TYNDALE

CORNERSTONE
BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The Gospel of Luke
Allison A. Trites

Acts
William J. Larkin

GENERAL EDITOR
Philip W. Comfort

WITH THE ENTIRE TEXT OF THE
New Living Translation

CORNERSTONE
B I B L I C A L
COMMENTARY

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary* is based on the second edition of the New Living Translation (2004). Nearly 100 scholars from various church backgrounds and from several countries (United States, Canada, England, and Australia) participated in the creation of the NLT. Many of these same scholars are contributors to this commentary series. All the commentators, whether participants in the NLT or not, believe that the Bible is God's inspired word and have a desire to make God's word clear and accessible to his people.

This Bible commentary is the natural extension of our vision for the New Living Translation, which we believe is both exegetically accurate and idiomatically powerful. The NLT attempts to communicate God's inspired word in a lucid English translation of the original languages so that English readers can understand and appreciate the thought of the original writers. In the same way, the *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary* aims at helping teachers, pastors, students, and lay people understand every thought contained in the Bible. As such, the commentary focuses first on the words of Scripture, then on the theological truths of Scripture—inasmuch as the words express the truths.

The commentary itself has been structured in such a way as to help readers get at the meaning of Scripture, passage by passage, through the entire Bible. Each Bible book is prefaced by a substantial book introduction that gives general historical background important for understanding. Then the reader is taken through the Bible text, passage by passage, starting with the New Living Translation text printed in full. This is followed by a section called "Notes," wherein the commentator helps the reader understand the Hebrew or Greek behind the English of the NLT, interacts with other scholars on important interpretive issues, and points the reader to significant textual and contextual matters. The "Notes" are followed by the "Commentary," wherein each scholar presents a lucid interpretation of the passage, giving special attention to context and major theological themes.

The commentators represent a wide spectrum of theological positions within the evangelical community. We believe this is good because it reflects the rich variety in Christ's church. All the commentators uphold the authority of God's word and believe it is essential to heed the old adage: "Wholly apply yourself to the Scriptures and apply them wholly to you." May this commentary help you know the truths of Scripture, and may this knowledge help you "grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord" (2 Pet 1:2, NLT).

PHILIP W. COMFORT
GENERAL EDITOR

ABBREVIATIONS

GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

b.	Babylonian Gemara
bar.	baraita
c.	*circa*, around, approximately
cf.	*confer*, compare
ch, chs	chapter, chapters
contra	in contrast to
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ed.	edition, editor
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
et al.	*et alli*, and others
fem.	feminine
ff	following (verses, pages)
fl.	flourished
Gr.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew
ibid.	*ibidem*, in the same place
i.e.	*id est*, the same
in loc.	*in loco*, in the place cited
lit.	literally
LXX	Septuagint
𝔐	Majority Text
m.	Mishnah
masc.	masculine
mg	margin
ms	manuscript
mss	manuscripts
MT	Masoretic Text
n.d.	no date
neut.	neuter
no.	number
NT	New Testament
OL	Old Latin
OS	Old Syriac
OT	Old Testament
p., pp.	page, pages
pl.	plural
Q	Quelle ("Sayings" as Gospel source)
rev.	revision
sg.	singular
t.	Tosefta
TR	Textus Receptus
v., vv.	verse, verses
vid.	*videur*, it seems
viz.	*videlicet*, namely
vol.	volume
y.	Jerusalem Gemara

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

ASV	American Standard Version
CEV	Contemporary English Version
ESV	English Standard Version
GW	God's Word
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
JB	Jerusalem Bible
KJV	King James Version
NAB	New American Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCV	New Century Version
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NIrV	New International Reader's Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NJPS	The New Jewish Publication Society Translation (*Tanakh*)
NKJV	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NLT	New Living Translation
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version
TEV	Today's English Version
TLB	The Living Bible

ABBREVIATIONS FOR DICTIONARIES, LEXICONS, COLLECTIONS OF TEXTS, ORIGINAL LANGUAGE EDITIONS

ABD *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols., Freedman) [1992]

ANEP *The Ancient Near East in Pictures* (Pritchard) [1965]

ANET *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Pritchard) [1969]

BAGD *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 2nd ed. (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker) [1979]

BDAG *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 3rd ed. (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich) [2000]

BDB *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Brown, Driver, Briggs) [1907]

BDF *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Blass, Debrunner, Funk) [1961]

BHS *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Elliger and Rudolph) [1983]

CAD *Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* [1956]

COS *The Context of Scripture* (3 vols., Hallo and Younger) [1997–2002]

DBI *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman) [1998]

DBT *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (2nd ed., Leon-Dufour) [1972]

DCH *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (5 vols., D. Clines) [2000]

DJD *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* [1955–]

DJG *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Green, McKnight, Marshall) [1992]

DOTP *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch.* (T. Alexander, D.W. Baker) [2003]

DPL *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Hawthorne, Martin, Reid) [1993]

EDNT *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (3 vols., H. Balz, G. Schneider. ET) [1990–1993]

HALOT *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, J. Stamm; trans. M. Richardson) [1994–1999]

IBD *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (3 vols., Douglas, Wiseman) [1980]

IDB *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (4 vols., Buttrick) [1962]

ISBE *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (4 vols., Bromiley) [1979–1988]

KBL *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros* (Koehler, Baumgartner) [1958]

LCL Loeb Classical Library

L&N *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (Louw and Nida) [1989]

LSJ *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed., Liddell, Scott, Jones) [1996]

MM *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (Moulton and Milligan) [1930; 1997]

NA^{26} *Novum Testamentum Graece* (26th ed., Nestle-Aland) [1979]

NA^{27} *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed., Nestle-Aland) [1993]

NBD *New Bible Dictionary* (2nd ed., Douglas, Hillyer) [1982]

NIDB *New International Dictionary of the Bible* (Douglas, Tenney) [1987]

NIDBA *New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* (Blaiklock and Harrison) [1983]

NIDNTT *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (4 vols., C. Brown) [1975–1985]

NIDOTTE *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (5 vols., W. A. VanGemeren) [1997]

PGM *Papyri graecae magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri.* (Preisendanz) [1928]

PG *Patrologia Graecae* (J. P. Migne) [1857–1886]

TBD *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Elwell, Comfort) [2001]

TDNT *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (10 vols., Kittel, Friedrich; trans. Bromiley) [1964–1976]

TDOT *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (8 vols., Botterweck, Ringgren; trans. Willis, Bromiley, Green) [1974–]

TLNT *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (3 vols., C. Spicq) [1994]

TLOT *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (3 vols., E. Jenni) [1997]

TWOT *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (2 vols., Harris, Archer) [1980]

UBS^{3} *United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament* (3rd ed., Metzger et al.) [1975]

UBS^{4} *United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament* (4th corrected ed., Metzger et al.) [1993]

WH *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (Westcott and Hort) [1882]

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Old Testament

Gen	Genesis
Exod	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Num	Numbers
Deut	Deuteronomy
Josh	Joshua
Judg	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1 Sam	1 Samuel
2 Sam	2 Samuel
1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Kgs	2 Kings
1 Chr	1 Chronicles
2 Chr	2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh	Nehemiah
Esth	Esther
Ps, Pss	Psalm, Psalms
Prov	Proverbs
Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Song	Song of Songs
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Lam	Lamentations

Ezek	Ezekiel	Obad	Obadiah	Zeph	Zephaniah
Dan	Daniel	Jonah	Jonah	Hag	Haggai
Hos	Hosea	Mic	Micah	Zech	Zechariah
Joel	Joel	Nah	Nahum	Mal	Malachi
Amos	Amos	Hab	Habakkuk		

New Testament

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

Deuterocanonical

Bar	Baruch	1–2 Esdr	1–2 Esdras	Pr Man	Prayer of Manasseh
Add Dan	Additions to Daniel	Add Esth	Additions to Esther	Ps 151	Psalm 151
Pr Azar	Prayer of Azariah	Ep Jer	Epistle of Jeremiah	Sir	Sirach
Bel	Bel and the Dragon	Jdt	Judith	Tob	Tobit
Sg Three	Song of the Three Children	1–2 Macc	1–2 Maccabees	Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
		3–4 Macc	3–4 Maccabees		
Sus	Susanna				

MANUSCRIPTS AND LITERATURE FROM QUMRAN

Initial numerals followed by "Q" indicate particular caves at Qumran. For example, the notation 4Q267 indicates text 267 from cave 4 at Qumran. Further, 1QS 4:9-10 indicates column 4, lines 9-10 of the *Rule of the Community*; and 4Q166 1 ii 2 indicates fragment 1, column ii, line 2 of text 166 from cave 4. More examples of common abbreviations are listed below.

CD	Cairo Geniza copy of the *Damascus Document*	1QIsa^{b}	Isaiah copy ^{b}	4QLam^{a}	Lamentations
		1QM	*War Scroll*	11QPs^{a}	Psalms
1QH	*Thanksgiving Hymns*	1QpHab	*Pesher Habakkuk*	11QTemple^{a,b}	*Temple Scroll*
1QIsa^{a}	Isaiah copy ^{a}	1QS	*Rule of the Community*	11QtgJob	*Targum of Job*

IMPORTANT NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

(all dates given are AD; ordinal numbers refer to centuries)

Significant Papyri (𝔓 = Papyrus)

𝔓1 Matt 1; early 3rd
𝔓4+𝔓64+𝔓67 Matt 3, 5, 26; Luke 1-6; late 2nd
𝔓5 John 1, 16, 20; early 3rd
𝔓13 Heb 2-5, 10-12; early 3rd
𝔓15+𝔓16 (probably part of same codex) 1 Cor 7-8, Phil 3-4; late 3rd
𝔓20 James 2-3; 3rd
𝔓22 John 15-16; mid 3rd
𝔓23 James 1; c. 200
𝔓27 Rom 8-9; 3rd
𝔓30 1 Thess 4-5; 2 Thess 1; early 3rd
𝔓32 Titus 1-2; late 2nd
𝔓37 Matt 26; late 3rd
𝔓39 John 8; first half of 3rd
𝔓40 Rom 1-4, 6, 9; 3rd
𝔓45 Gospels and Acts; early 3rd
𝔓46 Paul's Major Epistles (less Pastorals); late 2nd
𝔓47 Rev 9-17; 3rd

$\mathfrak{P}$49+$\mathfrak{P}$65 Eph 4-5; 1 Thess 1-2; 3rd
$\mathfrak{P}$52 John 18; c. 125
$\mathfrak{P}$53 Matt 26, Acts 9-10; middle 3rd
$\mathfrak{P}$66 John; late 2nd
$\mathfrak{P}$70 Matt 2-3, 11-12, 24; 3rd
$\mathfrak{P}$72 1-2 Peter, Jude; c. 300
$\mathfrak{P}$74 Acts, General Epistles; 7th
$\mathfrak{P}$75 Luke and John; c. 200
$\mathfrak{P}$77+$\mathfrak{P}$103 (probably part of same codex) Matt 13-14, 23; late 2nd
$\mathfrak{P}$87 Phlm; late 2nd
$\mathfrak{P}$90 John 18-19; late 2nd
$\mathfrak{P}$91 Acts 2-3; 3rd
$\mathfrak{P}$92 Eph 1, 2 Thess 1; c. 300
$\mathfrak{P}$98 Rev 1:13-20; late 2nd
$\mathfrak{P}$100 James 3-5; c. 300
$\mathfrak{P}$101 Matt 3-4; 3rd
$\mathfrak{P}$104 Matt 21; 2nd
$\mathfrak{P}$106 John 1; 3rd
$\mathfrak{P}$115 Rev 2-3, 5-6, 8-15; 3rd

Significant Uncials

א (Sinaiticus) most of NT; 4th
A (Alexandrinus) most of NT; 5th
B (Vaticanus) most of NT; 4th
C (Ephraemi Rescriptus) most of NT with many lacunae; 5th
D (Bezae) Gospels, Acts; 5th
D (Claromontanus), Paul's Epistles; 6th (different MS than Bezae)
E (Laudianus 35) Acts; 6th
F (Augensis) Paul's Epistles; 9th
G (Boernerianus) Paul's Epistles; 9th
H (Coislinianus) Paul's Epistles; 6th
I (Freerianus or Washington) Paul's Epistles; 5th
L (Regius) Gospels; 8th
Q (Guelferbytanus B) Luke, John; 5th
P (Porphyrianus) Acts—Revelation; 9th
T (Borgianus) Luke, John; 5th
W (Washingtonianus or the Freer Gospels) Gospels; 5th
Z (Dublinensis) Matthew; 6th
037 (Δ; Sangallensis) Gospels; 9th
038 (Θ; Koridethi) Gospels; 9th
040 (Ξ; Zacynthius) Luke; 6th
043 (Φ; Beratinus) Matt, Mark; 6th
044 (Ψ; Athous Laurae) Gospels, Acts, Paul's Epistles; 9th
048 Acts, Paul's Epistles, General Epistles; 5th
0171 Matt 10, Luke 22; c. 300
0189 Acts 5; c. 200

Significant Minuscules

1 Gospels, Acts, Paul's Epistles; 12th
33 All NT except Rev; 9th
81 Acts, Paul's Epistles, General Epistles; 1044
565 Gospels; 9th
700 Gospels; 11th
1424 (or Family 1424—a group of 29 manuscripts sharing nearly the same text) most of NT; 9th-10th
1739 Acts, Paul's Epistles; 10th
2053 Rev; 13th
2344 Rev; 11th
f^1 (a family of manuscripts including 1, 118, 131, 209) Gospels; 12th-14th
f^{13} (a family of manuscripts including 13, 69, 124, 174, 230, 346, 543, 788, 826, 828, 983, 1689, 1709—known as the Ferrar group) Gospels; 11th-15th

Significant Ancient Versions

SYRIAC (SYR)
syr^c (Syriac Curetonian) Gospels; 5th
syr^s (Syriac Sinaiticus) Gospels; 4th
syr^h (Syriac Harklensis) Entire NT; 616

OLD LATIN (IT)
it^a (Vercellenis) Gospels; 4th
it^b (Veronensis) Gospels; 5th
it^d (Cantabrigiensis—the Latin text of Bezae) Gospels, Acts, 3 John; 5th
it^e (Palantinus) Gospels; 5th
it^k (Bobiensis) Matthew, Mark; c. 400

COPTIC (COP)
cop^{bo} (Boharic—north Egypt)
cop^{fay} (Fayyumic—central Egypt)
cop^{sa} (Sahidic—southern Egypt)

OTHER VERSIONS
arm (Armenian)
eth (Ethiopic)
geo (Georgian)

TRANSLITERATION AND NUMBERING SYSTEM

Note: For words and roots from non-biblical languages (e.g., Arabic, Ugaritic), only approximate transliterations are given.

HEBREW/ARAMAIC

Consonants

א	*aleph*	= ʾ	מ, ם	*mem*	= *m*
בּ, ב	*beth*	= *b*	נ, ן	*nun*	= *n*
גּ, ג	*gimel*	= *g*	ס	*samekh*	= *s*
דּ, ד	*daleth*	= *d*	ע	*ayin*	= ʿ
ה	*he*	= *h*	פּ, פ, ף	*pe*	= *p*
ו	*waw*	= *w*	צ, ץ	*tsadhe*	= *ts*
ז	*zayin*	= *z*	ק	*qoph*	= *q*
ח	*heth*	= *kh*	ר	*resh*	= *r*
ט	*teth*	= *t*	שׁ	*shin*	= *sh*
י	*yodh*	= *y*	שׂ	*sin*	= *s*
כּ, כ, ך	*kaph*	= *k*	תּ, ת	*taw*	= *t, th* (spirant)
ל	*lamedh*	= *l*			

Vowels

◌ַ	*patakh*	= *a*	◌ֳ	*qamets khatuf*	= *o*
◌ַח	*furtive patakh*	= *a*	◌ֹ	*holem*	= *o*
◌ָ	*qamets*	= *a*	◌ וֹ	*full holem*	= *o*
◌ָה	*final qamets he*	= *ah*	◌ֻ	*short qibbuts*	= *u*
◌ֶ	*segol*	= *e*	◌ וּ	*long qibbuts*	= *u*
◌ֵ	*tsere*	= *e*	◌ וּ	*shureq*	= *u*
◌ֵי	*tsere yod*	= *e*	◌ֲ	*khatef patakh*	= *a*
◌ִ	*short hireq*	= *i*	◌ֳ	*khatef qamets*	= *o*
◌ִ	*long hireq*	= *i*	◌ְ	*vocalic shewa*	= *e*
◌ִי	*hireq yod*	= *i*	◌ַי	*patakh yodh*	= *a*

GREEK

α	*alpha*	= *a*	ε	*epsilon*	= *e*
β	*beta*	= *b*	ζ	*zeta*	= *z*
γ	*gamma*	= *g, n (before* γ, κ, ξ, χ*)*	η	*eta*	= *ē*
			θ	*theta*	= *th*
δ	*delta*	= *d*	ι	*iota*	= *i*

κ	*kappa*	*= k*	τ	*tau*	*= t*
λ	*lamda*	*= l*	υ	*upsilon*	*= u*
μ	*mu*	*= m*	φ	*phi*	*= ph*
ν	*nu*	*= n*	χ	*chi*	*= ch*
ξ	*ksi*	*= x*	ψ	*psi*	*= ps*
ο	*omicron*	*= o*	ω	*omega*	*= ō*
π	*pi*	*= p*	'	*rough breathing mark*	*= h (with vowel or diphthong)*
ρ	*rho*	*= r (ῥ = rh)*			
σ, ς	*sigma*	*= s*			

THE TYNDALE-STRONG'S NUMBERING SYSTEM

The Cornerstone Biblical Commentary series uses a word-study numbering system to give both newer and more advanced Bible students alike quicker, more convenient access to helpful original-language tools (e.g., concordances, lexicons, and theological dictionaries). Those who are unfamiliar with the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek alphabets can quickly find information on a given word by looking up the appropriate index number. Advanced students will find the system helpful because it allows them to quickly find the lexical form of obscure conjugations and inflections.

There are two main numbering systems used for biblical words today. The one familiar to most people is the Strong's numbering system (made popular by the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance to the Bible*). Although the original Strong's system is still quite useful, the most up-to-date research has shed new light on the biblical languages and allows for more precision than is found in the original Strong's system. The Cornerstone Biblical Commentary series, therefore, features a newly revised version of the Strong's system, the Tyndale-Strong's numbering system. The Tyndale-Strong's system brings together the familiarity of the Strong's system and the best of modern scholarship. In most cases, the original Strong's numbers are preserved. In places where new research dictates, new or related numbers have been added.[1]

The second major numbering system today is the Goodrick-Kohlenberger system used in a number of study tools published by Zondervan. In order to give students broad access to a number of helpful tools, the Commentary provides index numbers for the Zondervan system as well.

The different index systems are designated as follows:

TG	Tyndale-Strong's Greek number	ZH	Zondervan Hebrew number
ZG	Zondervan Greek number	TA	Tyndale-Strong's Aramaic number
TH	Tyndale-Strong's Hebrew number	ZA	Zondervan Aramaic number

So in the example, "love" *agapē* [TG26, ZG27], the first number is the one to use with Greek tools keyed to the Tyndale-Strong's system, and the second applies to tools that use the Zondervan system.

1. Generally, one may simply use the original four-digit Strong's number to identify words in tools using Strong's system. If a Tyndale-Strong's number is followed by a capital letter (e.g., TG1692A), it generally indicates an added subdivision of meaning for the given term. Whenever a Tyndale-Strong's number has a number following a decimal point (e.g., TG2013.1), it reflects an instance where new research has yielded a separate, new classification of use for a biblical word. Forthcoming tools from Tyndale House Publishers will include these entries, which were not part of the original Strong's system.

The Gospel of Luke

ALLISON A. TRITES

INTRODUCTION TO *Luke*

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, which has been described as "the most beautiful book in the world,"[1] is the first part of a two-volume work devoted to the life of Jesus and the opening years of the Christian church. In Luke's Gospel, we are introduced to "everything Jesus began to do and teach" prior to his ascension (described in 24: 50-51; Acts 1:6-11). In the second volume, the book of Acts, Luke picks up the story of the years following the Ascension, showing the growth of the Christian movement and noting the stages of its expansion from Jerusalem to Rome.[2] These two books, when taken together, constitute about 27% of the New Testament. Thus, Luke's perspective on the life of Jesus and the early Christian movement is vitally important if one is to gain a good grasp of the overall message of the New Testament. Our attention will be devoted primarily to Luke's Gospel, although similarities and points of contact with the book of Acts will be noted where appropriate.

AUTHOR

Though Luke's Gospel doesn't name its author, most scholars today acknowledge Luke as the author of both the third Gospel and the book of Acts. Luke was certainly not the most prominent person in the early church, so it is difficult to believe that his name would be attached to the Gospel unless he were actually the author. There is a strong and persistent tradition in the early church that Luke wrote the third Gospel and the book of Acts. This view receives support from the Muratorian Fragment (which reflects the view of the church in Rome c. AD 170–190); from Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (c. 185); and later, from the influential church leaders Eusebius (d. 339) and Jerome (d. 420). This traditional view was the general consensus until the rise of modern critical biblical scholarship in the last two hundred years and indeed has continued to be widely held to the present day. Most scholars still attribute both the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts to Luke, the beloved physician and traveling companion of the apostle Paul (Harrington 1968:13).

The "Gospel according to Luke" is the title given at the close of this Gospel in 𝔓75, the oldest surviving Greek manuscript that contains nearly all of Luke (dated about AD 175–225), but this tradition is not certain and has been attacked in modern times. However, two features from the internal evidence of Luke–Acts must be carefully noted. First, the author does not present himself as an eyewitness of most of the events in the two-volume work, particularly those related to the life and ministry of Jesus (1:1-2), relying instead on his own study of the traditions

taken from eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (1:2-4). Second, he appears to view himself as a companion of Paul in the "we" sections of Acts (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1–28:16). This latter feature reduces the search for possible authors.

Some critics view the "we" sections simply as a literary device designed to create the effect or impression of an eyewitness (Haenchen, Pervo). The picture of Paul in Acts is also contrasted with the self-portrait drawn in the Pauline epistles, both in terms of its historical accuracy and its theological characteristics. Such arguments have led a few writers to deny that the author of the third Gospel was a companion of Paul (Vielhauer, Robbins). However, the connection of Luke as a traveling companion of Paul has been ably defended by Fitzmyer, who has argued that a creative literary device does not offer an adequate explanation of the appearance and disappearance of the "we" sections in such a capricious manner (Fitzmyer 1989:16-22). In addition, some "sailing" references lack the "we" terminology, though they would be suitable insertions if the aim were just to increase the impression of vividness (e.g., Acts 13:4, 13; 14:26; 17:14; 18:18, 21).

In fact, a strong case has been made that the portrait of Paul in his epistles should be seen as compatible with that presented in Acts (Bruce 1962:24-27). According to the internal evidence of Luke–Acts, it is reasonable to conclude that the author was personally acquainted with Paul as a traveling companion and was most probably a second-generation Christian. He was committed to the task of communicating the Good News in an accurate and responsible manner.

His prologue is unique among the Gospels and displays an elevated literary style that is clearly reminiscent of the classical historians of the ancient world like Thucydides, Polybius, and Herodotus (Talbert 1989:7-11; Winter and Clarke 1993:1-29). However, the most illuminating parallels to the prologue are probably the prefaces of Josephus in his two-volume work *Against Apion*, discussed in the notes on 1:1-4. To sum up, Luke stacks up well against his contemporaries as a responsible historian of Christian origins.

For the modern reader of Luke's Gospel, it is interesting and significant that there are three helpful references to Luke in the New Testament. He is mentioned in Philemon when Paul sends greetings to Philemon from Epaphras, a fellow prisoner, and then adds similar greetings from Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, who are described appreciatively as "co-workers" (Phlm 1:24). The second reference is found in Colossians, where greetings are given from a group including Epaphras, Luke, and Demas (Col 4:10-14). There, Luke is explicitly described as "the beloved physician" (Col 4:14, KJV) and is listed with Christian colleagues who were Gentiles (the Jewish believers are listed in Col 4:11), making it probable that he, too, was a Gentile. The third reference to Luke appears in 2 Timothy, where once more Paul is in prison and notes rather plaintively, "Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim 4:11).[3] Evidently, Paul valued the help and support of Luke as a trusted confidant and aide.

In addition to these direct references to Luke, there are several "we" passages in

Acts that support Luke's authorship. They suggest that the author was a participant in the action and a traveling companion of the apostle Paul (Acts 16:10-18; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1–28:16). They show no marked differences in style or vocabulary from the rest of Acts, so the whole book appears to be the product of one author. The style and vocabulary of Acts also seem to harmonize well with the Gospel of Luke, pointing strongly to a single writer as the author of both books. In addition, the theological perspective of Luke's Gospel and that of Acts seem to be consistent. Both books stress the historical matrix of redemptive events, the role of the Holy Spirit, the place of angels, the importance of prayer, the fulfillment of Old Testament promises in the life of Christ and in the developing work of the Christian church, and the realization of God's purpose in holy history. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that both volumes are dedicated to Theophilus (1:3; Acts 1:1) and that the second volume specifically refers to the first one (Acts 1:1), thus linking Acts directly with Luke's Gospel.

Another element that has been used to support Luke's authorship has been the medical language of Luke–Acts, and comparisons have been made between Luke and other ancient doctors like Hippocrates (fourth–fifth century BC) and Galen (second century AD).[4] Much less stress has been placed upon this element in recent years in view of studies that have shown that medical language was used in ancient times by educated people who were not physicians.[5] However, this recent argument has probably been pressed too far, so that while vocabulary and style do not decisively prove that Luke was a physician, the evidence of Luke–Acts reveals an author who was deeply concerned about human pain and suffering (see 4:38; 13:10-17; 14:1-4; Acts 9:32-42; 28:8-9).

Vincent Taylor, one of the great authorities on Luke's Gospel in the twentieth century, made a perceptive comment:

> *The objections to Lukan authorship turn mainly upon the historical problems that meet us in Acts, especially the difficulty of reconciling the account of the Apostolic Council in Acts 15 with Paul's personal narrative in Galatians 2:1-10 and the problem raised in Acts 15:23-29. These problems belong mainly to the study of the Acts and all that can be said here is that the difficulties have been exaggerated, especially if it is remembered that the aims and circumstances of Luke and Paul were different.*[6]

Accepting Luke as the author of both the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, we can begin to paint a portrait of the remarkable person who stands behind these writings. E. P. Blair describes Luke as follows:

> *He was broad in his sympathies, compassionate toward the poor and outcasts in society, genuinely pious, self-effacing, radiantly joyful, charmingly urbane, and deeply loyal. He remained with Paul to the end, doubtlessly serving him in medical and other ways, and earned the great apostle's gratitude and admiration.*[7]

Little is known about Luke's personal life, though the Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke claims that he never married and died at the ripe old age of 84 in Boeotia (Greece; though some place his death in Bithynia [Turkey] or Ephesus), being "full of the Holy Spirit."[8] There are a variety of traditions regarding his activities in his later years and the place and manner of his death. Some writers have connected him with Antioch in Syria (as does the Anti-Marcionite Prologue) and have noted the detailed references in Acts to that city (Acts 6:5; 11:19-27; 13:1; 14:26; 15:22-35). Others, drawing attention to the "we" passages of Acts, have suggested that Luke had a special link with Philippi. They argue that Luke was the "man from Macedonia" who appeared in a vision to Paul at Troas, worked with Paul in evangelizing his native land, remained in Philippi, and later resumed contact with Paul and the missionary team when they returned to Philippi (Acts 16:8-17; 20:5-6). Certainly, there are detailed references in Acts to both Antioch (Acts 6:5; 11:19-27; 13:1; 14:26; 15:22-35) and Philippi (Acts 16:8-17; 20:5-6), but any conclusions drawn from these references remain speculative.

Despite the limitations of our knowledge, much can be learned about the author's interests and concerns from the study of Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts, where many of the same themes frequently appear (e.g., concern for the poor, interest in the stories of women, the importance of prayer), each of which is discussed below.

Before closing this section on authorship, it must be said that J. W. Wenham (1991) has proposed that the author of the third Gospel and Acts is Lucius, a prophet and teacher who came from Cyrene and served as a leader in the church at Antioch in Syria (Acts 13:1). A man by the same name is noted elsewhere in the New Testament as an associate of Paul (Rom 16:21). However, there is no clear evidence that either of these two people is the same as the reputed author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts (Achtemeier 1985:582), despite the creative attempt of Wenham to connect Lucius with the better-known Luke.

DATE AND OCCASION OF WRITING

Luke's Gospel has been dated as early as AD 59–63 and as late as the latter part of the second century. The question of dating is a complex one and involves the book of Acts as an integral part of Luke–Acts. Paul's ministry certainly dominates the second half of Acts, and the last quarter of the text is occupied with Paul's trip to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial. However, Acts ends without telling us the outcome of Paul's trial, leading some to argue that it had not taken place by the time Acts was complete. In this view, Acts, and possibly Luke–Acts, is dated in the early 60s AD.

Many scholars have opposed this view (cf. Fitzmyer 1981:54-56; Nolland 1989:xxxix; C. A. Evans 1990:2). They note that Luke himself called attention to the fact that other Gospel accounts had preceded his (1:1), and Mark's Gospel was almost certainly one of his sources. Thus, acknowledging that Luke used Mark in the composition of his Gospel, most scholars opt for a date for Luke–Acts after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, positing a date between AD 70 and 90.

However, a strong case can be made for an early date. William Larkin, in his work on Acts in this volume, argues for a date for Luke–Acts in the early 60s, and this view has also been defended by such notable scholars as F. F. Bruce (1962:21-24) and Richard Longenecker (1981:235-238). Similarly, Carson, Moo, and Morris would place Luke in the early 60s (a possible date for Acts) and Mark in the late 50s or early 60s (1992:116-117). They draw attention to the lack of mention of the Neronian persecution, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the deaths of Paul and James (AD 62). In addition, they remark that Luke would likely have noted Paul's release from prison or execution if it had taken place before he wrote. They further observe that Paul's epistles were highly valued in the early church but are ignored in Acts—a difficult feature to account for in a later dating. In addition, they find it unlikely that Luke would present as friendly a view of Rome as we find in Luke–Acts *after* the Neronian persecution of the mid-60s. Moreover, on the contents of Acts, Bruce notes how well they fit the premise of an early date: "Prominence is given in Acts to subjects which were of urgent importance in the church before AD 70, but which were of less moment after that date. Such were the terms of Gentile admission to church fellowship, the coexistence of Jews and Gentiles to the church, the food requirements of the apostolic decree [ch. 15]" (Bruce 1990:14, 17). We conclude that such cumulative evidence points to a date for Luke–Acts in the early 60s.

It is only fair to note that a few scholars have opted for a second-century date. John Knox and J. C. O'Neill, based on comparisons with writers like Josephus, Justin Martyr, and Marcion, have advanced a date of the early- or mid-second century. However, the peaceful situation between the Christian church and Rome depicted in the book of Acts seems to be different from the climate described by Christian writers of even the late first and early second centuries, such as Clement of Rome (c. AD 96) and Ignatius (AD 117). Luke presents a relatively friendly outlook on the Roman authorities, a position that would have been much more difficult to maintain after imperial persecution became more widespread in the second century (note, for instance, the correspondence about persecuting Christians between Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, and the Emperor Trajan).[9] A second-century date, then, seems to be ruled out as quite improbable. Despite widespread disagreement on the issue, a first-century date of about AD 62 seems the most reasonable option for Luke–Acts.

The place of writing was probably Rome, though other places have been suggested, including Asia Minor and Greece. "The Monarchian Prologue to Luke promotes the latter option, but its reliability is suspect. It was at Rome that Luke could have used the time profitably to put the finishing touches" on his work.[10] Its destination would depend on Theophilus's place of residence, and that is unknown. However, the minute descriptions of places in Palestine seem to point to readers who were not familiar with that region but were more knowledgeable about other areas under Roman jurisdiction. Antioch, Ephesus, and Achaia are all possible destinations, but the matter must be left open in the absence of further evidence.

AUDIENCE

We have already noted that the Gospel was specifically addressed to Theophilus (1:3), a name that means "lover of God." While the book is profitable to anyone who loves God, it is probable that it was directed to a specific individual who bore that name. The description of the person as "most honorable" (Gr., *kratistos* [TG2903, ZG3196]) seems to point to a Roman official or at least a man of high social position and wealth, as elsewhere in Luke–Acts the name is only associated with Roman governors (Acts 23:26; 24:2[3]; 26:25). It is quite possible that this man served as a patron or benefactor of Luke, facilitating the copying and distribution of his work.[11] Such a dedication to a publisher was a common practice at the time. Some writers have suggested that there were those in the imperial circle who were friendly to the Christian message, and the fact that Luke's writings were addressed to a person in the higher echelons of Roman society might cause these elites to consider the Christian proclamation with greater seriousness. This idea is drawn from what is observed in similar ancient dedicatory prefaces (e.g., *Letter of Aristeas* 1:1-12; Talbert [1989:7-11] also discusses other examples; cf. C. A. Evans 1990:19).

Generally in such prefaces there is a definite attempt on the part of such writers to reach those who would appreciate a "characteristic love of learning." Thus, it is quite likely that an appeal to similar readers might have been a part of Luke's intentional strategy for the acceptance of the gospel message. The fact that Luke's preface is presented in the most stylistic and literary Greek in the New Testament is significant. Luke apparently intended to reach out to open-minded, well-educated readers who would find such a carefully balanced, sophisticated statement of purpose to be meaningful. The impact of a cultured, well-organized approach to the presentation of his case by Luke could have possibly had this effect, even if it was not the intended result of his dedication to Theophilus. At the same time, the actual contents of his two-volume work are plainly concerned with a wider, more universal audience, including the poor, the disadvantaged, the marginalized, and women. It is a gospel that shows the breadth of God's mercy, which reaches out to all branches of the human family.

In addition, Luke's precise description of his historical method helps the modern person to identify with the original audience by showing the reader what to expect from Luke's work. He took his historical task seriously, and the text gives every evidence of fulfilling his stated historical aims. It is therefore necessary to pay close attention to his preface, which serves as an explanation of his methodology in both books (1:1-4). Here Luke, following the conventions of Greek-speaking historians like Thucydides and Josephus, carefully spells out his historical method so that his readers might know the principles by which he worked. First, he notes that other writers had attempted to explain the historical foundation of Christian origins before him. Second, he observes the special role of "the eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" (1:2, RSV), who could attest everything from the beginning and made careful use of their evidence. Third, he intended to provide "a careful account" of the Christian movement. Fourth, he claims that he had made a thorough investiga-

tion of the facts of the case. Fifth, he names Theophilus as the intended recipient of his work in his dedication (cf. Acts 1:1); and sixth, he presents the historical evidence so that his readers (Theophilus and other interested persons) might know the solid historical basis of the things they had been taught. Thus, the message was intended for Theophilus's instruction (1:4), but it was clearly designed also for all those readers among whom the work was circulated and those who would hear the message orally (note the warning given in 8:18: "So pay attention to how you hear").

CANONICITY AND TEXTUAL HISTORY

Irenaeus (mid-second century AD) was among the first to recognize the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) as being the exclusively canonized Gospels (*Against Heresies* 3.11.11). The Muratorian Canon (c. AD 200) also affirmed Luke's Gospel as part of the canon, as did Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.7) in about 325 and Athanasius in 367 (presenting the canon of the Western church in his festal letter).

There are several early manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke. Manuscripts of the second and third century include 𝔓4, 𝔓45, 𝔓69, 𝔓75, 𝔓111, and 0171. There are also more than fifteen uncial manuscripts from the fourth to tenth centuries that contain complete or nearly complete texts of Luke; among them are the following: ℵ and B (fourth century); C, D, and W (fifth century); P and 040 (sixth century); L (eighth century); K, M, U, and V (ninth century); and S (tenth century). Two other important manuscripts for Luke are Q and T of the fifth century, although each contains less than half of Luke.

Of all these manuscripts, 𝔓75 is the most accurate copy of Luke. The manuscript, produced by a very careful scribe, manifests a type of text that was followed by another careful scribe—the one who produced the fourth-century manuscript known as codex Vaticanus (see Porter 1962:363-376). 𝔓75 and B (Vaticanus) provide the best textual witness to the original wording of Luke's Gospel. Though its extant portion is much smaller than what is in 𝔓75 and B, the second-century papyrus 𝔓4 is also an excellent witness. In fact, 𝔓4 exhibits 95% agreement with 𝔓75 in the 440 verses where 𝔓4 and 𝔓75 overlap. It should also be added that 𝔓75 further affirms ℵ and B in including several portions of Luke 22–24 that were excluded by codex Beza (D) and erroneously considered "Western non-interpolations" by Westcott and Hort. (For further discussion on this, see Comfort 2007).

LITERARY STYLE

Luke had great gifts as a writer, and these are evident in the artistic quality of his work (see Cadbury 1919–1920). The third Gospel truly offers an artist's portrait of Jesus, who is seen as embodying the Greek ideals of the good, the true, and the beautiful. Luke had a fine command of the Greek language, a rich and extensive vocabulary, and a wide-ranging style that could employ classical elegance (as in the preface, 1:1-4) or express Semitic idiom reflecting the language of the Greek Old

companions: "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" (24:25-26). The divine plan had been unmistakably mapped out: "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day"; this message of repentance and faith in Christ was to be shared among the nations, beginning in Jerusalem (24:46-47).

The same strong emphasis on God's sovereign plan for history is found in Acts (e.g., Acts 2:23; 4:28; 20:22-24). Once again, it is presented in such a way as to highlight the central place of Christ in God's plan (Acts 3:20-21; 17:3; 26:15-18). Luke saw Jesus as the Messiah appointed beforehand by God. Similarly, the apostles were declared to be those whom "God had chosen in advance" to be his witnesses (Acts 10:41). Energized by the Holy Spirit, the disciples were to take the message concerning Christ throughout the world and share it with all people (Acts 1:8). Paul, for instance, felt impelled by the Spirit to go to Macedonia and Achaia with the gospel and then to take it to Rome (Acts 19:21). The whole perspective of Luke and Acts stresses that a sovereign God was working his purpose out in history, and his plan would be fulfilled! Lonsdale Ragg's glowing tribute to Luke may serve as a fitting conclusion to this introduction:

> *What St. Luke was as a man is reflected in his writings. Wide and deep sympathy, love of souls, interest in simple things, in manhood and womanhood, in childhood and domesticity, in the joy of life, in prayer, worship, praise, and thanksgiving; historical sense, keen observation, loyalty to fact; gift of narrative, dramatic, and artistic sense, and a certain genial humor; deep enthusiasm for the Saviour, the Divine-Human Christ, and for the first missionary heroes of the Ascended Lord—all these are there, and much more. No wonder his Gospel is described by Renan as "the most beautiful book ever written" (1922:ix).*

OUTLINE

I. Preface (1:1-4)
II. The Nativity Stories (1:5–2:52)
  A. The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold (1:5-25)
    1. Zechariah's background (1:5-7)
    2. Zechariah's Temple service (1:8-10)
    3. The angel Gabriel visits Zechariah (1:11-17)
    4. Zechariah's response (1:18-22)
    5. The conception of John the Baptist (1:23-25)
  B. The Birth of Jesus Foretold (1:26-38)
  C. Mary Visits Elizabeth (1:39-45)
  D. The Magnificat: Mary's Song of Praise (1:46-56)
  E. The Birth of John the Baptist (1:57-66)

F. Zechariah's Prophecy (1:67-80)
G. The Birth of Jesus (2:1-7; cf. Matt 1:18-25)
H. The Shepherds and Angels (2:8-20)
I. Jesus Is Presented in the Temple (2:21-24)
J. The Prophecy of Simeon (2:25-35)
K. The Prophecy of Anna (2:36-40)
L. The Childhood of Jesus (2:41-52)

III. The Preparation for Jesus' Ministry (3:1–4:13)
A. John the Baptist Prepares the Way (3:1-20)
1. John the Baptist (3:1-6; cf. Matt 3:1-6; Mark 1:2-6; John 1:19-23)
2. John's preaching of repentance (3:7-9; cf. Matt 3:7-10)
3. John's ethical teaching (3:10-14)
4. John's preaching about the Messiah (3:15-18; cf. Matt 3:11-12; Mark 1:7-8)
5. John's imprisonment (3:19-20; cf. Matt 14:6-11; Mark 6:17-28)
B. The Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22; cf. Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11)
C. The Record of Jesus' Ancestors (3:23-38; cf. Matt 1:2-16)
D. The Temptation of Jesus (4:1-13; cf. Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13)

IV. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (4:14–9:50)
A. Jesus Rejected at Nazareth (4:14-30)
B. Jesus Casts Out an Evil Spirit (4:31-37; cf. Mark 1:23-28)
C. Jesus Heals Many People (4:38-41)
D. Jesus Continues to Preach (4:42-44)
E. The First Disciples (5:1-11; cf. Matt 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20)
F. Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy (5:12-16; cf. Matt 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45)
G. Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man (5:17-26; cf. Matt 9:2-8; Mark 2:3-12)
H. Jesus Calls Levi (Matthew) (5:27-32; cf. Matt 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17)
I. Discussion about Fasting (5:33-39; cf. Matt 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22)
J. Discussion about the Sabbath (6:1-5; cf. Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28)
K. Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (6:6-11; cf. Matt 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6)
L. Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles (6:12-16; cf. Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19)
M. Crowds Follow Jesus (6:17-19; cf. Mark 3:7-12)
N. The Beatitudes (6:20-23; cf. Matt 5:2-12)
O. Sorrows Foretold (6:24-26)
P. Love for Enemies (6:27-36; cf. Matt 5:38-47)
Q. Don't Condemn Others (6:37-42; cf. Matt 7:1-5)
R. The Tree and Its Fruit (6:43-45; cf. Matt 7:16-20)
S. Building on a Solid Foundation (6:46-49; cf. Matt 7:24-27)
T. Faith of the Roman Officer (7:1-10; cf. Matt 8:5-13; John 4:46-53)

U. Jesus Raises a Widow's Son (7:11-17)
V. Jesus and John the Baptist (7:18-35; cf. Matt 11:2-6)
W. Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman (7:36-50)
X. Women Who Followed Jesus (8:1-3)
Y. Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed (8:4-15; cf. Matt 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20)
Z. Illustration of the Lamp (8:16-18; cf. Matt 13:12; Mark 4:21-25)
AA. The True Family of Jesus (8:19-21; cf. Matt 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35)
BB. Jesus Calms the Storm (8:22-25; cf. Matt 8:18, 23-27; Mark 4:35-41)
CC. Jesus Heals a Disturbed Man (8:26-39; cf. Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20)
DD. Jesus Heals in Response to Faith (8:40-56; cf. Matt 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43)
EE. Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Disciples (9:1-6; cf. Matt 10:1, 7-11; Mark 6:7-13)
FF. Herod's Confusion (9:7-9; cf. Matt 14:1-2; Mark 6:14-16)
GG. Jesus Feeds Five Thousand (9:10-17; cf. Matt 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-15)
HH. Peter's Declaration about Jesus (9:18-20; cf. Matt 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; John 6:68-69)
II. Jesus Predicts His Death (9:21-27; cf. Matt 16:21; Mark 8:31)
JJ. Jesus' Transfiguration (9:28-36; cf. Matt 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; 2 Pet 1:16-18)
KK. Jesus Heals a Disturbed Boy (9:37-43a; cf. Matt 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29)
LL. Jesus Again Predicts His Death (9:43b-45; cf. Matt 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32)
MM. The Greatest in the Kingdom (9:46-48; cf. Matt 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37)
NN. Using the Name of Jesus (9:49-50; cf. Mark 9:38-41)

V. Jesus' Journey to the Cross (9:51–19:44)
A. Opposition from Samaritans (9:51-56)
B. The Cost of Following Jesus (9:57-62; cf. Matt 8:19-22)
C. Jesus Sends Out His Disciples (10:1-20; cf. Matt 9:37-38; 10:7-16; 11:21-23)
D. Jesus' Prayer of Thanksgiving (10:21-24; cf. Matt 11:25-27)
E. The Most Important Commandment (10:25-29; cf. Matt 22:35-40; Mark 12:28-31)
F. Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:30-37)
G. Jesus Visits Martha and Mary (10:38-42)
H. Teaching about Prayer (11:1-13; cf. Matt 6:9-13; 7:7-11)
I. Jesus and the Prince of Demons (11:14-28; cf. Matt 12:22-30; Mark 3:22-27)

J. The Sign of Jonah (11:29-32; cf. Matt 12:38-42)
K. Receiving the Light (11:33-36; cf. Matt 6:22-23)
L. Jesus Criticizes the Religious Leaders (11:37-54; cf. Matt 23)
M. A Warning against Hypocrisy (12:1-12; cf. Matt 10:26-33)
N. Parable of the Rich Fool (12:13-21)
O. Teaching about Money and Possessions (12:22-34)
P. Be Ready for the Lord's Coming (12:35-48; cf. Matt 24:43-51)
Q. Jesus Causes Division (12:49-59; cf. Matt 10:34-36)
R. A Call to Repentance (13:1-5)
S. Illustration of the Barren Fig Tree (13:6-9)
T. Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (13:10-17)
U. Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast (13:18-21; cf. Matt 13:31-33; Mark 4:30-32)
V. The Narrow Door (13:22-30; cf. Matt 7:22)
W. Jesus Grieves over Jerusalem (13:31-35; cf. Matt 23:37-39)
X. Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (14:1-6)
Y. Jesus Teaches about Humility (14:7-14)
Z. Parable of the Great Feast (14:15-24; cf. Matt 22:1-10)
AA. The Cost of Being a Disciple (14:25-35)
BB. Parable of the Lost Sheep (15:1-7)
CC. Parable of the Lost Coin (15:8-10)
DD. Parable of the Lost Sons (15:11-32)
EE. Parable of the Shrewd Manager (16:1-18)
FF. Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31)
GG. Teachings about Forgiveness and Faith (17:1-10; cf. Matt 18:6-7, 15; Mark 9:42)
HH. Ten Healed of Leprosy (17:11-19)
II. The Coming of the Kingdom (17:20-37; cf. Matt 24:37-39; Mark 13:21)
JJ. Parable of the Persistent Widow (18:1-8)
KK. Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector (18:9-14)
LL. Jesus Blesses the Children (18:15-17; cf. Matt 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16)
MM. The Rich Man (18:18-30; cf. Matt 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31)
NN. Jesus Again Predicts His Death (18:31-34; cf. Matt 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34)
OO. Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar (18:35-43; cf. Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52)
PP. Jesus and Zacchaeus (19:1-10)
QQ. Parable of the Ten Servants (19:11-27; cf. Matt 25:14-30)
RR. The Triumphal Entry (19:28-40; cf. Matt 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10)
SS. Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem (19:41-44)

VI. The Passion Story (19:45–24:53)
- A. Jesus Clears the Temple (19:45-48; cf. Matt 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; John 2:13-17)
- B. The Authority of Jesus Challenged (20:1-8; cf. Matt 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33)
- C. Parable of the Evil Farmers (20:9-19; cf. Matt 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12)
- D. Taxes for Caesar (20:20-26; cf. Matt 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17)
- E. Discussion about Resurrection (20:27-40; cf. Matt 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27)
- F. Whose Son Is the Messiah? (20:41-47; cf. Matt 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37a)
- G. The Widow's Offering (21:1-4; cf. Mark 12:41-44)
- H. Jesus Foretells the Future (21:5-38; cf. Matt 24:4-36; Mark 13:5-37)
- I. Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus (22:1-6; cf. Matt 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1-2, 17-21)
- J. The Last Supper (22:7-30; cf. Matt 26:17-19, 26-29; Mark 14:12-16, 22-25)
- K. Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (22:31-38; cf. Matt 26:30-35; Mark 14:26-31; John 13:36-38)
- L. Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives (22:39-46; cf. Matt 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42)
- M. Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested (22:47-53; cf. Matt 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; John 18:2-11)
- N. Peter Denies Jesus (22:54-65; cf. Matt 26:57-75; Mark 14:53-72)
- O. Jesus before the Council (22:66-71; cf. Matt 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65)
- P. The Trials of Jesus before Pilate and Herod (23:1-25; cf. Matt 27:1-2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; John 18:33-38)
- Q. The Crucifixion of Jesus (23:26-43; cf. Matt 27:32-44; Mark 15:21-32; John 19:16-27)
- R. The Death of Jesus (23:44-49; cf. Matt 27:45-56; Mark 15:33-41; John 19:28-37)
- S. The Burial of Jesus (23:50-56; cf. Matt 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; John 19:38-42)
- T. The Resurrection of Jesus (24:1-12; cf. Matt 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; John 20:1-10)
- U. The Walk to Emmaus (24:13-34)
- V. Jesus Appears to the Disciples (24:35-49)
- W. The Ascension of Jesus (24:50-53; cf. Acts 1:6-11)

COMMENTARY ON

Luke

◆ I. Preface (1:1–4)

Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. 2They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples.* 3Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write a careful account for you, most honorable Theophilus, 4so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.

1:2 Greek *from those who from the beginning were servants of the word.*

NOTES

1:2 ***They used the eyewitness reports.*** Eyewitness testimony, often overlooked and underrecognized by form critics (such as Schmidt, Bultmann, and Dibelius), is a basic factor to be reckoned with in understanding the historical basis of the Gospels. If the date of the Gospel is early, the eyewitnesses mentioned here would still be available for interview and consultation in large measure. As time went on, their numbers would naturally decrease. Paul recognized this fact when he wrote to the Corinthians. He noted that the risen Lord "was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died" (1 Cor 15:6).

Eyewitnesses were crucial in establishing the truth of details, and this point is accepted by Luke in establishing and explaining his historical method. In OT times, eyewitnesses were required, for example, in establishing a verdict in criminal cases (Deut 17:6; 19:15). This principle of multiple witnesses was generally accepted and utilized in NT times as well (Matt 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; Heb 10:28; 1 John 5:7-9). The central events both of the life and ministry of Jesus and of the early church were anchored in eyewitness testimony (cf. 1 John 1:1-4) that was carefully investigated by Luke (Trites 1977:55, 139, 198).

"In particular the prominence accorded to Peter as eyewitness informant behind Mark (e.g., Mark 8:29, 32ff; 9:2, 5; 11:21; 14:29, 33, 37, 54, 66-72; 16:7; cf. Luke 22:54-62) . . . helps to secure a strong line of continuity between the Gospel . . . as 'story' and Jesus of Nazareth as 'history'" (Head 2001:293). The relationship between Mark and Peter is also strongly supported by external evidence (e.g., Papias, the Anti-Marcionite Prologue, Irenaeus). Similarly, eyewitness testimony is preserved in the Q material, the roughly 230 verses preserved in Matthew and Luke (e.g., the Temptation, recorded in both Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13). For further discussion, see Head 2001.

1:3 ***a careful account.*** Luke was concerned about unfolding the events of Jesus' life "carefully" or "accurately" (*akribōs* [TG199, ZG209]). He thus described his historical procedure and also noted his interest in providing "certainty" or "truth" (*asphaleia* [TG803, ZG854]; 1:4). For further comment on Luke's preface, see "Audience" in the Introduction. On the different approaches taken in Germany and Britain to evaluate Luke's historical work, see van

Ommwern 1991. On the use of ancient prefaces to historical works, see Earl (1990), who points out that most ancient historical prefaces do not directly address the one to whom the work was dedicated. This is an unusual feature of the Lukan preface that is worthy of note. For a discussion of Luke's prologue in appreciation of Luke–Acts as a whole, see Dillon 1981; Alexander 1993; Brawley 1991:86-106.

COMMENTARY

As noted in the Introduction, Luke used a preface to spell out his historical method so that his readers might know the principles on which he worked. First, he noted that other writers had attempted to explain the historical foundation of Christian origins before him. Second, he observed the special role of "the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples," who could attest everything "from the beginning," and made careful use of their evidence. Third, he intended to provide "a careful account" of the Christian movement. Fourth, he claimed that he had made a thorough investigation of the facts of the case. Fifth, he named Theophilus as the intended recipient of his work in his dedication (cf. Acts 1:1); and sixth, he presented the historical evidence so that his readers (Theophilus and other interested persons) might know the solid historical basis of the things they had been taught.

Luke's preface emulates the formal practice of the Greek-speaking historians of the time. The way Josephus introduced his famous book *Against Apion* is particularly instructive, for it is a work composed of two parts, with an introduction or preface to the entire work at the beginning of Book 1 and a brief summary and review at the beginning of Book 2:

> In my history of our *Antiquities,* my excellent Epaphroditus, I have, I think, made sufficiently clear the extreme antiquity of our Jewish race. Since, however, I observe that a considerable number of persons discredit the statements of my history concerning our antiquity, I consider it my duty to devote a brief treatise to all these points in order at once to convict our detractors of malignity and deliberate falsehood, to correct the ignorance of others, and to instruct all who desire to know the truth concerning the antiquity of our race. As witnesses to my statements I propose to call the writers who, in the estimation of the Greeks, are the most trustworthy authorities on antiquity as a whole. (*Against Apion* 1.1-4)
>
> In the first volume of this work, my esteemed Epaphroditus, I demonstrated the antiquity of our race, I shall now proceed to refute the rest of the authors who have attacked us. (*Against Apion* 2.1)

These two statements of Josephus shed considerable light on Luke's introduction, which really serves as a historical preface to his two-volume work. There are a number of remarkable similarities between the comments of Josephus and Luke's preface. In each case, two volumes are closely connected and linked together by the same author, and the same person is addressed in both volumes; in the case of Luke–Acts, it is Theophilus, who is mentioned in 1:3 and Acts 1:1. Furthermore, Josephus directed his book to "my excellent Epaphroditus," and Luke used the same honorific language to address Theophilus (*kratiste;* 1:3). Both writers were con-

cerned to teach and instruct their readers, and both were committed to the use of responsible historical methods to arrive at the truth. Both also utilized "the most trustworthy authorities"; in Luke's case, these included those who were "eyewitnesses" of the events of the life of Christ and of the early disciples. Finally, both were concerned to demonstrate their historical credibility by offering convincing evidence or "proof" (the word *tekmērion* [TG5039, ZG5447] being used by both Josephus [*Against Apion* 1.2] and Luke [Acts 1:3, lit. "with many proofs"]).

There is, however, one significant difference in approach between Luke and Josephus. Josephus was rather critical of some of his historical predecessors who, in his opinion, had done less than justice to the Jewish people. Luke, on the other hand, did not attack or disparage those who had written before him. All the same, he believed that he had something distinctive to contribute and set out to produce "a careful account" of Christian origins, building constructively on those who had gone before him. He wanted to give Theophilus and all his readers or auditors (those who hear the text orally) solid grounds to reassure them of the truth they had been taught (1:4). Luke undertook his historical work with the utmost seriousness—the task of studying the sources, interrogating the witnesses, evaluating the evidence, and arranging the matter in a logical way. For him, responsible critical investigation of sources and evidence was absolutely necessary to the historiographical task he had set for himself. His aim was to provide a narrative or "account" (*diēgēsis* [TG1335, ZG1456], 1:1) that would offer solid information about Christ and the early church. Luke's "order" (*kathexēs* [TG2517, ZG2759], 1:3) is not precisely defined and should be interpreted as synonymous with "systematic," as Stein has argued (1983). For instance, the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem is an excellent example of Luke's principle of order, though incidents in this section are not always presented in chronological sequence (9:51–19:27; so Stagg 1967:499-512). "The 'main point' of the Prologue [and the "order" it claims] is that 'Christianity is true and is capable of confirmation by appeal to what has happened'" (Morris 1974:67, quoting Stonehouse 1951:44).

◆ II. The Nativity Stories (1:5–2:52)

A. The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold (1:5-25)

1. Zechariah's background (1:5-7)

5When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. 6Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. 7They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

NOTES

1:5 ***Herod was king of Judea.*** This was Herod the Great, who ruled from 37 to 4 BC over Judea, Galilee, Samaria, and a large part of Perea and Syria. On the life of Herod the Great, see Grant 1971.

COMMENTARY

This is the first substantial part of the third Gospel. In the preface (1:1-4), Luke outlined the historical method that he would use in both the Gospel and Acts. He now begins his account by telling of two miraculous births (1:5–2:52) before presenting the preparation for the ministry of Jesus—outlining the ministry of John the Baptist and describing the baptism, genealogy, and temptation of Jesus (3:1–4:13). These accounts set the stage for Luke's major presentations of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee (4:14–9:50), the ministry of Jesus on the journey to Jerusalem (9:51–19:44), the final ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (19:45–23:56), and the concluding accounts of Jesus' resurrection and ascension (24:1-53).

Luke took pains to locate the family background of Jesus and his forerunner, John the Baptist (see also 3:1-2). There is a deliberate contrast presented between John the great prophet and Jesus the greater prophet. This is exemplified in the account of the two annunciations: note the contrast between Zechariah's doubts (1:18-20) and Mary's humble reception of the news (1:38). Luke made it clear that Zechariah was a Jewish priest who lived "when Herod was king of Judea" (1:5). The reference here is to Herod the Great, who ruled from 37 to 4 BC (see note on 1:5). He was a brilliant but ruthless man who put his wife Mariamne and two of his own sons to death because of his fearful paranoia. He was the ruler who cruelly slaughtered the innocents (all children two years of age and under) in Bethlehem and its vicinity, a tragedy noted in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 2:13-18).

Luke placed Zechariah in one of the twenty-four groups that offered priestly service in the Temple, namely, "the priestly order of Abijah" (1:5). The details of these priestly courses are spelled out in 1 Chronicles 24:1-18. These arrangements had been in place since King David's time, and Abijah was one of the heads of the priestly families (1 Chr 24:10; Neh 12:17). Zechariah had an honorable place in the religious establishment at Jerusalem and each year served on rotation for two weeks in the Temple in addition to his service on the Jewish high holy days.

Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, who was also a descendant "from the priestly line of Aaron," are presented as devout Jewish people who were "righteous in God's eyes" (1:5-6). They made it their constant aim to please God, and they were meticulous in their religious practices, "careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations" (1:6; cf. Deut 30:15-20). They were earnest and sincere in their profession of faith. But their one great disappointment as a couple was the absence of children. This was a very serious thing for devout Jews, because children were considered a sign of God's blessing upon the marriage. For example, Psalm 128, speaking of the happiness of those who "fear the LORD," waxes eloquent on the theme of family bliss: "How joyful and prosperous you will be! Your wife will be like a fruitful grapevine, flourishing within your home. Your children will be like vigorous young olive trees as they sit around your table. That is the LORD's blessing for those who fear him" (Ps 128:2-4). In the absence of children, there was a sense of falling away from God's approval. Women particularly struggled with the stigma of barrenness and were often subject to social reproach—something frequently

noted in the Old Testament, as in the cases of Sarai, Rebekah, Rachel, and Hannah (Gen 16:1-3; 25:21; 30:23; 1 Sam 1:1-18). Zechariah and Elizabeth had lived for many years with this perplexing situation; no relief seemed in sight, for "they were both very old" (1:7).

◆ 2. Zechariah's Temple service (1:8-10)

[8]One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. [9]As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. [10]While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

NOTES

1:9 ***he was chosen by lot.*** The lot was an oracular device used in making a selection from a number of choices. In the OT, the casting of lots was employed in the determination of God's will (Num 27:21), the division of land (Josh 18:11; 19:1, 10, 17, 24, 32, 40), the allocation of military duties (Judg 20:9), the appointment of persons to settle in Jerusalem during its restoration (Neh 11:1), and the assignment of tasks to priests and Levites (1 Chr 24:5-18; 25:8; 26:13). The guilty verdicts pronounced on Achan and Jonathan were probably determined by lot, though the word is not used in the Heb. text (Josh 7:14-18; 1 Sam 14:41-42). The casting of lots was used to settle disputes (Prov 18:18; Jonah 1:7). In the NT, Jesus' executioners cast lots for his garments (23:34; Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; John 19:24), and lots were cast to select Matthias as a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:26). After the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), lots became unnecessary. The Holy Spirit was available to lead Christians into spiritual truth. In fact, Jesus had promised this special help from the Holy Spirit: "He will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you" (John 14:26; 16:13). The book of Acts is full of examples where the Spirit of God guided believers in their actions and decisions (see Acts 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6-7).

1:10 ***a great crowd stood outside, praying.*** As the people were waiting in devout expectation that God would answer their prayers while the incense rose, it appears that God guided the lots so that the angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah at the most sacred moment of his life.

COMMENTARY

The Jewish Temple in New Testament times was an impressive establishment that had been subjected to massive reconstruction under Herod the Great, a process that began in 20 BC and was not completed until AD 64. As in the case of the earlier Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel, there were several outer courts, each one being higher and more sacred than the preceding one. First, there was the Court of the Gentiles, then, the Court of the Women, and finally, the Court of the Israelites, which was only open to ritually clean Jewish men. Beyond that, only the priests could proceed to enter the Temple building itself. Here was located the sanctuary (*naos* [TG3485, ZG3724], called in Heb. the *hekal* [TH1964, ZH2121]) and beyond it the Holy of Holies, where the high priest entered only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

The Holy Place, where Zechariah was called to serve on this momentous occasion,

Acts

WILLIAM J. LARKIN

INTRODUCTION TO *Acts*

THE BOOK OF ACTS is more than first-century church history; it is a narrative about the Triune God on an unstoppable mission to the ends of the earth. The book of Acts intends to evangelize us by persuading us that the second half of the gospel—salvation for all the nations (Luke 24:47)—is true. God "on mission" not only means that all three of the Trinity initiate the mission but also that they are the direct agents of mission. The Father "calls" both Jew and Gentile to himself (2:39). What Jesus "began to do and teach" (1:1), as recorded in Luke's Gospel, he continues—only now from heaven—and the Spirit bears direct witness (5:32). The momentum of Acts is ever outward, not only geographically, as promised in Jesus' final words (1:8), but also ethnically—from Jews to Samaritans to God fearers to pagan Gentiles. And that momentum extends beyond the book's last verse, as it draws us, the evangelized, into the company of those on mission, who also evangelize boldly (28:31).

AUTHOR

The author of the book of Acts did not identify himself, but he did claim to have been a traveling companion of Paul. The reader discovers this through the "we passages" scattered throughout the second part of the book (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-8; 27:1–28:16); these uses of the first person plural indicate that the writer was a participant in certain events recorded in the book.[1]

The author's reference to the "first book" he wrote (see Acts 1:1) is undoubtedly a reference to the third Gospel. The same addressee, Theophilus; similarities of interest (for example, salvation of the Gentiles); and similar language and style lead to the conclusion that he also authored the Gospel of Luke. Church tradition, from the second century onward, consistently testifies that the author is Luke, the beloved physician (Col 4:14), and often associates him with the church of Syrian Antioch (Carson, Moo, Morris 1992:186). By using other patristic evidence and reasoning from the content of Luke–Acts and Paul's letters, John Wenham (1991) has proposed that the references in the New Testament to Luke, whether formal (*Loukios* [TG3066, ZG3372]; cf. 13:1; Rom 16:21) or familiar in spelling (*Loukas* [TG3065, ZG3371]; cf. Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Phlm 1:24), are all to the same person, who is also the author of Luke–Acts. This identification further fills out the author's profile. He is from Cyrene and is Paul's blood relative. Luke, then, was a Hellenistic Jew and not a proselyte or a Gentile. This means that the author of Acts was at one and the same time

"a Jew, steeped in the traditions of his fathers, having the fullest entré into the institutions of the Jewish faith" and that he, as a founder and leader in the church at Syrian Antioch, was "partly instrumental in starting a movement of the church towards the Gentiles, which was as important as Peter's baptism of Cornelius" (Wenham 1991:38-40).

DATE

Acts should be dated sometime between the last events recorded in Acts (AD 62) and the terminus of the expected life span of Paul's traveling companions (AD 85). Scholars have normally opted for either the early sixties or sometime in the seventies to mid eighties.

There are seven "historical silences" in Acts that, together with the content Luke presents, suggest that the book predates certain historical events (Mehat 1992:174-175). These point to a date in the early sixties. Luke does not tell his readers about the following mid- to late-sixties events: (1) the outcome of Paul's trial; (2) the death of James, the brother of Jesus; (3) Nero's persecution around AD 64; (4-6) the deaths of Peter, Paul, and Nero; (7) the Jewish revolt (AD 66) and the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. The book's use of evaluations by Roman authorities as an apologetic for Christianity's innocence, Luke's concern with the reception of Gentile Christians into a predominantly Jewish Christian church, and the prominence of Paul in the narrative also indicate a time before these events.

Acts devotes so much space to the events of the three years immediately preceding its seemingly abrupt conclusion (chs 20–28) that it is likely the events had just occurred. The accuracy of its geographical, political, and sociocultural details is best explained if the work was produced close to the events. These facts could not have been recovered through library research at a later time since there were no such reference works in the first century.

An early sixties date makes the ending of Acts understandable both in terms of its apparent abruptness and its appropriateness as a fitting conclusion. Luke reports the course of early church history only as far as he knows it. This does not include Paul's death, even though the circumstances Luke portrays prepare his readers for it (20:25-28). The date in the early sixties does, however, bring the narrative to a point where Paul is able, though a prisoner, to preach boldly and without hindrance the Kingdom of God and teach about the Lord Jesus Christ (28:31), thus confirming the truth of a gospel that had claimed that God's message of repentance unto the forgiveness of sins in the Messiah was for all nations (Luke 1:4 [implicit in that Theophilus is not a Jewish name]; 24:46-47; Acts 1:8; 28:31). Such a conclusion communicates most effectively if it was written in a time when Christianity experienced relative freedom and official protection—namely AD 62–63. At this time the Jews had not revolted, and Christians would have still been considered a sect of Judaism, granting them official protection. Further, it was in AD 64 that Nero used Christians as scapegoats for a fire he had set in the capital.

AUDIENCE

Luke dedicated his work to "most honorable Theophilus" (Luke 1:3; cf. Acts 1:1). The honorific title could indicate the equestrian rank in Roman society. Moberly (1993:23) thinks so, for he identifies Theophilus as a "man of Roman citizenship and Equestrian rank, possibly another Roman governor or ex-governor." At the least, the title points to a person of elite social standing. The equestrian rank in the imperial Roman society was the second aristocratic order, ranking only below the senatorial rank in status. It provided the officer corps for the Roman army and a wide range of civil administrators.

Recent studies concerning the audience implied by Luke's writings indicate that Luke wrote to an ethnically and socially mixed group that lived in an urban setting (Esler 1987). Some scholars proceed further, based on the content of Luke–Acts, to characterize the elite element as either "elite periphery" or "isolates," "in-between" people "restricted by prestige and rank but enabled by money and circumstance" (Moxnes 1994:387; Botha 1995:155). Though some see the evidence from the details of Luke–Acts as pointing to any of the urban centers of the eastern Mediterranean (Moxnes 1994:380), others see Luke writing within and to the setting of urban Rome (Domeris 1993). Given the evidence I will present for the occasion and purpose of writing (discussed below), Rome does seem the most likely location for the audience. Theophilus, then, is representative of the literate, upper-middle-class Roman public for which Luke wrote; it was a "sophisticated audience" who would have "an appreciation of subtlety" (Soards 1990:47).

Many scholars (including all those cited so far) heavily favor seeing Luke's audience as Christian, though there has been consistent recognition that the works could be directed to non-Christians. Downing (1995:91) gives this carefully nuanced assessment: "If Christian Luke has Theophilus as a friend or patron (or friendly patron), he is most likely at least a sympathizer, more likely a member of the group." Since I will argue for an evangelistic purpose for the book, I see Acts' audience as basically non-Christian. Downing's (1995:94-96) proposal of symposia and dinner settings for the readings of the works accords with such an audience and purpose, though he again sees it happening within a Christian context.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF WRITING

The occasion for Acts should, then, be found in the encounter of the Roman upper-middle class with the Christian faith. This audience had been informed of Christianity in an environment where many voices contested Christianity's value. The Jewish community in Rome, according to Suetonius, "constantly made disturbances at the instigation of *Chrestus*" during Claudius's reign (*Claudius* 25.4). Evidently, Christian missionary activity in the Jewish community caused public disorder (taking *Chrestus* as a variant form of *Christus*). Claudius issued an edict that the Jews be expelled. This seems to have been implemented to the extent of the expulsion of the ringleaders and a prohibition of assembly (18:2; *Dio Cassius* 60.6.6). The attention the emperor gave to the Jewish-Christian controversy and the

influential position Jews held in Roman society makes it likely that their negative evaluation of Christianity would have had some impact on inquiring, non-Christian Romans. As Acts and Romans and Philippians (works written to or in the Roman context of the late fifties and early sixties) bear witness, unbelieving Jews branded Christianity as a disorderly sect, hardly innocent before the state and unworthy of the attention of law-abiding Romans (Luke 23:4-5, 13-16, 22, 47; Acts 17:5-9; 18:13; 24:4-5; Rom 13:1-7).

The initial natural reaction of this level of society would be to despise the Christian faith as an eastern cult (16:20-21; 25:18-20; cf. Rom 1:15-16). When Tacitus and Suetonius describe the persecution of Christians under Nero in the middle sixties, they term Christianity "a pernicious superstition . . . a disease . . . horrible or shameful; a new and mischievous superstition" (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44; Suetonius *Nero* 16.2). Moberly (1993:23) judges that Luke's work would have seemed "subversive, anti-social, and foolish" to most men of the equestrian class. This negative assessment of Christianity was so pervasive among the general populace that Nero was able to accuse and punish Christians for his own incendiary acts. Tacitus indicates that Christians were "loathed for their vices" and that they "were convicted, not so much on the count of arson as for hatred of the human race" (*Annals* 15:44). Not only did their worship of Jesus threaten to corrupt, if not obliterate, native forms of Roman worship, but their refusal to invoke the Roman gods and make offerings to the emperor's statue was a treasonous act, which undermined the empire's security (cf. Pliny *Letters* 10.96). Thus, their crime in Roman eyes was *odio humani generis*—"hatred of the human race."

Some in the Roman upper-middle class, initially informed about the claims of the Christian gospel, then, may have heard of Paul's case. If the negative assessment of Christianity by the Jewish community or by their own native biases had not given them pause to embrace the gospel, at the least it would have created some confusion. A final element to add to the confusion was the church's internal debate over the nature of salvation by grace through faith. Judaizers were attacking the legitimacy of a salvation by grace for the Gentiles (Luke 18:9; Acts 15:1-2; 21:20-21; Rom 10:1-21; Phil 3:1-16).[2] What was the truth about this Christian gospel? Was it certain? Was it for a Roman?

If this is the occasion, what is Luke's purpose in writing Luke–Acts? Is it edification or evangelism? A recently published assessment of Acts (Green 1997:17) lists seven views (with chief proponents) concerning purpose: (1) defense of the Christian church to Rome; (2) defense of Rome to the Christian church; (3) apology for Paul against Judaizers; (4) edification providing an eschatological corrective; (5) edification providing reassurance of the truth of the gospel; (6) edification to assist the church in legitimizing itself over against Judaism; and (7) edification to encourage Christians in allegiance to Jesus, which involves a basic social and political stance within the empire. Our framing of the question is intended to set the discussion as a choice between a variant of number one—an evangelistic purpose—and numbers four through seven. (Numbers two and three are less likely as a purpose since they

are centered on a purpose particular to Acts and/or Paul and therefore are not comprehensive enough to encompass both the third Gospel and Acts.) Was Luke providing certainty to those who had embraced the faith (edification), or was he providing proof of the truth of the faith so that they would embrace it (evangelism)?

The soundest way to pursue this discussion is to assess four factors in Luke's writing that all scholars agree must be examined if we are to arrive at a satisfactory answer concerning Luke's purpose: Luke's preface (Luke 1:1-4), appropriate details, central themes, and literary genre (Gasque 1978:119; for discussion of literary genre see "Literary Style," p. 369). Luke explicitly gives us his purpose in the clause: "so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught" (Luke 1:4). The kind of knowledge (*epiginōskō* [TG1921, ZG2105]; NLT "be certain") Luke desires for his readers includes both recognition of the truth about facts (cf. 4:13) and Spirit-aided insight (cf. usage in Luke 24:31). Luke wanted his readers to be reassured of "the truth" of all they had been taught. This truth is a certainty based on a clear understanding of the evidence (21:34; 22:30) and also the firm assurance that such truth has personal significance for the reader (2:36).

The interpretation of the last phrase of Luke's purpose statement helps to determine whether this certainty of knowledge is for the edification of the church or the evangelism of non-Christians. The NLT rendering "so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught" (cf. *katēcheō* [TG2727, ZG2994], "taught") suggests an edifying purpose because Theophilus is represented as having already made a decision and been catechized. Although *katēcheō* eventually became a technical term in the church for the instruction of new believers, in biblical usage it can also refer simply to informing someone about something. Luke uses it both ways in Acts ("taught," 18:25; "have been told," 21:21).

This range of meaning opens up the possibility that Luke 1:4 may be referring to the fact that Theophilus has simply been introduced to information about the Christian faith in evangelistic contacts. Luke's writing, then, would aim to provide confirmation to Theophilus concerning what he has been informed of, in order to persuade him to embrace the gospel. I would argue that the use of similar vocabulary in Acts 21–23 provides appropriate parallels to Theophilus's situation. Just as Jewish Christians in Jerusalem had received information—albeit incorrect information—about Paul's encouragement of Diaspora Jews to apostatize from Judaism (21:21, 24), so Theophilus had received information about the Christian faith. As Paul acted to correct the misinformation by his actions, Luke sought to confirm the truth of the Christian Good News through writing his Gospel. And just as the tribune sought to know the truth about the cause of the Temple disturbance (21:34; 22:30; cf. 23:28), so Luke desired to help Theophilus understand the truth of the gospel of which he had been informed.

If this use of *katēcheō* to mean "inform" points to an initial exposure to Christianity, then the "everything" (*logōn* [TG3056, ZG3364]) refers to the content of the gospel. That gospel, summarized in Luke 24:46-48, has two parts: (1) *salvation accomplished*—Jesus said, "It was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die

and rise from the dead on the third day," and (2) *salvation applied*—"this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' You are witnesses of all these things." The Gospel of Luke was written to confirm the truth of "salvation accomplished." Luke penned Acts to provide a basis for certainty that the "salvation applied" portion of the gospel was true and applied to his contemporaries. Understanding Luke 1:4 in this way requires that we see Theophilus as the object of evangelism, not catechesis.

A number of details in Acts point to its evangelistic purpose and a Roman reading public. For example, no matter the numbers or ethnicity involved, each conversion account focuses on the desired response to the gospel and in that way fulfills an evangelistic purpose. This is achieved rhetorically in Acts 2, through a citation of Old Testament promise (Acts 2:21, citing Joel 2:32), descriptions of the crowd's internal and external reactions (Acts 2:37, 41), and through Peter's explanation of the correct response to the salvation offer (2:38-40). The Pentecost account serves not simply as a model to edify Christian witnesses but as an evangelistic call to non-Christians, in this case a Jewish group. Paul's conversion experience, reported three times throughout Acts (chs 9; 22; 26), includes a commissioning to missionary service. This might lead us to place material about Paul in the category of contributions to a missionary model and to regard these accounts as oriented to the church's edification (Kurz 1990b). However, each successive account, while not abandoning the theme of Paul's commissioning, progressively brings out more aspects of the gospel's "salvation applied" content (22:14-16; 26:16-18; cf. 26:22-23). By the time we get to Acts 26:29, Paul stands as a very explicit model of conversion (Brawley 1988).

The other conversion experience reported multiple times concerns Cornelius, his household, and his friends (10:1–11:18). Through commands in angelic visions and the Spirit's speaking, God takes the initiative in gathering the Cornelius group and bringing the messenger Peter to them. Each successive telling of the vision gives more of the "salvation applied" content, including the values and responses worth emulating (10:4-8, 22, 32; 11:14). The climax of Peter's speech links the Cornelius group to the evangelistic purpose of Acts (10:42-43). The Holy Spirit affirms their reception of the message by coming upon them while Peter was still speaking (10:44). Peter's spirited defense of his witness at Caesarea and his use of it to settle the dispute over circumcision also leave in the reader's mind a positive impression of this Gentile audience and its response to the gospel (11:1-18; 15:7-11).

When these case studies are combined with a survey of the other conversion accounts (particularly those of individual Romans in Acts 16) and the trial scenes of chapters 24–26, it becomes increasingly clear that Luke recounts these events in order to evangelize his reader. What is highlighted in each is not the example of the witness but its reception. In other words, the scenes provide more detail about Lydia, the Philippian jailer, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa in their respective responses to the gospel message than they do about Paul in his method of witness. Luke includes many accounts that highlight individual non-Jews, particularly non-

Christian Romans, who often respond positively to the early church's missionary message (S. Wilson 1973:ch 7). In this way, he demonstrates the truth of the "salvation applied" portion of the gospel. Repentance and forgiveness of sins have been proclaimed effectively in Christ's name among all the nations because it is for all nations—including all of Luke's readers.

The distinctive theological themes of Acts have to do with the gospel message, but especially with its "salvation applied" portion: proper response, salvation blessings, and universal offer. Luke consistently presented the "salvation accomplished" portion of the saving message: the divinely ordained mission of the Messiah in suffering and rising in fulfillment of Scripture (2:23-32; 3:18; 4:11; 5:30; 7:52; 10:39, 43; 13:32-39; 17:3; 26:22-23). But just as consistently he developed his theme of repentance as the proper response to God's offer of salvation—mainly in preaching portions of Acts (2:38; 8:22; 17:30; 20:21; 26:18; cf. 9:35; 14:15). The promise of salvation blessings (2:38; 3:26; 4:12; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 22:16; 26:17-18) and the universal scope of the salvation offer (2:39; 3:25; 10:43; 13:39, 46-48; 17:30-31; 22:15, 21; 26:17, 23) also occur often in the speeches of Acts. These themes definitely advance an evangelistic purpose.

CANONICITY AND TEXTUAL HISTORY

There is firm evidence that from the early fourth century Acts was listed among the acknowledged books of the canon (Eusebius *History* 3.4.1; 3.2.5). This is confirmed in the subsequent canonical lists found in Athanasius's 39th Festal Letter (AD 367) and in Jerome's *Lives of Illustrious Men* 7. Earlier, from the mid-second- to early third-century church fathers, we find allusions or references to Acts in Tertullian (*Against Marcion* 5.2; *Prescriptions against Heretics* 22); Clement of Alexandria (*Miscellanies* 5.12-13); and Irenaeus (e.g., *Against Heresies* 1.15.1-3). In each case, false teaching is being countered with an authoritative appeal to the content of Acts.

The earliest evidence for the canonicity of Acts is mixed in terms of the certainty it yields. On the one hand, Justin Martyr (AD 100–165) has a number of possible allusions, which at best keep open the possibility he knew Acts (Barrett 1994:41-44). The strongest allusion is in his *Apology* (39.3): "From Jerusalem there went out into the world men, twelve in number, and they were uninstructed (*idiōtēs* [TG2399, ZG2626]; same word as in 4:13), unable to speak [cf. 4:13, where a similar concept is conveyed by a different Greek word], but by the power of God they indicated to the whole human race that they had been sent by Christ to teach all men the word of God" (as translated in Barrett 1994:41; note Justin's factual divergence from the Acts account of the apostles' role in the prosecution of the church's missionary task). Another group of early witnesses, which were once thought to date from the latter half of the second century, are the Anti-Marcionite Prologues. These mention that Luke wrote Acts. "They are now held to have been neither directed against Marcion, nor written so early, nor even to be of the same date" (Cross and Livingstone 1997:77). This leaves the Muratorian Canon of the late second century as the first clear statement to place Acts among the books of the New Testament canon. It

OUTLINE

I. The Jerusalem Church's Establishment and Mission in the City (1:1–6:7)
   A. The Promise of the Spirit (1:1-5)
   B. The Ascension of Jesus (1:6-11)
   C. Matthias Replaces Judas (1:12-26)
   D. The Holy Spirit Comes (2:1-13)
   E. Peter Preaches to a Crowd (2:14-42)
   F. The Believers Meet Together (2:43-47)
   G. Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar (3:1-11)
   H. Peter Preaches in the Temple (3:12-26)
   I. Peter and John before the Council (4:1-22)
   J. The Believers Pray for Courage (4:23-31)
   K. The Believers Share Their Possessions (4:32-37)
   L. Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)
   M. The Apostles Heal Many (5:12-16)
   N. The Apostles Meet Opposition (5:17-42)
   O. Seven Men Chosen to Serve (6:1-7)
II. The Jerusalem Church's Mission in Judea and Samaria (6:8–9:31)
   A. Stephen Is Arrested (6:8-15)
   B. Stephen Addresses the Council and Is Martyred (7:1–8:1a)
   C. Persecution Scatters the Believers (8:1b-3)
   D. Philip Preaches in Samaria (8:4-25)
   E. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-40)
   F. Saul's Conversion (9:1-19a)
   G. Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem (9:19b-31)
III. The Jerusalem Church's Mission to the Gentiles (9:32–12:25)
   A. Peter Heals Aeneas and Raises Dorcas (9:32-43)
   B. Cornelius Calls for Peter (10:1-8)
   C. Peter Visits Cornelius (10:9-33)
   D. Gentiles Hear the Good News (10:34-43)
   E. Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit (10:44-48)
   F. Peter Explains His Actions (11:1-18)
   G. The Church in Antioch of Syria (11:19-30)
   H. James Is Killed and Peter Is Imprisoned (12:1-5)
   I. Peter's Miraculous Escape from Prison (12:6-19)
   J. The Death of Herod Agrippa (12:20-25)
IV. Paul's First Missionary Journey and the First Church Council at Jerusalem (13:1–16:5)
   A. Barnabas and Saul Are Sent Out (13:1-3)
   B. Paul's First Missionary Journey (13:4-12)
   C. Paul Preaches in Antioch of Pisidia (13:13-43)
   D. Paul Turns to the Gentiles (13:44-52)

COMMENTARY ON

Acts

◆ I. The Jerusalem Church's Establishment and Mission in the City (1:1–6:7)

A. The Promise of the Spirit (1:1-5)

In my first book* I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach [2]until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. [3]During the forty days after his crucifixion, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

[4]Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. [5]John baptized with* water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

1:1 The reference is to the Gospel of Luke. **1:5** Or *in;* also in 1:5b.

NOTES

1:1 ***my first book.*** Acts 1:1-11 is the preface to this second volume. Barrett (1994:61) extends it to v. 14. According to the consistent practice of "scientific treatises" (e.g., Dioscorides *Materia Medica* 2, 3, 4, 5; see Alexander's discussion [1993:143]), Luke recapitulated the events of his first volume, particularly Luke 24:44-53. This practice is also seen in historical works (e.g., Josephus *Antiquities* 7.380-382; 8.1). Acts is not a letter but the second part of an "apologetic history" or "missionary brief."

Theophilus. He was either the work's patron or a representative of the intended audience. See discussion under "Audience" in the Introduction.

1:3 ***forty days.*** Acts 1:1-11 recapitulates Luke 24:36-53. The transitional *de* [TG1161, ZG1254] (now, then) at Luke 24:44 allows for a break in time sequence and does not demand that the Ascension happen on Easter evening. In this way we can harmonize the two accounts and see Acts as providing the specifics of the timing of the Ascension (Moule 1982:63).

1:4 ***when he was eating with them.*** This renders *sunalizomenos* [TG4871, ZG5259]. The NASB translates this "gathering them together," and RSV translates it "while staying with them." Of these three possibilities, "eating with them" is the best option. For more detail on the three options and the issues involved here, see BDAG 964.

1:5 ***with water . . . with the Holy Spirit.*** In the Gr., it is possible to take both phrases as either instrumental (NLT text) or locative, "in" (NLT mg). The NLT rendering is preferred since the grammatical construction here is the same as in Luke 3:16 (perhaps indicating adherence to a traditional form of this statement) and parallels the use of the Hebrew preposition *bet* with "Spirit" in 1QS 4:21 (cf. Barrett 1994:74).

COMMENTARY

God is on mission! What Jesus began to do and teach, he continues by his Spirit through the church (4:10; 9:15; 18:10; 23:11). By the Spirit he instructed his apostles, whom he had chosen during his earthly ministry (Luke 6:13). They were to be his agents, sent on mission with his authority. In Jewish thought, the "apostle of God" was applied to the priesthood, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and Ezekiel, "because there took place through them things normally reserved for God" (TDNT 1.419). In Acts, the apostles guarantee the message about the "words and works of Jesus," especially the truth of the Resurrection (1:22; 10:41-42). Over a forty-day period, Jesus appeared to them, showing them the necessary evidence or "undeniable proofs" (*tekmērion* [TG5039, ZG5447]; cf. Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 5.9), from which one could draw no other conclusion than that he was alive. During his resurrection appearances, Jesus talked to them about the Kingdom of God (1:3). Here we have more than a code word for the content of the early church's preaching (cf. 8:12; 19:8; 28:31). The salvation accomplished in Jesus' death and resurrection and applied in the proclamation and reception of the gospel meant the initial arrival of the final reign of God (Isa 24:23; Zech 14:9; Luke 11:20).

Jesus' command that the apostles not embark on the mission until the Holy Spirit came (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5) serves as a reminder to us that, though the mission is prosecuted through human agents, it is primarily God's mission. Jesus gave this command during a solemn meal in which the eleven probably renewed their commitment to their Lord (1:4, cf. *sunalizomenos* [TG4871, ZG5259], lit. "eating salt"; cf. the Semitic background of a "covenant of salt," in the NLT mg of Num 18:19; 2 Chr 13:5; Ezra 4:14; see also ISBE 4.286).

Placing the promise in eschatological perspective, Jesus declared that John's water baptism of repentance in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom will be superseded by a "Spirit and fire" baptism of fulfillment. This will happen soon, at Pentecost, which will initiate salvation blessings: the gift of the Spirit at conversion and his filling for empowerment in witness (2:38; 4:8). This, however, was only the foreshadowing of the promised end-time deluge of the Spirit and fire (2:1-13; Joel 2:28; cf. Isa 66:15; Ezek 36:25-27; 39:29). The future encounter with God's "Spirit and fire" will be like an angry sea engulfing and sinking a boat, or like a massive surge of floodwater suddenly sweeping down on a man and overwhelming him as he attempts to cross a river. It will be immense, majestic, and devastating (Turner 1981:51).

◆ B. The Ascension of Jesus (1:6–11)

6So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?"

7He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

9After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. 10As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11"Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

NOTES

1:7 ***The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times.*** Jesus' response corrects the disciples mainly about the timing of the coming Kingdom. When he returns, Jesus will exercise a universal reign as the Davidic Messiah over a redeemed ethnic Israel (3:21; McLean 1994).

1:8 ***you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.*** The Spirit empowers the believers to bear witness to forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name (Luke 24:46-47); it indicates a different kind of reign by Jesus, king of peace. As servant-king, he will take away "the burden of sin, law and corruption to lead [people] into freedom" (Legrand 1989:19).

ends of the earth. Ellis (1991:132) convincingly identifies this as Spain (the city of Gades in particular, since the Gr. phrase is in the sg.). According to ancient geography, Spain was the western "end of the earth" (Diodorus Siculus *History* 25.10.1; cf. Isa 49:6 and Acts 13:47). Luke, through the use of this term, "signals his knowledge of a (prospective) Pauline mission to Spain and his intention to make it part of his narrative" (Ellis 1991; cf. Rom 15:24, 28; *1 Clement* 5:6).

1:9 ***he was taken up.*** The Ascension was the second stage of Jesus' three stage movement to heaven after his death (Resurrection, Ascension, and session at the divine right hand—see 2:32-34). Luke's account of the Ascension is not a figurative depiction of Jesus' spiritual exaltation, identical with his resurrection (contra Baird 1980:5), nor is it his previous departure to heaven, from which he came for every post-Resurrection appearance after his spiritual resurrection-exaltation to the Father's right hand (contra Harris 1983:84). Rather, for Luke the Ascension is a distinct event after the Resurrection, the second stage of Jesus' progress to the Father's right hand. The account does not depend on the first-century cosmology of a three-story universe (Gooding 1980:113); in fact, a cloud intervenes at the point of Jesus' actual entrance into the presence of God in heaven.

COMMENTARY

Jesus' talk of the Spirit's promised coming and the Kingdom of God (1:3, 5) made the apostles' ears tingle. Everything in their understanding of the arrival of the age to come, even corrected by the Messiah's suffering and resurrection, told them that nothing stood in the way of the full realization of the reign of God in Israel on earth. So they kept asking Jesus whether he would restore the Kingdom and liberate Israel then and there (Jer 16:15; 23:8; Hos 11:11; Joel 3:1).

Jesus' response focused the apostles' attention on the time before the final consummation and on their mission in it. History is fully in God the Father's hands (2:23; 3:21; 17:30). He sets the dates and determines the seasons but does not reveal the precise timing to humans (not even the Son; cf. Mark 13:32). As Peter will preach later, Jesus must be exalted to heaven for a period of time before "the final restoration of all things" (3:21). What Jesus revealed is a task that must be performed until the last day: witness to Jesus' saving power must be borne to the ends of the earth (Luke 21:13; 24:47; cf. Matt 24:14).

God would pursue his mission through these agents once they received the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came upon them, they would be equipped to do the work of bold, effective witness (2:37; 4:7-8, 31, 33; 6:5, 8, 10; 7:51, 55; 8:13; 18:24-25; 19:10). As we will soon learn from Peter, the outpouring is not only from the Father who promised it (1:4) but also from the Son because he, exalted to the Father's right hand, would receive from God the promised Holy Spirit, which he then would pour out (2:32-35). The empowerment for mission comes from the Triune God.

Jesus had told his disciples that the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name would be taken to the ends of the earth and that beginning from Jerusalem, they were to be witnesses of these things (Luke 24:47-48). Through their personal knowledge of the facts and significance of Jesus' ministry, they would be able to bear witness (14:2-3; 22:14-21; 23:11; 26:16). God would so closely attend this witness with his Spirit that, at points, Luke will say that in the Christian's witness the Holy Spirit or the Lord is witnessing (5:32; 26:23).

The extent of the witness is summarized geographically here, though it is also detailed ethnically in the accounts of Acts. God empowers his witnesses, sending them forth with a centrifugal momentum to Palestinian and Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem (2:1–8:3), then on to the Samaritans, a pious Ethiopian eunuch, and a group of God-fearing Gentiles in Judea and Samaria (8:3–11:18; see esp. 8:5, 27; 10:3), and finally to pagan Gentiles beyond Palestine in a movement from east to west—Syria, Cyprus, central Asia Minor, west Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and "the ends of the earth" (11:19–28:31).

As if to punctuate the point of the connection between earth and heaven in this great mission, Jesus was lifted up, and a cloud carried him out of their sight immediately after he had pronounced the mission (cf. Exod 40:34; Dan 7:13; Luke 21:37). Thereafter, he would direct his mission from the Father's right hand in heaven (2:32-34), though he would always be active on earth bringing salvation, encouragement, and guidance to his people (16:10, 14; 18:9). The angels' rebuke of the disciples' paralyzed stare at the sky (the word translated "sky" and "heaven" in these verses is the same Gr. word) gives as its immediate reason (in the form of a promise) the fact that the end will come when Jesus visibly returns.

◆ C. Matthias Replaces Judas (1:12–26)

12Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of half a mile.* 13When they arrived, they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying.

Here are the names of those who were present: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot), and Judas (son of James). 14They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.

15During this time, when about 120 believers* were together in one place, Peter stood up and addressed them. 16"Brothers," he said, "the Scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus. This was predicted long ago