

CHAPTER 2

Setting the Context of the Speech

THE STORY OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (ACTS 13–14)

At Acts 13.1, Luke resumes the story of the church at Antioch. Earlier, at 11.19–26, he had described its founding by members of the Hellenist group and its initial phase, helped and guided by Barnabas and Paul, together with a brief account of the generosity of these new Christians towards their fellow Christians in Jerusalem when they heard about an impending famine from the lips of a prophet called Agabus (11.27–30). After reporting the persecution of the church at Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa I and his sudden death (12.1–24), Luke gets Barnabas and Paul back to Antioch from their visit to Jerusalem to deliver the aid (12.25).

Initially, we learn that, in addition to Barnabas and Paul, three others share the leadership of the church, namely Simeon (nicknamed “Black”); Luke, a Cyrenaeen; and Manaen, a former steward of Herod the Tetrarch. These five are called “prophets and teachers.” During a time when they¹ were worshipping the Lord and fasting, they received a revelatory command from the Holy Spirit (in the way in which Luke tells the story, the emphasis falls entirely on what was believed to be the divine origin of the command, any human agency of this divine command being passed over, as

1. Grammatically, the plurals of the verbs relate naturally to the five prophets and teachers. On the other hand, when Paul and Barnabas returned, they gathered together the church and gave them a report of what God had done through them, so that it is entirely possible that Luke might have thought of the involvement of the church as a whole in their being commissioned, even if the original impetus came through the prophets and teachers as a group.

is any possible prior discussion of “outreach” work): they were to set apart Barnabas and Paul for the work to which the Spirit had called them (13.2). No geographical area is designated in the word from the Spirit, nor actually that missionary work is specifically in mind.

At the end of his Gospel, Luke had the risen Jesus explaining that God’s plan contained in the OT was that the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem, and commissioning his disciples to be his witnesses in this task (24.45–49). Then, the risen Lord repeated this commission at the beginning of Acts in what has so often been described as the programmatic statement of the book (Acts 1.8). Luke had also in the course of his story informed the reader that Paul is the “chosen vessel” appointed by the risen Lord Jesus to proclaim the name of Jesus “before Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel” (9.15). So, although Peter is in Luke’s story the first to admit a Gentile to the Christian church (Acts 10.1–11.18)² and although the Hellenists were the first to preach to non-Jews in Antioch (11.19–21), it cannot be said that the reader receives the impression that the risen Lord’s strategy has really got under way. Now, however, this is to change. There is going to be a mission-outreach from the church at Antioch, ordered by the Spirit and to be spear-headed by Barnabas and Paul. Luke reported that the two men were duly sent out after the rest had laid hands on them (13.3–4a). Again, Luke concentrated on the divine origin of the venture, by stating that the two were sent out by the Holy Spirit (v. 4a).

The two (we learn a little later at v. 5b that they were accompanied by John Mark, whom they had brought with them from Jerusalem after their visit there with the famine relief contribution—12.25) set sail for Cyprus and preached in the synagogues in Salamis, the capital of the island (13.4b–5). They crossed over the island to reach Paphos on the south-west corner (v. 6). Here the pro-consul, Sergius Paulus, sent for them to hear the word of God. At his court, there was a Jewish magician, a false prophet, called Elymas bar-Jesus, who sought to prevent the proconsul’s being influenced by Barnabas and Saul into accepting the Christian faith (vv. 6b–8).

2. The status of the Ethiopian eunuch is ambiguous. According to Deut. 23.1, he could not be admitted to the assembly of the Lord, but a more open and liberal approach is evinced by Isa. 56.1–8, which envisages both foreigners and eunuchs [both true of the official] who obey the law of Yahweh as being welcomed into the House of the Lord, though whether Isa. 56 would take precedence over Deut. 23 in the Judaism of the first century AD is another matter. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:426, concludes that we must be content to take the story as a piece of tradition about Philip which Luke placed here not because it fitted into his scheme of Christian expansion but because this was the point at which he was dealing with Philip. As many have rightly emphasized, *Luke* clearly saw the conversion of Cornelius as the admission of the first Gentile.

Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit, not only sternly rebuked Elymas, but also struck him with temporary blindness (vv. 9–11). This made a deep impression on Sergius Paulus, who is described as an intelligent man (v. 7), and he became a believer. “When the pro-consul saw what had happened he believed, because he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord” (v. 12). The first convert mentioned by Luke is thus a Gentile.

From Cyprus, Luke has the missionaries sail to the mainland of Asia Minor, to Perga, from where they went to Antioch in Pisidia (vv. 13–14). From this point on, Luke made Paul the leading figure: e.g., at v. 13 he says “Paul and his companions;” at v. 16 it is Paul who preached; and now Luke uses the order “Paul and Barnabas” eight times³ (and only once, at 14.14, “Barnabas and Paul” as previously), though it is true that at Lystra, the locals called Barnabas “Zeus” and Paul “Hermes,” because Paul was the chief speaker (14.12).

At the synagogue in PA, the chief officials asked the missionaries whether they had a message of παράκλησις, which may be translated as “encouragement” or “exhortation.”⁴ Either sense or both/and could be the meaning here, but Lucan usage perhaps favours “encouragement.”⁵

Paul began by a selective review of the story of God's dealings with Israel (vv. 16b–25). The emphasis is on God: He chose the Hebrew “fathers;” exalted Israel while in Egypt and led them out of that land; nourished them in the desert; drove out those who lived in Canaan; and settled the Israelites there (vv. 16b–19). God gave the people judges and, even when the people requested a king, He gave them Saul (vv. 20–21). God, however, set him aside and raised up David, who is described as a man after God's own heart and dedicated to doing His will, to be king (v. 22). The speech then leaps to

3. 13.42, 43, 46, 50; 14.1, 3, 20, 23.

4. See BAG, 623, for a list of the various shades of meaning for παράκλησις.

5. Luke uses παράκλησις twice in his Gospel and four times in Acts. The occurrences in the Gospel both have the nuance of “comfort” or “consolation;” Simeon was looking for the eschatological salvation of Israel (2.28) and the Woe on the rich is justified because they have already received their comforts now (6.24). In Acts, Barnabas is called “the son of encouragement,” i.e., he was a man who encouraged others (4.36), while the churches in Judea and Galilee grew through “the encouragement supplied by the Holy Spirit” (9.31). The members of the church at Antioch rejoiced at the encouragement of the letter sent by the Jerusalem church to them (15.31). If we could assume that Luke could use the word in a similar way to Paul at 1 Cor. 14.3, where Paul says that someone prophesying speaks what builds up (οἰκοδομή), exhortation (παράκλησις) and comfort (παραμυθία), then “exhortation” might be preferred. However, since context does not demand a sense contrary to Lucan usage elsewhere, probably “encouragement” should be favoured if we have to make a choice. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:629, however, assumes a “word of exhortation, hortatory discourse, sermon,” as does Flichy, *Figure*, 185.

a descendant of David, Jesus, whom God had brought on the scene to be a saviour for Israel (v. 23). The coming of this Jesus in fulfillment of God's promise was announced by John the Baptist who preached a baptism of repentance for all the people of Israel. John the Baptist declared the imminent coming of one far greater than himself (vv. 24–25).

Having mentioned Jesus, the speech now turns specifically to him and the message of salvation which flows from him and his ministry (v. 26). Attention is focussed on the fact that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their leaders, through failure to recognise him for what he was and their failure to understand the prophetic Scriptures, paradoxically fulfilled those very Scriptures when they condemned him and, although they found no real cause for the death sentence, went on to request that Pilate put him to death. He was then taken down from the cross and buried in a grave (vv. 27–29). But God raised him from the dead. Thus raised to life, Jesus appeared over a period of many days to those who accompanied him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people (vv. 30–31). The focus is now directed specifically to the congregation, and the speaker asserted that he was announcing the good news that God had fulfilled for the congregation the promise made to the fathers, by raising Jesus from the dead (vv. 32–33). Then there follows three passages from the OT which help to elucidate the significance of the resurrection of Jesus. Firstly, Ps. 2.7 is used to show that Jesus had been begotten as God's Son through the resurrection (v. 33b). As one raised and, therefore, immortal (never to suffer corruption), Jesus is the one through whom God will give to the congregation the reliable, holy blessings promised to David (as predicted by Isa. 55.3), for, finally, as Ps. 16.10 asserted, God will not let His Holy One see corruption (vv. 34–35). God had promised eternal rule to David's descendant, and only one who is immortal could receive and fulfill such a promise. The promise was clearly not meant for David, who died and did see corruption. But the one whom God raised did not see corruption, and is, therefore, able to impart the blessings of his eternal rule to men and women (vv. 36–37).

The speech climaxes in both promise (vv. 38–39) and warning (vv. 40–41). Through this Jesus, forgiveness of sins and justification (something the Mosaic Law could not achieve) are offered to everyone who believes. On the other hand, the congregation should not despise and reject the work which God was doing in their day, a work so unusual that there will be the temptation not to believe. The work which God is doing probably includes both the actual ministry of Jesus, now in the past, but also what flows from that ministry, and specifically from the resurrection of Jesus, which has been stressed from v. 30 onwards, namely the universal spread of the good news of God's salvation to everyone who is prepared to believe, irrespective

of race (like the Roman centurion, Cornelius; the people of Antioch; or the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus).

Paul and Barnabas received a request to address the synagogue on the next sabbath (v. 42). Many Jews and proselytes accompanied them as they left the synagogue and received encouragement to continue in God's grace (v. 43). While the language may be somewhat muted, there are certain hints that it is not inappropriate to regard what Luke says in v. 43 as the founding of a Christian community in PA: there is the use of the verb "to follow" which can have religious overtones given the context of preaching by Paul; the use of the verb "to persuade" which Luke can use elsewhere as a synonym of "to believe;"⁶ and the use of the phrase "to continue in the grace of God" with its suggestion that the hearers were already *in* the grace of God.⁷

Luke says that all the city gathered at the synagogue a week later to hear God's word (v. 44), a fact which re-ignited zeal for the law⁸ in some⁹ of the Jews who spoke against and slandered what Paul and Barnabas were saying, because, in their estimation, by admitting Gentiles on the basis of faith the two missionaries were compromising the purity of Israel. Paul and Barnabas then made a solemn assertion that it was necessary first to proclaim God's word to the Jews, but, since the Jews rejected it and, thereby, proved themselves unworthy of eternal life, they would turn to the Gentiles. For the Lord had commanded them to do so. Isa. 49.6—the task of the Servant of the Lord to be a light to the nations so that God's salvation might reach to the ends of the earth—is quoted to substantiate this turning to the Gentiles (vv. 46–47).

This assertion filled the Gentiles with joy and they praised the Lord for his word. Those ordained for eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread through the whole area (vv. 48–49).

The unbelieving Jews resorted to stirring up pious women of noble birth and the leading men of the city, and they succeeded in instigating a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and, indeed, as a result of these efforts, Paul and Barnabas were expelled from the region. But the two shook the dust from their feet as a symbolic prophetic witness against their opponents¹⁰ and moved on to Iconium (vv. 50–52).

6. See 17.4; 28.24 (on the latter text, see 53n44).

7. See Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 92–95.

8. Taking ζήλος in this sense (rather than as envy or jealousy), with Hengel, *Zealots*, 181; Roloff, *Apg.*, 205; Pesch, *Apg.* 2.45; Dunn, *Acts*, 184; Klinghardt, *Gesetz*, 236; Koet, *Five Studies*, 102–6; Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 96–99, esp. 97, 99; Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, 137; and Flichy, *Figure*, 214.

9. These are to be distinguished from those who believed according to v. 43.

10. Strathmann, μάρτυς TDNT 4.503: "The fact that they leave their hearers

Luke opens his account of events at Iconium with the phrase ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἱκονίῳ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ. While most scholars interpret this phrase as Luke's indication that a visit to the Synagogue was the customary first step in the method of the missionary work pursued by Paul and Barnabas,¹¹ it is possible that Luke meant that the same pattern occurred at Iconium as at PA. This would suggest that the events at PA had a typical character about them.¹² Initially at Iconium, Paul and Barnabas made many converts from both Jews and Gentiles through their preaching in the synagogue there. But once again those Jews who were unconvinced stirred up the Gentiles and turned them against the Christians (14.1–2). Paul and Barnabas continued an effective ministry of word and deed, with the Lord enabling them to perform miracles to confirm the message. In the end, however, when a plot to set upon and stone Paul and Barnabas became known, they left the town and went on to Lystra and Derbe and that district, preaching the gospel there¹³ (14.3–7).

At Lystra¹⁴ the missionaries encountered a purely pagan crowd (Luke does not mention any visit to a Synagogue). Paul healed a man who was a cripple from birth (vv. 8–10), and this produced an attempt to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods visiting the earth (Barnabas being taken for Zeus in human form and Paul for Hermes, the messenger of the gods, because he was the chief speaker). Paul and Barnabas only just managed to prevent the priest of Zeus from sacrificing to them (vv. 11–14).

Paul exclaimed that he and Barnabas were just human beings like them and called on the Lystrans to turn from such idolatrous activity to the living God. God had made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In previous generations He allowed the Gentiles to behave in such an idolatrous fashion, although He did not leave them without a witness to His powerful and benevolent activity, for He gave them rain and fruitful

with this gesture will be a witness against their resistance and unbelief on the day of judgment.”

11. So Haenchen, *Acts*, 409; Marshall, *Acts*, 233; Schneider, *Apg.* 2.150; Roloff, *Apg.*, 211; Lüdemann, *Early Christianity*, 159; Pesch, *Apg.* 2.51; Barrett, *Acts* 1:667; Jervell, *Apg.*, 368; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 527; Kee, *Acts*, 171.

12. This seems to be implied by Johnson, *Acts*, 250 and Witherington, *Acts*, 418; and is forcefully stated by Flichy, *Figure*, 183–84 (the events at PA have the significance of a typical example). See the NRSV “The same thing occurred at Iconium.”

13. As they do in Derbe in the transitional v. 21. Flichy, *Figure*, 225, comments that this shows that the presence of the missionaries in this new region is always under the sign of the “proclamation of the Good News.”

14. For a full-scale study of what happened at Lystra and the mini-speech delivered there, see Béchard, *Paul*. See also Lerle, “Predigt,” 46–55; Flichy, *Figure*, 223–42; Kez-bere, *Umstrittener Monotheismus*, 152–63.

seasons from heaven. He also provided food and He filled people's lives with gladness (vv. 15–17).

Then some Jews from PA and Iconium arrived at Lystra and won over the Lystrans. The result was that the people stoned Paul and left him for dead outside the city. Paul, however, revived and the Christians brought him back into the town (vv. 19–20b).¹⁵ On the morning of the next day, he and Barnabas left for Derbe, where they continued to preach the gospel and make disciples for Christ (vv. 19–21a).

The two missionaries returned the way they had come and revisited Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the new converts, encouraging them to remain in the faith and warning them that it would be through tribulations that we enter the Kingdom of God. In all the churches which they had established, they appointed elders and committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed (vv. 21b–23).

They continued southwards through Pisidia to the coast and embarked at Attalia on board ship for Antioch, from where the church had committed them to the grace of God “for the work which they had fulfilled” (this phrase picks up the words of the Spirit about “the work to which I have called them” at 13.2).¹⁶ There they reported to the church on all that God had done through them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (vv. 24–28).

THE PLACE OF PAUL'S SPEECH WITHIN THE JOURNEY ACCOUNT

Within this first missionary journey, Paul's speech at Pisidian Antioch occupies a key place.¹⁷ It is true that Luke does record some words of Paul to the (pagan) people of Lystra (14.15–17), but this is hardly a full-scale address¹⁸

15. Bechard, *Paul*, 141, 165, maintains that the episode at Lystra constitutes the dramatic climax of the journey. While there is some truth in this, it should not be maintained at the expense of the importance of Paul's PA speech.

16. In grammatical parlance, there is an *inclusio* here (Note also that at the end of PA speech there is a reference to the “work” which God is doing, 13.41); cf. Maloney, *God*, 118, 127, 129; cf. Flichy, *Figure*, 174. Compare too how Luke says at 13.5 that the two missionaries proclaimed “the word of God” in the synagogues of Cyprus and at 14.25 that Paul and Barnabas spoke “the word” in Perga on the return journey to the coast before embarking for Syrian Antioch.

17. Compare Wilckens, *Missionsreden*, 70; Buss, *Missionspredigt*, 17; Tyson, *Death*, 39; Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 149–50. Korn, *Geschichte Jesu*, 150, describes it as the center (Schwerpunkt) of the activity of Paul with Barnabas in PA.

18. We may agree with Jervell, *Apg.*, 377–79, that this is not “a missionary sermon.”

and, indeed, could be said to be a “curtain-raiser” or preliminary sketch for Paul’s speech at Athens (17.22–31). The speech at PA really dominates: it is the centerpiece of this section of Acts.¹⁹ Quantitatively, out of 80 verses in these two chapters, the speech occupies 26 verses, which is virtually a third of the material. In this important turning point in the Christian mission, Luke has chosen to give Paul a major speech.

Although Luke has previously reported how Paul engaged in preaching (Acts 9.20–22, 28–29; 11, 26), he has only given the barest summary of the theme of Paul’s preaching, so that this is the first occasion we experience a speech “in full” from him.²⁰ Thus, Luke gives us a speech from the character who is from now on to be the dominant figure in Acts 13–28. As we have already seen, Barnabas is of secondary importance compared with Paul in chapters 13–14. Throughout these chapters Paul is the leading figure of the two (one could say that just as Peter in the early chapters of Acts is accompanied by John, so here Paul is accompanied by Barnabas).

The speech is one delivered in a synagogue and addressed to Jews plus those who fear God (vv. 16, 26). After the conclusion of the address, as Paul and Barnabas were leaving the building, Luke tells us that many Jews and God-fearing proselytes attached themselves to the missionaries (v. 43). On first impression, then, Luke seems to have in mind an audience of Jews and full converts rather than Jews and those Gentiles attracted by Jewish monotheism and ethical teaching, without having taken the step of converting fully to Judaism.²¹ Nonetheless, Gentiles are attracted to hear “the word of God” on the following sabbath (13.44).

One could say that Paul is shown to be a loyal, not a renegade, Jew. He goes to the synagogue and he addresses the congregation and shows himself to be one capable of handling the sacred scriptures. He is mindful of the election of Israel (13.17) and of Israel’s prior claim to receive good news from God (vv. 32–33a, 46). He can describe his ministry in terms of the commission to the Servant of Yahweh (in Isaiah 49.6) at v. 47.

While the flow of the sermon seems to involve Israel, for God has now fulfilled the promise which He originally made to the fathers and renewed to David, yet in the closing section of the speech there is the seed of the universal implication of the good news: “By this man *everyone* who believes will be justified.” This comes out unambiguously on the following sabbath

19. We may, therefore, query the claim made by some scholars that the episode at Lystra represents the climax of the first missionary journey—see Bechard, *Paul*, 141, 165 n. 15 and Flichy, *Figure*, 224 (both quote Beutler, *Heidenmission*, 360–83 as also making this point).

20. Zwang, *Paul*, 122–23, 151 153, 188, 194, stresses this point frequently.

21. See chapter 4 below for a discussion of this question.

when, in the face of Jewish opposition, Paul declares the intention of Barnabas and himself to turn to the Gentiles. The positive reason for this is the fact that Gentiles are included in God's age-old plan as recorded in the OT. "Light" and "Salvation" are, in God's purposes, meant for the Gentiles, even at earth's farthest bounds (Isa. 49.6, quoted at v. 47). Thus, while Jesus is the fulfillment and climax of God's dealings with Israel, he is also the destined Saviour of the Gentile world as well. Nevertheless, there is truth in the observation made by Odile Flichy that the actual sermon at PA does not give such a central place to the point stressed in Luke's summary of the report made by Paul and Barnabas to the church at Antioch, viz. that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (14.27).²²

The implications of this will be considered later in our study.

Although the speech stresses that God has fulfilled His promise to His people, we come up against the problem of Jewish rejection of this claimed fulfillment. There is, first, the warning issued at the end of the speech, via the quotation from Hab. 1.5, not to despise the work which God is doing. This is followed by the opposition of many Jews and their rejection of the message. Then, the declaration of turning to the Gentiles is the first of three declarations to the same effect (the others are at 18.6 and 28.28). This may be said to be like the first occurrence of a musical theme which recurs in a symphony with ever-increasing insistence. It feeds into the readers' awareness both that the Christian message is not finding favourable response with the Jewish people and that this message must be proclaimed to all and sundry, for that has been the divine intention all along. As Tannehill has stressed, "we are not allowed to forget Jewish rejection. . . Acts does not mitigate the problem and reduce the tension by weakening the witness to God's saving purpose and the scriptural promise to the Jewish people."²³

THE RELATION OF THE SPEECH TO WHAT HAS PRECEDED IN CHAPTERS 1-12

Luke has, of course, introduced us to the figure of Paul before chapter 13. We have learned how he agreed with putting Stephen to death (8.1); how he wreaked havoc on the Christian community in Jerusalem by hauling off

22. Flichy, *Figure*, 175-76. In accordance with her narrative critical approach, she suggests that this constitutes what she calls the "program" in advance of what Luke proposes to narrate concerning the activity of Paul still to come. Some events in chapters 13-14 (the conversion of Sergius Paulus and the speech to the pagan crowd at Lystra) have a significant proleptic dimension.

23. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:174-75.

members to prison (8.3); and how he was authorized by the High Priest to proceed against Christians at Damascus (9.1–2); and how, while on the way to Damascus, he was “stopped in his tracks” when the risen Jesus confronted him. Temporarily blinded by the vision, Paul was led to Damascus where a devout Jewish Christian, Ananias, came to him, on the orders of the risen Jesus. Paul received his sight and was baptized (9.3–9, 17–19).

In the way that Luke tells the story, we, the readers, learn of Paul’s future role via the risen Jesus’ conversation with Ananias. When the latter demurs at going to meet one with such a bad reputation as a persecutor of Christians, he is overruled and told to go, for Paul “is a chosen vessel for me, to take my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. For I will show him what he must suffer for my name” (9.15–17). Having been baptized at Ananias’ command, Paul immediately engaged in preaching that Jesus was the messiah, the Son of God, in the synagogues of Damascus to the amazement of those who heard him (9.20–22).

The risen Lord’s prediction of suffering soon started to be fulfilled, as the Jews of Damascus plotted to kill Paul and, indeed, they kept watch at the city gates to prevent his escaping. However, the Christians lowered him down the walls in a basket, and Paul got away and returned to Jerusalem (9.23–25). There, the Christians were suspicious of him, but one Barnabas took Paul “under his wing” and acted as a kind of guarantor for Paul and brought him to the apostles and vouched for him (9.26–27). Paul took up preaching among the Greek-speaking Jews—just as Stephen before him had done—but also, like Stephen, aroused murderous designs among them, which resulted in the Jerusalem Christians sending him out of the city and away to Tarsus (9.28–30).

It is from Tarsus that later on Barnabas persuaded Paul to join him in a ministry to strengthen the comparatively recently formed congregation at Antioch. Barnabas and Paul taught for a whole year in the church (11.25–26). Indeed, the church sent relief to the Jerusalem Christians, adversely affected by famine, by Barnabas and Paul, an evident sign of the respect and honor in which they were held, plus, of course, the fact that Barnabas had originally come to Antioch at the instigation of the Jerusalem Christians (11.27–20; 12.25).

In spite of all this, chapters 13–14 are our first proper, extended look at Paul. We have had summary type statements of his activity as a Christian preacher in Damascus, Jerusalem and Antioch. Now we see him in action. Luke gives us an extended glimpse of him, and the sermon at PA is a sample of his preaching to Jews. We were told through the risen Jesus’ words to Ananias that Paul would bear the name of Jesus before Gentiles, kings and the sons of Israelites. At PA, Paul addressed the “sons of Israel” and Gentiles

(13.16, 44), while Paul also had spoken earlier before Sergius Paulus, who, even though not a king, was a very high ranking Roman official and a member of the highest order of Roman society.

The way in which Paul and Barnabas faced opposition, not only at PA (13.45, 50), but also at Iconium (14.2, 5) and Lystra (14.19), picks up the theme of Paul's suffering for the sake of Jesus mentioned in Jesus' conversation with Ananias (9.16).

Many have rightly pointed out that each of Luke's main characters in his double volume commence their ministry with an important inaugural sermon—Jesus in the Nazareth sermon (Lk.4.18–21); Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2.14–38); and Paul at PA.²⁴ Paul's speech at PA has links with both of the others.

Here we will look at the links with Peter's speech in Acts 2.²⁵ Both speeches assume the Davidic descent of Jesus (2.30 and 13.23); emphasise the responsibility of the Jerusalemites for the death of Jesus (2.23,²⁶ 36 and 13.27–29); operate with a contrast scheme of what men did in putting Jesus to death and how God reversed that in raising Jesus from the dead (2.23–24, 36 and 13.28–30); make liberal use of the OT with both using Psa. 16 as a proof text for the resurrection of Jesus, with Peter's speech giving a fuller discussion (2.25–32 and 13.34–37); mention the theme of witnesses to the resurrection (2.32 and 13.31); refer to Jesus' exaltation (2.33–35 and 13.33–34), though the Christological titles they use are different; and end in varying ways with the same offer of forgiveness (2.38 and 13.38). There are differences too, an obvious one being that Peter's speech mentions the Spirit (2.14–21, 33), whereas Paul's speech does not. Paul's speech, on the other hand, has a brief, selective résumé of Israel's history, which does not figure in Peter's speech. Nevertheless, despite these differences, when it comes to fundamentals, Luke's picture is that these two leading figures of the early church were in agreement. There was a basic similarity of message.²⁷

24. "Commence" would not be strictly accurate, since Paul had been preaching earlier. Yet in a sense, from a Lucan perspective, the journey of Acts 13–14 is the beginning of Paul's ministry as a missionary sent out. See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:160–61.

25. For the latest handling of this theme, see the extremely thorough treatment of Clark, *Parallel Lives*, esp. 230–60.

26. Here, we need not discuss whether the phrase "at the hand of lawless men" refers to the Romans or the Jewish leaders.

27. Paul himself strongly maintained that there was a fundamental unity of message between him and those who were apostles before him—see 1 Cor. 15.11. In Gal. 2.6, he vehemently maintained that the Jerusalem triumvirate of James, Peter, and John "added nothing to my gospel" and, indeed, his argument in 2.1–10 assumes that there was a core agreement on "the gospel." At Antioch, he rebuked Peter for not acting in

We may also mention two further links with material in chapters 1–12. The reference to the risen Jesus’ appearing over a period of many days to those who had come up to Jerusalem with him from Galilee (13.31) recalls to the reader the earlier mention at 1.3 that the risen Jesus had shown himself to be alive by many proofs over a period of forty days. Likewise, the phrase “to the ends of the earth” in the Isa. 49.6 quotation at 13.47 would remind the reader of the similar phrase, likewise dependent on Isaiah 49.6, in the risen Lord’s commission to be his witnesses at 1.8. We have, therefore, two reminders of the “prologue” of Acts in chapter 13.

THE RELATION OF THE SPEECH TO WHAT FOLLOWS IN CHAPTERS 15–20

Luke has Paul and Barnabas telling the church at Antioch on their return “how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (14.27). The activity of Paul and Barnabas had raised this issue, as the sequel to the PA speech makes clear (vv. 44–49). Later, in Lystra, the two men speak directly to non-Jews who worshipped pagan gods, whatever contact they may or may not have had with Judaism previously (14.15–17).

The whole issue of the relation of non-Jews to the Christian faith surfaced immediately in Luke’s next block of material, commonly referred to as the “Jerusalem Council.” Some Jewish Christians from Judea arrived in Antioch and taught members of the church that unless they were circumcised in accordance with the law of Moses, they could not be saved, provoking thereby a good deal of discussion and dispute with Paul and Barnabas. Eventually, the Antioch church decided to send Paul and Barnabas and others to Jerusalem to discuss the matter (15.1–2). At Jerusalem, some Pharisaically-inclined believers asserted the same viewpoint—that converts must be circumcised and told to keep the Law of Moses (15.5). Presumably, those mentioned in 15.1 and 5 were members of an ultra-conservative wing of the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem and Judea. The issue, then, is one of salvation: can Gentiles be saved by faith (as Paul claimed at 13.39) or do they have to become Jews in order to become members of the people of God?²⁸

accordance with the truth of the gospel, and, again, the assumption of his argument is that Peter accepted that both Jews and Gentiles alike were justified on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 2.11–16).

28. In this section, on the level of narrative criticism, we are not required to discuss the historical questions surrounding the Jerusalem Council and whether, e.g., there was (as Jervell believed, *Unknown Paul*, 23, 26–38) a resurgence of Jewish Christian militancy as a reaction to the success of the Antioch mission and whether the conservatively

In the discussion at the meeting between the apostles, elders and members of the church at Jerusalem and the Antiochene delegation, Peter emphatically supported the position of Paul and Barnabas. Peter refers to how God had chosen him to bring the word of the gospel to the Gentiles—a reference to the Cornelius episode recorded in Acts 10.1–11.18. On that occasion, God had made no difference between Jews and Gentiles: He had given the latter the Holy Spirit, just as He had to the former on the day of Pentecost, and had cleansed their hearts by faith (15.7–9). We may note two points in what Peter subsequently is recorded as saying, where there is agreement with the position taken by Paul in the PA speech. Peter says to impose the Law on Gentile converts would be equivalent to putting God to the test and placing on Gentile converts a yoke which neither Jews in the past nor present had been able to bear (v. 10). In his PA speech, Paul had said that only through Jesus could one be justified before God from the things from which one could not be justified by the Law of Moses (13.38). The wording may be different, but there is agreement in essence. Then Peter says “But we believe that we [Jews] shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in a way similar to them [the Gentiles]” (15.11). Paul had said through Jesus everyone who believes will be justified (13.39). Thus, in respect to Law and Salvation, the stance taken by Paul is that also taken by Peter at the Jerusalem Council.

We note that the *σωθῆναι* of Peter's final words (15.11) picks up the *σωθῆναι* of 15.1 and enunciates a different approach to that put forward there; grace from the Lord Jesus and faith from human beings are the twin poles of salvation.

Luke does not report what Paul and Barnabas said, since he has already narrated the signs and wonders which God had done through them among the Gentiles, in chapters 13–14 (though Luke is not *per se* averse to repetition as 10.1–48 and 11.1–18; and 9.1–19, 22.1–21 and 26.2–23 clearly show).

James then took up the discussion and supported Peter's position by quoting Amos 9.11–12.²⁹ James asserted that God had planned the admission of the Gentiles to His people all along. There are two stages in this process. Firstly, the “fallen tent of David” would be restored. Probably there is both a personal and a corporate dimension to this idea. The everlasting rule promised to the Davidic house will be restored through the resurrection

inclined members at Jerusalem saw the conversion of someone like Cornelius as an exception, a “one-off” incident, without establishing a precedent or principle.

29. While the quotation in Acts 15.16 differs from the MT and the LXX of Amos 9.11, at 15.17 it is much closer to the LXX of Amos 9.12. See the careful discussion of Sabine Nägele, *Laubhütte Davids*, 81–107, esp. 81–89.

of Jesus and his consequent entry into lordship at God's right hand. But the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, the descendant of David, have corporate implications—the renewal of the people of God. This takes place through the outpouring of the Spirit of God. This renewal of the people of God through the Spirit of God is the necessary preliminary step towards the incorporation of Gentiles into the people of God.³⁰ This is, secondly, precisely what the scriptural quotation says: the rest of humanity will seek God, i.e., Gentiles on whom His name has been called.³¹ Calling a name over someone is a biblical idiom indicating ownership.³² The perfect tense of the verb indicates a past action with continuing consequences, whether God's calling His name over them took place in creation or in the saving ministry of His Son, Jesus Christ. The idea of God's name being called over the non-Jewish world picks up James' opening remark that God recently acted through Peter to take a people from among the Gentiles for His name (v. 14). So, the recent experience of God's action through His Spirit in the Cornelius story and the testimony of Scripture cohere to indicate what God's will was in relation to Gentiles and to show that this purpose was known from of old.

Since James said that the prophetic scriptures agreed with what Peter had reminded them about God's action to secure a people for Himself from the Gentiles, then the way in which “the rest of humanity” seeks God can only be on the basis of the grace of the Lord Jesus and the exercise of faith.

Thus, whatever may be the purpose of the abstention from certain things proscribed by Mosaic Law, in *Luke's narrative* they cannot affect the point that to be saved rests on the grace of the Lord Jesus and faith from human beings. In other words, the decision of the Council vindicates the mission of the Antioch church led by Paul and Barnabas. Thus, we might say that the outcome of the Jerusalem Conference on the issue of how we receive salvation had already been adumbrated in the PA speech. We may set out the links as follows. Paul and Barnabas recount “how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (14.27); Peter declares that we believe that we shall be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus in a similar way to them (15.11). James said that “With this the words of the prophets agree. . . so that the rest of humanity might seek [i.e., by faith] the Lord.”

The letter sent by the Jerusalem church confirms this approach, because it begins with a total repudiation of those from within their own ranks

30. For a fuller discussion of this passage and the meaning of “David's fallen tent,” see 170–75.

31. This assumes that ἐπικέκληται is a perfect indicative passive.

32. The REB sacrifices the Biblical idiom and freely renders “whom I have claimed for my own.”

who had unsettled the Antioch church members and denies that they had received any authorisation to do so (15.24). One could not ask for the matter to be put more clearly. Whatever the intention behind the request to abstain from certain things listed in 15.29, this does not appertain to salvation.

The reception of the letter and its bearers further confirms our argument. "When they had read (it), they rejoiced at its encouragement" (15.31). The verb "rejoiced" (ἐχάρησαν) is the same verb which Luke used to describe the reaction of the Gentiles when Paul and Barnabas said that they were turning to the Gentiles and quoted the words addressed to the Servant of the Lord "I have appointed you to be a light to the nations, that you may be (the means of bringing) salvation to the ends of the earth" (13.46–48). The encouragement received from the letter is the encouragement that salvation rests on the grace of the Lord Jesus to be received by faith, and not on being circumcised and keeping the Law.

The immediate sequel to the PA speech showed that Paul and Barnabas' pronouncement that the Jews had proved themselves unworthy of eternal life and that they would turn to the Gentiles, was not absolute. At the very next town, Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue (14.1).³³ This pattern continues in Paul's second missionary journey: at Philippi (16.13), where Paul and his companions search for a place of prayer (i.e., Jewish) on the sabbath; Thessalonica (17.1–2, where Luke writes "according to his custom"); Berea (17.10); Athens (17.17); Corinth (18.4; where Paul also made the solemn asseveration "From now on I will go to the Gentiles" 18.6); Ephesus (18.19). It continues to be the case for the third missionary journey: Ephesus (19.8); Greece—?Corinth (20.2–3—if the Jews plotted against him, this suggests that he was trying to convert them to belief in Jesus as messiah). We note also that in his speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus Paul said that he had declared the need to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus, to both Jews and Greeks (20.21). In other words, Luke wants the reader to understand that Paul did not give up his attempts to bring Jews to faith in Jesus, wherever he went.

The inference is clear: neither 13.46 nor 18.6 is meant in an absolute and final manner. Paul continues to have a concern for his own people. He still has a mission to them in accordance with his commission from the risen Jesus (9.15).

Although the title "the Christ/Messiah" does not figure in the PA speech, nonetheless Jesus is described as a descendant of David; he is part of

33. The point is reinforced if the phrase κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ means "as usual"—so Barrett, *Acts* 1:667; NIV (BAG, 123, 408, however, takes it as "together," "in the same place"). It is difficult to see why Wilckens, *Missionsreden*, 71, has said that this is the last call to repentance addressed to the Jews.

the story of Israel and the fulfillment of the promise made to the fathers; and it is to him and his resurrection that the OT refers. The PA speech can give the background, therefore, against which Luke's bare remarks about Paul's preaching to Jews can be seen. At Thessalonica, Paul spent three sabbaths in the synagogue reasoning with the people from the Scriptures and seeking to prove that the messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead and that Jesus whom Paul was preaching was the messiah (17.2–3). The Berean Jews were of a more noble character and they listened eagerly to what Paul said and they "examined the scriptures daily to see if Paul's message was true" (17.11). At Corinth, Paul testified to the Jews that Jesus was the messiah (18.5). Alleging that Jesus was the messiah is a summary type statement of the kind of preaching Paul gave as exemplified in the PA speech.

We saw that the result of Paul's PA speech and the subsequent sabbath session was a mixed one. That repeated itself in so many places which Paul visited subsequently on his second and third journeys. There was often fierce opposition, frequently from the Jews, sometimes necessitating a speedy departure. Some Jews did believe in spite of this opposition from their own people. Gentiles, very often from the group of non-Jews who were loosely attached to the synagogue, believed. Dupont has commented that what happened at PA sets a pattern for the future: in a sense, the mission at PA is "a sort of prototype of the Pauline mission."³⁴

As we come to the close of this sub-section, it is worth pointing to a fact which is, from the point of view of Luke's narrative, an interesting feature. If we take chapters 13–20 as a whole, i.e., the section of Acts which covers the missionary career of Paul as a free man, we observe that Luke has allocated (so to speak) three major speeches to Paul,³⁵ of which the first is the PA speech, addressed to members of the synagogue there, primarily to Jews, but also including some proselytes. The second major speech of Paul is that delivered before a wholly Gentile audience at Athens (17.22–31), a speech which many see as epitomising the encounter of Christianity and Greek philosophy, the Gospel and Greek culture.³⁶ The third major speech given to Paul is that delivered to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, i.e., a speech

34. Dupont, *Nouvelles Études*, 344. See also Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 137–41 (cf. 167, 215), for a summary of the pattern discernible in Luke's descriptions of Paul's ministry to Jews in the Diaspora and see 89–90 for Deutschmann's assertion that 13.42–52 has an "ideal" or "typical" character—it is typical of Paul's mission experience in the Diaspora.

35. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 408.

36. E.g., Dibelius, *Studies*, 79–83. See Jervell, *Apg.*, 445, 451, 452–53, for his view that this speech is not a missionary sermon, but a speech addressed to philosophers and expressing judgment on paganism.

addressed to Christians, specifically the leaders of a major Pauline congregation and giving through them a pastoral “last will and testament” to a church founded by him.

Thus, in Paul's time as a Christian missionary in Acts 13–20, we have sermons to Jews (primarily), Gentiles and Christians. From the point of view of our study, Luke has in effect given his readers a sample of Paul's preaching to a primarily Jewish audience in the PA speech. We do not subsequently in Acts get a detailed account of the actual content of Paul's preaching on his many visits to the synagogue during the remainder of his mission. This further underlines the importance of the PA speech in the structure of Acts.³⁷

THE RELATION OF THE PA SPEECH TO THE WHOLE BOOK

To a large extent, this theme has already been touched on in the previous subsections, and we shall seek to avoid duplication. It is a perennial danger to read Acts in the light of what Paul says about himself and not to let Acts speak for itself. Thus, Paul claims to have been called to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Gal. 1.16; Rom. 1.5; 11.13), though he also was deeply concerned for his own people as Romans 10.1 amply testifies, and, indeed, he did say in Romans 11.13–14 that he saw his ministry to the Gentiles as designed to provoke his own people to jealousy (at Gentiles' receiving salvation) and so save some of them, and he affirmed that in the end God's mercy would triumph and all Israel would be saved (Rom. 11.26). Furthermore, he enunciated his famous principle of “accommodation” in 1 Cor. 9.19–23, which included becoming like a Jew to win Jews. Despite these important statements, we tend naturally to think of Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Luke's picture of Paul on this issue could be said to be more nuanced than this “popular” view of Paul. We have already mentioned Acts 9.15 where those to whom Paul is sent to take the name of Jesus include “the sons of Israel” in addition to “Gentiles and kings.” Alongside this passage we must now consider others.

In the second account of his call in Acts 22, we read that Ananias conveyed the risen Jesus' message to Paul: “You will be his witness to all people concerning what you have seen and heard.” Later, after returning to Jerusalem, Paul had had a vision from the risen Jesus within the holy precincts of the temple. He received an order from Jesus: “Go: I will send you far away to

37. Von Bendemann, “Paulus und Israel,” 296, goes so far as to describe the PA speech as a “lexicon” (*Lexikon*), containing the developed Christological witness (Zeugnis) of the witness (Zeugen) to the Diaspora Synagogue.

the Gentiles,” at which point the crowd interrupted him and prevented his continuing (22.21). From a literary point of view, the speech is interrupted at a vitally significant point. So, there is no doubt that Luke here wishes to stress that Paul’s commission definitely includes going to the Gentiles.

The emphasis in the defense speeches of Paul during the various trial scenes (Acts 23–26) is, however, very much on Paul’s Jewishness and his faithfulness to the basic tenets of Israel’s faith, specifically, the hope of resurrection from the dead (e.g., 23.6). Paul claims that he “believes all that has been written in the Law and the prophets, having hope in God . . . that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous” (24.14–15). Before the governor Festus he protests “I have done nothing wrong against either the Law or the temple or against the Emperor” (25.8). Then, in a session before both Festus and the Jewish king, Herod Agrippa II, Paul emphasises his strict Jewish upbringing and that he is on trial for the hope contained in the promise made by God to their ancestors (“our fathers”). As he goes on to narrate the story of his call to be a servant of and witness to the risen Lord, received on the road to Damascus [the third occasion that the readers/hearers have heard this], he reports the promise that the Lord Jesus will rescue him from his own people and the Gentiles—a promise which assumes a ministry to both (26.16–17). In obedience to that call, Paul has preached to those in Jerusalem and Judea and to the Gentiles (26.20). Paul also goes on to say that the scriptures foretold that the messiah should suffer, be the first to rise from the dead and proclaim light to the people and to the Gentiles (26.22–23). The risen Jesus will do this proclaiming through his servants like Paul (e.g., 22.2–5, 12–14, 17–18). The light motif picks up this same theme from the final scene at PA, where Paul and Barnabas say that their preaching to the Gentiles corresponds to the command of the Lord in scripture “I have appointed you to be a light to the Gentiles” (13. 47). At PA, the allusion is to Isa. 49.6, while at 26.17–18 the combination of phrases suggests Isa. 42.6–7, 16; nevertheless, this light theme links the PA speech and that before Festus and Herod Agrippa II.³⁸

All this fits in with the picture which the PA speech of Paul conveys of a man committed to the Scriptures and the promise contained therein which God made to the fathers and which He has fulfilled through a descendant of David, who was himself a man after God’s heart and the recipient of a renewal of the promise made to the fathers, and in this respect a kind of prototype of his descendant to come, namely Jesus, the Saviour of Israel and the source of forgiveness and life to all who believe.

38. Cf. Marguerat, “Saul’s Conversion,” 152.

But if Paul does have a ministry to his own people as well as to Gentiles, what success does he have among them? It is clear that Paul's message has a mixed reception and divides the Jewish communities to which he goes. At the end of the PA preaching, the situation is that while some Jews have responded (v. 43), many have rejected the message, and not only rejected but have actively spoken against what Paul said. Luke uses the verb ἀντιλέγειν at 13.45. This reminds us of what Simeon had said about Jesus—that he was a sign which would be spoken against (σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον, Lk. 2.34), and anticipates what Luke has Paul saying twice at the very end of the Book of Acts: firstly, Paul said that it was when the Jews of Jerusalem spoke against him (ἀντιλεγόμενων δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων) that he was compelled to appeal to Caesar at Rome (Acts 28.19), and, secondly, the leaders of the Roman Jews reported that all that they knew about Christians was that everywhere people spoke against the movement ([ἡ αἰρέσις] πανταχοῦ ἀντιλέγεται, 28.22).³⁹

The issue of a picture of Paul who carries on a ministry to Jews as well as to Gentiles brings us now to the disputed issue of the main episode at the end of Acts. When Paul eventually arrived at Rome, Luke's account makes no mention of Paul's contact and dealings with Christians (apart from their meeting him at the Appian Forum and the Three Taverns—28.15), but has Paul inviting the leaders of the Jewish community to his hired lodgings to explain why he has arrived in Rome as a prisoner. They agreed to meet him again to consider his message at depth, and, on that occasion, for the whole day, Paul carried on discussions with them, based on the Law and the prophets, about the kingdom of God and the things concerning Jesus (28.17–28). The Jewish leaders in Rome were divided by what Paul had maintained. Some were persuaded; others did not believe. Then, Paul quoted Isa. 6.9–10⁴⁰ to them and concluded: “Let it be known to you, therefore, that

39. Luke uses the verb ἀντιλέγειν 5 times (out of 9 occurrences in the NT). The other occurrence is at Luke 20.27, where he reports that the Sadducees spoke against the idea of the resurrection of the dead.

40. Isaiah 6.9–10 seems to have been an early Christian *testimonium* to explain Jewish refusal of the message both of Jesus himself and their own proclamation of him as messiah, and to justify taking the Christian gospel to the Gentiles. See e.g., Lindars, *NT Apologetic*, 159–67; Gnllka, *Verstockung Israels*.

this salvation⁴¹ of God has been sent to the Gentiles. They—yes they⁴²—will listen” (28.25b–27, 28).

Is this third and last pronouncement definitive? Coming so close to the end of the entire book,⁴³ it might well seem to have an ominous note, as if “the end of the road” had been reached. Has Luke deliberately ended Acts with this assertion as an indication that he has written off the Jewish people? Have they for Luke forfeited their role as the elect people? Is the church now for Luke a Gentile church? Is Rome now the center and no longer Jerusalem? It is understandable if some scholars have assumed an affirmative answer to these questions. These concluding verses seem to sound a dark and sombre note.

Yet the following points need to be borne in mind. In the first place, not all the Jews in Rome refused to believe—some were convinced. It is entirely possible to take the clause καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπειθόντο τοῖς λεγομένοις in a positive sense (v. 24).⁴⁴ The opposite reaction (οἱ δὲ ἠπίστευσουν) is “not believing.”⁴⁵ Secondly, according to 28.30, Paul under house arrest received all who came to him. It is difficult to exclude all Jews from this “all.”⁴⁶

41. Note the rare neuter form, σωτήριον, which also occurs strategically at Luke 2.32; 3.6 (this occurs elsewhere in the NT only at Eph. 6.17) and then at the very end of his two volume work. See Dupont, *Études*, 398–401, for a discussion of the way Luke has balanced the beginning of his gospel and the end of Acts through the use of this rare form, σωτήριον. (See further 58 n. 75, 93–94, 189–92).

42. How should v. 28b be translated? The JB, GN, REB, and NRSV simply ignore the καὶ. The NIV is probably in the wrong with “and they will listen,” because καὶ comes second, not first. The translation offered attempts to get the nuance of the καὶ which strengthens the pronoun αὐτοὶ (Cf. J. B. Phillips: “and they at least will listen to it!”). Delebecque, *Actes*, 140, quoted by Barrett, *Acts* 2:1247, translated “Eux, oui, ils écouteront.” On the other hand, Schröter, “Heil” 300, argues for taking the καὶ with the verb, not the pronoun.

43. Wasserberg, *Israel's Mitte*, 102, stresses this point to counter what he calls the optimism of Tannehill's interpretation of this closing scene of Acts (Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:350).

44. So Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1244; Witherington, *Acts*, 801; Franklin, *Christ*, 114; Wainwright, *Restoration*, 76; Koet, *Five Studies*, 127, 133; Evans, *Scripture*, 208; Evans, “Luke's View,” 37; Mutzner, “Erzählintention,” 37; Merkel, “Israel,” 396; Rapske, *Paul*, 362–63; Ravens, *Restoration*, 238–39 (who shows that Luke's use of πείθειν “can, on occasions, have the sense of conversion and a corresponding change of belief” (he gives as examples Lk. 16.31; 20.6; Acts 5.36–37; 17.4; 18.4; 19.26; to which could be added Acts 19.8; 26.28; and also 14. 2 in a negative sense); Prieur, *Verkündigung*, 65; Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 194–95, 229; Sellner, *Heil Gottes*, 372. On the other hand, many stress that Luke does not actually say that they believed—Haenchen, *Acts*, 723; Marshall, *Acts*, 424; Schneider, *Apg.*, 2.417; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 795.

45. Raven, *Restoration*, 239; Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 195.

46. In agreement with Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1252; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 797; Witherington, *Acts*, 803; Dupont, *Nouvelles Études*, 479–82; Brawley, *Luke-Acts*, 77; Koet, *Five Studies*,

Thirdly, would Luke have gone out of his way to stress Paul's commitment to his ancestral faith and the hope of Israel in chapters 22–26 (just reviewed), only then to have him go back on this simply because some of the Roman Jews had not believed?⁴⁷ Fourthly, would Luke have included such massive promises in Luke 1–2, only to write them off at the end of Acts?⁴⁸ Tannehill's contention that Luke does not minimise the tension between God's promises to Israel and Israel's failure to respond is surely correct.⁴⁹ Fifthly, we should bear in mind that the idea of a Gentile mission had already been legitimized by the risen Jesus with reference to God's plan revealed in Scripture (Luke 24.46–47; Acts 1.8); confirmed to both Paul (Acts 9.15) and Peter (Acts 10.1–11.18); and accepted by the Jerusalem Council on the advice of James and his exposition of Scripture (15. 13–21).⁵⁰ Paul is not enunciating something new at the end of the story recorded in Acts. Sixthly, we may note that Barrett believed that the ending of Acts reflects not so much whether the Jews have a continuing place in the purposes of God, as Luke's "triumphalism of the word:" even if the Jews as a whole reject the word, others will take it up.⁵¹ Seventhly, Dunn maintains that just as in its original context the hardening statement was part of Isaiah's commission and was in no way intended to mean that he should not preach to his fellow countrymen and women, so it may be assumed that neither did Luke think that the quoted verses from Isaiah meant that Paul should no longer preach to the Jews.⁵²

137; Evans, *Luke*, 209; Ravens, *Restoration*, 241–42, 246; Prieur, *Verkündigung*, 71, 74; Wolter, *Israel's Future*, 319; Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 237, who quotes Weiser, *Apg.* 2.377, "Luke means . . . predominantly Gentiles, but does not exclude Jews."

47. Cf. Franklin, *Christ*, 114–15.

48. Cf. the comment of Farris, *Hymns*, 159, that it is more reasonable to suppose that Luke placed the "hymns" [Magnificat, Benedictus and Nunc Dimittis] of Luke 1–2 at the head of a book which sees an Israel repentant and restored, at least partially, rather than an Israel rejecting the gospel and therefore rejected by its God. He believes that these hymns are like an overture which sets out motifs which recur in the body of compositions and he singles out the themes of promise and fulfillment and the restoration of Israel (151) and he believes that there is no reason to suppose that Luke had given up all hope for unrepentant Israel or that Acts 28 represents the end of a mission to Israel (199 n. 39). Mittmann-Richet, *Sühnetod*, 275, maintains that the initial picture in the Gospel of Israel welcoming its Messiah with open arms points to the End.

49. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:174–75. See Ravens, *Restoration*, 49, 211, 246, 255, for a strong defense of the view that Luke still held on to a belief in the restoration of Israel.

50. Von Bendemann, "Paulus und Israel," 299–300.

51. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1246. Prieur, *Gottesheerrschaft*, 83, says that in Acts 28.17–31 Luke is not concerned about Paul but his message.

52. Dunn, *Acts*, 355.

Finally, we might mention the view more recently put forward by a number of scholars, that the end of the quotation from Isa. 6.9–10 in Acts 28.26–27 contains a note of hope that despite Israel's hardening God will heal them. The arguments which they put forward may be summarized as follows. The adverb *καλῶς* is not intended in an ironical sense, but indicates that the Holy Spirit has spoken so well that what was said in the past also applies in the present.⁵³ Grammatically, the future *καὶ ἰάομαι αὐτούς* is not equivalent to a subjunctive after *μήποτε* of v. 27d, but a genuinely independent clause.⁵⁴ The LXX has translated the Hebrew in a positive sense—God will heal the Israelites as an act of grace reversing the hardening.⁵⁵ The assumption of a positive sense for *καὶ ἰάομαι αὐτούς* fits in with the other notes of hope for Israel to be found in LA.⁵⁶

Perhaps the safest conclusion is that for Luke the obdurate part, the unrepentant part, of the nation as a whole had forfeited for the time being its special status,⁵⁷ but that individual Jews continued to be welcome if they came to believe in Jesus as messiah and lord.⁵⁸ Those Jews who believed provided the link with the history of salvation in the past and guaranteed the continuity of Israel, the true people of God.⁵⁹

Does Luke go any further than this? Does he still hold on to the hope that the Jewish people might one day welcome their messiah? Or, to put the matter another way, would Luke think that God would somehow fulfill His promises? There are hints, one cannot put it more strongly, that he had not surrendered the hope of such an eventuality. As mentioned, the promises within the birth narrative seem strategically placed. There is the word of

53. Bovon, *Studies*, 118–19.

54. Bovon, *Heilige Geist*, 230; Karrer, *Verstockungsmotiv*, 257–59 (he denies that a change to the future indicative in a series is the rule, rejecting the view of BDF, para. 442).

55. Karrer, *Verstockungsmotiv*, 260–63, 271. In that Karrer stresses that in the LXX God will heal the Jewish people, his position is more forcefully put than Bovon, *Oeuvre*, 150; Steyn, *Quotations*, 228; and Koet, *Five Studies*, 129–30, who think more of the possibility of Israel's repentance.

56. Karrer, *Verstockungsmotiv*, 271. Cf. Buttica, “Has God Rejected,” 163 who cautiously says that these verses in LA are not to be overemphasized but neither underestimated.

57. Cf. Gnillka, *Verstockung*, 154; Talbert, *Martyrdom*, 101. That could be taken as the thrust of the parable of the guests invited to the supper in Luke 14.15–24, esp. v. 24.

58. Cf. Franklin, *Christ*, 114; Brawley, *Jews*, 77; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:357; Korn, *Geschichte Jesu*, 52–54; Prieur, *Verkündigung*, 71; Marguerat, “Saul's Conversion,” 155 n. 72; And “Enigma,” 299; Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 233–51, 260. This seems to be the view also of Bock, *Proclamation*, 219.

59. Cf. Brawley, *Jews*, 151, “The only Church Acts knows still has the umbilical cord attached” to Israel.

Jesus in Luke 13.35—did Luke only apply it to the entry into Jerusalem (as many scholars believe)⁶⁰ or had he the Parousia in mind?⁶¹ And, if the latter, does it imply a positive response⁶² or a “Too late”?⁶³ Does the reference to a limit on the “times of the Gentiles” in Luke 21.24 hold out the implication that God’s mercy might save Jerusalem in the deepest sense of the word?⁶⁴ Did Luke understand the promise of Jesus to the twelve at 22.28–30 only in terms of their leadership of the group of disciples in Jerusalem in the early days after the resurrection and ascension, or did he think of the eschatological completion of the purposes of God which would embrace Jews and Gentiles?⁶⁵

Dogmatism is out of the question. But we may affirm that to say that Luke has written off the Jews is to go too far.⁶⁶ The Christian message is still “the hope of Israel” (Acts 28.20).⁶⁷ It is noteworthy that Luke never transfers the concept of Israel to the church nor does he use some such phrase as “the true Israel” or “the new people of God” of the church.⁶⁸

A second theme to be explored is the relation of Acts to the promises of Luke 1–2. The angel Gabriel promised Mary that her son would be great and would be called Son of the Most High and that he would receive the throne of his ancestor David and would reign over the house of Jacob

60. E.g. Evans, *Luke*, 565.

61. So Grundmann, *Lukas*, 290; Marshall, *Luke*, 577; Nolland, *Luke*, 2:742; Bock, *Proclamation*, 121; Chance, *Jerusalem*, 131–32.

62. Grundmann, *Lukas*, 290; Caird, *Luke* 174 (though taking the reference to God); Marshall, *Luke*, 577 (a live possibility); Nolland, *Luke*, 2:742; Franklin, *Christ*, 130; Bock, *Proclamation*, 121. Ellis, *Luke*, 192, leaves the question open.

63. Manson, *Sayings*, 128; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1036.

64. Borgen, “From Paul to Luke,” 168–82, and Marshall, *Historian*, 187, see Luke close to Paul here.

65. So, e.g., Marshall, *Luke*, 818.

66. In agreement with Dunn, *Acts*, 183, 354–56; Koet, *Five Studies*, 139, 150–53; Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 119, 166–67, 188, 200–201, 203, 209–10, 212–13, 215, 219, 224; Mittmann-Richert, *Sühnetod*, 274–75; Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 271, who comments: “Jewish rejection of the gospel in Luke-Acts should not be interpreted as the grounds for a dismissal of all Jews for all time, but neither should it be trivialized so that no long-term consequences for disbelieving Jews are envisioned.”

67. Franklin, *Christ*, 115. He describes Acts 28.28 as “less a program for the future than a justification of what has happened.” A not dissimilar position is taken by Bendemann, “Paulus und Israel,” 300–302. Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 258, affirms that the hope of conversion of Jews has not been given up by Luke, while Denova, *Things Accomplished*, 175, asserts that the view that Acts 28.25–29 means the ultimate rejection of the Jews as a nation cannot be sustained.

68. This is stressed very strongly by Deutschmann, *Synagoge*, 84, 200–201, 209–10, 212–13, 215, 219, 224.

forever (Luke 1.32–33). He would be holy and the Son of God (v. 35). In the PA speech, Ps. 2.7 is used to reveal that Jesus at his resurrection became Son of God, while the language of Ps. 16 about God's "Holy One" is used of Jesus (admittedly, ὅσιος is used and not ἅγιος as at Luke 1.35). There is the strong hint, therefore, that, having been raised from the dead never to return to corruption, i.e., immortal and eternal, the risen Jesus is now sharing in the life of God.⁶⁹ In other words, the promise to Mary about her son's eternal reign is fulfilled by being transcended. The eternal reign is not on earth, but in heaven: there the Son is with the Father. The promise made by Gabriel to Mary about Jesus is fulfilled in such a way as to eclipse and transform the original promise completely.

The promise to the fathers is a key point in the PA speech (13.32–33; cf. v. 23): it is now fulfilled in Jesus, especially his resurrection. Though "promise" does not occur in Luke 1–2, the idea of God's oath sworn to the fathers does, and this must be taken as a synonym of promise.⁷⁰ In the Benedictus, we hear of the oath which God swore to Abraham that He would deliver Israel from her enemies so that they might worship and serve him in holiness (ἐν ὁσιότητι) and righteousness (1.73–75). The Magnificat paraphrases this idea when it says "as He spoke to our fathers," i.e., to remember to show mercy to Abraham and his seed forever.⁷¹ Promise, oath, speech, whatever the language used, the idea is the same. God made a promise to Abraham and his descendants⁷² and now He has fulfilled that promise in Jesus, especially in his resurrection, since in his risen, immortal state Jesus the Holy One (ὁ ὅσιος) can mediate the reliable, holy things promised to David.

Via the use of the light theme from Isaiah 49.6, there is a link between the oracle of Simeon and the PA episode taken as a whole. Simeon had predicted that the babe in his arms was destined to be a "light for revelation to the Gentiles" (Luke 2.31). The Gentiles need revelation in order to recognise the God of Israel as the God of all the earth and of all nations. Their hearts and minds need to be illuminated: they need the light of the revelation which Jesus will bring. In the sequel to Paul's sermon, on the following sabbath, after the Jews of the synagogue had for the most part rejected "the

69. Peter's speech at Pentecost explicitly said that Jesus was exalted and received from the Father the promised Spirit whom he has poured out on believers, 2.33; cf. 5.31.

70. See also the discussion in Sellner, *Heil Gottes*, 49–50.

71. The syntax of Luke 1.54b–55 is awkward. The καθὼς ἐλάλησεν πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν may be a parenthesis with τῷ Ἀβραάμ καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ the indirect object of remembering mercy of v. 54b.

72. See Gen. 22.16; 26.3; 32.13; Deut. 4.31; 7.8, 12; 8.1, 15, for reference to God's oath to Abraham.

word of salvation," Paul quoted Isa. 49.6 with its mention of "light for the Gentiles."⁷³

Salvation is another theme which links the PA speech with the rest of LA.⁷⁴ From David's descendants, God has brought on the scene Jesus as a Saviour for Israel (13.23). The word of God's salvation has, accordingly, been sent to the present generation (13.26). On the following sabbath, Paul and Barnabas quote Isa. 49.6 to justify their taking the message to Gentiles—the Lord had appointed them to be his instruments in taking salvation (σωτηρίᾱ) to the ends of the earth. In the birth narratives, Simeon had predicted that the babe in his arms was the salvation (σωτήριον) which God had prepared "for all the peoples" (Luke 2.30–31)

Luke sets this theme going in the birth stories when Zachariah praises God because He has raised up for Israel "a horn of salvation" in the house of David (1.68). The angel of the Lord announces to the shepherds the birth of a Saviour (2.11). Peter declared to the Sanhedrin that there is salvation in no one else but Jesus, the rejected but vindicated stone (4.12), and later to the same body proclaimed the risen Jesus as a saviour for Israel (5.31).

It is probably highly significant from a literary artistic standpoint that Luke uses three times the rare neuter form σωτήριον (he usually employs σωτηρίᾱ): twice at the beginning of his work (Luke 2.30 and 3.6) and once at the very end of his work (Acts 28.28).⁷⁵ The aged Simeon declared that in the infant Jesus he had seen the σωτήριον of God, which God has prepared in the presence of all peoples. A little later, Luke (alone among the Synoptics) extends the quotation from Isa. 40 to include the line "And all flesh will see the σωτήριον of God." Finally, at the end of Acts, Paul said to the Jews at Rome: "Be it known to you, therefore, that this σωτήριον of God has been sent to the Gentiles" (28.28). This "inclusio" is hardly accidental, but is a deliberate linkage between the beginning and end of a carefully planned work.⁷⁶

While the verb "to save" is not used in the PA speech, it is used frequently by Luke of the activity or results of Jesus' activity. If we leave on

73. Von Bendemann, "Paulus und Israel," 300, goes so far as to say that with Acts 28.28 (which with the phrase σωτήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ echoes Isa. 49.6 and Luke 2.32) Luke has reactualized the oracle of Simeon, which speaks of the glory of Israel along with the universal promise of God's saving action.

74. For a detailed study of the themes of salvation, to save and saviour in respect of God and Jesus in LA, see Marshall, *Historian*, 77–216. Marshall (93) calls salvation "the central motif of Lucan theology," "this central, guiding motif."

75. Dupont drew attention to this in "Salut," 132–55 (= *Études*, 393–419, esp. 398–401).

76. See the previous note.

one side the phrase “Your faith has saved you” in healing stories (Luke 7.50; 8.48 [cf. 8.50]; 17.19; 18.42; cf. Acts 4.9; 14.9) and the two instances of the verb in the shipwreck story (Acts 27.20,31), there are still some impressively important statements. In the explanation of the Parable of the Sower, Luke rewrites what Mark says about the first group of seeds which fell on the path and were eaten by the birds: “When they have heard (the word of God), then the devil comes and takes the word from their hearts lest they believe and are saved” (8.12). Clearly, Jesus’ word conveys salvation. At the end of the incident involving Jesus’ visit to the house of Zaccheus and the transforming effect on his host, Jesus said “Now salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (19.9–10).

There is an *inclusio* in Peter’s speech on the Day of Pentecost. The quotation from Joel finishes with “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2.21) and at the end of his speaking, Peter calls on the crowd “Save yourselves from this crooked generation” (2.40). Luke rounds off his account with the comment “The Lord added daily to their number those who were being saved” (2.47). To be saved is clearly something of the highest importance for men and women. Even the highest in the land, the members of the Sanhedrin, need to be made aware that only through the name of Jesus can we be saved—there is none other beside him who can save us (4.12).

In defense of his action in baptising Cornelius and others at Caesarea, Peter recounted how the centurion had been told by an angel to send for Peter “who will speak to you words by which you and your whole household will be saved” (11.14). The Philippian jailor cried out to Paul and Silas “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” and was told that he and his household should believe in the Lord Jesus and they would be saved (16.31).

The theme of salvation and its recipients also links the PA episode to the programmatic sentence at the beginning of Acts. The Lord Jesus, on the point of ascending to heaven, said to his disciples: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth” (ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς 1.8). When they reproached the Jews of PA with proving unworthy of eternal life by refusing their message, Paul and Barnabas said that they would turn to the Gentiles, for the Lord had commanded them in this way, and they quoted Isa. 49.6: “I have appointed you to be a light to the nations so that you might be (the bearer of) salvation to the ends of the earth” (ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς 13.46–47).

Now the eleven disciples addressed in Acts 1.8 do not in actual fact fulfill the commission “to the ends of the earth.” For Luke, the discharge

of that part of the commission fell supremely to Paul. Arguably, we see this beginning to happen in earnest in Acts 13–14. In his PA speech, Paul acknowledged the role of the original witnesses (13.31): significantly, though, they are witnesses “to the people,” i.e., of Israel. Later, in Paul’s speech before the infuriated crowd outside the temple, he said that Ananias had said to him in Damascus: “The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and see the Righteous One and hear his voice, because you will be his witness to all people concerning the things which you have seen and heard” (22.14–15). In this way, Paul is linked with the original disciples as a witness to the Lord Jesus.⁷⁷

Forgiveness of sins is another important theme for Luke. The risen Jesus asserts that the Scriptures (Law, Prophets and Psalms) had taught that the messiah should suffer, that he should rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance leading to the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem’ (Luke 24.46–47). In three of his speeches, Peter mentions the gift of forgiveness. He challenges the crowd on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (faith is “collapsed into” the submission to baptism) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2.38). Before the Sanhedrin, Peter maintained that God has exalted Jesus as Leader and Saviour at His right hand, in order to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins (5.31). Peter concluded his address to Cornelius and his household by saying that all the prophets bore witness to Jesus, that everyone who believes in him should receive forgiveness of sins through his name (10.43).

Thus, when Paul announces forgiveness of sins through Jesus (13.38), going on to explain this in the next clause as justification from sins, he is preaching in a manner faithful to scripture, to Jesus and to the Jerusalem disciples led by Peter. In the light of 26.18, we may also say—in a manner faithful to the commission received directly from the risen Lord Jesus who had said to him that he was sending him “to open their [that is, the (Jewish) people and the Gentiles⁷⁸] eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those sanctified by faith in me” (26.18).

77. Cf. Dupont, *Nouvelles Études*, 455–56: Paul “appears as the executor of the mission entrusted to the apostles . . . On Paul falls the task of assuring to the church its universal dimension announced by the prophets.” For a similar viewpoint, see also Jervell, *Apg.*, 283, 288, 595, 639.

78. So Pesch, *Apg.*, 2.278; Roloff, *Apg.*, 353; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 760; and Witherington, *Acts*, 744. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1160, appears to accept a double reference in the οὓς, though concedes that it is possible that the reference is only to the Gentiles. Haenchen, *Acts*, 686; Schneider, *Apg.*, 2.374; and Johnson, *Acts*, 436–37, refer it to the Gentiles.

Previously, we mentioned that Luke had each of his three main characters begin their ministry with an inaugural speech. We turn now to examine some of the links between the speech of Jesus at Nazareth and Paul's PA speech. If Jesus was commissioned to preach the good news in fulfillment of Isa. 61.1, so too Paul with Barnabas preached the good news of God's fulfillment of His promise to the fathers (Acts 13.32). If Jesus believed himself "sent" to preach, so Paul said that the word of salvation had been sent to the people (Acts 13.26) and backs up his sense of being sent with the use of Isa. 49.6 at 13.47. Jesus uses ἄφεσις in respect of captives and downtrodden twice (Luke 4.18—Luke has probably taken these statements in a metaphorical or spiritual sense⁷⁹), while Paul's speech climaxed in the offering of the ἄφεσις of sins (Acts 13.38—forgiveness being a spiritual release). At Nazareth there is a hint that the blessings of Jesus' ministry will go eventually to Gentiles, recourse being made to the stories of the dealings of Elijah and Elisha with foreigners (Luke 4. 25–27). Paul began within the synagogue, but, as a result of the rejection by the Jews at PA, he turned to the Gentiles and backed this up as corresponding to the will of God by reference to Isa. 49.6, having earlier proclaimed that everyone who believes will be justified before God by Jesus.

There is, then, a web of threads which link the PA speech and episode to the rest of Luke's twofold volume. These threads attest the importance and significance of the speech and episode within Luke's overall plan and strategy for his work.

79. In agreement with Rese, "Alttestamentliche Motive," 146, and Korn, *Geschichte Jesu*, 77, who interpret the "oppressed" to be sinners.