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Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, vieiraa@csl.edu

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MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR CONSOLATION:
ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΣΙΣ IN LUKE-ACTS

A Doctoral Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Alexandre Teixeira Vieira
December, 2018

Approved by:

Dr. Jeffrey Oswald

Dissertation Advisor

Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs

Reader

Dr. Joel Biermann

Reader

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To Celiane

“In Jesus the promise is confirmed, the covenant is renewed, the prophecies are fulfilled, the law is vindicated, salvation is brought near, sacred history has reached its climax, the perfect sacrifice has been offered and accepted, the great priest over the household of God has taken his seat at God’s right hand, the Prophet like Moses has been raised up, the Son of David reigns, the kingdom of God has been inaugurated, the Son of Man has received dominion from the Ancient of Days, the Servant of the Lord, having been smitten to death for his people’s transgression and borne the sin of many, has accomplished the divine purpose, has seen light after the travail of his soul and is now exalted and extolled and made very high.”

F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Eugene, Or: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	The Anchor Bible
ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTNT	Biblical Theology of the New Testament
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConcC	Concordia Commentary
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ICNT	India Commentary on the New Testament
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</i>
JSJSS	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series

JSJSup	Supplements to Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KEK</i>	<i>Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary of the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NAC	New American Commentary
NTL	New Testament Library
NTSI	New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentaries
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RSPT</i>	<i>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
SBLSPS	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
<i>ScrB</i>	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SMT</i>	<i>Swedish Missiological Themes</i>
SNTSMS	Society for the New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SVTQ</i>	<i>St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>

<i>SwJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
TGST	Tesi Gregoriana, Serie Teologia
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

ABSTRACT

Vieira, Alexandre Teixeira. “My Eyes Have Seen Your Consolation: Παράκλησις in Luke-Acts.” Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2018. 216 pp.

Luke describes Simeon as a faithful Jew who was “awaiting the consolation of Israel.” Many interpreters say that this description conveys Luke’s idea that there is a separate hope for the nation of Israel, which would be made manifest at some point in the future when the Messiah would bring about political deliverance for them. Others argue that, although Luke himself did not think that was the case, Simeon and other Jews in Luke’s narrative did, but the narrative Luke writes serves as a corrective against that view. Many others, however, see no reason to believe that Luke or Simeon envisioned such a nationalistic salvation apart for the spiritual salvation Jesus brought for all who believe. This work argues this third option, approaching it in a way that has not been done before. All of Luke’s use of παράκλησις are studied as part of the same interpretative matrix to show that Luke employs that Isaianic promise as the background for the view that *consolation* in Jesus, be it *of Israel* or *for all*, is equivalent to *salvation* in the narrative, and never points to a nationalistic or political understanding of such salvation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the meaning of παράκλησις (and παρακαλέω) in the Bible. Generally speaking, it has been said that, in the New Testament, the word group receives its content “preponderantly from the NT event of salvation.”¹ In terms of meaning, its usage is consonant with the LXX translation of the Hebrew נחם, where “‘to comfort’ is by far the outstanding sense,”² whereas in ordinary Greek usage this meaning was rare and, when present, meant a different sort of comfort.³ In keeping with the idea that παρακαλέω and παράκλησις in the NT relate to the event of salvation, some scholars offer a theological summary of these words, saying that “‘comfort’ or ‘consolation’ takes place through the present and future act of God Himself to salvation. Hence it is hardly too much to say that, as defined by the NT act of salvation, παρακαλεῖν and παράκλησις may be traced back to the saving work of the triune God.”⁴

As helpful as the general observations above may be for our reading of the NT, can we say that they do justice to each author’s use of those terms? For example, in what ways are these definitions related to the *consolation* Simeon was waiting for according to Luke? What about the

¹ Otto Schmitz and Gustav Stählin, “παρακαλέω, παράκλησις,” *TDNT* 5:793. A similar take is taken by others. See, e.g., J. Thomas, “παρακαλέω, παράκλησις,” *EDNT* 3:23–27; G. Braumann, “παρακαλέω,” *NIDNTT* 1:569–71.

² Schmitz and Stählin, *TDNT* 5:777. See also Thomas, *EDNT* 3:24. “The LXX displays an interest in developing a religious vocabulary in which certain Greek terms consistently represent certain concepts in Scripture.”

³ Schmitz and Stählin, *TDNT* 5:776.

⁴ Schmitz and Stählin, *TDNT* 5:799.

consolation that the rich have (Luke 6:24) or that the Holy Spirit gives (Acts 9:31)? In Luke's writings, is παράκλησις a future or present reality (or both)? Does it concern only Israel or the people of God as a whole? Even though it has been claimed that "the high degree of modulation and theological relevance for παρακαλέω/παράκλησις in the NT is attested esp. in Paul (and Acts). ... In most instances the persuasive tone of παρακαλέω contains undeniable echoes of the message of salvation,"⁵ and that "Luke ... stands in the *paraclesis* tradition of Paul,"⁶ Luke's usage has yet to be thoroughly investigated.

The investigation of this word group in Luke-Acts is especially important as one considers Luke's description of Simeon, one of the characters in the beginning of the Gospel who represent the expectant Jewish people. Simeon was in Jerusalem, and Luke describes him as "righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel."⁷ (Luke 2:25) In addition, the reader is told that he had received a specific revelation from the Holy Spirit, and that he was led to the temple, where he met Jesus. With respect to Luke's observation that Simeon was waiting for the «παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ», "The discerning reader will ask whether and how this [expectation] is being realized in the narrative."⁸ Luke does not spell out what is meant by «παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ», but the competing explanations one finds among scholars leave some questions unanswered. Should the reader take for granted that Simeon was expecting a purely nationalistic

⁵ Thomas, *EDNT* 3:26.

⁶ Thomas, *EDNT* 3:25.

⁷ Unless otherwise specified, all translations are my own. Also, from this point on, the Greek «παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ» will be used interchangeably with the English translation ("consolation of Israel") to refer to Simeon's expectation.

⁸ Robert C. Tannehill, "Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story," in *The Shape of Luke's Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 107. Tannehill's words are not specifically about παράκλησις. His point is that Old Testament quotations and allusions in Luke-Acts (including the promise of *consolation*) provide a particular understanding of God's purpose, and the reader needs to reflect on what they mean and how they fit within the narrative.

manifestation of such *consolation*? If so, then one needs to ask *why*. How does the fact that the fulfillment of that expectation is found in Jesus help us better understand the nature of παράκλησις within the narrative?

Without ignoring that in the first two chapters of the Gospel “Luke provides his readers with a framework of expectation and significance within which to read the rest of the story of the Gospel and Acts . . . , it is also clear that this framework of hope is itself subject to interpretation by the events which fulfil it only in unexpected ways.”⁹ With this in mind, it becomes necessary to analyze the events that unfold in the Gospel and Acts with the purpose of comprehending how the promised παράκλησις is realized in the story and what it entails. In order to do that, this research will analyze Luke’s various uses of παράκλησις as part of the same interpretative matrix to offer a new insight into this question: How do all uses of παράκλησις in Luke-Acts clarify the implied author’s own understanding of the fulfillment of the *consolation* promised by the prophet and brought about by/in Jesus?

The Current Status Of The Question

The question posited above has not received careful treatment in scholarship, but its answer has often been assumed. Scholars who recognize the relevance of the first two chapters of Luke¹⁰

⁹ Richard Bauckham, “The Restoration of Israel in Luke–Acts,” in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Perspectives*, ed. J. M. Scott, JSSSup 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 438. Bauckham’s point is that Luke’s presentation of Israel’s hope and Scriptural promises of restoration are related to “the ways they were understood in late Second Temple Judaism.” (438–39) In that connection, he argues that the restoration of the twelve tribes and the return of the diaspora are relevant aspects to understand Luke’s theology of restoration. Although this paper will not make the same argument that Bauckham is making, his words are helpful as they express the dynamic relation of the first two chapters of the Gospel and the rest of Luke–Acts.

¹⁰ The most prominent scholar who has argued (against the consensus) that the infancy narratives are not relevant for understanding Luke’s theology is Hans Conzelmann. He regards the first two chapters of the Gospel as problematic because they present, in his view, a different theology than the rest of Luke’s writing. He says, “It is strange that the characteristics features they contain do not occur again either in the Gospel or in Acts. In certain passages there is a direct contradiction, as for example in the analogy between the Baptist and Jesus, which is emphasized in the early chapters, but deliberately avoided in the rest of the Gospel. Special motifs in these chapters,

to the whole narrative see the expectations about the Messiah's work reported there and attempt to explain what the fulfillment of those expectations looks like in Luke's subsequent presentation. Concerning the specific promise of *consolation*, it is somewhat a consensus that only Luke's first use of παράκλησις in Luke 2:25 is relevant to understand his point of view regarding its fulfillment. As a result of that, word studies on παράκλησις or on the theme of *consolation* in Luke-Acts are lacking,¹¹ and no one has investigated the author's other uses of this word¹² to determine whether they confirm the explanations often found in theological dictionaries and/or offer any insights into Luke's interpretation of that promise and its fulfillment.

Explanations of the *consolation of Israel* in the beginning of the Gospel are dependent on which matrix for interpretation one uses when reading Luke 2:25. Those who focus on the Jewishness of the characters and promises contained in the first two chapters of the Gospel tend to relate the fulfillment of those promises to the *restoration* of the kingdom of Israel, normally with political and nationalistic overtones.¹³ In other words, they understand that the hope of the Old Testament has purely national implications and that this is the background for interpreting

apart from the typology of John, are the part played by Mary and the virgin conception, the Davidic descent and Bethlehem." Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 172. Despite Conzelmann's views, there is still a consensus that the infancy narratives are relevant for the study of Luke-Acts, and other scholars have strongly criticized Conzelmann for his neglect of Luke 1-2. Cf. H. H. Oliver, "The Lucan Birth Stories and the Purpose of Luke-Acts," *NTS* 10 (1964): 202-26.

¹¹ Contrary to the attention that has been given to this theme in other parts of the Bible. See, e.g., Reimund Bieringer, "The Comforted Comforter: The Meaning of παρακαλέω or παράκλησις Terminology in 2 Corinthians," *HTS* 67 (2011): 1-7; Paul A. Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians: Philosophical Sources and Rhetorical Strategy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Marta García Fernández, *Consolad, Consolad a mi Pueblo: El Tema de la Consolación en Deuterocaiás* (Roma: Gregorian & Biblical, 2010).

¹² There are, however, as we will see below, a few suggestive comments by some scholars that Luke's several uses of παράκλησις are part of the same interpretative matrix.

¹³ Although the adjectives *political* and *nationalistic* can mean different things, for the purpose of the present study they can be used interchangeably.

Luke's first two chapters. On the other side, those who look for the fulfillment in the subsequent narrative focus on Luke's universal *soteriology* without making a sharp distinction between promises specific to Israel and promises to both Israel and Gentiles. Despite this difference in approach, scholars agree that Luke uses *consolation* in 2:25 "under the influence of Is. 40:1f. for the consolation brought about by the messianic era,"¹⁴ because the Isaianic context is "resoundingly echoed in Simeon's song."¹⁵

In this section, I will discuss these two approaches to *παράκλησις* in Luke's description of Simeon as well as interpretations of his use of the term elsewhere, paying special attention to how scholars relate them to Luke 2:25. This review will reflect the fact that most of the scholarly discussion regarding *παράκλησις* in Luke-Acts has concerned Simeon and his hope. Insofar as that is part of the status of the question, the scholars represented in the first two subgroups below are equally important for our discussion as they deal with the connection between Luke 1–2 and the rest of the narrative one way or another, discuss the matter of reliability of characters and Luke's intention for crafting the infancy stories, and express well the apparent consensus that Simeon is in some way fundamental for the entire narrative. What distinguishes them is the framework they use to interpret *consolation* in Luke 2:25. The first group matrixes Simeon's hope with the perceived role of Israel in God's plans, whereas the second with Luke's universalistic *soteriology*. In the review that follows, I will not attempt to offer a chronological presentation, but will group scholars according to their ideas.

¹⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 118. For a list of passages from the Old Testament and other Jewish writings that demonstrate how the phrase *consolation of Israel* was used as a theological concept referring to the messianic era, see Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash*, vol. 2 (München: Becksche, 1924), 124–26.

¹⁵ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 145.

Παράκλησις in Luke 2:25 as Primarily Deliverance for the Nation

The Gospel of Luke begins with the hope of Israel. The opening chapters highlight the expectations that pious Israelites had concerning God's promises of salvation through his Christ.¹⁶ From this standpoint, one occasionally finds mention of Simeon's expectation of the *consolation of Israel* in studies on restoration, which explain it as a national and political hope,¹⁷ not related to Luke's other uses of παράκλησις. For this reason, in this section I will present Simeon's hope in relation to the topic of *restoration*. In doing so, the focus will not be on *restoration* itself, for this is a larger topic that needs to take into account other aspects of Biblical and Lukan theology.¹⁸ What I will do is to examine one aspect of the restoration—namely the *consolation of Israel*—that is often assumed to agree with the view that Luke, or just Simeon, envisions a place for the nation Israel in God's plans for the future.¹⁹

¹⁶ As Bauckham puts it, "It is widely agreed that in the first two chapters of his Gospel Luke creates for the beginning of Jesus' story a setting which expresses the messianic and eschatological hopes of Israel, based in the prophetic scriptures." Bauckham, "The Restoration," 438. In this section we will see a version (there are variations) of the commonly accepted view that "most Jews [in the first century BC] hoped for a coming messiah ("anointed one") who would be of the dynasty of King David. In contrast to the early Christian understanding, this Jewish hope concerned a political ruler who would defeat the foreign oppressors and establish Israel as a great political kingdom. ... this nationalistic hope would take place in the real politics of plain history, sometime in the future." Charles B. Puskas and C. Michael Robbins, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Cambridge: Casemate, 2012), 46.

¹⁷ It could be argued that spiritual salvation is included and maybe even assumed by such studies; and yet, the focus remains on the future of the nation.

¹⁸ From this perspective, the topic of παράκλησις can be considered a subcategory of *restoration* and studies on *the Jews in Luke-Acts*. The focus of this research, however, is on παράκλησις as Luke employs it in the framework of his narrative. For the themes of *restoration* and *Jews* in Luke-Acts, see Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002); A. W. Wainwright, "Luke and the Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel," *ExpTim* 89 (1977): 76-79; Joseph B. Tyson, ed., *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1988); Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the Scholars: Critical Approaches to Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); and Robert C. Tannehill, *The Shape of Luke's Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005). See also Darrell L. Bock, *Acts, BECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 61-62; Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke-Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*, BTNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 51-54; and C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 205-07.

¹⁹ The future of Israel according to Luke has yet to reach a consensus. The debate lies in whether Israel as a nation—including the unbelieving—has any reason for hope or whether those who rejected the Messiah are out forever. For a summary of the discussion along with the main proponents of each view, see Michael Wolter, "Israel's Future and the Delay of the Parousia, according to Luke," in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's*

As one reads Luke’s infancy stories, “Our attention is specially drawn to Luke’s description of [Simeon] as righteous, devout and ‘waiting for the consolation of Israel.’ What would such consolation have connoted in the *Sitz im Leben Jesu*?”²⁰ Larry R. Helyer, who asks this question, acknowledges the consensus that Luke’s description of Simeon’s hope refers to Isaiah 40:1ff and proposes that “a national, political dimension can hardly be separated from the spiritual in the light of the context of Isaiah 40–55, which is permeated by the hope of a return to Zion—a second exodus.”²¹ He also mentions Jewish literature of the Second Temple period to demonstrate that the “consolation of Jerusalem and its restoration politically”²² were closely associated, and concludes that “it is difficult to believe that political associations were not also present to the minds of individuals like Zechariah, Simeon and Anna.”²³

Narrative Claim Upon Israel’s Legacy, ed. David P. Moessner (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1999), 307–12.

²⁰ Larry R. Helyer, “Luke and the Restoration of Israel,” *JETS* 36 (1993): 318.

²¹ Helyer, “Luke,” 319. The exilic model of restoration and its connection to Luke–Acts has been acknowledged by scholars in various ways. See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the people of God*, vol. 1 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); Bauckham, “The Restoration.”

²² For a helpful survey of this theme as found in Early Jewish Literature, see Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel: Israel’s Re-gathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish Literature and Luke–Acts*, BZNW 138 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 4–11.

²³ Helyer, “Luke,” 319. He cites “texts such as Tob 13:9–18; 14:5–7 (c. 2d century BC); 2 Macc 1:27–29; 2:7–8 (c. 1st century BC); Bar 4:5–5:9 (c. 150–160 BC).” These texts describe Israel’s condition as one of exile. The passage from Baruch is noteworthy because of its description of God’s rescue (their return from exile). In a series of encouraging passages, God’s rescue is brought to the people’s mind introduced by the words: “Take courage, my people, you are the ones who keep Israel’s name alive” (4:5); “Take courage, my children, . . . He will rescue you from oppression, from the power of your enemies” (4:21); “Take courage, my children, . . . he will not forget you” (4:27); and the last time this formula is used, God’s rescue is described this way: “θήσει Ιερουσαλημ παρακαλέσει σε ὁ ὀνομάσας σε” (4:30). In this context, God’s *comforting* of his people forms a parallel to and is the culmination of Israel’s name being alive (4:5), God’s rescue from enemy oppression (4:21), and God remembering his people (4:27).

²⁴ Helyer, “Luke,” 319. Joseph A. Fitzmyer seems to agree with this statement: “Luke does not further explain the ‘consolation of Israel,’ but it is to be understood as the postexilic hope for God’s eschatological restoration of the theocracy to Israel.” Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I–IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28 (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 427. However, see his comments on Luke 3:1–6: “The quotation of Isaiah 40 serves to enhance [John’s] appearance with the note of fulfillment: the consolation of Israel which that prophetic passage once announced is now to be understood in a new way.” Fitzmyer, *The Gospel*, 452. Likewise, when commenting on Luke 4:21, Fitzmyer says: “What was promised by Second Isaiah as consolation for Zion is now being granted in a new sense and a new way. The Consolation of Zion takes place anew

What follows, then, is an overview of interpretations of *consolation* in Luke-Acts in the context of the *restoration of the kingdom*, where *παράκλησις* is believed to have a clear theological meaning that points to “a key element in many strands of OT and Jewish eschatology, referring to the hope of deliverance for the nation.”²⁴

Robert C. Tannehill compares the beginning of Luke to the end of Acts and concludes that Israel’s story in Luke-Acts is tragic. He acknowledges that in Luke’s infancy stories we have hints of the conflict within Israel and of the mission to the Gentiles—themes that will be the focus of Luke’s narrative, but he contends that the first two chapters strongly accentuate an anticipation that “stands in tension with the course of the narrative in Acts.”²⁵ Even though there are a few words in the opening of the story that suggest “salvation for Gentiles and conflict in Israel,”²⁶ they “are surrounded by much fuller statements about Israel’s salvation through Jesus. These statements are phrased in such a way as to make clear that they refer to the Jewish people.”²⁷ Tannehill cites those verses such as “the throne of David . . . house of Jacob forever” (Luke 1:32–33), the belief of Mary and Zechariah that God was helping Israel as he fulfilled “the promises to the fathers (1:54–55, 68–75),”²⁸ the expectation of redemption held by Zechariah and Anna, and the certainty that God was rescuing Israel “from the hand of enemies (1:71, 74).”²⁹ Considering the political situation in which those people found themselves, Tannehill insists that

(see 2:25; cf. 7:22).” Fitzmyer, *The Gospel*, 534.

²⁴ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 238.

²⁵ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 109. See also his article “The Story of Israel within the Lukan Narrative,” in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim Upon Israel’s Legacy*, ed. David P. Moessner (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1999).

²⁶ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 109.

²⁷ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 109.

²⁸ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 109.

²⁹ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 109.

“readers who are aware of the Jewish-Roman war and its outcome ... would sense the tragic disappointment of this hope.”³⁰ The hope that stems from OT quotations, formulations and “statements by characters who are presented favorably and therefore seem to be reliable spokespersons for the implied author”³¹ are ultimately disappointed at the end of the story.

Tannehill offers six pieces of evidence to support this reading: Jesus’ weeping for Jerusalem; the reminders of the national hope at the transition from Luke (24:21) to Acts (1:6); emphasis on the pronoun “to you” in Acts when talking about salvation in speeches to Jewish audiences; the irony that the Jews, in rejecting Paul’s message, are rejecting something that is essential to their hope and Scriptures; the shift in position of the Jewish people from the beginning of the story, when Jesus is recognized as Israel’s salvation, to the course of events, where they repeatedly reject Jesus; how Israel’s story in Luke-Acts follows the pattern of Israel’s story from Abraham to Moses as presented in Stephen’s speech.³² For these reasons, Tannehill claims that, while there are “indications of hope for the salvation of the Jews which point beyond the end of Acts,”³³ one can say that “The story of Israel, so far as the author of Luke-Acts can tell it, is a tragic story.”³⁴

What about Simeon and his hope for the *consolation of Israel*? What does it mean that God is bringing *consolation* through the coming of Jesus? While maintaining that all the characters of

³⁰ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 109.

³¹ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 109.

³² Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 112–18.

³³ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 124.

³⁴ Tannehill, “Israel in Luke–Acts,” 124. Although in “What Kind of King, What Kind of Kingdom,” in *The Shape of Luke’s Story: Essays on Luke–Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 48–55 Tannehill looks to the unfolding narrative in order to understand how the expected King and Messiah of chapters 1 and 2 will perform his task, he insists that “the social hope represented in the birth narrative by reference to messianic peace for the Jewish people, including freedom from foreign oppressor and from the oppression of poverty (1:53), has continuing significance.” Tannehill, “What Kind of King,” 51.

the first two chapters of Luke are spokespersons for God and hence what they believe and say is connected thematically, Tannehill notices that Simeon stands out as an interpreter of God's plan. Because Simeon's hymn includes the Gentiles, which is something new (even though he also continues themes mentioned previously), Tannehill suggests that, "In the sense that it presents God's saving purpose through Jesus in its broadest scope, the *Nunc Dimittis* is the climax of the Lukan infancy narrative."³⁵ This inclusion of the Gentiles, however, does not change the fact that the *consolation* expected is an indication of a distinct hope for Israel as a nation.³⁶

From the brief exposition above, especially the idea that Israel's story in Luke-Acts is tragic, it follows that Tannehill holds that Simeon's expectation of the *consolation of Israel* awaits a nationalistic fulfillment (as opposed to spiritual, realized in the church), which will only happen when the Jews convert³⁷ to Jesus and their kingdom is restored.

David L. Tiede, in a similar way, in his article "'Glory to Thy People Israel': Luke-Acts and the Jews"³⁸ argues that "Luke's hopeful assurances in the infancy stories are to be taken at

³⁵ Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 71.

³⁶ Tannehill's view of the Jewish hope for a political kingdom in Luke-Acts can be seen at different places in his *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986). In his comments about the annunciations to Zechariah and Mary, he says that "'salvation' in Luke 1:71 has clear connotations of political freedom. To suppose that the author could not be thinking in such political terms because all would know that Israel did not become an independent state with its own king ignores the tragic line of the story: the story is presenting a real possibility and a valid hope which was tragically rejected at the moment of fulfillment." Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:26. Likewise, when commenting on Zechariah's song, he says: "Understanding salvation to include political freedom for the Jewish homeland does not conflict with the dominant theology of Luke-Acts. It only appears to do so when we fail to understand its function within the total story: fulfillment of this hope for freedom is anticipated here in order to prepare for and heighten the effect of the tragic turn which will take place when the leaders of Israel reject the king who could fulfill this promise. The narrator understands the Scriptures to promise a messianic kingdom for Israel which will be a time of peace and freedom from oppressors. This promise is acknowledged as valid—if only Israel would accept its Messiah." Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:34. Those observations show, in Tannehill's opinion, "that the author has not given up hope for the Jews who have rejected the church's message." Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity*, 1:41.

³⁷ He says that "while the passages just discussed indicate a lingering hope for the salvation of the Jews, this remains a hope for salvation through conversion. The passages discussed do not show any shift from the claim of Acts 4:12 that salvation comes exclusively through the name of Jesus." Tannehill, "Israel in Luke-Acts," 124.

³⁸ David L. Tiede, "'Glory to Thy People Israel': Luke-Acts and the Jews," in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish*

face value.”³⁹ By this he means that the distinctly Jewish hope of deliverance for the nation is envisioned by Luke as a guaranteed outcome of the work of the Messiah. At some point, the people of Israel are to experience the fulfillment of those promises. Luke repeatedly, both in the infancy stories and in the course of the narrative, reports the Jewish hope in terms of “God’s promises to Israel.”⁴⁰ Tiede notices the hopes of characters such as Simeon (Luke 2:25), Anna (Luke 2:28), Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50–51), Cleopas and his companion (Luke 24:51), Jesus’ disciples (Acts 1:6), James (Acts 15:16), and Paul (Acts 26:6), and observes that those characters and “the content of their expectations are constantly identified in the language of the scriptural promises to Israel.”⁴¹ Therefore, even if Acts ends with an indictment against the Jews rather than the fulfillment of the national hope, “it is inconceivable that the hopes of these faithful in Israel will finally be disappointed.”⁴²

In light of the above, Tiede suggests that Simeon, whose “own credentials are above reproach,”⁴³ foreshadows the entire story with his two oracles. The first oracle describes who the Messiah is and what he represents: salvation and light. Tiede concludes that “When seen in connection with Simeon’s expectation of the ‘consolation of Israel,’ this ‘salvation’ has the clear connotation of the ‘redemption,’ ‘restoration,’ ‘kingdom,’ and ‘hope’ which all of the other worthies in the story await.”⁴⁴ Why does this salvation have “the clear connotation” of those themes related to Israel? Tiede seems to assume that because Simeon’s hope would have been

People: Eight Critical Perspectives, ed. Joseph B. Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1988), 21–34.

³⁹ Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 25.

⁴⁰ Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 26.

⁴¹ Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 26.

⁴² Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 26.

⁴³ Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 26.

⁴⁴ Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 27.

political, then the salvation that he saw as the answer of his expectation clearly had nationalistic characteristics.⁴⁵

The second oracle, about the falling and rising of many in Israel, is only partially fulfilled at the end of Acts. Since Luke in his two volumes focuses on the Jewish rejection, which is the *falling*, the reader must understand that “the fundamental tension of the plot still awaits a final resolution.”⁴⁶ The *rising* of many in Israel represents the expected future restoration of the nation. As Tiede puts it, “the restoration, the consolation, the redemption, the repentance, the forgiveness, and the reign of God which Simeon and all those other worthies in Israel expected has only begun to be inaugurated in the present time of Luke’s story.”⁴⁷

David P. Moessner reacts to Tiede’s argument that all promises of Luke 1–2 are to be taken “at face value”. He contends that Tiede’s literalistic understanding is not meant by Luke. For instance, when Mary claims that God will “put down the mighty from their thrones” (Luke 1:52), or when Zechariah prophesies that God is bringing “salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us” (Luke 1:71), these characters do think that the primary referent is Rome and that God’s deliverance will be political freedom, but Luke will later show the reader that

⁴⁵ In other words, *salvation* in this passage is to be understood against the backdrop of the Jewish hopes as Tiede understands them. This seems to go against the use of the term at the end of Acts, where the dispute between Paul and the Jews represents “a resumption of the themes sounded in Simeon’s oracles.” Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 29. In that context, after Paul witnesses to the Jews testifying to “the kingdom of God”, trying to persuade them “about Jesus, from the Law of Moses and the Prophets”, and quoting from Isaiah, he finally concludes: “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen.” (Acts 28:23–28) It is clear here that *salvation* cannot be understood against the backdrop of the nationalistic hopes Tiede sees in Simeon and other characters from Luke 1–2. It is noteworthy that, when Tiede wants to show that Paul was interested in salvation just as Simeon had been, he omits verse 28: “Like Simeon, Paul speaks to the end about salvation by testifying to the kingdom of God and the Messiah and Lord Jesus (Acts 28:23, 31).” Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 29.

⁴⁶ Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 23.

⁴⁷ Tiede, “Glory to Thy People,” 34.

they were wrong.⁴⁸ In other words, whereas Tiede (and Tannehill) defends that the narrator's point of view is shared by those characters, Moessner understands that those pious Jews are unreliable characters who are not able to interpret God's βουλή for the reader. Therefore, "the fundamental tension of the plot", which Tiede believes to be the literal fulfillment of all the hopes in Luke 1–2, is not awaiting a final resolution. "The tension," says Moessner, "is ironic. That is to say, what certain characters believe and express as a hope or promise on one level is meant to be perceived by the readers on a different level."⁴⁹

Moessner argues that the only humans who are reliable characters in the first two chapters of the Gospel are Simeon and Anna. Whereas the knowledge of other characters is significantly limited, as they were fearful or even struck dumb for unbelief,⁵⁰ Simeon receives a specific revelation, is led to the temple by the Holy Spirit—who was upon him, and reveals to Mary, like the angel had done, the fate of the child. Anna "confirms Simeon's revelation to those like Mary and Zechariah who are awaiting or expecting liberation for Jerusalem (2:38; cf. 24:21). In chiastic sequence she thus offsets and redefines the literal nationalistic-political messianic expectations"⁵¹ of earlier characters. Simeon and Anna are, thus, "depicted as special spokespersons for the omniscient point of view in a way that not only temporally qualifies but

⁴⁸ David P. Moessner, "The Ironic Fulfillment of Israel's Glory," in *Luke–Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1988), 37–38.

⁴⁹ Moessner, "The Ironic Fulfillment," 38.

⁵⁰ Tannehill, who regards all characters as reliable, contends, for instance, that "Zechariah's dumbness affects him until he obediently fulfills Gabriel's directions. Then he speaks 'filled with Holy Spirit' (Luke 1:67)." Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:16 n. 22.

⁵¹ Moessner, "The Ironic Fulfillment," 40–41. In order to maintain that Anna is a reliable character (which means that she has no nationalistic/political expectations), Moessner argues that she does not have the hope of redemption of Jerusalem, but only gives witness about Jesus to those who have that hope. This is different from most interpreters, who hold that Anna herself shares in their hope of *redemption* as a female counterpart of Simeon and his hope of *consolation*. Even if Moessner is right about Anna, the same move cannot be made regarding Simeon, for the text explicitly says that he was waiting for the *consolation of Israel*. The question is, why does Moessner still think that Simeon is a reliable character?

also qualitatively redefines the passel of prophetic hopes and expectations in Luke 1.”⁵² By saying “qualitatively”, Moessner wishes to correct Tiede’s view that Simeon’s oracles only help the reader as a temporal framework of the fulfillment of the Jewish hope, while assuming the truth of all the hopes of the characters before him.

Moessner’s point is that Simeon and Anna are given special insight into the plan that God is realizing through the story, while the other characters are ignorant of what is coming. For example, when Mary or Zechariah “speaks of Israel’s enemies, are they the Lord God’s/the narrator’s enemies or main antagonists that will be presented in the ensuing story?” Simeon, on the other hand, foresees the inclusion of the Gentiles and the division within Israel.

Evidently Moessner, like Tiede and Tannehill, believes that a correct understanding of Simeon is fundamental to properly interpret Luke’s subsequent story. The difference between them is that Moessner argues that Luke wants to correct the erroneous beliefs of pious Jews, rather than reaffirm them. In this scheme, Luke sets out to show the disjunction between the old hope and the actual fulfillment; that is, he does not emphasize the continuity or progressive revelation of the plan of God, but deliberately heightens the discontinuity within God’s people’s hope. Although Moessner argues that Simeon and Anna are reliable and therefore are not like the other misguided Jews presented in the beginning of the Gospel, he is included here⁵³ because he does not address the fact that Simeon is described as “waiting for the consolation of Israel,” which would appear to be inconsistent with his view of Simeon’s reliability—because this

⁵² Moessner, “The Ironic Fulfillment,” 40.

⁵³ Moessner reads Luke’s story and the role of the Jewish hopes differently from Tiede and Tannehill, but he seems to agree that those expectations presented in the beginning of the Gospel stem from a nationalistic understanding of the OT prophecies.

Jewish hope stresses Simeon's connection to the characters presented previously.⁵⁴

Darrell L. Bock, who concedes that the *consolation of Israel* is related to the connection between Jesus and salvation as interpreted by Simeon,⁵⁵ defends that "Luke expresses [Simeon's] hope in national terms."⁵⁶ Although salvation and restoration for Israel are only made possible through Jesus, Simeon "longs for the nation's deliverance, just as Zechariah had."⁵⁷ In other words, salvation in Jesus plays an important part in the redemption of Israel, but those hopes of chapters 1–2, including the *consolation of Israel*, are not to be spiritualized.

Joel B. Green also seems to understand *consolation* in the beginning of the Gospel as political restoration. After pointing out the socio-political character of the songs of Mary and Zechariah, he adds that "Simeon and Anna, in their respective hopes for 'the consolation of Israel' and 'redemption of Jerusalem,' must also have in mind the cessation of foreign occupancy and subjection, the renewal of Israel as a nation under Yahweh (and not under Caesar)."⁵⁸ So, their hopes represent "an anticipation with clear ramifications for the cessation of Israel's subjection to its Herodian and Roman overlords."⁵⁹ With this view of the social setting of those

⁵⁴ The inconsistency lies in that Moessner thinks Simeon's reliability is due to the fact that he is not a misguided character like the ones presented previously, which the reader learns from Simeon's correct interpretation of God's plan as he anticipates the inclusion of the Gentiles. However, Simeon was, after all, looking for the *consolation of Israel*, and Moessner does not explain how this expectation is different from those of the other characters.

⁵⁵ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 242. When commenting on Luke 2:30, Bock says: "The interesting feature of this verse is that seeing God's salvation is linked directly to seeing Jesus, so that a strong tie exists between salvation and the one who personifies it. This connection in turn relates to the idea of Israel's consolation in 2:25. Fulfillment has come in Jesus, and so Simeon can die in peace. The idea that the person of Jesus is at the center of soteriology is a keystone of Lukan Christology."

⁵⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, IVPNTC, ed. Grant R. Osborne (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 58. See also Darrell L. Bock, "The Restoration of Israel in Luke–Acts," in *Introduction to Messianic Judaism: Its Ecclesial Context and Biblical Foundations*, ed. David Rudolph and Joel Willits (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 168–77.

⁵⁷ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 59.

⁵⁸ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 59.

⁵⁹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 59.

Jews, Green understands that the hope of *consolation* held by Simeon was political, and explains that παράκλησις is “used in the sense of the restoration of Israel under the reign of God only here in Luke-Acts.”⁶⁰

What all these scholars have in common is an understanding that Simeon’s hope for *consolation* is tied to and defined by the promise of the future restoration of *Israel*, and such restoration has a *national* or *political* character.⁶¹ This group makes an important contribution to studies on the role of the Jews in Luke-Acts. By demonstrating that the Gospel story has its roots in the hopes of Israel, they remind Luke’s readers that a “Christianized” reading of the beginning of the Gospel will not do justice to what the author is doing. However, when it comes to the specific promise of *consolation of Israel*, it seems that some assumptions and inferences are being made when one focuses on *Israel*, which leads to an interpretation of *consolation* that may not be the most natural in light of the whole story. The explanations of *consolation* in this context often lack supporting evidence from Luke-Acts, but only infer from a narrow reading of Isaiah and other Jewish literature from the Second Temple period what that *consolation* would have meant. For instance, Helyer concludes that “It is difficult to believe” that in the minds of the Jewish characters in Luke 1–2 political associations were not present. Similarly, Fitzmyer,⁶² who recognizes that Luke does not further explain what is meant by *consolation of Israel*, infers that “it is to be understood” as the “restoration of the theocracy to Israel.” Tiede seems to operate with a similar mindset when he claims that the hopes in the beginning of the Gospel “are to be

⁶⁰ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 145. See also Joel B. Green, “The Problem of a Beginning: Israel’s Scripture in Luke 1–2,” *BBR* 4 (1994): 80, in which he says that the disciples’ question in Acts 1:6 brings back to mind Simeon’s hope for consolation and Anna’s audience who awaited redemption.

⁶¹ Moessner, as we saw, would agree this is the case with the other hopes of chapters 1–2, but he would be reluctant to say the same for Simeon.

⁶² See footnote 22 above.

taken at face value”, and “it is inconceivable” that such hopes “will finally be disappointed.” His decision of what “face value” means places an unnecessary pressure on the plot to conform to a nationalistic understanding of fulfillment. Since Luke’s narrative seems to end in a disappointing (or tragic, as Tannehill argues) manner, Tiede defends that the plot is still open. In the same way, Green writes that Simeon and Anna “must have in mind” a nationalistic fulfillment, and adds that only in Luke 2:25 is παράκλησις employed “in the sense of the restoration of Israel under the reign of God.”

Why are they so certain that is what *consolation of Israel* must have meant in Luke? What evidence do we have, based on the story Luke tells, that the *consolation* that seems to be fulfilled in Jesus refers to the restoration of the nation with political overtones? These scholars raise significant questions regarding the theme of restoration in Luke, but as far as Simeon’s hope of consolation is concerned, we may gain new insights from available information in Luke-Acts that has been overlooked.

Παράκλησις in Luke 2:25 as Primarily Spiritual Salvation

As I said before, it is widely accepted that Luke 1–2 anticipates the restoration of Israel, and that this theme is a major concern of Luke-Acts. But the consensus ends when one asks *what* the restoration (including *consolation*, *redemption*, etc.) as envisioned by Luke will entail. On this side of the scholarly debate, the hope of *consolation* is “the salvation which the Messiah was to bring.”⁶³ For those who support this view, the interpretative matrix for understanding

⁶³ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 5th ed., ICC, ed. Charles Augustus Briggs, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Alfred Plummer; 1922; repr. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 66. Plummer says that such salvation was called *consolation* by the Jews (Isaiah 40:1, 49:13, 51:3, 61:2, 66:13), and hence the Messiah was called the “consoler” or “consolation”. He also points out that the hope of Joseph of Arimathea, who was “awaiting for the kingdom of God”, is in parallel with Simeon’s hope.

Simeon's hope of *consolation* is Luke's own story.⁶⁴ While both sides agree that the *consolation of Israel* was expected to come with the inauguration of the messianic era, these scholars prefer to interpret παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ mainly by looking at *what Luke says* about the messianic salvation.⁶⁵

I. Howard Marshall, for instance, contends that one can only fully understand what the first two chapters of Luke's gospel mean by reading the author's own exposition of the fulfillment of those hopes in the subsequent chapters. Marshall summarizes the available scholarly views regarding the theme of restoration in the infancy narratives in his analysis of the relationship between the political and military language in the hymns and the mission of Jesus.⁶⁶ As we saw in the previous section, there are basically two solutions that have been offered to the problem of the political expectations in the early chapters not being fulfilled by the end of Acts. One solution states that the political deliverance is expected in the distant future, not in the events of Luke-Acts, where just a few hints of that deliverance are present. Marshall opposes this view because he thinks that the reader should expect those hopes to be developed in greater detail in Luke's narrative. It would be misleading to start the gospel by presenting a lengthy

⁶⁴ This does not mean, however, that all scholars who approach Luke from a narrative perspective will arrive at the same conclusions with respect to the hopes expressed in the first two chapters. We have seen that Tannehill, for instance, concurs with the scholars in the previous section. Another notable example is Green. In his discussion of his methodology focused on the narrative for reading Luke—more specifically in his definition of *co-text*, he says that the reader expects promises made early to be fulfilled later in the narrative, “even if we are not always clear *how* or *in what sense*” they will be fulfilled. That is to say, “expectations . . . can be reshaped or even set aside by subsequent co-text.” Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 13. When it comes to Simeon's hope of consolation, however, we have seen that he agrees with those who define it as political restoration.

⁶⁵ As with the previous section, it could be argued that scholars on this side do not necessarily exclude any possibility for political restoration (even though not nationalistic, and not before the return of Christ). However, as the title says, the focus on this side is on spiritual salvation to all believers.

⁶⁶ I. Howard Marshall, “Political and Eschatological Language in Luke,” in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, and Anthony C. Thiselton, vol. 6 of *Scripture and Hermeneutic Series*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew and Anthony C. Thiselton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 157–77.

description of the expectations surrounding the mission of Jesus and then not articulate the fulfillment in terms that are coherent with that presentation. Another solution that has been postulated claims that the characters who have those hopes are not reliable, and therefore Luke's narrative is corrective. Marshall objects to this because Luke describes those characters as pious, saints, and inspired by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷

What is, then, the best solution to interpret the hope of *consolation* in the beginning of Luke that is often taken as national and political restoration? Marshall suggests that the language in the beginning of the gospel employs “military rhetoric” that expresses “the realities of the spiritual mission of Jesus.”⁶⁸ In other words, those faithful in Israel “use a different kind of language to bring out the significance of what is happening.”⁶⁹ That means that the mission of Jesus “is ‘political’ but ... ‘not as we know it’.”⁷⁰ Jesus’ kingdom is significantly different from its human counterparts and can be said to be “spiritual in that it is concerned with the inward allegiance of people to God as a result of which they live in new ways.”⁷¹ In the light of the whole gospel, the hopes of those pious Jews—which are expressed in military and political terms—must be taken as “metaphorical expressions of the inner meaning of the mission of Jesus and the disciples.”⁷²

By taking the political and military terminology of Luke 1–2 as metaphoric language that expresses the reality of the mission of Jesus as the Savior of the world, Marshall understands that

⁶⁷ Marshall, “Political and Eschatological,” 160.

⁶⁸ Marshall, “Political and Eschatological,” 160.

⁶⁹ Marshall, “Political and Eschatological,” 160.

⁷⁰ Marshall, “Political and Eschatological,” 161.

⁷¹ Marshall, “Political and Eschatological,” 161.

⁷² Marshall, “Political and Eschatological,” 162.

consolation means primarily spiritual deliverance. When he reads the revelation that Simeon received (that he would not see death before seeing the Lord's Christ), Marshall understands this as the definitive fulfillment of the people's hope of *consolation*. In his own words, "the consolation of Israel is to be equated with the coming of the Messiah."⁷³ In the same way, when he comments on the phrase *redemption of Jerusalem* in verse 38, he says that it "conveys the idea of divine deliverance which is to be brought about by Jesus, and is thus a messianic concept like 'comfort' in 2:25; cf. 24:21."⁷⁴ At first glance it does not seem that Marshall's interpretation opposes the views represented in the previous section, for they too would agree that the *consolation* and the Messiah are inseparable, and the first is only made available because of and fulfilled by the second. The difference, however, is that Marshall is saying that the fulfillment of the promises of *consolation* is located in the mission of Jesus as Luke tells it, as opposed to being found in the fate of the nation Israel.

A similar representation of the soteriological view of *παράκλησις* in the beginning of Luke can be found in Stein's words, who claims that «*παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ*» "refers to the consolation that would be brought by the inauguration of the messianic age"⁷⁵ and says that "this consolation is described as 'seeing the Lord's Christ'"⁷⁶ in v.26. Stein further explains what he means by adding that for Luke "this referred not to the fulfillment of Jewish political hopes involving deliverance from their enemies and restoration of David's throne *but rather to the*

⁷³ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 119. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, SP 3, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991), 57.

⁷⁴ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 124. It is noteworthy that he understands the phrase *redemption of Jerusalem* of v.38 as another way to express the reality of salvation, just as *consolation of Israel*. Those who defend that *consolation* refers to the political deliverance of the nation, defend that *redemption* in v.38 refers to the national hope as well.

⁷⁵ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC 24 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 114.

⁷⁶ Stein, *Luke*, 114.

*salvation Jesus brought.*⁷⁷ In this perspective, the *consolation* which Simeon expected is equivalent to “Jerusalem’s redemption (2:38); the coming of God’s kingdom (23:51); the Master’s return (12:36); the resurrection of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15).”⁷⁸ Stein’s position is reinforced in his reading of Simeon’s hymn, as he defends that σωτήριον in verse 30 explains the παράκλησις of verse 25. He observes that “[t]here is a clear allusion here to Isa 40:5 (LXX).”⁷⁹ In connecting *consolation* and *salvation*, Stein refers the reader to his comments on *salvation*⁸⁰ in 1:69,⁸¹ where he resolutely objects to the political interpretation and defines it as concerned with “the individual’s relationship to God. It involves the individual’s ‘life’ (Luke 9:24) and is for those who recognize that they are ‘lost’ (19:10). It comes through faith and involves forgiveness of sins (1:77).”⁸² Regarding the *redemption of Jerusalem* in v.38, there are no surprises. As we might expect, those words are frequently taken as an equivalent of *consolation of Israel*. For Stein, therefore, the *redemption of Jerusalem* “serves as a synonym for [both] the ‘consolation of Israel’ ... and ‘salvation’.”⁸³

Raymond E. Brown’s interpretation is worth mentioning here. Despite the fact that his views are not representative of the majority of scholars⁸⁴ on this side, his explanation of

⁷⁷ Stein, *Luke*, 115. Emphasis mine.

⁷⁸ Stein, *Luke*, 115. All these passages are connected by Luke’s use of προσδέχομαι.

⁷⁹ Stein, *Luke*, 115. In Isaiah we have: «καὶ ὀφθήσεται ἡ δόξα κυρίου καὶ ὄνεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι κύριος ἐλάλησεν»

⁸⁰ The word there is σωτηρία. Stein does not seem to differentiate between the two words, whereas others point out that σωτήριος has to do with the “*instrument of salvation*.” Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 144.

⁸¹ The context is the *Benedictus*, where Zechariah praises God for redeeming his people (68), raising up a horn of salvation in the house of David (69), and for saving them from their enemies (71). This passage is used by scholars who hold to a national and political fulfillment of the promises as foundational for their reading.

⁸² Stein, *Luke*, 99.

⁸³ Stein, *Luke*, 118.

⁸⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, ABRL, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1993). Brown’s historical-critical exegesis caused a heated debate regarding methodology among Catholic scholars. He was most criticized for

consolation is a reaction against the political understanding in favor of a spiritual fulfillment. Brown hypothesizes that the hymns in Luke's infancy narrative came originally from a group of Jewish Christian Anawim,⁸⁵ particularly those at the Qumram community—whom Brown regards “as a sectarian group of Anawim,”⁸⁶ who saw themselves as a sort of remnant within Israel and expected God to bring spiritual deliverance. Luke would have taken their hymns about God's salvation and altered them in such a way as to include Jesus as the provider of the expected deliverance. Based on his understanding that Simeon and Anna “are the embodiment of the piety of the Anawim”⁸⁷ and on the Anawim's alleged influence on Luke's birth stories, Brown concludes that both “consolation of Israel” in v.25 and “redemption of Jerusalem” in v.38 “refer to messianic deliverance,”⁸⁸ and “[a]ny attempt to interpret the words in purely nationalistic terms, e.g., political freedom of Jerusalem from the Romans, founders on the idealism of the Anawim and on Simeon's prayer for the Gentiles.”⁸⁹

Scholars who interpret *consolation* in relation to spiritual salvation offer a substantial contribution to studies on Luke's multifaceted soteriology as well as the ecclesiology of Luke-Acts. In addition, this side shows greater justification for their view of *consolation of Israel* in the beginning of the Gospel, because they demonstrate that there is an important connection

arguing against the historicity of some episodes in the birth narratives (e.g., he wrote that Mary did not utter the words of the *Magnificat*), as a result of his emphasis on the Gospel writers' theological and christological presuppositions as the main framework for their presentation. See a discussion of the debate in Joseph G. Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis*, TGST 50 (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2001), 164–68. The present study is interested in Brown's explanation of Luke's understanding of *consolation*, despite his view of the production of the text.

⁸⁵ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 350–55.

⁸⁶ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 351.

⁸⁷ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 452.

⁸⁸ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 442.

⁸⁹ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 442–43.

between *consolation* and Jesus's *salvation* in the text without drawing too many conclusions from the world behind the text (with the exception of Brown). This is not viewed as a neglect of the OT promises because, as Marshall puts it, this salvation "stands in continuity with the Old Testament hope of the coming of the Messiah."⁹⁰

Marshall's idea that the seemingly political language that gives expression to the Jewish hopes is "military rhetoric" that refers to Jesus's spiritual deliverance is most helpful. If *consolation* does not mean a priori liberation from the Romans or future hope for the nation, then one is bound to look for Luke's explanation in the immediate context, and there we see Jesus as the fulfillment of Simeon's hope. Stein does well in connecting *consolation* with the other passages where Luke uses προσδέχομαι. This puts παράκλησις in an eschatological perspective that is not exclusive to one particular nation. His explanation that *salvation* refers back to *consolation* also deserves more attention as one tries to understand Luke's view of παράκλησις. Brown's line of thought is different from the two above, but his conclusion is the same: the expectation of *consolation of Israel* referred to a spiritual salvation. His suggestion that Simeon represents the Jewish Christian Anawim is relevant as one studies Simeon as a character as well as the connection between the poor and παράκλησις in chapter 6.

In terms of Luke's view of παράκλησις, this group goes a step further than the previous by pointing out textual relationships often neglected or overlooked by the scholars reviewed before. What is generally lacking, with a few exceptions that will be discussed later, is a consideration of how Luke's other uses of παράκλησις may supplement or oppose their reading of *consolation* in the context of Luke 2:25.

⁹⁰ I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 187.

Luke's Other Uses of Παράκλησις

As can be seen above, Luke's other uses of παράκλησις are usually not taken into account by scholars who recognize the significance of the term in Luke 2:25. Scholars tend to look for the meaning of «παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ» either by focusing on the Jewish hope of national restoration, or on Luke's soteriology—salvation in Christ to all who believe. Despite the acknowledged significance of Luke's use of παράκλησις in the beginning of the Gospel, it is commonly accepted that elsewhere it “has the sense of comfort or encouragement.”⁹¹ In this section we will take a look at the interpretation of παράκλησις that is frequently offered in other contexts in Luke-Acts, as well as the few exceptions that link those uses to Luke 2:25 and seem to suggest that there is more to Luke's theology of παράκλησις than just the debate about the restoration of Israel.

The other passage in the Gospel where Luke uses παράκλησις is in the context of the beatitudes and woes in chapter 6. After blessing the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful, and the hated (Luke 6:20–23), Jesus says to the rich, “you have received your consolation.” (Luke 6:24) Here, however, παράκλησις is not believed to evoke the same theological concepts as in 2:25. Commentators usually notice the irony in the words of Jesus to the rich, and explain the παράκλησις they have as a false blessing.⁹² Bock represents most scholars as he does not see a meaningful relationship between the several uses of the term, but only notices that παράκλησις “is clearly negative here, although it is often positive in Lucan usage (Luke 2:25; Acts 4:36; 9:31; 13:15; 15:31).”⁹³

⁹¹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 145.

⁹² See Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 141: “comfort is not to be mistaken for blessedness.”

⁹³ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 584.

Marshall adds to the customary interpretation by referring the reader to his comments on Luke 2:25 and making the contrast between divine consolation and the consolation that money can buy.⁹⁴ Furthermore, in an article where he talks about salvation and Israel and equates the coming of Jesus with salvation and consolation, he points out that this relationship “is confirmed by the proclamation of Jesus: the denial of comfort to the rich in Luke 6:24 confirms that the promise of the kingdom to the poor in 6:20 is, in effect, a promise of such comfort.”⁹⁵ Marshall sees a connection between Luke’s two uses of παράκλησις in the Gospel, and bases his understanding of παράκλησις in 6:24 on the relationship between the salvation that came with the messianic era and the consolation that had been promised. By doing that he also expands the interpretative matrix for παράκλησις in Luke and separates the discussion of the meaning of that word from the debate about the restoration of Israel.⁹⁶

Frederick W. Danker makes the same connection as Marshall, and expands it to include some of Luke’s uses of παράκλησις in Acts. When commenting on Simeon’s expectation, he first asserts that the consolation Simeon expected was fulfilled “in the person and work of Jesus,”⁹⁷ and then he explains that Luke’s other uses of παράκλησις are intentionally related to the divine consolation of Luke 2:25 and to the Holy Spirit. “At 6:24,” he says, “Luke will show how pitiful

⁹⁴ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 256.

⁹⁵ Marshall, “‘Israel’ and the Story of Salvation: One Theme in Two Parts,” in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim Upon Israel’s Legacy*, ed. David P. Moessner (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1999), 356.

⁹⁶ This is not to say that Marshall rejects the idea that Luke anticipates the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. He acknowledges that there are “very difficult texts (Luke 22:2f; Acts 1:6–8)” which point in that direction and therefore the issue of Israel’s restoration should not be oversimplified. The point is that “At least for the foreseeable future, the focus is on the church,” and his interpretation of παράκλησις in Luke–Acts stems from that understanding. Marshall, “‘Israel’ and the Story,” 357.

⁹⁷ Frederik W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age: A Commentary on St. Luke’s Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 63.

is the shortsightedness that identifies the divine consolation with financial success.”⁹⁸ And he goes on to say that the divine consolation is something that is experienced in the life of the church through the agency of the Spirit: “Later it will be said of the post-Easter Christians that they were filled with the ‘consolation’... of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31; cf. 13:15). Similarly, Luke here [at 2:25] links ‘consolation’... and the Holy Spirit.”⁹⁹

In commenting on Luke 6:24, Danker once again connects the consolation that the rich have—which, he notices, is contrasted with the *kingdom of God* of v.20—with the one expected by Simeon by reminding the reader that what the rich possess “is not the ‘consolation’ (*paraklesis*) of Luke 2:25.”¹⁰⁰ Since it is not the same consolation, it follows that “[t]hey live in the illusion that they are the privileged recipients of the benefits of the New Age. But all they can await is lamentation.”¹⁰¹ Danker is, through this comment, saying that divine consolation for the author also has implications for the future.¹⁰²

In Acts, we encounter *παράκλησις* for the first time in Luke’s translation of *Barnabas* (Acts 4:36) as «*νῖος παρακλήσεως*». A lot of time has been devoted to the origin of that name and Luke’s translation of it, and some interpreters disagree with Luke’s translation. Conzelmann

⁹⁸ Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 64.

⁹⁹ Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 64.

¹⁰⁰ Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 142.

¹⁰¹ Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 142–43.

¹⁰² A similar approach is taken by Luke Timothy Johnson. In his explanation of *παράκλησις* in Luke 2:25, he remarks that “[t]he term ‘comfort’ or ‘consolation’ is *paraklesis*, which Luke uses in two other significant contexts, 6:24 and 16:25.” Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 54. Although he does not explain how those texts are connected, one can still see that he sees a meaningful parallel among Luke’s uses of the term, and he also believes that *consolation* in Luke implies future salvation. It is striking, however, that he mentions Luke 16:25 where the verb (*παρακαλέω*), not the noun (*παράκλησις*), is used. He is able to do that because he is saying the context is “significant”, but when one considers the verb’s usage in 8:31–32 or 15:28, it becomes clear that the connection between the texts he cites based on those words needs further explanation.

simply concludes that *Barnabas* means *son of Nebo* and, therefore, Luke is incorrect,¹⁰³ while Fitzmyer notes that “Luke’s comment about the meaning of the *supernomen* ‘Barnabas’ is problematic.”¹⁰⁴ Other commentators, however, understand Luke’s translation in relation to Barnabas’s subsequent role in the narrative, and explain that «ὄϊός παρακλήσεως» means something along the lines of *encourager*.¹⁰⁵

In the other passages where *παράκλησις* appears in Acts, because of the lack of a problem that needs to be explained (such as Luke’s translation of *Barnabas*), Luke’s use of the word tends to be assumed or dismissed by scholars. Some explain that *παράκλησις* is used elsewhere in Acts as *exhortation*. One exception, perhaps, is at 9:31, where Barrett makes a general comment about «τῆ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος», saying that it may “refer to whatever it is that the Holy Spirit does, and this will include both the (messianic) consolation (cf. e.g. Lk. 2:25) and the stirring up and enabling of Christians to live as they should (cf. 1:8).”¹⁰⁶

We can see that, except for a few brief comments, five out of the six times in which *παράκλησις* is used in Luke-Acts have not been taken into consideration by scholars who seek to explain Luke’s theology. Marshall and Danker begin to put Luke’s several uses into one interpretive matrix in which the contexts of different passages become relevant to interpret each other, but they do not develop it further. Barrett suggests that the *consolation* of the Spirit can also mean the messianic salvation of Luke 2:25, but does not explain how or why, which only

¹⁰³ Hans Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, HNT 7 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963), 39.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 320.

¹⁰⁵ See Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 1180.

¹⁰⁶ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:474. About the other passages in Acts, he says: “At 4.36 . . . it probably means (prophetic) *exhortation*; similarly at 13.15. At 15.31 however the word seems to mean *comfort*, though *encouragement* is not impossible.”

raises more questions regarding Luke's use of παράκλησις.

These scholars are helpful insofar as they provide the reader of Luke-Acts with a more nuanced understanding of the author's theological use of παράκλησις than a normal dictionary entry is able to do. It appears, however, that even those who indicate that there is a meaningful and theological relationship among Luke's diverse uses of this word have only begun to explore what that relationship is, for apart from Luke 2:25, the term seems to have been overlooked.

The Thesis

I intend to argue that Luke's several uses of παράκλησις help the reader understand what he means by «παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ» in Luke 2:25. Luke constructs a narrative in which the *consolation* brought by the Lord Jesus should no longer be considered apart from the salvation offered to the whole Christian church—both Israel and Gentiles joined by the same Spirit. *Consolation* in Luke-Acts is both a present and future reality, related to salvation for all peoples, not political or nationalistic, and is accomplished in the person of the Lord Jesus.

Overview Of The Dissertation

After the first introductory chapter in which I reviewed the literature on the topic and proposed a thesis statement, a second chapter situates this study in the context of current scholarship and describes the methodology used in the construction of the argument of the dissertation.

The two chapters that follow present an investigation of Luke's use of παράκλησις in its various contexts. Chapter three deals exclusively with the main text in this topic, Luke 2:25. We see how the expectation of παράκλησις is associated with the coming of the Lord, and how Israel's longing for *consolation* finds its fulfillment in the infant Jesus and his salvation, which is

for both Israel and the Gentiles.

Chapter four brings together an analysis of the other five passages where παράκλησις occurs (Luke 6:24; Acts 4:36; 9:31; 13:15; 15:31). In Luke 6:24 we will take a look at Jesus' ministry and see how those blessings of chapter 6 fit in it. Also, we will investigate how the ironic saying of Jesus to the rich expands the meaning of consolation as a promise not only for this world. The discussion in Acts 4:36 will explore Luke's choice of words in his translation of the nickname Barnabas, Barnabas' function in the narrative will be considered as a means to understand Luke's theology. In Acts 9:31 we will see how Luke uses the theme of consolation in a summary statement that highlights the spread of the gospel. The analysis of Acts 13:15 will aim to demonstrate how the "word of παράκλησις" equates in Luke's point of view, even if subtly, to the "word of salvation". The message given by Paul and Barnabas and its effect on the hearers highlight Luke's point of view. Luke's use of παράκλησις in Acts 15:31 will take into account the function of that chapter within the entire narrative, and will evaluate how Luke's description of the reaction of the Gentiles upon receiving the letter from Jerusalem conveys his point of view. The chapter ends with a brief overview of the verb παρακαλέω in Luke-Acts.

Chapter five shows how Luke relied on the prophet Isaiah to explain the mission to the Gentiles. At important points in the narrative echoes or quotations from Isaiah justify such mission. We see that, for instance, when Simeon praises God (Luke 2:32: "light for revelation to the Gentiles"), when Paul and Barnabas explain their turning to the Gentiles because of Jewish rejection of their message (Acts 13:47: "I have appointed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may be for salvation to the end of the earth."), when Paul describes his preaching (Acts 26:23: "the Christ ... would proclaim light to the people and to the Gentiles."), and in Paul's last dispute against the Jews (Acts 28:26–27), after which he declares that "to the Gentiles this salvation of

God has been sent, and they will listen” (Acts 28:28). Luke’s reliance upon Isaiah at these points confirms the reading of *consolation* as salvation to all who believe put forth in this dissertation.

Chapter six discusses the identity of the people of God in the narrative, by showing how Luke viewed Israel and its relationship to the church. Israel continues to be important for the author, so much so that he describes Simeon’s hope as consolation *of Israel*. In this chapter we will explore the reasons why Luke interpreted the fulfillment of promises made to Israel (including the promise of consolation to Israel) in the OT being fulfilled in the church of the NT.

Finally, chapter seven brings this study to its conclusion. The thematic thread of παράκλησις in Luke-Acts that emerge in the previous chapters will be summarized, and new avenues for research will be suggested.

CHAPTER TWO

RELEVANCE AND METHODOLOGY

The Dissertation in Context of Current Scholarship

The primary contribution of this dissertation to current NT scholarship is in filling a void in Lukan studies by offering an investigation into Luke’s own use of παράκλησις. As it was shown in the introduction above, the meaning of this word has been mostly taken for granted in Lukan passages, and most studies in the NT concern only Paul’s usage.¹ This investigation will articulate the meaning of παράκλησις as it is found in Luke-Acts, and the results will demonstrate how and why it is not farfetched (though it does not say all that needs to be said) to say that this word, as it is used by Luke, receives its content “preponderantly from the NT event of salvation.”² This dissertation will, therefore, test the conclusions often put forward by theological dictionaries as well as complement their argumentation. Insofar as this study will offer a more nuanced and accurate understanding of a particular theme in the Lukan corpus and relate it to major themes in those writings, it will represent the regained interest in Biblical theology that can be seen in NT scholarship.³

The discipline of biblical theology has had a long history. Many credit the German biblical scholar Johann Philipp Gabler as the first to use the term in its modern sense⁴ due to his

¹ As far as I know, there is no full-length monograph on this theme as found in Luke and/or Acts.

² Schmitz, *TDNT* 5:793.

³ For a recent discussion of the place of Biblical Theology in current NT scholarship, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Present and Future of Biblical Theology,” *SwJT* 56 (2013): 3–23.

⁴ Some go as far as to credit Gabler as the father of the discipline of biblical theology, which is obviously an

influential address at the University of Altdorf in 1787 in which he proposes a distinction between biblical and systematic theology. Since Gabler, biblical theology has received various definitions⁵ and emphases, and there are numerous works considered to be representative of the discipline. In recent years—more specifically the last three decades—interest in biblical theology and its multifaceted approaches can be seen in the amount of literature that has been produced in the field, which highlights new tendencies such as (but not only) multi-thematic approaches and organization of biblical theology under the overarching story of the Bible. Among several important contributions,⁶ a substantial work that represents this trend is *New Studies in Biblical*

overstatement. See, e.g., D. A. Carson, “Current Issues in Biblical Theology: A New Testament Perspective,” *BBR* 5 (1995): 18: “It would be the height of arrogance to argue that before the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century the church knew nothing of biblical theology.” See also the following comments regarding the claim that Gabler originated biblical theology in separating it from dogmatic theology, in Ben C. Ollenburger, Elmer A. Martens and Gerhard F. Hasel, eds., *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Old Testament Theology, 1930–1990*, vol. 1 of *Sources for Biblical and Theological Study* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 490: “Gabler came to be seen as the ‘father’ of biblical theology because, it is claimed, he defined its independent status over against dogmatic (or systematic) theology. Whatever the merits of that status may be, Gabler would have been deeply troubled by any suggestion that biblical theology should be set loose from dogmatics. His intention was precisely to give dogmatic theology a firm and unchanging foundation, and this he saw as biblical theology’s ‘specific objective’.” It is interesting to notice that in the revised edition of this work the comment above is replaced with a more neutral note: “His inaugural lecture there, in 1787, came to be seen as biblical theology’s founding document, especially since it argued for a ‘proper distinction’ between biblical and dogmatic theology. Gabler intended the distinction to serve dogmatic theology and, thereby, the church and its ministers.” Ben C. Ollenburger, ed., *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future*, revised edition of *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1 of *Sources for Biblical and Theological Study* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 497.

⁵ For a helpful historical overview categorized under different definitions and tendencies, see Carson, “Current Issues,” 18–26. See also James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 1–17, for a helpful presentation of “The Many Faces of Biblical Theology,” in which the author discusses the attempts to define the discipline in contrast to *doctrinal theology*, *non-theological use of the Bible*, *history of religions*, *philosophy and natural theology*, and as a *comprehensive approach* as opposed to interpretations of only *parts of the Bible*.

⁶ As an example of biblical theology literature produced recently, see I. Howard Marshall, and David Peterson, eds., *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Charles H. H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005); Thomas Hatina, *New Testament Theology and its Quest for Relevance: Ancient Texts and Modern Readers* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2013); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013); Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013).

Theology, edited by D. A. Carson, which currently has 40 volumes and is not yet complete. In the series preface, Carson explains what kind of biblical theological studies are being produced:

New Studies in Biblical Theology is a series of monographs that address key issues in the discipline of biblical theology. Contributions to the series focus on one or more of three areas: (1) the nature and status of biblical theology, including its relations with other disciplines (e.g. historical theology, exegesis, systematic theology, historical criticism, narrative theology); (2) the articulation and exposition of the structure of thought of a particular biblical writer or corpus; and (3) the delineation of a biblical theme across all or part of the biblical corpora.⁷

This research is situated among the more recent types⁸ of biblical theology, insofar as this study will seek to “delineate a biblical theme across”⁹ Luke-Acts. Regarding definitions, I am not contending which is the best, as “there cannot be a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ definition of biblical theology. There is neither a stable, longstanding tradition of the use of the expression to which one might refer, nor an array of biblical passages that utilize the expression. Everyone is free to use the expression as he or she sees fit.”¹⁰ Having said that, obviously there are helpful guidelines to follow when one attempts to interpret a biblical theme, and the next section will deal with matters related to methods. The point here is that my approach will be a small contribution to the discipline as it is currently practiced by some,¹¹ because it will investigate one theme in Lukan theology and interact with scholars who work on other topics such as salvation in Luke, the matter of prophecy-fulfillment, and the relationship between Luke-Acts and Isaiah.

⁷ D. A. Carson, preface to *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness*, by David Peterson, NSBT 1, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 7.

⁸ I am not using this word in a technical sense, since there is no precise classification of *types* of biblical theology. However, this dissertation’s approach is aligned with current tendencies in the field.

⁹ Carson, preface to *Possessed*, 7.

¹⁰ Carson, “Current Issues,” 27.

¹¹ See, e.g., Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God’s Kingdom: A Thematic-Theological Approach*, NSBT 40, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016); and Gary Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy*, NSBT 6, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

In relation to the current status of the question presented previously, this dissertation will supplement the argumentation of those scholars who see connections in Luke's line of thought in the way he uses παράκλησις throughout Luke-Acts. For example, it will expand on Luke's description of the false *consolation* received by the rich (Luke 6:24) as opposed to the true *consolation* which is the kingdom received by the poor (Luke 6:20), and explore how, in Luke's presentation, this fits Luke's description of Simeon's hope of *consolation* which finds its fulfillment in the salvation that Jesus brought. This study will also explore how παράκλησις is not only a hope that deals with the future (Luke 2:25) but also a present reality (Acts 9:31; 13:15) in Luke's narrative (suggested by Danker). Likewise, it will investigate the connection between the Holy Spirit and παράκλησις in texts such as Luke 2:25 and Acts 9:31 (Barrett). These different pieces of information will help us address the questions raised in the introduction of this proposal as we assess Luke's theology of παράκλησις.

Another aspect that is relevant as we place this dissertation in context is the fact that interpretations of Luke's use of παράκλησις have mostly focused on Simeon's expectation in the beginning of the Gospel (as it was demonstrated in the review of the literature). Such emphasis can be seen as the result of the growing interest—in the second half of the last century—among scholars in the way Judaism is depicted in the NT and in the Jewish background of the NT. Joseph B. Tyson has repeatedly written about this motif in scholarship. He explains that “[s]cholarly interest in this subject has not arisen simply out of concern for antiquity, but to a large extent it has been influenced by recent history. In particular, the Holocaust of 1933–45 has awakened an interest in exploring the roots of modern anti-Semitism.”¹² Tyson says that the

¹² Joseph B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke–Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1992): xii. See also Terence L. Donaldson, *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the NT: Decision Points and Divergent Interpretations* (Waco: Baylor University, 2010).

Holocaust represented a “marked turning point in the history of New Testament Scholarship,”¹³ and a lot of attention was given to Luke-Acts due to the arguably ambiguous view of the Jews in those writings.¹⁴ These studies raised the question of the place of Israel in God’s future plans, and at the turn of the century it could be argued that of “all the topics currently being discussed in Lukan research, the question of Israel's future doubtless counts among those least likely to generate consensus among scholars.”¹⁵

This interest affected different areas of NT scholarship one way or another.¹⁶ Because this is the case, this dissertation will interact with studies on the Jews in Luke-Acts, especially in its discussion of Simeon and the expression *consolation of Israel*. As far as the debate over that passage goes, I will approach the topic in a way that is similar to those scholars that read παράκλησις in connection with *salvation* for all peoples. Through that approach, the present study will help explain the complex and often overlooked relationship that exists between *consolation* and *salvation*. Although Luke’s view of παράκλησις is not an all-encompassing theme, the interaction between the present study and discussions about the Jews may also be relevant for studies on the theme of restoration in Luke-Acts, the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, and the purpose of Luke’s writings.

¹³ Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the Scholars*, 1.

¹⁴ Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the Scholars*, 2. For a thorough presentation of the major scholars and their views regarding Jews in Luke-Acts, see this book by Tyson. For a helpful overview of the major contributions to Lukan studies on the related topics of theology, eschatology and history, see Rebecca I. Denova, *The Things Accomplished Among Us: Prophetic Tradition in the Structural Pattern of Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 141 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997): 41–80.

¹⁵ Michael Wolter, “Israel’s Future,” 307.

¹⁶ Besides this dissertation’s bibliography concerning Luke-Acts, see, e.g., studies on Paul: E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); and on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity: James D. G. Dunn, ed., *Jews and Christians, the Parting of the Ways – A.D. 70 to 135* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

Methodology

It was said above that this dissertation will be a small contribution to the field of biblical theology as it helps to delineate a biblical theme across Luke-Acts. Having said that, this *is not* a biblical theology per se. I will *not* argue that παράκλησις is a central theme in Lukan theology or in the NT, much less in the whole Bible. By “small contribution” I mean simply that this research will provide insights into Lukan theology, and thereby will aid those who engage in more comprehensive biblical theological studies. In terms of methodological procedures, a biblical theological perspective will enable this research to frame questions and look for answers in a way that takes into account several thematic connections within Luke-Acts that have been overlooked or only begun to be explored when it comes to his use of παράκλησις. As it will be seen below, in this dissertation’s approach “[b]iblical theology ... becomes a narrative theology, with its method being informed by literary criticism of the ‘story’ rather than by historical criticism of the origin and form of its sources.”¹⁷ Furthermore, in keeping with a biblical theological perspective on Luke’s use of παράκλησις, this study will also consider the relationship of Luke-Acts and the book of Isaiah.

The texts analyzed in this dissertation will be those in which Luke uses the noun παράκλησις: Luke 2:25; 6:24; Acts 4:36; 9:31; 13:15; 15:31. The author’s uses of the verb παρακαλέω will also be considered and summarized, as this will give us insights into Luke’s “theology of *consolation*”. Considering the focus on the texts above because of lexical considerations, a comment about word studies seems appropriate. This author has been partially motivated to undertake this study precisely due to the lack of consideration for Luke’s entire

¹⁷ Mead, *Biblical Theology*, 135.

narrative in word studies.¹⁸ In such studies, words are explained by means of definitions and long lists of meanings in diverse biblical passages, but a careful examination of their use in context is often missing.¹⁹ Such examination is the task of this dissertation.²⁰ Although elements of a synchronic type of word study (such as the use of a word by one author, in a specific work) will be present, this will only be part of the process.²¹ As it tries to understand how Luke uses παράκλησις in his story, this study will be descriptive—looking to bring to light the author’s own voice, and avoid “normative theological claims”²² that fall beyond the scope of the present work.

In order to analyze the texts above, this dissertation will employ aspects of narrative

¹⁸ At times, even the immediate context is neglected in word studies. See, e.g., the treatment of παράκλησις in Luke 6:24 that is offered in Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner’s, 1906), 313–14: “From *παρά*, to the side of, and *καλέω*, to call or summon. Literally, a calling to one’s side to help; and therefore *entreaty*, passing on into the sense of *exhortation*, and thence into that of *consolatory* exhortation; and so coming round to mean *that which one is summoned to give to a suppliant—consolation*. Thus it embodies the *call* for help, and the *response* to the call. Its use corresponds with that of the kindred verb *παρακαλέω*.” It goes on to cite many biblical passages without consideration of the present context. Towards the end of the comment on this occurrence, it says that “the word *comfort* goes deeper than its popular conception of *soothing*. It is from the later Latin *confortare*, to make strong.”

¹⁹ See James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 206–62. See also Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and their Meanings: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 17–32.

²⁰ In this way, this dissertation is similar to those that look to understand the meaning and function of phrases within a work, not just individual words. See, e.g., David Mark Ball, *‘I Am’ in John’s Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications*, JSNTSup 124 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).

²¹ For a helpful article that recommends a synchronic approach to word studies and discusses the role of such studies in the exegetical process, see John H. Walton, “Principles for Productive Word Studies,” in *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: The Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 158–68.

²² James K. Mead, *Biblical Theology: Issues, Methods, and Themes* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 9. This decision is due to the scope of the dissertation and does not imply that normative discourse does not have a place in the study of this topic. In this respect, I agree with Carson: “Ideally, *biblical theology will transcend mere description and linking of the biblical documents, and call men and women to knowledge of the living God.*” Carson, “Current Issues,” 31.

criticism. This method²³ in biblical studies “surfaced prominently in the 1980s”²⁴ as a result of the dissatisfaction among biblical scholars with the way that biblical narratives were being read.²⁵ Yale theologian Hans W. Frei²⁶ is often considered the first to demonstrate how approaches associated with the historical-critical method “fail to take seriously the narrative character of the Gospels.”²⁷ In those approaches, the Gospels were customarily “regarded less for [their] narrative presentation of Jesus’ ministry, and more as an arsenal of episodes from which favorites might be drawn.”²⁸ Once the need to read the biblical narratives *as narratives in their own right* was acknowledged by biblical scholars, and once theologians found new conversation partners among literary critics (before that, their most natural interlocutors had been historians), categories that were utilized to analyze stories (such as “events, characters, and settings”²⁹) began to be used in biblical studies, and meaning was found *in the text* itself rather than *behind the text* as it was in historical approaches.

²³ Although for our purposes we can speak of narrative criticism as a somewhat defined and singular method, it is opportune to recognize that “the narrative criticism that is currently practiced in NT studies is an eclectic discipline that borrows from a number of areas, including rhetorical criticism, structuralism, and reader-response criticism. The method is still undergoing development, but some widely-accepted principles can be identified.” Mark Alan Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 240.

²⁴ Joel B. Green, “Narrative Criticism,” in *Methods for Luke*, MBI, ed. Joel B. Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 74.

²⁵ For an overview of the history of the inception of narrative criticism into biblical studies, see Mark Alan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, GBS (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991), 1–6. See also Green, “Narrative Criticism,” 74–81.

²⁶ Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

²⁷ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 2.

²⁸ Green, “Narrative Criticism,” 77. Green cites Fitzmyer’s commentary to illustrate the use of historical-critical method applied to Luke: “The classic work on the Third Gospel by Joseph Fitzmyer is a good example. Completed in 1985, it marked the pinnacle of redaction-critical study of the Gospels, but in more than 1,600 pages of erudition, Fitzmyer treats pericope after pericope of the Third Gospel, each in relative isolation, with little attention paid to the significance of the narrative location of that pericope, and thus with only the barest of attempts to account for narrative coherence.” Green, “Narrative Criticism,” 77.

²⁹ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 23.

The concise description of what gave rise to narrative criticism above evidences an aspect of this method that will be the most relevant for this dissertation: studying the individual passages in the context of the entire text(s) of Luke-Acts. This aspect of narrative criticism, which treats “narratives as complete tapestries in which the parts fit together to form an organic whole,”³⁰ will be appropriate, for instance, for our consideration of Simeon’s expectation. Among other things, it will help us answer the question, “Considering Luke’s narrative (including characterization, narrator’s point of view, etc.), does it look like the implied author of Luke-Acts anticipated a national or political restoration for the people of Israel?” In order to assess Luke’s use of παράκλησις, elements such as the characterization of Simeon will be useful to determine whether he is a reliable or unreliable character, as well as Luke’s characterization of Barnabas in which we encounter an atypical translation of his name. The narrator’s point of view regarding the people of God, Israel, and the Holy Spirit, will also be important elements as we study those passages in relation to their connection to the story which Luke tells by means of his narrative. Although it may seem as if this dissertation is picking and choosing among the available narrative-critical tools, this is a common feature of narrative approaches. As Tannehill³¹ explains of his use of the method, “In this work I am not concerned with developing narrative theory ... but with using selected aspects of narrative criticism to gain new insights into Luke-Acts.”³²

³⁰ James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 39.

³¹ Tannehill was a pioneer in the discipline of narrative criticism in NT studies. He was the first to produce a narrative study of Luke-Acts. Other scholars who “deserve recognition as pioneers of the discipline” and their works are David Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), and Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988). Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 6.

³² Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:1.

As we discuss the use of aspects of narrative criticism for interpreting Luke-Acts, there are three matters that need to be addressed in this section. First, the terminology employed to talk about the *implied author*.³³ In this dissertation, “Luke” will be used interchangeably with “implied author” without implying that Luke, Paul’s companion, is the actual author. Although I take no issue with the traditional witness to Luke as the author,³⁴ the analysis offered in this dissertation does not depend on the reliability of the tradition. Second, the matter of genre. In this work, there will be no discussion of genre, as “[n]arrative analysis applies to narratives of all genres, whether their primary objective is historical or fictional. It can therefore be applied to Luke and Acts without first solving the dispute over what genre(s) they are.”³⁵

A third issue that needs attention at this point is the unity of Luke and Acts. Up to this point I have employed the term “Luke-Acts”, and we now turn to the reasons behind the decision for taking both books together and for indicating it through this terminology. The hyphenated term was popularized in the 1920s by Henry J. Cadbury. In his book *The Making of Luke-Acts*,³⁶ Cadbury complains that critical scholarship has treated Luke and Acts separately,³⁷ and defends that “[i]n any study of Luke and Acts, their unity is a fundamental and illuminating axiom.”³⁸ He begins his argument by saying that the same authorship of the books is universally agreed upon, even as they have differences in subject matter and sources, and goes on to acknowledge that just

³³ See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 5–6.

³⁴ Fitzmyer, who accepts the traditional view, offers a summary of the tradition in *The Gospel*, 35–41.

³⁵ William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke–Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 2. Tannehill also does not discuss the genre(s) of the two books in his *The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts*.

³⁶ Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke–Acts* (London: SPCK, 1958).

³⁷ Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 7.

³⁸ Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 8.

the fact that they have the same author “is not enough.”³⁹ The point he is making is that Luke and Acts “are not merely two independent writings from the same pen; they are a single continuous work. Acts is neither an appendix nor an afterthought. It is probably an integral part of the author’s original plan and purpose.”⁴⁰ The unity between the two books is reinforced, in Cadbury’s view, by Luke’s reference to Τὸν πρῶτον λόγον (Acts 1:1). He argues that the first account should be understood as “volume one”⁴¹ rather than “former treatise,”⁴² for this is in accordance with “the conventions of ancient writing.”⁴³ Because of this, and despite the canonical separation⁴⁴ of these two books, Cadbury suggests that the “two books of Luke need above all a common name. No doubt they once had such a name and were distinguishable as Book I and Book II. What that name was we cannot know; it perhaps contained none of the words ‘gospel,’ ‘acts,’ ‘Luke,’ or ‘apostles’.”⁴⁵ One can easily see how this suggestion of a common name gave rise to the form commonly used today, about which Cadbury says: “Hyphenated compounds are not typographically beautiful or altogether congenial to the English language, but in order to emphasize the historic unity of the two volumes addressed to

³⁹ Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 8.

⁴⁰ Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 8–9.

⁴¹ Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 9.

⁴² Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 9.

⁴³ Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 9.

⁴⁴ Regarding the canonical division, Cadbury says that it can easily be explained by the fact that volume one was like the three other books that the church esteemed and put together because of their similarities. “The companion volume belonged to another category of Christian writings, memorabilia about the apostles.” Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 10. Bock, who thinks that Luke–Acts can be read as a unity, concurs with Cadbury in his position regarding the canonical division of Luke and Acts: “The reasons for this was because the church made a clear topical break between the accounts directly about Jesus and those dealing with the subsequent new community, a break that Acts even makes in the way the two volumes were issued. Nevertheless, the continuities that Luke–Acts shows are important theological and literary elements of how those works were designed to function. Making too much of this topical break can risk losing those connections.” Bock, *A Theology*, 59.

⁴⁵ Cadbury, *Luke–Acts*, 10.

Theophilus the expression ‘Luke-Acts’ is perhaps justifiable.”⁴⁶

In the decades that followed, the unity of Luke-Acts became a widespread consensus in Lukan scholarship. Even though it was disputed by a handful of scholars,⁴⁷ it could be said in the early 1990s that “the notion of the unity of Luke-Acts has remained virtually unscathed.”⁴⁸ In order to re-open the debate and challenge that consensus, Parsons and Pervo wrote in 1993 *Rethinking the Unity of Luke-Acts*. In this book, they categorize five ways in which the unity of Luke and Acts can be understood: authorial, canonical, generic,⁴⁹ narrative,⁵⁰ and theological.

⁴⁶ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 11.

⁴⁷ See a summary of the challenges raised in Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 5–6.

⁴⁸ Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 6.

⁴⁹ Their discussion of generic unity is not relevant for our purposes because, as Parsons and Pervo put it, “[t]he unity of Luke and Acts is not a hypothesis requiring generic identity.” Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 43. Also, “Recognition of one type of unity, for example, narrative unity, does not depend upon generic unity. R. Tannehill’s exemplary two-volume study of the narrative unity of Luke and Acts does not address the question of genre.” Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 21. Marshall speculates whether “a new phenomenon [such as the unity of a Gospel and a work such as Acts] required a new genre to give it adequate expression.” I. Howard Marshall, “Acts and the ‘Former Treatise’,” in *The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting*, ed. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke, vol. 1 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, ed. Bruce W. Winter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 180. Others, however, concede that the unity of Luke-Acts exists despite the different genres of Luke and Acts: “Even though there is a possible generic shift from the biographical stance of Luke’s Gospel to the historiographic purpose of Acts, these two genres are sufficiently closely related — and the other evidence for unity is so overwhelming, including the introductions — that I will proceed from the standpoint that each is a volume of a two-volume work by the person we call Luke.” Stanley E. Porter, “Scripture Justifies Mission: The Use of the Old Testament in Luke-Acts,” in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 108.

⁵⁰ This category is directly related to this dissertation’s approach, and thus their chapter on narrative unity will be summarized. When dealing with the narrative unity of the two documents, they start by using Seymour Chatman’s distinction between the necessary components of a narrative: *story* and *discourse*. “In simple terms, the story is the *what* in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the *how*.” Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 19. Parsons and Pervo’s analysis has to do with the level of discourse in the narrative, where they focus primarily on the narration in Luke and Acts. They argue that at the first-level narration, the narrators of Luke and Acts use different literary devices. This is evidenced by linguistic differences, and other literary aspects such as the use of *parallels* (e.g., journeys in Luke and Acts), which they claim have different functions and therefore do not stress narrative unity; *linkage* (e.g., Jesus’s command that the disciples should wait in Jerusalem and the ascension), in which the differences between the linked accounts are so much that they can be considered “independent, discrete narratives, at least on the discourse level[;]” and the *prefaces*, which cannot attest to the narrative unity alone, considering that the ending of Luke does not clearly anticipate that there would be another volume, against a conventional feature at the time. Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 53–64. Other features of the narration that are believed to stress the discontinuity of the narrative on the level of discourse are the participation of the narrator of Acts in the story (where he becomes homodiegetic), whereas Luke’s narrator is extrinsic to the story (heterodiegetic); and, “on the second

They begin by showing that both authorial unity and canonical unity are not debatable. The first is a given (only a few have contested it), and the latter is nonexistent, since “according to all evidence available to us, Luke and Acts never stood side-by-side in any canonical list.”⁵¹ Their argument, then, has to do with the last three of those: generic, narrative, and theological. They claim that “[t]he assumption of authorial unity of the Lukan writings has led, in part, to the conclusion that Luke and Acts are unified in these other ways as well.”⁵² And the thesis they attempt to defend is “that the unity of ‘Luke-Acts’ is a largely unexamined hypothesis, and that upon closer scrutiny it may be more helpful to speak of Luke *and* Acts—a gospel and its sequel written by the same real author, but two very distinct narratives embodying different literary devices, generic conventions, and perhaps even theological concerns.”⁵³

It is beyond the scope of the present study to defend the unity of Luke-Acts against Parsons and Pervo, but some comments to justify our decision seem necessary. After their suggestive study, many scholars have offered their responses,⁵⁴ and it should be noted that the consensus

level of the narrative,” the participation of some characters in Acts within the stories they narrate, such as Paul’s narration of his conversion, whereas Jesus narrates parables in which he is not one of the characters. Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 65–67. Also, Luke’s narrator uses second-degree narration (a narrative within the narrative) often, while the narrator of Acts does not. And the function of their intradiegetic narrators (such as Jesus narrating something within the narrative of Luke) differs. Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 51–52.

They present still other details to prove their thesis that the narration of the two documents demonstrates that there is no unity at the discourse level of the narrative, but the above summary is sufficient for our purposes. The point is that “[t]he conclusion to which this preliminary study leads is that at the discourse level it is inappropriate to speak of the narrative unity of Luke and Acts. These two works are independent narratives with distinct narration, that is, they each tell the story *differently*.” But how about unity at the *story* level? Parsons and Pervo say that Tannehill’s view of narrative unity is focused “almost exclusively at the level of story,” and question whether it is possible to conceive of unity on the story level even though at the discourse level there is no unity. Does it not amount to two stories, rather than one told *differently*? “And if it is possible that this story level exists only in the construal of the modern reader, then the assumption of narrative unity between Luke and Acts needs serious examination.” Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 82–83.

⁵¹ Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 8.

⁵² Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 18.

⁵³ Parsons and Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity*, 18.

⁵⁴ The first scholarly defense of the unity of Luke–Acts as a result of Parsons and Pervo’s book is found in Marshall, “Acts and the ‘Former Treatise’,” 163–182. In his essay Marshall argues “that the prologues to the two

still stands.⁵⁵ “For the most part, we can say that monographs on Luke, Acts or Luke-Acts (typically published dissertations) continue to assume and affirm the significance of the unity of the Lukan volumes ... In some cases there is a tacit acknowledgement of the objections of Parsons and Pervo, but with a continued resistance to their hypothesis.”⁵⁶ That resistance can be easily seen in recent commentaries, which continue to say that Parsons and Pervo “have overstated their case. These two volumes may be different in genre, structure, and style, but it is necessary to explain the links between them at the level of story, themes, and theology.”⁵⁷

More recently, the unity of Luke-Acts has also been called into question from the perspective of the history of reception of the two books. Andrew Gregory demonstrated that, with only two exceptions, Luke and Acts were read separately before Irenaeus,⁵⁸ and C. Kevin Rowe took it a step further and questioned whether the reception history gives us an indication

books indicate that they are to be read as one connected story, that various small features in the narratives point in the same direction and that the ending of the Gospel points forward to a sequel.” Marshal, “Acts and the ‘Former Treatise’,” 163. Another criticism to their enterprise is that they do not define what *narrative* is, but only assume that their list of differences at the discourse level prove the disunity of Luke and Acts. See Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God’s People Intertextually* (New York: T&T Clark), 37; and Joel B. Green, “Luke-Acts, or Luke and Acts?,” in *Reading Acts Today: Essays in Honour of Loveday C. A. Alexander*, ed. Steve Walton et al; LNTS (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 103.

⁵⁵ Michael F. Bird, “The Unity of Luke-Acts in Recent Discussion,” *JSNT* 29 (2007): 434. Michael F. Bird says that “despite warranting a frequent mention in the footnotes of scholarly monographs, they have not convinced the majority of Lukan scholars and have not overturned the consensus.”

⁵⁶ Bird, “The Unity of Luke-Acts,” 426–27. Bird’s article offers a survey of scholarship after Parsons and Pervo’s book.

⁵⁷ David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 7. Obviously, Pervo’s recent commentary on Acts takes a different stance on this issue. After a brief exposition of the differences between the Gospel and Acts, he warns that “[t]he unities of Luke and Acts are questions to be pursued rather than presuppositions to be exploited.” And he explains that his “commentary does not presume that the author planned and executed his books in advance.” Richard E. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 19–20.

⁵⁸ “This investigation of the evidence for the reception of *Luke* and *Acts* in the period before Irenaeus has found no evidence other than that of Irenaeus and the Muratorian Fragment to demonstrate that *Luke* and *Acts* were read as two volumes of one work.” Andrew Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus: Looking for Luke in the Second Century*, WUNT 169 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 352.

that these two books should be read separately today.⁵⁹ However, their observations are not an outright rejection of the possibility of reading the two books as a unity, but just an assessment of the way they were originally read (as Luke and Acts) and the implications thereof for our reading. Rowe admits that his view “does not dispute the notion that Luke-Acts can be read as a literary unity,”⁶⁰ and acknowledges that “[t]here is every reason to say that the two volumes are unified structurally, thematically, and theologically—which is to say literarily in a rather full sense—but it does not follow that the volumes had to be, or were intended to be, issued together as one work.”⁶¹ Thus, although arguments from the history of reception are important for the debate over the unity of Luke-Acts, they do not disprove the narrative unity of those books.

The survey regarding the unity of Luke-Acts above is intended to show that it is currently fitting to read Luke-Acts together in Lukan scholarship. Having said that, this dissertation will not argue for unity, but assume it for two reasons. First, because most of the scholars surveyed in our review of the literature read this way, and this dissertation will be in conversation with them; and second, because reading Luke-Acts “as a unified work [is] most important for doing biblical theology,”⁶² and therefore it is suitable for this project.

By treating Luke-Acts as a narrative in their own right, this dissertation will not try to identify sources behind the texts, nor examine how the author’s redaction of previous material

⁵⁹ See C. Kavin Rowe, “History, Hermeneutics and the History of Luke-Acts,” *JSNT* 28 (2005): 131–57; and C. Kavin Rowe, “Literary Unity and Reception History: Reading Luke-Acts as Luke and Acts,” *JSNT* 29 (2007): 449–57.

⁶⁰ Rowe, “History,” 131.

⁶¹ Rowe, “Literary Unity,” 451. Rowe distances his position from Parsons and Pervo’s earlier thesis: “In contrast to Parsons and Pervo, I do not question the literary, theological or ‘architectonic’ unity of Luke-Acts. Indeed, I think it demonstrable that the author of the Gospel did write Acts as a sequel to Luke.” Rowe, “Literary Unity,” 451.

⁶² Bock, *A Theology*, 60.

might help us understand his theology. The focus will be on the final form of the Gospel and Acts as we find them in modern critical editions of the Greek NT. In the case of Acts, the Western text will not be taken into consideration because the passages analyzed in this study are not significantly affected by the different readings it contains.⁶³

Beyond the analysis of the texts in the context of the narrative, an additional step will be taken to support the thesis: an investigation of Luke's use of Isaiah. This is necessary because this dissertation will study Luke's view of *consolation*, which is an Isaianic theme. This is evident in the beginning of the Gospel, where Luke describes Simeon's hope in Isaianic terms, and the words spoken by Simeon come from the book of Isaiah. After the study of the texts, an examination of Luke's use of Isaiah will help us determine whether the thesis is supported by his use of the prophet. Proceeding this way as one focuses on the whole of Luke-Acts is also important because in "the two-volume work of Luke, the prophet Isaiah plays an important role. Besides a number of allusions, we find in Luke-Acts seven places where Luke unmistakably quotes this prophet. These quotations mark without exception important turning-points in the story."⁶⁴

The purpose of surveying Luke's use of Isaiah is to draw general conclusions in order to compare them to the analysis that this dissertation will offer of the topic of παράκλησις, not to

⁶³ For a discussion of the Western text of Acts, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1975), 259–72.

⁶⁴ Joop Smit, "The Function of the Two Quotations from Isaiah in Luke 3–4," in *The Scriptures of Israel in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maarten J. J. Menken*, ed Bart J. Koet, Steve Moyise, and Joseph Verheyden (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 41. Joop Smit notes the following turning points and quotations: "the beginning of the preaching of John the Baptist (Luke 3:4–6; Isa 40:3–5), the beginning of the ministry of Jesus (Luke 4:18–19; Isa 61:1–2 and 58:6), the beginning of the passion (Luke 22:37; Isa 53:12), the conclusion of the speech of Stephen (Acts 7:49–50; Isa 66:1–2), the beginning of the proclamation among the gentiles (Acts 8:32–33; Isa 53:7–8), the conclusion of Paul's preaching in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:47; Isa 49:6) and the conclusion of Acts itself (Acts 28:26–27; Isa 6:9–10)." Cite In addition to the quotations, Luke's Gospel has more allusions to Isaiah than to any other book of the OT. See Charles A. Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel*, JSNTSup 94 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 49.

argue for a particular view of Luke's use of the OT⁶⁵ or to offer a detailed study of the quotations and/or allusions.⁶⁶ This dissertation will interact with scholars who have offered their contributions in this area.⁶⁷

There are also plans to include an appendix with a brief study of the hope of *consolation* (as it relates to *salvation*, *restoration*, and other themes) in Second Temple Jewish literature. Although not directly related to the argument of this dissertation, such study will be relevant for the thesis as it will demonstrate how appeals to an understanding of Second Temple Judaism's nationalistic hopes and its direct applicability to one's interpretation of Luke's phrase *consolation of Israel* may not be satisfactory. In its treatment of Second Temple literature, this dissertation will both draw examples of the topic from primary sources and interact with scholars who have worked with those sources.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ For discussions of different views on Luke's use of the OT, see Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 12 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 13–53. See also Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition*, 13–44. For a helpful overview of the issues in the study of the NT use of the OT, see Jonathan Lunde, "An Introduction to Central Questions in the New Testament use of the Old Testament," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Kenneth Berding, and Jonathan Lunde (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 7–41.

⁶⁶ For a brief and simple discussion of the difference, see Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition*, 46–49.

⁶⁷ Some general guidelines will be followed in our assessment of Luke's use of Isaiah, especially for understanding those passages that are in the immediate context of our selected texts. See Klyne Snodgrass, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 47–49.

⁶⁸ Fuller, *The Restoration*, 198–207, for instance, criticizes those who argue that Jews in Luke–Acts must have expected a nationalistic restoration. He disputes that there are various models of the hope of restoration in Early Jewish Literature, and therefore restoration in Luke is not necessarily political. He suggests that "the pressing question is not whether Luke has a theology of restoration or not, but how he interprets it." Fuller, *The Restoration*, 198. From the standpoint of the whole story, he concludes that "Luke ... carefully words Israel's hopes in these introductory chapters in terms that allow him to shape and revise the understanding of restoration over the course of his two-part narrative." Fuller, *The Restoration*, 204. He argues that Luke portrays the work of Jesus and his redemption in a broad way, not in political terms. Luke "de-militarizes the language of deliverance," describes the ascension to the throne in a way that does not "immediately upsets the earthly Regime of Rome," and expands the circle of the enemies of Israel, including "demonic powers (Luke 10:19; Acts 13:10) and portions of the Jewish population itself (Luke 19:27)." Fuller, *The Restoration*, 204–05. In the same way, the consolation anticipated by Simeon is not explained in the beginning, but is "left open for Luke to elucidate over the course of his story." Fuller, *The Restoration*, 206. The point is that "the story of Israel's restoration begins, not ends, in Luke 1–2." Fuller, *The Restoration*, 207. See also Craig A. Evans, "Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the

Conclusion

This dissertation interacts with studies on the Jewish identity of the NT church and therefore will be relevant to topics such as restoration of Israel and promise and fulfillment. However, the main contribution it makes to scholarship is to the understanding of the theme of consolation that is often overlooked in the narrative crafted by Luke. Such understanding will emerge through a careful analysis of each of the contexts in which *παράκλησις* occurs. As for methodology, this dissertation is situated in the intersection between Biblical Theology and Narrative Criticism. Tools from both these camps will be employed as we follow Luke's rationale of promise and fulfillment of consolation in the narrative.

Gospels,” in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, JSJSup 56, ed. James M. Scott (New York: Brill, 1997), 299–328.

CHAPTER THREE

LUKE 2:25—THE HOPE OF *CONSOLATION* FULFILLED

What is the relationship between Simeon's hope of consolation and his interpretation of salvation in Jesus? Why was it relevant for the author to describe Simeon in such a Jewish way and then open the reader's understanding of salvation in a way that seemingly contradicted Jewish hopes? In this chapter, I will explore how Simeon's hope functions in its context, and address the function of the whole infancy narrative in the rest of Luke-Acts. The point I will make is that Simeon's hope is met with its fulfillment as he sees the salvation in Jesus. In other words, the salvation without borders is the *consolation* he expected.

Simeon's Expectation and Simeon's Song: Connection between *Consolation* and *Salvation*

Whereas it is widely accepted that, on a narrative level, Simeon's song is connected to his hope as described by Luke, such connection has only superficially been explored. In other words, scholars generally see a connection between the words *salvation* (v.30) and *consolation* (v.25),¹ but they seem to treat these two words in isolation, emphasizing one in detriment of the other, as if both could not be referring to the same kind of deliverance—and thus betraying their view that *consolation* and *salvation* are not closely related. In this section, I begin² to demonstrate that

¹ This means that *consolation*, in this context, is *salvation*. The meaning of this sentence, however, is disputed. See the introduction for the different perspectives.

² This will set up the framework by which I believe one should interpret παράκλησις in Luke-Acts. This study of Luke 2:25 alone, however, will not resolve all the tensions between the two perspectives on Simeon's hope.

such disconnection is not suggested by the text, and this suggests that such disconnection may only be viable when one reads the text with the presupposition that Jews of the first century had a very limited understanding of salvation.³

What is the connection between Simeon's hope and his own interpretation of God's actions at the sight of Jesus? A helpful way to gain insight into this question is by considering the author's way of creating⁴ the scene. Narrative critics tell us that "[t]wo generally recognized narrative techniques of characterization are *showing* and *telling*."⁵ Even though in the Gospels "the preferred method of characterization seems to be the technique of showing,"⁶ Luke does employ the technique of *telling* his readers about some characters' traits and disposition. In Luke's account of the presentation in the Temple, he gives a direct presentation of Simeon, whom he describes as "righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him" (Luke 2:25). This direct presentation seems to show primarily⁷ the

³ An example of this is found in J. Massyngberde Ford, "Zealotism and the Lukan Infancy Narratives," *NovT* 18 (1976): 291: "Simeon, like Zechariah, may have expected a military leader. He is in the temple (we do not know whether he was a priest) waiting for the consolation of Israel. Consolation (*παράκλησις*) while occurring ten times in the primo-canonical books also appears four times in Maccabees (I Mace, χ 24 in the sense of "favour"; xii 9 encouragement; II Mace, vii 24 [the tyrant enticing the boymartyr]; xv 11), the last reference appears on the occasion when Judas is encouraging his soldiers by recording the vision of Onias. Thus *parakl sis* does not necessarily mean quiet consolation, indeed, the classical meaning is "aid", "summons" or "exhortation". Simeon could be awaiting a warlike leader like Judas Maccabeus."

⁴ In terms of *literature*, not *historicity*. In other words, the facts behind the story are not the creation of the author, but the written work through which we apprehend the story is.

⁵ James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 126. These categories can also be referred to as *direct* and *indirect presentation* (e.g. David B. Gowler, "Characterization in Luke: A Socio-Narratological Approach," *BTB* 19 (1989): 54–62). The distinction between *telling* and *showing* in narratives is helpful to the extent that it expresses the different ways by which a narrator can tell a story, although I would not entirely disagree with G rard Genette in that "in contrast to dramatic representation, no narrative can 'show' or 'imitate' the story it tells. All it can do is tell it in a manner which is detailed, precise, 'alive,' and in that way give more or less the *illusion of mimesis*—which is the only narrative mimesis, for this single and sufficient reason: that narration, oral or written, is a fact of language, and language signifies without imitating." G rard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: and Essay in Method*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cornell University, 1983), 164.

⁶ Mark Alan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, GBS (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991), 52.

⁷ I say "primarily" because it is not the "only" thing that Luke's description of Simeon conveys. This will be

Jewishness of Simeon, both because of the words employed and because the previous characters were expectant Jews. Luke's indirect presentation of Simeon, however, from verse 28 onward, accentuates Christian characteristics as later developed throughout the narrative: Simeon accepts Jesus as salvation and explains that this salvation is for all. In other words, when Simeon encounters Jesus, he recognizes that the boy is God's response (salvation) to the expectations of his people—characterized by Luke as *consolation of Israel*. Both Luke's direct and indirect presentation of Simeon in this scene highlight the correlation between *consolation of Israel* and *boundless salvation* in a sort of chiasmic⁸ structure:

A Joseph and Mary go to Jerusalem to **present Jesus**, and there is **Simeon** (2:22–25a)

B Simeon has **the hope (consolation of Israel)** of the people (2:25b)

C He will see it/him before he **dies** (2:26)

X Main point: As someone who represents the expectant Jewish people, Simeon has an encounter with Jesus in a Jewish setting and because of a Jewish custom; and **he received the child and blessed God** (2:27–28)

C' Now he is ready to die for he **has seen** (2:29–30a)

B' The fulfillment (salvation as light for revelation to Gentiles and glory to Israel) of what he expected (2:30b–32)

A' Joseph and Mary are astonished before **Simeon's** way of **presenting Jesus** to them (2:33)

The main point is that faithful Jews should naturally recognize and embrace God's limitless salvation through Jesus, for this is precisely the fulfillment of their expectations, at least

dealt with when we consider the participation of the Holy Spirit.

⁸ For the relevance of chiasmus in the biblical literature, see Brad McCoy, "Chiasmus: An Important Structural Device Commonly Found in Biblical Literature," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 9 (2003): 17–34.

according to Simeon's interpretation. That point is underscored by Luke's clever way of connecting *consolation of Israel* and *salvation*.

It is noteworthy that what Simeon sees is a baby, a person, not a declaration of war against the Roman Empire or any other apparent result of God's deliverance for his people. Nor does Simeon say that his eyes have seen "your Savior", but "your salvation". Had he said *Savior* instead of *salvation*, one might interpret it as a way of pointing to the future, when the Savior would grow up and bring about actual *salvation* for the people. What he is saying instead is that the baby *is*⁹ God's salvation, already in his arms and before his eyes, and therefore he can depart in peace, for his wait (for the consolation of Israel) is over. This is not to say that there is nothing left for the future. The point is that *consolation/salvation* is found in the person of Jesus already, and Simeon understands this, even if there is a "not yet" aspect to the deliverance God promised. Although Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem to present Jesus to the Lord, Luke uses this scene to present Jesus more fully to the reader, and he does that through Simeon.

What is said above confirms that there is a strong connection between *consolation of Israel* and *salvation* for the wider world, as some scholars have noticed (albeit just slightly explored).¹⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson, for instance, says that "The child himself, we are to

⁹ In Lutheran terminology, borrowing from debates concerning Jesus' presence in the Church's celebration of the Lord's Supper, one might say that the baby Jesus *is salvation*, he does *not represent salvation*.

¹⁰ See the section Παράκλησις in Luke 2:25 as Primarily Spiritual Salvation in the introduction for some examples. Also, note that such interpretation was not strange to the church Fathers, as can be gathered from S. Thomas Aquinas' *Catena Aurea*. Among the excerpts presented in this work, we find the following statements by the Fathers: "GREEK EX. Simeon blessed God also, because the promises made to him had received their true fulfillment. For He was reckoned worthy to see with his eyes, and to carry in his arms the consolation of Israel. And therefore he says, *According to your word*, i.e. since I have obtained the completion of your promises... ATHAN. That is to say, the salvation wrought by Christ for the whole world. How then was it said above that he was watching for the consolation of Israel, but because he truly perceived in the spirit that consolation would be to Israel at that time when salvation was prepared for all people. GREEK EX. Mark the wisdom of the good and venerable old man, who before that he was thought worthy of the blessed vision, was waiting for the consolation of Israel, but when he obtained that which he was looking for, exclaims that he saw the salvation of all people. So enlightened was he by the unspeakable radiance of the Child, that he perceived at a glance things that were to happen a long time after." S. Thomas Aquinas, *St. Luke*, vol. 3 of *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected Out of*

understand, *is* the consolation that Simeon was awaiting,”¹¹ and John MacArthur agrees: “Salvation had come to Israel, and [Simeon] was holding the consolation of Israel, the Messiah, in his arms.”¹² A good summary of the correlation between the two terms in this context is offered by Geoffrey W. Grogan, who concludes that “This consolation is personalized, so that for Simeon the Lord’s Christ, the divine salvation and the consolation of Israel are all one. Indeed, for him, all the ideas he has gathered from Isaiah find their focus in a person, the child in his arms.”¹³

In order to better understand the narrative implications for the connection between *consolation of Israel* and *salvation*, one needs to pay attention to Simeon’s (or to the narrator’s) choice of words. He uses σωτήριον here, instead of the more common term σωτηρία. The latter had appeared in Zechariah’s song (1:69, 71, 77), where it expresses a narrower view of salvation: “...horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David... salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us... to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins.” Although these verses do not contradict Simeon’s later universalization of God’s deliverance (e.g. “forgiveness of their sins”),¹⁴ the object of God’s salvation is Israel. By reporting Simeon’s reaction with σωτήριον, Luke is giving the reader a broader and more accurate (as we see later in the narrative) understanding of *salvation* to the

the Works of the Fathers (translated by John Henry Newman; CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), 85–86.

¹¹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 57.

¹² John MacArthur, *Luke 1–5*, MNTC (Chicago: Moody, 2009), 181.

¹³ Geoffrey W. Grogan, “The Light and the Stone: a Christological Study in Luke and Isaiah,” in *Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology Presented to Donald Guthrie*, ed. Donald Guthrie and Harold Hamlyn Rowdon (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 166.

¹⁴ Stein, for instance, sees a connection between *salvation* in Simeon’s and Zechariah’s songs, even if different terminology is employed. See Stein, *Luke*, 99.

people than that of chapter 1. In the NT this word is used almost exclusively by Luke (with the exception of Ephesians 6:17), and only three times: Luke 2:30, 3:6, and Acts 28:28. As Green puts it,

In Luke 3:6 and Acts 28:28, it is used in contexts that emphasize the universalism of God's salvation, which "all flesh shall see," including the Gentiles. And in each case of its appearance in Luke-Acts the Isaianic background of this terminology is evident. Simeon identifies Jesus as this agent of salvation, practically equating the arrival of Jesus, the Lord's Messiah, with the advent of the new era of divine consolation.¹⁵

Green expresses well the nuanced view of salvation that the word σωτήριον conveys, but he seems to downplay the importance of Simeon's statement due to his understanding of σωτήριον as "agent of salvation". He explains that Simeon is "practically equating" Jesus' arrival with the era of consolation, but my view is that Luke is doing precisely that, without reservation. The *salvation* that all flesh shall see (Luke 3:6), which was sent to the Gentiles, who would listen (Acts 28:28), is what Simeon *receives* and *sees* in Jesus, which, according to Luke's presentation, is the fulfillment of the Jewish hope of divine *consolation*.

Aspects of Characterization and Point of View in Luke 2:22–38

We know that Simeon was an expectant Jew who saw in Jesus the fulfillment of his hope, but what that means is still debated, for scholars have assumed what a first century Jew might or might not have been able to believe concerning Jesus given his first-century Jewish background. However, "[a]ny attempt to evaluate characters apart from the actual reading of the text runs the risk of reductionism."¹⁶ How is he characterized? Is there anything in Luke's presentation of

¹⁵ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 148. See also H. H. Oliver, "The Lucan Birth Stories," 221. "There is the same evidence here of universalism as is found in Acts xxviii. 28 where the Lucan word σωτήριον is associated with ἔθνη."

¹⁶ Gowler, "Characterization in Luke," 54.

Simeon that offers the reader a nuanced view of this particular Jew's view of salvation? What information does the implied reader have to reconstruct Simeon from the narrative?¹⁷

In this section I will to consider Simeon's reliability and his function in the narrative. This is necessary because the argument of this dissertation depends on his agreement with the narrator. If he was a misguided character, then the subsequent sections in which it will be argued that Luke employs the term *παράκλησις* in a matter that is coherent with its relationship with salvation for all as we see in Luke chapter 2 will make no sense. Having said that, I am not concerned with the question whether Simeon *is* or *is not* a reliable character, for most scholars would agree that he is reliable, and as such his interpretation of the unfolding plans of God is to be adopted by the reader of the Gospel. Rather, what we need to consider is *how* Luke's strong presentation of his reliability models for the reader the correct way in which the correlation between *consolation of Israel* and *salvation* for all nations must be interpreted.

Even if a correlation between *consolation of Israel* and *salvation* for all has been established, it is necessary to consider whether that view espouses Luke's point of view as he presents this scene. By point of view I mean "the conceptual framework or worldview of the narrator, also called the ideological point of view,"¹⁸ which reveals the "general worldview that the narrator wants the reader to adopt or reject."¹⁹ Through Luke's characterization of Simeon, the reader is informed of Simeon's "general orientation [...] toward truth or untruth,"²⁰ and that has to do with his view of *consolation* as well. Does his point of view espouse the narrator's? Is

¹⁷. As the author puts it, "narrative critics are interested in characterization, that is, the process through which the implied author provides the implied reader with what is necessary to reconstruct a character from the narrative." Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 52

¹⁸ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 169.

¹⁹ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 167.

²⁰ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 54.

it the same as that of other characters in the story? In this analysis, I will focus on the so-called objective planes on which point of view is expressed: phraseological and spatial-temporal.²¹

Phraseological Point of View

“One of the most accessible aspects of point of view is the phraseological plane, or the point of view expressed in the words and phrases that the narrator selects for the characters as well as the narrator's own voice.”²² *Phraseological* point of view surfaces in the narrator’s voice, both in what he says and what he leaves out, as well as the words the characters use.²³ The aforementioned word σωτήριο that is used by Simeon is one example in which we detect the evaluative point of view that in this narrative salvation is to be understood in broad terms. As Klaus Berger summarizes the meaning of that word in the context of Simeon’s song, “Das eschatologische Heil ist in dem neugeborenen Knaben präsent.”²⁴ Now we turn to other aspects of Luke’s characterization of Simeon that give us a better understanding of this character’s role in the narrative.

In Luke’s description of Simeon we learn, as noted previously, that he is “righteous and devout” (Luke 2:25), and that these characteristics accentuate his Jewishness²⁵ in a positive light.

²¹ For a discussion of point of view and the four planes, see Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 169–73, and Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 53–54. The so-called *psychological* point of view is not prominent in this section of the Gospel, and the *ideological* point of view of the narrator will be examined through the *phraseological* and *spatial-temporal* point of views. As Resseguie puts it, “Ideological point of view in a narrative is expressed through phraseological, psychological, and spatial-temporal planes.” Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 170.

²² Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 175.

²³ In other words, “What the narrator includes or omits establishes on a phraseological plane an ideological perspective.” Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 183.

²⁴ Klaus Berger, “Das Canticum Simeonis (Lk 2:29–32).” *NovT* 27 (1985), 30.

²⁵ This is true especially because of the word εὐλαβής, translated as “devout”. It is used only by Luke in the NT, always referring to Jews. Acts 2:5: “There were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, *devout* men from every nation under heaven.” Acts 8:2: “And *devout* men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.” Acts 22:12: “And a certain Ananias, a *devout* man according to the law.”

However, Simeon is not only described as a good Jew. Luke’s emphatic mention of the Holy Spirit among the people (not in its relationship to Jesus) in this context is striking. Apart from the first two chapters, in the Gospel the Holy Spirit is a promise yet to be fulfilled for the community of believers. It is mentioned in Luke 3:16 by John, when he says that Jesus would (in the future) “baptize you with Holy Spirit and fire,” and at the end of the Gospel (Luke 24:49), where it is referred to by Jesus as a promise of the Father that was about to be fulfilled. In between these two references, the Holy Spirit is mentioned in connection with Jesus at his baptism (Luke 3:22), temptation (Luke 4:1) and ministry (Luke 4:14, 18; 10:21), but does not appear to be in activity among the disciples as it would be later in the book of Acts. In Luke 1–2, however, the Spirit is present among the expectant Jews. It fills John the Baptist even before his birth (Luke 1:15), it fills Elizabeth when she is visited by the pregnant Mary (Luke 1:41), and it fills Zechariah (Luke 1:67), who then prophesies.²⁶ Besides them, the Holy Spirit is especially active in Simeon. It appears three times in a span of three verses, and the word order in the first appearance is emphatic²⁷ (πνεῦμα ἦν ἅγιον). Luke tells us that the Holy Spirit *is upon him*, something was revealed to him *by the Holy Spirit*, and he is led to the Temple *in/by the Spirit*. As Mark Coleridge notes,

The difference between Simeon here and the inspired characters of earlier episodes is that the Holy Spirit—initially at least—inspires Simeon to act rather than speak. This is the infancy narrative’s first and only instance of action under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and as such it adds an important element to the narrative’s understanding of the influence of the Holy Spirit.²⁸

²⁶ The Holy Spirit coming upon Mary (Luke 1:35) is not considered here because that has more to do with the Spirit’s participation in the Lord’s conception than with its filling a believer.

²⁷ Luke’s word order here is unique: «καὶ πνεῦμα ἦν ἅγιον ἐπ’ αὐτόν». Marshall hypothesizes that this might be for emphasis. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 118.

²⁸ Mark Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative: Narrative as Christology in Luke 1–2*, JSNTSup 88

By characterizing Simeon's relationship to the Spirit in such a way, Luke is making the reader "aware that all Simeon does, experiences, and says is under the direct control of God."²⁹ Ju Hur claims that the Holy Spirit, as well as voices from heaven, angels, and OT citations form a "divine frame of reference," and "if characters are engaged with the divine frame of reference in a positive way, that is, endorsed by the narrator, this functions as a literary indicator that they are reliable characters who share the same (triumph) ideology with the Lukan narrator."³⁰ That information provided by the author makes Simeon a very reliable character.³¹ As Tiede puts it, Simeon's "credentials are above reproach, and the repeated mention of the Holy Spirit confirms all that he expects to see and does see."³²

In the OT, "'The Holy Spirit' as an expression occurs [...] only at Psalm 51:11 (LXX 50:13) and Isaiah 63:10–11."³³ Because of that, and given the fact that this section of the Gospel is full of references to texts from Isaiah, Steven F. Plymale thinks "we can reasonably suggest that Luke had the passage from Isaiah in mind as he mentioned the Holy Spirit's role in Simeon's life. He seems to be alerting the reader to the significance of the Simeon episode in

(Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 165.

²⁹ Steven F. Plymale, "The prayer of Simeon," in *The Lord's Prayer and Other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era*, ed. Mark Harding and Mark Christopher Kiley (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 29.

³⁰ Hur, *A Dynamic Reading*, 101.

³¹ As Powell explains, in addition to the narrator's, "the evaluative point of view of God is by definition true and that of Satan untrue. What about the other characters? The reader will judge whether their evaluative points of view are true by comparing them with the points of view of the narrator, God, and Satan." Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 54. Ju Hur says that "The narrator's ideological point of view in Luke–Acts claims to encompass God's point of view through which he evaluates or comments on characters, depicted through inside views or outward behaviour (for instance, see Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke 1.6; Simeon in Lk. 2.25; Herod's death in Acts 12.23)." Ju Hur, *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke–Acts*, 99.

³² Tiede, "Glory to Thy People," 26.

³³ Steven F. Plymale, "The Prayer of Simeon," 29.

God's plan of salvation."³⁴ This might be part of the reason why Luke mentions the Spirit at this point, but more can be said when one looks at how emphatic Luke is, and how the Spirit seems to function in this part of the narrative. This unusual presence and activity of the Spirit in chapters 1 and 2 and particularly in its emphatic relation to Simeon conveys the narrator's point of view that there is more in common between those Jews and later Christians than current studies of first-century Judaism seem to admit. The Spirit in the beginning of the story reminds us of the Spirit after Pentecost.³⁵ Later, in Peter's speech (Acts 2:17–18), as he interprets a prophecy from Joel, he says that God would pour out his Spirit on sons and daughters, young and old, and on male and female servants and they would prophecy. Luke gives us a glimpse of a similar outpouring even before Jesus' birth, as Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Simeon are filled with the Spirit in a manner that is remarkably similar to what would happen in the post-Pentecost period. This opens the possibility that for Luke the perspective of those first-century Jews is not so different from the post-resurrection understanding of the Savior and of salvation, and therefore the reader does not need to look to answers about their perspective outside of Luke's narrative. This relationship of the Spirit to Simeon suggests, Oliver claims, that

the intentional character of Luke's presentation of the relationship of the theme of universalism and the Spirit appears in the example of Simeon. As the Spirit is the initial force behind Luke's insistence upon universalism in Acts, so it is the Spirit-filled Simeon who makes the major forecast of this universalism in the nativity story.³⁶

W. Barnes Tatum challenges Oliver by stating that "he does not perceive that St Luke uses

³⁴ Steven F. Plymale, "The Prayer of Simeon," 29.

³⁵ Although Hur does not seem to go as far as to practically equate the activity of the Spirit in the beginning of the Gospel to the pouring down that takes place after Jesus' ascension, he says that "the prologue as the 'prelude' to Luke–Acts foreshadows the characterization of both the Spirit and Spirit-filled characters appearing in the plot of the main narrative." Hur, *A Dynamic Reading*, 203.

³⁶ H. H. Oliver, *The Lucan Birth Stories*, 225.

the birth stories *in order* to portray the first period in the story of salvation, the Epoch of Israel.”³⁷ Tatum argues that “The activity of the Spirit [in the first 2 chapters of the Gospel] recalls the nature and work of the Spirit in old Israel [...] Thus, the Spirit-motif characterizes the time of the births of John and Jesus as the Epoch of Israel.”³⁸ Against the opinion that the Spirit in the beginning of the Gospel connects the prologue to the church of Acts (or to the “Epoch of the Church”), Tatum maintains that

there is a decisive difference between the prophetic Spirit operative at the births of John and Jesus and the prophetic Spirit effective within the later Church. Whereas at the births of John and Jesus only a *few* chosen individuals receive the Spirit, within the Church everyone is a recipient [...] Within the church [sic] *everyone* is a prophet. Thus, it is more correct to say that the role of the Spirit as the prophetic Spirit in the nativity stories recalls the role of the Spirit in the past history of Israel. This *contrast* between the *prophetic Spirit* in Luke i–ii and the *prophetic Spirit* in the Epoch of the Church offers further evidence that in the former section of his gospel St Luke characterizes the Epoch of Israel.³⁹

Tatum’s arguments are noteworthy, but insufficient to rule out the possibility that the Spirit in the beginning of the Gospel may be Luke’s way of showing the reader that those Jews are in agreement with those who later (in Acts) are influenced by the Spirit in the same way. Firstly, although Jesus’ relationship to the Spirit is undeniably different from John’s, it is not so obvious that the *prophetic Spirit* belongs to the Epoch of Israel (to use Tatum’s terminology) and is not present in Jesus’ ministry (e.g. Luke 4:17–19). Secondly, Tatum’s distinction of *few* and *everyone* seems overstated. The *few* characters in the beginning of the Gospel comprise, proportionally, a great number of people given the total number of characters presented in that section of the book. Correspondingly, not *everyone* in the church is said to be filled with the

³⁷ W. Barnes Tatum, “The Epoch of Israel: Luke I–II and the Theological Plan of Luke–Acts,” *NTS* 13 (1967), 186.

³⁸ Tatum, “The Epoch,” 189–90.

³⁹ Tatum, “The Epoch,” 191.

prophetic Spirit.

Considering the above, it is not farfetched to say that the meaning of *consolation of Israel* is not to be understood apart from the “Jewish Christian” framework that the author is creating. Even the placement of Simeon’s hope in Luke’s description seems to point to this unified Jewish (hope) and Christian (fulfillment) interpretation of *consolation of Israel*, as he places it between Simeon’s Jewish and Christian characteristics: “*righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.*” It is important for the reader to notice that Luke is describing Simeon this way for a purpose, for “[d]irect definition plays a critical part in the characterization because it creates in the mind of the reader an explicit, rational, and authoritative impression of a character.”⁴⁰

Luke’s phraseological point of view that Simeon’s hope is not so different from the hope of later characters can also be seen in the author’s use of the verb *προσδέχομαι*. In Luke-Acts, this verb frequently takes as its object a word or expression that refers to eternal salvation, without distinguishing whether it is for the people of Israel or for Gentiles. Some were “looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38), Joseph of Arimathea was “looking for the kingdom of God” (Luke 23:51), and Paul as well as other Jews look for the hope that “there will be resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous” (Acts 24:15).⁴¹ The use of the same verb suggests consistency of hope, and not all of those instances—even if describing the hope of Jewish characters—denote a nationalistic view of salvation.

Another way by which the narrator hints at Simeon’s connection to later characters—both Jews and Gentiles—is by saying that he *received/took* (*ἔδέξατο*) Jesus in his arms (Luke 2:28).

⁴⁰ Gowler, *Characterization*, 55.

⁴¹ See Stein, *Luke*, 115.

The verb δέχομαι, which can mean *to receive* or *take* physically, is often used in the NT with a spiritual concept as object, such as *word, grace, kingdom, or someone who brings a message*, in which case the focus is not on the person being welcomed, but the *message*.⁴² We see the same usage in Luke-Acts. In Luke, Jesus says that “whoever *receives* this child in my name *receives* me, and whoever *receives* me *receives* the one who sent me” (Luke 9:48), and “whoever does not *receive* the kingdom as a child will surely not enter it” (Luke 18:17). In Acts, the people of Samaria “had *received* the word of God” (Acts 8:14), Gentiles also “had *received* the word of God” (Acts 11:1), and the Berean Jews “*received* the word with all eagerness” (Acts 17:11). Considering the use of this word in later contexts, we can say that Simeon’s actions in the beginning of the Gospel exemplify for the reader what is the appropriate response before Jesus in the eyes of the narrator. But whereas he *received* Jesus literally in his arms, others throughout the narrative are supposed to *receive* him by means of messengers or the word. One might also say that Simeon, in a manner of speaking, quite literally *receives* the kingdom *as a child*. The observant reader will make these connections and notice that Luke is showing Simeon as a model character in a story that will be about *receiving vs rejecting*.

Spatial-Temporal Point of View

The setting where the scene takes place is the Temple, a place that is significant because it roots the expectation of the people and the coming of the Messiah within the context of Jewish piety. Oliver, for instance, who argues from the perspective of source research that Luke included the birth narratives later in his work as a way to introduce the purpose of Luke-Acts early in the narrative, claims that although it is hard to determine the relationship of the

⁴² See Matt 10:14, 40–41; 18:5; Mark 6:11; 9:37; 10:15; John 4:45; 1 Cor 2:14; 2 Cor 6:1; 11:4; Gal 4:14; Eph 6:17; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:13; 2 Thess 2:10; Jas 1:21.

presentation in the Temple and the episode in which Jesus sits among teachers to the rest of chapters 1 and 2, “it may be said with certainty that a principal reason for including the story was its setting in Jerusalem, in the Temple—the place which continues to figure largely in the scheme of redemption, even in the primitive church.”⁴³ Similarly, Tatum, who highlights the Jewishness of the first two chapters of the Gospel, concludes that the setting helps the reader understand that “The theological idea fundamental to Luke i–ii is the notion of Israel as the people of God.”⁴⁴ For some, this setting reveals Luke’s point of view that Jews have a distinct place in God’s plan of salvation through Jesus.

The question we should ask at this point is whether this Jewish setting disqualifies Simeon as a character type that is related to the later Christians as it was argued above. To answer this question, we should begin by looking at other spatial aspects of the narrator’s point of view that are present in the scene, more specifically in Simeon’s two oracles. Both things Simeon says in the Temple seem to conflict with the notion that he is representing the Jewish people only, apart from the church of Acts. In his first oracle, he says that God’s salvation has been prepared in the presence of πάντων τῶν λαῶν (Luke 2:31). Whether or not Gentiles are to be included in *all peoples* has been debated,⁴⁵ but the fact that Simeon specifically mentions ἔθνῶν in what follows

⁴³ H. H. Oliver, *The Lucan Birth Stories*, 221.

⁴⁴ Tatum, “The Epoch,” 194. Tatum says that “Luke i and ii constitute in their present form a tableau of first-century Jewish piety,” and observes that in those chapters “the events themselves take place wholly within the geographical confines of Palestine; and the real geographical axis of Luke i–ii is Jerusalem, the site of the Temple.” Tatum, “The Epoch,” 194. Along these lines, Tannehill observes: “The strongly Jewish atmosphere of the birth story is also apparent from its settings and characters. It begins and ends with scenes in the temple.” Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:19.

⁴⁵ It is possible that “by this phrase Luke wishes to incorporate both Jews and Gentiles under a common designation. If so, then it is quite logical for him to make a reference to each group separately in the following two phrases: the Jews as λαοῦ σου Ἰσραήλ and the Gentiles as ἔθνῶν.” Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke–Acts*, SNTSMS 23, ed. Matthew Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 36. Marshall, after summarizing the different points of view regarding *all peoples*, concludes: “since Luke normally uses λαός to refer to Israel (e.g. Acts 26:17, 23) or to the new people of God, which includes gentiles (Acts 15:14), it is more probable that his change of word here from Is. 52:10 LXX reflects a deliberate intention to show that the

(Luke 2:32)⁴⁶ makes this oracle stand out in the beginning of the Gospel.⁴⁷ As Pervo puts it, through his song Simeon “affirms the universality of God's deliverance; *all the peoples* prepares for the shock of v.32: enlightenment for the Gentiles. Heretofore nothing has hinted that this savior's deliverance will include gentiles...”⁴⁸ This means that already in the beginning of the narrative the reader has a glimpse of the idea that God has chosen Gentiles to be part of his people, a point that would later be officially acknowledged by the church in Acts 15:14, and more poignantly in Acts 28:28. Through his song, Simeon expands the boundaries of the expectations regarding God's promises to Israel, conveying the author's point of view that salvation will reach beyond the Temple, the Jews, and Israel herself. In other words, “Already the reader is given an indication that the Messiahship of Jesus fulfills the expectations of more people than just the Jews. Rather it is full of meaning for both Jews and Gentiles.”⁴⁹

Simeon's second oracle also reveals that the spatial point of view of the narrator favors a redefined reading of people of God in the narrative. Simeon tells Mary that the child “is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign to be spoken against” (Luke 2:34). “What is remarkable ... is that this is the first time that something negative is mentioned.

gentiles are included. Whether *λαοί* refers purely to the gentiles or is meant to include both Jews and gentiles (Wilson, 36–38) is not clear. In any case, the use of Is. 40:3–5 in Lk. 3:4–6 to prove that ‘all flesh will see the salvation of God’ strongly suggests that the same thought is present here.” Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 120–21. The same interpretation is given by Johnson: “Here this means all the people of the earth.” Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 57.

⁴⁶ The syntax of this verse is ambiguous, for δόξαν can either be taken as an object of the preposition εἰς (“light for revelation to Gentiles and [light for] glory to your people Israel”) or as in apposition to σωτήριόν, such as φῶς (“light for revelation to Gentiles and glory to your people Israel”). This does not affect my interpretation, for either way *salvation* is for both Gentiles and Israel.

⁴⁷ See Brown, *The Birth*, 459. “As the next two lines indicate, the term ‘peoples’ covers the Gentiles and Israel, so that the Gentiles too are God's people.”

⁴⁸ Richard I. Pervo, *The Gospel of Luke*, TSB 4. (Salem, OR: Polebridge, 2014), 35.

⁴⁹ Tyson, *Images of Judaism*, 50.

Everything before was wholly jubilant, ... but Simeon speaks of trouble and rejection.”⁵⁰ This oracle too replaces or, better yet, creates an invisible boundary that distinguishes the people of God from the people of Israel. Whereas the *all peoples* above expanded the concept to Gentiles, the *falling* and *rising* places a divisive line between two opposite sides within Israel. Salvation has come, but this salvation will be spoken against, rejected by *many* (not by all) in Israel.

Such rejection is indicated both by the word *falling* and by the use of ἀντιλεγόμενον. In Acts the verb ἀντιλέγω is used in contexts where such a divisive line within Israel is made evident because some speak against or reject Jesus.⁵¹ In Acts 13, many Jews and Gentiles receive the word brought by Paul and Barnabas, but the Jews ἀντέλεγον the message. As will become more evident in the discussion of that episode later, some connections with the presentation in the Temple are striking. The episode begins with the rulers of the synagogue asking Paul and Barnabas: «ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, εἴ τίς λόγος παρακλήσεως πρὸς τὸν λαόν, λέγετε». Whereas the Jews who were gathered at that moment thought that the *word of consolation* and *people* might have been exclusive Jewish concepts, and that is what they expected Paul and Barnabas to *speak*, the scene shows the reversal of each of those ideas. The *word of consolation* turned out to be synonymous with the *word of God* (Acts 13:5, 7, 46), *word of the Lord* (13:44, 48, 49), and *word of this salvation* [in Jesus] (13:26). The term *people*, at least in the surface, still refers primarily to Israel (13:17, 24, 31), but since some accept their *word of consolation* and others *reject* it, the implication is that the *people of God* are those who are, in fact, consoled by their words. The result of their proclamation is that *many Jews followed* them (13:43), as well as the Gentiles (13:48), while *the Jews speak against* what Paul and Barnabas *had spoken* to them. Leaving the

⁵⁰ Coleridge, *The Birth*, 173.

⁵¹ Tyson, *Images of Judaism*, 50–51.

details aside for now with respect to the identity of *many Jews* and *the Jews*,⁵² the point is that there is conflict, and a new definition of *consolation* and *people* taking place, just as we see in the presentation in the Temple. In addition to Acts 13, this word is used twice in Acts 28 (19, 22), also in the dispute between Paul and the Jews.

There certainly were many Gentiles who rejected the message about Jesus (e.g. Acts 17:32), but Luke is careful not to employ ἀντιλέγω to talk about their opposition, only employing the word to report Jewish rejection. The point is that Simeon's oracles about salvation to all peoples and the division within Israel are accurately realized in the narrative later, and the reader learns it in the second chapter of the Gospel, when the author conveys his point of view in subtle but clear ways.

What is the significance of the two oracles, then? Hur offers a helpful summary:

Simeon's two oracles (Lk. 2.29–32; 34–35), construed as a programmatic narrative device, are designed to shed light on the Lukan plot in the remainder of Luke-Acts. [...] Therefore, we cannot overemphasize the pivotal importance of Simeon's two oracles for grasping the plot of the whole narrative of Luke-Acts: it would lead readers to expect (1) a series of resistant or hostile responses of some Israelites to Jesus himself (cf. Lk. 7.1–10) and to Jesus' disciples/witnesses (e.g. Acts 4.5–7, 13–18; 5.17–18, 33; 6.8–15; 7.54–60; 8.1–3; 9.23–30; 12.1–5; 13.44–45) and thereby (2) a repeated theme of reversal (cf. 4.18–19; 5.31–32; 6.20–26; 7.22–23) through a pattern of 'acceptance and rejection' extended to the inclusion of Gentiles among God's restored people (Acts 10.44–48; 11.15–18; cf. 13.46; 18.6; 28.28).⁵³

More than that, it is significant that such a message is conveyed in the Temple.

Commenting on the Temple in Luke 2, Tannehill says that “The location is one of several examples of significant settings which enhance major scenes.”⁵⁴ This enhancement is precisely

⁵² This is probably the same group that changed its mind. But the point made in this study still stands.

⁵³ Hur, *A Dynamic Reading*, 201–02n66. See also Joop Smit, “The Function of the Two Quotations from Isaiah in Luke 3–4,” in *The Scriptures of Israel in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maarten J. Menken*, ed. Bart J. Koet, Steve Moyise, and Joseph Verheyden (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 50.

⁵⁴ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:38.

what I suggest Luke is doing. He is describing Simeon's oracles about salvation to all nations and division in Israel *in the Temple*, and this highlights the main point of the presentation in the Temple as seen earlier, which is: faithful Jews should naturally recognize and embrace God's limitless salvation through Jesus, for this is the fulfillment of their expectations.

Luke's temporal perspective accents the spatial point of view described above; we can observe that by noting the duration⁵⁵ of the events. When talking about narrative movements, Gérard Genette proposes that the relation between story time and discourse time may take one of four forms: *pause*, *scene*, *summary*, and *ellipsis*.⁵⁶ This classification helps us assess the pace of the narrative,⁵⁷ thus determining the narrator's point of view through the narration. In our text, the narrator slows down to tell the encounter Simeon has with the boy in the Temple (Luke 2:25–35), taking the time to describe both his actions and speech, which is an example of *scene* (discourse time and story time are approximate). By doing so, the narrator directs the reader's attention to what matters most,⁵⁸ in this case, Simeon's interpretation of who Jesus is and what he represents, as well as the inclusion of the Gentiles in salvation and the division within Israel. The episode ends with the account of Anna being related in *summary*. This summary also points to the significance of what happened just before, to the centrality of the words of Simeon. Note the immediacy conveyed by the contrasting imperfect verbs in verses 37 and 38. Anna lived long years in which she “never left” (οὐκ ἀφίστατο) the temple, which, in a nutshell, tells the reader

⁵⁵ This category comes from Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (New York: Cornell, 1980), 86–112.

⁵⁶ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 94–95.

⁵⁷ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 39. “What narrative critics hope to gain from application of Genette's categories is a means of gauging the pace of the narrative, of determining where it speeds up and where it slows down.”

⁵⁸ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 172. “When the narrative slows down, the reader is to take special notice.”

that she also was someone who had been waiting her whole life for something to happen. But when she arrived “at that very hour” in which Simeon was speaking, two inceptive imperfects show her abrupt change of disposition: “she began to praise God (ἀνθωμολογεῖτο) and to speak (ἐλάλει)” about Jesus to other expectant people. Whatever Simeon and Anna were waiting for has arrived, and that applies to those who were expecting the “redemption of Jerusalem” as well.

Consolation Of Israel And Redemption Of Jerusalem

Luke does not report Anna’s⁵⁹ speech, but the reader can assume that she agreed with Simeon about Jesus and Israel.⁶⁰ Anna’s appearance forms an *inclusio* with Simeon,⁶¹ in which the author includes the substance of their participation in the narrative in what is presented between their introductions. This is made evident by the expressions *consolation of Israel* and *redemption of Jerusalem*, which “act as brackets, signaling an *inclusio* that holds together the figures of Simeon and Anna and marks the principal thematic context of the episode: the expectation of Israel fulfilled in Jesus.”⁶²

There are still other aspects of characterization that are shared by both characters. One of which is the connection with the post-Pentecost church of Acts, even if the Spirit is not mentioned in relation to Anna: “By placing Anna the prophetess side-by-side with Simeon, Luke is anticipating the atmosphere of Pentecost: ‘In the last days I shall pour out my Spirit upon all

⁵⁹ Andrés García Serrano, talking about Luke’s description of Anna, notes that it “is a remarkable lengthy segment with a high concentration of verbs for such a minor character, who never reappears. Throughout Luke’s Gospel, no other character, aside from Jesus, receives such biographical attention.” Andrés García Serrano, “Anna’s Characterization in Luke 2:36–38: A Case of Conceptual Allusion?,” *CBT* 76 (2014): 464–80.

⁶⁰ Serrano, “Anna’s Characterization,” 473.

⁶¹ John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, WBC 35a (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 118. Green suggests that the *inclusio* is between 2:39 and 2:21–24. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 152. However, he agrees that “Luke [...] has thus portrayed Simeon and Anna as male-female counterparts, who represent the best of expectant Israel and testify to the central place Jesus already occupies in God’s redemptive plan.” Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 143.

⁶² Serrano, “Anna’s Characterization,” 474.

flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy' (Acts 2:17)."⁶³ That may be an indication that Anna's interpretation of Jesus should also be viewed in connection to both a Jewish and Christian background, and not limited to what we might think of first-century Judaism.⁶⁴

The parallels between Simeon and Anna are relevant because they offer the reader a context for interpreting the phrase *redemption of Jerusalem* in a way that is not strictly Jewish, just as *consolation of Israel* is to be understood as salvation for all, including Gentiles, and excluding those in Israel who would reject Jesus. As some have put it, *consolation of Israel* and *redemption of Jerusalem* are synonymous in this context,⁶⁵ and what they mean for the author can be found in his presentation of the scene. Both concepts are found in the Masoretic Text of Isaiah 52:9: «כִּי־נִגְמַת יְהוָה עִמּוֹ גָּאֹל יְרוּשָׁלַם». In the LXX, however, the textual parallel with Luke is harder to maintain: «ἠλέησεν κύριος αὐτήν καὶ ἐρρύσατο Ἱερουσαλημ». Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suggest that Luke could get the idea that the terms are synonymous even if he were reading the Greek version of Isaiah.⁶⁶ Without entering the discussion about Luke's sources at this point, Brown simply acknowledges that "this same Isaian background dominates the oracles of Simeon in praise of him who is the consolation of Israel and the redemption of Jerusalem."⁶⁷

If consolation of Israel is not to be understood as political deliverance in Simeon's

⁶³ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 466.

⁶⁴ Because of his idea of the Anawim and widowhood in Luke's writings, Brown concludes that "there is real verisimilitude in Luke's portrait of Anna on both the Jewish and the Christian level." Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 468.

⁶⁵ Stein, Luke, 118.

⁶⁶ The texts Luke had at his disposal when writing the Gospel are disputed. Some think that he translated from Hebrew, while others defend that he was reading the LXX. For some arguments on both sides of the discussion, see William G. Most, "Did St. Luke Imitate the Septuagint?," *JSNT* 5 (1982): 30–41; Paul Winter, "Some Observations on the Language in the Birth and Infancy Stories of the Third Gospel," *NTS* 1 (1954): 111–21; Nigel Turner, "The Relation of Luke I and II to Hebraic Sources and to the Rest of Luke–Acts," *NTS* 2 (1955): 100–09.

⁶⁷ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 454.

interpretation, neither should redemption of Jerusalem refer to salvation for the Jewish people. Both expressions are presented in the context where the author is laying out his views of these terms to guide the reader through the narrative that will follow. In this scene,

Simeon and Anna not only present Jesus, but they embody the human recognition of the Messiah and inform the reader of the authentic human response to Jesus. They each await him with great expectations (vv. 25, 38b), receive him (vv. 28, 38a), speak about him (vv. 29–32, 34b–35, 38b), and praise God (vv. 28b, 38a).⁶⁸

The Presentation In The Temple In The Context Of Chapters 1–2

No one would deny that the first two chapters of Luke present hopes that are found in the Old Testament and that they are placed in the beginning to set the stage for the story that will be told by showing that God is at work for his people. Questions arise, however, as one ponders on what the relationship between these chapters and the subsequent narrative is. For example, is the salvation in Jesus going to *fulfill* those hopes? Or is it going to *correct* the people who still hold to a misplaced hope? Before talking about the function of Luke 1–2 for the whole of Luke-Acts, it is necessary to assert the function of our scene (presentation in the Temple) within the introduction of the Gospel. This is necessary because some have suggested that Simeon is set apart from the other characters, as he is reliable and others are misguided. What we will see, however, is that the difference in them is the degree to which the fulfillment of those hopes is expressed in more universalistic terminology, not that in essence they expected different things. To keep this analysis focused, I will limit this examination to a brief comparison of the songs in the infancy narrative.

⁶⁸ Serrano, “Anna’s Characterization,” 475.

The Infancy Songs

The fact that the author included songs in the infancy narrative connects the themes and the characters involved with those songs, even if at first sight one might wonder whether the differences found in them are so irreconcilable that they should be read separately. In other words, the use of songs links Mary, Zechariah and Simeon in some way. Now we look at the function of Simeon's song—and consequently his hopes—for the narrative, when considering what was presented before.

It is commonly argued that Mary and Zechariah were expecting some kind of political or nationalistic deliverance because of the language employed in their songs.⁶⁹ Mary's song praises God for what he is doing for Israel and for his fulfilling of the things promised to Abraham. Zechariah's, likewise, seems to be all about the exclusive rights of Israel to the salvation God is revealing. It is filled with terms such as Israel, David, fathers, covenant, Abraham.⁷⁰ But it is only when read in isolation from the narrative that these two songs allow for a limited perspective of God's salvation. All songs are connected thematically, for they recognize that the event of Jesus' birth means *salvation from God to people*. The definition of salvation and people, even if not made explicit in the songs, can be apprehended by readers as they follow Luke in the progressive disclosure of God's plan.

To grasp the framework Luke is creating for the reader, one needs to notice that “Throughout the Lukan infancy narrative, the kind of plot of the passages concerning Jesus

⁶⁹ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:26, 34, 41; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 59; Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 59.

⁷⁰ Each of those terms can be interpreted in a less particularistic way when considering the entire narrative. For example, “enemies”, instead of the Roman Empire, may be said to include spiritual enemies. See Fuller, *The Restoration*, 205. Here is not the place to discuss all the possible interpretations for those songs, however, but only to point out what Simeon's song does for the narrative in comparison with Mary's and Zechariah's.

undergoes a progressive evolution.”⁷¹ It is not that the characters have different perspectives or disagree among each other, rather, it is Luke’s way of creating a climax in his revelation of the identity and significance of Jesus in the first chapters. The three songs are connected thematically, but instead of repetitions, we see a development in those themes.⁷² When comparing Simeon’s words to Zechariah’s, Tannehill observes that “Simeon's canticle is relatively short compared to Zechariah's Benedictus, but the Nunc Dimittis is supplemented by other revelatory statements concerning the significance of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:10s11, 14, 34–35, 38).”⁷³ Simeon’s song adds a decisive feature in the characterization of salvation: God’s salvation has a universal scope,⁷⁴ for now it is explicitly said to be for the Gentiles as well as Israel. Up to this point in the narrative the focus was on Israel only. Now salvation is expressed in more comprehensive terms, unlike anything that had been said before, “and this is a progression which anticipates the movement”⁷⁵ of the subsequent narrative. The relevance of this new element is highlighted by the fact that Simeon addresses God directly, which is the first time this happens in the narrative.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Andrés García Serrano, *The Presentation in the Temple: The Narrative Function of Lk 2:22–39 in Luke–Acts*, AnBib 197 (Roma: Gregorian & Biblical, 2012), 237.

⁷² Serrano, *The Presentation*, 257.

⁷³ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:16. This should not be overstated, however. Serrano, for instance, seems to claim that in Mary’s song there is no revelation about Jesus. He asks, “who is revealed? Throughout the *Magnificat* there is no direct reference to Jesus.” Serrano, *The Presentation*, 235. Mary does have a high understanding of Jesus’ identity and reveals that through her song. When the angel tells her of her future pregnancy, he says, «τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ» (Lk. 1:35). Some verses later, in her song, she adds a comment about who God is, «καὶ ἅγιον τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ» (Lk. 1:49). This is very subtle but seems to add to Jesus’ characterization as Luke guides the reader progressively into the narrative.

⁷⁴ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 57; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:34; Brown, *The Birth*, 459.

⁷⁵ Coleridge, *The Birth*, 167.

⁷⁶ Coleridge, *The Birth*, 167. “The effect of this is [...] to accentuate God in a way that makes the Nunc Dimittis more radically theocentric than either the Magnificat or the Benedictus.”

Primacy Effect

Now that I have tried to demonstrate how the songs within the framework of chapters 1–2 are connected thematically, for they all talk about the work of the Messiah for the people, even if the last song introduces new features, let us discuss briefly the relationship of these chapters to the rest of Luke-Acts. As it was said previously, “Luke provides his readers with a framework of expectation and significance within which to read the rest of the story of the Gospel and Acts . . . , it is also clear that this framework of hope is itself subject to interpretation by the events which fulfil it only in unexpected ways.”⁷⁷

Everyone agrees that these chapters are, in some ways, “previews of [the] salvation”⁷⁸ described later. The difference is that some say that the terminology⁷⁹ used to describe the hopes presented here should be taken at face value—literally, while others understand such terminology as metaphorical.⁸⁰

I concur with Marshall, who explains, as shown before, that the language of the songs is metaphorical military language to express “the realities of the spiritual mission of Jesus.”⁸¹ This makes sense when one reads Luke-Acts and sees the development of themes such as *salvation*, *enemies*, *hate*, *Jerusalem*, *servant*, *people of God*, and finds no political overtones. It makes even more sense when one considers the current formation of the people by the end of Acts and the rejection of many Jews. The beginning of the Gospel is, therefore, setting the stage for what comes by explaining Jesus’ salvation in diverse ways, among which Simeon’s is the clearest and

⁷⁷ Bauckham, “The Restoration,” 438.

⁷⁸ Terminology suggested by Tannehill in his *Narrative Unity*.

⁷⁹ Enemies, salvation, etc. Background is thought to be the dispute of the nations.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Tiede and Marshall in the introduction of this dissertation.

⁸¹ Marshall, “Political and Eschatological,” 160.

most easily related to the rest of the narrative, and none of which should be taken as exclusivist. Interpreting the first chapters this way renders it unnecessary to resort to Tannehill's view that Luke-Acts is tragic.⁸² In the same way, Marshall's view helps us understand that there is no ironic tension⁸³ between what the characters say and expect to happen and what truly takes place in the narrative. Those characters were influenced by the Spirit, and that signals for the reader that they are not misguided in their interpretation of salvation. Ironic tension is present when the reader does not pick up on Luke's clues (such as the Spirit and definition of salvation in Luke 2) and projects onto some characters a simplistic view of Judaism.

The language of Luke 1–2, including Simeon's hope and its interpretation in the scene, creates what critics call the primacy effect of a narrative. This means that what comes first "creates expectations in the reader."⁸⁴

The primacy effect denotes the critical importance that initial information has upon the reader's process of perception. The attitudes imbued in the early stages of the narrative encourage the reader to interpret the rest of the narrative in that light, unless the later narrative causes a reprocessing of that initial information.⁸⁵

In the case of *consolation of Israel*, based on what we have seen so far, one could say that consolation has to do with messianic salvation for all peoples, and that consolation will not be for all Israel, because many will reject. This primacy effect here causes the reader to reinterpret some concepts that might have been familiar in another context (OT Jewish hopes) in the light of what will be presented in the narrative (consolation in Luke-Acts). Luke is giving the reader a

⁸² Robert C. Tannehill, "Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story," in *The Shape of Luke's Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 105–24.

⁸³ David P. Moessner, "The Ironic Fulfillment of Israel's Glory," in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1988), 37–38.

⁸⁴ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 209.

⁸⁵ Gowler, "Characterization in Luke," 57.

framework for understanding the fulfillment of OT promises, and that framework unites old Israel and later Christians into one hope, one people, as object of one salvation.

Tyson says that “[a]s an anticipation of the relation of the Christian message to Judaism, the speech of Simeon in Luke 2:29–35 is the key passage in Luke 1–2. Indeed, it serves as a significant anticipation of a number of themes that will find expression later in Luke-Acts.”⁸⁶ As someone else put it, Simeon’s “prophecy is programmatic for the entire subsequent narrative, and therefore is of particular importance for guiding the reader’s understanding of the story.”⁸⁷ This preview of salvation that we encounter in the presentation in the Temple does not support the view that Israel as a political entity can expect anything from God. Her salvation can only be found when she is *consoled* as God’s favor reaches the world, including the Jews who accept the boy Jesus as salvation.

Through the presentation in the Temple, Luke wants the reader to adopt the point of view that *consolation is salvation*, and this salvation is for all nations. Whatever one thinks about Jews in the first century, this scene (Spirit present, salvation for Gentiles, division in Israel, etc.) explains God’s salvation from a perspective that resembles the post-Pentecost accounts in Acts. In other words, “The old expectations welcome a new reality. The OT, represented by these elderly individuals, meets its fulfillment, made present in the newborn Jesus. Anna and Simeon are part of the old remnant of Israel, who, welcoming Jesus, becomes the new Israel.”⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Tyson, *Images of Judaism*, 49.

⁸⁷ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 57.

⁸⁸ Serrano, “Anna’s Characterization,” 480.

Conclusion

In the presentation in the Temple scene Luke creatively connects consolation with salvation. Through his telling and showing what happens when Simeon encounters Jesus, he highlights that the boy is the fulfillment of the people's expectations. In a comparison with the earlier infancy songs, Simeon's song adds the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's plans, which will be narrated mainly in the book of Acts. In that sense, Simeon's words have a primacy effect upon the narrative, showing beforehand the things that will take place later and creating thereby a framework by which readers should read the rest of the story. Although filled with language that point to military conquest upon the enemies of the nation, those pious Jews' expressions of God's salvation (and hence the *consolation of Israel*) in the first two chapters are best understood as metaphoric language that refer also to God's spiritual deliverance from sins that is offered to all nations.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE OTHER ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΣΙΣ TEXTS

Luke 6:24—*Consolation* or Kingdom of God: True Παράκλησις as Reward in Heaven

This section is intended to explore how Jesus uses παράκλησις in his teaching. I will expand on Marshall and Danker’s suggestion that eschatological *consolation* is related to the promise whose fulfillment Simeon expected, and will propose that the Isaianic context of Jesus’ ministry to the poor—who are an important class for the implied author—lends itself to such a word as a substitute for messianic salvation.

Blessings in the Context of Jesus’s Ministry

The second occurrence of παράκλησις in the narrative is during Jesus’ famous Sermon on the Plain. In a section containing blessings and woes, Jesus says about the rich: “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation” (Luke 6:24). On the surface, consolation here refers to wealth as opposed to poverty. In the context, however, consolation points beyond mere social affluence.

What Good News is there for the Poor?

The sermon is the first delivered by Jesus after he began his ministry in Galilee (Luke 4:14–30). When he started his ministry, he read from the book of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good news to the poor, he sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free” (Luke 4:18).

That initial proclamation of Jesus echoes throughout the Gospel, for these words become programmatic for Jesus' ministry. When considering this passage (Luke 4:16–30), some claim that

No text is more important for understanding Luke's two volumes than this one [because] we possess in this text the entire outline of both the Gospel and Acts in nuce. Therefore its importance cannot be overlooked. Luke is here introducing us to his two volumes and providing us with the glasses, as it were, by which we are to read all that follows.¹

It is relevant that the “‘good news to the poor’ promised in Jesus’ inaugural address (4:18–19) explicitly surfaces [at 6:20].”² Luke 4:18 is only the first of many times in which *πτωχός* occurs in Luke. The poor receiving good news (along with other signs of Jesus’ ministry) serves as testimony to John’s messengers that Jesus is the one they had been waiting for (Luke 7:22); in the parable of the great dinner, the poor are honored by an invitation to the eschatological feast (Luke 14:15–24); and there is a story about a poor man named Lazarus who, as opposed to a rich man, finds relief from his poverty after his death (Luke 16:19–31). This emphasis begs the question: if Jesus’ ministry would be one of preaching good news to the poor (Luke 4:18), and that was actually happening (Luke 7:22), but the fate of the poor did not seem to change until after their earthly life has ended (Luke 14:15–24; 16:19–31), then what is the good news for the poor?

Luke’s continued narration helps us answer that question. At the end of chapter 4, Jesus explains his mission: “It is necessary for me to preach the good news of the kingdom of God, for I was sent for this reason” (Luke 4:43). The good news to the poor is that the kingdom of God is

¹ Walter Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor: Wealth and Poverty in Luke–Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 64–65.

² Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 265.

theirs, despite their apparent hopeless situation.³ This answer is behind Jesus' blessings and woes in chapter 6 and will enlighten us regarding the use of παράκλησις in that sermon.

One more thing needs to be mentioned as we look at Jesus' first sermon in chapter 4: the scandal of the universality of salvation based on the Scriptures of Israel. Jesus hints at his mission for those who are outside Israel when he says that Elijah was sent to a widow in Sidon, and that Elisha was used by God to cleanse a Syrian man, which fills the people of the synagogue with anger (Luke 4:25–28). This demonstrates that the good news of the kingdom of God, though begins to be proclaimed in Jewish synagogues, is meant to reach all those who need salvation, no matter where they are from.

Themes from the Canticles in Luke 1–2

Jesus' ministry fulfills expectations put forth in the beginning of the Gospel. Green notices the relation with Mary's song, saying that Jesus' blessings and woes echo

the reversal segment of Mary's Song (1:46–55) [...]: "blessed" (1:45, 48; 6:20, 21a, 21b, 22); "hungry" versus "filled" (1:53; 6:21, 25); "rich" (1:53; 6:24). [...] Images of salvation declared in Mary's Song to have already happened are again reaffirmed by Jesus as he articulates his understanding of reality in this new day.⁴

An important feature of this clear relation of the beatitudes with the song of Mary is that through Jesus' teaching the reader can reinterpret what was meant by "blessed", "hungry" and "rich" in the beginning. More than referring to poor and hungry Israelites only (as is supposed by many when reading Mary's song), Jesus extends those things to whoever was or would be his

³ This does not mean that the poor will enter the Kingdom *because* they are poor. The criterion continues to be *receiving* Jesus as opposed to rejecting him, as we see in the beginning of the Gospel. "One therefore finds in these verses no idealization of poverty." (Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 266)

⁴ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 265.

disciples.⁵ His ministry would effect the reversals that pious Jews were hoping for, in unexpected—at least for some modern readers—ways.

One may go a step further than Green and suggest that connections can be made also between Zechariah's song and the beatitudes of chapter 6. Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would be “salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all those who hate us” (Luke 1:71). In his teaching, Jesus explains that it is a blessing “when people hate you, exclude you, revile you and reject your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man,” (Luke 6:22) and he tells his disciples to “love your enemies, and do good for those who hate you” (Luke 6:27). Later, when he talks about the signs of the end and says that even their own families would betray them (Luke 21:16), he says that “you will be hated by all on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will perish” (Luke 21:17–18). In his teaching, Jesus is employing terminology and alluding to hopes that first appeared in the beginning and explaining what they mean in the narrative. “Enemies” and “hatred” in these contexts do not have the Roman occupation as background—as even one's own family could become a hateful enemy, and so the hopes of being delivered should not be viewed as political or nationalistic salvation for the nation.

⁵ There is a debate regarding what is meant by “poor” in Jesus' blessings. Generally speaking, scholars agree that, unlike in Matthew, Jesus is talking about socially unprivileged people, but connecting this definition with discipleship in some way. Plummer says that “*Actual* poverty, sorrow, and hunger are declared to be blessed (as being opportunities for the exercise of internal virtues); and this doctrine is emphasized by the corresponding Woes pronounced upon wealth, jollity, and fulness of bread (as being sources of temptation).” Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 179. But each of these things is not a blessing in and of itself, “unless it is ‘for the Son of Man's sake’.” Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 179. These things are only a blessing because they are addressed to the disciples, not to unbelieving people. “These Beatitudes would not be true, if addressed to them. It is to the faithful Christian that poverty, hunger, sorrow, and unpopularity are real blessings; to others they may be mere sterile suffering.” Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 179–80. Marshall concurs with the notion that poor refers to those who are materially poor, but he also adds that “The description of them being persecuted for the sake of the Son of man shows that the thought is not simply of those who are literally poor and needy, nor of all such poor people, but of those who are disciples of Jesus and hence occupy a pitiable position in the eyes of the world.” Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 246. Green explains that “poor” and “rich” are “not simply a declaration of economic class [...]. ‘Poor’ and ‘rich,’ then, are socially defined constructs — and Jesus is overturning the way these terms have been constructed in ordinary discourse.” Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 267. See also Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 573–75.

Can we say that Luke connects Jesus' blessings and woes to Simeon's song as well? Upon initial inspection one might see no connection, because the wording in Simeon's song is not repeated in the beatitudes, and the theme of universal salvation seems distant from the blessings and woes of chapter 6. Nevertheless, even if Simeon's song itself is not connected on the surface, Luke's presentation of that scene (linking Simeon's interpretation of Jesus to Simeon's hope of *consolation*) gives the impression that for the author there is a relationship between the fulfillment of Simeon's hope in Jesus and Jesus' later ministry. Some scholars, as seen before, have proposed that in the background of the occurrence of παράκλησις in Luke 6:24 is the hope of *consolation* that Simeon had.⁶ It is reasonable to suggest such a connection, because similar relationships can be seen between the blessings and woes and the other two songs from the infancy narrative; also, the beatitudes are related to Jesus' ministry as defined in Isaianic terms in chapter 4,⁷ and among the infancy songs, Simeon's is the only one heavily based on Isaiah. If these two occurrences of παράκλησις are connected somehow by the author, the reader can assume that what is taught about *consolation* in chapter 6 is in the same interpretative matrix of *consolation of Israel* in chapter 2, and in order to understand the contextual meaning of that word, the reader must read both texts.

Commenting on the relationship between Mary's song and the beatitudes, Green says that what we find is that the author is portraying "Jesus as redefining, both now and for the eschatological future, the way the world works; he is replacing common representations of the

⁶ See Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 256; and Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 142.

⁷ See Pilgrim, *Good News*, 74. This notion seems to be the consensus when considering the Beatitudes in Matthew as well. "While no direct reliance upon Isaiah 61 can be demonstrated, nevertheless there seems to be general agreement that the beatitudes of both Matthew and Luke take their distinct theological character from an eschatological understanding of Isaiah 61." Pilgrim, *Good News*, 74.

world with a new one.”⁸ This is true also of the term *παράκλησις*. As we will see below, the hope of *consolation*, which first appeared in a Jewish setting in chapter 2, is being further defined for the reader.

Real vs False *Consolation*: Eschatological Overtones

The blessings (Luke 6:20–23) and woes (Luke 6:24–26) are written in parallel structure; for each blessing, there is a corresponding woe:⁹

Table 1. Blessings and Woes in Luke 6:20–26

6:20b	Blessed are you who are poor , for yours is the kingdom of God .	6:24	But woe to you who are rich , for you have received your consolation .
6:21a	Blessed are you who hunger now , for you will be satisfied .	6:25a	Woe to you who are satisfied now , for you will hunger .
6:21b	Blessed are you who weep now , for you will laugh .	6:25b	Woe to you who laugh now , for you will mourn and weep .
6:22–23a	Blessed are you when people hate you, exclude you, revile you and reject your name as evil , on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap in that day, for your reward is great in heaven;	6:26a	Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
6:23b	for so their fathers did to the prophets .	6:26b	For their fathers did the same to the false prophets .

⁸ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 264.

⁹ Green, for instance, in his commentary, treats verses 20 and 24 together, as well as 21a and 25a, 21b and 25b, 22–23 and 26. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 266–68.

As we can see, the *consolation* of the rich corresponds to *kingdom of God* that is offered to the poor. Bock mentions that *παράκλησις* “is clearly negative here, although it is often positive in Lucan usage.”¹⁰ On the surface, it looks as though *παράκλησις* “is clearly negative,” for all the other “rewards” on the side of the woes are negative (“hunger”, “mourn”, “weep”). Nevertheless, I contend that, on the contrary, the point is not the negativity of *consolation*, but the ironic fact that, although the rich may feel some kind of comfort in this life, they *lack the true παράκλησις*. As some have concluded, “the denial of comfort to the rich in 6:24 confirms that the promise of the kingdom to the poor in 6:20 is, in effect, a promise of such comfort.”¹¹ Even without using the word *consolation* in relation to the poor, Jesus is teaching that it is the poor who have received *παράκλησις*, which is being defined as the kingdom of God. This should not be unexpected to the reader, for in In Luke 2, *παράκλησις* was equated with salvation for all and the coming of the Lord. It is not that *παράκλησις* is negative, rather, there is a contrast between true vs false *παράκλησις* —kingdom of God vs temporary wealth and security.¹²

Jesus says that the poor have received *παράκλησις* in the form of the kingdom of God, and, in the context, consolation and kingdom of God are, in a sense, a present reality. This is important because it is similar to the author’s view of *παράκλησις* shown in chapter 2 of the Gospel, when Simeon’s hope of *consolation* is said to be satisfied when he says, “*Now, Master, you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation*” (Luke 2:29–30; emphasis added). In Luke 6, Jesus does not say “yours *will be* the

¹⁰ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 584.

¹¹ Marshall, “‘Israel’ and the Story,” 356.

¹² Marshall expresses such contrast when he says about the rich: “There will be no divine consolation for such people, for they have already received their consolation in the form of what money can give to them.” Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 256.

kingdom,” as if they are awaiting the fulfillment of their consolation in the future; “It is not a promise, as in the next Beatitudes, but the statement of a fact.”¹³ With that in mind, the *consolation* that God is offering through Jesus, which this study is relating to the *consolation of Israel* in the beginning of the Gospel, appears to be spiritual in the sense that it has to do with God’s spiritual kingdom, and does not allude to any hope that Israel as a nation might have based on prophecies of Isaiah. In fact, this teaching about *παράκλησις*, which has prophecies from Isaiah as its background, speaks against that view.

One might object that although God’s people may receive some comfort now, the specific hope of *consolation* for the nation is to be fulfilled in the future, when God will finally conquer Israel’s enemies and give them the long-awaited prosperity. That objection is valid, but only if a political/nationalistic fulfillment is not in view. Admittedly, just as I said in the context of Simeon, there are things left for the future. This is evident in the Beatitudes as well, for apart from the kingdom of God which has the present tense (ἐστίν; Luke 6:20),¹⁴ the other rewards are expressed by means of verbs in the future tense (χορτασθήσεσθε, γελάσετε; Luke 6:21–22). That is to say, “the Kingdom is not yet theirs in its fulness; and those elements which are not yet possessed are promised in the Beatitudes which follow.”¹⁵ The poor are comforted now by possessing the kingdom, but they still await the food and laughter that their eternal consolation will offer. Jesus is, therefore, teaching that true *παράκλησις* is also eschatological, but here we

¹³ Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 180.

¹⁴ The phrase «ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολλὸς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ» (Luke 6:23), which can be translated with a present tense, carries the sense of futurity, for “reward in heaven” is something that will be received after their earthly life, when they will finally be satisfied and laugh. One could still insist that “kingdom of God” works the same way as “reward in heaven”, but the parallels between v.20 and v.24 clarifies that “kingdom of God” should be read along the lines of present “consolation” which the rich have already received.

¹⁵ Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 180. As Bock puts it: “The promise given here is inaugurated, but it has hardly reached its total fulfillment.” Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 572.

find no hint whatsoever of an interpretation commonly offered when reading Simeon, that *consolation of Israel* has nationalistic overtones. The present consolation of the poor resembles the eternal consolation of God, they are not distinct things.

Jesus' vision of the new world is eschatological, but it is not relegated to the future. The end has already arrived, and the values he asserts in debate with his opponents and in instruction to his followers and the crowds reflect those of this new era.¹⁶

The story of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates this teaching.¹⁷ In the story, Abraham says to the rich man who cries out from Hades: "Child, remember that *you received your good things* during your lifetime, while Lazarus had things; but now he is being *consoled*¹⁸ here, while you are in agony" (Luke 16:25). "Lazarus, who received no comfort, is now comforted; the wealthy, having received his consolation, will be consoled no more."¹⁹ This story also has connections with the expectations that people had regarding the work of Jesus, as seen in Mary's song (Luke 1:53): "He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty."

This understanding of παράκλησις within the narrative allows the reader to look back at 2:25 and realize that Simeon's hopes were not Jewish centered. As was shown, even though Luke 1–2 presents the hopes of Israelites and shows that they are in line with the prophecies of the OT, the concept of people of God begins to be redefined in Simeon's oracle to Mary. Similarly, in Jesus' teachings, God's people who receive his παράκλησις is also explained in new ways. "As Luke relates it, Jesus launches his discourse on the constitution of the new community with a series of beatitudes and woes"²⁰

¹⁶ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 265.

¹⁷ Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 182.

¹⁸ The verb here is παρακαλεῖται.

¹⁹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 608.

²⁰ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 264.

In the case of Luke 6, God's people are those whom Jesus call "blessed". This is evident for at the end of the blessings and of the woes Jesus relates each group to either the prophets or the false prophets. The blessed, in this context, are in line with "the prophets" (Luke 6:23). On the other hand, those to whom judgement is pronounced, follow in the footsteps of "the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). This affirmation by Jesus is striking, because it shows that the true people of God are those who follow the prophets, which here means understanding Jesus' ministry and mission, as well as the rewards that God grants, in a way in which παράκλησις is seen as the kingdom of God given to the poor, with eschatological overtones, but not nationalistic. Be it Jew or Gentile, God's *consolation* is for those who are in line with the prophets.²¹

Good News to the Poor: Considerations on the use of παράκλησις in Reference To Salvation

In Jesus' inaugural address in chapter 4, he says that he was anointed "to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18), and some people "regard this phrase as the most significant in Luke."²² In Luke 6:20, Jesus calls the poor blessed, a statement that is striking in and of itself, for it is believed that "this marks the first time in Jewish religious literature that the poor are directly called the blessed."²³ Even before Jesus in the narrative calls the poor blessed, Luke demonstrates that they are blessed in the way he crafts the infancy narrative. By showing humble people being

²¹ Bock, when talking about the poor and the hungry in this context, says that Jesus is alluding to promises found in Isaiah. He also says that *the hungry* "has both socioeconomic and religious overtones and that errors of interpretation occur when either element is removed." Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 575. That means that, "The promise is not a political agenda nor a political reversal, but rather the hope of comfort extended to those who elect to participate in God's plan." Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 576. I agree with his explanation of this passage, but I wonder why this view of *the promise*, *political agenda*, and *comfort*, are not extended to his view of the presentation in the Temple. In other words, why does he place a strong emphasis on Simeon's Jewishness, despite the fact that in Luke 6 the promise of consolation found in Isaiah is applied to a broader group?

²² Pilgrim, *Good News*, 67.

²³ Pilgrim, *Good News*, 76.

reached by God’s salvation in chapters 1–2, “Luke is here anticipating the good news to the poor embodied in Jesus’ ministry throughout his Gospel.”²⁴ All this emphasis in key passages of the narrative attests that

Special attention is given to the poor in Luke’s Gospel.²⁵ Mary’s hymn in Luke 1:46–55 sets the tone for this theme. [...] The focus on the poor is reinforced in three representative presentations of Jesus’ preaching (Luke 4:18; 6:20–23; 7:22). In these passages salvation is offered specifically to the poor. Jesus mentions the poor explicitly when he thanked the Father for those who were his ministering disciples (10:21–22). The poor are those who should be invited to the eschatological banquet table (14:13, 21–24). Here the social implications of responding to God are made clear. Salvation for Lazarus adds to the focus on this theme (16:19–31), while the widow with her small copper coin of contribution also reinforces it (21:1–4). For Luke, the “lowly people” are especially noted as candidates for God’s grace.²⁶

Since Luke has this focus on the poor as he reads and applies prophecies from the OT—specifically from Isaiah—to the ministry of Jesus, it is understandable that a word such as παράκλησις would be used almost as a substitute for salvation (see Luke 2:25, 29) and for kingdom of God (see Luke 6:20, 24) in his account of Jesus’ significance for God’s people. Even if the referent of the term πτωχός is debatable,²⁷ Luke’s focus on the poor in the Gospel is clear; and having passages from Isaiah as a framework for his theological thinking, the term παράκλησις lends itself as a suitable word for the contexts in which he uses them.

Although I cannot claim to know Jesus’ intended results through his sermon in Luke 6:20–

²⁴ Pilgrim, *Good News*, 80.

²⁵ For a discussion about the prominence of this theme in Luke but not in Acts, see S. John Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor: Character Types in Luke–Acts*, JSNTSup 144 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997). In short, the author concludes: “‘Why are the blind, the lame, the poor, and so on so prominent in the Gospel and all but absent in Acts?’ The answer may be stated briefly: the christological function of these character types in the Gospel does not fit the status of Jesus in Acts. The blind, the lame, the poor, and the others virtually disappear in Acts because in Acts Jesus is no longer God’s earthly eschatological agent of salvation. In Acts, Jesus is the risen and ascended Lord; a new christological situation is present.” Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor*, 220–21.

²⁶ Bock, *A Theology*, 247–48.

²⁷ The debate is whether Jesus meant the poor “in spirit” (like Matthew), any person who lacks wealth, a combination of both, a poor disciple, any disciple, etc.

26, I can infer, as other have, that “The effect of the beatitudes is thus both to comfort men who suffer for being disciples and to invite men to become disciples and find that their needs are met by God.”²⁸ We might say that Luke’s emphasis on the poor and outcasts as well as his reading of Isaiah have motivated him to develop, even if unintentionally and in a subtle way, a *theology of consolation*.

As obvious as all that may sound, it is not when one considers how *consolation of Israel* in Luke 2:25 has either been understood as having the Roman oppression as background or been almost dismissed entirely in its connection to the other occurrences of παράκλησις in the narrative. What I am proposing is that the narrative itself is giving clues as to what is the background for understanding Luke’s use of that term in both contexts, and those clues do not include the hope of the nation of Israel to overcome their oppressors.

It is argued above that Jesus’ words in Luke 6 help the reader to understand some aspects of the presentation in the Temple in Luke 2. It should be noted, however, that this apprehension of meaning goes both ways: the presentation in the Temple, through the primacy effect it creates, impresses upon the reader the understanding that the expected παράκλησις was present and available for all peoples, as salvation in Jesus. In chapter 6, the reader learns that those in need who are in line with the prophets, have already received the παράκλησις of having the kingdom of God. Both passages complement each other in their presentation of the author’s point of view with respect to the promised *consolation*.

²⁸ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 246. Or, as Green puts it: “these beatitudes and woes are words of hope and comfort to people like those who have already been the recipients of Jesus’ ministry: lepers, sinners, the demonized, toll collectors, women, and so on. Unacceptable in the socially defined world in which they live, they are not only tolerated but embraced and restored in the new world Jesus proclaims and embodies.” Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 266.

Acts 4:36—Barnabas: *Comforted and Comforter*

Luke's third use of the word παράκλησις is in connection with Barnabas in Acts 4. On first consideration, there does not seem to be a *theology of consolation* behind this occurrence. Nonetheless, an investigation into Luke's translation of the name Barnabas and his presentation of him as a character in the story may offer some insights into his view of παράκλησις.

The Author's Choice of Words

When Luke introduces Barnabas in the narrative,²⁹ he writes: "Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means 'son of consolation'), a Levite, originally from Cyprus..." (Acts 4:36). In this description, Luke's translation of the name Barnabas is "the most important detail."³⁰ As a quick review of the literature shows, "Luke's interpretation of the name Barnabas in Acts iv. 36 has elicited many attempts at explanation, but a glance at the standard commentaries is enough to show that no consensus of scholarly opinion has yet been reached."³¹ Scholars are certain that *Bar* is Aramaic (ܒܪ) for "son of", so the difficulty over Luke's translation derives from the fact that no Aramaic root for *παβῶς* that has been suggested means παράκλησις. The most common opinions suppose that it derives from ܦܪܘܒܐ or one of its cognates, which would mean in its original form "son of a prophet", or "of prophecy".³²

²⁹ The view that Barnabas is first introduced in the narrative in chapter 4 is the most common. However, because of the witness of Codex Bezae, which link the two Josephs of Acts 1:23 and 4:36, some believe that Barnabas enters the narrative in the first chapter of Acts. See Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, "Barnabas in Acts: A Study of His Role in the Text of Codex Bezae," *JSNT* 21 (1999): 23–66.

³⁰ Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 74.

³¹ Sebastian Brock, "BAPNABAΣ: YIOΣ ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΣΕΩΣ," *JTS* 25 (1974), 93. See Brock's article for a variety of suggested etymologies for Barnabas. The author suggests an etymology that connects the source of Luke's etymology (either Luke or someone else, possibly Barnabas) with a Syriac background, possibly Antioch. For a summary of the different views regarding the etymology of Barnabas, see Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:259.

³² Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:259.

Because of this difficulty, some have concluded that Luke’s translation is wrong³³ or at least problematic.³⁴ Despite this view, the majority of scholars agrees that Luke’s translation of Barnabas is not grounded on etymological considerations alone,³⁵ but it is based on the role Barnabas has in the narrative. The nickname “‘*son of encouragement*’” is believed to identify “him as one generally known for his kindness and support of others.”³⁶ Barrett is certain that “υἱὸς παρακλήσεως must mean *son of exhortation*, that is, *preacher*; and it corresponds with this that Barnabas is represented in Acts[.]”³⁷ Craig S. Keener, who agrees that the name itself means something different from the translation, says that “‘Son of Encouragement’—that is, *encourager*, could accurately depict elements of Barnabas’s ministry in Acts[.]”³⁸ This view that Luke translates Barnabas as υἱὸς παρακλήσεως because of Barnabas’ traits is so prominent³⁹ that F. F. Bruce insists that “wherever Barnabas found people or situations requiring encouragement, he gave all the encouragement of which he was capable.”⁴⁰

These suggestions make sense not only when considering the role Barnabas *will* have in Acts, but also in the immediate context of his introduction. Luke presents Barnabas as a role

³³ Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 39.

³⁴ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 320.

³⁵ Barrett says that the translation is “a piece of popular rather than scientific etymology.” Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:259. Parsons agrees that “the significance lies less in the etymology of the Aramaic *bar-anaba* than in the role Barnabas will play later in this story.” Parsons, *Acts*, 74.

³⁶ David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 206.

³⁷ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:258–59.

³⁸ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1180.

³⁹ Bock suggests that “a popular wordplay may be at work here, as often is the case in the giving of names.” Therefore, he concludes that “the name refers to what the prophet does by way of encouragement.” Bock, *Acts*, 207. This emphasis on *encouragement* is also found in theological dictionaries, when dealing with the meaning of παρακλησις: “it is important to catch also the note of encouragement. This applies to the rendering of Βαρναβᾶς as υἱὸς παρακλήσεως in Ac. 4:36. For the apostles whose witness had brought him to faith he was an encouragement like the son who is a real comfort to his father by his being and nature.” Schmitz and Stålin, *TDNT* 5:797n180.

⁴⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The Pauline Circle* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 16.

model of the Christian community. He is the ideal believer⁴¹ used by Luke to contrast to Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5:1–11),⁴² who are judged, rather than commended for their actions. Barnabas' care for the community is illustrated by his selling a field and giving the money to the apostles. This action speaks less of his social status ("ownership of land was the principal source of wealth and social standing in the Greco-Roman world."⁴³) than of his willingness to act for the common good. His example gains further significance in a limited goods society, where "an honorable man maintains a defensive posture [regarding his wealth] inside the community," and where "[e]ven the giving and accepting of compliments are rare, because the person who compliments is guilty of aggression [against the balance]."⁴⁴ Whether this view of a limited goods society is accurate or not, certainly "the sale of property and the sharing of the proceeds was not [...] a universal practice; if it had been done by all there would be no point in singling out Barnabas for special commendation."⁴⁵

Even if there is no consensus regarding the Aramaic roots behind Luke's allegedly inaccurate translation of Barnabas, one thing is agreed upon: Luke chooses the words *υἱὸς παρακλήσεως* for a reason; he wants to make a point. And, so far, the point suggested by scholars has been Barnabas' role as an *encourager* or *comforter* in the remainder of the narrative. Such hypothesis is reasonable, but we might wonder whether this is all there is behind Luke's choice of words when translating Barnabas. Considering the two occurrences of *παράκλησις* in the Gospel as well as Barnabas' role in Acts, I suggest that through this character Luke is

⁴¹ S. Jonathan Murphy, "The Role of Barnabas in the Book of Acts," *BSac* 167 (2010), 321.

⁴² Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 208.

⁴³ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 206.

⁴⁴ Gowler, "Characterization in Luke," 59.

⁴⁵ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:258.

conveying—even if incidentally—his theological view of *consolation*.

In this verse, such theological point is conveyed also in his description of Barnabas' background. Barnabas, being a Levite from Cyprus, is someone who personally unites two worlds. On the one hand, because he was a Levite, he was regarded as a prominent member among Jews,⁴⁶ who had strong connections with the Jerusalem church.⁴⁷ On the other hand, because he was born in Cyprus, he was a “Hellenistic Jewish believer.”⁴⁸ This is relevant because it makes Barnabas someone who “was uniquely placed to become a mediator between Jewish and Gentile Christians and an encourager of the Gentile mission (e.g., 11:22–4; 14:22).”⁴⁹

Tannehill acknowledges the significance of the connection between *υἱὸς παρακλήσεως* and Barnabas' Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds:

This honorary name, together with the indications that he has roots both in Judaism (he is a Levite) and in the Diaspora, foreshadows his future role as mediator between Jewish and gentile Christians and encourager of the gentile mission. In 11:23 and 14:22 we find Barnabas “encouraging” (both passages use *παρακαλέω*) communities that include Gentiles.⁵⁰

In my view, Tannehill is right in asserting that the connection between *πράκλῆσις* and Barnabas' backgrounds point to the Gentile mission and inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God. However, Tannehill, like others, disconnects this text from what came before, as if Luke could only be calling Barnabas “son of *πράκλῆσις*” *because Barnabas will encourage the*

⁴⁶ Keener says that “within Judaism, ‘Levite’ was a status claim, just like hereditary aristocratic lineages elsewhere.” Keener, *Acts*, 2:1182. His credentials are above reproach, for “Levites were considered of higher standing than other Jews.” Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 320.

⁴⁷ This can be seen in his intercession for Paul in Acts 9. Also, outside the narrative world of Luke–Acts, Galatians 2:13 corroborates this.

⁴⁸ Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 322. See also Keener, *Acts*, 2:1181. Barrett disagrees that Barnabas was a Diaspora Jew, a Hellenist. He considers the view that he was a Hebrew. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:258.

⁴⁹ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 206.

⁵⁰ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:78.

mission. Reading it this way causes Tannehill to assert that the narrative will show that Barnabas will be a “‘son of encouragement’ in ways that extend beyond the apostles’ original meaning in giving this name to a dedicated disciple.”⁵¹ This reading seems to miss the internal connections that Luke is creating throughout the narrative.

It is likely that Luke’s translation of Barnabas as υἱὸς παρακλήσεως is motivated by his view that God’s consolation, prophesied in Isaiah and hoped for by Simeon and others in the beginning of the narrative, is offered to Jews and Gentiles alike. This was Luke’s interpretation of the promise of *consolation of Israel* from Isaiah, as we saw in our discussion of Luke 2:25, and this point (that God’s consolation is offered to Jews and Gentiles alike) will be made through Barnabas’ actions in Acts.

The fact that the nickname is given “by the apostles” is of special significance. When Luke used παράκλησις in the context of Simeon, we saw that people of God does not equal the nation of Israel, for she would be divided on account of Jesus. In Jesus’ blessings and woes, Luke tells us that Jesus connects παράκλησις and the Kingdom of God, which is for the ones who are in line with the prophets. Now, in his introduction of Barnabas, after the Christian community has been formed, Luke is indirectly telling the reader that the apostles themselves agree that the promise of *consolation* is for all, for they are the ones who chose such name for Barnabas, whom Luke will show to be an important character in the spreading of the message of Jesus to the Gentiles.

Barnabas’s Function as a Character

Unlike some aspects of Luke’s translation of Βαρναβᾶς, which are debated among

⁵¹ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:78.

scholars, Luke’s focus on Barnabas’ role in the narrative as he chooses the words υἱὸς παρακλήσεως is a consensus. In this section, I will examine Barnabas’ function in Acts and propose that the view defended above—that παράκλησις in the introduction of Barnabas (Acts 4:36) betrays Luke’s *theology of consolation*—is supported by how Luke presents his story.

Encourager of the Marginalized

As was abundantly demonstrated above when this study presented the usual interpretations of Luke’s translation of the name Barnabas, most scholars focus on the *encouragement* that Barnabas provides as υἱὸς παρακλήσεως. This emphasis can be seen throughout his participation in the narrative of Acts,⁵² and we may exemplify his role as an *encourager* in three emblematic actions. The first, which was already discussed, is when he sells a field and gives the money for the good of his fellow believers (Acts 4:37).

Barnabas’ second exemplary demonstration of his ministry of encouragement occurs when he intercedes for Saul with the apostles in Jerusalem, so that Saul was accepted by the church (Acts 9:27).⁵³ After his conversion on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1–18), Saul begins preaching in Damascus, where he joined other disciples (Acts 9:19–22). After fleeing from the Jews, he goes to Jerusalem and tries to join the disciples who are there, but his bad reputation preceded him, causing the disciples to fear and doubt his newfound faith (Acts 9:26). It is at this time that Barnabas comes back into the narrative, after his brief appearance of chapter 4, when Luke called him υἱὸς παρακλήσεως. Now, in chapter 9, Luke tells the reader that Barnabas “took him

⁵² In a short article about Barnabas, by Dick France, the author focuses on Barnabas’ “ministry of encouragement by considering three of the objects of his *paraklēsis*.” The three objects are *the outsiders*, *the suspect* (Paul), and *the failure* (John Mark). Dick France, “Barnabas—Son of Encouragement,” *Themelios* 4 (1978): 3–6.

⁵³ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1689–90.

and brought him to the disciples and told them” (Acts 9:27) about Saul’s conversion and his ministry in Damascus. From that point on, Saul was accepted by the Jerusalem church (Acts 9:28).

Commenting on the words ἐπιλαβόμενος αὐτὸν (“taking him”), Bock says that “The idea of ‘taking him’ here has the force of ‘taking him under his wing’.”⁵⁴ Barnabas’ attitude in Jerusalem appears to go against common sense, for both Ananias (Acts 9:13–14) and the other disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26) were afraid of Saul at first. Barnabas, on the other hand, uses his influence to persuade the church to accept Saul, even when “his advocacy was risky.”⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that “[n]o reason is given for Barnabas’ intercession for Saul, though Barnabas was known as a comforter.”⁵⁶

The third typical example of Barnabas’ role as an encourager occurs when he decides to take John Mark along, despite the fact that John had abandoned him and Paul before (Acts 15:37–39). Even though this time it might seem that he is against Paul because of the separation that is caused by his choice, he is acting in accordance with his character as when he vouched for Paul in the Jerusalem church. Now, when he chose John Mark, Barnabas “was once again an advocate on behalf of another [...]. Standing by John Mark and choosing to sail off with him was risky, for John Mark had deserted them previously.”⁵⁷

The paragraphs above illustrate Barnabas’ most representative characteristic: he was an *encourager*. Besides these three instances, other examples could be offered:

⁵⁴ Bock, *Acts*, 369.

⁵⁵ Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 323.

⁵⁶ Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 323.

⁵⁷ Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 340.

When the church in Jerusalem heard about Greeks ‘turning to the Lord’ in Antioch (11:29–21), they sent Barnabas to Antioch, and he “*encouraged* them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose” (11:23, emphasis added; cf. 4:36). When the disciples decide to send relief “to the brethren who lived in Judea,” they sent it by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (11:30). Barnabas is a sign both of submission to the apostles and encouragement to fellow believers.⁵⁸

Bridge between Jerusalem and Gentiles

As much as Barnabas was an encourager—and this might have been *a* reason for Luke’s translation (or for the nickname he was given by the apostles), Luke’s view of consolation is conveyed in the way Barnabas—the *son of consolation*—functions as a bridge between Jews and Gentiles in the narrative.

When I discussed Luke’s introduction of Barnabas above, I briefly spoke about the significance of his background, saying that it is an indication that Barnabas is someone who represents both Jewish and the Gentile world. Luke, through his “relatively elaborate introduction of (Joseph) Barnabas, [...] brings onto the stage the character who will serve as the link between the immediate followers of Jesus and the gentile mission eventually led by Paul.”⁵⁹ In other words, his origin makes him “well qualified for a mission to Gentiles, since he came from one of these Gentile areas.”⁶⁰

In his second appearance in the narrative, his function as a bridge is highlighted by the move that his intercession for Paul signifies in the progression of the Gospel. Although that scene is in Jerusalem, his bringing Paul to Jerusalem gains additional meaning “as the narrative

⁵⁸ Parsons, *Acts*, 74. See also Bock, *Acts*, 218: “In Acts he cares for the poor, gives of his resources, welcomes Paul when others are skeptical, encourages him in ministering alongside him [...]”

⁵⁹ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 128.

⁶⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 216.

unfolds and he is presented as a key bridge between the Jerusalem church and other churches.”⁶¹ The one who would become the most renowned missionary to the Gentiles (Saul) needs Barnabas’ intercession to be linked to the Jerusalem church. By acting as a bridge in Acts 9:26, Barnabas is “assuming the center stage of the Gentile mission.”⁶²

The third time Barnabas surfaces in the narrative is in chapter 11. In Acts 10–11, the Gospel, which had already gone out to Judea and Samaria, begins to reach the Gentile world. At this point, Barnabas is a central character when the message about Jesus goes to Antioch. There, after the proclamation to the Jews, some Greeks hear the word and believe. Barnabas is then sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch to see what had happened (Acts 11:22), and when he got there he “*παρεκάλει* them all to remain in the Lord” (Acts 11:23). Luke adds that Barnabas did that “for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (Acts 11:24). After that, Barnabas goes to Tarsus to look for Saul, and he brings him to Antioch to minister alongside him (Acts 11:25–30). In his second appearance, Barnabas had presented Paul to the Jerusalem church. Now, he presents Paul to the ministry of the first Gentile church in Acts.⁶³ It is through Barnabas, that “Luke [...] connects Paul to the seminal spread of the movement to Gentiles (though he arrived after it began).”⁶⁴ In other words, Barnabas “became the bridge that linked Saul and the Antioch church. That became the sending church for Saul’s multiple expeditions.”⁶⁵

After that initial step toward the mission to the Gentiles, Barnabas, chosen by the Spirit,⁶⁶

⁶¹ Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 324.

⁶² Parsons, *Acts*, 73.

⁶³ Keener says that “Although many Jews lived in Antioch, it was predominantly Gentile and Pagan.” Keener, *Acts*, 2:1836.

⁶⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1833.

⁶⁵ Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 326.

⁶⁶ Parsons, *Acts*, 74–75.

takes part on Paul's first missionary journey, related in Acts 13–14. As can be seen in the text, “Barnabas was a key member of this missionary expedition, proclaiming the message of salvation in Jesus to Jew and Gentile across Cyprus and parts of Asia Minor. [...] He proclaimed Jesus boldly to both Jews and Gentiles, and endured opposition because of it.”⁶⁷ In chapter 15, Barnabas appears for the last time. In that context, right before his separation from Paul, Luke relates the results of their journey and the decisions that the church had to make regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God.⁶⁸ As Luke makes clear, “Barnabas played a key role in the official decision of the church to recognize Gentile inclusion in the new community without being circumcised.”⁶⁹

It is clear that Barnabas was an important character⁷⁰ when it comes to the spread of the Gospel through the narrative. His function as a bridge between two worlds is shown as he “testifies about the work of God to those outside and within the community.”⁷¹ The programmatic proclamation of Simeon—who awaited the *παράκλησις of Israel*—that salvation in Jesus was prepared before all peoples and that it would be a light for revelation to the Gentiles is realized through the person and work of Barnabas—who was the *son of παράκλησις*—in each time he appears in the narrative.

Barnabas emerged in all three major sections (1:1–8:3; 8:4–11:18; 11:19–28:31) of the narrative of Acts. The final section focuses on the proclamation of the message of salvation in Jesus Christ to the end of the earth—geographically and ethnically. Though a secondary character in several ways, Barnabas contributed significantly to the spread of the gospel. [...] Even secondary characters literarily speaking are utilized by a story's narrator to move the ideological point of view along. As such,

⁶⁷ Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 334.

⁶⁸ I will discuss the relevant details for this dissertation that are found in Acts 13 and 15 later.

⁶⁹ Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 338.

⁷⁰ As Bock acknowledges: “He surely is one of Luke's heroes.” Bock, *Acts*, 216.

⁷¹ Bock, *Acts*, 218.

Barnabas played an important role in the Book of Acts. He is another vehicle through whom the narrative progresses.⁷²

Luke's translation, which is usually understood as the author's view of Barnabas as a character, conveys Luke's view not only of Barnabas as a comforter, but of παράκλησις itself. In fact, not only his translation of Barnabas, but his report of who Barnabas is and what he does shows the reader what παράκλησις come from God looks like. The Spirit filling Barnabas, his role in Paul's being accepted by the Jerusalem church, and his work for the gospel among both Jews and Gentiles, make him worthy to be called υἱὸς παρακλήσεως.

It is also noteworthy for the present thesis, even if coincidental, that Luke uses παράκλησις only in parts of Acts where Barnabas is present. The first time is in his introduction of Barnabas, in chapter 4, and the last time is right before Barnabas' last appearance, in chapter 15. Might this be Luke's way of showing that, now that Barnabas' work was done and the Jerusalem church has officially acknowledged the Gentiles as the people of God, it was not necessary for him to keep referring to the promised παράκλησις anymore?

Acts 9:31—The *Consolation* of the Holy Spirit Multiplies the Church

The fourth occurrence of παράκλησις in Luke-Acts is at Acts 9:31, where Luke writes: “Then the church had peace throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria, being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord; and because of the consolation of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied.”⁷³

⁷² Murphy, “The Role of Barnabas,” 341.

⁷³ The Greek has: «Ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐκκλησία καθ’ ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Γαλιλαίας καὶ Σαμαρείας εἶχεν εἰρήνην οἰκοδομουμένη καὶ πορευομένη τῷ φόβῳ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τῇ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐπληθύνετο» In my translation, I took both participles οἰκοδομουμένη καὶ πορευομένη as introducing an adverbial clause of *result*, related to the verb εἶχεν. Thus, “the church had peace, *with the result that* it was being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord.” It is interesting that most English translations separate the two participles, linking the second one to the second half of the verse: “and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the consolation of the Holy Spirit, it was multiplied.” Most Brazilian Portuguese translations and the few Spanish that I have consulted separate the two participles. Interestingly, the NIV and NVI (*Nova Versão Internacional*. Portuguese version of the NIV) offer different translations, according to the tendency of each language. Fitzmyer offers a similar translation to what we

About παράκλησις here, Barrett says that “At 9.31 the meaning is not clear and it would be unwise to build on this verse.”⁷⁴ While that is the case, he still defends that “... it is not wrong to allow it to refer to whatever it is that the Holy Spirit does, and this will include both the (messianic) consolation (cf. e.g. Lk. 2.25) and the stirring up and enabling of Christians to live as they should (cf. 1.8).”⁷⁵ Why “it is not wrong” is not explained. Almost as if pressed by the necessity of commenting on every single word, Barrett makes those remarks. Similarly, Keener, in a footnote, says that “‘Comfort’ (παρακλήσει) here refers to encouragement (Acts 15:31), not exhortation (13:15), perhaps (but not necessarily) as a foretaste of eschatological hope (Luke 2:25; 6:24). Luke rarely couples the Holy Spirit with nouns of comfort in this manner.”⁷⁶

In this section, I will explore this verse’s connection with the plot of Luke-Acts and suggest that consolation (which had been associated with salvation earlier) is finally leaving Jerusalem to reach other places, fulfilling its purpose as outlined by Simeon’s song of praise, and in accordance with Jesus’s answer to the disciples in the beginning of Acts.

Summary Statement and the Spread of the Gospel

Luke’s use of the technique of summary in the book of Acts is well known. Scholars tend to agree that the representative texts of this genre are Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35; 5:12–16; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20.⁷⁷ As we can see from the range of verses in each of the so-called summaries,

have here. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 441. Horatio Balch Hackett, says that “καὶ τῆ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, belongs not to πορευόμεναι, but to ἐπληθύνοντο, of which it assigns the cause: and *by the aid* [...] of the Holy Spirit were multiplied. That sense of παρακλήσει is not certain.” Hackett, *A Commentary on the Original Text of the Acts of the Apostles* (Boston: J. P. Jewett, 1852), 142. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992), 176.

⁷⁴ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:258.

⁷⁵ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:474.

⁷⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1696 fn 892.

⁷⁷ H. Alan Brehm, “The Significance of the Summaries for Interpreting Acts,” *SJT* 33 (1990), 30.

some are longer than others. Because of that, there have been debates regarding whether all those summaries have the same function. One suggestion that is relevant for our reading of Acts distinguishes between two subcategories of the genre “summary”, according to the distinctive perceived function of each type. The two subgroups

may be called “summary narratives” and “summary statements.” The “summary narratives” (2:42–47; 4:32–35; 5:12–16) create the impression that Luke is describing the believers, customary practice. [...] The “summary statements” (6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20) have a similar, but more subtle function in Acts, emphasizing the theme of the advance of the gospel by repeating the phrase ‘and the word grew’ at strategic points throughout the narrative.⁷⁸

According to the definition above, Acts 9:31 is a summary statement placed at a strategic point in the narrative, that functions as a marker to show the advance of the gospel.⁷⁹ Luke structures his work to reflect the geographic plan that appears in Jesus’ response to the disciples in Acts 1:8,⁸⁰ and he “placed these statements at important points of transition in Acts as subtle reminders of his intention to show how the word grew from Jerusalem, through Samaria and Syria to Asia Minor, and eventually past Greece to Rome, thus ‘to the ends of the earth.’”⁸¹ Luke wants to show how the message about Jesus is being revealed to all, including Gentiles, just as

⁷⁸ Brehm, “The Significance of the Summaries,” 30. Also, “by their placement at important points of transition in the narrative, the summary statements in Acts advance the theme of the spread of the gospel and the growth of the churches.” Brehm, “The Significance of the Summaries,” 30. Some scholars, even when they do not openly agree with this categorization, treat the two groups differently. See Gregory E. Sterling, “‘Athletes of Virtue’: An Analysis of the Summaries in Acts (2:41–47; 4:32–35; 5:12–16),” *JBL* 113 (1994): 679–696; M. A. Co, “The Major Summaries in Acts: Acts 2,42–47; 4,32–35; 5,12–16: Linguistic and Literary Relationship,” *ETL* 68 (2005): 49–85. Keener adds other passages to the usual list of summaries (Acts 4:4; 9:42; 11:21; 13:48; 28:31), but agrees that the five summary statements above are “the clearest summaries of the gospel’s expansion.” Keener, *Acts*, 1:574.

⁷⁹ Brehm puts a great deal of emphasis on the words “and the word grew” as “an almost stereotypical” characteristic of the summary statements. Brehm, “The Significance of the Summaries,” 33, 38–39. However, as we see in Acts 9:31 (and Acts 16:5), this expression is not present in every summary statement; it is only in three out of five (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20). The theme of growth is present in all of them.

⁸⁰ Keener, *Acts*, 1:575, 992.

⁸¹ Brehm, “The Significance of the Summaries,” 40.

Simeon had said in the beginning of the Gospel.⁸²

When discussing this summary statement in its context, Barrett argues that Luke often uses the words μὲν οὖν when “he begins a new section of his book,”⁸³ and “[s]ince the verse is related both to what precedes and to what follows it seems necessary to consider it on its own as a connecting link.”⁸⁴ Perhaps Barrett and others overstate the case that Luke’s use of this formula signals the beginning of a new section,⁸⁵ but his point that this is a connection link still stands. In this summary statement, Luke suggests that the church has found some peace after the persecution (Acts 8:1) and is experiencing the prophesied growth (Acts 1:8). And Luke makes clear that the gospel has reached a milestone in its progression, for it now is well “established in the ‘Judea and Samaria’ part of Jesus’s words in 1:8, paving the way for the mission to the ends of the earth.”⁸⁶ Although in chapter 9 there is some focus on the Jerusalem area, it also serves the purpose of pointing to the ends of the earth, for it is in Jerusalem that the reader sees Saul begin his ministry on behalf of the established church (Acts 9:28) and directed to the Hellenists (Acts 9:29).⁸⁷ In other words, “[t]his particular summary statement functions retrospectively, but also to introduce the stories [...] that follow.”⁸⁸

⁸² Keener, *Acts*, 1:992.

⁸³ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:472.

⁸⁴ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:472. See also Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 317.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Acts 1:6; 8:25; 14:3; 28:5.

⁸⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1697. Barrett notes that “the church is now (according to Luke) settled and established in all Jewish areas, including the half-Jewish area of Samaria. Galilee could hardly be omitted. The church is at peace and flourishing, and is now ready for further expansion.” Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:472. See also I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 177.

⁸⁷ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1697. “Although 9:32–43 will continue with the Judean ministry (as part of the Petrine material that leads into the Cornelius story), Luke is preparing to transition into the evangelization of Gentiles.” Keener, *Acts*, 2:1697.

⁸⁸ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 317. Commentators disagree on whether it is best to treat this verse with what precedes or with what succeeds, but most consider 9:31 as the end of a section. See Parsons, *Acts*, 125;

The formula μὲν οὖν, which also appears in Acts 16:5, is not the only formal aspect that makes this summary statement stand out. Of relevance here is the fact that this summary statement is the only one in which Luke mentions any *cause*⁸⁹ for the growth of the church. This is also the only statement in which Luke does not mention either “word” (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20) or “faith” (Acts 6:7; 16:5). Instead, he writes about the “fear of the Lord” and “consolation of the Holy Spirit”. Other than in Acts 9, “Spirit” and “fear” are usually unrelated, with the exception, perhaps, of Acts 5:3, 5, 9, 11 (where fear comes upon the people after Ananias and Sapphira die for having lied to the Holy Spirit), and less likely Acts 2:38–43 (where fear comes upon the people who had been baptized and received the Spirit). None of this seems to be the background of Luke’s summary in Acts 9:31. Instead, this combination, coupled with Jesus’ self-understanding of his mission in Isaianic terms as seen in Luke 4 and Luke’s understanding of Jesus’ salvation as the fulfillment of Isaianic promises as seen in Luke 2, seems to allude to Isaiah 11–12, where “fear of the Lord” and the work of the “Spirit” would be related to the Messiah, and God’s salvation would be recognized by the nations and God would bring his people from the ends of the earth.⁹⁰

Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 315; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 437; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 174; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 320. For examples of those who think that the verse starts a new section, see Johnson, *The Acts*, 176; Paton James Gloag, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 1 (New York: T&T Clark, 1870), 347. Yet some scholars prefer to treat this verse on its own. See Bock, *Acts*, 372; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 196.

⁸⁹ Depending on how one understands «τῇ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος» to function. I translate it as a dative of cause. Fitzmyer agrees that “[t]he growth of the church is thus ascribed to the *paraklēsis*, ‘encouragement, exhortation, consolation’ of the Spirit.” Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 441. See Hackett, *A Commentary*, 142.

⁹⁰ Scholars commonly see in Luke the general OT idea of fear of the Lord, rather than the specific Isaianic passage as background. Some completely ignore the Isaiah passage as a possible background for Acts 9:31. See Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 441: “A new element is introduced in the description of the Christian church: the OT idea of the ‘fear of the Lord’ (Prov 1:7, 29; 2:5; 9:10; 19:23; Ps 19:9; Sir 9:16; 25:6), the beginning of knowledge. Luke introduces that idea to enhance the wisdom that characterized early Palestinian Christian.”

A shoot will come out of the stump of Jesse, and a branch will bear fruit from its root. And the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. He will enjoy the fear of the Lord.⁹¹ (Isaiah 11:1–3a)

And in that day, the root of Jesse—who stands as a sign for the peoples, it is him whom the nations will seek; his resting place will be glory.⁹² (Isaiah 11:10)

He will raise up a sign for the nations, and gather the banished of Israel and gather together the scattered of Judah from the four extremities of the earth. (Isaiah 11:10)

And in that day, you will say: “I will praise you, Lord, for though you were angry at me, your anger turned away, and you have comforted⁹³ me. (Isaiah 12:1)

Given the influence Isaiah had on Luke’s theological thinking,⁹⁴ the aforementioned uses of παράκλησις in the narrative, and the peculiar elements of this summary statement, it is possible that Luke has, at this turning point in the mission of the church, slipped into his Isaianic view of mission and fulfillment of prophecies about Jesus and the work of the Spirit. As someone reminds us,

At important points of transition between major events Luke reiterates by means of the summary statements what is foremost on his mind. They function like neatly tucked away clues which, when they come to our attention, give us a better perspective on the way the various parts of the Acts narrative fit together to demonstrate the progress of the gospel to the ‘ends of the earth.’”⁹⁵

The clues here are *not* showing that παράκλησις is “what is foremost in his mind;” rather, they show us that whenever he uses that word, especially in connection with the Spirit, what is foremost in his mind is the universalization of the Jewish salvation, in accordance with his

⁹¹ The LXX is slightly different here: «ἐμπλήσει αὐτὸν πνεῦμα φόβου θεοῦ».

⁹² “Peoples” and “nations” translate respectively the Hebrew עַמְּוֹת and אֲרָצוֹת. Here they are clearly synonyms, and the LXX translates both with ἔθνων and ἔθνη respectively. This use of “peoples” as a synonym for Gentiles is seen, as mentioned before, in Luke 2:31–32.

⁹³ Although the Hebrew has נַחַם, the LXX translates it with ἐλεέω.

⁹⁴ See chapter 6 below.

⁹⁵ Brehm, “The Significance of the Summaries,” 39.

readings of Isaiah, as seen in the beginning of the narrative.

Subjective Genitive: Salvation Goes out of Jerusalem and *Comforts* Other Places

Some scholars hypothesize that Luke uses the word παράκλησις in this context because of the persecution that had befallen the church in chapter 8. Since now is a time of peace and growth after oppression, it makes sense to use a word such as *comfort* or *encouragement*.⁹⁶ However, as we reflect on the connection between the hope of Simeon and Luke's summary of the spread of the gospel in Acts, we may notice further connections in the narrative.

This brings us to another aspect that makes this “impressive summary statement”⁹⁷ stand out in Acts: Luke mentions the Spirit. In Acts 1:8 Jesus says that the power of the Holy Spirit would be behind the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In Luke's account, we see that the Spirit was involved in the witnessing in Jerusalem (Acts 2:4) and Samaria (Acts 8:14–19), and in chapter 9 the summary says that the church was growing because of the παράκλησις of the Spirit. In this context, we see that Luke is using παράκλησις with a subjective genitive (τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος), rather than an objective genitive as he used earlier, when he described Simeon's hope as the «παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ». The point here is not a grammatical one, but one about Luke's interpretation of the promised consolation. Whereas many interpreters think that the fulfillment of Simeon's hope would happen when consolation came *to Israel*, in Luke's account, the promise is fulfilled when consolation goes out *from Israel* to the nations. This point is underscored in Simeon's explanation of Jesus' salvation, when he says that it would be a light for revelation *to the Gentiles* and for *glory to Israel*. In Luke's view

⁹⁶ See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 318. When one reads it this way, one can say that Luke summarizes in Acts 9:31 “not so much the Judean and Samaritan mission but the way God ended the persecution by converting the chief persecutor.” Keener, *Acts*, 2:1695.

⁹⁷ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 317.

of παράκλησις as salvation that goes out of Jerusalem to the Gentiles and it is witnessed by the power of the Holy Spirit, it seems that describing the increase in the church throughout other regions, when it is ready to officially leave the Jewish areas, with an expression such as «τῆ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος» is fitting.

The point above is supported by the references to the Spirit at key points in the narrative's development of the theme of salvation. In Luke 2, Luke emphatically underscores the Spirit's participation in Simeon's understanding of παράκλησις as salvation to all, with the first reference to the Gentiles in the narrative; in Luke 3–4, the Spirit anoints Jesus to do his work of salvation as expected from the beginning; in Acts 1:6–8, which is often linked to Luke 1–2 because of the hopes expressed, Jesus tells the disciples that their hopes regarding Israel will be fulfilled *as* the Spirit spreads the gospels from Jerusalem to the Gentiles; finally, in Acts 9:31, we have a summary of the partial fulfillment of the disciple's hope, as the Spirit makes the church grow.

In this important summary of the spread of the gospel, the use of παράκλησις related to the Spirit is in a way being connected with Acts 1:8 and also Luke 2:25. This connection highlights Luke's theology of promises to Israel being fulfilled in the life of the church. In Luke 2 consolation was to be a salvation that was a light for the glory *of Israel*, and now we see more clearly how that would happen. Salvation was to come from Jerusalem and reach the ends of the earth, and it happens through the *consolation* of the Holy Spirit.

Considering the above, we may conclude that Barrett is right when he says that "... it is not wrong to allow [παράκλησις in Acts 9:31] to refer to whatever it is that the Holy Spirit does, and this will include both the (messianic) consolation (cf. e.g. Lk. 2.25) and the stirring up and

enabling of Christians to live as they should (cf. 1:8)”⁹⁸ However, we can say more than that. In this section we could see how Luke uses παράκλησις in connection with the Holy Spirit in a summary statement that shows παράκλησις as the work of the Holy Spirit in multiplying the church with the goal of reaching “the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8), and how this is in line with Simeon’s understanding of *salvation* as “revelation to Gentiles and glory to Israel.”

The immediate context of persecution and the mention of *peace* suggest that *encouragement* or *comfort* are in view, but they do not exhaust the meaning of this word in Luke’s usage. Bock reminds us that παράκλησις “has a broad meaning, and to choose between comfort and encouragement limits it too much.”⁹⁹ Bock, however, means lexical meaning, whereas this research has stressed contextual meanings. When we consider the wider context of the narrative we may say that, in fact, this word has a broad meaning, and to choose between comfort and encouragement *and the consolation which Simeon expected and is in part referred to here* limits it even more.

In sum, the internal connections in the narrative subtly reveal that the παράκλησις of the Spirit which causes the church to grow has been hinted at in earlier passages, and serves here as an appropriate substitute for the more common ways of Luke to summarize the growth of the church. With this in mind, παράκλησις is more than just psychological encouragement to persecuted people; it is connected to Luke’s view of messianic salvation.

⁹⁸ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:474.

⁹⁹ Bock, *Acts*, 372.

Acts 13:15—The Word of *Consolation* is the Word of *Salvation*

The next occurrence of *παράκλησις* is within the “major narrative segment”¹⁰⁰ of Acts 13–14. This section of the book relates the commissioning (Acts 3:1–3) of Barnabas and Saul (soon to be named Paul, cf. Acts 13:9), by the Holy Spirit, for the missions which came to be known as Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13:4–14:25), and their return to Antioch (Acts 14:26–28). In the plot of Acts, this section is significant because it reports the first deliberate outreach to Gentile regions, where they intentionally proclaimed to both Jews and Gentiles.¹⁰¹ This journey served as the basis for Paul and Barnabas’ arguments for the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:4).

At this point, I will explore what Paul’s response to the Jewish request for a *word of consolation* was, as well as the effect it had on hearers and its relevance for the narrator’s story. The point, as in every other section of this dissertation, is *not* to argue that *παράκλησις* is a major theme in Luke-Acts, but only to understand what it reveals about the implied author’s theological point of view.

Word of *Consolation*: A Designation of A Sermon or Play on Words?

The text says that when Paul and Barnabas arrived in Antioch in Pisidia, they went to the synagogue to meet the people (as was customary when they went to a new place). In Acts 13:15 we are told: “After the reading from the law and the prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent to them, saying: ‘Brothers, if there is in you¹⁰² a word of consolation for the people, say it.’”

¹⁰⁰ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:159.

¹⁰¹ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:159.

¹⁰² The Greek text has «εἴ τίς ἐστὶν ἐν ὑμῖν», which may be translated as “if you have.” My translation reflects the wordplay I think is intended by Luke’s report of that dialogue.

What did the leaders of the synagogue mean by λόγος παρακλήσεως?

The popular answer is that they meant simply a biblical message. Marshall comments that “[a] sermon based on Scripture is appropriately described as a message of ‘encouragement’ (*paraklēsis*); cf. 1 Macc. 12:9; 2 Macc. 15:9.”¹⁰³ Along these lines, others say that Paul and Barnabas were “asked if they wish to encourage those attending,”¹⁰⁴ if they had “some words of encouragement.”¹⁰⁵ Others see more than that in these words. Bruce refers the reader to Hebrews 13:22¹⁰⁶ and says that “perhaps it was current as an expression denoting a synagogue sermon,”¹⁰⁷ while Johnson admits that “the term *logos tēs paraklēseōs* seems to have something of a technical flavor for a sermon based on the lections.”¹⁰⁸ Fitzmyer mentions interpretations that consider these words as a technical term for Acts 13:17–22, but cites lack of evidence and its use in Hebrews 13:22 as indication that in Acts 13:15 it is less specific, referring to the entire sermon that follows.¹⁰⁹

Some scholars are certain that λόγος παρακλήσεως are used in a technical sense in the present context. Barrett, when commenting on the meaning of Barnabas in Acts 4:36, says that it is “such a discourse as might be given in a synagogue service: a word of exhortation, or perhaps of encouragement; a sermon;”¹¹⁰ he restates that opinion when dealing with Acts 13:15: “λόγος

¹⁰³ I. Howard Marshall, “Acts,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Gregory K. Beale and Donald A. Carson, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 582.

¹⁰⁴ Bock, *Acts*, 451.

¹⁰⁵ Babu Immanuel Venkataraman, *Acts of the Apostles: An Exegetical and Contextual Commentary*, ICNT 5, ed. Brian C. Wintle, Dexter Maben Babu, and Immanuel Venkataraman (Primalogue, 2016), 146.

¹⁰⁶ “I urge you, brothers, bear with the word of consolation, for I have written to you in a few words.”

¹⁰⁷ Bruce, *Acts*, 252 fn 41.

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, *The Acts*, 230.

¹⁰⁹ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 510.

¹¹⁰ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:258.

παρακλήσεως is *word of exhortation*, hortatory discourse, sermon.”¹¹¹ Although it is not impossible that the expression λόγος παρακλήσεως might have been used in a technical sense to denote a sermon, the fact is that the evidence is inconclusive, for “[w]e know so little about how the synagogue gatherings functioned at this time.”¹¹² Because of our lack of evidence, any suggestion that the words are used in a technical sense “for a messianic interpretation [...] probably reads too much into the phrase.”¹¹³

Whatever the case, the reader may notice that there is some element of irony in Luke’s report of the scene. Scholars generally distinguish between two subtypes of irony: verbal and situational. The first occurs when “the speaker intentionally says one thing, but means another.”¹¹⁴ The latter refers to “an incongruity or contradiction between what a speaker says and what the author intends.”¹¹⁵ In the leaders of the synagogue’s request, there are two situational ironies. The first and most straightforward, is the fact that Barnabas’ name means, according to the author, “son of consolation” (Acts 4:36). When they ask, “Brothers, if there is in you a word of consolation for the people, say it,” the reader will remember that there is in fact *the son of consolation* among those visitors. It is as though Luke uses the leaders of the synagogue’s request to remind the reader of the role of Barnabas in the story, which they seem unaware of.

The second and most important situational irony lies in the fact that what they request is, in the author’s point of view, exactly what they receive. Whether they were technically asking for a

¹¹¹ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:629.

¹¹² James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 178.

¹¹³ Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*; JSNTSup 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 157.

¹¹⁴ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 30.

¹¹⁵ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 68.

sermon or just general words of encouragement, the fact is that they did not have a message about Jesus in mind, not in the least one that could *encourage* Gentiles to join their people. The text says that the leaders asked to hear a λόγος παρακλήσεως (Acts 13:15), and after they heard the message, they “begged (παρεκάλουν) that these words be spoken to them the next Sabbath” (Acts 13:42). These verses form an *inclusio* that frames the message in between as the true λόγος παρακλήσεως in the author’s view. Authors frame narratives with some “words, phrases, and concepts that help identify the themes of the narratives”¹¹⁶ and thereby “underscore prominent themes and concepts of a story.”¹¹⁷ In Acts 13, both the noun παράκλησις and the verb παρακαλέω are used exclusively by the leaders of the synagogue in the framing of the message. This highlights the irony, as they are unable to recognize with Paul and the reader that the word of consolation is the word of salvation in Jesus.¹¹⁸ Paul makes that point in verse 26, when he addresses them in a manner that reminds them of the way they addressed him and Barnabas in the first place. A comparison of the two verses will show how irony functions here “to convince the reader of the narrator’s point of view, [how] irony is used to persuade the reader of the narrator’s beliefs, norms, values, and point of view.”¹¹⁹

Table 2. Irony in Acts 13:15 and 13:26

¹¹⁶ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 58.

¹¹⁷ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 57.

¹¹⁸ Danielle Ellul, speaking on the connection of the *word of consolation* and *word of salvation* in this context, seems to miss the irony when she says that Paul shifts the meaning of one into the other. My point is that they are the same for the author and for Paul, and the problem is that the audience did not see it this way. Her comments are on the significance of verse 23, where she says, “Il a dans cette section une place centrale, car il fait basculer la parole d’esperance et d’encouragement du v. 15 (λόγος παρακλήσεως) en parole de salut (v. 26: λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας).” Danielle Ellul, “Antioche de Pisidie: Une Prédication... Trois Credos? (Actes 13,13–43),” *FN 5* (1992), 7.

¹¹⁹ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 73–74.

13:15	ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, εἴ τίς ἐστὶν ἐν ὑμῖν λόγος παρακλήσεως πρὸς τὸν λαόν, λέγετε.	13:26	ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, υἱοὶ γένους Ἀβραάμ καὶ οἱ ἐν ὑμῖν φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας ταύτης ἐξαπεστάλη.
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There are three elements in these verses that need our attention as we follow the author's line of thought. Paul calls them ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, just as he and Barnabas had been called before Paul started to speak; Paul defines his message as ὁ λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας ταύτης, which he delivers in response to a request for a λόγος παρακλήσεως;¹²⁰ Paul expands those who are being addressed by specifying that they are υἱοὶ γένους Ἀβραάμ καὶ οἱ ἐν ὑμῖν φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, whereas he was asked to bring a message to τὸν λαόν. These details alone convey significant aspects of the author's theological point of view that we met before: a) there is a continuity between the old and the new people (for some would rise while others would fall; cf. Luke 2:34); b) true παράκλησις is related to salvation; c) such salvation has no nationalistic or political overtones, but is specified in broader terms.

The second point mentioned above is accentuated by the high concentration of the word λόγος in chapter 13. As I already mentioned, this chapter talks about *word of God* (Acts 13:5, 7, 46), *word of the Lord* (Acts 13:44, 48, 49), and *word of this salvation* (Acts 13:26). All these uses are related to each other and refer to the message of salvation in Jesus. The *word of consolation* (Acts 13:15) should not be excluded from the list. As Keener observes:

Although Luke employs λόγος about sixty-five times in Acts alone, genitive nouns of content (or nouns other than “God” or “the Lord”) rarely follow it (exceptions include “message of his grace” in Acts 14:3; 20:32), and so the connection between

¹²⁰ This is not to say that verse 26 only points to verse 15. As most will notice, the “*message of salvation* [of verse 26] refers back to v. 23, where Jesus is described as ‘*Saviour*’ for Israel.” Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 390.

“encouragement” and “salvation” may be noteworthy (compare Luke 2:25 with 2:38).¹²¹

Luke’s emphatic use of *λόγος* in this context stresses the irony for the reader, as hearers of *the word of consolation* (which is *the word of God, the word of the Lord, and the word of salvation*) do not recognize it as *comforting*.

The Word of *Consolation* in Context

We will now take a closer look at the word of consolation that Paul preached and at the effect it had on hearers, with the goal of providing further evidence for Luke’s theological understanding of what kind of salvation constitutes the *consolation of Israel*.

The Message

Paul’s sermon is paramount for the plot of Luke-Acts. This is the first speech delivered by this character who will take the center stage in Acts, and this is during his first missionary journey. When he is asked to bring a *word of consolation*, “the reader will be looking for an example of the message he carries.”¹²²

Paul’s sermon is rooted in the history of Israel, to whom God promised salvation in the first place. He starts with the beginnings of his people in Egypt and goes up to the period of king David (Acts 13:16–22). He then says that it is from David’s offspring that God has sent “to Israel the Savior, Jesus, according to the promise” (Acts 13:23),¹²³ about whom John had publicly testified (Acts 13:24–25). This word of salvation (Acts 13:26) was mistakenly rejected by the

¹²¹ Keener, *Acts*, 2:2047 fn 703.

¹²² Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, 148.

¹²³ Keener thinks that, unlike most of Paul’s speech which covers the story of Jesus from the proclamation of John until the end of the Gospel, this verse “may hint at the Davidic Savior of the Gospel’s infancy narrative.” Keener, *Acts*, 2063.

inhabitants of Jerusalem and their rulers, who had him crucified (Acts 13:27–29). But God raised him, as was prophesied in the Scriptures (Acts 13:30–37), and now, through him, there is forgiveness of sins and justification to all who believe (Acts 13:38–39). At the end of the message, Paul warns his audience against unbelief (Acts 13:40–41).

Danielle Ellul’s partition of the message into three sections is helpful.¹²⁴ Her division is based on the three times in which Paul addresses the audience (Acts 13:16, 26, 38). She explains that “ce genre d’appel est un moyen technique fort courant pour attirer l’attention, pour souligner une idée importante, pour marquer un nouveau développement.”¹²⁵ Having divided the text this way, she says that within Paul’s message we find three distinct creeds: in section one (Acts 13:16–25), we have an OT creed (Acts 13:17); in section two (Acts 13:26–37), we have a NT creed (Acts 13:27–31); and in section three (Acts 13:38–41), we have a Pauline creed (Acts 13:38–39).¹²⁶ As long as the notion of different creeds is not used to stress discontinuity, it can be maintained. However, what I am most interested in in Ellul’s discussion is how she defines the *people* in each of Paul’s address. In the first section, she notices that his addressees are “Israelite brothers and those who fear God” (Acts 13:16), and Paul begins by saying, «ὁ θεὸς τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου Ἰσραὴλ ἐξελέξατο τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν» (Acts 13:17). This reveals that Paul’s interlocutors are the people of Israel.¹²⁷ As he starts the second section, however, Paul addresses the audience as, “Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and the God-fearing among you” (Acts 13:26a). Ellul sees the mention of Abraham here as an expansion on the first address, but

¹²⁴ See the most common proposed structures in Keener, *Acts*, 2:2053–55.

¹²⁵ Ellul, “Antioche de Pisidie,” 5.

¹²⁶ Ellul, “Antioche de Pisidie,” 3–14.

¹²⁷ Ellul, “Antioche de Pisidie,” 5.

she says that “la principale transformation est ailleurs, dans le passage des pères d’autrefois aux fils d’aujourd’hui,”¹²⁸ when he says that «ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας ταύτης ἐξαπεστάλη» (Acts 13:26b). What Paul is saying, in other words, is that he (and *us*), in the present time as opposed to the past, is the people of God. She then claims that Paul’s next address does not make any reference to the people of Israel or the children of Abraham, for he just says «ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί» (Acts 13:38). Here, she argues, he is defending a new source of identity for the people, one that is not defined by a temporal marker, but that proposes a new distinction: «παῖς ὁ πιστεύων» (Acts 13:39) as opposed to those who do not believe.¹²⁹

It seems unlikely that, as Ellul claims, the words «ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί» are not a reference to the people of Israel or the children of Abraham. That expression is frequently used when Jews are addressed.¹³⁰ Therefore, Paul is not excluding the people of Israel and the children of Abraham in that verse, but he is further defining who they are, by means of the words «παῖς ὁ πιστεύων». Just as the address in verse 26 is an expansion (not a new category) of the address in verse 16, verses 38–39 are a further clarification of the intended audience. “All who believe” become, in Paul’s speech, *the people of God*.

Paul’s message can be summarized in the following words: “Therefore, brothers, let it be known to you that through this man the forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38–39). Paul focuses on the forgiveness of sins, which is

¹²⁸ Ellul, “Antioche de Pisidie,” 5.

¹²⁹ Ellul, “Antioche de Pisidie,” 5.

¹³⁰ See Acts 1:16; 2:29, 37; 7:2, 26; 13:15, 26, 38; 15:7, 13; 22:1; 23:1, 6; 28:17.

a frequent theme associated with salvation in Jesus throughout Luke-Acts,¹³¹ going back to the beginning of the Gospel, when Zechariah prophesied that John would “give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 1:77).¹³² It is remarkable that in a sermon to God’s people which recounts parts of the history of their ancestors, including the oppression in Egypt and the institution of the monarchy, and in which he draws from OT passages,¹³³ Paul defines salvation as deliverance from sin. This substantiates Marshall’s argument, with which I concur, that the language in the beginning of Luke is filled with military metaphors. Paul ignores any national or political hope that some might still hold on to, and proclaims salvation from sins, based on the resurrection of Jesus.

In Paul’s sermon we may also detect irony that underscores the points made above. In verse 27, he tells them that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their leaders fulfilled the words of prophets which are read every Sabbath, even though¹³⁴ they did not recognize him as the promised Messiah. They were the ones who fulfilled the words, but they did not believe such words had been fulfilled. This past irony is actualized at the end of the sermon, when a similar error happens to Paul’s audience. After hearing the sermon, they beg to listen to Paul’s message again (Acts 13:42), but when they do, they begin to contradict everything that Paul says (Acts 13:45). Another irony occurs when Paul quotes from Isaiah in verse 41: “I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe, even if someone told you.” The fact is that someone *is*

¹³¹ See Luke 1:77; 3:3; 4:18; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18;

¹³² And by the end of the Gospel, this theme is the core of the message that should be preached to all nations, starting in Jerusalem: “repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47).

¹³³ For a discussion of some of those passages, see Dale Goldsmith, “Acts 13:33–37: A Peshet on II Samuel 7,” *JBL* 87 (1968): 321–24.

¹³⁴ Or *because*. It depends on whether one translates the participle ἀγνοήσαντες with a causal or concessive force.

telling them about God’s work in Jesus, and they fulfill the prophecy by *not believing* in it.

The message is showing how the recent events are rooted in the history of Israel. Paul wants to show (as Luke does in various ways) that “Jesus’s story continues the earlier story of God’s faithfulness to Israel. As such, the survey [of the history of Israel] also weaves its hearers into that story, to act like either the disobedient or the righteous remnant of Israel (13:40–41).”¹³⁵

The Result

The significance of this message as one that helps to move the plot forward may be seen in the immediate effect it had on the hearers. Initially both Jews and proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:42–43), with the result that one week later “almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord, but when the Jews they were filled with jealousy and, blaspheming, began to oppose what was spoken by Paul” (Acts 13:44–45). This opposition causes Paul to remind them of God’s plan to bring salvation to the ends of the earth (as prophesied by Isaiah), a mission which even the Jews promote by rejecting their message (Acts 13:46–47). Upon hearing this, the Gentiles were glad and, unlike those Jews, “began glorifying the word of the Lord,” which continued “to spread through the whole region” (Acts 13:48–49).

As a whole, the event on the synagogue results on a renewed resolution to spread the mission among the Gentiles. This is noteworthy, considering that this speech, along with “Peter’s opening address in Acts 2–3, and Stephen’s speech in Acts 7 are the key speeches in Acts on Jewish promise.”¹³⁶ How is it that the key Jewish promise results in the inclusion of the Gentiles? This question is one that occupies the author from the beginning of the Gospel. As Simeon had

¹³⁵ Keener, *Acts*, 2:2062.

¹³⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 448.

said, because of Jesus many in Israel would rise, whereas many would fall. In Acts 13, the Jews¹³⁷ who were filled with jealousy and began to ἀντιλέγω the word of the Lord, are fulfilling what Simeon said in Luke 2:34. Jesus would be a sign of contradiction, and these Jews' response causes them to *fall*, because they are rejecting the word of *consolation/salvation* that was preached to them.

It may seem that verse 46 is showing that the mission to the Gentiles was an afterthought for the apostles (and Luke): “And Paul and Barnabas boldly said: it was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first. Since you reject it and judge yourselves not worthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles.” However, the inclusion of the Gentiles was part of the plan from the beginning, and the reader knows that Paul had been chosen for that purpose (Acts 9:15).¹³⁸ The motif of God's plan to take salvation from Jerusalem to ends of the earth is behind Luke's organization of the material,¹³⁹ as we saw both in his summary at Acts 9:31, where he reports how the message had reached the Jewish regions first, and in the infancy narrative of the Gospel, when salvation is born among the Jews, and one of them proclaims that such salvation is for all the nations. When Paul says that the word was to be spoken to the Jews first, he is not just providing an excuse for abandoning the Jews and turning to the Gentiles; the point is not consequential, but sequential. What it means is that the salvation that Israel hoped for would naturally turn to the Gentiles *also*, and would include those who believed among them (rather

¹³⁷ Since in Acts 13:43 it says that “many of the Jews [...] followed Paul and Barnabas, [...] who, speaking to them, urged them to remain in the grace of God,” it is likely that “the Jews” of verse 45 who oppose them is not the same group. Marshall defends that “[i]t was no doubt only a section of the Jews who adopted this attitude, in view of verse 43. Nevertheless, it was plain that official Judaism, as represented by the synagogue, was rejecting the gospel.” Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 230.

¹³⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 521. Because the text makes clear that the plan was to intentionally go to the Gentiles, “this action was not to be regarded as a kind of retaliation to the Jews' rejection of the Gospel.” Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 230.

¹³⁹ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:173.

than excluding all Israel) into the people of God.

Marshall observes that Paul and Barnabas make clear that they “fulfilled their duty of going ‘to the Jews first’,” and says that “the basis of this duty is never made absolutely clear in the New Testament, but presumably rests on the nature of Israel as the covenant people to whom he continued to offer his promises of salvation.”¹⁴⁰ However, when one consider the entire narrative, one sees that the basis for such duty is found on the emphasis that Luke places on the continuity between the old and the new people, between the promises to Israel and the fulfillment to Israel and Gentiles alike; in this point of view, it is logical to go to the Jews first, for they are already (or at least should be) on the inside; they are the ones who had been waiting for such events (fulfillment of their hopes), and therefore should be the first to hear what God accomplished in Jesus. Luke does not need to spell out for the reader the reason why the apostles felt they had a duty of going to the Jews first, because the reader has already noticed how Luke portrayed the salvation in Jesus as reaching the Jews first as it fulfilled the hopes of the first characters (who were Jews) in the narrative. “Since the Christian gospel is the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel, Jews everywhere have a prior right to hear what God has done for them.”¹⁴¹

During his message, Paul said that through Jesus the people had forgiveness of sins. At the end, when they reject the word, he implies that they are rejecting eternal life (Acts 13:46), while many Gentiles were appointed for eternal life.¹⁴² Paul’s mention of eternal life, as I said about his focus on forgiveness of sins before, supports the view that a word of *consolation* to the people, based on the promises of old and God’s actions in their favor, has spiritual and eschatological

¹⁴⁰ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 230. See Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 520.

¹⁴¹ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 397.

¹⁴² The expression “eternal life” occurs only here («τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς») and in verse 48 («ζωὴν αἰώνιον») in the book of Acts. It further stresses Luke’s irony throughout the episode. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 520.

ramifications. The deliverance that is offered through the word of *consolation* is the same for Jews and Gentiles: eternal life.

The basis for the mission to the Gentiles is found in the Scriptures of Israel, more precisely in Isaiah 49:6. The part of the verse that is quoted says: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may be for salvation to the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47). It may seem that Paul is saying that he is the light,¹⁴³ but that is beside the point. What is relevant is that the word *light* is once again being used in its Isaianic sense according to Luke’s interpretation. Only here and in Luke 2:32 is *light* connected with the message of salvation to the nations, and both passages use prophecies from Isaiah to talk about the universalization of salvation. A “light for the Gentiles” and “salvation to the ends of the earth” are parallel. While the first phrase (along with other clues already mentioned) links this passage with Simeon’s song and its revelation that the Jewish Messiah was for the Gentiles as well, the second phrase refers to John’s preaching in Luke 3:5–6 and to Jesus’ response to the disciples in Acts 1:8. The expression “to the ends of the earth” highlights the intentional move from Jerusalem to the Gentiles as prophesied in the beginning of the Gospel and outlined in the beginning of Acts.¹⁴⁴

The end of the chapter reinforces the definition of people of God that Luke seems to be creating throughout the narrative, as seen in other texts studied in this dissertation. In verse 52, he says that “the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” People from all nations can be disciples, just as people from all nations can be *the people of God*, for the Holy Spirit is filling both Jews (as seen in the infancy narrative) and Gentiles alike.¹⁴⁵ The Holy Spirit that

¹⁴³ If that is the case, it is only because of his message. See Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 521.

¹⁴⁴ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:173.

¹⁴⁵ Peter’s sermon had made this clear in Acts 2:39, and in Acts 10–11 this point is greatly emphasized.

would be poured on Israel is for the Gentiles as well, the salvation that was expected by Israel is for the Gentiles as well, and the *consolation of Israel* is turning out to be for the Gentiles as well. This is shown in subtle but sufficiently clear ways by Luke whenever the word παράκλησις occurs in the narrative.

As in Luke 2, παράκλησις is here used in association with the salvation promised in Isaiah and fulfilled in Jesus. Just as in the infancy narrative God's promises and its fulfillment are framed in the history of Israel, Paul's message begins with the history of Israel and adds an account of salvation as experienced after Jesus' resurrection. In Acts 13, a *word of παράκλησις* is no different for the author than a *word of salvation*. Keener, who barely mentions παράκλησις in his commentary at this point, nonetheless sums it up nicely:

The reader knows in advance what basic message the invited guests will bring (cf. Acts 9:20) and that true “comfort” (παράκλησις) comes from the Holy Spirit (9:31), right teaching (15:31), and the promised hope (Luke 2:25) and so will not be surprised that the honored visitors’ “message of exhortation” is a “message of salvation” (Acts 13:26), the message of God and the Lord (13:44, 46, 48 49).¹⁴⁶

Through the connections with other parts of the narrative, one is able to conclude that the *word of consolation* here is informing the reader of what *consolation of Israel* means for the implied author. It has to do with messianic salvation, and the acceptance of the Gentiles is an important part of it. Purely nationalistic hopes, if they are held by anyone in the story, are on the side of those who are rejecting.

Acts 15:31—The Consolation of the Gentiles

Just as some think that *consolation of Israel* in Luke 2:25 means a promise specific to the Jewish people, some in the early church thought that the messianic salvation was for Jews only;

¹⁴⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 2:2047.

this is why there were Jewish Christians who wanted Gentiles to be circumcised and become Jews to be accepted into the church. In this section, I will consider the words chosen by the author of Luke-Acts to describe the reaction of the Gentiles to the letter from Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:31), taking into account the significance of chapter 15 for the entire narrative.

The Jerusalem Council in Light of the Whole of Luke-Acts¹⁴⁷

In Acts 15, Luke tells the story of the famous Jerusalem Council.¹⁴⁸ After Paul and Barnabas had finished their first missionary journey and gone back to their sending church in Antioch, some people went to Antioch and began teaching the brethren that “unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). This teaching caused a great disagreement between Paul and Barnabas and those people who wanted to require the Gentile Christians to be circumcised, and so the church sent Paul and Barnabas along with others to consult with the Jerusalem church. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they told the Jerusalem church leaders what God had done through them but found resistance among some Pharisees (Acts 15:2–5). The apostles and the elders then convened to discuss the basis of the inclusion of Gentiles into the church, and after hearing Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James (Acts 15:6–21) they decided, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to send a letter to the Antiochian church with recommendations for Gentile Christians. The decision expressed in the letter was that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised, but only to “abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from strangled animals, and from sexual immorality” (Acts 15:22–29). When they

¹⁴⁷ In this dissertation, I will not deal with the relationship of Acts 15 to Galatians 2:1–10 because that falls outside the scope of a reading focused on the narrative of Luke-Acts. For the discussion of the relationship of the two passages, see major exegetical commentaries on Acts 15, including Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 539–41; Bock, *Acts*, 488–93; and Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 244–47.

¹⁴⁸ Bock says this is not a council in the technical sense, but a consultation. Bock, *Acts*, 486. However, he later calls it the Jerusalem Council. Bock, *Acts*, 495.

delivered the letter, those who read it “rejoiced at the consolation” («ἐχάρησαν ἐπὶ τῇ παρακλήσει»; Acts 15:31). In terms of structure, many commentators divide this passage in three sections. “The problem is presented in 15:1–5.¹⁴⁹ The discussion and decision emerge in 15:6–21 [...]. The final major unit is 15:22–35, where the letter is both composed and sent with commissioned messengers.”¹⁵⁰

There is much disagreement regarding many aspects of Acts 15 among scholars, ranging from its sources and historicity to its theology. Despite that, there is a strong consensus that this passage is key in Luke’s narrative. Scholarship is filled with statements in that regard. Some say that “Acts 15 is clearly one of the most important chapters in the book of Acts—perhaps in the whole NT.”¹⁵¹ Bruce, for instance, correctly says that “[t]he Council of Jerusalem is an event to which Luke attaches the highest importance.”¹⁵² Marshall agrees, and adds that “Luke’s account of the discussion regarding the relation of the Gentiles to the law of Moses forms the centre of Acts both structurally and theologically.”¹⁵³ Perhaps no scholar has been more emphatic regarding the relevance of Acts 15 for the rest of the narrative than Fitzmyer. He argues that this is

for Luke a very important development in his story of the early church. It falls designedly in the center of Acts. In my translation, chaps. 1–14 have 12,385 words; chaps. 15–28, 12,502 words. So what is now recounted is the turning point of Luke’s story, when the apostolic and presbyteral college of Jerusalem officially recognizes

¹⁴⁹ See also Earl Richard, “The Creative Use of Amos by the Author of Acts,” *NovT* 24 (1982), 48. For a different perspective on the delimitation of the text, see Alex T. M. Cheung, “A Narrative Analysis of Acts 14:27–15:35: Literary Shaping in Luke’s Account of the Jerusalem Council,” *WTJ* 55 (1993): 137–55. He contends, against the consensus, that Acts 14:27 is the beginning of the Jerusalem Council narrative.

¹⁵⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 492.

¹⁵¹ Cheung, “A Narrative Analysis,” 137–38.

¹⁵² Bruce, *Acts*, 282.

¹⁵³ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 242. See Bock, *Acts*, 486. “Acts 15 is a central chapter in terms of both its location in Acts and the theological issue it presents.” See also Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 417.

the evangelization of Gentiles, which has been initiated by Peter and carried out on a wide scale by Barnabas and Paul.¹⁵⁴

This brief survey on the insistent comments about the weight of Acts 15 for the narrative is to show, without a doubt, that this is “a turning point in the history of the church,”¹⁵⁵ and “[w]e are justified, therefore, in regarding the Apostolic Council as a watershed in the narrative of Acts.”¹⁵⁶

In an examination of Luke’s last use of the term *παράκλησις*, we do well to remember the significant context in which he inserted such a word.

I now turn to the reason why Acts 15 is so significant. When the matter of the inclusion of the Gentiles was raised, the church had to make a decision. At that point, the Gentiles had already been accepted in some places, so the issue at hand was whether the church needed to require circumcision in addition to their faith.¹⁵⁷ And here lies the central theme of the chapter and of the book of Acts: the Jerusalem Council, because of God’s will, officially resolves that Gentiles do not need to become Jews in order to be part of the church, and therefore the mission to the Gentiles, which has already started, was legitimate.¹⁵⁸ This central theme is underscored as “[t]he present narrative is framed by the first (Acts 13:1–14:26) and the second (Acts 15:36–18:22) missionary journeys of Paul.”¹⁵⁹

The Council’s decision is based, in the narrator’s understanding, on God’s own desire. This can be observed in the way Luke’s report puts God as the subject of verbs that support the

¹⁵⁴ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 538.

¹⁵⁵ Veselin Kesich, “The Apostolic Council at Jerusalem,” *SVTQ* 6 (1962), 108.

¹⁵⁶ Johnson, *The Acts*, 268.

¹⁵⁷ Bock notes that “[t]he debate now is not whether the Gentiles should be included but on what basis they should enter the community.” Bock, *Acts*, 486.

¹⁵⁸ Richard, “The Creative Use of Amos,” 50.

¹⁵⁹ Cheung, “A Narrative Analysis,” 139.

mission to the Gentiles: “everything God had done” (Acts 15:4); “God chose” (Acts 15:7); “God testified” (Acts 15:8); “[God] by giving the Holy Spirit” (Acts 15:8); “He did not discriminate” (Acts 15:9); “[God] having cleansed their hearts” (Acts 15:9); “the signs and wonders God had done” (Acts 15:12); “God visited” (Acts 15:14); God speaks in the quote from Amos, which is used to support the mission to the Gentiles.¹⁶⁰ Luke wants the reader to be certain that the inclusion of Gentiles into the church was not an afterthought nor a human initiative. Rather, it was planned, orchestrated and accomplished by God himself. There ought to be no more questions (cf. Acts 11) whenever Gentiles were baptized and received by the church, for in chapter 15 God was validating “once for all”¹⁶¹ the mission to the Gentiles.

Luke also underscores God’s validation of the mission to Gentiles by his way of using the term *Gentiles/nations* (ἔθνος) in the chapter.¹⁶² By noticing the seven references to the Gentiles in the chapter, the reader learns of their “conversion” (Acts 15:3), that they should “hear the word of the gospel and believe” (Acts 15:7), that “God had done signs and wonders among them” (Acts 15:12) and “visited them” (Acts 15:14), that many of them “are called by [God’s] name” (Acts 15:17), and that therefore the Jerusalem church should “not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God” (Acts 15:19). After all that, the church sends a letter to the “brethren of the Gentiles”¹⁶³ (Acts 15:23) to inform their decision to not require them to be circumcised. As I will

¹⁶⁰ Lyle Story, “Luke’s Instructive Dynamics for Resolving Conflicts: The Jerusalem Council,” *JBPR* 3 (2001), 101.

¹⁶¹ Cheung, “A Narrative Analysis,” 142. As Richard reminds us, “it is not to settle once and for all the matter of Gentile inclusion. Instead, the Gentile mission is an ongoing process from the beginning to the end of Acts.” Richard, “The Creative Use of Amos,” 50. The mission was not settled, but officially recognized as legitimate. What was settled was the dispute over its legitimacy.

¹⁶² Richard, “The Creative Use of Amos,” 50.

¹⁶³ The Gentiles are called “brothers” for the first time in Acts 15, which signals Luke’s understanding of *people of God*. This will be dealt with in chapter 6.

point out later, when I talk about the Amos quotation, *Gentiles/nations* was most often used in contrast to believer Israel in the OT. Luke, however, in this chapter solidifies his positive view of the Gentiles, based on his understanding of salvation in Jesus; a view that he had been revealing to the reader since the beginning of Acts, culminating in the Jerusalem Council.¹⁶⁴

Luke narrates the story of receptive Gentiles on the Day of Pentecost (2:5–12), the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40), Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles (9:15) and most importantly for Acts 15—the detailed Cornelius story (10:1–11:18). Acts 11:19–30 includes a substantial witness among the Gentiles at Antioch and is followed by Barnabas and Paul’s missionary tour in which Gentiles receive the Christian gospel (13:1–14:28), well expressed by the statement ‘now we turn to the Gentiles’ (13:46).¹⁶⁵

Luke’s view of the Gentiles in light of his soteriology continues to show after chapter 15. He “refers to the Gentile ministry sixteen times in the second part of Acts (16:6—28:31) as a settled matter; the conclusion of Acts expresses the certainty that ‘Gods salvation has been sent to the Gentiles and they will listen’ (Acts 28:28).”¹⁶⁶ Although one can say that it is a settled matter, the mission to the Gentiles is what takes the center stage after the Jerusalem Council. The reader will notice that “[f]rom here on, the main theme is the gospel going out into all the world.”¹⁶⁷ Chapter 15 also marks the strongest transition¹⁶⁸ from Jerusalem to the ends of the world (cf. Acts 1:8), as the Jerusalem church recedes and Peter vanishes from the narrative.

Acts 15 makes clear that the gospel is to go out to the Gentiles according to God’s plan, but it does so without representing a break with the old faith. The gospel which is universal is the same that the Jews had received first, and so the “Council did not create a new faith but

¹⁶⁴ Story, “Luke’s Instructive Dynamics for Resolving Conflicts,” 102.

¹⁶⁵ Story, “Luke’s Instructive Dynamics for Resolving Conflicts,” 102.

¹⁶⁶ Story, “Luke’s Instructive Dynamics for Resolving Conflicts,” 102.

¹⁶⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 486.

¹⁶⁸ An example of another transitions in Acts occurs at 9:31.

expressed the one which already existed.”¹⁶⁹ As the first chapters of the Gospel show (cf. the hopes of characters such as Simeon), Luke is as much interested in showing how Jesus brings salvation to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles. Acts 15, therefore, does not promote the mission to Gentiles in detriment of Israel. On the contrary, Luke uses this scene “to emphasize the essential *continuity* between these stages in the divine plan: the inclusion of the Gentiles does not mean the replacement of ‘Israel’ but its expansion.”¹⁷⁰

In sum, the scene is important because it completely legitimizes the Gentile mission. It also establishes faith alone rooted in the grace of God through Christ alone as the principle of inclusion, and it does so by showing continuity with the promises of old. The new faith and practice are actually rooted in old promises, making the faith an old one in its roots.¹⁷¹

James’s Quotation of Amos and Jerusalem’s Understanding of Restoration

The entirety of the Jerusalem Council is about the inclusion of the Gentiles into the church, as we saw above. But now I turn to a specific segment of that scene which is “the climatic and deciding section of the narrative of ch. 15.”¹⁷² James’ quotation of Amos in Acts 15:16–17 (and possibly Isaiah in verse 18) most strongly makes the points I have been making in this dissertation concerning Luke’s theological view that some of God’s promises to Israel (including the *consolation of Israel*) are fulfilled as God calls Gentiles to be part of his people, for that text “is pivotal in relation to Luke’s ecclesiological purpose in Acts.”¹⁷³ My focus on James’ quotation from Amos is justified because it “played a most strategic part within the Acts passage.”¹⁷⁴ More than that, some say that James’ “speech [...] is the centre-piece of the chapter,

¹⁶⁹ Kesich, “The Apostolic Council,” 113.

¹⁷⁰ Johnson, *The Acts*, 268.

¹⁷¹ Bock, *Acts*, 493.

¹⁷² Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts*, 182.

¹⁷³ Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts*, 182.

¹⁷⁴ Michael A. Braun, “James’ Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council: Steps Toward a Possible

directing attention to the more fundamental matter of God’s purpose for Jews and Gentiles, as revealed in Scripture.”¹⁷⁵

The Text of the Quotation

Before I discuss the theological impact the quotation has upon the narrative, it is necessary to mention briefly the textual issues that have occupied scholars for a long time. The purpose of the following discussion is not to resolve the debate, but to point out an important aspect of Luke’s theological point of view in his report of James’ speech. The textual issues have to do with the version of Amos 9:11–12 that was quoted by James. When viewed side-by-side, the divergences emerge:

Table 3. The quotation from Amos 9:1–2 in Acts 15

Acts	<p>μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω καὶ <i>After these things I will return and</i> ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν <i>rebuild the fallen tent of David,</i> πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα <i>and I will rebuild its demolished</i> αὐτῆς ἀνοικοδομήσω καὶ ἀνορθώσω <i>things, and I will restore</i> αὐτήν, ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ <i>it, so that the rest of humankind</i> κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν <i>may seek the Lord, and the</i></p>	Amos (LXX)	<p>ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἀναστήσω τὴν <i>In that day I will raise up the</i> σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ <i>fallen tent of David, and</i> ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς <i>I will rebuild its ruins,</i> καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς <i>and its demolished things</i> ἀναστήσω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτήν <i>I will raise up, and I will rebuild it</i> καθὼς αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος, ὅπως <i>just as in the days of old; so that</i></p>
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Solution of the Textual and Theological Problems,” *JETS* 20 (1977), 113.

¹⁷⁵ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 418.

<p>κύριον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ’ οὓς <i>Gentiles—upon whom my name</i> ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ <i>is called, says the Lord,</i> αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα <i>who does these things</i> γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος <i>known from of old.</i></p>	<p>ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν <i>the rest of humankind and all the</i> ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ’ <i>Gentiles—upon whom my name</i> οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ <i>has been invoked—may seek,</i> αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα. <i>says the Lord God who does these</i> things.</p>
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Both versions are quite different from the MT text, which can be translated thusly:

In that day I will raise up David’s fallen tent, and I will repair its breaches, and its ruins I will raise up, and build it like in the old days; that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations upon whom my name is called, declares Yahweh, who does this.¹⁷⁶

The first issue is regarding what the prophecy says (or does not say) about the Gentiles. In the Hebrew text, the prophecy refers only to the rebuilt tent of David which will possess the “remnant of Edom and the nations”, which may be a reference to the lost of the house of Israel. The rest (or remnant) of humankind and Gentiles are not said to seek the Lord,¹⁷⁷ as they do in both Greek versions above, which “are in closer agreement with each other than they are with the MT.”¹⁷⁸ This discrepancy seems to demonstrate that James quoted the LXX rendering rather than translated the MT.

¹⁷⁶ The Hebrew text has: בְּיוֹם הַהוּא אֶקְוֶה אֶת־סֹכֶת דָּוִד הַנִּפְלֶטת וְגִדְרֹתַי אֶת־פְּרֻצֵיהֶן וְהִרְסֹתֶיהֶן אֶקְוֶה וְבִנְיָתֶיהָ כִּי־מִי עוֹלָם: לְמַעַן יִרְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׂאֵרֵי אֲדוֹם וְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרְאוּ שְׁמִי עַל־הֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה זֶה:

¹⁷⁷ Although that theological point could be inferred if the reader understood the “rest of the nations” as Gentiles who sought the Lord.

¹⁷⁸ Braun, “James’ Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council,” 115.

Against the view that James may have quoted the LXX is the fact that there are some differences between that version and what Luke writes in Acts. Both the beginning and the end are different and the LXX is slightly longer. In addition, some argue that it is unlikely that James would have quoted from the Greek version of the text.¹⁷⁹

If James quoted neither the LXX nor translated the MT text as we have it today, we are left with the option that he may have quoted from a Hebrew source that was not the MT. In fact, some defend just that:

[T]he *Vorlage* to James' testimonia was a Hebrew text divergent from the MT and superior to it. [...] From the textual evidence, from the probable cause of corruption, and from the sheer logic of the situation, we have ample warrant to emend the MT—and such an emendation need not be too severe.¹⁸⁰

As it was mentioned above, it is not my intention to solve the dispute regarding the version behind James' quotation. I am interested in showing how that quotation serves Luke's purpose in writing the chapter and the book as a whole. Whether the text comes from the LXX or MT is beside the point, and even if James' words were proven not to be reported by Luke verbatim, the quotation from Amos "belongs with others that provide important clues to the meaning of the narrative from God's perspective."¹⁸¹ In fact, it is plausible that the Greek quotation of the verse from Amos does not agree with either the MT or the LXX, but it expresses Luke's view.¹⁸² And if the quotation is from the LXX, even if James would not have quoted from the Greek OT, one

¹⁷⁹ Bruce, *Acts*, 294. Bruce still thinks that the text is based off of the LXX version because of Luke's intentions. However, Bock reminds us that "this would have been a regionwide discussion, and the use of Greek here would not be unlikely. If James were conciliatory, then his use of a Greek rendering would only solidify the point." Bock, *Acts*, 491.

¹⁸⁰ Braun, "James' Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council," 117.

¹⁸¹ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:188.

¹⁸² Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 555.

can say that Luke chose the LXX because of his theological understanding of that prophecy.¹⁸³

The point I want to make, at the risk of unintentionally sounding as if the event was not historical, is that Luke is ultimately behind the words which were written, and through which he wants to convey a message. After discussing the difficulties regarding the version of the quotation as used by James, Marshall admits that “there is no real difficulty in supposing that Luke himself has added the quotation to bring out more clearly the way in which the progress of the church is in accordance with the Old Testament prophecies.”¹⁸⁴

The text is quoted in such a way as to help the reader follow the narrator’s argument throughout the narrative, and there is a reason behind the exact words that were chosen. Even the words that introduce the quote are helpful in our reading of the scene. After saying that God wanted “to take a people from [the Gentiles] for his name” (Acts 15:14), James says that “with this the words of the prophets agree” (Acts 15:15). What is the referent of “the prophets” in this case? Some scholars believe that verse 18 is not part of the quotation, and therefore “the reference is to ‘the book of the twelve prophets’, *i.e.* the scroll of the minor prophets (as in 7:42), from which the citation from Amos 9:11f comes.”¹⁸⁵ Although that is possible, it is likely that the word “prophets” is plural “because both Amos and Isaiah are to be quoted,”¹⁸⁶ in which case verse 18 (“known from of old”) is part of the quotation.

If that is, indeed, a quotation from or allusion to Isaiah,¹⁸⁷ where exactly does it come from

¹⁸³ Bruce, *Acts*, 294.

¹⁸⁴ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 253.

¹⁸⁵ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 252.

¹⁸⁶ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 555.

¹⁸⁷ Barrett disagrees, saying that verse 18 “is probably a simple gloss rather than an additional quotation.” Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 2:728.

or what passage does it allude to? The general agreement among scholars is that «γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος» (Acts 15:18)¹⁸⁸ is a reference to Isaiah 45:21, where the LXX reads «τίς ἀκουστὰ ἐποίησεν ταῦτα ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς».¹⁸⁹ The textual connection is between ἀπ’ αἰῶνος and ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, and, besides this, scholars notice the thematic relationship of the two passages. In Isaiah 45, God says: “Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth. I am God and there is no other. [...] Before me every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess to God...” (Isaiah 45:22–23). At the end of the section, it says that in God “all the descendants of Israel will be justified and glorified” (Isaiah 45:25). Those words are in a context where God promises to free his captive people and to bring judgement upon Babylon and its false gods. Despite this consensus, some scholars admit that the connection is not so clear. Johnson, for instance, says that “the possible allusion to Isa 45:21 is weak,”¹⁹⁰ and Barrett points out that “the resemblance is far from close.”¹⁹¹

It is my contention that there is an allusion to Isaiah, but not to chapter 45. In chapter 45, though the nations are mentioned as part of God’s plan, they are still viewed mostly negatively. Instead, Luke seems to be alluding to the LXX rendering of Isaiah 63:16, which reads: “For you are our Father, since Abraham did not know us, and Israel did not recognize us; but you, O Lord, are our Father. Deliver us; from the beginning your name is upon us.”¹⁹² In this verse, ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς also occurs, just as in Isaiah 45:21. In chapter 63, however, the context speaks more directly to the issues being discussed in Acts 15. God’s interlocutors in Isaiah 63 are claiming to be God’s

¹⁸⁸ Concerning the variant readings for this text, Barrett notes that all of them “except the last make the same point: God has not suddenly thought of the inclusion of the Gentiles: it has always been his intention, and he has long made his intention known.” Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 2:728.

¹⁸⁹ Parsons, *Acts*, 214; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 432; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 252.

¹⁹⁰ Johnson, *The Acts*, 265.

¹⁹¹ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 2:728.

¹⁹² The LXX has «σὺ γὰρ ἡμῶν εἶ πατήρ, ὅτι Ἀβρααμ οὐκ ἔγνω ἡμᾶς, καὶ Ἰσραηλ οὐκ ἐπέγνω ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ σὺ, κύριε, πατήρ ἡμῶν· ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς, ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ἐστίν».

children, despite the fact that they are neither known by Abraham nor recognized by Israel. This is precisely the situation of the Gentile Christians in Acts 15. They have become God's children, a fact to which the apostles are now witnessing, even though some Jews (Abraham and Israel, in that context) do not know or recognize them as God's people.

The contention above is supported by the end of the verse in the LXX. The MT text ends with the words "our Redeemer from of old is your name."¹⁹³ The Greek version changes the words slightly: «ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐστίν». As we see, the Greek version says that God's name has been, from of old, upon those who were not recognized by Israel. The same is being taught at the Jerusalem Council's by means of the quotation from Amos, to which Luke attaches the words "from of old". James has just said that the Gentiles upon whom God's name has been called («ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς»; Acts 15:17) will seek him and Luke adds that this fact was known "from of old", both of which are found in Isaiah.¹⁹⁴

The larger context of Isaiah 63:16 also favors this connection. In the same prayer, we read that ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος (Isaiah 64:3 [64:4 Eng.]) no one has heard or seen a god besides the true God. However, as Luke makes clear, the fact that there is a people beyond ethnic Israel is γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος (Acts 15:18). What needs to be understood by the church of Acts is that, as Isaiah wrote, God is the Father and "we are all" (Isaiah 64:7 [64:8 Eng]) work of his hands. Rather than emphasizing the distinctiveness of the Jewish people, Luke alludes to a passage which highlights that everyone, even the Gentiles, is the work of God's hands. In Isaiah, God responds after the prayer: "I became manifest to those who did not seek me, I was found by those

¹⁹³ :דמִשׁ מְלִיכָהּ מִיָּמֵינוּ

¹⁹⁴ That verse from Isaiah does not mention the Gentiles specifically, but Luke may have inferred from the negative references to Abraham and Israel that the Gentiles are God's children according to that verse.

who did not ask for me. I said, ‘here I am’, to a nation who did not call on my name” (Isaiah 65:1). If the Gentiles have responded to the message of the Gospel and are now part of the church, that is due to God’s manifestation among them; this last point is emphasized by those who speak at the Jerusalem Council.

What is important to notice at this point is that James’ quotation from Amos with its addition of a possible allusion to Isaiah 63 “is related to the Lucan view of salvation history.”¹⁹⁵ The quotation is used “as proof of God’s intention”¹⁹⁶ towards the Gentiles. As I continue to seek after the author’s point of view through this scene, we can agree that Luke

does not hesitate to impose upon the quotations a certain number of stylistic, thematic, or manifestly theological modifications. [...] One is never quite sure whether Luke has chosen carefully his OT texts to reinforce his ideas or his view of history, or whether the composition results, in large part, from a serious reading of the Jewish scriptures and meditation upon their meaning for the spread of Christianity.¹⁹⁷

The People of God in Acts 15

In the next chapter I will treat the question of who the people of God is for the author of Luke-Acts. Nevertheless, as one ponders on the function of the Amos’ prophecy (with Luke’s possible allusion to Isaiah) in Acts 15, it is necessary to make some contextual observations. Who is *the people of God* according to the Jerusalem Council? What is the relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians? To what extent the promises of old apply to the *new people*? These are questions that Luke sets out to answer in Acts 15, which makes this a central passage in scholarly discussions about dispensationalism, covenant, people and OT prophecy in the

¹⁹⁵ Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 556.

¹⁹⁶ Richard, “The Creative Use of Amos,” 49.

¹⁹⁷ Richard, “The Creative Use of Amos,” 52.

NT.¹⁹⁸

In Acts 15:14 James says that, as Simeon explained, “God first visited, in order to take from the Gentiles a people for his name.” James’ conclusion that God wanted to take from the Gentiles a people for his name is striking when one considers how the term *λαός* “is used by Luke almost exclusively in reference to Israel as the ‘people of God,’ that is, in its religious sense.”¹⁹⁹ This view is emphasized by scholars, who tend to argue that translations of this verse “scarcely bring out the paradoxical force of the Greek.”²⁰⁰ In the OT the people of God is identified with Israel, whereas the Gentiles are presented in contrast to the people of God.²⁰¹ In Acts 15, “when James uses the same two terms here, he does not speak of God’s taking a people *in contrast to* the Gentiles, but of his taking a people *consisting of* Gentiles.”²⁰² As was discussed earlier, Luke likely began his narrative with the idea that the Gentiles were also God’s *λαός* (cf. Luke 2:32), and the reader may have picked up on that clue (although it is disputed whether that occurrence referred to Gentiles), but Acts 15 clarifies beyond doubt what the author’s point of view regarding God’s people is. If there was any dispute regarding the claim that the Gentiles

¹⁹⁸ See Braun, “James’ Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council,” 118: “Apart from the textual questions, Acts 15:16–17 has been a battleground for covenantal and dispensational theologians for many years.” Also, R. Dickinson, “The Theology of the Jerusalem Conference: Acts 15:1–35,” *ResQ* 32 (1990), 82: “The original Scofield Reference Bible considered Acts 15:16–18 as ‘the most important passage in the N.T.’ in support of dispensationalism.”

¹⁹⁹ Johnson, *The Acts*, 264. Among the passages Johnson cites to support Luke’s use of *laos* as a reference to Israel, is Luke 2:32. In that context, as we have seen, it is possible that Luke is already hinting at the notion that *laos* refers to Gentiles as well as to Israel. See also Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:187.

²⁰⁰ Bruce, *Acts*, 293.

²⁰¹ Bruce, *Acts*, 293. See also Marshal, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 251: “The paradox inherent in the contrast between ‘Gentiles’ (or ‘nations’) and ‘people’ is striking, since the latter term was often used of the Jews as the people of God in contrast to the Gentiles.” Bock agrees with this and provides OT texts to illustrate the consensus, but adds that the OT hints at the inclusion of the Gentiles in the concept of *people*: “The term ‘people’ (*λαός*, *laos*) is significant because it often refers to the people of God (Acts 7:34; 13:17), as it does here. In the OT, this term refers to Israel (Deut. 26:18–19; 32:8–9; Ps. 134:12 LXX [135:12 Eng.], although Zech. 2:11 (2:15 LXX) uses it to refer to Gentiles as a part of renewed Israel.” Bock, *Acts*, 502.

²⁰² Bruce, *Acts*, 293.

were as much of God's people as Israel that should be dissipated after James' speech. The question now is whether there are two peoples of God or just one. And, if there is just one, is Israel still part of it?

Some scholars understand that there are two peoples from this point on, because the Gentiles “constitute a new people of God and not simply a large addition to the existing people known as Israel. The critical question here is therefore how these two peoples relate to each other.”²⁰³ In the quotation from Amos, God says: “*After these things I will return and rebuild the fallen tent of David, and I will rebuild its demolished things, and I will restore it, so that the rest of humankind may seek the Lord, and the Gentiles—upon whom my name is called*” (Acts 15:16–17). The expression *rest of humankind* («οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων») can also be translated as “the remnant of humankind,”²⁰⁴ and some scholars see in this an indication that even after Acts 15 there are two distinct peoples within the people of God. Braun says that theologically “the word ‘remnant’ applies strictly to Israel,”²⁰⁵ and this shows, against “amillennial equations of Old Testament Israel with the New Testament Church,” that “in this passage the two groups, Jews and Gentiles, are held in tension.”²⁰⁶ In this perspective, he interprets that the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David was not seen by Luke, as “many amillennial interpreters insist,”²⁰⁷ as having been fulfilled in the founding of the church. Although in the church Jews and Gentiles are together the people of God, there are aspects of the identity of each group that distinguish them

²⁰³ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 432.

²⁰⁴ The word *κατάλοιποι* and cognates are often used in the LXX for the concept of the faithful remnant of Israel (cf. Isaiah 46:3; Jeremiah 6:9; 23:3; 24:8; 38:7; Ezekiel 9:8; 11:13; Micah 2:12; Zephaniah 2:7, 9; Haggai 1:14; Zechariah 8:6, 11–12).

²⁰⁵ Braun, “James’ Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council,” 119.

²⁰⁶ Braun, “James’ Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council,” 120.

²⁰⁷ Braun, “James’ Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council,” 121.

and this continues to be so even after Acts 15.

If Braun's views are correct, then the promise of *consolation of Israel* which the Jews in the first century expected will ultimately find its fulfillment separately from the church.²⁰⁸ Although the Jews are related to the Gentiles in the church, there are promises specific to them that are not applied to the NT church.

It is clear that Jews and Gentiles are distinct in some way even after Acts, but only culturally rather than in a religious sense; the resolution sent from Jerusalem by letter demonstrates that Gentile brothers should be respectful toward the Jewish Christian's way of living their faith. Nonetheless, with respect to salvation and gifts from God (theologically), the context emphatically shows that they are united. Both Jews and Gentiles have received the same Spirit that Israel awaited (Acts 15:8), both Jews and Gentiles are treated with no distinction by God, having had their hearts cleansed (Acts 15:9), and both Jews and Gentiles are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus (Acts 15:11). This apparent change in the people of God may have been unexpected and even unwanted by some, but it "is an innovation of the new era that Jesus and the distribution of the Spirit on Gentiles have brought."²⁰⁹

But what about the words "rebuild the tent of David"? Does it not mean that James envisioned a separate Jewish people even as he admitted that God planned to bring in Gentiles? This seems unlikely, considering the emphasis of the chapter and James' mention of the Gentiles as God's people. James seems to be expressing "the view of the primitive Church concerning the

²⁰⁸ Dickinson, "The Theology of the Jerusalem Conference," 82: "Foundational to dispensational theology is the hermeneutical principle which contends that the promises to Israel and the promises to the church are separate and distinct."

²⁰⁹ Bock, *Acts*, 502.

vital question of the relation between Israel and the Gentiles,²¹⁰ that is, that the salvation of the Gentiles was attached to the salvation of Israel,²¹¹ for both groups are now one people and have the same Savior. James quotes this passage from Amos to teach that the restoration of Israel (the rebuilding of the tent of David) is not an event that happens apart from the Gentiles. On the contrary, “the restoration of David’s kingdom (under the Messiah Jesus) functions as an invitation to the rest of the nations to join ‘the people of God.’”²¹² Such invitation had already started and was being experienced at the time of the church in Acts 15, which means that in their perspective, the restoration of David’s kingdom had happened when the “heavenly and universal reign of the crucified Messiah or Son of David”²¹³ had begun after Jesus exaltation.²¹⁴

James’ interpretation of God’s promise of restoration and its relation to the Gentiles is in line with Jesus’ conversation with the disciples in Acts 1:6–8. When asked about the time that the kingdom would be restored *to* Israel, Jesus answered that it was not for them to know the times, but they would receive power from the Holy Spirit to become witnesses “in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Now in Acts 15, when James quotes a text about the restoration to prove that the Gentiles were part of God’s plans as his *people*, we can see that Jesus’ answer to the disciples was not a dismissal of their question, but an actual explanation of the signs that restoration had come to them.

Who is the *people*, then? Some say that based on Acts 15 one may call the *people* “New

²¹⁰ Kesich, “The Apostolic Council,” 112.

²¹¹ Kesich, “The Apostolic Council,” 112.

²¹² Johnson, *The Acts*, 265.

²¹³ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 431.

²¹⁴ But see Bock, who says that the “rebuilding of the dynasty does not refer just to the resurrection.” Bock, *Acts*, 504. Whatever else it means, though, “James does not develop this theme.” Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 431.

Israel.”²¹⁵ However, this definition never appears in the Bible.²¹⁶ And we do not need a definition for the people of God other than those who believe in Jesus and are united in the same Spirit. This is the conclusion of the apostles and the main point of the narrative. No one group can claim to be special, for the Gentile Christians too “are God’s people in the full sense that Israel is.”²¹⁷ James’ words and the text he quotes suggest “both an extension in the meaning of ‘Israel’ defined in terms of faith rather than in terms of ethnic or ritual allegiance, and a claim for the continuity of the Gentile mission with biblical history.”²¹⁸ But if we want to give a new title to the *people*, based on what we find in the text, we could say that the people of God, which consists of both faithful Israelites and Gentiles, can also be called *church*.²¹⁹

The extension of meaning and expansion of the people were God’s design “from of old”, as the prophets foresaw. In Acts 15 the Jewish part of the church had the opportunity to reexamine their own status and they caught up with God’s plan. As someone put it, “[i]n the search for Gentile identity, the Jewish community rediscovers and redefines its own identity.”²²⁰

Simeon and Other Connections to the Beginning of the Narrative

James’ opening words are stunning: “Simeon explained how God first visited, in order to take from the Gentiles a people for his name” (Acts 15:14). There is more to this verse than the application of the term *people* to the Gentiles. Who (and what event) does the first clause refer to?

²¹⁵ Kesich, “The Apostolic Council,” 109.

²¹⁶ Dickinson, “The Theology of the Jerusalem Conference,” 82.

²¹⁷ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:187.

²¹⁸ Johnson, *The Acts*, 264.

²¹⁹ Dickinson, “The Theology of the Jerusalem Conference,” 77.

²²⁰ Story, “Luke’s Instructive Dynamics for Resolving Conflicts,” 118.

The question is important when one notices that James refers to an explanation offered by Συμεών. Fitzmyer seems to be alone in his interpretation that this is Simeon Niger of Acts 13:1.²²¹ Barrett criticizes Fitzmyer by stating that he “is mistaken to see here a reference to Simeon Niger.”²²² Instead, *Simeon* should be understood as referring to “the Hebrew or Aramaic form”²²³ of Peter’s personal name,²²⁴ because “the logic of the entire narrative demands that we take it as referring to Peter and not some other character (such as the Simeon Niger of Acts 13:1); otherwise the reference itself would be nonsensical.”²²⁵ A few reasons are recurrently offered for James’ word choice. Some say it is “probably intended to give the passage a Semitic air;”²²⁶ or maybe the alternative name is “due to Luke’s love of archaizing.”²²⁷ A more sophisticated way of expressing Luke’s intention is to say that the “narrator is using the rhetorical art of ‘impersonation (*προσωποποιία*),’ composing a speech appropriate to the narrative character and the setting.”²²⁸

The explanations above are logical, as Johnson notes, insofar as they acknowledge that James is referring to Peter. However, they are insufficient. If Luke loves archaizing or wanted to give the passage a “Semitic air”, why would he go to great lengths to depict James quoting from the LXX (or something other than the MT)? As scholarship shows, it is believed that the only

²²¹ Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 552–53.

²²² Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 2:723.

²²³ Bruce, *Acts*, 293.

²²⁴ Both Marshall and Bock comment that James refers to Peter by his Jewish name. Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 251, and Bock, *Acts*, 502.

²²⁵ Johnson, *The Acts*, 264.

²²⁶ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 2:723.

²²⁷ Johnson, *The Acts*, 264.

²²⁸ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:186.

reasons why James would have quoted from the LXX version of Amos are either because he did not want to be associated too closely with the Jews at that moment, or because Luke himself was behind the wording of the quotation, making it less Jewish for the sake of the context. Both explanations speak against the choice of *Simeon* as a way to make the text more Semitic. Another reason why current explanations for the name *Simeon* are insufficient is that nowhere else in Luke or Acts is Peter's name written that way.²²⁹ All the other times in which Peter's Semitic name is given—sixteen times in Luke-Acts, it is written *Simon* (*Σίμων*). This may seem a minor change, but it is significant for the reader's evaluation of the author's point of view.²³⁰

The paragraph above is not intended to make the point that *Simeon* is someone other than Peter. Rather, I want to offer another explanation to the question *why* he is strangely called that way only here. Considering the point Luke is making in his narrative, it is reasonable that the word *Simeon* here is the narrator's choice to signal to the reader that the explanation ("God first visited, to take from the Gentiles a people for his name") was given in the narrative when a certain *Simeon* spoke (certainly not Simeon Niger). By this simple rhetorical move, the narrator is linking the Jerusalem Council's recognition that God called a people from the Gentiles to the first place in the narrative where the narrator told the reader this would happen: when Simeon, in Jerusalem, said that God's salvation had been "prepared in the presence of all peoples, [and it was] a light for revelation to Gentiles" (Luke 2:31–32). The point is not that James was not referring to Peter,²³¹ but rather that both what Peter and Simeon said and showed in the narrative

²²⁹ In the NT, only in 2 Peter 1:1 is Peter unmistakably called *Simeon Peter*.

²³⁰ Cf. Lk. 4:38; 5:3–5, 8, 10; 6:14; 22:31; 24:34; Acts 10:5, 18, 32; 11:13. As Stephen E. Fowl reminds us, "the spelling of names in ancient documents can be somewhat fluid. Alternatively, once an author opts for one spelling of a name, the author tends to remain consistent throughout the document." Stephen E. Fowl, "Simeon in Acts 15:14: Simon Peter and Echoes of Simeon's Past," in *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, ed. Frank E. Dicken and Julia A. Snyder; LNTS (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 185–86.

²³¹ John Chrysostom in his homily XXXIII on "Acts XV. 13, 15" takes the position that this Simeon is the

up to this point are meant by Luke.²³²

The verb used in the explanation appears to show this connection with the beginning of the Gospel as well (“God first ἐπεσκέψατο”; Acts 15:14). The verb ἐπισκέπτομαι appears seven times in Luke-Acts out of eleven times in the NT. But it is used with the theological sense of God’s visiting his people at the time of salvation only four times, twice in the beginning of Luke (1:68, 78), once later in the Gospel (7:16), and lastly in Acts 15:14. This theme of God’s first visitation²³³ brought up by James right after calling Peter *Simeon* is Luke’s way of emphasizing how the Council is in accordance with God’s plan from the beginning, and also of pointing out how the expectations about Jesus mentioned in the beginning of the narrative are finding their fulfillment in the course of the story. This verb serves as a “bridge to the birth narrative.”²³⁴

Some other connections are highlighted by Tannehill:

James is proclaiming the Messiah previously announced in Luke’s birth narrative, the one who would ‘reign over the house of Jacob’ on ‘the throne of David his father’ (Luke 1:32–33) and bring salvation to Israel (1:69–71) but who was also called a ‘light for revelation of the Gentiles,’ bringing salvation to all flesh (2:30–32; 3:6). James recalls the prophecy concerning this Messiah who would be savior of both Israel and the Gentiles, reminding us of opening themes in the Lukan narrative, because the participation of the Gentiles is now in progress and the church must affirm this development.²³⁵

same that was introduced in Luke 2:25. It does not occur to him that it could have been Simon Peter. *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans* 33 (NPNF¹ 11: 206–08).

²³² A similar approach is taken by Rainer Reisner, based on interpretations offered in the history of the church—mainly Chrysostom. He concludes that, even if the reader cannot be sure whether James was referring solely to Simeon, the connection should not be ignored. Rainer Reisner, “James’s Speech (Acts 15:13–21), Simeon’s Hymn (Luke 2:29–32), and Luke’s Sources,” in *Jesus of Nazareth: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 263–78.

²³³ The adverb πρῶτον, in this sense, refers to the beginning of the narrative, to the first indication that God’s salvation came to the Gentiles as well.

²³⁴ Reisner, “James’s Speech,” 275.

²³⁵ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:189.

Jerusalem Accepts the Gentiles: The Fulfillment of the *Consolation* of Israel is Evidenced in the *Consolation* of the Gentiles

It is in the context described above that Luke uses the word *παράκλησις* for the last time in the narrative. After the people of the Antiochian church read the letter sent from Jerusalem, Luke says that “they rejoiced at the consolation” (Acts 15:31). The cause of the rejoicing is noteworthy here. Were the Gentiles simply psychologically *encouraged* or *comforted* by the decision of the Jerusalem Council? That may have played a part, but it does not exhaust the contextual meaning of *παράκλησις* in Acts 15.

Luke’s use of the verb *rejoice* (*χαίρω*) here is telling. He often uses this verb and the noun *joy* (*χαρά*) in connection with salvation. Luke employs the word *joy* in Acts both “in connection with the progress of the church’s mission (Acts 5:41; 11:23; 15:3, 31; 12:14) [and] as the result of conversion (Acts 2:46; 8:8, 39; 13:48, 52; 16:34).”²³⁶ This theological use of the theme of *joy* occurs, as Marshall notes also in the Gospel:

For in the Gospel rejoicing accompanies the hearing of the message of salvation (Luke 2:10; 8:13) and the knowledge that one’s name is written in heaven (Luke 10:20); to receive Jesus as one’s guest is an occasion of joy (Luke 19:6). Such joy on the part of the recipient and the spectators of God’s grace (Luke 13:17) is but an echo of the heavenly joy over the return of repentant sinners to the Father (Luke 15:5, 7, 10, 32). God and man share in joy.²³⁷

As we can see, for Luke, *rejoicing* is an appropriate response to the reception of salvation. In fact, when commenting on the joy of the Gentiles in Acts 13:48, Johnson says that “[t]he response of ‘joy’ signals acceptance of God’s visitation (Luke 1:14, 28; 2:10; 6:23; 8:13; 10:17, 20; 13:17; 15:5, 11, 32; 19:6, 37; 24:41, 52; Acts 5:41; 8:8, 39; 11:23).”²³⁸ In Acts 15:31, when

²³⁶ Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, 202.

²³⁷ Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, 202–03.

²³⁸ Johnson, *The Acts*, 242.

Luke says that the Gentiles *rejoiced at the consolation*, he is signaling that the letter from Jerusalem gave them more than just comforting words; it represented the culmination of the themes of mission, conversion and acceptance of God's visitation. These three themes are central to the whole chapter, as we have seen. The apostles testify to the conversion of the Gentiles, they decide that by God's will the mission to the Gentiles is legitimate, and James (based on Simeon's explanation) concludes that God first visited in order to take from the Gentiles a people for his name. Their rejoicing, therefore, on a narrative level, points to the resolution of those themes.

The reason for their rejoicing is summarized by Luke with the word *παράκλησις*. Considering the relevance of the chapter, the reader will ponder on Luke's choice of words, and notice that this is the first time the noun *παράκλησις* is used for the Gentiles. Up to this point this word was used in contexts where it hinted at a connection with the mission to the Gentiles in Luke's theological point of view, but this is the first time the Gentiles receive *consolation*. Just as Luke's possible allusion to Isaiah earlier, the use of the name *Simeon*, the theme of *restoration* and *visitation* in James' quotation of Amos, and the conclusion that the mission to the Gentiles was part of God's plan, the word *παράκλησις* invites the reader to look back at the beginning of the narrative and interpret this *consolation* as the fulfillment of an expectation that had been presented earlier. In other words, the *consolation of Israel* (Luke 2:25) that the Jewish people expected, the *word of consolation* (Acts 13:15) that the leaders of the synagogue wanted but some rejected, is now officially received by the Gentiles.

This completes a cycle in the narrative where God's promise to Israel finds its fulfillment as the Gentiles are included in the people of God. Whereas in the beginning, once Simeon, a Jewish character, received consolation, he could depart in peace (*ἀπολύεις ... ἐν εἰρήνῃ*; Luke 2:29), now those representing the Jewish church, who offer consolation to the Gentiles, are also

dismissed in peace (ἀπελύθησαν μετ' εἰρήνης; Acts 15:33). Once the *consolation of Israel*—now understood as both *to* and *from* (objective and subjective genitive) Israel—arrives as promised (to Jews and Gentiles), the believing Jewish people find peace.

Whether intentionally or not, some words are here applied to the Gentiles for the first time to show their inclusion in the ancient Jewish faith (the new Christian faith). The Gentiles are now called *brothers* (15:1, 22–23), they are the *people of God* (15:14, 17), and they share in the *consolation* promised to Israel when they turn to God (15:19). Luke's use of *παράκλησις* here, even if not deliberately reserved for this context such as *brothers* and *people*, unmistakably shows his theological point of view that what Simeon expected (which found fulfillment in Jesus) is now shared by the Gentiles. The days of consolation are upon the church.

Παρακαλέωι in Luke-Acts

In this section I briefly examine Luke's use of the verb *παρακαλέω* to see whether the theological point of view that was evidenced through his use of the noun is also present. The word occurs twenty-nine times in Luke-Acts, of which twenty-two are in Acts. Some interpreters see little connection of Luke's use of this verb to his theological view of mission and salvation. Barrett, for instance, says that in Acts the verb "often means *to ask*, or more strongly, *to entreat* (e.g. 8.31; 9.38; 13.42; 19.31) but it also means *to exhort*, in a specifically Christian sense (e.g. 2.40; 11.23; 14.22). It may mean *to comfort*, but this is more doubtful."²³⁹ On the other hand, others seem to overstate the case, stating that the meaning of both the verb and the noun is based on the event of salvation,²⁴⁰ and therefore these words "may be traced back to the saving work of

²³⁹ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:258.

²⁴⁰ Schmitz and Stälin, *TDNT* 5:793.

the triune God.”²⁴¹

Luke’s theological use is somewhere in between the two extremes above. There are at least five occurrences which unmistakably denote a connection of *comforting* and salvation or spiritual blessing. Luke says that John the Baptist, “with many other exhortations (παρακαλῶν), preached good news to the people” (Luke 3:18). In his message at Pentecost, Peter “urged (παρακάλει) them: be saved from this perverse generation” (Acts 2:40). When Barnabas arrived at the church in Antioch, “he exhorted (παρακάλει) all to remain in the Lord with purpose of heart” (Acts 11:23). Similarly, Paul and Barnabas spoke to the disciples “encouraging (παρακαλοῦντες) them to remain in the faith” (Acts 14:22). And finally, the prophets Judas and Silas “comforted (παρακάλεσαν) and strengthened the brothers” (Acts 15:32)²⁴² who had just rejoiced at the consolation of being officially welcomed into the church.

Whether Luke purposely connected the verb παρακαλέω to the preaching of the gospel because of his theological use of παράκλησις is doubtful. Nonetheless, the fact that the verb is used in connection with the faith in Jesus is in line with Luke’s view of *consolation* throughout the narrative.

Conclusion

Luke’s other uses of παράκλησις betray the author’s theological view of this theme. In Luke 6:24, Jesus contrasts the false παράκλησις received by the rich to the *kingdom of God* received by the poor, which is the real παράκλησις. Furthermore, the poor’s *consolation* that is equated with the *kingdom of God* is elsewhere shown to carry into the afterlife, as we see in

²⁴¹ Schmitz and Stålin, *TDNT* 5:799.

²⁴² Thomas says that Acts 15:32 and 20:2 represent “*open* (15:32) or *intensive act of preaching* (20:2).” Thomas, *EDNT* 3:27.

Jesus's story about the rich man and Lazarus—the poor man. In that story, the rich man receives good things during his life, whereas Lazarus “is comforted” (παρακαλείται) even after his death. In Acts 4:36, Luke uses παράκλησις in his questionable translation of Barnabas as υἱὸς παρακλήσεως. Although Luke's choice of words is usually interpreted as a recognition of Barnabas's role in the narrative as an *encourager*, through his translation Luke may be telling us more about his view of παράκλησις than just that. Barnabas is someone filled with the Holy Spirit, who is the bridge between Jerusalem and Paul (future apostle to the nations), and who preaches about salvation in Jesus to the Gentiles. These aspects (not just the fact that Barnabas *encourages* others) are being highlighted through his nickname. In Acts 9:31, the παράκλησις of the Holy Spirit causes the church to grow. This verse summarizes the events told earlier, where the message about salvation in Jesus goes out of Jerusalem and starts reaching other peoples. Luke's summary statement, with the work of the Spirit and the areas where the church was growing, brings to mind Jesus's promise in Acts 1:8, where he said that the Spirit would be behind the mission to spread the Gospel from Jerusalem to the end of the earth. In this connection, παράκλησις is not mere internal encouragement. Next we analyze Acts 13:15. When Paul and Barnabas are asked to deliver a λόγος παρακλήσεως, they offer the λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας (Acts 13:26) in Jesus. As a result of that speech (word of *consolation/salvation*), more Gentiles are added to the group of believers (Acts 13:44–48). In Acts 15 there is the Jerusalem council, where the inclusion of the Gentiles is dealt with. The council resulted in the *consolation of the Gentiles*, for Luke describes the reaction of those who received the letter from Jerusalem by saying that they “rejoiced at the παρακλήσει” (Acts 15:31). The church's full acceptance of Gentile Christians is viewed as the fulfillment of God's promises about the rebuilding of the tent of David, as the quotation from Amos demonstrates. Finally, chapter four briefly summarizes

Luke's use of the verb παρακαλέω.

CHAPTER FIVE

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FUNCTION OF ISAIAH CITATIONS IN LUKE-ACTS

The significance of Jesus' messiahship, the mission to the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews are recurrent themes in Luke-Acts, and Luke draws from different parts of OT Scriptures throughout his writings to show that what happens in the narrative is in accordance with what was foretold.¹ To grasp the breadth of Luke's theological emphases that have their origin in his reading of the OT, it is necessary to analyze all his uses of OT sources. For the purpose of this dissertation, however, I will limit this investigation to his use of texts from Isaiah, because throughout this study I have argued that Luke's several uses of *παράκλησις* are connected to his view of the promise of *consolation of Israel* and the context of Simeon, and that promise and context clearly point to Isaiah.² The question I seek to answer in this section is whether Luke's interpretation of Isaiah in general support the interpretation of *consolation* described previously or whether it speaks against it.

Before I move on to the exposition of Luke's use of Isaiah, it is important to discuss which texts will be considered and which criteria were used for choosing them. We know that Luke, as other NT authors, resorted to the OT in various ways, among which the most common were "by

¹ Mogens Müller, "The Reception of the Old Testament in Matthew and Luke-Acts: From Interpretation to Proof From Scripture," *NovT* 43 (2001), 322: "To a much higher degree than in the other two synoptic gospels the Jewish Bible plays an important role for the theological argumentation in the Lukan writings. [...] in the Lukan writings the Jewish Bible becomes more important in itself."

² Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 145.

explicit citations and intentional allusions,”³ but also by reproducing ideas and idioms from the OT that influenced him, and “possibly by LXX style.”⁴ His use of Isaiah undoubtedly includes all these categories, but investing time in the minutiae of each possible reference to Isaiah in Luke-Acts falls outside the scope of this work, for many apparent references are debatable.⁵ To understand Luke’s theological insights drawn from Isaiah, it will suffice to focus only on the explicit quotations and perhaps a few allusions (depending on who is defining the terms) from Isaiah. We should note that the “distinction between quotations and allusions can be quite difficult and somewhat arbitrary.”⁶ Even the major critical NT editions disagree on what constitutes a quotation or allusion.⁷ For our purposes, I will follow the definitions below:

A quotation may be defined as OT material preceded by an IF [introductory formula] or an OT citation that lacks an IF, but that possesses a substantial verbatim agreement with an OT text (i.e., more than a brief phrase) or that is identified as a quotation by the NT context. The latter includes paraphrastic renderings that are intended to be more than mere allusions but that may not possess an exact verbal agreement with our LXX or MT because of such reasons as interpretive renderings of the text. An *allusion* is a more indirect reference that has some intended verbal or material parallelism to a specific OT text.⁸

Even when scholars agree to a similar definition of the terms, it is not guaranteed that their lists of quotations and allusions will be the same. Some say that there are five Isaiah quotations in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 3:4–6; 4:18–19; 8:10; 19:46; 22:37),⁹ while others see only four

³ Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition*, 46.

⁴ Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition*, 46.

⁵ As we saw in our discussion of Acts 15:18.

⁶ Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition*, 47.

⁷ “Identifying citations is an inexact science and there is little consensus on which texts in Luke–Acts are explicit citations and which are paraphrases or allusions. Although sharing a common text, the two standard editions of the NT differ on OT citations.” James A. Meek, *The Gentile Mission in Old Testament Citations in Acts: Text, Hermeneutic, and Purpose* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2009), 17.

⁸ Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition*, 47.

⁹ Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition*, 48.

(Luke 3:4–6; 4:18–19; 19:46; 22:37),¹⁰ and yet some say there are three (Luke 3:4–6; 4:18–19; 22:37).¹¹ The same happens when we consider the use of Isaiah in Acts: while some see five explicit quotations from the book of Isaiah (Acts 7:49–50; 8:32–33; 13:34; 13:47; 28:26–27),¹² others say there are only four (Acts 7:49–50; 8:32–33; 13:47; 28:26–27).¹³

Knowing that there is an informed arbitrariness in the scholar’s choice of what constitutes an explicit citation, I have elected to include the following passages from Luke-Acts for discussion: Luke 3:4–6; 4:18–19; 19:46; 22:37; Acts 7:49–50; 8:32–33; 13:47; 28:26–27. The analyses in this chapter will not be an in-depth investigation of each of the quotations, for that would take an entire dissertation. The purpose is to draw general conclusions from Luke’s use of Isaiah in each of the quotations, to compare it to the argument made in this dissertation up to this point.

In general terms, we may say that Luke uses Isaiah prophetically. James A. Meek classifies the OT citations in Luke-Acts as pertaining to one of four categories: legal, historical, doctrinal, and prophetic.¹⁴ After briefly explaining each of these, he says that the “majority of citations are employed in a *prophetic* capacity, principally drawn from the prophets and the book of Psalms and applied to events which have been fulfilled in the narrative or which are yet to be fulfilled. These are most often in view in discussions of the OT in Luke-Acts.”¹⁵ Meek then further categorizes the *prophetic* group, stating that prophetic quotations are usually concerned

¹⁰ Bart J. Koet, “Isaiah in Luke–Acts,” in *Isaiah in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed M. J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, NTSI (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 79–80.

¹¹ Joop Smit, “The Function of the Two Quotations,” 41.

¹² Koet, “Isaiah in Luke–Acts,” 80.

¹³ Joop Smit, “The Function of the Two Quotations,” 41.

¹⁴ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 19.

¹⁵ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 19.

with Luke's view of Christology, soteriology, judgement, rejection, and universal spread of the gospel.¹⁶ As we will see, Meek's clarification of the *prophetic* citations seems to correspond to Luke's use of Isaiah in Luke-Acts.

Establishing Jesus's Messiahship

From Luke's several quotations of Isaiah in Luke-Acts, the reader can identify that some texts are quoted with the purpose of describing Jesus' messiahship. Such purpose is evidenced especially in Jesus' programmatic address in chapter 4, and in Jesus' relation with the Isaianic servant.

Luke 4:17–21 as Programmatic for Jesus's Ministry: Identity and Work

In chapter 2 of this dissertation some aspects of Jesus' inaugural message in Luke 4 were discussed. Now, it is opportune to look at that passage again with a view to finding out how the quotation from Isaiah is being used by the author.

We are told that at the beginning of his ministry Jesus went to a synagogue in Nazareth and began to teach. In verses 17–19, the text says:

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him and, unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good news to the poor, he sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

His first words after this reading were: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). With some minor differences, Luke follows the text of the LXX for Isaiah 61:1–2.¹⁷ The quotation in Luke omits the phrase «ιάσασθαι τοὺς συντετριμμένους τῆ καρδία»

¹⁶ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 19–20.

¹⁷ Even with some differences from the LXX, the reader can see that Luke did not follow the MT because of the end of Isaiah 61:1. Both Luke 4 and the LXX version mention «κηρύξαι ... τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν», while the MT

after mentioning the proclamation of good news to the poor, and at the end, when it talks about the proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord, it changes the verb from καλέσαι to κηρύξαι. The most relevant variance, however, is the addition of the phrase «ἀποστεῖλαι τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφέσει» from Isaiah 58:6.¹⁸ There are several explanations for such addition. The three major suggestions are: *a*) the connection made by Jesus between Isaiah 61 and 58 is due to the theme of a messianic banquet (cf. Isaiah 61:6 and 58:7); *b*) the text represents a Semitic midrash in which the two Hebrew passages were connected; *c*) the link between the two passages is the Greek catchword ἄφεσις, and the conflation of the passages is in accordance with the *gezerah schawah* technique, which was common practice among Jewish theologians at the time.¹⁹ The last suggestion seems to be more likely given the exegetical milieu of the time. However, even if there was a different reason for the joining of the two texts, the interest of this dissertation is in the final form which we find in Luke's narration of the episode.

There have been discussions about whether the focus of the quotation in the context of Luke 4 lies on the message to the poor and freeing of the oppressed, on the figure of the Messiah who would do those things, or on both.²⁰ Even without resolving this debate, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the function of the quotation.

The first thing to note is that, according to Luke, it was Jesus himself who read and applied this text. The importance of this can hardly be overstated. This is Jesus' first message in the Gospel, and by means of his interpretation of the prophecy from Isaiah he is conferring divine

has וְלִצְדִיקִים פְּקוּחֵי קוֹחַ ... לְקַרְא. But see Kimball, who defends, based on the agreements and disagreements with both the LXX and MT, that "Luke has preserved a mixed text form." Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition*, 99.

¹⁸ Koet, "Isaiah in Luke–Acts," 83.

¹⁹ Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition*, 106–10.

²⁰ Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy*, 108.

authority to his own ministry.²¹ Jesus is explicitly proclaiming “his Messiahship”²² in prophetic terms. Luke indicates that Jesus intentionally chose the reading by saying that he “found” (εὑρεν) the place he wanted.²³ Jesus’ intentionality in selecting the passage and his application of it models for Luke the way in which he presents throughout the narrative Jesus’ ministry and its effect on people as representing the fulfillment of Isaianic prophecies. Luke does this by displaying quotations from Isaiah at turning points in Luke-Acts.²⁴

As was said above, the quotation from Isaiah in Jesus’ inaugural address says something about Jesus’ own identity. The beginning of the text shows that Jesus is stating that he is the Messiah (“The Spirit of the Lord ... anointed me”),²⁵ but what kind of Messiah? The answer is found in verses 24–27, where Jesus says to those gathered at the synagogue that “no prophet is accepted in his hometown” and then cites the examples of prophets Elijah and Elisha.²⁶ That Jesus saw himself as a prophet can also be seen in Jesus’ emblematic lament over Jerusalem in Luke 13:33–34:

However, it is necessary for me to go today and tomorrow and the following day, for it cannot be that a prophet should die outside Jerusalem. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you; how often I have wished to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.

The author’s inclusion of such passages in which Jesus identifies himself as a prophet

²¹ Joop Smit, “The Function of the Two Quotations,” 52.

²² Stanley E. Porter, “The Messiah in Luke and Acts: Forgiveness for the Captives,” in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 150.

²³ Marshall contends that the notion that Jesus opened at that passage accidentally “is alien to the sense of εὑρεν and to the stress on the initiative of Jesus.” Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 182. See also Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 404.

²⁴ Joop Smit, “The Function of the Two Quotations,” 41.

²⁵ Joop Smit, “The Function of the Two Quotations,” 52.

²⁶ Joop Smit, “The Function of the Two Quotations,” 52.

shows that this aspect of Jesus' identity is relevant for the author. Another way by which the author conveys his view of Jesus' prophetic identity is by giving examples in his narrative of others who recognize Jesus as a prophet (Luke 7:16, 39; 24:19).²⁷ What kind of Messiah is Jesus according to Luke 4 and these other passages? Johnson is right to conclude that "Luke's answer is unequivocal. He is a *prophetic* Messiah."²⁸

As the anointed prophet of Isaiah 61, Jesus is also associated with the other figures of OT prophecies. The ones that are most commonly suggested, besides "the final eschatological prophet [and] the Messiah, [are] the suffering servant, and a royal Davidic figure."²⁹ In the next section, I will discuss Luke's use of Isaiah to present Jesus as the Servant and what that means for the narrative of Luke-Acts. For the moment, however, "it is probably unnecessary to differentiate strongly between"³⁰ the terms, but only note that this quotation is presenting Jesus as a complex figure³¹ who would bring about God's salvation. All complexity aside, we might conclude that

The proclamation of Luke 4 is thus prophetically messianic, in terms of both the citation used and the content of the citation. It depicts one who is anointed by the Spirit of God to proclaim a specific prophetic message. This message inaugurates Jesus' mission and, by his specific appropriation, clearly labels him as the prophetic Messiah.³²

²⁷ Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 154.

²⁸ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 81. See also Steve Moyise, *Jesus and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 58: "it is clear that Luke understands Jesus to be claiming that he is the anointed prophet of Isaiah 61." Some have questioned whether the quotation means that Jesus is *a* prophet or *the* prophet, since the latter occurs only in Acts. However, the fact that Jesus is claiming the messianic prophetic role to himself as well as his role as the hero of Luke's narrative shows that he is not just *a* prophet. See Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 155.

²⁹ Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 152.

³⁰ Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 152.

³¹ Kimball defends a combination of three figures: "the messiah, the servant and the final prophet." See Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition*, 112.

³² Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 155.

Having discussed how the quotation serves to define Jesus' identity as the prophetic Messiah, it is necessary to observe what the quotation means for his *work*. In other words, what will Jesus do that will be the fulfillment of that passage from Isaiah? In chapter two of this dissertation I discussed his preaching of good news to the poor and the relation of this passage with Luke 6:24, and briefly mentioned the missiological character of Jesus' application of the sermon, when he compares himself to Elijah and Elisha. Now I turn to other aspects of the function of this quotation of Isaiah that become programmatic in Luke-Acts.

A noteworthy aspect of this Isaiah 61 quotation is, as was mentioned earlier, the insertion of words from Isaiah 58:6 probably based on the catchword ἄφεσις. This addition places emphasis on "'release' as a characteristic activity of Jesus' ministry."³³ "Release", then, becomes the main work of Jesus as the prophetic Messiah. Green notices how both Jesus' identity and his work as the one who would bring release are underscored through structural features of the quotation. As he demonstrates, the repetition of the pronoun "me" in its emphatic position and the repetition of the word "release" underscore Luke's (and Jesus') theological point of view:

Spirit of the Lord is upon *me*,
For he has anointed *me*;
To preach good news to the poor he has sent *me*:
To proclaim for the captives release,
and to the blind sight;
To send forth the oppressed in release;
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.³⁴

Along with the blessings for the poor and the blind, Jesus is saying that besides physical healings, his mission would include the spiritual blessings of release from sins.³⁵ That type of

³³ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 210.

³⁴ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 210.

³⁵ Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 153.

spiritual release is demonstrated in the Gospel in contexts that link it to physical healing. As Stanley E. Porter summarizes, “the same root for ‘forgiveness’ is used in two episodes where Jesus fulfills the Isaianic and messianic expectations.”³⁶ In chapter 5, the reader is told that Jesus was teaching and “he had the power of the Lord to heal” (Luke 5:17). At that occasion a paralyzed man is brought before him, and when he sees the faith of those who brought the man (Luke 5:18–19), his response is, “Man, your sins are forgiven [ἀφέωνταί]” (Luke 5:20). When the scribes and Pharisees regarded Jesus’ words as blasphemous (Luke 5:21–22), he said, “Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ [ἀφέωνταί] or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive [ἀφιέναι] sins (he said to the paralyzed man), I am telling you, get up, take your mat and go home” (Luke 5:23–24).

A similar use of this root occurs in chapter 7. Soon after messengers from John ask Jesus whether he is the one the people had been waiting for, to which he replies by showing and saying that he is fulfilling those words of Isaiah 61 (Luke 7:18–22), he forgives the sins of a sinful woman (Luke 7:47–50). Although Jesus does not link physical healing and spiritual release in this context as he does in chapter 5, the connection with his healing and words before John’s messengers and the response of those who are at the table with him reveal to the reader how Jesus himself interpreted Isaiah and how he fulfilled the prophesied release in his ministry. His forgiving of the woman “gives graphic evidence of Jesus’ understanding of his messianic calling to include the forgiveness of those held captive by sin.”³⁷

Jesus’ interpretation of his mission as the fulfillment of Isaianic prophecies is offered by the author as a means to show how his own narrative conforms to Jesus’ self-understanding

³⁶ Porter, “The Messiah in Luke and Acts,” 153.

³⁷ Porter, “The Messiah in Luke and Acts,” 154.

based on the OT. As the reader progresses in the narrative, he finds that those blessings which, according to Isaiah, would be brought about by the prophetic Messiah are evidenced in the ministry of Jesus. As we noticed by looking at Jesus' (and Luke's) use of the word ἄφεσις and its cognates, a significant aspect of the work of the Messiah that is described in terms that might be viewed as a description of earthly oppression ("release to the captives") refers most of all to spiritual salvation.³⁸

This way of interpreting and applying the "release" predicted in Isaiah might have been contrary to the way some Jews of Jesus' time understood that term. James A. Sanders says that Isaiah 61 "was one of the favorite passages in Judaism in the time of Jesus"³⁹ because they were living under Roman oppression and were looking forward to the fulfillment of the prophesied *release*. In a context of political oppression, they "may well have been thinking at first that Jesus was the herald of Isaiah 61 sent to proclaim the great Jubilee release from slavery to Roman oppression and economy."⁴⁰

As we saw in chapter one, one does not need to take for granted that Jews of the first century would have interpreted the messianic blessings as primarily material or physical and relating to temporal well-being just because they were living in an oppressive regime. It is possible that, even if Sanders is right about their situation under Roman rule, they would have expressed their messianic hopes in military or political terminology (cf. Marshall), while being certain that the fulfillment would be mainly spiritual and future. Having said that, Sanders is right in pointing to the fact that due to their current political situation and religious expectations,

³⁸ See the discussion of Acts 13:15 in chapter 2, where Paul's message is summarized in the forgiveness Jesus brought.

³⁹ James A. Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke," *Int* 36 (1982), 152.

⁴⁰ James A. Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke," *Int* 36 (1982), 152.

they would have interpreted Isaiah 61

as beneficial to themselves. They would have identified, in their turn, with the poor (which they were), with the captives (which they felt themselves to be under Roman rule), with the blind (feeling themselves like dungeon inmates who suffer prison blindness), and the oppressed (which they surely were). They had every right to feel that the blessings of Jubilee would devolve on themselves when the eschaton arrived and when Messiah, or Elijah, the herald of the eschaton, came.⁴¹

And here lies another feature of this quotation's function in the narrative that becomes programmatic. After Jesus reads the text and tells them that the passage was being fulfilled that same day (Luke 4:21), they apparently do not understand initially that he is claiming to be the one through whom the fulfillment was taking place, and therefore they were happy to receive his words as a prophetic announcement of their deliverance by God (Luke 4:22). But a change of disposition takes place when he undeniably applies Isaiah's words to himself (Luke 4:23–24) and extends God's promised delivery to the Gentiles by mentioning the examples of Elijah and Elisha (Luke 4:25–27); when they understood what he was saying, they rejected both him and his message, and tried to kill him (Luke 4:28–29).⁴²

It is unclear whether their anger was due in part to the realization that Jesus applied the words to himself. Nonetheless, it is incontestable that their wrath was caused mainly—if not solely—by Jesus' "interpretation and application of [the expected release] to those outside of Israel. It is not Jesus' appropriation but his hermeneutical extension that angered his audience."⁴³ The comparison of Jesus' own ministry to those of Elijah and Elisha has this effect because the common feature of the two prophets that Jesus stresses is the fact that "in both the prophetic

⁴¹ James A. Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke," *Int* 36 (1982), 152.

⁴² Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 151.

⁴³ Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 151.

visitation was extended to Gentiles—outside the boundaries of the people Israel.”⁴⁴ As Johnson notes, although the reader already knows from Simeon’s words in Luke 2:32 and the Isaiah quotation in Luke 3:6 that the prophetic salvation—particularly as prophesied in Isaiah—was intended for all peoples, “this is the first that any of the Jewish characters in the narrative have heard of it.”⁴⁵ Sanders expresses the issue most clearly: “What was the real prophetic offense in Jesus’ sermon? It was theological: in other words, it was serious, it was ultimate. Jesus was saying to the congregation that God was not a Jew.”⁴⁶

The rejection of Jesus and his message is due to his understanding that God’s blessings promised through the prophet Isaiah were not exclusive to the people of Israel. Such rejection is programmatic both because it anticipates the Jewish continued rejection to the message of Jesus and the church, and because it anticipates that Jesus’ and the church’s ministry will be for Gentiles as well, based on their understanding of OT prophecies.⁴⁷ It is noteworthy that in Jesus’ words the mission to the Gentiles would not be caused by the rejection of the Jews, as some argue based on other parts of the narrative. Even before any apparent rejection, “the initiative [for the mission] is his throughout; at every step in his address at Nazareth he asserts the universal embrace of God’s salvific purpose.”⁴⁸

The theme of Jewish rejection was first foretold in the “prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34),”⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 82.

⁴⁵ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 82. Johnson overstates the fact somewhat, for Jewish characters have already heard of it in the Temple, when Simeon speaks about salvation for all. However, there is novelty in the sense that these Jewish characters better represent “the Jews” in Luke–Acts than those of chapter 2.

⁴⁶ James A. Sanders, “Isaiah in Luke,” *Int* 36 (1982), 154–55.

⁴⁷ Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition*, 115.

⁴⁸ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 208.

⁴⁹ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 81.

when he spoke of division within Israel. Equally, Simeon was the first to predict that God's prophetic salvation was not only for the Jews. In Jesus' inaugural address, he brings those two themes together and suggests a way in which they are related: "a reason why many Jews later on in Acts reject the Gospel [is] precisely because it is meant for all (cf. e.g., Acts 13:44–52)."⁵⁰

To summarize, the Isaiah quotation shows that Jesus is the *prophetic* Messiah who realizes God's salvation, and such salvation is emphatically described as release, which in the narrative is mainly understood as spiritual release from sins. Much as the prophets Elijah's and Elisha's, Jesus' (and by extension the church's) prophetic ministry will offer salvation to the Gentiles, and therefore many within the people of Israel will reject him. With all these features, this quotation and its surroundings represent "one of Luke's most detailed events and contains many themes that he will continue to develop. Luke 4:16–30 is a representative sample of Jesus' ministry, a paradigm for his ministry."⁵¹

Luke 22:37 and Acts 8:32–33: Jesus as Isaianic Servant

The Isaiah quotation in Luke 4 is undeniably related to the Isaianic Servant, and some correctly suggest that "Isa 61:1–3 may be either a suffering servant song or a midrash upon one."⁵² Nonetheless, because of the strong identification that the Lukan Jesus has with the Isaianic Servant elsewhere in the narrative, it is helpful to treat it separately from that quotation.

The idea that Jesus fulfils the mission of the Servant is expressed as early as chapter 2 in the Gospel. The presentation in the Temple scene, studied in chapter one of this dissertation,

⁵⁰ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 82.

⁵¹ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 394.

⁵² Porter, "The Messiah in Luke and Acts," 150. See also Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition*, 112: "Isa. 61:1–3 is likely a servant song or at least a midrash on the earlier songs."

relates the advent of the Messiah Jesus with the “mission of the Servant in Isaiah 40–66,”⁵³ both in Luke’s description of Simeon and in Simeon’s first oracle. That section has echoes to several verses from Isaiah⁵⁴ which “point to the image of the Isaianic Servant of Yahweh as a fundamental scriptural metaphor for interpreting the mission of Jesus as a whole.”⁵⁵ As mentioned earlier, Simeon’s song stands out in comparison to Mary’s and Zechariah’s because it adds the theme of the universality of salvation. What has not been mentioned, however, is that in Simeon’s song Jesus is “directly associated for the first time with the ‘Servant’”⁵⁶ of Isaiah. Noteworthy in Luke’s use of the Servant motif is the relation of the Servant to the nations and not only to Israel. Bock rightly observes that “it is not the suffering elements of this figure that are brought to the fore, as in other NT uses of this theme; rather it is the note of victory, vindication, and hope.”⁵⁷ To that he adds the “universal scope of Jesus’ work. The regal, Davidic, messianic Savior-Servant has come to redeem more than the nation of Israel; he has come for the world.”⁵⁸ I would submit a slight correction to Bock’s explanation. The broad scope of salvation in Luke 2 is not presented in addition to the Servant motif, but such view of salvation is intrinsically related to Luke’s view of the work of the Servant. In other words, the Servant motif is tied to the mission to Gentiles.

The Servant motif surfaces in several places within the narrative,⁵⁹ and Jesus is explicitly

⁵³ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 144. See also Koet, “Isaiah in Luke–Acts,” 85.

⁵⁴ Green notes “especially 40:5; 42:6; 46:13; 49:6; 52:10; 56:1; 60:1.” Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 147.

⁵⁵ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 147.

⁵⁶ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 245.

⁵⁷ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 245.

⁵⁸ Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 245.

⁵⁹ See Koet, “Isaiah in Luke–Acts,” 85. The author argues that the voice from heaven at Jesus’ baptism and the giving of the Spirit may also be a reference to the Isaianic Servant.

called *Servant* a few times in Acts (3:13, 26; 4:27, 30).⁶⁰ However, for the sake of scope, we will now look at the other two quotations (aside from Isaiah 61 in Luke 4) where Jesus is related to the Servant. In Luke 22:37, Jesus tells his disciples that the passage from the Scriptures that says “And he was numbered with the transgressors” must be fulfilled in him. This quotation is a slightly modified version of Isaiah 53:12,⁶¹ and it is part of a Servant song. The other quotation appears in Acts 8:32–33, where Philip meets a eunuch who had been reading the following: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb is silent before its shearer, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation his justice was denied. Who will describe his generation? For his life was taken away from the earth.” This quotation has the exact wording of parts of the LXX version of Isaiah 53:7–8.

The first quotation occurs in the context of Jesus’ last moments with his disciples before his arrest. Because the quotation is short, the reader must be careful not to assume too much about its function. Nonetheless, it is clear that Jesus is relating his mission to that of the Servant, by modeling his final suffering after the fate of the Servant.⁶² What that means is that the rejection of the Messiah-Servant even unto death, just as his rejection at the beginning of his ministry, was God’s plan.⁶³ Whatever the soteriological implications are in Jesus’ application of the Servant motif,⁶⁴ it is clear that “Jesus’ quotation occupies a prominent position at the

⁶⁰ See Peter Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke–Acts*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark International, 2008), 126; and Robert F. O’Toole, “How does Luke portray Jesus as servant of YHWH,” *Biblica* 81 (2000), 332–33. But see also Johnson, *The Acts*, 67, 70–71, 84, who prefers to translate *παῖς* in these verses as “child”.

⁶¹ The LXX «καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη» while Luke’s text reads «καὶ μετὰ ἀνόμων ἐλογίσθη».

⁶² Koet, “Isaiah in Luke–Acts,” 85.

⁶³ See Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 1747–49.

⁶⁴ The Isaiah passage continues to show how the Servant dies for others, while the quotation in Luke stops before that. Does this mean that Luke was not interested in showing how Jesus’ death atoned for the sins of others, or just the opposite, the quotation points to the entire context of the Isaianic passage?

beginning of Luke's passion narrative, and the fulfillment formulae around the quotation suggest that the Isaianic reference is likely employed primarily with a view toward christological fulfillment."⁶⁵ By means of this quotation Jesus declares, just as he did in the beginning of his ministry, that at key moments in his life and work he is fulfilling God's word, particularly in the Isaianic prophecies about the Servant, in the presence of his audience.

The second quotation conclusively demonstrates that "Luke connects the preaching which he has been describing with the interpretation of the person of Jesus in terms of the second Isaiah's suffering Servant."⁶⁶ If the reader still had any doubt at this point regarding Jesus' identification with the Servant, the account of Philip and the eunuch clarifies things. When the eunuch asks Philip about the referent of the passage, Philip, "beginning with this passage, preached to him about Jesus" (Acts 8:35). This quotation effectively demonstrates that in Luke-Acts Jesus' innocent death was viewed as a fulfillment of the work of the Isaianic Servant. In this way, Acts 8:32–33 and Luke 22:37 are connected, for both show the reader how the suffering and death of Jesus was God's plan for his Servant,⁶⁷ with the citation in Acts 8 providing "a summary of Jesus' passion."⁶⁸

The two quotations mentioned above alone demonstrate that Luke saw Jesus as the awaited Servant.⁶⁹ However, there are many other examples in Luke's presentation of Jesus that unmistakably point to the Servant (as we saw in our discussion of the Isaiah quotation in Luke

⁶⁵ Benjamin R. Wilson, *The Saving Cross of the Suffering Christ: The Death of Jesus in Lukan Soteriology*, BZNW 223 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 99.

⁶⁶ G. W. H. Lampe, "The Lucan Portrait of Christ," *NTS* 2 (1956), 160.

⁶⁷ O'Toole, "How does Luke portray Jesus," 337.

⁶⁸ O'Toole, "How does Luke portray Jesus," 345.

⁶⁹ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 38–41.

4). Before moving to the next section, therefore, it is opportune to mention that, contrary to what seems based on the two quotations above, Luke used the Servant motif not only to describe Jesus' rejection and death, but also his ministry, especially his (and the church's) mission to the Gentiles. Just as the Servant in Isaiah was to be a "light to the nations", which means salvation for all peoples,⁷⁰ "[t]he allusions in Luke 2.32 and Acts 26.23 are applied to Jesus and the salvation he brings to the Gentiles."⁷¹

Considering the above, how can one summarize Luke's use of the Servant motif? As O'Toole rightly notes:

This presentation does belong to Luke's Christology and can function as a summary of Jesus' mission. He is God's chosen one. The Servant Tradition particularly served Luke to explain Jesus' suffering and passion and to underline his innocence. Moreover, the theme of Jesus as Servant of YHWH expands Lukan 'salvation' with special reference to the image of 'light' and justifies Jesus' mission to the Gentiles.⁷²

Legitimizing the Mission to the Gentiles

Meek's study of Luke's use of the OT focused "attention on the neglected use of the OT to legitimate the Gentile mission in Luke-Acts."⁷³ Among the OT passages which Luke employed with that purpose, his frequent use of Isaiah stands out. We now turn to some of those quotations.

Salvation and Light to "All Flesh" (Luke 2:32; 3:4–6; Acts 13:47)

At different places in his narrative Luke employs Isaiah to tell his readers that God's salvation in Jesus is meant for all peoples. We have seen how that is the case in Luke 2:31–32, where, in a context filled with Isaianic allusions, salvation is said to have been "prepared in the

⁷⁰ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 38.

⁷¹ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 53.

⁷² O'Toole, "How does Luke portray Jesus," 345–46.

⁷³ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 9.

presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to Gentiles.” In addition, in the discussion about the Isaianic term salvation (σωτήριον) in the context of John the Baptist’s ministry, it was pointed out that John’s preaching, fulfilling Isaiah, made it clear that “all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:6). From the perspective of redaction criticism, this becomes more significant when one notices that neither Matthew (3:3) nor Mark (1:3), who quote the same text from Isaiah in this context, includes the part about “all flesh” seeing God’s salvation. The inclusion of such verse from Isaiah fits “the Lukan context, because the addition of the gentiles to God’s people Israel is an important theme in Luke-Acts.”⁷⁴

An understanding that Isaiah’s prophecies—particularly the ones related to the Servant—served as the basis for the universalization of salvation and the mission of the church to the Gentiles can be seen in the quotation from Isaiah 49:6 in Acts 13:47: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may be for salvation to the ends of the earth.” As was shown in chapter 4 above, on a narrative level, this quotation relates to other passages that talk about salvation for all flesh, such as Luke 2:32, 3:5–6, and Acts 1:8.⁷⁵ As in those passages, Luke’s focus here is on the universalization of God’s salvation, rather than on the Jewishness of the promises. This can be seen in Luke’s omission of what precedes expression “light for the Gentiles”. As Fitzmyer notes, “Luke omits ‘as a covenant for a race’ and so eliminates all reference to the Jewish people.”⁷⁶ This argument is stronger if Luke is quoting from the LXX rather than the MT, but the omission of any reference to the Jewishness of the context is relevant. The significance of Paul’s

⁷⁴ Koet, “Isaiah in Luke–Acts,” 83.

⁷⁵ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 242: “The full citation brings together the themes initiated by Simeon’s prophecy in Luke 2:32 and continued by Jesus’ programmatic prophecy in Acts 1:8.”

⁷⁶ Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 521.

explaining the church's mission to the Gentiles⁷⁷ in these terms lies also on the fact that this quotation "represents a major turning-point in the narrative."⁷⁸ From this point on, even though the Jews will still hear the gospel in their synagogues, Paul "will increasingly focus on Gentiles."⁷⁹ In other words, this quotation, at that moment in time, "sets the agenda for the second half of the book."⁸⁰ Wherever God's salvation will go, even against the will of some of the Jews, it is in accordance with God's own plans as outlined through the mission of his Servant.

Jewish Rejection of the Messiah (Luke 19:46; Acts 7:49–50; 28:25–27)

Along the lines of the motif above, Luke employs Isaiah to show how at least some from within the nation of Israel are rejecting the salvation God is offering to his people. A quotation that may be seen in this light, although it rarely is, appears in Luke 19:46, where Luke reports Jesus conflating quotations from Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. When Jesus cleanses the Temple, he says: "It is written: my house will be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers." Luke presents («ἔσται ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς») a loose citation of the LXX text («ὁ γὰρ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται»). What calls the reader's attention is Luke's omission of the second part of the Isaiah verse, which says that the house of prayer would be "to all the nations" («πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν»). This is a subtle but significant omission, considering the Temple setting. More than a Temple cleansing, this text is about the Jewish rejection of Jesus

⁷⁷ Koet considers Luke's use of Isaiah 49:6 "one of the most innovative Lukan uses of Isaiah," for in his narrative this verse "is used as a legitimization of the gentile mission as a consequence of Jesus' mission: the gentiles will see the light." Koet, "Isaiah in Luke–Acts," 99.

⁷⁸ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 24.

⁷⁹ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 24.

⁸⁰ Meek, *The Gentile Mission*, 24.

and his teachings (19:47). As the immediate context shows, “[t]he nation missed Messiah’s visit (19:41–44), and [now] they fail to worship God properly.”⁸¹

In Acts 7 Luke reports Stephen’s words before the Jewish Council. Towards the end of his speech (Acts 7:49–50), he quotes from Isaiah 66:1–2, saying: “‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is the footstool of my feet. What sort of house will you build me?’ says the Lord ‘Or what is the place for my rest? Was it not my hand that made all these things?’” At first, Stephen’s reproach seems to be directed at the Temple worship of the Jews. His own application of that passage, however, shows that he has more than a building in mind. In the verses which follow this quotation Stephen criticizes them for rejecting the prophets just as their forefathers had done, and for rejecting the Messiah, the Righteous One. The Isaiah’s quotation in this context means more than restricting God to the Temple; they were confining God to a people and its religious costumes.⁸²

The last quotation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts drives home the argument that Luke—and the characters in the narrative—related the opposition of the Jews to Jesus and his messengers to prophecies from Isaiah. In Acts 28:26–27 Paul is reported quoting from Isaiah 6:9–10:

You will hear indeed, but will never understand; you will see indeed, but will not perceive. For the heart of this people has become insensitive; with their ears they barely heard, and they shut their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.

This passage is intended as a severe reproach by the apostle Paul. Paul was claiming that

⁸¹ Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 622. Johnson sees in this episode an indication that the Jewish religion is not binding on the Gentiles: “The elimination of this phrase is important for grasping Luke’s view of the Temple. It has a significant role for Judaism and for the first Jerusalem community, but not an enduring role for the Gentiles.” Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 300.

⁸² Given the relevance of the Isaiah quotation for the point Stephen is trying to convey through his speech, Keener observes that the use of this quotation at the end “is also strategic to save his most volatile and explicit text for last, providing him opportunity to preface it with the necessary narrative to drive home his counteroffensive. Homilies did at least sometimes reserve their most significant texts for the end of the homily.” Keener, *Acts*, 2:1418.

“*the Holy Spirit* had truly spoke about them in the words which *Isaiah* had originally addressed to their ancestors; it was a case of ‘like father, like children.’”⁸³ As noted earlier, in this context Paul says that the salvation (σωτήριον) that he is preaching “has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen.” Luke uses this dialogue to remind the reader of “promises of *Isaiah* quoted or paraphrased in the Lukan birth narrative, where the same rare neuter form is found (Luke 2:30; 3:6).”⁸⁴ Both passages highlight the universality of God’s salvation and the inclusion of Gentiles. The end of Acts, nonetheless, describes the rejection of those who were once God’s people.

At this point Tannehill contends that the narrative of Luke-Acts is tragic because of its ending. Because the Jews reject, while the Gentiles will hear, the ending “conflicts with God’s purpose that ‘all flesh,’ including Israel, ‘see God’s salvation.’ [...] the chief emphasis of the end of Acts is on the unsolved problem of Jewish rejection.”⁸⁵ Tannehill’s reading of the passage appears to require, by implication, that for God’s promise to be fulfilled *every* individual from all peoples need to accept the Messiah. But that is not the case. Just as not all Gentiles will listen, not all Jews have rejected. The narrative shows examples of people believing and rejecting on both sides. In that sense, the ending is not tragic, for God’s salvation has reached people across every racial divisive line of the time, from the Jews to the Gentiles. It is because God’s word is being fulfilled that Paul emphasizes, against the group of Jews who wanted to limit God’s salvation, that the Gentiles will be brought in.

⁸³ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 424.

⁸⁴ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:349.

⁸⁵ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:349.

Conclusion

It is a consensus that Luke employed Isaiah “at *crucial* places within the narrative, [and this] indicates that Isaiah is a key to the understanding of Luke-Acts as a whole.”⁸⁶ Upon a brief investigation, one will note that Luke sees the mission of Jesus and his followers, as well as the salvation to all flesh and the rejection by some Jews as the fulfillment of Isaianic prophecies. He reads Isaiah both in christological and missiological ways. Although Luke’s christological and missiological understandings owe to his reading of Isaiah, one can say that “the proclamation of salvation to all people and the response to this proclamation by both Israel and the nations formed Luke’s typical use of Isaiah.”⁸⁷ Within the narrative salvation is clearly defined in broad terms, being “taken to a new level in Acts where the Gentiles receive salvation gladly [...], while many Jews refuse and face God’s rejection [...]. These unexpected outcomes result from a legitimate if somewhat selective dialogue with Isaiah.”⁸⁸

One example of what was said above is Luke’s use of Isaiah to describe John’s ministry. First, the ministry has to do with repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Then, “as it was written by Isaiah”: all flesh will see the salvation of the Lord. Although Isaiah speaks to the hope of Israel, Luke uses it to show that hope fulfilled among and through Israel, to all flesh. Aside from the division between Jews and Gentiles, it is important to note that Luke also reads Isaiah’s hope of salvation as applying to the church.⁸⁹

When we consider this information in addition to our analysis of his use of *παράκλησις*, the narrative meaning of *consolation* becomes all the more evident. When taken together, the

⁸⁶ Koet, “Isaiah in Luke–Acts,” 80.

⁸⁷ Mallen, *Transformation of Isaiah*, 133.

⁸⁸ Mallen, *Transformation of Isaiah*, 132.

⁸⁹ Mallen, *Transformation of Isaiah*, 205.

promise of *consolation of Israel* and Luke's other uses of παράκλησις are in line with how Isaiah functions in Luke: the promise is for the people of Israel (Luke 2:25) and realized through Israel's Messiah, extended to all flesh (Acts 9:31; 15:31), but rejected by some Jews (13:15). *Consolation*, as well as salvation, Messiah, and the notion of people, which were concepts used in relation to Israel, are expanded by Luke's uses of Isaiah to apply to more than a nation, but to all those who accept the Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER SIX

ISRAEL IN LUKE-ACTS

Since the main passage under consideration in this dissertation deals with the consolation *of Israel*, a few observations about how I understand Israel in Luke-Acts are necessary. How can one say that consolation in Luke-Acts is related to the Isaianic promise to the people of Israel and at the same time claim that it is used in the narrative in connection to salvation to all who believe, including the Gentiles? In other words, how can the consolation *of Israel* be understood as consolation *to all believers*? Does Israel in Luke 2:25 and in Luke-Acts as a whole mean *spiritual* Israel, as in other parts of the New Testament? Does Israel mean only Israelites by birth? Or, as this study suggests, does Israel in the beginning of the Gospel represent *the people of God* which later in the narrative will welcome Gentiles?

As I mentioned earlier, this is a hot topic among Lukan scholars, and there is no consensus about the identity of *Israel* in the narrative. Therefore, it is not my intention in this brief exposition to make a complete case for the interpretation I am adopting in this dissertation. Such an argumentation would take an entire dissertation. The aim of this chapter is to show there is a way in which to read Israel in the narrative that supports the view put forth in this dissertation that Luke understood *consolation of Israel* as salvation to all nations.

Friend or Foe? Believing vs Rejecting Israel

It is common to find explanations of Luke's view of Israel that treat the people of Israel as either good or bad, friend or foe. In this dichotomy, if Israel is to be considered a friend, then the

promises made to them should be taken at face value. This sort of reading lends itself to emphasis on the distinctiveness of Israel (dispensationalism), which separates Luke's first use of παράκλησις from the other five and often assumes a political/nationalistic kingdom is in view. On the other hand, if Luke presents Israel as a foe, then the Jewish people in the narrative are all wrong and misguided, and their hope does not really matter. In this perspective, Simeon is an unreliable witness, and therefore his hope of *consolation of Israel* is not a theological theme that Luke develops in his narrative, but rather one that he corrects.

There are representative scholars on either side of this dispute, who seem to infer from the narrative of Luke-Acts that Luke is either pro or against Jewish people, as if the Jewish characters in the story are flat.¹ Some of these scholars' positions have already been presented in this dissertation. To summarize, Tannehill thinks the end of Acts leaves hope for the Jews of the future, due to the positive light in which the narrative presents the promises to them, and the fact that some of these promises are not met with their fulfillment at the end of the narrative. Sanders, on the other hand, defends the opposite, and is likely the most resolute proponent of a negative view of the Jews in Luke-Acts, as he argues that Luke sets out to correct their hopes and establish the church, with the Gentiles included, as the legitimate people of God in the narrative.

Although decidedly contrary to each other, both interpretations above have something in common: a view of Luke's presentation of Israel (or the Jews) as *either or*. However, when one considers the data, one sees that "there is not one common solution to the question about the fate of Israel, so that Luke represents his own."² In some ways, Jacob Jervell stands in between the

¹ For a helpful overview of the literature, beginning with Conzelmann and Haenchen, see Tyson, *Images of Judaism*, 10–13.

² Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.

extremes, and this is due to one of his “fundamental theses about the work of Luke:”³ not all people of Israel reject; therefore, Israel as a character is neither good or bad, but rather, there is a division between repentant and obdurate Jews.⁴ In this view, Luke does not consider Israel in and of itself to be a friend or a foe. Those who are not believers are portrayed negatively, whereas the repentant Israel are portrayed as Christians.⁵

I agree with Jervell’s analysis at this point. The reality is that Israel and the Jews in Luke-Acts are not so flat that either label could apply to the entire group with justice. This is in line, when not interpreted chronologically, with Simeon’s prophecy that Jesus “is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign to be spoken against” (Luke 2:34). Instead, believing versus rejecting Jews within the nation Israel is more appropriate, for Luke describes the group both in a positive and in a negative light, depending on its relation to Jesus and his work. The reader of Luke-Acts should notice that Luke’s presentation of his characters is complex, which requires the reader to pay attention to each context in order to determine whether someone or some group is being commended or condemned by the author. Below I present what I think is a fair reading of Israel, the Jews, and other terms that refer to what was once *the people*.

³ Tyson, *Images of Judaism*, 11.

⁴ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 42.

⁵ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 42.

Table 4. Positive and negative references to Israel and Jews in Luke-Acts

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
ISRAEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Israel</i> is expectant according to Scriptures and recognizes Jesus as God’s fulfillment (Luke 1–2) • Hope for <i>Israel</i> stands (Acts 1:6) • Jesus saves <i>Israel</i> by their repentance and remission of sins (Acts 5:31) • Mission to <i>Israel</i> (Acts 9:15; 10:36) • Jesus, the Savior, brought for/to <i>Israel</i> (glory to Israel) (Acts 13) • <i>Israel</i>’s hope is the same as Paul’s hope (Acts 28:20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith outside <i>Israel</i> was greater (Luke 7:9) • All people of <i>Israel</i> is responsible for Jesus’ death (Acts 4:10, 27)
JEWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the king of the <i>Jews</i> (Luke 23:38) • Many <i>Jews</i> were persuaded (Acts 13:43; 19:17) • A great multitude of <i>Jews</i> believe (Acts 14:1; 21:20) • The word is proclaimed to <i>Jews</i> (Acts 18:4–5; 20:21) • <i>Jews</i> hear the word, and some (Apollos) know the Scriptures (Acts 18:19 – 19:10) • Timothy was a believing half-<i>Jew</i> (Acts 16:1)⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jews</i> want to kill Paul (Acts 9:23; 20:3, 19; 21:11) • <i>Jews</i> can’t eat with Gentiles (Acts 10:28) • <i>Jews</i> killed Jesus (Acts 10:39) • <i>Jews</i> are happy when the disciples are put in prison (Acts 12:3) • <i>Jews</i> become jealous and stir people up against the apostles (Acts 13:45, 50; 17:5, 13; 21:27) • The unbelieving <i>Jews</i> stir people up against them (Acts 4:2–5, 19) • <i>Jews</i> against Paul (Acts 18:12–14)

⁶ But see Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Was Timothy Jewish (Acts 16:1–3)? Patristic Exegesis, Rabbinic Law, and Matrilineal Descent,” *JBL* 105 (1986): 251–68, for an argument against Timothy’s Jewishness in the eyes of Luke (and Paul).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul accused by <i>Jews</i> (Acts 22–28)
<p style="text-align: center;">PHARISEES / TEACHERS / SCRIBES / PRIESTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A <i>pharisee, teacher of the law</i>, can be fair-minded (Acts 5:34f) • <i>Pharisees</i> believe in the resurrection and, because of that, some <i>scribes</i> among them do not condemn Paul (Acts 23:6–9) • Zechariah was a believing <i>priest</i> (Luke 1:5f) • Many <i>priests</i> believe (Acts 6:7) • Some <i>scribes</i> seem to honestly listen to Jesus (Luke 20:39) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pharisees</i> and <i>teachers of the law</i> don't believe (Luke 5:17f) • <i>Pharisees</i> and <i>scribes</i> against Jesus' associates (Luke 5:30f; 15:2; 19:39) • <i>Pharisees</i> and <i>scribes</i> for sabbath and looking for something to catch him (Luke 6:2–7; 11:53) • <i>Pharisees</i> and <i>lawyers</i>, unlike all the people and even tax collectors, rejected God's purpose (Luke 7:30) • A <i>pharisee</i> doesn't understand sin (Luke 7:39; 18:9–14) • <i>Pharisees</i> are only externally clean, lack love and look for honors before people, and they are hypocrites (Luke 11:38–43; 12:1) • <i>Pharisees</i> are greedy (Luke 16:14) • The Son of Man must suffer before and be rejected by <i>high priests</i> and <i>scribes</i> (Luke 9:22) • In the parable, a <i>priest</i> does not help the wounded man (Luke 10:31) • <i>High priests</i> and <i>scribes</i> want to kill Jesus (Luke 19:47; 20:19; 22:2–until the end) • <i>High priests</i> and <i>scribes</i> try to catch him (Luke 20:1)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Priests</i> and <i>high priests</i> and <i>scribes</i> arrest disciples (Acts 4:1–5:27) • <i>High priests</i> authorize Saul to arrest believers (Acts 9; 22:5; 26:12) • <i>High priests</i> press charges against Paul (Acts 22–26) • Warning against the <i>scribes</i>, who like honor and appearance (Luke 20:46) • A <i>lawyer</i> tests Jesus (Luke 10:25) • Jesus speaks against <i>lawyers</i> (Luke 11:45–52)
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Looking at the table above, some things become clear. *Israel* is mostly viewed positively by Luke, with a few exceptions where they are criticized. On the other hand, Jewish groups such as the Pharisees and high priests are viewed as bad for the most part, with some notable exceptions, as Luke’s comment mentions the many *priests* who believe in Acts 6:7. The group known as the *Jews* is portrayed positively approximately half of the time. If we consider the first two chapters of the Gospel as a description of this group (in the table above I included those chapters as describing *Israel*), however, their positive portrayal would be much more prominent.

From what we can see in Luke’s presentation of Israel (and related terms) throughout the narrative, if there is any dichotomy in Luke’s view of the people, it is not (at least primarily) Israel vs Gentiles (or church), but a division within Israel, defined by *belief* and *rejection* of the Lord Jesus. The point is how one reacts to Jesus and his message.⁷ Do they reject or accept? Is

⁷ In addition to the two sides depicted in the table, there are innumerable references of those terms that are neither positive nor negative. Israel: Luke 1:80; 2:34; 4:25, 27; 22:30; 24:21; Acts 1:6; 2:22, 36; 5:21, 35; 7:23, 37; 13:16; 21:28. Jews: Luke 7:3; 23:3, 37, 51; Acts 2:11, 14; 10:22; 13:5; 16:3, 20; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:2; 19:14, 33, 34; 21:21, 39; 22:3, 12; 24:18, 24; 25:8, 10; 26:3, 4; 28:17. Pharisee: Luke 5:33; 7:36, 37; 11:37; 13:31; 14:1, 3; 17:20;

their faith and their understanding in line with what was in the prophets, or are they siding with those who rejected and killed the prophets? This is crucial to show that as far as the definition of Israel goes, Luke-Acts does not suggest a break with the past or a redefinition of Israel. It does, however, stress that there is a legitimate people that is characterized by *belief* as opposed to *rejection*.

Israel, Church and the People of God

If Israel is a divided people, then who is the people of God in Luke-Acts? Is it all of Israel? Is it only the believing side of Israel? What about the church? Is the church part of Israel or is the believing Israel part (or the entirety) of the church? Again, who is the people of God?

Conzelmann's comments concerning Luke's theological view of the relation between church and Israel are particularly helpful when one considers the question of the people of God in Luke-Acts. He argues that for Luke the church takes over the "traditional terminology of the 'people',"⁸ and this is precisely the main relation of the church to previous redemptive history (which he calls the Epoch of Israel). The evidence for this, he says, is found mostly in speeches in the first half of Acts.⁹ He concludes,

It is characteristic of Luke's interpretation of history that it is only the idea of the people of God as such that is a determining factor, not the details of Israel's history. Even the Old Testament's own interpretation of history, according to which history follows a regular pattern of election—apostasy—disaster—turning back to God—new deliverance—is not taken over. The idea of tradition is applied to Israel only in the general sense, that the Church is now the people of God.

Acts 15:5. Priest/High priest: Luke 3:2; 5:14; 6:4; 17:14; Acts 14:13; 19:14; 23:5.

⁸ Conzelmann, *Theology of St. Luke*, 162.

⁹ He points out, among other things, that "'Israel' appears in a stereotype form of address in Acts ii, 22; iii, 12; v, 35; xiii, 16." Conzelmann, *Theology of St. Luke*, 163.

In the above quotation we see that for Conzelmann the “Epoch of the Church” is a legitimate section in God’s redemptive history because the *people of God* lives on in it, as it once lived in the nation of Israel.

One may disagree with Conzelmann’s division of salvation history in Luke-Acts, but his thesis that the terminology of the *people* is taken over by the church should not be overlooked. Jervell maintains that the church claims “to be the restored Israel.”¹⁰ What that means in a context where both sides of Israel—those who have rejected and those who have accepted Jesus—claimed to be the legitimate people of God¹¹ is that the church did not replace Israel, but continues to be Israel. He observes that “Luke does not speak of the Christians primarily as ‘church’, but as a people, *laos*, the word reserved for Israel in its unique position. Israel plays an important role in Luke’s theology.”¹² At first glance Jervell’s position seems to be quite similar to Conzelmann’s, but there are significant differences that need clarification. Jervell thinks of the church as “primarily of Jews and for the Jews,”¹³ and therefore affirms that “the identity of the church, then is clear: it is Israel, the one and only.”¹⁴ For Jervell, then, unlike Conzelmann’s notion of the “Epoch of the Church” and most commentators on Acts who emphasize that Luke wrote the book to show how the message of the gospel spread to other peoples and welcomed Gentiles, the concept *Israel* continues to be related to the Jews, as well as *church* and *people of God*, even if there are God-fearers among them. In other words, although Jervell admits that Israel is the church, his reading of Luke-Acts is overly Jewish. He downplays the mission to the

¹⁰ Jervell, *The Theology of Acts*, 16.

¹¹ Jervell, *The Theology of Acts*, 16.

¹² Jervell, *The Theology of Acts*, 34.

¹³ Jervell, *The Theology of Acts*, 37.

¹⁴ Jervell, *The Theology of Acts*, 37.

Gentiles as merely a necessary step to rebuild David's fallen house, says that Paul is the apostle to the Jews, and Gentile converts in Acts are mostly God-fearers and synagogue friends.

As it was with Conzelmann, one may also disagree with the Jewish outlook of the church as Jervell understands it. However, he makes a fundamental contribution to our understanding of the relation between Israel and church in Luke-Acts, even if his critic offers slight corrections to his thesis. What is of particular pertinence to the present dissertation is Jervell's view that "the Christians are heirs of the promises to Israel, and they are so as Jews."¹⁵ Does he mean that the church is heir of the promises *because* they are Jews? Or, even if there is no causal relationship, can the church only be heir of the promises to Israel *as long as* they are Jews? Is it a necessary requirement? In my view, even if the Jewish roots of the church are described in the narrative, Jervell seems to offer a reading that does not take fully into account what happened in Acts 15.

Paul Trebilco offers insightful information that helps us see in Luke an intentional move to apply to Gentiles in the church some designations that were reserved for Jews before the Jerusalem Council.¹⁶ He argues that up to chapter 15 of Acts, ἀδελφοί is used by Jews to refer to other Jews as "fellow kinsmen" or 'compatriot,' Jewish Christians address other Jewish Christians as ἀδελφοί, and similarly Luke uses ἀδελφοί as a designation for Jewish Christians. A significant new usage was introduced in Acts 15:1 and 15:22–23.¹⁷ Trebilco notes that it is clear that the reference in Acts 15:1 is to both Jews and Gentiles, given that in Acts 11:20–26¹⁸ Luke describes the mixed nature of the Antioch church, and emphasizes that in chapter 15 we find "the

¹⁵ Jervell, *The Theology of Acts*, 37.

¹⁶ Paul Trebilco, "The Significance of the Distribution of Self-Designations in Acts," *NovT* 54 (2012): 30–49.

¹⁷ Trebilco, "Distribution of Self-Designations in Acts," 32.

¹⁸ Trebilco, "Distribution of Self-Designations in Acts," 32.

first application of ἀδελφοί to both Jews and Gentile Christians in Acts.”¹⁹ The use of the word ἀδελφοί to refer to Gentile Christians is not incidental, for they are officially designated as brothers—even though they were not Jews—in the letter sent by the Council (Acts 15:23): “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings.” In this remarkable and official way and at a turning point in the history of the early church, the Gentiles are called ἀδελφοί by the ἀδελφοί apostles and elders. What becomes clear from this point on is that people are now ἀδελφοί not because they are fellow Jews, but “*because* they are Christians.”²⁰

The significance of this usage of the word is that it demonstrates that the Gentile Christians are God’s people just as Jewish Christians claimed to be. According to Trebilco, the Luke’s general usage of ἀδελφοί in the narrative is informed by the OT and by the Jews who used it “for members of God’s people,”²¹ and its inclusive usage in the narrative to Gentiles after the Jerusalem Council, when Gentiles are officially welcomed by the Jerusalem people, makes it “clear that Gentiles are part of the one people of God; they too are ‘brothers and sisters’ of the new family.”²² This move of the narrative is motivated by the Luke’s theological point of view (since he “is very careful in his use of these self-designations”²³) who is interested in depicting the full acceptance of the Gentiles into the people of God.

Luke’s theological emphasis on the church as the people of God has been part of scholarly

¹⁹ Trebilco, “Distribution of Self-Designations in Acts,” 32.

²⁰ Trebilco, “Distribution of Self-Designations in Acts,” 33.

²¹ Trebilco, “Distribution of Self-Designations in Acts,” 36.

²² Trebilco, “Distribution of Self-Designations in Acts,” 36.

²³ Trebilco, “Distribution of Self-Designations in Acts,” 30.

conversation for some time.²⁴ David Seccombe considers this topic so evident in Luke-Acts that he contends that it “must be rated as one of [Luke’s] major purposes in writing.”²⁵ Luke, he says, develops a theology of the people in which those who are aligned with God’s movements within history to save through his prophetic world are his true people, whereas those “who refuse to obey the prophet Jesus will be cut off from the chosen λαός.”²⁶ Seccombe summarizes Luke’s view thusly:

The new people of God, as Acts shows it develop, is neither a renewed Jewry expanded by an inflow of proselytes, nor a Gentile ‘new Israel’ from which the Jews have departed, but a ‘church of nations’ [...] from all peoples, the Jews included and first, and also the Gentiles. Believing Gentiles belong as heirs of Abraham’s promise of blessing for the nations, not by being melded with the Jews through circumcision, but by being blessed with the gift of the Holy Spirit on the gracious initiative of God, and by their simple acknowledgement of Christ.²⁷The fact that promises of God made to Israel in the OT were not limited to the Jews of the NT is clear when we look at one of the most distinctive characteristics of the people of God in Acts: the Holy Spirit. The apostle Peter, speaking of the promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:39, tells the Jews that “the promise is to you and to your children and to all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God calls to himself.” Taking this text in isolation, it is reasonable to suggest that those who are “far away” are Jews from the diaspora. Nonetheless, it is more likely that this is a reference to the coming of the Spirit upon the Gentiles as is depicted in Acts 10. The adverb

²⁴ See, for instance, David Seccombe, “The New People of God,” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I.H. Marshall and D. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 349–72.

²⁵ Seccombe, “The New People of God,” 71.

²⁶ Seccombe, “The New People of God,” 71.

²⁷ Seccombe, “The New People of God,” 72.

μακρᾶν is used two other times in Acts. One in the context of Paul’s witness in Athens (Acts 17), and the other in Paul’s report of his conversion and calling (Acts 22). In the latter, he says that he heard from the Lord: “Go, because I will send you far away (μακρᾶν) to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21).²⁸

One thing that some who focus on Jewish hopes as distinctive to the nation of Israel seem to have in common is that they downplay the role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts.²⁹ They acknowledge that the Spirit is behind the mission and the people who prophecy in the beginning of the narrative, among other things, but they still operate with an understanding that the presence of the Spirit or the unity of the “new” people is not enough to remove the old divisions between Jews and Gentiles, and Israel and church. However, the Spirit transforms one’s understanding of those categories. The Spirit, who speaks through people in Luke 1–2 with an OT, Jewish flavor, is the one who anoints the Son of God for a ministry that will not be only for the Jews; who transforms the disciples in witnesses in the beginning of Acts; who makes the people grow in other areas besides Jerusalem (Acts 9:31); who converts Gentiles and testifies to those in Jerusalem that the Gentiles are accepted (chapters 10–11); who guides the Jerusalem church in welcoming the Gentiles (chapter 15). Although the text speaks and assigns an importance to places such as Jerusalem, and speaks about and distinguishes between Jews and Gentiles, the Spirit breaks geographical and ethnic barriers, blends places and unites peoples, and shows that in Jesus all the peoples receive the fulfillment of all the promises made to Israel. The same redemption from enemies and the same future kingdom that Israelites expected, are offered to all those who have the Spirit, whom the Lord calls his people, and whom Luke calls the

²⁸ The same word is used in Ephesians 2:13 and 17 to refer to the Gentiles who were “far away” from God.

²⁹ Tannehill, for instance, does not mention the Spirit in his comments on Acts 9:1–31.

church.

The church is not heir of the promises to Israel because it is made up of Jews, but because the church is *the people of God*—even as the church is made up of mixed people. Luke does not develop in his narrative the concept of spiritual Israel as we see in Paul, but his way of relating the history of the early church in its relationship to the promises of Israel indicates that his understanding was not too different from Paul’s. Even if the label “Israel” is used by Luke to refer to the nation and never specifically for Christians (perhaps because he wanted to evade “the national and religious limitations such a label conveys”³⁰), the fact that God’s promises were fulfilled in his kingdom in which all Christians were included makes the Christian church “the true Israel” and “God’s covenant people.”³¹

Conclusion

Israel in Luke-Acts is not a flat character. Although depicted positively by Luke most of the time, some terms related to the nation, such as Jews, scribes and priests are also viewed negatively. That is due to Luke’s criterion to judging whether someone is on the right side, on the divine side, within the narrative. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus are friends, whereas those who reject him, also reject God’s purpose for his people. Since that is the case, the notion of who is the people of God for Luke goes beyond the national boundaries of the people of Israel. For him, all believers in Christ, to whom the promised Spirit has already come, be they Jews or Gentiles, are part of God’s people, worthy to be called brothers. As the people of God, they—who are the church—inherit the promises made to Israel in the OT, even if the prophets

³⁰ Michael A. Salmeier, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Role of God as the “Ordainer of Times and Seasons” in Acts of the Apostles*, PrTMS 165 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 110.

³¹ Salmeier, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 110.

did not mention develop the concept of “church” or “spiritual” Israel as some NT authors. One of those promises was the consolation of Israel, which is understood as the messianic salvation of God through his Christ, which is for all who believe, rather than a promise that refers to the well-being of one nation only.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In this concluding chapter I will summarize the findings of the previous chapters and offer suggestions for further research that is related to the topic but that due to the scope of the present study could not be undertaken. At the end, I will draw conclusions from our reading of παράκλησις in light of the whole narrative of Luke-Acts and say why it matters for readers of these two NT books.

Summary of Luke's Use of Παράκλησις in Luke-Acts

This dissertation's stated thesis claimed that "Luke's several uses of παράκλησις help the reader understand what he means by «παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ» in Luke 2:25." What is meant by this is that to properly understand the theme of the prophetic *consolation* expected by Simeon and other Jews in Luke-Acts, the reader of the narrative needs to take into consideration the author's point of view as he expresses it in the contexts where he employs παράκλησις.¹ The Introduction showed that most scholars read Luke 2:25 in isolation from Luke's other uses of παράκλησις, and thus their interpretation of the fulfillment of the prophetic *consolation* is informed either by their view of the restoration of Israel or by Luke's broad soteriology. When those two areas of study are the basis for one's interpretation of *consolation*, the result is either

¹ This is not the only aspect that needs to be taken into consideration, but it is an important piece that has often been overlooked.

an emphasis of *consolation* as deliverance for the nation of Israel or an emphasis of *consolation* as spiritual salvation. For some, these two need not be seen as opposite, but as two facets of the same eschatological fulfillment of *consolation*. A few scholars have argued that παράκλησις in Luke 2:25 should be viewed in light of the other occurrences of παράκλησις, such as Luke 6:24, but their comments are just suggestive, without offering substantial study on the relationship between the two passages.

To fill this void in scholarship, especially in the areas of Lukan studies—including the role of the Jews and the OT in the Gospel and the field of biblical theological readings of Luke-Acts, this dissertation analyzed all contexts in which Luke made use of the word παράκλησις. The analysis drew on elements of both Narrative Criticism and Biblical Theology to provide a comprehensive understanding of Luke’s point of view of *consolation* within his two-volume work. After the chapters which present the use of the word in context, Luke’s use of Isaiah and the character Israel (and related terms) in the narrative were surveyed to help draw a more complete picture of the theme under investigation.

This dissertation’s study of Luke’s use of παράκλησις in Luke 2:25 showed that *consolation* and *salvation* in Jesus for all, not just for the Jews, are closely connected in the presentation in the Temple scene. The chiasmic structure of the text reveals that Luke relates the expected *consolation* to the present *salvation* in Jesus. Furthermore, the connection between the two words is confirmed by the fact that Simeon refers to Jesus as God’s σωτήριον. This word, which is common in the Greek text of Isaiah, is rare in the NT, being used only three times by Luke (out of four in the whole NT). Every time Luke uses σωτήριον in Luke-Acts, prophecies from Isaiah are in view (Luke 2:30; 3:6; Acts 28:28). It is fitting that a character described by the narrator in such Isaianic terms (“waiting for the consolation of Israel”) would interpret the

fulfillment of his expectations with Isaianic terminology.

It is noteworthy that Simeon's interpretation of Jesus is not a misguided nationalist reading of what God is doing. The author shows us that his point of view is the same as Simeon's by describing this character positively with words such as "righteous and devout" and, most of all, by repeatedly telling the reader that the Holy Spirit is behind what Simeon thinks and does. The Holy Spirit, who will later be the fulfillment of a promise to the church and who will transform people in witnesses of Jesus to the world, endorses Simeon's (and the author's) view of Jesus. This means that a more accurate interpretation of *consolation* in that context is one which does not ignore the spiritual significance of Jesus to all peoples, according to the testimony of the Spirit.

Simeon's second oracle corroborates the above interpretation. In his words to Mary, he warns her that Jesus will be a sign to be *spoken against*, and that many in Israel would *fall* while many would *rise*. This shows that, from the beginning of the Gospel, it is clear that the people of God (one might say, the true Israel), is not defined by bloodline, but by acceptance over against rejection of Jesus. Even Anna's mention of *redemption of Jerusalem* should be seen in this light, because Luke structures the scene in a way which makes her the counterpart of Simeon, forming an *inclusio*.

The entire scene and the context in which it is presented (Luke 1–2) offer what some have called "previews of salvation" in the narrative of Luke-Acts. Such previews have a primacy effect, that is, they impress upon the reader a framework through which the reader should read and interpret the rest of the story. In the case of consolation in Luke-Acts, the primacy effect shows that, unless told otherwise, the reader should view *consolation of Israel* as closely connected to *salvation* for all peoples.

Our study of Luke's blessings and woes in chapter 6 showed that Jesus' concern and ministry to the poor was prevalent in his teaching. Beginning with his first public address in Luke chapter 4, he quotes from Isaiah and says that the interpretation of those words is found in his ministry, as he would, among other things preach good news to the poor. In addition, the recipients of the blessings that would come from his ministry would not be the Jewish people only, just as the prophets Elijah and Elisha were sent to bless other peoples.

The paragraph above suggests that Jesus' blessings and woes in chapter 6 are properly understood when seen against his entire ministry and prophecies concerning his work. For instance, themes first introduced in the infancy songs serve as the background for much of Jesus' ministry, and that includes the blessing to the poor and the warning to the rich in Luke 6:24. Jesus, who was interpreted by Simeon (and Luke) as the fulfillment of the *consolation of Israel*, who was called *salvation*, is not saying that some already have found worldly *consolation*, but have lost the real *consolation*, which is the kingdom of God. Such eschatological *consolation* is not liberation for oppression or any other earthly blessing.

The investigation of Acts 4:36 showed that it is a consensus among scholars that Luke's translation of the name Barnabas as *son of consolation* is not linguistically accurate, but it is due to theological or other reasons. Such theological reasons, I argued, are found both in what came before Barnabas as well as his subsequent role in the narrative. Before Barnabas we learn of Luke's view of *consolation* through the presentation in the Temple scene, which is complemented by Jesus' blessings and woes. After the introduction of Barnabas, the *son of consolation*, we learn that Luke presents him as an *encourager* of the marginalized but also as the *bridge between Jerusalem and Gentiles*. Barnabas is the one who helps Saul, who would soon become the apostle to the Gentiles, be accepted by the Jerusalem church, and this makes

Barnabas a central character in the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles. Besides, Barnabas was a missionary to the Gentiles and even went with Paul on his first missionary journey. All this seems to indicate that Barnabas' role in the narrative—an intersection between Jews and Gentiles—conveys Luke's own theological view of παράκλησις.

Luke's fourth use of παράκλησις in his writings occurs at Acts 9:31, which is a summary statement about the spread of the Gospel. Whenever Luke employs a summary statement, it is about the mission of the church reading other places, and the terminology he uses at those times reveals what is important for him theologically. Acts 9:31 stands out among the several purpose statements because it is the only one in which he cites the cause for the growth of the church, namely, the *consolation* of the Holy Spirit. When one matrixes this with the description of Jesus in the beginning of the narrative as the fulfillment of *consolation*, and the way Jesus presents himself as the one who came to fulfill prophecies from Isaiah, it is reasonable that this summary statement alludes to passages such as Isaiah 11–12, where the “fear of the Lord” and the “Spirit” are related to the Messiah and God's salvation to all peoples. Another notable aspect of this use of παράκλησις is that Luke's summary statements are connected to the promise of Jesus in Acts 1:8, when he says that the Holy Spirit will empower the apostles for witnessing in Jerusalem and beyond, reaching the whole world. In light of that, Luke seems to be hinting that the *consolation* of the Holy Spirit which will make the Gospel spread to other areas is not by happenstance, but it is the fulfillment of Jesus' words in the beginning of Acts, and also the fulfillment of Simeon's expectation in the beginning of the Gospel.

The next occurrence of παράκλησις in the narrative is in Acts 13:15, when Paul and Barnabas are asked to offer a λόγος παρακλήσεως to the people of the synagogue. This expression is commonly but not conclusively understood as a formal designation of a sermon in

the synagogue setting. Whether that is the case or not, we do not know for sure. However, even if it is, the reader can still notice some elements of irony in Luke's account. The leaders of the synagogue ask for a *word of consolation*, and they are before the one whom Luke has presented to the reader as the *son of consolation*. Also, what they ask is exactly what they receive (*word of consolation*) in the author's point of view. At their request for a *word of consolation*, Paul offers a *word of salvation* (Acts 13:26) in Jesus. It is ironic that they do not regard this *salvation* as *comforting*, as they should if they understood λόγος παρακλήσεως the same way as the author, as Paul and Barnabas and, at this point in the narrative, as the reader.

Paul's message (*word of consolation/salvation*) has connections to what we have encountered before in our study of παράκλησις in Luke-Acts. It is a message about Jesus and his salvation not to a specific people, but to "all who believe" (Acts 13:39). The true people of God are those who believe in him, both the Jews who meet in synagogues and the Gentiles who lived estranged from first-century Jewish religion. After their preaching, Luke relates the reaction of the people who heard them: some Jews began to contradict what they were saying, just as Simeon had predicted in Luke chapter 2, when he said that Jesus would be a sign of contradiction. Paul and Barnabas, in turn, quote from Isaiah 49:6 to support that their message—Jesus—is to bring light to Gentiles as well, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

All the above amounts to the fact that whenever Luke employs παράκλησις in his narrative, he is revealing to the reader, even if subtly, his understanding of the promise of *consolation of Israel* found in Isaiah: it has to do with the messianic salvation realized in Jesus and offered to all nations.

The last occurrence of παράκλησις is at Acts 15:31. When the Gentiles receive the letter produced by the Jerusalem council, they "rejoiced at the consolation." These words gain

significance because they are written at the major turning point in the narrative. Acts 15 presents the theological motifs by which the mission to the Gentiles should be undertaken without obstructions created by the Jewish side of the people of God. After much deliberation, James uses a quotation from Amos 9 as a proof text to conclude that God's calling of the Gentiles in their present situation is the fulfillment of God's OT promises about the restoration of David's kingdom. By doing this he is officially and unequivocally explaining prophecies thought to be specific to the nation of Israel as relating ultimately to the spiritual people of God which now includes the Gentiles.

The question of who the people of God is lies at the center of the controversy of Acts 15 (and of Luke-Acts as a whole). The debate arises because the unstated claim of the Jewish Christians was that they were the true people of God because of their direct descent from the OT Israelites. However, the Jerusalem Council clarifies that God called Gentiles to be his people alongside (not over against) his people among the Jewish Christians. Whatever separation there may be from that point on between Jewish and Gentile Christians, it is a cultural matter, not a religious or spiritual one. Both sides of the one people of God are theologically joined, as they were both called, received the Spirit, and were saved by the grace of the same Lord Jesus. Who is the people of God, then? It consists of those who believe in Jesus and have the Spirit.

It is because the Gentiles were acknowledged to be God's people that they *rejoiced at the consolation*. In context, this is more than psychological gladness and encouragement. *Joy and rejoiced* are commonly used by Luke to express people's reception of salvation. When they received the letter from Jerusalem, they *rejoiced* because their words of acceptance were a way of telling them they were now incorporated into God's people. Because the Gentiles are too God's people, their reason for rejoicing is simply the *consolation*. This is the first time in the

narrative in which Gentiles receive *consolation*. Up to this point, Luke used παράκλησις in connection to the mission to Gentiles, but now he says they have received it. By describing their reaction with these words, Luke is impressing upon the reader the idea that the *consolation of Israel* that was expected in the beginning of the narrative, is finding its fulfillment even as Gentiles are brought into the people of God.

The second part of this dissertation's thesis statement claimed:

Luke constructs a narrative in which the *consolation* brought by the Lord Jesus should no longer be considered apart from the salvation offered to the whole Christian church—both Israel and Gentiles joined by the same Spirit. *Consolation* in Luke-Acts is both a present and future reality, related to salvation for all peoples, not political or nationalistic, and is accomplished in the person of the Lord Jesus.

This is confirmed also by how Luke quotes from or alludes to Isaiah in his narrative. At crucial parts of the narrative Isaiah is present to confirm Jesus' identity as the promised Messiah and to validate the church's mission to the ends of the earth. Simeon, depicted as a faithful Jew, describes Jesus in Isaianic terms; John the Baptist's work is described by Luke as a fulfillment of Isaiah's words; Jesus' inaugural message is taken from Isaiah, and he applies that to his ministry. Such quotations and allusions to Isaiah are frequently used in context where the universality of salvation is being highlighted. The promise of *consolation of Israel*, therefore, should be understood along these lines of Luke's general interpretation of Isaiah, and not in a way that contradicts his understanding of the prophetic message and its significance in the life and work of Jesus.

The last chapter of this dissertation surveyed Luke's view of Israel and its related terms with an aim to determining whether Luke's point of view has any impact on our interpretation of *consolation of Israel*. We discovered that Luke the criterion for judging whether a character is good or bad for Luke is *belief in the Lord Jesus*. Those who believe, no matter where they are from, are God's people and will experience the fulfillment of God's promises—including the

promise of *consolation*. In this sense, the reader should not read into *consolation of Israel* the idea that the nation *Israel* will be the recipient of special deliverance from God in the future.

Suggestions for Further Research

Limitations are to be expected in any research, especially one that attempts to trace a theme in a narrative that comprises approximately one fourth of the NT. This dissertation, therefore, admittedly does not cover aspects that are important for a comprehensive understanding of *consolation of Israel* in Luke-Acts, but only those that are more basic and should serve as a starting point for future research: the contexts where *παράκλησις* is used. Further research in the following areas can contribute to the present topic.

Jewish themes in the beginning of the Gospel. This dissertation acknowledged the Jewishness of the first two chapters of Luke and sided with Marshall in his interpretation that the military language that refers to God's salvation in those chapters is a metaphor for spiritual salvation. However, only one Jewish topic was explained in light of the narrative, namely, the *consolation of Israel*. Nonetheless, there are many references to prophecies that are not from Isaiah that refer to the work of Jesus, which were not presented in detail. For example, the fact that the angel tells Mary that Jesus would be given David's throne, and would reign forever in Jacob's house (Luke 1:32–33); or Mary's conclusion that God is showing favor to Abraham's descendants (Luke 1:55); or Zechariah's song. What conclusions would one reach by employing the same methodology of this dissertation to the study of these themes? Will such a research support the present study on *consolation* or will it be at odds with it?

Texts about restoration in Luke-Acts. An extension of the paragraph above, but something that deserves a separate treatment, is the broad topic of restoration. Luke 21:24 says that "Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the nations, until the times of the nations are fulfilled."

What did Jesus mean? For some, this is a clear indication that after a set amount of time, Jerusalem—which represents Israel—will receive deliverance, *consolation*. Gentiles here are not seen as the same people as Israel, but as the enemy, and God’s deliverance will be political/nationalistic. If this reading is right, the explanation of *consolation of Israel* offered in this dissertation will need to be reconsidered. Another text that will have significance in this discussion is Acts 1:6, where the disciples ask Jesus about the restoration of the kingdom *to Israel*. That question, along with Peter’s message in Acts 3:21, which states that there will be a time for “the restoration of all things”, is used by those who defend that the disciples were waiting, among other things, for God’s vindication of his people Israel. If this is the case, Simeon (and Luke) could be expecting this as well. Although it seems unlikely, considering our exposition of *consolation* in Luke-Acts, a conclusive case can only be attempted when one integrates the present study with these other texts that talk about restoration.

Connections between Luke’s use of παράκλησις and John’s παράκλητος. It is a consensus that the Gospel of John was written later than Luke’s Gospel. Can the case be made that the way John regards Jesus as the παράκλητος (and the Spirit, by extension, as the other παράκλητος) shows that the concept of *consolation* found in Jesus as seen in Luke evolved among the early Christians? In other words, because salvation in Jesus was called *consolation of Israel*, Christians adopted the term παράκλητος to refer to the Savior. This approach is more canonical than focused in the narrative, but it certainly represents a possible avenue for research on this topic.

Significance of this Dissertation for the Reader of Luke-Acts

What difference does the argument of this dissertation make for the reader of Luke-Acts? How can this information contribute to someone’s reading of the narrative? I submit a couple of

points.

Firstly, this study shows how necessary it is to analyze words and expressions in the contexts where they occur. Although virtually any scholar would agree with that statement, when it comes to the reading of παράκλησις in Luke's writings, the assumed background for each of its occurrences tend to take the forefront and define what it means, to the point where no profound analysis of its use by Luke is found.

Upon closer inspection, the theme of *consolation* was revealed to be consistent through a series of events that culminate in the salvation that was expected, realized, witnessed to, and widespread from the beginning to the end of the narrative. When Luke describes Simeon in the beginning, who soon would recognize Jesus as salvation for all peoples, as someone who expected the *consolation of Israel*, one of the possibilities for interpretation of this phrase must include (even if it will only be resolved later) the result of the Jerusalem Council—when the Gentiles rejoice at the *consolation*. Conversely, when readers reach Acts 15, they should look back at the other occurrences of παράκλησις and realize that a cycle of *promise* and *fulfillment* is being completed. That is to say, the narrative defines what *consolation (of Israel)* really is, and not one's previous understanding of either first century Judaism or Lukan soteriology.

The reader should strive to approach Luke-Acts with an open mind to hear as much as possible what these writings have to say about people, mission, and salvation, even if at first sight what they find seems to contradict their previous knowledge of Isaiah's or Paul's theology, for instance. *Consolation of Israel* can mean “spiritual salvation” for all believers, for the church, even if it is never explicitly defined in such a way.

Secondly, other themes that were viewed in connection with the theme of *consolation* make an impact on how readers may understand and apply the narrative in their own situations. For

example, because of its high regard for Jewish Christians in the beginning of the Gospel, and because Luke refers to the *consolation of Israel* as salvation for those Jews, many Christians today conclude that the text favors a dispensational view of God's people. However, as the analysis showed, the several texts in which παράκλησις occurs have something to say about *people of God* that challenge dispensational readings of Luke 2:25.

When members of the church in the twenty-first century read these ancient texts, they can also *rejoice at the consolation* that God promised from of old, and that he brought to the world in the Lord Jesus. The church, consisting of those who believe in Jesus, is the *people of God* in the world today, and united in the same Spirit the church does not necessarily (at least considering the texts that were studied in this dissertation)² envisage a separate kind of *consolation* for those who belong to a specific people on earth. All of God's people can sing together: "Now, Master, you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation which you prepared before all peoples, light for revelation to Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:29–32).

² I am not claiming that this dissertation will put to rest the debate about dispensationalism. That was never the intention of this research. What I am claiming here is that the topic of *consolation of Israel* in Luke–Acts, which is often thought by some to support dispensationalism, does *not necessarily* point in that direction, as my approach has demonstrated.

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