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Diegesis and the Messianic Model: “Telling” the Motif

Though the Book of Acts develops multiple themes,¹ this chapter highlights the death-resurrection message presented through the diegetic remarks about Jesus. Narrator and character comments “tell” the story of Jesus, not in the focalized mimetic mode but rather in summary fashion. Not every reference to Jesus contains both elements of death and resurrection, yet numerous diegetic statements about him do consistently combine both concepts. Because some scholars have favored one perspective (either suffering or glory) over the other, this chapter engages both viewpoints.

The diegetic passages of Acts form the structure with frequent digressions to answer challenges emerging from the different interpretations. Beginning with the narrator comments on the hyperdiegetic level, the focus then shifts to the intradiegetic narrator comments, which are spoken within a deeper narrative layer by the characters themselves. In both sections, discussion begins with passages clearly including the combined death-resurrection message, followed by divergent passages with depict Jesus with only dark shades of suffering or resplendent hues of renewed life.

1. Polhill, *Acts*, 57–72. Polhill discusses eight different themes in his introduction, which, he claims, “all interweave and overlap with one another to furnish together the rich tapestry that is the story of Acts” (57).

HYPERDIEGETIC COMMENTS ABOUT JESUS

As mentioned previously, hyperdiegetic statements refer to those made by the narrator and that, in accordance with Robert Funk's understanding, take place on the level above the primary narrative.² These comments include summaries and descriptions given in "unfocused" segments where "the narrator 'reports' what has transpired without permitting the reader to witness events directly or immediately."³ In iterative mode as used for summaries, "time, participants, actions, and even space are heaped up, pluralized, conflated."⁴

By investigating these hyperdiegetic comments, the narrator's viewpoint of Jesus takes shape. William S. Kurz gives an apt description of this perspective as "the filter through which the narrator presents his narration; it is like the place of the camera which determines the angle from which a viewer sees an object."⁵ The narrator and each character or character group in a narrative express individual perspectives that may or may not be in agreement with the others. James Dawsey, for example, argues that the narrator in the Gospel of Luke has a different perspective or "voice" than the Lukan Jesus.⁶ Though the academic guild has not embraced Dawsey's conclusions,⁷ his work does clarify the possible distinctions between a narrator and characters within the narrative. For this reason, focusing attention on the hyperdiegetic comments contributes to a greater understanding of the narrator's view of Jesus.

This study assumes that the narrator in Acts is both reliable and authoritative; that is, the narrator merits readers' trust and guides them in a

2. Funk, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 31. Although Gérard Genette (*Narrative Discourse*, 228) and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (*Narrative Fiction*, 91) both prefer the term "extradiegetic" to describe this level, I agree with Funk that this term fosters confusion and suggests that the narrator is somehow "outside" rather than part of the narrative as a whole (*Poetics*, 31 n. 16).

3. Funk, *Poetics*, 134.

4. Ibid., 139.

5. Kurz, "Narrative Approaches to Luke-Acts," 203.

6. Dawsey, *Lukan Voice*, 93–94.

7. Robert Tannehill remains unconvinced that the two voices can be distinguished so clearly from one another (*Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1:7), and Joseph B. Tyson expresses doubt that Luke's readers would be able to recognize the subtle hints left by such a narrator (review of *Lukan Voice*, 545). While making these observations, both Tannehill and Tyson offer another substantive reason for rejecting Dawsey's view—the unlikelihood of a gospel narrator's being categorized as unreliable and non-omniscient.

desired interpretation of the characters, their direct speech, and their actions.⁸ Not only does the prologue itself engender readers' trust through a reassurance of the book's comprehensiveness, the easing of any doubts occurs, according to Robert Tannehill, because the "values and beliefs affirmed by the narrator are also those of the implied author."⁹ In short, the narrator does not function as a foil for the implied author to convey a contradictory message.

Moreover the use of narrative asides and first-person narration legitimize and enhance the narrator's authority. Steven M. Sheeley argues convincingly that the narrative asides play a critical role by establishing a relationship in which readers learn to depend on the narrator for "much of the information necessary to read and understand the story correctly."¹⁰ The shift from third- to first-person narration, according to Allen Walworth, augments the narrator's diegetic authority by adding the credibility of an eyewitness account.¹¹ The combination of techniques enables the narrator to exert influence over readers' interpretation of the story.

References to Jesus's Death and Resurrection

Two of the clearest passages in which the narrator connects death and resurrection to Jesus surface in the opening scene of the book (1:1–3) and a nutshell summary of Paul's missionary preaching (17:2–4). Besides these, the narrator alludes to Jesus as the crucified-risen Messiah in numerous abbreviated comments scattered throughout the narrative. The final part of this section investigates the possible exceptions to this dual emphasis of the narrator's understanding of Jesus.

8. Rimmon-Kenan defines the reliable narrator as "one whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an authoritative account of the fictional truth" (*Narrative Fiction*, 100). R. Alan Culpepper offers further clarification: "The reliability of the narrator . . . must be kept distinct from both the historical accuracy of the narrator's account and the 'truth' of his ideological point of view. 'Reliability' is a matter of literary analysis, historical accuracy is the territory of the historian, and 'truth' is a matter for believers and theologians" (*Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 32).

9. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:7.

10. Sheeley, "Narrative Asides," 102. He defines narrative asides here as "parenthetical remarks addressed directly to the reader which interrupt the logical progression of the story, establishing a relationship between the narrator and the narratee which exists outside the story being narrated."

11. Walworth, "Narrator of Acts," 31.

Acts 1:3

The opening words of the narrator set forth the integral components of the double-sided motif by stating that Jesus, “after his suffering . . . presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs” (1:3). Verse three is characterized by diegesis rather than mimesis because of the iterative mode in recounting the event.¹² The narrator describes an action that occurs repeatedly over a forty day period. The mention of Jesus’s “suffering” (παθεῖν) here includes his death. As Hans Conzelmann notes, the infinitive of πάσχω regularly refers to “the whole of the passion” in both Luke and Acts.¹³ Now, subsequent to his death, Jesus is alive and demonstrates this with “convincing proofs.” Such appearances to the apostles obviously presuppose the resurrection event. The narrator thus opens the story with a powerful image of Jesus, painting him as the one who experienced both suffering/death and resurrection.

The positioning of this portrait at the beginning of the story has a profound impact on the reader. Meir Sternberg calls such a strategy the “primacy effect,” suggesting that a characterization given early in the narrative significantly influences readers’ continuing perception of that character.¹⁴ Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan concurs with Sternberg’s judgment:

The text can direct and control the reader’s comprehension and attitudes by positioning *certain* items before others Thus, information and attitudes presented at an early stage of the text tend to encourage the reader to interpret everything in their light. The reader is prone to preserve such meanings and attitudes for as long as possible.¹⁵

The narrator’s description of Jesus at this crucial point in the narrative therefore shapes all subsequent interpretations of Jesus. The narrator encourages readers to rely on this first impression of Jesus as the crucified-and-risen one whenever they encounter and judge the later images.

12. Funk, *Poetics*, 137–38. Relying on Genette, Funk defines “iterative” as “a technical term meaning the narration in a single statement of events occurring more than once” (137 n. 9). He later specifies three types of iterative statements: those which suggest (1) repeated action, (2) durative action, and (3) conative action (ibid., 159).

13. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 5. Cf. Luke 22:15; 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23.

14. Sternberg, *Expositional Modes*, 96.

15. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 74.

The words spoken to the apostles about the "reign of God" (βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ) likely encompass both events as well. F. F. Bruce reflects this viewpoint in his commentary when he describes the reign of God in Luke as "the same good news as Jesus himself had announced earlier, but now given effective fulfillment by the saving events of his passion and triumph."¹⁶ Jesus's words to the disciples in the Third Gospel after his resurrection further substantiate the point.¹⁷ In contrast to the general resurrection appearances described in the opening verses of Acts, Luke 24:36–49 offers a focalized example. The narrator in Acts mentions that Jesus speaks to the apostles about the reign of God, but the closing scene of the Gospel records the actual words spoken. Here the resurrected Jesus specifically explains to them that the Messiah, as prophesied, had "to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day" (Luke 24:46). If the correlation between the two scenes is justified, the unavoidable conclusion makes a strong connection between the reign of God and the Messiah who experiences death and resurrection. Not surprisingly, Tannehill compares these two passages and arrives at this very point: "The things concerning the reign of God" of which Jesus speaks in Acts 1:3 include this revelation about his won role as the rejected and exalted Messiah, the king through whom God reigns."¹⁸ The narrator's description of Jesus as the one who presents himself alive subsequent to his suffering thus provides the empirical proof for the initiation of God's reign.

Acts 17:2–4

This passage is one of the clearest examples of the narrator's summary of Jesus as the suffering-and-risen Messiah. Together with the following verses, the larger narrative segment interweaves diegetic and mimetic

16. Bruce, *Book of Acts*, 32.

17. The degree of narrative unity between Luke and Acts is not without dispute. While Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, 1:xiii) and Tyson (*Death of Jesus*, ix–x) find complete narrative unity between the two works, Mikeal Parsons has argued strongly for a "restricted intertextuality" which he defines as "the relation of a text with other texts by the same writer" ("Unity of the Lukan Writings," 43). Acts, according to Parsons, functions as a sequel to the Gospel, not the second volume of a single narrative. This category does not, however, prevent "the interlacing of events, characters, and settings" between the two works though caution should be exercised when drawing interrelationships (ibid., 43–44).

18. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:13.

materials with the narrator's comments in verses 2–4, introducing the focalized response of the Thessalonian “Jews” (vv. 5–9).¹⁹

Returning to the iterative mode, the narrator summarizes the content of Paul's preaching in the synagogues.²⁰ On at least three different occasions, Paul enters the synagogue at Thessalonica and sets forth his position on the basis of the Scriptures, “explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead” (vv. 2–3). This oft-repeated message is an equivalent to the “preaching of Jesus” evidenced by the narrator's immediate elaboration in which Paul identifies this Messiah as “Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you” (v. 3). According to the narrator's categories, the proclamation about Jesus includes both essential elements of his death and resurrection in the fulfillment of his role as Messiah.

While the narrator invites readers to supply details of the summarized message by recalling previous sermons preached by Peter and Paul,²¹ specific mentioning of the Messiah's death and resurrection directs readers to focus on these two elements. Because the narrator of Acts possesses a high degree of authority in relationship to his readers, acceptance of the summary seems accurate and reliable. The power of the narrator occasionally woos even the most skeptical readers: historical-critical ones. Ernst Haenchen, for example, when commenting on 17:3, ascertains “the doctrine of the death and resurrection of the Messiah Jesus” to be the “most important” aspect of Christian preaching portrayed in Acts.²²

Also noteworthy, the position of the narrator in this key passage remains consistent with the initial image presented at the beginning of the book. Even though the “primacy effect” influences readers' understanding, the first impression does not act as a hermeneutical straitjacket. Given enough counter evidence, readers are likely to change their opinion.²³ Yet the narrator uses this summary as an opportunity to reinforce

19. Funk notes that introductions, conclusions, and transitions often contain unfocused narration (diegetic material) and “can occur anywhere, mixed with a more focused variety” (*Poetics*, 156).

20. Funk cites a parallel example found in Acts 9:19–20 (*ibid.*, 158–59).

21. Both Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, 2:206) and Polhill (*Acts*, 360) agree that the earlier sermons in Acts provide the details of the narrator's summary of the messianic preaching in 17:2–3.

22. Haenchen, *Acts*, 507.

23. Paul provides an excellent example of such a change. At first, the narrator de-

the initial judgment about the essential attributes of Jesus. In fact, the narrator brings the image into sharper focus by explicitly labeling him the "Messiah."

Furthermore, the mention of Paul's "opening up" (διανοίγων) of the Scriptures to demonstrate the messianic claims of Jesus echoes the Third Gospel, when the resurrected Jesus "opens up" the Scriptures for the same purpose (Luke 24:32).²⁴ The disciples on the road to Emmaus describe the risen Jesus similarly (διήνοιγεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς) as they refer to his words about the necessary suffering and exaltation of the Messiah (24:26).²⁵ In a later episode, the risen Jesus "opens up" (διήνοιξεν) the disciples' minds to the Scriptures by explaining the necessity of the Messiah "to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day" (24:45–46).

Does the concept of necessity apply to suffering and resurrection or suffering alone? Charles H. Cosgrove emphasizes the suffering aspect of the divine "musts" when he notes the "eleven references to the necessity of Jesus' passion in Luke-Acts."²⁶ Yet later in the article, Cosgrove defines the "passion event" as inclusive of the "cross and resurrection/ascension."²⁷ Grammatically, both events are intimately connected with the divine imperative because the parallel infinitives (παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι) are both dependent on the impersonal verb δεῖ (Luke 24:46). Moreover, the appeal to Scriptures seems to support the necessity of both events. Though the issue will be explored in greater detail in the following section, note that when Peter and Paul appeal to the fulfillment of specific Scriptures, they include prophecies about the Messiah's death *and* resurrection/exaltation.

scribes him as one who heartily approves of the killing of Stephen (8:1) and becomes an aggressive persecutor of the church (8:3). But the counter evidence of his conversion and subsequent preaching activities should convince readers that a change has occurred. Nevertheless, the primacy effect is powerful enough that they may be reluctant at first to accept Paul's conversion as genuine, similar to the reluctance of the disciples immediately following his conversion (9:26).

24. Tannehill carefully identifies the connections between the two accounts (*Narrative Unity*, 2:206–7).

25. The phrase "enter into his glory" encompasses the resurrection event (cf. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses*, 141–43). Tannehill concurs when he explains that the reference "seems to embrace both resurrection and exaltation, with the emphasis on the new status of Jesus which results" (*Narrative Unity*, 1:284 n. 13).

26. Cosgrove, "Divine Δεῖ in Luke-Acts," 174.

27. *Ibid.*, 188.

Abbreviated Comments

In a number of instances, the narrator associates the activity of preaching with one of following direct objects: (1) Jesus; (2) the reign of God; or, (3) the word (of God/the Lord).²⁸ Just as narrative “gaps” require readers to interact with the story by supplying necessary material missing from the text,²⁹ these abbreviated comments beckon readers to supply the missing details of the proclamation summaries. Although conclusions depend on the analysis of the characters’ sermons about Jesus, hints from the narrator indicate a desire for readers to recall the message of Jesus’s death and resurrection. The opening scene and the summary given in 17:3 reveal the key elements of Jesus’s story from the narrator’s point of view while the numerous abbreviated statements of the same message demonstrate its pervasiveness.

As discussed above, the narrator guides readers’ interpretation by telling them in 17:3 that the “preaching of Jesus” is equivalent to the proclamation of Jesus as the suffering-risen Messiah. Elsewhere the narrator makes similar announcements, yet without explicit reference to Jesus’s death and resurrection. In 5:42, for example, the narrator describes how the apostles daily teach (διδάσκοντες) and preach (εὐαγγελίζομενοι) Jesus as the Messiah in the temple and from house to house. Philip, when he encounters the Ethiopian Eunuch, preaches (εὐηγγελίσατο) Jesus to him (8:35). In another instance (18:5), Paul devotes himself to “the word” by “testifying [διαμαρτυρούμενος] to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus.” Apollos likewise argues with the Jews to prove (ἐπιδεικνύς) through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah (18:28). In each of these examples, the narrator clearly identifies Jesus as the object of their proclamation. The narrator specifically mentions the focus of the preaching; that is, Jesus as the predicted Messiah whom the narrator identifies through the opening scene and 17:3 as the one who has suffered and risen from the dead.

The emphasis on Jesus being the predicted Messiah must find support from the Scriptures. For this reason, the narrator is careful to mention the inspired predictions, the “words spoken by the prophets,” as an

28. The narrator uses the verb εὐαγγελίζω with some of these objects but also by itself to imply the preaching of the “gospel/good news” (8:40; 14:7, 21; 16:10).

29. See Iser, *Implied Reader*, 34–46. By encouraging readers to supply the necessary details, the narrator draws readers into the story, giving them a creative role. Nevertheless, some markers will be posted to “gently guide” readers without leading them “by the nose” (ibid., 37).

important element of the proclamation event. Philip (8:32–35), Paul (17:2–3; 28:23), and Apollos (18:24, 28) each depend on the Scriptures to demonstrate the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies in Jesus. In Berea, the recipients of “the word” examine the Scriptures daily to test the validity of the Christian proclamation.³⁰

Connections also exist between the proclamation of Jesus and that of “the word [of God/the Lord].”³¹ When summarizing the activities of those scattered due to persecution, the narrator draws a parallel between two groups: one speaks “the word” to the Jews, and the other speaks to the Hellenists also, “proclaiming the Lord Jesus” (11:19–20). Although the recipients change, the message apparently remains the same. Similarly, Paul proclaims “the word” in Corinth to the Jews and the Greeks by telling them that Jesus is the Messiah (18:4–5). For the narrator, proclamation of “the word” is equivalent to the preaching of Jesus.

The announcement of the “reign of God” (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) functions as another equivalent message.³² The narrator first introduces the topic in Acts by describing how the crucified-and-resurrected Jesus speaks about this topic repeatedly to his disciples (1:3). Philip later “proclaims the good news” (εὐαγγελίζομένῳ) about the reign of God (8:12), a statement which parallels the proclamation of “the word” (8:4) as it is identified specifically with Philip’s preaching of the Messiah (8:5). Similarly, Paul preaches about the reign of God in the synagogue at Ephesus (19:8). Listening to Paul’s message, the people of the city “heard the word of the Lord.” According to the narrator, Paul routinely speaks about the reign of God in his preaching (28:23, 31), a fact which Paul himself affirms when giving his farewell address to the Ephesians (20:25). Tannehill thus offers an apt description of the reign of God as concomitant with the rule of Jesus as the Messiah:

30. The comments made by individual characters in their speeches, which will be discussed in the following section, offer detailed examples of how exactly Jesus fulfills these messianic predictions.

31. Minert H. Grumm succinctly catalogs the usage of this phrase: “‘the word of God’ comes twelve times; ‘the word of the Lord’ ten times; then ‘the word of the gospel,’ ‘the word of this salvation,’ ‘the word of his grace’ (twice); and ‘the word’ absolute ten times—a total of thirty-six times in Acts” (“Another Look,” 334).

32. In some senses, admittedly, the reign of God has more of a future orientation, but the concept remains attached to Jesus. Robert Maddox aptly surmises the event as “a present reality though it must also be consummated in the future” (*Purpose of Luke-Acts*, 186).

The importance of Jesus' own reign in the narrator's understanding of the reign of God explains the brief summaries of the missionary message that combine the reign of God and Jesus . . . These are not two separate topics, for God's reign is established in the world through the rule of Jesus Messiah. Thus the missionary message may also be summarized simply as 'reign of God' (19:8; 20:25).³³

With Jesus playing such an integral part of God's reign, it necessarily includes the important aspects of his death and resurrection.³⁴

Also contributing to the synonymy of these phrases is an overlap of Greek verbs and settings. Διαμαρτύρομαι, καταγγέλλω, κηρύσσω, and εὐαγγελίζω often take any one of the three direct objects.³⁵ The act of proclamation in its different forms also frequently finds common backdrops, occurring in either places of worship, while traveling, or in cities or villages.³⁶

Recognizing the correspondence between these terms is certainly not a novel discovery. C. H. Dodd qualifies such phrases as "virtual equivalents."³⁷ Bo Reicke draws a close comparison between the phrase "spread of the word" and other expressions used to describe the expansion of the Christian message.³⁸ Ernst Haenchen suggests that the reign of God forms "the content of the Christian proclamation."³⁹ More recently, Beverly Gaventa concludes that the "speaking of the word" in Acts "consistently refers to the proclamation of the gospel,"⁴⁰ interchangeable with the preaching of Jesus and the reign of God.

The narrator likely alternates the terms to avoid literary monotony while keeping this message constantly before his readers. Both William Freedman and M. H. Abrams point to frequency as an essential element

33. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* 2, 14.

34. C. H. Dodd identifies the reign of God "as coming in the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus" (*Apostolic Preaching*, 24), providing a helpful assessment for understanding the concept in Acts.

35. E.g., 8:12, 25; 9:20; 11:20; 13:5; 17:3, 13; 18:5; 28:23, 31.

36. E.g., 5:42; 8:40; 9:20; 14:7, 21; 17:2-3.

37. Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 28.

38. Reicke, "Risen Lord," 162-63.

39. Haenchen, *Acts*, 141 n. 2. He points specifically here to Acts 1:3; 19:8; 20:25; and 28:23.

40. Gaventa, "To Speak Thy Word," 79.

for the efficacy of a literary motif.⁴¹ Freedman also highlights the importance of variability: the motif thrives on a "family" or an "associational cluster" of references "rather than merely a single, unchanging element."⁴² The abbreviated comments by the narrator provide a variability and pervasiveness necessary for the formation and consistency of a death-resurrection motif.

References to Jesus's Death Alone

Despite the emphasis by the narrator on both the suffering and resurrection of Jesus, some diegetic passages seem to highlight only one aspect of the double-sided motif. The following section considers two passages in particular which apparently place the accent on Jesus's suffering.

Acts 8:32–33, 35

In the midst of "showing" the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, the narrator interrupts the scene in verses 32–33 and 35 in order to offer clarification for readers.⁴³ First, the narrator specifies that the Ethiopian has been reading Scripture from Isaiah that describes in strong tones the suffering aspect of the Messiah. The quoted part of the passage ends with a phrase about how "his life is taken away from the earth" (Acts 8:33; cf. Isa 53:7–8).

At first glance, the resurrection of Jesus seems strangely absent, allowing David Moessner and others to build a case for the heightened significance of Jesus's death. Indeed, Moessner highlights this passage as an illustration of the "accent" falling on the suffering and death of Jesus rather than his resurrection.⁴⁴ He is careful to note how "Philip begins with the Scriptures of a suffering anointed one in declaring the present 'good news about Jesus' (8:35) which leads directly to the chamberlain

41. Freedman, "Literary Motif," 110.

42. *Ibid.*, 124.

43. Sheeley classifies 8:32–33 as a narrative aside given to provide context ("Narrative Asides," 105). Verse 35 is a statement made by the narrator in the iterative mode that describes "durative" action; that is, a type of continuous action best "represented by a solid line" (Funk, *Poetics*, 159).

44. Moessner, "Church," 183, 187.

being baptized (8:36, 38).⁴⁵ Though some suggest that the phrase “for his life is taken away from the earth” can be construed as a reference to the resurrection/exaltation of Jesus,⁴⁶ this interpretation is not overly convincing and necessitates allowing the weight of the quotation to fall upon the predicted suffering of the Messiah.

When the entire Scripture citation in verses 32 and 33 are viewed in light of verse 35, however, Moessner’s position does not exclude of the resurrection perspective. The word “begin” (ἀρχάμενος), which is part of the narrator’s commentary on the unfolding events, retains the inclusion of Jesus’s exaltation as an implicit but faithful partner of his death. Verse 35 expressly indicates the suffering and death of the anointed one to be only the beginning part of the message. Using this text as the springboard, Philip explains the rest of the story. Though R. J. Porter speculates that Philip “continued to preach the gospel to him from the subsequent verses of Isaiah,”⁴⁷ most commentators agree that the content would more likely parallel the kerygmatic message proclaimed earlier in the narrative.⁴⁸ How would readers likely fill this gap? The narrator assumes familiarity with the LXX, but does this include knowing the specific passages that follow two and three chapters subsequent to the quoted verses, as Porter argues?⁴⁹ A familiarity with type scenes appears plausible,⁵⁰ but readers with the kind of recall Porter requires are quite incredible and therefore unlikely. Rather his “preaching of Jesus,” as shown above, most undoubtedly includes the equally important aspect of Jesus’s resurrection and exaltation. The chamberlain therefore hears and responds to a message that resonates with two notes of equal intensity: one supplied by the narrator, the other supplied by readers on the narrator’s cue.

Acts 14:22

After Paul is stoned at Lystra, the narrator iteratively summarizes Paul’s words of encouragement to the surrounding churches: participation in suffering as necessary for entrance into the “reign of God” (14:22).

45. Ibid., 187.

46. E.g., Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:111–12.

47. Porter, “What Did Philip,” 55.

48. E.g., Polhill, *Acts*, 225 and Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* 2, 111.

49. Porter, “What did Philip,” 54–55.

50. Cf. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 47–62.

These afflictions, contrary to the opinion of Robert Maddox, are more than "mere annoyances, which a resolute Christian can easily endure."⁵¹ Rather, the suffering is real, painful, and necessary. As Moessner clearly elucidates, soteriology hinges on Jesus's suffering, which the persecution of his witnesses continues to proclaim.⁵² Conceding this point, however, does not negate the duality of the death-resurrection motif. Viewed within the larger context, suffering plays only one part in God's overarching plan of salvation. The other critical aspect of God's plan is renewed life, as Paul himself illustrates when he rises up (ἀναστάς) after being stoned and everyone's "supposing" him to be dead (14:19).⁵³

References to Jesus's Resurrection Alone

Other hyperdiegetic passages seem to emphasize only the resurrection of Jesus. In two of the comments (4:2; 17:18), however, the resurrection or hope of the resurrection is only tangentially connected with Jesus while one statement by the narrator in 4:33 does specifically highlight the importance of Jesus's resurrection.

Acts 4:1–2

In these verses the narrator describes how the Sadducees become "much annoyed" because the apostles are "teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection from the dead." This statement reveals that the disciples, who had earlier received instruction from the resurrected Jesus about the importance of his death and return to life, now obey his instructions by teaching the people about Jesus and proclaiming the possibility of a future resurrection from the dead. The focus of the latter part of the comment lies not with Jesus but with the people. Rather than enlightening the image of Jesus, 4:2 suggests the outcome for those who believe their message.

Nevertheless the narrator does link the phrase "in Jesus" (ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ) with "the resurrection from the dead." As Conzelmann testifies about the construction, the two phrases "belong" together, and "in

51. Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, 82.

52. Moessner, "Church," 193–95.

53. This scene will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Jesus” becomes emphatic due to its placement before the other expression.⁵⁴ Because Jesus experienced resurrection from the dead, those who align themselves with this Messiah may partake of a similar experience. Arguably the accent falls on Jesus’s resurrection, not his death.⁵⁵ The phrase necessarily implies, however, that death precedes the resurrection. One does not simply translate into an immortal heavenly state; death is still the gatekeeper. Moreover, the detailed content of the preaching in the temple voiced in 3:11–26 and 4:8–12 maintains the focus on both the death and resurrection of Jesus.⁵⁶

Acts 4:33

In this instance, the narrator recounts how “with great power the apostles gave their testimony [ἀπεδίδουν τὸ μαρτύριον] to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” In contrast to the previous passage, the narrator here focuses directly on Jesus, emphasizing his resurrection, though the act of “giving testimony/bearing witness” generally carries a more comprehensive message.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the accent shifts temporarily to the resurrection aspect of Jesus’s mission.

Yet again such an ephemeral shift does not justify theological extrapolations such as the one given by Haenchen when drawing his conclusions about this passage: “In the first place they [the twelve apostles] are the witnesses of Jesus’ Resurrection. This for Luke is specially important: his theology has its centre of gravity in the Resurrection.”⁵⁸ Rather the comprehensive nature of the actual testimony given by the apostles centralizes both the death and resurrection events (e.g., 10:39–43).

54. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 32.

55. Kilgallen, “What the Apostles Proclaimed,” 246–48.

56. The following section provides detailed discussion of these intradiegetic passages.

57. The witnesses for Jesus in the book of Acts have specific characteristics and functions. In a narrow sense, these are the ones who empirically experience the resurrected Jesus and then testify to others about the certainty of this miraculous event (e.g., 1:3, 22; 2:32; 10:40–41). More broadly, these witnesses are those who have experienced Jesus’s entire ministry, testifying to others through a comprehensive message about this Messiah (e.g., 1:8, 21–22; 10:39–43; 18:5; 23:11).

58. Haenchen, *Acts*, 163.