

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

THE LITERARY SHAPE AND MISSIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTS:  
AN INVITATION TO BE AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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requirements of Anglia Ruskin University  
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**Peter and Ruth Loescher**  
(1925–2014) and (1919–2012)

“For of such is the kingdom of God”.

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ABSTRACT

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THE LITERARY SHAPE AND MISSIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTS:  
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A fresh reading of Acts shows how its structure and story reveal missional significance, inviting God's people to be an instrument for the kingdom of God. This study investigates three related areas in: (1) constructing an appropriate literary method from within the vast field of literary criticism; (2) focusing on Acts as a whole literary work instead of narrower pericopes or the broader corpus of Luke-Acts; and (3) revealing theological significance from literary shape instead of imposing it on the narrative.

The method is a focused narrative criticism joining structure elements (sections, sequence, and size) and story components (literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, speech, and intertextual) to inform a narrative theology arising from the text. Three Graeco-Roman literary principles (from Horace and Aristotle) organise ancient and modern literary concepts. The study's core central chapters investigate the literary shape of Acts' Ending (21:15–28:31) as a finish and closure, Acts' Beginning (1:1–8:3) as a start and opening, and Acts' Middle (8:4–21:14) as a centre and climax. The resulting theological significance focuses on the culmination, foundation, and pivot of mission and the kingdom of God.

The literary and theological findings include the structural proportionalism of Acts 1:1–8:3 (initial success) and Acts 21:15–28:31 (Paul's restoration), a central scene at Lystra (14:8–20a), story advances and declines in the Gentile mission, a decline with Paul from 19:21, and the missional significance of a mission instrument (Jesus, Israel, twelve apostles, Peter, Philip, Stephen, Saul/Paul, church) target (Jews, Gentiles), message (God, Jesus, resurrection, salvation), source (Holy Spirit, "the Word of God/Lord", "the name of Jesus"), method (verbal communication, supernatural activity), success, suffering, and expansion.

This research contributes a focused method of narrative criticism and theology, integrates structure and story, gives an exploration of the whole Acts' narrative, and demonstrates how Acts' literary shape reveals the important missional significance of the church being an instrument for the expanding kingdom of God.

Key Words: Acts, Narrative Criticism, Narrative Theology, Mission Instrument, Kingdom of God.

## CONTENTS

CONTENTS .....	iii
ABBREVIATIONS.....	xii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: THEORY OF LITERARY SHAPE AND SIGNIFICANCE .....	10
1.1 Literary Shape and Significance within Literary Criticism.....	12
1.1.1 Genre.....	12
1.1.2 Author-Text-Reader.....	13
1.1.3 Implied Author and Reader.....	14
1.1.4 Text-Centred Approaches .....	16
1.1.5 Development and Employment of Literary Shape Theory .....	19
1.2 Three Key Foundational Concepts from Horace and Aristotle .....	21
1.2.1 Horace’s “Five-Act Structure”.....	22
1.2.2 Aristotle’s “Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)” .....	24
1.2.3 Aristotle’s “Complication, Transformation, and Denouement” .....	25
1.3 Ancient and Modern Literary Shape Concepts.....	26
1.3.1 Literary Ending Concepts .....	26
1.3.2 Literary Beginning Concepts .....	30
1.3.3 Literary Middle Concepts .....	37
1.4 Summary .....	43
CHAPTER TWO: LITERARY BACKGROUND AND METHOD FOR ACTS.....	45
2.1 Acts’ Literary Background .....	45
2.1.1 Date.....	45
2.1.2 Author .....	46
2.1.3 Reader(s).....	47
2.1.4 Genre.....	48
2.1.5 Paratext .....	50
2.1.6 Text.....	51

2.2 Method for Exploring Acts' Literary Shape and Significance .....	52
2.2.1 Acts' Literary Scholarship .....	53
2.2.2 Validity of Literary Shape Method for Acts .....	55
2.2.2.1 Objection One: narrative criticism is a new method of study rejecting older academic disciplines .....	55
2.2.2.2 Objection Two: Narrative criticism is an anachronistic imposition of modern literary concepts onto ancient literature .....	56
2.2.2.3 Objection Three: Narrative criticism uses fictional concepts that undermine historical veracity .....	56
2.2.2.4 Objection Four. Narrative criticism is too sophisticated and complicated for the original readers .....	57
2.2.2.5 Objection Five. Narrative criticism introduces subjective theories fundamentally different to Jewish or Christian theology .....	58
2.2.3 Application of Ancient and Modern Literary Shape Theory to Acts .....	58
2.2.4 Method and Acts' Structure .....	60
2.2.4.1 Structural Models for Acts .....	61
2.2.4.2 Horace's "Five-Act Structure" and Acts .....	67
2.2.4.3 Other Structural Elements .....	74
2.2.5 Method and Acts' Story .....	76
2.2.5.1 Aristotle's "Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)" and Acts .....	77
2.2.5.2 Aristotle's "Complication, Transformation, and Denouement" and Acts .....	77
2.2.5.3 Reading Strategies and Acts .....	81
2.2.5.4 Acts' Literary-Spatial Component .....	83
2.2.5.5 Acts' Literary-Temporal Component .....	90
2.2.5.6 Acts' Character Component .....	95
2.2.5.7 Acts' Speech Component .....	104
2.2.5.8 Acts' Intertextual Component .....	107
2.2.6 Method and Acts' Significance .....	112

2.2.6.1 Scholarship on the Theology of Acts .....	113
2.2.6.2 Narrative Theology .....	114
2.2.6.3 Scholarship on Mission in Acts .....	116
2.2.6.4 Method for Missional Significance in Acts. ....	118
2.3 Summary.....	127
CHAPTER THREE: ACTS' ENDING .....	129
3.1 Acts' Ending Scholarship .....	130
3.2 Fine-Tuned Method for Acts' Ending .....	133
3.2.1 Method for Exploring the Structure of Acts' Ending .....	133
3.2.2 Method for Exploring the Story of Acts' Ending .....	133
3.2.3 Method for Exploring the Significance of Acts' Ending.....	134
3.3 Literary Shape of Acts' Ending .....	134
3.3.1 The Final Summary (28:30–31).....	135
3.3.1.1 The Last Word: ἀκωλύτως (28:31).....	136
3.3.1.2 With All Boldness: μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας (28:31).....	136
3.3.1.3 Teaching the Things about the Lord Jesus Christ: διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (28:31).....	137
3.3.1.4 Heraldng the Kingdom of God: κηρύσσω τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (28:30).....	138
3.3.1.5 Welcoming All Coming to Him ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν (28:30) .....	138
3.3.1.6 His Own Rent: ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι (28:30).....	139
3.3.1.7 Remained Two Whole Years: Ἐνέμεινεν δὲ διετίαν ὅλην (28:30).....	139
3.3.1.8 Literary Shape in the Final Summary .....	140
3.3.2 The Final Scene (28:16–28).....	141
3.3.2.1 Final Statement (28:28).....	141
3.3.2.2 Final Quotation (28:26–27).....	142
3.3.2.3 Final Speech (28:25b) .....	145

3.3.2.4 Final Setting (28:23–25a).....	146
3.3.2.5 Penultimate Speech (28:17b–22) .....	147
3.3.2.6 Final Location (28:16–17a).....	148
3.3.2.7 Literary Shape in the Final Scene .....	150
3.3.2.8 Framing in Acts' Ending.....	151
3.3.3 Final “Act” (21:15–28:15).....	152
3.3.3.1 Final Voyage (28:11–15) .....	152
3.3.3.2 Malta (28:1–10).....	153
3.3.3.3 Storm and Shipwreck (27:1–44) .....	154
3.3.3.4 Trials in Caesarea (23:31–26:32).....	156
3.3.3.5 Trials in Jerusalem (21:27–23:30) .....	158
3.3.3.6 Church and Temple (21:15–26) .....	160
3.3.4 Literary Shape in “Act V” (21:15–28:31).....	161
3.4 Missional Significance of Acts' Ending.....	164
3.5 Summary.....	170
CHAPTER FOUR: ACTS' BEGINNING .....	173
4.1. Acts' Beginning Scholarship .....	174
4.2. Fine-Tuned Method for Acts' Beginning .....	176
4.2.1 Method for Exploring the Structure of Acts' Beginning .....	177
4.2.2 Method for Exploring the Story of Acts' Beginning .....	177
4.2.3 Method for Exploring the Significance of Acts' Beginning.....	178
4.3 Literary Shape of Acts' Beginning.....	178
4.3.1 The First Summary (1:1–5).....	178
4.3.1.1 The First Word: Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον (1:1) .....	179
4.3.1.2 The Authorial I: ἐποιήσάμην περὶ πάντων (1:1) .....	180
4.3.1.3 Theophilus: ὦ Θεόφιλε (1:1).....	180
4.3.1.4 Jesus: ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν (1:1).....	182
4.3.1.5 The Apostles: ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ... οὓς ἐξελέξατο (1:2)...182	

4.3.1.6 The Holy Spirit: διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου (1:2).....	183
4.3.1.7 First Mention of Ascension: ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ... ἀνελήμφθη (1:2) .....	183
4.3.1.8 Resurrection and Suffering: παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις (1:3) .....	184
4.3.1.9 Forty Days: δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσαράκοντα ὁπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς (1:3).....	184
4.3.1.10 Kingdom of God: λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ (1:3).....	185
4.3.1.11 Table-Fellowship: συναλιζόμενος (1:4) .....	185
4.3.1.12 Jerusalem: παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι (1:4) .....	186
4.3.1.13 The Promise of the Father: περιμένειν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς (1:4).....	186
4.3.1.14 John's Baptism: ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι (1:5).....	187
4.3.1.15 Holy Spirit Baptism: ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἁγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας (1:5) .....	187
4.3.1.16 Literary Shape in the First Summary .....	188
4.3.2 The First Scene (1:6–11).....	189
4.3.2.1 Jesus's Commission of the Apostles (1:6–8) .....	190
4.3.2.2 The Ascension (1:9–11) .....	194
4.3.2.3 Literary Shape in the First Scene .....	194
4.3.2.4 Framing in Acts' Beginning.....	196
4.3.3 The First "Act" (1:12–8:3).....	197
4.3.3.1 The Reconstitution of the Twelve (1:12–26) .....	198
4.3.3.2 Pentecost (2:1–47).....	201
4.3.3.3 Healing of the Lame Man (3:1–26).....	206
4.3.3.4 Peter and John before the Jewish leaders (4:1–31) .....	207
4.3.3.5 Ananias and Sapphira (4:32–5:16).....	209
4.3.3.6 Apostles and the Sanhedrin (5:17–42) .....	209
4.3.3.7 Stephen (6:1–8:3).....	210



4.3.4 Literary Shape in “Act I” (1:1–8:3) .....	213
4.4 Missional Significance of Acts’ Beginning.....	216
4.5 Summary.....	225
CHAPTER FIVE: ACTS’ MIDDLE.....	228
5.1 Acts’ Middle Scholarship .....	228
5.2 Fine-Tuned Method for Acts’ Middle .....	232
5.2.1 Method for Exploring the Structure of Acts’ Middle .....	233
5.2.2 Method for Exploring the Story of Acts’ Middle .....	233
5.2.3 Method for Exploring the Significance of Acts’ Middle .....	234
5.3 Literary Shape of Acts’ Middle .....	235
5.3.1 Central Scene of “Act III” and Acts (14:8–20a).....	235
5.3.1.1 Central Speech (14:15b–17).....	235
5.3.1.2 Literary Context for the Speech (14:8–14) .....	238
5.3.1.3 Reaction to the Speech (14:19–20a) .....	240
5.3.1.4 Literary Shape in Acts’ Central Scene .....	241
5.3.2 “Act III” (11:27–16:40) .....	241
5.3.2.1 Advance to Pisidian Antioch (13:13–52).....	243
5.3.2.2 Advance with Mission at Iconium (14:1–7) .....	248
5.3.2.3 Extended Climax in Return Journey to (Syrian) Antioch (14:20b–15:2) .....	248
5.3.2.4 Decline with Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35).....	249
5.3.2.5 Opening of “Act III”: Peter and Herod (11:27–12:25) .....	254
5.3.2.6 Mission Advance from (Syrian) Antioch to Cyprus (13:1–12) .....	256
5.3.2.7 Hints of Further Decline from (Syrian) Antioch to Troas (15:36–16:9) .....	257
5.3.2.8 Closing of “Act III”: Philippi (16:10–40).....	260
5.3.2.9 Literary Shape of “Act III” .....	263
5.3.2.10 Parallelism in Acts’ Middle .....	267



6.5.1 ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts' Middle .....	341
6.5.1.1 ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 14:22. ....	341
6.5.1.2 ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 8:12 .....	343
6.5.1.3 ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in 19:8 and 20:25 .....	346
6.5.2 The Broader Kingdom of God Topic in Acts' Middle .....	350
6.5.3 The Missional Significance of the Kingdom of God in Acts' Middle.....	354
6.6 Summary.....	358
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION .....	362
7.1 Acts' Literary Structure .....	362
7.2 Acts' Literary Story .....	363
7.2.1 Closure of Acts' Ending .....	363
7.2.2 Opening of Acts' Beginning .....	364
7.2.3 Climax of Acts' Middle .....	365
7.2.4 Story Components of Acts' Whole Story .....	366
7.2.4.1 Acts' Literary-Spatiality .....	366
7.2.4.2 Act's Literary-Temporality .....	367
7.2.4.3 Acts' Characters .....	368
7.2.4.4 Acts' Speech Framework .....	369
7.2.4.5 Acts' Intertextuality .....	370
7.3 Acts' Missional Significance.....	370
7.3.1 Mission Instrument .....	370
7.3.2 Mission Target .....	371
7.3.3 Mission Message.....	371
7.3.4 Mission Source .....	372
7.3.5 Mission Means .....	373
7.3.6 Mission Success .....	373
7.3.7 Mission Suffering .....	374
7.3.8 Mission Expansion (The Kingdom of God) .....	374

7.4 Summary .....	374
7.5 A Final Word .....	376

## DIAGRAMS

Diagram I: Thesis Map .....	5
Diagram II: Integration of Horace and Aristotle with Freytag and Modern Literary Critics/Screenwriters .....	44
Diagram III: Statistical Calculations of Starts, Midpoints, and Finishes .....	69
Diagram IV: Acts “Five-Act” Structure .....	71
Diagram V: Acts’ Mission Advances and Declines .....	79
Diagram VI: Acts’ Literary-Spatial Component .....	87
Diagram VII: Acts’ Literary-Temporal Component .....	94
Diagram VIII: Acts’ Character Component .....	102
Diagram IX: Acts’ Speech Component .....	106
Diagram X: Acts’ Intertextual Component .....	110
Diagram XI: Overview Patterning of “Act III” .....	242
Diagram XII: The Kingdom of God in Acts “Five-Act” Structure .....	314
Diagram XIII: Theological Connections for the Kingdom of God in Acts .....	321

## APPENDICES

Appendix I: Glossary of Key Literary Concepts .....	378
Appendix II: Acts’ Word Count .....	383
Appendix III: Acts’ Sections .....	385
Appendix IV: Acts’ Literary Time Frame .....	390

## ABBREVIATIONS

Most abbreviations in this study are standard as taken from *The SBL Handbook of Style. For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*. Edited by Billie Jean Collins, Bob Buller and John F. Kutsko, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

AG	Analecta Gregoriana.
<i>AJET</i>	<i>Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology</i> .
ANS	Ancient Narrative Supplementum.
AnSBF	Analecta Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.
ASMMS	American Society of Missiology Monograph Series.
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible.
BRBS	Brill's Readers in Biblical Studies.
<i>BT</i>	<i>Bible Translator</i> .
CCRLL	Currents in Comparative Romance Languages and Literatures.
CCS	Cistercian Study Series.
CorBC	Cornerstone Biblical Commentaries.
CPBT	Counter Points: Bible and Theology.
EC	Epworth Commentaries.
EP	Evangelical Press.
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i> .
EH	Europäische Hochschulschriften.
FBC	Fortress Commentary on the Bible.
FCI	Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation.
GH	Gorgias Handbooks.
<i>GTR</i>	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i> .
ICSB	Ignatius Catholic Study Bible.
<i>IGRR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae as Res Romanas Pertinetes</i> .
<i>IJT</i>	<i>Indian Journal of Theology</i> .
INTTR	Institute for New Testament Textual Research.
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</i> .
<i>MD</i>	<i>Materiale e discussion per l'analisi dei testi classici</i> .
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentaries.
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology.

NTR	New Testament Readings.
PAST	Pauline Studies.
PBC	The People's Bible Commentary.
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs.
PC	The Preacher's Commentary.
PCNT	ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament.
<i>PLMA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.</i>
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentaries.
<i>P. Oxy.</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri.</i>
PRS	Pittsburgh Reprint Series.
<i>PT</i>	<i>Poetics Today.</i>
RNCTRTBS	Routledge New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies.
SBLSBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature.
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series.
SHS	Scripture and Hermeneutic Series.
STML	Studies in Themes and Motives in Literature.
<i>SQE</i>	<i>Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum.</i>
WBBC	Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries.
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.
ZIBBC	Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary.

## INTRODUCTION

The Greek book of Acts, also known as the Acts of the Apostles, tells the story of what follows Christ's resurrection. It begins in Jerusalem and ends in Rome, from ca. AD 30 to AD 60, from Peter and the apostles to Paul, from the first speech in Acts 1 to the final one in Acts 28, and from the first Old Testament quotation (Ps 69:25) to the last (Isa 6:9–10). Acts spans 28 chapters, 1,002 verses and 18,450 words.<sup>1</sup>

This study tackles the question of how Acts' literary shape reveals significance. Literary shape is structure (the form) and story (the content).<sup>2</sup> Together these reveal the narrative's significance, meaning, or emphasis. For Acts, story means a specific arrangement of historical events. This study accepts literary artistry and historical veracity can co-exist.<sup>3</sup> I argue that Acts' structure and story reveal a missional significance<sup>4</sup> in telling of an invitation to God's people to be a mission instrument for the kingdom of God. The emphasis in this study is on the story in Acts of how Israel as the people of God (both as a nation and a restored remnant church) receive and respond to an invitation to be a mission instrument for the kingdom of God. By extension this invitation then applies to the readers.

The four main reasons for investigating this question all fill gaps in scholarship.

First, studies of Acts tend to focus on smaller sections and neglect the bigger picture of a whole and distinct literary unit.

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<sup>1</sup> The verse count is based on NA<sup>28</sup> which omits 8:37; 15:34; 24:7 and 28:29 as not in most reliable MSS and combines 19:40 with 41 (separated by NIV (2011) increasing its own total of verses to 1,003). The word count is also based on NA<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 61.

<sup>3</sup> James Barr, "Reading the Bible as Literature", *BJRL* 56 (1973–74): 10–33; Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Language and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Han Young Lee, *From History to Narrative Hermeneutics*, *StBibLit* 64 (New York: Lang, 2004), 1–9; 138–190.

<sup>4</sup> The term missional comes from Francis DuBose, *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983). Cf. Ed Stetzer, "An Evangelical Kingdom Community Approach", in *The Mission of the Church: Five Views in Conversation*, ed. Craig Ott (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 91–116, esp. 94–97.

Second, the literary artistry of the Graeco-Roman milieu<sup>5</sup> encourages a similar approach to Acts.

Third, a focused narrative criticism and narrative theology corrects “the hodgepodge of observations”<sup>6</sup> and also expands “the boundaries of viable interpretations with new and interesting readings”<sup>7</sup> of Acts by prioritising the actual text rather than its extra-textual historical context.<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, Acts’ structure and story combine to reveal fresh aspects of missional significance.

The consensus of scholarship accepts the connection between Acts and Luke’s Gospel.<sup>9</sup> However, some question this<sup>10</sup> and debate the exact nature of the relationship.<sup>11</sup> The benefits of reading Acts with Luke’s Gospel are accepted, but require research beyond the present study.<sup>12</sup> A reasonable hypothesis views the

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<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 7.16 (1450b. 36), for literary size, sequence, and stages; Vitruvius, *De Architectura libri decem*, 1.26–27, for proportion and symmetry; Plato, *Gorg.* 503e–504a, for form, selection, arrangement, order and parts combining into a whole. Cf. Wilhelm Wuellner, “Arrangement”, in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C. – A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 51–87; Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, SBLMS 20 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), 5–9, 77–78, 81.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Allan Powell, “Narrative Criticism: The Emergence of a Prominent Reading Strategy”, in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. K. R. Iverson and C. W. Skinner. RBS 65 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 19–43, citing 20.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley E. Porter, “Literary Approaches to the New Testament: From Formalism to Deconstructionism and Back”, in *Approaches to New Testament Study*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs, JSNTSup 120 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 77–128, citing 115.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah M. Cocksworth, “Review of Beginnings, Endings and the Narrative Unity of Luke and Acts” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2013), 25; Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 200.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: Macmillan, 1927). For recent discussions see Patrick E. Spencer, “The Unity of Luke-Acts: A Four Bolted Hermeneutical Hinge”, *CBR* 5 (2007): 341–366; Joel B. Green, “Luke-Acts, or Luke and Acts? A Reaffirmation of Narrative Unity”, in *Reading Acts Today. Essays in Honour of Loveday C. A. Alexander*, ed. Steve Walton, et al., LNTS 427 (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 101–19; Joseph Verheyden, “The Unity of Luke-Acts: One Work, One Author, One Purpose?”, in *Issues in Luke-Acts*, ed. Sean A. Adams and Michael Pahl (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2012), 27–50.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Patricia Walters, *The Assumed Authorial Unity of Luke and Acts: A Reassessment of the Evidence*, SNTSMS 145 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> E.g. I. Howard Marshall, “Acts and the Former Treatise”, in *The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting* ed. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke, BAFCS 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1993), 163–182, citing 164–172; Ethel E. Wallis, “Thematic Parallelism and Prominence in Luke-Acts”, *Notes on Translation* 75 (1979): 2–6, citing 2.

<sup>12</sup> In terms of the literary shape and significance of Luke-Acts. However, this does not exclude references from Luke’s Gospel where relevant to a focused study of Acts.



similar size<sup>13</sup> and structure<sup>14</sup> of Luke's Gospel as a prototype for Acts.<sup>15</sup>

However, it is legitimate to focus on Acts as a whole and distinct literary unit.<sup>16</sup> Acts has a deliberate preface introducing the narrative<sup>17</sup> and a repetition of the ascension account.<sup>18</sup> There is also genre disunity between Acts and Luke's Gospel,<sup>19</sup> they have distinct themes,<sup>20</sup> and there is no canonical or historical evidence that the early church joined the two books.<sup>21</sup> Luke-Acts scholars go beyond the important call for an exploration of whole narratives<sup>22</sup> as the basic biblical literary unit.<sup>23</sup> As a result more research is required into Acts as an integrated whole<sup>24</sup> and especially how its distinct literary shape reveals a distinct missional significance.

<sup>13</sup> A. Q. Morton, *The Gathering of the Gospels: From Papyrus to Printout* (New York: Mellen, 1997), 10–11, notes the remarkably close count of letters in Acts (95,696) and Luke's Gospel (95,804), using the text of Regional Computing Centre of Edinburgh University accessed 31 August 1973.

<sup>14</sup> John C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: SPCK, 1970), 69–72; David G. Palmer, *Sliced Bread: The Four Gospels, Acts and Revelation: Their Literary Structures* (Cardiff: Ceridwen, 1988), 565–66; Palmer, *New Testament: New Testimony to the Skills of the Writers and First Readers*, 5th rev. Illustrated Exhibition ed. (Cardiff: Ceridwen, 2016), 42.

<sup>15</sup> Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 7, comments on the symmetry of the last 23% of Luke's Gospel presenting Jesus's trials, death and resurrection compared to 24% of Acts on Paul's trials and arrival at Rome. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 4.3351.

<sup>16</sup> Steve Walton, "Acts", in *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, D. J. Treier and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids: SPCK, Baker Academic, 2005), 74–83, citing 79, argues "to read Acts apart from Luke is to impoverish and badly skew one's reading of Acts". The counterbalancing response is "to not read Acts as a separate distinct literary unit apart from Luke is to also impoverish and skew one's reading of Acts".

<sup>17</sup> Acts 1:1–8 with the themes of mission and the kingdom of God explored in this study.

<sup>18</sup> Luke 24:50–53 and Acts 1:6–11.

<sup>19</sup> Parsons and Pervo, *Unity*, 12. Contra those like David Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1988), 77–140, esp. 139, who argues that Luke-Acts follows the genre of Hellenistic "general history", and Sean A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*, SNTSMS 156 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 256, who argues that Luke-Acts is a best understood as a collective biography.

<sup>20</sup> Verheyden, "Unity", citing 35–36.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period Before Irenaeus: Looking for Luke in the Second Century*, WUNT 2.169 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 2; Gregory, "The Reception of Luke and Acts and the Unity of Luke-Acts", *JSNT* 29 (2007), 459–72; C. Kavin Rowe, "History, Hermeneutics and the Unity of Luke-Acts", and "Literary Unity and Reception History: Reading Luke-Acts as Luke and Acts", in *Rethinking the Unity and Reception of Luke and Acts*, ed. Andrew F. Gregory and C. Kavin Rowe (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 43–65; 74–81; Robert W. Wall, "The Acts of the Apostles: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections", in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10, ed. Leander E. Keck, et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 1–368, citing 26–32.

<sup>22</sup> James Muilenberg, "Form Criticism and Beyond", *JBL* 88 (1968), 1–18, citing 16.

<sup>23</sup> David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study. A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 79.

<sup>24</sup> As noted by Richard P. Thompson, *Keeping the Church in its Place: The Church as Narrative Character in Acts* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 3. For a focus on Acts see Scott Shauf, *Theology as History, History as Theology: Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19*, BZNW 133 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 50–54; Alan J. Bale, *Genre and Narrative Coherence in the Acts of the Apostles*, LNTS 514 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 15–20.

Mikael Parsons and Richard Pervo are right that “if Acts is to receive its due it must be regarded as something more than an extension of Luke. Just as Luke is complete in and of itself, so is Acts”.<sup>25</sup> A focus on Acts fulfils Markus Bockmuehl’s call to “let Acts be Acts”.<sup>26</sup> Whilst giving full attention to the vast secondary literature on Acts, the priority is a “direct study”<sup>27</sup> of Acts’ NA<sup>28</sup> Greek Text. This follows Ward Gasque’s advice that “it is important to point out that the agreement or disagreement with the views of other scholars is not the test of the value of a New Testament scholar’s work. The real question is: Does he come to grips with the New Testament data with which he is working?”<sup>28</sup> and John Bengel’s expositional principle to “introduce nothing *into* Scriptures, but every thing *from* them, and to overlook nothing which is really contained *in* them”.<sup>29</sup>

The Thesis Map (Diagram I), on the next page, gives the template for how this study assesses the claim that Acts is “a deliberately constructed narrative designed, even to the smallest detail, for the sake of making certain didactic points”.<sup>30</sup> In order to achieve this, the emphasis is on Acts’ text rather than context and puts literary shape (structure and story) before theological significance.

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<sup>25</sup> Parsons and Pervo, *Unity*, 126. Cf. F. Scott Spencer, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), 23; Norman R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 85; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 791.

<sup>26</sup> Markus Bockmuehl, “Why Not Let Acts be Acts? In Conversation with C. Kavin Rowe”, *JSNT* 28 (2005): 163–166.

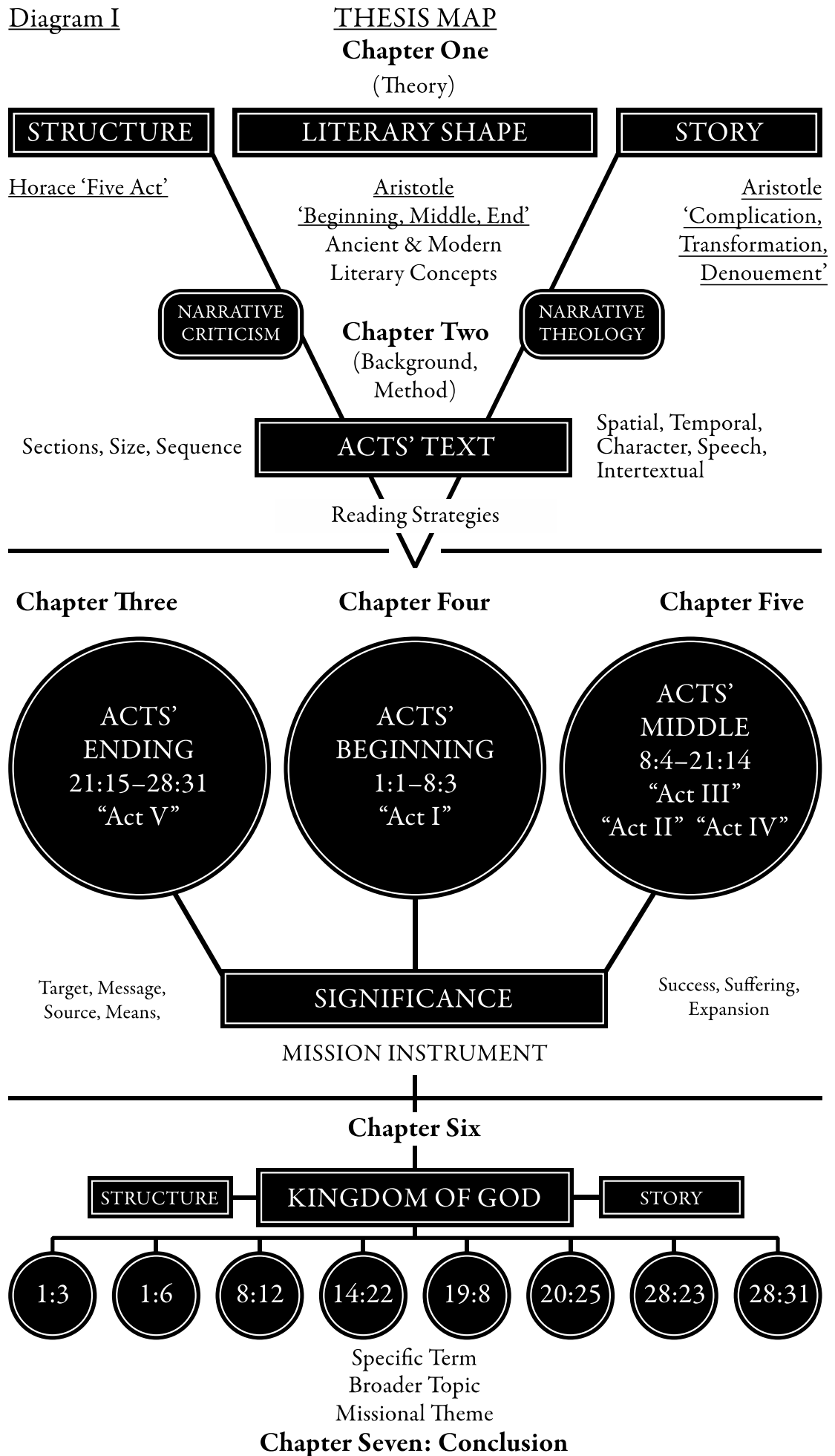
<sup>27</sup> Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 1–7, 50–52.

<sup>28</sup> W. Ward Gasque, “The Historical Value of the Book of Acts”, *EQ* 41 (1969): 68–88, citing 88. Cf. C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11–12.

<sup>29</sup> John Albert Bengel, “On the Right Way of Handling Divine Subjects”, in J. Chr Storr, *Liturgical Portions of the Apostolical Epistles* (1750) as cited in John C. F. Burk, *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of John Albert Bengel Compiled Principally from Original Manuscripts Never Before Published*, trans. Robert F. Walker (London: William Ball, 1837), 261, emphasis his.

<sup>30</sup> John B. Gabel, Charles B. Wheeler and Anthony D. York, *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 234.

Diagram I



The methodological approach uses three key ancient structure and story principles from the Graeco-Roman milieu of Acts:<sup>31</sup>

1. Horace's "Five-Act Structure" which divides a drama into five distinct "Acts" (differentiated from Acts as the title of the book).
2. Aristotle's "Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)" which divides a tragedy into three story stages.
3. Aristotle's "Complication, Transformation, and Denouement" which analyses the sequence of a story's plot development.

These principles regulate a focused narrative criticism and a narrative theology drawn from the wide field of both ancient and modern literary theory. The method is then employed to explore the literary structure and story of Acts' Ending (21:15–28:31), Beginning (1:1–8:3), and Middle (8:4–21:14). This leads to discoveries about missional significance with a particular emphasis on an invitation to be a mission instrument for the kingdom of God.

Chapter One reviews the theory of literary shape and significance within the complexities of wide-ranging literary criticism. I decided to develop a narrative-critical text-centred approach by organising ancient and modern literary concepts around three key principles drawn from Horace (structure) and Aristotle (story stages and story sequence). These principles have heuristic value whether or not they directly influenced Acts' literary shape. Although the principles are relatively brief and somewhat imprecise in content, they have been extensively developed by Renaissance and modern literary critics/screenwriters into useful tools which can be used for exploring Acts' literary structure, story, and significance. This approach leads to the construction of a theoretical framework for literary shape ending, beginning, and middle concepts.

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<sup>31</sup> Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012–15), 1:18; Loveday C. A. Alexander, "The Relevance of Greco-Roman Literature and Culture to New Testament Study", in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 109–126, citing 112. A legitimate alternative approach would have been to explore the Old Testament books or the New Testament Gospels as possible models of Acts' literary shape. These need further research, but are reluctantly omitted since they would have increased an already large literary framework. For Acts in relation to Old Testament see Morna Hooker, *Endings: Invitations to Discipleship* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 59, Deuteronomy and Numbers. P. R. Davies, "Ending of Acts", *ExpTim* 94 (1982–83): 334–35, 2 Kings 25:27–30. Troy M. Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered: A Study of the Ending of Acts within Its Literary Environment*, WUNT 2.280 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 106–109, 1–4 Kgdms (1 and 2 Kgs). For Acts in relation to New Testament Gospels see William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 31. Cf. J. Lee Magness, *Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of Mark's Gospel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 117–125.

Chapter Two first outlines Acts' literary background (date, author, reader(s), genre, paratext, and text) before developing the theoretical framework into a method for exploring Acts' literary structure, story, and significance.

Graeco-Roman literary criticism makes little of literary structure. The exception is Horace's "Five-Act Structure". I make an original heuristic application to Acts of this structure adjusted for its later development by literary critics and the use of a statistical analysis. This application attempts to resolve the inherent tensions of trying to connect structure and story. Also in order to better understand literary structure I intend to explore the structural elements of sections (how the narrative is divided), size (how the narrative is emphasised), and sequence (how the narrative is arranged).

Graeco-Roman literary criticism majors on story. Aristotle is particularly influential with his story stages and sequence principles. Story stages as proposed by Aristotle are more to with the development of the plot than a distinct division of the narrative into three "Acts". I apply Aristotle's principles to the story which Acts tells so as to offer a fresh interpretation using backwards, forwards, and central reading strategies together with literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, speech, and intertextual components. The discovery of a narrative mid-point reveals a hinge around which the story develops.

A focused narrative theology completes the method by showing how a definite literary shape reveals a theological significance.<sup>32</sup> The joining of literary and theological approaches addresses the criticism that analyses of Acts' structure often fail to adequately develop the interpretative dimension.<sup>33</sup> Literary structure and story show that missional significance integrates the theological topics. In particular the idea of Aristotle's story sequence is applied to form a model of mission advances and declines within Acts. As an original hypothesis, I propose that Acts is primarily

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<sup>32</sup> Joel B. Green "Narrative Criticism", in *Methods for Luke*, ed. Joel B. Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 74–112, citing 74–92, argues for a narrative critical close reading of the Gospels and Acts; Green, "Learning Theological Interpretation from Luke", in *Luke: Interpretation, Reflection and Formation*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green and Anthony C. Thiselton, SHS 6 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 55–78, citing 57, discusses significance from the narrative rather than historical facts; Robert J. Karris, *Luke: Artist and Theologian. Luke's Passion Account as Literature* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1985), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Lynn M. Poland, *Literary Criticism and Biblical Hermeneutics: A Critique of Formalist Approaches*, AARAS 48 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 66. Cf. Jane P. Tompkins, "The Reader in History: The Changing Shape of Literary Response", in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 201–06, citing 204, that, unlike contemporary exegetes, ancient literary theory generally concerned itself less with what a text means and more with what it does.

about the struggle to form God's people into a mission instrument to reach the world. An analysis of literary shape suggests that the stages of missional significance are a *foundation, pivot, and culmination*.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five apply the method to the Acts text divided using Aristotle's story stages into Acts' Ending, Acts' Beginning, and Acts' Middle<sup>34</sup> overlaid with Horace's "Five-Act Structure". These chapters repeat a deliberate and consistent approach that prioritises literary structure and story before significance, uses close exegetical work on the text rather than context to identify literary shape and missional significance, and because of the size of Acts' narrative, gives priority to the narrower focus of Acts' finish (28:16–31), start (1:1–11), and centre (14:8–20a) before moving to a broader scope of the whole story. The observations of literary shape are noted progressively throughout each chapters and the discoveries of missional significance are appropriately left until the end of each chapter. A closing summary then brings together the findings of literary shape and missional significance. The particular sequence starting with Acts' Ending reflects the expected likelihood of where literary shape most reveals missional significance.

Chapter Three explores Acts' Ending ("Act V") (21:15–28:31) as the most likely stage where literary shape reveals significance. The close of the narrative is where the narrator focuses the work "in order to leave those final impressions that best fit its main concerns".<sup>35</sup> The ending connects to the rest of the narrative since "all it has to do is land safely, it's not an introduction of new information – it's a safe landing. It lets us see what has been there all along".<sup>36</sup> In this way the *culmination* of the mission instrument theme becomes apparent.

Chapter Four explores Acts' Beginning ("Act I") (1:1–8:3) as the foundational stage of the narrative<sup>37</sup> where literary shape is expected to reveal significance. The beginning sets the course for the narrative in that "if you write the rest of the story, then you'll be able to write the beginning".<sup>38</sup> The idea of framing is

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<sup>34</sup> The embryonic inspiration for the significance of beginnings and endings was given by Morna Hooker, *Beginnings: Keys That Open the Gospels* (London: SCM, 1997), 62–63 and Morna Hooker, *Endings*, 58–66, although she only makes a brief comment about Acts. Cf. Marianna Torgovnick, *Closure in Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 5, comments that "the formal relationship of ending to beginning and middle is what I call the shape of fictions".

<sup>35</sup> Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991), 2:353

<sup>36</sup> Jerome Stern, *Making Shapely Fiction* (New York: Norton, 1991), 125.

<sup>37</sup> Brian Richardson, "Introduction", in *Narrative Beginnings: Theories and Practices*, ed. Brian Richardson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 1–10, citing 1.

<sup>38</sup> Stern, *Shapely*, 93.

important in “reading the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end”.<sup>39</sup> The *foundation* of the mission instrument theme becomes evident.

Chapter Five explores Acts’ Middle (“Act II, Act III and Act IV”) (8:4–21:14) as another stage where literary shape may reveal significance. Scholars often neglect the middle as the most difficult stage to identify, but it is crucial for literary shape since “the middle, the climax of the play is the most important place of the structure: the action rises to this; the action falls away from this”.<sup>40</sup> Recent literary and film studies helpfully emphasise that “understanding the true significance of midpoints unlocks a door, behind which lies the reason that stories are the shape they are”.<sup>41</sup> The *pivot* of the mission instrument theme becomes evident.

Chapter Six focuses on the kingdom of God in Acts as a term connected to the literary structure, a broader topic within the story, and a missional theme showing mission expansion by the mission instrument. This explores Matthew Skinner’s claim that “Acts is first and foremost a story about the ongoing proclamation of the kingdom of God”.<sup>42</sup>

Chapter Seven draws together in conclusion the findings of this exploration into Acts’ literary structure, story, and significance.

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<sup>39</sup> Paul Copley, *Narrative: The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2001), 19.

<sup>40</sup> Gustav Freytag, *Technique of the Drama: An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*, trans. Elias J. MacEwan (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 105.

<sup>41</sup> John Yorke, *Into the Woods: How Stories Work and Why We Tell Them* (London: Penguin, 2013), 60.

<sup>42</sup> Matthew L. Skinner, “Acts”, in *Theological Biblical Commentary*, ed. Gail R. O’Day and David L. Peterson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 359–371, citing 360.

## CHAPTER ONE: THEORY OF LITERARY SHAPE AND SIGNIFICANCE

This chapter does three things. First, it reviews the theory of literary shape and significance within the wide-ranging field of literary criticism before clarifying the approach being taken in the present study (§1.1). Second, it outlines three key foundational concepts from Horace and Aristotle (§1.2). Third, it constructs a theoretical framework from ancient and modern literary shape concepts (§1.3).

Clarity is sought from the wide-ranging literary theory without sacrificing comprehensiveness. Since literary criticism uses terms imprecisely and interchangeably, it is important from the outset to define the four key terms of shape, structure, story, and significance together with their relationship to each other.

*Literary shape* in this study is a combination of the structure and story. Literary shape is an important concept<sup>1</sup> denoting the totality of literary features within a work<sup>2</sup> that indicate the main concerns.<sup>3</sup> Synonymous terms include “pattern” or “architecture”.<sup>4</sup> Literary structure and story are not easily separated<sup>5</sup> or prioritised,<sup>6</sup> but equally contribute to literary shape.<sup>7</sup>

*Literary structure* in this study is restricted to the arrangement, form, proportions or the “how” of the text, rather than the wider, but related, underlying “what” of the story structure used by Structuralism.<sup>8</sup> “Narrative theory, however, has struggled to reconcile common sense with conceptual rigour”<sup>9</sup> and an interchange of ideas blurs the relationship between the “how” and the “what”. For clarity, I

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<sup>1</sup> Tremper Longman III, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, FCI 3 (Grand Rapids: Academie; Leicester: Apollos, 1987), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Robert G. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 9–12; P. Perkins, *Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 204–213.

<sup>3</sup> Loveday C. Alexander, *Acts*, PBC (Abingdon: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2006), 15–16.

<sup>4</sup> Talbert, *Patterns*, 5–8.

<sup>5</sup> Amos Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (London: SCM, 1964), 10, 12, 33.

<sup>6</sup> Walsh, *Fictionality*, 53, notes that Russian Formalism sought to prioritise form over content.

<sup>7</sup> The attempts to connect story and structure by Renaissance literary scholars is given when considering Horace’s “Five Act” structure. See §1.2.1, pp.22–24.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick O’Neill, “Narrative Structure”, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Marie-Laure Jahn and Manfred Ryan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 366–70, citing 366, allows for both meanings of structure. A brief description of Structuralism is given when considering text-centred approaches later in this chapter. (See §1.1.4, p.18, n.66).

<sup>9</sup> Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 52.



summarise Ete Eisen's helpful correlation of the various terms used by key scholars.<sup>10</sup>

The “how” of:

*Erzählen* (the telling process of narrative voice and addressee) known as narration (Gérard Genette), text (Mieke Bal) or discourse (Seymour Chatman). This study uses the term *structure* with the elements of sections, size, and sequence.

*Erzählung* (the resulting narrative in time, mode, distance, and focalisation) known as *sjuzet*<sup>11</sup> (plot in Russian Formalism), *récit* (Genette), story (Bal), or text (Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan). Eisen's *erzählung* creates an overlap between structure and story. This study links *erzählung* to story in connection to the literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, speech, and intertextual story components.

The “what” of:

*Geschichte* (history of events and characters) known as *historie* (Genette), *fabula* (Russian Formalism and Bal), or story (Chatman, Rimmon-Kenan). This study uses the term *story*.

*Literary story* in this study is the “what” of the narrative including the places, time, characters, and events. A plot refers to the causal linking of events into the “how” of the story or even the “why”.<sup>12</sup> “Narrative” is often used synonymously with story,<sup>13</sup> but in this study the term includes both structure and story.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ute E. Eisen, *Die Poetik der Apostelgeschichte: Eine narratologische Studie*, NTOA 58 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 50, 62, for summary of terms. For the key scholars; 50–53, Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980); 53–57, Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, rev. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009); 57–59, Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978); and 56–57, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983).

<sup>11</sup> From the Russian сюжет, also romanised as *syuzhet*, *sjuzhet*, *sujet*, or *suzet*.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics* (London: Athlone Press, 1991), 4; E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927), 86, 93–95; Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism* (London: SCM, 1999), 40–43. James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 197–209; Gary Yamasaki, *Insights From Filmmaking For Analyzing Biblical Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 60–65.

<sup>13</sup> Gabriel Fackre, “Narrative Theology. An Overview”, *Int* 37 (1983): 340–352, citing 341.

<sup>14</sup> H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 16.

*Literary significance* in this study is the message emerging from the literary artistry of the narrative as a rhetorical act of persuasion.<sup>15</sup> Some literary critics follow Ernst Hirsch's distinction between meaning (authorial intention) and significance (reader's interpretation).<sup>16</sup> The more important question is whether significance/meaning is located in the author's intention, the narrative's literary shape, or the reader's interpretation. Whilst all are valid approaches, this study focuses on literary or narrative significance<sup>17</sup> as the significance revealed in the narrative's literary shape.

*Theological significance* in this study is no surprise given Acts' connection to the biblical corpus. The term "theological" refers to key topics such as salvation, Israel, and church, rather than just the narrower semantic meaning of teaching specifically about God.<sup>18</sup> As shown later in Chapter Two *missional significance* emerges from Acts' literary shape as the integrating framework for the other theological topics.

The first step is to position literary shape within literary criticism.

### 1.1 Literary Shape and Significance within Literary Criticism

The theory of literary shape begins with the key debates over genre and the precedence of text over author or reader before locating the theory within the various text-centred approaches.

#### 1.1.1 Genre

Some scholars argue that an identification of genre is essential for correctly interpreting a piece of literature.<sup>19</sup> Whilst the principle is broadly correct, its application to Acts is problematic due to uncertainties over its genre classification.<sup>20</sup> Literary shape exists whether or not a genre category is established.

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<sup>15</sup> Green, "Narrative Criticism", 91.

<sup>16</sup> Ernst D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 8, 38, 57, 62–67, 127, 141, 216; 255.

<sup>17</sup> As also used by Gerald L. Stevens, *Acts: A New Vision of the People of God* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 301.

<sup>18</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:496–97; Shauf, *Theology*, 41–42, 48–50.

<sup>19</sup> Hirsch, *Validity*, 127.

<sup>20</sup> This study considers Acts' genre in Chapter Two (see §2.1.4, pp.48–50).

### 1.1.2 Author-Text-Reader

Twentieth century development of literary theory moves from an author-centred approach to a reader-centred approach via a text-centred approach.<sup>21</sup> Whilst literary critics often combine all three approaches, the starting point is important for literary shape.

*An author-centred approach* focuses on reconstructing the probable historical context of the original author as essential for discerning significance.<sup>22</sup> This subtly shifts the interpretation away from the text's literary shape to an uncertain external context of the author's intention.<sup>23</sup> Debates over *focalisation* ask whether the author is a *heterodiegetic narrator* outside the story or a *homodiegetic character* inside it.<sup>24</sup>

*A reader-centred approach* places the significance outside the narrative in the reader's interpretation<sup>25</sup> with a multiplicity of possible significances.<sup>26</sup> The text's literary shape is given no identifiable objective significance.

*A text-centred approach* locates significance in the text itself.<sup>27</sup> This consideration was bypassed by the move from an author-centred to a reader-centred approach.<sup>28</sup> As a result there are concerns that a text-centred approach leads to a

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<sup>21</sup> Mark Allan Powell, *The Bible and Modern Literary Criticism: A Critical Assessment and Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 5–13.

<sup>22</sup> Denis Dutton, "Why Intentionalism Won't Go Away", in *Literature and the Question of Philosophy*, ed. Anthony J. Cascardi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 192–209, citing 200–201.

<sup>23</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:19.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 58–78; Bal, *Narratology*, 18–31; Uri Margolin, "Focalization: Where Do We Go from Here?", in *Point of View, Perspective, and Focalization: Modeling Mediation in Narrative*, ed. P. Hühn, Wolf Schmid, and Jörg Schönert (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 48–58; Yideg Alemayehu, *Modern Narrative Theory: Voice and Focalization in the Novel* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr Müller, 2011), 26–33. See further discussion on focalisation connected to Acts' characters in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, p.96–97).

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Stanley E. Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Tompkins, *Reader-Response Criticism*.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949); Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Garrett Barden and William Glen-Doepel (New York: Seabury, 1975); Pavel. N. Medvedev and Mikhail. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, trans. Albert J. Wehrle (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel", ed. and trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson, in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 259–422.

<sup>27</sup> Powell, *Literary Criticism*, 7–9, 52–73.

<sup>28</sup> For a useful discussion on the shifts in biblical criticism see Fernando F. Segovia, "And They Began to Speak in Other Tongues': Competing Modes of Discourse in Contemporary Biblical Criticism", in *Reading from this Place. Volume 1. Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 1–32.

subjective interpretation without any controls.<sup>29</sup> Whilst conceding that the reading of a text has elements of a reader's interpretation, this does not negate the search for the text's own intrinsic meaning along "the axis of communication" between the author and reader.<sup>30</sup> Guiseppe Betori correctly distinguishes between the author's *struttura* (structure) and reader's *strutturazione* (structuration), but also comments that the latter is limited by the objective text.<sup>31</sup> A text-centred approach provides the implied author's intention and the implied reader's understanding.

### 1.1.3 Implied Author and Reader

The term "implied author"<sup>32</sup> was introduced by Wayne Booth<sup>33</sup> as a concept of identifying the author's literary personality or image only from the text itself.<sup>34</sup> The "implied author" is often seen as an entity between the real author and the narrator.<sup>35</sup> I use the term "implied author", as a "useful heuristic construct",<sup>36</sup> a "hypostasis of the work's structure",<sup>37</sup> and a "design principle" for the text,<sup>38</sup> rather than a reader-created "inferred author"<sup>39</sup> which leads some to question the usefulness of the

<sup>29</sup> Christopher M. Tuckett, *Reading the New Testament: Methods of Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 174–75. Chapter Two deals with this objection (see §2.2.2.5, p.58).

<sup>30</sup> Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Guiseppe Betori, "La strutturazione del libro degli Atti: Una proposata", *RivB* 42 (1994): 3–34, citing 4.

<sup>32</sup> Other possible terms include "model author" in Umberto Eco, *Lector in fabula: La coperazione interpretativa nei test narrativi* (Milan: Bompiani, 1979), "abstract author" in Wolf Schmid, *Der Textaufbau in den Erzählungen Dostoevskijs* (München: Fink, 1973), "apparent artist" in Kendall Walton, "Points of View in Narrative and Depictive Representation", *Noûs* 10 (1976): 49–61, "fictional author" in Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and "postulated author" in Alexander Nehamas, "The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal", *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981): 133–39. For an assessment of these terms see Toms Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, *The Implied Author: Concept and Controversy* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 123–48.

<sup>33</sup> Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 71–76; Kindt and Müller, *Implied Author*, 17–61, for the context and origins of Booth's use of the implied author.

<sup>34</sup> The concepts of a "literary personality" and "author's image" were first formulated systematically by Russian Formalism and developed in Structuralism. See Wolf Schmid, "Implied Author" (revised version) in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/implied-author-revised-version-uploaded-26-january-2013>.

<sup>35</sup> Schmid, "Implied Author", 2.4. This is critiqued as a conflation with the text. See Ansgar Nünning, "Implied Author", in Herman, Jann, and Ryan, *Narrative Theory*, 239–40; Ansgar Nünning, "Deconstructing and Reconceptualizing the 'Implied Author': The Resurrection of an Anthromorphized Passepartout or the Obituary of the Critical Phantom?", *Anglistik*, 8.2 (1997): 95–116; Kindt and Müller, *Implied Author*, 104–121.

<sup>36</sup> Brian Richardson, "Introduction: Implied Author: Back From the Grave or Simply Dead Again?", *Style* 45 (2011): 1–10, citing 6.

<sup>37</sup> Schmid, "Implied Author", 2.2.

<sup>38</sup> Marie-Laure Ryan, "Meaning, Intent, and the Implied Author?", *Style* (2011): 29–47.

<sup>39</sup> Abbott, *Narrative*, 85, 235; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 87; Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 147–51; Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 77; Kindt and Müller, *Implied Author*, 69–104.

concept.<sup>40</sup> For the present study it is important to note that an implied author includes stylistic, ideological, and aesthetic properties of the text<sup>41</sup> and is essentially “the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole” which implies “an ideal, literary created version” of the real or original author.<sup>42</sup> The extent to which the implied author reflects the original author depends upon the genre and intent of the work.<sup>43</sup> William Nelles helpfully brings the two together in what he calls “hypothetical intentionalism” which limited the range of readings to the text itself.<sup>44</sup> Questions also arise about how detached the implied author is from the characters.<sup>45</sup> Whilst the present study focuses on literary shape, it is also important for literary significance to discern the extent to which there is an authorial intention to influence the readers.<sup>46</sup> This joins the “implied author” to the intended rhetoric of the text. The absence of an author in the narrative introduces elements of ambiguity and uncertainty,<sup>47</sup> but requires “a nearly complete union of the narrator and reader in a common endeavour”.<sup>48</sup>

The concept of an implied reader<sup>49</sup> was systematically theorised by Wolfgang

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<sup>40</sup> See a helpful discussion of the various theories of the implied author in James Phelan, *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 38–49. Also Schmid, “Implied Author”, 3.3.13–18.

<sup>41</sup> Schmid, “Implied Author”, 1.1; Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 73–74, includes symbolic significance and theology as part of discerning the implied author.

<sup>42</sup> Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 73, 75; Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, 148, argues that “the implied author is everything that the text lets us know about the author”.

<sup>43</sup> Justin Sully, “Implied Author/Reader”, in *The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory*, ed. Michael Ryan, 3 vols. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 1.253–56, citing 254; Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 151–53; Schmid, “Implied Author”, 3.4.22; William Nelles, “Historical and Implied Authors and Readers”, *Comparative Literature* 45.1 (1993): 22–46.

<sup>44</sup> William Nelles, “A Hypothetical Implied Author”, *Style* 45 (2011): 109–118, citing 113–115.

<sup>45</sup> Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 157–58.

<sup>46</sup> Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 200–205.

<sup>47</sup> Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 271–374, discusses authorial silence to control sympathy, clarity and confusion, and secret communion between author and reader with the price of impersonal narration being confusion of distance and an unreliable narrator.

<sup>48</sup> Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 300.

<sup>49</sup> Other possible terms include “model reader” in Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), “abstract reader” in Wolf Schmid, “Implied Reader”, in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/search/node/impliedreader> (27 January 2013), 3.1.7; 3.4.20, “postulated reader” in Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 137–44, “intended reader” (author’s objective) in Hannelore Link, *Rezeptionsforschung: Eine Einführung in Methoden und Probleme* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1976), “imagined reader” (author’s concept of the audience) and “conceived reader” (reader’s construction) in Gunter, *Rezeptionsgeschichte: Grundlegung einer Theorie* (München: Fink, 1977), 38–39, “implicit reader” in Schmid, “Implied Reader”, 3.4.18, “superreader” in Michael Riffaterre, “Describing poetic structures: Two approaches to Baudelaire’s, *Les Chats*”, *Yale French Studies* 36/37 (1966): 200–42; “ideal reader” in Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976).

Iser<sup>50</sup> and draws from the analogous elements of the implied author within the text as relevant to its audience.<sup>51</sup> The ambiguity is whether the implied reader is a “presumed addressee” of the author or an abstract reader who is the “ideal recipient” who understands the text according to its structure.<sup>52</sup> Peter Rabinowitz suggests that that each narrative text has actual, authorial (those whom the author had in mind), narrative (those which the narrative itself implies), and ideal narrative (those who believe the narrative) audiences.<sup>53</sup> In the present study, I follow a narrative “implied reader” as “a structure inscribed in the texts”.<sup>54</sup> Scholars debate the usefulness of a heuristic implied reader rather than an actual flesh-and-blood reader.<sup>55</sup> Whilst acknowledging that every reader is influenced by their own background, a text-dominant reader is useful for an exploration of literary shape.<sup>56</sup> The role of a reader in determining literary significance is inevitably more subjective.

To be clear, I use the terms “author” and “reader” in the present study to primarily refer to the implied author and reader discerned from Acts’ literary shape yet without prejudicing the debate over the historical author and readers or the application of literary significance to present-day readers.

#### 1.1.4 Text-Centred Approaches

The present study extracts various aspects of literary shape from the different text-centred approaches.

The emphasis on the form of the internal text as a “piece of verbal art, a product of deliberate crafting, shape and making by its author”<sup>57</sup> arose in *Russian*

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<sup>50</sup> Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974).

<sup>51</sup> Sully, “Implied Author/Reader”, 254; Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 428–31; Kindt and Müller, *Implied Author*, 136–43.

<sup>52</sup> Wolf Schmid, “Implied Reader”, 3.1.5–10; Nelles, *Historical and Implied Authors and Readers*, 29–42.

<sup>53</sup> Peter J. Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences”, *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977): 121–41.

<sup>54</sup> Iser, *Act of Reading*, 60.

<sup>55</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, “The Significance of Social Location in Reading John’s Story”, in *Gospel Interpretation. Narrative-Critical and Social-Scientific Approaches*. Ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997), 212–21; Yak-Hwee Tan, *Re-Presenting the Johannine Community: A Postcolonial Perspective*, SBL 107 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 65–68.

<sup>56</sup> Tan, *Johannine Community*, 66.

<sup>57</sup> Uri Margolin, “Formalism”, in Herman, Jahn, and Ryan, *Narrative Theory*, 180–185, citing 180.

*Formalism*.<sup>58</sup> This was further developed by *New Criticism*<sup>59</sup> which replaced the search for “original authorial intent” with that of the implied author discerned within the text. The two component parts of literary shape as story (what the narrative is about) and discourse (how the narrative is told)<sup>60</sup> emerged from *Narratology* which forms theoretical principles from specific literary texts.<sup>61</sup> The application of literary theory to biblical narratives became known as *Narrative Criticism*<sup>62</sup> looking first at Old Testament literature<sup>63</sup> before extending to the New Testament.<sup>64</sup> It is here that the exploration of Acts’ literary shape finds its home.

Saussure’s linguistic concepts<sup>65</sup> resulted in further developments of philosophical and obscure “deep-surface” meanings closer to a reader-centred approach. Although generally less relevant to exploration of a text’s literary shape, they do contain some useful ideas. The idea of symbolic meaning for spatial,

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<sup>58</sup> E.g. Viktor B. Schklovsky, *On the Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (Champaign: Dakey Archive, 1990); Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968); Pamela Jeanne Milne, *Vladimir Propp and the Study of Structure in Hebrew Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1988); Peter Steiner, *Russian Formalism: A Metapoetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978); Roman Jakobson, “A Postscript to the Discussion of the Grammar of Poetry”, *Diacritics* 10 (1980): 21–35.

<sup>59</sup> John C. Ransom, *The New Criticism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1979); William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy” and “The Affective Fallacy”, in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), 3–18, 21–39.

<sup>60</sup> Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 19, 96.

<sup>61</sup> E.g. Gerald A. Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin: Mouton, 1982); Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*; Bal, *Narratology*; Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>62</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 36, notes the interplay between Narratology and Narrative Criticism; Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 19, notes that narrative criticism has no exact counterpart outside of biblical scholarship. Cf. Joel B. Green, “Narrative Criticism”, in *Methods for Luke*, ed. Joel B. Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 74–112.

<sup>63</sup> E.g. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. William Trask (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957); Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982); Thomas R Henn, *The Bible as Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic, 1981); Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983); John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984); Sternberg, *Poetics*; Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1987); Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, trans. Dorothy Shefer-Vanson. JSOTSup 70 (Sheffield: Almond, 1989); Jerome T. Walsh, *Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

<sup>64</sup> E.g. William A. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969); Petersen, *Literary Criticism*; Leland Ryken, *Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1987); Powell, *Narrative Criticism*; Porter, “Literary Approaches”, 94–112; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*; David Rhoads, *Reading Mark: Engaging the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004); Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*.

<sup>65</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959).

temporal, and character components is taken from *Structuralism*<sup>66</sup> and the concept of narrative gaps/omissions from *Deconstructionism*.<sup>67</sup>

A study of the relationship between literary shape and significance connects with other aspects from scholarship. The idea of a deliberate arrangement of a text's structure and story for maximising significance emerges from *Literary-Rhetorical Criticism*.<sup>68</sup> However, this combines a broad spectrum of historical studies, homiletic oratory, and reader persuasion. Also, the ancient rhetorical handbooks generally apply grammatical and stylistic aspects to individual speeches (a micro literary-shape) rather than principles for a whole literary narrative.<sup>69</sup> Since Acts was written for reading aloud like other ancient books,<sup>70</sup> this study follows Robert Morgenthaler<sup>71</sup> and Philip Satterthwaite<sup>72</sup> in making a limited application of some

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<sup>66</sup> Daniel and Aline Patte, *Structural Exegesis: From Theory to Practice. Exegesis of Mark 15 and 16 Hermeneutical Implications* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 1–10. However, Structuralism's exploration of the deep structures within literary story leads into a reader-response approach which undermines literary shape as revealing theological significance. Cf. Susan Wittig, "The Historical Development of Structuralism", in *Structuralism: An Interdisciplinary Study*, ed. Susan Wittig, PRS 3 (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1975), 1–22; Daniel Patte, *Structural Exegesis for New Testament Critics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); Bill Stancil, "Structuralism", in *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*, ed. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 319–344.

<sup>67</sup> Meir Sternberg, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 50–55; James A. Redfield, "Behind Auerbach's 'Background': Five Ways to Read What Biblical Narratives Don't Say", *AJSR* 39 (2015): 121–50. However, Deconstructionism is a poststructural response arguing the textual meaning is not stable or coherent. Like structuralism it undermines a literary shape which reveals a definite theological significance. Cf. Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (New York: Methuen, 1982); G. Douglas Atkins, *Reading Deconstruction, Deconstructive Reading* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983).

<sup>68</sup> E.g. George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); Duane F. Watson, ed., *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*, JSNTSup 50 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990); Dennis L. Stamps, "Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament: Ancient and Modern Evaluations of Argumentation", in Porter and Tombs, *Approaches to New Testament Study*, 129–169; Ben Witherington, III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009).

<sup>69</sup> Rhet. Her.; Theon, *Prog.*; Quintilian, *Inst.* esp. 10; Cicero, *Inv.*; Cicero, *De or.*; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Comp.* Cf. Blake Shipp, *Paul. The Reluctant Witness: Power and Weakness in Luke's Portrayal* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 121–158.

<sup>70</sup> R. W. McCutcheon, "Silent Reading in Antiquity and the Future of the Book", *Book History* 18 (2015): 1–32, citing 11; Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 5–6; Thomas E. Boomershine, *Story Journey: An Invitation of the Gospel as Story Telling* (Oxford: Abingdon, 1988); Rhoads, *Reading Mark*, 176–200; Whitney Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2003); William D. Shiell, *The Lector and the Early Christian Audience* (Boston: Brill, 2004); Pieter J. J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 82, calculates that Acts can be performed in 120 minutes.

<sup>71</sup> Robert Morgenthaler, *Lukas und Quintilian: Rhetorik als Erzählkunst*. 2 vols. ATANT 14, 15 (Zürich: Gotthelf, 1993).

<sup>72</sup> Philip E. Satterthwaite, "Acts Against the Background of Classical Rhetoric", in Winter and Clarke, *Ancient Literary Setting*, 337–380.



rhetorical principles to Acts' literary shape.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the identification of theological significance within a text follows the macro-literary emphasis of *Composition Criticism*<sup>74</sup> and a focus on words, sentences, and paragraphs similar to the micro-literary syntax, semantics, and semiotics of *Discourse Analysis*.<sup>75</sup>

These approaches move beyond just identifying literary shape into also interpreting its significance. For Acts this involves constructing a narrative theology, but only after narrative criticism is applied to Acts in Chapter Two. The danger of reading theology into the narrative is avoided by first focusing on literary shape.

The next step clarifies how literary shape theory is developed and employed in the present study.

### 1.1.5 Development and Employment of Literary Shape Theory

In order to ground the theory within the literary milieu of Acts I first did an extensive search for Graeco-Roman literary shape theory prior to the first century AD. The only explicit literary structure concept that I found was the “Five-Act” Structure for drama proposed by the Roman poet Quintus Horatius Flaccus, known as Horace (65–8 BC).<sup>76</sup> Whilst ancient literary story concepts were more frequent it was the two comments of the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC) about story stages and sequence which stood out as especially related to literary shape.<sup>77</sup>

The overlap of poetry, epic, prose narrative, historiography, and drama in the Graeco-Roman world justifies an application of dramatic and poetic concepts to a prose narrative like Acts. There was a genre fluidity and development.<sup>78</sup> Epics told stories in poetic form,<sup>79</sup> a prose narrative style developed with historiography and

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<sup>73</sup> I am aware of the recent debate with Ben Witherington III, “‘Almost Thou Persuadest Me ...’: The Importance of Greco-Roman Rhetoric for the Understanding of the Text and Context of the NT”, *JETS* 58 (2015): 63–88; Jason A. Myers and Ben Witherington III, “Response to Stanley Porter”, *BBR* 26 (2016): 547–49, arguing I think cogently for the application of Graeco-Roman rhetoric to the NT. This is opposed by Stanley E. Porter, “When It Was Clear That We Could Not Persuade Him, We Gave Up and Said, ‘The Lord’s Will Be Done’” (Acts 21:14): Good Reasons to Stop Making Unproven Claims for Rhetorical Criticism”, *BBR* 26 (2016): 533–45; Porter, “Ben Witherington on Rhetoric One Last Time (I Hope)”, *BBR* 26 (2016): 551–52.

<sup>74</sup> Wesley A. Kort, *Story, Text and Scripture. Literary Interests in Biblical Narrative* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988); Moore, *Literary Criticism*, 10; Charles W. Puskas, *The Conclusion of Luke-Acts: The Significance of Acts 28:16–31* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009), 30–32; Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 63–65, 84–96.

<sup>75</sup> Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, eds., *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999).

<sup>76</sup> Horace, *Ars*, 189.

<sup>77</sup> Aristotle, *Poet* 7.3–6 (1450b. 25–30) and 18.1–2 (1445b.24–28).

<sup>78</sup> Adams, *Genre*, 53–57.

<sup>79</sup> Kenny, *Aristotle*, xi.

drama,<sup>80</sup> and the novel followed.<sup>81</sup> The different genres all use artistic form<sup>82</sup> and their merging was also seen within Graeco-Roman society with education advancing from basic literary to advanced rhetorical skills.<sup>83</sup> Also, the dominant orality of the Graeco-Roman culture meant that stories were written for a dramatic reading.<sup>84</sup> There was thus an interconnectivity between speaking and writing.<sup>85</sup> For these reasons scholars of Graeco-Roman literary studies proceed from the premise that dramatic and poetic concepts legitimately apply to a prose narrative.<sup>86</sup>

I therefore felt confident to use the three key ancient literary shape concepts from Horace and Aristotle (§1.2) to develop a literary shape theory. Not only were the concepts extant when Acts was written, but they are foundational for literary shape ideas employed by later literary critics and dramatists. The addition of modern literary concepts which reflect the ancient theories is both helpful and legitimate. In particular the principles from Aristotle and Horace have a long history of application within literary criticism. In the present study they are used to regulate the theoretical framework for literary shape.

Later in this chapter (§1.2.1) I outline the attempts by Renaissance literary critics to link Horace's "Five-Act" Structure to Aristotle's story stages. The twentieth century literary scholar, Gustav Freytag, classified the five parts of a narrative as an *introduction*, a *rise* (Aristotle's complication), *the central climax* (Aristotle's transformation), a *fall* (Aristotle's denouement), and a *catastrophe*.<sup>87</sup> However,

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<sup>80</sup> Consuelo Ruiz-Montero, "The Rise of the Greek Novel", in Schmeling, *Novel*, 29–85, citing 32, 45–50, 54–59.

<sup>81</sup> B. P. Reardon, "Chariton", in *The Novel in the Ancient World*, ed. Gareth Schmeling, rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 309–335; John Morgan and Stephen Harrison, "Intertextuality", in *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 219–36, citing 227.

<sup>82</sup> J. W. H. Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity: A Sketch of Its Development*, 2 vols. (London: Methuen, 1952), 1.54–55; C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry: Prolegomena to the Literary Epistles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 87; G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), 71, 240; N. J. Lowe, *The Classical Plot and the Invention of Western Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Irene J. F. de Jong, *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>83</sup> Quintilian, *Inst*, 1–2. Cf. Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 148–56.

<sup>84</sup> Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 72–73, 91, 119, 127; Ruiz-Montero, "Greek Novel", 65–70; Christopher Pelling, *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2; Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 127.

<sup>85</sup> Quintilian, *Inst*, 10.7.29. Cf. James J. Murphy, "Quintilian and Modern Writing", *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 19 (2016): 188–194.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. Kenny, *Aristotle*, xii; D. A. Russell, "Aristotle", in *Ancient Literary Criticism: The Principal Texts in New Translations*, ed. D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 85–170, citing 87.

<sup>87</sup> Freytag, *Technique of Drama*, 105, 114–140, 192–209.

Freytag makes no reference to Horace and seems to expand Aristotle's story stages rather than suggest a literary structure. Daniel Marguerat attributes the origin of an explicit quinquipartite scheme to Paul Larivaille's later work. However, Larivaille primarily discusses the literary story stages of *avant* (before), *pendant* (during) or *transformation* (in three parts of provocation, action, sanction), and *après* (after).<sup>88</sup> The relationship of structure and story stages is problematic. It is possible to note the conceptual story stages without having precise structural divisions. For this reason I use Aristotle's story stages to organise the ancient and modern Ending (§1.3.1), Beginning (§1.3.2) and Middle (§1.3.3) literary concepts.

The employment of Horace and Aristotle's concepts by modern literary critics and screenwriters varies from a *three-part* or "*Three-Act*" structure loosely based on Aristotle's concept to those who attempt to integrate Horace's "Five-Act" Structure.<sup>89</sup> John Yorke attributes the first articulation of a "Three-Act" Structure to Syd Field.<sup>90</sup> However, rather than divide the work into three equal parts, the modern literary critics and screenwriters follow a symmetrical arrangement into Part One (25%), Part Two (50%), and Part Three (25%) which is more concerned with story parts.<sup>91</sup> Those using a "Five-Act" Structure subdivide the middle Part Two into three "Acts II, III, and IV".<sup>92</sup> However, if the longer Part Two is retained then the equally division of the three middle Acts will mean they are each 16.666...% of the narrative. I apply this heuristic structural overlay to Acts in Chapter Two.<sup>93</sup>

Diagram II (p.44) integrates the concepts of Horace and Aristotle with those from Freytag and modern literary critics/screenwriters. The next section outlines the three key foundational ancient literary shape concepts in more detail.

## 1.2 Three Key Foundational Concepts from Horace and Aristotle

The present study states the three key ancient concepts of Horace and Aristotle upfront in order to organise the wider field of Graeco-Roman literary criticism within

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<sup>88</sup> Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*. 43; Cf. Paul Larivaille, "L'analyse (morpho) logique du récit", *Poétique* 19 (1974): 368–388, citing 386–87.

<sup>89</sup> Jennine Lanouette, "A History of Three-Act Structure", <https://www.screentakes.com/an-evolutionary-study-of-the-three-act-structure-model-in-drama/>; Gabe Moura, "The Three-Act Structure", <http://www.elementsofcinema.com/screenwriting/three-act-structure/>; Stephen Cannell, "What is the Three Act Structure?", <https://www.writerswrite.com/screenwriting/cannell/lecture4/>.

<sup>90</sup> Yorke, *Into the Woods*, 26; Syd Field, *The Screenwriter's Workbook*, rev. ed. (New York: Delta Trade, 2006), 44–45.

<sup>91</sup> Field, *Screenwriters Workbook*, 193–209, divides his middle "Act II" into a first and second half around the midpoint.

<sup>92</sup> Yorke, *Into the Woods*, 33–36.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.4.2, pp.67–74).

which they were discovered. The concepts also connect the ancient and modern literary shape into an overlapping framework for structure and story. Dealing first with literary structure means Horace's concept is considered first followed by Aristotle's earlier literary story concepts.

### 1.2.1 Horace's "Five-Act Structure"

The earliest extant reference to a "Five-Act Structure" is by Horace, ca. 10–8 BC, who states,

*neue minor neu sit quinto production actu fabula* (let no play be either shorter or longer than five acts). (*Ars poetica*, 189 [Fairclough, LCL]).

This has a long history of interpretation within literary criticism, but T. W. Baldwin's work from 1947 remains the most recent definitive study and is relied upon for the summary which follows.<sup>94</sup> Horace does not explain whether his rule is a reference to structure or story.<sup>95</sup> Structure seems more likely since the quotation is one of a series of separate comments about the performance of stories on stage.<sup>96</sup> The "Acts" therefore divide the drama into distinct parts. It is unclear whether the "Five-Act Structure" originates from Greek literary theory<sup>97</sup> or later Roman dramatic practice.<sup>98</sup> Also although choruses were later used as an interlude marking act-divisions, they were first used as part of the drama itself.<sup>99</sup>

The earlier Roman playwright, Publius Terentius Afer, known as Terence (195–159 BC), is sometimes cited as the originator of the rule.<sup>100</sup> However, this is unproven, since even though discernible in his plays, Terence does not mention the

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<sup>94</sup> T. W. Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Five-Act Structure: Shakspeare's Early Plays on the Background of Renaissance Theories of Five-Act Structure from 1470* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1947), 65. Cf. reviews by H. S. Wilson, *Modern Language Notes* 63 (1948): 494–96; J. M. Nosworthy, *Review of English Studies*, 25 (1949): 359–61; Clifford Leech, *Modern Language Review*, 42 (1948), 494–96.

<sup>95</sup> C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry: The 'Ars Poetica'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 248.

<sup>96</sup> Horace, *Ars* 179–201.

<sup>97</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act Structure*, 65.

<sup>98</sup> Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity*, 2.86; Andrew Laird, "The *Ars Poetica*", in *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*, ed. Stephen Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 132–43, citing 133–35; Brink, *Prolegomena*, 43–74.

<sup>99</sup> W. Beare, "Horace, Donatus and the Five-Act Law", *Herm* 67 (1946): 52–59, citing 52–56.

<sup>100</sup> E.g. Yorke, *Into the Woods*, 34.

“Five-Act Structure”.<sup>101</sup> Also Horace makes no mention of Terence. It is not until the fourth/fifth century AD that the Roman grammarian, Donatus, connects Terence (without mention of Horace) to the “Five-Act Structure”<sup>102</sup> for presenting Greek literary works on stage.<sup>103</sup>

Aristotle seems to influence Horace,<sup>104</sup> though Horace does not directly refer to him.<sup>105</sup> It is unclear how the quinquepartite Latin drama divisions correlate with Aristotle’s tripartite story concepts (see §1.2.2 below).<sup>106</sup> The structure and story often overlap. For example, Aristotle’s inclusion of choruses in the drama with five anatomical divisions of prologue, parade (chorus), episode, stasimon (chorus), and exode<sup>107</sup> possibly makes a “Five-Act Structure”. Donatus delineates the three parts of a play after the prologue as “protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe”.<sup>108</sup>

The debate over structure and story continues with the fifteenth and sixteenth century AD literary critics who, like Philipp Melanchthon, apply “protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe” to “Acts I, III, and V” respectively.<sup>109</sup> However, “Acts II and IV” as connecting links were more difficult to identify.<sup>110</sup> Renaissance literary critics, such as Christoforo Landino, Jacobus Latomus, and Josse Willich, put “Acts I and II” together into the beginning and “Acts III and IV” together into the middle.<sup>111</sup> “Act II” is seen as completing the beginning<sup>112</sup> and “Act IV” as preparing for the ending.<sup>113</sup> However, as Baldwin points out, “Acts I, III, and V” are the crucial ones<sup>114</sup> and the attempt to force the “Five-Act Structure” into the tripartite story

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<sup>101</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 9–27. Cf. Terence, *The Comedies*, trans. Betty Radice (London: Penguin, 1976).

<sup>102</sup> Donatus, *Euanthius* 3.1–2 (Wessner, 1.18–19), *Eunuchus*, Praef. 1.5–5\* (Wessner 1.265–66), *Adelphoe* 1.3–4 (Wessner 2.4); Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 28–52.

<sup>103</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 29–31.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Rutherford, “Poetics and Literary Criticism”, in Harrison, *Horace*, 248–261, citing 248.

<sup>105</sup> Marvin. T. Herrick, “The Fusion of Horatian and Aristotelian Literary Criticism, 1531–1555”. *Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* 32 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1946), 3; Tobias Reinhardt, “The *Ars Poetica*”, in *Brill’s Companion to Horace*, ed. Hans-Christian Günther (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 499–526, citing, 505.

<sup>106</sup> Nosworthy, “Review”, 359.

<sup>107</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 12. 15–27. Cf. Herrick, “Fusion”, 91; Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 53–54; Brink, *Ars Poetica*, 248.

<sup>108</sup> Donatus, *Euanthius* 4.5 (Wessner, 1.22); Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 33–34.

<sup>109</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 176–78, for Melanchthon’s edition of Terence (1528).

<sup>110</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 227.

<sup>111</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 115–16, for Landino’s edition of Horace (1482); 227, for Latomus’s edition of Terence (1534); 239, for Willich(us)’s edition of Horace (1539). Cf. Leech, “Review”, 502–503.

<sup>112</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 239, citing Willich(us) (1539).

<sup>113</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 223, citing Latomus (1534).

<sup>114</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 311.

divisions of beginning, middle, and ending is unnecessary.<sup>115</sup> This chapter explores later how literary critics such as Freytag and also recent dramatists develop Horace's "Five-Act Structure".

The second foundational literary shape concept is from Aristotle.

### 1.2.2 Aristotle's "Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)"

Aristotle states ca. 335 BC,

ὅλον δέ ἐστιν τὸ ἔχον ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσον καὶ τελευτήν. ἀρχὴ δέ ἐστιν ὃ αὐτὸ μὲν μὴ ἐξ ἀνάγκης μετ' ἄλλο ἐστίν, μετ' ἐκεῖνο δ' ἕτερον πέφυκεν εἶναι ἢ γίνεσθαι: τελευτὴ δὲ τοῦναντίον ὃ αὐτὸ μὲν μετ' ἄλλο πέφυκεν εἶναι ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο ἄλλο οὐδέν: μέσον δὲ ὃ καὶ αὐτὸ μετ' ἄλλο καὶ μετ' ἐκεῖνο ἕτερον. (A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and end. A beginning is that which does not itself follow necessarily from something else, but after which a further event or process naturally occurs. An end by contrast, is that which itself naturally occurs, whether necessarily or usually, after a preceding event, but need not be followed by anything else. A middle is that which both follows a preceding event and has further consequences). *Poetics*, 7.3–6 (1450b. 25–30 [Halliwell, LCL]).

The immediate context is about writing a tragedy. Aristotle's succeeding comment that "stories (plots) that are well-constructed should not begin (and end) at some arbitrary point (random) but should conform to the stated pattern (formulae)"<sup>116</sup> suggests that his beginning, middle, and end(ing)<sup>117</sup> connects to story stages rather than structure. The terms ἀρχή and μέσος can indicate structural starts or middles respectively. However, τελευτή is probably a reference to a conceptual closure<sup>118</sup> rather than using the alternative ἔσχατος which indicates a temporal or spatial conclusion.<sup>119</sup> The third foundational literary shape concept is also from Aristotle.

<sup>115</sup> Baldwin, *Five-Act*, 198.

<sup>116</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 7.7 (1450b. 31–33) [Kenny, OUP, alternative translation in brackets by Fyfe, LCL].

<sup>117</sup> *Ending* is used rather than end throughout this study as the overall literary term combining both a structural *finish* and a story *closure*.

<sup>118</sup> LSJ, τελευτ-αῖος, 1771, as finish, accomplishment, completion. The use of time suggesting the "last day". Cf. BDAG, τελευτή, 997, marking the point when something ceases to exist. Also an euphemism for death (Matt 2:15).

<sup>119</sup> LSJ, ἔσχατος, 699–700. Cf. BDAG, ἔσχατος, 397–98, Acts 1:8; 13:47.

### 1.2.3 Aristotle's "Complication, Transformation, and Denouement"

Aristotle states,

ἔστι δὲ πάσης τραγωδίας τὸ μὲν δέσις τὸ δὲ λύσις, τὰ μὲν ἔξωθεν καὶ ἔνια τῶν ἔσωθεν πολλάκις ἢ δέσις, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἢ λύσις: λέγω δὲ δέσιν μὲν εἶναι τὴν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μέχρι τούτου τοῦ μέρους ὃ ἔσχατόν ἐστιν ἐξ οὗ μεταβαίνει εἰς εὐτυχίαν ἢ εἰς ἀτυχίαν, λύσιν δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς μεταβάσεως μέχρι τέλους. (Every tragedy has both a complication and denouement: the complication comprises events outside the play, and often some of those within it; the remainder is the denouement. I define the complication as extending from the beginning to the furthest point before the transformation to prosperity or adversity; and the denouement as extending from the beginning of the transformation till the end). (*Poetics*, 18.1–2 (1445b.24–28 [Halliwell, LCL])).

For Aristotle the δέσις (tying up) and λύσις (loosing) are two processes mapping the story's plot development. The tying up or *complication* develops from the beginning to the middle and the loosing or *denouement* from the middle to the end. The μετάβασις is the *transformation* or change taking place in the middle and moves the story to a *denouement* or explication.<sup>120</sup> Notably for Aristotle *denouement* is a neutral term bringing a story's plot to a satisfactory conclusion of prosperity or adversity depending on whether the preceding *complication* is negative or positive. This foundational principle applies to literary shape in the progression as a journey to the ending from the beginning through the middle. Also the transitional midpoint of the story and each "Act" produces an episodic rhythm in a series of climaxes.<sup>121</sup> These are also called story peaks and troughs, or in this study, *advances* and *declines*, in contrast to a pyramid-shaped rise and fall or a straight line ascending progression. There is also the possibility that the overall plot is made up of a number of sub-plots.<sup>122</sup>

The three foundational principles organise the material from a wider exploration of ancient and modern literary shape concepts.

<sup>120</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 18.1–2 (1445b.24–28) [Halliwell, LCL, "denouement"; Kenny, OUP, "explication"].

<sup>121</sup> John Gardner, *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 188.

<sup>122</sup> Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 52–55.

### 1.3 Ancient and Modern Literary Shape Concepts

The present study uses the three stages of ending, beginning, and middle to explore structure (Horace), story (Aristotle), journey or progression (Aristotle), and the resulting significance. Additional Graeco-Roman material supplements the literary shape theory under construction and modern literary studies develop it further.<sup>123</sup> There are two complementary and often inter-related scholarly approaches using either literary theory handbooks or actual works of literature. Although the works of literature are often genre-specific there is a transference of concepts with some qualification to a broader application. Given the size of the task it is fortunate that there are seminal works on literary endings and beginnings to build on. Literary middles have less written on them and therefore need more introductory material.

#### 1.3.1 Literary Ending Concepts

Aristotle identifies an end(ing) as “that which itself naturally occurs, whether necessarily or usually, after a preceding event, but need not be followed by anything else”.<sup>124</sup> The end of the story is both a connection to what precedes it and a conclusion to the work. For clarity the present study uses four key distinct terms: (1) *ending* as an overall term combining both structure and story shape; (2) *finish* as the final section or statement of the structure; (3) *closure* as the conclusion of the literary story or plot, and (4) *culmination* as the resulting completion of literary significance. Other literary ending concepts used in this study are highlighted in italics. They relate to the structure, story, journey or progression, and significance.

*The ending as the structure’s finish* is not generally referred to by Graeco-Roman literary critics. However, the Roman rhetorician Quintilian uses the ending concept for both structure and significance. He states that a peroration at the end of a judicial speech functions both as recapitulation and an emotional appeal.<sup>125</sup> Quintilian also notes that the last word is frequently the most emphatic.<sup>126</sup>

*The ending as the story’s closure* raises the question whether the ending is incomplete (open) or complete (closed). I am indebted to Troy Troftgruben’s work

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<sup>123</sup> Andrew Laird, “The Value of Ancient Literary Criticism”, in *Ancient Literary Criticism*, ed. Andrew Laird (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1–36. See Chapter Two (§2.2.2.2, p.56).

<sup>124</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 7.5 (1450b. 28–29) [Halliwell, LCL].

<sup>125</sup> Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.1.1–8; 6.1.9–55.

<sup>126</sup> Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.4.29–30.



which uses Acts' genre possibilities<sup>127</sup> to study the endings of Graeco-Roman prose fiction,<sup>128</sup> biography,<sup>129</sup> epic,<sup>130</sup> and historiography.<sup>131</sup> He concludes that all have examples of open and closed endings. Epics often interweave open and closed features to link a self-contained narrative with a larger story beyond the narrative.<sup>132</sup> Troftgruben uses "closed" and "closure" synonymously<sup>133</sup> rather than distinguishing between *closed* (complete) *closure* and *open* (incomplete) *closure*. Deliberately leaving foreshadowed outcomes incomplete is a Graeco-Roman device for engaging the readers.<sup>134</sup> Michal Dinkler links this to the modern psychological "Zeigarnik Effect" in which something unfinished is better remembered.<sup>135</sup>

Clarity over terminology for literary concepts is essential. Literary critics use *closure* in various ways<sup>136</sup> and debate whether *closure* is about "signification" (meaning) or "configuration" (method).<sup>137</sup> These are not easily separated since all literary shape has significance. This study differentiates between a structural *finish* of

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<sup>127</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*. I replicate his approach later in this chapter with ancient literary beginnings (§1.3.2, pp.32–34) and middles (§1.3.3, pp.38–41).

<sup>128</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 62–71, cites Chariton, *Chaer.*; Xenophon of Ephesus, *An Ephesian Tale*; Longus, *Daphn.*; Achilles Tatius, *Leuc. Clit.*; and Heliodorus, *Aeth.* as examples of closed endings. Cf. Adams, *Genre*, 236–37.

<sup>129</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 71–80, cites Plutarch, *Cat. Min.* as an example of a closed ending. Cf. Adams, *Genre*, 237–42, notes a sense of conclusion with the death of a character in an individual biography, but a more open ending in collected biographies such as Jerome, *Vir. Ill.*; Diogenes Laertius, *Eminent Philosophers*; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.*

<sup>130</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 84–85, 93, cites Homer, *Od.* as an example of closed ending and, 81–84, 93; and Homer, *Il.* and Virgil, *Aen.* as combining elements of closed and open endings. Cf. Adams, *Genre*, 233–35.

<sup>131</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 94–98, cites Herodotus, *Hist.* as an example of an open ending and, 98–105, 112; and Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*; Sallust, *Bell. Cat* and *Bell. Jug.* as examples of closed endings with a hint of openness. Cf. Adams, *Genre*, 235–36.

<sup>132</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 81–84, 93, cites Homer, *Il.* and Virgil, *Aen.* Cf. Hooker, *Endings*, 4.

<sup>133</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 59, Table 1.

<sup>134</sup> Cicero, *De or.* 2.41:177; Plutarch, *Mor.* 1.45E; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Act.* 55 (Acts 28. 17–20), (Schaff, 455).

<sup>135</sup> Michal Beth Dinkler, "The Acts of the Apostles", in *The Gospels and Acts*, ed. Margaret Aymer, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and David A. Sánchez, FBC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 327–63, citing 361.

<sup>136</sup> For discussion Don Fowler, "Second Thoughts on Closure", in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*, ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn and Don Fowler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3–22. Of a reader-response (Fowler, "Second Thoughts", 3, and the "enclosure" of a work by its beginning and ending (Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 30–31).

<sup>137</sup> Peter J. Rabinowitz, "Reading Beginnings and Endings", in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure and Frames*, ed. Brian Richardson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 300–313, citing 303. Cf. D. A. Millar, *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), xi, distinguishing between *ending* of form and *closure* of function.

the text and *closure*, as the meaning or completion of the plot.<sup>138</sup> This distinguishes between “merely ceasing” a narrative and “concluding” it.<sup>139</sup>

Further nuances for *closure* include the difference between a *postscript* which is outside the narrative story<sup>140</sup> and an *epilogue* which is inside.<sup>141</sup> An *epilogue* is a broader *overview or summary ending* distinguished from a *close-up scenic ending* that is an integral part of the story.<sup>142</sup> Two features of closure are “conflicts are resolved”<sup>143</sup> and “questions answered”.<sup>144</sup> James Phelan calls these *arrival* (resolution) and *exposition* (closing background and orientation)<sup>145</sup> and adds *farewell* (concluding exchanges between author and audience) and “completion” (reader’s response) in his four aspects of ending.<sup>146</sup> Closure is a relative matter ranging from “the gentle but firm, through slammed shut, to locked and bolted”.<sup>147</sup> The weakest “surprising or a disappointing end” is an *anti-climax* with “closural inadequacy”<sup>148</sup> and the strongest an *epigrammatic closure* as the last word on the subject.<sup>149</sup>

*The ending’s connection to the story’s journey or progression* equates with Aristotle’s idea of denouement. Freytag makes a brief mention of Aristotle’s “turn in action” (transformation) as having an incomplete outline, but makes no connection with his own five part pyramidal arrangement. His arrangement concludes with a *fall/return* leading into *catastrophe*<sup>150</sup> which like denouement now carries negative connotations of a literary decline. However, for Freytag the terms were neutral. J. R. R. Tolkien proposes the term *eucatastrophe* for a plot’s positive resolution.<sup>151</sup> Neither Aristotle nor Horace favour the sudden or unexpected story ending of a *deus*

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<sup>138</sup> Torgovnick, *Closure*, 6–7.

<sup>139</sup> Barbara H. Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), 1–2.

<sup>140</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 71, e.g. John 21:24–25.

<sup>141</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 72, e.g. Job 42:12–17.

<sup>142</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 72–3. Cf. Torgovnick, *Closure*, 14–16.

<sup>143</sup> Gerald A. Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 65.

<sup>144</sup> Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 17.

<sup>145</sup> James Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction – Judgements, Progressions and Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 20; Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 75; James Phelan, “The Beginning of the Beloved”, in Richardson, *Narrative Beginnings*, 195–212.

<sup>146</sup> Phelan, *Experiencing*, 20–21.

<sup>147</sup> Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 196.

<sup>148</sup> Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 213, 222.

<sup>149</sup> Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 208, as a gravestone’s epitaph.

<sup>150</sup> Freytag, *Technique of Drama*, 115, 135–40.

<sup>151</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, “On Fairy Stories”, in *Tree and Leaf*, repr. (London: Grafton, 1992), 9–73, citing 62–64.

*ex machina* caused by the outside intervention of a god, but argue that the plot's resolution should naturally arise from the story itself.<sup>152</sup>

Modern literary critics evaluate the ending as part of an artistic whole connected to the beginning and middle.<sup>153</sup> Marianna Torgovnick outlines the five ways an ending connects to the rest of the narrative as *parallelism* (a connection to the whole text), *tangential* (a new topic introduced at the end), *linkage* (a connection to another literary work often unwritten), *circularity* (a connection to the beginning), and *incompletion* (no connection to the beginning).<sup>154</sup> This study uses *parallelism* of the broader category of connections made by Acts' Middle to the whole work. A new term *accumulation* is coined to distinguish the progressive build-up of the ending's connections.

Boris Uspensky's *framing* concept is a "bird's eye view" of the beginning and ending as the borders of an internal world separate from an external point of view.<sup>155</sup> He argues this has special relevance for religious cultures.<sup>156</sup> The ending is "a freezing in pose like a Chinese theatre where at the end of an act the actors assume special poses to form a 'tableau vivant'".<sup>157</sup> The present study uses *framing* specifically of similarities that appear at the beginning and ending of a narrative in what Uspensky calls "the plane of phraseology".<sup>158</sup> It is a reasonable hypothesis that significance increases at the furthest extremities of framing.

*The ending as the significance's culmination* links to a number of concepts. The concept of *denouement* or resolution of the ending often reveals the overall theme of the story.<sup>159</sup> The concept of *retrospective patterning*<sup>160</sup> is a narrative perspective from the ending, reinterpreting expectations created and having a big rhetorical impact on the reader. It links to a backwards reading introduced later in this chapter. The concept of what Barbara Smith calls "a paratactic structure" arranges the narrative by *thematic* repetition rather than a sequential coherence.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 15.38–45 (1454a.33–1454b.9); Horace, *Ars* 191–192.

<sup>153</sup> Torgovnick, *Closure*, 6; Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 65.

<sup>154</sup> Torgovnick, *Closure*, 13.

<sup>155</sup> Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*, trans. Valentina Zavarin and Susan Wittig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 63–64, 137–46.

<sup>156</sup> Uspensky, *Poetics*, 137–38.

<sup>157</sup> Uspensky, *Poetics*, 150.

<sup>158</sup> Uspensky, *Poetics*, 150.

<sup>159</sup> Michael Tierno, *Aristotle's Poetics for Screenwriters: Storytelling Secrets from the Greatest Mind in Western Civilisation* (New York: Hyperion, 2002), 11.

<sup>160</sup> Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 10–14, 119, 212, 218; Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 63.

<sup>161</sup> Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 98, 99.

David Richter extends this to fables or rhetorical fictions whose structure is generated not by plot, but by doctrines, themes or theses.<sup>162</sup> Thematic and sequential arrangements can co-exist.<sup>163</sup> For this study the *thematic* is joined to the *paradigmatic* application. Frank Kermode suggests the ending is a philosophical concept of death and apocalyptic expectation.<sup>164</sup> The text's ending may hint at, omit, or deliberately ignore an *aftermath* beyond it.<sup>165</sup> As Don Fowler suggests "all works leave things undone as well as done; all great works have that paradox at the core of their greatness".<sup>166</sup> A dialectic of ending and continuance allows readers the choice of a number of endings.<sup>167</sup>

A similar approach identifies the key concepts of literary beginning theory.

### 1.3.2 Literary Beginning Concepts

The three key foundational concepts from Horace and Aristotle again organise this study of Graeco-Roman and modern literary beginning concepts. There are significant seminal works of classical<sup>168</sup> and modern beginnings,<sup>169</sup> but literary beginning theory is less developed than ending theory,<sup>170</sup> especially in historical narratives.<sup>171</sup> A brief survey of actual ancient beginnings mirrors Troftgruben's approach to endings. For clarity the present study uses four key distinct terms: (1) *beginning* (cf. *ending*) as an overall term combining both structure and story shape; (2) *start* (cf. *finish*) as the first statement or section of the structure; (3) *opening* (cf. *closure*)<sup>172</sup> as the beginning of literary story or plot; and (4) *foundation* (cf. *culmination*) as the commencement of significance. Other literary beginning

<sup>162</sup> David H. Richter, *Fable's End: Completeness and Closure in Rhetorical Fiction* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974), vii, 17.

<sup>163</sup> Richter, *Fable's End*, 18.

<sup>164</sup> Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction with a New Epilogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Cf. Walter B. Crouch, *Death and Closure in Biblical Narrative*, StBibLit 7 (New York: Lang, 2000).

<sup>165</sup> Deborah H. Roberts, "Afterword: Ending and Aftermath, Ancient and Modern", in Roberts, Dunn, and Fowler, *Classical Closure*, 251–273, citing 257.

<sup>166</sup> Don Fowler, "First Thoughts on Closure: Problems and Prospects", *MD* 22 (1989): 75–122, citing 79.

<sup>167</sup> Fowler, "Second Thoughts", 5, 21.

<sup>168</sup> Francis M. Dunn and Thomas Cole, eds., *Beginnings in Classical Literature*, YCS 29 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>169</sup> Richardson, *Narrative Beginnings*.

<sup>170</sup> James Phelan, "Beginnings and Endings: Theories and Typologies of How Novels Open and Close", in *Encyclopedia of the Novel*, ed. Paul Schellinger, 2 vols. (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998), 1:96–99, citing 97.

<sup>171</sup> Philippe Carrard, "Beginnings, Historical Narrative, and the Outbreak of World War II", in Richardson, *Narrative Beginnings*, 63–78, citing 63.

<sup>172</sup> For the sake of clarity note that Phelan, *Experiencing*, 17, uses "opening" differently for what in this study is a structural *start* and "beginning" for what in this study is called a story *opening*.

concepts used in this study are given in italics. They relate to the structure, story, journey or progression, and significance.

*The beginning as the structure's start* does not appear among Graeco-Roman literary critics. However, the first words were often used to identify the work and became the title.<sup>173</sup>

*The beginning as the story's opening* is according to Aristotle “that which does not itself follow necessarily from something else, but after which a further event or process naturally occurs”.<sup>174</sup> This identifies a beginning as both a commencement and a connection to what follows. Aristotle’s comment, that “the *complication* comprises events outside the play and often some of those within it”,<sup>175</sup> suggests a distinction between the literary *start* and the story *opening*. Horace prefers the beginning of the discourse as *in medias res* (“into the middle of things”)<sup>176</sup> part way through a larger story beyond the text rather than *ab ovo* (“from the egg”)<sup>177</sup> with story and discourse beginning at the same time. A story which begins outside the start of the text is an *open* (incomplete) *opening* and a story which begins with the text is a *closed* (complete) *opening*.

Scholars often use the terms *prologue* and *preface* interchangeably when referring to the beginning of Graeco-Roman works. However, a helpful distinction is that a *prologue* is an internal part of the story often as a *close-up scenic beginning* and a *preface* is external to the story<sup>178</sup> often as an *overview or summary beginning* which gives a point of entry to precede, initiate, and influence the reader’s experience.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Diskin Clay, “Plato’s First Words”, in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 113–130, citing 113.

<sup>174</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 7.6–7 (1450b. 26–27) [Halliwell, LCL].

<sup>175</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 18.1 (1455b. 23–24) [Halliwell, LCL].

<sup>176</sup> Horace, *Ars* 147. Fairclough, LCL, translates as “into the story’s midst”. This use of “*in medias res*” needs to be distinguished from the modern literary use of it for a beginning that starts in the middle of the literary story and then proceeds from an earlier chronological perspective. Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 45–47.

<sup>177</sup> Horace, *Ars* 148. Fairclough, LCL, translates *gemino ... ab ovo* as “twin eggs” referring to the birth of Helen of Troy from an egg in Greek mythology as the beginning of the Trojan War story].

<sup>178</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 50.

<sup>179</sup> Marilyn Edelstein, “Before the Beginning: Nabokov and the Rhetoric of the Preface”, in Richardson, *Narrative Beginnings*, 29–43, citing 29, 30, 40.

Commenting on epic poems, Aristotle notes that:

the exordia provide a sample of the subject, in order that the hearers may know beforehand what it is about, and that the mind may not be kept in suspense, for that which is undefined leads astray; so then he who puts the beginning, so to say, into the hearer's hand enables him, if he holds fast to it, to follow the story (*Rhet.*, III: 14. 6.1–5 (1415a, 17–21) [Freese, LCL]).

Similarly Quintilian notes that a speech's *exordium* makes the hearer favourable towards what follows.<sup>180</sup>

In Hellenistic literature the *proem* usually gives the thematic and programmatic reasons for the work<sup>181</sup> together with a brief mention of the patron who then disappears leaving an ambiguous relationship with the author.<sup>182</sup> Lucian calls for a *preface* proportionate to the work and rejects long *prefaces* followed by weak narratives.<sup>183</sup> He points out that a *preface* is not always required and that the best historians use it to hold attention and offer instruction.<sup>184</sup> The Greek literary *preface* often includes<sup>185</sup> an authorial first person,<sup>186</sup> a dedication to a named second person,<sup>187</sup> and a recapitulation or summary of the previous book in the series.<sup>188</sup>

A brief survey of Graeco-Roman narrative beginnings follows Troftgruben's four genres closest to Acts.

*Prose fiction* often begins with a *preface* written in the authorial first person.<sup>189</sup> Chariton's *Callirhoe* and Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* use a framing device at

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<sup>180</sup> Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.1.5.

<sup>181</sup> Gian Biagio Conte, "Proems in the Middle", in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 147–160, citing 149.

<sup>182</sup> Barbara K. Gold, "Openings in Horace's *Satires* and *Odes*: Poet, Patron and Audience", in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 161–86, citing 164, 167.

<sup>183</sup> Lucian, *How to Write History* 6.23.1–6.

<sup>184</sup> Lucian, *How to Write History* 6.52.1–6; 53.1–7; 54.1–10.

<sup>185</sup> Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, SNTSMS 70, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 108–109, analyses the opening features as a title, opening formulae, and prologue/preface.

<sup>186</sup> Loveday C. A. Alexander, "The Preface to Acts and the Historians", in *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles*, LNTS 298 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 21–42, citing 29.

<sup>187</sup> Alexander, "Preface to Acts", 30–32, examples of Josephus, *Ant.*; Apollodorus, *Chronica*; Berossos and Manetho; Aristippus, *Libyan History* (Diogenes Laertius, *Eminent Philosophers* 2.83); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.4.3.

<sup>188</sup> Alexander, "Preface to Acts", 32–34; Cf. Darryl W. Palmer, "The Literary Background of Acts 1:1–14", *NTS* 33 (1987): 427–438, citing 427, examples of Polybius, Didorus Siculus, Philo and Artemidorus (without giving the specific works).

<sup>189</sup> E.g. Chariton, *Chaer.*, Longus, *Daphn.*

the beginning and ending of their work.<sup>190</sup> The latter starts “in medias res” of the chronological story.<sup>191</sup> Xenophon of Ephesus’s *Ephesian Tale* has an opening prophecy which shapes the resulting narrative.<sup>192</sup>

*Biographies* may have a title and name,<sup>193</sup> with or without a *preface*,<sup>194</sup> a brief<sup>195</sup> or longer formal *prologue/proem*.<sup>196</sup> They often have connective openings to earlier works.<sup>197</sup> Some of the prologues in Plutarch’s *Lives*, are thematically organised and operate more on the level of the whole book rather than the individual lives.<sup>198</sup>

*Epics* often have incomplete and imprecise beginnings with an impersonal voice<sup>199</sup> from outside the story.<sup>200</sup> As a result the epic often adds key explanatory material later in the work.<sup>201</sup> The *Odyssey* is an example of a beginning that starts in the middle of the literary story and then proceeds to an earlier chronological perspective.<sup>202</sup> Greek tragedies begin with *prologues*<sup>203</sup> which are suppliant (arousing sympathy and creating a crisis), conspiratorial (an absent or silent protagonist), or

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<sup>190</sup> Heliodorus, *Aeth.* begins and ends in Ethiopia; Chariton, *Chaer*, with the reunion of the lovers Chaereas and Callirhoe. Cf. Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale*, which begins and ends in Ephesus.

<sup>191</sup> Clinton Walker Keyes, “The Structure of Heliodorus’ *Aethiopica*”, *Studies in Philology* 19 (1922): 42–51, citing 44.

<sup>192</sup> J. Bradley Chance, “Divine Prognostications and the Movement of Story: An Intertextual Exploration of Xenophon’s *Ephesian Tale* and the Acts of the Apostles”, in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative*, ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance and Judith Perkins, SBLSymS 6 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 219–234, suggests that Acts 1:8 functions in a similar way.

<sup>193</sup> Burridge, *Gospels*, 156–57, examples of Lucian, *Demon*, and Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.*

<sup>194</sup> Burridge, *Gospels*, 130, example of Nepos, *Att.*

<sup>195</sup> Burridge, *Gospels*, 130, example of Xenophon, *Ages*. 1.1.

<sup>196</sup> Burridge, *Gospels*, 129–30, example of Isocrates, *Evag.* (*Or.* 9) 1–11. Cf. Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, “Beginnings in Plutarch’s *Lives*”, in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 205–30, citing 227, 214.

<sup>197</sup> Adams, *Genre*, 124–25, examples of Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.1; Plutarch, *Aem.* 1.1; Diogenes Laertius, *Emminent Philosophers* 4.1.

<sup>198</sup> Timothy E. Duff, “The Structure of the Plutarchan Book”, *Classical Antiquity* 30 (2011): 213–78, citing 218–42, notes that thirteen of the twenty-two *Parallel Lives* have an opening *prologue*; Duff, “The Prologues”, in *A Companion to Plutarch*, ed. Mark Beck (Chichester: Blackwell, 2014), 333–49, distinguishes between formal prologues which introduce both lives and informal prologues (proemial) which are biographical of one life.

<sup>199</sup> Alexander, “Preface to Acts”, 29.

<sup>200</sup> Charles Segal, “Tragic Beginnings”, 85.

<sup>201</sup> Victoria Pedrick, “The Muse Corrects: The Opening of the *Odyssey*”, in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 39–62, citing 39, example of Homer, *Od.*; Conte, “Proems in the Middle”, 152–3, example of Virgil, *Aen.*

<sup>202</sup> David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1992), 75, refers to this as the modern sense of “in medias res”. See the previous discussion at §1.3.2, p.31, n.176.

<sup>203</sup> Charles Segal, “Tragic Beginnings: Narration, Voice and Authority in the Prologues of Greek Drama”, in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 85–112, citing 85.

detached (separate to the story).<sup>204</sup> The detached *prologue* often contains a detached speech giving a strong temporal continuity between the past and the future.<sup>205</sup>

*Historiography* begins either at an arbitrary point<sup>206</sup> or with “a false-start recusatio”<sup>207</sup> which starts with one story or theme before leaving it unfinished for another version or topic. Often a *proem* gives the temporal start a purpose/method<sup>208</sup> and/or a literary/ideological reason.<sup>209</sup> The spectrum of historiographical styles undermines Loveday Alexander’s opinion that the summary is more common in philosophical or scientific enquiry than historiography.<sup>210</sup> For example, Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* and Herodian, *History of the Empire*, have opening outlines for their work.<sup>211</sup>

Modern literary beginning concepts include the idea of an opening, entry-way, or *threshold* into the story-world<sup>212</sup> as *interactional* (invitation to readers), *intertextual* (reference to other texts), or *intratextual* (introduction to the author’s narrative world).<sup>213</sup> The beginning’s summary mode and explanatory role<sup>214</sup> provides the reader or hearer with an *exposition* of the initial background and orientation.<sup>215</sup> This includes the “who, when, what, where, and how” of the narrative<sup>216</sup> which construct the story components in Chapter Two. Two key questions are where the beginning starts and where it finishes.

The start of a beginning involves *discursive* (the discourse or literary beginning), *chronological* (the story’s beginning), or *causal* (the plot’s beginning)

<sup>204</sup> Segal, “Tragic Beginnings”, 99–110.

<sup>205</sup> Segal, “Tragic Beginnings”, 108–110, examples of Euripedes, *Hipp.* and Sophocles, *Aj.*

<sup>206</sup> Francis M. Dunn, “Introduction: Beginning at Colonus”, in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 1–12, citing 11–12, example of Tacitus, *Agr.*

<sup>207</sup> Hayden Pelliccia, “Sappho 16, Gorgias’ *Helen*, and the Preface to Herodotus’ *Histories*”, in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 63–84, citing 65, 84, example of Herodotus, *Hist.*

<sup>208</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 50–51, examples of Herodotus, *Hist.*; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*; and Livy, *History*.

<sup>209</sup> Thomas Cole, “Initium mihi operis Servius Galba iterum T. Vinius consoles ...”, in Dunn and Cole, *Beginnings*, 231–45, citing 235.

<sup>210</sup> Sean A. Adams, “Luke’s Preface and Its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander”, *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 177–91. Contra Alexander, “Preface to Acts”, 34, concluding, 40–42.

<sup>211</sup> Palmer, “Literary Background”, 427, sees Acts as fitting this category.

<sup>212</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 39. Lodge, *Art of Fiction*, 5.

<sup>213</sup> Elizabeth S. Malbon, “Ending at the Beginning: A Response”, in *How Gospels Begin*, ed. Dennis E. Smith. *Semeia* 52 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 175–84, citing 177.

<sup>214</sup> Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 67

<sup>215</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 41–2. Patrick O’Neill, “Exposition”, in Herman, Jahn and Ryan, *Narrative Theory*, 155–56; Phelan, “Beloved”, 197; Phelan, *Experiencing*, 19.

<sup>216</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 41; R. MacCauley and G. Lanning, *Technique in Fiction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 26.



aspects.<sup>217</sup> They are either separate or combined in a *formal beginning* of literary shape. Another category is a *conceptual beginning* of literary significance which uses initiatory thematic and symbolic devices.<sup>218</sup> Catherine Romagnolo suggests that determining a narrative's causal beginning is problematic<sup>219</sup> and cites Brian Richardson:

we need to critically sift through the various possibilities ... until we arrive at the first significant event of the story. Our most accurate concept will be an avowedly shifting one, and one that points to the elusive and often arbitrary nature of beginning.<sup>220</sup>

The *finish* of a beginning has received little scholarly analysis.<sup>221</sup> George Hughes suggests the beginning continues until there is a break in the narrative.<sup>222</sup> Phelan marks the boundary between the beginning and the middle with a *launch* introducing the first set of instabilities or tensions.<sup>223</sup>

*The beginning's connection to the story's journey or progression* is implied in Aristotle's two fundamental concepts of "a beginning is that ... after which a further event or process naturally occurs"<sup>224</sup> and "the complication as extending from the beginning to the furthest point before the *transformation* to prosperity or adversity".<sup>225</sup> Graeco-Roman authors often wrote the beginning after the completion of the work.<sup>226</sup> Quintilian notes that good speeches mention things early on and take them up again later.<sup>227</sup> Lucian argues for a gentle and easy transition from the *preface* to the narrative since the whole body of history is in effect a long narrative.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 52. Catherine Romagnolo, "Recessive Origins in Julia Alvarez's *Garcia Girls: A Feminist Exploration of Narrative Beginnings*", in Richardson, *Narrative Beginning*, 149–65, citing 152.

<sup>218</sup> Catherine Romagnolo, "Initiating Dialogue: Narrative Beginnings in Multicultural Narratives", in *Analyzing World Fiction*, ed. Frederick Luis Aldama (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 183–98, citing 196; Sudarsab Rangarajan, *Critical Essays on Michael Butor's L'Emploi du Temps*, CCRL 211 (New York: Lang, 2012), 12–16.

<sup>219</sup> Romagnolo, "Initiating Dialogue", 192.

<sup>220</sup> Brian Richardson, "A Theory of Narrative Beginnings and the Beginnings of '*The Dead and Mollo*'", in Richardson, *Narrative Beginnings*, 113–126, citing 117.

<sup>221</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 53.

<sup>222</sup> George Hughes, *Reading Novels* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002), 263.

<sup>223</sup> Phelan, *Experiencing*, 18.

<sup>224</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 7.3–4 (1450b. 26–27) [Halliwell, LCL].

<sup>225</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 18.2 (1445b. 25–27) [Halliwell, LCL].

<sup>226</sup> Clay, "Plato's First Words", 114, cites Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Comp.* 6.25.32–33, referring to Plato's *Resp.*, for which on his death a number of different versions of the beginning were found. Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Eminent Philosophers* 3.37; Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.6.64.

<sup>227</sup> Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.21.

<sup>228</sup> Lucian, *How to Write History* 6.55.1–4.

Freytag develops Aristotle's *complication* concept as a *rise* from the *introduction* to the *climax*.<sup>229</sup> As the start of a journey, Phelan writes, "beginnings not only set narrative in motion, but also give it a particular direction".<sup>230</sup> A beginning often tentatively initiates a problem or question needing resolution as the narrative progresses.<sup>231</sup> There is possibly a hint of the uncommenced plot's *denouement*.<sup>232</sup> The link to the whole narrative is underlined by Edward Said's comment that "in choosing a beginning it is conferred with status based on its ability to intend the whole of what follows from it".<sup>233</sup>

The concept of *framing* was identified in linking the ending with the beginning.<sup>234</sup> The present study recasts Torgovnick's terminology given here in brackets for the ending connections with new terms for the beginning connections. These include *transitivity (circularity)*: the connection between the beginning and the ending;<sup>235</sup> *intransitivity (incompletion)*: a disconnection of beginning and ending; *embryonic (accumulation)*: a connection between the beginning and the rest of the work; *oblique (tangential)*: an unexpected start; and *connexion (linkage)*: a connection to an earlier work.

*The beginning as the significance's foundation* links to a number of concepts. The term *sequential patterning* (cf. *retrospective patterning* for the ending) is coined for looking at the narrative from the perspective of the beginning. Also a *thematic/paradigmatic* arrangement rather than narrative sequence can shape the beginning as well as the ending.<sup>236</sup> The idea of something before the beginning includes the concepts of a philosophical *origin*<sup>237</sup> and the narrative *paratext*.<sup>238</sup> Philosophically a beginning is a birth, but as Anthony Nuttall argues all beginnings

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<sup>229</sup> Freytag, *Technique of Drama*, 114–40.

<sup>230</sup> Phelan, "Beginnings", 97.

<sup>231</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 44; John Navone, *Towards a Theology of Story* (Slough: St Paul, 1977), 55.

<sup>232</sup> Uspensky, *Poetics*, 149.

<sup>233</sup> Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 50.

<sup>234</sup> See §1.3.1, p.29.

<sup>235</sup> Mikeal C. Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts: The Ascension Narratives in Context*, JSNTSup 21 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1987), 152. For the sake of clarity note that Said, *Beginnings*, 72–73, uses *transitivity* differently of the beginning's connection to the whole narrative (what is called *embryonic* in this study).

<sup>236</sup> See §1.3.1, p.29–30.

<sup>237</sup> Niels Buch Leander, "To Begin with the Beginning: Birth, Origin and Narrative Inception", in Richardson, *Narrative Beginnings*, 15–28, citing 16.

<sup>238</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. J. E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2; Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 49.

are merely suppositions or impositions since they emerge from a context.<sup>239</sup> As Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle express it “no journey, no life, no narrative ever really begins: all have in some sense already begun before they begin”.<sup>240</sup> The narrative paratext includes the separate title and foreword as preparatory for the narrative.

The same approach identifies the key concepts of literary middle theory.

### 1.3.3 Literary Middle Concepts

The study of these is necessarily more extensive since ancient and modern writers often avoid the concept of a “middle”. A middle is difficult to identify because of its permeable boundaries<sup>241</sup> and imprecise to define since it is used for the centre of both structure<sup>242</sup> and story.<sup>243</sup> Horace and Aristotle’s key foundational concepts again helpfully organise the middle concepts from both Graeco-Roman and modern literature. Recent screenwriters are particularly relevant since they increasingly refer to ancient concepts in an attempt to write a good script. For clarity the present study uses four key distinct terms of: (1) *middle* (cf. *beginning* and *ending*) as an overall term combining both structure and story shape; (2) *centre* (cf. *start* and *finish*) as the statistical middle statement or section of the structure; (3) *climax* (cf. *opening* and *closure*) at the story’s middle<sup>244</sup> rather than the popular use of climax for an ending; and (4) *pivot* (cf. *foundation* and *culmination*) as the *transformation*, transition, bridge or *hinge* of literary significance. Other literary middle concepts used in this study are given in italics. They relate to the structure, story, journey or progression, and significance.

*The middle as the structure’s centre* is an identifiable stage of a narrative suggested by Horace’s “Five-Act Structure” and Aristotle’s “Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)”. For Freytag this is *the central climax* (Aristotle’s transformation). Modern

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<sup>239</sup> Anthony D. Nuttall, *Openings. Narrative Beginnings from Epic to the Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 201, 211–213, applying Kermode’s philosophy of an ending to the beginning.

<sup>240</sup> Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism, and Theory*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Harlow: Pearson, 2009), 3.

<sup>241</sup> Romagnolo, “Recessive Origins”, 155.

<sup>242</sup> Caroline Levine and Mario Ortiz-Robles, “Introduction”, in *Narrative Middles: Navigating the Nineteenth-Century British Novel*, ed. Caroline Levine and Mario Ortiz-Robles (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 1–21, citing 9, 18.

<sup>243</sup> Hilary M. Schor, “The Make-Believe of a Middle: On (Not) Knowing Where You Are In *Daniel Deronda*”, in Levine and Ortiz-Robles, *Narrative Middles*, 47–74, citing 50–51.

<sup>244</sup> Alan Rosen, *Dislocating the End: Climax, Closure and Invention of Genre*, STML 35 (New York: Lang, 2001), 1; Christopher Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese, 2007), 156.

literary critics or screenwriters either have an “Act II” as the middle of a *Three-Act Structure* following Aristotle or an “Act III” as the middle of a “Five-Act” Structure following Horace.

For modern novelists and screenwriters the middle/centre narrows down into a search for the actual *midpoint*.<sup>245</sup> A statistical approach helps since the structural midpoint occurs almost exactly halfway through any successful story (in a book or film) providing symmetry and underlining significance for the centre.<sup>246</sup> The midpoint is further nuanced into two parts or major events which occur at the centre “sparking off each other like exposed wires”.<sup>247</sup> The first event provides stimulus for change and the second shows the start of a response. James Bell looks for a “*mirror moment*” within the middle scene in the dead centre of novels or films where the narrative or character makes a reflective comment revealing what “the story is really all about”.<sup>248</sup>

*The middle as the story’s climax* is suggested by Aristotle’s middle as “that which both follows a preceding event and has further consequences”<sup>249</sup> and a *transformation* between the *complication* and *denouement*.<sup>250</sup> Freytag’s *climax*, or crisis, as the middle of his five story parts,<sup>251</sup> is a watershed event separating the two halves of the story.<sup>252</sup> Although difficult to identify, the story middle is “a center of consciousness binding everything as an internally coherent whole”.<sup>253</sup> An introductory survey of actual Graeco-Roman narrative middles uses Troftgruben’s genre headings to fill the scholarly gap.

*Prose fiction* middles are often difficult to define due to the lack of a discernible structure in their book divisions.<sup>254</sup> However, a new beginning is sometimes present in the second half of the narrative, e.g. the summary passage of

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<sup>245</sup> Field, *Screenwriter’s Workbook*, 193–209; Mary Lynn Mercer, *The Midpoint: How to Write the Central Turning Point with Emotion, Tension and Depth* (Marston Gate: Amazon, 2014).

<sup>246</sup> Yorke, *Into the Woods*, 37–41, linking the centre to Horace and Terence.

<sup>247</sup> Mary Lynn Mercer, *Midpoint*, 41.

<sup>248</sup> James Scott Bell, *Write Your Novel From the Middle* (Woodland Hills, CA: Compendium, 2014), 22–30 and esp. 4.

<sup>249</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 7.6 (1450b. 30) [Halliwell, LCL].

<sup>250</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 18.1–2 (1455b, 24–28).

<sup>251</sup> Freytag, *Technique of Drama*, 105, 114–15, 128–35, 192–209.

<sup>252</sup> Vogler, *Writer’s Journey*, 159.

<sup>253</sup> Kent Puckett, “Before and Afterwardness in Henry James”, in Levine and Ortiz-Robles *Narrative Middles*, 75–106, citing 76.

<sup>254</sup> E.g. Xenophon of Ephesus, *An Ephesian Tale*, five books with uneven proportions (Bernhard Kytzler, “Xenophon of Ephesus”, in Schmeling, *Novel*, 336–359, citing 353–54).

Chariton's *Callirhoe*<sup>255</sup> or book six of Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* as a narrative hinge.<sup>256</sup> More complex middles like that of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, use *interlacement* (shifting focus from one person to another and back).<sup>257</sup>

*Biographies* do not generally have an identifiable middle<sup>258</sup> except, for example, in Plutarch's *Lives* when another *prologue* introduces the start of the second life within each individual pair of biographies.<sup>259</sup>

*Epics* such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid* are difficult to use for exploring the middle concept because of their large size. Scholars dispute their structure with Analysts focusing on the individual episodes<sup>260</sup> and Unitarians on a single plan.<sup>261</sup> The focus on an underlying design and structural unity is more useful in the search for a middle.<sup>262</sup>

Some scholars argue that *Iliad* has a detailed symmetry with either a tripartite<sup>263</sup> or quinqueseptate structure<sup>264</sup> working from its extremities to its centre.<sup>265</sup> Book Ten acts as a kind of middle interlude before the second half intensifies the theme of war.<sup>266</sup> The later *Odyssey* has a more complex structure<sup>267</sup> making analysis

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<sup>255</sup> Chariton, *Chaer.* 4.7.5. Cf. Stefan, Tilg, *Chariton of Aphrodisias and the Invention of the Greek Love Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 214.

<sup>256</sup> Heliodorus, *Aeth.* 6. Cf. Gerald. N. Sandy, *Heliodorus* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 15–16; Jonas Grethlein, “Minding the Middle in Heliodorus’ *Aethiopica*: False Closure, Triangular Foils and Self-Reflection”, *The Classical Quarterly*, 66 (2016): 316–55.

<sup>257</sup> Xenophon, *Cyr.* 2.3–8, 9–11, 12, 13, 14–33; 3.3–11. Cf. Richard I. Pervo, *Profit With Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 133–34.

<sup>258</sup> Timothy E. Duff, “How Lives Begin”, in *The Unity of Plutarch’s Work: ‘Moral’ Themes in the ‘Lives’, Features of the ‘Lives’ in the ‘Moralia’*, ed. Anastasios G. Nikolaidis (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 187–207; W. Jeffrey Tatum, “Why Parallel Lives?”, in *Plutarch’s Lives: Parallelism and Purpose*, ed. Noreen Humble (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2010), 1–22, citing 2.

<sup>259</sup> Duff, “Plutarchan Book”, 218; Duff, “How Lives Begin”, 204, with 196–201, giving the example of *Alk.*1. Cf. Donald A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London: Duckworth, 1973), 21, notes that the usual structure for each biography is a prologue, the Greek life, the Roman life and a closing *synkrisis*.

<sup>260</sup> Johann Gottfried and Jakob Hermann, *De interpolationibus Homeri* (Lepizig: Staritz, 1832); Hermann, *De iteratis apud Homerum* (Leipzig: Staritz, 1841); Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1927).

<sup>261</sup> John T. Sheppard, *The Pattern of the Iliad* (London: Methuen, 1922); Cecil M. Bowra, *Homer and his Forerunners* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1955), 10–14; Cedric Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 98, 252, 255. For discussion Gregory S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 159–78 (Analyst), and 253–67 (Unitarian).

<sup>262</sup> Constantine A. Trypanis, *The Homeric Epics* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977), 7; Oliver Taplin, *Homeric Soundings: The Shaping of Iliad* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 285–293.

<sup>263</sup> Henry T. Wade-Gery, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 15–16; Barry. B. Powell, *Homer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 93, as books 1–9; 10–18; and 19–24.

<sup>264</sup> Powell, *Homer*, 87–89, as books 1; 2–9; 10; 11–20; 21–24.

<sup>265</sup> Kirk, *Songs of Homer*, 261.

<sup>266</sup> Bowra, *Homer*, 106.

<sup>267</sup> Kirk, *Songs of Homer*, 228.

extremely difficult with either a two-part<sup>268</sup> or tripartite structure<sup>269</sup> being suggested. A central section in books 9–12 recounts the adventures to the Phaeacians<sup>270</sup> and the second half starts with the revelation of Odysseus's identity as he reclaims his kingdom.<sup>271</sup> The *Aeneid* reveals either a bipartite<sup>272</sup> or tripartite structure.<sup>273</sup> Gian Conte suggests it has a *middle proem* as “the privileged locus of literary consciousness”.<sup>274</sup> The high point comes not at the end, but in the middle (book six),<sup>275</sup> with a focus on Romulus as the founder of Rome and Augustus Caesar<sup>276</sup> as the point where Aeneas gains full recognition of his mission.<sup>277</sup>

*Historiography* includes the contrasting styles of Herodotus and Thucydides as good examples of ancient historiography. A historical narrative is more than mere chronological facts or events since their selection and arrangement reveals a more subjective interpretation<sup>278</sup> allowing for an exploration of the middle.

Herodotus is the earlier of the two writers calling his work *historiae* (enquiries) within the milieu of philosophical and proto-scientific enquiries of his era rather than just a narrative of past events.<sup>279</sup> It shows a gradual progression away from the early mythical fables to recent history<sup>280</sup> as a genre allowing a transition from the earlier epics to the later prose writing.<sup>281</sup> Scholars see it as a unified artistic work of considerable complexity<sup>282</sup> with internal ring composition of some sections

<sup>268</sup> Bowra, *Homer*, 71–72; Taplin, *Homeric Soundings*, 19, books 1–13; 13–24.

<sup>269</sup> Trypanis, *Homeric Epics*, 32–33, books 1–4; 5–12; and 13–24. Cf. Powell, *Homer*, 93.

<sup>270</sup> Kirk, *Songs of Homer*, 162.

<sup>271</sup> Powell, *Homer*, 137–39, book thirteen of twenty-three books.

<sup>272</sup> Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and the Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 41, books 1–6 and 7–12.

<sup>273</sup> Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 42, 50, 59. Cf. George E. Duckworth, *Structural Patterns and Proportions in Vergil's Aeneid* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), 11, books 1–4; 5–8; 9–12, with books 5–8 as “the keystone section”.

<sup>274</sup> Conte, “Proems in the Middle”, 153.

<sup>275</sup> R. S. Conway, *The Vergilian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 143.

<sup>276</sup> Virgil, *Aen*, 6.792–796. Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 51. Duckworth, *Structural Patterns*, 23, 24, notes the focal point is Anchise's speech on Roman nationalism and patriotism.

<sup>277</sup> Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 49.

<sup>278</sup> Hans-Peter Stahl, “Speeches and the Course of Events in Books Six and Seven of Thucydides”, in *The Speeches in Thucydides: A Collection of Original Studies with Bibliography*, ed. Philip Stadter (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 60–77, citing 61; Hunter R. Rawlings III, *The Structure of Thucydides History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 3.

<sup>279</sup> Herodotus, *Hist*. Cf. James S. Romm, *Herodotus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 9; Rosalind Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 161–167; De Jong, *Narratology*, 167–196.

<sup>280</sup> Romm, *Herodotus*, 5–6.

<sup>281</sup> K. H. Waters, *Herodotus the Historian: His Problems, Methods and Originality* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 8; John Gould, *Herodotus* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989), 48–49.

<sup>282</sup> Stewart Flory, *The Archaic Smile of Herodotus* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 16.

beginning and ending in the same way.<sup>283</sup> The nine-book classification (not original to Herodotus) has a tripartite structure.<sup>284</sup> The pivotal middle Book Five records the transitional Ionian revolt as an antecedent to the spread of war into Greece with a midpoint as a linking device between the two surrounding sections.<sup>285</sup>

Thucydides was a literary artist as well as a meticulous researcher<sup>286</sup> possibly designing his work more for the emerging written culture than the earlier oral culture.<sup>287</sup> His *History of the Peloponnesian War* has eight books (not original to Thucydides)<sup>288</sup> with a beginning in books I–IV (first ten-year war), a middle or centre section in book V (seven-year peace), and an apparent unfinished ending<sup>289</sup> in VI–VIII (second ten-year war).<sup>290</sup>

These Graeco-Roman works confirm the middle as an important stage of the story connecting the beginning and ending. In spite of their large size, some epics and even historiography have a structure arranged around the central section of a significant episode. Prose fiction and biographies have less obvious middles.

*The middle's connection to the story's journey or progression* reflects Aristotle's "Complication, Transformation, and Denouement" concept as a process undertaken rather than a point identified. The middle connects the beginning and ending<sup>291</sup> with a coherent plot trajectory.<sup>292</sup> It is also a *hinge*<sup>293</sup> which bisects between what goes before and after by reading backwards to causes, and forward to effects. The middle's imprecise nature blurs boundaries so that the beginning gradually becomes the middle and the middle gradually becomes the end. As a *journey* or *progression*, the middle connects the beginning and ending in various models of development.

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<sup>283</sup> Waters, *Herodotus*, 62.

<sup>284</sup> Seth Bernardete, *Herodotean Inquiries* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 4, books 1–4 (causes of the Persian/Greek war), book 5 (transition), and books 6–9 (war itself).

<sup>285</sup> Herodotus, 5.28–38.1. Cf. Sara Mandell and David Noel Freeman, *The Relationship Between Herodotus, History, and Primary History* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 53.

<sup>286</sup> Rawlings, *Structure of Thucydides*, 3.

<sup>287</sup> Gregory Crane, *The Blinded Eye: Thucydides and the New Written World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), 3, 7.

<sup>288</sup> Simon Hornblower, *Thucydides* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 1.

<sup>289</sup> Hornblower, *Thucydides*, 7, notes that although the work ends at 411 BC, the second war continued up to 404 BC.

<sup>290</sup> Rawlings, *Structure of Thucydides*, 7–9, 58.

<sup>291</sup> Horace, *Ars* 152 [Fairclough, LCL]. Cf. J. P. Fokkeman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 77.

<sup>292</sup> Levine and Ortiz-Robles, "Introduction", 11.

<sup>293</sup> Puckett, "Before and Afterwardness", 76.

First, a straight linear progression rising from the beginning to the ending or as it is often called “a climax”.<sup>294</sup> Ursula Le Guin favours this since a story’s progression is a journey (or a quest) rather than merely a resolution of conflict.<sup>295</sup>

Second, Freytag’s pyramid expresses the outline of the plot as a journey to closure having five parts that include three crises.<sup>296</sup> These consist of an *introduction* followed by the first crisis (*exciting force*) causing a *rise* (Aristotle’s *complication*), to the *climax* followed by a second crisis (*tragic moment*) causing a *return* or *fall* (Aristotle’s *denouement*), and a third crisis (*final suspense*) which leads into the closing *catastrophe*. Phelan argues that the first set of instabilities or tensions (what Freytag calls the first crisis) are the *launch* of the *complication* as a voyage or middle with often an *exposition* of relevant information.<sup>297</sup>

Third, as an original suggestion, I propose a nuanced approach in a model of story peaks and troughs<sup>298</sup> with mission *advances* and *declines* suitable for a narrative of Acts’ complexity.<sup>299</sup> As well as an overall *rise* and *fall* there is a *complication*, *transformation*, and *denouement* within each “Act”.

*The middle as the significance’s pivot* links to a number of concepts. The idea of *overview patterning* considers the narrative from the perspective of the middle by combining both *retrospective patterning* (the view from the ending) and *sequential patterning* (the view from the beginning). The middle’s *parallelism* connects the *accumulation* of the ending and the *embryonic* of the beginning. As with the ending and the beginning, the middle can have a *thematic/paradigmatic* arrangement. Philosophically if beginning is birth and ending is death then the middle is life.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> In this study *climax* is used of the crisis at the midpoint. See §1.3.3, p.37.

<sup>295</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*, ed. Susan Wood, rev. ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1979), 147.

<sup>296</sup> Freytag, *Technique of Drama*, 114–40.

<sup>297</sup> Phelan, *Experiencing*, 18–20.

<sup>298</sup> Though Freytag, *Technique*, 132–33, does briefly mention the possibility of a double apex in the middle part.

<sup>299</sup> Chapter Two develops this further (see §2.2.5.2, pp.77–78, and esp. Diagram V, p.79).

<sup>300</sup> Tomas Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2.



## 1.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined the theory of literary shape and significance within the various text-centred approaches. Three key foundational Graeco-Roman literary concepts were identified with Horace's "Five-Act Structure", Aristotle's story stages of "Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)", and his story sequence of "Complication, Transformation, and Denouement". Using these as organising principles, a theoretical framework was constructed with ancient and modern literary ending, beginning, and middle shape concepts. The key terms are given in Appendix I for easy cross-referencing when making application to Acts' text.<sup>301</sup> Diagram II on the next page gives an integration of Horace and Aristotle with Freytag and modern literary critics/screenwriters.

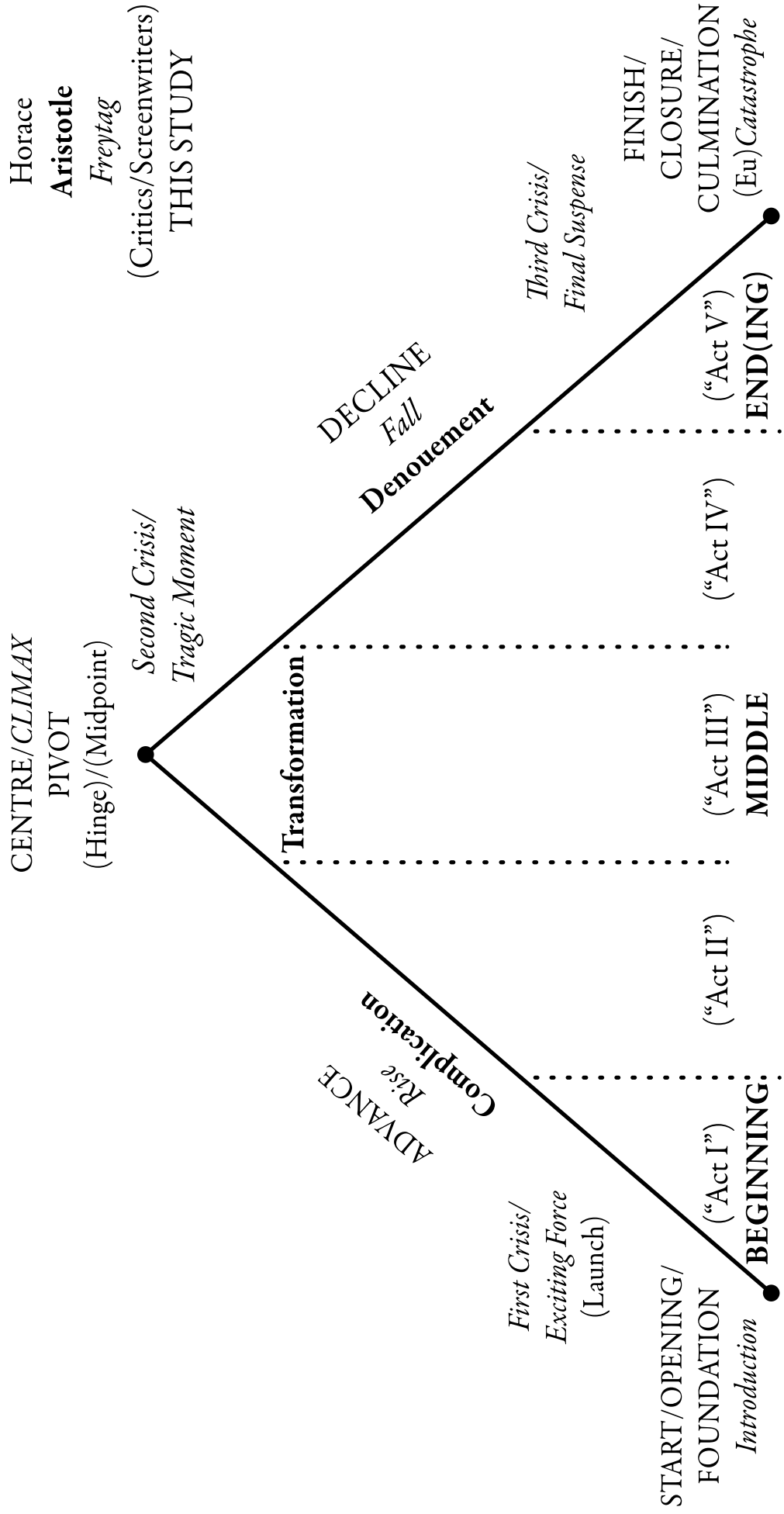
The next chapter takes the theoretical framework and develops it into a method suitable for an exploration of Acts' literary shape and significance.

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<sup>301</sup> See pp.378–82.

Diagram II

INTEGRATION OF HORACE AND ARISTOTLE WITH FREYTAG  
AND MODERN LITERARY CRITICS/SCREENWRITERS



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERARY BACKGROUND AND METHOD FOR ACTS

This chapter applies the theoretical framework from the previous chapter to Acts. It first sketches Acts' literary background (§2.1) and then develops a method for exploring Acts' literary shape and significance (§2.2).

### 2.1 Acts' Literary Background

The literary background of Acts covers questions of date, author, reader(s), genre, and text. Although the focus of the present study and its arguments about Acts' literary shape are independent of the scholarly debates about such questions, I outline my conclusions briefly here, to help orientate the reader concerning my views

#### 2.1.1 Date

Keener helpfully surveys the various possible options which include:<sup>1</sup>

1. In the early AD 60s: since Acts ends before Paul's trial and death.<sup>2</sup> There is also no mention of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (AD 70).<sup>3</sup>
2. AD 70s and 80s: a view held by the majority of scholars.<sup>4</sup>
3. AD 90s: arguing that Acts is dependent on Josephus.<sup>5</sup>
4. AD 100–150: arguing that Acts was written to counter Marcion.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:383–401.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. C. Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Black, 1957), 18–19; E. M. Blaiklock, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Historical Commentary*. TNTC (London: Tyndale Press, 1959), 16; Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, ed. Conrad Gempf, WUNT 49 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 365–410; Hilary Le Cornu with Joseph Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Academon, 2003), 1.xxviii–xxix.

<sup>3</sup> C.S.C Williams, *Acts*, 13–14; I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 5 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1980, repr. 2008), 48–49. For other arguments dating Acts before AD 70 see Richard Longenecker, *Acts*, 31–34, including: (1) Jews unlikely to be portrayed as having spiritual and political power; (2) Christianity unlikely to be associated with Judaism as a *religio licita*; (3) Roman justice for the church unlikely after Nero persecution; (4) language is used of the earliest church; and (5) Acts betrays no knowledge of Paul's letters.

<sup>4</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:392; Mark Allan Powell, *What Are They Saying About Acts?* (New York: Paulist, 1991), 37; A. von Harnack, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Williams, 1909), 290–97; Polhill, *Acts*, 27–31; Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 17<sup>th</sup> ed. KEKNT 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 86; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54–55; Witherington, *Acts*, 60–63; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 86.

<sup>5</sup> Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Pervo, *Dating Acts*; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 3, 17; Dennis E. Smith and Joseph B. Tyson, *Acts and Christian Beginnings: The Acts Seminar Report* (Salem: Polebridge, 2013), 5–6.

The date of Acts is “at best educated guesswork”.<sup>7</sup> Whilst not dismissing the possibility of a date in the early AD 60s, I think it is more likely that Acts was written in the early AD70s with a deliberate lack of references to Paul’s death and the destruction of the temple<sup>8</sup> in order to focus on the invitation of an ongoing mission role for a restored Israel both as a remnant church and a nation. There is no direct evidence that Acts is either dependent on Josephus<sup>9</sup> or written against Marcion.<sup>10</sup> What is important for the present study is that Acts post-dates the key Graeco-Roman foundational principles of Horace and Aristotle which may have influenced it.

### 2.1.2 Author

Since the author of Acts is anonymous, scholars debate the identity using tradition, historical context and text.<sup>11</sup> The traditional view is that the author is Luke, writer of the Third Gospel, and companion of Paul.<sup>12</sup> Although the scholarly consensus is less than it was<sup>13</sup> I accept the traditional view as historically feasible. However, since the present study focused on Acts’ literary shape, I use the term “author” primarily to refer to the “implied author” discernible within the text. This gives a more accurate textual interpretation than the speculative reconstruction of a historical author.<sup>14</sup> However, in historiographic narrative the implied author is often identical to the narrator.<sup>15</sup> I also accept James Phelan’s proposal that the implied author is “a streamlined version of the real author”.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.401.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of why Luke may have suppressed these references see Keener, *Acts*, 1:385–88; Witherington, *Acts*, 807.

<sup>9</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.394.

<sup>10</sup> Charles K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols., ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1994, 1998), 1:30–48; Keener, *Acts*, 1:398–400.

<sup>11</sup> Satterthwaite, “Classical Rhetoric”, 348.

<sup>12</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.1; 3:13.3; 3.14.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.12; Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 7; Origen (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.10); Chrysostom, *Hom. Act.* 1 (Acts 1. 1–2) (Schaff, 4); Muratorian Canon, ll 34–39. See wider discussion in Rick Strelan, *Luke the Priest: The Authority of the Author of the Third Gospel* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 79–86; Keener, *Acts*, 1:402–422; Osvaldo Padilla, *The Acts of the Apostles: Interpretation, History and Theology* (London: Apollos, 2016), 21–37.

<sup>13</sup> Frank Dicken, “The Author and Date of Luke-Acts”, in Adams and Pahl, *Issues in Luke-Acts*, 7–26; Sean A. Adams, “The Relationships of Paul and Luke: Luke, Paul’s Letters, and the We-Passages of Acts”, in *Paul and His Social Relations*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Land, Pauline Studies 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 126–42, esp. 129–35, calls for a differentiation between a historical Luke, a Pauline Luke and Luke the supposed author of Gospel of Luke and Acts.

<sup>14</sup> Umberto Eco, “Overinterpreting Texts” in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. S. Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45–66, citing 25; Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 45–47.

<sup>15</sup> Aleymayehu, *Modern Narrative Theory*, 47.

<sup>16</sup> Phelan, *Living to Tell*, 45.

Acts' text suggests that the author is:

1. An anonymous narrator who writes with an almost omnipotent authority.<sup>17</sup>
2. The author of the Third Gospel.<sup>18</sup>
3. A companion of Paul.<sup>19</sup>
4. An educated person with excellent Greek and likely Hellenistic education.<sup>20</sup>
5. A person with a good knowledge of Judaism and the Septuagint.<sup>21</sup>
6. A good historian, theologian, and literary artist.<sup>22</sup>
7. A person with a keen interest in the Christian mission.<sup>23</sup>

In order to fulfil these observations, the author is probably either a God-fearing Gentile or a Diaspora Jew.<sup>24</sup> I think the latter is more likely since such an author would more appropriately give Israel an invitation to be a mission instrument.

### 2.1.3 Reader(s)

Acts 1:1 names the first reader of Acts as Theophilus. His identity and relevance to literary shape is explored further in Chapter Four.<sup>25</sup> However since Theophilus is possibly the sponsor of Acts,<sup>26</sup> the narrative could be for a wider audience.<sup>27</sup> This may fulfil Lucian's rule that in writing history "do not write with your eye just on the present, to win praise and honour from your contemporaries; aim at eternity and prefer to write for posterity".<sup>28</sup> Scholars debate the various aspects of the wider

<sup>17</sup> Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 152. Tan, *Johannine Community*, 66.

<sup>18</sup> Acts 1:1.

<sup>19</sup> Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16. I am aware of the scholarly debate that the "we-passages" could be a literary device as well as indicating the author was a historical companion with Paul. See later in this chapter pp. 99–101. Also Keener, *Acts*, 1.407–414, for discussion on the identity of the companion as Luke, Aristarchus, Demas, and Titus.

<sup>20</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.404. Powell, *About Acts*, 24; Richard A. Burridge, "The Genre of Acts—Revisited", in ed. Walton, et al., *Reading Acts Today*, 23. The present study of Acts' literary shape suggests an author of considerable literary ability.

<sup>21</sup> The present study explores the repeated focus on Jerusalem (see §2.2.5.4, pp.84–86, Diagram VI (A-C), pp.87–89), Jews (§2.2.5.6, p.98), and extensive Old Testament intertextuality in Acts (see §2.2.5.8, pp.107–112, Diagram X, p.110).

<sup>22</sup> The present study explores the link between literary artistry and theological significance without denying the veracity of Acts' historicity. See Haenchen, *Acts*, 90–112; Howard Marshall, *Luke, Historian and Theologian* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 21–52; Marshall, *Acts* (1980), 18.

<sup>23</sup> The present study explores the widespread theme of mission in Acts (see §2.2.6.4, pp.118–26).

<sup>24</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:403–405. Allen, *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews*, 261–271.

<sup>25</sup> See §4.3.1.3, pp.180–81.

<sup>26</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:654–56.

<sup>27</sup> Beverley Roberts Gaventa, "Acts of the Apostles", in *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, 5 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 1.33–47, citing 35.

<sup>28</sup> Lucian, *How to Write History* 6.61.2–6.

original audience for Acts including status (educated or illiterate), ethnicity (Jew or Gentile), geography, and spiritual status (Christian or unbeliever).<sup>29</sup>

However, a study of literary shape focuses on the “implied reader” which is discernible within the Acts’ text as:

1. A reasonably educated audience able to know Greek and appreciate literary artistry. However, as Keener points out, the literary and rhetorical ideas filtered down to a less able audience who would have had Acts read to them.<sup>30</sup>
2. Those with an appreciation of Judaism and the Septuagint. This could conceivably be either God-fearing Gentiles<sup>31</sup> or the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>32</sup>
3. People with an interest in Christian mission or at least those who need to be challenged about it.
4. Located in the urban centres of the eastern Mediterranean world including Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi.<sup>33</sup>

As with the author (see §2.1.2 above), I think the audience of an invitation to be a mission instrument for expanding the kingdom of God, is likely to be the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>34</sup> However, this is not to exclude the growing Gentile church.<sup>35</sup> Whilst the focus of the present study is on discerning the implied reader from Acts’ literary shape, the significance of the text applies to both historical and present-day readers.

#### 2.1.4 Genre

The various proposals which scholars make for the genre of Acts are:

1. Travel narrative.<sup>36</sup> Whilst Acts has elements of this, it does not cover the whole text and the idea of travel narrative covers many genres.<sup>37</sup> The idea of a journey links to that of literary shape.

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<sup>29</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:423–434

<sup>30</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1. 423–26.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke-Acts* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 35–36.

<sup>32</sup> Loveday C. A. Alexander, “Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text”, in *Ancient Literary Context*, 183–206.

<sup>33</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.429–34.

<sup>34</sup> This agrees with the conclusions of Ben Byerly, “Luke’s Narrative Legitimation of Paul and the Gospel Among the Diaspora (Acts 16–19)” (PhD diss., Africa International University, 2016), 65–100, who gives an overview of arguments for and against Jew or Gentile audience, before concluding that Acts is written to the Jewish Diaspora.

<sup>35</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.428.

<sup>36</sup> Knox, *Acts*, 55.

<sup>37</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.53–54.

2. Biography.<sup>38</sup> This often involves extending the genre of Luke's Gospel to Acts.<sup>39</sup> However, there is no reason Acts cannot have its own genre, or be part of a collected biography.<sup>40</sup> It is possible that Acts is the biography of a movement or mission, rather than a person(s).
3. Historiography. This is the most common genre classification for Acts, though the type of historiography is debated.<sup>41</sup> Rhetorical historiography was common within the Graeco-Roman world<sup>42</sup> and confirms the legitimacy for an exploration of Acts' literary shape.
4. Novel.<sup>43</sup> This study explores the many literary features of Acts which make it similar to a novel. However, I do not think this means Acts is fictitious since many features of ancient novels are missing in Acts and there is evidence of a historical approach and accuracy.<sup>44</sup> Also the storytelling techniques of antiquity are found in both "fact" and "fiction" writing meaning these features do not definitively decide its genre.<sup>45</sup>
5. Epic.<sup>46</sup> Again Acts contains some epic features since it is a "foundation story" which has a large narrative sweep. However Acts differs from epic in being prose rather than poetry.<sup>47</sup>

I follow the view that Acts is a mixed or hybrid genre containing elements of several main genres.<sup>48</sup> I consider it to be a historiographical work telling a biography of

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<sup>38</sup> Talbert, *Patterns*, 125–136; Burridge, "Genre of Acts", 3–28; Adams, *Genre*, 247–56.

<sup>39</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.54–62.

<sup>40</sup> Adams, *Genre*, 247–56.

<sup>41</sup> Yamanda, "Rhetorical History", 231; Keener, *Acts*, 1:90–165; Suresh A. Shenoy, *The Four Fabulists: The Literary Genres of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2012), 65–80. Padilla, *Acts*, 39–74.

<sup>42</sup> This addresses the objection that literary shape undermines historical veracity (see §2.2.2.3, pp.56–57).

<sup>43</sup> Pervo, *Profit*.

<sup>44</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.62–83.

<sup>45</sup> Loveday C. A. Alexander, "Fact, Fiction and the Genre of Acts", in *Ancient Literary Context*, 133–164, citing 144–45.

<sup>46</sup> Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, compares Acts with Virgil's *Aen.*; Denis R. Macdonald, "Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders and Hector's Farewell to Andromache: A Strategic Imitation of Homer's *Iliad*", in *Contextualising Acts. Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd Penner and Caroline V. Stichele, SBLSymS 20 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 189–204, comparing with Homer's *Il.*

<sup>47</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1.83–87.

<sup>48</sup> Dale Sullivan, "Forged in the Fire: A Study of the Generic Dynamics in the Acts of the Apostles", in *Rhetorics in the New Millennium: Promise and Fulfilment*, ed. James D. Hester and J. David Hester, SAC (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 168–192, citing 185; Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 248–49; Bale, *Genre*, 93; Thomas E. Phillips, "The Genre of Acts: Moving Towards a Consensus?", *CBR* 4 (2006): 365–96, esp. 382–85; Pervo, *Profit*, 88–119.

mission in novelistic style<sup>49</sup> with travel narrative and epic features.<sup>50</sup> Its literary shape reveals a theological significance developed from the wider Old Testament and Gospel texts.<sup>51</sup>

### 2.1.5 Paratext

The only paratext element available for Acts is the title. However, this is not original and differs in the various manuscripts<sup>52</sup> with ΠΙΡΑΧΕΙΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ appearing in late second century AD.<sup>53</sup> The shortened title ΠΙΡΑΧΕΙΣ is possibly an attempt to crystallise the overall message linked to “all that Jesus began to do or teach” (1:1).<sup>54</sup> ΠΙΡΑΧΕΙΣ was used in the Graeco-Roman world of an individual’s biography<sup>55</sup> containing outstanding deeds and especially those of rulers.<sup>56</sup> This suggests an emphasis on Acts’ narrative events rather than the speeches. However, words were understood as enactments. The present study prefers the term Acts since the addition of ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ is anachronistic. Although appearing early at 1:2, the apostles as a group are not the main characters throughout the story.<sup>57</sup> The term may possibly refer to Peter and Paul since their biographies cover most of Acts. However, the late use of the title suggests an apologetic purpose for dealing with questions about the apostles

<sup>49</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:80, calls it “an entertaining history with novelistic techniques”. Cf. Alexander, “Fact, Fiction and the Genre of Acts”, 144–45.

<sup>50</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 169–78, who argues that Acts’ Ending is in some ways comparable to some endings of epic literature.

<sup>51</sup> I am aware that Acts draws heavily on the Old Testament story in terms of theological significance. Whilst it is possible that the author constructs the book to mirror Old Testament historiography, the present study explores the literary shape primarily within the first century Graeco-Roman literary milieu. Also in order to retain a focus on Acts the valid connection to Luke’s Gospel is not pursued.

<sup>52</sup> NA<sup>28</sup>, 378, for list of variant titles in different MSS. Cf. Carl R. Holladay, *Acts. A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016), 8–9.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Parsons, *Departure*, 268, notes the three sources are Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.13.3; the anti-Marcionite prologue (Aland, *SQE* 549); and the Muratorian Canon (ll 34).

<sup>54</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:645.

<sup>55</sup> Adams, *Genre*, 117–20, argues that ΠΙΡΑΧΕΙΣ shows that ancient readers placed Acts within “the biography-historiography spectrum”. However, Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 37, argues that ΠΙΡΑΧΕΙΣ does not identify Acts’ genre since it is not a single biography; Raoul Mortley, “The Title of the Acts of the Apostles”, in *Lectures Anciennes de la Bible*, Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 1 (Strasbourg: Centre d’Analyse et de Documentation Patristiques, 1987), 105–112, argues that the title of Acts does not coincide with the book’s contents.

<sup>56</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 136; David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1987), 78.

<sup>57</sup> Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 17.



in the early church.<sup>58</sup> Sternberg calls this a psychological “primacy effect”,<sup>59</sup> giving a positive first impression of the apostles to the readers and hearers.<sup>60</sup>

### 2.1.6 Text

The object of this study is Acts’ Greek text from the 28<sup>th</sup> Revised Edition of Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (NA<sup>28</sup>). At present this, or its UBS<sup>5</sup> identical equivalent, is the main text for scholarly work and contemporary translations. It uses an eclectic approach to the extant Greek manuscripts<sup>61</sup> for reconstructing with a high degree of probability the original first century manuscript or at least the copies which circulated and were eventually accepted by the churches in the fourth century AD. One of the actual extant MSS of Acts, such as Codices *Sinaiticus*, *Alexandrinus*, or *Vaticanus*, was another possibility for a study focus, but these were not used since they would reflect the nuances of later publications. In considering variants for Acts the NA<sup>28</sup> favours the *Alexandrian Text*<sup>62</sup> rather than the *Western Text* primarily represented by the *Codex Bezae*. This latter extant partial text<sup>63</sup> followed by a

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<sup>58</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:645, against the proliferation of apocryphal acts; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 5, correcting Marcion’s suggestion that Paul was the only faithful apostle of Christ; Wall, “Acts”, 30, due to an emphasis upon apostolic succession within what is known as “early catholicism”; Holladay, *Acts*, 8, notes the more exaggerated title “The Acts of *All* (emphasis added) the Apostles” used in the *Muratorian Canon*.

<sup>59</sup> Sternberg, *Expositional Modes*, 96. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 147, the title is not wholly a misnomer since the apostles are the first twelve rulers of the church, with Paul as their representative and the apostolic age is the church’s ideal existence.

<sup>60</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 182–84; Gerhard Krodel, *Acts*, ACNT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 1.

<sup>61</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 14–30, for summary of extant MSS and textual groups.

<sup>62</sup> For the priority of the *Alexandrian Text* including *Sinaiticus*, *Alexandrinus* and *Vaticanus* MSS in Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 5; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 28–29; Justin-Alexandru Mihoc, “The Inceptive Ecclesiology of Acts 1–5 and Its Reception in the Patristic Period” (PhD diss., University of Durham, 2014), 26–36; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 49–52; Peter Head, “Acts and the Problems of its Texts”, in Winter and Clarke, *Ancient Literary Setting*, 415–444; David Trobisch, *A User’s Guide to the Nestle-Aland 28 Greek New Testament* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 22–24.

<sup>63</sup> *Codex Bezae* is missing 8:29–10:14; 21:10–12, 16–18; 22:10–20; and 22:29–28:31.

minority of scholars<sup>64</sup> is 4.83% longer than the NA<sup>28</sup>.<sup>65</sup> However, its variants do not significantly affect the structure of Acts' literary shape due to the balanced distribution of the additional words.<sup>66</sup> Rather than engage in textual criticism this study quotes the NA<sup>28</sup> Acts' text whenever the argument depends on the Greek or an English translation inappropriately loads meaning.<sup>67</sup> The chapter and verse divisions are not original, but were added later for referencing.<sup>68</sup>

## 2.2 Method for Exploring Acts' Literary Shape and Significance

The first steps locate a narrative-critical approach within Acts' literary scholarship, establish its validity over against a number of objections, and clarify the application of ancient and modern literary shape concepts to Acts. An appropriate method for

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<sup>64</sup> J. M. Wilson, *The Origin and Aim of the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Macmillan, 1912), 89–105; Albert C. Clark, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes on Selected Passages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933); Frederic G. Kenyon, "The Western Text in the Gospels and Acts", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 24 (1938): 287–315; D. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and its Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); W. A. Strange, *The Problem of the Text of Acts*, SNTSMS 71 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Josep Rius-Camps and Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae: A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition*, 4 vols., JSNT 257, LNTS 302, 365, 415 (London: T&T Clark, 2004–2009), esp. 1.1–11; Christopher M. Tuckett, "How Early is the 'Western' Text of Acts?", in *The Book of Acts as Church History. Text, Textual Traditions and Ancient Interpretations*, ed. Tobias Nicklas and Michael Tilly (New York: de Gruyter, 2003), 69–86; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 222–236.

<sup>65</sup> This percentage is based on the *Codex Bezae* extant material (13,904 words as calculated by Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *The Bezan Text of Acts: A Contribution of Discourse Analysis to Textual Criticism*, JSNTSup 236 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 6) and NA<sup>28</sup> equivalent of the same text (13, 263 words). Other scholars calculate the percentages as: 6.24% (Strange, *Problem*, 213); 6.6% (Read-Heimerdinger, *Bezan Text*); 8.5% (Kenyon, "The Western Text", 310, and Clark, *Acts*); nearly 10% (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 223, in what Read-Heimerdinger, *Bezan Text*, 7, calls a generous rounding up which is cited in many recent publications. However, a footnote calculates a more precise 8.5% based on Clark and Kenyon above).

<sup>66</sup> Read-Heimerdinger, *Bezan Text*, 11–15. I have calculated that the differences for her *Codex Bezae* from NA<sup>28</sup> are Ch 1 (+35), Ch 2 (+3), Ch 3 (-2), Ch 4 (+11), Ch 5 (+59), Ch 6 (+38), Ch 7 (-133), Ch 8 (+2), (Ch 9 missing), Ch 10 (+46), Ch 11 (+63), Ch 12 (+63), Ch 13 (+75), Ch 14 (+68), Ch 15 (+90), Ch 16 (+73), Ch 17 (+21), Ch 18 (+69), Ch 19 (+52), Ch 20 (+36), Ch 21 (-57), Ch 22 (+29). This demonstrates that the literary shape is unaffected since the additions are well spread throughout Acts. Also the narrative's balance is unchanged since the majority of the additions are in Acts' Middle (8:4–21:14). A recreated complete *Codex Bezae* adds the missing material increased by: (1) 4% for 8:29–10:14 as an average % for extant Acts 8–10 (+49 making +1,271 words); (2) 7.19% for 21:10–12, 16–18, 22:10–20, 29–30 as an average for extant Acts 21 and 22 (+16 making +271 words); and (3) 4.83% for 23:1–28:31 as an average for the whole extant text calculated in the preceding n.65 (+3829 words). The total increase is 5,371 making the *Codex Bezae* 19, 275. An analysis of this confirms that the even spread of additional words does not change the literary structure. However, the detailed analysis of Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4 vols., demonstrates narrative-critical variations in Acts' literary story in the *Codex Bezae*.

<sup>67</sup> In all other cases Acts' text quoted is my own English translation of the NA<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Kurt J. Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 181, chapter divisions added to the Vulgate Bible in 1205 by Stephen Langton and verse divisions in 1551 by Robert Stephanus. Although mainly for reference purposes, the divisions also identify something of Acts' structure by being generally located at appropriate story breaks.

exploring Acts' literary shape and significance is then developed and employed for Acts' structure, Acts' story, and Acts' significance. The discussion of Acts' structure looks at various models before applying Horace's "Five-Act Structure" and other structural elements. The method is then expanded to Acts' story with Aristotle's story stages and sequence principles. To this is added reading strategies and story components. The method is completed by considering Acts' significance in terms of scholarship on the theology of Acts, narrative theology, scholarship on mission in Acts, and missional significance arising from Acts' literary shape.

### 2.2.1 Acts' Literary Scholarship

Although the scholarly approach to Acts has been dominated by historical criticism, some scholars use aspects of literary criticism.<sup>69</sup> These are useful conversation partners in the search for literary shape. Early literary considerations of Acts by Matthias Schneckenburger,<sup>70</sup> Ferdinand Baur,<sup>71</sup> Martin Dibelius,<sup>72</sup> and Henry Cadbury<sup>73</sup> are within the historical-critical school. They were followed by Hans Conzelmann<sup>74</sup> and Ernst Haenchen<sup>75</sup> who give priority to literary aspects over historical and theological. Two distinct approaches developed which use either Graeco-Roman or modern literary concepts.<sup>76</sup> Those applying Graeco-Roman concepts include Charles Talbert (literary environment),<sup>77</sup> Morgenthaler

<sup>69</sup> For a comprehensive overview of recent approaches to Acts see Todd Penner, "Madness in the Method? The Acts of the Apostles in Current Study", *CBR* 2.2 (2004): 223–93.

<sup>70</sup> Matthias Schneckenburger, *Über den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte* (Bern: Fischer, 1841). Cf. Andrew J. Mattill, Jr., "The Purpose of Acts: Schneckenburger Reconsidered", in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 108–22.

<sup>71</sup> Ferdinand C. Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine: A Contribution to a Critical History of Primitive Christianity*, trans. A. Menzies, 2 vols. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1876).

<sup>72</sup> Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Heinrich Greeven (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958). Cf. W. Ward Gasque, *A History of the Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 234; Clare K. Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History: An Investigation of Early Christian Historiography*, WUNT 2.175 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 32–37.

<sup>73</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955); Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: SPCK, 1958). Cf. Gasque, *Interpretation*, 185–94; Beverley Roberts Gaventa, "The Perils of Modernising Henry Joel Cadbury", in *Cadbury, Knox and Talbert: American Contributions to the Study of Acts*, ed. Mikeal C. Parsons and Joseph B. Tyson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 8–26; Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 37–40.

<sup>74</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (London: Faber, 1961). Cf. Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 40–42.

<sup>75</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*. Cf. Gasque, *Interpretation*, 235; Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 42–44.

<sup>76</sup> Mikeal C. Parsons, "Reading Talbert: New Perspectives on Luke and Acts", in Parsons and Tyson, *Cadbury, Knox and Talbert*, 133–171, citing 165.

<sup>77</sup> Talbert, *Patterns*, 1–14.

(Quintilian),<sup>78</sup> Ben Witherington (rhetoric),<sup>79</sup> Parsons (speech and literary),<sup>80</sup> and Richard Pervo (novelistic).<sup>81</sup> Those applying modern literary concepts include Robert Brawley (structuralism)<sup>82</sup> and Robert Tannehill (internal connections, progressive sequence, and narrative rhetoric).<sup>83</sup> Various aspects of literary criticism are also found in works on Acts by Michael Goulder (typological),<sup>84</sup> Jacques Dupont (text-centred literary analysis),<sup>85</sup> Luke Johnson (“literary shape to a theological vision”),<sup>86</sup> William Kurz (canonical and reader-response),<sup>87</sup> Gooding (selection of material and proportions),<sup>88</sup> Robert Wall (final form and canonical),<sup>89</sup> David Peterson (narrative structure/theology),<sup>90</sup> Beverley Gaventa (narrative theology),<sup>91</sup> Scott Spencer (post-structuralism),<sup>92</sup> Bruce Longenecker (rhetoric),<sup>93</sup> Scott Shauf (narrative theology),<sup>94</sup> Paul Borgman (close literary reading),<sup>95</sup> and Terry Bleek (canonical).<sup>96</sup> Gerald Stevens’s recent, *Acts: A New Vision of the People of God*, is of particular relevance for a narrative-critical approach.<sup>97</sup>

Since some scholars reject a literary approach, the validity of applying narrative criticism to Acts is now defended.

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<sup>78</sup> Morgenthaler, *Lukas*.

<sup>79</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 2–3.

<sup>80</sup> Parsons, *Acts*, 8.

<sup>81</sup> Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009). Pervo, *Profit*.

<sup>82</sup> Robert L. Brawley, *Centering on God: Methods and Message in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 16–23.

<sup>83</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:1–8; Tannehill, *The Shape of Luke’s Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005).

<sup>84</sup> Michael D. Goulder, *Type and History in Acts* (London: SPCK, 1964).

<sup>85</sup> Jaques Dupont, *The Salvation of the Gentiles: Studies in Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Paulist, 1979); Dupont, *Nouvelles études sur les Actes des Apôtres* (Paris: Cerf, 1984).

<sup>86</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 1.

<sup>87</sup> Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 1–4.

<sup>88</sup> David Gooding, *True to the Faith: Charting the Course Through the Acts of the Apostles*, rev. ed. (West Port Colborne: Gospel Folio, 1995), 385.

<sup>89</sup> Wall, “Acts”.

<sup>90</sup> Peterson, *Acts*.

<sup>91</sup> Beverley Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 59.

<sup>92</sup> F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary Cultural Reading* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 26.

<sup>93</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries: The Art and Theology of the New Testament Chain-Link Transitions* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005), 165–252.

<sup>94</sup> Shauf, *Theology*.

<sup>95</sup> Paul Borgman, *The Way According to Luke: Hearing the Whole Story of Luke-Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 6.

<sup>96</sup> Terry N. Bleek, “The Interrelationship of Theology, History, and Literary Artistry in Acts: From a Canonical Reader’s Perspective” (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2012).

<sup>97</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, which although not published until the present study was nearing completion, is referenced as confirming some of my findings.

### 2.2.2 Validity of Literary Shape Method for Acts

Objections raised in applying narrative criticism to the Bible<sup>98</sup> are relevant to Acts, but do not equally apply to each model of narrative criticism. The focused narrative criticism method attempts to answer the following objections.

#### 2.2.2.1 Objection One: narrative criticism is a new method of study rejecting older academic disciplines

Stanley Porter argues that modern literary criticism loses the history of criticism.<sup>99</sup> However, aspects of narrative criticism are not new since classical-rhetorical (or historical-rhetorical) criticism<sup>100</sup> using ancient rhetorical handbooks to interpret the biblical text is prevalent amongst the Greek Fathers, Augustine, Calvin, Luther and Melancthon.<sup>101</sup> Narrative criticism actually complements the older academic disciplines of textual criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism, and historical criticism.<sup>102</sup> *Socio-Rhetorical Criticism*<sup>103</sup> attempts to combine all methods. However, as Blake Shipp rightly argues, a study based on one method potentially yields more clear in-depth results to set alongside the findings of other methods.<sup>104</sup> By focusing on the final form of the text, narrative criticism treats Acts as “a coherent and purposefully written narrative”<sup>105</sup> and a whole literary unit, rather than a conglomeration of disparate sources.

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<sup>98</sup> Powell, *Literary Criticism*, 16–19; Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 91–98; Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 212–216; Porter, “Literary Approaches”, 116–20; Barry M. Foster, “The Contribution of the Conclusion of Acts to the Understanding of Lucan Theology and the Determination of Lucan Purpose” (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1997), 7–12.

<sup>99</sup> Porter, “Literary Approaches”, 116.

<sup>100</sup> Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 127–41.

<sup>101</sup> Witherington, “Almost”, 64–65.

<sup>102</sup> Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 86–87. Cf. Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 53–56, for “an integrated approach” focused on the final form of the text.

<sup>103</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996); Robbins, *The Tapestry of Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>104</sup> Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 6, 7, 144–46, critiques socio-rhetorical criticism and the use of it by Witherington, *Acts*, as often being unclear and shallow with anaemic results, hermeneutical confusion and reader-orientated interpretations.

<sup>105</sup> Chris Green, *The Word of His Grace: A Guide to Teaching and Preaching from Acts* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 10, 11.

### 2.2.2.2 *Objection Two: Narrative criticism is an anachronistic imposition of modern literary concepts onto ancient literature*

Parsons argues that the use of modern literary concepts is inappropriate since they do not share the same literary conventions and social settings as ancient literature.<sup>106</sup> However, although a tentative application is required,<sup>107</sup> modern concepts are useful for literary analysis since they are often simply developments of ancient concepts.<sup>108</sup> In particular the three key theoretical concepts from Horace and Aristotle have a long history of application within literary criticism. In the present study they regulate the use of modern concepts.

### 2.2.2.3 *Objection Three: Narrative criticism uses fictional concepts that undermine historical veracity*

Eckhard Schnabel argues that historiography does not create “story” or “plot”.<sup>109</sup> However, he misses the point that an arrangement of true facts has a literary shape. Porter’s concern that literary criticism loses the historical context,<sup>110</sup> is overcome by Alexander’s observation that fact and fiction were not separate generic categories in the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>111</sup> Story artistry can co-exist with accurate history.<sup>112</sup> Viewing Acts as a selective history with a deliberate literary shape which reveals theological significance<sup>113</sup> produces important insights not possible through historical-criticism.<sup>114</sup> This overcomes Porter’s censure that literary criticism

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<sup>106</sup> Mikeal K. Parsons, “Luke and the Progymnasmata: A Preliminary Investigation into the Preliminary Exercises”, in Penner and Stichele, *Contextualising Acts*, 43–64, citing 62.

<sup>107</sup> As called for by Sean A. Adams, “Lucian and the New Testament: An Evaluation of His Life, Work and Relationship to New Testament Studies”, *ExpTim* 121 (2010) 594–600, citing 599, in relation to Lucian writing later than Acts.

<sup>108</sup> Norman R. Petersen, review of *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, by Charles H. Talbert”, *JBL* 96 (1977): 455–58, citing 457.

<sup>109</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Fads and Common Sense: Reading Acts in the First Century and Reading Acts Today”, *JETS* 54 (2011): 251–78, citing 265–66.

<sup>110</sup> Porter, “Literary Approaches”, 116–17.

<sup>111</sup> Alexander, “Fact, Fiction and the Genre of Acts”, 144–45. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 1:103–104; Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 60.

<sup>112</sup> Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 71–96; Keener, *Acts*, 1:97–101, 131–147; Samson Uytanlet, *Luke-Acts and Jewish Historiography: A Study on the Theology, Literature and Ideology of Luke-Acts*, WUNT 2.366 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 12–19; Shenoy, *Four Fabulists*, 153–174; Padilla, *Acts*, 75–122.

<sup>113</sup> Gabel. Wheeler and York, *Bible as Literature*, 234; Sternberg, *Poetics*, 41–46; Demetrius K. Williams, “Acts as a History of the Early Church”, in *The New Testament Fortress Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Margaret Aymer, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, David A. Sánchez (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 309–326, citing 314–16; Marshall, *Luke, Historian and Theologian*, 21–52; Padilla, *Acts*, 120–122.

<sup>114</sup> Powell, *Literary Criticism*, 18; F. Scott Spencer, “Acts and Modern Literary Approaches”, in Winter and Clarke, *Ancient Literary Setting*, 381–414.

produces unenlightening and pedestrian readings.<sup>115</sup> Narrative analysis brackets out historical-critical issues since the story-world of a biblical narrative is a self-contained entity.<sup>116</sup> Osvaldo Padilla is right that the postmodern historical focus on the story of the past is closer to ancient history than the nineteenth/twentieth century histories based on scientific verification of historical facts.<sup>117</sup>

#### 2.2.2.4 *Objection Four. Narrative criticism is too sophisticated and complicated for the original readers*

Amos Wilder argues that the classical Greek literature is too sophisticated and artistic compared to the New Testament.<sup>118</sup> However, the pervasiveness of the Greek culture and education means literary and rhetorical practice was widespread.<sup>119</sup> Although Acts is possibly written for a popular audience,<sup>120</sup> the early church included gifted and well-educated persons.<sup>121</sup> Even if many were not conscious of the literary shape, all great artists “always put more into the work than is ordinarily realised”.<sup>122</sup> The author of Acts uses literary skill and artistry to address a capable reader like Theophilus.<sup>123</sup> Lauri Thurén rejects Aristotle as too innovative a thinker for application to the New Testament.<sup>124</sup> However, Acts’ author is also innovative and Aristotle’s two key story concepts, previously outlined, are simple, elementary and well-suited for application to Acts.<sup>125</sup> Narrative criticism actually brings scholars and non-professional readers closer together.<sup>126</sup> The accusation that different literary approaches are often contradictory and obscurantist<sup>127</sup> without an explicit method or formal controls<sup>128</sup> is best overcome by establishing a straightforward literary shape model with clear terminology.

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<sup>115</sup> Porter, “Literary Approaches”, 117.

<sup>116</sup> Yamasaki, *Insights From Filmmaking*, 40.

<sup>117</sup> Padilla, *Acts*, 75–122.

<sup>118</sup> Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric*, 44.

<sup>119</sup> Witherington, “Almost Thou Persuadest Me”, 66–69.

<sup>120</sup> Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 148–52; Keener, *Acts*, 1:29.

<sup>121</sup> Witherington, “Almost Thou Persuadest Me”, 69.

<sup>122</sup> Duckworth, *Structural Patterns*, vii.

<sup>123</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 45.

<sup>124</sup> Lauri Thurén, “Is There Biblical Argumentation?”, in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference*, ed. A. Eriksson, T. H. Olbricht and W. Ubelacker (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002), 77–92, citing 79–80.

<sup>125</sup> Octavian Baban, “The Reasons for Luke-Acts: The Message of Luke’s Descriptive Theology”. 23 May 2013. <http://www.obinonet.ro/docs/tyndale/tyndrex/la/luke-acts.pdf>.

<sup>126</sup> Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 87–88.

<sup>127</sup> Longman, *Literary Approaches*, 47–49.

<sup>128</sup> Porter, “Literary Approaches”, 117.

### 2.2.2.5 Objection Five. Narrative criticism introduces subjective theories fundamentally different to Jewish or Christian theology

Graeme Goldsworthy contends that there is “the eclipse of the gospel in literary criticism”<sup>129</sup> since some literary theories, such as reader-response, structuralism, and deconstructionism can lead to a subjectivity of interpretation undermining the distinctiveness of the biblical text. However, a carefully constructed text-centred model of literary shape answers Goldsworthy’s criticism by showing how narrative creates theology.<sup>130</sup> Literary artistry co-exists in Acts with theological truth that is drawn from the Old Testament and interpreted within a Christian framework.<sup>131</sup>

In answering the objections, the positive values of using a literary approach to Acts include: (1) a revival of an older interpretative approach; (2) a focus on the final form of the text; (3) an emphasis on a whole literary unit rather than disparate sources; (4) using modern literary concepts to develop ancient ones; (5) being closer to Graeco-Roman historiography and culture; and (6) allowing narrative to create theology. Porter adds:<sup>132</sup> (7) an attention to detail; (8) the value of story; (9) an interest in the writing and reading process; and (10) a freedom of interpretation which allows interesting readings.

Having defended the validity of applying narrative criticism to Acts, I now outline my approach to the application of ancient and modern literary shape concepts.

### 2.2.3 Application of Ancient and Modern Literary Shape Theory to Acts

The development and employment of the literary shape theory given in Chapter One<sup>133</sup> is applied to Acts. Not only is Acts a combination of different genres,<sup>134</sup> but New Testament scholars follow Graeco-Roman scholars in applying dramatic and

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<sup>129</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centred Hermeneutics: Biblical-Theological Foundations and Principles* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2006), 155–166.

<sup>130</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics*, 37–38.

<sup>131</sup> Gregory Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography*, SNT 64 (Leiden: Brill, 1992); William S. Kurz, “Promise and Fulfilment in Hellenistic Jewish Narratives and in Luke and Acts”, in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim upon Israel’s Legacy*, ed. David P. Moessner (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999), 147–70; Carl Holladay, “Acts and the Fragments of Hellenistic Jewish Historians”, in Moessner, *Heritage of Israel*, 171–98; Augustin Del Agua, “The Lucan Narrative of the ‘Evangelization of the Kingdom of God’: A Contribution to the Unity of Luke-Acts”, in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. Joseph Verheyden (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 637–661, citing 643–646, 648–49.

<sup>132</sup> Porter, “Literary Approaches”, 112–115.

<sup>133</sup> See §1.1.5, pp.19–21.

<sup>134</sup> See §2.1.4, pp.48–50.



poetic concepts to a prose narrative.<sup>135</sup> This is a legitimate and helpful approach since the ancient concepts pre-date Acts. Horace's "Five-Act" Structure has heuristic value and, together with Aristotle's story concepts, holds promise for a fruitful exploration of Acts. A number of New Testament scholars apply the ideas of Horace and Aristotle, although they do not always maintain a clear distinction between the literary structure and story. Montgomery Hitchcock applies the concepts of Horace and Aristotle to John's Gospel.<sup>136</sup> Brian Rosner links ancient drama to Acts, but wrongly attributes Aristotle's story stages to Horace.<sup>137</sup> David Gooding, Octavian Baban, and Kota Yamanda apply Aristotle's story concepts to Acts.<sup>138</sup> Yamanda explicitly uses these to form a tripartite structure of a beginning (Acts 1–7), middle (Acts 8–12) and end (Acts 13–28) in relation to a conflict-solution between Judaism and Christianity.<sup>139</sup> My aim is to apply both of Aristotle's principles for story stages and story sequence extensively to Acts.

I follow Alexander's approach that "we may usefully analyse Acts, like many Greek novels, in dramatic terms".<sup>140</sup> She divides Acts into four major "Acts" with the proviso that this is a modern rather than an ancient division.<sup>141</sup> I propose to make an original heuristic application to Acts of Horace's "Five-Act" structure as developed by literary critics and with the use of a statistical analysis.

Having established Acts' literary scholarship, the validity of using narrative criticism, and clarified the application of ancient and modern literary concepts to Acts, the method for exploring literary shape begins with Acts' structure.

<sup>135</sup> E.g. Sternberg, *Poetics*, 39. See §1.1.5, pp.19–20, n.86.

<sup>136</sup> In relation to John's Gospel see F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, *A Fresh Study of the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1911), 140–41; F.R. Montgomery Hitchcock, "Is the Fourth Gospel a Drama?", *Theology* 7 (1923): 307–17.

<sup>137</sup> Brian S. Rosner, "The Progress of the Word", in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 215–233, citing 227, wrongly follows Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John's Gospel* (London: Routledge, 1994), 35, who cites Hitchcock inaccurately and wrongly attributes Aristotle's comments to Horace and Hitchcock. Cf. Hitchcock, "Fourth Gospel", 307–308, for a more accurate reference to Aristotle.

<sup>138</sup> David Gooding, *According to Luke: A New Exposition of the Third Gospel* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 357–58; Octavian Baban, *On the Road Encounters in Luke-Acts: Hellenistic Mimesis and Luke's Theology of the Way* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 19–25; Kota Yamanda, "A Rhetorical History: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles", in *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, JSNTSup 131 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 230–250.

<sup>139</sup> Yamanda, "Rhetorical History", 245–46.

<sup>140</sup> Loveday C. Alexander, "Acts", in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1028–61, citing 1030.

<sup>141</sup> Alexander, "Acts", 1030.

### 2.2.4 Method and Acts' Structure

The idea of a literary structure for Acts is challenged as an idle endeavour<sup>142</sup> with unjustified conclusions<sup>143</sup> leading to a plethora of suggestions<sup>144</sup> that are at best only heuristic devices for managing the text.<sup>145</sup> Unfortunately, Acts does not have any obvious syntactical or grammatical markers.<sup>146</sup> Some see the search for any structure as pointless, arguing that Acts is a library of programmatic episodes.<sup>147</sup> In spite of the danger of subjectivity, there are good reasons for seeking an Acts' structure.

First, Graeco-Roman culture encouraged the practice of narrative planning,<sup>148</sup> rough drafts,<sup>149</sup> arrangement and proportion,<sup>150</sup> taking account of limited manuscript space,<sup>151</sup> and even counting the columns or words.<sup>152</sup>

Second, the author's former book, Luke's Gospel is written *καθεξῆς*<sup>153</sup> which

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<sup>142</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1.52.

<sup>143</sup> Hemer, *Acts*, 37.

<sup>144</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 227–28; Keener, *Acts*, 1:574–581.

<sup>145</sup> Tyson, *Images of Judaism*, 15.

<sup>146</sup> Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Textual Connections in Acts*, SBLMS 31 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), explores the conjunctions in Acts, but the large number means they are not satisfactory structural markers. Other possibilities are the use of summaries (these are explored later in this chapter with Turner's Six-Panel Structure, see §2.2.4.1, p.66) and "the kingdom of God" (this is explored in Chapter Six, see §6.2.1, pp.312–13, and Diagram XII, p.314).

<sup>147</sup> Eduard Lohse, "Lukas als Theologe der Heilsgeschichte", *EvT* 14 (1954): 256–75; C. Marvin Pate, et al., eds., *The Story of Israel: A Biblical-Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004) 179–80.

<sup>148</sup> Talbert, *Patterns*, 79.

<sup>149</sup> Strange, *Problem*, 168–71; Botha, *Orality and Literacy*, 75.

<sup>150</sup> A. Q. Morton and G. H. C. MacGregor, *The Structure of Luke and Acts* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964), 15, 39; Jaques Dupont, "La question du plan des Actes des Apôtres à la lumière d'un texte de Lucien de Samosate", *NovT* 21 (1978): 220–231; Giuseppe Betori, "Strutturazione degli Atti e storiografia antica" *Christianesimo nella Storia*, 12 (1991): 251–263.

<sup>151</sup> Morton and MacGregor, *Structure*, 12–13.

<sup>152</sup> Morton and MacGregor, *Structure*, 17–18.

<sup>153</sup> Luke 1:3. BDAG, *καθεξῆς*, 490, "pert. to being in sequence in time, space or logic, *in order, one after another*". An exploration of the NT usage confirms this range of meaning. Acts 3:24 (temporal); 11:4 (logical/theological); and 18:23 (spatial/sequential). The only other NT use is Luke 8:1 (temporal/afterwards). For discussion on temporal (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978, 43) and theological (Gerhard Schneider, "Zur Bedeutung von *καθεξῆς* im lukanischen Doppelwerk", *ZNW* 68 (1977): 128–31; Arthur A. Just, *Luke*, 2 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1996–97), 1.36; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, 2 vols., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994–96), 1.63).

some scholars interpret of literary order<sup>154</sup> and it is a reasonable expectation that the second work will have a similar arrangement.

Third, the initial oral presentation required a dramatic framework dividing the narrative into manageable “Acts”.<sup>155</sup>

Fourth, an interaction of literary structure and story brings a fuller understanding of both. I will attempt to overcome the inherent tensions of trying to connect a structural overlay with Acts’ story by following the previously noted attempts by the Renaissance literary scholars<sup>156</sup> and adjusting Horace’s “Five-Act” structure with story stages.<sup>157</sup> However, the transitions between the structural sections and story stages blur the overall picture.

Fifth, even if only heuristic it is nonetheless helpful “to think through the features that shape the narrative and give it a theological meaning”.<sup>158</sup>

The method for exploring Acts’ structure involves an application of Horace’s “Five-Act Structure” interpreted by Renaissance literary critics, Freytag, and modern screenwriters together with the structural elements of sections, size, and sequence. However, we must first begin with scholarship’s search for an Acts’ structure.

#### 2.2.4.1 Structural Models for Acts

From the vast number of proposals there are essentially five main Acts’ structures. These are bipartite, tripartite, fourfold, “Five-Act Structure” (quinquepartite), and six-panel, with variations within each one. A major factor is whether the structure is symmetrical or asymmetrical.<sup>159</sup> This research favours a symmetrical structure

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<sup>154</sup> M. Völkel, “Exegetische Erwägungen zum Verständnis de Begriffs ΚΑΘΕΞΗΣ im lukanischen Prolog”, *NTS* 20 (1973–74): 289–99; F. Mussner, “καθεξής im Lukaspilog”, in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift for Werner Georg Kümmel*, ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Grässer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 253–55; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, 2 vols., AB 28, 28a (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981–85), 1.299; Loveday C. A. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1*, SNTSMS 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 131–32, 136; François Bovon, *Luke*, 3 vols., Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002–12), 1, 3; David E. Garland, *Luke* ZECNT 15 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 55; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, PillNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 26–27.

<sup>155</sup> Shiell, *Lector*, 4–5; Botha, *Orality and Literacy*, 101; Casey W. Davis, *Oral Biblical Criticism: The Influence of the Principles of Orality on the Literary Structure of Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 11–63.

<sup>156</sup> See §1.2.1, pp. 22–24.

<sup>157</sup> See §2.2.4.2, pp. 67–74.

<sup>158</sup> Liefeld, *Acts*, 36.

<sup>159</sup> Unless specified the word counts shown are based on NA<sup>28</sup>.

supported by the Graeco-Roman love of symmetry<sup>160</sup> and the careful planning required for limited and expensive manuscript space<sup>161</sup> especially if the narrative expects to fill the whole scroll as with Acts.<sup>162</sup> The approach to the four alternative Acts' structures is not to reject them outright, but to assess their potential and particularly ways in which they may relate to the "Five-Act Structure". This is important since although the aim is clearly demarcated divisions, the transition sections create a more flexible structure.

### *Bipartite Structure*

This divides Acts into two parts with similarities<sup>163</sup> between Peter and Paul.<sup>164</sup>

Acts 1–12. Acts of Peter (Jerusalem Church/mission to Jews)  
(8,046 words).

Acts 13–28. Acts of Paul (Gentile church/mission to Gentiles)  
(10,404 words).

The bipartite structure is problematic due to an unclear transition<sup>165</sup> between Paul appearing<sup>166</sup> and Peter disappearing.<sup>167</sup> There is also a literary disproportion between the two parts which gives a greater attention to Paul.<sup>168</sup> In addition the bipartite structure has no clear story central section and overlooks the role of other characters.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Talbert, *Patterns*, 6. John L. Myres, *Herodotus: Father of History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), 85. Gooding, *According to Luke*, 358–59, argues that literary symmetry in a historical work is not inconsistent with strict historicity.

<sup>161</sup> E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 51–52; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 51; Botha, *Orality and Literacy*, 69–80.

<sup>162</sup> Morton, *Gathering*, 113. Pate, *Story of Israel*, 178. Although extra parchment could be added to a scroll, this is unlikely with Acts since it is at the upper limit of scroll size.

<sup>163</sup> What scholars call "parallelism", but in this study used of a character or theme reappearing throughout the narrative.

<sup>164</sup> Arator, *De Actibus Apostolorum* (also known as *Historia Apostolica*). Cf. Richard Hillier, *Arator on the Acts of the Apostles: A Baptismal Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 5, 15; Richard B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Exposition* (London: Methuen, 1906), xlvii–l; Talbert, *Patterns*, 23–26; Pervo, *Acts*, 21;

<sup>165</sup> Philippe H. Menoud, "The Plan of the Acts of the Apostles", in *Jesus Christ and the Faith. A Collection of Studies*, trans. Eunice M. Paul (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978), 121–132, citing 121.

<sup>166</sup> Acts 7:58; 8:1a, 3; 9:1–31; 11:25–26; 12:25–15:4; 15:12; 15:35–28:31.

<sup>167</sup> Acts 1:13–5:42; 8:14–25; 9:32–11:18; 12:3–18; 15:7–11.

<sup>168</sup> An exact word count of Peter (3,890) and Paul (9,118) further increases the disproportion of literary emphasis (see §2.2.5.6, p.98, 101).

<sup>169</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 32–34.

A more proportionate bi-partite structure divides Acts<sup>170</sup> into:

Acts 1–14. Up to the Jerusalem Conference (9,453 words).

Acts 15–28. From the Jerusalem Conference (8,997 words).

This has a greater symmetry with the Jerusalem Conference (15:1–35) as the central turning point from Peter to Paul with the legitimisation of Gentile mission.<sup>171</sup> As shown later in this chapter with Horace’s “Five-Act Structure”, Acts 15 is not the statistical central section, but closer to the beginning of Acts’ second half.

### *Tripartite Structure*

The two main proposals are either a spatial asymmetrical arrangement based on Acts 1:8 or a symmetrical literary arrangement. The spatial arrangement interprets Acts 1:8 as a programmatic statement suggesting a threefold gospel mission movement across geographical and ethnic boundaries.<sup>172</sup>

Acts 1:1–8:3. Jerusalem (or to the Jews) (4,767 words).

Acts 8:4–11:18. In Judaea and Samaria (or to Gentile God-fearers and Samaritans) (2,569 words).

Acts 11:19–28:31. To the end of the earth (Gentiles) (11,114 words).

Its disproportionality is shared with several possible structural variations.

First, the middle pericope (8:4–11:18) extended to 12:25 links the Peter and Herod section with the Judaea and Samaria section.<sup>173</sup> However, this extension is unlikely since it removes (Syrian) Antioch’s function as a book-end (11:19–30; 13:1–3).<sup>174</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Charles C. Torrey, *The Composition and Date of Acts*, HTS 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), uses this division to confirm his hypothesis of an Aramaic source for the first half; Wall, “Acts”, 35–36, starts the second half at 15:13; Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 54, starts the second half at 15:36 with an opening long prologue from 1:1–2:47. She argues the climactic events of Cornelius (10:1–11:18) and Paul’s final defence speech (26:1–26) are central to the two parts with preparation (3:1–9:43 and 15:36–25:27) and *denouement* (11:19–15:35 and 27:1–28:31) sections.

<sup>171</sup> Menoud, “Plan”, 121–132; Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp with Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel. Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), xlii, sees the two epochs of the church’s history as Acts 1–14 (Israel) and 16–28 (Christianity) around the centre piece of Acts 15 prepared for by the first missionary journey (Acts 13 and 14) and worked out by the great missionary journey (15:36–21:26).

<sup>172</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, NTG (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 29, 1:1–5:42; 6:1–11:18 and 11:19–28:31, with the first section in Jerusalem adjusted to 1:1–8:3 as in Morgenthaler. *Lukas*, 421, and O’Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 72.

<sup>173</sup> J. Bradley Chance, *Acts* SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007), 195–206; William S. Kurz, *Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 21–23.

<sup>174</sup> This argument is expanded in Chapter Five (see §5.3.2.9, p.264).

Second, the middle pericope extended to 15:35 marks the beginning of a witness to the ends of the earth.<sup>175</sup> However, this proposal is undermined by Paul's frequent returns to Jerusalem.

Third, a different tripartite arrangement proposed by James Scott based on a world-view of ancient Jewish geography with missions to Shem (2:1–8:25), Ham (8:26–40), and Japheth (9:1–28:31).<sup>176</sup> The extreme disproportions make it unlikely.

Such disproportional structures were unusual within Graeco-Roman literature. One possible explanation is that the longer third part gives an emphasis to Gentile mission.<sup>177</sup> The third part is traditionally sub-divided into Paul's three missionary journeys (13:1–14:28; 15:40–18:22 and 18:23–21:17).<sup>178</sup> However, a break between the second and third journeys is unclear, since 18:23 onwards is probably only a second stage or lap in the last mission.<sup>179</sup> The tripartite structure also lacks a clear spatial scheme with Jerusalem constantly reappearing<sup>180</sup> and 1:8 being reversed with Samaria (8:4–25) preceding Judaea (9:31–43). Also the "end of the earth" is an ambiguous term and there is no clear mission movement to Gentiles since Paul persists in focusing on Jews nearly to the end of Acts (28:17–27). Whilst 1:8 is programmatic for the ongoing mission beyond Acts, it is not an outline for the book.<sup>181</sup>

A possible more proportional tripartite structure is:

1:1–9:43. Acts' Beginning (6,186 words).

10:1–19:20. Acts' Middle (6,233 words).

19:21–28:31. Acts' Ending (6,031 words).

This is worth pursuing as a possible "Three-Act" structure, but this study gives priority to Horace's "Five-Act Structure" as existing when Acts was written. The strong division at 9:43/10:1 and the uncertain division at 19:20/21 are relevant

<sup>175</sup> Gerhard Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*. 2 vols., HTKNT 5 (Freiburg: Herder, 1980–1982), 1.7–9, 68.

<sup>176</sup> James M. Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon", in *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf, BAFCS 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994), 483–544, citing 531.

<sup>177</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:575. Marshall, *Acts* (1992), 29.

<sup>178</sup> For discussion of the origin of this idea see Heidi J. Hornik and Mikeal C. Parsons, *The Acts of the Apostles Through the Centuries*, Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 143.

<sup>179</sup> Donald T. Rowlington, "The Geographical Orientation of Paul's Missionary Interests, *JBL*, 69 (1950), 341–4; Menoud, "Plan", 126; John T. Townsend, "Missionary Journeys in Acts and European Missionary Societies", in *Society of Biblical Literature 1985 Seminar Papers*, SBLSP 24 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 433–37; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 97; Holladay, *Acts*, 257.

<sup>180</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 30–31.

<sup>181</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:702–708; Powell, *About Acts*, 36.

for further consideration since they are also the midpoints of the transitional “Acts II and IV” in the “Five-Act Structure”.

### *Fourfold Structure*

Morgenthaler proposes a symmetrical literary structure based on his own word count.<sup>182</sup>

1:1–7:60 (or 8:3).<sup>183</sup> Foundation (M. 4,690 words; 4,767 words).

8:4–14:28. Transition (M. 4,731 words; 4,686 words).

15:1–21:26 (or 21:17).<sup>184</sup> Mission (M. 4,400 words; 4,525 words).

21:27–28:31. Opposition (M. 4,561 words; 4,472 words).

The strength of this arrangement is that the sections are roughly proportional with the four equal parts of 25% fitting into the 25%–50%–25% basis of “Five-Act Structure”. Scholars propose a large number of asymmetrical variations for the middle 50%.<sup>185</sup> These are too numerous to deal with here, but this study of literary shape considers the valid story breaks.

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<sup>182</sup> Morgenthaler. *Lukas*, 321–323.

<sup>183</sup> Morgenthaler. *Lukas*, 421, confusingly has a summary chart in which first section ends at 8:3 rather than 7:60 which he previously calculated in 322. Cf. Bruce W. Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 192–198, sees 8:1b–3 as the first chain-link interlock in Acts at an approximate midpoint in first half of Acts.

<sup>184</sup> Satterthwaite, “Classical Rhetoric”, 349, discusses Morgenthaler’s statistical approach for a division at 21:26 and concludes from a story perspective that 21:17 is a better division still allowing for four ‘roughly equal’ parts.

<sup>185</sup> E.g. Alexander, “Acts”, 1030, as 1:1–7:60; 8:1–12:25; 13:1–21:16 and 21:17–28:31; Ernst Haenchen, “The Book of Acts as Source Material for the History of Early Christianity”, in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 258–78, citing 259, as 1:1–8:3; 8:4–15:35; 15:36–21:26; and 21:27–28:31; Johnson, *Acts*, v–vii, as 1:1–8:3; 8:4–15:35; 15:36–22:29; and 22:30–28:31; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 5–7, as 1:1–8:40; 9:1–15:35; 15:36–21:26; and 21:27–28:31; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:43, as 1:1–5:42; 6:1–12:25; 13:1–20:3 and 20:4–28:31, but then confusingly (due to editorial requirements) has 13:1–18:23 for their third volume; Goulder, *Type and History*, 65–66, as 1:1–5:42; 6:1–9:31; 9:32–12:24; and 12:25–28:31; Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian Writing the ‘Acts of the Apostles’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 111, as 1:1–7:60; 8:1–12:25; 13:1–20:38; and 21:1–28:31; Bruce W. Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 229–235, as 1:1–8:3; 8:4–12:25; 13:1–19:41; and 20:1–28:31.

### *Six-Panel Structure*

The asymmetrical six-panel structure was first proposed by Charles Turner using the identification of selected summaries as boundary markers for periods of progress in the extension of the church.<sup>186</sup>

Acts 1:1–6:7. The Church in Jerusalem (3,441 words).

Acts 6:8–9:31. Palestine (2,522 words).

Acts 9:32–12:24. Antioch (2,068 words).

Acts 12:25–16:5. Asia Minor (2,210 words).

Acts 16:6–19:20. Europe (2,178 words).

Acts 19:21–28:31. Rome (6,031 words).

The use of summaries as textual markers is apparently a strong argument for this structure. Also the middle four panels are fairly proportionate, but the first panel and especially the last are not. Even more problematic is that the identification of the summaries is arbitrary without a consistent pattern.<sup>187</sup> The additional summaries such as 5:42;<sup>188</sup> 15:35;<sup>189</sup> 16:5;<sup>190</sup> and 21:16<sup>191</sup> suggest further panels. In spite of these weaknesses, the structure does have some merit since it confirms some of the story breaks used within the “Five-Act Structure”.

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<sup>186</sup> Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30–31. Charles H. Turner, “Chronology of the New Testament”, in *A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing with its Language, Literature and Contents Including Biblical Theology*, ed. James Hastings, asst. John C. Selbie, et al., 5 vols. (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1900–1904), 1:403–425, citing 421. Cf. Gooding, *True to the Faith*, 17–21; William J. Larkin Jr., “Acts”, in *The Gospel of Luke. Acts*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, CorBC 12 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2006), 350–668, citing 360, but starts the fourth panel at 13:1; Richard N. Longenecker, “Acts”, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, ed. Tremper Longman and D. E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 664–1102, citing 696.

<sup>187</sup> Acts 19:20; 12:24; 6:7 contain the “Word of God/Lord” motif, but this also occurs in the summary of 13:49. Acts 28:31; 16:5; 9:31 do not share any common features making them distinctive from other summaries. An expanded discussion of summaries is given later in this chapter (see §2.2.5.5, p.91–92).

<sup>188</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 97, 179, 180.

<sup>189</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, NICNT, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 300.

<sup>190</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 46–48.

<sup>191</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 46–48.



Seven,<sup>192</sup> eight,<sup>193</sup> twelve,<sup>194</sup> or fourteen<sup>195</sup> part structures simply add further subdivisions to the structures already considered.

Within the proposals for Acts' structure, Horace's "Five-Act Structure" stands out as the one present in the Graeco-Roman literary world. Though some scholars attempt disproportionate quinquepartite schemes<sup>196</sup> without reference to Horace, a more thorough and proportionate arrangement is now explored.

#### 2.2.4.2 Horace's "Five-Act Structure" and Acts

Horace's "Five-Act Structure", developed by Renaissance literary critics, classified by Freytag, and given a new impetus by modern dramatists, is now used with Acts. A potential confusion of terminology is avoided by noting this study's distinction between Acts as the title of the New Testament book and "Acts" in quotation marks as a division of the structure. The first step in producing a heuristic structure to apply to Acts is to construct a rough "Five-Act Structure" using a statistical approach. Rough calculations count columns, verses, sentences, or text lines (stichoi).<sup>197</sup> This study uses a word count (Morgenthaler)<sup>198</sup> rather than an unnecessarily precise letter count (A. Q. Morton),<sup>199</sup> although neither scholar applies their method to Horace's "Five-Act Structure".<sup>200</sup>

<sup>192</sup> E.g. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 120–123, 1:1–26; 2:1–8:4; 8:5–40; 9:1–14:28; 15:1–35; 15:36–22:21; 22:22–28:31. Green, *Word of His Grace*, 20, 1:1–2:47; 3:1–6:7; 6:8–9:31; 9:32–12:24; 12:25–16:5; 16:6–19:20; 19:21–28:31. Guiseppe Betori, "Alla ricerca di una articolazione per il libro degli Atti", *RivB* 37 (1989): 185–205, citing 203, that all structure positions originate with the points of divisions at: (1) end of Acts 5; (2) first verses of Acts 8; (3) end of Acts 12; (4) last verses of Acts 15; (5) half way through Acts 19; (6) half way through Acts 21. Also Betori, "La strutturazione del libro degli Atti", 3–34, 1:1–14; 1:12–8:4; 8:1b–14:28; 14:27–16:5; 15:35–19:22; 19:20–28:31; 28:14b–31, with overlapping links.

<sup>193</sup> E.g. Bruce W. Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 229, notes NRSV has 1:1–5:42; 6:1–8:40; 9:1–31; 9:32–11:18; 11:19–12:25; 12:1–15:35; 15:36–19:20 and 19:21–28:31. This acknowledges the difficulties in placing Paul's conversion-commission (Acts 9) and the Peter/Herod incident (Acts 12). Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 55–57, 1:1–2:47; 3:1–5:42; 6:1–9:31; 9:32–12:25; 13:1–15:35; 15:36–18:17; 18:18–20:38 and 21:1–28:31.

<sup>194</sup> E.g. Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 2 vols., EKKNT 5.2 (Zürich, Benziger, 1986), 1:41, has 1:1–11; 1:12–26; 2:1–6:7; 6:8–9:31; 9:32–12:25; 13:1–15:34; 15:35–19:20; 19:21–21:14; 21:15–26:32; 27:1–28:16; 28:17–28; 28:29–31.

<sup>195</sup> E.g. Witherington, *Acts*, v–x, has 1:1–14; 1:15–26; 2:1–47; 3:1–4:22; 4:23–8:3; 8:4–40; 9:1–31; 9:32–11:18; 11:19–15:35; 15:36–18:23; 18:24–21:16; 21:17–26:32; 27:1–28:12; 28:12–31.

<sup>196</sup> E.g. Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, NTD 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 13–14, as 1:1–5:42; 6:1–9:31; 9:32–15:35; 15:36–19:20; and 19:21–28:31; O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 72, with the first three divisions differing as 1:1–8:3; 8:4–11:18; 11:19–15:35.

<sup>197</sup> J. Rendel Harris, *Stichometry* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1893), 39–44, notes that the range of stichoi calculated for Acts varies from 2,524 to 2,559.

<sup>198</sup> Morgenthaler, *Lukas*, 321–323.

<sup>199</sup> Morton, *Gathering*, 101–111, applies the statistical method to an authorship stylistic analysis.

<sup>200</sup> Morton and MacGregor, *Structure*, 39, note the equality of the middle panels of Acts as 9:32–12:24; 12:25–16:5 and 16:6–19:20.

The present study applies the modern literary development of Horace within a 25%–50%–25% framework as “Act I” (25%), “Act II” (16.666...%), “Act III” (16.666...%), “Act IV” (16.666...%), and “Act V (25%)”.<sup>201</sup> Diagram III, on the next page, shows the statistical start, midpoint, and finish of each “Act” based on the total of 18,450 words (see Appendix II for calculations, adjustments, and comparisons)<sup>202</sup> in the NA<sup>28</sup> Greek text. It cannot be proved that Acts’ author had such a scheme in mind or made the necessary statistical calculations. Whether or not this is the case, the scheme has a heuristic value as a starting point for a rudimentary “Five-Act Structure” applied to Acts’ story. The fruitfulness of the proposed structure for understanding Acts will only become clear as the study progresses.

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<sup>201</sup> See §1.1.5, p.21. A proportional 20% for each of the five “Acts” would result in “Act I” (1:1–7:5a); “Act II” (7:5b–11:20a); “Act III” (11:20b–17:11); “Act IV” (17:12–22:27a); “Act V” (22:27b–28:31). Adjustments for Acts’ story would mean “Act I” (1:1–5:42); “Act II” (6:1–11:18); “Act III” (11:19–16:40); “Act IV” (17:1–23:11); “Act V” (23:12–28:31). This connects the Stephen section to the move from Jerusalem in “Act II”, puts the (Syrian) Antioch church at start of “Act III”, and starts “Act V” with the move to Caesarea. The transitional nature of these sections means that this structure is workable for Acts.

<sup>202</sup> See pp.383–84.

Diagram IIISTATISTICAL CALCULATIONS OF  
STARTS, MIDPOINTS & FINISHES

	START	MIDPOINT	FINISH	
“ACT I” Beginning	1:1 (0)	4:26 (2306/7)	7:55a (4612/3)	25% 4612/3 words
“ACT II”	7:55b (4613)	9:41 (6149/50)	12:8a (7687/8)	16.66% 3075 words
“ACT III”	12:8b (7688)	14:15 (9225/6)	16:34a (10762/3)	16.66% 3075 words
“ACT IV”	16:34b (10763)	19:14 (12299/300)	21:20a (13837/8)	16.66% 3075 words
“ACT V” Ending	21:20b (13838)	25:10 (16143/4)	28:31 (18450)	25% 4612/3 words

( ) cumulative word count

The next step is to adjust the statistical structure by connecting the more subjective possible story divisions and midpoints which are closest to the statistical calculations.<sup>203</sup> I accept that there are transitional sections between the “Acts” (7:54–8:4; 11:19–30; 16:35–40; and 21:15–17) which result in fluid divisions with overlapping material.<sup>204</sup> The result is that this study focuses more on “Act V” (Ending); “Act I” (Beginning), and “Act III” (Middle) rather than the more transitional “Act II” and “Act IV”. The midpoints of each “Act” give theological legitimacy to the events either side of them.<sup>205</sup> Diagram IV, on the next page, shows the resulting Acts’ “Five-Act Structure”.

“Act I” (1:1–8:3). The statistical midpoint (4:26) in the prayer of 4:24–30 is an appropriate story midpoint with the Psalm 2:1–2 quotation referring to the kings of the earth and rulers in opposition to the Lord and his Christ. The statistical *finish* (7:55) allows the completion of Stephen’s story (7:55–8:2) to start “Act II” and connect to what follows. However, 8:3 is a better story *closure* for “Act I” since it marks the literary-spatial movement from Jerusalem to Samaria. The transitional interlocking of Saul (later known as Paul)<sup>206</sup> and Stephen in 8:1–3 is either the *finish* of “Act I” or the *start* of “Act II”. A decision for the *finish* of “Act I” at 8:3 marks a literary-spatial and literary-temporal conclusion to the earlier events.

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<sup>203</sup> The story adjustments to the above statistical structure result in “Act I” (4,767 words), “Act II” (2,722 words), “Act III” (3,378 words), “Act IV” (2,889 words) and “Act V” (4,694 words). The impact of this on statistical midpoints is minimal since they are calculated as “Act I” (4:30 instead of 4:26), “Act II” (9:40 instead of 9:41), “Act III” (14:13 instead of 14:15), “Act IV” (19:15 instead of 19:14) and “Act V” (25:8 instead of 25:10).

<sup>204</sup> For further details see Appendix III, pp.385–89.

<sup>205</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 235.

<sup>206</sup> The change to Paul occurs at 13:9. This study uses the name appropriate at the particular point in the story.

Diagram IV

BEGINNING

“ACT I”

1:1

8:3

Mid  
Points:

4:26

Spatial: Jerusalem

Character: Peter (Stephen)

ACTS’ “FIVE-ACT STRUCTURE”

MIDDLE

“ACT III”

11:27

16:40

21:14

“ACT IV”

21:15

ENDING

“ACT V”

28:31

9:31  
9:41  
9:43

Samaria  
Judea  
Caesarea

(Phillip)

Peter - Paul - Peter

19:14  
19:20  
19:21

Ephesus

Paul

14:15

Lystra

Peter - Paul

James

25:10  
25:11  
25:12

Jerusalem  
Caesarea  
Rome

Paul

“Act II” (8:4–11:26). The statistical midpoint (9:41) is an appropriate story midpoint recording the notable resurrection of Tabitha. It connects Joppa (9:42–43) with the following events. However, 9:43 is a better nearby story midpoint concluding Peter’s Judean ministry (9:32–43). The summary of 9:31 is also a possibility since it marks the end of Saul’s early ministry. “Act II” is transitional moving the story from Peter in Jerusalem, through Samaria (8:4–40), Saul’s conversion-commission (9:1–31), Peter’s Judean ministry (9:32–43), Peter and Cornelius (10:1–11:18), and the Antioch church (11:19–26 or 30). The statistical finish (12:8) is inappropriately in the middle of the Peter and Herod section (12:1–24) and 11:30 is a better story *closure*. The preceding (Syrian) Antioch section (11:19–30)<sup>207</sup> and particularly Agabus’s prophecy (11:27–30) is transitional at either the *finish* of “Act II” or the *start* of “Act III”. A decision for 11:26 as the *finish* of “Act II”, with the important first mention of Christians, allows 11:27–30 to introduce “Act III” and frame the following section ending at 12:25.

“Act III” (11:27–16:40). The statistical midpoint (14:15) in Paul’s Lystran Mission (14:8–20a) is a key original proposal made by this study. It is often overlooked by the scholarly consensus which places the Jerusalem Conference section (15:3–35) as Acts’ structural and theological midpoint.<sup>208</sup> A midpoint of the Lystran mission (14:8–20a) shifts the central emphasis from the defence of the Gentile mission to a more positive first purely pagan Gentile mission. From this midpoint an *overview patterning* reveals how the surrounding material contributes to missional significance.<sup>209</sup> The preceding Acts 13 records Barnabas and Saul’s mission to Pisidian Antioch where Paul’s speech and scriptural quotations lay a strong mission foundation. The succeeding Acts 15 deals with the resistance to mission. Further away from the centre, Acts 12 connects Barnabas and Saul’s mission from (Syrian) Antioch to events in Jerusalem and Acts 16 tells of Paul and Silas’s new mission from Troas to Philippi. The statistical *finish* (16:34) appropriately marks the conversion of the Philippian jailor and his family. Whilst Paul’s first appeal to Roman citizenship (16:35–40) is a suitable transitional and

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<sup>207</sup> Delbert L. Wiens, *Stephen’s Sermon and the Structure of Luke-Acts* (Richard Hills, TX: BIBAL, 1995), 241, a second section from 5:1 finishes at 11:18.

<sup>208</sup> See Acts’ Middle scholarship in Chapter Five (§5.1, pp.230–32).

<sup>209</sup> This is developed in Chapter Five (see Diagram XI, p.242).

introductory start for “Act IV”,<sup>210</sup> the nearest best story *closure* for “Act III” is 16:40.

“Act IV” (17:1–21:14). The statistical midpoint (19:14) is located in the middle of the closing events at Ephesus (19:11–20).<sup>211</sup> A better nearby story midpoint is either the summary statement of 19:20 or Paul’s statement in 19:21 announcing his planned journey to Jerusalem and then Rome. The middle of the Ephesus section (18:24–19:40) may seem an odd place to mark a division.<sup>212</sup> However, a key proposal is that 19:21 marks a significant negative turning point leading to a story decline<sup>213</sup> with the riot in Ephesus marked by Paul’s absence (19:23–41), the return to Troas (20:7–12) which closes the mission begun there in 16:6–10, the farewell speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus (20:13–38), and Paul’s ignoring of the Holy Spirit’s warnings (21:1–16). The statistical *finish* (21:20) records the opening words of the Jerusalem elders to Paul. A better story *closure* for “Act IV” is 21:14 which precedes the fronted time clause “but after these days” (21:15). Paul’s arrival at Jerusalem (21:15–17) is best attached as the opening of “Act V”.<sup>214</sup>

“Act V” (21:15–28:31). The statistical midpoint (25:10) appropriately introduces Paul’s closing appeal to Caesar (25:11) which is approved by Festus (25:12). The appeal continues Paul’s restoration as a mission instrument begun in his speeches before the Jerusalem crowd (22:1–21), the Sanhedrin (23:1b–6) and Felix (24:10b–21). The appeal also sets up the finale of the closing three chapters which record Paul before King Agrippa (26:1b–29), the storm and shipwreck (27:1–44), and the final journey to Rome (28:1–31). In “Act V” Paul becomes a prisoner rather than a free missionary. It is notable that the opening scenes at Jerusalem (Acts 1–8) and the closing scenes of Paul’s captivity (Acts 21–28) are statistically so similar in size. The symmetry of “Act I” and “Act V” strongly supports the hypotheses that Acts’ structure is constructed to support the story, that Horace’s “Five-Act

<sup>210</sup> There are hints of Rome in “Act IV” at 17:7; 18:1, 2, 12–17; 19:21.

<sup>211</sup> Wiens, *Stephen’s Sermon*, 145, 184–85, includes Ephesus in a middle section as 18:24–19:7 within a wider pericope of 18:18–19:22, but does not discuss structure.

<sup>212</sup> Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 198–205, makes a case for 19:21 as a division based on his chain-link interlock arguments. The present study nuances 19:21 as a turning point rather than a section division. Cf. a tripartite structure (§2.2.4.1, pp.63–65) and the six-panel structure (§2.2.4.1, p.66).

<sup>213</sup> Chapter Five explores this key proposal for the literary shape of Acts’ story (see §5.3.4.2, pp.279–81).

<sup>214</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:173.

Structure”, classified by Freytag and developed by modern dramatists, is a valid model for Acts, and that the literary shape results in missional significance.

With the big-picture of Acts’ literary structure in place, other structural elements are now added to the method.

#### 2.2.4.3 Other Structural Elements

The three elements of sections, size, and sequence are important for Acts’ literary structure.

*Sections* break down Acts’ structure into smaller identifiable narrative units.<sup>215</sup> These are more than a series of dramatic episodes identified by Eckhard Plümacher,<sup>216</sup> but rather link into a continuous story. A useful metaphor sees the sections as a series of progressive envelopes, Chinese boxes,<sup>217</sup> or Russian dolls<sup>218</sup> unfolding the story. The sections are identified grammatically, episodically using combined criteria such as time, place, constellation of characters, and theme,<sup>219</sup> or as a distinct literary story unit.<sup>220</sup> Stephen Levinsohn’s seminal work on Acts’ conjunctions<sup>221</sup> is helpful in identifying the sections using a grammatical method. He identifies *καί* as a connection or comparison,<sup>222</sup> *δέ* as a contrastive break marking out a distinct unit,<sup>223</sup> *τέ*, as similar to *καί*, but showing a specific relationship between elements,<sup>224</sup> *οὖν*, linking to what has preceded,<sup>225</sup> and *μέν οὖν* being transitional in joining the prospective *μέν* and continuative *οὖν*.<sup>226</sup> Although the sections within the “Acts” are normally easy to identify, the transitions between them are not always

<sup>215</sup> Jan Christoph Meister, “Narrative Units”, in Herman, Jahn and Ryan, *Narrative Theory*, 382–384; Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 88–94.

<sup>216</sup> Eckhard Plümacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller: Studien zur Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 80–136.

<sup>217</sup> Fowler, “Second Thoughts”, 19.

<sup>218</sup> Suggested by Steve Walton in conversation, Cambridge, March 2015.

<sup>219</sup> Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 32, gives the helpful caution that episodes should not be identified by a single criterion.

<sup>220</sup> E.g. Acts 28:16–31. Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 116.

<sup>221</sup> Levinsohn, *Connections*.

<sup>222</sup> E.g. the repeated use of *καί* at 1:4; 1:9; 1:15 and 2:1 makes connections throughout a long opening section. Levinsohn, *Connections*, 83–85, 96–120, esp. 119–20.

<sup>223</sup> E.g. the use of *δέ* at 28:30 marks out the closing summary as separate to the preceding section. Levinsohn, *Connections*, 83–96, citing 96.

<sup>224</sup> E.g. the use of *τέ* as a connection at 5:42; 12:17b; 16:34; 17:14b; 18:4b; 20:7b; 21:16, 18b; 27:5 and a contrast at 6:13; 9:3b; 14:21; 15:4b; 21:12; 24:10. Levinsohn, *Connections*, 121–136, citing 136.

<sup>225</sup> E.g. the use of *οὖν* at 10:23; 13:38; 22:29a; 25:1, 23. Levinsohn, *Connections*, 138–141.

<sup>226</sup> E.g. the use of *μέν οὖν* at 9:31. Levinsohn, *Connections*, 141–150, citing 147–50, and esp., 147, shows that 9:31 is a transition rather than a termination suggested by Turner, “Chronology”, 421.



clear cut. Appendix III gives an outline of Acts' sections. This study uses the term *scene* of an amalgamation of *sections*.<sup>227</sup>

*Size* or proportion is an important factor of Acts' literary shape.<sup>228</sup> It is a reasonable hypothesis that the more textual space is given to any particular section or aspect of the story then the greater the significance.<sup>229</sup> Size is an ancient strategy alongside other literary features. Aristotle identifies that "beauty consists in magnitude and ordered arrangement"<sup>230</sup> and Lucian states that a writer of history should "run quickly over small and less essential things, while giving adequate treatment to matters of importance".<sup>231</sup> A statistical analysis is therefore useful since as Bal argues, word-counting is not sterile or irrelevant, but demonstrates how "the attention of the text is patterned".<sup>232</sup> Although size may underline apologetic and eye-witness importance,<sup>233</sup> scholars rightly conclude that the comparative narrative proportions reveal literary significance<sup>234</sup> and underscore the theological themes.<sup>235</sup> Also the literary device of *redundancy* involves the *repetition* of key material<sup>236</sup> (e.g. the Peter/Cornelius section<sup>237</sup> or Saul's conversion-commission<sup>238</sup>) for emphasis<sup>239</sup> and development of significance.<sup>240</sup>

*Sequence* is the deliberate arrangement of Acts' sections so that significance emerges from the order and progression of the narrative. The story flows from

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<sup>227</sup> As with the final scene (28:16–28) and the first scene (1:6–11). In order to keep the same terminology the term is also used of the central scene (14:8–20a) although this is also a section. Narratology uses the term "scene" differently to indicate discourse time = story time (not appearing in Acts).

<sup>228</sup> Liefeld, *Acts*, 16, 41; Joel Green, *How to Read the Gospels and Acts* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1987), 107.

<sup>229</sup> Burridge, *What Are the Gospels*, 116–17; Liefeld, *Acts*, 16, 41.

<sup>230</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 7.16 (1450b. 36) [Fyfe, LCL].

<sup>231</sup> Lucian, *How to Write History* 6.56.4–6. For a similar concept with rhetoric see Cicero, *De or.* 3.27.104–105; Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.4; [Longinus], *Subl.* 11–12; Rhet. Her. 4.45.58.

<sup>232</sup> Bal, *Narratology*, 99.

<sup>233</sup> Longenecker, "Acts", 1013.

<sup>234</sup> A. C. Headlam, "Acts of the Apostles", in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 1.25–35, citing 35; William M. Ramsay, *Pictures of the Apostolic Church. Its Life and Teaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), 84; Larkin, *Acts*, 361; Tannehill, *Shape*, 216–17; Witherington, *Acts*, 365.

<sup>235</sup> Philip Satterthwaite, "Classical Rhetoric", 352, but does not identify the proportions, the theological themes or the method of underscoring. This study addresses the omission.

<sup>236</sup> Susan R. Suleiman, "Redundancy and the 'Readable' Text", *PT* 1 (1980): 119–42.

<sup>237</sup> Acts 10:1–47; 11:1–18 and 15:7–9.

<sup>238</sup> Acts 9:1–19; 22:2–21 and 26:4–18.

<sup>239</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:74–77; Joel B. Green, "Internal Repetition in Luke-Acts: Contemporary Narratology and Lucan Historiography", in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. Ben Witherington III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 283–99.

<sup>240</sup> D. D. Schmidt, "Rhetorical Influences and Genre: Luke's Preface and the Rhetoric of Hellenistic Historiography", in Moessner, *Heritage of Israel*, 27–60, citing 54–55; Alexander, "Acts", 1042.

section to section in the dynamic of a plot gathering the events into a beginning, middle, and ending.<sup>241</sup> The exegetical “Law of First-Mention” recognises that the first reference of a story aspect or theme establishes its meaning for what follows.<sup>242</sup> However, a “Law of Final-Mention”<sup>243</sup> needs more attention since the final reference is more important for the culmination of a story aspect or theme. Variations to sequence underline significance, e.g. the dislocation of a section as a *retrospective flashback* or a *prospective foreshadowing* (e.g. 1:18–19; 22:17–21)<sup>244</sup> and the *intercalation* of one section splitting apart another section (e.g. 12:1–24).<sup>245</sup> The *recurrence* of story components in frequency and distribution also contributes to significance.<sup>246</sup>

The method for exploring literary story dovetails into the one established for literary structure.

### 2.2.5 Method and Acts’ Story

The method for exploring Acts’ story applies Aristotle’s “Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)” and “Complication, Transformation, and Denouement” concepts. Three reading strategies (backwards, forwards and central) produce different perspectives on the story. Five story components (literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, speech, and intertextual) are chosen because they fill out Acts’ narrative

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<sup>241</sup> Mark Kingston Hargreaves, “Reading the Bible as Narrative and the Implications for the Notion of Biblical Authority” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1992), 151.

<sup>242</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *Interpretation of the Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1972), 124–25, attributes the first use to Lord Bacon (1600). Others attribute to Benjamin W. Newton including Arthur T. Pierson, *The Bible and Spiritual Criticism: Being the Second Series of Lectures on the Bible Delivered in Exeter Hall in the Months of February, March and April 1904* (London: Nisbet, 1906), 41–45; F. E. Marsh, *The Structural Principles of the Bible: How to Study the Word of God* (Kilmarnock: John Ritchie, 2008), 224–25; George H. Fromow, ed., *Teachers of the Faith and the Future: The Life and Works of B. W. Newton and Dr S.P. Tregelles* (London: Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, undated), 22.

<sup>243</sup> Suggested by Sam Storms in conversation at Swanwick, February 2016. Cf. Fromow, *Teachers of Faith*, 22, citing Benjamin W. Newton as “the only unfailing method of interpreting Scripture is the structural method. Where do you first hear of any matter and where the end of it? Then compare the beginning and the end, in order to get a firm grasp of the general character of all that intervenes”. Cf. Pierson, *Bible and Spiritual Criticism*, 94.

<sup>244</sup> An imprecise term meaning either: (1) a temporal prolepsis (as used in this study); or (2) the brief introduction of people, places or themes appearing more fully later in the narrative. Cf. Clarice J. Martin, “The Function of Acts 8:26–40 within the Narrative Structure of the Book of Acts: The Significance of the Eunuch’s Provenance for Acts 1:8c” (PhD diss., Duke University, 1985), 222–38.

<sup>245</sup> Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 121–22.

<sup>246</sup> Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 77; Sternberg, *Poetics*, 92, 365–440; Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 95–97.

construction.<sup>247</sup> With each component a strict literary focus concentrates on what is in the text rather than the external context.

#### 2.2.5.1 Aristotle's "Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)" and Acts

Chapter Three applies Aristotle's story stages to Acts' Ending (21:15–28:31), Chapter Four to Acts' Beginning (1:1–8:3), and Chapter Five to Acts' Middle (8:4–21:14). These explore how the story *closure*, *opening*, and *climax* reveal missional significance. The order of the chapters reflects expected significance in Acts' Ending as the *culmination* of the most expected significance,<sup>248</sup> Acts' Beginning as the *foundation* of expected significance, and Acts' Middle as the *pivot* with some expected significance, although difficult to locate. The scholarly debate over the literary shape of Acts' Ending, Beginning, and Middle is reserved for introducing the exploration of the actual Acts text in Chapters Three to Five.

#### 2.2.5.2 Aristotle's "Complication, Transformation, and Denouement" and Acts

Aristotle's story progression or development concept is relevant for both Acts' whole story framework and the resulting significance. As with many ancient historical works, the idea of a plot in Acts moves it beyond just a chronological progression to a causal connection appropriate for a theological treatise. Whilst an overall plot for Acts is discernible there are also numerous sub-plots<sup>249</sup> which are linked,<sup>250</sup> overlapping,<sup>251</sup> inserted,<sup>252</sup> or interlaced.<sup>253</sup>

<sup>247</sup> Theon, *Prog* 5.1 (Kennedy) for spatial, temporal, character components in general narrative construction; Carey C. Newman, "Acts", in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 436–44, citing 439–40, notes the spatial (geography), biographical (Peter/Paul) and speech-rhetorical (sermons) components.

<sup>248</sup> See the previous discussion of "Law of Final-Mention" (§2.2.4.3, p.76).

<sup>249</sup> Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 52–55.

<sup>250</sup> E.g. The tragic annihilation of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–11) is a counter-model to the positive example of Barnabas (4:36–37) (Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 52); the reconstitution of the Twelve apostles (1:15–26) is a preparation for the fulfilment of Jesus' promise about the Holy Spirit (1:8) which is fulfilled at Pentecost (2:1–4).

<sup>251</sup> E.g. Stephen's death (7:59–8:2); Saul's persecution (7:58; 8:1, 3); and scattering to Samaria (8:1, 4, 5).

<sup>252</sup> E.g. The story of Peter and Herod (12:1–24) inserted between Barnabas and Saul's relief mission to Jerusalem (11:27–30 and 12:25) and the church at (Syrian) Antioch (12:19–30 and 13:1–3); the account of Apollos (18:24–28) between Paul's journey from and to Ephesus (18:19–23 and 19:1–41).

<sup>253</sup> E.g. The stories of Peter and Saul/Paul (see later in this chapter for Acts' character component, §2.2.5.6, p.98).

The present study focuses on the sequence of an overall or unifying plot in Acts viewed as a progressive journey to the ending from the beginning through the middle with large stretches of Acts showing causal continuity.<sup>254</sup> I agree with Gary Yamasaki that “paying attention to the plot development in the book of Acts – that is reading with an eye to how each new episode of the story relates to what has been previously presented – yields a depth of analysis of Acts rarely seen in traditional treatments of the book”.<sup>255</sup>

There is also a development (*complication*) to a turning point (*transformation*) leading to a resolution (*denouement*). In keeping with this Acts is often seen positively as a “theology of glory”<sup>256</sup> with continual progression from beginning to end.<sup>257</sup> However, as shown in Diagram V on the next page, the present study explores Acts as a more realistic pattern of story peaks and troughs. This applies Aristotle’s concept to the midpoints within each “Act” in a series of pyramid and inverted pyramid shaped plots.<sup>258</sup> Also, as shown later in this chapter, the plot development of story advances and declines links to mission progress within Acts.<sup>259</sup> In this way the chronological progression of Acts’ story is joined with the theological development of Acts’ significance.

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<sup>254</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:5–6.

<sup>255</sup> Yamasaki, *Insights From Filmmaking*, 65.

<sup>256</sup> Conzelmann, *Theology*, who sees in Acts a theology of glory overturning all opposition;

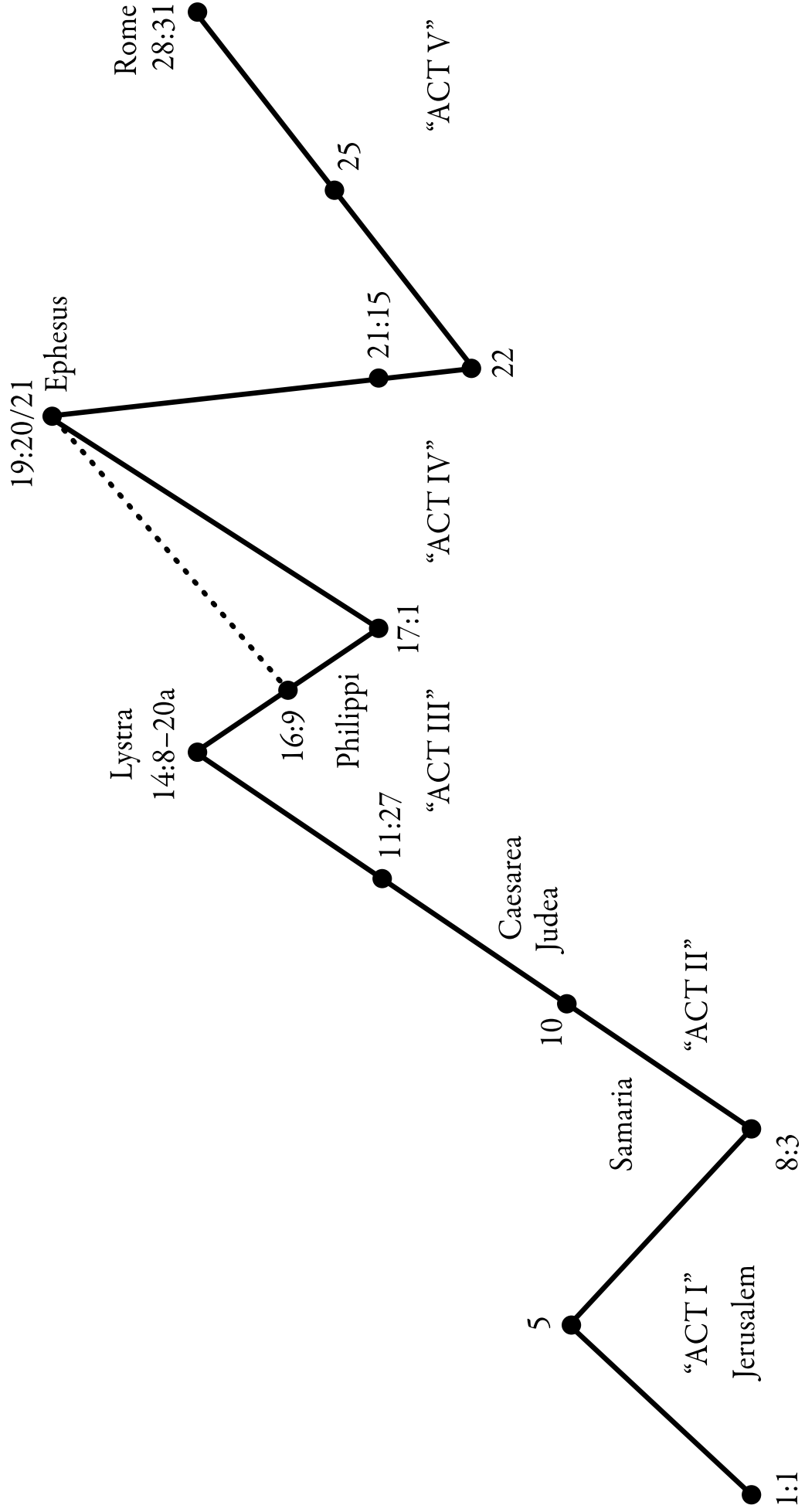
<sup>257</sup> Rosner, “Progress”, 229, refutes this description. Example of those suggesting it are Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 99–100, Acts being a continuous progression culminating in its highest point or final “climax” at Acts 28.

<sup>258</sup> Frye, *Great Code*, 169–7, as the shape of the whole Bible; Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 204–208, as comedy (U-shaped plot) and tragedy (inverted U-shaped plot).

<sup>259</sup> See §2.2.6.4, pp.126–27.

Diagram V

ACTS' MISSION ADVANCES AND DECLINES



The key points are:

Acts 1–4: an advance in the foundational story of the model believing community.

Acts 5–7: a decline with internal problems emerging in 5:1–10 and 6:1–7.

Acts 8–14: a continuous mission advance up to the central *climax* at Lystra.

Acts 15: a decline involving opposition to mission and the ambiguities of the Jerusalem Conference.

Acts 16–19: an overall second advance in renewed mission from either 16:9 or 17:1 up to a climax at Ephesus (18:24–19:20), but with hints of a negative undertow.

Acts 19:21: a key turning point in “Act IV” leading to a decline.

Acts 19:21–21:30: a decline with Paul’s journey to Jerusalem and subsequent arrest.

Acts 22–28: a third advance in Paul’s restoration as a mission instrument during his imprisonment and the resulting journey to Rome.

Another suggestion about progression uses the ancient narrative technique of a chiasmus<sup>260</sup> to emphasise a central midpoint<sup>261</sup> around which narrative units are arranged. Scholars apply this to Acts’ sections,<sup>262</sup> longer narrative

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<sup>260</sup> N. W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study of Form and Function of Chiastic Structures* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992); J. Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language: Chiasmus in the Scriptures and Beyond* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary, 1994); Talbert, *Patterns*, 56–58, on Acts 15:1–21:26.

<sup>261</sup> Roland Meynet, “The Question at the Center: A Specific Device of Rhetorical Argumentation in Scripture”, in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference*, ed. Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht and Walter Übelacker (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002), 200–214, citing 200–202.

<sup>262</sup> Donald R. Miesner, “Chiasm and the Composition and Messages of Paul’s Missionary Sermons” (STD diss., Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, 1974), 170–215, 13:16–41 with midpoint of 13:28; Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 65–67, 2:23–36 with midpoint of 2:31; 4:8–12 with midpoint of 4:11; and 5:1–6 with midpoint of 5:4b; Spencer, *Luke and Acts*, 48–49, 8:32–35 with midpoint of 8:32–33; Bleek, “Interrelationship”, 156, 1:1–11 with midpoint of 1:4–5; W. Schmithals, *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas* ZBNT 3.2 (Zürich: Theologischer, 1982), 115, 11:27–12:25 with midpoint of 12:12; Macdonald, “Paul’s Farewell”, 189–203, citing 199, 20:18–35 with midpoint of 20:28–31; Witherington, *Acts*, 292, 8:25–40 with midpoint of 8:32–35; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, rev. ed. (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 191, 22:3–21 with midpoint of 22:14–15.

stretches,<sup>263</sup> or even the whole book.<sup>264</sup> The technique is not pursued further in this study since, whilst it produces helpful observations within smaller units, it becomes more speculative and forced with larger narrative stretches.<sup>265</sup> Instead an *overview patterning* technique is used for exploring Acts' Middle.

Another literary technique used in Acts is the gaps (deliberate omissions)<sup>266</sup> in the narrative story or themes. This study shows how a progressive increase or decrease of gaps contributes to missional significance and especially if the gaps occur together in the same section of the narrative. An example is the hypothesis that the diminishing references to God, Jesus, and especially the Holy Spirit in the later part of Acts suggests a mission decline. However, the various plausible options for explaining an omission need a careful assessment to avoid over-speculative interpretations.

The idea of progression also links to the journey motif.<sup>267</sup> Acts emphasises a quest theme by a series of narrow escapes.<sup>268</sup> In this way it is possible for Acts' story to deliberately reflect the complexities and ambiguities of life.<sup>269</sup>

### 2.2.5.3 Reading Strategies and Acts

Chapters Three (Acts' Ending), Four (Acts' Beginning), and Five (Acts' Middle) use different reading strategies. These strategies are scholarly devices complementing the literary shape concepts of *retrospective*, *sequential*, and *overview patterning* as different perspectives for viewing the narrative.

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<sup>263</sup> Donald R. Miesner, "The Missionary Journeys Narrative: Patterns and Implications", in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. Charles H. Talbert, ABPRSSS 5 (Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 199–214, citing 202–209, 12:15–21:16 with midpoint of Areopagus address (17:16–34); Talbert, *Patterns*, 56–58, 15:1–21:26 with midpoint of 18:24–28; Edwin S. Nelson, "Paul's First Missionary Journey as Paradigm: A Literary-Critical Assessment of Acts 13–14" (PhD diss., Boston University Graduate School, 1982), 52–56, 13:1–14:28 with midpoint of 13:14–52.

<sup>264</sup> Palmer, *Sliced Bread*, 56–86, eleven sections arranged around a central one of 11:27–15:35 adjusted by Palmer, *New Testimony*, 42, 48–52, to 11:22–16:5; Wiens, *Stephen's Sermon*, divides the whole of Acts into a number of chiasmi with many chiasmic sub-sections within each one as: (1) 247–48, 1:1–4:37; (2) 110, 5:1–11:18; (3) 258–260, 11:19–21:14, divided into 11:19–16:40 and 17:1–21:14 and (4) 265–66, 21:15–28:31; Ronald J. Allen, *Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 209–218, suggests a chiasmus for the whole of Luke-Acts.

<sup>265</sup> Spencer, *Luke and Acts*, 48–49.

<sup>266</sup> Robert C. Tannehill, "Freedom and Responsibility in Scripture Interpretation, with Application to Luke", *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson*, ed. Richard P. Thompson and Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 265–78, Cf. Sternberg, *Poetics*, 186–90, 222–29, 235–63, for wider discussion of gaps in biblical literature.

<sup>267</sup> The journey concept forms part of Acts' Literary-Spatial component later in this chapter (see §2.2.5.4, pp.85–86).

<sup>268</sup> Beardslee, *Literary Criticism*, 50–51.

<sup>269</sup> Suggested in conversation by Rowlie Wymer (Cambridge, October 2015).

A *backwards reading* for Acts' Ending is inspired by the scholarly suggestion to read the narrative from back to front. However, this suggestion is more about reading forwards from the beginning using the perspective of the ending.<sup>270</sup> A literal backwards reading considers each section of Acts' Ending focusing on what follows and without reference to what precedes.<sup>271</sup> This has the advantage of showing how each section links to what follows in what Alexander calls "unrolling the story backwards".<sup>272</sup> *Retrospective patterning* becomes clear by identifying the threads or connections from the ending through to the beginning.<sup>273</sup>

A *forwards reading* for Acts' Beginning is what Peter Phillips calls "sequential reading" as "the gradual linear reading of a text accompanied by the gradual unfolding of its meaning, the normal way in which readers and hearers encounter texts".<sup>274</sup> The order of the text-continuum determines the impression on the reader.<sup>275</sup> The resulting rhetorical effect is called "sequential disclosure"<sup>276</sup> in which the unknown future narrative is not allowed to influence the interpretation.<sup>277</sup> This approach permits the author to use ambiguity creatively.<sup>278</sup> *Sequential patterning* views each section in relation to what precedes it.

A *central reading* for Acts' Middle concentrates on the central scene before oscillating to the preceding and succeeding narrative. This has the advantage of an *overview patterning* which considers each section's role in the *complication* up to the central *transformation* and the *denouement* away from it.

These macro-reading strategies help discern Acts' developing story plot.

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<sup>270</sup> Torgovnick, *Closure*, 8; Loveday C. A. Alexander, "Reading Luke-Acts From Back to Front", in *Ancient Literary Context*, 207–30; Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 12–13, 119, uses *retrospective patterning* for the same concept.

<sup>271</sup> This is a heuristic approach since the early readers would have knowledge of earlier material. See Steve A. Wiggins, review of *Insights from Filmmaking for Analyzing Biblical Narrative* by Gary Yamasaki, *RBL* 09/2017. <https://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=11513&CodePage=11513,609,8711,6428>, 3.

<sup>272</sup> Alexander, *Acts*, 16.

<sup>273</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 217; Elizabeth S. Malbon, "Ending", 184.

<sup>274</sup> Peter M. Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel: A Sequential Reading*, LNTS 294 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 18, 26–29. Cf. Yamasaki, *Insights From Filmmaking*, 50–60.

<sup>275</sup> Menakhem Perry, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings [With an Analysis of Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily']", *PT* 1:1–2 (1979): 35–64.

<sup>276</sup> Phillips, *Prologue*, 21.

<sup>277</sup> This is another heuristic approach since many readers would know the end of the story. See Steve A. Wiggins, review of *Insights from Filmmaking for Analyzing Biblical Narrative* by Gary Yamasaki, *RBL* 09/2017. <https://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=11513&CodePage=11513,609,8711,6428>, 3.

<sup>278</sup> Phillips, *Prologue*, 33–34. Cf. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *The Concept of Ambiguity – the Example of James* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977). Margueret and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 116–118, refers to ambiguity as polysemy signifying a deliberate imprecision created by using words or phrases that have a plurality of meaning.



A close narrative reading also involves the literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, speech, and intertextual components. The literary-spatial component is considered first since in Acts it is more prevalent than the temporal or character components.<sup>279</sup> The other components logically proceed from the characters into their speeches which contain the majority of intertextual Scripture quotations.<sup>280</sup>

#### 2.2.5.4 Acts' Literary-Spatial Component

Many literary and biblical scholars discuss this component.<sup>281</sup> It shows how Acts is more than a mere map or travel log, since places and journeys act as narrative devices<sup>282</sup> which thematically<sup>283</sup> reveal missional significance.<sup>284</sup> The literary-spatial component relates to: (1) Acts' key locations; (2) Acts' topographical details; (3) the literary structural size element of locations; (4) Acts' journey sequence; and (5) the significance of Acts' geography.

*The key locations in Acts* are within the eastern Mediterranean part of the Roman Empire<sup>285</sup> confirming the story's selectivity in not developing the mission to the south and east.<sup>286</sup> Scholars use historical and archaeological details to illuminate

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<sup>279</sup> Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, SNTSMS 146 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8. Parsons, *Acts*, 158; Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 85–86.

<sup>280</sup> The only exception being Isa 53:7–8 in the narrative at 8:32b–33.

<sup>281</sup> E.g. Robert T. Tally Jr., "Introduction: The Word, The Text, and the Geocentric", in *The Geocritical Legacies of Edward W. Said: Spatiality, Critical Humanism and Comparative Literature*, ed. Robert T. Tally Jr. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1–16. De Jong, *Narratology*, 105–134; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 80–82; Francois Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999), 105–114; Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 87–120; Roland Barthes, "The Structural Analysis of a Narrative from Acts X–XI", in *Structuralism and Biblical Hermeneutics: A Collection of Essays*, ed. and trans. Alfred M. Johnson, Jr. PTMS 22 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 1979), 109–143, citing 124.

<sup>282</sup> E.g. Keener, *Acts*, 1:582–596; Matthew L. Skinner, *Locating Paul. Places of Custody as Narrative Settings in Acts 21–28*, AcBib 13 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 2–3, 8; Dean P. Béchar, *Paul outside the Walls: A Study of Luke's Socio-Geographical Universalism in Acts 14:8–20*, AnBib 143 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 171–231; Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon", 483–544; Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 231–56; Loveday C. A. Alexander, "In Journeyings Often: Voyaging in the Acts of the Apostles and in Greek Romance", in *Ancient Literary Context*, 69–96; Alexander, "Narrative Maps: Reflections on the Toponymy of Acts", in *Ancient Literary Context*, 97–132; Patrick Grant, *Reading the New Testament* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), 36–59; Vernon K. Robbins, *Sea Voyages and Beyond: Emerging Strategies in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Blandford Forum: Deo, 2010); Eisen, *Poetik*, 161–168.

<sup>283</sup> Wallis, "Thematic Parallelism", 2–6.

<sup>284</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 46–47; Floyd V. Filson, "The Journey Motif in Luke-Acts", in Gasque and Martin, *Apostolic History*, 68–77, citing 75.

<sup>285</sup> Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon", 483–544.

<sup>286</sup> Richard Bauckham, "What if Paul had Travelled East Rather Than West?", *BibInt* 8 (2000): 171–84, hypothesises that Paul intended to travel east since: (1) Jerusalem at centre of east and west; (2) from Damascus no Jew would travel west; (3) the direction of his Nabatean mission until the opposition of 2 Cor 11:32–33; (4) Paul's role in west should not be exaggerated; (5) Acts is a *pars pro toto* story.

the function of key locations within Acts.<sup>287</sup> However, Acts gives very few geographical details of the locations. Instead a literary-spatial component focuses on the particular emphases of the story as suggesting a possible symbolic representation for the location.<sup>288</sup> For example Jerusalem is portrayed as the continuing centre of Judaism,<sup>289</sup> Lystra as a centre of pagan worship<sup>290</sup> and Rome as the political centre of Roman authority with Caesar.<sup>291</sup> Chapters Three to Five explore these and other locations further.

*The topography of Acts* allows a micro-approach to the literary-spatial component. Literary details like mountains, deserts, islands, rivers, upper rooms, prisons, etc., possibly have a figurative significance.<sup>292</sup> The temple is an important topographical detail in Acts (27 times).<sup>293</sup>

*The structural size* identifies the proportional literary attention of locations as providing significance rather than just being typical episodes or available source material.<sup>294</sup> Morgenthaler documents a literary size approach to the locations,<sup>295</sup> but

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<sup>287</sup> E.g. William M. Ramsay, *The Cities of St Paul: Their Influence on His Life and Thought* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907); Eckhard. J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press; Leicester: Apollos, 2004).

<sup>288</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 9. Cf. Roland Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge*, trans. Richard Howard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 233, suggests the Structuralist idea of a topographic code for Caesarea in Acts 10–11.

<sup>289</sup> Two different Greek forms of Jerusalem appear in Acts. Read-Heimerdinger, *Bezan Text*, 311–344, suggests that the transliterated Hebrew form Ἱερουσαλήμ (LXX) refers to the Jewish political and religious centre and the Hellenistic Greek form Ἱεροσόλυμα is used to portray the secular Jerusalem as a more neutral geographical location. However, other scholars dispute this distinction. E.g. Harnack, *Acts*, 76–82; Dennis D. Sylva, “*Ierusalēm* and *Hierosolyma* in Luke-Acts”, *ZNW* 74 (1983): 207–209; J. M. Ross, “The Spelling of Jerusalem in Acts”, *NTS* 38 (1992), 474–76; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 101; Keener, *Acts*, 1:698.

<sup>290</sup> Acts 14:8–20a.

<sup>291</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:701. This study explores the literary importance of Rome and Caesar (see Ch 3, §3.3.4, p.162).

<sup>292</sup> Kris Brown, “How Acts Means”, *HBT* 38 (2016): 74–87, citing 79. Cf. Barthes, “Structural Analysis”, 125, for the topographical, actional and symbolic codes of a housetop.

<sup>293</sup> Most references are ἱερόν (temple courts) and only two ναός (temple). There is a concentration of references, including those to priests, in Acts 2–5 and 21–26. Keener, *Acts*, 1:698–702; J. Bradley Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988); Steve Walton, “A Tale of Two Perspectives? The Place of the Temple in Acts”, in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 135–150; N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, vol. 4 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, 2 vols. (London: SPCK, 2013), 355–58; Wright, “Reading the New Testament Missionally”, in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael W. Goheen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 175–93, citing 181–85.

<sup>294</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 537.

this requires an interpretation of the relative significance.

*The journeys of Acts* convey the movement of an overall narrative journey from Jerusalem to Rome.<sup>296</sup> There are concentric circles from Acts 1:8<sup>297</sup> together with Paul's actual missionary journeys in Galatia (Acts 13–14) and the Roman province of Asia (Acts 16–19).<sup>298</sup> The symbol of a journey or movement is important in the Graeco-Roman world,<sup>299</sup> e.g. sea-voyages can symbolise a trip into the unknown<sup>300</sup> and the travel motif the journey of the soul.<sup>301</sup> In a similar way Acts possibly uses the journey motif for the reader's personal journey of spiritual discovery<sup>302</sup> from the security of their own "Jerusalem" to a mission in their present-day "Rome". Some differentiate between a centripetal (inwards towards Jerusalem/Israel) and a centrifugal (outwards towards the world) movement,<sup>303</sup> but Richard Bauckham is right to see them as two aspects of the same mission.<sup>304</sup>

The theological journey from Jerusalem's Jewish particularism to Rome's universalism<sup>305</sup> progresses from heritage to mission.<sup>306</sup> In addition there is an expansion or conquest of territory including Samaria, Cyprus, Galatia,<sup>307</sup> Greece<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Morgenthauer, *Lukas*, 329–331, compares by counting sentences in 13:1–14:28 (Pisidian Antioch, 88; Iconium, 18; and Lystra, 31) and by counting words in 15:1–21:26 (Jerusalem, 533; Antioch, 128; Philippi, 801; Thessalonica, 167; Beroea, 136; Athens, 371; Corinth, 311; Ephesus, 850; Miletus, 373; and Jerusalem 272) and in 21:27–28:31 (Jerusalem, 1511; Caesarea, 1585; and Rome, including the journey to it, 1363). Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 1:584, gives example of Corinth, Ephesus and then Athens as receiving more literary attention than Paul's *ministry* in (Syrian) Antioch (emphasis mine), since (Syrian) Antioch itself actually receives more literary attention than Athens.

<sup>296</sup> Alexander, "Journeys", 73. Cf. Floyd V. Filson, "Journey Motif".

<sup>297</sup> Liefeld, *Acts*, 36, but notes Samaria (Acts 8) does not fit the concentric pattern.

<sup>298</sup> Miesner, "Missionary Journeys", 199–214; Alexander, "Narrative Maps", 109, 111.

<sup>299</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 240–246; Alexander, "Journeys", 69–70.

<sup>300</sup> Alexander, "Journeys", 75, 81; Robbins, *Sea Voyages*, 53, 56; Holladay, *Acts*, 488. See Acts 13:4, 13; 14:26; 16:11; 18:18, 21; 20:6, 13; 21:1–3, 6, 7; 27:1–44; 28:11–13.

<sup>301</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 241.

<sup>302</sup> Cornelia Cook, "Travellers' Tales and After-Dinner Speeches: The Shape of Acts of the Apostles", *New Blackfriars* 74 (1993), 442–457, citing 444; Alexander, *Acts*, 11–13; Tom (N. T) Wright, *Acts for Everyone*, 2 vols. (London: SPCK, 2008), 2.124–127; Navone, *Theology of Story*, 53–104; Baban, "Reasons for Luke-Acts", 34–38, notes the connection with "the Way" motif in Acts 9:2; (18:25, 26); 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; Baban, *On the Road*, 195–272.

<sup>303</sup> E.g. Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 367 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 112; Scobie, *Ways*, 530–31; Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2001), 136.

<sup>304</sup> Richard Bauckham, "Mission as Hermeneutic for Scriptural Interpretation", in Goheen, *Reading Missionally*, 28–44, citing 34–36.

<sup>305</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 79.

<sup>306</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:697.

<sup>307</sup> This includes Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe. G. Walter Hansen, "Galatia", in Gill and Gempf, *Graeco-Roman Setting*, 377–395.

<sup>308</sup> Alexander, "Narrative Maps", 111, notes that Acts uses older names such as Lycia, Pamphylia and Phrygia, Galatia and Lycaonia reminiscent of the Greek Empire

(Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia), and Rome as significant regions.<sup>309</sup> The conquest is by “the Word of God/Lord”<sup>310</sup> or the kingdom of God.<sup>311</sup>

Diagram VI (A–C) on the next three pages expands Alexander’s outline of the recurring nature of Acts’ journeys<sup>312</sup> by adding more locations and the structural size element.<sup>313</sup> This presents the sequence and emphasis of Acts’ literary-spatial component.

By total words the top six locations are: (1) Jerusalem, by a big margin (7,494);<sup>314</sup> (2) Caesarea (2,454);<sup>315</sup> (3) Ephesus (875);<sup>316</sup> (4) Pisidian Antioch (682);<sup>317</sup> (5) (Syrian) Antioch (548);<sup>318</sup> and (6) Philippi (530).<sup>319</sup> Jerusalem not only receives the most literary attention (over half of the text), but is also a location that is repeatedly returned to. Other locations reappear at strategic points, e.g. Caesarea features both in Acts 10 and Acts 23–26, and Troas book-ends Paul’s mission in Greece (Acts 16:8–10 and 20:7–12).

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<sup>309</sup> The idea of Acts’ focusing on mission to surrounding regions rather than individual cities was suggested in conversation by John Proctor (Cambridge, November, 2013).

<sup>310</sup> Acts 8:14 (Samaria); 13:5,7 (Cyprus); 13:44, 48, 49 (Galatia); 16:32 (Macedonia/Greece) 18:11 (Achaia/Greece); 19:10, 20 (Asia/Greece) Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 254; Rosner, “Progress”, 215–233; Skinner, “Acts”, 360, 362–63; Alan J. Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, LNTS 359 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 135–170; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, WUNT 2.130 (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 147–80.

<sup>311</sup> Acts 1:3, 6 (outside Jerusalem); 8:12 (Samaria); 14:22 (Galatia); 19:8 (Asia/Greece); 28:23, 31 (Rome). The kingdom of God as a spatial mission expansion is explored in Ch.6.

<sup>312</sup> Alexander, “Journeys”, 74.

<sup>313</sup> The calculations underlying Diagram V (A–C) are shown for the larger literary size locations represented by boxes with a scale of one square mm per word as Jerusalem (1:1–8:3), 4,606; Samaria (8:5–25), 345; Desert (8:26–39), 262; Damascus (9:1–25), 447; Joppa (10:9–23), 255; Caesarea (10:24–48), 452; Jerusalem (11:2–18), 290; (Syrian) Antioch (11:19–30), 217; Jerusalem (12:1–19a), 388; Pisidian Antioch (13:14b–52), 682; Lystra (14:6–20a), 248; Jerusalem (15:4–29), 453; Philippi (16:12–40), 530; Athens (17:15–34), 396; Corinth (18:1–18a), 321; Ephesus (18:24–27a, 19:1–41), 836; Miletus (20:17–38), 384; Jerusalem (21:15–23:30), 1,681; Caesarea (23:33–26:32), 1,631; Sea Voyage (27:1–44), 755; and Rome (28:16–31), 322. Locations not in boxes have less than 200 words.

<sup>314</sup> Acts 1:1–8:3 (4,606); 9:26–29 (76); 11:2–18 (290); 12:1–19a (388); 15:4–29 (453); 21:15–23:30 (1,681).

<sup>315</sup> Acts 9:30a (8); 10:1–8 (132); 10:24–48 (452); 12:19b–24 (91); 21:8–14 (140); 23:33–26:32 (1,631).

<sup>316</sup> Acts 18:19–21 (40); 18:24–19:41 less 18:27b, 28 (835).

<sup>317</sup> Acts 13:14–51 (682). Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 170, wrongly has 714.

<sup>318</sup> Acts 11:19–30 (217); 12:25–13:3 (81); 14:26–15:2 (99); 15:30–40 (151). This Antioch does not have a regional appellation in Acts 6:5; 11:19, 20, 22, 26, 27; 13:1; 14:26; 15:22, 23, 30, 35; 18:22; but is given (Syrian) in this study to avoid confusion with Pisidian Antioch at 13:14 (with appellation); and 14:19, 21 (unspecified, but Pisidian is made clear by story development).

<sup>319</sup> Acts 16:12–40 (530).

Diagram VI (A)

## ACTS' LITERARY-SPATIAL COMPONENT

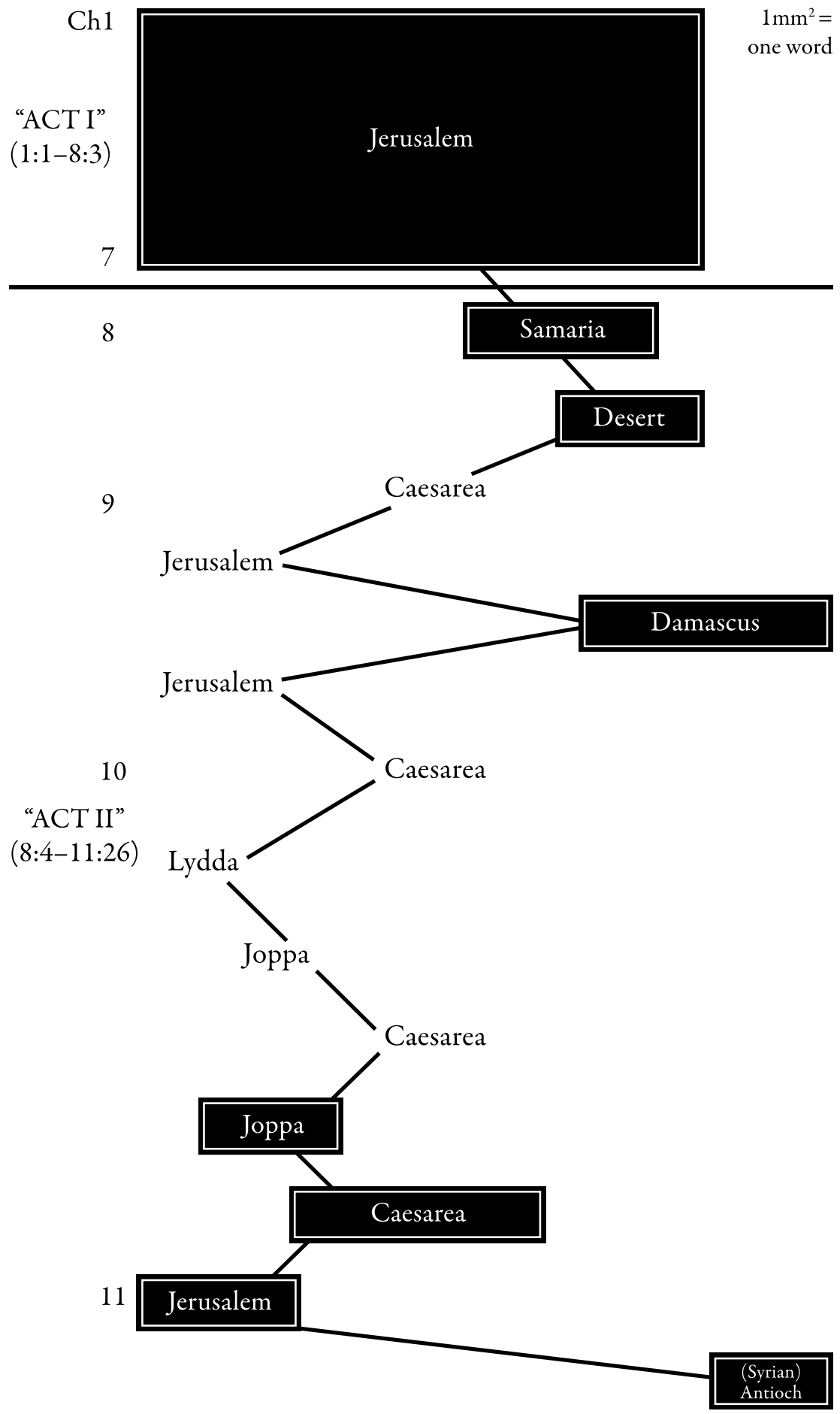


Diagram VI (B)

1mm<sup>2</sup> = one word

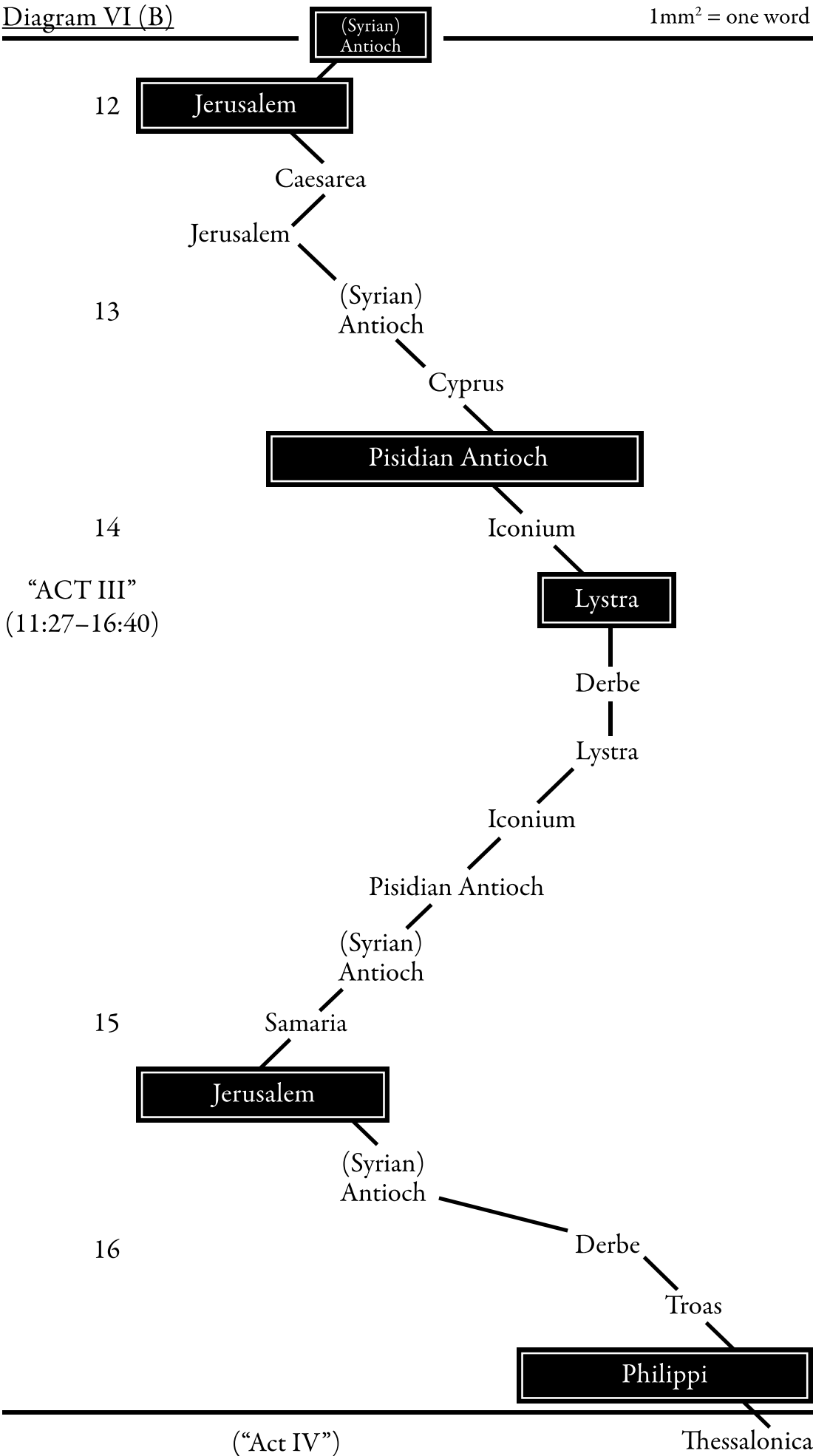
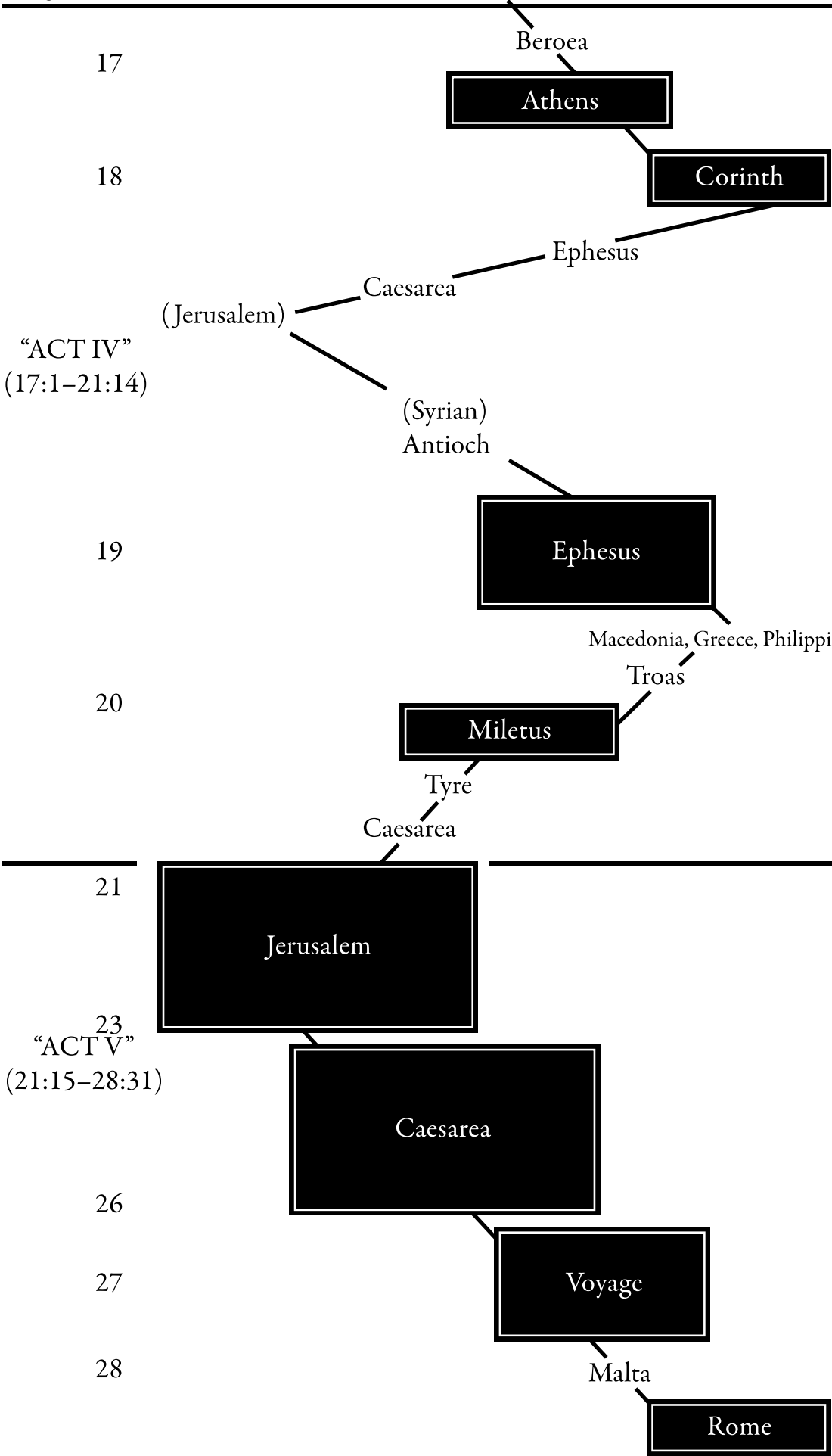


Diagram VI (C)

Thessalonica

1mm<sup>2</sup> = one word



*The significance of Acts' geography* is largely neglected by scholars,<sup>320</sup> although Matthew Sleeman's work begins to correct this.<sup>321</sup> He is an excellent conversation partner using the philosophical concept of thirdspace, which combines both physical and conceptual elements of geography,<sup>322</sup> to suggest significance for Acts' literary-spatial component. However, further study is required beyond Sleeman since he only focuses on Acts 1–11<sup>323</sup> in relation to the ascension's narrative meaning for other story events. His emphasis on a heavenly perspective is open to debate since the descent of the Holy Spirit locates Acts' literary-spatial component primarily on earth. Sleeman concedes that "the task of reading for space within Acts is only just begun".<sup>324</sup>

#### 2.2.5.5 Acts' Literary-Temporal Component

Again, scholars widely explore this component and particularly discourse time in relation to story time and/or historical time.<sup>325</sup> For Acts the component concerns: (1) Acts literary time; (2) a literary chronology with externally corroborated events; (3) the role of summaries; (4) a temporal overlapping technique; (5) a *flashback* (*analepsis*); and (6) the significance of specific temporal terms.

A literary time frame of specific temporal references in Acts totals approximately ten years and nine months, though this is increased by many general references. As shown in Appendix IV the five "Acts" have an uneven distribution of literary time with forty-six days in "Act I"; one year and seven days in "Act II"; thirteen days in "Act III"; five years and forty-six days in "Act IV"; and four years, three months and sixty-eight/seventy days in "Act V".<sup>326</sup> Acts' rhythm has examples

<sup>320</sup> Possibly as a reaction to the theological weight placed on Luke's geography by Conzelmann, *Theology*, 18–94.

<sup>321</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 1–3.

<sup>322</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 26–56 and esp. his interaction with Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), who, 11, defines thirdspace as "real-and-imagined-and-more". There is a physical "what it is", a conceptual "what it does", and a philosophical "what it means". Cf. Patrick Schreiner, "Space, Place and Biblical Studies: A Survey of Recent Research in Light of Developing Trends", *CurBR* 14 (2016): 340–71.

<sup>323</sup> Extended to Acts 21 onwards by Matthew Sleeman, "Paul, Pentecost and the Nomosphere: The Final Return to Jerusalem in the Acts of the Apostles", in *Cities of God? An Interdisciplinary Assessment of Early Christian Engagement with the Urban Environment(s)*, ed. Steve Walton, Paul Trebilco and David Gill (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming).

<sup>324</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 263.

<sup>325</sup> Günther Müller, *Die Bedeutung der Zeit in der Erzählkunst* (Bonn: Universitäts-Verlag, 1947); Müller, "Erzählzeit und erzählte Zeit", in *Morphologische Poetik: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. Helga Egner and Elena Müller (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), 269–86; De Jong, *Narratology*, 73–104; Hughes, *Reading Novels*, 50–52; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 85–101; Tolmie, *Narratology*, 87–103, esp. 101–102; Eisen, *Poetik*, 99–110.

<sup>326</sup> See Appendix IV, p.390.



of ellipsis (discourse time considerably < story time),<sup>327</sup> summary (discourse time < story time),<sup>328</sup> and pause (discourse time considerably > story time).<sup>329</sup> The slowing of narrative time suggests literary significance.<sup>330</sup>

*A literary chronology* does not feature in Acts. Talbert notes five externally corroborated events,<sup>331</sup> but Acts neither locates them within its literary chronology nor constructs an accurate historical framework. A temporal purpose for the structure is therefore unlikely.<sup>332</sup> Consequently, the present study does not construct an accurate chronological time-line, even if Acts is accepted as an accurate historical narrative of real events over the thirty year period<sup>333</sup> of AD 30–60.

*The role of summaries* in Acts is unclear due to the complexities of identification, categorisation, and purpose. The number identified<sup>334</sup> varies since there are no consistent features.<sup>335</sup> Also the scholars debate the categorisation of summaries. Witherington distinguishes between “summary statements” linking the narrative panels and “summary passages” describing the believing community (Acts 1–8).<sup>336</sup> Alternatively, Joseph Fitzmyer categorises “major summaries” of several verses, “minor summaries” of one verse, and “numerical summaries”.<sup>337</sup> Analysed grammatically, the purpose of a summary is as a distinct stand-alone literary

<sup>327</sup> E.g. Acts 1:15; 4:5; 5:7; 6:1; 11:27. Eisen, *Poetik*, 102–103.

<sup>328</sup> See the following discussion on the role of summaries and n.334–45.

<sup>329</sup> Acts 1:1; 10:1–2. Eisen, *Poetik*, 103. For wider discussion of literary rhythm see Bal, *Narratology*, 98–109; Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 93–112. There are no examples in Acts of scene (discourse time = story time) or slow-down (discourse time > story time).

<sup>330</sup> E.g. Stevens, *Acts*, 301, Acts 27 covers a two week period with an entire chapter.

<sup>331</sup> Talbert, *Acts*, 237–244, as: (1) death of Herod Agrippa I in 12:23 at AD 44; (2) famine in Claudius’s reign in 11:28 at AD 46–48; (3) Claudius’s edict expelling Jews from Rome in 18:2 at AD 49; (4) Gallio’s proconsulship in 18:12 at AD 51–52, and (5) Festus’s procuratorship in 24:27 at AD 59.

<sup>332</sup> As suggested by C. J Cadoux, “The Chronological Division of Acts”, *JTS* 19 (1917–18), 333–341, citing 336, that Charles H. Turner’s Six-Panel Structure (1:1–6:7; 6:8–9:31; 9:32–12:24; 12:25–16:5; 16:6–19:20; 19:21–28:31) are five year periods. Cf. Dale A. Moody, “A New Chronology for the Life and Letters of Paul”, in *Chronos, Kairos, Christos: Nativity and Chronological Studies Presented to Jack Finegan*, ed. Jerry Vardaman and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 223–240, esp. 227–33. The suggestion is refuted by O’Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 65; Keener, *Acts*, 1:575. Also Steven Ger, *The Book of Acts: Witnesses to the World* (Chattanooga: AMG 2004), 11, suggests that Acts 1–12 and 13–28 divide the first twenty-nine years of church history into two equal parts consisting of fourteen and a half years each.

<sup>333</sup> Aune, *Literary Environment*, 119, comments that both Acts and Luke’s Gospel span thirty year periods. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 7.

<sup>334</sup> Walters, *Unity*, 74–88, uses Dibelius, Cadbury, Benoit, Conzelmann, and Fitzmyer to determine nineteen summaries.

<sup>335</sup> See the previous discussion under “Six-Panel Structure”, §2.2.4.1, p.66.

<sup>336</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 157–59.

<sup>337</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 97–98. Those looking at the major summaries of 2:41–47; 4:32–35; 5:12–16 include Pierre Benoit, *Jesus and the Gospel*, 2 vols. (New York: Seabury 1974), 2.94–103, citing 96; M. A. Co, “The Major Summaries in Acts (Acts 2, 42–47; 4, 32–35; 5, 12–16): Linguistic and Literary Relationship”, *ETL* 68 (1992): 49–85; Gregory E. Sterling, “Athletes of Virtue”, *JBL* (1994): 679–696.

marker,<sup>338</sup> a link-back to the preceding section,<sup>339</sup> a summation of the succeeding section,<sup>340</sup> or a connecting transition between two sections<sup>341</sup> in what Parsons calls “revolving doors” looking back and anticipating what follows.<sup>342</sup> Scholars suggest the summaries either briefly suspend the momentum of the story<sup>343</sup> or link the sections for progression within the narrative.<sup>344</sup> The summaries serve in the temporal rhythm with discourse time < story time and especially where they contain a temporal reference.<sup>345</sup>

*The temporal overlapping technique* is used in Acts 8–12 for the events of Philip in Samaria and with the Ethiopian eunuch (8:4–40), Saul’s conversion-commission (9:1–31), Peter’s Judaeon ministry and Cornelius (9:32–11:18), the church in (Syrian) Antioch (11:19–26), and Peter /Herod (11:27–12:25). A temporal order is difficult to establish<sup>346</sup> and the sections thematically function by advancing in a preparatory manner towards the prototype Gentile mission of Barnabas and Saul beginning at 13:1–4.<sup>347</sup>

*A flashback (analepsis)* emphasises Paul’s vision (22:17–21).<sup>348</sup> Shimon Bar-Efrat suggests that flashbacks in speeches are backward glances which link to a

<sup>338</sup> E.g. 2:42–47; 4:32–37; 5:12–16; 12:24; 13:49; 18:11 and 28:30–31, with a δέ at their start and in the succeeding verse with the exception of 28:30–31 which only has a δέ at the start.

<sup>339</sup> E.g. 6:7 and 19:20, with a καί at the start of the verse and a δέ in the succeeding verse.

<sup>340</sup> E.g. 19:10, with a δέ at the start of the verse and a τέ in the succeeding verse making a specific forward connection. However, if the summary is defined as 19:10–12 then it is a stand-alone with a δέ in 19:13.

<sup>341</sup> E.g. 9:31 and 16:5, with μὲν οὖν (“on the one hand therefore”) linking to the past and the succeeding δέ (on the other hand) giving an emphasis on what follows.

<sup>342</sup> Mikeal C. Parsons “Christian Origins and Narrative Openings: The Sense of a Beginning in Acts 1–5”, *RevExp* 87 (1990): 403–422, citing 410.

<sup>343</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 141; Johannes de Zwaan, “Was the Book of Acts a Posthumous Edition?”, *HTR* 17 (1924): 95–153, citing 103, prefers to call them “stops” since they do not really summarise the preceding narrative.

<sup>344</sup> Satterthwaite, “Classical Rhetoric”, 355. Cf. Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking*, 70–71; Puskas, *Conclusion*, 51–52.

<sup>345</sup> Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35; 5:42; 9:31; 12:19b; 14:28; 15:30–35; 17:11–13; 18:18; 18:21b–23; 19:8–12; 19:22. Eisen, *Poetik*, 101–102.

<sup>346</sup> Tyson, *Images*, 117. Cf. Steve Walton, “How Mighty a Minority Were the Hellenists?”, in *Earliest Christian History: History, Literature, and Theology: Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honour of Martin Hengel*, ed. M. F. Bird and J. Maston, WUNT 2.320 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 305–327, citing 322; Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 175–86.

<sup>347</sup> Possible candidates for the first Gentile mission in Acts are the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40), but against this is his description as a worshipper at Jerusalem (8:27); Cornelius (10:1–11:18), but against this is his description as a God-fearer (10:2); the church at (Syrian) Antioch (11:19–26), but this is uncertain due to the more difficult reading of Ἑλληνιστῆς (11:28) which is previously used of Greek-speaking Jews (6:1; 9:29), but is in contrast to Jews at 11:19. They could be God-fearers or proselytes. The term “prototype mission” is borrowed from John Eifffion Morgan-Wynne, *Paul’s Pisidian Antioch Speech (Acts 13)* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 4. Cf. Dupont, *Nouvelles études*, 344; O’Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 131.

<sup>348</sup> Powell, *About Acts*, 102; Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 145–46.

character's longing for the past.<sup>349</sup> This supports the proposal followed in this study, that Paul's imprisonment in 21:27–26:32 marks the restoration of his mission which is in decline following his decision to return to Jerusalem (19:21).

*The significance of specific temporal terms* such as the “forty days” (1:3), portraying a complete period of preparation,<sup>350</sup> “the Sabbath” (thirteen times), suggesting a Jewish focus,<sup>351</sup> “night/midnight” (sixteen times), suggesting spiritual darkness, and “dawn” (three times), picturing the resurrection, are highlighted in the exploration of Chapters Three to Five. The recurrence of periods like “today” (nine times),<sup>352</sup> “three days” (seven times),<sup>353</sup> “seven days” (four times),<sup>354</sup> “three months” (three times),<sup>355</sup> and “two years (three times)”<sup>356</sup> may underline their symbolic connection or cause the reader to link story events. Lengthy temporal terms emphasise the importance of the locations and/or events.

Diagram VII, on the next page, combines these factors to show the repeating temporal terminology, the overlapping temporal nature of “Act II”, and the temporal sequences in “Acts IV and V”. This study tests the hypotheses that: (1) an absence of temporal movement (“Acts I, II, and III”) suggests an interpretation of the sections as *thematic/paradigmatic* principles; and (2) a temporal movement (increasing in “Act IV” and especially “Act V”) suggests missional progression or development.

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<sup>349</sup> Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 180–184.

<sup>350</sup> This is given a fuller consideration in Chapter Four (see §4.3.1.9, pp.184–85).

<sup>351</sup> Spread evenly across Acts from 1:12 to 20:7 with four refs in Acts 13. Hornick and Parsons, *Acts*, 210–12; Isaac W. Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE: Reading Luke and Acts as Jewish Texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 194–237, esp. 233–37.

<sup>352</sup> A literary marker. Baban, “Reasons for Luke-Acts”, 54–55; Allen, *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews*, 236–37.

<sup>353</sup> The resurrection after a suffering period (Hos 6:2; Matt 12:40).

<sup>354</sup> The creation (Gen 1:1:1–2:2).

<sup>355</sup> A period of completeness. Cf. Francis Pereira, *Ephesus: Climax of Universalism in Luke-Acts. A Redactional-Critical Study of Paul's Ephesian Ministry (Acts 18:23–20:1)* (Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1983), 127–29, for the sense of completeness in Exod 2:2; 2 Sam 6:11; 1 Chr 21:12; Goulder, *Type and History*, 165, links it to the three months of care Moses received from his family (7:20).

<sup>356</sup> Linking successful mission (19:10), recovery (24:27), and closing ministry (28:30). Cf. Stevens, *Acts*, 556–57.



### 2.2.5.6 Acts' Character Component

For Aristotle, “plot, then, is the first principle and, as it were, soul of tragedy, while character is secondary”.<sup>357</sup> However, the plot and characters are better viewed as interdependent.<sup>358</sup> Acts is similar to Graeco-Roman biographies in their patchy treatment of characters.<sup>359</sup> These often quickly pass over the early years to focus on a public debut, periods of major virtues, key public speeches and the final days especially with a trial or a hero's death.<sup>360</sup> For this reason the character component primarily focuses on the character's appearance and function within Acts' structure and story.<sup>361</sup> The main features of Acts' character component are: (1) characterisation; (2) focalisation; (3) the infrequent appearances of Jesus; (4) parallels and transitions between the two main characters of Peter and Paul; (5) the people-groups; (6) the possible autobiographical “we-group”; and (7) the literary size and sequence of characters.

*Characterisation* is the development of characters within a literary text.<sup>362</sup> In Acts<sup>363</sup> they function both as actors or “*dramatis personae*” in the story or plot<sup>364</sup> and also as dynamic, rather than static, individuals subject to change and progress.<sup>365</sup> Characterisation is either direct (“telling”), with specific traits and evaluation explicitly mentioned in the text,<sup>366</sup> or indirect (“showing”) as inferred by actions,

<sup>357</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 6. 65–66 (1450a.34–35) [Halliwell, LCL]. Cf. 6.37–39 (1450a. 15–17); 8.1 (1451a.16).

<sup>358</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 35–36; Tolmie, *Narratology*, 40–41.

<sup>359</sup> Cornelius Bennema, *A Theory of Character in the New Testament Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 99–108.

<sup>360</sup> Burridge, “Genre of Acts”, 17.

<sup>361</sup> Uspensky, *Poetics*, 81–83.

<sup>362</sup> I follow John A. Darr, “Narrator as Character: Mapping a Reader-Orientated Approach to Narration in Luke-Acts”, *Semeia* 65 (1993): 43–60, who whilst arguing that characterisation involves the reader's subjective interpretation of the text, concedes that there is a text-specific reader. My present study of literary shape focuses on Acts' characters as they appear objectively in the text.

<sup>363</sup> John T. A. Marlow, “A Narrative Analysis of Acts 1–2” (PhD diss., Gold Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Brea, CA, 1988), 74–82; John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992).

<sup>364</sup> Algirdas J. Greimas, *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at Method*, trans. Daniele McDowell, Ronald Schleifer, Alan Velie (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 197–221; Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tale*; 25–65; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 58–59, 62–65. Tolmie, *Narratology*, 40; Darr, *Character Building*, 38–39.

<sup>365</sup> Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 125–26; Thomas R. Arp, *Perrine's Story and Structure*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998), 79–80; Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 119–31; Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 73–80; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 59–62; Jonathan Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001), 5–12; Yamasaki, *Insights From Filmmaking*, 65–69.

<sup>366</sup> E.g. Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (6:5), full of God's grace and power (6:8). Tolmie, *Narratology*, 42–44; Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 127–28; Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 54–55.

speech, appearance, or environment.<sup>367</sup> John Darr particularly comments on the narrative sequence and the progressive building of character.<sup>368</sup> Literary critiques use various classification systems for characters in terms of their complexity, development, and penetration into inner life.<sup>369</sup> A character can be a flat/type/background (one trait without development), a round/full-fledged/protagonist (more than one trait, developing with inner thoughts), or an intermediary between the two.<sup>370</sup> However, this is really a matter of a continuum<sup>371</sup> as shown in Cornelius Bennema's theory of character for New Testament narrative.<sup>372</sup> He helpfully corrects the view of those, like Adams, who see the characters in Graeco-Roman literature (and Acts) as flat and static.<sup>373</sup> My approach is that the main characters like Peter, Saul/Paul, Barnabas, and James, are actually round/dynamic characters who either progress or regress within the narrative especially in relation to their involvement in the mission instrument.<sup>374</sup>

*Focalisation* is the point of view presented by a character or the narrator.<sup>375</sup> The focus of narration is either in the first person (by the main character like an

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<sup>367</sup> Tolmie, *Narratology*, 44–53; Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 126–27, 130–32; Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 116–17; Tan, *Johannine Community*, 57–59; Darr, *Character Building*, 39–41, 43–45; Gary Yamasaki, *Watching a Biblical Narrative: Point of View in Biblical Exegesis* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 1–41.

<sup>368</sup> Darr, *Character Building*, 39–41, 43–45.

<sup>369</sup> Joseph Ewen, “The Theory of Character in Narrative Fiction”, *Hasifrut* 3 (1974): 1–30, is only available in Hebrew. See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 40–42, and Tolmie, *Narratology*, 56, for discussion and Bennema, *Theory of Character*, 164–83, for application to Peter, Pilate, Barnabas, and Lydia in Acts.

<sup>370</sup> Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 93–106; Tolmie, *Narratology*, 53–59; Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation*, 52–57; W. J. Harvey, *Character and The Novel* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), 58–68, has two types of intermediary characters as either a *card* who approaches greatness but is not cast in the role of a protagonist, or a *ficelles* which is more extensive than a background character, but exists only to fulfil certain functions in the narrative.

<sup>371</sup> Tan, *Johannine Community*,

<sup>372</sup> Bennema, *Theory of Character*, 31–112.

<sup>373</sup> Adams, *Genre*, 161–63, 172–205, focusing on Stephen, Philip, Ananias, James, the brother of Jesus, Barnabas, Judas, Ananias and Sapphira; Simon Magus, and seven sons of Sceva.

<sup>374</sup> E.g. Saul as one who opposes the mission instrument (8:3), is dramatically changed and becomes part of the mission instrument (9:1–30, esp. 9:15–16), has his name changed to Paul as fitting for the Gentile mission (13:9), engages in the mission (13:1–19:20) albeit with a continued focus on the Jews (13:5, 14–43; 14:1; 16:3–4, 13; 17:1–4, 10; 18:4; 19:8), a decision to return to Jerusalem (19:21), rehearsal of his mission during his imprisonment in Jerusalem (22:3–21) and Caesarea (26:2–29), focus on his Roman citizenship ((22:25–29), recovery of the mission (27:1–28:10), renewed focus on Jews at Rome (28:17–31). See Yamasaki, *Insights From Filmmaking*, 75–77; Luke Macnamara, *My Chosen Instrument: The Characterisation of Paul in Acts 7:58–15:41* (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical, 2016), for an exploration of how Saul/Paul's absences in Acts' narrative contribute to his characterisation.

<sup>375</sup> Tolmie, *Narratology*, 29–38; Abbott, *Narrative*, 73–74; De Jong, *Narratology and Classics*, 47–72; Phelan, *Living to Tell*, 110–19; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 72–74; Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 167–196; Gary Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism: Point of View and Evaluative Guidance in Biblical Narrative* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012).

autobiography), a first-person observer (a minor character tells the main character's story), an observer-author (an author tells the story), or an omniscient author (an author who presents the mind, motives, and feelings of one or more characters).<sup>376</sup> Norman Friedman presents it as a range from the "complete presence of the author" to a "total absence of the author".<sup>377</sup> Acts has examples of Genette's internal focalisation (only what the character knows),<sup>378</sup> external focalisation (less than the character knows),<sup>379</sup> and zero focalisation (more than the character knows).<sup>380</sup> The latter type conveys the omniscient narrator who appears in Acts with knowledge (often theological) beyond the characters. This allows for theological diversity and progress. There are also occasions when one of the characters is an internal narrator telling their own story.<sup>381</sup> Yideg Alemayehu's definition of focalisation as the "selection and presentation of data for a certain purpose"<sup>382</sup> links closely to Acts' literary shape for missional significance. Uspensky breaks the point of view down into the four planes of phraseological (how words and phrase are used), spatial-temporal (where and when events are narrated), psychological (the characters thoughts and behaviours), and ideological (the narrator's norms, values, and worldview).<sup>383</sup> The characters also provide theological insights which interpret the raw data of experience.<sup>384</sup>

*The infrequent appearances of Jesus* after the ascension (1:9)<sup>385</sup> are either an

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<sup>376</sup> Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Fiction* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1943), 588–90.

<sup>377</sup> Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept", in *PMLA* 70 (1955): 1160–84. See Yamasaki, *Watching*, 29.

<sup>378</sup> E.g. Acts 12:9. Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 73.

<sup>379</sup> E.g. Acts 10:23b. Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 73. Also Saul/Paul's conversion-commission as an external focalisation (9:1–18) and an internal focalisation (22:6–16) see Tolmie, *Narratology*, 36–37; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 129–130.

<sup>380</sup> E.g. Acts 3:3. See Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 188–89. Cf. Yamasaki, *Watching*, 34–36. For a further example of all three types of focalisation in 12:4 see Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 73.

<sup>381</sup> E.g. Acts 22:6–16 and 26:12–18 where Paul retells the story of his conversion-commission.

<sup>382</sup> Alemayehu, *Modern Narrative Theory*, 51.

<sup>383</sup> Uspensky, *Poetics*; Cf. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 169–92; Alemayehu, *Modern Narrative Theory*, 56–58; Yamasaki, *Watching*, 30–34; 156–81; Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 18–105.

<sup>384</sup> Alexander, "Acts", 1032.

<sup>385</sup> Acts 1:1–10a; 9:3–16; 10:13–15; 18:9, 10 (Lord).

“absentee Christology”<sup>386</sup> or more positively an underlying presence directing the mission journey at strategic points.<sup>387</sup> Titles such as the Son of Man (7:56), the Son of God (9:20), Lord (one hundred and seven times), and Christ (twenty-five times) reveal various aspects of Jesus’s character and role.<sup>388</sup>

*Parallels and transitional interlacement between Peter and Paul* form a significant pattern in Acts,<sup>389</sup> but do not necessarily determine structure.<sup>390</sup> Acts is somewhat biographical like Plutarch’s *Lives*,<sup>391</sup> but rather than simple dual biographies, there is a complex and integrated shift from Peter to Paul in Acts 7–15.<sup>392</sup> Instead of biographical details such as births, lives, and deaths, the emphasis is on involvement with mission<sup>393</sup> and a transition through other characters such as Stephen<sup>394</sup> and Philip.<sup>395</sup> Also Paul receives a greater literary emphasis<sup>396</sup> by size<sup>397</sup> and sequence.<sup>398</sup>

*The people-groups* also function like characters within Acts’ structure and story. Some of the more important ones for this study include Jews (seventy-nine times) as the people of God,<sup>399</sup> along with their leaders the Pharisees (seven times),

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<sup>386</sup> Conzelmann, *Theology*, 170–206; Parsons, *Departure*, 160–162, cites Martin Kreisworth, “Centers, Openings and Endings: Some Faulknerian Constants”, *American Literature*, 56 (1984): 38–50, citing 39, for the strategy of an “empty center” which uses the absence throughout the whole story of a major character who is also curiously present in the major actions and thoughts of other characters. For discussion on present scholarly impasse over Christ’s presence and absence see Sleeman, *Geography*, 12–21, citing Andrew Burgess, *The Ascension in Karl Barth* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 150, that the crux of the debate is the exact manner in which Jesus is present. Cf. Steve Walton, “Jesus, Present and/or Absent? The Presence and Presentation of Jesus as a Character in the Book of Acts”, in Dicken and Snyder, *Characters*, 121–40, esp. 124, for the tension between the physical absence of Jesus and him being active from heaven.

<sup>387</sup> Parsons, “Origins”, 404; Gaventa, “Acts” (2006), 42–43.

<sup>388</sup> Uspensky, *Poetics*, 25–27, discusses how different names or titles designate the character from several points of view.

<sup>389</sup> Talbert, *Patterns*, 23–26; Andrew C. Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lucan Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001), 35–38; 183; 192; 209–260; 321.

<sup>390</sup> Gooding, *True to the Faith*, 387–389, notes that structure and pattern are different things that do not have to chime together.

<sup>391</sup> Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 81–114.

<sup>392</sup> Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 171–73, 186–92.

<sup>393</sup> Lucien Legrand, *Unity and Plurality: Mission in the Bible*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 103–105; Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 337–38, unity of Jewish and Gentile missions; Talbert, *Patterns*, 99, legitimate line of succession from Jesus, to Peter and the apostles, to Paul.

<sup>394</sup> Acts 6:1–8:2.

<sup>395</sup> Acts 8:5–13 and 8:26–40.

<sup>396</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:570.

<sup>397</sup> Morgenthaller, *Lukas*, 334, with 1,469 words for Peter and 2,023 for Paul. Later footnote for recalculation of words for sections in which they appear.

<sup>398</sup> The emphasis on Paul in literary sequence is: (1) he succeeds Peter; (2) Paul is on centre stage from Acts 12 on; and (3) Acts’ Ending focuses on Paul.

<sup>399</sup> The Jews appear throughout Acts except in chs. 1; 3–9; 15; 27.



Sadducees (five times), and priests/chief priests (twenty-five times).<sup>400</sup> Reference is also made to Ἑλληνιστής (Greek speakers) (four times)<sup>401</sup> as suitable for Acts' overall focus on the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>402</sup> The Samaritans only appear in Acts 8 as a stage between Israel and the Gentiles. The religious Gentiles within Israel are variously described as ones who φοβέω God ("God-fearers") (four times),<sup>403</sup> ones who σέβω ("worshippers") (six times),<sup>404</sup> and προσήλυτοι ("proselytes") (three times),<sup>405</sup> as either a rising scale of conversion to Judaism<sup>406</sup> or as synonymous terms.<sup>407</sup> The Gentiles are referred to in various ways as Ἕλληνας (Greeks) (eleven times),<sup>408</sup> ἔθνοι (Gentiles, but occasionally of a people group) (forty-three times),<sup>409</sup> Athenians (17:21–22), βάρβαροι (barbarians or foreigners) (28:2), and Romans (ten times).<sup>410</sup> A character component focuses on the description and function of these people groups within the narrative rather than external historical data.

*The four we-group passages*<sup>411</sup> are often debated and considered by the

<sup>400</sup> Pharisees, Sadducees and priests are clustered at key moments of Jewish resistance at Acts 4–7; 15:5 (Pharisees) and Acts 23–26.

<sup>401</sup> Acts 6:1; 9:29; maybe 11:20 (variant Ἑλλήν); 17:12 (Ἑλληνίς). Peterson, *Acts*, 353, points out that Hellenists could be: (1) Greek-speaking Jewish Christians (6:1); (2) Greek-speaking Jews who were not Christians (9:29); or (3) Greek-speaking Gentiles (11:20; 17:12). Cf. BDAG, Ἑλληνιστής, 319.

<sup>402</sup> Byerly, "Narrative Legitimation" 1–2, 257–69; Stevens, *Acts*, 21; Holladay, *Acts*, 151–52.

<sup>403</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:519, of three groups: (1) pious Jews and Gentiles; (2) a synonym for proselytes; and (3) a group between Gentiles and proselytes. For a social rather than religious connection to Judaism, Cf. Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, BAFCS 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 47–49; Judith M. Lieu, "Do God-Fearers Make Good Christians?", in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder*, ed. S. E. Porter, P. Joyce and D. E. Orton, BibInt 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 329–45, citing 332. The "God-fearers" appear only in Acts' Middle.

<sup>404</sup> BDAG, σέβω, 917–18. They appear only in Acts' Middle.

<sup>405</sup> BDAG, προσήλυτος, 880, "one who has come over from polytheism to Judaeian religion and practice, convert".

<sup>406</sup> AD. Martin C. DeBoer, "God-Fearers in Luke-Acts", in *Luke's Literary Achievement. Collected Essays*, ed. Christopher M. Tuckett, JSNTSup 116 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 50–71.

<sup>407</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 69–73.

<sup>408</sup> BDAG, Ἕλλην, 318, as either: (1) persons of Greek language and culture; or (2) broader sense of those influenced by Greece as distinguished from Israel. They appear predominantly in Acts' Middle.

<sup>409</sup> Samaritans (8:9) and Jews 10:22; 24:2, 10, 17; 26:4; 28:19. BDAG, ἔθνος, 276–77. Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 157–164; James M. Scott, Paul and the Nations. *The Old Testament and Jewish Background of Paul's Mission to the Nations with Special Reference to the Destination of Galatians*, WUNT 84 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 57–121.

<sup>410</sup> Only the first reference at 16:21 is of a group of Romans (also indirect references in speeches, 25:16; 28:17). Other references are Paul's references to his Roman citizenship.

<sup>411</sup> Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16. Some have three sections by merging middle section to 20:5–21:18 as William Campbell, *The "We" Passages in the Acts of the Apostles: The Narrator or Narrative Character*, SBL SBL 14 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 1. Others argue for five sections by separating last section into 27:1–29 and 28:1–16 as Stanley E. Porter, *The Paul of Acts: Essays in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric and Theology* WUNT 115 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 28–33.

scholars<sup>412</sup> to be an “indissoluble riddle”<sup>413</sup> having “impenetrable logic”.<sup>414</sup> Traditionally the “we-group” is understood as an authorial presence (*homodiegetic character-narrator*),<sup>415</sup> but there are uncertainties over a lack of comparable ancient usage<sup>416</sup> and the author/group’s anonymity.<sup>417</sup> Another suggestion is an eyewitness source document,<sup>418</sup> but it remains unproven since the passages are integrated into Acts’ narrative.<sup>419</sup> This study follows the third suggestion of a literary device,<sup>420</sup> not as a fiction, but a motif retaining historical veracity. Suggestions about the literary function of the “we-group” include: (1) a way of retaining the author’s anonymity;<sup>421</sup> (2) an ancient historiographical device underlining veracity;<sup>422</sup> (3) a connection to sea voyages suggesting involvement in mission movement;<sup>423</sup> (4) a closer identification with Paul;<sup>424</sup> (5) connecting the story-world with the readers;<sup>425</sup> (6) an intervention at strategic moments in Paul’s itinerary;<sup>426</sup> (7) an indication of the

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<sup>412</sup> For a summary of the debate see Pervo, *Acts*, 392–96; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2350–237; Adams, “Relationships”, 135–41.

<sup>413</sup> Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts*, 357.

<sup>414</sup> Samuel Byrskog, “History or Story in Acts – A Middle Way? The ‘We’ Passages, Historical Intertexture, and Oral History”, in Penner and Stichele, *Contextualizing Acts*, 257–283, citing, 262.

<sup>415</sup> Colin J. Hemer, “First Person Narrative in Acts 27–28”, *TynBul* 36 (1985): 79–109; Hemer, *Acts*, 312–34; William Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1973), 22–23; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 98–103; James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, Christianity in the Making 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 66.

<sup>416</sup> Richard Wallace and Wynne Williams, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Companion* (London: Classical Press, 1993), 12–15; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2361–2373.

<sup>417</sup> Byrskog, “History or Story”, 262; Pervo, *Acts*, 396; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 114–120.

<sup>418</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:xxv; Niels Hyldahl, *The History of Early Christianity* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1997), 236; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2356–2361; Byrskog, “History or Story”, 265; A. J. M. Wedderburn, “The ‘We’-Passages in Acts: On the Horns of a Dilemma”, *ZNW* 93 (2002): 78–98, citing 94–98. Porter, *Paul of Acts*, 47–66.

<sup>419</sup> Susan Marie Praeder, “The Problem of First Person Narration in Acts”, *NovT* 29 (1987): 193–218.

<sup>420</sup> Campbell, *The “We” Passages*, Robbins, *Sea Voyages*; Pervo, *Profit*, 57; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:7, 259, 282–83, 286–87; 4:8–9, 98–99, 383, 249–251; Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 264–267; Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 24; Smith and Tyson, *Acts*, 186–87; Dennis R Macdonald, “We-Passages in the Acts of the Apostles”, in Smith and Tyson, *Acts Seminar*, 191–99; Jacques Dupont, *The Sources of Acts: The Present Position*, trans. Kathleen Pond (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), 167; Adams, “Relationships”, 139.

<sup>421</sup> Campbell, *“We” Passages*, 46–47; Witherington, *Acts*, 481–485.

<sup>422</sup> Campbell, *“We” Passages*, 27–47.

<sup>423</sup> Robbins, *Sea Voyages*, 70–81.

<sup>424</sup> Warren S. S. Smith, “We-Passages in Acts as Mission Narrative”, in *The Ancient Novel and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: Fictional Intersections*, ed. Marília P. Futre Pinheiro, Judith Perkins and Richard Pervo, *ANS* 16 (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 171–188. Keener, *Acts*, 3:2373.

<sup>425</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 491; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:246–47; Foster, “Conclusion”, 86–87. Byrskog, “History or Story”, 263.

<sup>426</sup> In (1) new mission direction to Macedonia (16:10); (2) the return journey to Jerusalem (20:5); (3) continuing on from Miletus (21:1); and (4) the journey to Rome (27:1).

author's spatio-temporal and ideological point of view;<sup>427</sup> (8) testifying about God's will for Paul's mission direction;<sup>428</sup> (9) supporting Paul when he moves towards Rome;<sup>429</sup> and (10) having a rhetorical purpose as yet undiscovered.<sup>430</sup> This study builds on these suggestions by exploring the "we-group" passages as literary shaping devices that reveal significance.

*The literary size and sequence of the characters* are shown in Diagram VIII (A and B), on the next two pages. The top six characters by a word count of when they are present in the Acts' story<sup>431</sup> are: (1) Paul (9,118);<sup>432</sup> (2) Peter (3,890);<sup>433</sup> (3) Barnabas (1,755)<sup>434</sup> though most often alongside Paul; (4) the "we-group"<sup>435</sup> alongside Paul (1,705); (4) the apostles (1,444)<sup>436</sup> alongside Peter; (5) Stephen (1,317);<sup>437</sup> and (6) Festus (1,148).<sup>438</sup> In contrast Jesus is relatively infrequent (438).<sup>439</sup> The literary sequence includes: (1) an emphasis on the transitional nature of Stephen; (2) a focus on Peter in "Acts I and II" and Paul in "Acts III, IV and V"; (3) a transition from Peter to Paul in "Acts II and III"; (4) a greater literary size emphasis on Barnabas and Saul (1,648) than Paul and Silas (960);<sup>440</sup> (5) the emergence of the "we-group" in Act III with an increasing emphasis of literary size in "Acts IV and V";<sup>441</sup> and (6) the surprising absences of Paul (30.7% of Acts 9–28).<sup>442</sup>

<sup>427</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 24–25; Campbell, "We" Passages, 67, suggests the "we-group" replaces Barnabas's role as a positive supporter of Paul.

<sup>428</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 349.

<sup>429</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:251.

<sup>430</sup> Bale, *Genre*, 25.

<sup>431</sup> Adams, *Genre*, 129–31, uses more general character divisions to ascertain the allocation of narrative space resulting in slightly inflated % for (1) Paul 56.4% (I have 49.4 %); (2) Peter 23.4% (I have 21.1%); (3) Barnabas 10.3% (I have 9.5%); and (4) Stephen 7.2% (I have 7.1 %).

<sup>432</sup> Acts 7:58b (13); 8:1a (7); 8:3 (17); 9:1–9 (144), 17–30 (259); 11:25–30 (97); 12:25–15:4 (1,524); 15:12 (23); 15:35–39 (89); 15:40–17:4 (824), 10–15 (136); 17:16–18:23 (779); 19:1b–12 (212); 19:21–22 (48); 20:1–21:14 (948); 21:15–23:11 (1,325), 16–17 (38), 31–35 (76); 24:2–27 (436); 25:6b–12 (127), 23b–26:29 (644); 27:1–28:31 (1,352).

<sup>433</sup> Acts 1:12–26 (290); 2:14–40 (525); 3:1–4:23 (908); 5:1–10 (192) 8:14–25 (199); 9:32–43 (223); 10:9–11:18 (1,018); 12:3–17 (337); 15:7–11 (98).

<sup>434</sup> Acts 4:36–37 (31); 11:22b–26 (75); 11:30 (12); 12:25–15:4 (1,525); 15:12 (23); 15:35–39 (89).

<sup>435</sup> Acts 16:10–17 (165); 20:5–15 (190); 21:1–18 (304); 27:1–28:16 (1,046).

<sup>436</sup> Acts 1:1–2:4 (567); 5:12–42 (566); 11:1–18 (311).

<sup>437</sup> Acts 6:5–6 (42); 6:8–7:60, 8:2 (1,263).

<sup>438</sup> Acts 24:27–26:32 (1,148). Compare King Herod, 12:1–4, 19–23 (155), Felix, 24:2–27 (436), King Agrippa, 25:13–26:32 (904).

<sup>439</sup> Acts 1:1–9 (166); 9:3–6, 10–16 (192); 16:7 (17); 18:9–10 (38); 23:11(25), excluding 22:17–21 which is a literary *flashback* in a speech.

<sup>440</sup> Barnabas and Saul, 11:30 (12); 12:25–15:4 (1,524); 15:12 (23); 15:35–39 (89) and Paul and Silas, 15:40–17:4 (824), 17:10–15 (136).

<sup>441</sup> See previously in this chapter at pp.99–101.

<sup>442</sup> A total of 4,002 of 13,051 in Acts (9–28). See 9:10–16 (133), 31–11:24 (1,521); 12:1–24 (944); 15:5–11 (131), 13–21 (130); 17:5–9 (86); 18:24–28 (103); 19:23–41, except 30–31 (311); 23:12–15 (78), 18–30 (240); 25:1–6a (96), 13–22 (184), 26:30–32 (45).

Diagram VIII (A)

1mm<sup>2</sup> = one word

## ACTS' LITERARY-CHARACTER COMPONENT

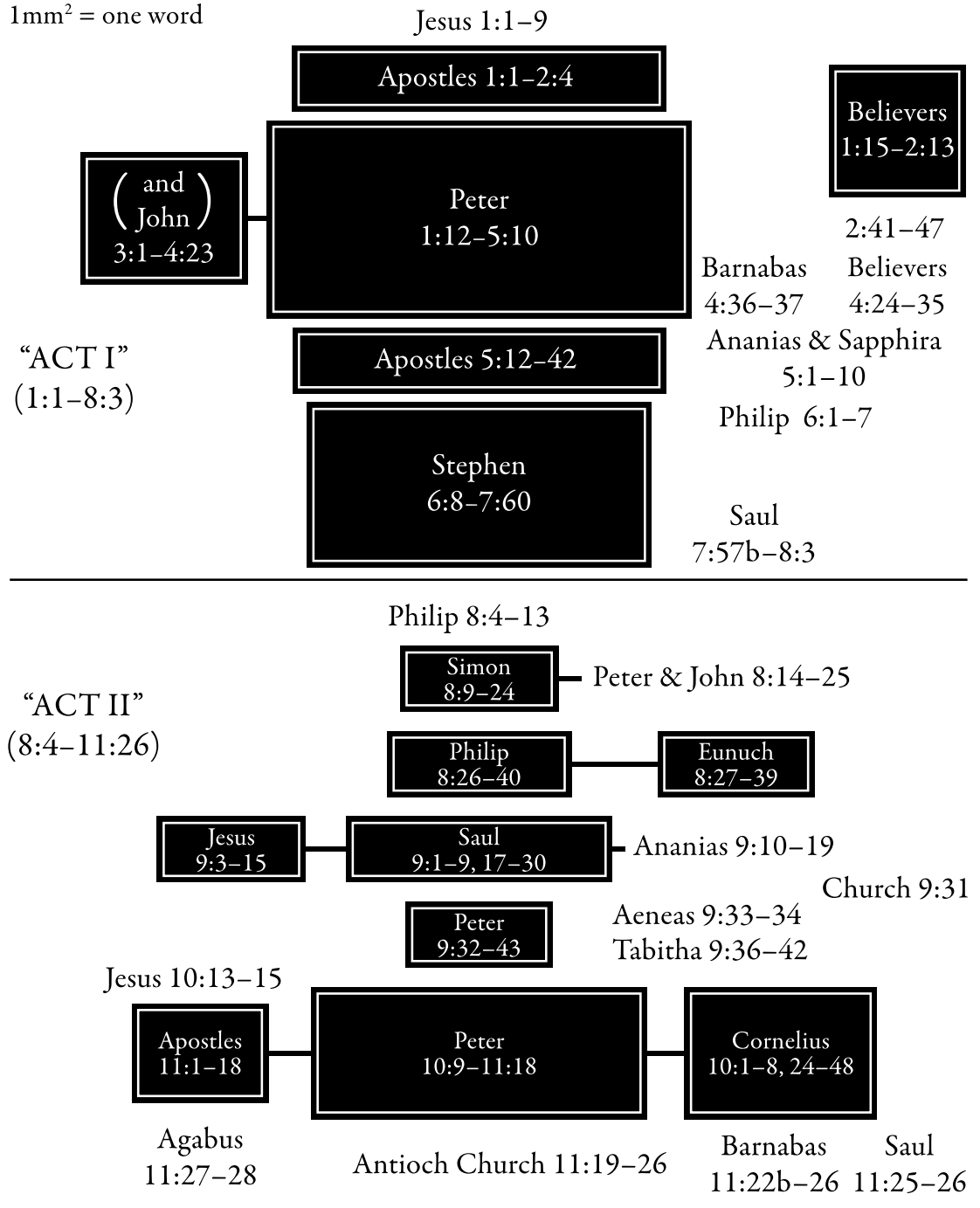


Diagram VIII (B)1mm<sup>2</sup> = one word

Antioch Church - Agabus 11:27–28

Barnabas &amp; Saul 11:30

King Herod 12:1–23

Peter 12:3–17

John Mark 12:25 &amp; 13:13

Barnabas & Saul  
12:25–15:4  
(Saul changed to Paul 13:9)

Sergius Paulus 13:7–12

Bar-Jesus 13:6b–11

“ACT III”  
(11:27–16:40)

Church

14:21–28 &amp; 15:4–6

Peter 15:7–11, Barnabas &amp; Paul 15:12, James 15:13–21

Judas &amp; Silas 15:22, 32

John Mark 15:37–39

Paul &amp; Barnabas 15:35–39

WE-GROUP  
16:10–17

Paul & Silas  
15:40–16:40

Timothy 16:1–3

Lydia 16:13–15

Paul & Silas  
17:1–4, 10–15

Jason 17:5–9

Silas &amp; Timothy 17:14–15

Paul  
17:16–18:23

Aquila &amp; Priscilla

18:2–3 18b–19a

Apollos 18:24–28

“ACT IV”  
(17:1–21:14)

Paul  
19:1b–12

Jewish Seven 19:13–16

Paul 19:21–22

WE-GROUP  
20:5–15

Ephesian Riot  
19:23–41

WE-GROUP  
21:1–18

Paul  
20:1–21:14

Seven 20:4 Eutychus 20:9–12

Ephesian Elders  
20:18–38

“ACT V”  
(21:15–28:31)

Felix  
24:2–27

Festus  
24:27–26:32

King Agrippa  
25:13–26:32

Paul  
21:15–28:31

James 21:18

Roman Soldiers  
21:31–22:29

Sanhedrin  
22:30b–23:10

Ananias 23:2–5

Roman Soldiers  
23:17–33

Julius 27:1

WE-GROUP  
27:1–28:16

Publius 28:7–8  
Church 28:14–15

Roman Jews  
28:17–31

### 2.2.5.7 Acts' Speech Component

This component's importance is evident since Acts' speeches consist of about 25% of Acts' text<sup>443</sup> increasing to 74% if the speeches' narrative contexts are included.<sup>444</sup> This study focuses on the twenty-six major speeches,<sup>445</sup> although scholars differ over the total number.<sup>446</sup> Historical accuracy and literary artistry<sup>447</sup> are held together by the Graeco-Roman historiographical practice of designing speeches appropriate for the speaker (προσωποποιία).<sup>448</sup> The search for Acts' literary shape focuses on the speeches' micro-literary shape, narrative context, and pattern within the whole narrative including an exploration of their size and sequence. However, the focus on Acts' big picture means that a detailed rhetorical analysis is not undertaken.<sup>449</sup>

*The speeches' micro-literary shape* is considered by exploring their individual beginning, middle, and ending<sup>450</sup> in order to discern significance.<sup>451</sup>

<sup>443</sup> Aune, *Literary Environment*, 125; Keener, *Acts*, 1:261–62.

<sup>444</sup> Aune, *Literary Environment*, 127.

<sup>445</sup> This study identifies twenty-six major speeches (see Diagram IX, p.106) by adding Paul's speech to Festus (25:8b, 10–11) to an amalgamation of Witherington, *Acts*, 119, whose twenty-four also omits Paul's final speech to the Roman Jews (28:17b–20); and Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 114–39, whose twenty-five also omits Paul to the Jerusalem Jews (23:1b, 3b, 5b, 6b), Paul to Gentiles at Lystra (14:15b–17), and his first speech to the Roman Jews (28:25b–28, but adds the church's prayer (4:24–30), splits Festus's speech to Agrippa into two speeches (28:14b–21 and 24b–27), and Paul's prophecy on shipboard (27:21–26).

<sup>446</sup> Twenty-eight in Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 104; thirty-two in Aune, *Literary Environment*, 124, 125; thirty-six in Soards, *Speeches in Acts*, 1, 21; and thirty-seven in Holladay, *Acts*, 40–42.

<sup>447</sup> Fred Veltman, "The Defence Speeches of Paul in Acts", in Talbert, *Perspectives*, 243–56; Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 1–11; Gene L. Green, "Luke: Historian, Rhetor, and Theologian. Historiography and the Theology of the Speeches of Acts", in *New Testament Theology in the Light of the Church's Mission: Essays in Honour of I. Howard Marshall*, ed. Jon C. Laansma, Grant Osborne and Ray van Neste (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 161–180; Sean A. Adams, "On Sources and Speeches: Methodological Discussions in Ancient Prose Works and Luke-Acts", in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Witts, TENTS 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 389–411; Padilla, *Acts*, 123–149; Holladay, *Acts*, 42–46.

<sup>448</sup> Lucian, *How to Write History*, 6.58. Cf. Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 116; Aune, *Literary Environment*, 125–26; Keener, *Acts*, 1:259–261; Witherington, *Acts*, 115–16.

<sup>449</sup> Ancient rhetoric categorises the speeches as forensic (legal about the past), deliberative (political about the future) and epideictic (ceremonial about the present) types of speeches. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.4–8; Mack, *Rhetoric*, 34–35; Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric*, 13–14; Martin L. Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome: A Historical Survey*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>450</sup> In ancient rhetoric the four parts of a speech are the proem (introduction), narratio (facts), probatio (arguments), and peroratio (epilogue). H. C. Lawson-Tancred, *The Art of Rhetoric: Aristotle. Translation with an Introduction and Notes* (London: Penguin, 2004), 44; Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 23; Myres, *Herodotus*, 80; Duckworth, *Structural Patterns*, 23–24; Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric*, 16 makes a case for five parts by dividing out propositio from narratio.

<sup>451</sup> Dunn, *Beginning*, 87; Osvaldo Padilla, "The Speeches in Acts: Historicity, Theology and Genre", in Adams and Pahl, *Issues in Luke-Acts*, 171–197, citing 188.

Although the speeches of Acts are shorter<sup>452</sup> and more direct<sup>453</sup> than the normal Graeco-Roman speeches, they still reveal a literary shape. Often the speech is interrupted emphasising either a strategic point<sup>454</sup> or giving opportunity for further remarks.<sup>455</sup>

*The speeches' context* within the narrative is also relevant to literary shape.<sup>456</sup> The symbiotic relationship between a speech and its surrounding narrative gives the possibilities that the word interprets the deed,<sup>457</sup> the setting illustrates or gives a context for the word,<sup>458</sup> or the word and setting have different significances.<sup>459</sup>

*The speeches' overall pattern* suggests that the whole Acts' narrative is arranged as a framework for them.<sup>460</sup> The speeches are located at climactic story turning points<sup>461</sup> and show progressive development.<sup>462</sup> Diagram IX, on the next page, shows the speeches' size and sequence.<sup>463</sup>

<sup>452</sup> Padilla, *Acts*, 140–143, citing Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. Hist.* 20.1.1–4, who comments on Graeco-Roman long speeches.

<sup>453</sup> Aune, *Literary Environment*, 127, notes some ancient historians slide from indirect to direct discourse including Josephus, *J.W.* 4.40–48, 238–269, 272–282; Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.118, 125, 153; 3.156.2–3; 5:31, 39; 6:1; 9.2; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War.* 1.137.4; 3.113; 8:53.

<sup>454</sup> Daniel Lynwood Smith, *The Rhetoric of Interruption: Speech-Making, Turn-Taking, and Rule-Breaking in Luke-Acts and Ancient Greek Narrative*, BZNW 193 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 8–9, defines an interruption as a “breaking in upon” rather than merely a “breaking the continuity of” and as a result, 218–43, lists Acts 2:37; 4:1; 7:54–57; 10:44; 13:48; 17:32; 19:28; 22:22; 23:7; 24:25; 26. Cf. G. H. R Horsley, “Speeches and Dialogues in Acts”, *NTS* 32 (1986): 609–614, citing 610–11.

<sup>455</sup> Acts 2:37, followed by 2:38–39; 7:54, followed by 7:55–56; 10:44–46, followed by 10:47; 23:2, followed by 23:3; 24:4 followed by 24:5; 26:24, followed by 26:25–27; and 26:28, followed by 26:29.

<sup>456</sup> Myres, *Herodotus*, 80; Duckworth, *Structural Patterns*, 23–24.

<sup>457</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:265; Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 91; Brian A. Rosner, “Acts and Biblical History”, in Winter and Clarke, *Ancient Literary Setting*, 65–82, citing 76.

<sup>458</sup> Todd Penner, “Civilizing Discourse: Acts, Declamation and the Rhetoric of the Polis”, in Penner and Stichele, *Contextualizing Acts*, 65–104, citing 84; Robert C. Tannehill, “The Functions of Peter’s Mission Speeches in the Narrative of Acts”, *NTS* 37 (1991): 400–414; Padilla, “Speeches in Acts”, 189.

<sup>459</sup> Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 69.

<sup>460</sup> Cook, “Traveller’s Tales”, 447; Dibelius, *Acts*, 145; Witherington, *Acts*, 119; Padilla, “Speeches in Acts”, 189.

<sup>461</sup> Martin Dibelius, “The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography”, in *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Heinrich Greeven (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1958), 138–185, citing 164. Cf. Myres, *Herodotus*, 80; Duckworth, *Structural Patterns*, 23–24; Miesner, “Missionary Journeys”, 212; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 108; Witherington, *Acts*, 119; Eckhard Plümacher, “The Mission Speeches in Acts and Dionysius of Halicarnassus”, in Moessner, *Heritage of Israel*, 251–66, citing 255; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Septuagintal Midrash in the Speeches of Acts* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002), 10.

<sup>462</sup> Dennis J. Hamm, *Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 8; Miesner, “Missionary Journeys”, 212; Dibelius, “Speeches in Acts”, 145; Stevens, *Acts*, 174–75.

<sup>463</sup> The statistical calculations underlying Diagram IX are shown for the larger literary size speeches represented by boxes on scale of one sq. mm. per word as Peter/Jews (2:14b–36, 38b, 39, 40b), 481; Peter/Jews (3:12b–26), 296; Stephen/Jewish leaders (7:2b–53, 56b), 1,014; Peter/Cornelius (10:28b, 29, 34b–43, 47), 232; Peter/Jewish believers (11:5–17), 241; Paul’s first speech/Jews (13:16b–41, 46b, 47), 425 + 45 = 470; Paul/Ephesian leaders (20:18b–35), 320; Paul/Jews (22:1, 3–21), 372; Festus/Agrippa (25:14b–21, 24b–27), 224; Paul/Agrippa (26:2–23, 25b–27, 29b), 496. The other speeches are not in boxes since they have less than 200 words.

Diagram IXACTS' SPEECH COMPONENT1mm<sup>2</sup> = one word

"ACT I" (1:1–8:3)	Peter/Jewish Believers	1:16, 17, 20–22	
	Peter/Jews	2:14b–36, 38b, 39, 40b	
	Peter/Jews	3:12b–26	Jerusalem
	Peter/Jewish Leaders	4:8b–12	
	Peter/Jewish Leaders	5:29b–32	
"ACT II" (8:4–11:26)	Gamaliel/Jewish Leaders	5:35b–39	
	Stephen/Jewish Leaders	7:2b–53, 56b	
	Peter/Cornelius	10:28b, 29, 34b–43, 47	Caesarea
	Peter/Jewish Believers	11:5–17	Jerusalem
"ACT III" (11:27–16:40)	Paul/Jews	13:16b–41, 46b–47	Psidian Antioch
	Paul/Gentiles	14:15b–17	Lystra
	Peter/Jewish Believers	15:7b–11	Jerusalem
	James/Jewish Believers	15:13b–21	
"ACT IV" (17:1–21:14)	Paul/Gentiles	17:22b–31	Athens
	Town Clerk/Ephesians	19:35b–40	Ephesus
	Paul/Ephesian Leaders	20:18b–35	Miletus
"ACT V" (21:15–28:31)	James & Jerusalem elders/Paul	21:20b - 25	Jerusalem
	Paul/Jews	22:1, 3–21	
	Paul/Jews	23:1b, 3b, 5b, 6b	
	Tertullus/Felix	24:2b–8	Caesarea
	Paul/Felix	24:10b–21	
	Paul/Festus	25:8b, 10–11	
	Festus/Agrippa	25:14b–21, 24b–27	
	Paul/Agrippa	26:2–23, 25b–27, 29b	
	Paul/Jews	28:17b–20	
	Paul/Jews	28:25b–28	Rome



The top six speeches in literary size by word count<sup>464</sup> are: (1) Stephen to the Jerusalem Jewish leaders (1,014);<sup>465</sup> (2) Paul to King Agrippa at Caesarea (496); (3) Peter at Pentecost to Jerusalem Jews (481); (4) Paul to Pisidian Antioch Jews (470); (5) Paul to Jerusalem Jews (372); and (6) Paul to Ephesian leaders at Miletus (320).

The literary sequence includes: (1) an even spread of speeches throughout Acts; (2) eight speeches by Peter, one by James, one by Stephen, eleven by Paul, one by the Jerusalem elders and four by non-Christians; (3) the target audiences include ten speeches to Jews;<sup>466</sup> six to believers;<sup>467</sup> and six to Gentiles;<sup>468</sup> and (4) a preponderance of longer speeches in Acts' Beginning and Ending.<sup>469</sup>

A speech's intertextual material is also important.<sup>470</sup>

#### 2.2.5.8 Acts' Intertextual Component

Intertextuality is an important strategy since it sets Acts' story within the bigger Old Testament story<sup>471</sup> of Israel's history,<sup>472</sup> the main characters Abraham,<sup>473</sup> Moses,<sup>474</sup> and David,<sup>475</sup> and many allusions to the Scriptures.<sup>476</sup> This creates an important sub-plot<sup>477</sup> and pattern<sup>478</sup> for Acts. The scholarship on a broad intertextuality is extensive

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<sup>464</sup> Byerly, "Narrative Legitimation", 170, has the same top six with minor numerical inaccuracies of Stephen (1013), Paul before Agrippa (499), Peter at Pentecost (482), Paul at Pisidian Antioch (424 without 13:46b, 47). He extends the list to the top fourteen speeches with minor differences at Peter/Cornelius (230), Paul/Festus (223), and Paul/Felix (200).

<sup>465</sup> Liefeld, *Acts*, 65.

<sup>466</sup> Acts 2:14b–40b; 3:12b–26; 4:8b–12; 5:29b–32; 7:2–56; 13:16–47; 22:1–21; 23:1–6; 28:17b–20, 25b–28.

<sup>467</sup> Acts 1:16–22; 11:5–17; 15:7b–11; 15:13b–21; 20:18b–35; 21:20b–25. This corrects the erroneous view often given that Paul's Miletus speech is the only one to believers in Acts.

<sup>468</sup> Peter to Cornelius (10:34b–47), Paul at Lystra (14:15b–17), Paul at Athens (17:22b–31), Paul to Felix (24:10b–21), Paul to Agrippa (26:2–23).

<sup>469</sup> Hemer, *Acts*, 416.

<sup>470</sup> Soards, *Speeches in Acts*, 143–157; Keener, *Acts*, 1:258–319.

<sup>471</sup> James A. Meek, *The Gentile Mission in Old Testament Citations in Acts. Text, Hermeneutic and Purpose*, LNTS 385 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 133.

<sup>472</sup> Acts 7:2–47 and 13:17–25. Keener, *Acts*, 1:477–491.

<sup>473</sup> Acts 3:13, 25; 7:2, 5, 16, 17, 32; 13:26.

<sup>474</sup> Acts 3:22; 6:11, 14; 7:20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 35, 37, 40, 44; 13:39; 15:1, 5, 21; 21:21; 26:22; 28:23.

<sup>475</sup> Acts 1:16; 2:25, 29, 34; 4:25; 7:45; 13:22, 34, 36; 15:16. Yuzuru Miura, *David in Luke-Acts: His Portrayal in the Light of Early Judaism*, WUNT 2.232 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

<sup>476</sup> Scriptures and Old Testament (OT) are used interchangeably in this study. See Kenneth D. Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually*, JSNTSup 282 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 1, prefers "Scriptures of Israel" since the designation, Old Testament, was not used in the first century AD.

<sup>477</sup> Alexander, "Acts", 1029.

<sup>478</sup> Cook, "Traveller's Tales", 450.

in the fields of Graeco-Roman,<sup>479</sup> literary<sup>480</sup> and biblical studies.<sup>481</sup> This study seeks a simpler intertextual component which better serves the purpose of discerning literary shape.<sup>482</sup> This is done by narrowing the focus to twenty-six<sup>483</sup> quotations,<sup>484</sup> although scholars differ on the exact number<sup>485</sup> with the most variation being in Stephen's speech (7:2b–53). Most of the quotations are from the Septuagint (LXX)<sup>486</sup> with which any variations are compared rather than the Hebrew text. This

<sup>479</sup> E.g. Dennis R. Macdonald, *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2001), 219, gives example of Chariton, *Chaer.* citing Homer's *Il.* and *Od.* Verbatim; Sean A. Adams, "Greek Education and Composite Citations of Homer", in *Composite Citations in Antiquity, Volume One: Jewish, Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Uses*, ed. Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn, LNTS 525 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 17–34, citing 18–21, gives examples of citations from Homer, *Il.* in Plato, *Resp.* 3.391a, Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.58, Plutarch, [*Cons. Apoll.*] 24, Porphyry, *Quaest. Hom.* 12.127–32, §5; Seth M. Ehorn, "Composite Citations in Plutarch", in Adams and Ehorn, *Composite Citations*, 35–56, citing 56, gives examples of citations in Plutarch, *Mor.* 543f; 742a (Homer, *Il.*), *Mor.* 505c (Plato, *Leg.*), and *Mor.* 1006b (Aristotle, *De an.*).

<sup>480</sup> E.g. Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, trans. Jeremy Whiteley with Emma Hughes (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989); Heinrich Plett, ed., *Intertextuality* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991); Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>481</sup> E.g. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Use of the Old Testament in Luke-Acts", in *Society of Biblical Literature 1992 Seminar Papers*, SBLSP 31 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 524–538; Rosner, "Biblical History"; G. J. Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations in the Context of the Petrine and Pauline Speeches of the Acta apostolorum*, CBET 12 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995); Robert L. Brawley, *Text Pours Forth Speech. Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Johnson, *Septuagintal Midrash*; Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture*; I. Howard Marshall, "Acts", in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 513–606; Meek, *Mission*; Kenneth D. Litwak, "The Use of the Old Testament in Luke-Acts: Luke's Scriptural Story of 'The Things Accomplished Amongst Us'", in Adams and Pahl, *Issues in Luke-Acts*, 147–169.

<sup>482</sup> Christopher D. Stanley, "The Rhetoric of Quotations: An Essay on Method", in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, JSNTSup 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 44–58, citing 57. Cf. Meek, *Mission*, 21, notes the use of quotations, particularly as an appeal to authority, offers insight into the author's purposes and expectations of the intended readers.

<sup>483</sup> See Diagram X, p.110. NA<sup>28</sup>, 28, 50, 82, 83, has thirty-three in its margin, but a close examination adjusts this with six rather than eleven in Stephen's speech, omits 3:13; 4:24 and 14:15 as allusions, and includes 4:11 (Ps 118:22) which is omitted by NA<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>484</sup> A distinction is sometimes made between a citation as having an introductory formula such as "it is written" or "it is said" and a quotation that does not, but is readily identifiable as close to Scripture. This study uses quotation since it also embraces a citation.

<sup>485</sup> The range includes twenty-one (Witherington, *Acts*, 123, 124); twenty-two or twenty-three (Fitzmyer, "Old Testament in Luke-Acts", 526); twenty-five (Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations*, 29, has twenty-five, but is actually twenty-seven with double references at 1:20 and 3:22, 23. Marshall, "Acts", 527, follows Steyn); twenty-seven (Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 86–87); thirty (Charles K. Barrett, "Luke/Acts", in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 231–44, citing 238–40; thirty-six (Keener, *Acts*, 1:478, 29–43. Meek, *Mission*, 17–20, notes this is the number in NA<sup>27</sup>); thirty-eight (Holladay, *Acts*, 54, 55); forty (Steve Moyise, *The Later New Testament Writers and Scripture* (London: SPCK, 2012), as number in UBS<sup>4</sup>); and forty-three (Moyise, *New Testament Writers*, 141–43).

<sup>486</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 4–5. However, this study uses the chapter and verse referencing system from the Hebrew text since this appears in Protestant translations such as RSV and NIV rather than the LXX numbering which differs in the Psalms and Joel quotations. Cf. Billie Jean Collins, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko, eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style. For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 265–68, for specific details of English/Hebrew/Greek versification.

study also follows the suggestion that a quotation leads to a retrospective interpretative reading of the whole Old Testament passage in which it is located.<sup>487</sup> Though every story borrows from another story, this does not negate a text-centred approach since the selective intertextuality contributes to the literary shape.

Diagram X, on the following page, outlines the literary shape of the intertextual component.

There are a number of pertinent observations.

All but one of the quotations are located in speeches<sup>488</sup> and are very brief with Joel 2:28–32 being the largest (2:17–21).<sup>489</sup>

The literary structure has an uneven distribution of seventeen quotations in “Act I”, one in “Act II”, six in “Act III” (with the key quotations of Isaiah 49:6 (Acts 13:47) and Amos 9:11–12 (Acts 15:16–18) either side of the central scene in Acts 14:8–20a), none in “Act IV” and two in “Act V”.

There is a reduction of quotations in the second half of Acts<sup>490</sup> which is attributed to either sources<sup>491</sup> or an unsuitability for use in Gentile mission.<sup>492</sup> As an original suggestion, I propose that since the quotations support an invitation to Israel as a nation and remnant-church be an instrument for worldwide mission, their decline suggests that the emphasis on the invitation also reduces.

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<sup>487</sup> Charles H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of the New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 126; Dodd, *The Old Testament in the New* (London: Athlone, 1952); G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 4; Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 5; Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014); Meek, *Mission*, 5–7.

<sup>488</sup> The exception is Isaiah 53:7–8 in the narrative of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (8:32–33). Ps 2:1–2 is in the speech-like prayer of Acts 4:24–30.

<sup>489</sup> The top six quotations by word counts are: (1) 2:17–21 (Joel 2:28–32) 107; (2) 7:32–34 (Exod 3:5–10) 66; (3) 2:25b–28 (Ps 16:8–11) 61; (4) 28:26–27 (Isa 6:9–10) 54; (5) 15:16–18 (Amos 9:11–12) 46; and (6) 8:32b–33 (Isa 53:7–8) 40. Maddox, *Purpose*, 44, wrongly sees Isa 6:9–10, as second longest quotation in Luke-Acts.

<sup>490</sup> Stephen B. Chapman, “Saul/Paul: Onomastics, Typology and Christian Scripture”, in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 214–243, citing 237.

<sup>491</sup> Torrey, *Composition and Date of Acts*, 57.

<sup>492</sup> Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, 174.

Diagram X		ACTS' INTERTEXTUAL COMPONENT		
	LAW	PROPHETS		PSALMS
"ACT I"		Peter		Ps 69:25 (1:20a)
		Joel 2:28–32 (2:17–21)		Ps 109:8 (1:20b)
				(Ps 16:8–11 (2:25b–28))
				Ps 110:1 (2:34b–35)
	3	(Deut 18:15, 18–19 (3:22b–23))		
		Gen 22:18; 26:4 (3:25b)		
	4			Ps 118:22 (4:11)
			Church	(Ps 2:1–2 (4:25b–26))
	7	Gen 12:1 (7:3)	Stephen	
		Gen 15:13–14 (7:6b–7)		
"ACT II"		Exod 2:14 (7:27–28)		
		Exod 3:5–10 (7:32–34)		
		Deut 18:15 (7:37b)		
		Exod 32:1 (7:40b)		
		(Amos 5:25–27 (7:42b–43))		
		Isa 66:1–2 (7:49–50)		
	8	(Isa 53:7–8 (8:32b–33))		Ethiopian Eunuch
	13	(Isa 55:3 (13:34b))		(Ps 2:7 (13:33b))
		Hab 1:5 (13:41)	Paul	(Ps 16:10 (13:35b))
"ACT III"		(Isa 49:6 (13:47b))		
	15	James (Amos 9:11–12 (15:16–18))		
"ACT IV"				
"ACT V"		Paul		
	23	Exod 22:28 (23:5b)		
"ACT V"		Paul		
	28	(Isa 6:9–10 (28:26–27))		

There is a notably even distribution of nine quotations from the Law<sup>493</sup> pointing to Israel's past history and religion, nine from the Prophets<sup>494</sup> (five from Isaiah<sup>495</sup>) pointing to Israel's potential future, and eight from the Psalms (of king David)<sup>496</sup> pointing to the realisation of the kingdom of God.

Some quotations are repeated for emphasis (highlighted with circles in Diagram X) including those from Psalm 2, Psalm 16, Deuteronomy 18, Amos, and Isaiah.

Acts 7:49 is the first Isaiah quotation which tells of the mission's culmination in a new heaven and a new earth (Isa 66:1–2) and Acts 28:26–27 is the last Isaiah quotation from near the prophecy's beginning which tells of the mission's commission (Isa 6:9–10). The reversal of Isaiah's literary order suggests that Acts moves from mission's ultimate potential culmination to a situation in Acts 28 where the formation of a mission instrument is still underway with a fresh reminder of its commission.<sup>497</sup>

There is a disproportionate literary-spatial distribution with nineteen of the twenty-six quotations located in Jerusalem, and the remainder clustered in Pisidian Antioch, Caesarea, and Rome. This underlines the focus on an invitation for Israel/Jewish Diaspora to be a worldwide mission instrument.

There is also an even character distribution of eight with Peter (five Psalms, two Law and one Prophet), eight with Stephen (six Law and two Prophets), seven with Paul (four Prophets, two Psalms and one Law), and one each with the church (Psalm), Ethiopian eunuch (Prophet), and James (Prophet).<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> Peter Mallen, "Genesis in Luke-Acts", in *Genesis in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, LNTS 466 (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 60–82; Dietrich Rusam, "Deuteronomy in Luke-Acts", in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, LNTS 466 (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 63–81.

<sup>494</sup> Huub van de Sandt, "The Minor Prophets in Luke-Acts", in *The Minor Prophets in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, LNTS 377 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 73–77.

<sup>495</sup> Bart J. Koet, "Isaiah in Luke-Acts", in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, NTSI (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 79–100; Mallen, *Transformation*; Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*.

<sup>496</sup> Peter Doble, "The Psalms in Luke-Acts", in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, NTSI (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 83–118.

<sup>497</sup> Contra Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 105–109, esp. 108–109; Mallen, *Transformation*, 96, who argue that the reversal is from judgement-salvation in Isaiah to salvation-judgement in Acts. However, this relies on interpreting the use of Isaiah 6:9–10 at 28:25–28 as the final turning from Israel.

<sup>498</sup> Bill T. Arnold, "Luke's Use of the Old Testament in Luke-Acts", in Witherington, *History, Literature, and Society*, 300–323, citing 302.

James Meek argues that Isaiah 49:6, Amos 9:11–12, Joel 2:28–32 (he uses the LXX numbering of 3:1–5a), and Genesis 22:18 legitimise the Gentile mission.<sup>499</sup> Extending his approach, I propose that all twenty-six quotations reveal a framework of missional significance.

The reason for focusing at length on the structure and story of Acts, including literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, rhetorical, and intertextual components, is that they reveal significance.<sup>500</sup> With a clear method for literary structure and story in place, attention now turns to the method of exploring literary significance.

### 2.2.6 Method and Acts' Significance

The significance of a narrative ranges from being entertaining, educational, philosophical, ideological, motivational, or, as with Acts, theological and particularly missional. The author's theological presuppositions determine the design of structure and story for an intended significance. This study focuses on significance from the text's literary shape through a focused narrative theology rather than a historical context, wider biblical canon, or a systematic theology. However, a narrative may also have a *thematic/paradigmatic* arrangement.<sup>501</sup> The emphasis in this study is on the textual significance of the mission invitation and expansion in Acts rather than the application of the findings for mission today. It is worth acknowledging that the interpretation of literary shape is inevitably subjective both in the selective recording of observations and the significance drawn from them. A combination of theological, literary, and missional approaches best serves the method for exploring Acts' significance.

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<sup>499</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 133–134.

<sup>500</sup> Conzelmann, *Acts*, xlv, xlvi, notes this for spatial and temporal schematization.

<sup>501</sup> Seymour Chatman, "On the Notion of Theme in Narrative", in *Essays on Aesthetics: Perspectives on the Work of Monroe C. Beardsley*, ed. John Fisher (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 161–79; Marie-Laure Ryan, "In Search of the Narrative Theme", in *The Return of Thematic Criticism*, ed. Werner Sollors (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 169–88; Heta Pyrhönen, "Thematic Approaches to Narrative", in Herman, Jahn and Ryan, *Narrative Theory*, 597–98.

### 2.2.6.1 Scholarship on the Theology of Acts

The search for a theology of Acts is often linked to discussions about Acts' purpose<sup>502</sup> as historical,<sup>503</sup> apologetic in a defence of either Paul or Christians,<sup>504</sup> evangelistic,<sup>505</sup> and pastoral in defending Paul or the church.<sup>506</sup> Other scholars see Acts' theology as representative of the author or redactor, a common core of the early Christian message,<sup>507</sup> the narrative characters,<sup>508</sup> the speeches,<sup>509</sup> a patchwork of theological motifs or topics,<sup>510</sup> an implicit thematic shape<sup>511</sup> or topical arrangement,<sup>512</sup> and a systematic framework or a more progressive model.<sup>513</sup>

As Howard Marshall observes there are surprisingly few works on an overall theology of Acts.<sup>514</sup> The exceptions include Jacob Jervell's study on the restoration of Israel,<sup>515</sup> Alan Thompson's work on salvation-history,<sup>516</sup> and various Acts' commentators.<sup>517</sup> Also relevant, but less helpful for this study, are those focusing on

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<sup>502</sup> E.g. Keener, *Acts*, 1:435–458; Marshall, *Acts* (1992), 14–16, 31–36, 38–60; Maddox, *Purpose*, 20–23; Joel B. Green, “Acts of the Apostles”, in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1997), 7–24; Mark L. Strauss, “The Purpose of Luke-Acts: Reaching a Consensus”, in Laansma, Osborne and van Neste, *New Testament Theology*, 135–150.

<sup>503</sup> E.g. W. C. van Unnik, “The ‘Book of Acts.’ The Confirmation of the Gospel”, in *The Composition of Luke's Gospel: Selected Studies from Novum Testamentum*, compiled by David E. Orton, BRBS 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 184–217.

<sup>504</sup> E.g. Alexander, “Apologetic Text”, 183–206; John W. Mauck, *Paul on Trial: The Book of Acts as a Defense of Christianity* (Nashville: Nelson, 2001); B. S. Easton, *Early Christianity: The Purpose of Acts and Other Papers*, ed. F. C. Grant (London: SPCK, 1955), 33–57.

<sup>505</sup> E.g. O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 185.

<sup>506</sup> E.g. Mattill, “Schneckenburger”, 108–122; Maddox, *Purpose*. I. Howard Marshall, “Luke and His Gospel”, in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien*, ed. Peter Stuhlmacher, WUNT 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 239–308; Strauss, “Purpose of Luke-Acts”, 141–150; Charles H. Talbert, *Luke and the Gnostics: An Examination of Lucan Purpose* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966).

<sup>507</sup> Charles H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments: Three Lectures with an Appendix on Eschatology and History* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964).

<sup>508</sup> I. Howard Marshall, “How Does One Write on the Theology of Acts?”, in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 1–16, citing 6; Keener, *Acts*, 1:250–257, 313–316.

<sup>509</sup> Philipp Vielhauer, “On the ‘Paulinism’ of Acts”, in Keck and Martyn, *Luke-Acts*, 33–50; Padilla, “Speeches in Acts”, 188; Dunn, *Beginning*, 87.

<sup>510</sup> F. Scott Spencer, “Narrative of Luke-Acts”, in Adams and Pahl, *Issues in Luke-Acts*, 121–146, citing 121.

<sup>511</sup> Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 4.

<sup>512</sup> Alexander, “Acts”, 1028.

<sup>513</sup> Soards, *Speeches in Acts*, 204.

<sup>514</sup> Marshall, “Theology of Acts?”, 8.

<sup>515</sup> Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 34–43. Cf. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972).

<sup>516</sup> Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan*, NSBT 27 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2011).

<sup>517</sup> E.g. Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 60–66; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:lxvii–cvi; Bock, *Acts*, 32–42; Peterson, *Acts*, 53–97; Keener, *Acts*, 1:492–549; Chance, *Acts*, 18–26.

the combined theology of Luke-Acts.<sup>518</sup> The only major work on Acts' theology is a compilation edited by Marshall and Peterson<sup>519</sup> presenting a constellation of theological topics. It is a useful conversation partner for this study because of the inclusion of a literary approach.

Although a single-topic integrated approach to Acts' theology often fails to encompass all the evidence, it is equally true that a too broad approach loses the overall meaning.<sup>520</sup> An examination of Acts confirms the scholars focus on the single main theological topics as God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, Israel, the church, the kingdom of God, and mission. I propose that an overall theology of mission best integrates the other topics. However, this needs verification from a literary approach which answers Gaventa's call for a narrative theology of Acts.<sup>521</sup>

### 2.2.6.2 Narrative Theology

Narrative theology has the potential to define the relationship between narrative and theology.<sup>522</sup> However, as a relatively recent scholarly approach,<sup>523</sup> it has a largely philosophical focus<sup>524</sup> on how theology works out practically in the human story<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> E.g. Conzelmann, *Theology*; E. Franklin, *Christ the Lord: A Study in the Purpose and Theology of Luke-Acts* (London: SPCK, 1975); Maddox, *Purpose*; Robert F. O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology: An Analysis of Luke-Acts* (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1984); Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*; J. T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); François Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Fifty-Five Years of Research (1950–2005)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005); Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

<sup>519</sup> I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson, eds., *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), esp. I. Howard Marshall, "Theology of Acts", and David Peterson, "Luke's Theological Enterprise: Integration and Intent", 521–44. Cf. briefer treatments in David S. Dockery, "The Theology of Acts", *CTR* 5 (1990): 43–55; Skinner, "Acts"; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*, Brazos Theological Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), based on the Western text.

<sup>520</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 20.

<sup>521</sup> E.g. Beverley Roberts Gaventa, "Toward a Theology of Acts: Reading and Rereading", *Int* 42 (1988): 146–57, citing 148–49.

<sup>522</sup> Shauf, *Theology*, 4–57.

<sup>523</sup> E.g. Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982); George W. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology* (London: SCM, 1984); Hans W. Frei, *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*, ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones, eds., *Readings in Narrative Theology: Why Narrative?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997).

<sup>524</sup> For a recent discussion see Padilla, *Acts*, 199–243.

<sup>525</sup> Harald Weinrich, "Narrative Theologie", *Concilium* 9 (1973): 329–334; Johann B. Metz, "Kleine Apologie des Erzählens", *Concilium* 9 (1973): 334–341; H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Story of our Life", in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 21–45; Gary L. Comstock, "Two Types of Narrative Theology", *JAAR* 55 (1987): 687–717.



connected to the bigger biblical narrative.<sup>526</sup> Although Acts does this for its own historical time, such an approach moves the focus away from the text itself. Consequently narrative theology is often ill-defined and kept separate to narrative criticism.<sup>527</sup> This study uses a focused narrative theology to interpret the defined literary shape. In essence, such a narrative theology is a discourse about God or related theological topics in the setting of a story's coherence, movement, and climax.<sup>528</sup>

The questions are: Is theology just inserted into the narrative or does the narrative somehow reveal theology? Is the nature of the theology systematic or progressive? Such questions are best answered using a text-centred hermeneutic similar to Kevin Vanhoozer<sup>529</sup> and David Bauer/Robert Traina.<sup>530</sup> The question for the present study is the extent to which missional significance in Acts integrates the theological themes by their structural location, size, and sequence,<sup>531</sup> as well as their connection to the story literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, rhetorical, and intertextual components. Also the ways in which the ending, beginning, and middle story stages show respectively the *culmination*, *foundation*, and *pivot* of missional significance. In addition the whole narrative of a developing missional journey is potentially symbolic or programmatic for an overall impact or telos.<sup>532</sup>

A sequential, cumulative reading of the narrative<sup>533</sup> best ascertains the progression of Acts' narrative theology. Barbara Smith maintains that a growing perception of the work's development tests any thematic hypothesis.<sup>534</sup> This study emphasises literary progression rather than historical theology. Applying the "Law of First-Mention" to a theological topic within Acts' early chapters does not guarantee

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<sup>526</sup> Green, "Reading Gospels and Acts", 47–52; Ryken, *Words of Life*, 80; Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric*, 74; Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, "Story and Biblical Theology", in *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew, et al., SHS 5 (Bletchley: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 144–71.

<sup>527</sup> E.g. Spencer, "Narrative", 126; Liefeld, *Acts*, 49–59; Del Agua, "Evangelization of the Kingdom of God", 643, 648.

<sup>528</sup> Fackre, "Narrative Theology", 343.

<sup>529</sup> Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998), is a text-centred approach, but also engages with the author's intention and a revised reader response model.

<sup>530</sup> Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*.

<sup>531</sup> Liefeld, *Acts*, 59.

<sup>532</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 653, commenting on Acts 27; Pate, et al., *Story of Israel*, 178–79; Green, "Reading Gospels and Acts", 44. See the previous discussion on journeys in Acts reflecting the journey of an individual or a church (§2.2.5.4, p.85).

<sup>533</sup> Spencer "Narrative", 122.

<sup>534</sup> Smith, *Poetic Closure*.

its meaning for the whole narrative.<sup>535</sup> For example, pneumatology is best not formed from the events of Acts 2 alone, but through the Holy Spirit's developing role in Acts and particularly the surprising absence in Acts 21–28.<sup>536</sup> The “Law of Final-Mention”<sup>537</sup> brings the developing theology to a final culmination. The missional advances or declines follow Aristotle's story movement concept of “Complication, Transformation, and Denouement”.

Having brought together the theological and narrative approaches to Acts' missional significance, the next step is to consider the scholarship on mission in Acts.

### 2.2.6.3 *Scholarship on Mission in Acts*

Michael Goheen's recent edited compilation develops a missional hermeneutic for reading the New Testament.<sup>538</sup> Scholars and missiologists widely recognise that mission is a primary theme of Acts. This is confirmed by Acts' commentators,<sup>539</sup> missional readings of Luke-Acts,<sup>540</sup> and mission theory and practice studies which draw on Acts for support.<sup>541</sup> However, there are surprisingly few monographs specifically on Acts' mission theme.<sup>542</sup> Although many scholars note, like Ferdinand

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<sup>535</sup> M. J. Cook, “The Mission to the Jews in Acts: Unravelling Luke's Myth of the Myriads”, in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 102–23, citing 121.

<sup>536</sup> Contra Liefeld, *Acts*, 84 who argues that Holy Spirit references occur with considerable evenness across the entire book of Acts.

<sup>537</sup> See §2.2.4.3, p.76. Pierson, *Bible and Spiritual Criticism*, 110–11, introduces idea of progressive growth and development in theological ideas citing Acts as an example in the expansion from 1:8 to Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea, and Ephesus.

<sup>538</sup> Goheen, *Reading Missionally*.

<sup>539</sup> E.g. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:ci-civ; Bock, *Acts*, 34–35; Peterson, *Acts*, 79–83; Keener, *Acts*, 1:505–19; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 1084–86.

<sup>540</sup> E.g. Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts*, SNTSMS 23 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Robert J. Karris, “Missionary Communities: A New Paradigm for the Study of Luke-Acts”, *CBQ* 41 (1979), 80–97, citing 93; Harold E. Dollar, *A Biblical-Missiological Exploration of the Cross-Cultural Dimensions in Luke-Acts* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993).

<sup>541</sup> E.g. Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmuehler, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 255–79; Legrand, *Unity*, 89–115; David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 41–55, 113–129; Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 127–59; Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission: The Glory of Christ in All Time and Space* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 208–242; Johannes Nissen, *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt: Lang, 2004), 49–74; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:387–913; 2:923–1588; Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 514–21; Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 121–155.

<sup>542</sup> Robert G. Maddox, *Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth: The Pattern of Mission in the Book of Acts* (Enfield: UTC, 1980); Howard C. Kee, *Good News to the Ends of the Earth: The Theology of Acts* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990).

Hahn,<sup>543</sup> that mission influences the structure of Acts, they actually approach the theme from historical,<sup>544</sup> theological,<sup>545</sup> or practical perspectives.<sup>546</sup> Gaventa,<sup>547</sup> William Larkin,<sup>548</sup> Phillip Scheepers,<sup>549</sup> and N. T. Wright<sup>550</sup> begin embryonic literary approaches to mission in Acts which this study explores more fully.

The wide-ranging debate over the terminology and concepts of mission are beyond this study, but suggestions for application are made in the conclusion. However, some orientation is helpful in setting the mission parameters. The term “mission” should not be understood too broadly since “if everything is mission, nothing is mission”.<sup>551</sup> Nor should it be too narrow, but rather follow David Bosch’s definition that “mission is the totality of the task which *God* has *sent* his *Church* to do in the *world*”.<sup>552</sup> This study uses a working definition of mission that prioritises the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel message within a wider framework of God’s mission in the world.<sup>553</sup> The term, *missio Dei*, is used both to emphasise God as the source of mission rather than human activity and also to extend mission

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<sup>543</sup> Ferdinand Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (Naperville: Allenson, 1965), 128.

<sup>544</sup> E.g. Wilson, *Gentiles*, 239–67, concluding that Acts has no consistent theology of Gentile mission.

<sup>545</sup> E.g. Howard Marshall, *A Concise New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2008), 55, that the theology of Acts is essentially a theology of mission.

<sup>546</sup> E.g. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig, eds., *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

<sup>547</sup> Beverley Roberts Gaventa, “You Will Be My Witnesses: Aspects of Mission in Acts of the Apostles”, *Missiology* 10 (1982), 413–25.

<sup>548</sup> William J. Larkin Jr., “Mission in Acts”, in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams (New York: Orbis, 1998), 170–186.

<sup>549</sup> Phillip Scheepers, “Acts and the Mission of the Church”, *Vox Reformata* (2010): 88–99.

<sup>550</sup> Wright, “Reading Missionally”, 181–185.

<sup>551</sup> Stephen C. Neill, *Creative Tension* (London: Edinburgh House, 1959), 81.

<sup>552</sup> David J. Bosch, “The Why and How of a True Biblical Foundation for Mission”, in *Zending op weg naar de toekomst: Feestbundel aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. Johannes Verkuyl*, ed. T.J. Baarda (Kampen: Kok, 1978), 33–45, citing 36, emphasis his.

<sup>553</sup> David J. Bosch, *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1980), 15–18. Cf. Charles van Engen, “‘Mission’: Defined and Described”, in *Missionshift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 7–29; Michael W. Goheen, “A History and Introduction to a Missional Reading of the Bible”, in Goheen, *Reading Missionally*, 3–27, citing 21–25; Craig G. Bartholomew, “Theological Interpretation and a Missional Hermeneutic”, in Goheen, *Reading Missionally*, 68–85, citing 71–74.

beyond a gospel salvation into a creation mandate.<sup>554</sup> The wider debate includes concepts such as evangelism, mission location inside or outside church structures, incarnational mission, dialogue, and social action. This study refers to these as they occur in relation to Acts. The adjective “missional” defines the significance arising from literary shape.<sup>555</sup>

#### 2.2.6.4 Method for Missional Significance in Acts.

A theology of mission combines the findings of literary shape and missional significance with the integration of other theological topics in Acts. As an original suggestion, I propose the outcome is that Acts focuses on an invitation to be a mission instrument for the kingdom of God. This study develops the proposal with key mission aspects of “who” (mission instrument), “to whom” (mission target), “what” (mission message), “how” (mission source and means), and “result” (success, suffering, and expansion for the kingdom of God).<sup>556</sup>

(1) *The mission instrument* proposal connects with the story character component. There is a mission succession of Israel’s largely unfulfilled mission

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<sup>554</sup> Georg. F. Vicedom, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*, trans. Gilbert A. Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf (St Louis: Concordia, 1965); H. H. Rosin, *Missio Dei* (Leiden: Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, 1972); Bosch, *Witness to the World*, 239–249; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 389–93; Thomas E. Phillips, “The Mission of the Church in Acts: Inclusive or Exclusive?”, in *Acts with Diverse Frames of Reference*, ed. Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 118–129, citing 127; Lalsangkima Pachuau, “Missio Dei”, in *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, ed. John Corrie (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007), 232–234; Wright, *Mission of God*, 61–64, 70–188; John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Steve Walton, “The Acts of the Apostles as the Mission of God”, *The 2012 Redcliffe College Bible and Mission Lecture* (delivered 15 May 2012), 1–16, esp. 1–6.

<sup>555</sup> Other equivalent terms include missiological (though often used of a practical theology that investigates the church’s mission and esp. missionary activity), theology of mission, or mission theology (although these terms also link theology with mission practice). Cf. Wright, *Mission of God*, 24–25. Charles van Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 17–31. Greg McKinzie, “Currents in Missional Hermeneutics”, *Missio Dei: A Journal of Missional Theology and Praxis* 5 (2014): 19–48.

<sup>556</sup> Engen, *Mission* 29, has a grid which includes mission context, agents, motives, means, methods, goals, results, centripetal/centrifugal activities, utopia/future hope, presence, proclamation, persuasion, incorporation, structures, partnerships, power, prayer, praise.

vocation amongst the nations,<sup>557</sup> through Jesus,<sup>558</sup> especially in Luke's Gospel,<sup>559</sup> the twelve apostles (1:8), Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Saul/Paul's Gentile mission. Paul's conversion-commission (9:1–19)<sup>560</sup> includes a prophetic call<sup>561</sup> to be God's mission instrument (from *σκεῦος* in 9:15)<sup>562</sup> as a representative of Israel in the fulfilment of its destined Gentile mission.<sup>563</sup> The restoration of Israel, as a remnant, includes an involvement in mission as the servants of God.<sup>564</sup> Scholars suggest that in the first half of Acts the church discovers its identity<sup>565</sup> and in the second half engages in its mission to the world.<sup>566</sup> However, this study offers a more nuanced position of a

<sup>557</sup> For scholarly debate see Harold H. Rowley, *Israel's Mission to the World* (London: SCM, 1939); Johannes Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church: A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1962), 15–54, including the Pentateuch, Jonah's example, Isaiah's servant of the Lord, and the Messiah of the prophets. Cf. Legrand, *Unity*, 15–27; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, vol. 1 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 381–83; Ferris L. McDaniel, "Mission in the Old Testament", in Larkin and Williams, *Mission*, 11–20; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000); Charles H. H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Our God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 509–40; James Chukwuna Okoye, *Israel and the Nations: A Mission Theology of the Old Testament* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006); Wright, *Mission of God*, 28; Goheen, *Light to the Nations*, 23–74.

<sup>558</sup> Acts 1:1; 2:22; 10:36–39. Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Mission*, 141–160; Legrand, *Unity*, 39–67; John D. Harvey, "Mission in Jesus' Teaching", in Larkin and Williams, 30–49; Alan Le Grys, *Preaching to the Nations: The Origins of Mission in the Early Church* (London: SPCK, 1998), 37–68; Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 25–54; Wright, *Mission of God*, 505–14; Goheen, *Light to the Nations*, 75–119.

<sup>559</sup> Wilson, *Gentiles*, 29–58; Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Mission*, 255–69; Dollar, *Biblical-Missiological*, 35–82; William J. Larkin, Jr., "Mission in Luke", in Larkin and Williams, *Mission*, 152–69; Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 111–27.

<sup>560</sup> Cf. Acts 22:6–16; 26:12–23.

<sup>561</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 203.

<sup>562</sup> The idea of a mission instrument is taken from Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 102–103, who notes that the principal use of *σκεῦος* in LXX is as an implement or tool. See LXX for: (1) armour or weapons (e.g. Gen 27:3; 1 Kgdms (Sam) 8:12; 17:54; 2 Kgdms (Sam) 1:27; Ps 7:14; Eccl 9:18) and esp. armour-bearer (e.g. Judg 9:45; 18:11, 16; 1 Kgdms (Sam) 14:1f; 16:21; 31:4); (2) tabernacle and temple vessels (e.g. Exod 25:3; Num 4:15; 3 Kgdms (1 Kgs) 7:34); (3) farm and construction tools (e.g. 2 Kgdms (1 Sam) 24:22; 3 Kgdms (1 Kgs) 7:34; (4) jar (4 Kgdms (2 Kgs) 4:3f; (4) harp (Ps 90:22); (5) treasures (e.g. Gen 24:53; Hos 13:15; Nah 2:10). See LSJ, *σκεῦος*, 1607, as a vessel or implement of any kind; T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Chiefly of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 512–13, *σκεῦος*, for implements or tools in various settings of cultic, home, hunting, war, sailing; BDAG, *σκεῦος*, 927–28, §1, material object used in occupation; §2, a container, vessel or jar; and §3, of a human being exercising a function. Cf. Johannes Aagaard, "Trends in Missiological Thinking During the Sixties", *IRM* 62 (1973): 8–25, citing 13; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390. Haenchen, *Acts*, 325; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:455–56; Skinner, "Acts", 363.

<sup>563</sup> Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 19. Cf. Wilson, *Gentiles*, 161–68, esp. 167–68.

<sup>564</sup> This study explores the four servant terms used within Acts in connection to mission: (1) *παῖς* (3:13, 26; 4:25, 27, 30); (2) *δοῦλος* (2:18; 4:29; 16:17, cf. *δοῦλέω*, 20:19); (3) *διακονία* (12:25; 20:24; 21:19); and (4) *ὑπηρέτης* (26:16).

<sup>565</sup> The term "church" is used throughout this study of the community variously described as: (1) brothers; (2) disciples; (3) the believers; (4) *ἐκκλησία*; (5) the Way; and (6) the holy ones. Cf. Steve Walton, "Calling the Church Names: Learning About Christian Identity from Acts", *PRSt* 41.3 (2014): 223–241.

<sup>566</sup> Beardslee, *Literary Criticism*, 50; Robert W. Wall, "Israel and the Gentile Mission in Acts and Paul: A Canonical Approach", in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 437–57, suggests that Acts 1–14 is a commentary on Joel 3:1–5a [LXX 2:28–32] and Acts 15–28 a commentary on Amos 9:11–12.

contemporaneous invitation to be a mission instrument (addressed to Jews or God-fearers) and examples of Gentile mission. The term, “instrument”, involves a tension<sup>567</sup> between a *missio Dei* and a human agent,<sup>568</sup> intermediary,<sup>569</sup> or partner.<sup>570</sup> Acts also requires an exploration of the extent to which individuals,<sup>571</sup> as “a paradeigma for imitation”,<sup>572</sup> or the church,<sup>573</sup> function as a mission instrument. Relevant missional terms for the instrument are μάρτυς (witness) (thirty-eight times),<sup>574</sup> ἀπόστολος (apostle) (thirty-one times),<sup>575</sup> and Χριστιανός (Christian) (twice).<sup>576</sup> Prayer also has a missional role of intercession and expressing dependence on God. Acts’ story suggests that the nation, the church, and individuals all struggle to fulfil the mission calling.<sup>577</sup> This explains why the relationship between the church and mission is unclear in Acts. An invitation to be a mission instrument does not guarantee those invited will necessarily become involved or if they do that they will succeed. Mission develops almost in spite of the church,<sup>578</sup> yet is closely connected to it.<sup>579</sup> There is also the question whether Paul’s practice supports the idea of what is now called “parachurch mission”.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Bosch, *Witness to the World*, 77–81. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, “Luke’s Portrait of the Pauline Mission”, in *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul’s Mission*, ed. Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 99–113, citing 101–102.

<sup>568</sup> Larkin, “Mission in Acts”, 177–78.

<sup>569</sup> Skinner, “Acts”, 359.

<sup>570</sup> Goheen, “David Bosch’s Missional Reading”, 231. Walton, “Mission of God”, 6.

<sup>571</sup> Peter G. Bolt, “Mission and Witness”, in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 191–214; I. Howard Marshall, “Who Were the Evangelists?”, in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles*, ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein, WUNT 127 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 251–63, citing 256–58.

<sup>572</sup> Mallen, *Transformation*, 189.

<sup>573</sup> Mallen, *Transformation*, 191–193; Christoph W. Stenschke, “Mission in the Book of Acts: Mission of the Church”, *Scriptura* 103 (2010): 66–78.

<sup>574</sup> The total includes μάρτυς (thirteen times), μαρτυρία (once), μαρτύρον (twice), and related verbs μαρτυρέω (eleven times), μαρτύρομαι (twice), διαμαρτύρομαι (nine times). Cf. Allison A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, SNTSMS 31 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 128–153, links witness to the apostles. For μαρτυρέω see later in this chapter under mission means, p.124, n.613–15.

<sup>575</sup> The term is used in Acts predominantly of the Twelve and twice of Barnabas and Saul (14:4, 14).

<sup>576</sup> As an original suggestion, I propose to explore how this term (11:26; 26:28) suggests a mission instrument.

<sup>577</sup> Walton, “Acts”, 77–78, argues that believers can be a barrier, or at least resistant, to the new moves God is making (e.g. Acts 11:2; 15:1, 5); Walton, “Mission of God”, 20, the church is “slow to catch on and finds itself dragged along – even kicking and screaming sometimes – on God’s coat-tails”; Le Grys, *Preaching to the Nations*, 76–79, concludes that Gentile mission was very controversial in Acts.

<sup>578</sup> Gaventa, “Witnesses”, 416.

<sup>579</sup> Stenschke, “Mission”; Scheepers, “Acts and Mission”, 95–98.

<sup>580</sup> Scheepers, “Acts and Mission”, 96–98; Arthur F. Glasser, et al., eds., *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God’s Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 300–306.

(2) *The mission target* is traditionally understood as a cross-cultural progression,<sup>581</sup> or better an expansion,<sup>582</sup> towards a universal scope<sup>583</sup> through Jews,<sup>584</sup> Samaritans, Gentile God-fearers,<sup>585</sup> and pagan Gentiles.<sup>586</sup> Whilst, as Philip Towner points out, this development is apparent,<sup>587</sup> the continuing focus on Jews is the subject of extensive debate.<sup>588</sup> Recent scholarship no longer explains the “turning passages” to Gentiles (13:46; 18:6; 28:28) as a rejection of Jews.<sup>589</sup> Rather it suggests the acceptance of Gentiles along with Jews,<sup>590</sup> or two parallel missions.<sup>591</sup> As an original interpretation, I propose that the “turning to Gentiles” is the remnant (in Paul and Barnabas) acting as a mission example to correct the mission failure of Israel. The Gentile mission target is set alongside an invitation for God’s people, as Israel and/or the church, to be a mission instrument. The question is whether the mission is located inside or outside a church’s structures<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation* NSBT 14 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), 157–80. Scheepers, “Acts and Mission”, 94–95.

<sup>582</sup> Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 104–105, suggest that Acts is an example of *biographical generalisation* in which the narrative progresses from a person or subgroup to a larger group of which the originally described person or subgroup is a part. They show that Acts moves from Jews, to a combination of Jews, Samaritans and God-fearers, to Jews, God-fearers and Gentiles.

<sup>583</sup> Larkin, “Mission in Acts”, 182–84.

<sup>584</sup> David L. Allen, “Acts Studies in the 1990’s: Unity and Diversity”, *CTR* 5 (1990): 3–13, citing 11. Cf. Tyson, *Jewish People*.

<sup>585</sup> Jacob Jervell, “The Church of Jews and God-Fearers”, in Tyson, *Jewish People*, 11–20, believes Christian mission in Acts is directed only at God-fearers and Jews.

<sup>586</sup> E.g. Wilson, *Gentiles*; Jacques Dupont, *The Salvation of Gentiles: Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. John R. Keating (New York: Paulist, 1979), 11–34; David S. Dockery, “Acts 6–12: The Christian Mission Beyond Jerusalem”, *RevExp* 87.3 (1990), 423–438; Scott McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); Christoph W. Stenschke, *Luke’s Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith*, WUNT 2.108 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); Naymond H. Keathley, *The Church’s Mission to Gentiles: Acts of the Apostles, Epistles of Paul* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1999).

<sup>587</sup> E.g. Philip H. Towner, “Mission Practice and Theology Under Construction (Acts 18–20)”, in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 417–436, suggesting Corinth (Acts 18) and Ephesus (Acts 19) is a move from the Jewish synagogue to Gentiles.

<sup>588</sup> E.g. Tyson, *Images*; Tyson, *Luke, Judaism and the Scholars: Critical Approaches to Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); Robert F. O’Toole, “The Christian Mission and the Jews at the End of Acts of the Apostles”, in *Biblical Exegesis in Progress: Old and New Testament Essays*, ed. J. N. Aletti and J.L. Ska (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2009), 371–96; Phillips, “Mission of the Church”, 118. For an opposing view see Jack T. Sanders, “The Jewish People in Luke-Acts”, in Tyson, *Jewish People*, 51–75, who argues that the Jews are written off.

<sup>589</sup> This study explores the “turning passages” further (see §5.3.2.1, p.246, n.195–97).

<sup>590</sup> Maddox, *Witnesses*, 62–73, citing 73.

<sup>591</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 115; Larkin, “Mission in Acts”, 182–184.

<sup>592</sup> Pachau, “Missio Dei”; Harvey G. Cox, *The Secular City* (London: SCM, 1965); Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (London: SCM, 1967); Will Loescher, “Theological Issues Arising from a Local Church Case Study and the Hypothesis of Separating Outreach from a Church’s Internal Life” (M.Phil diss., University of Wales, 1999).

(3) *The mission message* from a literary shape perspective within the speeches includes well-researched keynote topics<sup>593</sup> such as God, Jesus as Lord and Christ, the resurrection, salvation, and the kingdom of God. Salvation (σωτηρία) has wide connotations of deliverance or preservation from danger and disease resulting in safety, health, and prosperity. Although the Old Testament physical emphasis is retained, Acts focuses more on moral and spiritual salvation<sup>594</sup> which also includes the formation of a mission instrument. The kingdom of God is extensively explored in Chapter Six. This study distinguishes between the invitation to be a mission instrument and the mission message. The mission invitation to Jews focuses primarily on the Old Testament Scriptures and the Messiah. The mission message to pagan Gentiles (e.g. Lystra and Athens) starts with a focus on creation linked to *missio Dei*.<sup>595</sup> This raises the issue of contextualisation or cultural adaptation<sup>596</sup> in the messenger or message. The fact that the examples of mission message do not include an invitation to be a mission instrument, nor do Gentiles in Acts engage in mission, suggests the focus is on a challenge to God's people.

(4) *The mission source* involves the debate about *missio Dei* with a focus on God in Acts as the primary author of mission, the presence of Jesus, and especially the activity and empowering of the Holy Spirit. I propose that the Holy Spirit in Acts is primarily a mission source rather than for salvation. Acts' literary shape and missional significance distinguish between God's underlying plan,<sup>597</sup> his activity in the narrative,<sup>598</sup> and the indirect references to him in the speeches.<sup>599</sup> The reduction

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<sup>593</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 100–101, has a comprehensive table of 34 summary descriptions of the message preached in Acts including “the word”, the resurrection, salvation, gospel, Christ, Lord, grace, peace, kingdom of God, repentance and faith.

<sup>594</sup> BDAG, σωτηρία, 985–86. There is a single use of the neuter form σωτήριο at 28:28. BDAG, σωτήριος, 986. Also the use of σώζω referring to the healing of the lame man (4:9) and the rescue from the shipwreck (27:20, 31, note διασώζω at 27:44). Cf. Ben Witherington III, “Salvation and Health in Christian Antiquity: The Soteriology of Luke-Acts in its First Century Settings”, in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 145–166; Graham H. Twelftree, *People of the Spirit. Exploring Luke's View of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 51.

<sup>595</sup> Flett, *Witness of God*, 208–11.

<sup>596</sup> Gaventa, “Witnesses”, 422–23; Cf. Paul G. Hiebert, “The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization”, in Hesselgrave and Stetzer, *Missionshift*, 82–102.

<sup>597</sup> Squires, *Plan of God*; Skinner, “Acts”, 363–64.

<sup>598</sup> Steve Walton, “The Acts – of God? What is the ‘Acts of the Apostles’ All About?, *EQ* 80 (2008), 291–306, argues God is the main actor. He links this to mission in “Mission of God”, 6–25. Cf. Holladay, *Acts*, 62–65; Joseph G. Muthuraj, “The Theology of God and the Gentile Mission in Acts” (PhD diss., University of Durham, 1995), constructs his thesis on God being the cause of mission as well as the content, but tellingly the large majority of his thesis is about God as the content of mission.

<sup>599</sup> Burridge, “Genre of Acts”, 12–16”, challenges Walton's conclusions as failing to differentiate God directly in the narrative (only the subject at 19:11) and referenced indirectly in the speeches.



of references to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in Acts' Ending needs an explanation.

The intersection of the mission source and means includes the Old Testament Scriptures, “the Word”, and references to “the name of Jesus”. Scholars debate whether the ambiguous “Word of God/Lord” motif refers to the Old Testament Scriptures,<sup>600</sup> an agent of God,<sup>601</sup> Jesus,<sup>602</sup> the church,<sup>603</sup> the gospel message<sup>604</sup> as Jesus's own words or an apostolic proclamation,<sup>605</sup> or verbal communication.<sup>606</sup> It could also conceivably be Luke's Gospel or the preceding Scripture quotation. Marguerat helpfully notes that “le nom de Jésus Christ n'est par seulement évoquer son souvenir, mais actualiser sa puissance et la représenter efficacement”.<sup>607</sup>

(5) *The mission means* within missiology join together Christian presence, incarnational identification, social action, verbal communication, and supernatural activity.<sup>608</sup> Acts' emphasises the last two. The main proclamation verbs are primarily, but not exclusively,<sup>609</sup> of spoken communication.<sup>610</sup> They include: (i) εὐαγγελίζω linked to the gospel message;<sup>611</sup> (ii) καταγγέλλω as public widespread

<sup>600</sup> Isa 9:7; 40:7, 8; 45:22–24; 55:10–11.

<sup>601</sup> Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 147–180.

<sup>602</sup> Moisés Silva, *NIDNTE*, λόγος, 3:127–70, citing §NT 1.4, 166–69; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of the Scriptures in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 419–20; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:47–51, distinguish “the Word of God” as a more general concept and “the Word of the Lord” as specifically connected to Jesus

<sup>603</sup> Matthew Skinner, “The Word of God and the Church: On the Theological Implications of the Three Summary Statements in the Acts of the Apostles”, in *The Unrelenting God: God's Action in Scripture: Essays in Honor of Beverley Roberts Gaventa*, ed. David J. Downs and Matthew L. Skinner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 60–82.

<sup>604</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 141–46; B. Klappert, λόγος, *NIDNTT*, ed. Colin Brown, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–78), 3:1081–21, citing NT §3, 1110–14; Rosner, “Progress”, 215–33.

<sup>605</sup> Silva, *NIDNTE*, λόγος, 3:160–66, §NT 1.2,

<sup>606</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 278.

<sup>607</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:293, “the name of Jesus Christ is not only to evoke his memory, but to actualise his power and represent it effectively” (in this study all French translations are my own). Cf. John A. Ziesler, “The Name of Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles”, *JSNT* 4 (1979): 28–41; Walton, “Jesus”, 133–34.

<sup>608</sup> Michael Nazir-Ali, *From Everywhere to Everywhere. A World View of Christian Witness* (London: Collins/Flame, 1991), 139–193; Loescher, “Separating Outreach”, 132–36, 141–53, 162–68, 172–78.

<sup>609</sup> Bosch, *Witnesses to the World*, 18–20, notes evangelism is more than verbal proclamation; Gaventa, “Witnesses”, 417, that witness involves word and deed.

<sup>610</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 99–100, gives a comprehensive table of eighteen verbs used in Acts to describe the action of apostolic preaching.

<sup>611</sup> BDAG, εὐαγγελίζω, 402. Also the noun εὐαγγέλιον which surprisingly only appears twice at 15:7 and 20:24. BDAG, εὐαγγέλιον, 402–403.

dissemination;<sup>612</sup> (iii) μαρτυρέω as witnesses (with possible legal connotations)<sup>613</sup> for and to Christ,<sup>614</sup> but with an uncertain application in teaching God's people, reaching the world, or both;<sup>615</sup> (iv) παρρησιάζομαι as boldness in speaking<sup>616</sup> with freedom of speech,<sup>617</sup> public openness,<sup>618</sup> and courage in the context of opposition,<sup>619</sup> but contrary to scholars' claims, not explicitly from the Holy Spirit;<sup>620</sup> (v) διαλέγομαι as a dialogue with a rational appeal to thinking;<sup>621</sup> (vi) πείθω as both a persuasive process and a positive outcome;<sup>622</sup> (vii) κηρύσσω as heralding an official announcement;<sup>623</sup> and (viii) διδάσκω as teaching or instruction in a formal or informal setting<sup>624</sup> which as a framing device may suggest Acts is a catechism for

<sup>612</sup> BDAG, καταγγέλλω, 515.

<sup>613</sup> Trites, *Witness*, 128–135; Maria. T. Y. Do, *The Lucan Journey: A Study of Luke 9:28–36 and Acts 1:6–11 as an Architectural Pair*, EH 23 (Bern: Lang, 2010), 159–161, argues that its Graeco-Roman legal usage is superseded by Acts' predominant use of being an eye-witness proclamation of events involving salvific value.

<sup>614</sup> BDAG, μαρτυρέω, 617–18; διαμαρτύρομαι, 233, meaning to make a solemn declaration often with authority in matters of extraordinary importance. Related nouns include μαρτυρία (the act of the witness), μαρτύριον (the content of the witness) and μάρτυς (the person who is a witness). BDAG, μαρτυρία, 618–19; μαρτύριον, 619; μάρτυς, 619–20.

<sup>615</sup> Bolt, “Mission and Witness”, 191–214, restricted to the twelve apostles and Paul. Cf. Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 116–17; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 116.

<sup>616</sup> BDAG, παρρησιάζομαι, 782, and for noun παρρησία, 781–82.

<sup>617</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 140, as experienced by free citizens of ancient Athens.

<sup>618</sup> Alexander, “Acts”, 1034, frankness of Greek philosophy; Mealand, “Close of Acts”, 596–97, as used at times within Greek culture to address the gods.

<sup>619</sup> Mealand, “Close of Acts”, 597; Foster, “Conclusion”, 268–70; Gaventa, “Witnesses”, 417–20. Other approaches include Pereira, *Ephesus*, 114–16, who argues for the assessment of each reference; Sara C. Winter, “Παρρησία in Acts”, in *Friendship, Flattery and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*, NovTSup 82, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 185–202, that the verb does not indicate opposition. However, only 18:26 (Ephesus); 26:26 (Caesarea) and 28:31 (Rome) are not explicitly linked to a context of opposition, but in each place Jewish opposition is implicit (19:9; 26:6; 28:24–25).

<sup>620</sup> Those linking boldness and the Holy Spirit includes Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 140; Thompson, *Acts*, 97–98; Trites, *Witness*, 15–52. However, only 4:31 makes an explicit direct connection, with 4:29 and 19:8 having Holy Spirit references nearby.

<sup>621</sup> BDAG, διαλέγομαι, 232. Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:903, reasoning or arguing; Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 458, an initial presentation resulting in debate.

<sup>622</sup> BDAG, πείθω, 791–92, as either active, which indicates the action of persuading, or passive/perfect as the state of persuasion. The four combinations of tense and voice for proclamation in Acts are: (1) imperfect/present active as process of persuading (13:43, though the “to continue in the grace of God” may indicate a state of persuasion; 18:4; 19:8, even though it has the antonyms of ἐθελήρονοντο (hardened) and significantly the opposite ἡπείθουν (unpersuaded) they can be outcomes of the process rather than a contrast to a state of persuasion; 26:28; 28:23); (2) aorist active as the process of persuasion completed (19:26); (3) imperfect passive as process of being persuaded (28:24, though the joining of the antonym ἀπίστος (unbelieving) may indicate a state of persuasion); and (4) aorist passive as state of persuasion (17:4 as closest to Christian conversion). Cf. Jon A. Weatherley, “The Jews in Luke-Acts”, *TynBul*, 40 (1989): 107–117, esp. 110; Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 125

<sup>623</sup> BDAG, κηρύσσω, 543–44. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 3:3022, repeating the words of a ruler; Larkin, “Acts”, 392, appealing to the will for a decision.

<sup>624</sup> BDAG, διδάσκω, 241, and noun διδαχή. Scholars see contrast with κηρύσσω as: (1) appealing to mind instead of will (Larkin, “Acts”, 392); (2) a lengthier exposition (Constantino Antonio Ziccardi, *The Relationship of Jesus and the Kingdom of God according to Luke-Acts*, TGST 165 (Rome: Editrice Pontifica Università Gregoriana, 2008), 74–75); and (3) to believers rather than unbelievers (Foster, “Conclusion”, 264–66).

mission.<sup>625</sup> This study also explores the literary distribution of supernatural manifestations such as σημεῖα and τέρατα,<sup>626</sup> miracles, healings, and resurrections showing God's tangible presence.<sup>627</sup> They are related to salvation,<sup>628</sup> "the Word",<sup>629</sup> and "the name of Jesus" rather than the Holy Spirit.<sup>630</sup> There is little evidence for the gospel witness linked to social action<sup>631</sup> or the church community as a basis for mission.<sup>632</sup>

(6) *The mission success* in Acts requires a more thorough assessment using literary shape to correct the over-positive traditional view of "success".<sup>633</sup> The present study follows Gaventa in distinguishing between proclamation and explicit conversions.<sup>634</sup> The question is the extent to which success is attributed to God or the human instrument. Also Chapter Six explores mission success over Satan and demonic forces in relation to the kingdom of God.

(7) *The mission suffering* throughout Acts is primarily caused by Jewish opposition<sup>635</sup> which also occurs inside the church.<sup>636</sup> For this reason, the opposition is simultaneously a sign of both mission decline and faithfulness. Although sometimes the unbelieving Gentiles oppose the mission,<sup>637</sup> the Roman authorities are

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<sup>625</sup> Acts 1:1 and 28:31.

<sup>626</sup> BDAG, σημεῖον, 920–21, meaning a sign or miracle; and 999, τέρας, a wonder. Holladay, *Acts*, 299, links with OT use in God's demonstration of power over the Egyptians (Exod 7:3; Deut 4:34; 6:22; Ps 135:9) with possible subtext that God is dramatically at work once again in the Gentile mission.

<sup>627</sup> Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 200–202.

<sup>628</sup> Marianne Fournier, *The Episode at Lystra: A Rhetorical and Semiotic Analysis of Acts 14:7–20a*, AUS 7.197 (New York: Lang, 1997), 203–213.

<sup>629</sup> Leo O'Reilly, *Word and Sign in the Acts of the Apostles: A Study in Lucan Theology*, AG 243 (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1987), 191–211, argues that the "signs and wonders" legitimate the "Word". They are always found in close proximity to it, but the "Word" occurs sometimes without accompanying "signs and wonders".

<sup>630</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 119–21; Gonzalo Haya-Prats, *Empowered Believers: The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts*, ed. Paul Elbert, trans., Scott A. Ellington (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 34–35.

<sup>631</sup> Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 177–203, argues the principles of social care are focused on the internal life of the Christian community. See Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32, 33–37; 9:36; 11:28–30; 20:35; 24:17. For a more missional application see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 117–18; Eben Scheffler, "Caring for the Needy in the Acts of the Apostles", *Neotestamentica* 50 (2016): 131–65.

<sup>632</sup> Only Acts 2:42–47 and 4:32–37, but these are probably an internal witness by the remnant to the nation.

<sup>633</sup> Loescher, "Separating Outreach", 4–5, for five measurements of mission success as: (1) contacts made; (2) influence upon the community; (3) enhanced congregational life; (4) conversion; and (5) discipleship; Larkin, "Mission in Acts", 184, quantitative and qualitative.

<sup>634</sup> Gaventa, "Witnesses", 420–22.

<sup>635</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:3.

<sup>636</sup> Acts 11:1–3 and 15:1–2 together with internal problems at 5:1–11; 6:1 and 21:20–25.

<sup>637</sup> E.g. Acts 13:50; 14:2, 5, 19; 16:19–24.

generally favourable. Scholars note mission and suffering are connected,<sup>638</sup> especially through Jesus the suffering Servant,<sup>639</sup> being a public spectacle,<sup>640</sup> and boldness language.<sup>641</sup> This prevents a triumphalistic view of Acts,<sup>642</sup> but should not automatically shift to a eulogy of Paul since suffering may result from his own actions and decisions.<sup>643</sup>

(8) *The mission expansion* is used as a term in this study in relation to the kingdom of God as an important aspect of the *missio Dei* embracing the whole world.<sup>644</sup> Chapter Six focuses on how the kingdom of God functions in Acts as a term at strategic points in the literary structure, a broader topic within Acts' story, and in missional significance related to expansion and conquest.

Acts is often thought to one of "triumphalistic progress"<sup>645</sup> and therefore a successful model to be emulated.<sup>646</sup> For a better assessment of mission "advance" and "decline" I focus primarily on the aspects of the gospel proclamation to Gentiles, their subsequent conversion, and the impact on their society.<sup>647</sup> Also relevant is that the mission activity is in response to the ongoing invitation for God's people to be a mission instrument for worldwide mission. A decline in the invitation is likely to mean a decline in the mission. The present study takes into account the struggle of

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<sup>638</sup> John J. Kilgallen, "Persecution in the Acts of the Apostles", in *Luke and Acts*, ed. Gerald O'Collins and Gilberto Marconi, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist, 1991), 143–160; David P. Moessner, "The 'Script' of the Scriptures in the Acts: Suffering as God's Plan (βουλή) for the World for the 'Release of Sins'", in Witherington, *History, Literature, and Society*, 218–50; Scott Cunningham, *Through Many Tribulations: The Theology of Persecution in Luke-Acts* JSNTSup 142 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 227; Brian M. Rapske, "Opposition to the Plan of God and Persecution", in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 235–56; Paul Y. Jeong, *Mission from a Position of Weakness*, AUSTR 269 (New York: Lang, 2007), 31–39; Brian J. Tabb, "Suffering in Ancient Worldview: A Comparative Study of Acts, Fourth Maccabees and Seneca" (PhD diss., University of Middlesex, 2013), 165–168, 175; Tabb, "Salvation, Spreading and Suffering: God's Unfolding Plan in Luke-Acts", *JETS* 58 (2015): 43–61.

<sup>639</sup> Byerly, "Narrative Legitimation", 131–34, 156–59.

<sup>640</sup> Brittany E. Wilson, "Sight and Spectacle: 'Seeing' Paul in the Book of Acts", in Dicken and Snyder, *Characters*, 141–53.

<sup>641</sup> See the previous discussion of mission means, p.124, n.616–20.

<sup>642</sup> Gaventa, "Witnesses", 419; Martin W. Mittelstadt, *The Spirit and Suffering in Luke-Acts: Implications for a Pentecostal Pneumatology*. JPTSUP 26 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 132–38, argues for a "theologia crucis" alongside a "theologia gloriae".

<sup>643</sup> E.g. Acts 16:18 and 19:21 interpreted as mistaken actions.

<sup>644</sup> Vicedom, *Mission of God*, 12–44; Flett, *Witness of God*, 51–61, 290–92; Walton, "Mission of God", 5–6; Jedidiah Coppenger, "The Community of Mission: The Church", in *Theology and Practice of Mission. God, the Church and the Nations*, ed. Bruce R. Ashford (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2011), 60–75.

<sup>645</sup> This view is rightly refuted by Rosner, "Progress", 229.

<sup>646</sup> Sean A. Adams, "The Characterization of Disciples in Acts: Genre, Method, and Quality", in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, ed. Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Snyder, LNTS 548 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 155–68, argues for Peter and Paul as models following the example of Jesus based on a comparison with Graeco-Roman collected biographies.

<sup>647</sup> See above p.125, n.633, for factors measuring mission success.

Israel (as a nation and a remnant-church) and the apostles, Peter, and even at times Paul, to engage in Gentile mission.

The presence or absence the above missional significance features (e.g. witness, apostle, Christian, prayer, God, Jesus as Lord and Christ, resurrection, salvation, Holy Spirit, “the Word of God/Lord”, “the name of Jesus”, proclamation verbs, supernatural manifestations, and the kingdom of God) within Acts’ literary shape confirms whether or not there is mission progress. The presence of these features confirms a mission advance, but the reduction or absence suggests a mission decline. This is especially true where there is the presence or absence of a number of the features. Other examples include the presence of the “we-group” confirming a mission advance and Old Testament intertextuality as an encouragement in the formation of the mission instrument. The structural arrangement of the missional significance features confirms the story sequence of Acts’ mission advances and declines.<sup>648</sup>

A clear and comprehensive method for approaching Acts’ literary shape is now complete. Definitions of literary structure, story, and missional significance are in place. Elements and components are in readiness.

### 2.3 Summary

This chapter has given a brief summary of Acts’ literary background and defended the validity of applying a focused method of narrative criticism. This method prepares to explore the literary shape of the NA<sup>28</sup> text of Acts with: (1) Horace’s “Five-Act Structure” and the literary structure elements of sections, size, and sequence; (2) Aristotle’s story stage concept of Acts’ Ending, Beginning, and Middle; (3) Aristotle’s story development concept in the journey of “Complication, Transformation, and Denouement”; (4) the key Graeco-Roman and modern literary concepts; (5) backwards, forwards, and central reading strategies; and (6) the literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, speech, and intertextual story components. This leads into a focused narrative theology with a particular emphasis on missional significance with an invitation to be a mission instrument for the kingdom of God.

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<sup>648</sup> See Diagram V, p.79.

The following Chapters Three to Five use this focused narrative-criticism/theology method to explore the story stages of Acts' Ending, Beginning, and Middle. This examines how Acts' literary shape reveals the *culmination*, *foundation*, and *pivot* of missional significance. Chapter Six adds the kingdom of God as a specific term, broader topic, and missional theme within Acts' structure and story.

### CHAPTER THREE: ACTS' ENDING

The next three chapters use the method constructed in Chapter Two to explore the ending, beginning, and middle stages of literary shape. Each chapter follows a deliberate and consistent arrangement which begins with Acts' scholarship, fine-tunes the method, prioritises literary structure and story in close exegetical work on Acts' text which moves from a narrow focus of Acts' finish (28:16–31), start (1:1–11), and centre (14:8–20a) before moving to the broader scope of the whole story. The discoveries of missional significance are appropriately noted at the close of each thesis chapter. Each stage of literary shape makes a distinctive contribution to the way Acts' literary structure and story reveal missional significance. The present chapter focuses on Acts' Ending as the stage where significance is expected to be most prominent. As Alexander points out “the easiest way to understand the shape of the drama is to begin at the end”.<sup>1</sup> By starting with “Act V” (21:15–28:31) the *culmination* of significance is viewed from the final perspective.

The last words in Acts 28:30–31 conclude the narrative in an apparently abrupt and open-ended manner. The story has reached its destination spatially at Rome, temporally after ten literary years and nine months,<sup>2</sup> focused on the character component of Paul, rhetorically in his final speech, and intertextually in a final quotation from Isaiah 6:9–10. However, the questions and tensions raised during the preceding Acts' story are surprisingly unresolved. Paul's future fate is left hanging. The struggles between Judaism and the gospel are still centre stage. The church, Paul's companions, and the Holy Spirit are notably absent. In spite of this, the ending is still expected to have significance as the *culmination* of the work and William Brosend correctly observes that “Luke ends where he does for reasons theological, not chronological, by narrative design, not by accident of history”.<sup>3</sup>

The start of Acts' Ending is difficult to identify and scholars propose various options. These include a narrower focus on the final summary marked off by δέ from

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander, *Acts*, 16.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix IV, p.390.

<sup>3</sup> William F. Brosend, “The Means of Absent Ends”, in Witherington, *History, Literature, and Society*, 348–362, citing 360.

28:30,<sup>4</sup> the final scene located in Rome from 28:16,<sup>5</sup> or a broader scope including the final journey from 27:1<sup>6</sup> or even the trials starting at Jerusalem from 21:15.<sup>7</sup>

The present chapter follows a deliberate approach to explore Acts' Ending in terms of scholarship (§3.1), a fine-tuned method (§3.2), the observations of an accumulative literary shape which prioritises literary structure and story before significance in close exegetical work on the narrow focus of the final summary (28:30–31) and final scene (28:16–28) before the broader view of 21:15–28:15 (§3.3), the discoveries for a *culmination* of missional significance appropriately left until the end of the chapter (§4.4), and a closing summary which brings together the findings of literary shape and missional significance (§4.5).

### 3.1 Acts' Ending Scholarship

The surprising Acts' Ending has fascinated scholars for generations. Historical criticism tends to see it as an abrupt and premature conclusion,<sup>8</sup> whilst literary criticism joined with theological reflection observes a more deliberate and planned closure.<sup>9</sup> Various literary approaches to Acts' Ending theory are made, notably by Jacques Dupont,<sup>10</sup> Herman Hauser,<sup>11</sup> Charles Puskas<sup>12</sup> and Barry Foster<sup>13</sup> in the late twentieth century, and more recently Troy Troftgruben<sup>14</sup> and Hannah Cocksworth.<sup>15</sup> Dupont undertakes a careful analysis of the literary structure for 28:16–31, Hauser follows a Structuralist approach, Puskas uses compositional criticism, and Foster a blend of literary and historical criticism. Of particular importance to this study are Troftgruben's focus on Graeco-Roman literary endings in prose fiction, epic,

<sup>4</sup> Levinsohn, *Connections*, 96. See Chapter Two §2.2.4.3, p.74.

<sup>5</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 33–38; Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 138; Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 114–15.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 212.

<sup>7</sup> Loveday C. A. Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography", in *Ancient Literary Context*, 43–68, citing 67; Floyd V. Filson, *Three Crucial Decades: Studies in the Book of Acts* (London: Epworth, 1963), 14.

<sup>8</sup> For discussion of this view see Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 8–13.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 475. Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 14–28.

<sup>10</sup> Jacques Dupont, "La conclusion des Actes et son rapport à l'ensemble de l'ouvrage de Luc", in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, redaction, theologie*, ed. J. Kremer, BETL 48 (Gembloux: Duculot; Leuven: University Press, 1979), 359–404.

<sup>11</sup> Hermann J. Hauser, *Strukturen der Abschlusserzählung der Apostelgeschichte* (Apg 28:16–31), AnBib 86 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979).

<sup>12</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, is a revised publication of his "The Conclusion of Luke-Acts: An Investigation of the Literary Function and Theological Significance of Acts 28:16–31" (PhD diss., St Louis University, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Foster, "Conclusion".

<sup>14</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*.

<sup>15</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings".



biography, and historiography genres showing closure and openness, and focus on modern literary ending concepts outlined in Chapter One.

Whilst Dupont<sup>16</sup> and Foster<sup>17</sup> make connections to the rest of Acts, they do not pursue how literary shape reveals significance. What is required is a larger scope for Acts' Ending, a more comprehensive method of analysis, and a more robust narrative theology.

Scholars also debate the reasons for the *finish* and *closure*. Troftgruben identifies four possibilities.<sup>18</sup>

First, the author's ignorance is connected with source criticism and/or an early dating of Acts.<sup>19</sup> Whilst this explanation does allow for a literary shape of Acts' Ending, it is usually associated with an inadequate closure that does not have any particular significance.

Second, the prevention of a finish due to running out of papyrus, the death of the author, or the loss of the original ending. However, the ending is insufficiently abrupt to support this removal of literary shape.<sup>20</sup>

Third, a deliberate apologetic seeks a reason in the *aftermath* beyond Acts' Ending. This includes possible events such as Paul's death, his release to further mission, Nero's persecution, the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, and a growing separation between the church and Judaism. However, as Troftgruben argues, the omissions, especially Paul's fate, do not sufficiently support the apologetics.<sup>21</sup> Other apologetic reasons proposed are Acts' canonical placement or *linkage* to a planned third volume.<sup>22</sup> Interesting though these suggestions are, they move the discussion into a context that is outside the text and are therefore not relevant for this research.

Fourth, an intentional and fitting conclusion comes closest to explaining how literary shape reveals a *culmination* of significance. It embraces the key concepts of *closure* and a connection to the journey from the beginning. Troftgruben discusses the three main literary and thematic arguments for a fitting conclusion.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Dupont, "La conclusion", 380–403.

<sup>17</sup> Foster, "Conclusion", 35–63.

<sup>18</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 8–28.

<sup>19</sup> See discussion and refutation in Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 9–10.

<sup>20</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 16.

<sup>22</sup> William M. Ramsay, *St Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1895), 23, 27–28, 309; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 97–98, refutes Ramsay, *Traveller*, 29, that πρῶτος (1:1) used instead of the comparative πρότερος does not suggest a third volume.

<sup>23</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 22–28.

The first argument is that Acts' Ending fulfils 1:8.<sup>24</sup> Troftgruben considers this is unlikely since Rome was understood as the centre and not the end of the world.<sup>25</sup> Also the gospel preceded Paul's reaching Rome since the church is present in 28:15.<sup>26</sup> Puskas further points out that this proposal does not sufficiently account for an ending which includes Paul's defence statements (28:17–20) and a focus on the Roman Jews spiritual hardness (28:25–28).<sup>27</sup>

The second argument is for a mission *culmination* at the capital of the Gentile world.<sup>28</sup> However, as Troftgruben shows, this is undermined by the gospel preceding Paul to Rome and the focus on him mostly preaching to Jews rather than Gentiles.<sup>29</sup> Also, as Puskas points out, the broader content of the ending, with the exception of 28:25–28 and possible addition of 28:30–31, does not support this proposal.<sup>30</sup>

The third argument is that Acts' Ending is a culminating theological message about the close of the Jewish mission.<sup>31</sup> However, as Troftgruben correctly concludes, in this respect 28:16–31 is more ambiguous than decisive.<sup>32</sup>

Having failed to find reasons for Acts' Ending within the text, Troftgruben seeks to hold the *closure* of an author's skilful design together with openness for the hearer/reader's world. Unfinished trajectories emphasise what is omitted.<sup>33</sup> An *open closure* allows for the possibility of a significance beyond the text<sup>34</sup> or at least as Alexander suggests an exit from Acts into the everyday world of the readers or

<sup>24</sup> Menoud, "Plan"; Jaques Dupont, "Le salut des Gentils et la signification théologique du livre des Actes", *NTS* 6 (1959–60), 132–55, citing 140–41; Wilson, *Gentiles*, 236–37; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 790–92. Cf. Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 24.

<sup>25</sup> Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 54.8.4; W. C. van Unnik, "Der Ausdruck ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς (Apostelgeschichte i.8) und sein alttestamentlicher Hintergrund", in *Sparsa collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik*, 3 vols., NovTSup 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 1:386–401; Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon", 541; Miriam T. Griffin, "Urbs Roma, Plebs, and Princeps", in *Images of Empire: the Roman Empire in Jewish, Christian, and Greco-Roman Sources*, ed. Loveday C. A. Alexander, JSOTSup 122 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 19–46, citing 20.

<sup>26</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 26.

<sup>27</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Paul W. Walaskay, *And So We Came to Rome: The Political Perspective of St Luke*, SNTSMS 49 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>29</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 25–26.

<sup>30</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 4–5.

<sup>31</sup> O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 66–70; Joseph B. Tyson, "The Problem of Jewish Rejection in Acts", in Tyson, *Jewish People*, 124–137; Robert C. Tannehill, "Rejection by Jews and Turning to Gentiles: The Pattern of Paul's Mission in Acts", in Tyson, *Jewish People*, 83–101; Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 101–109; Jervell, "The Divided People of God: The Restoration of Israel and Salvation for the Gentiles", in Jervell, *People of God*, 41–74; Cf. Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 26–28.

<sup>32</sup> This chapter explores this issue further (see §3.3.2, pp.141–50).

<sup>33</sup> See discussion in Chapter One (§1.3.1, pp.26–30).

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 205–30; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 30; Parsons, *Departure*, 159; Scott W. Hahn and Curtis Mitch, *The Acts of the Apostles: Commentary, Notes, and Study Questions*. ICSB, RSV, 2<sup>nd</sup> Catholic ed. (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2002), 13; Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Acts*, PC (Nashville: Nelson, 2002), 352; Maddox, *Witnesses*, 93; Dinkler "Acts", 361.

hearers.<sup>35</sup> However, as Troftgruben points out, such suggestions are open to question since there is no such convention in ancient literature.<sup>36</sup> Instead he proposes that Acts' Ending is an example of *linkage* to the bigger salvation-epic beyond the text.<sup>37</sup> Accepting that Acts' Ending is intentional and fitting, and even linked to something bigger, there still remains the search for a significance which directly emerges out of the text's literary shape.

The research method for Acts' Ending is now outlined.

### 3.2 Fine-Tuned Method for Acts' Ending

The method constructed in Chapter Two is now fine-tuned for studying the structure, story, and significance of Acts' Ending.

#### 3.2.1 Method for Exploring the Structure of Acts' Ending

The method for exploring Acts' Ending structure is based on the final "Act" (21:15–28:31) of Horace's "Five-Act Structure". Grammatical, episodical, and story factors identify the ten sections of Acts' Ending<sup>38</sup> as the final summary (28:30–31), in the final scene (28:25b–28; 28:23–25a; 28:16–22), and in the final "Act" (28:11–15; 28:1–10; 27:1–44; 23:31–26:32; 21:27–23:30; 21:15–26). The idea of progressive envelopes begins with the final summary and opens out into the preceding wider context. The material's sequence and size suggests significance. The repetition of Saul's conversion-commission from 9:1–19 in 22:1–21 and 26:2–23 is also noted.

#### 3.2.2 Method for Exploring the Story of Acts' Ending

The method from Chapter Two includes a backwards reading, story components, and the key literary ending concepts.

*A backwards reading*<sup>39</sup> starts from Acts 28:31 and explores the final summary in reverse word by word and phrase by phrase. This approach is then extended deliberately backwards to the final section (28:28–16) and the final "Act" (28:15–21:15). A strict adherence to backwards reading as a heuristic scholarly approach develops a *retrospective patterning* that interprets each section by what follows.

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<sup>35</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 227–28.

<sup>36</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 31–32, critiques Alexander and, 162, Marguerat.

<sup>37</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 169–178, 188.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix III, p.389.

<sup>39</sup> As outlined in Chapter Two (see §2.2.5.3, p.82).

*The story components* explore the literary-spatial movement<sup>40</sup> culminating in Rome via the journey involving Malta, Caesarea, and Jerusalem; the literary-temporal movement<sup>41</sup> including the *flashback* of 22:17–21; the character movement<sup>42</sup> focusing on Paul, Jewish and Roman leaders, and the “we-group”;<sup>43</sup> Paul’s speeches<sup>44</sup> with specific contexts and conclusions;<sup>45</sup> and the intertextual quotations of Isaiah 6:9–10 (28:26–27) and Exodus 22:28 (23:5b).<sup>46</sup> Together these components reveal the *culmination* of missional significance.

*The key literary ending concepts* from Chapter One are summarised in the glossary of Appendix I.<sup>47</sup> This avoids an explanation or cross-reference each time a concept is used.

### 3.2.3 Method for Exploring the Significance of Acts’ Ending

This chapter identifies the *culmination* of missional significance in Acts’ Ending by using a focused narrative theology from Chapter Two. This involves exploring how far Paul, as Israel’s remnant, appeals for the nation to become a mission instrument and also exemplifies the mission. Also whether the emphasis is on the struggle to become the instrument rather than the success of the mission. The discoveries about missional significance are delayed until the end of this chapter so that precedence is given to the literary shape.

## 3.3 Literary Shape of Acts’ Ending

A backwards reading approaches Acts’ Ending (21:15–28:31) divided into the final summary (28:30–31) with an expectation of increased significance needing detailed attention as the narrowest delimitation of Acts’ Ending (§3.3.1), the final section (28:16–28) revealing a progressive journey towards a conclusion (§3.3.2), and a synopsis of the broader final “Act” (21:15–28:31) (§3.3.3). Each part combines an exploration of structure and story in order to identify the observations of an accumulative literary shape.

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<sup>40</sup> See Diagram VI (C), p.89.

<sup>41</sup> See Diagram VII, p.94 and Appendix IV, p.390.

<sup>42</sup> See Diagram VIII (B), p.103.

<sup>43</sup> Acts 27:1–28:16a and 21:15–18 (as the conclusion of 21:1–18).

<sup>44</sup> See Diagram IX, p.106.

<sup>45</sup> Acts 28:25b–28; 28:17c–20; 26:2–23; 24:10b–21; 23:1b, 3, 5, 6b; 22:1, 3–21.

<sup>46</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>47</sup> See pp.378–82.

### 3.3.1 The Final Summary (28:30–31)

The final summary is both an *overview ending* with Paul's ongoing ministry and also a *close-up scenic ending* at Rome. It has a key role in literary shape as the *finish* of the final "Act" and *denouement* of the story rather than an unconnected *postscript*. The last words of a book are often highly significant as Stern puts it "the closer and closer you get to the ending, the more weight every word has, so that by the time you get to the last several words each one carries an enormous meaning".<sup>48</sup> The summary is expected to contain the *culmination* of missional significance, *circularity* themes causing a *framing* with Acts' Ending, and *accumulation* connections to the rest of the narrative. Scholars debate whether the summary of 28:30–31 forms a culminating conclusion,<sup>49</sup> a confirming final *epilogue*,<sup>50</sup> or an open transition<sup>51</sup> with nothing ended.<sup>52</sup> James Dunn suggests the idea of a "fade out" blurring the narrative and *epilogue*.<sup>53</sup>

A key question is whether 28:30–31 looks backwards,<sup>54</sup> stands alone, embraces the final section, or points forwards to further activity.<sup>55</sup> The final summary probably looks both backwards and forwards with *closed* and *open closure*.<sup>56</sup> A *closed closure* links to what precedes, although it is not apparent with a backwards reading. An *open closure* is suggested by the literary-temporal reference to "two years" (28:30) hinting at something beyond the ending. Troftgruben argues for an *open closure* due to the grammatical forms of ongoing activity (28:31)<sup>57</sup> with the imperfect ἀπεδέχετο (28:31), the present participles εἰσπορευομένους, κηρύσσων, διδάσκων, and the adverbial phrases μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας and ἀκωλύτως.

Defining Acts' Ending as the final summary allows a detailed examination of the *finish* or *closure* of a literary shape which reveals the *culmination* of missional significance. The final summary (28:30–31) is read backwards phrase by phrase.

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<sup>48</sup> Stern, *Shapely*, 124.

<sup>49</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 25.

<sup>50</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 138.

<sup>51</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 2, 142.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Bauckham, "The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts", in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 435–87, citing 485.

<sup>53</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, EC (Peterborough: Epworth, 1996), 356.

<sup>54</sup> Dupont, "La conclusion", 361.

<sup>55</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 142, similar to 18:11 and 19:10.

<sup>56</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:353.

<sup>57</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 2.

### 3.3.1.1 *The Last Word: ἀκωλύτως (28:31)*

Acts 28:31 finishes with the New Testament *hapax legomenon* adverb ἀκωλύτως (“unhinderedly”).<sup>58</sup> The positioning of adverbs after verbs is because of either a literary-spatial connection or emphasis.<sup>59</sup> David Mealand examines the possible uses of ἀκωλύτως within the wider Greek culture<sup>60</sup> as a legal term in relation to rented property “without let or hindrance”,<sup>61</sup> a wider use indicating an absence of restraint,<sup>62</sup> religious freedom to worship or offer sacrifices, and even, to indicate divine power and authority.<sup>63</sup> As the last word ἀκωλύτως reveals missional significance in Paul’s unexpected freedom at Rome, the unhindered nature of his preaching and teaching, and as Marguerat puts it, “qu’une assertion sur la liberté irrepressible de la Parole”.<sup>64</sup> This describes the unstoppable divine message and mission in the whole of Acts.<sup>65</sup>

Ἀκωλύτως adds a triumphant note and further meaning to the preceding phrase.

### 3.3.1.2 *With All Boldness: μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας (28:31)*

Although παρρησία is a noun it also can act adverbially as here and give meaning to preceding actions. Its use in 28:31 suggests boldness in the freedom of speech, public openness, and courage in the face of opposition.<sup>66</sup> Richard Cassidy combines παρρησία with the following ἀκωλύτως as Paul’s inner attitude.<sup>67</sup> However, an

<sup>58</sup> See κωλύω at 8:36 and 10:47 not hindering or forbidding water-baptism; 11:17 no-one being able to hinder God; 16:6 Paul hindered by the Holy Spirit from speaking the word in Asia; 24:23 Paul’s people not being hindered from attending him; and 27:43 hindering the soldiers on board the ship from killing Paul and other prisoners. Cf. James Emery White, *Christ Among the Dragons: Finding Our Way Through Cultural Challenges* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2010), 164–171.

<sup>59</sup> David Davies, “The Position of Adverbs in Luke”, in *Studies in NT Language and Text in Honour of G.D. Kilpatrick on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. J. K. Elliott (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 106–121.

<sup>60</sup> David L. Mealand, “The Close of Acts and Its Hellenistic Greek Vocabulary”, *NTS* 36 (1990): 588–96.

<sup>61</sup> Mealand, “Close of Acts”, 589–90, 592–93, ref. to *P.Oxy.* 502.31 (ed. Grenfell and Hunt, 3. 223–25); 912.19 (ed. Grenfell and Hunt, 6.263–65); 1127.17 (ed. Hunt, 8.221–23); and 1641.3–6 (ed. Grenfell and Hunt, 14.63–64). Cf. BDAG, ἀκωλύτως, 40.

<sup>62</sup> Mealand, “Close of Acts”, 593, ref. to Strabo, *Geogr.* 17.1.25.18; Dio Chrysostom, *Lib. myth.* (*Or.* 5.8); Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 20.1.1–4, 16.49.8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus. *Ant. rom.* 5.7.5; Plutarch, *Luc.* 42.1; Lucian, *Tox.* 31.4.

<sup>63</sup> Mealand, “Close of Acts”, 593–95, ref. to Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 1.91.5; Philo *Spec.* 1.113; Josephus. *Ant.* 16.166, 16.41, Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.1.128.

<sup>64</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres*, 2 vols. (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2007, 2015), 2.387, “an assertion on the irrepressible freedom of the Word”.

<sup>65</sup> Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel* (Nashville: Broadman, 1955), 1.

<sup>66</sup> See the introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124).

<sup>67</sup> Richard J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1987), 134.

unhindered external outcome of triumph is also possible as a result of the inner boldness. Sara Winter downplays the idea of boldness arguing there is no opposition, proclamation to Jews, or a public setting at 28:31.<sup>68</sup> Although backwards reading does not establish a context of Jewish rejection and Roman imprisonment<sup>69</sup> at this stage, *παρρησία* does hint at a less irenic situation. The question of boldness in Acts needs further exploration and particularly a connection to mission. Understanding the last word as one of triumph guarantees the outcome of *παρρησία*. The phrase *μετὰ πάσης* adds a sense of comprehensiveness.

Having established the manner and outcome, the next step examines the two preceding activities of teaching and proclaiming. Scholars debate whether the actions or their objects are more important for *missio Dei* and human involvement. Alexander emphasises the actions,<sup>70</sup> but these are overshadowed by the magnitude of the objects, the Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.<sup>71</sup> However, for the purposes of this study the objects and actions are considered together starting with the final object and its accompanying action.

### 3.3.1.3 Teaching the Things about the Lord Jesus Christ: διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (28:31)

The final object is the significant combination of the title *κύριος*, the name Ἰησοῦς, and the role Χριστός. The human name Ἰησοῦς, from the Hebrew name Joshua, means “the Lord saves”.<sup>72</sup> With *κύριος*, and Χριστός wrapped around it there are sufficient political and religious connotations to necessitate the need for boldness and an outcome of triumph. The title *κύριος* suggests authority and even deity<sup>73</sup> from its LXX usage replacing the divine name יהוה.<sup>74</sup> For this reason many Jews rejected an application to Jesus. Scholars debate whether *κύριος* was an implied challenge to the Roman emperor who used the title of ownership and authority.<sup>75</sup> The role Χριστός as “the Anointed One” links to Israel’s expectation of a deliverer, the Messiah. The idea of anointing links to the public ceremony in which oil was used to recognise official

<sup>68</sup> Winter, “Παρρησία”.

<sup>69</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:353.

<sup>70</sup> Alexander, “Back to Front”, 216.

<sup>71</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 187, portraying a witness that depends on God alone and is not contingent on human efforts.

<sup>72</sup> BDAG, Ἰησοῦς, 471–72.

<sup>73</sup> BDAG, κύριος, 576–79.

<sup>74</sup> E.g. Exod 3:15; 6:2, 3; Ps 83:18; Isa 12:2.

<sup>75</sup> Chapter Six pursues this further in relation to the kingdom of God (see §6.3.3, p.328).

positions such as kings and priests.<sup>76</sup> The Jews generally rejected the messianic appellation Χριστός as applicable to Jesus.

The phrase τὰ περί could refer to Jesus's life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, or more widely to the gospel message and/or the Old Testament Scriptures. The action διδάσκω suggests teaching or instruction in an informal or formal setting.<sup>77</sup> It is not possible at this stage in backwards reading to confirm whether it infers a synagogue or church setting or that Acts is a form of catechism.<sup>78</sup>

The title κυρίος and the role Χριστός link to the name Ἰησοῦς as the final object of the action, διδάσκων, and give a reason for the accompanying attitude of boldness and outcome of triumph. Moving backwards further in the final summary, a second object and action are also joined together.

#### 3.3.1.4 *Heralding the Kingdom of God: κηρύσσω τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (28:30)*

The second object τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ as a divine reign or realm is extensively explored in Chapter Six as an example of how literary shape reveals missional significance. The action κηρύσσω as public heralding<sup>79</sup> sets the context for “the teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ” who is by implication the king of God's kingdom. This possibly challenges both the Roman Empire and the Jewish aspirations for Israel's restored kingdom.<sup>80</sup> Such a context explains the need for boldness and an unhindered outcome. The two verbs “heralding” and “teaching” are preceded by a third verb “welcoming all”.

#### 3.3.1.5 *Welcoming All Coming to Him ἀπεδέχετο πάντας τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν (28:30)*

The phrase τοὺς εἰσπορευομένους πρὸς αὐτόν suggests that people are coming to Paul rather than him going to them. To these the kingdom of God is heralded and the things about the Lord Jesus Christ are taught. A message with no hearers is hardly dangerous, but if a gathering of people is added then the need for boldness increases.

<sup>76</sup> Muraoka, *Septuagint Lexicon*, Χριστός, 600. BDAG, Χριστός, 1091. LXX uses, e.g. Ps 2:2; Dan 9:25–26. NT uses of Jesus, e.g. Luke 2:11; 2:26; 3:15; 4:41; 9:20; 20:41; 22:67; 23:2, 35, 39; 24:26, 46.

<sup>77</sup> See the previous introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, pp.124–25).

<sup>78</sup> Chapter Four reflects on this further when considering διδάσκω as a framing device (see §4.3.2.4, p.196).

<sup>79</sup> See the introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124).

<sup>80</sup> Chapter Six explores these issues further in relation to the kingdom of God.



The phrase ἀπεδέχετο πάντας precedes the gathering. The distinctively Lukan ἀποδέχομαι<sup>81</sup> means receiving someone favourably, showing approval by acceptance, and commending as praiseworthy.<sup>82</sup> The imperfect ἀπεδέχετο leads into present participles of “heralding” and “teaching” to give a sense of ongoing activity.<sup>83</sup> The word πάντας confirms the inclusivity of the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is unclear at this point whether the “all” is Gentiles from 28:28, Jews from 28:17–27, or a combination of both.<sup>84</sup> If enemies and spies are included, then this underlines the need of boldness and a triumphant outcome. The welcoming is preceded by Paul’s financial independence.

### 3.3.1.6 His Own Rent: ἐν ιδίῳ μισθώματι (28:30)

The context for the welcoming, bold, and ultimately triumphant activity implies a surprising freedom.<sup>85</sup> Paul’s financial independence is suggested by μισθώματι meaning payment of rent<sup>86</sup> and confirmed by ἐν ιδίῳ. Overall a sense of independence and freedom is added to hospitality<sup>87</sup> with the possible topographical location of a rented house.<sup>88</sup> The picture of freedom is a fitting one for the free activities, objects of spiritual freedom, a free manner, and an outcome of freedom. The context of freedom is preceded by a literary-temporal one.

### 3.3.1.7 Remained Two Whole Years: Ἐνέμεινεν δὲ διετίαν ὅλην (28:30)

Scholars debate whether διετίαν ὅλην is a temporal or legal term.<sup>89</sup> Mealand finds no evidence for a legal biennium necessitating Paul’s mandatory release after two years

<sup>81</sup> Acts 2:41; 18:27; 21:17; 24:3 (not a gospel activity but in Tertullus’ speech to Felix) and 28:30. The only other NT uses are Luke 8:40 (of the crowd welcoming Jesus) and Luke 9:11 (of Jesus welcoming the crowd) with a link to “the kingdom of God”.

<sup>82</sup> BDAG, ἀποδέχομαι, 109.

<sup>83</sup> Daniel Marguerat, “The Enigma of the Silent Closing of Acts (28:16–31)”, in Moessner, *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel*, 284–304, citing 302. Cf. Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 168, which “a modern filmmaker might stage this ending by slowly pulling the camera out of Paul’s dwelling and fading the screen to black during the middle of an evangelistic address”.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. variant reading for 28:30 in NA<sup>28</sup> as “Jews and Greeks”.

<sup>85</sup> In the context of Paul reaching Rome as a prisoner which becomes apparent with backwards reading.

<sup>86</sup> Mealand, “The Close of Acts”, 583–86, ref to Ditt. Syll (*SIG*) 1024, 1200. Cf. translation “at his own expense”, NRSV and ESV.

<sup>87</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 367.

<sup>88</sup> As translated by NIV (2011) and NASB95. Cf. Mealand, “The Close of Acts”, 583–86, only by implication since no extant Greek MS evidence.

<sup>89</sup> BDAG, διετα, 245.

without a formal trial.<sup>90</sup> Rather it is a legal rental<sup>91</sup> or possibly a general time period.<sup>92</sup> As a temporal term the two years is a summary marker for the ending of a section<sup>93</sup> or the end of a period after which something else happened.<sup>94</sup> Whatever the exact meaning Ἐνέμεινεν δὲ διετίαν ὅλην adds a note of longevity to the freedom for “heralding the kingdom of God and teaching the things about the Lord Jesus with boldness and without hindrance”.<sup>95</sup> A very positive note is struck even if the absence of any gospel success or Holy Spirit activity puts the emphasis on the proclamation rather than the outcome.

The observations of Acts’ literary shape in the final summary are now summarised.

### 3.3.1.8 Literary Shape in the Final Summary

A narrow focus on 28:30–31 underlines the last words as a positive *finish* and *closure* of Acts’ Ending. Acts closes with Paul “unhinderedly” (emphasising freedom and triumph) and “with all boldness” (emphasising courage) heralding the kingdom of God and teaching the things about the Lord Jesus Christ. This is possibly an appeal for forming the mission instrument, an example of the mission itself, or both. The final summary is both a *closed closure* completing the final section (28:16–28) and possibly earlier narrative,<sup>96</sup> and also an *open closure* with unfinished trajectories into what is beyond. As Pervo describes it:

Luke’s own last word is a perfect summary of his writings, a one-word closure, that is, at the same time, an opening, a bright and invigorating bid to the future, an assurance that ‘the ends of the earth’ is not the arrival at a boundary, but realisation of the limitless promise of the dominion of God.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Mealand, “Close of Acts”, 587–88.

<sup>91</sup> Mealand, “Close of Acts”, 588–89, ref. to *P.Oxy.* 910.51.

<sup>92</sup> Mealand, “Close of Acts”, 589.

<sup>93</sup> The significance of “two years” will be considered later in this chapter by its use at Caesarea (24:27). Also in Chapter Five with its use at Ephesus (19:10). See Diagram VII, p.94.

<sup>94</sup> Kurz, *Luke-Acts*, 24. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1251.

<sup>95</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 367.

<sup>96</sup> At this stage in a backwards reading this is not clear, but the summary could complete: (1) the final section of 28:16–31; (2) the final journey to Rome from Jerusalem in 27:1–28:31; (3) Paul’s prison experiences from 21:15 (Longenecker, “Acts”, 1101); (4) the journey from Ephesus to Rome via Jerusalem in 19:21–28:31; (5) the whole of Paul’s missionary activity in 13:1–28:31 (Witherington, *Acts*, 1998, 813); (6) the whole of Acts; and (7) the whole of Luke-Acts (Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:354).

<sup>97</sup> Richard I. Pervo, *Luke’s Story of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 96.

The final summary presents a positive closure as an *eucatastrophe* somewhere between an *anti-climax* and an *epigrammatic closure*. However, there is no *arrival* resolving conflicts or an adequate *exposition* answering questions. The story ending has a sense of *incompletion* with different literary-spatial and character components than the beginning. However, a sense of missional significance overcomes this and an *open closure* leads to expectations that Paul's example is to be continued. As the structural *finish* of the whole narrative the summary contains the potential themes for *circularity* and *framing* including Jesus, teaching, and the kingdom of God.<sup>98</sup> Story components focus 28:30–31 as the close of the whole narrative in the literary-spatial location of a possible rented house supporting the context of freedom for Paul to continue his mission, the literary-temporal two whole years being a long period of stability and perseverance in ongoing mission activities, and the character Paul (as yet unnamed reading backwards) as an example of the mission instrument and an invitation to the indefinite *πάντας* that he welcomed. There are no supporting speech or intertextual components in the final summary.

A backwards reading continues in 28:16–28. These verses are often referred to by scholars as Acts' Ending, but are here called the final scene.

### 3.3.2 The Final Scene (28:16–28)

The specific story seems odd. As Conrad Gempf notes, “so much must have happened to Paul in Rome; to select just this story and ignore the Christian communities in Rome, or Paul's trial is remarkable”.<sup>99</sup> The final section focuses on Paul's message to the Roman Jews.<sup>100</sup> A backwards reading interprets each part of the final scene by what follows. The final summary adds to the speech's final statement.

#### 3.3.2.1 Final Statement (28:28)

The final statement is possibly an editorial comment attached to the final summary,<sup>101</sup> but is more likely to have significance as the conclusion of the final

<sup>98</sup> The framing concept is discussed further later in this chapter (see §3.3.2.8, pp.151–52).

<sup>99</sup> Conrad Gempf, “Luke's Story of Paul's Reception in Rome”, in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*, ed. Peter Oakes (Carlisle: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002). 42–66, citing 59.

<sup>100</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:344. Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 154.

<sup>101</sup> Foster, “Conclusion “, 236–37. Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt, *Paul the Accused: His Portrait in the Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 90.

speech.<sup>102</sup> The statement refers to a past event described as “to the nations (ethnics) was sent this salvation of God”<sup>103</sup> with a yet future result that they will ἀκούω as either a neutral hearing<sup>104</sup> or more probably a positive listening.<sup>105</sup> The mission is underway in the past sending of God’s salvation to the Gentiles,<sup>106</sup> though this is not yet made specific with a backwards reading.

Salvation<sup>107</sup> is “of God” as a reason for the free and bold proclamation in the final summary. The character component focuses on the Gentiles who by inference are included in the indefinite “all” that Paul welcomes (28:30). This suggests that the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ are for more than a Jewish audience. However, since the statement culminates a speech addressed to Jews they are also included in the “all” and are probably the main focus. Rather than a final rejection of the Jews and a mandate for an exclusively Gentile mission, the final statement is a declaration that the Gentile mission is already happening even if the Jews do not respond to the invitation to be a mission instrument.

The use of οὖν connects to what precedes. The backwards reading links God’s salvation for all through the kingdom mission to the preceding final quotation of Scripture in Acts.<sup>108</sup>

### 3.3.2.2 Final Quotation (28:26–27)

The final quotation of Scripture in Acts is from Isaiah 6:9–10 whose importance is underlined as the close of the overall Acts’ intertextual framework and being the fourth largest.<sup>109</sup> Scholars suggest that the Jewish Old Testament Scriptures, and particularly Isaiah, are a hermeneutical framework for understanding the story of Acts.<sup>110</sup> An original proposal explores how the quotation links to the final statement

<sup>102</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 39 and 41–42.

<sup>103</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation*, 155. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1236.

<sup>104</sup> John Leslie Nolland, “Luke’s Readers – a Study of Luke 4:22–8; Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28 and Luke 21:5–36” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1977), 107–8 suggests that the adverbial force of καί suggests it means “also”, thus linking Acts 28:28 to previous uses of ἀκούω that translated as the neutral “hear”, respect of the Jews.

<sup>105</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 2:386, argues that Greek ἀκούω is the major or main verb of welcome or reception to “the Word” in Acts. This is substantiated by Acts 2:37; 4:4; 5:11; 8:6; 10:44; 13:48; 14:9; 15:7; 16:14; 18:8; 19:5, but it should not be therefore assumed that the verb is synonymous with belief since it is not the case in 5:33; 7:54; 17:32; 19:28; 22:22; 24:24; 28:6.

<sup>106</sup> Jervell, *People of God*, 63. Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation*, 155.

<sup>107</sup> See the comments on the mission message in Chapter Two regarding the breadth of salvation being given a New Testament moral and spiritual focus (§2.2.6.4, p.122).

<sup>108</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 83–84; Marshall, *Luke. Historian and Theologian*, 187.

<sup>109</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>110</sup> E.g. Alexander, “Back to Front”, 220; Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*; Koet, “Isaiah in Luke-Acts”, 79–100; Mallen, *Transformation*, 187.

and contributes to the invitation to be a mission instrument. This looks at the scholars' discussion about a rejection of the Jews, minor differences with the LXX, the opening sentence, the wider context of Isaiah, and Jesus's use of the quotation.

The suggestion of a final rejection of the Jews and a turn to Gentiles<sup>111</sup> is unlikely since: (1) Jews are still being persuaded (28:24);<sup>112</sup> (2) the mission to the Gentiles is a *fait accompli* with salvation already sent;<sup>113</sup> (3) Paul's resolve to turn to Gentiles (13:46–47; 18:6) does not change his practice of “first to the Jews”;<sup>114</sup> (4) the “all” (28:30) does not distinguish between Jews and Gentiles;<sup>115</sup> (5) Paul aims for a response of repentance rather than declaring an irreversible judgement;<sup>116</sup> (6) neither Isaiah nor Jesus stopped their Jewish mission;<sup>117</sup> (7) previous Luke-Acts material suggests an ongoing mission;<sup>118</sup> (8) all the prominent Acts' speeches seek a similar response;<sup>119</sup> (9) the Jewish themes of the kingdom of God and Jesus as Messiah continue;<sup>120</sup> (10) the mission to Jews and Gentiles continues<sup>121</sup> or as this study proposes, an invitation to become the mission instrument continues alongside the example of Paul's Gentile mission.

The LXX is quoted almost verbatim.<sup>122</sup> The two differences are the opening statement “go to this people and say” possibly emphasising the “going” rather than the saying as in LXX “go and say to this people”. The second minor difference removes αὐτῶν from the ears in LXX, but keeps it on the eyes in Acts (28:27) emphasising the observation of supernatural signs.

Isaiah's opening commission, “go to this people and say”, is only quoted here in the New Testament.<sup>123</sup> Scholars suggest this highlights Acts' mission thrust<sup>124</sup> and

<sup>111</sup> Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (London: SCM, 1987), 80–83, 297–99; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 227; Haenchen, *Acts*, 128–29. For discussion and refutation see Dunn, *Acts*, 353; Puskas, *Conclusion*, 56; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1237.

<sup>112</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1244; Witherington, *Acts*, 801; Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 53.

<sup>113</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 127.

<sup>114</sup> These verses are considered further in Chapter Five (see §5.3.2.1, pp.246–47).

<sup>115</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 53.

<sup>116</sup> Marshall, “Acts”, 600–601.

<sup>117</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 355.

<sup>118</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 54, as in Luke 1 and 2; 24:46–47; Acts 1:8; 9:15; 10:1–11:18; 15:13–21, Acts 22–26.

<sup>119</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 129.

<sup>120</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 353.

<sup>121</sup> Nolland, “Luke's Readers”, 109–113. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 4:3757.

<sup>122</sup> John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 543.

<sup>123</sup> Matt 13:14b–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10b. Parsons, *Acts*, 364; Marshall, “Acts”, 600; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:347–48.

<sup>124</sup> Craig A. Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6:9–10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation*, JSOTSup 64 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 121.

Paul's prophetic vocation.<sup>125</sup> However, it also extends to Israel's role as a mission instrument. This supports the proposal that a call to mission is being resisted.

The wider Isaianic context shows the quotation is the outcome of a glorious throne and temple vision (Isa 6)<sup>126</sup> involving Isaiah's commission as a mission instrument.<sup>127</sup> Although Isaiah's prophetic mission and message is resisted, there is hope of restoration in the holy seed described as a stump or remnant (Isa 6:13)<sup>128</sup> and a son, Immanuel (Isa 7:14). Canonically at least, the later Deutero/Trito-Isaiah (Isa 40–66)<sup>129</sup> shows an ultimate positive outcome in the Christ's servant ministry and Israel blessing the world. Acts 7:49–50 puts the Isaianic outcome (Isa 66:1–2) before the commission.

A shortened form in Luke 8:10 suggests that the final quotation is possibly reserved to use here in Acts.<sup>130</sup> Jesus uses the quotation to enigmatically justify his use of parables as concealing and revealing the mysteries of the kingdom of God.<sup>131</sup> It is conceivable that Acts is also presenting parabolic pictures of mission involvement.<sup>132</sup>

Pulling all this together, the final quotation informs the final statement (28:28) as meaning that Jews resist the sending of salvation to the Gentiles as well as receiving salvation for themselves. Isaiah 6:9–10 becomes a challenge for all God's people<sup>133</sup> to fulfil the mission of Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul. This interpretation strengthens the link with the final summary's emphasis on welcoming all, proclaiming the kingdom of God, and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The final quotation is preceded by the start of the final speech.

<sup>125</sup> Acts 9:15. Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 225; Dunn, *Beginning*, 1006; Foster, "Conclusion", 201; Josh W. Jipp, *Divine Visitations to Strangers in Luke-Acts: An Interpretation of the Malta Episode in Acts 28:1–10*, NovTSup 153 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 274; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3754.

<sup>126</sup> Kingdom and temple are themes that run throughout Acts. Gooding, *True to the Faith*, 390, links the throne in Isaiah 6 with the ascension in Acts 1.

<sup>127</sup> For debate over Isaiah's commission as: (1) an inaugural call (John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 172); (2) a specific task (Evans, *See and Not Perceive*, 22; Hans Wilderberger, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 257; John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, WBC 24, rev. ed. (Nashville: Nelson, 2005), 104); or (3) unclear (Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, IBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 54–55).

<sup>128</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 803.

<sup>129</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 27, that whatever compositional history, Isaiah was regarded as a single work in the first century.

<sup>130</sup> B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London, SCM, 1961), 159–167, 254–55; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3751–52.

<sup>131</sup> Luke 8:10 (compare Matt 13:11–16, and Mark 4:11–12).

<sup>132</sup> Building on the general idea of parabolic story from John D. Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story* (Niles, IL: Argus, 1975).

<sup>133</sup> Evans, *See and Not Perceive*, 166

### 3.3.2.3 Final Speech (28:25b)

Ancient rhetoricians are aware that a speech near the end of a narrative has an optimal rhetorical effect.<sup>134</sup> Jane Tompkins suggests it is “to produce results and not as an end in itself”.<sup>135</sup> This is true of the final speech (28:25b–28) which functions as a *farewell* concluding exchange between the author and audience. 28:25b includes the character component of Paul, his “one word”, the Holy Spirit and Scripture, and the phrase “to your fathers”.

Paul is mentioned by name for the last time in Acts, but is present throughout the final section.<sup>136</sup> His “one word” (ῥῆμα ἓν) is the complete speech,<sup>137</sup> a “*parole unique*”,<sup>138</sup> and possibly a prophetic utterance<sup>139</sup> emphatically<sup>140</sup> applying what follows to his hearers. The Holy Spirit is a popular theme for interpreting Acts, but is not present and active as expected in the final section at Rome.<sup>141</sup> Scholars rarely comment that the only reference is to the Holy Spirit’s past speaking through Isaiah.<sup>142</sup> It is impossible to substantiate the suggestion that the Holy Spirit reference means Paul is Spirit-inspired like Isaiah.<sup>143</sup> However, it does give authority to the following “go to this people and say” (28:26) as a call to witness.

Marguerat suggests that Paul distances himself from his hearers with the term “to your fathers” applying the quotation indirectly.<sup>144</sup> However, the application of the commission suggests Israel’s call as a mission instrument. The final speech combines Isaiah’s past message with the final statement about the present Gentile mission. The challenge of being a mission instrument continues in Paul’s words and example.

The final speech with its final quotation and final statement provides a hopeful closure. Within this overall positive context the proclaiming of the kingdom of God and the teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ continue in spite of possible opposition.

<sup>134</sup> Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.1.51–52; Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 129.

<sup>135</sup> Tompkins, “Reader”, 204.

<sup>136</sup> See Diagram VIII (B), p.103.

<sup>137</sup> Foster, “Conclusion”, 189.

<sup>138</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 2:385.

<sup>139</sup> Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 148; Betz, ῥῆμα, *NIDNTT* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1975–78), 3:1119–23, esp. 1121–23, identifies λογός as Christian proclamation as a whole and ῥῆμα as individual words often as prophecy.

<sup>140</sup> Marshall, “Acts”, 601.

<sup>141</sup> A summary of the absence of the Holy Spirit in Acts’ Ending is given when considering the Mission Source at the end of this chapter (see §3.4, pp.167–68).

<sup>142</sup> For exception see George K. A. Bonnah, *The Holy Spirit: A Narrative Factor in the Acts of the Apostles*, SSB 58 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2007), 210–266.

<sup>143</sup> As suggested by Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture*, 190; Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 155.

<sup>144</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 222.

A backwards reading now gives a final setting for the final speech.

### 3.3.2.4 Final Setting (28:23–25a)

The final setting includes the key issues of the departure of the Jews, witness, the kingdom of God, and Jesus in the Law of Moses and the Prophets.

The middle voice ἀπελύοντο (28:25) ambiguously has a direct meaning of release, an indirect meaning of departure, or a passive meaning of dismissal.<sup>145</sup> The temporal ambiguity of the following “having said” (εἰπόντος) means ἀπελύοντο is either the cause or the outcome of the speech.<sup>146</sup> Whichever it is, Paul has the final word<sup>147</sup> connecting the speech closely to the final summary. As a result the “all” (28:30) includes Jews as well as the Gentiles suggested by 28:28. The Jews are previously divided (28:24) into those who ἐπείθοντο, and those who ἠπίστουν.<sup>148</sup> The imperfect passive of πείθω suggests a process of being persuaded, but is probably a conversion due to the antonym “unbelieving”.<sup>149</sup> The focus on Jews (28:23) coming on an appointed day to Paul’s lodging sets the context for the final speech and quotation which follows. Although de-emphasised as indirect speech, 28:23–25a<sup>150</sup> prepares for the focus on the final speech in 28:25b–28.

The literary-temporal component of “from morning until evening” gives extensiveness to Paul’s witness.<sup>151</sup> The literary-spatial component of τὴν ξενίαν (28:23) confirms Paul’s residence as a place of freedom rather than imprisonment (cf. 28:30).<sup>152</sup> The final witness in Acts<sup>153</sup> is Paul διαμαρτυρόμενος<sup>154</sup> to the kingdom

<sup>145</sup> BDAG, ἀπολύω, 117–18. Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 2003), 57–124.

<sup>146</sup> Bart J. Koet, *Five Studies on the Interpretation of Scriptures in Luke-Acts* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 130.

<sup>147</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 55.

<sup>148</sup> Jervell, *People of God*, 49, 61, makes much of Israel being divided into two groups so as to purge out the disobedient.

<sup>149</sup> See the introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124). Cf. Hauser, *Struckturen*, 64–66; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 445; Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 125. The conclusion is not altered if the distributive iterative imperfect of πείθω indicates a series of people experiencing the repeated action of being persuaded in contrast to those who are disbelieving. Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 546–47.

<sup>150</sup> Gempf, “Luke’s Story”, 45.

<sup>151</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1243.

<sup>152</sup> BDAG, ξενία, 683, hospitality as an activity or a location.

<sup>153</sup> A summary of the witness theme in Acts’ Ending is given when considering mission means at the end of this chapter (see §3.4, p.169).

<sup>154</sup> Acts 28:23, “solemnly witnessing”. See the introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124, n.614).



of God (28:23).<sup>155</sup> He also persuades as a process rather than an outcome<sup>156</sup> about Jesus from the Law of Moses<sup>157</sup> and the Prophets. The latter links to the final quotation from Isaiah 6. The close proximity of Jesus and the kingdom of God is echoed in 28:31 and suggests that the final summary (28:30–31) is a précis of the final scene (28:16–28) rather than chronologically succeeding it. If so, then the “all” (28:30) is primarily focused on Jews. The syntax of 28:23 means “the Law of Moses and the Prophets” are possibly the source of Paul’s witness about ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ and/or the accompanying persuasion about Jesus.<sup>158</sup>

The placing of the outcome before the final speech gives prior warning that division, disagreement, and departure follows the final quotation and statement. Scholars debate whether the overall Jewish reaction is negative,<sup>159</sup> indecisive,<sup>160</sup> or serene,<sup>161</sup> but there is no fierce opposition. The final setting both contributes to the meaning of the final speech and summary,<sup>162</sup> and also results from the preceding penultimate speech Paul makes at Rome.

### 3.3.2.5 Penultimate Speech (28:17b–22)

This section deals with Paul’s summary of his trials, the hope of Israel, and the church as a sect within Judaism.

In contrast to distancing himself from the Jews in 28:25, Paul identifies with them in this penultimate speech.<sup>163</sup> Although not explicitly a defence speech,<sup>164</sup> Paul does declare he is innocent of opposing Judaism. The speech concludes with “the hope of Israel” (28:20), but the meaning is unclear at this stage in backwards reading. The suggestions are the resurrection,<sup>165</sup> salvation,<sup>166</sup> the restoration of the kingdom to

<sup>155</sup> Chapter Six explores the link to the mission means of the kingdom of God (see 6.3.3, p.329).

<sup>156</sup> Present tense *πείθων* (28:23) as an ongoing process. Cf. the outcome in 28:24.

<sup>157</sup> This study explores the ambiguity surrounding the positive and negative uses of the Jewish Law in Acts.

<sup>158</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 60. Foster, “Conclusion”, 173–75.

<sup>159</sup> David. W Pao, “Disagreement among the Jews in Acts 28”, in *Early Christian Voices: in Texts, Traditions, and Symbols: Essays in Honour of François Bovon*, ed. David H. Warren, Ann Graham Bock, and David W. Pao, *BiblInt* 66 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 109–118.

<sup>160</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 125.

<sup>161</sup> Bart J. Koet, “Paul in Rome (Acts 28:16–31): A Farewell to Judaism?” *Bijdragen* 48:4 (1987), 397–415, citing 414. Cf. Alexander, “Acts”, 1060.

<sup>162</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 124.

<sup>163</sup> Compare “brothers” and “our fathers”, 28:17 with “your fathers”, 28:25.

<sup>164</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 219–20. Cf. Puskas, *Conclusion*, 44, for arguments that it is a defence speech.

<sup>165</sup> Acts 23:6–8, 24:15, 26:6–8, 26:23.

<sup>166</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1240, notes how the hope of the resurrection (Acts 23:6 and 24:15) becomes the hope of the promise of Messianic salvation (Acts 26:6).

Israel,<sup>167</sup> or probably including worldwide mission.<sup>168</sup> Paul has a ἄλυσις<sup>169</sup> indicating restriction in tension with his freedom.<sup>170</sup> In 28:22 the Jewish response moves the issue from Paul to “the sect”<sup>171</sup> suggesting the church, including Gentiles, is a group within Judaism.<sup>172</sup> Paul’s answer leads into the final speech.

The combination of Paul’s innocence, a summary of the trials, “the hope of Israel”, a hint of captivity, and a sect within Israel give added meaning to the final setting, speech, and summary. “The hope of Israel” connected to the kingdom of God and Jesus, informs the final speech with its final quotation and final statement. Rather than setting aside Israel, the quotation and statement remind Jews that the mission instrument continues in the example of the final summary where all are welcomed, the kingdom of God proclaimed and the things about the Lord Jesus Christ taught.

The first speech is preceded by the final location.

### 3.3.2.6 Final Location (28:16–17a)

The key points to note are Rome, the start of the final section, the “we-group”, and the tension of freedom and captivity.

As a literary-spatial component, Rome is a significant setting for the final section. Scholars give many reasons for this including: (1) a simply historical reason,<sup>173</sup> but no mention is made of Rome’s strategic importance as the capital of a dominant world empire; (2) intertextual, but there is no reference to parallels with world empires in the Old Testament;<sup>174</sup> (3) apologetic, but there is too much extraneous material;<sup>175</sup> and (4) ecclesiastical,<sup>176</sup> but the location of Acts’

<sup>167</sup> Chapter Six explores the connection with the kingdom of God (see §6.3.2, p.326).

<sup>168</sup> For full discussion of τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, see Hauser, *Struckturen*, 88–95.

<sup>169</sup> BDAG, ἄλυσις, 48, either literal chain or imprisonment.

<sup>170</sup> Gempf, “Luke’s Story”, 48.

<sup>171</sup> BDAG, αἵρεσις, 27–28, is a term used either of a group or an opinion with distinctive tenets. Foster, “Conclusion”, 163–65, it did not have its later negative connotation.

<sup>172</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1998, 2.1242, as in 5:17; 15:5; 24:5, 14; 26:5.

<sup>173</sup> M. Labahn, “Boldly and Without Hindrance He Preached the Kingdom of God and Taught About the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 28:31): Paul’s Public Proclamation in Rome as the Finale of a Shipwreck”, in *Christians as a Religious Minority in a Multicultural City: Modes of Interaction and Identity Formation in Early Imperial Rome*, ed. J. Zangenberger and M. Labahn, LNTS 243 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 56–76, citing 56.

<sup>174</sup> Moessner, “End(s)ings”, 220–221, comparable with Nineveh (Assyria), Babylon (the only one mentioned in Acts 7:43), Persia, and Greece as also empires in which God’s people maintained a witness whilst being in captivity.

<sup>175</sup> Steve Walton, “The State They Were In”, in Oakes, *Rome in the Bible*, 1–41, esp. 29–31.

<sup>176</sup> Burnett H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study in Origins treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship and Dates*, 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1936), 531; Keener, *Acts*, 1:429–31.

hearers/readers is unknown. Although Rome only has a limited literary reference in Acts,<sup>177</sup> it does offer promise as the ending of a journey (*catastrophe*) and an *exposition* in a destination reached. This suggests an importance for a *culmination* of missional significance. This is unlikely to be as a specific location since Rome is the centre and not the end of the world.<sup>178</sup> It is possibly a typical mission scene.<sup>179</sup> However, the focus on Jews supports an invitation to be a mission instrument from Isaiah 6:9–10 for boldly and triumphantly heralding the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.

For many scholars 28:16 is a structural marker for the start of Acts' Ending. They point out the literary features of a transitional verse<sup>180</sup> portraying the arrival at Rome rather than a journey to it.<sup>181</sup> Also the verse forms an *inclusio* with Paul's living situation in 28:30–31.<sup>182</sup> The character component of 28:16a is notable with the last mention of the “we-group” as a *homodiegetic character-narrator* in Acts. Having supported Paul in reaching Rome the “we-group” suddenly disappears.<sup>183</sup> Following the proposal that their literary role is to give missional support,<sup>184</sup> they disappear either because Paul has achieved the task,<sup>185</sup> or, as I propose, a disapproval of the renewed Jewish focus. This casts doubt on whether the closing summary (28:30–31) is actually a Gentile mission, since the “we-group” do not reappear as expected.

There is a tension between the growing emphasis on Paul's “freedom”<sup>186</sup> and captivity in Rome (28:16b).<sup>187</sup> Paul is presented as seemingly in charge, yet does not follow his normal practice of visiting the synagogue.<sup>188</sup> Brian Rapske refers to Paul as a “missionary prisoner”<sup>189</sup> and Skinner argues that, “the images of the hardships imposed by places of custody are consistently muted in the last quarter of Acts to

<sup>177</sup> Acts 18:2; 19:21; 23:11; 28:14, 16. Cf. Labahn, “Boldly”, 56.

<sup>178</sup> Chapter Four explores this further in relation to 1:8 (see §4.3.2.1, p.192). Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, 344; Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 160–162.

<sup>179</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 37, 76.

<sup>180</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 139–143.

<sup>181</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 115–16.

<sup>182</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 36–38; Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 115–16.

<sup>183</sup> The final “we-group” passage is 27:1–28:16.

<sup>184</sup> See the introduction to Act's Character Component in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, pp.99–101).

<sup>185</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 548.

<sup>186</sup> Acts 28:16, 23, 30. Brian M. Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody*, BAFCS 3 (Carlisle: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 173–191, esp. 173, as “a remarkably light confinement”.

<sup>187</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 37–38.

<sup>188</sup> Hauser, *Struckturen*, 93–94.

<sup>189</sup> Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 429–35.

emphasise instead these places as sites for strategic proclamation of the gospel”.<sup>190</sup> This sets the scene for the closing ἀκωλύτως (28:31).

28:16–17a reveals important literary-spatial (Rome) and structural (start of the final section) markers. The last mention of the “we-group”, together with the tension of freedom and captivity, sets the scene for what follows.

The observations of Acts’ literary shape in the final section are now summarised.

### 3.3.2.7 *Literary Shape in the Final Scene*

The final scene informs the final summary by broadening the structural *finish* of Acts and providing a context for the *culmination* of significance. The story components reveal that 28:16–28 provides the setting for the final summary and also connects to the journey from Acts’ Beginning. There a sense of *exposition* and *farewell* elements.

*The literary-spatial component* identifies Rome as the final destination. However, the emphasis is on a location where Jews reside, rather than a centre of a world empire. The final section brings together the triad of Rome, Israel, and gospel mission as the combined context for the heralding of the kingdom of God and the teaching of the things about the Lord Jesus Christ. The literary-spatial focus narrows topographically on Paul’s own lodging as a place of freedom rather than captivity. It is here that he gathers people together to issue an invitation for them to be part of the mission instrument.

*The literary-temporal component* highlights that every new paragraph in 28:17–31 begins with a temporal reference for a new temporal setting.<sup>191</sup> “The three days” and “morning to evening on an appointed day” suggest both progression and expansiveness in Paul’s developing invitation for the Roman Jews to be a mission instrument.

*The character component* names Paul in 28:25 as a key character of Acts together with an emphasis on his Jewish audience.<sup>192</sup> This is surprising if Acts is a move from a Jewish to a Gentile mission. However, it is more understandable if the final section is an appeal for Israel to become God’s mission instrument before the final summary shows Paul exemplifying how the mission is done. As a literary

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<sup>190</sup> Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 8.

<sup>191</sup> Acts 28:17, 23 and 30. Puskas, *Conclusion*, 39.

<sup>192</sup> Foster, “Conclusion”, 66–73, esp. 71.

device the disappearance of the “we-group” after 28:16 suggests a possible disapproval of Paul’s re-engagement with the Jews.

*The speech component* reveals a missional *culmination*<sup>193</sup> in Paul’s first and final speeches at Rome with important conclusions of “the hope of Israel” (28:20) and “God’s salvation sent to the Gentiles” (28:28).<sup>194</sup> However the speeches confirm the focus on an invitation to be a mission instrument rather than the mission itself.

*The intertextual component* of Isaiah 6:9–10 as the final Acts’ quotation supports the invitation to be God’s mission instrument from its opening phrase, content, wider Isaianic context, and use by Jesus.

### 3.3.2.8 Framing in Acts’ Ending

Not only does the final scene establish a missional context for the final summary, but also *circularity* and *framing* show potential topics for connection to the first summary/scene (1:1–11).<sup>195</sup> The themes at the *finish* and *start* of a narrative are the clearest candidates for *framing*. At this stage, the possible *framing* topics are simply noted for comparison with the first summary/scene in Chapter Four. These include: Jesus,<sup>196</sup> Holy Spirit,<sup>197</sup> teaching,<sup>198</sup> the restoration of Israel,<sup>199</sup> knowledge or lack of it,<sup>200</sup> last words,<sup>201</sup> triumph,<sup>202</sup> salvation,<sup>203</sup> and Scripture.<sup>204</sup> They all connect to missional significance<sup>205</sup> and of particular importance for this study are the *framing*

<sup>193</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3756, notes that both the final words of Jesus (1:8) and Paul (28:28) emphasise a world-wide Gentile mission.

<sup>194</sup> Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 285–86, suggests that this is a reference to Malta (28:1–10).

<sup>195</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 84; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 29; John Moles, “Time and Space Travel in Luke-Acts”, in *Engaging Early Christian History: Reading Acts in the Second Century*, ed. Ruben R. Dupertuis and Todd Penner (Durham: Acumen, 2013), 101–22, citing 114; Parsons, *Departure*, 156–159; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:354; Dupont, *Nouvelles études*, 483–509.

<sup>196</sup> Maddox, *Purpose*, 133; Witherington, *Acts*, 812.

<sup>197</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 84; Parsons, *Departure*, 157–58; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3717.

<sup>198</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 84; Moles, “Time and Space Travel”, 114; Parsons, *Departure*, 158; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3717.

<sup>199</sup> Dupont, “La conclusion”, 390.

<sup>200</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 84.

<sup>201</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 158.

<sup>202</sup> Robert H. Smith, “Theology of Acts”, *CTM*, 42:8 (1971): 527–35, citing 531.

<sup>203</sup> Acts 28:28.

<sup>204</sup> Acts 28:26.

<sup>205</sup> This will be seen in the summary on missional significance at the end of this chapter (see §3.4).

topics of world-wide mission,<sup>206</sup> witnessing,<sup>207</sup> and kingdom of God.<sup>208</sup>

The sections of the final “Act” add to what has been discovered.

### 3.3.3 Final “Act” (21:15–28:15)

A wider scope for Acts’ Ending goes beyond the traditionally accepted boundaries of 28:16–31. This allows a fuller exploration of how literary shape reveals a *culmination* of missional significance. A synopsis is appropriate due to the size of the final “Act”. A continued backwards reading shows further connections and development in the literary sections, structure elements, a midpoint at 25:10 or 25:12, and story components. The six sections are the final voyage (28:11–15), Malta (28:1–10), storm and shipwreck (27:1–44), trials in Caesarea (23:31–26:32), trials in Jerusalem (21:27–23:30), and church and temple (21:15–26).<sup>209</sup> Of particular interest is discovering how each section illuminates the succeeding one.

As Marshall rightly points out, the size of the final “Act”, and length of some of the sections, underline its significance.<sup>210</sup> Taken as a whole “Act V” with its focus on trials, storm, and shipwreck re-orientate the overall meaning of Acts away from the early triumph and success of “Act I” (1:1–8:3) to a more realistic exit. At the same time there is a recovery of Paul’s mission with a positive advance and preparation for the *closure* of Acts’ story.

Reading backwards from 28:16 moves to the final voyage.

#### 3.3.3.1 Final Voyage (28:11–15)

This section sets the scene for Rome by describing the last stage of the voyage which pushes the story along. The emphasis is on Paul taking courage<sup>211</sup> through his last encounters with churches in Acts. These include the “brothers” at Puteoli (28:14) and two groups from Rome (28:15)<sup>212</sup> whose ἀπάντησις suggests an official welcome of

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<sup>206</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 84; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 29; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3717; Parsons, *Departure*, 157–58; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:354.

<sup>207</sup> Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 29; Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 151–154.

<sup>208</sup> Maddox, *Purpose*, 133; Puskas, *Conclusion*, 84; Parsons, *Departure*, 156–57; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 29; Moles, “Time and Space Travel”, 114; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:354; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3717.

<sup>209</sup> See Appendix III, p.389.

<sup>210</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 350.

<sup>211</sup> BDAG, θάρσος, 444, courage. A NT *hapax legomenon* though the cognate verb θαρσέω appears seven times, six in the Gospels and at Acts 23:11, significantly all spoken by Jesus.

<sup>212</sup> Hemer, *Acts*, 156.

Paul (28:15).<sup>213</sup> The arrival at Rome is underlined by the literary device of a double-arriving (28:14, 16).<sup>214</sup>

The Malta section precedes the final journey.

### 3.3.3.2 Malta (28:1–10)

This section combines salvation and mission with explicit salvation terminology (the use of *διασώζω* at 28:1, 4) interpreting the rescue from the shipwreck. In addition the snake incident (28:3–6) not only demonstrates Paul's innocence,<sup>215</sup> but also makes an interpretive connection with Satan<sup>216</sup> linked to the salvation imagery of Genesis 3:15 where God declares the defeat of the serpent.<sup>217</sup> Acts 28:1–10 fits Freytag's description of a *final suspense* which prepares for the final scene.<sup>218</sup>

A mission theme is suggested by the island location in Old Testament usage<sup>219</sup> and as a possible end of the earth from 1:8,<sup>220</sup> the *βάρβαροι*,<sup>221</sup> and physical healings (28:8–9). There is no mention here of verbal proclamation.<sup>222</sup> However, the healings at Malta alongside the teaching at Rome (28:17–31), presents Paul as a mission instrument that combines deed and word in a demonstration and proclamation fitting for the closure of Acts.<sup>223</sup> The unusual kindness (28:2) and

<sup>213</sup> W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and Land: Early Christianity and Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 283. Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 536. Keener, *Acts*, 4:3709–712.

<sup>214</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 36.

<sup>215</sup> G. B. Miles and G. Trompf, "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27–28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution and Shipwreck", *HTR* 69 (1976): 259–267; D. Ladouceur, "Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27–28", *HTR* 73 (1980) 435–449, citing 448; Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 218. Muthuraj, "Theology of God", 201–14,

<sup>216</sup> Luke 3:7; 10:18, 19, and 11:11, 12. Johnson, *Acts*, 466; John Clabeaux, "The Story of the Maltese Viper and Luke's Apology for Paul", *CBQ* 67 (2005): 604–610; Spencer, *Acts*, 245; John Christopher Thomas, *The Devil, Disease and Deliverance: Origins of Illness in New Testament Thought*, JPTSup 13 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 292–93; Pervo, *Acts*, 672; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3673–75; Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 261.

<sup>217</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 501, 503.

<sup>218</sup> Freytag, *Technique*, 115, 135–37. See Diagram II, p.44.

<sup>219</sup> E.g. Ps 72:10; 97:1; Isa 24:15; 41:1, 5; 42:4, 10, 12; 49:1; 51:5; 60:9; 66:19; Jer 31:10; Zeph 2:11.

<sup>220</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 214.

<sup>221</sup> BDAG, *βάρβαρος*, 166, as foreign-speaking (Colin J. Hemer, "First Person Narrative in Acts 27–28", *TynBul* 36 (1985): 79–110, citing 101), non-Greek persons (Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 17–19, 39–44) or both (Keener, *Acts*, 4:3665–67).

<sup>222</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:337; Holladay, *Acts*, 503, in contrast to Lystra (14:8–20a) and Ephesus (19:11–20).

<sup>223</sup> This will become apparent when considering in Chapter Four that the whole of Acts is a continuation of "what Jesus began to do and teach" (1:1) (see §4.3.1.4, p.183).

hospitality shown (28:7) may echo the welcome in Acts 28:15, 30.<sup>224</sup> Such a framework prepares for Paul's proclamation in Rome.<sup>225</sup>

The "having been saved" (διασωθέντες) (28:1) closely connects<sup>226</sup> the section with the themes of salvation and mission also present in the preceding storm and shipwreck section.

### 3.3.3.3 Storm and Shipwreck (27:1–44)

This remarkably long section, together with Malta (28:1–10) has a close literary connection to the final section at Rome. It is therefore surprising that scholars rarely consider how the storm and shipwreck might set the context for what follows.<sup>227</sup> As an exception Alexander persuasively argues for this section as part of Acts' Ending.<sup>228</sup> The section is another candidate for Freytag's third crisis (*final suspense*) which prepares for the final scene.<sup>229</sup>

Structurally the large size of 27:1–44 is notable especially since it appears to contain very little theology.<sup>230</sup> Scholars debate the possible literary, historical, allegorical, and fictional reasons.<sup>231</sup> Goulder goes too far in claiming that "the incident occupies the central position symbolically in the whole book and requires to be heavily weighed".<sup>232</sup> However, his point is well made since the section is important for literary shape and missional significance.<sup>233</sup> The use of lengthy descriptions and frequent time references<sup>234</sup> slows the narrative down, builds tension,<sup>235</sup> and allows the hearer/reader space to assimilate what is happening.<sup>236</sup> The final reappearance of the "we-group" as a *homodiegetic character-narrator* (27:1) and a literary device endorses the movement of mission towards Rome.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>224</sup> Hooker, *Endings*, 96; Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 282–83.

<sup>225</sup> Labahn, "Boldly", 70.

<sup>226</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 669, the medieval decision to mark a new chapter at 28:1 is unfortunate.

<sup>227</sup> E.g. omitted by Puskas, *Conclusion*; Troftgruben, *Conclusion*; and Cocksworth, "Beginnings".

<sup>228</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 211–12.

<sup>229</sup> Freytag, *Technique*, 115, 135–37.

<sup>230</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 421.

<sup>231</sup> For discussion see Schnabel, "Fads".

<sup>232</sup> Goulder, *Type and History*, 39–40

<sup>233</sup> The omission of three other preceding shipwrecks (2 Cor 11:25) increase the emphasis of the one which the author has reserved to record in Acts 27. Pervo, *Acts*, 644–48.

<sup>234</sup> The next day (27:3), many days (27:7), much time (27:9), next day (27:18), third day (27:19), many days (27:20), a long time (27:21), and fourteenth night (27:27).

<sup>235</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 212.

<sup>236</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 458.

<sup>237</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 501; Campbell, "We" Passages, 80–84; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1180; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:383.



As Alexander notes, the narrative significance of this westward voyage is not always appreciated sufficiently.<sup>238</sup> Paul is presented as the hero<sup>239</sup> in charge<sup>240</sup> through his four interventions<sup>241</sup> which are interspersed throughout the voyage. The journey portrays the Gentile mission which culminates with Paul being a witness to God's kingdom and the Lord Jesus Christ in Rome.

Most scholars give the storm a natural interpretation, but also concede that deliverance from such disasters was often seen as a sign of divine favour in the ancient world.<sup>242</sup> Marguerat suggests the expectation of Paul's trial is transformed by the journey to Rome into his innocence before the pagan world.<sup>243</sup> The storm may connect to storms experienced by Jesus<sup>244</sup> and Jonah,<sup>245</sup> who like Paul,<sup>246</sup> had a God-given mission. A more robust theological interpretation of the storm includes God's control, a fallen world, and even Satan's opposition as a better basis for interpreting Acts 27. Scholars suggest possible applications in a parallel with Jesus's death and resurrection,<sup>247</sup> overcoming Roman power,<sup>248</sup> and the symbolism of an individual or a church's own voyage.<sup>249</sup> The salvation (σώζω) terminology<sup>250</sup> echoing that used in 28:28 suggests that the rescue from storm and shipwreck is a possible metaphor for salvation.<sup>251</sup> This interpretation is supported by the Eucharistic hint of the final breaking of bread (27:33–38),<sup>252</sup> the “throwing out the wheat into the sea” (27:38) as symbolic of a gospel sowing,<sup>253</sup> and the remarkable salvation of all 276 “souls”<sup>254</sup>

<sup>238</sup> Alexander, “Back to Front”, 213.

<sup>239</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 422.

<sup>240</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 709.

<sup>241</sup> Acts 27:10, 21b–26, 31, and 33b, 34.

<sup>242</sup> Miles and Trompf, “Luke and Antiphon”, 267.

<sup>243</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 219.

<sup>244</sup> Luke 8:22–25.

<sup>245</sup> Jonah 1:4–16. Cf. Luke 11:29–32. For parallels with Acts 27 see Paul. W. Walaskay, *Acts*, WestBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 198; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:393–94; Alexander, “Acts”, 1059; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3559.

<sup>246</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 509, for Acts 27 as a narrative metaphor of Paul's journey to Jerusalem.

<sup>247</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 323; Pervo, *Acts*, 652–53; Puskas, *Conclusion*, 10–11, 68–69, esp. 115–125; Wright, *People of God*, 375. See refutation by Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 102–3.

<sup>248</sup> Warren Carter, “Aquatic Display: Navigating the Roman Imperial World in Acts 27”, *NTS* 62 (2016): 79–96.

<sup>249</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 510; Pervo, *Acts*, 649; Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 244–45.

<sup>250</sup> As σώζεσθαι (27:20), σωθῆναι (27:31), σωτηρίας (27:34), and διασωθῆναι (27:44) meaning “we were all thoroughly saved”. Cf. Wright, “Reading Missionally”, 185.

<sup>251</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 216–17; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:337–38; Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 33–37; Alexander, “Acts”, 1060.

<sup>252</sup> C. K. Barrett, “Paul Shipwrecked”, in *Scripture: Meaning and Method: Essays Presented to Anthony Tyrell Hanson*, ed. Barry P. Thompson (Hull: Hull University Press, 1987), 51–63, citing 60–63; Walaskay, *Acts*, 236; Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 35–36; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3642–47.

<sup>253</sup> Walaskay, *Acts*, 238. Cf. Luke 8:5–15; Acts 8:1.

<sup>254</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 665, suggests that ψυχῶν and ψυχῆς in Acts 27:10, 22 connects the 276 to the 3,000 in Acts 2:41 where ψυχαί is also used.

joined into one community as a single “we-group” (27:37).<sup>255</sup> The salvation theme is carried forward to the final statement of 28:28.

Johnson suggests that Acts 27 shows God’s control of history and Paul as a prisoner heading for martyrdom.<sup>256</sup> However, the literary shape sets a missional context for what follows on Malta and then Rome. Paul and the “we-group” are on the mission which brings salvation to Gentiles (cf. 28:28). God’s plan for world-wide salvation will be fulfilled in spite of human failure and Satan’s opposition. There is a sense in which Acts 27 is a microcosm of the whole Acts story. Nothing can stop the gospel.<sup>257</sup>

The storm and shipwreck picture are prepared for by the preceding section telling of Paul’s trials.

### 3.3.3.4 *Trials in Caesarea (23:31–26:32)*

As a literary-spatial component, Caesarea is a step towards Caesar and Rome.<sup>258</sup> It is described as a seat of Roman government and becomes the launch-pad for Paul’s journey to Rome.<sup>259</sup> It marks an important moment when Paul passes from Jewish to Roman jurisdiction<sup>260</sup> underlined by his “triumphal procession” with a ridiculous size of escort.<sup>261</sup>

The narrative’s length and frequent temporal references<sup>262</sup> slow down the story to underline its importance and give a sense of movement. The literary-temporal focus on a two years imprisonment at Caesarea is echoed by the corresponding period at Rome in 28:30.<sup>263</sup> Reading backwards, the three defence speeches before King Agrippa (26:2–29), Festus (25:8–11), and Felix (24:10–21) suggest progressive missional significance.

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<sup>255</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:335.

<sup>256</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 458.

<sup>257</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3569.

<sup>258</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 386.

<sup>259</sup> The progressive nature of Caesarea’s importance to Acts becomes evident in Chapter Five (see §5.3.3.2, pp.270–71).

<sup>260</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 406. The concept of Paul’s recovery is not yet obvious at this stage in a backwards reading. See Diagram V, p.79, for mission advances and declines.

<sup>261</sup> Acts 23:23, “two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen” compared to the forty that plotted to kill him (23:13, 21).

<sup>262</sup> Next day (23:32), five days later (24:1), several days later (24:24), two years (24:27), three days (25:1), eight or ten days (25:6), few days later (25:13), next day (25:23).

<sup>263</sup> Full periods of successful gospel mission (19:10), recovery (24:26), and renewed mission (28:30).

In his final and longest<sup>264</sup> defence speech<sup>265</sup> before King Agrippa,<sup>266</sup> Paul upholds his faithfulness to the Jewish religion (26:4–8). It is unclear at this stage in backwards reading whether this is positive or negative in relation to mission. The greater emphasis on his conversion-commission (26:12–18)<sup>267</sup> emphasises the call to be a mission instrument through a heavenly vision (26:15–23).<sup>268</sup> He shows that his mission is an extension of Christ's mission (26:23)<sup>269</sup> foretold by the prophets and Moses (26:22).<sup>270</sup> Agrippa's response refers to Χριστιανός (26:28) whose connection to missional significance through the Χριστός, the one anointed for mission is highlighted later in this chapter.<sup>271</sup> Also Paul's reply (26:29) possibly means he wants Agrippa and all his hearers to become a part of God's mission instrument.

The speech before Festus has an unclear mission focus. The literary emphasis is on Paul's appeal to Caesar (25:10–11)<sup>272</sup> close to the midpoint of "Act V".<sup>273</sup> However, the appeal is ambiguous and could be a negative political expediency depending upon another lord,<sup>274</sup> a positive mission strategy,<sup>275</sup> or a mixture of the two.<sup>276</sup> The latter seems most likely since paradoxically Paul does not appear before Caesar in Acts,<sup>277</sup> but his appeal becomes instrumental in reaching Rome.<sup>278</sup> Often a human decision with mixed motives, is used by God to further his mission.

Before Felix, there is no mention of mission. Instead Paul defends his Jewishness from the charges against him. However, the positive conclusion refers to

<sup>264</sup> See the introduction of Acts' Speech Component in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.7, p.107).

<sup>265</sup> Gaventa, "Acts" (2006), 34. Keener, *Acts*, 4:3491. Holladay, *Acts*, 468.

<sup>266</sup> Chapter Six explores the connection between King Agrippa and the kingdom of God (see §6.3.2, pp.322–23).

<sup>267</sup> This becomes more obvious when compared with the other two accounts of Paul's conversion-commission at 22:4–21 (see later in this chapter, §3.3.3.5, p.159) and 9:1–19 (see Chapter Five, §5.3.3.2, pp.273–74).

<sup>268</sup> Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 24, with a link to the vision of Isaiah 6.

<sup>269</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3532.

<sup>270</sup> Cf. Acts 28:23. See §3.3.2.4, p.147.

<sup>271</sup> See Mission Instrument in Acts' Ending for full discussion of this proposal (§3.4, p.164).

<sup>272</sup> See also a reiteration of the appeal at 25:21; 25:25; 26:32.

<sup>273</sup> See the discussion in Chapter Two (§2.2.4.2, p.73) and Diagram IV, p.71 for 25:10 as the statistical midpoint and 25:12 as the story midpoint for "Act V".

<sup>274</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 446, 484–85.

<sup>275</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 490. Schnabel, *Acts*, 992–93.

<sup>276</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3460, concedes that an original bold mission strategy may have been regarded later as misguided in the light of Nero's persecution.

<sup>277</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 536.

<sup>278</sup> The significance of Rome as a mission target becomes apparent from 19:21 onwards.

the resurrection from the dead (24:21) mentioned throughout the trials<sup>279</sup> as suggestive of Paul's restoration.

Paul's trials possibly parallel Christ's trials.<sup>280</sup> They certainly give the context for Paul the prisoner to become Paul the missionary. Paul may not get to Rome as he expected, but he carries with him what is needed. The trials at Caesarea develop from the trials at Jerusalem.

### 3.3.3.5 Trials in Jerusalem (21:27–23:30)

As the scene for Paul's trials, Jerusalem appears here for a final time in Acts<sup>281</sup> with the negative aspects of Jewish opposition uppermost and the Jerusalem Church strangely absent after 21:15. Reading backwards there are two defence speeches before the Sanhedrin (23:1–6) and the Jerusalem crowd (22:1–21). These mark the start of Paul's mission recovery and form the basis for the later trials at Caesarea.

In the Sanhedrin speech the key issues are the penultimate quotation of Scripture and the first mention of the hope of the resurrection. The quotation from Exodus 22:28 (23:5) is usually dismissed as ironic<sup>282</sup> and is not given sufficient theological weight by the scholars within the overall Acts' intertextual framework.<sup>283</sup> Within the context of Paul's engagement with the priesthood, Exodus 22:28 contains the idea of submission to the ἄρχων of the people. The ruler is normally a reference to a king or even a transcendent spiritual figure, but also sometimes a religious leader such as a priest.<sup>284</sup> It is possible that a missional connection is being made through the priest's role in teaching, prayer, and sacrifice<sup>285</sup> linked to Jesus.<sup>286</sup> The hope of the resurrection divides the Sanhedrin and, as Paul Schubert points out, it simply and

<sup>279</sup> Acts 24:14–15; 26:6–8 and 26:22, 23. Thompson, *Acts*, 79–80; Kevin L. Anderson, *But God Raised Him From the Dead: The Theology of Jesus' Resurrection in Luke-Acts*. PBM (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 261–292. The importance of the resurrection theme in Acts becomes more apparent with the trials in Jerusalem (23:6) and also when considering Acts' Beginning in Chapter Four.

<sup>280</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 114–115.

<sup>281</sup> It will become apparent as this study unfolds that Jerusalem has the most literary-spatial attention in Acts and is the location to which narrative frequently returns. See the introduction to Acts' Literary-Spatial Component in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.86) and Diagram VI (A-C), pp.87–89.

<sup>282</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 383–84. Keener, *Acts*, 3:3277–81.

<sup>283</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>284</sup> BDAG, ἄρχων, 140. Chapter Six (§6.3.2, p.327), considers the quotation of Ex 22:28 in relation to the broader topic of the kingdom of God in Acts.

<sup>285</sup> Bleek, "Interrelationship", 201–207. Cf. λειτουργούντω (priestly service) in Rom 15:16 describing mission.

<sup>286</sup> Strelan, *Luke the Priest*, 130–140, for Christ portrayed as a priest with the role of a teacher in 1:1. Cf. Zech 6:9–15 for Joshua (Jesus) the priest who is king.

effectively transforms the whole judicial issue into a theological one.<sup>287</sup> “The hope” is a positive theme of mission success which is carried forward through the trials,<sup>288</sup> the symbolism of the storm, shipwreck, and survival of the snake-bite, to the final section in 28:20.<sup>289</sup>

The significant final appearance of the Lord in Acts (23:11) tells Paul to “take courage”<sup>290</sup> in view of the coming dangers. The promise of witness in Rome is fulfilled at 28:23.<sup>291</sup> Scholars argue that the conjunctive *καί* links both Rome and Jerusalem to *δεῖ* (23:11)<sup>292</sup> which is often used of divine necessity throughout Acts.<sup>293</sup> However, since here *δεῖ* is only explicitly linked to Rome, it allows a possible interpretation that a humanly determined journey to Jerusalem is graciously overcome by a divinely appointed journey to Rome.<sup>294</sup> The plot to kill Paul (23:11–22) sets the scene for the transfer to Caesarea and prepares for the possible symbolic death-resurrection pictures which are to follow.

Preceding this Paul’s first defence speech is a prophetic voice to Jerusalem.<sup>295</sup> The main focus is on the account of Saul’s (as Paul was previously called) conversion-commission (22:6–16) which is repeated in 26:12–23.<sup>296</sup> A comparison between the two accounts reveals differences of an increased intensity of the light from heaven (22:6; 26:13), the addition of “hard for you to kick against the goads” (26:14), and the declaration of Saul’s Gentile mission progressing from Saul’s recollection of what was passed on to him by Ananias (22:14–16) to what was given to him directly by Jesus (26:16–18). These hints of progressive missional significance will be confirmed when exploring Acts’ Middle in Chapter Five.

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<sup>287</sup> Paul Schubert, “The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts”, *JBL* 87 (1968): 1–16, citing 11.

<sup>288</sup> Acts 23:6; 24:15; 25:19; 26:6–7; 26:23.

<sup>289</sup> See the previous discussion in this chapter (§3.3.2.5, pp.147–48).

<sup>290</sup> BDAG, *θαρσέω*, 444, meaning firm or resolute in the face of danger of adverse circumstances. Often translated as confidence. Cf. see previously in this chapter for the use of cognate noun *θάρσος* at 28:15 (§3.3.3.1, p.152, n.211).

<sup>291</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1243. See end of this chapter for summary in mission means (§3.4, p.165).

<sup>292</sup> E.g. Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 405.

<sup>293</sup> Acts 1:16, 21; 3:21; 4:12; 5:29; 9:6, 16; 14:22; 15:5; 16:30; 17:3; 19:21, 36; 20:35; 23:11; 24:19; 25:10, 24; 26:9; 27:21; 27:24, 26. Charles H. Cosgrove, “The Divine *Δεῖ* in Luke-Acts. Investigations into the Lukan Understanding of God’s Providence”, *NovT* 26 (1984): 168–190, esp. 178–79, for use of *δεῖ* in connection with Scripture prophecy (1:21) and Paul’s mission (9:6; 13:46). However, *δεῖ* does not always indicate divine necessity as Shauf, *Theology*, 239–40, shows in 19:36; 24:19; 25:24 and 26.

<sup>294</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 139–140, 463. See discussion on 19:21 in Chapter Five (§5.3.4.2, pp.279–81).

<sup>295</sup> István Czachesz, *Commission Narratives: A Comparative Study of the Canonical and Apocryphal Acts* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2007), 70–78, 88.

<sup>296</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§3.3.3.4, p.157).

A reminder of Saul's resistance to the Gentile mission is given at the close of the first defence speech. The *temporal flashback* of a chronologically earlier<sup>297</sup> temple "ecstatic trance" (22:17–21)<sup>298</sup> suggests Saul knew that the direction of mission should have been away from Jerusalem and not towards it.<sup>299</sup> Saul's reply referring to Stephen's martyrdom (22:20) seems more of a protest than an agreement.<sup>300</sup> The resulting commission, "go because I into the nations far away will send you out (ἐξαποστελῶ)"<sup>301</sup> is left unfulfilled by the speech's interruption (22:21).<sup>302</sup> However, the vision prepares for a similarly worded commission to Isaiah (and Israel) in 28:25b.<sup>303</sup> Paul's appeal to his Roman citizenship (22:25)<sup>304</sup> is possibly part of an increasing mission focus on Rome.

Preceding the Jerusalem trials is the church and temple section.

### 3.3.3.6 Church and Temple (21:15–26)

The opening section of "Act V" provides an explanation for the succeeding narrative. There is the transitional literary device of a double-arriving at Jerusalem (21:15–17).<sup>305</sup> The welcome<sup>306</sup> by James<sup>307</sup> and the elders at Jerusalem (21:18) allows Paul to report on the Gentile mission (21:19). The proposal that the "we-group" functions as a literary device means that their sudden disappearance after 21:18 raises the possibility that they disapprove of what follows,<sup>308</sup> rather than a desertion of Paul.<sup>309</sup>

<sup>297</sup> A literary chronology places the temple vision five years and eighty-three days before Paul tells of it here in 22:17–21 (from a historical chronology it is probably around twenty years). See Diagram VII, p.94 and Appendix IV, p.390.

<sup>298</sup> This is the last of several visions in Acts. A list is given in Chapter Five, §5.3.3.2, p.274, n.515.

<sup>299</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 136–39, 459–60.

<sup>300</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 427. Stevens, *Acts*, 460.

<sup>301</sup> Acts 22:21 has cognate verb ἐξαποστελῶ (send out) as a form of the noun "apostle".

<sup>302</sup> Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 89.

<sup>303</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 426.

<sup>304</sup> Sean A. Adams, "Paul the Roman Citizen: Roman Citizenship in the Ancient World and Its Importance for Understanding Acts 22:22–29, in *Paul: Jew, Greek and Roman*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, PAST 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 309–26.

<sup>305</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 36, as a Lukan characteristic employed when an important figure approaches the destination of his travels. Cf. 28:14–16.

<sup>306</sup> Cf. Acts 28:30. See §3.3.1.5, p.139, n.81 for use throughout Acts.

<sup>307</sup> James, the brother of Jesus, appears by name at key points in the Acts' story. See 12:17; 15:13 and 21:18.

<sup>308</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 453.

<sup>309</sup> Porter, *Paul of Acts*, 172–86. Johnson, *Acts*, 466.

Scholars give positive reasons for the omission of Paul's collection<sup>310</sup> as focusing on the divine purpose rather than human reason,<sup>311</sup> or the Gentile mission<sup>312</sup> rather than Jewish concerns.<sup>313</sup> However, a negative reason for the omission argues that the collection was ill-advised,<sup>314</sup> not well-received by the Jerusalem Church,<sup>315</sup> and even redirected for the purification rituals.<sup>316</sup> Scholars suggest that there is a tension between Paul and the Jerusalem Church<sup>317</sup> with the elders offering Paul a compromise solution that shows commitment to the Jewish Law (21:20–24).<sup>318</sup> The tension between the Jewish Law and the gospel mission is underlined with mention of the ambiguous decree from the earlier Jerusalem Conference (21:25)<sup>319</sup> and Paul's subsequent temple rituals (21:26). The mission decline results in the subsequent trials.

It is time to summarise the observations of literary shape in “Act V” (21:15–28:31).

### 3.3.4 Literary Shape in “Act V” (21:15–28:31)

From a backwards reading, *retrospective patterning* shows an advance for Paul's Gentile mission<sup>320</sup> through the trials and a final journey to Rome. The final summary (28:30–31) leaves a positive *open closure* to Paul's invitation for the Jews to be God's mission instrument (28:17–28) and a possible ongoing mission example. The

<sup>310</sup> Rom 15:25–26; 1 Cor 16:3. For discussion see David D. Downs, “Paul's Collection and the Book of Acts Revisited”, *NTS* 52 (2006): 50–70; Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts*, WUNT 2.248 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 60–70; James D. G. Dunn, “Luke's Jerusalem Perspective”, in Walton, et al., *Reading Acts Today*, 120–36, citing 133–136; Doohee Lee, *Luke-Acts and “Tragic History”: Communicating Gospel with the World*, WUNT 2.346 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 252–53; Keener, *Acts*, 3:3113–16; 4.3409–12.

<sup>311</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:266–67.

<sup>312</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 224–228, esp. 228.

<sup>313</sup> Richard Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church”, in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham, BAFCS 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995) 415–480, citing 479–80; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, SBLDS 39 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 219–20.

<sup>314</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:257–268; Stevens, *Acts*, 142–43.

<sup>315</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 588; Walaskay, *Acts*, 185–86, 193.

<sup>316</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 612–14; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1001; Holladay, *Acts*, 413–14.

<sup>317</sup> Robert Orlando, *Apostle Paul; A Polite Bribe* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2014), 48–61, 118–126, who marshals support from various scholars interviewed in his film, *A Polite Bribe* (The Nexus Project, LLC, 2013) including Philip Esler; Dominic Crossan; Gerd Lüdemann; Ben Witherington III; Robert Jewett.

<sup>318</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 284–85; Stevens, *Acts*, 454. In contrast to those who interpret Paul's Jewish commitment as a positive example in his mission to Jews (e.g. Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1441–43).

<sup>319</sup> Acts 15:19–29. Pereira, *Ephesus*, 233–34. The connection to the Law and gospel debate at the Jerusalem Conference is picked up in Chapter Five (see §5.3.2.4, p.251).

<sup>320</sup> Previous advances in Paul's mission were 13:1–3 and possibly 16:9–10. See Diagram V, p.79.

large literary size of Paul's trials and the storm-shipwreck underline their importance to the narrative.<sup>321</sup> Together they tell the story of progression from captivity to mission. The complexities of this progression are shown in Paul's appeal to Caesar (25:10–12) at the midpoint of "Act V" since the appeal either a Gentile mission strategy or an avoidance of mission suffering. Overall, the story components of an elongated Acts' Ending reveal a sense of progression.

*The literary-spatial component of "Act V"*<sup>322</sup> has an almost equal emphasis on Jerusalem (21:15–23:30) and Caesarea (23:31–26:32) as the two locations for Paul's imprisonment.<sup>323</sup> Jerusalem is given a religious focus with references to the temple and priests<sup>324</sup> who portray a negative picture in their opposition to Paul and his mission invitation. The movement to Caesarea suggests a mission advance as the place of departure for the voyage to Rome and the reappearance of the "we-group" (27:1). The voyage is emphasised by its literary size and many spatial references adding a sense of a long journey. Malta (28:1–10) combines the ideas of salvation, mission, and Paul's restoration. From a literary perspective Rome, rather than Jerusalem, has significance as the final literary destination of Acts.<sup>325</sup> The increasing references to Rome in "Act V",<sup>326</sup> together with references to Caesar<sup>327</sup> and Paul's Roman citizenship,<sup>328</sup> confirm the city as the divinely appointed target of Paul's final mission.<sup>329</sup> However, the focus is on a last appeal for Jewish involvement in the Gentile mission and a closing reference to the kingdom of God.<sup>330</sup>

*The literary-temporal component of "Act V"*<sup>331</sup> combines a sense of chronological movement and a progression of Paul's Gentile mission in the many temporal references<sup>332</sup> together with a slowing down of the narrative in a long story time period of four years, six months, and 68/70 days which possibly points to an

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<sup>321</sup> Liefeld, *Acts*, 17, 41, notes the proportion of attention given to Paul's trials is an important factor in the interpretation of Acts as a whole.

<sup>322</sup> See Diagram VI (C), p.89.

<sup>323</sup> Caesarea (21:15–23:30), 1,681 words; Jerusalem (23:33–26:32), 1,631 words.

<sup>324</sup> Acts 21:26, 27, 28, 29, 30; 22:5, 17, 30; 23:2, 4, 5, 14; 24:1, 6, 12, 18; 25:2, 8, 15; 26:10, 12, 21. Chapter Four explores the corresponding emphasis on temple and priests in Acts 2–7.

<sup>325</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 20.

<sup>326</sup> "Act I" (2:10), "Act III" (16:21, 37, 38), "Act IV" (18:2; 19:21), "Act V" (22:25, 26, 27, 29; 23:11, 27; 25:16; 28:14, 16, 17). There is notably no reference to Rome in "Act II" suggesting that the location does not feature as a mission target at this stage.

<sup>327</sup> Acts 25:10–11; 25:21; 26:32 and 28:19.

<sup>328</sup> Acts 22:25–27 and 23:27.

<sup>329</sup> Acts 19:21 and 23:11. The idea of Rome being embraced within the worldwide mission of a renewed Israel is present at 2:10.

<sup>330</sup> Chapter Six explores this further (§6.3.1, pp.323–326).

<sup>331</sup> See Diagram VII, p.94.

<sup>332</sup> See Appendix IV, p.390.



underlying cause for delay in mission progress. This is particularly seen in the two year period of Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea (24:27) and maybe in the similar two year period at Rome (28:31). However, the latter may suggest a period of settled and successful mission.<sup>333</sup>

*The character component of "Act V"*<sup>334</sup> focuses on Paul, as an example of the mission instrument, and the peripatetic "we-group" as a literary device confirming missional significance in a support of the Gentile mission by their journey to Rome and a disapproval of a Jewish focus in their absences of 21:19–26:32 and 28:17–31.

*The speech component of "Act V"*<sup>335</sup> shows the strategic and progressive nature of Paul's speeches. The five trial speeches<sup>336</sup> emphasise Paul's Jewishness,<sup>337</sup> his appeal to Caesar,<sup>338</sup> and a renewed focus on the resurrection.<sup>339</sup> A growing mission focus becomes apparent in the speeches' closures<sup>340</sup> and when Paul as an internal narrator retells the story of his conversion-commission.<sup>341</sup> Similarly Paul's four statements on board ship move from disaster and loss, to shipwreck, to an offer of salvation, and finally to salvation.<sup>342</sup> Paul's two speeches at Rome<sup>343</sup> bring "the hope of Israel" and the Gentile mission to a literary close.

*The intertextual component of "Act V"*<sup>344</sup> notes the two Old Testament quotations of Exodus 22:28 (23:5) in connection with leadership amongst God's people, and Isaiah 6:9–10 (28:26–27) emphasised by its literary size and sequence near to Acts' *finish* as a commission of the mission instrument. It is unlikely that the infrequency of quotations is due to the inappropriateness of using Jewish Scriptures in Gentile mission, since a focus on Jews continues. The sparsity is possibly because Acts' Ending is primarily a mission decline, even though there are encouraging signs as Paul travels to Rome. However, a tension remains between Paul emerging as a mission instrument<sup>345</sup> and his focus on Israel fulfilling its worldwide mission calling.

<sup>333</sup> Cf. the same period of mission in Ephesus (19:10).

<sup>334</sup> See Diagram VIII (B), p.103.

<sup>335</sup> See Diagram IX, p.106.

<sup>336</sup> Acts 22:1, 3–21; 23:1b, 3b, 5b, 6b; 24:10b–21; 25:8b, 10–11; and 26:2–29.

<sup>337</sup> Acts 22:3–5; 24:11–18; 25:8a and 26:4–11.

<sup>338</sup> Acts 25:8–11.

<sup>339</sup> Acts 22:6; 23:6b–8; 24:15, 21; 26:6–8, 23. Schubert, "Cycle of Speeches", 8–10.

<sup>340</sup> Acts 22:17–21; 23:6; 24:21; 26:23. For the idea of closing statements see Schubert, "Cycle of Speeches" and for interruptions see Smith, *Rhetoric of Interruption*.

<sup>341</sup> Acts 22:21; 26:16–23. Yamasaki, *Watching*, 154.

<sup>342</sup> Acts 27:10, 21b–26, 31 and 33b, 34.

<sup>343</sup> Acts 28:17b–20 and 28:25b–28.

<sup>344</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>345</sup> This accepts and nuances the evidence of Rapske, *Roman Custody*, and Skinner, *Locating Paul*, that Paul is a missionary and a witness in spite of his imprisonment.

The literary shape of Acts' Ending reveals missional significance.

### 3.4 Missional Significance of Acts' Ending

Acts' Ending is a *culmination* for the various aspects of missional significance noted in Chapter Two<sup>346</sup>

(1) *The mission instrument* focuses on Paul's return to Jerusalem as showing an emphasis on his concern for Israel's restoration as a mission instrument rather than an engagement in the Gentile mission. The lengthy period of imprisonment allows for a slow rehabilitation as a mission instrument. The double recounting of Paul's conversion-commission epitomises the call to mission at the heart of salvation.<sup>347</sup> Although Christ sends Paul to the Gentiles (22:21),<sup>348</sup> the mission involves Christ first proclaiming light to his own people (26:23). Scholars debate the term Χριστιανός<sup>349</sup> as a derisory title, a positive distinguishing term, a Roman religious<sup>350</sup> or political<sup>351</sup> classification; or an internal theological identification highlighting Jew and Gentile joined in one church.<sup>352</sup> However, as an original suggestion, I propose that the diminutive Χριστιανός is a term for the mission instrument since it literally means "a little Χριστός (Christ)". The role Χριστός fulfilled by Jesus is one anointed by the Holy Spirit for mission.<sup>353</sup> By implication Christians ("little Christs") have the same task.<sup>354</sup> The term is King Agrippa's response to Israel's light shone on the Gentiles (26:23) and ποιῆσαι (26:28) possibly means "play the role of a Christian" rather than just the process of becoming one.<sup>355</sup>

<sup>346</sup> See §2.2.6.4, pp.118–127.

<sup>347</sup> Acts 22:6–16 and 26:12–23. See previous discussions in this chapter at §3.3.3.5, p.159 and §3.3.3.4, p.157.

<sup>348</sup> See also Acts 26:17b.

<sup>349</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:792–797; Martin Hengel and Anna M. Schwemer, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 225–230; Stevens, *Acts*, 77–83. Cf. Chapter Five develops this further in relation to the only other use of Χριστιανός in Acts (11:26) (see §5.4, p.291).

<sup>350</sup> Rainer Riesner *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, trans. Doug Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 111–114.

<sup>351</sup> Edwin A. Judge, *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, ed. James R. Harrison, WUNT 229 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 437–38; Hengel and Schwemer, *Paul*, 229–30.

<sup>352</sup> Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 98–99; Towner, "Mission Practice", 417–436.

<sup>353</sup> Acts 10:38. See previous discussion in this chapter on Χριστός (§3.3.1.3, pp.137–38).

<sup>354</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 330–31, links Christian to Christ (God's anointed agent) in alignment to God's purpose and action, but does not explicitly extend this to an involvement in the mission. Mather, "Paul in Acts", 40, links Christian to Paul as a μάρτυς (witness) and ὑπηρέτης (helper, assistant) in 26:16.

<sup>355</sup> C.S.C. Williams, *Acts*, 265; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 212; Johnson, *Acts*, 440; Dunn, *Acts*, 332; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 420; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3546; BDAG, πείθω, 791. However, Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 764, rejects this suggestion as a later idiom.

Paul's reply wants all his hearers to become what he is, i.e. a mission instrument as a servant<sup>356</sup> and witness (26:16) except for the chains (26:29).<sup>357</sup>

The storm and shipwreck of Acts 27 echo Jonah's story<sup>358</sup> as a prophet reluctant to go on a mission to the Gentiles whilst Israel remains so stubborn. The final section at Rome, final speech, and final quotation from Isaiah 6:9–10 (28:26–27) continue the invitation for God's people to be a worldwide mission instrument. Scholars give various explanations for the virtual absence of the church in Acts' Ending<sup>359</sup> including that the support for Paul was private,<sup>360</sup> because the church is a remnant of a restored Israel,<sup>361</sup> to allow Paul to introduce Christianity to Rome,<sup>362</sup> or to prioritise mission.

However, an equally valid proposal is that the struggle to form a mission instrument extends to the church.<sup>363</sup> The absence of prayer in "Act V", except by Paul at 28:8, suggests a diminishing reliance on God. From Acts' Ending the impression is that when the church fails, the mission is carried forward by Paul as a "parachurch instrument". There is also a possible underlying sense that the mission should be located in the world rather than the church.<sup>364</sup>

It is unclear whether the closing summary (28:30–31) is a continued appeal to the mission instrument or an example of mission. Either way, the close of Acts

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<sup>356</sup> The term ὑπηρέτης as one who functions as a helper or assistant in a subordinate capacity. BDAG, ὑπηρέτης, 1035. Cf. διακονία (21:19) of Paul's Gentile mission as a service rendered in an intermediary capacity. See Chapter Two for an introduction to the servant concept in relation to the mission instrument (§2.2.6.4, p.119, n.564).

<sup>357</sup> 1 Peter 4:16 is the only NT reference to Χριστιανός outside of Acts and notably links the term to mission suffering.

<sup>358</sup> David Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel*, JSNTSup 119 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 235–36. See previous discussion in this chapter (§3.3.3.3, p.155, n.245).

<sup>359</sup> There is no mention of ἐκκλησία, but only ἀδελφοί implying the churches at Jerusalem (21:17), Puteoli (28:13–14) and Rome (28:15). See Walton, "Calling the Church Names", 225–26.

<sup>360</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3350–51.

<sup>361</sup> Jervell, *People of God*, 41–74. For an alternative view that the people of God are redefined as a new body of Jew and Gentile see discussion in Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 102–104. However, there is no reason why like the new creation both a recreation of something totally new (Rev 21:1, 5) and a restoration of something existing (Acts 3:21) cannot coexist.

<sup>362</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 8–9.

<sup>363</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3748, notes that the pattern of recalcitrance of God's people prophesied in 28:23–28 is displayed as much by Christian history as Israel's.

<sup>364</sup> In Loescher, "Separating Outreach", I argue for a separation between the gospel mission and the church beyond what is normally seen in twentieth/twenty-first century AD British Christianity. As a result my proposal for an overall title for Acts is, "Getting the Gospel out of the Church into the World". In a similar vein O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 75–6, writes "Luke's thesis is that the gospel is free to travel to the ends of the earth only when it is free from the false form which the Jewish religion has taken ... the gospel was breaking out of its entanglement with organised Judaism (I would say church structures and programmes) and becoming free to be the universal religion. Jerusalem is left behind and Rome is entered".

invites its readers to continue Paul's example<sup>365</sup> in welcoming all, heralding the kingdom of God, and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) *The mission target* refocuses on pagan Gentiles on board ship in Acts 27 and especially the Maltese βάρβαροι (28:2), although neither record that the gospel message is proclaimed. Rome becomes a target in 23:11, but the focus returns to the Jews<sup>366</sup> in 28:17–28 without any final turning away to Gentiles.<sup>367</sup> Paul is an example of remnant Israel engaged in the worldwide Gentile mission (28:30–31). However, the Gentile mission does not receive the expected prominence even at the story closure.<sup>368</sup> Instead the emphasis remains on persuading Israel to be a mission instrument.

(3) *The mission message* in “Act V” focuses on the progressive retelling of Paul's conversion-commission<sup>369</sup> as a reminder of the invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument. Rather than the expected gospel message, there is a *culmination* of the invitation to the Jews at Rome in the final speech (28:25b–28) with a quotation from Isaiah 6:9–10.

“Act V” emphasises God with nineteen references.<sup>370</sup> However, there is no clear present activity of the *missio Dei* since the majority of the references have God as an object,<sup>371</sup> refer to God's past activity with Israel,<sup>372</sup> the gospel mission (21:19), or Paul (26:22); or a future activity (22:3). Notably there is no mention of any activity through Jesus. The two references to God's present activity in the resurrection (26:8) and rescue (27:24) are both indirectly reported in speeches. Jesus is surprisingly not prominent in the mission message being referred to by name seven times, but always as an object,<sup>373</sup> the Lord five times, with the majority being in Paul's report of his conversion-commission,<sup>374</sup> and Christ three times<sup>375</sup> with the full

<sup>365</sup> Darr, *On Character Building*, 147–148; William S. Kurz, “The Open-Ended Nature of Luke and Acts as Inviting Canonical Actualisation”, *Neot* 31 (1997): 298–308, citing 303; Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 229–30; Mallen, *Transformation*, 193–94; Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 43.

<sup>366</sup> Tyson, “Problem”, 124–137.

<sup>367</sup> See Chapter Two for an introduction to this issue in connection to the mission target (§2.2.6.4, p.121).

<sup>368</sup> Contra Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:356, who sees the end of Acts as directing attention to the missionary situation Paul leaves behind.

<sup>369</sup> See p.164, n.347 above.

<sup>370</sup> Chapter Five will show that this more than doubles the literary references to God from “Act IV” (only eight) as marking a renewed mission (see §5.4, p.294).

<sup>371</sup> Acts 21:20; 22:3; 23:1; 24:14, 15, 16; 26:20, 29; 27:25, 35; 28:15.

<sup>372</sup> Acts 22:14; 26:6.

<sup>373</sup> Acts 22:8; 24:24; 25:19; 26:9, 15; 28:23, 31.

<sup>374</sup> Acts 22:8, 10, 19 (Paul's account of his retrospective temple trance); 23:11; 26:15.

<sup>375</sup> Acts 24:24 (the object of Paul's discourse as Christ Jesus); 26:23 (from OT); 28:31 (in Paul's teaching at Rome).

appellation, Lord Jesus Christ, at 28:31. The sparsity of references hints that there is a mission decline.

However, more positively there are references to the resurrection both of the dead<sup>376</sup> and Jesus.<sup>377</sup> I propose this is appropriate for an invitation to be a mission instrument. The resurrection represents new life, and resonates with the expected gospel success. Although Acts' Ending does not realise the potential, there is nonetheless missional significance in the closing references to salvation (28:28)<sup>378</sup> and the kingdom of God (28:23, 31).<sup>379</sup>

(4) *The mission source* in Acts' Ending is notably lacking even when Paul recovers his mission. Scholars debate whether Acts' Ending is biographically focused exclusively on God,<sup>380</sup> Paul,<sup>381</sup> or both, so as to encompass both *missio Dei* and human agency.<sup>382</sup> Whilst this combination is possibly true theologically, there is, as already noted, no present activity of God in "Act V".<sup>383</sup> The one possible mention of Jesus's direct involvement in the narrative, rather than being reported in speeches, is as the ambiguous "Lord"<sup>384</sup> who encourages the imprisoned Paul at Jerusalem (23:11). Consequently the scholars debate an "absentee Christology".<sup>385</sup>

The Holy Spirit is often wrongly assumed to be the key to Acts.<sup>386</sup> However, in "Act V" he is only mentioned at 28:25. Frank Stagg is right that it is a misnomer to call the whole book "the Acts of the Holy Spirit".<sup>387</sup> Also scholars have not noted sufficiently that the first (1:2) and last (28:25) mentions of the Holy Spirit are

<sup>376</sup> Acts 23:6–8; 24:15, 21; 25:19; 26:6–8; 26:23, and maybe "hope", 28:20. See Puskas, *Conclusion*, 123–25 and Dunn, *Beginning*, 957–58, for Paul's rescue from shipwreck as enactment of the resurrection.

<sup>377</sup> Acts 25:19; possibly 26:8; and 26:23.

<sup>378</sup> Dupont, *Nouvelles études*, 398–401, for use of the rare neuter form σωτήριον linking salvation theme at Acts' Ending (28:28) back to the beginning of Luke's Gospel (Luke 2:32). Cf. Pereira, *Ephesus*, 241–243; Bruce W. Longenecker, *Hearing the Silence: Jesus on the Edge and God in the Gap: Luke 4 in Narrative Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 68; Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 370. There is also salvation terminology (σῶζω in 27:20; 31) and symbolism in the storm and shipwreck rescue of Acts 27.

<sup>379</sup> Chapter Six explores the missional significance of the kingdom of God in Acts.

<sup>380</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 172.

<sup>381</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 217.

<sup>382</sup> Steve Walton, review of *A Conclusion: A Study of the Ending of Acts within its Literary Environment*, by Troy M. Troftgruben, JETS 54.3 (2011): 848–850.

<sup>383</sup> See the previous discussion under Mission Message. For the scholarly debate of God's absence/activity see Chapter Two's introduction to the mission source (§2.2.6.4, p.122, n.598 and 599).

<sup>384</sup> Although "Lord" is ambiguously used in Acts of both God and Jesus, the title probably refers to Jesus because of the mention of witness (23:11). Cf. 1:8.

<sup>385</sup> For an introduction to the scholarly debate see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, p.98, n.386).

<sup>386</sup> E.g. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 193; Justo L. González, *The Story Luke Tells: Luke's Unique Witness to the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 117.

<sup>387</sup> Stagg, *Acts*, 5–9.

indirect connections to the ministry of others (Jesus and Isaiah) rather than direct action. This may underline the inspiration of Scripture<sup>388</sup> or legitimise Paul and his words since he has a similar message to Isaiah.<sup>389</sup> However, there is no *deus ex machina* with a final outpouring of the Holy Spirit to book-end with Acts 2. Various reasons are suggested for the virtual disappearance of the Holy Spirit in Acts' Ending. These include an inaugurating Spirit who is the agent of beginnings,<sup>390</sup> a completion of the Spirit's literary purpose once salvation has been offered to all people,<sup>391</sup> and a voyage back to our everyday world where indirect Holy Spirit reality is the norm.<sup>392</sup> Other possibilities include a challenge to recover a more direct Spirit activity lost by a decline in spiritual experience<sup>393</sup> and an acknowledgement that mission must continue outside of God's sovereignly granted seasons of revival.<sup>394</sup> I propose that from a literary shape perspective the lack of Holy Spirit activity in Acts' Ending is due to a reluctance or resistance of God's people (as the nation of Israel, the remnant-church, and even Paul) to be a mission instrument. The rest of this study will test this hypothesis.

The sense of mission decline is confirmed with the "Word of God/Lord" motif<sup>395</sup> being absent and "the name of Jesus" only being used retrospectively.<sup>396</sup>

(5) *The mission means* in Acts' Ending has only infrequent references to verbal proclamation and supernatural activity. This confirms an overall mission decline due to Paul's imprisonment. An analysis of the proclamation verbs from Chapter Two<sup>397</sup> in "Act V" shows: (i) εὐαγγελίζω as linked to the gospel is not present strongly suggesting a mission decline; (ii) a single retrospective use of

<sup>388</sup> William H. Shepherd, Jr., *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts*, SBLDS 147 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 242–43.

<sup>389</sup> Foster, "Conclusion", 72, 195, 201.

<sup>390</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 112; Marguerat, "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts", in *The Holy Spirit and the Church according to the New Testament*, ed. Predrag Drautonić, et al., WUNT 354 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 111–28.

<sup>391</sup> Shepherd, *Narrative Function*, 219.

<sup>392</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 229.

<sup>393</sup> Samuel Chadwick, *The Way to Pentecost* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932); James Buchanan, *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), 220–36.

<sup>394</sup> See Iain Murray, *Pentecost Today? The Biblical Basis for Understanding Revival* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998), 54–79, for discussion of human responsibility and God's sovereignty.

<sup>395</sup> Contra Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 156, who argues that "the Word of God" is absent in Rome since it has been replaced by the kingdom of God (28:31) as a summary of Paul's ministry appearing in 20:25. However, this conclusion is unsubstantiated since nowhere in Acts is "the Word of God" paralleled with the kingdom of God.

<sup>396</sup> The two references to "the name", 22:16 (Lord) and 26:9 (Jesus of Nazareth) are both retrospective to Paul's conversion-commission.

<sup>397</sup> See §2.2.6.4, pp.123–25.

καταγγέλλω (26:23) in a report of Jesus making public widespread dissemination of light to both “the people” (i.e. the Jews) and the ἔθνοι (Gentiles); (iii) μαρτυρέω<sup>398</sup> is the most frequent with Paul<sup>399</sup> gradually emerging<sup>400</sup> for the first time<sup>401</sup> as a witness to “all men” (22:15),<sup>402</sup> commissioned by the Lord (23:11),<sup>403</sup> before actually witnessing to King Agrippa (26:22) and the Jews in Rome about the kingdom of God (28:23);<sup>404</sup> (iv) παρρησιάζομαι as Paul’s boldness in speaking before King Agrippa and especially at the close of Acts in Rome;<sup>405</sup> (v) διαλέγομαι only used once of a dialogue by Paul with a rational appeal to Felix’s thinking;<sup>406</sup> (vi) πείθω as both a persuasive process and outcome especially by Paul at Rome;<sup>407</sup> (vii) a singular, yet significant use of κηρύσσω as heralding an official announcement about the kingdom of God at the close of Acts in Rome;<sup>408</sup> and (viii) διδάσκω in the accusation that Paul teaches against the Jewish Law (21:21, 28) and more positively about the Lord Jesus Christ at the close of Acts (28:31).<sup>409</sup> Supernatural manifestations are also absent except for the healings on Malta (28:8–9). The sparsity of proclamation and supernatural activity is another indication of a possible mission decline in Acts’ Ending.

(6) *The mission success* in Acts’ Ending is symbolised in the salvation of all 276 on board the ship (27:37, 44) and widespread healings on Malta (28:9). However, Christoph Stenschke correctly observes that this is not the crown of Paul’s Gentile mission.<sup>410</sup> The recovery from the snake bite (28:3–6) may hint at a victory over Satan, but the lack of explicit conversions<sup>411</sup> suggests a limited success.<sup>412</sup>

<sup>398</sup> Acts 22:15 (μάρτυς); 22:18 (μαρτυρία); 22:20 (μάρτυς); 23:11 (διαμαρτύρομαι); 26:5, 16 (μάρτυς); 26:22; 28:23 (διαμαρτύρομαι).

<sup>399</sup> P. Boyd Mather, “Paul in Acts as ‘Servant’ and ‘Witness’”, *BR* (1985), 23–44.

<sup>400</sup> Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 13.

<sup>401</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 425

<sup>402</sup> This study explores whether witness in Acts is an appeal for Israel to be a mission instrument rather than the popular use of the term for Christian mission.

<sup>403</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 123.

<sup>404</sup> Cook, “Traveller’s Tales”, 455.

<sup>405</sup> Acts 26:26 and 28:31 (noun).

<sup>406</sup> Acts 24:25. Cf. 24:12 (Paul states he did not διαλέγομαι in the temple, synagogues or city during his last visit to Jerusalem).

<sup>407</sup> Acts 26:28 and 28:23 (process of persuading); 28:24 (process of being persuaded, though the joining of the antonym ἀπίστος (unbelieving) may indicate a state of persuasion).

<sup>408</sup> Acts 28:31 as the only reference to κηρύσσω not in Acts’ Middle.

<sup>409</sup> See previous comments on διδάσκω as a framing device for Acts (§3.3.2.8, p.151). This will be explored further in Chapter Four with Acts’ Beginning (§4.3.2.4, p.196).

<sup>410</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 237.

<sup>411</sup> The only specific mention is retrospective of the thousands of Jews that have believed (21:20).

<sup>412</sup> Contra Parsons, *Departure*, 171, who suggests that the success story of the church is plotted alongside the tragic story of Israel.

Rome does not bring a triumphant end to Paul's preaching, but instead an ongoing appeal for the Jews to be a mission instrument and perhaps an example of mission.

(7) *The mission suffering* has an emphasis in the literary size<sup>413</sup> and temporal length of Paul's imprisonment.<sup>414</sup> There is a complex interplay between suffering expected in mission and that caused by Paul's own decisions and actions. There are also threats to his life<sup>415</sup> and the storm/shipwreck in Acts 27. The extent of suffering at Rome in Acts 28 is unclear. The boldness language suggests some opposition,<sup>416</sup> but also Paul's freedom increases as is fitting for the recovery of his mission.

(8) *The mission expansion* links to the kingdom of God (28:23, 31). The worldwide sense of *missio Dei* continues to expand at Rome in spite of Paul's limited recovery. Chapter Six explores this further.

Overall the *culmination* of mission in Acts is disappointing. There is a limited recovery of the Gentile mission with a general absence of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, "the Word of God", "the name of Jesus", the church, prayer, verbal proclamation, supernatural activity, and explicit conversions. The closing emphasis at Rome in Acts 28 returns to an appeal for the Jews to be a mission instrument, with even the focus of the closing summary (28:30–31) being unclear.

The combination of literary shape and missional significance is now summarised.

### 3.5 Summary

The identification of literary shape in Acts' Ending suggests a *culmination* of missional significance. The previous observations of an accumulative literary shape in the final summary (§3.3.1.8), final scene (§3.3.2.7), and "Act V" (§3.3.4) are now integrated with the discoveries of missional significance (§3.4).

The structure and story of Acts' Ending reveal several key findings of missional significance:

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<sup>413</sup> Paul's imprisonment in 21:30–28:31 (4,389 words) and his mission activity in 13:1–21:29, less 15:1–35; 18:24–28; 19:23–41 (4,971 words). Maddox, *Witnesses*, 89, 94–101.

<sup>414</sup> Paul's imprisonment at least four years (24:27; 28:31) and his mission activity over five years (18:11; 19:8; 20:3, 31).

<sup>415</sup> Acts 21:31, 35 (as a similar reference to the crowd's demand for Jesus's crucifixion in Luke 23:18); 22:22, 24–25; 23:12–22, 27–30.

<sup>416</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§3.3.1.2, pp.136–37).



1. The final summary (28:30–31) has an *open closure* which leaves the mission invitation and mission incomplete for a potential future fulfilment.
2. There is a closing sense of freedom (the literary-spatial location of Paul's rented house), stability and perseverance (the literary-temporal "two whole years"), comprehensiveness (the indefinite "all"), courage ("with all boldness), and triumph ("unhinderedly") for the mission.
3. The emphasis in the final scene (28:16–28) is on an invitation for Jews to be a mission instrument rather than recording an actual Gentile mission at Rome. Paul, the main character at this stage, supports the invitation with a quotation of Isaiah 6:9–10.
4. The final "Act" (21:15–28:31) tells the story of a gradual mission advance from Jewish religious resistance (21:27–23:30) and Paul's imprisonment. The advance is seen in a move from Jerusalem (21:15–23:30) to Caesarea (23:31–26:32) with its potential for missional progress. The reappearance of the "we-group" approves the start of the voyage (27:1). The storm/shipwreck (27:1–44), emphasised by its literary size, is a mission salvation picture.
5. Paul's five trial speeches mark his emergence as a mission instrument including a renewed reference to the resurrection as appropriate for new life and gospel success, a quotation of Exodus 22:28 in connection to mission leadership, and the progressive retellings of his conversion-commission. The term Χριστιανός (26:28) used by King Agrippa has a mission instrument connotation. Paul's four significant statements on board the ship add to the sense of mission and his two closing speeches at Rome remind Israel of their mission responsibility.
6. Although Jesus's appearance at 23:11 identifies Rome as the mission target, the Gentile mission only appears in the symbolic salvation of the 276 from shipwreck and the healings on Malta.
7. The literary-temporal component both slows down the story with lengthy time periods of mission preparation and then speeds it up with frequent time reference as the mission moves forward.

8. There is an undertow of mission decline, or at least a struggle to form a mission instrument, with Acts' Ending having a general absence of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, "the Word of God", "the name of Jesus", the church, prayer, verbal proclamation, supernatural activity, and explicit conversions. Also the disappearance of the "we-group" after 28:16 may suggest their disapproval of Paul's repeated focus on Israel.

Micah Kiel writes about endings that, "they ask new questions rather than answering old ones ... it seems that the best ending is the one that calls forth an open future and makes you go back to the beginning and start all over again".<sup>417</sup> From this standpoint the exploration of how literary shape reveals missional significance moves from Acts' Ending surveyed in this chapter to Acts' Beginning which is the subject of the next.

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<sup>417</sup> Micah Kiel, "Did Paul Get Whacked? The Ending of the Sopranos and the Acts of the Apostles". June 2007. <http://sbl-site.org:80/Article.aspx?ArticleId=695>, reflecting on the endings of the Sopranos (Home Box Office series) in comparison with Acts' Ending, as cited and discussed by Kathy Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines. The Audience as Fellow-Worker in Luke-Acts and its Literary Milieu*, LNTS 425 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 172–73.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ACTS' BEGINNING

The focused narrative criticism constructed in Chapter Two explores Acts' Beginning as another stage of literary shape. Although beginnings are less determinative of what follows than endings are as a *culmination* of what precedes,<sup>1</sup> "Act I" (1:1–8:3) contributes to Acts' structure and story as a *foundation* of missional significance. The beginning is often the last thing written<sup>2</sup> as a foundational element,<sup>3</sup> reference point,<sup>4</sup> the main entrance,<sup>5</sup> and an influence for the whole narrative.<sup>6</sup> For this reason some scholars argue the beginning is the key to everything.<sup>7</sup> Graeco-Roman beginnings often present the main themes,<sup>8</sup> orientate narrative understanding,<sup>9</sup> and give hints of the coming *denouement*.<sup>10</sup> Even though Acts was written on a continuous scroll, its beginning was probably either written with the whole narrative in mind at least in note form or attached at the front when the work was complete.

The first words in Acts 1:1–5 imperceptibly slide with "fuzzy boundaries" from *preface* to *prologue* to story.<sup>11</sup> The story commences spatially at Jerusalem, temporally immediately after Jesus's resurrection, focused on the characters of Jesus and the eleven apostles, rhetorically in Jesus's final speech and Peter's first speech, and intertextually with the first quotations from Psalms 69:25 and 109:8. The *foundation* is laid for an anticipated positive story of mission, though as already observed from Acts' Ending, this may not be straightforward.

The *finish* of Acts' Beginning is uncertain since there is no grammatical break until the δέ of 2:5.<sup>12</sup> Scholars propose various options including the first

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<sup>1</sup> Phelan, "Beginnings", 97.

<sup>2</sup> Stern, *Shapely*, 93, "if you write the rest of the story, then you'll be able to write the beginning".

<sup>3</sup> Richardson, "Introduction", 1.

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, *Reading Novels*, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Said, *Beginnings*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> George Watson, "The Sense of a Beginning", *Sewanee Review* 86 (1978): 539–48, citing 541.

<sup>7</sup> Phelan, "Beginnings", 97, commenting on the beginnings in Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. Charles K. Scott-Moncreif, Andreas Mayor, and Terence Kilmartin, rev. Dennis J. Enright, 6 vols. (London: Vintage, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:646.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander, "Preface to Acts", 21.

<sup>10</sup> Hooker, *Beginnings*, xiv.

<sup>11</sup> Steve Walton, "Where Does the Beginning of Acts End?", in Verheyden, *Unity of Luke-Acts*, 447–467, citing 467.

<sup>12</sup> See Levinsohn's observations about δέ in Chapter Two (§2.2.4.3, p.74).

summary ending at 1:2<sup>13</sup> or 1:5,<sup>14</sup> the first scene at 1:8;<sup>15</sup> 1:11;<sup>16</sup> or 1:14,<sup>17</sup> and a broader scope for Acts' Beginning at 1:26;<sup>18</sup> 2:47;<sup>19</sup> 5:42;<sup>20</sup> 6:7;<sup>21</sup> 8:3;<sup>22</sup> or 8:4.<sup>23</sup> These proposals are critiqued as the present chapter unfolds, although a finish at 8:3 has already been suggested in Chapter Two.<sup>24</sup>

The present chapter follows the deliberate approach used in the previous chapter to explore Acts' Beginning in terms of scholarship (§4.1), a fine-tuned method (§4.2), the observations of an accumulative literary shape which prioritises literary structure and story before significance in close exegetical work on the narrow focus of the first summary (1:1–5) and first scene (1:6–11) before the broader view of 1:12–8:3 (§4.3), the discoveries for a *foundation* of missional significance are appropriately noted at the end of the chapter (§4.4), and a closing summary which brings together the findings of literary shape and missional significance (§4.5).

#### 4.1. Acts' Beginning Scholarship

Scholars use various approaches to Acts' Beginning including genre identification<sup>25</sup> and theological connections to Luke's Gospel.<sup>26</sup> However, the focus here is on key works interacting with literary shape. These involve debates about delimitation and literary concepts.

Those using narrative criticism in a narrow delimitation of Acts' Beginning include Parsons<sup>27</sup> and Arie Zwiep.<sup>28</sup> However, they focus on the ascension and

<sup>13</sup> Krodel, *Acts*, 51; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 3–4; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 191–94; Keener, *Acts*, 1:641.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 97; Witherington, *Acts*, 113; Wall, "Acts", 37; Peterson, *Acts*, 99; Longenecker, "Acts", 713.

<sup>15</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 144–47.

<sup>16</sup> Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:41; Johnson, *Acts*, 28.

<sup>17</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:61–64; Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:21; Pervo, *Acts*, 34; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:45–46.

<sup>18</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 120–123.

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 263; Walton, "Beginning of Acts", 466; Green, *Word of His Grace*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, 13–14; Goulder, *Type and History*, 65. Parsons "Origins", 403; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 55.

<sup>21</sup> Goulder, *Type and History*, 66, 6:1–7 is an overlap between Section I (1:1–5:42) and Section II (6:1–9:31).

<sup>22</sup> Morgenthaler, *Lukas*, 421, although at 322, his first panel ends at 7:60. Cf. Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 192–198.

<sup>23</sup> Giuseppe Betori, "Perseguitati a causa del Nome: Strutture dei racconti di persecuzione in Atti 1, 12–8.4", *AnBib* 97 (1981), 21–25. Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 264.

<sup>24</sup> See §2.2.4.2, p.70.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*; Alexander, "Preface to Acts", 21–42.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander, "Back to Front", 207–30.

<sup>27</sup> Parsons, *Departure*.

<sup>28</sup> Arie W. Zwiep, *The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology*, NovTSup 87 (Leiden, Brill, 1997).

extend the discussion to Luke-Acts. This is also done by Maria Do (1:6–11)<sup>29</sup> and Cocksworth (1:1–14),<sup>30</sup> though they do have more comprehensive treatments of the opening section. Those giving a wider scope to Acts' Beginning include Zwiep (Acts 1)<sup>31</sup> and Justin Mihoc (Acts 1–5).<sup>32</sup> Steve Walton's is the only work to date which explores the delimitation options for Acts' Beginning.<sup>33</sup> He extends the beginning to 2:47 and begins the process of drawing out significance. However, his approach is largely thematic rather than literary.

Scholars apply ancient or modern literary concepts to Acts' Beginning. Those applying Graeco-Roman literary concepts include Alexander<sup>34</sup> and Darryl Palmer.<sup>35</sup> The latter's brief article on Acts 1:1–14 looks at the Hellenistic literary forms of an appearance (epiphany), farewell scene, and assumption in relation to Jesus in Acts' Beginning. Those applying modern literary concepts include Parsons, Do, Mihoc, and Cocksworth. The latter helpfully identifies key modern literary beginning concepts which are noted in this chapter (as she did for ending concepts in Chapter Three), but does not search for literary shape and significance in any depth.

Scholars who draw theological significance from the literary shape of Acts' Beginning include Sleeman<sup>36</sup> and Eisen.<sup>37</sup> Although Sleeman majors on the literary-spatial aspects of the ascension, he does draw out theology up to Acts 11. Eisen applies narratology to Acts Beginning, Middle, and Ending.<sup>38</sup> Her relevant comments on Acts 1:1–14 are referenced as the present chapter unfolds.<sup>39</sup>

In order to fill some scholarly gaps I propose a broader scope for Acts' Beginning, a focused method of narrative criticism which combines Graeco-Roman and modern literary beginning concepts, and a focused narrative theology.

Scholars also debate the reasons for Acts' Beginning. These are possibly linked to a rationale for the whole narrative.

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<sup>29</sup> Do, *Lucan Journey*.

<sup>30</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings".

<sup>31</sup> Arie W. Zwiep, *Judas and the Choice of Matthias*, WUNT 2.187 (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> Mihoc, "Inceptive Ecclesiology".

<sup>33</sup> Walton, "Beginning of Acts", 447–467.

<sup>34</sup> Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*.

<sup>35</sup> Palmer, "Literary Background".

<sup>36</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*.

<sup>37</sup> Eisen, *Poetik*.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter One, p.11.

<sup>39</sup> Eisen, *Poetik*, 141–169.

First, Alexander suggests that Acts is “a continuation of a story already half-way through”.<sup>40</sup> The references to the “first word” (1:1), Theophilus (1:1),<sup>41</sup> and Jesus’s suffering and resurrection (1:3)<sup>42</sup> establish a connection with Luke’s Gospel. However, the repetition of the ascension account in Luke 24:50–53 and Acts 1:1–11 indicates a deliberate separation of Luke-Acts into two distinct literary works.

Second, Mihoc observes that the early chapters of Acts are a foundational “narrative of beginnings”<sup>43</sup> for the early church similar to the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2.<sup>44</sup> The idea of a foundation extends to the opening basis for missional significance in Acts’ Beginning.

Third, Tannehill comments that the slide into story without any apparent breaks creates “the transition from the external world to the world of the narrative”.<sup>45</sup> The reader/hearer is drawn into the story. This is a helpful way of grappling with the difficult structure of the first summary and scene.

Fourth, this study explores the proposal that Acts’ Beginning is an intentional and fitting primer for what follows.<sup>46</sup> The opening topics progressively develop a *foundation* in Acts’ Beginning for the rest of the narrative, e.g. the continuation of the words and deeds of Jesus (1:1), the Holy Spirit (1:2, 5, 8), the apostles (1:2), the kingdom of God (1:3), the future of Israel (1:6), and the world-wide mission (1:8). Their missional significance is summarised at the end of this chapter.

The research method for Acts’ Beginning is now outlined.

## 4.2. Fine-Tuned Method for Acts’ Beginning

The method constructed in Chapter Two is now fine-tuned for studying the structure, story, and significance of Acts’ Beginning.

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<sup>40</sup> Alexander, “Preface to Acts”, 24–25.

<sup>41</sup> Luke 1:3.

<sup>42</sup> Luke 22:47–24:49.

<sup>43</sup> Mihoc, “Inceptive Ecclesiology”, 40–50, citing Pierre Gilbert, *Bible, myths et récits de commencement*, Parole de Dieu 25 (Paris: Seuil, 1986), 23–53; Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 32.

<sup>44</sup> Mihoc, “Inceptive Ecclesiology”, 51–58.

<sup>45</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:9.

<sup>46</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1. 646–47, for discussion over whether Luke intends a prospective summary in the introduction. He concludes that the introduction is an implicit rather than explicit theological prologue of what follows.

#### 4.2.1 Method for Exploring the Structure of Acts' Beginning

The method for exploring Acts' Beginning structure identifies "Act I" (1:1–8:3) of Horace's "Five-Act Structure". The similar size (25% of the narrative)<sup>47</sup> to "Act V" (21:15–28:31) appears to counter-balance the early success of gospel mission with the later sufferings of Paul. As with Acts' Ending, grammatical, episodic, and story factors identify the ten sections of Acts' Beginning<sup>48</sup> as the first summary (1:1–5), the first scene (1:6–8; 1:9–11), and the first "Act" (1:12–26; 2:1–47; 3:1–26; 4:1–31; 4:32–5:16; 5:17–42; 6:1–8:3). The idea of progressive envelopes begins with the first summary and opens out into the succeeding wider context. Also the material's sequence and size suggests significance.

#### 4.2.2 Method for Exploring the Story of Acts' Beginning

The method from Chapter Two includes a forwards reading, story components, and the key literary beginning concepts.

*A forwards reading*<sup>49</sup> starts at Acts 1:1 and moves forwards through the whole of Acts' Beginning. A strict adherence prevents reference to succeeding material and enables a *sequential patterning* to interpret the unfolding narrative by what precedes.

*The story components* explore the literary-spatial *foundation* of Jerusalem, the sparsity of literary-temporal references with the notable exception of the forty days (1:3), the character movement<sup>50</sup> from Jesus, to the apostles, Peter, the Seven, and Stephen, the main speeches of Peter<sup>51</sup> and Stephen (7:2–53) which receives a literary emphasis as the last speech in "Act I" and largest speech in Acts,<sup>52</sup> and the intertextual predominance of seventeen Scripture quotations (out of a total of twenty-six).<sup>53</sup> Together, in Acts' Beginning, these components are likely to reveal the *foundation* of missional significance.

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<sup>47</sup> "Act I" (1:1–8:3) has 4,767 words and "Act V" (21:15–28:31) has 4,694 words. See calculations in Chapter Two (§2.2.4.2, p.70, n.205) and Diagram III, p.69.

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix III, p.385.

<sup>49</sup> As outlined in Chapter Two (see §2.2.5.3, p.82).

<sup>50</sup> See Diagram VIII (A), p.102.

<sup>51</sup> Acts 1:16–22; 2:14b–40; 3:12b–26; 4:8b–12; 5:29b–32.

<sup>52</sup> See Diagram IX, p.106.

<sup>53</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

*The key literary beginning concepts* from Chapter One are summarised in the glossary of Appendix I.<sup>54</sup> This avoids an explanation or cross-reference each time a concept is used.

#### 4.2.3 Method for Exploring the Significance of Acts' Beginning

This chapter identifies the *foundation* of significance in Acts' Beginning by using the focused narrative theology from Chapter Two. This involves exploring how far the literary shape suggests a missional significance in the restoration of Israel as an instrument for world-wide mission to establish the kingdom of God. Also whether the remnant, typified by the reconstitution of the Twelve, empowered by the Spirit, and enlightened by the Scriptures, appeals to the nation. The significance of why the mission does not move out of Jerusalem needs further exploration. However, in order to give precedence to literary shape, the discoveries of missional significance are delayed until the end of this chapter.

### 4.3 Literary Shape of Acts' Beginning

A forwards reading approaches Acts' Beginning (1:1–8:3) divided into the first summary (Acts 1:1–5) as the narrowest focus given the most detailed attention since its location at the start increases the expectation for a *foundation* of missional significance (§4.3.1), the first scene (Acts 1:6–11) as the scholars' delimitation developing significance (§4.3.2), and the first "Act" (Acts 1:12–8:3) as the widest scope using a less detailed approach for the progressive journey that unfolds (§4.3.3). Each part combines an exploration of structure and story in order to identify the observations of an accumulative literary shape.

#### 4.3.1 The First Summary (1:1–5)

The first summary has a key role in literary shape as the *start* of the first "Act" marking the *threshold* of entering into the story. The first words begin the *foundation* of significance, include *transitivity* themes *framing* with Acts' Ending, and make *embryonic* connections to the rest of the narrative.

Scholars debate whether Acts has a secondary *preface* because of its

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<sup>54</sup> See pp.378–82.



connection to Luke's Gospel.<sup>55</sup> Consequently Richard Longenecker refers to 1:1–5 as a “resumptive preface”.<sup>56</sup> Certainly 1:1 is a *preface* outside the story, but the move to a *prologue* inside the story is unclear. Various suggestions include: 1:3 as the story shifts from the past to the present,<sup>57</sup> but this is unlikely as there is no clear closure formula and the recapitulation of Luke's Gospel continues;<sup>58</sup> 1:4 in a move from a general summary to a specific event, but the *καί* suggests a connection to 1:3;<sup>59</sup> and as the most likely and followed in this study, 1:6,<sup>60</sup> with a new story episode,<sup>61</sup> *μὲν οὖν* looking forwards as well as backwards,<sup>62</sup> and a shift in tone dynamically inserting dialogue and characters into the plot.<sup>63</sup>

However, if a *prologue* exists, then its finish is indiscernible from the actual chronological or causal beginning of the story. There is barely an *intratextual threshold* to the author's narrative world. Marguerat is right that “cette solution narrative a le mérite d'estomper la transition entre préface et récit”.<sup>64</sup> The blurring also ensures there is no separation between the worlds of the author and the reader.

Acts' Beginning as the first summary allows a detailed examination of the *start* and *opening* of literary shape as revealing the *foundation* of missional significance. The large number of subjects underlines the importance of the *preface-prologue* in setting an agenda for the narrative that follows. The first summary (1:1–5) is read forwards phrase by phrase.

#### 4.3.1.1 The First Word: Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον (1:1)

Acts 1:1 starts with “the first word” both syntactically and literally. Most scholars see Τὸν πρῶτον λόγον as a reference to a previous literary work identified as Luke's

<sup>55</sup> Those supporting a secondary preface include Sterling, *Self-Definition*, 331; Alexander, “Preface to Acts”, 23–27. However, Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking Unity*, 61–62, rejects a secondary preface in Acts since although ancient literature like Josephus, *C. Ap.* has primary (1:1–3) and secondary (2:1–2) prefaces similar to Luke-Acts, they also have an explicit reference to continuing the work at the end of volume one (1.322–25) which is absent in Luke's Gospel.

<sup>56</sup> Longenecker, “Acts”, 713.

<sup>57</sup> See previous list in this chapter of scholars who argue for the preface to end at 1:2 (p.174, n.13).

<sup>58</sup> Walton, “Beginning of Acts”, 447.

<sup>59</sup> Do, *Lucan Journey*, 149; Parsons, “Origins”, 403.

<sup>60</sup> See the previous list of scholars who argue for the preface to end at 1:5 (p.174, n.14).

<sup>61</sup> Do, *Lucan Journey*, 137; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 102; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 64.

<sup>62</sup> Do, *Lucan Journey*, 137. See Levinsohn's observations about *μὲν οὖν* in Chapter Two (§2.2.4.3, p.74).

<sup>63</sup> Do, *Lucan Journey*, 137.

<sup>64</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:36, “this narrative solution has the merit to blur the transition between preface and story”.

Gospel.<sup>65</sup> Scholars debate whether *πρῶτον* here means first in sequence (of time or number) or a sense of prominence.<sup>66</sup> Whilst the term *λόγος* links backwards to a larger story,<sup>67</sup> not enough has been made of the loaded potency for what follows.<sup>68</sup> Whilst a forward reading does not confirm a wider meaning at this stage, *λόγος* includes the communication of a thought or mind.<sup>69</sup> Whatever the nuance, the introductory *μέν* (1:1) does not have the expected contrasting *δέ*.<sup>70</sup>

Following “the first word” the author gives a personal reference.

#### 4.3.1.2 The Authorial I: *ἐποισάμην περὶ πάντων* (1:1)

This is the only reference to the author as an individual within the narrative.<sup>71</sup> A text-focused search for literary shape discerns the implied author rather than the original author.<sup>72</sup> The implied author’s “I made about all things” may indicate a close connection to the story and its ongoing communication. Since the author is an omniscient *heterodiegetic narrator* at least part of 1:1 is a *preface*.

The narrative then turns from the authorial I to the recipient of their work.

#### 4.3.1.3 Theophilus: *ὦ Θεόφιλε* (1:1)

*Θεόφιλος*, as an overt narratee,<sup>73</sup> is an *interactional threshold* from the real world to the story world. Scholarship speculates about his possible identity as a Jew,<sup>74</sup> a high

<sup>65</sup> E.g. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:64, for literary attachment and theological continuity; Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:37, notes that “le narrateur a ménagé un effet de tuilage entre Lc 24 and et Act 1” (“the narrator has managed an overlapping like on a tiled roof effect between Luke 24 and Acts 1”).

<sup>66</sup> BDAG, *πρῶτος*, 892–94; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 195; Alexander, *Preface to Luke’s Gospel*, 144; Longenecker, “Acts”, 713; Johnson, *Acts*, 24. This is used in the debate about whether Luke planned a third volume (see §3.1, p.131, n.22).

<sup>67</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 175.

<sup>68</sup> Moles, “Time and Space”, 109, noting that there is a similar play on “the Word”, preface of Luke’s Gospel. The present study explores “the Word of God/Lord” in Acts.

<sup>69</sup> BDAG, *λόγος*, 598–601, §1. See the introduction to the mission source in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.123).

<sup>70</sup> This does not occur until 2:5. There is a *μέν οὖν* (1:6) and a *τότε* (1:12).

<sup>71</sup> The “we-group” hides the identity of the author. Parsons, *Departure*, 176, notes that the first person narrator is missing at the end.

<sup>72</sup> See discussions in Chapter One (§1.1.3, pp.14–15) and Chapter Two (§2.1.2, p.46).

<sup>73</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:9.

<sup>74</sup> Strelan, *Luke the Priest*, 102–106. However, Steve Walton, review of *Luke the Priest: The Authority of the Author of the Third Gospel* by Rick Strelan, *EQ* 82 (2010): 180–182, concludes there is insufficient evidence that the author was a Jew or a high priest.

priest,<sup>75</sup> a Gentile,<sup>76</sup> a Roman,<sup>77</sup> and whether he is, an unbeliever,<sup>78</sup> interested party,<sup>79</sup> God-fearer<sup>80</sup> or Christian.<sup>81</sup> This debate is inconclusive since the name, Θεόφιλος was common amongst both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>82</sup> Also debated is whether Θεόφιλος is an individual first reader/hearer of Acts, a lector for a wider audience, or Luke's patron.<sup>83</sup> The sense of an important personage is suggested by the appellation "most excellent" (κράτιστε) in Luke 1:3,<sup>84</sup> the size of the combined material in Luke-Acts,<sup>85</sup> and the frequent mention of money.<sup>86</sup> However, even without extant evidence,<sup>87</sup> there is also the possibility that Θεόφιλος (literally "God-lover or loved of God")<sup>88</sup> is a code name applying to believers<sup>89</sup> or protecting the identity of an individual.<sup>90</sup> If Acts is addressed to an individual then it invites every subsequent hearer or reader to receive it "like Θεόφιλος" as a personal instruction and challenge to join and sponsor the gospel mission instrument. Read aloud in a corporate setting, Acts encourages individuals to join together for mission.

After stating the author and hearer/reader, the *preface* slides into an *ab ovo* opening with story and discourse beginning simultaneously rather than *in medias res* (though elements of this appear with Judas and subsequent Old Testament quotations).<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Rius-Camps, and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:59–60, speculate that Theophilus is the high priest by that name who was the son of Annas (Luke 3:2) who served from AD 37–41. Cf. Richard Anderson, *Who are Joanna and Theophilus? The Irony of the Intended Audience of the Gospel of Luke* (Kindle edition); David L. Allen, *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 324–337.

<sup>76</sup> Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 188; Keener, *Acts*, 1:657–58; Roman Garrison, *The Significance of Theophilus as Luke's Reader* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2004), 4; Tyson, *Images*, 35–39.

<sup>77</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 29.

<sup>78</sup> Garrison, *Theophilus*, 4.

<sup>79</sup> Joel. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 45–46.

<sup>80</sup> Tyson, *Images*, 35–39.

<sup>81</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:658.

<sup>82</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1: 657–58; Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 188.

<sup>83</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 136–37; Keener, *Acts*, 1:653–56.

<sup>84</sup> For discussion over use of title as a member of Roman equestrian order or merely form of courtesy see Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 29; Keener, *Acts*, 1.655. Cf. The use of the title of Felix (23:26; 24:3) and Festus (26:25).

<sup>85</sup> Approximately 25% of the New Testament.

<sup>86</sup> Garland, *Luke*, 56.

<sup>87</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.299–300, adjectival use not before the Byzantine period; Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, 188, absence of pseudonyms in ancient prefaces.

<sup>88</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:66.

<sup>89</sup> Arthur A. Just, Jr., *Luke*, ACCS 3 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), 4, citing Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 1.6.

<sup>90</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:657; Streeter, *Four Gospels*, 535–539, as a secret name for Flavius Clemens (cousin and joint consul of emperor Domitian); Werner, G. Marx, "A New Theophilus", *EvQ* 52 (1980): 17–26, Agrippa II (26:28).

<sup>91</sup> Acts 1:16–19; 1:20a (Ps 69:25) and 1:20b (Ps 109:8). For discussion see Pervo, *Acts*, 48; Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 175–76.

The creation of a *foundation* for Acts begins with Jesus as the opening character.

#### 4.3.1.4 Jesus: ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν (1:1)

As the main character at the start of Acts' Beginning, it is reasonable to expect the presence of Ἰησοῦς throughout the story. However, Acts' Ending has already shown that this does not happen,<sup>92</sup> even if a mention of Jesus at 28:31 does suggest Christology as a *transitivity* theme for *framing* the narrative.<sup>93</sup> Putting the infinitive “to do” (ποιεῖν) before “to teach” (διδάσκειν)<sup>94</sup> possibly influences ΠΡΑΞΕΙΣ in the title<sup>95</sup> and as Marguerat points out “la priorité de l’agir sur la parole est typique de Luc, pour qui le discours explicite après coup l’événement”.<sup>96</sup> Deeds are explained by teaching. The appearance of διδάσκω here and at 28:31<sup>97</sup> is another example of *transitivity* as an *inclusio framing* the whole narrative. The use of ἤρξατο (began) suggests that ποιεῖω and διδάσκω will continue in the narrative that follows.<sup>98</sup>

With the author, reader/hearer, and main character in place, Acts' Beginning combines *discursive*, *chronological* and *causal beginnings* as the discourse, story, and plot get underway. The character component widens from Jesus to the apostles.

#### 4.3.1.5 The Apostles: ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ... οὓς ἐξελέξατο (1:2)

The term ἀποστολῶι has the connotation of “sent ones”,<sup>99</sup> related to an authoritative leadership function, a mission task, or most likely both.<sup>100</sup> They appear early in Acts' Beginning as those “commanded” (ἐντειλάμενος) and “chosen” (ἐξελέξατο) by Jesus

<sup>92</sup> Chapter Five will test whether it is the case in Acts' Middle.

<sup>93</sup> The discussion of Acts' framing was begun in Chapter Three (§3.3.2.8, pp.151–52) and will be completed later in this chapter (§4.3.2.4, pp.196–97).

<sup>94</sup> Acts 1:1 “to do” and “to teach”. The teaching theme is summarised as a mission means at the end of this chapter (see §4.4, pp.223–24).

<sup>95</sup> See discussion on paratext in Chapter Two (§2.1.5, pp.50–51).

<sup>96</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:37, “the priority focus on the word is typical of Luke, putting the speech after an explicit event”.

<sup>97</sup> See summary on διδάσκω at end of this chapter under mission means (§4.4, p.223–24).

<sup>98</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 60; Longenecker, “Acts”, 714; Johnson, *Acts*, 24; Keener, *Acts*, 1:652; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 30; Wall, “Acts”, 38. However, Witherington, *Acts*, 10, does not see it as implying continuation.

<sup>99</sup> BDAG, ἀπόστολος, 122, discusses its use in older Greek of a naval expedition in reference to a bill of lading or letter of authorisation for shipping or persons dispatched for a specific purpose such as ambassador, envoy, delegate, messenger either with or without extraordinary status. Cf. Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 18–21.

<sup>100</sup> Wilson, *Gentiles*, 113–20; Legrand, *Unity*, 98–99; Alan R. Johnson, *Apostolic Function in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Missions* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009), 51–102.

in preparation for the mission task.<sup>101</sup> The activity of commanding develops the teaching (1:1) as a possible description of the whole Acts' narrative.<sup>102</sup> The idea of chosen underlines the commissioning of the apostles for what lies ahead.<sup>103</sup>

Closely tied in between the two activities is the Holy Spirit clause.

#### 4.3.1.6 The Holy Spirit: διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου (1:2)

This is the first mention of the ἅγιον πνεῦμα. The idea of breath, wind, or spirit<sup>104</sup> is joined with that of holiness as indicating being dedicated to God and having purity.<sup>105</sup> “D’une syntaxe volontairement ambivalente” of 1:2<sup>106</sup> means the clause “through the Holy Spirit” can apply either to “commanding”, “choosing”, or most likely both. Jesus’s dependence upon the Holy Spirit<sup>107</sup> sets up an expectation for the continuing mission.<sup>108</sup> The Holy Spirit is anticipated as a key theme in Acts and a developing pneumatology is expected.<sup>109</sup> However, the nuance of the Holy Spirit enabling the ministry of others acts as a possible *framing* device (Jesus here and Isaiah in 28:25).

The activity of the Holy Spirit, albeit it through Jesus, is joined with the first mention of the ascension.

#### 4.3.1.7 First Mention of Ascension: ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ... ἀνελήμφθη (1:2)

1:2 begins with the temporal reference “until which day” and concludes with the first mention of the ascension. By wrapping these around the activity of Jesus and his relationship with the apostles through the Spirit, the author gives the impression that there is a final day coming for Jesus’s ministry on earth. The meaning of ἀνελήμφθη

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<sup>101</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 61.

<sup>102</sup> See Acts 1:4. Cf. the use of παραγγέλλω at 10:42; 15:5; 16:18. (BDAG, παραγγέλλω, 760, to give order, command, instruct, direct).

<sup>103</sup> Cf. 1:24; 6:5. Chapter Five explores this theme further to show the connection between election and mission in Acts (see §5.4, p.290, n.700).

<sup>104</sup> BDAG, πνεῦμα, 832–836.

<sup>105</sup> BDAG, ἅγιος, 10–11.

<sup>106</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:38, “a deliberately ambivalent syntax”. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 24.

<sup>107</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 80.

<sup>108</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:661

<sup>109</sup> However, it has already been shown in Chapter Three that this is not the case in Acts’ Ending. The present chapter will explore the Holy Spirit in Acts’ Beginning and Chapter Five in Acts’ Middle.

suggests an upwards carrying movement<sup>110</sup> of an ascension<sup>111</sup> rather than P. A. van Stempvoort's suggestion of a reference to death.<sup>112</sup> At this stage the narrative does not elucidate what the ascension means.

The literary order moves to resurrection and suffering, which in actual chronological sequence precede the ascension.

#### 4.3.1.8 Resurrection and Suffering: παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις (1:3)

A chiastic structure (ABA) of the resurrection wrapped around “after his suffering” (μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτόν) may hint at a similar outline for the whole of Acts.<sup>113</sup> The aorist “he presented himself living” (παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα)<sup>114</sup> refers to the outcome of the “in many convincing and decisive proofs” (ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις).<sup>115</sup>

The encounter with the resurrected and Spirit-empowered Jesus continues for a specific period with symbolic significance.

#### 4.3.1.9 Forty Days: δι’ ἡμερῶν τεσσεράκοντα ὁπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς (1:3)

Scholars debate whether “the forty days” are historical,<sup>116</sup> a literary device, or symbolic.<sup>117</sup> These aspects can be held together. Historically, the forty days indicate a sustained period of time. The use of *διά* (“through”) suggests that Jesus made a number of appearances over forty days rather than being continually present.<sup>118</sup> As a literary device the forty days emphasise an extensive instruction for the apostles.<sup>119</sup> Symbolically the forty days are a reminder of similar complete periods in Israel's

<sup>110</sup> BDAG, ἀναλαμβάνω, 66–67, including §3, taking to oneself, §4, taking along on a journey, and §5, taking in hand for scrutiny. These are all suitable descriptions of God's role in Jesus's ascension.

<sup>111</sup> Jacques Dupont, “ANΕΛΗΜΦΘΗ (Act.i.2)”, repr. in *Études sur les Actes des Apôtres*, LD 45 (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 477–80.

<sup>112</sup> P. A. van Stempvoort, “The Interpretation of the Ascension in Luke and Acts”, *NTS* 5 (1958): 30–42, citing 32–33.

<sup>113</sup> The resurrection emphasis of Acts 1–7 and Acts 21–28 around the middle section tracing suffering for the gospel mission.

<sup>114</sup> BDAG, παρίστημι/παριστάνω, 778–79, §1.f, to prove or demonstrate, and §2 to be present.

<sup>115</sup> BDAG, τεκμήριον, 994.

<sup>116</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 55.

<sup>117</sup> Philippe H. Menoud, “During Forty Days (Acts 1.3)”, in *Jesus Christ and the Faith: A Collection of Studies*, trans. Eunice M. Paul (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978), 167–79.

<sup>118</sup> Longenecker, “Acts”, 716, in contrast to the use of an accusative without a preposition to indicate a continual presence.

<sup>119</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 194, as an explanation of the temporal discrepancy with Luke 24 which intimates that the ascension is on the same day as the resurrection.

history.<sup>120</sup> One of the most notable is Moses receiving the commandments at Sinai for Israel as God's people and kingdom.<sup>121</sup> Forty days is also the length of Jesus's testing period in the desert before he started his mission.<sup>122</sup> Such events imply that the forty days (1:3) complete a preparation period,<sup>123</sup> confirm the apostles' role,<sup>124</sup> and are a prelude to a new ministry.<sup>125</sup> The present participles "being seen" (ὀπτανόμενος) and "speaking" (λέγων) bring the story closer to the hearers/readers.<sup>126</sup>

Not only does Jesus appear during the forty days, he also speaks about the kingdom of God.

#### 4.3.1.10 Kingdom of God: λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ (1:3)

Chapter Three has already identified ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (28:31) as having mission expansion in view. Chapter Six develops this further in relation to the reference here.<sup>127</sup>

The καί (1:4) links the following incident of table-fellowship to the forty days.

#### 4.3.1.11 Table-Fellowship: συναλιζόμενος (1:4)

The move from a general description to a specific event is not given a fixed literary-temporal point within the forty days. Scholars debate whether συναλίζω implies staying with, assembling, or most likely a literal translation "the eating of salt together".<sup>128</sup> A reference to eating underlines the physicality of the event and salt has

<sup>120</sup> Gen 7:12, 17 (rain); 8:6 (after mountains appeared and Noah opens window of the ark); Exod 24:18 (Moses receiving the Law at Sinai); Num 13:25 (searching the Promised Land); 1 Sam 17:16 (Goliath defies Israel); 1 Kgs 19:8 (Elijah's journey to Horeb); Ezek 4:6 (symbolic enactment of Jerusalem's siege); Jonah 3:4 (preaching in Nineveh).

<sup>121</sup> Exod 24:18; 34:27–28; Deut 9:9–11; 10:10. Spencer, *Acts*, 35, links with Jesus giving commands in 1:2. Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 37.

<sup>122</sup> Luke 4:1–13, citing 2. Spencer, *Acts*, 35; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:64; Pervo, *Acts*, 37; Keener, *Acts*, 1:670.

<sup>123</sup> Mihoc, "Inceptive Ecclesiology", 59–60.

<sup>124</sup> Zwiep, *Ascension*, 173.

<sup>125</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:670.

<sup>126</sup> Uspensky, *Poetics*, 71.

<sup>127</sup> See §6.4.1, pp.331–34.

<sup>128</sup> BDAG, συναλίζω, 964, §1. Cf. Henry J. Cadbury, "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts: Luke's Interest in Lodging", *JBL* 14 (1926): 310–17; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 101; Hooker, *Endings*, 100; Zwiep, *Ascension*, 100.

Old Testament connections to a covenant meal.<sup>129</sup> It is the first mention of table-fellowship in Acts.<sup>130</sup>

So far no location is given for the story. This is now suggested.

#### 4.3.1.12 Jerusalem: παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι (1:4)

Jerusalem is mentioned for the first time in Acts. The apostles are “ordered” (παρήγγειλεν)<sup>131</sup> by Jesus “not to depart” (μὴ χωρίζεσθαι) from Jerusalem suggesting that the story is located here or at least nearby. This location for the *foundation* of Acts’ story is hardly surprising given Jerusalem’s history of religious symbolism and prophetic promise.<sup>132</sup> However, the previous mention of Christ’s suffering (1:3) is a reminder that Jerusalem, and especially its leaders, is resistant to Jesus. A better assessment of whether Jerusalem is viewed positively or negatively in Acts is made as the story unfolds. The surprising use of the Hellenistic Ἱεροσόλυμα (1:4) possibly contrasts Jerusalem as a neutral geographical location with the expected transliteration Ἱερουσαλήμ from the Hebrew as a religious and political centre.<sup>133</sup>

Jesus’ order that the apostles are “not to depart from Jerusalem” implies this is their intention.<sup>134</sup> Instead they are “to wait for the promise of the Father” (1:4).

#### 4.3.1.13 The Promise of the Father: περιμένειν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς (1:4)

The reference to the Father completes the appearance of the three persons of the Godhead (now known as the Trinity) within the *foundation* of Acts.<sup>135</sup> The “promise” (ἐπαγγελία) is not at this stage explicitly connected to the Old Testament promises.

<sup>129</sup> Lev 2:13; Num 18:19; 2 Chron 13:5. Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 191–193; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:72.

<sup>130</sup> Chapter Five continues to explore the theme (see §5.3.3.2, p.275, n.519).

<sup>131</sup> BDAG, παραγγέλλω, 760, to make an announcement about something that must be done.

<sup>132</sup> 2 Sam 5:5; 1 Kgs 2:36; 11:13, 32; 2 Kgs 21:4, 7; Ezra 1:3; Neh 1:3; Ps 51:8; 68:29; 102:21; 116:19; 122:2, 6; 135:21; 147:2; ; Isa 24:23; 33:20; 40:9; 52:1; 62:1, 6, 7, 65:18, 19; 66:10; Jer 33:10–11; Joel 2:32; Zech 8:3–5. See Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:40.

<sup>133</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.84, n.289). Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 101, as an exception since Ἱερουσαλήμ is the predominant term used in the opening chapters of Acts. Cf. Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:67–68, as telling the disciples to have nothing to do with the religious institution.

<sup>134</sup> Ironically the apostle’s apparent keenness to leave Jerusalem without the Holy Spirit is replaced by their seeming reluctance with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>135</sup> Diane G. Chen, *God as Father in Luke-Acts*, StBibLit 92 (New York: Lang, 2006), esp. 153–157, notes that that in Acts only Jesus addresses God directly as Father (1:4, 7; 2:33).



However, ἐπαγγελία connects to Jesus's previous ministry,<sup>136</sup> a re-orientation of the Old Testament,<sup>137</sup> and the wider promise-fulfilment in Acts.<sup>138</sup>

The promise of the Father is interpreted by the following reference to the start of Jesus's ministry.

#### 4.3.1.14 John's Baptism: ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι (1:5)

Jesus introduces that John the Baptist "baptised in or with water" (ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι)<sup>139</sup> without mentioning the connection to the start of his own mission.<sup>140</sup>

Scholars debate the meaning of water-baptism for Jesus in the light of the connection with Spirit-baptism. Dunn argues for an affirmation of Jesus's sonship<sup>141</sup> and Max Turner for messianic empowerment.<sup>142</sup> Since for Jesus water-baptism does not signify conversion, it is likely to mean an identification with God's people as a mission instrument. Water-baptism in Acts may have a similar connotation.<sup>143</sup>

John's water-baptism is transitional<sup>144</sup> to the Holy Spirit-baptism that follows.

#### 4.3.1.15 Holy Spirit Baptism: ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἀγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας (1:5)

At this stage in forwards reading the exact meaning and purpose of the Holy Spirit-baptism (ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἀγίῳ) is unclear, although it connects to the promise of the Father (1:4) and the kingdom of God (1:3). The link to John's water-baptism suggests the Holy Spirit-baptism may in some way inaugurate a new

<sup>136</sup> Acts 1:4, "which you heard of me" as a probable reference to Luke 24:49, but possibly also within the forty days instruction.

<sup>137</sup> Luke 24:27, 44–47.

<sup>138</sup> Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 277, 341–346, for link to 2:17–18, 33. Cf. Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 169–72, for link to the restoration of Israel's prophetic vocation. The promise theme runs throughout Acts and is summarised in Chapter Five (§5.3.2.1, p.244, n.160).

<sup>139</sup> The dative ὕδατι is either instrumental (with water) or locative (in water).

<sup>140</sup> Luke 3:1–22, esp. 21–22.

<sup>141</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, *SBT* 2.15 (London: SCM, 1970), 29.

<sup>142</sup> Turner, *Power*, 197–201.

<sup>143</sup> The idea that water-baptism in Acts joins salvation and mission is explored throughout this chapter and Chapter Five. The connection with Spirit-baptism is also considered.

<sup>144</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 97–98, suggests that John the Baptist is both the last of the OT prophets and also the forerunner of the new era of salvation. Chapter Five considers the strategic reference to John the Baptist in Acts.

mission.<sup>145</sup> The preposition ἐν with the dative means either an instrumental “with/by” or a locative “in/into”.<sup>146</sup> The imprecise timing of “after not many (of) these days” (οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας) adds further ambiguity.

The observations of Acts’ literary shape in the first summary are now summarised.

#### 4.3.1.16 Literary Shape in the First Summary

A narrow focus on 1:1–5 as the *start* and *opening* of Acts’ Beginning gives the first words their true foundational significance. The first summary has an *open opening* through its *connexion* to the earlier story (“the first word”) about Jesus in Luke’s Gospel. The anonymous author and his narratee, Θεόφιλος, appear in a very brief *preface* which imperceptibly slides into a *prologue* drawing the hearer/reader into the story. There is also a structural wrapping of the ascension around the period of preparation in 1:2 and the resurrection around the suffering in 1:3.

Story components focus 1:1–5 as the *foundation* and point of departure for the whole narrative. The literary-spatial component is unspecified, but Jerusalem is implied. The context of a fellowship meal is also important. The literary-temporal component reveals an *overview beginning* of forty days (1:3) and a *close-up scenic beginning* (1:4–5). The character component includes the author, Theophilus, Jesus, and the apostles. The narrative slide from *preface* to *prologue* to story results in a close connection between Jesus’s continuing mission, his apostles, and the Holy Spirit who is the focus of Jesus’s first speech (1:4b–5).

As the structural start of the whole narrative, the summary contains potential *transitivity* and *framing* connections to Acts’ Ending and possible *embryonic* connections to the whole narrative. These include the *foundation* of missional significance in Jesus, teaching, the apostles, the resurrection, the kingdom of God, table-fellowship, and the Holy Spirit. The seeds of a progressive *exposition* and possibly a developing *origin* are sown for confirmation as the narrative unfolds. This study extends the *framing* concept to the first scene since this includes an explicit mention of mission.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>145</sup> This proposal is explored throughout this chapter and Chapter Five leading to conclusions about the Holy Spirit as a mission source.

<sup>146</sup> Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 372–75, esp. 374–75, refutes the idea of a dative as indicating being filled with a content (of the Holy Spirit) since there are no clear examples in biblical Greek which instead normally uses a genitive of content.

<sup>147</sup> See later in this chapter (§4.3.2.4, pp.196–97).

The opportunity for observing theological progression becomes more apparent as a forwards reading continues in the first scene of 1:6–11.

#### 4.3.2 The First Scene (1:6–11)

Both the *start* and *finish* of the first scene are difficult to identify with any certainty. The *start* is grammatically suggested by *μὲν οὖν* (1:6), although these conjunctions transition from what precedes.<sup>148</sup> The continued story connects the first section and summary. Various suggestions are made for the unclear *finish*.

1:8 with Jesus's commission of the apostles,<sup>149</sup> but against this is the close story connection marked by the *καί* of 1:9 and the ascension that follows.<sup>150</sup>

1:11 with Jesus's ascension (1:11) as a new phase marked by a literary-spatial and character change in 1:12,<sup>151</sup> but against this the story continues with *τότε* in 1:12.<sup>152</sup>

1:14 with the close of the group in Jerusalem,<sup>153</sup> but this is uncertain since the literary-temporal marker “in these days” (*ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις*) (1:15) is either a dividing<sup>154</sup> or connecting phrase.<sup>155</sup>

1:26 with the twelve apostles reconstituted by the replacement of Judas and a temporal shift at 2:1,<sup>156</sup> but against this is the unexpected connecting *καί* with the continued literary-spatial and character components of Jerusalem and “they were all together” (2:1).<sup>157</sup>

2:4 after the coming of the Spirit and the first *δέ* in 2:5, but against this is an unnatural break since the story continues.

2:13 with the end of the Pentecost event and a *δέ* in 2:14, but against this is that Peter's speech explains what preceded.

<sup>148</sup> See previously in this chapter (§4.3.1, p.175, n.62).

<sup>149</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.174, n.15).

<sup>150</sup> Walton “Beginning of Acts”, 448, argues separation from 1:9–11 seems artificial.

<sup>151</sup> Parsons, *Acts*, 28; Do, *Lucan Journey*, 138, 149; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:59.

<sup>152</sup> Levinsohn, *Connections*, 151–53, notes that *τότε* is a connective conjunction in either a close chronological sequence with the preceding event or if a new initiative then linked to the same subject in response to the last event. He suggests a good translation is “forthwith”

<sup>153</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:61. Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:45.

<sup>154</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 108; Palmer, “Literary Background”, 436; Fearghus Ó Fearghail, *The Introduction to Luke-Acts: A Study of the Role of Lk 1, 1–4, 44 in the Composition of Luke's Two Volume Work* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991), 67–69.

<sup>155</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 15.

<sup>156</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 182; Dunn, *Acts*, 3; Neil, *Acts*, 71.

<sup>157</sup> Either a continuation of the apostles (1:26) or more likely the one hundred and twenty (1:15).

2:41 with the end of the day of Pentecost and a following summary statement, but against this the summary of 2:42–47 is connected to the earlier story.

2:47 at the end of the summary and making 1:1–2:47 an introduction with themes characteristic of Acts as a whole,<sup>158</sup> but the story continues in 3:1.

Grammatically and episodically the strongest candidates from the above options for delimiting the first scene are 1:11, 14; 2:41; or 2:47. In order to allow a detailed focus on the smallest amount of text, this study uses 1:11 to identify the first scene as 1:6–11.<sup>159</sup> However, this is not an attempt to overcome the deliberate blurring of boundaries in Acts' Beginning. Many of the above delimitations are valid, e.g. the transitional 1:12–14 attaches to either the first summary or the first scene.<sup>160</sup>

Structure elements and story components illuminate the literary shape of 1:6–11 and reveal the *foundation* of missional significance. A forwards reading method shows how each section or envelope progressively adds to what precedes it. The developing story in the first scene has the two sections of Jesus's commission (1:6–8) and the ascension (1:9–11).

#### 4.3.2.1 Jesus's Commission of the Apostles (1:6–8)

This section starts with *μὲν οὖν* as a literary marker connecting backwards and forwards. It is unclear how far this is into the forty day period (1:3).<sup>161</sup> This section puts emphasis on the apostles' question and Jesus's answer.<sup>162</sup> Jesus is addressed as *κύριος* (1:6) for the first time in Acts. The term is possibly a title of respect,<sup>163</sup> but also has kingship and divine meanings.<sup>164</sup> The apostles' question is about when Jesus will restore the kingdom to Israel. This is the first mention of Israel in Acts and signifies not only geographical boundaries, but also an important national and religious identity for the people of God. The question arises from the instruction about the kingdom of God in 1:3 and its relationship to the Spirit-baptism of 1:4–5. Further comment on the kingdom in 1:6 is reserved until Chapter Six.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Walton "Beginning of Acts", 450.

<sup>159</sup> Do, *Lucan Journey*, 139.

<sup>160</sup> Ó Fearghail, *Luke-Acts*, 72; Do, *Lucan Journey*, 149.

<sup>161</sup> Acts 1:9 reveals that it is the fortieth day.

<sup>162</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 28.

<sup>163</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 102.

<sup>164</sup> Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 21. See discussion in Chapter Three (§3.3.1.3, p.137).

<sup>165</sup> See §6.4.1, pp.331–334.

Jesus makes clear that the apostles are not to know either *χρόνος*, the quantitative aspect of time,<sup>166</sup> or *καιρός*, the qualitative aspect of time,<sup>167</sup> about the kingdom. Instead Jesus links the kingdom with a strong contrastive *ἀλλά* to the empowering Spirit and expanding literary-spatial movement (1:8). Many scholars see 1:8 as a key verse which sets the agenda for the whole of Acts.<sup>168</sup> As a *transitive beginning* it marks the end of the *prologue*.<sup>169</sup> The main topics are power, the Holy Spirit coming upon, witness, and the literary-spatial movement. Taken together they suggest that 1:8 is Jesus's commission<sup>170</sup> for the apostles to be a mission instrument.

“Power” (*δύναμις*) connects to the kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit. Although the action of “coming upon” (*ἐπελθόντος*) is unexplained at this stage in a forwards reading,<sup>171</sup> the Old Testament usage suggests the Holy Spirit's empowering for service rather than salvation.<sup>172</sup> It is another way of describing the Spirit-baptism of 1:5. The use of *καί* connects the power of the Holy Spirit and “my witnesses” (*μου μάρτυρες*), as co-existing, or more likely, the witnesses are the result of the power received.<sup>173</sup> The important theme of being a witness is introduced for the first time in Acts.<sup>174</sup> The ambiguous genitive pronoun *μου* means a witness about Jesus, being his representatives, or probably both.<sup>175</sup>

The promised empowering Holy Spirit awaits future fulfilment.<sup>176</sup> However, the literary-spatial expansion of mission is first to Jerusalem, then Judaea and

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<sup>166</sup> BDAG, *χρόνος*, 1092.

<sup>167</sup> BDAG, *καιρός*, 497–98. Cf. Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1865), 200–203; J. B. Lightfoot, *Notes on the Epistles of St Paul from Unpublished Commentaries* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 70–71. Others see a less clear distinction between the terms, e.g. James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (London: SCM, 1969), 21–85, esp. 47–49; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 35.

<sup>168</sup> E.g. Keener, *Acts*, 1.689–711, esp. 708–10; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2.9; Witherington, *Acts*, 106; Marguerat, *Actes*, 1.20; Alan J. Bale, “The Ambiguous Oracle: Narrative Configuration in Acts”, *NTS* 57 (2011): 530–46. Parsons, *Departure*, 155; Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 112; Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Mission*, 269.

<sup>169</sup> See previously in this chapter (§4.3.2, p.189).

<sup>170</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 144; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 33–37; Johnson, *Acts*, 30; Longenecker, “Acts”, 718–19; Bock, *Acts*, 67; Keener, *Acts*, 1:689; Stevens, *Acts*, 156.

<sup>171</sup> This, together with other Holy Spirit terminology, is summarised in the mission source discussion at the end of this chapter and Chapter Five.

<sup>172</sup> Gen 1:2; Num 11:25–26, 29; 24:2; Judg 3:10; 6:34; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam 10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:13; 19:20, 23; 1 Chr 12:18; 2 Chr 15:1; 24:20; Isa 11:2; 32:15; 42:1; 44:3; 59:21; 61:1; Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:28–29.

<sup>173</sup> Do, *Lucan Journey*, 166.

<sup>174</sup> See the introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124).

<sup>175</sup> Martin M. Culy and Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 9.

<sup>176</sup> This chapter explores the fulfilment of the promise not only at Pentecost in Acts 2, but also along with Chapter Five considers the proposal that 1:8 may apply to all the Holy Spirit fillings of Acts.

Samaria, and finally “an (the) end of the earth” (ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς) (1:8b).<sup>177</sup> Jerusalem is the starting point, though again nothing is made of its religious and political connotations. A move is then made to Judaea which can refer to the province, all of Palestine, or the entire Jewish land.<sup>178</sup> The deliberate joining with Samaria hints at a reuniting of the two areas which had long been separated, although there is no mention of Samaria’s ancient religious connections.<sup>179</sup>

The enigmatic phrase ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς is the focus of much scholarly debate about its meaning and identification. The meaning depends whether 1:8 is a geographical expansion,<sup>180</sup> ethnic transition,<sup>181</sup> or the literary contents of the whole narrative. The consensus of present scholarship sees 1:8 as setting a potential mission agenda rather than an Acts’ outline.<sup>182</sup> The singular ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς appears in the LXX<sup>183</sup> as a translation of the Hebrew plural<sup>184</sup> which has a worldwide meaning.<sup>185</sup> However, in the light of the singular ἐσχάτου<sup>186</sup> scholars propose various specific locations including Ethiopia,<sup>187</sup> Rome,<sup>188</sup> and Spain.<sup>189</sup> Though Rome seems possible as the finish of Acts, it was the centre and not the end of the ancient world.<sup>190</sup> Other possible lines of interpretation include the mythological “Ocean” surrounding the earth and inhabited by monsters needing to be overcome so that the universe can be

<sup>177</sup> Abstract nouns are commonly qualitative-definite even though there is no definite article. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 249–50.

<sup>178</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:702.

<sup>179</sup> The proposal that this signifies a restoration of divided Israel is considered in Chapter Five with relation to Acts 8 and Chapter Six in relation to the kingdom of God.

<sup>180</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:709; Alexander, “Back to Front”, 213.

<sup>181</sup> Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 127; Robert L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, Reconciliation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 32–33.

<sup>182</sup> Walton, “Beginning of Acts”, 463. See the discussion in Chapter Two concerning 1:8 and the tripartite structure (§2.2.4.1, pp.63–64).

<sup>183</sup> Deut 28:49; Ps 134:7 (ET 135:7); Pss Sol 1:4; 8:15; Isa 8:9; 45:22; 48:20; 49:6; 62:11; Jer 6:22; 10:13; 16:19; 27:41 (ET 50:41); 28:16 (ET 51:16); 32:32 (ET 55:32); 38:8 (ET 25:32).

<sup>184</sup> Martin, “Function of Acts 8:26–40”, 69–76.

<sup>185</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:17, notes that the phrase ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς prefixed by ἕως only occurs at Isa 8:9; 48:20; 49:6; 62:11; Pss Sol 1:4, here and Acts 13:47 suggesting salvation for all peoples; Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church”, 422, argues that Acts 1:8 is probably a universal reference. Isa 49:6 is dealt with in Chapter Five when looking at 13:47.

<sup>186</sup> BDAG, ἐσχάτος, 397–98, §1.

<sup>187</sup> Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.1.6; T. C. G. Thornton, “To the End of the Earth”, *ExpTim* 89 (1977–78): 374–75; Janet E. Spittler, “Christianity at the Edges: Representations of the Ends of the Earth in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles”, in *The Rise and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries of the Common Era*, ed. Clare K. Rothschild and Jens Schröter, WUNT 301 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 353–378, citing 359, 373; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 225; Sleeman, *Geography*, 197; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:107; Martin, “Function of Acts 8:26–40”, 84–122.

<sup>188</sup> Pss. Sol 8.16. Uytanlet, *Luke-Acts*, 248.

<sup>189</sup> Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.1.8 (the west end of the earth); E. Earle Ellis, “The End of the Earth (Acts 1:8)”, *BBR* 1 (1991): 123–32, citing 128–132; Davies, *Gospel and Land*, 279.

<sup>190</sup> Alexander, “Back to Front”, 213; Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 65; Keener, *Acts*, 1:703–710, esp. 707.

properly ordered,<sup>191</sup> τῆς γῆς referring to the land of Israel rather than the earth,<sup>192</sup> and “until” (ἕως)<sup>193</sup> suggesting ἐσχάτου has a possible temporal meaning<sup>194</sup> supported by the question of 1:6.

Whatever the exact meaning, 1:8 is not only an invitation and commission, but also a prophetic promise which Jesus declares will come to pass.<sup>195</sup> However, by the finish of Acts the question becomes why this is not fulfilled.<sup>196</sup> It is also unclear at this stage whether the expansion of 1:8 is towards Diaspora Jews,<sup>197</sup> Gentiles,<sup>198</sup> or both.<sup>199</sup> As an original suggestion I propose in this study to explore how the apostles fulfil the task of being witnesses in both calling God’s people (as a nation and a remnant-church) to be a mission instrument and also by their involvement in the Gentile mission. Although ambiguous at this stage, 1:8 has the speech importance as the last words of Jesus on earth before his ascension. The literary function of 1:6–8 combines the concepts of a *causal beginning* as an outline of the narrative plot-line;<sup>200</sup> a possible *exposition* which provides information for what follows, and an *introduction* to the beginning of a journey.

The importance of Jesus’s promise-commission as a *foundation* of missional significance is now unexpectedly emphasised. They are his last words on earth before his ascension which now follows having being anticipated in 1:2.

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<sup>191</sup> James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 12–26, citing 24.

<sup>192</sup> Suggested by Daniel R. Schwartz, “The End of the Gê”, *JBL* 105 (1986): 669–76; Johnson, *Acts*, 27, notes that reading earth or land depends on the overall plan of the narrative.

<sup>193</sup> BDAG, ἕως, 422–424, §1, temporal usage at 1:22; 2:35; 7:45; 13:20; 17:26; 23:12, 14, 21; 25:21; 28:23, and §3, spatial usage at 1:8; 8:40; 9:38; 11:19; 17:14; 21:5; 26:11.

<sup>194</sup> ἐσχάτος only occurs three times in Acts with 1:8 and 13:47 being unclear and 2:17 as definitely temporal. Cf. Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 110–12, for a connection between the eschatological and geographical character of mission.

<sup>195</sup> Leslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 64. Cf. Palmer, “Literary Background”, 428; Parsons, *Departure*, 155; Roland Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit: Selected Writings*, ed. David M. Paton (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2006), 5; Pervo, *Acts*, 41; Steve Walton, “What Does ‘Mission’ in Acts Mean in Relation to the ‘Powers That Be?’”, *JETS* 55 (2012): 537–56, citing 539–40; Bale, *Genre*, 151–153.

<sup>196</sup> Bale, *Genre*, 139.

<sup>197</sup> Jervell, *Theology of Acts*, 41; David J. Williams, *Acts*, NIBC 5 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 24.

<sup>198</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 107.

<sup>199</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 66.

<sup>200</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 113.

#### 4.3.2.2 The Ascension (1:9–11)

A forwards reading contains the surprise that Jesus, the story's main character to this point, now suddenly departs so early in the narrative.<sup>201</sup> The conversation begun in 1:4 might have profitably continued with more of the forty days' teaching about the kingdom of God.<sup>202</sup> Scholars debate the role of ascension in Acts<sup>203</sup> as an example of focalisation or point of view at the beginning of the narrative,<sup>204</sup> a preparation for the promised Holy Spirit (1:5, 8), and an epochal change in Jesus's presence with the apostles. Although the ascension is not yet identified as part of Jesus's exaltation, it does, as Sleeman suggests, begin to interpret Acts from a heavenly perspective.<sup>205</sup> In particular it conveys the potential of Jesus ruling over the mission on earth.<sup>206</sup> This will continue until his return (1:11) which is reasonably expected in the succeeding narrative.<sup>207</sup> The imperfect periphrastic participle "as they were gazing into heaven" (1:10)<sup>208</sup> indicates continuous past time and allows the hearer/reader to view the action from within the story.<sup>209</sup>

The observations of Acts' literary shape in the first scene (made up of the ascension and Jesus's commission) are now summarised.

#### 4.3.2.3 Literary Shape in the First Scene

The structural start of Acts broadens as the first scene (1:6–11) develops the first summary (1:1–5). The first scene is a *causal* beginning of the plot, an *exposition* of

<sup>201</sup> This raises again the question of an "absentee Christology". See §2.2.5.6, p.98, n.386.

<sup>202</sup> Chapter Six explores the proposal that narrative theology develops the kingdom of God theme throughout Acts.

<sup>203</sup> E.g. Parsons, *Departure*; Zwiep, *Ascension*; Sleeman, *Geography*. Cf. John F. Maile, "The Ascension in Luke-Acts", *TynBul* 37 (1986): 29–59; Steve Walton, "Ascension of Jesus", in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, Nicholas Perrin, rev. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2013), 59–61; Joel B. Green, "He Ascended into Heaven": Jesus' Ascension in Lukan Perspective, and Beyond", in *Ears That Hear: Explorations in Theological Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green and Tim Meadowcroft (Sheffield: Phoenix, 2013), 130–50.

<sup>204</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 150, 190, contrasts the narrative function of the ascension as an invocation at the beginning in Acts rather than a benediction at the ending in Luke's Gospel (Luke 24:50–53). Cf. Yamasaki, *Watching*, 91–94.

<sup>205</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 63–92, esp. 91–92.

<sup>206</sup> Larkin, "Acts", 380.

<sup>207</sup> Andrew J. Jr. Mattill, *Luke and the Last Things: A Perspective for the Understanding of Lukan Thought*. (Dillsboro: Western North Carolina Press, 1979), 41–54, citing 10:42; 17:31; 24:15, 25. Cf. 1:10–11; 2:20; 3:19[NA<sup>28</sup> 3:20a]–21; 7:55; 13:41; 14:22; 26:6–7, 23; 28:20. Against this Conzelmann, *Theology*, 95–136, 202–20, suggests a replacement of an imminent hope with the ascension and Holy Spirit. For wider scholarship see Bovon, *Fifty-Five Years*, 1–10.

<sup>208</sup> Although ἀτενίζοντες (gazing) is a present participle, the use of an imperfect form of ἐμύει (ἤσαν) creates an imperfect meaning. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 648.

<sup>209</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 176; Uspensky, *Poetics*, 75.



information for the narrative, and an *introduction* emphasising elements for the subsequent narrative.<sup>210</sup> Jesus's commission of the apostles (1:6–8) is a key section setting the missional agenda for what follows. The ascension (1:9–11) fits Freytag's first crisis as *an exciting force*<sup>211</sup> and a possible *launch* commencing the narrative journey.<sup>212</sup> Within a forwards reading the story components, identified in Chapter Two, show the *foundation* of missional significance.

*The literary-spatial component* is not specified, so at this stage, Jerusalem is assumed from 1:4.<sup>213</sup> Israel as a nation, with an unspecified symbolic religious significance, is brought into focus by the apostles' question relating to the kingdom (1:6). However, Jesus's answer outlines an expanding mission movement from Jerusalem, through the unexplained joining of Judaea and Samaria, to the unspecified end of the earth (1:8).

*The literary-temporal component* in 1:7 distinguishes between the chronological χρόνους and the more theological καιρούς. Jesus emphasises that Israel's restoration is through a Holy Spirit empowered witness to the end of the earth. It is possible to view ἐσχάτος temporally as well as spatially, especially with the mention of the Parousia in 1:11. The ascension marks the end of the forty days and suggests a new era is about to begin.

*The character component* retains a focus on Jesus and his apostles until Jesus suddenly and unexpectedly leaves the narrative at the ascension. The story transitions through the two men in white clothes to the apostles.

*The speech component* includes the very significant last words of Jesus (1:6–8) which connect the kingdom, the Holy Spirit, and the mission. The speech of the two men in white is a reminder that whilst one day Jesus is returning, in the meantime a task remains.<sup>214</sup> So far there is no Scripture quotation in Acts' Beginning providing an intertextual component.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 28.

<sup>211</sup> Freytag, *Technique*, 115, 121–25. See Diagram II, p.44.

<sup>212</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 173.

<sup>213</sup> The fact that it is just outside Jerusalem becomes apparent at 1:12. See this chapter p.198.

<sup>214</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:84.

<sup>215</sup> However, as already seen in this chapter there are echoes of OT concepts and references in: (1) the forty days (1:3); (2) the kingdom of God (1:3); (3) Jerusalem (1:4); (4) the promise (1:4); (5) the end of the earth (1:8); and (6) the cloud (1:9).

#### 4.3.2.4 Framing in Acts' Beginning

Not only does the first scene develop a missional *foundation* building on the first summary, but also *framing* and *transitivity* show potential topics for connection to the *culmination* of the final scene/summary (28:16–31). The changes in literary-spatial (Jerusalem to Rome) and character (Jesus and the apostles to Paul) suggest elements of *intransitivity*. The possible framing themes noted in the final scene/summary<sup>216</sup> are now assessed in relation to the first summary/section. These are Jesus, teaching, the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God, Israel, knowledge or lack of it, witness, world-wide mission, last words, triumph, salvation, and Scripture.

The strongest claim to *framing* in the first (1:1–5) and final (28:30–31) summaries are teaching, Jesus, and the kingdom of God. Teaching (1:1; 28:31) suggests that the whole of Acts is for the purpose of catechism in how to be a mission instrument for the kingdom of God. As Parsons puts it, “Jesus is no longer the teacher, but the subject matter, no longer the proclaimer, but the proclaimed”.<sup>217</sup> Jesus is a *framing* theme (1:1; 28:31), although he is not actively present in the ending as he is in the beginning. He is the mission message more than the mission source. Christology develops in Acts with a delayed use of Lord (2:36; cf. 1:6) and Christ (2:31, 36). The kingdom of God (1:3; 28:31) is a further *framing* theme with a second reference (1:6; 28:23) linking to the Holy Spirit and mission. The proposal of a mission instrument for the kingdom of God is tested throughout Acts' narrative and as a *framing* device in Chapter Six.

The references to the Holy Spirit (1:2, 8, 16; 28:25) make a possible *framing* connection.<sup>218</sup> However, this is undermined by the disappearance of the Spirit's explicit active presence after 19:6. Also as already noted the first (1:2) and last (28:25) mentions of the Spirit are indirect connections to the ministry of others (Jesus and Isaiah) rather than direct action. An assessment of the Holy Spirit as a mission source is made in Chapter Five.

Other themes are further from the *start* or *finish*. The restoration of Israel (1:6) possibly is a *framing* with “the hope of Israel” (28:20).<sup>219</sup> Knowledge or the lack of it (1:7) is not a strong connection to 28:26–27.<sup>220</sup> Witness is another key

<sup>216</sup> These were given in Chapter Three (§3.3.2.8, pp.151–52).

<sup>217</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 158.

<sup>218</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 155.

<sup>219</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 148; Bauckham, “Restoration of Israel”, 466.

<sup>220</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3717, what is known differs substantially in the two cases.

theme in Acts,<sup>221</sup> but it only occurs further from the start (1:8) and finish (28:23). Also an application to world-wide mission depends on the unproven interpretations of the ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς (1:8) as meaning Gentiles or Rome. The last words of Jesus (1:6–8) and Paul (28:25–28) do have some correlation and the triumph of the ascension (1:9–11) may link to the last word ἀκωλύτως of 28:31.<sup>222</sup> Major themes near the finish, but not the start, are salvation (28:28), but only at 2:21, and Scripture (28:26), but only relatively late at 1:20.

The blurring of Acts' Beginning mean that the themes slide from the first summary (1:1–5) and the first scene (1:6–11) into the first "Act" (1:12–8:3).

#### 4.3.3 The First "Act" (1:12–8:3)

A wider scope for delimitation beyond 1:1–11 allows a continuing search for how literary shape reveals the *foundation* of missional significance. A synopsis is appropriate due to the size of the first "Act". The *oblique* new beginning starts from 1:12 and records the formation of God's mission instrument as a remnant from within Israel. Located entirely in Jerusalem, the story is one of early success and growth alongside both Jewish resistance and internal church struggles. The similarly sized "Act I" and "Act V"<sup>223</sup> form the contrasting narrative book-ends of success and suffering. There is a growing sense of *complication* in Acts' Beginning with the interweaving of successes and set-backs.

Further connections and development in Acts' narrative are seen through forwards reading, literary sections, structure elements, a midpoint at 4:26, and story components. The seven sections are the reconstitution of the Twelve (1:12–26), Pentecost (2:1–47), healing of the lame man (3:1–26), Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (4:1–31), Ananias and Sapphira (4:32–5:16), the apostles before the Sanhedrin (5:17–42), and Stephen (6:1–8:3).<sup>224</sup> Of particular interest is discovering how each section connects to the preceding one. The structural and story reasons for finishing Acts' Beginning at 8:3 were demonstrated in Chapter Two.<sup>225</sup>

Reading forwards from 1:11 the first section is the reconstitution of the Twelve.

<sup>221</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 144, 153–154.

<sup>222</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 158.

<sup>223</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.4.2, p.73–74).

<sup>224</sup> See Appendix III, p.385.

<sup>225</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.4.2, p.70).

#### 4.3.3.1 The Reconstitution of the Twelve (1:12–26)

This section receives a surprising prominence due to its literary size and sequence. Its literary size is the largest of any event so far in Acts' Beginning and by comparison the ascension receives very little textual attention.<sup>226</sup> Its literary sequence places the reconstitution<sup>227</sup> of the Twelve (apostles) as important to the *foundation*, even if scholars often overlook it.<sup>228</sup> The section fits Freytag's first crisis (*exciting force*)<sup>229</sup> and is a possible second *launch*<sup>230</sup> connecting the ascension and Pentecost. The key foundational elements are the transition of the new community's prayer in Jerusalem (1:12–14), Peter's first speech (1:15–22) with two quotations of Scripture (1:20), and the appointment of Matthias (1:17–26).

Scholars do not sufficiently consider the literary function of 1:12–14 as a transition from the ascension to the replacement of Judas.<sup>231</sup> The use of *τότε* in 1:12 and *καί* in 1:15 means 1:12–14 has both backwards and forwards connections.<sup>232</sup> The use of imperfect periphrastic participles "they were waiting" (1:13) and "were continuing steadfastly" (1:14) allow the hearer/reader to enter the story.<sup>233</sup> The literary-spatial component 1:12–14 contains the surprise that the earlier events have actually taken place outside (albeit a small distance) Jerusalem.<sup>234</sup> This suggests a separation from the religious centre with the "Sabbath day's journey" (1:12) implying religious restrictions.<sup>235</sup> The ascension is now noted as taking place from the symbolically elevated "mount called olive grove"<sup>236</sup> without drawing on its evocative connotations from the Old Testament,<sup>237</sup> Rabbinic teaching,<sup>238</sup> or Jesus.<sup>239</sup>

<sup>226</sup> The replacement of Judas (1:15–26) has 221 words, the opening commission (1:1–8), 152 words, the ascension (1:9–11), 63 words, and prayer (1:12–14), 69 words.

<sup>227</sup> The term "reconstitution" is borrowed from Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 217.

<sup>228</sup> Exceptions include Zwiep, *Judas*; Nelson P. Estrada, *From Followers to Leaders: The Apostles in the Ritual of Status Transformation in Acts 1–2*, JSNTSup 255 (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

<sup>229</sup> Freytag, *Technique*, 115, 121–25. See Diagram II, p.44.

<sup>230</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 173.

<sup>231</sup> For an exception see Pervo, *Acts*, 46, noting that lists in Acts signal an important transition (1:13; 6:5; 13:1; 20:4).

<sup>232</sup> Longenecker, "Acts", 722, an introduction to what follows.

<sup>233</sup> See the previous discussion on the use of imperfect periphrastic participles at 1:10 (§4.3.2.2, p.194, n.208 and 209).

<sup>234</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 82.

<sup>235</sup> Zwiep, *Ascension*, 108; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:86; Oliver, *Torah Praxis*, 194–204; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 105, notes that the Sabbath day's journey was 2,000 cubits or six furlongs (almost one kilometre) based on Exod 16:29 interpreted by Num. 35:5.

<sup>236</sup> Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 102, a predicate genitive.

<sup>237</sup> The location of an eschatological battle (Zech 14:4).

<sup>238</sup> The place of the final resurrection. Zwiep, *Ascension*, 108.

<sup>239</sup> The place of Jesus's triumphal entrance (Luke 19:29–44). Cf. Sleeman, *Geography*, 82. A place of prayer and disciple's failure (Luke 21:37; 22:39). Cf. Parsons, *Departure*, 196.

The idea of an elevated point between heaven and earth carries into the topographical “upper room” (τὸ ὑπερῶον) (1:13).<sup>240</sup> The list of eleven apostles (1:13) hints that something is amiss in the omission of Judas.<sup>241</sup> Nelson Estrada suggests that the commission of 1:8 turns the followers of Jesus into leaders<sup>242</sup> of a new *ὁμοθυμαδόν* (together, united, in one purpose)<sup>243</sup> community (1:14) including women<sup>244</sup> and Jesus’s family.<sup>245</sup> The group engages in the first mention of “the prayer” (τῇ προσευχῇ) (1:14)<sup>246</sup> which suggests a connection, within a symbolic elevated place, between the apostles and the ascended Jesus. The content of the prayer is not given, but scholars suggest that it is for the Holy Spirit,<sup>247</sup> the kingdom of God, and mission.<sup>248</sup>

So far the story proceeds towards the anticipated coming of the Holy Spirit, but the temporal phrase “in these days” (ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις)<sup>249</sup> marks a literary transition to a new surprising<sup>250</sup> and strategic<sup>251</sup> phase (1:15). The character focus narrows to Peter as the leader of the apostles (1:15)<sup>252</sup> and a significant one hundred and twenty (1:15).<sup>253</sup> Peter’s first speech (1:15–22)<sup>254</sup> adds to the *foundation* of missional significance by joining the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and the reconstitution of the Twelve.

<sup>240</sup> BDAG, ὑπερῶον, 1034. Sleeman, *Geography*, 82. Parsons, *Departure*, 196, links to the different word ἀνάγαιον (Luke 22:12) as suggestive of the same place. Other occurrences of elevated places in Acts are considered in Chapter Five (e.g. 9:37–39, the rooftop in Acts 10; and 20:8).

<sup>241</sup> Parsons, “Origins”, 405.

<sup>242</sup> Estrada, *Followers to Leaders*, ix.

<sup>243</sup> Steve Walton, “Ὁμοθυμαδόν in Acts. Co-location, Common Action or ‘Of One Heart and Mind’?”, in *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B. W. Winter on His 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, ed. Peter J. William, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 89–105, esp. 104–105; Estrada, *Followers to Leaders*, 136–148.

<sup>244</sup> The first mention in Acts. Keener, *Acts*, 1:746–749.

<sup>245</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:749, notes that though not mentioned here by name, this includes James (brother of Jesus) who later in the narrative has a leadership role in Jerusalem.

<sup>246</sup> BDAG, προσευχή, 878–79, as activity or place of prayer. Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 106, a prayer service or meeting. The theme of prayer runs throughout Acts.

<sup>247</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:750, cites 4:31, 8:15 and 13:2, but only 8:15 is specifically prayer for the Holy Spirit.

<sup>248</sup> Allison A. Trites, “The Prayer Motif in Luke-Acts”, in Talbert, *Perspectives*, 168–186.

<sup>249</sup> An exploration of Acts’ Literary Temporal Component includes the use of ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις. See Diagram VII, p.94.

<sup>250</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 38, notes that it interrupts the natural flow.

<sup>251</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 48.

<sup>252</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 116; Zwiep, *Judas*, 130.

<sup>253</sup> The number of men required for establishing a Jewish community. See *m. Sanh*, 1.6; 4:172; Brad Blue, “The Influence of Jewish Worship on Luke’s Presentation of the Early Church”, in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 473–498, citing 480; Estrada, *Followers to Leaders*, 180–181; Parsons, “Origins”, 406, points out that in the newly formed community women count.

<sup>254</sup> For an introduction to Peter’s speeches see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.7, p.107) and Diagram IX, p.106.

Insufficient scholarly attention is given to the conjunction of the Holy Spirit and Scripture<sup>255</sup> which also appears near Acts' *finish* in 28:25.<sup>256</sup> The promise of the Holy Spirit empowering (1:8) is placed within a wider pneumatological framework of Jesus's teaching (1:2a), the apostles (1:2b), the question about the kingdom (1:6), and now the Scriptures (1:16). This suggests a potential indirect activity of the Holy Spirit through the mission instrument. However, there is also a hint that the Holy Spirit activity is in the past rather than experienced in the present.

A sense of fulfilment<sup>257</sup> and divine necessity<sup>258</sup> connects the Old Testament Scriptures with Judas (1:16). The parenthetical telling of Judas's act of betrayal and subsequent death (1:18–19) reminds the hearer/reader how shocking the event was for the apostles.<sup>259</sup> The first Scripture quotations of Acts' intertextual framework (Psalms 69:25; 109:8)<sup>260</sup> are interpreted in relation to the replacement of Judas. This is not due to his death, but his failure in the apostolic mission.<sup>261</sup> Timothy Wiarda argues that the emphasis on these details illustrates how narrative theology focuses on the reconstitution of the Twelve,<sup>262</sup> even if the restoration of Israel and missional significance is not made explicit.<sup>263</sup> Chapter Six explores this further in relation to the kingdom of God.<sup>264</sup>

The apostolic role is described as “a witness” (μάρτυρα) “to his (Jesus's) resurrection” (1:22) confirming the two themes already mentioned.<sup>265</sup> Continuing prayer (1:24)<sup>266</sup> to the Lord<sup>267</sup> connects the ascension to the appointment of Matthias who is chosen instead of Joseph Barsabbas.<sup>268</sup> The use of lots retains an Old

<sup>255</sup> For an exception see Bonnah, *Holy Spirit*, 210–266.

<sup>256</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.2.3, p.145).

<sup>257</sup> This is the first use of the fulfilment concept which appears throughout Acts. Johnson, *Acts*, 35, notes that “fulfilled” is a classic expression of early Christian conviction concerning prophecy.

<sup>258</sup> Acts 1:16, 21. This is the first usage of the divine δει which appears throughout Acts. See the discussion in Chapter Three (§3.3.3.5, p.155, n.293).

<sup>259</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 220. Cf. Zwiep, *Judas*, 103–25, for the three stories of Judas's death (Matthew, Luke and Papias) in circulation in the first and second centuries AD, with Luke reporting it in the context of the replacement of the twelfth apostle.

<sup>260</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>261</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 109; Zwiep, *Judas*, 150–154.

<sup>262</sup> Timothy Wiarda, *Interpreting Gospel Narratives: Scenes, People and Theology* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 58–67.

<sup>263</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 220–21; Wall, “Acts”, 48; Johnson, *Acts*, 38; Zwiep, *Judas*, 173–179; Peterson, *Acts*, 126; Stevens, *Acts*, 152–53.

<sup>264</sup> See §6.4.2, pp.334–35.

<sup>265</sup> The witness at 1:8 and resurrection at 1:3.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. prayer at 1:14.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. the Lord at 1:6.

<sup>268</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:129–131, argue that Joseph Barsabbas is the preferred choice by his forefronting and extended information.

Testament context and leaves the final choice to God.<sup>269</sup> Scholars debate whether the appointment of Matthias is a premature mistake prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit.<sup>270</sup> However, the narrative gives no hint of this,<sup>271</sup> but rather presents the reconstitution of the Twelve as necessary for the restoration of Israel as a mission instrument and a positive preparation for the eschatological expectancy of the Holy Spirit about to be poured out (1:4–8). At the same time, as Dunn suggests, the oddity of the event may hint at some underlying deficiencies.<sup>272</sup> It remains to be seen whether Matthias along with the Twelve fulfil their mission purpose.<sup>273</sup>

The stage is set for the next section which sees the fulfilment of the promised Spirit which was given attention in advance (1:8).<sup>274</sup>

#### 4.3.3.2 Pentecost (2:1–47)

Scholars do not sufficiently recognise the connection of this section with what precedes. The ascension and reconstitution of the Twelve combine as a *foundation* for the coming of the Spirit, the resulting mission, and the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. It becomes apparent that there is a temporal gap of ten days from the ascension (1:10–11). As previously observed, the καί of 2:1 gives 1:1–2:4 a complete literary structural unity as preliminary for what follows.<sup>275</sup> However, since this produces an unnatural story break, this study joins the event (2:1–4) to the outcome (2:5–13), explanation in Peter’s speech (2:14–36), and the result (2:37–47).

The concept of “fulfilled” (συμπληροῦσθαι) (2:1) suggests a possible theological fulfilment<sup>276</sup> as well as a temporal completion. Pentecost is the Jewish feast which celebrates the wheat-harvest as a “day of first-fruits” fifty days after the Passover.<sup>277</sup> However, Acts makes no explicit Old Testament connections to a new

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<sup>269</sup> Estrada, *Followers to Leaders*, 151–165; 185–86. Cf. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:92; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 112. However, Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:133–34, suggest the giving of the lots implies a more conventional vote.

<sup>270</sup> For the suggestion that Paul was to be the twelfth apostle see Bale, *Genre*, 174–77.

<sup>271</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 47; Keener, *Acts*, 1:753.

<sup>272</sup> Dunn, *Beginning*, 151–155. Cf. Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:136–139.

<sup>273</sup> Bale, *Genre*, 174–177.

<sup>274</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:13.

<sup>275</sup> Levinsohn, *Connections*, 104–105.

<sup>276</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 131. Cf. Acts 1:16.

<sup>277</sup> Exod 23:16; Lev 23:15–21; and Deut 16:9–12. Haenchen, *Acts*, 174; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 49–50.

creation,<sup>278</sup> a possible reversal of Babel,<sup>279</sup> a renewal of the Sinai covenant,<sup>280</sup> or the symbols of wind<sup>281</sup> and fire<sup>282</sup> as connotations of God's presence. Pentecost is both an eschatological fulfilment<sup>283</sup> and is probably paradigmatic for what follows<sup>284</sup> in the gospel harvest.<sup>285</sup>

The first corporate Holy Spirit outpouring fulfils the promises of a baptism (1:5) and a coming upon (1:8) with a filling in 2:4. Scholars debate the terminology, the extent of full or partial fulfilment, and the connection with salvation, mission, or both. These issues are dealt with when summarising under the mission source later in this chapter.<sup>286</sup> At this stage in forwards reading the Holy Spirit initiates the mission which is expected to continue throughout the rest of Acts.<sup>287</sup> I offer an original nuanced interpretation that the Holy Spirit empowering both enables the witness of a reconstituted remnant of Israel (1:12–26) and also the nation/church to be an instrument for worldwide mission. Scholars debate whether the “speaking in tongues” (γλώσσαις) are ecstatic,<sup>288</sup> prophetic speech,<sup>289</sup> a miracle of hearing,<sup>290</sup> human languages,<sup>291</sup> and only for the apostles.<sup>292</sup> Since the result is a widespread communication of “the great deeds of God” (2:11), the supernatural tongues appear

<sup>278</sup> Luther, *Luther's Works*, 22.318; Mihoc, “Inceptive Ecclesiology”, 63–64, 66–67.

<sup>279</sup> Gen 11:1–9. Ambrose, *Sermo*, 36.2; Calvin, *Acts*, 2.2; Kirsopp Lake, “The Gift of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost”, in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1939), 5.111–21, citing 114–15; Joseph G. Muthuraj, “Mission and Universalism in Luke-Acts”, *IJT* 39 (1997): 56–66, citing 62–64; Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 78; Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 40–41.

<sup>280</sup> Exod 19:1–20:21. Dupont, “La nouvelle Pentecôte (Ac 2, 1–11)”, in *Nouvelles études*, 193; Dunn, *Baptism*, 47–49; Turner, *Power*, 280–289; Thompson, *One Lord*, 83–88; See Menzies, *Empowered*, 189–201, for a critical assessment of the Sinai connection.

<sup>281</sup> E.g. 1 Kgs 19:11–12; Ezek 37:9–14. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:113.

<sup>282</sup> E.g. Gen 15:17; Exod 3:2–5; 13:21–22; 14:24; 19:18; 24:17; Deut 4:12, 24, 33, 36; 5:4; 10:4; 1 Kgs 19:12; 2 Kgs 2:11. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:114–15.

<sup>283</sup> Arie W. Zwiep, “Luke's Understanding of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit”, in *Christ, the Spirit and the Community of God: Essays on the Acts of the Apostles*, WUNT 2.293 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 100–119, citing 108–9.

<sup>284</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 157.

<sup>285</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 237; Uytanlet, *Luke-Acts*, 238–39; Stevens, *Acts*, 50–71.

<sup>286</sup> See §4.4, pp.220–23.

<sup>287</sup> H. von Baer, *Der heilige Geist in den Lukasschriften* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926), 103; Menzies, *Empowered*, 34; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:26.

<sup>288</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 59.

<sup>289</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:793–94.

<sup>290</sup> Dunn, *Beginning*, 159.

<sup>291</sup> John Chrysostom, *Hom. Act*, 4 (Acts 2.1–2), (Schaff, 41); John H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (Cleveland: World, 1968), 60–62; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 74–75; Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 52–56.

<sup>292</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 92.



more missional than ecclesiastical at this point.<sup>293</sup> The phrase “every nation (ἐθνους) under the heaven” is possibly symbolic of a universal mission<sup>294</sup> which embraces even Rome (2:10). However, there is no hint that this is the final location of Acts. Rather, the focus in Acts’ Beginning is on the Diaspora Jews as a reversal of the Exile.<sup>295</sup>

Peter’s authoritative and foundational prophetic speech (2:14–40)<sup>296</sup> receives emphasis due to it being two and a half times longer than the narrative event which it explains.<sup>297</sup> From a literary perspective the speech is a delayed *exposition*.<sup>298</sup> Peter explains the Pentecost event by quoting Joel 2:28–32 (2:17–21). The slight changes to the LXX<sup>299</sup> emphasise the Holy Spirit outpouring as an eschatological promise with the “last days” (2:17),<sup>300</sup> prophetic activity (2:17–18),<sup>301</sup> and “signs and wonders” (2:19).<sup>302</sup> Meek interprets the quotation as anticipatory for Gentile mission through the reference to “all flesh” (2:17), the male and female slaves (2:18), and “everyone who invokes the name of the Lord will be saved” (2:21).<sup>303</sup> The significant first mentions of “the name”<sup>304</sup> and salvation<sup>305</sup> in Acts confirm the mission emphasis. The speech’s shift from pneumatology to Christology<sup>306</sup> focuses

<sup>293</sup> In contrast to ecclesiastical use in 1 Cor 12–14. Muthuraj, “Mission”, 61–64; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 74–75; Wall, “Acts”, 55; Thiselton, *Holy Spirit*, 52–55; Keener, *Acts*, 1:793–94; Walton, “Mission of God”, 9.

<sup>294</sup> F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931), 11; Rosner, “Progress”, 218, as larger than the Roman Empire; Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church”, 419–422; James M. Scott, “Acts 2:9–11 As an Anticipation of the Mission to the Nations”, in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles*, ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein, WUNT 127 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 87–123.

<sup>295</sup> 1 Chron 16:35; Ps 106:47; Zech 8:7; Isa 2:2; 11:12; 49:6 and 66:18. Stevens, *Acts*, 170. It is unclear whether the Jews are visitors or residents in Jerusalem since κατοικέω (2:5) or ἐπιδημέω (2:10) can mean either. Cf. BDAG, κατοικέω, 534; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:118–19, 121–124; Witherington, *Acts*, 135; BDAG, ἐπιδημέω, 370. However, from a literary perspective no Jews leave Jerusalem until 8:1.

<sup>296</sup> Padilla, *Acts*, 153, that “together with the Eleven” suggests official authority and ἀποφθέγγομαι (2:14) means prophetic speech as in LXX (1 Chron 25:1).

<sup>297</sup> The event of the Holy Spirit outpouring (2:1–13) is 194 words and the explanation in Peter’s speech (2:14b–36, 38b, 39, 40b) is 481 words. Parsons, “Origins”, 408.

<sup>298</sup> Cocksworth, “Beginnings”, 174.

<sup>299</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, 178–89; Turner, *Power*, 269–70; Keener, *Acts*, 1:874–76.

<sup>300</sup> This replaces “after these things” in LXX (Joel 2:28). Van de Sandt, “Minor Prophets in Luke-Acts”, in *The Minor Prophets in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, LNTS 377 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 73–77, citing 63; Keener, *Acts*, 1:877–81.

<sup>301</sup> The emphasis on prophecy is increased by the addition of “they will prophesy” in 2:18 forming an inclusio with 2:17c. Turner, *Power*, 270.

<sup>302</sup> The addition of “signs” to wonders in 2:19 (cf. Joel 2:30) possibly preparing for 2:22. Turner, *Power*, 270. See an introduction to this theme in Chapter Two as part of the mission means (§2.2.6.4, p.125, n.626).

<sup>303</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 95–113, with 2:21.

<sup>304</sup> The theme of “the name” is explored throughout this chapter and Chapter Five.

<sup>305</sup> The theme of salvation has already been explored for Acts’ Ending in Chapter Three (§3.4, p.167, n.378) and is further explored in this chapter and Chapter Five.

<sup>306</sup> Padilla, *Acts*, 154.

the meaning of the Pentecost event on Jesus and especially the resurrection from 2:22 onwards.<sup>307</sup> The quotations from Psalm 16:8–11 (2:25–28) and 110:1 (2:34–35) confirm the exaltation of Jesus through the resurrection,<sup>308</sup> ascension,<sup>309</sup> or probably both.<sup>310</sup> He is the ultimate prophet (2:30), Lord, interchangeably with יהוה (YHWH),<sup>311</sup> and Christ<sup>312</sup> for the first time in Acts (2:31). The witness to the resurrection (2:32) leads to a declaration of the kingship of Jesus linked to the pouring out of the Spirit (2:33). The conclusion of the speech in 2:36 declares both an initiation<sup>313</sup> and a confirmation<sup>314</sup> of Jesus as Lord and Christ.

The speech's triple closure in 2:36, 39, and 40 links Jesus, the calling of God,<sup>315</sup> and salvation. The first interruption brings a closing emphasis<sup>316</sup> on a call to repentance (2:38), baptism (presumably with water)<sup>317</sup> in "the name of Jesus Christ", forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38). This combination is usually interpreted as connecting the Holy Spirit to salvation.<sup>318</sup> However, it may also refer to empowerment,<sup>319</sup> or at least the formation of a mission instrument, since this has been Acts' pneumatological emphasis up to this point with reference to a worldwide mission at 1:8.<sup>320</sup> In Robert Menzies's words, "the church is a prophetic community

<sup>307</sup> Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 201–218.

<sup>308</sup> Maile, "Ascension"; Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 46–47; Zwiep, *Ascension*, 144–166.

<sup>309</sup> Gerhard Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesus: Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrtsund Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* (Munich: Kosel, 1971), 244, 276–283; Eric Franklin, *Christ the Lord: A Study in the Purpose and Theology of Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 30–45.

<sup>310</sup> J. H. Lygre, "Exaltation Considered with Reference to the Resurrection and Ascension" (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1975), 205.

<sup>311</sup> Acts 2:20; 2:25; 2:34, 36 and 2:39. Keener, *Acts*, 1:920–23; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 128, notes that the title "Lord" is applied to Jesus with a higher value than the strict exegesis of Ps. 110:1 would imply. It is not inferior in dignity to the ineffable name of God.

<sup>312</sup> Chapter Three noted the importance of this title in relation to mission (see §3.3.1.3, p.137–38) and it is further explored throughout both this present chapter and Chapter Five.

<sup>313</sup> Arie W. Zwiep, "Jesus Made Both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36): Some Reflections on the Altitude of Lukan Christology", in *Christ*, 139–156.

<sup>314</sup> Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 218.

<sup>315</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 103–104, 108–110, as further evidence of the Gentile mission.

<sup>316</sup> Smith, *Rhetoric of Interruption*, 218–21. The idea of speech interruption was introduced in Chapter Two (see §2.2.5.7, p.105).

<sup>317</sup> Acts 2:38, 41; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:3 use baptism in an unspecified manner leading to ambiguity whether water-baptism or Spirit-baptism is referred to. The assumption is that unspecified baptism is water-baptism. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 369–71; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 69–70, takes the view that water-baptism and Spirit-baptism are connected.

<sup>318</sup> E.g. Parsons, "Origins", 410; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 71; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 264; Haenchen, *Acts*, 184; Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:277; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:125; Peterson, *Acts*, 155–56; Dunn, *Acts*, 33; Turner, *Power*, 358–60.

<sup>319</sup> Keener, *Spirit*, 197. Keener, *Acts*, 1:984–88.

<sup>320</sup> Also Acts 1:2 (apostles chosen and commanded), 5 (Jesus's mission and baptism with the Holy Spirit), and 15 (reconstitution of the Twelve symbolising Israel as a mission instrument). Robert P. Menzies, "The Spirit of Prophecy: Luke-Acts and Pentecostal Theology: A Response to Max Turner, *JPT* 15 (1999): 59–74.

with a missionary task”.<sup>321</sup> Some scholars argue that the “gift” is the Holy Spirit himself, rather than a gift which the Holy Spirit gives.<sup>322</sup> However, the genitive can mean either. The outpourings in Acts join the Holy Spirit with his accompanying gifts. In fact the gift and the promise (2:33, 39) link back to the mission and Pentecost through 1:4 and 1:8.<sup>323</sup> At this stage the exact connection and sequence between repentance, water-baptism, forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit is unclear.<sup>324</sup> I propose that a possible solution is to distinguish between the closely linked aspects of salvation and the formation of the mission instrument, e.g. whilst salvation involves repentance and forgiveness, this is separated in 2:38 from a future gift of the Holy Spirit. Water-baptism as a church-entrance rite in Acts joins salvation and the formation of the mission instrument.<sup>325</sup> The overall corporate rather than individual application of 2:38–39 suggests a formation of the mission instrument<sup>326</sup> and the reference to “your children” suggests a prophetic empowerment as with the sons and daughters in 2:17. Significantly, there is no mention of any immediate explicit Holy Spirit activity,<sup>327</sup> even though scholars suggest this is present in the life-style of the community.<sup>328</sup>

The Pentecost event and speech confirm the missional significance begun in Acts 1. The speech has crucial hermeneutical keys which are programmatic for the rest of Acts’ narrative.<sup>329</sup> The speech, called a *λόγος* (2:41) with possible latent connotations to “the Word of God”,<sup>330</sup> is welcomed<sup>331</sup> and the outcome is the

<sup>321</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, 204.

<sup>322</sup> E.g. Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 71; Peterson, *Acts*, 15.

<sup>323</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, 203.

<sup>324</sup> See Chapter Five (§5.4, p.298), for the connection in Acts 8, 10 and 19. For a discussion of the complex relationship see Beverley Roberts Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 97; Menzies, *Empowered*, 203–204; Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 59–61; Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 369–71.

<sup>325</sup> Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 86, 99, suggests that the passive *βαπτισθήτω* (2:38) is an initiation process involving acceptance by the Christian community.

<sup>326</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:191.

<sup>327</sup> A forwards reading will continue to watch for the fulfilment of the promise. Cf. Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of a Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 96–97.

<sup>328</sup> Acts 2:42–47. Turner, *Power*, 359.

<sup>329</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 383; Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 238; Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfilment in Lukan Christology*, JSNTSup 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 148–49; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:160–162, 165; Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 196.

<sup>330</sup> Cf. Acts 1:1 where a similar connotation was previously proposed in this chapter (see §4.3.1.1, pp.179–80).

<sup>331</sup> Cf. the welcome Paul gives in 28:30 (see §3.3.1.5, p.139). However, 2:41 is too far from Acts’ start to be a clear *framing* or *transitivity* concept.

formation of a sizeable group of three thousand as a model community (2:42–47).<sup>332</sup> The community's life is a *foundation* for mission with the fact that “the Lord added the ones being saved” (2:47) suggesting the divine activity of a *missio Dei*.

The themes of the temple, the prayer, and Peter (3:1) continue in the following section.

#### 4.3.3.3 Healing of the Lame Man (3:1–26)

A single event is chosen to develop the *foundation* of missional significance.<sup>333</sup> The location is at the spatially significant Jerusalem temple at the heart of Israel's religion.<sup>334</sup> To begin with there is a positive view of the temple in prayer, proclamation, and God's presence.<sup>335</sup> However, the inclusio of the temple gate<sup>336</sup> contrasts its beauty with the exclusion of the congenitally lame man.<sup>337</sup> The temple system's impotence contrasts with healing in “the name of Jesus” (3:6).<sup>338</sup>

Peter's explanatory speech interprets the healing<sup>339</sup> with reference to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (3:13); the Holy and Righteous One (3:14); the resurrection (3:15); the times of refreshing and restoration (3:19[NA<sup>28</sup> 3:20a]–21) linked to 1:6–7;<sup>340</sup> “the name of Jesus” (3:16); Christ as the prophet whom Moses said was to be listened to (3:22–23);<sup>341</sup> and the world-wide blessing promised through Abraham's seed (3:25). The latter quotation from Genesis 22:18 and 26:4 prepares for the Gentile mission<sup>342</sup> through the seed which is a mission instrument. This clearly applies to Christ, but also extends to Israel and the church if the seed is taken as a collective noun.<sup>343</sup> The slight changes from the LXX keep the focus on the

<sup>332</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:162; Thompson, *Church*, 111–115; Keener, *Acts*, 1:991–1038; Witherington, *Acts*, 163; Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 135; Thompson, *One Lord*, 63–74; Mihoc, “Inceptive Ecclesiology”, 74–76.

<sup>333</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 150.

<sup>334</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 105.

<sup>335</sup> Prayer (2:46; 3:1; Cf. 21:21), proclamation (3:11) and God's presence (3:1–10; Cf. 22:17–21). See Walton, “Temple in Acts”, 136–138. Cf. Turner, *Temple*, 18–42, 54–67.

<sup>336</sup> Acts 3:2 and 3:10. Pervo, *Acts*, 101.

<sup>337</sup> Contra those who make the beauty of the gate a positive connection, e.g. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 278, to the beauty of the healing; and Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:211, to the beauty of the garden of Eden (Gen 2:9; 3:6).

<sup>338</sup> Daniel Marguerat, “The Resurrection and its Witnesses in the Book of Acts”, in Walton, et al., *Reading Acts*, 171–185, citing 175.

<sup>339</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 71.

<sup>340</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:15, 55, the verb ἀποκαθιστάνω (1:6) and noun ἀποκατάτασις (3:21) together with χρόνοι (times in 1:6, 7; 3:21) καιροί (seasons in 1:7; 3:29 [NA<sup>28</sup> 3:20a]).

<sup>341</sup> The quotation of Deut 18:15, 18–19.

<sup>342</sup> Mallen, “Genesis”, 70–71, that the quotation also resembles Gen 12:3; 18:18; 28:14. Cf. Wilson, *Gentiles* 114–129; Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 130.

<sup>343</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 123–124;

mission instrument rather than mission by fore-fronting “your seed” before the worldwide blessing and also having “all the families of the earth” instead of “all the nations of the earth”.<sup>344</sup> The implication is that the healing of the lame man symbolises the restoration of Israel.

Peter’s speech brings a reaction from the temple authorities.

#### 4.3.3.4 Peter and John before the Jewish leaders (4:1–31)

Suffering connected to witness is added to Acts’ Beginning alongside the success of an increase in those believing to around five thousand (4:4). The existing religious leaders challenge Peter and John, as the leaders of a restored Israel,<sup>345</sup> about their connection to the power and “the name” (4:7).<sup>346</sup> The *foundation* of missional significance is restated with Peter notably filled with the Holy Spirit as the power for prophetic witness (4:8)<sup>347</sup> and the healing being attributed to “the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” (4:10). Quoting Psalm 118:22 (4:11), Peter makes it clear that salvation is only found in “the name of Jesus” (4:12). The picture of rebuilding the temple or nation upon Jesus as the cornerstone or capstone points in the wider context of Psalm 118 to the restoration of Israel. The Sanhedrin note the boldness<sup>348</sup> of Peter and John (4:13) who refuse to be silenced (4:19–20).

As the story progresses, clear hints emerge that the healing of the lame man is a foundational symbolic picture for the restoration of Israel.<sup>349</sup> Leaping (3:8–9) echoes Isaiah 35:6,<sup>350</sup> the healing is salvation (σώζω) (4:9) as preparation for 4:12,<sup>351</sup> Jesus the Messiah heals the lame (4:10, 13),<sup>352</sup> the healing is a “known or knowable

<sup>344</sup> Mallen, “Genesis”, 71. Keener, *Acts*, 2:1120.

<sup>345</sup> Following the reconstitution of the Twelve in 1:12–26 (see previously in this chapter, §4.3.3.1, pp.198–201). Cf. David Seccombe, “The New People of God”, in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 349–372, citing 354–55; Johnson, *Acts*, 79–81.

<sup>346</sup> Power already linked to the Holy Spirit (1:8) and “the name” to Jesus Christ (2:38).

<sup>347</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 300.

<sup>348</sup> See Chapter Two for introduction to boldness as a mission means (§2.2.6.4, p.124).

<sup>349</sup> Bede, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Lawrence T. Martin, CSS 117 (Kalamazoo: Cisterian Publications, 1989), 3.2a; Bauckham, “Restoration of Israel”, 481–82, notes that Israel are described as lame in Mic 4:6, 7; Zeph 3:19; Isa 35:6; Wall, “Acts”, 77–78; Peterson, *Acts*, 165; Tannehill, *Shape*, 187; Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 219; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts: The Subversion of Physiognomy in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 109–122, esp. 121.

<sup>350</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 279; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:52; Johnson, *Acts*, 66.

<sup>351</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:61.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. Luke 5:17–26; 7:22; 14:13. Tannehill, *Shape*, 204.

sign” (4:16),<sup>353</sup> and the forty years of the man’s lameness (4:22) possibly evokes Israel’s wilderness journey.<sup>354</sup>

A further addition to the *foundation* of missional significance is made by the model prayer (4:23–30). A *missio Dei* to the whole world is suggested by the prayer being addressed to the “master or owner” (δέσποτα)<sup>355</sup> as Creator of “the heaven and the sea and all things in them” (4:24)<sup>356</sup> and Controller of history (4:28).<sup>357</sup> The underlying kingdom of God and mission themes mean a further exploration of the prayer takes place in Chapter Six of this study.<sup>358</sup> The structural midpoint of “Act I” is the quotation of Psalm 2:1–2 with the Holy Spirit’s indirect activity of speaking through King David (4:25–26).<sup>359</sup> The Psalm significantly stands as at the entrance of all the Psalms with a reference to God’s Christ (Χριστός), King, and Son.<sup>360</sup> The opposition towards Jesus and the apostles (4:27–29a) results in missional significance in a request for boldness<sup>361</sup> to speak “the word” with accompanying signs and wonders<sup>362</sup> through “the name of Jesus”<sup>363</sup> (4:29b–30). The result is a shaking suggestive of God’s presence,<sup>364</sup> a filling with the Spirit fulfilling the promise of 2:38–39 (cf. 2:4), and a bold speaking of “the Word of God” (4:31).<sup>365</sup>

The narrative of specific events (3:1–4:31) reveals the restored model community of Israel<sup>366</sup> as part of the *foundation* of missional significance. A second summary book-ends the narrative (4:32–35; cf. 2:42–47) followed by a further specific event of Satan’s opposition within the community.

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<sup>353</sup> BDAG, γνώσις, 204.

<sup>354</sup> Exod 16:35; Num 14:33, 34; 32:13; Deut 2:7; 8:2–4; 29:5; Josh 5:6; Ps 95:10. See also Acts 7:36. Spencer, *Acts*, 52; Sleeman, *Geography*, 106. For other forty year periods in Acts which are possibly evoked by 4:22 see Moses’s forty years in the Midian desert (7:30) and King Saul’s forty year reign (13:21).

<sup>355</sup> BDAG, δέσποτης, 220. Witherington, *Acts*, 201.

<sup>356</sup> Hays, *Echoes in Gospels*, 269–70, notes the links to Exod 20:11 and Ps 146:6.

<sup>357</sup> Stephen F. Plymale, *The Prayer Texts of Luke-Acts*, AUS 7.118 (New York: Lang, 1991), 84.

<sup>358</sup> See §6.4.2, p.336–37.

<sup>359</sup> Cf. The previous discoveries of the Holy Spirit’s indirect past activity speaking through David (1:16) (see §4.3.3.1, p.200) and Isaiah (28:25) (see §3.4, pp.167–68).

<sup>360</sup> Ps 2:2, 6, 7, 12.

<sup>361</sup> Cf. Acts 4:13 (see §4.3.3.4, p.208).

<sup>362</sup> Cf. Acts 2:19 (see §4.3.3.2, p.203).

<sup>363</sup> Cf. Acts 2:21, 38; 4:10, 12, 17.

<sup>364</sup> Exod 19:18; Judg 5:5; Ps 18:7; 68:8; 77:18; Isa 29:6; Jer 4:24; Hag 2:6. Also linked to Jesus’s death (Matt 27:51–54), resurrection (Matt 28:2) and Parousia (Luke 21:11; Rev 11:13; 16:18). Plymale, *Prayer*, 86.

<sup>365</sup> This is the first mention of “the Word of God”, although the concept was introduced as a mission source in Chapter Two (see §2.2.6.4, p.123) and previously intimated at in this chapter with 1:1 (see §4.3.1.1, p.179–80) and 2:41 (4.3.3.2, p.205).

<sup>366</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:43–47.

#### 4.3.3.5 Ananias and Sapphira (4:32–5:16)

Again the specific event is book-ended by two summaries (4:32–35; 5:12b–16). These describe features of the model community as a potential mission instrument including a witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with power (4:33),<sup>367</sup> supernatural signs and wonders (5:12),<sup>368</sup> unusual physical healings by Peter's shadow (5:15),<sup>369</sup> and exorcisms (5:16).<sup>370</sup> The positive picture is threatened by the unexpected and bizarre negative example of Ananias and Sapphira as ambiguous believers.<sup>371</sup> Peter's speech identifies Satan,<sup>372</sup> who is mentioned for the first time in Acts, as an opponent of the Holy Spirit (5:3)<sup>373</sup> who empowers the mission instrument and now purges it.<sup>374</sup> Within this context the Jerusalem community is called an ἐκκλησία (assembly or church) for the first time as the mission instrument continues to form its identity separate to Israel.<sup>375</sup> The second summary (5:12b–16) is possibly the close of "the narrative of beginnings".<sup>376</sup> However, "Act I" is not yet completed.

The triumph of the witness over internal opposition caused by Satan is followed by further external opposition.

#### 4.3.3.6 Apostles and the Sanhedrin (5:17–42)

The literary function of this section broadens the focus from Peter to all the apostles in the developing conflict with the temple leaders.<sup>377</sup> The dramatic supernatural release from prison suggests a salvation picture even though explicit terminology does not appear. The mention of "an angel of the Lord" (5:19) suggests heaven's

<sup>367</sup> Cf. Acts 1:8, 22; 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10.

<sup>368</sup> Cf. 4:30 (see §4.3.3.4, p.208) and 2:19 (see §4.3.3.2, p.203).

<sup>369</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 96.

<sup>370</sup> Chapter Six develops the theme of exorcisms as indicating the victory which the kingdom of God's has over Satan's opposition.

<sup>371</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 132–137. Most commentators are silent about whether Ananias and Sapphira are true believers.

<sup>372</sup> BDAG, σατάν, 916–17, literally "adversary". In Acts only in 5:3 and 26:18, but also διάβολος (devil) at 10:38 and 13:10. Spencer, *Acts*, 56–57; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 163, notes the limited OT references to Satan as Job 1:6, 7, 8, 12; 2:1, 2, 3, 6, 7; Ps 109:6; Zech 3:1–2.

<sup>373</sup> Acts 5:3, filling Ananias's heart to deceive the Holy Spirit; 5:4 to lie to God; and 5:9 to tempt the Spirit of the Lord. Cf. Thomas, *Devil*, 235–36; Thompson, *One Lord*, 72; Jonathan Kienzler, *The Fiery Holy Spirit: The Spirit's Relationship with Judgement in Luke-Acts* (Blandford Forum: Deo, 2015), 112–22.

<sup>374</sup> Kienzler, *Fiery Holy Spirit*, 112–22.

<sup>375</sup> BDAG, ἐκκλησία, 303–304. Cf. Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 107–108; Walton, *Calling the Church Names*, 229–34; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 325; Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 164; Holladay, *Acts*, 138.

<sup>376</sup> Mihoc, "Inceptive Ecclesiology", 7.

<sup>377</sup> Tannehill, *Shape*, 187.

involvement, or even a divine epiphany.<sup>378</sup> Other hints include “this life” (5:20), meaning the new life of salvation, and the dawn evoking the resurrection (5:21).<sup>379</sup> The literary size gives the mission command as much literary attention as the prison release.<sup>380</sup>

A literary inclusio<sup>381</sup> and sense of déjà vu is created by similarities with Acts 3 of the temple courts,<sup>382</sup> “the name of Jesus”,<sup>383</sup> and a witness to the resurrection and ascension.<sup>384</sup> The Holy Spirit is also mentioned as a witness<sup>385</sup> and a gift to those who obey God (5:32) for a possible mission empowering.<sup>386</sup> In spite of Gamaliel’s attempt to soften the opposition,<sup>387</sup> the witness involves suffering (5:40–41) and continues to διδάσκω that Jesus is the Christ (5:42). This involves εὐαγγελίζω<sup>388</sup> whose first use in Acts is appropriate for the transition from the apostles to Stephen and suggests that a wider missional approach is beginning within Jerusalem.

The oscillation between the apostle’s witness, Jewish opposition, internal problems, and further Jewish opposition, continues with more internal problems and the zenith of opposition against Stephen as the last section in Acts’ Beginning.

#### 4.3.3.7 Stephen (6:1–8:3)

The literary-temporal component and transitional marker “in ... these days” (ἐν ... ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις) (6:1)<sup>389</sup> continues the lack of precise chronology in “Act I” and suggests a continued period within Jerusalem.<sup>390</sup> However, 6:1–7 is a key segment<sup>391</sup>

<sup>378</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 110; John Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany: Prison-Escape in Acts of the Apostles*, BZNW 131 (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2004), 93–101; See Gen 16:7–9; 22:11, 15; Exod 3:2; Num 22:22–35; 1 Kgs 19:7; 2 Kgs 1:3, 15; 19:35; 1 Chr 21:12–30; Isa 37:36; Zech 1:11–12; 3:5–6; 12:8. The appearance of angels in Acts is traced throughout this study and especially in Chapter Six as suggesting the involvement of the kingdom of God.

<sup>379</sup> Cf. Luke 24:1 for a link to resurrection.

<sup>380</sup> Cf. The mission command (5:20), fifteen words (twenty-eight if 5:21a included) and prison release (5:19) fourteen words. Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:65.

<sup>381</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 207.

<sup>382</sup> Acts 5:20, 21, 25. Cf. 3:2, 8.

<sup>383</sup> Acts 5:28, 41. Cf. 3:6, 16.

<sup>384</sup> Acts 5:30–32. Cf. 3:15.

<sup>385</sup> This adds to the developing witness theme which will be summarised as a mission means at the end of this chapter.

<sup>386</sup> Cf. Acts 2:38.

<sup>387</sup> Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 128–39.

<sup>388</sup> See the introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.123).

<sup>389</sup> Cf. Acts 1:15; 11:27. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 346.

<sup>390</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:307.

<sup>391</sup> Justin Taylor, *Les Actes des deux apôtres*, vols. 4–6, EBib, n.s. 41, 23, 30 (Paris: Gabalda, 2000), 4:1.



moving the story into a new phase.<sup>392</sup> Further internal problems<sup>393</sup> between Hellenistic and Hebraic Jews,<sup>394</sup> exacerbated by poor administration, threaten the Twelve's ministry of "the Word". The solution of the seven men (6:5)<sup>395</sup> with Hellenistic names, including Nicolaus a proselyte,<sup>396</sup> introduces two of them, Stephen and Philip, as a leadership transition<sup>397</sup> away from the Twelve<sup>398</sup> (and especially Peter) towards the Gentile mission (and Paul).<sup>399</sup> The summary of 6:7 indicates the continued development of the mission instrument with the growth of "the Word of God",<sup>400</sup> an increase in disciples, and a large number of priests obeying the faith. The summary pauses the story which then moves without a spatial or temporal break to further opposition from the Jewish temple leaders.

Stephen is given a literary prominence with the longest speech in Acts.<sup>401</sup> Its strategic placement at the *finish* of "Act I" emphasises a critical turning point of the story<sup>402</sup> with key foundational themes<sup>403</sup> as a platform<sup>404</sup> to move beyond Israel<sup>405</sup> with the Gentile mission. Stephen is full of faith, the Holy Spirit, grace, power (6:5, 8), and does wonders and signs (6:8). Yet the Hellenistic Jews<sup>406</sup> accuse him of speaking against the holy place (temple) and the Jewish Law (6:13) in relation to

<sup>392</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 108; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 346.

<sup>393</sup> Described as γογγυσμός (murmuring) (6:1). Barrett, *Acts*, 1:307, links to Num 11:1 (LXX).

<sup>394</sup> The use of Ἑλληνιστής for Greek-speaking Jews. See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, p.99, n.401).

<sup>395</sup> Ramsay, *Apostolic Church*, 45, notes that seven was a sacred number in Hebrew belief, but thinks its use in 6:3 is more to do with seven spheres of duty.

<sup>396</sup> Earl Richard, *Acts 6:1–8:4: The Author's Method of Composition*. SBLDS 41 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978), 311–312; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 183; Witherington, *Acts*, 240–247, 250; Stevens, *Acts*, 99–100.

<sup>397</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 122; Johnson, *Acts*, 110–112; Peterson, *Acts*, 186; Thompson, *Acts*, 164.

<sup>398</sup> The term "Twelve", is only used here in Acts.

<sup>399</sup> Martin Hengel, "The Geography of Palestine in Acts", in *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham, BAFCS 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 27–78, citing 69; Justo L. González, "Reading from My Bicultural Place: Acts 6:1–7", in Segovia and Tolbert, *Reading from this Place*, 139–47, citing 146.

<sup>400</sup> Thompson, *One Lord*, 140, as seeing the conquest of Jerusalem complete at 6:7. Cf. Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 151.

<sup>401</sup> For the calculation see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.7, p.107). Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 251–52; Liefeld, *Acts*, 65–66; Wiens, *Stephen's Sermon*, 8.

<sup>402</sup> Satterthwaite, "Classical Rhetoric", 351; Richard, *Acts 6:1–8:4*, 319.

<sup>403</sup> Wiens, *Stephen's Sermon*, 241, argues that the four themes of Stephen's speech are proportionally represented in Acts in: (1) 1:3–4:37, Abraham, 13.4%; (2) 5:1–11:18, Joseph, 25.6%; (3) 11:19–21:14, Moses, 35.4%; and (4) 21:15–28:31, the temple, 25.7%.

<sup>404</sup> Wiens, *Stephen's Sermon*, 8.

<sup>405</sup> Gregory E. Sterling, "'Opening the Scriptures': The Legitimation of the Jewish Diaspora and the Early Christian Mission", in Moessner, *Heritage of Israel*, 199–217, citing 214–217.

<sup>406</sup> See discussion on the synagogue of Freedmen, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, ones from Cilicia and Asia (6:9) in Barrett, *Acts*, 1:320, 323–25.

Jesus. Stephen answers these accusations<sup>407</sup> by recapitulating the history of Israel<sup>408</sup> with many Old Testament quotations.<sup>409</sup> The references to Abraham (7:2–8),<sup>410</sup> Joseph (7:9–16),<sup>411</sup> and Moses (7:17–44)<sup>412</sup> hint at a wider mission target by emphasising that God's presence is not limited to Jerusalem or Israel.<sup>413</sup> Also the motif of rejection of God's messengers is present with Joseph and Moses.<sup>414</sup> The speech has a literary emphasis of over 50% on Moses<sup>415</sup> in response to the accusation about the Law. Stephen answers the accusation about the temple by highlighting the failure of Israel's worship (7:44–50).<sup>416</sup> Scholars debate whether Stephen attacks the temple,<sup>417</sup> or as is more likely, emphasises God's transcendence over it<sup>418</sup> and Christ's radical implications for it.<sup>419</sup>

Stephen quotes Amos 5:25–27 (7:42–43) to point out past idolatry<sup>420</sup> leading to the Babylonian exile with implications for the worldwide mission. The significant replacement of Damascus in the LXX with Babylon (7:43) underlines this point.<sup>421</sup> Even if God's people do not follow their calling, then God acts to fulfil his worldwide mission purpose. The final quotation from Isaiah 66:1–2 (7:49–50) points to the *missio Dei* by emphasising the sovereignty of God and, from the Isaiah context, the eternal worldwide blessing.<sup>422</sup> In this mission instrument context, Stephen challenges his hearers about their present resistance to the Holy Spirit and rejection of Jesus (7:51–53). The speech closes with a double interruption which confirms the rejection of Jesus and introduces his exaltation.<sup>423</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 179.

<sup>408</sup> Longenecker, "Acts", 815.

<sup>409</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 119; Padilla, *Acts*, 165–66.

<sup>410</sup> The Abraham story is in Gen 12–25. Quotations from Gen 12:1 (7:3); 15:13–14 (7:6b–7).

<sup>411</sup> The Joseph story is in Gen 37–50.

<sup>412</sup> The Moses's story is in Exod 1:1–40:38. Quotations from Exod 2:14 (7:27–28); 3:6–10 (7:32–34); Deut 18:15 (7:37b); Exod 32:1 (7:40b).

<sup>413</sup> Heinz-Werner Neudorfer, "The Speech of Stephen", in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 275–294, citing 279; Thompson, *Acts*, 168.

<sup>414</sup> Lee, *Tragic History*, 270–272. Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:85–86.

<sup>415</sup> Of the total of 1,000 words: (1) 7:2b–8, Abraham, 169 words; (2) 7:9–16, Joseph, 142 words; (3) 7:17–44, Moses, 548 words; (4) 7:45–47, Joshua, David and Solomon, 46 words; and (5) 7:48–53, closing challenge from the prophets, 95 words.

<sup>416</sup> James N. Rhodes, "Tabernacle and Temple: Rethinking the Rhetorical Function of Acts 7:44–50", in *Contemporary Studies in Acts*, ed. Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 119–137.

<sup>417</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 145–148.

<sup>418</sup> Dennis D. Sylva, "The Meaning and Function of Acts 7:46–50", *JBL* 106 (1987): 261–275; Walton, "Temple in Acts", 138–43; Pervo, *Acts*, 193; Witherington, *Acts*, 274.

<sup>419</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 165–66; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 186.

<sup>420</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 189.

<sup>421</sup> Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel: Israel's Regathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish Literature and Luke-Acts*, BZNWK 138 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 264–67.

<sup>422</sup> See Isa 65:17–25; 66:12–14, 19–24.

<sup>423</sup> Acts 7:54 and 7:57. Smith, *Rhetoric of Interruption*, 223–27.

“Act I” closes with the major transition of Stephen’s martyrdom<sup>424</sup> which can be viewed through a missional lens. Mission success is intimated since Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, sees the exalted Jesus standing at the right hand of God (7:55–56).<sup>425</sup> The singular use of “the Son of Man”<sup>426</sup> emphasises the mission expansion suggested through the eschatological background of the title in relation to the kingdom of God.<sup>427</sup> A mission instrument context is created by Stephen’s dying prayer being reminiscent of Jesus on the cross.<sup>428</sup> A new character, Saul, appears for the first time in Acts (7:58). His importance to the mission instrument in the rest of Acts is not evident at this stage,<sup>429</sup> since he approves of Stephen’s death and is not yet known as Paul.<sup>430</sup> The growing opposition culminates in a great persecution<sup>431</sup> which paradoxically leads to a new Jewish diaspora<sup>432</sup> throughout Judaea and Samaria (8:1). The mission instrument moves forward through a scattering rather than a human strategy.<sup>433</sup> However, it is unclear whether there is a possible ongoing reluctance towards worldwide mission since the apostles remain in Jerusalem.<sup>434</sup>

Stephen’s speech and martyrdom closes the opening story events in Jerusalem. The literary shape of “Act I” (1:12–8:3) is now assessed as revealing the *foundation* of missional significance.

#### 4.3.4 Literary Shape in “Act I” (1:1–8:3)

A forwards reading has shown the *sequential patterning* of Acts’ Beginning. “Act I” of Horace’s “Five-Act Structure” creates an opening literary shape. The first summary (1:1–5) and section (1:6–11) introduce the ideas of the kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit, and mission. The reconstitution of the Twelve (1:15–26) gives a

<sup>424</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 143.

<sup>425</sup> For discussion on what Jesus’s standing signifies as a final opportunity for the Jews, welcome to Stephen, a witness for his defence, foresight of Christ’s coming advent, world dominion and judgement see Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 154–157; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 60; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:384–85.

<sup>426</sup> Twenty-six times in Luke’s Gospel. Cf. Peterson, *Acts*, 266; M. Sabbe, “The Son of Man Saying in Acts 7, 56”, in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer, BETL 48 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 241–279, citing 258–59.

<sup>427</sup> This is explored further in Chapter Six (§6.4.2, pp.337–38).

<sup>428</sup> Compare 7:59 with Luke 23:46 and 7:60 with Luke 23:34. See Plymale, *Prayer*, 94; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 160; Sabbe, “Son of Man”, 252–53; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:99–100; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 390.

<sup>429</sup> Dockery, “Acts 6–12”, 428.

<sup>430</sup> Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 19.

<sup>431</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:64–79.

<sup>432</sup> BDAG, διασπείρω, 236, meaning to scatter. The noun used in LXX for dispersion of Israel among the Gentiles. Cf. Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 163; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 54.

<sup>433</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 161.

<sup>434</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:1467–69; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 396; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:391; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:102.

literary emphasis, by size and sequence (placed between the ascension and Pentecost), to the formation of the mission instrument. There is a literary emphasis in the increasing literary size of the subsequent Pentecost event (2:1–4), outcome (2:5–13), and speech (2:14–36). The Holy Spirit outpouring empowers the remnant as the mission instrument of the resurrected and ascended Jesus who is Lord and Christ. Israel’s potential restoration is illustrated by the healing of the lame man (3:1–10). “Act I” tells the story of interwoven success, Jewish resistance, suffering, and internal problems within the *foundation* of missional significance. The statistical midpoint appropriately occurs within the model prayer (4:26) and emphasises the triumph of Christ and his mission over the earthly kingdoms. Stephen’s speech (7:2b–53) and martyrdom (7:54–8:3) establishes a platform for the move to Gentile mission. The story components show how an elongated Acts’ Beginning reveals a sense of narrative and theological progression.

*The literary-spatial component of “Act I”*<sup>435</sup> focuses on Jerusalem, portrayed as Judaism’s religious centre, by the references to the day of Pentecost (2:1), the temple,<sup>436</sup> and possibly Ἱερουσαλήμ.<sup>437</sup> Jerusalem has both positive and negative features. Positively it is the place where the Holy Spirit first comes, the gospel is preached, the eschatological restoration takes place,<sup>438</sup> and the remnant church is formed. Negatively it is the place of Jewish opposition.<sup>439</sup> At this stage in forwards reading, is unclear whether Jerusalem is only foundational as a stepping-stone for mission.<sup>440</sup> Various topographical elements are possible symbols including the upper room as a prayer connection between earth and heaven, the temple as a religious centre having an expectation of God’s presence, houses as locations for fellowship and unity, and prisons with release as a salvation picture.

*The literary-temporal component of “Act I”* reveals a number of symbolic references including forty days (1:3) suggestive of similar complete periods at the

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<sup>435</sup> See Diagram VI (A), p.87.

<sup>436</sup> See references to temple and priests in Acts 2:46; 3:1–3, 8, 10; 4:1, 6, 23; 5:17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 42; 6:7; 7:1. Cf. re-emergence in 22:30

<sup>437</sup> Ἱερουσαλήμ is used predominantly in “Act I” at 1:8, 12, 19; 2:5, 14; 4:5, 16; 5:16, 28; 6:7 with interestingly the more secular Ἱεροσόλυμα appearing only at the book-ends of 1:4 and 8:1. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 1:698, that predominance of Ἱερουσαλήμ evokes a biblical milieu. For an introduction to this issue see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.84, n.289).

<sup>438</sup> Including the Mount of Olives (1:12) as a well-known eschatological setting, the prophecy of Joel (2:16–21), and the times of refreshing and restoration of all things (3:19[NA<sup>28</sup> 3:20a]–21). Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church”, 425–26.

<sup>439</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 91–98.

<sup>440</sup> Goulder, *Type and History*, 69; Alexander, “Journeyings”, 74; Robert H. Smith, *Acts* (St Louis: Concordia, 1970), 15.

commencement of the missions of Jesus and Israel, the day of Pentecost fulfilled (2:1) in connection to the harvest completion feast, the ninth hour (3:1) suggestive of Jesus's death in Luke 23:44,<sup>441</sup> and dawn (5:21) suggesting the new life of the resurrection. I propose that the overall lack of specific time movement in "Act I"<sup>442</sup> adds to a *thematic/paradigmatic* approach which defines the mission instrument.

*The character component of "Act I"*<sup>443</sup> shows a transition from Jesus to the reconstituted twelve apostles and especially Peter<sup>444</sup> before concluding with Stephen (6:8–7:60).<sup>445</sup> The literary *foreshadowing* technique of briefly introducing Stephen (6:5) before he makes a major appearance in the story,<sup>446</sup> suggests that others like Barnabas (4:36),<sup>447</sup> Philip (6:5),<sup>448</sup> and Saul (7:58, 8:1, 3)<sup>449</sup> may do the same.

*The speech component of "Act I"*<sup>450</sup> gives an invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument. Peter's five major speeches<sup>451</sup> and particularly their closures emphasise witness and resurrection (1:22) as the mission means and message, Jesus as Lord and Christ (2:36) at the heart of the mission message, the promise of the Holy Spirit (2:38–39) as the empowering of the mission instrument, salvation (2:40b) as part of the message, and Israel as a mission instrument of worldwide blessing (3:25–26). The literary size and culminating placement of Stephen's speech (7:2–52) underlines its importance as a challenge to Israel in preparation for the move to a worldwide Gentile mission.

*The intertextual component of "Act I"* shows a predominance of seventeen Old Testament quotations from Acts' total of twenty-six.<sup>452</sup> These form a progressive biblical framework as a foundation for the invitation to be a mission instrument in:

Psalms 69:25 and 109:8 (1:20) refer to the restoration of Israel.

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<sup>441</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:210.

<sup>442</sup> E.g. days (2:1; 3:1; 4:5; 5:21; 8:1), "in these days" (1:15; 6:1), "from day to day" (2:46) (see Peterson, *Acts*, 163, suggesting this emphasises the regularity of events), and "every day" (5:42).

<sup>443</sup> See Diagram VIII (A), p.102.

<sup>444</sup> Marlow, "Narrative Analysis", 199–201; Bennema, *Character*, 166–172; Wilson, *Gentiles*, 113.

<sup>445</sup> Wilson, *Gentiles*, 137–38.

<sup>446</sup> Gaventa, "Acts" (2006), 39.

<sup>447</sup> As will become evident in Chapter Five. See Acts 9:27; 11:22–24; 11:25–15:39.

<sup>448</sup> As will become evident in Chapter Five. See Acts 8:5–40; 21:8–14.

<sup>449</sup> As will become evident in Chapter Five. See Acts 9:1–31; 11:25, 26–30; 12:25–15:4; 15:35–28:31.

<sup>450</sup> See Diagram IX, p.106.

<sup>451</sup> Acts 1:16–22; 2:14b–36, 38, 39, 40b; 3:12b–26; 4:8b–12; 5:29b–32.

<sup>452</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

Joel 2:28–32 (2:17–21) is the longest quotation in Acts<sup>453</sup> in connection with the Holy Spirit’s empowering of the mission instrument.

Psalms 16:8–11 (2:25b–28) and 110:1 (2:34b–35) refer to the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Jesus as the Lord and Christ of the mission.

Deuteronomy 18:15, 18–19 used by Peter (3:22b–23) and Stephen (7:37b) describes Jesus as the Mosaic prophet.

Genesis 22:18 and 26:4 (3:25b) describes Jesus as the Abrahamic seed bringing a message and a worldwide mission of blessing.

Psalm 118:22 (4:11) refers to the rejected and risen Christ as the cornerstone/capstone of salvation.

Psalm 2:1–2 in the model prayer at the midpoint of “Act I” (4:25b–26) refers to the worldwide victory and reign of the Christ.

Several quotations from the Old Testament history of Israel in Stephen’s speech<sup>454</sup> prepare for Amos 5:25–27 (7:42b–43) which refers to the prophetic mission of a new diaspora.<sup>455</sup>

Isaiah 66:1–2 (7:49–50) is the closing quotation in “Act I” and refers to the mission’s ultimate fulfilment in the Lord’s reign over all the earth. A comparison with Acts’ Ending notes the significant Isaianic framework which starts at the end of Isaiah and moves to the beginning (cf. Isaiah 6:9–10; Acts 28:26–27).<sup>456</sup> Both Isaiah quotations have the same context of the throne and temple. The repetition of other quotations will be explored as the biblical framework develops.<sup>457</sup>

The literary shape of Acts’ Beginning reveals missional significance.

#### 4.4 Missional Significance of Acts’ Beginning

Acts’ Beginning is a *foundation* for the various aspects of missional significance noted in Chapter Two.<sup>458</sup>

(1) *The mission instrument* concept begins with the apostles being witnesses for and of Jesus (1:8) in Jerusalem as a “base camp for mission”.<sup>459</sup> The

<sup>453</sup> For the calculation see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.8, p.109, n.489).

<sup>454</sup> Gen 12:1 (7:3); Gen 15:13, 14 (7:6b, 7); Exod 2:14 (7:27b, 28); Exod 3:6–10 (7:32–34); Deut 18:15 (7:37b); Exod 32:1 (7:40b).

<sup>455</sup> Fuller, *Restoration*, 264–67, notes that Stephen puts the Babylonian exile (7:43) instead of Damascus which is found in both the MT and LXX of Amos 5:25–27.

<sup>456</sup> The full Acts’ Isaianic framework will become apparent in Chapter Five.

<sup>457</sup> This will become apparent for Ps 2; 16; and Amos in Chapter Five.

<sup>458</sup> See §2.2.6.4, pp.118–127.

<sup>459</sup> Wilson, *Gentiles*, 95.

reconstitution of the Twelve (1:15–26) is emphasised by its literary size. As leaders of the restored remnant of Israel,<sup>460</sup> the apostles led by Peter, boldly invite<sup>461</sup> the people of God to be a mission instrument<sup>462</sup> and servants of the Lord<sup>463</sup> following the example of Jesus.<sup>464</sup> However, the Jewish leaders resist. The growing negative undertones of the temple<sup>465</sup> contrast with the church<sup>466</sup> as a possible new temple.<sup>467</sup> The formation of a model Holy Spirit filled community<sup>468</sup> offers the possibility of church life as a vehicle for mission. The focus on prayer<sup>469</sup> acknowledges God as the mission source. However, although Jesus is the example of a mission instrument,<sup>470</sup> the world-wide mission of 1:8 is not undertaken in “Act I”. Some suggest this is because Jesus’s words are a promise, not a command<sup>471</sup> or only relate to the restoration of Israel as a base for mission.<sup>472</sup> However, the fact that both a promise and a base need subsequent action,<sup>473</sup> suggests a reluctance by Israel and also the church,<sup>474</sup> with internal problems,<sup>475</sup> to become a mission instrument. Stephen’s speech (7:2b–53) and martyrdom (7:54–8:3) prepare for the mission instrument’s movement beyond Jerusalem in 8:1.<sup>476</sup>

(2) *The mission target* throughout “Act I” is the Jews in Jerusalem, including the gathered Diaspora. However, this is complicated by the offer of salvation in the

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<sup>460</sup> Legrand, *Unity*, 99–102.

<sup>461</sup> Mallen, *Transformation*, 189–197.

<sup>462</sup> This point was made previously with the Acts’ Beginning speech component summary (see §4.3.4, p.215).

<sup>463</sup> See δουλός as slave or subject at 2:18 (male and female slaves) and 4:29 (praying believers). BDAG, δοῦλος, 259–60.

<sup>464</sup> See παῖς used of Jesus as one committed in total obedience to another at 3:13, 26, 4:27, 30, and 4:25 of King David. BDAG, παῖς, 750–51.

<sup>465</sup> From a positive beginning as the meeting place of the believing community (2:46), to an impotent force in comparison to “the name of Jesus” in the healing of the lame man (3:1–10), to a source of opposition (4:1–23; 5:17–40), before concluding as a source of contention addressed by Stephen (6:13–14; 7:46–50). The negative undertones carry forward to Paul’s arrest in the temple at 21:26–29.

<sup>466</sup> Though seldom identified distinctively as the ἐκκλησία. See 5:11; 7:38 (Israel in OT); 8:1, 3.

<sup>467</sup> Arie W. Zwiep, “Church between Ideal and Reality: Some Comments on the Role of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles”, in *Christ*, 120–138, citing 129–30. However, Chance, *Jerusalem*, 149–50, argues that the literal temple retains its eschatological role as a place of salvation.

<sup>468</sup> Acts 2:42–47; 4:23–35; 5:12–16.

<sup>469</sup> Acts 1:14, 24; 2:42; 4:24–31; 7:59.

<sup>470</sup> Acts 2:22.

<sup>471</sup> See the previous discussion in this chapter (§4.3.2.1, p.193).

<sup>472</sup> Legrand, *Unity*, 96–97; Goheen, *Light to the Nations*, 129–46.

<sup>473</sup> Bosch, *Witness to the World*, 81.

<sup>474</sup> Wilson, *Gentiles*, 91–92; Le Grys, *Preaching to the Nations*, 78.

<sup>475</sup> The problem of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–10) and the distribution to the widows (6:1–6).

<sup>476</sup> Neil, *Acts*, 116; Thompson, *Acts*, 165; F. F. Bruce, “Stephen’s Apologia”, in *Scripture: Meaning and Method. Essays Presented to Anthony Tyrrell Hanson*, ed. Barry P. Thompson (Hull: Hull University Press, 1987), 37–50.

speeches being part of the invitation to become a mission instrument.<sup>477</sup> This focus may explain why Acts' Beginning, whilst being a preparation for a wider Gentile mission,<sup>478</sup> has no explicit record of the church engaging in it.<sup>479</sup>

(3) *The mission message* focuses on the invitation to be a mission instrument. This is made possible by the resurrected and exalted Jesus, as Lord and Christ, whose ultimate victory will bring the worldwide blessing promised to Abraham (3:25).<sup>480</sup> Acts 1:8 and Stephen's speech lay the *foundation* for a mission beyond Israel.

"Act I" has a major emphasis on God with forty-two references.<sup>481</sup> However, these do not record a present direct involvement of God in the story.<sup>482</sup> Most are indirect references in speeches. Nearly half are God's past activity in Israel,<sup>483</sup> a large number are linked to Jesus's recent past,<sup>484</sup> one is in the future,<sup>485</sup> and the remainder have God as an object.<sup>486</sup> However, the implication is that God forms an instrument for the *missio Dei* by being the Father who is involved in the gift of the Holy Spirit,<sup>487</sup> the Lord who rules over all,<sup>488</sup> the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,<sup>489</sup> the Creator (4:24), and the one who causes Jesus's life, death, and resurrection.<sup>490</sup>

In a similar way, Jesus is central to the mission message of "Act I" rather than presented as an active mission source. He is referred to by name twenty-five

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<sup>477</sup> E.g. Acts 2:38–39; 3:18–26.

<sup>478</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 32.

<sup>479</sup> Whilst Acts 4:29–31 involves the whole church in speaking "the word of God" there is no mention that this indicates a wider mission and may well refer to an involvement in issuing a mission invitation to the Jews.

<sup>480</sup> Wright, *Mission of God*, 194–203.

<sup>481</sup> There are substantially more references to God in "Act I" than any other "Act".

<sup>482</sup> The passive verbs used of the ascension (1:2, 9) may suggest divine activity, but God is not explicitly mentioned. The only two indirect speech references to present activity are 5:32 and 5:39.

<sup>483</sup> Acts 2:17, 30; 3:13 (twice), 21, 22, 25; 7:2, 6, 7, 9, 17, 20, 25, 32 (twice), 35, 37, 42, 45.

<sup>484</sup> Acts 2:22 (twice), 24, 32, 36; 3:15, 18, 26; 4:10; 5:30, 31.

<sup>485</sup> Acts 2:39.

<sup>486</sup> Acts 2:47; 3:8, 9, 21, 24; 5:4, 29; 6:11.

<sup>487</sup> Acts 1:4 (a promise); 1:7 (an ordaining of times and seasons); 2:33 (a giving of the promise of the Holy Spirit to Jesus after his resurrection/ascension so that Jesus can then pour out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost).

<sup>488</sup> God as Lord is related to the OT (2:34; 3:22; 4:26), Jesus's past ministry (2:22; 3:26), future (2:39; 3:19 [NA<sup>28</sup> 3:20a]) or as an object (2:21; 4:29). The term *κύριος* is also used of Jesus making it difficult on occasions to identify who is being referred to. See p.219, n.492 below.

<sup>489</sup> Acts 3:13; 7:32.

<sup>490</sup> Acts 2:22–24; 2:32; 3:13–15; 4:10; 5:30–31.



times,<sup>491</sup> as the Lord definitely seven times and other possible uses,<sup>492</sup> the Christ nine times,<sup>493</sup> Jesus Christ of Nazareth,<sup>494</sup> the Holy and Righteous One,<sup>495</sup> the “leader/originator of life” (ἀρχηγός),<sup>496</sup> a prophet like Moses,<sup>497</sup> Abraham’s seed,<sup>498</sup> God’s servant,<sup>499</sup> Saviour,<sup>500</sup> and the Son of Man.<sup>501</sup> Given the importance of Jesus’ crucifixion and death within the New Testament gospel message,<sup>502</sup> it is intriguing that the Acts’ speeches have instead the resurrection as their key motif.<sup>503</sup> This echoes the emphasis of the mission message in Acts’ Ending.<sup>504</sup> The resurrection is appropriate for an invitation to be a mission instrument. It represents new life, implies the Holy Spirit’s renewal and power for mission, and resonates with the expected gospel success. Suffering in Acts is connected to mission as a prelude to the victory that follows.<sup>505</sup>

Surprisingly for a narrative about the gospel mission, salvation terminology does not appear until 2:21 and then infrequently<sup>506</sup> suggesting that it is the mission itself, rather than the resulting salvation, which has the greater focus. However, before Israel can fulfil the mission task, it needs salvation for itself as symbolised in

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<sup>491</sup> The most of any “Act” with reference to Jesus’s past ministry (1:1, 16, 21; 2:22, 32, 36; 3:13, 20; 4:27, 33; 5:30), present activity (1:11; 7:55) or as an object (1:14; 2:38; 3:6; 4:2, 10, 13, 18, 30; 5:40, 42; 6:59).

<sup>492</sup> With reference to Jesus as Lord in the OT (2:34), past ministry (1:21; 4:33), present activity within a speech (2:36) or as an object (1:6; 7:59 (Lord Jesus), 60). The use of κύριος is ambiguous at 1:24; 2:20, 21, 25, 47; 5:9, 14. However, the dual-usage of the title is a subtle way of confirming Jesus’s deity. George A. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Donald A. Hagner, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1994), 375; Robert F. O’Toole, *Luke’s Presentation of Jesus: A Christology*, SubBi 25 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2004), 184–205.

<sup>493</sup> With reference to Jesus as the Christ in the OT (3:18; 4:26), past ministry (2:31), future (3:20), present activity within a speech (2:36), and as an object (2:38; 3:6; 4:10; 5:42).

<sup>494</sup> Acts 2:22 (Jesus of Nazareth); 3:6; 4:10; 6:14 (Jesus of Nazareth),

<sup>495</sup> Acts 3:14 (past); 7:52 (Righteous One- OT).

<sup>496</sup> Acts 3:15; 5:31. BDAG, ἀρχηγός, 138–39. Kee, *Good News*, 25, founder of a city; Walton, “Jesus”, 130, leader who leads the way to life.

<sup>497</sup> Acts 3:22; 7:37, quoting Deut 18:15, 18–19. Uytanlet, *Luke-Acts*, 216, Jesus as the New Moses.

<sup>498</sup> Acts 3:25 quoting Gen 22:18; 26:4, with Jesus fulfilling the promise of worldwide blessing.

<sup>499</sup> Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27 (past ministry) and 4:30 (object), with a possible connection to Isaiah’s Servant. Cf. Walton, “Jesus”, 129.

<sup>500</sup> Acts 5:31 (object).

<sup>501</sup> Acts 7:56 (present activity within speech).

<sup>502</sup> Rom 5:10, 1 Cor 1:18, 2:2 Gal 6:14; Eph 2:16; Col 1:20, 2:14; Heb 2:14.

<sup>503</sup> Acts 1:3; 22; 2:24, 31, 32; 4:2, 10, 33; 5:30. Anderson, *God Raised Him*. Haenchen, *Acts*, 163.

<sup>504</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.4, p.167).

<sup>505</sup> I propose that the term “gospel” (15:7; 20:24) has a missional as well as a soteriological emphasis that embraces both success (the resurrection) and suffering (the cross). Cf. Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:34–35. This is also true to some extent of classic “gospel presentation” passages such as Rom 1:1–17 (see Rom 1:1, 5, 9, 15, 16); 1 Cor 15:1–58 (see 1 Cor 15:1, 9–11, 58), and 1 Thess 1:4–10 (see 1 Thess 1:5, 6–8, serve in 9) which are set in the context of the gospel mission.

<sup>506</sup> Acts 2:40, 47; 4:9, 12.

the stories of the lame man<sup>507</sup> and miraculous release of the apostles from prison to witness.<sup>508</sup>

(4) *The mission source* focuses on the empowering<sup>509</sup> of the Holy Spirit<sup>510</sup> with God not directly active in the narrative<sup>511</sup> and Jesus only directly present in the significant framing of “Act I”.<sup>512</sup> Bosch is correct that “the intimate linking of pneumatology and mission is Luke’s distinctive contribution to the early church’s missionary paradigm”.<sup>513</sup> The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2:1–4) is part of the fulfilment of 1:8 and sets an expectation for what follows in Acts.<sup>514</sup>

Scholars debate the synonymity and meaning of the various terms used for the Holy Spirit’s activity.<sup>515</sup> They include: “baptising in/with” (ἐν [πνεύματι] βαπτίζω),<sup>516</sup> “power” (δύναμις),<sup>517</sup> “coming-upon” (ἐπέρχομαι ... ἐπὶ),<sup>518</sup> “filled” (πίμπλημι),<sup>519</sup> and “outpouring” (ἐκχέω).<sup>520</sup> These are different aspects of the same event in 2:1–4. Further terms added later in “Act I” include: “receiving” (λαμβάνω),<sup>521</sup> “the gift/giving” (τὴν δωπεάν/δίδωμι),<sup>522</sup> and “full” (πλήρης).<sup>523</sup> Chapter Five more fully assesses these terms in the light of their usage throughout Acts.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit activity in 2:1–4<sup>524</sup> is even more contested. Michael Eaton’s diagram and work on the baptism with the Spirit gives a useful starting point for understanding the spectrum of views.<sup>525</sup> Several link the Pentecost

<sup>507</sup> Acts 3:1–10 using σώσω in 4:9 to combine physical and spiritual healing.

<sup>508</sup> Acts 5:18–19 with Jesus being declared as Saviour in 5:31.

<sup>509</sup> Acts 1:8; 2:22; 3:12; 4:7, 33; 6:8.

<sup>510</sup> For the Holy Spirit linked to witness in Acts’ Beginning see 1:8; 2:4, 11; 2:17, 18; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:5, 10. Wall, “Acts”, 139, “we can only infer from Jesus’s promise of Spirit-baptism (1:8) that believers are unable to participate fully in the community’s missionary vocation without receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit”; Harry R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 162, the launch of witness at Pentecost; Gnanakan, *Kingdom Concerns*, 174–94.

<sup>511</sup> See previous discussion on the mission message, p.218.

<sup>512</sup> Acts 1:1–9 and 7:55. Cf. 2:33, but this is an indirect reference within Peter’s speech.

<sup>513</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 114.

<sup>514</sup> However, Chapter Three has already shown this is not the case in Acts’ Ending and Chapter Five will explore the Holy Spirit’s appearances in Acts’ Middle.

<sup>515</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:115.

<sup>516</sup> Acts 1:5 (future).

<sup>517</sup> Acts 1:8 (future).

<sup>518</sup> Acts 1:8 (aorist).

<sup>519</sup> Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31 (aorists).

<sup>520</sup> Acts 2:17 (future), 18 (future), 33 (aorist).

<sup>521</sup> Acts 2:33 (aorist), 38 (future).

<sup>522</sup> Acts 2:38 (future); 5:32 (aorist).

<sup>523</sup> Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55 (adjectives).

<sup>524</sup> For an overview of Acts’ pneumatology see Bonnah, *Holy Spirit*, 1–60.

<sup>525</sup> Michael Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit: The Teaching of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 14, 18–33. Cf. Menzies, *Empowered*, 17–45.

outpouring to salvation including a sacramental approach favoured by the early church fathers,<sup>526</sup> part of Christian conversion without being a conscious “experience”,<sup>527</sup> salvation-history,<sup>528</sup> or an initiatory conversion experience.<sup>529</sup> Others connect the Holy Spirit to service or sanctification in an empowering for witness in mission,<sup>530</sup> a gift of holiness,<sup>531</sup> an “extraordinary activation of the Christian life”,<sup>532</sup> assurance,<sup>533</sup> inspired speech in prophecy and tongues,<sup>534</sup> a season of spiritual awakening,<sup>535</sup> and an anticipation of the eventual fullness of salvation.<sup>536</sup> Various aspects can be integrated,<sup>537</sup> but this study focuses on the literary shape of a developing foundational pneumatology in “Act I”.

<sup>526</sup> Barn. 11.1–10, 1–2; 2 Clem. 7.6; Herm. Vis. 3.3.5, 3.7.3; Herm. Sim. 9.16.2; 9.31.1, 4; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 68, 277, 464. Cf. Eaton, *Baptism*, 18–20.

<sup>527</sup> Richard Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 22, 24, 27–28, 31; Bruner, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 155–218.

<sup>528</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 125–44; Bock, *Theology*, 211–26; James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 183–204.

<sup>529</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 4; Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 84–100.

<sup>530</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*; John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, JPTSUP 12 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Ju Hur, *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JSNTSUP 211 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001).

<sup>531</sup> V. Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971); A. M. Hills, *Holiness and Power* (Jamestown: Newby, 1896); L. T. Corlett, *Holiness in Practical Living* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1949); L. W. Wood, *Pentecostal Grace* (Wilmore: Francis Asbury, 1980); Haya-Prats, *Empowered*, 191,

<sup>532</sup> Haya-Prats, *Empowered*, 247.

<sup>533</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 29–31, and the rest of his work setting out the baptism with the Spirit as a sealing of salvation with direct experiential assurance. A view held by Thomas Goodwin in Post-Reformation Calvinism, Howell Harris in early Methodism and Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

<sup>534</sup> Keener, *Spirit*, 190; Luke T. Johnson, *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church: The Challenge of Luke-Acts to Contemporary Christians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 52–71, on the prophetic Spirit linked to mission; Younghawn Kim, “A Narrative Preaching of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts” (PhD diss., University of Wales, Lampeter, 2008), 237. David Peterson, “The Pneumatology of Luke-Acts: The Spirit of Prophecy Unleashed”, in Adams and Pahl, *Issues in Luke-Acts*, 195–216.

<sup>535</sup> This is now popularly referred to as revival. Scholars have not yet pursued sufficiently the possibility that Acts is an account of spiritual revivals joining empowerment and salvation. Murray, *Pentecost Today*, 17–21; D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Authentic Christianity: Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1999–2006), 1.29–31; 6:140–44; Derek Morpheu, *The Mission of the Kingdom: The Theology of Luke-Acts* (Capetown: Vineyard, 2011), 49–53.

<sup>536</sup> Haya-Prats, *Empowered*, 154, 235.

<sup>537</sup> E.g. David Watson, *Discipleship* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1981), 115, joins the non-experiential and experience aspects in a release of that which has already been given in principle; F. B. Meyer (see Eaton, *Baptism*, 20–21), who took the opposite approach by arguing that the empowering was non-experiential; L. Joseph Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* (Glasgow: Collins Fontana, rep 1977), 79, joins the sacramental approach and charismatic experience; Turner, *Power*, joins the salvation and empowering aspects (see also Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, 145–58, for a critique of similar integration by Third Wave theologians); Hur, *Dynamic Reading*, 266–67, joins the empowering and guiding for mission with verification of certain groups; Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 82–83, 151, joins an empowering for mission with sense of the presence of God; Martin C. Salter, *The Power of Pentecost: An Examination of Acts 2:17–21* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2012), joins the salvation-history approach and the hope for a charismatic experience.

The first mention of the Holy Spirit (1:2) as the means for the commanding/choice of the apostles suggests that Acts' pneumatology may have more to do with commission rather than just conversion. This is confirmed by the link with empowering for witness in world-wide mission (1:8). The Holy Spirit's past speaking through David<sup>538</sup> instructs about the formation of the mission instrument. However, the parallel with a past speaking through Isaiah in the final Holy Spirit reference (28:25), book-ends Acts with situations where the Holy Spirit is not presently active. The Holy Spirit coming upon the community of believers as the remnant of Israel (2:1–13) connects with an empowering for mission.<sup>539</sup> Peter confirms this by quoting Joel 2:28–32 to show an empowered prophetic communication leads to salvation. The gift/promise (2:38) is possibly a conversion-commission for mission<sup>540</sup> since the Holy Spirit is not explicitly given until 4:31.<sup>541</sup>

Further mission connections include the renewed individual filling for witness with Peter (4:8) and mention of the Holy Spirit in the battle with Satan (5:3, 9). The adjective *πλήρης* describes a state of being full of the Holy Spirit in contrast to a distinct experience of empowering.<sup>542</sup> However, rather than just a high level of sanctification,<sup>543</sup> the state may indicate a high level of charismatic gifts resulting from the empowering as a readiness for mission.<sup>544</sup> The mission is being resisted by the Jews (7:51). Max Turner is correct to put salvation and service together.<sup>545</sup> However, the pneumatological framework of “Act I”<sup>546</sup> suggests an interpretation that primarily,<sup>547</sup> and possibly exclusively,<sup>548</sup> links to the formation and empowering

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<sup>538</sup> Acts 1:16; 4:25.

<sup>539</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 189, argues that Acts 2 is about the theology of the Holy Spirit within the church rather than in mission. However, the two things are not easily separated since the formation and empowering of the instrument is for the purpose of mission. Cf. Zwiep, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”, 110–114.

<sup>540</sup> As previously argued in this chapter (see §4.3.3.2, pp.204–205).

<sup>541</sup> Walaskay, *Acts*, 60, as a second Pentecost acting as a literary bracket (2:4–4:31). The believers' activities of 2:42–47 and the healing of 3:1–10 only imply the outworking of a Holy Spirit-filling. The question is whether these are part of salvation/sanctification rather than a distinct outpouring.

<sup>542</sup> Acts 6:3, 6; 7:55. The only other use is 11:24.

<sup>543</sup> Turner, *Power*, 166–67, 169.

<sup>544</sup> Haya-Prats, *Empowered*, 155–167.

<sup>545</sup> Turner, *Power*, 401–27.

<sup>546</sup> “Act I” contains twenty-one of the fifty-four Holy Spirit references (40%) in Acts (this excludes 18:25, 19:21 and 20:22 as ambiguous and probably a reference to the human spirit). Acts 1:2, 5, 8, 16; 2:4 (twice), 17, 18, 33, 38; 4:8, 25, 31; 5:3, 9, 32; 6:3, 5, 10; 7:51, 55.

<sup>547</sup> Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984); James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991); Hur, *Dynamic Reading*, 226–27.

<sup>548</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*; Cf. Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, 88–90, adds the nuance that by “exclusive” he means nonsoteriological, prophetic, and missiological.

of God's mission instrument.<sup>549</sup> This takes Turner's argument for the restoration of Israel and integrates it with Menzies's view of empowering.<sup>550</sup> The invitation to be part of a mission instrument includes the offer of the Holy Spirit's presence and power in order to fulfil the commission.<sup>551</sup> Chapter Five explores how the Holy Spirit connects to mission in Acts' Middle and Chapter Six how they both relate to the kingdom of God.

The intersection between the mission source and means includes the extensive use of Scripture quotations,<sup>552</sup> "the name of Jesus",<sup>553</sup> and the progressive "Word" motif as Luke's Gospel (1:1), a Holy Spirit inspired speech (4:29, 31), a *διακονία* (ministry or service) of "the Word" (6:4), and a personified and independent force full of its own vitality (6:7).<sup>554</sup>

(5) *The mission means* include both verbal communication and supernatural activity. An analysis of the proclamation verbs from Chapter Two appearing in "Act I"<sup>555</sup> shows: (i) a surprising single use of *εὐαγγελίζω* (5:42) confirming that Acts' Beginning is about an invitation that Israel should be a mission instrument rather than a story of worldwide mission; (ii) the infrequent *καταγγέλλω* as public widespread dissemination linking the Old Testament prophets to the apostles;<sup>556</sup> (iii) the more frequent *μαρτυρέω*, but only as a witness to Israel;<sup>557</sup> (iv) *παρρησιάζομαι* underlining boldness in the face of Jewish resistance though not as a *framing* device since the first mention is not until 2:29;<sup>558</sup> and (viii) the frequent *διδάσκω* as teaching

<sup>549</sup> Penney, *Missionary Emphasis*; Kim, "Narrative Preaching", 30; Hull, *Holy Spirit*, 46–47, 75; Zwiep, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit"; Bock, *Acts*, 58; Thompson, *Acts*, 131; Keener, *Acts*, 1:689–90.

<sup>550</sup> Turner, *Power*, 418–27, applies the restoration of Israel with a "salvation" framework; Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, 97–98, rejects Turner's proposal because of its link to salvation. I propose to join Turner's proposal to Menzies' outcome.

<sup>551</sup> Gnanakan, *Kingdom Concerns*, 181–84.

<sup>552</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>553</sup> Acts 2:21 (Lord), 38; 3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 30; 5:28, 40, 41. Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:49, notes that "the name" is esp. characteristic of Acts 2–5.

<sup>554</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:82.

<sup>555</sup> See §2.2.6.4, pp.123–25. The proclamation verbs not appearing in "Act I" are: (v) *διαλέγομαι*, as a dialogue with rational appeal to thinking; (vi) *πείθω*, as a persuasive process or a positive outcome; and (vii) *κηρύσσω*, as heralding an official announcement. The suggestion is that these methods do not develop until later in Acts' story.

<sup>556</sup> Acts 3:24 (retrospectively to the OT prophets) and 4:2 (the resurrection of the dead by the apostles).

<sup>557</sup> Acts 1:8 (*μάρτυς*); 1:22 (*μάρτυς*); 2:32; 2:40 (*διαμαρτύρομα*); 3:15 (*μάρτυς*); 4:33 (*μαρτύριον*); 5:32 (*μάρτυς*); 6:13 (*μάρτυς*); 7:44 (*μαρτύριον*); 7:58 (*μάρτυς*). John Niemelä, "Acts 1:8 Reconsidered: A Stub Track, a Siding, or a Main Track?", paper presented at GES Conference, Fort Worth, TX, 13 April 2011. <http://www.mol316.org/pdfs/Acts%201%208%20for%202011%20GES%20conf1.pdf>, 1–11, citing 8–10, concludes that witness in 1:8 is a fulfilment of Deut 30:1–4 in regathering Israel and restoring the kingdom to Israel.

<sup>558</sup> Acts 2:29 (noun); 4:13; 4:29 (noun); 4:31 (noun).

notably by Jesus at the start of Acts (1:1) and extending to the apostles.<sup>559</sup> As already noted in this chapter, teaching functions as a narrative *framing* device suggesting the purpose of Acts.<sup>560</sup> The frequent references to signs and wonders,<sup>561</sup> as well as healings,<sup>562</sup> confirm the mission's supernatural element.

(6) *The mission success* is entirely Jewish and about the growth of the instrument<sup>563</sup> with notable advances seen from Jesus to 12 (1:2), 120 (1:15), about 3,000 (2:41), daily additions (2:47), about 5,000 (4:4), multitudes of men and women (5:14), an increase of disciples (6:1), and a great number of priests (6:7). The success is attributed to God.<sup>564</sup> Also victory over Satan is seen in exorcisms<sup>565</sup> and in the Ananias and Sapphira section.<sup>566</sup>

(7) *The mission suffering* caused by Jewish opposition is a progressive theme in Acts' Beginning reaching a pinnacle with Stephen's martyrdom.<sup>567</sup> Paradoxically, this suffering is a catalyst<sup>568</sup> to the expansion of mission beyond Jerusalem (8:1, 4).<sup>569</sup>

(8) *The mission expansion* begins with the kingdom of God at 1:3, 6 linked by 1:8 to the Holy Spirit and formation of the mission instrument. Chapter Six explores how this theme develops in Acts.

Overall the *foundation* of mission in Acts is promising. The mission instrument is formed. The mission target and message focus on Israel's invitation to get involved in the *missio Dei* of worldwide divine activity focused on Christ. Israel is offered salvation in order to serve. The mission source is the activity of the Holy Spirit, widespread Scripture quotations, references to "the name of Jesus", and "the Word". The mission means of teaching and supernatural signs reinforce the invitation. In spite of all this, the Jewish leaders resist, the church has internal problems, and there is a reluctance to move outside of Jerusalem with the mission.

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<sup>559</sup> Acts 1:1; 2:42 (noun); 4:2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28 (noun), 42.

<sup>560</sup> See §4.3.2.4, p.196.

<sup>561</sup> Acts 2:19 (both); 2:22 (both); 2:43 (both); 4:16 (sign); 4:22 (sign); 4:30 (both); 5:12 (both); 6:8 (both); 7:36 (both).

<sup>562</sup> Acts 3:7 and 5:15, 16.

<sup>563</sup> Jervell, *People of God*, 47.

<sup>564</sup> Acts 2:47; 6:7.

<sup>565</sup> Acts 5:16.

<sup>566</sup> Acts 5:1–11 in light of the mention of Satan at 5:3.

<sup>567</sup> Acts 4:1–3; 5:17–18, 40–41; 6:9–14; 7:54–8:2. Talbert, *Patterns*, 35–39; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:63–65; Haenchen, *Acts*, 274; Tabb, "Suffering", 144–159.

<sup>568</sup> Cunningham, *Tribulations*, 214.

<sup>569</sup> Pervo, *Profit*, 28; Cf. Jeong, *Weakness*, 36–37.

The combination of literary shape and missional significance is now summarised.

#### 4.5 Summary

The identification of literary shape in Acts' Beginning suggests a *foundation* of missional significance. The previous observations of an accumulative literary shape in the first summary (§4.3.1.16), first scene (§4.3.2.3), and "Act I" (§4.3.4) are now integrated with the discoveries of missional significance (§4.4).

The structure and story of Acts' Beginning reveal several key findings of missional significance:

1. The first summary (1:1–5) opens Acts with a literal "first word", the author, and reader Theophilus, leading into a plethora of themes which reveal the mission instrument from the start. These include Jesus as the originator and focus of mission, the apostles as the mission instrument, the Holy Spirit as the source of mission, the resurrection as appropriately picturing the vitality, energy, and ultimate triumph of mission, the kingdom of God as mission expansion, and the table-fellowship which points to the community of the mission instrument.
2. The indeterminable slide from *preface* to *prologue* to story encourages the hearer/reader to identify with the challenge of being a mission instrument.
3. The last words of Jesus before his unexpected departure at the ascension in the final section (1:6–11) emphasise the connection between the empowering of the Holy Spirit and the resulting worldwide witness of the apostles (1:8).
4. The reconstitution of the Twelve is given an emphasis by its literary size (1:12–26) and is symbolic of a restored remnant Israel as a mission instrument
5. "Act I" (1:12–8:3) sets out the developing *foundation* for missional significance. This includes the major mission source of the Holy Spirit empowering (2:1–11) together with frequent references to "the Word" and "the name of Jesus". The mention of signs and wonders, as well as healings, confirm the supernatural element. However, Acts' Beginning is not a story of continual mission advance, but also shows some decline in

the growing Jewish resistance, Satanic opposition, and internal church problems (5:1–11; 6:1–6). Both Israel and the church appear reluctant at this stage to engage in world-wide mission.

6. An exclusive literary-spatial focus on Jerusalem suggests that Israel's transformation as a mission instrument is primarily in view. However, the fact the story remains in Jerusalem in Acts' Beginning suggests a reluctance to move forward with the Gentile worldwide mission.
7. The lack of literary-temporal movement in "Act I" suggests a *thematic/paradigmatic* approach which defines the mission instrument rather than telling the story of mission progress.
8. The character focus begins with Peter and the apostles appealing to Israel, but then this task transitions to Stephen. Peter's five speeches focus on Jesus's exaltation as an incentive for the mission, and Stephen's speech prepares for the mission movement away from Jerusalem. This is given a literary emphasis as the largest speech in Acts and by its location at the end of "Act I". In addition the prominent use of seventeen Old Testament quotations (65% of the total in Acts) constructs a framework for the call to mission.
9. The mission message has a major focus on God and Jesus as Lord and Christ, initiating the mission instrument. Jesus's absence throughout most of Acts' Beginning suggests that the emphasis is on the human instrument rather than the *missio Dei*. Although Jesus is largely absent from the story, his active involvement at both the beginning and end of "Act I" indicates an over-arching presence. The focus on the resurrection rather than the cross is appropriate for new life and gospel success. A less frequent than expected mention of salvation also suggests that the formation of a mission instrument is in view rather than the mission.
10. The most frequent proclamation verbs are μαρτυρέω and διδάσκω. These are used in connection with the focus on an invitation for the Jews to be a mission instrument rather than the mission itself. This is confirmed by the surprisingly single use of εὐαγγελίζω and the fact that "Act I" closes with the church still in Jerusalem.



The emphasis of Acts' Beginning is upon the formation of the mission instrument. The mission has great potential, but as already seen in Acts' Ending, does not finish as expected. To understand what happens in-between, the next chapter explores Acts' Middle. As Horace puts it "the middle is not discordant with the beginning, nor the end with the middle".<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>570</sup> Horace, *Ars* 152 [Fairclough].

## CHAPTER FIVE: ACTS' MIDDLE

Acts' Middle makes a distinctive contribution to Acts' literary shape. However, it is the most difficult stage to identify and analyse since the middle of a literary work is “notoriously impossible to sustain – undecided, transitional, vacillating”<sup>1</sup> due to its sheer length and complexity. Analysing the muddle of the middle is a “bewildering, massive and deliberately undramatic enterprise”.<sup>2</sup> This makes the present chapter particularly challenging since Acts' Middle is 50% of the narrative in Horace's “Five-Act Structure”. Nonetheless, the middle is important as “a major nerve ganglion of the story”<sup>3</sup> with many threads leading in and out. The middle connects the beginning and the ending, and also contains an important midpoint. Freytag suggests that “two chief parts of the drama are firmly united by a point of the action which lies directly in the middle. This middle, the climax of the play, is the most important place of the structure; the action rises to this; the action falls away from this”.<sup>4</sup>

For this study the structural arrangement of Acts' Middle (8:4–21:15) starts where Acts' Beginning finishes and finishes where Acts' Ending starts. The statistical centre is the Lystra scene (14:8–20a) with a midpoint at 14:15. The present chapter uses the deliberate and consistent approach used in previous chapters to explore Acts' Middle in terms of scholarship (§5.1), a fine-tuned method (§5.2), the observations of an accumulative literary shape which prioritises literary structure and story before significance in close exegetical work on the narrow focus of 14:8–20a before the broader view of 8:4–21:14 in an oscillating manner which emphasises the central scene (§5.3), the discoveries for a *pivot* of missional significance appropriately left until the end of the chapter (§5.4), and a closing summary which brings together the findings of literary shape and missional significance (§5.5).

### 5.1 Acts' Middle Scholarship

Unlike Acts' Ending and Beginning, there is no scholarly work specifically on the entire Acts' Middle. This leaves a large research gap to fill regarding Acts' literary

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<sup>1</sup> Levine and Ortiz-Robles, “Introduction”, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Levine and Ortiz-Robles, “Introduction”, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Vogler, *Writer's Journey*, 156.

<sup>4</sup> Freytag, *Technique of Drama*, 105.

shape. Helpful scholarship includes discussions over Acts' structure<sup>5</sup> and commentators who cover the Middle along with the rest of Acts. The various possibilities for a central section have strengths and weaknesses.

12:1–25 is a possible central section as the second half of a bipartite structure based on the character transition from Peter to Paul.<sup>6</sup> The few monographs on this section link it to wider Luke-Acts' themes rather than considering its literary location.<sup>7</sup> Although 12:1–25 is a possible transitional *pivot* for missional significance, it is unlikely as the central section since the transition from Peter to Paul is a complex interwoven pattern.<sup>8</sup> Also it would create an asymmetrical literary shape.<sup>9</sup>

13:13–52 is a possible central section which Edwin Nelson argues from a chiasmic arrangement of Acts 13–14.<sup>10</sup> However, along with other scholars who explore different aspects of this section, Nelson does not link this to wider Acts' literary shape.<sup>11</sup> The present study draws on John Morgan-Wynne's work which includes the wider context of Acts' speeches and the first missionary journey, a useful, but brief, structural analysis, and the theological emphases of God, Christ, the Old Testament, and Israel.<sup>12</sup> The strengths of 13:13–52 as a possible *pivot* for

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.4.1, pp.61–67).

<sup>6</sup> For an introduction to this transition see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, p.98).

<sup>7</sup> Frank Dicken, *Herod as a Composite Character in Luke-Acts*, WUNT 2.375 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 149–52; O. Wesley Allen Jr., *The Death of Herod: The Narrative and Theological Function of Retribution in Luke-Acts*, SBLDS 158 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 75–108.

<sup>8</sup> Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 171–72, 186. The transition is explored further later in this chapter.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 1–12 (43.6%) and 13–28 (56.4%) (see calculations for bipartite structure at §2.2.4.1, p.62). Also see the discussions in Chapter Two on Graeco-Roman love of symmetry (§2.2.4.1, p.62, n.160).

<sup>10</sup> Nelson, “Paul’s First Missionary Journey”, 52.

A (13:1–3). Missionaries ordained to work with prayer and fasting.

B (13:4–6a). General preaching in Cyprus.

C (13:6b–12). Miraculous involvement in Cyprus.

D (13:13–14a). Transition: John Mark.

E (13:14b–52). Work in Antioch of Pisidia.

D<sup>1</sup> (14:1–6). Transition: Iconium.

C<sup>1</sup> (14:7–20). Miracle at Lystra.

B<sup>1</sup> (14:21). General preaching in Derbe.

A<sup>1</sup> (14:22–28). Ordaining of church leaders to work with prayer and fasting.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. E. Lövestam, *Son and Saviour: A Study of Acts, 13.32–37*, CN 18 (Lund: Gleerup, 1961); Marcel Dumais, *Le langage de l'évangélisation: L'annonce missionnaire en milieu juif (Actes 13, 16–41)*, TR 16 (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1976); C. A. Joachim Pillari, *Early Missionary Preaching: A Study of Luke's Report in Acts 13.16–41* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition, 1979); Pillari, *Apostolic Interpretation of History: A Commentary on Acts 13.16–41* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition, 1980); Matthäus F.-J. Buss, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus im Pisidischen Antiochien: Analyse von Apg 13,16–41 im Hinblick auf die literarische und thematische Einheit der Paulusrede*, FzB 38 (Stuttgart: KBW, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*.

missional significance are that the section frames the start of Paul's mission with 28:16–31,<sup>13</sup> contains Paul's first and longest speech (13:16b–41), and includes a key intertextual quotation of Isaiah 49:6 (13:47) legitimising the Gentile mission.<sup>14</sup> However, from a statistical perspective, 13:13–52 does not contain the midpoint (14:15) and is therefore better understood as Mary Mercer's "first half or event of the midpoint".<sup>15</sup>

15:3–35 is favoured by scholars as the central section of literary structure, literary story, and missional significance.<sup>16</sup> However, Acts 15 remarkably has no major publication even though there are various articles.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of literary structure this section is the second half of a fourfold structure and the largest literary episode in Acts' Middle.<sup>18</sup> However, the structural justification for 15:3–35 is often a *fait accompli* based on previous literary or theological decisions. For example Fitzmyer supports the importance of 15:3–35 with a statistical analysis based on his own translation word count of Acts 1–14 (12,385) and 15–28 (12,502).<sup>19</sup> However, he does not take the logical step of checking the midpoint (14:15). Structurally 15:3–35 is after the centre.<sup>20</sup> It is better understood as Freytag's second crisis (*tragic moment*)<sup>21</sup> or Mercer's "second half or event of the midpoint"<sup>22</sup> which marks the literary decline with a mission authorisation responding to opposition.

In terms of literary story the arguments are strong for 15:3–35 as the climax. Haenchen notes that it functions as, "the turning point – centrepiece – watershed – episode which rounds off and justifies past developments and makes those to come

<sup>13</sup> Wall, "Acts", 359.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph B. Tyson, "The Gentile Mission and the Authority of Scripture in Acts", *NTS* 33 (1987): 619–631, citing 623. Cf. Meek, *Mission*, 24–55.

<sup>15</sup> Mercer, *Midpoint*, 20, 41–108, sees this occurring between 47.5–50% of the narrative. For Acts this starts in middle of 13:41 embracing the "turning to Gentiles" (13:46–47) and the Iconium section (14:1–7).

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Kee, *Good News*, 57; Rosner, "Progress", 227; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 256; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:85; Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:168; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:709–10; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 538; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2207; Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 149–51; Holladay, *Acts*, 294; Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 160.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Terence Callan, "The Background of the Apostolic Decree (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25)", *CBQ* 55 (1993): 284–297; Alex Cheung, "A Narrative Analysis of Acts 14:27–15:35: Literary Shaping in Luke's Account of the Jerusalem Council", *WTJ* 55 (1993), 137–54; Michael Mahan, "A Narrative Analysis of the Jerusalem Council Discourses: Table Fellowship and the Implicit Theology of Salvation", *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 5 (2013): 39–62.

<sup>18</sup> Cheung, "Narrative Analysis", 144.

<sup>19</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 538.

<sup>20</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 367, notes that Acts 15 is not the structural pivot, but does not say what is.

<sup>21</sup> Freytag, *Technique*, 115. See Diagram II, p.44.

<sup>22</sup> Mercer, *Midpoint*, 20, 109–167, sees this occurring between 50–52.5% of the narrative. For Acts this extends to the end of 15:11.

possible”.<sup>23</sup> Yet the concept of a turning point leaves it unclear whether the section closes the first half of Acts’ story or opens the second. It is debatable that what follows in Acts 16–28 is just a positive triumphant story rather than also including periods of decline.<sup>24</sup> Fitzmyer suggests 15:3–35 is a character transition from Peter finally disappearing at 15:7–11 to Paul’s prominence from 15:36 onwards.<sup>25</sup> However, this oversimplifies the character transition.<sup>26</sup> Conzelmann argues that 15:3–35 is a spatial transition from the Jewish mission in Jerusalem to the Gentile mission in the rest of Acts.<sup>27</sup> However, this disregards Paul’s earlier prototype Gentile mission (Acts 13–14), his continued Jewish focus, and the later return to Jerusalem.<sup>28</sup>

In terms of missional significance, Philippe Menoud describes 15:3–35 as “the turning point in the history of the propagation of the gospel”.<sup>29</sup> He argues that mission preparation is complete in principle and mission practice now begins to take the gospel to the end of the earth.<sup>30</sup> Alex Cheung supports this by noting that the section is framed by the first (13:1–14:26) and second (15:36–18:22) missionary journeys.<sup>31</sup> Witherington suggests that Acts 15 is the “most crucial chapter”<sup>32</sup> or theological *pivot* of Acts in keeping with the assumption that the Jerusalem Conference has an entirely positive outcome of mission authorisation.<sup>33</sup> This chapter later argues for a more ambiguous conclusion in keeping with a story decline and the fact that Acts only infrequently mentions the decision.<sup>34</sup> Although a negative outcome can be a centre or pivot, if 15:3–35 is about resolving a resistance to mission (albeit with a solution of kinds) then it is a less positive central section than those which record the actual mission. Also whilst a literary division at 15:35 is

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<sup>23</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 461–62.

<sup>24</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 367–68.

<sup>25</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 538.

<sup>26</sup> A more precise analysis of the transition is given later in this chapter (see §5.3.2.9, pp.264–65).

<sup>27</sup> Conzelmann, *Acts*, 115.

<sup>28</sup> Acts 16:3, 13; 17:2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8, 10; 19:21; 21:17; 28:17.

<sup>29</sup> Menoud, “Plan”, 124.

<sup>30</sup> Menoud, “Plan”, 123–25.

<sup>31</sup> Cheung, “Narrative Analysis”, 139.

<sup>32</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 439.

<sup>33</sup> Cheung, “Narrative Analysis”, 145.

<sup>34</sup> Acts 15:31; 16:4–5; 21:25.

justified,<sup>35</sup> John O'Neill correctly points out that it is not a division that “dominates all divisions”.<sup>36</sup>

14:8–20a is rarely considered as a central section maybe because of its relatively small literary size. The two major studies by Marianne Fournier<sup>37</sup> and Dean Béchard<sup>38</sup> are helpful for this study. Fournier looks at the structure of 14:8–20a through a rhetorical and semiotic approach, but does not identify the section as Acts' Middle or connect it to the wider narrative. Béchard usefully connects the section with the wider narrative of the first missionary journey. However, his method is a mix of Talbert's architectonic patterns and structures, Cilliers Breytenbach's social-historical geography, and Pervo's travel narratives.<sup>39</sup> As an original suggestion, I propose that 14:8–20a is the central section (scene) of Acts' literary structure, story, and missional significance.<sup>40</sup> Scholars include it in larger central sections of 14:1–28, the first missionary journey (13:1–14:28),<sup>41</sup> and 8:1b–14:28.<sup>42</sup> This chapter seeks to give priority to literary shape by proposing that Acts 13–15 is a more central structural arrangement revealing how the mission instrument for Gentiles is formed (Acts 13), exemplified (Acts 14), and resisted (Acts 15).

In order to fill some scholarly gaps I propose a focused method of narrative criticism which combines Graeco-Roman and modern literary middle concepts, an emphasis on the statistical midpoint as a contribution to the analysis of Acts' literary structure, an exploration of Acts 13–15 as a story *climax* likely to reveal missional significance, and a broader scope for Acts' Middle which allows an exploration of how the story advances and declines connect to Acts' Beginning and Ending. The research method for this chapter is now outlined.

## 5.2 Fine-Tuned Method for Acts' Middle

The method constructed in Chapter Two is now fine-tuned for studying the structure, story, and significance of Acts' Middle.

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<sup>35</sup> The Jerusalem Conference actually ends at 15:29, but 15:30–35 can reasonably be attached since it is a transitional section telling of the delivery of the letter to (Syrian) Antioch.

<sup>36</sup> O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 66.

<sup>37</sup> Fournier, *Lystra*.

<sup>38</sup> Béchard, *Outside the Walls*.

<sup>39</sup> Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 77–85; Talbert, *Patterns*; Cilliers Breytenbach, “Zeus und der lebendige Gott: Anmerkungen zu Apostelgeschichte 14.11–17”, *NTS* 39 (1993): 396–413; Pervo, *Profit*.

<sup>40</sup> Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 204.

<sup>41</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, “Paul's Mission to the Gentile World: Acts 13–19”, *RevExp* 71 (1974): 487–497, citing 488. Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 138. Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 227.

<sup>42</sup> Betori, “La strutturazione del libro degli Atti”, 17,

### 5.2.1 Method for Exploring the Structure of Acts' Middle

Horace's "Five-Act Structure", classified by Freytag and applied by modern dramatists, divides Acts' Middle into three "Acts" roughly equal in length after adjustments for story breaks. Chapter Two identifies these as "Act II" (8:4–11:26), "Act III" (11:27–16:40), and "Act IV" (17:1–21:14).<sup>43</sup> There are transitional sections between the "Acts" which have the blurred edges common to Acts' narrative. A statistical approach identifies Lystra (14:8–20a) as the structural central scene containing the narrative midpoint at 14:15. Grammatical, episodic, and story factors outlined in Chapter Two identify the nine sections of "Act III"<sup>44</sup> as 11:27–12:25; 13:1–13; 13:14–52; 14:1–7; 14:8–20a; 14:20b–15:2; 15:3–35; 15:36–16:9; 16:10–40. A synopsis of the wider Acts' Middle looks at the whole, rather than sections, of "Act II"<sup>45</sup> and "Act IV"<sup>46</sup> since they are transitional to and from the central "Act III". However, a focus on structural elements and story components is observed across the entire Acts' Middle.

### 5.2.2 Method for Exploring the Story of Acts' Middle

This study applies Aristotle's story stages and development principles to Acts' Middle as a journey from Acts' Beginning to Acts' Ending. Aristotle suggests there is a *complication* to the midpoint of *transformation* and then a *denouement* away from it.<sup>47</sup> However, Acts' Middle has two advances (11:27–14:7; 16:6–19:20) and two declines (15:3–16:5; 19:21–21:14) each containing high and low points.<sup>48</sup> The method from Chapter Two includes a central reading, story components, and the key literary middle concepts.

*A central reading* appropriate for Acts' Middle<sup>49</sup> begins at the central scene (14:8–20a) where significance is most likely and moves outwards in an oscillation backwards and forwards.<sup>50</sup> This observes the *overview patterning* of an overall

<sup>43</sup> See Diagrams III (p.69) and IV (p.71).

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix III, p.387.

<sup>45</sup> "Act II" has six sections as 8:4–25; 8:26–40; 9:1–31; 9:32–43; 10:1–11:18; 11:19–26. See Appendix III, p.386.

<sup>46</sup> "Act IV" has eight sections as 17:1–9; 17:10–15; 17:16–34; 18:1–18a; 18:18b–19:40; 20:1–12; 20:13–28; 21:1–14. See Appendix III, p.388.

<sup>47</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.* 18.1–2 (1445b.24–28).

<sup>48</sup> See Diagram V, p.79.

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.3, p.82).

<sup>50</sup> Levine and Ortiz-Robles, "Introduction", 9.

advance and decline in “Act III” (11:27–16:40) as well as the preceding “Act II” (8:4–11:26), and succeeding “Act IV” (17:1–21:14).

*The story components* include the literary-spatial movement to Lystra in the centre from Samaria (8:4–25) at the start and Caesarea at the finish (21:8–14). The narrative revisits the locations of Caesarea, (Syrian) Antioch, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Troas, Ephesus and Jerusalem.<sup>51</sup> The literary-temporal movement has external chronological markers<sup>52</sup> and an overlapping of sections in Acts 8–12.<sup>53</sup> The character movement from Peter to Paul through Philip and Barnabas includes other minor characters<sup>54</sup> contributing to the development of the story.<sup>55</sup> The speech component includes the speeches of Peter,<sup>56</sup> Paul,<sup>57</sup> and James<sup>58</sup> with their own specific contexts and conclusions.<sup>59</sup> The intertextual Old Testament quotations are notably clustered in Paul’s speech at Pisidian Antioch,<sup>60</sup> but are also present within the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch<sup>61</sup> and James’s speech.<sup>62</sup>

*The key literary middle concepts* from Chapter One are summarised in the glossary of Appendix I.<sup>63</sup> This avoids the need for an explanation or cross-reference every time a concept is used.

### 5.2.3 Method for Exploring the Significance of Acts’ Middle

This chapter identifies the *pivot* of missional significance in Acts’ Middle by using the narrative theology method from Chapter Two. This involves exploring how far the literary shape suggests a missional significance in an example of Gentile mission at Lystra, with a previous exposition at Pisidian Antioch, and following an authorisation at Jerusalem. Also to see if the emphasis is on the formation of a mission instrument with an ongoing invitation to Israel, the examples of Philip, Peter

<sup>51</sup> See Diagram VI (A–C), pp.87–89.

<sup>52</sup> AD 44 (Herod’s death. 12:23); AD 46–48 (Famine. 11:29); AD 49 (Claudius’s Edict. 18:2); AD 52 (Gallio. 18:12); and AD 59 (Festus. 24:27).

<sup>53</sup> See Diagram VII, p.94.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. the Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, King Herod, Bar-Jesus, Sergius Paulus, James, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos. Note the re-emergence of Philip and Agabus in Acts 21:8–11.

<sup>55</sup> See Diagram VIII (A and B), pp.102–103.

<sup>56</sup> Acts 10:34b–43, 11:5–17 and 15:7b–11 as his final speech.

<sup>57</sup> Acts 13:16b–41 as his first and longest speech, and 13:46ab, 47; 14:15b–17; 17:22b–31; 20:18b–35.

<sup>58</sup> Acts 15:13b–21.

<sup>59</sup> See Diagram IX, p.106.

<sup>60</sup> Acts 13:33b (Ps 2:7); 13:34b (Isa 55:3); 13:35b (Ps 16:10); 13:41 (Hab 1:5) and 13:47 (Isa 49:6).

<sup>61</sup> Acts 8:32b–33 (Isa 53:7–8).

<sup>62</sup> Acts 15:16–18 (Amos 9:11–12).

<sup>63</sup> See pp.378–82.



and Paul, further empowering of the Holy Spirit, and the enlightenment of Scripture. The discoveries of missional significance are delayed until the end of this chapter so that precedence is given to the literary shape.

### 5.3 Literary Shape of Acts' Middle

The fine-tuned method explores the literary shape of Acts' Middle divided into the central scene of "Act III" and Acts (14:8–20a) (§5.3.1), "Act III" (11:27–16:40) (§4.3.2), "Act II" (8:4–11:26) (§5.3.3), and "Act IV" (17:1–21:14) (§5.3.4). Each part combines an exploration of structure and story in order to identify the observations of an accumulative literary shape.

#### 5.3.1 Central Scene of "Act III" and Acts (14:8–20a)

The structure of Acts reveals the central scene as 14:8–20a located at Lystra. Although scholars do not give this section much prominence, this study shows that its centrality within Act's literary shape suggests it is a *pivot* of missional significance. Fournier uses a chiasm to confirm that the central speech (14:15b–17) is at the centre of the central scene.<sup>64</sup> A central reading begins with the speech, then its preceding context (14:8–14), and succeeding reaction (14:19–20).

##### 5.3.1.1 Central Speech (14:15b–17)

A word count of Acts in NA<sup>28</sup> reveals the exact statistical centre is between the words ἐσμεν and ὑμῖν<sup>65</sup> in the middle of the statement "and we are men of like nature evangelising to you" (καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς) (14:15). This marks a *mirror moment* at the midpoint revealing a focus on a human mission instrument presenting the gospel to other humans. However, the significance of such a precise calculation should not be overplayed except in identifying the central scene as a suitable story *climax*. In spite of the speech's

<sup>64</sup> Fournier, *Lystra*, 47–80, esp. 72.

A (v. 8). Lame man's incapacity to stand on his feet.

B (vv. 9–10). Healing.

C (vv. 11–13). Crowd's desire to offer sacrifice.

D (vv. 14–15a). Protest in actions and words.

E (vv. 15b–17). Proclamation.

D' (v. 18a). End of protest in words.

C' (v. 18b). Crowd restrained from sacrificing.

B' (v. 19). Stoning.

A (v. 20a). Paul's capacity to rise.

<sup>65</sup> For the statistical calculations see Diagram III, p.69.

brevity, it is important as the first gospel presentation in Acts to pagan Gentiles rather than to those who have some understanding of Israel's God.<sup>66</sup> Roland Meynet's suggestion about questions being a significant centre of a concentric arrangement for biblical literary units or whole books<sup>67</sup> applies to the initial question, "Men, why are you doing these things?" (14:15). The speech centre focuses on "(the) Living God" (θεὸν ζῶντα) surrounded by εὐαγγελιζόμενοι (14:15) and "not himself unwitnessed" (ἀμάρτυρο) (14:17). A close examination reveals that although starting from a pagan perspective, the speech is an apologetic gospel presentation<sup>68</sup> based on the biblical revelation of a Creator God rather than a natural theology without biblical links.<sup>69</sup>

First, the speech is a polemic to stop the sacrifices<sup>70</sup> arising from a misunderstanding of a natural revelation.<sup>71</sup> Many of Acts' speeches give an invitation to be a mission instrument from the Old Testament revelation of God as Lord of Israel.<sup>72</sup> However, this speech focuses on (the) θεὸν ζῶντα.<sup>73</sup> This does not have a definite article, but takes one as a monadic or one-of-a-kind noun<sup>74</sup> or a proper name rather than being just one amongst a number of living gods.<sup>75</sup> "(The) Living God" is a source of life,<sup>76</sup> the Creator, a contrast to dead idols,<sup>77</sup> and appears in the LXX especially in relation to the defeating of Israel's enemies.<sup>78</sup> The description "who

<sup>66</sup> See the Samaritans (8:4–25), Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40), Cornelius (10:1–11:18), Greeks (11:19–21), Sergius Paulus at Paphos (13:6–12); Gentiles at Pisidian Antioch (13:48–50), Gentiles at Iconium (14:1–7). Cf. Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 337; Nelson, "First Missionary Journey", 144–45; Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 369; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 298–99.

<sup>67</sup> Meynet, "Question", 200–202.

<sup>68</sup> Fournier, *Lystra*, 183–85, 194–97; Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 155–56; Peterson, *Acts*, 411.

<sup>69</sup> Stephen R. Spencer, "Is Natural Theology Biblical?", *GTR*, 9.1 (1988): 59–72, citing 63; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 276; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:179; Peterson, *Acts*, 409; Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 187–88.

<sup>70</sup> Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 376–378.

<sup>71</sup> Conrad H. Gempf, "Historical and Literary Appropriateness in the Mission Speeches in Acts" (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 1988), 218; Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 188.

<sup>72</sup> Fournier, *Lystra*, 194–95. See speeches at 1:16, 17, 20–22; 2:14b–36, 38b, 39, 40b; 3:12b–26; 4:8b–12; 5:29b–32; 7:2b–53, 56b; 10:34b–43, 47; 11:5–17; 13:16b–41, 46b, 47; 15:13b–21; 21:20b–25; 24:10b–21; 26:2–23; 28:17b–20; 28:25b–28. Besides 14:15b–17, the speeches not referring to the revelation of the OT are 15:7b–11; 17:22b–31; 19:35b–40; 20:18b–35; 22:1, 3–21; 23:1b, 3b, 5b, 6b; 24:2b–8; 25:14b–21, 24b–27.

<sup>73</sup> Muthuraj, "Theology of God", 115.

<sup>74</sup> Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 248–49.

<sup>75</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:680.

<sup>76</sup> Schnabel, *Acts*, 610; Muthuraj, "Theology of God", 118.

<sup>77</sup> Fournier, *Lystra*, 67–68, 129–137, 191–93; Longenecker, "Acts", 934; Keener, *Acts*, 2:2159–64.

<sup>78</sup> Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10 (enemies); 1 Sam 17:36 (enemies); 2 Kgs 19:4, 16 (enemies); Ps 42:2; 84:2; Isa 37:4, 17 (enemies); Jer 10:10; 23:36; Dan 5:23 (enemies); 6:26; Hos 1:10; 4:15. Cilliers Breytenbach, *Paulus und Barnabas in der Provinz Galatien: Studien zu Apostelgeschichte 13f; 16,6; 18,23 und den Adressaten des Galaterbriefes*, AGAJU 38 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 62.

made the heaven and the earth (land/ground) and the sea and all the things in them” confirms God as Creator from the Old Testament<sup>79</sup> in contrast with Zeus, the pagan weather god.<sup>80</sup> The same description in the model prayer (4:24)<sup>81</sup> alongside a quotation from Psalm 2:1–2<sup>82</sup> supports a possible connection between θεὸν ζῶντα and the kingdom of God (14:22).<sup>83</sup>

Second, the present tense, εὐαγγελιζόμενοι (14:15), suggests the speech is part of an ongoing proclamation<sup>84</sup> from 14:7 linked to the gospel message about Jesus.<sup>85</sup>

Third, the gospel is presented on the basis of a shared humanity (14:15)<sup>86</sup> and the distinctive call “to turn” (ἐπιστρέφειν)<sup>87</sup> from “useless things” (ματαίων)<sup>88</sup> “towards (ἐπὶ)<sup>89</sup> (the) Living God”. This echoes Exodus 14:15, implies a critique of pagan religion,<sup>90</sup> and challenges Graeco-Roman inclusive religious society.<sup>91</sup>

Fourth, there is the hint of a new era in a change from the past when “(the) Living God” “allowed all the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) to go in their ways” (14:16).<sup>92</sup> God gives blessings from heaven described as “rain and fruitful seasons”. These are a suitable agricultural picture for the Lystran context<sup>93</sup> and may also hint at spiritual blessings as used in the Old Testament.<sup>94</sup>

Fifth, the inconclusive ending of the speech (14:18–19)<sup>95</sup> means it may only

<sup>79</sup> Exod 20:11; Ps 146:6. NA<sup>28</sup>, 428. See also Neh 9:6.

<sup>80</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:2165–68.

<sup>81</sup> See οὐρανός and γῆ joined in 2:19; 7:49; 10:11; 17:24. Johnson, *Acts*, 83; Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 208.

<sup>82</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.3.3.4, p.208).

<sup>83</sup> The connection is discussed further in Chapter Six. (§6.4.2, p.336).

<sup>84</sup> Schnabel, *Acts*, 609; Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 178–79.

<sup>85</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.123, n.611).

<sup>86</sup> Dean E. Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2005), 68.

<sup>87</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:2164, sees it as equivalent to repentance; Muthuraj, “Theology of God”, 114, as conversion with a two-fold meaning of turning from idols and turning to God.

<sup>88</sup> BDAG, ματαίος, 621. See Lev 17:7; 1 Kgs 16:13, 26; 2 Kgs 17:15; Isa 2:20; 30:7, 15, 28; 31:2; 44:9; Jer 2:5; 8:19; Ezek 8:10. Cf. Muthuraj, “Theology of God”, 114–15.

<sup>89</sup> BDAG, ἐπὶ, 364, §4, where 14:15 is an example of a marker of movement.

<sup>90</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary. Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2008), 164–167.

<sup>91</sup> David Lim, “Evangelism in the Early Church”, in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1997), 353–59, citing 354.

<sup>92</sup> Flemming, *Contextualisation*, 70.

<sup>93</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:2168–72.

<sup>94</sup> Gen 8:22. For rain linked to spiritual blessings see Deut 11:14; 28:12; 32:2; Lev 26:4; 2 Sam 23:4; Ps 68:9; 72:6; 147:8; Prov 16:15; Isa 30:23; 55:10; Jer 5:24; Hos 6:3; 10:12; Joel 2:23; Zech 10:1. For the idea of fruitfulness linked to spiritual blessings see Gen 26:22; Deut 28:4, 11; Ps 1:3; Isa 32:15.

<sup>95</sup> Scholars debate whether the speech is interrupted (Polhill, *Acts*, 316), discontinued (conversation with Daniel Lynwood Smith, Chester, Sept 2016, confirming his omission of the Lystra speech in his *Rhetoric of Interruption*. Cf. Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 190), or neither, since it is a summary (Keener, *Acts*, 2:2157).

be preliminary to a clearer gospel message.<sup>96</sup> Marshall suggests that the accompanying gospel (from the previous speeches) is given a literary omission to focus on the pagan aspect of the message.<sup>97</sup> The preceding literary context for the speech is important.

### 5.3.1.2 Literary Context for the Speech (14:8–14)

The speech's context is the climactic literary-spatial location of pagan Lystra, the healing of the lame man, and the character focus on Paul and Barnabas described as apostles.

Scholars confirm the literary focus on Lystra's rural and uncivilised nature<sup>98</sup> in spite of the omission of its broader social mix as a Roman colony.<sup>99</sup> Its literary purpose as a remote setting<sup>100</sup> is confirmed by references to the region of Lycaonia (14:6)<sup>101</sup> and the Lycaonian language or dialect (14:11).<sup>102</sup> The main literary focus is Lystra's superstitious paganism in what Dunn calls a definitive encounter with the gods of classical Greece.<sup>103</sup> Barnabas and Paul are mistaken as Zeus (Δία) and Hermes (Ἑρμῆν) (14:12)<sup>104</sup> because of the supernatural elements of the healing of the lame man (14:8–10), and possibly Paul's "stare" (ἀτενίσας) (14:9)<sup>105</sup> and "loud voice" (μεγάλη φωνή) (14:10) which Rick Strelan argues were identifications of gods.<sup>106</sup> As a result the miracle is interpreted within a pagan framework.<sup>107</sup> There is a reappearance of Gospel messengers as mistaken gods in Paul's renewed Gentile mission at Malta (28:6).<sup>108</sup> Darrell Bock rightly describes the lack of reference to

<sup>96</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 316. Cf. Bock, *Theology*, 242.

<sup>97</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 252.

<sup>98</sup> Strabo, *Geogr.* 12.6.5; 14.5.24; Ramsay, *Cities*, 407–418; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:672.

<sup>99</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 272–74; Amy L. Wordelman, "Cultural Divides and Dual Realities: A Greco-Roman Context for Acts 14", in Penner and Stichele, *Contextualizing Acts*, 205–32; Keener, *Acts*, 2:2129; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1112–13.

<sup>100</sup> Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 206; Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 388–395.

<sup>101</sup> Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 232–353; Ramsay, *Traveller*, 110–111, notes that Lycaonia divided into Roman part (including Lystra and Derbe) and non-Roman part.

<sup>102</sup> Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 146–150, 413–14.

<sup>103</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 189.

<sup>104</sup> Ovid, *Metam.* 8.611–724; Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 417–18; Keener, *Acts*, 2:2142–55; Wordelman, "Cultural Divides", 219–31; Conrad Gempf, "Mission and Misunderstanding: Paul and Barnabas in Lystra (Acts 14:8–20)", in *Mission and Meaning: Essays Presented to Peter Cotterell*, ed. Antony Billington, Tony Lane and Max Turner (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 56–69, citing 60–66.

<sup>105</sup> BDAG, ἀτενίζω, 148. Acts 1:10; 3:4, 5, 12; 6:15; 7:55; 10:4; 11:6; 13:9; 14:9; 23:1.

<sup>106</sup> Rick Strelan, "Recognising the Gods: Acts 14:8–10", *NTS* 46 (2000): 488–503. Cf. John J. Pilch, *Visions and Healings in Acts of the Apostles: How the Early Believers Experienced God* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), 109–112, sees these elements as supporting a healing trance.

<sup>107</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 183.

<sup>108</sup> Cook, "Travellers' Tales", 445.

Jesus throughout the section as “striking, but not surprising”<sup>109</sup> in view of the pagan misunderstanding,<sup>110</sup> the need for education,<sup>111</sup> and establishing monotheism.<sup>112</sup> Healing without a calling on “the name of Jesus” may cause the confusion which follows.<sup>113</sup>

The miraculous healing gives the context for the central speech.<sup>114</sup> Although the identity of the lame man is not given, there is nothing to suggest he is not a pagan Gentile.<sup>115</sup> The healing therefore symbolises the salvation of Gentiles.<sup>116</sup> It parallels a similar healing by Peter close to a temple in Jerusalem (3:1–9)<sup>117</sup> which symbolises the restoration of Israel. The gospel symbolism is confirmed by faith (πίστις),<sup>118</sup> salvation (σώζω),<sup>119</sup> and resurrection (ἀνάστηθι)<sup>120</sup> in connection to the healing (14:9–10). This strongly suggests that the preaching of the gospel precedes the healing<sup>121</sup> which takes place “as Paul was speaking” (λαλοῦντος) (14:9) in what was probably his usual manner.

It is important to note that although the character component focuses on Paul, the prototype Gentile mission is that of Paul and Barnabas.<sup>122</sup> The term “apostles” (14:14. Cf. 14:4) is used for the only time outside the Twelve in Acts’ Beginning where it indicates the “sent ones” with a mission task.<sup>123</sup> The literary placement of “the apostles” with reference to Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14 confirms their role as a

<sup>109</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 478. Cf. Muthuraj, “Theology of God”, 94, suggests that Christological considerations are not the main point of the healing in Lystra.

<sup>110</sup> Alfons Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 2 vols., ÖKTNT 5 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1981, 1985), 2:352–53.

<sup>111</sup> Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:60.

<sup>112</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 478.

<sup>113</sup> Strelan, “Recognising the Gods”, 502. However, see 9:36–42; 19:11–12; 28:7–9, for healings without “the name of Jesus”.

<sup>114</sup> Flemming, *Contextualization*, 67.

<sup>115</sup> Conzelmann, *Acts*, 109; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:178; Johnson, *Acts*, 251; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 300.

<sup>116</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:150–51.

<sup>117</sup> Bede, *Acts*, 14:8; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:177–179; Fournier, *Lystra*, 199–203; O’Reilly, *Word and Sign*, 131–134; Eddie Gemiquet, “Luke’s Journey Narrative: A Literary Gateway of the Missionary Church in Acts”, *Scriptura* 103 (2010), 16–29, citing 26.

<sup>118</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 250; Schnabel, *Acts*, 606; Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 179–80. However, Bock, *Acts*, 475, limits faith as only for physical healing.

<sup>119</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 199; Fournier, *Lystra*, 127–28; Jefferson White, *Evidence and Paul’s Journeys: An Historical Investigation into the Travels of the Apostle Paul* (Hilliard, OH: Parsagard, 2001), 13–14.

<sup>120</sup> Gemiquet, “Luke’s Journey Narrative”, 26.

<sup>121</sup> Fournier, *Lystra*, 81–82, 151, 195; Wall, “Acts”, 198.

<sup>122</sup> Nelson, “First Missionary Journey”, 110–11.

<sup>123</sup> Andrew C. Clark “The Role of the Apostles”, in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 169–90. Keener, *Acts*, 2:2124–25.

mission instrument in the central example of Gentile mission.<sup>124</sup> The emphasis is on the mission, rather than as Dunn suggests, just the earlier commissioning at (Syrian) Antioch.<sup>125</sup> The subsequent absence of the term, “apostles”, may indicate Paul’s growing independence.<sup>126</sup>

The *climax* of the contextually appropriate speech is also shaped by the succeeding reaction.

### 5.3.1.3 Reaction to the Speech (14:19–20a)

A story decline starts with the crowd’s superstitious response highlighting the difficulty of communicating the gospel.<sup>127</sup> At this stage no conversions are reported.<sup>128</sup> The decline continues with Jews from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium who both resist Paul’s message and prevent others from accepting it.<sup>129</sup> Paul is stoned in a parallel with Stephen (7:58–8:1a)<sup>130</sup> and his “rising up” (ἀναστᾶς) (14:20) echoes the same verb used in connection with the healing of the lame man.<sup>131</sup> Scholars debate the extent of a miracle on the scale of normal recovery,<sup>132</sup> healing of severe injuries,<sup>133</sup> and a resurrection from the dead.<sup>134</sup> Witherington argues that the tentative “supposing” (νομίζω) (14:19) means Paul was not actually dead.<sup>135</sup> However, the verb can also mean “following a custom”<sup>136</sup> which could link here to the practice of holding executions, dragging a dead body as a sign of disrespect, or conducting a burial outside the city.<sup>137</sup> At the very least there is a symbolic death and resurrection

<sup>124</sup> Muthuraj, “Theology of God”, 107–110; Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 136–49; Witherington, *Acts*, 419.

<sup>125</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 186.

<sup>126</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:671–72.

<sup>127</sup> Flemming, *Contextualization*, 71.

<sup>128</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 191.

<sup>129</sup> Acts 13:45–47; 14:4–5. The later discussion in this chapter on Paul’s message at Pisidian Antioch proposes that it is understood as an invitation for Israel to be part of the mission instrument.

<sup>130</sup> Spencer, *Acts*, 160; Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 81; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 309.

<sup>131</sup> Acts 14:10. Fournier, *Lystra*, 83.

<sup>132</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 254; Holladay, *Acts*, 290.

<sup>133</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 279; Schnabel, *Acts*, 612; Peterson, *Acts*, 412; Tabb, “Salvation”, 53. Longenecker, *Hearing the Silence*, 58, 113–6, between divine causality and human recovery.

<sup>134</sup> Fournier, *Lystra*, 77, 83, 139–40; Rick Strelan, *Strange Acts: Studies in the Cultural World of the Acts of the Apostles*, BZNW 126 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 243–253; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 311.

<sup>135</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 427.

<sup>136</sup> BDAG, νομίζω, 675, §1, as in 16:13. For the idea of tentativeness see §2, citing 7:25; 16:27; 17:29, but notes that 8:20; 21:29 might well be common tradition and practice. However, I would argue that this is possibly true for all the references with 21:29 being the most likely to have a purely tentative meaning.

<sup>137</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:2176. Cf. Luke 4:29; Acts 7:58; 8:3; Jer 22:19.

picture<sup>138</sup> at a *pivot* of mission suffering.<sup>139</sup> The irony of Saul the murderer being “murdered” is played out in his redemption as Paul the missionary.<sup>140</sup>

The literary shape of the central scene is now summarised.

#### 5.3.1.4 *Literary Shape in Acts’ Central Scene*

As the central scene of Acts’ structure and story, 14:8–20a functions like Aristotle’s *transformation* and also contains potential themes of *parallelism* with Acts’ Beginning and Ending.

The story components reveal that 14:8–20a acts as a central *hinge* for the narrative. The literary-spatial component is Lystra with an emphasis on Gentile paganism confirmed by the topographical mention of a temple. There is no literary-temporal component, but the character component focuses on Paul and Barnabas as apostles in the new phase of mission. The relatively brief speech component of the “one-minute” Lystra speech<sup>141</sup> receives a climactic emphasis through its central location. It is a gospel apologetic calling for a turn from idols to the sovereign Creator God who witnesses through physical and spiritual blessings from heaven. The lack of any intertextual Old Testament quotations is expected in a speech addressing pagan Gentiles, although as noted there are biblical allusions.<sup>142</sup> The themes of evangelising, witness, salvation, death/resurrection, and mission suffering surround the speech.

A central reading outwards from 14:8–20a explores “Act III”.

#### 5.3.2 “Act III” (11:27–16:40)

Diagram XI, on the next page, shows the overview patterning of “Act III”. This approach avoids the need to force story parallels between sections as found in Delbert Wiens’s similar, yet more complex, chiasm.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 360; Parsons, *Acts*, 202; Goulder, *Type and History*, 109; Alexander, *Acts*, 112; Pervo, *Profit*, 148.

<sup>139</sup> Vogler, *Writer’s Journey*, 159–166.

<sup>140</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 360.

<sup>141</sup> Robert Morgenthaler, *Die Lukanische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis*, 2 vols., ATANT 14 and 15 (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1948), 2.73.

<sup>142</sup> See the previous discussion in this chapter on the central speech at Lystra (§5.3.1.1, pp.235–38).

<sup>143</sup> Wiens, *Stephen’s Sermon*, 258–59, has 14:8–18 at the centre of a complex chiastic division of 11:19–16:40.

Diagram XIOVERVIEW PATTERNING OF "ACT III"

Barnabas &amp; Saul Mission 11:27–30

JERUSALEM  
PETER & HEROD  
CAESAREA  
12:1–24

Barnabas &amp; Saul Mission 12:25

(SYRIAN) ANTIOCH  
COMMISSION 13:1–3

CYPRUS 13:4–12

Perga

Rationale  
for Mission

PISIDIAN ANTIOCH  
13:13–52

ICONIUM 14:1–7

Healing 14:8–14a

Climax  
of Mission

LYSTRA

Speech 14:15b–17

Opposition 14:18–20a

Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch

RETURN JOURNEY 14:20b–15:2

(Syrian) Antioch

Phoenicia, Samaria

Resistance  
to Mission

JERUSALEM  
15:3–35

(Syrian) Antioch

DECLINE 15:36–16:7

Syria & Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Phrygia & Galatia (not Asia or Bithynia)

TROAS RECOMMISSION  
16:8–9

Samothrace, Neapolis

PHILIPPI  
16:10–40



A central reading keeps the central scene (14:8–20a) in focus by oscillating backwards and forwards following the overview patterning in the previous Diagram XI:

1. Backwards to the preceding advance to Pisidian Antioch (13:13–52) with a positive rationale for the mission instrument (§5.3.2.1) and the prior advance of a mission at Iconium (14:1–7) (§5.3.2.2).

2. Forwards beyond the central scene to an extended *climax* in the succeeding return journey to (Syrian) Antioch (14:20b–15:2) (§5.3.2.3) and the decline with the resistance of Jewish believers and resulting Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35) which functions as a *middle proem* for the second half of Acts (§5.3.2.4).

3. Further backwards to the earlier advance in the Peter and Herod section (11:27–12:25) starting “Act II” (§5.3.2.5) and a continuing mission advance from (Syrian) Antioch to Cyprus (13:1–12) (§5.3.2.6).

4. Further forwards to the hints of further decline from (Syrian) Antioch to Troas (15:36–16:9) (§5.3.2.7) and a possible further mission advance to the closing of “Act III” at Philippi (16:10–40) (§5.3.2.8).<sup>144</sup>

### 5.3.2.1 Advance to Pisidian Antioch (13:13–52)

The literary-spatial perspective of Pisidian Antioch omits its status as a Roman colony and a strategic location controlling east and west land routes.<sup>145</sup> Instead the initial focus is on the Jews and the synagogue,<sup>146</sup> before widening to a city divided into Jews who resist Paul’s message, Gentile God-fearers,<sup>147</sup> Jewish believers, Gentile believers, and Gentile leaders who expel Paul and Barnabas from the region. Bradley Chance suggests that 13:13–52 and 28:15–31<sup>148</sup> frame Paul’s Gentile mission.

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<sup>144</sup> See Appendix III, p.387.

<sup>145</sup> Ramsay, *Cities*, 247–296; James. L. Blevins, “Acts 13–19: The Tale of Three Cities”, *RevExp*, 87 (1990): 439–50, citing 439–442; Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity: A History of New Testament Times* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1999), 279; Keener, *Acts*, 2:2035–44.

<sup>146</sup> Notable since the Jewish population of Pisidian Antioch was small and only had one synagogue. Otto F. A. Meinardus, *St Paul in Ephesus and the Cities of Galatia and Cyprus* (New York: Caratzas Brothers, 1979), 23.

<sup>147</sup> Acts 13:16, 26. Also “worshipping proselytes” (13:43).

<sup>148</sup> Chance, *Acts*, 525, notes the parallels as: (1) first encounter concludes with Jewish openness; (2) second encounter draws larger audience; (3) Jews not so open second time and some reject the message; (4) Paul quotes from Isaiah; (5) Paul declares Jewish responsibility for rejection; and (6) Paul announces he will preach to Gentiles. Chance builds on a previous suggestion by Polhill, *Acts*, 541–42.

Paul's speech (13:16b–41) is important as the first (and second largest) of his speeches.<sup>149</sup> Andrew Clark suggests the speech is programmatic not only for Acts 14, but also Acts 14–28, as the speech of 2:14b–39 is for Acts 2–12.<sup>150</sup> As a rationale for the Gentile mission, the Pisidian Antioch speech contains key issues including Israel's history, Jesus, salvation, resurrection, witness, and a cluster of Old Testament quotations.<sup>151</sup>

The summary of Israel's history (13:16–22) complements the longer one in Stephen's speech (7:2b–50)<sup>152</sup> with a focus on God<sup>153</sup> and his choice of a people (13:17a),<sup>154</sup> before significantly concluding with King David (13:22)<sup>155</sup> whose “seed according to promise”<sup>156</sup> brought to Israel a “Saviour” (13:23).<sup>157</sup> Jesus's story includes the start of his ministry with John the Baptist (13:23–25),<sup>158</sup> his death (13:28), burial (13:29), and resurrection (13:30). The themes of salvation (13:26), resurrection (13:33–37),<sup>159</sup> witness (13:31), promise (13:23, 32),<sup>160</sup> and fulfilment (13:29, 33)<sup>161</sup> lie behind the activity of εὐαγγελίζω (13:32) not only here but throughout Acts.

The four Old Testament quotations appear in a climactic cluster<sup>162</sup> and connect to previous quotations.<sup>163</sup> The cluster connects to Jesus's resurrection/ascension,<sup>164</sup> his kingship, and mission. The fourth quotation from Habakkuk 1:5 (13:41) has a literary emphasis as the closure of Paul's first speech. The opening call to “look” and “wonder” marks out the divine work which follows as something important and incredible. Palmer Robertson, commenting on

<sup>149</sup> For statistical calculations see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.7, p.107). Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:175; Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 41, notes the speech occupies twenty-six or virtually one third of eighty verses in Acts 13–14.

<sup>150</sup> Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 230–260. See Chapter Four (§4.3.3.2, p.205, n.329).

<sup>151</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 275–79, for stages of argument in the speech including scriptural links; Keener, *Acts*, 2:3053–55, for discussion on outline of speech's structure.

<sup>152</sup> Alexander, “Acts”, 1045.

<sup>153</sup> Acts 13:16, 17, 21, 23, 26, 30, 33, 36, 37. Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 36, 140–143.

<sup>154</sup> Election connected to mission is carried forward from 1:2, 24; 6:5.

<sup>155</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 77–94, esp. 77–78, 92.

<sup>156</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 57.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Acts 5:31.

<sup>158</sup> John the Baptist appears at strategic points in Acts as a model of transition into the reconstituted kingdom of God. See 1:5; 10:37; 11:16; 18:25; 19:3, 4.

<sup>159</sup> Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 234, sees this speech as the most comprehensive explanation of the resurrection in Acts.

<sup>160</sup> See Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39; 7:17; 13:23, 32; 23:21 (from Roman soldier to the Jews); 26:6.

<sup>161</sup> The various words used for the idea of fulfilment in Acts are: (1) πληρόω, 1:16; 3:18; 9:23; 12:25; 13:25, 27; 14:26; 19:21; 24:27; (2) ἐκπληρόω, 13:33; (21:26); (3) τελειόω, 13:29; (20:24).

<sup>162</sup> Ps 2:7 (13:33b); Isa 55:3 (13:34b); Ps 16:10 (13:35b); Hab 1:5 (13:41).

<sup>163</sup> Ps 2:7 (13:33b) is connected to Ps 2:1–2 in the church model prayer (4:25b–26) and Ps 16:10 (13:35b) is connected to Ps 16:8–11 in Peter's Pentecost speech (2:25b–28).

<sup>164</sup> Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 247–258.

Habakkuk, suggests that the incredibility is due to the rapid, intense, God-prompted handing over of Israel to the Gentiles.<sup>165</sup> The same features apply to Jesus's work and the Gentile mission. The call's subject is "the despisers" (οἱ καταφρονηταί) suggesting that Israel or the remnant are disregarding the nations.<sup>166</sup> God is going "to work a work" (ἔργον ἐργάζομαι) which can refer to judgement,<sup>167</sup> salvation,<sup>168</sup> resurrection,<sup>169</sup> or the mission.<sup>170</sup> A mission interpretation is supported by τὸ ἔργον forming a literary inclusio at the beginning (13:2) and ending (14:26) of Paul and Barnabas's prototype mission.<sup>171</sup> God is at work within the mission.<sup>172</sup> The wider context of Habakkuk 1:5 is the Chaldean/Babylonian invasion in which God's purposes for Israel as a mission instrument will ironically be fulfilled through their dispersion among the Gentiles.<sup>173</sup> Paul warns the same will happen again unless the Jews recognise the Gentile gospel mission as a sign of Israel's restoration.<sup>174</sup>

The Jews want to hear more "words" (ῥήματα) (13:42)<sup>175</sup> and the whole city gathers on the following Sabbath to hear "the Word (λόγος) of the Lord" (13:44). The "Word" motif forms an inclusio with 13:48–49. Jewish opposition to the Gentile mission (13:45) is met with "boldness" (παρρησιασάμενοι) by Paul and Barnabas.

<sup>165</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 146.

<sup>166</sup> Acts 13:41 quotes from LXX rather than MT which focuses on the object "look at the nations". Consequently scholars debate whether Israel, the remnant or the wicked of the nations are being addressed in Hab 1:5 and thus Acts 13:41. See Robertson, *Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*, 142–46. Michael B. Shepherd, *The Twelve Prophets in the New Testament*, StBibLit 140 (New York: Lang, 2011), 47–48.

<sup>167</sup> In view of ἀφανίσω ("perish or vanish") (13:41). The conquest of the world by Babylon was actually an act of God. Cf. Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 143; F. F. Bruce, "Habakkuk", in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expositional Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 2.831–896, citing 847.

<sup>168</sup> In view of the forgiveness of sins and justification that immediately precedes in 13:38–39. Shepherd, *Twelve Prophets*, 48.

<sup>169</sup> In view of 13:30–37. Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 256, 257; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:652; Pillari, *Apostolic Interpretation*, 71–73.

<sup>170</sup> Sandt, "Minor Prophets", 71–72.

<sup>171</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 130; Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 100–123. It is also used later of John Mark's desertion from the ἔργον (15:38).

<sup>172</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 274.

<sup>173</sup> Hab 1:6–11. Specifically the Chaldeans/Babylonians (LXX). Cf. Robertson, *Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*, 149; Shepherd, *Twelve Prophets*, 65; BDAG, ἀφανίσω, 154–55, for the milder meaning of "to become invisible" as suitable for an incarnational mission amongst the nations instead of "perish" (13:41).

<sup>174</sup> M. D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 270–272.

<sup>175</sup> See discussion on ῥῆμα as a specific word at 28:25 (§3.3.2.3, p.145, esp. n.139). It is possible that the specific words referred to here at 13:42 are more Scripture quotations. Cf. 2:14; 5:20, 32; 6:11, 13; 10:22, 37, 44; 11:14, 16; 13:42; 16:38; 26:25; 28:25.

They declare with an emphatic ἰδοὺ (13:46)<sup>176</sup> that “we turn to the nations” (στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη) supported by a very significant quotation from Isaiah 49:6 (13:47b).

Scholars usually interpret στρεφόμεθα (also at 18:6 and 28:28<sup>177</sup>) as a change of the mission target audience from Jews to Gentiles.<sup>178</sup> The suggestion of a final turning<sup>179</sup> is correctly refuted and the ongoing Jewish focus<sup>180</sup> explained by salvation-history, mission strategy,<sup>181</sup> or a localised context.<sup>182</sup> The impression from 13:46–47 is that “the Word of God” first spoken to the Jews is a salvation offer which they “reject” and judge themselves not worthy of “eternal life”.<sup>183</sup> However, these concepts may also be interpreted as the mission instrument invitation suggested by Habakkuk 1:5. The following quotation from Isaiah 49:6b (13:47b) links the Old Testament mission of Israel<sup>184</sup> and its Messiah<sup>185</sup> to the mission of Paul and Barnabas.<sup>186</sup> The context of Isaiah 49:6a is the recovery of dispersed Israel linked to a worldwide salvation and restoration of God’s kingdom.<sup>187</sup> The mission is “for a light of Gentiles”<sup>188</sup> and “for a salvation until an (the) end of the earth (ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς)”<sup>189</sup> connected to the expanding witness commission of 1:8.<sup>190</sup> The singular “you” (σε) in Isaiah 49:6a (LXX) is a reference to the servant of the Lord, who in the wider prophecy is an ambiguous figure as Isaiah, the nation of Israel, or the Messiah.<sup>191</sup> In Acts 13:47a, Paul and Barnabas, rather than simply identifying

<sup>176</sup> Used as a literary marker for emphasis see 1:10; 2:7; 5:9, 25, 28; 7:56; 8:27, 36; 9:10, 11; 10:17, 19, 21, 30; 11:11; 12:7; 13:11, 25, 46; 16:1; 20:22, 25; 27:24. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*, 190–91; Yamasaki, *Watching*, 170–71; Holladay, *Acts*, 279–80, translates it as “take note”.

<sup>177</sup> See discussion in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.121).

<sup>178</sup> E.g. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:656–57; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 521; Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 209, 211, 224.

<sup>179</sup> Conzelmann, *Acts*, 227; Wilson, *Gentiles*, 226–33.

<sup>180</sup> Acts 14:1 after 13:46; 19:8 after 18:6; and 28:30 after 28:28.

<sup>181</sup> E.g. Keener, *Acts*, 2:2001–2; Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 175–178.

<sup>182</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 313.

<sup>183</sup> Surprisingly 13:46 and 48 are the only references to “eternal life” in Acts. See implied references using just “life” (ζωή) in 2:28; 3:15; 5:20 and 11:18.

<sup>184</sup> Dupont, *Nouvelles études*, 348; Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 177; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 521.

<sup>185</sup> Jervell, *People of God*, 61. Cf. Meek, *Mission*, 46–53, who sees it as both Israel and the Messiah.

<sup>186</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 414; Thompson, *Acts*, 118–120.

<sup>187</sup> Isa 49:1 mentions islands and distant nations; Isa 49:7, 23 speak of Gentile kings being subdued before the restored Israel.

<sup>188</sup> For theme of light see 9:3; 12:7; 16:29; 22:6, 9, 11; 26:13; 26:18, 23.

<sup>189</sup> Abstract nouns are commonly qualitative-definite even though there is no definite article. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 249–50.

<sup>190</sup> See discussion in Chapter Four (§4.3.2.1, pp.192–93).

<sup>191</sup> The servant is applied to Israel (Isa 49:3) and the Messiah (Isa 49:5, 6). Alan J. Thompson, *Acts*, 118–120; Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 100; Mallen, *Transformation*, 86–88; Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 133; Meek, *Mission*, 34–38.

themselves with the servant, go further by using the plural “us” (ἡμῖν) to describe themselves together as the singular “you” (σε) of a mission instrument. In this they represent the remnant of Israel and by inference extend the mission instrument concept to Israel as a nation.<sup>192</sup> The mission of Isaiah 49:6 is interpreted as “the Lord has commanded us” (ἐντέταλται ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος). This echoes the only other Acts’ use of ἐντέλλω (1:2)<sup>193</sup> which includes Jesus’s final command (1:4) that involves mission (1:8). The command of mission at Acts’ start and near the centre determines the overall purpose of Acts.<sup>194</sup>

Gaventa suggests a new framework of divine versus human initiative for understanding the “turning from Jews to Gentiles” is found in the rejection of God’s plan by Israel.<sup>195</sup> However, this does not resolve the tensions identified. Instead as an original suggestion, I propose that a better solution notes the reluctance of Jews to move beyond their own religious exclusivism<sup>196</sup> and understands Paul’s declaration as saying that if Israel does not fulfil the Gentile mission, then he will.<sup>197</sup> Consequently the surrounding mission language of 13:46–47 is understood as Israel resisting the invitation to become a mission instrument for worldwide mission. Rather than a change of the mission target, “the turning” (στρεφόμεθα) is a mission example. Paul’s ministry of seeking Israel’s restoration and Gentile mission go hand in hand.

The quotation of Isaiah 49:6 is significantly located between Jewish resistance (13:45) and Gentile acceptance (13:48).<sup>198</sup> It is the only Old Testament quotation in Acts that is heard by pagan Gentiles as well as Jews. The Gentiles believe (13:48) and “the Word of the Lord” spreads (13:49) before Jewish opposition leads to Paul and Barnabas being “persecuted”<sup>199</sup> and expelled (13:50). The

<sup>192</sup> Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 100; Thompson, *Acts*, 119; Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 133; Stevens, *Acts*, 314; Meek, *Mission*, 50–53, extends this to the church, though Acts gives no evidence for this.

<sup>193</sup> See discussion in Chapter Four on the concept of command in Acts (§4.3.1.5, p.182–83, n.102). Also there is no mention of Jesus commanding anything in Luke’s Gospel.

<sup>194</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:2099; Penney, *Missionary Emphasis*, 70–71.

<sup>195</sup> Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 203–204.

<sup>196</sup> This inference, without the same conclusion, is proposed by Foster, “Conclusion”, 248.

<sup>197</sup> For the idea of Paul fulfilling Israel’s mission see Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 134–35; Koet, *Five Studies*, 110–114. Jervell, *People of God*, 61. Dunn, *Acts*, 184.

<sup>198</sup> Fournier, *Lystra*, 199, suggests that 13:46–52 is a transition between the evangelisation of the Jews in Acts 13 and the Gentiles in 14:8–20a. However, the transition seems to take place at 13:47.

<sup>199</sup> BDAG, διωγμός, 253, a program or process designed to harass and oppress someone. Together with the verbal cognate of διώκω the term is used at 7:52; 8:1; 9:4, 5; 13:50; 22:4, 7, 8; 26:11, 14, 15. See connection between persecution of 8:1 caused by Saul and the one at 13:50 which he suffers.

concluding comment that the disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit (13:52) is reminiscent of 2:4.

The Pisidian Antioch section provides a rationale for the Gentile mission at Lystra (14:8–20a). The two are linked by the mission at Iconium.

### 5.3.2.2 *Advance with Mission at Iconium (14:1–7)*

Iconium continues the prototype Gentile mission. The smaller literary size of 14:1–7 suggests it functions as a connection between the larger sections of Pisidian Antioch and Lystra.<sup>200</sup> The contrast with Lystra is obvious since Iconium has the literary-spatial focus<sup>201</sup> of Jews and Greeks within the Jewish synagogue (14:1). A “great multitude” believe (14:1) with Paul and Barnabas described as “apostles” for the first time in Acts (14:4).<sup>202</sup> They remain a “sufficient time” (ἱκανὸν χρόνον) (14:3)<sup>203</sup> and in the face of Jewish opposition, “boldly speak” (παρρησιάζομαι) “for the Lord” who “witnesses” (μαρτυρέω)<sup>204</sup> to “the Word of his grace” with “signs and wonders” (14:3).<sup>205</sup> This strong collocation of themes, extensively used in Acts, is appropriate for a section close to the centre. Paul and Barnabas escape the plot to stone them and “evangelise” (εὐαγγελίζω) at Lystra and Derbe (14:6–7).

The sections of Pisidian Antioch (13:14–52) and Iconium (14:1–7) confirm the continuing story advance of the Gentile mission which reaches its climax when directed for the first time to pagans at Lystra (14:8–20a). Beyond the central scene is the return journey to (Syrian) Antioch (14:20b–15:2) leading into the Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35).

### 5.3.2.3 *Extended Climax in Return Journey to (Syrian) Antioch (14:20b–15:2)*

Paul and Barnabas move from Lystra to Derbe (14:20b–21) as a place of “evangelising” (εὐαγγελίζω) which with 14:7 book-ends the Lystra section within a

<sup>200</sup> 648 words for Pisidian Antioch (13:13–52); 116 for Iconium (14:1–7) and 248 for Lystra (14:8–20a). See Diagram VI (C), p.89.

<sup>201</sup> No mention is made of the fact that like Pisidian Antioch and Lystra, Iconium was a Roman colony but with more Greek influences (see 14:1). It was also the central city for the surrounding rural area. Keener, *Acts*, 2:2110–2; Ramsay, *Cities*, 317–382; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1111; Peterson, *Acts*, 403.

<sup>202</sup> See previous discussion at 14:14 linking apostle to a new mission. (§5.3.1.2, p.239–40).

<sup>203</sup> BDAG, ἱκανός, 472, §1, for possible meaning of “sufficient” time to achieve a purpose. Maybe also 8:11; 9:23, 43; 18:18; 20:11; 27:7, 9.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. Acts 14:17.

<sup>205</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 285, suggests the miracle-working connection resumes from 13:9–11 and anticipates 14:8–10.

gospel proclamation context. There is also gospel success in “many disciples” (μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανούς) (14:21)<sup>206</sup> without opposition.<sup>207</sup> Derbe is a mission *pivot*<sup>208</sup> followed by a reverse journey to Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch (14:21).<sup>209</sup> As Marguerat puts it, “la boucle du premier voyage missionnaire est bouclée”<sup>210</sup> with a literary *inclusio* back to (Syrian) Antioch.<sup>211</sup> The mission is referred to by the *inclusio* of “the ἔργον<sup>212</sup> which they fulfilled” (14:26).<sup>213</sup> Alongside this human mission activity there is also an emphasis on the *missio Dei* which emerges in the statements of “what things God did with or through them” (14:27)<sup>214</sup> and “he opened to the Gentiles a door of faith” (14:27). The idea of a mission instrument does not imply passivity, but joins responsibility with a recognition that God’s power must work through the instrument to achieve the mission. The joining of 14:20b–15:2 to the previous Lystra section creates a positive extended *climax* for a central unit of 14:1–15:2. The mention of “many afflictions” (14:22) is a reminder of the mission suffering at Lystra (14:19). However, a positive connection is made between the suffering and the “kingdom of God” (14:22).

There is a transition from 14:27–28<sup>215</sup> with καί (15:1)<sup>216</sup> closely connecting the prototype Gentile mission to a continuing decline as internal resistance leads into the Jerusalem Conference.

#### 5.3.2.4 Decline with Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35)

The main question is whether the consensus of scholars are right in viewing the Jerusalem Conference as an entirely positive solution<sup>217</sup> to the problem caused by the

<sup>206</sup> BDAG, ἱκανός, 472, §4, but possibly “sufficient” in sense of reaching a required number. Maybe also 11:24, 26; 12:12; 19:19, 26; 20:8.

<sup>207</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 255.

<sup>208</sup> There is no mention that Derbe was on the furthest eastern frontier of Galatia as noted by Witherington, *Acts*, 428 and Marguerat, *Actes*, 2:77.

<sup>209</sup> There is no mention that Pisidian Antioch, Iconium and Lystra are in Gentile Galatia and connected by the Roman highway, the Via Sebaste. Hansen, “Galatia”, 377–395.

<sup>210</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 2:77, “the circle of the first missionary journey is complete”.

<sup>211</sup> Acts 14:26–28 and 13:1–3 Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:182.

<sup>212</sup> Acts 13:2; 14:26. Cf. 13:41 (see previous discussion at §5.3.2.1, p.245). Also 15:18, 38.

<sup>213</sup> Ramsay, *Pictures*, 114.

<sup>214</sup> BDAG, μετά, 636, §2.a, notes that either αὐτῶν indicates “what God has done in helping them”, or ποιῆν links to μετ’ αὐτῶν as “what God has done for them”. Cf. Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 327; Linda M. Maloney, ‘All that God had Done with Them’: *The Narration of the Works of God in the Early Christian Community as Described in the Acts of the Apostles*, AUS 91 (New York: Lang, 1991), 91, 118–21.

<sup>215</sup> Betori, “La strutturazione del libro degli Atti”, 19.

<sup>216</sup> Cheung, “Narrative Analysis”, 140, 144.

<sup>217</sup> E.g. Keener, *Acts*, 3:2207; Pervo, *Acts*, 370; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:709; Polhill, *Acts*, 337–38; Thompson, *Church*, 194.

Gentile mission of 14:8–20a.<sup>218</sup> The key issues are the renewed literary-spatial focus on Jerusalem, the speeches of Peter (15:7b–11) and James (15:13b–21), the quotation from Amos 9:11–12 (15:16–18), and the letter concerning the decision made (15:23b–29).

Jerusalem receives the most literary-spatial attention in Acts and is the place to which the narrative frequently returns.<sup>219</sup> However, here the focus is entirely on the Jerusalem Church rather than the city.<sup>220</sup> An ambivalent picture is carried forward from Acts 1–7 with both Israel as a nation and the remnant Jewish church struggling to accept the invitation to be a gospel mission instrument beyond Jerusalem. The resistance continues amongst the Jewish Diaspora<sup>221</sup> and now emerges within the church against Paul and Barnabas's prototype mission (15:1). This ongoing opposition shapes the resulting narrative.<sup>222</sup>

Acts 15 is a sequential survey which moves from character to character so that none become the focalisation.<sup>223</sup> The narrative joins references to Peter and Cornelius (10:1–11:18) with those to Paul and Barnabas (13:1–14:28). Peter's final speech and appearance in Acts (15:7–11) adds for the third time<sup>224</sup> a literary emphasis on the Cornelius section.<sup>225</sup> The speech contains important *parallelism* elements including "choice" (15:7), "witness" (15:8), "the Holy Spirit" (15:8), and "grace" (15:11).<sup>226</sup> God does "signs and wonders" among the Gentiles through Barnabas and Paul (15:12).<sup>227</sup> Comparing their indirect speech with the direct

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<sup>218</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, 320.

<sup>219</sup> See statistical calculations in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.86) and Diagram VI (A–C), pp.87–89.

<sup>220</sup> The main text of NA<sup>28</sup> (15:4) has Ἱερουσαλήμ which may refer to the Jewish political and religious centre. However, MSS variants (see NA<sup>28</sup>, 430) have Ἱεροσόλυμα used to portray the secular Jerusalem as a more neutral geographical location. See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.84, n.289).

<sup>221</sup> Acts 13:45, 50; 14:2, 5, 19.

<sup>222</sup> Acts does not proceed to fully develop the underlying internal conflicts and tensions revealed against Paul's mission in Gal 2:1–10. Witherington, *Acts*, 440–449; Barnett, *Rise of Early Christianity*, 292; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:696–97; Dunn, "Luke's Jerusalem Perspective", 120–36; Olaf Linton, "The Third Aspect: A Neglected Point of View", *ST* 3 (1949): 79–95.

<sup>223</sup> Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 32.

<sup>224</sup> Acts 10:1–48; 11:1–18 and 15:7–11. Ronald D. Witherup, "Cornelius Over and Over and Over Again: 'Functional Redundancy' in the Acts of the Apostles", *JSNT* 49 (1993): 45–66; Julien C. H. Smith, "The Rhetorical Function of Refutation in Acts 6–7 and 10–15", in Phillips, *Contemporary Studies*, 103–118.

<sup>225</sup> Dunn, "Luke's Jerusalem Perspective", 129.

<sup>226</sup> "Act I" (4:33), "Act II" (11:23), "Act III" (13:43; 14:3, 26; 15:11, 40), "Act IV" (18:27; 20:24, 32). Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 298–99.

<sup>227</sup> See the previous discussion in this chapter on divine versus human activity at 14:27 (§5.3.2.3, p.249, n.214). However, the last occurrence of "signs and wonders" (15:12) is in keeping with a mission decline. See summary of mission means at the end of this chapter (§5.4, p.302).



speeches of Peter and James suggests that Paul's part is de-emphasised in the decision that follows.<sup>228</sup>

James's speech is given a literary emphasis by its relative size<sup>229</sup> and sequence as the closing speech within this section. Scholars debate whether James is portrayed positively or negatively. A positive view argues that James replaces Peter as the leader in the Jerusalem Church and at this critical narrative juncture points the church in a new direction.<sup>230</sup> A negative view projects back James's involvement in the compromise solution of 21:17b–25 and interprets the letter's stipulations (15:19–29) as due to a Jewish emphasis<sup>231</sup> and superiority.<sup>232</sup> His speech is difficult to assess since he focuses more on disciplinary problems than the gospel issues.<sup>233</sup> Although pointing to the divine action of God (15:14, cf. 15:12), James favours Peter over Paul (15:14)<sup>234</sup> and focuses on an exegesis of Scripture rather than an experience of the Holy Spirit.<sup>235</sup> However, James is probably an example of characterisation moving from a positive to a negative portrayal, and/or combining both aspects.

The quotation of Amos 9:11–12 (15:16–18) connects to Stephen's Amos quotation<sup>236</sup> within the overall Acts' intertextual framework.<sup>237</sup> The idea of a mission instrument is seen in the two stages of a restored Israel and a Gentile mission.<sup>238</sup> The first stage is described as "I will rebuild the tent (τὴν σκηνὴν) of David". Scholars debate whether this refers to the body of Jesus,<sup>239</sup> the Jerusalem

<sup>228</sup> Gempf, "Luke's Story", 42–66, citing 45; Cheung, "Narrative Analysis", 148; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 345–46.

<sup>229</sup> James's speech (15:13b–21) with 122 words is 30% larger than Peter's (15:7b–11) with 89 words.

<sup>230</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 119.

<sup>231</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, "Why and How did Embryonic Christianity Expand Beyond the Jewish People?", in *The Rise and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries of the Common Era*, ed. C. K. Rothschild and J. Schröter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 183–204, citing 200; Cheung, "Narrative Analysis", 151.

<sup>232</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 172–73.

<sup>233</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 553.

<sup>234</sup> Cheung, "Narrative Analysis", 149–151. Cf. Stephen E. Fowl, "Simeon in Acts 15:14: Simon Peter and Echoes of Simeon's Past", in Dicken and Snyder, *Characters*, 185–98, for discussion on a possible link to Luke 2:29–32.

<sup>235</sup> Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church", 452.

<sup>236</sup> Amos 5:25–27 quoted in Acts 7:42b–43. Earl Richard, "The Creative Use of Amos by the Author of Acts", *NovT* 24 (1982): 37–53, citing 49–50; Sandt, "Minor Prophets", 74–75. See Chapter Four (§4.3.3.7, p.212).

<sup>237</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>238</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 46–47; James D. G. Dunn, *Neither Jew Nor Greek: A Contested Identity*, vol. 3 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 292–95, 302; Meek, *Mission*, 89.

<sup>239</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 448.

temple,<sup>240</sup> Israel,<sup>241</sup> the kingdom,<sup>242</sup> or the church.<sup>243</sup> These possibilities all relate to God's salvation plan. However, subtle changes from the LXX<sup>244</sup> suggest a restored Israel as a mission instrument for God's kingdom. The change of "raise" (ἀναστήσω) (Amos 9:11) to "rebuild" (ἀνοικοδομήσω) (15:16) suggests something beyond Christ's resurrection.<sup>245</sup> Also the omission of "as in the ancient days" (Amos 9:11) implies that there is not just a restoration of the past, but that God is doing something new.<sup>246</sup> The closing addition of "known from the age" (Acts 15:18) suggests that this has always been God's intention.<sup>247</sup>

The second stage is in two parts. The ambiguous "the rest of people" that "may seek the Lord" (15:17) is either a reference to the Jewish remnant or more likely to Gentiles.<sup>248</sup> The addition of "the Gentiles upon whom the name of the Lord has been called" makes a clear mission connection.<sup>249</sup>

The conclusion of James's speech adds ambiguity. Meek is right that "a satisfying explanation of the decree has not yet been offered".<sup>250</sup> James's statement "not to trouble the ones from the nations turning to God" (15:19) is vague even if it does imply a rejection of circumcision as the means of salvation (cf. 15:5). It is unclear why James proposes that Gentiles should follow four abstentions (15:19–20).

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<sup>240</sup> Jostein Ádna, "James' Position at the Summit Meeting of the Apostles and the Elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15)", in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles*, ed. Jostein Ádna and Hans Kvalbein (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 125–161, citing 151–159, esp. 154, that the only other use of σκηνή in Acts is at 7:44 with reference to the tabernacle.

<sup>241</sup> Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:80; G. Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1987), 168; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 555; Jervell, *People of God*, 52–53; Wilson, *Gentiles*, 224–25.

<sup>242</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:188–89; Johnson, *Acts*, 265; Peterson, *Acts*, 431–32; Thompson, *Acts*, 120–124; Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 175; Meek, *Mission*, 67–69, 82–83; Holladay, *Acts*, 302. The connection with the kingdom of God is explored in Chapter Six (§6.5.2, pp.351–52).

<sup>243</sup> Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church", 453–455; Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles (Acts 15.13–21)", in Witherington, *History, Literature, and Society*, 154–84, citing 165–167; Howard C. Kee, *To Every Nation Under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997), 181, argues for the meaning to be the people of God amongst whom God dwells.

<sup>244</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 300.

<sup>245</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 61.

<sup>246</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 61.

<sup>247</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 63.

<sup>248</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:727; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 341; Witherington, *Acts*, 459; Meek, *Mission*, 83–86.

<sup>249</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 47; Wright, *Mission of God*, 495–96; Meek, *Mission*, 86–90. Sandt, "Minor Prophets", 76–77.

<sup>250</sup> Meek, *Mission*, 91.

They could simply be for sanctification based on Leviticus 17–18,<sup>251</sup> give continuity between Israel and the church,<sup>252</sup> correct pagan worship rituals<sup>253</sup> so that there can be unity in the church between Jews and Gentiles,<sup>254</sup> or allow for mission to take place in both communities.<sup>255</sup> Acts appears ambivalent about the Jewish Law. It is often a negative source of contention over salvation and mission.<sup>256</sup> It also has a positive function as a witness to God's plan of salvation, an ethical guide, and continuity between Israel and the followers of Jesus.<sup>257</sup> Scholars debate whether the negative or positive aspects are uppermost and whether there is positive progress within Acts.<sup>258</sup> I propose that the abstentions are a negative compromise solution since James refers to them in connection to the Jewish context of synagogues and Sabbath (15:21).

The resulting decision receives a literary emphasis by the size of the letter recorded in the narrative (15:23b–29).<sup>259</sup> The addition of the Holy Spirit (15:28) implies God's approval.<sup>260</sup> However, doubts arise since the reference is possibly to an earlier Holy Spirit activity (cf. 15:8),<sup>261</sup> appears in a letter and not the narrative,<sup>262</sup> “seem” (δοκέω) has a predominant use in Acts of wrong deductions,<sup>263</sup> and the “and

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<sup>251</sup> Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church”, 458–464; Simon Buttica, “Acts 15 or the ‘Return of the Repressed?’ The Church and the Law in Acts”, in *The Torah in the New Testament: Papers Delivered at the Manchester Lausanne Seminar of June 2008*, ed. Michael Tait and Peter Oakes, LNTS 401 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 118–132; Holladay, *Acts*, 302–304.

<sup>252</sup> Conzelmann, *Acts*, 118–19.

<sup>253</sup> Emmanuelle Steffek, “Some Observations on the Apostolic Decree in Acts 15:20, 29 and 21:25”, in Tait and Oakes, *Torah*, 133–40; Witherington, *Acts*, 459–467; Thompson, *Acts*, 185.

<sup>254</sup> Ramsay, *Pictures*, 138; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 144; Mahan, “Narrative Analysis of the Jerusalem Council”, 54–56, 61; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2258–79; Oliver, *Torah Praxis*, 394–98.

<sup>255</sup> Blevins, “Acts 13–19”, 443.

<sup>256</sup> Acts 6:13; 10:14, 28; 15:1, 5, 29; 21:21–26.

<sup>257</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 153–157. Cf. Jervell, *People of God*, 133–151; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:xcviii–ci; Bock, *Acts*, 38–39; Philip F. Esler, *Community and the Gospel in Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 122–30; Gaventa, “Acts” (2006), 44–45; Daniel Marguerat, “Paul and the Torah in the Acts of the Apostles”, in Tait and Oakes, *Torah*, 98–117; Oliver, *Torah Praxis*.

<sup>258</sup> Stephen G. Wilson, *Luke and the Law*, SNTSMS 50 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 58, as having both negative and positive aspects, but emphasising the positive; Craig L. Blomberg, “The Law in Luke-Acts”, *JSNT* 22 (1984): 53–80, citing 70–72, takes a positive approach to the Law being fulfilled in Christ, but admits that this is via a “slow dawning” in Acts; F. Gerald Downing, “Freedom from the Law in Luke-Acts”, *JSNT* 26 (1986): 49–52, as embracing a traditional Jewish piety.

<sup>259</sup> The letter has 109 words (one sixth of the total 600 words in 15:1–35) which is comparable to Peter's speech (15:7b–11) of 89 words and James's speech (15:13b–21) of 122 words. Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 363, describes 15:7–18 as a detour before the initial question about Gentile inclusion is discussed.

<sup>260</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 3:2291.

<sup>261</sup> Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 162.

<sup>262</sup> John B. F. Miller, *Convinced That God Had Called Us: Dreams, Visions and the Perception of God's Will in Luke-Acts*, BibInt85 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 224–25; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:734.

<sup>263</sup> Acts 12:9; 17:18; 26:9; 27:13. The sending of Judas and Silas with a compromise solution (15:22, 25) may also be a wrong deduction. The only definitely positive deduction is for a negative conclusion in 25:27 (it seems unreasonable to send Paul without charges). BDAG, δοκέω, 254–55.

us” (καὶ ἡμῖν) suggests that it is an official decree from a human decision.<sup>264</sup> It implies that a centralised authority in Jerusalem regards its decisions as divinely sanctioned.<sup>265</sup> The preceding considerations make a case for a negative view of 15:3–35 and the literary ambiguity carries into the following mission decline with the lack of prayer in the appointment of Jerusalem’s letter-carriers.<sup>266</sup> Judas possibly represents the Hebrew party, and Silas, the Hellenistic group.<sup>267</sup>

Before the mission decline is explored, a central reading approach oscillates back to the advance from the opening of “Act III” in the sections of Peter and Herod (11:27–12:25) and the Mission Advance from (Syrian) Antioch to Cyprus (13:1–12).

### 5.3.2.5 Opening of “Act III”: Peter and Herod (11:27–12:25)

The opening section of “Act III” is anchored in Roman/Judaeian history<sup>268</sup> told as a possible temporal *flashback*<sup>269</sup> or contemporaneous with the surrounding sections through the overlapping phrase “in these days” (11:27)<sup>270</sup> and “at that season” (12:1).<sup>271</sup> As part of a transitional chain-link,<sup>272</sup> 11:27–30 either closes “Act II” or opens “Act III”. It highlights the release-retribution (12:1–24) as an *intercalation* splitting apart the wider story of Barnabas and Saul’s relief mission.<sup>273</sup> The Jerusalem section is not superfluous<sup>274</sup> or detachable,<sup>275</sup> but follows a further story advance initiated by the Spirit through Agabus’s prophecy about the coming famine (11:28). Agabus’s reappearance in 21:10–11 forms a literary *inclusio* for Paul’s

<sup>264</sup> Schnabel, “Fads”, 259–60. Cf. Holladay, *Acts*, 305, notes the same formula appears in decisions involving humans and pagan deities; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:220–21, that “the Holy Spirit” (Peter, 15:8) and “us” (James) suggests 15:28 is not a joint unanimous decision, but rather a compromise between two opposing positions.

<sup>265</sup> Alexander, “Acts”, 1047.

<sup>266</sup> Estrada, *Followers to Leaders*, 185–86.

<sup>267</sup> H. F. B. Mackay, *The Adventure of Paul of Tarsus*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), 124.

<sup>268</sup> Famine in Claudius’s reign (11:28) possibly dated AD 46–48. Josephus, *Ant.* 20.51–53; Witherington, *Acts*, 37, 373; John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 66–71; Riesner, *Paul’s Early Period*, 125–136. Death of Herod Agrippa I (12:20–23) dated in the early months of AD 44 by Josephus, *Ant.* 19.343–352.

<sup>269</sup> Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church”, 433.

<sup>270</sup> For Acts 1:15; 2:18; 6:1; 7:41. Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 108.

<sup>271</sup> For *καίρως* see 1:8; 3:19 [NA<sup>28</sup> 3:20a]; 7:20; 12:1; 13:11; 14:17; 17:26; 19:23; 24:25.

<sup>272</sup> Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 174, sees 11:27–12:25 as a complete transitional chain-link section.

<sup>273</sup> Acts 11:30 and 12:25. David Wenham, “Acts and the Pauline Corpus: II. The Evidence of Parallels”, in Winter and Clarke, *Ancient Literary Setting*, 215–58, citing 239; Stevens, *Acts*, 276; Bruce W. Longenecker, “Lukan Aversion to Humps and Hollows: The Case of Acts 11.27–12.25”, *NTS* 50 (2004): 185–204, citing 189–201.

<sup>274</sup> Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 218.

<sup>275</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:558, argues that 12:1–24 is more detachable from the narrative than any other Acts’ section.

Gentile mission. The role of prophets and prophecy in Acts is about Holy Spirit inspired communication progressing the mission.<sup>276</sup> The resulting collection is possibly a literary foreshadowing of the one missing at 21:19<sup>277</sup> and/or a symbolic gospel connotation in famine relief.<sup>278</sup> Jerusalem forms a literary-spatial inclusio by book-ending the prototype Gentile mission of Acts 13 and 14.<sup>279</sup>

The literary shape and missional significance of 11:27–12:25 has a transitional role<sup>280</sup> in the literary-spatial shift to and from Jerusalem (12:1–19a, 25)<sup>281</sup> via Caesarea (12:19b–23) and (Syrian) Antioch (11:27–30; 12:25). The character movement includes Barnabas and Saul (11:30; 12:25), the apostle James (12:2),<sup>282</sup> Peter (12:3–17), and James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church (12:17).<sup>283</sup> Peter's supernatural release from prison in Jerusalem (12:1–19a) is significantly juxtaposed with King Herod's retributive death in Caesarea (12:19b–23).<sup>284</sup> Both events involve an angel (of the Lord)<sup>285</sup> who, together with prayer (12:5, 12), implies heaven's involvement. Peter's prison release is symbolic of salvation in both Jewish and Graeco-Roman literature.<sup>286</sup> His departure to the deliberately vague "into another place" (12:17) hints that his role in the story is nearly complete. The death of a false

<sup>276</sup> Acts 2:17, 18; 11:27; 13:1; 19:6; 21:9, 10. Earle Ellis, "The Role of the Christian Prophet in Acts", in Gasque and Martin, *Apostolic History*, 68–77; Hengel and Schwemer, *Paul*, 231–239, esp. 239.

<sup>277</sup> Downs, "Paul's Collection", 54–62, argues that 11:27–30 is not a misplaced account of the later collection. Cf. Downs, *Offering*, 60–70. See Chapter Three (§3.3.3.6, p.161).

<sup>278</sup> Pervo, *Luke's Story*, 43; Stevens, *Acts*, 66–67, in contrast to Herod providing food to Tyre and Sidon (12:20).

<sup>279</sup> Acts 12:25 and 15:2.

<sup>280</sup> Allen, *Death of Herod*, 131–34.

<sup>281</sup> Jerusalem is not mentioned specifically until 12:25 where in NA<sup>28</sup> main text Barnabas and Saul are said to return "into Jerusalem". However, the variant readings, NA<sup>28</sup>, 421, have "out of Jerusalem". Either reading is possible since the mission is described as to Judaea in 11:29, the events in 12:1–17 appear to take place in Jerusalem, and the story moves to Caesarea (12:18–24). Diagram VI (B), p.88, follows the more difficult reading in NA<sup>28</sup> main text. See Holladay, *Acts*, 255–56.

<sup>282</sup> One of the original twelve apostles beheaded and not replaced. See discussion in Chapter Four (§4.3.3.1, p.200), over the replacement of Judas due to his desertion rather than death.

<sup>283</sup> James, the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church, emphasises a Jewish perspective within the Acts' narrative (see 15:13 and 21:18).

<sup>284</sup> For parallels between Peter and King Herod sections see Pervo, *Acts*, 314; Clare K. Rothschild, *Paul in Athens: The Popular Religious Context of Acts 17*, WUNT 341 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 150.

<sup>285</sup> Acts 12:7 (of the Lord), 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 23 (of the Lord). Also 5:19 (of the Lord); 6:15; 7:30 (of the Lord), 35, 38, 53; 8:26 (of the Lord); 10:3 (of God), 7, 22; 11:13; 23:8, 9, 27:23 (of God). This is another example of mission decline. Wilfred L. Knox, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1948), 92, notes that although angels appear frequently in the first half (eighteen times) they only appear in Paul's words in second half. Cf. Scott Shauf, *The Divine in Acts and in Ancient Historiography* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 211–12.

<sup>286</sup> See also Acts 5:17–25 and 16:22–40. Cf. Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*. David Parry, "Release of the Captives", in Tuckett, *Luke's Literary Achievement*, 156–164, citing 158–59; Holladay, *Acts*, 141.

Jewish king<sup>287</sup> suggests a link to the kingdom of God.<sup>288</sup> The summary conclusion “but the Word of God grew and increased” (12:24) confirms the triumph of the gospel.<sup>289</sup> Strikingly Caesarea is both where Herod dies and Cornelius enters into new life (Acts 10).

The section gives a victorious preparation for the advance of the prototype Gentile mission from (Syrian) Antioch to Cyprus.

#### 5.3.2.6 Mission Advance from (Syrian) Antioch to Cyprus (13:1–12)

The (Syrian) Antioch Church section contributes to the overall literary *climax* of “Act III” by confirming the Cornelius section<sup>290</sup> and engendering a further mission advance.<sup>291</sup> The Holy Spirit confirms<sup>292</sup> the “work” (ἔργον)<sup>293</sup> which Barnabas and Saul are called to (13:2). However, I would argue that it is unclear whether this is an intentional progressive move towards the Gentiles<sup>294</sup> since the Cyprus section (13:4–12) includes a continued focus on Jews.<sup>295</sup> This section has a typical Lukan transitional role in its smaller size and preceding sequence to the larger Pisidian Antioch section (13:13–52).<sup>296</sup> Cyprus (13:6) like Malta (28:1–10) is a significant island launch-pad for a new mission with a sea voyage (13:4, 13) to the end of the earth (1:8).<sup>297</sup> However, as Barnabas’s homeland<sup>298</sup> the focus at Cyprus remains on the Jewish synagogues (13:5). Saul is filled with the Holy Spirit for probably the first time (13:9) fulfilling the promise made in 9:17 and preceding his first miracle.<sup>299</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Alexander P. Thompson, “Thwarting the Enemies of God: Contrasting the Death of Herod and the Resurrection of Jesus in Luke-Acts”, in *Reactions to Empire: Sacred Texts in their Socio-Political Contexts*, ed. John A. Dunne and Dan Batovici, WUNT 2.372 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 96–102.

<sup>288</sup> This link is explored further in Chapter Six (see §6.5.2, p.351).

<sup>289</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 59; Thompson, *One Lord*, 141–143.

<sup>290</sup> Alexander, “Acts”, 1042.

<sup>291</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:599; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 237.

<sup>292</sup> Probably through the prophetic and teaching ministry of the church (13:1). Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 74–75, suggests Barnabas and Saul may have planned the new mission for some time and what is recorded is the confirmation of their plans by the church.

<sup>293</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter for 13:41; 14:26 (§5.3.2.1, p.245).

<sup>294</sup> Cf. Acts 11:19. Peterson, *Acts*, 372–73.

<sup>295</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:12.

<sup>296</sup> See also Iconium (14:1–7) before Lystra (14:8–20a) and Malta (28:1–10) before Rome (28:16–31).

<sup>297</sup> Acts 4:36, 37; 11:19; 21:16. Alexander, “Journeyings”, 75, 81; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:179. For spatial and missional significance of islands (sometimes translated sea-coasts) see Gen 10:4; Esth 10:1; Ps 72:10; 97:1; Isa 11:11; 20:6; 23:2, 6; 24:15; 40:15; 41:1, 5; 42:4; 42:10, 12, 15; 49:1; 51:5; 59:18; 66:19; Jer 2:10; 25:22; 31:10; 50:39; Ezek 26:15, 18; 27:35; 39:6; Zeph 2:11.

<sup>298</sup> Acts 4:36. Witherington, *Acts*, 394.

<sup>299</sup> Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 114–17, 232, 239, 246–47, 333–34.

This prepares him for the ensuing spiritual battle<sup>300</sup> with Bar-Jesus, the Jewish<sup>301</sup> "magician/false-prophet" (13:6)<sup>302</sup> over the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus (13:7, 12),<sup>303</sup> who Stenschke suggests is the first definite pagan Gentile conversion in Acts.<sup>304</sup> The change of Saul's name to Paul is more than just a second name,<sup>305</sup> a nick-name,<sup>306</sup> or adopting the patronage of Sergius Paulus.<sup>307</sup> Rather the name change from Jewish to Greek marks the commencement of his Gentile mission<sup>308</sup> and appropriately continues throughout the rest of Acts.<sup>309</sup>

These early sections of "Act III" commence and develop the mission advance towards the climax of the central Lystra scene (14:8–20a). After this there is a decline with opposition to the Gentile mission and the ambiguities of the Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35). The closing sections of "Act III" reveal a complex picture combining further hints of decline, especially in the section from (Syrian) Antioch to Troas (15:36–16:9), and a new mission advance (albeit it with some ambiguity) to Philippi (16:10–40).<sup>310</sup>

#### 5.3.2.7 Hints of Further Decline from (Syrian) Antioch to Troas (15:36–16:9)

Three dubious events suggest a continued decline.

First, the "sharp disagreement"<sup>311</sup> between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark causes their unexpected separation. Paul labels the previously unexplained

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<sup>300</sup> Spencer, *Journeying*, 149.

<sup>301</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:613, sees Bar-Jesus as being on the boundary between Judaism and heathenism.

<sup>302</sup> For discussion over whether magic in the Graeco-Roman world was sleight of hand/trickery, manipulative psychology, supernatural powers or demonic influence see Witherington, *Acts*, 396–398, 577–579; Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); Stanley E. Porter, "Magic in the Book of Acts", in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and its Religious Environment*, ed. Michael Labahn and Bert J. L. Peterbolte, LNTS 306 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 107–21; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1499–1508.

<sup>303</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Revell, 1924), 246–47, views Sergius Paulus as between two forces represented by Saul (God) and Elymas (Devil).

<sup>304</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 166.

<sup>305</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:616; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 158–59.

<sup>306</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 401–402.

<sup>307</sup> Barnett, *Rise of Early Christianity*, 277.

<sup>308</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 113; Dollar, *Biblical-Missiological*, 202–203; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:42–43, 51–54; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 244–246.

<sup>309</sup> The only reversion to Saul is at 22:7, 13; 26:14 as Paul retrospectively tells of his conversion-commission.

<sup>310</sup> See Diagram V, p.79.

<sup>311</sup> BDAG, παροξύσμός, 780.

return to Jerusalem (13:13)<sup>312</sup> as a negative “withdrawal” (ἀποστάντα) (15:38)<sup>313</sup> and not “going with them into the ἔργον.<sup>314</sup> Scholars speculate over the reasons for John Mark’s desertion<sup>315</sup> and the resulting disagreement,<sup>316</sup> but the narrative omits any explanation.<sup>317</sup> This ambiguity continues the sense of decline from the preceding Jerusalem Conference. The break between Barnabas and Paul may well be symbolic of the break between the Jerusalem Church and Paul’s Gentile mission.<sup>318</sup> The narrative favours Paul,<sup>319</sup> since Barnabas disappears from the story (15:39) and Paul continues “being commended to the grace of the Lord” (15:40) with Silas as his new partner.<sup>320</sup> However, ambiguity remains since Paul’s decision is a return pastoral visit rather than a new mission<sup>321</sup> and lacks any Holy Spirit direction in contrast to 13:1–4.<sup>322</sup>

The second event is Paul’s circumcision of Timothy (16:3) who is introduced as one of the disciples at Lystra (16:1).<sup>323</sup> The reason given for the circumcision is the Jewish sensitivities to Timothy’s mixed parentage (16:3). Scholars interpret this as a positive action arguing that since Timothy was Jewish through his mother<sup>324</sup> the circumcision is necessary for a Jewish mission.<sup>325</sup> However, the narrative makes no

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<sup>312</sup> C. Clifton Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel. Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 102–117, esp. 109, that ὑποστρέφειν (13:13) has the possibility of either a neutral returning or negative retreating under fire.

<sup>313</sup> BDAG, ἀφίστημι, 157–58. Black, *Rhetoric of the Gospel*, 108–109. Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 106, of warriors retreating from battle in Jer 46:5 (LXX).

<sup>314</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter that the ἔργον could be the Gentile mission (§5.3.2.1, p.245).

<sup>315</sup> These include: (1) the fact he is not chosen by the Spirit and commissioned by the church in Acts 13:2 (Ramsay, *Traveller*, 71); (2) his disapproval over a mission to Gentiles (Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 313, Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 231. Black, *Rhetoric of the Gospel*, 102–117); and (3) his unhappiness over Paul assuming leadership (Thompson, *Church*, 197–198; Andrianjatovo Rakotoharintsifa, “Luke and the Internal Divisions in the Early Church”, in Tuckett, *Luke’s Literary Achievement*, 165–177, citing 175).

<sup>316</sup> These include: (1) Paul being too harsh and unforgiving (Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:230; Dick France, “Barnabas - Son of Encouragement”, *Themelios* 4 (1978): 3–6); (2) Barnabas being too soft due to family connections since John Mark is his cousin (Col 4:10) (Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 349; (3) underlying theological issues about the Gentile mission (Barrett, *Acts*, 2:755; Jürgen Roloff, “Konflikte und Konfliktlösungen in der Apostelgeschichte”, in *Der Treue Gottes trauen: Beiträge zum Werk des Lukas Für Gerhard Schneider*, ed. Claus Bussmann and Walter Radhl (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 111–26, citing 122).

<sup>317</sup> Ramsay, *Pictures*, 173; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 375, 379.

<sup>318</sup> C. K. Barrett, *Luke the Historian in Recent Study* (London: Epworth, 1961), 33.

<sup>319</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 3:2299–2310.

<sup>320</sup> A possible Hellenistic connection was noted previously in this chapter at 15:32 (see §5.3.2.4, p.254).

<sup>321</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 317; Stevens, *Acts*, 121, 338–41.

<sup>322</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:765; Miller, *Convinced*, 100–101.

<sup>323</sup> Cf. Acts 14:22.

<sup>324</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 314.

<sup>325</sup> E.g. Haenchen, *Acts*, 480; Pervo, *Acts*, 125; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:249; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2311–22



mention of this and the action is ambiguous so soon after the Jerusalem Conference's discussion. The circumcision is possibly a negative example of the compromise reached about Jewish sensibilities.<sup>326</sup> The renewed focus on communicating the Jerusalem Conference decision (16:4) increases the ambiguity especially in view of F. F. Bruce's suggestion that the change from the singular (16:1) to the plural (16:4) indicates that Paul is not personally invoking the Jerusalem decrees, but that this is the main task of Silas.<sup>327</sup> The summary (16:5) moves the section back in a positive direction.<sup>328</sup> However, viewed as a complete literary unit,<sup>329</sup> the ambiguities of 15:3–16:5 suggest a continued decline from the Jerusalem Conference.

The third event also contains ambiguity.<sup>330</sup> There is a double block with the Holy Spirit “holding back” (κωλυθέντες) (16:6)<sup>331</sup> and the “Spirit of Jesus not allowing (οὐκ εἴασεν)” (16:7)<sup>332</sup> the repeated attempts to move forwards (16:7).<sup>333</sup> Acts' *hapax legomenon*, “Spirit of Jesus”, suggests the exalted Christ still directs the mission.<sup>334</sup> The blocks introduce the complexity of divine direction alongside human decision. Paul's movements in Acts are attributable to his own decisions,<sup>335</sup> the decisions of others often in response to opposition,<sup>336</sup> and less often to explicit divine guidance.<sup>337</sup> The outcome of a decision does not prove it is right or wrong since mission success can be either the result of a right decision or God overcoming a wrong one. In 16:6–7 the explicit double block in contrast with the divine direction of 13:2 introduces the possibility that Paul sometimes makes his own (wrong)

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<sup>326</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 344.

<sup>327</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 352–53. Cf. B. N. Kaye, “Acts' Portrait of Silas”, *NT* 21 (1979): 13–26.

<sup>328</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 451.

<sup>329</sup> Spencer, *Journeying*, 162–169. Cf. Thompson, *Acts*, 188.

<sup>330</sup> See Miller, *Convinced*, 65–107; John F. B. Miller, “Paul's Dream at Troas: Reconsidering the Interpretations of Characters and Commentators”, in Phillips, *Contemporary Studies*, 138–153.

<sup>331</sup> BDAG, κωλύω, 580.

<sup>332</sup> The negative of BDAG, ἐάω, 269, including as a nautical term for leaving anchors in the sea.

<sup>333</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 122, 345, notes the imperfect of ἐπεῖραζον (16:7) makes the action durative meaning over and over inferring that Paul is having an argument with the Spirit over a period of time.

<sup>334</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 455; Miller, *Convinced*, 93.

<sup>335</sup> Acts 9:26; 13:14; 14:21, 24, 25, 26; 15:36; 17:1; 18:1, 18, 22, 23; 19:1, 21; 20:1, 13, 16; 21:1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 15.

<sup>336</sup> Acts 9:23, 25, 30; 11:30; 13:50; 14:6, 20; 15:3; 17:10, 14, 15; 20:3; 23:31, 33; 27:1; 28:11, 14, 16.

<sup>337</sup> Acts 13:2, 4 and 16:9, 10.

decisions about mission direction.<sup>338</sup> Stevens notes that Paul's visions in Acts are regularly rehabilitative starting with 9:3–9.<sup>339</sup> However, the seemingly positive<sup>340</sup> night vision<sup>341</sup> of “a certain Macedonian man” (16:9) has ambiguities. The Macedonian man is not identified.<sup>342</sup> The resulting human interpretation<sup>343</sup> makes no reference to a divine agent,<sup>344</sup> the Holy Spirit,<sup>345</sup> or divine guidance for the resulting journey.<sup>346</sup> Nothing is made of the geographical locations of Asia and Bithynia,<sup>347</sup> the historical connections of Troas,<sup>348</sup> the strategic importance of Greece,<sup>349</sup> or the westward move towards Rome.<sup>350</sup>

The vision of 16:9 sets a trajectory for a new mission advance<sup>351</sup> to Philippi.

### 5.3.2.8 Closing of “Act III”: Philippi (16:10–40)

The Philippi section bookends “Act III” with the opening section of 11:27–12:25 having parallels of Holy Spirit direction, a mission trip, prayer, imprisonment, and dramatic release. 16:10–40 has a literary emphasis in its large size<sup>352</sup> and its sequence as the closing section of “Act III”. Although often seen by scholars as a key moment of new mission initiative,<sup>353</sup> there are underlying ambiguities which

<sup>338</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1148; W. Paul Bowers, “Paul’s Route through Mysia: A Note on Acts XVI.8”, *JTS* 30 (2) (1979): 507–511; Josep Rius-Camps, “The Gradual Awakening of Paul’s Awareness of His Mission to the Gentiles”, in *The Book of Acts as Church History: Text, Textual Traditions, and Ancient Interpretations*, ed. Tobias Nicklas and Michael Tilly, BZNW 120 (New York: de Gruyter, 2003), 281–296, citing 288; Holladay, *Acts*, 317.

<sup>339</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 123.

<sup>340</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:765; Talbert, *Acts*, 147.

<sup>341</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 94, sees 16:9 and 18:9 as the only visions at night in Acts. Cf. Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 112–15.

<sup>342</sup> Options include Luke (Witherington, *Acts*, 479–80); Alexander the Great (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.322–339); Julius Caesar (Suetonius, *Jul.* 32), the Philippian jailor (16:27–34); an angel (Keener, *Acts*, 3:2344–45); or an unidentified figure.

<sup>343</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:195.

<sup>344</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 97; Miller, “Paul’s Dream”, 141. However, Edmond Farahian, “Paul’s Vision”, in O’Collins and Marconi, *Luke and Acts*, 197–207, citing 207, argues that there is sufficient obscurity for a *sunergia* between God and human beings.

<sup>345</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 102.

<sup>346</sup> Miller, “Paul’s Dream”, 143–44, contrasting with formal divine-directive at 13:1–3.

<sup>347</sup> The provinces of Asia (south) and Bithynia (north) are notably a move away from Rome.

<sup>348</sup> Scholars have surprisingly made little of the connection between Troas and the nearby ancient remains of Troy as the origin of the founders of Rome and the base for the Greek Empire launched by Alexander. For exception see Kee, *Good News*; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2335–37. See also 20:6b–12.

<sup>349</sup> Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 417; Dibelius, *Acts*, 76; Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts*, 305; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 577; Paul Treblico, “Asia”, in Gill and Gempf, *Graeco-Roman Setting*, 291–362, citing 357–9; Thompson, *Acts*, 53.

<sup>350</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 3:2341–42.

<sup>351</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 349, suggests that the Troas vision is God’s gracious renewal of the Damascus Road vision (Acts 9).

<sup>352</sup> Philippi has the sixth largest literary size emphasis for a location in Acts. For statistical calculations see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.86).

<sup>353</sup> E.g. Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 147; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2374.

contribute to a continuing undertow of decline.<sup>354</sup> These include the lack of anticipated “evangelising” (εὐαγγελίζω),<sup>355</sup> limited success in spite of high expectations,<sup>356</sup> the absence of the Holy Spirit, and no explicit divine presence or angel in the prison rescue.<sup>357</sup>

The first appearance of the “we-group” as a *homodiegetic character-narrator* in 16:10–17 functions as a literary device. They interpret Paul’s vision at Troas and endorse the fresh Gentile mission advance to Philippi.<sup>358</sup> Their involvement with Lydia affirms prayer which continues throughout Acts as a dependence on God’s power and sovereignty.<sup>359</sup> The abrupt disappearance after the slave-girl’s exorcism (16:18)<sup>360</sup> possibly suggests disapproval either that Paul is presenting the gospel in Jewish terms,<sup>361</sup> or more likely, of his negative “disturbed/annoyed” (διαπονέομαι) reaction.<sup>362</sup> This portrays the resulting imprisonment as due to Paul’s unwise actions in a similar way to Acts 21. The subsequent absence of the “we-group” throughout the prison episode (16:18–40) reinforces the ambiguities at Philippi.

In literary-spatial terms, Philippi is a “(first) city of the (first) district of Macedonia” (16:12).<sup>363</sup> The most extensive description of a location in Acts<sup>364</sup> underlines the city’s importance, but neither its wealth<sup>365</sup> nor political role in joining

<sup>354</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 65–107; Miller, “Paul’s Dream”, 138–153.

<sup>355</sup> See Acts 16:10.

<sup>356</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 16.11; Spencer, *Acts*, 164; Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 236.

<sup>357</sup> In contrast to 5:19–20 and 12:7–10. However, see following discussion (p.263) on whether the earthquake (16:26) is a divine intervention.

<sup>358</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:258–59; Stevens, *Acts*, 348–49.

<sup>359</sup> Acts 1:14, 24; 2:42; 3:1; 6:4, 6; 8:15; 9:11, 40; 10:4, 9, 30, 31; 11:5; 12:5, 12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:13, 16, 25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 26:29; 27:29; 28:8. Cf. Plymale, *Prayer*; David M. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts*, WUNT 2.49 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992); Geir Holmås, *Prayer and Vindication in Luke-Acts: The Theme of Prayer Within the Context of the Legitimizing and Edifying Objective of the Lukan Narrative*, LNTS 433 (London: T&T Clark, 2011); Shauf, *Divine*, 213–16.

<sup>360</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:286; Byrskog, “History or Story”, 261–62, notes the irregular, sudden and abrupt endings of the “we” passages at 16:17 20:15; 21:18; 27:29; 28:16.

<sup>361</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:253.

<sup>362</sup> The only other use in NA<sup>28</sup> is the negative reaction of the priests and Sadducees to the apostle’s teaching about Jesus and the resurrection (4:2). See also D variant at Mark 14:4 as a negative reaction to the waste of ointment. Cf. González, *The Story Luke Tells*, 73–74, seeks to interpret 16:18 as a positive reaction as Paul’s annoyance about the misrepresentation of salvation as a ticket to heaven; BDAG, διαπονέομαι, 235, takes a neutral approach.

<sup>363</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:778–780; Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1972).

<sup>364</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 102; Witherington, *Acts*, 489–90; Ramsay, *Traveller*, 206, suggests it is because of Luke’s pride in his home-town.

<sup>365</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1152. Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter*, SNTSMS 110 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1–54; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2380–82.

of East and West<sup>366</sup> is mentioned. Instead there is a Roman emphasis as the only city in Acts<sup>367</sup> being identified as a colony.<sup>368</sup> Paul and Silas are accused of customs unlawful for Romans (16:21) and Paul makes his first appeal to Roman citizenship (16:37–38). Alongside this a Jewish emphasis continues<sup>369</sup> with the Sabbath<sup>370</sup> and a place of prayer (16:13). Three positive salvation episodes have missional significance for the Acts' narrative, but also have some ambiguous undertones.

First, the conversion of Lydia (16:13–15),<sup>371</sup> a worshipper of God,<sup>372</sup> whose heart the Lord opens, who is baptised with water,<sup>373</sup> and engages in table-fellowship with the “we-group”.<sup>374</sup> She forms a literary inclusio for the Philippi section.<sup>375</sup> However, less positively Lydia is a woman and not the expected Macedonian man from the night-vision.<sup>376</sup>

Second, the exorcism of the slave girl (16:16–18) who is connected to Lydia through the place of prayer.<sup>377</sup> Although possessed by a “spirit of Python”,<sup>378</sup> the slave girl makes a surprise announcement about “the Most High God” (16:17). Scholars debate whether this reflects Old Testament theology,<sup>379</sup> paganism,<sup>380</sup> or both.<sup>381</sup> However, she also refers to “a way of salvation” (16:17)<sup>382</sup> before being delivered by “the name of Jesus Christ” (16:18). The negative aspect of Paul's frustration leading to imprisonment has already been noted.

<sup>366</sup> Thompson, *One Lord*, 74–79.

<sup>367</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 102, notes that other cities such as Troas, Pisidian Antioch, and Lystra were also Roman colonies without being identified as such in Acts.

<sup>368</sup> BDAG, *κολωνία*, 557, a city or town outside of Italy whose inhabitants enjoyed special political privileges; A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 93.

<sup>369</sup> Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 117–21, 147–48.

<sup>370</sup> The suggestion is that the Sabbath underlines the Jewish undertow to Paul's journey from 15:40 onwards. See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.5, p.93, n.351).

<sup>371</sup> Bennema, *Character*, 178–182, for a character study of Lydia.

<sup>372</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, p.99, n.404).

<sup>373</sup> For water-baptism as an initiation into the mission instrument see Chapter Four (§4.3.3.2, p.204).

<sup>374</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 3:2403–20, esp. 2414–20; Stevens, *Acts*, 344–45.

<sup>375</sup> Acts 16:14–15 and 16:40. Holladay, *Acts*, 329.

<sup>376</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 16.11; Spencer, *Acts*, 164; Miller, *Convinced*, 103.

<sup>377</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 493.

<sup>378</sup> Acts 16:16. BDAG, *πύθων*, 896–97, of the mythical serpent or dragon that guarded the Delphic oracle and later came to mean divination; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:784–85, sees it as a symbol or representative of the underworld, but surprisingly along with other commentators does not link it to Gen 3:15 or Acts 28:3–5.

<sup>379</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:786; Schnabel, *Acts*, 683; Levinskaya, *Diaspora*, 84–95; Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 123–25.

<sup>380</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:786; Witherington, *Acts*, 494–95; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2422–28.

<sup>381</sup> Newman and Nida, *Acts*, 316; Holladay, *Acts*, 323; Rowe, *Upside Down*, 24–25.

<sup>382</sup> Acts 16:17. Newman and Nida, *Acts*, 316; Schnabel, *Acts*, 683, links to other refs to the Way in Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22.

Third, the conversion of the jailor has many positive salvation aspects including Paul and Silas's dramatic release from prison (16:22–40),<sup>383</sup> at midnight<sup>384</sup> involving prayer,<sup>385</sup> an earthquake understood as a divine intervention within the Graeco-Roman world<sup>386</sup> and possibly a link to the “shaking” of 4:31,<sup>387</sup> salvation,<sup>388</sup> faith,<sup>389</sup> the Lord Jesus,<sup>390</sup> water-baptism,<sup>391</sup> and table-fellowship.<sup>392</sup> However, there are also ambiguities in the silence of Paul and Silas at their trial (16:19–24), the earthquake not being explicitly identified as a divine intervention,<sup>393</sup> the unclear motive for Paul's latent appeal to Roman citizenship, and his insistence that the Philippian magistrates escort them out of the city<sup>394</sup> in a closing episode which contains no overtly theological content (16:35–40).<sup>395</sup>

The literary shape of “Act III” can now be summarised.

### 5.3.2.9 Literary Shape of “Act III”

A central reading around the *climax* of 14:8–20a suggests the literary shape of “Act III” is a positive *complication* or mission advance (11:27–14:7) and a negative *denouement* (14:20b–16:40). The Pisidian Antioch section (13:13–52) gives a rationale for the Gentile mission (14:8–20a) which is followed by the ambiguity of the Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35). There is then a negative decline in the separation of Paul and Barnabas (15:36–41), the circumcision of Timothy (16:1–5),

<sup>383</sup> Cf. other prison releases in Acts (4:1–22; 5:17–42; 12:1–19a).

<sup>384</sup> Acts 16:25. Cf. other uses of night in Acts with possible symbolic meaning of spiritual darkness and opposition (5:19; 9:24, 25; 12:6; 16:9, 33; 17:10; 18:9; 20:31; 23:11, 23, 31; 26:7; 27:23, 27 (twice)).

<sup>385</sup> Acts 16:25. Cf. The extensive use of prayer throughout Acts as indicating dependence on God for the mission (1:24; 6:6; 8:15; 9:11, 40; 10:9, 30; 11:5; 12:12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 28:8). Chapter Six explores the theme further in relation to the kingdom of God.

<sup>386</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:776, 794; Witherington, *Acts*, 497; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2494–97.

<sup>387</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 201.

<sup>388</sup> Acts 16:30–31. Part of the salvation theme which runs throughout Acts.

<sup>389</sup> Acts 16:31. Cf. 3:16; 6:5, 7, 8; 11:24; 13:8; 14:9, 22, 27; 15:9; 16:5; 17:31; 20:21; 24:24; 26:18.

<sup>390</sup> Acts 16:31. The titles of Jesus are used in Acts as appropriate for the mission context. They are summarised in the missional significance sections in Chapters Three to Six.

<sup>391</sup> Acts 16:33. Cf. 1:5; 2:38, 41; 8:12, 13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:47, 48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:3, 4, 5; 22:10. For discussion of ambiguity between water-baptism and Spirit-baptism see Chapter Four (§4.3.3.2, p.204, n.317).

<sup>392</sup> Acts 16:34. Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:196, suggests that the meal is symbolic given the strange time after midnight.

<sup>393</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 104.

<sup>394</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:303–305. Others give Paul the benefit of the doubt. E.g. Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 129–134; White, *Evidence and Paul's Journeys*, 23–24; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:205; Witherington, *Acts*, 501.

<sup>395</sup> For discussion about the story (16:40) and statistical end (16:34) of “Act III” see Chapter Two (§2.2.4.2, pp.72–73).

the uncertainty of mission direction (16:6–9), the departure of the “we-group” (16:17), Paul’s imprisonment at Philippi (16:19–24), and the focus on his Roman citizenship (16:35–40). However, the ambiguities at Philippi mean it is unclear whether a fresh mission advance begins at 16:10 or 17:1.<sup>396</sup>

*The literary-spatial component of “Act III”* spirals around (Syrian) Antioch via Jerusalem, Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, back to Jerusalem, and then on to Philippi via Troas.<sup>397</sup> Various aspects of the journey are notable. The mission launch-pad from (Syrian) Antioch<sup>398</sup> twice forms an *inclusio* encompassing Jerusalem.<sup>399</sup> The smaller literary-spatial sections of Cyprus (13:4–12) and Iconium (14:1–7) are transitional mission stepping stones.<sup>400</sup> There is a progression from Jews at Pisidian Antioch (13:13–45), to Gentiles (13:46–52), Jews and Gentiles at Iconium (14:1–7), and the pagan Gentile *climax* at Lystra (14:8–20a). There is a contrast between the prophetic church at (Syrian) Antioch<sup>401</sup> and the authoritative church at Jerusalem (15:4–29). Troas (16:8–10) is a launch-pad for the new Gentile mission. Philippi (16:10–40) combines the continuing undertow of decline with a fresh mission advance and the implied Jewish focus shifts to a Roman emphasis.

*The literary-temporal component of “Act III”* reveals an overlap (11:27–12:25) between “Act II” and “Act III” beginning with “in these days” (11:27) and “that season” (12:1). The famine in Claudius’s reign (11:28) and Herod’s death (12:23) are external historical references. As with “Act I”, I propose that an overall lack of specific time movement in “Act III” suggests a continued *thematic/paradigmatic* approach to the mission instrument.

*The character component of “Act III”* reveals the transitional *interlacement* of Peter and Saul/Paul in Acts 8–15.<sup>402</sup> The characterisation of Saul/Paul shows him gradually taking centre stage<sup>403</sup> first alongside Barnabas,<sup>404</sup> then as leader with

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<sup>396</sup> See Diagram V, p.79.

<sup>397</sup> See Diagram VI (B), p.88.

<sup>398</sup> Dollar, *Biblical-Missiological*, 187–99.

<sup>399</sup> Acts 11:27–30 and 12:25, and 14:26–15:2 and 15:30–40.

<sup>400</sup> Cyprus between (Syrian) Antioch (13:1–3) and Pisidian Antioch (13:13–51); Iconium between Pisidian Antioch (13:13–51) and Lystra (14:8–20a).

<sup>401</sup> Acts 11:27–30; 13:1–4; 14:26–15:3; 15:30–40.

<sup>402</sup> Peter (Acts 1–8), Saul (Acts 9:1–31), Peter (9:32–11:18), Saul (11:25, 26, 30), Peter (12:1–24), Saul/Paul (12:25–15:5), Peter (15:7–11), Paul (15:12, 22–28:31).

<sup>403</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 149, makes the point that the remaining part of Acts is like the Gospels in being concentrated on a single personality.

<sup>404</sup> Acts 4:36–37; 11:22–26, 30; 12:25; 13:2, 7.

Barnabas,<sup>405</sup> and then with Silas. Barnabas's role in the Gentile mission is ambiguous since his characterisation shows an initial encouragement and involvement<sup>406</sup> is replaced with a disagreement and disappearance (15:36–39).<sup>407</sup> Silas is Paul's partner from 15:40 (though singular verbs are used of just Paul until 16:4)<sup>408</sup> and at Philippi,<sup>409</sup> Thessalonica (17:4–5), Beroea (17:10–15), and Corinth (18:5) from where he suddenly disappears from the narrative without explanation. Peter also strikingly disappears, first at 12:17, and then finally after a brief reappearance in 15:7–11.<sup>410</sup> This suggests neither Peter nor Paul are the main focus, but rather their involvement as God's mission instrument. Other characterisation observations include the ambiguous role of James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church in the move towards the Gentile mission (15:13–21)<sup>411</sup> and the first appearance/disappearance of the enigmatic "we-group" (16:10–17).<sup>412</sup>

*The speech component of "Act III"* shows the strategic nature of the different speeches and their closures. Paul's brief Lystra speech (14:15b–17) with the statistical midpoint (14:15) is the first example of a pagan Gentile mission. Paul's Pisidian Antioch speech (13:16–41) is his first in Acts (and his second longest)<sup>413</sup> which, together with the briefer second speech (13:46–47), gives a rationale for the Gentile mission which follows. Peter's Jerusalem Conference speech (15:7–11) is his last in Acts and closes with salvation through the grace of our Lord Jesus for both Jews and Gentiles (15:11). James's Jerusalem Conference speech (15:13b–21) supports Gentile mission, but is ambiguous in its concluding application.

<sup>405</sup> Acts 13:9, 13, 43, 46, 50; 14:1, 3, 23; 15:2, 22, 35, 36. Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:11; Stevens, *Acts*, 308; Yamasaki, *Watching*, 158–59. The order is reversed back to Barnabas and Paul in 14:14 (maybe because of identifying Barnabas as the primary god Zeus) and 15:12, 25 (maybe out of deference to the Jewish setting of the Jerusalem Conference). Cf. Cheung, "Narrative Analysis", 148–49; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 346, 360–61; Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 27–28.

<sup>406</sup> See previous two notes (n.404 and n.405).

<sup>407</sup> For discussion on Barnabas's character role in Acts see Markus Öhler, *Barnabas: die historische Person und ihre Rezeption in der Apostelgeschichte*, WUNT 156 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Campbell, "*We*" *Passages*, 58–65; Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 294–319; Benema, *Theory of Character*, 175–178; France, "Son of Encouragement"; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:129–31, 298–301; 3:237–39; Yamasaki, *Watching*, 163; 176–77; 208–209.

<sup>408</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 312.

<sup>409</sup> Acts 16:19, 22, 25, 29, 36, 38, 40.

<sup>410</sup> Gaventa, "Acts" (2006), 39.

<sup>411</sup> Acts 15:13 (first mentioned in 12:17) (see previously in this chapter, §5.3.2.4, p.251) and a more negative role at 21:18 (see Chapter Three, §3.3.3.6, pp.160–61).

<sup>412</sup> This study proposes that the "we-group" functions as a literary marker for approval/disapproval concerning the Gentile mission. See introduction in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, pp.99–101).

<sup>413</sup> See statistical calculations in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.7, p.107).

*The intertextual component of “Act III”* builds on the “Act I” intertextual framework.<sup>414</sup> “Act III” has six climactic Old Testament quotations with five notably clustered in Paul’s foundational Pisidian Antioch speeches. Together they contribute to the biblical framework for a developing mission instrument.

Psalm 2:7 (13:33b) applies to Jesus’s victory in resurrection and ascension. The reference to Jesus’s sonship is interpreted by him being God’s King (Ps 2:7) and is missional in relation to the nations being his inheritance and the ends of the earth being his possession (Ps 2:8). The same Psalm is quoted in the church’s model prayer for mission boldness in the light of Jesus’s victory over the kings of the earth (4:25b–26; Ps 2:1–2).<sup>415</sup>

Psalm 16:10 (13:35) applies to Jesus’s resurrection. It refers to the Holy One not seeing decay connected to an inheritance (Ps 16:6) and being enthroned at the right hand of God (Ps 16:8, 11). This links to a previous longer quotation of Psalm 16:8–11 (2:25b–28).<sup>416</sup>

Isaiah 55:3 (13:34b) applies to the resurrection and salvation as the promised blessings of David’s kingdom.<sup>417</sup> It has a missional meaning within its Isaiah context by being connected to a witness to the peoples (Isa 55:4) and the summoning of the nations (Isa 55:5). The quotation is sandwiched between the two previously noted Psalms as part of the wider Acts’ Isaianic framework.<sup>418</sup>

Habakkuk 1:5 (13:41) refers to the failure of God’s people paradoxically leading to the worldwide mission.<sup>419</sup>

Isaiah 49:6 (13:47b) links the mission of Isaiah, Israel, Jesus, and Paul and Barnabas as a light for the Gentiles and bringing salvation to the end of the earth (mentioned in 1:8).

Amos 9:11–12 (15:16–18) in James’s speech at the Jerusalem Conference supports the restoration of Israel as a remnant for the purposes of Gentile mission. This overcomes the challenge of the Babylonian exile (Amos 5:25–27) quoted in

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<sup>414</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>415</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.3.3.4, p.208).

<sup>416</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.3.3.2, p.204).

<sup>417</sup> Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 250.

<sup>418</sup> In Stephen’s foundational speech (7:49–50; Isa 66:1–2), the story of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:32b–33; Isa 53:7–8), in Paul’s foundational Pisidian Antioch mission (13:34b; Isa 55:3 and 13:47b; Isa 49:6), and by Paul’s culminating speech at Rome (28:26–27; Isa 6:9–10).

<sup>419</sup> See the previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.2.1, pp.244–45).



Stephen's speech (7:42–43).<sup>420</sup> Significantly after 15:16–18 the Scripture quotations are less frequent.<sup>421</sup>

### 5.3.2.10 *Parallelism in Acts' Middle*

Not only is “Act III” the literary *climax*, but *parallelism* shows potential topics for connection backwards to the first summary/scene (1:1–11) and forwards to the final scene/summary (28:16–31). The end of Chapter Four identifies the topics connecting the first summary/scene and the final scene/summary as Jesus, teaching, the kingdom of God, Holy Spirit, witness, last words, worldwide mission, triumph, and the place of Israel in the Gentile mission.<sup>422</sup> The themes of salvation and Scripture are also present in the final scene/summary.<sup>423</sup>

The themes of witness (14:17) and the world-wide mission among the first pagan Gentiles appear in the Lystra central scene (14:8–20a) and the kingdom of God (14:22) is in an extended central scene (14:1–28).<sup>424</sup> The appearance of mission and the kingdom of God in Acts' *opening climax* and *closure* confirms the focus on these themes in this study.<sup>425</sup> The themes of Jesus as the mission message<sup>426</sup> and Israel as the mission instrument<sup>427</sup> appear in “Act III” and link backwards to the first summary/scene and forwards to the final scene/summary.<sup>428</sup> Also there is a connection from “Act III” to the final scene with salvation<sup>429</sup> and Scripture<sup>430</sup> implying a partial recovery of the mission message and source.

The exploration of Acts' Middle extends to “Act II” (8:4–11:26) and “Act IV” (17:1–21:14) as important connections to Acts' Beginning and Ending. However, in view of their transitional nature, only synopses are given for the literary shapes of “Act II” and “Act IV” within the constraints of this study.

<sup>420</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.3.3.7, 196–97).

<sup>421</sup> Only two more appear in Acts at 23:5b (Exod 22:28) and 28:26–27 (Isa 6:9, 10). Chapter Three suggested that this is possibly due to a mission decline (see §3.3.4, p.163).

<sup>422</sup> See the discussion of framing in Chapter Four (§4.3.2.4, pp.196–97).

<sup>423</sup> See the discussion of framing in Chapter Three (§3.3.2.8, pp.151–52).

<sup>424</sup> The connection between mission and the kingdom of God in Acts 14 is explored in Chapter Six (§6.5.1.1, pp.341–43).

<sup>425</sup> “Act I” (mission at 1:8 and kingdom at 1:3, 6). “Act V” (mission at 28:28 and kingdom at 28:23, 31).

<sup>426</sup> Acts 14:3 and 14:23.

<sup>427</sup> Acts 13:16–41; 15:1–35. Parsons, *Departure*, 160, sees this as a major plot strategy anticipated in the opening, developed in the middle, and later closed in the ending.

<sup>428</sup> Jesus (1:1 and 28:31) and Israel/Jews (1:6 and 28:17–28).

<sup>429</sup> “Act III” (14:9) and the final scene (28:28).

<sup>430</sup> “Act III” (13:33; 34, 35, 41, 47; 15:16–18) and the final scene (28:26–27). Cf. a possible link to “Act I” (1:20).

### 5.3.3 Literary Shape in “Act II” (8:4–11:26)

A forwards reading shows that “Act II” transitions the narrative from the opening “Act I” (1:1–8:3) in Jerusalem to the central and climactic “Act III” (11:27–16:40) with its focus on Gentile mission.<sup>431</sup> The mission advance moves through the six story sections of Philip in Samaria (8:4–25), Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40), Saul’s conversion-commission and early mission (9:1–31), Peter’s Judean ministry (9:32–43), Peter and Cornelius (10:1–11:18), and (Syrian) Antioch Christians (11:19–26).<sup>432</sup> A synopsis of literary shape for “Act II” includes the structure elements and story components.

#### 5.3.3.1 Structure Elements of “Act II”

The structure elements include sections, size, and sequence. The blurred boundaries around the *start* (8:1b–4) and *finish* (11:27–30) of “Act II” confirm its transitional role. The literary sequence of the six sections suggests they are significant steps,<sup>433</sup> or better successive waves<sup>434</sup> with ebbs and flows, moving progressively closer to the Gentile mission which begins in 13:1. Saul’s conversion-commission (9:1–31) is near the midpoint of “Act II”.<sup>435</sup> The Peter and Cornelius section (10:1–11:18) receives a literary emphasis<sup>436</sup> by its size as the largest section in “Act II”,<sup>437</sup> its rehearsals by Peter,<sup>438</sup> its structural placement immediately after the midpoint of “Act II” (9:41 or 9:43), and by being the most abrupt literary break since the start of Acts’ story.<sup>439</sup> John Marlow helpfully suggests that since the section is causatively unrelated to preceding events it has an ideological function for the commencement of

<sup>431</sup> Alexander, “Acts”, 1038. Cf. Rosner, “Progress”, 226; Dollar, *Biblical-Missiological*, 226.

<sup>432</sup> See Appendix III, p.386.

<sup>433</sup> Dockery, “Acts 6–12”, 423.

<sup>434</sup> Ryken, *Words of Life*, 19.

<sup>435</sup> Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 109, give Paul’s conversion (9:3–19a) as an example of a pivot for positive cruciality.

<sup>436</sup> For detailed explorations of the literary structure see Barthes, “Structural Analysis”, and Louis Marin, “A Structural Analysis Essay of Acts 10:1–11:18”, in Johnson, *Structuralism*, 145–177.

<sup>437</sup> The six sections of “Act II” in order of word count emphasis are: (1) 1,150, Peter and Cornelius (10:1–11:18); (2) 564, Saul’s conversion-commission and early mission (9:1–31); (3) 353, Philip in Samaria (8:4–25); (4) 279, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40); (5) 223, Peter’s Judean ministry (9:32–43); and (6) 153, (Syrian) Antioch Christians (11:19–26). Holladay, *Acts*, 226, notes that 10:1–11:18 is important because of amount of space, but wrongly states it is the longest episode in Acts. Stephen (6:8–8:3) and Paul in Jerusalem (21:17–23:18) are actually larger.

<sup>438</sup> Acts 11:1–18 and 15:7–11. Larkin, “Acts”, 361; Tannehill, *Shape*, 216–17; Witherington, *Acts*, 365.

<sup>439</sup> The unexplained literary-spatial and character component changes with Caesarea and Cornelius.

the Gentile mission.<sup>440</sup> However, Marguerat's suggestion that 10:1–11:18 is the theological peak of Acts,<sup>441</sup> seems doubtful for a section which is not the central *climax* of Acts' literary structure. A more measured description by Witherington identifies 10:1–11:18 as "the most crucial drama yet recorded in Acts, involving events that would significantly change the direction of mission and the ministry of the early church from then on".<sup>442</sup> This commendation also applies to 11:19–26 which closes "Act II" by focusing on the (Syrian) Antioch Christians.

### 5.3.3.2 Story Components of "Act II"

The story components demonstrate the advance to the central *climax*.

*The literary-spatial component of "Act II"* starts with the transitional *launch* of Samaria (8:4–25) which receives further attention in Chapter Six of this study because of its kingdom of God reference (8:12).<sup>443</sup> There is a surprising reversal of order from what is expected (1:8) placing Samaria before Judaea.<sup>444</sup> However, no explicit mention is made of Samaria's spatial and ethnic position between Israel and the nations. Samaria is notable as the first location in Acts where the story is outside Jerusalem. Distinctive literary features include the supernatural battle with evil<sup>445</sup> in a confrontation with Simon the sorcerer (8:9–13),<sup>446</sup> Philip "heralds" (κήρυσσω)<sup>447</sup> the Christ (8:5) with signs, exorcisms, and healings (8:6–7), and the use of "the name of Jesus" (8:12), the conversions of Simon and the Samaritans,<sup>448</sup> and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (8:17).<sup>449</sup> The story moves into the desert, as a symbolically

<sup>440</sup> Marlow, "Narrative Analysis", 181.

<sup>441</sup> Marguerat, "Resurrection", 180.

<sup>442</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 365. Cf. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:330, "damit einer entscheidenden Epoche in der Geschichte der Urkirche" (thus a decision - the epoch in the history of the early church).

<sup>443</sup> See Chapter Six (§6.5.1.2, pp.343–46).

<sup>444</sup> Smith and Tyson, *Acts*, 94, notes the reversal, but does not give an explanation for this; Jervell, *People of God*, 118, suggests the order links the Samaritans to Jews rather than Gentiles.

<sup>445</sup> The way this forms an inclusio with events at Ephesus (Acts 19) is considered later in this chapter.

<sup>446</sup> For the issue of magic in the ancient world see previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.2.6, p.257, n.302).

<sup>447</sup> See introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124, n.623).

<sup>448</sup> From a literary perspective there is no reason to doubt the genuineness of Samaritans' and Simon's conversion which is stated explicitly in 8:12–13. See Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 361–66. For an alternative view suggesting they are not believers see Witherington, *Acts*, 288–89.

<sup>449</sup> This is significantly the first one outside of Jerusalem. An extensive summary of the Holy Spirit outpourings in Acts' Middle is given as part of the discussion on the mission source at the end of this chapter (see §5.4, pp.296–301).

remote, barren, and unlikely place for spiritual conversion,<sup>450</sup> on the way to Gaza (8:26).<sup>451</sup> Ethiopia (8:27) is a possible location for the “end of the earth” from 1:8.<sup>452</sup>

Further literary-spatial movement occurs with less prominent locations such as Azotus (8:40), the place of Holy Spirit transportation;<sup>453</sup> Damascus (9:1–25), the place close to Saul’s conversion-commission;<sup>454</sup> Tarsus, Paul’s home city;<sup>455</sup> Judaea, which reappears throughout Acts’ narrative in fulfilment of 1:8;<sup>456</sup> Galilee, surprisingly only mentioned as a location at 9:31;<sup>457</sup> Lydda (9:32–35), a place of resurrection;<sup>458</sup> and Joppa (9:36–43), a place of Peter’s vision in a suggestively unclean tanner’s house<sup>459</sup> without making an obvious mission link to the story of Jonah.<sup>460</sup>

More prominently, Caesarea recurs throughout Acts<sup>461</sup> with the second largest literary size after Jerusalem.<sup>462</sup> Caesarea’s function as the Roman administrative capital of Judaea<sup>463</sup> or an important sea-port<sup>464</sup> is not mentioned. The literary-spatial emphasis is the Roman presence with Cornelius and the Italian Regiment (10:1) and the Gentile population (10:28). As a bridge between Roman and

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<sup>450</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 197. However, Isaiah prophesies about the desert becoming a place of refreshment and fruitfulness, e.g. Isa 35:1, 6; 41:19; 43:19, 20; 51:3.

<sup>451</sup> Though not mentioned in Acts it would be well known from OT history that Gaza was one of five main Philistine cities (1 Sam 6:17). See also Judg 16:1, 21; 2 Kgs 18:8. Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 174.

<sup>452</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.3.2.1, p.192, n.187).

<sup>453</sup> There is no mention that it is the old Philistine city of Ashdod (Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 230) or that it may reverse the curse of Zeph. 2:4–7 (Martin Hengel, *Acts and History of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1979), 79). See also Amos 1:6–8 and Zec 9:5–7.

<sup>454</sup> There is no mention that it is the ancient capital of Syria or that it had a chequered history as part of the Davidic kingdom showing that God’s rule can be repeatedly resisted. Damascus was conquered by King David (2 Sam 8:3–6); rebelled (1 Kgs 11:23–25); and was recaptured by King Jeroboam (2 Kgs 14:28). Hengel and Schwemer, *Paul*, 50–90.

<sup>455</sup> This fact is revealed in 21:39; 22:3. There is no mention that it is the chief city of Cilicia, a free city under Roman control and a leading centre of culture, with schools devoted to philosophy, rhetoric and law. Hengel and Schwemer, *Paul*, 158–77. Also Ramsay, *Cities*, 85–244, discusses the possible connection with Tarshish in the OT (Jonah 1:3).

<sup>456</sup> Acts 1:8; 2:9, 14; 8:1; 9:31; 10:37; 11:1, 29; 12:19; 15:1; 21:10; 26:20; 28:21.

<sup>457</sup> Indirect mentions in speeches (1:11; 5:37; 10:37 and 13:31). The reasons for the virtual omission are possibly that the gospel has already been taken to Galilee (Barrett, *Acts*, 1:80) and/or to keep the focus on Jerusalem (Keener, *Acts*, 1:699–700).

<sup>458</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 219–220. Surprisingly there is no mention that Lydda is in Judaea fulfilling 1:8. Cf. Hengel, “Geography”, 59; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 86, suggests that Lydda and Sharon were only semi-Jewish becoming later practically Gentile.

<sup>459</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 351; Sleeman, *Geography*, 230–232.

<sup>460</sup> Jonah 1:3. Sleeman, *Geography*, 231.

<sup>461</sup> See Acts 8:40; 9:30; 10:1, 24; 11:11; 12:19; 18:22; 21:8, 16; 23:23, 33; 25:1, 4, 6, 13. See Diagram VI (A–C), pp.87–89.

<sup>462</sup> See statistical calculations in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.86).

<sup>463</sup> Hengel, “Geography of Palestine”, 56.

<sup>464</sup> The imagery of a sea-port supports Caesarea as a launch-pad for mission beyond Israel.

Jewish culture, Caesarea is a suitable symbolic place for the gospel mission's ongoing transition beyond Israel.<sup>465</sup>

Jerusalem also frequently recurs in "Act II"<sup>466</sup> as the Jewish religious centre with a continuing influence over the other locations.

The first mention of (Syrian) Antioch (11:19–30)<sup>467</sup> concludes "Act II". Nothing is made of its importance as the capital of Syria and the third largest city of the Roman Empire.<sup>468</sup> Instead the literary-spatial emphasis is on the prophetic church of Jews and Gentiles<sup>469</sup> as a launch-pad for successive mission movements.<sup>470</sup> I think Richard Thompson's suggestion that (Syrian) Antioch takes over the world-wide mission from the failed Jerusalem Church<sup>471</sup> is doubtful since it continues to have a relatively small literary size compared to Jerusalem.<sup>472</sup>

*The literary-temporal component of "Act II"* reveals that the six sections are not chronological, but overlapped in successive waves.<sup>473</sup> "In that day" (8:1) introduces "the great persecution" and "scattering". There is no literary-temporal marker at the start (8:26) of the Philip and Ethiopian eunuch section. "But Saul" (9:1) continues his persecution against the disciples. "But it came to pass" commences Peter's Judaeon ministry. There is no literary-temporal marker at the start (10:1) of the Peter and Cornelius section. A reference back (11:19) to the scattering of 8:4 starts the (Syrian) Antioch section. The lack of literary-temporal specificity suggests there could be *thematic/paradigmatic* principles for mission preparation. Literary-temporal references may have a symbolical significance, e.g. Cornelius's vision at the ninth hour (10:3) linked to the time Jesus died,<sup>474</sup> Peter's prayer at the sixth hour (10:9), or noon, linked to the time of Saul's conversion-commission,<sup>475</sup> and the three

<sup>465</sup> Hengel, "Geography of Palestine", 61; Goulder, *Type and History*, 68, sees it as a vital bridge to the Gentiles.

<sup>466</sup> Acts 8:14; 8:26; 9:2; 9:26–29; 11:1–18, 22.

<sup>467</sup> This is distinguished from Pisidian Antioch (see Chapter Two, §2.2.5.4, p.86, n.318).

<sup>468</sup> Josephus, *J.W.* 2.4.2–4.

<sup>469</sup> This assumes that the use of Ἑλληνιστῆς at 11:20 is Greek-speaking Gentiles. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 366; Ramsay, *Pictures*, 105; Stevens, *Acts*, 64–65, 99–100, 104–111. But see later discussion in this chapter (p.293, n.733) since the Gentiles may well be God-fearers within Israel.

<sup>470</sup> Acts 11:30; 13:1–3; 14:26–15:3; 15:30–41; 18:22–23.

<sup>471</sup> Thompson, *Church*, 163. Cf. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 133, suggests (Syrian) Antioch has become "the Mother-Church of all Gentile churches".

<sup>472</sup> (Syrian) Antioch has 548 words and Jerusalem has 1,207 words in Acts' Middle and 1,681 words in Acts' Ending. For overall statistical calculations see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.86). In addition (Syrian) Antioch only recurs once more (six times) than Jerusalem (five times, if 21:15 included) in "Act III" and "IV". See Diagram VI (B and C), pp.88–89.

<sup>473</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.5, p.92) and Diagram VII, p.94.

<sup>474</sup> Luke 23:44–46. Also Acts 3:1.

<sup>475</sup> Acts 22:6; 26:13. Cf. Luke 23:44 as start of the three hour eclipse during Jesus's crucifixion.

tomorrows linked to Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection.<sup>476</sup> There is also a literary-temporal slowing of the story with the indefinite literary-temporal gap of "were fulfilled sufficient days" (9:23)<sup>477</sup> and "a whole year" (11:26) at (Syrian) Antioch.

*The character component of "Act II"* reveals a further story advance in the start of the long transitional overlap between Peter and Saul/Paul (Acts 8–15).<sup>478</sup>

Philip, the second of the Seven (6:5–6), surprisingly<sup>479</sup> continues the transition from Stephen,<sup>480</sup> and is presented as the forerunner of Peter and John (8:14–25).<sup>481</sup> However, Samaria's character emphasis is on Simon the sorcerer<sup>482</sup> known as the "power of God, the one called great" (8:10) suggesting supernatural power, a deity, or the Messiah.<sup>483</sup> He believes<sup>484</sup> and is baptised.<sup>485</sup> The story then moves to the Ethiopian (8:26–40) whom some scholars argue is Acts' first example of a Gentile convert.<sup>486</sup> However, this is not made explicit and his connection to the temple worship in Jerusalem (8:27) suggests a Jewish emphasis.<sup>487</sup> The Ethiopian is better understood as a part of the continuing transition towards a Gentile mission as a symbolic convert,<sup>488</sup> a foreshadowing of geographical expansion,<sup>489</sup> and a fulfilment of Old Testament promises.<sup>490</sup> Scholars suggest that the emphasis is on his inclusion in Israel<sup>491</sup> since the references in Acts 8 focus on him being a eunuch.<sup>492</sup> The

<sup>476</sup> Acts 10:9, 23, 24. See Luke 23:50–24:8, esp. 24:7; Acts 10:40. For other three days in Acts see esp. 9:9 (Bede, *Acts*, 9.18); also 25:1; 27:19; 28:7, 12, 17.

<sup>477</sup> This is calculated as a three year period when Saul was in Arabia. See Witherington, *Acts*, 322–325; Johnson, *Acts*, 174–75; McRay, *Paul*, 91–93; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1032–1045; Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 256–260. See previously in this chapter for discussion of "sufficient time" (§5.3.2.2, p.248, n.203) and for "fulfilled" (§5.3.2.1, p.244, n.161).

<sup>478</sup> See Diagram VIII (A), p.102.

<sup>479</sup> The surprise is that the narrative does not return to the Jerusalem Twelve who might have been expected to fulfil the commission of 1:8. See Witherington, *Acts*, 279.

<sup>480</sup> Gooding, *True to the Faith*, 125.

<sup>481</sup> Spencer, *Journeying*, 98; Dunn, *Acts*, 103. Some scholars parallel Philip with John the Baptist as the prophet in the wilderness and Apollos in 18:24–28. Cf. F. Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study in Roles and Relations*, JSNTSup 67 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 223–32; Ramsay, *Pictures*, 63.

<sup>482</sup> Simon the sorcerer, 270 words (8:9–24), Peter and John, 199 words (8:14–25) and Philip, 146 words (8:5–13).

<sup>483</sup> Muthuraj, "Theology of God", 40–45; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1510–12.

<sup>484</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.269, n.448) for suggestion that Simon's conversion is presented in literary terms as genuine.

<sup>485</sup> See previously in this chapter (p. 263, n.391) for water-baptism in Acts.

<sup>486</sup> Martin, "Function of Acts 8:26–40", 28–37.

<sup>487</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 75–76; Sleeman, *Geography*, 188.

<sup>488</sup> Gaventa, *Darkness to Light*, 106; Parsons, *Body*, 123–141; Parsons, *Acts*, 124; Thompson, *Acts*, 116.

<sup>489</sup> Martin, "Function of Acts 8:26–40", esp. 38–49, 222–38.

<sup>490</sup> Blessings for Ethiopia (Cush) are prophesied in Ps 68:31; 87:4; Zeph 3:10 and typified in example of Ebed-melech (Jer 38:7, 10, 12; 39:16).

<sup>491</sup> Isa 56:3–5. Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 225; Parsons, *Body*, 123–141; Parsons, *Acts*, 124; Thompson, *Acts*, 116.

<sup>492</sup> Acts 8:27, 34, 36, 38, 39.

question “what prevents me to be baptised” (8:36) may suggest his exclusion from the temple worship.<sup>493</sup> His position as treasurer for the queen of Ethiopia underlines his potential contribution to the mission instrument.<sup>494</sup> He disappears from the story at 8:39 and so does Philip at 8:40.<sup>495</sup>

The insertion of Saul’s conversion-commission and early ministry at 9:1–31, rather than the alternatives of earlier at 8:4 or later at 11:19, allows the surrounding examples of Philip/Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40) and Peter/Cornelius (10:1–11:18) to emphasise Saul as a mission instrument to the Gentiles.<sup>496</sup> The three sections have significance beyond being individual “conversions”.<sup>497</sup>

Saul’s conversion-commission is a “radical reversal”<sup>498</sup> from the most developed instance of opposition so far in Acts.<sup>499</sup> However, Stevens is right to suggest that Saul/Paul’s characterisation in Acts includes both his stubborn resistance and sacrificial service.<sup>500</sup> Paul’s later accounts of his conversion-commission in 22:6–16 and 26:12–18 move the account from an internal to an external focalisation<sup>501</sup> and are an example of *literary repetition* or *redundancy*<sup>502</sup> which brings inner significance to the fore.<sup>503</sup> The accumulative differences<sup>504</sup> underline Paul’s gradual restoration as a mission instrument,<sup>505</sup> e.g. the increasing light from heaven (9:3; 22:6; 26:13), Jesus (9:5) becomes Jesus of Nazareth (22:8),<sup>506</sup> the “what

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<sup>493</sup> Deut 23:1. Sleeman, *Geography*, 189; Brown, “How Acts Means”, 80–83; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1590; Witherington, *Acts*, 299–300). See the similar ostracisation of the lame man in Acts 3 (Chapter Four, §4.3.3.3, p.206).

<sup>494</sup> A possible implied challenge to Theophilus whose possible important position could also contribute money or influence to the gospel mission.

<sup>495</sup> A sudden and unexplained character disappearance is frequently used in Acts as a literary device suggesting that the characters serve the message and mission (e.g. Peter after 5:15; 12:17 and 15:11, Saul after 9:30, Silas after 18:5). Cf. Adams, *Genre*, 197.

<sup>496</sup> Mattill, “Schneckenburger”, 112; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:113; Stevens, *Acts*, 245; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 425–42.

<sup>497</sup> Gaventa, “Witnesses”, 420–21.

<sup>498</sup> Gaventa, “Acts” (2006), 40. Cf. Bauer and Traina, *Inductive*, 109.

<sup>499</sup> Saul’s appearance as a murderer (9:1) threads through the narrative at 22:4, 20; 26:10 and 28:4.

<sup>500</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 245.

<sup>501</sup> See Chapter Two, §2.2.5.6, pp.96–97.

<sup>502</sup> Charles W. Hedrick, “Paul’s Commission/Call: A Comparative Analysis of the Three Reports in Acts”, *JBL* 100 (1981), 415–32; Ronald D. Witherup, “Functional Redundancy in the Acts of the Apostles: A Case Study”, *JSNT* 48 (1992): 67–86; Gaventa, *Darkness to Light*, 52–92; Daniel Marguerat, “Saul’s Conversion and the Multiplication of Narrative in Acts”, in Tuckett, *Luke’s Literary Achievement*, 127–155; Holladay, *Acts*, 203–222.

<sup>503</sup> Alexander, “Acts”, 1055.

<sup>504</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 629,

<sup>505</sup> Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 117–18; Stevens, *Acts*, 491–92, suggests that God will have Paul go back to the Damascus Road to get him back on track.

<sup>506</sup> It is possible that the appellation “of Nazareth” as a term of despising in connection with mission suffering. See John 1:46. Cf. Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 10:38; 22:8; 26:9.

it is necessary to do" (9:6) becomes "the things arranged or appointed" (22:10), and Paul's commission for Gentile mission progresses from being given to Ananias (9:15–16),<sup>507</sup> passed on to Paul by Ananias (22:14–16), and being directly given to Paul by Jesus (26:16–18). Saul disappears from the story at 9:30<sup>508</sup> with uncertainty whether he will feature again.

The abrupt character shift in 10:1 brings a literary emphasis on Cornelius a Roman centurion whose vision is reported more times than Peter's.<sup>509</sup> Scholars tend to interpret Cornelius as the first Gentile convert.<sup>510</sup> However, he is not a typical pagan Gentile, but "devout and fearing God" (10:2) as a possible Jewish proselyte.<sup>511</sup> His "conversion" is another progressive wave<sup>512</sup> in the movement towards Gentile mission.<sup>513</sup>

Peter is also an important character in "Act II" reappearing with a Judaeian ministry (9:32–42) which prepares for the Cornelius story (10:1–11:18).<sup>514</sup> His characterisation continues with an ecstatic vision of a sheet from heaven (10:9–16) which overcomes his mission hesitancy.<sup>515</sup> The narrative sections about Peter function as a literary inclusio (Acts 1–5; 9:32–11:18) legitimising Stephen, Philip, and Saul (Acts 6–9),<sup>516</sup> and a second inclusio (9:32–11:18; 12:1–19) legitimising the events at (Syrian) Antioch where the focus is on Barnabas and Saul (11:19–30). Barnabas plays an important role in "Act II" reappearing from "Act I" (4:36) as Paul's encourager (9:27; 11:25) and Jerusalem's representative (11:22).<sup>517</sup>

<sup>507</sup> A better disciple than his namesake in 5:1–11 and the high-priest in 24:1. Three Ananias are too much for one story.

<sup>508</sup> For another ten year silent period until 11:25. Robert Osbourne, "St Paul's Silent Years", *JBL* 84 (1965): 59–65; McRay, *Paul*, 95–99; Witherington, *Acts*, 232; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1046–1069; Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 266–268; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 2, 408–10, argues that Saul's narrative gaps (9:31–11:24 and 12:1–24) construct him as an ecclesial figure rather than a lone-ranger.

<sup>509</sup> Cornelius's vision four times (10:1–6; 10:22; 10:30–32; 11:13–14) and Peter's vision twice (10:9–16; 11:5–10). See Marin, "Structural Analysis", 147–154.

<sup>510</sup> E.g. Dockery, "Acts 6–12", 431; Tyson, "Gentile Mission", 624.

<sup>511</sup> Ramsay, *Traveller*, 43; Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 150.

<sup>512</sup> For temporal overlapping see Chapter Two (§2.2.5.5, p.92) and Diagram VII, p.94.

<sup>513</sup> Seccombe, "The New People of God", 360–362. Cf. S.V.D. vanThanh Nguyen, *Peter and Cornelius: A Story of Conversion and Mission*, ASMMMS 15 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012).

<sup>514</sup> Witherup, "Cornelius", 50.

<sup>515</sup> Visions and trances appear at strategic points in the Acts' story to move the mission forward. Acts 3:10; 9:10, 12; 10:3, 10, 17, 19; 11:5; 12:9; 16:9 (at night); 18:9 (at night); 22:17; 26:19. Cf. Pilch, *Visions*. Miller, *Convinced*; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2347–49; Chan-Hie Kim, "Reading the Cornelius Story from an Asian Immigrant Perspective", in Segovia and Tolbert, *In This Place*, 165–74, citing 170, suggests it is the story of Peter's "conversion" rather than Cornelius'.

<sup>516</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 90–91; Gaventa, *Darkness to Light*, 124.

<sup>517</sup> Cf. 11:27; 12:25 15:2, 30, 33. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:552; Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church", 434; Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 294–307; Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 86–87.



The ascended Jesus influences the Gentile mission by reappearing at the significant point of Saul's conversion-commission (9:3–5, 10–16).

*The speech component of "Act II"* highlights Peter's two long speeches which outline and defend the gospel mission. The first to Cornelius and his congregation (10:34b–43) focuses on Jesus as the mission instrument (10:36–38), the resurrection (10:40–41), and final judgement (10:42). The Holy Spirit's interruption highlights the speech's conclusion of "forgiveness of sins ... through his name" (10:43) as an important part of the mission message.<sup>518</sup> The second speech to the Jerusalem Church (11:5–17) defends the mission from an accusation about table-fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles.<sup>519</sup>

*The intertextual component of "Act II"* has only one quotation, possibly because the Old Testament quotations are unsuitable for a Gentile mission context.<sup>520</sup> However, the focus on Samaritans and God-fearers makes this explanation unlikely.<sup>521</sup> Instead the infrequency could be a deliberate literary omission to emphasise the climactic cluster of quotations in "Act III" and highlight the solitary important quotation of Isaiah 53:7–8 (8:32b–33). It is the only quotation within the story action itself rather than a speech and focuses on the mission suffering of the Lord's servant<sup>522</sup> as part of the Isaiah references within Acts' overall intertextual framework.<sup>523</sup>

The literary shape of "Act II" reveals an advance towards the *pivot* of missional significance in the narrowing focus of "Act III", Acts 13–15, and especially the centre scene (14:8–20a). The literary shape of "Act IV" will complete Acts' Middle.

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<sup>518</sup> Smith, *Rhetoric of Interruption*, 227–29. Cf. John J. Kilgallen, "Did Peter Actually Fail to Get a Word in? (Acts 11, 15)", *Bib* 71 (1990): 405–10, noting that the interruption is woven into the narrative which includes Peter's complete speech. For Acts' references to forgiveness of sins see 5:31; 8:22; 13:38; 26:18.

<sup>519</sup> Dollar, *Biblical-Missiological*, 323–49. The theme of table-fellowship develops through 1:4; 10:23, 28–29; 11:3, 12; 16:15, 34.

<sup>520</sup> Marguerat, "Resurrection", 181; Tyson, "Gentile Mission", 628–29.

<sup>521</sup> See Acts 10:43 for reference to OT prophets with Cornelius.

<sup>522</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 227; Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lukan Old Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 12 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 249–254; Bock, "Isaiah 53 in Acts 8", in *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 133–144. Mallen, *Transformation*, 125–131, 177–78; Morna D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1959), 113–14; Byerly, "Narrative Legitimation", 133–34; Bosch, *Witness to the World*, 72, 76.

<sup>523</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

#### 5.3.4 Literary Shape in “Act IV” (17:1–21:14)

A forwards reading shows how “Act IV” connects “Act III” (11:27–16:40) to “Act V” (21:15–28:31). Diagram V shows a decline after 14:8–20a, a second advance with the new Gentile mission from 16:9, a new *climax* at Ephesus (18:18b–19:20), and a second decline with Paul’s decision to prioritise Jerusalem before Rome from the midpoint of “Act IV” (19:21).<sup>524</sup> This combination of advances and declines contributes to the highs, lows, and ambiguities of the intervening narrative. There is a narrative transition from Paul as a free missionary to a prisoner (20:1–21:14).<sup>525</sup> A synopsis of the literary issues for “Act IV” includes the structure elements and story components.

##### 5.3.4.1 Structure Elements of “Act IV”

The structure elements include sections, size, and sequence. The eight sections, delimited by a literary-spatial component, are Thessalonica (17:1–9), Beroea (17:10–15), Athens (17:16–34), Corinth (18:1–18a), Ephesus (18:18b–19:41), Troas (20:1–12), Miletus (20:13–38), and the journey to Jerusalem (21:1–14).<sup>526</sup> The Ephesus section has a literary emphasis in its size as the third largest compared to the other locations,<sup>527</sup> its sequence as the final location and pinnacle of Paul’s Gentile mission,<sup>528</sup> the key “Act IV” midpoint at 19:21, and the chain-link interlock (19:21–41) which Bruce Longenecker identifies as an ancient literary device. He argues for a start at 19:21 based on the two surrounding structural markers of a summary (19:20) and a literary-temporal reference (19:23).<sup>529</sup>

##### 5.3.4.2 Story Components of “Act IV”

The story components follow the advances and declines.

*The literary-spatial component of “Act IV”* starts with the four cities of Thessalonica (17:1–9), Beroea (17:10–15), Athens (17:16–34), and Corinth (18:1–18a) linking Philippi (16:10–40) at the close of “Act III” to the pinnacle of mission at

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<sup>524</sup> See Diagram V, p.79.

<sup>525</sup> Lee, *Tragic History*, 245–46.

<sup>526</sup> See Appendix III, p.388.

<sup>527</sup> See statistical calculations in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.86).

<sup>528</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 255, 257; Stevens, *Acts*, 123–24; Richard E. Oster, “A Historical Commentary on the Missionary Success Stories in Acts 19:11–40” (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1974), 131.

<sup>529</sup> Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 198–205.

Ephesus (18:18b–19:20). These locations all show Paul’s struggles in encouraging Jews to become God’s mission instrument whilst being himself an example. Thessalonica<sup>530</sup> is notable for the accusation made by the Jews that Paul and Silas are “contrary to the decrees of Caesar” and “saying there is another king, Jesus” (17:7).<sup>531</sup>

Of the four cities, Beroea<sup>532</sup> has the briefest literary emphasis<sup>533</sup> focusing on the positive response of Jews and Greeks to the Scriptures.<sup>534</sup> Athens, as a centre of Greek philosophy and religion,<sup>535</sup> is given a major literary emphasis due to the inclusion of Paul’s speech. The literary focus in Corinth<sup>536</sup> is a triangle of Paul’s witness, a mixed reaction by Jews expelled from Rome (18:2),<sup>537</sup> and Roman ambivalence towards the gospel evidenced in Gallio’s defence of Paul (18:12–17).<sup>538</sup> As previously argued at 13:46,<sup>539</sup> “the turning” to Gentiles (18:6) is not about a change of mission target, but about Paul being an example of the mission instrument. The phrase “your blood upon your heads” (18:6) connects to Ezekiel 33:1–6 for both those who ignore a warning when a city is attacked and also to watchman who fail to

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<sup>530</sup> Nothing is made of the fact that Thessalonica was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia enjoying close ties with Rome. See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1160–1163.

<sup>531</sup> Chapter Six explores this in relation to the kingdom of God (§6.5.2, p.353).

<sup>532</sup> No mention is made of fact that Beroea was “out of the way” (Cicero, *Pis.* 36.89; Larkin, *Acts*, 249; Witherington, *Acts*, 509), the centre of the province’s imperial cult, Macedonia’s second city (after Thessalonica) where the provincial council met, a large city with many people (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 136; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 597; David W. J. Gill, “Macedonia”, in Gill and Gempf, *Graeco-Roman Setting*, 397–417, citing 410), and a Roman trading colony (Keener, *Acts*, 3:2561).

<sup>533</sup> The literary emphasis by word count is: (1) Athens, 396; (2) Corinth, 321; (3) Thessalonica, 167; and (4) Beroea, 112. This suggests that Thessalonica and Beroea are in some way transitional between Philippi and Athens/Corinth. Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 170, inaccurately calculates Athens as 324 words by mistakenly omitting 17:15, 33–34 in his calculations.

<sup>534</sup> Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 166, argues it is a positive foil to the negative portrayal of Jews at Thessalonica.

<sup>535</sup> The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers are mentioned (17:19) together with Athenian religion (17:22, 23). However, no mention is made of the lost ancient grandeur and glory of Athens as the one-time capital of Greece or the Roman influence which had embraced Athens philosophy and religion. See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1170–1174; Blevins, “Acts 13–19”, 444; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2584–95.

<sup>536</sup> It is given a similar literary emphasis as Athens, but no mention is made of Corinth’s importance as the capital of Achaia, its strategic location as gateway between east and west, its destruction and rebuilding as a Roman colony in 44 BC, its economic prosperity as a commercial centre, or its reputation for immorality. See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1181–86; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:860; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2684–97; McRay, *Paul*, 164–173.

<sup>537</sup> Acts 18:2, 4, 5, 8. Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 192–228; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2697–711.

<sup>538</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:858; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:226–27; Witherington, *Acts*, 551–56; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2760–74; Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 214–19; Peterson, *Acts*, 515–18.

<sup>539</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.2.1, p.246).

give it.<sup>540</sup> The latter application would mean that the Jews are responsible if they refuse to be a mission instrument.

The literary-spatial focus of 18:18–23 shows a move from Corinth, briefly to Ephesus, back to Caesarea, the unnamed Jerusalem,<sup>541</sup> and (Syrian) Antioch, before Paul goes again to Galatia and Phrygia.

Ephesus<sup>542</sup> is the primary literary-spatial location of “Act IV”. It closes Paul’s Gentile mission, and has a kingdom of God reference (19:8).<sup>543</sup> The narrative reveals a pinnacle of the second mission advance (16:10–19:20) with a mission target of both Jews<sup>544</sup> and Greeks (19:10), a mission source of a final outpouring of the Holy Spirit (19:6) connecting back to Acts 2<sup>545</sup> and Acts 8,<sup>546</sup> the mission means of verbal proclamation (19:8) and extraordinary miracles/healings (19:11), and mission success in the victory over Satan with exorcisms (19:11, 13–16), and a destruction of magic books (19:18–19)<sup>547</sup> echoing the context of Samaria (8:4–13).<sup>548</sup> In addition, the conquest of “the Word” forms a literary inclusion (19:10, 20).<sup>549</sup>

However, the features of a mission advance (19:10, 17, 21) co-exist with a sense of decline from the central scene. These include the underlying ambiguities of the Holy Spirit’s block to Paul “speaking the Word in Asia” (16:6),<sup>550</sup> Paul’s

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<sup>540</sup> Bart J. Koet, *Dreams and Scripture in Luke-Acts: Collected Essays* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 181–84; Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 199–201; Holladay, *Acts*, 352, notes it is OT language for assigning ultimate responsibility to someone, esp. for someone’s life, either one’s own life or *that of someone else* (emphasis mine) in connection to 2 Sam 1:16; 14:9; 1 Kgs 2:37; Ezek 33:4–6; Jer 51:35.

<sup>541</sup> 18:22 describes it as “he went up and greeted the church” which the scholarly consensus sees as Jerusalem, e.g. Ramsay, *Traveller*, 264–65; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2794–96; Riesner, *Early Period*, 297; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:880–81.

<sup>542</sup> Nothing is made of the fact that Ephesus is a harbour city renowned for its strategic spatial location, diversity, as a popular cultural arts hub and the Roman administrative centre for Asia Minor. Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.1.24, notes it is the second most important city after Rome. Cf. Blevins, “Acts 13–19”, 446–449; Treblico, “Asia”, 302–357; Paul Treblico, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius*, WUNT 166 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 11–18; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1206–11; Shauf, *Theology*, 127–136; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2789–92.

<sup>543</sup> See Chapter Six (§6.5.1.3, pp.346–49).

<sup>544</sup> Acts 19:10, 13, 14 and 17. Todd Klutz, “Naked and Wounded: Foregrounding, Relevance and Situation in Acts 19:13–20”, in *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T Reed, JSNTSup 170 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 258–281, citing 259.

<sup>545</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 409.

<sup>546</sup> Alexander, “Acts”, 1052.

<sup>547</sup> BDAG, *πρόλογος*, 800, §2. Strelan, *Paul, Artemis and the Jews*, 86–88, 263–64, finds no substantial historical evidence for a widespread practice of magic at Ephesus, but does concede that 19:19 refers to it. Shauf, *Theology*, 240–263, as the key theme being the conflict of the spreading Christian mission with pagan religion

<sup>548</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.3.2, p.269).

<sup>549</sup> Acts 19:10 and 19:20. Thompson, *One Lord*, 151–157; Pereira, *Ephesus*, 188.

<sup>550</sup> By implication this includes Ephesus which was located in the province of Asia. Fernando, *Acts*, 494.

uncertainty about God's will (18:19–21), Paul's unusual absences (18:24–28; 19:13–20),<sup>551</sup> the dominating presence of Artemis's temple (19:23–41), the large literary size of the riot<sup>552</sup> without any direct theological content,<sup>553</sup> and the passing by of Ephesus (20:16–17).

In particular the shadow of Jerusalem hangs over “Act IV” with Paul's decision to go there (19:21). Although 19:21 seems an unnatural break in the middle of the Ephesian section, there are grounds as Jürgen Roloff puts it “einen entscheidenden Wendepunkt zu markieren. Das missionarische Werk des Paulus ist abgeschlossen; nun soll der neue, letzte Abschnitt seines Weges beginnen, der von zwei Stationen bestimmt sein wird: Jerusalem und Rom”.<sup>554</sup> As a result many scholars interpret 19:21 as a divinely inspired decision by Paul to go first to Jerusalem and then to Rome.<sup>555</sup> A case can be made for an alternative interpretation of 19:21 with Rome as the primary goal<sup>556</sup> and Jerusalem as a wrong detour.

First, it is a narrative turning point bringing Paul's Gentile mission as a free man to a close.<sup>557</sup>

Second, “when these things were fulfilled” suggests a new phase in the story,<sup>558</sup> the fulfilment of the mission,<sup>559</sup> and possibly a summary of what has preceded requiring Paul to seek affirmation from Jerusalem about Jewish deficiencies.<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>551</sup> Acts 18:24–28 (Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 173) and 19:13–20 (extended to 19:41 since Paul only briefly present at 19:30–31) (Johnson, *Acts*, 348).

<sup>552</sup> A word count for the Ephesian section (18:24–27a, 19:1–41) shows that from a total of 836 in order of emphasis: (1) 341, the riot (19:23–41) is 43% ; (2) 112, the seven sons of Sceva (19:13–17); (3) 111, Paul and the Twelve (19:1–7); (4) 101, the summary of Paul's ministry and miracles (19:8–12); (5) 80, Apollos (18:24–27a); (6) 48, the decision re Jerusalem and Rome (19:21, 22); and (7) 43, the burning of magic books (19:18–20).

<sup>553</sup> There is no mention of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, or the gospel. Contra Muthuraj, “Theology of God”, 177–95, who argues that it is a polemic against the making of idols through the citation of Paul's comment about “gods made with hands” (19:26); the focus on the Jews (19:33–34); and the apologia for Paul and his companions by the town clerk (19:35–40).

<sup>554</sup> Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, 288, “a decisive turning point. The missionary work of Paul is finished; now will begin the new, most recent section of his way, which will be determined by two stations: Jerusalem and Rome”. (In this study all German translations are my own). Cf. Longenecker, *Boundaries*, 201–202, wrongly citing above as Jervell; Turner, “Chronology”, 421; O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 67–68, 72; NRSV, whose last of eight text units for Acts is 19:21–28:31.

<sup>555</sup> E.g. Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:239; Dunn, *Acts*, 262; Witherington, *Acts*, 588; Peterson, *Acts*, 543; Wall, “Acts”, 1014; Schnabel, *Acts*, 800; Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 268.

<sup>556</sup> Rius-Camps, “Gradual Awakening”, 289–90.

<sup>557</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 346; Witherington, *Acts*, 588; Stevens, *Acts*, 420.

<sup>558</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 569; Pereira, *Ephesus*, 218; Wall, “Acts”, 269; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2860.

<sup>559</sup> Longenecker, “Acts”, 1013; Pereira, *Ephesus*, 219–20; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2860.

<sup>560</sup> The possibilities for these include the Jewish involvement in sorcery (19:17–19); the failed exorcism (19:13–16); the rejection of Paul's message about the kingdom of God (19:8–9); the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the twelve disciples who knew only the baptism of John (19:1–7); and Apollos's inadequacies somehow prefiguring what happens at Ephesus (18:24–28).

Third, the middle voice of ἔθετο suggests Paul's resolving for himself.<sup>561</sup>

Fourth, most scholars concur that ἐν τῷ πνεύματι is ambiguous.<sup>562</sup> Greek does not capitalise πνεύμα as a proper noun,<sup>563</sup> there is no clarifying "Holy",<sup>564</sup> and the preposition ἐν is inconclusive.<sup>565</sup> Consequently Bible translations have Spirit,<sup>566</sup> Paul decided (spirit),<sup>567</sup> or leave both options open.<sup>568</sup> I agree with a number of scholars that the surrounding weight of other evidence suggests that it is Paul's spirit.<sup>569</sup>

Fifth, δεῖ links divine direction only to Rome and not Jerusalem.<sup>570</sup> Tannehill is representative of scholars who argue that it would be strange to attribute a human decision for Jerusalem and a divine decision to Rome since "and/also" (καί) suggests a comparability between the two.<sup>571</sup> However, καί can mean a simple connection<sup>572</sup> that the divinely directed journey to Rome will follow the humanly determined one to Jerusalem.

Sixth, the decline of the subsequent riot which suddenly and unexpectedly ends Paul's mission at Ephesus,<sup>573</sup> does not produce any further explicit gospel success,<sup>574</sup> and foreshadows the Jerusalem riot (21:27–36).<sup>575</sup>

Seventh, the mission decline in the journey to Jerusalem fits the narrative flow of an underlying decline from the climax of 14:8–20a<sup>576</sup> with Ephesus as a "meteoric burst" at the pinnacle of the second mission advance.<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 125; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:919; Culy and Parsons, *Acts*, 370; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 652, (but he contradicts at 677, citing 19:21 in support of divine guidance for Jerusalem at 20:22).

<sup>562</sup> E.g. Witherington, *Acts*, 588; Bock, *Acts*, 605; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2861.

<sup>563</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 414.

<sup>564</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 126.

<sup>565</sup> Shauf, *Theology*, 237–38; *L&N*, 1:359 (30.76), show that the use of the middle voice followed by the prepositional phrase is an idiom for "to make up one's mind". However, they inexplicably add that 19:21 could be a reference to the Holy Spirit.

<sup>566</sup> E.g. RSV, NRSV, ESV.

<sup>567</sup> E.g. NIV, NET.

<sup>568</sup> KJV has "the spirit"; NASB, "in the Spirit", but footnote "in the spirit"; NIV (2011), "in the spirit", but footnote "in the Spirit".

<sup>569</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:919; Cosgrove, "Divine Δει", 178; Le Cornu with Shulam, *Acts*, 2.1065; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:58. Stevens, *Acts*, 413–14.

<sup>570</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 127.

<sup>571</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:239.

<sup>572</sup> See Levinsohn's observations in Chapter Two (§2.2.4.3, p.74, n.222).

<sup>573</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 124, 415–20.

<sup>574</sup> Rick Strelan, *Paul, Artemis and the Jews in Ephesus*, BZNTW 80 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), 133. Cf. the disciples in 19:30; 20:1 and the fact that the riot does not limit the freedom of Ephesian believers. Conversation with Steve Walton, Cambridge, March 2017.

<sup>575</sup> Byerly, "Narrative Legitimation", 244–46, 254.

<sup>576</sup> Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 67.

<sup>577</sup> Oster, "Missionary Success", 131.

Eighth, Paul's ongoing Jewish focus and his submission to Jewish rituals creates ambiguity in the narrative. This study argues they imply a mission decline,<sup>578</sup> rather than a more positive affirmation.<sup>579</sup>

Ninth, Paul's return to Jerusalem is possibly because of his focus on inviting Israel to be God's mission instrument,<sup>580</sup> rather than engaging in the mission itself.

Tenth, although 19:21 is the first indication that Rome might be the final destination in 28:16–31, there is no resulting literary emphasis to support Richard Rackham's claim that Rome becomes the real centre and subject of the narrative.<sup>581</sup> The references to Caesar and Roman citizenship are surprisingly sparse<sup>582</sup> and make nothing of Rome's importance as the capital of the Roman Empire. The story decline to Jerusalem and Paul's subsequent arrest make it uncertain at this stage whether Paul will ever arrive at Rome.<sup>583</sup> It is not until "Act V"<sup>584</sup> that positive hints about Rome emerge.

Many scholars appeal to 20:22, but this is inconclusive since "I having been bound by/in the s(S)pirit" (δεδεμένος ἐγὼ τῷ πνεύματι) can again be the human spirit or Holy Spirit.<sup>585</sup> There is no divine δεῖ or "Holy" to clarify what is meant.<sup>586</sup> The use of the Holy Spirit in 20:23 does not clear up the ambiguity as some scholars suggest<sup>587</sup> since it refers to the outcome rather than the cause of going to Jerusalem. It also refers in a general way to "in every city" rather than a specific one. The urgency to reach Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost is Paul's own decision (20:16).<sup>588</sup> This may express hope for a fresh Holy Spirit outpouring as in 2:1–13<sup>589</sup> or more likely reflect Paul's focus on Israel.<sup>590</sup>

<sup>578</sup> Rius-Camps, "Gradual Awakening", 287.

<sup>579</sup> E.g. Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 415.

<sup>580</sup> Filson, "Journey Motif", 74.

<sup>581</sup> Rackham, *Acts*, 359.

<sup>582</sup> Acts 16:21, 37, 38. Cf. 22:25–29.

<sup>583</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 1.

<sup>584</sup> Acts 23:11; 25:12 and 27:24.

<sup>585</sup> The dative τῷ πνεύματι is either referential or locative as "in my spirit" or instrumental as "by the Spirit". Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 144–46, 153–55, 158–66; Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 404. The verb δέω is not used of the Holy Spirit's actions elsewhere in the NT.

<sup>586</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 127–130, 436–37.

<sup>587</sup> Steve Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle: The Portrait of Paul in the Miletus Speech and I Thessalonians*, SNTSMS 108 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 88; C. K. Barrett, "Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders", in *God's Christ and His People. Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, ed. Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 107–21, citing 112; Shepherd, *Narrative Function*, 233; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 510; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2861.

<sup>588</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 3:2960–63, 2988–92.

<sup>589</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 234–35, links it to the gospel harvest. See also Keener, *Acts*, 3:2963.

<sup>590</sup> Rius-Camps, "Gradual Awakening", 291. Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:126–27, discusses the use of the secular ἱεροσολύμα in 20:16 changing to religious Ἱερουσαλήμ in 20:22. See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.84, n.289).

Scholars give positive explanations for Paul's rejection of the warnings at Tyre (21:4) and Caesarea (21:8–14). Some argue that New Testament prophecy is conditional rather than authoritative and requires a weighing or sifting.<sup>591</sup> Others conclude that a prophetic divine revelation about future opposition in Jerusalem is wrongly interpreted and applied as meaning that Paul should not go.<sup>592</sup> Alternatively, the warnings are simply informative messages preparing for suffering rather than prohibitions.<sup>593</sup> Tannehill suggests that since the warnings are reported in the narrative rather than a speech, they are one step away from the Holy Spirit's direct expression.<sup>594</sup> Other scholars simply accept the tension of two different Holy Spirit emphases, one warning of future events and the other encouraging Paul.<sup>595</sup>

However, there are narrative hints at Tyre and Caesarea that the Jerusalem journey is in the wrong direction.

First, the warning at Tyre (21:4) is “through the (S)pirit” (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος). This is most probably a reference to the Holy Spirit<sup>596</sup> since the imperfect “they were saying” (ἔλεγον) is a durative action<sup>597</sup> which together with the seven days (21:4)<sup>598</sup> indicates a sustained prophetic message. Also, the connection of the plural subject (“disciples”) of ἔλεγον to the singular “through the Spirit” means it cannot be a human spirit.<sup>599</sup> The message “not to go up into Jerusalem” (μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα) is a clear unambiguous command with the verb ἐπιβαίνω being a vivid

<sup>591</sup> 1 Thess 5:20–21 and 1 John 4:1. Ramsay, *Pictures*, 244; David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 217–22, 264; Witherington, *Acts*, 630–31; Keener, *Acts*, 3:3082–4; Holladay, *Acts*, 405; Kylie Crabbe, “Accepting Prophecy: Paul’s Response to Agabus with Insights from Valerius Maximus and Josephus”, *JSNT* 39 (2016): 188–208.

<sup>592</sup> John Chrysostom. *Hom. Act. 45* (Acts 20:32), (Schaff, 374); Conzelmann, *Acts*, 178; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:263; Rapske, *Roman Custody*, 408. Hur, *Dynamic Reading*, 265

<sup>593</sup> Calvin, *Acts*, 21.4; Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Acts of the Apostles: Ten Lectures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), 106; Polhill, *Acts*, 433.

<sup>594</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:263.

<sup>595</sup> François Bovon, “Der Heilige Geist, die Kirche, und die menschlichen Beziehungen nach der Apostelgeschichte 20,36– 21,16”, in *Lukan in neuer Sicht: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. François Bovon (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1985), 181–204; Lee, *Tragic History*, 255–257; Miller, *Convinced*, 225–229, esp. 227; Shepherd, *Narrative Function*, 235–36; Wenk, “Acts”, 126.

<sup>596</sup> Cf. “through the (Holy) Spirit” at 1:2 and 11:28.

<sup>597</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 131, 442.

<sup>598</sup> Seven days (a week) are symbolically used of a complete period of time, e.g. Gen 1:3–2:3 (creation); Exod 12:14–16 (Passover); Josh 2:6–5, 15. As well as Acts 21:4 it is used in 20:6; 21:27 and 28:14.

<sup>599</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 131, 441–42.



and forceful “not to set foot in”.<sup>600</sup> The unequivocal 21:4 should interpret the ambiguous 19:21.<sup>601</sup>

Second, the warning at Caesarea (21:11) is within the context of the reappearance of Philip from Acts 8. This inclusio gives a sense of closure for the Gentile mission as Paul heads back to Jerusalem.<sup>602</sup> There is a strong sense of a prophetic community with Philip’s four prophesying daughters (21:8–9) echoing 2:17<sup>603</sup> and the reappearance of Agabus the prophet (21:10–11), whose prophecy Paul followed in 11:27–30.<sup>604</sup> Scholars argue that the inaccuracy of the prophecy highlights the difference between divine revelation and human interpretation/application.<sup>605</sup> However, the “binding” of Paul could be a causative expression<sup>606</sup> or I suggest, even possibly metaphorical representing the bondage of Jewish legalism.<sup>607</sup> The Caesarean community and the “we-group” support the prophecy<sup>608</sup> with the positive activities of “encouraging” (παρακαλέω) (21:12)<sup>609</sup> and “persuading” (πείθω) (21:14).<sup>610</sup> Some scholars attempt to justify Paul’s journey to Jerusalem with a parallel to Jesus’s passion.<sup>611</sup> However, the weaknesses are that Paul, like Peter, could be making an unwise self-assertion,<sup>612</sup> the outcome is different since Paul is protected and not put to death,<sup>613</sup> and a parallel to Jesus’s “death and resurrection” does not guarantee Paul is right since it did not for the Old Testament prophet, Jonah.<sup>614</sup> Paul’s willingness to die in Jerusalem (21:13) undermines his

<sup>600</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Newly Discovered Commentary*, ed. Ben Witherington III and Todd D. Still, The Lightfoot Legacy Set vol. 1, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2014), 269.

<sup>601</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 442.

<sup>602</sup> Acts 21:8 and 8:40. Stevens, *Acts*, 243. See previous suggestion in this chapter that the literary-spatial significance of Caesarea in Acts is as gospel mission launchpad (§5.3.3.2, pp.270–71).

<sup>603</sup> Acts 21:9. F. Spencer *Journeying*, 207; Alexander, “Acts”, 1053; Stevens, *Acts*, 444; David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1979), 107–108.

<sup>604</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 371.

<sup>605</sup> It is not Jews (21:11) but Romans (21:33) who bind Paul. Keener, *Acts*, 3:3081–84; Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 107–108; Stevens, *Acts*, 134–136, 444–45.

<sup>606</sup> Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 411–12. Cf. Skinner, *Locating Paul*, 101.

<sup>607</sup> See the use of δέω in this way in Rom 7:1–6.

<sup>608</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 631. Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:255. Stevens, *Acts*, 135.

<sup>609</sup> There is a widespread positive use of παρακαλέω throughout Acts both within the church and also in mission, e.g. 2:40; 9:39; 11:23; 14:22; 15:32; 16:15, 40; 20:1, 2, 12; 21:12; 27:33, 34; 28:14, 20.

<sup>610</sup> See introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124, n.622).

<sup>611</sup> Acts 19:21–28:31 as parallel to Luke 9:51–19:27. Alexander, “Journeyings”, 74; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2862; Maddox, *Purpose*, 66–67, 76–80.

<sup>612</sup> Luke 22:33–34.

<sup>613</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 127; Shauf, *Theology*, 235–37; Holladay, *Acts*, 402.

<sup>614</sup> Jonah 1:3, 10, 17. Matt 12:39–40.

plans for Rome. The concluding “we remained silent” (ἡσυχάσαμεν)<sup>615</sup> and accompanying “let the will of the Lord be done” (21:14) do not necessarily signify approval,<sup>616</sup> but a resignation to God’s will over-ruling a wrong decision.<sup>617</sup>

In spite of the evidence, only a few scholars favour the view that Paul gets it wrong.<sup>618</sup> The general reluctance to be critical of Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles or the author of inspired New Testament epistles is unwarranted.<sup>619</sup> Other factors in “Act V” which support the idea of decline include the absence of the “we-group” after 21:18,<sup>620</sup> the disappearance of the Holy Spirit,<sup>621</sup> the omission of the collection Paul was taking to Jerusalem,<sup>622</sup> the Jerusalem Church elders’ offer of a religious compromise (21:20–25),<sup>623</sup> and Paul’s arrest and imprisonment (21:30–28:31). Some scholars interpret the Lord’s words to Paul at 23:11 as an affirmation of his journey to Jerusalem. However, it can merely be a statement of fact since once again the δεῖ only links to Rome.<sup>624</sup>

Before this, Troas (20:6b–12) forms an inclusio with 16:8–9 as the beginning and ending of Paul’s Macedonian mission.<sup>625</sup> However, on this occasion the journey is a return rather than a forward mission advance. Nothing is made of the ancient historical connections,<sup>626</sup> but the literary-spatial focus is on a symbolic<sup>627</sup> presentation of the Troas Church with positive and negative features linked to the rest of Acts.

Positive connections include the breaking of bread motif (20:7, 11),<sup>628</sup> the

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<sup>615</sup> BDAG, ἡσυχάζω, 440, that the silence is more about resignation than a positive declaration. The other two uses in Acts 11:18 and 22:2 are both references to the silencing of potential opposition. This suggests that the use in 21:14 is similar.

<sup>616</sup> Spencer, *Journeying*, 207.

<sup>617</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 446.

<sup>618</sup> Blaiklock, *Acts*, 168; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:77; James Montgomery Boice, *Acts: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 355–370; Stevens, *Acts*, 124–43.

<sup>619</sup> Other authors like Peter and Mark are not presented as exemplary in Scripture. Luke may have attempted to hide Paul’s faults, but it is unrealistic to think that none are present and hinted at in Acts, e.g. 15:36–41; 16:3, 6, 7, 18, 37; 21:26. As Stevens, *Acts*, 334, helpfully points out, “regardless of the Renaissance portraits picturing Paul with a halo, readers of Acts need to remember Paul is, after all, a human being”.

<sup>620</sup> See discussion in Chapter Three (§3.3.3.6, p.160).

<sup>621</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.4, pp.167–68).

<sup>622</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.3.6, p.161).

<sup>623</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.3.6, p.161).

<sup>624</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.3.5, p.159).

<sup>625</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 427.

<sup>626</sup> See previously in this chapter (§5.3.2.7, p.260, n.348).

<sup>627</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 358.

<sup>628</sup> Acts 2:42; 2:46; 27:35. Witherington, *Acts*, 160–61, discusses whether the breaking of bread refers to an ordinary meal, or more likely the Lord’s Supper.

upper room (20:8),<sup>629</sup> many lamps symbolising spiritual light (20:8),<sup>630</sup> the resurrection of Eutychus (20:9–12),<sup>631</sup> and “encouragement” (20:12).<sup>632</sup> Negative features include the Jewish Sabbath (20:7),<sup>633</sup> an absence of prayer,<sup>634</sup> Paul speaking too long,<sup>635</sup> no details of his speech,<sup>636</sup> the midnight darkness (20:7),<sup>637</sup> the sleepiness, the fall and death of Eutychus (20:10),<sup>638</sup> and no mention of the Holy Spirit.<sup>639</sup>

The journey to Jerusalem includes various locations. Miletus (20:17–38)<sup>640</sup> is a literary *farewell* ending deliberately separated from Ephesus (20:16). Tyre (21:3b–6)<sup>641</sup> is where Paul receives a prophetic warning. Ptolemais (21:7) focuses on a stay with the brothers. Caesarea, appears in “Act IV” as a recurring location.<sup>642</sup> However, here it is a stage on the return to Jerusalem, rather than being a springboard for Gentile mission role as anticipated from Acts 10.<sup>643</sup>

*The literary-temporal component of “Act IV”* has frequent references to specific literary time periods.<sup>644</sup> These give a literary-temporal movement for the mission advance and decline in contrast to “Acts I, II, and III” which use literary-temporal unspecificity to mark *thematic/paradigmatic* development. Story time exceeds discourse time in “Act IV” with a year and a half at Corinth (18:11), three months and two years at Ephesus (19:8, 10)<sup>645</sup> later extended to three years (20:31),

<sup>629</sup> See Chapter Four (4.3.3.1, p.199, n.240).

<sup>630</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.246, n.188) for theme of light in Acts. Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 3:2968–70.

<sup>631</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 276. The resurrection theme in Acts’ Middle is summarised with the mission message at the end of this chapter (§5.4, p.295, n.763).

<sup>632</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.609, n.608) for encouragement theme in Acts.

<sup>633</sup> τῇ μᾶ τῶν σαββάτων (one/first of the Sabbaths). Oliver, *Torah Praxis*, 222–31, as a Jewish reckoning for Saturday evening/ Sunday morning.

<sup>634</sup> The first occurrence in Acts of an upper room without prayer. See 1:13 (prayer for reformation of Israel as the mission instrument and possible Holy Spirit empowerment); 9:36–41 (prayer for resurrection); and 10:9 (prayer that leads to vision re the Gentile mission).

<sup>635</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 391; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:101.

<sup>636</sup> Morgenthaler, *Lukanische*, 2.73.

<sup>637</sup> See list of Acts’ references to night previously in this chapter (§5.3.2.8, p.263, n.384).

<sup>638</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:102–104; Stevens, *Acts*, 428.

<sup>639</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 392.

<sup>640</sup> There is no mention of Miletus being a commercial port with four harbours and large markets resulting in economic prosperity. Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.6; McRay, *Paul*, 201–205; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1231–3.

<sup>641</sup> There is no mention of Tyre’s OT history (Josh 19:29; 2 Sam 5:11; 24:7; 1 Kgs 5:1–11; 2 Chr 2:3–16), its strong prophetic denunciations (Isa 23:1–18; Jer 25:22, 27:1–11; Ezek 26:1–28:19; 29:18–20; Joel 3:4–8; Amos 1:9, 10) or its prominence as equal to Jerusalem in population and commercial power. Wallace B. Fleming, *The History of Tyre* (New York: AMS, 1966).

<sup>642</sup> Acts 18:22; 21:8–14.

<sup>643</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.3.2, pp.270–71).

<sup>644</sup> See Appendix IV, p.390.

<sup>645</sup> Cf. Paul’s imprisonment at Caesarea (24:27) and his mission at Rome (28:30–31). Keener, *Acts*, 4:3763.

three months in Greece (20:3), seven days at Troas (20:6b–12);<sup>646</sup> and a number of days at Caesarea (21:10). In Acts such time periods suggest the relative importance of the activity in a particular location, e.g. the three years at Ephesus confirm the mission zenith<sup>647</sup> of Paul's longest stay at one place in Acts.<sup>648</sup> Paul's stays get progressively longer<sup>649</sup> suggesting either increasing success<sup>650</sup> or possibly, within an overall mission decline, a reluctance to move quickly towards Rome. "Act IV" also has two external temporal connections.<sup>651</sup>

*The character component of "Act IV"* focuses on Paul as the main character following the transition from Peter completed in "Act III". However, Paul's mission advance is replaced with a decline involving peaks and troughs. At points Paul is uncharacteristically less prominent and especially during times of civil disorder.<sup>652</sup>

Apollos (18:24–28) is a transitional figure as a possible Jew, a disciple of John the Baptist, or a Christian,<sup>653</sup> from Alexandria.<sup>654</sup> He is a forerunner to Paul<sup>655</sup> and the Ephesian twelve disciples (19:1–7).<sup>656</sup> Scholars debate whether these enigmatic disciples are Jews who are disciples of John the Baptist,<sup>657</sup> believers since

<sup>646</sup> See the previous suggestion about the symbolic nature of the seven days (§5.3.4.2, p.282, n.598).

<sup>647</sup> The emphasis is increased by the literary size, the last outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Paul's final missionary activity in Acts. Shauf, *Theology*, 87.

<sup>648</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 572.

<sup>649</sup> See one year at (Syrian) Antioch (11:26); eighteen months at Corinth (18:11) and three years at Ephesus (20:31). Holladay, *Acts*, 310.

<sup>650</sup> Rius-Camps and Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:379.

<sup>651</sup> Acts 18:2. Claudius's expulsion of Jews from Rome in AD 49 which hints at a clash between Judaism and Rome possibly closes Paul's mission to the West. Cf. Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.4; Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 296; Ramsay, *Traveller*, 254; Witherington, *Acts*, 539–544. Acts 18:12. Gallio's proconsulship of Achaia (18:12) in AD 51–52. Cf. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Paul and Gallio", *JBL* 112 (1993): 315–317; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:870–71; Witherington, *Acts*, 551–52.

<sup>652</sup> Acts 17:5–8; 18:12–17; 19:23–41. Cf. 18:24–28 where Paul is absent from the story of Apollos.

<sup>653</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 41–57; Haenchen, *Acts*, 554–56; Witherington, *Acts*, 564–67. Debate on whether ζέων τῷ πνεύματι (18:25) indicates the Holy Spirit (Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 364; Witherington, *Acts*, 564; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:888; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2807–808; Turner, *Power*, 389); or human zeal/enthusiasm (Pervo, *Acts*, 459; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:26; Parsons, *Acts*, 262; Johnson, *Acts*, 335).

<sup>654</sup> Nothing is made of the fact that Alexandria in Egypt is the second largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome. Clinton E. Arnold, *Acts*, ZIBBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 187–189.

<sup>655</sup> Spencer, *Acts*, 183–84, like John to Jesus and Philip to Peter. Cf. Treblico, *Early Christians*, 115–125.

<sup>656</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:885; Peterson, *Acts*, 523.

<sup>657</sup> Treblico, *Early Christians*, 127–134.

this is the normal use of μαθητάς in Acts,<sup>658</sup> and the elders appearing at Miletus.<sup>659</sup> They receive the last Holy Spirit outpouring in Acts. As an original suggestion, I propose this is the formation/empowerment of a mission instrument (or at least the leadership of it) at Ephesus similar to the apostles in Jerusalem in Acts 1. Both Acts 1 and 19 refer to John the Baptist,<sup>660</sup> the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,<sup>661</sup> and the Twelve.<sup>662</sup> Bruce is right that the Twelve in Acts 19 “were probably the nucleus of the Ephesian Church”,<sup>663</sup> and Spencer that “as the Jerusalem apostles could not hope to continue the prophetic mission of John and Jesus without the Spirit’s power, neither can the twelve Ephesian disciples”.<sup>664</sup> The significant number twelve supports the connection and is explored further in Chapter Six in relation to the restoration of the kingdom of God.<sup>665</sup>

Other minor characters also become part of the mission instrument theme by being partners alongside Paul. They include Silas, who replaces Barnabas; Timothy, a disciple from Lystra;<sup>666</sup> Aquila and Priscilla, who are Jews from Rome;<sup>667</sup> and Paul’s seven companions, perhaps as a representative number (20:4).<sup>668</sup> The reappearance of Philip (21:8)<sup>669</sup> and Agabus (21:10)<sup>670</sup> recalls earlier events in the mission advance. Jesus confirms his ongoing direction of the mission with a rare appearance in a night-vision to Paul at Corinth (18:9–10).<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 556; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 363; Pereira, *Ephesus*, 85–88, 90–92, 107–108; Parsons, *Acts*, 265. Also Shauf, *Theology*, 146–47, notes that 19:1 is the only one lacking the definite article and using τίνας, but this does not change the meaning of μαθητάς; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromily and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromily, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936–77), 4.4.62, argues that 19:5 continues the story of John’s baptism.

<sup>659</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 254.

<sup>660</sup> Acts 1:5; 19:3–4.

<sup>661</sup> Acts 1:5, 8; 19:6. Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:13.

<sup>662</sup> Acts 1:13–26; 19:7.

<sup>663</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 365.

<sup>664</sup> Spencer, *Journeying*, 194.

<sup>665</sup> See Chapter Six (§6.5.1.3, p.348).

<sup>666</sup> Acts 17:14; 18:5; 20:4.

<sup>667</sup> Acts 18:1–3, 18, 19, 26. Keener, *Acts*, 3:2711–21, 2809–11. For other references to the role of women in Acts see 1:14; 2:17, 18; 5:7–10 (Sapphira); 5:14; 6:1; 8:3, 12; 9:2; 9:36–42 (Dorcas); 12:12 (Mary, mother of John Mark); 12:13–15 (Rhoda); 13:50; 16:13–15 (Lydia); 17:4, 12, 34 (Damaris); 18:2, 3, 18, 19, 26 (Priscilla); 21:9 (Philip’s four daughters); 22:4, 25:13 (Bernice). Keener, *Acts*, 1:597–638, for Luke’s perspective on women and gender concluding 638, that he is one of the more progressive voices of his era.

<sup>668</sup> Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus. There is possibly a thematic link with the Seven in 6:5, 21:8 and a contrast with seven sons of Sceva in 19:14–16. Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:90, suggest that these are a representative number for the purpose of Paul’s collection for Jerusalem linked to the seventy nations in Jewish tradition. The seven men show spatial diversity including Beroea, Thessalonica, Derbe, Lystra and Asia. Pereira, *Ephesus*, 235, comments on the seven as signifying the fruits of Paul’s mission.

<sup>669</sup> From Acts 8:5–40.

<sup>670</sup> From Acts 11:27–30.

<sup>671</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.274, n.515) for a list of visions in Acts.

The proposal that the “we-group” passages are important moments of literary shape which reveal missional significance<sup>672</sup> is demonstrated at 20:5–15 and 21:1–18. The “we-group’s” extended absence (16:18–20:4) contributes to the ambiguity caused by an undertow of overall decline from 15:1 onwards.<sup>673</sup> They reappear still at Philippi (20:5, cf. 16:7)<sup>674</sup> and accompany Paul to Troas (20:6b–12), perhaps hoping that another vision like 16:8–10 will redirect mission. The “we-group’s” reluctance regarding the Jerusalem journey as not part of God’s mission plan<sup>675</sup> is suggested by their delay over the Passover (20:6),<sup>676</sup> their disappearance after the statement that Paul is in a hurry to reach Jerusalem (20:16), and their silent presence at Miletus (20:17–37).<sup>677</sup> Although the “we-group” reappears accompanying Paul to Jerusalem (21:1), their disapproval is suggested by an attempt to dissuade Paul (21:12),<sup>678</sup> their sudden disappearance soon after meeting the Jerusalem Church elders (21:18),<sup>679</sup> and their subsequent absence at the events before and during Paul’s imprisonment at Jerusalem and Caesarea lasting over two years (21:19–26:32).<sup>680</sup>

*The speech component of “Act IV”* includes Paul’s two speeches at Athens (17:22b–31) and Miletus (20:18b–35). Scholars give the Athens speech considerable scholarly attention<sup>681</sup> because it expands the mission message for Gentile

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<sup>672</sup> For the possible use of the four “we-group” passages as literary shape devices revealing missional significance see the introduction in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, pp.98–101); Chapter Five for 16:10–17 (§5.3.2.8, p.261) and 20:5–15 (§5.3.4.2, p.284); Chapter Three for 21:1–18 (§3.3.3.6, p.160); and 27:1–28:16 (§3.3.2.6, p.149).

<sup>673</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter on Decline with the Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35) (§5.3.2.4, pp.249–54), Hints of Further Decline from (Syrian) Antioch to Troas (15:36–16:9) (§5.3.2.7, pp.257–60), “Act IV” (17:1–21:14) (§5.3.4.2, pp.276–90), and esp. 19:21 (pp.279–81).

<sup>674</sup> This assumes that the “we-group” remained at Philippi. Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:949; Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 424.

<sup>675</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:98–99. Stevens, *Acts*, 426.

<sup>676</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:98–99.

<sup>677</sup> Acts 21:1 confirms that the “we-group” were present at Miletus although they are not explicitly mentioned in the story. Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:127.

<sup>678</sup> See previous discussion at p.283.

<sup>679</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:190.

<sup>680</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:256. Rather than cowardice as suggested by Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 121.

<sup>681</sup> Bertil Gärtner, *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation* (Lund: Gleerup, 1955); N.D. Stonehouse, “The Areopagus Address”, in *Paul Before the Areopagus and Other New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 1–40; Hans Conzelmann, “The Address of Paul on the Areopagus”, in Keck and Martyn, *Luke-Acts*, 217–30; C. K. Barrett, “Paul’s Speech on the Areopagus”, in *New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World: Essays in Honour of Harry Sawyer*, ed. Mark E. Glasswell and Edward W. Fasholé-Luke (London: SPCK, 1974), 69–77; F. F. Bruce, “Paul and the Athenians”, *ExpTim* 88 (1976): 8–12; Rowe, *Upside Down*, 27–41; Josh W. Jipp, “Paul’s Areopagus Speech of Acts 17:16–34 as *Both Critique and Propaganda*”, *JBL* 131 (2012): 567–88.

pagans<sup>682</sup> from the “curtain-raiser” at Lystra (14:15b–17).<sup>683</sup> In order to adapt to the Greek culture without losing the gospel message,<sup>684</sup> the speech combines a civil background,<sup>685</sup> theological themes of God and humankind,<sup>686</sup> philosophical concepts,<sup>687</sup> and gospel emphases of repentance, resurrection and judgement.

The Miletus speech is Paul’s only speech in Acts to an exclusively church audience.<sup>688</sup> In keeping with an overall sense of decline, it is Paul’s farewell speech at the end of his Gentile mission as a free man.<sup>689</sup> It endorses his activity as a mission instrument (20:18–27, 33–35), declares his innocence of the blood of all (20:26),<sup>690</sup> and instructs the Ephesian elders to continue the mission instrument role (20:28–32).<sup>691</sup> The speech creates uncertainty about the future<sup>692</sup> and has possible hints of Paul’s death.<sup>693</sup>

*The intertextual component of “Act IV”* has no Old Testament quotations. Craig Keener suggests this is because of their inappropriateness for Gentile mission.<sup>694</sup> This seems feasible with two Greek philosophical quotations in the Athens speech.<sup>695</sup> However, a mission decline is a more likely reason since the Old

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<sup>682</sup> Parsons, *Acts*, 199, 200, points out the drastic contrast between Lystra and Athens, with the latter being the more sophisticated, cultural and philosophical centre of the ancient world; Padilla, *Acts*, 186, downplays the differences by showing that Lystra has more Greek philosophy and Athens less than is usually argued; John Proctor (in conversation at Cambridge, October, 2011) suggested that the attention is perhaps also due to a preference with its irenic and calm style which is akin to Western Christianity, rather than the more dramatic and confrontational one which is normal for Paul in the rest of Acts; Muthuraj, “Theology of God”, 123–76, sees the speech as correcting Greek idolatry and philosophy.

<sup>683</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 41; Béchard, *Outside the Walls*, 355–431; Blevins, “Acts 13–19”, 442.

<sup>684</sup> Gärtner, *The Areopagus Speech*, 66–72; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:825.

<sup>685</sup> Acts 17:22–23. Bruce W. Winter, “On Introducing Gods to Athens: An Alternative Reading of Acts 17:8–20”, *TynBul* 47 (1996): 71–90.

<sup>686</sup> Acts 17:24–27. Pervo, *Acts*, 146–48, esp. 148; Witherington, *Acts*, 517–35; Bruce, “Paul and the Athenians”; Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 172–81; Loescher, “Separating Outreach”, 181–82. Padilla, *Acts*, 186; Holladay, *Acts*, 337.

<sup>687</sup> Acts 17:28. Keener, *Acts*, 3:2614–17.

<sup>688</sup> However, it is not the only speech in Acts to a church audience (see Chapter Two, §2.2.5.7, p.107, n.467). Ramsay, *Pictures*, 239, argues that Luke selects the speech (address) to mark the end of a period for which the speech at Pisidian Antioch formed the beginning.

<sup>689</sup> Duane F. Watson, “Paul’s Speech to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:17–38): Epideictic Rhetoric of Farewell”, in Watson, *Persuasive Artistry*, 184–208, citing 185. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, 610–616; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 674; William S. Kurz, *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 16–51; Lee, *Tragic History*, 246–47; Alexander, “Acts”, 1053; Holladay, *Acts*, 394.

<sup>690</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter on 18:6 (§5.3.4.2, p.277–78).

<sup>691</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 354.

<sup>692</sup> Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, 78–9.

<sup>693</sup> Acts 20:22–25; 20:29 and 20:38. Holladay, *Acts*, 401; Wall, “Acts”, 283.

<sup>694</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1:479.

<sup>695</sup> Acts 17:28a, “for in him we live and move and are” is probably from the Greek philosophy of Epimenides of Crete (cf. Rothschild, *Paul in Athens*, 7–24). Acts 17:28b, “for we are also offspring of him” is from Aratus of Cilicia (cf. Aratus, *Phaen*, 5. Keener, *Acts*, 3:2659–60).

Testament quotations are absent even a renewed Jewish emphasis.<sup>696</sup> The Miletus speech is a prime candidate for an Old Testament quotation, but only has a concluding agraphon of Jesus not found in the Gospels.<sup>697</sup>

The literary shape of the entire Acts' Middle ("Acts III, II and IV") reveals the missional significance of Acts' Middle.

#### 5.4 Missional Significance of Acts' Middle

Acts' Middle has two mission advances and declines arranged around the central section of Paul's first approach to purely pagan Gentiles at Lystra (14:8–20a).<sup>698</sup> The first mission advance is seen in "Act II" (8:4–11:26) and the first half of "Act III" (11:27–14:7). The first mission decline appears in the second half of "Act III" with the church's resistance to the Gentile mission resulting in the ambiguities of the Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35) and beyond (15:36–16:9). The second mission advance begins with Philippi (16:12–40) and reaches a fresh pinnacle at Ephesus (18:1b–19:20) before the second decline of Paul's return to Jerusalem (19:21f).

Acts' Middle is a *pivot* for the various aspects of missional significance noted in Chapter Two.<sup>699</sup>

(1) *The mission instrument*, chosen<sup>700</sup> and commanded<sup>701</sup> as in 1:2,<sup>702</sup> transitions from Peter to Saul/Paul as witnesses<sup>703</sup> alongside Jesus's example<sup>704</sup> by the Holy Spirit (10:36–38).<sup>705</sup> The mission instrument broadens to include Philip and the Samaritans (8:5–25). Saul's conversion-commission (9:1–19) has the important features (9:15) of a mission instrument as a "chosen vessel" (σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς)<sup>706</sup> "to carry my name" (having a missional connotation)<sup>707</sup> to the mission target of Gentiles

<sup>696</sup> Acts 17:2–3; 17:11; 18:4, 19, 26, 28; 19:8.

<sup>697</sup> Acts 20:35. Hornick and Parsons, *Acts*, 220–21.

<sup>698</sup> See Diagram IV, p.71.

<sup>699</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, pp.118–27).

<sup>700</sup> Acts 9:15 uses election (ἐκλογή) of mission rather than salvation. Cf. ἐκλέγομαι (1:2, 24; 6:5; 13:17; 15:7, 22, 25), προχειροτονέω (10:41), ἐπιλέγω (15:40), and προχειρίζω (3:20; 22:14; 26:16). Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 21–25, links Israel's election with mission. Cf. Legrand, *Unity*, 8–14; Wright, *Mission of God*, 191–264.

<sup>701</sup> Commanded (13:47). Also 17:15 and 10:42 (παραγγέλλω).

<sup>702</sup> Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 147. See Chapter Four, §4.3.1.5, pp.182–83.

<sup>703</sup> Acts 8:25; 10:39; 10:42; 13:31; 18:5; 20:21, 24, 26. Wilson, *Gentiles*, 111–12.

<sup>704</sup> The Lord witnessing in 14:3 and 14:17 and God witnessing in 15:8

<sup>705</sup> Joseph Koech, "The Spirit Motif in Luke 4:14–30; Acts 1:8 and the Church Today", *AJET* 27 (2008): 155–176.

<sup>706</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 243. Keener, *Acts*, 2:1655–56, suggests that the references to σκεῦος in Peter's vision soon afterward (10:11, 16; 11:5) make it possible that Paul's status as a "vessel" is connected to the bringing in of the Gentiles. See Chapter Two, §2.2.6.4, p.119, n.562.

<sup>707</sup> Tabb, "Suffering", 164–65.



(notably named before the Jews),<sup>708</sup> kings (although Paul only appears in Acts before King Agrippa),<sup>709</sup> and the people of Israel, with mission suffering being the expected outcome.<sup>710</sup> Paul is the prime example of a mission instrument (20:18–27, 33–35). Divine causality and human agency combine in the *missio Dei* at 13:47.<sup>711</sup> God works through the mission proclamation so that it becomes powerful.<sup>712</sup>

In Acts' Middle, Israel, as a nation and a remnant, struggles to accept its role as a worldwide mission instrument. The Jews are often resistant to Paul's mission.<sup>713</sup> Even Paul himself focuses on Jews<sup>714</sup> in his attempts to persuade them of the Gentile mission. In doing this his own Jewishness comes to the fore.<sup>715</sup> Harold Dollar is right that "the theological challenge of the Gentile mission is not the reluctance of the Gentiles to respond to the gospel, but the reluctance of Jews to preach to them".<sup>716</sup>

More positively there is further evidence for the mission instrument. The mission develops with the Jews travelling to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and (Syrian) Antioch (11:19–20).<sup>717</sup> Appropriately for the mission development, the disciples at (Syrian) Antioch are called Χριστιανοί for the first time (11:26).<sup>718</sup> As proposed in Chapter Three, the term has a missional meaning of "little Christs" who are anointed by the Holy Spirit for mission.<sup>719</sup> The double reference in Acts forms a literary inclusio of Paul's introduction to Gentile mission (11:26) and the completion of his mission recovery (26:28).<sup>720</sup> Another term suggesting the mission instrument is ἀπόστολοι used twice of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra and Iconium.<sup>721</sup> The use of servant terminology (δοῦλος and διακονία) of Paul and Barnabas in Acts' Middle also implies

<sup>708</sup> Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 105.

<sup>709</sup> Acts 25:13–26:32. The prophecy about kings does not resolve the ambiguity over Paul's return to Jerusalem since God sometimes fulfils his predictions through human mistakes. Cf. Acts 4:28. Chapter Six links 9:15 to the kingdom of God (see §6.5.2, pp.352–53).

<sup>710</sup> See following summary of mission suffering in Acts' Middle, p.303.

<sup>711</sup> Skinner, "Acts", 364.

<sup>712</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 316.

<sup>713</sup> Acts 9:1–2, 23–24, 29; 12:1–4; 13:50; 14:2, 5, 19; 17:5, 13; 18:6, 12.

<sup>714</sup> Acts 9:20–22, 29; 13:5, 14, 42; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1–2, 10; 18:4, 19; 19:8, 10, 17; 20:21.

<sup>715</sup> Acts 16:3; 18:18; 20:16. Byerly, "Narrative Legitimation", 10–17, shows that a focus on Jew-Gentile issues exists throughout Acts and even in the so-called Gentile section of Acts 16–19; Legrand, *Unity*, 93; Stevens, *Acts*, 394; Roger Tomes, "Why Did Paul Get His Hair Cut? (Acts 18:18; 21.23–24)", in Tuckett, *Luke's Literary Achievement*, 188–197; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2780–87.

<sup>716</sup> Dollar, *Biblical-Missiological*, 184.

<sup>717</sup> Marshall, "Who Were the Evangelists?" 257; Mallen, *Transformation*, 192; Stenschke, "Mission", 72.

<sup>718</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 84–89, 99–111, 275–76; Holladay, *Acts*, 246.

<sup>719</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.3.4, p.157).

<sup>720</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 495.

<sup>721</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.1.2, pp.239–40).

that they are God's mission instrument.<sup>722</sup> Paul's speech at Pisidian Antioch, and especially the Isaiah 49:6 quotation (13:47), confirms that Israel as the people of God are to be a mission instrument to bring worldwide salvation.<sup>723</sup>

The mission instrument extends to the church as a remnant of Israel. John Court suggests that water-baptism in Acts is a marker for successive stages in mission success.<sup>724</sup> However, as indicating incorporation into the church it could equally relate to the formation of the mission instrument. Although the *ἐκκλησία* appears most in the *climax* of Acts' Middle<sup>725</sup> and the activity of prayer is frequent,<sup>726</sup> there is no mention of a church functioning as a mission instrument. The proposed explanation that the absence is because mission was widespread<sup>727</sup> seems unlikely for such a major theme. I propose a better solution is that the emphasis throughout Acts remains on an invitation and ensuing struggle for Israel, as a nation and remnant-church, to become a mission instrument. Internal problems re-emerge (20:29–32)<sup>728</sup> before the church largely disappears in Acts' Ending.<sup>729</sup>

(2) *The mission target* progresses through Samaritans (8:1–25), an Ethiopian (8:26–40), Gentile God-fearers,<sup>730</sup> Greeks,<sup>731</sup> and pagan Gentiles.<sup>732</sup> However, it is difficult to discern between those invited to be a mission instrument and the mission itself. Most scholars interpret Ἑλληνιστῆς at (Syrian) Antioch (11:20) as Gentiles in

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<sup>722</sup> See δοῦλος (slave or subject) at 16:17 (Paul and Barnabas described as slaves of the Most High) and cognate verb δοῦλέω at 20:19 (Paul serving the Lord in Asia). Also διακονία at 12:25 (describing Barnabas and Saul's relief mission to Jerusalem); 20:24 (describing Paul's Gentile mission), and cognate verb διακονέω 19:22 (of Timothy and Erastus deaconing to Paul). See the introduction to this theme in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.119, n.564).

<sup>723</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.2.1, pp.246–47).

<sup>724</sup> John M. Court, *Reading the New Testament*, NTR (London: Routledge, 1997), 37, as in Jerusalem (2:41), Samaria (8:12), Caesarea (10:48), Philippi (16:15, 33), Corinth (18:8), Ephesus (19:5), and also retrospectively Damascus (22:16).

<sup>725</sup> Sixteen times in Acts' Middle spread over "Act II" (9:31; 11:22, 26), "Act III" (12:1, 5; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:3, 4, 22, 41; 16:5), "Act IV" (18:22; 20:17, 28) in comparison to four times in "Act I" (5:11; 7:38; 8:1, 3) and none in "Act V". The three uses in relation to crowd in the Ephesian riot (19:32, 39, 41) suggest a move towards a secularisation of the term. Stevens, *Acts*, 14–15.

<sup>726</sup> See "Act II" (8:15; 9:11, 40; 10:4, 9, 30–31; 11:5), "Act III" (12:5, 12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:13, 16, 25), "Act IV" (20:36; 21:5) compared with "Act I" (1:14, 24; 2:42; 3:1; 6:4, 6) and "Act V" (22:17; 28:8).

<sup>727</sup> Bosch, *Witness to the World*, 81.

<sup>728</sup> Legrand, *Unity*, 103–104.

<sup>729</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.4, p.165).

<sup>730</sup> These occur predominantly in Acts' Middle as those who "fear (φοβέω) God" at 10:2, 22; 13:16, 26; those who "show reverence/worship" (σέβω) at 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7; and "proselytes" (προσῆλυτοι) at 13:43 (cf. 2:10 and 6:5).

<sup>731</sup> These occur predominantly in Acts' Middle as Ἕλλην at 14:1; 18:4; 19:10, 17; 20:21 (cf. 21:28).

<sup>732</sup> Sergius Paulus (13:12), Pisidian Antioch (13:48), lame man at Lystra (14:8–10), Philippian jailor (16:33), Dionysius and Damaris (17:34).

contrast to Jews (11:19) and conclude it is “a momentous step forward”<sup>733</sup> and “the most important chapter in the history of Christian mission”.<sup>734</sup> This may overstate the case, since they are possibly Gentile God-fearers within the Jewish synagogues.<sup>735</sup> Francis Pereira suggests that the focus on Jews and Gentiles at Ephesus (19:10)<sup>736</sup> creates a point midway between Jerusalem (Jews) and Rome (Gentiles). However, this seems unlikely since the Jewish focus continues throughout Acts’ Middle<sup>737</sup> and even beyond this at Rome (28:17–27). The turning passages of 13:46 and 18:6 are not a change of target, but rather Paul, as the remnant, exemplifying the mission instrument function expected of the nation. This is reinforced by the mission thrust of the quotations from Psalm 2:7 (13:33b), Isaiah 55:3 (13:34b), Habakkuk 1:5 (13:41), and especially Isaiah 49:6 (13:47b).

(3) *The mission message* at the *pivot* of Paul’s Lystra speech (14:15b–17) is about the one true “living God” (θεὸν ζῶντα)<sup>738</sup> as Creator of the world and Sovereign over the nations. This suggests a different mission approach to pagan Gentiles<sup>739</sup> in keeping with the *missio Dei* for the whole earth. Athens (17:22–31) is another example of this approach. However, the actual approach is less radical than suggested since Paul’s Lystra speech has gospel hints<sup>740</sup> and is probably unfinished; the Athens speech has a theological framework,<sup>741</sup> critiques pagan religion,<sup>742</sup> and is

<sup>733</sup> E.g. Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 225.

<sup>734</sup> Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation*, 145–46. Cf. Le Grys, *Preaching to the Nations*, 88–90; Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 165; Goheen, *Light to the Nations*, 147–51.

<sup>735</sup> The previous use of the term for Jews at 6:1 creates ambiguity at 11:20 maybe in keeping with the overlap of Jew and Gentile. The variant “Ἑλλήν” in some MSS more clearly indicates Greeks. For discussion see Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 99–100; Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1:780–797; C. F. D. Moule, “Once More, Who Were the Hellenists?” *ExpTim* 70 (4, 1959): 100–102; Craig C. Hill, “Acts 6.1–8.4: Division or Diversity?”, in Witherington, *History, Literature, and Society*, 129–53; Witherington, *Acts*, 240–247. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 340–42; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 2:27–31. Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 60–103; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1253–60.

<sup>736</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 258.

<sup>737</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.231, n.28) for Jewish focus references. Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:206; Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 150, argues that each major phase of Paul’s ministry begins in the Jewish synagogue.

<sup>738</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 478.

<sup>739</sup> Wilson, *Gentiles*, 215–18; Wight, *Mission of God*, 394–420; Loescher, “Separating Outreach”, 180–81, where I engage with Roy Joslin, *Urban Harvest* (Welwyn: EP, 1982), who uses Acts 14 as a model for evangelism amongst the working class; Peterson, *Acts*, 411, argues for pre-evangelism establishing a biblical foundation in a culture which has wrong presuppositions about God and human nature.

<sup>740</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.1.1, pp.235–38).

<sup>741</sup> Loescher, “Separating Outreach”, 181–82; Padilla, *Acts*, 186; Holladay, *Acts*, 337. See previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.4.2, pp.288–89).

<sup>742</sup> Conrad H. Gempf, “Athens, Paul at”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph. P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 51–54.

enclosed within references to Jesus and the resurrection;<sup>743</sup> there is no evidence that Paul abandoned a new approach because of a lack of success;<sup>744</sup> and Peter also refers to God's sovereignty over the nations in connection with Christ (10:34–36) and the prayer of 4:24 highlights the Creator theme.<sup>745</sup>

God is integral to the mission message in Acts' Middle,<sup>746</sup> though less so than in Acts' Beginning. The speeches report God's present activity, his past activity in Israel, his activity linked to Jesus's past, or have God as an object. There are nineteen references in "Act II", with the majority in the Cornelius section,<sup>747</sup> twenty-two in "Act III",<sup>748</sup> and eight in "Act IV" with only two the other side of 19:21.<sup>749</sup> Even with the important missional reference to "the Most High God" (16:17),<sup>750</sup> a literary-critical perspective suggests that the decrease in references is possibly due to a mission decline.

The mission message in Acts' Middle also includes Jesus. However, the central speech (14:15b–17) strikingly omits to mention him. This could be because of the need to establish monotheism over polytheistic idolatry.<sup>751</sup> Jesus is less prevalent with seven mentions in "Act III",<sup>752</sup> compared to thirteen in "Act II"<sup>753</sup> and sixteen in "Act IV".<sup>754</sup> It is possible that the reduction reflects the God-centred focus of the

<sup>743</sup> Acts 17:18 and 31 (cf. 32). Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 219–20.

<sup>744</sup> As suggested by Ramsay, *Traveller*, 252; F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 246. For refutation see Keener, *Acts*, 3:2677.

<sup>745</sup> Mallen, "Genesis", 80.

<sup>746</sup> Muthuraj, "Theology of God", 6, particularly in speeches to Gentiles at Samaria (8:4–24), Caesarea (10:3–32, 44–48), Lystra (14:8–18), Athens (17:16–34), and Ephesus (19:23–41).

<sup>747</sup> Acts 8:21 (object); 10:2 (twice) (object), 4 (object), 15 (present activity in a voice), 22 (object), 28 (present activity in a report), 31 (present activity in angel's declaration), 34 (present activity in a speech), 38 (Jesus), 40 (Jesus), 41 (apostles), 42 (Jesus), 46 (object); 11:9 (present activity in a report), 17 (twice) (present activity in a report and object), 18 (twice) (object and present activity in a report). Walton, "The Acts – of God?", 294, notes the curious phenomenon of an absence of God from Acts 9 (also absent from Acts 1 and 25).

<sup>748</sup> Acts 12:5 (object), 23 (object); 13:16 (object), 17 (Israel), 21 (Israel), 23 (Jesus), 26 (object), 30 (Jesus), 33 (Israel/Jesus), 37 (Jesus); 14:27 (present activity in a report); 15:4 (present activity in a report), 7 (present activity in a speech), 8 (present activity in a speech), 10 (object), 12 (present activity in a report), 14 (present activity in a report), 19 (object); 16:10 (present activity in a conclusion), 14 (object), 25 (object), 34 (object).

<sup>749</sup> Acts 17:24 (OT present activity in a speech), 27 (present activity in a speech), 30 (present activity in a speech); 18:7 (object), 13 (object); 19:11 (present activity); 20:21 (object), 32 (object).

<sup>750</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§5.3.2.8, p.262).

<sup>751</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:2158–59.

<sup>752</sup> Acts 13:23 (object), 33 (past); 15:11 (object), 26 (object); 16:17 (Spirit of Jesus), 18 (object), 31 (object).

<sup>753</sup> Acts 8:12 (object), 16 (object), 35 (object); 9:5 (present activity), 17 (past), 20 (object), 27 (object), 9:34 (present activity in a speech); 10:36 (object), 38 (past), 48 (object); 11:17 (object), 20 (object).

<sup>754</sup> Acts 17:3 (object), 7 (object), 18 (object); 18:5 (object), 25 (object), 28 (object); 19:4 (object), 5 (object), 13 (twice, object), 15 (object), 17 (object); 20:21 (object), 24 (present activity), 35 (past); 21:13 (object).

Gentile mission. This mission is also underlined by the fact that Jesus is referred to as Lord,<sup>755</sup> which beyond a Jewish connection has possible connotations in relation to Gentile rulers,<sup>756</sup> rather than the purely Jewish term, Christ.<sup>757</sup> Jesus is also referred to twice as the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>758</sup> once as a Saviour,<sup>759</sup> and the Son of God for the only time in Acts.<sup>760</sup> The latter term combines human and divine aspects.<sup>761</sup> The overall reduction in references to the Lord and Christ as Acts' Middle proceeds may be a further literary indication of a mission decline.<sup>762</sup>

However, there are aspects of Jesus's mission that do continue throughout Acts' Middle. The resurrection motif is an ongoing reminder of the new life and power for mission.<sup>763</sup> The cross<sup>764</sup> is in close connection to mission suffering rather than expounded as an atonement.<sup>765</sup> Jesus's return as the final eschatological judge of all appears at the close of both Peter and Paul's mission speeches.<sup>766</sup>

<sup>755</sup> There are more Lord Jesus references in Acts' Middle with "Act II" (8:16; 9:17; 11:17, 20), "Act III" (15:11, 26; 16:31) and predominantly "Act IV" at Ephesus (19:5, 13 (twice), 17), Miletus (20:21, 24, 35) and Caesarea (21:13). Cf. only one in "Act I" (7:59) and none in "Act IV".

<sup>756</sup> See §6.3.3, p.328, and n.156. Also the ambiguity over the use of the Lord as God or Jesus continues from Acts' Beginning. References to Lord as Jesus include: "Act II" (possibly 8:22, 24, 25, 39; probably 9:1, definitely 9:5, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 27; probably 9:28, 31, 35, 42; possibly 10:4, probably 10:14, possibly 10:33; probably 11:8, definitely 11:16; probably 11:21, 23, 24); "Act III" (possibly 12:11, 17; 13:2, 10, 11, 12; probably 13:44, 47, 48, 49; 14:3, 23; 15:35, 36, 40; 16:14, 15, definitely 16:31, probably 16: 32), "Act IV" (probably 18:8, 9, 25; 19:10; definitely 19:13; probably 19:20; 20:19; 21:14). For a similar analysis see James D. G. Dunn, "ΚΥΡΙΟΣ in Acts", in *The Christ and the Spirit: Collected Essays of James D. G. Dunn*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 241–53; Ling Cheng, *The Characterisation of God in Acts — the Indirect Portrayal of an Invisible Character*. PbMon (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2011), 237–39.

<sup>757</sup> The Jesus Christ references decrease in Acts' Middle. "Act II" (8:12; 9:34; 10:36, 48; 11:17), "Act III" (15:26; 16:18) and "Act IV" (18:5, 28). Cf. "Act I" (3:6; 4:10; 6:4) and "Act V" (24:24).

<sup>758</sup> Acts 11:17 and 15:26. Cf. 28:31.

<sup>759</sup> Acts 13:23. Cf. 5:31.

<sup>760</sup> Some MSS include "the Son of God" in the declaration of faith by the Ethiopian eunuch (8:37) and at the end of 28:31, but these are omitted in NA<sup>28</sup> main text.

<sup>761</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 240; Kee, *Good News*, 14; Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (London: SCM, 1976); Y. Levin, "Jesus 'Son of God' and 'Son of David': The Adoption of Jesus into the Davidic Line", *JSNT* 28 (2006): 415–42, esp. 419–20, 428; Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in its Social and Political Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Kee, *Good News*, 14.

<sup>762</sup> "Act II" (Lord 30x, Christ 5x), "Act III" (Lord 24x, Christ 2x, and "Act IV" (Lord 15x, Christ 2x). Ladd, *Theology*, 375, notes that the majority of uses of Lord are in the first half of Acts. Whilst a correct observation, the term's re-emergence at Ephesus and Miletus in Acts 19–20 should also be noted.

<sup>763</sup> "Act II" (9:36–42, example of Tabitha/Dorcas; 10:40–41); Act III" (13:30, 33, 37; 14:19–20, possible example of Paul); "Act IV" (17:3, 18, 31; 20:7–12, example of Eutychus).

<sup>764</sup> Translation of ξύλον (tree) which is used in Acts for the cross drawn from Deut 21:23.

<sup>765</sup> Acts 10:39 (cf. mission 10:37–38, witness 41–42); 13:29 (cf. witness 13:31); 20:28 (cf. mission 20:26). Cf. Acts 5:30 (cf. witness 5:32). Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 107–11, for discussion of Jesus suffering as the one who served God.

<sup>766</sup> Acts 10:42 (Peter at Caesarea); 17:31 (Paul at Athens).

Acts' Middle also includes salvation as a mission theme. The central scene's use of σώζω (14:9) defines the healing of the lame man at Lystra (14:8–11) as a salvation event.<sup>767</sup> "Act III" contains nine of the ten references for the σώζω word group in Acts' Middle<sup>768</sup> including Jesus as σωτήρ (13:23). The two prison rescues<sup>769</sup> are suggestive salvation symbols even if they do not use salvation terminology. "Act II" only has one reference to salvation (11:14), but does include healings which serve as a physical manifestation of salvation.<sup>770</sup> "Act IV" has no references to salvation and only the healings at 19:11. The emphasis of salvation terminology in "Act III" is a good example of how literary shape reveals a *pivot* of missional significance.

(4) *The mission source* majors on the Holy Spirit. However, Jesus is explicitly present in the narrative three times, at Saul's conversion-commission (9:3–6), Peter's vision (10:13–16), and to Paul at Corinth (18:9–10).<sup>771</sup> God acts directly for the only time in Acts' narrative by doing extraordinarily powerful deeds at Ephesus (19:11).<sup>772</sup> However, these are mediated through "the hands of Paul".

Scholars identify and discuss the three main corporate Holy Spirit outpourings of Acts' Middle at Samaria (8:15–17), Caesarea (10:44–47), and Ephesus (19:6). However, they often omit the one at Pisidian Antioch (13:52) without giving a reason.<sup>773</sup> It can legitimately be included as a continuation of the Pentecost experience.<sup>774</sup> There is also an individual filling of Paul (13:9) fulfilling

<sup>767</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:2130.

<sup>768</sup> See σώζω (14:9; 15:1, 11; 16:30, 31), σωτηρία (13:26, 47; 16:17), and σωτήρ (13:23). Cf. "Act I", σώζω (2:21, 40, 47; 4:9, 12), σωτηρία (4:12; 7:25), and σωτήρ (5:31); "Act V" (σώζω 27:20; 31; σωτήριον 28:28).

<sup>769</sup> Acts 12:1–19; 16:22–40;

<sup>770</sup> Acts 8:7; 9:32–35.

<sup>771</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:226, refers to the hidden actor of Acts still at work.

<sup>772</sup> Shauf, *Divine*, 186–87, notes that "the Lord" acts directly at 2:47; 10:15; 11:21; 16:14 but these are possibly Christological. See previously in this chapter (p.295, n.756).

<sup>773</sup> The reasons could be: (1) there is no mention of any accompanying signs such as tongues or prophecy, but this is also the case with the Holy Spirit outpouring at Samaria (8:15–17); (2) the use of πληρώ (fill, BDAG, πληρόω, 827–29, §1) rather than the usual πίμπλημι (completely fill, BDAG, πίμπλημι, 813–14, §1); (3) the use of imperfect passive indicating a continuous action resulting in a state of being "full" (what is known as customary imperfect. Cf. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 548) rather than the usual aorist suggesting a completed action. This argument is used by Richard Gary Fairman, *An Exegesis of "Filling" Texts which Refer to the Doctrine of Filling* (D.Th diss., Grace Theological Seminary, 1986), 256–61), but is uncertain since "full" is normally indicated by the adjective πλήρης and the imperfect passive can refer to a filling process; (4) the coupling of the filling with a second quality of joy is also given as a reason for it being a state rather than an experience, but see Haya-Prats, *Empowered*, 159–63, for the possibility that it is an intensification of joy.

<sup>774</sup> Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 137; Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 290; Stevens, *Acts*, 315.

the promise of 9:17.<sup>775</sup> By joining these to the individual filling of Peter and the two corporate fillings at Jerusalem,<sup>776</sup> attempts are made to produce either a systematic<sup>777</sup> or a complete biblical pneumatology.<sup>778</sup> However, since this has proved problematical, the outpourings are often understood as an indefinable diversity of Holy Spirit operations<sup>779</sup> or interpreted as “one-off” unique and unrepeatable historical events.<sup>780</sup> As an alternative, I propose to establish a literary framework by building on the *foundation* of pneumatology from Acts’ Beginning<sup>781</sup> for a corresponding *pivot* here in Acts’ Middle.<sup>782</sup> The advances and declines of Acts’ story components show how the Holy Spirit outpourings function as a source of mission. The connections and contrasts between the episodes are also considered.

*The literary-temporal component* of pneumatology stretches over two and half literary years and fifty-one days suggesting a framework which is both paradigmatic and developmental.<sup>783</sup> The outpouring of Acts 2 sets the agenda for what follows and Acts 19 concludes it.<sup>784</sup> *The literary-spatial component* of pneumatology reveals progress from Jerusalem to Ephesus through Samaria, Caesarea, and Pisidian Antioch. This connects the outpourings to a geographically and ethnically expanding mission following the pattern of 1:8.<sup>785</sup> A similar connection is made in the *character component* of pneumatology moving from the Jerusalem disciples and Peter, to the Samaritans, Cornelius with his relatives and friends, Paul and the Pisidian Antioch disciples, and the Ephesian disciples.

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<sup>775</sup> Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 114–17, 232, 239, 246–47, 333–34. To avoid this conclusion Turner, *Power*, 168, argues that the aorist *πῖμπλημι* (9:17) can be understood as an inceptive (also called an ingressive) aorist indicating a “long term” state rather than a punctiliar action. Cf. Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 558–59.

<sup>776</sup> Acts 2:1–4 (corporate); 4:8 (Peter); and 4:31 (corporate).

<sup>777</sup> E.g. Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence*.

<sup>778</sup> E.g. Thiselton, *Holy Spirit*.

<sup>779</sup> E.g. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 65.

<sup>780</sup> E.g. Thompson, *Acts*, 125–44.

<sup>781</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.4, pp.220–23).

<sup>782</sup> Developing the idea of a charismatic structure for Acts from John Christopher Thomas, *The Spirit of the New Testament* (Leiden: Deo, 2005), 223–232.

<sup>783</sup> In terms of literary time there are three days between 2:1–4 and 4:8; no time between 4:8 and 4:31; three days between 4:31 and 8:15–17; seven days between 8:15–17 and 10:44–47; one year and a day between 10:44–47 and 13:9; six days between 13:9 and 13:52; one and a half years, twenty-five days between 13:52 and 19:6. The Jerusalem, Samaria and Caesarea outpourings are temporally close suggesting that together they form a paradigmatic framework. The year gap between them and Pisidian Antioch outpouring, and then between the Pisidian Antioch outpouring and the Ephesus outpouring suggests that these outpourings form a more developmental stage in the pneumatology. See Appendix IV, p.390.

<sup>784</sup> Contra Pereira, *Ephesus*, 105, who suggests the Ephesian Pentecost is a new mission turning point since every subsequent Holy Spirit outpouring marks a new advance in mission. However, since Ephesus is the last outpouring it is better understood as a *culmination*.

<sup>785</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 243.

Following the same range of interpretations as Pentecost in Acts 2,<sup>786</sup> the outpourings are interpreted as initiatory for salvation (Dunn), repeatable for empowering (Menzies), or a combination of both (Max Turner).<sup>787</sup> This leads to different interpretations of the fact that the outpouring is after conversion/water-baptism in Acts 2,<sup>788</sup> 8<sup>789</sup> and probably 19,<sup>790</sup> and before conversion/water-baptism in Acts 10.<sup>791</sup> Matthias Wenk helpfully argues that the underlying motif for Luke's pneumatology is an eschatological vision of a universal and reconciled people of God including Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles.<sup>792</sup> This lends support to the suggestion that the outpourings are part of the formation of the mission instrument. Turner uses the resulting lack of mission engagement to refute Menzies's suggestion that the Holy Spirit in Acts is exclusively an empowering for witness.<sup>793</sup> However, I suggest that this critique can be overcome by my proposal concerning a mission invitation.<sup>794</sup> This sees the formation and empowering of the mission instrument in Acts as often more about establishing the potential for mission rather than the actual mission itself.<sup>795</sup>

*The speech component* of pneumatology identifies thirteen references to the Holy Spirit in Peter's speeches, whereas in keeping with the mission decline Paul's speeches surprisingly only have five references.<sup>796</sup>

A comparison of the main outpourings show various connections and contrasts. The Holy Spirit terminology from Pentecost appears across the four corporate outpourings in Acts' Middle including "baptised in/with" (ἐν [πνεύματι])

<sup>786</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.4, pp.220–21).

<sup>787</sup> For helpful overview of the debate see William P. Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit: Luke-Acts and the Dunn Debate* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2012).

<sup>788</sup> For discussion see Dunn, *Baptism*, 38–54; Menzies, *Empowered* (empowering), 173–201; Turner, *Power*, 267–315.

<sup>789</sup> For discussion see Dunn, *Baptism*, 55–72 (salvation); Menzies, *Empowered*, 204–213 (empowering); Turner, *Power*, 360–75; Max Turner, "Interpreting the Samaritans of Acts 8: The Waterloo of Pentecostal Soteriology and Pneumatology?", *Pneuma* 23 (2001): 265–86 (both).

<sup>790</sup> For discussion see Dunn, *Baptism*, 83–90 (salvation); Menzies, *Empowered*, 218–25 (empowering); Turner, *Power*, 388–97 (both).

<sup>791</sup> For discussion see Dunn, *Baptism*, 79–82 (salvation); Menzies, *Empowered*, 215–18 (empowering); Turner, *Power*, 378–87 (both).

<sup>792</sup> Matthias Wenk, "Acts", in *A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit*, ed. Trevor J. Burke and Keith Warrington (London: SPCK, 2014), 116–28.

<sup>793</sup> Turner, *Power*, 359–60, 373, 398–99, 402–404; Menzies, *Empowered*, 226–28.

<sup>794</sup> See §2.2.6.4, pp.118–20; §3.4, pp.164–66; §4.4, pp.216–17; §5.4, pp.290–92.

<sup>795</sup> Abraham Smith, "A Second Step in African Biblical Interpretation: A Generic Reading Analysis of Acts 8:26–40", in Segovia and Tolbert, *Reading from this Place*, 213–228, citing 221, that "the narrator repeatedly links dramatic displays of the Spirit's involvement with reports of the Jerusalem hegemony's hearing about the new junctures of the mission".

<sup>796</sup> Peter (1:16; 2:17, 18; 2:33, 38; 5:3, 9; 10:38, 47; 11:12, 15, 16; 15:8) Paul (19:2; 20:22, 23, 28; 28:25). See Bonnah, *Holy Spirit*, 89, who makes this observation, but does not give an explanation for it.



βαπτίζω),<sup>797</sup> “falling-upon” (ἐπιπίπτω),<sup>798</sup> “filled/filling” (πίμπλημι/πληρόω),<sup>799</sup> “outpouring” (ἐκχεῶ),<sup>800</sup> “receiving” (λαμβάνω),<sup>801</sup> “giving/the gift” (δίδωμι/τὴν δωπεάν),<sup>802</sup> “power” (δύναμις),<sup>803</sup> and “full” (πλήρης).<sup>804</sup> The term “anoint” (χρίω) is used of the Holy Spirit and power in relation to Jesus as a mission instrument (10:38).<sup>805</sup> The laying on of hands by Peter and Paul<sup>806</sup> as a possible blessing,<sup>807</sup> appointment,<sup>808</sup> and impartation<sup>809</sup> of the Holy Spirit brings an element of individuality to the corporate outpourings.<sup>810</sup> The recurrence of speaking in tongues, with praise and prophecy, at the strategic points of Caesarea and Ephesus<sup>811</sup> suggests a supernatural preparation for mission proclamation.<sup>812</sup>

The Holy Spirit’s involvement with the mission instrument continues as he speaks to promote mission,<sup>813</sup> seizes Philip for fresh mission areas (8:39), encourages the church (9:31), enables prophecy to engender mission (11:28),<sup>814</sup> sends Barnabas and Saul on the prototype Gentile mission (13:4), blocks Paul from going into Bithynia (16:6–7), warns of mission suffering (20:23; 21:10–11), and makes overseers for the mission instrument (20:28). The connections between the Holy

<sup>797</sup> Acts 11:16 (future). Cf. 1:5 (future).

<sup>798</sup> Acts 8:16 (perfect); 10:44 (aorist); 11:15 (aorist); 19:6 (coming upon ἐρχομαι ... ἐπί - aorist). Cf. 1:8 (coming upon ἐπέρχομαι ... ἐπί - aorist).

<sup>799</sup> Acts 9:17 (aorist); 13:9 (aorist), 52 (imperfect of πληρόω). Cf. 2:4; 4:8, 31 (all aorists). See Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 94, for discussion that πίμπλημι is a special imbuing of the Spirit for a particular task. The filling is never commanded in Acts, not related to sanctification, and always genitive rather than dative.

<sup>800</sup> Acts 10:45 (perfect). Cf. 2:17 (future), 18 (future), 33 (aorist).

<sup>801</sup> Acts 8:15 (aorist), 17 (imperfect), 19 (present), 10:47 (aorist), 19:2 (aorist). Cf. 2:33 (aorist), 38 (future).

<sup>802</sup> Acts 8:18 (present), 20 (noun); 10:45 (perfect); 11:17 (aorist); 15:8 (aorist). Cf. 2:38 (future), 5:32 (aorist).

<sup>803</sup> Acts 10:38. Cf. power(s) in 1:8; 2:22; 3:12; 4:7, 33; 6:8; 8:13; 19:11. Holy Spirit is not directly linked but in close proximity at 8:17 and 19:6. Cf. 1:8. Haya-Prats, *Empowered*, 30–38, points out that power is a wider category of God’s intervention often in material ways and only sometimes used with the Holy Spirit in Acts.

<sup>804</sup> Acts 11:24 (adjective). Cf. 6:3, 5; 7:55 (all adjectives).

<sup>805</sup> Acts 10:38 (aorist). BDAG, χρίσω, 1091. See Chapter Three (§3.4, p.164) for link between Χριστός (“anointed one”) and Χριστιανός (“little anointed ones”) as terms for the mission instrument.

<sup>806</sup> Acts 8:17, 18; 19:6. Cf. 6:6 (for ministry); 13:3 (for mission); 28:8 (for healing). For discussion see Pereira, *Ephesus*, 93–101; Turner, *Power*, 372.

<sup>807</sup> Gen 48:14; Lev 9:22.

<sup>808</sup> Num 8:10–11; 27:18, 23; Deut 34:9.

<sup>809</sup> Matt 19:15; Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40; 13:13.

<sup>810</sup> Ramsay, *Pictures*, 60.

<sup>811</sup> Acts 10:46 (praise from people to God) and 19:6 (prophecy from God to people). Cf. 2:5–13, esp. 11, declaring the wonders of God, and 17–18 linked to prophecy. Cf. Keener, *Spirit*, 195.

<sup>812</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.3.3.2, pp.202–203).

<sup>813</sup> Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11 (to warn Paul about Jerusalem).

<sup>814</sup> Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 94–109, links prophetic utterance to convincing proclamation.

Spirit and the kingdom of God further indicate that Acts' pneumatology involves the empowering of the mission instrument for the purposes of mission expansion.<sup>815</sup> Although scholars argue that the Holy Spirit prompts and guides the vital stages of the mission,<sup>816</sup> a more careful examination finds that this is actually restricted to only four occasions.<sup>817</sup> The Holy Spirit's last mission direction in Acts is actually a negative prevention concerning Asia and Bithynia (16:6). There are actually far more occasions when a mission movement is made without a specific mention of the Holy Spirit.<sup>818</sup> This does not remove the benefits of a spiritual empowering for mission, but may suggest that the mission needs to continue outside of times of spiritual revival and also allow a greater place for human strategy and decision within the *missio Dei*. However, as already noted the mission movements in Acts are actually more often instigated by mission suffering rather than human choice.<sup>819</sup> Also the absence of the Holy Spirit connects with the mission decline especially with the disappearance of the active Holy Spirit after 19:8<sup>820</sup> as Paul returns to Jerusalem. The clustered Holy Spirit references<sup>821</sup> diminish<sup>822</sup> from twenty-one in "Act I";<sup>823</sup> to seventeen in "Act II";<sup>824</sup> nine in "Act III";<sup>825</sup> six in "Act IV";<sup>826</sup> and one in "Act V".<sup>827</sup> In keeping with this decline, the closing Holy Spirit references in Acts' Middle involve sufferings (20:23; 21:11), internal church's struggles (20:28–30), and telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem (21:4).

<sup>815</sup> See Chapter Six (§6.5.3, pp.356–57).

<sup>816</sup> Wilson, *Gentiles*, 55; Thiselton, *Holy Spirit*, 66.

<sup>817</sup> Philip and the Ethiopian (8:29, 39); Peter and Cornelius/Caesarea (10:19; 11:12); Jerusalem (11:28); and the start of the prototype Gentile mission (13:2, 4).

<sup>818</sup> Samaria (8:4–5); Paul's conversion and early ministry (9:1–30, cf. 9:17); Peter in Judaea (9:32–42); (Syrian) Antioch and Greeks (11:19–21); Pisidian Antioch (13:13–14); Iconium (13:50–14:1; Lystra (14:6–7); Derbe (14:20); return journey back to (Syrian) Antioch (14:21–28); Jerusalem (15:2–4); Syria and Cilicia (15:36–16:5); Philippi (16:11–12); Thessalonica (16:40–17:1); Beroea (17:10); Athens (17:14–15); Corinth (18:1); Ephesus (18:18–19); journey to Caesarea, Jerusalem, (Syrian) Antioch (18:20–22); Galatia (18:23); Ephesus (19:1); decision re Jerusalem (19:21); Macedonia (20:1–5); Troas (20:6); Miletus (20:13–16); Tyre (21:1–3); Caesarea (21:8); Jerusalem (21:15–28:24); Rome (28:28–31).

<sup>819</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.259, n.336).

<sup>820</sup> See comments in Chapter Three (§3.4, pp.167–68).

<sup>821</sup> Liefeld, *Acts*, 84, notes the clusters of Holy Spirit references in Acts 2, 8 and 10–11. Cf. Green, *Word of His Grace*, 26.

<sup>822</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 111–13, takes a similar statistical approach.

<sup>823</sup> Acts 1:2, 5, 8; 2:4 (twice), 17, 18, 33, 38; 4:8, 31; 5:3, 9, 16, 32; 6:3, 5, 10; 7:51, 55, 59.

<sup>824</sup> Acts 8:15, 17, 18, 19, 29, 39; 9:17, 31; 10:19, 38, 44, 45, 47; 11:12, 15, 16, 24.

<sup>825</sup> Acts 11:28; 13:2, 4, 9, 52; 15:8, 28; 16:6, 7.

<sup>826</sup> Acts (18:25?); 19:2, 6, (21?); (20:22?), 23, 28; 21:4, 11. The ambiguous references at 18:25, 19:21 and 20:22 are considered a reference to the human spirit.

<sup>827</sup> Acts 28:25.

The intersection of the mission source and means in Acts' Middle includes the decrease in Scripture quotations as appropriate for the Gentile mission.<sup>828</sup> The increase in the "Word of God/Lord" motif, with ten references in "Act III",<sup>829</sup> contributes to the *pivot* of missional significance before the motif disappears after 19:20. This removes any suggestion that the Holy Spirit is somehow replaced by "the Word" in Acts' Ending. "The name of Jesus" reappears<sup>830</sup> extensively throughout Acts' Middle<sup>831</sup> with an emphasis at Samaria and Ephesus<sup>832</sup> to mark the start and finish of the mission outside of Israel. However, "the name" motif also disappears after 19:17.

(5) *The mission means* in Acts' Middle bring together word and sign with an emphasis on acts of power in Samaria<sup>833</sup> and Ephesus.<sup>834</sup> The proclamation verbs identified in Chapter Two<sup>835</sup> all appear with: (i) the preponderance of εὐαγγελίζω in "Acts II and III" as gospel proclamation;<sup>836</sup> (ii) the preponderance of καταγγέλλω in "Acts III and IV" as widespread public dissemination;<sup>837</sup> (iii) μαρτυρέω as official

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<sup>828</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>829</sup> In "Act II", 8:4, 14 (of God), 25 (of the Lord), 11:1 (of God), 19; "Act III", 12:24 (of God), 13:5 (of God), 7 (of God), 26 (of salvation), 44 (of the Lord), 46 (of God), 48 (of the Lord), 49 (of the Lord), 14:3 (of his grace), 25; 15:7 (of the gospel), 35 (of the Lord), 36 (of the Lord), 16:6, 32 (of the Lord); "Act IV", 17:11, 13 (of God), 18:5, 11 (of God), 19:10 (of the Lord), 20 (of the Lord), 20:32 (of his grace). See Thompson, *One Lord*, 141–159, for idea of "the Word's" conquest in Acts' Middle. Cf. five references in "Act I" (see §4.4, p.223) and none in "Act V".

<sup>830</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 283.

<sup>831</sup> "Act II" at 8:12 (Jesus Christ), 16 (Lord Jesus), 9:14, 15, 16, 21, 27 (Jesus), 28 (Lord), 10:43, 48 (Jesus Christ); "Act III" at 15:17, 26 (Lord Jesus Christ), 16:18 (Jesus Christ); and "Act IV" at 19:5 (Lord Jesus), 13 (Lord Jesus), 17 (Lord Jesus), 21:13 (Lord Jesus). Cf. thirteen references in "Act I" (see §4.4, p.223, n.553) and only two retrospective references in "Act V" (see §3.4, p.168, n.396).

<sup>832</sup> Samaria (8:12, 16) and Ephesus (19:5, 13, 17).

<sup>833</sup> Acts 8:6 (signs), 13 (signs and acts of power).

<sup>834</sup> Acts 19:8–11. See Pereira, *Ephesus*, 177–182 for discussion on acts of power at 2:22; 8:13 and 19:11

<sup>835</sup> See introduction to mission means (§2.2.6.4, pp.123–25).

<sup>836</sup> "Act II", 8:4 ("the Word"), 12 (the kingdom of God and "the name of Jesus Christ"), 25 ("Word of the Lord"), 35 (Jesus), 40; 10:36 (peace through Jesus Christ); 11:20 (Lord Jesus); "Act III", 13:32 (God's promise); 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35 ("Word of the Lord"); 16:10; Act "IV", 17:18 (Jesus and the resurrection). The only other reference is in "Act I": 5:42 (Christ Jesus). The single reference in "Act IV" and none in "Act V" suggest a mission decline. The noun εὐαγγέλιον is used at 15:7 and 20:24. Cf. Holladay, *Acts*, 286.

<sup>837</sup> "Act III", 13:5 ("Word of God"), 38 (forgiveness of sins); 15:36 ("Word of the Lord"); 16:17 (the Philippian slave girl), 21 (unlawful customs); "Act IV", 17:3 (Jesus), 13 ("Word of God"), 23 (the Athenian unknown God). The only other references to καταγγέλλεται in Acts are in "Act I" (3:24; retrospectively of the prophets, and 4:2) and "Act V" (26:23, retrospectively of Jesus).

witnesses for and to Christ;<sup>838</sup> (iv) *παρρησιάζομαι* as frequent bold speaking;<sup>839</sup> (v) *διαλέγομαι* in “Act IV”<sup>840</sup> as Paul’s discussion or argument about Jesus with Jews<sup>841</sup> primarily in the synagogues;<sup>842</sup> (vi) *πείθω* as both a persuasive process and outcome<sup>843</sup> used only by Paul;<sup>844</sup> (vii) the preponderance of *κηρύσσω* heralding an official announcement with its first use in Acts at Samaria (8:5) and the penultimate mention at Ephesus (20:25);<sup>845</sup> and (viii) *διδάσκω* as teaching spread throughout Acts’ Middle<sup>846</sup> including locations beyond the expected church and synagogue.<sup>847</sup>

The supernatural manifestations as a means of mission continue with Peter in Judaea,<sup>848</sup> signs and wonders in the prototype Gentile mission at Iconium (14:3), the healing of the lame man at Lystra (14:8–10), and a final mention of signs and wonders at 15:12 as characterising Barnabas and Paul’s mission.<sup>849</sup> They then disappear until the powerful deeds at Ephesus (19:11) and the raising of Eutychus from the dead in 20:9–10. From this point in keeping with the mission decline there are no supernatural manifestations until they re-emerge at Malta in 28:1–10.<sup>850</sup>

<sup>838</sup> In “Act II”, 8:25 (*διαμαρτύρομαι*); 10:39 (*μάρτυς*), 41 (*μάρτυς*), 42 (*διαμαρτύρομαι*), 43; “Act III”, 13:31; 14:3, 17; 15:8; and “Act IV”, 18:5 (*διαμαρτύρομαι*); 20:21 (*διαμαρτύρομαι*), 24 (*διαμαρτύρομαι*), 26. This completes the even spread of the witness theme throughout Acts with “Act I” having ten references (see §4.4, p.223, n.557) and “Act V” eight (see §3.4, p.169, n.398). Note that the Lord bears witness in 14:3 and 14:17.

<sup>839</sup> Acts 9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8. Cf. four references in “Act I” (see §4.4, p.223, n.558) and twice in “Act V” (see §3.4, p.169, n.405).

<sup>840</sup> Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8, 9; 20:7, 9. The only other reference is 24:25 in “Act V” (see §3.4, p.169, n.406).

<sup>841</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 117.

<sup>842</sup> The exceptions are 19:9 (in the hall of Tyrannus); 20:7, 9 (upper room at Troas); 24:25 (to Felix). Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, 66–67, 71.

<sup>843</sup> Acts 13:43 (imperfect active: process of persuading); 17:4 (aorist passive: state of persuasion); 18:4 (process of persuading); 19:8 (process of persuading since although it has the antonyms of *ἐθελγρόνοντο* (hardened) and significantly the opposite *ἡπείθουν* (unpersuaded) this is inconclusive since they can be outcomes of the process rather than a contrast to a state of persuasion), 26 (process of persuasion completed). “Act I” and “Act II” have no proclamation *πείθω* references. “Act V” has three references (see §3.4, p.169, n.407).

<sup>844</sup> Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 124–25.

<sup>845</sup> Acts 8:5 (the Christ); 9:20 (Jesus is the Son of God); 10:37 (John’s baptism); 10:42; 15:21 (Jewish heralding about the Law of Moses is the only time in Acts not used of the gospel); 19:13 (Jesus); 20:25 (the kingdom). Pervo, *Acts*, 205. The only use outside Acts’ Middle is 28:31 (kingdom of God).

<sup>846</sup> Acts 11:26; 13:12 (noun); 15:1, 35; 17:19 (noun); 18:11, 25; 20:20.

<sup>847</sup> To the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, on Cyprus (13:12) and at Athens (17:19). Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 335–42.

<sup>848</sup> The healing of the paralytic Aeneas in 9:32–35 and the raising from the dead of Tabitha (Dorcas) in 9:36–42.

<sup>849</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 299. Cf. Sleeman, *Geography*, 99. However, although the exact terminology is not used, there are ongoing miracles recorded in 19:11–12; 20:11; 28:8–9.

<sup>850</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 425, 527.

(6) *The mission success* in Acts' Middle is extensive<sup>851</sup> starting with victory over Satan's forces at Samaria.<sup>852</sup> Acts surprisingly records very few major Gentile conversions<sup>853</sup> and the mission is most successful amongst God-fearers.<sup>854</sup> Scholars debate whether there is any success at the *pivot* of the Lystra central scene.<sup>855</sup> Afterwards success is more limited than expected.<sup>856</sup> The expectation from the vision that great success will follow at Philippi is not fulfilled, but only Lydia and the jailor with their households (16:10–40).<sup>857</sup> There are also disappointing results of only a few converts at Athens (17:34).<sup>858</sup> Only at Ephesus (19:9–20) does there appear to be widespread success<sup>859</sup> with exorcisms (19:12) and the burning of books (19:19) suggesting a widespread triumph over demonic forces<sup>860</sup> as a fitting *culmination* of Paul's Gentile mission. However, as Strelan points out, the success is largely amongst Jews rather than Gentiles.<sup>861</sup>

(7) *The mission suffering* runs throughout Acts' Middle<sup>862</sup> with a notable central focus at 14:22.<sup>863</sup> For Paul the suffering intensifies<sup>864</sup> in the expulsion from Pisidian Antioch (13:50), the plot of stoning at Iconium (14:5), and the actual stoning at Lystra (14:19). Some suffering is possibly caused by Paul's own actions, e.g. the flogging and imprisonment at Philippi (16:22–23) as the last occurrence in Acts' Middle. The omission of suffering in the Ephesus riot (19:23–41) may suggest a mission decline rather than a gospel triumph.<sup>865</sup>

<sup>851</sup> Acts 8:12–13, 36–38; 9:31, 35, 42; 11:17–18, 21, 24; 13:43; 14:1, 20, 21; 16:15, 33; 17:4, 12, 34; 18:8, 10; 19:5, 18.

<sup>852</sup> The exorcisms (8:7) and conversion of Simon the sorcerer (8:9–13). Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 58.

<sup>853</sup> Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 364.

<sup>854</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 310–11.

<sup>855</sup> Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 321, notes that though some scholars see Paul's preaching at Lystra as a failure, the disciples later identified in 14:20–23 suggest otherwise. Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 180, sees it as a minimal response.

<sup>856</sup> Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:59–60; C. Kavin Rowe, "The Book of Acts and the Cultural Explication of the Identity of God", in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe and A. Katherine Gibb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 244–266, citing 257.

<sup>857</sup> Miller, *Convinced*, 103; Miller, "Paul's Dream", 147, 151.

<sup>858</sup> Béchar, *Outside the Walls*, 372; Legrand, *Unity*, 109; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2676–78.

<sup>859</sup> Treblico, *Early Christians*, 134–152.

<sup>860</sup> Cf. Acts 8:7, 9–13; 13:6–11 and 16:16–18. Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 89–99.

<sup>861</sup> Strelan, *Artemis*, 2, 131, 273. There is a need to differentiate between success in proclamation (19:10, 17) and salvation.

<sup>862</sup> Acts 9:1–2, 23, 29; 11:19, 12:1–5; 13:45, 50; 14:5, 19, 22; 16:19–24; 17:5, 13; 18:12; 19:23; 20:3.

<sup>863</sup> Chapter Six explores mission suffering further in relation to the kingdom of God (see §6.5.3, pp.358–59).

<sup>864</sup> Spencer, *Acts*, 158; Pervo, *Acts*, 348.

<sup>865</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Cor 1:8–10. Pereira, *Ephesus*, 195–197, esp. 197, argues the omission is due to suffering being inappropriate for the culmination of Paul's mission activity.

(8) *The mission expansion* relates to the kingdom of God which notably appears in an extended central section of “Act III” at 14:22, in Samaria at the start of “Act II” at 8:12, and either side of the mid-point of “Act IV” at Ephesus (19:8) and Miletus (20:25). Chapter Six explores how this theme develops in Acts.

The combination of literary shape and missional significance is now summarised.

## 5.5 Summary

The literary shape of Acts’ Middle suggests a *pivot* of mission significance. The previous observations of an accumulative literary shape in the central scene (§5.3.14), “Act III” (§5.3.2.9), “Act II” (§5.3.3), and “Act IV” (§5.3.4) are now integrated with the discoveries of missional significance (§5.4).

The structure and story of Acts’ Middle reveal several key findings of missional significance:

1. The statistical central section at Lystra (14:8–20a) is confirmed as an appropriate positive story climax for the mission advance which began with “Act II”. Pauls’ central speech (14:15b–17) is the *pivot* of missional significance as the first example in Acts of the mission to pagan Gentiles. The mission message focuses on God as Creator and Sovereign over the nations. An extended central scene (to 14:28) includes mission suffering with Paul’s “death and resurrection” (14:20) and mission expansion with the kingdom of God (14:22).
2. “Act III” (11:27–16:40) has a mission advance to the central scene at Lystra (14:8–20a) and then a mission decline until a second mission advance starts at 16:10 or 17:1. Leading up to the central section, Paul’s first speech at Pisidian Antioch (13:16b–41, 46–47) gives a rationale for the mission instrument using a climactic cluster of Old Testament quotations. Before this, the mission advance is seen in “Act III” with Peter’s gospel triumph over King Herod (11:27–12:25) and the prototype Gentile mission from (Syrian) Antioch to Cyprus (13:1–12).
3. The decline on the other side of the central section begins with the attempt of the Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35) to deal with opposition within the church against the Gentile mission. Although James’s quotation of Amos 9:11–12 (15:16–18) seems to endorse the mission, the resulting letter of conditions is

ambiguous. A sense of decline continues with the separation of Paul and Barnabas (15:36–40), the circumcision of Timothy (16:3), and the uncertainties of mission direction. Even after a new advance there are still underlying ambiguities of events at Philippi (16:10–40) including the sudden disappearance of the “we-group” at 16:17.

4. The lack of specific literary-temporal references in “Act III” supports a *thematic/paradigmatic* approach which defines the mission instrument.
5. The complex hand-over from Peter to Paul (Acts 9–15) confirms that Acts is about the mission instrument rather than individual biographies.
6. The previous “Act II” (8:4–11:26) has a transitional role in moving from Jerusalem to the first Gentile mission in “Act III”. The literary sequence of six sections act as successive waves in making a progressive advance towards the Gentile mission. The sections are the important reunification of Samaria and Israel (8:4–25) as one mission instrument, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40) as a foreshadowing of worldwide mission and the quotation of Isaiah 53:7–8 (8:32b–33) highlighting mission suffering, Saul’s conversion-commission as a mission instrument (9:1–31), Peter’s Judean ministry (9:32–43) leading into the meeting between Peter and a God-fearing Gentile, Cornelius (10:1–11:18), as preparation for the coming Gentile mission and the two major speeches of Peter underlining the continued development of the mission instrument, and the (Syrian) Antioch Christians (11:19–26) marking the start of Paul’s introduction to the Gentile mission.
7. The missional terms Χριστιανοί (11:26) of “little Christs” who are anointed by the Holy Spirit for mission and ἀπόστολοι (14:4, 14) of Paul and Barnabas as the “sent ones” appropriately on the mission to Iconium and Lystra as the only usage in Acts other than the Twelve.
8. “Act IV” (17:1–21:14) continues the second mission advance through Thessalonica (17:1–9) and Athens (17:16–34) up to the pinnacle of Paul’s Gentile mission at Ephesus (18:19–19:41). Here the mission instrument is further supplemented with the formation of a new symbolic Twelve (19:1–7). The frequent literary-temporal references in “Act IV” support the movement of mission in contrast to their lack in “Acts I, II, and III” which I suggest mark a *thematic/paradigmatic* formation of the mission instrument.

9. I have argued at length that the midpoint of 19:21 sees a sharp mission decline as Paul returns to Jerusalem via Troas (20:6b–12) and Miletus (20:18b–35) rather than proceeding to Rome. The journey is overshadowed with prophetic warnings at Tyre and Caesarea not to proceed (21:4, 10–11).
10. The mission advances and declines in Acts' Middle<sup>866</sup> are confirmed in various ways. The mission message shows how God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit appear in the advances, but then disappear in the declines. Salvation is appropriately present in "Act III", but then disappears. The mission source includes the empowering of the Holy Spirit, "the Word of God/Lord", and "the name of Jesus". They all regularly feature up to 19:21 before disappearing. As appropriate for a Gentile mission means, *εὐαγγελίζω* appears most in Acts' Middle and the supernatural manifestations cluster at Samaria (8:6–7, 13) and Ephesus (19:11). However, rather than a triumphalistic view of mission, Acts' Middle shows the more realistic mission advances and declines. The struggle to form the mission instrument continues, with ongoing Jewish resistance and limited Gentile mission success. Although the church appears most in Acts' Middle it does not engage in mission.
11. The mission target moves to Gentiles, but the emphasis on Jews remains as Paul continues to invite them to become the mission instrument. I have argued that the problematic declaration of "turning to Gentiles" (13:46; 18:6), which is not consistently and absolutely done, should be understood as Paul being an example of the mission instrument.

The next chapter adds the mission expansion aspect of the kingdom of God to complete the exploration of literary shape and missional significance.

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<sup>866</sup> See Diagram V, p.79.



## CHAPTER SIX: THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ACTS

The previous chapters demonstrate how Acts' literary shape as structure and story reveals missional significance. The present chapter extends this approach by focusing on the kingdom of God in Acts as an extensive "worked example" of literary shape and missional significance.

There are five good reasons why the kingdom of God in Acts is a suitable topic for this closing chapter.

First, the widespread scholarship on the kingdom of God is at an impasse over the present "now" and future "not yet" aspects. There is extensive work on the kingdom of God in Acts. I will use a distinct literary approach which produces a narrative theology for the topic.

Second, scholars observe the eight uses of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts 1:3, 6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23; 28:31.<sup>1</sup> I will demonstrate their function within the literary structure.

Third, scholars note the kingdom of God references are important for Acts' story. I will observe the kingdom of God as a broader topic implicit within the narrative.

Fourth, the theological connections of the kingdom of God in Acts are extensively studied. I will indicate how they integrate.

Fifth, the missional significance of the kingdom of God in Acts is well documented. I will show how the kingdom of God relates to the mission expansion as the final aspect and purpose of the invitation to be a mission instrument.

This chapter explores the kingdom of God in Acts in terms of scholarship (§6.1), a fine-tuned method (§6.2), Acts' Ending (§6.3), Acts' Beginning (§6.4), Acts' Middle (§6.5), and a summary (§6.6).

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<sup>1</sup> The lexical form ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (the kingdom of God) is used throughout this study to signify the variant forms that do appear. The brackets around (τοῦ θεοῦ) indicate that two of the references do not use this additional description but are simply referred to as ἡ βασιλεία.

## 6.1 Scholarship on the Kingdom of God in Acts

The vast amount of scholarship on the kingdom of God seeks a historical background,<sup>2</sup> a biblical understanding from the Old Testament<sup>3</sup> and Synoptic Gospels,<sup>4</sup> and/or a theological framework which constructs various models holding the tensions of salvation-history/systematic,<sup>5</sup> creation/salvation,<sup>6</sup> now/not yet,<sup>7</sup> invisible/visible,<sup>8</sup> rule/realm,<sup>9</sup> supernatural/socio-political,<sup>10</sup> Israel/church,<sup>11</sup> and single focus/multi-faceted.<sup>12</sup> All these approaches have some useful points to interact

<sup>2</sup> E.g. John Bright, *The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church* (New York: Abingdon, 1963); Dale Patrick, "The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament", in *The Kingdom of God in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Interpretation*, ed. Wendell Willis (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 67–80; John J. Collins, "The Kingdom of God in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha", in Willis, *Kingdom of God*, 81–96; B. T. Viviano, "The Kingdom of God in the Qumran Literature", in Willis, *Kingdom of God*, 97–108.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); Bruce K. Waltke, "The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament: Definitions and Story", in *The Kingdom of God*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 49–72.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Harold Roberts, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (London: Epworth, 1955); Richard H. Hiers, *The Kingdom of God in the Synoptic Tradition* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1970); George W. Buchanan, *Jesus, the King and His Kingdom* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> E.g. William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: Its Expression in the Books of the Old Testament* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989); Mark Strom, *The Symphony of Scripture: Making Sense of the Bible's Many Themes* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1990); Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991); Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1959), 19–36.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); Ladd, *Theology*.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Louis Berkhof, *The Kingdom of God: The Development of the Idea of the Kingdom, Especially Since the Eighteenth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 115–130; Sam Storms, *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative* (Fearn: Mentor, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> E.g. George Eldon Ladd, "The Kingdom of God – Reign or Realm?", *JBL* 81 (1962): 230–38; Ladd, *Presence*, 144, 195–202; Reg Burrows, "Kingdom of God and Mission", *Churchman*, 101 (1987), 5–21; John C. O'Neill, "The Kingdom of God", *NovT* 35 (1993): 130–141, citing 130–31; David Secombe, *The King of God's Kingdom: A Solution to the Puzzle of Jesus* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 175–177.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1907); S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967); Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973); Bruce J. Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus: The Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001); Benedict T. Viviano, *The Kingdom of God in History* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 45–51, 81–99.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Philip Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom with an Examination of Modern Dispensationalism* (Swengal: Renier Publications, 1966); Gregg R Allison, "The Kingdom and the Church", in Morgan and Peterson, *Kingdom of God*, 179–206.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. For a single focus see Johannes Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971, first pub 1892); Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (New York: Schocken, 1914, first pub 1901); Charles H Dodd, *The Gospel in the New Testament* (London: National Sunday School Union, 1926); and for a multi-faceted kingdom see Howard A. Snyder, *Models of the Kingdom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991).

with, but this study focuses on specific literary approaches and especially the literature on the kingdom of God in Acts.

### 6.1.1 Literary Approaches to the Kingdom of God

Three scholars, Amos Wilder, Norman Perrin, and Anne Moore, consider the kingdom of God from the perspective of literary criticism.<sup>13</sup> Wilder takes a literary approach to Jesus's use of the kingdom of God.<sup>14</sup> Perrin suggests the kingdom of God is an ancient Jewish symbol which joins creation and nation.<sup>15</sup> He argues it is used in the Synoptic Gospels as a tensive symbol with many meanings about God's kingship rather than a steno-symbol with only one meaning.<sup>16</sup> Moore examines Hebrew linguistic and literary features. She replaces the idea of a symbol with a cognitive metaphor which emphasises the interaction between the two concepts of God and kingdom.<sup>17</sup>

Whilst these discussions begin a literary approach, they do not fully develop a narrative-critical approach to the kingdom of God or make an application of their theories to Acts. The next step is to explore whether this is done by the literature on the kingdom of God in Acts.

### 6.1.2 Literature on the Kingdom of God in Acts

The kingdom of God in Acts receives widespread scholarly attention, but primarily this focuses on Luke-Acts and/or concentrates on wider theological connections. Whilst the kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel is relevant for the kingdom of God in Acts, I have chosen not to use it for two reasons. First, the lack of a substantial monograph on the kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel means the construction of a literary model would have dominated my own project.<sup>18</sup> Second, it would

<sup>13</sup> W. Emory Elmore, "Linguistic Approaches to the Kingdom: Amos Wilder and Norman Perrin", in Willis, *Kingdom of God*, 53–66.

<sup>14</sup> Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric*.

<sup>15</sup> Norman Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

<sup>16</sup> Perrin, *Language of the Kingdom*, 30.

<sup>17</sup> Anne Moore, *Moving Beyond Symbol and Myth: Understanding the Kingship of God of the Hebrew Bible through Metaphor*, StBibLit 99 (New York: Lang, 2009), 9–64, esp. 54–64.

<sup>18</sup> A good starting point is the preponderance of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references in Luke 9–10 and 17–18 coming at the close of "Acts II and IV". See later in this chapter (p.312, n.44) for kingdom of God references in Luke's Gospel. Cf. brief introductions in Pereira, *Ephesus*, 119–125; Del Agua, "Evangelization of the Kingdom of God", 648–654; Robert F. O'Toole, "The Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts", in Willis, *Kingdom of God*, 147–62; John Leslie Nolland, "Salvation-History and Eschatology", in Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 63–82, citing 68; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:71; Dunn, *Neither Jew Nor Greek*, 3. 292–95; Thompson, *Acts*, 43.

overshadow the necessary focus on how the kingdom of God works in Acts' literary shape. Luke-Acts scholars helpfully connect the kingdom of God to specific theological topics such as an emerging doctrine of the Trinity,<sup>19</sup> the reign of the Davidic Messiah,<sup>20</sup> the Holy Spirit as an empowering for proclamation,<sup>21</sup> the plan of God,<sup>22</sup> the world and the church,<sup>23</sup> an earthly political kingdom offered but rejected by Israel,<sup>24</sup> and a revolutionary approach to Rome.<sup>25</sup> Whilst these have some literary elements, they do not focus on a narrative critical approach exclusively for the kingdom of God in Acts.

Other scholars link Acts' ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references to Jesus,<sup>26</sup> prayer,<sup>27</sup> teaching and proclamation,<sup>28</sup> witness,<sup>29</sup> the content of preaching,<sup>30</sup> church,<sup>31</sup> gospel,<sup>32</sup> mission,<sup>33</sup> universality,<sup>34</sup> conflict,<sup>35</sup> geography,<sup>36</sup> biography,<sup>37</sup> and the restoration of

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<sup>19</sup> Leslaw D. Chrupcala, *Il Regno Opera della Trinità nel Vangelo di Luca*, AnSBF 45 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1998). See Bovon, *Fifty-Five Years*, 522–23.

<sup>20</sup> Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*.

<sup>21</sup> Youngmo Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt to Reconcile these Concepts*, PBM (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> Alexander Prieur, *Die Verkündigung der Gottesherrschaft: Exegetische Studien zum lukanischen Verständnis*, WUNT 2.89 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996). Bovon, *Fifty-Five Years*, 521–22.

<sup>23</sup> Philip Mauro, *The Church, The Churches and The Kingdom* (Sterling: Abounding Grace, 1988).

<sup>24</sup> Zetetes (no Christian name is given), *The Structure of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles in the Light of 'The Kingdom to Israel'* (London: Elliott Stock, 1887).

<sup>25</sup> Karl Allen Kuhn, *The Kingdom according to Luke and Acts: A Social, Literary and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 535.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, "Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer", *NovT* 15 (1973): 59–71, citing 63, 67; Schreiner, *King*, 489–497, esp. 493.

<sup>28</sup> Maddox, *Purpose*, 107.

<sup>29</sup> Cocksworth, "Beginnings", 153.

<sup>30</sup> Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 228.

<sup>31</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 16–19.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony Buzzard, "The Kingdom of God in the Twentieth-Century Discussion and the Light of Scripture", *EQ* 64 (1992): 99–115, citing 104, 112; Eisen, *Poetik*, 145–46.

<sup>33</sup> Puskas, *Conclusion*, 84. Many of the other scholars noted above also link the kingdom of God to mission alongside their other connections, e.g. Michael A. Salmeier, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Role of God as the "Ordainer of Times and Seasons" in the Acts of the Apostles*, PrTMS 165 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 80–81. Zetetes, *Structure of Acts*, linking to Israel as a nation. Thompson, *Acts*, linking it to salvation-history and the church. Schreiner, *King*, and Cho, *Spirit*, linking to the Spirit.

<sup>34</sup> Del Agua, "Evangelization of the Kingdom of God", 654–657; Walter J. Galus, *The Universality of the Kingdom of God in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), which is part of his PhD diss., but unfortunately his chapter on Acts is unpublished and unobtainable; Zwiep, *Ascension*, 30.

<sup>35</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 156–57, 256.

<sup>36</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 157; Sleeman, *Geography*, 68, 176.

<sup>37</sup> Walton, "Beginning of Acts", 455.

Israel.<sup>38</sup> Although these are only brief observations, they highlight connections discussed later in this chapter. The major works on a theology of Luke-Acts<sup>39</sup> or Acts<sup>40</sup> do not consider the kingdom of God sufficiently important to treat the theme under a separate heading.

Three scholars are particularly helpful in my exploration of a literary approach to the kingdom of God in Acts.

Alan Thompson notes the significance of the strategic placement of the term ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) giving a thorough interpretation of all eight references.<sup>41</sup> I build on his observations of the broader kingdom theme in Acts' structure and story. However, unlike this study, he puts theology before literary shape in his commitment to an inaugurated kingdom of God within a salvation-history framework. I seek to give priority to literary shape.

Michael Salmeier discusses how ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references fit into the larger story framework of God as the "ordainer of times and seasons".<sup>42</sup> I develop his idea that divine universal kingship is joined with the redemptive restoration of the kingdom.

Constantino Ziccardi comes closest to this study into how the kingdom of God in literary shape reveals significance. His work on the relationship of Jesus and the kingdom of God in Luke-Acts examines each of the eight Acts' ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references. I expand his brief third chapter which usefully discusses the narrative placement of the references at key points in the Acts story.<sup>43</sup>

However, none of the three scholars develop the ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references in relation to literary structure.

Two major gaps in scholarship are evident which I seek to address in this study. First, there needs to be a thorough narrative-critical approach to the strategic placement of the kingdom of God within Acts' structure and story. Second, there

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<sup>38</sup> Smith, "Theology of Acts", 528; McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*, 389–430; Robert L. Brawley, "Paul in Acts: Aspect of Structure and Characterization", in *Society of Biblical Literature 1988 Seminar Papers*. SBLSP 28. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 80–105, citing 95–96; Anderson, *God Raised Him*, 267.

<sup>39</sup> E.g. Bock, *Theology*, 108, briefly notes the kingdom of God references without comment even in a chapter on eschatology. Bovon, *Fifty-Five Years*, does not give the kingdom of God its own section, but makes various references under other headings such as, 1–85, the plan of God; and 280–302, salvation.

<sup>40</sup> Marshall and Peterson, *Witness*, 68–70, esp. 70, has a short section of the kingdom of God, but only briefly notes the Acts references.

<sup>41</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 44.

<sup>42</sup> Salmeier, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 80–81.

<sup>43</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 149–158.

needs to be an exclusively Acts-focused view of the kingdom of God's connection to other theological topics and especially mission.

## 6.2 Fine-Tuned Method for the Kingdom of God in Acts

The method from Chapter Two is now fine-tuned for studying the kingdom of God in Acts' structure, story, and significance.

### 6.2.1 Method for Exploring the Kingdom of God in Acts' Structure

The method considers the term ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) as a potential structural marker and framing device within Horace's "Five-Act Structure".

The eight references to ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) are never a subject acting in the narrative, but always an object as a genitive τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ (1:3; 8:12; 19:8) or an accusative τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (14:22; 28:23, 31) and just τὴν βασιλείαν (1:6; 20:25). This means in Acts the kingdom of God is never portrayed as having its own dynamic, but is always linked to some other action. The sparsity of the term in Acts is in stark contrast to the thirty-nine occurrences in Luke's Gospel.<sup>44</sup> Possible explanations deducible from scholarship include that Jesus and the gospel fulfil the kingdom; the resurrection, ascension, and pouring out of the Holy Spirit changes the kingdom focus; the church replaces the kingdom; the gospel puts Israel and the kingdom in the background; and a focus on the present diminishes the focus on a future kingdom.<sup>45</sup> However, these solutions are problematic since if true ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) would not continue to occur up to Acts 28:31. As an original suggestion, I propose that the sparsity is because of the term's function as a strategic marker in Acts' literary structure. Alan Thompson points out "although there are not a large number of references to the kingdom of God in Acts, their strategic placement and contexts indicate an importance that outweighs the number of occurrences of the

<sup>44</sup> Luke 1:33 (βασιλεία); 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 8:1, 10; 9:2, 11, 27, 60, 62; 10:9, 11; 11:2 (ἡ βασιλεία), 20; 12:31 (ἡ βασιλεία), 32 (ἡ βασιλεία); 13:18, 20, 28, 29; 14:15; 16:16; 17:20 (twice), 21; 18:16, 17; 18:24, 25, 29; 19:11; 21:31; 22:16, 18, 29 (ἡ βασιλεία), 30 (ἡ βασιλεία); 23:42 (ἡ βασιλεία), 51. Whilst the term ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) carries meaning from Luke's Gospel, it should be noted that it does not function as a framing device in Luke 1 and 24 in the same way as it does in Acts 1 and 28. The earliest mention of ἡ βασιλεία in Luke's Gospel is 1:33 and the last in 23:51.

<sup>45</sup> Although scholars rarely comment explicitly on the sparsity of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts, the reasons are deducible from their arguments. For an overview see Wendell Willis, ed., *The Kingdom of God in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987); Viviano, *Kingdom*; Morphew, *Mission of the Kingdom*. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, eds., *The Kingdom of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

phrase”.<sup>46</sup> However, he applies this to Acts’ story rather than beginning with the literary structure as in this study.

Keener notes that 28:23 and 28:31 form an inclusio of material about the kingdom of God in the final scene.<sup>47</sup> I propose to explore the same idea as an inclusio for the material between 1:3 and 1:6.

Scholars correctly observe that ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) is a structural framing device at the start (1:3, 6) and finish (28:23, 31) of Acts.<sup>48</sup> This is no accidental arrangement, since as a framing device ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) has three valuable literary purposes in Acts. First, at the beginning of the narrative it sets the agenda for what follows.<sup>49</sup> Second, at the ending of the narrative it culminates what precedes and remains uppermost in the reader’s mind.<sup>50</sup> Third, its location at both the beginning and the ending suggests “the triumph of God’s reign is the *subtext* of the narrative sandwiched between”.<sup>51</sup>

The eight references of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) are plotted onto Acts’ “Five-Act Structure”<sup>52</sup> (see Diagram XII on the next page). This study explores the possible strategic function of the references as literary structural markers.

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<sup>46</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 38.

<sup>47</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3749, 3772.

<sup>48</sup> O’Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 59; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:352; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 797; Bock, *Acts*, 754; Pervo, *Acts*, 687; Peterson, *Acts*, 722; Hooker, *Endings*, 59; Stevens, *Acts*, 16; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3772–73; Allen, *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews*, 339–40.

<sup>49</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:14; Longenecker, “Acts”, 717; Bock, *Acts*, 56.

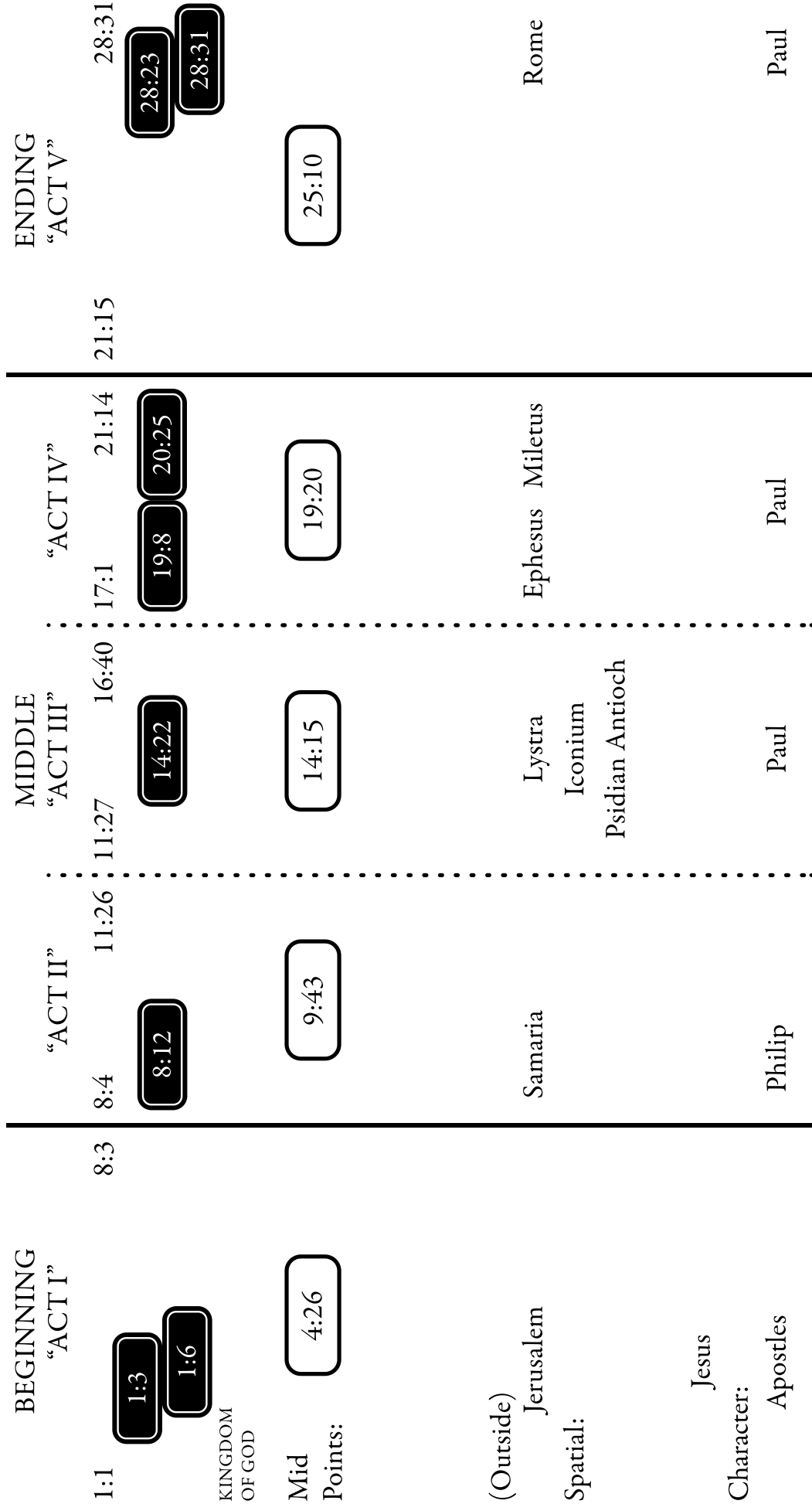
<sup>50</sup> Allison, “Kingdom and Church”, 179–206, citing 189; Viviano, *Kingdom of God*, 28; Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 244.

<sup>51</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 41. Cf. Schreiner, *King*, 470; Pervo, *Acts*, 38; Stevens, *Acts*, 551.

<sup>52</sup> See Diagram IV, p.71.

Diagram XII

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ACTS’ “FIVE-ACT STRUCTURE”





The references show an even spread across all “Acts”.

The double references at both Acts’ Beginning (1:3, 6) and Acts’ Ending (28:23, 31) suggest an opening and closure emphasis<sup>53</sup> and/or a framing device for the whole of Acts.

The reference at 14:22 is close (148 words) to the midpoint of “Act III” at 14:15.

The reference at 8:12 is near (120 words) to the start of “Act II” at 8:4.

The two references in “Act IV” are structurally more difficult to place. However, 19:8 is close to the midpoint at Ephesus marking an *inclusio* with 8:12 as the start and finish of the mission outside of Jerusalem. 20:25 is a retrospective reference back to Ephesus. 19:8 and 20:25 are within the mission advance and decline respectively surrounding the midpoint of “Act IV” (19:21).

If these observations prove to be correct then ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) helps to construct Acts’ structure and also plays a part in Acts’ story.

## 6.2.2 Method for Exploring the Kingdom of God in Acts’ Story

The method joins ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) as a literary motif and narrative tool with the kingdom of God as a broader topic implicit in Acts’ narrative.

### 6.2.2.1 ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts as a Literary Motif and Narrative Tool.

Dennis Horton uses the idea of a literary motif in Acts of the death and resurrection motif,<sup>54</sup> and similarly James Morgan of the thoroughfare motif.<sup>55</sup> Both scholars refer to William Freedman’s helpful definition and evaluation of a literary motif<sup>56</sup> with five criteria:

(i) *Frequency*. The greater the use of the motif the deeper the impression it leaves.<sup>57</sup> Contrary to this rule, the relative and unexpected infrequency of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts compared to Luke’s Gospel heightens questions about its significance.

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<sup>53</sup> Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 178–79.

<sup>54</sup> Dennis J. Horton, *Death and Resurrection: The Shape and Function of a Literary Motif in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> James M. Morgan, *Encountering Images of Spiritual Transformation: The Thoroughfare Motif within the Plot of Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013).

<sup>56</sup> William Freedman, “The Literary Motif: A Definition and Evaluation”, *Novel* 4 (1971): 123–131.

<sup>57</sup> Freedman, “Literary Motif”, 126.

(ii) *Avoidability or Unlikelihood*. “The more uncommon a reference is in a given context the more likely it is to strike a reader, consciously or subconsciously, and the greater will be its effect”.<sup>58</sup> Whilst ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) is not used in a particularly uncommon way in Acts, the scarcity of the term is notable. If the term is a gospel motif then it is strikingly infrequent and if replaced by the gospel then it is uncommonly frequent since it would be expected to disappear.

(iii) *Significant Context*. The motif should occur at “most or all of the climactic points of a work”.<sup>59</sup> This chapter demonstrates this is true for ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in both the structure and story of Acts.

(iv) *Coherence*. The motif should be used recognisably and coherently within the literary unit.<sup>60</sup> This is true for the kingdom of God in Acts, although whether the coherence is in literary shape or significance needs further exploration.

(v) *Symbolic Appropriateness*. “The motif is not a symbol, but it may be symbolic”.<sup>61</sup> Freedman distinguishes between a symbol as an ideological construct which may occur once and a motif as a literary device which is necessarily recurrent and accumulative. This distinguishes Freedman’s literary motif from Perrin’s tensive symbol or Moore’s cognitive metaphor.<sup>62</sup> In this sense viewing ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts as a literary motif focuses on the term’s use as a literary device within literary shape. However, many commentators simply assume ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) is a leitmotif<sup>63</sup> or a code-word<sup>64</sup> for the whole Christian gospel.<sup>65</sup> The literary approach in this study seeks a greater nuance from the term’s use within the narrative. As Robert O’Toole correctly points out, ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) is not univocal since its meaning varies with the context.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Freedman, “Literary Motif”, 126, joins the factors of frequency and avoidability together arguing there is “a law of diminishing returns here, the efficacy of the motif beginning to decline at the point where unlikelihood begins to shade into unsuitability or frequency into tedious repetition. Maximum power will therefore probably be achieved at the degree of frequency and improbability just short of this negative tendency, a point that varies from work to work”.

<sup>59</sup> Freedman, “Literary Motif”, 126–27.

<sup>60</sup> Freedman, “Literary Motif”, 127.

<sup>61</sup> Freedman, “Literary Motif”, 125.

<sup>62</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter, p.309.

<sup>63</sup> Burrows, “Kingdom and Mission”, 6.

<sup>64</sup> Borgman, *The Way*, 249.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. Conzelmann, *Acts*, 227; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 32; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:170, 408; 2:1243; Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:490; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:204; Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:577; Pervo, *Acts*, 684; Schnabel, *Acts*, 1071; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 625–26; Longenecker, “Acts”, 715; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), 215; Holladay, *Acts*, 369.

<sup>66</sup> O’Toole, “The Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts”, 147.

This study suggests that ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) functions as a narrative tool in Acts. The term both receives meaning from the story and also contributes to it. Marguerat comments “le motif du Règne ... domine toute l'intrigue des Actes”<sup>67</sup> and Parsons argues that ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) has a strategic positioning throughout the story.<sup>68</sup> Salmeier commences a basic story framework for ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references noting that they begin and end the work, occur when the message expands beyond Jerusalem (8:12), are near the beginning and end of Paul’s mission (14:22; 19:8), and occur in Paul’s only address to believers (20:25).<sup>69</sup> Philip Mauro notes that the kingdom connects with Jesus (1:3, 6), the proclamation arising from Paul’s persecution of the church (8:12), tribulation (14:22), and the church (20:25).<sup>70</sup> The present study extends the narrative-theology approach with the references’ own story stages in Acts’ Ending, Middle, and Beginning, the story advances and declines, and the application of literary-spatial,<sup>71</sup> literary-temporal, character,<sup>72</sup> speech, and intertextual components.

The method for exploring the kingdom of God in Acts’ story has a second aspect.

#### 6.2.2.2 *The Kingdom of God in Acts as a Broader Topic.*

The proposal is to explore hints of the kingdom of God within Acts’ story to see if the theme has greater significance beyond ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references. A well-defined method of assessing the broader topic avoids the danger of placing the kingdom of God as a total theological construct upon Acts.<sup>73</sup>

The first step recognises that the kingdom of God as a broader topic in Acts is implicit rather than explicit.<sup>74</sup> Within literary scholarship implicitness is called a

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<sup>67</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:39, “the motif (pattern) of the reign ... dominates all the plot of the Acts”.

<sup>68</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 157.

<sup>69</sup> Salmeier, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 80–81.

<sup>70</sup> Mauro, *Church, Churches and Kingdom*, 102–104, 196, 198, 245.

<sup>71</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 68, 176, argues that the strategically placed ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references generate an interwoven theological geography across and beyond the narrative. However, he does not pursue this, leaving a scholarly gap for the present chapter to fill. Cf. Parsons, *Departure*, 157.

<sup>72</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 157, notes the biographical connections with Philip, Barnabas and Paul, but does not explore them further leaving a gap for the present chapter to fill.

<sup>73</sup> Brown, “How Acts Means”, 74–87, citing 86.

<sup>74</sup> Krishna Rayan, *Text and Sub-Text: Suggestion in Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987), 5; Charles A. Perfetti and Joseph Z. Stafura, “Comprehending Implicit Meanings in Text Without Making Inferences”, in *Inferences During Reading*, ed., Edward J. O’Brien, Anne E. Cook and Robert F. Lorch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1–18, citing 1–2.

*subtext* with a meaning beneath the actual words and actions.<sup>75</sup> There is a range of possible implicit meanings from a close-to-the-text or a *referential inference* within the text;<sup>76</sup> a *metonym* as a substitute for something else;<sup>77</sup> to an *elaborative inference* based on additional information from the reader's world beyond the text.<sup>78</sup> Since I have not been able to identify a suitable model for identifying textual implicitness, one is constructed for this chapter starting with the close literary context of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) and widening to the whole narrative.

A likelihood scale of probable and possible<sup>79</sup> assesses the hints of the broader kingdom of God topic.

(1) *Probable*. The most likely hint of the kingdom of God topic identified as (i) a *syntactical connection* to ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ),<sup>80</sup> e.g. “to Israel” (τῷ Ἰσραήλ) in 1:6; (ii) *the immediate narrative context* of the term having a related kingdom concept,<sup>81</sup> e.g. exorcisms indicating a clash between God and Satan's kingdoms in 19:11; (iii) a *suggestive story link* in close proximity to the kingdom topic,<sup>82</sup> e.g. Jerusalem or Rome as capitals of kingdoms in the literary-spatial settings of Acts 1 or 28; and/or (iv) a *connected word association*,<sup>83</sup> e.g. Jesus referred to as βασιλέα ἑτέρον in 17:7.

(2) *Possible*. This is a less likely, but nevertheless important, hint, identified as: (i) no syntactical connection; (ii) a related kingdom concept in a narrative context further away from ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ), e.g. exorcism in 16:16–18; (iii) a suggestive story link to the kingdom topic further away from ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ), e.g. Rome as a capital of an earthly kingdom in 18:2; and/or (iv) an indirectly connected word association, e.g. Herod ὁ βασιλεύς in 12:1 or βασιλεῦ Agrippa in 26:2.

A persuasive case for a probable or possible hint is built when several of these factors combine. This method of implicitness identifies the kingdom of God as

<sup>75</sup> Linda Seger, *Writing Subtext: What Lies Beneath* (Studio City: Michael Wiese, 2011), 2–3.

<sup>76</sup> Perfetti and Stafura, “Implicit Meanings”, 3.

<sup>77</sup> Brown, “How Acts Means”, 74–87, citing 86.

<sup>78</sup> Anne E. Cook and Edward J. O'Brien, “Passive Activation and Instantiation of Inferences during Reading”, in O'Brien, Cook and Lorch, *Inferences during Reading*, 19–41, citing 24.

<sup>79</sup> Taken from Smith and Tyson, *Acts*, 4.

<sup>80</sup> Perfetti and Stafura, “Implicit Meanings”, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Joseph P. Magliano and Arthur C. Graesser, “A Three Pronged Method for Studying Inference Generation in Literary Texts”, *Poetics* 20 (1991): 193–232, citing 196–97, discusses backwards and forwards inferences.

<sup>82</sup> Magliano and Graesser, “Three Pronged Method”, 198, discusses spatial and character inferences.

<sup>83</sup> Magliano and Graesser, “Three Pronged Method”, 195, 197, discusses the use of pronouns and the process of instantiation which assigns a referent to a particular noun category, e.g. bacon and eggs meaning a breakfast.

a broader topic in Acts as: (1) *an action or position indicating power, authority or rule* through the Holy Spirit and supernatural signs, wonders, and healings;<sup>84</sup> (2) *a heavenly kingdom* including the appearances of Jesus and the activity of angels;<sup>85</sup> (3) *Jesus* with the royal titles of King, Lord, and Christ/Messiah;<sup>86</sup> (4) *the kingdom mission instrument* including the apostles, Israel, Philip, and Paul; (5) *prayer* as a connection to God's rule;<sup>87</sup> (6) *a battle with Satan*<sup>88</sup> including exorcisms;<sup>89</sup> (7) *Israel's kingdom* in the past with King Saul, King Solomon, and especially King David, or in the present with King Herod or King Agrippa, and represented by Jerusalem, Judaea, and Samaria; (8) *the church* as a model kingdom community; (9) *earthly kingdoms* such as Rome (Caesar and officials), Ethiopia, and Greece; and (10) *the creatorial kingdom*<sup>90</sup> of God as Creator and Sustainer of the whole world.

The kingdom of God in Acts is not only a term within the literary structure and a broader topic within the story, but one aspect of the missional significance.

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<sup>84</sup> The miracles in Acts announce the arrival of the kingdom of God in a substantial continuity with the miracles of Jesus. See Fournier, *Lystra*, 207; O'Reilly, *Word and Sign*, 147, 152–59; Muthuraj, “Theology of God”, 46–51; Howard M. Ervin, *Healing: Sign of the Kingdom* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002); Holladay, *Acts*, 183.

<sup>85</sup> Angels suggest heaven's rule from the throne of God (see Isa 6:1–6). Cf. Walton, “Ascension”, who links angelic activity to the ascension. For references to angels in Acts see Chapter Five (§5.3.2.5, p.255, n.285).

<sup>86</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.1.3, pp.137–38) for Lord and Christ. Chapter Four (§4.3.3.2, pp.203–204) explores the Lord as linked to authority and power through Jesus's exaltation in Acts 2 and Christ as having Old Testament connections esp. to King David.

<sup>87</sup> Schreiner, *King*, 493; Keener, *Acts*, 1:750.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Luke 11:14–20. Darrell L. Bock, “The Kingdom of God in New Testament Theology”, in *Looking Into the Future: Evangelical Studies in Eschatology*, ed. David W. Baker (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 28–60, citing 43–44; Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 58. Jason Maston, “How Wrong Were the Disciples About the Kingdom? Thoughts on Acts 1:6”, *ExpTim* 126 (2015): 169–178, citing 172, as a battle over territory, namely who is going to rule the earth. For specific references to Satan in Acts see Chapter Four (§4.3.3.5, p.209, n.372).

<sup>89</sup> Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:11, 13–16. Cf. Luke 4:33–37, 41; 7:21; 8:2, 26–39; 9:1, 37–43; 10:17–20; 11:14–26. Pereira, *Ephesus*, 121, “the establishment of God's reign over men involves the destruction of Satan's rule over the world”; Muthuraj, “Theology of God”, 52, exorcism as a conflict between the power of the enemy and the kingdom of God; Shauf, *Theology*, 193–196, citing exorcisms as “an act of war against the kingdom of Satan”; Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 45, that exorcisms herald the kingdom of God “because as the Kingdom of Satan diminishes, the Kingdom of God grows proportionately”. Cf. Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*, SNTSMS 129 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 207–64; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2429–56.

<sup>90</sup> The term “creatorial” is from O'Neill, “The Kingdom of God”, 132, and is preferred to “creational” which can be understood that the kingdom is active in creating. Another possibility would be to describe it as the “creation kingdom”. Cf. McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*, 19–36, distinguishes between a universal kingdom (creation) and a mediatorial kingdom (redemptive) as two aspects of the kingdom of God; Scott W. Hahn, “Christ, Kingdom and Creation: Davidic Christology and Ecclesiology in Luke-Acts”, *Letter and Spirit*, 3 (2007): 113–138, citing 122, suggests that the Davidic kingdom is a renewal of creation.

### 6.2.3 Method for Exploring the Kingdom of God in Acts' Significance.

The theological significance of the kingdom of God in Acts is obscured by the argument that it cannot be derived from Acts alone,<sup>91</sup> the common assumption that ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) is simply a general summary of the Christian message,<sup>92</sup> and a focus on a single accompanying theological theme.

The first step in constructing a method for exploring the kingdom of God in Acts' significance is to seek textual objectivity by identifying the clusters of theological themes in close proximity to ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ). Close proximity means *syntactical connections* as parallel objects of the same verbs and/or appearing within the *immediate narrative contexts*.<sup>93</sup> However, the latter needs supporting evidence to be identified as a kingdom theme. Diagram XIII on the following page shows that the main theological connections to ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) are God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, Israel, church, and mission.

*God* has the closest *syntactical connection* with the kingdom through the use of the genitive.<sup>94</sup> This can be: (1) attributive suggesting the kingdom's innate divine quality; (2) possessive suggesting the kingdom belongs to God; (3) ablative suggesting God as the source or originator of the kingdom; (4) content as a kingdom full of God; and (5) subjective suggesting God reigns. This study explores which are relevant and also considers the close narrative proximity of God to 14:22; 19:8; and 20:25.<sup>95</sup>

*Jesus* is found in close proximity to all the kingdom of God references. He is both the subject who speaks about it in 1:3 and the central object of its proclamation in 8:12; 28:23, 31.<sup>96</sup> The titles, Lord, Christ, and King, may indicate that Jesus rules over the kingdom of God. This needs further exploration, but the fact he is infrequently present in the narrative undermines the assertion, at least in Acts, that the rule of God comes through the rule of God's agent.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:70–71.

<sup>92</sup> See later in this chapter (p.316, n.65).

<sup>93</sup> The *syntactical connections* are the genitive of τοῦ θεοῦ in all but 1:6 and 20:25, Israel (1:6), “the name” of Jesus Christ (8:12), Jesus (28:23), and the Lord Jesus Christ (28:31). The *immediate narrative contexts* are shown on Diagram XIII. Cf. Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 20.

<sup>94</sup> Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 78–112.

<sup>95</sup> Acts 14:15, 19:11 and 20:24, 27.

<sup>96</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1243, 1252.

<sup>97</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 754, commenting on Acts 28:23. Cf. Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 444; Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 21.

Diagram XIIITHEOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS FOR  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ACTSBeginning/"ACT I" (1:1–8:3)

Jesus 1:1–11

God the Father  
1:7Holy Spirit  
1:2**1:3**Holy Spirit  
1:5**1:6**Holy Spirit  
1:8Holy Spirit  
1:16  
2:1–13Israel 1:6  
Lord 1:6**MISSION**  
**1:8**Scripture  
1:20

<u>"ACT II"</u> (8:4–11:26)		<u>Middle</u> <u>"ACT III"</u> (11:27–16:40)		<u>"ACT IV"</u> (17:1–21:14)	
<b>8:12</b>		Jesus 13:38	Scripture 13:33–35, 41, 47	Lord Jesus 19:5	Scripture 18:28
<b>MISSION</b> <b>8:12</b>	Jesus Christ 8:12	Jews 13:46, 47	Salvation 13:47, 14:9	<b>19:8</b>	Holy Spirit 19:6
Holy Spirit 8:15–17		The Living God 14:15		<b>MISSION 19:10</b>	Jews & Greeks 19:10
		<b>14:22</b>		God 19:11	Lord Jesus 19:13, 17
		<b>MISSION</b> <b>14:21, 25</b>		Lord Jesus 20:21, 24	Holy Spirit 20:23
		Church 14:23	Lord 14:23	God 20:24, 27	
		Gentiles 14:27		<b>20:25</b>	
		Jews 15:31	Salvation 15:1, 11	<b>MISSION</b> <b>20:25</b>	
				Holy Spirit 20:28	Church 20:28

Ending/"ACT V"  
(21:15–28:31)Gentiles  
28:28Holy Spirit  
28:25Salvation  
28:28Israel  
28:20**28:23**Jesus  
28:23Scripture  
28:23, 26, 27**MISSION 28:31****28:31**Lord Jesus  
Christ  
28:31

*The Holy Spirit* connection is found with all references except 14:22. The link between the kingdom, the Holy Spirit, and mission in 1:6–8 sets up an expectation for the rest of Acts. However, this study explores why the kingdom of God continues to appear in Acts (20:25; 28:23, 31) even when the Holy Spirit is not manifestly operating.

*Salvation* only features alongside the references at 14:22 and 28:31. This study explores whether the limited connection places the emphasis more on the mission instrument than the mission.

*Israel* is closely connected to references at 1:6; 14:22; 19:8; and 28:23. This study explores whether the Jewish emphasis in Acts' Beginning at Jerusalem and Acts' Ending at Rome means the kingdom of God is particularly relevant to Israel as a mission instrument.

*The church* only appears close to the references at 14:22 and 20:25. This study explores the implication that this links to the struggle to become a mission instrument and also the suggestion that the church replaces the kingdom of God in Acts.

As already noted most of the themes identified are dealt with in various monographs on the kingdom of God in Acts. The one exception is a lack of an extensive study on the connection to mission, although many scholars note it<sup>98</sup> and some pursue certain aspects.<sup>99</sup> This chapter explores Johannes Blauw's assertion that mission is the actualisation of the kingdom of God manifested in a witness by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>100</sup> As already seen in this study, the literary shape of Acts suggests a particular focus on mission as a key theological theme with a restored Israel as a mission instrument, energised by the Holy Spirit, making a worldwide gospel proclamation. I propose to complete this study into missional significance by exploring the kingdom of God in Acts as a mission expansion.<sup>101</sup> This involves a continuation of Jesus's ministry,<sup>102</sup> the formation of a mission instrument, and the

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<sup>98</sup> See previous outline of scholarship on the kingdom of God in Acts (§6.1.2, pp.309–11, esp. p.310, n.33).

<sup>99</sup> E.g. Strom, *Symphony of Scripture*, 217–226; Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 269–311.

<sup>100</sup> Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 105.

<sup>101</sup> Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 105, "the proclamation of the gospel among the nations ... the manifestation of Christ's dominion over the world"; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 40; Shipp, *Reluctant Witness*, 40.

<sup>102</sup> Del Agua, "Evangelization of the Kingdom of God", 651.



advance of God's Empire.<sup>103</sup> This gives rise to expressions like "kingdom mission instrument", "kingdom mission", or "kingdom advance".<sup>104</sup>

This chapter now applies the method for exploring the kingdom of God within Acts' structure, story, and significance. In the same order and stages as Chapters Three to Five, Acts' Ending is given priority as an intended *culmination*, then Acts' Beginning as a *foundation*, and lastly Acts' Middle as a *pivot*. At each stage the method considers ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) as a narrative tool with literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, speech, and intertextual components; the kingdom of God as an implicit broader topic; and also in connection to missional significance.

### 6.3 Acts' Ending and the Kingdom of God

The *culmination* of missional significance for the kingdom of God is expected within Acts' Ending. This is explored by examining ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 28:31 and 28:23 within their literary contexts (§6.3.1), noting the broader implicit kingdom of God topic in 21:15–28:31 (§6.3.2), and establishing the connection to missional significance (§6.3.3).

#### 6.3.1 ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 28:31 and 28:23

As already noted the twin ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ references in Acts' final summary (28:30–31) and scene (28:16–31) function as structural markers for the finish of Acts, an *inclusio* for the intervening material, and as a framing device linked to Acts' Beginning (1:3, 6). Since ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is not replaced in Acts 28 with other gospel terminology, it is unlikely that the term only refers to national Israel as suggested by a Dispensational interpretation.<sup>105</sup> Instead the term is retained and significantly brings the narrative to a close as an exit strategy. As a final impression ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ informs the whole narrative. The term is defined by its function within Acts' story<sup>106</sup> as well as the surrounding theological themes. The context for ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in the final section of the narrative (28:16–31) completes its

<sup>103</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 2.

<sup>104</sup> Coppenger, *Community of Mission*, 75; Stetzer, "Evangelical Kingdom", 100.

<sup>105</sup> Mauro, *Gospel of the Kingdom*. For discussion of the issue from perspective of progressive Dispensationalists compared to the early Dispensational views see Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); Russell Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004).

<sup>106</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 16.

literary meaning. The term's function as a narrative tool is explored using literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, speech, and intertextual components.

*The literary-spatial location* of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ at Rome raises the question whether geographical territory is being “conquered” by the *missio Dei*. As previously discussed, it is unclear whether Rome concludes Acts’ mission expansion as “an (the) end of the earth” (1:8)<sup>107</sup> or whether the kingdom of God in Acts confronts the Roman Empire.<sup>108</sup> Rowe suggests a nuanced solution in which the gospel confronts Rome, not to replace it with Israel, but to transform it.<sup>109</sup> The appearance of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ at Rome makes a clear statement about *missio Dei* since, as Cassidy, puts it “in the heart of the dominant kingdom of the world, Paul preaches the kingdom of God”.<sup>110</sup> Acts appropriately closes with “all boldness” and “unhinderedly” (28:31).

*The literary-temporal component* of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ references focuses on the two years in 28:30. This implies missional significance since not only does the period of Paul’s freedom in Rome contrast with his time in prison at Caesarea (24:27), but it also mirrors his successful mission in Ephesus (19:10). Acts’ open-ended closure includes ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (28:31) as part of the *culmination* of missional significance. The framing with 1:3, 6 and the open-ended nature of Acts possibly suggests an ongoing invitation to the readers to become a mission instrument for the kingdom of God.<sup>111</sup>

*The character component* of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is Paul and the Roman Jews. Paul’s proclamation (κηρύσσω) (28:31)<sup>112</sup> and witness (διαμαρτυρούμενος) (28:23) of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ are activities which suggest he has an official status<sup>113</sup> in spite of

<sup>107</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.2.6, p.149) and Chapter Four (§4.3.2.1, p.192).

<sup>108</sup> For a summary of the debate see Steve Walton, “The State They Were In”, 26–28; Jeremy Punt, “Countervailing ‘Missionary Forces’: Empire and Church in Acts”, *Scriptura* 103 (2010): 45–59; John M. G. Barclay, *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363–87; Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1305–19.

<sup>109</sup> E.g. Rowe, *Upside Down*, 4, 87. Cf. Drew J. Strait, “Proclaiming Another King Named Jesus? The Acts of the Apostles and the Roman Imperial Cult(s)”, in *Caesar is Lord, Jesus is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies*, ed. Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2013), 130–145; Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, “Conclusion”, in McKnight and Modica, *Jesus is Lord*, 211–214.

<sup>110</sup> Richard J. Cassidy, “Paul’s Proclamation of *Lord Jesus* as a Chained Prisoner in Rome: Luke’s Ending is His Beginning”, in *Luke-Acts and Empire: Essays in Honor of Robert L. Brawley*, ed. David Rhoads, David Esterline and Jae Won Lee (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 142–154, citing 148. Cf. Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 227; Parsons, *Acts*, 349; Peterson, *Acts*, 722; Wright, *People of God*, 375; Smith, “Theology of Acts”, 531–32, 535.

<sup>111</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 367.

<sup>112</sup> This connects Paul with Jesus (Luke 4:43; 8:1) and the apostles (Luke 9:2, 60). Alexander, “Back to Front”, 217; Keener, *Acts*, 4:3772–73.

<sup>113</sup> See the introduction to mission means in Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124).

being a prisoner.<sup>114</sup> He continues to give an invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument alongside his own example. At this stage the recipients of Paul's message about ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ are unclear. It is definitely the Roman Jews (28:23, cf. 17–22) to whom Paul shows how Jesus and the kingdom promise belong together in the sacred texts (28:23).<sup>115</sup> However, the ambiguous “all” (πάντας) (28:30) possibly extends the kingdom message to the Gentiles.<sup>116</sup>

The *speech component* in which ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (28:23) is located, suggests that the kingdom of God is part of the invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument (28:25–28).<sup>117</sup>

The *intertextual component* includes the Isaiah 6:9–10 quotation (28:26–27) bracketed between the 28:23 and 28:31 references to ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>118</sup> As was seen in Chapter Three, the Isaiah quotation can be interpreted as an invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument.<sup>119</sup> The mention of the Lord's throne in Isaiah 6:1 suggests that the context of Isaiah's commission is the kingdom of God.<sup>120</sup> This is juxtaposed with King Uzziah's death suggesting a contrast between the failed kingdom of Israel and God's kingship.<sup>121</sup> The briefer quotation in Luke 8:10 not only has a mission context in the Parable of the Sower, but is also connected to “the mysteries of the kingdom of God”.<sup>122</sup>

The two ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ references in their context (28:16–31) contribute to the *culmination* of mission significance. Dunn argues that the concluding emphasis of Acts matches the initial emphasis and in effect answers 1:6.<sup>123</sup> However, whilst the mission expansion reaches Rome, it still remains very much a potential

<sup>114</sup> Acts 28:16, 17, 23, 30. For the literary emphasis on Paul's freedom in spite of being a prisoner see Chapter Three (§3.3.1.1, p.136 and §3.3.1.6, p.139).

<sup>115</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 754. See Chapter Three (§3.3.2.4, p.147) for the argument that the syntax of 28:23 allows the “Law of Moses and the Prophets” to be either the source of Paul's witness about ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ and/or the accompanying persuasion about Jesus.

<sup>116</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.1.5, p.139). However, the literary shape of the final section suggests that possibly the “all” is primarily focused on the Jews (see §3.3.2.1, p.142 and §3.3.2.4, p.146).

<sup>117</sup> As previously argued from the final statement (28:28), quotation (28:26–27), and speech (28:25b) in Chapter Three (§3.3.2.1–3.3.2.3, pp.141–45).

<sup>118</sup> See the previous comment in this chapter about the inclusio of the kingdom of God (28:23 and 28:31) in Acts' structure (§6.2.1, p.313, n.48).

<sup>119</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.3.2.2, pp.142–44).

<sup>120</sup> Andrew T. Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic-Theological Approach*, NSBT 40 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2016), 14–22.

<sup>121</sup> Evans, *See and Not Perceive*, 27.

<sup>122</sup> Luke 8:4–15. Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations*, 226–9.

<sup>123</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 356. Cf. Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 248; Polhill, *Acts*, 546.

outcome of the invitation to be a mission instrument (28:23). Even at 28:31 it is unclear whether ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is actually part of the mission message.

The broader kingdom of God topic in Acts' Ending is now considered.

### 6.3.2. The Broader Kingdom of God Topic in Acts' Ending

Reading backwards, Acts' Ending (28:31–21:15) has a number of probable or possible hints for the *culmination* of the kingdom of God topic.<sup>124</sup>

“The hope of Israel” (28:20) is a probable kingdom of God hint in a *suggestive story link* between Israel and the nearby ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (28:23). “The hope” is possibly the resurrection and/or Jesus<sup>125</sup> which also previously connects to Jesus's exaltation as king.<sup>126</sup> Some scholars suggest “the hope of Israel” answers the question about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel in 1:6.<sup>127</sup> If so, then Paul is bound as a prisoner (28:20) for the kingdom of God whose mission involves suffering.<sup>128</sup>

The Malta envelope (28:1–10) has possible hints of the kingdom of God in a battle with the realm of Satan in the symbolic victory over a snake bite (28:3–6)<sup>129</sup> and the subsequent healings (28:7–9).<sup>130</sup>

Paul's mention of an angel of God whilst on board a ship (27:23) suggests the possible presence of the kingdom of God even if there is no explicit direct intervention.

The kingdoms of Israel and Rome in Acts 25–26 have a *suggestive story link* to a possible kingdom of God topic. The frequently repeated reference to King (βασιλεύς) Agrippa,<sup>131</sup> as the last Jewish king suggests the narrative is possibly about Israel's kingdom in relation to the kingdom of God.<sup>132</sup> Paul testifies to his own

<sup>124</sup> See the previous outline of this approach (§6.2.2.2, pp.317–19).

<sup>125</sup> See discussion in Chapter Three (§3.3.2.5, p.148).

<sup>126</sup> Acts 2:25, 30–36.

<sup>127</sup> E.g. Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 66–69, esp. 67; Morgan-Wynne, *Pisidian Antioch*, 152; Justin Taylor, “Paul and the Jewish Leaders at Rome: Acts 28:17–31”, in *Paul's Jewish Matrix*, ed. Thomas G. Carey and Justin Taylor (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical, 2011), 311–26.

<sup>128</sup> The connection between the kingdom of God and mission suffering becomes clear when considering 14:22 later in this chapter. Cf. 9:16 for the mention of suffering as part of Paul's conversion-commission.

<sup>129</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 466; Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 261.

<sup>130</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, “The Kingdom, Satan and Demons”, in Morgan and Peterson, *Kingdom of God*, 153–178, citing 172–177.

<sup>131</sup> Acts 25:13, 14, 24, 26; 26:2, 7, 13, 19, 26, 27 and 30.

<sup>132</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 674. Cf. Gooding, *True to the Faith*, 390, suggests a link to King Herod in Acts 12 and a contrast to King Jesus in Acts 1.

Jewish heritage<sup>133</sup> and particularly the “twelve tribes” (26:7).<sup>134</sup> After recounting his own conversion-commission,<sup>135</sup> Paul seeks to restore Israel, represented by King Agrippa, to its mission task for the kingdom of God. Paul’s mission engagement with the kingdom of Rome is seen in his encounters with Roman characters,<sup>136</sup> his recurring appeal to Caesar,<sup>137</sup> and the previous mention of his Roman citizenship.<sup>138</sup> These are instrumental in his subsequent journey to Rome.

A further possible hint of the kingdom of God is found in the quotation of Exodus 22:28 which refers to the High Priest as “a ruler (ἄρχων) of the people” (23:5). The ἄρχων can mean a ruler,<sup>139</sup> but is mainly used in Acts of Jewish leaders<sup>140</sup> and of Moses, as a leader, judge, and prophet of Israel, foreshadowing the Messiah.<sup>141</sup> The LXX confirms the Messianic connection.<sup>142</sup> The quotation is significantly from the Siniatic covenant in which Israel were constituted as a kingdom of priests.<sup>143</sup> Scholars make the suggestion that the priestly function of God’s people (then and now) is missional in prayer and sacrificial service.<sup>144</sup>

Acts’ Ending brings a *culmination* to the missional significance in connection with the kingdom of God as both a term and a broader topic.

### 6.3.3 The Missional Significance of the Kingdom of God in Acts’ Ending

The main questions about mission identified in Chapter Two<sup>145</sup> and used throughout Chapters Three to Five are now connected to the kingdom of God.

(1) *The mission instrument of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Ending* is Paul on

<sup>133</sup> Acts 26:2–8, noting the frequent reference to Jews, Jewish or Jerusalem.

<sup>134</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 472.

<sup>135</sup> Acts 26:12–18.

<sup>136</sup> The chiliarch in Jerusalem (21:31–40; 22:22–30); centurion (23:17); two centurions and four hundred soldiers with seventy horsemen (23:23–33); Felix, governor of Caesarea (23:33–24:27); Porcius Festus, governor of Caesarea (24:27–26:32).

<sup>137</sup> Acts 25:10–12; 25:21. Cf. “emperor/Augustus” (σεβαστός) in 25:21, 25. BDAG, σεβαστός, 917, worthy of reverence, *revered*, *august*. Also κύριος (25:26) of Caesar when normally in Acts it refers to God or Jesus (only exceptions are here, of an angel (10:4), owners of the Philippian slave-girl (16:16, 19) and jailor’s address to Paul and Silas (16:30)).

<sup>138</sup> Acts 22:25–29.

<sup>139</sup> BDAG, ἄρχων, 140, one who has eminence in a ruling capacity, *ruler*, *lord*, *prince*. The term is used in LXX of Israel’s twelve princes (Num 17:6).

<sup>140</sup> Acts 3:17; 4:5, 8, 26; 13:27; 16:19. Also Gentile leaders (14:5; 16:19).

<sup>141</sup> Acts 7:27, 35. Cf. 7:37. Keener, *Acts*, 3:3277–3281.

<sup>142</sup> Gen 49:10; Ps 2:2; Mic 5:2; Is 9:6; 33:22; Ezek 37:22, 24, 25.

<sup>143</sup> Exod 19:6 within the Siniatic covenant literary unit of Exod 19:1–40:38. Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 24; Wright, *Mission of God*, 224–25, 329–33.

<sup>144</sup> Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 24; Wright, *Mission of God*, 224–25, 329–33. Nicholas Haydock, *The Theology of the Levitical Priesthood: Assisting God’s People in Their Mission to the Nations* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015).

<sup>145</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, pp.118–27).

his journey from Jerusalem to Rome. The use of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ to Jews (28:23, 31), with Isaiah 6:9–10 (28:26–27) as an invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument, was previously discussed.<sup>146</sup> Although the question about Israel's physical kingdom is not specifically addressed in Acts' Ending, the role of Israel in the kingdom of God is discovered in a spatially expanding mission. The ambiguous "all" (28:30) includes Israel as well as possibly extending to Gentiles.<sup>147</sup> The expectation that the church will function as "an instrument of the kingdom in the world"<sup>148</sup> does not materialise in Acts' Ending. This underlines the ongoing struggle to get Israel, either as a nation or remnant-church, to be a mission instrument.

(2) *The mission target of the kingdom of God in Acts' Ending* is Rome. As the centre of the Roman Empire this ensures that the mission expansion in Acts closes with a kingdom mission that potentially embraces the whole world.<sup>149</sup> However, the continued focus on Jews in 28:23 is more about forming a mission instrument than a strategy of mission.<sup>150</sup>

(3) *The mission message of the kingdom of God in Acts' Ending* focuses on Jesus. Scholars debate whether the close connection between the kingdom of God and "things about the Lord Jesus Christ" (28:31, cf. 28:23) means one or two messages.<sup>151</sup> The best solution is to see a distinction as well as a connection since as Tannehill concludes it is "the realisation of God's reign through the enthronement of Jesus at God's right hand as the royal Messiah".<sup>152</sup> However, the kingdom of God could be present,<sup>153</sup> future,<sup>154</sup> or probably a combination of both aspects due to the eschatological two comings of Jesus.<sup>155</sup> The title κυρίος indicates both a position of rule and authority in Graeco-Roman society and is also used of deity by Jews.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> See this chapter, p.325.

<sup>147</sup> See previous comments in this chapter, p.325.

<sup>148</sup> Van Engen, *God's Missionary People*, 113; James Emery White, *Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 135–37.

<sup>149</sup> Stetzer, "Evangelical Kingdom", 106–109.

<sup>150</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.325, n.117).

<sup>151</sup> See discussion in Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1252–53.

<sup>152</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:352.

<sup>153</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 542–43 cites Thomas. D. Bernard, *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament: Considered in Eight Lectures before the University of Oxford on the Bampton Foundation*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Macmillan 1900), 112, for the kingdom of God as a "distinct and present fact" in Jesus.

<sup>154</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 723.

<sup>155</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 4:3772.

<sup>156</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 76–82; Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, trans. Harold Knight and George Ogg (London: Lutterworth, 1969), 68–89.

Χριστός is a special Jewish word for a king as the Lord's anointed.<sup>157</sup> Alongside ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (28:31), κυρίως and Χριστός confirm Jesus is the king of God's kingdom. Salvation is not directly part of the kingdom message, unless the Gentiles of 28:28 are included in the "all" to whom Paul heralds the kingdom of God in 28:31.

(4) *The mission source of the kingdom of God in Acts' Ending* raises the question of whether there is a connection to the Holy Spirit. Youngmo Cho argues for a connection in Acts 28.<sup>158</sup> He contends that, throughout Acts, Paul is a Spirit-filled prophet and led by the Holy Spirit. However, the present study suggests this is not the case and there is certainly no record of it in Acts 28. Cho seeks support from the last mention of the Holy Spirit in 28:25, but this is a reference to the distant past, rather than a present, activity of the Holy Spirit. There is also no explicit mention that Paul's preaching in Rome is, as Cho suggests, by a specific empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit and the kingdom of God have a more complex relationship in Acts' Ending in which the kingdom is present without the Holy Spirit. I suggest the focus is on the potential for mission expansion through the invitation to be a mission instrument, rather than it actually being achieved.

Other references to mission sources are sparse in Acts' Ending. Jesus only makes one direct appearance (23:11) which endorses Paul's witness in Rome without specifically linking it at this stage to the kingdom of God. The "Word" motif does not appear in connection with the kingdom of God.

(5) *The mission means of the kingdom of God in Acts' Ending* involves verbal communication with both ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references.<sup>159</sup> In 28:23 Paul solemnly witnesses (διαμαρτυρόμενος) as an official representative to ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ along with the effort of a persuading (πείθω) about Jesus.<sup>160</sup> Ziccardi suggests that witnessing may imply a present experience of the kingdom,<sup>161</sup> but I have suggested throughout the present study that witnessing involves an invitation to be a mission instrument for potential future mission expansion.<sup>162</sup> In 28:31 Paul heralds (κηρύσσω)

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<sup>157</sup> Scott W. Hahn, "Political and Eschatological Language in Luke", in Bartholomew, Green and Thisleton, *Reading Luke*, 157–177, citing 163. Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 76–78; Ferdinand Hahn, *Titles of Jesus*, 103–239; Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, 55–58; Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse*, WUNT 2.142 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001); Walton, "Jesus", 128–29.

<sup>158</sup> Cho, *Spirit*, 190–94.

<sup>159</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 156–57; Puskas, *Conclusion*, 50; Johnson, *Acts*, 470; Stevens, *Acts*, 564.

<sup>160</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 117–18.

<sup>161</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 59.

<sup>162</sup> See §2.2.6.4, p.124; §3.3.2.7, pp. 150–51; and §4.4, p.223.

ἡ βασιλεία as an official announcement.<sup>163</sup> The connection with “teaching (διδάσκω) the things about Jesus” suggests that Paul is teaching others to be a kingdom mission instrument alongside his own example which follows that of Jesus. The whole of Acts may have this aim since both διδάσκω and ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ are framing devices in 1:1 and 28:31. Whilst bold speaking (παρρησιάζομαι) is not used in relation to the kingdom of God in Acts’ Ending, the noun παρρησία is used in 28:31 to suggest courage in the face of opposition.

Although the narrative is only brief, Rome is notable as the only place in Acts where ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is not connected to supernatural manifestations. The absence of these may suggest that the mission decline from 19:21 is not fully reversed by the end of Acts.<sup>164</sup>

(6) *The mission success of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Ending* is limited. There is no mention of the kingdom of God at Malta, but there is a possible hint with the victory over Satan symbolised in Paul’s snake-bite (28:3–6) and healings (28:8–9). At Rome there is some success amongst the Roman Jews after Paul solemnly witnesses to the kingdom of God (28:24). Although the final summary shows the kingdom of God boldly and unhinderedly heralded, there is no explicit mention of a successful outcome as would reasonably be expected in the closure of Acts.

(7) *The mission suffering of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Ending* is largely absent. Contrary to Parsons’s suggestion, the immediate context of the kingdom of God is not always conflict or confrontation.<sup>165</sup> The increasingly positive presentation of Paul’s “freedom” throughout Acts’ Ending and especially at Rome in spite of him being under house arrest questions whether suffering is always necessary for furthering the kingdom mission.

The same method is now repeated in assessing the kingdom of God in Acts’ Beginning.

#### 6.4 Acts’ Beginning and the Kingdom of God

The *foundation* of missional significance for the kingdom of God is expected within Acts’ Beginning. This is explored by examining ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (1:3) and ἡ βασιλεία (1:6) within their literary context (§6.4.1), noting the broader kingdom of

<sup>163</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.124, n.623).

<sup>164</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.4, p.169).

<sup>165</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 256.



God topic in 1:1–8:3 (§6.4.2), and establishing the connection to missional significance (§6.4.3).

#### 6.4.1 ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in 1:3 and 1:6

As already noted the twin ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references in Acts' first summary (1:1–5) and at the start of the first scene (1:6–11) function as structural markers for the start of Acts, form an *inclusio* for the first summary, and are a framing device linked to Acts' Ending (28:23, 31). The references are part of an entrance strategy which creates a first impression and sets a *foundation* with the narrative theme of apostolic witness to the kingdom of God.<sup>166</sup>

The focus in this study is on the literary shape of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts' Beginning rather than the historical, biblical, and theological backgrounds, or an assumption that the term is a metonym for the gospel.<sup>167</sup> The literary context of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in the first section (1:1–11) commences its meaning in Acts. The start is not expected to have the fullness of content arrived at in the finish.<sup>168</sup> Literary-spatial, literary-temporal, and character components show how ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) operates as a narrative tool in Acts' Beginning.<sup>169</sup>

*The literary-spatial location* of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) at Acts' start is Jerusalem with its Old Testament background as the capital of Israel's kingdom.<sup>170</sup> Israel's connection to the kingdom of God is fiercely debated<sup>171</sup> since Israel's part in the final restoration is not fully answered in Acts.<sup>172</sup> A key issue is whether the question about ἡ βασιλεία (1:6) is totally misguided in temporal and spatial aspects

<sup>166</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Acts* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 22.

<sup>167</sup> It was previously noted that this is the common assumption of many scholars (see p.316, n.65 in this chapter).

<sup>168</sup> As previously explained the focus on Acts' literary shape in this study precludes a wider exploration of "the kingdom of God" theme carried forward from Luke's Gospel (see previous comments in this chapter, §6.1.2, pp.309–10).

<sup>169</sup> The speech and intertextual components are not relevant to ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references at 1:3, 6. However, they are useful when considering the broader topic.

<sup>170</sup> For Jerusalem see Chapter Four (§4.3.1.12, p.186, n.132). For the kingdom of Israel see 1 Sam 8; 2 Sam 7:11–16; 1 Kgs 9:5; Isa 9:7.

<sup>171</sup> The debate is whether the kingdom of God is retained by a transformed Israel or transferred to the church. The basic positions are: (1) Israel replaced by the church (amillennial or replacement theology); (2) Israel temporarily set aside by the church age (premillennial); and (3) Israel restored in the end-times church (postmillennialism). Cf. Darrell L. Bock, ed., *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, CPBT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999); Chad Brand, ed., *Perspectives on Israel and the Church: 4 Views*, CPBT (Nashville, Broadman & Holman, 2015); Steven D. Aguzzi, *Israel, the Church and Millenarianism: A Way Beyond Replacement Theology*, RNCTRTBS (New York: Taylor & Francis; Routledge, forthcoming).

<sup>172</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:41; Newman, "Acts", 443.

of the kingdom,<sup>173</sup> limited needing correction,<sup>174</sup> or largely correct asking whether this is time for “die endzeitliche Aufrichtung des Reiches”.<sup>175</sup>

Although ἡ βασιλεία does not have the qualifying τοῦ θεοῦ as in 1:3, there is nothing to suggest two different kingdoms. The dative τῷ Ἰσραήλ can have a range of meanings including: (1) “to” (which is ambiguous); (2) “in, on or upon” (locative) suggesting the more specific restoration of the kingdom in Israel; or (3) “with or by” (instrumental) which is closest to a mission instrument idea since the restoration is through the means of Israel or as NEB translates it as “to once again establish the sovereignty of Israel”.<sup>176</sup>

Sleeman argues that “the kingdom” is a philosophical thirdspace which includes both “spiritual” and physical aspects.<sup>177</sup> Pressing this further I agree with Jason Maston who shows from the Old and New Testament that the kingdom is territorial,<sup>178</sup> political,<sup>179</sup> and national<sup>180</sup> in a realm as well as a rule.<sup>181</sup> The apostle’s question is therefore appropriate.<sup>182</sup> They are unlikely to be ignorant<sup>183</sup> after the forty days period of completed instruction about the kingdom of God. Also the question addresses Jesus as restoring the kingdom to Israel<sup>184</sup> in the light of his previous teaching about the kingdom of God (1:3).

In addition, Jesus’s answer neither rebukes nor ignores the question, but clarifies the restoration of the kingdom.<sup>185</sup> Restoration implies something has been lost and needs to be recovered.<sup>186</sup> There is no setting aside the physical, but Jesus’s answer relates the restoration of the kingdom to the coming of the Holy Spirit and mission. The coming of the Holy Spirit was expected to accompany the restoration of

<sup>173</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: To the Ends of the Earth*, BST (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1991) 41; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 64; Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 1:64, 70–71; Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 139.

<sup>174</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 8, 10; Larkin, “Acts”, 379; Longenecker, “Acts”, 718.

<sup>175</sup> Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, 1:201, “the eschatological restoration of the kingdom”.

<sup>176</sup> Barclay M. Newman, “Translating ‘The Kingdom of God’ Outside the Gospels”, *BT* 29 (1978): 225–231, citing 225.

<sup>177</sup> Sleeman, *Geography*, 79. See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.4, p.90, n.322).

<sup>178</sup> Maston, “Acts 1:6”, 171–73, for creation, the temple as the royal throne, the kingdom of Israel, a physical locality (Luke 11:17–18), a battle with Satan over territory (Luke 4:5–7), originating from heaven but visible on earth (John 18:33, 36; Luke 11:2).

<sup>179</sup> Maston, “Acts 1:6”, 173–76, for Daniel’s reference to kingdoms (Dan 2 and 7); the context of Roman rule (Luke 1:5; 2:1–2; Acts 17:6–7).

<sup>180</sup> Maston, “Acts 1:6”, 176–77, for the restoration of Israel (Luke 1:67–75; 24:21; Acts 3:19–21) and blessings to the world (Isa 2:2–4; Ps 2:10–12; Luke 2:32).

<sup>181</sup> Maston, “Acts 1:6”, 172.

<sup>182</sup> Maston, “Acts 1:6”, 178.

<sup>183</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 106; McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*, 393.

<sup>184</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 104–105.

<sup>185</sup> Moore, *Kingdom of Christ*, 119. Cf. Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 574.

<sup>186</sup> BDAG, ἀποκαθίστημι/ἀποκαθιστάνω, 111–12.

the kingdom of God to Israel.<sup>187</sup> The apostles' Holy-Spirit-empowered witness connects the restoration to the formation of the mission instrument,<sup>188</sup> the activity of mission,<sup>189</sup> and the outcome of worldwide salvation.<sup>190</sup> Cho suggests that the context of 1:6–8 does not fit either a spiritual or physical restoration, but instead the renewal of the mission calling.<sup>191</sup> This study brings together the spiritual and physical aspects of the kingdom of God in a mission expansion.

Surprisingly ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) is never actually mentioned in Jerusalem. Cho suggests this is perhaps because Jesus completed the kingdom message to Jerusalem and the apostles would take it to the world.<sup>192</sup> John McLean suggests that the timing of Israel's restoration is in God's hands.<sup>193</sup> I propose a third explanation is the function of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) as indicating mission expansion within Acts' structure and story. The question about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (1:6) arises out of the preceding summary (1:1–5) and creates a theological *subtext* for what follows in 1:6–8, Acts 1, and the whole of Acts' narrative.<sup>194</sup>

The references to Judaea and Samaria, and the “end of the earth” (1:8) suggest a universal spatial expansion of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>195</sup> Scott Hahn sees it as a literal restoration of the Davidic kingdom.<sup>196</sup> However, the expansion does not start in Acts' Beginning. The Mount of Olives (1:12) is a further literary-spatial hint for ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) as the site of the ascension leading to the reign of Jesus. It is also the location for the final battle which leads to the “Lord being king over the whole earth”.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Joel 2:28–32. Cf. Num 11:29; Isa 11:2; 32:15; 42:1; 44:3; 59:21; 61:1; Ezek 11:19; 36:26–27; 37:14; 39:29.

<sup>188</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 29.

<sup>189</sup> David L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 90. Cf. Wall, “Acts”, 42; Heikki Räisänen, “The Redemption of Israel: A Salvation-Historical Problem in Luke-Acts”, in *Challenges to Biblical Interpretation: Collected Essays 1991–2000*, BibInt 59 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 61–81, citing 66.

<sup>190</sup> Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 91–96, citing 96.

<sup>191</sup> Cho, *Spirit*, 182. This corrects the amillennialist's over-spiritualised remnant salvation which focuses on the church and the over-eschatologised pre-millennialist's national restoration of Israel.

<sup>192</sup> Cho, *Spirit*, 185.

<sup>193</sup> John A. McLean, “Did Jesus Correct the Disciples View of the Kingdom?”, *BSac* 151 (1994): 215–27, citing 226.

<sup>194</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 42.

<sup>195</sup> Spencer *Journeying*, 36; Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 95; Stevens, *Acts*, 156; Uytanlet, *Luke-Acts*, 233–35.

<sup>196</sup> Hahn, “Christ, Kingdom and Creation”, with Jerusalem as David's city, Judaea his tribal land, Samaria representing David's nation in northern Israel and the Gentiles as David's vassals.

<sup>197</sup> Zech 14:1–4, 9. See Spencer, *Journeying*, 38; Zwiép, *Ascension*, 108–109.

*The literary-temporal component* of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts begins with Jesus's resurrection. The forty days period (1:3) is probably both symbolic and literal.<sup>198</sup> Symbolically the forty days link to the kingdom of God since the same period is mentioned in connection Moses and the people of God at Sinai being made a "kingdom of priests"<sup>199</sup> and Jesus refusing "the kingdoms of the world" offered to him by the devil.<sup>200</sup> Literally, the forty days in 1:3 prepares the apostles for a mission expansion (cf. 1:6–8) with a complete and thorough instruction in the many aspects or "the things about" (τὰ περὶ) ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. Jesus expands the theme in the light of his preceding death and resurrection.<sup>201</sup> The use of διδάσκω (1:1) and ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ as a framing device for Acts (cf. 28:31) suggests that Acts' narrative expounds the theme.

*The character component* of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) involves Jesus who by his resurrection and ascension is exalted as king.<sup>202</sup> The forty days of kingdom proclamation involves what Jesus began to do and teach in presenting himself alive with proofs (1:3) and giving instructions through the Holy Spirit (1:2). The responsibility for proclaiming ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ passes to those present at his ascension (1:9). The instruction concludes with a link between the kingdom, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the worldwide mission.

The two ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references in their context (1:1–11) are part of the *foundation* of missional significance. Jesus's lengthy instruction prepares the apostles to be a mission instrument for the kingdom of God.

The broader kingdom topic is now considered in 1:1–8:3.

#### 6.4.2 The Broader Kingdom of God Topic in Acts' Beginning

Acts 1:1–8:3 provides the *foundation* for the broader kingdom of God topic based on probable or possible hints.<sup>203</sup>

The reconstitution of the Twelve (1:15–26) is a *suggestive story link* giving a possible kingdom of God hint. It begins to show how the kingdom of Israel becomes again the kingdom of God. The twelve apostles in conjunction with Jesus the Messianic king rule over the twelve tribes of a restored kingdom of God expressed

<sup>198</sup> See Chapter Four (§4.3.1.9, pp.184–85).

<sup>199</sup> Exod 19:6. Cf. Exod 24:18; 34:27–28.

<sup>200</sup> Luke 4:5–6 in 4:1–13.

<sup>201</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 32; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:13–14.

<sup>202</sup> Maile, "Ascension", 55–56; Walton, "Ascension", 60.

<sup>203</sup> See the previous outline of this approach (§6.2.2.2, pp.317–19).

through Israel.<sup>204</sup> The very act of prayer implies a dependence upon the sovereignty of God as king over his kingdom (1:14, 24). Peter refers to the Holy Spirit speaking through David. This first mention in Acts of Israel's past king hints that the kingdom of God is behind what is happening. The LXX uses "a kingdom of a Lord" (βασιλείας κυρίου) in relation to the Davidic monarchy (1 Chr 28:5; 2 Chr 13:8).<sup>205</sup> The two quotations of Davidic Psalms (69:25; 109:8) imply a kingly and divine assent for the reconstitution of the Twelve after Judas's failure in the mission task.<sup>206</sup> The rejection of David in both Psalms gives a background to Jesus's mission suffering as the rejected king restoring God's kingdom.<sup>207</sup> The reconstitution of the Twelve as a remnant suggests the start of the restoration of Israel in fulfilment of the kingdom of God references (1:3, 6). The mention of witness (1:22, cf. 1:8) confirms that the lengthy section is about restoration as a corporate mission instrument. This becomes evident with a focus on Peter (and John) as the spokesman for the group.<sup>208</sup> Neither Matthias nor the other apostles are individually mentioned by name again in Acts.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2:1–13)<sup>209</sup> begins to restore ἡ βασιλεία (1:6), fulfil Jesus's promise (1:8), and equip the restored mission instrument. The restored remnant in Jerusalem and Israel's Diaspora (2:9–11) are *suggestive story links* as possible hints of a kingdom for Israel. The first mention of Rome (2:10) implies a coming worldwide kingdom of God. Peter's explanatory speech connects the Holy Spirit to the final eschatological kingdom of the Old Testament prophets in "the last days" (2:17) and "the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord" (2:20).<sup>210</sup> The two further quotations from King David, Psalms 16:8–11 (2:25b–28) and 110:1 (2:34b–35), link the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to Jesus's enthronement by the resurrection and ascension. Psalm 16:8, 11 speak of Jesus on the right hand (side) of God. In the ancient world the right hand

<sup>204</sup> Luke 22:29–30. Jervell, *People of God*, 75–77, 89, 93–94; Peter K. Nelson, *Leadership and Discipleship: A Study of Luke 22:24–30*, SBLDS 138 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1994), 222; Estrada, *Followers to Leaders*, 167–178; Bauckham, "Restoration of Israel", 469–77.

<sup>205</sup> Scott W. Hahn, "Kingdom and Church in Luke-Acts. From Davidic Christology to Kingdom Ecclesiology", in Bartholomew, Green and Thiselton, *Reading Luke*, 294–326, citing 295.

<sup>206</sup> See discussion in Chapter Four that the replacement is due to Judas' failure rather than his death (see §4.3.3.1, p.200).

<sup>207</sup> Cf. 2:23, 36; 3:18; 4:27; 5:30. Keener, *Acts*, 1:765; Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 232, 247, 253.

<sup>208</sup> Acts 2:14; 3:1, 12; 4:8, 19; 5:29.

<sup>209</sup> Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 113–14; Thompson, *One Lord*, 64; Keener, *Spirit*, 201.

<sup>210</sup> Joel 2:31; Obad 15, 21; Zeph1:14; 3:15; Zech 14:1, 9.

rather than the left was more valuable because its loss was a handicap to the warrior. Consequently the term “right hand” abstractly refers to a position of honour or power next to a royal figure such as a king and even God.<sup>211</sup> Psalm 110:1–4 refers to the kingship of Jesus and the victory over his enemies.<sup>212</sup> Peter’s second speech confirms the restoration of the kingdom of God has begun and will reach a final culmination (3:21, cf. 1:6).<sup>213</sup>

Possible hints of the kingdom of God appear in the *suggestive story links* of the model prayer which acknowledges God’s sovereignty within the context of persecution (4:24–30).<sup>214</sup> The prayer implies the kingship of God since the title *δεσπότης* (4:24) is frequently used in LXX to suggest absolute and undisputed authority and control.<sup>215</sup> The declaration that God “made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them”, points to a world-wide creatorial kingdom.<sup>216</sup> Once again the Holy Spirit is mentioned as speaking through King David<sup>217</sup> in the quotation of Psalm 2:1–2 (4:25–26). This Psalm has a kingdom of God theme in “the One enthroned in heaven” (v4) installing his King on Zion (v6) so that he might rule the nations (v9). The restoration of God’s kingdom through Israel results in a worldwide mission that has the nations as an inheritance and the ends of the earth as a possession (v8). Back in Acts, the kingdom triumph in Jesus is over Herod (the Jewish king), Pontius Pilate (the Roman leader), Gentiles, and the people of Israel (4:27).<sup>218</sup> As a result, God’s subjects/slaves (*δούλοι*) (4:29)<sup>219</sup> seek an equipping of bold speaking and “signs and wonders” to be a mission instrument for the kingdom

<sup>211</sup> BDAG, *δεξιός*, 217–18. David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 52–58.

<sup>212</sup> Alexander E. Stewart, “The Temporary Messianic Kingdom in Second Temple Judaism and the Delay of the Parousia: Psalm 110:1 and the Development of Early Christian Inaugurated Eschatology”, *JETS* 59 (2016): 255–70.

<sup>213</sup> Bolt, “Mission and Witness”, 197–98; Thompson, *Acts*, 108; Bauckham, “Restoration of Israel”, 477–81; Goran Lennartson, *Refreshing and Restoration: Two Eschatological Motifs in Acts 3:19–21* (Lund: Lund University, 2007); Niemelä, “Acts 1:8 Reconsidered”, 8–10.

<sup>214</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 229. Smalley, “Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer”, 70.

<sup>215</sup> Muraoka, *Septuagint Lexicon*, *δεσπότης*, 110. See 56 times in LXX. Only once here in Acts (see Witherington, *Acts*, 201). See also Luke 2:29 (another significant prayer); 1 Tim 2:1–2; 2 Pet 2:1; Jude 4 (the only explicit use of Jesus); Rev 6:10. Walton, “Mission of God”, 11.

<sup>216</sup> Salmeier, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 101. Cf. 14:15 and 17:24 in a pagan Gentile mission context. For discussion of OT background see Chapter Five (§5.3.1.1, pp.236–37).

<sup>217</sup> See previous comments in this chapter on reference to King David at 1:15 (see p.335).

<sup>218</sup> It is striking and deeply ironic that the people of Israel and the Jewish leaders are identified as taking the role from Psalm 2 of attacking God’s king, whereas in the Psalm it is the Gentiles who do this. Conversation with Steve Walton, Cambridge, March 2017.

<sup>219</sup> Within the context of the kingdom of God this suggests the idea of the king’s servants as a mission instrument. For an introduction to this theme see Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, p.119, n.564).

of God. The filling of the Spirit (4:31) is a further empowering for kingdom mission expansion (cf. 1:6–8).

Another possible kingdom hint in a *suggestive story link* arises in the first explicit mention of Satan in Acts (5:3) within the Ananias and Sapphira section (5:1–11). Although the concept of a battle between the kingdom of God and the forces of evil is not made explicit in Acts, the reference to exorcisms (5:16) suggests an underlying *subtext*.<sup>220</sup> Such opposition cannot stop mission success (5:14) and “the angel of the Lord” (5:19) implies divine intervention from God’s throne.

A further possible kingdom of God hint occurs in Jesus exalted to God’s right hand as ἀρχηγός and σωτήρ (5:31). The term ἀρχηγός is used of someone given special esteem as a leader or originator<sup>221</sup> and σωτήρ as a title for high-ranking officials and Roman emperors.<sup>222</sup> Jesus as the king of God’s kingdom brings about its mission expansion over all the world.

Stephen’s speech (7:2–53) contains a *suggestive story link* to the Old Testament kingdom of God in Israel. Although at first the spatial territory is of the Promised Land (7:3–7), the reach of God’s realm is more extensive since he calls Abraham in Mesopotamia/Haran (7:1, 4), Joseph in Egypt (7:9–10), and Moses in Midian (7:29–34). The influential positions that Joseph (7:9–14) and Moses (7:20–22) have in Egypt, the world empire of their day, foreshadow the final worldwide conquest of God’s kingdom. Joseph is described as a ruler over Egypt (7:10) and Moses over Israel (7:27, 35). Stephen concludes his speech by expanding the limitations of the earthly temple to the heavenly throne in Isaiah 66:1–2 (7:49). This quotation is notably within the context of the *culmination* of God’s worldwide and eternal kingdom in the new heavens and a new earth (Isa 65:17; 66:22). Abraham and Stephen’s proclamation of the Lord’s glory (cf. 7:2, 55) significantly echoes Isaiah 66:19 where it is proclaimed to Greece and the distant islands. The last Isaiah quotation in Acts (28:26–27; Isa 6:9–10) is also within the context of the Lord’s glory filling the whole earth (Isa 6:3).<sup>223</sup>

The overall connection with Jesus’s kingship is made by Stephen seeing the Son of Man in the position of royal honour and power at the right hand of God.<sup>224</sup> In

<sup>220</sup> See previously in this chapter (§6.2.2.2, p.319, n.88 and 89).

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Acts 3:15. Kee, *Good News*, 25.

<sup>222</sup> Ditt. *SIG*, 760; Ditt. *OGIS*, 458; *IGRR*, 4.12, 584. Cf. Oakes, *Philippians*, 138–40.

<sup>223</sup> For the discussion on the Isaiah 6 context see Chapter Three (§.3.3.2.2, pp.142–44).

<sup>224</sup> Brawley, *Centering on God*, 88. See previous discussion in this chapter on the right hand, p.335–36.

Daniel 7:13–14, the eschatological term “Son of Man” points to one who receives a world-wide “everlasting kingdom”.<sup>225</sup>

Acts’ Beginning contains the *foundation* of missional significance for the kingdom of God as both a specific term and a broader topic.

#### 6.4.3 The Missional Significance of the Kingdom of God in Acts’ Beginning

The main questions about mission are now connected to the kingdom of God.<sup>226</sup>

(1) *The mission instrument of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Beginning* is Jesus (1:3), the Twelve apostles as chosen witnesses (1:8, 22 linked to 1:6), Peter as the spokesman for the believers, and the wider community praying as subjects of God (4:29). The forty days instruction about ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ leads to a restoration of the kingdom to Israel through a formation of a mission instrument starting with the reconstitution of the Twelve and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The potential for a worldwide mission instrument is seen in the Jewish Diaspora (2:5)<sup>227</sup> and there is an expectation that the whole purpose of Acts is the establishing of a community, in which God is acknowledged as king, to be the nucleus of an empire that spreads to the uttermost parts of the earth.<sup>228</sup> The challenge to Israel, both as a nation and as a remnant known as the ἐκκλησία (the community of believers led by the apostles), is to be both kings and a kingdom.<sup>229</sup> Whilst the church in Acts is formed into a kingdom community within Israel,<sup>230</sup> the kingdom of God is a larger concept which includes worldwide mission expansion.<sup>231</sup> However, this does not happen in Acts’ Beginning. Instead the focus is on the remnant challenging Israel to become a mission instrument. This could explain why there is no mention of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in Jerusalem.

<sup>225</sup> Cf. Luke 22:69. Schreiner, *King*, 477; Hahn, *Titles of Jesus*, 21–67; Dan G. McCartney, “Ecce Homo: The Coming of the Kingdom as the Restoration of Human Vicegerency”, *WTJ* 56 (1994): 1–21, citing 10, 12; Sabbe, “Son of Man”, 241–279; Dockery, “Acts 6–12”, 426.

<sup>226</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, pp.118–127).

<sup>227</sup> Acts 2:5, “every nation of the (ones) under the heaven”. Thompson, *Acts*, 109–110.

<sup>228</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, 2.

<sup>229</sup> An idea borrowed from McCartney, “Ecce Homo”, 12.

<sup>230</sup> Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35 and 5:12–16. Strom, *Symphony of Scripture*, 240–256; Douglas A. Hume, *The Early Christian Community: A Narrative Analysis of Acts 2:41–47 and 4:32–35*, WUNT 2.298 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); Rubén R. Dupertuis, “The Summaries of Acts 2, 4, and 5 and Plato’s *Republic*”, in *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative*, ed. Jo-Ann Brandt, Charles W. Hedrick and Chris Shea, SBLSmyS 32 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2005), 275–290.

<sup>231</sup> For discussion see Moore, *Kingdom*, 144–60. Cf. Ladd, *Presence*, 233; Bruce, “Kingdom”, 266; Burrows, “Kingdom and Mission”, 12–13.



(2) *The mission target of the kingdom of God in Acts' Beginning* is focused on Jews within Jerusalem. The apostles, as witnesses for, and of, Jesus, seek the restoration of Israel.<sup>232</sup> They offer salvation<sup>233</sup> and the empowering of the Spirit<sup>234</sup> so that the nation may become a mission instrument for the kingdom of God.

(3) *The mission message of the kingdom of God in Acts' Beginning* focuses on Jesus. He relates to the kingdom of God in three ways. First, Jesus is the exalted king of the kingdom by his resurrection and ascension (5:31).<sup>235</sup> He also has the royal titles of *κύριος* and *Χριστός*.<sup>236</sup> Second, Jesus is an example of one who proclaims (1:3) and restores (1:6) the kingdom. Third, Jesus is the central object of the kingdom's proclamation including the Davidic Messiah in Peter's first speech,<sup>237</sup> the phrase "right hand (side)" recurring in connection with Jesus's position of royal authority,<sup>238</sup> defeating death (2:27), subduing God's enemies (2:35), and Christ's return.<sup>239</sup> The kingdom message includes salvation in the fullest sense and the two are explicitly connected by Jesus, as both Prince and Saviour, exalted to God's right hand (5:31).

(4) *The mission source of the kingdom of God in Acts' Beginning* is God through the *syntactical connection* to the kingdom, the Father setting the times and seasons for the restoration of the kingdom (1:7), and the *δεσπότης* addressed in prayer as controlling all things (4:24).<sup>240</sup> Jesus is also the one who teaches about the kingdom of God (1:3) and links it to the Holy Spirit and mission (1:6, 8). From this, Marguerat hypothesises that throughout Acts the kingdom is present in the action of the risen Lord.<sup>241</sup> However, Jesus's infrequent appearances make the claim hard to substantiate. Instead, there is a closer connection between the establishment of the kingdom and the Holy Spirit.<sup>242</sup> This includes the Holy Spirit's involvement in the appointment and/or commanding of the apostles (1:2), the instruction about the

<sup>232</sup> Niemelä, "Acts 1:8 Reconsidered", 1, 8, 9, 11.

<sup>233</sup> Acts 2:21; 2:38a, 40; 3:19; 4:12; 5:31.

<sup>234</sup> Acts 2:16–20, 38b, 39; 4:31; 5:32.

<sup>235</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 51; Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, 29–41; Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:417.

<sup>236</sup> See the previous discussion in this chapter (p.319, n.86).

<sup>237</sup> Acts 2:25–36. Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 130–93; Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:13; Hahn, "Kingdom and Church", 296–98, 318–20.

<sup>238</sup> Acts 2:25, 33, 34, 5:31; 7:55, 56. See previous discussion in this chapter on the right hand, p.335–36.

<sup>239</sup> Acts 1:11, 3:21. Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 106–107.

<sup>240</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (p.336, n.215).

<sup>241</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 2:387.

<sup>242</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 109.

kingdom including the baptism in the Holy Spirit (1:4–5),<sup>243</sup> and empowering language (1:8)<sup>244</sup> linked to the Holy Spirit. The close connection to the kingdom implies the presence and activity of God’s royal power and authority. The “Word” motif, appears for the first time in Acts as a result of the kingdom-related prayer (4:32).

(5) *The mission means of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Beginning* include the verbal communication of μαρτυρέω (1:8) as official witnesses for and to Christ,<sup>245</sup> and διδάσκω as Jesus’s teaching (1:1, 3). The power and authority of the kingdom of God is shown through the means of “signs and wonders”,<sup>246</sup> the healing of the lame man (3:7–8), the shaking following the model prayer (4:31), and healings (5:12).

(6) *The mission success of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Beginning* is seen in the growth of the mission instrument as the Jewish believers increase from one hundred and twenty (1:15), to three thousand (2:41), to five thousand (4:4).

(7) *The mission suffering of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Beginning* is not made prominent at the start. Jesus’s suffering is mentioned briefly (1:3),<sup>247</sup> but the focus is on his resurrection and ascension. The opposition from the Jewish leaders develops in the apostles’ appearances before the Sanhedrin, their resulting imprisonments, and a culmination with Stephen’s death.<sup>248</sup> This reflects resistance to the mission instrument within Israel which paradoxically results in the mission beyond Israel.

## 6.5 Acts’ Middle and the Kingdom of God

The *pivot* of missional significance for the kingdom of God is expected within Acts’ Middle. This is explored by examining the four uses of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts’ Middle at 14:22; 8:12; 19:8; and 20:25<sup>249</sup> (§6.5.1), noting the broader kingdom of God topic in 8:4–21:14 (§6.5.2), and establishing the connection to missional significance (§6.5.3).

<sup>243</sup> Smalley, “Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer”, 64.

<sup>244</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1:79. links power with authority.

<sup>245</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 59.

<sup>246</sup> See Chapter Two as part of the mission means (§2.2.6.4, p.125, n.626).

<sup>247</sup> The connection between the kingdom of God and mission suffering is implied from the narrative of Luke’s Gospel. Cf. Luke 23:38–43. However, the emphasis is more on the ultimate success of the kingdom.

<sup>248</sup> Acts 4:1–22; 5:17–42; 6:9–14; 7:54–60; 8:1, 3.

<sup>249</sup> See Diagram XII, p.314.

### 6.5.1 ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Acts' Middle

From a literary perspective each of the four ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references, within its own context, develops from Acts' Beginning, and continues the journey towards what is found in Acts' Ending. Once again the focus on literary shape avoids treating ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) as a *metonym* for the entire gospel message.<sup>250</sup> The central reading used in Chapter Five explores 14:22 in “Act III” because of its important position near the centre of Acts' structure (§6.5.1.1); 8:12 near the beginning of “Act II” (§6.5.1.2); and 19:8; 20:25 located in the mission advance and decline either side of the “Act IV” midpoint (§6.5.1.3). Literary-spatial, literary-temporal, character, and speech components show how each ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) reference operates as a narrative tool.

#### 6.5.1.1 ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 14:22.

The central scene with its midpoint is an important stage for ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. The reference in 14:22 is just after the literary midpoint of 14:15. As part of a literary hinge ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ follows the inauguration of a pagan Gentile mission (14:8–20a) and is just before opposition to the mission within the church. The only appearance of the term in Acts within direct speech underlines its importance.<sup>251</sup> The main emphasis is a connection to mission suffering with troubles, distress, oppression, affliction, tribulation, or persecution (θλίψις)<sup>252</sup> forefronting the entering of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>253</sup> Scholars link this to future eschatological tribulations,<sup>254</sup> but I would argue that kingdom suffering is also present mission suffering as seen with Jesus<sup>255</sup> and Paul.<sup>256</sup> In particular at this point, Paul's sufferings are part of his mission instrument calling from 9:16.<sup>257</sup> The δεῖ links the sufferings and ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ to the divine plan rather than human achievement.<sup>258</sup>

<sup>250</sup> As is common amongst scholars. See previously in this chapter (p.316, n.65).

<sup>251</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 3:166.

<sup>252</sup> BDAG, θλίψις, 457. Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 351–52.

<sup>253</sup> Culy and Parsons, *Acts*, 282.

<sup>254</sup> Dan 9:20–27; 12:1–4; Matt 24:21, 29; 24:9; Luke 21:10–24. Cf. Conzelmann, *Theology*, 98–99; Johnson, *Acts*, 254; Witherington, *Acts*, 428; Bock, *Acts*, 482; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:686; Keener, *Acts*, 2:2181; Schnabel, *Acts*, 613; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 382; Mattill, *Last Things*, 52–53.

<sup>255</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 254.

<sup>256</sup> Ambrose, *Off.* 1.15.58; Thompson, *Acts*, 55–70.

<sup>257</sup> Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 314.

<sup>258</sup> Gaventa, *Acts* (2003), 209. Surprisingly Cosgrove, “Divine Δει”, makes no comment on 14:22. See Chapter Three (§3.3.3.5, p.159, n.293).

*The literary-spatial location* of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ extends to Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch (14:21). These three cities form the basis of the three preceding sections (14:8–20a; 14:1–7; 13:14–52) which portray the sufferings of Paul and Barnabas.<sup>259</sup> Marguerat is right, “Le discours n’est pas théorique: les Lycaoniens ont été témoins des tourments infligés aux missionnaires”.<sup>260</sup> Paul and Barnabas return to the three cities and courageously speak about ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>261</sup> The return journey goes to pagan Gentiles (Lystra), a mixture of Jews and Gentiles affected by signs and wonders (Iconium), and those impacted by the Old Testament quotations (Pisidian Antioch).<sup>262</sup> In this way the impact of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ widens from the immediate section of 14:21–28 to include 13:14–14:20a. This becomes relevant when looking at the kingdom of God as a broader topic in Acts’ Middle.

*A literary-temporal context* is not given for ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 14:22. The question is whether “to enter into the kingdom of God” refers to a future hope or a present reality. Since the sufferings precede entry into the kingdom, most scholars conclude it is a reference to the future kingdom at death,<sup>263</sup> “the Parousia”,<sup>264</sup> or a final state of blessedness/eternal life.<sup>265</sup> The preceding exhortation “to remain in the faith” does not necessarily indicate just a future orientation for the sufferings, but can be the result of past or present sufferings as well. Without any future tense ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is conceivably a present reality. Some interpret the “entering into the kingdom of God” as initial<sup>266</sup> or present<sup>267</sup> salvation. However, the “remaining in the faith” (14:22) and ongoing suffering suggests something else is in view. Suggestions include a coming under the authority of God as king<sup>268</sup> and an association with Jesus’s suffering and glory.<sup>269</sup> The close connection between suffering and mission leads into the proposal that entering into ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ involves becoming a

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<sup>259</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:181.

<sup>260</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 2:78, “the speech is not theoretical: the Lycaonians were witnesses to the torments inflicted on the missionaries”.

<sup>261</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 279; Dupont, *Nouvelles études*, 352.

<sup>262</sup> See Chapter Five (§5.3.2.9), pp.266–67.

<sup>263</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 436; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 112.

<sup>264</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 125; Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 255.

<sup>265</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 2:686; Peterson, *Acts*, 414; Bock, *Acts*, 482; Schnabel, *Acts*, 613.

<sup>266</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 362, in n.128, citing Mark 9:47, 10:23–25, John 3:5 in support. However, his interpretation of these verses as initial salvation is ambiguous since in the main commentary he states that the kingdom is a goal for the believer’s path.

<sup>267</sup> Maddox, *Purpose*, 136–37, 153.

<sup>268</sup> John Hargreaves, *A Guide to Acts* (London: SPCK, 1990), 138.

<sup>269</sup> Longenecker, “Acts”, 937.

mission instrument through mission sufferings.<sup>270</sup> Paul and Barnabas assert that suffering is the destiny of every disciple. In each of the three cities there is the potential for the mission to continue alongside sufferings. At Pisidian Antioch, the disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit (13:52) implying an empowering for witness. At Iconium, Barnabas and Paul continue to preach the gospel (14:7). At Lystra, Paul gets up after his stoning and goes back into the city.

*The character component* of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ at 14:22 is its messengers, Paul and Barnabas, and the recipients who are Jewish and Gentile disciples<sup>271</sup> in Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch. The ambiguous “us” (ἡμεῖς) (14:22) can mean the message applies to the past, present, and/or future mission sufferings of Paul and Barnabas, the hearers of the message through the activity of “confirming the spirits of the disciples” and “encouraging to remain in the faith”,<sup>272</sup> both speakers and hearers,<sup>273</sup> or even extend to the author and readers of Acts.<sup>274</sup>

The term ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ at 14:22 in its context (13:14–14:23) connects the theme of suffering to the *pivot* of missional significance. The next reference is 8:12.

#### 6.5.1.2 ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 8:12

Structurally ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 8:12 is significantly located in the opening section (8:4–25) of “Act II”. This is the first time that the term recurs since 1:3 and 1:6.<sup>275</sup>

*The literary-spatial location* of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ at 8:12 is Samaria whose unexpected literary emphasis is underlined by placing it before Judaea as the first story location outside of Jerusalem. I propose that the reason for this emphasis is Samaria’s connection with the kingdom of God. This connection is not made explicit in Acts, but Samaria had an important, yet ambiguous, position as a buffer zone between Israel and the nations.<sup>276</sup> Scholars debate whether this means Samaria is significant as part of a mission movement towards Gentiles.<sup>277</sup> This is uncertain since

<sup>270</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 18.

<sup>271</sup> Acts 14:1; 13:48; 13:43 and 14:27.

<sup>272</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 280. Parsons, *Acts*, 202.

<sup>273</sup> Parsons, *Acts*, 203. Tabb, “Salvation”, 53.

<sup>274</sup> Thomas Morrison, *The Acts of the Apostles and Epistles of Paul: Arranged in a Form of Continuous History with Notes Critical and Explanatory, a Gazetteer of Places and Questions for Examination* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1864), 78; Newman and Nida, *Handbook on Acts*, 284.

<sup>275</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 328.

<sup>276</sup> Eisen, *Poetik*, 165. Cf. Sleeman, *Geography*, 71; V. J. Samkutty, *The Samaritan Mission in Acts*, LNTS 328 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 75–86, 196.

<sup>277</sup> Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 99–121, on Samaritans at Luke 9:51–56; 10:30–37; 17:11–19 as preparing for Acts 8; Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 69.

Samaria also symbolised the long lost ten tribes comprising the northern kingdom of Israel taken into captivity by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC. Many Israelites were deported and Samaria was formed by mixing Gentile captives with the Israelites who remained. Acts 8 possibly shows a reunification of the divided ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel (including Samaria) in the restored kingdom of God.<sup>278</sup> The coupling of Samaria and Judaea in 8:1 supports this.<sup>279</sup> Samaria becomes part of the mission instrument as the reconstituted people of God<sup>280</sup> confirmed by the connection with Jerusalem (8:14). As Johnson rightly suggests, “the kingdom of God takes on a geographical connotation: territory is being wrested from the power of demons and brought under God’s rule”.<sup>281</sup>

*The literary-temporal context* for ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is “in that day” (8:1a) which links the mission in Samaria with Stephen’s death<sup>282</sup> and Saul’s persecution. The “great persecution” (διωγμὸς μέγας) (8:1b) with apocalyptic hints<sup>283</sup> leads to a new Diaspora (8:4). This underlines mission suffering in relation to ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ seen at 14:22. The other literary-temporal context is the “sufficient time” (8:11) of Simon’s powerful influence in Samaria.<sup>284</sup> Keener argues that the context is inadequate to determine whether the kingdom of God is present or future.<sup>285</sup> However, the triumph over Simon’s lengthy “reign” suggests ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is a present reality, even if the term also has a future fulfilment.

*The character component* focuses on Philip who continues the transition from the apostles begun with Stephen. Marguerat aptly observes that “paroles et signes représentent la mise en œuvre du Règne”.<sup>286</sup>

The use of εὐαγγελίζω (8:12) connects the gospel with ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. This has mission connotations for both Israel and Rome. For Israel, εὐαγγελίζω

<sup>278</sup> Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 176–179; Bauckham, “Restoration of Israel”, 470–74; Jervell, *People of God*, 113–32; Gary N. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origin and History of their Early Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Reinard Plummer, *The Samaritans: A Profile* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 40–41; James T. Mace, “Messianic Reunification in Luke-Acts: Fulfilling Prophesied Davidic Inclusion of Northerners (Samaritans) in Restoring ‘All Israel’”, paper presented at BNTS Conference, University of Chester, September 2016, [http://www.bnts.org.uk/sites/default/files/papers/bntc\\_2016\\_acts\\_mace.pdf](http://www.bnts.org.uk/sites/default/files/papers/bntc_2016_acts_mace.pdf).

<sup>279</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 29, 280.

<sup>280</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 401.

<sup>281</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 151. Cf. Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 65–69, for link between magic, Satan and the kingdom of God in Samaria.

<sup>282</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 236.

<sup>283</sup> For the theme of persecution in Acts see διωγμός in Chapter Three (§5.3.2.1, p.247, n.199) and θλίψις (14:22) in previous discussion in this chapter on (§6.5.1.1, pp.341–43).

<sup>284</sup> For “sufficient time” references in Acts see Chapter Five (§5.3.2.3, p.248, n.203).

<sup>285</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2:1511.

<sup>286</sup> Marguerat, *Actes*, 1:293, “words and signs represent the implementation of the reign”.

points to the Messiah's mission (Isa 61:1) fulfilled in Jesus.<sup>287</sup> For Rome, εὐαγγελίζω was used of announcements for the emperor's birth, death, or military victories.<sup>288</sup> The announcement of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is a radical step for Philip since the Samaritans did not accept the Old Testament connections to a Davidic kingdom.<sup>289</sup> Philip also heralds (κηρύσσω) the Christ (8:5) who although not used in Samaritan theology, connects with their idea of "a taheb" as a coming restorer of the kingdom.<sup>290</sup>

There is also a demonstration of God's kingdom with a triumph over the demonic realm in the exorcisms (8:7).<sup>291</sup> The announcement and demonstration of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is connected to "the name of Jesus Christ" (8:12) as an accompanying source of mission.<sup>292</sup> The connecting conjunction καί can indicate a dual-aspect message, two separate themes, or possibly an exegetical use in which Jesus Christ gives a new perspective on the kingdom of God.<sup>293</sup> The resulting "great signs and powerful deeds" (σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις μεγάλας) (8:13)<sup>294</sup> further confirm the "invading kingdom of God".<sup>295</sup> The greater power of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ triumphs over Simon's magic<sup>296</sup> with the conversion of the Samaritans and Simon himself.<sup>297</sup>

The mission expansion of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ creates a "united kingdom of Israel".<sup>298</sup> This is confirmed by Jerusalem's endorsement through Peter and John (8:14)<sup>299</sup> and the subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit as an empowering separate to conversion (8:15–17).<sup>300</sup> The implication is that Samaria is now part of

<sup>287</sup> Luke 4:18–19.

<sup>288</sup> SEG, 490. Jon F. Dechow, "The 'Gospel' and the Emperor Cult: From Bultmann to Crossan", *Forum* 3.2 (2014): 63–87; John D. Crossan, *God and Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 147–48.

<sup>289</sup> Gooding, *True to the Faith*, 129.

<sup>290</sup> J. Macdonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans* (London: SCM, 1964), 362–71; Dunn, *Beginning*, 281, comments that usually it is Jesus Christ, so to leave Christ unidentified as here is quite exceptional. Cf. 8:12.

<sup>291</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 146; Wall, "Acts", 138.

<sup>292</sup> The "name of Jesus" at the intersection of the mission source and means has been previously thoroughly explored in this study (for a summary see Chapter Five, §5.4, p.345, n.831).

<sup>293</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 220; Newman, "Kingdom of God", 226, cites Today's Malay Version for 8:12 as "the Good News how God had established his rule through the means of Jesus Christ".

<sup>294</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter on signs and wonders (p.340).

<sup>295</sup> Pereira, *Ephesus*, 180.

<sup>296</sup> Conzelmann, *Acts*, 64; Johnson, *Acts*, 146–47; Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 71–74; Dirk van der Merwe, "The Power of the Gospel Victorious over the Power of Evil in Acts of the Apostles", *Scriptura* 103 (2010): 79–94, citing 88. See Chapter Five (§5.3.3.2, p.269 and §5.3.2.6, p.257, n.302).

<sup>297</sup> For a discussion of the Samaritans' and Simon's conversions see Chapter Five (§5.3.3.2, p.269, n.448).

<sup>298</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 236.

<sup>299</sup> Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 34–42.

<sup>300</sup> See the discussion of the Holy Spirit outpourings in Chapter Five (§5.4, pp.296–300).

the mission instrument. Wall is right that “Philip’s mission in Samaria and the conversion of the eunuch do not initiate the church’s mission beyond Israel, they are rather the climactic episodes in Luke’s narrative of Israel’s restoration”.<sup>301</sup>

The term ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (8:12) within its context (8:5–13) contributes the idea of overcoming Satanic power and expanding the mission instrument to the *pivot* of missional significance. The last two references to consider are 19:8 and 20:25.

#### 6.5.1.3 ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in 19:8 and 20:25

The two references surround the midpoint of “Act IV” located at 19:21. ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is in the pinnacle of the Gentile mission advance at Ephesus (19:8) and ἡ βασιλεία in Paul’s Miletus speech (20:25) occurs within the mission decline. The brackets around [τά] (“the things”) about ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (19:8) in the main text of NA<sup>28</sup> indicate that although accepted by the editors it is omitted by some MSS.<sup>302</sup> The use of τά suggests that ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ has many aspects and connections.<sup>303</sup> The use of ἡ βασιλεία without the qualifying τοῦ θεοῦ (20:25) does not necessarily mean the kingdom of Israel since the surrounding context links back to Paul’s Ephesian mission and 19:8.<sup>304</sup> However, as was seen at 1:6, the restoration of the kingdom of Israel is embraced within the restoration of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>305</sup>

The progression of Paul’s Gentile mission from the vision at Troas in 16:9 reaches a *climax* in the events at Ephesus surrounding ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in 19:8.<sup>306</sup> From 19:21 there is a decline towards Jerusalem before the mission to Rome is undertaken.<sup>307</sup> On the other side of the midpoint at 19:21, ἡ βασιλεία (20:25) both concludes the Ephesian mission and also prepares for Paul’s journey to Jerusalem. The two ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references operate as narrative tools within their different literary contexts of a mission advance and a mission decline. It is a good illustration of how literary shape reveals missional significance.

*The literary-spatial locations* are Ephesus (19:8) and nearby Miletus (20:25). The *immediate narrative context* of Ephesus is a battleground for the conflict

<sup>301</sup> Wall, “Acts”, 135.

<sup>302</sup> See NA<sup>28</sup>, Acts 19:8, omitted by B, D, Ψ, 1175, 1891<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>303</sup> The use of τά in 1:3 strengthens the case for it here.

<sup>304</sup> Bruce, *Acts* (1990), 433. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:973.

<sup>305</sup> See the previous discussion in this chapter, pp.331–34.

<sup>306</sup> For Ephesus as the pinnacle of the Gentile mission see Chapter Five (§5.3.4.2, p.278).

<sup>307</sup> This study has previously argued for 19:21 as a point of mission decline (see Chapter Five, §5.3.4.2, pp.279–81).



between the kingdom of God and Satan's kingdom.<sup>308</sup> The victory of God's kingdom involves the Holy Spirit outpouring (19:6), "the Word of the Lord" (19:10, 20), extraordinary miracles, healings, and exorcisms (19:11), "the name of the Lord Jesus" (19:5, 13, 17), the destruction of magic books (19:19), and power language (19:20). This is strikingly similar to what occurs at Samaria in Acts 8<sup>309</sup> and confirms the climactic nature of the Ephesian section within Acts' narrative.

The summons of the Ephesian Church elders to Miletus joins the location to Ephesus and in the following speech Paul reflects back on the role of ἡ βασιλεία in his previous mission. However, the literary-spatial separation away from Ephesus is in keeping with the less triumphal mood after the decline from 19:21. Paul's focus on reaching Jerusalem (20:16) makes Miletus potentially peripheral. However, the literary size of the Miletus section prevents this conclusion (20:17–38).

*The literary-temporal component* in Ephesus identifies the initial proclamation of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ by Paul in the synagogue as three months (19:8).<sup>310</sup> This suggests a period of completeness<sup>311</sup> and is the first occurrence since the forty days of 1:3 that a specific time period is directly linked to the kingdom of God. This link possibly implies that ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, or at least the proclamation of it, is a reign in time as well as being a rule and a realm. Paul's dialogue (διαλέγομαι) continues in the school of Tyrannus (19:9)<sup>312</sup> for a further two year period (19:10).<sup>313</sup> As a period of extended mission expansion the same period of time is significantly used for Paul's proclamation of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in Rome (28:30). Sandwiched in between these two extended missions are the contrasting "two years" Paul spent in prison at Caesarea (24:27).<sup>314</sup> The repetition of the same time period of "two years" suggests that the reign of God's kingdom triumphs over a period of human weakness and opposition.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 99; Steve Walton, "Evil in Ephesus. Acts 19:8–40", in *Evil in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Chris Keith and Loren T. Stuckenbruck. WUNT 2.417 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 226–34, concludes 234, that Ephesus is a battlefield with real evil defined by its rejection of and opposition to the gospel. However, he does not mention Satan or the devil probably because 19:8–40 does not.

<sup>309</sup> See the previous discussion in this chapter (p.345).

<sup>310</sup> Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Acts*, 4:48. Strelan, *Artemis*, 245.

<sup>311</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.5, p.93, n.355).

<sup>312</sup> The same verb διαλέγομαι (dialogue) is used in connection with the kingdom of God in 19:8.

<sup>313</sup> The time Paul spent in Ephesus is extended to three years in 20:31.

<sup>314</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.5.5, p.93, n.356).

<sup>315</sup> Stevens, *Acts*, 557, describes it as Paul being in the centre of God's will (19:10), moving off-centre (24:27), and returning to the centre of God's will (28:30).

*The character component* identifies Paul as the major character for both ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references. He is connected to five of the eight references in Acts<sup>316</sup> with only Jesus and Philip also proclaiming ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>317</sup> This suggests that the proclamation of the kingdom of God is connected to Paul's Gentile mission expansion, rather than Peter or the Twelve. Paul presents ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) to the Ephesian Jews (19:8) and the Ephesian Church elders (20:17, 25) who could be Jews or Gentiles. The Ephesian Twelve (19:7), as Jews connected to John the Baptist (19:3), possibly link to ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ since the symbolic number of twelve (19:7) echoes the Jerusalem Twelve (1:12–26) and points again to the restoration of Israel.<sup>318</sup> The vagueness of “about twelve” (ὥσεὶ δώδεκα) (19:7) does not remove its symbolism, but suggests the number is deliberately highlighted. As Johnson points out other vague references in Acts retain their specificity.<sup>319</sup> The idea of a renewed mission instrument amongst the Jewish Diaspora<sup>320</sup> is confirmed by their empowering with the Holy Spirit (19:6) and conceivably being the elders summoned to Miletus.<sup>321</sup> However, the Jewish refusal at Ephesus (19:9) to be involved with the mission expansion of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ leaves Paul as an example of the mission instrument broadening the mission to all the Jews and Greeks in Ephesus and Asia (19:10, 17).

*The speech component* places ἡ βασιλεία at Miletus within the context of Paul's farewell speech<sup>322</sup> as his only major speech addressed to Christians (20:18b–35).<sup>323</sup> “Behold” (ἰδοὺ) marks 20:25 out as having something important to say.<sup>324</sup> Paul's earlier mission in Ephesus is described as a “heralding” (κηρύσσω) of ἡ βασιλεία which foreshadows the same activity at 28:31.<sup>325</sup> The activity of κηρύσσω is connected with the two activities of “witnessing solemnly” (διαμαρτύρομα) “to the

<sup>316</sup> Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23 and 28:31.

<sup>317</sup> Jesus (1:3) and Philip (8:12). The other reference is in the apostle's question (1:6). Cf. Wall, “Acts”, 267.

<sup>318</sup> Bede, *Acts*, 19.7; Pereira, *Ephesus*, 102–105; Thompson, *Church*, 212; Haenchen, *Acts*, 554; Johnson, *Acts*, 338; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 96–97; Strelan, *Artemis*, 244; Fuller, *Restoration*, 254–57, 263; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2824.

<sup>319</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 338. Cf. 2:41; 4:4; 5:7, 36; 10:3; 13:18; 13:20; 19:34.

<sup>320</sup> Byerly, “Narrative Legitimation”, 239–40.

<sup>321</sup> For the discussion on the Ephesian Twelve (19:1–7) as possibly the Miletus elders who are given the task of continuing Paul's mission (20:28–32) see Chapter Five (§5.3.4.2, pp.286–87).

<sup>322</sup> See Chapter Five (§5.3.4.2, p.289).

<sup>323</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:252.

<sup>324</sup> For the use of behold in Acts see Chapter Five (§5.3.2.1, p.246, n.176).

<sup>325</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 522. Cf. 20:25 and 28:31 (see in this chapter, §6.3.3, pp.329–30).

gospel of God's grace" (20:24) and "reporting (ἀναγγέλλω)<sup>326</sup> all the plan of God" (20:27). Scholars debate whether the three objects of the activities are the same thing.<sup>327</sup> However, I agree with Ziccardi who helpfully argues that there are three distinct concepts within a comprehensive message with ἡ βασιλεία being God's kingship, "the gospel of grace" being God's favour, and "the plan" being God's overall sovereign control.<sup>328</sup>

Paul's statement that the Ephesians "will no more see his face" (20:25) precedes ἡ βασιλεία. Whether the statement refers to Paul's death or the end of his mission,<sup>329</sup> the statement encapsulates the kingdom mission expansion within both suffering and gospel triumph. On one side of ἡ βασιλεία, Paul asserts suffering is guaranteed as a mission instrument in completing the "ministry/service" (διακονία)<sup>330</sup> given to him by the Lord Jesus (20:23, 24).<sup>331</sup> On the other side of ἡ βασιλεία, Paul declares himself "clean from the blood of all people" in accomplishing the heralding of the kingdom mission (20:26).<sup>332</sup> This echoes 18:6. The idea of being responsible for the blood of others is drawn from the task of a watchman for a city found in Ezekiel's prophecy.<sup>333</sup> Paul hands this responsibility on to the Ephesian elders urging them to protect the church acquired through the blood of God's own (20:28).<sup>334</sup>

The four ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references in Acts' Middle are carefully located within the literary shape which reveals the *pivot* for missional significance. 8:12 in the opening section of "Act II" combines the inclusion of Samaria within the restored kingdom of God and the triumph over Satan. 14:22 at the centre of "Act III" relates back to Lystra (14:8–20a) as a reminder that the kingdom mission is about suffering as well as success. 19:8 is at the pinnacle of the second mission advance with a notable victory over Satan. 20:25 is a retrospective reminder within the mission decline from 19:21 and combines the past triumph of Ephesus with the future sufferings.

<sup>326</sup> BDAG, ἀναγγέλλω, 59, and also generically meaning to provide information, disclose, announce, proclaim, or teach.

<sup>327</sup> E.g. Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 391, thinks it is a fruitless task to try and distinguish them.

<sup>328</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 134–142.

<sup>329</sup> See Chapter Five (§5.3.4.2, p.289, n.693).

<sup>330</sup> See previous comment on the king's servants in this chapter (p.336, n.219).

<sup>331</sup> Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*, 129–142, making the case for the connection of Jesus to the kingdom of God in Paul's speech.

<sup>332</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:257; Witherington, *Acts*, 622.

<sup>333</sup> Ezek 18:13; 33:6. Cf. Marshall, *Acts* (2008), 351–52; Johnson, *Acts*, 362. See Chapter Five (§5.3.4.2, pp.277–78).

<sup>334</sup> NA<sup>28</sup>, Acts 20:28, MSS variants of 20:28b have either "the church of God", "the church of the Lord", or "the church of the Lord and God". Walton, *Leadership*, 94–98, concludes that the evidence points to the church of God (Father) which he obtained with the blood of his own (Son).

Hints of the broader kingdom topic are now considered.

### 6.5.2 The Broader Kingdom of God Topic in Acts' Middle

Acts' Middle (8:4–21:14) has a number of probable or possible hints for the *pivot* of the kingdom of God topic.<sup>335</sup> A central reading approach keeps the focus on Acts' climax by oscillating from “Act III” (11:27–16:40), then the preceding “Act II” (8:4–11:26), and lastly the succeeding “Act IV” (17:1–21:14).

The search for the kingdom of God topic in “Act III” begins with the central scene at Lystra (14:8–20a), then the preceding advance including the Pisidian Antioch section (11:27–14:7), and finally the decline from the succeeding Jerusalem section onwards (15:3–16:40).

*The central scene at Lystra (14:8–20a)* contains a probable hint in *the suggestive story link* of Acts' first encounter with a purely pagan Gentile audience at a pagan temple linked with pagan gods. The specific proclamation of the Creator as “(the) Living God” (14:15) suggests a creatorial kingdom over all the world as a correction to pagan superstition.<sup>336</sup> Stenschke notes “the kingdom of God captures what Gentiles needed to know about God and his relation to the world”.<sup>337</sup>

*The preceding Pisidian Antioch section (13:14–52)* contains a possible kingdom of God hint in *a suggestive story link* with the history of Israel (13:17–22), which Paul traces in a similar way to Stephen.<sup>338</sup> He significantly focuses on the establishment of Israel's kingdom, and by implication the kingdom of God, through the indirectly *connected word association* of βασιλεύς used of his namesake Saul (13:21)<sup>339</sup> and David (13:22). Paul shows that Jesus is the Davidic royal descendant confirmed by his resurrection<sup>340</sup> and the Old Testament context for his quotations points to God's promised king of a worldwide kingdom. The wider context of Psalm 2:7 (13:33b) includes God's king (Ps 2:6) with the nations as his inheritance and the ends of the earth as his possession (Ps 2:8). The same Psalm is quoted in the model of prayer (4:26; Ps 2:1–2).<sup>341</sup> Isaiah 55:3 (13:34b) mentions the summons of King

<sup>335</sup> See the previous outline of this approach (§6.2.2.2, pp.317–19).

<sup>336</sup> See Ps 146:6 for “the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them”, 10 “The Lord reigns forever”. Pervo, *Acts* 358, for suggestion that God reigns over the three realms of cosmos in Graeco-Roman philosophy.

<sup>337</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 237.

<sup>338</sup> See previous comment in this chapter on Stephen's history of Israel (p.337).

<sup>339</sup> Macnamara, *Chosen Instrument*, 267.

<sup>340</sup> Acts 13:23, 30, 33, 37.

<sup>341</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.336).

David and the nations. Psalm 16:10 (13:35b) is a Psalm of King David which mentions the idea of being enthroned at God's right hand (Ps 16:8, 11). The same Psalm is quoted in Peter's speech at Jerusalem (2:25b–28; Ps 16:8–11).<sup>342</sup> Isaiah 49:6 (13:47b) contains a reference to “an (the) end of the earth” which appears also in 1:8 as a response to the kingdom question of 1:6. Isaiah 49:7 links the kingdom mission to the image of worldwide conquest over kings and princes.

*The start of “Act III” (11:27–13:13)* has possible hints of the kingdom of God topic. First, Herod's opposition (12:1–4) is possibly because he views the proclamation of the kingdom of God as threatening his own dynasty.<sup>343</sup> Second, the church's victorious prayer (12:5, 12) implies the involvement of God's sovereignty. Third, the clear, but indirectly *connected word association* of ὁ βασιλεύς for Herod (12:1, 20). Fourth, the reference to Herod's royal throne (12:21) which is about to be overthrown.<sup>344</sup> Fifth, the kingdom of God triumphs both in Jerusalem and Caesarea with God's sovereignty in an “angel of the Lord”<sup>345</sup> rescuing Peter (12:6–11) and striking Herod dead (12:23). “The Word of God” continues to increase and spread (12:24)<sup>346</sup> in what Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo helpfully suggests is a territorial expansion of God's Empire.<sup>347</sup> The whole section is given a literary enclosure within the mission of Barnabas and Saul,<sup>348</sup> as a reminder that the kingdom of God is involved in the Gentile mission expansion of Acts 13. The possible hint of a kingdom of God *suggestive story link* occurs at Cyprus in the encounter with Bar-Jesus or Elymas, the Jewish sorcerer and false prophet (13:6–11). Paul's rebuke, “you are a child of the devil”, implies a clash between the kingdom of God and Satan<sup>349</sup> over the salvation of the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus.<sup>350</sup>

*The Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35)* follows the central Lystra scene. There is a possible kingdom of God hint in the quotation of Amos 9:11–12 (15:16–18).

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<sup>342</sup> See previously in this chapter (p.335).

<sup>343</sup> Ramsay, *Pictures*, 91.

<sup>344</sup> Thompson, “Thwarting the Enemies of God”, 103–104.

<sup>345</sup> Acts 12:7, 23.

<sup>346</sup> Pao, *Isaianic New Exodus*, 154–55. Cf. Thompson, *One Lord*, 141–143.

<sup>347</sup> Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo, *A Postcolonial Reading of the Acts of the Apostles*, StBibLit 147 (New York: Lang, 2012), 45–46.

<sup>348</sup> Acts 11:30; 12:25.

<sup>349</sup> Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 79–87.

<sup>350</sup> Acts 13:8, which explicitly states that Elymas the sorcerer opposed Paul and Barnabas and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

This refers to the restoration of David's tent (σκηνή) which could be a reference to the Davidic kingdom<sup>351</sup> and links to a worldwide mission expansion (15:17b).<sup>352</sup>

*The closing of "Act III" (15:36–16:40)* has fewer hints of the kingdom of God as might be expected with a mission decline. The Philippian earthquake (16:26) possibly implies divine intervention<sup>353</sup> and there is a possible kingdom hint in the Philippian slave girl's exorcism (16:16–18) as confronting Satan's kingdom. The use of κύριος for Jesus hints at his kingship (16:31).<sup>354</sup>

*"Act II" (8:4–11:26)* transitions Acts' story from the exclusively Jerusalem-focused "Act I" (1:1–8:3) to "Act III". The reunification of Israel and the triumph over Satan at Samaria (8:4–25) have already been considered in relation to ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (8:12). The Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch section (8:26–40) has possible *suggestive story links* to the kingdom of God. God sovereignly directs the mission with an angel of the Lord (8:26). The conversion of the eunuch who is the treasurer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopian kingdom<sup>355</sup> suggests that the kingdom of God invades the kingdoms of this world.<sup>356</sup>

Saul's significant conversion-commission (9:1–19) and resulting mission (9:19–30) have a possible kingdom of God hint in the rare narrative appearance of the exalted Jesus (9:4–6) repeatedly referred to as κύριος<sup>357</sup> and as "Son of God" (9:20). The latter term was used of Alexander the Great<sup>358</sup> and Augustus, the Roman emperor.<sup>359</sup> An indirect *word association* to the kingdom of God is made by mention

<sup>351</sup> Hahn, "Kingdom and Church", 319. Kee, *To Every Nation*, 181, links it to the Davidic dynasty through which God's rule is effective in the world. See discussion in Chapter Five (§5.3.2.4, pp.251–52).

<sup>352</sup> Thompson, *Acts*, 120–122. Wright, *Mission of God*, 348–49.

<sup>353</sup> See Chapter Five (§5.3.2.8, p.263).

<sup>354</sup> Stenschke, *Gentiles*, 202, suggests it is a correction of the jailer addressing Paul and Silas as "lords" (16:30).

<sup>355</sup> Acts 8:27. Keener, *Acts*, 2:1534. Uytanlet, *Luke-Acts*, 244; Abraham Smith, "Second Step", 224 and 228.

<sup>356</sup> For Ethiopia as a possible end of the earth from 1:8 see Chapter Four (§4.3.2.1, p.192, n.187).

<sup>357</sup> Used ten times in 9:1, 5, 10 (twice), 11, 13, 15, 17, 27 and 28. Cf. Newman, "Acts", 441, 442, that the apocalyptic vision of Jesus signals that the long-awaited kingdom of God was present in the exalted Jesus.

<sup>358</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 50.51; Plutarch, *Alex.* 27.5; Arrian, *Anab.* 3.5.1. Cf. William E. L. Broad, "What Led Jesus to be Called the Son of God? An Historical Investigation of How an Appellation of Alexander the Great and of the Roman Emperors Came to be Used of Jesus" (MLitt diss., Durham University, 2012), 16–38, esp. 28.

<sup>359</sup> K. Galinsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), facing 260, Gaius Octavianus (Augustus) with writing on a gold coin, minted in 28 BCE and now in the British Museum, which bears the inscription 'IMP CAESAR DIVI F COS VI' (Imperator Caesar, son of the deified, Consul for 6th time). Cf. Broad, "Son of God", 85–93; Peppard, *Son of God*, 31–49, esp. 46–49.

of kings (βασιλέων) (9:15) as targets of the mission alongside Gentiles and the people of Israel.<sup>360</sup>

The Peter and Cornelius section (10:1–11:18) does not have a specific ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) reference, but there are some possible kingdom of God hints. Heaven's rule is seen in Cornelius's vision of an angel of God (10:3–4). Peter addresses the voice in his vision as "Lord" (10:14) and declares the royal sovereignty of "Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all" (10:36).<sup>361</sup> The reference to "evangelising peace" (10:36) possibly links to the widely-known Pax Romana.<sup>362</sup>

"Act IV" (17:1–21:14) completes the search for the broader kingdom of God topic. It closes Acts' Middle with the second mission advance reaching its *culmination* at Ephesus (18:18b–19:20) followed by the decline to Jerusalem. The literary shape of mission advances and declines impacts the kingdom of God topic with the sections before 19:21 being more positive than those after it.<sup>363</sup>

The section at Thessalonica (17:1–8) contains a probable kingdom of God hint in the directly *connected word association* of "another βασιλέα, one called Jesus" (17:7).<sup>364</sup> This is the only time in Acts where βασιλεύς is explicitly used of Jesus. However, it is unclear whether βασιλεύς sets Jesus's kingship against Caesar's rule<sup>365</sup> since it occurs not in a positive assertion, but in an accusation by Paul's opponents.<sup>366</sup>

Paul's Areopagus speech at Athens (17:22b–31) has possible hints of the kingdom of God topic. The speech revisits the creatorial kingdom of God from the Lystra scene by referring to the "Lord of heaven and earth" (17:24, cf. 14:15). It also

<sup>360</sup> Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 155–60, suggesting that Paul seeks to persuade the rulers to submit to the kingdom of God for their own salvation, the freedom of Christian mission and the extension of the kingdom of God.

<sup>361</sup> Holladay, *Acts*, 238, challenge to the Cornelius loyalty to Caesar as a Roman soldier. Cf. Walton, "Mission of God", 16.

<sup>362</sup> Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 2 and 3 (Behr, *Sacred Tales*, 88–89, 105); Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.74.2; Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 12; Ditt. *OGIS*, 458; G. Hirschenfeld, ed., *The Collection of Ancient Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum*. London. 1893, 4.894. For historical discussion see Paul Petit, *Pax Romana*, translated by James Willis (London: Batsford, 1976), and in relation to the Christian gospel, Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1987). Also Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 177–179, sees the Pax Romana as something to be appreciated as an "environment in which Christian mission can progress"; John D. Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus's Apostles Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 70–75, esp. 74, argues for two alternative visions of world peace.

<sup>363</sup> See Diagram V, p.79.

<sup>364</sup> O'Toole, "Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts", 147; Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1312; Holladay, *Acts*, 334.

<sup>365</sup> Rowe, *Upside Down*, 92–103; Witherington, *Acts*, 508; Alexander, "Acts", 1050.

<sup>366</sup> Strait, "Proclaiming Another King", 140.

implies the future eschatological kingdom of God with a final judgment on a “day set by God” and by “a man whom he designated” (17:31).<sup>367</sup>

The section at Corinth (18:1–17) has a *suggestive story link* to the kingdom of God though the possible hint of its literary shape being book-ended with Roman jurisdiction. The section opens with the expulsion of all the Jews from Rome by Claudius (18:2) bringing Priscilla and Aquila into contact with Paul. This increases the surprise of the later unexpected prominence given to the Jews at Rome in Acts 28. A tension is set up between Rome and Israel. The section closes with Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, portrayed as a disinterested observer between the Jews and Paul (18:12–17).<sup>368</sup> Rome’s relationship to the kingdom of God seems ambivalent. The use of the possible royal “Lord” is another hint of the kingdom of God.<sup>369</sup>

Hints of the kingdom of God at Ephesus (18:18b–19:20) have already been explored, but the other side of “Act IV” midpoint (19:21) turns attention towards returning to Jerusalem rather than a mission to Rome. Notably there are very few broader kingdom of God hints in this stretch of the narrative. The lengthy Ephesian riot episode (19:23–41) is notable for the absence of Paul and God. There is also no mention of the kingdom of God which might have been expected to counter the frequently referenced religious cult of Artemis.<sup>370</sup> The retrospective ἡ βασιλεία reference in the Miletus speech (20:25) has already been considered.<sup>371</sup>

The kingdom of God as a broader topic disappears after the reappearance at Miletus in Acts 20. This follows the literary mission advances and declines in the *pivot* of missional significance in Acts’ Middle.

### 6.5.3 The Missional Significance of the Kingdom of God in Acts’ Middle

The main questions about mission are now connected to the kingdom of God.<sup>372</sup>

(1) *The mission instrument of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Middle* is Philip (8:12) and Paul.<sup>373</sup> The invitation for a restored Israel (including Gentiles) to be a

<sup>367</sup> For the link between kingship and a throne of judgement. Cf. Prov 20:8; Ps 9:7; Dan 7:9–10; Joel 3:12; Obad 21. However, Maddox, *Purpose*, 123–132, citing 130, argues that the emphasis is imminence rather than delay.

<sup>368</sup> See Chapter Five (§5.3.4.2, p.277, n.538).

<sup>369</sup> Acts 18:8, 9, 10.

<sup>370</sup> Acts 19:24, 27, 28, 34, 35. Dunn, *Acts*, 252.

<sup>371</sup> See previously in this chapter (§6.5.1.3, pp.346–49).

<sup>372</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, pp.118–127).

<sup>373</sup> Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; (cf. in Acts’ Ending, 28:23, 31). Arias, *Reign of God*, 59–60.



mission instrument continues. The instrument expands through the reunification with Samaria (8:8–25) and the Ephesian Twelve (19:1–7). Also possibly included is the (Syrian) Antioch Church with the royal connection of the term Χριστιανοί (11:26)<sup>374</sup> and the “we-group” referred to as subjects/slaves (δούλοι) of the Most High God (16:17).<sup>375</sup> The church’s connection to the kingdom of God is made more tangible through ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references at 14:22 and 20:25. Paul’s encouragement suggests the church is expected to be a mission instrument.

(2) *The mission target of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Middle* extends beyond Israel (after proclamation is strangely absent at Jerusalem)<sup>376</sup> to include: Samaritans (8:12), the Jewish Diaspora at Iconium (14:1), Pisidian Antioch (13:14, 16, 43), and Ephesus (19:8, 10). The main mission target of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) is unclear in Acts’ Middle. Dunn argues it is primarily Jews,<sup>377</sup> but this is only explicit at 19:8. The Gentiles are probably included at Lystra, possibly at Iconium within the Jewish synagogue, definitely at Pisidian Antioch,<sup>378</sup> and possibly at Ephesus.<sup>379</sup> Tannehill argues that “the reign of God” in Acts is primarily in statements addressed to Jews or to Christian communities needing instruction in Jewish matters.<sup>380</sup> This links to ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) being used more in relation to an invitation to be a mission instrument than of the mission itself.

(3) *The mission message of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Middle* focuses on Jesus who is conjunctively linked to ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) at 8:12. He is also in close proximity to other references at 14:23 (Lord); 19:5; and 20:24.<sup>381</sup> Within Acts’ Middle the kingdom titles include κυρίως, Χριστός, “the Son of God” (9:20), the royal Davidic Messiah (13:33–37), and βασιλεύς (17:7). Jesus’s connections to the kingdom of God in Acts are mainly related to his first rather than his second coming. However, Acts’ Middle also implies the future kingdom with Jesus as the final king-judge (10:42; 17:31).<sup>382</sup>

<sup>374</sup> See Chapter Three (§3.4, p.164).

<sup>375</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§6.4.2, p.336, n.219).

<sup>376</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§6.4.1, p.333).

<sup>377</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 257.

<sup>378</sup> Acts 13:48, cf. 14:22.

<sup>379</sup> Acts 20:25. See previous discussion in this chapter (§6.5.1.3, p.348, n.321) that Ephesian Twelve Jews are the leaders at Miletus. Cf. Chapter Five (§5.3.4.2, p.287).

<sup>380</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:351. Cf. Pereira, *Ephesus*, 212.

<sup>381</sup> For the close relationship between Jesus and kingdom of God see Ziccardi, *Jesus and Kingdom*.

<sup>382</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§6.5.2, p.354, n.367).

God has the closest *syntactical connection* with the kingdom. There is a notable midpoint reference in the central scene at Lystra to “(the) Living God” who is the Creator. This is the first time Paul preaches to pagan Gentiles and his message’s starting point is the creatorial aspect of the kingdom of God rather than the redemptive aspect.<sup>383</sup> The later ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ reference (14:22) links back to the Lystra scene. The Miletus speech surrounds ἡ βασιλεία at 20:25 with frequent mentions of God.<sup>384</sup>

Salvation is not explicitly connected to the kingdom of God in Acts’ Middle.

(4) *The mission source of the kingdom of God in Acts’ Middle* raises the question of the kingdom’s relationship to the Holy Spirit and Jesus. Jonathan Kienzler states the popular view that Jesus is present and reigns by the Holy Spirit.<sup>385</sup> This is true, but does not present the complete picture.<sup>386</sup> Cho attempts to show that the Holy Spirit’s primary role in relation to the kingdom of God is for an empowering proclamation, but concedes this is not always the case.<sup>387</sup> The eight ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references show a more complex relationship. Jesus starts as the subject speaking of the kingdom of God (1:3) and later becomes the object of it (8:12; 28:31).<sup>388</sup> The Holy Spirit occurs with the kingdom of God (1:6; 8:17; 19:6), but also without it (10:44–46; 13:52). The occasions where the Holy Spirit is present without the kingdom of God imply a focus on an empowering of the mission instrument rather than a mission expansion. Occasions where the kingdom of God and mission are without the Holy Spirit (14:22; 28:23, 31) imply that mission expansion can happen without the explicit mention of a specific Holy Spirit empowering.<sup>389</sup>

As an intersection of the mission source and means, the “Word of God/Lord” motif occurs close to ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) in 8:14; 14:25; 19:10; and 20:32. It is not present at 1:3, 6; or 28:23, 31. “The Word” also appears apart from the kingdom of

<sup>383</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (§6.5.2, p.350).

<sup>384</sup> See 20:21 (turn to God in repentance), 24 (gospel of God’s grace), 27 (the whole will of God), 28 (the church of God, or possibly the Lord), 32 (committed to God and “the Word of his grace”).

<sup>385</sup> Kienzler, *Fiery Holy Spirit*, 16. Cf. Conzelmann, *Theology*, 204, that the Spirit is a substitute for Jesus’s “real presence”.

<sup>386</sup> Bovon, *Fifty-Five Years*, 249, notes that the Holy Spirit is distinct from Christ in Acts.

<sup>387</sup> Cho, *Spirit*, 162–195.

<sup>388</sup> See previously in this chapter §6.2.3, p.320. Also §4.3.2.4, p.196, n.217.

<sup>389</sup> Another possibility is that the Holy Spirit empowering for mission from 1:8 happens with or without a specific outpouring. Conversation with Steve Walton, Cambridge, March 2017.

God and/or the Holy Spirit.<sup>390</sup> Whilst all three can be present, as an original solution to the complex interplay, I propose that a literary arrangement possibly distinguishes the kingdom of God as mission expansion, the Holy Spirit as mission empowerment, and “the Word” as a mission communication. Each can be present with or without the others.

(5) *The mission means of the kingdom of God in Acts* reveal that all of the references, with the exception of 1:6, have ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) as the object of a verbal communication.<sup>391</sup> In addition some are close to supernatural manifestations. The main Acts’ proclamation verbs identified as a mission means in Chapter Two<sup>392</sup> are all connected to the kingdom of God<sup>393</sup> including: (i) εὐαγγελίζω (8:12) as linked to the gospel; (iii) μαρτυρέω (indirectly 1:8) as official witnesses for and to Christ; (iv) παρρησιάζομαι (19:8) as bold speaking suggesting courage in the face of opposition; (v) διαλέγομαι (19:8) as discussing or arguing in a rational appeal to thinking; (vi) πείθω (19:8; and indirectly 28:23) as both a persuasive process and a positive outcome; (vii) κηρύσσω (20:25; 28:31) as heralding an official announcement; and (viii) διδάσκω as teaching (indirectly 1:1; 28:31).

Bart Koet argues that the proclamation verbs indicate the kingdom of God is a general summary of the message.<sup>394</sup> However, the means do not define the message and should be understood within their literary context. Chris Green suggests the four ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) references in Acts’ Middle are divided with two in the context of evangelism (8:12; 19:8) and two in the context of strengthening churches and leadership (14:22; 20:25).<sup>395</sup> However, a dichotomy is unnecessary since 8:12 and 19:8 link to an invitation to be a mission instrument as well as mission expansion. The proclamation of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) to those already included in the people of God possibly confirms this.<sup>396</sup>

The supernatural manifestations appear in the same context as ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) at Samaria (8:6, 13), Lystra (14:8–10), and Ephesus (19:11).

<sup>390</sup> Acts 4:31 (Holy Spirit); 6:7; 8:4; 11:1 (Holy Spirit); 12:24; 13:5, 7 (Holy Spirit); 13:44, 46, 48, 49 (Holy Spirit); 15:35, 36; 16:6 (Holy Spirit); 16:32; 17:11, 13; 18:11.

<sup>391</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 156–57; Puskas, *Conclusion*, 50; Johnson, *Acts*, 470; Stevens, *Acts*, 564; Marguerat, *Christian Historian*, 228.

<sup>392</sup> See Chapter Two (§2.2.6.4, pp.123–25).

<sup>393</sup> The only proclamation verb identified in Chapter Two not related to the kingdom of God is καταγγέλλω as a public widespread dissemination.

<sup>394</sup> Koet, *Five Studies*, 126,

<sup>395</sup> Green, *Word of His Grace*, 17–18.

<sup>396</sup> Acts 8:12 (Samaritans); 14:22 (disciples); 19:8 (Jews) and 20:25 (Ephesian church leaders).

(6) *The mission success of the kingdom of God in Acts* is seen at Samaria (8:12) and Ephesus (19:8; 20:25) with a particular emphasis on the victory over Satan's demonic realm.<sup>397</sup> The clash between the kingdom of God and Satan as part of mission activity is suggested by the exorcisms,<sup>398</sup> the magic connected with Simon (8:9–11), Elymas described as “a son of the devil” (13:10), and the sorcery at Ephesus (19:18–19). The proposal that the kingdom of God relates to mission expansion is confirmed in Acts' Middle. The related ideas of a realm and spatial conquest imply an advance of God's Empire explicitly in Samaria, Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, and Ephesus.

(7) *The mission suffering of the kingdom of God in Acts* is explicitly expressed by the troubles, distress, oppression, affliction, tribulation, or persecution (θλιψις) (14:22). The “great persecution” (8:1) results in the kingdom of God at Samaria (8:12). The mission suffering is linked to Christ's sufferings<sup>399</sup> and to the kingdom of God (14:22) at Lystra (14:19), Iconium (14:5), and Pisidian Antioch (13:50). Paul's Miletus speech confirms that in the kingdom mission (20:25) suffering (20:19, 23, 29–31) and success in widespread proclamation (20:20–21, 25–27, 32) can go hand in hand. However, suffering is a complex mix of God's purposes, gospel faithfulness, and human mistakes.<sup>400</sup> Parsons argues that the immediate context of each ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) reference is conflict or confrontation.<sup>401</sup> However, this is not explicitly the case in 1:3, 6; 8:12. Notably Jewish rejection causes the suffering rather than Roman opposition. This implies that internal opposition from within God's people is more likely to stop the mission instrument than external resistance to the message.

## 6.6 Summary

The kingdom of God clearly illustrates how Acts' literary shape reveals missional significance. This chapter makes a number of original contributions to understanding the kingdom of God in Acts.

First, the proposal that ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) functions as a literary structural marker explains the term's relative infrequency and gives a coherence to the framing

<sup>397</sup> Acts 8:7; 19:11–16.

<sup>398</sup> Acts 8:7; 16:16–18; 19:12–16.

<sup>399</sup> Vicedom, *Mission of God*, 136–42. See previous comments in this chapter (§6.4.2, p.335, n.207 and §6.5.1.1, p.340).

<sup>400</sup> See Chapter Five (§5.4, p.303).

<sup>401</sup> Parsons, *Departure*, 256.

and parallelism often noted by scholars. The appearance of ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) at the start (1:3, 6) and finish (28:23, 31) supports its function in the *foundation* and *culmination* of Acts' missional significance. Also the references at 14:22 near the midpoint, 8:12 at the start of Acts' Middle, and 19:8; 20:25, either side of the midpoint of "Act IV" confirm that ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) contributes to the *pivot* of Acts' missional significance.

Second, the discovery that the kingdom of God is a broader topic within Acts demonstrates the theme is more widespread than just the use of a specific term. Story components and probable/possible hints establish the kingdom of God as a major underlying theme in Acts.

Third, the proposal that the kingdom of God in Acts links the idea of a kingdom mission instrument to the kingdom expansion of God's Empire. This corrects the scholarly tendency to limit the kingdom of God to a *metonym* for the Christian gospel. Instead the kingdom of God takes its place within Acts' mission advances and declines. This also has implications for the creatorial *missio Dei* discussions.

These structure, story, and significance elements combine to show the kingdom of God developing in Acts' Beginning, Middle, and Ending.

*Acts' Beginning reveals a foundation for the kingdom of God.* Jesus is the kingdom's risen, ascended, and exalted king, teacher for forty days, and its central theme. The hope of Israel's restoration is through the promise of a worldwide kingdom. The Holy Spirit empowers the kingdom's mission with bold proclamation and supernatural manifestations. The kingdom mission instrument is the reconstituted twelve apostles as witnesses representing Jesus. The fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies brings restoration for the Davidic kingdom. A model kingdom community is formed which engages in prayer as an acknowledgement of kingdom authority. An appeal is made to the Jerusalem Jews to take note of their history and fulfil their destiny to become part of the mission instrument. There is a mixture of acceptance and resistance to this message. Victory over Satan is seen in exorcisms and overcoming his influence within the church. Finally Stephen's speech and death prepares for the transition to worldwide mission.

*Acts' Middle reveals a pivot for the kingdom of God.* There is a continued focus on Jesus as King, Lord, and Christ. A spatial expansion starts with Samaria and culminates at Ephesus. Israel's restoration continues in the reunification with

Samaria and the appeal for the nation to become a worldwide mission instrument embracing Gentile God-fearers and pagans. The leadership of the mission instrument transitions from Peter via Philip to Paul and from the Jerusalem Twelve to the Ephesian Twelve. The Holy Spirit outpourings at Samaria and Ephesus provide an inclusio for the source of mission empowering. Scripture quotations underline Israel's mission to the world and Jesus as the Davidic royal Messiah. The church's connection to the kingdom mission becomes more tangible in Acts' Middle and especially in the missional term *Χριστιανοί*. The exorcisms demonstrate a mission victory over Satan. The limited, but significant, engagements with Rome and Caesar point to the ultimate blessings of a worldwide kingdom of God. There is a contextual mission focus on the creatorial kingdom of God. A link between the kingdom mission and suffering is emphasised. The kingdom of God's mission expansion reaches a pinnacle at Ephesus, before there is a decline from 19:21 when Paul's focus turns to Jerusalem. The persuasion of Israel to be the mission instrument takes priority over the mission expansion.

*Acts' Ending reveals a culmination for the kingdom of God.* The Lord Jesus Christ remains the kingdom's central theme. A restored Paul as the kingdom's mission instrument both urges the Jews to join in the task and is an example of heralding the kingdom to all. The Holy Spirit, "Word", and the church are all notably absent indicating the mission instrument's ongoing struggle. However, the mission expansion of the kingdom of God continues "unhinderedly" (28:31) with a possible mission conquest of Rome over a significant two year period.

The kingdom of God is a bigger concept than merely a metonym for the mission instrument and its mission. However, the mission in Acts is nuanced by its connection to the kingdom of God. If Tannehill is correct that "the ruling power of Jesus is saving power"<sup>402</sup> then mission extends his rule.<sup>403</sup> As Dunn succinctly puts it "the kingdom will be seen to be most truly Israel's when it is proclaimed most freely to the other nations"<sup>404</sup> and David Tiede that "the promise of God's reign is not simply the preserved of Israel, but the renewal of the vocation of Israel to be a light to the nations to the ends of the earth".<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> Tannehill, *Luke-Acts*, 2:39.

<sup>403</sup> Johnson, *Acts*, 29; Bosch, *Witness to the World*, 236–37.

<sup>404</sup> Dunn, *Acts*, 356.

<sup>405</sup> David L. Tiede, "The Exaltation of Jesus and the Restoration of Israel in Acts 1", *HTR* 79 (1986): 278–86, citing 286.

The kingdom of God is the goal of a creatorial *missio Dei*<sup>406</sup> which has Jesus as its director (king), focus, and example. Also the eschatological future makes the kingdom mission urgent. The Old Testament Scriptures connect the restoration of the kingdom of God to Israel as a kingdom mission instrument. The Holy Spirit in Acts is primarily for the empowerment and direction of kingdom advance.<sup>407</sup> Jean Daru notes that “Il Regno di Dio è un immersion (battesimo) nel mare dello Spirito di Dio” and “tesimoniare in ogni luogo ciò che è avvenuto con Gesù”.<sup>408</sup>

These contributions open new avenues for further kingdom of God research which has been rather static since the realised/unrealised twentieth century debates. In particular, future research requires a similar literary approach to the kingdom of God in Luke’s Gospel, in the New Testament epistles, and in relation to the theology of mission. Beyond this the challenge remains for the church as the remnant of Israel to engage in kingdom mission by advancing God’s Empire as an instrument in the divine activity of the creatorial *missio Dei*.<sup>409</sup> As G. W. H. Lampe puts it “the disciples are empowered by the Spirit ... to act as agents and stewards of his kingdom throughout the world ... for their vocation as instruments of the Spirit ... and missionaries of the Kingdom”.<sup>410</sup>

All that remains in conclusion is to draw the findings together.

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<sup>406</sup> Vicedom, *Mission of God*, 14.

<sup>407</sup> Keener, *Spirit*, 201.

<sup>408</sup> Jean Daru, *Dio ha aperto anche ai pagni la porta delle fede (At 14:27): Una lettura degli Atti degli Apostoli* (Rome: ADP, 2001), 71–72, “the kingdom of God is an immersion (baptism) in the sea of the Spirit of God” and “a witness in every place about Jesus” (Italian translation is my own).

<sup>409</sup> J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999), 35–36.

<sup>410</sup> G. W. H. Lampe, “The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St Luke”, in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 159–200, citing 188.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The question of what Acts' literary shape reveals about missional significance has been thoroughly explored following the thesis map.<sup>1</sup>

Chapter One located literary shape and significance within widespread literary criticism. Chapter Two constructed an appropriate method. A focused narrative criticism was constructed using ancient and modern literary concepts organised around the three key principles of: (1) Horace's "Five-Act Structure"; (2) Aristotle's story stages; and (3) Aristotle's story development.<sup>2</sup> The focused method brought together literary structure and story in a way which means they inform each other. An application was then made to the Greek text of NA<sup>28</sup> in Acts' Ending (Chapter Three), Acts' Beginning (Chapter Four), and Acts' Middle (Chapter Five) using a deliberate and consistent approach which prioritised literary structure and story before significance, close exegetical work to identify structure and story, and moves from a narrow focus of Acts' finish (28:16–31), start (1:1–11), and centre (14:8–20a) to a broader scope of the whole story. The discoveries of missional significance were appropriately noted at the close of each chapter. This approach demonstrated how literary structure relates to the story. A focused narrative theology identified the missional significance emerging from literary shape and in particular explored an original proposal of an invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument. Chapter Six explored the kingdom of God in Acts as both an illustration of how literary shape works and also as a connection to mission expansion.

Observations about literary shape led into interpretations about significance and particularly proposals about missional significance.

This conclusion summarises the findings made.

### 7.1 Acts' Literary Structure

The application of Horace's "Five-Act Structure"<sup>3</sup> reveals three particular findings about Acts' literary structure.

First, "Act I" (1:1–8:3) and "Act V" (21:15–28:31) follow the 25%–50%–25% divisions which have been developed from Horace by modern literary critics and screenwriters. The similar size of Acts' Beginning and Acts' Ending (each 25%

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<sup>1</sup> See Diagram I., p.5.

<sup>2</sup> See Diagram II, p.44.

<sup>3</sup> See Diagram IV, p.69.



of the narrative) counterbalances the early potential of an invitation for a restored Israel to be a mission instrument with the closing struggles of a restored Paul as an example.

Second, the statistical Acts' midpoint of 14:15 identifies the Lystra episode (14:8–20a) as the central scene with a pivotal role of Barnabas and Paul as an example of a mission instrument to pagan Gentiles.

Third, the midpoints of the other “Acts” also mark key moments of missional significance in the literary story. The midpoint (4:26) of “Act I” (1:1–8:3) occurs in the church's model prayer for its empowering as a mission instrument within the surrounding context of external resistance from Israel and the church's internal problems. The midpoint (9:43) of the transitional “Act II” (8:4–11:26) is followed by the Peter and Cornelius section as a preparation for Gentile mission. The midpoint (19:21) of “Act IV” (17:1–21:14) marks the moment of Paul's decline as the mission instrument. The midpoint (25:12) of “Act V” (21:15–28:31) is Paul's appeal to Caesar which contributes to the start of his recovery as a mission instrument to Rome.

These findings demonstrate ways in which Acts' structure connects to Acts' story.

## 7.2 Acts' Literary Story

The Acts' story components and advances/declines<sup>4</sup> led to my literary findings supporting hints of missional significance in both story stages and the whole story.

### 7.2.1 Closure of Acts' Ending

Chapter Three applied a backwards reading strategy and literary ending concepts to show Acts' *finish* as a closure for the preceding narrative. Acts' Ending is an overall story advance for the mission instrument, but also contains an undertow of decline continuing from Acts' Middle.

The final summary (28:30–31) presents a positive ending with an *open closure* which indicates that the mission instrument story is not over. Whilst there is no explicit mention of a Gentile mission, the final two phrases are appropriately “unhinderedly” and “with all boldness”. Paul's closing example in Rome leaves a

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<sup>4</sup> See Diagram V, p.79.

strong impression with the hearers or readers that the three activities of a mission instrument in welcoming everyone, heralding the kingdom of God, and teaching the things about the Lord Jesus Christ should be continued by all churches with an expectation of both opposition requiring boldness and God-given freedom bringing success in the worldwide *missio Dei*.

The preceding final scene (28:16–28) confirms that the focus is not on the actual carrying out of the Gentile mission, but the invitation for Israel (the Jews at Rome) to be God’s mission instrument. This, and the disappearance of the “we-group” after 28:16, implies that the recovery of Paul and the mission advance are not complete.

The final “Act” (21:15–28:31) reiterates the struggle to be a mission instrument both for Paul and Israel. The literary emphasis on the storm, shipwreck, and snake-bite symbolises Paul’s recovery with hints of his Gentile mission on board ship and at Malta. During his trials at Jerusalem and Caesarea, Paul twice recounts his conversion-commission with additional details pointing to his recovery as a mission instrument.

### 7.2.2 Opening of Acts’ Beginning

Chapter Four applied a forwards reading strategy and literary beginning concepts to show Acts’ *start* as an *opening* for the succeeding narrative.

The first summary (1:1–5) and scene (1:6–11) use a blurred entrance strategy allowing the reader to join the story of an invitation to be a mission instrument. Jesus’s last words (1:7–8) connect the kingdom of God to the Holy Spirit in the worldwide mission which begins at Jerusalem and involves the joining of Judaea and Samaria.

“Act I” (1:1–8:3) develops the invitation to be a mission instrument with Israel as both a remnant and a nation. The story advance shows the formation of the mission instrument as a remnant with the reconstitution of the Twelve (1:15–26) and an empowering by the Holy Spirit (2:1–13). The story decline shows the struggle to form the mission instrument with Israel’s resistance to the invitation, internal church problems, and a reluctance to move beyond Jerusalem. “Act I” closes with Stephen’s speech (7:2b–53) and death preparing for the worldwide Gentile mission.

### 7.2.3 Climax of Acts' Middle

Chapter Five applied a central reading strategy and literary middle concepts to show Acts' *climax* for the surrounding narrative.

The central scene (14:8–20a) records the first example of a mission instrument reaching pagan Gentiles at Lystra. The previous sections of the first half of “Act III” (11:27–14:7) show the preceding advance for the mission instrument in the gospel triumph over King Herod (11:27–12:25), the prototype Gentile mission starting at Cyprus (13:1–12), and the rationale for mission at Pisidian Antioch (13:14–52).

“Act II” (8:4–11:26) has successive waves of preparation for the Gentile mission. Philip in Samaria (8:4–25) points to development of the mission instrument with the reunification of Judaea and Samaria, a victory over Satan's forces, and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40) section confirms the mission instrument's task is worldwide. Saul's conversion-commission (9:1–31) is for the purpose of him being a mission instrument (9:15–16). Peter's Judaeian ministry (9:32–43) leading into the Cornelius section (10:1–11:18) points to the Gentile involvement in the mission instrument with another outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The formation of a Christian community at (Syrian) Antioch (11:19–26) further expands the mission instrument.

The sections of the second half of “Act III” (14:8b–16:40) show a decline after the central scene. Paul, the church, and Israel all struggle to respond to the invitation to be a mission instrument. The issues about the Gentile mission are unresolved by the Jerusalem Conference (15:3–35). There are subsequent ambiguities for the mission instrument in the separation of Paul and Barnabas (15:36–40), circumcision of Timothy (16:3), and uncertainties about the mission direction (16:6–9). However, alongside this overall decline, there is also a second advance for the mission instrument in the renewed Gentile mission (16:9–10). The resulting mission at Philippi (16:11–40) has both positive and negative elements for the mission instrument. There are three positive salvation episodes in the conversion of Lydia (16:13–15), the exorcism of the slave girl (16:16–18), and the conversion of the jailor (16:22–40). However, there are also negative undertones in Paul's frustration (16:18), the sudden disappearance of the “we-group”, imprisonment, no mention of the Holy Spirit, and no explicit divine presence or angel in the prison

rescue.<sup>5</sup> Also the section closes with Paul's insistence on an escort out of city without any overtly theological content (16:37–40).

“Act IV” continues the overall mission advance through Thessalonica (17:1–9), Beroea (17:10–15), Athens (17:16–34), and Corinth (18:1–17). In each place there are elements of gospel success and also resistance. Athens develops the mission message to pagan Gentiles which was begun at Lystra. Ephesus (18:18b–19:20) is the pinnacle of Paul's Gentile mission with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, widespread mission, and an overcoming of Satan's forces reminiscent of Samaria (8:4–25). However, after the midpoint (19:21) there is a decline following Paul's decision to return to Jerusalem rather than heading for Rome. The mission instrument heads in the wrong direction via Troas (20:6b–12), Miletus (20:17–38), and the prophetic warnings not to proceed at Tyre (21:3–6) and Caesarea (21:8–14).

Having summarised the findings of the story stages, those related to the whole story are now added.

#### 7.2.4 Story Components of Acts' Whole Story

Five story components reveal the development of Acts' whole story in terms of where, when, who, what is spoken, and what is quoted.

##### 7.2.4.1 Acts' Literary-Spatiality

The literary-spatial component shows a number of key locations in terms of literary size and sequence.<sup>6</sup> First, Jerusalem, is not only the location for Acts' opening, but also remains the primary literary location throughout the narrative. This supports the proposal that Acts focuses on the invitation to God's people (a restored Israel as a remnant and nation embracing Samaritans and Gentiles) to be a mission instrument. Second, Caesarea as a sea-port and a recurring location between Israel/Rome functions as a launch-pad for mission beyond Israel. Third, Lystra, is an appropriate central *climax* where the first pagan Gentile mission takes place. Fourth, Ephesus, is a second *climax* for the successful pinnacle of Gentile mission before the struggles of 19:21 onwards. Fifth, Rome is the literary-spatial closure of Acts and the final location for a mission challenge to Israel.

<sup>5</sup> For discussion on whether the earthquake is a divine intervention see §5.3.2.8, p.263.

<sup>6</sup> See Diagram VI (A–C), pp.87–89.

In addition various topographical details contribute to the spatial meaning of Acts. These include islands as transitional stepping stones for the mission progress,<sup>7</sup> upper rooms as locations between earth and heaven especially as places of prayer,<sup>8</sup> prisons as symbolic of restriction and the release of salvation,<sup>9</sup> and the temple as a place of Jewish opposition to the worldwide mission rather than being a centre making known God's presence.<sup>10</sup>

In these ways the present study demonstrates the significance of Acts' geography in relation to the mission journey as a thirdspace concept.

#### 7.2.4.2 Act's Literary-Temporality

The literary-temporal component<sup>11</sup> reveals that only ten years and nine months are actually recorded<sup>12</sup> of a story which probably covered thirty years. "Act I" has no definite literary-temporal framework, which supports its *thematic/paradigmatic* function as a model of mission formation. "Act II" uses the literary-temporal overlapping technique to construct parallel sections for the successive waves of mission preparation. This is confirmed as an extensive period by the closing reference to a whole year (11:26). "Act III" has no specific literary-temporal references, but does use the external events of the famine in Claudius's reign (11:28) and Herod's death (12:23) to anchor the story within external chronology. "Act IV" gives a sense of increasing literary-temporal movement with references to specific periods such as the repeated seven days (20:6; 21:4) and three months (19:8; 20:3). The two (extended to three) years connected to Ephesus (19:10; 20:31) emphasises the importance of this location. "Act V" also has many specific literary-temporal references drawing out the sense of a lengthy story period through Paul's trials and the storm. Paul's *flashback* (22:17–21) underlines the restoration of his mission. The two year periods at Caesarea (24:27) and Rome (28:30) counter-balance mission suffering and success together with the same period occurring earlier at Ephesus.

The summaries in Acts were shown to be literary shape devices which underline key story points rather than identifying a structure.

Many specific temporal terms have an underlying symbolic connection.

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<sup>7</sup> Cyprus (13:4–12) and Malta (18:1–10).

<sup>8</sup> Acts 1:13; 9:36–41; 10:9.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 4:3; 5:18–21; 12:3–11; 16:23–40; 21:30–26:32.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 2–5; 7:45b–50; and Acts 21–26.

<sup>11</sup> See Diagram VII, p.94.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix IV, p.390.

### 7.2.4.3 Acts' Characters

The character component<sup>13</sup> includes the characterisation of those like Paul and Peter in relation to the mission. Paul/Saul's characterisation is of a somewhat reluctant mission instrument. He is one who at first opposes the mission instrument (8:3), is then dramatically changed and becomes part of the mission instrument (9:1–30, esp. 9:15–16), has his name changed to Paul as fitting for the Gentile mission (13:9), engages in the mission (13:1–19:20) albeit with a continued focus on the Jews<sup>14</sup> and a decision to return to Jerusalem (19:21), a rehearsal of his mission during his imprisonment in Jerusalem (22:3–21) and Caesarea (26:2–29), a focus on his Roman citizenship (22:25–29), a recovery of the mission (27:1–28:10), and a renewed focus on Jews at Rome (28:17–31). Peter's characterisation begins with him as a leader of the restored Twelve giving an invitation to the Jerusalem Jews to be a mission instrument (1:15–5:42), endorsing the mission to Samaria (8:14–25), demonstrating God's in healing and resurrection within Judaea (9:32–42), involved in a vision and move towards the Gentile God-fearers (10:1–11:18), a dramatic encounter overcoming the opposition of King Herod (12:1–24), appearing for a brief final time at the Jerusalem Conference to endorse the Gentile mission (15:7–11).

There is a complex transition in Acts 9–16 from a *foundation* with Peter to a *culmination* with Paul. The proposal is that this transition is best explained as a biography of the mission instrument including the characterisation of those such as Philip, Stephen, Barnabas, and James. The observation that Paul has more than double Peter's literary focus<sup>15</sup> indicates that Peter prepares for Paul's Gentile mission.

The present study highlights Jesus's surprising absence from the story after the expectations created by his resurrection presence in the start. The absences confirm the mission declines which occur, although there remains an underlying presence of Jesus directing the mission journey at strategic points.<sup>16</sup>

The most frequent people group in Acts is the Jews. This supports the focus on an invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument to the Gentiles described as God-fearers, worshippers, proselytes, Greeks, Athenians, barbarians, and Romans.

<sup>13</sup> See Diagram VIII (A and B), pp.102–103.

<sup>14</sup> Acts 13:5, 14–43; 14:1; 16:3–4, 13; 17:1–4, 10; 18:4; 19:8.

<sup>15</sup> See statistical calculation in Chapter Two (§2.2.5.6, p.101).

<sup>16</sup> Acts 1:1–9; 7:55; 9:4–6, 10–16; 10:13–16; 16:7 (Spirit of Jesus); 18:9–10; 22:17–21; 23:11.

The “we-group” has been shown to have a literary function within Acts as approving the Gentile mission.<sup>17</sup>

The focalisation in Acts is largely an omniscient external narrator who develops an overall ideological framework for a missional significance. Within this the various characters are sometimes given their own theological nuances and differences.

#### *7.2.4.4 Acts’ Speech Framework*

The speech component<sup>18</sup> reveals that the speeches are positioned within the story so as to reveal a developing significance for the mission instrument. They appear at key story moments and within specific spatial contexts. The key speeches in terms of their literary size are, first, Stephen (7:2b–53), the largest speech, which comes at the end of “Act I” and prepares for the Gentile mission which follows. Second, Peter’s first speech to Jerusalem Jews at Pentecost (2:14b–36, 38b, 39, 40b) explains the Holy Spirit outpouring as the formation and empowering of the mission instrument in fulfilment of the Old Testament (2:16–21), through Jesus’s reign (2:34–36), and as a future promise (2:38–39). Third, Paul’s first speech at Pisidian Antioch (13:16b–41, 46b, 47) is a rationale for the first pagan Gentile mission at Lystra. Fourth, Paul’s speech before King Agrippa (26:2–23) confirms his own recovery as a mission instrument. The first and last speeches of Jesus (last 1:7–8), Peter (first 1:16–22 or 2:14b–36; last 15:7b–11), and Paul (first 13:16b–41; last 28:25b–28) confirm the mission instrument theme.

A speech’s micro-literary shape is shown to be also important. Not only does the beginning, middle, and ending of each speech reveal a foundation, pivot, and culmination for its particular significance, but also often the interruption of the speech emphasises a particular strategic point or allows for further remarks. Although not the emphasis in the present study, there is scope for a detailed rhetorical analysis of each speech in Acts.

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<sup>17</sup> See §5.3.4.2, p.288, n.672.

<sup>18</sup> See Diagram IX, p.106.

#### 7.2.4.5 Acts' Intertextuality

The intertextual component<sup>19</sup> shows an intriguing arrangement of Old Testament quotations which appear at strategic points and underline the invitation to be a mission instrument. An even spread of the Prophets, Law, and Psalms connects Israel's past story with the present mission. Literary coherence and development are shown by the repeated quotations of Psalm 2 (4:25b–26; 13:33b), Psalm 16 (2:25b–28; 13:35b), Amos (7:42–43; 15:16–18), and most notably Isaiah (7:49–50; 8:32b–33; 13:34b; 13:47b; 28:26–27). The Psalms speak of the Messianic king who restores Israel as a mission instrument. Amos tells of how both the exile and restoration bring about a worldwide mission. Isaiah shows how the Messiah and his servants bring salvation to “the end of the earth”. Acts reverses Isaiah by placing the goal of mission (Isa 66:1–2) first in 7:49–50 and the commencement of mission (Isa 6:9–10) last in 28:26–27.

The reduction in Old Testament quotations in the second half of Acts is due to a decline in the invitation to be a mission instrument for God's kingdom.

### 7.3 Acts' Missional Significance

Acts' literary structure and story reveals the *foundation*, *pivot*, and *culmination* of missional significance using key aspects. This study notes a number of discoveries, draws conclusions, and offers a conceptual framework for an invitation to be a mission instrument for the kingdom of God.<sup>20</sup> These are now briefly summarised.

#### 7.3.1 Mission Instrument

Acts' Beginning begins with the reconstitution of the Twelve (1:15–26) in response to Jesus's mission promise (1:8) and the Holy Spirit empowering (2:1–4). The apostles, as leaders of the restored remnant of Israel, call the nation to be a mission instrument (2:17–18, 38; 3:25). Acts' Middle includes the reunification with Samaria (8:5–25), Saul's conversion-commission (9:15), and the inclusion of Cornelius (11:15–17). Saul, renamed Paul, becomes the example of a mission instrument. The terms Χριστιανοί (11:26; cf. 26:28) as “the little anointed ones” and ἀπόστολοι (the Twelve, 1:2, 26; Paul and Barnabas, 14:4, 14) as the “sent ones” support the idea of a mission instrument. Paul continues as a mission instrument into Acts' Ending.

<sup>19</sup> See Diagram X, p.110.

<sup>20</sup> See §3.4 (pp.164–70); §4.4 (pp.216–24); and §5.4 (pp.290–304).



Throughout Acts there is tension between the invitation for Israel to become a mission instrument and the mission itself. I argue that an invitation to be a mission instrument does not guarantee those invited will necessarily become involved or “if they do” that they will succeed. This is seen in Acts’ Beginning with a reluctance to move beyond Jerusalem, in Acts’ Middle with Paul’s repeated focus on Jews, and in Acts’ Ending with a focus on Paul’s recovery as a mission instrument and a continuing appeal for Israel to be one. Alongside this there is an interplay between a human instrument and God fulfilling his own *missio Dei*. Prayer in Acts indicates a dependence on God’s role within mission.

The term “church” (ἐκκλησία) does not appear until 5:11 where it emerges as the remnant of Israel. The ἐκκλησία is most frequently mentioned in Acts’ Middle, but surprisingly there is no mention of any church engagement in mission. The term disappears after 20:28 and notably does not reappear at Rome even though there are small groups of believers along the journey. This implies that the struggle to establish an active mission instrument is a problem for the church as well as Israel. Acts endorses the role of a “parachurch organisation” (such as Paul and his team) in fulfilling the worldwide mission especially when the church is reluctant.

### 7.3.2 Mission Target

This study challenges the consensus that Jews are the mission target in Acts’ Beginning. Rather I propose a more nuanced position that views the initial offer of salvation being for the restoration of Israel as a mission instrument. Acts’ Middle shows a focus on Gentiles with the move from Jerusalem. However, within the complexity of mission advance and declines, Paul continues to extend the invitation to be a mission instrument to the Jews. The problematic “turning passages” of 13:46 and 18:6, are to be understood not as a change of mission target from Jew to Gentile, but as Paul exemplifying the mission instrument function expected of the nation. The mission target in Acts’ Ending is also ambiguous due to the renewed focus on Israel, except for the ship’s passengers, the Maltese, and possibly the “all” of 28:30.

### 7.3.3 Mission Message

A mission message is probably not present in Acts’ Beginning since the speeches focus on the prophetic mission made possible by the resurrected and exalted Jesus. The message to the Jews from the Old Testament Scriptures is about the empowering

of the mission instrument rather than a mission proclamation. This explains why the focus is on the resurrection as a mission power rather than the cross as a means of salvation. In Acts' Middle the mission message is Paul's speeches to pagan Gentiles at Lystra and Athens which start with the *missio Dei* of creation and God's sovereignty over the nations. However, by Acts' Ending the focus has returned to an invitation for Israel.

God is directly referenced most in "Act I" and then repeatedly throughout Acts. "Act IV" has a noticeable reduction in references to God matching the decline from 19:21. The reduction in "Christ" references as the story progresses is possibly due to the more God-centred message of the Gentile mission (14:15b–17; 17:22–31). However, a similar reduction in the more Gentile-orientated "Lord" references indicates an overall mission decline. Salvation appears most in "Act III" with the  $\sigma\omega\zeta\omega$  word group appropriate for the Gentile mission. In keeping with the mission decline, "Act IV" has no salvation references. The references towards the end of "Act V" link with the mission recovery. The healings, prison releases, and the rescue from shipwreck are pictures of salvation strategically placed across the Acts story.

#### 7.3.4 Mission Source

The mission source in Acts' Beginning includes the empowering of the Holy Spirit, "the name of Jesus", and "the Word of God/Lord". However, in Acts' Middle all three reduce and disappear after 19:21 confirming a mission decline. Six Holy Spirit outpourings are identified. I argue that these are for empowering the mission instrument at key moments in the story. Within Acts' literary structure the outpourings appear near the start of "Act I" in Jerusalem (2:1–4 and 4:31), at the start of "Act II" in Samaria (8:15–17), at the midpoint of "Act II" in Caesarea (10:44–47), with the mission advance of "Act III" in Pisidian Antioch (13:52), and at the midpoint of "Act IV" with the pinnacle of Paul's Gentile mission at Ephesus (19:6). The disappearance of Holy Spirit outpourings not only supports the idea of a mission decline, but also indicates that the mission recovery remains incomplete at the end of Acts. Also God is not active as a subject in the story except at the pinnacle of Paul's Gentile mission at Ephesus (19:11) and Jesus only appears directly nine times in Acts.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See previous discussion in this chapter (p.368, n.16).

### 7.3.5 Mission Means

The mission means include both verbal communication and supernatural activity. Various discoveries were made about the proclamation verbs used in Acts. First the concentration of εὐαγγελίζω (gospel presentation) and καταγγέλλω (public dissemination) in Acts' Middle underlines the mission activity not found in Acts' Beginning and Ending. Second, μαρτυρέω (witness) is used of the invitation for Israel to be a mission instrument. Third, παρρησιάζομαι (speaking boldly) is in the face of internal Jewish resistance. Fourth, διαλέγομαι (dialogue) and πείθω (persuasion) are Paul's new approach to Jews from Acts' Middle onwards. Fifth, κηρύσσω (heralding) of official key announcements is used first at Samaria (8:5) and finally at Rome relating to the kingdom of God. Sixth, διδάσκω located at the start (1:1) and finish (28:31) indicates a catechetical purpose for Acts.

The accompanying supernatural activity of signs and wonders, powerful deeds, and healings are present up to Acts' Middle. They follow the story advances and declines in a last mention of signs and wonders at 15:12, disappearing until Ephesus (19:11–12) at the pinnacle of Paul's Gentile mission, disappearing again in the decline from 19:21 except for the raising of Eutychus from the dead (20:9, 10), re-emerging for the last time at Malta (28:1–10) in Paul's mission recovery, and being absent at Rome.

### 7.3.6 Mission Success

The mission success in Acts' Beginning is more about the growth of the mission instrument. The Gentile mission in Acts' Middle follows the story advances and declines with success being limited after the central scene except for the pinnacle of Paul's mission at Ephesus. The victory over Satan is displayed in exorcisms at Jerusalem (5:16), Samaria (8:7), Philippi (16:18), and Ephesus (19:12). Acts' Ending does not record any explicit Gentile mission success. Acts is a story of a realistic human struggle to carry out the worldwide mission. However, encouragingly, the narrative also tells of how God continues to oversee the ultimate success of the *missio Dei*.

### 7.3.7 Mission Suffering

The mission suffering is predominantly caused by Jewish opposition rather than the Roman authorities. “Act I” culminates with Stephen’s martyrdom giving rise to the expansion of mission beyond Jerusalem. Suffering runs throughout Acts’ Middle with a notable central focus on suffering for the kingdom of God (14:22). However, suffering is not always a sign of mission advance, but is sometimes caused by human failure. Paul’s imprisonment in “Act V” is due to a combination of mission decline and his commitment to Gentile mission as well as contributing to the process of his recovery. Acts 27 and 28 downplay suffering and focus on Paul’s freedom.

### 7.3.8 Mission Expansion (The Kingdom of God)

Several key discoveries emerged in Chapter Six. First, the term ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) used eight times in Acts functions as a literary structural marker in Acts’ *start*, *climax*, and *finish*.<sup>22</sup> Second, the kingdom of God is a more widespread broader topic in Acts. Third, the kingdom of God continues “unhinderedly” (28:31) and indicates a mission expansion in rule, realm, and reign even when the church does not completely fulfil its calling to be a mission instrument. Fourth, Acts’ Beginning reveals a *foundation* for the kingdom of God. Jesus is its king and the reconstituted twelve apostles lead a restored kingdom mission instrument which is empowered by the Holy Spirit. However, the expected mission expansion does not take place. Fifth, Acts’ Middle reveals a *pivot* for the kingdom of God with a spatial expansion which starts with Samaria and reaches a pinnacle at Ephesus. There is a contextual mission focus on the creatorial kingdom of God at the central section of Lystra and later at Athens. A link between the kingdom mission and suffering is also emphasised. The persuasion of Israel to be the kingdom mission instrument takes priority over the mission expansion. Sixth, Acts’ Ending reveals a *culmination* for the kingdom of God in expanding to Rome in spite of the mission instrument’s ongoing struggle.

## 7.4 Summary

The present study has demonstrated the interplay between Acts’ literary shape (explored as a relationship of structure and story) and missional significance.

A summary of mission in Acts includes:

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<sup>22</sup> See Diagram XII, p.314.

1. A primary focus on an invitation to be a mission instrument with preparation in “Acts I and II”, focus on Jews and Jerusalem continuing in “Acts III” and IV”, and Paul’s recovery and closing encounter with Roman Jews in “Act V”.
2. A reluctance to engage in the mission with the mission instrument remaining in Jerusalem in “Act I”, opposition from within the church in Acts 15, Paul’s continuing focus on Jews in “Acts III and IV”, and his desire to return to Jerusalem in 19:21.
3. Mission advances and declines which tell a realistic rather than a triumphalistic story confirmed by the presence or absence of missional significance features.
4. Examples of Gentile mission particularly in the proclamation at the central section of Lystra (Acts 14) and the conversions at the second pinnacle of Ephesus (Acts 19).
5. Expansion of the mission with the ἡ βασιλεία (τοῦ θεοῦ) markers suggesting a *missio Dei* strategically located at Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea, Ephesus, and Rome.

A summary of Acts’ literary shape in the light of the finding of missional significance confirms:

1. Acts’ literary structure with an equal 25% Acts’ Beginning telling of mission potential/reluctance and a 25% Acts’ Ending telling of mission recovery/reluctance. Also the first central section at Lystra (Acts 14) is identified as the first pinnacle of a distinctly Gentile mission.
2. Acts’ literary story stages with a Beginning that prepares for the mission, a Middle which climaxes with the Gentile mission at Lystra (Acts), preceded by preparation up to and including Acts 13, and succeeded by opposition and ambiguity (Acts 15), and an Ending that tells of mission recovery.
3. Acts’ literary story sequence has a complication (the reluctance to carry out the mission), transformation (the mission examples), and denouement (Paul’s mission reluctance, recovery, and reaffirmation). There is in fact a double advance and decline around the pinnacles of mission examples at Lystra (Acts 14) and Ephesus (Acts 19).
4. Acts’ literary components link to mission. The literary-spatiality moves from the mission from Jerusalem to Rome via Samaria, Caesarea, Lystra, and Ephesus. The literary-temporality reveals seasons of mission staticity and

movement. The characterisation relates the mission instrument of the Twelve, Stephen, Philip, the transition from Peter to Paul, and the presence of the “we-group” affirms a positive mission direction. The speech framework and intertextuality establish the invitation to be a mission instrument.

## 7.5 A Final Word

Every attempt has been made to follow Bockmuehl’s assertion to “let Acts be Acts”,<sup>23</sup> Gasque’s advice to “come to grips with the New Testament data”,<sup>24</sup> and Bengel’s expository principle to “introduce nothing *into* Scriptures, but every thing *from* them, and to overlook nothing which is really contained *in* them”.<sup>25</sup> The reasons for this Acts’ study have been answered with originality of method, focus, and results. The method is a text-centred approach using a focused narrative criticism and theology. The results prove that Acts is a distinct literary unit which is “a deliberately constructed narrative designed, even to the smallest detail, for the sake of making certain didactic points”.<sup>26</sup> Acts’ structure and story combine to reveal missional significance in connection with the kingdom of God. In particular, Acts has been shown to be a realistic account of mission advances and declines. This is confirmed by the presence or absence of mission features within the literary shape.

However, the findings made only open the door to a vista of more unknowns requiring further research. These include: (1) developing the literary shape of the transitional “Act II” (8:4–11:26) and “Act IV” (17:1–21:14); (2) the other theological themes such as God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, Israel, and the church identified in Acts; (3) a less triumphal approach to Paul’s life and mission; (4) looking at how literary shape reveals significance in Luke’s Gospel, Luke-Acts, and the Western Text of Acts; (5) applying the same method to other Bible books; and (6) a wider theology of *missio Dei* and the kingdom of God.

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<sup>23</sup> See Introduction, p.4, n.26 (Bockmuehl, “Acts”).

<sup>24</sup> See Introduction, p.4, n.28 (Gasque, “Historical Value”, 88).

<sup>25</sup> See Introduction, p.4, n.29 (Bengel, “Right Way”).

<sup>26</sup> See Introduction, p.4, n.30 (Gabel, Wheeler, and York, *Bible as Literature*, 234).

Two thousand years of research into Acts have not exhausted its meaning and much work remains. As this study of Acts closes it is good to be reminded that,

it is complete because we have rehearsed a past and arrived at a present. That present, inconclusive or arbitrary as it is, stands for any present in the history of the Christian era – with its sense of fulfilment awaited, a promise known and believed in, a future incalculable in its twists and turns, ups and downs.<sup>27</sup>

The vital task remains of transmuting the findings made into hermeneutical principles for interpreting, preaching, and living out Acts today.<sup>28</sup> A study of how Acts' literary shape reveals missional significance will find its greatest gain in helping to restore the present-day church as a mission instrument for the kingdom of God.

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<sup>27</sup> Cook, "Traveller's Tales", 456.

<sup>28</sup> See Joel B. Green, "Reading the Gospels and Acts", in *Narrative Reading, Narrative Preaching; Reuniting New Testament Interpretation and Proclamation*, ed. Joel B. Green and Michael Pasquarello, III (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 37–66. Michael Pasquarello, III, "Whose Story: Preaching the Gospels and Acts", in Green and Pasquarello, *Narrative Reading*, 67–79. Walton, "Acts", 80–82.

## APPENDIX I: GLOSSARY OF KEY LITERARY SHAPE CONCEPTS

The relevant page numbers are given for the full discussion in Chapter One (or occasionally Chapter Two). The concepts in brackets show analogous ending, beginning, and middle terms.

***Ab ovo***: (31) story and discourse begin simultaneously.

***Accumulation***: (29) the connection of an ending to the whole text (cf. *Embryonic* and *Parallelism*).

***Advance***: (25) the progression of Acts' missional significance (cf. *Rise* and *Complication*).

***Aftermath***: (30) what follows outside the ending.

***Anti-climax***: (28) an inadequate closure.

***Arrival***: (28) the resolution of conflicts.

***Beginning***: (30) the overall term combining structure and story beginnings, sometimes called a *Formal Beginning* (cf. *Ending* and *Middle*).

***Catastrophe***: (28) the ending of the story.

***Causal***: (34) the beginning of a plot.

***Centre***: (37) the structure's middle (cf. *Finish* and *Start*).

***Chronological***: (34) the beginning of the story.

***Circularity***: (29) the connection of an ending to a beginning (cf. *Transitivity*).

***Climax***: (37) the middle of the literary story or plot (cf. *Closure* and *Opening*).

***Closed Closure***: (27) a closed story ending with sense of completeness.

***Closed Opening***: (31) a closed story beginning not depending on any previous events.

***Close-Up Scenic Beginning***: (28) a narrower focus of a story episode for the beginning.

***Close-Up Scenic Ending***: (31) a narrower focus of a story episode for the ending.



**Closure:** (26–28) the conclusion of the literary story or plot (cf. *Opening* and *Climax*).

**Complication:** (25, 35–36) Aristotle's term for what follows an introduction up to the *Transformation* in the middle.

**Conceptual Beginning:** (35) the opening of significance, also called *Foundation* (cf. *Culmination* and *Pivot*).

**Connexion:** (36) the connection of a beginning to another work (cf. *Linkage*).

**Culmination:** (26) the closure of significance (cf. *Foundation* and *Pivot*).

**Decline:** (25) the regression of Acts' missional significance (cf. *Fall* and *Denouement*).

**Denouement:** (25, 28) Aristotle's term for the untying of the plot's complexities following the middle *Transformation* down to the *Catastrophe*.

**Deus ex machina:** (28–29) a sudden or unexpected story ending caused by the outside intervention of a god.

**Discursive:** (34) the beginning of discourse.

**Embryonic:** (36) the connection of a beginning to the whole text (cf. *Accumulation* and *Parallelism*).

**Ending:** (26) the overall term combining structure and story ending (cf. *Beginning* and *Middle*).

**Epigrammatic Closure:** (28) the strongest closure.

**Epilogue:** (28) a finish inside the story.

**Eucatastrophe:** (28) a good ending.

**Exciting Force:** (42) Freytag's first crisis between an *Introduction* and *Rise*.

**Exordium:** (32) Graeco-Roman term for a beginning, also called a *Proem*.

**Exposition:** (28) the background and orientation information often in a beginning, but can be anywhere in the narrative.

**Fall:** (20) Freytag's term for movement from *Centre* to *Finish*.

**Farewell:** (28) the concluding exchange between author and audience.

**Final Suspense:** (42) Freytag's third crisis between the *Denouement* and *Catastrophe*.

**Finish:** (26) the structure's ending (cf. *Start* and *Centre*).

**"Five-Act Structure":** (22–24) a dramatic structure concept from Horace classified by Freytag and applied by modern dramatists to give the central "Act III" an important focus.

**Flashback:** (76) the narrative of an earlier story event.

**Formal Beginning:** (35) the overall term combining the structure and story beginnings, also a *Beginning* (cf. *Ending* and *Middle*).

**Foundation:** (30) the opening of significance, also called *Conceptual Beginning* (cf. *Pivot* and *Culmination*).

**Framing:** (29) a character or theme appearing at the beginning and ending.

**Heterodiegetic Narrator:** (13) an author outside of the story.

**Hinge:** (37) the idea of a point at which the narrative turns.

**Homodiegetic Character-Narrator:** (13) an author inside the story.

**Incompletion:** (29) the disconnection of an ending to a beginning (cf. *Intransitivity*).

**In medias res:** (31) a beginning starting in the middle of a larger story outside the text.

**Interactional:** (34) an invitation to readers.

**Intercalation:** (76) one section splitting apart another section

**Interlacement:** (39) a shifting focus from one character to another and back again.

**Intertextual:** (34) a reference to other texts.

**Intransitivity:** (36) the disconnection of a beginning from rest of the narrative (cf. *Incompletion*).

**Intratextual:** (34) an introduction to the author's narrative world.

**Introduction:** (20) Freytag's term for the *Start* or *Opening* of "Act I".

**Journey:** (41–42, 81) expressing connection and progression in the story and significance.

**Launch:** (35) the end of the beginning and the start of the middle marked by tensions or instabilities being introduced (similar to Freytag's *Exciting Force*).

**Linkage:** (29) a connection to another work often unwritten (cf. *Connexion*).

**Middle:** (24, 37–38) the overall term combining structure and story between the beginning and the ending (cf. *Ending* and *Beginning*).

**Middle Proem:** (40) the start of the second half.

**Midpoint:** (38) an identifiable moment at the exact centre of the narrative.

**Mirror Moment:** (38) a character or narrative reflection at the midpoint revealing the focus of the story.

**Oblique:** (36) a new topic in the beginning (cf. *Tangential*).

**Open Closure:** (27) an open story ending leaving things unresolved.

**Opening:** (30) the beginning of the literary story or plot (cf. *Closure* and *Climax*).

**Open Opening:** (31) an open story beginning depending on previous events.

**Origin:** (36) a philosophical or theological predecessor to the beginning.

**Overview Beginning:** (31) a broader point of view at the beginning, also called a *Summary Beginning*.

**Overview Ending:** (28) a broader point of view at the ending, also called a *Summary Ending*.

**Overview Patterning:** (42) an overview of the narrative from the perspective of the centre combining both *Sequential Patterning* and *Retrospective Patterning*.

**Parallelism:** (29) a character or theme viewed from the middle and appearing throughout the story (cf. *Accumulation* and *Embryonic*).

**Paratext:** (36) a literary predecessor to the beginning.

**Pivot:** (37) significance in the middle (cf. *Culmination* and *Foundation*).

**Postscript:** (28) a finish unconnected to the story.

**Preface:** (31) a start unconnected to the story.

**Proem:** (32) a Graeco-Roman term for a beginning, also called an *exordium*.

**Prologue:** (31) a start inside the story.

**Retrospective Patterning:** (29) reinterpreting the narrative from the perspective of the ending (cf. *Sequential Patterning* and *Overview Patterning*).

**Rise:** (20) Freytag's term for movement from *Introduction* to *Climax*.

**Sequential Patterning:** (36) interpreting the narrative from the perspective of the beginning (cf. *Retrospective Patterning* and *Overview Patterning*).

**Start:** (30) the structure's beginning (cf. *Finish* and *Centre*).

**Summary Beginning:** (31) a broader point of view at the beginning, also called an *Overview Beginning*.

**Summary Ending:** (28) a broader point of view at the ending, also called *Overview Ending*.

**Tangential:** (29) a new topic in the ending (cf. *Oblique*).

**Thematic/Paradigmatic:** (30) the narrative is arranged so as to develop themes and principles rather than by plot.

**"Three-Part ("Three-Act") Structure":** (21) Aristotle's "Beginning, Middle, and End(ing)" developed into a 25/50/25% division of the narrative as a basis for the "*Five-Act Structure*".

**Threshold:** (34) an entry into the story world.

**Tragic Moment:** (42) Freytag's second crisis occurring after the *Climax* and leading into the *Fall* (*Denouement*).

**Transformation:** (25) Aristotle's term for the move from the *Complication* to the *Denouement*.

**Transitivity:** (36) a connection of the beginning to the ending (cf. *Circularity*).

## APPENDIX II: ACTS' WORD COUNT

The total word count of 18,450 is based on the main Greek text of NA<sup>28</sup> taken from <http://www.nestle-aland.com/en/read-an28-online/>. When initially downloaded this shows a total of 18,483 words that needs adjusting for textual markers, gaps between verses, and unattached prefixes in brackets. A definitive word count of Acts is not helped by the different word totals calculated by scholars and publications which include:

(1) 18,370, if the disputed words in NA<sup>28</sup> are excluded. The adjusted total of 18,450 includes eighty separate disputed words in brackets which are preferred by the editors even though textual critics are not completely convinced of their authenticity.

(2) 18,374, Morgenthaler's own calculation.<sup>1</sup>

(3) 18,382, Morgenthaler based on NA<sup>26</sup> even though this is actually 18,450<sup>2</sup> since no changes were made in the number of words from NA<sup>26</sup> to NA<sup>27</sup> to NA<sup>28</sup>.

(4) 18,451, Bibloi, Silver Mountain Software, using the *Analytical Greek New Testament*, but counts a rogue asterisk at 15:13.

(5) 18,454, Sean Adams based on his own personal computer count of NA<sup>27.3</sup>

(6) 18,472, the online Accordance.<sup>4</sup> In correspondence with Rex A. Koivisto and Helen A. Brown the difference of the extra twenty-two words is ascertained as: (1) Acts 1, +2 by Accordance counting the title, ΠΡΑΞΕΙΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ; (2) +21 for crasis which are counted as two words by Accordance in Acts 5 (+2: καὶ in 5:15 and καὶ κεῖνος in 5:37), Acts 7 (+1: καὶ κεῖθεν in 7:4), Acts 8 (+1: καὶ μοι in 8:19), Acts 10 (+1: καὶ μοι in 10:28), Acts 13 (+1: καὶ κεῖθεν in 13:21), Acts 14 (+2: καὶ κεῖ in 14:7 and καὶ κεῖθεν in 14:26), Acts 15 (+1: καὶ κεῖνοι in 15:11), Acts 16 (+1: καὶ κεῖθεν in 16:12), Acts 17 (+1: καὶ κεῖ in 17:13), Acts 18 (+1: καὶ κεῖνους in 18:19), Acts 20 (+1: καὶ κεῖθεν in 20:15), Acts 21 (+1: καὶ κεῖθεν in 21:1), Acts 22 (+3: καὶ κεῖ in 22:10, καὶ γὰρ in 22:13 and καὶ γὰρ in 22:19), Acts 25 (+1: καὶ κεῖ in 25:20), Acts 27 (+2 : καὶ κεῖθεν in 27:4 and καὶ κεῖ in 27:6), Acts 28 (+1: καὶ κεῖθεν in 28:15); and (3) -1 in Acts 9 due to Accordance counting ὁ τί (9:6) as one word.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Morgenthaler, *Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes* (Zürich: Gotthelf, 1958), 164. Cf. Aune, *Literary Environment*, 117, without source of the calculation.

<sup>2</sup> Morgenthaler, *Lukas*, 321–22. Cf. Burridge, “Genre of Acts”, 19–20 who simply follows Morgenthaler.

<sup>3</sup> Adams, *Genre*, 140.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.accordancebible.com>.

(7) 19,551, from the online Thesaurus Linguae Graecae,<sup>5</sup> which purports to use the word count of *TLG*,<sup>6</sup> based on *The Greek New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.<sup>7</sup> from the UBS<sup>2</sup>/NA<sup>25</sup> Greek text. However, the *TLG* notes that the word counts are relative rather than absolute since they are inflated by symbols and sigla used in formatting the printed page.<sup>8</sup> It seems likely that the considerably inflated total includes the 1,002 verse numbers plus the two title words and also 97 other unaccounted additions. The problem is that scholars rely on the inaccurate word count for making further calculations and conclusions in their research.<sup>9</sup>

(8) 20,845, Walton's mistaken claim to use NA<sup>27</sup>/USB<sup>4</sup> text from Accordance.<sup>10</sup> See (6) above.

The problem of an inaccurate word count is exacerbated since scholars and publications often quote previous works without checking or qualification.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tlg.uci.edu>.

<sup>6</sup> Luci Berkowitz and Karl A. Squitter, *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: Canon of Greek Authors and Words*, with technical assistance by William A. Johnson, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 283, showing the word count of *Acta apostolorum* within 0031 NOVUM TESTAMENTUM.

<sup>7</sup> Kurt Aland, et al., eds., in co-operation with the Institute of New Testament Textual Research, *The Greek New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1968), 416–528.

<sup>8</sup> Berkowitz and Squitter, *TLG*, xxvii.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Smith, *Interruption*, 246.

<sup>10</sup> Steve Walton, “The Acts – of God”, 293, 306.

## APPENDIX III: ACTS' SECTIONS

## “ACT I” (1:1–8:3)

			1:1
<b>The First Summary</b>			1:5
.....			
	Dialogue/Characters	μὲν οὖν	1:6
<b>The First Scene</b>			1:11
.....			
	(Literary-spatial/character change)	τότε	(1:12–14)
.....			
		“in these days”	1:15
<b>Reconstitution of the Twelve</b>			1:26
.....			
	Temporal change	καί	(2:1–4)
.....			
		δέ	2:5
<b>Pentecost</b>			
	Summary		2:42–47
.....			
	Specific event	δέ	3:1
<b>Healing of the Lame Man</b>			3:26
.....			
	Close story link/opposition	δέ	4:1
<b>Peter and John before the Sanhedrin</b>			4:31
.....			
	(Transition)	δέ	(4:32–37)
.....			
	Character change “a certain man”	δέ	5:1
<b>Ananias and Sapphira</b>			
	Summary		5:12–16
.....			
	Close story link/specific event/opposition	δέ	5:17
<b>Apostles before the Sanhedrin</b>			
	Summary		5:42
.....			
		“in these days” (6:1–7)	
<b>Stephen</b> (6:5)		δέ	6:8
.....			
	(Saul/Stephen)		(8:1–3)
.....			

**“ACT II” (8:4–11:26)**

<b>Philip in Samaria</b>	Spatial/character change	μὲν οὖν	<b>8:4</b>
	Peter and John summary	μὲν οὖν	<b>8:25</b>
<b>Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch</b>	Spatial change	δέ	<b>8:26</b>
	Summary		<b>8:40</b>
<b>Saul’s Conversion-Commission/Early Ministry</b>	Character change	δέ	<b>9:1</b>
	Summary	μὲν οὖν	<b>9:31</b>
<b>Peter’s Judean Ministry</b>	Character change “it came to pass”	δέ	<b>9:32</b>
	“it came to pass”	δέ	<b>9:43</b>
<b>Peter and Cornelius</b>	Spatial/character change “a certain man”	δέ	<b>10:1</b>
	(story continues in Jerusalem)	δέ (11:1)	<b>11:18</b>
<b>(Syrian) Antioch Christians</b>	Spatial/character change (back to 8:4)	μὲν οὖν	<b>11:19</b>
			<b>11:26</b>



**“ACT III” (11:27–16:40)**

	Spatial/character change	“in these days” Barnabas and Saul	<b>11:27–30</b>
<hr/>			
		“at that time”	<b>δέ 12:1</b>
<b>Peter and Herod</b>			
		Barnabas and Saul	<b>12:25</b>
<hr/>			
	Spatial change	δέ	<b>13:1</b>
<b>(Syrian) Antioch to Cyprus</b>			
			<b>13:12</b>
<hr/>			
	Spatial change	δέ	<b>13:13</b>
<b>Pisidian Antioch</b>			
			<b>13:52</b>
<hr/>			
	Spatial change	δέ	<b>14:1</b>
<b>Mission at Iconium</b>			
	(Transitional summary)		<b>(14:6–7)</b>
<hr/>			
	Spatial change	“a certain man”	<b>καί 14:8</b>
<b>Central Scene at Lystra</b>			
			<b>14:20a</b>
<hr/>			
	(Summary)	τέ	<b>14:20b–23</b>
<b>Extended Climax /Return to (Syrian) Antioch</b>			
	(Summary)	(14:27–28)	
		καί	<b>15:1–2</b>
<hr/>			
	Spatial change	μέν οὖν	<b>15:3</b>
<b>Jerusalem Conference</b>			
	(Transition)	μέν οὖν	<b>(15:30–35)</b>
<hr/>			
	Temporal change	“after some days”	<b>δέ 15:36</b>
<b>(Syrian) Antioch to Troas</b>			
	(Transition)	καί	<b>(16:9)</b>
<hr/>			
	Spatial change	(transition)	<b>δέ (16:10–11)</b>
<b>Philippi</b>			
			<b>16:40</b>
<hr/>			

**“ACT IV” (17:1–21:14)**

<b>Thessalonica</b>	Spatial change	δέ	<b>17:1</b>
			<b>17:9</b>
<b>Beroea</b>	Spatial change	δέ	<b>17:10</b>
			<b>17:15</b>
<b>Athens</b>	Spatial change	δέ	<b>17:16</b>
			<b>17:34</b>
<b>Corinth</b>	Spatial/ temporal change	“after these things”	<b>18:1</b>
		“many days”	<b>18:18a</b>
<b>Ephesus</b>	Spatial change (transition)	<b>18:18b</b>	
		δέ	18:19
		Character change	“a certain Jew” (Apollos transition) (18:24–28)
		Temporal changes	“it came to pass” 19:1
			“when were fulfilled these things” 19:21
			“it came to pass about that time” 19:23
<b>Troas</b>	Spatial change	δέ	<b>19:40</b>
			<b>20:1</b>
<b>Miletus</b>	Spatial change	(transition)	<b>20:12</b>
			<b>20:38</b>
<b>Journey to Jerusalem</b>	Spatial/temporal changes	δέ	<b>21:1</b>
		“it came to pass”	21:5
		“on the morrow”	21:8
			<b>21:14</b>

**“ACT V” (21:15–28:31)**

<b>Church and Temple</b>	Spatial/temporal changes	“after these days”	<b>21:15</b>
			<b>21:26</b>
<b>Trials in Jerusalem</b>	Seven days fulfilled/ opposition	δέ	<b>21:27</b>
	(Transition)	μὲν οὖν	<b>(23:22–30)</b>
<b>Trials in Caesarea</b>	Spatial change	μὲν οὖν	<b>23:31</b>
			<b>26:32</b>
<b>Storm and Shipwreck</b>	Spatial change	δέ	<b>27:1</b>
			<b>27:44</b>
.....			
<b>Malta</b>		καί	<b>28:1</b>
			<b>28:10</b>
<b>Final Voyage</b>	Spatial/temporal change	δέ	<b>28:11</b>
	(Transition/double-arrival)	(28:14–16)	<b>28:15</b>
<b>Final Scene</b>	Spatial change	δέ	<b>28:16</b>
	“and it came to pass”	28:17	<b>28:28</b>
<b>Final Summary</b>		δέ	<b>28:30</b>
			<b>28:31</b>

## APPENDIX IV: ACTS' LITERARY TIME FRAME

### **Total: Ten Years, Three Months, 180–82 Days**

#### **“ACT I”: Forty-Six Days**

1:3 (forty days); 2:1 (day of Pentecost); 3:1 (one day); 4:5 (the next day); 5:21 (daybreak-two days); 8:1 (that day).  
1:15 (in these days); 6:1 (in these days).

#### **“ACT II”: One Year, Seven Days**

9:9 (three days); 10:9 (following day- two days); 10:23 (next day); 10:24 (following day); 11:26 (a whole year).  
*9:19 (some days); 9:23 (sufficient days); 9:43 (sufficient days); 10:48 (some days).*

#### **“ACT III”: Thirteen Days**

12:21 (appointed day); 13:14 (Sabbath); 13:44 (next Sabbath - week); 14:20 (next day- two days); 16:11 (next day- two days).  
*11:27 (in these days); 14:28 (not a little time); 15:33 (a time); 15:36 (some days); 16:12 (some days).*

#### **“ACT IV”: Five Years, Forty-Six Days**

17:2 (three weeks/Sabbaths); 18:11 (a year and a half); 19:8 (three months); 19:10 (two years); 20:3 (three months); 20:a (five days); 20:6b (seven days); 20:15 (next day- two days); 20:31 (three years - two included at 19:10); 21:1 (next day- two days); 21:4 (seven days); 21:7 (a day); 21:8 (next day).  
*17:11 (daily); 17:17 (every day); 18:4 (every Sabbath); 18:18 (sufficient days); 18:23 (some time); 19:22 (a time); 21:10 (many days).*

#### **“ACT V”: Four Years, Three Months, Sixty-Eight/Seventy Days**

21:18 (next day- two days); 21:26 (next day); 21:27 (seven days); 22:30 (next day); 23:12 (next morning); 23:32 (next day); 24:1 (five days); 24:27 (two years); 25:1 (three days); 25:6 (eight or ten days); 25:23 (next day- two days); 27:3 (next day- two days); 27:18 (next day- two days); 27:19 (third day- which includes two days at 27:18); 27:27 (fourteenth night includes 27:18 and 27:19); 27:33 (dawn); 28:7 (three days); 28:11 (three months); 28:12 (three days); 28:13 (next day- two days); 28:13 (following day); 28:14 (seven days); 28:17 (three days); 28:23 (a certain day); and 28:30 (two years).  
*24:24 (some days); 25:13 (some days); 27:7 (a number of days); 27:9 (sufficient time); 27:20 (many days).*

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