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THE THEOLOGY OF GOD AND
THE GENTILE MISSION
IN ACTS

by

Joseph Gnanaseelan Muthuraj

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to investigate Luke's theology of God in the accounts of the mission to the Gentiles in Acts. In Acts, God is portrayed as the cause of the mission. It is God who inaugurates and guides the Gentile mission. For Luke, God who acts is God who has fixed the times and seasons. The mission is described as part of God's times, past, present and future. It is mission by God.

The Gentile mission is also mission about God. The 'cause' of the mission becomes the 'content'. This fact is not widely recognised by studies in Luke-Acts. 'God' is prominent in the speeches in the Gentile mission narratives of Samaria (8: 4-25), Caesarea (10: 33-43), Lystra (14: 8-18), Athens (17: 16-34) and Ephesus (19: 21-41). We examine these narratives to analyse the speeches in their immediate contexts provided in the narrative itself. Except in Ac. 10, Luke's contexts contain details concerning Gentiles' belief and worship of god/goddess/gods which in Luke's view represent false notions about God. The fundamental issue in the theology of God in all these narratives is confusion of the human with the divine. That men and works of men are neither God nor manifestations of God is the essence of the theological kerygma. In Ac. 10, Peter's own wrong notion of God is corrected and his new knowledge about God leads to the conversion of the Gentiles. God who is proclaimed to the Gentiles is God who does 'mighty acts'.

We consider two more narratives, 12: 21-24 and 28: 1-10, in which Gentile notions of god are presented without kerygma attached to them. The former can be classified with the mission narratives since all of them function as model settings to Luke's readers, illustrating how mission ought to take place in circumstances in which similar false understandings of God are found. The latter episode is an example of Luke's positive use of Gentile notions of god as 'justice' to attest the innocence of Paul, the prisoner and missionary to Rome. In the description of the Gentile mission in Acts, Luke emerges as a theologian of God.

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PREFACE

S. G. Wilson's *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge University, 1973), which was originally a PhD thesis at the Department of Theology, University of Durham, was a source of inspiration to undertake research in the field of the Gentile mission in Acts. Wilson's book has been and will be one of the few standard works on the subject. However, reading his work led me to choose an entirely different line of approach. While Wilson through the study of the Gentile mission in Acts attempted to assess the reliability of Luke as an historian, I have sought to show that in Luke's description of the Gentile mission in Acts Luke presents himself as a theologian of God in the Church and the society of his time.

I would like to express my gratitude to my Supervisor, Professor J. D. G. Dunn, who watched over this work at every stage and I am most grateful for his patient advice, intellectual stimulation and Christian warmth and understanding. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Emeritus the Reverend C. K. Barrett for his advice, criticisms and above all his labour of love in reading the manuscript of my thesis at the final stage which enabled me to make necessary modifications and improvements. My thanks are due to Dr. Nicholas Taylor who not only corrected my English in every chapter of the thesis but drew my attention to some important literature I had missed. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my examiners Prof. I. H. Marshall and Dr. L. T. Stuckenbruck for their final comments and corrections to the manuscript. However, the imperfections and the lack of formulation in good English in the present draft are of my own making. I thank Miss. Natalie Knödel for her valuable help in printing and photocopying the manuscript.

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Finally, I am indebted to my wife and the children for the love and understanding they showed throughout my studies and even when they had to be separated from me in the first and the final years of my work.

ABBREVIATIONS

A. Books, Periodicals and Reference works

- ABD* *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedmann, *et. al.*, New York: Doubleday, 1992
- ANRW* *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
- ATR* *Anglican Theological Review*
- BA* *Biblical Archaeologist*
- BAG* Bauer, W. F., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, ed. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, Cambridge University Press, 1957
- BC* *The Beginnings of Christianity*, pt I, *Acts of the Apostles*, ed. F. J. F. Jackson and K. Lake, London: Macmillan, 1933ff
- BDB* *A Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, Oxford: Clarendon, 1976
- BDF* Blass, F., and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, tr. R. W. Funk, Cambridge University Press, 1961
- BZ* *Biblische Zeitschrift*
- CBQ* *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
- DNTT* *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ET, ed. C. Brown, Exeter: Paternoster, 1975ff
- ERE* *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908ff
- ET* *Expository Times*
- HTR* *Harvard Theological Review*
- HUCA* *Hebrew Union College Annual*
- IB* *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. G. Butterick, *et. al.*, New York: Abingdon, 1954

- IDB* *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*,
 ed. G. A. Butterick, et. al., New York:
 Abingdon, 1962
- Int.* *Interpretation*
- JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature*
- JJS* *Journal of Jewish Studies*
- JRS* *Journal of Roman Studies*
- JTS* *Journal of Theological Studies*
- LS* H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-
 English Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon,
 1966
- NT* *Novum Testamentum*
- NTS* *New Testament Studies*
- OTP* *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed.
 J. C. Charlesworth, vol. 1, London:
 Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983, vol. 2,
 New York: Doubleday, 1985
- PCB* *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. M.
 Balck, London: Nelson, 1962
- PLA* *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. C. H.
 Talbert, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978.
- SE* *Studia Evangelica*
- SEA* *Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok*
- SLA* *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. L. E. Keck & J.
 L. Martyn, London: S. P. C. K., 1968
- TDNT* *Theological Dictionary of the New
 Testament*, ET, ed. G. Kittel and G.
 Friedrich, London: Wm. B. Eerdmans,
 1964
- TWAT* *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten
 Testament*, ed. G. J. Botterweck, et. al.,
 Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1984
- TZ* *Theologische Zeitschrift*
- ZAW* *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche
 Wissenschaft*
- ZNW* *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche
 Wissenschaft*
- ZIK* *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

B. Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Church Fathers

<i>Adv. Haer.</i>	<i>Against all Heresies</i>
<i>Arist.</i>	<i>Aristobulus</i>
<i>Bar.</i>	<i>Baruch</i>
<i>Bel Drag.</i>	<i>Bel and the Dragon</i>
<i>Eccl.</i>	<i>Ecclesiasticus</i>
<i>Ep. Jer.</i>	<i>Epistle of Jeremiah</i>
<i>I, II Esd.</i>	<i>Esdras I, II</i>
<i>Ep. Diog.</i>	<i>Epistle to Diognetus</i>
<i>Hist. Eccl.</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
<i>Lett. Arist.</i>	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
<i>I, II, III, IV Macc.</i>	<i>Maccabees I, II, III, IV</i>
<i>Ps. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>Wisd.</i>	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>

C. The Works of Philo

<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De Cherubim</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De Confusione Linguarum</i>
<i>Deca.</i>	<i>De Decalogo</i>
<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod Deterius Potiori insidiari soleat</i>
<i>Deus</i>	<i>Quod Deus sit Immutabilis</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>De Ebrietate</i>
<i>Jos.</i>	<i>De Josepho</i>
<i>L. A. i. iii</i>	<i>Legum Allegoriarum i, iii</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>De Legatione Gaium</i>
<i>Mos. i. ii.</i>	<i>De Vita Mosis i. ii.</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De Mutatione Nominum</i>
<i>Opi.</i>	<i>De Opificio Mundi</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De Plantatione</i>
<i>Post.</i>	<i>De Posteritate Caini</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod omnis probus liber</i>
<i>Spec. i, ii, iii, iv</i>	<i>De Specialibus Legibus i, ii, iii, iv</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	<i>De Virtutibus</i>

D. The Works of Josephus

<i>Antiq.</i>	<i>The Antiquities of the Jews</i>
<i>WJ</i>	<i>The Wars of the Jews</i>
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	<i>Against Apion</i>

E. Others

<i>Metam.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Olympic Oration</i>
<i>T. Nf.</i>	<i>Targum Neofiti</i>
<i>T. Ps.-J</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>

DECLARATION

Hereby, I declare that the materials offered in this thesis have not been previously submitted by me for a degree in this or any other University.

Signature-----

Date-----

I

INTRODUCTION

Theology (discourse about God)¹ is often one of the neglected aspects of NT studies. Two decades ago, N. A. Dahl wrote, 'For more than a generation the majority of New Testament scholars have not only eliminated direct references to God from their works, but also neglected detailed and comprehensive investigation of statements about God...it is hard to find any comprehensive or penetrating study of the theme "God in the New Testament."' ² Such pertinent remarks could be regarded as valid even to-day although some signs of scholarly interest in the subject are beginning to appear.³

There is no detailed study of 'God' in Luke-Acts but theology is beginning to be seen as fundamental to Luke's thinking. Some peculiar features of this theology have been noted by scholars. H. Conzelmann assumes that there was no necessity for Luke to expound a doctrine of God as it was part of the normal belief of the Church. But he argues that Luke's concept of the redemptive history and the mission preaching to the Jews enabled him to develop certain ideas of God, such as the plan, will and the providence of God.⁴ Later studies⁵ worked around these themes and recently J. T. Squires has traced the way the theme of 'plan of God' is developed throughout Luke-Acts. But as Squires himself has recognised, the theme the 'plan of God' is only one aspect of

¹ J. Macquarrie, *Thinking about God*, London: SCM, 1975, p. 7.

² Cited by J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1980, p. 355; a similar view has been expressed by C. H. Gibling, 'Three Monotheistic Texts in Paul', *CBQ*, 37 (1975), p. 527.

³ Note particularly, H-J. Klauck (ed.), *Monotheismus und Christologie: Zur Gottesfrage im hellenistischen Judentum und im Urchristentum*, Freiburg: Herder, 1992; P-G. Klumbies, *Die Rede von Gott bei Paulus in ihrem zeitgeschichtlichen Kontext*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992; J. T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts*, Cambridge University, 1993.

⁴ *The Theology of Saint Luke*, London: Faber and Faber, ET, 1969, p. 149.

⁵ E. g., I. H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, Exeter: Paternoster, pp. 103-111; see below, n. 15; for a survey of the previous studies on the theme of plan of God in Luke-Acts, see Squires, *Plan of God*, pp. 5-10.



'God' in Luke-Acts.⁶ With a view to contributing to our understanding of 'God' in Luke-Acts, the present study seeks to investigate the themes and the motifs concerning God, by which we mean 'theology of God'. How does Luke 'theologise' or 'discourse' about God himself?

1.1 GOD AND THE GENTILE MISSION

1.1.1 *God is the cause*

Our study focuses on the accounts of the mission to the Gentiles in Acts in which, as we shall argue, a dynamic and creative theology of God can be found. 'God' is central to Luke's description of the mission to the Gentiles. The first indication of this can be seen in the statements relating to the mission in which God is the subject of the verb and τὰ ἔθνη is the object.

The gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out (by God) (ἐκκέχυται) even on the Gentiles (ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη) (10: 45)⁷; to the Gentiles (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) also God has granted (ἔδωκεν) repentance unto life (11:18); God gave (ἔδωκεν) the same gift to them (Gentiles) (11: 17); God had opened (ἤνοιξεν) a door of faith to the Gentiles (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) (14: 27); God chose (ἐξελέξατο) that the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) should hear the word of the gospel (15: 7); Paul and Barnabas related what signs and wonders God had done (ἐποίησεν) through them among the Gentiles (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) (15: 12; 21: 19); God saw to it (ἐπεσκέψατο) that a people would be taken out from the Gentiles (ἐξ ἐθνῶν) for his name (15: 14); the salvation of God has been sent (ἀπεστάλη) to the Gentiles (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) (28: 28).

In addition, there are OT quotations, reports and events relating to the Gentile mission containing frequent references to God. 'God'/'Lord' is the subject in two key OT quotations relating the deeds done in connection with the Gentile mission (13: 47; 15: 16, 17). The summary report on the mission in Iconium refers to God

⁶ Squires, *Plan of God*, p. 186.

⁷ It may be inferred that the passive voice denotes an act of God since elsewhere in Acts the gift of the Spirit is given by God (cf. Ac. 11: 17; 15: 8).

as bearing witness (τῷ μαρτυροῦντι) to the word of his grace (14: 3). In the episode of the conversion of Cornelius in 10: 1-11: 18, apart from the two examples (11: 17, 18) cited above, the statements 'God has cleansed (ἐκαθάρισεν)' (10: 15), 'God has shown (ἔδειξεν)' (10: 28) and 'the things that are commanded (πάντα τὰ προστεταγμένα) by the Lord' (10: 33), are fundamental to the story of the conversion. The frequent and consistent use of 'God' as the subject of actions describing the mission to the Gentiles suggests that for Luke the Gentile mission is what God has done for the Gentiles and among the Gentiles. The understanding of God as the cause of the mission is disclosed through the statements relating to the Gentile mission.

This observation is not wholly new. Several key studies have noted the prominent presentation of 'God' particularly in the Cornelius episode (10:1-11:18). Dibelius comments, '...everything comes from *God*: *God* wishes to receive the pious centurion; *God* causes Cornelius to send for Peter; *he* commands the apostle to go with the messengers; *he* shortens the future Christian's period of development to maturity by sending him the Holy Spirit when he has scarcely been instructed'.⁸ This observation leads Dibelius to the conclusion that the episode is 'not a justification of the conversion of the Gentiles but a reference to the independent, effective power of *God*'.⁹ Dibelius points out further the importance of this message for the debate at the Jerusalem council that God has acted in the mission to the Gentiles.¹⁰ Luke, according to Dibelius, insists that the mission is not of man but of God.

This view has been echoed by several scholars. Haenchen, for example, points out repeatedly that one of the basic motives of Luke in the story about the conversion of Cornelius is to show that God himself introduced the Gentiles into the Church (Ac. 10: 3, 11-

⁸ *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H. Greeven, ET, London: SCM, 1956, p. 121. Italics mine.

⁹ *Studies*, p. 14. Italics mine.

¹⁰ *Studies*, p. 96; Dibelius (p. 133) comments in passing that Luke also selected and arranged the missionary journeys 'in order that it may more clearly be seen that God is the real controller of the missionary journey'.

16, 22, 30; 11: 5-10, 13).¹¹ For J. Jervell, 'God himself initiates the Gentile mission'.¹² S. G. Wilson maintains that the Gentile mission from the beginning is seen not as the work of men but of God.¹³ Conzelmann sees the references to God in the Cornelius episode as indicative of divine initiative.¹⁴

Some have gone further to study several accounts of the Gentile mission, in an effort to identify a specific theme in Luke's presentation of God as the cause of the mission. Here the Gentile mission forms part of the wider investigation of Luke's theology of God.¹⁵ S. Schulz argues that in Luke-Acts we see a concept of the Providence of God which foresaw, fore-ordained and pre-planned the salvation of the nations.¹⁶ The more recent and detailed study of Squires treats the Gentile mission as an aspect of God's plan.¹⁷ Squires argues that, for Luke, the theme of 'plan of God' explains the mission to the Gentiles.¹⁸ God always intended and directly authorised the Gentile mission.¹⁹ The above studies show remarkable consensus in recognising the fact that God has acted in the mission to the Gentiles and that in the accounts we read about God as the 'cause'.

1.1.2 *God is the content*

However, what is not fully recognised is the fact that 'God' is central to the early Church's preaching to the Gentiles in Acts. The

¹¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, ET, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971, p. 360.

¹² *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts*, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972, p. 57.

¹³ *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts*, Cambridge University, 1973, pp. 177ff.

¹⁴ *Acts of the Apostles*, ET, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987, p. 86.

¹⁵ Not all the studies which make reference to Luke's theology of God consider the significance of 'God' in the mission narratives. E. g., Flender, *St Luke: Theologian of Redemptive History*, tr. R. H. Fuller and I. Fuller, London: SPCK, 1967, pp. 143-146; D. L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980, pp. 97-103.

¹⁶ S. Schulz, 'Gottes Vorsehung bei Lukas', *ZNW*, 54 (1963), pp. 104-116. Schulz ('Gottes Vorsehung', p. 115) writes, 'Die erste Heiden-bekehrung geht also auf die ausdrückliche Initiative der Gottesvorsehung zurück'.

¹⁷ *Plan of God*, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Plan of God*, p. 188.

¹⁹ *Plan of God*, p. 60.

'cause' of the mission becomes also its 'content'.

Dibelius²⁰ and Conzelmann²¹ have studied Luke's presentation of God in the Areopagus speech. Squires also has argued that the plan of God is central to the speech in Athens.²² But a detailed study of the theology of God in the Gentile mission speeches in Acts has not been undertaken. Part of the reason is that the previous mission studies stress the importance of Christology in the preaching to the Gentiles. For example, F. Hahn maintains that the task of the Gentile mission is defined fundamentally by Christology.²³ M. Hengel sees an intrinsic parallelism between the development of Christological thinking and the Gentile mission in Luke.²⁴

However, an overview of the mission speeches reveals that 'God' is fundamental to Luke's proclamation to the Gentiles. This does not mean to say that Christ was not preached to the Gentiles. There are only three narratives in Acts in which exclusive reference to Christ as the object of the preaching is found. Philip told the Ethiopian eunuch the good news of Jesus (8: 35). In Antioch, men of Cyprus and Cyrene preached the Lord Jesus (11: 20). On the basis of the charge that was made against Paul in Thessalonica (17: 7), it may be assumed that Paul preached Jesus to the Gentiles there. Out of the three cases, the Ethiopian eunuch is an exception as he had good knowledge of the OT. The other two narratives do not offer enough materials on the Christological message to the Gentiles.

There is a lot of truth in R. Bultmann's statement, '*Christian missionary preaching in the Gentile world could not be simply the christological kerygma; rather, it had to begin with the proclamation of the one God*'.²⁵ At the same time it is hard to accept E. Schweizer's claim that the early Church replaced the Christological kerygma with the theological one when the audience

²⁰ *Studies*, pp. 26-83.

²¹ 'The Address of Paul on the Areopagus', *SLA*, pp. 217-230.

²² *Plan of God*, pp. 71-75.

²³ F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, London: SCM, 1965, pp. 63, 74; also, C. Kasting, *Die Anfänge der urchristlichen Mission*, München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1969.

²⁴ *Earliest Christianity*, London: SCM, 1979, p. 106.

²⁵ *New Testament Theology*, vol. I, London: SCM, 1959, p. 65. Italics his.

were Gentiles.²⁶ There are references to Christ in the proclamations in Caesarea (10: 34-43), Samaria (8: 5) and Athens (17: 22-31). But the main subject matter in these speeches is actually God. 'God' emerges as the pivotal concept in the preaching to the Gentiles. In nine verses of Peter's speech in Caesarea (10: 34-43) the word 'God' and the corresponding pronoun occur eight times.²⁷ In Samaria, Philip preached about the kingdom of God (8: 12) and Christ (8: 5). Syntactically, God is the subject in the two main speeches made in the typical non-Jewish situations, Lystra (14: 15-17) and Athens (17: 22-31). Reference to Jesus is made at the very end in the speech in Athens (17: 31) and the speech in Lystra has no reference to Christ. It may be assumed from the one sentence that is presented by Luke in the Ephesian narrative which makes reference to the proclamation (19: 26) that Paul's preaching was about God.²⁸

Why is 'God' fundamental to the preaching among the Gentiles? It has been argued that the purpose is to polemicise against two major aspects of the religion of non-Jews. The kerygma of one God, for Bultmann, was preached in a society where polytheism was still a living force. Polytheism and idolatry were, therefore, treated as the religious forms in conflict with monotheism.²⁹ Similarly, Conzelmann argues, on the basis of his study of the Areopagus speech, that Luke has reduced the discussion in the Gentile speeches to two points: i) polytheistic ideas and ii) the divine worship expressed through images.³⁰ For Conzelmann, Luke has left out of the polemic both popular piety and philosophy. R. M. Grant analysed the diverse forms of paganism in conflict with Christianity. Against the backdrop of the religious-historical context of Asia Minor, Grant seeks to assess the encounter of the Christian mission with the gods/goddesses of the cities, for example, with Aphrodite in Paphos, Athena in Athens, Zeus and

²⁶ 'Concerning the Speeches in Acts', *SLA*, pp. 212-214.

²⁷ Further, the subject of ἀπέστειλεν (v. 36) and παρήγγειλεν (v. 42) is God.

²⁸ It must be noted that the name Christ is central to the exorcism in Ephesus (19: 13-20). Yet the healing is seen as the work of God (cf. 19: 11).

²⁹ *Theology*, vol. I, pp. 65, 72.

³⁰ 'Paul on the Areopagus', p. 218.

Hermes in Lystra and Artemis in Ephesus.³¹ With regard to the speeches in Lystra and Athens, he maintains that they are two key-note addresses against idolatry.³²

These scholars have attempted to assess the relevance and the purpose of the preaching of God within the Gentile religious environment. The questions we would like to raise are: Are they right in maintaining that the kerygma about God is confined to tackling Gentile views of polytheism and idolatry? Does Luke leave out the polemics against popular piety and philosophy as claimed by Conzelmann? Is Luke through the preaching of one God encountering the gods and goddesses of the cities and provinces such as Athena in Athens and Artemis in Ephesus? It is important that we analyse the depth and the extent of Luke's polemics against the religions of the Gentiles. Moreover, sufficient attention has not been given to the positive aspects of the theology of God in the proclamation and, most importantly, to the connection between the kerygma and the polemical principles that evolved from it.

Before we outline the task and the scope of our present study of 'God' as the cause and particularly the content of the Gentile mission in Acts with its importance and significance to the Gentile hearers, we look briefly at the method employed by the present investigation.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

1.2.1 *Kerygmata and kerygmatic settings*

One of the insights of the style critical studies of M. Dibelius was the recognition that the speeches in Acts are basically the author's compositions.³³ Luke, the author of Acts, follows the ancient

³¹ *Gods and the One God*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986, pp. 21ff.

³² Grant, *Gods*, p. 50.

³³ *Studies*, pp. 145ff. C. H. Dodd's (*The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966, p. 27) analysis of the speeches in Acts concentrates on tracing the common elements of the kerygma of the early Church. His study has not taken into consideration the Gentile speeches. U. Wilckens (*Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte: Form- und traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Neukirchener

practice in historiography by inserting 'speeches' in his writings. The role and function of the speeches may best be understood by comparing Acts with ancient historiography.³⁴ Several modern approaches to the study of Acts have made use of this insight.³⁵ At the same time, Dibelius argues, the analogy between ancient historiography and the book of Acts has its limits, since the book of Acts has a kerygmatic aim which is not simply to narrate but to proclaim.³⁶ Therefore, the speeches serve the interests of the proclamation for the author.³⁷

What is important to note is that Dibelius also speaks of the 'setting' in which Luke has placed the proclamations. He states, 'He (Luke) follows the great tradition of historical writing in antiquity in that he freely fixes the *occasion* of the speech and fashions its *content* himself.'³⁸ In this respect, the speeches in Acts are to be studied against two contexts. In one sense, Luke has shaped his speeches in order to correspond to the conception of his work as a whole. The book has a theme and the speeches play a part in developing it.³⁹ Secondly, the speeches, particularly the Gentile mission speeches, have immediate contexts/settings which function as 'occasions' for them. Luke has added speeches to his account to illuminate the significance of the occasion. Dibelius takes the Areopagus speech as an example to argue that it is important for Luke to show how the preaching penetrated into the heart of

Verlag, 1961, pp. 81-91) studies the speeches to the Gentiles in order to identify the the basic scheme in the preaching of the early Church. He argues that Ac. 14: 15-17, 17: 22-31, I Thess. 1: 9ff. and Heb. 6: 1ff. contain the same Traditionsstücke whose emphasis is on turning from the idols to the one God.

³⁴ *Studies*, p. 178.

³⁵ E. Plümacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller*, *Studies zur Apostelgeschichte*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972; W. C. van Unnik, 'Luke's Second Book and the Rules of Hellenistic Historiography', *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, Leuven University, 1979, pp. 37-60, see p. 41; G. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1992, pp. 311-346, especially, p. 320.

³⁶ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 178. Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 107: 'In Acts, as in the Gospel, Luke wishes to be an evangelist...'

³⁷ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 183.

³⁸ *Studies*, p. 155. Italics mine.

³⁹ *Studies*, p. 175.

Greek spiritual life.⁴⁰ The characterisation of Athenian life symbolises 'the encounter of the gospel with the Greek spirit'.⁴¹ The speeches are not records of how the historical mission took place in the circumstances described by the 'occasions'. They have a contemporary meaning, that is to show how one ought to preach in the religious circumstances as they existed, for example, in Athens.⁴² In other words, 'Luke wishes to present first of all not what has taken place but what is taking place'.⁴³ Dibelius concludes,

So we see Luke once more as a historian who expounds the meaning of an event by striking description; we see him also in his capacity as herald and evangelist, a rôle which he fulfils completely in his first book and wishes ultimately to fulfil also in Acts; in his capacity as an historian he finds abundant opportunities of doing so.⁴⁴

The methodological principle that we draw from Dibelius' analysis of the speeches in Acts is that, for Luke, the force of the proclamation made to the Gentiles is related to and to some extent depends on their immediate narrative contexts/settings.⁴⁵ Therefore, a study also of the occasions for the proclamations in the narratives of the mission in Samaria (8: 4-25), Lystra (14: 8-14, 18) and Ephesus (19: 23-41) along with an analysis of the same for the Areopagus speech (17: 16-23), is essential for the

⁴⁰ *Studies*, p. 164.

⁴¹ *Studies*, p. 134.

⁴² *Studies*, p. 70.

⁴³ *Studies*, p. 134. This point of Dibelius has not met with overall acceptance as Plümacher (*Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller*, p. 74) speaks of 'Archaisierung' of the mission speeches. Through the dramatic presentation of the mission episodes, Plümacher argues, Luke portrays the heroic *past* of mission success (p. 110); also against Dibelius, Conzelmann ('The Address of Paul on the Areopagus', *SLA*, p. 218) judges the speeches not as missionary addresses but as a purely literary creation. However, with reference to Athens, he states (p. 218), 'The value of the description rests not in the historical worth of its details as sources of information about Paul's conduct, but in the fact that it documents for us how a Christian around 100 AD reacts to the *pagan* milieu and meets it from the position of faith'. Italics his.

⁴⁴ *Studies*, pp. 134-135.

⁴⁵ There are some who stress this view-point. E. g., B. Gärtner, *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation*, Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1955, pp. 45-52; G. Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, II, Freiburg: Herder, 1982, p. 231; C. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1989, p. 424. On the other hand, W. L. Knox (*The Acts of the Apostles*, Cambridge University, 1948, p. 18) takes the view that the speeches have no real connection with the context.

explication of the meaning of the speeches to the Gentiles.⁴⁶ Such an approach will enable us to assess what Luke, as an evangelist, aims to achieve through the proclamation in a given Gentile context since, for Luke, both 'occasions' and 'proclamations' are integral and vital components of the mission to the Gentiles.

1.3 THE TASK AND THE SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

1.3.1 *MISSION BY GOD* (PART I)

The thesis has two parts. In part one (chapter II), we shall briefly review the evidence in Acts which indicates how fundamental for Luke the thought was of God as the cause of the mission. Most studies have begun from the Cornelius episode and have treated it as the main base. But we shall begin from the first chapter of Acts. The passages are: Ac. 1: 6-8; 10: 1-33; 10: 44 - 11: 18; 13: 47-48; 14: 3, 27; 15: 1-29; 22: 12-21; 28: 28. Amidst scholarly consensus, we do not offer a new thesis but we shall attempt, as Schulz and Squires have done, to identify Luke's theological motif which illuminates the acts of God in relation to the Gentile mission. We shall argue that one such motif which sustains Luke's explanation is his idea of 'times' in relation to God.

1.3.2 *MISSION ABOUT GOD* (PART II)

The major part of our study, as indicated, is devoted to an investigation of the significance of God in the speeches in the mission narratives of Caesarea (10), Samaria (8: 4-25), Lystra (14: 8-18), Athens (17: 16-34) and Ephesus (19: 23-41) with a view to assessing important aspects of Luke's theology of God in the proclamation to the Gentiles.⁴⁷ What are the motifs or the themes concerning God that are fundamental to the preaching to the Gentiles? Most importantly, which aspects of Gentile religions are

⁴⁶ Dibelius (*Studies*, pp. 72, 111) regards the preaching in Lystra and Caesarea as patterns for the proclamation to the Gentiles.

⁴⁷ Not all the speeches before the Gentile audience have received equal treatment. Paul's speech before the Areopagus has received more coverage than any of the other speeches to the Gentiles in Acts [J. T. Townsend, 'The Speeches in Acts', *ATR*, XLII (1969), p. 153].

polemicalised against? We treat both questions as related to each other. An answer to both can be obtained by analysing the speeches and the 'setting' within which the speeches have been placed.

Therefore, the important part of our endeavour is to inquire into the 'Lukan setting' which serves as the occasion for the proclamation. Our aim is not to construct the historical context in which the mission may have taken place but the context as Luke himself has presented it as offering an occasion for the preaching. He has portrayed the settings vividly in the mission episodes in order that the appeal and the polemical tendencies of the kerygma in various contexts could be appreciated by the readers.

A preliminary reading of Luke's mission episodes in the five key places or regions which we have chosen to investigate, Samaria (8: 4-25), Caesarea (ch. 10: 1-16; 34-43), Lystra (14: 8-18), Athens (17: 16-34) and Ephesus (19: 23-41), suggests that in all, except the Cornelius episode, a particular improper understanding of god/gods/goddess is central to the episode and creates the occasion for the proclamation of the proper understanding of God. The evangelist Luke reflects on the Gentile settings from a theological perspective. He presents the false conceptions of God found in those situations in order to underline the need for the proclamations to challenge them. The key question in the analysis of these mission episodes is, How do the kerygmata confront the kerygmatic settings challenging the conceptions of god/goddess/gods held in Samaria, Lystra, Athens and Ephesus?

We also consider in this connection two more narratives which contain expressions of the Gentile attitudes about god but do not have any kerygma attached to them. In the narrative on the death of king Agrippa I (12: 20-24), the people acclaimed the king as god. After his shipwreck in Malta (28: 1-10), Paul himself is called 'god' by the Maltese. What does Luke aim to convey through these Gentile expressions? We list all these episodes in the order they appear in Acts briefly indicating the issues they pose concerning God and the message preached in counteracting them.

Chapter III: In Samaria (Ac. 8: 4-24), Simon Magus who amazed the people with magic is acclaimed as 'the power of God which is called great' (v. 10). Philip preaches the kingdom of God and the Christ.

Chapter IV: In Caesarea (ch. 10), the situation is different from the rest of the episodes as the household of Cornelius feared God, gave alms liberally to the people and prayed constantly to God (10: 2). Nevertheless, Luke has Peter preach to them Peter's new knowledge about God as impartial and as accepting those who fear him.

Chapter V: The people of Caesarea (12: 20-24) acclaimed Herod Agrippa I, 'The voice of a god and not man' (12: 22). The problem is not addressed through proclamation but by Herod's punishment by the angel of God. Why, in Luke's view, is such an acclamation abhorrent to God?

Chapter VI: In Lystra (Ac.14: 8-18), the acclamation in the Lycaonian language, 'The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!' (v. 11), reflects their understanding of god/gods. Further, Paul and Barnabas were identified with Hermes and Zeus and the people began to offer sacrifices to them at the temple of Zeus. The speech about the 'living God' challenges these views about god/gods and the Gentile worship in Lystra.

Chapter VII: In the idol-ridden city of Athens (17: 16b) which is also the centre of Stoic and Epicurean philosophy, Paul was charged with preaching 'foreign divinities' (17: 18c). In the midst of all the sacred places, objects, shrines and altars, Paul finds an altar 'to an unknown God' (17: 23). Luke has Paul preach to the Athenians the acts of God.

Chapter VIII: The incident in Ephesus (19: 23-41) in which Luke narrates the hostile opposition to Paul from the guild of silversmiths for preaching that 'gods made with hands are not gods'. The Ephesians acclaimed, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians'

(v. 28). Here again the problem relates to the concept of god in Ephesus.

Chapter IX: The surprising climax of all these is that Luke lets Paul be called god (θεός) in the narrative of the shipwreck in Malta (Ac. 28: 1-10). Can Paul, the missionary portrayed as fighting against the misconceptions of God elsewhere, himself be called god?

The above episodes, except the Cornelius episode in which Peter's wrong notion about God is corrected, reveal different views of the Gentiles concerning their god/goddess/gods which in Luke's view need to be challenged through the proper understanding of God. Luke, as a theologian, seeks to tackle the issues concerning God maintained in the contemporary situation of his readers for which the above episodes serve as models or ideal settings for the proclamation of the early Church. The present investigation embarks upon a careful assessment of Luke's theology of God that emerges both in his presentation of and confrontation with the Gentile views of god which, for him, represent misconceptions of God. God is the 'content' as well as the 'cause' of the mission to the Gentiles. Luke emerges as a 'theologian' in his description of the Gentile mission in Acts.

To avoid repeated use of the phrase 'theology of God' throughout this study, for the sake of variation and brevity the words 'theology'/'theological' are also used referring exclusively, as we indicated above, to views concerning God. In some specific contexts, 'theology'/'theological' denote views of god/goddess/gods held by non-Jews. 'Theologian' is one who discourses about God. Care has been taken in making use of citations from sources which have not used these words in the sense used in the present study.

PART I

MISSION BY GOD

II

KNOWING GOD'S TIMES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As a first step in our inquiry into Luke's theology of God we listed the key references in Acts which show that God 'acts' in mission to the Gentiles, for example, by 'opening' a door of faith to them, by 'doing' signs and wonders among them and by 'granting' eternal life to them. The fact that God is the chief 'actor' in the mission has been recognised by scholars mainly from the episodes relating to the conversion of Cornelius.¹ In this chapter, we examine a few more passages to see how Luke describes God's actions in relation to the mission to the Gentiles. What understanding does Luke have of the acts of God? What theological nuances can we identify in the narratives which portray God as the cause of the mission?

Squires has attempted to answer these questions. He argues that there are several means by which God's action in relation to the Gentile mission has been explained, for example, by signs and wonders, epiphanies and fulfilment of prophecies.² God's deeds through signs and wonders are seen among the Gentiles (14: 3, 15: 12).³ The visions in the Cornelius episode are communication from God through epiphanies (10:1-11:18).⁴ Through prophecies from the scriptures Luke has shown that the Gentile mission is a vital part in the ministry of Paul (13: 48).⁵ For Squires, these various means of God's action underline the theological theme of 'the plan of God'.⁶ Secondly, Squires also attempts to see the freedom of the human will to exercise its own intentions either to obey or disobey God's plan. He cites Paul as an example to show that Paul never opposed the plan of God but willingly co-operated with the divine

¹ See ch. I, pp. 2-4.

² *Plan of God*, pp. 97-101; 116-120; 149-151.

³ *Plan of God*, pp. 100-101.

⁴ *Plan of God*, p. 117.

⁵ *Plan of God*, pp. 149ff., 184.

⁶ *Plan of God*, p. 187.

will.⁷

However, though Squires' analysis has brought out the means and the theological theme in God's actions he has somewhat surprisingly failed to take note of the time references that go with Luke's description of the acts of God. Secondly, the human involvement in relation to God's actions in the Gentile mission also needs to be reviewed as it is closely linked to our first observation.

2.2 Ac. 1: 4-8

We begin from the opening section Ac. 1: 4-8 in which Luke sets forth his programme for the mission to the Gentiles.⁸ The question from the disciples, 'Will you restore at this time the kingdom to Israel?' (v. 7) 'provides an opportunity to clarify a problem of the highest significance'.⁹ Jesus' reply points to the new agenda, mission which is wider in scope and which involves the disciples. They shall be witnesses in 'Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth' (Ac. 1: 8).¹⁰ The witnessing from Jerusalem to the end of the earth anticipates in one sense the plan of the book which begins from mission in Jerusalem and ends with Paul's preaching in Rome.¹¹ But it has been argued that the phrase 'to the end of the earth' does not mean that Rome was the end of the earth.¹² Luke probably envisions a goal that goes beyond the end of Acts since he has shown at the end of Acts that the work is

⁷ *Plan of God*, p. 183.

⁸ Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, pp. 94ff. The D-text makes the reference to mission earlier in Ac. 1: 2 by adding καὶ ἐκέλευσε κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

⁹ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 143.

¹⁰ The phrase ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς occurs again in Ac. 13: 47 as part of the quotation from Is. 49: 6. In Lk. 24: 47, the scope of the mission is described slightly differently, εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; cf. Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 91.

¹¹ Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 96; R. C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. I, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, p. 296.

¹² W. C. van Unnik, 'Der Ausdruck ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς (Apostelgeschichte i 8) und sein alttestamentlicher Hintergrund', *Sparsa Collecta*, Pt. I, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1973, pp. 386-401. T. C. G. Thornton ['To the End of the Earth: Acts 1⁸', *ET*, 89 (1977-78), p. 374] who agrees with Unnik argues that Ethiopia was regarded as one of the extremities of the inhabited earth. So the last part of the commandment is fulfilled in the Eunuch's baptism and his joyful return to Ethiopia.

still in progress.¹³ Therefore, it may be taken that Luke is speaking of the mission, on the one hand, moving towards Rome as illustrated in Acts and, on the other hand, mission 'in process of fulfilment' even in his own day so that his readers will be able to continue its fulfilment.¹⁴

Secondly, the question is about 'when?'. 'Will you at *this time* restore the kingdom to Israel?' The reply from Jesus points to the times and seasons fixed by the Father in the exercise of his authority.¹⁵ Luke here hints that the concern for the time of restoration is to be changed by a theological outlook about times because the times are fixed by God. The expectation of the restoration of the kingdom is replaced by an understanding of God and his Lordship over time.¹⁶ The question 'when?' lies with the Father as the times are under his authority and plan.¹⁷ For Luke, the universal mission of the early Church is bound up with such an understanding of God. We shall see in this chapter whether Luke is building a case here for viewing the Gentile mission as part of God's χρόνους and καιρούς.

2.2.1 God's χρόνοι and καιροί

The words καιρός and χρόνος are significant for Luke's theology of God. Luke takes them as stereotyped expressions whose original meanings are forgotten.¹⁸ On the other hand, many have drawn

¹³ R. C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. II, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990, p. 18.

¹⁴ Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. I, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994, p. 80; R. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982, p. 77.

¹⁵ *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. F. J. F. Jackson and K. Lake, vol. IV, London: Macmillan, 1933, p. 8.

¹⁶ Cf. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, ET, London: SCM, 1957, pp. 73 & 76.

¹⁷ The title Father to God is not a common feature in Luke. Matthew uses πατήρ of God 46 times whereas it is found only 17 times in Luke. In the gospels, God is not only the father of Jesus but also of the disciples. In Matthew, the phrases ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν and ὁ πατήρ μου occur thirteen and nineteen times respectively. The phrases ὁ πατήρ σου and ὁ πατήρ ἡμῶν occur five times and once. In Luke, ὁ πατήρ μου and ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν appear three and four times respectively. Out of five occurrences of πατήρ in Mark with reference to God, twice is God ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν.

¹⁸ BC, IV, p. 8. F. Blass and A. Debrunner (*BDF*, § 446. 3) treat καιρός and

attention to the distinctive meaning and the significance of these terms in the NT.¹⁹ Our aim is not to embark upon Luke's concept of time but to highlight his use of *καιρός* and *χρόνος* which are of theological significance to him. We should not differentiate *καιρός* and *χρόνος* on the basis of the suggestion made by J. A. T. Robinson, for whom the former is measured by the purpose of God and the latter is ordinary chronological time removed from reference to God.²⁰ Though the term *χρόνος* is primarily used to denote 'span of time'²¹ without any theological meaning attached to it, it is also used with the presupposition that God causes it to occur.²² In the speech of Stephen, Luke refers to the time of the promise (*ὁ χρόνος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας*) drawing near which God had granted to Abraham (Ac. 7: 17). Paul's speech before the Areopagus makes reference to God who overlooks the *χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας* (Ac. 17: 30). The time (*ὁ χρόνος*) came for Elizabeth to be delivered (Lk. 1: 57) which is not an ordinary course of events in child-birth but looks back to the days (*ἐν ἡμέραις*) when God looked on her to take away the reproach among men (Lk. 1: 25).²³ Luke has Peter declare that heaven must receive Jesus until the time for fulfilling all that God spoke by the mouth of the prophets (*ἄχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων*) (Ac. 3: 21). Thus *χρόνος* as 'period of time' is given by God and ruled by God.²⁴

Like *χρόνος*, there are several non-theological uses of *καιρός* indicating mainly a period of time.²⁵ In the theological sense, Luke

χρόνος as synonyms.

¹⁹ J. Marsh, *The Fullness of Time*, London: Nisbet & Co., 1952, pp. 108-120; Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, pp. 37-50; J. A. T. Robinson, *In the End God*, London: Collins, 1968, pp. 55-67; J. Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, London: SCM, 1961, pp. 20-46; G. Dellings, 'καιρός', *TDNT*, III, pp. 455-466; C. Hahn, 'Time', *DNTT*, III, pp. 826-850.

²⁰ *In the End God*, p. 57.

²¹ Hahn, 'Time', p. 843; *TDNT*, III, p. 591; e. g. Lk. 8: 27 (*χρόνω ἱκανῶ*), 29 (*πολλοῖς χρόνοις*); 18: 4 (*ἐπὶ χρόνον*); 20: 9 (*χρόνους ἱκανούς*); 23: 8 (*ἐξ ἱκανῶν χρόνων*); Ac. 8: 11 (*ἱκανῶ χρόνω*); 14: 3 (*ἱκανὸν χρόνον*), 28 (*χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον*); 15: 33 (*χρόνον*); 18: 20 (*ἐπὶ πλείονα χρόνον*); 20: 18 (*τὰ πάντα χρόνον*). But note, *ἐν στιγμῇ χρόνου* (Lk. 4: 5); *ἐν τῷ χρόνω τούτῳ* (Ac. 1: 6).

²² Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, pp. 49ff.

²³ It denotes the time of the fulfilment of God's promise (E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982, p. 25).

²⁴ Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 49.

²⁵ J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. III, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963, p. 27. E. g. Lk. 4: 13; Ac. 13: 11 (*ἄχρι καιροῦ*); Lk. 8: 13 (*πρὸς καιρὸν*);

speaks of the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord (καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου - Ac. 3: 20).²⁶ God has determined the allotted periods (καιρούς) of the nations' habitation (Ac. 17: 26). The expression τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου (Lk. 17: 44) is based on Luke's theology as elsewhere divine visitation for salvation is linked with God (cf. Lk. 1: 68; 7: 16). Καιρός is used in connection with the fulfilment of prophecy. What the angel of the Lord spoke to Zechariah will be 'fulfilled in their time' (πληρωθήσονται εἰς τὸν καιρὸν αὐτῶν) (Lk. 1: 20). The verb πληρῶ can be used of a 'specified or divinely predestined time', the καιρός.²⁷ The same verb is used in connection with the Scriptures.²⁸ The use of καιρός here underlies God's determination.²⁹ Thus the terms καιρός and χρόνος refer basically to God's time when God's purpose is carried out.³⁰ In this sense, the times and seasons of God refer to the content, namely, fulfilment of God's purposes. In this sense, they also attest divine Lordship since God has fixed them.

2.2.2 Incomprehension of God's times

Yet there is a human dimension to this theological understanding of the mission to the end of the world. The mission is not only bound to God who has fixed times and seasons in his own authority but there also is a human dimension. It is not for the disciples to *know* God's time.³¹ It is characteristic of Luke that he stresses the lack of human understanding when the significant word δεῖ ('divine must')³², the word which illustrates the plan of God more

Lk. 12: 42 (ἐν καιρῷ); Lk. 13: 1 (ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ καιρῷ); Lk. 18: 30 (ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ); Lk. 21: 36 (ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ); Ac. 19: 23 (κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον).

²⁶ Here 'the Lord' means 'God' (Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 208).

²⁷ C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, London: SCM, 1990, p. 152.

²⁸ J. Nolland, *Luke 1-9: 20*, Dallas: Word Books, 1989, p. 33.

²⁹ J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, London: Doubleday, 1981, p. 328.

³⁰ Luke replaces reference to fulfilment of prophecy in Mt (26: 56) and Mk (14: 49) regarding the arrest of Jesus with the time reference, 'But this is your hour (ἡ ὥρα), and the power (ἡ ἐξουσία) of darkness' (Lk. 22: 53). Although 'this hour' stands in relation to the authority of God's adversaries (TDNT, IX, p. 678.), it is part of the designated purpose of God (J. Nolland, *Luke 18: 35-24: 53*, Dallas: Word Books, 1993, p. 1089).

³¹ C. H. Cosgrove ['The Divine ΔΕΙ in Luke-Acts', *NT*, XXVI, 2 (1984), p. 171] points out that the human part in relation to the plan and the foreknowledge of God is not often recognised by scholars.

³² Conzelmann (*Theology*, p. 139) understands the word δεῖ implying

powerfully than any other single word in Luke-Acts, is used particularly in connection with the prediction of the passion of Jesus (9: 21, 45; 18: 31-34; 24: 6).³³ What is a double statement in Mk. 9: 32 concerning the passion is turned into a four-fold stressing of the incomprehension of the disciples (Lk. 9: 45).³⁴ Luke adds that God's plan with Jesus was concealed from the disciples (παρακεκαλυμμένον ἀπ' αὐτῶν) so that they should not perceive it (ἵνα μὴ αἰσθωνται). The prediction in Lk. 18: 31-34 has a three-fold statement about the inability of the disciples to understand the divine plan for Jesus. Luke says that the disciples understood none of these things (οὐδὲν συνῆκαν); the saying was hid from them (κεκρυμμένον ἀπ' αὐτῶν), and they did not grasp what was said (οὐκ ἐγίνωσκον τὰ λεγόμενα) (Lk. 18: 34).

The disciples' incomprehension is seen in connection with the fulfilment of the prophecy. Luke depicts in the lives of the disciples the gradual realisation of the fulfilment of the OT prophecy concerning the passion that everything that is written of the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished (Lk. 24: 13-35).³⁵ Jesus opened their minds to understand the scriptures so that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached to all the nations (Lk. 24: 45-47). Incomprehension of the fulfilment of God's purpose and gradual understanding of it are aspects of discipleship, a peculiar feature in Luke-Acts. Luke is not implying that the disciples have nothing to do with God's plan. Conzelmann is right when he says that the disciples receive assurance not knowledge.³⁶ The disciples do not possess the knowledge of the times because they are not the ones who determined them. Yet they receive divine assurance that they will be witnesses. 'Because God alone ordains, the course of events is hidden from us, but on the other hand for the very same reason we can be certain that the plan will be carried through'.³⁷ The divine appointment of the

something decreed by God.

³³ Cosgrove, 'The Divine ΔΕΙ in Luke-Acts', p. 171.

³⁴ Evans, *Luke*, p. 426.

³⁵ Luke writes τελεσθήσεται πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα διὰ τῶν προφητῶν for Mark's τὰ μέλλοντα αὐτῷ (Mk. 10: 32).

³⁶ Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 152.

³⁷ Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 152.

times at which God's works become manifest and the human incomprehension of those times are themes interwoven in Luke's concept of the world-wide mission.

2.3 Ac. 10: 3-32; 44-48

The time of God has arrived and God has acted. This is the theme which runs through the account of the conversion of Cornelius and his household (ch. 10). A corollary theme, of course, is that Peter does not comprehend the purpose of God but comes to a firm recognition after the event had actually occurred. The believers are amazed that the Holy Spirit has been poured even on the Gentiles (v. 45).

The beginning for mission to the Gentiles is made when Peter and Cornelius are praying to God.³⁸ The important thing to note here is that Luke makes reference to time. About the ninth hour of the day, Cornelius saw a vision (10: 3). Peter went up to the housetop to pray about the sixth hour (10: 9). Cornelius' time of prayer which is about three in the afternoon during which time the daily afternoon sacrifices were offered in the temple.³⁹ Peter's prayer at the sixth hour was not a fixed time of prayer.⁴⁰ Perhaps Peter was having his morning prayer late or the afternoon prayer earlier than usual.⁴¹ Cadbury thinks that these references to 'hours' simply show that the early Christians lived in a society without clocks and watches and so one had to rely on time reckoning no more specific than morning, noon and afternoon together with dawn and sunset.⁴² However, reference to the time is not simply to say at what time Cornelius and Peter prayed. Haenchen sees the purpose of the time reference in the case of Cornelius as to show that the vision ($\phi\alpha\nu\epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma$) takes place in broad daylight.⁴³ Barrett argues that it is pointless to fit the time references to Jewish,

³⁸ For an explanation on the Jewish custom of praying three times a day, see J. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, London: SCM, 1967, pp. 66-81.

³⁹ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 198; Jeremias, *Prayers*, p. 69.

⁴⁰ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 347.

⁴¹ J. Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981, p. 169.

⁴² 'Some Lukan Expressions of Time', *JBL*, 82 (1963), p. 278.

⁴³ *Acts*, p. 346.

Greek or Roman habits of prayer and eating and in the case of Peter, Luke has no further interest than providing a psychological framework by stating that Peter was hungry.⁴⁴

First, it is clear that God's guidance to Cornelius and Peter come through prayer. Luke has shown in Acts that religious observances like prayer (Ac. 12: 5, 12), fasting (Ac. 13: 2-3) and worship (Ac. 3: 1ff; 22: 17-18) are occasions when extraordinary events take place which bring changes in the progress of the mission. In the light of this, Luke is not providing a mere chronological framework for the incident since the narrative shows that other motives prompted him as well. If Cornelius prayed constantly, why has that particular moment been cited as significant by Luke? In the same way, the time chosen for Peter's vision is the next day about the sixth hour. This brings us to another observation that Luke has narrated the incident in an appealing way working out the timing of Peter's prayer when Cornelius' men were coming near the city (10: 9).⁴⁵ Luke also times the arrival of the men when the vision was just over and Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what it might mean (10: 17).⁴⁶ The timing of the arrival was not worked out by Cornelius (cf. v. 20) when he sent his men nor is it mere coincidence. These references to time firmly indicate that the first step towards solving Peter's confusion and disclosing the meaning of the vision has arrived. Calvin comments that it is clear that the whole affair was controlled by the wonderful plan of God.⁴⁷

Luke introduces the scene of the arrival of Cornelius' men with *ἰδοῦ* (v. 17) which is found mostly in divine disclosures to men (Lk. 1: 20, 31, 36; Ac. 10: 30). It indicates that the readers ought not to look at it as an ordinary event. The word *ἰδοῦ* has been used to denote divine action behind the time in the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Ac. 5: 9). What seems to be an ordinary time interval of about three hours after the death of Ananias becomes the time of divine judgement and immediate execution for Sapphira (Ac. 5:

⁴⁴ Acts, I, p. 504.

⁴⁵ Note, the present participles *ὀδοιπορούντων* and *ἐγγιζόντων*.

⁴⁶ The distance between the places where Peter and Cornelius lived was about 30 miles.

⁴⁷ Quoted by Barrett, Acts, I, p. 504; cf. Roloff, *ApG*, p. 170.

7).⁴⁸ Behold the feet of those who buried Ananias are at the door and they will carry her out (Ac. 5: 9). Luke describes the coincidence between her denial and the arrival of men in a vivid manner in order to show that the point of time is caused by God. They are not times calculated merely in terms of hours and days, but are signs to show that the times are determined by God and are God's times, for either salvation or judgement.

In the conversation between Peter and Cornelius the first note of reference is time. Cornelius says, 'Four days ago about this hour I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house' (v. 30). Cornelius is not explaining to Peter about the times of prayer which he had observed four days previously but tells him the special significance of the time of prayer. In the construction of the initial event of the conversion of Cornelius Luke has been guided by the theological conviction that God has fixed these times. Times of the visions and the meeting between Cornelius' messengers and Peter point out that God's times have arrived and God's actions in the mission to the Gentiles are discerned by the disciples. This is why mission is depicted as the occasion of joy and surprise as a result of the new recognition of God.

God is not outside time. His times are part of the chronology which is affected by it. The ordinary hour and day like the time of prayer are defined by Luke from the standpoint of God's moments for his action. What was the customary time of duty for a priest in the temple to burn incense becomes a significant time not only in Zechariah's life as the lot fell to him for priestly service on that day, but also God's whole plan of salvation. The disclosure of God's plan takes place at the hour of incense (τῆ ὥρᾳ) (Lk. 1: 10) and by the time (αἱ ἡμέραι) his service came to an end God's time of fulfilment of his plan was announced in a dramatic fashion. Zechariah will be unable to speak until the time of fulfilment (πληρωθήσονται εἰς τὸν καιρὸν αὐτῶν). Such a time arrives on the child's day of circumcision (Lk. 1: 59) which is a customary event in his life.

⁴⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 239.

The time (αἱ ἡμέραι) for Mary to be delivered is the σήμερον of salvation (Lk. 2: 6, 11). The time (αἱ ἡμέραι) for purification according to the Law was an important time in the lives of Simeon and Anna. Simeon was inspired by the Holy Spirit to go to the temple at the right time when the parents brought the child Jesus to the temple (Lk. 2: 27).⁴⁹ The time has come when Simeon has seen the consolation of Israel and now (νῦν) he is ready to depart from the world (Lk. 2: 29; cf. v. 26).⁵⁰ For a long number of years, Anna worshipped at the temple with fasting and prayer night and day and she came up at that very hour (αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ) and gave thanks to God (Lk. 1: 38). Jesus went to the synagogue as was his custom on the Sabbath day (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων) (Lk. 4: 16). That day not only is another day of worship but the 'to-day' (σήμερον) of the fulfilment of the scripture (Lk. 4: 21).⁵¹ A Sabbath day became a memorable event in the life of a woman who was bound by Satan for eighteen years (Lk. 13: 16-17). All these Lukan pericopes show that Luke uses ordinary and customary times to show that they are important, special and divinely appointed time indicating the realisation of God's purpose.

In the vision, God's message to Peter, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common' was spoken three times. Here ἐπὶ τρίς plays the role of confirmation of divine intention (cf. I Sam. 3: 2-8; John 20: 15-17). The message here probably alludes to men as well as to rules about eating with the Gentiles.⁵² In other words, 'the vision shows that the abolition of the taboo over food in effect means the abolition of restrictions between Gentiles and Jews'.⁵³ Peter's statement confirms this. God has shown him that he should not call any *man* common or unclean (10: 28). This again points to a decisive change in attitude to other men effected by the prayer of the sixth hour. Barrett asks whether the aorist ἐκαθάρισεν refers to a point in time and if so, at what point or whether it is

⁴⁹ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 427.

⁵⁰ For an explanation on the meaning of the word 'depart' see Evans, *Luke*, p. 216. Νῦν stands first in the sentence for emphasis.

⁵¹ The emphasis falls on σήμερον as it is placed first in the statement.

⁵² Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 112.

⁵³ G. Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, London: SCM, 1989, p. 127.

constative.⁵⁴ First, ἐκαθάρισεν does not refer to a change in the attitude of God himself but represents God's eternal will.⁵⁵ God's act of cleansing the Gentiles had already occurred in the time of the prophet Elisha when Naaman the Syrian was cleansed (ἐκαθαρίσθη) (Lk. 4: 27).⁵⁶ Such an act of God in the days of Elisha foreshadows the time when God's cleansing is now occurring in the days of the mission of the Church.

Another important dimension in the whole story is the human incomprehension which heightens the effect of the divine action and thereby makes plain to the readers that the mission has been initiated by God who has fixed the times. God inaugurated the mission and made it happen. It is mission by God. Cornelius did not know the meaning of the vision but sent men to Joppa as he was commanded (v. 8). Peter was confused as to the meaning of the vision but the Holy Spirit bade him to go without hesitation with the men (v. 20). Cornelius and Peter could only relate to each other their own personal side of their experiences (vv. 25-33). It is only after the outpouring of the Spirit that the real meaning of the event becomes clear. Peter's companions are astonished. New understanding is reached. The Holy Spirit has been poured out even on the Gentiles (v. 45).⁵⁷ This leads to baptism and Peter's accepting the invitation to stay with the household of Cornelius. This means that Peter regarded them as 'clean'.⁵⁸

There are two themes intertwined in Luke's description of the Gentile mission. i) The references to time in the Cornelius episode are not to provide a chronological framework to the events but to emphasise the divine action behind the incidents. Such divine actions make the times special and full of significance for the people who participate in that time process and also show that the times indicate the carrying out of the plan of God. The overall effect the readers receive by reading the Cornelius episode is that

⁵⁴ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 509.

⁵⁵ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 509.

⁵⁶ The explicit references to God in the story of Naaman in the OT (II Kings 5: 1-14) is indicated by the divine passive in Lk. 4: 27.

⁵⁷ The word ἐκχύεσθαι recalls the use of ἐκχεῖν in Ac. 2: 17, 18, 33.

⁵⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 354.

of a gradual unfolding of the theme, 'times and seasons are fixed by God'. The occurrences give full scope to the theme of human lack of understanding because times and seasons are not fixed by them. They do not know the time but they are part of it. Gradually, the events lead them to a fuller realisation of God's plan. This explains the joy and the astonishment over the acts of God who has cleansed the Gentiles and poured the Holy Spirit on them.

2.4 Ac. 11: 1-18

The following section of 11: 1-18 is an abbreviation of the story told in 10: 1-48 but does not include every aspect of it.⁵⁹ The references to times of prayer which are prominent in 10: 1-48 are missing. However, Luke mentions the voice speaking to Peter three times (ἐπὶ τρίς) as in 10: 16 and indicates the arrival of the men from Cornelius as happening 'at the very moment' (καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐξαυτῆς), that is, at the conclusion of the vision (cf. 10: 17). But Luke, in ch. 11, has added a time reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He has Peter explain, 'As I began to speak the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ)' (11: 15). The spatial reference to the place where the disciples were to be filled by the Spirit (cf. Lk. 24: 49) is replaced by a temporal one. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is conceived in terms of origin in time.⁶⁰ The lesson that Luke wishes to drive home is that God who gave them the Spirit in the beginning has acted again when Peter spoke to the Gentiles. The outpouring of the Spirit is understood in terms of time. Peter here speaks as one who has understood the plan of God which once was fulfilled in the life of the community in Jerusalem.

Peter has fully understood the significance of God's time not only in the life of the early Christian community but also in the formation of the new community. Peter feels unable to withstand God because God worked in the same way in the beginning when the Christians in Jerusalem believed in the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 17). Peter is successful in imparting this knowledge to his hearers.

⁵⁹ Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 355.

⁶⁰ Conzelmann (*Theology*, p. 211, n. 1) understands the idea behind the ἀρχή in the sense of the beginning of the Church.

They are silenced. The fuller knowledge that mission to the Gentiles is mission by God has now been attained and they glorified God saying, 'Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life' (v. 18). It is God's time fixed in his authority, and the disciples from whom it is hidden are nevertheless the instruments to realise God's purpose in time.

2.5 Ac. 13: 46-48; 14: 27; 18: 6

The time element is also traceable in the subsequent passages. In Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas declare that it was necessary that the word of God be first (πρῶτον) spoken to the Jews. The word πρῶτον is significant here as without the article the word mostly designates time.⁶¹ The reason is made plain in the speech in which Luke has Paul say that the good news about the fulfilment of what was promised to the fathers is preached to them (13: 32). The word of God was first spoken to them and since they thrust it aside, Paul and Barnabas obey the commandment of God to be the light-bearers to the uttermost parts of the earth.⁶² The words of Paul and Barnabas ἰδοὺ στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη (v. 46) mark a decisive and radical turning-point in the Gentile mission.⁶³

Though the statement here is not expressed in terms of time, in a similar context in 18: 6 it reads, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορεύσομαι. The plural τὰ νῦν is used in Acts to signify time which in turn denotes an understanding of new divine action (cf. Ac. 4: 29; 5: 38; 17: 30; 20: 32; 27: 22).⁶⁴ The terms πρῶτον and ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν do not refer to the ordinary times as both in Antioch and in Corinth the ordinary time gap between the Jewish and the Gentile mission must have been very short and not all that significant.⁶⁵ Moreover, Paul in his later ministry does not stop preaching to the Jews (14: 1; 18: 19). Hence, both the terms must refer to God's time in which

⁶¹ BAF, § 256.

⁶² F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1965, pp. 282ff.

⁶³ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 656.

⁶⁴ See BDF, § 160. See further, ch. VII, pp. 171-173.

⁶⁵ In Antioch, the transition happens almost in a week's time (13: 42) and in Corinth probably after ministering for few weeks in the synagogue (18: 4).

the accomplishment of God's plan is shown.

In Antioch, those who were ordained (ἦσαν τεταγμένοι) for eternal life believed. The passive τεταγμένοι implies an action in the past by God.⁶⁶ God has long ago appointed the turning of the Gentiles and the realisation of that fact is made known in a positive manner by prophecy (13: 47) and by ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν (18: 6). It is not only the fact that the Gentiles were fore-ordained which led to their faith but God himself has opened the door of faith for them (14: 27). It means that God's time is already here and Gentiles who believe enter into a relationship with God.⁶⁷

2.6 Ac. 15: 1-18

According to Luke's depiction of the Apostolic council, Peter, Paul and Barnabas and James make specific references to God in connection with the Gentile mission. The time aspect in the theology of God receives a renewed emphasis and the conviction that God willed and is guiding the Gentile mission has grown stronger. The report of Paul and Barnabas does not make any time reference but underlines the full knowledge of the reality of what God is doing among the Gentiles. The catch-phrases are ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός (vv. 4, 12; 13: 27)⁶⁸ and σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα (v. 12). The latter is often associated with the work of God elsewhere in Acts (2: 43; 3: 13ff.; 4: 29ff.; 5: 12).⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 658; Bruce, *Acts*, p. 283, n. 72. The passive τάσσομαι is used in connection with 'authority' (Lk. 7: 8). Note also προστάσσω (Ac. 17: 26).

⁶⁷ Gentiles also have access to God himself (Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 437, n. 3).

⁶⁸ Squires, *Plan of God*, p. 61.

⁶⁹ The word τέρας does not occur alone in the NT but together with the word σημεῖον it is one of Luke's favourite expressions. In Acts, Luke uses both phrases σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα (4: 30; 5: 12; 14: 3; 15: 12) and τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα (2: 19, 22, 43; 6: 8; 7: 36). Twice the phrases occur in 'passive' constructions (Ac. 2: 43; 5: 12) denoting the action of God and once Stephen is the subject but the additional phrase πλήρης χάριτος καὶ δυνάμεως implies divine action (Ac. 6: 8). God as the subject can clearly be seen in other references (Ac. 14: 3; 15: 12). K. H. Rengstorff (*TDNT*, VII, p. 125) seeks to maintain a theological distinction between the two by arguing that in σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα the accent is on what God is doing at present and in the phrase τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα the emphasis is on what God can do at present. But there is very little difference between these distinctions.

Peter declares, 'you know that in the early days (ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων), God has made a choice among you that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of God and believe' (v. 7). The reference to time is made 'in order to stress the fact that the decision came from God some time ago and was made known to the first of the disciples'.⁷⁰ It expresses the conviction that God ordained the Gentile mission from the earliest days.⁷¹ That God fixed the time of the Gentile mission long ago is the theological message to the council. What happened in past time expresses God's plan for the mission.

Similar conviction may be seen in the words of James. For him, Simeon has related how God first (πρῶτον) visited the Gentiles. The word ἐπεσκέψατο means 'to make provisions for' (cf. Lk. 1: 68, 78; 7: 16) especially of 'the providential action of God for his people'.⁷² God's initiative is described in terms of time.⁷³ Hence the call of the Gentiles signifies God's time. The action of God is further confirmed by the prophetic words of Amos (9: 11ff).⁷⁴ God is the subject of ἀναστρέψω (v. 16), ἀνοικοδομήσω (v. 16a, 16b), ἀνορθώσω (v. 16b), ἐπικέκληται (v. 17b), λέγει (v. 17c), γνωστά (v. 18).⁷⁵ However, the clause γνωστά ἀπ' αἰῶνος is not part of the quotation from Amos.⁷⁶ The Lukan addition is probably in line with ἀπ' ἀρχῆς in 15: 7.⁷⁷ Given the context in which the time reference occurs, it echoes, καθὼς ἐλάλησεν διὰ στόματος τῶν ἁγίων ἀπ' αἰῶνος προφητῶν αὐτοῦ (Lk. 1: 70), ἃ προκατήγγειλεν διὰ στόματος πάντων τῶν προφητῶν (Ac. 3: 18) and πάντων ὧν ἐλάλησεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ στόματος τῶν ἁγίων ἀπ' αἰῶνος αὐτοῦ προφητῶν (Ac. 3: 21).⁷⁸ In Luke's thinking, the prophecies are

⁷⁰ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 115.

⁷¹ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 445; Roloff, *Apg*, p. 230.

⁷² Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 175.

⁷³ 'Was damals geschehen ist, war Gottes Initiative (πρῶτον)': O. Bauernfeind, *Kommentar und Studien zur Apostelgeschichte*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1980, p. 191; see n. 61.

⁷⁴ Some commentators take the reference to the re-erection of the dwelling of David etc. as an explanation of the story of Jesus culminating in resurrection which was a fulfilment of the promise made to David (Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 448; R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, pt. II, Benziger Verlag, 1986, p. 80).

⁷⁵ Cf. Squires, *Plan of God*, p. 149, n. 159.

⁷⁶ Schneider (*Apg*, II, p. 182) thinks that it was taken from Is. 45: 21ff.

⁷⁷ Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 182, n. 82.

⁷⁸ The phrase ἀπ' αἰῶνος is found in the NT only in Luke-Acts (Nolland, *Luke 1*

basically what God himself has spoken in the past.⁷⁹ What God has spoken by the prophets belongs not to a merely chronological past but to God's time in the past in which God has spoken. The prophetic words which God has made known from of old agree with the time of God's visiting the nations to call out a people for his name. The Gentile mission belongs to the time line of past and present established by God.

2.7 Ac. 22: 12-21

The account of Paul's conversion in Ac. 22: 12-21 emphasises his call to be an apostle to the Gentiles (v. 21). Luke describes the divine urgency for Paul to bear witness to all men (v. 15). Paul was not told of God's plan at the time of his vision except for an assurance that what has been appointed (τέτακται) for him (22: 10; cf. Ac. 13: 47) to do will be made known to him. God's plan for Paul and the nature of the task that awaits him are conveyed to him by Ananias. God has appointed (προεχειρίσατο) Paul to know his will and hence he is urged by the divine voice (σπεύσον καὶ ἔξελθε ἐν τάχει) (22: 18). Paul's mission to the Gentiles is part of God's fore-ordained plan.⁸⁰

2.8 Ac. 28: 28

The final note in Acts emphasises knowledge concerning the universal mission and the continual progress of the Gentile mission. 'Let it be known to you (γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν) that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles (αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀκούσονται)'. This echoes Luke's understanding of the mission that 'all flesh shall see the salvation of God' (Lk. 3: 6).⁸¹ The actual realisation of it will continue to happen in the future.

- 9: 20, p. 87).

⁷⁹ Luke adds λέγει ὁ θεός to the prophetic words of Joel (Ac. 2: 17).

⁸⁰ The προ-compounds and the related verbs describe the intentions of God (Squires, *Plan of God*, p. 2, n. 9).

⁸¹ Roloff, *Apog*, p. 375.

2.9 CONCLUSION

God's plan for the mission to the Gentiles is conceived in terms of time, past, present and future. The description of the Gentile mission is an adumbration of God's times. The God who inaugurated and guided the Gentile mission is the God who has fixed the times and seasons. The early Church did not know God's times but was given assurance that they shall be witnesses. The divine plan was realised by the Church and the conviction that God willed the Gentile mission grew stronger as the commission was carried out. Luke tells his readers that God has allotted the times and, therefore, those times express God's actions in mission to the Gentiles.

The theology of God which acknowledges his Lordship over time is integrated into the commission of the mission to the end of the earth. By establishing this particular connection Luke imposes a pattern on the presentation of the Gentile mission. If the progress of the mission from Jerusalem to the end of the earth, for Luke, prescribes the structure and the contents of Acts, an understanding of God ordaining the times and of his divine Lordship over times underlie that description. The knowledge that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles is paramount for the continuation of the mission to the ends of the earth. Mission, in this sense, is mission by God.

PART II

MISSION ABOUT GOD

INTRODUCTION: *Pentecost and the Gentile Mission*

In part I we noted that Luke understands mission as mission by God. The first indication of this was seen in Ac. 1: 5-8. In our analysis of the passages which illustrated God as inaugurating and executing the mission to the Gentiles, we identified a thematic strand associated with the theology of 'God who acts'. Luke offers a theological understanding of time by which he explains the origin and the progress of the mission by God.

In part II we look into another important aspect of Luke's description of the mission which is the major concern of the present study. For Luke, mission is also *about* God. God is the subject matter of the preaching. An indication for this aspect of mission can also be seen in the opening chapters of Acts and particularly in Luke's interpretation of the event on the day of Pentecost (2: 5-13). In Ac. 1: 8, the disciples are given assurance that they shall be witnesses. What happens when they become witnesses by the power of the Holy Spirit? The answer is provided in the Pentecost narrative.

In Ac. 2: 1-13, Dibelius observes that what was really the account of the ecstatic speaking in tongues becomes, 'by means of the enumeration of the races to which the hearers belong, *a prototype of the mission to the world*'.¹ The story of Pentecost looks forward to the proclamation of the gospel to all the peoples (cf. Lk. 24: 47).² The Holy Spirit is the source of the new phenomenon of speaking in other languages as the Spirit also gives them 'utterance' (καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐδίδου ἀποφθέγγεσθαι αὐτοῖς). The word ἀποφθέγγεσθαι in the LXX is used of seers and soothsayers.³ It conveys 'the notion of a kind of prophetic wisdom utterance',⁴ prophetic or inspired speech (Mic. 5: 12; Zach. 10: 2; Ez. 13: 9, 19; I Chr. 25: 1).⁵ In his description of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit

¹ *Studies*, p. 106. Italics mine.

² G. W. H. Lampe, *God as Spirit*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1977, p. 68.

³ *BC*, IV, p.18.

⁴ G. H. Giblin, 'Complementarity of Symbolic Event and Discourse in Acts 2, 1-40', *SE*, VI (1973), p. 191.

⁵ L. O'Reilly, *Word and Sign in the Acts of the Apostles*, Roma: Editrice

on the day of Pentecost, Luke emphasises the role of prophecy in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit.⁶ For in addition to reference to prophecy in v. 17b (προφητεύουσιν), Luke adds καὶ προφητεύουσιν to v. 18 though it was not part of the text from Joel 3.⁷

The utterance of a prophetic nature can be equated with the task of the Church, both in defending and proclaiming the Word. Elsewhere in Acts, the word ἀποθέγγεσθαι is used for an intelligible speech relating to the proclamation of the gospel (2:14; cf. 26:25).⁸ The experience of being filled with the Spirit has been associated with *speaking* the word of God with boldness (4:31; cf. 4:8; 6:5, 10). The Spirit-filled utterance from the disciples to the nations is about the 'mighty acts of God' (μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ). Luke has evidently abbreviated the contents of the prophetic utterance in this key phrase. The speakers were telling forth the *great deeds of God*.⁹ The mighty works of God are *heard* by the nations but there were some who mocked and said, 'They were filled with new wine' (v. 13).

The sending of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, touches on the fundamental aspect of God which underlies Luke's formulation of the mission preaching to the Gentiles. That God is also the content of the mission is signalled early on in the Pentecost narrative. God who does mighty acts is also the content of the mission. If the mighty deeds of God are proclaimed to the Gentiles, it means that the Gentiles' notions about god and gods

Pontificia Universit  Gregoriana, 1987, pp. 61ff.

⁶ Lampe, *God as Spirit*, p. 65: 'To Luke the Spirit means primarily the Spirit of prophecy'.

⁷ D omits καὶ προφητεύουσιν. B. Metzger (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London: United Bible Societies, 1971, p. 297ff.) comments in favour of retaining the clause as it is widely attested.

⁸ ἀποθέγγεσθαι : 'to speak in a solemn or inspired way, but not ecstatic speech' (Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 168, n. 3).

⁹ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 124. Italics his. In the LXX, The word μεγαλεῖα occurs in the context of proclaiming the mighty acts of God to the nations of the world. In the book of Psalms itself, group of words τὰ μεγαλεῖα (Ps. 70/71: 19), τὰ θαυμάσια (95/96: 3; 104/105: 2; 106/107: 8,15;), τὰ ἔργα (104/105: 2; 106/107: 22) describe the mighty works of God. Almost all these references are related to proclaiming God first and foremost as the Creator and that his works of creation reveal his mighty works. God is ἐμεγαλύνθη σφόδρα (Ps. 103/104: 1) and his acts are ἐμεγαλύνθη τὰ ἔργα (Ps. 103/104: 24).

can no longer have value. Thus the Pentecost event foreshadows the proclamation to the nations indicating not only the essence of the message which the Gentiles are going to hear but also implying that the conceptions of god/goddess/gods held by the Gentiles will be challenged by the gospel about God and his mighty acts.

In the following chapters from III to VIII we shall be analysing a series of narratives to see how the mighty acts of God are declared to the Gentiles and how the false notions concerning God among the non-Jews are challenged.

III

SAMARIA (8: 4-25): POWER OF GOD, GREAT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The mission outside Jerusalem begins from Ac. 8: 4. The Hellenists who were scattered abroad (διασπαρέντες) went about preaching the word.¹ The first account of mission is the mission by Philip in Samaria which was later followed up by Peter and John. We shall analyse the mission account in Ac. 8: 4-25 to establish how the proclamation as well as the mission context in Samaria reveal Luke's theological interests. We ask, what is the misconception of God in Samaria according to Luke and how does the kerygma in challenging that misconception express his theology of God?

The historical relationship between Jews and Samaritans need not concern us here.² Unlike John in his gospel, Luke does not seem to be concerned in the present account with the ethnic and the religious issues which divided Jews and Samaritans.³ Luke generally regards the Samaritans as standing outside the normal framework of Jewish life.⁴ Luke portrays a Samaritan as ἀλλογένης (alien, outsider) as distinct from the Jews⁵ and Samaria as an

¹ The phrase 'proclaim the word' is common in Acts (Ac. 4: 4, 29, 31; 6: 2, 7; 8: 14, 25; 10: 44; 11: 1; 12: 24; 13: 5, 7, 44, 48; 14: 25; 15: 7, 36; 16: 32; 17: 13; 18: 11; 19: 10, 20.).

² For historical relationship between Jews and Samaritans, see: R. J. Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews: The Origin of Samaritanism Reconsidered*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, Philadelphia: Fortress, pp. 352-358; idem., 'Σαμάρεια, Σαμαρίτης, Σαμαρίτις', *TDNT*, VII, pp. 88-94; J. D. Purvis, 'Samaritans', *IDBSupp*, pp. 776-777; F. M. Cross, 'Aspects of Samaritan and Jewish History in Late Persian and Hellenistic Times', *HTR*, 59 (1966), pp. 201-211.

³ R. Bultmann (*The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, ET, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971, p. 179, n. 2) notes that Ac. 8: 5ff. raises a different problem altogether and not the question of the relation between the Jews and the Samaritans as is highlighted in Jn. 4.

⁴ C. K. Barrett, 'Light on the Holy Spirit from Simon Magus (Acts 8, 4-25)', *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, Leuven University, 1979, p. 282; cf. Lk. 9: 51ff.; 10: 17; 17: 18.

⁵ J. Bowman, *The Samaritan Problem: Studies in the Relationship of Samaritanism, Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ET, Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1975, p. 69; Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 69.

identifiable geographical unit over against Judea.⁶ What is important here is that Luke has a distinct place for Samaria in the plan of mission in Acts laid down in 1: 8. From Luke's point of view, the Samaritan mission marks the first movement of the Church outside Jewish Palestine. Mission to Samaria represents, therefore, an essential part of the non-Jewish world.⁷

3.2 MISSION BY PHILIP (vv. 4-13)

Luke begins the mission narrative with Philip preaching in (τὴν) πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας (8: 4, 9).⁸ It is difficult to determine whether Luke was primarily thinking of the hellenised Samaritans in Samaria or the Samaritans in the sense of the religious community which shared some common elements with Judaism.⁹ Throughout the mission narrative Luke means the residents in Samaria in general.¹⁰ Later Luke remarks that Samaria received the word of God (8: 14) without making distinction between different communities. Luke's reference to τὸ ἔθνος Σαμαρείας (Ac. 8: 9) as being amazed by the magic of Simon might not exclude the Samaritans in the religious sense. It is therefore likely that Luke probably meant a Samaritan population with mixed religious ideas.¹¹

Several studies have maintained a tradition or traditions about Simon Magus as the main component of the Samaritan mission

⁶ Cf. Ac. 9: 31; 15: 3. Samaria has its own identity as τὸ ἔθνος Σαμαρείας (Ac. 8: 9) just as 'the nation' of the Jews (Ac. 24: 2, 10, 17; 26: 4).

⁷ Bowman, *Samaritan Problem*, p. 70; also, O. Cullmann, *The Early Church*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins, London: SCM, 1956, p. 186.

⁸ If 'the city' refers to Sebaste, the old city of Samaria, then a hellenised audience is in view because the city was thoroughly hellenised by Herod the Great (E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. II, rev. ed. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979, pp. 16-20, 160-164). If Shechem, the headquarters of the Samaritans, is meant then Samaritans as the religious community were probably the audience (Haenchen, *Acts*, pp. 306-307). If we omit the definite article as some mss do, then 'a city of Samaria', which might refer to Gitta, the birthplace of Simon (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 89).

⁹ Most commentators see the difficulty (e. g., G. Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, pt. I, Freiburg: Herder, 1980, pp. 483ff.)

¹⁰ Note: αὐτοῖς, v. 5; οἱ ὄχλοι, v. 6 and general references in vv. 10, 12.

¹¹ There is no consistent ethnic distinction between Σαμαρείτης and Σαμαρεὺς (see Hemer, *Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, pp. 225-226).

narrative.¹² Some studies investigating a gnostic background to the NT examine the relationship between Simon of Acts and traditions about him in second century and third century writings.¹³ Such concerns fall outside the scope of our investigation. Our concern is to look afresh as to how Luke has understood Simon and equally importantly, how the kerygma counteracted the image projected through Simon.

3.2.1 THE KERYGMATIC CONTEXT

3.2.1.1 *Simon Magus in Acts*

With regard to Simon in Acts, it has been claimed that Simon, in the eyes of Luke, was a gentile wonderworker,¹⁴ a sorcerer,¹⁵ a demonic wizard,¹⁶ a Grand Vizier of the Lord of Heavens,¹⁷ a false prophet,¹⁸ or a μάγος who had money-making motives.¹⁹ Accordingly, the mission of Philip was seen as an antithesis to

¹² Schneider, *Apg*, I, p. 484; R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, pt. I, Benziger Verlag, 1986, p. 272; Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 17; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 308; Barrett, 'Light on the Holy Spirit', p. 292.

¹³ E. g., some studies show disappointment that Luke's portrayal of Simon does not provide sufficient details to testify to the image of Simon as gnostic. The description in Acts is taken as playing down Simon's role and significance and hardly doing any justice to the importance of Simon; e. g., K. Rudolph, *Gnosis the Nature and History of an Ancient Religion*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983, p. 294; also Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 307) who argues that Luke has trimmed down the Simonian Gnosis idea of Simon as the supreme deity; also, Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, pp. 100ff.; idem, 'The Acts of the Apostles and the Beginnings of Simonian Gnosis', *NTS*, 33 (1987), pp. 420-426. There is a problem of definition of Gnosticism, when it came to express itself fully, how much of gnostic ideas were current in the NT period and whether the NT writers were influenced by it or they rejected it. R. McL. Wilson (*Gnosis and the New Testament*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968, pp. 48, 140) argues that Simon is not gnostic in the sense of the later developed Gnosticism. He ('Simon and Gnostic Origins', *Les Actes des Apôtres*, pp. 485-491) maintains that there is a gap still to be bridged between Simon of Acts and Simon of the heresiologists. C. K. Barrett (*Luke the Historian in Recent Study*, London: Epworth, 1961, p. 62) maintains that it may be that Luke pillories gnostic leaders in the person of Simon Magus.

¹⁴ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 134.

¹⁵ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 17.

¹⁶ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 308.

¹⁷ J. de Zwaan, 'The Greek of Acts', *BC*, II, p. 58.

¹⁸ R. B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, London: Methuen & Co., 1953, p. 112.

¹⁹ Barrett, 'Light on the Holy Spirit', p. 291.

these images of Simon.²⁰ In order to appreciate fully the nature of the problem in Samaria and the role of the kerygma in encountering that problem, we need first to note the comparison and the contrast shown by Luke's portraits of Philip, Simon and the people as in the text. In order to do this, we outline the narrative in the following manner.²¹

Φίλιππος δὲ κατελθὼν εἰς τὴν πόλιν
τῆς Σαμαρείας (v. 5a)

Ἄνῆρ δέ τις ὀνόματι Σίμων
προϋπήρχεν ἐν τῇ πόλει
(v. 9)

ἐκήρυσσεν αὐτοῖς τὸν Χριστόν (v. 5b)

λέγων εἶναί τινα ἑαυτὸν
μέγαν (v. 9c)

πολλοὶ γὰρ τῶν ἐχόντων πνεύματα
ἀκάθαρτα...ἐξήρχοντο, πολλοὶ δὲ
παραλελυμένοι καὶ χωλοὶ ἐθεραπεύθησαν
(v. 7)

μαγεύων (v. 9)

προσείχον δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι τοῖς λεγομένοις
ὑπὸ Φιλίππου ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῷ
ἀκούειν αὐτοῦ καὶ βλέπειν τὰ σημεῖα
ἃ ἐποίει (v. 6)

ὧ̄ προσείχον...λέγοντες, Οὗτός
ἐστὶν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ
ἡ καλουμένη Μεγάλη
προσείχον δὲ αὐτῷ διὰ τὸ
ἱκανῶ χρόνῳ ταῖς μαγείαις
ἐξεστακέσαι αὐτοῦς (vv.
10-11)

ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ εὐγγελιζομένῳ
περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ

ὁ δὲ Σίμων καὶ αὐτὸς
ἐπίστευσεν...θεωρῶν τε

²⁰ Lüdemann (*Traditions in Acts*, p. 99) thinks that Luke wants to depict the superiority of Philip's power to that of Simon. But he also maintains that we shall probably never know the nature of the controversy between Philip and Simon. It can be left open, miracles and/or gift of the Spirit or whatever. Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 308) thinks that the nature of the controversy between Christian mission and Simon is by and large interpreted in terms of Luke's aim to illustrate the superiority of Christian miracles over the magical practices. It is a victory of a non-magical view of the gospel over a magical (Barrett, 'Light on the Holy Spirit', p. 294).

²¹ The division is slightly modified from the one presented by K. Beyschlag, *Simon Magus und die christliche Gnosis*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1974, p. 101; also cf. Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, pp. 95-96.

ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ (v. 12)

σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις

μεγάλας γινομένας ἐξίστατο

(v.13)

Luke in this small section of the narrative (vv. 5-13) repeats certain words and phrases with or without slight variation of form or meaning.²² The words προσεῖχον (vv. 6, 10, 11), πολὺς (vv. 7, 8) and ἐξιστάναι (vv. 9, 11) occur three times each, μέγας (vv. 7, 9, 10, 13) five times and σημεῖα (vv. 6, 13) and δύναμις (vv. 10, 13) twice each. On the level of meaning, the word προσεῖχον is similar to προσκαρτερεῖν (v. 13) and πολὺς to πάντες (v. 10).²³ It should also be observed that these key words also describe the contrast between the nature and the effect of the activities of Philip and Simon as the tabulation shows. The portrait of Simon consists i) in his self-proclamation that he was somebody great, ii) in his magical practice and influence, iii) and most importantly the acclamation of the people saying, 'This man is that power of God which is called great'. The mission of Philip provides the counter-function to Simon. The main cross-references are: Simon's claim that he is somebody great is set in contrast to Philip's preaching of Christ. Simon's practice of magic is antithetical to Philip's signs of healing and exorcism. The people who acclaimed Simon as the power of God called the Great later believed what was said by Philip concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Christ. We now examine these points in detail.

3.2.1.2 *Simon - the Power 'of God' (v. 10b)*

The people's acclamation of Simon, Οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη Μεγάλη is most significant to the issue at stake in Samaria. The clause ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη Μεγάλη appears to be an awkward idiom because of the addition of extra words, the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ and the clause ἡ καλουμένη Μεγάλη.²⁴ The words τοῦ θεοῦ would have been a Lukan addition as Luke has added τοῦ θεοῦ

²² Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 91.

²³ The term προσέχειν means to believe and act upon what is heard (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 89).

²⁴ Knox (*Acts*, p. 25, n. 2) thinks that the awkwardness of the phrase is due to Luke's failure to understand.

in other contexts by way of an explanation to his readers.²⁵ For the Markan idiom of the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, Luke has 'power of God' (cf. Lk. 22: 69. par. Mt. 26: 64/Mk. 14: 62). The expressions such as 'Christ of God' (Lk. 9: 20) and 'Wisdom of God' (Lk. 11: 49), the 'angels of God' (Lk. 12:9; 15: 10) and '...Adam, the son of God' (Lk. 3: 38) are also typically Lukan. The expansion of the acclaim with the gloss τοῦ θεοῦ is not misleading in this context as is often assumed.²⁶

The genitive τοῦ θεοῦ here is possessive rather than of apposition.²⁷ He was not acclaimed as God himself and whether Simon was seen and acclaimed as the incarnation of God in Acts is not clear.²⁸ The developed traditions of the second and third centuries made Simon more prominent and identified him with God.²⁹ The tradition represented by Justin mentions that Simon was considered to be a god in Rome and that all the Samaritans recognised Simon as Supreme God and worshipped him.³⁰ Irenaeus says, 'By many he (Simon) was glorified as a god, and he taught that he himself was the one who appeared to the Jews as Son; descended in Samaria as Father; and come to other nations as the Holy Ghost. He stated that he was the Supreme Power, however, that is, the Father who stood over all and who allowed men to call him by whatever Name they pleased'.³¹

We must note, in Acts the term 'power' is qualified by the words 'of God'.³² This is very important for Luke's portrayal of the image of Simon to the readers to show that his title 'power' is

²⁵ G. Dalmann, *The Words of Jesus*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1909, p. 200; cf. Schneider, *Apg*, I, p. 489.

²⁶ *Contra* Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 303.

²⁷ J. E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1985, p. 371, n. 317.

²⁸ Both Roloff (*Apg*, p. 134) and Pesch (*Apg*, I, p. 274) think that Simon was probably regarded as an incarnation of God.

²⁹ About the year 150 AD, according to Justin, nearly all the Samaritans revered Simon as the highest deity (Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 307).

³⁰ *Apologia*, 26: 1-3.

³¹ *Adv. Haer.* I, 23, 1.

³² The addition of τοῦ θεοῦ is Lukan pleonasm (cf. Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 95).

fundamentally theological in content.³³ The people saw that he *was* the power of God on earth and they paid heed to him.³⁴ He was seen as a manifestation of God as someone invested fully with the power of God.³⁵ In brief, the people's idea of God and his power is reflected in their ascription of power of God to Simon.

3.2.1.3 Simon - 'Great'

The second definition of power is given by the word *καλουμένη* which is also recognised as a Lukan addition. The tendency is to take *μεγάλη* as adjectival to the phrase. In this sense *μεγάλη* is still recognised as part of the title 'the power' since the expression 'great power' was a self-designation of Simon known from the later traditions.³⁶ But the use of *καλουμένη* probably means more than an adjectival role to *ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ*. Luke often adds *καλουμένη* to the name (Lk. 10: 39) or sobriquet of a person, place (Lk. 19: 29; 21: 37), or thing (Ac. 3: 2).³⁷ The word *μεγάλη* is closely allied to the image of Simon as the power of God since the term also stands for a divine attribute.³⁸ The word *μεγάλη* brings in an aspect of the divine attribute which was commonly used for

³³ Schneider (*Apg*, I, p. 490): '...so stand dahinter wohl ein göttlicher Anspruch...'; [Roloff, *Apg*, p. 134; Beyschlag (*Simon Magus*, p. 105):...daß die dem Simon zugeschriebene "große Kraft" nicht als menschliche, sondern als göttliche gedacht war'.

³⁴ Οὗτός is to point some one who is present (deictic): *BDF*, § 290.

³⁵ Simon's title 'the power of God' has parallels both in Samaritan and Jewish traditions. The title 'power' appears to be a divine name in Samaritanism. In the Samaritan Targum the Hebrew *בָּרַךְ* can be represented by 'the Power' or *בְּרַחַם* 'the Mighty One' (Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 63) and such usage is found in the *Defter* and *Memar Marqah*, Samaritan writings composed in IV century AD, in which 'the power' is also being praised as 'great' (*גָּדוֹל*) (J. E. Fossum, 'Sects and Movements', *The Samaritans*, ed. A. D. Crown, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1989, p. 364). Those who see Jewish elements in the religious background in Samaria take the title 'power' or 'great power' as a periphrasis of God in Judaism (Deut. 9: 26ff.; *Mos.* i. 111) (see Roloff, *Apg*, p. 134; Pesch, *Apg*, I, p. 274).

³⁶ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 63; E. Haenchen, *Gott und Mensch*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1965, p. 294.

³⁷ *BAG*, p. 400. Lake (*BC*, IV, p. 91) thinks that *καλουμένη* suggests that Luke here is dealing with a foreign term in his *μεγάλη*. Metzger (*Textual Commentary*, p. 358) thinks that *καλουμένη* apologises for the foreign term. J. Munck (*Acts of the Apostles*, New York: Doubleday, 1967, p. 305) argues that *καλουμένη* means 'so-called' or 'said to be' and both neutral and pejorative meaning underlie this use of the expression in Acts.

³⁸ The words *μέγας* and *μέγιστος* are divine epithets (A. D. Nock, 'Paul and the Magus', *BC*, V, p. 183, n. 4).

gods and deities.³⁹ In Acts, it is also used as an attribute for the Ephesian goddess Artemis (19: 28, 34). Similar examples may be found in the acclamations in hellenistic religions: μέγας ὁ Ἀσκληπίος, μέγας Ἀπόλλων Λερμηνός, μεγάλη Μήτηρ Ταζηνή, μέγας Μῆν Πετραεΐτης, μέγας Ζεὺς Οὐράνιος, μεγάλη Ἀνάειτις and μέγα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Σαράπιδος.⁴⁰ Mithras was worshipped as μέγας θεός. In *Bel and the Dragon*, Bel is praised, μέγας ἐστὶ ὁ Βήλ.⁴¹ Like 'power', 'great' represents another epithet which is associated with gods and goddesses.

But the term μεγάλη adds another aspect to the image of Simon. The word μέγας and its derivatives are also used in connection with epiphanies of deities and heroes.⁴² In this sense, the description μεγάλη may be taken as referring back to the self-understanding of Simon that he was somebody great. The cause εἶναί τινα ἑαυτὸν μέγαν would remind the readers of the self-understanding of Theudas who showed himself as somebody (Ac. 5: 36).⁴³ On this comparison it is not unlikely that he was a messianic pretender.⁴⁴ At any rate, power and greatness, are divine attributes ascribed to Simon of Acts. The participle καλουμένη also stresses the festive aspect of the acclamation, that the people celebrated him as the power of God, the great.⁴⁵

Before Philip arrived in Samaria, Simon was practising magic (μαγεύων) and all gave heed to him because of his μαγεῖαι. This is also an important aspect of Simon's portrait as Luke mentions Simon's magic twice (vv. 9, 11). Luke uses neither of the words

³⁹ TDNT, IV, p. 529.

⁴⁰ A. D. Nock, 'Studies in the Graeco-Roman Beliefs of the Empire', *Arthur Darby Nock: Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Z. Stewart, Oxford: Clarendon, vol. I, 1972, p. 36.

⁴¹ Beyschlag, *Simon Magus*, p. 112, n. 29. The term μεγαλειότης is another expressive word for divine greatness.

⁴² TDNT, IV, p. 530.

⁴³ Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 95

⁴⁴ Rackham, *Acts*, p. 113. Simon's self-acclamation bears similarities to claims made by the pseudo-messiahs who swarmed in Phoenicia and Palestine in the middle of the second century (Wilson, 'Simon and Gnostic Origins', p. 486); also see R. A. Horsley and J. S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*, Minneapolis: Winston, 1985, pp. 88-172.

⁴⁵ Bauernfeind, *Apg*, p. 125.

elsewhere in Acts but of this group μάγος is the only word used by Luke in Acts. The Jewish false prophet Elymas, ὁ μάγος who had a some sort of a position in the household of a great Roman⁴⁶ was a religious power.⁴⁷ Luke describes him a ψευδοπροφήτης who sought to turn the proconsul from faith (13: 8). Luke does not furnish details concerning Elymas' work and whether he had a following comparable to Simon's. The depiction in the kerygmatic context in Samaria shows another side of a μάγος. Here Simon was practising magic by performing μαγείαι. Μαγεία is the activity of the μάγος.

This source of influence that Simon had on the people could be traced to the possession of the power of God. In the magical papyri the formulas of invocation have reference to the power and greatness of gods. The incantations such as 'I adjure thee by the great God', 'I invoke you ...mighty,...compeers of the great god' are found in the papyri.⁴⁸ Other common expressions are 'I call upon μεγαλοδυνάμους παρέδρους τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ, ὀρκίζω τὴν σὴν δύναμιν πᾶσι μεγίστην, ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε τὸν πάντων μείζονα and χαίρε μεγαλοδύναμε'.⁴⁹ In the hellenistic world, the wonder-workers and the magicians considered themselves to be manifestations of god's powers.⁵⁰ In this connection, the word 'power' can be taken as central to the religious phenomenon of magic. God is conceived in terms of power which Simon possessed and he displayed it through his magic to the extent that both young and old celebrated him as the power of God. Bauernfeind rightly remarks, 'Man wird nicht an einen Magier im gewöhnlichen Sinne denken, der eine theologische Fassade braucht; die Magie steht in engster Verbindung mit einem theologischen System und einem besonderen Selbstbewußtsein'.⁵¹ Simon's claim and his magical practice should be viewed in terms of his manifestation as the power of God, the great.

⁴⁶ A. D. Nock, 'Paul and the Magus', *BC*, V, p. 183.

⁴⁷ *TDNT*, IV, p. 359.

⁴⁸ H. C. Kee, *The Origins of Christianity: Sources and Documents*, London: SPCK, 1980, pp. 85ff.

⁴⁹ Beyschlag, *Simon Magus*, p. 112, n. 30; *TDNT*, IV, p. 357; Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 91.

⁵⁰ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 134. Empedocles called Menecrates as Zeus.

⁵¹ *Apg*, p. 126.

To sum up, there are three key words which illustrate, for Luke, the problem in the kerygmatic context in Samaria: δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ, μέγαλη and μαγεῖαι. They are closely related and describe for Luke and his readers the nature of the theological problem to be encountered. Simon was declared the power of God, if not an incarnation fully invested with God's power. The word 'great' is closely associated with the phrase δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ insofar as both are designations of the attributes of God. The notion of the power of God is closely related to the magical acts of Simon with which he amazed the people in Samaria. Thus Luke has carefully presented the context in Samaria underlining its deeper theological implications focusing on the central notion of 'power of God'. For Luke, there is a theological challenge here to the kerygma of God.

3.2.2 THE KERYGMA

In order to see how Luke approaches this theological challenge, we now turn to the mission itself. The result of the mission was astounding. The magnitude of the success is indicated by the threefold use of the forms of πολὺς (vv. 7, 8). The people who followed Simon for a long time and who held him in high honour and veneration turned to Philip. Simon not only lost his followers but he himself believed, was baptised and continued with Philip. The conversion must have been real and quite remarkable since the news spread to Jerusalem. But the change happens, according to the narrative, in a quiet and a smooth way. There was no resistance or opposition shown either from the people or from Simon Magus himself. The section comes to a sudden ending but it cannot be said to be a disappointing one.⁵²

Luke's economy of words does not allow us to evaluate the change of mind on the part of the people in Samaria, and what had caused the uprooting of their misconception of God. But on the basis of the description that Luke has provided, the change was not caused simply by their attraction to Philip's signs and powers (σημεῖα καὶ

⁵² E. g., Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 303. Conzelmann (*Acts*, p. 64) thinks Luke was keen to move over to the next section of the story.

δυνάμεις μεγάλας) over against those of Simon. It is true that people saw the signs which Philip performed but many of them (πολλοὶ) were recipients of those signs when they experienced release from evil spirits and sickness. Most importantly, they also *gave heed* with one accord [ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῷ ἀκούειν αὐτοὺς (τοῖς λεγομένοις)] and *believed* (ἐπίστευσαν) what was *preached* by Philip (τῷ Φιλίππῳ εὐαγγελιζομένῳ). The significance of both the proclamation and the signs which led the people to faith needs to be explored if the relevance of the kerygma to the kerygmatic context in Samaria is to be properly understood. The reason for giving up the wrong understanding of God's power and for turning away from being subjected to its influence lies in the miracles which the people experienced and in the proclamation they heard and believed through the mission of Philip.

Luke sums up the kerygma in three phrases, ὁ Χριστός, βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ and τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Luke states that Philip proclaimed τὸν Χριστόν in (the) city of Samaria. Luke has not explicitly stated the significance of preaching Christ to the religious situation he has described to his readers. What we need to find out is, what is the concept of Christ implied and assumed in Luke's mission context in Samaria since Luke has not given a clear Christological definition here.

3.2.2.1 *The presence of God's kingdom (v. 12)*

Luke expands the content of the kerygma by adding two further expressions. Philip preached περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ and τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v. 12). The two expressions together in a slightly different form occur in Ac. 28: 23, 31.⁵³ Though Luke has not defined any of these phrases in the Samaritan episode, the phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in Acts is often taken as a summary description of the entire Christian proclamation.⁵⁴ The book of Acts opens with reference to Jesus preaching the kingdom of God to his disciples (1: 3) and it closes with Paul preaching the

⁵³ Βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ and περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (28: 23) and βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ and περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (28: 31).

⁵⁴ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 227. It is difficult to sustain the notion that the kingdom of God means the Church (*contra* Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 347).

kingdom of God (28: 31). In the gospel, Luke uses the phrase 'to preach the kingdom of God' more frequently than other synoptic writers.⁵⁵ In contrast to parallels in Mark and Q, Luke has introduced preaching the kingdom of God into Lk. 4: 43; 8: 1; 9: 2, 11, 60; 10: 9; 16: 16.⁵⁶ The phrase 'name of Jesus Christ' may be said to be mainly associated in the present context with baptism (cf. 8: 16), a theme which is not part of our investigation. But the phrase is used by Luke in the context of healing ministry of the disciples (Ac. 3: 6; 9: 34). But we shall first look into the significance of the juxtaposition of two statements of kerygma in the mission to Samaria, that is, preaching the Christ and preaching the kingdom of God. Most importantly, how do the expressions 'Christ' and 'kingdom of God' serve, for Luke, both the kerygmatic and the polemical function within the Lukan context in Samaria? In other words, how do they counteract the theological challenge presented by Luke through the image of Simon?

To understand the significance of the message concerning the kingdom of God and Christ we must begin by looking at Luke's summary of Philip's mission activity in vv. 6-8. Luke makes reference to unclean spirits coming out of many and many who were paralysed or lame were healed.⁵⁷ The occurrence of healing and exorcism on such a large scale is reported only in Samaria, Ephesus (19: 11ff.) and Malta (28: 8-9).⁵⁸ Nowhere else in Acts has Luke placed the kerygma of the kingdom of God in a mission context of healing and exorcism; nor does he make reference to preaching the kingdom of God in missionary episodes where he deals with healing and exorcism (cf. Ac. 3: 1-10; 9: 32-43; 13: 4-12; 16: 16-24; 19: 8-10). This is a significant clue for understanding the kerygma in the religious environment in

⁵⁵ R. Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982, pp. 132ff.

⁵⁶ The word εὐαγγελιζέσθαι is a favourite Lukan word. It occurs ten times in the gospel (1: 19; 2: 10; 3: 18; 4: 18, 43; 7: 22; 8: 1; 9: 6; 16: 16; 20: 1), and fifteen times in Acts (5: 42; 8: 4, 12, 25, 35, 40; 10: 36; 11: 20; 13: 32; 14: 7, 15, 21; 15: 35; 16: 10; 17: 18).

⁵⁷ The Greek of B-text in v. 7a is ungrammatical. The author probably thought of πνεύματα ἀκάθαρτα as a nominative, forgetting that he began with πολλοί and so finished up the sentence with βοῶντα ἐξήρχοντο. (see Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 90; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pp. 356-357).

⁵⁸ The specific instances of healing (Ac. 14: 8ff.) and exorcism (Ac. 16: 18) occur in Gentile mission contexts.

Samaria as Luke has understood it.

The preaching of the kingdom of God and the occurrence of healing and exorcism would remind the readers how Luke has viewed them together in the gospel narratives. Conzelmann is right when he says that when Luke mentions the kerygma concerning the kingdom, it is assumed that the reader knows what the content of this is and that he has read Luke's gospel.⁵⁹ In his gospel, Luke not only takes over the summary statements of widespread healings and exorcism (4: 40-41; 6: 17-19), he also introduces one more in which exorcism is added to the cures (7: 21).⁶⁰ The way Luke describes healing and exorcism in the Samaritan context is in line with the summaries in his gospel.⁶¹

The Lukan summary of healing and exorcism suggests two things for the understanding of the preaching of the kingdom of God. i) Luke is here dealing with the most fundamental aspect of the nature of the kingdom of God. The meaning of the phrase 'kingdom' here would mean 'reign', 'dominion' rather than kingdom in the 'spatial' sense.⁶² ii) The kingdom of God, God's dynamic rule, is preached in Samaria with the signs of healing and exorcism.⁶³ For Luke, it is more likely in such a context that "to proclaim the kingdom is to announce its 'presence'".⁶⁴ By the

⁵⁹ *Theology*, p. 218; R. O'Toole ('The Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts', *The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation*, ed. W. Willis, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1987, p. 147) makes a similar point that with regard to Luke's teaching of the kingdom of God we must assume that Luke is addressing the readers of his two-volume work.

⁶⁰ Cf. 9: 43b; Evans, *Luke*, p. 70.

⁶¹ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 62. There are some important Lukan features that the readers have come across in the reading of the Gospel. Luke prefers ἄνθρωπος ἔχων πνεῦμα δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου (Lk. 4: 33) for ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ in Mk. 1: 23; cf. ἀνὴρ...ἔχων δαιμόνια in Lk. 8: 27, γυνὴ πνεῦμα ἔχουσα ἀσθενείας (Lk. 13: 11), τινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα (Ac. 16: 16) τοὺς ἔχοντας τὰ πνεύματα τὰ πονηρὰ (Ac. 19: 13). For φωνὴ μεγάλη cf. Lk. 8: 28, also Mk. 1: 26; 3: 11. Luke uses ἐξέρχεται (ἀπό) in connection with exorcism (cf. Lk. 4: 35, 41; 8: 29, 33, 35, 38; Ac. 16: 18).

⁶² Luke speaks of the kingdom in the sense of certain things being done in it (Lk. 7: 28; 13: 29; 14: 15) and people entering it (Lk. 18: 17, 24, 25). But such a sense is not implied here. The meaning in the Samaritan context will suit some Lukan passages (Lk. 4: 43; 8: 1; 9: 2, 11; 11: 20; 12: 32; 13: 18, 20; 17: 21; 19: 11); cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 156.

⁶³ Evans, *Luke*, p. 492.

⁶⁴ Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 133; J. Gray, *The Biblical Doctrine of*

mission activity of healing and exorcism, Luke emphasises here the 'presence' of the kingdom rather than the imminence or the future aspect of the kingdom of God to which Luke probably has elsewhere alluded (cf. Lk. 14:16). Luke seems to be concerned here with the existential nature of the kingdom rather than with the kingdom about to come. The presence of God's rule is one of the key Lukan perceptions of the kingdom of God.⁶⁵

What is also important is that we must stress the import of the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ in Luke.⁶⁶ To speak of 'the kingdom of God' is simply a way of speaking of God himself as reigning.⁶⁷ It is God's kingdom and 'if the Kingdom is the rule of God, then every aspect of the Kingdom must be derived from the character and action of God'.⁶⁸ The message of the kingdom of God in Samaria portrays essentially that it is God who is at work. The expulsion of the unclean spirits and the healing of the paralysed and lame in Samaria demonstrate that God's rule is visible and present.⁶⁹ Philip's signs indicate that God's rule has been realised in the lives of many in Samaria. The preaching of God's kingdom in word and its manifestation in deed form the inseparable part of the kerygma in Samaria.⁷⁰ It is this notion of God and the efficacy of God's rule that stands in antithesis to the religion of magical practices in Samaria.⁷¹

Before we see the close connection between Christ and the kingdom of God we must note another characteristic change

the Reign of God, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979, pp. 320ff.

⁶⁵ Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 114. In Luke, 'the idea of the coming of the kingdom is replaced by a timeless conception of it' (Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 104).

⁶⁶ O'Toole, 'Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts', p. 148.

⁶⁷ *The Kingdom of God and North-East England*, ed. J. D. G. Dunn, London: SCM, 1986, p. 6.

⁶⁸ G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1974, p. 81. The being and action of God supply the necessary qualification to the word 'kingdom' (*TDNT*, I, p. 582).

⁶⁹ Cf. H. van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1965, p. 252. The man from whom demons had gone out was ordered to go home and declare how much God has done for him (Lk. 8: 38).

⁷⁰ Cf. *TDNT*, I, p. 584; 'Signs and Wonders', *IDB*, IV, p. 350.

⁷¹ Cf. H. C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Cambridge University, 1988, pp. 118-120.

brought out by the manifestation of the kingdom of God. Luke reports that the city was filled with much joy (πολλή χαρά).⁷² The theme 'joy' is central to Luke's thinking.⁷³ One of the enduring marks of the outbreak of the reign of God in the world through healing and exorcism is joy. The theme of joy is associated with praising God in several Lukan pericopes of healing and exorcism. Luke concludes healing and exorcism stories characteristically with either the person healed or the witnesses or both praising God (Lk. 9: 43a; cf. 5: 25, 26; 7: 16; 13: 13, 17; 17: 15; 18: 43). Such is the atmosphere that surrounds the dawn of God's rule in Samaria.⁷⁴

Preaching the kingdom of God and preaching Christ cannot be said to be two different and independent messages. The conceptions of the kingdom of God and Christ belong together and it is largely with the inter-connection between the two that Luke was occupied in his first volume. For Luke, Jesus is the kingdom preacher par excellence.⁷⁵ This means for Luke that the healing of the lame and the paralytic and the casting out of the unclean spirits are part and parcel of the effective proclamation of the kingdom of God by Jesus.⁷⁶ The mighty works of Jesus, his healing and exorcism are the signs of God's rule breaking into the world.⁷⁷ The most explicit identification of the presence of the kingdom with the mission of Jesus comes from a Q-saying in Lk. 11: 20. Exorcism is a sign indicating that the kingdom of God has come. The presence of the kingdom is announced through the mission of

⁷² The 'joy' indicates 'die große Öffentlichkeitswirkung' (Roloff, *ApG*, p. 134).

⁷³ See W. G. Morrice, *Joy in the New Testament*, Exeter: Paternoster, 1984, pp. 91-99.

⁷⁴ 'The presence of the kingdom of God means joy' (*TDNT*, IX, p. 718); cf. P. J. Achtemeier, 'The Lukan Perspective on the Miracles of Jesus: A Preliminary Sketch', *PLA*, p. 159.

⁷⁵ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 157. W. C. Robinson ('On Preaching the Word of God', *SLA*, p. 135) rightly observes that the nature of the kingdom was the keynote address with which Jesus' public ministry began (Lk. 4: 16ff.).

⁷⁶ Luke mentions the proclamation of Jesus and the healing activity together (cf. Lk. 4: 31ff.; 8: 1ff.; 9: 2). Achtemeier ('Miracles of Jesus', pp. 156ff.) rightly points out that Luke attempts to balance Jesus' miraculous activity and his teaching in such a way as to give them equal weight.

⁷⁷ van der Loos, *Miracles*, p. 223.

Jesus.⁷⁸ Through such a dynamic view of God's rule already manifesting itself in the present Luke offers the most formidable challenge to the misconceptions of God he observed in Samaria.

3.2.2.2 *Christ - the Power of God*

The word 'power' is not found in the preaching of Philip but his kerygma in deed is *δυνάμεις μεγάλαι* (8: 13). One of the themes which can explain the relation between the presence of the kingdom of God and Christ is the concept of 'power', the key term which has helped Luke to explain the wrong notion of God among the Samaritans. The concept of 'power' binds the kerygma concerning the kingdom of God, the Christ and the healing and the exorcism of Philip. The 'power of God' is the fundamental element that sustains the kerygma in word and in deed. Luke understood the person and the work of Christ in terms of power. Jesus returned to Galilee armed with the power of the Spirit (*ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος*: Lk. 4: 14). His endowment with power is linked with the works of the kingdom of God, particularly with healing and exorcism. Luke has edited the Markan phrase 'with authority Jesus commands the unclean spirits' as 'with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits'.⁷⁹ In the Lukan summary of Jesus' healing activities, Luke has, 'the power came forth from him (*δύναμις παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐξήρχετο*) and healed them all' (cf. Mk. 3: 10/Lk. 6:19). In the story of the healing of the woman with a haemorrhage Luke has Jesus say, 'I perceive that power has gone forth from me'.⁸⁰ Luke makes special reference to the 'power' in the story of the healing of the paralytic (Mk. 2: 1-12/Lk. 5: 17-26). Luke adds to the Markan story, 'the power of God was with Jesus to heal' (v. 17). This power of God in action is both potential as well as kinetic energy; it 'comes upon' Jesus (Lk.

⁷⁸ Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 134; The reign of God was central to the mission of Jesus (Gray, *Reign of God*, p. 319); In the light of Lk. 4: 43 and 8: 1 the phrase 'preaching concerning the kingdom of God' probably also reflects the way Luke describes the work of Jesus.

⁷⁹ Mk. 1: 27/Lk. 4: 36. Nolland (*Luke 1 - 9: 20*, p. 208) comments that whereas Mark mentions the obedience of the unclean spirits Luke prefers to use the verb, *ἐξέρχονται* (Lk. 4: 35).

⁸⁰ The transcendent power of God as present here in a way goes beyond Jesus' own action (Nolland, *Luke 1 - 9: 20*, p. 420).

5: 17), it can reside in him and be released by the touch of an individual (8: 46) and it can go out from him repeatedly (6: 19).⁸¹ The power that flows out of Jesus to bring healing is the power of God himself.⁸² Luke also uses the phrase 'the finger of God' (Lk. 11: 20) in the context of healing and exorcism. The metaphorical language denotes the mighty power of God.⁸³ Luke further uses the word δύνανται to refer to all Jesus' cures and exorcisms (Lk. 10: 13; 19: 37). 'The unique element in the exorcisms of Jesus is that they are special signs of God's power and of his Kingdom'.⁸⁴

Exorcism is also seen as a conflict between the power of the enemy and the kingdom of God. The Lukan summary of healing and exorcism in Samaria is not a mere list of Philip's miraculous activities. There is a note of conflict implicit in Luke's formulation. That the unclean spirits came out with a loud voice indicates that the spirits are powerful and yet are defeated. The expulsion of the unclean spirits means that the kingdom of God has come.⁸⁵ This further explains the existential meaning of the kingdom of God and Christ's mission against the power of the spirits, the arch-enemy which Luke calls Satan.⁸⁶ This can be seen in the Lukan story of the healing of a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years (Lk. 13: 10-17). Luke describes the sickness as the work of the Satan and the healing meant a freedom from the binding force of Satan.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Evans, *Luke*, p. 71.

⁸² Nolland, *Luke 1 - 9: 20*, p. 234. The power of Christ is always the power of God (*TDNT*, II, p. 306).

⁸³ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, London: SPCK, 1975, p. 46. C. K. Barrett (*The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition*, London: SPCK, 1977, p. 63) argues that Lukan form δακτύλω θεοῦ is more original than Mathew's 'Spirit of God' (Mt. 12: 28a). Cf. 'the hand of the Lord' in Ac. 4: 28-30.

⁸⁴ Barrett, *Holy Spirit*, p. 62. A. Richardson (*The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels*, London: SCM, 1941, p. 41): 'The working of the δύναμις of God results in the manifestation of His βασιλεία'; cf. G. W. H. Lampe, 'Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles', *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in their Philosophy and History*, London: A. R. Mowbray, 1965, pp. 167ff.

⁸⁵ van der Loos, *Miracles of Jesus*, p. 252.

⁸⁶ 'Satan' has become the name for the arch-demon in contemporary angelology in Palestinian Judaism (Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 514).

⁸⁷ W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1971, p. 280. The success is evidence of the victory of the kingdom of God against the kingdom of Satan. [Evans, *Luke*, p. 552; cf. S. H. Hooke, *The Kingdom of God in the Experience of Jesus*, London: Gerald

This leads us to another aspect of the kerygma in Samaria, that is, preaching in the name of Jesus Christ. The name of Jesus Christ is another embodiment of the power-theme in Luke-Acts. The power of God which was in Jesus is transferred from Jesus to his disciples for their mission to preach the kingdom and heal (9: 1). His disciples were given the authority over all the power of the enemy.⁸⁸ Thus the name of Jesus Christ effects healing (Ac. 3: 10) and demons are subject to the disciples in Jesus' name (Lk. 10: 17).⁸⁹ The engagement of the disciples in fighting against the power of the enemy in the ministry of healing and exorcism, and preaching the kingdom of God stresses the continuity between the mission of Jesus and the mission of the disciples. Philip's preaching the name of Jesus Christ and his σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις μεγάλας also fit into this unique existential expression of the kingdom of God encountering the false notion of the power of God and its manifestations through magic.

In Samaria, God's rule is present through the mission of Philip. This is seen in the mission activity of healing and exorcism. Luke expects the readers to understand the kerygma of Christ in line with his notion of the 'presence' of the kingdom of God. Luke conceived the ideal realisation of the kingdom of God in the earthly ministry of Jesus. In this, 'the power of God' plays a prominent role. In other words, kerygma about Christ recalls to the readers the peculiarly Lukan portrait of the earthly ministry of Jesus the Christ in whom the power of God was at work. This theological outlook of 'power of God' behind the term Christ, for Luke, confronts the misconception of God in Samaria. Christ in whom the power of God came in full expression through his earthly ministry is the counter-figure to Simon who was believed to be the power of God.

The identification of Jesus as the Messiah in his death and

Duckworth, 1949, pp. 48ff.

⁸⁸ Cf. F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Lk 1,1 - 9,50)*, Benziger Verlag, 1989, p. 456.

⁸⁹ The phrase 'great power' also characterises the mission of the apostles (Ac. 4: 30; cf. 1: 8).

resurrection, which appears as the main feature of the kerygma about Christ in the Jewish contexts, does not seem to be the point of the argument in Samaria.⁹⁰ The situation in Samaria is represented by the people's wrong notion that Simon is the manifestation of the power of God, a figure like a god-man and the efficacy of that power is seen in his magic. The kingdom of God and Christ as the bearer of the power of God offer a true theological perspective within which the Christ in the Samaritan context is to be understood. This enables the readers to understand God himself and his power. The word 'Christ' etymologically means 'the anointed one'.⁹¹ According to Luke, behind the etymological meaning of the word Christ as the anointed one there stands the concept of God. Apart from the OT quotation in Heb. 1: 9, Luke is the only author in the NT who makes reference to the anointing of Jesus.⁹² The reference to anointing is found at the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and ἔχρισέν με...' (Lk. 4: 18). For Luke, the anointing of Jesus is an act of God. Luke uses the verb χρίω in Ac. 4: 27 with God as the subject. It is God who anointed (ὁν ἔχρισας) Jesus and this is confirmed by the Psalmist's phrase κατὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ in v. 26.⁹³ The demons knew that Jesus is the

⁹⁰ Luke's Christology may be said to be the most variegated in the NT (Evans, *Luke*, p. 65). C. F. D. Moule ('The Christology of Acts', *SLA*, p. 175) argues that different Christological emphases attach not to the person speaking but to the occasion. It is important to observe that the characteristic features of the messiahship as expounded in the proclamation to the Jews in Acts do not occur in Ac. 8. There is obviously no effort on the part of Philip to convince the Samaritans from their *scriptures* that Jesus was the Messiah (cf. 3: 17; 18: 28; 28: 23) or to establish the fact that Jesus had to suffer and rise from the dead (cf. 2: 22ff.). In 28: 23, Luke has indicated clearly that τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ are the facts of Jesus' death and resurrection, and in this sense his messiahship (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 347). Paul sought to convince the Jews in Rome about Jesus the Messiah from the law of Moses and the prophets (Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 723). With the limited details Luke has furnished with regard to the religious situation in Samaria, it is not clear as to whether Luke had in mind to prove the point that what was promised to the fathers and to David has been fulfilled in the death and the resurrection of Jesus (Ac. 13: 32ff).

⁹¹ H. J. Cadbury ('The Titles of Jesus in Acts', *BC*, V, p. 358) rightly observes that Luke uses χριστός in an etymological sense .

⁹² R. C. Tannehill, 'The Mission of Jesus according to Luke iv 16-30', *Jesus in Nazareth*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972, p. 69. Luke is the only evangelist who uses the word χρίειν.

⁹³ Lake (*BC*, IV, p. 47) claims that ἔχρισας refers to the meaning of χριστός, and it must be translated 'make Messiah'.

Christ (4: 41). At the conclusion of the mission of Jesus, Luke has Peter's confession as, 'Christ of God' (9: 20; cf. Lk. 2: 26; 23: 35).⁹⁴ Of the NT writers, Luke alone uses the designation 'the Christ of God'.⁹⁵ The genitive 'of God' shows 'from whom the anointing of the anointed one derived and to whom he belongs'.⁹⁶ This messianic aspect of Jesus with special reference to God is echoed in speeches to the Jews [(2: 22; cf. 2: 36; 'his Christ' (3: 18)]. A strong theological notion thus dominates the concept of Christ in Luke. Philip is preaching the anointed one of God, the Christ of God to encounter Simon, the power of God.

For Luke, the concept of God and 'the power of God' have been given their decisive impress with the life of the Messiah. The power-motif is seen in operation in the account of the birth of Christ. 'Christ' means more than being endowed with power; his existence is particularly determined by the power of God. Luke perceives the beginning of Christ's existence as a special and unique act of the divine power of God.⁹⁷ The power of the Most High overshadowed Mary (Lk. 1: 35). In a unique way in Luke, Jesus is declared Christ in the birth narrative. Even here, 'the Christ of God' idea is unmistakably present. Simeon wished to see the Lord's Christ (τὸν Χριστὸν Κυρίου: 2: 26).⁹⁸ Once again, Luke gives considerable theological weight to the use of the term Christ. Luke not only portrays Christ as equipped with power throughout his ministry, but the beginning of Christ's existence is also a manifestation of the power of God. Luke's point in all these cases is not to show the intermittent presence of the power of God with Jesus but that he was conceived by the power of the Most High and through the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord the power continues to work through him. This portrait of the 'Christ of God' reveals to the people in Samaria the true meaning of God and how he manifests himself in the world. Here is where the people found

⁹⁴ Luke alters from 'the Christ' to 'the Christ of God' (Mk. 8: 29; cf. Lk. 23: 25).

⁹⁵ Cf. D. L. Jones, 'The Title *Christos* in Luke-Acts', *CBQ*, 32 (1970), p. 73.

⁹⁶ *TDNT*, IX, p. 532.

⁹⁷ *TDNT*, II, p. 300.

⁹⁸ The anointed of the Lord is a regular expression for the actual king [cf. Ps. 2: 2 (Ac. 4: 26); Ps. 18: 50; II Sam. 1: 14] (Evans, *Luke*, p. 214); cf. Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, p. 119.

the new foundation for their faith in the power of God.

3.2.2.3 Christ - 'Great'

Another implication in the proclamation of Christ in this context would be to polemicise against Simon's claim that he is somebody great. Jesus is called 'great' in two contexts in Luke's gospel. The phrase οὗτος ἔσται μέγας in 1: 32 locates Jesus' greatness in a context of messianic titles and functions. In the birth narrative, the word μέγας is used of Jesus without any qualification but it occurs in association with another title 'the Son of the Most High'. The interpretation of Lk. 1: 32-33 is dependent on messianic texts such as II Sam. 7: 12; I Chr. 22: 9-10; Ps. 89: 26-29; Is, 9: 7.⁹⁹ Luke also uses μέγας in connection with the prophetic task of the Messiah Jesus in Lk. 7: 16. The term μέγας here refers to prophets who like Moses and Elijah were effective in word and deed (Lk. 4: 24ff.; 24: 19; Ac. 7: 22; *Eccl.* 45: 3; 48: 4ff.).¹⁰⁰ The fact that Jesus is great as a prophet does not mean he was an autonomous figure. He was acclaimed as 'a great prophet' raised up by God and through him God has visited his people (Lk. 7: 16).¹⁰¹ The status of Jesus as the prophet of God challenges Simon's self-image of ascribing to himself the divine attribute of greatness. The contrast between self-acclaimed greatness of Simon and the greatness of Jesus with a special messianic-prophetic function is vivid before the eyes of the readers.

The kerygma of Christ in the Samaritan context implies that Luke is referring to the earthly ministry of Jesus in whom the power of God came to full expression. The title Christ expresses the nature and the function of God who anointed him and filled him with power. The Christ is the Christ of God. This probably is the picture of Christ that Luke is concerned mainly to show to his readers. This theme of God's Christ is borne out by Peter's speech at Pentecost. The Lukan Peter speaks of Jesus of Nazareth, a man

⁹⁹ H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, I, Freiburg: Herder, 1969, p. 47, n. 54; Schweizer, *Lukas*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ cf. Grundmann, *Lukas*, pp. 160ff.

¹⁰¹ The clause, 'John will be great before the Lord' may be understood as 'John will be a great prophet' [Bovon, *Lukas (1,1-9,50)*, p. 55].

attested by God who did mighty works and wonders and signs (δυνάμει καὶ τέρασι καὶ σημείοις) through Jesus in the midst of Israel (Ac. 2: 22). The mighty works are described as acts of God through Jesus.¹⁰² They are evidences of the power of God operating through Jesus.¹⁰³ Again the same view is expounded in Peter's speech to Cornelius and his household in which Luke has an apt summary of the life and mission of Jesus. Luke refers to the anointing of Jesus by God with the Holy Spirit and power (ὁ θεὸς...δυνάμει) which echoes the reference to Jesus' anointing in Lk. 4: 18.¹⁰⁴ Jesus, the one anointed by God with power, went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil (Ac. 10: 38).¹⁰⁵ It is a miniature of the gospel story as Luke saw it.¹⁰⁶ Luke's gospel provides the commentary to the description of Jesus' works in this speech.¹⁰⁷ This again emphasises the fact that by Christ Luke meant the Christ of God and that Christ was anointed with the power of God and to this message people in Samaria with one accord gave heed.¹⁰⁸

To sum up, the basic theological question that arises out of the Lukan image of Simon is, what is the power of God and how does the power of God manifest itself among the Samaritans? The true meaning and significance of 'power of God' is to be found in the reality of God's kingdom in Samaria. God's rule is present dynamically as evidenced by healing and exorcism. Philip preaches Christ whose person and work was determined by God's

¹⁰² Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. p. 20.

¹⁰³ Bruce, *Acts*, p. 70; cf. Schneider, I, p. 271, n. 67; Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁴ Tannehill, 'Mission of Jesus', p. 69. It may also be said to contain allusion to baptism (cf. Barrett, *Holy Spirit*, p. 42) but the v. 38b will point to the mission of Jesus in Lk. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Whether Luke expresses a 'subordinationist' or 'adoptionist' Christology does not matter here. What is important is that by the virtue of God's anointing Jesus and God being with him, Jesus was able to heal those who were oppressed by the devil.

¹⁰⁶ Evans, *Luke*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁷ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 83; 'Entfaltung in Form eines kurzen Abrisses des Jesus-Kerygmas': Roloff, *Apg*, p. 172.

¹⁰⁸ 'Die Kraft zu diesem Wirken und seine auf *alle Kranken* oder *Unterdrückten* gerichtete Zielrichtung wird also auf Gott zurückgeführt...Er ist der "Christus Gottes": Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 77. Italics his.

power. He was anointed by God with power and therefore he was the Christ of God. God acted through him in subduing the power of the evil one. Through his name his disciples are engaged in preaching and healing in Jesus' name. Luke does not seem to treat Christ as an independent figure and, by and large, both in the gospel and in the speeches of Acts, where the title Christ is used particularly in reference to the earthly life of Jesus, he is always the Christ of God. Luke's Christology consists in theology. The theological underpinning of the concept of Christ as the anointed by God is vital to the image of Christ. Conzelmann rightly observes that the deeds of God are of two types. There are references in which God alone is the subject of action and there are acts which God performs through Christ.¹⁰⁹ God's rule and God's Christ are the content of the kerygma for the mission context in Samaria. This brought about the change which turned the people away from the misconceptions concerning God and his power in Samaria.

3.3 MISSION BY PETER (vv. 14-24)

3.3.1 *God, the 'giver' of the Holy Spirit*

The section vv. 14-24 is a new episode though Simon still remains the central character. Philip is no longer part of the scene.¹¹⁰ The apostles Peter and John have taken his place. The mission by the apostles presents a number of features of special interest. Hence, there are different assessments of the nature of the controversy between Peter and Simon. Those assessments largely arise out of the analysis of the first part of the story in which Simon wishes to obtain the Holy Spirit with money. Haenchen argues that Luke intended to show that the apostles (not Philip!) had the power to impart Holy Spirit through laying on hands and to demonstrate that the divine spirit is not for human trafficking.¹¹¹ Barrett draws attention to the contrast between Simon who makes money

¹⁰⁹ Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 178.

¹¹⁰ It cannot be said that Philip's success in the mission is minimised since the problem is to do with Simon alone not with the host of others who were converted genuinely through Philip's mission (*contra* Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 304).

¹¹¹ *Acts*, pp. 304, 308.

by trafficking in the supernatural over against Peter who accepts no money.¹¹² For Conzelmann, vv. 18-24 offer the first detailed example of the Lukan distinction between miracle and magic.¹¹³ There is no doubt that the text offers clues to all these viewpoints.

Yet the dialogue between Peter and Simon seems to show strong theological colouring. The Holy Spirit is described as 'the gift of God' though Luke elsewhere has ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (Ac. 2: 38; 10: 45; cf. 17: 17). Peter's strong reaction in vv. 20-21 comes with the message that Simon's heart is not right before God. The stern words from Peter in v. 23 are preceded by his urging Simon to repent and to pray to the Lord that the evil intent of his heart may be forgiven him. In a humble answer at the end Simon requests Peter to pray for him to the Lord. Though Luke uses the κύριος title for Jesus, κύριος on both occasions in vv. 22 and 24 refers to God.¹¹⁴ We must pay particular attention to this theological aspect in order to understand the nature of the interaction between Peter and Simon.

The wish of Simon to obtain the Holy Spirit is that others may then be able to receive it from him. Simon's wish is, Δότε κάμοι τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἵνα ὡς ἐὰν ἐπιθῶ τὰς χεῖρας λαμβάνη πνεῦμα ἅγιον (v. 17).¹¹⁵ Simon does not wish to buy the Spirit for himself but he wishes to acquire the power to bestow the Holy Spirit on others.¹¹⁶ The problem in the episode lies here. Simon's wish is incompatible with the nature and the character of God since granting the Holy Spirit is something only God can do. The 'laying on of hands' is regarded as effecting the gift of the Spirit to the Samaritans.¹¹⁷ In Ac. 19: 6, Luke states that when Paul laid his hands on the Ephesians the Holy Spirit came on them. With the

¹¹² 'Light on the Holy Spirit', p. 291.

¹¹³ *Acts*, pp. 65ff.

¹¹⁴ Schneider, *Lukas*, p. 221.

¹¹⁵ The wish reflects Satan's words in Lk. 4: 6 (ἐμοὶ παραδέδοται καὶ ὡς ἐὰν θέλω δίδωμι αὐτήν), cf. Schneider, *Apg*, I, p. 493, ns. 93, 94.

¹¹⁶ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 304; J. E. Yates, *The Spirit and the Kingdom*, London: SPCK, 1963, p. 170.

¹¹⁷ S. New, 'The Name, Baptism, and the Laying on of Hands', *BC*, V, p. 138.

laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit comes.¹¹⁸ Luke, however, describes here the Spirit as being *given* (δίδοται) to the people *through* the laying on of hands (διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν). Luke wishes to place the emphasis on the fact that the Holy Spirit is given not by the apostles themselves but through the imposition of their hands.¹¹⁹ The redacted Q-saying in Luke 11: 3 states that it is the heavenly Father who will give (δώσει) the Holy Spirit.¹²⁰ The apostles bore witness before the authorities by saying that God *gives* the Holy Spirit to those who obey him (Ac. 5: 32). Peter's words to the circumcision party refer to God who *gave* the Spirit to the Gentiles just as he *gave* it to the brethren in Jerusalem. Again in Peter's words in the Apostolic council Luke makes the same point that God has *given* the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles just as he *gave* to those in Jerusalem. 'It is God, not magicians or even apostles, who gives his own Spirit'.¹²¹ Here lies the clue to Luke's fundamental conviction that the Holy Spirit is the gift of God because it is given by him. Luke, therefore, shows that the problem which is represented by Simon here is of taking the role of God for himself in imparting Holy spirit to others.

In the conflict between Simon and Peter, there is an overshadowing of the theological problem we have already noted in the first section, that is, Simon's desire to take upon himself the divine attributes of greatness and the power of God. Simon here is seen striving for the authority for which God is the source.¹²² Therefore, as the final exchange between Peter and Simon shows, Peter treats Simon's desire as a sin against God. Peter's judgement of the condition of Simon as being in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity is a metaphor of the state of sin.¹²³ Simon's

¹¹⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 554.

¹¹⁹ The Holy Spirit was not the prerogative of the apostles (*contra* Munck, *Acts*, p. 75).

¹²⁰ Luke adds 'Holy Spirit' in this Q-logion (cf. Mt. 7:7-11).

¹²¹ Barrett, 'Light on the Holy Spirit', p. 293.

¹²² In Luke's thinking, ἐξουσία is also closely linked with δύναμις. The Lukan parallel to Mk. 1: 27 seems to treat δύναμις and ἐξουσία as synonymous (cf. Lk. 9: 1; 10: 19); see Barrett, *Holy Spirit*, p. 78. Richardson (*Miracle-Stories of the Gospels*, p. 7) observes that Luke deliberately associates δύναμις and ἐξουσία where Mark has not done so (Lk. 4: 36; 9: 1; 10: 19; cf. Mk. 11: 28/Ac. 4: 7).

¹²³ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 305.

sin is found in his act as well as in his intention. The act is that he offered money so that he can possess the gift of God for which he was severely reprimanded.¹²⁴ Luke focuses here on the intention of the heart because, for Luke, it is in the heart that life with God is rooted.¹²⁵ Such a conviction of Luke is noticeable elsewhere in Luke-Acts (cf. Ac. 5: 6). Simon's wicked thought of his heart, to acquire authority to *give* the Holy Spirit to others is condemned by Peter, but an opportunity for repentance and forgiveness is also implicit in Peter's verdict. Simon should repent and pray to *God* for forgiveness.¹²⁶

3.4 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the mission contests a theological problem in the Samaritan context. The central theological issue that emerges from the Lukan image of Simon is, what is the power of God? and how does it manifest itself?. People believed that Simon was the answer for both questions. The kerygma which encountered the problem is also fundamentally theological in content. Philip's preaching concerning God's kingdom was accompanied by the signs of the kingdom, healing and exorcism. The joy as the result of the mission indicates that the kingdom has become visible and present in Samaria and that God's rule has overcome the power of evil. In this context, Philip's preaching Christ is also significant and must have contained a portrait of Christ through whom God's kingdom came to people. For Luke, the phrase 'power of God' plays a key role in presenting that image of Christ. That the Messiah was conceived by the power of God and was anointed by

¹²⁴ It is one of Luke's interests to show the proper and improper use of money in relation to holy things (Barrett, 'Light on the Holy Spirit', p. 288). It is not clear, however, whether Simon was intending to make money out of conferring the Holy Spirit on others.

¹²⁵ Cf. *TDNT*, III, p. 612. It has been argued by Lüdemann ('Beginnings of Simonian Gnosis', pp. 420-426) that the word here refers to Simon's female partner Helena *ἐπίνοια* or *ἐννοια* for whose salvation Simon has come down to the world. But the context in which the word occurs in Acts bears no resemblance to the tradition concerning Helena and the concept of *ἐπίνοια* in Simonian doctrine. Here Luke's conviction is noticeable that God knows the heart. Luke designates God elsewhere as *ὁ καρδιογνώστης*, 'the One who knows the heart' (Lk. 1: 24; 15: 8); cf. *TDNT*, III, p. 613.

¹²⁶ 'Returning to God' is the basic feature of the kerygma to the Gentiles in Acts (14: 15; 15: 19; 26: 20); cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 338.

God in power is a typically Lukan portrait of Christ which serves as the counter-image to Simon who was acclaimed as the power of God. Simon took upon himself the divine attribute of greatness. To him and to the Samaritans, the greatness of the Christ of God is preached.

Simon also coveted the gift of God that he might acquire it in order to be able to impart it to others. Here again Simon sought to assume the role of God. The gift of the Holy Spirit belongs to God and therefore it is God who can give the Holy Spirit. Simon is urged to turn to God so that the intent of his heart may be forgiven. The fact that Luke is a theologian can be seen in his effort to bring out the misconception of God in the Samaritan context and also in the theological message that is preached in Samaria.

IV

CAESAREA (10: 34-43): GOD IS IMPARTIAL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

From Samaria, we now move to Caesarea where, according to Luke, the conversion of the first Gentile convert takes place. Wilson remarks that the conversion of Cornelius is the Gentile mission *par excellence*.¹ However, for Luke, the Cornelius episode is the prime example to show how the times of God have arrived in which God has acted in cleansing the Gentiles. In other words, the narrative speaks more about the cause of the mission than about the content.²

Peter's speech to Cornelius and his household is regarded as unique when compared to other speeches to the Gentiles in Acts. The contents of the speech are different from that of the Gentile sermons in Lystra (14: 15-17) and in Athens (17: 22-31).³ Second, the scheme of the speech in vv. 37-41 is similar to that of Peter's other speeches and of Paul's speech in Antioch (13: 16-41).⁴ Third, most importantly, there is no misconception of God present in the faith of Cornelius. The context says that Cornelius feared God (φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν) which points to his belief in one God. That belief is expressed in prayer and almsgiving (ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνας πολλάς).⁵ Hence the speech does not address a polemical situation as in Samaria or in any other Gentile settings. However, there is a wrong notion of God, but one held by Peter! The point of the narrative is to show how Peter received a new revelation about what God has done. His idea of God is corrected with the message that God has cleansed the unclean which means that God has

¹ *Gentile Mission*, p. 177.

² See ch. II, pp. 21-26; U. Wilckens, 'Kerygma und Evangelium nach Lukas (Beobachtungen zu Acta 10 34-43)', *ZNW* 49 (1958), pp. 236-237.

³ Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 128.

⁴ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 111; cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 351.

⁵ Prayer and alms-giving are characteristic features of Jewish religion and are part of Luke's ethics presented in the Gospel (Lk. 11: 41; 12: 33; 12: 20-21; cf. Ac. 9: 36).

accepted the Gentiles. This new-found knowledge not only confirmed for him that mission is mission by God but now also forms the basis of his preaching about God.

4.2 GOD WHO ACCEPTS

The opening words of the speech express Peter's experience when he says, 'I perceive (καταλαμβάνομαι) that God shows no partiality (προσωπολήμπτης)'. The word προσωπολήμπτης means, 'one who shows favour'.⁶ Peter has come to a recognition, both from the message in his own vision and from the realisation that God also appeared to Cornelius, that God does not favour one nation.⁷ The same idea is expressed positively in the following statement that in every nation (έν παντί έθνει) anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him (δεκτός αὐτῷ έστιν). The theme of 'acceptability' is fundamental to the Cornelius episode and to the Gentile mission.⁸

But the speech says more than what the context requires.⁹ It offers a summary of the gospel beginning with the earthly ministry of Jesus from his ministry in Galilee to his role as the judge of the living and the dead.¹⁰ In what seems to be a speech more devoted to the earthly career of Jesus than any other speech of Peter's,¹¹ there are references to God which are significant to Luke's theology in relation to Christology.

(ὁ θεός) απέστειλεν (v. 36),

έχρισεν αὐτόν ὁ θεός (v. 38a),

ὁ θεός ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ (v. 38c),

ὁ θεός ἤγειρεν (v. 40),

(ὁ θεός) έδωκεν αὐτόν έμφανῆ (v. 40b),

τοῖς προκεχειροτονημένοις ὑπό τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 41),

⁶ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 519.

⁷ Bruce, *Acts*, p. 224; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 359.

⁸ Jervell (*Luke and the People of God*, p. 57) thinks that vv. 34-35 is significant for the history of mission.

⁹ Wilson (*Gentile Mission*, p. 175) comments that Luke had one eye on the context and the other on presenting a stereotyped pattern of the speeches.

¹⁰ Pesch, *Apg*, I, p. 343.

¹¹ So, Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 128.

(ὁ θεὸς) παρήγγειλεν (v. 42a) and
ὁ ὠρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 42b).

However, we are not concerned with the relationship between theology and Christology as shown in this speech except to point out that Luke has placed the ministry of Jesus within the perspective of the acts of the impartial God. The theme of God who accepts might well be implied in the statement that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth.¹² The status of Jesus as the Christ is something which is bestowed upon him by God.¹³

By making reference to Jesus' ministry of healing and exorcism as the anointed one, Luke probably alludes also to the preaching of Jesus, the Christ. Jesus preached the acceptable year of the Lord (κυρίου δεκτόν) (Lk. 4: 19). The OT speaks of the coming of the Messiah as the acceptable time chosen by Yahweh (Is. 49: 8ff.; 58: 6ff.).¹⁴ With Jesus, Christ of God (Lk. 9: 20), it is the time of divine acceptance not the time for vengeance.¹⁵ This is probably one of the reasons that Luke has the content of Jesus' preaching as good news of peace (εὐαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην) in 10: 36. 'Peace' for Luke denotes absence of war (Lk. 11: 21; 14: 32) and therefore a quality characteristic of heaven itself (Lk. 2: 14; 19: 28). Jesus brings God's peace in a new way.¹⁶ God who accepts men from every nation has endowed Jesus with the message of acceptance and peace.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Peter's view about God has been corrected and he now sees God as accepting every nation that fears him. God has no favourites. This is reflected in the message to Cornelius and his household who feared God. The reference to the anointing of Jesus by God hints at the message of the acceptable year of the Lord.

¹² Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 171, n. 2. On Luke's theme of 'anointing', see ch. III, pp. 52-54.

¹³ Conzelmann (*Theology*, p. 176) maintains that the ministry of Jesus expresses a relationship of Jesus' subordination to God and his preeminence in relation to the world (cf. p. 180).

¹⁴ *TDNT*, II, p. 59.

¹⁵ Luke omits 'the day of vengeance of our God' from Is. 61: 1-2.

¹⁶ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 225.

V

CAESAREA (12: 20-24): GOD NOT MAN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Caesarea offers another event which is significant for our understanding of Luke's theology of God. The passage now to come under investigation is the account of the death of Herod Agrippa I in Ac. 12: 20-24.¹ It is quite obvious that, in this passage, Luke is not dealing with mission activity among non-Jews in Caesarea. Nevertheless, it contains an acclamation (v. 22) which represents a particular notion of god currently held by the Gentiles which was of fundamental importance to the mission in Luke's day. The narrative further illustrates how Luke challenges the notion from the standpoint of his own understanding of God.

Ac. 12, dominated by the dramatic episode of Peter's release from the prison, is shaped by a theological motif. The accent falls on the contrast between, on the one hand, evil attempts made by Herod Agrippa I to persecute some who belong to the Church (v. 1) and, on the other, the way in which God foiled his attempts particularly in the case of Peter whom God rescued from the hand of Herod (12: 11, 17).² Another important element in the narrative is the reference to prayer to God by the Church.³ This is followed by God's delivering Peter from prison through his angel.⁴ At the

¹ For historical details on the life of Agrippa and his rule in Judea, see E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. I, pp. 442-452; K. Lake, 'The Chronology of Acts', *BC*, V, pp. 446-452; recently, D. R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1990.

² Peter's role is purely passive and his liberation is an act of God alone (Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 389). Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, vol. II, pp. 151-58) points out that some of the key terminology reminds Luke's readers of the exodus. In that case, 'the hand of Herod' corresponds to 'the hands of the Egyptians' (Ex. 3: 8) and functions as a counter-image to the expression 'the hand of the Lord' which took its origin in the exodus narratives (see W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, ET, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979, pp. 117-18).

³ Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 22) thinks that the mention of a praying community must have originated with Luke himself. For the importance of prayer in Luke-Acts, see A. A. Trites, 'The Prayer Motif in Luke-Acts', *PLA*, pp. 168-186.

⁴ The word ὁ κύριος in vv. 11 & 17 refers to God (cf. Schneider, *Lukas*, p. 215).

conclusion of the chapter, immediately after the story of the death of Herod, Luke has, "Ὁ δὲ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἤρξανεν καὶ ἐπληθύνετο" (v. 24).⁵ It is Luke's purpose to show that the word grew and multiplied not only because of persecution from Herod but because the word had its origin in God.⁶

5.2 THE THEOLOGICAL ISSUE

5.2.1 A comparison between the versions of Luke and Josephus

The conflict between God and the king Herod reaches its climax ending in Herod's death (vv. 20-23). On the death of Herod, which happened between August 43 to February 44 AD, there are at least two other versions: i) Josephus (*Antiq.* XIX. 342-359) and ii) Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, 2. 10).⁷ Eusebius has obviously drawn materials from both Josephus and Luke (cf. *Hist. Eccl.* 2. 10. 1, 2). But many have drawn attention to the similarity of the accounts of Luke and Josephus.⁸ The stories of Josephus and Luke have more or less the same structure: i) Herod's appearance, ii) people's acclamation and iii) divine punishment and death. The accounts

⁵ It is a characteristically Lukan ending. The phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (τοῦ κυρίου) ἤρξανεν coupled with πληθύνειν occurs in Ac. 6: 7 and with ἰσχυεῖν in 19: 20. The construction αὐξάνω καὶ πληθύνω occurs in the LXX (Gen. 1: 22, 28; 9: 1, 7; 35: 11; Ex. 1: 7).

⁶ Τοῦ θεοῦ is subjective genitive (*BDF*, §163). In Acts the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (τοῦ κυρίου) is used with λαλεῖν (4: 31; 8: 25; 13: 46; 16: 32) καταγγέλειν (13: 5; 17: 13) ἀκούειν (13: 7, 44) διδάσκειν (18: 11) δέχεσθαι (8: 14; 11: 1; 13: 48); J. Kodell, 'The Word of God Grew', *Biblica*, 55 (1974), p. 508; Roloff, *Apg*, p. 192; Cadbury, 'Names for Christians and Christianity in Acts', *BC*, V, p. 391. The growth of the word of God also implies the growth of the Christian community which spread the word of God (Kodell, 'Word of God Grew', pp. 516ff.)

⁷ Lake ('Chronology of Acts', *BC*, V, p. 452) and D. C. Braund (*ABD*, I, p. 99): 44 AD; Schwartz (*Agrippa I*, pp. 107-111, 145): October 43 AD; E. M. Smallwood (*The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1976, p. 199): summer 44 AD.

⁸ It has been claimed that Luke tells the same story as Josephus (I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1983, p. 212) or an abbreviated version (Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 144). Some have recognised the agreements in essential points between the two accounts. (e. g., Munck, *Acts*, p. 114). Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 20) and Conzelmann (*Acts*, p. 96) think that both accounts are derived from a Jewish legend. Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 388) thinks that the version used by Luke is not in all respects superior to that of Josephus. Bruce (*Acts*, p. 256) takes the story of Josephus as a commentary on Luke's account.

differ in detail.⁹ The occasion of the appearance of Herod varies (*Antiq.* XIX, 343/*Ac.* 12: 21a). The description of his dress is more extensive in Josephus (XIX. 344/12: 21b). The mode of Herod's death is different (XIX. 346-347/12: 23). In Josephus, Agrippa himself explains the cause of his death (XIX. 347). Abbreviated as Luke's account may seem, it alone mentions the relationship between Herod and the cities of Tyre and Sidon that were economically dependent on Judea (v. 20).¹⁰ The similarities and differences have led scholars to believe that Josephus and Luke drew from different traditions, either written or oral, of Jewish origin.¹¹

It is the cause of Herod's death which bears the closest similarity in Luke and Josephus. Both stress the theological element in the acclamation. According to Josephus, Herod's flatterers raised their voices and addressed Herod as a god (φωνὰς ἀνεβόων, θεὸν προσαγορεύοντες) and said, 'May you be propitious to us and if we have hitherto feared you as a man, yet henceforth we agree that you are more than mortal in your being' (κρείττονα σε θνητῆς φύσεως ὁμολογοῦμεν) (*Antiq.* XIX. 345). Luke's shorter acclamation 'Θεοῦ φωνὴ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώπου' (v. 22) makes the same point. Herod is recognised not as the voice of god, but as a god by his voice, probably as a result of the speech he had made on his appearance.¹² The people regarded him as a god and this is the climactic point of the narrative.¹³ The punishment is rendered swiftly by the angel of God.

⁹ Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, p. 145.

¹⁰ Cf. I Ki. 5: 25; Ez. 27: 17.

¹¹ E. g., Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, p. 148; see n. 8.

¹² D reads, Θεοῦ φωναὶ (*BC*, III, p. 115). Conzelmann (*Acts*, p. 96) points out that it is not the veneration of the voice but of the person. In Josephus, Herod makes the speech after he saw the owl, the messenger of evil (ἄγγελον...κακῶν).

¹³ The acclamation is nothing to do with idolatry (*contra* Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 20) which as a religious phenomenon is related to 'idols' made of stone, wood etc. The phrase 'idolatrous acclamation' used by Dibelius in the sense of people idolising Herod is superfluous and it also tends to obscure the theological issue reflected in the words of the acclamation.

5.2.2. *God, not man* (v. 22)

The acclamation that king Agrippa is a god is similar to the expressions in the ruler-cults of antiquity. It reflects the Greco-Roman tradition of seeing in the earthly monarch the embodiment of divinity.¹⁴ There are instances of people ascribing divinity to the emperor and the emperors claiming divinity for themselves.¹⁵ A. Deissmann furnishes us with several examples of the application of the word 'god' to the emperors.¹⁶ Yet, the idea behind the term 'god' may connote various levels of divinity. A. D. Nock points out that if the ancients call someone 'god' it might mean different things to different people, the implication being that the term θεός may range from reference to Zeus to the οἱ παρὰ μικρὸν καλούμενοι θεοί.¹⁷ Sometimes the kings received divine honours without being specifically deified.¹⁸ The highest level of divinity may be seen in the cultic worship of the emperors.¹⁹

In the present context, however, the additional phrase οὐκ ἀνθρώπου adds an important dimension to the acclamation of Herod as a god. Herod is a god and *not a man*.²⁰ This means that man symbolises

¹⁴ The idea of divinity in kingship existed in Babylonia and Egypt which found its entrance into Greek and Roman religions and ways of life (see 'Deification', *ERE*, IV, pp. 525-532; W. W. Fowler, *Roman Ideas of Deity*, London: Macmillan, 1914, pp. 81-133).

¹⁵ J. Ferguson, *Among the Gods: An archaeological exploration of ancient Greek religion*, London: Routledge, 1989, pp. 159-172; L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, Connecticut: American Philological Association, 1931, pp. 1-35, 256-266; D. Cuss, *Imperial Cult and Honorary Terms in the New Testament*, Fribourg University, 1974, pp. 23-35.

¹⁶ *Light from the Ancient East*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927, pp. 344-346; Kee, *Origins of Christianity*, pp. 74-76; C. J. Roetzel, *The World that Shaped the New Testament*, London: SCM, 1987, pp. 72-76.

¹⁷ 'Notes on Ruler-Cult I-IV', A. D. Nock, I, p. 145.

¹⁸ ΣΥΝΝΑΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ', A. D. Nock, I, p. 244. Nock ('Notes on Ruler-Cult', p. 152) points out that in ruler-cult, Greek notions of the incarnation of the definite deity in a human frame for its lifetime are not common. On the question of the portrayal of the relationship between the Roman emperors and the gods, D. N. Schowalter (*The Emperor and the Gods*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) argues that the portrayal changed from emperor to emperor and even within the reign of a single emperor.

¹⁹ K. Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, ET, London: SCM, 1987, pp. 46-54.

²⁰ Roloff (*ApG*, p. 191) and Pesch (*ApG*, p. 367) take the meaning of the acclamation 'als Gott in Menschengestalt'. Such an interpretation does not find support in either Josephus or in Luke.

mortality whereas king Agrippa is divine. Herod's status as a god meant that he is above human nature and possibly immune from death. Josephus' account makes this point clearer than Luke's. According to Josephus, Herod laments saying, 'I who was by you called immortal (ἀθάνατος) am immediately hurried away by death (θανεῖν ἀπάγομαι)' (*Antiq.* XIX. 347). According to Josephus, Herod failed to stop the people (flatterers) ascribing to him divinity, which implies that Herod himself accepted divine status (XIX. 346). Furthermore, it is not a passive acceptance of divinity but also an active claim to be divine. Herod's royal apparel could also have been interpreted in the Greco-Roman world as part of a claim to divinity.²¹ Luke illustrates one of the current Gentile notions of deity as something which may properly be attributed to rulers.

That such a conception is totally wrong is shown by the immediate result, the death warrant from God himself. The angel of the Lord smote Herod immediately (παραχρήμα).²² Luke further mentions that Herod was eaten by worms (σκωληκόβρωτος) and died.²³ In Jewish literature, 'to be eaten by worms' is a typical death for one who despises God and considers himself God's equal.²⁴ The compiler of *II Maccabees* makes the latter point clear in his description of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. The worms (σκώληκας) swarmed within the body of the impious man and he was in pain and in anguish while the flesh fell from him. Antiochus

²¹ Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, p. 147; cf. *Legat.* 79 (E. M. Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini: Legatio Ad Gaium*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1970, p. 194).

²² Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 144; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 96. Luke mentions widespread activity of the angels (cf. Ac. 5: 19; 6: 15; 8: 26; 10: 3ff.; 27: 23). The word παραχρήμα occurs mostly in the context of miracles (cf. Lk. 1: 64; 4: 39; 5: 25; 8: 44, 47, 55; 13: 13; 18: 43; 22: 60; Ac. 3: 7; 5: 10; 13: 11; 16: 26). D adds, καὶ καταβὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος (see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 397).

²³ Josephus (*Antiq.* XIX, 349) speaks of Herod suffering from intense pain in his abdomen for five days before he died. The editor of D makes the death even more horrible by saying that Herod was eaten by worms while he was still living (E. J. Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts*, Cambridge University, 1966, p. 145). Cadbury (*The Book of Acts in History*, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955, p. 38) maintains that σκωληκόβρωτος (worm-eaten) is a popular agricultural usage. Roloff (*Apg.* p. 191) thinks it represents popular medicinal ideas.

²⁴ Several scholars (Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 67; Knox, *Acts*, p. 38; Schneider, *Apg.* II, p. 109, and Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 387) maintain that the mode of death is the typical end of the persecutors of God's Church. But as we have noted above the theological element is the heightening factor in Luke's presentation of the persecutors (cf. Ac. 5: 1-11; 13: 4-12).

could not endure his own stench and said, 'It is right to submit oneself to God and, being mortal (θνητὸν), not to think oneself equal to him (ἰσόθεα).'²⁵

A strong polemic against deification of the rulers is found in Philo.²⁶ Philo approached the question of the rulers as gods from the point of view of the religious Jew.²⁷ He stresses the need for emperors to imitate the virtues of the gods such as love and equality.²⁸ He also emphasises that the fatherhood of the king is to be based on the fatherhood of God along with other divine characteristics of rulership.²⁹ But his monotheistic scruples would not allow him to admit divinity in kings. Philo states that the most grievous impiety as far as the Jewish nation is concerned is to make the created and the corruptible nature of man (ἀνθρώπου γενητὴν καὶ φθαρτὴν τὴν φύσιν) appear uncreated and incorruptible through deification (εἰς ἀγέννητον καὶ ἄφθαρτον ὅσα τῷ δοκεῖν θεοπλαστήσαι) (*Legat.* 118). Philo apparently condemns Gaius for identifying himself with the demi-gods Dionysus, Heracles and the Dioscuri (*Legat.* 78) and with gods such as the Olympians, Hermes,

²⁵ *II Macc.* 9: 12; cf. S. Zeitlin (ed.), *The Second Book of Maccabees*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954, p. 183; note also, *Antiq.* XVII. 168ff.; *Is.* 14: 11; 66: 24; *Eccl.* 7: 17, 10: 8-11, 19: 3; *I Enoch* xlv. 6 (cf. W. O. E. Oesterley, *Ecclesiasticus*, Cambridge University, 1912, p. 51); see Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 387, n. 3; T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, London: Duckworth, 1983, p. 98, n. 31.

²⁶ Philo seems to be unaware of the deification of Agrippa. Probably he wrote before the incident. However, Philo's attitude is friendly towards him (*Legat.* 276-329). In the letter to Gaius from Agrippa which Philo probably helped to draft (so, Smallwood, *Legat.*, p. 292), Agrippa mentions that he was a Jew by birth and his ancestors were kings and some of them were high priests. This means, according to the letter that 'the office of the high priest is as superior in excellence to that of king as God surpasses men. For the office of one is to worship God, of the other to have charge of men' (*Legat.* 292). Agrippa could trace a Jewish descent as well as his Idumean (Smallwood, *Legat.* pp. 292ff.). Agrippa's part Jewish ethnic identity and his strong association with the Jews could not credit him with a right understanding of God.

²⁷ See *Legat.*, 74-112; 162-165; 351-368; also, Smallwood, *Legat.*, pp. 26-27. M. Hengel (*Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, vol. I, ET, London: SCM, 1974, p. 285) points out that Ben Sira, Daniel and Judith show that it is around the middle of the second century BC that the Jews undertook the polemic against the ruler cult for the first time.

²⁸ *Legat.* 85; E. R. Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus: Practice and Theory*, New Haven: Yale University, 1938, p. 109.

²⁹ *Spec.* iv, 184; Goodenough, *Politics of Philo*, p. 95.

Apollo and Ares (*Legat.* 93). The reason for Philo's condemnation is that Gaius no longer considered that he should 'abide within the bounds of human nature (ἐν τοῖς τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ὅροις) and he overstepped them in his eagerness to be thought of as a god' (*Legat.* 75; cf. 355). The deification of the king was rejected by Philo on the basis of the distinction between God and man, the nature of God and the nature of man, and man ought not to usurp the nature of God by declaring himself as god.³⁰ Luke reflects a similar theological position and formulates the acclamation to express the theology of God in which God and man are distinct.

A similar conviction is underlined by Luke in a few other contexts in Luke-Acts. The Q-saying in Luke 11: 9-13 conveys the antithesis between God and man rather more sharply than in Matthew 7: 7-11. If we accept the variant of P⁷⁵ and other mss for Lk. 11: 13 which have ὁ πατήρ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ instead of ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς in Matt. 7: 11, this will put the emphasis on 'the heavenly origin of the gifts of the divine Father compared with earthly gifts of earthly fathers'.³¹ The question of heavenly origin as opposed to human origin is at the centre of the debate between the priests and the scribes and Jesus in Jerusalem (Lk. 20: 1-8/ par.).³² Peter whose shadow had power to heal the sick refused to accept the respect shown by Cornelius with the words, ἐγὼ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος εἰμι (10: 26). Luke is not illustrating the humility of Peter,³³ but rather the impropriety of worship offered to a man (even an apostle!).³⁴

³⁰ Gaius, therefore, called the Jews οἱ θεομισεῖς for failing to recognise his godhead (*Legat.* 353). Goodenough (*Politics of Philo*, p. 99) draws attention to one of the many fragments hitherto not printed in which Philo states that the king is just as any man fashioned from the dust of the earth, and since the king is mortal, even if he is honoured as being an image of God, he should not vaunt himself; C. R. Holladay (*Theios Aner in Hellenistic-Judaism: A Critique of the Use of the Category in New Testament Christology*, Missoula: Scholars, 1977, p. 235) points out that dualism between Creator and creature, between God and man, is deeply entrenched in Philo.

³¹ Evans, *Luke*, p. 487; cf. H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, II, Freiburg: Herder, 1994, pp. 218ff.

³² Luke emphasises the seriousness behind the distinction between heaven, a circumlocution for God, and men by indicating the terrible consequence if it was admitted that John's ministry was from men (v. 6).

³³ *Contra* Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 350.

³⁴ Roloff (*Apog.*, p. 171) thinks that Cornelius probably is in danger of succumbing to his old Gentile habit of failing to draw a line between the Creator and the created. Such view has no support from the text. It is highly

A similar motif of worship but clearly in conflict with worshipping the living God is present in the Lystra episode. In Lystra, Paul and Barnabas declared themselves to be men with a view to condemn the attribution of names of gods to them and sacrifices offered to them (Ac. 14: 14ff.; cf. 3: 12). When this Lukan motif is compared with the acclamation to Agrippa the principle on which Luke's contrast between affirming divinity of the king and the reality of his nature as human is based becomes quite apparent.³⁵

So far we have been able to ascertain in at least three ways how Luke's theology of God emerges from the narrative of the death of Herod. First, Luke has placed vv. 20-23 firmly in the context of the progress of the God's mission to the Gentiles. The persecution is seen as an encounter between God and Herod Agrippa which culminates in Herod's acceptance of acclamation to him as god. Second, the acclamation underlines a wrong notion of God in Greco-Roman society against which Luke, as a theologian, presents a critique through the story. The narrative is not purely a political apology against kingship but questions seriously the theological assumptions behind attempts to ascribe divinity to kings. He contends that when kings and emperors accept or demand divine status it is a sin against God. Third, the polemic against the king's divinity offers an invaluable insight into Luke's view of God in which the natures of man and God are clearly distinguished. For Luke, theology impinges on anthropology. Right understanding of God involves a right understanding of man in relation to God. The few examples from Jewish literature have shown that the logic behind rejection of the deification of kings is that the king is mortal and therefore cannot assume the nature of God.³⁶ The same

unlikely that Luke intends to show Cornelius' worship of Peter as a denial of God since, according to Luke, the centurion feared God and prayed to him constantly. Pesch (*Apg*, I, p. 341) is probably right in maintaining that Cornelius thought that a man guided by the angels must have been 'ein übermenschliches Wesen'. But this should not be taken to mean that he had a wrong notion of God by offering to the created what is meant to the Creator. Further, Peter's speech to Cornelius and the household does not treat this as a theological issue to be addressed.

³⁵ Cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 82.

³⁶ Deissmann (*Light from the East*, p. 344) remarks that the Jews could not accept the idea of divine kings basically because of their monotheistic convictions. Goodenough (*Politics of Philo*, p. 113) tends to ignore this aspect in Philo's bold attempt to speak against the deification of Gaius. It is

theological-anthropological concern may be said to undergird the polemics of Luke.³⁷

5.3 HEROD DID NOT GIVE GLORY TO GOD (v. 23): *The Lukan Interpretation*

The narrative includes a further comment referring to Herod and God. Herod did not give glory to God (οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὴν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ). Josephus has no such comment in his version and Eusebius who follows the Lukan account closely has omitted this clause [cf. *Hist. Eccl.* 2. 10. 1]. According to the interpretation of Josephus, Herod did not reject the people's elevation of him to immortality.³⁸ According to the Christian interpretation of Eusebius the avenging minister of God overtook Herod because of his plot against the apostles (*Hist. Eccl.* 2. 10. 1).³⁹ The statement, therefore, is Lukan and gives an explanation of the punishment from the angel of God.⁴⁰ The question is, why does Luke use the phrase οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὴν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ to describe the cause of Herod's death? The readers would not have missed the point of the story if this statement had not been included by Luke. The death by being eaten by worms in itself would have conveyed the powerful imagery about the end met by blasphemers of God. We must ask, therefore, how does Luke expect the readers to understand the whole phrase and what

the theological concern which isolated the Jews in the eyes of Gaius from the rest of the nations (cf. *Legat.* 353, 357).

³⁷ H. Vorländer ('ἄνθρωπος', *DNTT*, II, p. 565) rightly observes that there is no self-contained anthropology in the NT. He writes, 'Statements about man are always partly theological pronouncements. He always appears as man vis-à-vis God'.

³⁸ Cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* XIX. 346; Schneider, *Apg.* II, p. 108. The expression ἀνθ' ᾧν is classical meaning 'return for which' = 'because' (*BDF*, § 208).

³⁹ It is not Luke's whole intention to show that God punished Herod because he persecuted the Church (cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, pp. 388ff.; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 213; Knox, *Acts*, p. 38; Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, p. 146).

⁴⁰ Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 20) takes the remark as Luke's naive description of the judgement. Lake's (*BC*, IV, p. 140) comment is out of place here since he explains the phrase οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὴν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ, on the basis of several uses of δόξαν διδόναι in the writings of John, to mean 'confess the truth' or 'pray for forgiveness'. He (*Studies*, p. 139) also ignores the article for δόξα. Bauer (*BAG*, p. 203) understands the usage of δ. διδόναι τῷ θεῷ in Ac. 12: 23 as referring to 'a form of religious devotion'. G. H. C. Macgregor (*The Acts of the Apostles, IB*, IX, New York: Abingdon, 1954, p. 163): 'admit oneself in the wrong and ask forgiveness'. These meanings are hardly justified by the main thrust of the story.

new dimension, if any, does the phrase bring to Herod's death? Most importantly, what are the theological perceptions which seem to underlie the expression?

5.3.1 'Glory' in Luke

First of all, it is important to inquire about the word δόξα which holds the key to the meaning of the phrase οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὴν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ and to understanding the present context. Δόξα occurs more frequently in Luke's gospel than in the other synoptic gospels - 13 times (Lk. 2: 9, 14, 32; 4: 6; 9: 26, 31, 32; 12: 27; 14: 10; 17: 18; 19: 38; 21; 27; 24: 26) and in Acts 4 times (7: 2, 55; 12: 23; 22: 11) compared to eight in Matthew (4: 8; 6: 13, 29; 16: 27; 19: 28; 24: 30; 25: 31) and three in Mark (8: 38; 10: 37; 13: 26). In the gospel, it is only Luke who has added references to 'glory' in the birth, transfiguration and the triumphal entry narratives (cf. 2: 9; 9: 26/par.; 19: 38/par.). To understand the uses of δόξα by Luke, it is instructive to have a general view of its meaning and functions in the NT. A good number of studies on δόξα in the NT observe that they are closer to the LXX than to secular Greek. It is often maintained that δόξα in the LXX has lost its basic Greek meaning of 'opinion' and 'conjecture' and acquired the characteristic meanings of the Hebrew כבוד.⁴¹ Though δόξα translates no fewer than twenty-five Hebrew words the close relationship between δόξα and כבוד occupies the attention of scholars since כבוד (כְּבוֹד and כָּבוֹד) is rendered by δόξα about 177 times out of about 199 occurrences of כבוד in the OT. The next maximum number of occurrences for δόξα is its rendering of תפארת about 16 times. However, it does not necessarily follow that δόξα should always be understood on the

⁴¹ E. g., A. M. Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ*, Norwich: Libra, 1967, pp. 23-28; G. Kittel, 'δόξα', *TDNT*, II, pp. 232-253; G. H. Davies, 'Glory', *IDB*, New York: Abingdon, 1962, p. 402; S. Aalen, 'Glory', *DNTT*, II, p. 46; L. H. Brockington, 'The Septuagintal Background to the New Testament use of ΔΟΞΑ', *Studies in the Gospels*, ed. D. E. Nineham, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955, pp. 1-8; M. Weinfeld, 'כבוד', *TWAT*, IV, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1984, pp. 23-40; C. C. Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1992, pp. 134-153; E. C. E. Owen, 'δόξα and Cognate Words', *JTS*, 33 (1932), pp. 137-9. Owen deals mostly with the use of δόξα in the Patristic Greek. The Greek meanings of δόξα are: expectation, notion, opinion of oneself and others have of one, repute, honour etc. (*LS*, p. 444).

basis of the word it translates in the majority of cases. The basic idea behind כבוד-δόξα is expressed by several English words such as 'honour', 'splendour', 'radiance', 'brightness', 'majesty', 'glory' etc.⁴² What is important to note here is that the meanings of כבוד-δόξα in the LXX can be broadly classified into anthropological and theological references.⁴³ That is to say, the basic ideas of כבוד-δόξα are expressed in the LXX in connection with man and things associated with man and also in connection with God referring to his nature, his presence and his acts.⁴⁴

In the anthropological application, כבוד-δόξα denotes something 'weighty' in man that brings 'importance' to him.⁴⁵ It refers to the manifestation of the person in terms of his material possessions and his striking *gravitas* in society.⁴⁶ It, therefore, brings 'reputation' since the outward manifestation brings honour and glory to renown.⁴⁷ There are some uses of δόξα which correspond to this anthropological meaning in Q and in Luke's special materials. But Luke's usage shows his distinctive application. In the Lukan pericope of the marriage feast in 14: 7-11, the term δόξα refers to the honour and social esteem a man receives in the presence of others.⁴⁸ In the Q-saying in Lk. 12: 27, 'even Solomon

⁴² Davies ('Glory', p. 401) recognises the difficulty in finding the exact English equivalent to convey the meaning behind כבוד-δόξα.

⁴³ This observation is drawn mostly on the basis of the listing of the occurrences of δόξα in E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint*, Pt. I, Oxford: Clarendon, 1892, pp. 341-343; cf. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. I, ET, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1970, p. 239-40; Davies, 'Glory', p. 401.

⁴⁴ G. Kittel's analysis of δόξα underlines this basic distinction in the use of כבוד-δόξα. (see particularly, *TDNT*, II, pp. 238, 239).

⁴⁵ von Rad, *Theology*, vol. I, p. 239.

⁴⁶ The word כבוד-δόξα is used in connection with πλοῦτος (I Kings: 3: 13; II Chr. 17: 5; Pr. 3: 16; Ecc. 6: 2; Es. 10: 2), with χρήματα (II Chr. 1: 11, 12) and with ἰσχύς (I Chr. 16: 28). For more OT references, see *TDNT*, p. 238; *BDB*, pp. 458-59. Aalen (*DNTT*, II, pp. 44-45) fails to recognise this aspect. His claim τίμη not δόξα being used in NT for honour shown to man is untenable, as Lk. 14: 7-11 shows. Other Hebrew words translated by δόξα bear both theological (T) anthropological (A) connotations referring exclusively to: מַלְכוּת majesty [Is. 14: 11 (A); 24: 14 (T); Ex. 15: 7 (T)] הַגְּדָל authority [Num. 27: 20 (A); Jb. 37: 22 (A)], תְּפִיכָה beauty [Ex. 28: 2, 36 (A); I Chr. 22 (A): 5; II Chr. 3: 6 (A); Is. 3: 18 (A)]; כֹּחַ strength [Ps. 68: 34 (T), Is. 12: 2 (T)] עוֹשֵׂה רֵיחַ weath [Ps. 112: 3 (T)]; כְּבוֹד glory [Pr. 14: 28 (A)].

⁴⁷ *TDNT*, II, p. 243.

⁴⁸ Nolland, *Luke 9: 21-18: 34*, p. 749; Evans, *Luke*, p. 570.

in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these', the word δόξα refers to the royal splendour and magnificence. It probably means not Solomon's dress but his riches and pomp of which the OT offers information.⁴⁹ In the temptation narrative 'glory' is used in association with the kingdoms of the world (Lk. 4: 6).⁵⁰ It does not matter whether Luke expanded the Matthean version,⁵¹ or whether Matthew abbreviated the Lukan,⁵² it is noteworthy that in Luke's wording 'glory of the kingdoms' and 'authority' are juxtaposed.⁵³ The meaning of δόξα here implies more than the riches and the material possessions; it specifically refers to the political power of the kingdoms in the inhabited world (οἰκουμένη).⁵⁴ All these uses are significant for understanding 'glory' in Luke. As in the LXX, the word is applied by Luke to men and the earthly powers with the meaning of splendour, radiance, honour and authority.

What is important to note, however, is that in these three contexts the use of 'glory' in relation to man is contrasted with Luke's understanding of God. The different expressions of human glory in the gospel are confronted by Luke's theology of God. For Luke, from the glory of man, from the glory of the king Solomon and from the glory and the authority of the kingdoms of the world one can draw lessons to understand the nature of God and his demands. Luke's aim in the pericope of the marriage feast is to demonstrate that 'real honour will come not from one's self-seeking choices (Lk. 14: 7), but from what is bestowed on one by another'.⁵⁵ This is explained in the saying at the end, 'For every

⁴⁹ I Ki. 10: 4-5, 21, 23; II Chr. 9: 4, 20, 22; see Nolland, *Luke 9: 21-18: 34*, p. 693.

⁵⁰ Δόξα is used for the royal splendour of Simon Maccabeus (*I Macc.* 14: 4ff.), for the royal style and pomp exhibited in the wedding between Alexander and Cleopatra (*I Macc.* 10: 58) and in Josephus the queen of Sheba was a queen μετὰ πολλῆς δόξης (*Antiq.* VIII. 166).

⁵¹ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, I-IX, p. 516.

⁵² Schürmann, *Lukas*, 1, p. 211.

⁵³ Luke has the phrase καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν along with his own clause τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἄπασαν. For comments on this, see Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 516; Schürmann, *Lukas*, 1, p. 212.

⁵⁴ For the political implications behind this temptation, see G. Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*, ET, Minneapolis, Fortress, 1991, pp. 212-221. The secular meaning of 'authority' is common only in Luke (cf. Lk. 20: 20; 22: 53; 23: 7; Ac. 5: 4; 9: 14; 26: 10, 12).

⁵⁵ J. Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, London: Doubleday, 1986, p. 1045. Jesus'

one who exalts himself will be humbled and the one who humbles himself will be exalted'. The passive form of the saying indicates the role of God.⁵⁶ The argument in Lk. 12: 27 is not that the clothing materials produced by human craft and industry cannot beat the beauties of nature,⁵⁷ but rather the emphasis is that God's care and provision evidenced in nature are far superior to the glory of Solomon.⁵⁸ Satan's allurement to the Messiah to win the glory and the authority of the kingdoms of the world with worshipping him is overcome on the principle of the monotheistic understanding of God and of man's responsibility to worship God alone (cf. Dt. 6: 4).⁵⁹ The anthropological aspect of 'glory' in whichever form it manifests itself in the world is contrasted by Luke's understanding of God in human life.

5.3.1.1 *The 'glory' of man*

Luke's explanatory remark that Herod did not give glory to God is not simply another way of saying that he failed to reject the ascription of divinity.⁶⁰ It is not merely a sin of omission but it relates to Herod's action which is counted as tantamount to desisting from giving the glory to God. The phrase should be taken as a critique of the entire aspect of Herod's life portrayed in this small section of vv. 20-23. This will enable us to judge precisely in what way Luke's depiction of Herod seems to suggest to the readers that the glory was not given to God. There are two main features in the episode: i) the visit of the Tyrians and Sidonians to make peace with Herod and ii) his own appearance on the appointed day. Luke's delineation of these two aspects of Herod's

admonition 'to go and sit in the lowest place' is based on the way God acts in exalting one who humbles himself (C. H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A literary and Theological Commentary of the Third Gospel*, New York: Crossroad, 1984, p. 197).

⁵⁶ Nolland, *Luke 9: 21-18:34*, p. 749.

⁵⁷ *Contra* Nolland, *Luke 9: 21-18:34*, p. 693.

⁵⁸ Evans, *Luke*, p. 528.

⁵⁹ Barrett (*Holy Spirit*, p. 51) treats the temptations as Messianic. Schürmann (*Lukas*, 1, p. 212), on the other hand, comments, 'Jesus stellt sich abermals unter die "Menschen"'. Nolland (*Luke 1 - 9: 20*, p. 180) suggests that though temptation was experienced by Jesus in a unique messianic context, it is a universal human temptation.

⁶⁰ *Contra* Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 108.

life was guided by his concept of human glory in the world which stands and expresses itself in contrast to the glory of God. It is true that the word δόξα does not figure in these features but δόξα in 12: 23 gives the impression to his readers that Luke relates the story within the conceptual framework of 'glory'. By this Luke enables better understanding of Herod's death and uses it to advance his own theological viewpoint.

The first feature of the narrative which highlights human δόξα is the visit of the delegates from Tyre and Sidon on their mission to meet the king and make peace. This is entirely a Lukan addition and its relevance to the story of Herod's death remains a puzzle for scholars.⁶¹ It is hard to estimate its relevance here partly because Luke himself does not draw a clear picture of the situation.⁶² Luke says that Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon,⁶³ cities of the Roman province of Syria.⁶⁴ Delegates came to Caesarea seeking peace (ἤτοῦντο εἰρήνην) with the king. Luke sees the relationship between the two regions in terms of Tyre and Sidon's dependency for food (τὸ τρέφεσθαι αὐτῶν τὴν χώραν) on Herod's administration.⁶⁵ The nature of the problem could well be that Herod had banned grain-exports to Tyre and Sidon.⁶⁶ Due to the lack of historical information, it is hard to assess the effects of the economic embargo but what is clear is that Luke is not referring to a mere trade dispute. The situation must have been serious as the people sought reconciliation with someone powerful who was passionately enraged with them.

If we take into consideration Luke's use of τρέφω/τροφή elsewhere, the words denote basic sustenance (cf. Lk. 12: 24; 23: 29; Ac. 2: 46;

⁶¹ Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, p. 144, n. 157. Knox (*Acts*, 38, n. 2) argues that the historians make incidental introductions of economic facts to their narratives of history. He thinks that the story was probably known to the Church in Jerusalem.

⁶² Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 386.

⁶³ The word θυμομαχέω means 'rage violently' (Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 386).

⁶⁴ Smallwood, *Jews*, p. 198.

⁶⁵ Such a dependence existed at the time of Solomon's reign (I Kings 5: 1-12). Ezekiel refers to Tyre as a trading country and mentions of commercial relationship with Judah and Israel (Ez. 27: 17).

⁶⁶ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 386; Roloff, *Apg*, p. 191.

9: 19; 14: 17; 27: 33, 34, 36, 38).⁶⁷ The situation could be that the livelihood of the people was seriously affected. Smallwood explains that Herod took the law into his own hands without referring the problem to the legate of Syria, and brought the people of Tyre and Sidon to their knees by an economic blockade.⁶⁸ Luke probably records the incident here because, for him, it is an arrogant display of Herod's authority.⁶⁹

Why should Luke choose this event to illustrate and underline the power Agrippa exercised to the extent of depriving people of their sources of sustenance? There is no easy answer to this question but it may be surmised that Luke thought this incident a fitting example of man's self-glory in the light of his reference to the famine which affected the whole world (Ac. 11: 28). Luke's information about the famine during the reign of Claudius (41 - 54 AD) has not been regarded as completely unhistorical though questions are raised as to when it occurred and how widespread it was.⁷⁰ Luke has already established a connection between the famine and the narrative in ch. 12 (cf. 12: 1). God's punishment of Herod happened when Paul and Barnabas were fulfilling their relief mission to Jerusalem. The Christian community which decided (ᾠρίσαν) to support the brethren afflicted by the famine stands as a model by which Herod's authority may be judged in terms of his punitive economic blockade of the Tyrians and

⁶⁷ According to Bauer (*BAG*, p. 825), their country *supported itself* by importing grain (τρέφω - 'feed, nourish, support, provide with food').

⁶⁸ *Jews*, p. 198. Schwartz (*Agrippa I*, p. 144) thinks that it is interference on the part of Herod in the business of Tyre and Sidon. Such a view does not match Luke's understanding of the situation. Cf. n. 103.

⁶⁹ Herod's anger is conceivable since there was persistent hostility between him and Vibius Marsus, the governor of Syria (cf. *Antiq.* XIX. 340ff., 361; XX. 1). Josephus describes Agrippa as a generous man (*Antiq.* XVIII. 144-145, 160; XIX. 335-37) and benevolent to those of other nations (XIX. 330). This is not Luke's impression of Herod!

⁷⁰ Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 374) thinks that the famine was not universal. W. M. Ramsay (*St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1902, pp. 49ff.) suggests that it happened between the winter 43/44 - 46 AD. Schwartz (*Agrippa I*, p. 215) thinks that the famine took place in the late forties after the death of Agrippa. There are valuable informations about frequent shortages of food in the first century AD in B. W. Winter's 'Acts and Food Shortages', *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, vol. 2, Grand Rapids: WB. Eerdmans, 1994, pp. 59-78.

Sidonians.⁷¹ In such a context, Herod's action manifests itself as an expression of human pride and glory.⁷²

The second feature is Luke's description of Herod's appearance which echoes the meaning of δόξα as brightness, magnificence, splendour and authority in human terms. Though Luke makes only a brief mention of the dress with the phrase ἐσθῆτα βασιλικήν,⁷³ his subsequent description of Herod enthroned and making an oration suggests the pomp and glory of his kingdom. The nature of the royal apparel, the effect of its brightness and magnificence, marked important occasions for Roman emperors, kings and procurators and must have been all too familiar to the readers.⁷⁴

The description of the royal robes by Josephus adds to the picture.⁷⁵ Josephus comments that the garment was made of silver. On the day of Herod's appearance, Josephus reports, 'the silver illumined by the touch of the first rays of the sun, was wondrously

71 Luke's economic interest (τὸ τρέφεισθαι) is also in line with his understanding of God. For him, God is one who feeds (τρέφει) humanity (Lk. 12: 24). Luke prefers a universal language 'God' for Matthew's 'your heavenly father' (Mt. 6: 26). According to Luke, God gives life to all men (Ac. 17: 25) and he gives fruitful seasons satisfying the hearts of men with food (τροφή) and gladness (Ac. 14: 17).

72 M. R. Strom ['An Old Testament Background to Acts 12. 20-23', *NTS*, 32 (1986), pp. 289-92] draws parallels between the description of Tyrian king in Ez. 28 and that of Herod in Ac. 12: 20-23 to argue that Luke has structured the narrative so as to demonstrate Herod's oppression and hubris as rationale for the judgement. Strom could find no parallel for 'because he did not give God the glory' in Ez. 28. A better comparison of Ac. 12: 20-23, however, could be made with Isaiah's description of a Babylonian king in Is. 13 & 14 where the word ὕβρις occurs twice (Is. 13: 11; ὕβριζοντες - Is. 13: 3). The parallel features are: i) Babylon's glory (ἐνδοξος) (Is. 13: 19) - Herod's glory (vv. 20-21); ii) The king of Babylon said in his heart, 'I will set my throne on high...I will make myself like the Most High' (Is. 14: 13-14) - 'The voice of a god and not of man' (v. 22); iii) he was an oppressor (Is. 14: 4, 6) - Herod was a persecutor (12: 2); iv) the Medes will slaughter their young men (Is. 13: 18) and God will cut off from Babylon name and remnant (Is. 14: 22; cf. v. 11) - The angel of the Lord smote Herod (v. 23a); v) his pomp was brought down to Sheol and the worms were his covering (Is. 14: 11) - Herod was eaten by worms (v. 23b). For a discussion on the ὕβρις of the Babylonian king, see especially, W. S. Prinsloo, 'Isaiah 14 12-15 - Humiliation, Hubris, Humiliation', *ZAW*, 93 (1981), pp. 433-438; J. D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, Texas: Word Books, 1985, pp. 207-213).

73 The term ἐσθῆς refers to highpriestly vestment in *I Esd.* (8: 71, 73) and to military uniform in *II Macc.* (8: 35; 11: 8).

74 Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 96.

75 Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 388.

radiant and by its glitter inspired fear and awe in those who gazed intently upon it' (*Antiq.* XIX, 344). Josephus further speaks of Herod Agrippa's love of glory (φιλοτιμία) (*WJ* 5. 154),⁷⁶ and on another occasion, according to Josephus, Agrippa's royal apparel was so glamorous that it instigated jealousy in Herodias (*Antiq.* XVIII, 240-41). These descriptions help us to obtain a fuller picture of Agrippa's appearance. Although Luke's comment is brief, his depiction of royal clothes in Lk. 7: 25 is with sarcasm. To a Q-saying, Luke has added a description of the royal dress as gorgeous (ἐνδόξω) and the life in the royal palace as luxury (τρυφῇ) (Lk. 7: 25b).⁷⁷ If we take the references to wilderness and palace to imply a contrast between John the Baptist and Herod then the splendour and luxury refers to Herod Antipas who imprisoned John.⁷⁸ Thus the picturesque description of Agrippa's appearance could hardly have failed to make Luke's readers think of human δόξα. Luke has drawn a picture in which Agrippa is shown as a man of splendour, honour and magnificence. This is in keeping with Luke's own understanding of earthly 'glory' based on the LXX.

Luke's life-sketch of Herod in vv. 20-21 illustrates the human glory of a vassal king like Agrippa I. His authority is exercised to punish the people of other regions who depend on him for the supply of food. His royal appearance is indicative of his honour and splendour. Such features of Luke's story serve to illustrate the human aspect of δόξα based on the LXX and his own use of δόξα in the gospel.

This human glory now usurps the position of God which is the climax of the story. The challenge to human glory which assumes divinity springs from his conviction about God which is expressed in terms of 'glory'. Luke repudiates the notion of 'the king as god'

⁷⁶ Cf. *Antiq.* XVIII. 291; XIX. 352. The word φιλοτιμία means 'thing on which one prides oneself' (Smallwood, *Legat.* p. 300).

⁷⁷ On source, cf. Bovon, *Lukas 1,1-9,50*, pp. 369ff. 'Ἐν τρυφῇ is a dative of possession and the stress falls on the object possessed (*BDF*, § 189). Luke has also altered Matthew's ἐν τοῖς οἴκοις τῶν βασιλέων το ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις εἰσὶν which may be taken to mean 'royal palace'. The word τὸ βασίλειον a neuter adjective with the article either in singular or plural came to mean 'the royal palace' (Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 674).

⁷⁸ Evans, *Luke*, p. 354.

on the ground of his theology of God.

5.3.1.2 The 'glory' of God - 'God of Glory'

In the theological sense, the word δόξα in the LXX forms part of the semantic field used to speak of God.⁷⁹ In the OT, the term 'glory of the Lord' (כבוד יהוה) became an important *terminus technicus* in describing theophanies (cf. II Cor. 4: 1-12).⁸⁰ It often expresses the divine presence as a luminous manifestation.⁸¹ In this sense, as Kittel has noted, the word δόξα in the NT means, i) 'divine and heavenly radiance', ii) the 'loftiness and majesty of God', and iii) even the 'being of God' and iv) 'his world'.⁸² Most of these meanings, if not all, correspond to the use of δόξα in Luke-Acts.

In Luke, we find the most impressive expression of the manifestation of divine δόξα.⁸³ The idea of glory in terms of 'brightness' and 'splendour' in relation to God can be noted in several accounts in Luke-Acts. In the narratives of Paul's conversion, the light appears to him (Ac. 9: 4; 22: 11; 26: 13). The light was brighter than the sun (26: 13) and Paul could not see because of the 'glory' [brightness (RSV)] of the light (22: 11). Although there is no specific reference to God, the accounts of Paul's experience of light contains features drawn from the OT theophanies.⁸⁴ Some have drawn attention to this in the birth narrative (Lk. 1: 26-38).⁸⁵ In Simeon's praise (Lk. 2: 32), 'glory' corresponds to 'light' (cf. Is. 60: 1, 19; 58: 8).⁸⁶ The reference to God is explicit here because it is God who prepared the light for revelation to the nations (2: 31, 32). In the transfiguration, the description of the cloud overshadowing and the garments

⁷⁹ All 76 occurrences of כבוד in which God/Lord is the direct referent are translated by δόξα (Newman, *Glory-Christology*, p. 148).

⁸⁰ von Rad, *OT Theology*, I, p. 240; *TWAT*, IV, pp. 27-34.

⁸¹ Davies, 'Glory', *IDB*, p. 402; Brockington, 'Septuagintal Background', p. 3.

⁸² *TDNT*, II, p. 237.

⁸³ von Rad, *TDNT*, II, p. 247.

⁸⁴ See Roloff, *Apg.* p. 149; Pesch, *Apg.* I, p. 303; cf. Marshall, *Acts*, p. 169.

⁸⁵ See C. Westermann, 'Alttestamentliche Elemente in Lukas 2, 1-20', in *Tradition und Glaube: Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971, pp. 317-327; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, pp. 18ff.

⁸⁶ Evans, *Luke*, p. 217; Nolland, *Luke, 1-9:20*, p. 120.

becoming λευκὸς ἑξαστράπτων echoes the theophany vision in Ez. 1 (cf. vv. 4, 7).⁸⁷ It emphasises the fact that Jesus belongs to the sphere of God.⁸⁸

The luminous manifestation of the presence of God, according to Luke, is a visible experience. He, therefore, uses the verb 'seeing' in connection with 'glory'. i) Moses and Elijah appeared (ὀφθέντες) in glory (Lk. 9: 30); ii) Peter and John saw (εἶδον) Jesus' glory (Lk. 9: 32); iii) Paul could not see (ἐνέβλεπον) because of the glory (Ac. 22: 11); iv) the 'glory of the Lord' shone around (περιέλαμψεν) them (Lk. 2: 9); v) Stephen saw (εἶδεν) the glory of God (Ac. 7: 55) and vi) the 'God of Glory' appeared (ᾤφθη) to Abraham (Ac. 7: 2). Luke understands the divine manifestation in theophanic terms and describes it explicitly as the glory of God.

Above all, Luke views God as the God of glory (ὁ θεὸς τῆς δόξης) (Ac. 7: 2).⁸⁹ Stephen's speech begins with the reference to the appearance of the God of glory to Abraham and concludes with Stephen seeing the glory of God in heaven (7: 55).⁹⁰ The God of glory is in the highest heaven.⁹¹ Two observations must be made here: i) Stephen preaches about the God of glory.⁹² God appeared to Abraham, to Moses (vv. 30-33) and now his glory is seen by Stephen (v. 55). The God of glory appeared in places outside Judea

⁸⁷ Nolland, *Luke 9: 21-18: 34*, p. 498.

⁸⁸ Bovon, *Lukas 1,1-9,50*, pp. 495ff. There is a combination of theophany and Christophany in the transfiguration account (Evans, *Luke*, p. 413).

⁸⁹ Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 71; cf. Ps. 29: 3; Bruce (*Acts*, p. 145): 'God all-glorious'.

⁹⁰ Pesch, *Apg*, I, p. 248.

⁹¹ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 292.

⁹² The contents of Stephen's speech might not have entirely originated from Luke. Nevertheless, the speech also shows marks of the editing of Luke [C. H. H. Scobie, 'The Origins and Development of Samaritan Christianity', *NTS*, 19 (1972/73), pp. 390-414]. J. A. Montgomery (*The Samaritans*, New York: KTAV, 1968, p. 211) notes that the Samaritan Pentateuch avoided anthropomorphisms. Montgomery (*Samaritans*, 210ff.) further observes that Samaritan theology stressed the incorporeality and impassibility of God surpassing Judaism in this respect. (Also, see R. J. Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews: The Origins of Samaritanism Reconsidered*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975, pp. 132ff.). With regard to 'glory', J. Fossum ('Sects and Movements', *The Samaritans*, ed. A. D. Crown, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1989, p. 366, ns. 296, 297) notes that in Samaritanism 'glory' was seen as a human-like lieutenant of God.

(cf. vv. 2, 5, 8, 9, 17, 20, 25).⁹³ ii) The glory of God in heaven does not imply aloofness⁹⁴ but polemicises against the view that the glory of God is rooted to one particular place on earth.⁹⁵ The quotation from Is. 66: 1-2 also adds to Luke's understanding of the glorious God for whom Heaven is his throne and the earth is his footstool (v. 49).⁹⁶ The glory of God, the heavenly and the transcendent presence of God, appears on earth and is visible from earth too.

The heavenly vision of God, in the gospel of Luke, presents a *scene* in which the glory of the Father, the glory of Christ, and the glory of the angels are seen together (9: 23-27). The reference to triadic glory is Lukan (Lk. 9: 26) whereas Mark (8: 38) and Matthew (16: 27) have only ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ.⁹⁷ In Luke, the Father, the Son of Man and the angels constitute the heavenly court.⁹⁸ In contrast to Mt. 16: 27, in Luke the son of Man does not appear as judge to repay everybody according to their deeds but 'as an advocate in the public setting of appearance before God and the holy angels'.⁹⁹ In the birth narrative (Lk. 2: 12-14), the role of the angels dominates the scene of the appearance of glory. There is an angel to convey the message of God and there is an 'army of heaven' (πλῆθος στρατιᾶς οὐρανοῦ) giving glory to God through the acclamation of praise (cf. I Kings 22: 19; Is. 6; Jer. 19: 13; Hos. 13: 4) for the wondrous revelation of God's glory upon earth.¹⁰⁰ Such

⁹³ Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 1977, p. 271; Munck (*Acts*, p. 66) rightly comments that such a view reflects Luke's programme of mission further away from Jerusalem.

⁹⁴ *Contra* Rackham, *Acts*, p. 101.

⁹⁵ Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 1977, p. 272; Bruce, *Acts*, pp. 156-163.

⁹⁶ In the gospel, Luke has, therefore, avoided the Matthean phrase θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ (Mt. 19: 28; 25: 31). Unlike in some of the apocalyptic literature, Luke does not affix 'glory' to objects and places (for a treatment of 'glory' in the apocalyptic literature, see Newman, *Glory-Christology*, pp. 105-133, especially, p. 132).

⁹⁷ The relationship between God and the Son of Man need not be raised here. For explanations, see Evans, *Luke*, p. 411; Schweizer, *Lukas*, p. 103.

⁹⁸ Schürmann (*Lukas*, 1, p. 549) points out that the scene of the Gerichtssall is absent in other passages relating to the coming of the son of Man. Roloff (*Apg*, p. 127) does not see reference to it in the appearance of God's glory in Ac. 7: 55.

⁹⁹ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 789; Schweizer (*Lukas*, p. 103): 'Jesus ist Gott unterstellt'.

¹⁰⁰ Westermann ('Alttestamentliche Elemente', p. 323) comments that the

scenes of God's glory were probably uppermost in Luke's mind when he mentioned the immediate intervention of the angel of the Lord to smite Herod. Further, it could be one of the reasons why he refers to the angel in the story in an unconventional way. In other contexts, Luke either mentions the appearance of the angel (Lk. 1: 11; 2: 9; 24: 4; Ac. 1: 10; 10: 3; 12: 7; 27: 23) or underlines the fact that the angel was sent by God (Lk. 1: 26). Herod's human glory of pomp and authority and his acceptance of divinity are effectively contrasted with the splendour and the glory of the Lord.

Luke's concept of glory in relation to God is quite significant for his theology of God. Luke's concept of God's glory is also the theological background against which Herod's act of not giving glory to God needs to be considered. For Luke, God is the God of glory and the glory of the Lord represents the perceptible luminous manifestation of God upon the earth. The scene of God in heaven with the army of angels is an important aspect to understanding the glorious God and the role of the angels in the heavenly court. All these aspects are denied in the exhibition of human honour and splendour and in Herod's acceptance of the ascription of divinity. Luke's rationale for the death of Herod is to be found within the contours of God as the God of glory.

The presence of the God of glory is to be acknowledged with praise. The expression 'give glory to God' is not very common in the OT.¹⁰¹ There are sporadic demands to give God the glory which means 'to recognise the import of his deity'.¹⁰² It is 'a duty laid upon men and angels to give glory to God. To give God the glory cannot possibly mean giving something which God does not have but it means acknowledging what is due to him'.¹⁰³ Hymnic acclamations in throne visions (Ez. 1; Is. 6) and in praise for creation (Ps. 29: 1-9) contain references to giving glory to God.¹⁰⁴

angel with the message and the angels praising combined two different appearances.

¹⁰¹ W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, p. 406.

¹⁰² *TDNT*, II, p. 241.

¹⁰³ *TDNT*, II, p. 244.

¹⁰⁴ Weinfeld (*TWAT*, IV, p. 27) points out that 'giving glory to God' occurs in the context of confessing one's own sins (cf. Jos. 7: 19; I Sam. 6: 5; Jer. 13: 6). The context in Ac. 12: 20-23 is not one in which confession is anticipated.

The former aspect is common in Luke. The manifestation of the glory of the Lord evokes reactions and symbolic gestures from men and angels. The multitude of the army of angels in Lk. 2: 14 praised God saying, 'Glory to God in the Highest' (cf. *Bar.* 2: 17-18; *I Esd.* 9: 8; *IV Macc.* 1: 12). The phrase 'glory of the Lord' in Lk. 2: 9 expresses 'the perceptible manifestation of God's presence' whereas the 'glory' in the acclamation in 2: 14 refers to the honour given to the stronger and the mightier.¹⁰⁵ Giving glory to God is an active acknowledgement of the God of glory.¹⁰⁶

The act of giving glory to God occurs in Luke's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Lk. 19: 28-40). The people praised God for all the mighty works (δυνάμεις) that they had seen (εἶδον). Luke probably sees the triumphal entry as the conclusion of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and he now looks back to all the mighty works of God.¹⁰⁷ The shout of acclamation, 'Glory in the highest' is an acknowledgement of what God had done through Jesus. It is thus praise of God for the mighty works that were performed through Christ and not simply the glorification of Jesus himself.¹⁰⁸ The language χαίροντες αἰνεῖν τὸν θεόν here is characteristic of the miracle stories in Luke (Lk. 5: 26; 7: 16; 13: 13, 17; 17: 15; 18: 43).¹⁰⁹ They were not mere expressions of gratitude but a recognition of God himself. This is brought out clearly in Lk. 17: 18. The Samaritan gave glory to God with a loud voice, falling on his face at Jesus' feet as if seeing a theophany and giving him thanks. 'Giving glory to God' (δοῦναι δόξαν τῷ θεῷ) in this context points to the theophanic nature of the Samaritan's encounter with Jesus. 'The return involves a public identification with what God is now

¹⁰⁵ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, I, p. 410; also, Evans, *Luke*, p. 207; H. Flender, *St. Luke: Theologian of Redemptive History*, ET, London: SPCK, 1967, p. 57.

¹⁰⁶ In the book of Revelation, the nations are urged to give glory to God (Rev. 16: 9) and in the acknowledgement of God's kingdom and reign as opposed to that of the earthly rulers (cf. Rev. 18: 9-19), the hymn of the martyrs at the marriage of the Lamb and his bride contains reference to giving God *the* glory (19: 7) (M. Rist, *The Revelation of the St. John the Divine*, IB, XII, New York: Abingdon, 1957, p. 507).

¹⁰⁷ Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 182, n. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Evans, *Luke*, p. 680.

¹⁰⁹ Evans, *Luke*, p. 551; H. J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts*, London: SPCK, 1968, p. 268.

doing in Jesus'.¹¹⁰ Thus, the vision of the God of glory is closely connected with the human and angelic expression of giving glory to him. The act of 'giving glory to God' is a gesture of both men and the angels acknowledging the glorious nature of God, his presence in the highest and the luminous manifestation of his glory on earth. Herod has failed to abide by his human nature by giving glory to God. He did not give glory to God as a man and through his show of human glory he sought to attain the position of God, the God of glory.

5.4 'God' in the accounts of Luke and Josephus

We noted similarities between Josephus and Luke in their accounts of the death of Herod Agrippa I and the common assumption that both drew upon Jewish traditions.¹¹¹ This allowed us to use Josephus to understand better the Lukan version. However, the theology of God which Luke seeks to convey in his version of the death of Herod is different from the notion of God held by Josephus.¹¹² The concept of δόξα which is operative in Luke's version did not determine Josephus' somewhat sympathetic interpretation of the story.¹¹³ This is partly because Josephus' use of δόξα particularly in relation to God does not betray the influence of the idea of כבוד in the OT.¹¹⁴ Secondly, Josephus' account of Agrippa I seems to outline theological ideas of his own when he holds that 'he (Agrippa I) was an object lesson in demonstrating the great power of fortune (τῆς τύχης) over mankind' (*Antiq.* XVIII, 239). Josephus' presentation of the life of Agrippa is based on the idea of fluctuating τύχαι. Josephus writes that God played the role

¹¹⁰ Nolland, *Luke 9: 21-18: 34*, p. 847; cf. Brockington, 'N. T. use of δόξα', p. 5.

¹¹¹ See pp. 68ff., n. 8.

¹¹² This is not recognised by Cadbury (*Making of Luke-Acts*, p. 341) who maintains that both Josephus and Luke interweave in their versions edifying interpretation, superstition, tradition and accurate political history.

¹¹³ Schwartz, *Agrippa I*, p. 45, n. 32.

¹¹⁴ A. Schlatter ('Wie sprach Josephus von Gott?', *Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie*, Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1910, p. 21) observes, 'Zur palästinensischen Formel כבוד, neben der des neutestamentliche ἡ δόξα steht, hat Josephus keine Parallele'. The listing of δόξα in Josephus by K. H. Rengstorff (*A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*, I, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1973, p. 519) testifies to the rarity of the meaning of non-human כבוד-δόξα.

of uplifting the fallen fortunes of Agrippa (XIX. 295).¹¹⁵ Agrippa's actions are sometimes interpreted by Josephus as a service rendered to God (XIX. 297). Such a theological colouring of Agrippa's life is partly due to Josephus' sympathetic and sometimes flattering attitude towards the Herodian family.¹¹⁶ For Luke, the Herods, except possibly Agrippa II, are the enemies of the Christian movement.¹¹⁷ Thirdly, the punishment to Herod in the Josephus' account is inflicted by fate, ἡ εἰμαρμένη (XIX. 347) a word almost synonymous with τύχη.¹¹⁸ It is used in the sense of an executive aspect of the divine will and is often juxtaposed with θεός and used interchangeably with it.¹¹⁹ The word is also connected with παραχρήμα which is almost equivalent to the expression κατὰ τύχην.¹²⁰ Whereas Luke's use of παραχρήμα with ἄγγελος κυρίου, the latter common in LXX, has no connotation of εἰμαρμένη as τύχη which is not in harmony with Luke's theology of God.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ The word τύχη appears 137 times. Josephus tends to use it as one aspect of the biblical Jewish God (see S. Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1991, p. 135, n. 56). The word πρόνοια, another theological concept in Josephus, is used massively in connection with Herodian history (H. W. Attridge, 'Josephus and His Works', *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. M. E. Stone, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984, p. 219). Schwartz (*Agrippa I*, p. 34) argues that the dramatic turnabout in Agrippa's life is modelled on the story of Joseph who like Agrippa rose to a position of king from a state of destitution. It should be pointed out that Luke's portrayal of Joseph is in stark contrast with that of Agrippa particularly in depicting how both served the people in a situation of a famine (cf. Ac. 7: 11-14).

¹¹⁶ See S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judean Politics*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1990, pp. 209-216. Several factors can be adduced for this. Agrippa was a promoter of Pharisaic religion (*Antiq.* XIX. 331) and he also worked for the Jewish interests in persuading, for example, Gaius not to set up his statue in the temple of the Jews (*Antiq.* XVIII, 297ff.).

¹¹⁷ Cf. Lk. 3: 20; 9: 9; 13: 31; 23: 8-11; Ac. 4: 27.

¹¹⁸ G. Stählin, 'Das Schicksal im Neuen Testament und bei Josephus', *Josephus - Studien*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974, p. 321.

¹¹⁹ (*Ag. Ap.* II. 245, 250; *WJ* IV. 288, 297; *Antiq.* XVIII. 18). Mason, *Josephus on the Pharisees*, p. 136.

¹²⁰ Stählin, 'Schicksal', p. 321, n. 7.

¹²¹ See n. 22. For Philo, the notion of δόξα is two-fold. It refers, i) to the being of God (φύσις) and ii) to the military might of a king (*Philo: Questions and Answers on Exodus, Supp.*, tr. R. Marcus, London: William Heinemann, 1987, p. 89). He has, however, not approached the problem of deification from the standpoint of his understanding of 'glory'.

5.5 CONCLUSION

To sum up, our analysis of Ac. 12: 20-23 was in two parts. In the first part, we focused on the acclamation and our study revealed i) the misconception of God in the ascription of divinity to rulers and ii) Luke's theology of God in which the natures of God and man are kept distinct. In the second part, we concentrated on Luke's interpretation of the event which is borne out by the statement οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὴν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ. With a view to understanding the meaning and the significance of this statement, we sought to demonstrate that in the description of the death of Herod the concept of glory has played a key role. The conceptual framework of the glory of man can be said to lie behind the delineation of the life of Herod. The word 'glory' meaning splendour and radiance is applied to the earthly powers. But the punishment is not a mere 'leveler' of human pride and glory, rather it points to theological reflection.

In the deification of Herod Luke sees the glory of God at stake. The visible presence of God's glory, the idea of God as the God of glory and the heavenly scene of God with the angels are the important features of 'glory' in relation to God. Such a theological basis seems to underlie Luke's statement, οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὴν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ and provides the context for understanding Luke's interpretation of the death of Herod. Luke intends a contrast between Herod's dazzling appearance and the radiance of the divine manifestation of the glory of God. Luke intends to show his readers the misconception of God and also the theological basis for repudiating it. The theological point which he seeks to establish through this episode is his understanding of God as the God of glory and that human glory cannot assume the status of the glory of God.

VI

LYSTRA (14: 8-18): GODS IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN

6.1 INTRODUCTION

We now inquire into the preaching to the Gentiles in Paul's first missionary journey. In Luke's description of the mission in Lystra (14: 8-18), Paul and Barnabas preach to the Gentiles in an atmosphere of Gentile worship and sacrificial offering (14: 13, 18). Our aim is to identify the theological issues that called for the proclamation in Lystra and the distinctive theological emphases that emerge from the speech.

6.2 THE KERYGMATIC CONTEXT: *The narrative framework (vv. 8-14)*

Lystra, a city in south central Asia Minor, became a Roman colony probably in 6 AD under Augustus.¹ The cities in Lycaonia were also subject to hellenistic influences. W. M. Ramsay regards the urban population of Phrygia and Lycaonia in south Galatia as half-hellenised.² The population was probably tri-lingual, speaking Lycaonian, Latin and Greek.³ To some extent, Luke's illustration of the mission in Lystra bears this out. Luke portrays the Lystrans as bi-lingual. The acclamation (v. 11) was said in the local Lycaonian language which Paul and Barnabas obviously did not understand. The Lystrans also knew Greek as they were able to listen to Paul's preaching.⁴ The names Zeus and Hermes are Greek names.⁵ Luke

¹ Bruce, *Acts*, p. 289. W. M. Ramsay ('Studies in the Roman Province Galatia', *JRS*, XVI, 1926, p. 111) notes that Galatia became a Roman province in 21-19 BC.

² 'Studies in the Roman Province Galatia', *JRS*, XII, 1922, p. 149; Cadbury, *Book of Acts in History*, p. 21.

³ W. M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899, p. 226.

⁴ Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 164. There are evidence to suggest that the Lycaonian dialect was used in the region until the fifth century AD: see C. Breytenbach, 'Zeus und der lebendige Gott: Anmerkungen zu Apostelgeschichte 14.11-17', *NTS*, 39 (1993), p. 399; R. Schmitt, 'Die Sprachverhältnisse in den östlichen Provinzen des Römischen Reiches', *ANRW*, II/29. 2, 1983, pp. 554-86, 569-70.

⁵ Bruce, *Acts*, p. 291.

also mentions the temple of Zeus before the city and the fact that the temple had a priest. This suggests strong Greek influence since the supreme deity of the ancient Greeks was Zeus.⁶ Whether Luke has 'graecised' the Lycaonian gods as Zeus and Hermes or the Lycaonians themselves graecised them remains unclear.⁷ At any rate, one might expect a blend of local and hellenistic religious ideas in Luke's presentation of the religious context. The readers meet in Lystra 'Hellenism in a Lycaonian setting'.⁸

6.2.1 *The healing of the lame man : A comparison with Ac. 3: 1-10*

Luke begins the narrative with the story of the healing of the lame man (14: 8-11). It has received much attention because of the similarities it has with Ac. 3: 1-10. Both relate the healing of a lame man and they are, as recorded by Luke, the first miracles performed by Paul and Peter respectively. Therefore, a comparison between the two stories has often been made as part of a comparison between the apostleships of Peter and Paul.⁹

We compare the two healing narratives Ac. 14: 8-11 and Ac. 3: 1-10 not with a view to the status of Paul and Peter but to help us investigate the significance of the miracle within the narrative

⁶ A. B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, vol. I, Cambridge University, 1914, p. 1.

⁷ cf. Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 164.

⁸ Cadbury (*Book of Acts in History*, p. 23) thinks that the hellenisation of local gods of Asia Minor proceeded more rapidly and that by the first century the Greek equivalents were accepted. However, Breytenbach ('Zeus und der lebendige Gott', pp. 396-413) has recently argued that the events described in 14: 11-13 can best be understood from a stand-point of local tradition which was active despite Hellenisation.

⁹ Each comparison has led to different conclusions. Lüdemann (*Traditions in Acts*, p. 160) argues that Luke has developed the healing story on the basis of the account of the healing narrated in 3: 1-10; also, G. W. H. Lampe, 'Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles', *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in their Philosophy and History*, ed. C. F. D. Moule, London: Mowbray, 1965, p. 177; Schneider (*Apg*, I, pp. 304-308) widened the circle to compare Ac. 3: 1-10 and 14: 8-11 with the story of healing of the cripple by Jesus in Lk. 5: 17-26 to conclude that there is a parallelism between all three; J. A. Hardon ['The Miracle Narratives in the Acts of the Apostles', *CBQ*, 16 (1954), pp. 308-309] considered several other miracles of Peter and Paul which show some correspondences to each other. The pair of Ac. 3 and Ac. 14 was seen against seven other pairs which have similarities, Ac. 2: 43 = Ac. 14: 3; 3: 1ff. = 14: 7ff.; 5: 1ff. = 13: 8ff.; 4: 31 = 16: 25ff.; 5: 15 = 19: 12; 9: 33ff. = 28: 7ff.; 9: 36ff. = 20: 9ff.; 12: 5ff. = 16: 25ff.

framework of Lystra. Both narratives have certain common basic elements of a healing story, such as the description of the illness, the faith of the crippled man, the meeting between the healer and the healed, a healing command, the result of the healing and the response from the onlookers. There are also verbal agreements between the two.¹⁰

Ac. 3: 1-10

τις ἀνὴρ χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ (v. 2)

ἀτενίσας δὲ Πέτρος εἰς αὐτὸν (v. 4)

[ἔγειρε καὶ] περιπάτει (v. 6)
ὀρθός

καὶ εἶδεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸν (v. 9)

Ac. 14: 8-11

τις ἀνὴρ ἀδύνατος...τοῖς ποσὶν ἐκάθητο χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὃς οὐδέποτε περιεπάτησεν (v. 8)

ὃς ἀτενίσας αὐτῷ (v. 9a)

Ἀνάστηθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου καὶ ἤλατο καὶ περιεπάτει (v. 10)

οἱ τε ὄχλοι ιδόντες ὃ ἐποίησεν Παῦλος (v. 11)

A comparison between the two also reveals many notable differences to which previous studies have paid less attention.¹¹

i) The fact that the person was lame has been emphasised strongly by Luke in Ac. 14 with a three-fold description that the man could not use his feet, had been crippled from birth, and had never walked.¹² The repetitive and redundant reference to the nature of

¹⁰ The Western reviser (D) makes the parallelism even closer by adding the healing formula in 3: 6 and by stating that the cure was instantaneous, εὐθέως παραχρῆμα (cf. 3: 7) (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 163).

¹¹ Lake (*BC*, IV, p. 163) notes faith as the most remarkable difference between the two narratives.

¹² χωλός is omitted by D probably as superfluous (J. H. Ropes, *The Text of Acts*, *BC*, III, p. 131). Mss. D, E, cop^{sa} omit the phrase ἐν Λύστροις. The scribe of D probably felt it unnecessary since the ms. has added ὁ δὲ Παῦλος καὶ Βαρνάβας διέτριβον ἐν Λύστροις in v. 6.

the sickness and the condition of the lame man is to tell the readers that the result of the healing is going to have a greater impact upon the onlookers.¹³

ii) In Ac. 14, Luke passes over the rest of the details with regard to the healing very quickly because he is keen to reach the climax of the story. The lame man is healed when he is listening to what Paul was *preaching*.¹⁴ Luke does not give the content of the preaching but his statement that the man had faith to be saved presupposes a message which may have aroused faith in the lame man to seek for his salvation.¹⁵

iii) What is striking in Ac. 14 is the absence of a reference to Christ which was key to the healing command in Ac. 3: 8.¹⁶ This suggests that Christological considerations are not the main point of the healing in Lystra. Luke intends to relate the healing in the present context in complete association with Paul. The crowd had seen what *Paul* had done. The preaching-healing story is told simply to enhance the image and reputation of the miracle-worker.¹⁷ Also

¹³ cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 430.

¹⁴ Metzger (*Textual Commentary*, pp. 422ff.) notes several witnesses introducing a variety of expansions. Codex Bezae reads: οὗτος ἤκουσεν τοῦ Παύλου λαλοῦντος ὑπάρχων ἐν φόβῳ. Ropes (*Text of Acts, BC*, III, p. 132) thinks that the reading probably is intended to justify Paul's confidence in the man's faith; W. M. Ramsay (*St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1902, p. 116) thinks that the man was a godfearer; Epp (*Codex Bezae*, p. 155) points out that D gives greater prominence to the apostles as miracle-workers than the B-text (cf. 16: 35D); the ms. cop^{G67} adds a circumstantial detail. 'He had been wishing to hear Paul speak. When Paul saw him he looked in his face; he knew in the spirit that he had true faith to be cured' (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 422ff.).

¹⁵ Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 431) thinks Paul had been speaking of Jesus as σωτήρ. The phrase πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι probably refers to the faith for physical healing. He (*Acts*, p. 430) also emphasises the preaching aspect of the story to argue that 'on Luke's presentation the miracle of the healing occurred only because that preaching had created the precondition for it'.

¹⁶ In Ac. 14: 10, the Western reviser adds the proper formula of healing ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The editor of D adds the Christ formula 'the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' in six other places (cf. Ac. 6: 8: 9: 17, 40; 18: 4, 8; 19: 14). This indicates that the 'name of the Lord Jesus Christ' was of special significance for the D-text (Epp, *Codex Bezae*, p. 63); cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 109. Christology is not integral to some of the healing miracles in Acts (9: 36-43; 20: 7-12; 28: 1-6). Haenchen (*Acts*, pp. 425-26) notes correspondence between the healing command in v. 10 and Ez. 2:1.

¹⁷ Bauernfeind (*Apg*, p. 182) observes that if the editor of Acts had shown that Paul healed the lame man by invoking the name of Christ that could

after the healing event, unlike in Ac. 3: 10-11, in Ac. 14 Luke intends to focus the attention on the healer(s) rather than on the person healed.

iv) The main feature of the story in Ac. 14 is the ending, the acclamation (v. 10). In the place of the wonder and amazement in 3: 11, Luke has an acclamation from the onlookers. The healing incident as an act recedes into the background but the acclamation plays a key role in the development of the rest of the scene that follows.¹⁸

6.2.2 THE THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

6.2.2.1 *The significance of the acclamation (v. 11)*

The healing sparks off the main action. When the Lystrans saw what Paul had done, they acclaimed loudly in Lycaonian, 'Οἱ θεοὶ ὁμοιωθέντες ἀνθρώποις κατέβησαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς'. The reference to Lycaonian language is to underline the indigenous character of the reaction to the miraculous.¹⁹ The passive ὁμοιόμοι in Hellenistic writings is used in connection with the gods.²⁰ In Acts, the word καταβαίνω is used in connection with vision (Ac. 10: 11; 11: 5) and theophany (Ac. 7: 34).²¹ Luke shows that the reaction to the healing has a strong theological basis which serves as a focal point for his presentation of the theological problem in Lystra.

6.2.2.2 *Healing gods and the epiphanies of gods*

In the reaction of the people, we see, first and foremost, a connection between the concepts of gods and miracles.²² It was a

have created a different reaction from the crowd. Perhaps, they may have called him a magician!

¹⁸ cf. Pesch, *Apg*, II, p. 57.

¹⁹ cf. Bruce, *Acts*, p. 291.

²⁰ Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 157, n. 24. In the NT, the word ὁμοιόμοι is used in connection with Christ (Heb. 2: 17; Rom. 8: 3; Phil. 2: 7).

²¹ Καταβαίνω may also be understood cultically (*TDNT*, I, p. 522).

²² H. C. Kee (*Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Cambridge University, 1988, p. 67) has shown that in the Greco-Roman healing tradition, the belief that gods are behind a healing represents the phenomenon which is called miracle.

popular tendency to link healing to the work of a god or gods.²³ Miracles were attributed to gods and were perceived to be solely the result of the direct action of the gods.²⁴ We shall look at some examples from the Greco-Roman tradition which associate gods with miracles of healing.

In the Hellenistic period, the healing gods came into sharper prominence.²⁵ The ancient myths about theogonies and our knowledge of cults and inscriptions inform the tradition about the healing gods and the belief that gods performed healing was central to the Hellenistic religions. Among the many healing divinities, Isis and Asclepius are the best-attested benefiting both their devotees and those in need.

Isis, the supreme Queen goddess from Egypt, was venerated as one who would act to restore health to humanity. Kee observes, 'There is no figure in the study of religion in the ancient world - and perhaps in the entire scope of history of religion - whose role is more widespread in time and space...than that of Isis'.²⁶ Although the Isis cult was predominantly an Egyptian cult it penetrated into every section of the Greco-Roman society but remained largely a religion of the upper class.²⁷ Isis and her consort Serapis act to restore the health of those who turn to the goddess for help.²⁸

Asclepius was also well-known throughout Asia Minor. Mythical stories recount the birth of Asclepius in the midst of fire. Asclepius was saved by Apollo; his father, from his mother Koronis when she was on her funeral pyre.²⁹ Apollo taught him the art of healing and therefore was considered to be a worthy god of healing.³⁰ The cult of Asclepius was an integral part of Hellenistic religious life

²³ R. Swinburne, *The Concept of Miracle*, London: Macmillan, 1970, p. 6.

²⁴ Kee, *Medicine*, pp. 67-70.

²⁵ Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, p. 268.

²⁶ *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method*, New Haven: Yale University, 1983, p. 105.

²⁷ Kee, *Miracle*, p. 128ff.

²⁸ Kee, *Medicine*, pp. 67ff.

²⁹ Kee, *Miracle*, p. 79.

³⁰ C. Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1951, p. 144.

since his sanctuaries were scattered throughout Asia Minor and beyond.

The greatest healing sanctuary of mainland Greece, at Epidaurus on the Adriatic sea, was once an ancient cult-centre of Apollo. In the course of time, Asclepius virtually replaced Apollo, and from the fourth century BC the sanctuary became Asclepius' special sanctuary. From here the Asclepius cult spread to Athens, Asia Minor and North Africa.³¹ Asclepius was worshipped as the patron and prototype of physicians and as the god who would heal those who visit the sanctuaries seeking divine aid. The sanctuary in Epidaurus had an *abaton* or *encoemeterion*, the place of incubation where the patients slept in the hope of healing.³² It was the custom for the person healed to record the divine healing he had received on a marble plaque. There are inscriptions dating from the fourth century BC to the second century AD.³³ R. M. Grant points out that without the inscriptions concerning records of healings at Epidaurus the history of hellenistic religion would be much poorer.³⁴ The inscriptions report healings of blind, lame and dumb.³⁵

Asclepius could not only heal people at the sanctuary in Epidaurus but in other sanctuaries elsewhere as we mentioned.³⁶ There were famous sanctuaries in Corinth, Athens, Pergamon, Cilicia and in Crete. The cult of Asclepius was brought to Rome from Epidaurus in 293 BC³⁷ and was duly domiciled on the island in the Tiber.³⁸ The cults of Asclepius were popular at the times of the emperors Domitian and Trajan. During their reign, the shrine at Pergamon

³¹ Ferguson, *Among the Gods*, p. 88. Asclepius' earliest home was in central Thessaly: see A. B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, vol. II, pt. II, Cambridge University, 1925, p.1088.

³² Ferguson, *Among the Gods*, p. 89.

³³ D. R. Carlidge and D. L. Duncan., *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980, pp. 151-53; Ferguson, *Among the Gods*, p. 91.

³⁴ R. M. Grant, *Gods and the One God*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986, p. 66.

³⁵ Carlidge and Duncan, *Documents*, p. 152; R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, Yale University, 1981, p. 34.

³⁶ Grant, *Gods*, p. 67.

³⁷ Grant, *Gods*, pp. 32-33.

³⁸ He arrived in the guise of a golden snake (Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. II, 1925, p. 1083).

was expanded and embellished. It became an outstanding healing centre for the whole empire and came to be regarded as one of the wonders of the world.³⁹ In this context the narrative of Acts 14 is entirely plausible, particularly as the acclamation reflects the current popular notion that gods were responsible for the occurrences of healing when it happened in a miraculous way as in Lystra.

The second aspect of the acclamation reflects the belief that gods appear and that they appear in the likeness of men. Appearance of a god and manifestation of power are closely related. Religious experience in antiquity had less to say about the activities of gods than about their epiphanies. Many had experienced or heard about some sort of manifestations of gods in the course of their lives.⁴⁰ It was claimed that appearances of a god or gods were to bring about cures, deliver men from danger, and to guide kings in war.⁴¹

The miraculous happenings at the shrine were generally attributed to the direct action of the god.⁴² The people who needed healing were visited by the god either directly in an epiphany, or in sacred dreams or by his aides, the sacred snakes, dogs and geese.⁴³ Celsus informs us that Asclepius had appeared in person to a great multitude of men, both Greeks and barbarians.⁴⁴ Asclepius used animals as his aides but epiphany in human form was rare.⁴⁵ Ferguson notes that there were incidents in which a god or his representative was described as a handsome man who performed healing by pouring salve into ailing eyes, applying ointment elsewhere and massaging the stomach or head etc.⁴⁶ The

³⁹ Kee, *Miracle*, p. 104.

⁴⁰ R. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1925, p. 160.

⁴¹ Grant, *Gods*, p. 54; for some of the accounts of epiphanies of Athene, see Ferguson, *Among the Gods*, pp. 14-15; M. P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*, ET, Oxford: Clarendon, 1925, pp. 159-160.

⁴² Kee, *Medicine*, p. 70.

⁴³ Kee, *Miracle*, p. 81.

⁴⁴ E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, New York: Norton Library, 1965, p. 45; also see R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, Viking, 1986, pp. 161ff.

⁴⁵ Appearance of Athena in the form of snake or bird was common (Nilsson, *Greek Religion*, p. 27)

⁴⁶ *Among the Gods*, p. 90.

interrelatedness between healing and epiphanies is one of the religious features in Asia Minor which aptly gives indication of the widespread belief about gods and their appearances.⁴⁷

In short, the acclamation conveys to the readers of Acts, not mere excitement of the Lystrans because they witnessed the miraculous healing but offers clues to their beliefs about gods. In the hellenistic healing tradition it was believed that gods performed healing and appeared in disguise in the form of animals and occasionally also of humans. Luke sees these conceptions of gods and their epiphanies in the likeness of men as the key theological problem in Lystra. The spiritual world of healing assisted by a popular belief in gods and their epiphanies is summed up by the acclamation and poses a challenge to the mission about God.

6.2.2.3 *Men named after the gods (v. 12)*

There are at least two other consequences of the miracle before the speech is inserted. The next in the sequence of events is that the Lystrans, according to Luke, called Barnabas and Paul, Zeus and Hermes respectively. This is an important scene in the narrative because without it the following scene of worship and sacrifice cannot be understood. What do we make of the identification of Paul and Barnabas with these two gods?

Paul is called Hermes because he was ὁ ἡγούμενος τοῦ λόγου (v. 12).⁴⁸ The role of Paul is not derived from his therapeutic skill. It corresponds to the general function which was traditionally given to Hermes in hellenistic cults and mythology. Hermes, indeed, was the herald of gods and he came to be regarded as 'the god of skill in the use of speech and of eloquence in general, for the heralds are the public speakers in the assemblies and on other occasions'.⁴⁹ It is this oratorical role of Hermes as in hellenistic mythology which has led to the identification of Paul with Hermes by the

⁴⁷ E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, University of California, 1971, p. 10. The idea of divine visitants is old (Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 676).

⁴⁸ Ἠγεῖσθαι with gen. occurs only here.

⁴⁹ W. Smith (ed.), *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, vol. II, London: Walton and Maberly, 1854, p. 412.

Lystrans.⁵⁰ Paul who was projected as the healer is here seen as an orator. This is probably part of Luke's design to underline the strong connection between 'word' and 'miracle' which can be seen in key mission activities in Acts (14: 3).⁵¹ The miracle of the raising of the dead in Troas is linked with preaching (20: 7-12). Luke's account of exorcism in Ephesus and the miraculous death of Herod Agrippa I ends with the statements about the spread of the word of God (12: 25; 19: 20). The account of the miraculous punishment rendered to the 'false prophet' Elymas Bar-Jesus shows the close connection between miracle and the word (Ac. 13: 12).⁵² Philip preached and healed in Samaria (8: 6).⁵³ In the people's calling Paul Hermes, the close missiological connection between miracle and preaching the word is evident, and Luke also anticipates the speech to follow (14: 15-17).

Why then did Barnabas receive the name Zeus? The function of Zeus is not immediately clear in the narrative framework. Zeus is the greatest of the Olympian gods and the father of gods and men. He is generally thought of as the omnipotent father and king of gods and men.⁵⁴ The Greek and Latin poets gave to Zeus an immense number of epithets and surnames indicating the places where he was worshipped and the powers and functions he possessed.⁵⁵ Although Zeus had many functions such as creator, sustainer, God of nature and God who guides the lives of men and animals, his role as a healer is not clearly attested. In A. B. Cook's comprehensive listing of the functions of Zeus, there is only a single reference to healing among about 120 functions adduced for

⁵⁰ Grant, *Gods*, p. 26; *BAG*, p. 310. This Luke's portrayal of Paul is contrary to how Paul describes himself in I Cor. 2: 1-5. For comment on this, see Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 677.

⁵¹ Lampe ('Miracles in Acts of the Apostles', pp. 168-169) notes that it is Luke's tendency to associate works of healing with the ministry of the word.

⁵² J. Jervell, *The Unknown Paul*, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984, p. 86. Jervell (p. 87) notes that Luke can conceive a proclamation without miracles but no miracles without proclamation. But see the special situation in Malta (Ac. 28: 1-9); Lake (*BC*, IV, p. 147) observes that the combination of ἐκπλήσσεισθαι and ἐπι διδασχῆ has good support in parallels (cf. Lk. 4: 32; 2: 48).

⁵³ 'Teaching' is in one sense inclusive of the miraculous element (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 147).

⁵⁴ W. Smith (ed.), *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, vol. III, 1856, p. 1322.

⁵⁵ Cook (*Zeus*, II, pt. II, p.1335-39) lists as many as 634 epithets for Zeus.

Zeus.⁵⁶ It is hard to assume that Luke was prepared to portray Barnabas in this manner ascribing to him the functions held by the most supreme god of Greek pantheon although he is not shown as directly involved in the healing.⁵⁷ Any attempt to find the rationale behind the identification of Barnabas with Zeus in terms of role and function could only be conjectural and for Luke it does appear to be unimportant in the present scene.⁵⁸ What is key to the scene is that it reveals people's belief in the epiphany of Zeus. Zeus as God of thunder was called *Zeus Kataibátes* which offers a conception of Zeus as 'He who descends'. Zeus was called *kataibátes* as early as 467-458 BC and appears in Greek literature from 421 BC.⁵⁹ The exact rendering of the title came to be known as 'the god 'who descends' himself in the form of a thunderbolt'.⁶⁰ The healing incident for the Lystrans is comparable to an epiphany of Zeus himself.

Why were the pair Zeus and Hermes chosen by Luke? It has been argued that the gods Zeus and Hermes were part of the *local* tradition in and around Lystra. C. Breytenbach has shown recently

⁵⁶ *Zeus*, II, pt. II, p. 877.

⁵⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 432.

⁵⁸ A good number of scholars view the names of Zeus and Hermes as Luke's technique of composition in order to make differentiation in rank, function and even in physical appearance between Barnabas and Paul. Bauernfeind (*Apq*, p. 182) remarks, 'Barnabas wirkte so machtvoll, daß man in ihm Zeus zu erkennen meinte'. Bruce (*Acts*, p. 292) assumes that Barnabas was identified with Zeus because of his 'more dignified bearing' and Paul, the more animated of the two, was called Hermes (cf. Munck, *Acts*, p. 132). It is claimed that Barnabas was the older convert and was regarded as of higher standing than Paul until he separated from Paul (Knox, *Acts*, p. 61). Barnabas, the elder and more reserved was evidently the supreme deity and the younger and more eloquent filled the part of Hermes (Rackham, *Acts*, p. 232.). Barnabas is even considered as a mere 'extra', a status which is also assumed to fit the image of Zeus (Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 110.). There is no physical description of Paul and Barnabas in the NT to judge the difference between them in appearance. The description of Paul's physical stature in *Acts of Paul and Thecla* comes from a later period and, moreover, different versions of the above work describe Paul's physical characteristics differently (See Rackham, *Acts*, p. 227, n. 1). The stature of Barnabas is known only from the statement of John Chrysostom (Schneider, *Apq*, II, p. 158, n. 29)]. From the point of view of the mission narratives Luke seems to make little differentiation between Paul and Barnabas. The task of mission and its consequences are equally shared by them (Ac. 13: 15-16, 32, 43, 46, 50-51; 14: 5, 9, 12).

⁵⁹ Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, pp. 14ff.

⁶⁰ Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, p. 15.



that the gods Tarchu(nt) and Ru(nt) in the area of Lycaonia were Graecised into Zeus and Hermes respectively.⁶¹ However, the argument that Barnabas and Paul were identified with Zeus and Hermes because the gods were the hellenised local gods does not explain the role that was adduced particularly for Paul/Hermes since the roles of the local gods are unknown.⁶² There is yet another piece of local tradition associated with Ovid who has narrated a story about an old couple Philemon and Baucis, in the adjacent region of Phrygia, who were visited by Zeus and Hermes in the guise of men. The couple offered hospitality to the unknown gods and the gods redeemed them from flood in the region. It has been suggested that Luke is using a similar literary motif in v. 12 corresponding to this local story about Zeus and Hermes.⁶³ The appearance of these gods to humans was known in the region even though the purpose of their appearance in Ovid's story is dissimilar to the one narrated by Luke.⁶⁴

In short, the identification of the speaker Paul with Hermes is on the basis of similarity in function whereas the role of Zeus and its connection with Barnabas remains unclear. What is fundamental to the identification is the belief in divine epiphanies. There is evidence to suggest that Luke uses local traditions which paired Zeus and Hermes together.⁶⁵

Even if the selection of names can be explained, the basic element is still unexplained.⁶⁶ When the specific connection between the

⁶¹ 'Zeus und der Lebendige Gott', p. 399.

⁶² Munck, *Acts*, p. 132; cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 110.

⁶³ Ovid, *Metam.* VIII, 611-724; see L. Malten, 'Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Sagenforschung', *Hermes*, 74 (1939), pp. 176-206; idem, 'Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Sagenforschung', *Hermes*, 75 (1940), pp. 168-176; cf. Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 164; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 110; Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 677. Schneider (*Apg*, II, p. 158) thinks that it is difficult to imagine that the story was in the mind of the people in Lystra when they counted the two Jewish healers as manifestations of Zeus and Hermes.

⁶⁴ Grant, *Gods*, p. 25; Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, pp. 833ff. Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 427, n.1) argues that the connection between Ovid's story and the Lystran incident is remote. He further argues that the Lycaonians would have named two of their own national gods. An earlier inscription of worn out figure of Hermes (?) appearing with Zeus is also found outside the region.

⁶⁵ Barrett (*Acts*, I, p. 676) thinks that the acclamation means, 'The gods whom we particularly associate with our region have come down'.

⁶⁶ O'Neill (*The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting*, London: SPCK, 1970,

role of Zeus and that of Barnabas is unspecified, we should not lose sight of the significance of the religious phenomenon, namely the *identification* of Barnabas and Paul with the gods named.⁶⁷ The notion of an epiphany of gods in the likeness of men leads to men being regarded as the bearers of the names of gods. This phenomenon points to a different theological problem indicating deification of humans. The people's notion of gods and their epiphanies have affected the way they considered the apostles and their work. For the people, they ought to be given the names of gods. Whereas the acclamation (v. 11) touches on the aspect of faith in gods of healing and the epiphany of gods, v. 12, for Luke, raises serious questions on the divine-human relationship.

6.2.2.4 *Sacrifices offered to men (vv. 13, 18)*

The further religious expression of worship and sacrifice at the temple of Zeus bears testimony to the fact that what the readers are encountering in Lystra is a problem of deification of men. According to v. 18, the sacrifices were offered to Paul and Barnabas at the temple of Zeus.⁶⁸ There were temples for Zeus, the greatest god of Greek pantheon, throughout the Greco-Roman world. Yet, no temple for Zeus in Lystra itself has been found.⁶⁹ At Ak-Kilisse (Sedasa), thirty kilometers from Lystra has been found a temple for Zeus.⁷⁰ The sacrifices to Zeus generally consisted of

pp. 145ff.) sees an analogy and an explanation for the Lystran incident in Artapanus' legendary account of Moses in which the Egyptian priests regarded Moses as Hermes. The view has been defended by Lüdemann (*Traditions in Acts*, pp. 161-62). However, there are vital differences between the two portrayals. Artapanus refers to a great deal of cultural and religious achievements and inventions by Moses in Egypt. Luke credits Paul only with preaching and healing in Lystra to earn the name Hermes. Moreover, in the following incident Luke relates the story of the stoning of Paul by both Jews and Lystrans (14: 19).

⁶⁷ Οἱ θεοί may point forward to the gods mentioned in v. 12 (Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 676).

⁶⁸ The phrase 'the priest of Zeus before the city' (ὁ τε ἱερεὺς τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ ὄντος πρὸ τῆς πόλεως) in v. 13 means the priest of Zeus whose temple was in front of the city (RSV). The D has οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς τοῦ ὄντος Διὸς πρὸ πόλεως (But the priests of the local Zeus-before-the-city). Lake and Cadbury (*BC*, IV, p. 165) thinks that the reading of D is 'based on exact knowledge of the probable situation'. The name of god probably stood for the temple (cf. Pesch, *ApG*, II, p. 57 n. 16; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 427 n. 2).

⁶⁹ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 110.

⁷⁰ Breytenbach, 'Zeus und der Lebendige Gott', p. 400.

bulls, oxen, pigs and cows.⁷¹

Some scholars have rightly recognised in Luke's narration of the dramatic event the blurring of divine-human as an issue for theology. Cadbury thinks that the scene at Lystra brings the readers closer to the imperial cult without the imperial cult being explicitly mentioned.⁷² Both Dibelius and Schneider place the religious phenomenon exemplified in the hailing of Barnabas and Paul as Zeus and Hermes along with the incident in which Herod Agrippa I was acclaimed god (Ac. 12: 22-23).⁷³ Therefore the point of the story in Lystra, for Dibelius, is the condemnation of 'Gentile apotheosis' through the refusal to accept the glory belonging to God.⁷⁴

Humans hailed as gods suggests deification of humans. This was more or less a common feature in various Greco-Roman religious traditions. The notion that a human being might become god after death had of course long been familiar. There were heroes who were spoken of as gods and they received sacrifice appropriate to the gods, e.g. Heracles, Melampus, Amphiaraus, the Dioscuri, Hyacinthus, Trophonius, etc.⁷⁵ There are also examples from hellenistic and Roman ruler cults. Several of the kings and the Roman emperors were identified with Zeus and other divine figures.⁷⁶ The writings of Virgil and Horace bear testimony to cultic actions carried out in honour of emperors. Virgil makes a shepherd say that Augustus is his god and that he would often offer a lamb on the emperor's altar.⁷⁷ Horace praises Augustus as a parallel god to Jupiter who reigns in heaven and Augustus as 'god on earth'.⁷⁸ An extreme example of emperors conferring the names

⁷¹ Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. II, p. 1339.

⁷² 'Roman Law and the Trial of Paul', *BC*, V, p. 297.

⁷³ *Studies*, p. 21; *Apg*, II, p. 158; also, Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, p. 168.

⁷⁴ *Studies*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, vol. II, p. 578.

⁷⁶ See Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. II, p. 1340; Nock, 'Notes on Ruler-Cult I-IV', *A. D. Nock*, I, pp. 134-59.

⁷⁷ Wengst, *Pax Romana*, p. 48.

⁷⁸ Wengst, *Pax Romana*, p. 48. The kings of Troy traced their lineage to Zeus (Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, p. 8). See also, ch. V, pp. 70-74.

of gods on themselves is Gaius Caligula who called himself Δίς Ἐπιφανοῦς Νέου⁷⁹ and who considered himself to be like the gods and demi-gods including Hermes.⁸⁰ Thus the emperor and the hero cults are prime examples of men bearing the names of gods as a symbol of deification.

Ascription of divinity to miracle workers was also common. In the description of the life of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus, it is mentioned that several times Apollonius was considered to be a god because of the supernatural powers he possessed.⁸¹ One of the accusations levelled against Apollonius is that men considered him a god (VIII, vii.7). In his home town Tyana, a Greek city in Cappadocia, local people called him the son of Zeus. But he always referred to himself as the son of Apollonius as Apollonius was also his father's name. His fame spread to many provinces. Apollonius was celebrated among the Egyptians and they gazed upon him as if he was a god (V. 24). The Lacedaemonians flocked round him and invited him to share their hospitality at the shrine Zeus (IV, 31). In his defence before the emperor Domitian, Apollonius denied that it was ever decided to assemble and sacrifice to Apollonius (VIII, 7.7).⁸² All these examples go to show that in the religious phenomenon of men as bearers of the names of gods, there is always a blurring of the distinction between god and man. Philostratus' portrayal of Apollonius also indicates that Apollonius sought to make the distinction between God and man as distant as possible.⁸³

Hence we can take the theological problem of the Lystrans calling Barnabas and Paul Zeus and Hermes as representing acclamation of men as gods in the Greco-Roman society. It is not clear as to which

⁷⁹ Philo, *Legat.* 346, 188.

⁸⁰ Philo, *Legat.* 94-98.

⁸¹ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, tr. F. C. Conybeare, London: William Heinemann, 1989, IV: 31; V: 24; VII:11.

⁸² After his death, temples and shrines were erected for him in various parts of Asia Minor (Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, p. xiv; Vopiscus, writing in the last decade of the third century, speaks of Apollonius as a manifestation of the deity (G. R. S. Mead, *Apollonius of Tyana*, New York: University Books, 1966, p. 31).

⁸³ Grant, *Gods*, p. 26.

religious tradition Luke is alluding, but in the present context in Lystra it is unlikely that deification of emperors is in view for Luke, as he has already dealt with it in 12: 22-24. Moreover, the scene in Lystra is tied to a healing incident. Luke's details seem to be illustrative of one or more than one category of religious tradition in which men are given the names of gods as a mark of their divinity. It is safe to conclude with Haenchen and Grant that Luke is dealing with the problem of ascription of divinity to men.⁸⁴

To sum up. Luke has packed into the dramatic episode in Lystra a great deal of information about what he sees to be the theological problems current in his day: the belief that gods effect healing, gods appear in the likeness of men, men are given the divine honour of bearing the names of the deities and as a mark of the divinity ascribed to men sacrifices are offered to honour them in the temple. All these important aspects of theology among the Gentiles had to be addressed by the kerygma of the early Church.

6.3 THE KERYGMA

6.3.1 *The speech (vv. 14-17)*

This section contains the speech proper (vv. 15-17) and a preface (v. 14) describing the reaction of Paul and Barnabas. The speech is more literary than the context.⁸⁵ It is formal with carefully chosen language and with precisely marked out structure.⁸⁶ It has only one sentence beginning from v. 14 and ending with v. 18. The subject of v. 14, the preface to the speech, is οἱ ἀπόστολοι which has a main verb (ἐξεπήδησαν) and four participles (ἀκούσαντες, διαρρήξαντες, κράζοντες, λέγοντες) describing the actions of the apostles. The speech proper (vv. 15-17) is introduced with κράζοντες καὶ λέγοντες rather than other more typical expressions. ἔφη (17: 22), φησὶν (22:2), ἔφη (7:1) and ἐπῆρεν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπεφθέγγετο (2: 14). It begins with an introductory clause in the

⁸⁴ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 432; Grant, *Gods*, p. 26.

⁸⁵ Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 166. Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 71, n. 23) calls it 'cultivated style': cf. the litotes οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφῆκεν, the onomatopoeia ἕτερος διδούς and the alliteration καιροὺς καρποφόρους.

⁸⁶ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 429, n. 1.

form of a question "Ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; (v. 15a) followed by chain of clauses connected by καί (v. 15b), ὃς (v. 15b), ὃς (v. 16), καίτοι (v. 17) and καὶ (v. 18). The subject ἡμεῖς in v. 15b for ἔσμεν and εὐαγγελιζόμενοι refers back to οἱ ἀπόστολοι in v. 14 and is the subject also of the final clause, v. 18. The relative pronoun ὃς which stands at the beginning of each clause in between vv. 15b & 18, refers back to θεὸν ζῶντα (v. 15b). It is governed by three verbs, ἐποίησεν (v. 15c), εἶασεν (v. 16), οὐκ...ἀφῆκεν (v. 17) and three participles ἀγαθουργῶν, διδοῦς, ἐμπιπλῶν (v. 17). Consequently, there are only two subjects in the speech, οἱ ἀπόστολοι and θεός. In other words, the speech is about *apostles* and *God*.

6.3.1.1 *The preface (v. 14): The apostles and God*

Luke has already indicated to his readers in 14: 4 that he considers Paul and Barnabas 'apostles'. The significance of the use of οἱ ἀπόστολοι both in v. 4 and v. 14 has often not been taken seriously by scholars. These words are thought of either as a surprise inclusion,⁸⁷ or as casual references from Luke.⁸⁸ A majority of the studies attempt to explain away the occurrence of οἱ ἀπόστολοι in 14: 4, 14. Bauernfeind thinks that οἱ ἀπόστολοι in Ac. 14: 4 and 14 remained unaltered due to negligence on the part of Luke when he was working over his sources.⁸⁹ Klein argues that the apostolate of the twelve is an original product of Luke [cf. Ac. 1: 2, 26; 2: 37, 42f.; 4: 33, 35, 36f.; 5: 2, 12, 18, 29, 40; 6: 6; 8: 1, 14, 18; 9: 27; 11: 1; 15: 2, 4, 6, 22f]. In all these references the word ἀπόστολοι is used in connection with the Twelve and Luke was the first one to deny the title of apostle to Paul while giving it to the twelve.⁹⁰ Therefore, according to Klein, the use of the word οἱ ἀπόστολοι in 14: 4, 14 should imply that the word is used by Luke without any real motive or purpose. However, the arguments that the term οἱ ἀπόστολοι found a place out of Luke's negligence and that Luke used it without really meaning it are wholly unconvincing. If Luke wanted to confine the use of the word to the twelve, he could not

⁸⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 420.

⁸⁸ Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 120.

⁸⁹ *Apg*, p. 12.

⁹⁰ Cited by W. Schmithals, *The Office of the Apostolate in the Early Church*, tr. J. E. Steely, London: SPCK, 1971, p. 265; cf. Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 117.

have erred twice. Some, on the other hand, have regarded the term 'apostle' as being imposed on Luke by the source he was using.⁹¹ But the uniqueness of its use in the present context has not been fully appreciated.

H. Kasting understands the use of the word 'apostles' in 14: 4, 14 as referring to the function of Paul and Barnabas as ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν (II Cor. 8: 23; Phil. 2: 25). They are on a temporary mission by the commissioning of the Church in Antioch as are Titus and Epaphroditus in Phil. 2. Kasting claims that the temporary status as apostles ended with the return of Paul and Barnabas to the Christian community at Antioch (14: 28).⁹² Barrett, as Kasting, views οἱ ἀπόστολοι in the immediate context of the Antiochene mission. But he goes on to argue that Paul and Barnabas were more than one of 'apostles of the churches'.⁹³ He draws attention to the theological aspect of their commissioning that they were sent by God not by men. In this sense Luke was prepared to call them 'apostles'.⁹⁴ We must note that the situation under which Titus and Epaphroditus were sent cannot be compared with the circumstances under which Luke has placed Paul and Barnabas in the first missionary journey. The function played by Epaphroditus is different from the task being carried out by Paul and Barnabas. The former was an intra-Church commission whereas the latter were sent to unknown Gentiles for missionary work. Lüdemann, therefore, rightly observes that Luke has used οἱ ἀπόστολοι in a wider sense to include those who preach the gospel among the Gentiles.⁹⁵ The views of Barrett and Lüdemann make good sense in

⁹¹ Lake, *BC*, V, p. 51; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 108; Roloff, *ApG*, p. 211. D omits οἱ ἀπόστολοι in 14: 14. Barrett (*Acts*, I, p. 678) notes that the short text in D without οἱ ἀπόστολοι may have been the correct reading. M. Wilcox ('Luke and the Bezan Text of Acts', *Les Actes des Apôtres*, p. 448) comments that the omission shows D's tendency to be more Lukan (as Luke uses οἱ ἀπόστολοι in most cases to denote the twelve) than Luke himself. It is hard to imagine why D did not drop οἱ ἀπόστολοι in 14: 4. It is explained by Epp (*Codex Bezae*, p. 128) as D's attempt to accentuate the hostility and opposition of the Jewish leaders to the apostles and also to enhance the dignity and deeds of the apostles themselves. If the latter concern is true of D, then it is less likely that D decided to omit οἱ ἀπόστολοι in 14: 14.

⁹² *Anfänge der Urchristlichen Mission*, p. 61.

⁹³ *Acts*, I, p. 667.

⁹⁴ *Acts*, I, p. 667.

⁹⁵ *Traditions in Acts*, p. 159. The traditional elements which underlie the

the present context in Lystra. 96

The question of apostleship is in general bound to the narrative context of the first missionary journey and in particular to the mission to the Gentiles in Lystra. Why has Luke introduced or retained the words οἱ ἀπόστολοι in 14: 14? How do we justify its use at the climactic point of the narrative? The word derives its content from the Hebrew meaning of שלח which often expresses the notion of 'sending with a special mission, authorisation, or responsibility with particular reference to the sender'.⁹⁷ Though the one who sends is in most cases someone other than God, in one quarter of the texts in which the word שלח/שלח occurs the sender is God.⁹⁸ Though the Church in Antioch laid their hands on them and sent them off as missionaries, the sender and the one who assigns them to the task is actually the Holy Spirit (13: 2, 4). It is significant that the later descriptions of the 'sent-ones' bring out the connection between theology and apostleship. The 'apostles' are commended to the grace of God (14: 26). Hence, in Acts, the term also indicates the task involved, not just the fact that they are sent with divine authorisation. To fulfil the task, the apostles are bound to obey God rather than man (4: 19) and therefore they speak boldly for the Lord (14: 3). They are not authorised and sent to carry out the task on their own. God is with them in their work. Many wonders and signs were done through the apostles (14: 3; 2: 43). The report of the mission at the end of the first missionary journey is basically about all that God had done through Paul and

Lukan composition of Ac. 13-14 are reflections of the joint missionary activity of Paul and Barnabas (idem, *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles*, London: SCM, 1984, p. 180, n.2). A. Harnack (*The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, ET, vol. I, London: William & Norgate, 1904, pp. 404-405) comments that Paul is for Luke an apostle in the wider sense of the term 'apostle' and not by reason of the qualities requisite for apostleship according to Ac. 1: 21ff.

⁹⁶ Dunn, (*Unity and Diversity*, p. 107) observes that the primitive sense of 'apostle' as missionary is preserved in Ac. 14: 4, 14; also, N. Taylor (*Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity*, Sheffield: JSOT, 1992, p. 156).

⁹⁷ F. H. Agnew, 'The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research', *JBL*, 105/1 (1986), p. 82; *TDNT*, I, pp. 400-401, 421. On the other hand, it should be noted that there are limitations in correspondence of roles between the שלח-figures and the apostle (see particularly, Schmithals, *Office*, pp. 21-57; 103-106.)

⁹⁸ *TDNT*, I, p. 400.

Barnabas (14: 27). By 'apostles' is meant a strong sense of commitment to the kerygma.⁹⁹ The apostles preached the message of salvation (13: 26, 43, 46). The joint activity of Paul and Barnabas as apostles should be understood in terms of mission by God. The apostles are sent by the Holy Spirit; they have a message from God; God is with them.

In brief, v. 14 occupies a central place in the narrative as Luke is beginning to introduce the message that will address the theological problems he has highlighted so far. The employment of the word 'apostles' in 14: 14 by Luke is deeply significant and is directly relevant to the situation in Lystra. It offers an image in sharp contrast to the way the Lystrans thought about them. The identification of Paul and Barnabas with gods is counteracted by the reminder of their true status as apostles.

Luke has built up the narrative to a climax in which the apostles are shown as acting swiftly and vigorously to encounter the situation. They tore their garments when they heard the news about sacrifices being made in honour of them. This outward gesture of Paul and Barnabas which is characteristically Jewish represents their inner feelings about what has happened thus far.¹⁰⁰ It is a fitting response through which Luke confirms to his readers the nature of the problem encountered by Paul and Barnabas.¹⁰¹ The context here seems to suggest that the reaction is aimed to express horrors and dismay at the misconceptions of God which are illustrated by each scene in the narrative.¹⁰² The symbolic action of Paul and Barnabas implies a strong disapproval of the Lystrans' attempt to deify Paul and Barnabas which, for

⁹⁹ Betz, 'Apostle', *ABD*, I, p. 310.

¹⁰⁰ cf. *Judith* 14: 16ff. Rackham (*Acts*, p. 232) who on the basis of 16: 22 thinks the symbolism of the gesture was known to the Gentiles. But both are two different actions.

¹⁰¹ H. J. Cadbury, 'Dust and Garments', *BC*, V, p. 271. Here the rabbinic texts seem to afford an explanation. On account of the following the garments are rent. 'One rends [his clothes] for his father or mother; or his master who taught him Wisdom, for a Nasi, or Ab Beth din; or on hearing evil tidings or hearing God's name blasphemed, or when a scroll of the law has been burnt or at the [sight of the ruined] cities of Judea, the holy Temple or Jerusalem': *Mo'ed Katan*, 26a; cf. Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I, pp. 1007-1009.

¹⁰² Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 195.

Luke, is tantamount to blasphemy *against God*.¹⁰³ Yet, at the centre of the rage, there is a 'theological vision' which Luke captures in the words spoken. The act of rending the garments symbolises the counter message of the apostles of God and their speech continues to address the theological issues with a view to present the true knowledge of God.

6.3.1.2 *The speech proper (vv. 15-17)*

6.3.1.2.1 *Apostles are men*

a) v. 15a : ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι

The speech is in a style reminiscent of the OT¹⁰⁴ and some have noted in the speech a good number of key words from Jewish literature.¹⁰⁵ Luke addresses first the key problem. The speech begins with an appeal 'why are you doing?'¹⁰⁶ In other words, 'Why are you making preparations for sacrifice?'¹⁰⁷ Luke counts the problem of identifying men with gods and sacrificing in honour of them as the priority issue. Here is a direct and strong rebuttal to the deification of men with a statement indicating their status as men not gods and their vocation as apostles preaching the good news.¹⁰⁸ The word ὁμοιοπαθεῖς is used not to show the humble character of the apostles but to stress their human nature.¹⁰⁹ This

¹⁰³ Cf. Mk. 14: 63 = Mt. 26: 65). Macgregor (*Acts, IB*, vol. IX, p. 189) sees it as blasphemy against the sacrificial worship paid to mere men.

¹⁰⁴ Bruce, *Acts*, I, p. 293; Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 71, n. 23. Luke presents here a characteristically Jewish teaching about God (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 166). E. Lerle ('Die Predigt Lystra', *NTS*, 31 (1960/61), p. 54) acknowledges the OT concepts and terminology in the composition of the speech but argues that the content of the speech resembles the preaching of Jesus.

¹⁰⁵ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 111; Knox (*Acts*, p. 69) maintains that in the general conception of God expounded in the speech we find ourselves entirely on the conventional ground of Hellenistic Judaism. It has been recently argued by Breytenbach ('Zeus und der lebendige Gott', pp. 397-98) that since there are number of words in the speech which may have been taken from the LXX, the speech is derived from the OT-Jewish tradition known to Hellenistic Judaism.

¹⁰⁶ *BDF*, § 299. 1; Marshall (*Acts*, p. 238) takes τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; as 'what are they doing?'

¹⁰⁷ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 679.

¹⁰⁸ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 680.

¹⁰⁹ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 679: 'The two act and shout so as to make it clear that

is to make plain their true status as men and therefore as men they can neither be ascribed with nor themselves assume divinity.¹¹⁰ Luke also uses the word ὁμοιοπαθεῖς...ἄνθρωποι as an antithesis to θεοὶ ὁμοιωθέντες ἄνθρωποις in the acclamation of the people (v. 11). Paul and Barnabas are not gods in the likeness of men but they are men, mortals just like the people in Lystra.¹¹¹

In the NT, Elijah the prophet is portrayed as a man of like nature with ourselves (ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθῆς ἡμῖν James 5: 17). In the speech in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, Luke has Paul say that David who had served the counsel of God in his own generation fell asleep, and was laid with his fathers. He stresses the fact that David saw corruption (διαφθοράν) (13: 36) which is indicative of the humanness of David.¹¹² The first statement in Luke's composition of the speech in ch. 14 thus undermines the Lystrans' way of calling the human as divine.

6.3.1.2.2 *The living God*

b) v. 15b: εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα

The second part of the opening declaration (v. 15b) explains the vocation of Paul and Barnabas that they are preachers of the gospel. Here Luke underlines the role of the apostles as men entrusted with the task of proclamation. The word εὐαγγελιζόμενοι is significant to Luke's idea of apostleship. Preaching the gospel is

they are no more than human'.

¹¹⁰ Luke's refusal to ascribe divinity to man is a motif also present in non-Jewish literature, see Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 110. The sin of the nations in the story of the tower of Babel is explained by Philo (*Conf.* 7) as the nations' demand to achieve immortality (ἀθανασίας) so that they may be exempted from old age and allowed to enjoy the vigour of youth for ever.

¹¹¹ cf. M. C. Parsons and R. I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993, p. 92. We are ἄνθρωποι, human not divine, on the same level with yourselves (Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 679). The book of *Wisdom of Solomon* portrays Solomon, the wisest of men, as a mortal man like the rest descended from the first man who was made of dust (*Wisd.* 7: 1-6).

¹¹² Luke employs διαφθορά in order to make a Christological point that Jesus whom God raised saw no corruption (Ac. 13: 34, 35, 37; 2: 27, 31). See ch. V, pp. 72ff.

the key function of the apostolate in Acts.¹¹³ Luke represents them devoted to the preaching of the word.¹¹⁴ The apostles were ceaselessly engaged in preaching every day in the temple and in home (5: 41; 6: 2, 4).

The noun εὐαγγέλιον is not often used by Luke (only in Ac. 15: 7; 20: 24) but the term εὐαγγελίζομαι is relatively common in Luke (Lk. 1: 19; 2: 10; 3: 18; 4: 18; 16: 16; 20: 1; Ac. 5: 42; 8: 4, 12, 40; 10: 36; 11: 20; 13: 32; 16: 10; 17: 18).¹¹⁵ The basic meaning of the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is 'proclaim', 'preach'.¹¹⁶ It is used with the mention of the thing or person proclaimed as well as the person or the place that receives the message.¹¹⁷ God had called Paul εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτούς, the Macedonians (16: 10). Paul and Barnabas preached (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἦσαν) in the cities of Lycaonia and the surrounding country (14: 7; cf. v. 21). In these references, the content of the preaching is not specified.

The word also occurs in Acts with certain objects of content added to it. Sometimes the word is followed by an unspecified content such as τὸν λόγον (Ac. 8: 4) and specifically τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου (Ac. 15: 35). The apostles did not cease preaching (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι) Jesus as the Christ (τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν) (Ac. 5: 42). Other variants are τὸν Ἰησοῦν (Ac. 8: 35; 17: 18) and τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν (Ac. 11: 20). Paul and Barnabas preached about the promise made to the fathers which God fulfilled by raising Jesus (Ac. 13: 12). Philip preached περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ (Ac. 8: 12) as also περὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ.¹¹⁸ Here in 14: 15, εὐαγγελιζόμενοι occurs with an accusative ὑμᾶς and an infinitive construction ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων which adduces a theological content to the preaching. The word here denotes both the people being evangelised and the content that is preached to them.

¹¹³ To preach the gospel and 'to be God's witnesses' are the two main functions of the apostles (Lake, 'The Twelve and the Apostles', *BC*, V, p. 52).

¹¹⁴ Barrett, *Luke the Historian*, p. 71.

¹¹⁵ Other synoptic writers use the noun fairly frequently and the verb occurs only once (Mt. 11: 5).

¹¹⁶ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. I, London: SCM, 1959, p. 87.

¹¹⁷ *BAG*, p. 317.

¹¹⁸ See ch. III, pp. 51-53; cf. Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 64.

God is the subject matter of the preaching and we must note particularly three terms that define the theological nature of the kerygma, that is, ἐπιστρέφειν, θεὸν ζῶντα and τῶν ματαίων. The word ἐπιστρέφω is common in the LXX. It appears about 579 times and translates as many as 20 Hebrew words. In religious contexts it always refers to the act of turning to the Lord (II Ch. 15: 4; 19: 4; 24: 19; 30: 9). It denotes an act of penitence towards God (I Ki. 8: 33-35, 47, 48). Πρὸς Κύριον τὸν Θεὸν is fundamental to the prophetic message (cf. Hos. 5: 4; 6: 1; 7: 10; 14:2). In Acts, 'returning to the Lord' is the central feature of the kerygma.¹¹⁹ The word ἐπιστρέφω occurs in Ac. 3: 19 and 26 as a variant term (Wechselbegriff) for μετάνοια.¹²⁰ It is a technical term to describe the 'conversion' of the people in turning to God.¹²¹ The words of James mention Gentiles turning to the Lord (15: 19). Luke speaks of a great number turning to the Lord in Antioch (11: 11) and the residents of Lydda and Sharon are reported to have turned to the Lord (9: 35). The purpose of Paul's mission is to declare both to Jews and to non-Jews that they should repent and 'turn to God' (26: 20). The theological kerygma also has another side of conversion which is to 'turn from' vain things.¹²² In this sense, the Christian concept of conversion is two-fold.¹²³

The word μάταιος has a basic meaning of 'unreal' and 'vain'. In the LXX, beauty (Pr. 31:30) and understanding (Ps. 93: 11) fall under the judgement of μάταιος. In most occurrences of μάταιος in the OT, the word has a strong theological overtone. The word is used particularly in regard to misusing the name of God [You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain (ἐπὶ ματαίῳ) Ex. 20: 7]. It refers to a willful act against God who brought Israel from Egypt and people going after things that do not profit (Jer. 2: 5, 8).

¹¹⁹ The infinitive ἐπιστρέφειν borders closely on the infinitive of purpose and result (*BDF*, § 392). Repentance is not something preliminary to the proclamation as argued by O'Neill (*Theology of Acts*, p. 152). Rather, it is fundamental to the kerygma about God that God calls the nations to turn to him.

¹²⁰ Wilckens, *Missionsreden*, p. 179.

¹²¹ *TDNT*, VII, p. 728.

¹²² Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 680.

¹²³ *TDNT*, VII, p. 728.

Forsaking the commandments of God and choosing to make graven images is equivalent to walking after the vanities (τῶν ματαίων) and becoming vain (ἐματαιώθησαν) (IV Kings 17: 16). The vanities (οἱ μάταιοι) provoke the Lord (III Ki. 16:2, 13, 26). By 'vanities' is meant primarily transgression against the one God. As Bauernfeind observes, 'Everything which resists the first commandment comes under the judgment of μάταιος...'¹²⁴ This basic OT meaning is relevant here too but the polemic is directed against the present religious actions. 'Vain things' refer to the wrong theology of the Lystrans and particularly to the notions that Paul and Barnabas represent an epiphany of gods, whom sacrifices are to be offered.¹²⁵ In order to condemn the names of gods ascribed to Paul and Barnabas, the role and the task of the apostolate as men bearing the message is affirmed by Luke.

c) v. 15c: ὃς ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν κτλ...

The God to whom they should turn is the 'living God'. The phrase 'living God' is central to the main thrust of the speech.¹²⁶ 'Living God' (ὃς) becomes the subject of the rest of the speech. Again an echo of OT motifs can be found here. The living God is the Creator God. The phrase, 'God who made the heaven and the earth...' reflects the wording of Ex. 20: 11. God is proclaimed as Creator of the Universe.¹²⁷ This is central to Luke's theology of God.¹²⁸ God is θεὸν ζῶντα because ζωὴ is proper to God. He is not only life in himself but he lives eternally.¹²⁹ He is the living God because he is Lord and Preserver of all living beings (Ps. 42: 3; Hos. 2: 1; Dan. 4: 23). This affirmation of God as 'living God' is used in various polemical contexts in which other concepts of the divine are brought under attack (cf. *Bel Drag.* 25). According to Deutero-Isaiah, the man-made gods whom men worship do not possess the living character of the only God (Is. 44: 9-20). The 'living God' of

¹²⁴ TDNT, IV, p. 522; Bauernfeind, *Apg*, p. 183. In the *Sibylline Oracles*, gifts to the dead and sacrifice to idols are considered vain which is tantamount to abandoning the great God (3: 547, 555); cf. *Lett. Arist.* 134-36.

¹²⁵ Bauernfeind, *Apg*, p. 183.

¹²⁶ Breytenbach, 'Zeus und der Lebendige Gott', p. 397.

¹²⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 428; Bultmann, *Theology*, I, p. 69.

¹²⁸ See ch. VII, pp. 135-138.

¹²⁹ TDNT, II, p. 862. Cf. Mt. 26: 63.

the Jews, the almighty and all-seeing God will show to king Antiochus that he alone is God by showing mercy to his people and by punishing Antiochus (*II Macc.* 7: 30-38). When Nicanor forced the Jews to accompany his army on the Sabbath day, a sharp controversy between Nicanor and the Jews arose. It was marked by an antithesis between the ruler in the sky, the 'living Lord', and the ruler on the earth, Nicanor (*II Macc.* 15: 1-5). The expression 'living God' is also a part of the early Christian confession: Christ is the son of the living God (*Mt.* 16: 16).¹³⁰

As already indicated, Luke establishes a strong relationship between God and the apostles and their mission. The message about God preached by the apostles has crucial significance to the Lystrans that they ought to turn from the vain things to the living God. The vain things denote the misconceptions about God found among the Lystrans.

d) v. 16: ὃς ἐν ταῖς παρωχημέναις γενεαῖς εἶασεν κτλ.

The second ὃς indicates that 'living God' is still the subject of the proclamation. Inasmuch as God is Creator, he is also God of the nations. In the past generations God allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. The word παροίχομαι is hapaxlegomenon and the phrase παρωχημέναις γενεαῖς has an explicit reference to time.¹³¹ The preposition ἐν implies both the point of time and the duration of time.¹³² Luke has a preference for the word εἶάω as it occurs in Acts 9 times out of 11 occurrences in the NT. It is only here that God is the subject of εἶάω.¹³³ The reference to past generations indicates that the decisive moment has arrived and it is time to return to God. It echoes the decisive turning point as in the case of the life of Mary whom the future generations shall call blessed. God regarded her low estate and ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν all generations will call her

¹³⁰ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, vol. II, Benziger Verlag, 1990, pp. 460ff.

¹³¹ It refers to the by-gone time (Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 681).

¹³² *BDF*, § 200.

¹³³ In Acts, 'Spirit of Jesus' (16: 7) and in the Gospel 'Jesus' (4: 41) are subjects of εἶάω.

blessed.¹³⁴ God's time has arrived and it divides the past from the present and thus makes a new beginning for the future generation.¹³⁵ So also, God is now dealing with the generations of nations in a new way.

Luke also makes a distinction between the ways of men and the ways of God. The implied antithesis here is that the ways of the nations are not the ways of God (cf. Ps. 14: 1-3; 51: 13; 67: 2). In Luke's description of mission, the phrases ἡ ὁδὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (Lk. 20: 21) and αἱ ὁδοὶ τοῦ κυρίου (Ac. 13: 10) define the kerygma.¹³⁶ In the eyes of the opponents, Jesus taught the way of God (Lk. 20: 21). Apollos was instructed in the way of the Lord (Ac. 18: 25, 26). The theological kerygma announces the change in time and it declares to the nations that 'God patiently waited for the present moment in which he makes turning possible'.¹³⁷

e) v. 17: καίτοι οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφῆκεν κτλ.

The verse has several special features. The particle καίτοι occurs only here with a finite verb;¹³⁸ ἀμάρτυρος is a hapaxlegomenon; ἀγαθουργέω does not appear elsewhere in the NT¹³⁹ and is rare outside the NT; ὑετός in the plural occurs only here; εὐφροσύνη is found only here and its other usage is found in the OT quotation in Ac. 2: 28; τροφή appears only twice in Acts (cf. Ac. 2: 46).¹⁴⁰ Τροφή καὶ εὐφροσύνη is perhaps a doublet of the same meaning. Its cultivated style is borne out in the following constructions: οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφῆκεν, a litotes; ὑετούς διδούς, onomatopoeia and καιροῦς καρποφόρους, alliteration.¹⁴¹ These linguistic peculiarities add a new dimension to Luke's kerygma concerning God.

¹³⁴ Evans, *Luke*, p. 174; Nolland, *Luke 1 - 9: 20*, p. 70.

¹³⁵ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 367. The phrase ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν is significant in Luke's conception of time and signifies the inauguration of the age of salvation (cf. 5: 10; 12: 52; 22: 18, 69; Ac. 18: 6).

¹³⁶ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 550, n. 5. Τοῦ κυρίου stands for τοῦ θεοῦ (Schneider, *Lukas*, p. 222).

¹³⁷ Bruce, *Acts*, p. 680.

¹³⁸ καίτοι = 'and yet' (*BDF*, § 450.3).

¹³⁹ But note, ἀγαθοεργέω in I Tim. 6: 18.

¹⁴⁰ Schneider, *ApG*, II, p. 161, ns. 60-65.

¹⁴¹ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 71, n. 23.

6.3.1.2.3 *The life-giving God*

The 'living God' is also 'life-giving' God. The participles ἀγαθουργῶν, διδούς and ἐμπιπλῶν have God as the subject and they illustrate the nature of God as the Life-Giver. The verb διδούς governs ὑετούς and also καιροῦς καρποφόρους. The Creator sustains the humanity he has created by providing them rains and fruit-bearing seasons. This is counted as God's goodness to the nations (Ps. 104: 13; 147: 8; Jer. 5: 24; Joel 2: 23-26). This gift of God is οὐρανόθεν which shows its origin. The RSV translates, '(God) satisfying the hearts of the people with food and gladness'. The accuracy of the translation has been questioned by O. Lagercrantz who argues that it is natural to speak of a heart filled with gladness but not food filling the heart.¹⁴² He therefore proposes to take ὑετούς καὶ καιρούς and τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης as a hendiadys in which two ideas are co-ordinated and one of which is dependent on the other.¹⁴³ Hence the former phrase is to be translated as 'seasons *through* rains' (literally, 'rains of fruitful seasons') and the latter as 'with joy *for* food'.¹⁴⁴ The rains make the times fruitful and the nourishment thus brought to men fills their hearts with gladness.¹⁴⁵ God is a living God because he makes the life of humanity possible (cf. 17: 24, 25, 27).¹⁴⁶

The notion of God who nourishes is not uncommon in the hellenistic understanding of god. Zeus was believed to be the god of the bright sky and so he was a weather god in general. In Lycaonia, Zeus was worshipped under the fuller title, 'He that

¹⁴² 'Act 14: 17', ZNW, 31 (1932), pp. 86-87.

¹⁴³ BDF, § 442. 16.

¹⁴⁴ BDF, § 442. 16.

¹⁴⁵ Lagercrantz, 'Ac. 14: 17', p. 87.

¹⁴⁶ The recent studies on food and nourishment in Luke have paid very little attention to the connection between food and the theology of God. E. g., H. Moxnes, 'Meals and the New Community in Luke', *SEA*, 51-52 (1986-87), pp. 158-167; J. H. Neyrey, 'Ceremonies in Luke-Acts: The Case of Meals and Table Fellowship', *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, pp. 361-387. Neyrey has completely ignored the Lukan theology of God as the giver of life to all whereas Marxenes' ('Meals', p. 166) brief remark that God feeds only his people is an inadequate understanding of Luke's theology.

thunders and lightens'.¹⁴⁷ There are expressions such as 'Zeus lightens', 'Zeus thunders', 'Zeus rains', 'Zeus sends the hail', etc., throughout the whole range of Greek literature.¹⁴⁸ Therefore thunder, lightning, rains, etc. were considered to be the 'signs' of Zeus (Διουσημία).¹⁴⁹ Sudden changes in the sky meant much to the worshippers of Zeus. Cook observes, '...assemblies, law-courts, and armies viewed such signs with alarm and on their occurrence were apt to drop the business in hand'.¹⁵⁰ The signs were positive or negative or mere stop-signs and they retained their significance throughout the classical period of Greece and Rome.¹⁵¹ Zeus, the sky God, the weather-making ruler then became 'the recognised head of the Greek pantheon, and in the Hellenistic age was brought into connexion with other manifestations of celestial brightness - sun, moon, and stars alike'.¹⁵²

Given this background concept of god, the readers must have been in a position to understand the statement about God who gives fruitful seasons through rains. God did not leave himself unattested. The gift of rains and fruitful seasons and gladness filling the hearts is a 'witness' to the work of God.¹⁵³ Why does Luke emphasise this aspect of God in Lystra? Luke is probably arguing that God cannot be localised and he wishes to make the narrative audience and his readers see that God is at work in nature and through nature. Parsons and Pervo suggest that Luke argues that 'incidents like the recent healing are but the tip of the iceberg, that the existence of crops and seasons are themselves miracles seen every day and callously overlooked'.¹⁵⁴ They further argue that in Lystra, Luke does not dissociate between miraculous and natural and sees nature and miracles as continuous.¹⁵⁵ One can also see here a further link between the word ἀμάρτυρον and 14: 3.

¹⁴⁷ Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, p. 817.

¹⁴⁸ Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, p. 1ff.; Nilsson, *History of Greek Religion*, p. 113.

¹⁴⁹ Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, p. 4. Διουσημία is the best attested form (n. 12).

¹⁵⁰ Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, p. 7.

¹⁵¹ Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, p. 8.

¹⁵² Cook, *Zeus*, II, pt. I, p. 840.

¹⁵³ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 428.

¹⁵⁴ *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993, p. 93.

¹⁵⁵ *Rethinking*, p. 94.

God has not left the world without his witness (ἀμάρτυρον) for he gives rains and fruitful seasons and satisfies the hearts of human beings with gladness. The same God is now bearing witness (μαρτυροῦντι) to the word of his grace which the apostles declare through their inspired utterance.¹⁵⁶ Whether the thought is of nourishment to humanity or of the word preached by the apostles to the Lystrans, the source of both is God. The term δίδωμι is also significant here. God who gives rains, seasons, food and gladness also gives signs and wonders through the hands of the apostles (14: 3).¹⁵⁷ What was unknown about God among the Gentiles is that God is now making himself known not only through rains and fruitful seasons but also through *witnessing* to his word by *giving* signs and wonders.

The idea of God as 'giver' is one of the prominent features in Luke's theology of God. God who gives rains and seasons also gives salvation (Ac. 7: 25), the Holy Spirit (Ac. 8: 18) and the kingdom (Lk. 12: 32). Luke's significant alteration of ἀγαθά in Matthew (Mt. 7: 11) to 'Holy Spirit' (Lk. 11: 9-13) is to underline the fact that the giving of the daily needs of nourishment is an example of God's gift of the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. One can derive the assurance of God's gift of the Holy Spirit from the act of a father's giving sustenance to his children. The prayer 'Give us our bread' is made to God only in the gospels.¹⁵⁸ Luke portrays God as 'the giver of food' to humanity. Luke's form of the Lord's Prayer stresses the aspect of the continuous giving (δίδου) of bread every day (τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν) by God. In the following parable of the friend requesting help at midnight the focus is on the friend and the bread needed. The inference one ought to draw is that God gives men bread likewise.¹⁵⁹ God feeds (τρέφει) humanity (Lk. 12: 24). Luke prefers

¹⁵⁶ With God as the subject the word μαρτυρέω occurs twice in Acts in relation to the kerygmatic activity of the early Church (cf. 13: 22; 15: 8). The construction μαρτυρέω with ἐπί + dative is unusual and the reading is supported only by a few witnesses. Yet it is considered original as ἐπί may have derived from an Aramaic original (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 421).

¹⁵⁷ *TDNT*, VII, p. 243; διὰ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν (Ac. 14: 3); διὰ τῶν χειρῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων (5: 12); διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων (2: 43); δι' αὐτῶν (15: 12). Διὰ with genitive indicates 'Vermittlerrolle der Apostel' (Schneider, *Apg*, I, p. 287, n. 28).

¹⁵⁸ E. Lohmeyer, *The Lord's Prayer*, ET, London: Collins, 1965, p. 135.

¹⁵⁹ J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, ET, London: SCM, 1972, p. 159; cf.

a universal language, 'God' for Matthew's 'your heavenly father' in Mt. 6: 26. God gives life to all men (Ac. 17: 25) and has filled the hungry with good things (Lk. 1: 53; cf. Ps. 107: 9).

In Luke, the verb for joy εὐφραίνεσθαι is connected with the partaking of food.¹⁶⁰ Food is God's gift to humanity and this fact was not realised by the rich man who was εὐφραινόμενος καθ' ἡμέραν λαμπρῶς in the story of rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16: 19). The festal meal is indicative of joy over the returning of the repentant son (Lk. 15: 23, 24, 29, 32). The early Christians broke bread in their homes, they partook of their food with glad and generous hearts praising God (Ac. 2: 46-47). Food and gladness are part of the Christian life and joy shared together. The fact that God is the 'giver', is not simply to be assumed but should be recognised by humanity by placing themselves constantly under the main source from where food and joy for daily living is obtained. Such a humanity can also receive God's other gifts by turning to the life-giving God.

In brief, Luke lets the speech end with the declaration that God gives and satisfies the heart of the people. It seems that neither the speech nor the attempt to stop the people from making sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas at the temple succeeded. However, later references suggest that the mission was a success and there was a significant Christian community in Lystra (cf. 16: 1ff.; I Cor. 16: 2; II Tim. 4: 10; I Pe. 1: 1).

6.4 CONCLUSION

To sum up, Luke's presentation communicates that 'god' was central to the religious life in Lystra. They believed that gods effect miracles through their appearances on earth in the form of men. Such extraordinary men are treated as gods in human form. This belief was reflected in the offering of sacrifices by the people at the temple of Zeus. Paul and Barnabas denounce the act of ascribing divinity to humans by drawing a clear distinction

Evans, *Luke*, p. 485.

¹⁶⁰ Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts*, p. 252.

between the human and the divine. The image of the apostles plays an important polemical role against the identification of men with gods. They are men proclaiming the living God. God is God of the nations who calls them to return from such vanities. The key to proclamation is the true nature of the living God who has life and gives life to humanity. He gives humanity fruitful seasons and fills their hearts with gladness. The rains and seasons are the daily miracles of God on the earth. In Luke's thinking, food and theology are inter-related. Grain is God's gift to humanity and it is this fact which brings joy to men. The Lystrans must turn to God from vain things which deny the one God, the author of life.

VII

ATHENS (17: 16-34): THE UNKNOWN GOD

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The mission to Athens is a highlight of Paul's second missionary journey.¹ Also among Luke's narratives of mission to the Gentiles, it holds a unique place since Athens was regarded as a symbol of Greek culture and religion.² Luke has Paul standing at the heart of the Greek culture.³ As in the previous narratives of Samaria and Lystra, we examine the speech and the setting in which the speech has been placed.⁴ This will enable us to draw out the characteristic features of Luke's theology of God that are significant for the mission in Athens.

7.2 THE KERYGMATIC CONTEXT: *The narrative framework (vv.16-23)*

What does Luke intend to say to his readers in the narrative framework about the 'occasion' of the speech? Does it contain Luke's evaluation of the religious environment in Athens? What are its specific aspects?

¹ 'Luke uses the space made available by Paul's short stay in Athens to craft one of his most impressive scenes': L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 5, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1993.

² Dibelius, *Studies*, pp. 73, 75. Philo (*Prob.* 140) states, 'Athens is in Greece what the pupil is in the eye and the reason in the soul (ὅπερ γὰρ ἐν ὀφθαλμῷ κόρη ἢ ἐν ψυχῇ λογισμός, τοῦτ' ἐν Ἑλλάδι Ἀθῆναι).' Diodorus of Sicily records that the Athenians had so advanced both in fame and power that their name was known practically throughout the inhabited world (*Diodorus of Sicily*, tr. by C. H. Oldfather, vol. IV, London: William Heinemann, 1946, XII, 2, 1).

³ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 152.

⁴ The narrative framework forms an inseparable unit with the content of the speech: cf. Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 45; Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 231; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 140: 'The scene and speech are woven together to form a whole'. The importance of studying the speech in its narrative context and of not treating it as a detachable entity is stressed by Parsons and Pervo (*Rethinking*, p. 85).

7.2.1 *The city was full of idols* (v. 16b)

Luke begins the narrative with Paul's interaction with the religious scene in Athens. The key expression is that the city was 'full of idols' (v. 16b, κατείδωλον οὔσαν τὴν πόλιν). The word κατείδωλος is not found elsewhere and κατ- in combination with εἶδωλον means 'full of'.⁵ The expression not only adds to knowledge about the religion of the city but it points immediately to the theological dimension of Paul's initial experience. An author like Luke, who had been deeply influenced by the LXX, must have been fully aware of the religious connotations of the word εἶδωλον which translates as many as 15 Hebrew words.⁶ It denotes objects of worship, images of gods, and, more importantly, is applied to the gods themselves.⁷ Paul was provoked within (παρωξύνετο) when he saw (θεωροῦντος) that the city was κατείδωλος.⁸ Paul's strong reaction is described as 'holy anger' (heiligen Zorn) shown by a Jewish Paul towards the religious condition of the Gentiles.⁹ What we must note here is that Luke depicts Paul's reaction to the Gentile milieu and has Paul interact with it from the position of his faith.¹⁰ Paul's reaction does not

⁵ Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 209; *BDF*, § 120. 2. The city of Athens was dominated by the citadel of the Acropolis. Modern excavations have shown that the Acropolis was seen as the dwelling-place of the gods and riddled with sacred places, caves, niches, shrines and altars. For details, see Ferguson, *Among the Gods*, pp. 190-213.

⁶ See e.g., W. K. L. Clarke, 'The Use of the Septuagint in Acts', *BC*, II, pp. 66-105; G. D. Kilpatrick ('Some Quotations in Acts', *Actes des Apôtres*, p. 93) argues that Luke had become permeated with the LXX and its exposition. The word εἶδωλον/עִדְוֹלִים [Deut. 29: 17 (16)] means 'logs', 'blocks', 'shapeless things' (*BDB*, p. 165); εἶδωλον/עִדְוֹלִים is figurative of what is evanescent, unsubstantial and worthless (Deut. 32: 21) (*BDB*, p. 210); εἶδωλον/עִדְוֹלִים (Num. 25: 2; I Kings. 17: 43; III Kings. 11: 2) literally means 'god' (θεός); εἶδωλον/עִדְוֹלִים (Hos. 4: 17; 8: 4; 13: 2; 14: 9) basically means 'shape' and 'fashion' from whence the idea of carving and fashioning the idols came to expression [*BDB*, p. 781; εἶδωλον is, therefore, used with the verbs ἔφαθ' (Is. 40: 19; 44: 16) and ἔφαθ' (Jer. 10: 14; 51: 17)]; εἶδωλον/עִדְוֹלִים (Jer. 14: 22; 16: 19) literally means 'emptiness', 'nothing' and εἶδωλον/עִדְוֹלִים (Jer. 9: 14; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, ed. P. D. Hanson, vol. I, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, p. 330) refers to Baals.

⁷ *TDNT*, II, p. 377.

⁸ The verb παρωξύνω appears elsewhere in the NT only in I Cor. 13: 5 with reference to love being not resentful or irritable. The noun παρωξυσμός occurs in Ac. 15: 38 to imply a sense of irritation and a sharp disagreement.

⁹ Roloff, *ApG*, p. 257; also, Schneider, *ApG*, II, p. 235. Some understand it as a feeling of aversion or disturbance shown by a Jewish Christian towards idols [e.g., Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 138; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 517; R. E. Wycherley, 'St. Paul at Athens', *JTS*, 19 (1968), pp. 619-21].

¹⁰ Conzelmann, 'The Address of Paul on the Areopagus', *SLA*, p. 218.

necessarily indicate anger as the sense behind παροξύνω is that 'Paul was stirred into action'.¹¹ Gärtner is right in suggesting that Paul's experience is a pointer for the reader that a subject of fundamental importance is to be treated.¹² Luke refers tacitly to one of the points of the speech, that is, a polemic against idols.¹³ By the use of the word κατείδωλος and by the depiction of Paul's reaction Luke has hinted at the theological nature of the problem which the proclamation needs to address.

7.2.2 Stoics and Epicureans (v. 18a)

The city was also dominated by philosophy. According to v. 18a, the Stoics and Epicureans disputed (συνέβαλλον) with Paul.¹⁴ Why are only these two schools mentioned when Athens was also a seat of Peripatetics and the Academy of philosophers?¹⁵ Is it that Luke thought they were the most influential at the time, and that he had their tenets in mind when he composed the speech?¹⁶ Luke does not provide concrete reports about the nature and the content of that debate. It may be conjectured that the conception of God in its own distinctive way is central to both these schools of thought.

God is quite central to Stoic thinking. Stoics called God by several names. God is i) *logos* - the rational structure of the universe, ii) *pneuma* - the fiery breath of life, the creative fire and iii) *tonos* - that which makes the whole universe cohere.¹⁷ Stoics maintained that God is related to the universe as soul is to the body and the universe is controlled by the divine principle for which the most

¹¹ 'The Book of Acts', A. D. Nock, II, p. 824. *Contra* Flender, *St. Luke*, p. 67.

¹² *Areopagus Speech*, p.45.

¹³ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 66.

¹⁴ The RSV has, 'met' (v. 18). Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 140. The word συμβάλλω with dative means not only 'to converse with' but also 'to engage in an argument' ('dispute': BAG, p. 1539).

¹⁵ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 257.

¹⁶ C. K. Barrett, 'Paul's Speech on the Areopagus', *New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World*, London: SPCK, 1974, p. 72; Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, pp. 43ff.

¹⁷ M. L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1985, pp. 23-24; F. H. Sandbach, *The Stoics*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1975, pp. 72-75.

appropriate name is Providence.¹⁸ Some Stoics were concerned about the proofs for the existence of God. Chrysippus (280-206 BC), for example, used a simple argument saying, 'There is something in the universe better than man. Therefore, the gods exist.'¹⁹ He also used teleological and empirical arguments to prove the existence of God.²⁰ Epictetus (50-130 AD), a contemporary of Luke says, 'God is the father of men and gods'. According to him, God is the guide and men ought to make use of him as they make use of the eyes.²¹ Stoics also held polytheistic beliefs. Chrysippus and Epictetus used the words 'God' and 'gods' almost interchangeably. The proof for the existence of God is also the proof for the existence of gods.²² The gods are part of the universe and particularly the elements of nature were gods themselves.²³ The analysis of the speech will reveal to us whether Luke echoes some of the Stoic concepts of God, as is sometimes claimed by scholars, or whether Luke is polemicising against them. Since Luke says that the Stoics disputed with Paul it might mean that Luke himself is disputing with Stoic philosophy.

The Epicurean system of philosophy, on the other hand, did not have the same theistic orientation as the Stoics. In fact their conception of God or gods was contrary to Stoic ideas in many areas. They held that the natural phenomena are not the work of gods.²⁴ The Epicureans also denied divine Providence and divine intervention in the world.²⁵ Nevertheless, they had their own views concerning God or gods. The gods are not divided into beneficent and maleficent beings and they are indestructible and eternal as long as human beings are bound to think of them as

¹⁸ *ERE*, IX, p. 862.

¹⁹ J. B. Gould, *The Philosophy of Chrysippus*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1970, p. 153.

²⁰ Gould, *Philosophy of Chrysippus*, p. 154.

²¹ *Epictetus: The Discourses as reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments*, tr. W. A. Oldfather, London: William Heinemann, 1985, II, vii, 11.

²² C. Burchard (*Der dreizehnte Zeuge*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970, p. 140) thinks that the Stoic and the Epicurean philosophers were 'Professoren, die freilich für Lukas keine Philosophiedozenten, sondern so etwas wie die Schriftgelehrten unter den Polytheisten sind...'

²³ Gould, *Philosophy*, p. 155; *Epictetus*, I, xiii.

²⁴ *ERE*, V, p. 328.

²⁵ *ERE*, V, p. 328.

blessed and eternal.²⁶ The theism of the Epicureans sought to show that gods are like eternal and happy human beings of an ethereal substance inhabiting the space between the worlds.²⁷

Hence, it is not difficult to assume that the concept of God could have been one of the key points of argument between Paul and the Stoics and Epicureans. Luke is probably also interested in them as two very different philosophical persuasions with whose theological ideas he seeks to engage the gospel.

7.2.3 Paul, the preacher of 'foreign divinities' (v. 18c)

In vv. 18b-21, we have Luke's own indication of at least three different reactions to Paul's teaching on 'Jesus and resurrection'. They are different in their tone, mood and content. Two of them are in a form of criticism (v. 18b and v. 18c) and the third is the Athenians' general positive religious desire to hear something new (v. 21).²⁸ We must consider carefully the second criticism in v. 18c that Paul seemed to be a preacher of 'foreign divinities' (ξένων δαιμονίων).²⁹

The emphasis that Luke wishes to bring in this criticism falls on the words ξένων and δαιμονίων. The word τὸ δαιμόνιον appears elsewhere in the NT in a pejorative sense to denote 'demons' (I Cor. 10: 20, 21) and is used in association with 'idolatry' (Rev. 9: 20). But, here the word is placed on the lips of non-Jews as the assessment of the Christian message. In Greek writings the word is used to denote 'divine power' or 'divinity' and sometimes implying an inferior divine being. The indefinite expressions θεός, τὸ θεῖον, τὸ

²⁶ ERE, V, p. 329.

²⁷ H. A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, vol. I, Harvard University, 1948, p. 176; Epicurus calls the life of the Divinity infinitely pleasant and happy (A. J. Festugière, *Epicurus and His Gods*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955, p. 61).

²⁸ Luke has formulated the reactions and the criticisms of the gospel around the key word 'new' which is used in two different forms in three places (cf. vv. 18c, 20 and 21). Roloff (*Ap g*, p. 258) describes the mood as 'unverbindliche Neugierde'; so also A. Wikenhauser (*Die Apostelgeschichte*, Regensburg: 1955, p.198) who calls it 'lebhaftes Interesse'.

²⁹ The word καταγγελεύς is used evidently as a general philosophic-religious concept, not specifically Christian (Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 220).

δαιμόνιον are characteristic of the hellenistic period and they signify impersonal expressions for the supreme powers.³⁰ With a hint of a slightly derogatory meaning here, the genitive plural δαιμονίων suggests that Athenians understood the resurrection of Jesus as a divine being, Anastasis, a goddess alongside Jesus.³¹ It should be noted that this criticism of the teaching of Jesus and resurrection does not represent common Christological problems such as the Messiahship of Jesus or his suffering and death which are common themes in the preaching to Jewish contexts (Ac. 3: 11ff.; 13: 16-42). Rather, Luke shows that the Athenians probably understood Jesus and resurrection in theistic terms of their own.³² This helps to develop the theological background to the preaching itself.

The word ξένων adds an important dimension to the core of the complaint. It has often been suggested that the phrase ξένα δαιμόνια conjures up the image of Socrates because it would have reminded the reader of the accusation of introducing new gods that was brought against him.³³ Paul's argument (διελέγετο) with those who happened to be in the Agora is also reminiscent of Socrates and his debates in the market place, the centre of Athenian life.³⁴ This

³⁰ P. Wendland, *Die Hellenistisch-Römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zum Judentum und Christentum*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1972, p. 105, n. 2. In the writings of early Church Fathers, the word τὸ δαιμόνιον was used exclusively to refer to 'the heathen gods' which were regarded as evil spirits and to mean the 'Devil' or 'Satan' (cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1978, pp. 327-28.).

³¹ Haenchen, *Acts*, pp. 517ff; Roloff, *Apg*, p. 258; Munck, *Acts*, p. 169; Flender, *St. Luke*, p. 67.

³² Cf. Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 48, n. 5. K. Löning ('Gottesbild der Apostelgeschichte', *Monotheismus und Christologie*, p. 103, n. 36) is right when he suggests that the expression ξένων δαιμονίων is a statement of irony with elements of caricature from Luke to reveal the mentality of the Athenians.

³³ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 139; Pesch, *Apg*, II, p. 134; Roloff, *Apg*, p. 257; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 517; E. S. Fiorenza, 'Miracles, Mission, and Apologetics: An Introduction', *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, London: Notre Dame, 1976, p. 12; J. Dupont, *The Salvation of the Gentiles: Essays on the Acts of the Apostles*, ET, New York: Paulist, 1979, p. 31; Schneider, *Lukas*, pp. 128ff.; O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 1970, p. 164; also, H. D. Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus und die sokratische Tradition*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1972, pp. 18-39. Notice particularly the description given of Socrates by Diogenes Laertius that he was ἕτερα δὲ καινὰ δαιμόνια εἰσηγούμενος (II, 21).

³⁴ According to Diogenes Laertius (II. 21-22), Socrates discussed moral questions in the work-shops and the market-place (ἐπὶ τε τῶν ἐργαστηρίων καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ). He was vehement in argument (διαλεγόμενον) and was engaged in argument with anyone (τοῖς προσδιαλεγόμενοις) who would converse with him.

probably reflects Luke's intention since the nature of the problem related by him is to do with religious teaching concerning the gods as in the case of Socrates. The intolerant attitude of the Athenians towards those who preached about strange gods is also well known, as Josephus, in his apology *Against Apion*, lists several incidents in Athens where some preachers and wandering sages were severely punished even to the point of death, for preaching about the gods of other nations.

But the Athenians, who considered their city open to all comers - what was their attitude in this matter? Apollonius was ignorant of this, and of the inexorable penalty which they inflicted on any who uttered a single word about the gods contrary to their laws (τὸ ῥῆμα μόνον παρὰ τοὺς ἐκείνων νόμους φθεγξαμένους περὶ θεῶν). On what other ground was Socrates put to death?... because he used to swear strange oaths and give out... that he received communications from a spirit, he was therefore condemned to die by drinking hemlock. His accuser brought a further charge against him of corrupting young men, because he stimulated them to hold the constitution and laws of their country in contempt.... Anaxagoras was a native of Clazomenae, but because he maintained that the sun, which the Athenians held to be a god, was an incandescent mass, he escaped by a few votes only from being condemned by them to death. They offered a talent for the head of Diagoras of Melos, because he has reported to have jeered at their mysteries. Protagoras, had he not promptly fled, would have been arrested and put to death, because of a statement about the gods in his writings which appeared to conflict with Athenian tenets. Can one wonder at their attitude towards men of such authority when they did not spare even women? They put Ninus the priestess to death, because some one accused of her of initiating people into the mysteries of foreign gods (ξένους ἐμύει θεούς); this was forbidden by their law, and the penalty decreed for any who introduced a foreign god (τιμωρία κατὰ τῶν ξένων εἰσαγόντων θεῶν) was death. Those who had such a law evidently did not believe that the gods of other nations were gods; else they would not have denied themselves the advantage of increasing the number of their own. So much may be said to the credit of the Athenians.³⁵

For the most part he was despised and laughed at, but he bore all these patiently (II. 21-22). For the details on the life, teaching and the trial of Socrates, see C. Phillipson, *The Trial of Socrates*, London: Stevens & Sons, 1928. E. Fascher ['Sokrates und Christus', *ZNW*, 45 (1954), p. 26] argues that although the name Socrates is not mentioned in the NT, reference to Socrates can be detected in the background of the presentation of Jesus, the lives of the disciples and particularly Paul.

³⁵ Ag. Ap. II. 262-269. The details of the charges laid against Socrates, Anaxagoras and Protagoras agree with the accounts of Diogenes Laertius on the lives of eminent philosophers probably dating from the 3 cent. AD. Diogenes (II. 12) records that Anaxagoras was indicted on a charge of impiety because he declared the sun to be a mass of red-hot metal. The affidavit against Socrates has the following charge. 'Socrates is guilty of refusing to recognise the gods recognised by the state, and of introducing other new divinities (ἕτερα δὲ καινὰ δαιμόνια εἰσηγούμενος)' (II. 40). Protagoras' work begins thus: 'As to the gods, I have no means of knowing either that they exist or that they do not exist' (IX. 51).

Although this evidence speaks of events which happened at least four centuries before Paul, it shows that Josephus made use of it for his apologetic purpose at the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century AD. Past events in Athens were still treated as relevant to the issue of showing intolerance to the gods of other nations. The lengthy quotation from Josephus informs us about the centrality of the concept of god in Athenian piety. It also tells us about the highly intolerant attitude of the Athenians towards any teaching on gods from others whom they charged as introducing foreign gods.³⁶ The point behind the criticism in v. 18c is not that Paul was a polytheist but that the 'divinities' he preached were strange and novel.³⁷ Although from Luke's treatment of the narrative it is obvious that Paul was in no danger of imminent death, as in the cases of Socrates, Anaxagoras and Protagoras, yet Luke tells the readers that a number of Athenians had already reached the conclusion that Paul was propagating ξένα δαιμόνια (v. 18). Of all the reactions shown by the Athenians as described by Luke, the criticism in v.18c contains vital clues to the theology of the Athenians. Thus Luke has made the attitude of the Athenians comprehensible to his readers by using a phrase familiar to them, foreshadowing the speech before the Areopagus.³⁸

³⁶ Philo also speaks of the intolerant attitude of the Athenians to the customs of other nations in comparison with the Jewish attitude to other nations (*Mos.* ii. 19).

³⁷ O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 1970, p. 165.

³⁸ Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 69) thinks that Luke meant the Hill of Ares. The place between the Areopagus and the Acropolis would have given room for a larger audience; also, Bauernfeind, *Apog.*, p. 216; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 518. n.6. However, there are strong indications that the Areopagus referred to a council rather than to a place; see *BC*, IV, p. 219; Pesch, *Apog.*, II, p. 135. Out of three references to the Areopagus in Diogenes Laertius, one clearly refers to place: λαβὼν πρόβατα...ἤγαγε πρὸς τὸν Ἄρειον πάγον· κάκειθεν...(I. 110). It is difficult to see a direct reference to place in the other two: εἰς Ἄρειον ἀναχθῆναι πάγον (II. 101), εἰς Ἄρειον πάγον προσκληθέντα (II. 116). There is also an instance (VII. 169) in which the Areopagites (τοὺς Ἄρεοπαγίτας) are referred to without the Areopagus being mentioned. They are seen participating in a court of inquiry, effecting judgement by casting their votes. Another opinion is that Paul was taken before the Areopagus, i.e. before the council sitting on the hill [so, T. D. Barnes, 'An Apostle on Trial', *JTS*, 20 (1969), p. 410]. Pausanias (*Description of Greece*, tr. by W. H. S. Jones, London: William Heinemann, MCMXVIII, xxviii, 5) states that the Hill of Ares received its name because Ares was the first to be tried here on account of murdering Halirrhothius. He also refers to the Areopagus as a court on a hill (VIII, xxxiv, 4; xxiv, 12; I,

7.2.4 In every way you are ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους (v. 22)

Luke presents in vv. 22-23 another side of Paul's interaction with Gentile religion after he has described Paul's initial reaction to Athenian religion in v. 16b. Luke portrays Paul as observing closely the spiritual world in Athens as the words θεωρῶ, διερχόμενος ἀναθεωρῶν, εὔρον clearly indicate.³⁹ The result of that experience is that Luke has Paul say that the Athenians are κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους. The word δεισιδαιμονία has different meanings and connotations in hellenistic literature.⁴⁰ But it means literally 'fearers of the gods' which stresses the theological connotation behind the term.⁴¹ The Athenians were intensely religious and

xxiv, 2). The court, however, received its name from the hill of Ares [cf. IV. v. 2 and note the expression 'the court at Athens called Areopagus' (καὶ τῷ Ἀθήνησι δικαστηρίῳ, καλουμένῳ δὲ Ἀρείῳ Πάγῳ)]; also cf. Ferguson, *Among the Gods*, p. 193. In Ac. 17: 19, the preposition ἐπὶ + acc. is used in relation to the authorities (Ac. 18: 12 ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα; Ac. 9: 21 ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς) whereas ἐπὶ + gen. (ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος) is used to denote place. Paul delivered the speech ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου πάγου (v. 22) and Paul went out ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν (v. 33) which are appropriate expressions if the council rather than the hill was implied (BC, IV, p. 214.); Nock rightly ('The Book of Acts', p. 831) remarks, 'Why on earth should men take Paul to this hill? Any Stoa was more convenient'.

The fact that Luke has chosen the Areopagus as the 'classical audience' might indicate the theological nature of the problem too. That the Areopagus possessed authority to hear new religious views in less serious cases than those mentioned by Josephus but relating to dispute about the gods is evident from the stories recorded by Diogenes Laertius. Theodorus, an atheist nicknamed θεός, was a follower and a contemporary of Aristippus (c. 435-350 BC) who engaged in an argument with Euryclides, the hierophant, and accused him of disclosing religious mysteries to the uninitiated (II. 115-117):

³⁹ The participle διέρχεσθαι describes walking through a definite area and ἀναθεωρεῖν refers to 'genaue Betrachtung eines Gegenstandes': H. Külling, 'Zur Bedeutung des Agnostos Theos', *TZ*, 36 (1980), p. 67. D replaces ἀναθεωρεῖν with διιστορεῖν which means 'genau kennenlernen' (p. 67, n. 11).

⁴⁰ In some contexts, 'religious feeling' or in a negative sense, 'superstition' (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 214).

⁴¹ Külling, ('Zur Bedeutung des Agnostos Theos', p. 67) understands the meaning of the term as 'Menschen, die viel Scheu vor Göttern haben'; P. Corssen [(*Der Altar des unbekanntes Gottes*), *ZNW*, 14 (1913), p. 314] takes it to mean φιλοθυσία which underlines the motif of sacrifices offered to gods; cf. Flender, *St. Luke*, p. 67. Δεισιδαιμονία by no means is 'superstition' (Haenchen, *Acts*, p.520, n.7; *contra* Roloff, *ApG*, p. 259). Out of fifteen occurrences of the word δεισιδαιμονία in Josephus, fourteen are used to denote Jewish religious rites and observances implying fear of God, religious zeal, faithfulness, unbending religious persuasion, rigorous faith, etc. [cf. K. H. Rengstorff, *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*, vol. I, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1973, p. 418; cf. *Antiq.* X. 42; XII. 6; XIV. 228, 232, 234, 237, 240, 259 (with

deeply committed to their ways of worshipping the gods which is shown by the fact that the city was full of the objects of their faith (τὰ σεβάσματα).⁴² It seems appropriate to understand the word as referring to the religiosity of the Athenians reflected in their strong manner of worship of the gods.⁴³

7.2.5 The altar to ἄγνωστος θεός (v. 23)

The reference to an altar to ἄγνωστος θεός in v. 23 indicates the climactic point in Luke's theological stance in creating the occasion for the speech. Luke touches upon the central theological nature of Athenian spirituality, before he can have Paul preach about God, a link provided by the altar inscription 'To an unknown god'. With regard to the inscription it is not attested either by ancient literature or by archaeological discoveries that such an altar existed.⁴⁴ The closest evidence one can find is the reference to the existence of 'altars to unknown gods' in Athens.⁴⁵ Diogenes Laertius mentions altars in Athens with no names inscribed on them (κατὰ τοὺς δήμους τῶν Ἀθηναίων βωμοὺς ἄνωνύμους) and to which sacrifice was once made (I. 110). Luke has probably referred to one such altar but has turned the inscription into the singular as

reference to the Samaritans); XV. 277; WJ II. 174]. The word δεισιδαιμονέστερος occurs in a non-religious context. Diogenes Laertius speaks of Menedemus, a member of the school of Phaedo, as being δεισιδαιμονέστερος (II. 132).

⁴² 'It should be first stressed that religion held such a major place in the Athenians' daily lives that no need was felt for elaborate accounts and explanations; everybody knew what it was all about' (B. S. Ridgway, 'Images of Athena on the Acropolis', *Goddess and Polis: The Panathenaic Festival in Ancient Athens*, Princeton University, 1992, p. 119). For a descriptive study on Athenian popular religion, see J. D. Mikalson, *Ancient Popular Religion*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1983.

⁴³ BC, IV, p. 214; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 520, n. 7; Conzelmann (*Acts*, p. 140) understands it as referring to the *piety* of the Athenians just as their religious curiosity is made plain by v. 21 (W. Foerster, 'δεισιδαίμων, δεισιδαιμονία', *TDNT*, II, p. 20). However, Luke also uses the word to refer to Jesus and the resurrection as the δεισιδαιμονίας of the Jews in a speech made by governor Festus to king Agrippa who was familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews (Ac. 25: 19). Hence in this context it should be translated as 'religions'. Josephus sees the Athenian spirituality in a positive light when he calls the Athenians τοὺς δὲ εὐσεβεστάτους τῶν Ἑλλήνων (*Ag. Ap.* II. 130).

⁴⁴ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 521. For a discussion on this issue, see Lake, 'The Unknown God', BC, V, pp. 240-46.

⁴⁵ Lake, 'Unknown God', BC, V, p. 242; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 521, n. 2; Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 238, n. 67.

the speech concerns the One God.⁴⁶

To sum up, the narrative framework shows the occasion for the speech Luke intends to provide. It consists of an assessment of the theology of the Athenians⁴⁷ - idols, debate with the Stoics and Epicureans, Athenians' understanding of 'Jesus and resurrection' and their commitment to worshipping gods, all of which have theological underpinning. In Luke's description, Paul's reactions to the Gentile milieu are shown as arising out of his theological convictions; so also the Gentiles' initial response to Paul's message reflects their beliefs about gods. What is important about the altar for the unknown god is that it sums up the theological issues which are important for Luke's theology of God and also opens up the way for the proclamation of God.⁴⁸ Luke concludes the section with the statement, 'What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you' (v. 23). The emphasis is 'on the neuter ὁ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες - τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω and not ὃν οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες - τοῦτον ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω. Nevertheless, this ὁ is by no means the philosophical τὸ θεῖον.⁴⁹ The relative pronoun refers to the content that is unknown about God, as reflected in their worship and philosophy, which is now being proclaimed to them by Paul.⁵⁰

46 Roloff (*Apg*, p. 259) thinks it unlikely that Luke had a single altar in mind and therefore he prefers the latter explanation.

47 Variegated beliefs concerning the gods in Athens are also attested in antiquity. Plato in his *Laws* mentions three different erroneous notions of God which he regards as marks of impiety. Plato condemns, i) those who do not believe in gods and ii) those who believe in the existence of gods but hold that the gods are wholly indifferent to human conduct and iii) those who believe there are gods and that gods exercise judgment over men's conduct but think that the impenitent sinner can escape the judgment by prayers and sacrifices (885 b). These three types of attitudes of impiety are described again elsewhere in the *Laws* (888 c, 948 c) (*The Laws of Plato*, tr. A. E. Taylor, London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1934, p. li-lii; also, see *The Laws of Plato*, ed. E. B. England, vol. II, Manchester University, 1921, p. 25).

48 H. Külling ('Zur Bedeutung des Agnostos Theos', p. 68) rightly observes, 'Die ausserordentliche Gottesfurcht und Frömmigkeit der Athener hat also im besondern in dieser inschrift ihren stärksten Ausdruck gefunden'.

49 J. D. de Zwaan, 'Was the Book of Acts a Posthumous Edition?', *HTR*, XVII, 1924, p. 135.

50 Külling, 'Zur Bedeutung des Agnostos Theos', p. 82; Schneider, *Lukas*, p. 298.

7.3 THE KERYGMA: *The content of the speech (vv. 24-31)*

The narrative framework does not in itself convey the meaning of the speech but it forms the necessary background by providing clues to the theological issues to be addressed by the speech. How does the speech respond to the theological problems highlighted in the kerygmatic context?

First of all, 'a first and sure indication of the theme is furnished by the subjects and verbal forms of the speech'.⁵¹ God is the subject of action right through the speech. It begins with ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας and concludes with the section on ὁ θεὸς, τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει (v. 30). God is predominantly the subject of the action, both of the principal verb forms (οὐ κατοικεῖ (v. 24), διδούς (v. 25), οὐδὲ ...θεραπεύεται (v. 25), ἐποίησεν (v. 26), εἶναι (v. 29), παραγγέλλει (v. 30), ἔστησεν (v. 31), μέλλει κρίνειν (v. 31), ὤρισεν (v. 31), and also of the participial clauses ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους (v. 26), ὀροθεσίας (v. 26), ὑπάρχοντα (v. 27), ὑπεριδῶν (v. 30); all of which elaborate the nature and various acts of the one and only God. The kerygma speaks, therefore, essentially about *God*.

The content of the speech is compact and contains groups of motifs compressed into one or two sentences.⁵² Dibelius divides the speech into three main units: (i) vv. 24, 25; (ii) vv. 26, 27; (iii) vv. 28, 29. For him, vv. 30, 31 forms the conclusion.⁵³ In order to follow the train of thought and the arguments within the speech, we propose, the speech may be treated under the following four headings. (i) God and the World (κόσμος - the heaven and the earth) - vv. 24-25; (ii) God and the Earth (γῆ) - v. 26; (iii) God and his Offspring (γένος) - vv. 27-29; (iv) God and the Inhabited World (οἰκουμένη) - vv. 30-31. Luke is not presenting abstract thought about God but proclaims God who is *in relation* to the world, to the earth, to humanity and to the inhabited world. These four units need not be seen as clear-cut divisions since reference to the earth is found also in the first division, and reference to humanity

⁵¹ P. Schubert, 'The Place of the Areopagus Speech in the Composition of Acts', *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, University of Chicago, 1968. p. 250.

⁵² Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 27.

⁵³ *Studies*, p. 27.

(ἄνθρωπος three times and ἀνθρώπινος once) is not exclusive to the third division but is also found in all the four divisions. The units are built upon each other and one unit is in thematic continuity with the other and, most importantly, they are all theologically linked to each other.

7.3.1 GOD AND THE WORLD (vv. 24-25)

7.3.1.1 *God, Creator and Lord*

ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, οὗτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος
οὐκ ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ
οὐδὲ ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θεραπεύεται προσδεόμενός τις
αὐτὸς διδούς πᾶσι ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα

Haenchen translates οὗτος 'this Lord'.⁵⁴ God/Lord is the subject and the four participles (ὁ ποιήσας, ὑπάρχων, προσδεόμενός, διδούς) and the present verb (κατοικεῖ) speak of God's nature and his work. The expression ὁ ποιήσας is used in reference to the Creator God in the NT.⁵⁵ The word ποιέω is significant as it occurs also in v. 26. The use of θεραπεύω in connection with worship appears only here.⁵⁶ The only occurrence of κόσμος in Acts is also to be found.

There are two positive and two negative affirmations about God in vv. 24 and 25. The positive declaration is that (i) God is the maker of the world and everything in it, and (ii) he is the Lord of heaven and earth because he gives life and breath to all men. The negative affirmation is also two-fold. (i) God does *not* live in shrines made by man; (ii) God is *not* served by human hands. Luke has subtly connected these positive and negative affirmations in his proclamation of God to the Gentiles.

To express the act of creation Luke, like the LXX, uses ποιεῖν instead

⁵⁴ Acts, p. 515.

⁵⁵ Lk. 11: 40; Heb. 3: 2; Rev. 14: 7; also cf. Ac. 7: 50; 14: 15.

⁵⁶ The other occurrences of θεραπεύω in the rest of the NT are often with reference to healing (e.g. Lk. 4: 40, 5: 15; 9: 1; Mk. 7: 21).

of κτιζεῖν. (cf. 4:24; 14:15).⁵⁷ However, the expression τὸν κόσμον is considered hellenistic rather than an OT expression.⁵⁸ Κόσμος is synonymous with 'heaven and the earth' and denotes the totality of creation: heaven, earth and humanity.⁵⁹ The same conception of the world in terms of its constituent parts is found also in Ac. 14: 16 and 4: 24 to which Luke adds the third element, the sea. Luke understands κόσμος in terms of the totality and unity of all the creatures in heaven, earth and sea. The motif of God the Creator and God the Lord of creation reflect the OT idea [Cf. Gen. 1: 1ff.; Ps. 103: 19; 136: 25; 145: 15ff.; 147: 7ff.; Neh. 9: 6; II Ez. 19: 6 (LXX)].⁶⁰ According to the Psalmist, the Lord gives (δίδως) food to every living being and it is the Lord who has control over the breath of man (Ps. 145: 15; 106: 3, 4). Another closer parallel to v. 24 comes from Is. 42: 5: Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς, ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν...καὶ διδοὺς πνοὴν τῷ λαῷ....⁶¹

Creation of the world by God is the fundamental aspect of the theology of God often enunciated in some of the hellenistic-Jewish literature.⁶² The author of the *Letter of the Aristeas* echoes kindred ideas relating to the lordship and the creative power of

⁵⁷ C. Westermann (*Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, London: SPCK, 1974, p. 100) observes that the word κτίζω is not found in Genesis, only ποιεῖν is used. Κτίζω and אִבַּנ came to have the same meaning only after the Greek translation.

⁵⁸ Conzelmann, 'The Address of Paul on the Areopagus', p. 221; Roloff, *Apg*, p. 260; Gärtner also acknowledges this but argues that καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ is intended by the author to clarify that it is the created world and all that it contains which is indicated. Conzelmann (*Acts*, p. 141) maintains that this use of κόσμος was mediated to him through hellenistic-Judaism.

⁵⁹ H. Sasse, 'Κόσμος', *TDNT*, III, p. 884. Cadbury's (*BC*, IV, p. 215) translation of 'sky and the earth' does not bring out the full meaning of 'heaven and the earth'.

⁶⁰ A good number of scholars have drawn attention the creation idea characteristic of the OT (LXX) in v. 24; e. g., Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 171ff; Pesch, *Apg*, II, pp. 136-137; Bruce, *Acts*, p. 356; N. B. Stonehouse, *Paul Before the Areopagus and other New Testament Studies*, London: Tyndale, 1957, p. 26; G. Dellling, *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zum hellenistischen Judentum*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970, pp. 403-404. Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 42), who, on the whole, underestimates the OT background for the speech, notes that the affirmation of God as Creator belongs to the OT.

⁶¹ Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 522) sees in v. 24 the free usage of Is. 42: 5; Roloff (*Apg*, p. 261) points out that Luke here combines Is. 42: 5 and Ps. 50: 8-13; see also, Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 199.

⁶² That God created the heavens and the earth is an oft-repeated theological statement in *Wisd.* 9: 9; *II Macc.* 7: 23; *IV Macc.* 5: 25; *III Sib. Or.* 542.

God. He says, 'The primitive men...demonstrated that the one by whom all live and are created is the master and Lord of all' (*Lett. Arist.* 16). The supreme blessing for living is to know that God is Lord over all (*Lett. Arist.* 195). The author has an injunction to the king who ought to show intense concern for his people whom he rules because 'God blesses the human race, giving them health and food and all their gifts in their season' (*Lett. Arist.* 190). The emphasis on this aspect of God led to several ways of describing him: for example, γενεσιάρχης (*Wisd.* 13:3), γενεσιουργός (*Wisd.* 13:5), γενέτης (*III Sib. Or.* 296, 726), παγγενέτωρ (*V Sib. Or.* 328), παγγενέτης (*III Sib. Or.* 550).⁶³ In Philo, we see a strong emphasis on creation and the lordship of God. The notion that God is the Maker and cares for what he has made, is the focal point in Philo's *De Opificio Mundi*.⁶⁴ Philo views God as ὁ κοσμοποιός (*Opi.* 7) ὁ ποιητός (*Opi.* 7,77,88) ὁ ποιῶν (*Opi.* 28, 29, 62).⁶⁵ For Philo, God's existence and his essence are vital questions for theology and for both questions, the knowledge of God as one, the Creator and the Maker of all things (κτίστης καὶ ποιητὴς τῶν ὄλων) and the Lord (κύριος) of creation is essential (cf. *Spec.* i. 30). Similar theological concern of viewing God as Creator and Lord is reflected in the Areopagus speech.

For Luke, creation is not something which happened in the beginning and is now over and done with. What stands behind v. 24 is the conviction that God is ὁ ποιήσας. God is the Maker for ever

⁶³ So also the apologetic literature claimed that God, the Lord is ruler of the world and several words substantiate that claim, e.g. ὑψιστος, μέγιστος, μόναρχος, δεσπότης, κυριεύων θεός, etc. (Dalbert, *Theologie der Hellenistisch-Jüdischen Missions-Literatur*, p.126.)

⁶⁴ F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Philo*, I, London: William Heinemann Ltd., MCMLXXXI, p. 2.

⁶⁵ *Wisdom of Solomon* has γενεσιάρχης and γενεσιουργός to denote God as Creator: Dalbert, *Theologie der Hellenistisch-Jüdischen Missions-Literatur*, p. 73. However, the Lukan distinction of the roles of God and the Lord is not found in the *Wisdom of Solomon* and the author uses them quite interchangeably (cf. 1: 6-8; 2: 5-8; 4: 10-14; 8: 3). However, there is only one reference (cf. *Wisd.* 16: 13) in which one sees a link between God as Lord and his power over the life of humanity. The author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* uses a parallel word δεσπότης in order to emphasise the lordship and the sovereignty of God (8: 3; 13: 3, 9; cf. 16: 3). Some writers prefer Δεσπότης for Κύριος. Ezekiel the Tragedian with reference to Ex. 12: 14 has Δεσπότης in place of Κύριος in LXX. Δεσπότης occurs four times in *Wisdom of Solomon* whereas Κύριος occurs 27 times. Most of *Wisdom's* references do not seem to bear any resemblance to Luke's theology in v. 25.

as he performed (ποιήσας) wonders and signs in Egypt and in Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years (Ac. 7: 36); God did (ἐποίησεν) signs and wonders through Jesus (Ac. 2: 22); God did (ἐποίησεν) signs and wonders through Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles (15: 12; 14: 27; 15: 4) God did (ἐποίησεν) extraordinary miracles by Paul (19: 11). God is addressed in 4: 24 as δέσποτα, 'Sovereign Lord' who made (ὁ ποιήσας) the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them and whose hand and counsel have foreordained what had to happen in the suffering and the death of his servant, the anointed one. This acclamation reflects the faith of the early Christian community that God who made the heaven and the earth in the past is at work always and hence he is able to look upon the threats to his servants from the authorities.⁶⁶

Thus, the proclamation has its beginnings in God the 'Maker' and God the Lord who created the world and sustains humanity by giving life and breath to every man. However, for Luke, the 'doing' of God is not limited to the act of creation and his acts are constantly known.

7.3.1.2 Polemical Argument I: The significance of χειροποίητος

If God is Creator and Lord what does this mean in the present religious context in Athens? The affirmation of God as the Creator and Lord has become the theological principle by which especially the religious attitude towards shrines and altars and the service rendered at the temples have been reviewed. In v. 24, Luke introduces one of his three explicit polemical statements of the speech. The polemical argument in v. 24 that God does not dwell in shrines made by men is focused on the word χειροποίητος.⁶⁷ The word is self-explanatory and hence does not pose a translation problem, but the difficulty is to assess the connotation it carries and the function it performs in revealing the overall polemic that

⁶⁶ The vocative δέσποτα also occurs in the prayer of Moses as recorded by Josephus (*Antiq.* IV. 40, 46; cf. I. 72, 272). The prayers in Luke-Acts indicate relationship between God and those who pray to God as that of δεσπότης - δοῦλος (Ac. 4: 24 and Lk. 2: 29).

⁶⁷ Cf. Ac. 7: 48-50. Most commentators have failed to recognise this, e. g. Pesch (*Apog.* II, pp. 136-37). Both Conzelmann (*Acts*, pp. 141-42) and Schneider (*Apog.* II, p. 239) have one sentence as a comment on χειροποίητος.

is presented here by Luke.⁶⁸ In the LXX, the word χειροποίητος or χειροποίητον is particularly used in connection with idols and idol worship (Lev. 26:1, 30; Is. 2:18; 10:11; 16:12; 19:1; 21:19; 31: 7; 46:6).⁶⁹ The word is in the repertoire of the OT polemic against idolatry among the Israelites. It refers exclusively to idols of wood and stone as opposed to the power of God of Israel (cf. Dt. 4: 28; II Kings.19: 8; Ps. 115: 4; 135: 15). There is one reference where τὰ χειροποίητα refers not to idols but to the the place of worship, the sanctuary of Moab (cf. Is. 16: 12).

In the present context, Luke does not seem to be referring to idols of wood and stone as objects of worship in this verse though in the Athenian context such a meaning would have made clear sense.⁷⁰ Luke's use of ναοῖς introduces a different connotation here. It refers to the place of worshipping the Deity. Therefore, there is an implied criticism of temples here rather than of idols.⁷¹

To ascertain the impact of the polemic against the shrines made by man, we must consider the clause ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ ὕψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ in Stephen's speech (Ac. 7: 48) which resembles 17: 24 in both language and content.⁷² In 7: 48, the polemical thought has

68 Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 522, n. 3) thinks that the word is used entirely in the subjective-anthropological sense and what stems from man's hand awakens no numinous feeling.

69 Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 211.

70 *Contra* Stonehouse (*Areopagus*, p. 22) thinks that v. 24 deals with the specific question of idolatry. Marshall (*Acts*, p. 286) understands χειροποίητος as man-made idols.

71 Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 42. This does not mean, however, that Luke has not recognised the connotation of idolatry behind the phrase 'made with hands' since in the encounter in Ephesus the contention is: οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοὶ οἱ διὰ χειρῶν γινόμενοι (Ac. 19: 26). The connection of the word χειροποίητος with idols or idol worship should not be over-emphasised as Gärtner (*Areopagus Speech*, p. 211) does, and the extreme negative attitude to the idols as seen in some of the OT passages should not be read into the content of the Areopagus speech. This does not mean that Luke is not critical about idols (see v. 29). Furthermore, the word χειροποίητος has been used elsewhere in the NT mainly to bring about contrasting viewpoints without any reference to idolatry. There is a contrast in Mk. 14: 58 between τὸν χειροποίητον and ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον which in that context indicates similarly the antithesis between divine and human. In II Cor. 5: 1, Paul contrasts between the heavenly and the earthly with the use of ἀχειροποίητον.

72 Gärtner (*Areopagus Speech*, p. 209) rightly acknowledges that the critique against the temple cult in Stephen's speech is the underlying principle in the Areopagus speech but here the censure is directed against

been expanded by a quotation from Is. 66: 1ff. The construction δὲ...ἀλλ' in 7: 47-48 is indicative of the antithesis behind the phrase which seems to be between God as the God of the temple and God as the God of the Universe. On the one hand, a spatial understanding of God residing in the temple and, on the other, a supra-spatial understanding that questions whether, earth being God's foot-stool and heaven his throne, a hand-made dwelling can contain him.⁷³

The real polemic in ch. 7, therefore, appears to be between two notions of God. On the one hand, the assertion that God is the Creator of the world and everything in it and, on the other, the belief held by some Jews that the temple was the abode of God. It appears that, for Luke, the contrast is not to cancel one notion by the other, nor is it a matter of preference of one idea over against the other, but he underlines how the faith which held that the temple made *by human hands* is the abode of God is in conflict with the idea that God's dwelling place is his creation made by *his hand*. In other words, the antithetical construction which involves χειροποίητος in 7: 47-48 is completed with the phrase ἡ χεὶρ μου which is part of the quotation from Isaiah. According to Luke, Stephen is posing the question that if God has *made* the earth and the heaven, the heaven being the throne of God and the earth being his foot-stool, then how can man think that he has *made* the temple to be the dwelling place for God?⁷⁴

The meaning of χειροποίητος and its role in explaining the antithesis in the context of 7: 47-48 enables us to understand the use of χειροποίητος in the Areopagus speech. The same principle of argument and the antithesis between two notions of God as in 7: 47-48 can be identified also in 17: 24. Luke's use of χειροποίητος in 7: 47-48 enables the readers to detect a similar antithesis between human and divine in order to emphasise the transcendent nature of the God who *made* the world as opposed to shrines *made* by man for God. It accentuates a concept of a 'transcendental

the Gentiles. Also cf. Bruce, *Acts*, p. 357.

⁷³ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 285.

⁷⁴ 'God's presence cannot be encapsulated or represented in any physical or man-made entity!' (Dunn, *Parting of the Ways*, p. 67).

monotheism' by which is meant that God as the Creator transcends human set limits.⁷⁵

Luke's theology of God as Creator operates in another polemical context. In a discourse against the Pharisees (Lk. 11: 37-41), Jesus stresses the importance of cleanliness both in the inner and the outer person as opposed to outward ritual cleanliness.⁷⁶ The term ὁ ποιήσας for God the Creator is unique for Luke and not used by other synoptists.⁷⁷ God has made both the inside and the outside of a person. Luke is attempting to derive here a lesson for a holistic understanding of man on the basis of the fact that God has made every aspect of man. Therefore the way to honour the Creator is to strive for internal purity. God is one to whom earth is his footstool and heaven is his throne but at the same time God the Creator knows the inner thoughts of men. God is ὁ καρδιογνώστης (Ac. 15: 8; cf. 1: 24; Lk. 16: 15).⁷⁸

To sum up, the argument that God does not dwell in man-made shrines arises out of a particular understanding of God and man. It invites the hearers in the narrative to consider what God has made and what man has made. 'God, the Maker is not bound to man-made shrines.

7.3.1.3 *Polemical argument II: The significance of ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων*

The second polemical argument of the speech centres around the phrase ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων. 'God is not in need of anything and he gives life and breath to all' and therefore, 'God is not served by human hands'. Both ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς and ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θεραπεύεται are key phrases in the cult polemic of the Areopagus speech.⁷⁹ The latter is closely related to the former in v. 24 since it

⁷⁵ Philo regards the entire creation as the sacred temple. 'The highest, and in the truest sense the holy, temple of God is, as we must believe, the whole universe (τὸν σύμπαντα κόσμον), having for its sanctuary the most sacred part of all existence...' (*Spec.* i. 66).

⁷⁶ Nolland, *Luke 9: 21 - 18: 34*, p. 665.

⁷⁷ Evans, *Luke*, p. 505.

⁷⁸ See ch. III, pp. 58ff.

⁷⁹ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 211.

also stresses the human element but yet distinct from it because Luke has used it to establish a different theological viewpoint in v. 25. The antithesis in v. 25 puts service rendered by human hands on the one side and the sustaining activity of the Lord who gives life and breath to all, on the other.

It has been argued that the phrase ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων is used of idols like χειροποίητος.⁸⁰ The phrase ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων in the OT is used to denote idols (Ps. 115: 4). But the phrase ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων has a specific usage in the Areopagus speech as it speaks of *service* rendered by human hands. In the OT, the Hebrew phrase כַּדְּיָדַי פָּשַׁעַר, which refers mainly to idols, has also been used in association with offering service and sacrifices to other gods. The prophetic warnings are: 'Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands' (Jer. 25: 6) and, 'Why do you provoke me to anger with the works of your hands, burning incense to the other gods...' (Jer. 44: 8). These prophetic pronouncements as they were addressed to the Jewish community of the VII - VI BC are based on a simple theological principle that offering services to other gods is tantamount to denial of the power of Yahweh. The same motif can be found in Stephen's speech in 7: 41 where ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν is used in connection with idols and offering sacrifices to them.⁸¹ It was a sin against God who in turn gave them over to worship of the host of heaven (7: 42).

In Ac. 17: 26, however, infidelity to Yahweh is not the theme but Luke has Paul stress the self-sufficient nature of God who is 'free from need'.⁸² Luke speaks of religious service to God but stresses

⁸⁰ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 211.

⁸¹ The clause ποίησαν ἡμῖν θεοὺς and the term ἐμοσχοποίησαν refer specifically to idols whereas the clause ἀνήγαγον θυσίαν τῷ εἰδώλῳ and the word εὐφραίνοντο refer to offering sacrifices to the idols. Both these aspects of idolatry may stand behind the phrase ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν.

⁸² Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 45. Haenchen, *Acts*, pp. 522ff. The references in Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 45. n. 50) from Philo (*Cher.* 44, 119, 123) illustrate the nature of God as 'free from need' in the context of physical needs. The section from *Deus.* 56, 57 deals primarily with the immutable nature of God. Wikenhauser's (*Apg.* p. 203) example from Philo (*Virt.* 9) speaks of the self-sufficiency of God in terms of wants and desires. In our opinion, Luke here speaks of a different notion of self-sufficiency!

God's freedom from need and his 'giving' nature.⁸³ The corollary is that God gives life and breath to all men.⁸⁴ It is God who *gives* and man who *receives* and not vice versa.

God who gives and God who is free from need are motifs found in several passages in Philo.⁸⁵ The character of God is described thus by Philo: 'But God is no salesman, hawking his goods in the market, but a free giver of all things, pouring forth eternal fountains of the free bounties, and seeking no return. For He has no needs Himself and no created being is able to repay His gift' (*Cher.* 123). 'For God begets nothing for Himself, for He is in want of nothing, but all for him (man) who needs to receive' (*Cher.* 45). The same thought is expressed when Philo attempts to elucidate the true meaning of offering service to God through the offering made by Abel (cf. *Det.* 52-56). For God is full (πλήρης) and he does not need anything. 'But it would be impiety to say that religion (θεραπείαν), which is caring for God, is a way of providing what will benefit the Deity; for He gains benefit from nothing, seeing that He is neither in need of anything nor does any exist capable of adding to His superiority in all things. Nay, He constantly and unceasingly benefits the universe' (*Det.* 55). Philo then goes on to explain that service to God ought not to be understood in terms of a service rendered by a slave to his master. The slave-master analogy is imperfect because masters are in want of service whereas God has no need of it (*Det.* 56).

Philo expounds the second commandment of the Mosaic law thus: 'So then He (God) gave no place in the sacred code of laws to all such setting up of other gods, and called upon men to honour Him that truly is, not because He needed that honour should be paid to Him (ἐαυτοῦ τιμῆς οὐ προσδεόμενος), for He that is all-sufficient to Himself needs nothing else,...Who is the primal and most perfect good, from Whom as from a fountain is showered the water of each particular good upon the world and them that dwell therein' (*Deca.* 81). God who revealed holy oracles and statutes to Moses is

⁸³ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 45, n. 50.

⁸⁴ cf. Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 200.

⁸⁵ Also, cf. *II Macc.* 14: 35; *III Macc.* 2: 9.

described as 'the Uncreated, the Incorruptible, the Eternal, Who needs nothing and is the maker of all, the Benefactor and King of kings and God of gods' (*Deca.* 41). With reference to honouring God through worshipping him, Philo stresses that 'God does not rejoice in sacrifices even if one offer hecatombs (ἐκατόμβας), for all things are His possessions (κτῆματα), yet though He possesses He needs none of them...' (*Spec.* i. 271).⁸⁶ These statements of Philo offer parallels to understand the theological idea expressed in v. 25.

To summarise, Luke is arguing in vv. 24-25 that the worship which does not recognise God's act of creating and sustaining the totality of the created order is bound to be misrepresenting God himself. The word χειροποίητος and the phrase ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων contribute to establish this theological message. Luke contrasts God who *made* the world and man who *made* the shrine. The transcendent nature of God is stressed as against the human construction of the temple which delimits God. Secondly, the nature of God who gives and needs nothing is in antithesis to the human service offered in the temple. Man is dependent on God the Lord for his life and breath. It is Luke's message to the Gentiles that they should acknowledge and worship God the Creator and God the Lord of heaven and earth.

7.3.2 GOD AND HIS OFFSPRING (vv. 27-29)

v. 27 - ζητεῖν τὸν θεὸν εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὗροιεν, καὶ γε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα

v. 28a - ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν, ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν

v. 28b - τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν

v. 29 - γένος οὖν ὑπάρχοντες τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ὀφείλομεν νομίζειν χρυσιῷ ἢ ἀργύρῳ ἢ λίθῳ, χαράγματι τέχνης καὶ ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου, τὸ θεῖον εἶναι ὅμοιον.

⁸⁶ Colson (*Philo*, vol. VII, p. 256) understands the connection of thought as follows: '...though He possesses all, He needs it not, and therefore how much more are the gifts of men unneeded.'

V. 28, the key verse in the section, has two clauses 28a and 28b. The γάρ of v. 28a links up thematically with v. 27, whereas v. 28b links itself to the following verse 29, the third negative affirmation about God in the speech. V. 28b becomes the chief motivation for an attack on conceiving God in the form of idols, the οὖν in v. 29 making the connection clear. It is because of the nature of the polemical argument in v. 29 and since it is closely related to those of vv. 24-25, we study vv. 27-29 and move to v. 26 which is thematically linked to vv. 30-31. The arguments in vv. 24-25 relate to temples and cultic worship whereas the argument in v. 29 relates specifically to idols, the objects of worship. Luke keeps these three aspects distinct as he criticises them from different theological standpoints.

There is a new theological basis on which the problem of idolatry is debated in v. 29. It has a proposition, 'For we are indeed his offspring' (v. 28b). The phrase τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν is probably a quotation from an astronomical poem *Phaenomena*, a work by a Stoic poet Aratus of Soli in Cilicia (c. 315-240/239 BC).⁸⁷ The quotation is used as a proof in the same way as OT quotations in the speeches in Acts. It does not mean that Luke is a Stoic and that he abandons Christian faith for Stoicism.⁸⁸ The purpose is not only to make use of the hearers' familiarity with the statement, but also to use it as a basis to question man's misconceptions of the divine. The quotation itself has a meaning and the polemic against idols in v. 29 stands in a relation of logical dependence upon it.

Aratus spoke of the divine origin of mankind ontologically from Zeus in the fifth verse of his *Phaenomena*.⁸⁹ A similar use of the quotation was made by Aristobulus in the second century BC, who cites from *Phaenomena* 1-9 in order to explain God's omnipresence and his governance of the world.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 190.

⁸⁸ Barrett, 'Paul's Speech on the Areopagus', p. 73.

⁸⁹ Wikenhauser, *Apg*, p. 209; Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 51; *BC*, IV, p. 218; Bruce, *Acts*, p. 360.

⁹⁰ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 145; M. J. Edwards ['Quoting Aratus: Acts 17, 28', *ZNW*, 82 (1992), pp. 265-269] suggests that Luke cannot have been wholly ignorant

And Aratus also speaks about the same things thus:

Let us begin with God, whom men never leave unspoken; full of God are the streets, and all the marketplaces of humanity, and full the sea and the harbors; and we are all in need of God everywhere. We are all his children;...(Arist. Fr. 4. 6).⁹¹

Aristobulus has changed the word Zeus in the poem to θεός, a change he has rightly acknowledged (Frag. 4. 7). He understands the quotation as advancing an idea to show how the power of God is throughout all things and how God brings everything to completion on earth as he rules over the earth; for he is the beginning, the middle and the end (Frag. 4.5). Aristobulus thus focuses on God in order to demonstrate a unitary divine ordering of the cosmos embracing both the world and men.⁹² His use of the quotation with his own theological input shows that in hellenistic Judaism the quotation from Aratus was open to Jewish interpretation in reference to the Creator God who is in close relation with world and men.⁹³ Luke too is using the quotation not

of Jewish apologetic literature produced before and during his time. Hence it is likely that he consulted a version of Aristobulus' work which had used the quotation from Aratus.

⁹¹ OTP, II, p. 841.

⁹² Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, p.167ff. Conzelmann ('Address of Paul', p. 224) maintains that Aristobulus made use of the quotation for the sake of belief in the biblical story of creation.

⁹³ Philo particularly maintains the kinship of man with God in his interpretation of the creation account in Genesis. He argues that those who study closely the law of Moses on creation would maintain that 'God, when He made man *partaker of kinship with Himself in mind and reason* (ὅτι τῆς αὐτοῦ συγγενείας μεταδούς ὁ θεὸς ἀνθρώπῳ τῆς λογικῆς), the best of all gifts, did not begrudge him the other gifts either, but made ready for him beforehand all things in the world, as for a *living being dearest and closest to Himself* (ὡς οἰκειοτάτῳ καὶ φιλτάτῳ ζώῳ) since it was His will that when man came into existence he should be at a loss for none of the means of living and of living well.' (*Opi.* 77. Italics mine.). Philo's idea of kinship has two aspects. The second half of the statement hints at man's closeness with God because God has given him gifts, the basic necessities to live and to live well (cf. *Opi.* 79-81). This will probably correspond with Luke's thought in v. 28a. Whereas the first half speaks of man possessing the best gifts of all, namely he is a partaker of kinship with God in mind and reason. 'The concept of *συγγένεια* represents in the most general sense the kinship or family relation that exists between man and the divine': D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus* of Plato, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1986, p. 341. According to Philo, man is *νοῦς* par excellence (*Opi.* 66), men are reasoning beings (λογικοί) (*Det.* 82) and the image of man is the most Godlike (τὸ θεοειδέστατον, *Opi.* 137). For a discussion on this aspect of man, see C. Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandria als Ausleger des alten Testaments*, Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1970, pp. 235-249; T. H. Tobin, *The*

in accordance with its original meaning in *Phaenomena*.⁹⁴ However, he has not presented the theological message in the same terms as Aristobulus. Nevertheless, an idea of kinship between the Creator and man may be said to be in the background of Luke's thinking.⁹⁵ What is important is that Luke has introduced a new application of the idea of man's kinship with God to denounce man's false conception of God revealed in idolatry.

7.3.2.1 *Polemical argument III: The significance of ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου*

If man is said to be in kinship with God what he produces can be the representation of God. It is this logic which was used by Luke's near contemporary Dio Chrysostom who defended in *Olympic Oration* 12 the creative artists, the skilled craftsmen who made statues and various representations of gods. Dio held the assumption that the belief that there is a god was innate in all mankind since the beginning of time 'and has arisen among all nations and still remains, being, one might almost say, a common and general endowment of rational beings' (τοῦ λογικοῦ γένους) (*Or.* 12. 39). The works of metal, stone and art are one of the sources of man's conception of the divine being (γενέσεων τῆς δαιμονίου παρ' ἀνθρώποις), to enhance the innate power already possessed by man by building upon it and enriching it (*Or.* 44-46). Dio defended those who made statues and the likenesses of gods (τὰ θεῖα ἀγάλματα) by arguing that the painters, sculptors and masons who worked in stone were portrayers of the divine nature through the use of art (μιμητὴν διὰ τέχνης τῆς δαιμονίας φύσεως) (44).⁹⁶

Luke's argument, on the contrary, affirms that man is related to God and therefore his portrayals of the divine in whatever

Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation, Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983. Josephus also acknowledges kinship between God and man but he uses it in a different context (cf. *WJ* VII. 349).

⁹⁴ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 193.

⁹⁵ Wilson (*Gentile Mission*, p. 208) thinks that the theological link between the divine origin of man and the polemic against idols, however, is unclear.

⁹⁶ In this sense, according to Dio, the poets were also 'image-makers' (τῆν ἐκείνων εἰδωλοποιῶν) (*Or.* 12. 45).

materials they are produced not only deny that kinship but misrepresent God. Luke in v. 29, however, has ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου which plays the role of an antithesis like the phrases χειροποίητοις ναοῖς and ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων in vv. 24-25. Luke gives a list of materials both valued and cheap and completes it with χαράγματι τέχνης καὶ ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου. The clause χαράγματι κτλ. is to be taken in apposition to the objects in the list.⁹⁷ The phrase χαράγματι τέχνης implies ὁ ἐχαράξατο and it is ἐνθύμησις of men which designs the objects. For Luke, idols are 'human' productions symbolising the misconception of God. The direct antithesis is between, on the one hand, the human as an offspring of God and, on the other, the human imagination that led man to conceive and portray God in an unfitting manner.

Such an antithesis can only be possible if Luke is interpreting the quotation, 'We are his offspring' in the light of the OT idea of creation of man in the image of God.⁹⁸ Further, the statement is to be viewed in connection with the theology of God which he has already outlined in the foregoing sections namely God is Creator and Lord of creation. It is only then that quotation offers the necessary logical principle for the argument against idolatry.⁹⁹ In contrast to Dio, the way in which Luke criticises idolatry is unique by making use of a quotation already known to the readers. In his interpretation of v. 29, Luke rightly comments, "The whole passage can be understood best if it be regarded as part of the century long controversy about 'images'".¹⁰⁰ The connection between a theology of God as Creator and Lord and criticism of idolatry is a common feature in OT and Jewish polemics. The fore-runner is Deutero-

⁹⁷ R. Reitzenstein, 'Die Areopagrede des Paulus', *Neue Jahrbücher für das klass. Altertum*, 31 (1913), p. 399. The word χάραγμα is rare but the phrase in *Wisd.* 13: 10 τέχνης ἐμμελέτημα is closer to *Ac.* 17: 29.

⁹⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 525; Roloff, *Apg*, p. 264; Pesch, *Apg*, p. 139; Bruce, *Acts*, p. 360.

⁹⁹ The meaning of the word νομίζειν (v. 29) is significant as Philo uses νομίζω in connection with acknowledging and worshipping God or the gods and the word does not imply mere thought or intention. We must note specially the following expressions of Philo: θεοὺς νομίζειν (*Deca.* 59) θεοὺς νομιζόντων (*Deca.* 75) and νομίζουσι θεοὺς (*Spec.* i. 53). Philo declares the first commandment thus: 'Let us, then, engrave deep in our hearts this as the first and most sacred of commandments, to acknowledge (νομίζειν) and honour one God who is above all...' (*Deca.* 65).

¹⁰⁰ *BC*, IV, p. 218.

Isaiah:

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure....Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket...All nations are nothing before him... To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? The idol!... (Is. 40: 12, 15, 17, 18-19).

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him?...
Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? (Is. 40: 25-26)

The argument that the worship of images is foolish because God is Creator is expressed explicitly in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. (*Wisd.* 13: 1-9.; 15: 16-17).¹⁰¹ The nearest parallel to v. 29 may be found in *Wisd.* 13:10 in which the objects are called οἴτινες ἐκάλεσαν θεοὺς ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων. Philo, in the first century, saw the inhabited world filled with idols of stone, silver and gold and with images and wooden figures and other works of human hands (τῶν ἄλλων χειροκμητῶν) fashioned by the craftsmanship of painting and sculpture (*Deca.* 66). An example from Josephus may help to support this assumption. The first commandment of the Decalogue, the Golden Law of monotheism, was explained by Josephus thus: 'The universe is in God's hands; perfect and blessed, self-sufficing and sufficing for all, He is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things. By His works and bounties He is plainly seen, indeed more manifest than ought else; but His form and magnitude surpass our powers of description. No materials, however costly, are fit to make an image of Him; no art has skill to conceive and represent it. The like of Him we have never seen, we do not imagine, and it is impious to conjecture' (*Ag. Ap.* II. 190-191).¹⁰² Like Philo, Josephus not only saw the first two commandments as two sides of the same coin, but also understood the one God as God of Creation who cannot be represented by idols.¹⁰³ For Luke,

¹⁰¹ G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, London: SCM, 1972, p. 185; cf. *Jub.* 20: 7-8; *Ep. Jer.* 8, 24, 26; *Bel Drag.* 5.

¹⁰² E. Bevan (*Holy Images: An Inquiry into Idolatry and Image-Worship in Ancient Paganism and in Christianity*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1940, pp. 46ff.) is wrong to argue that the second commandment is ambiguous and that it prohibits worshipping idols and not making one. J. Gutmann ['The "Second Commandment" and the Image in Judaism', *HUCA*, 32 (1961), pp. 168-74] overlooks the key passages in Philo and Josephus and the *Letter of Aristaeas* when he insists that a strict enforcement of the second commandment during the hellenistic period was lacking.

¹⁰³ One can find also in Greek thinking a critique of people's misconception

idolatry is not merely a perverted religious act nor an act committed out of lack of rationalisation. It represents a total misunderstanding of the nature of God himself and also a misuse of the concept of kinship with God when humanity is said to be the offspring of God.

In short, Luke's explicit polemical arguments centre around religious worship in Athens and he portrays vividly how Paul interacted with the religious situation. People's conception of the temples, their offerings and the way they conceived the deity in terms of idols reflect wrong notions of God.¹⁰⁴ All of them are 'human' creations, an assertion that is brought out by the expressions χειροποίητοις ναοῖς, ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων and ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου, which obscure the nature and the work of God. These polemical motifs can be explained by Luke's depiction of Paul's inner feelings (v. 16b) and his observations (v. 23) in his interaction with the city's religious condition (v. 16b). The response is made in the proclamation of the true knowledge of God.

7.3.2.2 'In him, we live, move and have our being'

It has been widely recognised that v. 28 is without parallel in the NT and forms a Stoic core of the Areopagus speech.¹⁰⁵ The word κινεῖσθαι is a central concept in Stoic philosophy.¹⁰⁶ The phrase ἐν αὐτῷ points to Stoic ideas of God who sets everything in motion.¹⁰⁷ It is interpreted that the verbs ζῶμεν, κινούμεθα, and ἐσμέν are

of God and particularly of the worship of idols (Roloff, *Apg*, p. 265). The criticism of images by the Greeks can be found even in pre-Socratic times and must have been pursued in different circles (Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 226; Bevan, *Holy Images*, p. 63). But none of the Greeks analysed the problem in the way Luke has done or polemicised against it from the perspective of an understanding of God the Creator and man the created.

¹⁰⁴ 'Die dreifache Kritik am heidenischen Gottesdienst...zugleich Kritik am Gottesbegriff der Heiden ist (VV24-29)...': Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 242 (italics his).

¹⁰⁵ Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, pp. 206ff; Roloff, *Apg*, pp. 263ff.; Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 52) maintains, the kinship idea reached the composer of the Areopagus speech from hellenistic poetry and philosophy. H. Hommel ['Platonisches bei Lukas: Zu Act 17: 28a (Leben - Bewegung - Sein)', *ZNW*, 48 (1957), pp. 193-200] argues that the kinship idea derived from Posidonius.

¹⁰⁶ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 195.

¹⁰⁷ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 48.

expressions of cosmological concepts indicating the close relationship between God, man and the world.¹⁰⁸ M. Pohlenz argues that v. 28a can be understood in the light of Posidonius' idea of cosmos as a unity between man, God and the world. The power of movement is attributed to God "daß die Seele in manchen wohl allein ihre eigene Kraft entfaltet, bei anderen aber entweder direkt von Gott bewegt wird oder in ihrer eigenen Bewegung mit dem Allgeist in Verbindung tritt, so daß sie von ihm 'mitbewegt' wird."¹⁰⁹ H. Hommel maintains that ζῶμεν refers to the physical aspect of man's life, ἐσμέν indicates the life of the soul of man and κινούμεθα elevates both into the cosmic sphere.¹¹⁰

However, the three verbs do not appear together in Stoic writings but only two in any given text, indicating either movement and being, or life and movement.¹¹¹ Hence it is possible that Luke himself has constructed this, being aware of the Stoic ideas. The preposition ἐν might not be understood in mystical terms but in causal terms implying that life, movement and existence will be impossible without God.¹¹² Luke brings out 'all sides of man's absolute dependence on God for life'.¹¹³

108 E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte Religiöser Rede*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1923, pp. 21ff. Philo indicates that the man and the world received the power to 'move' from God and God is the cause of all the movements of the 'life' of man in the world (cf. *Opi.* 8-9, 146, 147). Man receives from God the means of living and living well (τὸ ζῆν καὶ τὸ εὖ ζῆν). He is ζῶόν τε καὶ ἄνθρωπον (*Det.* 82). He is a living creature possessing the life-principle (ψυχώσις) (*Opi.* 66). According to Philo, creation takes place in movement (κίνησις) (*Opi.* 100) and the heavenly bodies are said to be in harmonious movement (*Opi.* 54).

109 Cf. M. Pohlenz, 'Paulus und die Stoa', *ZNW*, 42 (1949), p. 91. This view has been recently advocated by D. L. Balch ('The Areopagus Speech: An Appeal to the Stoic historian Posidonius against Later Stoics and the Epicureans', *Greeks, Romans, and Christians*, ed. D. L. Balch, *et al.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990, pp. 52-79). Squires (*Plan of God*, p. 72) argues that the human kinship idea is similar to that found in Dio Chrysostom's *Olympic Oration* 12. Also, cf. J. H. Neyrey ('Acts 17, Epicureans, and Theodicy: A Study in Stereotypes', *Greeks, Romans, and Christians*, pp. 118-134) who argues that the presentation of God in terms of providence in the Areopagus speech is not just a Stoic idea but a general, traditional understanding of God.

110 'Platonisches bei Lukas: Zu Act 17: 28a', pp. 198-99.

111 Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 195; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 144.

112 Cf. Rolóff, *Apg*, p. 219.

113 Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 195.

7.3.2.3 *God is not far from each one of us (v. 27b)*

In this sense, v. 28a amplifies v. 27. God is οὐ μακρὰν 'not far'; God is akin and closer to us since he is the foundation of human life. This is not only to make the seeking easier but to make it all the more important as a duty and destiny for humanity. Luke gives a psychological twist to the seeking by employing words such as feeling after him (ψηλαφήσειαν) and finding him (εὑροειν). There is a connection between seeking and finding in *Wisd.* 13: 6. Men ought to seek God because of the close relationship they have in various levels with God. Luke again does not guarantee the result of man's seeking but he introduces an element of hope and optimism.¹¹⁴ We see a close parallel in Philo who insists that nothing is better than searching for the true God (*Spec.* i. 36). The means of living well will lead one to contemplation through which the mind conceives a love and longing for knowledge of the heavenly existences (*Opi.* 77). Philo also has a touch of optimism in efforts to seek God. 'Doubtless hard to unriddle and hard to apprehend is the Father and Ruler of all, but that is no reason why we should shrink from searching (ἀποκνητέον τὴν ζήτησιν αὐτοῦ) for him' (*Spec.* i. 32). 'Though we are denied a clear vision of God as He really is, we ought not to relinquish the quest (ζήτησις). For the very seeking, even without finding, is felicity in itself...' (*Spec.* i. 40) Moses, according to Philo, was ever in touch (ψηλαφῶντος) with the divine with his hands and hence the meaning of his name is 'handling' because he received the oracles of God (*Mut.* 126).¹¹⁵ These examples help to understand the meaning behind v. 28a and particularly the connection between v. 28a and v. 27. since these verses present an understanding, unique in the NT, of God in relation to humanity and the world.

To sum up, v. 28a like v. 28b enunciates the relationship between God and man. In v. 28a, man's proximity with God and God's closeness with humanity are emphasised. In God, man receives life and movement. This makes it necessary and obligatory that man,

¹¹⁴ For Conzelmann (*Acts*, p. 144) the optative in 'in the hope that' leaves the 'finding' in suspension.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Philo, *L. A.* iii. 231.

closest and dearest to God, ought to search after God to come to an acute realisation of the divine-human relationship. Man is created to live, move and exist in close relationship with God in such a way as to give man the maximum of assistance in his quest for knowledge. According to v. 28b, man is not only closer to God, he is also in kinship with him. He is the progeny of God as he bears the stamp of God's image. Hence, conceiving God in terms of man-made idols is a denial of that kinship.

7.3.2.4 Stoics and Epicureans: Implicit Polemics?

Some key studies maintain that the content of the speech, particularly vv. 24-25 and 27-28, is indebted to Stoic ideas.¹¹⁶ We must pause here and look for some possible arguments against the Stoics and the Epicureans since Luke has mentioned in the narrative framework that Paul disputed with the Stoics and the Epicureans. First of all, it should be acknowledged that the Areopagus speech shows traces of Stoic thinking in some of its views of God. They can be found especially in this section which speaks of man's relatedness to God. The idea of God's relationship with men is expressed by Luke through the quotation from Aratus though he makes a different application. Man's divine origin was affirmed particularly by the first century Stoics, Seneca (4 BC?-65 AD) and Epictetus (c. 50/60-120/140 AD).¹¹⁷ Epictetus says that Zeus is the progenitor (τὸν Δία πρόγονον) of man and all men are brothers because they are the offspring of Zeus (τοῦ Διὸς ἀπογόνων).¹¹⁸ Polemic against cultic images was common among the Stoics. Zeno (333/2-262/1 BC) rejected images in the temples because they were unworthy of the deity and sacrifices because

¹¹⁶ Norden, *Agnostos Theos*; Dibelius, *Studies*; some studies have advanced the theory that the speech may best be illuminated by the tradition represented by Posidonius, a first century BC Stoic [H. Hommel, 'Neue Forschungen zur Areopagrede Acta 17', *ZNW*, 46 (1955), pp. 145-178]; recently, Balch, 'The Areopagus Speech', pp. 52-79; Neyrey, *Acts 17, Epicureans, and Theodicy*, pp. 118-134; Squires, *Plan of God*, pp. 71-75.

¹¹⁷ Dibelius, *Studies*, pp. 53-54.

¹¹⁸ *Epictetus*, I, xiii, 3-4; Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*: 'From thee was our begetting; ours alone - Of all that live and move upon the earth - The lot to bear God's likeness' (F. C. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions: The Age of Syncretism*, New York: Liberal Arts, 1953, p. 152).

God is not to be appeased by gifts.¹¹⁹ This is echoed in the writings of Seneca who rejected worship and every service to the gods.¹²⁰ He stressed the futility of sacrifices and other cultic practices which he labelled as superstitious.¹²¹ All these ideas to some degree resemble that of Luke.

However, Luke's theology of God shows its polemical edge towards other ideas of the divine espoused by the Stoics and the Epicureans. Diogenes Laertius says that the philosophical doctrine of the Stoics falls into three parts: physical, ethical and logical (VII, 39). Theology comes under one of the sections on physical doctrine, namely, cosmology. According to Zeno, there are two principles in the universe, the active (τὸ ποιῶν) and the passive (τὸ πάσχον) (VII, 134). The passive principle is a substance without quality whereas the active is the reason (ὁ λόγος), that is God (VII, 134). He is the everlasting (ἀύδιον) and is the artificer (δημιουργεῖν ἕκαστα). Therefore, Diogenes Laertius states that the cosmos for the Stoics is fundamentally God himself. This led to a naturalistic understanding of God. Zeno declared that the substance of God is the whole world and the heaven (VII, 148). God is the seminal reason of the universe and he gave birth (ἀπογεννᾶν) to fire, water, air and earth (VII, 136).¹²² Apart from this natural interpretation of how the universe came into being Stoic cosmogony is translated into an allegorised myth about gods.¹²³ Hence their aim in the allegories was 'to adjust their conception of a unitary deity and a monist physics to a polytheistic religion'.¹²⁴ The world is a system constituted by gods and men and all things came into being for their sake. Therefore, the Stoics saw gods and also their apotheosised heroes as manifestations of one central God (VII, 138).¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ *ERE*, XI, p. 861.

¹²⁰ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 54; Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 226.

¹²¹ Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, p. 33.

¹²² D. E. Hahm, *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology*, Ohio State University, 1977, pp. 59ff.

¹²³ Hahm, *Stoic Cosmology*, p. 61.

¹²⁴ Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, p. 34.

¹²⁵ Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, p. 34.

All these aspects of theology are summed up by Diogenes Laërtius:

The deity, say they (Stoics), is a living being, immortal, rational, perfect or intelligent in happiness, admitting nothing evil [into him], taking providential care of the world and all that therein is, but he is not of human shape (ἀνθρωπόμορφον). He is, however, the artificer of the universe and, as it were, the father of all...and which is called many names according to its various powers. They give the name Dia (Δία) because all things are due to (διὰ) him; Zeus (Ζῆνα) in so far as he is the cause of life (ζῆν) or pervades all life; the name Athena is given, because the ruling part of the divinity extends to the aether; the name Hera marks its extension to the air; he is called Hephaestus since it spreads to the creative fire; Poseidon, since it stretches to the sea; Demeter, since it reaches to the earth. Similarly men have given the deity his other titles, fastening, as best they can, on some one or other of his peculiar attributes (VII, 147).

Luke's understanding of God as the Creator and the Lord is remote from the monistic physics which held that the cosmos itself is God and everything existing is indistinguishably God. God did not transform himself into nature but created it and sustains it. The sovereignty of God in the Areopagus speech rules out the idea of a central God uniting several gods.¹²⁶ Luke drives home especially through the polemical arguments in the Areopagus speech some of the fundamental distinctions between human and divine and between human in relatedness to God and human which conceives God in terms of idols. This implies that Luke probably saw the blurring of such distinctions in the Athenian religion as characterised by the Stoic thinking.

The Stoics were generally concerned about proofs of his existence whereas Luke proclaims the God who acts.¹²⁷ Luke begins with God who created, not with the God who existed.¹²⁸ If God has to exist he has to act. All the verb forms in the speech are clear indications

¹²⁶ Cf. E. Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1913, p. 42.

¹²⁷ The Stoics were concerned about the existence of God which can be rationally proved from man since he originated from God. They also held that God is intrinsically connected with the world and is immanent in the world as its soul. Gärtner (*Areopagus Speech*, pp. 110ff.) discusses the four main arguments used by the Stoics for the existence of God. Also, see M. Pohlenz, *Stoa und Stoiker: Die Gründer, Panaitios, Poseidonios*, Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1950, pp. 81, 83; idem, *Die Stoa*, vol. I, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1948, p. 94. 'The Areopagus speech shows different conception of the Stoic proof of God; it is the teleological rather than cosmological proof which stands foremost': Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 60.

¹²⁸ Gärtner (*Areopagus Speech*, p. 146) maintains that there is not a single word in the speech to suggest any intention of proving God's existence.

of the concrete acts of God. Unlike the Stoics, Luke sees God in 'personal' terms. The Stoic view of God is not a personalised one.¹²⁹ According to the Areopagus speech, God created the world, he is not identical with it, neither is he separate from it because he sustains it by giving life and breath to all.

Likewise, there are fundamental differences between Luke's understanding of God and the Epicureans' concept of God. According to Epicurus, the gods do not bestow gifts and neither do they need man's gifts.¹³⁰ This is quite opposite to the idea of God who gives life and breath to all men. Epicurus spoke of deliverance from fear of the gods if one wanted to achieve happiness.¹³¹ Epicureans argued that gods are far removed from men and the world. The gods are an elite who cannot be bothered with puny mankind.¹³² The incompatibility between Luke's and Epicurean ideas of the divine have led some to think that the group which responded to Paul's message in a negative fashion both in the beginning and at the end (vv. 18b, 32) must be Epicureans.¹³³ The Epicureans also criticised temple worship and sacrifices.¹³⁴ But the reason for their rejection arose from a different concept of God from Luke's. In the light of this general picture it may be understood why Stoics and Epicureans disputed with Paul, and the sort of ideas of God Luke's theology of God intended to counter in Ac. 17.

7.3.3 GOD AND THE EARTH (v. 26)

ἐποίησέν τε ἐξ ἑνὸς πάν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντὸς προσώπου τῆς γῆς, ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ὁροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν.

In this section of the Areopagus speech, Luke speaks of yet another aspect of God's dealings with the earth different from that

¹²⁹ ABD, VI, p. 211.

¹³⁰ G. A. Panichas, *Epicurus*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967, p. 76.

¹³¹ ABD, II, p. 560; cf. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions*, p. 157.

¹³² Panichas, *Epicurus*, p. 76ff.

¹³³ IBD, II, p. 123; ABD, II, p. 560; Haenchen thinks that καὶ τινες and οἱ δέ in v. 18 are the Stoics and the Epicureans respectively.

¹³⁴ IDB, II, p. 122.

of vv. 24-25. Luke uses the word γῆ again in v. 26 but in a different sense from v. 24. We noted that, for Luke, the heaven, the earth and the sea constitute the whole of the cosmos (cf. 17: 24; 14: 16). In v. 26, Luke treats the earth as the place where every nation of humankind was allowed to dwell with allotted periods and boundaries of their habitation.¹³⁵ Luke's presentation of the theology of God enters into another phase in which he sees the role of God in relation to the earth which is a universal space for the habitation of humanity (the nations).

Of all the verses in the Areopagus speech, v. 26 is the most difficult verse for exegesis because its syntax is obscure and vocabulary ambiguous.¹³⁶ The problem is to explain the relationship between the main verb ἐποίησεν and the infinitives κατοικεῖν and ζητεῖν. The tendency is to treat ζητεῖν as the sole infinitive of purpose and attach it not just to ἐποίησεν but to the whole clause of ἐποίησεν...κατοικεῖν...¹³⁷ In this case the main verb ἐποίησεν is a helping verb for κατοικεῖν and translated 'he made to dwell'. Such a translation is objected to because it tends to obscure the meaning of ἐποίησεν which seems to carry the notion of creation (ποίησας in v. 24) forward to v. 26. The meaning 'he created' fits well with the following clause beginning with ἐξ.¹³⁸ Therefore, the most common way is to take both as infinitives of purpose being dependent on ἐποίησεν, expressing a two-fold purpose in God's creation of humanity.¹³⁹ God created (ἐποίησεν) out of one man every nation that they may dwell on the earth and that they might seek God.¹⁴⁰

7.3.3.1 *God and the nations*

The phrase 'God made' occurs a second time in the speech evoking the sense of God who 'acts'. In vv. 24-25, Luke's theology of creation was to demonstrate that God is Creator and Lord. But God's

¹³⁵ 'Heaven and earth are viewed both in their indissoluble connection and also in their differentiation in the N. T.': H. Sasse, 'γῆ', *TDNT*, I, p. 679.

¹³⁶ Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 200.

¹³⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 523, n. 1.

¹³⁸ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 261; Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, pp. 200-201.

¹³⁹ Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 201; Gärtner (*Areopagus Speech*, p. 153) treats both the infinitives as expegetical.

¹⁴⁰ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 262.

act of 'making' here touches upon a different theme. Luke turns to mankind in this (v. 26) and also in the following section (vv. 27-28) in the speech which we have already discussed. In v. 25, Luke asserts that God is the Lord of creation because he gives life and breath to all men. V. 26 contains another side of humanity, its settlement on earth by God. To the hearers in the narrative is thus explained another important aspect of theology of God.

God created every nation from one (man). The phrase ἐξ ἑνὸς πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων is ambiguous.¹⁴¹ It is generally assumed that by ἐξ ἑνὸς Adam is meant.¹⁴² The settling of the nations is either in accordance with God's command to Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 1: 28),¹⁴³ or it reminds the readers of the formation of earth in the creation account when God gathered together the water into one place so that dry land could appear for the nations to occupy.¹⁴⁴ In support for the latter argument, that the idea of creation of *Adam* is implied in v. 26a, the clause ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους καιρούς (v. 26c) is interpreted as referring to the 'times' or 'seasons' which God had ordained on the earth in the beginning of the creation of the world when God separated the day from the night and ordained the seasons, days and years (Gen. 1:14).¹⁴⁵

First of all, it should be pointed out that Luke in v. 26 is not referring to the creation of the *Adam* since he has already mentioned in vv. 24-25 the creation of the world and everything in it. Moreover, v. 26 does not indicate the creation of an *Urmensch* because Luke alludes clearly to the origin of 'every nation' *from* one man rather than of the man himself. The focus must fall on πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων. Some take the phrase to mean 'every race',¹⁴⁶ while

¹⁴¹ It is an easier expression in Greek than in English (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 216).

¹⁴² Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 523; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 142; Wikenhauser, *Apg*, p. 204; Nock, 'The Book of Acts', *A. D. Nock*, II, p. 830.

¹⁴³ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 154; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 523.

¹⁴⁴ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 262.

¹⁴⁵ So argues W. Eltester, 'Schöpfungsoffenbarung und Natürliche Theologie', *NTS*, III, 1956/57, p. 101; The motif of allotment of times and seasons may be found in Job 38: 8-11, Prov. 8: 28ff. Jer. 5: 22.

¹⁴⁶ Nock, 'The Book of Acts', p. 830.

others translate it 'mankind', or 'the whole human race'.¹⁴⁷ It is important that the literal sense of 'every nation' be kept and not be altered to yield a general and collective meaning of 'humanity', even though the end result might be the same.¹⁴⁸ Luke does not seem to be speaking of an amalgam of peoples but of a diversity of nations. In a different context, Luke alludes to the distress of the nations on the earth (Lk. 21: 25 - ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς συνοχὴ ἔθνῶν) and to the day of the Lord which will come upon those who dwell upon earth (Lk. 21:35). Repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be preached in his name to all the nations (Lk. 24: 47). These expressions are significant for Luke's understanding of humanity which is described in terms of diversity of nations. Thus, in v. 26, the reference to ἐξ ἑνὸς symbolises the common descent of all the nations whereas πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων indicates the human community of all peoples, the multiplicity of nations.

If this interpretation is correct, we can then ask, who is the man with whom the nations are associated? Certainly, humanity is the progeny of Adam, the first man who received from God the blessing that enabled him to propagate and increase (Gen. 1: 28).¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the blessing to multiply cannot adequately explain the following clause κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντὸς προσώπου τῆς γῆς which clearly speaks of the nations settling on the earth.¹⁵⁰

We may consider whether Luke alludes to the OT idea of Noah's children as nations populating the whole earth.¹⁵¹ Such an assumption finds support in Gen. 10, the table of the nations, a map of humanity which as a family of nations stretched across the

¹⁴⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 523; Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 35.

¹⁴⁸ *Contra* Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 201; Dibelius' (*Studies*, p. 35) explanation that ἔθνη is used to indicate 'class' or 'band' of men to distinguish it from 'groups' of bees or birds (cf. Prov. 30: 26) is far from Lukan usage of ἔθνη elsewhere in Acts.

¹⁴⁹ G. von Rad, *Genesis*, London: SCM, 1963, p. 58.

¹⁵⁰ The variant text D insert αἵματος which suggests a scribal intention to emphasise the blood relationship among the nations.

¹⁵¹ Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 36) asks the question: 'Is Paul thinking historically in the sense of the Old Testament, in which a family - first Adam's, then Noah's - is regarded as the origin of the many and varied types of peoples? Or is he thinking hellenistically of humanity as the sum of the inhabitants of the earth?' Dibelius considers the latter to be the case. He could reach this conclusion only by suggesting alterations to the text.

earth. The table of nations is 'unique and has no parallels either inside or outside the Old Testament.'¹⁵² 'Nowhere is there a survey of the relationship of peoples to each other comparable to the biblical table of the nations...'¹⁵³ It became the source for Hebrew geography and ethnography which is attested in Jewish writings of the Greco-Roman period. The notion that Noah's sons and their children occupied the whole earth and that the earth was divided between them was prevalent in Jewish tradition. Themes around the life of Noah and his children became central to Jewish understanding of history and ethnography of nations.¹⁵⁴

It is more probable, then, that Luke in v. 26 is not repeating the creation theme but rather portraying the diversity of the nations

¹⁵² C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, London: SPCK, 1974, p. 501.

¹⁵³ Quoted by Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 528.

¹⁵⁴ Commentaries, for example, on the list of nations (Gen. 10) and particularly the division of land between the three sons of Noah are found in *Jubilees* (8: 10-9: 13), Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (chs. 5 & 6) and in the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus (I. 122-147). All three have re-worked the list in Gen. 10 identifying the sons of Noah and their generations in the contemporary political, geographical and social life-settings of their time. Von Rad (*Genesis*, p. 62) observes that the cosmological and theological knowledge that undergirds the 'table of the nations' in Gen. 10 reflect the faith of Israel which was nourished in ancient Israel at the sanctuaries. The Targumists sought to identify the sons of Noah and their generations with the peoples and places of the Greco-Roman period. The *Targum Onqelos* does not add provincial identifications to the sons of Noah, but identifies the land borders of the settlements of the sons of Ham and Shem (Gen. 9: 18, 30) (B. Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988, 60), whereas, *Targum Neofiti*, in the later period, identifies the sons of Japheth with the following provinces: Phrygia, Germania, Media, Macedonia, Bithynia, Mysia, and Thracia. And the sons of Gomer are in: Asia, Barkewi, and Barbaria. And the name of the provinces of the sons of Javan are: Hellas, Tarsis, Italy, and Dardania. The sons of Ham are associated with Arabia, Egypt, Allihroq and Canaan. One of the sons of Raamah is Lybia (M. McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992). The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* has almost an identical list as in *T. Nf.* (M. Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992, 46-48). It was part of Jewish historiography to conceive the world as consisting of seventy nations and the number 'seventy' derived from Gen. 10, the genealogy of Noah and his sons (see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. II, p. 126). It was also believed that the seventy peoples of the world had their own guardian angels. *T. Ps.-J.* describes Gen 11: 7 in the following words: 'Then the Lord said to the seventy angels that stand before him: "Come let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's language." The Memra of the Lord was revealed against the city, and with it seventy angels corresponding to the seventy nations, each having the language of his people and the character of its writing in his hand'.

which share a common bond of physical relationship through Noah. Though Adam is the father of humanity, it is with Noah that in Hebrew ethnography the family of nations is associated. This Jewish notion of the plurality of the nations would have come readily to the mind of Luke if, as is thought, he had a good knowledge of the LXX. The family of nations occupied the whole earth as the place of their dwelling, a renewed work of God's creation on the earth. God is not only the Lord of the cosmos but also of the earth, the home-land for the diverse nations. The Gentiles ought to acknowledge the fact that it is God who has given the nations the whole earth to dwell in.

Luke's thinking of humanity in terms of the pluralism of nations was guided by the OT 'table of nations' which may be seen in Lk. 10 in which Jesus sends seventy/seventy-two other evangelists to do the task of preaching and healing. Though the number 70/72 can stand for several symbolic uses, both numbers are suited to express the symbolism of the nations. It is possible that Luke wrote seventy-two nations according to the LXX and the later copyists followed the tradition behind Gen. 10 MT by changing it to 70.¹⁵⁵ In the context of Lk. 10, the number denotes the prefiguration of the mission to the Gentiles, the nations.¹⁵⁶ Luke's declaration about God in the speech of Ac. 17 that he created from one man every nation, reinforces the idea that Luke understands universalism in terms of multiplicity of the nations.

God not only allowed the nations to settle on earth he also determined allotted periods and boundaries of their habitation. The words *καιροί* and *ὄροθεσία* and the meaning of the whole clause, 'having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation', present us with exegetical difficulties. For some, the word *καιροί* (seasons) would imply the times and seasons of the year and the word *ὄροθεσία* (boundaries) would mean demarcation between land and sea to enable humanity to dwell upon the

¹⁵⁵ I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, Exeter: Paternoster, 1978, p. 415; For a list of symbolic uses of 70/72, see Metzger, *Textual commentary*, pp. 150-51.

¹⁵⁶ Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts*, p. 255 ; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 415; Nolland, *Luke 9: 21-18: 34*, p. 549.

land.¹⁵⁷ Dibelius calls this interpretation 'philosophical' since the words 'seasons and boundaries' point in the direction of an interpretation from natural philosophy. M. Pohlenz, B. Gärtner and S. G. Wilson understand the words to refer to the 'periods and epochs' in the histories of the nations that settled on the earth.¹⁵⁸ Conzelmann argues that v. 26 should not be subjected to an either-or decision between philosophical and historical understanding, and on the basis of parallels from Qumran he concludes that the philosophical and the historical meanings are interwoven in v. 26.¹⁵⁹

A clarification of the meaning of the phrase καιρούς καὶ τὰς ὁροθεσίας is essential for the understanding of the theological point Luke wishes to establish here. Dibelius takes v. 26 and v. 27 together to argue that both seasons indicating natural seasons and boundaries referring to the division of the earth as inhabited and uninhabited zones, are intended to induce men to seek after God. In this sense, the καιροί and ὁροθεσίαι are proofs of the existence of God.¹⁶⁰ First of all, however, it is questionable whether proofs for the existence of God are required at all considering the fact that both popular and philosophical religions in Athens had their own beliefs concerning God. First of all, with the clause ἐπὶ παντὸς προσώπου τῆς γῆς in v. 26, it is difficult to assume that Luke is referring to divisions of the earth as habitable and uninhabitable zones. With regard to καιροί, it should be noted that in the structure of the sentence, its meaning should be derived from the preceding clause which links the three verbs ἐποίησαν...κατοικεῖν...ὀρίσας, rather than allowing the clause ζητεῖν τὸν θεόν which follows it to determine the meaning of καιρούς.¹⁶¹ With regard to the meaning of καιροί, it may be possible on the basis of the few extant parallels outside of Luke-Acts to

¹⁵⁷ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 262; Dibelius (*Studies*, pp. 33-34) seeks to understand ὁροθεσίας as referring to the division of the earth into habitable and uninhabitable zones.

¹⁵⁸ Pohlenz, 'Paulus und Stoa', pp. 86-87; Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, pp. 147ff.; Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, pp. 203ff.; also, Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 216; Wikenhauser, *Apg*, p. 204; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 288.

¹⁵⁹ *Acts*, pp. 143ff.

¹⁶⁰ *Studies*, pp. 33ff.

¹⁶¹ *Contra* Dibelius (*Studies*, pp. 27-37) who sees the whole clause linked to ζητεῖν to give a proof for the existence of God; Nock ('The Book of Acts', p. 830) thinks that the clause ὀρίσας κτλ defines and qualifies κατοικεῖν.

assume that Luke intended to mean the seasons of the years.¹⁶² As we have seen, Luke has mostly used καιροί in Luke-Acts either in the sense of 'divine time' (Lk. 1: 20; 4: 13; 8: 13; 19: 44; Ac. 1: 7; 3: 20; 7: 20) or in an ordinary sense to denote 'period of time'.¹⁶³ In the only instance where καιρούς is seen in connection with the earth (Ac. 14: 17), Luke has used an additional word καρποφόρους in order to make the sense of natural seasons clear. It is therefore difficult to interpret v. 26 as alluding to 'seasons' of the year and take 'divisions' as of the earth into habitable and uninhabitable zones.

Scholars draw upon the use of καιροί in Philo's writings to understand its significance.¹⁶⁴ Philo's exposition of the creation account makes the link between the earth and καιρούς clearer than in the LXX (cf. *Opi.* 43, 55, 59). But Philo uses it in association with ὥραι but distinct from it. In the phrase καιρούς τὰς ἐστησίους ὥρας (*Opi.* 55, 59), the word ὥραι stands for 'seasons',¹⁶⁵ whereas the word καιρός refers to the *period* of the seasons. In his exposition of Gen. 1: 14, it is the 'period' of the seasons which was fixed by God. Therefore it is possible to take Lukan usage of καιρούς here in a general sense as referring to 'periods of times' rather than a specific reference to 'natural seasons'.¹⁶⁶ When seen against the background of the settlement of the nations, the καιρούς seem to add a strong sense of historical meaning as 'natural seasons' were not created just for the sake of the nations that dwell on the earth and neither can 'natural seasons' be understood as delimiting men's habitations.¹⁶⁷

There are scores of references in Philo, in which καιρός simply

¹⁶² Gärtner (*Areopagus Speech*, p. 147, n. 2) notes that καιροί can mean seasons but this is very unusual. The documentation of the uses of καιροί for 'seasons' by J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan (*The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament illustrated from the Papyri and other non-literary Sources*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914-1929, p. 315) suggests that such a usage is rare; also, cf. *BAG*, p. 395, *LS*, p. 859.

¹⁶³ See ch. II, pp. 19ff.

¹⁶⁴ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 33. n. 14; Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, pp. 203ff.

¹⁶⁵ Also, cf. τοὺς ἐστησίους καιρούς (*Legat.* 190; *Spec.* i. 210); καιρός is τὴν ἐαρινὴν ὥραν (*Spec.* ii. 158).

¹⁶⁶ Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 204. An example from *Lett Arist.* supports this conclusion: '...God blesses the human race, giving them health and food and all other gifts in their season' (190).

¹⁶⁷ Nock, 'Book of Acts', p. 830.

means, 'opportunity', or 'suitable occasion' (*Legat.* 120, 168, 173, 201, 221, 227; *Mos.* i. 32, 46; *Jos.* 206). But it is also used to speak of various times or periods in history during which the Jews were sent out as colonies to settle in different parts of the inhabited earth (*Legat.* 281). The word *καιρός* is used in association with 'fortune' (*τύχη*) (*Spec.* ii. 23, 39, 46-48, 67, 78). An important use of *καιρός* is found in the context of explaining the fortune (*αἱ τύχαι*) which in the form of uncertainty dominates human affairs and makes them swing as on a scale with unequal weights (*Jos.* 140). Every nation has been subjected to the changes and vicissitudes of fortune which led the nations to the *καιρούς* of successes and failures. Philo furnishes several such examples from the lives of kings and nations who went through the momentary high and irretrievable low periods. 'The greatest kings have seen their empires overthrown when occasion (*καιρός*) gives a slight turn to the scale' (*Jos.* 131). Further,

'Egypt once held the sovereignty over many nations, but now is in slavery. The Macedonians in their day (*ἐπὶ καιρῶν*) of success flourished so greatly that they held dominion over all the habitable world, but now they pay to the tax-collectors the yearly tributes imposed by their masters. Where is the house of the Ptolemies, and the fame of the several successors whose light once shone to the utmost boundaries of land and sea? Where are the liberties of the independent nations and cities, where again the servitude of the vassal? Did not the Persians once rule the Parthians, and now the Parthians rule the Persians? So much do human affairs twist and change, go backward and forward as on the draught-board' (*Jos.* 135-136).¹⁶⁸

A similar passage is found in *Deus.* 173-176, which contains a longer list of nations, in which Philo describes the plight of the Macedonians, Parthians, Persians and Egyptians and the countries of Ethiopia, Carthage, Libya, Pontus, Europe, Asia and that of all the *οἰκουμένη*. The upward and downward movements in history from time to time (*χρόνοις...παρ' ἐκάστοις*) are caused by 'the revolution of that divine plan (*λόγος ὁ θεῖος*) which most call fortune (*τύχην*)' (*Deus.* 176).¹⁶⁹ All these examples point out that *καιρός* was widely

¹⁶⁸ Similar connection between *τύχης* and *καιρός* is seen in hellenistic historiography (see Schmid, 'Rede des Apostels Paulus', p. 103); *Τύχη* as a philosophical concept plays a key role in the human affairs; it is a theme which runs through the histories of Dionysius and Diodorus (see Squires, *Plan of God*, pp. 38-46).

¹⁶⁹ The connection between rise and fall of the nations and the fortune is made also by Polybius (XXXVIII, 22, 2; XXIX, 21, 3-6). H. A. Wolfson (*Philo:*

used in connection with the changes and movements in the history of the nations and to show that the divine Logos was in control of them.

Therefore, καιροί has an ethnological sense and may be taken as referring to the 'epochs' in the histories of the nations.¹⁷⁰ The apocalyptic vision of world history according to the book of Daniel (chs. 10-12) was referred to the historical epochs of the Babylonians, Medes, the Persians and the Greeks.¹⁷¹ Moreover, there are several uses of plural καιροί in Luke-Acts which are far from indicating times of natural seasons. Luke speaks of the 'times of the Gentiles' (καιροὶ ἐθνῶν) in Lk. 21: 24 in a political sense signifying 'epochs of history' referring to the possession of Jerusalem by the Gentiles.¹⁷² The purpose of all this for Luke is to show that God is Lord of history and of all the nations (cf. Lk. 21:10).

The meaning of ὁροθεσία is closely associated with that of καιροί. It is a rare expression and its meaning and sense cannot be applied solely to the seasons.¹⁷³ In association with the earth and the nations it may recall the 'national boundaries' on the earth among the Noachic nations (cf. Deut. 32:8).¹⁷⁴ When the two terms καιρούς and ὁροθεσία are correlated, 'they will refer to that category of God's dealings with the nations which decrees time and place'.¹⁷⁵ When God made the nations from one man and let them dwell on the earth, he made the *when* and the *where*.¹⁷⁶ For Luke, καιροί and ὁροθεσία testify to the sovereignty of God who has fixed them on his

Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, vol. II., Harvard University, 1947, pp. 421-425) argues that there is a fundamental difference between Philo and Polybius in their understanding of τύχη. For the former, it is will of God or the logos of God himself, whilst for the latter, it is the course appointed by nature.

¹⁷⁰ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 142.

¹⁷¹ Eissfeldt, *Old Testament*, p. 522.

¹⁷² E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans., 1983, p. 245.

¹⁷³ Schmid ('Rede des Apostels Paulus', p. 103) maintains that ὁροθεσία refers only to 'räumliche Abgrenzung'.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. for allotment of lands in Philo, *Post.* 89; *Plant.* 59.

¹⁷⁵ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, 148.

¹⁷⁶ Nock, 'Book of Acts', p. 830.

own authority (cf. Ac. 1: 7).

We might, therefore, conclude that Luke has used the word *καιρούς* in a general sense to mean 'periods of time'. It means that in v. 26 Luke has in mind specifically the times and epochs in the history of the nations. Such an understanding of v. 26b can also fit with the idea of the origin of the nations from one man in v. 26a reflecting the Hebrew view of ethnography. The common origin of humanity, not so much in its totality but in its diversity, its formation as nations and its distribution on the earth with boundaries are considered the creative work of God. It is God's plan and intention that all nations should dwell upon the earth. God determines the history of the nations; God is in continued relationship with the nations as the Lord of history.

The reference to epochs of history in the lives of the nations probably has a definite polemical function.¹⁷⁷ It may very well be that Luke is here denouncing the Epicureans' denial of God's involvement with the world.¹⁷⁸ Epicureanism was attacked, both during Luke's time and later, for their failure to understand God and his role in history.¹⁷⁹ There are polemical references to the Epicureans in some of the writings of hellenistic Judaism, especially in Philo and Josephus. Philo openly disagrees with the Epicureans on many essential points of doctrine and belief.¹⁸⁰ He polemicises

¹⁷⁷ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 146.

¹⁷⁸ Neyrey ('Acts 17, Epicureans, and Theodicy', p. 124) argues that the Areopagus speech deals with the question of theodicy in order to refute the views of the Epicureans, who denied the providence of God. He identifies, therefore, those who rejected the Areopagus speech as Epicureans (17: 34). B. Fiore ('Passion in Paul and Plutarch: 1 Corinthians 1-6 and the Polemic against Epicureans', *Greeks, Romans and Christians*, pp. 135-143) holds that Paul also joined the debate against the Epicureans and some of his arguments in I Cor. 5-6 are to distance the Christian community in Corinth from the oft-despised Epicurean movement.

¹⁷⁹ E. E. Urbach observes (*The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, vol. I, Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1975, p. 26) that Rabbinic Judaism also condemns those who deny the existence of God and that those who do are often called כּוֹפֵר בְּעִיקַר (one who denies the primary principle of the faith). "He who does not believe that God governs the world is an 'Epicurean' or כּוֹפֵר בְּעִיקַר" (p. 30. Heb. mine). Nock ('Philo and Hellenistic Philosophy', *A. D. Nock*, II, p. 562) observes that in Rabbinic writings the name Epicurean serves as a category of condemnation.

¹⁸⁰ E. g., Philo rejects their atomism, hedonism, their belief in the existence of gods in the form of human beings; see Wolfson, *Philo*, vol. I, p. 93.

particularly against their denial of providence and their belief that the created world is under the sway of varying and random causation.¹⁸¹ According to Philo, the Epicureans did not deny the existence of the Deity but, for them, the Deity does not exercise its providence.¹⁸² In his interpretation of the creation account in Genesis, one of the lessons that Philo draws is against the Epicureans, stressing that God exercises providence.¹⁸³ In the same spirit, Josephus maintains that the Epicureans are in error as they do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world.¹⁸⁴ Christian writers of the post-apostolic age saw in Epicureanism a philosophy incompatible with the fundamentals of Christian doctrine. The Christian reaction to the Epicureans was particularly directed toward their views of the gods and the denial of divine providence.¹⁸⁵ Therefore it is likely that in v. 26 Luke has Paul condemn the Epicurean notion of God/gods by emphasising the fact that God is involved in the lives of the nations in determining their times and boundaries.

7.3.4 GOD AND THE INHABITED WORLD (vv. 30-31)

v. 30: τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ θεός, τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντα πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν,

v. 31: καθότι ἔστησεν ἡμέραν ἐν ἧ ἔμελλει κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ᾤρισε, πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

A continuous line of thought is provided from the section on God

¹⁸¹ *Conf.* 114; also, cf. *Ebr.* 199.

¹⁸² Wolfson, *Philo*, vol. I, p. 176. The theism of the Epicureans sought to show that the gods are like eternal and happy human beings of an ethereal substance inhabiting the space between heavenly and earthly realms. Epicurus calls the life of the Divinity infinitely pleasant and happy (A. J. Festugière, *Epicurus and His Gods*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955, p. 61).

¹⁸³ *Opi.* 171-72; E. R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, New Haven: Yale University, 1940, p. 44.

¹⁸⁴ *Antiq.* X. 277-281.

¹⁸⁵ For details of Christian reaction, see H. Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition*, London: Routledge, 1989, pp. 94-116. Christians are not the first to criticise the Epicureans on the question of providence. There was also a fundamental disagreement in this area even between the Stoics and the Epicureans (Pohlenz, *Stoa und Stoiker*, p. 340).

and the earth (v. 26) to the present unit vv. 30-31 which deals with God in relation to the inhabited world. One of the features of the continuity is a similarity in meaning between $\gamma\eta$ and $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$. The word $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ has three different but inter-related connotations, geographical, cultural and political.¹⁸⁶ Luke uses it 8 times in Luke-Acts. It means 'the inhabited earth' and behind this is probably the Aramaic ܩܪܝܢܐ , 'on the whole earth' (cf. Lk. 21: 26; Ac. 11:28). The geographical meaning does not imply the earth as a geological mass but refers to the kingdoms of the earth (cf. Lk. 4: 5).¹⁸⁷ Strabo, the greatest geographer of antiquity, understood the 'inhabited world' in the widest possible sense referring to the earth, the sea, the natural changes that happen on the earth, to plants, animals and the nations that have inhabited the earth.¹⁸⁸ Strabo also used the same word to yield political connotations.¹⁸⁹ Through political expansion, Hellenistic culture introduced the concept of cosmopolitanism with its philosophical understanding of society. Kaerst writes, 'The ideally Hellenic is as such the cosmopolitan, which represents true humanity; severed from its specific local background, it embraces the world'.¹⁹⁰ Roman imperialism sought to convey more or less the same political and cultural ideology with the use of the word $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ and Roman emperors were regarded as rulers of the $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$.¹⁹¹ Nero was declared as the good genius of the $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ and the source of all good things. Marcus Aurelius was called $\tau\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\tau\eta\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \sigma\omega\tau\eta\eta\rho\alpha\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \omicron\lambda\eta\varsigma\ \omicron\iota\kappa\omicron\upsilon[\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\varsigma]$.¹⁹² In contrast to this political and cultural understanding, Luke stresses God's sovereignty over the nations and declares that God is about to judge the inhabited world.

¹⁸⁶ O. Michel, 'ή $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ ', *TDNT*, V, p. 157, n.1.

¹⁸⁷ Luke replaces Matthean $\kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$ (Mt. 4: 8) to underline the idea of 'kingdom of the inhabited world'.

¹⁸⁸ For Strabo, the understanding of $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ includes the description of each country in terms of its land, size and the climate and the differences that exist between the countries in different corners of the earth (I. 1. 13); also, cf. I. 1. 233, 271, 237, 243, 253, 293, 315, 317, 327, 321, 393, 407, 463. Polybius also uses it, among other meanings, in connection with land and the nations (2, 37, 5).

¹⁸⁹ Luke, of course, differs from Strabo as Strabo thinks that the description of $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ is to help rulers and commanders to hold sway over the land and sea and to unite cities and nations under one government (I. 1. 16, 18).

¹⁹⁰ Quoted by Michel, *TDNT*, V, p. 157.

¹⁹¹ Michel, *TDNT*, V, p. 157; cf. *BAG*, pp. 563-64.

¹⁹² Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, p. 315.

7.3.4.1 *God and the times*

Another feature of continuity may be found in the theme of 'time'. Luke has Paul speak in terms of the epochs in the history of the nations in v. 26, but here a different time reckoning is introduced. Luke expresses it through three different terms. Luke speaks of the past 'times of ignorance' (χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας), of repentance at the 'present time' (τὰ νῦν) and of the future judgment on 'the day' (ἡμέραν) which God has fixed. The καιροί in v. 26 are confronted by the phrase χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας. The times of ignorance are to be seen at the same historical level as the allotted periods of time in the lives of the nations. However, the author of the allotted periods is God himself, whereas ignorance is a realm which owes its existence to man's persistent efforts to deny God in history and to live in idolatry; both are deemed misconceptions of the divine.¹⁹³ In Lukan usage there is not much difference between χρόνους and καιροῦς.¹⁹⁴ God, who is the God of history has overlooked (cf. *Eccl.* 28: 7; *Wisd.* 15: 1) the times of ignorance (cf. *Wisd.* 12: 20; 14: 16). Because he is God, Creator and Lord who made every nation to dwell on the earth, he *now* commands men everywhere to repent.¹⁹⁵ Luke's aim, however, here is to make known the definite shift in time with τὰ νῦν.

¹⁹³ On the significance of ἀγνοια, Gärtner (*Areopagus Speech*, pp. 229, 233ff.) understands it in stronger terms. For him, the ignorance characterises the 'epochs of human history' that lie outside the revelation of Christ' and it also refers to sin, guilt and 'massive idolatry'. Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 55), on the other hand, thinks that the Lukan motif of ignorance is to ascribe as little guilt as possible to the heathens. Wilson (*Gentile Mission*, p. 210) sees a combination of both tolerance and reproof, conciliation and rebuke.

¹⁹⁴ See ch. II, p. 19. Evans (*Luke*, p. 544) thinks that καιρός and χρόνος are almost synonyms in Luke-Acts. Barr (*Biblical Words for Time*, p. 42.) maintains that only in certain contexts are καιρός and χρόνος distinguishable; in most cases the two words are synonymous. *Contra* Robinson (*In the End God*, p. 57) who, with reference to καιρός and χρόνος in the NT, makes a distinction between χρόνος as time measured by chronometer and καιρός as moments of opportunity appointed by God and decisive for men. But note Luke's usage: ἄχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως (Ac. 3: 21); ὁ χρόνος τ. ἐπαγγελίας (Ac. 7: 17).

¹⁹⁵ Luke is not narrowing the focus here by moving from a notion of pluralism of nations to an individual repentance. Nor is it justifiable from the content of the speech to limit repentance to returning from idolatry alone (e. g., Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 525, n. 6). It should also include the need to change from the failure to recognise God in history.

Τὰ νῦν is found in the NT only in Ac. 4: 29; 5: 38; 20: 32; 27: 22.¹⁹⁶ Except in 5: 38, all the references denote a present time full of meaning and significance. In 4: 29, it denotes a time of crisis for the early Church. 'Present time' in 20: 32 introduces an occasion different from the past. For three years Paul admonished the community in Ephesus and now (τὰ νῦν) he is commending them to God as the new situation has arisen and the time has come for him to depart. In the midst of crisis, Paul gives to those travelling with him the divine assurance, 'I now (τὰ νῦν) bid you take heart' (27: 22). So also the kerygma announces the new time, God's time in which nations are commanded by God to turn to him. God has chosen this present time for the realisation of his plan of salvation.¹⁹⁷ This present time is distinguished from all other epochs of history.¹⁹⁸

The proclamation brings in a new division of time in the lives of the nations. It designates the past as times of ignorance, invites the nations in positive response to God's call at present and warns the nations about the day in the future when God will judge the inhabited world. It is different from the epochs in the history of the nations. Each nation is given its own time by the sovereignty of God. But all of them are confined to one single time sequence of past (times of ignorance), present (time to return) and future (time when God judges). This also shows God's sovereignty. The appeal for repentance has universal dimension because God commands all men everywhere (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ) *because* he is the Lord of history.

The Areopagus speech is a time-charged speech. In the speech Luke is pointing out certain very important 'periods of time' in a forward moving history. To the Gentiles, history which has its beginning in God's creation is guided by him who allotted epochs in

¹⁹⁶ Τὰ νῦν functions as a Übergangswendung (Roloff, *Apog.*, p. 87).

¹⁹⁷ Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 44.

¹⁹⁸ Luke uses another word σήμερον which relates to the present time of God's salvation. The saviour is born to-day (Lk. 2: 11); the events of salvation foretold by the prophet have been fulfilled to-day (Lk. 4: 21); salvation has come to the house of Zacchaeus to-day (19: 9). Σήμερον is in emphatic first position in Lk. 19: 9; 4: 21.

the lives of the nations. Luke now refers to a change in the flow of history with the use of *νῦν*, introducing a new division of time. God's relationship with the nations is also understood by Luke on the basis of this time change. God overlooks the past and he now commands men everywhere (including in Athens) to repent (cf. Ac. 24: 3; 28: 22). Luke's theology speaks of God who is not outside time and history. Luke presents a God-centred history.

7.3.4.2 *God and the Christ*

Many commentators have remarked that v. 31 gives a Christian content to the Areopagus speech. Dibelius even asserts that the concluding sentence is 'the *only Christian* sentence in the Areopagus speech'.¹⁹⁹ As we noted above, scholars have begun to understand v. 30 itself from a Christian perspective. Although the idea of repentance is common to both Christians and Jews it needs to be understood in the context of the speech and not in terms of Christian doctrine of sin and grace.²⁰⁰ Though it is quite clear that by the phrase *ἐν ἀνδρί* Christ is meant, theology is still the main focus. However, the culmination in the series of God's acts can be seen in Christ. There are four verbs (*παραγγέλλει*, *ἔστησεν*, *μέλλει*, *ᾤρισεν*) and three participles (*ὑπεριδών*, *παρασχών*, *ἀναστήσας*) in vv. 30-31; the subject of all of which is God. It should be noted that the call to repentance issues from God himself and v. 30 has no explicit Christological overtones. This does not mean to say that Jesus has no role in the 'present time' of calling men to turn to God. One needs to await reference to Christ in v. 31. Luke has evidently maintained an unbroken continuity between God the Creator and the God who raised Jesus.

The work of God the creator has extended throughout since the creation of the world, guiding and determining the whole span of history of the nations and now fixing a day to judge the inhabited earth. Luke has used *ὀρίζω* in conjunction with *ποιέω* in v. 26 and the content of which is to demonstrate the analogy between the two different periods of God's 'doing'. We hear probably an echo of

¹⁹⁹ Dibelius, *Studies*, p. 56. Italics his.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Wilson, *Gentile Mission*, p. 209.

God's creative activity with Luke's repeated use of *ὀρίζω* in v. 31. The word *ποιέω* is also used with Christological significance in Luke's thought. God has *made* the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ (Ac. 2: 36).²⁰¹ However, here the word *ὀρίζω* takes the readers back to v. 26. The judgment will be effected by one man whom God has appointed and whose name Luke does not designate. Luke has dealt with the theme of the day of judgement as the day of the Lord in Ac. 2: 20 and 3: 19ff. The link between judgement, God and Christ would recall Peter's preaching to Cornelius (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ὠρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κριτής, 10: 42).²⁰² God who appointed the periods of times also appointed Christ so that he can judge the world in righteousness (cf. *Wisd.* 12: 16; 9: 3). For Luke 'the day' is not just a chronological marker but has a definite content in relation to the activity of God.²⁰³

Luke's account of the preaching of John the Baptist bears this out. Luke lets the emphasis fall on the 'coming wrath', judgement from God.²⁰⁴ The axe is already laid to the root of the trees (Lk. 3: 9). The felling of the trees is a prophetic image of judgement (Is. 6: 13; 10: 33-34; 32: 19; Ez. 31: 12; Dan. 4: 14).²⁰⁵ The impending judgement is captured again in the imagery of winnowing fork in the hand of the Coming One (Lk. 3: 17). The judgement is universal as the Coming One will separate the light chaff from the heavy kernel.²⁰⁶ The parousia-parable in Lk. 19: 11-27 ends on a very strong note of judgement.²⁰⁷ Of all the synoptists, it is only Luke who speaks of *ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως* (Lk. 21: 22) not only upon Israel but also upon the Gentiles who were instruments of Israel's

²⁰¹ Luke uses *ποιέω* in several cases in relation to God: cf. Ac. 2: 22, 36; 4: 24; 7: 36, 50; 15: 4, 12, 18; see pp. 137-138.

²⁰² L. C. Allen, 'The Old Testament Background of (προ) ὀρίζειν in the New Testament', *NTS*, 17 (1971), p. 105, argues that the word *ὀρίζειν* in the OT means 'to decree' and hence God would judge the nations by the man whom he has *decreed*.

²⁰³ J. Marsh, *Fullness of Time*, London: Nisbet, 1952, p. 26.

²⁰⁴ Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 468; Evans, *Luke*, p. 239.

²⁰⁵ Nolland, *Luke 1 - 9*: 20, pp. 148ff.

²⁰⁶ An eschatological note is associated with John's Messianic preaching (Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, p. 466.)

²⁰⁷ Being embarrassed by the ruthlessness of the master Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 59) argues that Luke is certainly wrong to have added such a conclusion to the parable.

judgement (vv. 22-28).²⁰⁸ Unlike in Mark, the eschatological discourse in Luke ends with a note on final judgement. It is only Luke who says, 'But take heart to yourselves lest...*that day* come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth' (Lk. 21: 34-35). What is *the hour* of the master's coming in Mark (13: 32-36) becomes the day of universal judgement in Luke.²⁰⁹ Luke probably chose to emphasise the judgement day and God's future judgement in righteousness to the council which engaged itself in matters of law and justice.²¹⁰ At the end, however, only one Areopagite judge turned to God, the judge of the nations.

Luke has brought the speech to focus on the theme of Jesus and resurrection. Luke has to do this since it relates directly to the criticism in v. 18c in connection with Jesus and resurrection. In response to the criticism which indicated that the Athenians understood Jesus and resurrection as foreign gods, Luke's monotheism in the speech addresses squarely the issue of the strangeness of Paul's teaching. Luke has presented the resurrection of Jesus as the culminating act in the grand scheme of God, the Creator and Lord and the God of history. Christ's resurrection and the day of judgment are in line with God's acts in the world and history.

It is not Luke's aim to assess the status of Christ in relation to God. His motive is neither to advocate a subordinationist Christology nor to show that Christology has now replaced theology.²¹¹ What Luke seeks to underline here is that it is God who has acted in Christ and

²⁰⁸ Nolland, *Luke 18: 35 - 24: 53*, p. 1003.

²⁰⁹ Evans, *Luke*, p. 760.

²¹⁰ It has been noted that particularly in Roman Athens, the Areopagus, like the imperial Senate in Rome, had powers to interfere in any aspect of corporate life relating to education, philosophical lectures, public morality and foreign cults [Barnes, 'An Apostle on Trial', p. 414]. According to Pausanias (*Description of Greece*, p. 554), after the reforms of Ephialtes, the court of the Areopagus was deprived of some of its powers and it became merely a criminal court with limited authority. It still, however, did not lose its moral and religious prestige. W. A. McDonald (*The Political Meeting Places of the Greeks*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1943, pp. 128-130) notes the considerable authority of the Areopagus especially in certain legal prerogatives. See also, n. 38.

²¹¹ cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 92. Ac. 10: 38: ὁ θεὸς ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ.

so the way to understand Jesus and resurrection is to see him primarily as the one appointed by God. The resurrection is also what God himself has performed as an assurance to all men. Christology is interlocked with theology. Therefore, the criticism that Jesus and resurrection are foreign divinities is refuted here by firmly placing Jesus in the line of a series of acts of God. The close connection between Luke's theology of God and his Christology is a strong 'no' to the Athenians' assessment that Christians teach 'foreign' divinities.²¹² The Lord of creation, God of the nations, God who is not far away from humanity and God of the times has appointed Jesus so that by him he may judge the inhabited world.

7.4 CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the analysis of the speech, we must ask the question which we asked ourselves at the beginning. What does Luke say about God and why does he say it? For Luke, the religious situation in Athens, a representative Greek culture, poses serious theological questions. The Athenians were worshippers of gods, as is indicated by the idols and altars. They criticised Paul as preaching 'foreign gods'. The philosophical schools were also active in discussing and debating about religious truths with Paul. It is likely that god/gods which were very much part of their philosophical teaching figured in that debate. Luke underlines their lack of true knowledge about God in what they worshipped and in the way they misunderstood 'Jesus and resurrection' as 'foreign divinities'. The proclamation is capable of addressing the lack of knowledge about God both in the popular as well as in the philosophical religions of Athens.²¹³ Luke makes known through Paul's preaching what is unknown to the Athenians about God.

Luke's proclamation of God includes both positive and negative affirmations. But, most importantly, there are close connections

²¹² "Der Zweck scheint dabei klar: fremdartig und befremdend sollen die Heiden die Botschaft nennen, die ihnen doch nur den Gott kündigt, in dem sie selbst 'leben, weben, und sind'....so darf der von den Toten erweckte 'Mensch' Jesus nur im Schluß Erwähnung finden" (Reitzenstein, 'Arcopagrede des Paulus', pp. 401-02).

²¹³ Cf. O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 1970, p. 169.

between the two. The negative declaration of what God is not arises from a positive understanding of what God is and vice versa. God is the Creator and therefore he cannot be confined to the limits of the temple. God is the Lord who feeds and sustains humanity and therefore is free from need. In order to bring out the polemics clearly and sharply, Luke relies on two phrases, *χειροποίητος* and *ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων*. The former serves to underline the antithesis between what is made by man and what is made by God and the latter likewise outlines the antithesis between what is given by God and what is offered by man.

V. 28a and v. 28b describe two types of man's relationship with God.²¹⁴ Luke applied the quotation from Aratus, 'we are God's offspring', in order to denote kinship between God and man. Man is a living being close to God. The triad *ζῶμεν*, *κινούμεθα*, and *ἔσμεν* is to be understood in causal terms that life, movement, existence are impossible for humanity without God. It is in God that man discovers his humanity and fulness of life. Luke, however, has evolved a different polemical argument in vv. 28-29 from the ones in vv. 24-25. The proximity of God with man is to enable man to search after God so that he can find him. This kinship between God and man should enable man to acknowledge God the Creator and Lord and not to represent his nature and character through idols which are the creations of human thinking (*ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου*) which fails to represent God.

God is spoken of by Luke in *relational* terms, that is, God's relatedness with the world, the earth, humanity and the inhabited earth. V. 26 expresses a key aspect of Lukan theology in relation to ethnology. Humanity is not seen as a collective mass of people; rather, they are the nations which came into being from a common origin. This Jewish conception of the unity and diversity of nations is reflected in v. 26 and Luke emphasises the unity in terms of the common origin of the nations and the diversity in terms of their

²¹⁴ Conzelmann ('Address of Paul', p. 226) considers this two-fold anthropology as an innovative part of Luke's theology. However, he describes this anthropological aspect in broader terms: a) the man-God relationship first being determined from above, as *proximity*; b) correspondingly from below, as being 'within God', as *kinship*.

boundaries and times and epochs allotted to them by God. Luke conceives God in relation to time. History and chronology are viewed from the stand-point of God. God is involved in time. The time process has meaning for God himself and for humanity. The divine-time calls for a new relationship with God. The times of ignorance God has overlooked; now he calls all men everywhere to repent. God has fixed a day in which he will judge the world. Thus, 'every assertion about God speaks of what he does with man and what He demands of him'.²¹⁵ The basic scheme of the speech, therefore, is Luke's theology of 'God in relationship with humanity' and Luke's understanding of 'humanity in its relation to God'. The speech deals with 'God not as He is in Himself but only with God as He is significant for man'.²¹⁶ For Luke theology is closely connected with anthropology. To use here one of Bultmann's famous sentences in connection with Paul's thought: 'Every assertion about God is simultaneously an assertion about man and vice versa'.²¹⁷

The sections under which we analysed the speech deal with a series of God's deeds.²¹⁸ The opening statement $\acute{\omicron}$ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας is central to the acts of God enunciated in the speech. All subsequent statements about God, in a certain sense, are an unfolding of this programmatic statement. God made the world and everything in it. God made every nation out of one man. God also 'made' the one man whom he raised from the dead and will judge the inhabited world by him. The proclamation in Athens integrates several themes in the acts of God, his creation, sustenance, his authority over the nations, his kinship with humanity, his call to repentance and his act of appointing Jesus to judge the inhabited world in righteousness.²¹⁹ By this line of progression Luke allows no distinction between the significance of God's act of creation and his culminating act of giving assurance to all men by raising Jesus from the dead. Both are effected by the one and the same God.

²¹⁵ Bultmann, *Theology*, I, p. 191.

²¹⁶ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. I. London: SCM, 1959, p. 191.

²¹⁷ Bultmann, *Theology*, I. p. 191; also, cf. Macquarrie, *Thinking about God*, p. 10.

²¹⁸ F. V. Filson, *The New Testament Against its Environment*, London: SCM, 1959, p. 53.

²¹⁹ Stonehouse, *Paul before the Areopagus*, p. 31.

VIII

EPHESUS (19: 23-41): MAKING GODS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Paul's third missionary journey concludes with his mission activities in Ephesus. The mission in Ephesus is the mission of longest duration recorded in the book of Acts. The mission work in the hall of Tyrannus continued for two years (19: 10).¹ But Luke has not furnished us with details either of the content of the proclamation or of the problems and issues addressed by the kerygma. Yet, this sustained mission activity brought about a remarkable change and, as Luke reports, all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord (19: 10; cf. v. 20). In such a situation, it seems that Luke is interested in reporting the aftermath of the mission, that is, the impact the proclamation made on the religion and society of Ephesus. It is one such incident Luke narrates vividly in 19: 23-40. We analyse the narrative to see which aspect of the mission was responsible for the impact and how it adds to his readers' knowledge about Luke's theology of God.

8.2 THE THEOLOGICAL ISSUE: *The speech by Demetrius (vv. 25-27)*

Ac. 19: 23-41 is a well developed episode dealing with a scene which plunged the whole city of Ephesus into confusion. The description of the riot is 'the product of Luke's narrative art'.² He uses as many as five different words to describe the riot: *τάραχος* (v. 23), *συγχύσεως* (v. 29), *στάσεως* (v. 40), *συστροφῆς* (v. 40) and *θόρυβον* (20: 1). Luke portrays the scene with local colouring 'as appropriate as it was in Athens'.³ The picture of the 'erzählten

¹ Western manuscripts add, 'from the fifth to tenth hour' that is daily from 11 to 4 o'clock. It may represent an accurate piece of information (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 470).

² Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 217; In vv. 22-37, various witnesses of the Western text add a variety of picturesque details (see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 472).

³ Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 236.

Welt' by Luke in the Ephesian narrative corresponds to the information known to us about Ephesus in antiquity, for example, references to the cult of Artemis, the guild of silversmiths, the theatre and the large colony of Jews in Ephesus.⁴ The Greek words μεγάλη, τό θέατρον, ὁ Ἀσιάρχης, ἐκκλησία, ὁ γραμματεὺς and νεωκόρον used in Ac. 19 are found in the Ephesian inscriptions and Egyptian papyri.⁵

The narrative (19: 23-41) can be divided into two parts: The first part, vv. 24-34, deals with the beginning of the riot and its escalation into a mass demonstration of anger and protest. The second part, vv. 35-41, shows how the riot subsided leading finally to the dismissal of the assembly without the crowd achieving their objective.⁶

Luke first states in general terms in v. 23 that the stir was concerning the way. The use of the word ὁδός here is significant particularly for understanding the problem that led to the riot.⁷

⁴ The temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the world. Bruce (*Acts*, p. 398) conjectures that the riot Luke records took place during a special festival celebrated in 55 AD at the temple of Artemis. There are numerous references to the presence of Jews in Ephesus (see E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. III. 1, rev. and ed. G. Vermes, et al., Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1968, pp. 22-23). J. Weiss (*The History of Primitive Christianity*, London: Macmillan, 1937, p. 320) remarks, with reference to Demetrius episode (19: 23-40), that every sentence can be illustrated from inscriptions and evidence of the authors of the time.

⁵ Cf. M. M. Parvis, 'Archaeology and St. Paul's Journeys in Greek Lands', *BA*, VIII, 3 (1945), pp. 63-73 and F. V. Filson, 'Ephesus and the New Testament', *BA*, VIII, 3 (1945), pp. 73-80; A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927, p. 113. Ephesus was also known for magical practices [C. E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic*, Cambridge University, 1989, p. 22; cf. 'Ἐφέσια γράμματα, 'Ephesian letters', mystic words engraved on the statue of Artemis believed to be a magical charm when recited (Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 157)]. The Ephesian theatre was the meeting-place of the city and it could contain 25,000. A. N. Sherwin-White (*Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1963, p. 92) points out that Acts does not show detailed knowledge of any other city as of Ephesus. For a recent historical study of Ephesus, see P. Trebilco, 'Asia', *The Book of Acts in the First Century Setting*, vol. 2, pp. 316-357.

⁶ Pesch (*Apg*, II, p. 179) divides it into three parts. He considers vv. 28-32 which contains the acclamation, the seizure of Gaius and Aristarchus and Paul's brief appearance on the scene as the middle part.

⁷ R. Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament*, vol. II, ET, London: SCM, 1993, p. 116) argues that the word ὁδός means 'Christian religion' distinguishing it from the Jewish or heathen religion. Flender (*St. Luke*, p.

By ὁδός Luke implies generally either the Christian community (Ac. 9: 2; 22: 4),⁸ or its teaching (Ac. 24: 22).⁹ Its uses in the Ephesian narrative suggest that it is the aspect of teaching which is uppermost in Luke's mind. In 18: 26, the 'way' refers to the kerygma as the way of God expounded more accurately to Apollos who had already been instructed (κατηχημένος) in the way of the Lord.¹⁰ In 19: 9, the absolute use of ὁδός functions as a designation of Paul's preaching concerning the 'kingdom of God'. But when his preaching was not accepted, he withdrew from the synagogue. Therefore, for Luke, the word ὁδός characterises primarily the message but implicit in the term is a reference also to the community that proclaims the message. When the teaching is rejected, the community is found in trouble with its surroundings and vice versa. Hence the impact of the mission depicted in vv. 23-41 is about the ὁδός, the message proclaimed by the early Church.

The riot protesting against the Way is instigated by Demetrius, a silversmith. Luke mentions that Demetrius was a maker of silver shrines of Artemis. His occupation as ποιῶν ναούς reflects the official title νεωποιοῦς held by each of the twelve members of a board of wardens of the temple of Artemis.¹¹ The trade probably indicates manufacturing and selling of silver statues of Artemis and other metal objects which were used as souvenirs and amulets.¹² It must have been, as Luke describes it, a lucrative business that brought profit to many craftsmen.¹³ Demetrius was

134) takes the word ὁδός as 'direction' and argues that Christianity is not yet a new religion and is still a 'direction' within Judaism.

⁸ So, Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 320, n. 1.

⁹ Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 274; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 320. Marshall (*Acts*, p. 168) notes that the word 'Way' means in effect 'Christianity'. Behind the term lies the concept of 'the way of Lord/God or the way of salvation' (Ac. 16:17).

¹⁰ In v. 25, D substitutes λόγον for ὁδόν which indicates that the later editors assumed here 'the teaching'.

¹¹ Grant, *Gods*, p. 27.

¹² The trade of Artemis is probably not making silver images of Ephesian temple as there is no archaeological evidence to suggest that there were silver temples of Artemis, though shrines made of terra-cotta and marble have been found. [Cadbury, *Acts in History*, p. 5; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 165; Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 275, n. 17; Filson ('Ephesus and the New Testament', p. 77), however, thinks that failure to find any is due to the limited extent of excavation.

¹³ The word ἐργασία means 'profit' as well as 'business'. The word 'profit is to

trying to organise those who were involved in the trade, the manufacturers (τεχνίται) and workmen (ἐργάται), for a public protest. He was probably exploiting his position as a temple warden to mobilise the men involved in the trade.¹⁴

The speech made by Demetrius is central to the event since it presents to the readers the issue at stake. The speech has two parts: a summary of what has happened in Ephesus and throughout all Asia, and his own assessment of its consequences.¹⁵ The first part has two elements: i) Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable company of people.¹⁶ ii) the message that turned them away is, 'gods made with hands are not gods'. As consequences, Demetrius points out the dangers posed both by Paul's message. First of all, their business is harmed severely since large number of people responded to his word and secondly, it has also threatened the importance of the cult of Artemis.¹⁷

Recent studies have rightly stressed the nature of the riot. W. Stegemann has argued that Luke has presented to his readers 'a social conflict with religious and economic motives'.¹⁸ Roloff sees the social conflict arising from religious, patriotic and economic interests.¹⁹ Rackham speaks of a 'skilful combination of religious devotion and patriotism with the group's own interests'.²⁰ It should be observed, however, that behind the social conflict Luke reports about 'mission preaching' which is responsible for the scene of encounter.²¹ Luke has Demetrius cite a specific clause

be preferred (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 246).

¹⁴ Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 246.

¹⁵ By Asia Luke probably meant not just Ephesus but also other cities in the province: cf. Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 246.

¹⁶ Μεθίστημι here refers to 'inducing someone to apostasy' (Schneider, *Apg*, II, p. 275, n.18).

¹⁷ G. D. Kilpatrick, 'Acts XIX. 27 ἀπελεγμὸν', *JTS*, 10 (1959), p. 327. The claim of Demetrius that Artemis is worshipped by the whole world was not an exaggeration (L. R. Taylor, 'Artemis of Ephesus', *BC*, V, pp. 251-256). The fame of Artemis was widespread and archaeological evidence suggests that the cult was practised in more than thirty places in antiquity (Filson, 'Ephesus and the New Testament', p. 76).

¹⁸ *Zwischen Synagoge und Obrigkeit*, Göttingen, 1991, p. 205.

¹⁹ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 291.

²⁰ *Acts*, p. 367.

²¹ 'Luke wanted to describe the conflict...as a conflict over the Christian

from Paul's sermon which brings to focus the central theological issue around which the confrontation between Christianity and the religion of Ephesus revolves.

8.2.1 *The theological kerygma: Polemic against 'gods made by hands'*

The key to the problem is the word θεοί. First, θεοί along with the phrase διὰ χειρῶν plays an important role in describing the problem as that of 'making gods'. Διὰ χειρῶν obviously refers to the work of the τεχνίτης and ἐργάτης. Therefore, as Luke tells it, the craftsmen and the workmen who are responsible for making gods take the centre stage along with Demetrius. The theological question from Luke's understanding of God is, 'Can hand-made idols be regarded as God?' Second, an effort is made to link θεοί with the goddess Artemis (ἡ θεός) which forms the basis of the accusation of Demetrius. Paul's message is not only a threat to the manufacture of θεοί but to the religion of the goddess Artemis itself.²² The kerygma, according to Demetrius, has attacked 'gods made by hands' and hence the 'goddess' of the whole world. The issue, therefore, has these two theological foci, that is, i) making gods by hand referring to idolatrous images and ii) direct condemnation of the goddess Artemis. This two-fold theological issue stands behind what is a social conflict aroused for religious and economic reasons. How justified is Demetrius in his accusations? Where does Luke's polemic lie? Is Luke polemicising against Artemis in order to bring discredit to the goddess? Does his gospel to the nations denounce the misrepresentation of God perpetuated by the 'hand-made idols'? Luke feels it necessary in this episode to explain to his readers what is meant and what is not meant by this important aspect of the kerygma.

The expression θεοὶ οἱ διὰ χειρῶν reminds his readers that what Luke presents here concerns his polemical argument against

proclamation': Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 216.

²² Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. II, p. 242; cf. Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 216. Ἡ θεός was a formal designation of the goddess Artemis (Hemer, *Acts*, p. 122).

idolatry.²³ As our discussion of the Areopagus speech has shown, Luke has dealt with the problem of idolatry with an implicit reference to the manufacture of idols through art and human imagination. The objects of gold, silver, stone and wood are *χαράγματα τέχνης* which implies 'that which is carved'.²⁴ This polemic in the Areopagus speech is now given full treatment in Luke's mission narrative in Ephesus.

In Ephesus and in the province of Asia, the gospel of God with its polemic against hand-made idols seems to have made a great crowd of people change their course of life.²⁵ Luke does not provide the details either of the kerygma or of the dramatic turn-about in the lives of the many people. But the phrase *θεοὶ οἱ διὰ χειρῶν* is central to Luke's treatment of the mission. Luke has selected this phrase to emphasise the polemic against the

²³ Pesch, *Ap g*, II, p. 183; Bauernfeind (*Ap g*, p. 234) remarks that Paul undermined the piety towards the cultic idols.

²⁴ See ch. VII, pp. 149-152.

²⁵ Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 578): 'Paul with his preaching about a true God has brought a great crowd of people...to apostasy from the old belief in the gods.' Incidentally, of all the accounts of Gentile mission, it is only in the Ephesian narrative that Luke reports the conversion of a large number of non-Jews with far-reaching social as well as religious consequences (Pesch, *Ap g*, II, p. 183); cf. E. S. Fiorenza ('Miracles, Mission, and Apologetics: An Introduction', *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, 1976, p. 5) who rightly notes that the Christian missionary activities in the Hellenistic world centred on public issues and societal interests. The nature of the impact caused by the proclamation of the Church on the social and religious fabric of the society is borne out by the famous letter of Pliny the Younger to Trajan: 'At any rate it (i. e. Christianity) is well established so that temples just now are almost abandoned have begun to be thronged, and customary rites which had long been suspended to be renewed, and the flesh of the sacrificial victims, for which until recently very few buyers were to be found, to be sold far and wide' (W. Williams, *Pliny*, Aris & Phillips, 1990, p. 73; Stegemann, *Synagoge und Obrigkeit*, p. 201: 'Hinter den Anzeigen bei Plinius steht also wohl ein sozialer Konflikt'. Pliny's letter bears testimony to the fact that Christian mission made deep inroads into the social and religious life of Greco-Roman society. There was a fall in temple attendance and sacrifices. The meat was not bought by the Christians because of its association with idolatry (Williams, *Pliny*, p. 143). A similar instance of the increase of Christianity endangering a trade is found in the present narrative of Luke (cf. E. G. Hardi, *Plinii Caecilii Secundi Epistulae*, London: Macmillan, 1889, p. 215). However, Stegemann (p. 201) draws attention to the fact that the attitude of the Roman authorities towards Christianity in Ac. 19: 23-40 differs from Pliny's letters. Munck (*Acts*, p. 197) thinks that both the Lucan and Plinian cases represent 'an upsurge that carried many people along with it yet soon spent itself'.

manufacture of idols, which he did not develop in the Athenian setting.²⁶

8.2.1.1 *The OT perspective*

The phrase οὐκ εἰδὼν θεοὶ οἱ διὰ χειρῶν γινόμενοι, is reminiscent more of the OT polemic against idolatry. The manufacture and the manufacturers of idols are integral to polemic against idolatry in the OT.²⁷ Technical terms and phrases of metal and wood working occur frequently. The Mosaic commandment forbids graven images (Deut. 5: 8). The word פֶּסֶל means an 'image' or 'likeness' of man or animal (cf. Ex. 20: 4), of wood or stone (cf. Hb. 2: 19), or of metal (cf. Judg. 17: 3,4).²⁸ A פֶּסֶל is 'something cast by a graver' and has been used with the verbs נָסַךְ (Is. 40: 19; 44: 16) and צוּרָה (Jer. 10: 14; 51: 17).²⁹ The word פֶּסֶל is often associated with נָהַךְ (Ex. 20: 23; Hos. 8: 4, 6; Is. 2: 7, 20; 30: 22; 31: 7; Deut. 7: 25; 29: 16; Jer. 10: 3ff. Is. 40: 19; 46: 6; cf. Ez. 16: 17, 51a, 59.). The parallel in Ex. 34: 17 has, "You shall not make for yourself 'molten gods' (מִסִּבָּה אֱלֹהִים)".³⁰ 'Cursed is the man who makes a graven or molten image (מִסִּבָּה)...a thing made by the hands of a craftsman...' (Deut. 27: 15). There are certain other fixed formulas which stress that the images or idols are made by hands (מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי חָרָק: Jer. 10:3; cf. Hos. 8: 6; 13: 2; Deut. 27: 15; Is: 40: 19ff.; 41: 6ff.). The word חָרָק refers to any kind of craftsman, whether in wood, stone or metal.³¹

The polemic against the manufacturers of idols is widespread in

²⁶ Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 55, n. 88) notes that in the Areopagus Speech, the polemic against images ranks higher than the polemic against the maker of idols.

²⁷ Von Rad (*Wisdom in Israel*, London: SCM, 1972, p. 180) notes, 'the polemic against idols was completely topical for an Israel which lived in closer contact with the international world'.

²⁸ *BDB*, p. 820.

²⁹ The root of נָסַךְ means 'to pour out' for casting metals (*BDB*, p. 650). The word צוּרָה means, 'to smelt', 'to refine', 'to test' (*BDB*, p. 864). Hence, the word פֶּסֶל is also translated by the Greek word γλυπτόν (Deut. 4: 16, 23, 25; Is. 42: 17); cf. C. R. North, 'The Essence of Idolatry', *Von Ugarit nach Qumran*, ed. O. Eissfeldt, et. al., Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1958, p. 153.

³⁰ The phrase אֱלֹהִים מִסִּבָּה appears five times.

³¹ W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, ed. P. D. Hanson, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, p. 331. A variation of the phrase מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי חָרָק can also be found (Deut. 4: 28; Mic. 5: 12ff.).

prophetic writings.³² Hosea says, 'They make for themselves molten images, idols skilfully made of their silver, all of them the work of craftsman (13: 2).'³³ The polemic against idols, which often took the form of mockery and ridicule, was aimed at those who made idols.³⁴

Mockery of pagan gods and idols is traditional in Israel and such mockery varied in genre.³⁵ Observation of the manufacture of images made a profound impression on the Israelites exiled in Babylon.³⁶ Several passages illuminate the character of idolatry as man-made. Is. 44: 9-20 is a piece of satirical writing which satirises manufacture of idols.³⁷ The makers are the ironsmith and the carpenter whose production of idols in various stages is described by Deutero-Isaiah so that the vanity in making idols is effectively demonstrated.³⁸ The ironsmith fashions, shapes and forges idols with his strong arm and tools (Is. 44: 12-13). The caricaturing of idolatry especially in terms of how the idols are made can be found in Ps. 115: 3-8; 135: 13-18. In Ps. 135, the idols of the nations as the work of men's hands are contrasted with God's action in nature and history, past and present.³⁹ In a similar tone, Micah prophesies that all Samaria's images shall be beaten to pieces and the remnant of Jacob shall bow down no more to the work of their hands (1: 7; 5: 13).

Jeremiah's message was sent to those who were exiled in the first

³² H. D. Preuß, *Verspottung fremder Religionen im Alten Testament*, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1971, p. 202

³³ The book of Hosea has נָצַף (4: 17; 8: 4; 13:2; 14: 9). The word נָצַף basically means 'shape' and 'fashion' from whence the idea of carving and fashioning the idols came to expression (*BDB*, p. 781).

³⁴ Preuß (*Verspottung*, p. 279) observes, 'Die spottende Religionspolemik des Alten Testaments erfolgt überwiegend als *Verspottung der Götzenbilder*' (Italics his). W. M. W. Roth ['For Life, He appeals to Death (Wis 13: 18)', *CBQ*, 37 (1975), p. 21] prefers to speak of the idol *parody* in OT rather than the idol *satire*.

³⁵ Preuß (*Verspottung*, pp. 269-73) lists forms such as letter, hymns, prophetic texts and wisdom literature.

³⁶ C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, London: SCM, 1969, p. 54.

³⁷ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 149; cf. O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965, p. 64.

³⁸ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-60*, p. 150.

³⁹ Roth, 'For Life He appeals to Death', p. 37.

deportation to Babylon (cf. 1: 16; 2: 1-28; 3: 6-13; 10: 1-16).⁴⁰ Jer. 10: 1-10 delineates exhaustively the process of manufacturing a god.⁴¹ 'Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz. They are works of the craftsman and of the hands of the goldsmith...they are all the work of a skilled man' (10: 9). The section begins with an admonition, 'Learn not the way of the nations (v. 2)'.⁴² The prophet warns the exilic community in Babylon not to learn the way of the nations, making particular reference to idolatrous practices.⁴³ In a similar vein but in a different tone, Luke describes in a Greco-Roman situation the encounter between the Christian way and that of the Ephesians.

8.2.1.2 Hellenistic Jewish literature

Polemic against idol-making was also common in Jewish literature of the Hellenistic Jewish diaspora.⁴⁴ The *Wisdom of Solomon*, the *Epistle of Jeremiah*, *Bel and the Dragon*, the *Letter of Aristeas* and the writings of Philo refer frequently to idolatry and particularly idol-making. The author of the *Epistle of Jeremiah* written probably no later than 317 BC, drew his inspiration for his denunciation of idolatry from Jer. 10: 2-15 and Is. 44: 9-20.⁴⁵ The author, probably a Jew living in Babylonia, launches a severe attack on idol-making in Babylonian religion.⁴⁶ The polemic is full of satire, sarcasm and ridicule.⁴⁷ Idols are the work of men's hands and have no divine power (v. 52) and their manufacture 'a scandalous fraud' (v. 47). *The Wisdom of Solomon* similarly criticises idol-making in Egypt and Babylon.⁴⁸ Ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων

⁴⁰ Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, p. 330.

⁴¹ R. P. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, London: SCM, 1986, p. 258.

⁴² Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, p. 330) compares Jer. 10: 2 with the use of ἡ ὁδός in Ac. 9: 2. But it is more appropriate with the use of ἡ ὁδός in Ac. 19: 23.

⁴³ The subsequent part of v. 2 may be intended as an exegesis of דַּרְךְ הַגּוֹיִם.

⁴⁴ Roth, 'For Life, He appeals to Death', pp. 39-47.

⁴⁵ G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, London: SCM, 1981, pp. 35ff.

⁴⁶ W. O. E. Oesterley, *An Introduction to the Books of the Apocrypha*, London: SPCK, 1935, p. 269; Roth, 'For Life, He appeals to Death', p. 40; cf. Eissenfeldt, *Old Testament*, p. 595.

⁴⁷ Nickelsburg (*Jewish Literature*, p. 35) notes that satirical polemics is the mode of expression against idolatry in exilic and post-exilic literature.

⁴⁸ Oesterley, *Introduction*, p. 292.

(13: 10), τὸ χειροποίητον (14: 8) and ἐργάζεται χερσὶν ἀνόμοις (18: 17) are the key terms in the polemic against making idols. The argument is that man is mortal (θνητός, 15: 17) and therefore what he makes is dead. His hands are lawless and therefore what is made with those hands is accursed (14: 8). The author of the *Letter of Aristeas*, probably an educated Jew of Alexandria, criticises deifying and making idols to men who had contributed greatly to the welfare of mankind.⁴⁹

Philo's interpretation of the first two commandments reflects yet another hellenistic-Jewish critical attitude towards idol-making (cf. *Deca.* 66). The second commandment assumed a new significance in Philo's attempt to relate Mosaic law to contemporary circumstances in the Greco-Roman period.⁵⁰ 'The Ruler of All warns: "Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver and gold," and "Neither shall ye make gods the work of your hands (χειρόκμητον) from any other materials..."' (*Spec.* i. 22; cf. *Deca.* 76). Philo's arguments against idol-making are: i) man ought not to make gods (θεοπλαστεῖν) as work of the hands (χειρόκμητον), ii) not even from the best materials like gold and silver. iii) It is absurd for man to shape gods (θεοὺς ὅσα τῷ δοκεῖν ἐμόρφωσαν) by giving them mortal form (θνητῷ παραδείγματι).

The above survey shows that within Judaism polemic against making idols was central to the debate over idolatry over many centuries. Much energy and poetic artistry were devoted to proving that idols made by hands are not gods.⁵¹ Luke stands within the tradition of Judaism for which polemic against making idols was central. Luke's theological kerygma shows continuity with the Jewish tradition because such polemic was integral to the interaction with Gentiles. Luke demonstrates how the early Church addressed the issue of making idols as gods in Ephesus and thus describes the measure of the impact of the kerygma and its

⁴⁹ Euhemerism is attacked through the criticism of making idols (*Aristeas to Philocrates*, ed. M. Hadas, Harper & Brothers, 1951, p. 154).

⁵⁰ S. Sandmel, 'Philo Judaeus: An Introduction to the Man, his Writings, and his Significance', *ANRW*, II.21.1., Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984, p.14.

⁵¹ Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From the Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, ET, London: George Allen & Unwin., 1961, p. 16.

effects on the lives of many people.

8.2.2 *The participation of the Jews*

The stir concerning 'the way' is both about the message and about the men who preached the message. Gaius and Aristarchus, the companions of Paul, were seized by the crowd.⁵² Some of the Asiarchs prevented Paul from entering the theatre. It is hard to explain this positive gesture from the Asiarchs since they had the duty of advancing the cult of Caesar.⁵³ That this gesture probably did not represent approval of Paul's kerygma, but concern to maintain public order. The presence of Alexander, the representative of the Jews, in the midst of the commotion requires consideration. Alexander was sent to make a defence speech (*ἀπολογεῖσθαι*). It is often assumed that this was to distance the Jews from the Christians.⁵⁴ But there was no need for Alexander to defend Judaism because no one had attacked Judaism until then. Further, it is hard to understand why the Jews would choose the context of a riot to further their claims, when it was clearly evident that Christians were already in trouble and also that there was hatred for the Jews in Ephesian society. Luke shows that the anger of the crowd fell on a Jew. When the crowd realised that he was a Jew they cried out in praise of Artemis for two hours. Conzelmann writes that v. 34 reflects anti-semitism.⁵⁵ The intensification of the drama emphasises the hostility against the Jews in Ephesus for which there is confirming evidence in

⁵² According to 20: 4, Aristarchus came from Thessalonica and hence was a Macedonian but Gaius came from Derbe. For a solution to the discrepancies, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pp. 475ff. and Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 167.

⁵³ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 576; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 166. For the functions of Asiarchs, see *BC*, V, pp. 256-62. Luke has restricted Paul's presence in the scene. Dibelius (*Studies*, p. 211, n. 12), therefore, concludes that the story does not belong to the accounts of Paul.

⁵⁴ Roloff's (*Apg*, p. 293) claim that Paul as a radical among the Jews spoke openly against idolatry and therefore the local Jews through their representative wished to make clear that they had no part in Paul's activity, has no support from the text. Similarly, Bauernfeind (*Apg*, p. 234) argues that Alexander wished to state that Jewish religion knows no idolatry but was approved by Caesar and he wishes to distance the Jewish community from Paul. It is hard to conjecture the contents of Alexander's speech which Luke has not recorded.

⁵⁵ *Acts*, p. 166.

Josephus.⁵⁶ Josephus' records are among the largest Jewish literary testimonies to the Jews in Ephesus (*Antiq.* XVI. 27-65; XIV. 225-230, 234, 237-240, 262-264).⁵⁷

Luke probably has an underlying concern to present to the readers a polemic against anti-Judaism and a support to the theological message Paul had preached. The message that gods made by hands are not gods was fundamental both to the Jewish scripture and literature and to Luke's understanding of the kerygma to the nations. As we noted, Luke stands in a long tradition of monotheism and the critique of idol-making which were fundamental to Jewish religious life and literature.⁵⁸ Alexander provokes the same rage and acclamation for Artemis as the Christians (vv. 28, 34).⁵⁹ Therefore, the introduction of Alexander is not a diversion from the main story, as is often assumed, because Luke is dealing with an important theological theme for which any religiously vibrant Jewish community would lend support.⁶⁰

Furthermore, Ephesus is one of the places where Luke presents Paul's mission in the synagogue in a favourable light.⁶¹ It is only in Ephesus that the Jews wanted him to stay a longer period (18: 19-20). His ministry in the synagogue lasted for three months before opposition broke out. Paul's departure from the synagogue

⁵⁶ Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 219; Stegemann, *Synagogue und Obrigkeit*, pp. 205-208.

⁵⁷ Also, cf. *Antiq.* XII. 125-126.

⁵⁸ This is probably one of the signs that the early Christian proclamation concerning God, with a strong element of polemic against idolatry, had much in common with Judaism. Luke probably wishes to underline here the continuity between the early Church's proclamation of one God and its polemical appeal with the propaganda of Hellenistic Judaism; cf. e. g., Bultmann, *Theology*, I, pp. 68ff.; Dunn, *Parting of the Ways*, pp. 19-21; O'Neill, *Theology of Acts*, 1970, pp. 139-159, Knox, *Acts*, p. 71.

⁵⁹ Here Paul and the Jews stand for the same thing (Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, II, p. 243).

⁶⁰ *Contra* Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 577) who speaks of a Jewish intermezzo having neither reasonable cause nor sensible conclusion in the present context.

⁶¹ There are other examples. Paul preached for three weeks in the synagogue in Thessalonica (17: 2-3) and his message was received with eagerness in Beroea and the Jews in Beroea were nobler than those in Thessalonica (17: 10-11).

is not described dramatically as in Pisidian Antioch or Corinth (cf. 13: 46; 18: 6). Luke does not add theological weight or missiological significance to Paul's move from the synagogue to the hall of Tyrannus.⁶² Luke simply states Paul withdrew from the synagogue to the hall of Tyrannus and concludes with a summary that both Jews and Greeks heard the word of the Lord. Luke was not willing to give the impression that each group was attempting to dissociate from the other. We have already noted that Luke's polemic against making idols is in line with the Jewish scriptures and the writings of hellenistic Judaism. It may, therefore, be conjectured that Alexander's attempt to make a defence speech has significance for the overall narrative and particularly for the theological issue at stake in Ephesus.

To summarise, in the first section of the narrative (vv. 23-34), Luke portrays how the proclamation was effective in the province of Asia. He does not present the whole content of the proclamation, but refers to its key polemical aspect with the proposition that 'gods made with hands are not gods'. It is around this theological theme that Luke has built the first part of the episode. The meaning of the polemic becomes evident when it made an impact on manufacturers and sellers of silver statues of Artemis. Judaism challenged this form of idolatry for several centuries, and Luke is engaged in a similar polemic in a typical hellenistic setting in Ephesus. Luke stands wholly and consciously in the Jewish tradition as may be seen from the fact that Alexander makes a defence speech on behalf of the missionaries and their message. One of the features of the Ephesian mission is that Luke has not drawn a firm line between Jew and Gentile missions as he has done, for example, in Antioch and Corinth.

⁶² There were some who spoke evil of the Way (19: 9). If Alexander was one of them why should he make a speech against the Christian missionaries when they were already in trouble? Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 539) maintains that Luke could not conceive of a Pauline mission to the Gentiles without the breach with the Jews first taking place. Rejection by the Jews gives legitimacy to Paul's mission to the Gentiles. W. Schmithals (*Paul and James*, London: SCM, 1965, pp. 59ff.) questions the view taken by Haenchen and argues that the mission to the Gentiles is not an enforced result of the Jewish opposition. For Jervell (*Luke and the People of God*, p. 69), it is not the rejection of the gospel by the Jews that made the Gentile mission possible, but Israel's acceptance.

8.3 AN APOLOGIA FOR PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS: *The speech by the town clerk (vv. 35-40)*

The second part of the episode (vv. 35-41) deals with yet another dimension to the theological issue addressed by the kerygma of the early Church in Acts. The reference to gods made with hands has been interpreted by Demetrius as an attack on the goddess Artemis herself. The questions are: How valid is his accusation that Paul and his companions have brought disrepute to the goddess? Has Demetrius rightly interpreted the polemic of the gospel? Answers to these questions are to be found in the speech of the town clerk (γραμματεὺς), one of the chief officers of the city, and in his subsequent action of dismissing the crowd.⁶³ The speech of Demetrius poses the riddle and the speech of the town clerk aims to solve it.

The town clerk's speech reads like an apologia for the preaching of the Christian community,⁶⁴ and has been fashioned by Luke.⁶⁵ It does not make direct reference to the message of Paul but provides important clues as to how the polemic against the misconception of God was conducted by Paul and his companions. In the town clerk's speech we must note at least two statements: i) about the status of the city Ephesus and the legend about the origin of the cult of Artemis; ii) the attempt to exonerate Paul and his companions. The town clerk's first statement offered a clear explanation of the relationship between the city and the cult. The word 'temple keeper' (νεωκόρος) in v. 35 is used to designate the city as a location of the imperial cult, but the word is used also for the cult of Artemis.⁶⁶ The thought conveyed by the statement is, 'Ephesus is well known as the city of Artemis; thus there is no

⁶³ Γραμματεὺς is the correct title for the chief executive magistrate in Ephesus (Hemer, *Acts*, p. 122).

⁶⁴ Macgregor, *Acts, IB*, vol. 9, p. 262; cf. Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, p. 28; Haenchen (*Acts*, p. 578) remarks that the speech was the best defence testimony imaginable for Paul and Christianity.

⁶⁵ Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 218.

⁶⁶ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 166. Thessalonica and Beroea also held the title of νεωκόρος (Macgregor, *Acts, IB*, IX, p. 262).

danger for the Artemis cult'.⁶⁷ He further asserts that the cult is based on the sacred stone fell from the sky. Whether this statement that Artemis was a meteorite or object sent from heaven (διοπετής) is aimed to show that she is not an idol made with hands remains unclear.⁶⁸ But his remarks have dampened the religious fanaticism aroused by Demetrius.⁶⁹ Hence it appears that the speech from the town clerk is intended more to quieten the crowd than to attack the message of Paul.⁷⁰

The speech is favourable to Paul and his companions. It makes clear that they have not preached against the cult of Artemis and its origin. Luke here makes a vital point to his readers concerning the nature of his polemic, its aim and its goal. The early missionaries were neither βλασφημούντας τὴν θεὸν ἡμῶν nor temple robbers (ἱεροσύλους). The word βλασφημέω has predominantly the religious connotation of a thought or act against God.⁷¹ The Christian missionaries are defended against the accusation of blaspheming Artemis.⁷² The Gentile mission in Ephesus did not aim to blaspheme the goddess as such.⁷³ What is implied is that the kerygma which declares that gods made with hands are not gods need not necessarily be taken as an attack on the goddess and any familiar myth that explains the origin of the cult. The word ἱερόσυλος means literally 'robber of temples' as distinct from other types of robbery.⁷⁴ But here this word also has purely a religious connotation implying that Paul and his companions have not done any crime against the temple. With this speech, Paul and his mission team and their polemical message are exonerated. On the whole, the town clerk's statement reveals Luke's understanding of the early Church's attitude to city gods and their

⁶⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 575.

⁶⁸ Lake's (*BC*, IV, p. 250) view that there is an argument here from Luke in support of the veneration of Christian icons does not find support from the text; cf. Marshall, *Acts*, p. 320.

⁶⁹ '...so dämpft der geschickte Beamte nun die aufgerägten Gemüter...': Pesch, *Apg*, II, p. 182.

⁷⁰ Trebilco ('Asia', *Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, p. 353) thinks that the town Clerk's words provide the cult's answer to Paul's preaching.

⁷¹ *TDNT*, I, pp. 622ff.

⁷² Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, II, pp. 243ff.

⁷³ Cf. Bruce, *Acts*, p. 401.

⁷⁴ Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 251.

myths in their mission of proclaiming God to the Gentiles.

8.3.1 *Attitude to other gods*

The two-fold approach of polemic against idol-making without attacking the gods of the city is widespread in Diaspora Judaism. Ex. 22: 28 (LXX) reads thus: 'Thou shalt not revile the gods (θεούς)'. In the writings of Philo and Josephus is found a tendency towards restraint from speaking insultingly of the 'gods' of the other cities. Interpreting the injunction in Lev. 24:15 'Whosoever shall curse God shall bear his sin', Philo argues that the word 'God' does not allude to 'the Primal God, the Begetter of the Universe but to the gods of the different cities who are falsely so called, being fashioned by the skill of painters and sculptors'.⁷⁵ The inhabited world is full of idols of wood and stone and other idolatrous images. But Philo urges, 'We must refrain from speaking insultingly of these, lest any of Moses' disciples get into the habit of treating lightly the name "god" in general, for it is a title worthy of the highest respect and love.'⁷⁶

More or less the same view was held by Josephus with respect to other gods. It is the Jewish custom not to criticise the religious customs of other nations. On the exposition of Ex. 22: 28, Josephus writes, 'Our legislator has expressly forbidden us to deride or blaspheme the gods recognised by others, out of respect for the very word "God"'.⁷⁷ *Antiq.* IV. 207 combines warnings against blasphemy of other gods with those against temple robbery. 'Let no one blaspheme those gods which other cities esteem as such; nor may anyone steal what belongs to strange temples; nor take away the gifts that are dedicated to any god.'⁷⁸ These examples speak of a defensive view adopted by certain Jewish writers on the ground of respect for the divinity though in their eyes gods in the form of idols represent a false notion of the deity. The polemic against idolatry is due to Jews' maintaining their identity by

⁷⁵ *Mos.* ii. 205.

⁷⁶ *Mos.* ii. 205; cf. *Spec.* i. 53.

⁷⁷ *Ag. Ap.* II. 237; also, II. 33.

⁷⁸ The Apostolic Constitutions make a similar remark (cf. W. Whiston, *Works of Josephus*, Hendrickson, 1988, p. 117, n.d.).

holding particularly to monotheism. This does not mean that the general Jewish attitude to the Greco-Roman gods was so much hatred as aversion. Luke's message to his readers reflects the same approach to the gods of the Gentiles. We saw that the message against gods made by hand is in continuity with Jewish tradition which down through the centuries fought against idolatry and idol-making. Luke shares with Judaism also the other side of the approach, that is, not to indulge in reviling other gods. This is vital to the proper understanding of Luke's concept of mission and of the nature of the polemic against idol-making in the mission to the Gentiles.⁷⁹

To sum up, the riot in Ephesus has to do with a Gentile misconception of God that stood behind the making of idols. It is addressed directly and emphatically through the proclamation. The message is essentially Judaistic. The evidence from the OT and later Jewish writings show a long history of opposing the making of idols. Luke's depiction of the event to his readers also includes a polemical motif against anti-Judaism. This shows that both the early Church and the Jews in Ephesus had a common frontier

⁷⁹ There are some shades of similarity between Luke's polemic in Ephesus and the polemic against idols in *The Epistle to Diognetus*, a Christian apologetic work probably written in the second century AD. The writer condemns idolatry by arguing that gods are made by wood-carver, brass-founder, silversmith and potter (*Ep. Diog.* II. 3-4). However, the writer denounces idolatry by posing series of questions. 'Are they not all dumb? Are they not blind? Are they not without souls? Are they not without feeling? Are they not without movement? Are not they all rotting?...Do you call these things gods? Are these what you serve?...' (*Ep. Diog.* II. 4-5). Later questions are in the style of mockery. In contrast, the Ephesus narrative does not reflect such an approach. In later treatments of mission in Ephesus, the balanced view of polemic against idolatry and a not-too-offensive attitude to other gods is lacking. Mission in Ephesus related in the *Acts of Paul* records a message of Paul in which Paul attacks immorality and idol-worship in the temple-cult of Artemis, with a warning that God will judge and burn the unrepentent with unquenchable fire. Instead of silversmiths, the goldsmiths appear as agitators and they wish to see Paul condemned. In contrast to the defence speech of the town clerk in favour of Paul and his companions, the governor takes the message of Paul as an attack on the statuettes of Artemis (E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. W. Schneemelcher, II, tr. & ed. R. McL. Wilson, London: Lutterworth, 1965, pp. 369-373). The mission praxis as described in *Acts of John* is quite different from Paul's activity in Ephesus as narrated by Luke. The event is described like a story of a direct conflict between John and the Ephesians in order to prove who is the real God, the God of John or the goddess Artemis (Hennecke, *NT Apocrypha*, II, pp. 188-258).

when it came to questioning the manufacture of idols, one of the roots of idolatry, while at the same time refraining from direct attack on the myths and cults of the gods and goddesses.⁸⁰ However, the proclamation made an impact on the Ephesian public affecting its social and religious attitudes. The clear outcome is that many left the cult of Artemis and turned to the Lord.

The speech of the town clerk which dominates the second section of the narrative plays an important role in solving the crisis brought about by the guild of silversmiths. The kerygma of God was interpreted as a threat to the goddess Artemis. The speech addresses this accusation by declaring that the men who preached God were blasphemers of the goddess. His dismissal of the crowd suggests clearly that the polemic against making idols was effective and triumphant.⁸¹

8.4 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the mission in Ephesus adds a new dimension to Luke's theology of God. It tells the readers something about the nature of the kerygma but, most importantly, how the theological kerygma functioned in the non-Jewish situation in Ephesus and what effects it brought about. Luke has designed the narrative in order to make the polemical thrust of the kerygma clearly visible. The attack on making idols is shown in a vivid and dramatic fashion. It signifies an attack on the theology held in Ephesus, reflected in the idol-making by the silversmiths, that gods made by hands are truly gods. It underlines the theology that God cannot be conceived in terms of man-made idols. Mission in Ephesus is one of the accounts in Acts in which Luke makes Paul stand within the OT and hellenistic-Jewish tradition in fighting a generations-long battle against a wrong understanding of God perpetuated by idol-making. It is also the main concern of the polemic in Ephesus that the gospel about God is not aimed at

⁸⁰ Kaufmann (*The Religion of Israel*, pp. 7-20) argues that in the large part of OT literature dedicated to expose the absurdity of idolatry no biblical writer utilises myths about other gods in his polemic (p. 13).

⁸¹ For Schneider (*Apg*, II, p. 278), it is a triumph of Christianity over the anti-Christian tumult.

attacking the temple and the myths of the city-gods. This point is vital for the understanding of Luke's mission about God among the nations. However, as the episode shows, one of the effects of hearing the word of the Lord was that the people were able to relinquish the city goddess. This was achieved by preaching about the way in which God cannot be represented rather than by attacking the local goddess.

IX

MALTA (28: 1-10): PAUL, A GOD?

9.1 INTRODUCTION

So far we have investigated the theological issues pertinent to the mission of the Church, in the form of accounts of mission outside Jerusalem beginning from Samaria and ending with Paul's last phase of mission activity in Ephesus. After Paul's mission in Ephesus (19: 1-40; 20: 17-38) and his subsequent journey to Jerusalem (21: 1-16), the narrative momentum of Ac. 21: 37 - 28: 31 is provided by Paul's trial and his journey to Rome.¹ Luke's main interest in Acts is to show that Paul is to bear witness in Rome which fulfils the mission programme outlined in Ac. 1: 8. Although the image of the missionary Paul continues to operate in the last eight chapters of Acts, the readers do not read any more about Paul's mission activities *per se* until he arrives in Rome. Hence, the Malta narrative which forms a part of the sequence of events of Paul's journey to Rome, lacks the features that characterise the mission activities in Samaria, Lystra, Athens and Ephesus. There is not a word about preaching. Though miracles and healings are performed in Malta the response from the people indicate that they are not intended as kerygma in deed as in the case of the Samaritan mission (8: 4ff.). But it contains a unique event in which the Maltese regarded Paul as a god (28: 6). This raises questions not only with regard to the understanding of the image of the missionary Paul but also with regard to Luke's theology expressed both implicitly and explicitly in the mission narratives we have analysed.

We have seen that Luke challenged the theological misconceptions in Samaria, Caesarea and Lystra which concerned men venerated as the bearers of divinity. In Samaria, Simon was celebrated as the power of God. In Caesarea, Herod Agrippa I was acclaimed as god. And in Lystra people believed that Zeus and Hermes had come

¹ Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 76.

down in the likeness of Barnabas and Paul. The strong rebuttal in all these cases is clearly evident to the readers. Simon and his followers were challenged by the message of the anointed one of God in whom power of God was at work. Later, in spite of Simon's conversion, Peter reprimanded him sternly for seeking to assume the role of God. The angel of the Lord smote Herod for overstepping his human nature and not giving the glory to God. Paul and Barnabas, the missionary apostles, tore their garments in condemnation of the blasphemous acts of offering sacrifices to them at the temple of Zeus.

It is ironical that the theologian Luke, a strong opponent of the acclamation of the human as the divine, does not refute the Maltese opinion that Paul was a god. Why is such a view not challenged by Luke? Does Luke attach divinity to Paul in Malta but condemn ascription of divinity to humans elsewhere in the book of Acts? Or, does he intend to treat the episode as being different from that of Samaria, Caesarea and Lystra? To find answers to these questions, it is essential that we focus on Luke's description of the circumstances in which Paul is regarded as a god and analyse the implications the statement holds for Luke's portrayal of him.

We take the view that the place where the crew landed after the shipwreck was the island of Malta in the Mediterranean.² Inscriptions from Malta suggest that the βάρβαροι in Malta, that is, people unable to communicate in the cosmopolitan languages of the Roman empire, spoke a Punic dialect.³ But there were also in

² See particularly, C. J. Hemer, 'Euraquilo and Melita', *JTS*, 29 (1975), pp. 100-111; idem, *Acts*, pp. 152ff. A. Acworth ['Where was St. Paul Shipwrecked? A Re-examination of the Evidence', *JTS*, 25 (1973), pp. 190-92] and O. F. A. Meinardus, ['St. Paul Shipwrecked in Dalmatia', *BA*, 39 (1976), pp. 145-47] argue that the island was Mljet off the Dalmatian coast. On details regarding the sea route and the technical aspects of navigation, see J. Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, London: Longmans, 1848; L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World*, Princeton: Princeton University, 1971. On Paul's travels in Acts, see B. M. Rapske, 'Acts, Travel and Shipwreck', *Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, vol. 2, pp. 1-47.

³ Hemer, *Acts*, p. 152; Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 340; Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 223; Roloff, *Apq*, p. 366. Ramsay (*St. Paul*, p. 343) rightly points out that the term βάρβαροι does not indicate rudeness or uncivilised habits. Casson (*Ships and Seamanship*, p. 36) prefers 'the Peoples of the Sea'.

Malta those who spoke Latin and probably there were some who knew Greek.⁴ The phrase *πρῶτος τῆς νήσου* denotes the chief representative of the Roman government,⁵ although his specific role in Malta is not immediately clear.⁶ Human settlement in Malta is traced to the middle of the third millennium BC and excavations indicate that the religion of the Maltese was characterised by temples and building of great tombs.⁷ The coinage in Malta bears characters from various myths and legends, Punic, Greek and Latin and they also exhibit traces of Egyptian influence.⁸

9.2 Δίκη

As in other local contexts where Luke presents the religious life and attitude of the people, Luke depicts here the Maltese concept of deity. The occasion which brought this to expression was when Paul was seen to be bitten by a viper (vv. 3-6). There are two different explanations for the appearance of the snake: i) the viper came out because of the heat (*ἀπὸ τῆς θερμῆς*)⁹ (v. 3), and ii) it is ἡ δίκη 'justice' working through the snake (v. 4). The first is a 'natural' explanation, devoid of religious meaning, stating that the heat occasioned the creature's appearance. The second, on the other hand, reveals strong religious overtones since it reflects the belief that ἡ δίκη caused it to happen. Luke probably presents these two viewpoints in the story in order to reflect different opinions among the readers. But attention is focused on the reaction of those who viewed the condition of Paul from the viewpoint of δίκη.

Luke treats ἡ δίκη as a reference to a Semitic deity in Malta translated by Luke into the goddess of δίκη in Greek mythology.¹⁰

⁴ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 713. Were there some Jews living in Malta too? Cf. Smallwood, *Jews*, p. 122, n. 13; J. Finegan [(*IDB* (K-Q), p. 234)] mentions that there are many Jewish and Christian Catacombs in Malta. The first century inscriptions particularly are bilingual, in Greek and Punic (Cadbury, *Book of Acts in History*, p. 24).

⁵ Luke, *BC*, IV, p. 342; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 714, n. 5.

⁶ Rackham, *Acts*, p. 493. Some dispute the Roman connection, e. g., Roloff, *Apg*, 367.

⁷ J. D. Evans, *Malta*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1963, pp. 46, 139.

⁸ Hemer, *Acts*, p. 152, n. 149.

⁹ Ἀπὸ + gen. means 'because of' or 'for' (*BDF*, § 210).

¹⁰ *BC*, IV, p. 341; also, Haenchen, *Acts*, p. Pesch, *Apg*, II, p. 298; Marshall,

He avoids the translation 'justice' in 28: 4 in order to differentiate δίκη from the hellenistic abstract principle of 'justice'.¹¹ Lake makes this distinction since for the Greeks δίκη is a mythological goddess and δίκη also represents the idea of 'justice' in the political and the ethical realms of life.¹² The concept of δίκη was central to hellenistic thinking as 'justice' was considered immanent in the state and when citizens follow paths of violence and injustice the state is punished by party feuds and civil war.¹³ Δίκη not only governs the city state, it is inseparable from the divine world order.¹⁴ The cosmos is under the power of justice and is ruled by δίκη. Injustice may succeed for a brief time but δίκη will strike sooner or later.¹⁵ The immanence of justice, the divine norm operating in the political and cosmic life, was combined with the mythical idea of δίκη, the 'retribution of Zeus'.¹⁶ Δίκη is a goddess and she is ἐκ Διός. She sits beside Zeus as his daughter with θεμὶς as her mother and the goddesses εὐνομία and εἰρήνη as her sisters.¹⁷ The forces of nature such as sun, sea and wind are instruments of Zeus in exercising his justice.¹⁸ They were also understood as natural law to guide and to punish the world.¹⁹ The two aspects of δίκη as both the principle 'justice' and the goddess 'justice' are often linked to each other and cannot be separated.²⁰ It is in terms of

Acts, p. 416.

¹¹ Cf. Cadbury, *Book of Acts in History*, p. 27.

¹² TDNT, II, p. 178; V. Ehrenberg, *Die Rechtsidee im Frühen Griechentum*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966, p. 83: 'δίκη ist gleichzeitig ethischer und politischer Begriff geworden'.

¹³ W. Jaeger, *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*, ET, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939, p. 139.

¹⁴ Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 138.

¹⁵ R. Hirzel, *Themis, Dike und Verwandtes*, Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1907, p. 225.

¹⁶ Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 142. Nilsson (*History of Greek Religion*, p. 189) points out that the civil law, which he calls the profane law, and the religious law had been 'placed from time immemorial under divine protection'. Justice and law are under the power of Zeus and Zeus sees that justice takes proper course.

¹⁷ Ehrenberg, *Rechtsidee*, p. 67; Hirzel, *Themis*, p. 139; Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 138.

¹⁸ Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 142. BAG, p. 197: 'Justice personified as a goddess'.

¹⁹ Hirzel, *Themis*, pp. 220ff. and 223.

²⁰ Cf. Ehrenberger, p. 67, n. 2. The conjunction of religious myths with the secular understanding of the law was also fairly common in Greek legal system according to which the crime of bloodshed must be cleansed by religious purification. Therefore, all actions of homicide were tried in temples (P. Vinogradoff, 'Law', *ERE*, VII, p. 849).

this dual conception of δίκη that the reaction of the Maltese needs to be viewed.

Since Paul is in the foreground, the whole incident functions as an interpretation of him.²¹ In the reaction of the Maltese to the snake-bite there is a portrayal of Paul's life which Luke develops in the last section of Acts (chs. 21-28).²² The Maltese linked the snake-bite not only to Paul's sea voyage and the way in which he landed on the island but also with his being a prisoner (vv. 4-5). The Maltese came to the conclusion by their religious reasoning that the prisoner Paul must be a murderer (φονεύς) and that having escaped the justice in the sea, he is now punished through the viper by the deity 'justice'.²³ But, contrary to expectations, Paul does not drop dead. The Maltese change their opinion and say that Paul is a god. Luke's concern here is not to evoke humour at the change of mind²⁴ nor to illustrate the 'fickleness of the savages'.²⁵ Luke demonstrates familiarity with the religious perception of the Maltese (cf. vv. 4, 6) and has woven quite skilfully into the story the religious outlook of the community. Paul's image is treated from the stand-point of the hellenistic theological concept δίκη.²⁶ The interplay between the incident and the theological explanation is the key to the explication of the statement that Paul is a god.

²¹ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 366; A. D. Nock ('The Book of Acts', p. 823) comments that the author of Acts was concerned with Paul rather than with the details of the voyage.

²² It is not necessary to ask whether the snake was poisonous or whether there were poisonous snakes in Malta. Knox (*Acts*, p. 65) even suggests that the snake did not bite Paul. The people thought that the snake was poisonous and that it bit (καθῆψεν) Paul.

²³ According to Evans (*Malta*, p. 140), excavations have shown that there were numerous representations in stone and clay of human, superhuman and animal figures in the temples in Malta. There were models and carvings of birds, fish and snakes found in the temples (p. 149). Snakes are known to have been associated with chthonic and fertility deities in many cults (p. 152). The Maltese saw Paul as a test-case of divine justice (A. Ehrhardt, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Manchester University, 1969, p. 127.)

²⁴ *Contra* R. I. Pervo (*Profit with Delight*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987, p. 65) who argues that the Malta episode is comparable to 'a Hellenic pose and sneer at barbarians'; Marshall (*Acts*, p. 417) thinks Luke is poking fun at the superstition of the Maltese.

²⁵ *Contra* Cadbury, *Book of Acts in History*, p. 25.

²⁶ Cf. Roloff, *Apg*, p. 366.

9.3 *The Lukan Paul: Divine or innocent?*

Luke is recording a genuine miracle to show that Paul remained unharmed after the snake-bite.²⁷ The miracle serves his aim in portraying Paul's life, particularly in the context of Paul's journey to Rome.²⁸ In form-critical terms, Paul's rescue from the snake belongs to a type of miracles which can be called 'rule miracle',²⁹ which functions to 'reward behaviour in accordance with the rules or punish behaviour contrary to the rules'.³⁰ Rule miracles are not common in the NT. Another example of the rule miracle is the story of Ananias and Sapphira in which the divine ruling of *punishment* is confirmed by a miracle (5: 1-10). In the incident in Malta, we have a rule miracle of *reward* which serves as a verdict in Paul's favour and demonstrates that he is innocent and indeed a god.³¹

Thus while scholars recognise Luke's motive in attesting the innocence of Paul,³² they tend to see the scene in various ways as also a proof for Paul's divinity. M. Dibelius comments that the incident announced to the Maltese an epiphany of god in the form of the apostle.³³ F. F. Bruce maintains that Luke has created an opportunity to demonstrate that Paul was 'a divine person, immune to mischances which would prove fatal to mortal men'.³⁴ J. Roloff suggests that Paul was carrying the powers of immortality.³⁵ Some hold that Paul is portrayed as a 'divine-man' (θεῖος ἀνὴρ) as known elsewhere in antiquity. According to G. Lüdemann, Luke wants to show 'the overpowering might of the divine man Paul'³⁶

²⁷ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 223.

²⁸ Kee, *Miracle*, p. 216.

²⁹ G. Theissen, *Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983, pp. 108ff.

³⁰ Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, p. 106. Examples of such miracles are found in Rabbinic Judaism [A. Guttmann, 'The Significance of Miracles for Talmudic Judaism', *HUCA*, 20 (1947), pp. 363-406].

³¹ The miracle has decided whether Paul is guilty or not guilty (Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, p. 108).

³² Pesch, *Apg*, II, p. 298; Bruce, *Acts*, p. 523; Roloff, *Apg*, p. 366.

³³ *Studies*, p. 214.

³⁴ Bruce, *Acts*, p. 523.

³⁵ *Apg*, p. 367.

³⁶ *Traditions in Acts*, p. 261.

and for H. Conzelmann the incident is the most extreme example of the 'divine man' motif in Acts.³⁷ Theissen thinks that the 'rescue' miracle also has a overlapping 'idea that immunity to snake-bite is a sign of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ and charismatic'.³⁸

There are, however, difficulties in understanding the incident as an epiphany of a god in Paul. As we have already noted, in an epiphany the god or goddess either appears in a vision or is 'seen' as the main cause in occurrences such as healings, wars and natural calamities.³⁹ Applying those principles here, it would rather seem that the goddess 'justice' working through the snake is closer to an epiphany than assuming that people have seen a god appearing in Paul. Further complications arise when Dibelius also understands the event in Malta as an apotheosis of Paul.⁴⁰ The term 'apotheosis' basically refers to attaining the status of divinity by humans through or after death.⁴¹ Moreover, Dibelius' arguments are based on the assumption that Luke is dealing with the same religious experience in both Lystra and Malta. We shall discuss later in this chapter the key differences between the two incidents.

The views of Lüdemann and Conzelmann that Paul is depicted as a 'divine-man' in Malta also have their problems. Despite D. Georgi's attempt to show the extent to which the motifs and functions of the 'divine-man'⁴² phenomenon had influenced Jewish apologetics and the portrayal of Jesus by Luke, some modern studies have urged caution in the application of a 'divine-man' model to NT personalities.⁴³ Some have drawn attention to the fact that there was no archetypal θεῖος ἀνὴρ with which Paul could be compared as

³⁷ Acts, p. 223.

³⁸ *Miracle Stories*, p. 108.

³⁹ See ch. VI, pp. 98-102; cf. Grant, *Gods*, pp. 54ff.

⁴⁰ *Studies*, p. 8.

⁴¹ M. Hengel, *The Cross of the Son of God*, London: SCM, 1986, pp. 192-194.

⁴² *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians*, ET, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987, pp. 122-137; 155-159; 173-174; 390-409.

⁴³ For a summary of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ-debate in NT studies, see Holladay, *Theios Aner*, pp. 1-46. The term 'divine-man' should be used with great caution (Marshall, *Acts*, p. 417).

there were various forms and functions of θεῖος ἀνὴρ.⁴⁴ The 'divine-man' concept was not bound to miracle-workers alone, but kings, mercenary captains, statesmen, poets, philosophers, athletes and doctors could also count themselves θεῖοι ἄνδρες.⁴⁵ It is worth noting here also C. R. Holladay's conclusion of his study of θεῖος ἀνὴρ that θεῖος ἀνὴρ does not necessarily carry the meaning of 'miracle-worker'.⁴⁶ K. Berger, therefore, warns us against interpreting the individual cases in the light of an abstract notion of θεῖος ἀνὴρ.⁴⁷ Theissen's distinction between θεῖοι ἄνδρες of archaic and classical periods (up to 3 cent. BC) and those of the hellenistic period (300 BC - 100 AD) may offer some clarity.⁴⁸ Even such a division on the basis of time is not widely accepted as it is not clear how much of the later pattern of θεῖος ἀνὴρ can be projected back into the earlier period.⁴⁹

Therefore, there is little justification in attempting to place Paul within a θεῖος ἀνὴρ category. However, the pattern of θεῖος ἀνὴρ seems to be that all these types of 'divine-men' in the hellenistic period were credited with divine or semi-divine status though the criteria by which their divinity was adjudged differed.⁵⁰ Some were ascribed a supernatural birth or a descent from a deity.⁵¹ Some were treated as divine by virtue of their wisdom.⁵² External manifestation such as performing mighty deeds was regarded as proof of divinity.⁵³ Therefore, one could speak of θεῖοι ἄνδρες

⁴⁴ E. g., Kee, *Miracle*, p. 298; Hengel, *Cross of the Son of God*, p. 29; M. Smith, 'Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretologies, Divine Men, the Gospels and Jesus', *JBL*, 90 (1971), p. 181; θεῖος ἀνὴρ was by no means a fixed expression (*TDNT*, VIII, p. 339.); Holladay, *Theios Aner*, p. 237; B. Blackburn, *Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Traditions: A Critique of the Theios Aner Concept as an Interpretative Background of the Miracle Traditions Used by Mark*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1991, pp. 263ff.

⁴⁵ Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, p. 277; D. L. Tiede, 'Aretology', *ABD*, vol. I, p. 372; *TDNT*, III, p. 122; Smith, 'Prolegomena', p. 187.

⁴⁶ *Theios Aner*, pp. 236ff.

⁴⁷ 'Zum Problem der Messianität Jesu', *ZTK*, 71 (1974), p. 6.

⁴⁸ *Miracle Stories*, pp. 266-68.

⁴⁹ Kee, *Miracle*, p. 298.

⁵⁰ Tiede, 'Aretology', p. 372; cf. P. J. Achtemeier, 'Gospel Miracle Tradition and the Divine Man', *Int.* 26 (1972), pp. 186ff.

⁵¹ Nock, 'Son of God in Pauline and Hellenistic Thought', *A. D. Nock*, II, p. 935. Hengel, *Cross of the Son of God*, p. 29.

⁵² Kee, *Miracle*, p. 298.

⁵³ Tiede, 'Aretology', p. 372.

transcending the boundaries of mortality, thus becoming divine.⁵⁴ Can such a claim for divinity be made in the case of Paul in Malta? We, therefore, propose to test the general claim that Paul was considered divine in Malta either as a superhuman or an immortal, and divine in the sense of a θεῖος ἀνὴρ. We shall emphasise the significance of 'justice' in the scene in Malta to understand the Maltese opinion of Paul as a god.

9.3.1 *Paul and the legal scenes*

First of all, the incident in Malta resonates with the picture of Paul that Luke has been constructing from the time Paul was arrested. From 21: 33 until the end of Acts the readers see Paul as a prisoner.⁵⁵ The tribune enquired who he was and what he had done (21: 33); Paul was brought before the council (22: 30), presented before the governors Felix (23: 33) and Festus (25: 6), and appeared before Agrippa II, Bernice, Festus and the tribunal (25: 23). These trial scenes are often studied as essential to Luke's presentation of Paul's character. It is true that Luke's portrait of Paul in the trial scenes shows him to be of high social standing and moral virtue,⁵⁶ and reveals courage, resourcefulness and excellence in rhetoric.⁵⁷ But all these features cannot submerge or trivialise the fact that Paul is a prisoner.

As a prisoner, Paul is in the hands of the law.⁵⁸ In these circumstances, therefore, Luke's portrayal of Paul in the trial scenes is characterised by legal terminology.⁵⁹ Although questions

⁵⁴ Georgi, *Opponents of Paul*, p. 129.

⁵⁵ Maddox (*Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 66ff.) observes rightly that in Acts the section on Paul the prisoner (239 verses) is slightly longer than that which describes his mission (226 verses). But he (p. 67) overstates when he holds that we are meant to remember Paul the prisoner more than Paul the missionary. Paul was a prisoner as a missionary!

⁵⁶ J. C. Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, Cambridge University, 1993, pp. 83-104.

⁵⁷ C. J. A. Hickling, 'The Portrait of Paul in Acts 26', *Les Actes des Apôtres*, pp. 499-503.

⁵⁸ Cadbury, 'Roman Law and the Trial of Paul', *BC*, V. p. 297.

⁵⁹ The following studies are to be particularly noted: A. A. Trites, 'The Importance of Legal Scenes and Language in the Book of Acts', *NT*, 16 (1974), pp. 278-84; H. W. Tajra, *The Trial of St. Paul: A Juridical Exegesis of the Second Half of the Acts of the Apostles*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1989; Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, pp. 42-57.

may be raised as to how closely Luke has followed the legal procedures of the time and how trustworthy his legal details are, he has nevertheless given a legally realistic reconstruction of the main events in Paul's life, the value of which cannot be categorically denied.⁶⁰ The words ὁ χιλιάρχος (21: 30; 22: 24; 23: 14, 18, 19, 22; 24: 22), ἡγεμόνος (23: 33; 24: 1, 10), βασιλεύς (25: 24, 26; 26: 2), ὁ ἀρχιερεύς (23: 2), πᾶν τὸ συνέδριον (22: 30; 23: 20, 28), τὸ πραιτώριον τοῦ Ἡρώδου (23: 35), and σπεῖρα (21: 31; 27: 1), indicate legal and military authorities who maintain law and order. In a legal context there are those who bring charges. Hence, one finds a repeated use of κατήγοροι (23: 30, 35; 25: 16, 18), κατηγορεῖν (22: 30; 24: 2, 8, 13, 19; 25: 5, 11, 16) which mean, in judicial sense, making formal accusations before a magistrate for the punishment of an accused person.⁶¹ Closely akin to these words are ἐγκαλέω (23: 28, 29; 26: 2, 7) which occurs seven times in the NT, six times in Acts alone. As a legal term, it means 'prosecute' or 'take proceedings against'.⁶² The noun τὸ ἔγκλημα referring to the crime with which one is charged appears only twice in the NT, both occurrences in the final trial scenes of Paul (23: 28; 25: 16).⁶³ So also the word ἡ αἰτία refers to the accusation.⁶⁴ Apart from these words that are central to the picture of Paul, we must also note the following key words used in a juristic sense.⁶⁵

ἀμαρτάνω (25: 8 - 'to violate set laws')

ἀνακρίνω (24: 8; 28: 18 - 'examine', 'investigate')

ἀναπέμπω (25: 21 - 'to send up' someone to higher judicial authority)

ἀνατίθημι (25: 14 - 'remit' or 'refer' something to an examining body)

ἀποδείκνυμι (25: 7 - 'to prove by argument')

τὸ αἰτίωμα (25: 7 - 'charge' 'accusation')

ἡ ἀπολογία (25: 15 - here, it is used in legal sense, antithesis of ἡ

⁶⁰ Cadbury, 'Roman Law and the Trial of Paul', p. 318; also, Tajra, *Trial of Paul*, pp. 2 & 72.

⁶¹ Tajra, *Trials*, pp. 90ff. Though the Jews figure as the formal accusers, Paul says that he has no charge to bring against his nation (cf. 28: 19).

⁶² *LS*, pp. 469-70; Schneider, *ApG*, II, p. 340, n. 39.

⁶³ Tajra, *Trials*, p. 108.

⁶⁴ Tajra, *Trials*, p. 107; cf. Lake, *BC*, IV, pp. 294ff.

⁶⁵ The meanings for most of the words are taken from Tajra (*Trials*) and *LS*.

κατηγορία)

τὸ βῆμα (25: 10, 17 - 'the place of judgement')

διαγινώσκω (23: 15 - 'to determine' or 'decide' a suit)⁶⁶

διακούειν (23: 35 - 'to give someone a hearing')

ἐμφανίζειν (24: 1; 25: 2, 15 - 'to lay information against someone' or 'to declare something against someone')⁶⁷

ἐπικαλοῦμαι (25: 11, 12, 21, 25; 26: 32; 28: 19 *appellare* - indicate judicial action)

ζήτησις (25: 19 - 'debate', 'judicial enquiry')

κρίνω (20: 16; 21: 25; 23: 3; 24: 6; 25: 25 (Act.) - 'to judge', 'give judgement'; 23: 6; 24: 21; 25: 9, 10, 20; 26: 6, 28; 27: 1 (Pass.) - 'to be brought to trial so that judgement may be given')

κρίμα (24: 25 - 'judging', 'judgement')

μεταπέμπω (25: 3 - 'to send for', 'to summon')

παριστάνειν (23: 23 - 'to present')

συλλαλέω (25: 12 - 'to talk with' to determine whether the appeal was well-founded or not)

χαρίζομαι (25: 11 - 'to oblige' as a result of a partial verdict or unjust condemnation)⁶⁸

Paul's accusers pressed twice for a death sentence (22: 22; 25: 24).⁶⁹ As a counter to these charges, Luke has Paul's innocence attested on at least three occasions.⁷⁰ It was Lysias' opinion (23: 29) that Paul did not deserve death which parallels Festus' remark before Agrippa II (25: 25) and the conversation among the

⁶⁶ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 194.

⁶⁷ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 198.

⁶⁸ The last two are not technically judicial words but here used in association with judiciary. Trites ('Importance of Legal Scenes', p. 282) notes a number of *hapax legomena*: ῥήτωρ (24: 1 - 'speaker in court'); διάγνωσις (25: 21 - 'decision' made in the court); ἀνάκρισις (25: 26 - 'examination'); διακούειν (23: 35 - 'give someone a hearing'); ἀκροατήριον (25: 23 - audience chamber); συμβούλιον (25: 15 - council).

⁶⁹ The accusation of the advocate Tertullus is in conventional terms of forensic rhetoric (Bruce, *Acts*, p. 463). *BDF* (§ 358. 2): 'they are requesting his death'; cf. Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 282.

⁷⁰ This reminds Pilate's threefold declaration of Jesus' innocence (Lk. 23: 13-22) (Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 207). Maddox (*Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 79) cites W. Radl and V. Stolle who argue that Paul's trial and passion in Acts 21: 27-26: 32 echo those of Jesus in Lk. 22: 47-23: 25; also, cf. Ehrhardt, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 123; Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts*, p. 310. For a comparison between Luke's accounts of trial of Jesus and Paul, see Munck, *Acts*, pp. lxxviiiff.

tribunal (26: 31) at the conclusion of the formal trial scenes. Undoubtedly, Luke's motive is to demonstrate to his readers that Paul, the prisoner was innocent of all the charges.⁷¹

9.3.2 Portrayal of Paul with *δίκη* related words

In this connection, certain key words related to and associated with *δίκη* also contribute to this portrayal of Paul.⁷² The word *καταδίκη* in 25: 15 denotes 'a verdict of condemnation' against Paul.⁷³ The word *ἀδίκημα* (24: 20 - 'wrongful act' or 'offence') is central to the image of Paul in the eyes of his opponents. The essence of Paul's defence (25: 10, 11) is that he has done no wrong (*οὐδὲν ἠδίκησα*) and if he was a wrongdoer deserving death he was prepared to die (*εἰ ἀδικῶ...οὐ παραίτουμαι τὸ ἀποθανεῖν*).⁷⁴ Luke also records four occasions in which attempts on Paul's life were made outside the purview of law (21: 31; 23: 10, 15; 25: 3). Even in the scene before the landing in Malta Paul was about to be killed (27: 42). In Malta, Paul is faced with death for the sixth time since he was arrested (v. 4 - *ἡ δίκη ζῆν οὐκ εἴασεν*; v. 6 - *ἡ καταπίπτειν ἄφνω νεκρόν*). Moreover, Luke describes Paul's condition after the snake-bite with words which the readers have already come across in the trial scenes. In the phrase *ἔπαθεν οὐδὲν κακόν* in 28: 5, the readers are reminded of the sympathetic view concerning Paul expressed by the Pharisees at the Jewish high council (23: 9 - *οὐδὲν κακὸν εὐρίσκομεν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ*). The people's realisation that no misfortune (*ἄτοπον*) came to Paul (28: 6) functions as a reply to Festus' challenge to the accusers saying, *εἰ τί ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἄτοπον κατηγορεῖτῶσαν αὐτοῦ* (25: 5).⁷⁵ A reflection of the penitent thief's moving words 'οὗτος δὲ οὐδὲν ἄτοπον ἔπραξεν' (Lk. 23: 41) attesting Jesus' innocence may be seen in the statement *θεωρούντων μηδὲν ἄτοπον εἰς αὐτὸν γινόμενον* (Ac. 28: 6).

⁷¹ Cf. Tajra, *Trials*, p. 108; cf. Bruce, *Acts*, p. 496.

⁷² The word *δίκη* can also mean, 'trial of a case' (*LS*, p. 430)

⁷³ Cadbury, 'Roman Law and the Trial of Paul', p. 309; cf. Tajra, *Trials*, p. 154.

⁷⁴ Paul's discussion with Felix (24: 25) focuses on justice (*δικαιοσύνη*).

⁷⁵ The word *ἄτοπον* means generally anything 'out of the way' or 'unusual' but specifically 'wicked', 'wrong', 'ethically improper', 'injurious' (Tajra, *Trials*, p. 137); *BAG*, p. 120.

In the immediate context of the suffering and the death of Jesus, it is only Luke who stresses the innocence of Jesus (Lk. 23: 39-49). The word ὁ δίκαιος is used of Jesus to stress his innocence.⁷⁶ In Lk. 23: 47, Luke substitutes the words of the centurion at the cross, 'Truly this man was (a) son of (a) god',⁷⁷ in Mark (15: 39) with, 'Certainly this man was innocent (δίκαιος)'. If it can be argued that Luke is unlikely to have weakened Mark's statement with this alteration,⁷⁸ then it is possible that Luke understood Mark's words of the Gentile centurion as a statement indicating Jesus' innocence. In a somewhat similar way it can be argued that Luke has used the Maltese affirmation of Paul as a god as a way of expressing Paul's innocence. The words of the reaction of the Maltese towards Paul, 'ἔλεγον αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν' (Ac. 28: 7), are in fact similar to the words used by the Gentile centurion in Mark, 'Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν (15: 39). In both cases Luke understands the words as an attestation of the innocence of the one so affirmed. Not infrequently Luke omits details from Mark in the parallel passages in Luke in order to make use of them in similar circumstances in Acts.⁷⁹ Further, in Acts, when ὁ δίκαιος is used in reference to the 'guiltless' Jesus, it stands as an antithesis to ὁ φονεύς/φονεῖς (cf. 3: 14; 7: 52). With the association of δίκη with φονεύς in the Malta episode it may be inferred that a status of innocence for Paul is intimated by Luke.

All the above features underline the fact that Luke's description of the snake-bite event is firmly connected thematically to the legal scenes in which Paul, being tried under the law, is standing between justice and death. It is Luke's concern to show that in all probability the charges had no basis and Paul does not deserve death.⁸⁰ Luke is concerned about Paul's vindication not his

⁷⁶ Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 28; Cadbury ('The Titles of Jesus in Acts', *BC*, V, p. 364, n. 3); Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 626; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, X-XXIV, p. 1520. D. Seccombe ['Luke and Isaiah', *NTS*, 27 (1981), p. 257] maintains that the 'innocence' of Jesus serves as the underlying theme of the passion narratives in Luke than in other gospels.

⁷⁷ Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts*, p. 310.

⁷⁸ M. J. Lagrange, *Evangile selon St Luc*, Paris: Etudes bibliques, 1941, p. 593 (cited in Marshall, *Luke*, p. 877).

⁷⁹ Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 5; Macgregor, *Acts*, *IB*, p. 29; cf. Cadbury, 'Dust and Garments', *BC*, V, p. 271.

⁸⁰ Munck, *Acts*, p. lxxvii: 'Luke's description of Paul's trial was influenced

deification.

What Luke has been trying to do all along from ch. 21: 27 he now accomplishes in ch. 28 through the hellenistic theological idea δίκη.⁸¹ Luke seeks to attest Paul's innocence through the dramatic scenes of legal debates and actions from a lower level of authority, the tribune, to the highest level, that is, governors and kings.⁸² R. I. Pervo rightly observes, 'Luke turned Acts 21-28 into a cliffhanger by withholding the verdict again and again, despite assurances that this time it would be final'.⁸³ However, despite his impressive analysis of Luke's presentation of Paul's legal struggles, Pervo concludes that the net result is disappointing and that no clarity emerges.⁸⁴ On the contrary, however, Luke has not let the legal battle fizzle out; for him, it is precisely the incident in Malta that forms the crowning conclusion of Paul's legal struggle. If law and justice, death and injustice and guilt and innocence are the overriding themes of the trials of Paul, the culminating episode in Malta expresses them more transparently than any legal scene that had gone before.⁸⁵ The motif of 'innocence' reaches its climax here and Paul is vindicated decisively. This is probably the reason that Luke records no further trial and the acquittal of Paul in Rome.

To sum up, the assessment of Paul by the Maltese from the viewpoint of 'justice' corroborates the picture of Paul in the legal scenes. But Luke's message is that Paul does not deserve death, he lives. He is not punished by justice; justice is with him. Hence, he is a god. The change of opinion does not describe a transition from

by his firm conviction of Paul's innocence'.

⁸¹ Despite an impressive analysis of the legal system in the Roman world (*The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody, The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, vol. 3, Grand Rapids: WB. Eerdmans, 1994), Rapske fails to appreciate the role of δίκη in the present context. He deviates somewhat from his objectivity to remark, '...it seems quite unlikely that Luke would adopt and argue Paul's innocence from a pagan perspective' ('Acts, Travel and Shipwreck', *Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, vol. 2, p. 44).

⁸² Haenchen, *Acts*, pp. 641ff.

⁸³ *Profit with Delight*, p. 48.

⁸⁴ *Profit with Delight*, p. 43.

⁸⁵ Pervo's (*Profit with Delight*, p. 65) failure to recognise this lies in the fact that he places the Malta episode under the category 'Cleverness and Wit' rather than that of 'Trials, Legal Actions, and Punishment'.

the human to the divine Paul but from the prisoner to the one declared 'not guilty' by the goddess and the principle of 'justice'. The effect of the antithesis between 'murderer' worthy to be punished by 'justice' and 'god' to whom belongs 'justice' is the main object lesson of the story. It is in this light that the word 'god' is to be understood.

9.3.3 *Shipwreck and divine retribution*

Luke's purpose in proving Paul's innocence has been viewed by some scholars in terms of the hellenistic belief that punishments are meted out by gods for the crimes committed by men.⁸⁶ They have argued that the hellenistic beliefs in divine retribution and shipwreck are operative in the narrative of Paul's journey to Rome which serves in a subtle way as proof of Paul's innocence. On the basis of the parallels from the Greek literature G. B. Miles and G. Trompf point out that for Greeks one guilty or polluted as a consequence of divine retribution can bring about destruction of the innocent in a sea voyage. The fact that everyone, about 276 voyagers, was saved is a decisive confirmation of Paul's innocence.⁸⁷ For Miles and Trompf, it is this fact about Paul that the Maltese failed to recognise.⁸⁸ They further maintain that it is Luke's purpose to show that Paul has been found guiltless by forces and exigencies far more dreaded than the human law courts.⁸⁹

Supporting the thesis of Miles and Trompf, D. Ladouceur adduces a further proof in the narrative for the hellenistic conceptions of shipwreck, pollution and divine retribution. He points out that, according to Luke, Paul continued his voyage under the insignia of the Dioskouroi, the 'twin brothers' Castor and Pollux (28: 11). The mention of the ship's sign will be one more argument to persuade

⁸⁶ G. B. Miles and G. Trompf, 'Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27-28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution, and Shipwreck', *HTR*, 69 (1976), 259-67; D. Ladouceur, 'Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27-28', *HTR*, 73 (1980), pp. 435-49; also, cf. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, pp. 243ff.

⁸⁷ 'Luke and Antiphon', p. 264.

⁸⁸ 'Luke and Antiphon', p. 266.

⁸⁹ 'Luke and Antiphon', p. 265.

the readers of Paul's innocence.⁹⁰ The Dioskouroi are not only the patrons of sailors, they are gods who are the guardians of truth and the punishers of perjurers,⁹¹ and protect sailors from danger.⁹² The Dioskouroi were also associated with the imperial cult and therefore Ladouceur concludes when Luke mentions that Paul sailed from Malta under the protection of the Dioskouroi, he probably implicitly refers to the favourable imperial verdict that awaited him.⁹³

All these seemingly trivial details which arise out of the Greco-Roman preconceptions of shipwreck and pollution may have helped to increase the awareness on the part of the Greco-Roman readers to see the journey and the landing in Malta as divinely controlled occurrences authenticating Paul's innocence.⁹⁴ Perhaps they shed light on the statement that Paul was a god to the Maltese. In this context, the statement may be taken as indicating the divine attestation of Paul's innocence rather than making him divine. When in the Lukan description of the legal scenes the Pharisees (23: 9), Lysias (23: 29), Festus (25: 25) and Agrippa II (26: 30-32) have been shown attesting the innocence of Paul, and Julius (27: 3, 43) and the young nephew of Paul (23: 16-22) helping to save his life, it is not difficult to conceive the theologian

⁹⁰ 'Hellenistic Preconceptions', p. 446.

⁹¹ 'Hellenistic Preconceptions', p. 445. When the ship is in trouble the crew invoke the Discouri and promise to sacrifice white lambs (Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, p. 100).

⁹² R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, New York: Viking, 1986, p. 118.

⁹³ 'Hellenistic Preconceptions', p. 447. If these implicit theological references are not insignificant hints to establish the innocence of Paul, the Greek readers could not have failed to detect few other words in ch. 27 connected particularly with the theological idea of ἡ δίκη. ὕβρις (27: 10, 12 - injury, loss) here is the opposite of δίκη (cf. Jaeger, *Paideia*, pp. 254, 279; Ehrenberg, *Rechtsidee*, p. 84). What is probably hinted at by the use of this word is that it is not δίκη which was pursuing Paul in the sea journey but he and the other travellers were hit by ὕβρις, the antithesis of δίκη. The concept of βούλη (27: 42 - plan, will) is associated with δίκη (Jaeger, *Paideia*, p. 100; Ehrenberg, *Rechtsidee*, pp. 21ff.; Hirzel, *Themis*, pp. 157ff., 166ff., 209ff.) through another concept related to 'justice', θέμις. In Homeric hymns, θέμις, the *authority* of 'justice' which is related to δίκη 'the legal enforceability of justice', is proclaimed by the βούλη of Zeus. Luke probably sets out a contrast between the βούλη of the soldiers (27: 42-43) and the goddess 'justice'. The concept βία (27: 41 - force, violence) is also regarded as being subjected to the power of δίκη (cf. Ehrenberg, *Rechtsidee*, pp. 83, 87; Hirzel, *Themis*, p. 352).

⁹⁴ Talbert, *Reading Luke*, p. 246.

Luke using some hellenistic theological ideas, and particularly the notion of *δίκη*, to present Paul to the Greco-Roman readers as favoured by the divine.⁹⁵

9.3.4 *A comparison with the incident in Lystra*

An argument in favour of the glorification of Paul as a god in the sense of being divine for some is the similarity between the incidents in Malta and Lystra. For Munck, the Maltese awe reflects the Lycaonians' attempt to bring sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas as gods.⁹⁶ O' Neill suggests that Luke has an apologetic motive both in Lystra and in Malta to show that the heroes of faith are highly honoured and even deified by the non-Jews.⁹⁷ For many, the incident is comparable to the outburst of Lycaonians' enthusiasm, but in Malta the order is reversed. First a murderer and then a god, whereas in Lystra first a god and later someone worthy to be stoned.⁹⁸

We must note that although the Maltese and the Lystrans are non-Jews, their local religious contexts show differences. The response shown by the Maltese to the miracle performed on Paul is quite different from that of the Lystrans who witnessed the miracle performed by him making the lame man walk. The Lystrans, according to Luke, saw in Paul and Barnabas the epiphany of their gods Zeus and Hermes and some identity between the functions of Paul and Hermes. The religious trait which characterises the Maltese is the concept of divine justice. Theology without expressing itself in a religious practice dominates the religion in Malta whereas in Lystra their understanding of gods is predisposed to cultic practices. Here lies the crucial difference. The opinion of the Maltese that Paul was a god never drove them to express it in a cultic way. Although their statement marked a drastic swing from their original conception of Paul as a murderer, it still remained only a change of attitude. It did not lead them to

⁹⁵ Philo (*L. A. i.* 40) calls Moses as 'a god to Pharaoh' which does not mean that he attributed divinity to Moses; cf. Ex. 4: 16.

⁹⁶ *Acts*, p. 255.

⁹⁷ *Theology of Acts*, p. 145.

⁹⁸ Rackham, *Acts*, p. 492; Bruce, *Acts*, p. 523, n. 12.

acclaim Paul as divine and to express it in a massive celebration by offering sacrifices to the local gods and goddesses. Further, the incident in Malta has been described neither as an act of *proskynesis* as in the case of ruler-cult in which the human was called god in a manifestation of human glory, nor as anything comparable to how the people in Samaria, amazed by the magic of Simon Magus, venerated him as the power of God. In a development such as in Lystra Luke saw the need for preaching God and clarifying the roles of the apostles as men who preach the good news. The Malta narrative, in contrast, is closely linked with the series of legal scenes and it is a scene in the sequence of several scenes in which Luke sets himself to demonstrate the innocence of Paul. Hence, in Luke's opinion, no disclaimer to Paul as a god is required. If Luke had sensed that Paul is treated as an epiphany of god or acclaimed as more divine than human he would not have let it pass without Paul reacting to the effort to accord divinity to him.⁹⁹

The outcome of the recognition of Paul as a god in Malta is borne out by the fact that Paul and his team who were welcomed initially (φιλανθρωπίαν - v. 2) have now become *socially* accepted among the people and particularly by the chief of the island who entertained them hospitably (φιλοφρόνως ἐξένισεν) for three days (v. 7). Such recognition does not necessarily show that Paul was divine but a free and innocent man. It is true that throughout Greek literature one may find the θεός and θεοί to denote 'anything out of the ordinary, anything seemingly exempt from decay and other human limitations'.¹⁰⁰ But when the word θεός is used for humans it may convey various nuances of meaning and in some cases it may not imply any divinity at all. The following three examples from Nock might illustrate this. The address 'Our god, Caesar' in official letters would indicate simply honours given to Caesar.¹⁰¹ Another example is that a charitable man becomes a god to his beneficiaries. Philostratus has Apollonius of Tyana saying that Iarchas and Phraotes are the only human beings who merit the

⁹⁹ Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 714.

¹⁰⁰ A. D. Nock, 'A *Diis Electa*: A Chapter in the Religious History of the Third Century', *A. D. Nock*, I, p. 260.

¹⁰¹ Nock, 'Deification and Julian', *A. D. Nock*, II, p. 840.

title god in rank rather than function.¹⁰² Luke the theologian has made use of the current hellenistic theological notion *δίκη* and the Maltese recognition of Paul as god in order to sketch a picture of Paul in which both the general as well as Christian readers encounter the legally innocent Paul who has divine approval and social acceptance.

9.3.5 *Paul and the healings*

Does Luke seek to establish the divinity of Paul through the miracles in Malta? The rule miracle does not necessarily indicate that Paul as a 'divine-man' has power over the animal world.¹⁰³ The snake is not the centre of attraction in the story and the people's change of attitude is based on the fact that Paul did not die rather than that he was able to destroy the snake.¹⁰⁴ The connection between the miracle and Lk. 10: 19 is also remote.¹⁰⁵ The phrase 'snakes and scorpions' in Lk. 10: 19 refers symbolically to the powers of the enemy which need to be overcome by the authority given to the disciples.¹⁰⁶ In Malta, the viper does not figure as a power of darkness to harm Paul (*ἀδικεῖν*), but according to the Maltese belief as Luke has described it, the snake is regarded as an instrument of the deity 'justice' and as a symbol of punishing the one who has done wrong (*ἀδίκημα*).¹⁰⁷

Further, the mass healing that followed the healing of Publius' father cannot be considered decisive proof of Paul's power as a 'divine man'.¹⁰⁸ The Maltese have not taken cognisance of the fact

¹⁰² Nock, 'Deification and Julian', p. 840.

¹⁰³ Ladouceur, 'Hellenistic Preconceptions', p. 449.

¹⁰⁴ Deissmann's (*Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926, p. 225) assumption that the Maltese pronounced Paul a god when they saw him throwing into the fire the poisonous snake does not have support from the text.

¹⁰⁵ Pesch (*Apg*, II, p. 298) and Lampe (*Acts, PCB*, p. 925) think that the snake-bite reminds the readers of Lk. 10: 19.

¹⁰⁶ 'Serpents and scorpions' are manifestations of the power of the enemy and they are not dangers to be escaped but evils to be destroyed (Evans, *Luke*, p. 455).

¹⁰⁷ The serpent was a symbol of many gods in the hellenistic religions (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 342).

¹⁰⁸ *Contra* Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 262. Evans (*Malta*, pp. 152ff.) points out that the excavations indicate the existence of the healing cults in

that Paul can work miracles even after having seen him rescued from the snake-bite. Their opinion of Paul as a god is set forth as a conclusion of the previous miracle (vv. 3-6) rather than as an assessment of the later miracles (vv. 8-9). When Publius' father was gripped with fever and dysentery, it is Paul who went to heal him which then led to the mass healing. Even the kind treatment given to Paul by the the chief of the island, probably a representative of the Roman administration, might simply imply Paul's acquittal. However, though these scenes (vv. 7-10) are loosely connected to the first (vv. 1-6), it is possible to detect divine-man characteristics in Paul as a charismatic miracle worker; but Luke is far from portraying him as θεῖος.

It should be noted that Luke describes the healing of Paul in a unique way when compared to other healing activities in Acts.¹⁰⁹ Elsewhere in Luke-Acts, Luke mentions prayer before healing (cf. Ac. 9: 12, 17) and in Lk. 4: 40 the 'laying on of hands' is described as a means of healing employed by Jesus.¹¹⁰ Nowhere is recorded the combination of 'praying' and 'the laying on of hands' in a narrative of healing as here.¹¹¹ What Luke seeks to convey through reference to prayer is that Paul depends on his master to effect healing.¹¹² Also by 'the laying on of hands' Luke emphasises the fact that it is God who does signs and wonders 'by the hands of Paul' (cf. 19: 11).¹¹³ The outcome of the healing is again described in terms of hospitality indicative of enhanced social acceptance, as the Maltese presented Paul with many honours,¹¹⁴ and the

Malta and cures were performed in the temple.

¹⁰⁹ Luke probably is composing vv. 8-9 on the basis of Lk. 4: 38-41 (Kirschschräger, 'Fieberheilung in Apg 28 und Lk 4', *Les Actes des Apôtres*, pp. 509-21; cf. Lüdemann, *Traditions in Acts*, p. 262). Luke's recording of the first miracle activities in Luke-Acts (Lk. 4: 38-41) corresponds to the last healing event in Malta which stands almost at the conclusion of the second volume (Lampe, 'Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles', *Miracles*, p. 178; cf. Roloff, *Apg*, p. 367).

¹¹⁰ S. New, 'The Name, Baptism, and the Laying on of Hands', *BC*, V, p. 137.

¹¹¹ Pesch, *Apg*, II, p. 299.

¹¹² Kirschschräger, 'Fieberheilung', p. 516; cf. Pesch, *Apg*, II, p. 299.

¹¹³ Rackham (*Acts*, p. 496) is right when he observes that Paul exercises his ordinary exercise of the gift of healing in Malta and that the Malta episode is different from the other extraordinary incidents in Lystra and Ephesus.

¹¹⁴ There is nothing to suggest that honours were accorded to Paul as if to a deity. The word τιμή can indeed refer to a physician's fee which does not minimise the greatness of the miracle. But Luke continues to stress the

travellers were also supplied with provisions.¹¹⁵ Healing by prayer and laying on of hands argues against conceiving Paul as a mighty superman but underlines his dependency on God.¹¹⁶

9.4 'I am of God and I worship God' (Ac. 27: 23)

Such a relationship of Paul with God is one of the many features of Luke's portrayal of Paul in the legal scenes. The miraculous and the miracle working missionary in Malta, according to Luke, does not possess autonomous divine power but has a close relationship with God. Luke has grounded Paul's life and mission in an understanding of God. God appointed (προεχειρίσατο) Paul to know his will (τὸ θέλημα - 22: 14),¹¹⁷ which determines the very essence of Paul's life and vocation (cf. I Cor. 1: 1; II Cor. 1: 1). The 'will' of God bears subjective and objective meaning. It indicates that the commissioning is willed by God and it also refers to what God wishes to bring about in appointing Paul.¹¹⁸ On this basis, according to Luke, the servants of a master are distinguished: ὁ δούλος ὁ γνοὺς τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου...ποιήσας πρὸς τὸ θέλημα (Lk. 12: 47) and ὁ μὴ γνοὺς...ποιήσας (Lk. 12: 48).¹¹⁹ His task is to appeal to both small and great that they should repent and turn to God which is illustrated by Luke in Paul's desire to make king Agrippa II turn to God.¹²⁰

Paul has been able to carry out his task with the help (ἐπικουρία) that comes from God (26: 22).¹²¹ With constant dependency on divine enabling Paul has lived (πεπολίτευμαι) in good conscience (πάσῃ συνειδήσει ἀγαθῇ) and has nothing for which to reproach

element of social acceptance (v. 10; cf. vv. 1 & 7); cf. R. L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation*, Atlanta: Scholars, 1987, p. 58.

¹¹⁵ They gave Paul and his team what they needed (ἐπέθεντο).

¹¹⁶ *Contra* Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 716.

¹¹⁷ Squires, *Plan of God*, p. 32, n. 67; cf. Conzelmann, *Theology*, p. 151, n. 1. The word θέλημα here is synonymous with βουλή of God.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *BAG*, pp. 354-55.

¹¹⁹ Lk. 12: 47-48 is distinctive to Luke. It is only Luke who uses θέλημα to the human will (Lk. 23: 25).

¹²⁰ The phrase ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ is taken by Marshall (*Acts*, p. 400) as referring to time.

¹²¹ The word ἐπικουρία occurs only here in the NT.

himself before God (23: 1; 24: 16).¹²² He strives to have a clear conscience (ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν) toward God and men.¹²³ Paul has hope in God (ἐλπίδα...εἰς τὸν θεόν) for the resurrection of the just and the unjust (24: 15). Hope is not merely a personal trust with expectation, it also refers to the promise to the fathers that God raises the dead. This hope is shared by the twelve tribes which earnestly worship God night and day.¹²⁴ Worship is another significant aspect of Paul's relationship with God. Paul affirms both among Jews (24: 14) and Gentiles (27: 23) that he worships (λατρεύω) God. It is an evidence of Paul's life-long commitment to God, like Anna who worshipped God with fasting and prayer night and day (Lk. 2: 37). For Luke, worship has a wider meaning and expresses allegiance and service to God alone, with a forthright denial of worshipping the divine elements, for example, the host of heaven (Ac. 7: 42) or the emperor (cf. Lk. 4: 8; Ac. 12: 21-24). The worshipping Paul takes courage (Ac. 28: 15) and offers courage to others (Ac. 27: 34-35) through thanksgiving to God.

A sequel to Paul's worship is his relationship with God as a prophet. He was told not only that he is destined to live but that God has also granted safety to others.¹²⁵ Paul has faith in God and is aware of God's protection for himself and others (27: 25). The landing of the crew in Malta is part of the prophetic vision of Paul.¹²⁶ Maintaining his innocence, Paul utters prophetically God's justice upon the High Priest of God who judges unjustly (Ac. 23: 3-5). It is possible that the readers understood 'God will strike you' (v. 3) as a prophecy of the death of Ananias who was murdered by the Zealots in 66 AD.¹²⁷

Thus, Luke's description of Paul's life and mission, which are

¹²² Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 637. Lake (*BC*, IV, p. 286) takes the verse to mean that Paul is leading a 'righteous life', a changed quality of life.

¹²³ The word συνείδησις is used in the sense of *conscientia consequens moralis* (Lake, *BC*, IV, p. 287).

¹²⁴ Conzelmann (*Theology*, p. 231, n. 1) believes hope of resurrection is completely separated from the early expectation.

¹²⁵ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 705.

¹²⁶ Roloff, *Apg*, p. 363.

¹²⁷ Paul's words were more prophetic than he realised (Bruce, *Acts*, p. 451). See Josephus, *WJ* II. 17. 9.; cf. II. 12. 6; *Antiq.* XX. 5. 2; 6. 2; 9. 2, 4.

closely linked, is bound up with God. All these experiences can be summed up in Paul's statement '...τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗ εἰμι' (27: 23).¹²⁸ The genitive denotes a relationship between God and Paul and its meaning and significance is to be understood not just in terms of Paul's piety towards God but in terms of his life and vocation grounded in an understanding of God's purpose.¹²⁹ By according the charisma of healing to Paul, Luke is not indicating a divine-man understanding of Paul. Rather his portrayal of Paul views every aspect of Paul's life from his relationship with God. Paul is projected not as a God-man but as a man *of* God.¹³⁰ The fundamental point of difference between Paul and the divine-men in antiquity is theological. Luke sees Paul not as divine but as having a relationship with God.¹³¹

9.5 CONCLUSION

To sum up, the incident of the snake-bite in Malta has been viewed by Luke in the light of the hellenistic theological concept of δίκη, the purpose of which is to emphasise Paul's innocence and to prove that justice is on his side. It is the zenith of the dramatic legal scenes described from ch. 21 onwards. Luke confirms in Malta, through depicting in an impressive manner the antithesis between 'murderer' and 'god', that Paul is not guilty. The narrative mirror-reads the legal scenes reflecting the juridical aspect of Paul's life by showing that Paul has committed no crime and therefore ought not to be condemned to death. Just as his survival in the midst of the mishaps in the sea was an evidence of divine vindication not divine punishment, so the serpent bite establishes conclusively the fact that Paul is not a murderer punished by the goddess justice. The absence of any religious drama as a result of

¹²⁸ For comment on the peculiar word order in 27: 23, see Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 704.

¹²⁹ *BDF*, § 163.

¹³⁰ It is possible that Luke had in mind the עֲלֵי שָׁמַיִם in Israel such as Elijah and Elisha rather than the θεῖος ἄνθρωπος of the hellenistic Roman period (cf. Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*, p. 27). Rapske ('Acts, Travel and Shipwreck', *Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, p. 46) rightly suggests that Ac. 27: 23ff. is a hermeneutical tool to understand the incident of snake-bite in Malta.

¹³¹ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, II, p. 167, n. 888.

the recognition of Paul as a god is a disclaimer that Paul was regarded as divine. The hospitality and further social acceptance that Paul received would compel the readers not to see Paul as a deity or a human with immortality. Nor is Luke engaged in glorifying Paul in Malta as a mighty divine-man possessing divinity.

This does not mean that there is nothing significant about the man himself who not only withstood the successive hearings and survived several attempts on his life but also performed healing in Malta through prayer and laying hands on the sick. For Luke, Paul belongs to God. Paul's call is willed by God; he carries out God's will; he has hope in God that is declared through his message. He worships God throughout his life and praises God in situations of despair to bring strength and courage. Paul, as a prophet, has faith in God which saves the life of his co-travellers. Luke as a theologian views the missionary's life past and present from a theological perspective and also uses a hellenistic theological concept *δίκη* to attest Paul's innocence.

X

CONCLUSIONS

The task we set ourselves was to explore Luke's theology of God in the description of the Gentile mission in Acts. Our investigation has shown that the theology of God and the Gentile mission are interwoven in Acts. This is evident in the way Luke has narrated the progress of the mission in terms of the positive acts of God. Our study of the passages which describe mission as mission by God has shown a particular aspect of theology of God expounding the acts of God. For Luke, God's Lordship over the times is linked with the new agenda of the Holy Spirit that the salvation of God is to be preached to all the nations. The Gentile mission is part of the sequence of times in the plan of God. God who acts is the God who has set the times and seasons. The ordinary times of prayer in the lives of Peter and Cornelius have been used by Luke to mark a particularly significant occasion in the mission of the Church. God's acts are indicative of his times and vice versa.

Luke affirms the sovereignty of God by portraying the lack of knowledge on the part of the disciples regarding God's plan and times. God's time has arrived with a new understanding that God has cleansed the unclean. The realisation that God opened a door of faith to the Gentiles led the early Church to the knowledge that God willed and planned the mission long ago (ἀπ' αἰῶνος) and that in the early days (ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων) God chose Peter in order that the Gentiles should hear the word through his mouth. Paul announces God's time (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν) by turning to the Gentiles. God had chosen (προεχειρίσατο) Paul that he should go the Gentiles and the Gentiles ordained (τεταγμένοι) for eternal life responded in faith. Acts closes with an emphatic and a futuristic note, 'Let it be *known*... that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they *will* listen'.

The second part which contains the major part of the investigation was concerned with Luke's presentation of the Gentile mission as mission about God. Although there are mission accounts dealing with the preaching of Christ to the Gentiles, we concentrated on the

narratives which contain speeches about God. We have seen that God is the subject-matter of the speeches in the narratives which illustrated the mission activities in Samaria, Caesarea, Lystra, Athens and Ephesus.

We sought to understand the meaning of the speeches in the light of their immediate contexts since both speeches and contexts were designed by Luke with a kerygmatic aim in mind. The settings are diverse but a common problem in all of them, except in the case of Cornelius, has to do with improper understanding of God and its varied expressions in the religious and social life of the Gentiles. Luke, as a theologian and evangelist, delineates those misconceptions as having to do with the Gentiles' beliefs about and their worship of god/goddess/gods.

In Samaria, Simon Magus was the centre of religious activity and the people's faith in him acclaimed a man as the manifestation of the power of God. A similar problem was encountered, but on a different level in Caesarea. Herod Agrippa I was not a miracle worker like Simon Magus, but a king who was not only an enemy of God but denied the people who were dependent on him for the basic amenity for life, the food. He further accepted the ascription of divinity to him by the people. Here is a clear example of a ruler cult in which the human glory is confused with divine glory. Differently again, the Lystrans believed that gods perform healing on earth by making special appearances. The apostles who preached and effected the healing were treated as gods in the likeness of men and were identified with Zeus and Hermes. The climax of this identification came when people began to offer sacrifices to them at the temple of Zeus. The analysis of all these three contexts has shown that Luke, the theologian, is attacking the different cults and beliefs which involved deification of men.

Luke's accounts point to another important aspect of the religion of the society in which he and his readers lived. Luke also polemicises against the misconceptions which are to do with idols, worship and sacrifices offered at the temples. People's attitude to the temples as a dwelling place of God, their assumption that

sacrifices are to be offered to him and their worship of the deity in gold, silver and representations made by the imagination and art of men, are forms and manifestations of a total misconception of God. Gentiles' misunderstanding of the gospel also offers a stiff challenge. In Athens, the message about Jesus and resurrection was counted as a teaching about new gods. Paul was charged with preaching foreign divinities as in the case of Socrates who faced a similar charge in Athens and was put to death. In Ephesus, Paul and his men were accused of preaching against the goddess Artemis.

In all these contexts, the mighty acts of God are proclaimed to the Gentiles both in word and in deed. In polemicising against the wrong notions of God, we found in each narrative that few distinct characteristics of God stand out clearly. The dawn of 'God's rule' was visible in Samaria. The unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed by them and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. To the Samaritans who believed Simon to be the power of God, the anointed one of God was preached. We observed that 'power', an important aspect in Luke's theology of God played a key role in encountering Simon and his followers. To them was preached the message about Christ in whom the power of God was made manifest. An allied idea of 'authority' was also emphasised in relation to God as he is the one who can 'give' the Holy Spirit. To the God-fearers of Caesarea, 'God who accepts' was preached. The God who is 'impartial' is the God who anointed Jesus of Nazareth who preached the acceptable year of the Lord. The theological concern that is behind the narrative of the death of Agrippa I is to show that God is 'God of Glory' and that human glory cannot assume the glory that belongs to God. In Lystra, the proper understanding of 'the living God' is central to the preaching. The wrong notion of God had to do with their identification of humans with gods and ascribing divinity to men by offering sacrifices. Such actions are condemned by the apostles of God who preach the good news. The theology of God as the living God determined their cult and worship as 'vain' things. The living God also is the 'life-giving God'. God nourishes humanity through rains and fruit-bearing seasons. The supreme act of God is seen in his 'giving'. God the

'giver' of food is also the God who 'gives' Holy Spirit and signs and wonders through the apostles.

No deification of humans was the issue at Athens and Ephesus. However, Luke sought to enforce a distinction between human and divine in every aspect of Gentile religion by arguing that God does not dwell in man-made shrines and is not in need of sacrifices offered by human hands. Also, idols made by human imagination cannot represent God. Once again, the distinction between human and divine is treated as essential to a proper understanding of God. God as the 'the one who has made' (ὁ ποιήσας) is key to the theology of God in the Areopagus speech in which the 'acts of God' from the creation to the judgement are expounded. God is the Creator who made the world and the Lord who gives life and breath to everyone. God is the Lord of history as the boundaries and the times of the nations are fixed by him. In him man has his life and being. Above all, God calls the nations to turn to him as he has fixed a day to judge the inhabited world. To Athenians, Luke has Paul preach Christ who is not a foreign god but one who has been raised from death and has been appointed by the God of the nations who will judge the inhabited world through him.

Not only popular religion was challenged by Luke in Athens but also the philosophies represented by the Stoics and the Epicureans. The proclamation of God before the Areopagus has shown that God is not identical with the cosmos as held by the Stoics but he created the world and is distinct from it. The Stoic dictum of man as an offspring of God is interpreted by Luke on the basis of the understanding of the Creator-creature relationship between God and man. Unlike the Stoics, Luke was not occupied with presenting proofs about the existence of God but he conceives God as God who 'acts' in relation to the world and the nations. Against the Epicureans, Luke speaks of God who is active in history.

Luke's distinction between Creator and creature, God and man, is once again affirmed through the episode of the riot in Ephesus. The encounter is with the makers of gods who are also the worshippers of the goddess Artemis. Luke's main concern is to denounce the

belief in god reflected in making idols and not to attack the goddess herself and the myths about her origin. The gospel is not an anti-propaganda to the god/goddess/gods in the city but at the same time the preaching about God in Ephesus led the people to relinquish the worship of their own city goddess. This distinction is vital to the kerygma about God which polemicises against wrong understandings of God expressed through 'making idols' and worshipping them but without condemning the gods and goddesses of the cities and provinces.

Finally, we analysed the narrative in which Paul was called 'god'. We sought to show that Luke did not feel the need to condemn it as it is not an acclamation as in the case of Simon in Samaria, Herod in Caesarea and Paul and Barnabas in Lystra. Those acclamations deserved denunciation as there were very clear signs that deification of men was the main issue. In the Malta narrative, in contrast, there is nothing to suggest that Luke intended to show Paul as divine and immortal by not refuting Maltese opinion. Rather, the incident in Malta is the climax of the legal scenes demonstrating that Paul is innocent and does not deserve death. Luke makes use of a current notion about the goddess 'justice' in Hellenistic society to drive home the point that Paul has been vindicated by divine justice. For Luke, Paul is not a divine-man but a 'man of God' who worships God night and day, has hope in God, has a clear conscience before God and is called by God to declare to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God.

The analysis of the episodes in Acts has shown that Luke was concerned with the theological problems of his day. Our investigation has forced us to recognise that there is little to suggest that Luke's main target is to decry polytheism. The mission overall makes reference to 'gods' but does not attack the fact that the gods are too many. This, however, does not mean to say that Luke shows indifference to polytheism, rather that he seeks to tackle the theological problems within the large spectrum of Gentile religions by beginning with one God without actually attacking polytheism as such. Idolatry, one of the key elements of Gentile religions, is denounced in Athens and Ephesus by Luke but

he offers theological bases for doing so. Who/what is not God and who is God is all that Luke as a theologian is saying to his readers in the accounts of the Gentile mission. The crucial issue in the theology of God that emerges quite strongly is the unequivocal denunciation of the blurring of the vital distinction between divine and human, be it reflected in cults centred around individuals or in the temple cults of the Greco-Roman world. The positive theology of God that is fundamental to the preaching is that God who is the God of life, power and glory is the 'doer'.

In the description of the cause and the content of the Gentile mission, Luke discourses about God who does mighty acts. The book of Acts expounds the acts of God.

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