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THE CONCEPT OF *ὁδός* IN THE
BOOK OF ACTS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
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in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Even a cursory reading of the Book of Acts raises questions concerning Luke's designation of Christianity as The Way. Precisely what does the expression mean in each case? Why does Luke use it in such a casual way, without explanation, while the expression is found nowhere else in the New Testament? From what source does this unique usage come upon the scene of the early Church? Wilhelm Michaelis, after reviewing the various possible sources, asserts that neither Greek philosophic usage nor the Old Testament nor rabbinic literature provide a satisfactory explanation.¹

The aim of this thesis is to examine the Old Testament and rabbinic literature to see what role, if any, they played in the formation of the *ὁδός* concept of Acts. The Septuagint in particular deserves attention, since it held such an important position in the Apostolic Church and so largely affected the writers of the New Testament. As H. B. Swete remarks,¹ the New Testament writers not only were familiar with the Septuagint, but were saturated with its thought and

¹Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ὁδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1948), V, 95.

²Henry B. Swete, An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, revised by Richard H. Ottley (London: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 451.

vocabulary. Swete continues:

. . . it must not be forgotten that the Greek vocabulary of the Palestinian Greek-speaking Jews in the first century A.D. was probably derived in great part from the Greek Old Testament. Even in the case of writers such as St. Luke, St. Paul, and the author to the Hebrews, the Septuagint has no doubt largely regulated the choice of words.³

Luke is a splendid example of a writer capable of polished literary Greek, yet strongly Semitic in vocabulary and thought patterns. H. J. Cadbury, in his "Style and Literary Method of Luke," Harvard Theological Studies, VI, 1920, asserts that ". . . much of Luke's post-classical vocabulary appears to be due to a distinctly Jewish-Christian language."⁴ In an essay on the Greek of Acts, J. de Zwaan points specifically to the *ἑσθῆς* usage as proof for the existence of a sort of "Christian Greek."⁵ Jackson and Lake sum up the results of a careful analysis of Luke's vocabulary and style:

It is clear that the writer was thoroughly impregnated with the Greek Old Testament; there is no good evidence that he was acquainted with the Hebrew original. He is able to use Greek like a Greek, and in this respect he is more Greek than Josephus, but he does not always write thus; sometimes, perhaps owing to the influence of Aramaic originals which he translated, sometimes

³Ibid., p. 453.

⁴Quoted in J. de Zwaan, "The Use of the Greek Language in Acts," The Acts of the Apostles, edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1922), II, 37.

⁵Ibid., p. 63.

owing to his imitation of the Septuagint.⁶

The solid foundation of Septuagint usage in the early Church has prompted an examination of all the instances of *ὁσος* according to Hatch-Redpath,⁷ and a categorization of the principle uses, in order to find possible clues to the usage in Acts. A brief study was also made of the rabbinic evidence available, as well as a survey of the New Testament uses of the term as background material.

⁶F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, "The Internal Evidence of Acts," The Acts of the Apostles, edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1922), II, 121.

⁷Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, Concordance to the Septuagint (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), II.

CHAPTER II

ḥḥōj IN THE SEPTUAGINT

ḥḥōj occurs in the Septuagint about 680 times, mainly in Proverbs, Psalms, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and is used predominantly as the literal translation for חָדָר .¹ There are about 475 literal instances, including such meanings as border (of a country), direction, journey, as well as roads of all types.² The various transferred uses of the term, which carry the bulk of the theological significance, are difficult to categorize cleanly, as Michaelis has noted.³ The broad outlines are plain, however, and will serve the purposes of this study.

God's Modes of Action

In the first large group of passages, *ḥḥōj ḥḥōv* denotes aspects of God's activity in the world. The term may point to His appearance in the phenomena of nature, as in Nahum 1:3, where God reveals His power and destructive wrath

¹Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ḥḥōj*," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1948), V, 47. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Theologisches Woerterbuch.

²Ibid., p. 48.

³Ibid., p. 49.

in earthquake and cloud.⁴ Even though such appearances of God in the physical forces of the universe are awesome, they still are merely partial disclosures, as Job declares, *ἴσόν ταῦτα μέρη ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ . . .* (Job 26:14).

More frequent and more significant are the many references of *ὁδός Θεοῦ* to God's acts in the history of His chosen people. Very often *ὁδός* is used to describe God's works of salvation, as in Psalm 76:20, which relates His saving way in the Red Sea as He delivered His people from the hosts of Egypt. God complains, Psalm 94:10, that Israel saw His works in the wilderness, yet *αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου . . .* The implication evidently is that the Israelites did not recognize God's saving purposes behind His deeds. This use of *ὁδός* finds its classic expression in Is. 55:8 f., where God offers His wayward people complete forgiveness if they will forsake their sin: *οὐ γὰρ εἶσιν αἱ βουλαὶ μου ὡςπερ αἱ βουλαι ὑμῶν οὐδὲ ὡςπερ αἱ ὁδοὶ ὑμῶν αἱ ὁδοὶ μου, λέγει Κύριος. ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπέχει ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, οὕτως ἀπέχει ἡ ὁδός μου ἀπὸ τῶν ὁδῶν ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ διανοήματα ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς διανοίας μου.* God's thinking and acting are not fickle or unreliable; they have the constant aim of saving His people--a mode of action

⁴All references to the Old Testament in this chapter are listed according to Alfred Rahlfs, editor, Septuaginta (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Wuerttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1950), I, II. Occasional parentheses refer to the Masoretic text.

beyond man's understanding. God's ways, therefore, are His redemptive plans and acts directed toward the repentant sinner, with whom He is in covenant relationship, Psalm 24:10.

A number of key terms are joined with *ὁδοὶ θεοῦ* to show the breadth and magnificence of God's covenant acts. Moses, Deut. 32:4, declares: *δίκαιος κύριος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ὀβίος ἐν πάσιν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ*. *κρίσις*, used in conjunction with God's ways also in Is. 26:8 and Jer. 5:4 f., is the usual translation for *מְדַבֵּר*, denoting God's merciful action, as F. Buechsel explains:

Damit kommt *κρίσις* zu der Bedeutung: das Recht, besonders: das des Unterdrückten, das der Richter zur Geltung, zur Durchsetzung bringt.⁵

Psalm 144:17 reviews God's works under two other terms:

δίκαιος κύριος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ὀβίος ἐν πάσιν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ. *δίκαιος* (פִּדְיָו) denotes God's faithfulness to His nature and to His covenant, and shows Him not merely as punishing judge but as dispenser of salvation.⁶ *ὀβίος* (וְיָדָו), a parallel term, emphasizes the merciful performance of God's covenant obligations.⁷ God's way as *ἀμωμος*, Psalm 17:31, and as *ἐὺθεύς*, Daniel 3:27, point to God's integrity shown

⁵Friedrich Buechsel, "*κρίσις*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, III, 943.

⁶Gottfried Quell, "*δίκαιος*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, II, 187.

⁷Friedrich Hauch, "*ὀβίος*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, V, 489.

in His dealings with men.

A noteworthy result of God's faithful dealings with His people is that all nations can behold His saving ways. Psalm 66:3 implores His mercy and grace for this very purpose: *τοῦ γινῶναι ἐν τῇ δ'ῆ τὴν ὁδὸν σου, ἐν πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν τὸ σωτήριόν σου*. The ultimate revelation of God's way among His people comes in the Messianic age, preceded by the cry of the herald, Is. 40:3, *Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου*. . . , when all flesh shall see the salvation of God. On the other hand, the forerunner also prepares the way for the Messenger of the Covenant, who will come to purify His people, and whose coming no man can endure, Mal. 3:1 f. God's ways, then, are His manifold works within history by which He brings His punitive judgement to bear upon the sinful world, and by which He redeems His people; His ways find their common focus in the redemptive work of His Son, the Messiah.

God's Commandments

The second major use of *ὁδός* in the Septuagint includes the wide range of God's instructions, the expressions of His will toward the behavior of men. Thus we find *ὁδός* in close connection with *μαρτύρια*, *ἐντολαί*, *δικαιώματα*, *κρίματα*, and *προβλήματα*. These terms are linked to God's expression through Moses, but generally have a more inclusive meaning. *τὰ μαρτύρια*, for instance,

may refer to Mosaic Law, Lev. 16:13, but more often designates the general class of prescriptions through which God has revealed Himself.⁸ *ὁδός* also may refer directly to the Sinaitic dispensation, as God commanded His people through Moses to obey *κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν ἐντείλατο σοι κύριος . . .*, Deut. 5:33. In most instances, however, *ὁδός κυρίου* is not identified with the Law given through Moses; it denotes rather a more general class of instructions, as illustrated by Psalm 118:14 f.: *ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ τῶν μαρτυρίων σου ἐτέρφθην ὡς ἐπὶ παντὶ πλούτῳ. ἐν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς σου ἀδολεσχῆσω καὶ κατανοήσω τὰς ὁδοὺς σου*. Here the parallel terms of instructions appear plainly, and the remark of Michaelis is borne out that *ὁδός* ultimately approaches the meaning of *ἐντολή*, a command of the Lord concerning man's behavior.⁹ It is important to remember that these commandments remain means by which God continues to speak and reveal Himself, and that they are echoes of God's definitive utterance through Moses. As Strathmann comments on *μαρτύριον*:

Fuer den Gebrauch des Wortes *μαρτύριον* in LXX ist . . . bezeichnend, dass Jahweh selbst das Subject des im *μαρτύριον* enthaltenen *μαρτυρεῖν* ist. Dieses *μαρτυρεῖν* aber hat sich vollzogen in her Mose zutheil gewordenen Offenbarung. Als deren Inhalt gelten

⁸Hermann Strathmann, " *μαρτύριον* ," Theologisches Woerterbuch, IV, 489.

⁹Wilhelm Michaelis, op. cit., p. 51.

die Gebote.¹⁰

The people of God observe and guard His ways as an expression of their covenant relationship to Him. In Gen. 18:19 the Lord assures Himself that Abraham and his household will guard the ways of the Lord and thus receive everything promised him. Deut. 26:7 records Israel's pledge to keep the ordinances given through Moses and to walk in God's ways, in response to God's pledge of consecrating them as His people. They face a choice of prosperity and life, or misfortune and death, depending upon their behavior toward God's ways, Deut. 30:16.

Lest walking in God's ways appear to be a mechanical performance, its deeper significance should be considered. There is no room here for self-trust or dead ritualism as described in Is. 58:2, where the Lord denounces Israel for pretending to seek Him daily and know His ways. Rather, those walk in God's ways who fear Him, Deut. 8:6; 10:12; Psalm 127:1. The walking is a relationship of total dependence and dedication, Deut. 10:12: *πορεύεσθαι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀγαπᾶν αὐτὸν καὶ λατρεύειν κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου* To journey in His ways is simply to cling to Him in confidence as Leader and Redeemer, Deut. 11:22.

¹⁰Herman Strathmann, op. cit., p. 489.

The exclusive, total relationship involved in walking the way of God's commandments is placed in sharp relief by the dread consequences of swerving from the way. To depart from the way is to commit idolatry as the Israelites did behind Moses' back, Ex. 32:8; Deut. 9:12. Moses makes very plain that they will be cursed by the Lord if they wander from the way, serving other Gods whom they do not know, Deut. 11:28. Erring from the way means no longer to fear the Lord; it means to forget Him, to turn the heart away, to abuse His covenant, Psalm 43:18 f.

God alone enables men to walk in His ways. Solomon, at the dedication of the Temple, asks God to incline the hearts of the people to walk in all of His ways, 3 Kings 8:58. Psalm 118:32 shows the Psalmist running the way of God's commandments when He gives him courage. It is God who turns man away from lust for vanities to genuine life in His way, Psalm 118:37. The credit always belongs to God, for the object of His patient teaching is the sinner, the meek, the man who fears the Lord, Psalm 24:8,9,12. God's pupil is the blessed man whose sins are forgiven, Psalm 31:8.

The gift of forgiveness and strength to walk God's paths then becomes the motive for the witness of God's people to the world. Their joy in His saving work leads them to teach sinners the ways of God, Psalm 50:15. In the Messianic age this witness reaches full flower, as God uses His Church to teach all nations how to journey in His ways, Is. 2:3; Micah 4:2.

Ultimately God's instructions, the way of His commandments, become another facet of His self-revelation as Savior.

The Life and Experiences of Man

The natural extension of *ὁδός* as God's instructions to man is the prominent use of *ὁδός* as man's total life and individual experiences, all of which take place in the light of the Lord's expressions of His will toward man. In many cases, the term is used inclusively, as in Job 29:6, where Job laments his lost prosperity, when his ways were bathed in curds. Daniel denounces Belshazzar for honoring all the precious material goods of the world, but forgetting the God in whose hand is all his breath and all his ways, Daniel 5:23.

The predominant emphasis in the Septuagint is that the Lord governs the lives of men, and participates especially in the lives of His own. God controls the destiny of men, guiding all of men's ways according to His good pleasure, Wisdom of Sirach 33:13. Psalm 138:3 acknowledges the God who searches and knows the heart, and sees all of man's ways. Very important is Psalm 1:6, where God appears as Judge of men: *ὅτι γινώσκει κύριος ὁδὸν δικαίων, καὶ ὁδὸς ἀβεβῶν ἀπολεῖται*. Jahweh's connection with the righteous is a ". . . knowledge which is in living, intimate relationship to its subject and at the same time

inclined to it and bound to it by love."¹¹ Quite properly, then, the believer is encouraged to entrust (Septuagint: uncover) his ways to the Lord, Psalm 36:5, who extends His power to bring His own through the crises of life, as He expedites their way, Psalm 17:33. Although the unbelievers seem to prosper for a time, the Lord knows the ways of the blameless, and their inheritance is everlasting, Psalm 36:18.

Many instances of *ōdōs* refer to specific actions and modes of behavior. These acts fall under the scrutiny of God, as Prov. 5:21 emphasizes, warning against adultery with the reminder that the ways of a man are before the eyes of God, who inspects his paths.¹² Closely related to God's sharp inspection of man's ways is His rigorous dispensation to every man according to his behavior, 3 Kings 8:39; Jer. 17:10; Hosea 12:3. In the light of such judgement the evil, crooked, perverted actions of the unrighteous are ways of death, Ez. 3:18; 18:23; they become a snare of death for others, Prov. 22:5. The evil kings of Israel receive the repeated indictment that they caused the people to follow their idolatrous practices, 3 Kings 15:26; 22:43, 53; the upright rulers, on the other hand, are commended as examples to those

¹¹Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Psalms, translated from the second edition of the German by Francis Bolton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), I, 37.

¹²Cf. Jer. 16:17; Job 31:4; Wisdom of Sirach 17:19.

who followed in their ways, 4 Kings 22:2; 2 Chron. 11:17; 2 Chron. 17:3.

Because the Lord has given His ways in which men are to walk, those who rebel against Him are described incisively as wandering in their own way, Is. 53:6. The evil-doers do not have insight, for they follow their own ways of avarice, Is. 55:11, and of false ritualism, Is. 66:3.

There still is hope for those who have been hostile in their ways, because the Lord beholds, heals, and comforts the contrite through the indwelling of His Spirit, Is. 57:17 f. On the basis of repentance God exhorts His people to improve their ways, Jer. 33:13 (26:13). Children of God yearn to keep their ways straight through earnest consideration of God's words, Psalm 118:5,9. David shows how specific this self-examination is by vowing to guard his ways so as not to sin with his tongue, Psalm 38:1. Those whose behavior shows their integrity as God's people (*ἀγαθοὶ ἐν ὁδοῖς* : *יְרֵאָה־לֵי יְהוָה*) are the blessed, Psalm 118:1. The result of God's gracious work is that the ways of the righteous are pleasing to Him as well as to men, Prov. 15:28 (16:7).

ὁδοί and the Church of the Old Testament

For the purposes of this study the further question needs to be asked whether *ὁδοί* is used in the Septuagint to denote God's chosen people or their group activity as the Church of the Old Testament.

The connection of *ὁδοὶ Θεοῦ* (God's commandments) with the covenant He established among His chosen people is a significant starting point.¹³ The disaster resulting from leaving the way underscores the exclusive relationship, as described above. The covenant relationship is the continuous frame of reference for Israel's walk of life, Psalm 43:18 f.; Psalm 36:34.

Furthermore, the larger picture of God's dealings with His people is viewed as a journey, with God as leader. Particularly in the accounts of the exodus, the wilderness wandering, and the entrance into the promised land, God appears as the guide who not only shows them the physical path to take, but directs the entire experience for the spiritual welfare of the people. Deut. 8:2, for instance, recalls for the people *πᾶσαν τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν ἤγαγεν σε κύριος ὁ Θεός σου ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ*. *ὁδός* here is more than the route; it points to the entire experience as evidence of God's direction.¹⁴ A study of *ὁδηγεῖν* and *ὁδοποιεῖν* reveals the history of the chosen people as an account of God's redemptive leadership. Moses' song of triumph, Ex. 15:13, praises God as Leader and Redeemer: *ὠδήγησάς τῃ δικαιοσύνῃ σου τὸν λαόν σου τοῦτον ὅν ἐλυτρώσω*. David, after receiving the promise of an eternal kingdom through

¹³Gen. 18:19; Deut. 11:28; 26:17; 30:16; Jer. 7:23.

¹⁴Wilhelm Michaelis, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

his seed, extols the incomparable action of God in clearing the promised land for His people, *ὡς ὠδήγησεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς τοῦ λυτρώσασθαι αὐτῷ λαόν*. Psalm 79:10 picks up the same thought with *ὁδοποιεῖν*, and 79:2-4 refers to God as the constant Shepherd of His people, the gracious One who dwells between the cherubim. God is the faithful leader who saves His own, Psalm 24:5, who redeems because of His name, Psalm 30:4 f. (31:3 f.).

Particularly important is the distinctive behavior pattern according to the Lord's precepts, which receives a designation much like a proper name. In 1 Kings 12:3, Samuel offers to lead the people: *δείξω ὑμῖν τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν ἀγαθὴν καὶ τὴν εὐθείαν*. Solomon, in his dedication prayer, expresses confidence that God will be merciful to His people and show them . . . *τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν ἀγαθὴν πορεύεσθαι*, 2 Chron. 6:27. In Jer. 6:16 the Lord through the prophet commands stubborn Israel: *στῆτε ἐπὶ ταῖς ὁδοῖς, καὶ ἐρωτήσατε τρίβους κυρίου αἰωνίους καὶ ἴδετε, ποία ἐστὶν ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ ἀγαθὴ, καὶ βαδίσετε ἐν αὐτῇ*. . . . A further example is Is. 30:11, where unrepentant Israelites refuse to hear the instructions of the Lord through the prophet, saying: *ἀποστρέψατε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ ταύτης* The term *ὁδὸς ἀληθείας*, Psalm 118:30, bears the stamp of God's authority as the genuine pattern of behavior,¹⁵ and

¹⁵Ibid., p. 52.

seems to be a somewhat stylized designation of the believer's way of life, in contrast to the unbeliever's pattern.

A number of passages place *ὁδός* in closer connection with a religious group. Is. 30:11 indicates that the restored people of God will be able to withstand the idolatrous deceivers who say, *Αὕτη ἡ ὁδός, πορευθῶμεν ἐν αὐτῇ*. . . . Wisdom of Solomon 5:5-7 illustrates how obedience to God's precepts is directly joined with membership in God's chosen people: at the Judgement the unbelieving fools of this world will finally see the Lord's purposes fulfilled in the virtuous man they have abused. The fools will ask in amazement how this man has come to be counted among the sons of God, having his lot among the saints, 5:5. The fools exclaim, *ἄρα ἐπλανήθημεν ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ ἀληθείας . . . ἀνοκίας ἐνεπλήθημεν τρίβοις καὶ ἀπωλείας καὶ δωδεύσαμεν ἐρήμους ἀβάτους, τὴν δὲ ὁδὸν κυρίου οὐκ ἐπέγνωμεν*, 5:6 f.

A number of passages from Isaiah use *ὁδός* in connection with the return of God's people in the Messianic age. God will prepare a highway for them just as He led the Israelites out of Egypt, Is. 11:16; He will lead His people in joyous vindication, clearing the way before them and before the Savior who establishes the New Jerusalem, Is. 62:10. The Lord, whose way is *κρίσις*, prepares the way for the godly, those who share in the Messianic kingdom, Is. 26:7 f. This passage points to God's role as teacher, a function explicitly

stated in Is. 42:16. The New Way upon which the dispersed will return involves their whole behavior, Is. 35:8; their way is cleansed through the Lord that gathered them: *ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁδὸς καθαρὰ καὶ ὁδὸς ἁγία κληθήσεται . . . οὐδὲ ἔσται ἐκεῖ ὁδὸς ἀκάθαρτος.*

The renewal of God's people is definitely described in Jer. 39:38 f. (32:38 f.), where God promises to establish an everlasting covenant: *καὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν, καὶ ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν. καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς ὁδὸν ἑτέραν καὶ καρδίαν ἑτέραν, φοβηθήναί με πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας*

Jer. 12:16 employs *ὁδός* in references to the worship and confession of God's own, in contrast to the worship of the heathen. The Lord promises to restore the evil neighbors of Israel and incorporate them among the chosen people, if they will repent and confess as Israel: *ἔσται ἐὰν μαθόντες μάθωσιν τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ λαοῦ μου τοῦ ὀμνύειν τῷ ὀνόματι μου Ἰη̄ κύριος καθὼς ἐδίδαξαν τὸν λαόν μου ὀμνύειν τῇ Βάαλ, καὶ οἰκοδομηθήσονται ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ λαοῦ μου.* The parallel in Jer. 10:2, warning against the ways of the heathen (*ὁδοὺς τῶν ἔθνων* : $\square \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\text{I}} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\text{X}} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\text{T}} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\text{I}} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\text{J}} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\text{T}} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\text{J}} \cdot \overset{\cdot}{\text{T}}$) substantiates the meaning as religious cultus.

It should be noted that Amos 8:14, often cited as a similar instance, is not valid for the study of *ὁδός*. The Hebrew reads $\text{וְלֹא יִהְיֶה עוֹלָם לְעַמּוּדָהּ$, translated by the

Septuagint $\epsilon\tilde{\eta}\ \delta\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma\ \epsilon\omicron\upsilon\upsilon$, ΒΗΡΘΑΒΕΕ, evidently parallel to the immediately preceding $\epsilon\tilde{\eta}\ \delta\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma\ \epsilon\omicron\upsilon\upsilon$, ΔΑΝΙ } $\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}$ $\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}$. Michaelis believes $\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}$ conceivably could have the meaning Kulturform, Kultus, but prefers the alternate reading $\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}$ (uncle, deity).¹⁶ Since the other possible translation of $\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}$ as journey is very difficult in this context, the conclusion is valid that the passage has no relevance for the *odos* concept, regardless of what the Hebrew text originally was.

A final example is Micah 4:1-5, which depicts the Messianic age when all nations will come to the mountain of the Lord, to the House of Jacob, and when God will show them how to walk in His way, 5:2. As the context shows (*νόμος, λόγος κυρίου*), God's way here refers to instructions for the behavior of His people. However, more is implied than performance of precepts; the way of the Church is a total life and confession of the Lord. Micah 4:5 describes the perfect poise of God's people in the New Age, as they stand out prominently in contrast to the unbelieving world: $\acute{o}\tau\iota\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \omicron\iota\ \lambda\alpha\omicron\iota\ \pi\omicron\rho\epsilon\upsilon\beta\omicron\upsilon\nu\tau\alpha\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\eta\nu\ \acute{o}\delta\omicron\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ [$\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}$ $\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}$ $\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{א}}\overline{\text{ל}}$] $\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\ \pi\omicron\rho\epsilon\upsilon\beta\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \acute{o}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\ \eta\mu\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\iota\omega\nu\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu\alpha$. The Septuagint rendering of "in the name of his God" with *odos*, parallel to the

¹⁶Ibid., p. 48.

journey of God's people "in the name of the Lord" indicates that *עֲשׂוֹת*, took on the meaning of the distinctive confession and life of the Church in the Old Testament.

These examples by no means outline a neat, progressive evolution of the term *עֲשׂוֹת* through a certain stage to the next stage. They do provide evidence that *עֲשׂוֹת* as God's precepts, followed by His people, became the basis of a distinctive way of life, in contrast to the ungodly, as in Psalm 1:1.6. In a few cases the term designates the confession and life of the Messianic Church of God.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF THE WAY IN THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA AND IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

Most instances of *ὁδός* in the Pseudepigrapha show the direct influence of the Old Testament, since almost all of them find close parallels in the Septuagint.¹ The same range of meanings is found in the Pseudepigrapha as in the Old Testament, including the literal uses and the transferred senses such as behavior and actions on the part of man, as well as the plans and works of God.² One of the most prominent uses is *ὁδοὶ Θεοῦ*, denoting God's precepts. Michaelis states with particular emphasis:

Vor allem hat der fuer das AT so bedeutsame Begriff der dem Menschen von Gott gebotenen Wege, der Wege Gottes, seinen festen Platz behalten: Jub 5,13; 20,2 f; Jub 21,2; 4 Esr 7,24. . . .³

There are occasional references to the way, and a number of occurrences of such phrases as way of the Law, way of righteousness, way of truth, and straight way.⁴ The concept of the Two Ways as found in the early Christian era, however,

¹Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ὁδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1948), V, 56. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Theologisches Woerterbuch.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 57.

⁴Ibid.

does not find exact parallels. A number of references place two ways in contrast to each other, but they are never explicit antithesis of the way of salvation as opposed to the way of death caused by unbelief. There is no widespread usage in Jewish inter-Testamental literature comparable to that in the Old Testament, where the contrast between believers and unbelievers stems specifically from *עוֹלָם* in the sense of behavior.⁵

In rabbinic literature *דְּרֹת הַיְיָ* commonly refers to the group of the faithful or to heretical sects. Strack-Billerbeck cites the exegesis of R. Jochanan b. Nuri concerning the fate of blasphemers and heretics:

. . . die sich von den Wegen der Gemeinde (der Gesamtheit) abgesondert haben, wie die Minim (Haeretiker) u. die Abtruennigen u. die Denunzianten u. die Heuchler u. die Epikureer. . . .⁶

This use of *דְּרֹת הַיְיָ* finds parallels in phrases such as "the ways of the Samaritans,"⁷ and the frequent designation "דְּרֹת הַיְיָ אֱמֹרִיתִי", "the ways of the Amorites."⁸ More explicit is *דְּרֹת אֱלֹהֵי הַיְיָ*, "another--," i.e., "a heathen way," applied by R. Jehuda (circum 150 B.C.) to the person who offers a hymn of praise to the sun.⁹

⁵Ibid., p. 58.

⁶Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926), II, 19 f.

⁷Ibid., I, 539.

⁸Ibid., II, 690.

⁹Ibid.

It should be noted that although קָהָל appears in contexts which are specifically religious and cultic, the term does not appear in an absolute sense, designating the congregation of the faithful.

To fill out this survey of the way concept in the inter-Testamental period, a brief reference should be made concerning Philo's use of the term. He employs ὁδός often, but without the rich theological connotations of the Old Testament, giving it rather an anthropocentric flavor, describing man's ascent to God.¹⁰ In fact, the Septuagint contains no points of contact for his peculiar emphases.¹¹

¹⁰Wilhelm Michaelis, " ὁδός ," Theologisches Woerterbuch, V, 56.

¹¹Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Parallels and Contrasts to New Testament Usage in Greek and World Literature

Profane Greek took the literal meaning road, street, and developed the derived meaning, journey.¹ It employed a variety of figurative uses, including means, manner, and procedure.² Evidently there were not many references of *ὁδός* to a pattern of life; *ὁδός βίου* usually meant simply, conduct.³

In philosophic, academic usage, *ὁδός* was used to designate a method of investigation or a system of knowledge.⁴ Cremer cites Lucian, Hermotim., 46, as an instance of *ὁδός* in the sense of philosophic system or school.⁵

The picture of the Two Ways occurs in mythological literature, as for instance in the Prodicus Fable, but as Michaelis

¹Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ὁδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1948), V, 43. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Theologisches Woerterbuch.

²Ibid., p. 48.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Hermann Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, translated from the second edition by William Urwick (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878), p. 444.

maintains, there is no reason to suppose that such material plays a role in the emergence of the Judaic-Christian uses of the expression.⁶

The fact that the picture of the way was current in Greek religious terminology as well as in religions throughout the world (Buddhism; Chinese Tao concept) by no means implies a connection between them. As Michaelis concludes:

Dieses naheliegende und leicht verstaendliche Bild bot sich eben vieler Orten und durchaus unabhaengig voneinander von selbst an, wenn es galt, geistige Vorgaenge und religios-ethische Entwicklungen anschaulich zu machen.⁷

Uses of *ὁδός* in the New Testament

ὁδός in the New Testament is used a number of times in the literal sense, in some instances with noteworthy theological implications.⁸ There are a few passages which show direct Hebrew influence, such as the prepositional use in Matt. 4:15.⁹

Various transferred uses appear in the New Testament, many of them parallel to the Septuagint. Matt. 3:3, referring to John the Baptist's preparation for the coming Messiah,

⁶Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ὁδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, V, 46.

⁷Ibid., p. 47.

⁸Ibid., pp. 66 f.

⁹Walter Bauer, Griechisch-Deutsches Woerterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der uebrigen urchristlichen Literatur (Fourth edition; Gieszen: Alfred Toepelmann, 1952), col. 1005.

picks up the thought of Is. 40:3. Luke 1:79, using Old Testament figures, describes the realization of salvation in Christ as a way of peace. James 1:8 speaks simply of man's behavior. Hebrews 3:10 quotes Psalm 94:10 (Septuagint), where *ἐδός* denotes God's commands.

Several passages present unusual uses of the term, and deserve special attention. In Matt. 7:13 ff., Jesus pictures the striking contrast of the Two Ways. Careful study reveals that *πύλη* and *ἐδός* are synonymous pictures, indicating that the person who enters the gate has already previously attained the goal, that of entrance into the kingdom.¹⁰

ἐδός thus signifies the means of entrance.¹¹ Although the picture of the Two Ways was current in contemporary Judaism, Christ took simply the form of the picture for the special content of this passage.¹²

John 14:6 gives Jesus' self-designation as *ἡ ἐδός*. It is noteworthy that here again the words are directed to the disciples in connection with their sharing in the kingdom. Michaelis sums up the significance of the passage:

Jesus und nur er allein ist fuer seine Juenger der Weg zum Vater, weil nur er als Sohn seines Vaters

¹⁰Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ἐδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, V, 172.

¹¹Ibid., p. 76. Note especially the phrases *οἱ εἰς ἐρχόμενοι δι' αὐτῆς*, 7:13, and *οἱ εὐρίσκοντες αὐτὴν* 7:14.

¹²Ibid., p. 73.

Vollmacht hat, sie in das Haus seines Vaters mitzunehmen.¹³
 There is no need to look for extra-Biblical sources for the word picture, since the context clearly illuminates the particular use of the expression.¹⁴

Another striking designation of Christ as *ὁδός* occurs in Heb. 10:20. The passage portrays Christ as the way to God, but the accent is not primarily eschatological as in John 14:6.¹⁵ There is no particular reason for believing that the expression in Heb. 10:20 developed from John 14:6; the Hebrews passage emerges from the immediate context, 9:8, as well as from the entire tabernacle picture, and is peculiar to the writer.¹⁶

1 Cor. 12:31 should also be considered. Paul prefaces his hymn to *ἀγάπη* with: *καὶ ἐστὶ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῶν δεῖκνυμι*. The context shows that he cannot refer to a means of obtaining gifts of the Spirit. The best interpretation is "manner and way of life, conduct, or behavior."¹⁷

¹³Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁷Hermann Cremer, op. cit., p. 444. Michaelis, "*ὁδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, V, 89, follows Brachmann, taking it in the sense of ". . . der Weg, zu dem Ziel zu kommen, das man anderweitig durch jenes *ζηλοῦν* erreichen will." This goal, however, is variously interpreted and vague.

2 Peter 2:2 presents *ὁδός* in a sense difficult to establish: *εἰ οὖν ἡ ὁδὸς τῆς ἀληθείας βλασφημῆ-
θήσεται*. It is not certain that doctrine is meant. Per-
haps it is used in the Old Testament sense of behavior, paral-
lel to 2 Peter 2:15, which employs *ὁδός* to denote the evil
example of Balaam, in contrast to the upright way.¹⁸

These samples indicate the wide range of transferred
meanings of *ὁδός* found in the New Testament, and show
frequent connections with Septuagint usage. A similar range
and contact with the Old Testament appears in the *ὁδός*
references in the Book of Acts.

ὁδός in the Book of Acts

Of the nineteen occurrences of *ὁδός* in Acts, seven
are literal uses: the road on which Philip met the Ethiopian
Eunuch, 8:26; 8:36; the road on which Paul saw Christ, 9:17;
9:27; and various journeys, 8:39; 25:3; 26:13.

Acts 2:28 contains Peter's quotation from Psalm 16:8-11
(Septuagint): *ἐγνώρισάς μοι ὁδούς ζωῆς . . .* Al-
though the Masoretic and Septuagint texts indicate the meaning
of behavior according to God's commands, Luke applies it to
Christ's resurrection, pointing to the means by which He at-
tained life.¹⁹

¹⁸Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ὁδός*," Theologisches Woerter-
buch, V, 90.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 88.

Acts 14:16 refers to God's previous attitude toward the behavior of the heathen: *ὅς . . . εἶδεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πορεύεσθαι ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν .*

In Acts 13:10 Paul curses Elymas: *οὐ πάύσει διαστρέφων τὰς ὁδοὺς τοῦ κυρίου εὐθείας* The use of *ὁδὸς εὐθεία* to denote behavior commanded by God has strong precedent in the Septuagint and gives good sense here. Further study, however, of such passages as Hosea 14:10 (Septuagint) opens the inviting possibility that God's plans and activity in His kingdom are meant.²⁰ In the light of the context (Elymas' attempt to thwart Paul's work) this interpretation seems best.

Acts 16:17 records the words of the slave girl at Philippi: *οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐπίστου εἰσὶν . οἵτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ἡμῶν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας .* The fact that Luke was an eyewitness of this incident, Acts 16:16, increases the probability that the words are a literal account. *ὁδὸς σωτηρίας* is best taken as the means of salvation, probably with emphasis on the spiritual.²¹

The Problem of *ὁδὸς* in Acts

Most significant in Acts are the unmodified uses of

²⁰Ibid., p. 91.

²¹F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles (Second edition; London: Tyndale Press, 1952), pp. 280, 316.

ὁδός : 9:2; 19:9; 19:23; and 24:22. The difficulty of interpreting these was felt already in the early Church, as evidenced by the attempt in the case of each passage to amend the text with a modifying demonstrative or genitive.²² There are four instances where *ὁδός* is modified either by *τοῦ κυρίου* (or *θεοῦ*), 18:25; 18:26, or by demonstratives, 22:4; 24:14.

Acts 18:25 f., the account of Apollos' arrival in Ephesus, presents exegetical difficulties: *οὗτος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ζέων τῷ πνεύματι ἐλάλει καὶ ἐδίδασκεν ἀκριβῶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐπιβιβάμενος μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου. . . .* When Aquila and Priscilla hear him, . . . *προσελάβοντο αὐτὸν καὶ ἀκριβέστερον αὐτῷ ἐξέθεντο τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.* The apparent contradiction between Apollos' knowledge of the way of the Lord and his need for indoctrination is somewhat resolved by the assumption that Apollos had deep insight into God's plan of salvation as revealed in Christ, but that he needed instruction concerning Christian baptism. The curious contrast between *ἀκριβῶς* and *ἀκριβέστερον*, however, and the cryptic phrase *τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* render the passage

²²James H. Ropes, "The Text of Acts," The Acts of the Apostles, edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1926), III, 83.

uncertain.

In both 18:25 and 18:26 *ὁδός* no doubt denotes God's redemptive activity, as Michaelis interprets:

. . . mit 'Weg' des Herrn bzw Gottes ist das Heilshandeln, der Heilsplan Gottes gemeint, der Weg, den er, wie die *Ἰουδαῖοι* (18:24) es lehren und *τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* (18:25) es offenkundig gemacht haben, gegangen ist und eingeschlagen hat.²³

Lake and Cadbury try to make a case for the meaning Christianity, on grounds that at least in 18:26 the textual evidence favors omission of the genitive.²⁴ Rather, the attempts to omit *τοῦ θεοῦ* in 18:26 indicate that the qualifying genitive must stand as the more difficult, but well attested and understandable reading.

The problem of the unique use of *ὁδός* in Acts comes into focus in 24:14, where Paul, before Felix, replies to Tertullus' charges of insurrection and sacrilege: . . . *κατὰ*

²³Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ὁδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, V, 94.

²⁴Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury, "English Translation and Commentary," The Acts of the Apostles, edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1926), IV, 232. Ropes, in his discussion of the text, op. cit., p. 178, presents the witnesses D and d for this omission, and urges that the shorter reading be adopted in line with the other unmodified uses in Acts. He rejects the opinion that *τοῦ θεοῦ* was emended to conform to these passages, arguing that the similar reading [*τοῦ*] *κυρίου*, 18:25, is left intact in all manuscripts. However, the plausible explanation can be offered that in 18:26 *ὁδός* with its modifier *τοῦ θεοῦ* forms a close parallel to 18:25, and thus accentuates the apparent contradiction between Apollos' knowledge of the way and his need for instruction. This would be cause enough for emendation. The dissenting witness of the Western tradition is hardly conclusive.

τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν λέγουσιν αἵρεσιν οὕτως λατρεύω τῷ
πατρὶ ὁ Θεῷ, πιστεύων πᾶσι τοῖς κατὰ τὸν
νόμον καὶ ταῖς ἐν προφῆταις γεγραμμένοις. . . .

Acts 24:14 implies that what the Christians designate as *ἡ ὁδός* is called *αἵρεσις* by the opponents. Michaelis contends that although *αἵρεσις* is used in 24:5 to denote the Christians, it cannot have that meaning here:

. . . da dann auch *ὁδός* sich auf die Christen als Gemeinschaft beziehen mueszte, was schwer moeglich scheint.²⁵

This presupposition, not further elaborated, is probably based on the lack of conclusive evidence for the origin of such a usage of *ὁδός*. Yet this is begging the question and ignoring the context. Another possible reason for Michaelis' assumption is that *αἵρεσις* would hardly be used to designate an heretical group such as the Christians. Although it is true that Josephus uses *αἵρεσις* to denote sects within Judaism (Essenes, etc.), rabbinic literature toward the end of the First Century uses the term יְהוּדָא to denote a sect, malc sensu, an heretical party.²⁶ To say, as Michaelis does, that in 24:14 Luke is using *αἵρεσις* in a somewhat abstract sense of "Lehre, Anschauung,"²⁷ is to

²⁵Wilhelm Michaelis, "*ὁδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, V, 93.

²⁶Heinrich Schlier, "*αἵρεσις*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, I, 180.

²⁷Walter Bauer, op. cit., col. 1007.

disregard 24:5, in which Tertullus, representing the Jewish officials, describes Paul as . . . *πρωτοστάτης . . . τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἵρεσως*. It must not be forgotten that Paul is answering the charges of Tertullus, and therefore, a change in meaning of *αἵρεσις* between the two references requires a strong contextual evidence. Such evidence is not apparent. In fact, the closely linked *λατρεύω*, denoting the activity of total dedication to God as His possession might be more easily connected with the vivid concept of God's people in action than with a "way of thought" or "teaching." *ὁδός* in 24:14 therefore, parallel to the designation in 14:5 as a group of Christians, refers to the members of the Church, emphasizing their historic connection with the Old Testament Church, and their dedication to God and witness to men as exemplified by the Apostle Paul.

That *ὁδός* in 24:22 has the same meaning is difficult to demonstrate conclusively. After Paul had presented his defense, Felix deferred action: *Ἀνεβάλετο δὲ αὐτοῦς ὁφῆλιξ, ἀκριβέστερον εἰδὼς τὰ περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ*. . . . There is little in the context to indicate whether *ὁδός* here connotes the distinctive teachings of Christianity or the history of Christians in action since Pentecost. Perhaps both are included, without particular coloring.²⁸ The fact that Luke uses *ὁδός* unmodified also

²⁸The uses of the phrase *τὰ περὶ . . . Ἰησοῦ* in Acts 18:25; 28:31, and Luke 24:19.²⁷ indicate that it may be colored in either direction by the context.

in 24:14, part of the same account, seems to urge that the same basic meaning holds true for 24:22--the group of people comprising the sect of the Nazarenes.

Several times *ὁδός* occurs in connection with Paul's persecution of the Christians. Acts 9:2 describes Saul's vehemence against the disciples of the Lord: *προβελθὼν τῷ ἀρχιερεὶ ἠτήσατο παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιτολὰς εἰς Δαμασκὸν πρὸς τὰς συναγωγὰς, ὅπως εἰάν τινος εὕρη τῆς ὁδοῦ ὄντας*. A group of Christians is described as belonging to, being a part of the Way. Here again there seems to be no particular flavor in the term. A similar instance is 22:4, although in this case *ὁδός* is modified. Paul addresses the mob which tried to seize him outside of the Temple, emphasizing that he also is a Jew, . . . *ὅς ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ἐδίωξα ἄχρι θανάτου, δεσμείων καὶ παραδιδούς ἄνδρας . . . καὶ γυναῖκας . . .* The particular emphasis is that the Way is a group which is naturally opposed by Jewish authorities and persecuted ignorantly in the name of God. *ταύτην* indicates the obvious antagonism against Christianity (its members and teachings) which has caused this violence against Paul.

Two more passages complete the study of *ὁδός* in Acts. Paul, after coming to Ephesus and teaching in the synagogue, finds opposition, 19:9: *ὡς δέ τινες ἐκκληρύνοντο καὶ ἠπείθουν κακολογοῦντες τὴν ὁδὸν ἐνώπιον*

τοῦ πλῆθους In 19:23 Demetrius, deploring the effects of Paul's preaching against heathen practices, stirs up a mob against Paul: Ἐγένετο δὲ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον ταραχὴ οὐκ ὀλίγη περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ.

There is an interesting contrast between the two: 19:9 describes the opposition of Jews from the synagogue, who rejected Paul's preaching of the Messianic kingdom, while 19:23 relates the opposition of Greeks trying to protect their vested interests in traditional Artemis worship. In both cases ὁδός is unmodified, appearing as a commonly accepted designation for the Christian proclamation.

Possible Sources of ὁδός in Acts

The six special uses of ὁδός in Acts stand unparalleled in the New Testament, and raise a number of questions concerning the origin of the expression. First, does the term (as applied to Christianity) originate among the Jewish opponents of the Church, or is it a self-designation by the Christians? Acts 24:14 implies a definite contrast between ὁδός and διέσεις, the name applied by Jewish opponents. It seems valid to infer that ὁδός was a term used first of all by the Christians themselves. The fact that ὁδός is described as the object of Jewish persecution in 9:2 and 19:9, and that it is described as the natural target of Judaism, 22:4, does not warrant the conclusion that it originated among the enemies of the Church or that it was used

particularly by traditional Jews. It is significant that the account of Jewish opposition in Ephesus, 19:9, is followed by a description of pagan plots against the Way, and that both accounts use the identical unmodified form of *ἑσῶς*. This leads to the conclusion that *ἑσῶς* as used by Luke does not imply that it is a schism from Judaism; the term seems to be an accepted tag for Christianity, without particular coloring in itself, Acts 24:22.

The further question then is raised: to what extent is the unique use of *ἑσῶς* due to Luke's and Paul's vocabulary, and to what extent does it represent a common designation among the members of the early Church? Although Paul fails to use both *ἑσῶς* and *Χριστιανοί* in his epistles, we cannot infer from silence that he did not use the term

. Acts 24:14 represents Paul's use of it in his address before Felix. This eye-witness account by Luke probably gives a condensed, but fairly literal transcription of the original words.²⁹

Conceivably, the unique usage of *ἑσῶς* might be a particular favorite of Luke's, but his casual use of the expression six times within the Book of Acts without explanation

²⁹F. F. Bruce, The Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles (London: Tyndale Press, n.d.), p. 27, concludes that ". . . the speeches reported by Luke are at least faithful epitomes, giving the gist of the documents used. Even in summarizing the speeches, Luke would naturally introduce more or less of his own style; but in point of fact it frequently seems to be the less, not more."

presupposes that Theophilus understands it, and probably indicates a common term in the Apostolic age.

How can we account for the emergence of *δδός* in this unique sense? Bauer describes the use of *δδός* in Acts:

von der gesamten religioesen u. sittl. Lebensart, d. Richtung, d. Lehre im umfassendsten Sinn (Lucian, Hermet. 46 *od.* v. d. Lehre e. Philosophenschule) . . . nach d. Lehre die sie e. Schulmeinung nennen AG 24,14. . . wenn er Leute finden sollte, die sich zu der Lehre hielten, 9,2. . . diese Lehre verfolgen 22,4 . . . es entstand e. Unruhe ueber d. Lehre 19,23 . . . um was es sich bei der Lehre handelte 24,22. . . .³⁰

His consistent translation as "Lehre" and his reference to Lucian seem to indicate a derivation from Greek philosophic usage. Cremer suggests that the reference in Lucian is quite probably linked with Acts 24:14.³¹ Michaelis, however, finds this hypothesis very weak:

Wenn aus Luc Hermet 46 wirklich geschlossen werden darf, dass *δδός* seine Bdtg (philosophische) Methode zur Bdtg System bzw Schule erweitert hat, so stueude dieser Gebrauch doch vereinzelt da, und auszerdem mueszte es als wenig wahrscheinlich gelten, dass Lukas durch eine im philosophischen Bezirk aufgekommene Verwendung von *δδός* veranlaszt worden sein sollte, die christliche Botschaft als Weg zu bezeichnen.³²

Another source may be the sayings of Jesus concerning *δδός* in John 14:6 or in Matt. 7:13. The traditional theory that the early Church took Jesus' self-designation

³⁰Walter Bauer, op. cit., col. 1007.

³¹Hermann Cremer, op. cit., p. 444.

³²Wilhelm Michaelis, "*δδός*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, V, 95.

and applied it to itself seems almost too neat and artificial. Matt. 7:13 f. appears to be a more likely possibility, since it connects more closely with the Two Ways concept of current Judaism.³³ Although both of these sayings of Christ appear in contexts of discipleship, their connection with the Acts references to the Church is not clear and conclusive.

The remaining possibility is that the Old Testament or rabbinic literature, or the two in combination, are responsible for the peculiar usage in Acts. Zahn points especially to the current rabbinic term, עַמְּנוּנֵינוּ , asserting that it forms a link with such Old Testament passages as Gen. 19:31; Psalm 1:1; Prov. 12:15; and Amos 8:14.³⁴ It is questionable whether this expression forms a strong link, since it does not carry specifically religious, cultic significance, nor designate a particular group.

Perhaps the simplest explanation for the use of ἐκκλησία in Acts is the Septuagint, in which ἐκκλησία references are

³³R. Newton Flew, Jesus and His Church (London: Epworth Press, 1951), p. 113. The Matt. 7:13 f. passage carries the strong tone of exclusiveness, characteristic of the Church as a minority group. The early Christian community was acutely conscious of its role as God's only people, Acts 2:40, and so the term is a plausible self-designation, as well as a possible term of contempt by proud Judaism and syncretistic paganism. Why this designation abruptly disappeared, especially if the enemies had been using it, is difficult to say.

³⁴Theodore Zahn, Die Apostelgeschichte des Lucas (Leipzig: Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1921), I, 322.

prominent. Particularly the concept of ways commanded by God is closely related to the life of the chosen people. The Pseudepigrapha reflect this powerful emphasis also.³⁵ The difficulty is that later rabbinic literature lacks parallels which lead directly into the special, absolute usage in Acts. The most that can be said is that $\overline{\text{בְּדַרְשָׁתוֹ}}$ was used to designate the mores of certain groups of people, sometimes with religious connotations.³⁶

The possibility remains that the early Church derived its first self-designation directly from the influence of the Septuagint. This suggestion becomes more credible when the role of the Septuagint in the Apostolic Church receives full recognition. The use of the Greek Old Testament for its lections, particularly the Psalms and the Prophets, where $\overline{\text{ὁδοί}}$ is plentiful, provides the opportunity for frequent contact with the term.

As noted in Chapter II, there are a number of Septuagint passages which show God's commanded ways viewed as a distinctive walk of life. In a few cases, Israel's pattern of living and corporate worship appear in an absolutized form, designating the group activity of the Old Testament Church. This is not to suggest that the early Church seized upon such passages from the prophets and deliberately gave

³⁵Supra, p. 20.

³⁶Ibid.

themselves a name. More naturally, the members of the Church could have been aware of the strong Old Testament use of *ὄσος* for the distinctive behavior which showed their connection with God. Certainly the external signs of corporate living were very prominent in the early Church. As. L. A. Thornton notes concerning the fellowship described in Acts 2:42, their relationship had its roots first of all in a connection with God, but more than that, it was a connection with each other in obvious outward manifestations as a reflection of the new inner life. The sharing of material goods in the first congregation, as well as the later collection for the poor of Jerusalem, are illustrations of this consciousness of the common life.³⁷ Hauck gives a similar flavor to the term *κοινωνία* in the Acts 2:42 passage:

In Ag 2,42 bedeutet *κοινωνία* wohl nicht konkret die 'Gemeinde,' die Genossenschaft der Christen, die sich noch nicht rechtlich von der juedischen Gemeinde getrennt, aber doch schon einen Kreis eigenster Lebensgemeinschaft darstellt, . . . die Gemeinschaft des bruederlichen Zusammenhaltens, das sich im Gemeindeleben bewaehrt und auswirkt.³⁸

The strong sociological overtones of this suggested source of the *ὄσος* usage may explain why the term gave way to the designation *Χριστιανοί* in the post-Apostolic age. In addition to the fact that *Χριστιανοί* was a term perpetuated by the opponents of the Church, it points directly

³⁷L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (London: Dacre Press, 1950), p. 16.

³⁸Friedrich Hauck, "*κοινωνία*," Theologisches Woerterbuch, III, 809.

to the Lord of the Church, whereas *ἐκκλησία* is very easily misunderstood as merely another "way of life."

The use of *ἐκκλησία* in various contexts in Acts shows how the term which originally emerged from the congregation in Jerusalem became a general designation for Christianity, sometimes with emphasis upon the distinctive proclamation, but most often referring to the members of the Church, the New Israel, in their corporate walk of life.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

None of the hypotheses for explaining the unparalleled use of *ὁδοί* in Acts has decisively powerful support. The results of this study indicate that the Septuagint offers more definite points of contact than the other suggested sources and provides a more natural line of development by which the early Church could arrive at its self-designation. Since the full picture of the transmission of the Septuagint and its use by the early Church is not known, the lack of solid rabbinic support cannot in itself overrule a direct transition from Septuagint to early Church. The primary role of the Septuagint text in the life of the Apostolic Church gives this theory of development preponderant weight of probability.

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