”; Dupont, *Salvation*, 152. Others also note that Luke thinks of the context when citing passages in Isaiah (Secombe, “Luke and Isaiah”).

913. Though it is a more common term in general, about ninety-five times in Luke-Acts. In the immediate context, it indicates benevolence in Acts 13:34, as in 13:20–21.

914. Doeve, *Hermeneutics*, 174. The term ὅσιος appears as a distinctive (albeit pagan) divine title in this very region of South Galatia (see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:25 [linked with a twin deity, δίκαιος; the concepts were easily linked, as in Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.Sb.12, pp. 26–27.17–18]; cf. Kearsley, “Angels”), though we should not read too much into its use here (probably dictated by exegetical constraints).

915. Only Luke in the NT employs the term ὑπηρετέω, which can include financial support (Acts 20:34; 24:23) but has a much wider semantic range (cf. Sir 39:4; BDAG; noun cognate in Acts 26:16 if admissible), including in other early Christian texts (e.g., Ign. *Phld.* 11.1; *Barn.* 1.5; *Herm.* 87.2; *Diogn.* 11.1).

916. Miura, *David*, 177–87, argues that Acts 13 involves a prophetic David typology. In Scripture, David was raised up not just for his own sake (though he was more spiritually qualified than his predecessor, 1 Sam 13:14; 16:7) but especially for Israel’s (see 2 Sam 5:12). He was raised up because Saul disobeyed (1 Sam 15:28). He himself later disobeyed (2 Sam 11:2–27), with disastrous consequences (2 Sam 12–1 Kgs 1); although he could have been replaced during that time, God accepted his repentance (2 Sam 12:10–13; 15:25–26; 16:12).

917. Moessner, “Script,” 238.

918. Technically we could read either “served his generation by God’s purpose” or “served God’s purpose in his generation”; the latter is more likely (Acts 13:22; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 270), although the sense is close in either case.

919. Some other expressions were more common, but this one clearly appears in the LXX, so that the idiom would be familiar.

fulfilled for him (Peter makes the same argument in Acts 2:29);⁹²⁰ he experienced decay, but the psalmist promised one who would not even experience decay (13:35), which applies to the ultimate Davidic ruler, Jesus (13:37), whom God raised (13:30).

Although much Jewish tradition depicted positive biblical characters as heroes⁹²¹ (a pattern amplified in later Christian hagiography), Luke's theology is clear that each person apart from Jesus had only a limited (though valuable) role in God's larger purpose, which climaxes and is fulfilled ultimately in Jesus. David fulfilled God's purpose in his limited lifespan; his role was God's choice, just like the roles of the apostles in Luke's own narrative (Acts 1:2; 15:7).

II. FORGIVENESS THROUGH FAITH (13:38–39)

After proving that Jesus's resurrection fulfills Scripture (and before noting that his hearers' rejection of the message could also fulfill Scripture), Paul speaks of forgiveness through faith.⁹²² Here, too, Paul presumably drew on Scripture (such as Gen 15:6 [Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6; also Jas 2:23; *1 Clem.* 10.6; *Barn.* 13.7]; or esp. Hab 2:4 [cf. Rom 1:17; Gal 3:7; also Heb 10:38], in the very context of the Habakkuk verse quoted in Acts 13:41), but it is omitted in Luke's summary.

"Therefore" in Acts 13:38 may connect forgiveness with the hope of resurrection, tying the future hope of believers with Jesus's resurrection/vindication (13:33, 35). ("Know therefore" is conventional language in exhortation.)⁹²³ The context of Isa 55:3 (cited in Acts 13:34) might suggest further connections omitted in Luke's more compressed account; God will pardon those who turn to him (Isa 55:7).⁹²⁴

Forgiveness was thus part of the complex promise: the Davidic promise of a Savior (Acts 13:23); the salvation message in the prophets (13:26–27), as evidenced by the context of, for example, Isa 55 (part of which was just cited in Acts 13:34); and the promise to the ancestors (Acts 13:32). Israel's promised eschatological restoration to God's favor was now available through the eschatological event of Jesus's resurrection. (The forgiveness preached here is the salvation preached in 13:26, 32.) It thus fits both its Lukan context and the context of texts mentioned but not developed by Luke (which could imply a fuller source), raising again the question of the extent to which the speech reflects Lukan and/or Pauline language.

(1) *Lukan, Pauline, or Both?*

"Let it be known to you" (13:38) is typical Lukan language of gospel proclamation (Peter in 2:14; 4:10; Paul here and in 28:28); "men, brethren" (ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί) is also characteristic of Luke's speeches (see 13:15, 26; 15:7; comment on Acts 2:14). But in some of what follows, Luke apparently reproduces some characteristically Pauline thought. In 13:38–39,⁹²⁵ most scholars recognize some Pauline language. It is unlikely that Luke had read any of Paul's letters and extremely unlikely that he

920. The connection with Peter's speech is generally noted; e.g., Knowling, "Acts," 296.

921. See, e.g., comments on various characters mentioned by Stephen in Acts 7 (ad loc.).

922. Luke often speaks of faith in the context of miracles (Luke 5:20; 7:9; 8:25, 48, 50; 17:6, 19; 18:42); see esp. discussion at Acts 3:16. The subject of faith here is different, but its object (God/Jesus) remains the same. Just as Paul can apply Abraham's faith in God's promise of seed, for God's purpose in salvation history, as a model for Christian faith in Abraham's ultimate seed for the ultimate salvation-historical promise (Rom 4:23–24), Luke can employ justifying faith as the entrance into a life of faith, rather than something radically different from other expressions of faith. The common feature, although not all believers exhibit all aspects of this faith, is radical dependence on God.

923. E.g., *Test. Iss.* 6:1; *Test. Jud.* 20:1.

924. Cf. also Isa 54:7–9; the covenant of peace and compassion in 54:10, which informs the eternal covenant of 55:3.

925. The usual English and Greek texts divide the verses differently, but I treat them together also because they are conceptually difficult to separate.

had read those that articulate these matters most fully (Romans and Galatians).⁹²⁶ It is far more likely that Luke had some closer acquaintance with Paul's preaching on the subject.⁹²⁷

Some of the familiar traits in these verses are as follows, though they are not necessarily uniquely Pauline in the history of early Christianity,⁹²⁸ and most also have Lukan parallels:⁹²⁹

Acts 13:38–39	Lukan Parallels	Pauline or Deuteropauline Parallels	Other NT Writers
"Forgiveness of sins" through Jesus	Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 26:18 (Luke 1:77; 3:3; Acts 8:22; 14:17)	"Forgiveness of sins" in Jesus (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14) (implied in Rom 4:7; 5:9)	(Implied in Mark 1:4; Heb 9:22; 10:18; John 20:23; perhaps Jas 5:15) Jesus forgives (Mark 2:10) and is involved in divine forgiveness (1 John 1:7, 9; esp. 2:12)
"Everyone who believes"	Acts 10:43 (including Gentiles; Luke often speaks of "believing," however, e.g., 13:12, 41, 48)	Rom 1:16; 3:22; 4:11; 10:4, 11* (all welcoming Gentiles who trust God's provision of Christ); Gal 3:22; 2 Thess 1:10	John 3:15–16; 6:40; 11:26; 12:46, 48; 17:21; 1 John 5:1
"Justified"† from everything	Implied in Luke 18:14	Rom 3:24, 26, 28, 30; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Gal 2:16–17; 3:8, 24; Titus 3:7 (implied in Rom 8:33; 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 3:11)	(For forgiveness, see above; the language of "justification" is absent, but the idea is implied in 1 John 2:1)
Not "justified" by "the law"	—	Rom 3:20, 28; Gal 2:16; 3:11; 5:4 (cf. Rom 2:13; 4:2)	Contrast at least the wording in Jas 2:21, 24–25
"Law of Moses"‡	Luke 2:22; 24:44; Acts 15:5; 28:23	1 Cor 9:9§	John 7:23; Heb 10:28

* With a biblical source in Rom 10:11.

† Translations (e.g., NRSV, NLT, NASB) often render this "freed," also part of the term's semantic range (see BDAG; the NIV and TNIV include both nuances). It is less likely that the "everything" from which one is freed is the laws, given Luke's favor toward the law (e.g., Acts 21:26) and the nonsensical tautology that this would make of the stated alternative (the law of Moses could hardly free one from its own laws). The "all things" must refer instead to the sins of 13:38, paralleling justification regarding sins here with forgiveness of sins there.

‡ The phrase is not Luke's creation but reflects OT usage (Josh 8:31–32; 23:6; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 23:25; 2 Chr 23:18; 30:16; Ezra 3:2; 7:6; Neh 8:1; 9:11, 13; Mal 4:4). Paul's complaint is not against the law but against his familiar phrase "law-works" (attested also in 4QMMT C 27, though cf. Abegg, "4QMMT," 710).

§ Obviously Paul, though employing the phrase rarely, nevertheless attributed the law to Moses (Rom 9:15; 10:5, 19; 2 Cor 3:15) and hence would not have disagreed with the formulation.

The language of "forgiveness of sins" is more Lukan than Pauline (though Paul certainly would not have objected to it), as is the specific phrase "law of Moses," but the language of justification by faith rather than works is distinctively Pauline (though Luke's inclusion of the language shows that he would not object to it).⁹³⁰

926. Given his association with Philippi, it is possible that Luke saw Philippians, which does contain some relevant language (Phil 3:9), but he would hardly know that it was characteristic only from the letter.

927. Hanson, *Acts*, 21–28, 38. Haacker, *Theology*, 143, notes that although everyone acknowledges that Acts 13:38–39 echoes Paul, some think the wording clumsy and not very accurately Pauline, because it identifies justification with forgiveness and uses "to justify" with "from." But both these characteristics appear in Paul, in a letter also addressing Jewish issues (Rom 4:5–8; 6:7).

928. Indeed, as Hays, *Conversion*, 71, rightly notes, Paul could take for granted (assuming that Gal 2:15–16 belongs to his quotation) that his fellow Jewish believers in Jesus accepted justification by faith in Christ (see also Dunn, *New Perspective*, 39). (We cannot be certain, however, that Paul's polemical summary here reflects the precise language employed on that occasion.)

929. Cf., e.g., Luke 18:9–14; 19:9–10; Acts 16:31. Instead of indicating that such language was not Pauline, however, they might simply suggest that such Lukan examples illustrate that Luke is closer to Pauline soteriology than, e.g., Matthew is.

930. Cf. Acts 15:9; as in Paul's letters (cf. Rom 3:9, 29; Gal 2:15–17; 3:8; Eph 2:8–11), justification by faith appears especially in the context of Gentiles' access to Israel's God (Acts 15:7–8; cf. 13:46–48). In Luke as in

Even this sense of “justification” is usually Pauline. Perhaps partly because he had found himself God’s enemy, rather than servant, through deeds based on his interpretation of the law, Paul recognized righteousness as only a gift of divine generosity, nothing boastworthy.⁹³¹ He became so convinced that all righteousness came only as God’s gift that he portrays any true good works as “fruit” (Gal 5:22–23) and accomplishments for God as gifts.

Of course, the language is not exactly like that of Paul’s letters (and certainly not borrowed from them); like many other ancient historians, Luke composes speeches in his words on the basis of his available source material, probabilities, and knowledge of the speaker’s level of rhetorical competence. Either condensing or expanding the tradition of Pauline preaching he has available would necessarily alter some Pauline wording, in addition to Luke’s own freedom to write in his own style. Further, Luke writes narrative containing brief speech summaries, not the detailed, lengthy, and nuanced arguments and diatribal counterarguments possible in a work such as Romans.⁹³²

Indeed, Luke may preserve authentic Pauline echoes elsewhere that we miss because modern Protestant interpretation has focused on the polemical letters Romans and (most polemical of all) Galatians,⁹³³ though Paul’s explicit emphasis on justification by faith rather than law is limited mostly to these letters despite occasional references elsewhere (e.g., Eph 2:8; Phil 3:9).⁹³⁴ Paul’s apparent hostility toward the law emerges especially in Galatians⁹³⁵ (it appears in Romans only if read through the lens of Galatians). But Galatians employs a more polemical form of rhetoric to address a particular crisis in the Galatian churches.⁹³⁶ It seems at least interesting that the one speech in Acts emphasizing justification by faith in Jesus instead of by the law (Acts 13:38–39) is addressed to the general region where the churches later most needed this message reinforced.⁹³⁷

Paul, faith rather than law leads to the gift of the Spirit, especially if we may read Luke (even the pre-Pauline part of Acts) in view of earlier Christian sources (Kilgallen, “Difference”). For one survey of scholarship on Paul and “justification,” see McGrath, “Justification”; on “faith” in Paul, Morris, “Faith.”

931. Cf. Phil 3:9, though admittedly the particulars of Paul’s language of righteousness are debated; for my argument, cf. briefly Keener, *Romans*, 27–29. Paul might not have appreciated the distinction between forensic and ontological applications of δικαιοσύνη as readily as his later interpreters; if God decreed one righteous forensically, one became new (cf. Rom 6:2–11) no less surely than God’s decree of light’s existence produced light (Gen 1:3). Though hyperbolically and in more general human terms, Paul speaks of sin exploiting the law, according to some including his own past case as an example, in Rom 7:7–13.

932. Dunn, *Acts*, 181, thinks that Luke has “only half grasped” Paul’s point; it would more charitably suffice to say that he has condensed Pauline language instead of spelling out the full proofs or explication. More exaggeratedly, Theissen, *Writing and Politics*, 85, thinks that Luke “would certainly fail” a Pauline theology test; Vielhauer, “Paulinism,” 42, doubts that Luke even knew justification’s significance for Paul. One wonders who is defining Pauline theology; on these grounds, one might wonder if the Paul of 2 Corinthians or 1 Thessalonians knew its significance either! Against exaggerated contrasts between Luke’s Paul and the epistolary Paul, see the discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 1:221–57 (esp. 250–57), following, e.g., Borgen and Porter; also (too recent for inclusion in my first volume) Thompson, “Paul in Acts.”

933. Some read Romans as softening and nuancing the polemical tone of Galatians (see esp. Tobin, *Rhetoric in Contexts*).

934. On authentic Pauline elements even regarding law and salvation, despite Luke’s adaptations, see Larsson, “Paul: Law and Salvation.”

935. Cf. Udoh, “Views on the Law”; Tobin, *Rhetoric in Contexts*, passim; Hübner, *Gesetz*.

936. Whether the anger is simulated (Isoc. *Ad Nic.* 23) or, more likely, heartfelt (Cic. *De or.* 2.45.189; Pliny *Ep.* 6.33.10), it affects style; on various forms of reproving letters, see Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 86, 89, 133–34, 166–67, 173; for invective rhetoric, see Quint. *Inst.* 6.2.20. Emotion (often observed in Galatians; e.g., Deissmann, *Light*, 237) was expected to produce elements of roughness (e.g., Isoc. *Antid.* 140, 310, 320). For various approaches to Galatians and rhetoric, see Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 129–42; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 192–94. Though Galatians was not haphazardly composed (Harvey, *Listening*, 217–30), it has fewer rhetorical devices than most of Paul’s letters (286) and is less rhetorically crafted than Romans (Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 239–40).

937. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 399 (counting Antioch as Galatian). That Luke knew something of Paul’s trouble with the Galatians is not at all improbable, especially on a later date for Galatians.

Some argue that Paul began using the language of justification only later, when he wrote Romans and Galatians (assuming the later date of Galatians, which I accept). Since it would have been the later Paul that Luke knew personally, it is possible that he employs such “later” Pauline language here. It is, however, by no means certain that Paul originated the terminology only in the first extant letter where we have it documented, and it does appear that our earliest glimpses of Paul already contain the essential elements that he could frame in that language.

For example, although Paul does not explicitly expound justification by faith in 1 Thessalonians, he employs πίστις or πιστεύω thirteen times, especially for embracing the gospel message, speaks of Christ delivering some from God’s wrath, and so forth. We cannot argue from silence that Paul would never have spoken of “justification” at this time, since that formulation becomes a crux in a debate occurring only in later letters. What we can argue is that his basic teaching of salvation through Christ is already evident in the earliest extant letter we have from him⁹³⁸—which is, after all, only ten to fifteen years before our last extant letter from him.⁹³⁹ Although the specific language of “justification” is not pervasive in Paul’s letters, the matter of dependence on Christ, not only for forgiveness but for all one’s moral and spiritual existence as a believer in Christ (understanding “faith” as dependence), is pervasive in the Pauline corpus.⁹⁴⁰ The forensic image is a particular application fitting this larger theological perspective.

Being “made righteous from all things” is more ambiguous than one would expect in Paul, but to claim that Luke has only “half grasped”⁹⁴¹ Paul’s point seems an exaggeration or even distortion. Luke could have stated the point more clearly, but the context suggests that the “all things” from which one is justified are the sins that are forgiven (Acts 13:38).⁹⁴² It is not the laws from which one is freed or justified; against that interpretation are both Luke’s favor toward the law (e.g., 21:26) and the nonsensical tautology this would make of the stated alternative (the law of Moses could hardly free one from its own laws).

(2) *Not against the Law (13:39)*

Although the Spirit’s activity compelled the Jerusalem church to admit Cornelius without circumcision, even Stephen praised the law itself (7:38, 53), as Luke

938. See also Kim, *New Perspective*, 85–99; Riesner, *Early Period*, 394–403; cf. Dunn, *New Perspective*, 36–38; Rainbow, “Justification.” Although the situation in the Corinthian correspondence did not require elaboration on this teaching, it does appear there (Kim, *New Perspective*, 99–100, cites 1 Cor 1:30; 6:9–11; 10:16f.; 11:23–26; 15:3–5; 2 Cor 3:1–4:6; 5:10, 14–21; more fully on 1 Cor 6:9–11, see Kim, *New Perspective*, 67–70). For consistency in his justification doctrine (allowing for improved articulation rather than intense development), cf. Hahn, “Entwicklung.” Contrast Donfried, *Thessalonica*, 89–90, overplaying the differences between 1 Thessalonians and later letters. By way of analogy, not all of Luther’s works stress justification, and had we lacked his early works, we would not know that he already held the same basic views on justification present in his later works (Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 312–13).

939. In a mature theologian, we might not expect major shifts in that period; but Paul was a pastoral, missionary, praxis-oriented theologian in the heat of polemic, not a later systematician, and so we dare not rule out shifts, certainly in language. Cf. Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 311.

940. Though not appearing in every paragraph, it is highly prominent in most of the correspondence after 1–2 Thessalonians and before the Pastorals.

941. Dunn, *Acts*, 181.

942. That Paul was a better writer than speaker (2 Cor 10:10) might allow that Luke, in fact, follows Paul’s ambiguous wording here; but this is not probable on the basis of Luke’s approach of condensing and rewording speech material, nor does it necessarily follow from Paul’s speaking abilities. It was his delivery rather than his logic that proved substandard (2 Cor 11:6; Keener, *Corinthians*, 34–35, 218–19), and even his letters sometimes lacked clarity (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), normally considered a literary virtue (*Rhet. Alex.* 25, 1435a.24, 34–36; 1435b.6–16, 19–22; Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 40; Quint. *Inst.* 8.2.22; Suet. *Gramm.* 10; Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.1; Diog. Laert. 7.1.59; e.g., Dion. Hal. *Demosth.* 5–6, 18; Photius *Bibl.* 166.109a, on Ant. Diog. *Thule*; cf. Rowe, “Style,” 123–24; Black, “Oration at Olivet,” 84).

himself does (e.g., Luke 2:22–24, 27, 39; 24:44). Rather than rejecting the law, Paul is interpreting it in light of the prophets.⁹⁴³ Paul's view of the law here introduces some tension into the narrative, a tension between the positive character of the law and its inability to save, also found in Paul's letters (esp. Rom 7:10–16).⁹⁴⁴ The issue is played out in Acts 15 (based partly on pre-Pauline precedent in Acts 10–11) but especially in later accusations that Paul undermines the law (21:21, 28; cf. 25:8), accusations the reader knows to be baseless (16:3; 18:18; 21:24; cf. 1 Cor 9:20).

For Luke, this is not a soteriology contradicting repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38) but a complementary one.⁹⁴⁵ Peter also preaches believing in order to receive forgiveness (10:43; 15:9, 11). Luke can depict conversion in terms of faith (4:4; 8:12–13; 11:17; 13:12, 48; 14:1, 23, 27; 15:5, 7; 16:31, 34; 17:12, 34; 18:8; 19:2) as well as obedience to the faith (6:7), turning to the Lord (11:21), or repentance (3:19; 8:22; 11:18; Paul in 17:30; 26:20), regardless of who is preaching. The church is also those who “believe” (2:44; 4:32; 5:14; 18:27; 19:18; 21:20, 25; 22:19; 26:18). Luke emphasizes different aspects of conversion in different passages; he expected repentance and faith as two aspects of the same event (20:21). Paul's letters also reveal that genuine faith must be expressed in genuine transformation (Rom 1:5; 6:1–23; 16:25;⁹⁴⁶ 1 Cor 6:9–11; Gal 2:17–20).⁹⁴⁷

What was the law unable to do? Later rabbis spoke of God's condescension (συγκατάβασις) in the law to accommodate Israel's weakness.⁹⁴⁸ Rabbis spoke of God's “concessions” in the law (cf. Mark 10:5; Rom 8:3; 1 Cor 7:6).⁹⁴⁹ The law could teach Israel righteousness (e.g., Luke 2:22–24; Rom 7:14, 16; cf. 1 Tim 1:8–9), but on early Christian assumptions it could not bring forgiveness to Israel; Scripture did, however, include the end-time promise of forgiveness (Luke 24:47; Rom 3:21–26; 11:26–27). At least for Luke, the phrase “everyone who believes” might (though need not) serve the same function as probably in Acts 10:43 and often in Paul (Rom 1:16; 10:11–13)—namely, that salvation includes Gentiles.⁹⁵⁰ Paul will cite a passage about “believing” in Acts 13:41.

943. See Perry, “Paul in Acts.”

944. Spencer, *Acts*, 146. Matera, *Theology*, 87–88, notes that Luke views the law positively except in Acts 15:10; the new era (Luke 7:28; 16:16) does not terminate the law (Luke 16:17).

945. Barrett, *Acts*, 652, thinks that the lack of mention of baptism at some points (in contrast to others, such as Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8) “may mean that baptism was differently evaluated in different strands of tradition, and . . . was not universal.” Luke, however, merely offers summaries.

946. Some debate the authenticity of Rom 16:25, but I believe the evidence favors it (see Keener, *Romans*, 192–93; also others, e.g., Grieb, *Story*, 146; Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 37, 454–57; Marshall, “Conclusion,” 183; Schlatter, *Romans*, 278; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 256); scholars divide fairly evenly regarding its authenticity (so Jewett, *Romans*, 998, though doubting its authenticity himself). Nanos, *Mystery*, 218–38, esp. 237–38, applies Paul's “obedience of faith” to the apostolic decree of Acts 15:29; with most scholars, I believe that this application is too narrow (e.g., Romans addresses sexual immorality less than 1 Corinthians, and addresses some other issues less still).

947. Contrary to many scholars, I do not believe that Paul separates forensic acquittal (or less accurately, I think, pardon; following a standard LXX sense) from ontological transformation when he uses δικαιοσύνη, even if the former *logically* precedes the latter (as it does, in passages such as Rom 6:1–11; 1 Cor 6:11). God's declaration has ontological effect (2 Cor 4:6); in the language of subsequent, harmonized NT theology, genuine justification also entails regeneration. Faith includes both trust and reliability (cf. the patronal use, deSilva, *Honor*, 145; idem, “Patronage,” 768, with full citation of relevant texts, including 4 Macc 8:6; Sen. Y. Ben. 3.14.2).

948. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 743, citing the medieval, classical expression in Maimonides *Guide for the Perplexed* 3.32. The thought appears in patristic sources (Mitchell, “Accommodation,” 208–12); some doubt whether it appears before Clement of Alexandria, however (Glad, “Adaptability,” 26–27; cf. Clem. *Strom.* 2.16).

949. See Daube, “Concessions to Sinfulness”; cf. esp. the prozbul (10), which was probably instituted no later than Hillel.

950. With Marshall, *Acts*, 228.

Excursus: Pauline Soteriology in Context

This excursus will not treat Pauline soteriology as a whole; entire books and monographs are devoted to even minor elements of that discussion, and many issues in it remain a matter of intense debate. Moreover, this is a commentary on Acts, not Romans, and so we simply look for sufficient background to assess Luke's portrayal of Pauline soteriology in Acts 13:38–39. Even if Luke belonged to the Pauline circle, he need not have repeated Paul's vocabulary precisely (ancient speeches were not verbatim, sometimes even when original documents were available [and they would not have been in this case]), and he need not have reproduced all the nuances of Paul's thought. But was he aware of, and would he have concurred with, the "justification" and "faith" elements of Paul's soteriology?

To put the question in context requires first an examination of early Jewish soteriology, then the treatment, in turn, of Pauline soteriology, Paul and the law, and Paul's view on justification. It is not necessary to resolve all the questions debated today to recognize that Luke reproduces a basic Pauline idea here, whether or not he understood all that Paul's language would have meant to either Paul himself or others—for example, his peers in Torah in Jerusalem.

1. Early Jewish Soteriology

The old stereotype that Judaism did not care for inwardness or "intention" is a caricature without foundation in the ancient sources, a product of anti-Semitism.⁹⁵¹ Love was necessarily the highest motivation for study of the Torah.⁹⁵² People needed God to judge them according to grace.⁹⁵³

Some scholars have thus argued that ancient Judaism was a religion of grace and that its soteriology focused on God's gracious and unmerited covenant with Israel.⁹⁵⁴ This perspective is clearly evident in many texts. For example, in some Qumran texts, God chose the people of Israel not because of their righteousness but because God loved their ancestors;⁹⁵⁵ he forgives Israel because of his love for them.⁹⁵⁶ E. P. Sanders heavily emphasized this approach.⁹⁵⁷ Some suggest that Sanders's use of categories,

951. For an example, see Bultmann, *Jesus and Word*, 67–71 (nuancing [70] his formulation only slightly); cf. Ridderbos, *Paul: Outline*, 133; Jeremias, *Theology*, 182 (who should have known better). Even in rabbinic literature, which by its genre focused on laws the way law books must do, inwardness was important; see, e.g., *m. 'Ab. 1:3; 2:9; b. Ber. 13a; y. Qidd. 1:7, §9*; rabbinic discussions of *kavanah* (on which see Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 95; Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 272–94; Limbeck, "Lobpreis"; Pawlikowski, "Pharisees"); cf. *Jos. Ag. Ap. 2.183, 217* in Vermes, *Religion*, 32. Rabbinic documents may appear more legalistic because they are *legal* documents, but this does not represent all of rabbinic, Pharisaic, or Jewish ethics (Davies, "Aboth," 127; Vermes, *Religion*, 195).

952. E.g., *Sipre Deut. 41.5.1*; cf. already *Deut 6:5–6*.

953. E.g., *Pss. Sol. 3:5; 9:6–7; 10:1–3; 13:6–11* (on *Psalms of Solomon*, see further Lane, "Legacy"; Lührmann, "Pharisaic Tradition"); *'Abot R. Nat. 8 A*.

954. Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 33–428 *passim*; idem, *Judaism*, 275–78; Dunn, *Romans*, lxiv–lxvi (on covenant nomism, lxvii–lxviii); against rabbinic Judaism's legalism earlier, cf., e.g., Odeberg, *Pharisaism*; Davies, "Aboth," 127; Limbeck, *Ordnung*.

955. CD VIII, 14–15, citing and reflecting the theology of Deuteronomy (*Deut 9:5*, then *7:8*).

956. 4Q504 1–2 II, 8–10. Garnet, "Light," 19, argues that in Qumran texts, salvation involves belonging to the covenant community but that individuals cannot be saved without obedience. Przybylski, *Righteousness*, 37–38, argues that the *Damascus Document* (CD) and most of the *Manual of Discipline* employ *tsedaqah* for God's gracious and salvific work but *tsedeq* for the moral norm.

957. Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, *passim*, noted above. Longenecker has also emphasized this approach, but recognizing more diversity in the Jewish sources; see *Introducing Romans*, 324–27.

some apparently imported from Pauline or biblical theology, may be anachronistic,⁹⁵⁸ but the material had to be categorized somehow, and his objective was to compare other early Jewish sources with Pauline soteriology.

Others argue for “works righteousness,” legalism, or at least synergism in many parts of early Judaism.⁹⁵⁹ Josephus may view the basis of Abraham’s justification as works.⁹⁶⁰ In *Wisdom of Solomon*, loving righteousness leads to immortality.⁹⁶¹ Sanders himself acknowledged works righteousness in *4 Ezra*,⁹⁶² and it probably appears in *2 Baruch* as well.⁹⁶³ Many have identified it also in rabbinic sources.⁹⁶⁴ Inclination to disobey the law appears widely in ancient sources.⁹⁶⁵ Whereas Sanders eliminated many such statements as not reflective of Judaism’s “pattern” of religion, others have complained that this restriction simply eliminates inconvenient evidence.⁹⁶⁶ Certainly, Jewish people expressed confidence in their relationship with God in comparison to that of the Gentiles⁹⁶⁷ (which one, indeed, would expect from the covenant and from observations about Gentiles in view of biblical ethics).

Both the legalistic and nonlegalistic positions probably represent legitimate emphases in the sources.⁹⁶⁸ This is true, first of all, because early Judaism included a wide variety of views on righteousness as well as on many other topics.⁹⁶⁹ Even more clearly, it is true because most of ancient Jewish thought, like most of ancient Christian thought,⁹⁷⁰

958. Some argue that his perspective on covenantal nomism stems from Tannaic sources and does not so readily fit apocalyptic sources (Collins, “Apocalyptic Literature,” 359–60) or Qumran’s theology (Donfried, *Thessalonica*, 290–91, following Fitzmyer, “Paul and Scrolls”), whereas Neusner, “Comparing Judaisms,” faults his approach for imposing Pauline theological categories on the rabbis.

959. E.g., Brinsmead, *Galatians*, 128–37; Scott, *Customs*, 274–76; Seifrid, *Justification*, 78–135; Hagner, “Matrix”; Eskola, “Paul et judaïsme”; idem, *Theodicy*, 28–60; Elliott, *Survivors*; Kim, *New Perspective*, 143–52 (from whom I borrow some of these sources); Hamilton, “Bootstraps”; Quarles, “Perspective”; Moo, *Romans*, 215–17; Gathercole, *Boasting*, 37–160, 214; cf. Smith, *Parallels*, 73, who argues that Paul abstracted and simplified the system in how he portrayed it. See esp. Thielman, “Plight to Solution”; idem, *Paul and Law*; Talbert, “Revisionists”; Hagner, “Judaism,” 84–88. Sanders would, however, cite in reply similar statements about reward in the NT.

960. Cairus, “Works-Righteousness” (on *Jos. Ant.* 1.183, comparing Targumim); though it must be said that Josephus may have simply not viewed works and faith as incompatible (cf. *Jas* 2:21–24). Josephus does appear to associate obedience with salvation (*War* 3.374; Gathercole, *Boasting*, 145) and to portray Pharisees (*War* 2.162; cf. 1.650; Gathercole, *Boasting*, 143, 148) and Essenes (*War* 2.154–58; Gathercole, *Boasting*, 144) as doing so. On God as judge of works in the Targumim, see Maher, “God as Judge.” Isaacs, *Spirit*, 47, suggests that Philo may have viewed grace and works as in competition.

961. Raurell, “Gift” (on *Wis* 1:1–15); though it must be said that there are passages in Paul, even in *Romans*, that can be read the same way (*Rom* 2:6–16).

962. Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 409–18, esp. 418. Ironically, some others have emphasized the balance of works and faith in *4 Ezra* (Hatch, *Faith*, 16–17); but for works there, see also Gathercole, *Boasting*, 136–39.

963. *2 Bar.* 51:7; Harrison, *Grace*, 102; Gathercole, *Boasting*, 139–42.

964. E.g., Quarles, “Soteriology” (on *m. ’Ab.* 3:16–17); Boccaccini, *Judaism*, 218–20; esp. Avemarie, *Tora und Leben*, esp. 36–43 (summarized in Gathercole, *Boasting*, 150–56; note *m. ’Ab.* 3:15; *t. Sanh.* 13:3; *Qidd.* 1:14; *y. Qidd.* 61d; *b. Sanh.* 81a). Even corporate salvation could be variously construed; although God redeemed Israel before giving it the law, in some texts the redemption was conditional on subsequent obedience (esp. *Sipra: Sipra Sh. pq.* 12.121.2.5; *Sipra Behar par.* 5.255.1.10; *Sipra Qed. pq.* 8.205.2.6; *Sipra Emor pq.* 7.227.1.6; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:386).

965. See, e.g., Thielman, “Plight to Solution,” 48–57, for the Hebrew Bible; 61–69, for the Qumran scrolls; and 69–72, for pseudepigraphic literature.

966. Moo, “Paul and Law” (while valuing Sanders’s contribution); cf. idem, *Romans*, 214–17.

967. See Gathercole, *Boasting*, 37–194 passim, esp. 193–94.

968. With, e.g., Kim, *New Perspective*, 83; cf. Gathercole, *Boasting*, 67, 263–64 (arguing that salvation by obedience could coexist with gracious election; in Reasoner, *Full Circle*, 119); Grindheim, “Jødedommen”; Das, “Pressure Points,” 101; Keener, *Romans*, 7; Kruse, *Romans*, 21; and some of those cited above. Harrison, *Grace*, 103, suggests that both sides in the debate may have theological agendas (traditional or ecumenical).

969. With, e.g., Harrison, *Grace*, 100; Watson, *Gentiles*, xii.

970. Räisänen, *Paul and Law*, even thinks that Paul (a single author) is self-contradictory in letters written close to the same time (cf. similarly Mac. Magn. *Apocrit.* 3.30–36 [*Porphyry’s* 58–65]); but while Paul

was never systematized into a single coherent system.⁹⁷¹ The rabbis, for example, did speak both of individuals' salvation by membership in the covenant people and of meriting the coming world by works.⁹⁷² Qumran sectarians spoke of themselves both as "perfect" in the law among humanity and as utterly inadequate before God.⁹⁷³ Others probably also held divergent views.⁹⁷⁴ Moreover, even if all of ancient Judaism viewed works only as a by-product of salvation by covenantal grace, it is doubtful that this would have prevented legalism⁹⁷⁵ any more than it does in some Christian circles with the same professed belief today.⁹⁷⁶ Thus some later rabbis criticized some earlier Pharisees for treating merits and sins as a mere accounting project.⁹⁷⁷

When E. P. Sanders sparked the "New Perspective," he developed, as he himself notes, already-existing perspectives on Judaism (e.g., in G. F. Moore) and Paul (e.g., in K. Stendahl).⁹⁷⁸ Most of the current reaction against the New Perspective argues for a legalistic stream in early Judaism but does not (and cannot) deny the emphasis on covenant grace that Sanders emphasized at such length.⁹⁷⁹ One problem in the debate is that different authors define categories differently and often make them mutually exclusive in ways that ancients would not have envisioned; ancient thinkers may have believed, for example, that their deeds merited God's attention, yet understood that without God's mercy no deed was sufficient for salvation.⁹⁸⁰ That

addresses different rhetorical situations and shifts arguments, Räisänen's critique, which uses some forced-choice logic, is overstated (see, e.g., Moo, "Paul and Law," 290–92; Cranfield, "Name"; Weima, "Evaluation"; Waters, *Justification*, 91–96). Still, it is true that Paul was a missionary, not a writer of systematic theology (with, e.g., Haacker, *Theology*, 68), and Paul's treatment of the law is more nuanced in Romans than in Galatians (cf. Hübner, *Gesetz*, though he may contrast them too much).

971. Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 120, notes that most rabbinic statements are ad hoc, though he believes that their commonalities show common concerns.

972. Avemarie, "Erwählung"; Hagner, "Judaism," 84–86; cf. Schmid, "Sünde"; Gathercole, *Boasting*, 134–35, 152, 155 (complaining [23] that Sanders downplays too much "the future dimension to salvation"); eternal reward for commandments in, e.g., *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 4b; *Qidd.* 39b; *Lev. Rab.* 14:1; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:350; Johnston, "Commandments"; works for paradise in *Exod. Rab.* 2:2; faith was also meritorious (*Gen. Rab.* 74:12; Marmorstein, *Merits*, 175–76; Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 336ff.). (Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 138–39, also notes such material.) The Tannaim approached righteousness as demand, not a gift, but their focus was primarily behavioral rather than soteriological (Przybylski, *Righteousness*, 39–76, esp. 74–76). The world of halakah is also far removed from early apostolic teaching (Macleod, "Perspective"), though genre accounts for some of this (contrast, e.g., *Thanksgiving Hymns*).

973. Kim, *New Perspective*, 150; cf. Gathercole, *Boasting*, 110–11; perhaps also emphasis on obedience in Timmer, "Nomism" (esp. 347, 349–52).

974. Krieger, "Paul and Torah," cites varied options for Gentiles in "apocalyptic Judaism."

975. Cf., e.g., Moo, *Romans*, 216, on what he calls "lay" Judaism.

976. Certainly the problem appears early in patristic sources (e.g., *Herm.* 2.4.3). Reward and punishment (which Paul himself affirms, e.g., Rom 2:6–10; 1 Cor 3:8, 14; 9:17–18) are pervasive in childrearing in most cultures and are undoubtedly necessary motivation, especially for a particular stage in children's moral development. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that such an approach as well as various other psychological factors dispose some of us individuals (especially if we fail to internalize grace in the same setting) toward fixation on details and their consequences.

977. See *y. Sotah* 5:5, §2, on the "bookkeeping Pharisee" (Neusner, 27:156).

978. See Sprinkle, "Pre-Sanders' Thinkers." To such lists one should certainly add Longenecker, *Paul* (rightly emphasized in some lists of pre-Sanders thinkers, e.g., Campbell, *Deliverance*, 97; cf. also Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 311); in a different way (though published after Sanders's seminal work), Fuller, *Gospel*.

979. Sanders was correcting an earlier overemphasis on legalism in early Judaism as a foil to Paul, especially in its form dominant in the German Lutheran tradition before the Holocaust (including in Billerbeck and Kittel; see Thielman, "Plight to Solution," 8–13). Thus many agree with his warnings, though not going as far as he does (McNamara, *Judaism*, 42–44; Carson, *Sovereignty*, 87–89; cf. Bird, "Dust"; idem, "Via Media"; discussion in Keener, *Romans*, 4–9; Campbell, *Deliverance*, 110). Gaston, "Impact," thinks that this approach helps Jewish-Christian relations only indirectly, by increasing appreciation for ancient Judaism.

980. Though emphasizing grace, Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 422, does not neglect the role of obedience in maintaining the covenant nearly so much as his critics imply. Though denying that obedience earns salvation, he regards it as a condition for it (141); obedience merely maintains one's place in the covenant initiated by election

is not Pauline theology, but it is the sort of idea that different scholars could put in different categories.

The appeal of some Jewish people in antiquity to a notion of “merit” invites mention here. Some of the earliest Christian sources report or suggest the prevalence of a view or perhaps attitude that Jewish people were saved by virtue of descent from Abraham (Luke 3:8//Matt 3:9; John 8:39, 52; Rom 4:12; 9:7–8; Gal 3:29; 4:25–26).⁹⁸¹ Some other early Jewish sources also react against the view that one could depend on one's ancestors for status before God without walking in their ways (*L.A.B.* 33:5; cf. Deut 26:5).⁹⁸² This perspective was developed further in later sources, though not necessarily in the same direction. Later rabbis stressed Israel's first redemption from Egypt and deliverance through the sea on the basis of patriarchal merits,⁹⁸³ reportedly depending on pre-Christian tradition concerning Abraham's merit.⁹⁸⁴ (The idea of God showing favor to descendants for an ancestor's sake does appear in Scripture—for example, Deut 7:8; 10:15; 1 Kgs 11:36; 2 Kgs 8:19; 2 Chr 21:7.) Later rabbis sometimes attributed God's blessings on Israel to merits of the patriarchs⁹⁸⁵ or occasionally the matriarchs,⁹⁸⁶ though some also emphasized the greater importance of one's own merits.⁹⁸⁷

Opinion was not unanimous, however, even by the end of the second century,⁹⁸⁸ and there appears little explicit connection between merits and personal benefits unrelated to corporate blessing on Israel.⁹⁸⁹ The “merit” approach to Paul's “works of the law” first surfaced in the patristic period.⁹⁹⁰ For discussion on circumcision, see the excursus at Acts 15.

(362); rabbis accepted both grace and works (100). Thus it is again not just the evidence but the different definitions used that lead to different verdicts on “ancient Jewish perspectives.” (For Sanders's clarification of his own position, which has sometimes been misconstrued or misapplied, see Sanders, “Nomism”; his primary point in this nuanced form, on which we exchanged some dialogue [as noted in *ibid.*, 23n1, 25n6, 49n52], seems difficult to dispute.)

981. Later, cf. Justin *Dial.* 140. I have borrowed this discussion on merits from Keener, *John*, 754–55; at greater length, see *idem*, *Matthew*, 125–27; for a more extensive survey of the final product in rabbinic thought, see Marmorstein, *Merits*.

982. For deliverance by mercy without merit, see *Mek. Shir.* 9.24ff. (Lauterbach, 2:69); *Exod. Rab.* 1:35; *Pesiq. Rab.* 49:4. It is God's honoring the covenant and favor toward the righteous (cf. Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 20). Cf. also dependence on mercy in the later Day of Atonement liturgy (Moore, *Judaism*, 2:214).

983. E.g., *Mek. Pisha* 16.165–68 (other opinions, 16.169–72); *y. Ta'an.* 1:1, §8; *Gen. Rab.* 55:8; 74:12; 76:5 (Jacob's merit); 84:5 and 87:8 (Joseph's merit); *Exod. Rab.* 2:4; 15:10; 23:5; *Lev. Rab.* 34:8, bar.; *Num. Rab.* 13:20; *Song Rab.* 4:4, §4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 10:9 (in prayer); see further Moore, *Judaism*, 1:537. Some Tannaim suggested they could have used more merit (*Sipre Deut.* 2.1.1–4); some Amoraim attributed the exodus to the merit of or faith in Moses (*Exod. Rab.* 15:3; 16:1), to righteous acts (*Exod. Rab.* 1:28; *Lev. Rab.* 28:4; *Num. Rab.* 20:22), to the merits of Israelite women (*Exod. Rab.* 1:12; *Num. Rab.* 3:6, bar.), or to various factors, including patriarchal merits (*Deut. Rab.* 2:23).

984. E.g., in *Mek. Besh.* 4.52–57 (Shemaya and Abtalion).

985. E.g., *m. 'Abot* 2:2; *Sipra Behuq.* pq. 8.269.2.5; *Sipre Deut.* 8.1.1; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1:1; 2:5; 5:8; 22:4; *Pesiq. Rab Kah. Sup.* 5:2; *Gen. Rab.* 39:3; 44:16; 48:12; 49:11; 70:8; *Exod. Rab.* 1:4; 15:4; 44:5; *Lev. Rab.* 31:4; 36:5; *Song Rab.* 7:6, §1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:9; 27/28:1; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 48:20; cf. *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 30:27; 39:5; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 18:18; 19:29; 21:17. This included expiation of Israel's sins (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 23:8; *Lev. Rab.* 29:7; *Deut. Rab.* 3:15).

986. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11:6; *Lev. Rab.* 21:11; 36:5; *Num. Rab.* 11:2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 12:5; 15:9.

987. E.g., *'Abot R. Nat.* 12, §30, 22, §46 B; *Gen. Rab.* 74:12; *Num. Rab.* 8:9; cf. individuals' benefits from ancestral merit, *y. Ta'an.* 4:1, §14; *Lev. Rab.* 9:2. Amoraim differed as to whether patriarchal merit could eventually run out (*y. Sanh.* 10:1, §6; *Lev. Rab.* 36:5).

988. See *Sipre Deut.* 329.3.1, following biblical precedent (Ezek 18:20); cf. 2 *En.* 53:1. Even in *Song Rab.* 1:2, §3, biblical sacrifices appear preferable to ancestral merits.

989. Later, merits could earn blessings even in the present era (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 17b). Because the messianic era would lack evil, it would also lack opportunity for merit (*Eccl. Rab.* 12:1, §1). Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 183ff., argues that ancestral merits help, but are not transferrable to, individuals.

990. See Mijoga, “Merit.” This would fit the period of its development in Judaism.

2. Pauline Soteriology

Debates on the New Perspective regarding early Jewish soteriology necessarily shape debates about the New Perspective approaches to Paul. If Paul counters a religion of legalism by preaching grace, it is believed that either that religion was truly legalistic or Paul offered a caricature; alternatively, he was countering a distortion of Judaism among some Jewish Christians (who came up with legalism on their own). For others less inclined to accept either legalism in Judaism or Paul's misrepresentation, Paul builds on what he agrees with in Judaism yet rejects any basis for personally salvific righteousness before God apart from Christ.

The New Perspective on Paul has both defenders⁹⁹¹ and critics.⁹⁹² It should be noted, though, that the New Perspective now represents a conglomeration of approaches even further apart from one another than were Sanders, Räisänen, and Dunn.⁹⁹³ Many proponents of the New Perspective argue that Paul's focus on "law-works" involves especially "boundary-markers," identifiers of ethnic Israel more problematic for Gentiles.⁹⁹⁴ Conversely, many critics of the New Perspective deny this position;⁹⁹⁵ others regard it as an old, rather than recent, insight.⁹⁹⁶ N. T. Wright and others have made much of a restoration eschatology based on the Jewish view that Israel was in exile; others have critiqued this view.⁹⁹⁷ Some who agree with the New Perspective nevertheless accept Luther's approach as a legitimate contextualization of Paul for Luther's own setting.⁹⁹⁸

Some have argued synthetically that Paul and most of the rest of early Judaism shared the overarching pattern of obedience in response to grace but that they defined

991. E.g., Dunn, *Romans*; idem, *Theology of Paul*; Wright, *Founder*. For attempts to apply the approaches' insights in translation, see, e.g., Schmidt, "Translating Faith."

992. E.g., Gundry, "Staying Saved"; Eskola, "Covenantal Nomism"; Seifrid, "Problems"; Zahl, "Mistakes"; Das, "Covenantal Nomism"; Hamilton, "Bootstraps"; Chester, "Justification"; Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 190; Kim, *New Perspective*, esp. 7–84; Busenitz, "Understanding"; Hughes, "View"; Fesko, "Imputation"; Zweck, "Wright" (mostly); Lohse, "Theologie" (regarding justification); Byrne, "New Perspective"; Theissen, "Nouvelle perspective." A popular view's detractors tend to write more often than its proponents, though not necessarily as influentially. Some accuse New Perspective proponents of being driven by presuppositions (e.g., Farnell, "Perspective"; Thomas, "Hermeneutics"); many of its proponents so view its detractors as well. Cf. varied approaches in Bird, *Paul*.

993. See Hylldahl, "En ny Paulus?" For summaries of the New Perspective approach to Paul, see Horrell, "Studies"; Garlington, "Perspective"; more hostile (and including Davies among advocates of the New Perspective, despite his date), see Kelly, "Approches"; for one bibliography, see Swanson, "Bibliography." As Longenecker, "Critiquing," observes, some criticisms of the New Perspective also stem from misunderstandings (or miscommunications).

994. Cf., e.g., Dunn, *Romans*, lxix–lxxi; idem, *Partings*, 117–39; idem, "Justice"; idem, "Works of Law"; cf. idem, "Justice"; Bachmann, "Paulusperspektive" (adding a distinction between good works and more specific halakic works). The Mishnah does not emphasize covenant obligations much, but they were heavily emphasized in what emerged as the liturgy (see Segal, "Covenant").

995. E.g., Fesko, "Works of Law" (against Wright); Waters, *Justification*, 105, 158 (against Dunn); Das, "Pressure Points," 103–6 (noting many critics). Marshall, "Works," complains that this approach neglects the later Pauline literature (whether it comes from Paul or his earliest interpreters). Moo, *Romans*, 214, notes that one cannot confine Paul's polemic solely to boundary markers.

996. Cf. Zahl, "Mistakes."

997. E.g., Seifrid, "Problems"; Pitre, *Tribulation*, 31–40 (arguing for a different view of exile); Kim, *New Perspective*, 136–41 (arguing [138] that even if early Judaism had a unified notion of exile, this hardly supplies the background for Gal 3:10, 13–14); Waters, *Justification*, 153.

998. Lung-Kwong, *Purpose*, 421 (noting that Paul's argument also addressed a specific, contextualized setting); Yeo, "Response," 30. Others find important agreements between Paul and Luther (Härle, "Paulus und Luther"; Brondos, "Luther"; Donfried, "Revisionists") and between Luther and the New Perspective (Saarinen, "Luther," on Finnish Lutheran interpreters); Watson, *Gentiles*, 346–47, warns against rejecting Luther's approach too far (accepting [346–50] the validity of theologically applying Paul's message formulated in a more particular setting).

differently how to obey.⁹⁹⁹ Paul emphasized moral principles above particular regulations meant to inculcate such principles (e.g., 1 Cor 9:8–10),¹⁰⁰⁰ and his emphasis on the eschatological era of the Spirit pointed to an obedience empowered by God's Spirit rather than shaped by human discipline.¹⁰⁰¹ Obviously, his insistence that righteousness was God's gift in Christ differed from non-Christian Jewish perspectives.

3. Paul and the Law

Most scholars agree that Paul's thought reflects some Pharisaic elements (cf. Phil 3:5).¹⁰⁰² But this observation does not settle what he retained and what he found incompatible with the revelation of Christ.

Scholars have offered a wide variety of views regarding Paul and the law (not all incompatible). For example, Paul caricatured and opposed the law;¹⁰⁰³ he expected Jewish believers in Jesus, though not Gentiles, to observe the law;¹⁰⁰⁴ he affirmed that Christ gave a person power to obey the law that the person could not otherwise keep;¹⁰⁰⁵ he expected continued obedience to many of the laws;¹⁰⁰⁶ he retained some laws as guides but not others;¹⁰⁰⁷ he shifts in his use of νόμος (which has a wide semantic range) from one text to another;¹⁰⁰⁸ he retained the first covenant as revelation but not as legal covenant;¹⁰⁰⁹ the haggadic (story) function of the law remains but not its halakic (legal) function;¹⁰¹⁰ the law exercises a convicting function, but its primary function is prophetic witness to Christ;¹⁰¹¹ Paul found God's will in the law but as understood through the revelation of Christ;¹⁰¹² Paul affirms the law but warns against depending on obedience for merit.¹⁰¹³

The very diversity of views might reflect a variety of nuances in Paul not easily summarized in a single phrase or sentence (as many of the authors of views summarized briefly above would no doubt agree). The law was good, but as an external code it could not save (Rom 7:12, 14, 16); it had to be written in the heart (8:2; cf. 2 Cor 3:3–6), as the prophets promised (Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:19–20; 36:25–27).¹⁰¹⁴ Although salvation

999. See esp. Davidson, "Patterns"; cf. Dunn, *Romans*, lxvi.

1000. Later rabbis reacted against a form of *minim* who emphasized only the Ten Commandments (Urbach, *Sages*, 1:361).

1001. For the distinctiveness of Paul's emphasis on the Spirit for moral empowerment (moving even beyond Qumran), see Gathercole, *Boasting*, 134; cf. Keener, *Spirit*, 2; Fee, *Paul, Spirit, and People*, 98–111; "divine agency" in Watson, *Gentiles*, 15.

1002. See, e.g., Cohn-Sherbok, "Paul and Exegesis"; Lührmann, "Pharisaic Tradition" (esp. on *Pss. Sol.* 3; earlier, see Lane, "Legacy"); esp. (though overemphasizing later rabbinic sources) Davies, *Paul*; Longenecker, *Paul*; this is also important in Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*. Most scholars agree with this view (e.g., Ramsay, *Other Studies*, 89–90; Grant, *Hellenism*, 136; Davies, *Introduction*, 27–28; Bruce, "History," 50).

1003. Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, 438; for Paul's being negative toward the law, see also Schoeps, *Paul*, 168ff. Sandmel, *Judaism*, 310, is more nuanced.

1004. Wyschogrod, "Christianity and Law."

1005. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 8; cf. Fuller, *Gospel*, x–xi, 93–96, 202. Cf. Rom 8:2–4; Jer 31:32–33.

1006. Hill, *Hellenists*, 146; cf. Rosner, *Ethics*, passim. Cf., e.g., 1 Cor 9:13 (though Paul does use explicitly marked Scripture more often to attest Christ than to explain ethics).

1007. Brooten, "Paul and Law" (doubting the traditional moral-vs.-ritual distinction).

1008. Haacker, *Theology*, 67–68.

1009. Vanhoye, "Validité"; idem, "Validità."

1010. Segal, *Convert*, 139 (noting that these rabbinic distinctions are post-Pauline).

1011. Reicke, "God of Abraham," 191–93. Cf. Rom 3:21, 31.

1012. Cranfield, "Response"; cf. Marguerat, "Avenir"; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 716–22; 2 Cor 3:14.

1013. Schreiner, "Works of Law"; Paul opposes not the law but legalism (Hunter, *Gospel according to Paul*, 18; Gasque, "Acts and History," 66; Calvin's approach toward the law was much more favorable than Luther's (noted, e.g., in Wright, *Justification*, 72). On Paul and the law, see also comment on Acts 9:1–19a; 21:21.

1014. Cf. Ammonius in *Cat. Act.* 13.39 (Martin, *Acts*, 169).

was by God's gracious act in Christ, not by anything possible by human effort, it was received by "obeying" the gospel message (cf. Rom 1:5; 6:17), and salvation from sin transformed a person to live a new life (e.g., 6:1–11; 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 5:24).¹⁰¹⁵ Paul closely connected saving faith with obedience (esp. Rom 1:5; 16:25);¹⁰¹⁶ he advocated not a passive mental assent but an active embrace of Christ's transforming lordship by the Spirit. The law as a whole remained God's revelation; its principles and the goals to which its stipulations pointed remained objects of obedience.¹⁰¹⁷

The law's specific stipulations, many of which applied to ancient Israel in the land and resembled ancient Near Eastern legal collections, fulfilled a purpose for ancient Israel and remained valid as teaching about God's purpose. But such stipulations were a means, not an end;¹⁰¹⁸ the end or goal was found in Christ, the climactic revelation of God's plan, of which the law was only a part (Rom 10:4; Gal 3:17, 19, 23–24). In a new era of salvation history, when God was embracing the Gentiles as promised in the prophets, stipulations specific to ethnic Israel were not necessary for Gentile converts.

For Paul, believers in Jesus are not "under the law"—that is, do not stand under the judgment of the law's righteous standard (Rom 2:12; 3:19; Gal 3:23; 4:4–5; 5:18); human works with respect to the law never could have justified (Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16). Instead, the law is written in the hearts of believers by the Spirit and approached from the perspective of its ultimate purpose in Christ (Rom 3:27; 8:2; 9:31–32; 10:2–4). The law itself testifies to this approach of righteousness by faith (3:31; cf. 3:27; 4:3). To be "justified from these things," as Luke puts it (Acts 13:39), likewise does not mean abrogating the law as divine revelation but instead indicates justification through God's gracious act in Christ rather than through obedience to the law (which, as 13:39 declares, is impossible, in any case).

4. Conclusions

The survey above has mostly just summarized the debate. Here I will likewise merely summarize my own response without providing my exegesis on the relevant Pauline passages.¹⁰¹⁹ Whatever else may be said, certainly Paul knew the form of Pharisaism from which he emerged far better than we, with our dearth of first-century Pharisaic sources,¹⁰²⁰ can hope to, and so Paul cannot be impugned with ignorance of Judaism's

1015. For Paul's affirming obedience, see, e.g., Moule, "Obligation." Employing multiple Aristotelian approaches to causation, one might pull together salvation's different aspects in Paul (cf. the compatibility of grace and faith in Frick, "Means and Mode").

1016. See, e.g., Du Toit, "Faith and Obedience."

1017. As Schreiner, "Works of Law," points out, Paul is not against obeying the law but against depending on obedience for justification.

1018. Even Tannaim allowed setting aside certain stipulations in emergencies when a true prophet requires it (*Sipre Deut.* 175.1.3).

1019. Although I have done the exegesis, I have not yet been able to write the commentaries (and am admittedly not firm in my understanding of all the passages, especially the more polemical ones in Galatians). It is possible that revisiting the exegesis in the course of writing commentaries will further shift my position.

1020. As Orval Wintermute, one of my esteemed and learned professors at Duke University, once pointed out to me in private conversation, our clearest extant examples of Pharisees writing in the first century are Paul and Josephus. Of course, the depth of Josephus's Pharisaic commitment is open to question, and rabbinic treatment of the Shammaites and Hillelites offers significant insight into first-century Pharisaism; but the hyperbole nevertheless usefully reinforces the point: Paul knew his personal experience of first-century Pharisaism better than we do (cf. Barrett, *Paul*, 78, as cited in Hagner, "Judaism," 88: "He is a bold man who supposes that he understands first-century Judaism better than Paul did"). And even if his experience was distorted or marginal, as some might have it, he also knew firsthand the teaching and lives of Pharisees in Jerusalem in ways that we (and even second-century Tannaim) cannot.

“true” character. Without tracing all the evidence from all the Pauline passages—this is a commentary on Acts, not on Pauline letters—I would suggest that Paul’s opponents appear “legalistic” because of a combination of factors.

First, as noted above, one could talk about grace in theory yet prove legalistic in practice; this happens often in Christian circles (and I have succumbed to it myself). Second, Paul probably portrays his opponents as one-sidedly as did any ancient rhetorician or writer; because their view, more than their person, is the object of his polemic, he can press their position with such a demand for logical consistency that he portrays it in a manner they may not have appreciated (by *reductio ad absurdum*).¹⁰²¹

Third, Jewish people could trust God’s grace and keep Jewish customs with which they had grown up, without seeing any inherent tension between the two. For new Gentile converts, however, imposing customs as a condition for entering the covenant did require a complete transformation of every aspect of life, including diet, relationships, and so forth (beyond the moral changes Paul would have required). That is, part of the “legalism” Paul combats is (when examined from a social rather than a purely theological perspective) a cultural ethnocentrism—one justifiable by appeal to biblical teaching about the covenant (Gen 17:12–14) and the strangers (e.g., Exod 12:19; Lev 16:29; 17:12, 15; 18:26) but one that also hindered the divinely ordained mission to the Gentiles as well as ignored the messianic basis for the eschatological new covenant (cf. Isa 19:23–25; Zech 2:11).

Paul apparently believed that his focus on the law had once obscured the truth about God’s appointed king for Israel and God’s plan for delivering his people; now, instead, God’s eschatological revelation in Christ is the central grid through which all else must be interpreted.¹⁰²² The beginnings of God’s plans provided one foundation through which to understand it, but its eschatological climax, which provided its fullest disclosure, provided the most complete perspective on all that had preceded it.

For Paul, salvation history pointed not to emerging rabbinic schools’ meticulous efforts to define and apply Israel’s God-given laws, zealous and devoutly intended though they were, but to the climax of Jesus’s prophetic ministry, resurrection, and enthronement as king over Israel and the nations. This climax entailed and initiated the new era of the Spirit, which included apostolic ministry, not least Paul’s own. Paul’s problem with his opponents’ approach was not that it was Jewish but that it missed the centrality of God’s act in Christ and the new life of the Spirit. If brought into our era, Paul would likely experience a similar conflict with most of Christendom today.

5. Paul on “Justification”

One’s view of Paul’s understanding of Judaism will also affect how one approaches his teaching on “justification,”¹⁰²³ although not to the same degree as it affects one’s understanding of his approach to “works” or the exclusivity of faith.¹⁰²⁴

1021. Cf. Keener, *Romans*, 7–9. If Paul no longer *agrees* with an aspect of his Pharisaic background, he may highlight an inconsistency and demand that it be pushed to its logical conclusion: Salvation by grace *and* by works? Unspoken pride in virtuous obedience while emphasizing humility? Hearts that fall short of the moral perfection that everyone knows that God requires? Perhaps others expected the covenant and atonement to make provision for such failings, but for Paul, they remain failings that God has dealt with more decisively in Christ. Cf. Agnew, “Adversary,” arguing for “straw” opponents, though allowing for real opponents behind them.

1022. Many scholars have suggested that Paul’s presentation of Judaism and the law reflects not his contemporaries’ understanding but Paul’s eschatological perspective in light of Christ (e.g., Keck, *Paul*, 126; Ladd, *Theology*, 501; cf. Dahl, *Studies*, 134–35).

1023. Cf., e.g., Ziesler, “Justification.”

1024. For much lengthier treatments of Paul and justification, coming to various conclusions, see, e.g., Morris, *Preaching*, 251–98; Barth, *Justification* (for background discussion, esp. 15–21).

When Greeks spoke of δικαίω and (more often) its cognates δίκαιος (“just,” “upright”)¹⁰²⁵ and δικαιοσύνη (“justice”),¹⁰²⁶ they thought especially in terms of justice, often as a category in forensic rhetoric or moral philosophy, rather than being put in right relationship with God.¹⁰²⁷ A Greek audience unfamiliar with the LXX would hear δικαίω as “seek justice against one,” involving punishment, not “justify one”; for them, Paul’s language probably administered a high-voltage “lexical shock.”¹⁰²⁸

A closer background for the center of Paul’s biblically informed ideal audience is the LXX and early Jewish usage in general. In Romans, Paul speaks of “God’s righteousness” (Rom 1:17; 3:5, 21–22; 10:3),¹⁰²⁹ drawing on one sense of the expression in Scripture even if it was not the only sense. Greek-speaking Judaism often used the language of God’s righteousness to refer to just demands;¹⁰³⁰ it contrasts with human sin.¹⁰³¹ God’s “righteousness” includes his faithfulness to fulfill his covenant promises (Neh 9:8).¹⁰³² In the psalmist’s prayers, God’s righteousness repeatedly disposed him to act justly¹⁰³³ or mercifully¹⁰³⁴ on behalf of his servant.¹⁰³⁵ The psalmist pleaded for forgiveness of guilt; then the psalmist would praise God’s righteousness (Ps 51:14).¹⁰³⁶ The psalmist also pleaded for God to answer in his righteousness and faithfulness (143:1) but not to judge him, since no one could be righteous in God’s sight (143:2).

1025. E.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 1, 1421b.25–28; 4, 1427a.24–30; 6, 1427b.39–41; 1428a.1–2; Mus. Ruf. 3, p. 40.25; 7, p. 58.25; 8, p. 62.8–9; 12, p. 86.6; 14, p. 92.21; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.24; 32.37; Marc. Aur. 3.6; 8.1; Men. *Rhet.* 2.3, 379.19–20; 2.11, 420.22; 2.5, 397.22; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.35; the adverb cognate in Mus. Ruf. 20, p. 126.22. What is “just” is the universally accepted, unwritten law (*Rhet. Alex.* 1, 1421b.36–1422a.2). The “righteous” in Jewish sources were those who obeyed God (1 *En.* 99:3; 100:5; 102:6, 10; 103:1), and they could be contrasted with “sinners” (e.g., 102:6, 9; 103:5).

1026. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 15; Mus. Ruf. 14, p. 92.32; Arius Did. 2.7.5b2, pp. 14–15.18–20; Men. *Rhet.* 1.3, 361.14–15, 17–22; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.20; 6.11; Hermog. *Progymn.* 12, “On Introduction of a Law,” 27; 11, “On Thesis,” 26; Aphth. *Progymn.* 7, “On Commonplace,” 35S, 20R; 14, “On Introduction of a Law,” 53S, 47R. For justice among the four cardinal Greek virtues, see, e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 3S, 1440b.17–19; 1441b.4–5; Mus. Ruf. 4, p. 44.12–16; 17, p. 108.10; Dio Chrys. 3.7, 58; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5a, pp. 10–11.8; 2.7.5b1, pp. 12–13.19; 2.7.5b2, pp. 14–15.4, 8, 18–20; 2.7.5b5, pp. 18–19.34–35; Lucian *Hermot.* 22; Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 375.8–376.2; 2.10, 416.5–12; Iamb. *V.P.* 30.167–86; see further comment on Acts 26:25.

1027. Nevertheless, justice was often associated with deities (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5b.12, pp. 26–27.17–18), with the highest deity (Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 104.32–33; Sil. It. 6.467), or even personified in its own right (see comment on Acts 28:4).

1028. Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 209 (esp. citing Rom 4:5). Had Paul used the wording deliberately in a manner dissonant to accepted usage, this could have been a rhetorical device for securing attention (cf. Anderson, *Glossary*, 66, on κατάχρησις). Haacker, *Theology*, 120–24, emphasizes Roman associations of the term (more than Greek, 122–23), but it was pervasive in Greek philosophers.

1029. On Paul’s theocentric argumentation in Romans, see, e.g., Williams, “Righteousness of God”; Piper, “Demonstration,” 22.

1030. Berger, “Gerechtigkeit Gottes,” noting its forensic sense and minimizing as exceptional texts referring to God’s mercy.

1031. Cf. Feuillet, “Antithèse” (emphasizing the theme in Isa 52:13–53:12).

1032. With such relational faithfulness one might compare aspects of the Korean concept of “yeon” (see Chae, “Yeon”).

1033. E.g., Pss 31:1; 35:24; cf. 35:27–28; 50:6; 97:6 (with 97:2); 103:17–18. Cf. also God’s righteousness helping the ruler dispense justice (72:1); God enacts justice (89:14). God might show his “righteousness” in vindication predicated on forgiveness (Mic 7:9).

1034. I include here any heeding of the psalmist’s plea for deliverance without specification of justice: e.g., Pss 5:8; 71:2, 15–16, 19, 24; 88:12; cf. Judg 5:11; 1 Sam 12:7. God’s righteousness parallels (or supplements) his faithfulness and/or covenant love in Pss 36:5–6, 10; 40:10; 88:11–12; 98:2–3; 103:17; 111:3–4; 119:40–41; 141:1; 143:11–12; 145:7; his salvation in 71:15. Cf. Job 33:26.

1035. Often one cannot distinguish between justice and mercy in the text (e.g., Pss 7:17 [cf. 7:8]; 22:31; 89:16; 119:40, 142); I have listed examples simply to try to show that both can be involved. In the Qumran scrolls, too, God’s righteousness established judgment on behalf of his servant (1QS XI, 5–6).

1036. Likewise, the psalmist praises that the enemies will not come into God’s righteousness, i.e., will not be vindicated or forgiven (Ps 69:27).

Qumran attests that the same ideas persisted in early Judaism:¹⁰³⁷ recognizing the supplicant's just and right way, God would act in his righteousness, forgiving the supplicant's sins (1QS XI, 2–3).¹⁰³⁸ God in his righteousness and goodness would judge, atone for the sins of, and purify his servants (XI, 13–15). God often rescued Israel because of his mercy rather than according to its rebellious works (1QM XI, 3–4). God pardoned people and removed their sin by his righteousness (1QH^a XII, 37).¹⁰³⁹ Likewise, in 4 *Ezra*, God would display his righteousness by showing eschatological mercy to those who had sinned.¹⁰⁴⁰

Many scholars thus argue that, in light of the Jewish context, Paul can use God's righteousness to represent not only God's punishment of evil but also his faithfulness to his covenant to deliver and vindicate his people (whether because they were righteous before God or because they repented before him).¹⁰⁴¹ Drawing on the sort of piety found in some psalms and Qumran scrolls, Paul could recognize that whatever humans' works, they were worthless for acceptability before God's perfection apart from God's love. Paul went beyond these other sources by affirming that God's ultimate demonstration of love in saving history was in Jesus's death and resurrection.¹⁰⁴²

Although God's righteousness includes his covenant mercy,¹⁰⁴³ the verb δικαιοῶ in the LXX included the notion of being recognized as righteous,¹⁰⁴⁴ not a fictitious bestowal of status.¹⁰⁴⁵ To "justify" oneself might mean to keep oneself innocent.¹⁰⁴⁶ It was also forensic language, applied, for example, to the guilty unable to protest their innocence (cf. Gen 44:16; Isa 43:9, 26) or be acquitted (Sir 10:29).¹⁰⁴⁷ Judges must

1037. Some have noted the parallels with Paul (Fritsch, *Community*, 126–27), though there are also differences (Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 312). They illustrate that this idea of God's righteousness remained intelligible in this period (Dahl, *Studies*, 99). It retained also a moral sense (1QS X, 25). Some later rabbis also present God's righteousness as his saving mercy (*Gen. Rab.* 33:1; *Ruth Rab.* proem 1; cf. "God of righteousness" in *Test. Jud.* 22:2; righteousness as grace in *b. Hag.* 14a); as his justice, *Test. Ab.* 13:10 A. But whereas "righteous" could apply to either norm or relationship in the OT, in the rabbis it usually specifies a norm (Przybylski, *Righteousness*, 76).

1038. Judgment, i.e., vindication, could come only from God (1QS XI, 5, 9–10); a person could not follow the right way in his or her own strength (XI, 10); only God's righteousness could deliver in trouble (XI, 12). One could appeal to one's righteousness after confessing one's sins (X, 11)—i.e., one's status before God depended partly on God's mercy and covenant faithfulness.

1039. In contrast to the righteous God, humans could not even walk in the right way except by God's Spirit (1QH^a XII, 29–32). Cleansing from sin was God's work alone (XIX, 10–11); he forgave and atoned for them because of his love (4Q504 1–2 II, 8–11).

1040. 4 *Ezra* 8:35–36 (pointed out in Stuhlmacher, *Justification*, 14–16). Unless God pardoned the guilty, few mortals would survive (4 *Ezra* 7:139–40).

1041. See, e.g., Wright, *Founder*, 103 (arguing [117–18] that it is covenant language); Stuhlmacher, *Justification*, 13–24; Haacker, *Theology*, 53–54; Stendahl, *Paul*, 31; Hunter, *Romans*, 29; Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 93–100; cf. God's faithfulness to his name in Piper, *Justification*, 90–91; idem, "Demonstration," 22–26; idem, "Righteousness." (Some prefer a genitive of origin here, hence "righteousness from God"; so, e.g., Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:98.) Wright, *Founder*, 119, argues that the issue in the first century was how one became part of God's people (cf. Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 544); although Paul's argument might involve this, we should not think that the terminology itself necessarily included this nuance (after all, Jewish usage most often involved those who were already considered part of God's people).

1042. Cf., e.g., Ladd, "Righteousness." Later, cf., e.g., Basil *Of Humility* 20.

1043. Barth, *Justification*, 16, connects God's righteousness in Isaiah and Psalms with God's salvific faithfulness but argues that it never includes acquitting the guilty.

1044. Gen 38:26; cf. Job 33:32; Sir 1:22; 23:11; 26:29; 31:5 (LXX; some versions, 34:5); of God in Sir 18:2; used in a comparative sense in Jer 3:11; Ezek 16:51–52. Cf. 1QS III, 3; *Gen. Rab.* 65:6.

1045. It can be fictitious if those pronouncing the verdict are poor judges of character, e.g., people supporting one's words simply because one is wealthy (Sir 13:22).

1046. Ps 72:13 LXX (73:13).

1047. Cf. the sense of "seeking vindication" before God (*Gr. Ezra* 2:5–6). Allen, "Romans I–VIII," 9–14, compares Paul's usage of "righteousness" in Rom 1–8 with the OT covenant lawsuit, but this is too narrow.

not “acquit [δικαιώσεις] the guilty”;¹⁰⁴⁸ they must “justify”—that is, pronounce righteous—the innocent (Deut 25:1). One could ask God to condemn and punish the guilty while vindicating (“justifying”) the righteous by rewarding them (1 Kgs 8:32; 2 Chr 6:23).

God himself was “justified,” or “shown to be right,”¹⁰⁴⁹ including when he pronounced just judgment against the psalmist.¹⁰⁵⁰ God would not recognize the guilty as righteous before him (Mic 6:11).¹⁰⁵¹ Yet apart from God’s mercy, no one could receive this verdict of righteousness (Ps 142:2 LXX [143:2 ET]).¹⁰⁵² Israel’s sins revealed God’s righteousness to judge them (Dan 9:7, 14), but God could be asked to forgive them according to his “righteousness” (Dan 9:16).¹⁰⁵³ Those who had sinned might endure his wrath until God “justified” them and pleaded their case for them, and they would see God’s “righteousness” (Mic 7:9). To “justify” was also to “render justice” on someone’s behalf (2 Sam 15:4); one should “justify,” “vindicate,” “defend the rights of” the widow (Isa 1:17) and the poor (Ps 81:3 LXX [82:3 MT]).

God had also promised eschatological vindication for Israel (Isa 45:25; 50:8) and God’s way (42:21).¹⁰⁵⁴ Perhaps most significant is that this term for “justify” appears in 53:11, part of a key passage mined by early Christians. In the LXX, God would justify, or vindicate, the righteous servant of many who carried away their sins (53:11 LXX), though in Hebrew God’s righteous servant is the verb’s subject. Although the context does lead to the servant’s vindication (53:12), the context probably makes better sense in saying that the righteous servant “justifies” or “vindicates” the many by carrying away the load of their sins (53:11).

For God to “justify”—that is, “acquit,” “vindicate,” and “show to be righteous”—a morally guilty person¹⁰⁵⁵ violates most Jewish usage, yet Jewish people would experience less lexical shock than Greeks,¹⁰⁵⁶ recognizing this acquittal (by God’s righteous mercy forgiving people) as part of the term’s semantic range. For Paul, God is both righteous and the one who makes righteous, because the sentence of guilt has already been executed on Jesus (Rom 3:24–26).¹⁰⁵⁷

Although Roman law understood the notion of pardons,¹⁰⁵⁸ this is no mere pardon;¹⁰⁵⁹ it is transformation of one’s status before God. In Pauline theology, this is insepa-

1048. Exod 23:7; cf. Isa 5:23; Sir 42:2; also forensic in Ezek 44:24.

1049. LXX Ps 18:10 (19:9); Sir 18:2.

1050. LXX Ps 50:6 (51:4); also against Israel, Dan 9:7, 14 (but see 9:16).

1051. Cf. Sir 9:12.

1052. To claim righteousness (justify oneself) before the Lord was exalting oneself, like boasting in wisdom before a king (Sir 7:5).

1053. Later Amoraim insisted that God wanted to acquit people (declare them righteous) so that he need not destroy them (*Pesiq. Rab.* 40:1, 3/4). Someday God would make Israel’s (comparative) righteousness known (*Pesiq. Rab.* 30:4).

1054. Cf. eschatological righteousness in Isa 56:1 (mercy in the LXX); 58:8 and redemption in 1:27 (changed to “pity” in the LXX); God’s gift of a robe of righteousness to Israel in Bar 5:2.

1055. For this usage in Paul, see, e.g., comments in Moore, “Δικαιοσύνη.” Some prefer, more technically, “render judgment in favor of” (e.g., Manson, *Paul and John*, 54) or “vindicate” (Dodd, *Bible and Greeks*, 42–59, esp. 57) rather than “acquit” (cf. Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:253, 270, “right-wise”—both accurate and ambiguous). DeSilva, *Honor*, 130, compares inscriptions about benefactors’ generosity. For Hays, *Echoes*, 157, Paul in Rom 1:17 sees Scripture as a narrative “about . . . God’s righteousness.”

1056. Scripture spoke of a wicked person repenting and becoming righteous (Ezek 18:22; cf. Tob 13:6). Some later rabbis spoke of Abraham’s intercession as making people appear more righteous before God (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 16:4).

1057. This interpretation, like all others, is debated today, but I believe it has the strongest exegetical warrant in light of the ancient sources (I address it, though only briefly, in Keener, *Romans*, 59–61, 72–73).

1058. Schiemann, “Indulgentia,” 793; cf. Blinzler, *Trial*, 207–8.

1059. Pace, e.g., Manson, *Paul and John*, 56. Cf. Jeremias, *Message*, 63, arguing for a genuine change and not a legal fiction; Ladd, *Theology*, 443, arguing that the status of the relationship is changed.

rable from the transformation of one's moral disposition effected by sharing Christ's death, a transformation also depicted (in terms of "ritual" status) as being set apart or consecrated to God.¹⁰⁶⁰ Although δικαιοσύνη includes a forensic component ("justification," "acquittal"), Paul also employs it for moral "righteousness." There is no contradiction; God puts his people in the right with him but also transforms them into eschatological creations capable of doing his will.¹⁰⁶¹ Paul emphasizes this teaching especially in letters addressing the salvation of Gentiles, who otherwise could not match Jewish people in obedience to the law.¹⁰⁶²

III. WARNING AGAINST UNBELIEF (13:40–41)

A plea to continue listening (Acts 13:40) was good rhetorical form (e.g., Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.5.10; see comment on Acts 2:22). Just as the prophets' warnings about Jesus's rejection were fulfilled by Jerusalem's leaders who did not understand them (Acts 13:27), Paul's hearers should beware lest other prophetic warnings be fulfilled by them. This passage illustrates the interplay between God's sovereign plan and human responsibility; someone will do the evil deed, but one must take care that it be not oneself (cf. esp. Luke 17:1; 22:22; perhaps 21:21–22).

Luke regularly uses the common phrase "the prophets" (Acts 13:40; elsewhere, e.g., Luke 16:29, 31; 18:31; 24:25, 27, 44; Acts 3:18, 24), but the term is certainly apropos here, since he quotes from the scroll of the prophets, the twelve "minor" prophets forming a single book (cf. Acts 7:42; 15:15).¹⁰⁶³

Although it was not uncommon to move from the Torah to the prophets (as in Acts 7:42–50), this citation's location at the end (13:41) should not mislead us into underestimating its significance for the speech. It may function like a closing gnome, which was common in speeches.¹⁰⁶⁴ Sometimes the most significant, central texts appeared at the end of a homily, as with all the homilies in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 16, most of which conclude with Isa 40:1 (whether they cited it earlier or not).

The context of Hab 1:5¹⁰⁶⁵ is Babylonian judgment on wicked Judah, judgment so terrible that God's doomed people would not believe it.¹⁰⁶⁶ The righteous, by contrast, would survive the judgment because of faith (2:4),¹⁰⁶⁷ an idea perhaps implicit behind

1060. That is, δικαιοσύνη as a forensic decree of righteousness overlaps with δικαιοσύνη as righteous character; God's decree is efficacious (cf., e.g., Gen 1:3), and a transformed eschatological destiny should reorient the convert's current life direction.

1061. Note this emphasis, e.g., in Schlatter, *Romans*, 20, 26–27, 133, 152; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 30–31, 185; Ortlund, "Justified," 338–39.

1062. For this emphasis most commonly with regard to Gentiles, see, e.g., Stendahl, *Paul*, esp. 1–7; with regard to the law, Sanders, *Paul and Judaism*, 439; earlier, Jeremias, *Message*, 58, recognized it especially in Paul's polemics with the synagogue. Cf. Keener, *Romans*, 7–8.

1063. With Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 157; Johnson, *Acts*, 236.

1064. Cf., e.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 1439a, 32.3–7; 32.33–35. If the speech has emphasized Israel's unfaithfulness alongside God's faithfulness, it warns Paul's (and Luke's) audience not to repeat it (*Zywica*, "Odpowiedzialność").

1065. For the importance of the context of texts cited in Acts 13:34–47, see van de Sandt, "Acts 13, 32–52." Wall, "Function," shows that Luke employs Hab 1:5 (in the spirit of LXX Habakkuk) to explain the divided audience response here. See Mufwata, *Extrémities*, 114–15, for textual comparisons and contrasts between Acts 13:41 and Hab 1:5.

1066. The marvel/wonder is terrible impending judgment (Hab 1:6–11), but Habakkuk pleads for God to turn back injustice, especially that of Chaldeans (1:2, 12–17); he waits to hear God's message (2:1). The message comes in 2:4: judgment will come on the proud, but the (humble) righteous will live by faith. For impending judgment, Luke's audience could envision 70 C.E., but this would appear more relevant for Jerusalemites than for Jews in Pisidian Antioch.

1067. Whose faith or faithfulness is meant varies between the MT and the LXX readings, which Paul seems to have finessed by omitting the pronoun altogether, though probably usually speaking of the believer's faith

Acts 13:39, since the only OT texts connecting faith and righteousness are Hab 2:4 and Gen 15:6. (If Luke's version of the speech condenses a longer and more Pauline source, Paul likely made more explicit connections at this point between Hab 2:4, in support of forgiveness by faith in Acts 13:38–39, and Hab 1:5 in Acts 13:41.) Qumran's commentary on Habakkuk (1QpHab) also offers a pesher application to end-time events: Habakkuk is here understood as referring to those who betrayed the new covenant by refusing to believe the divinely appointed Teacher of Righteousness.¹⁰⁶⁸ Here, Israel's potential unbelief is no surprise, having been predicted in Scripture, as implied earlier in Stephen's analogy with Moses (Acts 7:35–37; cf. Isa 53:1 in Rom 10:16).

The MT's reading that opens this text, "among the nations," could have been helpful for Luke's point, but the quotation follows the standard LXX form, "See, you who scoff!"—a form also presupposed in the exposition in 1QpHab II, 1–10.¹⁰⁶⁹ Amazement at signs (here θαυμάσατε) is frequent in Luke-Acts (Luke 2:18; 8:25; 9:43; 11:14; 24:41; Acts 2:7; 3:12; 4:13; 7:31; see comment on Acts 3:12), but sometimes these can harden confounded opposition as well (Acts 5:16–17; 6:8–12; 14:3–5; 16:18–23; 19:20, 26).

Some scholars see the "work" here as Paul's preaching,¹⁰⁷⁰ which would fit Luke's use of the term elsewhere (cf. 5:38; 13:2; 14:26; 15:38), and perhaps preaching as a sign (perhaps Luke 11:30). But immediate context must retain precedence over wider context, and the grammar (not least the emphatic "I") favors the interpretation that the work is God's (fitting even better the same Acts texts noted for Paul). Paul is the agent of recounting (ἐκδιηγῆται, also Acts 15:3, the only other NT use), not its subject; the work should be the object of faith in this verse, presumably the same object of faith as in 13:39.

The biblical warning of judgment for rejecting the Lord's message here develops a theme in Luke 19:42–44 and 21:6, 22. It begins to be fulfilled when Paul's hearers reject the divine messengers sent to them (Acts 13:45, 50). Some prophets and apostles would be persecuted (Luke 11:49; contrast Matt 23:34) so that judgment could come on that generation (11:50), a judgment proleptically symbolized by the disciples shaking the dust from their feet in Acts 13:51 (cf. Luke 10:10–11).

e. Response (13:42–52)

Although the immediate response was favorable (Acts 13:42–43), the rest of the narrative moves back and forth between Jewish and Gentile hearers, highlighting a

(Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; cf. also Heb 10:38; but Gal 2:20 might imply use of the LXX reading). Hays suggests that by omitting the pronoun, Paul draws on associations of both the Hebrew and the LXX readings (*Echoes*, 40–41). Hays and numerous other noteworthy scholars interpret "faith of Christ" differently, however, preferring a subjective genitive (Hays, *Faith*, 157–76; Barth, "Faith"; Johnson, "Faith of Jesus"; idem, *Romans*, 60–64; Dunnill, "Whose Faith?"; Ramarosan, "Études"; Hooker, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ"; Tonstad, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ"; Talbert, *Romans*, 43–47; Stubbs, "Shape"; see a fuller listing in Longenecker, *Interpreting Romans*, 319), marshaling significant evidence (especially important is the subjective genitive in Rom 3:3; 4:12, 16). But the objective-genitive view retains many supporters (e.g., Hultgren, "Formulation"; Matlock, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ"; idem, "Detheologizing"; Leyrer, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ"; Lee, "Against"), who appeal to context (e.g., Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 380–85, esp. 384–85; also Hunn, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," pointing to Gal 3:1–6), patristic usage (Harrisville, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ"; but cf. early translations in Talbert, *Romans*, 44), or the fact that Christ is an object, rather than subject, of the cognate verb (Tobin, *Rhetoric in Contexts*, 132–34; Schreiner, *Romans*, 186 [esp. on Rom 4:13–24]; contrast Vanhoye, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ"). Some others think that ancient readers may not have pressed the distinction too sharply (Morris, *Romans*, 175), or even prefer a genitive of origin (Rusam, "Πίστις"). See now especially discussion in Bird and Sprinkle, *Faith*.

1068. Pillai, *Interpretation*, 70; Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations*, 193.

1069. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 106.

1070. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 519.

contrast between them. Thus, on the next Sabbath, the Gentile hearers (13:44, 46–48) mostly responded more favorably than the Jewish hearers (13:45). Many Gentiles were therefore converted (13:48–49), but hostile Jewish members solicited the help of Gentile benefactors to drive the apostles from town (13:50–51). Meanwhile the disciples continued to be filled with the Spirit (13:52). Such a contrast serves an ironic purpose: the failure of those one expected to repent was particularly noteworthy, as was the positive response of the outsiders. One could not predict the results of one's sowing (Luke 8:4–15).¹⁰⁷¹

I. FAVORABLE SHORT-TERM RESPONSE (13:42–43)

The immediate response of all in the synagogue was favorable, just as it was in Jesus's inaugural sermon in the Gospel (Luke 4:22) and Paul's final speech in Jerusalem (Acts 22:2).¹⁰⁷² It is only when Gentiles are welcomed on virtually the same level as Israel that hostility arises, and then it is serious hostility (Luke 4:25–28; Acts 22:21–22). For Luke, the greatest objection of the Jewish people to the Jesus movement is its inclusion of Gentiles on equal terms, an objection prefigured in opposition to Jesus's table fellowship with the marginalized of Israel (Luke 15:1–2, 25–32).

We know that many Gentiles attended Jewish services and, in general, were welcome there,¹⁰⁷³ as Philo emphasizes (e.g., *Spec. Laws* 1.51–53, 308).¹⁰⁷⁴ If Josephus sometimes exaggerates the appreciation of all ancient Gentiles for Judaism (e.g., *Ag. Ap.* 2.280–86, balanced elsewhere), he is nevertheless clear that many Gentiles became adherents to Jewish faith (e.g., *War* 7.45). Word would hardly have spread throughout Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:44) about the speakers without the interest of those present that first Sabbath. But it is doubtful that uncircumcised Gentiles (not included in proselytes here) outnumbered Jews in the services, as was to happen in 13:44. More important, Luke accepts, though he does not here articulate, the idea that faith *without circumcision* justifies and presumably even makes Gentiles members of God's people (15:8–11); if his narrative presupposes this Pauline gospel, then the hostility that will follow is more readily explained.¹⁰⁷⁵

The primary interpretive problem in this verse is the identity of the “God-fearing proselytes.” Does Luke refer to what he normally means by proselytes or to what he normally means by God-fearers?¹⁰⁷⁶ The context divides the synagogue into two

1071. This is not an ethnic criticism per se. Had Luke written today, he might have made a similar point of nominal Christians' taking God's good news for granted, persecuting an evangelist working among non-Christians. Such conflicts reflect a general human tendency, not a particular ethnic one, and could be illustrated abundantly through history (in recent centuries, e.g., through much local English opposition to the Wesleys; examples could be multiplied).

1072. Cf. also Johnson, *Acts*, 243, comparing Luke 4:22–29. Many see the rejection at Nazareth as programmatic for synagogue rejections in Acts (e.g., Brawley, *Luke-Acts and Jews*, 155).

1073. Minority movements whose size can be augmented by conversion are sometimes aggressive in pursuing converts. There is some evidence that many Jewish people were willing to use synagogues to attract Gentiles (see Moore, *Judaism*, 1:284–85, 306, 324; Liefeld, “Preacher,” 206–7; their evidence is mostly from a later period, but one in which outreach was probably more restricted). A Jewish “missions movement,” however, is overstated (see comment on Acts 1:8).

1074. Schiffman, “House of Adiabene,” thinks that Luke used even his account of Adiabene's royal family to show that Judaism welcomed all.

1075. Luke's narrative probably does presuppose Pauline soteriology (see, e.g., Kilgallen, “Difference”), and the issue of Gentiles is probably what provokes hostility (idem, “Hostility”). Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 308, doubts that the local Jewish community understood the implications until the next week.

1076. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 47–49, offers a third proposal—namely, converts to Paul's message—but despite later Christian use of “proselyte” for Christian converts (e.g., Justin *Dial.* 28.2; Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 40–46), nothing extant from first-century Christianity—certainly nothing in Luke-Acts—prepares us for this reading. For one discussion of the significance of proselytes and God-fearers among hearers in Acts 2:11; 13:43, see Koch, “Proselyten.”

groups, apparently Jewish and Gentile (13:16, 48), perhaps allowing that these are simply devout but uncircumcised Gentiles.¹⁰⁷⁷ Conversely, anyone could fear God whereas “proselyte” is a more technical designation (2:10; 6:5), and so the term here probably means “devout proselytes.”¹⁰⁷⁸ From a narrative standpoint, Luke can use proselytes to stand in for Gentiles when they are the group closest to Gentiles available for his point (6:5), as he can use Samaritans (Luke 17:16–18;¹⁰⁷⁹ Acts 8:5–25); he may include both technical proselytes and God-fearers in the phrase.¹⁰⁸⁰ If we must decide between the two options, however, “devout proselytes” is the likeliest assumption, based on Luke’s usage.¹⁰⁸¹ Some scholars have argued that much of Paul’s ideal audience in his letters consisted of God-fearers;¹⁰⁸² if so, Luke’s portrayal of Paul evangelizing proselytes (here) and (on other occasions) God-fearers is quite plausible.

Synagogues functioned as community centers¹⁰⁸³ and hence provided an appropriate venue for continuing to speak after meetings. Those converted through grace (cf. Acts 15:11) must yet persevere. The exhortation to “continue” in God’s grace reflects a Lukan (and other early Christian, e.g., Rom 11:22; Col 1:23; Heb 3:14) concern for perseverance (see comment on Acts 14:22); Barnabas (Acts 11:23) and Paul and Barnabas (in 14:22) employ this language of “continuing” in the faith.¹⁰⁸⁴ That the exhortation appears so often in the context of young faith suggests that Luke expects it and views it as a model.

II. MIXED RESPONSE THE NEXT SABBATH (13:44–48)

When Gentiles whom the synagogue had not reached responded now to Paul’s message (13:44), apparently because he demanded only faith in Israel’s God without full conversion to Jewish culture and ethnicity (13:38–39), much of the synagogue responded with hostility (13:45). Paul then turned to the Gentiles (13:46–47), to the joy of the Gentiles (13:48) and the further annoyance of local Jewish people of influence (13:50).

(1) *Success Breeds Jealousy* (13:44–45)

The “whole city” (13:44) is standard hyperbole, foreign neither to Luke (Luke 8:39; 9:6, 60; Acts 21:28, 30; 24:3; 26:20; 28:22) and the gospel tradition (Mark 1:33, 45; 6:33; Matt 21:10) nor to other sources (e.g., Deut 2:25; Ruth 1:19).¹⁰⁸⁵ Nevertheless, word of a speaker with a dramatic style or message would spread quickly, and Paul’s message was nothing if not dramatic (its emphasis on the fulfillment of biblical promises might sound something like “The end of the world is coming,” but from a positive perspective). When famous speakers (e.g., Dio Chrysostom or Lucian)

1077. The usual sense of “God-fearers” in Luke (Nock, *Christianity*, 2; see comment on Acts 10:2).

1078. Marshall, *Acts*, 229. “God-fearers” (τοὺς σεβομένους) applies to proselytes in *Test. Jos.* 4:6.

1079. Cf. the LXX use of ἀλλογενής (Luke 17:18, a NT hapax legomenon) for a foreigner (e.g., Exod 12:43; 1 Esd 8:69, 70, 83, 92, 93; 9:7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 36; 1 Macc 3:36, 45; 10:12), including those attached to Israel (Isa 56:3, 6).

1080. Munck, *Acts*, 126, views them interchangeably here.

1081. One could argue for women, whose adherence to Judaism was not sealed with circumcision (Acts 13:50; 16:14), but this term is not so limited (17:4; cf. 17:17) and can apply to men (18:7).

1082. See Reiser, “Heiden”; for Romans, Tobin, *Rhetoric in Contexts*, 31–32, 43; cf. Lung-Kwong, *Purpose*, 155; Brändle and Stegemann, “Formation,” 124. This is more likely true in some letters (e.g., Romans) than in others.

1083. See esp. Levine, “Synagogue,” 14, citing, e.g., Philo *Embassy* 156; *Jos. Ant.* 14.214–16; 16.164, 167–68.

1084. It also seems to imply that some have been converted (with Wall, “Acts,” 194), though more would be later (Acts 13:48–49).

1085. C. Williams, *Acts*, 167 (citing Athen. *Deipn.* 5.48.212b); cf. more generally Crowe, *Acts*, 104. Johnson, *Acts*, 240, cites “such mass responses to excitement” in novels (Char. *Chaer.* 3.4.4–18; Heliod. *Eth.* 4.19.5; *Acts John* 31; *Acts Pet.* 3).

came to town, they would draw large crowds.¹⁰⁸⁶ A sophist wishing to be heard in a town had to attract sufficient numbers for his initial audition or risk shame; a small number, such as seventeen, was too few to succeed.¹⁰⁸⁷ Paul, by contrast, had clearly won the city's attention (though ultimately the local elite prove more influential on their local population, Acts 13:50). Despite hyperbole, then, many had gathered.¹⁰⁸⁸ Although the synagogue itself would not have been able to hold such crowds,¹⁰⁸⁹ an overflow meeting would be possible in the spacious central area of the town.¹⁰⁹⁰

By no means would all the hearers be devout. Even though "all the city" is undoubtedly exaggerated, even a partial cross section would include many people exposed to the sort of paganism mentioned in the comment on Acts 13:14 and participants in the imperial temple mentioned in the comment on Acts 13:50. Such a response is therefore remarkable.

Hostility from some synagogue members here (13:45) sets a pattern for much of Paul's subsequent public ministry (Paul's own testimony leaves open the possibility that he faced such conflicts even before this point historically, 2 Cor 11:24). Jealousy was a common motive to attribute to one's enemies (e.g., *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 1.213, 222, 225; see comment on Acts 5:17), and Luke at times attributes it to Jewish leaders as the cause of their hostility (Acts 5:17, which employs the identical phrase ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου; 17:5), following the pattern of the patriarchs' rejection of Joseph in Scripture (7:9).¹⁰⁹¹ For ἀντιλέγω, see also Luke 2:34; 20:27; Acts 28:19, 22, in each instance with people speaking against the truth.¹⁰⁹²

That Paul would have hecklers is not at all surprising; challengers often heckled speakers during their orations.¹⁰⁹³ The motive of jealousy in this case would not be

1086. Nock, *Conversion*, 62. Cf. also the crowds (initially hostile but won over) following Diogenes in the story in Diogenes *Ep.* 2.

1087. Winter, *Left Corinth*, 37 (citing Ael. Arist. *Or.* 51.29; Russell, *Declamation*, 77n16).

1088. While allowing hyperbole, Luke does not earlier go as far as Mark's hyperbolic "whole city" at the door (Mark 1:33; cf. Luke 5:19).

1089. Despite the massive size of a synagogue such as the much later one (the largest known to us) in Sardis (the bulk of the interior was roughly 197 by 59 feet, or about 60 by 18 meters—Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 308; earlier, Goodenough, *Symbols*, 12:191, had suggested "three hundred feet long," more than 90 meters, for the entire structure). First-century synagogues in the Holy Land could measure 15 by 10 meters (which would be some 49 by 33 feet; Evans, *World*, 51, on the Herodium synagogue); 120 square meters (Evans, *World*, 53, on Magdala); 12.5 by 10.5 meters (Evans, *World*, 55, on Masada's synagogue); 12 by 10 meters (Evans, *World*, 56–57, on the earlier synagogue at Modi'in); or 9.6 by 9.6 meters (Evans, *World*, 57, on Qiryat Sefer). Although it might accommodate more, fitting even two hundred people into the Herodium synagogue might feel very uncomfortable by Western standards.

1090. Schnabel, *Missionary*, 82–83, proposes that "the crowd could have gathered in front of the synagogue, or perhaps in the plaza called Augusta Platea at the northern end of the *Cardo Maximus*, or perhaps in the theater located on the *Decumanus Maximus*."

1091. Despite Mark 15:10, Luke skips the opportunity to attribute the motive to the priestly aristocracy at Jesus's trial. Baum, *Gospel*, 159, rightly notes that this portrayal of jealousy reflects a personal flaw of human individuals, not something inherent in Judaism. It may, however, reflect part of the honor-shame dynamic of ancient Mediterranean culture; note competition for honor (Jewett, "Shame," 551–53; Savage, *Power*, 23–25; cf. further Barton, "Moment"; idem, *Honor*, 29–130, for honor's relationship to a contest culture); it was a criterion in judicial rhetoric (Hermog. *Issues* 76.5–6; 78.22–79.6). For Mediterranean honor and shame more generally (and the limits of assigning this stereotype), see Gilmore, "Shame," 3–6, 16; Herzfeld, "House," 75; Brandes, "Reflections," 121–23; in antiquity, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 5.471–93; 5.529–32; 8.145–50, 161–63; Isaeus *Cleon.* 39; Cic. *Cat.* 2.10.25; Val. Flacc. 1.77; Pliny *Ep.* 5.11.2; 6.6.1–9; Suet. *Jul.* 11; 19.2; Lucian *Critic* passim; Philost. *Hrk.* 45.8; deSilva, "Wisdom"; idem, *Shame*, chs. 2–3; Adkins, *Merit*; Williams, *Shame*; in the OT, Hadjiev, "Honor"; for Stoic thought, see Mus. *Ruf.* 3, p. 38.29–30; 4, p. 48.3; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5 L, pp. 34–35.19; 2.7.10c, pp. 60–61.19, 27; 2.7.1 li, pp. 78–79.25–29.

1092. It is also negative in its other early Christian occurrences (Rom 10:21 [citing Isa 65:2]; Titus 1:9; 2:9; Ign. *Smyrn.* 7.1; *Barn.* 12.4 [citing Isa 65:2]; Herm. 28.3); in the LXX, see Isa 22:22; 50:5; 65:2; Hos 4:4; Sir 4:25; also 3 Macc 2:28; 4 Macc 4:7; 8:2. Jealous people do not praise (Symm. *Ep.* 1.25).

1093. E.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 18, 1432b.35–40; 1433a.14–25; Cic. *Or. Brut.* 40.138; Lucian *Dem.* 14; see further comment on Acts 2:13.

difficult to understand. Outsiders—offering the entire local Gentile community faith on terms that would have seemed “cheap” to traditional Jews who had labored among them¹⁰⁹⁴—would have appeared to treat lightly, in the name of and by means of their synagogue, the traditional Jews’ own years of work as a minority community.¹⁰⁹⁵ They probably viewed the newcomers as violating their hospitality, demanding conformity with new beliefs, and stirring trouble.¹⁰⁹⁶ The perspective one takes on the apostles’ behavior here will rest largely on one’s Christology.

More important, however, would have been the immediate attention of synagogue-attending Gentile sympathizers to the new teaching. God-fearers may have been of higher social status more often than were proselytes because persons of status had more to lose by full conversion.¹⁰⁹⁷ Their presence in the synagogues showed their attraction to Jewish ethics and monotheism and their willingness to question their own religious heritage. To be welcomed as first-class members of this faith without having to undergo circumcision and renounce their own ethnic identity must have been especially appealing to these sympathizers, helping to explain their rapid conversion to Christian faith.¹⁰⁹⁸

What appealed to the Gentiles, however, could prove offensive to the synagogue’s base constituents.¹⁰⁹⁹ Further, many of these Gentile adherents, though unable to be full members of the synagogue, were benefactors whose transfer of support (if the synagogue community itself rejected the apostolic message) would stir opposition (cf. Acts 13:45, 50; 17:12).¹¹⁰⁰ Gentiles who had already taken the step of full conversion (for males, including circumcision)¹¹⁰¹ may also not have been pleased by a newer, “lower” standard for other Gentiles. Possibly the higher-status members of the synagogue (13:15) or these high-status God-fearers were able to stir others with status against the outsiders (13:50).

The term translated “blaspheme” (which bears this meaning when applied to deities, 19:37) can mean simply reviling when applied to human objects (see comment on Acts 6:11–13; BDAG). That Luke uses such a term, however, reveals the strength of the hostility of Paul’s critics here and suggests the real object, unknown to them, of

1094. Diaspora Jewish homilies tended to be positive toward Gentiles (e.g., Siegert, “Homily,” 435–37); cf. also favorable works such as the *Letter of Aristaeus* (e.g., Hadas, *Aristaeus*, 225, on *Let. Aris.* 316; many have even viewed the *Letter of Aristaeus* as apologetic toward Gentiles, despite Tcherikover, “Ideology,” 60–61). Longenecker, “Character,” 152, suggests here “a defensiveness to guard one’s possessions (i.e., divine favor on Israel),” which he connects (p. 155) to possessiveness regarding possessions in the Gospel (Luke 12:16–21).

1095. One might compare a struggling local church trying to teach Christian morality in an otherwise unchurched area, suddenly confronted with the exploding growth of an apparent cult with apparently lower standards, using the church’s property but competing for its members. The analogy is inexact but might provide Christian readers more sense for the feelings involved.

1096. See fully Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism*, 100. Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 16, comparing modern views on marginal sects, also considers how other Jews would have regarded Christians; cf. also Thompson, “Ethics,” 64–78, for diverse interpretations of Paul’s preaching in the synagogues.

1097. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 77. This sometimes included even the high-status women (e.g., Poppaea, *Jos. Ant.* 20.195); but the royal house of Adiabene became high-status converts (*Ant.* 20.17, 38, 46, 48–49; despite initial resistance, 20.39–41, 47).

1098. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 77.

1099. When ethnic religion (for one definition, see Peel, “Christianization,” 443) loses its specifically ethnic component, it can attract outsiders rapidly (cf., e.g., the rapid modern proliferation of indigenous Christianity in many regions as soon as it shook free of Western, especially colonial, influence), yet this process risks alienating its traditional constituency.

1100. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 124–25; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 55, following Gülzow, “Soziale Gegebenheiten,” 196. Many Jewish communities in southern Asia Minor were well-accepted members of their society (see, e.g., Williams, “Jews of Corycus”; Trebilco, “Communities,” 567).

1101. Full conversion entailed not merely initiation into another polytheistic cult but joining an ethnic community (see Meeks, “Aliens,” 133–34).

their opposition (as in Luke 23:39; Acts 18:6; 26:11). God's servants are accused of blasphemy (Luke 5:21; Acts 6:11), but the severest accusers are themselves guilty of blasphemy against God (Luke 12:10).¹¹⁰² Paul's writings also testify to considerable opposition from some synagogues (2 Cor 11:24, 26; in Judea, see Rom 15:31; 1 Thess 2:13–16), without which, presumably, most of Judaism would have embraced the Jesus movement.¹¹⁰³ For Luke, rejecting Jesus's apostles is tantamount to rejecting both Jesus and the Father who sent them (Luke 10:16; the reader explicitly knows the sending in Acts 13:4). The result of a local synagogue "blaspheming" here, as in Acts 18:6, will be Paul's declaration that he is right to bring Israel's message also to the Gentiles.

(2) *Turning to the Gentiles (13:46)*

Whereas sophists stereotypically sought audience praise,¹¹⁰⁴ philosophers viewed changed behavior as the goal,¹¹⁰⁵ and faithful prophets in the biblical tradition shared the same commitment; when gentler rhetoric failed, prophets often pronounced judgment, sometimes severe. Paul's words are not calculated to win him favor in the synagogue (contrast Luke 11:43; 14:7–10; 20:46) but are spoken with the boldness of biblical prophets (e.g., Amos 3:2; see comments on "boldness" at Acts 4:13). Prophetic leaders often found themselves in conflict with institutional leaders, whom they regarded as obstinate against God's obvious message (e.g., Luke 14:1–6). The epistolary Paul could also sound hard on a Jewish audience (e.g., Rom 2:24) because he believed that his people had greater moral responsibility on account of greater knowledge (2:12–13, 17–29; 3:19–20; 4:15; 7:7–23; cf. Amos 3:2). He saw some contemporary Jewish claims as expressions of ethnocentric arrogance (Rom 2:17–23; 3:9, 27),¹¹⁰⁶ which he believed the God of Scripture rejected (3:29).

Paul's warning from the prophets in 13:41 suggests that some of his hearers will not believe despite testimony and hence will perish. As modern readers in a different setting, we may well wonder why Paul would give up on his audience so quickly. Several factors may make his response more intelligible. First, in keeping with 13:41, he believes that some have already rejected the message. This rejection is not likely to be resolved, at least not in the short run, by further dialogue. Again in keeping with 13:41, Paul believes that the rejection of true testimony brings moral responsibility. Second, Paul's mission in Pisidian Antioch is not likely to be a long-term one. Luke's narrative does not depict him settling at length in a city until the major urban center of Corinth (18:11). His haste might be motivated by the need to spread the gospel as widely as possible in an initial way (cf. Luke 10:4, 10–11, esp. in view of Acts 13:51),

1102. Possibly they used oaths or cursed Jesus (Witherington, *Acts*, 415), but the language need not demand this. On the meaning of blasphemy, see discussion at Acts 6:11.

1103. Thus, though repeated opposition can function as a plot device (Petersen, *Literary Criticism*, 91, who unfairly doubts its correspondence with the extrinsic world), it also reflects historic reality.

1104. Ael. Arist. *Def. Or.* 189, §57D; 201–2, §61D–62D, responds to this moral critique of orators.

1105. E.g., Mus. Ruf. frg. 49, p. 142.12–19. For philosophic critiques of rhetoric, see Xen. *Mem.* 4.3.1; Plato *Theaet.* 164CD; *Hippias major*; *Hippias minor*; Val. Max. 3.4.ext. 1; *Philo Creation* 45; *Worse* 38; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 40.4; 86.16; 100.1; 108.12, 23, 38; 115.1–2; Mus. Ruf. frg. 36, p. 134.14–16; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.8.7–8; 3.23 (e.g., 3.23.20, 38); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 6.21; 54.1–4; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 90–91.21–25; Anacharsis *Ep.* 1; Tac. *Dial.* 31–32, 42; Aul. Gel. 5.3.7; 5.10; Max. Tyre 26.2; 27.8; Marc. Aur. 1.7; 1.16.4; 1.17.8; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.30; *Ep. Apoll.* 1; Porph. *Marc.* 17.284–85; Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 42–60; Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 83–98.

1106. The problem that Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 304, suggests in this narrative. If modern readers agree too painlessly with Paul's intra-Jewish critique, consideration of the endemic character of ethnocentrism among all cultures today might add perspective (on ethnocentrism, see, e.g., Luzbetak, *Church and Cultures*, 126; Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, passim, e.g., 7, 23, 49–50, 82, 228, 292–93; Kroeber, *Anthropology*, 11, 74, 106, 234–35; Merriam, *Anthropology of Music*, 8; Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture*, 6–7, 149; Grunlan and Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology*, 26–27, 88, 263).

perhaps in part for eschatological reasons (cf. Acts 1:8; Mark 13:10).¹¹⁰⁷ Luke does not present Paul's approach here as a mistake, since it continues to be repeated (Acts 18:6; 19:9; 28:25–28).

In Luke's narration, both Paul and Jesus spoke after a reading from Scripture (Luke 4:21–27; Acts 13:15), and both offended their synagogue audience by embracing the Gentiles (Luke 4:25–27; Acts 13:46–47).¹¹⁰⁸ Despite Luke's design, he did not originate the concept. Acts shows the church's gradual growth in identifying God's people not simply as Jacob's ethnic descendants but instead as a multiethnic worldwide community.¹¹⁰⁹ One component that helped the missionaries to realize this point and turn increasingly to Gentiles was the pattern of rejection in Acts, analogous to what the epistolary Paul envisions as a partial hardening of Israel (Rom 11:7, 25, 30–31).¹¹¹⁰ Jewish unbelief, as well as the divine plan of reversing the status of outsiders and insiders (Luke 14:11; 18:14), necessitated turning to the Gentiles.¹¹¹¹ "Necessity" was also one important way to explain the reasons for, and hence defend the propriety of, one's behavior (Hermog. *Issues* 76.5–7; 77.20–78.21). But part of the necessity is the divine plan (on which see comment at Acts 2:23); turning to the Gentiles was already God's plan even before Israel's hardness (Luke 2:32; Acts 1:8; cf. Rom 11:31–32),¹¹¹² explicit even in the OT citation in Acts 13:47. Thus Israel's disobedience proved "the occasion, but not the cause, for the mission to the Gentiles."¹¹¹³ Luke did not compose this theology himself even though he emphasized it in particular ways; the Paul of the epistles no less views Israel's temporary rejection as grounds for reaching the Gentiles (Rom 11:11–15, 19–20; cf. also Jesus tradition in Mark 7:27–29).

Paul's claim that he turns to the Gentiles, however, appears to mean locally because he continues to begin in synagogues on subsequent occasions (Acts 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; cf. 28:17).¹¹¹⁴ Three times in Acts he warns his own people that he is "turning to the Gentiles," but each time (except the last because the book ends there) he goes to his own people in other cities (18:6; 28:28).¹¹¹⁵ This simply fits the pattern of Jesus's command to his agents: when people in one city reject his agent, the agent should shake off the dust and move on (Luke 10:10–11). Thus the schism is nowhere

1107. Cf. in later times a similar practice by the China Inland Mission and other groups working in new areas (Neill, *History of Missions*, 334, 336). Paul did not of course neglect church planting, which was necessary to sustain subsequent indigenously led evangelism. Pragmatic considerations might also support some urgency: once rejected by prospective Jewish hosts, it might be logistically difficult for them to remain locally, especially if expected patronage arrangements (such as with the Sergii Paulii) had fallen through.

1108. Though Paul responds to prior opposition in Acts 13:45, responding in turn, apparently, to Gentile acceptance in 13:44.

1109. See discussion in Seccombe, "People."

1110. See *ibid.*, 370–71; for the compatibility with Rom 11, Haacker, *Theology*, 90. Israel's hardening recalls Rom 9:18; cf. 2 Cor 3:14. Alternatively, Nanos, *Mystery*, 270–73, views turning to Gentiles not as a result of Israel's rejection but rather as a means to its eschatological restoration (predicated on his earlier argument in that book). Arguing for the continuing connection of the church with Israel, see Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 35–168.

1111. See Talbert, "Again: Mission."

1112. See Nolland, "Salvation-History," 76–81. On the role of Luke 2:32 in Luke-Acts, see Radl, "Beziehungen," 305–6; for the relationship here, cf., e.g., Rese, "Funktion," 78; Mufwata, *Extrémities*, 157 (noting the allusion to Isa 49:6; though cf. also Isa 42:6; 60:1–2).

1113. Barrett, *Acts*, 657; cf. Chance, *Acts*, 223. One might also contrast the ultimate cause (God's purpose) and the proximate cause or catalyst that effected it (by removing it from seeming like a breach of God's covenant with Israel).

1114. This pattern was noted even by John Chrysostom, who from it inferred that Paul did not abandon his people, "for great was his desire toward them" (*Hom. Acts* 37 [Martin, *Acts*, 211, on Acts 13:46]; he goes on to quote Rom 9:3; 10:1). He argues that Jews remained welcome (*Hom. Acts* 30 [Martin, *Acts*, 171]).

1115. With, e.g., Seccombe, "People," 364; Barrett, *Acts*, 657; Koet, "Pogłady"; Dollar, *Exploration*, 320–21; Nanos, *Mystery*, 273 (comparing Paul's theology in Romans).

final in Acts; Paul remains loyal to his Jewish identity and heritage (Acts 21:39; 22:3; 24:11–12, 14–15, 17; 25:8; 26:4–7; 28:17).¹¹¹⁶

Had Paul lived to see a final schism, he surely would have claimed that he, rather than the majority of his people, remained faithful to Israel's heritage; but by his and Luke's definition of God's plan (Acts 1:6–7; 3:21–26; Rom 11:11–32), the schism could never be irreconcilably final. The view that Israel rejected the gospel and that the God of the early Christians had therefore rejected Israel's further opportunities for repentance "is the first step towards Christian antisemitism"¹¹¹⁷ as well as a step back from ethnic universalism. Neither Luke nor Paul implies that Israel's rejection was total (cf. Luke 8:5–15); the rejection by large numbers, however, was particularly conspicuous for God's own chosen people (Rom 11:1–10). Instead of rejecting his people, God was welcoming Gentiles into his people;¹¹¹⁸ this is part of Luke's focus on the Gentile mission (cf. Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47), connecting his circle of Gentile churches with their heritage in ancient Israel.¹¹¹⁹

For Luke (as for Paul, Rom 1:16; 2:9–10), the message was not for Jewish people exclusively, but it was for them "first," as here and in Acts 3:26 (cf. also 1:8, though one's geographic sequence could be determined by one's starting location, 26:20).¹¹²⁰ The "necessity" of it going to them first probably reflects the divine purpose announced in God's promises to Israel.¹¹²¹

The epistolary Paul, too, refused to give up on his people's turning to Christ, insisting that God had not rejected his people (Rom 11:1–2), that God had left a remnant of Jewish believers (11:1–10), and that the Jewish people as a whole would someday embrace faith in Jesus (11:11–32, esp. 11:15, 24–27, 29, 31–32). Paul earnestly desired his people's salvation (9:1–3; 10:1; 11:14). He could not have envisioned the subsequent history of Christian anti-Semitism as the Gentiles who he hoped would provoke Israel's jealousy instead imported their pagan anti-Jewish prejudices into their practice of Christian faith.

Johnson's suggestion of irony here may be correct: "those who 'judged' Jesus to death without worthy cause are now 'judging' themselves unworthy of life" (cf. Acts 13:27; Luke 23:14–15).¹¹²² Leaving one's case to one's judges was often a rhetorical technique to flatter them (e.g., "You are the judges of what I have said," Aeschines *Tim.* 196; see comment on Acts 7:51–53), but it could be used ironically to opposite effect (cf. Acts 4:19 and comment there; 1 Cor 11:13)—for example, to declare that a critic had pronounced judgment on himself (cf. Luke 19:22; for views reversing who was on trial, see comment on Acts 7:51–53). Rhetoricians could claim in a court that their most effective evidence was the vile behavior of their opponents (e.g., Isaeus *Pyrr.* 54, 77).

Paul's hearers would readily understand his claim that what he offered was "eternal life" (also Acts 13:48; Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30), a phrase familiar in early Judaism from

1116. Dunn, *Acts*, xii.

1117. *Ibid.*, 182–83.

1118. With, e.g., Squires, "Acts 8.4–12.25."

1119. See the fuller discussion at Acts 28:23–31, and especially in the commentary introduction (Keener, *Acts*, 1:459–91, esp. 483–86).

1120. Sharing Israel's "leftover bread" (Mark 7:27–28; not in Luke) with the Gentiles was not anti-Jewish even if some of Paul's detractors took offense. But Luke's image of rejection is stronger than the leftover-bread image.

1121. With Le Cornu, *Acts*, 752. This is not a deliberative argument from necessity (on which see Anderson, *Glossary*, 17), since Paul is not persuading (at least not directly) but pronouncing judgment, and probably no one questioned Jewish priority, in any case; for Luke, however, it may supply a sort of "necessity" argument for Paul's turn to the Gentiles. In argument, one could enumerate multiple possibilities (here two) and eliminate all but one (see Anderson, *Glossary*, 32).

1122. Johnson, *Acts*, 241. In this case it would be those who chose to identify with those who passed that verdict, by agreeing with it.

Dan 12:2 onward (see comment on Acts 11:18). Luke uses “eternal life” as synonymous with salvation (compare Luke 10:25; 18:18 with Acts 16:30), the subject of Paul’s proclamation in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:26, 47).

(3) *Light for the Gentiles* (13:47)

The verb for “command” may evoke 1:2, where Jesus gave final instructions to his disciples (presumably including the mission as well as waiting in Jerusalem, 1:4–8). Here the verb applies to Paul and Barnabas a command of Scripture, a mission for God’s ideal people appropriated by those with the vision for their responsibility.

It is no coincidence that Luke gives Paul’s mission, against its Isaian background (see comment on Acts 1:8), the climactic location in the speech. Paul applies to his own mission the call Jesus gave his first witnesses; 1:8 alludes to the entire section of Isaianic Servant Songs (such as Spirit-empowered witness in Isa 42:1; 43:10–12; 44:8), with Isa 49:6 being a prominent example.¹¹²³ The mission of light in Isaiah belongs to the servant Israel (42:6), but through the nation’s disobedience (42:19), it is transferred to the remnant, who must restore the nation as a whole (49:5–6).¹¹²⁴ Similar Isaian language describes Jesus in Luke 2:30–32, as does Isaiah’s servant language (Luke 22:27, 37; Acts 3:13, 26; 8:32–33). That Paul historically saw himself as carrying part of the servant’s mission is likely; Paul may use Isa 42:6, 16 to describe his mission in Acts 26, and the epistolary Paul may use Isa 49:1 in Gal 1:15.¹¹²⁵ Other passages in Paul’s letters may also employ Isaiah’s servant passages as a grid for his calling.¹¹²⁶ One study of Rom 9–11 argues that “Paul read large sections of Isaiah as a prophetic word concerning his own role in the eschatological restoration of Israel and the extension of that salvation to the Gentiles.”¹¹²⁷

For Luke, the ends of the earth include Africa (Acts 8:26–40), and this passage, like others in Acts (2:5–13; 8:26–40; 28:16–31), is merely a proleptic fulfillment of the ultimate reaching of the ends of the earth that Isaiah prophesied (see again comment on Acts 1:8).¹¹²⁸ For Luke, temporary Jewish rejection leading to Gen-

1123. Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 96–101, addresses Acts 13:46–47 and the foundational character of Isa 49:6 for Acts; others also comment at length on 49:6 here (e.g., Rese, “Funktion,” 76–79; Meek, *Mission*, 24–55; for the view that Luke approaches Isaiah polysemously here, see May, “Reader-Response Critic,” 80–81; *ibid.*, 83, also identifies these uses as responding to resistance in 1:6 and 13:45). Van de Sandt, “Acts 13, 32–52,” especially notes the context of 49:1–6 for Acts 13:47; for Luke’s use of Isaian context, see Seccombe, “Luke and Isaiah”; Johnson, “Jesus against Idols.” For comparisons and contrasts between the wording of Acts 13:47 and Isa 49:6, see Mufwata, *Extrémities*, 115–16; for allusions to the passage elsewhere in Acts, see 156–57; for allusions to it in Enoch’s Similitudes, see 191–92; in the Isaiah Targum, 192–95. For Luke’s wider use of Isaiah’s servant, see also Mallen, *Reading*, 86–88. Malina and Pilch, *Acts*, 97, treat the quotation here as the center of a brief chiasmus regarding eternal life and Gentiles (Acts 13:46–48).

1124. Cf. Moessner, “Fulfillment,” 46–50. The narrowed remnant also appears in Isa 52:13–53:12, which early Christians widely applied messianically. Still, Luke may omit as irrelevant to his immediate purpose several words particular to Israel (see Pervo, *Acts*, 343n116).

1125. See Riesner, *Early Period*, 236; Kim, *New Perspective*, 101–3. Cerfaux, *Church*, 177–78n3, even thinks that Gal 1:15 is closer to Isa 49:5 (cf. Isa 29:22; 56:3) than to Jer 1:5. On the centrality of mission and evangelism for Paul, see Krentz, “Necessity”; for mission in his thought, e.g., Bowers, “Mission.”

1126. Kim, *New Perspective*, 101 (arguing that 2 Cor 4:4–6 alludes to Isa 42:6–7; 49:6; Gen 1:3; by contrast, Savage, *Power*, 112, argues that this passage alludes to Isa 9:1 LXX); cf. Hays, *Conversion*, 26. Kim, *New Perspective*, 103, affirms Paul’s Nabatean ministry (based on Gal 1:17, which might not refer to ministry) and thinks that Paul began ministry there to fulfill Isaiah (Kedar in Isa 42:11, which is Nebaioth in Isa 60:7; interpreted as the ancestor of Nabateans in Jos. *Ant.* 1.220–21).

1127. Wagner, *Heralds*, 32–33 (more fully, see 29–33). It might be noteworthy that all Paul’s explicit mentions of “Isaiah” appear in Romans (Rom 9:27, 29; 10:16, 20; 15:12).

1128. For a philosopher’s mission to the farthest reaches of the world (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 13), see Alexander, “Biography,” 58–59. May, “Reader-Response Critic,” 85, connects Luke’s use of Isa 49 with Acts’ open ending, showing that subsequent believers continue the servant’s mission.

tile conversion (cf. 28:26–28) simply provides divine opportunity to fulfill Isaiah's promised Gentile mission.¹¹²⁹

Even less biblically literate members of Luke's audience would not be taken aback by someone calling individuals "lights."¹¹³⁰ Rhetoricians depicted great or beloved individuals as "lights" (Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 5.27 [42]), sometimes extinguished at death (e.g., Men. Rhet. 2.11, 419.18–20).¹¹³¹ Jewish teachers regularly called particularly righteous sages or other persons lights (cf. John 5:35; Matt 5:14),¹¹³² including Abraham,¹¹³³ Jacob,¹¹³⁴ Moses,¹¹³⁵ David,¹¹³⁶ and ultimately the Messiah;¹¹³⁷ the designation also could be applied to Israel,¹¹³⁸ Jerusalem,¹¹³⁹ the temple,¹¹⁴⁰ or God himself.¹¹⁴¹

Some scholars have argued that before his conversion Paul held that conversion to Judaism was necessary for salvation and that he sought Gentile proselytes (Gal 5:11; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 20.34–35, 43–45);¹¹⁴² this theology of conversion then carried over into his mission to the Gentiles.¹¹⁴³ This view is surely plausible and perhaps correct, yet it may press too much information from its primary textual basis (Gal 5:11), given the hyperbolic nature of Galatians' intense rhetoric.¹¹⁴⁴ There was no Jewish missions movement as such (see comment on Acts 1:8), making Paul's vocation new in some respects¹¹⁴⁵ (though we read too much into the difference if we read typical modern missions models into his travels; see comment on Acts 13:5–12). But certainly Paul's writings, and extant first-century Christian sources as a whole, reflect this christologically bounded soteriology (cf. comment on Acts 4:12).¹¹⁴⁶

1129. See Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 243; cf. the fulfillment idea also in Le Cornu, *Acts*, xxxv.

1130. On light imagery, see more fully the documentation in Keener, *John*, 383–84, from which I have drawn this material.

1131. Cf. a pagan metaphor for a skillful sophist (Eunapius *Lives* 495) or heroes (Men. Rhet. 2.11, 419.18–20; Philost. *Hrk.* 44.5; 45.5).

1132. Sir 50:6–7; *L.A.B.* 51:4; *'Abot R. Nat.* 25 A; 9, §25 B; 13, §32 B; *b. Ber.* 28b (Johanan ben Zakkai); *y. Šabb.* 2:6, §2; *Ta'an.* 3:9, §4; *Exod. Rab.* 15:6; *Pesiq. Rab.* 8:4; cf. possibly 4Q504–506 (priests); *'Abot R. Nat.* 24 A; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Exod 40:4; *Gen. Rab.* 1:6 (righteous deeds). The expression must have been a fairly widespread one; Anna considers her son Tobias "the light of my eyes" (Tob 10:5); a source may have been 2 Sam 21:17 (cf. 1 Kgs 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19). In the eschatological time, see Wis 3:7–8 (cf. 5:6); Matt 13:43; Rev 22:5; *L.A.B.* 26:13; 4 *Ezra* 7:97; 2 *En.* 65:11 A; *Sipre Deut.* 47.2.1–2; *b. Sanh.* 100a; *Lev. Rab.* 30:2; *Eccl. Rab.* 1:7, §9; Abelson, *Immanence*, 89, cites *Yal. Pss.* 72.

1133. *Test. Ab.* 7:14 B; *Gen. Rab.* 2:3; 30:10; *Pesiq. Rab.* 20:2.

1134. *Ruth Rab.* 2:12 (probably fourth century).

1135. *Sipre Num.* 93.1.3; *b. Soṭah* 12a, 13a; *Exod. Rab.* 1:20, 22, 24; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:4.

1136. 11Q5 XXVII, 2.

1137. 1 *En.* 48:4 (from the Similitudes, alluding to Isa 42:6; 49:6); the eschatological high priest in 1QSb IV, 27; and Amoraic sources in *Pesiq. Rab Kah. Sup.* 6:5; *Gen. Rab.* 1:6; 85:1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 36:1–2; 37:2; kingship in general in *Tg. 1 Chr.* 8:33.

1138. E.g., Sir 17:19; *Pesiq. Rab Kah. Sup.* 5:1; uses of Isa 60:3 in the late *Song Rab.* 1:3, §2; 1:15, §4; 4:1, §2.

1139. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 21:4 (citing Isa 60:3); *Gen. Rab.* 59:5 (citing Isa 60:3).

1140. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 21:5, bar.; *Gen. Rab.* 2:5 (the temple in the messianic era; citing Isa 60:1); 3:4 (fifth century, citing Jer 17:12; Ezek 43:2).

1141. 1QH^a XV, 24–25; 4 *Bar.* 9:3; *L.A.B.* 12:9; *L.A.E.* 28:2; *Test. Zeb.* 9:8 (paraphrasing Mal 4:2); PGM 4.1219–22; perhaps 4Q451 24 7; cf. *Sib. Or.* 3.285; *b. Menah.* 88b (late second century); *Gen. Rab.* 3:4 (third century, citing Ps 104:2; also in *Exod. Rab.* 50:1); 59:5 (citing Isa 60:19); *Num. Rab.* 15:2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 8:5 (citing Pss 27:1; 119:105); 21:5 (citing Isa 60:19); Rev 21:23. In rabbinic texts, this often alludes to the Shekinah, e.g., *Sipre Num.* 41.1.1; *b. Ber.* 60b; the glory at the exodus is also depicted as light (e.g., Wis 17; 18:1–3; *b. Menah.* 86b; *Exod. Rab.* 14:3). For light symbolism in Scripture, see "Light" (cf. also Achtemeier, "Light," noted there).

1142. On this strict (and not dominant) Jewish view, see Donaldson, *Paul and Gentiles*, 54–60.

1143. *Ibid.*, 78.

1144. See, e.g., Gal 1:8; the grammatical lapse in 2:2–4. For a survey of various approaches to Galatians and rhetoric, see Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 129–42; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 192–94.

1145. See Bowers, "Propaganda," 318.

1146. Green, "Salvation," contends that "salvation" is the unifying theme of Acts.

(4) *The Word Spreads* (13:48)

Many Gentiles believed (Acts 13:48), and the message spread throughout the region (13:49). Conversion and salvation are causes of joy elsewhere in Luke-Acts (e.g., Acts 8:39; 13:52; Luke 10:20; 15:7), and joy a common response to other divine activity (e.g., Luke 1:14, 44, 47, 58; 2:10; 6:23; 10:17, 21). This is also true of “glorifying” God—that is, attributing appropriate honor to God by praise (2:20; 4:15; 5:25–26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47).¹¹⁴⁷ Thus Luke shows Paul’s mission to be godly partly by showing that it honors God (cf. esp. Acts 4:21; 11:18; in response to Paul, 21:20).

Acts portrays Paul as a more successful speaker than his letters claim him to be (1 Cor 2:1–4; 2 Cor 10:10),¹¹⁴⁸ but his letters reveal that his content, at least, was rhetorically sophisticated¹¹⁴⁹—indeed, they display sharper rhetorical argumentation than do the speeches in Acts. It is not his content but his delivery style (1 Cor 2:3; 2 Cor 10:10),¹¹⁵⁰ on which Acts does not comment, that Paul and some high-status observers found inadequate (2 Cor 10:10 suggests that his letters were not viewed as rhetorically deficient). Further, Paul’s letters indicate that whatever the complaints about his style, his missionary preaching proved effective nonetheless, an effectiveness he attributes to divine empowerment (1 Cor 2:4–5; Gal 3:1–3; 1 Thess 2:13). What we do see is that Luke emphasizes Paul’s strong points rather than his weaknesses (with a few possible exceptions, e.g., perhaps Acts 15:39).¹¹⁵¹ For Luke, Paul is a hero (probably, by the time he writes, a deceased one); he is also a model.

The phrase “appointed” applies to “enrollment” in papyri,¹¹⁵² relevant in view of the perspective in Luke 10:20. One may think of the Book of Life in early Jewish literature.¹¹⁵³

1147. The only other canonical use of the Lord’s word being glorified appears in 2 Thess 3:1; cf. perhaps Isa 40:3–5, 9.

1148. Cf. discussion in Porter, *Paul and Acts*, 101. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 299, plausibly suggests that Paul was historically weak here, on the basis of Gal 4:13.

1149. His form was also rhetorically literate; cf. Meeks, “Birth,” 26–27; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 54–58; idem, “Theorists,” 17; Holloway, “Prose”; Smit Sibinga, “*Serta Paulina*”; though Paul did not aim for atticizing elegance (Caragounis, “Dionysios Halikarnasseus”). Because many have overstated the case, some doubt that Paul used classical rules of rhetoric (see Weima, “Aristotle”); certainly one cannot structure letters as speeches (Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 114–17, 280; Reed, “Epistle”; Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 541–67, 584–85; Weima, “Theory,” 329; idem, “Letters”; Stamps, “Rhetoric,” 958; Aune, *Dictionary of Rhetoric*, 418; Keener, *Corinthians*, 4–5), and he also made rhetorical “mistakes” (Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 584; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 240). Yet Paul is far beyond “the vulgar language” in most papyri (Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 113); he uses more rhetorical devices (without necessarily knowing their technical titles) than would be expected for someone reflecting only completely unlearned, popular usage (see, e.g., Keener, *Corinthians*, 25, 29–32); and he displays at least the basic knowledge of any literate people in his era (Litfin, *Theology*, 137–38), and probably more. Fitting their own era, patristic and later sources analyzed his letters rhetorically (Classen, “Rhetorik”; Harvey, *Listening*, 22–23). 2 Pet 3:16 could imply his inappropriate rhetorical impenetrability (cf. Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 40; though some have thought Paul difficult, Mac. Magn. *Apocrit.* 4.8–19 [*Porphyry’s* 77–82]; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 240) but in context is more likely praising his depth (cf., e.g., Cic. *Fin.* 4.1.2; Diog. Laert. 9.1.12–13).

1150. See, e.g., Keener, *Corinthians*, 34–35, 227; on the importance of delivery, see, e.g., Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 37–44. Paul’s disclaimer in 1 Cor 2:1–3 can, indeed, be paralleled among more sophisticated rhetoricians (e.g., Isoc. *Panath.* 3; Isaeus *Astyp.* 35; *Aristarch.* 1; *Lysias Or.* 2.1, §190; 12.3, §120; 19.1–2, §152; Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 17; Cic. *Quinct.* 1.1–4; 24.77; *Catull. Carm.* 49.5–7; *Sall. Sp. G. Cotta* 4; *Ovid Metam.* 13.137; *Quint. Inst.* 4.1.8–9, 11; *Dio Chrys. Or.* 1.9; 12.16; *Tac. Hist.* 4.73; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 1.27).

1151. Paul boasts in his weaknesses, including his sufferings (2 Cor 11:23–33); Luke depicts Paul’s sufferings but also emphasizes elements that Paul could not emphasize without “boasting.”

1152. See Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 160; and esp. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 275.

1153. For the Book of Life, see *Jub.* 30:21–23; 36:10; *Phil* 4:3; *Rev* 20:12; *Herm.* 1.1.1; cf. (some perhaps regarding a list of the living) *Exod* 32:32–33; *Pss* 69:28; 139:16; *Dan* 12:1; *Jub.* 28:6; *1 En.* 39:2; 47:3; 89:70–71; 91:14; 93:1–3; 1QM XII, 2 (if we read “book”); 4QS04 1–2 VI, 12–14; *Daniélou, Theology*, 192–204; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:3; *Gen. Rab.* 24:3; 25:1. Cf. heavenly tablets or other records in

Some scholars have argued that the people “appointed” themselves,¹¹⁵⁴ but this interpretation is difficult to sustain.¹¹⁵⁵ Possibly the verse refers to God’s plan for the Gentiles, that Gentiles have been ordained to life (cf. Acts 11:18; Isa 49:6).¹¹⁵⁶ Luke might especially emphasize God choosing these Gentile believers in a context that mentions God “choosing” Israel (13:17) and therefore giving Jewish people the first opportunity (13:46). But early Judaism did not experience the dissonance between predestination and human responsibility¹¹⁵⁷ experienced by much subsequent Christian theology,¹¹⁵⁸ and there is no reason to think that Luke found the ideas dissonant either. (For God opening hearts, see 16:14; cf. Luke 24:45; note especially the key text Luke 10:21. On predestination in Luke-Acts and Luke’s environment, see further the excursus at Acts 2:23.) In this context, note the fairly conspicuous and perhaps deliberate tension with 13:46: “judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life,” a contrast underlining the play between God’s sovereignty and human choice.

That opponents are humiliated and the crowd rejoices is a good conclusion for a Lukan account (e.g., Luke 13:17). This conclusion leads to a section conclusion in Acts 13:49, followed by a further conclusion in 13:51–52 (Luke was not averse to multiple levels of conclusion; see Luke 16:8–13).

III. LONG-TERM RESPONSE (13:49–52)

Luke summarizes the longer-range response: the word spread (Acts 13:49, a common Lukan summary); Jewish opponents and the Gentile elite drove the apostles from town (13:50); by contrast, the apostles continued ministry elsewhere (13:51) while the disciples persevered in joy (13:52).

(1) *The Message Spreads (13:49)*

That the word spread (13:49) fits Luke’s usual way of summarizing its success in a period or location (e.g., 12:24; see comment on Acts 6:7). Baptism is not mentioned here; but if it occurred, the river Anthios may have been available,¹¹⁵⁹ or water could have been procured from elsewhere.¹¹⁶⁰

Dan 7:10; *Jub.* 3:10, 31; 4:32; 5:13; 6:17, 29, 35; 15:25; 16:3, 9, 28–29; 18:19; 19:9; 23:32; 24:33; 28:6; 30:9, 18–23; 31:32; 32:10, 21, 28; 33:10; 39:6; 49:8; *1 En.* 10:8; 81:1–4; 93:2; 97:6; 98:7–8; 103:2–3; 104:1, 7; 106:19; 107:1; 108:3, 7; *2 En.* 19:5; 44:5 A; *3 En.* 18:24–25; 44:9; *Jos. Asen.* 15:12; *Test. Ab.* 12:7–18 A; 10:7–11 B; *4 Ezra* 6:20; *Apoc. Zeph.* 3:6–9; 7:1–6; 9:2; *m. ’Ab.* 2:1; *b. Roš Haš.* 32b; Noack, “Qumran and Jubilees,” 200. Pagans also believed in records of deeds (*Lucian Downward Journey* 4; *Callim. Hymns* 6 [to Demeter], line 56), perhaps modeled after prison records (cf. Rapske, *Custody*, 250). Cf. also citizen enrollment, perhaps partly implied in Rev 3:5 (Ramsay, *Letters*, 385; Hemer, *Letters*, 148; Aune, *Revelation*, 225).

1154. Abbott, *Acts*, 158, noting that some hold this view; Blaiklock, *Acts*, 110 (claiming that the verb is middle).

1155. Luke employs not the middle (as in Acts 28:23) but the passive (as in 22:10; cf. Luke 7:8); although in Paul persons could order themselves (1 Cor 16:15), the passive referred to ordering by God (Rom 13:1). For a predestinarian reading here, see, e.g., Peterson, *Acts*, 399.

1156. Marshall, *Kept*, 94.

1157. E.g., 1QS X, 1ff.; 4Q180 1 2; *1 En.* 1:1–3, 8; 5:7–8; 25:5; 38:4; 48:1, 9; 50:1; 58:1; 61:4, 12; 93:2; *Jub.* 11:17; *Test. Job* 4:11/9. This appears particularly likely for Pharisees and later rabbis (*Jos. War* 2.162–63; *Ant.* 13.172; 18.13; see discussion in Klawans, “Fate”). Despite Josephus’s presentation of the Essenes (*Ant.* 18.18), many contend that even the Scrolls do not deny free will (Nötscher, “Schicksalsglaube”; Driver, *Scrolls*, 558–62; Marx, “Prédestination”; Sanders, *Judaism*, 251). See further comment on Acts 2:23.

1158. Patristic writers had to respond to some increasingly widespread pagan notions of Fate that excluded free will (e.g., Justin *Dial.* 141; *1 Apol.* 43; Tatian *Or. Gks.* 11; see further comment on Acts 2:23).

1159. It flowed by the city in winter and spring (Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 43–44); Paul is not traveling in winter (and spring may be past); at this altitude, winter water would be cool.

1160. For the aqueduct, see Finegan, *Apostles*, 91; one excavated fountain house is somewhat later (McRay, *Archaeology*, 237; on the baths, see 238). The fountain with the statue of the river god (Finegan, *Apostles*, 88) might not appear ideal.

(2) *Inciting the Elite* (13:50)

Local standards of honor and shame could dictate actions, and the local political connections here were powerful enough to lead to the apostles' expulsion. Public opinion could force people to conform to behavioral expectations or suffer disgrace (Isaues *Cleon.* 39). Although people of rank often embraced the Christian movement (Acts 8:27; 10:1; 13:12; cf. Luke 1:3), they could also prove its formidable enemies. Luke elsewhere indicates the importance of "leading" (lit. "first") men or women (e.g., Acts 28:7, 17), whether for (17:4, women) or against (Luke 19:47; Acts 25:2, men) the gospel. (For "first" as a "leading citizen," see, e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 3.2.2, and fuller discussion at Acts 28:7, 17.) Inscriptions reveal that many women held important roles in synagogues in Asia Minor, more often than in many other locations.¹¹⁶¹

Luke's emphasis on aristocrats comports well with the work's dedication to an elite patron or dedicatee ("most *excellent* Theophilus," Luke 1:4). Apparently some of the God-fearers of high social status (see comment on Acts 13:43) were the Jewish community's advocates with the other elements in the city. Local elites were decurions, belonging to the town council; they were lower in rank than Roman "knights" (*equites*) but acquired wealth from owning land (most respectably) or mercantile activity.¹¹⁶² They oversaw taxation, markets, and (where relevant) harbors and would be sent on embassies to the emperor or his local agents.¹¹⁶³ Most of them were former magistrates; the office was lifelong once one was admitted, and membership in the class became hereditary, with members nominated to offices.¹¹⁶⁴ On average, there were often about a hundred per city.¹¹⁶⁵ A smaller town such as Pisidian Antioch may have had fewer.

In Egyptian nomes, those perceived to be associated with Hellenism flaunted their status above other Egyptians, though to the Romans they remained Egyptian.¹¹⁶⁶ In a Roman colony, however, the (generally) large number of Roman citizens possessed the high-status culture. Antioch's elite used Latin and prided themselves in their Italian roots.¹¹⁶⁷ Inscriptions reveal that the upper class here consisted of Roman citizens descended from Italians the emperor Augustus had settled here; the leading people of the city here are Gentiles.¹¹⁶⁸ Some of these *may* have been relatives of Sergius Paulus (see comment on Acts 13:14; if Sergius Paulus was a sympathizer with Jews, or perhaps, more generally, reportedly esoteric knowledge from the East, even before the apostles' arrival [Acts 13:6–7], it is no less possible that some of his relatives were); in any case, his relatives could not prevent the persecution. Likewise, some members of the other leading family, the Caristanii, may have been involved.¹¹⁶⁹

Except where the Jewish community was powerful enough to seem to threaten citizens' exclusive privileges (namely, for elite Jews in Alexandria), sympathies for Judaism appear even among elites, including in Rome itself.¹¹⁷⁰ Given how rarely

1161. Kraabel, "Judaism in Asia Minor," 46–48 (though the supposed connection to female Anatolian divinities [48] is questionable); Trebilco, *Communities*, 104–13.

1162. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 111. On municipal aristocracies, see also Sanders, *Jesus to Mishnah*, 79.

1163. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 111, citing Plut. *Old Men* 794A.

1164. Sherwin-White, Jones, and Honoré, "Decuriones."

1165. *Ibid.*, 437. The 10 percent estimate in Harland, *Associations*, 27, thus appears too high.

1166. Lewis, *Life*, 36, 40–41.

1167. See Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 68–91, 134, 136, 143–44.

1168. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 122; cf. Ramsay's suggestion that these citizens would be less attracted to Paul's preaching in Greek (*Cities of Paul*, 313).

1169. With Mowery, "Caristanius" (noting from an inscription the vow on behalf of Claudius from this period by one C. Caristanius Fronto Caisianus Iullus).

1170. See Gager, *Anti-Semitism*, 67–88. For a synagogue donor also prominent in Aphrodisian city politics, see Gilbert, "Civic Life."

Eastern religions, viewed as exotic, seem to have penetrated wealthy elites,¹¹⁷¹ this is significant. Like other minority cults, Jewish residents depended on local patrons who belonged to higher social networks to make them acceptable to the cultural mainstream.¹¹⁷² If numerous enough, Jewish residents may have also exercised some measure of influence in local politics.¹¹⁷³

As in other Roman colonies, the governing body would be the *ordo*, ruling the *populus*.¹¹⁷⁴ The *populus*, whose best-attested political activity was to publicly hail their benefactors, exercised little oversight¹¹⁷⁵ but may have been easily swayed. Yet we need not think here of action based on an official meeting of the *ordo*; some officials, acting with the backing of crowds or with threats, could have been sufficient to drive the apostles out.¹¹⁷⁶ Paul's Roman citizenship might have helped him had he thought to appeal to it, but there is no evidence that this tactic even occurred to him until much later, after a beating in another colony (16:37).

Though Luke often mentions women, that the women are mentioned first here probably underlines their prominence.¹¹⁷⁷ Educated and high-born women could command significant respect, at least in Macedonian and Roman society (Plut. *Alex.* 21.4; Cic. 16.2).¹¹⁷⁸ They could prove influential enough that their political support could help shield an official from censure.¹¹⁷⁹ Although they constituted a minority, it is known that women held certain public offices in Asia Minor.¹¹⁸⁰

Sometimes such prominent women threw their support to the missionaries (Acts 17:4, 12), but in this case the support went to the latter's local opponents. It is known that many influential Gentile women sympathized with Judaism. For example, Josephus, undoubtedly exaggerating, claims that most women in Damascus were Jewish sympathizers (*War* 2.560).¹¹⁸¹ Many Romans complained about Roman women following Judaism,¹¹⁸² but this was probably partly because Judaism was enjoying so much success among other Romans¹¹⁸³ and partly because Roman husbands expected their wives to follow their religion.¹¹⁸⁴ Some women who sympathized with Judaism proved highly influential even in Rome itself (such as the empress Poppaea; see *Ant.* 20.195–96). Acmonia in Phrygia, near Antioch, provides an example of how Gentile women sympathizers could prove valuable to local synagogues. In that

1171. Beaujeu, "Cultes locaux," 443.

1172. White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:58–59.

1173. The Isis cult sometimes favored local officials in elections, and some argue that Judaism was even more involved in politics (Grant, "Christian and Roman History," 24).

1174. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 78, noting that these replaced the traditional Greek βουλή and δήμος. For the distinction in rank between the colonists and natives, see, e.g., Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:178.

1175. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 78–79.

1176. The traditional culture of the region was known to be aggressive (see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:72; 2:26–28; for the Roman military presence, 1:72–74; although, of course, military force would not be relevant here).

1177. Spencer, *Acts*, 147. Normally men took precedence over women of equal (and sometimes higher) rank (Gardner, *Women*, 67).

1178. Bruce, *Acts*, 275, doubts that they would hold this status in Athens or an Ionian city (e.g., Ephesus), but it was possible elsewhere (such as among colonists in Antioch). Men treated elite women with much greater respect than other women (see, e.g., Buszard, "Speech"). On women of status in antiquity, see the sources cited in the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:606–8; cf. also 616, 628.

1179. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.61.136, though Cicero's intention is to insinuate Verres's adultery with aristocratic women.

1180. Kraabel, "Judaism in Asia Minor," 44 (also noting prophetesses in the Asian churches, Rev 2:20; Euseb. *H.E.* 5.17.2–4); see esp. Brooten, *Women Leaders*, 5–39.

1181. Attraction to Judaism may have been "positively fashionable" (Judge, *Pattern*, 44) in some of these cities.

1182. Cf. *Juv. Sat.* 6.542–47; Witherington, *Acts*, 417n244.

1183. E.g., Gager, *Anti-Semitism*, 59–61; see comment on Acts 16:20–21.

1184. See Balch, *Wives*, passim.

case, a member of the local aristocracy named Julia Severa built a synagogue there.¹¹⁸⁵ Like men, women probably usually achieved synagogue offices and honors through wealth, status, and helping the synagogue.¹¹⁸⁶

Although only 40 percent of tomb inscriptions concern women, women constitute 50 percent of the proselytes and 80 percent of the God-fearers in these inscriptions.¹¹⁸⁷ Perhaps because women in the general population tended to be less educated and hence more easily exploited than men, some unscrupulous teachers were said to target women, especially wealthy women (cf. 2 Tim 3:6).¹¹⁸⁸ Although Luke never shies away from reporting women's patronage of the churches (Luke 8:3; Acts 16:15; see comment on Acts 16:15), suiting his valuing of both genders (Acts 2:17–18), neither can it have hurt his apologetic case for a first-century audience to show that Paul's opponents also made use of women's patronage.¹¹⁸⁹

Historically, the "persecution" may have included synagogue beatings (2 Cor 11:24) and/or beatings with Roman officials' rods (11:25), but we cannot be certain in which locations Paul faced such hardships; some may be in the period Luke surveys in a more cursory manner (in Acts 9:30; 11:25–26). Appeals to political allies to pressure out troublemakers sounds highly plausible to audiences in some cultures today.¹¹⁹⁰ The term for expelling them (ἐξέβαλον) is a strong one that Luke often uses for expelling demons, but Luke also uses it for driving God's agents out (Luke 6:22; 20:12; cf. Acts 16:37), sometimes in order to kill them outside a city (Luke 4:29; 20:15; Acts 7:58).

(3) *Shaking Off Dust (13:51)*

This action of shaking dust from their feet connects them with earlier witnesses (Luke 9:5; 10:11). What does shaking dust from feet symbolize? Jesus instructed his disciples to employ this symbol (Luke 9:5; 10:11) in the context of rejection that constituted the antithesis of hospitality (9:4; 10:5–10).¹¹⁹¹ One mark of proper hospitality was providing water for washing feet (7:44); hospitality included providing water for guests to wash their feet (Gen 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Luke 7:44) or providing servants to wash their feet.¹¹⁹² People often washed their feet when returning home;¹¹⁹³ washing one's feet was common enough that "unwashed feet" became proverbial in some places for "without preparation."¹¹⁹⁴

1185. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:9 (citing MAMA 6.262).

1186. See Brooten, *Women Leaders*, 32–33.

1187. Riesner, *Early Period*, 351; similarly, Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 25.

1188. Liefeld, "Preacher," 239–42 (citing, e.g., Lucian *Runaways* 18; *Alex.* 6; *Iren. Her.* 1.13.1, 3; 1.23.2, 4); cf. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 24:15; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 195.

1189. Cf. *Jos. Ant.* 17.41 (cf. 13.401, 405); Ilan, "Women to Pharisaism"; *Juv. Sat.* 1.38–39. Benefactresses are well attested in Asia Minor, e.g., at nearby Perga (Mitchell, "Archaeology," 171) or farther west in Lydia (White, *Origins of Architecture*, 1:81). For women as frequent guardians of inherited tradition against innovations in Middle Eastern societies, see Pizzuto-Pomaco, "Shame," 44.

1190. González, *Acts*, 163–64, compares how those advocating minority positions in Latin America often have faced trouble with ecclesiastical authorities, who then "appealed to the state—to the 'secular arm'"; e.g., those working for biblical principles of justice were called Communist agitators. The social situation depicted here is not entirely analogous, since the majority religion in Antioch was not Jewish, but good relations with the city authorities may have produced an analogous effect.

1191. Idealized philosophers did not employ the symbol, but they also withdrew from those rejecting them; Malherbe, *Philosophers*, 17, notes that when the masses refuse his cure, the Cynic "withdraws from them" (Heraclitus *Ep.* 2, 4, 7, 9; Socrates *Ep.* 24; Diogenes *Ep.* 28.8); sometimes he is even said to hate the masses and being with them (Diogenes *Ep.* 28.2).

1192. E.g., a triclinium wall mural in Carcopino, *Life*, 274; *Jos. Asen.* 7:1. For the hospitality function in Jewish circles, see esp. Thomas, *Footwashing*, 35–40; more broadly in the Mediterranean world, see 46–50.

1193. *Pesiq. Rab.* 23/24:2.

1194. Aul. Gel. 1.9.8. On Greco-Roman footwashing for hygiene, see Thomas, *Footwashing*, 44–46; on Jewish footwashing for comfort, see 31–35.

Most local roads would afford Paul and Barnabas an abundance of dust for this action,¹¹⁹⁵ though they probably left town on a paved road (see comment below). Within town, streets contained trash and sometimes even carcasses (Justin. *Dig.* 43.10.1.5); although laws in Rome forbade people in upper-story apartments emptying chamber pots into the streets, it seems to have happened.¹¹⁹⁶ One could also demonstrate contempt by showing one's heel (John 13:18).¹¹⁹⁷

There may be another reason, however, that Jesus told his disciples to shake dust from their feet against cities that rejected their preaching (Luke 10:10–11; Matt 10:14). If the following context in Luke 10 is closely related to the meaning of the act, the disciples were to shake dust from their feet probably in part to symbolize that the judgment of hostile Israelite towns would be stricter than that of pagans (Luke 10:12–15; Matt 10:15).¹¹⁹⁸ How would shaking dust off symbolize this stricter judgment implied in the following verses? Many scholars argue that Jewish travelers normally shook dust from their feet when leaving a pagan town, so that the action treats Jewish communities that *act* pagan (i.e., like non-Jews rejecting the kingdom) as if they were pagan.¹¹⁹⁹ Sandals that had touched profane soil must be removed in truly holy land (Acts 7:33; Exod 3:5).

Whether or not Jewish people practiced this gesture customarily, they would have grasped this symbolism easily enough. Later rabbis claimed that land outside Israel was unclean;¹²⁰⁰ already in this period, the land was considered holier than land outside (see comment on Acts 6:1; introduction to Acts 7). Josephus claimed that entering another country made Jews impure, requiring cleansing (*Ag. Ap.* 2.203);¹²⁰¹ excessive direct contact with Gentiles was also impure (see comment on Acts 10:28). For ancients, the soil of a land could represent the land itself: thus Naaman requested Israelite soil to take back for worshipping God in his land (2 Kgs 5:17), and Agamemnon kissed the soil of his native land (*Hom. Od.* 4.521–22).¹²⁰² Some other societies even in more recent times also beat off dust from feet and clothing to remove ritual contamination.¹²⁰³ For a similar action, compare Paul shaking out his garment in Acts 18:6 (cf. *Pesiq. Rab.* 10:11).

(4) *Journeying to Iconium (13:51)*

Iconium, modern Konya, was apparently at least eighty-five to ninety miles (140 km.) from Antioch (hence Acts 13:51 summarizes probably at least four days of walking).¹²⁰⁴ Paul and Barnabas would likely have traveled farther along the Via Se-

1195. See Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 107.

1196. See Stambaugh, *City*, 178, 184. In Rome, rain could wash trash down toward the sewers (189); but waste gradually raised the levels of streets (Owens, *City*, 157).

1197. Brown, *John*, 2:554, following observations about Near Eastern customs in Bishop, "Bread," 332; more generally, turning one's back may have also functioned as an insult (Jer 2:27; 18:17; 32:33).

1198. The verses likely are related for Luke because rejection of the messengers (Acts 10:10, 16) frames the verses about shaking dust off and treatment like pagans.

1199. E.g., Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 160 (following Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 1:571); C. Williams, *Acts*, 168; Marshall, *Acts*, 231; Arnold, "Acts," 346; Keener, *Matthew*, 320.

1200. See purportedly early tradition in *b. Šabb.* 14b (and other sources in Safrai, "Religion," 829).

1201. Cf. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 760 (citing *m. 'Ohal.* 18:6–7 [one incurs uncleanness from Gentile lands and homes]; *Ṭehar.* 4:5 [Gentile soil rendering impure]; *t. Miqw.* 6:1 [Gentile lands unclean]). For removing dust from one's feet in the temple (i.e., for a higher degree of holiness), see, e.g., *b. Ber.* 54a; *Yebam.* 6b; *Eccl. Rab.* 4:17, §1.

1202. Odysseus, at sea for days, kissed land (not even specifically his homeland) when he came upon it (*Hom. Od.* 5.463).

1203. The Gikuyu, to chase away any residual contact with demons (Mbiti, *Religions*, 117).

1204. Finegan, *Apostles*, 91, suggests 80 mi. (130 km.), perhaps meaning directly as the crow flies; offering newer estimates, Wilson (personal correspondence, Nov. 25, 2011) suggests 92 mi. (148 km.). On Iconium, see further Gasque, "Iconium"; Breytenbach, *Provinz*, 162–64; Schnabel, *Mission*, 1110–11 (including on 1110

baste, on which they had initially approached Antioch (see comment on Acts 13:14).¹²⁰⁵ It made more sense to take a paved road when possible,¹²⁰⁶ and Roman roads, built especially for pack animals and pedestrians, were superior to most roads in Europe before 1850.¹²⁰⁷ At twenty to twenty-six feet (6–8 m.) wide throughout its length, it would have readily accommodated wheeled traffic¹²⁰⁸ as well as pedestrians (see further comment on Acts 13:14).

One might wonder why they would take the most prominent road if they could be easily followed. Their persecutors (13:50) were not necessarily satisfied to merely drive them from town (14:19), but the apostles had little choice: there were simply no other practical east-west routes through this mountainous country.¹²⁰⁹ Their use of this Roman road is also what late second-century Christians, who knew the ancient local geography better than we, inferred from the story; *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 3 claims that Paul traveled the ὁδὸς βασιλική—that is, the imperial or Augustan highway.¹²¹⁰

The Via Sebaste, constructed under the supervision of Cornutus Aquila, the propraetor for Augustus in 6 B.C.E.,¹²¹¹ ran from Colonia Comama to Colonia Antiochia (Pisidian Antioch), then an estimated eighty-five miles east-southeast to Colonia Iconium and probably on to Lystra (Acts 14:6).¹²¹² Leaving Antioch on this route, Paul and Barnabas would initially follow the border between Phrygia Paroreius (on the north) and Pisidia (on the south; later Isauria is to the south) and remain on the road till reaching Iconium, which lay in Lycaonia (apparently near Phrygia). This road would take them nearly sixty kilometers south-southeast, then turn sharply east for about seventy to eighty kilometers,¹²¹³ for a total of about 130 to 140 kilometers (more than eighty miles).¹²¹⁴ The road from Lystra to Derbe (14:6, 20), covering perhaps fifty-six miles, may not have been paved.¹²¹⁵

Given the possible connection with Sergius Paulus's relatives noted earlier, they could have initially started along the Via Sebaste with this further westward journey in mind. (Had Iconium been the group's final destination, however, they could have skipped Antioch and taken a shorter route.)¹²¹⁶ Sergii Pauli Vetissus was about 110 kilometers

cities Paul and Barnabas would have passed en route to there); Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 228–31; Blaiklock, *Cities*, 27–30.

1205. So most scholars here (e.g., Hansen, "Galatia," 384), though some note that the matter remains debated (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 108). The road from Ephesus to Iconium did run near Antioch, but it was difficult to reach from Antioch (Lake, "Route," 225). For a photo of part of the Via Sebaste that remains between Antioch and Iconium, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:125.

1206. This assumes, probably rightly, that the persecution's objective was a local deterrent rather than deliberately life threatening, thus allowing open flight; though mobs might seek to kill him (Acts 14:5, 19), Roman citizens (a particularly respectable status in the East) risked too much by lynching someone.

1207. Cary and Haarhoff, *Life*, 138.

1208. Mitchell, "Via Sebaste," 1596.

1209. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:70.

1210. Lake, "Route," 226; Johnson, *Acts*, 246. Cf. the language in Num 20:17; 21:22.

1211. Lake, "Route," 225. Milestones attest the date (Mitchell, "Via Sebaste").

1212. French, "Roads," 52; Mitchell, "Via Sebaste," 1596; cf. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 39 (speaking of Lystra and Iconium as separate branches of the road).

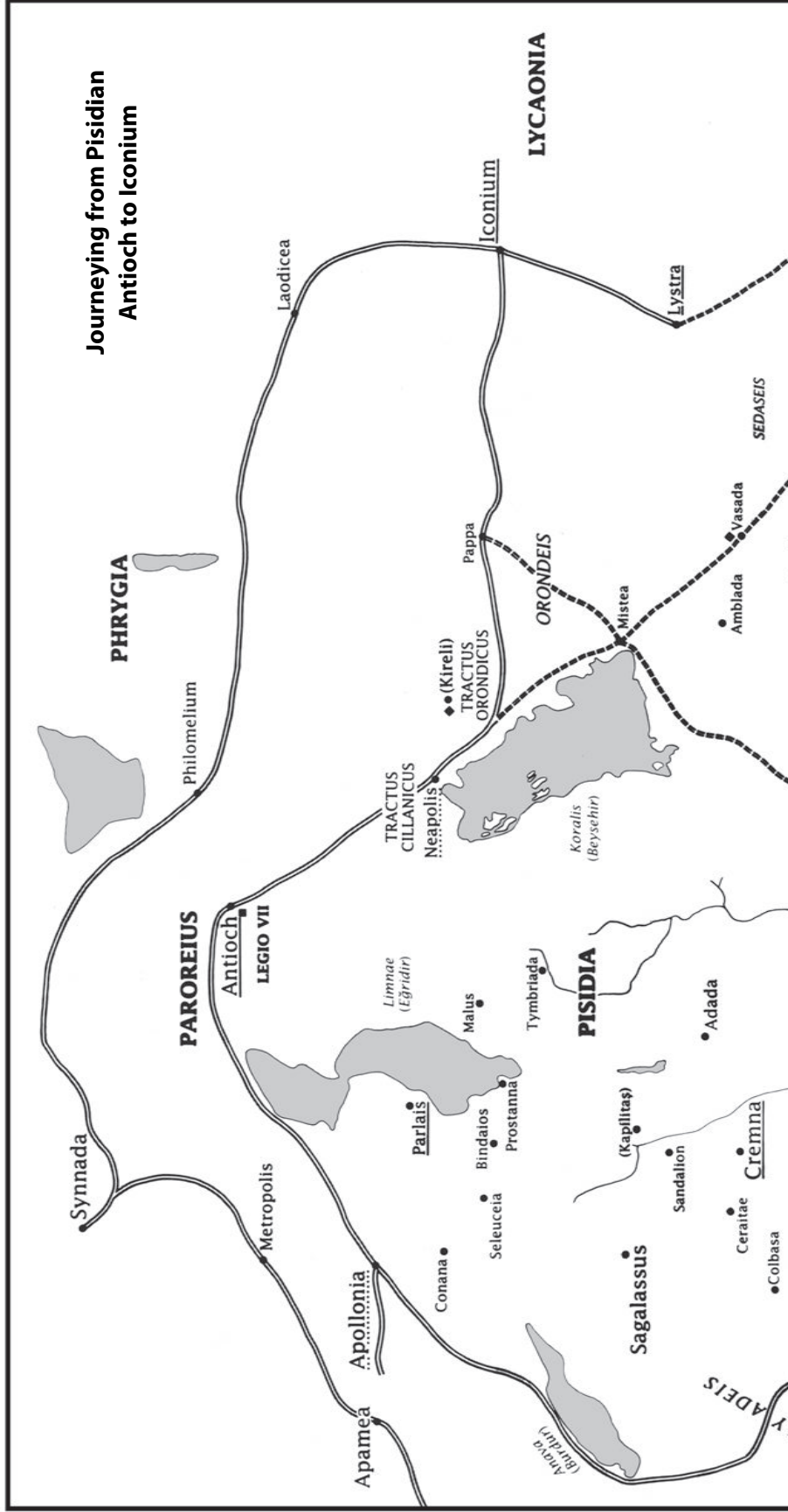
1213. A brief part of that section (perhaps a few kilometers) including a somewhat higher altitude crossing through the mountains ca. 30 km. from Iconium); but most of the journey is at 1,000–1,500 m. above sea level (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 5, after 1:78; cf. also map after 1:10).

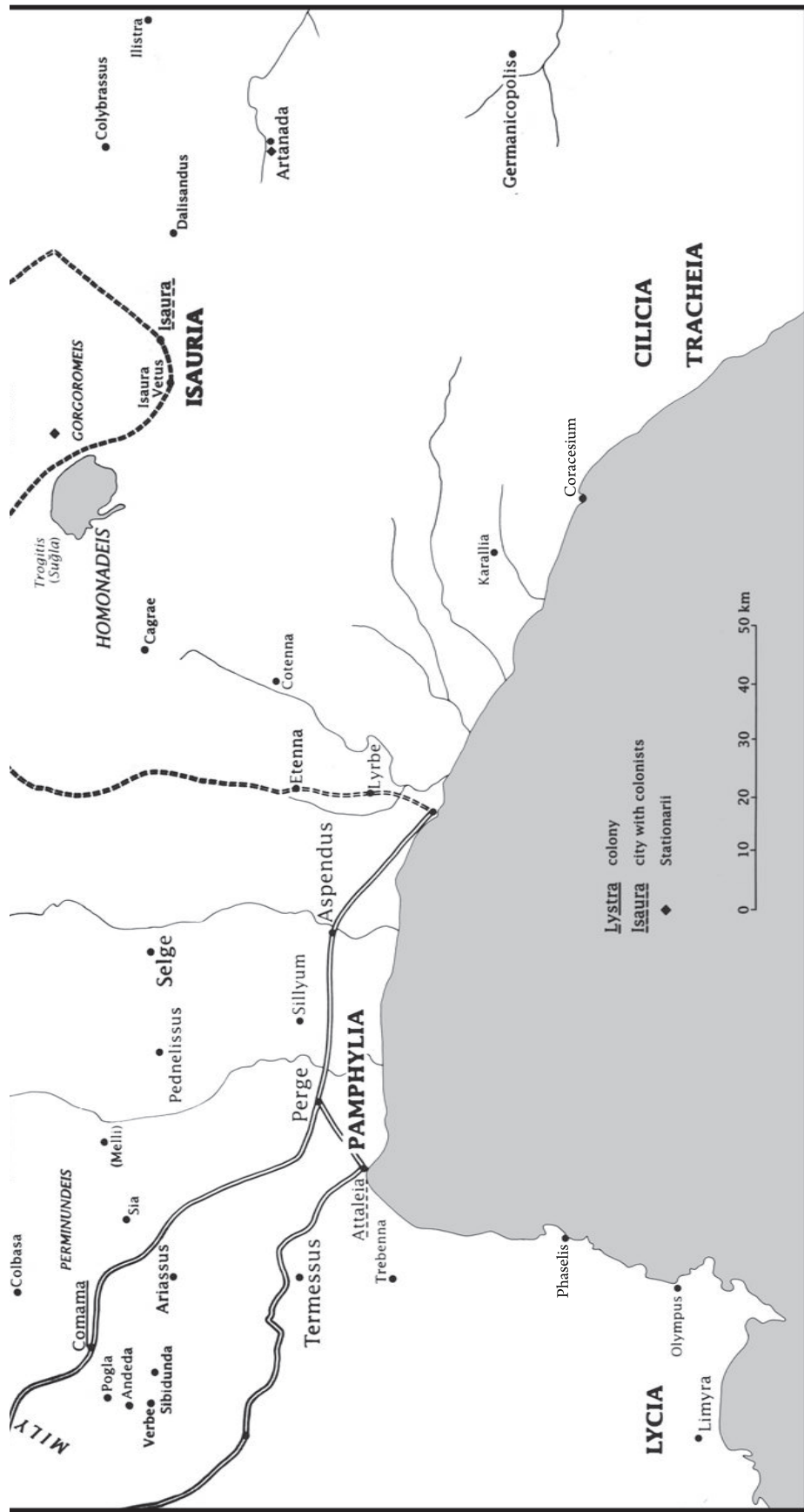
1214. These distances are my estimates based on the map in Mitchell, *Anatolia*, between 1:78 and 1:79. Actual distances walked can be much longer than map distances, however, because ascending and descending rugged terrain adds distance (one might similarly compare posted distances versus map distances in much of rural Africa today).

1215. French, "Roads," 53. Wilson (personal correspondence, Nov. 25, 2011) estimates 81 mi. (130 km.) from Lystra to Derbe via Laranda.

1216. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:70; see also map 5, after 1:78, along with map 8, p. 130. According to map 3, after 1:40, this northern route was an older Cilician road functioning in the first century B.C.E.

Journeying from Pisidian Antioch to Iconium





Reproduced from *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, Vol. 1: *The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule* by Stephen Mitchell (1993): Map 5: "The Pisidian Taurus." By permission of Oxford University Press.

south-southwest of Ancyra, about 110 to 120 kilometers north of Iconium, and about 110 kilometers northeast of Pisidian Antioch.¹²¹⁷ Mountains might force the traveler between Antioch and estates of the Sergii Pauli in Vetissus to travel by way of Iconium.

Thus, if Paul and Barnabas carried a letter of recommendation from Sergius Paulus and had not run into trouble with this family in Antioch, they might think of heading north from Iconium. That they instead turned south to Lystra may simply reflect their route following the Via Sebaste, but persecution in Iconium (14:6) or alienation from this family in either Antioch or Iconium could have deflected a northward goal had they had one. They probably had made contact with this family in Pisidian Antioch (where the family may have resided most of the year), if at all; and if the family was there, the encounter had probably gone poorly (given both 13:50 and Luke's silence on potential sponsors) or at least proved of little help. Other than such a contact, they lacked any reason to go north; in the mid-first century, very few towns larger than small villages (or camps of nomads) existed between Iconium and Ancyra.¹²¹⁸ Indeed, their primary contact with this family, and the people to whom they could provide access, would have been in Antioch anyway.

(5) *Iconium's Politics and Locale (13:51)*

Augustus had founded a colony at Iconium, distinct from and alongside the Greek polis, long before Paul's day.¹²¹⁹ The Greek polis Iconium was granted the title "Claudiconium," perhaps some time in the reign of Claudius;¹²²⁰ some scholars have suggested that it achieved the coveted status of Roman colony at this time (which would have presented an issue of immediate civic pride), but it was likelier during the city's refounding in the reign of Hadrian (117–38 C.E.).¹²²¹ (Colonial status had cheapened by then; Iconium became a full colony without any influx of Romans.)¹²²²

In any case, Iconium was significant, especially among local towns. Pliny the Elder called it an *urbs celeberrima*, the Lycaonians' most celebrated city (*N.H.* 5.25.95).¹²²³ Iconium is known to have included a theater, sponsored by both local and imperial patronage in the first half of the first century C.E.¹²²⁴ A prominent center from at least the fourth century B.C.E., the town "had clearly long been an important community and had presumably acted as a political and economic centre for south east Phrygia."¹²²⁵ Its fertile countryside was easily divided "into colonial allotments."¹²²⁶ Iconium's population was distinct from the rural communities in the district, though some of these were also growing by this period.¹²²⁷

Strabo notes that its territory boasted natural resources much superior to the rest of Lycaonia; the Galatian king had once held more than three hundred flocks there (Strabo 12.6.1). Explicitly exempting Iconium, Strabo claims that much of the rest

1217. As best as I can estimate from *ibid.*, map 10, after 1:164.

1218. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:96 (although, by the end of the first century, towns were growing there).

1219. Belke, "Iconium," 706; cf. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:77.

1220. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 107; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:95.

1221. Witherington, *Acts*, 417 (noting esp. Mitchell, "Iconium and Ninica"); Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:95.

1222. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 165.

1223. With Barrett, *Acts*, 661; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 522. Pliny the Elder, LCL, 2:293, translates "most famous city."

1224. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:18 (citing IGRR 3.262, 1474).

1225. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:95. Only in the Byzantine era did it supplant Lystra as Lycaonia's metropolis, but only Lystra's colonial status had made it more prominent beforehand (Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 183).

1226. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:77; cf. 1:151.

1227. In the basin ca. 30–40 km. southwest of Iconium, a small agricultural village appears about every 6 sq. km., and these grew into small towns during the Roman period (Mitchell, "Archaeology," 185, with 126, fig. 1). On Lycaonia further, see Bruce, "Lycaonia"; Schnabel, *Mission*, 1108–10; most extensively, including views about its history, see Bechard, *Walls*; for a summary of 1990s archaeological publications on Lycaonia and Isauria, see Mitchell, "Archaeology," 185–86 (noting that little excavation has been done during this period).

of the region of “the plateaus of the Lycaonians” was “cold, bare of trees, and grazed by wild asses,” with little water and (where there was water) the world’s deepest wells to procure it. The country nevertheless produced enough sheep to make some rich, “but the wool is coarse” (12.6.1 [LCL, 5:473–75]). Romans drove out robbers and pirates from Lycaonia and so brought the land under Roman control (12.6.2). As the intersection of several roads (including the Via Sebaste and a road from Ephesus), it held great importance.¹²²⁸ Its local advantages may have gone to its head: it fancied itself the most ancient of cities, even prediluvian.¹²²⁹

Luke specifies that Lystra and Derbe were in Lycaonia (Acts 14:6), some distance from (14:19), yet related to (13:51; 14:21; 16:2), Iconium. His description sounds as if he distinguishes Iconium from Lycaonia, another example of the ambiguous and shifting boundaries in this region. Strabo includes Iconium in Lycaonia¹²³⁰ but distinguishes it from Lycaonia in some respects. (Lycaonia was not far from Paul’s home territory of Cilicia and was eventually joined to it administratively in the second century.¹²³¹ Like Pamphylia, it was probably known to Paul before his visit.)

Luke’s apparently distinguishing Iconium from Lycaonia should not surprise us, since others in antiquity did the same.¹²³² Regional and ethnic boundaries were not hard and fast, and political boundaries fluctuated, especially affecting border cities.¹²³³ Further, geographically Iconium lay on the Lycaonian plain, but political and ethnic affiliation were more significant, and the local language was plainly Phrygian.¹²³⁴ (Phrygian names also were common in Iconium but not in Lystra.)¹²³⁵

Strabo himself, indeed, considers Phrygia’s various boundaries difficult to fix, noting even a proverb making fun of how difficult it was to distinguish Phrygia from Mysia (Strabo 12.4.4; 12.8.2). Whereas Strabo includes Iconium in Lycaonia,¹²³⁶ a single author, Pliny the Elder, places it sometimes there (*N.H.* 5.95) and sometimes in Phrygia (5.245).¹²³⁷ The citizens viewed themselves as Phrygian,¹²³⁸ and earlier writers had counted this as the easternmost town in Phrygia (*Xen. Anab.* 1.2.19). In the mid-second century, a citizen from there claims that he came from Iconium of Phrygia.¹²³⁹ A church council convened in “Iconium of Phrygia” less than a century

1228. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 160.

1229. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 355. Many in the Greco-Roman world believed in the antiquity of Phrygia (cf. Rives, “Phrygian Tales”).

1230. Like Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.25.95 and others.

1231. Bean and Mitchell, “Cilicia,” 330; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:155 (cf. also map 6, 1:99); Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 168–69.

1232. Finegan, *Apostles*, 83, notes that Iconium was in Lycaonia geographically but, more broadly, in Galatia Phrygia administratively; also Dmitriev, “Observations.”

1233. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 528, rightly: Luke “reflects the changing boundaries of Phrygia and Lycaonia in the first century, for which there is little historical control at present.”

1234. Ramsay, *Discovery*, 65; Finegan, *Apostles*, 92; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 178, 228; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:155. Ramsay argues that it was on the Phrygian side only during 37–72 (see fully Ramsay, *Discovery*, 39–114; followed by Longenecker, *Acts*, 229); for the Phrygian language here, see *Discovery*, 42, 71, 76. A language in Pisidia is attested (at least in names) as late as the third century (Davies, “Anatolian Languages”).

1235. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 228–30. This is confirmed also “by the geographical distribution of Neo-Phrygian texts” (110).

1236. Strabo could be detailed in his assessments, such as of the boundary between Lycaonia and Cappadocia (12.6.1).

1237. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 107; Pliny the Elder treats Lycaonia shortly after treating Pisidia and Antioch (*N.H.* 5.24.94–5.25.95).

1238. E.g., C. Williams, *Acts*, 168. It “was the furthestmost city of Phrygia on its south-eastern, Lycaonian border” (Calder, “Introduction, 1,” xi). It is generally considered “the last city of Phrygia” (Jones and Mitchell, “Lycaonia”).

1239. Ramsay, *Discovery*, 55; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 160, citing one Hierax in the time of Justin Martyr (in the *Martyrdom of Holy Martyrs*, or *Martyrdom of Justin*, ch. 3, probably fairly reliable on the sort of matter in question). See Calder, “Introduction, 1,” xi.

later.¹²⁴⁰ (On Phrygia, see comment on Acts 14:1–7.) It remained part of Galatia after the distinct eparchy of Lycaonia was formed, before 150 C.E.; it was the second city (Antioch was the first) when Pisidia became a new province in 295 C.E.¹²⁴¹ Cicero had classed Iconium as Lycaonian (*Fam.* 15.4.2) because of geographic proximity, but Iconium was politically the administrative center of Isaurian territory, not Lycaonian.¹²⁴²

Politically, however, it had long been counted even more plainly as part of the province of Galatia.¹²⁴³ In the early first century B.C.E., it became part of “the old Kingdom of Galatia (and thus formed part of what is sometimes known as ‘South Galatia’ . . .).”¹²⁴⁴ Amyntas, the Galatian king, once ruled this area (Strabo 12.6.1); when he died in 25 B.C.E., the Romans made it part of their province of Galatia. For the Phrygian and Lycaonian regions as part of the province of Galatia, see the introduction, below, to Acts 14:1–7.

(6) *Filled with Joy and the Spirit* (13:52)

Whereas the opponents of God's servants were “filled up” (a functional synonym) with jealousy in 13:45, the new believers here are “filled” with joy. “Filling” with joy is not an uncommon expression,¹²⁴⁵ but the contrast in the context may be deliberate. Gentiles had rejoiced at God's welcome in Acts 13:48; the new believers now continued in the joy of their confidence in God (13:52). Christian faith probably needed to be joyful to compete in ancient society; Greek religion was often joyful and celebratory.¹²⁴⁶ The goal of most ancient philosophy was happiness (εὐδαιμονία),¹²⁴⁷ a term absent in biblical Greek perhaps because the goal of most biblical ethics was oriented toward God's pleasure rather than that of mortals.¹²⁴⁸ For what it is worth,¹²⁴⁹ although Stoics distrusted emotions,¹²⁵⁰ Greek philosophy, including Stoics, valued joy,¹²⁵¹ among philosophers, wisdom and virtue, rather than bodily pleasure, yielded

1240. Ramsay, *Discovery*, 56 (citing Cyprian *Ep.* 71).

1241. Ramsay, *Discovery*, 56, citing also Basil in 372 C.E.

1242. *Ibid.*, 39–40, 55. Ramsay is certain that Luke was right about Iconium being outside Lycaonia (42); Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:155, concurs.

1243. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 107; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 6, 1:99 (for the period between Augustus and Hadrian); Belke, “Lycaonia,” 911.

1244. Barrett, *Acts*, 661.

1245. Cf., e.g., 2 Macc 3:30; 3 Macc 4:16; *Let. Aris.* 294; Philo *Alleg. Interp.* 3.81; *Abr.* 108; *Mos.* 1.177, 333 (cf. *Spec. Laws* 2.48); *Jos. Ant.* 15.421; *War* 3.28; *Symm. Ep.* 1.50.2 (cf. 1.22); *John* 3:29; 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; *Rom* 15:13; 2 *Cor* 7:4; *Phil* 2:2; 2 *Tim* 1:4; 1 *John* 1:4; 2 *John* 12; *Diogn.* 10.3.

1246. For joy in Greek and Roman religion, see Miccoli, “*Spirito festivo*” (though, for the Romans, cultic celebration might characterize especially festivals).

1247. E.g., *Mus. Ruf.* 7, p. 58.13–15; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5b.5, pp. 20–21.15–16; 2.7.6d, pp. 38.34–41.3; 2.7.6e, pp. 40–41.11–13; cf. Lutz, “*Musonius*,” 28; Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 74; Hossenfelder, “*Happiness*.” Cf. pleasure for Epicureans, *Diog. Laert.* 10.131; 10.144.17.

1248. Though cf. more hellenized Jewish and Christian approaches in, e.g., *Diogn.* 10.5; the term and its cognates appear 151 times in Josephus (e.g., *Ant.* 1.14, 20, 41, 44, 46, 69, 98, 104, 113, 142–43) and 189 times in Philo (e.g., *Alleg. Interp.* 1.4; 2.10, 82, 101–2; 3.52, 83, 205, 209, 218–19, 245).

1249. Wojciechowski, “*Vocabulary*,” doubts that moral philosophy shaped much NT language. I find some overlap in Pauline literature (e.g., Keener, “*Spirit Perspectives*”; idem, *Corinthians*, 44–47, 57; see esp. Malherbe, *Philosophers*), most prominently in the Pastorals, but much less often in Luke (apart from texts such as Acts 24:25; 26:25, where Paul addresses educated Gentiles).

1250. E.g., Knuttila and Sihvola, “*Emotions*,” 13, 15; cf. Plato (17); Aristotle was more positive (16); most non-Stoics regarded the Stoic position as unworkable (17). Plotinus urged suppressing emotions insofar as possible (Emilsson, “*Plotinus*,” 359). Apparently most Stoics viewed humans as entirely rational (Brennan, “*Theory*,” 23), but Posidonius may have broken with this approach (Cooper, “*Posidonius*,” 71, 99), assuming, as is likely, Galen correctly understood him (Sorabji, “*Chrysippus*”); some think Galen misunderstood Chrysippus (Gill, “*Did Galen Understand?*,” e.g., 126–27). Marcus Aurelius appreciated positive, “sane” emotions (Engberg-Pedersen, “*Marcus*,” 334–35).

1251. E.g., *Mus. Ruf.* 17, p. 108.7; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5k, pp. 34–35.1; 2.7.11e, pp. 68–69.12–16; *Iamb.* *V.P.* 31.196; cf. Vorster, “*Blessedness*,” 38–51. Stoics approved of joy as a good emotion (Engberg-Pedersen,

happiness.¹²⁵² Some moralists condemned frivolous laughter and jesting, emphasizing true joy instead (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.99).¹²⁵³

Jewish people often connected joy with keeping God's commandments;¹²⁵⁴ living according to wisdom (Wis 8:16); prayer (Tob 13:1); worship;¹²⁵⁵ and right living (*Let. Aris.* 261).¹²⁵⁶ Joy could be associated with public festivals (Neh 8:10–12; Ps 42:4).¹²⁵⁷ The association of joy with worship¹²⁵⁸ suggests worship as a possible component of the joy here. But Paul (whose life and, presumably, teaching Luke highly respects) often associates the Spirit with joy (e.g., Rom 14:17; 15:13),¹²⁵⁹ including in conversion (1 Thess 1:6) and as a normal feature of Christian living (Gal 5:22). Joy follows conversions in Luke-Acts (e.g., Acts 8:39), especially in Luke 15:5–7, 9–10, 23–24, 32.¹²⁶⁰ See comment on Acts 13:48. Perhaps most relevant here (although a deliberate connection is uncertain) is that Jesus “rejoiced” (a synonym albeit not a cognate) in the Spirit in Luke 10:21 over the Father revealing his truth to infants rather than the wise; here outsiders, who receive the message rejected by the insiders, are filled with joy and the Spirit.

4. Ministry in Iconium and Lystra (14:1–23)

In Acts 14:1–25, the two missionaries continue to face conflicts with hostile fellow Jews and others as they carry the gospel to other inland towns of southern Asia Minor. Apostolic signs do not dissipate opposition but rather reinforce the lines dividing supporters from opponents, neither of whom can ignore such a powerfully attested message. Signs continue to draw attention to the gospel and confirm for Luke's audience the veracity of the message about Jesus.

¹²⁵²“Vices,” 612; idem, *Paul and Stoics*, 73). It was not, however, a moral “virtue” (Arius Did. 2.7.5b, pp. 10–11.19; 2.7.5c, pp. 28–29.7; 2.7.5g, pp. 32–33.4), though Paul lists it with virtues that belong to the Spirit's fruit (Gal 5:22–23). Stoics appreciated a “calm pleasure” concerning what was good (Brennan, “Theory,” 57).

¹²⁵³Cic. *Parad.* 16–19; *Leg.* 1.23.60; *Tusc.* 5.7.19–20; Mus. Ruf. 7, p. 58.13; 17, p. 108.7; Iambl. *V.P.* 31.196; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 23; 27.3–4; 59.10; *Benef.* 7.2.3; *Dial.* 7.16.1–3; Epict. *Diatr.* 4.7.9; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 25.1; Arius Did. 2.7.6e, pp. 40–41.13–15; 2.7.11g, pp. 70.33–73.4; Lucian *Dem.* 19–20; also Meeks, *Moral World*, 46–47; Lutz, “Musionius,” 28; Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 73. Self-knowledge also yielded full joy (Cic. *Tusc.* 5.25.70).

¹²⁵⁴Cf. also warnings against excessive laughter or frivolity, e.g., Arist. *N.E.* 4.8.1–12, 1127b–1128b (esp. 4.8.3, 1128a); Epict. *Encheir.* 33.15; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 7.119; 32.99–100; 33.10; frg. 7 (Stob. *Flor.* 4, 23.60 [Hense, 588]; 74.60 [Meineke]); Aul. Gel. 4.20.4–6 (cf. 4.20.11); Iambl. *V.P.* 2.10; 17.71; 30.171; Porph. *Marc.* 19.321–22; Diog. Laert. 8.1.20; Pelikan, *Acts*, 148–49 (citing Arist. *N.E.* 2.7.11–13, 1108a; Clem. Alex. *Instr.* 2.8); *m. 'Ab.* 3:13/14; *t. Ber.* 3:21; *b. Ber.* 30b; perhaps 4Q266 18 IV, 12–13; 4Q184 1 2; *Gen. Rab.* 22:6; *Exod. Rab.* 30:21; *Ecl. Rab.* 2:2, §1 (but the rabbis disapproved of only inappropriate laughter; Reines, “Laughter”). For the approval of rhetorical humor so long as dignity is maintained, see, e.g., Cic. *Brut.* 43.158; *Or. Brut.* 26.88–90; Quint. *Inst.* 4.3.30–31; Plut. *Table* 2.1.4, *Mor.* 631C.

¹²⁵⁵Ps 19:8; Jos. Ag. *Ap.* 2.189; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 27:2; *b. Yoma* 4b; *y. Pesah.* 10:1; *Lev. Rab.* 16:4 (purportedly from Ben Azzai); *Pesiq. Rab.* 21:2/3; 51:4; Urbach, *Sages*, 1:390–92; Bonsirven, *Judaism*, 95; esp. the Tannaitic sources in Urbach, *Sages*, 1:390; most fully, Anderson, “Joy.” In *Song Rab.* 4:11, §1, public teaching of Torah should generate as much joy as wedding guests experience from beholding a bride (cf. John 3:29).

¹²⁵⁶Pss 32:11; 33:1, 3; 43:4; 68:3–4; 71:23; 81:1; 90:14; 92:4; 95:1; 98:4; 132:9, 16; *Jub.* 36:6; *Jos. Asen.* 3:4; *m. Pesah.* 10:6.

¹²⁵⁷The Spirit appears with joy in *y. Sukkah* 5, cited in Montefiore and Loewe, *Anthology*, 203; cf. *Tg. Onq.* on Gen 45:27–28.

¹²⁵⁸Cf. also, e.g., *m. Pesah.* 10:6; Halpern-Amaru, “Joy,” on *Jubilees*.

¹²⁵⁹E.g., Pss 2:11; 5:11; 20:5; 27:6; 31:7; 32:11; 33:1, 3; 35:9; 42:4; 47:1; 63:7; 67:4; 71:23; 81:1; 84:2; 90:14; 92:4; 95:1; 98:4; 132:9, 16. Joy could also lead to praise (Tob 8:16; 13:1; Jas 5:13; Luke 1:47).

¹²⁶⁰Haya-Prats, *Believers*, 159–60, views the Spirit as the source of joy in Acts 13:52. For joy in the NT, see further Elliott, *Feelings*, 167–81; in Paul, Kampling, “Freude”; Morrice, “Joy.” Cf., in later rabbis, *y. Sukkah* 22b; *Midr. Ps.* 24:3 (in Le Cornu, *Acts*, 760). Contrast the emotionless view of God in the Platonic tradition (Max. Tyre 9.2).

¹²⁶¹For Spirit-empowered joy in Luke-Acts, see Martín-Moreno, “Alegría”; along with praise, Cullen, “Euphoria.”

Although, geographically, 14:1 continues the location of 13:51, the verse that intervenes between them comments on the believers back in Antioch. Thus it is justifiable to start a new section here, though ancient writers were probably more concerned with narrative transitions than with our smooth modern outlines. With the admission that the section break used here is somewhat arbitrary and invites us to look back to previous comments, I introduce here some matters relevant for 14:1–23.

a. Introduction

The connections between Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra in Paul's ministry in Acts (cf. also 14:21; 16:2) may be independently attested in 2 Tim 3:11 (though it omits explicit mention of Derbe),¹²⁶¹ and there is little reason to doubt that Paul and his colleagues did travel to these four towns.¹²⁶² In view of Paul's ministry in prominent locations such as Corinth, who would invent ministry in such out-of-the-way towns?¹²⁶³

I. PHRYGIA

For Iconium's ambivalent character as a Phrygian or Lycaonian town, as well as its location in Roman Galatia and along the Via Sebaste, see comment on Acts 13:51.

Phrygia was not a province per se (it was split between Asia and Galatia),¹²⁶⁴ but it possessed a cohesive Phrygian identity, with a language continuing into the third century C.E. (cf. the similar use of Lycaonian in Acts 14:11) and a distinctive religion (for the religion, see also comment on Acts 14:11–12).¹²⁶⁵ Sabazios was a prominent traditional deity of Phrygia.¹²⁶⁶ Phrygians were particularly known for the worship of Agdistis (the mother goddess called Cybele elsewhere in Anatolia), "her youthful consort Attis and other Anatolian deities associated with righteousness, vengeance and justice"; Phrygians were also morally strict (as we might expect from reading Galatians).¹²⁶⁷ Outsiders associated them with the worship of the earth "mother" or "mother of the gods."¹²⁶⁸ The center of the Phrygian cult was farther north, in Pessinus.¹²⁶⁹ Cybele worship was considered wild and barbarous.¹²⁷⁰ See further comment on Cybele at Acts 14:15.

Greeks traditionally considered the Phrygians barbarians, but of the most ancient, hence most honorable, sort (Men. Rhet. 1.2, 354.2).¹²⁷¹ Paul evangelized in Phrygia, but some cities received his ministry only by means of the agents whom he had trained

1261. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 184; cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 189; Pervo, *Acts*, 320–21.

1262. See Lüdemann, *Christianity*, 165 (who calls it "a historical fact").

1263. The exception might be if Luke's primary audience was located there—which is extremely unlikely.

1264. Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.41.145 noted its boundaries with Galatia on the north (cf. here also 5.42.146) and Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Mygdonia on the south. Pliny clearly knows the overlap, since Galatia borders Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia on the south (5.42.147).

1265. For religion in Phrygia, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:187–91; for a summary of 1990s archaeological publications on Phrygia, see idem, "Archaeology," 178–83. For paganism in Anatolia in the first three centuries C.E., see idem, *Anatolia*, 2:11–31.

1266. See idem Parker, "Sabazius."

1267. Harrill, "Asia Minor," 134; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:189, 191. On the mother goddess there, cf. also Martin, *Colossians*, 4.

1268. E.g., Diog. Laert. 6.1.1; Lucret. *Nat.* 2.611; cf. a later sect in Hippol. *Ref.* 5.4.

1269. Apul. *Metam.* 11.4–5. Although the cult had spread around the Roman world, the site at Pessinus was in decline by the beginning of the first century (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:20, 22).

1270. Grant, *Religions*, xxxvii (though Apul. *Metam.* 11.4–5 conflates the two figures).

1271. The most ancient cities could be praised as most honorable (Men. Rhet. 1.2, 355.2–11). For Iconium's claim that it was the most ancient city, see Ramsay, *Pictures*, 355. Some ancients placed the site of Heracles's son's burial in Phrygia (Philost. *Hrk.* 8.14); for the alleged prediluvian history of the region, see comment on Acts 14:11–12. More recent respectable figures could also be claimed for Phrygia (Aesop in Max. Tyre 15.5; 32.1), though some ancients (including classical Athenians, who held a number of Phrygian slaves) ridiculed Phrygians as effeminate (Menander *Aspis* 242) and/or cowardly (Libanius *Invect.* 2.1; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 4.215–17; 12.99–100).

(cf. Acts 19:9–10; Col 1:2; 2:1; 4:16).¹²⁷² Phrygia and Galatia lay to the northwest of Paul's home province of Cilicia but were separated from it by the difficult passage across the Taurus mountains (Hdn. 3.1.4; 3.2.6), though it could be crossed if no human obstacles were added to the natural ones (3.3.8).¹²⁷³

Widely spread Neo-Phrygian inscriptions help define the part of the province of Galatia that would view itself as (or at least speak) Phrygian.¹²⁷⁴ William Calder argues that the boundary ran west from Iconium, “between the Sultan Dagh and the Pisidian mountains, to Apollonia”; he further notes that “the inscriptions assign Neapolis, Antioch, and Apollonia to Phrygia.”¹²⁷⁵ More Neo-Phrygian texts and Greek texts with Neo-Phrygian peculiarities have helped define the extent of ancient Phrygia.¹²⁷⁶ There was a significant Jewish population in Phrygia.¹²⁷⁷

II. THE PROVINCE OF GALATIA

The Phrygian region that includes many towns Paul visited is probably the area referred to in Paul's letter to the Galatians. The title “Galatia” sometimes applied to a region settled by Galatians—that is, Celtic tribes (what NT scholars typically call “North Galatia”)—but was also the title of a Roman province, which included “much of eastern Phrygia, Lycaonia, Isauria, Pisidia, and Pamphylia.”¹²⁷⁸ People in the middle of the first century C.E. called the entire province, and not merely its northern, Celtic region, “Galatia.”¹²⁷⁹ It is likelier that Paul's letter applies the title to residents of the province that held this explicit title.¹²⁸⁰ Those who doubt that Paul addresses the Phrygian churches founded in Acts favor the North Galatian hypothesis,¹²⁸¹ which some of its supporters claim as a majority view;¹²⁸² those who believe that Paul addresses the churches founded in Acts favor the South Galatian hypothesis,¹²⁸³ which some of its proponents likewise claim as a majority view.¹²⁸⁴ (These South Galatian

1272. For Laodicea as part of Phrygia, see Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.25.539; *MAMA* 1:xii.

1273. Some (Arrington, *Acts*, 147, comparing 2 Cor 11:26) also emphasize the perils of robbers in the mountains.

1274. For Neo-Phrygian inscriptions, see, e.g., *MAMA* 7:xxvii–xxix.

1275. Calder in *MAMA* 1:xi–xii. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 209, notes that Pisidian Antioch was later southern Galatia's “metropolis,” and he assigns (*idem*, *Cities of Paul*, 264, 298) even Antioch to South Galatia, as well as (343, 350) Iconium.

1276. Hemer, “Phrygia,” 126.

1277. Jos. *Ant.* 12.147; Cic. *Flacc.* 28.66–69 (quoted in Whittaker, *Jews and Christians*, 117–18); Stern, “Diaspora,” 149–50; Kraabel, “Judaism in Asia Minor,” 61ff. (for syncretism, see, e.g., 81–86, 142, 146); Bruce, “Lycus Valley”; cf. Meyers and Kraabel, “Remains,” 191; see also discussion below, on South Galatia.

1278. Calder and Mitchell, “Galatia.” Pamphylia was no longer part of Galatia when Paul visited but possibly again a part when he wrote Galatians (on its later date; see Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 163–64). Lycaonia (Belke, “Lycaonia,” 911) and Lystra (*idem*, “Lystra,” 47) were both in the province of Galatia.

1279. Mitchell, “Galatia,” 871 (citing Eutropius *Breviarium historiae romanae* 7.10; *ILS* 9499; *IGRR* 3.263).

1280. With Calder and Mitchell, “Galatia,” and other sources.

1281. E.g., Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 18–19; Lake, “Route,” 235 (attributing Ramsay's view to a conjectural emendation); Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 42–43; Reicke, *Era*, 229; Cousar, *Galatians*, 4 (very tentatively). (Strobel, “Region,” 649–50, might support the North Galatian hypothesis, but in *idem*, “Galatia,” 651, he certainly recognizes Phrygia and Lycaonia as parts of the province.) It was favored by patristic commentators (Wallace and Williams, *Acts*, 74), presumably on the basis of common usage.

1282. Betz, *Galatia*, 4; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 154.

1283. E.g., with varying measures of certainty, Ramsay, *Galatians*, *passim* (e.g., 81, 126, 180, 209, 318); *idem*, *Galatia*; Knox, *Jerusalem*, 236–39; Breytenbach, *Provinz*, esp. 99–126; Scott, *Nations*, esp. 181–215; Riesner, *Early Period*, 286–91; also Blaiklock, *Archaeology*, 90–91; *idem*, *Acts*, 122; Arrington, *Acts*, 165; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 278–307; Hansen, “Galatia”; *idem*, “Galatians,” 324–26; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 23–31; Tenney, *Galatians*, 46–51; Guthrie, *Introduction*, 468–72; Barnett, *Birth*, 206–10; Bligh, *Galatians*, 3–6; Wainwright, “Silas”; Yamauchi, *Cities*, 18; Carson, Moo, and Morris, *Introduction*, 290–93; Finegan, *Apostles*, 83; McRay, *Archaeology*, 236; Rapa, “Galatians,” 550–52.

1284. Hanson, *Acts*, 19–20; Tenney, *Galatians*, 51.

proponents are probably correct about the majority view today, even though, as in other matters, scholars tend to read and count especially those on their own side.)¹²⁸⁵

This question may prove important for our understanding of the character of Luke's historiography. This is because one objection raised to the fit between Paul's letters and Acts is that Paul knows only North Galatians (the supposed meaning of 1 Cor 16:1; Gal 1:2; 3:1; cf. 2 Tim 4:10) whereas Luke speaks only of Paul's travels in South Galatia.¹²⁸⁶ Since Luke and the undisputed Pauline epistles mutually attest each other on most other cities and regions where Paul ministered (either by the letter's audience or by random comments about churches), the lack of complementarity of the evidence at this point seems odd—and ultimately suspicious.¹²⁸⁷

It is unlikely that Paul would have converted the Galatians on a later journey (though I favor a post-Acts 15 dating for Galatians), because they know Barnabas (Gal 2:1, 9, 13; only twice elsewhere in Paul's corpus);¹²⁸⁸ likewise, Luke allows little room for such a journey. Luke elsewhere condensed long journeys into short comments, but he might at least report the fact of a journey so far out of the way (cf. the reports of places they could not journey in Acts 16:6–7). Granted, the journey to North Galatia can fit plausibly into the second journey, but for this, too, we lack clear evidence beyond Paul's claim that his audience consisted of "Galatians" (see comment on Acts 15:36–41; 16:6–7), which, as noted here, is not at all sufficiently clear evidence.

It is intrinsically more likely that Galatians tells us about churches that Acts mentions than that Luke was ignorant of some churches founded by Paul,¹²⁸⁹ churches nevertheless known to the Corinthians (1 Cor 16:1) and even well enough known by Paul's competitors that they followed him there to improve on his work (Gal 1:7; 3:1; 4:17; 5:10–12; 6:12–13). Paul visited the Galatians at least twice (Gal 4:13), which comports well with a second visit in Acts 14:21–25 or 16:1–6.¹²⁹⁰

A large number of scholars today incline instead to the South Galatian theory concerning Paul's letter to the Galatians, and not only for this reason.¹²⁹¹ As Stephen Mitchell,

1285. It is a frequent practice among some of the more radical scholars to omit from their count all scholars more conservative than themselves, regarding their books as unworthy of attention, apparently because these radical scholars do not count as true scholars exegetes who have differences with their critical presuppositions. (Ironically, they sometimes exclude conservative opinions by caricaturing all conservatives as too closed-minded to consider diverse views; the practice of the extreme left thus mirrors that of the extreme right.) Extreme conservatives likewise tend to read only conservative scholars and their critiques of more liberal scholars. Many other scholars do read a wider range of perspectives, but admittedly it is rarely possible for an individual to master all the literature on a subject.

1286. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 42–43; cf. Meeks and Fitzgerald, *Writings*, 10 (though some with a higher view of Luke's historical accuracy nevertheless prefer the North Galatian hypothesis; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 18–19; Reicke, *Era*, 229). Some other titles in 1 Pet 1:1 seem associated with more northern locations in Asia Minor, which could imply that North Galatia may have begun to be evangelized before 1 Peter; but if Paul did not directly evangelize these other regions (cf. Acts 16:7; 19:10), need he have evangelized North Galatia either? Nor was Cappadocia far north.

1287. With, e.g., Rackham, *Acts*, 195–98.

1288. One could appeal to 1 Cor 9:6 to argue that Barnabas continued traveling with Paul in a later period than Acts reports; but 2 Cor 1:19 names only Silas and Timothy, and it is quite difficult to imagine that Luke invented the uncomplimentary rift described in Acts 15:37–39. Paul's account of Barnabas's involvement is considerably fuller in Galatians than in 1 Corinthians.

1289. Riesner, *Early Period*, 287; cf. Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 26–28.

1290. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 405.

1291. E.g., Hanson, *Acts*, 19–20: "Most scholars therefore incline to the view that Paul in Galatians was addressing the four churches of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe." The view has been argued at great length (and convincingly) by Hemer, *Acts in History*, 278–307; cf. also Hansen, "Galatia"; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 23–31. For examples of supporters, see, e.g., Barnett, *Birth*, 206–10 (though also supporting the early date for Galatians, which a South Galatian view allows but does not require); Blich, *Galatians*, 3–6; Wainwright,

a leading expert on central Anatolia, has argued, Ramsay's work "should long ago have put the matter beyond dispute" in favor of *South Galatia*.¹²⁹² In another work he puts the matter more bluntly: "There is virtually nothing to be said for the north Galatian theory. There is no evidence in Acts or in any non-testamentary source that Paul ever evangelized the region of Ancyra and Pessinus, in person, by letter, or by any other means."¹²⁹³

Ancient texts treat the entire region as Galatian.¹²⁹⁴ "Galatian" had a wide range of meaning in Asia Minor because of the Galatians' widespread influence, a range that certainly had to include the Roman province of Galatia. The "Gauls," or "Galatians" (Celts), who migrated to Asia took possession of the part of Phrygia adjoining Cappadocia and the Paphlagonians (Strabo 4.1.13).¹²⁹⁵ They were considered lawless but were subdued by Roman conquest to the benefit (in Roman opinion) of their neighbors (Polyb. 3.3.5).¹²⁹⁶ Reputed Gallic practices included ritual human sacrifice (following old Druid-like customs)¹²⁹⁷ and the self-castration of the eunuch priests of Cybele (the Galli).¹²⁹⁸ But to the extent that names indicate ethnic self-identification, pure Celts became rare whereas diverse peoples throughout the Roman province of Galatia adopted the title.¹²⁹⁹

Galatians occupied Greater Phrygia (the region Midas ruled, in contrast to the Lesser Phrygia near Troy; Strabo 12.8.1).¹³⁰⁰ Greater Phrygia thus included both what was commonly known as Galatia and a smaller Phrygia as well as Lycaonia and Lydia (Strabo 2.5.31). The boundaries in this region became so confused that it was difficult to decide the exact contours of Phrygia (12.8.2; cf. 12.4.4); many Galatians settled in Phrygia (12.1.1).¹³⁰¹ Part of Greater Phrygia lay directly south of Galatia proper, but some of this region was held by Amyntas, king of (northern) Galatia, in the first century B.C.E. (12.5.4).

"Silas"; Finegan, *Apostles*, 83; McRay, *Archaeology*, 236; Hansen, *Galatians*, 16–17. Cf. Breytenbach, "Reasons," 165, who envisions the Galatian conflict as occurring near the Via Sebaste, which would fit this position.

1292. Mitchell, "Galatia," 871, noting that there is no evidence that Paul evangelized North Galatia. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 126, contended that North Galatian theorists made numerous blunders about Asia Minor's history.

1293. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:3. Mitchell suggests (*ibid.*) Peter as a likelier candidate for such evangelization, on the basis of 1 Pet 1:1, but this suggestion seems more questionable. That Peter was culturally equipped to initiate significant evangelistic inroads in that largely Gentile region appears unlikely, though he was undoubtedly respected by the churches there.

1294. Noted by, e.g., Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 23–24.

1295. On the Gauls, see further Caesar *Gall. W.* 1.1; Pliny *E. N.H.* 3.4.31–37; 1 Macc 8:2; Lafond, "Gallia"; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 1–17; for trade connections, Charlesworth, *Trade Routes*, 179–205; Goudineau, "Marseilles"; Tchernia, "Wine." On Gauls in Asia, see Polyb. 5.11.1–7; Callim. *Hymns* 4 (to Delos), lines 173, 184; Livy 38.17.2 (in Phrygia); Sen. *Y. Dial.* 12.7.2; 2 Macc 8:20; *Sib. Or.* 5.340; cf. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 235–46 (arguing that they were genuine Celts, ancestors of the Welsh); Ramsay, *Galatians*, 25, 45ff. On Gauls being light-skinned, tall, and blond, see, e.g., Diod. Sic. 5.28.1; 38.17.3; Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.203. For a thorough history of the Celts in Asia Minor, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:11–58 (including [19] their resettlement in North Galatia); cf. also Strobel, "Region," 649.

1296. On Gauls being less civilized than Asians, Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.1.9.27 (with the Asian variety being most degenerate, Livy 38.17.13); as the fiercest warriors in Asia, see Livy 38.17.2, 4; as barbarous and haters of Rome (including in Asia), see 38.47.9; as crude and stupid, Ant. Diog. *Thule* 109b. Noting the rhetorical level of Paul's letter to the Galatians, Betz, *Galatia*, 2, notes the absence of specifically Celtic elements.

1297. Cic. *Resp.* 3.9.15; Caesar *Gall. W.* 6.16. Archaeological finds have increased the credibility of ancient reports about Celtic human sacrifices (Euskirchen, "Celts: Religion," 98), including in pre-Roman North Galatia (a possibility noted in Dandoy, Selinsky, and Voigt, "Celtic Sacrifice").

1298. On Galli, see comment at Acts 8:27.

1299. Hansen, "Galatia," 390.

1300. Midas's palace was supposed to have been at Gordium in Phrygia (Quint. Curt. 3.1.11). The name "Midas," though, is probably Old Anatolian rather than Phrygian, and Assyrian material dates the historical Midas's reign to 718–709 B.C.E. ("Midas: Historical"; for Greco-Roman literary treatment of Midas, see Scherf, "Midas").

1301. The text also indicates the proximity of the Lycaonians and Cilicians to the boundaries of Cappadocia.

When Amyntas died in 25 B.C.E., Rome made his territory, including Lycaonia, into the province of Galatia, which remained until 295/297 C.E.¹³⁰² The Roman province called Galatia thus “comprised much of eastern Phrygia, Lycaonia . . . , Pisidia . . . and northern Pamphylia” (though the boundaries often shifted, in this period especially regarding southern Pisidia).¹³⁰³ Galatia was the Roman province, in other words, governing Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and even Pisidian Antioch, cities where Paul preached in Acts.¹³⁰⁴

They were “ethnically Phrygian and politically Galatian”¹³⁰⁵ and in Lycaonia more specifically ethnically Lycaonian and politically Galatian.¹³⁰⁶ It is likely to these, rather than to the more remote northern towns that would have taken Paul far out of his way, that Paul refers. (Indeed, few towns larger than villages or camps of nomads lay between Iconium and Ancyra, far to the north, had they traveled that route on the occasion depicted here.)¹³⁰⁷ Paul's letters suggest urban churches in strategic cities, often with some members who were Roman citizens or otherwise held high status; why would he have journeyed to North Galatia?¹³⁰⁸

The title in Paul's letters most naturally applies to the province. We should expect Paul to use the *provincial* title “Galatia” (1 Cor 16:1; Gal 1:2; cf. 2 Tim 4:10), since he regularly employs provincial titles: Achaia (Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 1:1; 9:2; 11:10; 1 Thess 1:7–8); Asia (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Cor 1:8; cf. 2 Tim 1:15); Macedonia (Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:5; 2 Cor 1:16; 2:13; 7:5; 8:1; 9:2, 4; 11:9; Phil 4:15; 1 Thess 1:7–8; 4:10; cf. 1 Tim 1:3); and Syria-Cilicia (Gal 1:21).¹³⁰⁹ If this is true for the other titles in 1 Cor 16 (16:5, 15, 19), it should be assumed when he employs “Galatia” in 16:1.¹³¹⁰ Further, Paul's Judaizing opponents in Galatians make little sense in North Galatia; why would they follow Paul to “the remote interior of Anatolia” when South Galatia “was both accessible and settled by Jews”?¹³¹¹ Moreover, Josephus explicitly identifies Gomer's descendants, including Paphlagonians

1302. E.g., Calder in *MAMA* 1:xii; C. Williams, *Acts*, 175; Jones and Mitchell, “Lycaonia”; Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 122.

1303. Harrill, “Asia Minor,” 134. On the frequent shifting of boundaries in Galatia (where they were originally too arbitrarily drawn, without regard for ethnic differences), see Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 121. Several years past Paul's visit, an inscription from Sagalassus (on which site see also Mitchell, “Archaeology,” 176) still attests Galatia's boundary south of both Antioch and Iconium (Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 163n2, citing *SEG* 19.765). Even Pisidia belonged to this region in the early part of the period (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:38, 64).

1304. E.g., Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:4, 155; C. Williams, *Acts*, 175; Hanson, *Acts*, 19–20; Dunn, *Acts*, 186 (“more likely than not”). Experts on each of these areas agree that they lay in Galatia in this period (e.g., Belke, “Iconium,” 706; Strobel, “Galatia,” 651; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:155; cf. map 6, 1:99, along with 2:155; Dmitriev, “Observations”).

1305. Hansen, “Galatia,” 378; cf. C. Williams, *Acts*, 176.

1306. E.g., Dmitriev, “Observations.”

1307. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:96. The four cities on that route all were founded toward the end of the first century or in the early second (1:96–97).

1308. Of course, “urban” is a term relative to the setting with which it is compared. Most villages and cities in Phrygia were barely distinguishable (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:181).

1309. Most of the ethnic designations Paul employs are much broader, such as “Greeks,” almost denoting “Gentiles,” perhaps from the Greek-speaking East (Rom 1:14, 16; 2:9–10; 3:9; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:22, 24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal 2:3; 3:28; Col 3:11); he never uses “Roman.” Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 162 (followed by Bruce, *Acts*¹, 279), allow for this to be Lycaonia Galatica (separated from the rest of Lycaonia in 41 C.E.; they view it at least as part of the additional tetrarchy in Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.25; Ptolemy *Geog.* 5.4). Romans tended to emphasize cities more than provinces (Judge, *Pattern*, 20–21), but Paul's regional titles are especially provincial.

1310. Riesner, *Early Period*, 289. The provincial title “Galatia” was common (Riesner [287] cites as examples *ILS* 9499.6–7; *CIG* 1.3991; Ptolemy *Geog.* 5.14; Tac. *Hist.* 2.9; *Ann.* 13.35; 1 Pet 1:1).

1311. Riesner, *Early Period*, 286; cf. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 189ff.; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 24–25; for Jews in Phrygia but rarer elsewhere in Galatia, see Mitchell, “Galatia,” 2:33, 35; Stern, “Diaspora,” 148–50. Betz, *Galatia*, 4–5, mentions some Jewish inscriptions in Anatolia's interior, but the evidence is considerably less than for Phrygia. For some Jewish inscriptions in Gaul proper (most of uncertain date and some as late as

and Phrygians, with “Galatians” (*Ant.* 1.123, 126).¹³¹² Josephus’s view reveals an educated Hellenistic Jewish perspective that is relevant for understanding how both Paul and his opponents would have perceived the area. Finally, subsequent Christianity flourished quickly in Phrygia but progressed in North Galatia only slowly till the third or fourth century.¹³¹³

One objection to the South Galatian theory is the argument that people there would have preferred to be called Phrygians or some other title, bearing no long-term ethnic loyalty to their Roman provincial label as Galatia. Thus on this view Paul might describe them as such in third-person references but not in the vocative as in Gal 3:1.¹³¹⁴ In 3:1, however, Paul is hardly attending to their sensitivities; the verse also calls them “foolish” and suggests that they have been dangerously misled.¹³¹⁵ The early Celts of Galatia had a reputation for barbarism,¹³¹⁶ and so an insult here need not be ruled out.¹³¹⁷

Granted, Lycaonians and Pisidians were nowhere else addressed as “Galatians” (Gal 3:1); “but,” as Riesner puts it, “how else could the apostle have addressed Lycaonians, Phrygians, Pisidians, Greek speakers, and Roman colonists together other than with reference to their common province?”¹³¹⁸ Their ethnic self-identities were too disparate for another overarching designation. Ethnic Galatians might be a minority in the southern part of political Galatia, but ethnicity studies demonstrate that people often identify with multiple ethnic groups.¹³¹⁹ An inscription from this period (57 C.E.) in Apollonia of Phrygia Galatica describes his land as “land of the Galatians.”¹³²⁰ Paul’s two references to them as such in his epistle “to the Galatians” can readily point to South Galatia. The first of these two references (Gal 1:2) must surely refer to the province, given Paul’s use of provincial titles elsewhere (cf., e.g., Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:1, 15; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 1:7–8). Luke himself links Phrygia and Galatia closely in Acts 16:6 and 18:23 (see comment there, esp. extended comment at Acts 16:6–8). Though not as compelling as evidence, it is nevertheless interesting that the one speech in Acts emphasizing justification by faith in Jesus instead of by the law (13:38–39) is addressed to the region where the churches later most needed this message reinforced.¹³²¹

the sixth century), see *CIJ* 1:478–84. The site in 2 Tim 4:10 may be Gaul (Riesner, *Early Period*, 304; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 213; Chadwick, *Early Church*, 63), though some prefer Galatia (Scott, *Pastoral Epistles*, 136).

1312. Scott, “Galatia,” 390.

1313. Latourette, *First Five Centuries*, 89 (following Ramsay, *Church in Empire*, 146–47). If one objects that this was because urban and coastal areas would be more open to change than more rural, inland areas, one should acknowledge that Paul would have likely targeted more urban coastal areas for the same reasons.

1314. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 42, noting that even Augustus in *Res gestae divi Augusti* calls them Pisidians. Paul employs an analogous vocative for pathos in 2 Cor 6:11, where, however, he employs neither provincial nor ethnic categories but the residency (more likely than citizenship, which would exclude too much of the church) of his addressees in Corinth; most of his other letters are to churches in particular cities rather than in regions.

1315. Riesner, *Early Period*, 287. For the use of “fool” as an insult in rhetoric, see Epict. *Diatr.* 1.18.10; 2.16.13; 2.21.2; 2.22.4–5; 3.13.17; 3.22.85; Plut. *Pleas. L. 2, Mor.* 1086EF; Mart. *Epig.* 10.100.1; Max. Tyre 38.5; Marc. Aur. 5.36.1; Phaedrus 3.15.2; Diog. Laert. 10.1.7–8; 1 Cor 15:36; Matt 5:22; Philo *Cher.* 75; *Sipre Deut.* 309.1.1; 309.2.1; *b. B. Bat.* 115b, end; *Ber.* 10a; *Erub.* 101a; *Yebam.* 102b.

1316. E.g., Livy 38.17.2, 4; 38.47.9; cf. Harrill, “Asia Minor,” 134–35; German Celts in Jos. *Ant.* 19.119–20.

1317. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:4 (citing negatively on Celts, including in Gaul, Callim. *Hymns* 4 [to Delos], line 184; Val. Max. 2.6.10; Lucian *Alex.* 27). Galatians were stereotyped as intellectually weak, though they had labored to overcome this prejudice (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:84).

1318. Riesner, *Early Period*, 287; so also Wallace and Williams, *Acts*, 74–75. For the self-identification of many long-term settlers in Iconium as Greek rather than Phrygian, see comment on Acts 14:1.

1319. Scott, “Galatia,” 390.

1320. Witherington, *Acts*, 478.

1321. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 399 (counting Antioch as Galatian; if Antioch was not at this time in Galatia proper, it was in any case not far from it). That Luke knew something of Paul’s trouble with the Galatians is not at all improbable, especially if we accept a later date for Galatians.

b. Mixed Results in Iconium (14:1–7)

Luke, who did not mention signs in Antioch, now returns to them (14:3), but this narrative indicates that despite 13:12, signs do not always lead to faith. In Iconium, as in Antioch, it is, ironically, Jewish opposition that prevents a wider Gentile reception and requires the apostles to leave.

I. FAITH, HOSTILITY, AND SIGNS (14:1–4)

Although many Jews and Gentiles “believed” (14:1), the Jewish people who did not believe stirred hostility among the other Gentiles (14:2), requiring Paul and Barnabas to speak boldly and with the confirmation of signs (14:3). Their preaching ultimately divided the city between their own message and the claims of their Jewish accusers (14:4).

(1) Jewish and Greek Believers (14:1)

Paul's interest in both Jews and Gentiles is attested in his own letters (e.g., Rom 1:16). Iconium's Jewish and Gentile populations may have been typical for Phrygia. Phrygia included many Jews (CIJ 2:24–38, §§760–80, much of it from W. M. Ramsay's work), and an excavated synagogue in its city Acmonia, dating to Nero's reign, “has produced the only Hebrew inscriptions found in the interior of Asia Minor outside Sardis.”¹³²² Antiochus III settled two thousand Jewish families in Phrygia (Jos. *Ant.* 12.149).¹³²³ If our understanding of the passage is correct, Babylonian Amoraim even cited an earlier Jewish sage from Galatia (*b. Ketub.* 60a, bar.). Paul and Barnabas continue ministry in the synagogues (see comment on Acts 13:46);¹³²⁴ they follow the pattern of Jesus's ministry, since he traveled to many synagogues (Luke 4:44). (For the expression “synagogue of the Jews,” distinguishing it from other assemblies, see comment on Acts 13:5.) Although Jews could settle as aliens, they apparently usually had the legal right of domicile.¹³²⁵

Like Paul, even when many of his hearers may be Roman citizens or ethnically non-Greek Asians (Rom 1:16; 2:9–10; 3:9; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:22, 24; 10:32; 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11), Luke sometimes contrasts “Jews and Greeks” or uses the titles together to summarize an entire population (Acts 14:1; 18:4; 19:10, 17; 20:21). Traditional Jewish language could use two polar opposites, such as “heavens” and “earth” or “day” and “night,” to summarize everything in between as well.¹³²⁶ Jews and Greeks certainly had developed hostility toward each other over the centuries, whether over citizen rights in Alexandria or hellenization in Judea.¹³²⁷ Josephus sometimes portrays Jews and Greeks as natural enemies, though often because these were among the primary cultural elements in a location.¹³²⁸ It has been argued that he uses “Greeks” to refer to residents of Greek cities and, secondarily, all non-Jewish inhabitants of cities.¹³²⁹ The original Greek settlers had to supplement their numbers with

1322. Harrill, “Asia Minor,” 134 (the others are in Greek).

1323. See Hansen, “Galatia,” 391.

1324. Cf. Chrys. *Hom. Acts* 30: despite having just been driven out in Antioch, they preached in a synagogue in Acts 14:1; this demonstrates that they were not cowardly.

1325. Rabello, “Condition,” 725.

1326. See, e.g., Gordon, *Near East*, 35n3.

1327. For genuine Jews vs. Greeks in Paul's letters, see esp. Stanley, “Jew nor Greek”; but cf. criticism in Das, *Debate*, 59. On Greek ethnicity in Acts, see discussion in Barreto, *Negotiations*, 110–13.

1328. Jos. *Ant.* 18.374–76 (though the Syrians were enemies also, 18.376); 19.278 (Alexandria, omitting the Egyptian residents). But sometimes Jews are “Greeks” as nonbarbarians (Jos. *War* 1.17, 94; Schnabel, *Missionary*, 325).

1329. Rajak, “Location,” 11–13, arguing that “Syrians” tend to be *rural* provincials in Josephus; cf. Jos. *War* 2.458; Schnabel, *Missionary*, 325. Josephus lists many distinct peoples (Stanley, “Hybrid,” 119, following

those who adopted Greek culture though lacking its ethnicity; “Greeks” were those with privileged status in Hellenistic cities.¹³³⁰ Thus “Greeks” could refer generally to urban citizens in the East.¹³³¹

By “Greeks” Luke might mean more specifically the Greek-speaking urban population distinct from Latin-speaking descendants of Italian Roman citizen settlers of the nearby colony (on which see comment on Acts 13:51). But since it is not certain, and (in view of coins and inscriptions) apparently unlikely, that Iconium itself was a colony this early (in contrast to Lystra and Pisidian Antioch)¹³³² and it is unlikely that it was settled by significant numbers of Italians in this period,¹³³³ it appears more likely that the title distinguishes them from the much-less-hellenized countryside.¹³³⁴ Numismatic evidence suggests that Greek religion and ideas dominated over native Phrygian conceptions, and by Paul’s day the Greek language had been dominant here for generations.¹³³⁵ Although immigrant Greek culture had sometimes overlaid or reinterpreted traditional conceptions, the inhabitants had probably long viewed themselves first as Greeks (providing status) rather than as Phrygians.¹³³⁶ Luke thus uses a term appropriate to the town.¹³³⁷

Among Greeks not associated with the synagogue, paganism was as pervasive in Iconium as elsewhere. The dominant religious devotion in other parts of Phrygia focused on the Phrygian mother goddess Cybele,¹³³⁸ known in this region as the Zizimmene Mother (because the home of her cult was Zizima, among mountains ca. 5 mi. north of Iconium).¹³³⁹ She was the patron deity of Iconium.¹³⁴⁰ Phrygia in general has been thought to have given much attention to the local variety of Mysteries; its focus on the underworld was probably related to the wealth of nearby mines and the nearby hot springs and cool fountains. Phrygians traditionally viewed the underworld as the home of the divine and the place of human origin and destiny.¹³⁴¹

Esler, *Conflict*, 59), but the binary ethnic division of humanity dominant in Paul’s letters may reflect his own experience as a Jew nurtured in a Greek city (Stanley, “Hybrid,” 125). Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism*, 131–32, estimates perhaps a million urban Greeks (scattered in a hundred Eastern cities with an average of ten thousand each) in contrast to fifteen to twenty million natives (though he estimates that in Egypt the proportion of Greeks was higher, one million out of eleven million).

1330. Reicke, *Era*, 38–39. Before their spread under Alexander, Greeks (including those in the islands) numbered over seven million, and probably closer to nine million (see Hansen, “Update,” esp. 276). In the century after Alexander, 38.9 percent of households (and an apparently higher proportion of the population) were Greeks in a nome we can test in Egypt (*ibid.*, 277).

1331. If this is the case, we need not think that all ancient writers shared this usage. Mark apparently distinguishes geography from ethnicity in Mark 7:26; “Greek” residents of Egypt’s nomes also held privileges denied the native Egyptians in the countryside.

1332. See Ramsay, *Pictures*, 357–58; more tentatively, Witherington, *Acts*, 417, following Mitchell, “Iconium and Ninica.” In this period, Iconium resisted Roman influence and tried to remain a Greek city-state, ruled by its citizen assembly and remaining “aloof from interference by the praetorian legate” (Longenecker, *Acts*, 227).

1333. Veteran settlements were no longer common, though some veterans are attested at Iconium (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:73).

1334. On the initial hellenization of Anatolia’s interior even before Augustus, see *ibid.*, 1:82–84.

1335. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 332–34.

1336. *Ibid.*, 334; tentatively followed by Witherington, *Acts*, 418. Ramsay also argues that Iconium was part of Roman Galatia (*Cities of Paul*, 343), as has been contended more broadly above.

1337. Given his frequent pairing of “Greeks” and “Jews” (Acts 14:1; 18:4; 19:10, 17; 20:21), Luke might use “Greeks” loosely for eastern Mediterranean urban Gentiles (cf. John 7:35; Rom 3:9; 1 Cor 1:22, 24; 10:32; 12:13; Isa 9:12 LXX; Winter, *Left Corinth*, 23). In each instance, however, he probably means Greek-speakers who probably identified themselves as culturally Greek.

1338. On Cybele, see more extensive comment at Acts 14:15.

1339. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 330; on the mother, see further 331.

1340. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:18.

1341. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 330. Mystery connections, more popular in early twentieth-century scholarship, might be overstated, especially with regard to Cybele (see Bøgh, “Kybele”).

The cult of Pluto flourished there (*MAMA* 8.4, 26).¹³⁴² Serpents, which lived in the earth, mediated between divine and mortal realms, offering healing.¹³⁴³

Iconium's civic religion was, however, more Greek than Phrygian, and it was Roman as well; a priest of Tiberius serviced the Roman imperial cult there.¹³⁴⁴ High priesthood in the imperial cult was the city's "most prominent public position."¹³⁴⁵ The Christian message did eventually take firmer root there, and bishops are known starting in the third century (Euseb. *H.E.* 6.19.17–18).¹³⁴⁶

(2) Jewish Opposition (14:2)

Luke speaks of local Jewish people who "disbelieved" (ἀπειθήσαντες); Luke later describes Jewish "disobedience" in another Asian city (Acts 19:9) and often speaks of Jewish communities stirring trouble for Paul among Gentiles (e.g., 14:19; 18:12–13; 19:9). The influence of local Jewish people of Iconium on their fellow inhabitants in the town is not surprising. In contrast to Alexandria, many elites in the empire were sympathetic toward their Jewish populations, including some members of the elite in Rome.¹³⁴⁷ In some locations in Asia Minor, a strong Jewish community with considerable ties to the Gentile elite was apparently able to prevent the early spread of the Christian movement (then a competing form of early Judaism) there.¹³⁴⁸

Judaism was influential in many communities in Asia Minor; when local Jewish leaders in many locations rejected the early Christian message, they understandably felt threatened in their influence and security when many of their Gentile sympathizers (who were less literate in their heritage than most Jews) became followers of the new movement.¹³⁴⁹ Paul's own letters testify that the Jewish Christians' Gentile mission encountered hostility from many other Jews (1 Thess 2:16).¹³⁵⁰

Presumably the larger number of Gentiles who believed (Acts 14:1) were those most closely associated with the synagogue; other Gentiles might well not show interest in such a message and hence might hear only the hostile perspective of Jewish leaders from their own community. Meanwhile, the Jewish people who did not embrace the message may have represented some of the more influential members of the Jewish community (cf. 14:4), the new message proving most appealing to those least satisfied with their social or religious status.

(3) Signs Confirm the Message (14:3)

Jesus commanded his agents to heal the sick when they were proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom (Luke 9:2; 10:9). Luke's Paul and Barnabas have been following

1342. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:28.

1343. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 330.

1344. On the imperial cult in Iconium, see Winter, "Imperial Cult," 94. For the imperial cult in Phrygia, see further *MAMA* 1:xiii (noting 1.19, 23, 24, 24a, 416, 429).

1345. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:116.

1346. Belke, "Iconium," 706. Cf. also the church council in Ramsay, *Discovery*, 56; in the thirteenth century, it is noteworthy as the site of the monastery of the Sufi Rumi (Mevlana), who founded the order known for the Whirling Dervishes (Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 229–31).

1347. Gager, *Anti-Semitism*, 67–88.

1348. See van der Horst, "Aphrodisias."

1349. See Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 124–25.

1350. Some scholars wrongly exclude this evidence on content-critical grounds. The claim that these lines in 1 Thessalonians are interpolated (Schmidt, "Linguistic Evidence"; Setzer, *Responses*, 16–19; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 51), although appealing for our modern sensitivities, is ultimately content criticism, with no textual or other extrinsic corroboration, and only minor deviations from Paul's typical vocabulary (deviations explicable on better grounds; Donfried, "Test Case"; idem, *Thessalonica*, 198–203; Das, *Paul and Jews*, 129–36; Collins, "Integrity"; Gundry, *Matthew*, 609; Witherington, *End*, 101). External evidence elsewhere in early Christian texts, in fact, supports its retention. Evidence of such intra-Jewish conflicts is uncomfortable because it has been exploited in the service of Christian anti-Semitism, but it is the latter's obvious misrepresentation and abuse of the historical data, not the data itself, that we should challenge.

the model found in those instructions (see comment on Acts 13:51). The commentary introduction provides more detailed background for the discussion here.¹³⁵¹

Paul himself mentions that signs were done through him, supporting his evangelizing of Gentiles (Rom 15:18–19) and attesting his apostolic ministry (2 Cor 12:12; cf. Heb 2:4) and, apparently, his gospel (cf. 1 Cor 2:4–5; Gal 3:5). It is interesting that Paul claims to have performed signs in Corinth (2 Cor 12:12), where Luke does *not* record them, which suggests that Luke offers at most a sampling of miracle reports. If such reports in ancient historical documents or occasional letters offend our modern sensibilities, this disconnect reflects our cultural philosophic presuppositions no less than theirs.¹³⁵² Luke's own audience would have had no such reservations, and Paul's audience apparently shared his conviction that they had witnessed these events (2 Cor 12:12; cf. 1 Cor 12:8–10; Gal 3:5). Paul's letters attest that he expected healings and miracles to occur in his churches (1 Cor 12:10, 28–30; cf. Gal 3:5); more to the point, he very likely claims that they occurred in his evangelistic ministry (Rom 15:18–19; 2 Cor 12:12).

The disciples in the Gospel of Luke had to grow in expressing faith for miracles (e.g., Luke 9:40–41).¹³⁵³ It is possible that we can read the narrative in Acts as presenting a progression of faith, moving from prophecy (Acts 13:1) to the blinding of Elymas (13:9–11) to many signs here; Paul's first recorded exorcism is in 16:18, but by 19:11–12, healings and exorcisms occur on a wider scale than in previous reports (and again widely in 28:8–9). It admittedly seems precarious to argue from silence that Paul was not already doing signs in Antioch, but it would suit Luke's linking of signs with evangelism to suggest that Paul experienced them especially on the cutting edge of apostolic ministry.

Although ancients reported some signs prophets or magicians who healed, suppliants most often sought healing at sanctuaries devoted to that purpose.¹³⁵⁴ However the signs may have been sometimes misunderstood in a Hellenistic context (Acts 14:11),¹³⁵⁵ here Jesus's followers perform signs to demonstrate God's reign or kingdom, as in the Gospel. It is possible that Luke emphasizes signs in less-sophisticated areas (the backward interior of Anatolia, here, or among "barbarians" in 28:8–9) and in magic-laden Ephesus (19:11–19), as opposed to prestigious Athens, Corinth, or Rome. Yet despite Luke's emphasis on different information for Corinth, Paul himself believed that miracles occurred through him in Corinth (2 Cor 12:12). Luke's emphasis is probably not that signs occur only among the backward or magically inclined,¹³⁵⁶ but that Paul emphasized intellectual discourse where it would be most effective, yet could combine it with signs where they remained welcome (e.g., 19:9–12).

Here the signs attest specifically the message of God's grace,¹³⁵⁷ just as disciples earlier prayed that God would grant them boldness by performing healings (4:29–

1351. See Keener, *Acts*, 1:320–82, 537–49; in greater detail for some questions, *idem*, *Miracles*.

1352. See Keener, *Acts*, 1:352–54; *idem*, *Miracles*, 200–207.

1353. Some other reports also suggest growth in a signs worker's expectation (Tac. *Hist.* 4.81).

1354. See Keener, *Acts*, 1:326–29; *idem*, *Miracles*, 35–65. On Asclepius as a healing deity or hero, see Guthrie, *Greeks and Gods*, 242–53; for healing cults in Roman Egypt (after the first century), see Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 46–52 (including discussion of how Christian "saints" later adapted this model, replacing expectations for the priests). See at greater length the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:326–29; *idem*, *Miracles*, 37–42.

1355. For example, in a later text a divine man might perform a sign to demonstrate his identity (Eunapius *Lives* 459).

1356. This would not fit his understanding of the setting in Acts 5:12. Unless one argues that Luke considered every location backward, there is little justification for associating signs with backwardness. If he expected them less in some kinds of sophisticated areas, he does not make this clear; his narration of Paul's stay in Rome is too brief to justify an argument from silence about miracles there (and certainly the epistolary Paul did not shy away from mentioning miracles for hearers there, Rom 15:19).

1357. Cf. Heb 2:3–4, where they attest salvation (I date Hebrews ca. 68 C.E.); Mark 16:20 (which may be dependent on Acts).

30). Their bold speech here is probably thus related to the signs (as in 4:13; though Paul had spoken boldly on other occasions apparently without them [9:27–28; 26:26; 28:31] or perhaps before them [19:8–12]). That the signs and wonders occurred through their “hands” might be simply a Semitism for their instrumentality, but it is probably more, comporting well with Luke’s portrait of many healings accomplished through laying on hands (e.g., 9:12; 28:8; Luke 4:40; 13:13; probably the same in Acts 5:12; 19:11). “Word of grace” could mean a “graciously spoken message” (cf. Luke 4:22) but here probably means the “message about grace” (Acts 20:24, 32).

(4) *Division concerning the “Apostles” (14:4)*

The message of grace brings division (cf. 23:7, employing ἐσχίσθη, as here; the family division of Luke 12:51–53), here between the local Jewish community’s side and the apostolic side.¹³⁵⁸ The πλῆθος in Acts 14:1 referred to Jewish and Gentile believers but in 14:4 must bear a different sense, perhaps referring to all the people or to the “popular assembly.”¹³⁵⁹ The term expressing schism, σχίζω, was a common one in political and social bodies, normally used negatively.¹³⁶⁰ The summary of conflicting views resembles other such summaries in ancient literature,¹³⁶¹ including those describing genuine historical conflicts.¹³⁶² Thus, for example, Pliny the Younger reports a division in Rome between two opinions (which he then details, *Ep.* 5.9.6). By itself, however, the division could refer to serious discussion rather than threats of violence;¹³⁶³ it is Acts 14:5 that reveals that more is at stake. Luke’s only other relevant use of the verb (23:7) also becomes potentially violent (23:9–10).

Despite the persecution of 14:5, “the apostles” had significant support here. The Christian movement spread from Iconium, which grew into one of the most influential seats of Christianity in Asia Minor (especially in proportion to its size).¹³⁶⁴

Luke restricts the term “apostles” almost always to the Twelve, making exceptions only in 14:4, 14. One common theory is that Luke simply reproduces a source here,¹³⁶⁵ but Luke’s overall literary artistry renders this suggestion dubious (just as it is doubtful that Luke preserved a prior “we” in his narrative that did not include himself; see comment on Acts 16:10). Barrett summarizes and evaluates several views of the term’s meaning here:¹³⁶⁶

1. Luke was simply careless (Barrett views this as unlikely).
2. Luke knew better than to call Paul an apostle but respected him so much that he allowed the title to slip once.
3. The term applies not to Paul and Barnabas but to their message from the apostles (Barrett rightly notes that this is not what the text says).

1358. After noting the division, Luke specifies it; a different rhetorical form would link both groups with a common verb, then differentiate them (cf. Anderson, *Glossary*, 49–50). Lists of crowd responses were common (e.g., the responses, most—but not all—negative, to Diogenes in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 9.8–9).

1359. For the latter, see Johnson, *Acts*, 247 (citing Plato *Apol.* 31C).

1360. See Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 70–73.

1361. Cf., e.g., Terence *Andr.* 1–27; *Self-T.* 16–52; *Eun.* 1–45; *Phorm.* 1–23; *Moth.* 1–57; *Brothers* 1–25; Phaedrus 2.9.7–11; 3.prol. 23; 4.prol. 15–16; Lucian *Lucius* 54.

1362. Cf. Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.7.3; 7.5.28; 8.10.68; *Bell. civ.* 1.intro. 1; 4.8.64; Aul. Gel. 6.19.6; 17.4.3–6; Corn. Nep. 7 (Alcibiades), 4.1–2; 25 (Atticus), 7.1–11.6; Tac. *Ann.* 4.49–50; Hdn. 4.3.2, 5; or conflicting advice in Tac. *Ann.* 2.76–77; 16.25–26.

1363. Cf., e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 8.18.3; Tac. *Ann.* 3.23.

1364. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 370.

1365. E.g., Gerhardsson, *Memory*, 220. Interestingly, Barnabas is named before Paul in Acts only at 14:12, 14 (although, before Luke began calling Saul “Paul,” Barnabas was always mentioned first).

1366. Barrett, *Acts*, 671–72.

4. They were simply apostles of the church of Antioch (13:1–3), and after this chapter, Paul is no longer an apostle of that church.

Barrett favors the fourth option if any,¹³⁶⁷ but I find it unlikely. To argue for it, one must import a secondary Pauline sense (2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25) against both the Lukan sense elsewhere and even the usual Pauline sense. (An appeal to this infrequent Pauline usage is especially strange because Paul elsewhere calls both himself and probably Barnabas [1 Cor 9:5–6] apostles.) If the Antioch church “sent” them out (Acts 13:3), so did the Holy Spirit (13:4, though neither verse employs ἀποστέλλω). And if Paul was sent by the Antioch church, was he not also sent in 15:2, 22 and especially 15:40, which does not employ the term? The sole semantic clue provided by Luke to the meaning here is the meaning he attributes to “apostle” elsewhere. Though Luke normally uses the term only for the Twelve, perhaps for consistency, he cannot but know the common Pauline usage, and it is difficult to imagine that he opposed theologically his mentor’s self-claim.¹³⁶⁸ He can thus use it the way he might imply it for the Seventy, who were also “sent” (Luke 10:1); he applies the verb cognate to Paul himself in Acts 22:21; 26:17.¹³⁶⁹ The Twelve were “witnesses,” but the term also extends beyond them because they ultimately perform this function paradigmatically, and further examples in this role demonstrate that the paradigm should continue to be observed among Luke’s audience (see comment on “witness” in Acts 1:8). The use of the term “apostles” here probably reminds Luke’s audience that these were God’s commissioned agents analogous to the Twelve (cf. Luke 11:49), an idea well suited to the way Luke parallels various characters.

Most scholars believe that Barnabas is also an apostle in Paul’s writings (1 Cor 9:2, 6),¹³⁷⁰ though Paul employs the title more broadly than Luke—for himself (often, e.g., Rom 1:1; 11:13), for James the Lord’s brother (Gal 1:19), probably for his traveling companions on a later journey (1 Thess 2:7, if the plural is meant with its usual force, including Silas and Timothy), and for others (Rom 16:7; 1 Cor 15:7).¹³⁷¹

1367. Dunn, *Acts*, 188; idem, *Romans*, 895; Talbert, *Acts*, 17; and Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 21–22, likewise argue for a lesser apostleship than the Twelve here. Linking the title with those who saw the risen Lord (1 Cor 9:1, which accumulates, not coordinates) would probably exclude both Barnabas (Gal 2:9; 1 Cor 9:5–6) and Silvanus (1 Thess 2:6–7), since they were apparently from Jerusalem whereas most of Jesus’s first followers who saw him after the resurrection were Galilean.

1368. Some did in fact question Paul’s apostleship (1 Cor 9:2; Gal 1:1; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 131; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 21; on early competition for the title, see esp. Taylor, “Identity,” 122–23), but these critics were often hostile to Paul. They would be the antithesis of a writer such as Luke, who if anything tends to idealize Paul as a hero. Further, Paul’s application beyond the Twelve extends to others besides himself. Very possibly they could receive the title “apostles” only once they began working miracles (cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Mark 6:7, 30; Luke 9:1–2, 10), which (apart from one judgment in Acts 13:9–11) are reported of Paul and Barnabas first in 14:3, the verse before the “apostles” title. (Unless Luke presupposes Mark 6:7, 30, however, it is not clear in Luke 6:13.) Or perhaps Luke’s apologetic responds to those still denying Paul’s apostleship, and Luke prefers to focus on his innocence rather than his title.

1369. See Witherington, *Acts*, 420. Verb cognates do not always share a sense cognate with the nouns, but a relationship is frequent enough that in the absence of closer conflicting evidence, we should take them into account. Neither should we suppose that Luke implies that Barnabas was at least one of the seventy(-two) (Luke 10:1); as a Diaspora Jew of means, he was surely living in Jerusalem (Acts 4:36–37) and not one of Jesus’s original Galilean followers.

1370. Cf., e.g., Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:59.

1371. Scholars who want to limit the use of “apostle” to the Twelve ignore Pauline use for Luke’s; those who wish to limit it to “the Twelve plus Paul” confuse the categories entirely. Those who wish to limit the usage to church planters draw only on Paul’s model (contrast James, Gal 1:19); what the Twelve and Paul share in common is distinctive authority as God’s special agents. Even as late as Ephesians, the church’s “apostolic foundation” (cf. Eph 2:20) hardly implies that apostles are not needed afterward (see Eph 4:11–13).

II. PERSECUTION AND FLIGHT (14:5–7)

Paul and Barnabas were ready for a divided city, but stoning (Acts 14:5) was normally intended to be fatal (cf. 14:19), not merely divisive. Thus the time was appropriate to move on to another town needing the gospel, as Jesus had commanded his agents (Luke 10:10–11).

(1) *Persecuting the Apostles (14:5)*

The antipathy of Iconium apparently remained (Acts 14:19), and so did the memory of Paul's sufferings there (2 Tim 3:11). Luke reports Paul's adventures in lively style, but he does not invent them. Luke's accounts of persecution in Asia Minor are plausible; later sources confirm that at least sporadic, local persecution continued to be the experience of many Diaspora churches in Asia Minor for many decades following (1 Pet 4:12–19; Rev 2:10; 3:8–10; Pliny *Ep.* 10.96; *Mart. Pol.* 1.1–2.1).

More important, we have undisputed eyewitness corroboration of such persecution in Paul's ministry. Lest we suppose Luke's narratives too dramatic, we should note that Paul records sufferings far more extensive in his own writings (1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 1:4–10; 4:8–12; 6:4–10; 11:23–28), including far more beatings and shipwrecks than Acts records (2 Cor 11:23–25).¹³⁷² (In view of Paul's tribulation lists,¹³⁷³ Luke does not exaggerate Paul's sufferings in Acts; if anything, he plays them down.¹³⁷⁴ Most likely they fall under his summarizing axe like other historical information he includes in the monograph, allowing only representative samples.) Paul attests that he faced dangers both from his fellow Jews¹³⁷⁵ and from Gentiles (2 Cor 11:26 mentions both). In addition to being beaten more times than Acts records (11:23), facing dangerous persecution regularly (1 Cor 15:30–32), and often being in danger of dying (2 Cor 11:23),¹³⁷⁶ Paul was hardly unfamiliar with the danger of stoning; he explicitly notes that he was once stoned (11:25; see discussion on Acts 14:19, below).

This is not the first unsuccessful attempt to kill Paul (Acts 9:23–25, 29–30); even though Luke's audience probably knows of his martyrdom, they also learn that God protected him many times before allowing his death. Stoning was common behavior for mobs, but it was also the appropriate punishment for blasphemy (Lev 24:16; see comment on Acts 7:58–59); note the more successful attempt in Acts 14:19. By contrast, those who saw Paul and Barnabas as God's agents would view persecution of them as criminally impious.¹³⁷⁷

1372. Paul's "brand marks of Jesus" (Gal 6:17) probably also implies that the beatings left marks (with Ramsay, *Galatians*, 472; Ridderbos, *Galatia*, 228; though others take them solely figuratively [Betz, *Galatia*, 324]). Cf. further his theology of apostolic "tribulation," in the comment below on Acts 14:22.

1373. Paul may schematize his sufferings even more than Luke does, especially in his tribulation lists; cf. Socratic labors (echoing Heracles's labors; Alexander, "Biography," 59–60, citing Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 104.27–33); especially philosophers' *peristasis* catalogues (see esp. and most fully Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 49, 59–70), though these were not limited to philosophers (Danker, "Debt," 265, citing, e.g., Polyb. 4.45; 2 Macc 4:16).

1374. So Hemer, *Acts in History*, 184.

1375. Cf. also for Judea 1 Thess 2:14–16, Rom 15:31, and Gal 6:12 (but this last text probably represents Paul's Christian opponents' non-Christian peers in Jerusalem, not in Asia Minor). Luke emphasizes local Jewish opposition in each location where he finds it, whereas Paul summarizes more the widespread unbelief of his people (Rom 9:3–6; 9:27–10:3; 10:19–21; 11:7–32).

1376. Second Timothy 3:12 presents persecution as normal for believers in Jesus (cf. Acts 14:22). Those who think Paul's or Luke's descriptions exaggerations because they doubt the reality of such beatings fallaciously read their own limited cultural experience of toleration into other societies. I know African evangelists who were regularly beaten for their testimony; indeed, in earlier years, I myself suffered three beatings (and some death threats) for my testimony even in North America, and know of others who shared the same.

1377. For the impiety of slaying even enemy envoys, see, e.g., Xen. *Anab.* 5.7.18–19 (leading to trial even by one's own people, 5.7.34); Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.35, 37; cf. Polyb. 15.2; Appian *Hist. rom.* 3.6.1–2; 3.7.2–3; 4.11; 8.8.53; see more fully Keener, *John*, 313–14.

“Their rulers” could refer to those of the immediate antecedent, the Jews (cf. Luke 8:41; 14:1; 18:18; 23:13, 35; 24:20; Acts 3:17; 4:8; 13:27; 23:5), or to those of “the Gentiles and the Jews,” thus including civic authorities as well as the high-status synagogue leadership (cf. Acts 4:26; 16:19).¹³⁷⁸ A city’s magistrates were authorized to take whatever action was necessary to quell disturbances and safeguard people.¹³⁷⁹ The τε καί here might be construed as favoring the view that “with the authorities” applies only to the Jewish leaders; civic leaders would be in charge of expulsion from the city but would not normally sanction a mob stoning, especially if the city already had some special privileges (whether as a Roman colony or as a town of high enough status to become a colony over the next century). Then again, “normal” behavior is often contravened in urgent situations.

The term ὀρμή indicates an impulse, strong desire, or beginning action to achieve something, often exceeding mere desire (cf. Jas 3:4).¹³⁸⁰ The term used here for mistreatment (ὕβριζω; also Luke 11:45; 18:32)¹³⁸¹ implies no mild insult,¹³⁸² the sort of experience that Paul is known to have resented (1 Thess 2:2, on his mistreatment in Philippi; see comment on Acts 16:22–23). Thus those who insulted tribunes could be killed during the republic (Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 10.35.3), and scandalizing even a peer warranted monetary penalties set by a court (P.Hal. 1.210–13). The term ὕβριζω applies to moral outrage, even of a deity, in Eurip. *Tro.* 69. The stoning failed here, but Paul’s enemies were able to catch up with him in Lystra and stone him there (Acts 14:19).

(2) *Fleeing Iconium (14:6)*

The model of fleeing appears elsewhere (9:24–25; cf. 17:10; 20:3) and might even stem from Jesus tradition (if Matt 10:23 reflects Q or another source), though if Luke has access to the tradition, he omits the opportunity to repeat it in his Gospel. (It could derive from pre-Markan eschatological material; cf. *m. Soṭah* 9:15 and sources in my Matthew commentary loc. cit.) We should not suppose that Luke compares Paul unfavorably with Peter, who did not flee the priestly authorities in Acts 4–5; in the face of potentially deadly persecution in which political authorities targeted him, even Peter left for a time (12:17).

How would Luke’s audience evaluate flight? Josephus at one point claims that he considered it undignified to flee (*Life* 146)—though he fled and even surrendered on other occasions. Fleeing in battle epitomized cowardice.¹³⁸³ Lucian mocks a philosopher who fled a hostile mob (*Peregr.* 19) and later had to defend himself for this action (*Peregr.* 20). Many, however, regarded flight as common sense under some circumstances and not an act of cowardice.¹³⁸⁴ Those who preferred death to denying their faith might nevertheless seek to escape persecution by other means.¹³⁸⁵ In

1378. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 278, favors rulers of both Gentiles and Jews here.

1379. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 372.

1380. See Matheson, *Epictetus*, 31; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 162; BDAG. Luke might think of the verb cognate in Acts 7:57, but its sense differs from the noun. Philosophers spoke of restraining the ὀρμαί (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.5b.2, pp. 14–15.6).

1381. Elsewhere in the NT, only at Matt 22:6; 1 Thess 2:2. Cf. the relevant use of cognates in 2 Cor 12:10.

1382. Cf., e.g., the hostile behavior in Aeschines *Tim.* 16; Demosth. *Aristocr.* 141; Polyb. 1.69.5; 6.7.5; Diod. Sic. 36.15.1–2; Mus. Ruf. 10, p. 78.23; Appian *Hist. rom.* 2.8.2; Epict. *Diatr.* 2.17.20; Diogenes *Ep.* 20; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.10e, pp. 62–63.18; 2.7.11m, pp. 92–93.5–6, 9.

1383. E.g., Thucyd. 2.42.4; Lysias *Or.* 14.5–6, §140; Polyb. 1.17; 6.24.9; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.9.4; Vell. Paterc. 2.85.3–5; 2.119.4; Quint. *Decl.* 287 intro; 315 intro; 375 intro; Libanius *Descr.* 1.7; Quint. Curt. 3.8.7; Sil. It. 10.7; Plut. *Luc.* 15.7; Suet. *Jul.* 60, 62, 67; Max. Tyre 3.8; 15.10; 33.3; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 2.9.

1384. E.g., Iambl. *V.P.* 31.190; y. *Abod. Zar.* 5:4, §3 (a story concerning R. Ishmael in Samaria). Flight that abandoned loyalties, however, was dishonorable, as in Mark 14:50 (with casting off a cloak in 14:52, cf. Lysias *Or.* 3.12, §97).

1385. *Gen. Rab.* 82:8 (a story about two disciples who disguised themselves during Hadrian’s persecution).

the early second century, Ignatius longed for martyrdom,¹³⁸⁶ an ideology that grew in time. But some who volunteered to suffer changed their minds when they saw the suffering, and early Christians warned against *seeking* suffering (*Mart. Pol.* 4.1). Even Stoics opined that one should not seek or desire suffering though one should endure it if it comes (*Sen. Y. Ep. Lucil.* 67.3–4). Wandering itself, however, was counted a form of suffering.¹³⁸⁷

The trip was likely not pleasant. Most of the Lycaonian plateaus were cold, poorly watered, and devoid of trees, though they did have sufficient water and vegetation to sustain sheep (Strabo 12.6.1). This was thus not a particularly prosperous region, in contrast to Iconium (cf. comment on Acts 13:51). Paul and Barnabas were likely able at least to travel the paved Via Sebaste on the way.¹³⁸⁸ (A northward journey would have made little sense, since there would be few possible evangelistic goals there; in the mid-first century, very few towns larger than small villages existed between Iconium and Ancyra.)¹³⁸⁹

(3) *Lycaonia and Lystra (14:6–7)*

Some classicists argue that Iconium was technically part of Isaurian territory in this period (see discussion at Acts 13:51); in this case the flight to Lycaonia meant entering a different political district (though both were part of the Galatian province), which moved them into a new jurisdiction and away from false charges—at least until they were followed (Acts 14:19). Whereas Phrygian names were common in Iconium, they were rare in Lystra, perhaps supporting here “a passage across a linguistic and administrative boundary from Phrygia [in a narrower sense] to Lycaonia.”¹³⁹⁰ (On Lycaonia, see further discussion at Acts 13:51.) The flight to Lystra and Derbe summarizes the next section; for more detail on out-of-the-way Derbe, see comment on Acts 14:20.

Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra likewise appear together in 2 Tim 3:11, which also mentions Paul's persecution at these locations; for the historical likelihood of their connection in Paul's ministry as portrayed in Acts, see comment on Acts 13:51. Lystra (at the mound called Zoldera Höyük, about a mile north of modern Hatunsaray) was about twenty to twenty-five miles (some 32–40 km.) south-southwest of Iconium.¹³⁹¹ It was closer than Derbe, but the “surrounding region” was only sparsely settled.¹³⁹² If villages once existed in the vicinity, we would not likely know it today, but it is also possible that Paul and Barnabas simply spoke to people along the roads to Lystra and then Derbe.

The Romans planted Lystra here to guard the highway (the Via Sebaste).¹³⁹³ In contrast to some of the countryside, its location on the way from Laranda to Iconium

1386. E.g., Ign. *Trall.* 10.1; *Rom.* 3–8 passim, e.g., 4.1–2; 5.2–3.

1387. E.g., homelessness as the hardest of sufferings in Hom. *Od.* 15.343; being driven from place to place as judgment in *Song Rab.* 6:10, §1.

1388. See French, “Roads,” 53; Hansen, “Galatia,” 385; Riesner, *Early Period*, 277; for fuller discussion, see comment on Acts 13:51.

1389. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:96 (though, as stated earlier, by the end of the first century, towns were growing there).

1390. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 228–30 (quote, 228). Lystra shared the broader Phrygian culture but was also distinct.

1391. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 243; Finegan, *Apostles*, 92; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 5, after 1:78; map 6, after 1:99. Wilson estimates 21 mi. (34 km.; personal correspondence, Nov. 25, 2011). Roads would have permitted them to travel alternatively a greater distance east and then south toward Tarsus (map in Rathmann, “Roads,” 642).

1392. Dunn, *Acts*, 188–89.

1393. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 52. If it existed before Augustus made it a colony, it does not seem to have issued its own coins and hence must have been small (154). On Lystra, see further Potter, “Lystra”; Breytenbach,

allowed it to thrive as a market town.¹³⁹⁴ Lystra itself stood on a small hill distinct from the surrounding plain, but its surrounding countryside is not flat either; to its north (from which the apostles approach) is hill country, and to its west (across the Via Sebaste) a high ridge obstructs vision.¹³⁹⁵ Lystra's mound covers only about sixteen acres, but this represents only the town's acropolis; a slope "down to a small stream" on its west contains fragmentary remains of ancient Lystra's buildings.¹³⁹⁶ We cannot easily estimate the size of the *territorium* it controlled; it had few other competitors for the land, but given its size, it may not have needed a large *territorium*.¹³⁹⁷ Among colonies, it is smaller than Antioch, Cremna, and Olbasa and has less area but more "vigour" than Comama; Levick suggests that it began with about a thousand colonists.¹³⁹⁸

Coins reveal that Augustus made Lystra a Roman colony,¹³⁹⁹ as does a statue at Pisidian Antioch honoring that city and dedicated by "*colonia Lystra*." Lystra's title was Colonia Julia Felix Gemina Lustra.¹⁴⁰⁰ Lystra's inscriptions pair it with Pisidian Antioch as a sister colony instead of linking Lystra with the Greek cities closer by.¹⁴⁰¹ Thirty-five of Lystra's 107 inscriptions are in Latin, although not always good Latin; that all these are from Lystra proper or one nearby village suggests some discontinuity with the countryside, which yields only Greek and many local names.¹⁴⁰² Yet Lystra does not seem to have taken as much interest in its colonial status as did Antioch (which included both Italian and local elements) or Iconium (which may have been still seeking to achieve colonial status).¹⁴⁰³ It also had a more prominent native element than Antioch.¹⁴⁰⁴

Paul's focus on Roman colonies where available suggests (probably on the historical level behind Luke's report, since he does not avail himself of the opportunity to emphasize this) that the Roman citizen Paul recognizes already the strategic importance of reaching Rome itself (Rom 15:20–23). Lystra, like Antioch and Iconium, belonged to the Roman province of Galatia in this period,¹⁴⁰⁵ and hence its church could be among those addressed in Paul's letter to the Galatians (see discussion on South Galatia at Acts 14:1–7). Still, many traditional customs remained throughout the larger region. Some cultural continuity existed in Lycaonia from Hittite culture in the second millennium B.C.E. to the early Christian period.¹⁴⁰⁶

Provinz, 164–65; Schnabel, *Mission*, 1112–13; Blaiklock, *Cities*, 31–34; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 240–43. The site has not been excavated, but it was identified by a monument discovered there in 1885 (*ibid.*, 243).

1394. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 154.

1395. *Ibid.*, 51.

1396. *Ibid.*, 51–52.

1397. *Ibid.*, 52–53. The land of the plain was useful for agriculture and readily divided for colonial allotments (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:77).

1398. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 94.

1399. The precise date is debated; for 25 B.C.E., see *ibid.*, 195–97.

1400. See Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 162; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 108; cf. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 29–41.

1401. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 224; also Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:76 (though warning that their sisterhood says nothing about a common foundation date; they were not "twins").

1402. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 154.

1403. Only one-sixth of the types of coins found there are "Roman in character" (*ibid.*, 197).

1404. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:11.

1405. *Ibid.*, map 6, 1:99; 2:155; also most commentators (e.g., D. Williams, *Acts*, 247–48); see discussion on South Galatia at Acts 14:1–7. In the second century, Lycaonia was detached and united with Paul's home province of Cilicia (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:155; Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 168–69). Eventually, in 370, it became part of the new province of Lycaonia (Belke, "Lystra," 48).

1406. See Lebrun, "Asianisme." The indigenes "spoke a form of Luwian" (Belke, "Lycaonia," 910). Apparently, Hittite fertility deities also persisted, mixed with Zeus cults (Parsons, *Acts*, 201, following Breytenbach, *Provinz*, 69–73).

c. Rejecting Deification in Lystra (14:8–20a)

If response to the apostles' message was mixed in Iconium (Acts 14:1–7), it proves still more ironic in Lystra. After Jesus's message heals a permanently disabled man (14:8–10), the crowds attempt to venerate the apostles (14:11–13); after the apostles reject such veneration (14:14–18), Jewish opponents have them stoned—for blasphemy (14:19–20a).¹⁴⁰⁷ Preaching the good news is central in the narrative.¹⁴⁰⁸

I. THE HEALING (14:8–10)

Paul's first described healing (though not his first described miracle [see 13:11] or his first mentioned healing [implied in 14:3]) closely parallels Peter's first. This connection fits Luke's pattern of paralleling Peter and Paul where he is able to do so:¹⁴⁰⁹

Peter's First Healing (3:6–8)	Paul's First Healing (14:8–10)
Lame from birth (3:2)	Lame from birth (14:8)
Peter "gazes intently" at the man needing healing (3:4)	Paul "gazes intently" at the man needing healing (14:9)
Once healed, the man leaps and walks (3:8)	Once healed, the man leaps and walks (14:10)
Near temple gates (3:2)	Near temple and gates (14:13)
Through faith (3:16)	Through faith (14:9)
Human "adulation" rejected (3:12)	Human "adulation" rejected (14:15)

Some points of comparison (especially the temple gates) appear weak, but most are strong and clear.

Luke elsewhere notes those unable to walk (Luke 14:13, 21), especially with regard to their healings (5:24; 7:22; Acts 3:2; 8:7).¹⁴¹⁰ This interest contrasts with a practice found in the larger Roman world: Roman fathers sometimes left disabled babies on the ground, to be discarded on piles of trash or dung.¹⁴¹¹ (By contrast, Jewish fathers disapproved of infant exposure [thus Acts 3:2].)¹⁴¹² The man lame from birth here presumably either had a merciful father or nothing visibly wrong with his legs at birth. Those with disabilities faced many prejudices.¹⁴¹³

Healing is a pervasive Lukan emphasis related to the spreading good news of the kingdom. Faith for healing (14:9) appears elsewhere in Luke-Acts (Luke 7:9–10, 50; 8:48, 50; 17:19; 18:42) and the Jesus tradition (cf., e.g., Mark 5:34, 36; 9:23; 10:52; 11:22–24; John 4:50; 11:40); it also appears in the parallel in Acts 3:16.¹⁴¹⁴

1407. Dionne, "Épisode," divides Acts 14:7–20 into a five-part schema yet views this unit as a cohesive narrative unity. This account is as full of colorful detail as the account of Iconium is sparse (Marshall, *Acts*, 235, complains that Haenchen criticizes each for the opposite reason).

1408. With Fournier, *Episode*, 80.

1409. Following here Spencer, *Acts*, 149; the parallels are also noted by others (see Witherington, *Acts*, 422–23; Green, "Acts," 753; recently, see esp. Fournier, *Episode*, 199–203). Suggested denials of the deliberate nature of the parallel (e.g., Munck, *Acts*, 131) are not convincing (Williams, *Miracle Stories*, 175–76, is much more convincing, but because he is denying additional parallels, not those particular to these two stories). Ancient interpreters also noticed the parallel (Bede *Comm. Acts* 14.8 [Martin, *Acts*, 175], allegorizing the first man as representing salvation for the Jewish people, and the second as salvation for the Gentiles).

1410. Parsons, *Acts*, 198, points out that Luke employs three similar phrases (using *interpretatio*, i.e., synonymia; *Rhet. Her.* 4.28.38) to underline the desperation of the man's situation. Roth, *Blind, Lame, Poor*, 107–8, treats the lame as a character type in the LXX.

1411. See Stamps, "Children," 197–98. Deformed babies could even be killed (see comment on Acts 3:2; 7:19).

1412. See comment on Acts 3:2; 7:19.

1413. For this and other information about disabilities in antiquity, see further de Libero, "Disability"; comment on Acts 3:2.

1414. The Greek associates faith with wholeness, or "salvation" (σωτηρία) as broadly expressed, as also in Luke 7:50; 8:48, 50; 17:19; 18:42; this offered a natural transition from physical to national and spiritual

(This is not to suggest that Luke or the gospel tradition associates healing only with faith.)¹⁴¹⁵

The apparent plural of the dative for Lystra in 14:8 (also 16:2; contrast the accusative singular in 14:6, 21; 16:1) seems strange, but it also appears in 2 Tim 3:11 and possibly (though not certainly) in some Latin documents; the title may thus be heteroclitic.¹⁴¹⁶ Although this is the only NT example with this sense, ἀδύνατος can refer to physical powerlessness elsewhere.¹⁴¹⁷

One could turn from addressing a crowd (Acts 14:9) to addressing an individual (14:10) or group (sometimes hypothetical) for rhetorical effect,¹⁴¹⁸ but Paul's action here is no mere rhetorical device. Paul's ability to discern faith here (14:9) might be viewed as an excellent teacher's insight, but more likely it is viewed (especially given Luke's emphasis) as supernatural.¹⁴¹⁹ Libanius allegedly recognized each person's character and moral inclinations when he saw them, enabling him to teach pupils well (Eunapius *Lives* 495); closer to our period, the same ability seems attributed in a more natural way to Musonius Rufus (frg. 48, p. 140.17–19). Rabbis occasionally spoke of prophetic discernment,¹⁴²⁰ sometimes even including a rare “charismatic” sage's confidence based on whether his prayer came fluently (*m. Ber.* 5:5). On faith for healing, see comments above.

On Luke's frequent use of “loud voice,” see comment on Acts 7:57. Healing by command also occurs in Acts 3:6, although there Peter helped the man up (3:7). Here, as in the account in 3:8, the man who is healed “leaps” (though here it is said only that he leaps up to walk, whereas there he both leaped up to walk and continued leaping as well as walking). In both texts, Luke's choice of the term “leap” suggests an allusion to Isa 35:6, the text alluded to in Luke 7:22.

Excursus: Paul as a Cynic Preacher?

One of the more controversial elements that occasionally appear in Luke's portrayal of Paul's ministry in Acts is Paul's occasional public preaching in a manner similar to Cynics.¹⁴²¹ Some suggest that Luke merely created this image of Paul to conform him to a popular philosophic model. Yet as we shall see, the model was not restricted to

restoration in Acts 4:9–12 (cf. the “soteriological” usage in Luke 8:12; Acts 15:11; 16:31). The context may also suggest a connection here (see Fournier, *Episode*, 82).

1415. Miracles can occur despite some participants' lack of faith (Matt 8:26; 14:17, 26; 16:8–10; Mark 4:40; 6:49; 8:4, 17–21; 9:24, 26; Luke 2:9; 5:4–9; 8:25; 11:14–15; esp. Luke 1:20; cf. Luke 10:18). The disciples themselves are often the ones chided for their little faith (Mark 4:40; Luke 8:25; 12:28; cf. Luke 17:5), albeit esp. in Matthew (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20). See further discussion in Keener, *Miracles*, 634.

1416. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 110 (citing MAMA 8.5, first century C.E.; 8.8, a third-century milestone; but admitting that the reconstruction is questionable).

1417. See Libero, “Disability,” 534. Hobart, *Medical Language*, 46, notes its occurrence in the medical literature, also comparing parallels for ὀρθός in Acts 14:10 (cf. Heb 12:13).

1418. E.g., Libanius *Declam.* 36.22–23; i.e., “apostrophe,” in, e.g., *Rhet. Her.* 4.15.22; Rowe, “Style,” 139 (citing Rom 2:1; Tert. *Mart.* 1); Porter, “Paul and Letters,” 581; Anderson, *Glossary*, 25 (citing Quint. *Inst.* 4.1.63–69; 4.2.103, 106–7; 6.1.3; 9.2.38; 9.3.24–26; and other sources).

1419. Strelan, “Recognizing,” argues for other signs to the Lystrans of the apostles' “divinity” here besides the miracle (though by themselves they may not have persuaded); on the gaze, see also Strelan, “Stares”; idem, *Strange Acts*, 127 (viewing it as displaying special power); comment on Acts 3:4. Parsons, *Acts*, 198–99, follows this background of the “divine,” unblinking gaze and gods' loud voices.

1420. Cf. *t. Pisha* 2:15; *Mek. Shir.* 7.17–18 (Lauterbach, 2:55); *b. Ber.* 31b.

1421. For Paul's fitting the ancient typology for a “wandering preacher,” see Liefeld, “Preacher,” 146–51. On Cynics, see further Desmond, *Cynics*; Klauck, *Context*, 377–85.

the Cynics, and Paul's own writings indicate his own use of a Cynic model at times. Once the paucity of our concrete evidence, on the one hand, and Luke's literary freedom as a historian, on the other, are taken into account, the supposed conflict between Luke and the epistolary Paul (mainly an argument from silence in the latter) appears far less clear.

1. Luke versus Paul on Public Preaching?

The emphasis of a "Cynic model" of open-air preaching has been exaggerated for Acts. Luke himself provides only four examples of Paul's "open-air" preaching, in three cities (Acts 14:8–10; 16:13; 17:17, 22–31).¹⁴²² Of these, one is a Sabbath gathering in which Paul would be naturally welcomed to speak as at a synagogue (16:13); another, a trial speech invited by local educators after initially hearing him (17:22–31), was a conventional way of introducing sophists in new cities. Acts does not emphasize the sophistic portrait as much as some have charged, and the apparent absence or rareness of this portrait in the epistles can be readily explained by their different focus and the fact that even Acts does not present this as Paul's usual method.

The proposed conflict rests on evidence that is better understood as reflecting the different genres and agendas of the two corpora. Luke focuses on the founding of churches and Paul on their continuing growth. We may illustrate this by responding to the arguments of two scholars. Meeks rightly points out that Acts sometimes portrays Paul and his companions as resembling the most successful "traveling sophists or philosophers," complete "with a retinue and rich patrons."¹⁴²³ By contrast, Paul's epistles, though not completely different from Acts, emphasize "the natural networks of relationship in each city and between cities."¹⁴²⁴

This contrast, however, may simply highlight the different agendas of Acts and the epistles: the former focuses on Paul's founding of churches, the latter on the spread of the movement after the initial contacts had been made. Before the church could grow along the lines of natural social networks, Paul needed to establish some contacts and gain a hearing. This he must have often done as Acts suggests, like a visiting synagogue lecturer (see the comment on Acts 13:5, where I have already argued this point) or a traveling sophist; 1 Cor 2:1 speaks of Paul's beginning in Corinth the way sophists often began, although it emphasizes the contrasts between Paul's focus and that of the sophists.¹⁴²⁵

Stowers objects that Paul's letters, as well as Acts when the uniquely Lukan elements are removed, reveal Paul starting as a teacher in private homes, and he notes that only those with recognized status in the Roman world would have access to public buildings.¹⁴²⁶ But that Paul moved quickly to private homes does not mean

1422. Liefeld, "Preacher," 202; Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 23. Although Acts presents Paul as preaching openly earlier as well as later in his ministry and in synagogues throughout, both Acts (esp. Acts 19:9) and Paul's letters (esp. 1–2 Corinthians and Philipians, but even 1 Thessalonians, his earliest letter; even more if we accept, as I do, Ephesians and Colossians) testify that Paul grew quickly conversant with Greco-Roman sophistic or sage models (Judge, "Scholastic Community," 126–28, even argues for a progression in Acts).

1423. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 28.

1424. *Ibid.*

1425. See Winter, *Left Corinth*, 36–37. Philosophers offered the same contrast at sophists' expense (e.g., Plato *Theaet.* 164CD; *Apol.* 38D–39B; Plato *Hippias major*; Xen. *Mem.* 4.3.1; Val. Max. 3.4.ext. 1; Sen. Y. *Ep. Lucil.* 20.2; 40.4; 86.16; 100.1; 108.12, 23, 38; 115.1–2; Mus. Ruf. 8, pp. 62.40–64.4; Marc. Aur. 1.7; 1.16.4; 1.17.8; Anacharsis *Ep.* 1; Porph. *Marc.* 17.284–85; Philo *Creation* 45; cf. Keener, *Corinthians*, 36).

1426. Stowers, "Status, Speaking, and Teaching." Cf. Witherington, *Corinthians*, 246, who doubts that Paul would have preferred street corner preaching to the domestic locus of intellectual activity.

that he always started there. Where did he obtain his initial contacts whose homes he could use (cf., e.g., Acts 18:6–8), or lecture halls (19:8–9)?¹⁴²⁷ Luke, who knew urban Hellenistic culture firsthand, does not force a choice between these different venues (20:20), nor is there anything logically incompatible about these venues.

Further, Paul's Roman citizenship and experience as a teacher provided him some degree of status, as is evident in his epistles (in the Corinthian correspondence, the higher-status members seem particularly upset that Paul refuses to conform to higher-status models available to him). Likewise, although his Jewishness counted against him for many hearers (16:20–21), others were interested in Judaism (see comment on Acts 13:43) and in exotic ideas from the East (similar to nineteenth-century Western fascination with the "Orient"). New speakers in a city had to start somewhere with a speech open to the public before starting their school and attracting students.¹⁴²⁸ Established status could draw a crowd, but even homeless Cynics could preach and harangue passersby freely in the porches of public temples and other buildings.

2. A Useful Portrayal?

This point raises the question of status, relevant not only to whether one required high status for public preaching but also to whether Luke had reason to simply invent such a portrait. Luke likes to emphasize high-status believers or sympathizers when he has them available, yet far from such public preaching being viewed as high-status, later Christian intellectuals avoided it precisely because it was low-status. Celsus charged that Christian preachers appealed to masses in the marketplace like other demagogues;¹⁴²⁹ Origen had to defend the practice in respectable terms (*Cels.* 3.50–52). Lucian *Runaways* 12 complains about low-class persons who pretend to become wise by becoming "philosophers," especially (*Runaways* 17) when they see that they can earn more as charlatans than as laborers.¹⁴³⁰

Marketplace preaching thus appeared disreputable to higher classes,¹⁴³¹ and so one who wished to establish himself as a sophist in an aristocratic home or attract disciples had to announce a public speech, draw a sufficient crowd, and begin more respectable teaching as quickly as possible. Once Paul had attracted some members whose social networks could extend the church, he would probably abandon the open-air method, especially if he had succeeded in winning some high-status members (whether through open-air preaching or, perhaps more likely, through rhetorical opportunities that this opened up for him in the homes of some converts' patrons).

1427. Lecture halls (Acts 19:9) were not private homes but would have been available to those who could afford to rent them. If Acts portrays Paul as supporting himself (20:33–34), so does Paul (1 Cor 4:12; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8); and if Acts indicates that Paul had patrons in some cities (Acts 19:31), Paul also mentions influential members of his congregations probably analogous to the influential patrons of synagogues (though Paul refuses to accept patronage in Corinth). By the time of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, he would have developed both the skills and the reputation of a sage, at least for a large enough group of people to make patronage of his group seem advantageous (see comment on Acts 19:31). We do not know the extent to which his ministry in Ephesus (19:9–10; our epistolary sources for his Corinthian ministry are more complete) may have exceeded opportunities elsewhere, but it does seem to have exceeded them (1 Cor 16:8–9).

1428. See again Winter, *Left Corinth*, 36–37; see comment on Acts 17:19.

1429. Liefeld, "Preacher," 204. For the aristocrats' antipopulist sentiments, see comment on Acts 4:18–22; Keener, *John*, 732–33.

1430. Lucian elsewhere complains about these uneducated Cynics (*Runaways* 27; *Phil. Sale* 11).

1431. Liefeld, "Preacher," 205.

Cynics, indeed, acquired their name from being compared to “dogs” (κύνες, pl. of κύων).¹⁴³² Their indecent, private acts in public gained them this reputation; thus Diogenes, while preaching, squatted and did something considered dishonorable, leading the crowds to denounce him as crazy.¹⁴³³ For other philosophers, however, being “bestial” meant being led by passions instead of by reason.¹⁴³⁴ When Demonax was not Cynic enough to please the Cynics, one accused him of being insufficiently “doggish,” to which he responded that his interlocutor was insufficiently human (Lucian *Dem.* 21). When a Stoic kept a rich woman's dog and it wetted him, people mocked him as a Cynic, a dog (Lucian *Posts* 34). (Unqualified comparisons of early Christian preachers to Cynics, ignoring the Jewish sensitivities of the former, prove unduly selective.)

Thus some other philosophers denounced fake Cynics and other philosophers,¹⁴³⁵ accusing them of greed¹⁴³⁶ or of abandoning real work for an easier job of preaching.¹⁴³⁷ Many viewed excessive Cynics as demagogues (e.g., Lucian *Dem.* 61); the masses, some complained, could not distinguish between true and false philosophers (Lucian *Runaways* 15).

This is not to imply that everyone viewed Cynics negatively. Stoics sometimes respected Cynics,¹⁴³⁸ and others also followed the example of “good” Cynics.¹⁴³⁹ (Many disdained the harsh, uncompromising “hard Cynics” while respecting the more tolerant “soft Cynics.”)¹⁴⁴⁰ Stoic views toward Cynics in this period are typically ambivalent, with both positive and negative characteristics.¹⁴⁴¹ Embarrassed by their Cynic roots, Stoics had moved away from them in many respects,¹⁴⁴² but first-century Stoics such as Seneca and Epictetus celebrated the Cynic model of simplicity, which regained popularity in the first two centuries B.C.E. and the first century C.E.¹⁴⁴³ Epictetus idealizes Cynics as models of virtue, at length in one of his discourses (*Diatr.* 2.22) and more briefly in other passages.¹⁴⁴⁴

1432. For comparison of Cynics to dogs, see, e.g., Cercidas frg. 1; Mart. *Epig.* 4.53.5; Lucian *Phil. Sale* 7, 10; *Runaways* 16; *Peregrinus* 2; Diog. Laert. 6.2.40, 45–46, 60, 77; Athen. *Deipn.* 13.611bc; *Gr. Anth.* 7.63–68, 115 (perhaps also 116); Philo *Plant.* 151; more positively, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.62; Paus. 2.2.4; Crates *Ep.* 16; Diogenes *Ep.* 2, 7; Lucian *Dial. D.* 329 (1/1, Diogenes 1); 425 (2/22, Charon and Menippus 3); 336 (3/2, The Dead to Pluto against Menippus 1); 420 (4/21, Menippus and Cerberus 1); Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.31–33; applied negatively to all philosophers in Lucian *Hermot.* 86. As an insult in general, see comment on Acts 10:11.

1433. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 8.36 (cf. insanity accusations, 9.8; 12.8; 34.2, 4); dogs were associated with indecent acts (Plut. *Exile* 7, *Mor.* 601DE; y. *Ta'an.* 1:6, §8). Cynics' behavior may be understandable; in working with the homeless years ago, I observed how “abnormal” those alienated from societal constraints seemed to those for whom such constraints defined normalcy.

1434. See, e.g., 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Pet 2:12; comment on Acts 10:11.

1435. E.g., Lucian *Dem.* 48; *Indictment* 7, 11; *Fisherman* passim, e.g., 15, 37, 42. Cf. public distaste for a hypocritical and greedy follower of Stoicism in Tac. *Ann.* 16.32.

1436. Lucian *Runaways* 17, 20; *Dial. D.* 374 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 10); *Hermot.* 9, 18; *Peregr.* 13; *Tim.* 54–57; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 42; cf. Malherbe, “Gentle as Nurse,” 216; for the same charge against religious charlatans, e.g., Soph. *Antig.* 1061; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.41; against other public figures, see, e.g., Lysias *Or.* 28.3, §179; Aeschines *Ctes.* 218.

1437. Lucian *Indictment* 6; *Runaways* 12.

1438. E.g., Diog. Laert. 7.1.121. Stoics did, however, move away from their Cynic roots, especially as Stoics became more socially respectable (Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 76); Cynicism was growing in popularity, however, in the first and second centuries B.C.E. (78).

1439. See Malherbe, “Gentle as Nurse,” passim (= also idem, *Philosophers*, 35–48).

1440. See Moles, “Cynics,” 418; Malherbe, “Gentle as Nurse,” 210, 214; idem, *Philosophers*, 20–22, 71–72. Malherbe, *Philosophers*, 14, points out that the Cynic materials themselves display this division.

1441. Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11s, pp. 98–99.24–28 (also Pomeroy, 127–28n222, citing esp. Cic. *Fin.* 3.68; Apollodorus Ephillus in Diog. Laert. 6.104; 7.121; Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22).

1442. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 76 (citing Diog. Laert. 7.34; cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.128, 148).

1443. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 78.

1444. E.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 4.8.30–32. Contrast Philod. *Prop.* cols. 12–13.

It was the Cynics' lifestyle that above all distinguished one as a Cynic rather than something else,¹⁴⁴⁵ but elements of their behavior were adapted by others. In practice, philosophers exhibited a range of behaviors, sometimes borrowing what they thought most useful from the Cynic tradition without adopting it wholesale.¹⁴⁴⁶ Dio Chrysostom appreciated Cynic doctrine but denounced Cynics' usual harangues on the streets, in alleys, and at temple gates as turning people off to true philosophy.¹⁴⁴⁷ Although Dio, as a famous orator, had more "honorable" means of access to public assemblies, he himself "for a time adopted the Cynic way of life."¹⁴⁴⁸ Although he was not a Cynic, Apollonius was portrayed as living in temples (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.16; 4.40), following the Cynic model.

Claiming that Luke's portrayal is not high-status or fabricated is therefore not meant to imply that neither Luke nor Paul would be able to find some value in presenting Paul as a wandering preacher at least initially (although Luke does not focus on how Paul drew outdoor hearings, except through signs). Public preaching would not offend everyone, and perhaps would offend aristocrats only if it was a controversial movement's primary means of expanding, which would suggest that it sought popular (rather than aristocratic) support.

3. Forums for Public Speech

There were many public speakers besides Cynics. Sometimes a form of public preaching was simply the only way most entirely new speakers could gain a hearing. Sophists gained reputations especially through versatile, extemporaneous presentations, whether with students or in public.¹⁴⁴⁹ Pliny the Younger praises for extemporaneous ability a young orator who displayed his exceptional knowledge by letting the audience select any topic for him to discuss (*Ep.* 2.3.1–3).

Those who wished to find crowds could find them in the forums and other public places; such places were popular for buying and selling, loitering, and gossip.¹⁴⁵⁰ Public speakers were common in the streets and at festivals;¹⁴⁵¹ even bathhouse-gymnasium complexes, as public places, hosted philosophers, rhetoricians, and poets vying for attention.¹⁴⁵² Although in language full of exaggeration, Lucian appears to present hearers as surrounded by would-be philosophers on every side.¹⁴⁵³

Declaimers competed for large crowds and applause, and crowds would gather to try out the newest speakers in the same way they would throng to watch fresh

1445. Malherbe, *Philosophers*, 12, 24. Some Cynics may not have adopted the entire lifestyle; e.g., Demetrius the Cynic sought to defend someone in court (Tac. *Hist.* 4.40).

1446. E.g., Lucian *Dem.* 5, 7.

1447. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.9, in Alexandria.

1448. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 26 (citing Dio Chrys. *Or.* 8.4–5, 9–16).

1449. Maclean and Aitken, *Heroikos*, xlvii. Some strongly preferred extemporaneous speeches (Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 205–6, citing Alcidas *On the Writers of Written Discourse, or On the Sophists* 6, 13–14, 22); on appreciation for extemporaneous speeches, see, e.g., Sen. E. *Controv.* 4.pref. 7; Pliny *Ep.* 2.3.1–3; Suet. *Gramm.* 23; Tib. 70.1; Lucian *Prof. P.S.* 20; Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.24.529; others insisted that preparation was important (Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.pref. 2–3). Even extemporaneous speeches, however, could draw on memorized stock topics (Walde, "Mnemonics," 96). Skilled memory allowed one to recall sufficient information on a range of subjects extemporaneously (Sen. E. *Controv.* 1.pref. 18; cf. 3.pref. 6).

1450. See, e.g., Stambaugh, *City*, 111. The most effective means of advertising was often shouting in the streets or markets (Hirschmann, "Advertizing," 978).

1451. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 20.9–10.

1452. McRay, *Archaeology*, 43.

1453. Lucian *Indictment* 6; esp. 8; cf. *Fisherman passim*, e.g., 15, 37, 42.

gladiators or actors.¹⁴⁵⁴ Although some philosophers lectured in halls or for wealthy patrons, such job markets could not absorb all aspiring sages, and so large numbers preached in streets and markets.¹⁴⁵⁵ As Abraham Malherbe notes, most philosophers “spoke in public settings ranging from the forum to the workshop.”¹⁴⁵⁶

A renowned orator such as Dio Chrysostom even criticized philosophers who secluded themselves in classrooms, as if the masses were beyond hope; he insisted on public forums to improve the moral state of the masses.¹⁴⁵⁷ Private lecturers tended to speak more positively and focus on details of academic interest whereas Cynics could rant and focused on the negative.¹⁴⁵⁸ Public speakers like Dio fall somewhere between these poles, denouncing ignorance yet more gently than the harsher Cynics.¹⁴⁵⁹ Paul's critiques, like Dio's, are generally reasoned but also can confront errors firmly (both in the epistles and in Acts).

Probably one could make a transition from street preaching to providing banquet entertainment in rich homes without the former activity reflecting badly on the latter; even if a street-preaching background would have been a problem if known, few marketplace speakers (except persistent Cynics with regular locations over a long period of time) would become widely known. Even the contrast between school settings and public settings did not always hold; although many schools met in rented buildings or private homes, some met outside.¹⁴⁶⁰ An ancient city's streets would be full of unofficial activity; teachers taught their pupils the alphabet while itinerant vendors called attention to their wares, butchers cut up carcasses on the side of the street, and scribes drew up rental contracts at tables. In such places of frenzied activity, “any kind of rumpus brought a crowd.”¹⁴⁶¹ The civic climate virtually necessitated such public activity and interests. Homes were mainly places to sleep and sometimes perhaps to cook food on charcoal braziers; they were too crowded, drafty, and poorly ventilated and lit for much else. Thus people congregated whenever possible in the generous open spaces allotted to public buildings (temples, markets, streets, amphitheaters, baths, gymnasia, city gate areas, etc.), which together might compose a quarter of the city.¹⁴⁶²

4. Cynic Preaching

Whereas philosophers addressed gatherings in the forum, baths, or other public settings by invitation, “some Stoics, but especially Cynics, preached in the marketplaces and on street corners, where they urged all who passed by to listen to them as they spoke of virtue.”¹⁴⁶³ Cynics spoke freely everywhere, whether in the streets or at temple gates, and Dio Chrysostom's hearers in Alexandria were accustomed to them (*Or.* 32.7–12).¹⁴⁶⁴

1454. Pogoloff, *Logos*, 176 (citing esp. Sen. E. *Controv.* 4.pref. 1–2; 7.pref. 8–9; 9.pref. 2). Of course, only those who proved most appealing would receive audiences before the elite (176, citing Sen. E. *Controv.* 2.4.12).

1455. Malherbe, “Life,” 35; cf. Lucian *Indictment* 8.

1456. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 24.

1457. Meeks, *Moral World*, 63 (citing Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.8–12).

1458. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 40–41.

1459. *Ibid.*, 42.

1460. Jeffers, *World*, 255 (noting also seating provisions).

1461. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 64.

1462. Jeffers, *World*, 57–58; for temples as public space, see, e.g., Libanius *Topics* 2.8, 12.

1463. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 13. On wandering Stoics in an earlier period, see, e.g., Culpepper, *School*, 131. By this period, however, public preaching characterized Cynics more than Stoics (Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 45–46); older Greek Cynics pioneered the itinerant style that grew in the Roman period (see Montiglio, “Wandering Philosophers”).

1464. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 24–25.

Lucian gives us a sample of the style of preaching attributed to harsh Cynics.¹⁴⁶⁵ He mentions Cynics harshly abusing passersby indiscriminately¹⁴⁶⁶ and employing exaggerations;¹⁴⁶⁷ one wept and tore (gently) at his hair to stir emotion (*Peregr.* 6). They were loud and boisterous,¹⁴⁶⁸ and they might rant angrily if contradicted by another speaker (*Peregr.* 31).¹⁴⁶⁹ One comic portrayal presents Cynics hitting each other with their staffs (Lucian *Fisherman* 44). Pliny the Elder complains that a severe Cynic such as Diogenes lacked normal human feeling (*N.H.* 7.19.79).

Cynics were known for their rudeness and especially their disrespect for social rank and status.¹⁴⁷⁰ When a person of status warned Diogenes not to spit in the wealthy home where he had brought him, Diogenes allegedly spat in the man's face, noting that nothing of poorer quality was available (Diog. Laert. 6.2.32). They were also antisocial enough to criticize rulers, but given their established role in social tradition, they usually avoided punishment. In stories about Diogenes, he desired as much honor as Alexander of Macedon¹⁴⁷¹ (a clear example of Cynic hubris). One could, of course, go too far, criticizing some more sensitive rulers. It was said that when Demetrius the Cynic in Rome denounced baths on the day that Nero dedicated his new baths, Tigellinus had him banished from Rome.¹⁴⁷²

Still, positive elements in Cynic preaching could be emulated. Other philosophers often shared Cynic themes, so that lower-class Stoics sometimes used Cynics' public preaching methods and (often wrongly, in this period) were sometimes viewed together with them politically.¹⁴⁷³ Ever a critic of harsh Cynics, the rhetorician Lucian showed great affection and respect for the Cynic teacher Demonax.¹⁴⁷⁴

5. Cynic Characteristics in Paul's Letters

Some scholars argue that Luke simply wished to present Paul preaching publicly according to a Cynic ideal.¹⁴⁷⁵ Yet we should consider the possibility that Paul knew of, and presented himself according to, the same cultural ideal.¹⁴⁷⁶ Granted, Paul's thought is usually much closer to that of Stoics than that of Cynics—living within

1465. On harsh Cynics, cf. Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.19.79; Lucian *Runaways* 19, 27. On such Cynics as demagogues, see Lucian *Dem.* 61.

1466. Lucian *Peregr.* 3, 18; *Runaways* 14; *Phil. Sale* 10.

1467. E.g., Peregrinus can rival Zeus; Lucian *Peregr.* 4–6.

1468. Lucian *Peregr.* 3, 5; *Runaways* 14, 27; cf. *Icar.* 31.

1469. One imagines that some hearers' motives for listening resembled those of some watchers of horror movies or graphic violence today: the cheap thrill of an adrenaline rush that does not risk one's safety.

1470. More positively, they were known for frank speech; see Vaage, "Barking"; Malherbe, "Gentle as Nurse," 208, 213; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 63; Diog. Laert. 6.2.51; 6.5.92. Diogenes probably employed his rude wit effectively, humorously attracting attention (see Bosman, "Selling Cynicism").

1471. Diog. Laert. 6.2.60, 64; he is unafraid of Alexander also (6.2.68), and Alexander respects him (6.2.32). Crates also answers Alexander boldly (6.5.93). The probably apocryphal story of Diogenes asking Alexander only that he move from blocking his sunlight was often told (e.g., 6.2.38; Arrian *Alex.* 7.2.1). Cf. also traditions about Diogenes's challenge to athletes' honor (Bosman, "Athletes").

1472. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.42. Demetrius had been close to an enemy of Nero (*Tac. Ann.* 16.34–35).

1473. Liefeld, "Preacher," 36, 40.

1474. E.g., Lucian *Dem.* 5, 7.

1475. Familiarity with Cynics was widespread; this was especially true for traditions about Diogenes (Hock, "Cynics and Rhetoric," 764–72). For a summary of information about the Cynics, see, e.g., Fiore, "Cynicism," 242–45.

1476. See esp. Downing, *Cynics* (though I would not find nearly so many elements specific to Cynicism); cf. Malherbe, *Philosophers*. Cynicism even offered an accepted (if often reviled) model for deviating from the norms of Gentile society (Downing, "Paul's Drive"); but this aspect of Cynicism could be more incidental to Paul's deliberate adaptation.

society's structures, working rather than living on the street, and so forth. But Cynic categories do allow Paul to expand the range of ideas he can communicate intelligibly in Gentile society (e.g., his ideal of radical apostolic lifestyle, following the Jesus tradition, sometimes resembles Cynic language).

Only a limited number of forums were available for public preaching, and Paul would likely employ methods that already existed. Granted, he usually started in the synagogues (see comment on Acts 13:5), but this is clearer in Acts than in the epistles, and Luke, who knew first-century culture better than we, saw no contradiction. Apparently Paul was ready to adopt a wide range of methods to gain a hearing among the largest possible range of audiences (1 Cor 9:20–22). These could include the way noted orators began in a city but also (and especially since Paul was rarely noted when he arrived) speaking on the street, a practice of many speakers (Cynics became particularly known for it because they went considerably further than others, even living on the streets).

Paul's writings do, indeed, show conformity to some Cynic-type ideals, although, at least on the ideal level (where they are most relevant to Paul), these models, like public preaching, were shared by some other philosophers as well (e.g., 1 Cor 3:21–23;¹⁴⁷⁷ 4:11–13).¹⁴⁷⁸ Scholars often compare Paul's argumentative style, especially in his three longest letters, to the diatribe used by (though not at all limited to) Cynics and Stoics,¹⁴⁷⁹ and his writings are full of elements frequent in this stream of philosophic thought.¹⁴⁸⁰ On some issues debated among philosophers, Paul comes closer to the Cynic position than do his opponents,¹⁴⁸¹ including his sacrificial lifestyle, though he is more often closer to Stoic thought (see comment at Acts 17:18). (Stoics, who differed from Cynics at some key points, nevertheless approved of some Cynic ideas and regarded the Cynic lifestyle as an accelerated path to virtue.)¹⁴⁸²

Although his life did not match the Cynic ideal in every respect even as he represents it, it is likely that Paul would conform to the pattern he espouses at least to a sufficient degree to retain his credibility when depicting this ideal to churches that knew him (such as Corinth and Thessalonica).¹⁴⁸³ In 1 Thess 2, his defense follows the conventional pattern that Dio Chrysostom portrayed as characteristic of the "good" Cynics.¹⁴⁸⁴ Paul may not describe the circumstances under which he began evangelism

1477. Not just Cynics (who implemented the notion radically, Crates *Ep.* 26–27; Diog. Laert. 6.2.37, 44, 72) but also the Stoics felt that all things belong to the wise; e.g., Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 66.22; Plut. *Cic.* 25.4; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11g, pp. 74–75.5–13; Diog. Laert. 7.1.125; mocked in Plut. *St. Poets* 4, *Mor.* 1058C.

1478. Cf., e.g., *peristasis* catalogues also used by Stoics; the wise person as being wealthy (1 Cor 4:8) in, e.g., Cic. *Parad.* 42–52; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11i, pp. 76–77.8–16. All kinds of philosophers thought themselves most fit to rule (Val. Max. 7.2.ext. 4; Iambl. *V.P.* 35.250), including Stoics (Cic. *Fin.* 3.22.75; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 108.13; Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 66.3, 13–26; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 88–89.26–29; pp. 90–91.1–6; pp. 92–93.18–20; ridiculed in, e.g., Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.125).

1479. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 144; cf. Stowers, *Diatribe*. But the diatribe form admittedly characterized instruction, not just school settings and certainly not just Cynics (Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 243; cf. Stowers, *Diatribe*, 175, favoring a school setting but refuting Bultmann's focus on Cynic street preaching; Watson, "Diatribe," 213; on Berol.P. 13044, see Bosman, "Riddle Contest").

1480. E.g., Rom 1:19–20 (cf., e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.6.23–24); 1 Cor 8:6 (cf., e.g., Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 91; Grant, *Paul*, 72); Phil 4:11 (cf., e.g., Mus. Ruf. frg. 43, p. 138.15; Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.11h, pp. 74–75.31–32; Diog. Laert. 6.1.11; 6.2.22; 10.120); though Paul, like most of his contemporaries (see comment on Acts 17:18), was eclectic (compare, e.g., Middle Platonic imagery in 2 Cor 4:16–18 with, e.g., Max. Tyre 10.5; Porph. *Marc.* 32.494–97). See further deSilva, "Paul and Stoa"; comment on Acts 17:18.

1481. See Sumney, *Opponents*, 185–86.

1482. Diog. Laert. 7.1.121 (perhaps because it offered a crash course in not valuing possessions).

1483. Though he appeals to the pattern in 1 Cor 9 partly to counter the higher-status members' status consciousness, Paul appeals to their knowledge of how he lives.

1484. See Malherbe, "Gentle as Nurse" (followed in part or in whole by various commentators on 1 Thessalonians).

in various locations (summaries such as 1 Thess 1:9–10; 2:13 are too brief to include such details), but his writings reveal a sensitivity to the ideal-philosopher model no less than does Acts (see remarks in the introduction to Acts 17:15–24 and at 17:19–20).

None of this is unexpected. Jesus and his Galilean followers began their itinerant ministry as wandering preachers.¹⁴⁸⁵ Some other Galilean sages also disputed in marketplaces, attracting audiences by the same means that were employed in Greek cities.¹⁴⁸⁶ It was only natural that other early Christians would continue this model, which, when translated from a rural Galilean to an urban Hellenistic setting, looked more like that of traditional Cynics than most alternatives the Greeks (unfamiliar with mobile biblical prophets) knew.¹⁴⁸⁷ Some scholars have contrasted Paul with itinerant, possessionless sages inferred from the Jesus tradition;¹⁴⁸⁸ yet Paul's lifestyle in Acts comes closer to this lifestyle than do any other concrete figures in the NT after Jesus's ascension.

6. Distinguishing Paul from Cynics

Sharing a characteristic of outdoor preaching with Cynics, however, does not make Paul a Cynic (any more than it made all other outdoor speakers Cynics). Liefeld notes that Luke carefully distinguishes Paul from questionable itinerants. Luke criticizes Paul's rivals (a common technique for distinguishing): Elymas in Acts 13:8–11, the exorcists of 19:13–16, false prophets in 20:29–30. Paul is no rabble-rouser (contrast 19:24–29; 24:5, 18–19); he is a rabbi working through local synagogues (13:5) and, in contrast to Cynic sages, refuses contributions (20:33–35).¹⁴⁸⁹ Paul's own writings reveal many of these same techniques. Many commentators on 1 Thessalonians have followed Malherbe's parallels with Dio Chrysostom, who distinguishes the good Cynic model from the bad.¹⁴⁹⁰ Paul's refusal to accept support from some churches became a matter of controversy in Corinth (1 Cor 9:3–18; esp. 2 Cor 11:7–9; 12:13–16; cf. 1 Thess 2:9).

Neither Luke nor Paul presses the wandering-preacher type to its fullest Cynic ideal.¹⁴⁹¹ Granted, Cynic simplicity (abandoning possessions) fits the demands of Paul's apostolic call both in his writings (1 Cor 4:11–12; 2 Cor 11:27) and in Luke-Acts (see Luke 9:3; 10:4 [cf. Mark 6:8–9]); Luke presses this ideal further, applying it, in accordance with the Jesus tradition, to all disciples, Luke 9:58; 12:33; 14:33; 18:29). Given such commitments, it is not surprising that a Cynic could exploit Christians (Lucian *Peregr.* 11–16).¹⁴⁹² People often gave speakers money; on Cynic simplicity, see comment on Acts 2:44–45; on Cynic begging, see comment on Acts 3:2–3.

Some scholars have compared Jesus's demands on his disciples to those of wandering Cynics.¹⁴⁹³ The comparison of Cynics to the early Jesus movement (often

1485. On itinerant speakers, see comment on Acts 11:27; cf. Keener, *Matthew*, 57.

1486. See Goodman, *State*, 74 (citing esp. *t. Kil.* 1:4).

1487. Cf. here esp. Meeks, *Moral World*, 107. This is not to highlight the traditional category of “wandering prophets”; see comment on Acts 11:27.

1488. Theissen, *Setting*, 28–35, suggests various socioeconomic factors in Palestine that led to itinerant Christian charismatic preachers (the supposed source of the “Forsake all and follow me”-type traditions); he contrasts them (35–40) to Paul, stressing community organization.

1489. Liefeld, “Preacher,” 298.

1490. E.g., Best, *Thessalonians*, 94–95; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 25; cf. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 114; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 61.

1491. Paul apparently distinguished his views from those of Cynics at times by opposing himself to Cynic language (cf., e.g., Fredrickson, “No Noose”).

1492. Edwards, “Satire,” even argues that Lucian presented Christians as sham Cynics.

1493. Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*, 27–33; Theissen, *Sociology*, 14–15; cf. Kee, *Origins*, 68. I borrow material here from Keener, *Matthew*, 154–55.

negatively by outsiders) is not unreasonable; missionaries such as Paul¹⁴⁹⁴ may have helped make such a model acceptable to later monasticizing streams of Christian thought (*Sent. Sext.* 18–19). Yet Jesus's itinerant ministry was in no respect distinctly Cynic.¹⁴⁹⁵ Cynics were not the only Greek philosophers who traveled;¹⁴⁹⁶ moreover, Torah teachers also could travel “from place to place to speak.”¹⁴⁹⁷ Most telling, Cynics were surely too rare in Jewish Palestine (indeed, so far as we know, nonexistent among Jewish people in Palestine or elsewhere) to provide the primary model.¹⁴⁹⁸ For Jesus's itinerant mission, the best background widely known in Jewish Palestine is that of the OT prophets.¹⁴⁹⁹

Although Cynics do not add much to our understanding of Jesus's ministry historically, they are more relevant to how some outsiders might view itinerant evangelists such as Paul.¹⁵⁰⁰ Like Paul, Cynics abandoned all possessions for their mission;¹⁵⁰¹ Paul did not take matters as far as they did, however, since he did not live on the street (cf. Acts 16:15; 18:2–3). Probably unlike Paul (given his Jewish aversion to nakedness),¹⁵⁰² Cynics wore very little—a short cloak, with a wallet.¹⁵⁰³ Like the early disciples, they might carry little with them, such as their staff.¹⁵⁰⁴ Other ancients complained about Cynics (or other sages) who thought that their simple garment or staff made them Cynics.¹⁵⁰⁵ But living simply also characterized some other thinkers who could compare their mean cloaks to those of Cynics (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.22; 34.2); philosophers with long hair, beards, and simple cloaks were a common sight,¹⁵⁰⁶ though they often faced mockery (72.2). All this despite the fact that statues of gods and heroes of old

1494. See Bowers, “Propaganda,” 318–19; Scroggs, “Present State,” 172.

1495. Even in Luke, who is most apt to present Jesus to his readers in such culturally relevant terms; cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Memory*, 74; Witherington, *Sage*, 117–45; Eddy, “Diogenes.”

1496. E.g., Diog. Laert. 2.22.

1497. Safrai, “Home,” 762. See also idem, “Education,” 965; *Sipre Deut.* 43.3.7.

1498. E.g., Boyd, *Sage*, 151–58; Eddy, “Diogenes,” 463–67.

1499. 1 Sam 7:16–17; 2 Kgs 4:8–10; cf. Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*, 16–24; Culpepper, *School*, 227. Whereas prophets like Jesus and Paul performed signs, Downing, *Cynics*, 220–21, cannot find notable Cynic examples.

1500. Though Paul was mostly itinerant as he was traveling to more hospitable venues, and did not go mostly naked or live on the street, as noted below. That is, ancients could use stock criticisms of Cynics against him, but they would not mistake him for a full-fledged Cynic, even before they heard him speak.

1501. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 64.18; Crates *Ep.* 18, 30; Lucian *Peregr.* 24, 36; see comment on Acts 2:44–45. They may have grounded this in their understanding of the primal ideal (see Martin, “Chronos Myth”).

1502. 2 Cor 5:3–4. Granted, he speaks of being poorly clothed (Rom 8:35; 1 Cor 4:11), but apparently as a trial necessitated by his travels rather than as a deliberate identification with the Cynic lifestyle. See fuller discussion of “nakedness” at Acts 7:58.

1503. E.g., Juv. *Sat.* 13.121–22; Crates *Ep.* 18, 30; Aul. Gel. 9.2.4–5; Lucian *Dem.* 48; *Runaways* 14, 20, 27; *Peregr.* 15, 24, 36; *Dial. D.* 364–65 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 2); *Indictment* 6; *Phil. Sale* 9; *Icar.* 31; *Cynic* 4, 19–20; cf. the complaint in Quint. *Decl.* 283.2. Against their detractors, Downing, *Cynics*, 34, allows more diversity for their apparel but concurs that they were poorly clothed.

1504. E.g., Lucian *Runaways* 27, 32; *Peregr.* 15, 24, 36; *Dial. D.* 364–65 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 2); *Indictment* 6; cf. philosophers in *Runaways* 14. One Cynic's staff sold for a high price after his death (Lucian *Book-Coll.* 14); Cynics could also be portrayed as hitting each other with their staffs (Lucian *Fisherman* 44, a comic portrait).

1505. E.g., Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 106.12–16; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.3; 49.11; Lucian *Runaways* 14; *Indictment* 6; Max. Tyre 1.9.

1506. Crosby, introduction to Dio Chrys. *Or.* 72 (LCL, 5:174), notes that this profession was more familiar than any other, which suggests that many practiced philosophy on the streets. On philosophers with long hair, see Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.15; 35.2; *Encomium on Hair*; Lucian *Phil. Sale* 2; *Peregr.* 15; *Cynic* 17, 19; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.36; Diog. Laert. 1.109; Iambl. *V.P.* 2.11; 6.31; with long beards, see Epict. *Diatr.* 2.23.21; Plut. *Isis* 3, *Mor.* 352C; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.30; Aul. Gel. 9.2.4–5; Lucian *Runaways* 27; *Icar.* 29; *Fisherman* 42; *Dem.* 13; *Lover of Lies* 5; *Indictment* 11; *Hermot.* 18, 86; *Eunuch* 9; Philost. *Ep. Apoll.* 3, 70; with both, Epict. *Diatr.* 4.8.12; 8.15; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.17; 47.25; 72.2; Lucian *Dial. D.* 371–72 (20/10, Charon and Hermes 9); Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 7.34. In contrast to Cynics, Stoics, though bearded, wore their hair short (Lucian *Runaways* 27; *Hermot.* 18).

also wore long hair and beards, says Dio,¹⁵⁰⁷ and that barbarians were expected to wear their hair long.¹⁵⁰⁸

Cynics also abstained from and taught abstinence from marriage,¹⁵⁰⁹ though, unlike Paul and other Jewish celibates, they did not think that singleness—useful to avoid distraction—necessarily entailed avoidance of deliberate sexual release. (Stoics differed starkly from Cynics on this point, approving of marriage.)¹⁵¹⁰ Because prostitutes cost money, it was best, said Cynics, to relieve one's sexual appetites for oneself; Diogenes was said to have given his hearers a public demonstration.¹⁵¹¹ One famous exception to the no-marriage rule was Hipparchia, from a wealthy family, who proved ready to endure the Cynic lifestyle and hence was welcome to marry Crates.¹⁵¹² It was said that they engaged in intercourse publicly, rejecting cultural notions of shame;¹⁵¹³ Crates and Hipparchia also continued living on the street.¹⁵¹⁴

Even where Paul could agree with Cynics, they followed some of these practices to extremes not appearing in Paul or even in the Jesus tradition. Those who fully followed Cynics' teaching also slept in public places (contrast Luke 10:5–7; Acts 16:15; 18:3), utterly unkempt and without concern for hygiene,¹⁵¹⁵ and were depicted as abandoning all family ties.¹⁵¹⁶ Some also regarded taking cold baths and going barefoot in winter weather as behavior typical for philosophers.¹⁵¹⁷ Not only did Cynics abstain from marriage themselves (as Paul did); they (unlike Paul; 1 Cor 7:9, 28, 36–40) would teach their followers to do the same. (For further on Cynics' simplicity, see comment on Acts 2:44–45; 3:2–3.)

Neither Acts nor the letters portray Paul as primarily Cynic, despite common features. Cynics were not alone in appreciation of sages who lived simply (see more detailed

1507. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 72.5. For long-haired heroes and deities, see, e.g., *Hom. Hymns* 3.450 (to Pythian Apollo); Pindar *Isthm.* 1.7; 3.14; Virg. *Aen.* 9.638; Ps.-Tibullus 3.10.2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.17; Lucian *Dial. G.* 215 (8/5, Zeus and Hera ¶5); *Cynic* 1; *Dial. G.* 275 (3/23, Apollo and Dionysus 2); Paus. 1.8.4; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.7; *Hrk.* 27.13; 29.5; 31.1; 38.3; 42.1, 3; *Ep.* 16 (26); 61 (64); for exceptions, Philost. *Hrk.* 19.3, 6; 33.39; 37.3. For ancients more generally, Hom. *Il.* 4.533; *Od.* 2.408; Sil. It. 15.671; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 2.12; esp. "long-haired Achaians" in Hom. *Il.* 2.51; 3.43, 79; 4.261; 7.85, 328, 442, 448, 459, 472, 476; 8.53, 341, 510; 9.45; 13.310; 18.6, 359; 19.69; *Od.* 1.90; 2.7; Spartans, Xen. *Lac.* 11.3; Plut. *S. Sp.*, Charillus 6, *Mor.* 232D; *Alc.* 23.3; *Lys.* 1.1–2.

1508. E.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 14.9.4; Pliny E. *N.H.* 6.32.162; 11.47.130; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.11; Heliod. *Eth.* 2.20.

1509. Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22.69–76 (esp. 70–71); Diogenes *Ep.* 47; Lucian *Phil. Sale* 9; *Dem.* 55; *True Story* 2.18; Max. Tyre 36.5; Diog. Laert. 6.2.54. So also any intercourse demanding excess time (Diogenes *Ep.* 44); for rejecting families, cf. Alciph. *Farm.* 38 (Euthydicus to Philiscus), 3.40, ¶1.

1510. See, e.g., Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.8, pp. 52–53.13; 2.7.11b, pp. 64–65.18–21 (presenting it as a sacrifice to which one condescends); 2.7.11m, pp. 90–91.9–11; Diog. Laert. 7.1.21, 121; Hierocles *Marr.* 4.22.21–24 (in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 100–104); Deming, *Celibacy*, 51–57; Collins, *Corinthians*, 254–55. Apparently Epictetus was unmarried (Lucian *Dem.* 55). Zeno's attempt to abolish marriage simply belonged to his anarchism against institutions in general (Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 75).

1511. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 6.16–20; Diogenes *Ep.* 42. While noting that harsh Cynics were noted for public defecation, masturbation, and the like, Downing, *Cynics*, 47–48, argues that not all Cynics behaved in this manner.

1512. Epict. *Diatr.* 3.22.76; Diog. Laert. 6.7.96–97; see further Goulet-Cazé, "Hipparchia." Some sources, perhaps doubting a woman's ability to fulfill this lifestyle, weaken her resolve (e.g., Crates *Ep.* 28–30, 32), but others portray her strength (Diogenes *Ep.* 3; Diog. Laert. 6.7.98; cf. Crates *Ep.* 33).

1513. Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 1.152.

1514. Mus. Ruf. 14, p. 92.1–4.

1515. E.g., Alciph. *Farm.* 38 (Euthydicus to Philiscus), 3.40, ¶2; Lucian *Icar.* 31. Lucian *Indictment* 6 mocks their self-tanning, based on their living in public space.

1516. E.g., Alciph. *Farm.* 38 (Euthydicus to Philiscus), 3.40, ¶¶1–3; cf. the portrayal of a father's alienation from a Cynic son in Quint. *Decl.* 283 (esp. 283.4). This resembles Luke 8:21; 9:59–62; 14:26; 18:29–30; but Luke does not press such controversial countercultural practices literally in Acts, as they would generate hostility from the broader society (see, e.g., Keener, *Paul*, 140–46).

1517. Lucian *Icar.* 31.

comment on Acts 2:44–45; 20:33–35); thus, for example, some rabbis praised (and perhaps idealized) the early sage Hillel for his background in poverty (*b. Yoma* 35b).

With some significant exceptions, most Cynics were uneducated or opposed education, especially rhetorical education;¹⁵¹⁸ Luke's portrayal of Paul appeals to a higher social stratum and (apart from Paul's public preaching) uses only widely favored elements of philosophic lifestyles (Paul's letters also confirm Luke's premise that Paul was more rhetorically sophisticated than the typical Cynic). Paul would agree with middle-of-the-road philosophers who held that philosophy was a matter not of being poorly clothed (though cf. 1 Cor 4:11) or of having long hair (cf. Acts 18:18; 1 Cor 11:14) but of thinking soundly (Mus. Ruf. 16, p. 106.12–16; Max. Tyre 1.9). Likewise, Malherbe concludes, regarding Cynic parallels in Paul's letters, that Paul "was no Cynic." He employed their language and addressed some of their favorite topics, but Paul was concerned with communities whereas Cynics were independent and concerned only with individuals.¹⁵¹⁹

7. Learning Greek Communication Patterns

Paul's training under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) prepared him for synagogue expositions, but as the narrative progresses, Paul realizes that God is giving him more success with Gentiles (13:46; 18:6), increasingly forcing him into the probably less familiar Greek rhetorical mold of a sophist or sage.¹⁵²⁰ There is good reason to believe that Paul had some knowledge of rhetoric—which would be useful in Greek-speaking synagogues—before his divine encounter near Damascus;¹⁵²¹ but it is unlikely that he had prepared to speak as a philosopher to Gentile audiences, a role into which he presumably grew.¹⁵²² Acts presents Paul as a versatile speaker equipped for both Jewish and Gentile settings (e.g., 13:16–47; 14:15–17; 17:22–31) but seems to climax with the portrait of Paul as a contextualized philosopher (19:9, still reaching both Jew and Gentile) and a speaker who could confute adversaries in Roman legal settings (Acts 24–26). For Luke, Paul apparently learned the new role without losing his role as a Jewish man of God or prophetic figure (19:11–12; 28:8–9). We should note, however, that elements with Cynic analogies may appear even in his first extant epistles,¹⁵²³ suggesting that either in Jerusalem or in Tarsus, while he was preparing for his calling (9:15, 30; 11:25), Paul learned how to effectively employ some basic philosophic language.

II. ATTEMPTED VENERATION (14:11–13)

Witnessing a clearly miraculous healing, the crowds respond on the basis of their own cultural assumptions: Paul and Barnabas are gods who have come to them, as

1518. See Hock, "Cynics and Rhetoric," 759–64. On Cynics as typically uneducated, see, e.g., Lucian *Phil. Sale* 11. Earlier Stoics may have opposed rhetoric, but most used it after Cicero (Stem, "Stoic").

1519. Malherbe, *Philosophers*, 8; cf. also Downing, *Cynics*, 10, 251.

1520. Judge, "Scholastic Community," 126–27 (identifying the turning point as Macedonia, 128).

1521. See, e.g., Keener, *Corinthians*, 4, 227; more fully, comment on Acts 22:3. By "some knowledge," I do not mean that his advanced education focused on rhetoric (it likely focused on Scripture) but that he was exposed to rhetoric, perhaps the way most seminarians today receive some basic training in sermon preparation.

1522. As noted above, his epistles betray considerable acquaintance with Stoic (e.g., Rom 1:20–32; 1 Cor 8:5–6) and other philosophic (e.g., 2 Cor 4:16–18) language (albeit without the consistency of a particular system), but such language becomes more dominant in the captivity letters (and still more so, for those who find Pauline traits there, in the Pastorals).

1523. See Malherbe, "Gentle as Nurse"; idem, *Philosophers*.

recounted in some older Phrygian tales. Like some other misinformed characters in Acts, they mistake God's agent for a deity (10:25; 28:6). Ultimately Luke makes a theological point at the expense of Greco-Roman polytheism. Greeks portrayed their deities as coming in disguises (see comment on Acts 14:11), but the true God, of different character, revealed his greater power to the people of Lystra.¹⁵²⁴

(1) *Possible Historical Tradition?*

Some scholars doubt whether anyone would have honored traveling Jews as gods,¹⁵²⁵ but several lines of evidence (expanded further below) render it at least plausible. First, it was commonly believed that deities could appear as mortals; though this claim was usually offered only for the distant past, the part of Asia Minor near Phrygia would probably prove open to the idea in the contemporary era more than would most others (see comment below). Second, people often acclaimed others as gods in rhetorical praise that was not intended literally (cf. comment on Acts 12:22); the emperor cult in the West is a pervasive example (in the East it was taken more literally). In this region, however, the line between deity and mortal in Hellenistic and imperial religion was fairly thin; see comment on Acts 10:25; 12:22. Third, if the narrative accurately portrays how far the adulation had reached before Paul and Barnabas understood (14:14), their interpreter was not the best,¹⁵²⁶ and so their monotheism may not have been accurately conveyed.¹⁵²⁷

Paul reminds the South Galatians that they received him as “an angel from God” (Gal 4:14),¹⁵²⁸ a reception some scholars connect with the reception as deities here.¹⁵²⁹ But Paul appears to refer to all the Galatians (not only those in Lystra). Moreover, he surely addresses currently monotheistic believers, who would not understand an early idolatrous act in these terms. Although the converts may well have sought to remedy their own or others' misconstrual of Paul's role by honoring him with a more adequate description (as an angel; i.e., the events may be related), it is questionable whether this comment in Galatians is a direct evidence of the crowds deifying Paul in Lystra.¹⁵³⁰

Ultimately none of these lines of evidence can prove that the story happened in

1524. See Martin, “Barnabas and Paul in Lystra.”

1525. O'Neill, *Theology*, 143.

1526. The best of interpreters could provide even dynamic equivalent translation (see Martindale, “Translation,” 1545, noting Hor. *Ars* 133–34; Cic. *Opt. gen.* 14; Jerome *Ep.* 57.5), but this was the educated ideal. Translation was often fairly free (Kennedy, “Source Criticism,” 144).

1527. Perhaps they were preaching in Greek, and someone in the crowd finally informed them in Greek of the response in the native language, but perhaps some did not understand their Greek fully (or as well as some others) and stirred others on the basis of their own premature conclusions.

1528. Paul might compare Jesus with an angel of the Lord (cf. Longenecker, *Christology*, 26–28, 31; on a different passage, cf. Fossum, “Angel in Jude”); later Christians employed this image (cf. Juncker, “Christ as Angel”) until Arian use forced them to discontinue it (Daniélou, *Theology*, 117; it also appeared among other groups; cf. *G. Eb. frg.* 6, in *Epiph. Her.* 30.16.4–5; Daniélou, *Theology*, 67, 140). The angel could be identified with God in some passages (Gen 48:15–16); God's word can be portrayed as angelic (Philo *Names* 87; *Flight* 5); and wisdom may be portrayed as an angel (Rogers, “Wisdom”), although, in the Targumim, angels preserve God's transcendence (*Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 3:5; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 3:5). But this passage probably offers no such christological point; it simply offers two comparisons with Paul and, on the angelic side, resembles 1 Sam 29:9; 2 Sam 14:17; 19:27; Zech 12:8 (cf. 4Q377 2 II, 11).

1529. E.g., Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:24; cf. Ramsay, *Cities of Paul*, 299.

1530. On the other side, the objection raised against the narrative, that faith arises in Gal 4:14 despite Paul's weakness but in Acts because of a miracle (O'Neill, *Theology*, 143), demands too much from documents addressing very different interests; the Pauline text addresses not the cause of faith but the cause of Paul's preaching there and need not refer to an incident specifically in Lystra. The view that the misunderstanding proves that the word is more persuasive for truth than are miracles (Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 2:275) creates a false dichotomy; God's word was attested through miracles (Acts 14:3), and the problem was inadequate translation (14:11, 14).

any way like how Luke tells it; acclamations of deity were common in novels¹⁵³¹ and are part of a common literary pattern in Acts (Acts 10:25; 28:6; see comment on Acts 10:25). But acclamations appeared in novels only because they also characterized the social reality that novels sometimes depicted; that is, they are not limited to novels.¹⁵³² Further, even Luke's literary motifs (e.g., the question "What shall we do [to be saved]?" in Luke 3:10; Acts 2:37; 16:30) often stem from some historical tradition (compare Luke 18:18 with Mark 10:17), and of all the instances of this pattern in Acts, the theme is more intrinsic to the fabric of the story in this passage than in the others. Moreover, various details (e.g., the accumulated evidence for pairing Zeus and Hermes at Lystra)¹⁵³³ suggest acquaintance with a source beyond a simple foreigner's familiarity with the myth. The story thus should not be deemed implausible simply because it is also entertaining.

(2) *Lycaonian Language (14:11)*

The rural and mountainous interior of Anatolia preserved indigenous languages and religious customs into late antiquity.¹⁵³⁴ A gloss in Stephanus of Byzantium claims that Lystra, though a Roman colony, preserved its native language;¹⁵³⁵ this claim could, however, be based on Acts 14. Apart from the hellenized Western cities, most of Asia's local languages persisted during the Hellenistic era.¹⁵³⁶ Some indigenes of Galatic Phrygia used the Phrygian language into the late third century C.E., with one district maintaining it as late as the fifth or sixth century.¹⁵³⁷ The Phrygian language revived briefly on late third-century C.E. pagan tombstones (perhaps as a pagan reaction against Greek-speaking Christianity), but both pagan and Christian eastern Phrygian inscriptions in Greek reflect Phrygian influence.¹⁵³⁸ Although the Phrygian-speaking area attested in 250 C.E. includes Iconium (on the border between Phrygia and Lycaonia), it does not include Lystra or Derbe.¹⁵³⁹

Funerary inscriptions indicate that the colony's Roman citizens spoke Latin; those speaking Lycaonian are thus the native Anatolians.¹⁵⁴⁰ Although languages such as Greek and Latin prevailed in the cities, local accents increased the farther one went from the city walls, and local languages persisted beyond them.¹⁵⁴¹ Some scholars argue that Lycaonian was one of the diverse Greek dialects of Asia Minor, simply too distant from the usual eastern urban Mediterranean Greek for Paul and Barnabas to understand.¹⁵⁴²

1531. E.g., Char. *Chaer.* 1.14.1; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 1.12; see further Johnson, *Acts*, 248 (noting also that this reflects accurately the permeability of human and divine in Greek thought); see comment on Acts 10:25. On acclamations in the real social world of antiquity, see comment on Acts 19:28.

1532. See, e.g., Lucian *Alex.* 38; *Dion.* 2, 4, 5; cf. political acclamations in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 40.26–27; Welborn, *Politics*, 12–13; Stoops, "Riot," 87 (following MacMullen, *Enemies*, 170, 339n10).

1533. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:24, arguing from this for "the historical precision of the famous episode in Acts."

1534. Mitchell, "Asia Minor."

1535. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 110.

1536. MAMA 1:xii. Outside the elites, much of the empire was "creolized" rather than "romanized" (Webster, "Creolizing").

1537. MAMA 1:xiii; cf. also Mitchell, "Phrygia"; Lejeune, "Phrygian Language." Likewise, the Pisidian language persisted in Pisidia's countryside (Mitchell, "Pisidia").

1538. MAMA 1:xii.

1539. MAMA 7:xliv; see also Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:155.

1540. Bruce, *Commentary*, 291. Romanization had begun far more recently than hellenization; romanizing a countryside went slowly, in some parts of North Africa "six centuries after the Roman conquest" (Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 192–93), though army recruitment helped (194); many in rural areas had "little [direct] experience . . . of Rome" (203).

1541. Ramsay, *Discovery*, 66; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 45–46; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 15; idem, *Moral World*, 25; Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism*, 131; cf. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 71. This was true also for ethnic Galatians (Tarn, *Civilisation*, 171).

1542. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 137, citing Brixhe, *Essai sur grec anatolien*, passim; cf. Consani, "Koiné et dialectes," esp. 32–33; Abbott, *Acts*, 160. Greeks could associate local "dialects" with lack of civilization (Parsons, *Acts*, 201, citing Strabo 8.1.6; 13.1.25).

Perhaps Paul and Barnabas could address only the Greek-speaking population directly;¹⁵⁴³ though Paul may have lacked means of contact with the Roman citizen population anyway, he probably did not know Latin well enough to preach in it at this point. (Even in Rome, most Jews spoke Greek.)¹⁵⁴⁴

Lycaonian speakers, however, no doubt understood Greek (in varying degrees); it was simply that they spoke among themselves in their first language or dialect, which Paul and Barnabas did not know.¹⁵⁴⁵ Luke reports the linguistic confusion to explain why the apostles did not intervene before matters became obvious (14:13–14).¹⁵⁴⁶ Whether or not Paul needed an interpreter to speak, he needed interpretation to understand (see comment on Acts 14:14).

(3) Proposed Mythical Backgrounds

Some scholars argue for the utility of a variety of Phrygian mythical traditions here.¹⁵⁴⁷ (Although Lystra was more Lycaonian than Phrygian, the latter, larger culture was sufficiently widespread in the area for interpreters to reasonably draw on its more widely extant background here.) Amy Wordelman suggests particular mythical backgrounds for the account here that differ from the usual approach. In Homer, Athena transforms herself in disguise (*Od.* 1.96–324, 405–19), for gods often come in disguises (17.484–87).¹⁵⁴⁸ (As noted below, this was a common motif in Greek myth, too pervasive by itself by this period to isolate a specific source.) She points out that some philosophers rejected this ideology; by locating the deification of Paul in rural Asia Minor, Wordelman suggests, Luke can dissociate it from Greek or Roman thought, which could reject such ideas.¹⁵⁴⁹ One wonders, however, whether on a popular level most Greeks did reject such ideas; Luke certainly does not isolate the idea in rural Asia Minor (Acts 10:25; 12:22; 28:6).

Wordelman notes that Ovid reports three stories in which mortals test Jupiter's (Zeus's) hospitality; in one case, Jupiter turns inhospitable Lycaon (Gk. Lykaon) into a wolf (λύκος) for rejecting his divinity;¹⁵⁵⁰ this provides a play on words with "Lycaonian" (14:11).¹⁵⁵¹ Given this background of transformation, Greeks spoke of "wolf-friendships," initial friendship that rapidly transmutes into enmity; Wordelman suggests that this helps explain the Lycaonians' fickle behavior.¹⁵⁵² The fickle attitude

1543. So Ramsay, *Discovery*, 67n2.

1544. See Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 75–77; Lung-Kwong, *Purpose*, 105; Noy, "Writing"; Avi-Yonah, "Archaeological Sources," 54. Of 534 inscriptions, Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 75, reckons that 76 percent are in Greek and 23 percent are in Latin, the latter concentrated in particular communities. If Paul later went to Spain (Rom 15:24, 28; cf. *1 Clem.* 5.5–7), he would need more Latin.

1545. With Haenchen, *Acts*, 431. This phenomenon can often be observed in bilingual settings with both "mother tongues" and "national languages." I have witnessed it in various African contexts.

1546. With Abbott, *Acts*, 160.

1547. Weaver, *Epiphany*, 7–9 (citing the metanarrative of Phrygian myth more generally), following esp. Bechard, *Walls*, 279–80.

1548. Wordelman, "Divides," 221.

1549. *Ibid.*, 222, citing Plato *Rep.* 2.380D–382D (and, less relevant, *Soph.* 216AB).

1550. Wordelman, "Divides," 223–31. On the myth, see Visser, "Lycaon"; on its original association especially with Arcadia (in Achaia), see Visser, "Lycaon," 909. For the prominence of the legend and its mixture with other local elements in Iconium, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:208.

1551. Wordelman, "Divides," 224–25. Such wordplays could also involve other λυκ- roots (e.g., Heracl. *Hom. Prob.* 7.10–11, implausibly preferring λυκαυγής or λυκάβας to λυκία, Lycia, as background for λυκιγενής; perhaps Quint. Curt. 3.1.1, 5).

1552. Wordelman, "Divides," 227 (citing for "wolf-friendship" Plato *Ep.* 318E; Marc. Aur. 11.15; Euseb. *H.E.* 6.43.6; cf. the wolf in Plato *Phaedr.* 241CD). On 227–28, she notes that Plato *Rep.* 8.565D applies the image to rulers who become tyrants (unfortunately, on 230 she appears to view the entire persecution theme in Acts through this narrow grid). For beliefs about wolf-like physiognomy, see Hünemörder, "Wolf," 691. For the fickleness of barbarians, see also Tac. *Ann.* 14.23.

of crowds is a common motif in ancient literature and is hardly limited to Lycaonia in Acts (see, e.g., 12:3 with 2:47; 16:17–19; 28:4–6), and so it is uncertain how far to press such a proposal. Nevertheless, although Wordelman argues the thesis insightfully and there may be value in it, I am convinced that in this case the conventional view of commentators—an allusion to the Baucis and Philemon myth—is more relevant. Although Lycaon's unbelief may count as a factor (indeed, we shall explore elements in a range of myths below), only the Baucis and Philemon myth includes both Zeus and Hermes together, testing hospitality.¹⁵⁵³

(4) *Baucis and Philemon*

Most commentators recognize the background of a particular myth here—namely, that of Baucis and Philemon.¹⁵⁵⁴ Ancient Phrygian tradition, reinterpreted through a Hellenistic and Roman grid,¹⁵⁵⁵ spoke of Zeus and Hermes coming to people in Phrygia; when all but one couple (Baucis and Philemon) failed to respond hospitably, the gods destroyed everyone else in a flood (Ovid *Metam.* 8.618–724).¹⁵⁵⁶ Some scholars have complained that Ovid, a Roman, is our earliest attestation for the story.¹⁵⁵⁷ But Ovid (43 B.C.E.–17 C.E.) wrote long before Paul's visit or Luke's account (this work, probably shortly before his exile in 8 C.E.),¹⁵⁵⁸ and a comparison of the rest of his work with earlier-attested myths demonstrates that most of his stories reflect earlier sources, even when he adds the transformation element relevant to his theme. Lycaonians also blended the story of a catastrophic flood with stories of their legendary founder, Lycaon.¹⁵⁵⁹

Because of this tradition, Jews also associated the flood with Phrygia (*Sib. Or.* 1.196) and located Ararat there (1.261–62).¹⁵⁶⁰ Second-century Christians in Asia Minor seem to have agreed.¹⁵⁶¹ (Because of their narrower canon, Jews focused on the flood even more than did Gentiles.¹⁵⁶² The flood was viewed as having inaugurated a new

1553. Pervo, *Acts*, 354, seems right to recognize Wordelman's scholarship as insightful while nevertheless finding stories like Baucis and Philemon more probable here.

1554. E.g., Ramsay, *Galatians*, 226; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 126; Bruce, *Documents*, 95–96; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, 305; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 531; Grant, *Gods*, 26; Hansen, "Galatia," 394; Bechard, *Walls*, 292–300 (as one example of local flood stories); Talbert, *Acts*, 124; Parsons, *Acts*, 199; Pervo, *Acts*, 353–54; idem, *Mystery*, 64; Rowe, *World*, 20–21; Green, "Acts," 753; contrast Hanson, *Acts*, 148. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 164, wonder what may have been the names of the Lycaonian deities behind Luke's (and perhaps Ovid's) narrative. Some, however, propose that contemporary Lycaonian was a dialect of Greek (see comment above); and hellenization of deities and their names might occur faster than the language as a whole.

1555. Although it is probably not relevant here, Greeks and Romans spoke of "Phrygian tales" in connection with euhemeristic or allegorical approaches to myths (Rives, "Phrygian Tales").

1556. The parallels to the well-known Greek story of Deucalion and Pyrrha (allusions in Ovid *Metam.* 1.322–29; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.49; Lucian *Patriot* 1; *Prof. P.S.* 20; *Syr. G.* 12–13; Philost. *Hrk.* 7.6; cf. Paus. 1.18.8) might be genetic, but this story is also indigenously Phrygian (e.g., "Baucis" is a Phrygian name; see Trebilco, *Communities*, 88–90). For southern Asia Minor flood traditions, see, helpfully and thoroughly, Bechard, *Walls*, 291–337; in other Mediterranean flood myths, see Stenger, "Deluge" (citing, e.g., Ovid *Metam.* 1.253–415; Apollod. *Bib.* 1.46–48; Plato *Critias* 110D–112A; *Tim.* 25CD); in Ovid *Metam.* 1.253–61, Jupiter sends a flood in lieu of destroying the world by fire.

1557. Wordelman, "Divides," 219. She does not oppose use of Ovid (on whom she also depends [223]); here she notes earlier attestation of the tradition, but I would argue that Ovid's dependence on sources where we can evaluate him suggests that he normally did depend on sources).

1558. Hinds, "Ovid," 1085. At least in later Rome, we have evidence that Ovid's own work was influential (see Hinds, "Martial's Ovid").

1559. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:208; Bechard, *Walls*, 280–91, esp. 286–91.

1560. They also associated fallen Troy with judgment on Phrygia (*Sib. Or.* 3.205–6; 3.401–7; might this imply judgment on Troy's Roman descendants?), though this was a different region of Phrygia than is in view here.

1561. Phrygia (*Sib. Or.* 7.13) was the first land to emerge after the flood in 7.7–15, probably second-century Christian material.

1562. E.g., 1 *En.* 10:2; 54:7–10; 65:1; 106:15; *Jub.* 4:24–7:34; 4Q422 II, frg. 2–6; *Sib. Or.* 1.129, 168; 3.109; 4.53; *Jos. Ant.* 1.75–95; 4 *Macc* 15:31; 4 *Ezra* 3:9–10; 2 *Bar.* 56:15; 77:23; 3 *Bar.* 4:10; *Test. Reub.* 5:6;

era.)¹⁵⁶³ Although the Phrygian flood story existed from as early as the third century B.C.E., before Jews had settled there,¹⁵⁶⁴ Phrygian Jews mingled their flood story with the local story to the satisfaction of Jews and Gentiles alike.¹⁵⁶⁵ Late second- or early third-century C.E. coins from Apamea in Phrygia explicitly portray Noah (ΝΩΕ) and the ark, suggesting that the Jewish community there was sufficiently influential for its version of the flood to become part of the local mythology;¹⁵⁶⁶ likewise, the Jewish coins join Noah with his wife to fit the local story.¹⁵⁶⁷ Noah was, after all, said to be the common ancestor of Jews and Gentiles alike.

With a tradition from this region¹⁵⁶⁸ (a tradition so prominent that it was known abroad) providing such a lesson, the region's inhabitants would not want to repeat their regional ancestors' mistake of inhospitality. Other factors would also encourage rapid acknowledgment of visiting deities. People in this region were morally strict,¹⁵⁶⁹ and many confession texts from nearby regions of Asia Minor view suffering as divine punishment;¹⁵⁷⁰ with such sensitivity to divine retribution, locals would not wish to miss their opportunity with the gods' apparently having come in person.

Anatolian religion in the first three centuries C.E. further emphasized contacts between deities and mortals.¹⁵⁷¹ Their inscriptions indicate that Phrygians also worshiped their deities as ἐπιφανέστατοι, "manifest."¹⁵⁷² This was not, however, a distinctively Phrygian belief; even some Neoplatonists, in contrast with some other forms of

Test. Naph. 3:5; *m. 'Ab.* 5:2; *B. Meši'a* 4:2; *Mek. Bah.* 10.20ff. (Lauterbach, 2:278); *Sipre Deut.* 43.3.2; 310.2.1; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 4:1; *b. B. Meši'a* 49a, bar; *Gen. Rab.* 27:3; 49:5; 1 Pet 3:20. To later rabbis, they were particularly wicked (*Gen. Rab.* 26:5); hence they received the harshest judgment in history (*Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 6:3) and would not inherit the coming world (*m. Sanh.* 10:3; *t. Sanh.* 13:6; *Sanh.* 108a; *Gen. Rab.* 28:8). But in a range of sources, the flood judgment prefigured the eschatological fire judgment (*Jos. Ant.* 1.70; *L.A.E.* 49:3; *t. Ta'an.* 2:13; 2 Pet 3:5–7; cf. *Lev. Rab.* 7:6).

1563. *Sib. Or.* 1.195 (a "second age"); *Philo Mos.* 2.64; cf. 2 Pet 3:6–7, 13.

1564. Levinskaya, *Diaspora Setting*, 150–52. Flood stories were pervasive in early second-millennium Mesopotamia (a Sumerian account in ANET 42–44; The Epic of Gilgamesh [ANET 72–99]; Atrahasis [ANET 104–6]; cf. Albright, *Yahweh*, 98–99; Gordon, *Near East*, 50; idem, *Civilizations*, 76–77; Kitchen, *World*, 28–30; Frymer-Kensky, "Epic"; idem, "Flood Stories"); the Mesopotamian story was widely circulated (see Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 142–43; Gordon, *Civilizations*, 86), and traces apparently persisted (Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," 340, esp. n. 1), probably through Berossus's account (*Jos. Ag. Ap.* 1.130–31; *Ant.* 1.93); flood stories also appear elsewhere (Mbiti, *Religions*, 70). Some ancients knew that Eastern flood myths differed to some degree from the Greek version (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.49); identified Noah with Deucalion (*Philo Rewards* 23); or treated the biblical story as older (Theoph. 3.18–19).

1565. Fletcher, "Correction," even finds an echo of Gen 8:3 LXX in another flood setting in Ovid *Metam.* 1.294 (*ararat*; this is, however, simply a form of Latin *aro*).

1566. Trebilco, *Communities*, 86–88; idem, "Communities," 567–68; Meyers and Kraabel, "Remains," 191; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:33; cf. Phrygia's prominence in the Diaspora flood account in *Sib. Or.* 1.196–98, 261–62. Apamea is more than 150 km. west of Iconium.

1567. Trebilco, *Communities*, 93. Josephus's flood narrative (*Ant.* 1.99) shares elements in common with the Deucalion story in Ovid *Metam.* 1, perhaps suggesting influence (whatever its direction; see Gossmann, "Möglichkeit"; though cf. Gen 9:15). Various cultures' versions of the deluge (including the Greek and biblical ones) were often connected (Diod. Sic. 1.10.4; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 1.130–31). Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 142, even connects the emphasis on the flood in 1 Pet 3:21 with local Asian interest, as illustrated in Apamea.

1568. Griffiths, "Baucis," argues that it is rooted in an "ancient Anatolian tree cult."

1569. Harrill, "Asia Minor," 134; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:189, 191. On the mother goddess there, cf. also Martin, *Colossians*, 4.

1570. Gordon, "Sceptre"; on confession texts and fear of punishment, see also Niang, *Faith*, 51–63.

1571. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:12, noting, e.g., that Apollo at Didyma announced that the gods were spending more time with mortals lately, appearing to them as children or adults of either gender; the gods were present on reliefs and honored for benefactions. Inscriptions frequently report gods ordering mortals "to set up a monument or to perform a pious action." This happened most often through dreams; Apollo spoke through oracles at Clarus and Didyma but also, on a smaller scale, throughout Asia Minor. Cf. dice oracles in Lycia and Pisidia (p. 13).

1572. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 226.

Neoplatonism, insisted that the gods could dwell with people instead of being only remote in the heavens (Iambl. *Myst.* 1.8).

(5) *Disguised Deities (14:11)*

Most commentators recognize the background of the Baucis and Philemon myth here,¹⁵⁷³ and it appears fairly obvious to those acquainted with Ovid.¹⁵⁷⁴ In addition to his biblical allusions, Luke assumes his audience's familiarity with the Dioscuri in Acts 28:11, makes allusion to Socrates in 17:19, and may allude to other Greek traditions in 16:9, and so there is no reason to doubt that he would make an allusion with local color here.

It is nevertheless appropriate to examine the broader context of Greco-Roman myth and fiction, in which deities came in disguises or (less often) disguised their favored mortals for their protection. Sometimes this motif included the moral of hospitality (cf. Gen 18:1–16; Heb 13:2). It was known that one should never mistreat beggars or strangers, who sometimes turned out to be deities from heaven in disguise (Hom. *Od.* 17.484–87). Likewise, an old woman fortunately responded to Demeter's request for water (Ovid *Metam.* 5.449–50), but the goddess turned into a lizard a boy who mocked her (5.451–61). Gods could visit and receive hospitality in human likeness, then vanish (Eunapius *Lives* 468). Jupiter came disguised in human form but induced the commoners to worship him after he gave them signs (*signa*) that a deity had come (Ovid *Metam.* 1.220). In times more recent to Luke's narrative, two visitors were said to have lured Simonides outside a banquet hall just before it collapsed, saving him, but then they could not be found (Val. Max. 1.8.ext. 7).

In Homeric epic, deities often came in disguises, sometimes as persons known to others, both in the *Iliad*¹⁵⁷⁵ and in the *Odyssey*.¹⁵⁷⁶ Roman epic inherited the idea as well, which appears several times in Virgil's *Aeneid*.¹⁵⁷⁷ Ovid, who reports the Phrygian

1573. E.g., *ibid.*; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 126; Bruce, *Documents*, 95–96; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 531; Grant, *Gods*, 26; Hansen, "Galatia," 394; contrast Hanson, *Acts*, 148. As noted above, Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 164, wonder about the names of the Lycaonian deities behind Luke's (and perhaps Ovid's) narrative. Some scholars, however, propose that contemporary Lycaonian was a dialect of Greek (see comment above); moreover, given antiquity's ready adoption of new deities from dominant cultures, hellenization of deities and their names (see discussion below) would probably occur faster than the hellenization of the language as a whole.

1574. For a recent example of reception history: on my first reading through Acts (decades ago, a few months after my Christian conversion from atheism), without access to or knowledge of commentaries but with considerable familiarity with Greek and Roman mythology (through Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Greek dramatists, etc.), I immediately recognized the resonance with Ovid's story (with which I was then more familiar than with the Bible); I had not expected to find such allusions. (I probably did also think of Ovid's Deucalion and Pyrrha flood story, but that recollection struck me more when I first read Genesis.) I would suppose that ancient pagan readers familiar with the popular myths on which Ovid drew would have recognized the similarities no less quickly. The transformation of the couple at the end could be Ovid's redaction to fit his unifying theme.

1575. Athena (as Laodocus, Hom. *Il.* 4.86–87; as Phoenix to Menelaus, 17.554–55; as Deiphobus to Hector, 22.224–31 [he realizes it only in 22.298–99]); Iris (as Helicaion, 4.121–24); Poseidon (as Calchas, 13.43–45, 69; as Thoas, 13.215–16; again in disguise, lest his intervention offend Zeus, 13.356–57; as an old man to Agamemnon, 14.136); Apollo (as Asius to Hector, 16.715–20; as Mentos to Hector, 17.71–73; as Periphas to Aeneas, 17.322–26 [but in 17.333 Aeneas recognizes him]; as Phaenops to Hector, 17.582–83; as Lycaon to Aeneas, 20.79–81; as Agenor to Achilles, 21.599–611; 22.7–11); Poseidon and Athena (to Achilles, 21.284–86); Hermes (to Priam, 24.354–458 [revealed in 24.459–61]).

1576. Where it most often involves Athena: as Mentos to Telemachus (Hom. *Od.* 1.105; cf. 1.113–35 [but Telemachus knows by 1.420]); as Mentor to Telemachus (2.267–68; 2.399–401 [traveling with him throughout *Od.* 3, like Raphael with Tobias, until revealing herself in 3.371–72]); as Telemachus himself (2.382–87); as a woman to Nausicaa (6.21–22); to Odysseus (as a young maiden, 7.19–20; 13.288–89; as a young shepherd, 13.221–22; as Mentor, 22.205–6 [becoming a swallow in 22.239–40]; 24.502–5, 548); to the Phaeacians (like their king's herald, 8.8; or as another man, 8.193–94); cf. also Hermes as a young man to Odysseus (10.277–79). For divine visitation in Homer, see also Denaux, "Theme," 266–68.

1577. Venus (as a virgin to Aeneas, Virg. *Aen.* 1.314–15 [he recognizes her as she turns in 1.402–6]); Cupid (as Ascanius to Dido, 1.657–60); Iris (as Beroë, 5.618–20 [but someone who knows Beroë well, and that she is not present, recognizes that it is a goddess, 5.645–52]); Allecto, a Fury (as an old woman in a dream, 7.415–16); Apollo (as Butes, 9.646–52 [but his disappearance reveals him, 9.658]).

story above, also narrates other appearances of deities,¹⁵⁷⁸ including the two deities mentioned in Acts 14:12. For example, Jupiter traveled disguised as a human, observing humanity's impiety (Ovid *Metam.* 1.212–13);¹⁵⁷⁹ Mercury came to Argus as a shepherd (1.676).¹⁵⁸⁰ In many tales, Zeus approached mortals in disguise to secure intercourse with them.¹⁵⁸¹ Greeks and Romans also told stories of immortals who metamorphosed into various forms trying to escape mortal captors who solicited information from them¹⁵⁸² or even managed to marry them.¹⁵⁸³ Morpheus imitated various human shapes (11.633–38), Icelos those of animals (11.638–40), and Phantasos other things (11.641–43). Jewish people spoke of angelic visits in disguise; the story of Abraham's hospitality (Gen 18:2–16) was the Jewish story par excellence of surprise visits from angels (Heb 13:2).¹⁵⁸⁴ Perhaps an important narrative connection of the theme of divine visitation here is also Luke's own background of God's visiting through Jesus in the Gospel (cf. Luke 1:68, 78; 7:16; 19:44).¹⁵⁸⁵

Greeks also sometimes suspected mortals of being divine, whether philosophers, heroes, or emperors.¹⁵⁸⁶ Some of Pythagoras's contemporaries allegedly (the report is late) suspected his deity (Iambl. *V.P.* 6.30). Local heroes also could receive almost any honor they solicited (Libanius *Declam.* 36.13);¹⁵⁸⁷ an emperor would naturally be praised as divine (Men. *Rhet.* 2.1–2, 370.21–26; 370.29–371.2; cf. comment on Acts 12:22); titular acclamations of various sorts were common after miracles.¹⁵⁸⁸ Ancient writers expected that common people would hail wonder-workers as divine;¹⁵⁸⁹ this might be particularly the case in smaller, out-of-the-way settlements where wonder-workers were probably less frequent.¹⁵⁹⁰ In Amoraic tradition, Abraham rejected being praised as king and god, declaring that the world has a true God and king (*Gen. Rab.* 42:5; 43:5).

The passage is pregnant with irony: rejected by some of their fellow Jews in Acts 14:2, the apostles are acclaimed as gods in the next town; they preach monotheism to idolaters, then are further assaulted by monotheistic enemies who join forces with the idolaters to attack them.¹⁵⁹¹ One suspects that the irony is deliberate: their opponents' blind hostility to the Messiah was so great that it appeared more important to them here than the common front for monotheism in a mainly polytheistic environment.

1578. Juno disguised as Beroë, Semele's nurse (Ovid *Metam.* 3.275–77); the sun like Leucothoë's mother, to kiss the daughter (4.222); Athena as an old woman, to warn Arachne to humble herself (6.26–27). Deities often came in disguise to seduce mortals (e.g., 14.765–71).

1579. Jupiter also disguised himself as Diana, to rape one of her virgins (Ovid *Metam.* 2.425, 434–37); as a bull, to seduce a woman (2.850–51). That he and Mercury came disguised as mortals (8.626–27) thus fits Ovid's interests.

1580. Mercury also changed shape to determine whether a witness would betray his theft of cattle (Ovid *Metam.* 2.698).

1581. E.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 2.4.1 (a stream of gold); 2.4.8; 3.1.1 (a bull); 3.8.2; 3.10.7 (a swan); 3.12.6; objecting, see Max. Tyre 35.1; for Poseidon, see Libanius *Narration* 39.

1582. E.g., Proteus in Virg. *Georg.* 4.405–14, 440–42; Nereus in Apollod. *Bib.* 2.5.11.

1583. Thetis in Apollod. *Bib.* 3.13.5; Ovid *Metam.* 11.241–46, 250–64.

1584. E.g., Philo *Abr.* 114; *Test. Ab.* 2:1 B; *Sipre Deut.* 38.1.4; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 18:1; also *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 18:2. On the relevance of Gen 18–19 here, see also Denaux, "Theme," 268–72. Elsewhere, two angels made it appear that the pilgrims to Jerusalem remained home, so that their Gentile neighbors would not rob their home (*y. Pe'ah* 3:8, §3). Cf. Satan in *Test. Job* 23:2.

1585. Denaux, "Theme," 272–78.

1586. See comment on Acts 10:25–26; also material in Keener, *John*, 178–79, 291–93, 298–99.

1587. Past heroes were accorded divine honors in cults (Maclean and Aitken, *Heroikos*, I–IV [esp. lii], lxxvii–lxxviii, lxxxi), which grew especially in later centuries.

1588. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 161. The ancient world accepted many preachers and miracle workers as deities (Murray, *Stages*, 195).

1589. Hanson, *Acts*, 148, cites Lucian *Alex.* 13 and (for Apollonius being charged with claiming worship) Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5.

1590. Nor were rural areas necessarily more credulous (cf. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 247).

1591. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 189.

(6) *Zeus and Hermes (14:12)*

For connections with a particular myth involving these deities as well as relevant motifs in Greek and Roman mythology, see comment on Acts 14:11. The choice of the deities Zeus and Hermes fits the story of Baucis and Philemon, but Zeus and Hermes were also paired in local inscriptions, including a probable case from Lystra itself (whether related to that story or not).¹⁵⁹²

Remains from Lystra also include a relief connecting Hermes with Zeus's eagle; although the pair appear together throughout Asia Minor, "the concentration of evidence in the region of Lystra is highly suggestive" and fits Luke's description.¹⁵⁹³ Granted, their linkage was by no means unusual.¹⁵⁹⁴ Hermes carried out Zeus's bidding, carrying messages for him as for the gods in general (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 2.102–4; Lucian *Downward Journey 2*; *Charon 1*). Together they were guardians of ambassadors and of the sacred laws that required ambassadors to faithfully represent their message.¹⁵⁹⁵

Zeus was the most prominent and dominant member of the traditional Olympian pantheon and continued to be worshiped in a more religiously diverse era.¹⁵⁹⁶ The omnipotence of his Roman equivalent, Jupiter, was a dominant theme for him in Roman literature.¹⁵⁹⁷ Shrines for Zeus were pervasive throughout Asia,¹⁵⁹⁸ including in Galatia; he is especially attested as Zeus Megistos in Iconium and northern Lycaonia.¹⁵⁹⁹ Zeus appears frequently in Phrygian inscriptions, far more often than Hermes.¹⁶⁰⁰ Temples to Zeus were common throughout Galatia, and he was the most frequent object of worship there.¹⁶⁰¹ Jewish sources associate Zeus in a special way with Phrygia (*Sib. Or.* 4.130–31),¹⁶⁰² though not all Jews would have regarded this as a compliment to Phrygia (11.134).¹⁶⁰³

1592. Ramsay, *Discovery*, 48–49; Deissmann, *Light*, fig. 53, facing p. 281; Knoll, *Denkmäler*, 76–77, §146; Bruce, *Documents*, 95–96; Hemer, *Acts in History*, 111; Hansen, "Galatia," 393; Gill, "Religion," 83–84. These writers cite MAMA 8.1; Calder, "Cult of Homonades," esp. 79–81; idem, "Zeus and Hermes at Lystra"; idem, "Acts 14:12"; idem, "Light on Baucis and Philemon."

1593. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:24.

1594. Hermes often accompanies Dionysus in sixth- to fifth-century B.C.E. vase paintings (Ley, "Hermes," 220). Associated deities were common; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:25–26, notes that north and central Phrygians worshiped the pair "Holy and Just," sometimes along with Apollo (e.g., *RECAM* 2.44, 45; MAMA 5.11; cf. Niang, *Faith*, 51).

1595. Witherington, *Acts*, 424–25, citing Plato *Laws* 12.941A, the most appropriate text on the subject.

1596. See further Murray, *Stages*, 70–71; most extensively, Cook, *Zeus*; see esp. Burkert, *Religion*, 125–31; Graf, "Zeus"; Henrichs, "Zeus"; for iconography, Bäbler, "Zeus."

1597. E.g., *Virg. Aen.* 1.60; 3.251; 4.25, 206, 220; 6.592; 7.141, 770; 8.398; 9.625; 10.100, 668; 12.178, 791; *Georg.* 2.325; Ovid *Metam.* 1.154; 2.304, 401, 505; 3.336; 9.271; 14.816; Val. Flacc. 3.249; in Greek, Callim. frg. 586; Plut. *Isis 2*, *Mor.* 352A; van der Horst, "Macrobius," 232, also cites *Macrob. Sat.* 1.23.21. But Juno might be *omnipotens* (*Virg. Aen.* 7.428) yet prove unable to prevail against Fate (7.314); other deities as omnipotent, e.g., Pluto in *Orph. H.* 18.17 (but perhaps as the "chthonic Zeus," 18.3).

1598. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:22.

1599. *Ibid.*, 2:23 (citing, e.g., MAMA 7.432, 521).

1600. E.g., MAMA 1.3, 4, 5, 7, 7a, 7b, 373, 429, 435, 435a (I did not find Hermes in this volume); in Phrygia and Caria, see 6.87, 88, 180, 242–43, 244, 250, 360, 370, 387 (Hermes might appear—though only two letters are clear—in 6.1, line 2); in eastern Phrygia, 7.105, 192, 359, 453, 476 (none with Hermes); in eastern Asia and western Galatia, 4.137, 138, 141, 184, 213, 226, 227, 265, 266, 267, 268. Note also Zeus "Soter" (1.6; 4.309; 6.2); "Megistos" (7.1, 107, 130, 135, 432, 521); Tios (Dios; 7.312, 313, 314, 316, 318, 406, 454, 495).

1601. Hansen, "Galatia," 393.

1602. Although this oracle may stem from early second-century C.E. Egypt, it probably reflects information from Phrygian Jewry. Many traditions assigned Zeus's birthplace to Crete (Hesiod *Theog.* 479–80; Apollod. *Bib.* 1.1.6; Lucian *Sacr.* 5, 10; cf. Diod. Sic. 3.61.1–3; Paus. 8.38.2; Max. Tyre 10.1; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.34; Sonnabend, "Ida"; Guthrie, *Greeks and Gods*, 40ff., 106, 155ff., 197, 201, 203, 209, 257; Norwood, *Greek Tragedy*, 310); but the Phrygian mother and the Cretan cave refuge were reconcilable (Strabo 10.3.7). In *Sib. Or.* 3.139–41, he was merely *reared* in Phrygia (probably implying Mount Ida near Troy; in either case, explaining his loyalties during the Trojan War). Cretans appear particularly attached to Zeus (Plato *Laws* 1.624A).

1603. The negative portrayal of the son of Cronus here may stem from the late first century B.C.E.

Why was Barnabas associated with Zeus? Some scholars suggest that “he was tall and stately”¹⁶⁰⁴ or that, as on local reliefs of Zeus Ampelites, he was elderly and bearded whereas Paul, like Hermes in the reliefs, was a younger aide.¹⁶⁰⁵ Although such associations are possible, the Lystrans may have associated Barnabas with Zeus simply because Paul was the main speaker¹⁶⁰⁶ (which is, in fact, the only reason that Luke explicitly offers). If Paul represented Hermes and the local people expected Zeus and Hermes as a pair, Barnabas would be identified as Zeus. Perhaps even Paul’s miracle working (Acts 14:9) seemed the delegated task of the messenger.

Normally the chief speaker held higher status than the other speaker (e.g., in the theater, Cic. *Ag. Caec.* 15.48), but the expectation of a Hermes-Zeus pair overrides that pattern here.¹⁶⁰⁷ Hermes was god of thieves,¹⁶⁰⁸ was a patron of travelers¹⁶⁰⁹ and commerce,¹⁶¹⁰ and (most important for our purposes) is called the “chief in speech” among deities (Iambl. *Myst.* 1.1).¹⁶¹¹ As noted above, Hermes was the chief messenger of the gods (e.g., Hom. *Od.* 1.38, 84)¹⁶¹² as well as chief crier for the gods¹⁶¹³ and in the underworld.¹⁶¹⁴ Further, he was a deity of crafty and eloquent speech (e.g., Aeschylus *Lib.* 811–18; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.15),¹⁶¹⁵ god of orators (Lucian *Nigr.* 10). Greeks could view a supposed Egyptian equivalent of Hermes as also a master of speech, creating the alphabet, naming objects, and creating a common dialect (Diod. Sic. 1.16.1). Stoics and others who allegorized myths equated Hermes with the λόγος, or word, of the gods.¹⁶¹⁶

1604. Grant, *Gods*, 20 (Zeus was naturally taller in a local portrayal, 25).

1605. Witherington, *Acts*, 422.

1606. Hermes was associated with wisdom (and his statues adorned Roman classrooms) in Cic. *Att.* 1.4.3. Paul was probably also the dominant theological thinker, though it should be noted that Paul and Barnabas must have agreed in their basic theological outlook and missionary approach, to have worked together so long (Hengel and Schwemer, *Between Damascus and Antioch*, 219). When they together defended Paul’s gospel in Jerusalem (Gal 2:1, 9), Paul was dominant there (2:2, 7).

1607. Cf. also the model of a messenger’s status deriving from the sender whom he represents (e.g., Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 6.88.2; *m. Ber.* 5:5; *t. Ta’an.* 3:2; *b. Naz.* 12b); Keener, *John*, 313.

1608. Guthrie, *Greeks and Gods*, 91–92. Cf. the account of Hermes’s own youthful thievery in Apollod. *Bib.* 2.1.3; 3.10.2; Ovid *Metam.* 2.685–86; Lucian *Dial. G.* 220 (11/7, Hephaistos and Apollo 1); Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.26; cf. Lucian *Prom. S.*; Burkert, *Religion*, 156–57.

1609. See Casson, *Travel*, 173–74.

1610. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 99, attributing to this Hermes’s prominence on coins in nearby Antioch and Cremna; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.15. As deity of the market, see Lucian *Indictment* 8.

1611. Cited in Conzelmann, *Acts*, 110 (comparing also Ael. Arist. *Or.* 46.398); Johnson, *Acts*, 248; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 531.

1612. Further, e.g., Lucian *Dial. G.* 275 (4/24, Hermes and Maia 1); 229–31 (14/10, Hermes and Helios 1–2, *passim*). Hephaestus also prefers that Hermes speak for him (Lucian *Prom. S.*). Hermes was the deity of messengers and heralds (Baudy, “Hermes,” 218); early vase images portray him primarily as the messenger for the gods (Ley, “Hermes,” 220).

1613. Lucian *Z. Rants* 6–7; *Indictment* 12; *Runaways* 26–27. He functions as crier at the figurative auction in Lucian *Phil. Sale* *passim*, e.g., 7 (the same term applies to auctioneers, e.g., in *Lucius* 35), and crier in the assembly and market (*Indictment* 8).

1614. Lucian *Downward Journey* 23. He was also the “guide” of souls there (*Downward Journey* 1; *Dial. G.* 276 [4/24, Hermes and Maia 1]; cf. *Dial. D.* 424 [2/22, Charon and Menippus 1]; 408 [5/18, Menippus and Hermes 1]; 341–43 [14/1, Hermes and Charon 1–2]), as well as tour guide (Lucian *Charon* *passim*, e.g., 24). Greeks thus identified the Egyptian Anubis with Hermes; cf. an allusion to this in Lucian *Dial. S.-G.* 307 (11/7, South Wind and West Wind 2); explicit in Macleod, *Lucian*, LCL, 7:219n1. He appears in art as a psychopomp, escorting souls (Ley, “Hermes,” 220), and was also associated with initiations and Mysteries (Baudy, “Hermes,” 216–19). The cult of Pluto appears here and at Iconium (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:28).

1615. For Hermes and deception, see Jost, “Hermes,” 690; for Hermes and wisdom, Cic. *Att.* 1.4.3. On Hermes in Greek religion, see Burkert, *Religion*, 156–59; Baudy, “Hermes”; Ley, “Hermes”; Martin, “Hermes”; cf. Barr, *Will of Zeus*, 197–99. Perhaps North Galatians would have followed an alleged Celtic identification of eloquence with Heracles instead of Hermes (Lucian *Heracles* 4), but Galatians’ and Gaul’s acquaintance with Greco-Roman religion probably arose independently.

1616. Grant, *Gods*, 26. The gods sent him, “being the λόγος,” from heaven in Cornutus *Summ.* 16 (Lang, 20, lines 18ff.) (and κήρυξ, or herald, of the gods [Lang, 21, lines 18–19]; van der Horst, “Cornutus,” 169).

Whatever the appearance of Barnabas, the crowd identified Paul with Hermes for his speaking ability, not his appearance. By this period Hermes normally appears unbearded, sometimes wearing a leopard skin, and is characterized by his herald's sign (the caduceus), the hat of a traveler (the *petasos*, sometimes winged), and winged sandals.¹⁶¹⁷ Given Paul's elite training (Acts 22:3), which probably included at least some rhetoric,¹⁶¹⁸ it should not surprise us that he proves the primary speaker despite Barnabas's other important gifts.

Even had Paul been educated solely in Jerusalem without any other experience of the pagan world, he (and the Cypriot Barnabas) would know of Hermes both from Judea and from their travels. Roads were often lined with cultic sites and monuments, especially “to Mercury/Hermes, the patron saint of wayfarers”; these were so well known that they appear in rabbinic literature.¹⁶¹⁹

(7) *Phrygian or Greek Deities?*

Lake and Cadbury wondered about the names of the Lycaonian deities behind Luke's narrative,¹⁶²⁰ but as Cadbury recognized later and other scholars have emphasized more forcefully, local deities were already being hellenized in this period.¹⁶²¹ Given the likelihood that Ovid's story about Baucis and Philemon, like many geographically related traditions, was originally a local cult legend from nearby Phrygia, Jupiter/Zeus and Mercury/Hermes were already natural equivalents for local figures; long-known inscriptions verify even the pairing of these Greco-Roman deities in the region (e.g., *MAMA* 8.1; see comment above).

The rural and mountainous interior of Anatolia preserved indigenous languages and religious customs into late antiquity.¹⁶²² Lycaonia reflected considerable Phrygian cultural heritage and influence (although this was far more dominant at Iconium than in Lystra). Some Phrygian inscriptions preserved the names of indigenous pagan deities. But such inscriptions often identified the indigenous deities with Greek equivalents, and the deities had Greek names in the Greek inscriptions.¹⁶²³ Greek influence led to the identification of the local mother goddess of nearby Lycia with Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis.¹⁶²⁴ Most Asian deities were identified with Greek analogues, although the indigenous Asian deities Cybele and Mên remained distinctive.¹⁶²⁵

Syncretism was perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of religion in the Hellenistic age, and it certainly continued into the Roman period (see comment on

For his involvement with interpretation (the etymology), see Macrob. *Sat.* 1.17.5 (cf. 1.12.20; van der Horst, “Macrob.,” 226). As the explicatory or interpretive word, see also Heracl. *Hom. Prob.* 2.8.2–3; 55.1; 72.4; cf. 67.6–7; 72.7, 19; cf. rational speech in the later Pythagorean Iamblichus *Letter* 5.2 (Stobaeus *Anth.* 2.2.5).

1617. Jost, “Hermes,” 690. Further on his portrayal, especially in an earlier period, see Ley, “Hermes,” 220.

1618. Paul does not write like a professional rhetorician, but he does write like someone with Greco-Roman education beyond the grammar level; i.e., he would have been at least introduced to rhetoric. See, e.g., Keener, *Corinthians*, 4, 25, 29–32; cf. Meeks, “Birth,” 26–27; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 54–58; idem, “Theorists,” 17; Holloway, “Prose”; Smit Sibinga, “*Serta Paulina*”; further comment on Acts 22:3.

1619. Le Cornu, *Acts*, 708, noting the (sing.) מרקוליס (citing *m. Sanh.* 7:6; *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 4:1; *t. 'Abod. Zar.* 6[7]:13; *b. Sanh.* 64a; *'Abod. Zar.* 50ab).

1620. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 164.

1621. Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 23; C. Williams, *Acts*, 170; cf. Greek and Roman names for Syrian deities in Rives, *Religion*, 144.

1622. Mitchell, “Asia Minor.”

1623. See *MAMA* 1:xiii.

1624. Bryce, “Lycia,” 386. On Apollo worship in Phrygia (in Hierapolis), see, e.g., Miller, “Apollo Lairbenos.”

1625. Graf, “Asia Minor: Religion,” 150–51. Cybele originated with a deity called Kubaba in the second millennium B.C.E. but eventually was identified with other mother deities, including the Greek Rhea (see van der Toorn, “Cybele”). On paganism in Anatolia in the first three centuries C.E., see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:11–31. For the predominantly Greek character of Artemis of Ephesus (though Ephesus is in Ionia), see comment on Acts 19:27.

Acts 8:9–11). Local cultures and religions throughout the East were progressively hellenized, more quickly in urban areas than elsewhere.¹⁶²⁶ In the following two centuries, Rome's emperors raised temples in Baalbek (in Lebanon) for local Syrian gods identified with Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury.¹⁶²⁷

Asian cults often retained local color despite Hellenistic names; thus Jupiter Dolichenus represented Hadad and hence was portrayed as riding a bull in ways that linked him with the image of Hadad.¹⁶²⁸ But syncretism meant that local cults would also draw on the Greek and Roman elements of the portrayal, not just the local ones. This would be less so in the case of the popular Agdistis (the Phrygian mother goddess elsewhere called Cybele in Anatolia) and Attis, her consort, where Greek and Roman parallels (such as Adonis) were less prominent.¹⁶²⁹ The status of cities, however, depended on how closely they could link their local cults with Greek (or, in a colony's case, Roman) deities,¹⁶³⁰ and so such syncretism was probably under way among urban residents and accepted by others. Roman citizens and Anatolian residents might not share the same first language, but the Anatolians would have learned from Roman religion.

(8) *Attempted Sacrifice (14:13)*

It is possible that Paul and Barnabas were lecturing near the temple of Zeus mentioned here; Greeks and Romans used temples, as well as other public places, for public lectures.¹⁶³¹ That Luke mentions the temple only in connection with the priest of Zeus and the worshipers, however, probably counts against this suggestion, especially given Luke's previous silence about this location in spite of his desire to accumulate parallels to the paralytic's healing in Acts 3:1–10 (which occurs near a temple gate, 3:2).

That the temple is "before the city" (πρὸ τῆς πόλεως)—that is, outside its gates—is, at the least, likely a historical reminiscence acquired from someone who had traveled in Asia Minor. Urban temples were most often in a city's acropolis or marketplace.¹⁶³² But this description for a temple's location appears fairly frequently in Asia Minor's inscriptions,¹⁶³³ including nearby.¹⁶³⁴ Another deity might be venerated at one deity's shrine,¹⁶³⁵ but only Zeus is mentioned here.¹⁶³⁶

A local inscription mentions priests of Zeus,¹⁶³⁷ who, as noted above, was the most widely worshiped (though not the most distinctive) deity in nearby Phrygia. It was common to have "a college of priests at great temples,"¹⁶³⁸ though the local sanctuary for Zeus was not necessarily a sizable temple. Local priests were often members of the

1626. Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 222–24.

1627. Munck, *Acts*, 132.

1628. Gill, "Religion," 84; cf. earlier Anatolian storm deities' associations with bulls in Kaiser, "Pantheon," 218. Cf. Hanson, *Acts*, 148, who thinks that the Lycaonian deities were only "vaguely identified with the more cosmopolitan Greek gods." For Zeus as a bull, see also Guthrie, *Greeks and Gods*, 46.

1629. Harrill, "Asia Minor," 134. On the mother goddess there, cf. also Martin, *Colossians*, 4.

1630. Pearson, "Civic Cults."

1631. Siegert, "Homily," 421n1; Watson, "Education," 310.

1632. Cousland, "Temples," 1186, noting exceptions. Cf. the gymnasium of Heracles that was ἔξω πύλων, Plut. *Themist.* 1.2.

1633. Grant, *Gods*, 25 (noting CIG 2462, 2796, 2963c, 3194, 3211 [= IGRR 4.1415], 3493; BCH 1 [1877]: 136; 11 [1887]: 464, §29; T. Wiegand, SAB [1906]: 259; IGRR 4.1406); Bruce, *Acts*¹, 282, compares IG 12.3.420, 522. Kearsley, "Acts 14.13," adds *I. Eph.* 5.1595.

1634. Gill, "Religion," 84, cites an inscription from Claudiopolis.

1635. E.g., in ancient Egypt, Badawy, *Architecture*, 180. Cf. honorary statues of mortals placed in temples in Val. Max. 8.15.ext. 2.

1636. In existing inscriptions, Hermes and Zeus do not appear anywhere as σύνναοι (sharing a temple; Haenchen, *Acts*, 432).

1637. E.g., in Witherington, *Acts*, 422. For priests in Phrygian inscriptions, see, e.g., MAMA 1.8, 13, 15, 373.

1638. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 282 (citing Aeschylus *Seven* 164; CIG 2963).

elite who served in the office for a set period (after paying the *summum honorarium*).¹⁶³⁹ An inscription names three priests of Zeus at Lystra; the Western reading here (the plural, “priests of Zeus”) might be accurate,¹⁶⁴⁰ or it may be a later attempt to conform the text to other information known from Christians in Lystra. But Luke has reason only to mention the priest acting at that point.¹⁶⁴¹

The term *στέμματα* signifies wreaths, garlands, or hair fillets, usually of wool. Those celebrating a festival or other event might wear garlands to signify joy (e.g., Char. *Chaer.* 3.2.14, using a different term); someone ready to sacrifice could therefore don a garland as well (e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 3.3.34, using the different term). People likewise wished to crown their deities with garlands (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.60). But commentators also note the possibility that the wreaths or garlands are for the oxen about to be sacrificed;¹⁶⁴² they were garlanded before being sacrificed (Lucian *Sacr.* 12; *Dem.* 11).¹⁶⁴³ Greek artwork indicates that bulls to be sacrificed might have a wreath placed on them, and Romans seem to have done this as well.¹⁶⁴⁴

Bulls or oxen were expensive and hence especially employed for the most important sacrifices,¹⁶⁴⁵ which is, not surprisingly, applicable here if the people really believe that the gods have come to them.¹⁶⁴⁶ For their local associations with Zeus, see comment on Acts 14:12.¹⁶⁴⁷ Elites typically acquired local priesthoods through benefaction; they could thus be the ones who contribute the sacrifices here. The priest may have been able to bring bulls quickly because “the sanctuary or the priest himself had grazing near the *temenos*,” the sacred area outside the city.¹⁶⁴⁸ In any case, we should not think that the entire scene transpired in only a few minutes, given the reasonable surmise that Paul was preaching to some people while others ran off to spread word about the miracle workers; Luke regularly compresses narratives.¹⁶⁴⁹ Even the speeches in Acts, unlike those in typical histories, do not normally unfold in “real time”—in other words, at a realistic length.

At which gates the sacrifice would occur is unclear. Since the temple was “outside the city” yet meant to be approachable, it may have been near the city gates.¹⁶⁵⁰ Such gates provided a good place for Paul to draw a crowd, and they were a natural place

1639. Gill, “Religion,” 82–83. The period of one year was common; see, e.g., Grundmann, “Decision,” 304; Keener, *John*, 853.

1640. So Hemer, *Acts in History*, 111n25. But would this reflect the permanent number in the office for all years? Parsons, *Acts*, 200, argues for a tiny rural shrine, following Bechard, “Rustics,” 92.

1641. A slayer of sacrifices was typically a professional, at least sometimes a muscular man “stripped to the waist” and using an axe (Rives, *Religion*, 25, with the relief panel on 26).

1642. Bruce, *Acts*¹, 282. Johnson, *Acts*, 248, mentions the practice for human sacrifices in Hdt. 7.197. D. Williams, *Acts*, 249, suggests that the garlands could apply to the sacrifices, the priest, attendants, or the altar (comparing Virg. *Aen.* 5.366; Eurip. *Heracles* 529).

1643. Bechard, *Walls*, 414, plausibly suggests that a “festival was already under way,” although (414–15) Luke omits this information because of his natural focus on Paul.

1644. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 146; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 779 (noting also garlands decorating altars).

1645. E.g., Polyb. 32.15.1–2; Pliny E. *N.H.* 8.70.183 (in Egypt, the bulls themselves received worship, 8.71.184–86). Others (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 165, following Wettstein; Johnson, *Acts*, 248) cite Lucian *Sacr.* 3, 12. Other cultures also used oxen (Druids in Pliny E. *N.H.* 16.95.250).

1646. On sacrifice rituals, see, e.g., Parker, “Sacrifice”; less relevantly, Scheid, “Sacrifice.” Those who offered sacrifice expected something in return from the gods (Klauck, *Context*, 38).

1647. Animals associated with Hermes in earlier Greek vase paintings include especially cocks, dogs, goats, and rams (Ley, “Hermes,” 220).

1648. Gill, “Religion,” 83. On the *temenos* in Greek thought, see Malkin, “*Temenos*” (and full bibliography there); Burkert, *Religion*, 84–87.

1649. Haenchen’s skepticism (*Acts*, 432, following Loisy) about bringing the animals so quickly (against which Gill, “Religion,” 83, comment) might make sense in a modern large city but seems unfounded for Lystra.

1650. On gate structures for large towns, see Jeffers, *World*, 51; on deities associated with gates in Greek religion, see Johnston, “Gates” (with thorough documentation).

to lay a disabled man if he was a beggar¹⁶⁵¹ (see comment on Acts 3:2). The other possibility is the gates of the sacred enclosure of Zeus, mentioned in the verse.¹⁶⁵² If Luke mentions the gates for the sake of a parallel with Acts 3:2 (which is uncertain), temple gates might be assumed by his ideal audience, but Luke would be more concerned with the mention of gates than with their location. This would make sense, however, only if the apostles are speaking near the temple gates, and if Luke knew this to be the case, he could have been more explicit.¹⁶⁵³ Luke's compressed account again provides hints that more detailed information was available to him without providing the reader sufficient detail to explain all of the hints fully.

To Luke's audience, crowds wanting to sacrifice to "the ultramonotheistic apostles" might appear humorous,¹⁶⁵⁴ though it could not have appeared this way to the apostles themselves within the narrative world.¹⁶⁵⁵

III. PREACHING THE TRUE GOD (14:14–18)

Paul and Barnabas finally learn of the crowd's misunderstanding of their mission (14:14), and they try to restrain them (14:18) with preaching about the true God (14:15–17). If the apostles' chief desire was to honor the true God, the distortion of their teaching to achieve the opposite would naturally horrify them. Luke summarizes their preaching in language reminiscent of the LXX but intelligible to a pagan audience.

(1) *Receiving the Report (14:14)*

Paul and Barnabas would recognize a sacred procession with sacrificial bulls¹⁶⁵⁶ and hence would have reason to ask their interpreter or others what was going on, especially when it became evident that the procession seemed directed toward them and not merely passing them.

If they were preaching in Greek without an interpreter (many who spoke Lycaonian as a first language would know some Greek as a second language), some misunderstandings might easily arise; the same could happen if the interpreter was not fluent enough in understanding either Greek or Lycaonian.¹⁶⁵⁷ Lystra yields many Latin inscriptions, but not all are in good Latin; outside Lystra most are in Greek, and names are often local.¹⁶⁵⁸ In this market town for the surrounding area, with a *territorium* divided among its colonists, the audience may have included people from the countryside. Lystra also had a more prominent native element than Antioch.¹⁶⁵⁹

1651. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 165; Munck, *Acts*, 132.

1652. Preferred by Gill, "Religion," 85 (noting [n. 27] that Lystra "is unlikely to have been walled at least at this time"); D. Williams, *Acts*, 249; Bechard, *Walls*, 409–10.

1653. Temples were public places; philosophers and other teachers could lecture on their steps or beneath their colonnades. But this would surely be a striking location for radical monotheists (Acts 14:15–17) to be preaching; we might thus expect Luke to clarify the site. (Arguments from silence never carry full weight, but their plausibility rests on the degree to which one could expect something other than silence in the given case.)

1654. So Pelikan, *Acts*, 150.

1655. The epistolary Paul would have always been unhappy to know that the people had not properly understood his message; he always was concerned about having labored in vain (2 Cor 6:1; Gal 2:2; 4:11; Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 2:1; 3:5). Misunderstanding is an experience familiar to virtually every cross-cultural communicator; in rural Africa, it was often the confused expression on my hearers' faces that on various occasions led me to ask some of my translators what they had said; in contrast to Paul's situation, in my case the correction often provoked strong laughter as I clarified and people understood what I had actually said.

1656. With Witherington, *Acts*, 425. On processions and sacrifices, relevant to Acts 14, see Kauppi, *Gods*, 64–82.

1657. Though I have been in situations where my interpreters were corrected either by me or by bilingual members of the audience. Even when I knew nothing of the local language, I could often pick up visual cues when my audience seemed confused by something.

1658. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 154.

1659. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:11.

Greeks and “barbarians” spoke different languages but could communicate through interpreters (Max. Tyre 8.8).¹⁶⁶⁰ Greeks needed interpreters to speak with Persians;¹⁶⁶¹ Themistocles had a local interpreter for the Persians executed for “corrupting” the Greek language (Plut. *Themist.* 6.2, who approves). Interpreters for the Roman military were of low rank, and their loyalty was not always trusted.¹⁶⁶² Sometimes interpretation even occurred in three languages; Greeks spoke to Armenians through their Persian interpreter (Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.34).¹⁶⁶³ Ideally one might eventually learn a language sufficiently well to dispense with an interpreter (Plut. *Themist.* 28.3); it was even claimed that Mithridates learned the languages of all twenty-two peoples he ruled so that he would not need to depend on interpreters (Val. Max. 8.7.ext. 16). Such aspirations would not, however, be practical for apostles who would spend only a short time initiating a Christian movement in the area.

Interpreters were also useful to those with only a partial command of a language (usually comprehension as opposed to speaking; e.g., Helioid. *Eth.* 7.19) or who felt it beneath their dignity to use a subordinate language (like some earlier traditional Romans concerning Greek).¹⁶⁶⁴ When Cicero was a Roman governor in southern Asia Minor, he needed to use an interpreter (Cic. *Fam.* 13.54.1).¹⁶⁶⁵ As here, one might learn what another said only after the fact, through interpreters (as in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.101, though the story is probably fictitious).

Even most strict Judean Jews recognized the importance of translation into local vernaculars. This was the function of both the LXX (cf. Jos. *Ant.* 1.11)¹⁶⁶⁶ and the Targumim.¹⁶⁶⁷ Later rabbis expected priests to use interpreters if the hearer did not understand the language (*Num. Rab.* 9:34).¹⁶⁶⁸ Certainly Luke does not portray the apostles employing a miraculous xenoglossy in their mission (see discussion at Acts 2:4); one who supernaturally understood all languages required no interpreter (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.21).

Some commentators note that one not yet worthy of a philosopher's reputation could rip off his garments and leap into public view naked, proving that he was simply mortal.¹⁶⁶⁹ More likely background, however, is the widespread ancient custom of

1660. Like other peoples; e.g., the familiar Gen 42:23.

1661. Plut. *Themist.* 28.1; and vice-versa, Quint. Curt. 5.13.7.

1662. See Peretz, “Interpreter.”

1663. Otherwise they were confined to communicating by signs “as if deaf” (Xen. *Anab.* 4.5.33; cf. Luke 1:22, 62). Their “march up country” depended heavily on interpreters (*Anab.* 7.2.19; 7.6.43).

1664. Val. Max. 2.2.2–3; Plut. *M. Cato* 12.4.

1665. Cicero's Greek was excellent, and so local languages were the complication. He was governor of Cilicia, which then included the Phrygian city Laodicea, where he was staying (Cic. *Fam.* 13.67.1; 15.4.2, mentioning also Lycaonia), though he usually stayed in Tarsus.

1666. Even the rabbis approved of Greek translation (e.g., *m. Meg.* 1:8; *'Abot R. Nat.* 37, §94, despite misinformation; *b. Meg.* 9a; *y. Meg.* 1:9, §4; *Gen. Rab.* 36:8), though Hebrew was better (cf. Sir prol.; cf. *y. Meg.* 1:9, §14). Defenders of the LXX regarded its translation as miraculous (*Let. Aris.* 301–11; cf. later Euseb. *H.E.* 5.8); later rabbis preferred Aquila's translation (*y. Meg.* 1:9, §4; *Qidd.* 1:1, §13; *Gen. Rab.* 93:3; *Song Rab.* 1:3, §3). The LXX influenced Paul's own style (Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 281). Cf. the translation of Egyptian sacred literature into Greek (P.Oxy. 11.1381, in Grant, *Religions*, 124–27).

1667. Many early rabbis disapproved of Targumim (e.g., *t. Šabb.* 13:2–3), but they knew and came to recognize them (*b. Ber.* 45a; *Meg.* 23b; *Ta'an.* 4b; *y. Meg.* 4:1, §2; *Ta'an.* 4:1, §14; Safrai, “Education,” 966–68), especially in oral form (cf. *Gen. Rab.* 65:11; *Pesiq. Rab.* 5:1). The Targumim that we have are much later than the first century (*pace* McNamara, “Review”; idem, “Novum Testamentum”; idem, *Judaism*, 205–52), though they may preserve some early traditions (e.g., *Tg. Neof.* on Gen 32:25 with 4Q158 1–2 4; cf. Brownlee, *Habakkuk*, 122–23; arguments in Schäfer, “Geist”; Ohana, “Prosélytisme”); for traditions circulating by Jerome's day, see Hayward, “Jerome”; for some methodological cautions, see Chilton, *Approaches*, 305–15. For the importance of interpreters, see, e.g., *Num. Rab.* 9:34.

1668. Nevertheless, a translator ought not to raise his voice above the reader in a service (*b. Ber.* 45a).

1669. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.9, also cited by Conzelmann, *Acts*, 111 (who adds Dio Cass. 48 and 37.7).

tearing garments for mourning (cf. Acts 18:6), which was a standard practice among Jews¹⁶⁷⁰ as well as among Gentiles.¹⁶⁷¹ When hearing blasphemy, one would tear one's garments.¹⁶⁷² The verbs here are most closely paralleled in a mourning scene in Jdt 14:16–17, with which Luke was probably familiar (though there is no deliberate echo of the thought here, since Bagoas was mourning Israel's victory).¹⁶⁷³ It was considered virtuous for mortals to refuse divine honors (see comment on Acts 14:15 below), but a mob was difficult to restrain.

(2) *The Speech (14:15–17)*

Since Paul is the primary speaker (Acts 14:12), Luke's ideal audience may construe Paul as author of the speech here, although it is probably intended more as a summary of the sorts of things the apostles cried out to deter the crowd (thus the plural in 14:14–15, 18).

Rhetorically, the brief speech is deliberative, inviting a change in behavior (14:15), including only an introduction and perhaps a short *narratio* recounting God's past benefits (14:15c–17).¹⁶⁷⁴ This speech is not clearly interrupted, since it is merely a summary of the sorts of things the apostles were saying (as in 2:40).¹⁶⁷⁵ Luke here displays Paul's skill in extemporaneous speaking (as often, e.g., Acts 22:3–21; cf. Luke 12:11–12; 21:14–15), a skill that was highly prized¹⁶⁷⁶ though most professors of rhetoric objected to using it to make up for a neglect in preparation.¹⁶⁷⁷ Schools emphasized repeated practice of this skill so that one could improvise without it being evident (Quint. *Inst.* 10.7.1).¹⁶⁷⁸ For “men” as an address, see comment on Acts 2:14; usually it is paired with another title, but not always (cf. Acts 7:26; 19:25; 27:10, 21).

A comparison of Paul's¹⁶⁷⁹ speeches in 13:16–47 (a synagogue audience), 14:15–17 (a rural community; see esp. comment on Acts 14:17), and 17:22–31 (urban philosophers) reveals his adaptability to diverse audiences. Although such adaptability could be viewed negatively by critics,¹⁶⁸⁰ the ability to adapt one's form to the audience

1670. E.g., Gen 37:29, 34; 44:13; Judg 11:35; 2 Sam 1:11; 13:19, 31; 1 Kgs 21:27; 2 Kgs 2:12; 5:7; 6:30; 11:14; 19:1; 22:11; 2 Chr 23:13; 34:19, 27; Esth 4:1; Job 1:20; 2:12; Isa 37:1; Joel 2:13; 1 Esd 8:71; 1 Macc 2:14; 4:39; 5:14; 11:71; Mark 14:63; Jos. *War* 2.316; *Ant.* 2.134; 7.4, 40; 9.67; Philo *Flight* 111; *Spec. Laws* 1.115; *Sipre Deut.* 43.3.8; *'Abot R. Nat.* 4, 25 A; b. *Šabb.* 105b; *Mo'ed Qaṭ.* 15a; *Ned.* 87a; *Hor.* 12b; y. *B. Meš'a* 2:11, §1; *Sanh.* 2:1, §4. Some of these passages concern sorrow over corporate sin (e.g., Num 14:6; Josh 7:6; Ezra 9:3; Jer 36:24; Joel 2:13; Jos. *Ant.* 10.59; 11.141; cf. Kee, *Every Nation*, 173).

1671. In novels (Char. *Chaer.* 1.3.4; 3.5.6; 3.10.3; 5.3.4; 7.1.5; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 1.4; 3.10; 5.5; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 25); historiography and biography (Quint. *Curt.* 10.5.19; Suet. *Julius* 33; Dio Cass. 54.4; Jos. *Ant.* 18.78) and life (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 46.12; Lucian *Fun.* 12; Croom, *Clothing*, 71; Brown, *Death*, 517). See further comment on Acts 22:23.

1672. *M. Sanh.* 7:5; *b. Sanh.* 60a, bar.; cf. *b. Mo'ed Qaṭ.* 25b–26a; *y. Mo'ed Qaṭ.* 3:7, §§7–8; *Sanh.* 7:6, §7; Matt 26:65. This response to blasphemy might include a natural extension of the response to not only mourning but treason (2 Kgs 11:14; 2 Chr 23:13; perhaps Jos. *War* 2.316).

1673. Johnson, *Acts*, 249, points out the similarity.

1674. Witherington, *Acts*, 426; cf. Fournier, *Episode*, 188–91; perhaps additionally a *probatio* (ibid., 191–93).

1675. Cf. the present participles κράζοντες in Acts 14:14 and λέγοντες in 14:18.

1676. Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.pref. 2; Tac. *Dial.* 6 (one speaker's view); Philost. *Vit. soph.* 1.482; 1.24.529; 2.26.614; cf. improvisation in earlier epic recitations (Collins, “Improvisation”). Some sophists were weak in this discipline (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.9.583; cf. also an emperor in Suet. *Aug.* 84). Speakers should be ready to embellish even prepared speeches during delivery (Dion. Hal. *Demosth.* 53).

1677. Cf. Sen. E. *Controv.* 10.pref. 3; Quint. *Inst.* 10.7.21.

1678. Calboli Montefusco, “Exercitatio,” 265.

1679. Though Barnabas is also offering exhortations here (Acts 14:14), Luke has already made clear that Paul is the main speaker (14:12), justifying our focus on him.

1680. Glad, “Adaptability,” 20–21; Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 134; Litfin, *Theology*, 115–17; Marshall, *Enmity*, 71–73; Ps.-Phoc. 49; cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.123; Hdn. 4.7.3–4; 4.8.1–3; S.S.S. Whether the case of Alcibiades is more negative or positive may be debated (Plut. *Alc.* 23.4–6; positive in Corn. Nep. 7 [Alcibiades], 11.2–6).

was essential for good rhetoricians (Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.24).¹⁶⁸¹ Although the language is thoroughly biblical (see comments below), it omits direct quotations of Scripture, which would be irrelevant for this audience (in contrast to Acts 13:16–47).¹⁶⁸² Some elements of the speech may even contextualize Paul's message specifically for an audience in this region, suggesting authentic tradition that Luke has compressed here.¹⁶⁸³

(3) *Compatibility with Pauline Thought*

Grant could be right that the speech “may not be what Paul would have said” but rather what Luke thinks “he should have said.”¹⁶⁸⁴ Still, although the wording and choice of terse elements that survive Luke's editing are Luke's, the approach is more Pauline than scholars often recognize. Most of Paul's epistles address Christians; when we approach the texts, however, that exemplify his understanding of natural theology (Rom 1:19–22), idolatry (1:23–25; cf. 1 Cor 8:5–6; 10:20–21), and repentance from idolatry (1 Thess 1:9), the resemblance between Luke's Paul and the Paul of the epistles is substantial.

The anti-idolatry language here resembles 1 Thess 1:9, the closest passage we have to a summary of Paul's expectations for pagans' conversion.¹⁶⁸⁵ Luke's natural theology is compatible with the natural theology in Rom 1:19–25.¹⁶⁸⁶ In both places, however, the natural theology must be qualified. In Romans, the revelation in nature makes humanity morally responsible for idolatry (1:18–23), but this revelation contrasts with the revelation in the gospel, which provides salvation (1:16–17).¹⁶⁸⁷ In fact, in different ways, Acts 14:15–17 and Rom 1:19–25 might even draw on the same source in Wis 13–15,¹⁶⁸⁸ though the connection is much clearer in the somewhat longer Romans passage.¹⁶⁸⁹ Wisdom of Solomon used God's revelation in nature to make idolatry morally indefensible¹⁶⁹⁰ and drew from Stoic models.¹⁶⁹¹ See more fully the discussion of natural theology at Acts 17:22–31.

(4) *Confronting Polytheism (14:15)*

As in the speech in Acts 17:22–31, Paul begins by establishing common ground with his audience (mentioning shared nature in 14:15; cf. also the agricultural imagery of 14:17). The approach here resembles the apologetic in Josephus and many

1681. For an example, see, e.g., Albucaius, adapting for both academic and popular audiences (Suet. *Rhet.* 6); later, Libanius (*Eunapius Lives* 495–96). See further Litfin, *Theology*, 65, 104–6; cf. *Thebaid* frg. 8; Max. Tyre 1.2; Diog. Laert. 2.66; *Exod. Rab.* 47:5.

1682. Cf. Siffer, “Annonce” (for here and Acts 17:22–31). The supposed exegesis of Ps 65:5–66:1 here, matched with the teaching of another student of Gamaliel in *Deut. Rab.* 7:7 (Barnes, “Paul and ben Zakkai”), is too narrow.

1683. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 139, following esp. Breytenbach, “Zeus und Gott”

1684. Grant, *Paul*, 9. This section's material is also used in Keener, “Monotheism.”

1685. With Wenham, “Paulinism of Acts Again”; Witherington, *Acts*, 426; Grant, *Paul*, 9.

1686. With, e.g., Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 145. From Philo to Augustine, monotheists challenged pagan natural philosophy (Miller, “Idolatry”). Paul opposed idolatry but not all of Gentile culture (Sandnes, “Idolatry and Virtue”).

1687. Cranfield, “Romans 1.18,” connects the two “revelations” by predicating both on the gospel, but this weighs too much on the connective γάρ.

1688. Haacker, *Theology*, 103–4.

1689. In Rom 1, see, e.g., Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 52; Davies, *Paul*, 28; Bruce, *Books*, 169; deSilva, “Wisdom of Solomon,” 1274; Hooker, “Adam,” 299 (noting differences as well); Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 91; Talbert, *Romans*, 63. Thus Bornkamm, *Experience*, 53, regards the parallels as well known. Wisdom and Acts stress humanity's ignorance, and Romans stresses suppression of knowledge (Talbert, *Romans*, 62–63; Gaca, “Declaration,” 3–5). But while ignorance may be less culpable (see comment on Acts 3:17), this ignorance is willful; both traditions seek to underline moral culpability.

1690. Cf. deSilva, “Wisdom of Solomon,” 1272.

1691. Kennedy, *Epistles*, 26; Ponizy, “Recognition”; cf. Collins, “Natural Theology”; Dafni, “Natürliche Theologie.”

Diaspora Jewish writers, and Luke's presentation of it would appeal to, and perhaps solicit the alliance of, many philosophic currents in his day.¹⁶⁹² The similarities with 17:22–31 might suggest that both reflect a pattern of Hellenistic Jewish apologetic as found in Wisdom of Solomon or Philo,¹⁶⁹³ though Paul's more directly confrontational summons to repentance (14:15; 17:30; cf. 19:26; 1 Thess 1:9) goes beyond the apologetic of most of his contemporaries.

Despite similarities, the speech confronts idolatry more bluntly than apologists often did. Although Jewish people naturally critiqued idolatry more often among themselves than with polytheistic crowds, they would recognize the ideas. Jewish literature often mocked paganism,¹⁶⁹⁴ following the lead of some biblical prophets (1 Kgs 18:27; Isa 44:12–17; 46:6–7; Jer 10:3–5; Ps 115:4–8).¹⁶⁹⁵ Some scholars fruitfully ground Luke's anti-idolatry polemic especially in Isaiah.¹⁶⁹⁶

Jews viewed idolatry as one of the very worst sins,¹⁶⁹⁷ perhaps the worst.¹⁶⁹⁸ For the rabbis, idolatry was one of the great sins of the antediluvian era.¹⁶⁹⁹ In Jewish tradition, Abraham¹⁷⁰⁰ became a fierce opponent of idolatry;¹⁷⁰¹ he destroyed the idols in his household¹⁷⁰² and faced conflict with his family.¹⁷⁰³ Later rabbis said that Abraham was the first person to leave idolatry.¹⁷⁰⁴ (For further discussion on Abraham's opposition to idolatry, see comment at Acts 7:2–8.)

A late Tanna complained that false gods, far from being creators, were created by the last entity created—namely, humans (*Sipre Deut.* 43.6.9). Church fathers adopted this approach. Criticizing the imperial cult, Tertullian pointed out that a person's divinity, far from being innate, was dependent on mortals' decisions and support (*Apol.* 5.2). It is not surprising that Gentiles believed that converts to Judaism hated Gentiles' deities (e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 20.77) and converts to Christianity denied them (*Lucian Peregr.* 13).

Sometimes, however, even Gentiles mocked what they viewed as ludicrous elements of mythology.¹⁷⁰⁵ Lucian (admittedly not typical) ridicules inconsistencies in popular views of the gods and Fate,¹⁷⁰⁶ arguing that the gods cannot reward mortals and are their

1692. See Downing, "Common Ground" (citing *Jos. Ant.* 1.272–73; 4.40–50; 20.89–90; and esp. *Ant.* 8.102–29; *Ag. Ap.* 2). For the inadequacy of portraying Paul and Barnabas as philosophers here, see Rowe, *World*, 21–22 (on the incompatibility of the way with pagan religion elsewhere in Acts, see, e.g., 26, 43).

1693. Grant, *Paul*, 9. For one comparison between Acts 14:8–20 and 17:16–34, see Bechard, *Walls*, 369–31.

1694. E.g., *Wis* 13:10–14:7; *Bel and the Dragon*; *Epistle of Jeremiah*; *Let. Aris.* 134–38. For other polemic, see, e.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.8–35; 4.4–23; among later Christians, 8.359–428.

1695. This could often be accomplished by means of *reductio ad absurdum*, a technique also familiar to philosophers (e.g., *Sen. Y. Ep. Lucil.* 113.20, mocking excessive personification of virtues).

1696. Pao, *Isaianic Exodus*, 181–216.

1697. *Jub.* 36:5; *Ep Jer* passim; *t. Sanh.* 13:8; *Pe'ah* 1:2; *Sipra VDDeho. par.* 1.34.1.3; *'Abot R. Nat.* 40 A; *b. Git.* 57b; *Šabb.* 145b–146a; *y. Sanh.* 3:5, §2; 6:7, §2; 8:8, §1; 10:1, §2; 10:3, §2; *Lev. Rab.* 37:1; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Num 35:25. The evil inclination led to this (e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 43.4.1; *Song Rab.* 2:4, §1; 7:8, §1; see Davies, *Paul*, 30, noting *b. Šabb.* 105b). It was also wrong for Gentiles (*Sipre Num.* 112.2.2; meriting judgment in *Sib. Or.* 3.34; but cf. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 4:9). Idolatry brought Solomon down (*Test. Sol.* 26). Cf. further Safrai, "Religion," 829.

1698. *Wis* 14:27; *Mek. Pisha* 5.40–41; *y. Ned.* 3:9, §3. It was tantamount to rejecting the entire Torah (*t. Bek.* 3:12; *Sipre Deut.* 54.3.2; *b. Qidd.* 40a), and rejecting Torah could lead to it (*Sipre Deut.* 43.4.1).

1699. E.g., 3 *En.* 5:6–11. It was idolatry that made them vulnerable to demons (*Gen. Rab.* 23:6; 24:6).

1700. Similar traditions were applied to Job in *Test. Job* 2–5.

1701. E.g., *Jub.* 21:3 (summarizing his righteousness); *Apoc. Ab.* 1–8. Flusser, "Upanishads," highlights Abraham's resistance to idolatry (e.g., *Jub.* 11:16–18; 12:1–6, 12–14; *Jos. Ant.* 1.155–56), but his comparison to the Upanishads is unnecessary.

1702. *Jub.* 11:12–14; cf. *Judg* 6:25–27.

1703. *Jub.* 11:16–17; 12:1–8.

1704. *Pesiq. Rab.* 33:3. In *Gen. Rab.* 39:1 (attributed to a Tanna), he questioned and God revealed himself to him.

1705. E.g., *Dio Chrys. Or.* 11 passim (e.g., 11.154, ridiculing Hecuba's transformation into a dog). For other critics of Greek religion, see, e.g., Grant, *Gods*, 20.

1706. See *Lucian Z. Cat.* 2–5; cf. *Pliny E. N.H.* 2.5.22; *Lucian Indictment 2*; *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.245.

fellow slaves to Fate.¹⁷⁰⁷ If Zeus responds that the gods have immortal bliss, Lucian's philosopher reminds him that the gods can be wounded, imprisoned, and tortured in the myths.¹⁷⁰⁸ Poets' myths are fine for literary purposes, Lucian opines, but those who take them seriously act like children or people who are insane.¹⁷⁰⁹ Apollonius allegedly criticized stories of immoral deities as nothing but silly tales for children or old women.¹⁷¹⁰

Some Gentiles were agnostic about the nature of the deity but rejected the multiplication of deities corresponding to human characteristics or needs.¹⁷¹¹ Humans making images in their own likeness could be mocked.¹⁷¹² Some intellectuals might ridicule the mythical portrayals of some immortals staying old while others remained young,¹⁷¹³ their adultery or affairs with mortals,¹⁷¹⁴ their conflicts with one another,¹⁷¹⁵ and so forth. Once Zeus asked Helios to rest from his work as sun god for three days so that Zeus would have a long night to commit adultery.¹⁷¹⁶ On another occasion, Zeus has to explain that there is nothing wrong with lust, when Ixion thinks he is having intercourse with Hera.¹⁷¹⁷

Some ancients questioned how a mortal woman could escape her divine pursuer when even a man is normally stronger than a woman;¹⁷¹⁸ how gods could prove powerless to help beloved mortals;¹⁷¹⁹ how gods could be permanently lame;¹⁷²⁰ how the immortals could enjoy night with Helios among them;¹⁷²¹ or how the twin brothers

1707. Lucian *Z. Cat.* 7–8.

1708. Lucian *Z. Cat.* 8; also in *Sacr.* 5–6; cf. *Z. Rants* 40. For this vulnerability of deities, see, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 5.339–42, 855–59, 870 (Diomedes at Athena's command; cf. 5.130–32, 335–39, 829–30); Ap. *Rhod.* 3.853; Apollod. *Epit.* 4.2; *Bib.* 1.7.1; Libanius *Encomium* 1.10. The bronze giant Talos, who lost all his ichor, died (Ap. *Rhod.* 4.1679–80; Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.26); Chiron had to trade away his immortality so that he could die rather than endure the pain of his wound (Apollod. *Bib.* 2.5.4); cf. perhaps Polyphemus in Eurip. *Cycl.* 231, 321 (Kovacs, "Introduction to *Cyclops*," 55); on the mortality of some ancient Near Eastern deities, see, e.g., ANET 139–40 (*Ba'al* poems, I* AB, vi, on 139; IAB, ii, on 140); Albright, *Yahweh*, 125–27; Gordon, "Psalm 82," 130–31 (citing UT 19.1816). Such "divine" mortality was rejected by Stoics (e.g., Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 95.49–50), and writers evaded the problem of such wounded deities by allegorization (Heracl. *Hom. Prob.* 30.1, 4; 31.1, 11; 52.5–6; 53.1).

1709. Lucian *Lover of Lies* 2–5. Lucian proves less generous in *Amber* 3, 5–6, denouncing their lies; cf. also the criticism in Val. *Max.* 4.7.4.

1710. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 5.14; cf. Lucian *Amber* 3.

1711. E.g., Pliny *E. N.H.* 2.5.14–16, 19.

1712. Lucian *Sacr.* 11.

1713. E.g., Pliny *E. N.H.* 2.5.17; Lucian *Sacr.* 11.

1714. E.g., Pliny *E. N.H.* 2.5.17; Lucian *Prom.* 17; *Parl. G.* 7; *Lover of Lies* 2; *Dial. G.* 206 (6/2, Eros and Zeus 1); 231 (19/11, Aphrodite and Selene 1); 233–34 (20/12, Aphrodite and Eros 1); 243 (17/15, Hermes and Apollo 3); 245–46 (21/17, Apollo and Hermes ¶¶1–2); 269–71 (2/22, Pan and Hermes 1–2); 272, ¶4; *Dial. S.-G.* 305–6 (11/7, South Wind and West Wind 1); 325–27 (15, West Wind and South Wind 2–3); Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.8. Some considered it inappropriate for a deity to have sexual intercourse with a mortal (Hermog. *Progymn.* 5, "On Refutation and Confirmation," 11; cf. Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.40). Zeus does manage to restrain himself if the offspring of the union could overthrow him, in Lucian *Dial. G.* 205 (5/1, Prometheus and Zeus 2). Heraclitus evades such charges by allegory (*Hom. Prob.* 68–69, esp. 68.8–9; 69.8–16).

1715. E.g., Pliny *E. N.H.* 2.5.17; Lucian *Dial. G.* 240 (16/14, Hermes and Apollo 2). In Lucian *Dial. G.* 278–80 (24/25, Zeus and Helios 1–2), Zeus is angry at Helios for allowing his son to nearly destroy the world, but (279, ¶2) he forgives him this time. Heraclitus evades this charge by allegory (*Hom. Prob.* 52, esp. 52.4).

1716. Lucian *Dial. G.* 229 (14/10, Hermes and Helios 1), mocking (for a more serious version, see, e.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 2.4.8).

1717. Lucian *Dial. G.* 214–19 (9/6, Hera and Zeus ¶¶1–5). Zeus was angrier in the more serious version (Apollod. *Epit.* 1.20).

1718. Aphth. *Progymn.* 5, "On Refutation," 29S, 13R; cf. Lucian *Dial. G.* 242 (Hermes and Apollo 2). Most mortal objects of Apollo's affection seem to have spurned him (e.g., Apollod. *Bib.* 3.12.5; Ovid *Metam.* 2.603–11; Lucian *Dial. G.* 242 [17/15, Hermes and Apollo 2]; 244 [18/16, Hera and Leto 1]).

1719. Lucian *Dial. G.* 239–40 (16/14, Hermes and Apollo 1–2); Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.24; Philost. *Younger Imag.* 14; also Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.245.

1720. Lucian *Dial. G.* 241 (17/15, Hermes and Apollo 1); 243 (18/16, Hera and Leto 1). Heraclitus evades this by allegory (*Hom. Prob.* 26.1, 7–8).

1721. Lucian *Icar.* 28 (mythographers would have probably replied that Helios was moving back eastward beneath the earth; but he would have trouble making the banquets without reliable assistants).

lovingly could share immortality on alternate days, so that they do not succeed in even seeing each other.¹⁷²² Some also rejected carrying gods on one's fingers (i.e., idolatrous rings)¹⁷²³ and oracles whose replies typically hedged so that they could not be falsified.¹⁷²⁴ Many laughed about Cretans claiming to host Zeus's tomb.¹⁷²⁵ Critics complained about Zeus's weakness, since Hera allured him to sleep on Mount Ida so that she could help the Greeks win a battle.¹⁷²⁶ Philosophers rarely accepted the old myths literally,¹⁷²⁷ and some accused of slander those who had presented the gods as immoral.¹⁷²⁸ Since anything and everything could be personified and deified, why worship any deities in particular?¹⁷²⁹

Without intending ridicule, others recounted (as truth or entertaining stories) how Hermes (as a newborn) stole mortals' property¹⁷³⁰ and killed those who might betray the secret.¹⁷³¹ Deities—often married—could seduce and rape various women¹⁷³² and occasionally boys¹⁷³³ yet slay such mortals if they proved unfaithful.¹⁷³⁴ (Their sexual exploits proved fertile ground for early Jewish and Christian critiques of paganism.)¹⁷³⁵ Hera could jealously avenge her honor in response to Zeus's adultery;¹⁷³⁶ insulted

1722. Lucian *Dial. G.* 286 (25/26, Apollo and Hermes). Athena as an armored female also struck Lucian as funny, in 225 (13/8, Hephaistos and Zeus 1), though not everyone mocked it (e.g., Philost. *Elder Imag.* 2.27).

1723. E.g., Pliny *E. N.H.* 2.5.21.

1724. Lucian *Dial. G.* 244 (18/16, Hera and Leto 1).

1725. Callim. *Hymns* 1 (to Zeus), lines 8–9; Lucian *Sacr.* 10; *Parl. G.* 6; *Tim.* 4; *Z. Rants* 45; *Lover of Lies* 3; *Patriot* 10 (Byzantine); cf. Euhemerus *Sacr. Hist.* 6 (in Grant, *Religions*, 76); Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.4.569; *Sib. Or.* 8.45–49; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 136.

1726. Heracl. *Hom. Prob.* 39.1 (on *Hom. Il.* 14.347–53); Heraclitus goes on to salvage the story by allegorizing it (*Hom. Prob.* 39.2–17). Cf. 1 Kgs 18:27; contrast Ps 121:3–4.

1727. Grant, *Paul*, 4–5; beyond philosophers, e.g., Libanius *Invect.* 7.2. Allegorizing allowed them to develop acceptable morals (Cic. *Nat. d.* 2.28.70; cf. Proclus *Poet.* 5–6; Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.255; Murray, *Stages*, 202; Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 98); some simply rewrote stories (e.g., Stesichorus's *Recantation*; Pindar *Olympian* 1.52–53).

1728. Dio Chrys. [Favorinus] *Or.* 37.32. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 11.19 complains of Homer's tales of the gods and (11.23) calls him a liar (yet seems to favor Hesiod in 12.23 and exalts Homer as the greatest poet in 18.8).

1729. Lucian *Icar.* 9; *Phil. Sale* 4.

1730. E.g., Ovid *Metam.* 2.685–86; Lucian *Dial. G.* 220 (11/7, Hephaistos and Apollo 1); Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.26; cf. Lucian *Prom.* 5. He also stole Apollo's property in *Apollod. Bib.* 3.10.2; in 2.1.3, Zeus ordered him to steal a cow. For earlier deities' covetousness, see, e.g., AQHT A (vi); B (*ANET* 151–52); Gordon, *Near East*, 100; Kaiser, "Pantheon," 63 (citing *UT* 75.1.38–39).

1731. Ovid *Metam.* 2.687–707, esp. 705–7 (Mercury turned another into stone, 2.830–32).

1732. E.g., Soph. *Searchers* 212–15 (*SPap* 3:44–45); Eurip. *Antiope* 69–71; *Pirithous* 22–24 (*SPap* 3:124–25); *Alope* frg. 107; *Antiope* frg. 223.72–77; *Archelaus* frg. 228a.15–16; *Danae* frg. 1132.26–34; *Andromeda* frg. 136 (Stobaeus 4.20.42); Menander *Heros* frg. 2 (Stobaeus *Ecl.* 5.20a.21); *Apollod. Bib.* 1.5.1; 1.7.8–9; 1.9.3; 3.2.1 (leading to her death); 3.1.1; 3.4.3; 3.5.5; 3.7.6; 3.8.2; 3.10.1, 3; 3.12.2, 5–6; 3.15.2, 4; *Epit.* 1.9, 22; *Thebaid* frg. 11 (from scholiast D on *Hom. Il.* 23.346); *Cypria* frg. 10 (from Athen. *Deipn.* 334b); frg. 11 (from Philod. *Piety* B 7369); Varro *L.L.* 5.5.31; Ovid *Metam.* 2.714–47; 3.1–2, 260–61; 4.234–44; 5.391–408; 14.765–71; *Sil. It.* 13.615; Lucian *Dial. G.* 250 (23/19, Aphrodite and Eros 1); Paus. 8.25.7–8; Parth. *L.R.* 15.3 (having someone else killed); Ach. *Tat.* 1.5.5–7; Apul. *Metam.* 6.22; Libanius *Speech in Character* 27.3; *Narration* 1; 4.1–2; 17; 31; 32; 39; 41 (cf. *Narration* 3). On very rare occasions, a mortal escaped, outwitting the deity (Ap. *Rhod.* 2.946–54) or outrunning him (Libanius *Speech in Character* 27.4; cf. *Narration* 17). Similar tales are told of mortals later deified, e.g., Heracles (e.g., *Apollod. Bib.* 2.7.4, 7). In Eurip. frg. 925, Hephaestus tried to rape Athena.

1733. For the boy Ganymede (raped by Zeus), see, e.g., Callim. *Epig.* 53; *Apollod. Bib.* 3.12.2; Virg. *Aen.* 1.28; Ovid *Metam.* 10.155–61; Lucian *Parl. G.* 8–9; *Dial. G.* 208–12 (10/4, Zeus and Ganymede ¶¶1–5), esp. 208, ¶1; 213 (8/5, Zeus and Hera ¶2); 214, ¶¶2–3; *Affairs* 14; *Charidemus* 7; Alciph. *Paras.* 23 (Limeterus to Amasetus), 3.59, ¶2; Philost. *Letters* 8 (46); Philost. *Younger Imag.* 8. For Apollo's affection for Hyacinthus, see, e.g., *Apollod. Bib.* 3.10.3; Ovid *Metam.* 10.162–219; Lucian *Dial. G.* 239–40 (16/14, Hermes and Apollo 1–2); 242, 2; 244 (18/16, Hera and Leto 1); Philost. *Elder Imag.* 1.24; Libanius *Narration* 2. Occasionally goddesses or nymphs did the same: for Rhea with Attis as a boy, see Lucian *Sacr.* 7; nymphs in Ap. *Rhod.* 1.1226–39; Ovid *Metam.* 4.368–79; *Sil. It.* 5.15–21; for Dawn's rape of Tithonus, see, e.g., *Apollod. Bib.* 3.12.4.

1734. E.g., Ovid *Metam.* 2.603–11. Apollo regrets it afterward (2.612–13). Cf. Libanius *Narration* 2; 4.2; 32.

1735. E.g., Jos. *Ag. Ap.* 2.244–46, 275; Athenag. *Plea* 20–22; Theoph. 1.9; *Ps.-Clem. Hom.* 4.15.1–19.3.

1736. E.g., Aeschylus *Women of Aetna* frg.; Eurip. *Bacch.* 94–98; Soph. *Searchers* 212–15; Callim. *Hymns* 4 (to Delos), lines 55–58; *Apollod. Bib.* 1.4.1, 3; 3.4.3; Ovid *Metam.* 2.477–88; 3.261–72, 280–309; 4.416–530;

by mortals' neglect¹⁷³⁷ or criticisms,¹⁷³⁸ deities could also plot their death.¹⁷³⁹ Deities could not protect mortals they loved,¹⁷⁴⁰ but they could deceive with supernatural effectiveness.¹⁷⁴¹ Deities could become animals to mate with each other.¹⁷⁴²

Although many normally would not dare complain against the morality of a deity's action,¹⁷⁴³ Greeks could complain about the injustice of their deities' decrees;¹⁷⁴⁴ with an entire pantheon, one could also pit some deities against others¹⁷⁴⁵ (as in the Trojan War)¹⁷⁴⁶ in ways that would have been unthinkable to monotheists. Popular polytheism allowed for competing agendas of various deities.¹⁷⁴⁷ That Zeus had overthrown his own father to become king was widely known.¹⁷⁴⁸ Mortals could also threaten deities with unbelief if they failed to act.¹⁷⁴⁹ Such divine morality, modeled after human desires, in turn became a model for human behavior.¹⁷⁵⁰ Jewish and Christian apologists condemned the morality of pagan deities,¹⁷⁵¹ and early Christian apologists (who were condemned especially for their monotheism) worked hard to distinguish Christianity from the tales of polytheistic deities.¹⁷⁵²

Appian *Hist. rom.* 12.15.101; Lucian *Dial. G.* 207 (7/3, Zeus and Hermes 1); 213 (8/5, Zeus and Hera ¶¶1–2) (of Ganymede); 228 (12/9, Poseidon and Hermes 2); *Dial. S.-G.* 315 (9/10, Iris and Poseidon ¶1); cf. her jealousy more generally in *Hom. Hymns* 3.343–44 (to Pythian Apollo); Sen. *Y. Herc. fur.* 1–29; Libanius *Narration* 12.

1737. E.g., Eurip. *Hipp.* 1–28, 1400–1403 (because deities desire honor, *Hipp.* 8); Ap. Rhod. 3.64–65; nonlethally in Pindar *Hymns* frg. 37; Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.15. A mortal woman who preferred another to a divine lover might be killed (Apollod. *Bib.* 3.10.3).

1738. Ovid *Metam.* 4.543–62; 5.409–37. A mortal who challenged Apollo was skinned to make a wine bottle (Apollod. *Bib.* 1.4.2; Philost. *Younger Imag.* 2); Athena flayed Pallas alive (Apollod. *Bib.* 1.6.2). A deity could also seek the destruction of the object of his jealousy (Apollod. *Bib.* 2.4.3; 3.14.1; one view in 3.4.4).

1739. Often they inspired mortals with folly that destroyed them (Hom. *Il.* 18.311–13; but cf. also 1 Sam 2:25; 2 Sam 17:14).

1740. E.g., Eurip. *El.* 1298–1300; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.10.3; cf. 1.5.1.

1741. Statius *Ach.* 1.364.

1742. Zeus became a bull to mate with Hera when she was a cow (Aeschylus *Suppl.* 299–301; cf. Poseidon's behavior in *Thebaid* frg. 11, from scholiast D on Hom. *Il.* 23.346). Earlier, Baal apparently turned into a bull to mate with his sister Anath when she became a heifer; Baal 1* AB (v) (ANET 139); Gordon, *Near East*, 99; Albright, *Yahweh*, 128–29; Moyer, "Practices," 25; Kaiser, "Pantheon," 9 (citing esp. *UT* 76), 58, 60, 155–56; cf. perhaps divine bestiality in Gilg. 6.46ff. (ANET 84); that of Helios's daughter Pasiphae in Apollod. *Bib.* 3.1.2–4; 3.15.8; Ovid *Metam.* 8.131–37, 155–56; Libanius *Narration* 21; 22.

1743. Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 1.9.

1744. E.g., Eurip. *Orest.* 417–18, 595–96. This seems to exceed sentiments such as those in 2 Sam 6:8; Ps 89:38–49.

1745. E.g., in the Roman-Carthaginian conflict, in Sil. It. 9.438–39; or deities' desire for Attica, Apollod. *Bib.* 3.14.1; conflict between Hephaestus and Hera in Libanius *Narration* 7.1–3; Hephaestus vs. Ares's adultery (Hom. *Od.* 8.266–366; Libanius *Narration* 26.1–2); deities competing for mortals' or others' affections, as in Libanius *Narration* 17.

1746. E.g., Ovid *Tristia* 1.2.4–5. Even if Homer authored both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, it remains noteworthy that the former portrays a much less harmonious pantheon; later Roman sources (e.g., the *Aeneid*) also portray their deities more favorably than in the *Iliad*.

1747. E.g., Aeschylus *Eum.* 179–84, 299–300 (but all deities hate the Furies, 197); Ovid *Tristia* 1.2.4–5; Sil. It. 9.438–39.

1748. E.g., Aeschylus *Eum.* 640–51.

1749. Odysseus in Eurip. *Cycl.* 606–7. In prayer, pagans often accumulated as many names of the deity they were entreating as possible (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.37–38, 451–52; 2.412; PGM 4.2916–27; Cleantes *Hymn to Zeus*; more restrained, *ILS* 190) and reminded a deity of favors owed, seeking an answer on contractual grounds, as many ancient texts attest (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.39–41; 10.291–94; *Od.* 1.61–62, 66–67; 4.762–64; 17.240–42; Ap. Rhod. 1.417–19; Virg. *Aen.* 12.778).

1750. E.g., Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.1.554; Ach. Tat. 1.5.5–7; cf. Pindar frg. 199 (from Strabo 17.1.19); Diod. Sic. 1.27.1; Philost. *Letters* 30 (58); Mattingly, *Christianity*, 23. This provided a subject for Jewish and Christian criticism (Jos. Ag. *Ap.* 2.244–46; Ps.-Clem. 4.15.1–19.3). Pagans who advocated imitation of deities, of course, did not cite such examples (e.g., Xen. *Cyr.* 6.2.29; Cic. *Tusc.* 5.25.70; Sen. *Y. Dial.* 1.1.5; 7.8.4; Mus. Ruf. 8, p. 64.14; Epict. *Disc.* 2.14.12–13; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.82; Plut. *On Borrowing* 7, *Mor.* 830B; Heracl. *Ep.* 5; Max. Tyre *Or.* 35.2; *Sent. Sextus* 44–45; Libanius *Thesis* 1.3).

1751. E.g., Jos. Ag. *Ap.* 2.232–49, 275; Athenag. *Plea* 20–22; Theoph. 1.9; Tatian *Or. Gks.* 33–34.

1752. See Pelikan, *Acts*, 163, noting esp. Origen's *Contra Celsum* (e.g., *Cels.* 4.5). Pelikan (164) paradoxically employs Acts 14:15–17 to raise the topic of θεῶσις (citing Basil *Holy Sp.* 9.23; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 29.19; Athanas.

Polytheism was more intellectually fashionable in many circles than was monotheism, because it represented the views of the dominant culture.¹⁷⁵³ It was undoubtedly difficult to give up polytheism; deities or spirits were associated with entrances to the home,¹⁷⁵⁴ with trees,¹⁷⁵⁵ and with personified virtues;¹⁷⁵⁶ for Romans, spirits were associated with families and even individuals.¹⁷⁵⁷ Beliefs about and thus feelings involving deities pervaded people's daily lives and habits; their experience seemed continuous and second nature. To give up polytheism was to surrender an entire worldview associated with virtually everything familiar that surrounded its devotees.¹⁷⁵⁸

Jews and Christians challenged not only the multiplicity of deities and myths but also the use of images for deities. Neither in myth nor in cult were cult statues the central element of most Greco-Roman religion¹⁷⁵⁹ the way they had been in earlier Egypt and much of the ancient Near East (inviting the OT polemic);¹⁷⁶⁰ but neither were they mere accessories.¹⁷⁶¹ Intellectuals could normally distinguish between a deity and its statue;¹⁷⁶² such images were simply symbols of, or pointers to, a deeper reality.¹⁷⁶³ The statue should seek to accurately portray the deity's attributes,¹⁷⁶⁴ but statues cannot adequately portray deity, and when in human form, they simply offer humanity's best illustration.¹⁷⁶⁵ Nevertheless, even intellectuals who offered such distinctions might insist that such humanly made images were useful for allowing mortals concrete ways to honor their deities.¹⁷⁶⁶ Though many philosophers held a more consistent system that allowed idols only for focusing thought on the divine, not everyone agreed. (On animal worship, see comment on Acts 7:41.)

Like Paul and Luke, many Jewish people also believed that nature testified to the unity and character of God (cf. Acts 14:17; see comment on Acts 17:22–31). But although early Judaism had many apologists, it was rarely evangelistic as here,

Discourses against Arians 1.43), which, if anything, would be undercut by this text (the topic might be better served by, e.g., 2 Pet 1:4).

1753. This was also true in ancient Israel's Middle Eastern context (Albright, *Biblical Period*, 61, comparing secularism today; idem, *Yahweh*, 264).

1754. See Johnston, "Gates."

1755. On dryads and hamadryads associated with trees in ancient texts, see Gödde, "Hamadryads"; Käppel, "Nymphs"; Bremmer, "Nymph"; associations with spirits seem to have crept into some later Jewish thought (cf. *b. Sanh.* 101a, bar.).

1756. E.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 77/78.33; Men. *Rhet.* 1.1, 333.21–24; 2.6, 400.32–401.19; 404.29–405.13 (negatively, 1.1, 342.6–9); cf. Klauck, *Context*, 65; Bloch, "Elpis." Since winds were deified, Fronto (Naber, 211, §7) reasons that smoke and dust are also divine (though one could clearly personify without deifying, e.g., *Rhet. Her.* 4.53.66; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 63–65; 75.5; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 4.30). Some rejected such practices as foolish (Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.5.14–15).

1757. For the *genius*, see, e.g., Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 110.1 (on popular belief); Maharam, "Genius"; this may have influenced some in the eastern Mediterranean as well, through adapting the sense of δαίμονες (cf. popular opinion in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 23.6; Epict. *Diatr.* 1.14.12, 14; Ach. *Tat.* 3.10.1; cf. Diog. Laert. 8.1.32; 9.1.7). For household deities, see, e.g., Klauck, *Context*, 60.

1758. Indeed, as Belayche, "Actors," 278, notes, deities were so many that one could say that "the world is full of gods" (Thales; Cic. *Leg.* 2.26).

1759. Rives, *Religion*, 32–34.

1760. *Ibid.*, 34.

1761. *Ibid.*, 34–36.

1762. Lucian *Portr. D.* 23; cf. Klauck, *Context*, 27; still harsher critiques by Cynics, in Downing, *Cynics*, 213. Indeed, εἰδωλον can refer to simply a phantom (e.g., the Helen made of clouds in Apollod. *Epit.* 3.5 [though a cloud gives birth in 1.20]).

1763. Grant, *Paul*, 4.

1764. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.74–75, 77.

1765. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.52, 54, 59. Against humanly constructed images, see Iamblichus *Letter* 18.1–3 (Stobaeus *Anth.* 3.11.35).

1766. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.60. But a human figure was the best (12.61). For Celsus's defense of worshipping deity images, against the Christian critique, see Cook, *Interpretation*, 91–94.

summoning Gentiles to abandon false gods.¹⁷⁶⁷ Granted, idolaters are sometimes apparently addressed when denounced or mocked (e.g., Isa 44:11; 46:12; *Sib. Or.* 3.547–48), but this occurred mostly in documents that practicing idolaters would never read or hear.¹⁷⁶⁸ The usually in-house polemic of OT prophets was now heard by idolaters themselves.

(5) *Mortals versus the Creator (14:15)*

Mortals' refusal of divine honors was considered virtuous (see comment on Acts 10:26)¹⁷⁶⁹ and is modeled positively by the apostles (Acts 10:26; cf. 3:12) but negatively by a tyrant (12:22–23). A “nature like ours” (the opening three Greek syllables evoking and challenging the crowd's claim in 14:11) means shared humanity, even for great figures; perhaps, by emphasizing their humanity, Luke, like James, also hints again that his audience may emulate many aspects of the apostolic model he presents (Jas 5:17–18).¹⁷⁷⁰ The term was, however, already in circulation in Hellenistic Judaism for shared humanity (4 Macc 12:13) or createdness (Wis 7:3). Most significant, being “humans like” their hearers rhetorically echoes their audience's claim in 14:11, that they have come “like humans.”¹⁷⁷¹ Although ποιέω is a common verb (sixty-eight times in Acts), the speakers may also contrast what the crowd is “doing” with what God did (also in 14:15) in creating the heaven, the earth, the sea, and their contents, so that the crowd returns evil for good.

“Turning” in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:16–17; 22:32; Acts 9:35; 11:21; 15:19; 26:18; 28:27) is equivalent to repentance (see, most clearly, Acts 3:19; 26:20).¹⁷⁷² “Repentance” was an appropriate response to idolatry (e.g., *Jos. Asen.* 9:2); some Egyptian Jews envisioned Egyptian priests someday “turning” to the true God (*Sib. Or.* 5.497).¹⁷⁷³ When the apostles described pagan religion as vain (μάταιος), they echoed a long prophetic tradition of denouncing idolatry, not only in the LXX¹⁷⁷⁴ but also in other expressions of Diaspora Judaism.¹⁷⁷⁵ The epistolary Paul also used such language for idolatry (ἐματαιώθησαν in Rom 1:21).¹⁷⁷⁶

Like Luke here, Paul in his letters also depicts Gentiles' turning to faith as “turning” from idols to the “living God.” The “living God” (here and in 1 Thess 1:9) contrasts

1767. Dunn, *Acts*, 191.

1768. Third-person denunciations are also prominent in the context of some of these references, e.g., Isa 44:9–20; 46:6–7.

1769. Scholars cite many examples (Aelian *Var. hist.* 8.15; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 2.22.12; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 82, 110; Grant, *Gods*, 26). Refusing any kind of honors sometimes led to greater praise in the long run (Val. Max. 4.1.6a); mortals failing to refuse divine honors was wicked (*Jos. Ant.* 19.345–46).

1770. Cf. the conception in Jerome *Homilies on the Psalms* 14 (Bray, *Romans*, 63).

1771. Fournier, *Episode*, 84.

1772. Cf. Luke 17:4. On Luke's use of ἐπιστρέφω, see further comment on Acts 11:21 (for the background in the Hebrew *shuv*, see Dupont, *Salvation*, 71). Jewish usage normally invited turning to God whereas Christians expected turning to Jesus (Acts 11:20–21; Dupont, *Salvation*, 71); in the case of idolatry, however, turning to monotheism is the first step (cf., e.g., 1 Thess 1:9).

1773. Cf. perhaps Philo *Virt.* 175–82 (as understood by Bekken, *Word*, 85–90). Islam later adopted this same tradition of “repentance” from idolatry and of turning to God (Qur'an 39.17).

1774. Lev 17:7 (LXX); 1 Kgs 16:2 (LXX), 13, 26; 2 Kgs 17:15; 2 Chr 11:15 (LXX); Isa 2:20 (LXX); 44:9; Jer 2:5; 8:19 (LXX); 10:3, 15; 28:18 (LXX = 51:18 MT); Ezek 8:10 (LXX); Jonah 2:8; Wis 13:1; 15:8; 3 Macc 6:11; using a different term, Wis 14:14. (In the MT, some of these passages either do not refer to vanity or do not clearly refer to idols, but the concepts are linked even in some passages in the MT; see, e.g., 1 Kgs 16:13, 26; 2 Kgs 17:15; Jer 2:5; 10:3, 15; Jonah 2:8; with a different term, Isa 41:29; 44:9.) The language applied to any kind of deception in which people trusted (e.g., Ps 30:7 [MT 31:7; ET 31:6]; Ezek 13:6–9, 19; 21:29; 22:28; Sir 34:5 [some versions, 31:5]). Cf. also Kelly, *Peter*, 74, on the LXX background for 1 Pet 1:18.

1775. E.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.29 (probably pre-Christian), 547–48 (probably second century B.C.E.). Cf. also “dead” used for the old “gods,” which were really mortal rulers (3.551–54, esp. 554; a euhemeristic interpretation, as for the mortal Zeus reared in Phrygia in 3.140–41).

1776. Cf. the comparable warning that idols lead to μάταια φρονεῖν, thinking vain things (*Sib. Or.* 3.555).

with polytheists' dead gods, as sometimes in the OT (Jer 10:10 [cf. 10:8–10])¹⁷⁷⁷ and early Judaism (e.g., *Jos. Asen.* 8:5). The title “living God” was frequent in early Judaism,¹⁷⁷⁸ and the context of this passage (including the contrast with “vain” things) displays how Luke wants his audience to understand God as “living”: concerned and active for humanity.¹⁷⁷⁹

God is creator of the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them (Acts 14:15).¹⁷⁸⁰ Luke elsewhere reports Paul's offering polytheistic hearers a similar summary of God's creation (17:24) and grounds the threefold summary of God's created realms (plus their denizens) in Scripture (echoed in 4:24). Scripture revealed that God made everything, including the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1; Isa 42:5; anti-idolatry polemic in Isa 45:8, 12, 18)¹⁷⁸¹ and, when it employs the threefold formula, the sea (Exod 20:11;¹⁷⁸² Neh 9:6; Ps 146:6; cf. Amos 9:6).¹⁷⁸³ Because the same formula appears in Acts 4:24 (from Ps 146:6), it probably reflects Christian liturgical memory (alluded to in Rev 5:13; 10:6; 14:7; 21:1), but Luke might display his cognizance of the context, here as in Acts 4:24. In Ps 146, God is the healer,¹⁷⁸⁴ just as God has performed healing in Acts 14:10. That God made heaven, earth, and sea is a formula that Luke favors (4:24), as already noted, though it was not unique to him among early Christians (Rev 10:6; 14:7; cf. 5:13; 21:1). The epistolary Paul, though not employing this full formula (but cf. 1 Cor 8:5; 10:26; Eph 3:15; Col 1:16, 20; esp. Phil 2:10), also argues about God from creation (Rom 1:20),¹⁷⁸⁵ with moral implications concerning idolatry (1:25).

Though Luke's formula is biblical, Roman poets used similar descriptions of universal sovereignty for the greatest god or gods: God pervades everything, earth and sea and heaven (Virg. *Georg.* 4.221–22);¹⁷⁸⁶ Jupiter shook land, sea, and heaven by shaking his head (Ovid *Metam.* 1.180); Jupiter rules sea and lands and heaven as well as mortals and gods (Hor. *Odes* 1.12.13–18).¹⁷⁸⁷ Orators borrowed the same

1777. The LXX omits Jer 10:10. Cf. the antipagan use in Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26, 36; 2 Kgs 19:4, 16; Isa 37:4, 17; Dan 6:20, 26 (i.e., more than half the OT uses); cf. also 2 Cor 6:16.

1778. *Jub.* 1:25; 21:4; *Sib. Or.* 3.763; 4Q504 1–2 V, 9; 8 (recto) 12; 5Q10 1 4; pervasive in Philo (more than 100, perhaps close to 150, times); Marmorstein, *Names*, 72; cf. *b. Šabb.* 137; *Eruv.* 13b; *Pesah.* 87b; *Yoma* 35b; *Hag.* 12b; *Ned.* 65a; *Git.* 6b; *Qidd.* 36a.

1779. See Dionne, “Figure de Dieu” (also noting the speech's portrayal of God as benevolent and immanent Creator).

1780. A speaker would gesture toward objects of discussion (Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 57–62, esp. 57), and so we might imagine the speaker(s) here gesturing toward heaven and earth (and perhaps south toward the sea; but not being visible, it was probably not necessary). On God as Creator in Luke-Acts, see, e.g., Pilgrim, “Creation” (also treating motifs useful for ecological theology).

1781. Also *1 En.* 101:8, as the basis for sinners fearing God (101:9). Gentiles might recognize the heavenly character of deity (see, e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 1.30.1; Ach. Tat. 5.2.2; on the superiority of the heavenly realm, e.g., Cic. *Tusc.* 1.19.43; Sen. *Y. Dial.* 12.11.6; Max. Tyre 9.6; Heracl. *Ep.* 5; Philo *Creation* 147) yet insist that one should worship the deity concretely through images and not just in the heavens (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.60). Jewish texts often associate God with “heaven” (e.g., 1 Esd 4:58; Tob 10:13; Jdt 6:19; 1 Macc 3:18, 50, 60; 4:24; 3 Macc 7:6; *1 En.* 83:9; 91:7; *Test. Ab.* 2:3 A; Philo *Creation* 82; *Sib. Or.* 1.158, 165; 3.247, 286), especially as “our Father in heaven” (*m. Soṭah* 9:15; *t. Ber.* 3:14; *B. Qam.* 7:6; *Hag.* 2:1; *Pe'ah* 4:21; *Sipra Qed. pq.* 9.207.2.13; *Behuq. pq.* 8.269.2.15; *Sipre Deut.* 352.1.2).

1782. Exod 20:11 is the foundational text (including the sea) followed by the others, offering the Torah's support for Luke's geographic universalism (cf. Slater, “Exodus 20:11,” though he may derive too much from this).

1783. The full formula appears also in anti-idolatry polemic in *Test. Job* 2:3–4 (esp. 2:4: ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς).

1784. Of blind eyes and those bowed down (Ps 146:8), though this is not clear in the LXX.

1785. Also Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 147 (mentioning the Stoic description there).

1786. Familiar language for Virgil: the winds, if unrestrained, would blow away seas, lands, and heaven (*Aen.* 1.58, 280).

1787. Cf. the same idea of universal sovereignty, differently worded, in Hor. *Odes* 3.45–48.

language: Apollo's splendor at his birth filled earth, sea, and heaven (Men. Rhet. 2.17, 439.18–19).¹⁷⁸⁸

Yet Gentile writers also typically treated heaven, earth, and sea as deities in their own right.¹⁷⁸⁹ Perhaps most relevant here, the universal Christian formula contrasts with the traditional belief attributed to many Phrygians, the worship of the earth mother.¹⁷⁹⁰ (Lystra is Lycaonian but close enough to Phrygian culture for this widespread emphasis to be relevant here.) “Mother Rhea” was typically associated with Phrygia;¹⁷⁹¹ it was said that the “mother of the gods” was Phrygian.¹⁷⁹² Isis claims that the Phrygians were the first to worship her as mother of the gods.¹⁷⁹³ Ancient sources often speak of the earth mother or mother earth,¹⁷⁹⁴ “Great Mother,”¹⁷⁹⁵ “Mother Cybele,”¹⁷⁹⁶ “Mother of the gods,”¹⁷⁹⁷ “Mother of all,”¹⁷⁹⁸ or the Idaean Mother.¹⁷⁹⁹ She was hellenized even in Asia, but the mother role was retained.¹⁸⁰⁰ Rhea was mother of Zeus in traditional Greek sources, and Cybele assumed this role.¹⁸⁰¹ A black stone constituted her sacred totem;¹⁸⁰² a pine was sacred to her.¹⁸⁰³ Greeks added the Mysteries, though (given their secrecy) we naturally know little about them.¹⁸⁰⁴

Cybele's cult was traditionally celebrated with ecstasy, shouts, and dancing.¹⁸⁰⁵ Her worshippers used tympana, tambourines, cymbals, and sometimes Phrygian flutes,¹⁸⁰⁶

1788. In Men. Rhet. 2.17, 439.20–21, earth, sea, and heaven showed good omens (the expanded summary of creation thus functioning as a rhetorical flourish). A later magical text could address a deity as “king of the heavens and the earth and all things living in them” (PGM 13.784–85 [PDM 190]; Jewish influence on the language is possible).

1789. Rives, *Religion*, 16.

1790. For specifically Phrygian associations, see, e.g., Eurip. *Bacch.* 58–59, 79; Lucret. *Nat.* 2.611; *Rhet. Her.* 4.59.62; Val. Max. 7.5.2; Sen. *Y. Ep. Lucil.* 108.7; Lucian *Gout* 30–32; *Affairs* 42.

1791. Eurip. *Bacch.* 58–59 (Rhea being Zeus's mother).

1792. Diog. Laert. 6.1.1; cf. *Orph. H.* 27.12. Others, following Hesiod, made Night the mother of deities (*Orph. H.* 3.1). Cybele's music was distinctively Phrygian (e.g., Lucret. *Nat.* 2.618–20); a cult modeled after Cybele's uses Phrygian music in Apul. *Metam.* 8.30.

1793. Apul. *Metam.* 11.4–5. But Isis worship was calmer whereas that of Cybele was wilder (Grant, *Religions*, xxxvii).

1794. E.g., Aeschylus *Suppl.* 890; *Lib.* 44; Lucret. *Nat.* 2.581–99. For earth as mother, see further Aeschylus *Seven* 16; Pindar *Nem.* 6.1–2; *Ol.* 7.38; Ovid *Metam.* 1.393; *Fasti* 2.713–19; Val. Max. 7.3.2; Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.63.154; Suet. *Jul.* 7.2; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.15; 4 *Ezra* 10:9–14 (in the context of Zion as mother, 9:41–10:24); as nurse, Paus. 1.22.3; Athen. *Deipn.* 10.451E; for Nature as mother, Pliny E. *N.H.* 24.1.1; 37.78.205; Athenians counted the soil as mother (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 64.12). Cf. “Mother Tethys,” personifying the sea (*Sib. Or.* 3.22). On earth as a goddess, see, e.g., Hutter, “Earth.”

1795. E.g., Virg. *Aen.* 10.220 (cf. 10.234); Pliny *Ep.* 10.49.1; *Gr. Anth.* 6.220. Iconography identifies her with Cybele (Uggeri, “Mater Magna,” 459).

1796. Sen. *Y. Troj.* 72; cf. Catull. *Carm.* 63.9.

1797. E.g., Ap. Rhod. 3.716; Sext. *Emp. Pyr.* 3.217; Val. Max. 8.15.3; Pliny E. *N.H.* 2.6.37; Diog. Laert. 6.1.1. Prometheus as a Titan was a child of earth (Lucian *Z. Rants* 1; *Prom.* 3).

1798. *Hom. Hymns* 30.1 (to Earth); Virg. *Aen.* 6.595; *Gr. Anth.* 7.461; cf. Philo *Creation* 133.

1799. Val. Max. 7.5.2; Grattius *Cyneg.* 19–20.

1800. Roller, “Great Mother.” Ramsay, *Other Studies*, 125–59, suggests pagan antecedents to the later veneration of Mary at Ephesus. “Ma” (meaning “mother”) is an Anatolian mother goddess, though this name is not primarily attested in Phrygia (Gordon, “Ma”).

1801. E.g., Mart. *Epig.* 9.39. The Phrygian earth mother was not Dionysus's mother, however (Otto, *Dionysus*, 70). Phrygians may have originally associated Matar (Cybele) with the king (so Bogh, “Kybele”).

1802. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 136.

1803. Sen. *Y. Troj.* 72. (Attis died beneath a pine; Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 6.)

1804. Paus. 2.3.4 knew about them but refrained from relating it; Juv. *Sat.* 2.110–16 is eager to denounce them.

1805. See, e.g., Plut. *Dial. L.* 16, *Mor.* 758EF; Burkert, *Religion*, 178; Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 136. See the Galli's ecstatic prophecy in Livy 38.18.9; further discussion on ecstasy under prophetism at Acts 2:16–17.

1806. E.g., Eurip. *Bacch.* 59; Callim. *Iambi* 4.194.106; Catull. *Carm.* 63.8–9, 29; Lucret. *Nat.* 2.618–20; Babr. 141.6–9; Phaedrus 4.1.6–7; Pliny *Ep.* 2.14.13 (implied); Lucian *Dial.* G. 233–34 (20/12, Aphrodite and

the goal being ecstatic possession by the mother of the gods.¹⁸⁰⁷ The ecstasy was not all joyful: the worshipers wailed and mourned¹⁸⁰⁸ in light of the death of Cybele's beloved Attis.¹⁸⁰⁹ Her long-haired followers could lacerate themselves during frenzied worship.¹⁸¹⁰ On her Galli, who castrated themselves in a fit of ecstasy, see comment on Acts 8:27, but many of her followers were women.¹⁸¹¹

Cybele was worshiped widely outside Phrygia¹⁸¹²—for example, probably in Crete.¹⁸¹³ Romans paid respect to the mother goddess,¹⁸¹⁴ though her castrated Galli were objects of disdain (see comment on Acts 8:27); in response to a prophecy, Romans brought her cult to Rome.¹⁸¹⁵ Nevertheless, Roman citizens were originally restricted from the cult; only in the reign of Claudius did the cult of Attis find an official home in Rome.¹⁸¹⁶ From then on, however, Attis's spring festival became popular in Rome.¹⁸¹⁷ See further some discussion of the mother goddess at Acts 19:27.

Luke does not restrict the universal formula to this context and need not have the cult of Cybele specifically in mind. Nevertheless, it may have occurred to some of Luke's ancient audience, and would likely have occurred to Paul's real hearers in Phrygia if he offered the sort of words that Luke describes here. Paul's creator of heaven, earth, and sea would also challenge traditional Greek myth concerning Zeus, who figures here. The usual form of the myth divided the rule of heaven, earth, and sea among Zeus (heaven), Hades (underworld), and Poseidon (sea);¹⁸¹⁸ they had neither a single ruler nor, far less, a single creator-ruler, though Zeus was certainly viewed as supreme and was increasingly viewed as an all-powerful supreme deity.

Even most philosophers would have differed with Paul's claim here (though see comment on Acts 17:24, 29). Although Platonists advocated interest in the supreme good (an approach that later Christian Platonists readily exploited in the service of

Eros 1); *Orph. H.* 27.11; Philost. *Letters* 69 (15); *Gr. Anth.* 6.219–20; for Cybele's "sister," Apul. *Metam.* 8.30; cf. *Lucian Alex.* 9. Such instruments were not, of course, limited to that sphere (e.g., 1 Esd 5:59–60; 1 Macc 4:54; 13:51; P.Hib. 54.13; Ovid *Metam.* 3.532–33; Livy 39.8.8; *Lucian Dance* 68; *Dion.* 4).

1807. *Iambl. Myst.* 3.9. Phrygian music, which was passionate (*Proclus Poet. 5*, K61.27; K62.6; 6, K84.21), could stir a drunken youth to riotous behavior, in contrast to calmer melodies (*Iambl. VP.* 25.112).

1808. *Suet. Otho* 8.3.

1809. Cf. *Catull. Carm.* 63.4–6; *Statius Silv.* 2.2.88; *Lucian Affairs* 42; *Sacr.* 7; *Dial. G.* 233–34 (20/12, Aphrodite and Eros 1); Koester, *Introduction*, 1:191–94; Klauck, *Context*, 120–28. The Attis cult spread widely (Bremmer, "Attis"), though as a Greek, and not Phrygian, invention (Bøgh, "Kybele"); for artistic portrayals from the Roman period, cf., e.g., Godwin, *Mystery Religions*, 116–19; Vermaseren, *Cybele*, 95–96. Contrary to the excesses of the earlier history-of-religions school, Attis was not raised from death (Klauck, *Context*, 122).

1810. *Val. Flacc.* 7.635–36.

1811. *Lucian Affairs* 42; *Iambl. Myst.* 3.10.

1812. There were also other mother goddesses; e.g., *Tac. Germ.* 40, 45; cf. *Jer* 7:18; 44:17. A statue head of Cybele was discovered in Samothrace (Welch, "Statue Head").

1813. Sanders, *Crete*, 37 (but cf. mother goddesses already in Minoan Crete, in Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 13–14). On the Curetes assisting the mother goddess in Crete, see Strabo 10.3.11; for frenzied mother-goddess worship there, see 10.3.13.

1814. E.g., *Val. Max.* 1.1.1. Romans also had divine mother figures; see Clarke, "Spaces," 271, on Fortuna Primigenia.

1815. *Val. Max.* 7.5.2; 8.15.3; *Sil. It.* 17.1–4 (line 8 calls her Cybele). See also discussion in Uggeri, "Mater Magna," 458.

1816. Grant, *Gods*, 33. Tiberius, however, kept a painting of Cybele's high priest in his bedchamber (Pliny E. *N.H.* 35.36.70), and the temple of the Mother of the Gods (apart from Attis) was already ancient in Rome (*Tac. Ann.* 4.64).

1817. Klauck, *Context*, 124. The mother goddess cult appears even in far-flung Beroea, though the evidence could be as late as the fourth century (or as early as the second; Koester, *Paul and World*, 177–79).

1818. E.g., *Lucian Dance* 37. Zeus also ruled the earth under heaven. Cf. some heavenly, earthly, and chthonic deities in *Hom. Il.* 3.276–78; *PGM* 1.315–16; 17a.2–3 (cf. the three tiers in *Pr. Jos.* 11); heavenly, terrestrial, and marine (*PDM Sup.* 131–34); heavenly, marine, and chthonic (*Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.240); deities above and below in *Livy* 31.31.3; *PGM* 1.264.

monotheism), some mounted a defense of this doctrine's compatibility with idols. Though Greeks and Romans typically despised Egyptian idolatry's use of animal forms,¹⁸¹⁹ some Platonists contended that the gods liked to sanctify lower (material) forms by using them to signify themselves (Iambl. *Myst.* 7.1; cf. Max. Tyre 2.2, 10).¹⁸²⁰ Thus Porphyry (or a thinker like him) later criticized Christians for insisting on one God; although there was but one supreme deity, he charged, he was not angry with the worship of other gods as well (in Mac. Magn. *Apocrit.* 4.20–23).¹⁸²¹ A complete avoidance of idols would force Christians from public life in their communities, making them dishonorable outsiders;¹⁸²² their strict monotheism was socially incompatible with polytheistic society. Certainly denunciation of other deities does not dispose the crowds to continue favoring the preachers here once it is clear that they are not deities themselves (Acts 14:19).

(6) *God Endured Idolatry (14:16)*

That God permitted¹⁸²³ past eras of wrong behavior probably means that he “overlooked ignorance” (Acts 17:30). Similar language appears in Paul, though directed toward a different context and situation; Rom 3:25 probably includes Jewish sins, forgiven in anticipation of the cross,¹⁸²⁴ whereas both texts in Acts suggest God's tolerating idolatry (in the sense of not wiping out worshipers of such images) because God planned to someday bring salvation in Christ.¹⁸²⁵ The prototype for all of these may be Wis 11:23, where God mercifully overlooks people's sins “for repentance,” probably meaning that God allows them opportunity to repent.¹⁸²⁶

The wording may be somewhat diplomatic, but it reminds us that Paul's ultimate goal was not simply to make a successful oration by rhetorical standards. Rhetoricians advised securing hearers' favor by praising their ancestors (Socratic *Ep.* 28); Paul's measured tolerance of error is hardly praise. God had the right to judge the nations as he decided, since (from a Jewish perspective) God ruled all the nations (Deut 32:8; Ps 145:9; Wis 11:22–24; 1 *En.* 84:2).¹⁸²⁷

(7) *Agricultural Testimony (14:17)*

The rhetorically sensitive would speak of what was esteemed among a given people (Arist. *Rhet.* 1.9.30, 1367b). The common view of nearby Phrygia was that it was fertile (Hor. *Odes* 2.12.22). Although much of Lycaonia was less hospitable for agriculture (Strabo 12.6.1), as noted above, this was a basically rural community (as also noted above), and an urban cosmopolitan speech would have put such an

1819. Pearson, “Idolatry, Jewish Conception”; see comment on Acts 7:22, 41. In the Memphite theology, deities entered idols as their bodies (ANET 5).

1820. Later Christian Platonists were able to adapt this approach to defend the incarnation (and ultimately the use of icons) while retaining Platonic notions. For the early Christian Platonists, cf., e.g., Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 369–79, 660, 664, 719.

1821. *Porphyry's* 83–88. Cults emphasizing a supreme God with subordinates such as Mithras, angels, or Hermes became popular in late antiquity (Lake, “Proselytes,” 94).

1822. DeSilva, *Honor*, 47.

1823. Apart from Matt 24:43 and 1 Cor 10:13, the term ἐάω is in the NT typically Lukan, though it bears no overriding theological significance there (it simply means “permit” or “not stop”; Luke 4:41; 22:51; Acts 16:7; 19:30; 23:32; 27:32, 40; 28:4).

1824. Cf. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 215. This might resemble amnesty for former crimes (Aeschines *Tim.* 39), but perhaps especially the suspension of judgment until atonement (as in *Abot R. Nat.* 39 A, depicting the state between repentance and the Day of Atonement).

1825. If such passages suggest some form of access to God in paganism, Luke's full context is also clear that it is fulfilled only in Christ (cf. Dumais, “Salut”).

1826. The idea that God wants sinners to live and have opportunity to repent also appears elsewhere (Ezek 18:23, 32; *Test. Ab.* 12:13 B).

1827. Dunn, *Acts*, 189. Cf. also 1 Chr 16:31; Pss 47:2, 8; 83:18; 96:10; 97:9; Zech 14:9.

audience off.¹⁸²⁸ Life in rural villages in Asia Minor diverged dramatically from urban life, including in matters of “language and nomenclature, diet and lifestyle, cults and patterns of authority.”¹⁸²⁹ Most of the rural empire was concerned with fertility, and temples included rituals to ensure this.¹⁸³⁰ Greeks invoked Demeter before sowing (e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 3.21.12).

Although this background may flesh out our picture of Paul’s historical visit to Lystra, scholars debate the extent to which it would inform the hearing of most of Luke’s first audiences. Urban populations sometimes viewed rural dwellers as backward and unlearned (see the commentary introduction),¹⁸³¹ a view also entertained about Christians by some of their educated detractors. If such is the case here, Luke’s apologetic undercuts the view of the missionaries as backward, instead portraying their pagan hearers as misunderstanding (cf. 17:18) but the apostles, like good sages, as trying to explain their identities accurately.¹⁸³² Yet Luke’s audience might not know much about Lystra (though it likely knew of churches in South Galatia, 1 Cor 16:1), and Luke reserves the title “barbarians” for the Maltese (Acts 28:2, 4).¹⁸³³ Although Luke *might* play on the ancient prejudice of rural simplicity, he uses his broad term πόλις in introducing Lystra in 14:6, and the negative behavior he attributes to Lystrans, divinizing mortals, applies not only to barbarians (28:6, in the west) but to urban dwellers as well (10:25; 12:22). It is not stereotypical rural behavior (witness the urban imperial temples) but stereotypical *Gentile* behavior. The fickleness of the masses (14:19) appears most often in ancient literature as a stereotype of *urban* masses.

“Witness” could come through signs as in 14:3, but here it came through creation and God’s bounty, his gifts to all. “Not without witness” is a case of Luke’s frequent use of litotes (12:18; 19:23, 24; 21:39; 27:20).¹⁸³⁴ The testimony of creation (cf. Ps 19:1–6)¹⁸³⁵ made humanity morally responsible (Wis 13:1), as also in Pauline theology (Rom 1:20). In Paul, too, God’s kindness leads to repentance (2:4). Luke undoubtedly condenses a more complete early Jewish and Christian apologetic approach here.

This apologetic developed an idea already present among many philosophers, especially Stoics. Stoics believed that the universe’s order and signs of benevolence

1828. For urban-rural tensions, see MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 15, 30, 32; Lee, “Unrest,” 128; more fully the commentary introduction, Keener, *Acts*, 1:590–96.

1829. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:195.

1830. E.g., in Egypt (Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 37–46).

1831. Keener, *Acts*, 1:592–93. This was true also in the interior of Asia Minor (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:195).

1832. See more fully Bechard, “Rustics.” The rustics in the passage are manipulated, but in contrast to second-century pagan portrayals of Christian evangelists (Lucian, etc.), “Paul and Barnabas are the victims of this deception not its perpetrators” (Bechard, *Walls*, 431).

1833. Wordelman, “Divides,” 205, 217, complaining that much of the history of interpretation denigrates the Lystrans as “rural” and “Oriental.” We might note, however, the apparent need for interpreters in Acts 14:14; the Greek of Paul’s audience is limited, though Luke does not emphasize this point directly. While Luke admittedly uses “city” loosely even for villages (e.g., 27:8; Luke 1:26; 2:4; 7:11), it would be a strange term if he wished to deliberately *highlight* a town’s rural character. In any case, Luke would be no more anti-rural for noting persecution here than anti-urban for noting it in Ephesus (19:24–29). Historically, Paul suffered both in cities and outside them (2 Cor 11:26). Niang, *Faith*, argues that Paul’s letter to the Galatians (93–108) reflects an anticolonial approach that differs from the traditional Roman bias against Galatians.

1834. On litotes, see, e.g., Rowe, “Style,” 128; cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4.38.50. It is not exclusively Lukan (e.g., Mark 6:4; 1 Cor 9:26; Heb 7:20; 9:7).

1835. I note here the idea, not the terminology, unless one thinks of midrashic linkage with the context; a cognate of “witness” appears in Ps 18:8 LXX (19:8 MT; 19:7 ET), but with reference to the law. The permanence of the moon testifies to God’s eternal covenant with David’s house (Ps 88:37–38 LXX; 89:37–38 MT; 89:36–37 ET). Heaven and earth can testify as witnesses (Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 2 Esd 2:14; 1 Macc 2:37; Jdt 7:28; 2 Bar. 19:1; 84:2; *Test. Mos.* 3:12; cf. 1Q22 I, 5; 11Q12 5 2), a usage probably originally related to their being called to witness the original covenant with Israel (ancient Near Eastern treaties named witnesses). *Jub.* 4:30 is probably not relevant.

indicate the divine mind that established and sustains it.¹⁸³⁶ One of the Cynic Epistles even employs the same language as here: night and day bear testimony (μαρτυροῦσιν) to God's character, just as the seasons and the fruit-bearing (καρποφοροῦσα)¹⁸³⁷ earth as well as the moon's cycle bear witness (μαρτυρία, Heracl. *Ep.* 4). A Hellenistic Jewish philosopher like Philo could also use such language (*Flight* 184).¹⁸³⁸ Would a Lystran crowd, many of whom spoke Lycaonian as their first language, understand such apologetic bridges to popular Greek philosophy? Perhaps not fully, but it is difficult to think what other bridges might have worked better (or the historical Paul would have known), and certainly Luke's ideal audience would have understood and appreciated those bridges. Philosophic texts, more often preserved than popular ideas, also sometimes attest to ideas more widely held on a popular and rudimentary level.

People valued rain more than other resources as necessary for crops¹⁸³⁹ and sought it by various religious rituals,¹⁸⁴⁰ sometimes including those that were widely viewed as magic.¹⁸⁴¹ Various deities were credited with sending rains,¹⁸⁴² though Zeus (and his local equivalent) was the primary storm god.¹⁸⁴³ (Some also preferred "scientific" theories on rain, such as that it was caused by each of the planets and stars.)¹⁸⁴⁴ God's benevolence in sending the rain and feeding creation is already clear in the OT (Lev 26:4; Pss 145:15; 147:8–9; rain in its [rainy] seasons, Jer 5:24);¹⁸⁴⁵ early Judaism developed the idea further. God alone was in charge of sending rain (1 *En.* 2:3),¹⁸⁴⁶ though he sent rain in response to prayers,¹⁸⁴⁷ sacrifices,¹⁸⁴⁸ the temple service,¹⁸⁴⁹

1836. See Keener, *John*, 341–42, 371–72, 376–77; cf. Diog. Laert. 7.1.134, 147. For the application of this thought to Acts 14:17, see Kee, *Miracle*, 199. Cf. also comments above.

1837. This term and its cognates were "literary, from Pindar onwards" (Bruce, *Acts*¹, 284).

1838. Philo *QG* 3.15 is probably not relevant.

1839. E.g., Plut. *Nat. Phen.* 2, *Mor.* 911F–912D; 1 *En.* 76:4–13; 2 *Bar.* 10:11; *b. Ta'an.* 7ab; *Gen. Rab.* 13:3–4; *Lev. Rab.* 35:8. Cf. learning the value of crops over gold during famine (Max. Tyre 5.1). Naturally rain could have unpleasant aspects, as in the term's other Lukan use (Acts 28:2).

1840. Greeks might undergo rituals (cf. Iambl. *V.P.* 10.51) or require sacrifice to propitiate a deity who sent drought (Paus. 2.29.8; Alciph. *Farm.* 33 [Thallicus to Petraeus], 3.35, ¶¶ 1–2; rejected by Sen. *Y. Nat.* Q. 4.7.3).

1841. E.g., an Egyptian priest in Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 226 (though this was public); a powerful witch in Ovid *Am.* 1.8.9–10; the hail magician in Iambl. (nov.) *Bab. St.* 10 (Photius *Bibl.* 94.75b). This remains true in many traditional societies (Mbiti, *Religions*, 89, 234–37).

1842. Cf. Parth. *L.R.* 6.6; heroes in Diog. Laert. 8.2.59; Paus. 2.29.8; Philost. *Hrk.* 15.6.

1843. Breytenbach, "Zeus und Gott," thinks that the claim opposes local beliefs about Zeus as controller of weather (and finds other first-century ideas from southern Asia Minor in the passage). For Zeus as a weather deity, see Lucian *Icar.* 25–26; Guthrie, *Greeks and Gods*, 37ff., 125–26; in Anatolia particularly, Rives, *Religion*, 60; for some suggested common traits of some ancient Near Eastern storm deities, see Green, *Storm-God*.

1844. Pliny *E. N.H.* 2.39.105–6; 2.43.112 (giving a much more accurate perspective in 2.42.111). Sen. *Y. Nat.* Q. 4.7.3 rejects the view that incantations can affect rain.

1845. Johnson, *Acts*, 249; Dunn, *Acts*, 191; Mufwata, *Extrémités*, 16. Cf. Pss 65:9; 104, including "gladness" in 104:15. The seasons here could be comparable to the "times" in Acts 17:26 (among other parallels between that speech and this one), but "apocalyptic" seasons are more likely in view there. For God's character, including his benevolence, here, see Dionne, "Figure de Dieu."

1846. E.g., texts about the keys God has not delegated, *b. Sanh.* 113a; *Ta'an.* 2a; *Gen. Rab.* 73:4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 42:7; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Gen 30:22; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Deut 28:12; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 18.285; *Sipre Deut.* 38.1.4. In addition to rabbinic texts about the keys, some other texts also linked rain with resurrection (e.g., *b. Ber.* 29a; 33a; *Ta'an.* 2b; 7a; *y. Ber.* 5:2; *Ta'an.* 1:1, §2a; *Gen. Rab.* 13:6; *Deut. Rab.* 7:6). God's sovereignty over rain is also implied by the name of an angel whose name means "rain of God" (1 *En.* 6:7).

1847. Public prayers in *b. B. Meši'a* 28a; holy persons in 1 Sam 12:17–18; Jdt 8:31; Jos. *Ant.* 13.343–46; 14.22; *m. Ta'an.* 3:8; *t. Ta'an.* 2:13; *'Abot R. Nat.* 6 A; *b. Ta'an.* 8a; 19b–20a; 23ab; 24a–26a; *y. Ta'an.* 1:4, §1; 3:9, §§6–8; 3:10, §1; 3:11, §4; cf. 1 Kgs 17:1; 18:41–46; Jas 5:17–18; Evans, "Holy Men"; Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 70, 76.

1848. *Pesiq. Rab.* 52:3; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 13:5. Many scholars think that the water-drawing ritual at Sukkoth was meant to secure rain; see Moore, *Judaism*, 2:44–45 (comparing the functions of libations among pagans); Ringgren, *Religion*, 190; Harrelson, *Cult*, 69; Uval, "Streams"; cf. Zech 14:16–19.

1849. *'Abot R. Nat.* 4 A; *b. Ta'an.* 19b, bar.; *Pesiq. Rab.* 52:3.

festivals,¹⁸⁵⁰ and other acts.¹⁸⁵¹ God created people not to care for him but so that God could care for them (*Sipre Deut.* 38.1.3).

A saying that one Gospel reports from Jesus tradition may be relevant: God sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous (Matt 5:45, with the unrighteous paralleling tax gatherers in 5:46 and Gentiles in 5:47). Luke omits the saying, and so we cannot be certain that he or his ideal audience knew it, but given Matthew's general propensity to preserve Jesus's sayings accurately,¹⁸⁵² it may well have been known. The sentiment was more widespread (e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 38.1.4).¹⁸⁵³

"Filled with food and gladness" indicates God's benevolence even toward those who do not worship him.¹⁸⁵⁴ Luke uses ἐμπίμπλημι with regard to food in Luke 1:53 and 6:25 (cf. also John 6:12), but because "hearts" fits better with "gladness," the expression may be elliptical.¹⁸⁵⁵ "Filling with gladness" here might implicitly point to the higher filling with joy that is available in full submission to God's purposes (Acts 13:52).¹⁸⁵⁶ Seasons dictated the work cycle for the bulk of the empire's population;¹⁸⁵⁷ religiously, they were central in the myths related to the agricultural cults of rising deities.¹⁸⁵⁸ Luke's audience, however, recognized that God ruled the seasons (Gen 8:22; Ps 74:17); some Diaspora Jews interpreted the "times" of Gen 1:14 as the four seasons in a year (Philo *Creation* 59).¹⁸⁵⁹

One exercise for declamation in Greek rhetorical schools was called "Whether the gods exercise providential care for the cosmos";¹⁸⁶⁰ Paul might not have been the first

1850. *T. Sukkah* 3:18; *Eccl. Rab.* 7:14, §3; *Song Rab.* 7:2, §2. On prayers for rain at Sukkoth, *m. Ta'an.* 1:1; *b. B. Meši'a* 28a; *y. Ta'an.* 1:1, §§1–10. In later tradition, God made his decisions concerning rain during this festival; e.g., *t. Roš Haš.* 1:13; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* Sup. 7:2; *y. Roš Haš.* 1:3, §43; perhaps also *m. Roš Haš.* 1:2 (but cf. *m. Ta'an.* 1:1). Cf. the association instead with God's decrees at the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) in *Sipre Deut.* 40.4.2; *y. Roš Haš.* 1:3, §§45–46. Some came to believe that the water libations at this feast brought on the rains (*b. Ta'an.* 25b).

1851. Almsgiving (*Lev. Rab.* 34:14); repentance (*Gen. Rab.* 13:14); tithes (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1:4); obedience to the Torah (Lev 26:3–4; Deut 11:13–14; *Sipre Deut.* 41.6.4; *Num. Rab.* 3:12). Rain could be withheld because of sins (Deut 28:48; *1 En.* 101:2; *Pss. Sol.* 17:18; *Jos. Ant.* 8.318–19; *b. Ta'an.* 7b; *Lev. Rab.* 35:10) or (apparently) in mourning the temple's destruction (*b. Ta'an.* 19b).

1852. See Keener, *Matthew*, 24–31, and sources cited there; it would be easier to argue for some literary liberties in some of Matthew's narratives (e.g., Matt 27:3–10; see comment on Acts 1:18; though I mean this on a limited scale; see Keener, *Matthew*, 16–24, 32–36).

1853. Later sages regarded rain as a sign of God's beneficence for all people, worthy or unworthy (*y. B. Meši'a* 2:5, §2; 9:5, §1; *Gen. Rab.* 13:6, 15; *Pesiq. Rab.* 48:4; Flusser, *Judaism*, 490–91).

1854. *Sib. Or.* 3.659–60 speaks of God ultimately blessing the earth and making the sea "full of good things" (3.660: τῶν ἀγαθῶν πλήθουσα). In view of ancient parallels, Pervo's suggestion (*Acts*, 359) that Luke's emphasis on creation's goodness reveals closeness to second-century apologists confronting Gnosticism is unwarranted.

1855. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 532. Luke elsewhere speaks of a heart being "filled" (*Acts* 5:3; 7:23; cf. John 16:6; *Eccl* 9:3). "Food and gladness" may be a hendiadys (Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *Grammar*, 228, §442.16; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 784), though the expression appears later (Rowe, "Style," 143) and here the nouns lacks a shared definite article.

1856. Such expressions are not uniquely Lukan (John 3:29; 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Rom 15:13; 2 Cor 7:4; 2 Tim 1:4; 2 John 12), but perhaps the closest (using εὐφροσύνη) is Acts 2:28, again on a different level of joy. Xenophon claimed that the gods supply diverse foods partly for human enjoyment (*Mem.* 4.3.5–6; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 111; cf. 1 Tim 6:17). Writers could associate εὐφροσύνη with God's work (e.g., 1 Macc 3:2) or living virtuously (*Mus. Ruf.* 17, p. 108.7, contrasting living for pleasure, 108.4), though Stoics did not think it essential to a satisfied life (Arius Did. *Epit.* 2.7.6d, pp. 40–41.3; as a good but not one that produces others, cf. 2.7.5g, pp. 32–33.4–5; for its being a goal of virtue, cf. 2.7.5b.5, p. 20.15–16).

1857. On average (depending on location in the empire), farmers needed to work their fields "about 100 days a year" (Jeffers, *World*, 20).

1858. Cf. *Apollod. Bib.* 1.5.3; 3.14.4; Ovid *Metam.* 5.564–71; Gasparro, *Soteriology*, 29, 43–49; Guthrie, *Orpheus*, 55–56. By now it ought to go without saying that such seasonal revivification differs starkly from the Jewish notion of resurrection behind the Christian teaching (treated at greater length in Keener, *John*, 1172–77).

1859. God also provides humanity "with health and food and all other things in due season [κατὰ καιρὸν]" (*Let. Aris.* 190 [Hadas, 175]).

1860. Grant, *Gods*, 49–50 (citing Theon *Progymnasmata* [RG 2:126, line 2, to 2:128, line 1]). Cf. the contrast between Stoic and Epicurean views of providence noted in the excursus on Epicureans at Acts 17:18.

speaker passing through town to address such a question, but his moral application of his conclusion is far more demanding. Greeks attributed such benevolence to deities that were (except in the philosophers) often capricious and unpredictable. Phrygians looked to their goddess of justice for fertility,¹⁸⁶¹ but especially to Zeus.¹⁸⁶² Sycophantic orators even attributed rains and harvests (Men. Rhet. 2.1–2, 377.22–24) and all prosperity (377.20–22) to the emperor. Although Luke's audience would not know this, Paul's reported words are strikingly relevant in their local setting: Phrygian and Pisidian inscriptions praise Zeus Kalakagathios, a deity of good things and fruitfulness.¹⁸⁶³

Luke's audience, however, recognized the one true God as giver of fruitfulness; it was part of his benevolent purpose for creation from the start (Gen 1:12, 29–31). God was sovereign over nature, including annual cycles and fruitfulness (*I En.* 2:1–5:3, esp. 5:2), and agricultural productivity was God's blessing (e.g., εὐλογέω in Deut 28:3–12; *Test. Iss.* 5:4).¹⁸⁶⁴

(8) *Trying to Restrain the Crowd (14:18)*

Great speakers were sometimes thought able to calm riotous crowds (e.g., Diogenes *Ep.* 2). Pervo compares Paul's ability to calm an urban mob (Acts 14:18; 21:40–22:2) to weighty people's ability to calm crowds in fictitious works (Virg. *Aen.* 1.148–53).¹⁸⁶⁵ The comparison is noteworthy, but fictitious works often reflect social reality¹⁸⁶⁶ in that crowds could (eventually) listen to someone they respected (cf. Acts 19:35 and comment there), and in any case Paul only barely restrains them here (and is stoned in the next verse, 14:19). That the crowds were barely restrained suggests that they were more impressed by the apostles' signs than their rhetoric.¹⁸⁶⁷ Luke does not explain how the apostles failed to restrain the crowd's devotion despite denouncing deities. Perhaps, in the confusion, some continued to misunderstand; perhaps some thought them merely a different kind of deity; perhaps the most plausible guess is that some thought that the gods who had come in disguise were trying to remain incognito.¹⁸⁶⁸

IV. ATTEMPTED KILLING (14:19–20A)

So concerned are Paul's Jewish enemies from Antioch and Iconium that he is spreading what they view as false teaching that representatives follow him to Lystra to warn against hearing him. Perhaps learning that locals are trying to honor the apostles as gods, they stir the crowds to reject Paul and Barnabas, perhaps portraying them as sorcerers who would bring dishonor on any deity. Ironically, the apostles,

1861. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:18. Naturally, other peoples also had deities specialized in fertility (e.g., Epict. *Diatr.* 3.21.12; in Roman Egypt, Frankfurter, *Religion in Egypt*, 37–46; cf. Dunand, *Religion en Égypte*, 77–78); on older fertility emphases and practices in agrarian societies, see, e.g., ANET 126–28 (Telepinus), 129–42 (Baal's resuscitation); Harrelson, *Cult*, 12–13; Bright, *History*, 118–19; Moyer, "Purity," 59.

1862. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:23.

1863. Schnabel, *Missionary*, 167, noting also the regional emphasis on Zeus Bronton, patron of agriculture, linked with Hermes. Paul's verb, ἀγαθοεργέω, is rare in extant sources of this period (though it appears in 1 Tim 6:18) but could have been locally appreciated.

1864. Conversely, Israel's normally fruit-yielding ground lay desolate for a set time because of sin (*Sib. Or.* 3.280; cf., e.g., Deut 28:17–18, 23–24, 38–42; Isa 1:7; 62:4).

1865. Pervo, *Profit*, 35.

1866. The passage in Virgil makes an analogy by expressly appealing to what it presents as a known experience, probably in Virgil's own social world, of wise speakers calming mobs.

1867. Among the passages that Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 101, cites as examples of Paul's "convincing" rhetoric, this one alone seems out of place, since the crowds were "barely" convinced.

1868. Deflecting praise was honorable behavior for mortals but would not be deemed necessary for deities, particularly Zeus.

who have insisted vociferously on monotheism, are now stoned for blasphemy. Also ironically, they are stoned, in part, by the very pagans¹⁸⁶⁹ who have blasphemously just tried to worship them.

(1) *Luke's Agendas and Pauline Tradition*

In stoning Paul, his enemies succeeded in what they had merely attempted to do in 14:5, carrying on a pattern of persecution begun in 13:50 (though earlier carried out by Paul himself, 9:4–5). Paul here fulfills Jesus's call to take up the cross daily and follow him, surrendering his life (Luke 9:23; cf. 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 1:9). From a literary perspective, Paul now faces the same sort of persecution in which he had participated at Stephen's death (the stoning in Acts 7:58–59; also “dragging off” in 8:3 and here).¹⁸⁷⁰ The parallel with Stephen's death builds suspense; though Luke's audience probably knew that Paul did not die in Anatolia, readers can to some degree suspend their knowledge of outcomes to enter the story world and appreciate its suspense. For all its narrative value, however, the basis of this account cannot be a Lukan fiction; Paul himself tells us that he was once stoned (2 Cor 11:25), and obviously he had lived to tell about it in that letter.

The text does not indicate that Paul was, indeed, dead;¹⁸⁷¹ Luke may use the incident to parallel other resuscitation accounts¹⁸⁷² (though normally these involve resuscitation through, rather than of, the divine agent), but if so, he remains restrained in his description and apparently follows his source.¹⁸⁷³

Pervo notes that the threat of urban mobs was a handy novelistic device;¹⁸⁷⁴ this observation rightly reminds us that Luke focuses on scenes that will interest his audience. Historians, however, also reported an abundance of urban mobs. As Ramsay MacMullen points out, “Stoning, actual or threatened, [characterizes] all the chief cities of the empire and a chance scattering of the minor ones. It was a common form of group vengeance,” one that children allegedly even practiced in playing.¹⁸⁷⁵ Even if we lacked so many other reports (for stoning in ancient texts, see comment on Acts 7:58), the mob scene here, like the stoning itself, is hardly fictitious. It is difficult to imagine that Paul never faced mobs.¹⁸⁷⁶ “Beaten innumerable times” (2 Cor 11:23), as distinct from five synagogue beatings (11:24) and three public beatings with rods (11:25), suggests mob violence, and stoning itself (explicit in 11:25) more often than not would suggest the same (see comment on Acts 7:58 regarding mobs).¹⁸⁷⁷

1869. The grammatical antecedent of λιθάσαντες is “the Jews,” but from the context it appears that they recruited the crowd's aid.

1870. Spencer, *Acts*, 150. The “dragging” appears elsewhere in the NT in this sense only at Acts 17:6 (John 21:8 and Rev 12:4 use σέρω differently). The crowd may wish to drag Paul out of the city so that the corpse will not defile it; both pagan and Jewish executions were normally outside cities (see discussion below).

1871. See Marshall, *Acts*, 239–40.

1872. Goulder, *Type and History*, 109, finds the death-and-resurrection motif in some accounts of Paul's sufferings in Acts, including here. Not all Goulder's examples are persuasive, though Paul seems to have viewed some of his sufferings as proleptic martyrdoms (2 Cor 1:9–10).

1873. Νομίζω elsewhere in Luke-Acts refers to a false supposition (Luke 2:44; 3:23; Acts 7:25; 8:20; 16:27; 17:29; 21:29), with the probable exception of Acts 16:13. The verb does not always refer to contrary-to-fact suppositions, but it often does (e.g., *Test. Jud.* 19:4).

1874. Pervo, *Profit*, 34–35. If we view Paul's audience as rural, some may have stereotyped poor farmers as harsh (Menander *Dyskolos* 130–31).

1875. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 66 (citing more than twenty-five primary sources, 171n30 [to p. 66]). Individual public violence also appears commonly in documentary sources (see Bryen, “Visibility”).

1876. One may also recall that even in more recent times, preachers like Wesley and the early Methodists were among those who faced mobs in England and elsewhere.

1877. We sometimes tend to read texts in light of our own culture (hence minimizing persecution), but a more global perspective could help cure this tendency. I regularly receive reports from firsthand contacts in other parts of the world where persecution harsher than in Acts occurs. For that matter, I have personally

Pervo further claims that the sufferings in Acts are not genuine but simply provide chances to display heroism, fitting ancient novels' adolescent worldview of perpetual victimhood.¹⁸⁷⁸ Although some of Pervo's insights may accurately portray at least ancient novels, his negative opinion about recounting sufferings is pure prejudice. As noted above, Luke reports fewer of Paul's sufferings than his own letters do. Luke's purpose is undoubtedly to portray Paul's heroism through his sufferings, but this interest fits a generic purpose much broader than that of novels. As noted in the commentary introduction,¹⁸⁷⁹ historical works also found action and conflict interesting; this included philosophic biographies, which sometimes documented a sage's sufferings (see below), as do Paul's own letters. Recounting triumphs over sufferings might constitute an adolescent luxury for culturally dominant groups that face little oppression, but oppressed groups in much of the world generally find them more meaningful.¹⁸⁸⁰

As tribulation lists testify, people respected the integrity of those who lived sacrificially and suffered for their beliefs.¹⁸⁸¹ Failure to retaliate¹⁸⁸² or even to prosecute oppressors¹⁸⁸³ was a further sign of integrity impressive at least among philosophers. This interest fits well Luke's portrayal of Paul as a model sage. Wounds were also used to point to integrity or heroism,¹⁸⁸⁴ and one who, though wounded, continued to fight could be viewed as heroic (e.g., Philost. *Hrk.* 48.17).

(2) *Opponents Arrive (14:19)*

Enemies from Iconium at first sight make more sense than those from Antioch (Acts 14:19). Pisidian Antioch was more than a hundred miles from Lystra, four or five days' travel, but Iconium was only some twenty miles away. Nevertheless, despite their distance, Lystra and Pisidian Antioch shared a close relationship (see comment on Acts 14:6).¹⁸⁸⁵ Lystra's inscriptions pair it with Pisidian Antioch as a sister colony instead of linking Lystra with the Greek cities more closely located.¹⁸⁸⁶ Lystra's citizens

been beaten for sharing my faith even in the United States (though by individuals using their hands, not by a crowd or with stones).

1878. Pervo, *Profit*, 27. Is Paul here a *theios anēr* who jumps up unharmed or (as Acts 14:22 may suggest) one who suffers but is helped by others to complete his mission (Johnson, *Acts*, 253)?

1879. See, e.g., Keener, *Acts*, 1:69–71.

1880. For that matter, I can testify from personal experience that beatings do happen. In the U.S., I was beaten three times for sharing my faith with individuals, on one occasion accompanied by a threat of murder if that beater saw me again, and had my life threatened on other occasions. I was not stoned, but a Nigerian preacher I met was stoned and left for dead for his preaching (see comment below). Such incidents are not limited to specific professions of faith. For example, a gay man with whom I spoke in the United States was stoned as a boy for his sexual orientation. There are innumerable eyewitness accounts of beatings and other experiences of intolerance globally. It is simply not true that because action makes for a good story, it does not happen in real life.

1881. E.g., Grant, *Paul*, 47 (citing Sen. *Y. Ep.* 20.9; 62.3; 67.14; *Vit. beat.* 18.3).

1882. E.g., Sen. *Y. Dial.* 3.6.5; 4.32.1; Mus. *Ruf.* 10, p. 78.27–28; Plut. *S. Sp.*, Ariston 1, *Mor.* 218A; Max. Tyre 12 passim (e.g., 12.9); Marc. *Aur.* 6.6; Iambl. *V.P.* 10.51; 28.155; 1QS X, 17–18 (cf. Flusser, *Judaism*, 199, 485; but see Stendahl, "Hate"); CD IX, 3–6; *Let. Aris.* 227; *L.A.B.* 8:10; *Jos. Asen.* 23:9; 29:3; *Sipra Qed. pq.* 4.200.3.6 (applicable only for Israelites); cf. Thom, "Akousmata," 111; Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 103–5; among Christians, see Matt 5:39; Rom 12:17–19; *Acts Pet.* (8) 28; *Acts John* 81.

1883. Mus. *Ruf.* 10, p. 76.16–17; 10, p. 78.7–9, 16–19, 22–26; Iambl. *V.P.* 27.124–26; cf. Suet. *Tit.* 9.1; Lucian *Icar.* 16; Max. Tyre 12.9–10; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.22; *Vit. soph.* 1.25.532; Diog. Laert. 6.2.54; Matt 5:38–40; 1 Cor 6:7.

1884. E.g., Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.1.3; Ovid *Metam.* 13.262–67; *Fasti* 2.696–99; Val. Max. 7.7.1; Plut. *Alex.* 50.6; Arrian *Alex.* 7.10.1–3; Dion. Hal. *Ant. rom.* 7.62.3; Livy 45.39.17; cf. Sall. *Pomp.* 1–2; Caesar *C.W.* 1.72; Val. Max. 3.2.24; Sil. It. 9.350–51; Gal 6:17. A corpse's wounds could be employed the same way (Ovid *Fasti* 2.849; Plut. *Caes.* 68.1).

1885. See Bruce, *Acts*¹, 284–85 (following Ramsay, *Church in Empire*, 47ff.).

1886. Ramsay, *Galatians*, 224; also Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:76 (though warning that their sisterhood says nothing about a common foundation date; they were not "twins").

even erected a statue in Antioch.¹⁸⁸⁷ Likewise, we know of considerable movement along the Via Sebaste and elsewhere because of substantial trade in central Anatolia.¹⁸⁸⁸

If some who opposed Paul in Antioch traversed the Via Sebaste to warn other Jewish communities (extradition by local authorities would not be in view), they might well have recruited willing allies in Iconium and trekked another day on the road on which the apostles departed to Lystra. Some had plotted to stone Paul in Iconium (14:5); now they have caught up with him to accomplish their previously thwarted plan. Paul's Jewish-Christian opponents (2 Cor 11:4–6; Gal 2:4–5; 5:11; 6:12), like Paul himself, moved from place to place; there is no reason to doubt that Paul stirred sufficient animosity to invite a few non-Christian opponents to do the same. That Jewish hearers are not specified in Lystra may suggest that the Jewish community there was small.¹⁸⁸⁹ From Acts 16:1–2, we may infer that at least some Jews lived there, but they were probably few and assimilated; thus Timothy's mother had married a Greek.

The abruptness of the scene is striking: one moment the crowds could barely be prevented from worshipping the apostles (14:18), and the next they seek to kill him (14:19). This mirrors another scene in which some think Paul a murderer under divine judgment (28:4) then almost immediately decide that he is a god instead (28:6). The masses were thought to be fickle,¹⁸⁹⁰ and Luke may be having some fun at their expense (cf. 19:32),¹⁸⁹¹ though in Luke 23:13 he blames the rulers more than Mark's masses (Mark 15:11; also instigated by the rulers) for condemning Jesus. Probably, crowds in the colonies of southern Asia Minor's interior were easily moved by those they respected; the "chief political function" of the *populus* "appears from inscriptions to have consisted in acclaiming its benefactors in the theatre."¹⁸⁹²

This irony in the scene is hard to miss: local Jews join with idolaters to oppose the preacher of monotheism (Acts 14:15–17). (Cf. similarly the attempt of some Ephesian Jews to dissociate themselves from Paul's anti-idolatry preaching in 19:33–34.) Meanwhile Paul is the loyal advocate and courageous proclaimer of the monotheism of Israel's Scripture. Paul, who rejected veneration of anything but God, is now stoned, essentially for blasphemy. His Jewish opponents are comfortably assimilated into their pagan surroundings; *they* are not preaching against idolatry.¹⁸⁹³ Luke consistently portrays the apostolic movement and its leaders as representing the true Jewish message, whereas many others who claim to be its bearers subvert it (cf., e.g., 13:6). Another irony is that stoning was an appropriate penalty for blasphemy (Lev 24:16), yet Paul is the antithesis of blasphemy, having rent his clothes (again the appropriate response) at hearing true blasphemy (Acts 14:14). Had Paul accepted worship, he would have been a blasphemer, but he had rejected the very notion of it.

If any of the apostles' adversaries were familiar with the local language (which Paul did not know, 14:11, 14) or at least local customs (it is not likely that Jews in either Antioch or Iconium would speak Lycaonian, though some others in Iconium would),

1887. Ramsay, *Church in Empire*, 47–50, followed by Bruce, *Acts*¹, 285; idem, *Commentary*, 295.

1888. See Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:82.

1889. So Le Cornu, *Acts*, 786.

1890. E.g., Livy 31.34.3; Lucan *C.W.* 3.52–56; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 66; 73.5–7; Pliny *Ep.* 1.5.15–16; Tac. *Ann.* 2.41; *Hist.* 1.32, 45; 3.85; 5.8; further comment at Acts 2:47. The uncertainty of individuals' political fortunes in modern democracy would have been viewed the same way.

1891. Rackham, *Acts*, 234, points out that Gal 1:6 (cf. 4:15–16) suggests the same Galatian trait of fickleness. Such fickleness was far more widespread than Galatia, however (Mark 15:11–14; 2 Cor 7:2).

1892. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 78–79. Lystra's officials were decurions (*MAMA* 8.12), and its chief magistrates, duumvirs (Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 79).

1893. Cf. also Acts 19:26–27, 33–34. It is conceivable that they responded to a report that local Gentiles had offered Paul worship, but this is not how Luke (our only extant source) tells the story (and it is inconceivable that the epistolary Paul would have permitted such worship).

they would have an advantage over Paul and Barnabas, who were clearly foreigners.¹⁸⁹⁴ Certainly they could pose as locals better than Paul, in any case; Pisidian Antioch and Iconium shared a larger Phrygian cultural heritage with Lystra, and the imperial highway connected these cities.¹⁸⁹⁵

Counteracting the benevolent appearance of a public miracle would not necessarily prove difficult, since supernatural power could derive from various sources. The apostles' adversaries need merely argue that the two were magicians and had been driven out of the other towns for malevolent activity there. By denying the gods (14:15), Paul and Barnabas had already taken themselves out of the divine category and could be seen instead as impious; they had likely compromised local religious leaders' support (such as that of the priest of Zeus in 14:13). Mobs could be easily enough incited against those accused of evildoing; certainly this was true of anyone identified as a thief¹⁸⁹⁶ or of those accused of hoarding during famine or of religiously defiling a community.¹⁸⁹⁷ The Jewish accusers could have persuaded the crowds that Paul not only rejected their gods but also did not serve the Jewish God; they likely argued, or the crowds were ready to infer, the obvious natural conclusion on pagan terms—namely, that the apostles were magicians.¹⁸⁹⁸

Although mob violence could kill people in cities, burials and, where possible, executions were normally outside cities: corpses were unclean.¹⁸⁹⁹ Their close contact with the body and their treatment of it (which could have ruptured internal organs) renders all the likelier their assumption that they are correct in believing Paul to be dead.¹⁹⁰⁰

(3) *Survival (14:20)*

Who are “the disciples” here? It is possible that disciples accompanied Paul and Barnabas from Iconium (14:6), but the narrative suggests a likelier scenario, one implying that Luke has again omitted some details. Perhaps the present participle in 14:7 suggests that Paul had already been preaching in Lystra for some time (though it technically includes at least the lengthy trip to Derbe as well). Presumably he and Barnabas had made disciples there already as they would in Derbe soon after (14:21). They return to strengthen the disciples in 14:22, which again implies evangelistic success there before the more dramatic scene narrated in 14:8–20a.¹⁹⁰¹

1894. One who spoke the local language might expect special hospitality there (Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 3.1).

1895. Hemer, *Acts in History*, 178.

1896. E.g., Alciph. *Farm.* 16 (Pithacnion to Eustachys), 3.19, ¶¶1–2; this still occurs in parts of the world (as I have learned from some Nigerian and Kenyan friends).

1897. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 66.

1898. So Keener, *Background Commentary*, 363; on magic, see discussion at Acts 8:9–11. The objection to this interpretation—namely, that only Paul and not Barnabas was stoned (Le Cornu, *Acts*, 787)—falters on the fact that Paul was the primary speaker, hence the focus of attention. (It is also not inconceivable that the crowds would have stoned both of them had they been able; but perhaps one example was sufficient to satisfy the mob's rage.) Since the apostles only barely restrained the crowds from sacrificing to them (14:18), the Jewish accusers may have overheard acclamations that sounded blasphemous; but in Luke's condensed story, they ironically are stoning opponents of blasphemy.

1899. See, e.g., Deut 17:5; 22:24; 1 Kgs 21:13; Jos. *Ant.* 4.264; *War* 4.360; *Apoll. K. Tyre* 50; comment on Acts 7:58.

1900. Dragging a body was not respectful behavior (cf. Hom. *Il.* 24.21–22, though employing a different term) and might require special divine help to prevent the corpse from being torn (24.18–20). Luke elsewhere uses the term in a manner that, while implying violence, could result in much less physical damage (Acts 8:3; 17:6; cf. 4 Macc 6:1; Jos. *War* 2.612), but these instances involved people capable of voluntary movement, not one deemed a corpse (cf. dragging of an inanimate object in LXX 2 Sam 17:13; perhaps even the preexecution dragging in Jos. *Ant.* 20.136; *War* 2.491; cf. *War* 4.168; 7.154; probably the preexecution draggings in Jos. *War* 4.359–60, 652). Cf. esp. Philo *Flacc.* 65, 190; Jos. *War* 6.359.

1901. We can hardly blame Luke for focusing on the most graphic incidents, as did most historians and, for that matter, as do even modern journalists.

Although in many cultures, such as those primarily in question, stoning normally is meant to result in death,¹⁹⁰² it does not always do so, even in these cultures. For example, in his younger days, an evangelist in northern Nigeria named Baba Tambaya (Tambaya Jibirin) started churches in areas hostile to the Christian message. Dramatic miracles are reported to have occurred at times, but he also was sometimes stoned. On one occasion Baba Tambaya was stoned and left for dead, but he survived.¹⁹⁰³ Paul notes that he often faced death (2 Cor 1:9–10; 11:23) and that he was stoned (11:25). The purpose of stoning was normally the victim's death; if Paul was stoned and lived to tell about it, Luke's inclusion of at least a terse account of the event seems hardly out of place.

Other ancient (as well as modern) accounts of those wrongly thought to be dead abound. Cicero's brother Quintus "lay unnoticed for dead among the slain" (Plut. *Cic.* 33.3 [*Lives*, LCL, 7:167]). An expression that ancient literature employs to describe this situation is that of someone being "half-dead"—that is, alive but injured and appearing dead (Luke 10:30).¹⁹⁰⁴ Novels often spoke of those apparently dead who then revived (e.g., Char. *Chaer.* 1.4.11–12; 1.8; see comment on Acts 1:3), but sometimes this happened in real life as well.¹⁹⁰⁵

Paul's safe return to the city could involve several factors. In a culture where honor and shame were of major importance, Paul refused to be labeled cowardly for simply abandoning the disciples; thus he returned to the city (cf. Acts 16:40). With no one to stir up a mob action again (14:19), he would probably not suffer harm overnight, especially if his presence was not widely known.¹⁹⁰⁶ In view of the previous miracle (14:10), many residents might have even counted his survival as miraculous (or magical). Paul's desire to show himself alive and to speak with the disciples would also strengthen the church. When a leader fell, troops or other followers often dispersed.¹⁹⁰⁷ But finally, especially if Paul remained injured¹⁹⁰⁸ and evening was approaching, Paul and Barnabas had little choice but to return to the town. They presumably had few other options for lodging for the night, and night travel was dangerous.¹⁹⁰⁹ Derbe was far away (see comment below).

d. Strengthening the Churches (14:20b–23)¹⁹¹⁰

After visiting Derbe, the apostles returned to strengthen the young churches at other locations. Apparently tempers had cooled sufficiently for discreet ministry in

1902. Survivors of severe beatings sometimes died later from injuries (Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.10.588; Exod 21:18–21), including those who temporarily survived after being left for dead (Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.54.142). Guards beaten or stoned for failure at duty usually died (Polyb. 6.37.1–3), but some did survive (6.37.4–6).

1903. On July 2, 1998, I met and talked with (through a Hausa-speaking friend) Baba Tambaya, now elderly. My translator and informant was Professor Emmanuel Itapson, then my student (during the writing of this commentary my colleague in Hebrew Bible at Palmer Theological Seminary); he was also the son of one of Baba Tambaya's long-term coworkers, and both he and his father knew Baba Tambaya quite well. I also have a more recent oral account of fuller protection during a stoning in Sri Lanka (telephone interview by author, Jan. 10, 2009; but the source required anonymity for safety reasons).

1904. E.g., Callim. *Hymns* 6 (to Demeter), line 59; Livy 23.15.8; 40.4.15; Suet. *Aug.* 6; Corn. Nep. 4 (Pausanias), 5.4; cf. Eurip. *Alcestis* 141–43; Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 2.20; the Hebrew equivalent in Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, 42.

1905. E.g., Pliny E. *N.H.* 7.52.173; see further comment on Acts 9:36–42.

1906. Believing Paul dead, his opponents may have moved on, but since Iconium was a day's walk, they probably also spent the night in town. Since the mob action that they incited was technically illegal, they might not risk it again in the same town. Luke again leaves us unanswered questions, but his account is not implausible.

1907. E.g., Sil. It. 15.807–8; Arrian *Alex.* 4.24.4–5; 4.27.2; Num 27:17; 1 Kgs 22:17; Mark 14:50; John 16:32.

1908. Luke does not specify this point, perhaps in view of the apparently miraculous character of Paul's recovery. If, historically, Paul remained at all injured, however, it could constitute a factor in his return.

1909. See, e.g., Hor. *Ep.* 1.2.32–33; Catull. *Carm.* 62.34–35; Xen. *Eph. Anthia* 2.11; *Sib. Or.* 3.380; *Gen. Rab.* 92:6; MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 4; Le Cornu, *Acts*, 941–42.

1910. The visit to Derbe (Acts 14:20b–21a) precedes the return to strengthen the churches, but the visit is summarized too briefly to provide it a section equivalent to Iconium or Lystra in the outline, and rather than break a section in midsentence, I have kept the Derbe visit with the return.

less public venues; the danger of violence stemmed from mobs, not from ordinary encounters.

I. MINISTRY IN DERBE (14:20B–21A)

Contrary to some earlier identifications,¹⁹¹¹ Derbe (today identified with modern Kerti Hüyük)¹⁹¹² was about sixty miles (96 km.) southeast of Lystra.¹⁹¹³ Because this was more than a day's journey, we should understand εἰς Δέρβην as “for” or “toward” Derbe, instead of suggesting their arrival there the same day.¹⁹¹⁴ Whereas the Via Sebaste from Iconium to Lystra was wide and paved, the road southeast to Derbe likely was unpaved and more difficult.¹⁹¹⁵ Derbe was less advanced than some other cities Paul visited, and it lacks even evidence of signs of a proper Greek polis before Claudius's reign,¹⁹¹⁶ when Annius Afrinus, Galatia's governor from 49 to 54 C.E., praised the town's progress in romanization and honored it with the title “Claudioderbe.”¹⁹¹⁷ It was likely thus experiencing more significant growth during Claudius's reign than it had before, perhaps making it a more appealing site; or perhaps it was appealing simply because it lay southward and a significant distance from the apostles' antagonists. Given its smaller size, its omission in some recollections of the journey (2 Tim 3:11) and the brief summary here of the apostles' visit are not surprising. Nevertheless, the church in Derbe proved significant enough to merit Luke's mention (see comments below).

No laws in Lystra condemned the apostles in Luke's account, and Lystra's decrees would not have directly stopped the preachers from working in Derbe anyway,¹⁹¹⁸ though both Lystra and Derbe belonged to the same Roman province. Antipater the pirate once controlled Derbe, but Rome subdued it (Strabo 12.1.4); it was near Cappadocia, but Amyntas (ruler of Galatia, 12.5.1) ruled it (12.6.3), and so it shared the other cities' Galatian character.¹⁹¹⁹ Nevertheless, one town's local decrees, though perhaps useful to point out elsewhere, lacked legal force in another town.

The successful ministry¹⁹²⁰ in Derbe (Acts 14:21) is suggested by a later representative from there (20:4; cf. 16:1), in a mission that corresponds, in the epistles, to the bringing of an offering to the Jerusalem church by representatives of Gentile churches

1911. Ramsay thought Derbe a rude frontier city with Greek art and influence yet Roman customs income (*Cities of Paul*, 399), but his proposed site, Gudelisin, has proved mistaken.

1912. Or, more specifically, with Devri Şehri (e.g., Schnabel, *Mission*, 1121). The difference between the two, however, makes little difference for our purposes, since they are only ca. 2.5 mi. apart (McRay, *Archaeology*, 240).

1913. E.g., Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 528 (inscriptions in the vicinity mention Derbe); Conzelmann, *Acts*, 112; also Van Elderen, “Archaeological Observations,” 156–61. This site is ca. 13–14 mi. (22 km.) north-northeast of Laranda (modern Karaman) (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 112); it lay on the road between Iconium and Laranda (Schnabel, *Mission*, 1121). Further on Derbe, see Wineland, “Derbe”; Breitenbach, *Provinz*, 165–66; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 174–77 (but noting [177] that it has not been excavated); for earlier studies, Mattill and Mattill, *Bibliography*, 205, cite Radet and Paris, “Inscriptions de Pisidie” (1886); Ramsay, “Derbe” (1906); Ballance, “Site” (1957).

1914. Van Elderen, “Archaeological Observations,” 159. Luke, who would have had the accounts orally, may have simply known that Derbe was their next stop, but his wording demands no more than that they left for it the next day (with, e.g., Finegan, *Apostles*, 92).

1915. Witherington, *Acts*, 418.

1916. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:96.

1917. Hansen, “Galatia,” 389; Witherington, *Acts*, 418n250; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:95; but cf. map 6, 1:99 (going through Hadrian's era). Because of its location's commercial viability, it also seems to have been a site for collecting customs taxes (McRay, *Archaeology*, 239, following Ramsay, *Cities of St. Paul*, 385–404).

1918. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 33, emphasizing the local nature of towns' jurisdictions (which forced Paul's accusers to begin afresh their accusations in each city).

1919. The ruler Antipater Derbetes (Strabo 12.6.3) was on good terms with Cicero, who, as governor of Cilicia (including at the time Lycaonia), traveled in that region (Cic. *Fam.* 13.73.2).

1920. Use of the verb ἐυαγγελίζομαι, “evangelize,” may recall Acts 14:7, but the verb is frequent in Acts (e.g., 13:32; 14:15; 15:35) and need not be connected as closely as Haenchen, *Acts*, 435, suggests.

(2 Cor 8:19–20). This is the only use of the verb μαθητεύω in Luke-Acts, but at least some early Christians used it to refer to becoming a disciple of the Jesus movement (Matt 13:52; 28:19), and the phrase “disciple” appears as often as twenty-six times in Acts, including both recent (Acts 14:20, 22) and more mature (14:28) converts. Since a “disciple” was an adherent,¹⁹²¹ the noun and the verb probably both imply continuing allegiance (cf. 14:22) after the initial “turning to the Lord.”

II. RETURNING TO EARLIER CITIES (14:21B)

That Paul and Barnabas would return to cities where they had begun churches fits what we know of the historical Paul (as well as Luke’s portrait of the apostles; 15:36, 41; 18:23; 20:2–3, 17). He carried concern for his churches continually (2 Cor 11:28–29; 1 Thess 3:5–7) and made plans to visit when possible (1 Cor 4:18–21; 16:3–7; 2 Cor 12:20–13:2; Phil 2:24; Phlm 22),¹⁹²² and they could take great offense if his promise to visit failed to materialize in a timely fashion (2 Cor 1:15–2:1).¹⁹²³ If Paul could not go himself, he sometimes expressed regret (1 Thess 2:17–18), and often he sent others to represent him and to receive firsthand news of the churches’ welfare (1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:19; 1 Thess 3:5–6). Given Paul’s commitment to produce mature and self-propagating churches, “a follow-up visit would likely have been one of his priorities” (cf. Acts 15:36).¹⁹²⁴ This second visit might be implied by the contrast to his first visit in his mention of an “earlier time” (Gal 4:13),¹⁹²⁵ though this is uncertain.

After Derbe, Paul and Barnabas could have trekked across the Taurus Mountains (cf. Acts 15:41–16:10) to Syrian Antioch via Paul’s hometown, Tarsus (ca. 150 mi., or perhaps a week’s walk, from Derbe),¹⁹²⁶ but they chose to return through the regions where they had already ministered (14:21–26). One could suppose that winter was now approaching, making difficult a journey through the Cilician Gates, but had this been the case, they hardly would have sailed either (14:26). One could suppose that Paul’s previous ministry in Tarsus had made him unwelcome there, but he apparently felt comfortable returning to Cilicia in 15:41. Their purpose instead is to revisit the churches they have planted, churches that could well face persecution as they did when Paul and Barnabas were among them (14:22). Travelers often took detours to honor friendships (e.g., Pliny *Ep.* 7.16.4); one might complain if a friend passed nearby yet did not stop to visit (e.g., Symm. *Ep.* 1.102, affectionately).

Returning to cities where they were persecuted was also an act of courage (honorable from the vantage point of Luke’s audience), as noted in the comment on Acts 14:20. This aspect of their return was probably too obvious to ancient readers to require mention,¹⁹²⁷ but it fit an important virtue of the convinced sage and all who followed the path of wisdom. “Courage” was one of the four Aristotelian virtues, and theorists often articulated it explicitly,¹⁹²⁸ though historians more frequently illustrated it more tacitly. Continuing concern for potentially isolated believers would also be perceived honorably.¹⁹²⁹

1921. See esp. Wilkins, *Discipleship*, esp. 42.

1922. Though this also applied to some churches that Paul had not founded; cf. Rom 1:9–12.

1923. Protests about failures to visit were common, though in contrast to the situation depicted in 2 Corinthians, some appear to have been playful or affectionate; see, e.g., Symm. *Ep.* 1.11.2; 1.102.

1924. Dunn, *Acts*, 192.

1925. So Riesner, *Early Period*, 290; but he uses this connection to suggest that Paul wrote Galatians before his second journey (pp. 290–91).

1926. On the difficulties of crossing the Taurus Range, see, e.g., Hdn. 3.1.4; 3.2.6; 3.3.7.

1927. With C. Williams, *Acts*, 173.

1928. See comment on Acts 8:3; on the four virtues, see comment on Acts 26:25.

1929. Cf. Romans sending a fleet to rescue the survivors of their defeated army (Polyb. 1.36.5).

Still, the opposition to Paul in one of these cities (Acts 14:19) was a mob action rather than an official decree;¹⁹³⁰ in other cities where rulers were also hostile (13:50; 14:5), planned acquiescence with mob action, rather than official policy of persecution, might be in view. Even if rulers wished to restrict the apostles' public preaching, they had not necessarily banished them, or done so with severe penalties (contrast Thessalonica in Acts 17:9–10; 1 Thess 2:18). Ministering through house connections without continued, controversial preaching in a synagogue or marketplace would stir less hostility. Mob violence is often spontaneous and not always repeated if the culture already includes some diversity or experience of foreign elements or elements associated with those bringing that controversial message.¹⁹³¹ Naturally, however, it might have been prudent not to stay too long in any of these towns.

III. PERSEVERANCE FOR THE KINGDOM (14:22)

That Paul went to “strengthen” (cf. Acts 15:32, 41; 16:5; 18:23; Rom 1:11; 1 Thess 3:2)¹⁹³² and “encourage” (cf. Acts 15:32; 16:40; 20:1–2; Rom 12:1; 15:30; 16:17; 1 Cor 1:10; 4:16; 16:15; 2 Cor 5:20–6:1; 1 Thess 4:1, 10; 5:14) believers fits both the Lukan and epistolary Pauls.¹⁹³³ The apostles “strengthen” them by warning them what afflictions to prepare for.¹⁹³⁴

The demand to “continue in the faith”¹⁹³⁵ certainly suits Luke's Barnabas (Acts 11:23) and his Barnabas-Paul team (13:43). It also comports well with the exhortations of Pauline literature and of early Christianity in general. The warning against falling away was pervasive in early Christianity, whether perceived as the danger of apostasy (John 15:5; Rom 11:22; 1 Cor 9:27–10:12; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 4:19; 5:4; Eph 4:30; Col 1:23; Heb 2:1–3; 3:12–14; 4:11; 6:1–8; 10:26–27, 35, 39; 12:15–17) or as proving lack of conversion to begin with (1 John 2:19).¹⁹³⁶ The alternative to being led astray or falling away was maturation (Heb 5:14–6:2; 2 Pet 1:8–11; 3:17–18; cf. Phil 1:5–7).

Early Judaism commented frequently on apostasy¹⁹³⁷ but was divided in its opinion as to whether apostates could be forgiven if they repented.¹⁹³⁸ Greco-Roman paganism knew many who had become Christians only to reconvert to paganism;¹⁹³⁹ some apostates proved hostile toward Christianity¹⁹⁴⁰ whereas others¹⁹⁴¹ did not.

1930. Dunn, *Acts*, 192, generalizes for all three of the cities.

1931. Thus, e.g., early Methodist preachers in Britain usually experienced less mob violence on return visits. By contrast, missionary reports from nineteenth-century rural China (China Inland Mission) and mid-twentieth-century Hausa villages in northern Nigeria (reports from Evangelical Church of West Africa church planters of that generation) often suggest a much longer period of hostility.

1932. Luke uses ἐπιστηρίζω, and Paul στηρίζω (cf. also Rom 16:25; 1 Thess 3:13; 2 Thess 2:17; 3:3; Luke 22:32).

1933. Dunn, *Acts*, 193.

1934. Cf. 1 Thess 3:4, in Paul's letter probably closest to the period depicted here; cf. preparation for suffering by anticipating it in Galen *Grief* 52, 55–56.

1935. “The faith” is a common expression in early Christianity (in Acts, 6:7; 13:8; 16:5; elsewhere, e.g., Jude 3; Gal 1:23; Col 1:23; 1 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:13; cf. Rev 2:13).

1936. The Johannine approach here might refer not to conversion but to foreknowledge or predestination; cf. John 6:64, 70; 13:18, though the matter is not emphasized in the same way that one finds in the Qumran scrolls.

1937. Marshall, *Kept*, 29–50; I borrow some comments here from Keener, *John*, 696.

1938. Marshall, *Kept*, 46–47, arguing that earlier rabbinic opinion tended against it; cf. unpardonable sins in 1QS VII, 15–17, 22–23 (and possibly 1Q22; 4Q163 6–7 II, 6–7); *Jub.* 15:34; *y. Hag.* 2:1, §9. For deliberate acts of rebellion, see, e.g., CD VIII, 8; X, 3; *y. Šebu.* 1:6, §5. Greeks also felt that those who were once good but became bad merited stricter punishment (Thucyd. 1.86.1); Pythagoreans treated apostates as dead (Burkert, “Craft,” 18).

1939. Nock, *Conversion*, 156.

1940. In a later period, see *ibid.*, 157–60, on Julian the Apostate.

1941. Pliny *Ep.* 10.96 (unless these detainees remain secret Christian sympathizers).

Patron-client relationships based on “grace” (benevolence and gratitude) and mutual “faith” (fidelity) were expected to endure but sometimes did not do so through one party’s failure to persevere in the faith expected of one.¹⁹⁴² One who turned from God at the end of an otherwise good life lost all one’s merits (Ezek 18:24, 26).¹⁹⁴³ Early Christian writers also insisted on perseverance.¹⁹⁴⁴ Perseverance was the normal expectation but could not be taken for granted. Similarly, membership in cultic associations sometimes specified that whoever joined must remain for at least a year.¹⁹⁴⁵

Warning about coming afflictions was important (cf. Prov 22:3; 27:12). It was understood that leaders must not provide false expectations, which only disillusion followers in the long run (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.19). Suffering was sometimes necessary to achieve virtue (e.g., Mus. Ruf. 7, p. 58.25–26; frg. 46, p. 140.6; Max. Tyre 34;¹⁹⁴⁶ Rom 5:3–5; Jas 1:2–4).¹⁹⁴⁷ (On testing, see discussion at Acts 5:7–10.) Here the warning includes hope, as in Jewish kingdom tradition: those who suffered martyrdom would “live” with God forever (4 Macc 16:25).

The apostles’ warning about “many afflictions” follows naturally on their own experience of afflictions in these cities, which their converts have witnessed (Acts 13:50; 14:5), most obviously the recent stoning (14:19). It is a subject that could not be avoided and would likely prove relevant for the converts themselves (cf. 1 Thess 1:5–6; 3:3–4). Lukan as it might also be (see comment on Acts 4:27–31), this summary exhortation is also how Paul summarized his own exhortations to new believers, especially in areas that might see further persecution (in Paul’s earliest extant letter, 1 Thess 3:3–4, esp. 3:4, where the imperfect verb probably suggests repeated warning).¹⁹⁴⁸

Paul may have taught from Jesus tradition about the eschatological tribulation (cf. Luke 21:10–24, though from Luke’s perspective much of the experience of that passage may be already past),¹⁹⁴⁹ though a particular agraphon is difficult to pin down. Tertullian reported the tradition that before Mark 14:38 Jesus claimed that “no one can obtain the heavenly kingdom without prior testing” (*Bapt.* 20),¹⁹⁵⁰ but the saying’s authenticity, while not impossible, is uncertain (it could stem from Acts 14:22).

Luke’s view of the kingdom is both present and future, but the emphasis in this passage is futuristic,¹⁹⁵¹ which characterizes most of the language about the kingdom in the Pauline corpus (1 Cor 6:9–10; 15:24, 50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; 1 Thess 2:12;

1942. DeSilva, *Honor*, 149, 151 (applying this pattern to NT models of faith).

1943. Y. Pe’ah 1:1, §30; cf. t. Qidd. 1:15.

1944. E.g., Ambrosiaster *Commentary on Paul’s Epistles* (Vogels, 31–32; Bray, *Corinthians*, 27).

1945. Klauck, *Context*, 50, citing P.Lond. 2710 (from 69–57 B.C.E.). See also the Qumran probation period (1QS VI, 17–21; CD XV, 15; 4Q265 1 II, 4, 7; 4Q266 8 I, 6; 4Q270 6 II, 7; cf. also a year as a disciplinary period in 1QS VI, 25, 27; VII, 3–4, 8, 16; 4Q261 3 4; frg. 4a b5; frg. 6a e2; 4Q266 10 II, 2, 15; 4Q270 7 I, 6).

1946. See discussion in Trapp, *Maximus*, 267–68 (citing, e.g., SVF 2.1152, 1173; Sen. Y. *Prov.* 2.2–7).

1947. Hardships also prepare one to appreciate pleasure or other benefits (Max. Tyre 34.5–6); expecting them might also soften their blow (Eurip. frg. 964).

1948. The inevitability of suffering is common in Pauline tradition (Rom 5:3; 8:17–18; 12:12; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 3:12).

1949. The end of the times of Gentiles (Luke 21:24) would then be marked by phenomena that Luke probably regarded as future (21:25–36). Paul does use Jesus tradition to speak of the end-time period in 1 Thess 4:15–5:9 (see esp. Wenham, *Rediscovery*; Waterman, “Sources”; for other arguments for authenticity, see Pitre, *Tribulation*, 231–53, 264–91, 348–77). For the eschatological tribulation in early Judaism, see at length Pitre, *Tribulation*, 41–130.

1950. Finegan, *Records*, 134; Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings*, 73. The comparison with the logion in Matt 7:14 and Luke 13:24 (Brown, *Apostasy*, 139) is inadequate. In contrast to sources even at the end of the first century, when some witnesses could remain alive, Tertullian is no longer within living memory of Jesus.

1951. Nolland, “Salvation-History,” 70; Nielsen, “Purpose,” esp. 88.

2 Thess 1:5).¹⁹⁵² (The expression εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν, “enter into the kingdom,” appears also in Luke 18:17, 25.)¹⁹⁵³ “Tribulation” (θλίψις) is also a term more characteristic of Paul (twenty-two times, most undisputed) than of Luke (though Luke uses it in Acts 7:10–11; 11:19; 20:23), sometimes appearing even in an eschatological sense (probably 1 Thess 3:3; 2 Thess 1:4–6). Pauline language is likewise dominant in Acts 20:18–35, where, as here, Paul addresses believers, as in his letters (but in contrast to most other speeches in Acts).

Many scholars suggest that the passage uses the image of the final, eschatological tribulation that was to precede the Messiah's coming.¹⁹⁵⁴ (The idea of suffering immediately preceding the end is frequent in early Jewish literature;¹⁹⁵⁵ it is sometimes even called birth pangs.)¹⁹⁵⁶ This would fit Luke's eschatology borrowed from the Jesus tradition (Luke 17:31–18:8; 21:12–24).¹⁹⁵⁷ Some claims in the Pauline corpus also may present the eschatological tribulation as preceding the kingdom (1 Thess 3:3; 2 Thess 1:5–7; cf. Rev 1:9), even describing the suffering as part of the Messiah's suffering, and as a prerequisite for the end (Col 1:24; cf. Rev 6:9–11).¹⁹⁵⁸ For Paul, however, the eschatological tribulation is already present (Rom 8:22; 2 Thess 1:4; cf. 1 Tim 4:1–2; 2 Tim 3:1–6), as with others' portrayal of the tribulation (Matt 24:6–8; Rev 1:9; 12:1–6)¹⁹⁵⁹ and the last days (e.g., Heb 1:2; 2 Pet 3:3; see comment on Acts 2:17). (Luke also applies the term for “tribulation” here to the Jerusalem believers' persecution in Acts 11:19 and to Paul's own experiences in 20:23.)¹⁹⁶⁰

IV. APPOINTING LEADERS (14:23)

Paul and Barnabas appointed leaders, here called “elders,” so that the churches could continue to function and grow in the apostles' absence.¹⁹⁶¹ Organizing converts would consolidate the mission's results into self-propagating bodies capable of sustained growth.¹⁹⁶² Gathering converts into churches fits the sociological principle

1952. The kingdom is probably present in Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20–21 (see Donfried, *Thessalonica*, 247–48). Donfried (248–51) points out that Luke's reports of Paul's “kingdom” teaching do fit Paul's letters, which do reflect this aspect of Jesus tradition.

1953. It also appears in Matt 5:20; 7:21; 18:3; 19:22–24; Mark 9:47; 10:15, 23, 24, 25; and even John 3:5.

1954. Lohse, *Colossians*, 70; Mattill, “Way of Tribulation,” 531; Witherington, *Acts*, 428.

1955. E.g., CD IV, 12–13 A; 1QM XV, 1; 4Q162 I–II; 4Q215 1 II; 4QMMT C 21–22; *Jub.* 23:13; *4 Ezra* 6:24; 8:63–9:8; 13:30; *2 Bar.* 26:1–29:3; *Test. Mos.* 7–8; *Sib. Or.* 3.213–15, 635–48, 652–56; *m. Soṭah* 9:15; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5:9; *b. Ketub.* 112b; *Sanh.* 97a; *Gen. Rab.* 97 (NV); *Ecl. Rab.* 2:15, §2; *Song Rab.* 2:13, §4; 8:9, §3; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15:14/15; 31:10; 34:1; 36:1–2; perhaps 4QpPs (according to Allegro, “Light,” 95); cf. *Herm.* 1.4.2.

1956. E.g., 1QH^a XI, 3–18; *1 En.* 62:4; *b. Sanh.* 98b; *Šabb.* 118a. See more fully comment on Acts 2:24 (for the birth pangs image).

1957. The popular notion of Christians escaping final tribulation was unheard of before 1830, lacks a single supporting text when its cited texts are read in context, and contradicts the entire tenor of NT teaching (cf., e.g., Ladd, *Hope*; I addressed the issue more fully, on a semipopular level, in Keener, *Revelation*, passim, esp. 25, 34–35, 60, 75, 153–54, 166, 177–79, 237, 298, 318–19, 324–27, 333, 359–60, 388–89, 455–56, 472, 475).

1958. Cf. Paul's theology of apostolic “tribulation” (2 Cor 1:4, 8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4; Eph 3:13; Phil 4:14), possibly eschatological (Col 1:24; cf. Rev 6:9–11; Gustafson, “Afflictions”; Thompson, “Ephesians iii.13”; Bauckham, “Colossians 1:24”; Bruce, *Apostle*, 139; Stanley, *Resurrection*, 209; Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 61–62; Lohse, *Colossians*, 70–71; Martin, *Colossians*, 69–70; O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 77–79). We should note, however, that Judaism meant “birth pangs of the Messiah” as the birth pangs that led to his coming, not his own sufferings. On a suffering Messiah (probably limited to later speculation), see comment on Acts 2:23; excursus on messiahship at Acts 2:36; Keener, *John*, 288.

1959. See Keener, *Matthew*, 577–78; idem, *Revelation*, 292–93, 318–20.

1960. He also applies it to Joseph's sufferings (Acts 7:10) and famine (7:11).

1961. Talbert, *Mediterranean Milieu*, 53, compares with the succession here the succession from the Twelve to the Seven; both cases allow the function of διακονία to continue. For one discussion of authentic tradition in the appointment of elders in this region, see Nellessen, “Gemeinden,” esp. 498.

1962. Cf. Willimon, *Acts*, 150, comparing Francis Asbury's successful organizational skills (Asbury was not noted as a preacher, unlike George Whitefield). American Methodism multiplied to perhaps a thousand

that people are influenced by their social context; this was recognized by Israelite sages,¹⁹⁶³ Gentile sources,¹⁹⁶⁴ and early Christians (1 Cor 15:33; Heb 10:24–25).

Paul's (and perhaps some other early Christian missionaries') way of accommodating this principle would have appeared distinctive. Pagan worship was not structured as a service and, apart from civic festivals, usually focused on an individual's or family's commitments to deities and their temples.¹⁹⁶⁵ (The exception was cultic associations, which do bear resemblances to early Christian worship; on associations, see comment on Acts 2:42.) The term ἐκκλησία was more common for a political assembly than for a religious one, and a gathering lacking statue or sacrifice would either be associated religiously with synagogues or nonreligiously with philosophic schools. Stoics by this period were too high-status to pursue Stoicism's early communitarian ideals; the epistolary (as well as Lukan) Paul surpassed them in attempting to carry out this ideal.¹⁹⁶⁶

Although χειροτονέω can refer to electing in the manner of Greek cities,¹⁹⁶⁷ it also referred to leaders appointing or installing other officials,¹⁹⁶⁸ which (in view of Paul and Barnabas's being the implied subject) must be the case here.¹⁹⁶⁹ The book of Acts, like most Christian sources before the period of Ignatius, reflects diversity in forms of church leadership.¹⁹⁷⁰ Because elders functioned along with the "entire church" (Acts 15:4, 22),¹⁹⁷¹ their function was not hierarchical in the later sense; even apostles shared leadership (cf. 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4).¹⁹⁷²

The apostles commended the elders to the Lord, as they themselves had been commended (14:26), in turn passing on the role of spreading the message.¹⁹⁷³ The

times its initial size under his leadership (see, e.g., Noll, *Rise*, 190, 216, 218). Similarly, John Sung, while evangelizing the masses in China, recognized the even greater value of raising up leaders to multiply the effort (*Diaries*, 57, 79).

1963. Pss 1:1, 5; 119:63, 113, 115; Prov 13:20; Sir 6:7–12; 12:13–18; 13:1; *Sent. Syr. Men.* 148–53, 333–35; *Let. Aris.* 130; *m. 'Ab.* 1:6–7; 2:9; *t. 'Abod. Zar.* 1:17; *Sipre Deut.* 286.11.4; *'Abot R. Nat.* 16, §36 B; Ps.-Phoc. 134.

1964. E.g., *Gnom. Vat.* 460 (in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 110); *Xen. Mem.* 1.2.20, 24; 2.4.1–2.6.39; *Aeschines Tim.* 54–57; *Theoph. Char.* 29; *Rhet. Alex.* 7, 1429a.1–5; *Polyb.* 28.21.2; *Diod. Sic.* 12.12.3; 12.14.1; *Cic. Rosc. Amer.* 14.39; *Sall. Catil.* 14.4; *Sen. Y. Ep. Lucil.* 99.40; 104.20–21; 109; *Mus. Ruf.* 11, p. 84.16–17, 21–22; *Pliny Ep.* 4.27.6; *Arius Did. Epit.* 2.7.11m, pp. 88–89.13–16; *Suet. Claud.* 5; *Crates Ep.* 12; *Socraticus Ep.* 24; *Diog. Laert.* 1.60; *Babrius 9–12*; *Philost. Hrk.* 48.5.

1965. Winter, *Left Corinth*, 133.

1966. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics*, 78.

1967. Cf., e.g., 2 Cor 8:19; *Men. Rhet.* 1.3, 364.1–2; *Iambl. VP.* 35.260; cf. Betz, *Corinthians*, 74 (though noting [75] that Paul appointed Titus; likewise Martin, *Corinthians*, 275–76). Johnson, *Acts*, 254, cites *Plato Laws* 6.763E. On election, see comment on Acts 6:5.

1968. *Jos. Ant.* 6.39, 43; *Philo Jos.* 248; *Mos.* 2.142; cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 535; Johnson, *Acts*, 254. The people did it in *Jos. Ant.* 4.297; 7.8, 10; cf. *Ant.* 4.34, 54; though in some cases (e.g., *Life* 341) such language may appeal primarily to the Greek audience's democratic tradition. Texts also speak of God appointing the person (e.g., *Philo Mos.* 1.162; 2.160; *Rewards* 54).

1969. With most commentators (e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 112). Its later use for ordination (Euseb. *H.E.* 6.43.10) should not be retrojected here (before the prayer and fasting, Larkin, *Acts*, 216), although the idea is probably analogous to Acts 6:5–6a. Later rabbis laid hands on their own disciples to ordain them to the court, but still later rabbis required three judges (*y. Sanh.* 1:2, §13). For laying on of hands, see comment at Acts 6:6.

1970. See, e.g., Vincent, *Philippians, Philemon*, 36–51 ("Excursus: Bishops and Deacons [Phil. 1.1]"), esp. 50–51; Tyson, "Authority in Acts."

1971. Because only the apostles and elders gathered in Acts 15:6, they probably represented the broader church, which could not all meet at one place, especially in private. The "crowd" in 15:12 may refer to that of apostles and elders.

1972. See Spencer, *Philip*, 198; on the egalitarian ideal behind Pauline leadership, cf. Ehrensperger, *Power*, *passim* (esp. 180–200). Garland, "Absence," notes this egalitarian leadership model in Pauline churches and doubts "ordained ministry" there in our usual sense of the phrase; nevertheless, as suggested above, church leadership surely existed as one of the gifts (1 Cor 12:28; Rom 12:8; 1 Thess 5:12; Nardoni, "Concept"), even if this was attached to a person rather than to an office in this period.

1973. One could think that they commended all the believers (cf. Acts 20:32, although Paul is there addressing elders), but the close contextual connection with the apostolic team itself having been commended

term could apply to entrusting a bride to her groom as if a deposit (Tob 10:13), but its most relevant use is that of entrusting a person to God (Luke 23:46; Acts 20:32).¹⁹⁷⁴ The language reflects early Christianity in general and is not exclusively Pauline or Lukan; for example, 1 Peter (which also mentions elders, 1 Pet 5:1) exhorts believers to entrust their lives to God (4:19). On fasting (ideally conjoined with prayer; cf. Acts 13:2–3; Luke 2:37), see comment on Acts 13:2.

Although the short-range results of Paul's mission seem small compared with his later ministry in more cosmopolitan Ephesus or Corinth, this southern Anatolian mission both provided Paul necessary experience and laid the foundation for a growing movement. In Asia Minor, as word spread from the cities, "thousands of rural communities converted *en masse* to Christianity during the third and fourth centuries."¹⁹⁷⁵ Although the church of late antiquity differed much from Paul's simple model of small house churches, it is noteworthy that it shaped Anatolian culture in that period no less than had romanization in an earlier period.¹⁹⁷⁶

v. "ELDERS" (14:23)

Luke calls the leaders whom the apostles appointed "elders." The language of "elders" (whether πρεσβύτερος or occasionally γέρον) would be widely familiar. Egyptian associations could call their leaders "elders."¹⁹⁷⁷ On a larger scale, Greeks could use the term for leaders in a city (Diod. Sic. 21.18.1).¹⁹⁷⁸ A city's elders constituted the influential group known as the *gerousia* in the city gymnasium.¹⁹⁷⁹ Because ἐκκλησία most often was a "town meeting," an assembly ruled by "elders" might lead hearers to think of an alternative civic assembly. Elders could also be the older and wiser members of, for example, the army—leaders whose words were heeded by others.¹⁹⁸⁰

The primary leadership model that the Christians had available to adapt was leadership in the synagogue.¹⁹⁸¹ Synagogues may have borrowed the term from their Greek environment,¹⁹⁸² especially if LXX usage reflects that environment.¹⁹⁸³ As is well known, the LXX uses both ἐκκλησία and συναγωγή to translate the Hebrew *qahal*, for the "community" or "congregation" of Israel in the wilderness (cf. Acts 7:38).¹⁹⁸⁴ Because both terms applied to "assembly" in Greek, and if one wished to distinguish the group from a local synagogue (not necessarily always the case; compare Jas 2:2 with 5:14), the former term might serve as well as the latter, provided no one confused it with town assemblies (cf. Acts 19:39). Since Jewish synagogues (perhaps especially

in 14:26 (a different term, but probably employed basically synonymously) and the fasting (connected with consecration for a mission in 13:2–3) probably suggests that the elders remain in view.

1974. Cf. the people's concern about whom Deborah will "commend" (*commendas*) them to when she dies (*L.A.B.* 33:4).

1975. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:vii.

1976. *Ibid.* (articulating the thesis that Mitchell develops throughout *Anatolia*, vol. 2).

1977. Klauck, *Context*, 46.

1978. Cf. likewise the elders (in this case, γέροντας) as leaders in old Crete (*Arist. Pol.* 2.7.5, 1272a). Elders probably did control more in the idealized past (*Dion. Hal. Demosth.* 3). For examples from Egypt, see Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77.

1979. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 27, 81; Luke employs this term in Acts 5:21, and it appears more than thirty times in the LXX. The Spartans' council of elders (those more than sixty) was especially noted (e.g., *Aeschines Tim.* 180).

1980. *Hom. Il.* 2.404; *Philost. Hrk.* 21.29. The term ἐπίσκοπος also may reflect secular usage, though again probably via prior Jewish adaptation; see comment on Acts 20:28.

1981. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 80–81 (rightly noting that synagogues were, in turn, influenced by forms of families and Hellenistic voluntary associations); Maser, "Synagoge und Ecclesia"; Luna, "Reflections."

1982. Goodman, *State*, 119. Cf. Stambaugh and Balch, *Environment*, 49 (for archons).

1983. Deissmann, *Studies*, 154–56 (arguing that the LXX reflects Ptolemaic Alexandrian idiom).

1984. Cf. Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:38; Foakes-Jackson and Lake, "Development," 327–28; Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 54; Richardson, *Theology*, 285; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:629.

fledgling house synagogues) were the primary model for the house churches,¹⁹⁸⁵ it is helpful to recognize that authorities usually granted synagogue communities some autonomy as ethnic communities. As long as Christians were recognized as Jewish and not repudiated by the recognized Jewish community, they would, ideally, experience the same autonomy.

Given the church's adaptation of synagogue models already effective in Diaspora cities, it is reasonable that it borrowed "elders" from there as well.¹⁹⁸⁶ Diaspora Jewish communities certainly drew on wider models of rule by elders. Our evidence is clearest for the Alexandrian Jewish community, which was ruled by a gerousia, or council of elders, probably with members representing each of the local congregations.¹⁹⁸⁷ "Elders" are also abundantly attested in Diaspora Jewish inscriptions, though their role is not always clear and may have varied (and may sometimes simply designate age with its attendant status and influence).¹⁹⁸⁸ Scholars note the widespread evidence for this office in the Jewish Diaspora.¹⁹⁸⁹ Usually a council of elders, rather than a single elder, exercised their activities in synagogues.¹⁹⁹⁰ That they appear in 1QS VI, 8–9 reinforces the impression that the Jewish usage of "elders" was widespread.¹⁹⁹¹ (For usage in Josephus for rulers of Israel, see comment on Acts 4:5.)

Leaders' usual age was a natural factor in the development of the term's use for leaders. Biblical usage of the title suggests its long history in ancient Israel; there the older male members of a community typically functioned as its de facto community leaders.¹⁹⁹² The usage was natural in a world where respect for elders was part of the broader culture.¹⁹⁹³ In Jewish society, the younger had to respect the elder;¹⁹⁹⁴ in the wider world, young men were to rise before elders to offer their seats.¹⁹⁹⁵ Prominent

1985. On churches following synagogue models, cf., e.g., Maser, "Synagoge und Ecclesia."

1986. Many commentators recognize dependence on Jewish models (Selwyn, *Peter*, 227; Reicke, *Epistles*, 58; Sidebottom, *James*, 61; R. Williams, *Acts*, 97, 109). In Jerusalem (Acts 15:2), the term was also available (see comment on Acts 4:5, 8).

1987. Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 35 (citing Philo *Flacc.* 74, 80 [see also 76]; cf. *Jos. War* 7.412; elsewhere, *Jos. War* 7.47; Libanius *Ep.* 1251); Barclay, *Jews in Diaspora*, 43; cf. Philo *Embassy* 229; *Jos. Ant.* 7.293; 12.138, 142; 13.166, 169; Applebaum, "Organization," 491. Some have extrapolated from this to all Diaspora communities (Kelly, *Peter*, 197), but it certainly was not permitted in Rome (see comment on Acts 28:17). For a discussion of gerousia and gerousiarchs in ancient society, including Jewish inscriptions, see *CIJ* 1:lxv–lxxvi; cf. the feminine usage, 1:67, §95.

1988. In general, see *CIJ* 1:lxvii–lxxxvii. See, e.g., 1:294, §378; 1:432, §595 (transliterated from Hebrew; he was eighty); 1:433, §597 (feminine); 1:426, §581 (feminine); 1:503, §692 (feminine); 2:9, §739 (abbreviated, in Smyrna; cf. Goodenough, *Symbols*, 80); 2:45, §790 (Cilicia); 2:46, §792 (Cilicia); 2:53, §801 (Pontus); 2:76–77, §828a; 2:77, §828b; 2:79, §829; 2:137, §931. In Sardis, see Mitten, "Sardis," 65.

1989. See Applebaum, "Organization," 493–94; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77 (rightly noting the LXX, though probably overemphasizing the lateness of the epigraphic evidence). It is widely assumed (e.g., Lake, "Twelve," 56).

1990. See Brooten, *Women Leaders*, 53.

1991. See Driver, *Scrolls*, 522 (comparing also CD X, 2; comments on plural leadership among the Essenes in *Jos. Ant.* 18.22; *War* 2.146); cf. Kelly, *Peter*, 197. Rabbis also viewed "elders" as wise (*m. 'Ab.* 5:21), and they often viewed biblical ruling "elders" as sages (*Sipra Qed. pq.* 7.204.3.1; *y. 'Abod. Zar.* 3:1, §2; *Hor.* 3:5, §3; *Lev. Rab.* 11:8).

1992. See, e.g., for Israel, *Exod* 3:16, 18; 4:29; 12:21; 17:5–6; 18:12; 19:7; 24:1, 9, 14; *Lev* 4:15; 9:1; *Num* 11:16, 24–25, 30; 16:25; *Deut* 5:23; 27:1; 29:10; 31:9, 28; *Josh* 7:6; 8:10, 33; *Jer* 29:1; *Ezek* 8:1; for other peoples, *Num* 22:4, 7; locally, *Deut* 19:12; 21:2–6, 19–20; 22:15–18; 25:7–9; *Ruth* 4:2, 4, 9. Cf. later, e.g., *Jos. Ant.* 13.124, 428; *War* 2.267; *Luke* 9:22; 20:1; 22:52, 66; *Let. Aris.* 310; *2 Bar.* 31:1; 46:1; *Acts* 4:5, 8, 23; 6:12. On elders in ancient Israel, see Jacobs, "Leadership."

1993. This is true also in cultures not directly dependent on the ancient Near East or Mediterranean world (cf. Mbiti, *Religions*, 89–90).

1994. *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.206; *Ant.* 3.47; *Ps.-Phoc.* 220–22; *4 Bar.* 5:20; among Pharisees, *Jos. Ant.* 18.12. This included rising before elders (*Ps.-Phoc.* 220; *t. Meg.* 3:24; cf. *y. Bik.* 3:3, §§4–5).

1995. E.g., *Xen. Mem.* 2.3.16; *Val. Max.* 4.5.ext. 2; *Plut. S. Sp.*, Lycurgus 14, *Mor.* 227F; cf. Hirschmann, "Greeting," 1023. Roman society also demanded giving way to one's elder (*Cato Coll. Dist.* 10; *Dion. Hal.*

local leaders tended to be those who were aged, as both literary texts¹⁹⁹⁶ and inscriptions¹⁹⁹⁷ indicate. Merely that they were older men was sufficient grounds for showing them respect.¹⁹⁹⁸ Texts also spoke of the elders of Jerusalem (e.g., 2 Macc 14:37; Jdt 6:16) and prominent scholars allegedly sent by the high priest to impress Ptolemy (*Let. Aris.* 32, 39). In Jerusalem they were probably the lay members of the aristocracy who shared power with the priestly aristocrats.¹⁹⁹⁹ This suits the usage in Luke-Acts (see comment on Acts 4:5; 11:30). The leading men in Galilee were the aged (*Jos. Life* 266); local village leaders there were “elders,” just as in most of the ancient Mediterranean world.²⁰⁰⁰

Although exceptions were made for the spiritually mature (1 Tim 4:12), it made sense to select most “elders”—who would normally tend to be older as their title suggests—at least somewhat on the basis of their age, both because of the respect this would entail in the community (see comment above; cf. also comment on Acts 7:58) and because older members of a local community normally knew the community best (*Lysias Or.* 23.5, §167). They were generally considered the wisest.²⁰⁰¹ Not only the factor of age but also the status of heads of stable households, with success in governing their households, would make church leaders more respectable to the broader society, a criterion employed in selecting elders later (1 Tim 3:2, 4–5; Titus 1:6).²⁰⁰²

Other synagogue titles include “archons,”²⁰⁰³ “synagogue rulers” (Luke 8:49; 13:14; Acts 18:8, 17; see comment on Acts 13:15), and (perhaps usually honorary or often patronal) “fathers” and “mothers” of synagogues.²⁰⁰⁴ The usage seems to have varied in vocabulary and especially in function from one location to another. Patrons of associations often exercised some influence, paralleling the use of patronage in the

Ant. rom. 7.47.1); on respect for elders, see also, e.g., *Hom. Il.* 1.259; 23.616–23; *Xen. Cyr.* 8.7.10; *Aeschines Embassy* 22, 25; *Livy* 5.25.3; 6.24.7; *Val. Max.* 2.1.9–10; 2.2.4; *Aul. Gel.* 2.15; *Men. Rhet.* 2.4, 394.22; *Iamb. VP.* 8.37; 16.69; 21.99; 30.180; 33.230; text in *SPap* 3:476f, §116; cf. *Polyb.* 31.24.3; cf. fatherly respect toward even strangers (*Hom. Il.* 24.362, 371, 373; 24.507; *Od.* 7.28, 48; 8.145, 408; 20.199).

1996. E.g., *Arist. Pol.* 2.7.5, 1272a; *Diod. Sic.* 21.18.1; *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 8.15.1; *Jos. Life* 266; *Let. Aris.* 32, 39. See further comment on Acts 4:5.

1997. E.g., *CIJ* 1:294, §378; 1:426, §581; 1:432, §595; 1:433, §597; 2:9, §739; 2:45, §790; 2:46, §792; 2:53, §801; 2:76–77, §828a; 2:77, §828b; 2:79, §829; 2:137, §931; cf. 1:1xxxvi–1xxxvii; *Mitten*, “Sardis,” 65.

1998. E.g., 1 *Pet.* 5:5; *t. Meg.* 3:24; *Abod. Zar.* 1:19; 4 *Bar.* 5:20; *Ps.-Phoc.* 220–22; *Sent. Syr. Men.* 11–14, 76–93 (but cf. 170–72); *Hom. Il.* 1.259; 23.616–23; *Aul. Gel.* 2.15; *Diod. Sic.* 1.1.4; 2.58.6; *Plut. S. Sp., Lycurgus* 14, *Mor.* 227F; *Pythagoras* in *Diog. Laert.* 8.1.22–23.

1999. See *Sanders, Judaism*, 329.

2000. *Freyne, Galilee, Jesus*, 152; cf. *Sanders, Jesus to Mishnah*, 79 (citing *Ezra* 10:14; *Philo Hypoth.* 7.13). *Sanders* allows them this role alongside priests (cf. *Judaism*, 170–71, 182, citing esp. *Jos. Ag. Ap.* 2.187), also a high-status role in many unrelated societies (cf. *Mbiti, Religions*, 88).

2001. E.g., *Aeschines Tim.* 24; *Dion. Hal. Ant. rom.* 8.15.1; *Phaedrus* 4.2.16–19; *Philost. Vit. Apoll.* 6.11; *Vit. soph.* 1.25.543; *Job* 12:12; 32:7. There were exceptions (e.g., *Eccl* 4:13; *Fronto Ad M. Caes.* 3.3).

2002. “Overseers” in these texts is interchangeable with “elders” (*Titus* 1:5, 7); for “deacons,” see 1 Tim 3:12. On successful management of one’s household as a criterion for public leadership in antiquity, see *Isoc. Demon.* 35; *Ad Nic.* 19; *Diod. Sic.* 12.12.1; *Sen. Y. Ben.* 4.27.5; *Plut. Comparison of Aristides and Marcus Cato* 3.1; *Dinner* 12, *Mor.* 155D; *Bride* 144CD; *Alex.* 9.6; *S. Sp., Lycurgus* 21, *Mor.* 228CD; cf. *Eurip. El.* 386–87; *Isoc. Nic.* 41 (*Or.* 3.35); *Marc. Aur.* 1.16.4; *Sipre Deut.* 32.5.12; *Keener, Marries*, 98; *Malherbe, Social Aspects*, 99n21.

2003. See comment on Acts 13:15. Though *Justin* uses “archon” generically, later Roman sources mention only “elders” (*Cod. theod.* 16.8.2; *Applebaum*, “Organization,” 494–95); the title “archon” was dominant in Rome to the exclusion of “elder” (“Organization,” 493). They covered especially the secular part of synagogue business (495).

2004. For fathers (probably honorary, without attached duties, *Leon, Jews of Rome*, 186), see, e.g., *CIJ* 1:xcv–xcvii; 1:66, §93; 1:250–51, §319; 1:360, §494; 1:372, §§508–9; 1:373, §510; 1:393, §533; 1:397, §535; 1:398, §537; 1:462, §645; 1:463, §646; 1:505, §694; 1:520, §720; 2:9, §739. For “mothers of synagogues,” see, e.g., 1:118, §166 (reconstructed); 1:362, §496 (reconstructed); 1:384, §523 (a proselyte); 1:457, §639; *Levinskaya, Diaspora Setting*, 191; more fully, *Brooten, Women Leaders*, 57–72, esp. 57–63; the (much later) *Codex theodosianus* treats it as a real office (*Brooten, Women Leaders*, 65–66); fathers and mothers of guilds could be patrons, but cultic groups, especially Mithraists, may have used them as officers (71).

political system.²⁰⁰⁵ That we do not know what all of the titles meant in any given place, whether in synagogue inscriptions or in first-century Christian texts, is to be expected. As Leon notes, inscriptions list officers of synagogues in Rome but not their functions. “This is hardly surprising, since the members of the community obviously knew what the titles meant and the writers of the epitaphs were not concerned about remote posterity.”²⁰⁰⁶

That early Christians adapted the title “elders” from contemporary Judaism may be regarded as fairly certain; less certain is the date at which they began doing so. These churches were fairly new and probably still rather small,²⁰⁰⁷ though certainly, given the distances traveled, some time had transpired since the apostles first founded these churches, especially in Antioch. Small house churches of new believers had patron families in whose homes they met and probably some senior members who had previously attended synagogue and could offer teachings on Scripture. But would they need “elders”?²⁰⁰⁸ Many scholars doubt it, pointing out that Pauline literature nowhere employs the term for church leaders until the Pastorals (1 Tim 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; cf. 1 Tim 4:14; 5:1–2) and that otherwise the term appears only in literature often dated after 70 C.E. (Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1, 5; 2 John 1; 3 John 1).²⁰⁰⁹ Because, on the available evidence, I would date James, 1 Peter, and probably the Pastorals (or, at the very least, the traditional material behind them) earlier (a date in the 60s for James and 1 Peter, at least, and possibly for all of them—the 60s being before, I believe, Luke wrote Acts) than do many other scholars,²⁰¹⁰ I find the contrast less striking than do some others; but it does appear noteworthy that Paul does not employ the term in his undisputed epistles (earlier, by any judgment, than the other documents in question).

At the same time, we should not read as much into the debate’s significance as some scholars do. Nearly all agree that Luke exercised the freedom to describe events in his own words; if Luke at some points employed the common language of churches of his day to describe earlier offices, this would not be surprising.²⁰¹¹ If churches in

2005. Chow, *Patronage*, 64–68.

2006. Leon, *Jews of Rome*, 167. Cf. similarly Christian “deacons” in 1 Tim 3:8!

2007. Later regulations prohibited using new converts (1 Tim 3:6), fitting cultural expectations (Suet. *Tib.* 54.1; 1QS VI, 17–18; *t. Demai* 2:12); required them to be tested first (1 Tim 3:10; Cic. *Quint. frat.* 1.1.4.14–1.1.5.15; Colum. *Rust.* 1.8.2; Plut. *Educ.* 7, *Mor.* 4C; Heracl. *Ep.* 9; Gaius *Inst.* 1.199–200; Iamb. *V.P.* 17.71–72; 20.94; 1QS VI, 14–23; *Let. Aris.* 264; *t. Hag.* 2:9; *y. Ta’an.* 4:2, §8); and warned against ordaining them prematurely (1 Tim 5:22). Since the churches had to be governed somehow, however, the apostles may have simply had to pick the most mature converts available, preferably with knowledge of Scripture from backgrounds in the synagogue.

2008. The question contrasts with the situation of the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:30; 15:2–6; 21:18) and probably Diaspora churches that had existed for a long period (20:17) and hence is most relevant to this passage (14:23).

2009. E.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, 112, 173; Dunn, *Acts*, 186, 193; Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 355; Pervo, *Acts*, 362. Following the usual approach to deuteropauline letters, Bonneau, “Achever,” traces the development of leadership structures through Pauline literature and Acts.

2010. For evidence supporting these dates or for matters related to them, see Guthrie, *Introduction*, 723–46, 749–53, 762–81, 786–88; Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha and New Testament*, 86; Davids, *James*, 2–13 (favoring two stages); Martin, *James*, xxxi–xxxii (favoring two editions, lxxvii–lxxviii); Robinson, *Redating*, 118–39, 163–69; idem, *Trust*, 68–69; Mayor, *James*, i–lxxxiv (esp. vii), cxliv–clxxvii; Carson, Moo, and Morris, *Introduction*, 410–14, 421–24; Kelly, *Peter*, 11–15, 29–32; Selwyn, *Peter*, 7–17, 56–63; cf. Taylor, *Atonement*, 34; Moffatt, *General Epistles*, 86; Hunter, *Message*, 22; Johnson, *Writings*, 432–33. I recognize that a larger number of scholars disagree (depending on the documents in question), but I am merely expressing the tentative conclusion from my own study that the available evidence supports this position more readily than not (in order of decreasing probability, for 1 Peter, James, and the Pastorals). At the least, I believe that it deserves a fairer hearing than it is often given.

2011. For the possibility of anachronism, cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 535. That Luke did not mind reshaping language is clear (cf., e.g., Luke 5:19 with Mark 2:4). Though some historians complained about anachronistic language

some locations (e.g., Jerusalem) adopted the title before Pauline churches, churches in the Pauline circle (including Luke's) may have readily adapted the title at a later date.

Although Paul does not employ the term in his extant epistles, his charismatic model of leadership does not necessarily obviate all structure. (Luke's narrative, after all, is hardly lacking in charismatic leadership alongside offices.)²⁰¹² Paul's generally undisputed letters do, in fact, speak of leaders in his churches (see esp. Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 12:28; 16:16; Gal 6:6; Phil 1:1; 1 Thess 5:12–13),²⁰¹³ leaders whom Luke could readily describe in terms employed in much of the rest of the church. In what is probably Paul's earliest extant letter, the leaders teach and “administrate”²⁰¹⁴ (1 Thess 5:12), and warrant honor for their work (5:13).²⁰¹⁵ Paul speaks of the role of “overseer” (ἐπίσκοπος), which the church at some point²⁰¹⁶ began to identify with “elder” (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; cf. 1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; 1 Pet 5:1–2 mss). If the difference is more stylistic than a matter of content, Luke's mentor Paul himself would presumably not have objected.

Local churches would need to have some leaders in place, even if such leadership structures evolved in different ways in different locations.²⁰¹⁷ Some institutionalization began occurring in Paul's churches during his ministry there.²⁰¹⁸ Some scholars have even argued that Paul's undisputed letters suggest hierarchical or even monarchical authority,²⁰¹⁹ but I doubt that this is the case either in those letters or (see comment below) here in Acts. Most likely, leadership forms remained in flux for some time, with various titles in use alongside each other,²⁰²⁰ just as titles and offices for syna-

in earlier sources (Vell. Paterc. 1.3.2–3), most do not complain; cf. the use of standard Roman terms (rather than Punic or Samnite terms unintelligible to his audience) in Livy (Laistner, *Historians*, 94).

2012. See Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; apostles alongside elders in Jerusalem; and passages where institutional leaders must be filled with the Spirit (6:3). See also Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 320.

2013. Some scholars also cite 1 Cor 6:5; 2 Cor 8:23, addressing the importance of leaders in a general sense. See also Wenham, “Paulinism of Acts Again”; Eckey, *Apostelgeschichte*, 320; more extensively Clarke, *Leadership* (e.g., 88, 102–3, 130, though he may overstate “stratification”). Given the absence of “elders” in most Roman Jewish evidence, the title may have been inappropriate in Rome; given Paul's tension with much of the Corinthian churches' elite, he may also have been less direct about their leadership structures. But Phil 1:1 (presupposing a mutually understood meaning, now lost to us) reveals that terms such as “overseer” were already in use in his lifetime, though not in the Ignatian sense of “bishop.” Wider use of (city) bishops evolved later (see Lampe, “Patrons,” 496, citing, e.g., Ign. *Phil.* 7–8; Euseb. *H.E.* 5.16.5); subsequent exegetes of the earliest Christian texts have often noted the identity of “bishops” (overseers) and elders there (note Jerome and Wycliffe in Evans, *Wycliffe*, 220).

2014. The term applies to some form of leadership (Rom 12:8; common in the Pastorals, 1 Tim 3:4–5, 12; 5:17; Titus 3:8, 14). Hebrews 13:17 (which I also date earlier than most) speaks of obeying leaders.

2015. This need not mean, as probably in 1 Tim 5:17–18, that they were to receive a stipend (Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 78; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 125; cf. double pay for soldiers, e.g., Livy 40.43.7; Suet. *Jul.* 26.3; Tac. *Hist.* 4.19; Sherck, *Empire*, §49D, p. 92; §117, pp. 159–60), especially if they belonged to the elite already. Paul's defense of pay in 1 Cor 9:4–18 concerns apostles and the model of patronage for sages, not specifically leaders of local house congregations.

2016. Given its role in Israel's history and Jewish settings, one might guess that Jesus's followers used “elder” from a period even earlier than “overseer,” but we lack hard evidence to support this suspicion. Although it cannot be proved from explicit evidence, arguing against it from silence is also problematic (even “overseer” appears only once in Paul's undisputed letters, though its role there suggests that it was more common). Where “overseer” appears, it is in one of the later undisputed letters, allowing for the possibility that offices and their titles evolved over time. Because 1 Tim 5:17 could refer merely to some individuals being more gifted than others, I do not find persuasive the distinction between elders and overseers advanced in Clarke, *Leadership*, 57–58, 87, 185.

2017. See Johnson, *Acts*, 256–57 (also denying the incompatibility of charismatic leadership and structure). In the Pastorals, Paul's agents must appoint elders in each city (Titus 1:5); they must also transmit his teaching to others, as faithful disciples of other Jewish teachers would (2 Tim 2:2).

2018. See esp. MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 2–84.

2019. Grant, *Paul*, 24 (citing apostleship in 1 Cor 9:2; 12:28).

2020. As in Acts; see, e.g., Tyson, “Authority in Acts.” Some have even argued that the multiplication of diverse titles as the Christian movement developed may reflect less a normal stage in institutionalization and

gogue leaders varied throughout the Roman world. As Howard Clark Kee points out, the dichotomy between charismatic (hence earlier) and institutional (hence later) leadership articulated by many NT scholars misapplies the categories of Max Weber, for whom the charismatic could continue alongside the institutional.²⁰²¹

5. Return to Antioch (14:24–28)

For a discussion of the regions in Acts 14:24—namely, Pamphylia (on the coast) and Pisidia (to the immediate north, up to the border of Antioch)—and of their relationship to each other, see comment on Acts 13:13–14. Given their proximity to each other, writers naturally treated them side by side.²⁰²² Claudius detached Pamphylia from the province of Galatia at some point during his reign, though Nero or Galba rejoined them.²⁰²³ Pamphylia may have been distinct from Galatia at the time of Paul and Barnabas’s journey, but Luke distinguishes here not the provinces (i.e., not Pamphylia vs. Galatia) but the regions (Pamphylia vs. Pisidia) for geographic specificity. (This practice contrasts with Paul’s preference for provincial titles.) It is possible that even much of Pisidia was detached from Galatia and adjoined to Lycia and Pamphylia by this time.²⁰²⁴

Pamphylia included Perga (13:13), where John Mark left them (also 15:38); some Jewish people from the region had already become believers (2:10), but whether some had returned here (either after Pentecost or after the church’s scattering, 8:4; 11:19) is unclear. Cicero connected the Pisidians and their Pamphylian neighbors, along with the Cilicians, all of whom he previously governed, noting their dependence on augury based on birds’ songs and flight patterns (Cic. *Div.* 1.1.2);²⁰²⁵ others also opined that Phrygians were particularly good at interpreting omens from birds (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.5). (Lycaonia, near western Cilicia, was eventually joined to it administratively in the second century.)²⁰²⁶

Luke may note the preaching in Perga here (Acts 14:25) because he omits mention of it earlier (13:13–14). Some scholars have suggested the town’s largely Gentile character, which could explain why Paul and Barnabas might have passed it up initially, yet now prove more ready to minister there, more confident of ministry among Gentiles after founding a church without beginning in a synagogue in Lystra. Perga lay on Pamphylia’s northwestern border, with Attalia on its far southwestern border.²⁰²⁷

Attalia (14:25) was named for Attalus Philadelphus, who founded it in Pamphylia (Strabo 14.4.1).²⁰²⁸ Modern Antalya (now reputed to be Turkey’s eleventh

more a general cultural phenomenon evident in the expansion “of new titles, reflecting increasing specialisation of function,” among cult officials in Ephesus and elsewhere (Horsley, “Inscriptions of Ephesos,” 145–46).

2021. Kee, *Miracle*, 52–54. Weber did not speak of “charismatic” in the sense in which it is applied ecclesiastically today, but (contrary to Paul’s “charismatic” model) some Majority World churches with charismatic leadership are extremely hierarchical (often because of culturally accepted leadership models; cf. Grigg, *Urban Poor*, 181, 188, 250), as was true also of Edward Irving’s Catholic Apostolic movement in the nineteenth century. Charismatic movements are also strong in some churches with hierarchies (e.g., the Roman Catholic and Anglican communions).

2022. E.g., Pamphylia in Pliny E. *N.H.* 5.23.94; Pisidia in 5.24.94; both together in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.14.

2023. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 163–64.

2024. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:154.

2025. Whether Luke uses the title of the old kingdom or of a district in the Roman province Galatia does not produce a significant difference (Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 168).

2026. Bean and Mitchell, “Cilicia,” 330.

2027. See Mitchell, *Anatolia*, map 5, after 1:78.

2028. The same passage in Strabo reports the tradition that some Trojan Cilicians settled in Pamphylia, but probably neither Luke nor his audience would know this (hence no connection to Acts 16:8–9). The

largest city), Attalia lay at the mouth of the Cataractes and was the primary port for Pamphylia.²⁰²⁹ Attalia covered about 205 acres,²⁰³⁰ and parts of the ancient town wall remain.²⁰³¹ Attalia lies on a terrace of “flat limestone” on steep cliffs about 120 feet (37 m.) above the sea. A much later staircase leads from the harbor “up to the town”; “another approach through a cutting in the rock could be from his [Paul’s] time.”²⁰³² Once Paul and Barnabas reached Attalia, then, they had only a brief descent before their sea voyage to the southeast.

High-status Roman presence is attested for Attalia in this period.²⁰³³ The Calpurnii, Italian settlers, constituted Attalia’s most prominent family in the first century. One Marcus Calpurnius Rufus, son of an important imperial priest during Tiberius’s reign, is attested as a senator of high rank during the reign of Claudius.²⁰³⁴ Thus a tomb of the first-century B.C.E. or C.E. Italian type honors a Roman ex-consul, perhaps the same Calpurnius Rufus, a legate of Claudius, though the symbol may have been “added for a later member of his family” (e.g., a certain consul in Hadrian’s time).²⁰³⁵

Although the Via Sebaste ran as far as Perga, it probably did not extend to Attalia (Acts 14:25).²⁰³⁶ But any boats that came as far inland as the river harbor near Perga would not be the large ships more suited for travel to Syrian Antioch, and so Attalia was the correct port for their departure.²⁰³⁷ (Phaselis, with three harbors, was a significant city in this period and was just down the road,²⁰³⁸ but it probably was out of their way by land.) Attalia was a major port for trade between Syria or Egypt and the interior of Asia.²⁰³⁹ Although Luke may have given us only a summary of their itinerary, if the team began their ministry in Cyprus in early spring, they are undoubtedly returning to Syrian Antioch before winter makes travel more difficult.

In a work that emphasizes the continuity of ethnically mixed churches with Israel’s biblical heritage, Paul’s return to Syrian Antioch (14:26)²⁰⁴⁰ reinforces his connection with a center that, in turn, was birthed by the Jerusalem church (11:19–20).²⁰⁴¹ Each of the major “missionary journeys” begins in Antioch, and Paul returns to Antioch

Roman period saw larger walls and towers rebuilt over the older Hellenistic ones around the ancient harbor (Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 169).

2029. Lake and Cadbury, *Commentary*, 168; Bruce, *Acts*¹, 286; Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 166. Earlier modern Western sources call the town Adalia; many sources spell the river as “Catarractes.” For further information on Attalia, see Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 166–72; Schnabel, *Mission*, 1091; on Attalia’s harbor, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:247.

2030. McRay, *Archaeology*, 240.

2031. Finegan, *Apostles*, 85.

2032. *Ibid.*

2033. From an earlier period, many Italian *negotiatores* had settled there, engaged in commerce (see Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 57, 99). Attalia achieved colonial status at some point (Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:77).

2034. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:153, further noting, “The family probably also had interests in Lycaonia, south of Iconium.” This connection would simply illustrate the unity of the region, however, not any contacts for Paul (Luke does not report that he attracted many elite sympathizers there).

2035. Mitchell, “Archaeology,” 170.

2036. French, “Roads,” 52. Perga is 7–12 mi. northwest of Attalia (commentators’ counts vary; see comment on Acts 13:13). Wilson, “Route,” 482–83, argues plausibly that Paul took the central route back from Pisidian Antioch, through the Cestrus Valley, instead of the Via Sebaste, since 14:24 says that they passed through Pisidia, and by this point they might be more concerned with speed than with a paved road.

2037. See esp. Campbell, “Paul in Pamphylia.” As already noted at Acts 13:13, they probably traveled between Perga and Attalia on foot anyway.

2038. Fant and Reddish, *Sites*, 171 (noting a Roman period theater, two baths, and three later agoras; the city was founded in the seventh century B.C.E. and surely had an agora or agoras before or beneath the later ones).

2039. Finegan, *Apostles*, 84–85.

2040. It might be relevant that agents were to report back to the one who sent them (Talbert, *Acts*, 164, cites *Mek.* on Exod 12:1; *y. Hag.* 76d), although the principle in both cases seems straightforward, in any case.

2041. Cf. Alexander, “Mapping,” suggesting that early Christianity functioned as connected networks of local churches with Jerusalem as a symbolic center.

or even Jerusalem itself (Antioch in 14:26; 15:35; 18:22; Jerusalem in 9:26; 11:30; 12:25).²⁰⁴² On “commending,” see comment on Acts 14:23 (though the language differs); compare 15:40, where Antioch again commits (employing the same Greek verb) the new team of Paul and Silas to the Lord’s grace, or generous favor and empowerment.

Reporting God’s mighty works back to the Antioch church (14:27) fits Luke’s pattern of retelling divine deeds within the story (cf., e.g., Luke 9:10; 10:17).²⁰⁴³ Paul and Barnabas attribute these works to God (as in their testimony in Jerusalem, Acts 15:12). Gathering the church (14:27) presumably means by word of mouth, perhaps through sending word to leaders of house churches to contact their members. As suggested above, they may have completed the described journeys in less than a year; by contrast, given the distances covered, Ramsay suggests that the journeys of Acts 13–14 cover at least two and a half years.²⁰⁴⁴ In any case, they had been gone from Antioch for a significant period of time.

To “open” to someone is to welcome them (e.g., a new ruler, 2 Kgs 15:16 MT). The expression “open door” appears for promise of deliverance in Rev 3:8 and is a “characteristically Pauline”²⁰⁴⁵ expression for opportunities for ministry (1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3). But many ancients used “door” figuratively.²⁰⁴⁶ Doors could be employed figuratively for passages to wealth (Lucian *Tim.* 28), prayer,²⁰⁴⁷ or repentance.²⁰⁴⁸ They now remain for an unspecified amount of time (cf. Acts 9:23).

2042. Witherington, *Acts*, 560; Tannehill, *Acts*, 230; Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 173.

2043. On this subject, see Maloney, *Narration of Works*, 117–35. She finds no evidence of pre-Lukan tradition (126), but one wonders how much evidence would remain in any case; and whether or not Luke had specific tradition for this instance, we may at the least regard Luke’s report here as a reasonable historical inference. Travelers carried news to churches (cf. 1 Cor 1:11) and synagogues (see comments in Keener, *Acts*, 1:187–88; cf. also Willis, “Networking”), and Paul certainly had ties with the Antioch church (Gal 2:11; discussion at Acts 15). Cheung, “Acts 14:27–15:35,” argues for a literary unity in Acts 14:27–15:35, united by Paul’s mission reports (14:27; 15:3, 4, 12). Conzelmann, *Acts*, 112–13, suggests that one might expect a dative instead of μετ’ αὐτῶν but that the latter is attested in the LXX and papyri. The completed “work” in Acts 14:26 may refer back to 13:2 (Parsons, *Acts*, 185, suggesting an *inclusio*).

2044. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 134 (estimating their return, “at the earliest, in the autumn of A.D. 48”).

2045. Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 129; cf. also Parsons, *Acts*, 204 (adding also a connection with the image in Acts 14:22).

2046. BDAG cites as examples Max. Tyre 19.5d; Iambl. *Myst.* 10.5; see further Plut. *R. Col.* 3, *Mor.* 1108D; Lucian *Tim.* 28; Eunapius *Lives* 494; 1QM XI, 9; *Deut. Rab.* 2:12; *Lam. Rab.* 3:43–44, §9. Epictetus commonly applies it to the opportunity for death, especially suicide (*Diatr.* 1.9.20; 1.25.21; 2.1.19; 3.8.6; 3.13.14).

2047. *Deut. Rab.* 2:12; *Lam. Rab.* 3:43–44, §9.

2048. Again, *Deut. Rab.* 2:12; *Lam. Rab.* 3:43–44, §9.

